

THE DIARY OF AN AYURVEDA PATIENT



Mr. Anatoly Novikov
Irkutsk, Russia

© Punarnava Ayurveda
January 2009

Daily Journal of Mr. Anatoly Novikov (From Russia) . . .
Impressions during Ayurveda treatment course
(October 12 - November, 24, 2008)
Arogyodayam Ayurveda Hospital, Kalpathy ...
4 kms away from Palakkad town, Kerala State, India

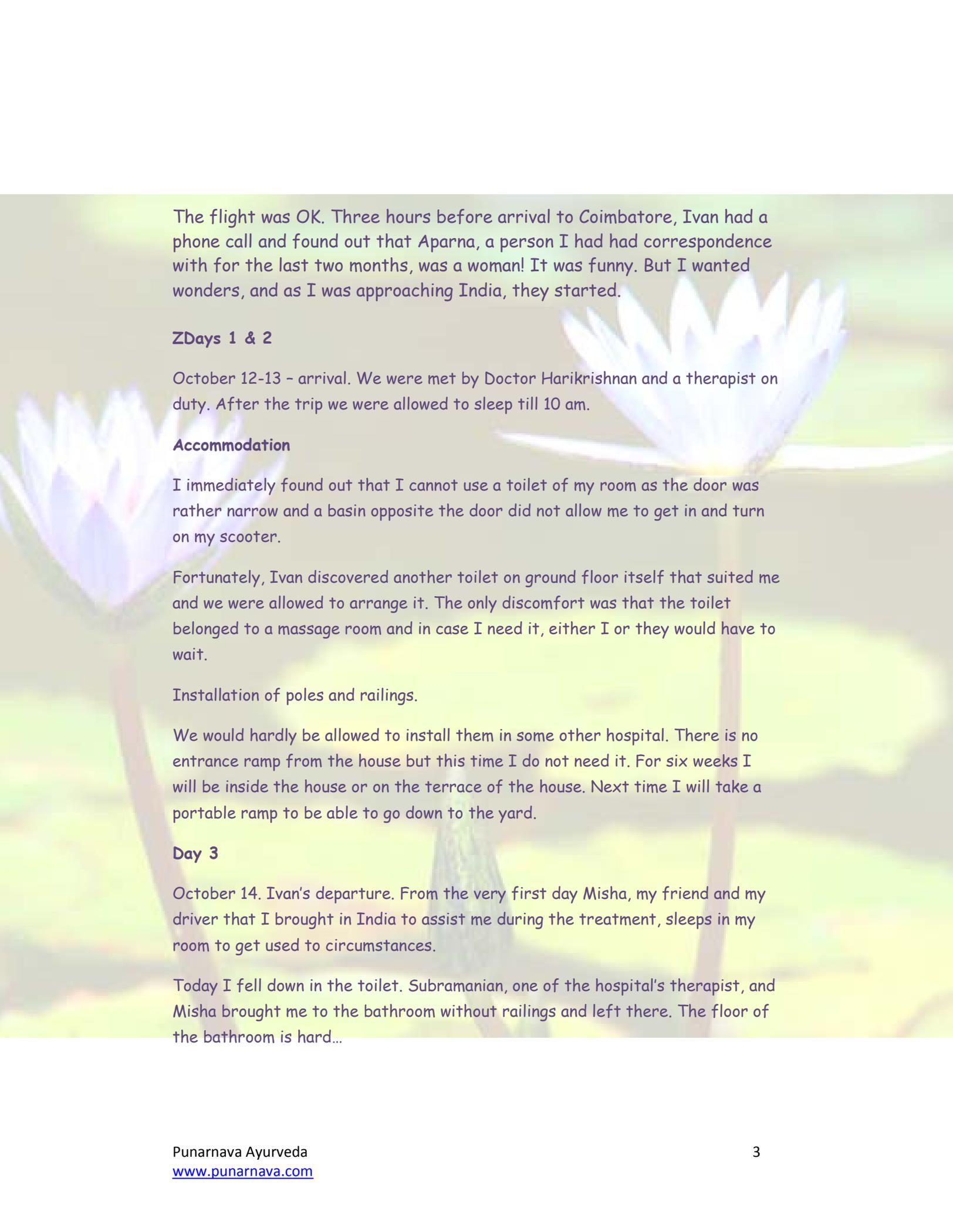
How did I get there?

I heard much about Ayurveda, but my decision to go to India for treatment was inspired by my old acquaintance Sasha Krupski, a doctor by profession and a former patient himself. Last year he underwent a course of treatment in Kerala and his opinion was rather positive.

I had never been to India, I had nothing to hope for and there was no need to convince me. I mailed information about myself to three sites that proposed Ayurveda treatment and the next day I got an answer from one Aparna from *Punarnava Ayurveda* website and our correspondence started.

Thus, for two months while Indian consular agency was issuing visa, I was addressed as "Shri. Anatoly". My medical documents were reviewed by a doctor named Harikrishnan from Arogyodayam Ayurveda Hospital and despite my age and period of illness he agreed to help me, appointed the date of treatment start and I had no alternatives any longer - I was to fly!

