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Collaboration

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U.S. BICENTENNIAL ISSUE

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In 1776 the United States of America was born with these words: "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal and are endowed by their creator with these inalienable rights—Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." During the first century of its existence, this young country struggled on the physical plane to grow, to develop its material resources, to explore and tame the huge unknown land open to it. As it entered its second century, the United States, then in its adolescence, one might say, began to develop its own identity on an emotional-vital plane. The past fifty years have seen the first buds of mental and intellectual development and the emergence of the United States as the most powerful nation in the world.

We devote this issue of *Collaboration* to the United States bicentennial, because we feel that this 200th birthday must also include a reexamination of the principles and ideals on which this vast nation was founded. We feel that the United States stands on the threshold of a new period of growth and development which, in the next 200 years, can carry it forward to a fuller realization and expression of the Divine Truth which seeks expression in every nation. In our last issue we said, "If humanity is to move forward to a new consciousness, the old must be left behind." On its bicentennial the United States is not only celebrat-

ing its past, but it must step forward towards a future that will truly fulfill the glowing promise and ideals of the Declaration of Independence, not only for the United States itself but for the Divine's purpose in the world.

The first piece below by Sri Aurobindo was written at the request of a disciple in New York City, in 1949, and is one of the last things written by Sri Aurobindo. The extracts from *The Human Cycle* are not on the United States but form a background relative to Sri Aurobindo's concepts of culture against which the subsequent extracts may be read and as a light with which one may read the current stage of United States culture. We should point that *The Human Cycle* was first published serially in *The Arya* from 1916 to 1918 under the title *The Psychology of Social Development*, and was first published in book form under its present title in 1950 without revision. *The Ideal of Human Unity*, from which we have taken several passages relating to the United States, was first published in *The Arya* from 1915 to 1918. A revised edition was issued in 1950.

We are grateful to Satprem for providing two significant passages from *The Mother's Log*, the largely unpublished record of his conversations with the Mother, and for permission to quote from a letter he wrote to us some years ago.

A MESSAGE TO AMERICA

Sri Aurobindo

I have been asked to send on this occasion of the fifteenth of August [1949] a message to the West, but what I have to say might be delivered equally as a message to the East. It has been customary to dwell on the division and difference between these two sections of the human family and even oppose them to each other; but for myself I would rather be disposed to dwell on oneness and unity than on division and difference. East and West have the same human nature, a common human destiny, the same aspiration after a greater perfection, the same seeking after something higher than itself, something towards which inwardly and even outwardly we move. There has been a tendency in some minds to dwell on the spirituality or mysticism of the East and the materialism of the West; but the West has had no less than the East its spiritual seekings and, though not in such profusion, its saints and sages and mystics, the East has had its materialis-

tic tendencies, its material splendours, its similar or identical dealings with life and Matter and the world in which we live. East and West have always met and mixed more or less closely, they have powerfully influenced each other and at the present day are under an increasing compulsion of Nature and Fate to do so more than ever before.

There is a common hope, a common destiny, both spiritual and material, for which both are needed as co-workers. It is no longer towards division and difference that we should turn our minds, but on unity, union, even oneness necessary for the pursuit and realisation of a common ideal, the destined goal, the fulfilment towards which Nature in her beginning obscurely set out and must in an increasing light of knowledge replacing her first ignorance constantly persevere.

But what shall be that ideal and that goal? That de-

pends on our conception of the realities of life and the supreme Reality.

Here we have to take into account that there has been, not any absolute difference but an increasing divergence between the tendencies of the East and the West. The highest truth is truth of the Spirit; a Spirit supreme above the world and yet immanent in the world and in all that exists, sustaining and leading all towards whatever is the aim and goal and the fulfilment of Nature since her obscure inconscient beginnings through the growth of consciousness is the one aspect of existence which gives a clue to the secret of our being and a meaning to the world. The East has always and increasingly put the highest emphasis on the supreme truth of the Spirit; it has, even in its extreme philosophies, put the world away as an illusion and regarded the Spirit as the sole reality. The West has concentrated more and more increasingly on the world, on the dealings of mind and life with our material existence, on our mastery over it, on the perfection of mind and life and some fulfilment of the human being here: latterly this has gone so far as the denial of the Spirit and even the enthronement of Matter as the sole reality. Spiritual perfection as the sole ideal on one side, on the other, the perfectibility of the race, the perfect society, a perfect development of the human mind and life and man's material existence have become the largest dream of the future. Yet both are truths and can be regarded as part of the intention of the Spirit in world-nature; they are not incompatible with each other: rather their divergence has to be healed and both have to be included and reconciled in our view of the future.

The Science of the West has discovered evolution as the secret of life and its process in this material world; but it has laid more stress on the growth of form and species than on the growth of consciousness: even, consciousness has been regarded as an incident and not the whole secret of the meaning of the evolution. An evolution has been admitted by certain minds in the East, certain philosophies and Scriptures, but there its sense has been the growth of the soul through developing of successive forms and many lives of the individual to its own highest reality. For if there is a conscious being in the form, that being can hardly be

a temporary phenomenon of consciousness; it must be a soul fulfilling itself and this fulfilment can only take place if there is a return of the soul to earth in many successive lives, in many successive bodies.

The process of evolution has been the development from and in inconscient Matter of a subconscient and then a conscious Life, a conscious mind first in animal life and then fully in conscious and thinking man, the highest present achievement of evolutionary Nature. The achievement of mental being is at present her highest and tends to be regarded as her final work; but it is possible to conceive a still further step of the evolution: Nature may have in view beyond the imperfect mind of man a consciousness that passes out of the mind's ignorance and possesses truth as its inherent right and nature. There is a truth-consciousness as it is called in the Veda, a supermind, as I have termed it, possessing Knowledge, not having to seek after it and constantly miss it. In one of the Upanishads a being of knowledge is stated to be the next step above the mental being; into that the soul has to rise and through it to attain the perfect bliss of spiritual existence. If that could be achieved as the next evolutionary step of Nature here, then she would be fulfilled and we could conceive of the perfection of life even here, its attainment of a full spiritual living even in this body or it may be in a perfected body. We could even speak of a divine life on earth; our human dream of perfectibility would be accomplished and at the same time the aspiration to a heaven on earth common to several religions and spiritual seers and thinkers.

The ascent of the human soul to the supreme Spirit is that soul's highest aim and necessity, for that is the supreme reality; but there can be too the descent of the Spirit and its powers into the world and that would justify the existence of the material world also, give a meaning, a divine purpose to the creation and solve its riddle. East and West could be reconciled in the pursuit of the highest and largest ideal, Spirit embrace Matter and Matter find its own true reality and the hidden Reality in all things in the Spirit. [From *Messages of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother*, 2nd series, pp. 19-23.]

AMERICA AND YOGA

Three Unpublished Letters of Sri Aurobindo

[Following are drafts of three letters found in a notebook kept by Sri Aurobindo in 1926. Revised versions of the letters were apparently sent. We are grateful to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives and Research Library for supplying the texts. The letters will appear in the August 1976 issue of the *Bulletin of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*.]

