



# Collaboration

AUTUMN, 1982

MT. TREMBER, N.Y. 12457, U.S.A.

VOL. IX NO. I



MAY MEETING - MATAGIRI

With this issue *Collaboration* is under new editorship. Eric Hughes, who has almost singlehandedly kept the journal going since its inception, announced at the May meeting at Matagiri that he could no longer do all the work required: the compilations, articles, news gathering, proof-reading, etc. that represent the necessary but extremely time consuming work of publication. A group of five people, Navaja Llope, Jeanne and Gordon Korstange, Jacque Swartz, and Margo Macleod volunteered to take up the task. Eric will continue to help us with advice, mailing, and subscriptions.

We would like to salute him for the years of effort he has given to this magazine which has been a major factor in uniting devotees of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in the West. Who of us has not come home from a day's journey into the wilds of Western civilization to see a copy of *Collaboration* waiting to remind us of where we belong? Eric's compilations from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother seemed always to touch some subject of immediate personal importance. His translations from *The Agenda*, begun recently, were eagerly anticipated. We inherit the tremendous work that Eric has done over the years in

publishing *Collaboration* and will try, with his support, to keep this journal a true vehicle of the integral yoga.

Our decision to take up *Collaboration* came out of the Matigiri meeting and the wonderful feelings of unity and purpose that it generated. Being together in the rain for two days opened up new possibilities and energy. Many people there expressed some of the frustration that we often feel at being separated by huge physical distances both from each other and from South India. The suggestion was made that we try to look at ourselves not only as conduits for work being carried out halfway around the globe but also as part of the community in North America. We will continue to give to the work in India. There was in addition a strong sense that we must begin to give more to each other here.

What should we give? The editors of *Collaboration* would like to propose that in these pages we begin to share something of ourselves and our experience in America. We ask that you the readers write about your work, your lives, and how you keep up your sadhana in this country. It can come in any form: You can interview each other; You can send pictures (let us see what the centers look like, a center being any place you live); You can write poems, stories, and articles. Let us try to make *Collaboration* an instrument of deeper communication between all of us who make up the community in North America.

This issue includes a number of articles that we hope materialize our intention of opening more to each other: a look at the Willow Gold/Global View community in Wisconsin, an interview with Gopal at Matagiri. However, even with five editors we cannot keep *Collaboration* going without your help.

Please send your written material to:

Margo MacLeod  
5274 Yale Station  
New Haven, CT 06520

Continue to send subscription money to Matagiri (Please see the enclosed subscription renewal notice).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editorial ..... 1

Meeting Highlights ..... 2

Willow Gold/Global View ..... 8

Silver Dawn Margo MacLeod ..... 10

My Preparation for Sri Aurobindo's Yoga Mother ..... 11

The Psychic Being Sri Aurobindo ..... 13

Interview With Gopal ..... 14

Sister Sea Miriam Belov ..... 17

Between Two Worlds Dick Bastone ..... 17

Down With The Arms Race—Up With The Human Race  
Tom O'Brien ..... 17

Mother on Nuclear Explosions ..... 18

General and Center News ..... 19

Special Report on European Centers ..... 19

News from Auroville ..... 20

Auroville: Toward The Future Savitra ..... 22

To The Truth That Is Forever Seyril Schochen ..... 23

Saraswati—Durga Autumn's Queen Roger Harris ..... 24

The House In The Woods Gordon Korstange ..... 24

The Anhinga Miriam Belov ..... 24

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING  
HELD AT MATAGIRI—May 29-31, 1982

Eric of Matagiri opened the meeting with a few remarks on how the meeting came to be called: Joe and Muriel Spanier of Sri Aurobindo's Action Center and June Maher of Auroville Association were planning to visit Matagiri in late May; David and Sally of Auroville wrote that they were planning a tour of the U.S. and would be at Matagiri in late May. Since there had been a feeling among some people that such a meeting should take place, this seemed an appropriate time for it. Originally the meeting was conceived to be a small and intimate one but as word of it spread, more people asked to come, and eventually it was thrown open to anybody who wanted to attend. (Through some last-minute changes and confusion, there was no official representative from the East West Cultural Center in Los Angeles, which we sorely regretted).

It was then explained that Matagiri had undergone great changes over the past three years, which were attributed directly to *Mother's Agenda*, which Matagiri had worked closely and intensely with. It was felt that an old form had been swept away and a new form was trying to emerge. This experience was not confined to Matagiri, but also to other centers in the Americas and in Europe (as well as to individuals). It seemed that the old type of center as it has existed until now was no longer sufficient and that a new form or approach is trying to take shape.

Each one present was then asked to make some opening remarks on why he or she had come to the meeting, etc. (A letter from the Auroville Cooperative to those attending the meeting was read). Most people expressed similar reasons: the need to be in physical contact with brothers and sisters, the sense of confusion arising from the collapse of old forms, and the groping for new ones, and the need to create a new focus for the work in North America, the need to feel "reconnected" to the work and those involved in it.

Then the matter of the dissemination of *Mother's Agenda* was raised and various suggestions were made as to how this might be accomplished. There is also an urgent need for funds for its publication. Several people offered their services and were asked to contact the Institute for Evolutionary Research directly. It was agreed that an introductory work was needed for people who have no background in the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, an intermediary work such as *Mind of the Cells* or *On the Way to Superhumanhood*.

But the important thing for the work was for all to live it, that it was not a matter of millions of readers of the *Agenda* or hundreds of followers, but the vibratory relationship each one sets up. Then we all become part of a "centerless center."

Eric then announced that because of his workload he was being forced to discontinue *Collaboration* with the next issue.

*Second Session:* The meeting opened with the announcement that Margo MacLeod, Jeanne and Gordon Korstange, Jacque Swartz and Navaja Llope had offered to take up the work of *Collaboration*. They would prepare each issue, which would then be distributed from Matagiri.

David Wickenden then gave an account of the new energy and focus coming out of Auroville and of the establishment of Auroville International in Germany and Holland, which could be the prototype for similar organizations in other countries, especially the U.S. He pointed out

the need for such an organization now to represent Auroville officially, as Auroville has reached a point where government recognition is helpful and in some cases necessary, so there has to be one such "certified" organization in each country for legal and governmental liaison, etc. The status of the various existing legal entities in the U.S. was discussed. Navaja Llope, who had lived for several years in the Ashram and was involved with the very first beginning of Auroville International, offered to explore the formation of such an organization. Matagiri offered office space.

It was suggested that when people returned home after the meeting, they call together people in their areas for meetings to discuss the subjects of the Matagiri meeting and give reports. There was a great need to draw more people into the work; all the centers need regular workers.

It was suggested that such meetings as this one be held more frequently (the last one was in 1974 in Aptos, Calif.). Tentatively a meeting was proposed for September 1982 in New York City, and another in spring or summer 1983 in Montreal.

*Third Session:* Allen Parker of the Center on Technology and Society, who had just returned from Auroville, spoke of the work of CTS in relation to Auroville and of the Merriam Hill Center in New Hampshire, which is developing a scholarship program to send people to Auroville and other communities. Seyril spoke of the Baca Grande project in Crestone, Colo., started by Hanne and Maurice Strong, who have been invited to participate and further information can be obtained from Constance and Iris, care of the Auroville Association in Aptos, California.

Seyril also spoke of the activities in Boulder, Colo., particularly at the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, which is purchasing land in Left Hand Canyon for various programs and projects.

The possibilities for publishing the English language edition of the *Auroville Review* in the United States were discussed. Clarie from Montreal suggested that one of the centers in Montreal would be willing to undertake it.

The discussions during all three sessions were wide-ranging and frank. No attempt here has been made to give a full and detailed account. However, a transcript of shorthand notes taken during the sessions as well as tape recordings of many of the discussions are available at Matagiri for anyone wishing a fuller account.

At the end of the meetings, Eric urged everyone who had the feeling to do so to write down their reflections and impressions when they returned home and send them to Matagiri for inclusion with the final report. What follows are the reflections that were submitted:

Even now, several days later, we have not yet fully assimilated or grasped the meeting: this was not the kind of meeting you can slap a handle on, hold up and say, "This is what we did, this we accomplished." It was more subtle than that. Like water moving under winter ice, there is a new current at work underneath the old structures and patterns of what have been known as the "Auroville centers"; a thaw has begun, a warm wind is afoot that promises to rearrange and release an energy that has long lain dormant. At the Matagiri meeting one could feel that current, that breeze; above all, the potential, the hope of a new and promised unfolding. It is still too early to chart the direction and scope of this new birth, but we all felt it. Perhaps the most important "result" of the gathering was the supportive

and encouraging sense that we *are* together, moving through the same process in our different ways, and that together, if we remain open and simple and ready to shift about and tack with the wind and work together, we can help the new form take shape.

David Wickenden and Sally Walton, Auroville

The Auroville meeting has remained a highlight for me. During the weekend I felt very substantial commonalities were expressed that have not become diluted since then — a sustaining energy that I for one needed so much. I felt a great drive and rejuvenation.

Navaja Llope, Greenwich, CT

The weekend took me back to Auroville in the sense that as I walked, talked, listened, ate, slept . . . whatever I did I felt the inspiration of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo infusing itself into every act, every moment. That was revitalizing, enlarging, a movement of opening and growth which had been absent for so long. Because here in America there is so much going on, work and living seem to become so superficial unless you can keep the deeper sense of self-fulfilment before you and in everything you do. I mean that in the sense of the spiritual self-fulfilment. My contact with the others there touched deeply that sense of relationship and destiny which took me into the life of Auroville and the inspiration of Mother and Sri Aurobindo. I felt a greater sense of homecoming while participating in this meeting than I had felt for two years in America. I know we all felt the joy and promise of being able to make some kind of communal effort here in America. If it be the work of *Collaboration* or *Agenda* or Auroville International or just being in touch with our common aspiration and inspiration, then it is a little of the light and spirit which can be infused into our lives here and now, and it is most welcome and necessary. As I think of all the people there, I think of the tremendous variety and richness which has so much potential to be something here in America. There are tremendous difficulties of time and space to overcome, but I know that we can find a way to do it. So the weekend gave me an aspiration to remain in contact with this collective energy which needs to be gathered and working in America. I hope that I can realize some of this by working on *Collaboration* and that others will succeed in realizing it in other ways. Most of all, I feel a great sense of gratitude for having been able to be at Matagiri and for the existence of Matagiri which is a living body which demonstrates what can be achieved in America. I always feel the Mother's touch there and know it as a refuge and home in this world.

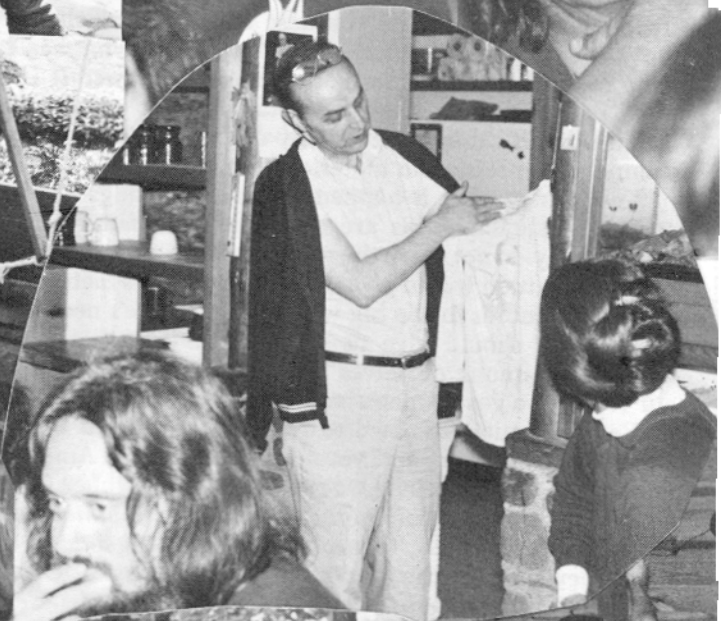
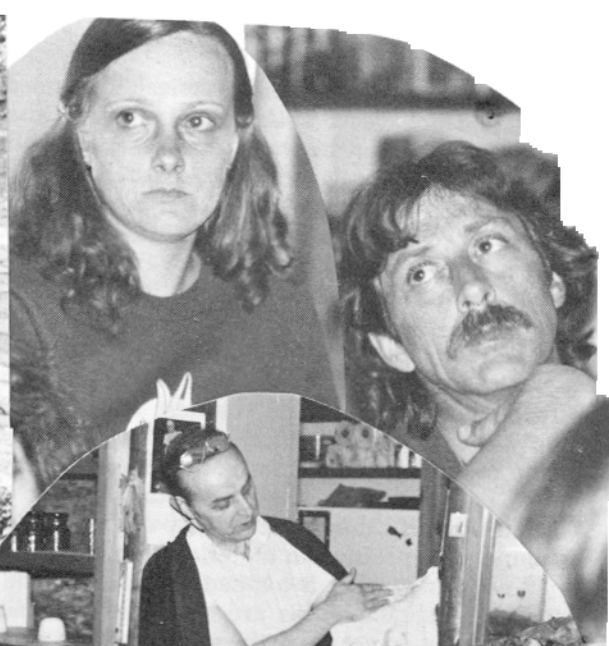
Jeanne Korstange, Middletown CT

We thank you all for the harvest of experiences we shared with you in the reunion of the Auroville "centers," and we want to express a deeply felt gratitude to the members of the Matagiri community who invited and received us so graciously.

