

Collaboration

FALL 1986

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In adoration we seek
union with the
Divine

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Cover: The Mother's hands in the mudra of "adoration."

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The Work Here

In this issue we present two manifestations of the Work being done in the United States. The first is George Nakashima, a man who has demonstrated what the power of consciousness can do when inspired by the ideal of physical perfection and steeped in a tradition that has developed aspects of daily life into quiet rituals of contemplation. To speak with George is to enter into that quietness. His is the triumph of an individual who left the physical proximity of the Mother's force, returned to the West, and was able to embody her vision in this country.

The second is the All-USA-Meeting, two days of collective yoga done in August by approximately seventy people at Merriam Hill in New Hampshire. There was beauty and joy in being together—as well as difficulties, for sadhana in common is often just that. Yet this gathering had more communion than commonness. AUM demonstrated that our aspiration for some kind of unity is slowly growing, despite the distances, the jobs, the urge to hide away in a room with photos and books. We all have a secret called Sri Aurobindo and Mother. To be in the company of those for whom it is a common tongue seems to be an evolving necessity.

The next issue of *Collaboration* will be about that expanding work. We would like each center, organization, and study group in America to send as complete an update as possible on the work you are doing. This includes everything from general statements, to descriptions of meetings, to members (group photo time, everyone), to buildings, to personal expressions by individuals. It will be an attempt to devote all of the issue to making clear and bringing together the scattered threads of the Yoga in the USA so that those involved can see each other better and those who want to get involved know where to go. This attempt itself is a test of our fragile collectivity since it demands cooperation and work done within a deadline. We need your reports by December 15th. Please try to get started as soon as possible and don't forget the photos.

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Collaboration begins its new volume each fall. Those of you who have not renewed your subscriptions, should please do so at this time. Subscription rates are \$12 per year. We continue to aspire for this journal to be yours and hope you see your subscription as a contribution to the Yoga as well as a purchase.

Gordon Korstange

Sri Aurobindo and The Mother on Beauty

Sri Aurobindo states that what the human consciousness is . . . "seeking through beauty is in the end that which we are seeking through religion, the Absolute, the Divine. The search for beauty is only in its beginning a satisfaction in the beauty of form, the beauty which appeals to the physical senses and the vital impressions, impulsions, desires. The soul of beauty in us desires the contact, the revelation, the uplifting delight of an absolute beauty in all things which it feels to be present, but which neither the senses and instincts by themselves can give . . . nor the reason and intelligence . . . for beauty is supra-rational, supra-intellectual. It is through all these veils that the soul seeks to get in touch with this universal, absolute beauty. God is Beauty and Delight hidden in the variation of his masks and forms."

Sri Aurobindo says that by identifying with beauty we "identify ourselves in soul with the Divine in all forms and activities of the world and shape an image of our inner and our outer life in the highest image we can perceive. Thus the aesthetic being in us "has risen to its divine consummation to reveal, to embody, to create. The highest beauty is to bring out of our souls the living image and power of God."

No doubt all of us have memories of moments of this highest beauty which Aurobindo speaks of. I think immediately of those breath-taking moments when I've walked into Mother Nature at her heights of perfection. There was the clear, cold night when the stars seemed close enough to reach and touch as I ascended the hill in Darjeeling for a view of Kanchenjunga. I've had the delight of going to the beach in Auroville on a full moon night and seeing the phosphorescent lights dance on the waves . . . I have my collection of photos which have attempted to capture sunsets, rainbows, mountains, dew drops on roses, or shell fish on rocks. I have rocks and pebbles from the beaches of Maine and driftwood from Lake Michigan and clay babies from Vermont. All of these things were a passing moment, a fleeting glimpse of "the soul behind, the self and spirit."

I have also tried to create things which have something of myself and yet something that is beyond myself. How many times have I taken a piece of clay and tried to impose some design on it and in the end find it to be just another piece of pottery? How many times have I found the pot within the ball of clay and looked at it sitting on my table wondering where it came from or who made it?

Sri Aurobindo says that the artist or the Yogi has a transmuting vision because he "discovers what is behind the object, the something More that it is." "In the Yogin's vision of universal beauty, all becomes beautiful, but all is not reduced to a single level. It all depends on the ascending power (Vibhuti) of Consciousness and Ananda that expresses itself in the object. All is the Divine, but some things are more divine than others. There are not only aesthetic values, but life-values, mind-values, soul-values that enter into the expression of beauty."

I often think of how I have become more aware of expressing harmony and beauty in all of my habits, since living in Auroville. Mother leaves her indelible mark on her disciples through an aspiration to express beauty through speech, work, and daily habits. This beauty is often very simple. A flower is in just the right place, a red tile floor is laid out in a geometric pattern, or a hand embroidered blouse or handwoven cloth is made or worn. Mother saw the cultivation of an aesthetic sense as part of every disciple's education. She thought that we should

develop; "The capacity to choose and adopt what is beautiful and harmonious, simple, healthy, and pure. For there is a psychological health just as there is a physical health, a beauty, and harmony of the sensations as of the body and its movements. As the capacity of understanding grows in the child, he should be taught, in the course of his education, to add artistic taste and refinement to power and precision. He should be shown, led to appreciate, taught to love beautiful, lofty, healthy, and noble things, whether in Nature or in human creation. This should be a true aesthetic culture, which will protect him from degrading influences. For, in the wake of the last wars and the terrible nervous tension which they provoked, as a sign, perhaps, of the decline of civilization and social decay, a growing vulgarity seems to have taken possession of human life, individual as well as collective, particularly in what concerns aesthetic life and the life of the senses. A methodical and enlightened cultivation of the senses can, little by little, eliminate from the child whatever is by contagion vulgar, commonplace, and crude. This education will have very happy effects even on his character. For one who has developed a truly refined taste will, because of this very refinement, feel incapable of acting in a crude, brutal or vulgar manner. This refinement, if it is sincere, brings to the being a nobility and generosity which will spontaneously find expression in his behavior and will protect him from many base and perverse movements."

Those who had the opportunity to live in the Ashram with Mother express this aesthetic education in various ways. In some disciples it is simply a blissful smile. In others, it is an abundance of love, personal warmth, and harmony in the being. Many disciples express beauty through physical development and the discipline that requires. Still others cultivate roses and hibiscus, or produce hand-marbled paper or cloth . . . In fact the Ashram in Pondicherry is unique within the context of India for its cultivation of beauty and harmony on the physical plane.

Mother wrote "It is one of the greatest weapons of the Asura at work when you are taught to shun beauty. It has been the ruin of India. The Divine manifests in the psychic as love, in the mind as knowledge, in the vital as power, and in the physical as beauty. If you discard beauty it means that you are depriving the Divine of this manifestation in the material and you hand over that part to the Asura."

She couldn't be more explicit! We have a choice and an example. Look at any photo of Mother, listen to her music or contemplate a flower with its significance. There is an immediate sense of that which is within. As Mother says, "A complete and universal appreciation of beauty and the making entirely beautiful our whole life and being must surely be a necessary character of the perfect individual and the perfect society."

"Harmony and beauty of the mind and soul, harmony and beauty of the thoughts and feelings, harmony and beauty in every outward act and movement, harmony and beauty of the life and surroundings, this is the demand of Mahalakshmi . . . where love and beauty are not or are reluctant to be born, she does not come."

Jeanne Korstange

Extracts from: *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library, Vol. 9, Letters on Poetry, Literature, and Art, 1972, S.A.A.P., pp. 332-35. Mother's Collected Works, Vol. 12, pp. 20-21 and Vol. 13 pp. 380-81, S.A.A.P., Pondicherry, 1978.*

Sundarananda:

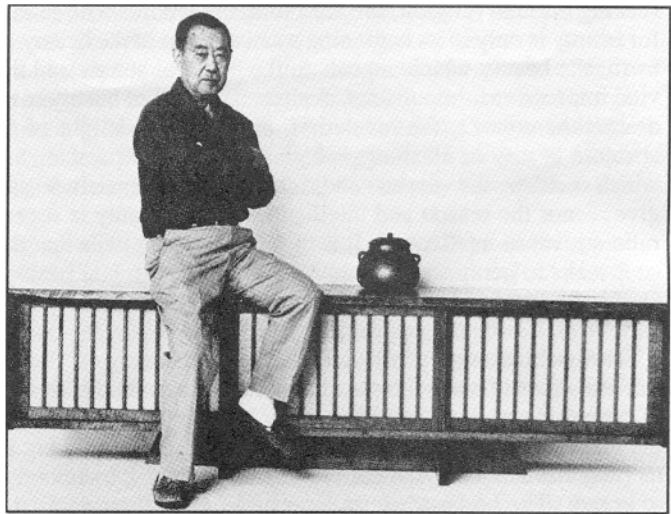
An Interview with George Nakashima

George Nakashima is one of the foremost woodworkers in the world and the oldest American disciple of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. His excellence in his craft is an expression of his dedicated Karma Yoga. Ever striving after perfection and allowing it to come forth naturally, he stands as an example to all. As he says in his autobiography, Soul of a Tree, "Each plank... can have only one ideal use. The woodworker must find this ideal use and create an object of utility to man, and, if nature smiles, an object of lasting beauty." At the age of 81, honors are pouring in from a life time of hard struggle and accomplishments. Honored by the Japanese government as an Order of the Sacred Treasure, his awards in America are numerous. National Geographic began their cable programming with a special on him. He is presently involved with the Metropolitan Museum of Art in creating a room for the new Japanese Galleries. The American Craft Museum and The Philadelphia Museum of Art both want to do exhibits of his work. His Altar To Peace will be inaugurated at St. John the Divine in New York City on this New Year's Eve during a peace concert conducted by Leonard Bernstein.