In the company of two assistants (one of them was my elder son Ivan) I went to India. It was my second trip abroad with the purpose of treatment: the previous year I was in China. Nevertheless, this one again was like a jump into water...



The flight was OK. Three hours before arrival to Coimbatore, Ivan had a phone call and found out that Aparna, a person I had had correspondence with for the last two months, was a woman! It was funny. But I wanted wonders, and as I was approaching India, they started.

ZDays 1 & 2

October 12-13 - arrival. We were met by Doctor Harikrishnan and a therapist on duty. After the trip we were allowed to sleep till 10 am.

Accommodation

I immediately found out that I cannot use a toilet of my room as the door was rather narrow and a basin opposite the door did not allow me to get in and turn on my scooter.

Fortunately, Ivan discovered another toilet on ground floor itself that suited me and we were allowed to arrange it. The only discomfort was that the toilet belonged to a massage room and in case I need it, either I or they would have to wait.

Installation of poles and railings.

We would hardly be allowed to install them in some other hospital. There is no entrance ramp from the house but this time I do not need it. For six weeks I will be inside the house or on the terrace of the house. Next time I will take a portable ramp to be able to go down to the yard.

Day 3

October 14. Ivan's departure. From the very first day Misha, my friend and my driver that I brought in India to assist me during the treatment, sleeps in my room to get used to circumstances.

Today I fell down in the toilet. Subramanian, one of the hospital's therapist, and Misha brought me to the bathroom without railings and left there. The floor of the bathroom is hard...

I swear at Misha, he answers back which makes me furious. I realize that this is not the idea of his first trip abroad, but this understanding does not bring me relief.

Day 4

October 15. Commencement of *ghee* (incomplete fasting) that will last for seven days.

In the evening the computer attracted my interest. I found out that from the moment of Ivan's departure it has been on, that is, during the first days I was so tired that even had no desire to switch off the computer. I just listen to music.

Commencement of massage with oil - *Abhyangam*.

I asked the Doctor not to combine massage and *ghee* fasting as I feel very weak.

In the evening or when I feel terribly hungry (on the first day I felt hungry at 4 pm, the next day - at 5 pm, and so on, later and later) I have rice with beetroot or cabbage.

I feel weak and irritated.

Problems with Misha continue. My sister called it "psychological incompatibility". It is nice that Misha does not know about that, otherwise he would feel himself even more important.

Days 5 - 10

October 16 - 25. *Ghee* every morning, its dose grows daily. Every morning the Doctor controls my state, measures the temperature by a mouth thermometer and every time warns me not to bite it. At the end he puts another glass of *ghee* on the table.

I started with 50 ml and reached 150 ml! At this amount I vomited: evidently, I am "saturated" with it.

I proposed Suma, Doctor's wife, then Doctor himself, to move Misha to "free India" and make an appointment on the 24th of November in Coimbatore airport. Suma asked Subramanian whether they could do without third assistant. He said "no" as it is difficult to carry "sir" to the bathroom after massage when he is in oil and almost lifeless. As to Doctor - he just advised not to be nervous, relax and try to overcome these difficult first days.

So, I have a driver and Subramanian and Bhaskar have an assistant.

I started recording my sensations day by day in a more regular manner. Desire to write, i.e. to work with the computer, is a very good sign.

Days 11-12

October 23-24. Massage is done first with oil, then with medicine mixed with milk - *ksheeradhara*. They get milk from a person who brings it in cans, and milk for tea they take from a package the milkman puts onto the grate.

After *ksheeradhara* the edema of my feet considerably reduced. In the evening feet swell again, but much less than when I was at home. In the morning feet are quite decent, especially the left one. When at home, the edema during the night practically did not reduce.

Day 13

From October 25 the massage with oil and milk is followed by *vasti* (*yapana vasti*). It has become easier to get up and stand on my feet. Gums do not bleed when I clean teeth. Water after rinsing the mouth is clean.

Day 17

October 29. Massage is followed by *vasti*. After *vasti* I do not feel quiet till 12 pm and even later. The Doctor offered small *vasti* (*matravasti*) after lunch as well, but then decided not to do it as he was happy with the lack of cramps in the stomach.

Day 19

October 31. Today the Doctor was present during massage, to be more exact, participated in the treatment. Either the boy-assistant fell ill (the day before he felt vomiting) or the Doctor himself decided to have a look at my response to massage - in any case I am grateful to him as massage and *vasti* followed were rather demonstrative. Bhaskar and Subramanian did not talk, just answered Doctor's questions.

There is one important thing about massage. Massage therapists must not talk loudly, to say nothing about laughing. Patients take the procedure as some mystery. It is for that purpose an oil lamp is lit in front of Ayurveda God image, mantras are played, and Bhaskar asks you to say nothing before you get to the table. He pours the first portion of oil onto your head, rubs it into your hair, covers the face and even puts it into your ears.