A lot has been said — and more would have to be said — said on the yet to be which occurred in the global meeting or felt from the environment itself. The setting of misty woods and cloudy disappearing mountains was very impressive and beautiful; the singing of birds, frogs and insects added life to the Talks, the music, the video show. And everyone was going on with his or her own personal ex-







periences.

For example, the night of my arrival, I dreamed very vivid scenes in which we were shown Auroville and what was to be done to prepare for the work: I saw underground consolidation as a symbol for penetration of both the earth and the unconscious. During all the weekend we sensed a force or a presence working in us with an aim that we are still trying to bring to consciousness. We know that most of us have felt the same push from above, and yet we wonder "what is the next step?"

Each step must indeed be a courageous one, a commitment to what we are doing, and we are all trying our best. Incidentally, it is precisely because there is so much to do that our letter and payment are late . . . But what can be done beyond these excuses and those pious vows? It is of some concern to us that these talks might remain the beautiful words they were, if they do not find their proper channel of expression in material form.

We all know that it happens often in meetings like this one that valuable ideas are exchanged but not realized, because they do not carry the weight of authority that an official recognition would give them. In itself, this fact, which is only one radius in the big wheel of Auroville's needs and possibilities, should give us the impetus to achieve that recognition among ourselves and call forth the same from our respective governments and the U.N.

We were quite surprised to realize that *On the Way to Supermanhood* was not yet available to the American public. Being rooted in the French culture by inheritance, we saw the flowering of *On the Way to Supermanhood* and Satprem's other books, then of the Mother's *Agenda* in the English culture, by the gradual publication first of *On the Way to Supermanhood*, then of *The Mind of the Cells*. These books by Satprem could be used as "heralds of the coming good," and even produced in a paperback edition with a high commercial potential that could provoke and finance the publication of the *Agenda*.

So it is already time to each go our ways, and to say some of the inexpressible, we would like to conclude with Claire's song:

Une brume blanche entourait la montagne  
Et la nature extatique  
Recevait cette douce pulie bienfaisante,  
En chantant de toutes ses cellules  
La mantra de la vie.

Peu a peu, ils arriverent de partout,  
Ces enfants de tout age,  
Pleins d'un clam espoire,  
Conscients de la realite  
D'un travail urgent a accomplir.

Ils ont parle de cette cite de l'Aurore,  
Laboratoire vivant d'une nouvelle conscience,  
Et de cette Terre prete a la transformation.  
Ils ont chante, ils ont danse, ils ont ri,  
Et chacun est reparti, confiant,  
Avec, au plus creux de son coers,  
Un diamant . . .

Claire Garand and Alain Marcotte, Auroville  
International-Quebec

## The Mother's Children

The Mother's children we are, doing her works in different centers of North America and in Auroville, the international city of dawn in South India. We met together at the Mother's mountain in the Catskills with the wonderful feeling that we are each of the other belonging to the Mother like brothers and sisters of a big family.

We believe in world unity and, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, in "the Idea, the hope of a new world order which will replace the old unsatisfactory order, and substitute for it conditions of the world's life which will in the end have reasonable chance of establishing permanent peace and well-being."

We believe in the words of the Mother, the Mother's *Agenda*, a document and a positive statement about the future of the human species as a whole on earth. We want to spread the Word of the Mother to those who have been hungering for human unity.

We believe the United States has a special role to play in the transformation of human consciousness as the Mother said and we also feel that this country has developed a favorable climate for it.

We believe we can help the Aurovilians in whatever capacity we have and we understand their problems, the "burden" they carry and we welcome the proposal for starting the U.S.A. center for Auroville International.

We parted from each other at the end of the meeting but with a positive feeling of meeting again.

Gopal Bhattaacharyya, Matagiri

From across the wide, wide continent we came,  
The diverse troupes, the many scattered parts,  
The beleagured workers,  
The beloved players,  
To the mountain we came, pursuing the game.

As we gathered in numbers, we gathered in force.  
Old habits trembled, unsure of the course.  
As exchanges grew stronger,  
A oneness took hold,  
Old masks were relinquished,  
Communion grew bold.

As all the heavy cares were aired,  
And each in each found his own dismays,  
A new pervading pressure was affirmed,  
A push, a need, a Now for Something Else, acclaimed.

Now what was gathered in, spreads again apart.  
Time and space regain their powered place.  
Though unknown still the mode vehicular,  
The future's changes ride within each heart.

Rani and Richard Turner, Ashfield, Mass.

The gathering was a joyful, intense experience. There was a renewed sense of aspiration and inspiration—a happiness to be together, similar to what took effect in the 1960s except that we seemed to bring into the 1980s a more conscious approach through wider and deeper experiences over the years.

Many ideas and worthwhile projects were discussed as possible alternatives to our present organization.

What seemed most evident is that the *Agenda* has deeply affected all of us over the past few years and that a stronger bond has emerged among us. There seems a need to share our experiences and to work more closely together, to improve communications and to establish a more cohesive and efficient international network. I believe we all agreed that a new energy is coming down and that centers, in the old, traditional, sentimental way, are outdated and that a new approach is needed. We did not come up with all the answers, but I am certain that all are open to this change and are willing to work with it and move with the flow.

Surely something was invoked over those three days and I am certain that on an occult plane, we received *something* from above that transcends all the talk, all the play, all the planning. It was most significant.

Anie Nunnally, New York City

Although the original focus of the meeting at Matagiri was to be the *Agenda* and its distribution in America, it turned out that Auroville and a support network for it were most actively discussed, especially on Sunday. The *Agenda* was covered only in a cursory manner on Saturday. This is unfortunate considering the difficulties with the *Agenda* work here in America. The *Agenda* is Mother's final legacy to us and is due a larger portion of our effort. Had Luc Venet from the Institute and Micheline from the Institute in France been able to attend, their experience and input would have changed this.

For the future, I feel that we will need to come together again just to discuss the matter of the *Agenda* in North America. Although a few ideas were brought forward at Matagiri, no concrete direction was assumed. It also seemed that the effort would again be left in the hands of just a few people, which has been a particular difficulty with the work on this continent.

Eric pointed out in his opening remarks that through the work with the *Agenda* a profound change had occurred at Matagiri and a new direction seemed necessary. This center too [i.e., Sri Aurobindo's Action Center in Boulder] is undergoing a change in the manner in which we carry out our work. This seems to be happening in many other centers as well. Now is the time for a renewal of our purpose and collective working together.

Regarding the work with Auroville in this part of the world, it is also a time for consolidation and concentration. With the Supreme Court [of India] case presumably (but not officially) won, Auroville will be able to accept an influx of new individuals and energy from the rest of the planet. Auroville itself is also ready to communicate with the outside, which for a while it seemed neither willing nor able to do. Auroville will need a legal representative in the Americas for handling tax-deductible grants and contributions and for liaisons with the International Advisory Council and with the Indian government.

One thing we have learned in the past decade is that any arbitrary form must meet an already existant need if it is to succeed. As was brought out in the meeting, the second hurdle is having people with an aspiration and dedication to work with each other. Given the inner changes we feel, and the outer opening indicated for Auroville, I am hopeful that this coming together will survive.

As we undertake this work, we need to keep in mind the evolutionary process. If there is indeed to be an organization

such as an Auroville International Americas (North and South), it must be approached in the spirit of a living experiment. The forms developed to provide a structure through which we can work together must be regularly examined in order that we not be caught up in yet another organization. As a group we seem to be strongly individualistic, so if the structure doesn't give sufficient rein to that aspect, we're bound to find out in a hurry! I think we have enough experience at this point that it shouldn't be a problem.

As with most meetings, the one at Matagiri generated a lot of enthusiasm and renewed energy. The most important result will not be what happened at the meeting; it will be what happens between now and the next meeting.

Larry Tepper,  
Sri Aurobindo's Action Center, Boulder, Colo.

What is that that comes over us  
After all these years  
Of hot, dry red earth  
With which to eat and build.

What is it that steals into us  
Between our yes and no  
Between the dollars and cents  
Me and you, the person and himself.

What is it that has spanned the time  
From first flush to fade,  
Like the memory of one gone  
Too loved to be remembered,  
It stays with us ever-present  
And acts upon our deeds.

We claim It in our dreams—  
It claims us in our life.

Timothy Jacob, Matagiri

There seemed to be a unique timeliness and significance to the Matagiri gathering of May 29-31, although interpretations of this event will naturally be expressed in a rich diversity of meanings. Over-riding for me, however, was the inner feeling that the Divine Mother's creative force was very much with us, seeking though more flexibility and suppleness of action on both our individual and collective levels, as well as in the modes of operation regarding the "work." From the numerous individual experiences that were recounted, and the course of our many discussions, it was felt that the swiftness of the Mother's action in the world at large was calling for yet a greater latitude of view on our part . . . and that former approaches to activities (structures) may very well be breaking down and undergoing changing perspectives. Though plasticity is a basic need in the dynamics of the Integral Yoga, in retrospect our meeting had the feeling of being a most timely conjunction of those sensing (as yet) indefinable changes taking place at this time. Although personal confirmation of this aspect was most helpful, it was truly an inspiration to be at a gathering of this unique nature. Whether one was in the need of concrete action, or pursuing clarification of general perceptions, our meeting in the natural beauty of Matagiri will nodoubt be of unending collective value to all aspiring hearts everywhere. One, therefore, can only offer up the deepest gratitude of the heart to the Divine Mother for having made this particular event possible.

Donna Sharkey  
Costa Mesa, Calif.

*This is the first of several articles on groups in America whose members have a spiritual focus stimulated by their experience with the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and/or by having lived in the Ashram or Auroville.*

*It was researched and written by Gordon & Jeanne Korstange who took advantage of being in the Midwest, on a visit to their families, to spend a few days at Willow Gold/Global View, in Madison, Wisconsin. They add these words about the experience: "Gathering the information for this article and writing it made both of us realize how difficult it is to develop an alternative life style in America. It also shows how much time it takes for a place and a group of people to develop into a strong, supportive, productive, cooperative living situation."*

*"We want to thank all the members of Willow Gold/Global View for sharing their work and lives with us in our first issue of Collaboration. They were especially helpful in offering suggestions for the article, making corrections and being their warm wonderful selves."*

*If any of our readers would like to make personal contact with Global View they can write to Global View, Rt. 3 Spring Green, Wisconsin, 53588. You can request to be placed on their mailing list (this will keep you informed of workshops, concerts/performances, and items available through the shop). Visitors are always welcomed (and please let them know if your interest was aroused through Collaboration).*

### **How a Physical Need Grew into a Community**

When the wild carrot lifts its head and opens its yellow flowers to the summer sun, the green grass carpets the gentle rolling hills thick and tall for the white-tail deer to nibble on. Then the two willows standing like sentinels at the entrance of Willow Gold are full and weep their light green leaves down to the sloping lawn. Seeing them now in their rich green setting, it's not hard to imagine how Marion and Duane Nelson chose them as the namesake for their new home in the Autumn of 1965.