It should be said that all of the Nakashima family is involved in the creation of this legend, but it began in 1938 when George was given the name of Sundarananda by Sri Aurobindo himself. Let us take a closer look at a person who has the honor of having been able to get in touch with true soul nature and express it so clearly that it shines forth for the whole world to see. We talked with George in his studio in New Hope, Pennsylvania. He began speaking about the building of Golconde, the well-known Ashram guest house, which originally drew him to Pondicherry.

The story of Golconde begins in Tokyo in 1934-35. I spent 5 years there with Anthony Raymond. He came to me with a sketch that wasn't more than 3". He wanted me to design the plan for it. So, I designed the building and worked on the engineering with a friend of mine. Then he asked for a volunteer to go to India to work on the building. No one else seemed to volunteer so I did. I was very happy to go. I was interested in India, so I made my first trip to Pondicherry in 1936. I spent a month seeing the grounds and working out the plans. I had worked out all the details of design for putting up a building in that environment. I had the idea of having louvers for complete ventilation. I thought it was a very important idea for that kind of climate. I knew it got hot there. I think I spent that first month there in the summer, then went back to Japan and finished the drawings and also bought equipment.

It was a real task because it was the first building of its kind in Pondicherry. There wasn't any equipment there for constructing such a building. They didn't have steel or cement. So Chandilal and I worked together ordering material. We got the steel from France. There wasn't any wharf in Pondicherry and that was a problem for unloading steel. We had to take the steel off the ships with these catamarans which are a couple of palmrya logs tied together. You have a little paddle and six men rowing. We got the steel off the boats with these men and their boats. It laid on the shore like a mass of spaghetti. Then they hauled it from the shore to the site. We just dragged it. There



George Nakashima

weren't any paved roads then but it sure messed up the dirt roads. And then the coolies had to straighten it. Then we had to make the shuttering. That was a complete design problem in itself. I made all the main details of the shuttering. I had to figure out the stresses in the framework. Then we had to make the appropriate construction. I had to detail all the steel work. It came all bent and we had to do the straightening and bending according to our needs. We had to make tests to see that the concrete was of appropriate quality. We had to be extremely careful to get concrete that held together instead of breaking off the aggregate. Mother was very insistent that it be of the highest quality. We got a very good quality with proper strength.

We didn't know how to build it, so we made a mini-Golconde as a trial. It was a one room model to see what we were getting into. Chandilal worked with me. Pavitra helped some but he was not as deeply into it. We talked everything over with Mother. She was interested in all the details. She had an amazing knowledge of what we were doing and what was going on with the construction principles. She took my design and recommendations and gave me her opinion. But as far as the construction and final design she left it pretty much to me.

When it came to the construction, there were three of us working on it, Jothilal, a Bengali engineer, Chandilal the Ashram engineer, and myself. You have to work together on a building like that. Not one of us took the sole credit for Golconde. We worked together on it. It was team work. We got going on the building. The three of us supervised. Everybody pitched in and it was a wonderful kind of feeling. I think we contributed to breaking down the caste system. Everybody did everything. Everybody worked there. It was a kind of do it yourself project. There were no professionals. We worked beautifully together. Mother insisted on great precision. So, we allowed only about 1/8" off plumb when we put up the columns.

After about a year of working on the construction Francois came. I don't know just how that happened but he was a very good man. He had been on a building project in Moscow with Corbusier. He left it and came to help us on Golconde. I did the

furniture for the miniature Golconde but he did it for the building after I left Pondicherry.

I didn't stay until Golconde was finished because of the war. The Japanese were in Burma. I was told that unless I left at that time it would have been impossible for me to leave. I thought that I should relate to the world rather than stay in the Ashram. I would have been happy to stay in the Ashram then. It was at that time the most heavenly place on earth. It was an ideal society.

*He never walked—he always ran.
We asked him why and he said that he
thought if he walked, the Mother would
think that he wasn't feeling very well.
So he'd always run.*

There wasn't a bit of rancor. During the whole time I was there I don't think I heard a harsh word. There was such joy, such beauty. A lot of it was the way Ashramites walked down the streets and how they looked, the depth of their eyes. Pavitra especially had the most beautiful eyes one can think of. They had such depth. And he would look at you straight with such beautiful eyes and it would just overwhelm you. And everybody thought that way. There was a blacksmith, Madanlal, who evidently had been given up for dead when he went to the Ashram. I don't know how he got to be a blacksmith, but he had become a person of great physical strength. He never walked—he always ran. We asked him why and he said that he thought if he walked, the Mother would think that he wasn't feeling very well. So he'd always run.

All of us in the Ashram at that time had this tremendous devotion to Mother and Sri Aurobindo. We had some extraordinary men there. Have you ever heard of Anilbaran? He was a very developed man spiritually. There were people like Dilip Kumar Roy. He wasn't quite into Aurobindo's yoga. He was a little restless. He would go out into India every once-in-awhile. Very few of us had permission to leave the Ashram. Even to go to Madras, we couldn't do that. Even around the Ashram. I remember that I once asked Anu if she'd take a walk in the country with me. She had to ask Mother. We finally had our walk in the country, but we had about six chaperons. She was just a teenager at the time. If anyone wanted to do anything more than that... it became a bit of a situation. None of us minded this.

From the beginning I missed non-vegetarian food. Becoming a vegetarian so soon after I got there was a little difficult but I soon got used to that. Mother conducted prosperity once a month. At that time we received a dhoti and a bar of soap and 2 rupees for spending money. We received it directly from Mother and that was all we wanted. Actually, that was one of the few complete Ashram events with everyone being there at the 7pm Meditation. Usually there were only 30 or 40 out of 200 people at the Meditations. So Prosperity was a complete event. Most Ashramites didn't come to Meditation. Mother used to come down the stairs promptly at 7pm and stop about halfway. She'd begin meditation. It lasted about 45 minutes and then she'd go upstairs again. I remember a beautiful atmosphere. It would be always full of scents from flowers in the garden and the scene of all the Ashramites sitting there meditat-

ing was very beautiful. Most of us had our meals in the dining room which was very nice. They were completely silent. No children. The women didn't eat with the men at that time. They were completely separate. There were very few of them. There was Anu and an English woman and Margaret Wilson. There was Shobana, the singer. But they never ate with us. They had their meals brought to their rooms. I occasionally had mine brought to my room. I had a servant who helped me. He took very good care of me. Mother made certain concessions, like bread and butter, for me. In India there's butter in the cooking—Ghee-anyway. But one was able to get canned butter. I had canned butter and a closet for my own food. Hot food was brought in a tiffin. There are certain interesting things in living there. The closet for our food would sit in little cement things which held water to keep the ants out. I had a family of ants that were very clever. They would climb up the sides of the container and then slide across the water on their bellies. And they would get into my cupboard. I witnessed this myself. So I can tell you.

After about a year Francoise came with Agnes and then Margaret Wilson arrived. We became friendly. She'd invite me over. At that time there were only two refrigerators in the Ashram. Mother's and Margaret's. We would have a glass of ice water together which was a real treat. She'd do most of the talking. This little weekly get together went on for quite a long time. Later on she received the name of Nishita from Sri Aurobindo. She must have been in her 50s. She was a very brilliant woman. She started with Sri Aurobindo in New York. She read Aurobindo's books in the public library. She'd sail

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right through them. It took me one month to read one chapter in *the Life Divine*. I couldn't do it but she did. She was accompanied by a woman whose name I've forgotten... MacLeod. She never stayed in the Ashram. Margaret once told me that she thought she'd only stay for about 2 weeks but she stayed on and on and finally died there. When I came back to the U.S. a friend asked me what I'd been doing and I mentioned Margaret and that ended up in the newspaper that Margaret Wilson was in the Ashram.

Darshan days. The weather was always perfect of course. At that time people would come from all over India and the world. Aurobindo and Mother would see all the Ashramites personally one by one. We'd go in by Purani's room and upstairs and Mother and Aurobindo would be sitting on the couch side by side. We'd go to Mother first. We all had a flower and we laid it on her lap, then put our heads down on her lap and she'd give us her blessing on the back of our head. Then we'd go to Aurobindo and get his blessing. Sri Aurobindo would take so much time that we'd reach a state of ecstasy. I think that was true for

