



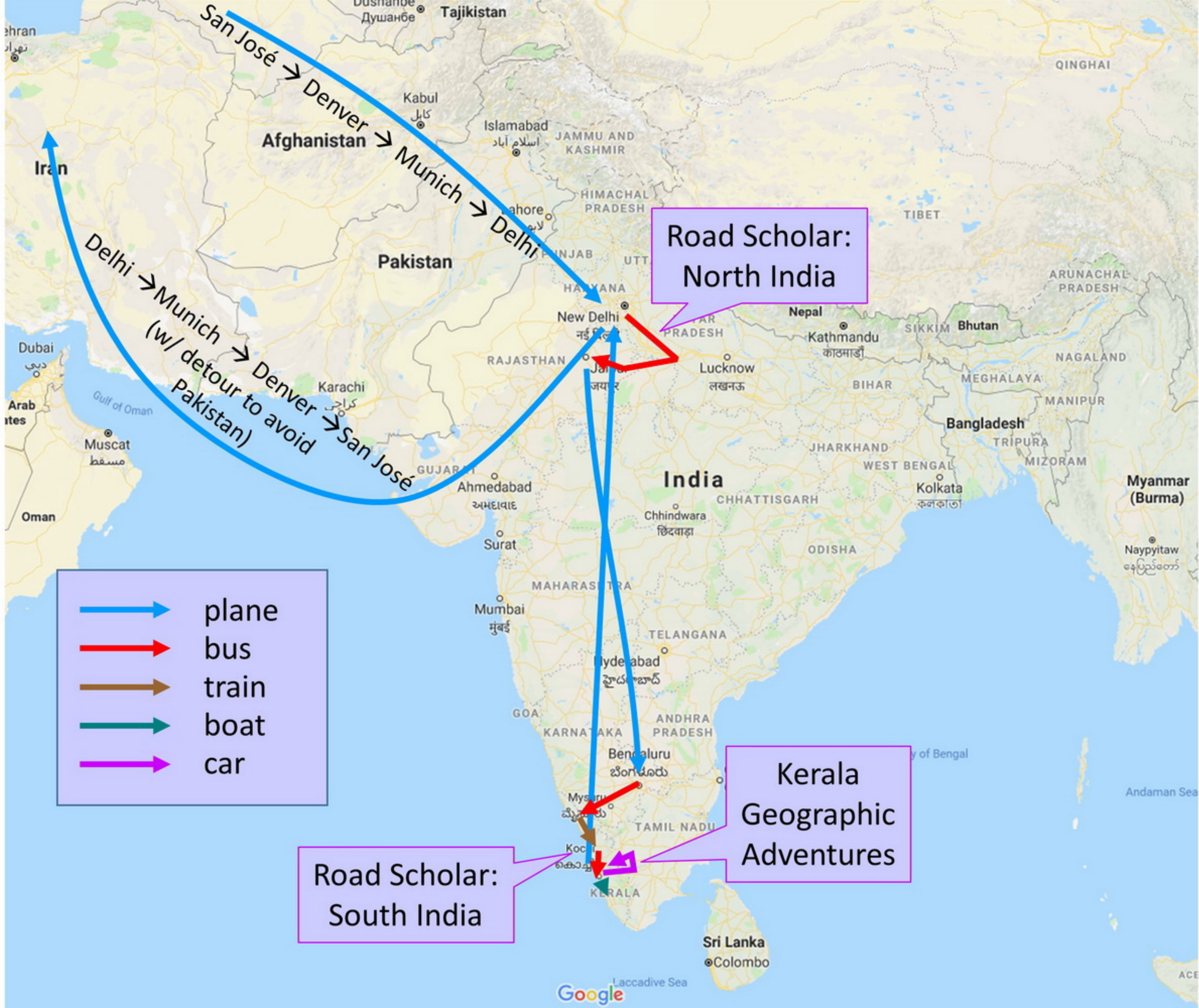
india

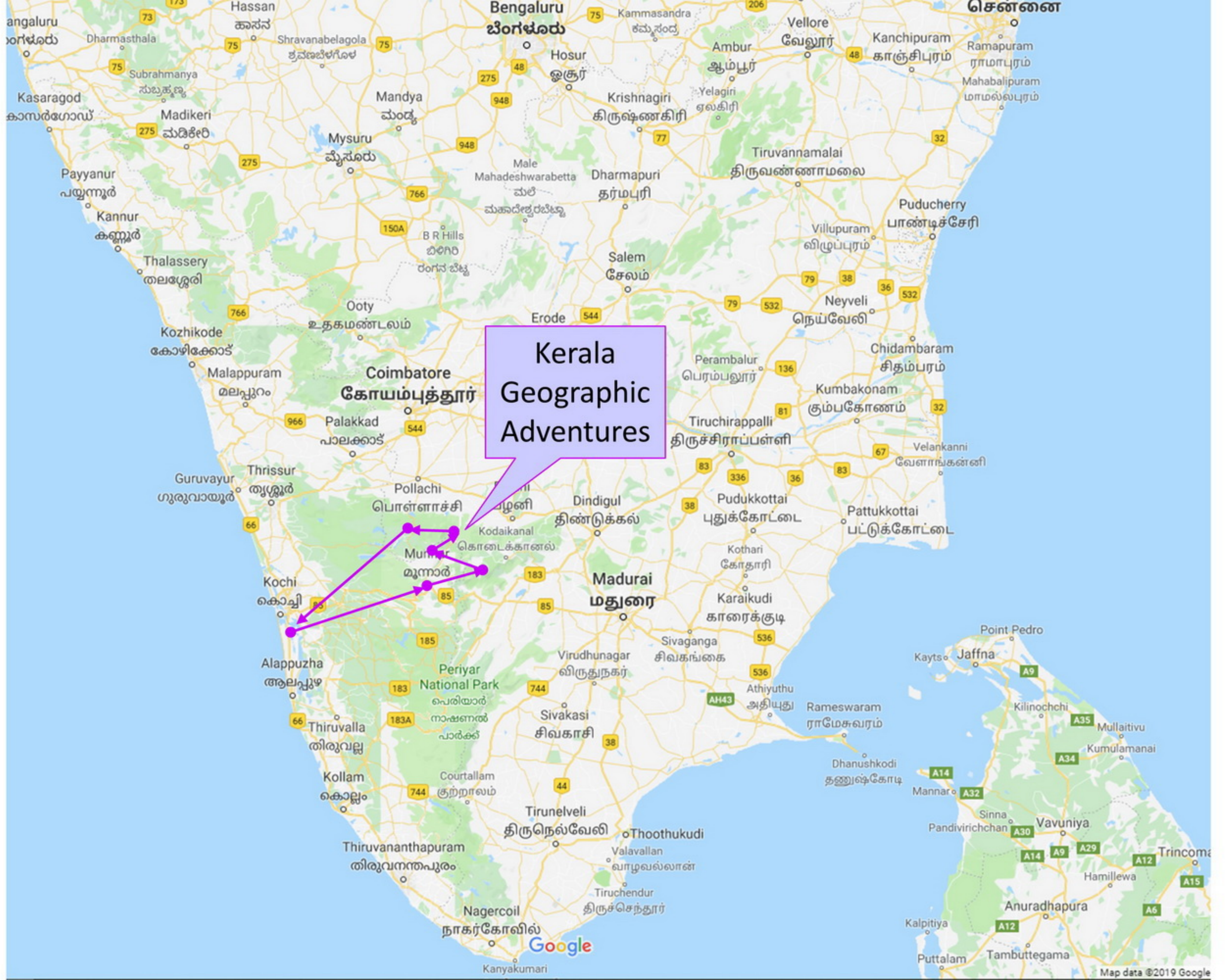
2019

part 3

Kerala Geographic
Adventures:

The Western Ghats







Our driver, Mr. Murali, picked us up at the hotel, ...



... and drove us past rubber-tree plantations, ...



... pineapple fields, ...



... cocoa plants, ...



... and cricket games, ...



... to the jungle home of our guide, ...



... Benny Kurian.

His wife and daughter graciously let us borrow him for a few days.



We leave the coast and head east into the Western Ghats,



... past jungle mountains 6,000+ feet tall,



.... past colorful small towns...