1

Dear Mr. and Mrs. X,

I received a little while ago your Christmas card and greetings and it reminded me of a letter written long

ago which I had hoped personally to answer, but could never do it, the time not having come. I have ever since I came to Pondicherry been obliged to withdraw more and more first from public life and then from all outer activities and absorb myself in a long and arduous inner endeavour. I had to discontinue the "Arya" for this purpose and for a long time I wrote nothing, not even any letters. Now although the needed intensity of the inner concentration is not over, it is becoming more possible for me to turn my face towards action on the physical plane. I take the opportunity [of] your card to do what I then failed

to do, even after so long a lapse of time.

I understand from your letter that there are around you a number of seekers after the spiritual life who have received some help from my works. I should be glad to hear more of this group and of what they and you are now doing. Perhaps it would now be possible to open a regular correspondence; for, even when I am not able to write myself, my brother and one or two others who are practicing Yoga here with me, often now write under my instructions or dictation the necessary answer. If you feel that such a correspondence would be of help to you...[sentence left incomplete].

In a letter of the year 1924 you asked whether I had prepared any more intimate instructions on Yoga (other than my published works) and asked to be allowed to share them with those I am guiding in Pondicherry. *The Yoga and Its Objects* and *Synthesis of Yoga*, although founded on my personal knowledge and experience were not intended for that purpose, but merely meant to indicate the general lines on which Yoga might proceed, the main principles, the broad ways of spiritual progress. I have not written or prepared anything new of the kind. All intimate guidance in so inner and delicate a thing as the spiritual life must be personal, suited to the recipient and the instruction given can only be effective if it is the channel for a spiritual contact and a guiding or helpful influence. In that way if you need my help I shall be glad to give it. That indeed is one of the objects which the correspondence I propose could serve.

2

I have received the copy of the East-West Magazine and the gift-book. It is not at all surprising that Swami X should have been so successful in America. His propaganda is admirably suited to the practical mentality of a western and especially of an American public and his statement of ideas on subjects like Karma, to its present capacity of understanding these subjects. I cannot gather from the magazine what is the nature of the inner practice or discipline which he calls Yogoda. The name Satsanga is that of a religious sect with a special kind of Yoga of devotion which is now achieving a considerable success in Bengal, but the practice here and its style and manner here seem to be different. It would have little success in India where the standards of spiritual life are of a subtler kind. Here the difficulty we experience is due rather to the inability to go beyond ancient ideas and forms. Plenty of money can be had in India for orthodox religious purposes and, also, although not on the American scale, for Asramas or other spiritual institutions which take the ascetic form or repeat established and well understood formulas. But the mind of the people is not as yet sufficiently open or receptive to have even a vague idea of what I am doing here with an entire departure from the old forms and an absence of the accustomed paraphernalia and a breaking of old barriers and habits. That is the one great advantage of

America, a great eagerness and openness of mind to new things; whether it will be sufficient to open it eventually also to the deep and true things is the experiment we have to make. Nothing can be said very definitely about the spiritual future of America. A great possibility is opening to it, but it depends on the Americans themselves whether they will receive and realise it. India and America stand at the two poles that have to meet and become one, the spiritual and the material life; one has shown a pre-eminent capacity of realisation in the spiritual, the other in the material world. America must be able to receive freely the riches of the spirit from India and must be able to give freely for the material organisation of a higher life from her own capacity and achievement and riches. That is at present only a possibility; let us see whether we can make it an achieved and perfect symbol.

3

I have taken a long time to consider the answer [to] your letter or rather to allow the answer to ripen and take form. It is not easy to reply to the request implied in what you have written; for the distance between India and America is great and, even if it were not so, guidance in yoga by correspondence and without personal contact is a very hampered and not usually in my experience a satisfactory method. Ideas can be exchanged on paper, but spiritual influence, a psychic interchange, a vigilant control—and all this is implied in this kind of guidance—are not so easily communicated. However, I will try to comply with your request as best I can under the circumstances.

First, let me say, that the absorption of ideas and the remoulding of the mental aims and attitude is one thing and the remoulding of the inner life and consciousness and eventually also of the outer life, which is the aim of Yoga, is quite another. The first can be done to some extent by the method of dissemination you indicate. But as you rightly see, instructions in Yoga cannot be fruitfully given on the same lines. That can only be given successfully to a few, to each separately as an intimately personal thing which he must assimilate and make living and true in himself according to his own capacity and nature. That is why I am led to believe that the work of Swami X is not only elementary but can hardly be the true thing—Yoga cannot be taught in schools and classes. It has to be received personally, it has to be lived, the seeker, *sadhaka*, has to change by a difficult aspiration and endeavour his whole consciousness and nature, his mind, heart, life, every principle of his being and all their movements into a greater Truth than anything the normal life of man can imagine. Those who can do this are not yet many, but some are to be found everywhere, and I see no reason why those in America should be condemned to only an elementary "instruction." The true Truth, the great Path has to be opened to them; how far they will go on it depends on their own personal capacity and the help they receive.

From The Human Cycle

In Europe and in modern times this has taken the form of a clear and potent physical Science: it has proceeded by the discovery of the laws of the physical universe and the economic and sociological conditions of human life as determined by the physical being of man, his environment, his evolutionary history, his physical and vital, his individual and collective need. But after a time it must become apparent that the knowledge of the physical world is not the whole of knowledge; it must appear that man is a mental as well as a physical and vital being and even much more essentially mental than physical or vital. Even though his psychology is strongly affected and limited by his physical being and environment, it is not at its roots determined by them, but constantly reacts, subtly determines their action, effects even their new-shaping by the force of his psychological demand on life. His economic state and social institutions are themselves governed by his psychological demand on the possibilities, circumstances, tendencies created by the relation between the mind and soul of humanity and its life and body. Therefore to find the truth of things and the law of his being in relation to that truth he must go deeper and fathom the subjective secret of himself and things as well as their objective forms and surroundings. [pp. 23-4]

The art, music, and literature of the world, always a sure index of the vital tendencies of the age, have also undergone a profound revolution in the direction of an ever-deepening subjectivism. The great objective art and literature of the past no longer commands the mind of the new age. The first tendency was, as in thought so in literature, an increasing psychological vitalism which sought to represent penetratingly the most subjective psychological impulses and tendencies of man as they started to the surface in his emotional, aesthetic and vitalistic cravings and activities. Composed with great skill and subtlety but without any real insight into the law of man's being, these creations seldom get behind the reverse side of our surface emotions, sensations and actions which they minutely analysed in their details but without any wide or profound light of knowledge; they were perhaps more immediately interesting but ordinarily inferior as art to the old literature which at least seized firmly and with a large and powerful mastery on its province. Often they described the malady of Life rather than its health and power, or the riot and revolt of its cravings, vehement and therefore impotent and unsatisfied, rather than its dynamics of self-expression and self-possession. But to this movement which reached its highest creative power in Russia, there succeeded a turn towards a more truly psychological art, music and literature, mental, intuitional, psychic rather than vitalistic, departing in fact from a superficial vitalism

as much as its predecessors departed from the objective mind of the past. This new movement largely aimed like the new philosophic Intuitionism at a real rending of the veil, the seizure by the human mind of that which does not overtly express itself, the touch and penetration into the hidden soul of things.... It initiated a decisive departure of the human mind from its old moorings and pointed the direction in which it is being piloted on a momentous voyage of discovery, the discovery of a new world within which must eventually bring about the creation of a new world without in life and society. Art and literature seem definitely to have taken a turn towards a subjective search into what may be called the hidden side of things and away from the rational and objective canon or nature. [pp.25-6]