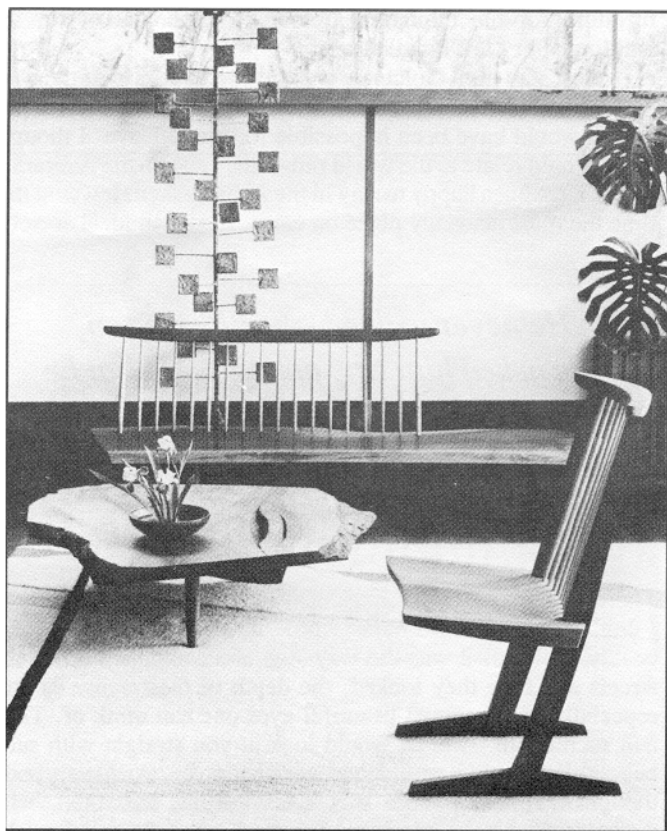
everyone. We'd give a flower to him and he'd give it back. Then we'd leave. Later on there'd be more of a general darshan. Ashramites were all received personally. It was the contact with Sri Aurobindo that was very important for all of us. These were the most beautiful days. We'd have our clean dhotis on. It made quite an impression for the Ashram. He touched us on the back of the head and that was it. It was the most extraordinary experience. You'd feel a sort of elation going through your body. I don't think it was just psychological. I think it was actual. And this would go on four times a year. I was there two years and I guess that equals 12 darshans. It was a tremendous experience. I don't think it was the same after Aurobindo died. After that she gave darshan from the balcony. The Ashram was never quite the same. But it was such a beautiful experience. I don't know of anything like it. It was an ideal society. It was difficult in a way but I finally felt that I would have to leave to relate to the world. I think that what we are doing here is an extension of Aurobindo's yoga. It's the sort of thing that we have evolved. I don't think that I could have done this kind of thing without first having experienced the Ashram and Sri Aurobindo's teachings. It is hard to explain. I don't know quite how it happened. Through a series of experiences that led to what we're doing I think all along I felt the presence of the Mother. In a very physical way.

When I left India I had to go to Hong Kong. I had to catch a boat there to Shanghai. I was along the wharf in Kowloon. I was about to be beaten up by a bunch of Chinese. There were about six of them. I didn't know what to do. I thought I'd try to make a run for it. But actually, before I had to make a run for it, the Chinese dropped off and left me alone. The only way I can explain that is Mother's presence.

There have been other things, too, since we moved here. One time there was a section of a tree branch that fell towards me and I thought maybe I was a gonner. The main section of the tree had died off 10 to 15 years before and the branch went this way. My head was right in the middle where it could have been crushed because the tree branch would have crashed right there.

He touched us on the back of the head and that was it. It was the most extraordinary experience. You'd feel a sort of elation going through your body. I don't think it was just psychological. I think it was actual.

Another time was when I had to break off shards of wood. Very often these break off and leave a very sharp corner. One time this limb broke off and left not only one, but two shards and they both went through my boot. I began to wonder as I was waiting for the pain to start. But one went through the heel of my boot and the other through the bottom of the boot and just scraped my foot. All in all I could have been very badly hurt. But I was okay. I was just waiting for the pain to start. After that I was just worried about my boot and having to buy new ones.

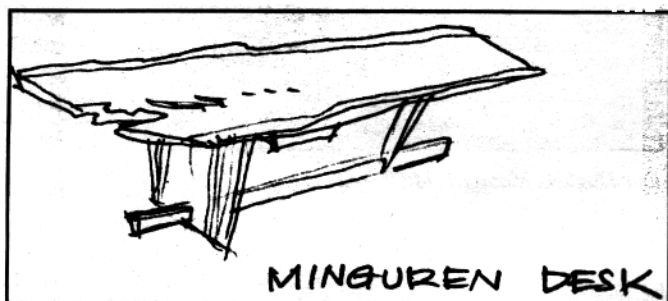


Furniture designed and crafted by George Nakashima at New Hope, Penn.

After one year in the Ashram (I don't think I even asked him, but that would often happen with Sri Aurobindo) he wrote me a little note saying that Sundarananda was my name. I think he had in mind that it was all on the physical plane and that's what I work in. "Sundar" means beauty and "ananda" means delight. He translated it to "One who delights in beauty."

I have this project which I've started from this great log that I acquired. It's an extraordinary piece. It's about 5' in diameter at the small end and flares to about 7'. It's unusual, something that nature had produced and might never produce again. It's unique. I acquired this. I wouldn't have the heart to cut this tree myself. But as long as it was cut, I felt that I could give it a second life—bring the fruit of nature to the imagination so that I could see what to do with this log. My final realization was when I was in the hospital recuperating from an operation and it came to me as a dream that it should be an altar for Peace. I put down my thoughts at that time. It wasn't long and I passed them on to a few friends that might be interested in it. At the present time we're starting a foundation. Just how it's going to go, I really don't know. There seem to be a few complications. If the Mother were here I would ask her, like everything else. But I'm determined to go ahead with it. The log is 12' by 12' and weighs about a 1/4 of a ton. The Cathedral of St. John the Divine has offered to take it. That is said to be the largest church in the world. It's non-sectarian, there are all kinds of people worshipping there. And it's very much peace minded. It's very open and involved in the peace movement. They're very anxious to have it. I think I'll go that way.

What I'm going to do from now on I'm not quite sure. My wife and I would like to tidy up our business but then we get busier and I don't know quite how to handle it. I'm afraid that I'm in the same position that Ramakrishna was. He would accept everything and everybody and he died at an early age. Sri Aurobindo was much more sensible. He contained everything and did his own writing. I don't mean to compare myself but I'm in a functional activity. I think that we can work it out. But we do have to tidy up things. I need to ease out of them in a nice way. I'm very much interested in the question of transformation. What we have tried to do here is that and I think that is where the future lies. It does not lie with the West. I think the West has pretty well declined and the superpowers are both wrong. Completely wrong. The main truth of all this is that we have built a society that doesn't work. But in spite of all the resources and money it has not produced a viable society and it certainly has not produced any beauty. So that's where craft comes in.



Sketch by George Nakashima

I can show you what we've done here in the way of Karma Yoga. We use nature to its fullest and take wood that has been cut, material people would throw away. We've tried to use the best of modern technology. At the same time I've tried to retain the good things from the past. What we've done here with most of our buildings is build an atmosphere of our ancestry in architecture and transport it into our society.

Photos by George Nakashima, New Hope, Penn.

In an age of death and disintegration we find a calm but desperate need to make things and, if possible, to create beauty. The day of personal expression, the rootless egotism of "modern art" and modern architecture with its completely false values is now over. It is a middle class luxury we can no longer afford. The realities of existence are pressing in on us from all sides.

We can still try to create beauty so that an honest, skilled and creative activity is possible; that we can rest for the night with an honest face.

Instead of a long-running and bloody battle with nature, to dominate her, we can walk in step with a tree to release the joy in her grains, to join with her to realize her potentials, to enhance the environments of man.

It is an art and a soul satisfying adventure to walk the forests of the world, to commune with trees, to take them when mature or even dead, and, going through the dozens of creative acts needed, to bring this living material to the work bench, ultimately to give it a second life.

This is our "Shakti," our creative energy.

George Nakashima

Autumn Poem

Beauty is victorious
As sincerity blooms this fall.
The asters are magnificent.
Purity arising out of a
Perfect consecration to
Truth scents the air.

The clarity of the sky light
(A golden light
Glowing gently, firmly
With incredible strength
And brilliance and yet,
As soft as a sleeping baby's breath)
Is humbling now as from the
Heart rainbows materialize.
The hands glisten with their colours.

Pink love illumines blue health.
Peace arises from deep within the
Earth's center as the
Goddess gives grace from above,
Pouring down over the globe
The intensity of the liberation
Of the mind of the cells.

Let us co-create in
Positive visualizations to
Aid in the evolution of this
Sweet world:
A heart pulsating love and peace
With the fullness of tropical lushness
Surrounding her.

We shall cut away the forces of evil
With songs of praise in order to
Enter the holy gates
Where Beauty lives.
The soul of Beauty appears.
Her husband embraces her;
Through this gathering which brings
Her joy the forces of evil will
Be utterly crushed.

Nature reaches out to us.
Divinity flows through us
And in unison
A dance of exultation and splendour
In the glory of autumn's phoenix plumage
May begin.

Autumn 1986
Miriam Belov

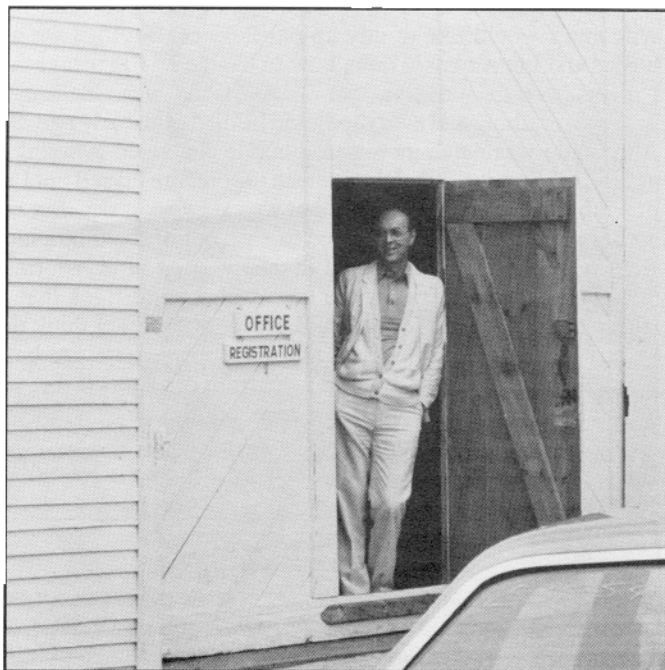
The Sounds of AUM

The morning after the All USA Meeting, I woke up with the sounds of AUM still with me and the energy of AUM no longer located so much in the head, but in the body's memory. The many voices of AUM were becoming less distinct, yet they lingered in another rainy New England dawn as faces and forms woke up with me to speak once again.