At that moment in time, when they could barely manage to purchase the old run-down house in back of the two willow trees, they would have found the thought of a small community nestled in the valley a romantic fantasy. Buying the old, decaying farmhouse and later in 1968 the barn and 190 acres which are now Willow Gold was not the product of coffee house discussions at Duane's community college in Elgin, Ill., nor was it the result of Marion's retirement from a 7th grade classroom teacher's life. Rather it was a physical necessity which occurred with the realization that Marion had to live with the physical condition that required daily treatment and a healthful environment.

### **The Driftless Region**

The Nelsons had long been acquainted with the area of Wisconsin where Willow Gold is located. It is known as the driftless region because thousands of years ago the four continental glaciers divided and went around the area from Madison to LaCross, Wisconsin, allowing the kinder, gentler forces of nature to work on the land. Today the southwest corner of Wisconsin is a place of winding roads, hills and valleys covered with trees, dotted with lakes and cut by the rushing Wisconsin River. They describe the land as a



feminine power which nurtures and sustains people, an appropriate setting for dealing with a problem of the physical body.

Life at Willow Gold began with the hard physical labor necessary to clean out and repair an old farmhouse which had seen years of neglect and abuse. Along with Margaret, a friend and colleague of Marion's, the school teachers took up the task of making the place inhabitable and beautiful. The people in the surrounding community of Clyde know and respect the folks at Willow Gold from having witnessed the work which these three people did from the beginning. This area, Duane says, is not a narrow and rigid backwoods township. The people are gentle, rather like the rounded, sloping hills which support them. They are rooted in their environment, have an awareness of its ecology, and know how to care for the land. They respect people for "knowing how to clean a place up and take care of it." This gives Willow Gold the support, friendship and trust of its neighbors. It makes the basis for the coming and going of so many people who have, over the years, been involved with helping Willow Gold to grow.

Nineteen-seventy was the year that the Nelsons, on the tail of a good storm, moved into the barn. Having overgrown the little farmhouse they left it to Margaret and bulldozed the trash and hog leavings out of the barn. Then they sandblasted the inside and began living in the downstairs. They had thought of a multi-level living space as a good way to remodel. The ground level and what is now the front of the house proved to be the most accessible for Marion who retired from teaching and turned to living permanently at Willow Gold. From this time on there was an increasing flow of people into the new living space.

### **Passage to India**

Duane and Marion made their first trip to India in 1974. This journey, they say, "changed all the factors. Out of that experience we worked with a whole new thread." Here is the point when Willow Gold took root as a stable base from which to work. Their attitude and perspective grew into a



whole new life style. The emphasis was on developing wholeness, and the most important part of this was human relationships. Through a genuine love and appreciation for what each person is, the material flow into and out of the community and business has been created.

Spending the winter months in India became a part of Marion's life after that first trip. Frank Chaffee accompanied her on a longer trip for the winter of 1975 and continued to be her winter companion in India for some years thereafter. It was with Frank that Marion visited Auroville and through him that the initial steps towards developing a business importing handicrafts began.

A familiar tale was told about how these two people found Auroville in 1978 after hearing about it for years. Just when they thought they couldn't make it another inch without a drink of water, a rest, they came to the red gate of Fraternity. There they found the shop where Fanou was working and Bryan kept the accounts. As most Auroville stories go they soon discovered why they had met. Over a meal at the Auroville restaurant in Pondicherry, Bryan assured them that starting an import business and handling Auroville goods was the most natural thing in the world and that they certainly could do it. He linked them up with Jonathan in New York who was importing goods from Fraternity and marketing them in America through a business known as Auro Imports International. By taking some goods with them and then using Jonathan as a wholesaler the business of selling handicrafts became a part of life at Willow Gold.

### *Passage From India*

Bryan and Fanou, now in a big room with a loft on the East side of the barn, sit in Fraternity hammock chairs and tell of how this was the last place they ever thought they would end up. When they left India in 1980 with their children Marichi and Aurelia, they had no idea of what they would do in the West other than take a vacation, travel, and relax from the intensity of life in Auroville. They visited Fanou's family and toured southern France. Findhorn welcomed them, and they explored the possibility of living and working there. Bryan, known as one of the people who had organized and developed the handicraft unit of Fraternity, was approached with the idea of setting up an import business. But at that point Bryan went happily on to America, for as he says, "When Fanou and I left Auroville the last thing we wanted was to have anything to do with the handicraft or import business."

When they arrived in New York City their first visit was to Jonathan who informed them that he also wanted to get out of business and take up Montessori education. However, he still had a considerable amount of goods which had recently arrived. Bryan, thinking that Frank and Marion might take over Jonathan's merchandise got in touch and discussed the matter. In 1978, Frank and Marion had taken the name of Global View and obtained a sellers license. Thus, a merger of Auro Imports International with Global View was not a giant leap but the unexpected next step for the business.

Global View was becoming one of those organizations which can best be described by David Spangler's concept of the Laws of Manifestation: all of the people involved had found themselves in the middle of a material flow, and by letting a spiritual focus direct their lives they gave a special direction to the material energy. They were using goods as a vehicle to express the interests, skills and creativity of all the individuals from the Indian villager to the members of Willow Gold. They can single out certain people who played

key roles in the process, but they had really functioned as a group, supporting each other and organizing a business which none of them would have been able to do alone.

### *Picking Apples in America*

Even though Bryan and Fanou were instrumental in the merger of Auro Imports International with Global View they never thought of Willow Gold as more than a stop on their way across the United States to visit friends and family. They bought a camper in Woodstock, New York and took off for the West Coast. When they visited Willow Gold they were charmed and felt its beauty. Bryan fell in love with the apple trees (non-existent on the plains of India), and the thought crossed his mind of being able to pick apples in the fall.

They moved on across the country visiting Bryan's parents in New Mexico and many Aurovilians in California. Hopefully they would find some place where they could become part of a community. As fall approached, picking apples looked even better than it had in early summer. They would have some work to do and all the apples they could dream of. They returned to Willow Gold and helped with the harvest.

Fanou knew that one of Marichi's dreams was to go to a regular school. As autumn is also the return of school, Marichi was taken to the Clyde township school where he was received with warmth and joy into the classroom of his dreams. Along with the seventeen other children in his room (the school has two rooms, one for grades 1-3 and the other for grades 4-6), he met his new teacher. She welcomed him with warm enthusiasm and accepted his Aurovillian perspective and dialect as a broadening addition to the schoolroom.

Bryan, Fanou, Marichi, and Aurelia parked their camper-home on the front lawn of Willow Gold. Even though it was difficult to be still housed so compactly after several months of traveling, they managed to live together with everyone having their own work or place to go to during the day. They stayed. Soon the apples were picked, and the cider pressed. Global View needed experienced workers. The campers' savings were running low, and with winter coming on, Bryan found himself working over the account books together with Fanou and Marion in the shop.

At the same time these Aurovilians realized that Willow Gold was their community. Here was the balance between collectivity and individuality they had been seeking. As the days became colder Marion left for her annual trip to Asia while Duane spent each week in Elgin teaching International Studies. The campers moved into the barn and began their community life with Willow Gold.

### *The Basis for the Community*

On land owned by individuals who have the ultimate responsibility for it, others are invited to participate in the work of this large farm and growing business. Each family is self-supporting and has its own income and life style. At the same time they share their resources when needed to develop the farm and business. As Duane says, "It is a form evolving out of life."

Global View, the business, is in its third year of existence and growing. Through planning and sound, rational business practices it is evolving into a strong and healthy people-oriented enterprise. At this point in time the imported goods come from Auroville, North and South India, Thailand and Tibetan refugees. In the shop at Willow Gold photographs in Auroville, Tibetans weaving carpets, and tribal craftswomen in Thailand. By giving a sense of the personal input in every item, these photos seem as important as the goods themselves.

Each person who finds her or his way to the rural shop is greeted first as an opportunity for personal interchange and second as a customer.

During our weekend at Willow Gold we attended a community meeting. After some strenuous efforts to collect everyone, we gathered in a circle and, holding hands, entered into a moment of silence. I looked up as my hand was gently squeezed and moved my eyes around the circle of faces. There was Aurelia, Kevin, Mirra, Marichi, Duane, Fanou, Marion, Bryan, Gordon and myself.

The first order of business was the lawnmower. This was Marichi's tale to tell. He spoke of how he had spent the whole day trying to start the thing without success. He punctuated his story with vivid sound effects which had everyone laughing. The problem was discussed, and it was agreed that the machine must go back to the repairman.

The meeting moved on to the calendar and the arrangements for the summer workshops and events. They would be attending the peace festival in Madison. David Wickenden and Sally Walton from Auroville were going to give a presentation.

There was more talk about the large garden (the deer had left it alone even though they sometimes come very close to the barn in the early morning), the horses (taken care by Susan Julson who lives in a teepee on the grounds in the summer and was away at the time attending a course on non-violent horse training), and various necessary trips to local towns by the members. Then the meeting was adjourned and the morning's work begun.

### *Mirra and Kevin*

Kevin comes with Mirra (Nancy Corneya) on long weekends to Willow Gold to work in the garden and house. He enjoys being in touch with the land and helping out in many ways. During the week he does rebirthing (a healing technique) in Madison. Mirra's association with Auroville dates back to 1971, with subsequent visits to Auroville and Pondicherry in 1974. A warm, supportive person, she enters eagerly into the work and play of the community, while her love for the land grows. The two of them are planning a marriage there and will soon be occupying an upstairs portion of the barn. At the moment they are fixing it up so that they will have their own kitchen, bath and sleeping rooms.

After two days we felt so much at home in this community that we could almost forget we were visitors. Aurilia's beaming face (after she kissed her pet toad) and Duane's booming laugh were constant beacons throughout our stay. The community members enjoy each other thoroughly and they are never too busy for the human contact that keeps it together. Even though it rained for two days we felt a constant buoyancy and lightness, a great support from everyone.

Willow Gold/Global View is an integrated and harmonious atmosphere constantly changing, moving on its own growing edge in response to life. They see their future in the quest for wholeness. Having moved in gradual, natural stages from a "house in the country" to democratic community linking the lives of individuals throughout the world they face the future with confidence and flexibility. More than half of the barn is still empty, and land is waiting. Fanou said, "The focus is not to look at what we've done; rather to look at what we can become."

### SILVER DAWN

Silver dawn  
unwrapped fog cocoon  
varied gray but still  
translucent layers  
light  
quiet waters  
mirror bright

Sea bird  
vibrant flitting  
moving like  
bat or butterfly

Small openings  
fragile blue  
infuse  
the spruce  
dash raindrops  
and perhaps also  
the tears in my eyes

— Margo MacLeod



# MY PREPARATIONS FOR SRI AUROBINDO'S YOGA

Mother

... If I look at the order my own yoga took ... When I was five years old (I must have begun earlier, but the memory is a bit vague and imprecise) ... but from five onwards, in my consciousness (not a mental memory but—how can I put it?—it's noted, a notation in my consciousness) ... well, I began with consciousness. Of course, I had no idea what it was. But my first experience was of the consciousness here [*gesture above the head*] at the age of five.

It was a very pleasant sensation. I would sit in a little armchair made especially for me, all alone in my room, and I ... (I didn't know what it was, you see, not a thing, nothing—mentally zero) and I had a *very pleasant* feeling of something very strong, very luminous, and it was here [*above the head*]. Consciousness. And I felt, "That's what I have to live, what I have to be." Not with all those words, naturally, but ... [*Mother makes a gesture of aspiration upward*]. Then I would pull it down, for it was ... it was truly my *raison d'être*.

That is my first memory—at five years old. Its impact was more on the ethical side than the intellectual; and yet it took an intellectual form too, since ... You see, apparently I was a child like any other, except that I was hard to handle. Hard in the sense that I had no interest in food, no interest in ordinary games, no liking for going to my friends' houses for snacks, because eating cake wasn't the least bit interesting! And it was impossible to punish me because I really couldn't have cared less: being deprived of dessert was rather a relief for me! And then I flatly refused to learn reading, I refused to learn. And even bathing me was very hard, because I was put in the care of an English governess, and that meant cold baths—my brother took it in stride, but I just howled! Later it was found to be bad (the doctor said so), but that was much later. So you get the picture.

