

Life in the mountain solitude

1998 - 2000

After our graduation from university, we left civilisation with my then future wife. We found a cottage in a remote Slovak mountain region (near Lom nad Rimavicou willage) and stayed there for two years. The way of life we experienced was quite different from that one in the city. There was time for contemplation, mindfulness meditation, nature observation, as well as learning traditional skills from local people.

A short report continues under the next 10 pictures:



approaching the cottage



valley view



Autumn



in the snow



kitchen



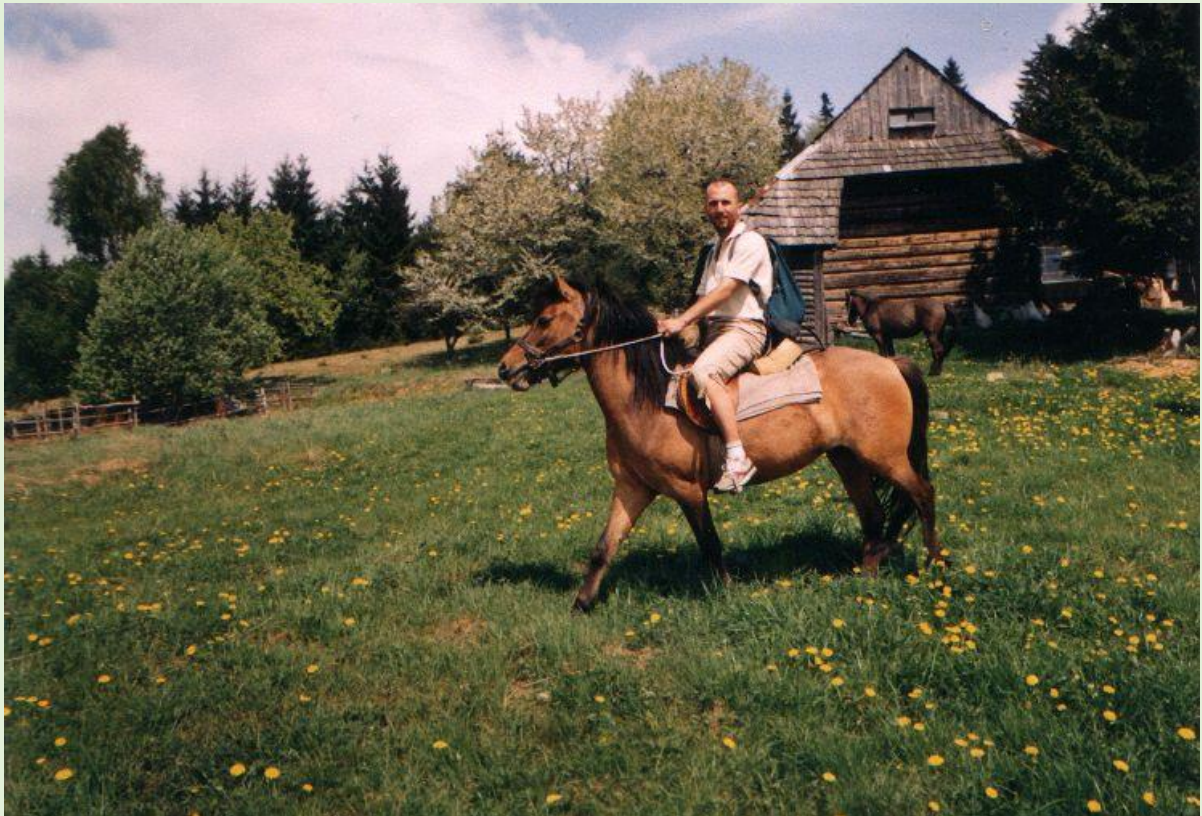
our family



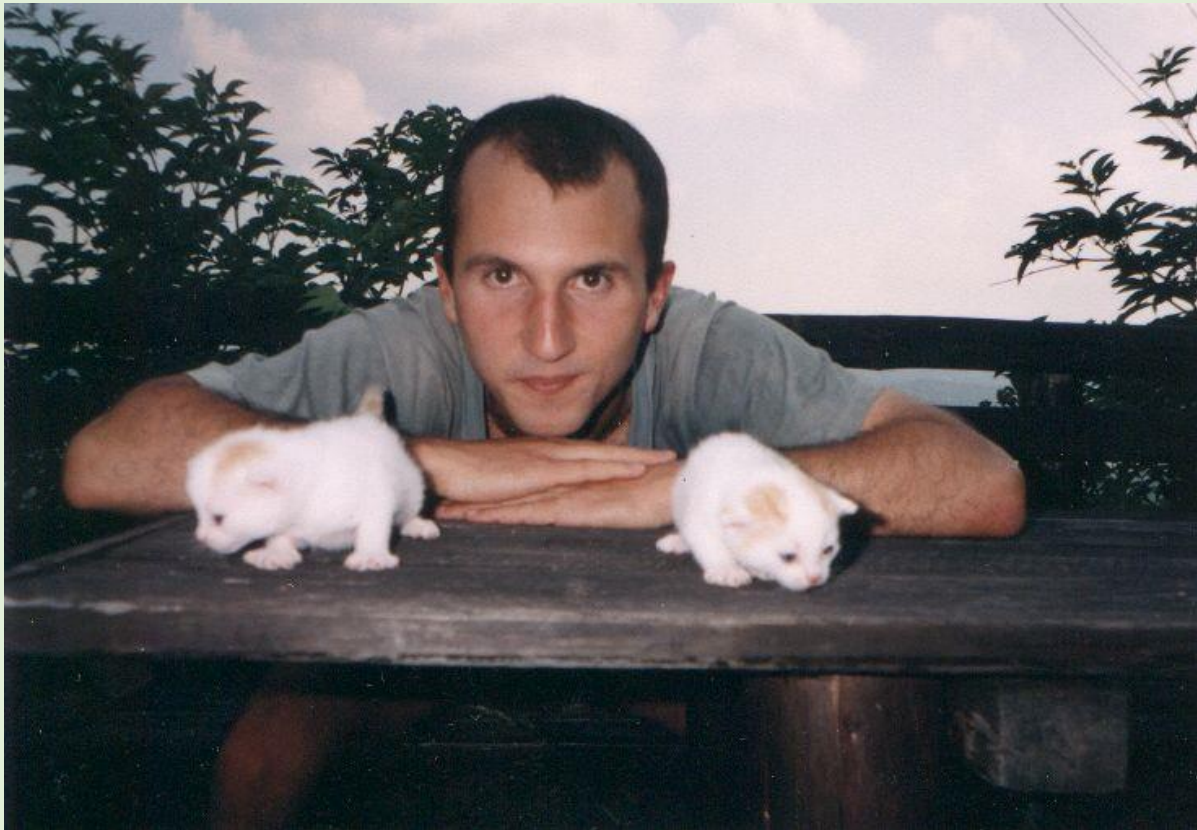
weekend breakfast



wedding presents



Spring



kittens

IN THE MOUNTAIN SOLITUDE

1998 - 2000

Short report

Already for two years we live in our (borrowed) small cottage. Our dream was fulfilled - after finishing our studies we wanted to try living in nature solitude.

We live in a big room joined with the kitchen in 60 years old traditional wooden house. The nearest neighbour is about 0.8 km. Our bus stop is 3 km. We heat with wood in the traditional brick oven. Quite a work to prepare it, the last winter we got only wood that was not dried yet so it wasn't very pleasant.

Our water comes from a spring near the cottage. Dry lavatory is also outside. Instead of toilet paper I prefer moss and snow. I've tried some traditional methods like using ash water for washing my cloth, teeth and hairs which became smart afterwards.

From the beginning we lived very ecologically. We used electricity only for light. Gradually as we started to work more seriously we accepted higher comfort with electrical heater, mobile phone, cooker, and laptop. It's about finding an equilibrium. Everybody should find his or her

“ecological quota” for living. Using certain comfort means certain pollution and that is meaningful if products of one’s work are really positive for society and the Earth.

Natalia is teaching English in the nearest basic school (6 km). Regarding myself, at the beginning I’ve earned for living with lectures on basic work with PC but now I can live only thanks to my rented flat that I’ve inherited.

One year ago we had our wedding! (after 5.5 years of being together) At first we planned it as an unofficial event but at last some 80 people gathered for the celebration. One group of friends brought us 3 small goats. Unfortunately, we did not want to breed them because our life style is different (for now).

We use to watch sun rise and sun set. Sometimes we have a see around us - when clouds are flying beneath us due to inversion. It’s very interesting to observe the fluent changes in the nature all the year along. How an old grass is slowly replaced by a new one, how cabs of dogs and cats are growing, where butterflies disappear for the winter, etc.

When I meet countryside people, I use every opportunity to learn about traditional agriculture, cutting, storing and working with wood, building traditional houses, ovens, wells, as well as breeding animals.