Several minutes later when the patient has been prepared, massage therapists start exchanging news and merrily laugh. That is, for a patient it is a mysterious treatment, while for them it is a common procedure. It is so, but the patient starts feeling cold and senses a hard table with all bones of his body. And massage may become useless. I assure you that the result of treatment will be worse if participants of the procedure do not cooperate.

There is one more thing. Massage starts early in the morning as soon as, say, Bhaskar comes to hospital. Before that he has been motor biking for 20 kms and his hands are cool. Why not to warm them up under the jet of hot water rather than against the patient's body who has recently got out of bed?

But today everything was perfect and, finally, Bhaskar and Subramanian granted me a bonus in the form of overall massage after my second turn to my back. I also did my best to follow the plan. The result was complete relaxation during the procedure, lack of pain in any position despite the fact that two big massage therapists crumple your feeble body on the bare wooden table.

Washing and putting clothes was rather quick.

Then it was breakfast. I have eaten everything and asked for some more. There was no more food. OK, no need to 'overeat'.

At the same time "quite healthy" Misha was slowly eating rice, ate less than a half and left. This is the way healthy people eat: "want" today, "do not want" tomorrow. The day after tomorrow they "want something tasty" and two days later they... die. Everyone says that "he could have lived more, but the heart... and what do you want at his 55?"

The appetite is abnormally good. 15 minutes before lunch (we had breakfast 1.5 hours later than others) I feel motion and flows in the stomach.

Feet edema is minimal.

The Doctor has just said that *vasti* will last for two days more, nine procedures total.

The sight is getting worse. There is a film in front of the eyes in the daytime, especially after meals, and the sight restores by the evening subject to sufficient artificial lighting. The state is rather familiar, that is why when at home the most fruitful work is done in the evening or at night.

I do not complain at sight worsening. It makes no sense to complain; if the general state is getting better the sight will become better as well. The same with the equilibrium loss and inflammation on the right foot.

I realize that it is useless to treat individual symptoms that are caused by the main disease. It is the main disease that shall be cured to eliminate individual symptoms.

I am very hungry again. Storm in the stomach. One hour 15 minutes before supper.

Day 20

November 1. Again massage was done with participation of the Doctor and again rather successfully. Bhaskar and Subramanian did not say a word during the procedure. I was "flowing" in their hands. As a result my feet that day were as never during the latest two years or more: flat feet with wrinkled skin on toes. What can the skin do if swelling relieve so quickly?

Had a phone talk to Sasha - the first talk during those three weeks. One of his comments related to my present state attracted my attention: "I feel weak after all those purifications". Correct, "weak" is the key word. So, it is a norm, this is how it must be.

What if I came to "that hospital" for three weeks only, as they had proposed? Even my six weeks seem to be not enough.

Day 21

November 2. Today I want to tell about the night. I was not sleeping between 2 am and 3:30 am. But not because I could not fall asleep, but because my right leg that usually was as a log, all of a sudden started bending and I enjoyed the forgotten position. To say nothing about erection and erotic dreams.

By the way, I must tell Ivan with whom the first day we were learning the hospital Rules what the word "celibacy" means in the item: "strictly maintain celibacy". In a couple of weeks I realize that it has the same root as the french word "celibataire" (bachelor).

Another item of Rules reads: "listen to mantras". Fortunately, there is no need to remind me of listening to music. Besides, there is much very good music in India and after hearing to the collection of my computer I started listening to records available in the hospital, they were quite good. These are the two CD I was allowed to copy:

"Sacred Mantras of India" and "Himalayan Chants".

Mantras eulogize God and *chants* - appeal for Knowledge, Health, Prosperity, Success, Enlightenment and other graces of God. *Mantras* and *chants* are listened to in the evening in quietude to change over from rest to work or from fuss to a quiet evening and night rest.

Thus, my computer and acoustic system bought there was switched on at 6 pm and the entire hospital was listening to *mantras, chants, kirtans and ragas*... Music really calms and soothes.

At 6 am first *kashayam* - a bitter tasted medicine - mixed with.. *Eranda tailam* (oil, again to a better defecation). *Arishtam* after breakfast. It has a very pleasant taste similar to that French ecologically clean "liqueur artisanale".

Interest to and friendly attitude towards complicated music arose. Willingly listen to early albums of Holger Czukay. Modern music is not the only preference. 30-year melodies may be more modern than music of any new singer.

Evidently, *Arogyodayam!*

Day 22

November 3. I have had a good sleep. 6 am - taking *Kashayam* medicine with "ghee" before breakfast and supper (two times a day). *Arishtam* after each meal - 3 times a day.

4 pm: massage followed by steaming with towels taken from boiled water and squeezed, then *Sirovasti* with 0.5 l of oil in a special "cap" fastened to the head by sticky bandages.

The practical aspect of this procedure was understandable, but difficult to imagine. Therefore, when Subramanian and Bhaskar started applying sticky bandage to my head, I asked Doctor who was always nearby in the critical moments, if somebody else had been subjected to this procedure before me. "Why?" - just asked the Doctor understanding my gloomy humor. "Just asked", I answered watching them doing that in the glass of the cupboard opposite me.