But whenever there was unpleasantness with my relatives, with playmates or friends, I would feel all the nastiness or bad will—all sorts of pretty ugly things that came (I was rather sensitive, for I instinctively nurtured an ideal of beauty and harmony, which all the circumstances of life kept denying) ... so whenever I felt sad, I was most careful not to say anything to my mother or father, because my father didn't give a hoot and my mother would scold me—that was always the first thing she did. And so I would go to my room and sit down in my little armchair, and there I could concentrate and try to understand ... in my own way. And I remember that after quite a few probably fruitless attempts I would end up telling myself (I always used to talk to myself; I don't know why or how, but I would talk to myself just as I talked to others): "Look here, you feel sad because so-and-so said something really disgusting to you—but why does that make you cry? Why are you sad? He's the one who was bad, so he should be crying. You didn't do anything bad to him ... Did you tell him nasty things? Did you fight with him or her? No, you didn't do anything, did you; well then, you needn't feel sad. You should only be sad if you've done something bad, but ... " So that settled it: I would never cry. With just a slight inward movement, or "something" that said, "You've done no wrong," there was no sadness.

But there was another side to this "someone": it was watching me more and more, and as soon as I said one word of made one gesture too many, had one little bad thought,

teased my brother or whatever, the smallest things, it would say [*Mother takes on a severe tone*], "Look out, be careful!" At first I used to moan about it, but by and by it taught me: "Don't lament—put right, mend." And when things could be mended—as they almost always could—I would do so. All that on a five to seven-year-old child's scale of intelligence.

So it was consciousness.

Next came the period of learning and developing, but on an ordinary mental level—school years. [Mother clarified: "Actually, a growth of consciousness was going on throughout those years of study; I didn't learn things by rote, I needed to understand them; and as soon as I understood something, I knew it. In other words, because the learning period was not yet intellectual, it can be considered part of the period of consciousness development]. When I was around seven, just under seven, my brother, who was 18 months older, used to bring big pictures home from school with him (you know, pictures for children with captions at the bottom; they're still used nowadays) and he gave me one of them. "What's written there?" I asked. "Read it!" he said. "Don't know how," I replied. "Then learn!" "All right," I told him, "show me the letters." He brought me an A-B-C book. I knew it within two days and on the third day I started reading. That's how I learned. "Oh-oh," they used to say, "this child is backward! Seven years old and she still can't read—disgraceful!" The whole family fretted about it. And then, lo and behold, in about a week I knew what should have taken me years to learn—it made them think twice!

Then, school years. I was a very bright student, always for the same reason: I wanted to understand. I wasn't interested in learning things by heart like others did—I wanted to understand them. And what a memory I had, a fantastic memory for sounds and images! I had only to read a poem aloud at night, and the next morning I knew it. And after I had studied or read a book and someone mentioned a passage to me, I would say, "Ah yes—that's on page so and so." I would find the page. Nothing had faded, it was all still fresh. But this is the ordinary period of development.

Then at a very young age (about 8 or 10), along with my studies I began to paint. At twelve I was already doing portraits. All aspects of art and beauty, but particularly music and paintings, fascinated me. I went through a very intense vital development during that period, with, just like in my early years, the presence of a kind of inner Guide; and all centered on my studies: the study of sensations, observations, the study of technique, comparative studies, even a whole spectrum of observations dealing with taste, smell and hearing—a kind of classification of experiences. And this extended to all facets of life, all the difficulties, sufferings, everything—oh, a whole field of studies! And always this presence within, judging, deciding, classifying, organizing and systematizing everything.

Then conscious yoga made a sudden entry into the picture when I met Theon; I must have been about 21. Life's orientation changed, a whole series of experiences took place, with the development of the vital giving interesting occult results.

Then, a period of intensive mental development, mental development of the most complete type: a study of all the philosophies, all the conceptual juggling, in minute detail—delving into systems, getting a grasp on them. Ten years of intensive mental studies leading me to ... Sri Aurobindo.

So I had all this preparation. And I am giving you these

details simply to tell you it all began with consciousness (I knew very well what consciousness and its force—its force of action, its force of execution. Next, a detailed study and thorough development of the vital. After that, mental development taken to its uppermost limit, where you can juggle with all ideas; a development stage where it's already understood that all ideas are true and that there's a synthesis to be made, and that beyond the synthesis lies something luminous and true. And behind it all, a continual consciousness. Such was my state when I came here: I'd had a world of continual experiences and had already attained conscious union with the Divine above and within—all of it consciously realized, carefully noted and so forth—when I came to Sri Aurobindo.

From the standpoint of *shakti*, this is the normal course: consciousness, vital, mental and spiritual.

If it is different for men? I don't know. Sri Aurobindo's case was quite special, and apart from him, I don't see any convincing example. But generally speaking, what is most developed in a man, along with the mind, is the physical consciousness; the vital is very impulsive, practically ungoverned. That's my experience of the hundreds and hundreds of men I have met. There's normally a physical strength built up through games and exercises, very mental. The vital is terribly impulsive and barely organized, except in artists, and even there . . . I lived among artists for ten years and found this ground to be mostly fallow. I mingled with all the great artists of the time, I was like a kid sister to them (it was at the turn of the century, with the Universal Exposition in 1900; and these were the leading artists of the epoch); so I was by far the youngest, much younger than any of them—they were all 30, 35, 40 years old, while I was 19 or 20. Well, I was much more advanced in their own field—not in what I was producing (I was a perfectly ordinary artist), but from the viewpoint of consciousness: observations, experiences, studies.

I am not sure, but it seems to me that the problem of consciousness ought to come first . . .

What happened to me in life is extremely logical, very, very logical (it wasn't me, I didn't decide anything—you don't make decisions at the age of 5). Each stage was prepared by the preceding one.

**Disciple:** But then what is this consciousness we feel like a force inside us? For instance, sometimes in meditation it rises, then descends; it's not fixed anywhere. What is this consciousness?

**Mother:** The Shakti!

Some receive it from above; for others, it rises from below [*gesture to the base of the spine*]. As I once told you, the old system always proceeds from below upwards, while Sri Aurobindo pulls from above downwards. This becomes very clear in meditation (well, in yoga, in yogic experience): for those who follow the old systems, it's invariably the *kundalini* at the base [*of the spine*] rising from center to center, center to center, until the lotus [*in an ironic tone*] bursts open here [*gestures to the crown of the head*]. With Sri Aurobindo, it comes like this [*gesture of descending Force*] and then settles here [*above the head*]; it enters, and from there it comes down, down, down, everywhere, to the very bottom, and even below the feet—the subconscious—and lower still, the inconscient.

It's the Shakti. He said, you know (I am still translating it), that the shakti drawn up from below (this is what happens in the individual process) is already what could be called a "veiled" shakti (it has power, but it is veiled). While

the Shakti drawn down from above is *pure* Shakti; and if it can be brought down carefully and slowly enough so that it isn't (how shall I put it?) polluted or in any case, obscured as it enters matter, then the result is immediately much better. As he has explained, it's always a greater power no matter where it awakens), there's inevitably a danger of the ego meddling in. But if it comes pure and you are very careful to keep it pure, not to rush the movement but let it purify as it descends, then half the work is done.

**Disciple:** It's a problem. When you contact the Supraconscious and the Shakti emerges at the crown of the head, it's something rising from below, isn't it? Is it then another movement, an ascending movement?

**Mother:** That is the consciousness of the *jiva* [soul], the personal, individual consciousness.

**Disciple:** It's something that grows . . .

**Mother:** It is the individual consciousness. Aspiration is almost always an expression of the psychic being—the part of us that's organized around the divine center, the small divine flame deep within human beings. You see, this divine flame exists inside each human being, and little by little, through all the incarnations and karma and so on, a being takes shape around it, which Theon called the "psychic being." And when the psychic being reaches its full development, it becomes a kind of bodily or at any rate individual raiment of the soul. The soul is a portion of the Supreme—the *jiva* is the Supreme in individual form. And since there is only one Supreme, there is only one *jiva*, but with millions of individual forms. This *jiva* begins as a divine spark—immutable, eternal and infinite (infinite in possibility rather than dimension). And through all the incarnations, whatever has received and responded to the divine Influence progressively crystallizes around the *jiva*, which becomes more and more conscious as well as more and more organized. Ultimately it becomes a completely conscious individual being, master of itself and moved exclusively by the divine Will. That is to say, an individual expression of the Supreme. That is what we call the "psychic" being."

Generally speaking, those who practice yoga have either a fully developed, independent psychic being which has taken birth again to do the Divine's work, or else a psychic being in its last incarnation wanting to complete its development and realize itself.

This is what aspires, this is what has the contact.

So, when you're told "become conscious of your psychic being," it's for the being formed by external nature to contact the divine Presence through the psychic being. Then the psychic takes charge of the whole being; in fact, it is the inner Guide . . . Well, when I was a little child, this "person" (which wasn't a person, but an expression of a certain consciousness and will) was actually the psychic presence; there was something else behind, but that's a rather special case. And what happened to me happens to everyone whose psychic being has deliberately incarnated: the psychic being guides your life, and if you let it act freely, it arranges *all* circumstances—it's truly wonderful! . . . I have seen—not only for myself but for so many people who also had conscious psychic beings—that everything is arranged with a view to . . . not at all your personal egoistic satisfaction, but your ultimate progress and realization. And all circumstances of life, even those you call "diastrous," are there to lead you where you have to go as swiftly as possible.

Yours is more than a psychic being. As I have told you, your psychic being is accompanied by something which has



come for a special purpose, with a particular intellectual power—a luminous, conscious purpose, with a particular intellectual power—a luminous, conscious power—which has come from regions higher than the mind, regions Sri Aurobindo called the Overmind, to do a special work. It is here [*gesture enveloping the chest and head*] and, along with the psychic, it's trying to organize everything. This, in your psychic, is what you are feeling. It must have great power . . . Don't you feel a kind of luminous force?

**Disciple:** Oh, yes, I feel it!

**Mother:** Well, that's what it is.

**Disciple:** That must be why I can't distinguish between the Force coming from above and the Force coming from within.

**Mother:** A time comes when you don't make this distinction anymore.

**Disciple:** That's why it's hard for me to speak about it; I don't know what's coming from above and what's coming from below.

**Mother:** To speak about it . . .

You know, everything I have just told you is . . . One always feels "on the verge of" or "nearly" or "almost." There's somethings bordering on but always tangential to the Truth—never to the point, always beside it. As soon as we speak, it's an approximation . . .

Anyway, the periods of my life have been as clear as could be, distinctly defined, preparing everything for my coming here.

Many, many things in my life have completely vanished—I don't remember them anymore, they're gone from my consciousness—everything that was preparing the *jiva* for its action here. Even before coming and meeting Sri Aurobindo, I had realized everything needed to begin his yoga. It was all ready, classified, organized. Magnificent! A superb mental construction . . . which he demolished within 15 minutes!

How happy I was! Aah! . . . It was really the reward for all my efforts.

Nothing! I knew nothing anymore, understood nothing at all—not a single idea left in my head! Everything I had carefully built up over so many years (I was past 35, I think), through all my experiences: conscious yoga, non-conscious yoga, life, experiences lived, classified, and organized (oh, what a monument!) . . . crash! It all came tumbling down. Magnificent. I hadn't even asked him.

I had tried to get complete mental silence . . . this kind of mental stillness [described by Sri Aurobindo in a letter which the disciple has just read to her] he speaks of (when you have it, anything can pass through your head without causing the least ripple), but I had never succeeded. I had tried, but couldn't do it. I could be silent when I wanted to, but as soon as I stopped thinking solely of that, stopped wanting only that, the invasion resumed and the work had to be done all over again.