Friday, August 15: We began with such delight in each other's presence, as when you round a corner on an ordinary dream path and suddenly see everyone you ever knew milling around waiting for you to arrive. At first you just want to look, to touch and test the reality of the vision. Many voices said, "How amazing to walk into this barn in New Hampshire and everyone was there." Larry Nagle from Auroville saw Raman from the Matrimandir workshop and immediately knew why he had left his temporary job on Long Island to come to Merriam Hill and, after an intense reunion game of basketball with Selva, Hari, Chopper, and Satya, knew somehow the meaning of Auroville. For others it was just the recognition of the many who are part of the One made palpable, the voices on the end of a telephone connection embodied.



Raman from Auroville on a 3 month scholarship to study Architecture in the US.



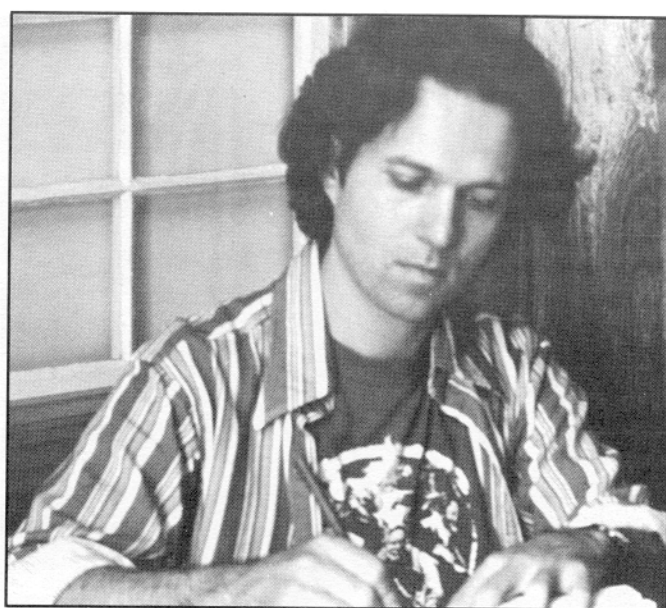
Eric Hughes, Matagiri, Mt. Tremper, NY.

*Throughout the weekend
this problem would arise: how to
speak words from heart to heart
in so little time when bound by
the business of the mind.*



From left to right: Fanou Walton, Willow Gold, Wis., Mary Alexander, Sacramento, CA., Ardis Hanson, Long Island, NY.

During the long summer afternoon of August 15th, these voices were being added to AUM and if you arrived later you did not know which way to turn—how to multiply oneself like Krishna—to greet each soul. Throughout the weekend this problem would arise: how to speak words from heart to heart in so little time when bound by the business of the mind. So much triviality to get through! In the future, during the seven day AUM, one day will be only for singing, eyes, and silence.



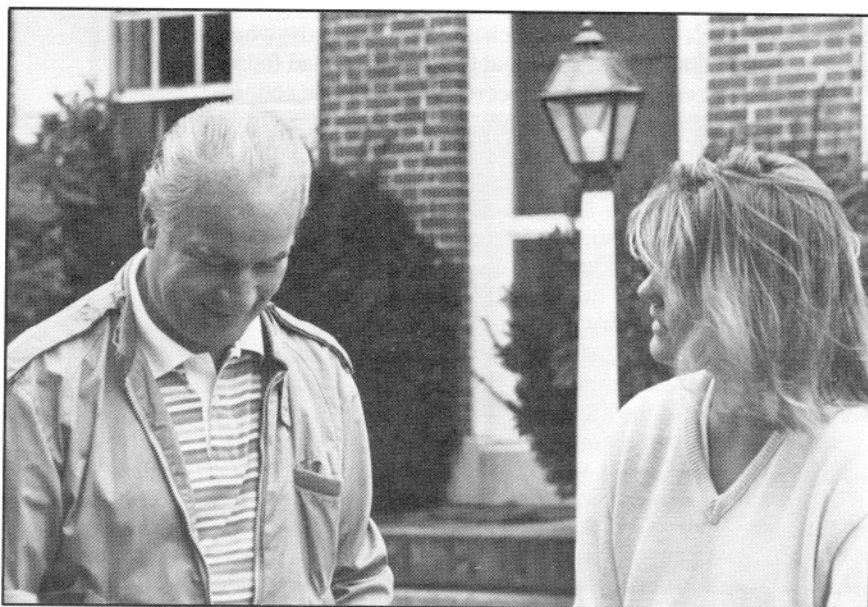
Julian Lines, Sri Aurobindo Center, High Falls, NY.

On the evening of the 15th, our voices were stilled to meditate and listen to a recording of The Mother reading *The Hour of God*. We sat in the barn, focused on a photo of Sri Aurobindo surrounded by candlelight and the flowers of summer. The silence grew deep. Our sounds were swallowed up by the crickets and the presence of the Guest whose birthday party it was. Afterwards we struggled back to words as if from far away. Ron Jorgensen of Seattle, Washington said, "This alone was worth the trip."



Connie Buckley, N.Y.C., NY, Francois Grenier, Auroville.

*The silence grew deep.
Our sounds were
swallowed up by
the crickets
and the presence of
the Guest whose
birthday party it was.*



Sam Spanner, Matagiri, Mt. Tremper, NY, and Regan Mitchell, Grinnell, IA.



Melissa Michaels and daughter Mariah, Boulder, CO.

*It was the great American game show/
soap opera/mini-series of ourselves,
famous for two minutes,
a way for the group to affirm each one's
history and presence.*

Saturday, August 16: We played a game, newly entitled "soul call," closed our eyes, and shouted for each other: "George...Gracie; Lox...Bagle; Sita...Rama." Then for the next two hours each of us had a chance to speak to the whole group, not about ourselves, but about the person we had found. The audience sat enthralled at the secrets revealed, the connections that appeared out of seemingly haphazard matching. It was the great American game show/soap opera/mini-series of ourselves, famous for two minutes, a way for the group to affirm each one's history and presence. Fenou Walton, from Willow Gold in Wisconsin, discovered a long lost friend from France. Francois from Auroville discovered his sought after American tycoon. Baby and David Wickenden, student and teacher years ago in Auroville, found each other in new dialogue, new situations, yet still, to Baby's fond surprise, David wore that old blue sweatshirt.

Business began in the afternoon following a lunch provided by the Mettanokit community of Another Place, just down the road from Merriam Hill, where many of us stayed. Several affinity groups met during that time and the next morning: inner networking, fundraising, education, health, marketing, Auroville International, and national coordination. It was a time to sow ideas, debate directions, question, and listen. These groups tended to revolve around the issues of our identity as American sadhaks and our relationship to the work in Auroville and



Mark McCaffrey, N.Y.C., NY, Steve Streeter, CA, Ariel Browne, GA, Julian Lines, Hasmujk and Gita Rama.



Jyoti Alexander, Sacramento, CA.

Pondicherry. The feeling is growing that we are coalescing as one body with many centers, that we need to feed ourselves and grow strong, yet our hearts are also drawn to the wide streets of Pondy and the red dust of Auroville.

Some of the affinity groups continued meeting into the night, after a videotape from Auroville, while DJ David Wickenden got us boogying in the barn and Anie Nunnally from New York and Medicine Story of Another Place were singing in the parlor. Then, with the moon hanging like a pale mango in the western sky, we went to bed after this day of intense interaction.

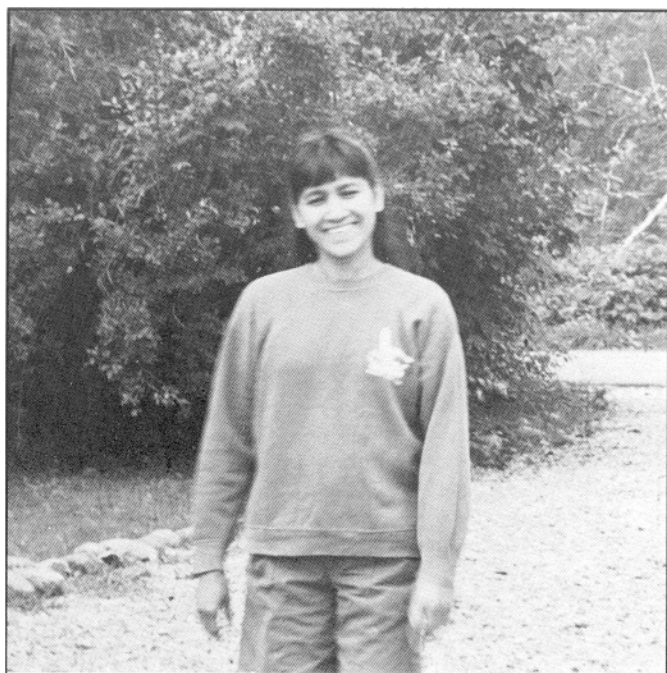
Sunday, August 17: We awoke to the end of AUM and, over breakfast, began planning next year's new, extended version. The meeting as a whole agreed to try to lengthen AUM to at least four days. Many suggested that it be held around a 3 day holiday. The hope is for AUM to be on the West Coast next year, but anyone who knows of a suitable site within traveling distance from a major airport should find out financial details and contact either Navaja Llope at AVI-USA in Sacramento or Julian Lines in High Falls. We want to set the date and place as soon as possible.