The essential barbarism of all this is its pursuit of vital success, satisfaction, productiveness, accumulation, possession, enjoyment, comfort, convenience for their own sake. The vital part of the being is an element in the integral human existence as much as the physical part; it has its place but must not exceed its place. A full and well-appointed life is desirable for man living in society, but on condition that it is also a true and beautiful life. Neither the life nor the body exist for their own sake, but as a vehicle and instrument of a good higher than their own. They must be subordinated to the superior needs of the mental being, chastened and purified by a greater law of truth, good and beauty before they can take their proper place in the integrality of human perfection. Therefore in a commercial age with its ideal, vulgar and barbarous, of success, vitalistic satisfaction, productiveness and possession, the soul of man may linger a while for certain gains and experiences, but cannot permanently rest. [p. 73]

From The Ideal of Human Unity

We see in Europe and America that the dominant Brahmin [spiritual and intellectual class] and the dominant Kshatriya [governing and military class] have been either abolished or are on the point of subsidence into equality with the general mass. Two rigidly separate classes alone remain, the dominant propertied class and the labourer, and all the most significant movements of the day have for their purpose the abolition of this last superiority. In this persistent tendency, Europe has obeyed one great law of Nature's progressive march, her trend towards a final equality. Absolute equality is surely neither intended nor possible, just as absolute uniformity is both impossible and utterly undesirable; but a fundamental equality which will render the play of true superiority and difference inoffensive, is essential to any conceivable perfectibility of the human race. [pp. 269-70]

The United States are the example of such an aggregate [a heterogeneous composite empire], although from the accident of their rule by a periodically elected President and not a hereditary monarch we do not associate the type with the idea of an empire at all. Still if the imperial aggregate is to be changed from a political to a psychological unity, it would seem that it must be done, by reproducing *mutatis mutandis* something of the system of the United States, a system in which each element could preserve sufficient local State independence and separate power of legislative and executive action and yet be part of an inseparable greater aggregate. [pp. 293-4]

Nevertheless, with whatever imperfections, the idea of the free democratic nation had practically triumphed in all America and Europe. [p. 324]

The disinterestedness that led a majority in America to decree the liberation of the Philippines and restrained the desire to take advantage of the troubles in Mexico is not possible to the mentality of the Old World, and it is doubtful how long it can stand even in America against the rising tide of imperialistic sentiment. [p. 328]

The traditional policy of the United States, its pacifism, its anti-militarism, its aversion to entanglement in European complications or any close touch with the politics of Europe, its jealousy of interference by the European Powers in American affairs in spite of their possession of colonies and interests in the Western hemisphere, are largely due to the instinct that this separateness is the sole security for the maintenance of its institutions and the peculiar type of its national life. Once militarized, once cast into the vortex of old-world politics, as it at times threatens to be, nothing could long protect the States from the necessity of large changes in the direction of centralisation and the weakening of the federal principle.

[Footnote:] The Roosevelt policy and the difficulties it encountered illustrate vividly the power of these two conflicting forces in the United States; and the trend towards the strengthening of the federal case, however slow, is unmistakable. [pp. 418-9]

The republican tendency is indeed Western in its origin, stronger as we go more and more to the West, and has been historically powerful chiefly in Western Europe and dominant in the new societies of America. [p. 445]

But against this [monarchical element] stands the fixed republican sentiment of the whole of America and the increasing spread of the republican form. [p. 447]

For the same reason the whole of America, in spite of its powerfully independent political and economic

being, has tended to be culturally a province of Europe, the south and centre by their dependence on Spanish, and the north by its dependence on the English language. The life of the United States alone tends and strives to become a great and separate cultural existence, but its success is not commensurate with its power. Culturally, it is still to a great extent a province of England. Neither its literature, in spite of two or three great names, nor its art nor its thought, nor anything else on the higher levels of the mind, has been able to arrive at a vigorous maturity independent in its soul-type. And this because its instrument of self-expression, the language which the national mind ought to shape and be in turn shaped by it, was formed and must continue to be formed by another country with a different mentality and must there find its centre and its law of development. [pp. 493-4]

America, more politically idealistic than Europe, entered the war [World War I] with a cry for a league of free nations. [p. 503]

It is here that the American idea of the League of Free Nations intervened and found a justification in principle.

Unfortunately, it was always difficult to know what exactly this idea would mean in practice. The utterances of its original spokesman, President Wilson, were marked by a magnificent nebulous idealism full of inspiring ideas and phrases, but not attended by a clear and specific application. For the idea behind the head of the President we must look for light to the past history and the traditional temperament of the American people. The United States were always pacific and non-imperialistic in sentiment and principle, yet with an undertone of nationalistic susceptibility which threatened recently to take an imperialistic turn and led the nation to make two or three wars ending in conquests whose results it had then to reconcile with its non-imperialistic pacifism. It annexed Mexican Texas by war and then turned it into a constituent State of the union, swamping it at the same time with American colonists. It conquered Cuba from Spain and the Philippines first from Spain and then from the insurgent Filipinos and, not being able to swamp them with colonists, gave Cuba independence under the American influence and promised the Filipinos a complete independence [granted in 1946]. American idealism was always governed by a shrewd sense of American interests, and highest among these interests is reckoned by preservation of the American political idea and its constitution, to which all imperialism, foreign or American, has to be regarded as a mortal peril. [pp. 507-8]

The larger national aggregates have grown up by a simple act of federation or union, though this has

sometimes had to be preceded by a common struggle for liberty or a union in war against a common enemy; so have grown into one the United States, Italy, Germany. [p. 549]

In America the attachment to individualism and the capitalistic system of society and a strong antagonism not only to Communism but to even a moderate Socialism remains complete and one can foresee little possibility of any abatement in its intensity. [p. 569]

THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE NEW AGE

The Mother

Question: What is the role of the United States with regard to the building of the new world?

The Mother: The work of the U.S.A. is to provide the financial help needed to prepare the earth for the new creation.

Question: What must the people of the United States do in order to begin to be able to fulfill this role?

The Mother: Become aware of those, individuals or organisations, capable of bringing about this transformation and give them the necessary money. [Dated 9 June 1968, in *Mother India*, September 1968.]