That's all I had told him (not in great detail, in a few words). Then I sat down near him and he began talking with Richard, about the world, yoga, the future—all kinds of things—what was going to happen (he already knew the war would break out; this was 1914, war broke out in August, and he knew it towards the end of March or early April). So the two of them talked and talked and talked—great speculations. It didn't interest me in the least, I didn't listen. All these things belonged to the past, I had seen it all (I, too, had had my visions and revelations). I was simply sitting beside him on the floor . . . I was just sitting

there, not listening. I don't know how long they went on, but all at once I felt a great Force come into me—a peace, a silence, something massive! It came, did this [Mother sweeps her hand across her forehead], descended and stopped here [*gesture at the chest*]. Later Mother specified: "It encompassed the three active mental centers" (the forehead, between the eyebrows, and the throat.) When they finished talking, I got up and left. And then I noticed that not a thought remained—I no longer knew anything or understood anything. I was absolutely *blank*. So I gave thanks to the Lord and thanked Sri Aurobindo in my heart.

And I was very careful not to disturb it; I held it like that for I don't know how long, 8 or 10 days. Nothing—not one idea, not one thought, nothing—a complete *blank*. In other words, from the outside, it must have looked like total idiocy.

But I was living in my inner joy—nothing stirring. I spoke as little as possible and it was like something mechanical, it wasn't me. Then slowly, slowly, as though falling drop by drop, something was built up again. But it had no limits, it had no . . . it was vast as the universe and wonderfully still and luminous. Nothing here [the head], but *there* [*gesture above the head*]; and then everything began to be seen from there.

And it has never left me—you know, as a proof of Sri Aurobindo's power it's incomparable! [*Mother's Agenda 1962* (vol. 3) (New York: Institute for Evolutionary Research, 1982), p. 278-88.]

## THE PSYCHIC BEING

Sri Aurobindo

The psychic being stands behind the heart supporting the mind, life and body. In the psychic transformation there are three main elements: (1) the opening of the occult inner mind, inner vital, inner physical, so that one becomes aware of all that lies behind the surface mind, life and body—(2) the opening of the psychic being or soul by which it comes forward and governs the mind, life and body turning all to the Divine—(3) the opening of the whole lower being to the spiritual truth—this last may be called the psycho-spiritual part of the change. It is quite possible for the psychic transformation to take one beyond the individual into the cosmic. Even the occult opening established a connection with the cosmic mind, cosmic vital, cosmic physical. The psychic realises the contact with all-existence, the oneness of the Self, the universal and other realisations which lead to the cosmic consciousness.

This psychic development and the psychic change of mind, vital and physical consciousness is of the utmost importance because it makes safe and easy the descent of the higher consciousness and the spiritual transformation without which the supramental must always remain far distant.

Of course the ego and the vital with its claims and desires is always the main obstacle to the emergences of the psychic. For they make one live, act, do sadhana for one's own sake and psychicism means to live, act and do sadhana for the sake of the Divine.

If desire is rejected and no longer governs the thought, feeling or action and there is a steady aspiration of an entirely sincere self-giving, the psychic usually after a time opens of itself.

Aspiration, constant and sincere, and the will to turn to the Divine alone are the best means to bring forward the psychic.

The central being is above the Adhar [the human vessel]—most people are not aware of their central being (Jivatma)—they are aware only of the ego.

The psychic is the soul, it is a portion of the Divine that supports the mind and body in the evolution. The psychic gets the Divine's help directly from the Divine.

The central being is that on which all the others depend. If it makes its surrender, that is, renounces its separate fulfilment in order to be an instrument of the Divine, then it is easier for the mind, vital and physical to surrender.

[The signs of the psychic's coming forward:] A central love, bhakti, surrender, giving everything, a sight within that sees always clearly what is spiritually right or wrong and automatically rejects the latter—a movement of entire consecration and dedication of all in one to the Mother.

The psychic, when it acts as the main power, acts through a certain feeling and inherent psychic sense which repels the falsehood. But the ranges of the mind above mind do not act in that way—there it is discrimination and will that act and their action is wider but less sure and less automatic so to speak.

The psychic being is in the heart centre in the middle of the chest (not in the physical heart, for all the centres are in the middle of the body), but it is deep behind . . . *deep within*, not on the surface where the ordinary emotions are. But it can come forward and occupy the surface as well as be within—then the emotions themselves become no longer vital things, but psychic emotions and feelings. The psychic so standing in front can also extend its influence everywhere, to the mind for instance so as to transform its ideas or to the body so as to transform its habits and reactions. [Letters on Yoga [Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1971], 3: 1092-1115.]

**Nirodbaran:** Lack of interest and energy, disinclination to go to [work]—this is my condition for the last few days. I took a cup of tea and the energy came back.

**Sri Aurobindo:** Sympathise with you. There was a time when I was like that. Teaified cells—instead of deified.

*Sri Aurobindo's Humor*

*Editor's note: Gopal Battachariya has been a member of the Matagiri community since 1978. Besides his work there he teaches Sanskrit and Indian philosophy at the State University of New York at New Paltz. He was recently invited to meet Indira Gandhi during her American tour. Gopal will also present a paper and be discussion leader at the New York conference on Asian Studies in Albany on October 29th and 30th. The following interview took place at Matagiri on August 17th.*

**Collaboration:** Can you tell us about your life before you came to America?

**Gopal:** I was born in what was then East Bengal in a village on February 28, 1917.

**C:** Auroville's birthday!

**G:** Yes, yes, the same day. I spent my early childhood in a country environment which I loved very much. A river ran near the village, and the community respected our family for some reason or other. I had an environment where love and fellow-feeling were just natural. After finishing my education in the country school, I went to the town school for high school. From there I went to a district town and had two more years of education. Then I went to Calcutta. Since then I was in or near Calcutta. While I was in university I came in touch with Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri. He used to give talks on Sri Aurobindo. Before that I was very much influenced by Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, and then by Gandhi. I joined Gandhi. I went to his camp and stayed there two years.

**C:** When was that?

**G:** 1938 to 1940. And I took training there in Gandhian philosophy and also worked according to their program.

**C:** Was Gandhi there at the time?

**G:** Yes . . . When I came in touch with Dr. Chaudhuri my spiritual hankering was still there. Even in Gandhi's camp, busy with all sorts of activities, something was wanting. So when I read the teachings of Sri Aurobindo I found greater fulfillment. I started reading more and more. Meanwhile I took a job in a high school near Calcutta.

**C:** So you took your degree in Sanskrit?

**G:** I took my degree in philosophy and Sanskrit.

**C:** Wasn't it a tradition in your family that one member would be a Sanskrit scholar?

**G:** Correct. Anyway I became a high school teacher. Then, fortunately a chance came. I started studying M.A. in philosophy at Calcutta University, and I got a fellowship to study abroad and the country was Australia. I went there and stayed for four years and studied at the University of Melbourne: philosophy of education because the government of India wanted me to do that. I had to sign a contract with the Indian government and promise to come back after four years to serve in the education system according to their dictation—but it was not bad. Anyway I accepted and sign-



ed. After doing my masters I also started research work for a Ph.D., but the government didn't allow me to stay further, so I came back and joined the post-independence movement in India. That was after the line of Gandhi's basic training. I became lecturer, professor, and then principal of government college of education under the University of Calcutta.

C: Tell us something about the two years you were with Gandhi.

G: It was in W. Bengal not very far from Calcutta, a place known as Balarampur. There they gave more stress on work. Gandhi's emphasis was on selfless work, and that was practiced in the ashram right from morning until dusk. The program would be eight hours of manual labor, eight hours of mental labor and eight hours of rest. We wouldn't do eight hours of manual labor, but we tried. So actually it was four hours of manual labor, four to six hours of mental labor or studies, discussion, writing, like that. The rest would be . . . later on games were included . . . the rest was personal. The ideal was casteless, creedless, democratic society. With that aim in view you were a revolutionary, a non-violent revolutionary, and that revolution would come through your work, your example, your precept, and your very life! We used to even clean latrines. In Gandhi's center everything was very clean. Gandhi used to say, "From cleanliness will come new education." Spinning was compulsory, then weaving, handicrafts. One has to do at least one, and I used to spin. We cooked meals by rotation. One had to do that and putting away the utensils in the right places just as we do here.

C: What do you remember about Gandhi? What are your personal impressions?

G: He was so much busy with so many things and yet how peaceful he would remain. That was something amazing! So many political problems and so many political leaders coming, and he had to take decisions every moment.

C: Especially at that time, just before the war.

G: Right! How calm he was all the time. Something amazing. It was as we could see in his face.

C: How many people were in the camp?

G: There were 150 men and women together.

C: Were there many of these camps around India?

G: Yes, there was at least one camp in each province.

C: Tell us a little bit about Australia . . . that was the first time you went abroad.

G: When I first went there they asked me to go to Sidney for an orientation course for newcomers. They gave training in English speech and the history of Australia. After this (they actually arranged my courses at the University of Sidney) I could see the courses, from the standpoint of my philosophy, were not that satisfying. A friend of mine who lived in Melbourne told me to come there. The standard of the University of Melbourne was much higher. They accepted me there. I lived in the International House where I could meet people from all over the world. There I had a full life. I was accepted by that community as one of the student leaders. I became the chairman of the students association. I used to write in the magazine. They once asked me to give a talk, and people would come to listen to me. I am a teacher! I only teach in the classroom! But they recognized me as a lecturer for the general public. My first talk was on comparative religion. The topic was "Vedanta and Christianity." Of course, after that in India I made several radio talks.

C: That was when you were the Principal of the educational college?

G: Yes.

C: And there you met Haridas Chaudhuri.

G: Yes. It was there also we started our Sri Aurobindo center. When the college came under Calcutta University, a friend of mine, Dr. Chitranjan Ghoshwami, started a center. He was the active secretary there, and he made me the president. He left India after a few years, and I continued the work until I, too, left.

C: When did you first go to Pondicherry?

G: I went first in 1956. I would be going at least once a year, attending conferences, visiting.

C: Did Mother ever say anything to you about coming to America?

G: No, at that time I did not plan in that way. Once I came here on a visit, in 1974. Since that time I planned on coming here. I liked this country so much. There was a nephew of mine in Ottawa, Canada, and he married a girl there. He wanted me to come to attend his marriage ceremony. That was an opportunity to visit the States. Then I thought that maybe Mother wanted me to come here. I liked it so much.

C: Why? What struck you about America?

G: The freedom of this country: free expression of opinion, free acceptance of new ideas. This society is such that everyone can experiment with ideas. The students who come to my class are so keen! Whatever I do for my students is so rewarding, and they accept it with all seriousness. I carry the message of Sri Aurobindo even when I teach Sanskrit: the ideas of world unity, the new consciousness, the supramental consciousness come up. They ask me many questions. I strongly feel that they are looking for a new consciousness as if they were ready for that! The right type of things ought to be presented before them. That's what I feel. Also, Mother said that a new consciousness could start in this country, and when I come in touch with the young people I have every reason to believe it.

C: How would you define your goals and aspirations here?

G: My aspiration is to, as Mother would say, remain young and strive towards perfection as long as I live. I strongly believe in world unity, one human race, and that that race is going to be transformed. I strongly believe in it, and I will work for it until the last breath of my life!

C: What was your first contact with Matagiri?

G: I saw the name in the books. Then Dr. Ghoshwami told me that Matagiri would be my place.

C: So when did you come?

G: I came in 1978. I was with my nephew Ajit for ten days. He was in Boston at that time. He drove me over here.

I just felt that I must stay here.

C: When did you begin to teach at New Paltz?

G: First I started giving my classes here. I am still doing so in Sanskrit. People were also interested in philosophy so that course also developed here. Then some friends of mine, Thomas (O'Brian), Aria Maloney, suggested that I try New Paltz, and they accepted my course. This is my fifth semester. There are both regular students taking it for credit, and others for non-credit. Many of them don't want to take tests. They just enjoy it. One student, Jeff Bach, takes it each semester and says, "I just enjoy the course. I don't care for credit."

C: It's almost as if your students are in the old tradition of India where the student follows the teacher because he likes the teacher.

G: Very sweet of you to say that!

C: Tell us a little bit about your meeting with Indira Gandhi.