... and elephant-infested (!) tea plantations, to reach our first destination:

પાલપાદપુલ્કોટીઢ
national park

KERALA FOREST AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

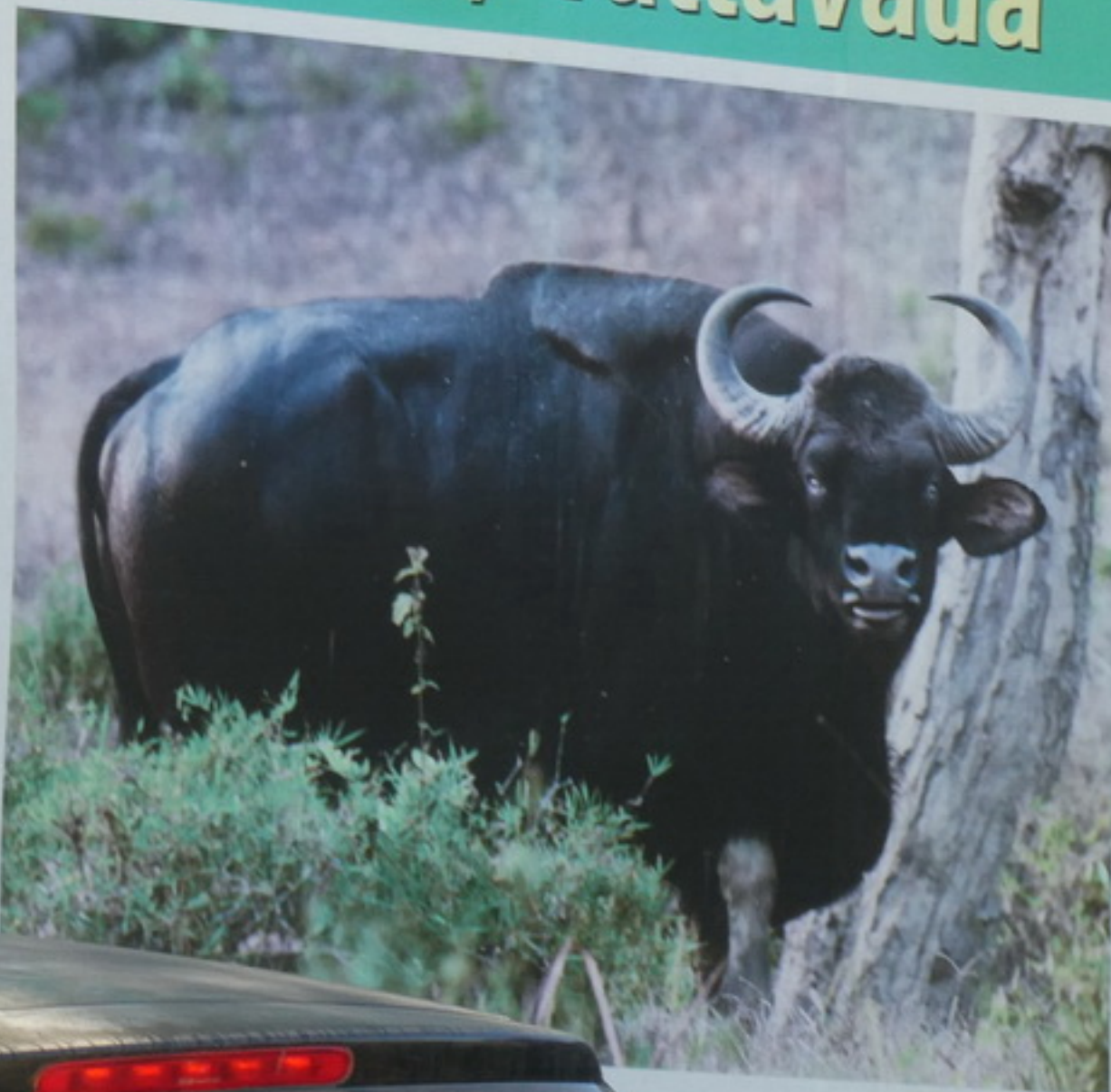
Shola National Parks, Vattavada

Trekking

Entrance fee Indians	Rs-250/-
Foreigners	Rs-600/-
Children	Rs-

Camping

Loghouse	Rs-4050/ 2 Person
Additional Person	Rs-1025/-
Amenity Centre	Rs-525/ person
Still Camera	Rs-40/-



NATIONAL PARK



Entering Pampadumchola (Pampadum Shola) National Park:
be on the lookout for this guy!



Landscape: a multi-layered jungle,



with white-cheeked barbets,



... and the tiny pied bush chat.



Beware of elephants!



(and, judging from the droppings,
they've been in the area.)



After a long steady climb, a steep decent ...



... to our jungle retreat, ...



... which still was fairly high in the hills.



The compound was surrounded by a trench, to keep the elephants out.



We enjoyed a proper Indian breakfast, ...