Hikers: Carol, Larry and Verne.

This dichotomy emerged in a discussion among the whole group on Sunday morning about the need for full-time, paid staff at the centers. It was proposed that 10% of donations to the Ashram and Auroville be taken out for center expenses. Many voices were raised on both sides of the issue. Some said that better organized, stable centers would actually increase the flow of money, materials, and energy toward India and better coordinate communications between distant American centers. Others stated that they were Aurovillians living in the West, that Auroville must extend its vibration around the world through the people who have been touched by its dream. Still others countered with the feeling that, despite the difficulties of building up centers, their hearts called for a total giving to the work in India. Finally, it was left for each center to decide whether it would take 10%, 5%, or nothing, and so the debate will go on. The problem is at the heart of our lives in this country and the sincere voices raised in the discussion were heard with respect and understanding.

During these meetings inside Merriam Hill there were other sounds outside of a volleyball game which seemed to last all



Baby, Auroville, presently studying in NC.

afternoon. Younger voices, Regan, Selva, Satya, Hari, Baby, Raman, exclaiming and laughing with delight at a well-executed spike, set, or serve, and at various intervals many of us joined in this game.

Suddenly, the closing circle was formed and around the room, one-by-one, we spoke. Vijay from New York City hoped to see this same circle around the completed Matrimandir in the year 2000. Other voices expressed gladness and gratitude tinged with imminent departure. But mostly, there was Seyril Scho lchen's voice rising up above the circle in a long, wonderful poem about the sudden passing of Ruud Lohman (cf p. 16), a voice that almost broke at one point but then leapt up out of sorrow more powerfully than before to affirm his continuing presence and, perhaps, the presence of all of us together, through many births and voices, discovering one-another again and again.

Gordon Korstange



Ron Jorgensen, Sam Spannier, Ghislaine Aarsse-Prins, and Yahel and Vivi Shtull.



Breakfast at Another Place.

Dear Folks—

The question of our collectivity was raised again at the AUM in Merriam Hill, but little attention paid to it. Who we are, what we are doing, and where the future lies *as a group* is central to all the projects discussed. There is a movement to bring together the diverse people in this country, to form a whole based on inner unity and working harmoniously towards the Divine. The collectivity is developing and perhaps now is the time to devote more thought to its nature, organization, maintenance, and goal.

The majority of the conference participants have lived in Auroville—they have fond memories of their stay, ties with current Aurovillians, and a conception of Auroville as unique both historically and spiritually. The city to them is the cradle of a new age, an experiment in collective yoga, a place where the future of social evolution resides. Auroville is sacred, a legacy and continuation of the work of the Mother, indispensable to humanity. This group (which includes most of the present leaders in this country) finds it natural that the focus of secular work be support for Auroville, in the form of money, materials, cultural exchange, outlets for products, or whatever.

Other past residents of Auroville see something different happening in south India. Their impression of the city is also that of an experiment in conscious living and collective yoga, of social and cultural innovation, but they tell of apathy, inefficiency, petty quarrels, smug superiority, divisions, crime. This group brought high ideals to the city of the future and were disillusioned by the human reality they found. They report that not only are the majority of Aurovillians caught up in the everyday surface problems of a communal life, they are not even trying to better themselves because they assume that yoga and spiritual evolution are guaranteed by the simple fact of residence in Auroville. From this disillusionment a number of individuals and families returned to this country to live. They are resolved to continue the Yoga and create something better *here*. How Auroville is seen in the scheme of things, and the willingness to work for it, varies greatly among this group.

A third group consists of individuals who, in whatever way, came to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother first. They find the books, perhaps join a small study or meditation group, and practice the Yoga. Only later do they learn of Auroville, and as can be seen from the above, may hear very different descriptions of it. Appeals for donations to Auroville don't necessarily touch them deeply; their aspiration to this point has been for the Divine. A coming together of people such as the meeting in New Hampshire is valued more as an opportunity to be with others following the same path than to expedite a particular goal such as fund raising. It is the natural impulse to be with like-minded and like-souled people, to widen one's yoga through unity with others on the deepest possible levels.

The diversity among those on this Path is a great strength, perhaps even a necessity for a full realization on the earth. To induce uniformity of thought or action, even unknowingly, would be a constriction of our collectivity. How can we best create a more harmonious and integrated whole, without forming one of those "arbitrary constructions made by men" which is held together by "illusory ties"?¹ Sri Aurobindo stresses that "it is unity in a new consciousness that is the aim, and the first thing is for each to do his sadhana, to arrive at that new consciousness and realize oneness there."² This is primary—for the ties between us as individuals to exist on as deep and true a level as possible. Connections are not exclusively mystical phenomena. Each person can try to see and foster the best aspects of all the others; to interact as clearly as one can.

In the context of an annual meeting, there could be sessions arranged for readings from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother (Savitri at dawn?); group chanting or individual singing/music presentations; free form explorations of individual experiences or questions regarding the Yoga; a speaker could be brought from Pondicherry or elsewhere to give one or more talks in specific areas; a panel discussion of crucial issues, etc. The purpose is not only to remember and re-dedicate, but to expand the range of expression and interaction. The abilities of our collective self have barely been tapped. Within a five-day meeting these sessions could be interspersed with the organizational, "practical" work as well as free time to meet others informally.



Sachy Alexander, Sacramento, CA.

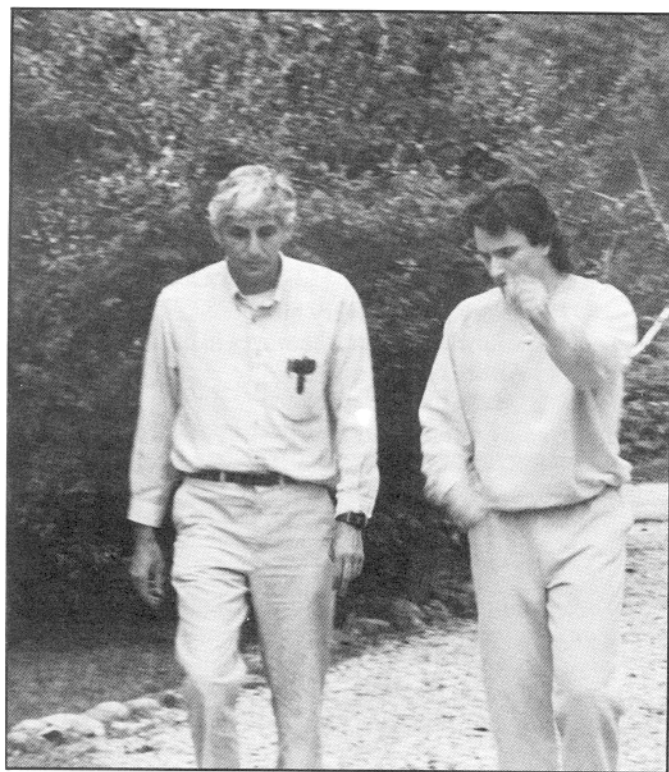
"Collective thought, collective suggestions are a formidable influence which act constantly on individual thought. And what is extraordinary is that one does not notice it."³ What is the character of our group-mind? Formed and effective in the world, amorphous and heterogeneous, nascent and sensitive? The journal *Collaboration* has been the link among the scattered Aurobindonian community for many years, aided recently by the annual AUM on the east coast. Are these sufficient, or are other links needed to help the group cohere? "Usually, if several individuals are put together, the collective value of the group is much less than the individual value of each one taken separately, but with an organization that is sufficiently conscious and coordinated, the power of individual action, on the contrary, can be multiplied."⁴ Coordination was discussed at the meeting and different possibilities are being considered. Communication is also essential for a group of people to work effectively. With this goal in view, I will be working towards starting a monthly newsletter/forum which will not only provide knowledge of events but also allow for the expression of aspirations, differences, views, and in general, the *ongoing character* of the Yoga as it progresses in this part of the world.

Let us use all our skills, directed by the inner Guide, to create a collectivity that is dynamic and true, that works effectively on different levels and is flexible to the exigencies of life, and that manifests as fully as possible the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

Dave Hutchinson

Notes

1. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Collective Yoga, p. 13
2. Ibid, p. 33
3. Ibid, p. 35
4. Ibid, p. 63



Joel Goodman, Auroville, Auroluigi, N.Y.C., NY.

A New Season

by Rose Kupperman

In 1972, I went to India in hopes of seeing Mother. I was graced by her presence twice but left (to say the least) a bit shattered and quite confused. While she said nothing but looked deeply into my being, I knew that something had happened and that I was changed from that moment on. I knew that things were happening and I could no longer call them coincidences. So I started to listen, to feel, and to try to understand.

The garden was green, lush, serene, (hidden from view), tucked away in a corner where there would be no way of suspecting that such a peaceful undisturbed spot existed on (this) earth. An indescribable joy arose within my being as I walked about dreamily surveying—feeling the majesty of the moment—on this glorious September day. A small, simple meeting house was nestled in the center on these hallowed grounds. "Third Haven" was the inscription on this little temple, erected by the Friends Society sometime during the period of the early settlers, where they worshipped then and still do. The Friends, a sincere, God-loving people, sensitive and knowing that only in the creation may the creator be realized—only in this kind of peacefulness, in this reverence, close to Nature, and in silence is it possible to commune with the source of all.