G: Good! To tell you the truth, I did not imagine that I myself would be invited to meet Mrs. Gandhi, and other people who really wanted to see her, who had written to her government, wouldn't be allowed. In New Paltz many peo-

ple, Indians and Americans, wrote to her and didn't get any invitation. When I think about it, it's due to Matagiri. Mrs. Gandhi has a warm feeling for the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville. I have been writing to her for the past two years about what Matagiri is doing. I asked her to visit us while she was here. Sam wrote a letter too. But she was very busy. Even so, a letter came here inviting me to the airport reception of Mrs. Gandhi. That was a surprise.

C: When you met her, how was the reception?

G: When I started from New York, Sam gave me a blessing packet with a small page inside where a story of Mother was written. I took it in my hand. Sam said, "If you have a chance, give it to her." So I went there and was almost at the end of the line. Other people gave her so many things, garlands, bouquets, saris, and I was standing there with that blessing packet in my hand. When she came to me, I just gave it to her. She took it and kept it in her hand (all other gifts were given to attendants) and thanked me. Then the Consul General became so much interested in me. He asked, "How is Matagiri doing?" "Going on well," I said. "Have you got our letter," he asked, "about the reception at the Carlyle Hotel?" "No," I said, very surprised. And when I came back to Matagiri a couple of days later there was the letter! So I went. Before I left, Sam gave me a marbled envelope to put our correspondences in for her, and Eric said, "Give our love to Mrs. Gandhi." I wasn't sure if I could do that! But when I started talking to her, the first words were, "My name is so and so (everyone had to say their name), I come from Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center, and Matagiri sends their love and best wishes to you." The whole meeting was spellbound, only with those few words. No one could say, "love to you." Now I am getting letters from many Indian associations. It's a grace!

C: What do you see for the future here in America?

G: What I see is the spiritual growth in the individual, the aspiration, that is what should be stressed. And then other things follow. The mode of action or program will come as the person has spiritual growth. That is the main thing. Doctrines, dogmas, rituals, temples, we have had enough! This world has seen enough of these things. Now we have to build ourselves.

C: What do you tell people when they ask you how to realize their spiritual potential?

G: Not many people ask! What I do, as they come into close contact with me . . . It's not a question of telling them anything. I just have to be what I am and . . .

*Note: Collaboration's tape and time ran out here, but Gopal has promised to share his thoughts on education with us in a future issue. For those who know him, Gopal's joyful presence speaks more than words can explain.*





## SISTER SEA

Sister Sea  
magic in your recesses  
unknown depths from which emerge the  
forces of ages,  
I embrace you.  
In your every mood the majesty of being.

I have seen you  
turbulence itself raging higher and higher  
to consume all,  
absorbing the land and rock to ply them as  
you will.

Power untamable  
power forever moving, growing, surging  
upward

Onward for infinity.  
Hypnotically caressing with the movement  
of your dance  
with the curves of your waves  
pulling me in, all in,  
to you.

And at the stretch where you meet the  
land  
to become the twist of water,  
I burst forth along with you  
Dancing on  
on forever with glory.

For hidden also in you  
is the knowledge just to be.  
Floating fluid, rainbow of colors  
resting, lulling all in your calmness  
then, again, I am taken in  
ever so gently.

MIRIAM BELOV

## BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

*Dick Batstone*

September 18, 1960

When people here worship the Mother, each one does so in his or her own way, no doubt. Some seek her blessing and health, others ask nothing, but trust that she will be the mother to a second birth in them. They strive for surrender and then their worship is an attitude of openness and silence before her, that her grace may act in them to alter all that hinders their inner progress. Some may not think of her as Westerners think of God, but they know that she is able to help them and to hear appeals made inwardly from miles away, even in material crises such as danger or illness. In this they are not superstitious but realistic. And when they give her thanks that is not misplaced either.

September 23

Ambu, alive like a light flame, warns, "Before you decided to take the plunge and stay here all is even and happy, nothing serious raises its head. The Mother is all love and kindness, and your psychic being is prompting you all the time. But once you decide to be a permanent sadhak, for life, then oh then, it is all different. The psychic being retires. It has done its job. It has brought you to the Mother's feet. Now its work is over and the Mother's work begins. But the Mother leaves you alone—she pays no more attention to you. She has her child. But now her work is in-

ward. You are apparently dropped and left on your own. And now all the fear and revolt of the vital nature expresses itself—all the dirt and the lust and bitterness come to the surface. You can hardly believe you are the same man, that you will ever be happy again. Perhaps you are ill; no-one comes near you, your friends never bother; your work-mates don't get on with you; you have a dark hot room . . . This is the time and the test that shows if you really want the Divine or an easy life."

September 28

Prophecies, miracles, wonders . . . A westerner may come here and be either fascinated or repelled by them. Living in the atmosphere of this place they have become less suspect for me. They no longer seem the arbitrary expression of omnipotence, but the occasional exercise of a special vision or force in answer to need, prompted, as with Jesus, by compassion. The followers may treasure the tales, but Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have discouraged all such mongering, knowing that signs and marvels are peripheral, and not essential to the work, nor evidence for the truth of the teaching.

A lady once sent a request to the Mother that she would make some demonstration of her power, to convince a visitor. The Mother declined adding, 'Who does she think I am, Madame Blavatsky?'

No, the real marvel is something else, for which the people who live in the Ashram are never tired of expressing their gratitude.

October 1

There is a small grey-haired man here with a noble face and profuse beard, about whom Norman told me an intriguing story.

It seems that he came here, first, with his wife and seven children, a few years ago, while on a holiday tour of South India. After staying a few days two or three of the children refused to leave. They said they were so happy that they wanted to stay. So determined were they that the parents were at a loss what to do, not wanting to carry them off by force. They decided to ask Mother's advice, and when she gave blessings in the Playground next day the family approached her, and the father explained the situation; would she speak to the rebels?

Mother said, "So they want to stay here, do they? Let me see them." And she took each child's face in turn between her hands, looking long into their faces. Then she said, "They can stay."

Their father, aghast, said, "But what about us, Mother?" She looked at him and said, "You too can stay."

The man was speechless, and for some days seemed bewildered. But they stayed—all nine of them, and the children are among the most brilliant in the school.

## DOWN WITH THE ARMS RACE, UP WITH THE HUMAN RACE

*Tom O'Brien*

Armed with posters and a box lunch, Marlenka, seven year-old Asha and I drove 100 miles south to the Big Apple on a day that we sensed would be important. Before entering the N.Y. Thruway we picked up a hitchhiker also on his way to the June 12th Nuclear Disarmament Rally & March. An optimistic mood was set as we all shared our hopes for world peace while winding our way down one of America's ribbon of highway.

Expecting gnarled traffic jams and harried motorists, we drove with suprising ease over the George Washington Bridge and smoothly entered the isle of Manhattan. After leaving the car in a mid-town garage we walked over towards the East Side. Marlenka, Asha and I wanted to join up with the the Catskill Alliance for Peace while our hitchhiker friend took a downtown subway to meet up with someone else. By the time we reached Lexington Avenue we already felt a sense of momentum. At 3rd Avenue we were halted in our progress by an ocean of people. Nevertheless, Marlenka wove steadily through the crowd leading us towards the Catskill Alliance which was assembling on 49th Street between 1st and 2nd. We plowed onward. For a moment I let Asha's hand go while we squeezed through a rush-hour type wall of people. Marlenka and he were just a step ahead of me when the realization hit that we had been split up. I quickly wriggled and wiggled to catch them. When a half hour of painstaking search brought no result, I decided to wait for the March to begin. Eventually, I thought, I'd find the Catskill group. There was little else to do.

As the march toward Central Park began the true magnitude of the crowd was not yet obvious. By chance I met an old friend who has the original name of Zarrus Wind, and together we walked, accompanying business people, a Japanese contingent, students, concerned medical professionals and many others. At the junction of 5th Ave. and 57th St. (I believe) we decided to join the red-shirted volunteers who were helping organize the flow of bodies. On this corner two streams merged into one greater torrent. One came North up 5th & the other West on 57th. The volunteer ushers joined hands and coordinated a smooth flow. This gave Zarrus and me an opportunity to help a bit, wait for the Catskill Alliance and see this remarkable assemblage of humanity in procession.

From Arkansas to Alaska, the States were represented. Posters were written in English, Spanish, Japanese, French and Chinese. Groups from colleges, minorities, professionals, high schools and small towns around the nation all marched together. Bread & Circus puppeteers danced on fifteen foot stilts, while other 'bigger than life' costumed folks depicted the horrors of nuclear war. All were here for one common purpose: to remind the world that nuclear armament means global suicide. There was no need to harass government officials and bureaucrats. The message was clear enough: We must work together or perish.

After ushering for about an hour I saw a banner coming with the name Catskill Alliance for Peace. Here was my hope of finding Marlenka and Asha. There was an anxious moment while I searched the crowd but soon we spotted each other. We had a joyful reunion, and continued our march on to Central Park. There we saw Pete Seegar and listened to Peter, Paul & Mary at the Band Shell (a designated children's area). Eventually we made our way to the great meadow where the crowd was massing. Here we stayed for some time, until nearly exhausted, we wound our way back to the car and headed North again.

The peaceful atmosphere present that day reflected a different mood than many of the marches I remember from the late '60s. There was no single generation or minority fighting for an issue. This was a representation of humanity. It was neither a liberal nor a conservative group. It was a diverse group of people gathering in unison to make a statement on one issue. Something palpable was present that went deeper than all apparent differences. Like bedrock this strength of oneness will endure.

## MOTHER ON NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS

*Mother:* Since I was a very small child, I have been extremely sensitive to the composition of the air: all "airs," if I may say so, had their own taste, their own color, and their own quality; I recognized them so precisely that sometimes I would say, "Why, the air of this country or that place has come here." Like that. I was extremely sensitive to the quality of pure air, I mean devoid of the elements that come from the decomposition of life and in particular from places where men are crowded together. I was extremely sensitive: I could, for example, if I traveled from one place to another, be suddenly cured of an illness simply by the change of air. When I met Theon, this phenomenon became conscious, studied and . . . it still continues today. Several days ago perhaps (I can't say, time doesn't count), but not very long ago I said to myself, "There is something new in the air;" it was something very unpleasant, extremely pernicious, and I felt that something (I did not say anything to anyone, naturally) had a particular odor, extremely subtle, not physical, and it had the capacity to separate vital vibrations from physical vibrations—in other words, an extremely noxious element.

I immediately went to work (it lasted for hours), the night was spent counteracting it: I was trying to find what higher vibration could counteract it; until I succeeded in clearing up the atmosphere. But the memory of it remained very precise. And I was told very recently (perhaps a day or two ago) that the Chinese had selected Indian soil, in the North, to test a certain kind of atomic bomb and had exploded a bomb there. So when they told me that, I suddenly remembered my odor. [The Chinese bomb was exploded on 16 October].

What makes those vibrations spread so far—the physical vibrations stop at a certain distance (although they go much farther than we usually think, but the vital vibrations that are behind (the "nervous" vibrations, we could say) must have a tremendous reach.

You know, when that volcano erupted in Martinique (that's something much more material), some volcanic dust was found in Marseille sometime later—that's quite far. Exactly the same dust, carried by the wind. So a bomb like that must have a considerable effect.

*Satprem:* But those vibrations you speak of do not emanate from human beings—from a bomb?

*Mother:* From the bomb.

*Satprem:* So a bomb can have a nonphysical action, a vital or subtle action?

*Mother:* It has an effect only because it has a subtle action—nothing would move, everything would remain inert if there were not a subtle action.

It's the vital contained in Matter—it's like the phenomenon of radiation. And it spreads. They are well aware of it but they don't acknowledge it: when they exploded the bomb in Japan, the consequences were much, much beyond what they were expecting, infinitely more serious and lasting than what they were expecting, because of the sudden release of those forces . . . They see only a given quantity, but there is everything that is behind which goes out also and has an effect. You know, they observed, for example, that cows are poisoned and their milk is not drinkable for a certain time (it happened in England), but that is the grossest, most outward phenomenon—there is a deeper one that is *much* more serious. [*Mother's Agenda* 1964, vol. 5, November 14.]