Then the real fun started. Bhaskar even wanted to invite Misha with camera but I asked him not to do that. First, because Misha would lose consciousness and, second, it was not the best moment for joking. Still Bhaskar took a mirror off the wall and allowed me to have a look at my head in the cap where the oil motion was felt...

The procedure was a success. During the last 5 minutes when oil was running from the hood down to my ears and cheeks my count was 150 only. Bhaskar started taking out the oil by a tablespoon and 30 minutes escaped. Then the cap and bandages were removed, hair was squeezed and I was carefully washed.

Now I am sitting and writing with clean silky hair on the head where an hour ago a heavy cap with oil was. There is half an hour left before supper.

Day 23

November 4. I have had a good sleep. The treatment is the same as yesterday: massage, "cap" for 35 minutes, i.e., 5 minutes longer. Everything is well known.

Appetite is good.

Day 24

November 5. I have had a good sleep. Same medicine, massage, then *Sirovasti* for 5 minutes longer. Feel weakness in the legs after treatment. Weak headache.

Appetite is good.

Day 25

November 6. I had a bad sleep before dawn. Feel pain in the liver, same as at home at such moments. I cannot understand whether it pains because I cannot fall asleep or cannot fall asleep because it pains. If I manage to detract from pain, I immediately fall asleep.

This morning I had something similar. I could not find a comfortable position to fall asleep. You turn every minute from the left side to the back, then to the right side and suddenly fall asleep. 5 minutes to 6 am Bhaskar brings medicine: "Sir...".

Feet became swollen again. The best result was after massage, with medicine mixed with milk. I try to sit with my legs lying on the chair. At home I will try to keep them on a special support. I will try to do that myself but always in the presence of some one who can help. This must become a rule. Without swelling I feel better. Most often I concentrate on my "heavy" feet.

The same treatment and medicine. *Sirovasti* is for another 5 minutes longer - for 45 minutes. There is no headache after treatment today.

The mood is good.

Day 26

November 7. I have had a good sleep. In the morning I feel spasms both inside and outside though on the whole spasms became weaker.

Medicine and treatment are the same. The Doctor said that the time of *Sirovasti* would be another 5 minutes longer, for 50 minutes during three remaining days. To sit for 50 minutes in the same position without moving and without permission to talk in order to make the time run faster is not a simple thing. But if I were told that treatment of multiple sclerosis includes pleasant procedures only, I would not believe the efficiency of such treatment.

Quite unexpectedly, the treatment was pleasant.

Day 27

November 8. For correct organization of everyday life I must, first of all, go to bed earlier, say, at 10 pm and get up earlier - at 8 am. Second, the entire social welfare system shall be changed. A social assistant must come everyday and cook food for tomorrow. Ideally she should come and cook lunch every day. But it is hardly possible as they are badly organized and my house is far from the city transport. I will develop the menu myself. The driver will be responsible for buying food.

Legs should be kept horizontally as long as possible, all the time during presence of assistants and partially during the work. It is necessary to design a special rotating table for a laptop near the table in the bedroom and near the armchair.

I had a talk to the Doctor on the prospects of the treatment, on organization of daily life and food between treatment courses. The last week will be devoted to preparation for life outside the hospital. I keep thinking about my next stay here. It is a good sign despite the fact that treatment was not simple and not very pleasant.

Bad things are immediately forgotten. When they listed the procedures I underwent Suma reminded me of *big vasti* during the hole second week. I forgot about this unpleasant procedure on the third day after it's finished!

Day 28

November 9. The sleep was good. Spasms remain but are weaker. I easily bend legs from either side.

I can't help thinking about the flight, though in reality everything is much simpler.

In the morning I learned how to cook tea.

Milk is mixed with water and brought to boiling. Then Indian tea is added and brought to boiling again. Tea is filtered and sugar is added to your liking. Cane sugar is less sweet than sugarbeet sugar. You may have tea without sugar. Then tea is stirred and poured from one vessel to the other for several times. Glasses are filled in the same manner - from the vessel with tea high up. After that tea becomes soft and foamy.

When at home, I will drink tea without sugar. Suma told me that I could drink tea without sugar even there and when at home I may cook tea only with milk. OK, I'll try.

In the daytime I wrote that expectations were, as a rule, more horrible than the event itself. Namely, I thought that last *shirovasti* could not take place due to medicine I took in the morning that turned out to be diuretic. How to be sitting motionless for 50 minutes with the cap with oil on your head if all the day before you had been visiting toilet every half an hour?

But in fact the procedure was OK, without any unpleasant things. I am clean again with a "storm" in the stomach awaiting for supper.

Day 29

November 10. I have had a good sleep. Spasms are normal: they are stronger in the morning, whereas at night and in the daytime they are weaker than at home. Intestine is emptied after breakfast. The Doctor did not allow me to interrupt taking the *Gandharvahasthadi Eranda Thailam* medicine. Let's see whether it always makes you visit the toilet every 30 minutes or it happens on the first day only.