I wandered aimlessly amidst this divine creation totally oblivious to the outside world—the air had an intoxicating fragrance; a misty aura seemed to pervade everything. "This must be fairyland," was my first thought. A very large tree somehow caught my attention. I looked at it from the distance—it was enormous. How old it must be! I kept up the gaze and realized that I must be becoming mesmerized—but by a tree? The whole atmosphere was mesmerizing . . . captivated, I could not seem to leave it. I thought I felt it beckoning to me. Strange, but then this was no ordinary garden. Sheepishly I obeyed the impulse, walked towards it very slowly, cautiously, noting its enormity, its gigantic circumference; how gnarled were its protruding roots! Surely this must have been planted by the pilgrims . . . I had become aware that the bark was covered with a green fungus; parasites were making their home here, too. Somehow there seemed to be room for all God's creatures, a home for all the little mites, all the little creatures that needed shelter, nourishment, protection. Now I, too, felt included.

I had been searching for such a friend knowing instinctively that there are such attractions in all forms of nature. Now, and of all times in this sleepy little town on the eastern shores of Maryland, but then why not now? If it was meant for me, could there be a better time, a more auspicious place? A new season was upon us . . . Nature would soon change its colors and again it would await its renewal, but this time I felt that I, too, was about to be regenerated.

Here in this ethereal garden, I came face to face with someone who had stood the test of time, whose secrets were well-hidden within its seed, within its roots. Silently, reverently, I stood close to it taking in its gentle vibrations. The wind helped to sway the leaves against my waiting cheek. The contact was warm and rapturous, not unlike a tender kiss. Sounds were audible, like those made by the cricket. A constant monotone chirping, captivating, permeating my being with its timeless refrain. Suddenly, it struck me that this must be a communication; so entranced was I by the experience that I had almost lost

the magical meaning of all I had longed to know. Secrets were being imparted to me . . . and I was again hypnotized.

Nature is subtle, silent, dreamy, sharing with those who are prepared, who are in tune, whose will does not get in the way.

The same energy that created this tree also created me. That one force brought me here face to face to see, know, feel the oneness of all of the divine creation—no matter the form—to know TRUTH, THE ESSENCE, THE SOURCE. . .

WE ARE ONE IN BEING, ONE IN THE DIVINE, ONE IN HIS LIGHT. I caught the meaning of this silent message as one catches a momentary flash of light. I knew that everything I conceived was truth, yet found it difficult to accept what I had always known, at least in a part of my being I always knew and yet didn't see; ever questioning my own sincerity as though it was only the machinations of a fertile mind. Doubts . . . doubts I am convinced keep us from knowing truth, from knowing ourselves. I must now become like the proverbial "little child," place my hand in the Master's, walk in faith, blind if need be—but know with certainty that God is all, and all is God.

Minutes ago I had been aware of surface things; how small, helpless, foolish I felt next to this majestic tree. How inadequate I felt even to try to begin to understand fully the vastness of this truth . . . the very purpose of my being was to know that all beings are ONE, no matter the shape, size, or form. I had asked to be shown. I can no longer feign ignorance. It's my responsibility now to be aware and to practice this awareness. I had asked to be shown, to be able to share this divine truth . . . the time is now for anyone who is ready and willing to open up to the light.

Impressions were now coming in rapid succession; images arose clear, vibrating, mystical, so that all was translucent, all vibrating, all movement. Everything was permeating everything else . . . nothing was what it seemed to be. All was flowing into all.

I don't know how long I had been standing there . . . it may have been but seconds. After this "vision" what does time mean? My benefactor made it quite clear that nothing is quite separate and apart, even if the surface impressions indicate otherwise.

*A new season was upon us . . .
Nature would soon change its colors
and again it would await its renewal, but
this time I felt that I, too, was
about to be regenerated.*

Nature was giving of its secrets, its innermost self:

WE ARE ONE WHOLE MANIFESTATION
. . . SEPARATENESS IS AN ILLUSION!

No longer could I take note of the gnarled roots. What I saw in this old friend was its supremacy, its majesty, its dignity, its grandeur. It had overcome the battle of the bruises. To be sure, its surface was lashed; it was whipped, bent, beaten . . . this was but surface scarring and meant nothing more than that, surface illusion. I was beginning to understand that if I wanted more than temporal knowledge I would have to look through, and not at—I was from here on to look for the cause, not the effect. THE INNER LIGHT, THE PRESENCE, THE DIVINE THAT IS

IN ALL, and entirely up to us to see through the mist, through the surface appearances.

I stood in awe of my friend and wondered how long it took for it to come to this understanding, how long it took to evolve, if time mattered at all. In spite of its apparent age, agonies, it stood tall and stately, reaching ever-upwards. It took no note of its appearance or the lashes it receives daily. Its AWARENESS seemed to be centered upon all of "God's Creation," the wholeness, the whole. It impressed upon me that I, too, was no smaller, no weaker, but equal to one and all; that this was merely another rung on the evolutionary ladder that we are all on, and its movements were ever-upwards.

What seemed so apparent in this delightful garden no longer was apparent. If I can retain just a glimpse of this new insight, this new light that was by "GRACE" granted me, I shall ever remember that we are one—one in spirit, one in light—see enormity in everything I see, see God in everything I see, never question, knowing that there is purpose . . . reason . . . behind the MASTER PLAN.

Now may I stand tall as the tree . . .

a silent sentinel,

a beacon in the darkness,

whispering, sharing its secrets with every passing breeze!

Sun was setting and the time had come to depart. I felt a great reluctance and vowed to soon return, when suddenly the same aura that surrounded me seemed to be closing in warmer, closer. I was not nearly as aware as I thought I was. If I learned anything, I should by now know that there is no separation. If I avoid being bound by boundaries, there would no be limit to the dimensions within my universe. That I, too, must know that there is no difference between that tree and me. I touched a leaf tenderly and felt swept-up within its very being. Infused with a new vitality, a vibrant current totally recharged me—the same energy that created everyone and everything. The same energy that creates, gives shape . . . form . . . illusion—unless the source is known—never again to be hypnotized by one fluttering leaf . . . no matter how it quivers, all eyes must now see the grandeur, the glory of the whole—learn to feel it flowing throughout one's being:

Become one with it . . .

Merge with it . . .

Serve it with love,

Knowing now and forever more

That every flower, every bird,

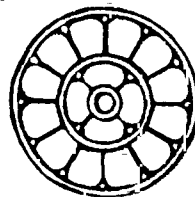
The howling winds, the waves in the sea . . .

All are one . . .

Like the tree and me.

A flash . . . a fragment . . . a light!

In everyone . . . in everything that we see . . . or be . . . or are becoming . . .





Aster - "Sincerity"

Sketch by Ilana Lilienthal.

The Mother of the World A Hymn

by Auroluigi

Editor's Note: The first portion of this poem was published in the last issue of Collaboration (Summer '86)

Four are your faces and twelve are your arms, round spiraling widely:

Existence, the infinite's introspective, self-luminous eye of
Consciousness watches with creative vision its expanding
panoramic

Bliss of becoming infinite times infinite in the infinitesimal.

Light is the eternal's camera, shoots still frames of space in
time's movie;

Life is the role, it is playing, at once actor, action and film-set;

Power is the laser projecting the cosmos' holographic light
show.

Wealth bring the immortal's nuggets of experience, sieved
from life's river;
Utility fosters the soul with birth and death, two shores of one
stream of
Progress whose ever-reborn waters journey to deathlessness'
ocean.
Youth eternal's elixir, Ananda, crowns man king of the
universe;
Harmony infinite blossoms at its everlasting spring-touch:
Perfection immortal, increasingly exquisite, opulent, varied.

Far is the reach of your limbs, deep-probing the grip of your
fingers:

Sincerity synchronizes a hundred clashing gears to one soul-
motion.

Humility views on the shore of the infinite achievements as
pebbles.

Gratitude tastes sweet paradise where ego bites bitter poison.

Perseverance, step after step, builds wings that suddenly take
off.

Aspiration's fire-key opens the gold safe of inspiration.

Receptivity's boundless funnel is the stilled life and mind,
turned lightward.

Progress' magical vitamin stimulates ever renewed youth.

Courage illustiously fights, no more to cast falsehood's
shadow.

Goodness purifies self-love, extending its radius endlessly.

Generosity's horn, replenished through giving, is growing but
fuller.

Equality feels one self within all, not all outside oneself.

Peace acts as dynamo: calmest deeps toss mightiest breakers.

Tremendous, your macrocosmical arms, microcosmic hands—

Mights of universal diffusion, individual concentration—

Propell the vessel of being on becoming's horizonless ocean,

Steering the fixed wheel of nature on soul's freewill-course of
adventure.

Unity's archetypes and archpowers, they constellate, combine,
coalesce,

Mixing the multiform maze of the myriad many's

One sole material—the world is a whirling kaleidoscope of
light.

Light turn into might, might into matter, your lustre-
explosions:

Diamond of adamant fire, the original white light peacock—

Spreads to an opaline iridescence by its all-creating chatoyance.

First is the vast white ray focussed to heliodor's demiurge-
laser;

Then undulated to a silvery pearly with chameleon-reflec-
tions;

Next, refracted to sapphire, emerald, topaz and ruby

Radiance, each triply shaded, a twelvefold power-palette:

Coral's opaque scarlet sturdily congeals compact clay-shapes;

Garnet's blood-burning pulsates to plasticity rigid-built bodies;

Amethyst's lilac lightning shakes to sensation, shocks to
passion.