Strangely enough (but perhaps not so strange) the first pages of this book [*On the Way to Superhumanhood*, the preface to which was published in the *Ulster County Townsman* of Woodstock, New York in March 1971] are published in the United States even before France, and in fact, some time ago, while I was reading this book to the Mother, she told me that the people of Europe were too old, too much bent on calculating every step they take and the consequences, while the American people were capable of enthusiasm and aspiration and of plunging into the Future. And she said that she expected much of this book for starting a new movement there. [Personal letter from Satprem, dated 28 March 1971]

AMERICA COMES TO SRI AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo's unique spiritual vision has spread slowly in the United States in comparison to other spiritual movements, especially the dramatic influx of the traditional Yogas and spiritual disciplines in the past ten years. First of all, at the time Sri Aurobindo first began presenting his ideas in written form (his major works were written and published serially in the philosophical monthly *Arya* between 1914 and 1920 and it was not until some years later that they became available in book form), only a small group of intellectuals and seekers came to know of him. Second, Sri Aurobindo was always opposed to propaganda for his Yoga, as is evident from the letters printed elsewhere in this issue. He wanted only people truly and deeply called to the spiritual life, for it was such people, he said, who could help achieve the new thing that is his Integral Yoga. Other people, he said, attracted by propaganda or publicity, who came to it merely from

From *Evening Talks*

The Americans have got the knack of getting into the rhythm which brings them money. The French method, for instance, does not succeed because they follow out small narrow paths, while the Americans get into movement on a large scale and money circulates and as it circulates it accumulates and increases life wherever it flows. [As recorded by A.B. Purani; Vol. II, p. 117]

[The Mother] said that the U.S.A. and India were the countries chosen for the great work of leading the world to its transformation. The U.S.A. with its great material strength and India with its spiritual force. [From an unpublished article by Udar Pinto, dated January 1976.]

From *The Mother's Log*

July 14, 1962: In America there is a little something which is doing this [The Mother imitates a fledgling, poking its beak outside the nest to peer all around]. It is almost chirping, aroused, wanting to find out, but coated with a crust hard as the carapace of an auto. Hammer blows are needed to break through—but beneath, there is something wanting to know. It knows nothing, is completely ignorant, but oh! it wants to find out—and this is what can be touched. Perhaps they will be the first to stir.

January 27, 1971: America: I have the impression that the center of transformation will be there. European countries are old.

a mental call or vital curiosity would be working, it at all, only on the surface of their consciousness, where nothing would be changed as Sri Aurobindo wanted it to be changed, and consequently would "spoil the work." Still there has been a steady interest in both Sri Aurobindo's philosophy and Yoga, which has shown a marked increase since 1972. His work was received more readily in Europe (in its philosophical form) than in America, partly because there was, in the very earliest days, a French edition of the *Arya*, and Pondicherry, where Sri Aurobindo lived, was a French possession.

Tracing early American contact with Sri Aurobindo has been particularly difficult, probably because of the sparseness of the contact. The earliest exchange we have been able to uncover is that between the American couple and Sri Aurobindo in the letters published

in this issue. They seem not to have gone to Pondicherry, however.

The first Americans to go to Sri Aurobindo's Ashram were Vaun and Janet MacPheeters. They were already in the Ashram in 1927 when K.D. Sethna first arrived there. Mrs. MacPheeters was given the name Shantimayi by Sri Aurobindo. Mr. MacPheeters eventually left the Ashram to tour India, but Janet remained. She was one of a group of about 20 Ashramites (which included two other Westerners, Pavitra from France and Dorothy Hodgson from England) who used to sit with the Mother every evening in the Prosperity room before soup distribution. Mr. Sethna reports that she "entered fully into the spirit of the happy talks and games the Mother played."

Mr. Sethna has recorded an anecdote about the MacPheeters' first Darshan of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in the book *Light and Laughter*. The MacPheeters eventually returned to America, and Mrs. MacPheeters corresponded with the Mother for several years.

The next American in the Ashram for whom we have a record is the well-known furniture designer, builder and woodworker George Nakashima. He went twice in 1937, the second time remaining for two years to help with the design and construction of the Ashram residence, Golconde, a building of unique beauty. (The architect was Antonin Raymond.)

Mr. Nakashima (who was given the name Sundaranda—"One who delights in beauty"—by Sri Aurobindo) writes: "I had heard many times while I was in Pondicherry of the Mother's reaction to the necessity of American pragmatism and even some materialism as something to be developed with Indian spirituality. We all had correspondence with the Mother. As a matter of fact, we all kept notebooks which we would send on to her with questions which she would answer directly in these notebooks. These notebooks, of course, were the source of "Letters and Conversations of the Mother" [published as *Conversations of the Mother*.] We also wrote to Sri Aurobindo, but generally less often."

Mr. Nakashima took photographs of Ambu, the Hatha Yoga master in the Ashram, in various Hatha Yoga poses. These photographs were later published in *Life* magazine. (*Life* also, some years later, presented an article on Americans in Asia, one of whom was Frederick Bushnell, son of a former Massachusetts attorney general and member of an old New England family. Mr. Bushnell lived in the Ashram for many years in the 1950s and 1960s on a river island which he developed agriculturally for Ashram needs.)

While Mr. Nakashima was in the Ashram, he says, three other Americans came. One was of Danish descent, and came to the Ashram after seeing a newspaper article somewhere in Southeast Asia. Another was a woman named Agnes Larsen, wife of a Czech designer named Francois Sommer, who worked with Mr. Nakashima on the design and drawings for Golconde and later did the furniture designs for the building.

The other American to arrive after Mr. Nakashima is probably the best-known American disciple of Sri Aurobindo, Margaret Wilson, the daughter of Woodrow Wilson. Hers is truly a story of dedication.

She first heard of Sri Aurobindo at a meeting in the U.S. from Dhangopal Mukherjee. When she expressed interest in knowing more, he advised her to write to Sri Aurobindo. She wrote first to the Arya Publishing House and obtained a few of his works. After reading them, she wrote to Sri Aurobindo for permission to come to the Ashram. His answer was "Not yet." She continued her reading and sadhana and kept in touch through letters. Finally Sri Aurobindo granted her permission to come. When she took up Ashram life, Sri Aurobindo gave her the name Nishta, which means, he wrote, "one-pointed, fixed and steady concentration, devotion and faith in the single aim—the Divine and the Divine Realisation."

There is a story about Miss Wilson before she went to the Ashram which illustrates this one-pointedness. She was reading Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita* in the New York Public Library and became so absorbed that she failed to notice the time. The library was closed and she was locked in for the night.

While she was in the Ashram, *The Life Divine* was issued in book form (she had done part of the typing for it). Miss Wilson sent a few copies to Sri Aurobindo to sign and bless, as she wished to send them to friends (one such set was sent to Will Durant, the well-known writer on philosophy). So it was that she initiated the custom of having Sri Aurobindo autograph his works as they were published.

Of Sri Aurobindo, Miss Wilson said: "Here is one on earth whom one can love all one's life and in whom one can lose oneself."

Physically rather weak, she arrived in the Ashram already suffering from an incurable disease. She gave up all medical treatment and relied only on the Force of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. She laid upon herself the Ashram discipline and lived as the others did. However, after a few years her health began to worsen and she was urged by friends to return to the United States for medical treatment. In refusing to do so, she said: "You see, if I die here, my soul will be in the Mother's hand, but if I die outside, who will take care of my soul?" She died in 1944 and was buried in a Christian cemetery in Pondicherry.

Dr. Jay Holmes Smith, who worked with the famous missionary Stanley Jones, was forced to leave India because of his active sympathy for Indian freedom. However, he returned with his wife, Maude, in the 1940s, and they went to live in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram as disciples, having been inspired by D.K. Roy's *Among the Great* and Sri Aurobindo's *The Synthesis of Yoga*. They are still there, and Maude is one of the editors of the Ashram magazine *Equals One*. (Another American who lived in the Ashram for many years also edited an Ashram magazine, *World Union*, until her death there in 1972, Marilyn Widman.)