I use to go to the shop once in a few weeks and I must walk up to the cottage with some 25 kg backpack full of mostly durable food.

Sometimes we get storms. Summer storms are more dangerous than winter storms because of a threat of direct hit by lightning. During the last one a barn was burnt a few km from us. Till the night we observed smoke and light from it. And we were lucky that our house was omitted because it is standing on more exposing site and has no lightning rod.

For the winter we gathered plenty of apples from surrounding abandon gardens. In fact, we stole them from bears. Sometimes we grain wheat and bake our own bread. We go for milk to our neighbours and then we can also prepare a sort of natural cheese. In the last season we experimented with a small garden. We got some onions, radishes, and potatoes. Just until the neighbour cows got in and made complete disorder. Birds are coming: around our cottage there are colourful jays and magpies. And during long winter times we got more friendly with stars and the Moon.

Imagine how the body cleaning looks like in the winter: As you are naked you take only a warm coat on and run with a pile of hot water outside. Then it looks like in an accelerated film. When you are back you feel warm and lucky. (Now I am less lucky because I already use a shower at the basic school.)

My friend founded a club for breeding hucul horses that originally lived in this European region. To preserve their genotype and for club members who can ride them or go with a big herd through pastureland. Slowly I am learning how to ride them. Even without any equipment, just a savage style. When we were galloping for the first time quite fast, suddenly the horse set back and let me make a flip into the air with falling in front of her. Fortunately, into a soft snow. For two times horses stood on my foot, it was so painful that I am very careful since then. The same friend has also started a small tourist information centre where I help him and have an access to PC and hopefully to internet soon. Lom nad Rimavicou is a small village only with some 300

inhabitants. But the value of natural surroundings is really extra standing. The village has the highest altitude from all regular villages in Slovakia – slightly over 1000 metres over the sea level.

Life without many negative advertisements, TV programmes, mass of people from which many are stressed and exhausted, helps us with our spiritual development. Instead of that we have silence, bird songs, thunderstorms, and jingling bells of cows.

I believe that one can choose life with both good job and good place for living. After enjoying the experience of living in nature it wouldn't be a win to go back to the city. It seems suitable for us to live like this, perhaps a bit less remote from civilization. That's why I am trying to build my profession here. Next year we should change from solitude to the village and if I am successful with my job here we would build our wooden house standing in semi-solitude.