



Collaboration

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We wish to take this opportunity to thank all those who have so generously contributed to the support of *Collaboration* and for all the expressions of appreciation we have received, from not only the United States but Europe and Asia. The two most recent issues, on Auroville and on Integral Yoga, elicited a good deal of reader response. Additional copies of both were requested by centers and individuals, and the Auroville issue prompted two other publications to do articles on Auroville. One is *The Yoga Journal*, published in California, which presents an article on Auroville in its May-June issue; the other is *Town Forum, A Journal of Creative Community*, published from the Cerro Gordon Ranch in Cottage Grove, Oregon, which is planning to excerpt from the Auroville issue.

Comments from our readers indicate that they find help and inspiration for their own growth and understanding in the articles we have published and very much appreciate the news section. A doctor in Germany, in sending us a contribution, wrote: "Thank you for the very valuable work you are doing in bringing together the followers of Sri Aurobindo." It is encouraging to us to be made aware that *Collaboration* is serving as such a useful link.

THE FOUR AUSTERITIES AND THE FOUR LIBERATIONS

(Conclusion)

The Mother

It is a very well-known fact that one has never to speak of one's spiritual experiences, if one were not to see vanishing in a moment the energy accumulated in an experience which is meant to hasten one's progress. The only exception to the rule allowable is with regard to one's Guru, when one wants to get from him some explanation or instruction about the content and meaning of one's experience. Indeed, it is to the Guru alone that one can speak of these things without danger, for only the Guru is able, in his knowledge, to turn to your good the elements of your experience as steps toward new ascents.

It is true also that the Guru himself is under the same rule of silence with regard to what concerns him personally. In Nature everything is in movement and whatever does not move forward is bound to move backward. The Guru, even like his disciple, should also progress, although his progress may not be on the same plane. To him, too, to speak of his experience is not helpful: the dynamic force contained in the experience, if it is put into words, evaporates in a large measure. On the other hand, by explaining to the disciples his experiences he powerfully helps their understanding and therefore their progress. It is for him in his wisdom to know to what extent he can and should sacrifice the one to the other. It goes without saying that no boasting or vainglory should enter into his narration; for the least vanity would make of him not a Guru but an impostor.

In this issue we conclude the Mother's "Four Austerities and Four Liberations" begun in the last issue, and begin to present Sri Aurobindo's integral system of psychology. An understanding of his view of psychology is important for comprehension of the Integral Yoga and its practice as well as for understanding his concept of spiritual evolution. These introductory passages on psychology were found among his papers and, while apparently intended for fuller treatment, seem to stand well enough as they are and they do introduce some basic concepts of Sri Aurobindo's psychology which will be elaborated in future issues.

In addition, we begin also in this issue to serialize portions of two recent, lengthy reports on Auroville which give a comprehensive and detailed picture of the city, its communities, problems and progress to date.

And finally we present two poems, one by an Aurovilian and one by an American living in the Ashram. Sri Aurobindo, himself a poet, regarded poetry as being one means of individual spiritual growth (as well as being an instrument for cultural evolution), and many of his followers write poetry. We expect to present more poetry in the future.

As for the disciple, I would tell him: "In any case, be faithful to your Guru whatever he may be; he will lead you as far as you are able to go. But if you have the good fortune to get the Divine as your Guru, there will be no limit to your realisation."

Nevertheless, even the Divine when he incarnates upon earth is subject to the same law of progress. The instrument for his manifestation, the physical being with which he clothes himself, should be in a state of constant progress and the law governing his personal self-expression is in a way linked with the general law of earth's progress. Thus even the embodied God cannot be perfect upon earth unless and until men are ready to understand and accept perfection. It will be the day when all will be done out of love for the Divine and not, as now, out of a sense of duty towards Him. Progress will be then a joy, instead of an effort and often even a struggle. Or, more exactly, progress will be through joy in the full adhesion of the whole being and not through coercing the resistance of the ego, which means a great effort and at times even a great suffering.

To conclude I would tell you this: if you want that your speech should express the truth and acquire the power of the Word, do not think beforehand of what you would say, do not decide what would be good or bad to say, do not calculate what would be the effect of what you are about to say. Be silent in your mind, keep steady in the true attitude, that of constant aspiration towards the

All-Wisdom, the All-Knowledge, and the All-Consciousness. Then, if your aspiration is sincere, if it is not a mere cover for your ambition to do things well and to be successful, if it is pure, spontaneous, and integral, then you will speak simply, you will utter the words that should be uttered, neither more nor less, and they will possess a creative power.

III

Of all austerities this is the most difficult, the austerity of feeling and emotion, the Tapasya of love.

Indeed, it is in the field of feelings more than perhaps in any other that man has the sense of something inevitable, a fatality dominating him which he cannot escape. Love (at least the thing to which human beings give that name) is especially looked upon as an imperious master whose caprices one cannot evade, who strikes you as he pleases and compels you to obey him whether you like it or not. In the name of love the worst crimes have been perpetrated, the wildest follies committed.

And yet, man has invented all kinds of moral and social rules to control this force of love, to make it sober and docile. These rules, however, seem to have been made only to be broken and the restraint they impose upon its free activity seems only to increase its explosive power. For it is not by rules that the movements of love can be governed. Only a greater, higher and truer power of love can master the uncontrollable impulses of love. Love can alone rule over love by illumining, transforming and enlarging it. For here also, more than anywhere else, control consists not in suppressing and abolishing, but in transmuting through a sublime alchemy. This is because, of all forces acting in the universe, love is the most powerful, the most irresistible; without love the world would fall back into the chaos of inconscience.

Consciousness is indeed the creator of the universe, but love is its saviour. A conscious experience alone can give a glimpse of what love is, its wherefore and its how. Any verbal transcription of it is necessarily a mental disguise for that which escapes all expression. Philosophers, mystics, occultists have tried but in vain. I do not pretend that I shall succeed where they failed. My purpose is to tell in the simplest terms possible what under their pen takes such an abstract and complicated form. My words will have no other aim than to lead towards living the experience and I mean to lead even a child.

Love is, in its essence, the joy of identity; it finds its supreme expression in the bliss of union. Between the two there are all the phases of its universal manifestation.

At the beginning of this manifestation, Love is, in the purity of its origin, composed of two movements, two complementary poles of the impulsion towards complete fusion. On one side, it is the supreme power of attraction and on the other the irresistible need of absolute self-giving. No other movement can do better in throwing a bridge over the abyss that was dug in the individual being when its consciousness separated from its origin and became inconscience.

What was projected into space had to be brought back to itself without, however, destroying the universe so created. Therefore Love burst forth, the irresistible power of union.

It has been soaring over darkness and inconscience; it has scattered itself, pulverised itself in the bosom of unfathomed night. And it is from then that there has begun the awakening and the ascent, the slow formation of matter and its endless progression. Is it not love, under an erring and obscure form, that is associated with all the impulsions of the physical and vital nature as they push towards every movement and every grouping? This has become quite visible in the plant world. In the plant and the tree, it is the need of growth to get more light, more air, more space; in the flower it is the gift of beauty and fragrance in a loving efflorescence. And in the animal is it not there behind hunger and thirst, the need for appropriation, expansion, procreation, in brief, behind all desire,

whether conscious or not? and, among the higher orders, in the self-sacrificing devotion of the female for her young ones? This naturally leads us to the human species where, with the triumphant advent of mental activity this association attains its climax, for it is there conscious and deliberate. Indeed, as soon as earth development made it possible, nature took up this mighty force of love to put it at the service of her creative activity by associating and mixing it with the movement of procreation. This association has become so close, so intimate that very few indeed have their consciousness illumined enough to be able to dissociate the two and experience them separately. Thus has love suffered all the degradations and thus it has been lowered to the level of the beast.

It is also from this very moment that there has clearly appeared in Nature's works her will to build up again, by stages and degrees, the primordial unity through groupings more and more complex and numerous. She used the power of love for bringing two human beings together and creating the dual group, the origin of family. Once she had broken the narrow limits of personal egoism by changing it into a dual egoism, she brought into being, with the appearance of the child, a more complex unit, the family. In the course of time through manifold association between families, interchange between individuals and blood mixture, larger groupings appeared: the clan, the tribe, the caste, and the class to end in the creation of the nation. The work of group formation proceeded simultaneously in different parts of the world; it has crystallised in the formation of the different races. Even these races Nature will fuse together in her endeavour to build a material and real basis for human unity.

To the consciousness of the majority of men all this appears to be a play of chance in life: they do not observe the existence of a global plan, they take circumstances as they come, well or ill according to their own nature, some are satisfied, others dissatisfied.

Among the satisfied, there is a certain class of men who are in perfect harmony with Nature's way of being: these are the optimists. To them the day is more brilliant because night is there, the colours are bright because of shadows, joy is more intense because of suffering, pain gives a greater charm to pleasure, disease bestows upon health all its value; I have even heard some saying that they are glad to have enemies, so can they all the more appreciate their friends. In any case, for all such persons, the sexual activity is a most savoury occupation, the satisfaction of the palate one of the delights of life one cannot dispense with; and it is quite natural that being born one must die: it puts an end to a journey which, if it lasted too long, would become tedious.

In short, they find life quite all right as it is and do not care to know if it has a reason or a purpose. They do not trouble over the misery of others and do not see any necessity of progress.

Such people you must never try to "convert": it would be a serious blunder. If, by mischance, they were to listen to you, they would lose their present poise without getting a new one. They are not ready for an inner life. But they are Nature's favourites; they have a very intimate alliance with her and this achievement must not be uselessly disturbed.

At a lesser degree and to a less durable extent, there are other contented ones in the world. Their satisfaction is due to the magic

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contained in the action of love. Each time a being breaks the narrow limits in which he is imprisoned by his ego, he soars up into the free air through self-giving, whether it is for the sake of another human being, or for the family or for the country or for his faith, he finds in this self-forgetfulness a foretaste of the marvelous delight of love and this gives him the impression that he has entered into contact with the Divine. But most often it is only a fugitive contact: for in the human being love is immediately mixed with the egoistic lower movements that tarnish it and take away all the power of its purity. Yet, even if it had remained pure, this contact with a divine existence could not endure for ever. For love is only one aspect of the Divine, an aspect that has upon earth suffered the same deformations as the rest.

However, all these experiences are quite good and useful for the ordinary man who follows the normal way of Nature in her wavering march towards the unity of the future. But they cannot satisfy men who are for hastening the movement, who, in other words, aspire to follow another line of movement, more direct and more swift, an exceptional movement that will liberate them from the ordinary human nature and its endless journey, enabling them to take part in the spiritual progress which will lead them along the quickest path towards the creation of the new race, the race that will express the supramental truth upon earth. These exceptional souls must reject all love that is between human beings; for, however beautiful and pure it may be, it creates a kind of short circuit and cuts the direct connection with the Divine.

One who has known Divine Love, finds all other love obscure, mixed with smallness and egoism and darkness. It looks like a bargain or a struggle for superiority and authority: and even in the best of men, it is full of misunderstanding and sensitiveness, frictions and misgivings.

Moreover, it is a well-known fact that you grow into the likeness of that which you love. If therefore you want to be like the Divine, love Him alone. One who has experienced the ecstasy of the communion of love with the Divine can alone know how insipid, dull and feeble all other love is, in comparison. And even if the most austere discipline is needed to arrive at this communion, nothing is too hard, too long, too severe, provided it takes you there; for it surpasses all expression.