... prepared by our local village guides.



Our tour guide, Benny, is on the alert,...



... watching the gaur (Indian Bison).

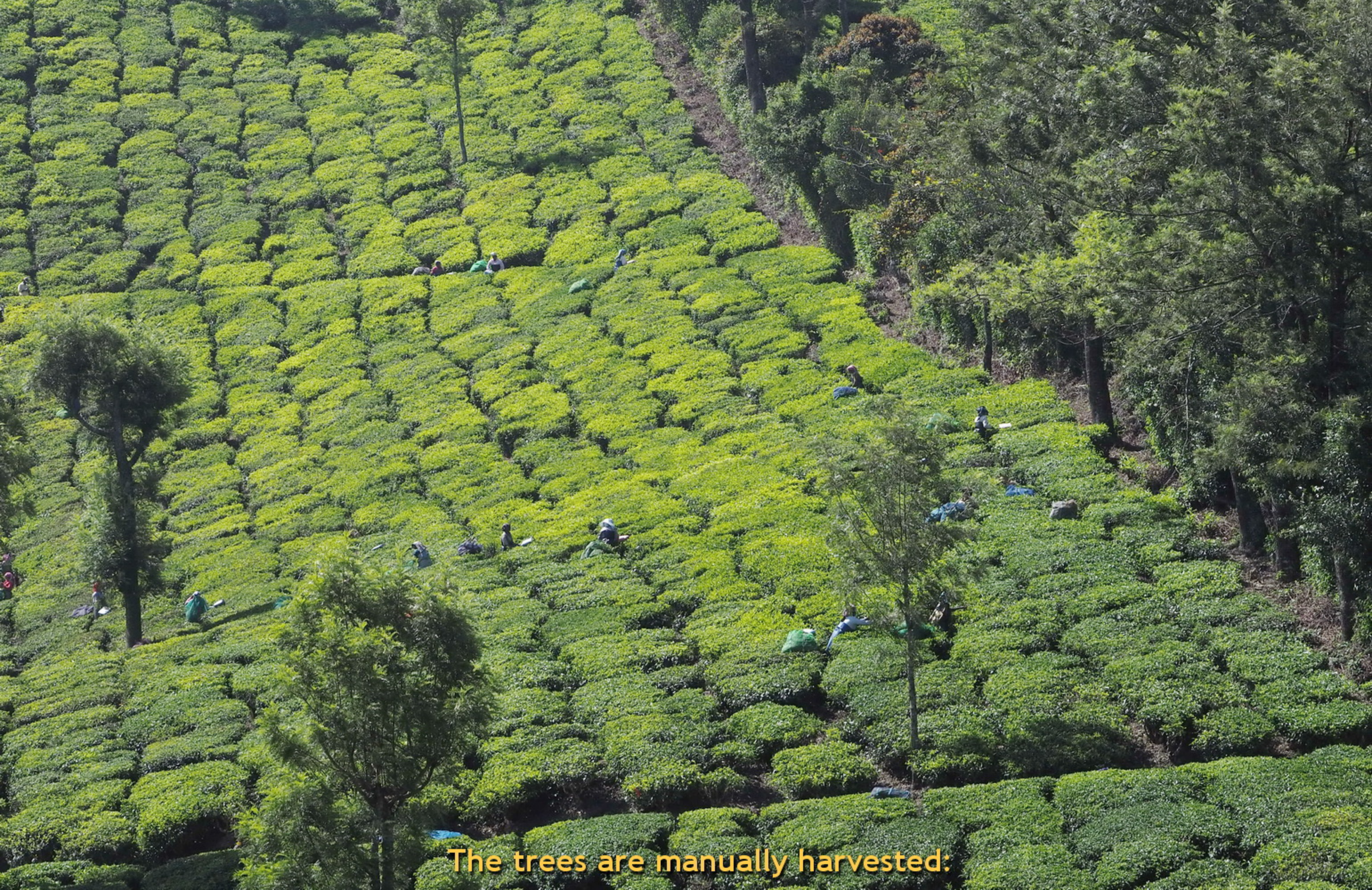


And away they go!





A tea plantation. The regularly harvested trees form a patchwork carpet.



The trees are manually harvested:



... only the top two leaves from each branch are picked.



Next day, back in town -- Munnar, ...

ശബരിമല

शबरिमला

சபரிமலை

శబరిమల

ಶಬರಿಮಲೆ

Sabarimala



201



HIGH RA
HOSPIT



... where road signs are given in 6 languages.
(And the English are sometimes both British and the new old name.)