Today I take a new and, I think, the last procedure of this treatment course: *Sirodhara* that turned out to be the easiest among the procedures. I've got used to be bathed in oil, and 30 minutes (even if the period grows) on the back are just pleasant time spending compared to 50 minutes with the cap with oil on your head.

But actually this procedure takes much force. After today's treatment (impact on the forehead) the legs do not hold at all. But by night they started recovering. The Doctor said that feebleness was not due to the direct effect on the head, but, nevertheless, the oil doze tomorrow will be reduced.

Day 30

November 11. I have had a good sleep except for one thing. During massage on the hard table and frequent use of the uncomfortable toilet bowl I have got a scab down the backbone that was ready to tear off last night. It was really painful.

But it is a usual thing that such problems in the hospital are solved easier than at home. Bhaskar applied medicine and I felt better.

Sirodhara treatment passed quickly though the last 5 minutes were painful due to troubles down the backbone. I plan to apply medicine 2-3 times a day.

Legs do not hold again. I hope that everything will become normal during the last week when Doctors will be making me ready to go back home.

I have a feeling that they have opened the abscess. The pain will last long and then... In the morning when I was looking Bhaskar making tea he said: "Sir, you will have to take treatment for four or five years". Another 4 or 5 years? Strange, but... why not? To go to India regularly during 5 years!

Day 31

November 12. I had a bad sleep. I keep applying the medicine and stay in bed in the daytime.

I have not noticed 35 minutes of the oil "pendulum" procedure - apparently, I was sleeping - treatment passed very quickly. But *Navarakizhi* massage followed I remember very well. I saw many times how they were preparing ball-type bags stuffed with some clay-like medicine.

Suma says that it is rice crumbles and that they are eatable. I saw those balls prepared right here before the procedure. Medicine is different for different patients and depends on the disease. This time preparations were for me... The Doctor said that this procedure is for restoration of legs sensitivity and force of muscles.

I am in a hurry to describe it while it is fresh in my memory.

At the beginning of *Navarakizhi* treatment two massage therapists from both sides roll hot balls along your body. First you feel those balls as soaked paste. Every time before moving them along some or other part of the body the massage therapists apply heat of balls just taken out of boiling medicine to your feet (a burner and a vessel with continuously heated medicine stands near your feet) and then, without interrupting the motion - if they stop the ball, they heat you - massage the body.

Every time two balls are taken out of the hot medicine and the used ones are put back for heating. Gradually those balls swell and become as heavy as an iron or a scale weight.

The second part of massage after turning to the back or stomach is done by champing bags with heavy fluid whose amount continuously reduces. By this moment you are lying in a paddle of sticky substance that is spread over you, remind Gabriel's "digging in the dirt" and longs for the first pot of hot water onto your back, then you will be carefully washed, dried, they will put on clothes, apply something curing onto the top of your head, allow you to smell it and ask: "happy?". And at this moment you feel really happy.

Day 32

November 13. I had a bad sleep. Feel sick after medicine taken before going to bed. Ate almost nothing for breakfast, as I had no appetite.

Both the procedures were OK. Fell asleep during "Shirodhara".

Had a long talk to the Doctor on the importance of everyday routine in my specific state. When at home I will have to take medicine he will give me.



The Doctor also advised me to do exercises, that is, to train my right hand. What a disappointment... If multiple sclerosis could have been cured by physical exercises, then sick people who are not lazy, would have been healthy! I have seen so many people with "dried out hands" or with commencing atrophy of extremities, who were persistently squeezing rubber balls or expanders. And all of them believed that those exercises would surely help them...

For two years I was visiting a doctor of non-traditional medicine and was spending a lot of time to stand in the "snake" posture, and two years more I was counting kilometers in the fields and forests around Irkutsk. I recorded time and enjoyed progress. And what am I doing now in this wheelchair? No, multiple sclerosis cannot be cured by physical exercises. As to my spare time - I have better ideas on how to spend it, rather than to squeeze the ball.

I would like to tell a few words about doctors specializing in neurology. I know why they select this thankless profession. Most often because they have to do practically nothing throughout their professional life for the same salary (which is not very high in Russia, that's true...) as other doctors. They certainly go to work daily but do not treat, just record the changes in the patient's state, prescribe medicine which, even most expensive one, gives only temporary relief, but ruins liver, favors weight growth, and, hence, heart diseases and other associated problems... And nobody can reproach them: these mysterious diseases are not curable!

Lying horizontally, I apply a tampon with medicine. I will have to do it at home at least once a day. Swelling became notably less and the injured vertebra aches less. At home I will cure it completely.

Made a copy of Punarnava CD about Ayurveda - a very good musical background!
- and took some more as souvenirs.

Day 33

November 14. Bhaskar woke me in the morning: «Good morning, Sir...». His watch is a bit fast and it means that I was sleeping soundly and did not hear his alarm clock.

No sickness at night, just dreams, dreams... Medicine with *ghee* in the morning. I cannot understand how I was taking it alone during my first week here if I cannot even stand its smell now! The same result as once with the olive oil: the liver cleaning procedure I undertook fifteen years ago was enough to start hating that dark-green "virgin olive oil" for the rest of my life.