It is this wonderful state that we wish to realise upon earth; it is this which will transform the world and make it a habitation worthy of the Divine Presence. Then will love, pure and true, incarnate in a body that will no longer be a disguise or a veil for it. Many a time the Divine sought, under the supreme form of love, to make the discipline easier and create a closer and more clearly perceptible intimacy; for this he put on a physical body similar in appearance to the human, but always, imprisoned within this gross form of matter, he could express only a caricature of himself. He will be able to manifest himself in the plenitude of his perfection only when human beings have made some indispensable progress in their consciousness and in their body. For man's vanity in its meanness and his stupid conceit take the sublime divine love, when it expresses itself in a human form, as a sign of weakness and dependence and need.

And yet man already knows, obscurely in the beginning, but more and more clearly as he progresses towards perfection that love alone can put an end to the suffering of the world; the ineffable joys of love in its essence can alone sweep from the universe the burning pain of separation. For only in the ecstasy of the supreme union can creation find its reason of existence and its fulfilment.

No effort, therefore, is too arduous, no austerity too rigorous, if it can illumine, purify, perfect and transform the physical substance so that it may no longer conceal the Divine, when the Divine takes in it an outward form. For that marvel of love will then freely express itself in the world, the love divine which has the power of changing life into a paradise of sweet joy.

This, you may say, is the ultimate end, the crown of the effort, the final victory. But what is to be done to reach there? What is the path to follow and what are the steps on the way?

Since we have decided to reserve love in its full splendour for our personal relation with the Divine, we shall, in our relation with others, replace it by a wholehearted, unchanging, constant and egoless kindness and goodwill. It shall not expect any reward or gratitude or even recognition. Whatever the way others treat you, you will not allow yourself to be carried away by resentment: and in your pure unmixed love for the Divine you shall leave him the sole judge as to how he is to protect you and defend you against the understanding and ill will of others.

Your joys and your pleasures you will expect from the Divine alone. In him alone you will seek and find help and support. He will comfort you in all your pain, lead you on the path, lift you up if you stumble, and if there are moments of faintness and exhaustion, he will take you in his strong arms of love and wrap you in his soothing sweetness.

Here, to avoid a possible misunderstanding, I must point out that I am compelled, because of the demand made by the language in which I express myself, to use the masculine form when I speak of the Divine. But, in fact, the reality I speak of as love is above and beyond all gender, masculine or feminine; and when it takes a human body, it chooses the body either of a man or a woman indifferently according to the need of the work to be done.

It short, the austerity of feeling consists in rejecting all emotional attachment, of whatever kind it may be, whether for a person, for the family, for the country or any other object, and concentrating exclusively on the attachment for the Divine Reality. This concentration will culminate in the integral identification and serve as an instrument for the supramental realisation upon earth.

This takes us quite naturally to the four liberations which will be the concrete forms of the realisation. The emotional liberation will be at the same time a liberation from suffering in the integral realisation of the supramental unity. The mental liberation or liberation from ignorance will establish in the being the mind of light or gnostic consciousness, which will express itself in the creative power of the word.

The vital liberation or liberation from desire gives to the individual will the capacity of identifying perfectly and consciously with the divine will and brings peace and serenity as well as the resulting power.

Finally, crowning all comes the physical liberation or liberation from the law of material causation. Because you are completely master of yourself, you are no longer the slave of the laws of nature that make you act through subconscious and semiconscious impulses and hold you to the rut of ordinary life. Because of this liberation you can decide, with full knowledge, about the path you want to take, choose the action you want to accomplish, and free yourself from all blind determinism, allowing nothing else to intervene in your life's course than the highest Will, the truest Knowledge, the Supramental Consciousness. [From *Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education*, 1973]



The Mother



Sri Aurobindo



INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY

Sri Aurobindo

[The following paragraphs were found among Sri Aurobindo's writings in a notebook containing what appear to be unrevised drafts. They appear to date from his early Pondicherry period and were first published in Sri Aurobindo Circle No. 32 (1976).]

¶ Body, brain, nervous system are instruments of consciousness, they are not its causes.

Consciousness is its own cause, a producer of objects and images and not their product. We are blinded to this truth because when we think of consciousness, it is of the individual we think. We look at the world in the way and speak of it in terms of individual consciousness; but it is of the universal consciousness that the world is a creation.

The individual participates subconsciously and superconsciously in the universal consciousness. But the embodied individual in his physical or waking mind does not so much participate as arrive at participation. He is not directly part of it, but reproduces it by a partial indirect action, and in reproducing selects and varies, combines and discombines, new combines and develops his selections.

In the body his waking mind receives its impressions from the outside world and reacts upon them. Body and nerves are his instrument for the impressions and the reaction; therefore all their apparent instrumentation is nervous, physical, atomically combined, a physiological apparatus for a battery of nervous energy.

Physical, nervous and sensory impressions are the means by which the individual is induced to put himself into waking relations with the physical universe. Physical, nervous and sensory reactions are his means for entering into that relation.

¶ He,—but who is he? The mental being in his mentality.

Who is it that feels himself to be separate from the world or things in the universe to be outside his being? Not the Spirit, for the Spirit contains the universe, creates and combines all relations. All personalities act in the one spirit, as our own multiple personalities act in one being. One spiritual being is their continent, they are not its constituents, but its outer results and the diverse representative selves of its consciousness and action.

Not, either, in the supramental being. For the supramental being is one with the spirit in its original or basic consciousness, in its idea-consciousness it is ideally comprehensive of cosmic things or, if we must speak in terms of space, commensurate with the universe. The supramental being with one action of his Idea-self can regard universal being as his object of will and knowledge. That attitude is the seed of mind. It can regard it as contained in itself and itself contained in it, and in that way know and govern it. But it can, too, like Spirit in its real action know all things by identity and govern all things by identity. Externality of being does not enter into supramental experience.

Supermind can see mind externalising objects; it can itself take a particular viewpoint fronting objects but it is in itself that it fronts them, as we front our subjective operations in mind. It does not regard them as something outside its own being, as we regard physically objects.

Mind is a delegation from supermind, which primarily regards existence as an object fronting its vision. Mental being also need not regard the universe as quite separate from or outside its own being. Subliminal mentality is capable by extension of a comprehensive relation with cosmic things and of entering into unity with the universe. Mind's starting-point is not a containing universal vision or a knowledge by identity, but an individualised viewpoint from which it sees the universe. Still mind can arrive at a sort of containing vision, a mentalised cosmic consciousness.

What then compels embodied mind to see objects externally and by separation? It is compelled by the fact of physical embodiment. Body is a self-limitation of conscious being by which mind is rigidly bound down to its own tendency of separative individuation.

Body, including all physical formations from the atom upwards, is a device of Nature for the extreme of conscious individuation. Empirically it is immaterial whether it is an image created by consciousness or a real substance of being. For practical purposes we may take it as a substantial formation. In fact body is a knot of conscious being built up by its own energy, instinct with nervous or subnervous life, because the energy is in Ignorance actually a living energy cognizing and cognized by subconscious or superficially conscious sense, because the energy is in a constant inherent reality a conscious energy. It is a knot indivisible in reality from universal Consciousness and Force and Substance but for a certain empirical utility of selective action separative rather than separate. Body, not really separate, is limited by subconscious instinct of separation and energetic tendency of separation, but not capable of effecting real separation. All its movements are a practical result of selective experience and selective action which is based on a phenomenon of separate physical being.

Body is separated from other bodies by intervention of universal matter, but both of the separate bodies are one with the indivisible intervening matter, therefore not separate in reality, but indivisibly connected in energy, and one matter in fundamental reality.

Put otherwise, two bodies are images or formations of one indivisible ethereal space, which is in reality one indivisible movement of material energy, life energy, mind energy.

This inseparable connection and fundamental unity of bodies becomes of immense importance when we examine the relation of the appearance of consciousness to its reality.

Mind in body has to begin from the separation proper to body. Embodied mind is bound down in its root-action to a separative view of the universe. This is its waking view; subliminally, whether in subconscious mentality or where it approaches or touches the superconscient being, it is capable of bridging this artificial separation.

Taking this separative basis of waking consciousness for itself and for a reality, the house of imprisoned awareness from which it looks at the world, it is bound to see objects as external to this awareness and this conscious vision. Embodied mind is as if a walled house were to have a thinking and — [illegible] (air and either) soul and look at things not in itself as things outside — [illegible] window, (the senses) receive the touches of the outside air (nervous life-impacts) as if other than the air in itself; even its own ether as other than the rest of ether (my soul and other souls). This is the self and not-self of our mentality.

Mind subliminal is able, though not normally habituated, to bridge the gulf between self and not-self; where it approaches the superconscient, this gulf lessens and conscience of oneness grows upon the being.

Body is only the instrument and basis of this extreme separative individuation, not its first cause. Mind itself is a prior cause; but mentality in itself need not be rigidly separative: especially, subliminal mind has a large integrating power. Mind in itself is only the basis of a relatively separative plurality; mind in body increases this relation into a phenomenon of absolutely separative plurality.

From this basis of externalising individuation and separative plurality waking mental consciousness in the physical universe commences its operations.

¶ Psychology is the knowledge of consciousness and its operations.

A complete psychology must be a complex of the science of the mind, its operations and its relations to life and body, with intuitive and experimental knowledge of the nature of mind and its relations to supermind and spirit.

A complete psychology cannot be a pure natural science, but must be compound of science and metaphysical knowledge.

This necessity arises from the difference between natural or physical sciences and psychology.

A physical science is a knowledge of physical processes which leads inevitably to action and use of physical processes. The scientist may only regard scientific truth and not utility; but he can find only truth of the process of things, not truth of the nature of things. His discoveries bring about inevitably an utility for action; for all truth of process is an utility for action. Even when not the aim of science, process and utility are the soul and body of physical science. Matter itself is only an utility of Spirit or Being or Nature for physical process and action. Material energy is an instrumental dynamis for that utility or else an original dynamis which has no other sense of its operations. We get beyond to a higher sense only when we get beyond material to mental, psychical and spiritual energy, to mind, soul and spirit.

Debatable it is whether if we knew the real essence of matter and the basic, not only the apparent, relations of mind, soul and spirit to matter and material operations, we could not arrive at an infinitely more potent use of physical process and operations. But in any case these things cannot be discovered by physical science; it has its limits and cannot exceed its limits.

Psychology may begin as a natural science, but it deals already with superphysical and must end in a metaphysical enquiry. If one side of the process it studies and its method of enquiry is physical, the other and more important is non-physical; it is a direct observation of mental operations by mind without any regard to their physiological meaning, support, substratum or instrumentation.

If this is in the first place a study of process and involves an utility for psychological action, yet what it leads to inevitably is not that action but an enquiry into the nature of mental consciousness.

This necessity arises from the immediate perception by mind of something beyond and behind its operations, some energy of hidden consciousness greater than our apparent mentality. To know what that is, we have to resort to a metaphysical enquiry.

Consciousness is itself found to be not essentially a process,—although in mind it appears as a process, but the very nature of self-existent being. Being or the Self of things can only be known by metaphysical—not necessarily intellectual—knowledge.

This self-knowledge has two inseparable aspects, a psychological knowledge of the process of Being, a metaphysical knowledge of its principles and essentiality.

We find that one of these principles of being is energy. Energy is an eternal and inherent power of conscious being. Since all energy is convertible to action, this knowledge also contains a side of psychological and spiritual utility,—eventually perhaps even, since life and body are results of the energy of being and supports of its action, of vital and physical utility.