Fire-opal flames limpid, delicate, sensitive psychic emotions;

Morganite's rosily shimmering kisses awake sleeping beauties;

Sunstone haloes divinely the heart with a warm gold glowing.

Peridot's sea-green glistening animates with energy-currents;

Jade's garden-green gleam patiently, steadily grows long
labour;

Amazonite's dark green glare guns staccatos of power-impulses.
 Lapislazuli's deep blue spangles, a meteor-dust, thoughts;
 Aquamarine's sparkling brilliance illumines with visionary starbursts;
 Moonstone's pale blue mystic opalescence entrances to space-time.

Blending these beams, you oscillate the web of existence:
 Creatures are marionettes, drawn by the stringings of light-hues:
 Coloured vibrations pull us and push us as puppets,
 Unaware, blind to the magnetic threads by which all moves,
 All is, a tapestry laced from one wan yarn, prismically self-dyed.
 Queen of the universe, reigning the relative with absolute rule!
 Omniscience' diadem crowns you—the pale corona fringing a surface—
 Tiara of a triple kingdom: all, within all, beyond all.
 Joining the low to the high, the small to the boundless, a cosmic
 Cross is your sceptre, inviolable investiture of omnipotence.
 Everywhere centered, your omnipresent orb is circumferenced
 nowhere.
 One end is space and the other is time in your girdle of space-time.
 Night is your velvetine mantle of majesty, plumblessly trailing;
 Day, your grandious royalty's silk-robe, dazzling embroidered.
 Galaxies wreath you with garlands, with jewelry, nebulae deck
 you.
 Your seal, a hyaline lotus, is growing perfection in mud:
 Transparent matter innumerably sparkling one spirit-shine.

Love is your secret, O love's smiling Soul! O love's splendid Spirit!
 O love's Roseheart, with the nectar of immortality honey-perfumed!
 O love's endlessly vibrating and ceaselessly echoing cristalline
 Laughter that throbs from the core of the universe, breathing the
 cosmos
 Out, out, in billow on gigantic billow of pulsating love, love,
LOVE—from the Alpha of one to the Omega of onenesses unnumbered.
 O incandescent Goddess of Love in the diamond-transparent
 Temple of Truth whose gate is the Good and whose buttress is
 Beauty,
 You we invoke with the fire on the altar of our aspiration
 Burning in the souls of the cells of the body, a myriad prayer:
 "Tear the straightjacket of mind from us—unveil supermind!
 Make a miraculous mutation come true, free in us, Mother,
 That, the Alone, the Divine, Vast-Truth-Right, One-All-Many."

Auroluigi
 Om Namō Bhagavatē

Ruud Lohman

Ruud Lohman, born in the Netherlands in 1937, was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1963. He traveled throughout India in late 1968, exploring various types of yoga. Auroville caught his imagination. After a year of research among the Sufis, pirs, and faqirs of Pakistan, he cut his ties with his past, returning to settle definitely in Auroville on the day the excavation of the Matrimandir began in 1971. He remained devotedly with the project, a dedicated worker and enthusiastic student of its symbology until his sudden demise on July 26, 1986 at the age of 48. Akash is Ruud and Barbara's nine year old son who has learned to climb like anything.

Ruud is the author of several books written in Dutch and a continuous flow of numerous brochures, pamphlets, and newsletters in English relating to the Matrimandir and Auroville. Known for his unquenchable fire and undaunted enthusiasm, Ruud's writing reflects the freshness and depth of his vision as well as the wide perspective from which he always chose to view the unfolding events; the concretisation in matter of "something else," which for him was perfectly manifest through both the symbol and fact of the Matrimandir.

His latest volume, *A House in the Third Millennium*, in English, has just been released and will be available soon in the USA. This slim collection of essays with beautiful photos by the well-known French photographer Dominique Darr spans the entire period of his Matrimandir experience from 1971 to 1986. The last essay completed in late 1985 hints at the line his sadhana took:

"Matrimandir is only he and she. Auroville is only he and she, I am only he and she—and so are you . . . it *Is* all this. It is I and my brain cells, my hands and the steel I touch, and it is you and the things you eat and the thoughts you think and the people you communicate with. It is not when Matrimandir is ready that She will move in in some subtle or supramental form and inhabit it as a queen adored . . . It is rather all the perspiration, all the aspiration, all the physical work, all the steel, all the concrete, all the shapes and spirals and curves of the building that is He and She. There is nothing else."

The Ruud Lohman Matrimandir Fund has begun to facilitate publication and distribution of information on Matrimandir. Barbara, Ruud's wife, will make ready his Matrimandir Diary notebooks for future publication. Contributions to help with this project may be sent to Auroville Trust, c/o AVI-USA in Sacramento, California with a covering letter of intention specified for "Ruud Lohman Matrimandir Fund."

Received by telex from Auroville, Sept. 3, 1986.

BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF DREAM

A Long Distance Call from
Colorado to Ruud at the
Matrimandir Outer Gardens

Why do you tease us, old Comrade,
pretending
you're buried under the sod of the Out-
er Gardens
bending the steel drought-stiffened
grasses now
breathless at rest at long last

when our Inner
Space-ship's not yet perfected, visibly
brought down—
Spaceless Soul of our multitudinous
selves—

in our Time?
We know better than that, old Play-
fellow! You can't fool us with the old
gone-to-heaven or elsewhere
stuff, we who are playing with you
the real Game of Games, Life
without death! You're found out!

You've gone
down to the roots of our own Inner
Gardens, haven't you! digging
for Root-Knowledge, Ruud!
In your new mind's
immobility, its thought-free stillness

swinging
the diamond thread between the extremes
of dreams, or

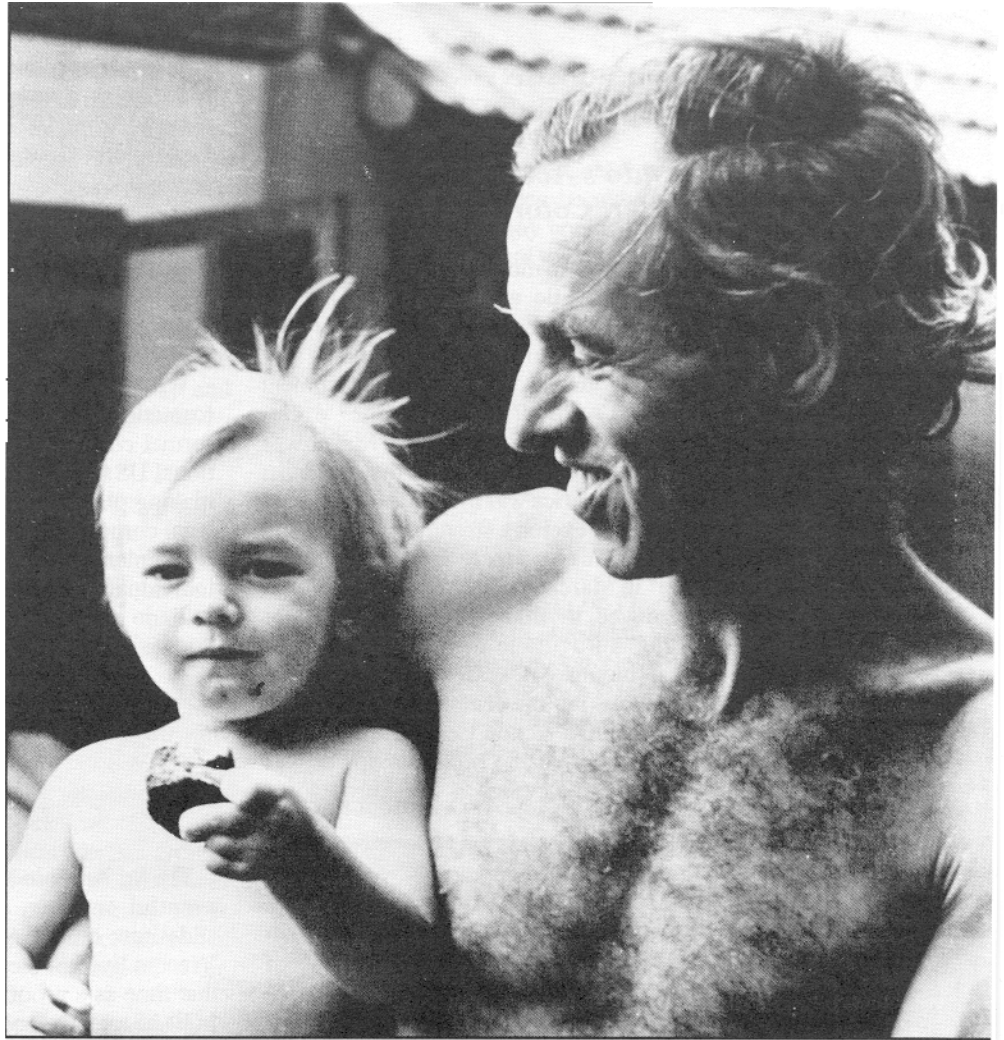
winging it back to your Amsterdam
and its transformation on streams of remembering
with us the future that must be

and shall be... or
at night on that ancient typewriter in Matri-
mandir office, through the Hour of Brahman pecking
away at the pigeons you see nesting behind
gold Supramental disks of our collective
Soul's skin...

Still cheering us on to the pinnacles
of our dreams of Her House as you bend
its invisibly subtle rods of support for its Outer
Skin, having shed your own thread-bare one
laughing your Lover's "Yes!" everlastingly
grinning or sighing it tenderly

(Yes! you
were always a tease).