In 1950 Sri Aurobindo left his body. In speaking of the importance of this event, the Mother indicated that his withdrawal was made to aid the work he had begun and that he "is here, as living and as present as ever." It was after his passing that his work began to show more overt results. For instance, the first Sri Aurobindo centers in the United States were established in the 1950s, the decade that also embraced the supramental descent (29 February 1956).

¶ Mrs. A. Moore Montgomery of New York City went to the Ashram for the first time in 1948 and had Darshan of Sri Aurobindo that year and in 1949 and 1950. Through her the first Sri Aurobindo center in the U.S. came into being. "Conceived by Higher Mind in 1952, using Mrs. Montgomery as instrument, the Sri Aurobindo International Center was born, by fiat of the Mother," on 1 February 1953. It had its formal inauguration in New York on 21 February 1953. For 20 years it was housed in private quarters at 875 Fifth Avenue, with the constant aspiration to expand.

The motto, aim and purpose of the Sri Aurobindo International Center has been since its inception the firm conviction that the thought of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother provides the specific antidote to what ails the world at this period of its history. The Mother established her own Center in the vital center of New York because she felt that among nations America was the most open and ready to receive what Sri Aurobindo and she had to give to the world. The Mother gave to the center the symbol of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education with the addition of an outer square. The square, the Mother has said, means the manifestation of the consciousness Sri Aurobindo calls the "supramental."

At the time of its conception the Mother wrote for the center's opening: "The centre has been conceived. The centre is born. The centre will grow into a powerful and efficient entity. To the centre I say, be welcome and succeed."

Perhaps it is appropriate at this point to record the American publication of Sri Aurobindo's works, inasmuch as Mrs. Montgomery and Mr. V.S. Tata, another disciple living in New York, were both involved in the undertaking. In 1949 the five major prose works of Sri Aurobindo—*The Life Divine*, *The Human Cycle*, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *Essays on the Gita* and *The Synthesis of Yoga*—were published. In 1953 E.P. Dutton and Co. took over the handling of these books (adding their imprint to the title page) and brought out a sixth, *The Mind of Light* (published in Ashram as *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth*), a series of articles which were the last prose writings of Sri Aurobindo. This last book was reissued by Dutton in 1971, with an introduction and annotated bibliography by R.A. McDermott. (Professor McDermott later prepared the copy for the Winter 1972 issue of *Cross Currents*, devoted to Sri Aurobindo, which was subsequently expanded into *The Essential Aurobindo*, published by Schocken in 1974; and edited and wrote one of the essays in *The Six Pillars: Introductions to Sri Aurobindo's Major Works*, published by Wilson

Books in 1974.)

In 1972 a group of people who were frequent visitors to Matagiri and who had been attending weekly meetings at the home of Joseph and Muriel Spanier in New York, to meditate and study the works of Sri Aurobindo, were inspired by Udar Pinto to take up a more active overt work. Udar, a longtime disciple of Sri Aurobindo who was then visiting the U.S., had formed a society in the Ashram called Sri Aurobindo's Action. Originally starting under that name, the group soon joined forces with the Sri Aurobindo International Center and opened a public center under the latter name at 140 West 58th Street. There was established a Sri Aurobindo library, a conference and meditation room, a boutique, an office, and the New York headquarters for Association for Auroville. It began to hold regular study sessions and various special meetings and events open to the public, and to entertain a steady stream of visitors, with a cadre of volunteer workers.

¶ The East-West Cultural Center was founded by Dr. Judith M. Tyberg on 1 May 1953. "Its object," writes Dr. Tyberg, "was to further the great Truths of Sri Aurobindo, the great integrator of East & West, which lead to a Life Divine on Earth and a greater world unity."

Dr. Tyberg, as a Sanskrit professor, received a scholarship to do research at Benares Hindu University in Calcutta in 1947. There she learned of Sri Aurobindo and his spiritual interpretations of the Veda and of his Yoga. Her whole being, she writes, "responded in great joy to the teachings, for they met the longing of her heart for a Truth that would integrate all the wonders of outer and inner life and eliminate restrictions that cause false education and hence the sorrows of the world." She first visited the Sri Aurobindo Ashram during the Rama holidays of October-November 1947 and remained for the Darshan of Sri Aurobindo on 24 November. That experience, she says, opened new soul-doors, and a new consciousness has directed her life since then. She was given the name Jyotipriya ("Lover of Light") by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. After that she had several Darshans of Sri Aurobindo, and in the autumn of 1949 went to live in the Ashram as a disciple, until she returned to California in April 1950.

After teaching for two and a half years at the American Academy of Asian Studies in San Francisco and conducting private groups in the study of Sri Aurobindo's teachings, Dr. Tyberg came to Los Angeles to start a school where she would be free to teach unrestricted the teachings of Sri Aurobindo, which brought together the best of the culture of the East and of the West. The **East-West Cultural Center** started in a small room but has steadily grown, Dr. Tyberg reports, and has moved three times to new quarters. Now at 2865 West 9th Street in Los Angeles, it owns the property, which consists of a large two-story building with lecture hall, library, classrooms and offices, and another building, the Arts Building, where meditations and other temple activities are carried on.

Dr. Tyberg has taught at San Francisco State College and Stanford University, has conducted a school for gifted children, and is professor of Sanskrit and

Indian religion, philosophy and literature at the College of Oriental Studies in Los Angeles and one of the "field faculty" for Goddard Graduate Program of Plainfield, Vermont, Los Angeles branch. Her works include *First Lessons in Sanskrit Grammar and Reading*, *Sanskrit Keys to the Wisdom Religion*, and *The Language of the Gods*.

The center is a very active one with numerous programs and activities, and an Auroville group.

Dr. Frederic Spiegelberg, after reading *The Life Divine*, went to the Ashram in 1949 and had Sri Aurobindo's Darshan. Said Dr. Spiegelberg: "Sri Aurobindo is the guiding spirit of our earth and the prophet of our age." As a result of his efforts, Sri Aurobindo was introduced into the curriculum of the department of Asian studies at Stanford University.

¶The late Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri was among the first to receive a doctorate in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy from Calcutta University. When the American Academy of Asian Studies wanted to have a disciple of Sri Aurobindo for its chair of Indian philosophy, Dr. Spiegelberg invited K.D. Sethna (the editor of *Mother India*). Mr. Sethna suggested Dr. Chaudhuri and Sri Aurobindo at once gave his approval. As a result, Dr. Chaudhuri was invited to San Francisco.

Dr. Chaudhuri first went to the Ashram in October 1937. He spent his summer sabbatical there for several months every year. In 1939 or 1940 he founded a center in Calcutta called Sri Aurobindo Pathmandir, where he lectured weekly on Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*. This Calcutta center is still active.

In 1951 he came to San Francisco to the American Academy of Asian Studies. Soon after his arrival he established the **Cultural Integration Fellowship**, which is devoted to global understanding through intercultural dialogue. The Fellowship was formally established as a nonprofit religious-educational organization in September 1955. On 7 January 1957 the San Francisco Ashram of the Cultural Integration Fellowship was inaugurated. The Fellowship and Ashram are located at 2650 Fulton St., across from Golden Gate Park.