Munnar is noted for having a Temple,



... church, ...



MAHALAKSHMI
Tea & Bakery
Hot, Coffee, Ice Cream, Good Drinks.
Bakery, Confectionery, Sweets, etc.

J.J. TEX

... and mosque all right next to one another.

The Life of Pi



(In fact, it was featured as a key part of a recent famous movie.)

LOP-1 - Pi Patel (Suraj Sharma) and a fierce Bengal tiger named Richard Parker must rely on each other to survive an epic journey.

Photo : Rhythm & Hues

TM and © 2012 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All rights reserved. Not for sale or duplication.



The Munnar Market, ...





... with merchants trimming cabbages with machetes.



MUNNAR HARDWARES

MUNNAR

മുന്നാർ



Once again, to assure myself that this is a real town and not a tourist attraction, I seek out the local hardware store.



Clean laundry drying on the lawn.



To bury a cable alongside the road, rather than use a trenching machine, they have a dozen people digging by hand: it provides more jobs.



Purple and green: Jacaranda trees in with the tea.



And (non-native) poinsettias line the road.

ਚੰਨਰ

ਗੋਵਿੰਦ

ਸ਼ਾਂਤਪੁਰ



Welcome to the Preserve. Beware of the giant squirrels!



... and termites, ...



... and monkeys. [Bonnet Macaques.]

Chinnar
Wildlife
Sanctuary

Kerala Forests &
Wildlife Department
Wildlife Division
Munnar

WELCOME TO
**CHINNAR
WILDLIFE
SANCTUARY**



It's an hour's hike to our next evening's stop.



A Tufted Gray Langur,
fourth of the 6 varieties of Indian monkeys.



***Lots* of Tufted Gray Langurs!**



And the grizzled giant squirrel!



Gray Wagtail.



Spot-belly Eagle Owl.



Brown Fish Owl.



White-rumped Shama.



After the hike, take a nap in the stream-bed.



Here we are east of the crest of the Western Ghats, in an arid rain-shadow.



(The area is reminiscent of Arizona.)



Our cabin for the night.

(Does it count as "running water" if someone runs up with a bucket from the stream?)
[It used to have plumbed water, but elephants stepped on the pipe.]



One of the day's guides (and cooks) from the nearby village, ...



... and the other.



Quite Arizona-like,



... complete with lizards, like the Rock Agama,



... Monitor Lizard, ...



... and Garden Lizard.

ANAMALAI TIGER RESERVE

Thiruppur division. Department of forest, Tamil nadu



NATURE DOES'T NEED PEOPLE, PEOPLE NEED NATURE

PHOTO: SAMSON P. SAMUEL



ANAMALAI TIGER RESE

Tiruppur Forest Divison



AMARA
CROCODIL

20

www.atrpollachi.com Ph - 04252-256055, 04252

We leave the preserve. We did see a Giant Squirrel,
and were just as happy to have not seen a tiger or crocodile.



More termite mounds -- this one painted and used as a Temple.



And coconuts everywhere! Here being husked, ...



... and there a row of roadside businesses weaving fronds into mats.



Thru another small Indian town, ...



... where the shopkeepers are ready for the upcoming Holi color-festival, ...



... and up a winding road back over the crest of the Western Ghats.



[A *very* winding road, ...]



தொண்டை ஊசி வளைவு
 $\frac{11}{40}$
HAIR PIN BEND
வெதுவாக செல்லாதீர்

... with 40 hairpin turns.]

ਰਬੀਪਦਾਰਵਾ



GO SLOW



Warning! Endangered monkey crossing!