## GENERAL AND CENTER NEWS

**Integral Knowledge Study Center** (Rand Hicks) 221 Clematis St. Pensacola, Fla. has available a studio recorded cassette of sanskrit chants recorded by the Ashram's Vasanti Rao (\$4 per copy or \$6 if premium tape is desired).

This Center started a year long course "Towards a New Society: Consciousness—Education—Transformation" to introduce the public to the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. There is a participating core of 10-12 people. A smaller smaller gathering of seekers meet on Thursdays for study and meditation.

**Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center** was represented by Gopal Bhattacharyya who was invited by the Indian consulate in New York City to greet Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of India on her arrival at Kennedy Airport on July 27. He also attended a reception on July 31, which Mrs. Ghandi gave for representatives of various organizations in the United States, at the Carlyle Hotel in New York City. Gopal presented Mrs. Gandhi with material on Matagiri and its work.



*Berkeley Study Group: Paul Molinari, Sandy Cadeira, Joanne McRae, Jim Hurley, Estelle Bedsworth, Jacqueline and Wayne Bloomquist*

**Auroville International Quebec** has a new address: 1487 av. Bureau Montreal, H2J2G2, tel (514) 527-2919. The new administrative group consists of Claire Garand, Pierre Sabran, George Kalifa, Denis Henley and Antionette Henley. They are working on an Auroville afforestation loan application to the Canadian government.

**Aurovilians Tour USA** Two long time American Aurovilians, Sally Walton and David Wickenden, were in the United States this summer giving slide shows and presentation on the work and vision of Auroville. Official representatives of the community, Sally and David visited a wide range of groups, organizations and individuals in the Pacific Northwest, California, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Washington D.C., Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Colorado, New York and Connecticut. A full report of their tour will appear in the next issue of *Collaboration*.

## Special Report on European Centers

*Extracts from the minutes of the 2nd Conference of the European Auroville International Center, held at Boytons, Hempstead England, June 19th-20th 1982.*

- Resolution I** It was resolved that the majority of the members of the executive board of an Auroville International Center have to be known and accepted by the Auroville Cooperative.
- Resolution II** It was resolved that the Coop send an English letter with news every two weeks to Auroville International France, who will take care of the immediate photocopying and sending to the other centers.
- Resolution III** It was resolved that the Coop should send a copy of every letter it sends (as the Coop) to an individual in a country where a center is established, to that center regardless of the contents of the letter.
- Resolution IV** It was resolved that the center shall inform Auroville regularly about possibilities of sales, and about shops misusing the name of Auroville.

It was decided to have the next conference of the European centers on the 18th and 19th of June 1983. Jurgen was unanimously elected chairman of this conference. The place shall be decided later. If necessary, a meeting with only 2 representatives of each center in about half a year can be held.

### *Progress Reports from the Centers received at this Conference*

#### *Italy*

Mukta from the Centro Sri Aurobindo in Bologna has been invited to Auroville as it was understood that he and some members of this Center wanted to create Auroville International Italy. Mukta explained that this was the intention, and that due to this there has been a split in the center. He intends to visit Auroville this year to meet the Coop and Pour Tous. Piero explained that some individuals in Italy, doing work related to Auroville (e.g. the Agenda) support Mukta's founding of Auroville International Italy.

#### *Switzerland*

Ila and Paulo reported that Jean Estoppy of the Association Suisse pour Auroville has decided to stop his work for the Association, and has asked them whether they want to take it over. The Swiss law does not prohibit this association from being run by people of non-Swiss nationality. A letter to this effect has been written to the Coop. The possibility of the change of the name into Auroville International Switzerland is being studied. The meeting supports the continuation by Paulo and Ila, and emphasizes the need for a uniform name (uniformity of letter headings is also most welcome).

#### *Germany*

Auroville International Germany has been officially recognized and tax-exempted. The center has been able to persuade Mercedes-Benz to donate an engine for the Auroville van. A bus, destined for Auroville, will leave from Berlin to Auroville in September.

### *Sweden*

Felix from Sweden reported that the Swedish center, which is set-up as a community, is in need of people to broaden its work. The center is (at the request of the Coop) in contact with the Swedish Government in order to realize the inclusion of Auroville in the Swedish "Tamil Nadu Afforestation" project.

### *U.K.*

The English center meets approximately three or four times a year. Three times a year a newsletter is sent, but the response is not overwhelming. The reaction to emergency appeals, such as for a donation for the court case, however, is extremely good. Regular business is done with Ensens d'Auroville. A study of existing charitable organizations has been made and information of those most likely to be of interest to Auroville was sent to the Coop. An attempt to form a community has not been realized yet.

### *France*

There have been some changes in the executive board as some members departed for Auroville. An important step in the development of the Center was its being accepted by the Foundation de France, through which the donation of tax-exempted gifts has been made possible.

### *The Netherlands*

Several groups and individuals in the Netherlands have combined to found "Auroville Internationaal Nederland," which has as its object to work for Auroville and be its official representative. In addition, the following official organizations exist: Aurotons (translation and publication of books); Uma and Namaste (products from Auroville). Auroville Internationaal Nederland has a standing working committee made up of Dutch Aurovilians who are living in Auroville and are recognized members of the Auroville Community. An official power of attorney to represent Auroville will be applied for.

### *Belgium*

Guy explained that the language situation in Belgium is such that the French speakers tend to join Auroville Int. France, while the Flemish speakers tend to the Netherlands. He collaborates very closely with the Netherlands, a group which can, if necessary, do the official representation work in Belgium.

## **NEWS FROM AUROVILLE**

### **Matrimandir Update**

Work continues on the outer structural form for the sphere which includes the making of the pre-cast members in the workshop and their placement with the crane. In addition, the remaining portions of the ramp are being cleaned of paint in preparation for their ferro-cement coating. To better preserve the marble stored in the Amphitheatre, new plastic jackets will be put on each slab of marble. Regular concreting of the joints which connect the precast beams together continues.

### **Matrimandir Gardens and Nursery**

In the past, the Matrimandir Gardens were divided into two distinct areas: the inner and the outer gardens.

This situation has changed significantly in the last year. A development worth mentioning is the concretization of a design for the Gardens which has been taking shape over the last three years. It eliminates a rigid separation between 'inner' and 'outer' areas, envisaging the Gardens as an organic, interconnected whole.

Piero and Francois are working closely together on the design of the Gardens, and some ideas have already materialized. For instance, eighty-one Service trees (*Peltaphorum pterocarpum*) were planted this year around and behind the amphitheater on the side away from the Matrimandir. Some landscaping work has also been executed, and more should follow so that by the winter monsoon of 1982 a large number of trees will have been planted. In addition, two other Matrimandir Gardens projects are in process.

### **The Banyan Tree**

The different ground covers around and under the Banyan Tree are now firmly established, and present a lovely sight all year round. Although this project was begun in 1979, the major work was finished only in the early part of 1981. It is hoped that through constant care and refinement over the years, this garden will reach a true sense of maturity equal to that of the Banyan Tree itself.

### **Bulgarian Roses**

These roses were unexpectedly given to Auroville at the time of Madame Zhivkova's official visit to Auroville in March 1981. Approximately one third of the 1,300 roses were kept for the Matrimandir Gardens, and an area was hastily prepared to receive them. Almost all the roses are in pots this year, as the large scale work of digging pits and composting could not be accomplished for the 1981 rose-planting season, which is from September through October. With the introduction of other varieties next year and in the years to come, a beautiful rose garden for Auroville is envisaged.

### **Education**

Four schools are now functioning in Auroville. The Center School has twenty adults involved in various learning activities with children, including the study of English, French, Tamil, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science; expression through Art and Handicrafts and physical development through sports.

Fertile school now numbers some twelve to fourteen students from the ages of twelve to eighteen, who come to the Greenbelt for a full morning's program of activities. A particular emphasis is given at Fertile to Mathematics and the Physical Science (Johnny's specialty) as well as to the subjects being focused on at Center School.

Fraternity School is growing. There are now nearly 80 Tamil students in four classes for ages 3-15. Four regular teachers from neighboring towns are helped occasionally by three Auroville volunteers who add to the standard curriculum by teaching painting, origami, and embroidery. Kottakarai/ Annainagar School has grown from being a



sprawling outdoor classroom with a single blackboard propped against a tree to a 'pukka school' where three teachers teach Tamil and English to some 120 students, aged five to fourteen.

### Educational Materials

Aurovilians attending the conference of European Auroville International Centers informed the participants that there is a general lack of material for educational purposes. The centers were requested to supply material (new or second hand) in the French or English language. Sending informative magazines such as the *National Geographic*, *Scientific American* is also appreciated. The European Centers asked the Coop to present an education project for funding.

### A Learning Exchange

Auroville's first Learning Exchange Program began on January 1, 1982, with the arrival of five students from the U.S. plus two staff members from Merriam Hill Center.

This project is sponsored by Merriam Hill Center in an attempt to provide field study experience in experimental communities for students of any age and culture who are enrolled in universities or engaged in personal study programs.

The students this time ranged in age from fourteen to twenty-one and represented a wide variety of backgrounds and experience. One is in high school, one is working on a Masters Degree, one is a university student doing independent study, and two are university graduates involved in personal study programs.

This first program was designed as a pilot project to plan and develop future student programs in Auroville. Comments from students:

"For me, the past three months in Auroville have been filled with 'learning' in the most complete sense of the word. I've experienced so many new things and grown so much since my arrival that my first days here now seem like years ago!"

Wendy Walsh

"... some place in me rests easy now, knowing that Auroville does, in fact, exist. It is finally that I know there are people in this world who are doing and not only talking."

Betsy Henry

Currently a program is being developed for Auroville youth to travel and study abroad. It is hoped that future exchanges will include students from many other countries. For further information on the Learning Exchange Program contact: Michel Henry, Merriam Hill Center, 129 Raymond St. Cambridge MA. 02140, USA.

### Aspiration Theatre Company

The new pieces "Tas pas vu mes lunettes?" and "Un arc-en-ciel s'est retourné" were staged recently and provided a provocative exploration into discovering a "new world" through the medium of dance and theatre.

### Greenbelt

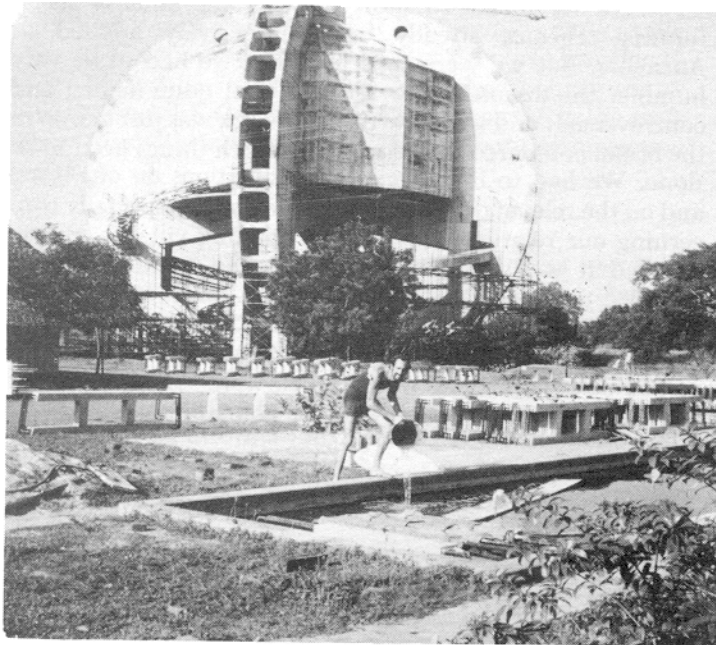
Two Aurovilians participated in the 'International Conference on Forests, People and Environment in the Third World' held in Madras and in a seminar on urban-rural relations in Southern Karnataka.

"... we were able to show some of the aims of social forestry schemes already being intensively applied in Auroville. But we were conscious that we had to be very humble: the discussions so far had been quite heated and controversial, and we knew that our work was just a drop in the ocean compared to the scale on which things need to be done. We had to field some tough questions on our status and on the relevance of what we were doing, especially concerning our relation with the surrounding villages. But in the end it was recognized that we had some useful experience to share. Later, we received some very positive response in conversations with some of the participants. People who had only very scanty knowledge of Auroville, picked up from articles in the press, were surprised to find out that such substantial work was going on."