Dr. Chaudhuri taught and lectured widely throughout the United States. Among his books are *Being, Evolution and Immortality* (first published as *Philosophy of Integralism*); *Sri Aurobindo: Prophet of Life Divine*; *Integral Yoga: The Concept of Harmonious and Creative Living*; and *The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo* (co-edited with Dr. Spiegelberg). In 1968 he helped establish and became the first president of the California Institute of Asian Studies in San Francisco. (After Dr. Chaudhuri's death in 1975, Dr. Spiegelberg became its president.)

The Fellowship and Ashram is an active center with a varied cultural and study program and a newly formed Auroville group.

¶Mrs. Lois Duncan first became acquainted with Sri Aurobindo's writings during a visit to India in 1935. Her interest in his message quickened, she said,

when in 1938 her friend Margaret Wilson journeyed to India to live in the Ashram. In 1953, after Mrs. Duncan and her husband, Nick, had moved to Crescent Moon Ranch near Sedona, Arizona, they sponsored a branch of the Cultural Integration Fellowship (of San Francisco) with annual seminars and Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri as mentor. In 1961 Mr. and Mrs. Duncan visited the Ashram in Pondicherry and forged a firm friendship with A.B. Purani, who came to the Sedona center in 1962 and conducted seminars in the midst of a lecture tour throughout the United States (and eventually Europe).

The **Sri Aurobindo Center** was formed and received the blessing of the Mother on 24 April 1966 in a telegram received from her, followed by a note from M.P. Pandit: "The Mother warmly approves of the proposal to make your place a Centre. She says it is very good. ... A glorious start for the Centre, I should say."

Mrs. Duncan wrote in the September 1967 issue of *Mother India*: "This Sri Aurobindo Center is situated in an amazingly colorful area, with rock formations of fantastic shapes that glow in the setting sun. The spirit of the place is one of ethereal beauty, enhanced by the happy sound of water from Oak Creek that winds through the ranch.... The cherished aspiration is that this Center may also be an oasis of spiritual peace.... There is quite an extensive library, covering a wide range of philosophical subject matter, including the various teachings of both the East and the West.... Sri Aurobindo, being in his life and in his writings a bridge between the East and the West, the past and the present, has been called a 'great reconciler.' A Sri Aurobindo Center is naturally motivated by this idea of expanding horizons."

Throughout the years the center has had many visitors and participants: Dr. Chaudhuri, A.B. Purani, Arabinda Basu, Dr. S.K. Ghose, Swami Kriyananda, P.N. Menon, Dorris Still, Dr. Vasant Merchant, Eliot Clark, Anu Purani, Dr. Robert Kleinman, Dr. Robert Bainbridge, Harry N. Olsen, Anne and Richard Eggenberger, Sukhendu Dutt, Dr. Joan Price—to mention only a few—have contributed their thinking, interpretations, dances and music, and their presence to the center.

After the passing of Mrs. Duncan on 12 March 1970, the center has been maintained and carried forward under the direction of Nick Duncan and its members and friends.

¶Mrs. Ida Patterson of Minneapolis, Minnesota, under the Mother's guidance, established a branch of the **Sri Aurobindo Society** in her home city on 28 September 1966. Mrs. Patterson writes: "Members and friends are instrumental in the various areas on rehabilitation, book-selling, items and finances received and disbursed, contacts made,... tape recordings, printed matter, meetings, visitors, speakers and programs. During the course of Society years, part of the time in Redlands, California, members held discussion and study classes. For some time this was also going on in Billings, Montana. In San Jose, California, and sur-

rounding locations some gathered together spending much time and effort to help form an association for Auroville interest. Another period an American sponsorship program was in effect on maintenance for some in need that were working and living in Auroville. For about three years repair parts and tools were sent to the Auro Garage to help keep the first two Kaiser Jeeps of Auroville in running order."

The first introduction of Auroville in the United States was made by the Sri Aurobindo Society. Contacts were made, in the beginning, for American Auroville resident applications to help toward the purchase of Auroville land. The society is also coordinating effort toward the establishment of a U.S. pavilion in Auroville (see elsewhere in this issue for a report on this pavilion).

¶In 1962 Sam Spanier, a New York City artist, went to the Ashram and had his first Darshan of the Mother on 12 March. While he was there he was inspired to establish a community in the United States dedicated to the integral vision of Sri Aurobindo. It was to be a resident center and would encourage the exchange of aspirants between the United States and the Ashram. A written résumé of this inspiration was presented to the Mother, who gave her blessings to the project. Mr. Spanier returned to the United States in April 1962. A meditation group was begun in his apartment and continued until 1968. In 1965 Mr. Spanier purchased acreage in the township of Woodstock, New York, and in 1968 he moved there with two other aspirants and the community was begun. On 2 August 1968 the Mother gave her blessings to the name **Matagiri**, which she selected from two submitted to her. From the beginning, with no publicity, there was a steady stream of visitors to Matagiri, who spent shorter or longer periods living and working with the residents. Two of the original three aspirants are still there, but the number of permanent residents is now nine.

In March and April 1970 Muriel Spanier (a cousin of Sam Spanier) visited the Ashram for the first time. While there, she was asked to help set up a book-distribution center in the United States for the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The proposed plan to establish this center either in New York City or at Matagiri was submitted to and approved by the Mother. In June 1970 Mrs. Spanier came to live at Matagiri and proposed that Matagiri, which had the facilities and the experience, undertake this work. Matagiri readily agreed to do so, and the work was begun with a one-page booklist of 18 titles. Today there are more than 400 titles and a 50-page catalog. Great efforts have been made to make bookstores aware of a domestic source for the works of Sri Aurobindo and to introduce Sri Aurobindo's work to such groups as teachers of philosophy and religion, educators, and poets and writers. Much of the work in this area has been carried on by Muriel and Joseph Spanier, two residents of Matagiri, who have toured the United States several times over the last two years giving slide

presentations on Auroville and the Ashram, and introducing the works of Sri Aurobindo to bookstores.

In early 1974 Matagiri published *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Collective Yoga*. The manuscript had been prepared in the summer of 1968 for the use of both residents and visitors.

In August 1974 it was felt that the time had come to issue some sort of periodical, and in September the first issue of *Collaboration* was sent out. It is published quarterly, contains passages from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, as well as news of various Sri Aurobindo centers around the world, and is sent free to nearly 4,500 people and institutions throughout the world.

In late 1975 Matagiri formed the **Matagiri Spiritual Center**, which was incorporated under the New York State law on 13 January 1976 as a nonprofit spiritual-educational corporation. (At the time of writing federal tax-exemption application was still pending.)

Matagiri has worked closely with various people on the preparation of published works and articles on Sri Aurobindo, his Ashram and Auroville. It also receives requests from scholars wishing to make use of its extensive Sri Aurobindo library, which contains more than 1,000 volumes.

At the present time Matagiri is engaged in the construction of an 8-room residence to accommodate the growing number of both residents and visitors. In addition to three buildings now on the property (including its office and storage for a large stock of books, incense and handmade paper), Matagiri rents a house nearby.

¶In 1971 Mrs. June Maher attended a meeting in California at which Clair Warden, an Aurovilian, spoke. Inspired by this talk, Mrs. Maher and several others started an informal group, which operated from October 1971 to August 1973, to inform themselves of the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, to contribute to Auroville, and to create a nucleus around which others inspired by Sri Aurobindo could gather. (Several of this original group have since made Auroville or the Ashram their home.)