Two great utilities open before psychology. We may acquire the possibility of a greater being, consciousness and energy. We may open up the possibility and discover the psychical means or process of becoming consciously one with our original self-existent Being, with God, the Absolute, the Transcendence. To lead up to these possibilities is the aim of Vedantic psychology.

¶ All psychology must result in and every complete statement of psychological truth must have for its frame a double schema of existence into which the facts it deals with must fall, a descending scale and an ascending scale.

The simplest elementary psychology deals with three notes of a limited scale,—the body and physical field and its impact, the life and body and biological and physiological processes, the mental being and its conscious experience and action. This is a scale of ascension.

¶ The nature of the physical field is the first fact; it determines everything else; it gives the impacts which awake the consciousness, the impressions, images, subjects which are its matter, the starting-point and basis of all its conceptions, the body which is its support, instrument, fulcrum of action, the physical occasion of the sense of self.

Everything appears to be in the body or by the body and either for the body or for the I-sense in the body.

The body seems to be the principal if not the only cause or determinant of individual consciousness.

What is not of the body is of the physical field outside the body.

Whatever is in the consciousness seems not to be of the physical field, yet appears to be derived from it, to be a resultant, development or deformation from physical experience.

¶ The life in the body is the necessary modification of the first fact of material being, without whose intervention consciousness is unable to manifest in any material form. The atom is a form of matter, the stone is a material body, but life in these things is either nil or not developed to the point where manifestation of consciousness becomes possible. Consciousness in the atom and the stone is either latent, non-manifest to us, suppressed, potential or nil.

Life in any degree is not sufficient for the manifestation of mental consciousness. A certain high degree of it or else a certain indispensable kind of organisation is needed for this third tone of the scale. Plants are living, even in a degree intensely living, they have a nervous organisation, but consciousness is either nil or latent, non-manifest at least to us, suppressed or else of another kind than ours, a submental nervous consciousness and not mentality.

Life supplies certain biological conditions and certain physiological processes which physically underlie the operations of conscious mental being.

Life gives the intermediate dynamic link between mind and body.

Life has two operations which serve the purpose of mentality, a necessary life power in the nervous apparatus and a capacity of instrumental development and modification. Without the power of life in the nervous apparatus consciousness in the body is impossible; without the power of developing modification, it might exist as in the lower animals, but it could not expand as in man.

The nervous apparatus is the initial biological fact necessary to mentality. Life power consists not of the nervous system, which is a physical element, but of a new power or energy of which the system is the vehicle,—the power of nervous communication, nervous charge, nervous discharge. This power is not sufficient to create mentality, for the plant too possesses them, yet does not appear to be a mental being, but it is the first condition of embodied mentality.

A power of biological and physiological development is the secondary, continuative factor necessary to farther evolution of mentality. Once the nervous vital power appears in material body, it shows a biological power of developing a more complex physical instrumentation for a more complex nervous activity. Once it has attained a certain complexity of physical instrumentation, life seems able indefinitely to refine in some subtle way its action of nervous power so as to support a more and more fine and complex action of mentality.

How far this development of mentality can go and how far it is dependent on the physical apparatus and the nervous action is one of the capital questions of psychology.

¶ Mental being, power and operation of mental consciousness is the third note of the scale of being.

Mind cannot certainly be said to be constituted of life and body, nervous action and reaction in a physical body. Nervous action does not appear to constitute of itself consciousness, any more than physical impact and consequent atomic disturbance appears of itself to constitute nervous action. As a correspondent or resultant nervous communication, charge and discharge is necessary to manifest life, so a resultant or correspondent conscious action,—sensation, perception, thought, conscious motivating impulsion, desire, intention, will—are necessary to manifest mind.

Mind may or may not be an exact result, reflection or correspondence of life-action in body, life thinking itself out in body, body living and thinking out its experience in mind, but it is not the same as life and body.

Life is a new or second power emerging from or in material energy. Mind is a new or third power emerging from or in the life-energy.

¶ But this is only the ascending scale.

Mind is not only awakened by life-action in the body at a certain evolutionary pitch of its operations; mind reacts upon and in certain ways uses for its own characteristic purpose, modifies by its will to act and increase the life-action and the ways of the body.

Mind is not limited in its thoughts by the life and the body. There is an action in it which is more than a creative stress of life, an attempt to image supraphysical realities, which we may dismiss as an illusion or a result of abnormal physiological states, but may also follow as first clues to a greater truth and possibly a higher tone or tones of the scale of being.

In that case, mind appears as a larger thing than life and material being. Though apparently an evolution from life and the body, it may have been in reality a prior power, life and body only its occasions and means for self-manifestation on the material plane of being.

At any rate, psychology has to regard the scale not only from the upward point of view of body creating life, life creating mind, but from the downward point of view of mind creating new life in body.

Evidently mind is a greater thing, higher than life and body. In that case, besides the ascending scale of the lower rising to a highest possibility, we must regard a possibility of the descending scale, the highest reality involving itself in the lower conditions of being.

But the question arises whether mind itself is the highest possibility or the highest reality.

¶ Vedantic psychology explores the idea and intuition of a higher reality than mind.

The intuition can only be verified by psychological experience exceeding the normal action of mind. This experience may lead to constantly ascending intuitions verified by an ascent of experience to some utmost of being.

Beyond mind psychological experience finds another power of energy, another note in the scale of being. This we will call the supermind. This supermind lives and acts natively in a domain of experience of which the mind becomes aware by a reflective experience and calls vaguely spirit or spiritual being.

Spirit is found to have three tones of its being. Triune, it makes each successively a power of its energy, a status of spiritual experience and form of its action. Triune, they are inseparable, but one or other can be so stressed as to appear a leading principle.

But we have to note three essential facts about spirit:—

Spirit is infinite consciousness, even when it dwells upon finite formulations of conscious being.

Awareness of spirit is infinite self-awareness.

All its three essential principles must have this character of infinity.

Infinite self-conscious bliss is the first; infinite self-conscious energy is the second; infinite self-conscious existence the third principle of spirit. Existence, consciousness, bliss are the three tones of

infinity, the three basic colours of the Absolute.

The ascending scale of being presents then seven notes, matter, life, mind, supermind, bliss self, self of conscious energy, self of primary conscious existence.

But the experience we get as we ascend in the scale leads us to the discovery that what in evolution appears subsequent is prior in reality. Life evolves in matter, but was pre-existent to matter, latent, omnipresent, waiting for matter to be ready to be manifest—which it does when the movement of energy reaches a certain intensity.

Mind evolves in embodied life, but was pre-existent to matter and life, latent, omnipresent, involved, a hidden cause of action, waiting for life and matter to be ready for its manifestation, which comes when the movement of energy has reached a greater intensity. So supermind is prior to mind, latent, omnipresent, involved even in matter and life, a hidden cause of action and waits for mind to be ready for its manifestation, and since supermind acts only in spirit, spirit too must be there, pre-existent, latent, omnipresent, involved, a hidden cause of action. But spirit is not dependent on the evolution of supermind for its manifestation; it can appear to our mentality, to our life consciousness, even to our physical mind.

The true nature and — [illegible] of this process appear in the descending scale. There we see the true development of the universe.

Spirit of self-being develops self of conscious energy which supports its self of cosmic bliss, which acts on the finite by supermind, which offers its differentiations to mind, relates them in life, fixes them phenomenally in body or material substance. This is the descending scale by which universe is created or made sensible to embodied soul.

But in the material world, all is first involved in matter and has to find itself by a development from material being and with material being as its support and basis. The evolving process of this self-discovery of the universal existence produces the phenomenon of evolution of higher and greater from lower and lesser principles which we call the ascending scale of being.

This phenomenon baffling now to the reason becomes a self-evident proposition when we observe the descending scale and find involution to have preceded evolution. This phenomenon arises inevitably from the nature of our being.

¶ Schema of being has to be formulated from these two points of view, the result, though data of experience being at first taken as a working hypothesis, is subject to verification. We follow actually the ascending scale, but the descending scale has first to be shown, as otherwise the possible explanations of psychological phenomenon which result from this line of experience, would be unintelligible and would have either to be excluded or the whole enquiry restated — [illegible] in detail in the end.

All questions of the reality or unreality of the world, its fundamental or ultimate purpose or want of purpose, the destiny of the soul, must be left over till the psychological data have been understood. To proceed otherwise would be to determine them by metaphysical reasoning; but the object before us is to arrive at them by the road of psychology.

The whole psychology of Vedanta depends upon this double scale and without it could have no complete scientific verification. Because it exists experience of consciousness can give a clue to the nature of world-existence. Metaphysical reasoning by itself could only give us philosophical opinions, psychological verification makes Vedantic truth a firm guide in life. It gives us a tangible ladder of ascension by which we rise to our highest truth of being.



Have faith in the Divine Grace, in spite of everything it will lead you to your true goal—the Divine.

EXPRESSIONS OF AUROVILLE

[The following is a portion of a report prepared by David Wickenden and other Aurovilians for the U.N. Habitat conference in Vancouver in May-June 1976. Further passages will be presented in future issues.]

Three main areas of work have gradually coalesced during the physical manifestation of the city. Though they operate in physical independence from the others, each having its own unique direction and character, together along with a fourth—the work on Bharat Nivas, the Indian pavilion in the International Zone—they constitute an essential unity; each represents a specific approach to the building of the city, each complements the other and is necessary to the balance of the whole.

1. There is the widespread and dispersed reforestation and agricultural work of the Green Belt;

2. The concentrated and consistent work on the city's centre;

3. The many-leveled and loosely held together activities that comprise the preparatory or first phase of Auromodele.

Interpenetrating and integrating these three is the self-conscious educational process occurring on all levels throughout Auroville, though focused specifically in a number of school and child-oriented environments, the crucially important interchange with the local villagers—architecture, ecology, economics, government—all pervade the total fabric of Auroville life in its triune weave of manifestation.

1. **The Green Belt.** The Green Belt, a circle of land 1.5 kms wide, was conceived not as a kind of buffer zone outside the central urban area, nor as a tract of land set aside for future expansion, but as an integral aspect of the township as a whole that would dynamically interpenetrate with the civic circle both physically and psychologically. The lines that exist now on the drawings are for the sake of convenience: rigid demarcations do not exist in fact.

The Green Belt will be a forested area of parks and wild-life preserves and an agricultural zone whose purpose is manifold. First, it is to transcend the human settlement dichotomy of urban vs. rural environments and create a new and integral harmony of life where nature and man would share in the creation of a balanced, harmonious environment with a single, whole consciousness. Second, it is an attempt to reclaim a virtually devastated ecosystem, victim of man's previous unconsciousness, and to slowly and comprehensively collaborate with the land to create a new micro-climate for the area. Third, it is to provide an agricultural base supporting Auroville's attempt to become self-sufficient.

The action taken toward realising the Green Belt has been a more or less spontaneous dispersal of a few groups of individuals to different quarters in order to begin the work on a small scale. Surrounded by infant forests, existing as oases in the surrounding desert, the communities these individuals formed exist largely as independent experiments in reforestation strategy, agricultural method, village relations, community environment, and organisation of life. At the same time, however, all are united by a common ideal, a common work and are in communication with the others. With each proceeding along its own lines and in its own way, they form together a many-sided approach to the overall aims, helping to complement the efforts of each other.

The first community of Forecomers, the first reforestation community of Fertile, the communities of Utilité, Pitchandikulam, Two Banyans, Nishta, Discipline, Kottakarai, Service Farm, Mango Grove, Hope and Auro-orchard have all evolved some kind of roots in the land and each in its own way is creating the future Green Belt.