Take medicine, then «shirodhara» procedure for 40 minutes (for five minutes longer than yesterday) followed by «Navarakizhi». Everything according to the Doctor's plan: each treatment course lasts for seven days minimum. Well, let it be seven days - the Doctor knows better. But in a week I am at home - what shall I do there? All right, forget it... Most often the difficulties are just our imagination!

The Doctor said that there will be two more days of intensive treatment and then preparation to go back home. Ordinary massage with oil during the last week. I will be eating fruits, buying souvenirs and tableware, learning cooking food under Suma's guidance, packing my stuff and planning a new trip to India.

I had a phone call from Sasha. He says he also feels weaker than when he arrived. He also told me that last time when he went back home from another Ayurveda center in April, he caught a flu in Irkutsk, and regretfully, had to take antibiotics after treatment in India. I will do my best not to fall ill.

Today is a day of phone calls. I have just had a phone call from Aparna. She asks me whether I continue my notes. Certainly I do, and will continue doing that for some time with the hope to record changes in my state after that intensive treatment. I hope it will be interesting and useful for everybody.

Day 34

November 15. I had a good sleep and awoke with joy. The mood is good. Spasms are not strong. Oil...

And it did happen! Both in the morning and after lunch. In different amounts and of different consistency. A man needs so little to be in good mood the whole day! Who will argue that correct food is not worth special attention?

I try to make Subramanian to give me double tea as a compensation for a glass of oil he made me drink in the morning. He nods his head. To be more exact, he rotates the head the way only they can do, which means: it is not allowed as after having tea the appetite before supper will be poor.

This movement of the head in different context may mean consent, disagreement and just attention - a very specific and very beautiful gesture...

Had a conversation with Doctor Ramkumar, the Managing Director of Punarnava Ayurveda. Punarnava soon opens a new Ayurveda hospital somewhere halfway between Coimbatore and Palakkad, South India. The number of patients there will certainly be larger than here, though everybody realizes that the fewer patients the better for them. But interest towards Ayurveda is growing and patients come from all over the world. I will also contribute to that process.

Doctor Ramkumar got interested in my poles and railings. My request is to provide ramps in the new hospital which I know is very important for disabled. And also ramps demonstrate the care about disabled people. On the whole we had a pleasant talk. It is nice to be talkative sometimes! But most often I am not...

Day 35

November 16. I had a good sleep. Spasms are not strong. Swelling is not strong. I have found out one interesting fact: the foot is narrow near the heel and widens towards toes. I did not know that ... ☺

Oil in the morning on an empty stomach. The Doctor said that daily defecation is more important than a normal hard stool. Actually, it is important even for spirit and workability.

«Sir...»: Subramanian has served the breakfast. "Just a moment", - I have forgotten about food as I had no appetite. Why? Ah, yes...

Had a talk to my relatives and calmed down. Everybody seems fine. At least they sound cheerful. They tell me about some Berlusconi and Obama. Like in a different world...

I have had my last «*shirodhara*» today which I overslept on the table, and «*Navarakizhi*». In the middle of massage, Subramanian suddenly stopped and pointed at my bent leg that was firmly standing on the foot without any support: "No help, Sir". No, he was mistaken, I think: simply there was little oil on the table at that moment...

A glass of milk with *ghee*, before going to bed. It was tasty, by the way.

Day 36

November 17. I had a good sleep. Spasms in the morning are not strong. Swelling is not strong either. Oil again.

«*Abyangam*» is a recovery massage with oil. Now the procedure looks simple and quick, but at the beginning it was a shock!

Day 37

November 18. I had a good sleep. In the daytime I felt strong feebleness in the legs. It is because it is very hot outside. Surely, it is because of heat!

The Doctor showed how to cook *ghee* from fresh cow butter. The butter is evaporated until it stops making noise, i.e., until water is completely evaporated. The product obtained is filtered through a cotton cloth, the remained residue is brown.

Melted butter - *ghee* - is thought to be vegetarian food. Its consistence is similar to that of oil, it is brown, and smells cookies. I will try it tomorrow. A spoonful of such butter can be added to any vegetarian food.

A recipe of morning rice porridge. . .

One small cup of rice should be cleaned well & soaked for a while. The soaked rice should be washed, put into water (three small cups of water) and cooked until it is boiled soft. Add one spoonful of *ghee*. When at home I will be adding nuts and kuraga (dry apricots) to it.

Tea.

I am bringing three types of tea with me. All of them are granulated tea. Other types of tea they probably drink in the hotels for breakfast. Tea is made with milk (half-and-half). By the way, you may use milk only, without water. Village milk, which is the natural one, is better, though you may try different types of milk. Milk in packs will also be OK.