The group conceived of forming a nonprofit corporation, and the Mother wrote to them giving her approval and blessings on 9 November 1972. Thus was formed the **Auroville Association**, which was incorporated on 8 August 1973. (Probationary federal tax exemption was granted on 5 April 1974 and permanent exemption on 23 March 1976; California tax exemption was granted on 7 August 1974.)

The association, at 212 Farley Drive, Aptos, California, has acted as liaison and correspondent with other centers, Auroville and the Ashram, disseminated information on the Ashram and Auroville, raised funds and purchased materials for Auroville (as well as serving as a conduit for grants to Auroville), imported and sold Auroville products as well as the works of Sri Aurobindo. In September 1974 it hosted a conference of American Sri Aurobindo centers which was attended by over 100 persons. It has also participated in

The library being developed in Auroville has urgent need of books of all kinds and of magazine subscriptions; the schools need games, records, crayons, paints, and sports equipment. The new school being developed at Center will need help in obtaining equipment for the under-six group.

The heart and soul of Auroville is at Center, called Peace. It is here that the Matrimandir (Temple of the Mother) is being constructed. This center comprises the original banyan tree which has been there from the beginning, the urn which was constructed for the dedication ceremony for Auroville, 28 February 1968 (when 124 UNESCO member nations each sent two young people with earth from their land to place in the urn in a symbolic gesture of human unity) and, most importantly, the Matrimandir, whose outer concrete skeleton has now been completed. This magnificent structure, 100 feet in height, can be seen from great distances, even from as far as Pondicherry. Also connected with Center are the offices called Unity, the Workers Camp (a residence for the Matrimandir workers), the Matrimandir Gardens Nursery, which is creating the gardens that will surround the Matrimandir.

Other groups and projects are the woodworking group, Takshanalaya, the experimental weather station, and a windmill farm being developed to provide an education facility for the higher-school students which would involve Ashram students and Tamil villagers. This will include agricultural and scientific experiments and a ceramic workshop. Here Ashram students will be able to apply skills they have learned in an integral way and the Tamils can enroll for a one- or two-year course of study and return to their village with needed skills. Experiments are being conducted in solar and wind energy, the development of algae as a food supplement, etc. Ayurvedic and allopathic clinics are maintained in several of the communities for treatment of Aurovilians and Tamils. The Ayurvedic clinic at Kottakarai treats at least 75 patients daily who come even from villages outside Auroville.

The Tamil Fund for Rural Development was created in May 1973 for "community development projects for the benefit of the Tamil population in the area of Auroville and its neighborhood." The fund is supporting many of the projects mentioned which have to do with relationships with the Tamils. The fund invites "participation, collaboration, suggestions, ideas and contributions, from the villages, from Auroville and from individuals and organizations wherever in the world. The Tamil Fund will be glad to communicate on request any available reports, observations, information and photos." (Write to Tamil Fund for Rural Development, Auroville 605101, India.)

As a concrete move to create an organization within Auroville to deal with the basic needs of Aurovilians (food, "prosperity" for those supported solely by Auroville, transportation, electricity, education, health services, maintenance) and to develop the grass roots for a self-governing body, Pour Tous ("For All") was created. In the past these needs were administered

by the Sri Aurobindo Society, the organization in the Ashram which sponsors Auroville. The society has many responsibilities with respect to purchasing the land and developing the building of Auroville, and Aurovilians are now trying to become self-sufficient in terms of their basic living requirements, which are indeed very basic.

The following is taken from a statement recently prepared by Pour Tous:

"For a long time there has been a strong inclination to find a way in which various areas of Auroville which are naturally related to each other (for example, food production and food consumption) could increasingly collaborate with each other and consequently arrive at a point where the internal exchange of money was no longer necessary.

"Pour Tous..., which has been the channel for purchase and distribution of food in Auroville for the last two and a half years, expanded its operations from the beginning of January 1976 in response to a growing need and collective awareness shared by Aurovilians to consolidate our efforts and energies and work more closely together; to strengthen the overall infrastructure of all the Auroville services. This new grouping became known as the Pour Tous Fund.

"The Pour Tous Fund has enabled the people living in Auroville to assess with some clarity and for the first time the actual priorities of Auroville. While we are confident that after some time Auroville will be able to meet its *running expenses* without further outside donations, for the moment there is a gap which has to be filled. We foresee that this gap may be present for at least the next six months."

This winter I spent two months at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, during which time I spent many days in Auroville visiting the different communities, speaking with people, attending Pour Tous meetings, walking across the land, and actually living in three different communities to have a first-hand experience of what it means to live in Auroville, if only for a short time.

Life in Auroville is physically very primitive. What has made these 400 souls leave behind the world they know to come to this difficult, alien environment, on this dry, eroded land in a hot subtropical climate?

"Auroville wants to be a creation expressing a new consciousness in a new way and according to new methods," the Mother said, and "The purpose of Auroville is to realise human unity." The attempt to express unity in diversity is one of the major experiments in Auroville, which is truly a laboratory in which all the basic problems of humanity are being worked out—but in a new way. Each individual, each group in Auroville is trying to fulfill an aspect of the dream that is Auroville, each has needs to be met, each is seeking to survive and grow and to manifest that which is trying to come into being there.

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To a world conference of the Sri Aurobindo Society in 1964 the Mother issued this message: "The future of the Earth depends on a Change of Consciousness.

The only hope for the future is in a change of consciousness and the change is bound to come. But it is left to men to decide if they will collaborate for this change or it will have to be enforced upon them by the power of crashing circumstances."

Auroville is the Divine's challenge. And in this sense we can all be Aurovilians because this is a challenge the whole world now faces.

—Muriel Spanier

Pour Tous Report

[The following is a summary adapted from a report of a Pour Tous meeting held 8 April 1976.]

Green Belt communities held a meeting, and Dennis (Two Banyans) reported that the feeling among them is one of the increasing functioning and coordination of work with Pour Tous. The Green Belt bank account has been transferred to Pour Tous. It was decided that a \$60 donation would be used to buy compost, about 5 tractor loads, enough for 3 to 5 acres to plant kambu or groundnuts. If possible, although there is less money available this year, the Green Belt will provide part of their crops for Pour Tous.

The laundry service has proved unsatisfactory in Aspiration, and there was discussion of looking for a new dobhi and fixing up the laundry facility in the Maintenance area.

The Free Store will open beside the new bakery quarters in the Maintenance area in Aspiration. There will be two sections at first: one for secondhand articles for exchange (centers in the U.S. and Europe will be asked to collect and send cotton clothing, light woolen clothes, sweaters, etc.); the second will have towels, sheets, candles, mosquito netting, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and a tailoring service. The Free Store will operate under the Pour Tous card system, tallying points rather than actual exchange of money. As soon as space is organized, a hair-cutting and massage service will be offered.

The Maintenance group of buildings will also house bicycle repair, plumbing and electrical workshop, van storage and the new bakery. Three water-storage rings will be put behind the bakery and laundry to recycle waste water for use in the projected garden area. A special type of algae will be introduced to the waste water from the laundry, which thrives on detergent wastes and purifies. The water from the bakery will be filtered. The old bakery location will be used for the sale of bread, cheese, peanut butter and special jams.