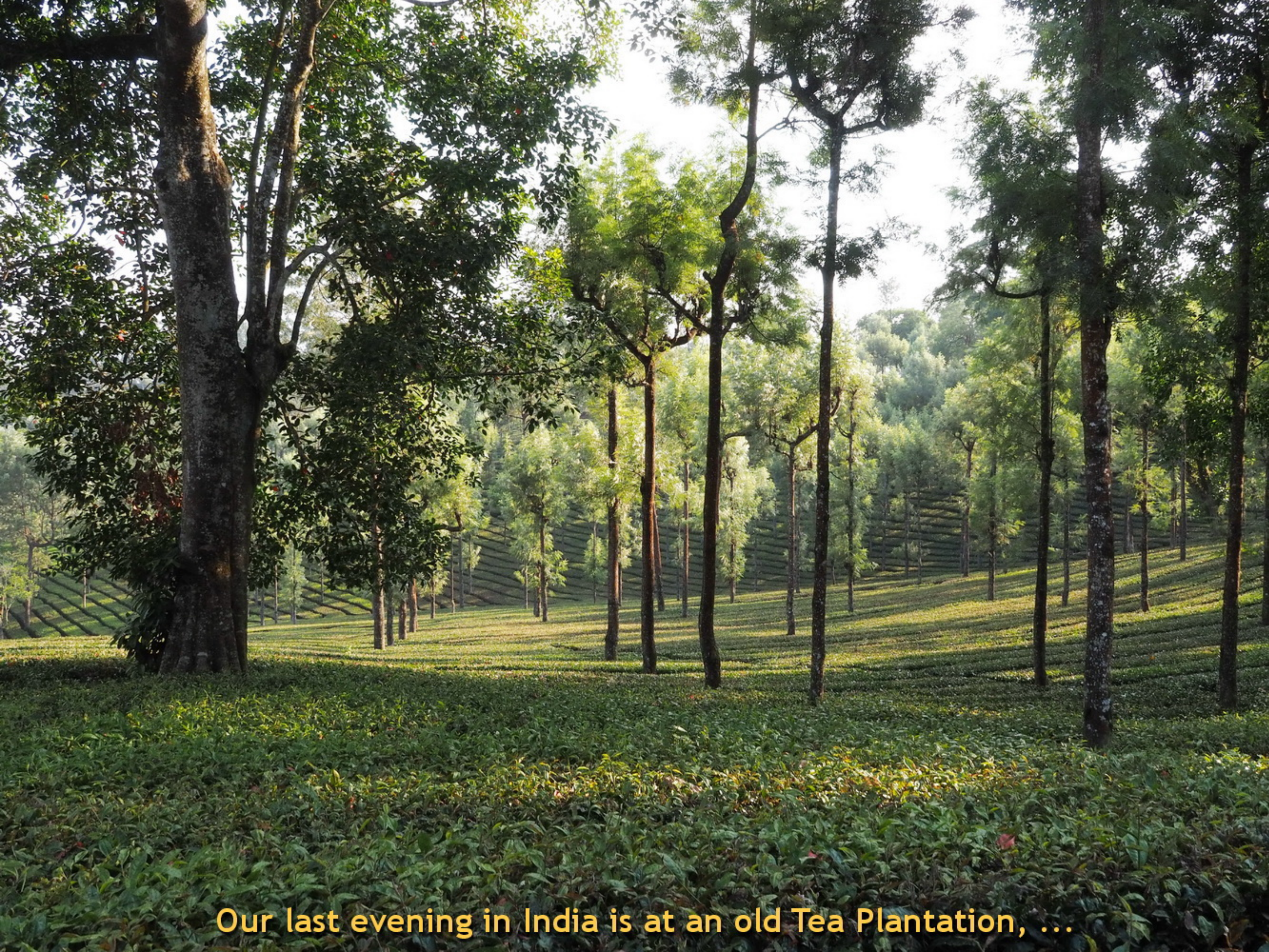
The Lion-tailed Macaque is one of the rarest and most threatened primates: just ~3,000 are alive -- and here are 5 of them!



The Lion-tailed Macaque likes to eat jackfruit, ...



... and to pose for photos.



Our last evening in India is at an old Tea Plantation, ...



... with the tea still being harvested by a crew of workers ...



... who carry their tools and supplies on their head, ...



... and appear quite happy that it's quitting time!



A tea blossom.



What's that in the tea?



A deer!



--- a Sambar Deer, the largest deer in India.



The Tea Plantation has a quaint
"faded elegance" to it, ...



... with a large, rustic dining room in the main building.



We stayed in the guest bungalow, ...



... with a spacious Common Room, ...



... and an electrified fence to keep out the elephants and sloth bears.



Our final morning in India, we go for another nature hike thru the tea, ...



... and see a Greater Flameback Woodpecker, ...



... porcupine quills ...



... (and holes porcupine had dug, looking for food), ...



... a Red-whiskered Bulbul, ...



... a Chestnut-headed Bee-Eater, ...



... and a Gaur (Indian Bison), blocking our path!



We encountered a whole herd of Gaur in the tea-field!



As the tea-pickers were not too worried by the gaur, we decided not to panic.