Utilité is a small, concentrated community with a permanent core of 2 or 3 and a floating population of from 7 to 15. The living ideal here is perfection in works; the progressive creation and maintenance of well-ordered, clean and beautiful environment with a balance between work with trees, flowers and gardens, vegetables, herbs, melons and also more large-scale field work with local grains.

It is open to visitors and serves as an introduction for many persons entering Auroville life.

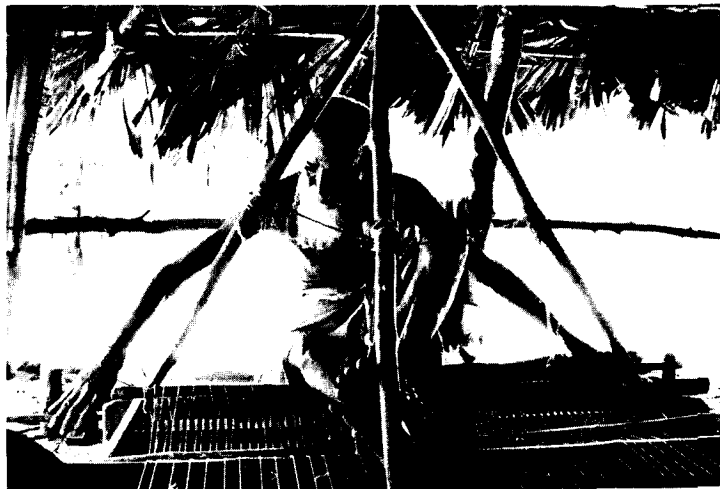
Fertile and its surrounding area embraces the homes of community members scattered across a wide geographical area; its characteristic mode of growth has been expansion. In between Nishta (Devotion) at one end of the tract and Aurogreen at the other, a considerable belt of forest has been planted. Here the first results of large-scale afforestation will be seen. The work has been impeded, however, by a need to become agriculturally self-sufficient due to lack of financial assistance, which has drawn energy away from the primary aim. Aurogreen itself is evolving into an integrated project of afforestation, fruit orchards, field cultivation, water conservation, and dairy undertaken in collaboration with the Indian government and Tamil villagers.

Auro-orchard began as an exclusively organic experiment in large-scale orchard and vegetable-crop cultivation. It has grown into a relatively high-capital operation involving 6 bore-wells and an extensive irrigation and sprinkler system. This has proved to be quite effective, but in order to survive, Auro-orchard has chosen to sell most of its produce outside of Auroville and to supplement its organic methods with some inorganic spraying.

Kottakarai is involved in diverse activities of field cultivation, afforestation, leather working, batik, silk-screening and other crafts in conjunction with local villagers. It also operates an Ayurvedic clinic for the neighbouring village.

Pitchandikulam has been an exploration into the outer environment and inner ecology of the local Tamils. Through the outward expression in the community of new and changing forms, new trees and plants, new structures, all using the rhythms and materials offered by the environment, a communication has been established that has sought to release both Tamil and newcomer alike from traditional patterns of seeing and thinking, and opening new avenues of understanding and mutual development.

At *Mango Grove* a special environment has begun to grow amidst an old mango grove and on a peninsula of bare red clay surrounded by deep canyons that cleave the land and [whose monsoon waters] carry it yearly towards the sea. An effort is being made to reclaim that land, and a large-scale experiment in the cultivation of high-nutrition algae for animal and human consumption has been initiated. And in a year's time, with concentrated effort, a garden has begun to blossom. In the activities of the flower garden, a vegetable garden, kitchen, poultry, dairy, and field cultivation a concentrated whole environment is being prepared. Though the work is focused particularly in Mango Grove and the Matrimandir nursery, an important activity throughout Auroville is the conscious working with plants and flowers, seeking to help release their potential, beauty and nourishment into the environment and establish a deeper link with their consciousness.



Mat weaver, Auroville 1976.



Jardin d'enfants, Aspiration, 21 February 1976.

2. The Centre. "The Matrimandir wants to be the symbol of the Divine's answer to man's aspiration for perfection, the union with the Divine manifesting itself in a progressive human unity. The Matrimandir will be the soul of Auroville. The sooner the soul is there, the better for everyone, especially for Aurovilians. Programme: Research through experience of the Supreme Truth, a Life Divine, but NO RELIGIONS" (The Mother).

Mankind has been developing over an extended period of time an imposing set of outward means, instruments and ways of living geared to the furtherance of his expansive civilisation, creating a situation in which he stands to be crushed by the unbridled magnitude of these very means and instruments. The sign of a new humanity is a reversal of viewpoint, a shift in orientation from "outside" to "inside"; and understanding that it is by inner knowledge and means alone that the world and man can be changed and mastered without being crushed.

Man's traditional approach toward community planning and building has generally taken two lines. On one hand, most human habitats have been and continue to be brought about by more or less random, haphazard growth motivated by the uneven stress of circumstance and various shifting local economic, material, social and political pressures and considerations. The settlements built in this fashion—and even those that have to a certain extent been "planned"—have no central force, no unified principle around which all the other forces can organise themselves; man is left with a scattered grouping of peoples and structures which is almost impossible to coordinate and harmonise. In reaction to this has been the other tendency, towards rigid developmental control and community planning. But this attempt to establish in a rational and sane manner the organisation of man's outer environment—the endeavour to establish the forms first and to fit in the life and soul afterwards—has proved inelastic, sterile and contrary to nature's mutable patterns; life revolts against it.

Auroville's aim and method of growth in all areas seeks to be from within out, to achieve a synthesis of planned growth with organic development, a framework within which the spontaneous individual and collective creative efforts can not only be encouraged but seen to be an essential contribution to the evolving totality of the city. In this process there is need for an integrating and coordinating action, a central unifying force which is yet wide and supple enough to allow for the various changing expressions of life. This central force has been given expression in Auroville through its Charter and is finding concrete manifestation in the building of the city's Centre.

The first priority in Auroville and the central focus of all activity is the construction of the Matrimandir, the Pavilion of Truth, the city's centre and soul. From the outside the Matrimandir will ap-

pear as a huge globe borne by four pillars reaching deep into the earth, opening at the top to receive and focus the light of the sun. The Matrimandir will contain three chambers, the first two leading upwards to the third, the central room, a dodecagon nearly 30 meters wide. The essentials of the structure were seen in a series of visions by the Mother; the physical rendering of her sketch was effected by a small team of Auroville architects.

The Matrimandir is symbolic of and will embody the central consciousness, the soul of the collectivity; out of the Consciousness concentrated at the Centre will flow the constant renewal of the city's life and its outward expressions, and grow the inner direction guiding and unifying the outer activity. But more, the Matrimandir is itself expressive of the large spiritual endeavour to achieve the union of spirit and matter, of the power calling forth from within the depths of things the consciousness-force hidden there to meet and unite with a descending consciousness-force from above. However, the Matrimandir is most notably not a religious building; it is a "temple" without a priest, a place of worship void of rites and rituals, a space unobstructed by theology and dogma—a universal form simply, for a universal aspiration. And perhaps it is finally above all and despite whatever we might try to say about it, a mystery and a symbol that we cannot fully penetrate, a form whose many meanings and suggestions we can never exhaust, whose full significance we cannot wholly grasp.

The landscape that is beginning to take shape around the Matrimandir will be expressive in its moulding of a spiritual wholeness; symbolic in form, embraced by a lake and system of waterways, it will seek the direct expression of different but related qualities of higher consciousness. This will be most evident in the 12 inner gardens close to the Matrimandir, which will evoke the central powers of divine manifestation through an interaction of flowering plants, bushes and trees. The Mother has seen certain qualities of consciousness within hundreds of flowers brought to her and, based on those experiences and other research elsewhere, the work has been underway for sometime to find the true nature of plants and the conditions and ways in which their life can best develop.

And so it was that, against all rationale, all practicality in the conventional sense, and in the middle of a desert, a handful of Aurovilians began in early 1971 to build the Matrimandir. Under a blazing sun they dug into the hardened clay with small hand shovels, picks and crowbars, removing the earth in flat pans and wheelbarrows, passing the red earth from hand to hand for the hollowing of an immense crater to be 10½ meters deep and 50 meters across at the rim. After several months it was felt that the work needed to be accelerated and in November a host of 400 paid village labourers joined the Aurovilians to help chip and haul the earth away. By February 21, 1972, excavation was completed. The base had been found: 20,000 cubic meters of earth had been displaced.



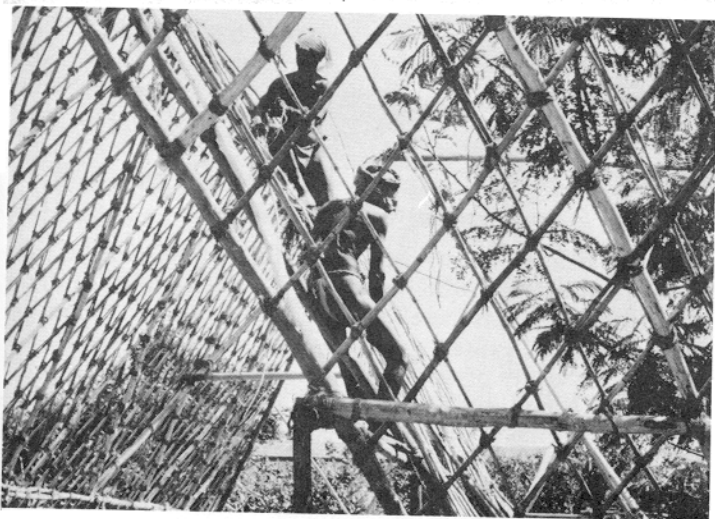
Auroville children (l. to r.): Aurovarata, Gracaurore, Aurokarl, Auroson.

Now began the reascent. A concrete platform was laid at the bottom of the pit, implanted with four arching pillars rising back up to ground level. Upon the pillars rose slowly four paired ribs curving upward to join finally at the apex of the sphere, completing the outer skeleton. To come now is the construction of the interconnecting 3 tie slabs serving as chamber floors, the chambers themselves, the connecting passageways and stairwells, construction of the exosphere and the varied, complex details connected both with it and the content of the interior levels.

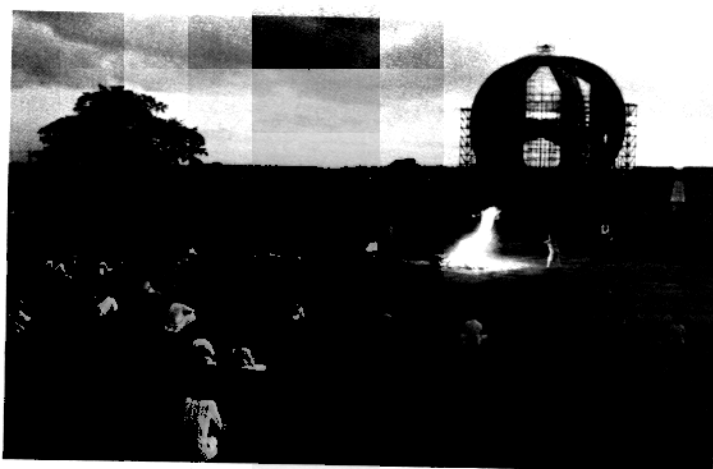
While a concentrated and dedicated core of workers has done all of the intricate, demanding work of preparation and execution, on the days of concreting many come from the other communities, children as well as adults, to share in the work and atmosphere of concentrated collective work for the sake of the community's highest ideal. For it is here, amidst the hammering and pounding, in the sweating labour among the 3 piles of gravel, rock and sand, in the loud churning and clanking of the mixer, in the delicate maneuvering, pouring and handling of the cement high up on the planks and scaffolding that the aim of Auroville's collectivity can be most directly experienced.