Ivan came to India with my warm clothes and... two batteries for my scooter. He bought them in Moscow on his way to India and failed to send them to Irkutsk. Now batteries have a chance to see the Taj Mahal ☺

On Friday Ivan will be here. He has just sent sms that he stopped in Agra in a good clean hotel that faces Taj Mahal. In the room a salamander runs along the wall. He says he understands the essence of India now. It is, certainly, a joke, but his observation is correct. All those salamanders, frogs and bats are taken here as a part of a quite friendly environment. Even in a good hotel, nobody will try to catch a salamander running along the wall.

Milk with *ghee* before going to bed.

Day 38

November 19. I had a good sleep. Light headache in the morning, probably because of the fan making noise throughout the night. Spasms and swelling are normal. There is no need even to look at legs. If they are swollen, I feel heaviness. And vice versa, if the legs are not swollen, I feel lightness.

I add *ghee* into rice. The rice has a new taste, a taste of cookies.

People who evidently equip the new hospital of Punarnava Ayurveda came to have a look at equipment in the bedroom and toilet. I would be glad if my recommendations would facilitate the stay of future patients, though railings should be manufactured for an individual person with account of his capabilities.

A "special room" for disabled I visited everywhere is larger than a common room and its door is wider. Railings are everywhere fixed to walls but they are designed mainly for support, whereas they must allow a person to draw himself. For this purpose there must be a vertical railing on the wall nearby and a pole from the opposite side where there is no wall. Ideally the pole should be placed a bit further from the place you rise to be able to draw yourself rather than to push yourself back. Unfortunately, it is difficult to understand for those who arrange rooms for disabled people in expensive hotels. Maybe I could be an advisor...? ☺

I feel bad today. My feet do not hold me at all. Three days left before the departure. It is useless to complain and to say something about your state. May be I do not know something? May be I should rely on the post-effect of treatment that will manifest itself later? But how to survive till it comes?

We are packing things: tableware, tea, spices, CDs. Medicine will come later. When I am at home, those things are to create environment close to that in India.

It is time to sum up the results:-

Swelling has almost gone, but comes back if I sit with my legs down. I give it 'plus' (+) for I saw my legs looking as they were long ago.

Inflammation of the right foot disappeared, I give it 'plus' (+).

Gums do not bleed when I clean my teeth - 'plus' (+).

Appetite is good, but I did not suffer from the lack of appetite at home either. Still, let it be 'plus' (+).

Spasms are less - 'plus' (+).

Legs hold worse than before treatment - 'minus' (-).

Sight worsens after lunchtime, especially after meals, as usual - 'zero' (0).

I cannot hold balance, as before, that is, no changes - 'zero' (0).

Total: +++++ 00 -

The summary did not take into account the state of my right hand and the capability to move legs. But it is too early to talk about it.

The conclusion is that my trip, no doubt, was not wasteful and I must continue treatment.

Day 39

November 20. Yesterday I told the Doctor about possible difficulties during flights and changes from plane to plane. He said: "Let's pray" in his language, which is equal to my "With god's help" I say in such cases.

Today I watched Jim Jarmusch's "Dead Man" again - a very good moment during the latest weeks to watch it again: «It's a test...», said the Indian. Yes, it will be a real test... once again.

For the first time I tried to hold a laptop where it should be - on the knees. I was watching the film and working a little. It is quite convenient.

I told the Doctor about the system of evaluation of my state, I invented yesterday: 'plus' - better, 'zero' - no changes, and 'minus' - worse. I decided to evaluate each symptom using a simple independent system. The result is just the sum - everything is vivid and is not impacted by positive or negative emotions. Later the monthly results can be evaluated using this 'plus-O-minus' system and I can record the changes in my health between treatment courses.

Medicines I bring with me will be enough for a month, then I could order it via the Punarnava Ayurveda website.

Cooking lessons continue. Today we learned how to cook soup from carrot and beetroot. Soups are dense thanks to addition of *green gram dal* that at home can be substituted by milled dry pea. Almost all the dishes are flavored with *turmeric powder* - very useful spice that colors food yellow. It is added in the amount of 1/5 of a tea spoon or a bit less per portion. When all the dishes on the table are yellow, it is not pleasant, as you have a feeling that you eat some special hospital food. But one dish, hopefully, will look nice.

Milk with *ghee* before going to bed. I fell asleep very quickly.

Day 40

November 21. I had a good sleep and awoke an hour before getting up. I did not want to sleep not because of some uneasy thoughts, but owing to a good sleep. I have not felt sleepy lately, nor I have a natural desire to sleep after lunch. Spasms and swelling are within the norm.

Ivan comes in some hours...

Ivan is already here. He told me that we have four flights back, rather than three. It will take us more than two days to get home! This is the real test... every time more and more complicated...

I have got an access to my mail. What a heap! It is nice that the major share of letters were re-addressed.

Next time it is advisable to have a wi-fi in the hospital. I will be working for an hour or two during the day, just to be aware of the events. I also need an ordinary support (for books) to be able to put it on the table and not to fasten to the edge of it so that I could work in any place with my computer.

The Doctor gave me medicine I must take home with me: several bottles with familiar names, and prescriptions on the Doctor's professional form. Bottles are plastic, Bhaskar will seal them.