*[Auroville Review No. 6, from which many of these items have been abstracted; is now available from Matagiri or from Auroville. 81 pages of articles, photos and progress reports combined to give a unique picture of Auroville in this brief moment of time.]*



*Aurovilians carrying sections of precast forms for Matrimandir*



*Bill Sullivan pouring water into the 'curing' pools for the precast beams*

## AUROVILLE: TOWARD THE FUTURE

*[The following piece has been adapted and condensed from an interview published in Auroville Review no. 6. Savitra is an American who has resided in Auroville for many years. He has been active in work in New Delhi concerning the Auroville Act, passed by Parliament in December, 1980, and the court case filed in the Supreme Court against Auroville and the Government of India. As Collaboration goes to press, the Court has yet to give a verdict on the Case.]*

Until recently, Auroville has been largely preoccupied with itself and with seeing itself *from* itself. Although we know somewhere that Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole, what this means *concretely* hasn't made much of an impact as yet. We tend to begin to feel that somehow *we* are Auroville and that Auroville belongs to us, even though, of course, we would all deny it.

The Auroville Act follows a process which has been emerging over the last couple of years that is characterized by people going out and other organizations from different parts of the world entering into Auroville to participate in various ways. There has been, for example, the communities exchange program and an increasing amount of communication between Auroville and the 'outside,' both within India and abroad. In a very concrete way, this Act came as a sort of decisive turning point that, for me at least broke the edge of Auroville. It has become very difficult now to separate any longer 'outside' from 'inside' Auroville. Auroville will always be uniquely itself—something that can never be compromised—but at the same time, Auroville is an inseparable part of India and the world. India in particular has a very special relationship and role vis à vis the rest of the world, and in that relationship I believe that Auroville has a particular role to play.

Somehow India and Auroville share a destiny and a collaboration, which is to offer an alternative future for the world. This Act has brought Auroville and India, through its Government, into a direct working relationship. When something as free and free-spirited as Auroville has to suddenly acknowledge itself in a context that includes a Government which generally is much more closed and conservative, there will be some differences, resistances, and difficulties. But nevertheless, without compromising Auroville, there is an exchange going on, somewhat similar to yin and yang, with elements of both in each. At this point it's as if India has entered into Auroville in a very direct way, and Auroville has entered into India in a very direct way. You could say that the Government entering into the administration of Auroville has allowed Auroville to enter into the Administration of the Government.

Since November-December we have passed through every major aspect of the Government of India. We've gone from the Executive branch through the Parliament and now through the Courts. Auroville and Auroville's vibration has had to pass through this whole spectrum of Government machinery. And whereas in the first two steps—in the Executive and the Parliamentary areas—the process was relatively swift, it was evidently in the slower Court process that the real impact of what Auroville deeply is and represents had to be exposed and get translated publicly. This constituted an infusion process, getting Auroville out, letting it enter into the consciousness of lawyers, judges, and to confront the whole resistance of that mechanism which normally would be unable to take Auroville in its consciousness at all. For me it was in this way that the Act triggered off something.

We can never go back. There is no way for Auroville to turn around and go back into its shell. It can only go further out, while retaining its true identity which will never get lost. Auroville and Aurovilians will now have to see that we can't be afraid to be contaminated by exposure to the world. On the contrary, we have to deal with and meet the world because there is no way to avoid that if you are part of a process to change the world. The world does not revolve around a small section of rural Tamil Nadu.

Auroville is in India and has to acknowledge that New Delhi, which is the nation's capital, plays a crucial role in Auroville's future, just as Auroville plays a crucial role in India's future. And both of them together when they more consciously discover that role, will play a crucial role in the world's future, which is just now beginning to happen. Through the International Advisory Council, for example, a vehicle is beginning to emerge in which individuals such as the Director-General of UNESCO are suddenly involved with Auroville and will be touched by Auroville and at the same time through Auroville can touch others.

### *A Catalyst for Change*

Auroville for me is an accelerator. India is a country based on eternity: change is not something very prevalent, at least on the surface. Auroville is a catalyst for change. So what we see here is the confrontation of two complementary elements of reality. Auroville receives a tremendous patience and perseverance and the sense of the eternal that India gives; on the other hand, Auroville infuses into India, whether in the area of reafforestation and land reclamation, alternative energy, or whatever, the need to change something *now*, the need to bring new ideas, new visions into

matter which is something India has been diverted away from for a long time. Auroville becomes like a grain of sand in the oyster whose irritation brings about a pearl. We can't do without each other.

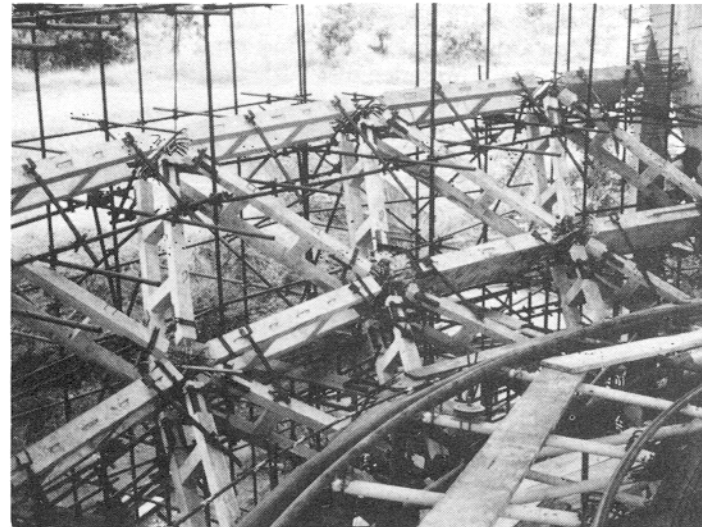
Now, because of the Government involvement with the Act, we will be able to filter more effectively into India and have the possibility of a much wider impact. We're in a position to involve India through the Government, through the departments of the Government like environment, resource development, rural development, appropriate technology, a whole list of things, to become a model where India can test out certain things which need to be tested out very fast. So it's like that. It's really where East meets West. And it's not only that East meets West as far as Aurovilians are concerned between themselves, but where Auroville represents this quick movement to bring something into matter where it confronts that other aspect of matter needing to change but resisting.

### *A Personal Re-connecting*

My own experience in New Delhi has certainly changed me. It gave me a lot of time to spend by myself, and I used that time to reconnect with certain lines that are *me*, which tend to get blurred when you are living constantly under the crosscurrents of influences in a collective situation like Auroville. And in that reconnection with myself, individually, I felt that I could find that point where I can more effectively contribute to the play of Auroville collectively. This became a very important theme for me over this last year and a half: that we have fought so long for the development of this thing which we call "Auroville the collective," but in the process, and perhaps for me almost ironically, the major issue of the Case was this term religion. We have the tendency to always project the thing 'out there' and to see the obvious adversary (in our case the Society) representing 'religion.' But in this way I kept seeing that She was trying to speak to all of us, and it's really just a game we play with ourselves if we try to see Her as speaking only to one party. The obvious—'religion'—was coming across through the Society. But if we understand what religion is, at least as I understand it through Her, religion is anything which tends toward the exclusive, which dogmatizes and creates a system that becomes *It*. Even if you don't see it as religion or having spiritual connotations, that tendency crystalizes into an attitude, a way of being. And in this sense the Mother is talking to all of us, this Case is speaking to every one of us both inside of Auroville and outside.

As a result, I came to realize that at each moment, for me, I had to be alive to the truth of my own nature. That was my personal way of not becoming religious. And I know in Auroville that we have to see that we should never become . . . That the tendency is there, because it is in human nature, for an Auroville dogma, or an Auroville creed, together with a certain fanatical tendency, a revolutionary guard. (I may not survive this interview) But really, that for me is something that we have to be mature enough to look at: not to be afraid to see the lessons that came out of this last experience into Auroville and Auroville entering into the world we have to realize that we are not *the* Auroville: we are a part of a process of growing into Auroville, four hundred and fifty of us, now. The future for Auroville is so much more than the habit we've gotten into over the past several years! And that habit keeps us turning and preoccupied with certain vestiges of our past that we all very much know and should get beyond.

For me the last year and a half has forced me to look at the future through the Case, through the issues that were brought up by the Act, and has forced me to recover what my dream was and what all of our dreams were in coming to Auroville—to live for that greatest possibility for the Earth. I'm certainly tired and not willing to spend any more energy on doing anything less than that. I'm sure I *will* do less than that, but I remember it well enough to at least feel uncomfortable when I'm doing less. And I know that all of us as Aurovilians are so much more than we are being. I hope that his Act, which in its truest dimension is much more than an Act of any government, allows us to become our true being expressing our true action in the world.



*Beginning of the geodesic structure going around the Matrimandir*

### **TO THE TRUTH THAT IS FOR EVER**

You it was who kissed me  
in Your light standing over  
whelmed consumed  
*Truth is for ever*  
my Lover.

Not yet, I wept  
unready swept to the root  
by Your moving Pillar of Fire  
by day and by night  
remorselessly charged  
by Your moving Column of Light  
going before me within  
without pity my desire for  
You burning the bush possessed.

Left consumed  
stripped at last  
leafless deflowered Yours  
my Lover whose kiss is  
*The Truth That Is For Ever*  
my life flowers a new Life  
And all life new  
flowers Your Fire and Light  
burning a bush possessed  
now U n c o n s u m e d.

—Seyril Schochen  
Boulder, Colorado



## SARASWATI-DURGA AUTUMN'S QUEEN.

Queen of heaven she walks now close  
Her breast a rapture of repose,  
In passion burning undisclosed  
And waves of lightning blazing glow  
Upon the oceans of our soul,  
As darkness wakes to hidden light  
And silent realms of deathless sight.  
And forms appear that watch on time  
Guardians of the sacred shrine,  
That burns like truth within our hearts,  
Where Love's strange wonder sun-born starts.  
And on a world dark-veiled by care  
Eyes of deathless vision stare,  
Through dark Throes of midnight air  
Towards a summit diamond-rare.  
And now a presence soft with dream  
One moment caught of insight keen,  
Towards our mystic earth does lean,  
With eyes that seem a queen's  
And now at last upon all sides  
Death does fail, Love abides,  
The golden lion-goddess rides.

— Roger Harris

## THE HOUSE IN THE WOODS

It happened again  
that night.  
He awoke to find her space empty  
in the cool moonlight,

and went to the unlocked door.  
The breadcrumb trail disappeared  
into the rustling forest.

He stood  
looking long.

'O my foolish one,  
don't you remember  
the hunger of birds?  
Where is she that you killed?  
Who are you?

At length he slept again  
and dreamt of following  
her trail through the woods  
grinding the bread into the ground.  
Among large white boulders  
it stopped.

In the morning she said:  
"Dreaming again?  
My love you know I will never leave.  
You know.

You know that."  
She touched his cheek  
and he did know and did believe  
that everafter they would be happy,  
and he placed a bowl of stones  
by the door that night  
that she might not forget  
in her haste for the forest.

— Gordon Korstange

## THE ANHINGA

MIRIAM BELOV

*[The author lives in New York City and works at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The anHINGA is a mythical bird which the Hopis regard as sacred. It carries their prayers to heaven.]*

City streets send up pulses with rhythms of  
life,  
iridescent vibrations of heat.  
Wave hands like clouds and sink into the  
root.  
Sun glows into

yellow moon floating like a ripe peach in  
the evening sky.  
A velvet whisper caresses my limbs.  
Glowing so deeply, I move through lush  
waves of air  
on the scents of dreams in the balmy  
nights.

Green hills pushing towards the sky,  
clusters of flowers with their faces turned  
up to the sun:  
these asanas of earth refresh.  
Cool, quiet movements.

Wings of the angels brush us gently  
as the wind moves through metropolis and  
vale.  
It is all the same—each expression a mudra  
of supplication.  
Life speaks in a cabal, carefully opening  
the gates  
if we only know how to know.

On her soul the aspiration ascends.



Walter and Tina at Aspiration Tree Nursery