The Tea Shop serves as a place where Aurovilians and visitors can meet with refreshments. However, the environment is not felt to be the best, and Mali has offered to help in efforts to build a new community area off the old bakery, a shaded pavilion for all-weather use and to create an atmosphere of beauty.

Yusef reported that 17,000 rupees (about \$2,000) had been received by the Pour Tous Fund. This included contributions from Auroville industries (the

major portion), contributions from Aurovilians, and donations from centers abroad.

U.S. PAVILION IN AUROVILLE

A meeting was held on 3 March 1976 at the International Zone in Auroville attended by Seyril Rubin, Sally Walton, John Walker, Muriel Spanier, Prabhat Poddar and Gloria to look at the land available for international pavilions in Auroville and choose a possible site which could be photographed for the purposes of those interested in the project. Immediate use of the photographs would be at the Auroville Summer Institute at Kent State University this summer, in a program given by Joel Goodman on "The Future U.S. Pavilion in Auroville."

In the course of the discussion the following points were made:

1. The question of land ownership in Auroville was a very complex one and before any funds could be raised or plans made for a U.S. pavilion there would have to be a definitive clarification of the status of the land.

2. The architectural form and design was the very last question which should be considered. It was felt imperative that the content and use of the pavilion be determined before the form was created.

3. To determine which aspects of U.S. culture should be included in the pavilion, it was felt that it was not too early to begin exploration (as has already been done by Joel Goodman in the U.S.).

4. It was suggested that the Nation Soul Game devised by Ruud Lohman be used as a basis for trying to determine what the soul of the United States is. This "game" could be introduced at Kent State University this summer and could be the starting point for a campaign to reach people in all avenues of American life.

5. When it was felt that the activities and concepts to be represented were clear, these could be presented to a team of architects who would plan the building to give the proper form for the realization in space of those ideas.

6. It is possible that before any final building is even decided upon, a group of Americans in Auroville (who would be working with those outside Auroville on this project) might want to begin to live together, possibly on the site of the U.S. pavilion, to begin to create a force field where some of the emerging concepts could be tried in a simple way before they were incorporated into the final plan.

NEWS OF CENTERS

Sedona, Arizona: SRI AUROBINDO CENTER (Crescent Moon Ranch, Star Route 2, Sedona, AZ 86336; telephone 602-282-7552). Sunday morning meetings begin at 10:00 a.m. with meditation followed by study meeting at 10:30 a.m. and informal discussion. The first six months of 1976 have been devoted to a study of Satprem's *Sri Aurobindo or The*

Adventure of Consciousness: the last six months of the year will focus on Sri Aurobindo's *The Human Cycle*. On the last Sunday of each month the morning meeting is followed by a cooperative luncheon and an afternoon program, featuring special talks, music, films and discussions.

Scottsdale, Arizona: PARADISE TAU (8223 E. Valley Vista Dr., Scottsdale, AZ 85253) is in the process of moving to new quarters and during this period no regular meetings are being held. Their new telephone number is 602-955-7398.

NEWS OF FOREIGN CENTERS

Montreal, Canada: O-PTI-ZOIZO (1596 St. Laurent Blvd., Montreal, Que. H2X 2T1, Canada). This vegetarian grocery store, cooperatively owned by a group of disciples, continues to grow. There is a bookstore offering the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother; they also sell plants, incense, clothing, hardware, and antique furniture. The store also imports Ashram and Auroville products. In addition, there are art exhibitions in a special room in their building. The six people who work in the store live together with six other adults and two children in a nearby house, where they take their evening meal together.

Recently a vegetarian restaurant opened next door to the grocery and two of the people involved live with the O-Pti-Zoizo group.

Sweden: AUROVILLE INTERNATIONAL-SWEDEN (Fack 6009, S-220 06 Lund, Sweden) has a study group on *The Life Divine* and gives slide presentations on Auroville. It participated in an exhibition called Ekotek in Stockholm in April, which stressed the technology, environment and ecology of Auroville. They are also engaged in small-scale handicrafts and distribute these along with items from the Ashram and Auroville. They publish *Nasta Steg* (Next Step), containing passages from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, news of Auroville, and poetry.

Great Britain: AUROVILLE INTERNATIONAL-UNITED KINGDOM (82 Bell St., London NW 1, England) reports that Dick Batstone gave a talk at the University of Edinburgh last fall on Sri Aurobindo and also gave two Auroville slide presentations, one at the Teilhard de Chardin Association in Edinburgh and one at Chilice Hills House, Glastonbury, as part of the Ramala Society's series of talks.

Germany: FREUNDE AUROVILLES [Friends of Auroville] (D-8033 Planegg bei Munchen, Elisabethweg 34, West Germany) has started a new center, called Aurora. Visitors are welcome.

GENERAL NEWS

¶ **Dr. Vasant V. Merchant**, Humanities Department, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ 86001, conducts a weekly study group on Sri Aurobindo's

Essays on the Gita. In several of her courses at the university she also uses a number of Sri Aurobindo's works. Among these courses are "World Perspectives in Arts and Literature of South Asia," "Significance of Indian Art, Literature, Religion and Spirituality," "Man and the Arts." In fall 1976 she will teach "Religions of the East," which will make use of Sri Aurobindo's *Secret of the Veda* and *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*.

Dr. Merchant recently reported that on 29 February W.B. Arnold gave an Auroville slide presentation at the Church of Universal Light in Phoenix. Also, on April 22 the Humanities Dept. and the International Relations Club of the university sponsored a Creative Arts Festival. As part of this event there was a visual presentation on "Auroville: The New International City of Dawn and Unity" by Miss Merchant. On April 28 Miss Merchant led a seminar on "Women of Asia" with reference to Sri Aurobindo's thought.

On October 7-9, 1976, the Humanities Dept. will host a conference on Asian studies, which will include a panel on Sri Aurobindo's relevance to contemporary American culture.

¶ **Chitta R. Goswami** of the Department of Religion, Kenyon College, Gambier, OH 43022, reports he is using several of Sri Aurobindo's works in his courses "Indian Religion and Culture," "Modern Indian Thought," "Hindu Texts," and "The Sources and Meaning of Religion." He also teaches a seminar on the Gita using Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita*. Next year he is scheduled to teach "Modern Indian Religious Thought," in which Sri Aurobindo's philosophy will figure prominently.

¶ **Dr. Zb. Madeyski** of Warsaw has been presenting talks on Sri Aurobindo and Auroville to audiences in Poland. His subjects have included Auro-education, marriage, economics, "religion," and the concept of Auroville.

¶ **Gayle Garrison** (Rt. 2, Oxbow No. 7, Chapel Hill, NC 27514) wishes to be in touch with people in her area (or elsewhere) who are interested in the integral way of Sri Aurobindo. She is especially interested in community.

¶ A study group in Sri Aurobindo's *The Synthesis of Yoga* is planned for this summer. Anyone in central New Jersey who is interested, please get in touch with Janice Edl, 59 S. Adelaide Ave. or Paul Molinari, 323 Montgomery Ave., both in Highland Park, NJ 08904.

We regret to report the passing of Prithwi Singh Nahar, a longtime resident of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. He was the author of a book of poetry, *Winds of Silence*, and until recently was in charge of the Publications Department of the Ashram.