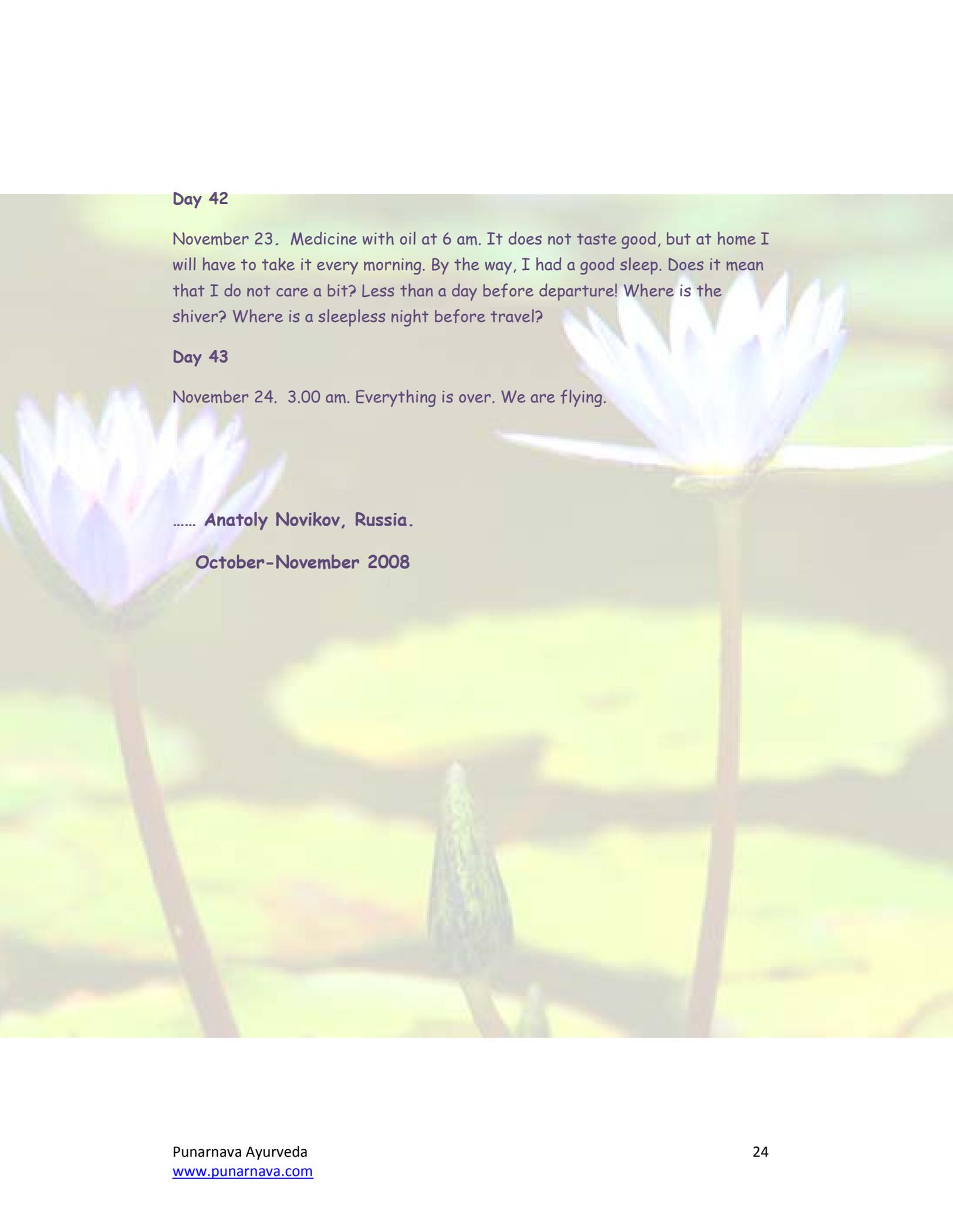
"Has sealed..." . He simply wrapped the plugs with scotch. (Later, on the way home one of the bottles leaked, but evidently I looked so pitiful, that customs had no claims against it).

It is nice that the scooter is not counted as luggage. I am bringing with me a box with tableware made of stainless steel, and Misha brings glasses as gifts - 36 pieces. And he wanted to take 40! I convinced him not to.

Day 41

November 22. I had a good sleep. Spasms are normal. Swelling reduces overnight but do not go down to the level after «Ksheeradhara» massage during the third week. Yesterday I was not practically sitting with my legs up. When at home, I must use every chance to hold my legs up.

We have bought a router (the wireless internet-connection equipment) with a manual in Russian. For 220 volts, certainly. Thus, wi-fi has appeared in the hospital today!



Day 42

November 23. Medicine with oil at 6 am. It does not taste good, but at home I will have to take it every morning. By the way, I had a good sleep. Does it mean that I do not care a bit? Less than a day before departure! Where is the shiver? Where is a sleepless night before travel?

Day 43

November 24. 3.00 am. Everything is over. We are flying.

..... Anatoly Novikov, Russia.

October-November 2008