To begin the preparation for the work of the creation of the Centre's gardens, a nursery was begun on February 21, 1970. With no water and a barren patch of land which later expanded to 6 acres, the first 4 Aurovilians found themselves gardening with two barrels of water a day hauled by bullock. Months passed in this precarious fashion until a pipe line could be rigged to a well some distance away. Its 1,200 gallons per hour barely permitted selective water, no irrigation. With the resulting lack of ground cover, each plant had to be banded, mulching as much as possible. During the summers of the power cuts during daylight hours, watering continued till midnight. With no fencing, no initial protection, the first planting was wiped out by the cows.

From this laborious initiation the Nursery has grown into a well-shaded and peaceful retreat harbouring areas for seed propagation, cutting and transplanting, ferns and begonias, gazebos and arches for creepers, a small greenhouse, hibiscus gardens, lotus and waterlily ponds, a tree farm integrating rare trees of India and the tropics, and others. Monthly observation charts are kept on all the plants, now numbering over 20,000. A small reference library has been started along with a training program for young Tamilians interested in gardening, and attempts have been made to upgrade and refine the trees and shrubs, propagate new varieties and introduce new flora to the region. In building up a collection of many hundred species, a worldwide seed exchange has been actively undertaken with the result of a growing representation of the whole vegetal kingdom in Auroville. Work has begun on one of the outer gardens of the Matrimandir and an extensive program of land contouring in that area has also started.



Building a keet and bamboo roof, Auroville.



28 February 1977 (Auroville's birthday). Dawn meditation at the amphitheatre at Centre. In the background are the Banyan Tree and the Matrimandir.

The Centre as a whole will be a place of silence, of a complete concentration of the whole environment on the Consciousness-Force that is the community's goal and *raison d'être*. In a triangle in this area stands an ancient banyan tree, geographical centre of Auroville; the Urn of Unity, where the soils of 124 nations were placed at Auroville's foundation; and the Matrimandir. The Centre grows into a potent symbol, the axis of the evolutionary force of consciousness and the higher nature of existence—Sat, Chit, and Ananda—in its three-fold truth of individual, universal, and transcendent manifestation, by which turns the wheel of a new creation.

3. **Auromodele.** "The purpose of life in Auromodele is to learn to live in Auroville, to make all the experiments necessary for learning to live in Auroville" (The Mother).

The third major approach toward the manifestation of the city that has sought expression thus far is Auromodele, perhaps the most complex and ambiguous of the three.

As with the Green Belt and the Centre, its purpose has been clearly stated; the concept, however, leaves considerable room for interpretation; and several divergent viewpoints on the true nature of Auromodele have emerged. The concept indicates an approach to the creation of a human habitat through an initial experimental process covering all aspects of the future individual and collective life, social, political, economic organisations and relationships and so on which would be used to form the experimental base for the building of the city body proper.

In one sense Auromodele is that process of collective living going on everywhere in Auroville and even outside physical Auroville where collectivities are attempting to move toward the ideals of the Charter; this has been one major interpretation. In fact, every community does represent a certain experiment in which ways of living are being worked out for the future. How to organise work, how to find the harmony between the individual life and the collective, what material relationships and forms work best under the physical conditions of Auroville are all being worked out daily in every living place. But the Auromodele concept seems to imply something more specific and it was toward this end that the physical conception was made.

This conception, rendered by Auroville's chief architect, has been planned to hold 2,000 people in an integrated urban area of relatively high density, several kilometers outside the proposed area. It would require a technology of a high order to build and maintain. The vision here is of a concentrated, sophisticated prototype community set aside and developed in order to make the necessary initial experiments in a concentrated way. In order to push ahead toward a new order and society, one must pass through a period in which all the elements of all the different phases, past, present, and future, are thrown together and then slowly and almost

one by one taken up, exhausted and rejected or integrated. The function of Auromodele community would be to concentrate and thus intensify and accelerate this process.

One interpretation has been that Auromodele means solely this particular physical conception and the tract of land that has been set aside for its construction. And somewhat outside this proposed area, next to the Tamil village of Kuilayapam, is the community of *Aspiration*, the largest Auroville settlement, holding around 150 persons. *Aspiration* (including the more widespread but neighbouring centres of *New Creation* and *Udayam*, the handicrafts community of *Fraternity* and the agricultural community of *Mango Grove*) has spontaneously drawn to itself the seed elements of an international township and it has thus been seen by some to be in itself the Auromodele experiment or at least the initial phase of it.

Aspiration was begun in October 1969 by a small group of Europeans, predominantly French, who had been attracted to the possibility of Auroville and had traveled overland to the fledgling city together. Slowly the first 36 huts were built that year in bolted wook-frame construction set in low brick walls, covered by pyramid-shaped thatched roofs. By December of 1970 the population had increased to 65 and the cultures had diversified. A construction and mechanical workshop, *Toujours Mieux* ("Always Better"), had begun and preparations were initiated for the construction of the government-financed school buildings. The second phase of 16 family cottages commenced and 35 children had begun gathering to explore Auroville's first educational environment in a hub by the canyon.

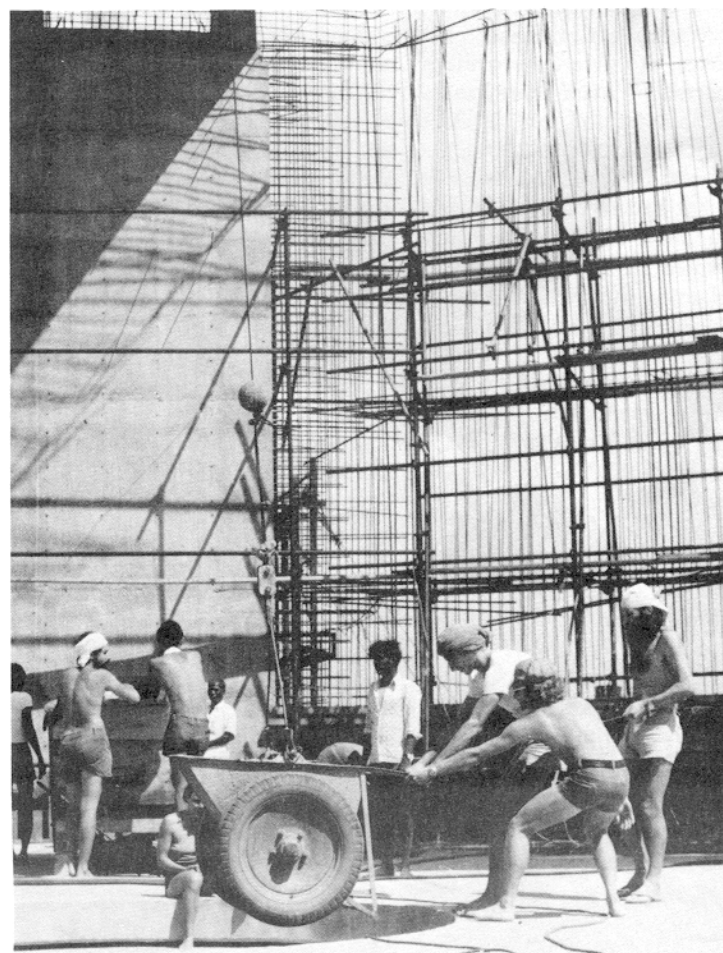
The community continued to grow gradually. A central keet cafeteria was completed in January of 1971, a woodworking unit formed, a printing press was constructed and began operation; the shrubs and trees and flowers that had been planted grew, softening the harshness of the environs; the permanent school buildings took shape and the small-scale industries and services slowly gained momentum. A hand laundry was started, a small bakery began to evolve the first of its multi-grained biscuits and sourdough loaves. A handmade paper factory started in April 1973; the architects moved their office from Pondicherry to the community that summer; and in August the small Health Centre servicing both those living in *Aspiration* and in the adjacent village of Kuilapalayam opened. *Fraternity* handicrafts center was begun in 1972. The agricultural and educational community of *Mango Grove* was begun down the slope from the main community and across the canyon in 1974, and the educational living environments of *New Creation* and *Udayam* ("Dawn" in Tamil) also took shape.

Today there are approximately 150 persons of many different nationalities living in the Auromodele area, almost half of whom are children, in addition to the large Tamil village of Kuilapalayam.



Its atmosphere is notably different from the other rugged pioneer communities of the Green Belt and the [Matrimandir] workers' camp at the Centre. Though itself rustic by any conventional Western standard, *Aspiration*, with its large number of residents and greatest range of work activities and services, is more urban in spirit than any of the others and may contain within it the potential for further evolution into a more densely populated and more highly developed civic community.

It has also become the place where the problems of collective international living have become most transparently manifest. The proper balance between the individual and the collective life has not yet been discovered. The tendency here as elsewhere has been to ward a somewhat excessive individualism and lack of real community life. In addition, the community has become a focus of problems of small nationality clusters, holding within it a certain lack of cultural integration and communication. Relations with Kuilayapalam have also proved difficult and have yet to be harmoniously developed. *Aspiration* today seems indeed to be moving toward fulfilling the proposed role for Auromodele as a special laboratory where the major difficulties can be faced, experienced and dealt with.



Aurovilians working on the Matrimandir.

The question of when Auroville will be ready to proceed from the Auromodele stage to Auroville proper, of knowing when all the necessary experiments have been made, remains of course unanswered. But the existence of a physical Auromodele does not exclude the possibility of working in the inner city area itself, as the work at the Centre and *Bharat Nivas* indicates. Auromodele, whatever outward form it will finally take, will undoubtedly retain its function, continuing indefinitely as an experimental area and focal point as the city grows; as such it would continue to provide the larger body an ongoing service and utility.



In the Integral Yoga, there is no distinction between the Sadhana and the outward life; it is in each and every moment of the daily life that the Truth must be found and practised.

REPORT ON THE MATRIMANDIR GARDENS

[The following is from a report prepared by Narad and other Matrimandir Gardens workers on the development of the Gardens and the nursery from inception to date. It will be continued in the next issue.]

Initial Phase 1970-77

To begin this report and establish our research on a higher basis we must look to the words of the Mother and know something of her relationship with plants and flowers. She speaks of the vegetal kingdom: "Have you ever watched a forest with all its countless trees and plants struggling to catch the light—twisting and trying in a hundred ways to be in the sun? That is precisely the feeling of aspiration in the physical—the urge, the movement, the push towards the light. Plants have more of it in their physical being than man. Their whole life is a worship of light. Light is, of course, the material symbol of the Divine, and the sun represents, under material conditions, the supreme Consciousness. The plants feel it quite distinctly in their own simple, blind way. Their aspiration is intense, if you know how to become aware of it." And again, of the movement of love in plants: "The movement of love is not limited to human beings and it is perhaps less distorted in worlds other than the human world. Look at the flowers and trees. When the sun sets and all becomes silent, sit down for a moment and put yourself into communion with Nature. You will feel, rising from the earth, from below the roots of the trees and mounting upward and coursing through their fibres, up to the highest outstretching branches, the aspiration of an intense love and longing—a longing for something that brings light and gives happiness—for the light that is gone and they wish to have back again. There is a yearning so pure and intense that if you can feel the movement in the trees, your own being too will go up in an ardent prayer for the peace and light and love that are unmanifested here." These and many other illuminating statements are found in the book *Flowers and Their Messages*, which can serve as the starting point for our understanding of the significance of flowers and their relationship to man.