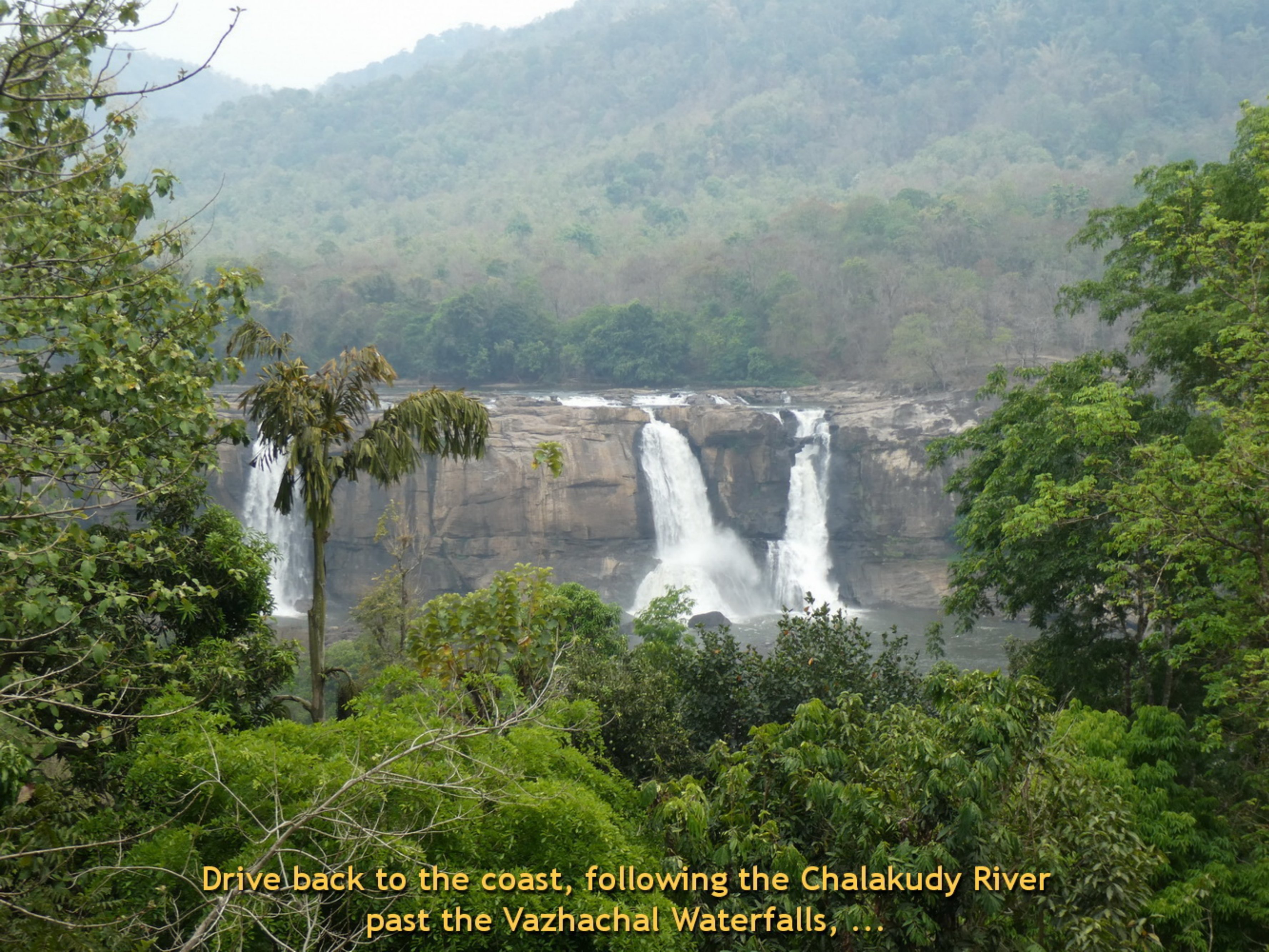
We finally get to see the Malabar Giant Squirrel, ...



... and two Dollarbirds (and not a \$2 bird!), ...



... and a rare Nigiri Langur -- the 6th of the 6 types of Indian monkeys.



Drive back to the coast, following the Chalakudy River
past the Vazhachal Waterfalls, ...



... to the Cochin (Kochi) Airport for our flight to Delhi and thence back home.



Goodbye from India, ...



... and Hello! Welcome Home! to San Jose.