

# Collaboration

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Richard Pearson on the Mother's work with flowers •  
Larry Seidlitz on the Divine Grace • Martha Orton on Spiritual Knowledge •  
Source Material • Current Affairs • AV Almanac • Poetry • Apropos



## About the cover

This untitled sketch by Ashram artist Dhanavanti seems to represent the Mother enfolded within Nature, the immanent Divine within physical nature. From her book, *Tapasyâ: Hymns in colour, available at SABDA* (used with permission).

## The authors and poets

The late **Minnie N. Canteenwalla**, was encouraged to write poetry by Sri Aurobindo during a visit to the Ashram at age 18 in 1930 or 1931. Her book *Deep Footprints* was published in 1983.

The late **Georgette Coty** was a member of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Her book *Sing my Soul*, of poetry and essays, was published in 2001.

**Rod Hemsell** (rodhemsell@yahoo.com) is a member of Auroville and has for many years hosted Savitri Immersion Workshops at the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center in Crestone, Colorado.

**Dave Hutchinson** is one of the organizers for the upcoming Fundamentalism and the Future conference and has been an organizer for several AUM conferences (dbhutchinson@ucdavis.edu).

**Shyam Kumari** (shyamkumari@auromail.net) is a sadhika of the Ashram, an author, and president of Sri Aravinda Vidyalaya, a Sanskrit institute. Her poems have appeared in *Mother India*.

**Martha Orton** (martha.orton@gmail.com) is the author of *The Quest for Knowledge and Mastery*, a therapist, and an online course facilitator for Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research.

**Richard Pearson**, a member of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram since childhood, is an expert on flowers and plants, and a contributor to *Flowers and Their Messages* (richard.kailas@gmail.com).

**Larry Seidlitz** (lseidlitz@gmail.com) facilitates online courses for Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research in Pondicherry, and is editor of *Collaboration*.

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The late **Thémis**, a sadhika of the Ashram, was best known for her translation of Satprem's *Sri Aurobindo or the Adventure of Consciousness*. Her book *Poems* was published in 1952/1994.

**Prabhjot Uppal**, a physician and journalist, has authored three books: *Doctors Are People Too*, *White Coat Tales*, and *The Little Bird Who Found Herself* (prabhjot\_uppal@hotmail.com).

**Mauna van der Vlugt** (mauna@auroville.org.in) is a Aurovilian with various responsibilities such as Auroville International coordination, Press Liaison, and Auroville Webmaster.

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## From the office of Collaboration

In this issue, our three main articles pertain to three very different topics. In Chronicles, we present Richard Pearson's reminiscences about his experiences in the Ashram and about the Mother regarding flowers. Richard is well-known due to his travels to the U.S. and Europe, and his generous efforts making many foreign visitors to the Ashram feel at home. One of the most striking things about him is his deep love and connection with the nature. In this account, he focuses on the Mother's deep relation with nature and with flowers in particular, and how this relation developed over time.

In the first of our two Essays, I (Larry Seidlitz) examine the nature and place of the Divine Grace in the Integral Yoga. This article is in a sense a companion to the article I wrote for last issue, in which I focused on practices in the Integral Yoga. It was evident to me that practices and personal effort were incomplete in this yoga without the action of the Grace, and that this subject required a separate treatment. When I began examining Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's writings pertaining to the Grace, it became increasingly clear how central Grace is in this Yoga, and moreover, how revealing this issue is about the central processes at work in sadhana. The essay focuses on important excerpts from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother that reveal its nature and action.

The second Essay is by Martha Orton and it examines the nature of spiritual knowledge. This article is based largely on selected parts of Martha's book, *The Quest for Knowledge and Mastery*. This main thesis of this book is that the essential underlying motive of all human behavior is the quest for knowledge and mastery. But this motive works at first subconsciously, without awareness of the deeper nature or source of knowledge and mastery. As the human being evolves through partial and superficial forms which cannot bring lasting fulfillment, eventually he turns to the search for spiritual knowledge and mastery, two things which go always together. This article, the first part of two, examines the nature of this spiritual knowledge and its relation to mental knowledge and other aspects of our nature.

Our Source Material section focuses on selections from Sri Aurobindo's writings and from the Mother's talks on the supramental consciousness and its manifestation.

In our opening section, Current Affairs, we have an article on the upcoming conference "Fundamentalism and the Future." Whereas it appears that this issue of Collaboration may not make it into your mailbox before the conference, there is already an extensive set of literature on the topic available online (see the article for details), and it is likely more will be forthcoming. As evident from the article, this conference is not simply about the response to Peter's Heehs book, *The Lives of Sri Aurobindo*, but examines the issue of fundamentalism in depth in various contexts, with a focus on the future. Also in this section, there is a write up about the three Savitri Immersion Workshops held at the Sri Aurobindo Learning Center in Crestone, CO this summer, a center which incidentally is thriving despite Seyril Schochen's passing in December 2006. In the section Briefs, there is a report about AUM 2009, news about several new and established centers, and information about the new publication of Aurovilian Jocelyn's book, *The Antithesis of Yoga*.

In AV almanac, we have two complementary articles about a new documentary film on Auroville by a professional team that focuses on the deeper spiritual aspects of the community. There is also an article on developments at the New Creation Bilingual School, now renamed Aikiyam School, including its accreditation. An important part of this story is the Aikiyam School's support group, which has been important in leading the school to a higher level.

In the Poetry room, in addition to Sri Aurobindo's poems, we feature several of the distinguished women poets of the Integral Yoga. This issue also includes three wonderful sketches by Dhanavanti, an Ashram artist, many flower photos, and Apropos quotes.

### The artists and photographers

*Dhanavanti's sketches are from her book, Tapasyâ: Hymns in colour, published by Auroville Press in 2008 (available at SABDA).*

*Martin Littlewood is a member of Auroville International UK. He is a supporter of Aikiyam School and works with its support group.*

*Giorgio Molinari is one of Auroville's main photographers and a supporter of Aikiyam School.*

*Flower photos are from the book The Spiritual Significance of Flowers, by the Mother, published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 2000.*

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**Submissions:** Collaboration welcomes writing, photos, and artwork relevant to the Integral Yoga and spirituality. Submit material by email to: editor@collaboration.org; or by post to Collaboration, 2715 W. Kettleman Lane, Suite 203-174, Lodi, CA 95242 USA. Collaboration cannot be held responsible for loss or damage of unsolicited material. Letters to the editor may be published unless you indicate otherwise. Letters and articles may be edited for style and space considerations.

**About SAA:** The Sri Aurobindo Association distributes information about Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, and Auroville and supports various projects related to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Auroville, and Integral Yoga activities in America. Current officers: Theresa Boschert, coordinator; Kalpana Patel, treasurer; Chandresh Patel, secretary. Members: Lynda Lester, Vishnu Eschner, and John-Robert Cornell.

**Contributions:** Donations for the work of the SAA, Auroville, and the Sri Aurobindo Ashram may be sent to SAA. Donations are tax exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code.