The work of building the Matrimandir Gardens will also proceed in this way, as in time we will see that "the whole creation will become more conscious; thus the vegetal kingdom will participate in this progress in accordance with its own nature" (The Mother). This initial participation can be felt even now, and at times witnessed. I have personally experienced the calm and protectiveness of a certain tree and its vibrations of healing. I have heard the call of another tree directing me to look at its first flower, a single blossom of ethereal blue. I have seen a species come into flower within a year when every reference work in our library stated that it would take 6 to 8 years or more! Certainly the vibrations of the flowers often penetrate through to our inner selves, awakening joy and aspiration, deepening peace and calm.

Possibly greater in importance than all the technical research will be the study of the messages of the flowers and the ways in which they are helping us to rise beyond the narrow limits of self. In the words of the Mother: "Perhaps the beauty of flowers too is a means used by Nature to awaken in human beings the attraction for the psychic."

The reports that follow are the record of the birth of a garden and its infancy. There are numerous lists of scientific names and data detailing the research completed to date. There is, however, another aspect, one that bears a mostly unspoken testimony to the collective growth and aspiration of Aurovilians from all parts of the world, whether they live with us permanently or have come to offer their energies for a few weeks or a few months, and that the love and the will they bring to build the Matrimandir, the soul of Auroville, in this dawn of the golden age. The Mother has written: "The Matrimandir will be the soul of Auroville. The sooner the soul is there, the better it will be for everybody and especially for the Aurovilians." . . .

In this report I should like to place in a clear perspective the major areas in which I feel the Matrimandir Gardens and subsequently all of Auroville can become a prototype of a consciously developed, balanced ecology. We can also manifest a living proof of the true harmony possible between man and his environment. A collaboration between concerned individuals and a sympathetic government aware of the need of returning the Motherland to health and fertility can be achieved by the sincere efforts of men of goodwill. . . .

History of the Matrimandir Nursery and Gardens

. . . Preparation for the future gardens began with the formation of a nursery on February 21, 1970. The site, located in a mango grove a few hundred yards west of the Banyan Tree at the center of the city was chosen because it provided the only shade and protection in the surrounding area. Among the first things planted in the nursery were thousands of seeds brought from California.

In the beginning 4 Aurovilians began working with a budget of \$20 per month, clearing the land, establishing a water supply, gathering the simple tools locally available, developing a working relationship with Tamil people living in the area, and learning about a completely new world of plants in the tropics. Though our present budget is nearly \$150 a month, just enough for the basic requirements of daily maintenance, the conditions which challenged the workers in the first years are still facing us today. The expansion and refinement which has taken place during the past years to enable us to meet and overcome these conditions has come in many ways: by the donation of funds and equipment by friends of Auroville in India and abroad and through the skills, energy, knowledge and goodwill of people who have been with us here, whether for several days or several years.

As recently as 100 years ago the broad area of coastline on which Auroville is situated was covered with dense tropical forests. Since the removal of these forests the land has suffered severe erosion of the topsoil and in areas where the topsoil remains it has been depleted of nutrients due to uncontrolled and excessive grazing and to a lack of knowledge of crop rotation, soil conservation and rebuilding methods. Over most of the area of the nursery, the surface is now red clay which bakes hard in dry weather and becomes a quagmire in the rainy season. Wherever a plant is put into the ground, whether a tree or an annual, a large pit or bed must be dug, the red clay removed and replaced with a mixture of topsoil hauled in by bullock cart and compost made by the slow accumulation and breaking down of leaves and other cuttings. The dense and always hungry populations of insects and rodents quickly developed a taste for the new, foreign species of plants being introduced as did the domestic but equally hungry herds of cows and goats which roam freely from the villages. In an effort to avoid adding chemicals to the already damaged ecological balance we try to control insects either by hand or by other, natural means. Cows and goats are somewhat easier as they can be guarded against by the erection of temporary thorn fences.

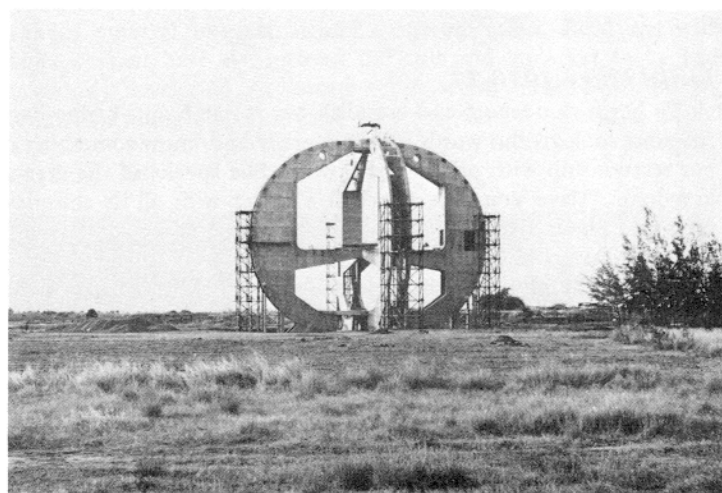
Initially one of the major projects was to lay a pipeline from a well 1,000 feet away to storage tanks in the nursery. Through the years this water system has been gradually refined and expanded so that it now includes two large storage tanks containing about 10,000 gallons and 4 sets of cement rings which store enough water above the ground to take care of the most critical watering needs by gravity during the frequent electricity failures. During the dry, hot season the pump at the well site must be kept running 20 hours a day in order to maintain the nursery. Since it is at this time of the year that we are affected by the widespread electricity shortages and cuts, we have had to purchase a diesel pump as an auxiliary at the well, and a kerosene pump as an alternative to the small electric pump at the storage tanks within the nursery. Water from these tanks is dispersed throughout the nursery by an underground pipe system designed by visitors from Holland and England. From these outlets the plants are watered by plastic hoses held together, since Indian hoses have no couplings, by wire and the persistence of the young Tamil boys who work with us. Makeshift though this system may be, it is remarkably efficient and has somehow sufficed to serve our expanding needs for the past 6 years. Now, however, we have reached the maximum capacity for our shallow well; to date the single well is serving several thousand plants on 6 acres.

When the attempt was made in the first year to introduce seeds brought from California, it was not realized that the work of collecting and introducing new species would become the most extensive work of the nursery. Efforts were first made to locate and visit places in India where there were established collections of plants, mostly botanic gardens originally planted by British horticulturists and botanists. The work done by these men is admirable and of invaluable use to us as we were able to see mature living examples of things described in the excellent books done by the indefatigable British botanists. The problem now became one of nomenclature and identification since, after the departure of the original collectors, the botanic gardens have suffered from a bureaucracy that has put them under the direction of men chosen for their government positions rather than their botanical knowledge. We soon realized that we would have to find more accurate sources of information and began collecting books that were to be the beginning of our growing library. Gradually, through trips to Bangalore, Delhi, Calcutta, and other places, plants already introduced or indigenous to India were identified and brought to the nursery for study. As long as space was available, one plant of each new species was put into the ground under the best possible growing conditions and weekly observations were made to record the growth, health, and characteristics of flowering, foliage, fruits, etc. For 3 years this information on young plants was augmented by monthly trips to several gardens in Madras and seasonal trips to Bangalore, where similar information is now being collected and entered on reference cards which will be kept in the library.

Beginning in January 1976, the work of collecting species from abroad took a great leap forward as a result of a letter sent for us by Matagiri to more than 300 botanic gardens and arboreta around the world giving a short introduction to Auroville and our work with plants, and including our Index Seminum, which lists seeds of more than 250 species growing here, many indigenous to India. This seed-exchange offer brought surprising responses from such countries as Sweden and Russia as well as tropical countries. Active correspondence has developed as a result with gardens in Australia, Hawaii, New Zealand, Africa, and several points in America, to name only a few. As we began receiving many rare species it became apparent that we needed to have more controlled conditions in which to cultivate and observe the results of the new introductions, and a small glass house was built. At about the same time a couple of orchid plants were acquired and also took up residence in the glass house. Since that time it seems that orchids have been showered upon us in monsoon proportions both as a result of collecting from

a nearby scrub jungle which is marked for removal by the government and by the generosity of people coming from America, Holland, and Brazil. The latest group, brought by friends from Brazil, numbered more than 200 plants, all carried on the flight in a huge box and arriving in perfect condition. The glass house is now bursting with orchids and a new glass house is planned to make room for the continuing work with seeds.

The library mentioned above has been another project of particular importance in the last year. The collection of books grew rapidly as a result of many generous donations in India and abroad and a separate library room with protective cabinets became necessary for the preservation of the books and so that they could be accessible to everyone. This has been completed just enough to be in use but finishing has stopped for lack of funds.



Matrimandir construction, July 1976.

In speaking at various times about her vision of the future gardens surrounding the Matrimandir, the Mother spoke very clearly about the presence of waterways in the landscape. This year, through the combined interest of workers here and friends in America, the many-faceted work of water gardening has begun with the collection of various aquatic plants and many beautiful water lilies. Hand in hand with this has been the beginning of water ecology studies, collection and observation of various kinds of fish and other water animals, and the experimental construction of a natural pond according to an ancient Chinese method. This method utilizes ordinary clay with a layer of organic matter sandwiched in between. As the organic matter decomposes, the bacteria fill the microscopic fissures in the clay and a completely watertight seal is effected. This creates a total natural setting which induces a spontaneous ecological balance. In the future we hope to experiment with modern sealing materials available in America which achieve the same results but require much less labor.

All of these activities taking place in the nursery, though seemingly diverse, have a single purpose, which is to provide a firm base in experience, knowledge and materials for the Matrimandir Gardens. The area of the gardens will eventually encompass approximately 125 acres in a wide circular belt surrounding the inner triangle of the city formed by the Matrimandir, the Banyan Tree, and the Lotus Urn. . . . Forming the structure of the sphere of the Matrimandir are 4 pillars facing the cardinal points. To each of these pillars the Mother gave the name of one of the four aspects of the Mother: North is Mahakali, East is Mahalakshmi, South is Maheshwari, and West is Mahasaraswati. To each of these aspects she also gave corresponding colors: Mahakali is red and gold, Mahalakshmi is pink, lavender, pale green, Maheshwari is gold and blue, and Mahasaraswati is red and white. According to the present outline, which is based on a sketch made by the Mother, the area closest to the center will be fairly open, containing only the waterways and the

12 gardens, which the Mother named Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, Light, Life, Power, Riches, Utility, Progress, Youth, Harmony, and Perfection, with the Garden of Unity surrounding the Banyan Tree. Outside of this inner area will be a ring of trees, shrubs and groundcover plants beginning with low trees widely spaced and becoming more dense and tall toward the outer circumference. The first trees to form this wooded belt were put into the ground on November 24, 1973, in the area extending from the pillar of Mahasaraswati. Since the winter of 1973-74, when the first large plantation was completed in the Mahakali quadrant, more than 700 trees have been planted in a continuing band into the area of Mahasaraswati and another large section in Maheshwari, where the normally flat land has been gently contoured to form low rolling hills. During the winter of 1975-76 several sections, including both sides of the present access road to the Matrimandir, have been planted linking the Mahasaraswati and Maheshwari areas. Development of the east side of Mahalakshmi awaits further land purchases.

Position and choice of the trees going into the outer gardens has followed only one exterior plan and that is the color guide that was given to each pillar by the Mother. The rest is done with a minimum of formal planning; preliminary studies are made of the possibilities for each area in an effort to become as familiar as possible with the characteristics and requirements of the plants but the actual placement is spontaneous. For each one of these trees the same preparation and care must be given as in the nursery. Pits must be dug and the red clay replaced by topsoil and compost. As the area is completely exposed to animals and weather, a protective

basket must be woven and placed around the plant until it is tall enough to survive alone. The water system consists of two relatively shallow wells and two storage tanks. From these tanks water is dispersed through underground pipes over much of the garden, but in outlying areas it must be carried by wheelbarrow and bullock cart. The work is challenging and the conditions and lack of equipment always a handicap, but the results more than compensate for this. In this year's unusually heavy monsoon rains we saw how even the initial contouring retained great quantities of water that usually run off, carrying inches of topsoil every year. After only 3 years many of the trees in the Mahakali area are more than 10 feet high and in many areas are already dotting the hills with spots of color. Each year new and greater numbers of birds are attracted to the protection of the trees. It is especially encouraging to see that so many of the new introduced species, many of which have been sent to us as a result of the seed-exchange program, have established themselves easily, obviously happy with their new home. But more fulfilling than all is to climb to the top of Matrimandir and to view from that height the future forest, now only small dots of green but already giving new life to the arid plain.

It is impossible to describe in words more than a surface image of any aspect of Auroville, for it is something living and unique which must be experienced by each one according to the truth of his own inner being. This is especially true of the Matrimandir and the life and work which surround it. We invite all of goodwill to share with us in any way in the manifestation of the soul of Auroville, the Matrimandir and the Gardens.

NEWS OF AUROVILLE

¶The impact of the recent Indian elections on Auroville and the committee appointed by the previous administration to help resolve some problems there has not yet been made clear. Mr. Habbu, the liaison officer for the committee and Auroville, has been spending time in Auroville talking with residents and has also been in New Delhi.

¶A special appeal has gone out for help in providing 1,800 square meters of white marble to line the inner chamber of the Matrimandir. It is to be imported from Italy at a cost of approximately \$36,500. Currently concretings are being done for the walls of the inner chamber. The floor of the chamber has been completed.

¶Serenité school, at Ashram Beach, at present has about 50 children from the fishing villages and is steadily expanding. Lessons are given under the village banyan tree by Aurovilians.

The children of the Aspiration schools have organized the work of securing the Pyramid (the building formerly used for science education) and its contents, and are planning to remodel it.

Other works of maintenance and repair are being undertaken by the children around Sanskrit school and the old kindergarten.

¶Group meditations are now being held under the Banyan Tree at Centre, Sundays at 6:00 p.m.

¶Industrial development: A report prepared by consultants from Tata who visited Auroville several months ago was made available to Auroville for consideration. The object of the survey of industrial possibilities is to determine the feasibility of a Tata Technological Consultancy in the work of encouraging industrial development for self-support. The report contained a description and evaluation of existing units of production, recommendations for their improvement, suggestions for new units, and other areas of possible investment.

¶Two living structures in Green Belt burned to the ground recently. Aurovilians living in those buildings are presently living in the storerooms at Nine Palms until new houses can be built.

¶The Government of India is planning to publish a brochure on Auroville and has asked Auroville to provide the material to be included in it—the Mother's vision of Auroville, a survey of the last 9 years, a projection of needs present and future, and the government's statement on the basis of their involvement (to be written by the government).

To help Auroville: Auroville needs funds, equipment, books, clothing, educational and craft materials and tools, etc. For more specific information, write to Matagiri or one of the centers listed at the end of this issue. Since some equipment and material is dutiable in India, it is better to send such items through one of the centers.

Tax-exempt contributions may be sent to Auroville Association, Sri Aurobindo Society (Minneapolis), or East-West Cultural Center (addresses at the end of this issue).

For further information on specific projects in Auroville, you can write directly to (all addresses are in India):

Matrimandir: Seyril, Peace, Centre, Auroville 605101.

Green Belt: Dennis, Fertile, Auroville, South Arcot District.

Matrimandir Gardens: Narad, The Nursery, Centre, Auroville 605101.

Tamil Fund for Rural Development: Ruud Lohman, Centre, Auroville 605101.

Pour Tous: Alain or Yosuf, Aspiration, Auroville 605104.

Education: Shraddhavan or Shanti, Aspiration, Auroville 605104.

Children's Centre School: Michelle, Centre, Auroville 605104.

Fraternity: Minou, Kottakuppam, Auroville 605104.

Aurocreation: Lisa or Jocelyn, Aspiration, Auroville 605104.

Ayurvedic Dispensary: Angela, Kottakarai, Auroville 605101.

To visit Auroville: Write to Secretary, Unity, Auroville 605101, or Service, Aspiration, Kottakuppam 605104.

When writing to Auroville, please include International Reply Coupons, available from most post offices, to cover return postage.

For details on costs, transportation and lodging, write to Matagiri.

Note: Anyone planning to go to the Ashram or Auroville and who would be willing to carry small items needed by various departments there, please write to Matagiri. We usually have such items ready to be taken.

Robert McDermott, author/editor of *The Essential Aurobindo* and other works and professor of philosophy at Baruch College, New York, has written, narrated and co-directed, with Nuala O'Faolain, a film, *The Avatar: Concept and Example*, produced by the BBC for the Open University Course "Man's Religious Quest." The film uses Krishna and Sri Aurobindo as exemplars of the avatar concept and introduces viewers to Hindu spirituality. Although the emphasis is on Sri Aurobindo, the treatment of Krishna as a traditional Hindu avatar well serves as background and contrast to Sri Aurobindo's contemporary spiritual teaching and legacy. Interviewed in the film are Dick Batstone, Durabai and Tim Wrey of the London Sri Aurobindo center. Recording of the script was completed in March in New York and final editing will be done this summer. The first public showing of the film will be on BBC-2 during the third week of February 1978 and will thereafter be available for purchase or rental in both Great Britain and the United States.

Carolus Verhulst, long a follower of Sri Aurobindo and for some-time associated with the Dutch publishing firm of Servire, has left that firm and formed his own publishing and book-distribution company, Mirananda (Mirananda Uitgevers B.V., Zijdweg 5A, Wassenaar, The Netherlands). The new firm publishes or distributes works in the field of philosophy and mysticism, including those by Sri Aurobindo, Krishnamurti, Ouspensky, Gurdjieff and the Theosophical Society. Mirananda is handling the works of Patrizia Norrelli-Bachelet, author of *The Gnostic Circle* and, most recently, *The Hidden Manna*, and plans to bring out *Footprints of the Spirit*, by Frederic Ross of the East-West Cultural Center in Los Angeles, as well as the Equals One *Eternity Game*, which will be brought out in Dutch and German this fall and in English, under the title of *Golden Ball Game*, next spring.

The Integral Counseling and Psychotherapy department of the California Institute of Asian Studies (3494 21st St., San Francisco, CA 94110), organized in 1973 to educate students for careers in professional counseling according to the integral view of the late Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri, is rapidly growing. Currently some 60 students, including doctors, lawyers, nuclear scientists, public-health planners, etc., are enrolled. The Integral Counseling program draws upon a wide range of sources, including the works of Dr. Chaudhuri, Sri Aurobindo's system of psychology, the major spiritual traditions of East and West, recent cultural and social-science research, and the work of leading humanistic and transpersonal psychologists.

The department's specific objectives are (1) to provide a variety of learning experiences designed to develop counseling skills; (2) to develop and maintain the Integral Counseling Center as a training site for interns and as a significant community service; (3) to advance the integral view, a cross-cultural, East-West view of personality and society; and (4) to research the integral view and disseminate pertinent findings in the community.

The Institute is planning a Haridas Chaudhuri Memorial Symposium in June. Among the speakers tentatively expected to participate are Ira Progoff, John Vasconcellos, Charles Tart, Willis Harman, and Claudio Naranjo.

Wayne Bloomquist of Auro-Mira Creations, a retail shop selling crafts and books from Auroville and the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, taught a class in May on creativity centered around Sri Aurobindo's teaching, under the auspices of Unique Programs, an Oakland organization offering a variety of adult-education courses. In June, Bloomquist will teach a course in Walnut Creek, also under the aegis of Unique Programs, on integrating everyday working life with the spiritual life. Bloomquist recently completed his Ph.D. in comparative psychology at the California Institute of Asian Studies.

Mahdev Pandit, a secretary of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and author of numerous works on Sri Aurobindo and the spiritual traditions of India, has been touring the United States. Traveling by van, he has covered 25 states in 3 months and has spoken at a number of Sri Aurobindo centers, as well as the United Nations, Esalen, Lindisfarne, Krotana, Arcosanti, Tassajara Zen Center, the Theosophical Society in Boston, Interface, at Yale, Kent State, Windsor, Northern Arizona, Purdue, Wake Forest universities and the universities of Vermont, Colorado, Denver, Connecticut and California (Riverside). In a letter to Matagiri, Mr. Pandit reported: "The tour is going well and I am much encouraged by the response. There is a deep opening in this country and I am positive regarding the future. . . . Vasanti's music has appealed to so many. People go into meditation when she sings." He is accompanied by Vasanti Golikere, his secretary and editor, who is a gifted vocalist.

On May 14 Mr. Pandit led a discussion group on Auroville in New York at Lindisfarne Association. Participants included Brian and Sally Walton and Seyril of Auroville.

Arvind Jani of Tampa, Fla., will speak at the Himalayan Institute's International Congress on Meditation-Related Therapies to be held in Chicago June 16-19. The subject of his talk is "Mental Illness in Context of Philosophy of Meditation." Arvind and his wife, Mala, have been devoted followers of Sri Aurobindo for many years and have a professional interest in psychology.

Soundings, an interdisciplinary journal published by the Society for Religion in Higher Education and Vanderbilt University, published an article titled "The Lure of Novel Religious Forms: Three Autobiographical Sketches" by Elizabeth Lam Vieg in its Winter 1974 issue. Two of the sketches are of individuals inspired by the vision and Yoga of Sri Aurobindo, one a resident of Auroville, the other a Catholic nun who teaches sociology, religion and literature.

Tublu, an accomplished flutist from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, is currently in New York City. Besides some recent concerts at Lindisfarne, he also plays morning ragas with K. Paramjyoti at HINDOL, 343 E. 30, Apt. 12P (for information, call 737-3768) and gives lessons at the Lotus Gallery, 91 Spring St. (call 226-6664).

On March 31, Juan Penalver, an active supporter of the Sri Aurobindo center in New York and of Auroville, died in his sleep. Juan, a painter and art teacher, lived for a time at the center and will be remembered by many for his devotion and hospitality.

NEWS OF CENTERS

[Most centers have regular programs of readings, meditations, music, study groups, etc. as well as special programs observing Darshan days. For programs of regular events and meetings, call or write the center nearest you; see list at end of this issue.]

Sri Aurobindo Library (140 W. 58 St., 8B, New York, NY 10019; tel. 212-757-7584) is open Saturday afternoons by appointment. A weekly study group has begun to meet Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. for reading and meditation. Call for details.

Sri Aurobindo's Action Center (P.O. Box 1977, Boulder, CO 80306). Joseph and Muriel Spanier were interviewed on April 23 by Ann Martin on the radio program "Exploration of the Occult," taped in Long Beach, Calif. They spoke of the significance of the descent of the Supramental or Truth-Consciousness and the development of Auroville as a manifestation of the evolutionary vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The center publishes *Auroville Voice*, a quarterly giving news, articles and reports of Auroville. A minimum contribution of \$5.00 is suggested for a year's subscription. Checks should be made payable to Sri Aurobindo's Action Center.

Matagiri (Mt. Tremper, NY 12457). Mahdev Pandit and Vasanti Golikere visited Matagiri March 18-19. At a program arranged for them in nearby Woodstock, Vasanti sang and Mahdev spoke on Sri Aurobindo's vision and Auroville. Mahdev also spoke informally at Matagiri and was interviewed by a local newspaper.



M.P. Pandit at Matagiri. From l. to r.: Melissa, Patrick, Barbi, Tatsat, Timothy, Jyoti, Stan, Sam (front), Rick (rear), Pandit, Audrey, Vasanti.

Narad and Mary Helen of the Matrimandir Gardens visited on April 14-15 and showed slides of the Gardens and reported on progress in Auroville. While in the States, Narad is exploring various areas of technology on behalf of Auroville and especially visiting agricultural stations and arboretums to establish contacts for the Gardens and to try to obtain equipment.

Other recent visitors included Dr. Venkataswamy, an eminent eye doctor and longtime disciple of Sri Aurobindo, who has been working with the Indian and United States governments on the problem of blindness resulting from malnutrition; Michael Zelnick of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram; Arthur Gregor, the well-known American poet; a group from the Boston center; and others from various parts of the United States, Canada and France.

The construction of a new building to provide accommodations for residents and visitors has been temporarily suspended for lack of funds. The portion of the structure already put up is being used for storage.

Received in the Sri Aurobindo library of Matagiri: "Man in Progress: The Religious and Political-Social Future of Man According to the Thoughts of Sri Aurobindo Ghose and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, A Comparative Analysis," by Bill Lanning, a Ph.D. thesis, Baylor University.

The Quest for Political and Spiritual Liberation: A Study in the Thought of Sri Aurobindo Ghose, by June O'Connor, of the Religious Studies Dept. of the Univ. of California (Riverside). Available from Matagiri in June 1977.

[Note: Some items in the news section were obtained from *Auroville Notes*, *Auroville International-U.K. Newsletter*, and *Auroville*. . . Lien (published by Auroville International-France).]

Photo credits: Pandit at Matagiri, Matagiri; Aurovilians working on Matrimandir, Roger Tool; all other photos by Rakhal, AuroImage, Auroville.

NEWS OF FOREIGN CENTERS

Montreal: The Society for the Development of Auroville (4461 Rue St.-André, Montreal, Que. H2J 2Z5, Canada) has published its first book, *L'Eau ronde, poème*, by Guy Lafond. Guy, long associated with the center, has had two previous books published: *J'Ai Choisi la mort* and *Poèmes de l'Un*. His new work, a 3-part poem, is issued in a limited edition and was designed by Gaston Varonneau, president of the Society.

London: Sri Aurobindo Society of Great Britain (82 Bell St., London NW 1, England) participated in the Festival of Mind and Body held April 19-24 at Olympia. Auroville International of Great Britain had an information stall, sold crafts from Auroville and the Ashram, and gave a slide show on Auroville.

Dick Batstone of the center lectured at Bristol University on February 8 on Sri Aurobindo and showed slides of Auroville.

Balmukund Parikh has been giving a series of talks at the center on the Bhagavad Gita, using Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita*.

Duncan Brown has been selling Auroville handicrafts at a stall in Farrington Road.

Oxfam continues to be actively supportive of Auroville because of Auroville's efforts at integrating and utilizing skills of the indigenous Tamil villagers. The spring Oxfam catalog includes Auroville products.

Narad and Mary Helen from the Matrimandir Gardens gave a talk and slide show on flowers and the Gardens.

Jojhar Dhillon, who works for the Birmingham (England) public libraries, was given the opportunity to mount an exhibition on Auroville in March. It was held in the Dept. of Religion and Philosophy at the Central Library of Birmingham.

Essex: Marguerite Smithwhite, who has spent considerable time in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville, has begun a group in the village of Billericay to study the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo and to provide information on Auroville. The address is Marguerite Smithwhite, 24 Ian Road, Billericay, Essex, England.

Paris: Auroville International-France (67 rue de Rome, 75008 Paris, France). On 30 March, Gabriel Monod-Herzen, author of *L'Ecole du libre progres de l'Ashram de Sri Aurobindo* and other works, spoke at the center on his experience of life in the Ashram and the Yoga of Sri Aurobindo.

The center's lending library is now open to the general public. Books may be taken if a deposit equal to the price of the book is given; the deposit is refunded when the book is returned.

Barcelona: There are now two centers here: Amigos de la India, c/o Mrs. Diana Oliya de Peralta, Av. José Antonio 608, 5A, Barcelona 7, Spain (tel. 231-2477), which holds weekly readings and lectures on Sri Aurobindo; and Sintesis, c/o José Penalver, Diputacion 418, pral. 1, Barcelona 13, Spain (tel. 226-9868), a new center run by the brother of Juan Penalver (see General News). Visitors are welcome at either center.

Singapore: The Sri Aurobindo Society of Singapore (Trade Union House, Shenton Way, Singapore 1; tel. 916-555 and 984-165) observed its fourth anniversary last fall by bringing out a special publication called *Golden Light*. It contains a number of passages from Sri Aurobindo and the Mother as well as articles on the Ashram, the Society, and Auroville; a talk by M.P. Pandit; and an article on the Matrimandir by Tim Wrey; and numerous photographs.

SILENCE

By Shradhdhavan

Silence, root of all things,
Like deep water lies
Behind the shadows
Of these tranquil eyes.

Silence, core of all things,
Like clear water flows
Through all these hollow limbs and nerves
As silent all the wondering body grows.

Silence, womb of all things,
Like still waters spread
Dissolves all form and name and tone
Into force unlimited.

[In *Mother India*, Feb. 1977]



Jardin d'enfants, Aspiration, 21 February 1976.

TOGETHER

By Peter Heeb

Companions on the sacramental way
Who share the adoration of my heart,
Why do we still on separate by-paths stray?
No longer do we need to walk apart.

One-minded, let us form a common light,
Converging like the sunbeams in the sun.
Let us pool our strengths to make a common might,
That the great collective Labour can be done.

Assembled into trained and ordered bands
And ranked against the common enemy,
Responsive to our General's commands,
Together let us march to victory.

As portions of one beatific whole,
Together let us travel to the goal.

[From *Night and Dawn*]

Sri Aurobindo Centers—United States

ARIZONA: Sri Aurobindo Center, Crescent Moon Ranch, Star Route 2, Sedona, AZ 86336 (tel. 602-282-7552 or 282-5794).

Paradise Tau, 4335 N. 36th St., Phoenix, AZ 85018 (tel. 602-955-7398).

CALIFORNIA: Atmaniketan Ashram, 785 Alcott Ave., Pomona, CA 91766 (tel. 714-629-8255).

Auroville Association, 212 Farley Dr., Aptos, CA 95003 (tel. 408-688-4173).

Cultural Integration Fellowship, 2650 Fulton St., San Francisco, CA 94118 (tel. 415-648-3949 or 386-9590).

East-West Cultural Center, 2865 W. 9th St., Los Angeles, CA 90006 (tel. 213-DU6-0999).

Sadhana Sri Aurobindo, c/o Aspen, 13774 E. Teague, Clovis, CA 93612 (tel. 209-298-8293).

COLORADO: Sri Aurobindo's Action Center, P.O. Box 1977, Boulder, CO 80306 (tel. 303-447-0982).

ILLINOIS: Sri Aurobindo Center, c/o Dr. Lakshman Sehgal, 2851 Dr. Martin L. King Dr., Apt. 1217, Chicago, IL 60616 (tel. 312-842-5351).

MARYLAND: Sri Aurobindo Society, c/o Raichura, 2322 Glenmont Circle, Apt. 212, Silver Spring, MD 20902 (tel. 301-942-6168).

MASSACHUSETTS: Sri Aurobindo Books, 84 Charles St., Boston, MA 02114 (tel. 617-723-5759).

MINNESOTA: Sri Aurobindo Society, 3124 Dupont Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408 (tel. 612-825-5206).

NEW YORK: Matagiri, Mt. Tremper, NY 12457 (tel. 914-679-8322).

Sri Aurobindo Library, c/o 140 W. 58 St., Apt. 8B, New York, NY 10019 (tel. 212-757-7584). Open by appointment only.

PENNSYLVANIA: Arya, c/o Naren Bhatt, 5132 Haverford Rd., Harrisburg, PA 17109.

Sri Aurobindo Centers—Canada

BRITISH COLUMBIA: Future Child, Box 1419, Salmon Arm, BC V0E 2T0 (tel. 604-832-2369).

Sri Aurobindo Society, c/o Auro-Book Store, 319 W. Pender St., Apt. 203, Vancouver, B.C.

QUEBEC: Centre Sri Aurobindo, 3127 Rue St. Denis, Montreal, Que. H2W, 2M7 (tel. 514-844-7675).

Société pour le Développement d'Auroville, 4461 St. André, Montreal Que. H2J 2Z5.

O-Pti-Zoizo, 1596 St. Laurent Blvd., Montreal, Que.

Sri Aurobindo Centers—Europe

BELGIUM: Sri Aurobindo-Auroville Society, "Mira Hoeve," Nieuwmoersesteenweg 17, Essen.

ENGLAND: Integral Yoga Center, c/o J.I. Patel, 139 St. John's Road, Colchester, Essex C044JH.

World Union U.K. Centre, c/o Mrs. Rita Barret, 7 Panton Crescent, Greenstead Estate, Colchester, Essex.

Sri Aurobindo Society of Great Britain and Auroville International—U.K., 82 Bell St., London NW 1.

Marguerite Smithwhite, 24 Ian Road, Billericay, Essex.

FRANCE: Auroville International—France, 67 rue de Rome, 75008 Paris.

Sri Aurobindo Center, 7 avenue Carnot, Paris 17.

WEST GERMANY: Atmaniketan Ashram, 4401 Appelhuelsen, Marienplatz 9.

Freunde Aurovilles, D-8033 Planegg bei Munchen, Elisabethweg 34.

Sri Aurobindo Society, c/o Heinz Kappes, Belchenstr. 19, Karlsruhe 75.

ITALY: Centro Anandamayi, Vicolo dell Terme 8, 60035 Iesi (An.).

Centro Sri Aurobindo, Via Fonseca Pimental 4, 20127 Milan.

NETHERLANDS: Namaste, Tweede, Bloemdwarsstraat 9, Amsterdam.

Sri Aurobindo-Auroville Society, Th. Jeffersonlaan 311, Rijswijk Z.H. 2105.

POLAND: Zbigniew Madeyski, Warszawa 00355, Tamka 49 m. 64.

SPAIN: Amigos de la India, c/o Mrs. Diana Oliva de Peralta, Av. José Antonio 608, 5 A, Barcelona 7.

Sintesis, c/o José Penalver, Diputacion 481, pral. 1, Barcelona 13.

SWEDEN: Auroville International—Sweden, Fack 6009, S-220 06 Lund.
Swedish World Union Center, c/o Mrs. Vera Hedenlo, Huntverksgatan 25, B., 57200 Oskarshamn.

SWITZERLAND: Sri Aurobindo Edition, Seestrasse 35, Zollikon, Zurich.
[Readers who know of European or Middle Eastern centers not listed here are invited to send us the name and address.]