For I hear you, old Comrade,
way off here on this ridge of a mountain
in Colorado's blue twilight of buried gods,
laughing over the new keys you're finding
to share with us, some new Root-Knowledge
you're digging up...



Ruud Lohman with son Akash in Auroville.

So I refuse to cry over
that slim worn-out Western Outer
Skin planted to nourish the Outer
Gardens (even though the tears
sometimes insist on coming)—

Because
I know well, old Willing Servitor of the Divine,
con-Frère in Her love building
with us the House of the New Creation,
House
of the Spirit, of the Third Millennium
as you cleverly named it before
bringing down the hard lid of your typewriter's
Matter,—

you're still with us though stilly,
every millie of the long way up
to the peak of our Inner Chamber,

and far
far beyond all we can dream now—
far, far
beyond all the boundaries of all Dream.

Seyril,
Boulder, Colorado
and
Verite, AUROVILLE

Center News

Sri Aurobindo's Action Center Boulder, Colorado

In the winter of 1976 we spent two months in Pondicherry and were frequent visitors to Auroville at a time when the Sri Aurobindo Society had cut off all financial support for Auroville, was appropriating for itself funds which were being sent to the Society for Auroville, and had drawn up a document (Auro Trust) which states that Auroville was under the "exclusive possession" of the Sri Aurobindo Society. June Maher was in India at the same time and we three decided that the most important work to be done in America was to alert the American disciples to the situation and to develop a strong support system for Auroville in this country. This we proceeded to do when we returned home to Matagiri in March.

In July of 1976 we moved to Boulder to open a center here devoted to supporting Auroville in every way we possibly could. After several months of searching for a name which would encompass all we felt the center represented, we named the center Sri Aurobindo's Action Center, Association for Auroville. Symbolically, we felt the Mother's power was incorporated in this name as we saw her as Sri Aurobindo's action.

Under the name of Sri Aurobindo's Action Center, we formed a not-for-profit corporation in the State of Colorado. We delayed applying for Federal tax exempt status as we wanted to see the response we would receive to our fund-raising efforts. We did not want to find ourselves in the position of being classified as a private institution. We began the work we were inspired to do for Auroville which included an appeal for funds which explained the situation with the Sri Aurobindo Society. At that time, news from Auroville was very difficult to come by. To fill this void the inspiration came to us to publish a journal which would keep people informed about developments in Auroville. We wrote to friends in Auroville and, on the basis of the response we received, *Auroville Voice* was born. The first issue was published in the winter of 1977. We printed 400 copies and received 100-125 subscriptions at \$5 each for this quarterly. These subscriptions only paid for one issue. Over 200 complimentary copies were sent out each quarter to interested individuals and organizations around the world who might be helpful to Auroville, many at the request of Aurovillians. We continued to publish *Auroville Voice* through the summer of 1980 when Auroville began to publish the *Auroville Review* on a fairly regular basis.

By the spring of 1977 we found that our fund-raising efforts came to naught so we decided to earn money for Auroville by selling Auroville products and sending the profits back to Auroville. Primarily we sold Aurosarjan clothing, Fraternity products, incense, books, and handmade paper. We were able in this way to support the publication of *Auroville Voice* and to send thousands of dollars to Auroville each year. We also gave talks and slide presentations on Auroville throughout the United States. Another function we performed was to act as an information center for thousands of people who wrote to us over the years requesting information or who came to the center to learn more about Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, and Auroville. The weekly meditation we started in our apartment in New York in 1968 has continued to this day.

Larry Tepper came from Ohio to join us in 1977 and we lived together as a community in a rented house (which we still occupy) from 1979 until his marriage in 1983. Larry, Lynda Lester, and Georges Dandrimont are an integral part of the center.

In the past few years our business activities have diminished. Times have changed and there is no longer the same market for Auroville clothing or products. And we no longer have the physical energy to aggressively pursue and develop markets and travel the long distances as we had done in the past. Last year we sold out our entire stock of clothing.

We feel that we can continue our communication and information function without the responsibility of maintaining a formal corporation. We work closely with Auroville International USA and Matagiri and will continue to do so. But we are making plans to dissolve Sri Aurobindo's Action Center as a legal corporation.

We plan to function as we did when we started in 1968—as individuals whose lives are dedicated to the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and to Auroville as a manifestation of that vision.

Muriel and Joseph Spanier

Sri Aurobindo Center Boston, Massachusetts

The Sri Aurobindo Center of Boston has experienced quite an eventful summer. We began early in the summer with a slideshow of the Ashram and Auroville by Vincent Massa. Vincent lived at the Ashram for seven years, working most of that time as a proofreader at the Ashram Press. Before he left India he received special permission to take slides of the Samadhi. It was a treat, both for those of us who haven't been to Pondicherry or to India and for those of us who have, to receive a personalized tour by a long-time resident.

The next event was a visit by Swami Ishwarananda, a representative of Gurumayi Chidvilasananda. Gurumayi, as many of you probably know, is the successor of Muktananda. When Vincent Massa and John Schlorholtz from the Boston Center visited her during her stay in Boston, she indicated that she knows M.P. Pandit and suggested we invite Swami Ishwarananda. His visit with two other disciples turned out to be delightful. An American, he has carried Sri Aurobindo's booklet, *The Mother*, with him since the beginning of his spiritual awakening. He gave a talk on the process of the unfolding of the shakti in one's life, including in his talk the role played by one's personal aspiration and effort and the help that the guru can provide. Meg Christian, who accompanied him, literally vibrated the walls of our Center with her remarkably beautiful singing.

Next came AUM. The Boston Center would like to thank all of you who passed through or stayed here before and after AUM for your considerateness and for sharing the unique qualities of your individual aspirations. The presence of your energies had a truly broadening effect on this Center and left behind a greater sense of openness here. Please come back and open us up some more whenever you are in the area.

The last special event of the summer occurred just after AUM, when a few of the AUM participants were still here. An Indian, who travels in America by the name of Yogi Ram, visited us. He gave a thoroughly engaging talk on the Bhagavad

Gita. Thirty years on the Ahmedabad police force gave his presentation of the Gita's call to action a depth of understanding that only comes from a sincere endeavor to bring a spiritual teaching into regular life. We all appreciated his humorous delivery as well. One member of the group was even led to remark that Yogi Ram would have made a great comedian if he hadn't become a yogi.

We were disappointed that Tara Johar, who runs the Delhi branch of the Ashram, had to cancel a video presentation she was planning to give here recently. She had to fly back to India suddenly as a result of a family tragedy.

We continue to have meditation sessions on Monday and Wednesday nights and a drop-in time from 12:00 to 5:00 on Sundays. Please visit if you are in the area.

East West Cultural Center Los Angeles, California

A variety of spiritual and cultural programs continue at the East West Cultural Center.

Six years after the passing of East West Cultural Center founder, Dr. Judith Tyberg, this 33 year old non-profit religious and educational corporation pursues the same format as that which she developed during her years as president of the organization. The institute has two main aspects:

1. The nucleus and inspiration of this cultural meeting ground is the spiritual thought, life, and work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Satsangs on Their teachings plus lectures about Them and Their philosophy, the four darshan celebrations dedicated to Them form the main activity of this aspect of the center.

2. Because Sri Aurobindo has said that "All life is yoga" and "The knowledge that unites is the true knowledge" and because he is known as "The integrator of East and West" his inspiration moves the directors to present the best of the cultures of East and West. The individuals familiarity with and relationships to various religions, arts, educational practices, science, philosophy helps him to integrate within his own understanding the cultural and spiritual values of East and West, promoting a greater world unity.

In this light, offerings of classes in Hatha Yoga in English and Spanish, homeopathic consultations, meetings for meditations and contemplations (from the Taoist-Buddhist influences), Teachings of Sanskrit, Hindi, and Punjabi are made open to the public at the present time. Presentations at the regular Sunday afternoon open house programs include lectures or demonstrations on art, spiritual healing, holistic medicine, philosophy, science, education, music, poetry, diet, psychology, cultural dances, astrology, religion, yoga, sociology, anthropology, mysticism, etc.

Once speakers representing five different spiritual practices were on the same stage, lecturing and answering questions from the audience—Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Catholicism, Supramental Yoga of Sri Aurobindo.

Dr. Tyberg's books on Sanskrit and books on the spiritual thought of East and West including the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother form part of a large library of old and new books and donations provide the main income of the center.

Sometimes pot luck dinners are given for the lovers of truth whether their path is that of Sri Aurobindo or another way.

Sri Aurobindo Center High Falls, New York

Matagiri Sri Aurobindo Center has just received a shipment of incense and anticipates the arrival of a large number of books soon. If you know of any bookstores, health food stores, or gift shops which might want to carry our books and incense, please let us know.

Once again the Center participated in the *New York is Book Country* fair on Fifth Avenue. The theme and featured title was *Flowers and Their Messages*. Members of the New York City study group helped at the booth and distributed color postcards and bookmarks with flowers and their significances as given by the Mother.

The Center has a large stock of T-shirts left from the AUM meeting (see photo). They come with Mother's signature taken from her message, "No Words—Acts" and AUM in Sanskrit from her handwriting on a stone laid in the east pillar (Maha lakshmi) of the Matrimandir on February 21st, 1972.

Adult sizes are small, medium, large, and extra large and come in light blue, fuchsia, purple, and royal blue. They cost \$8 including postage. Children's sizes are small (6-8) and medium (10-12) and come in turquoise and red. They cost \$7 each. All are 50/50 polyester cotton except the white ones which are all cotton. The proceeds from these T-shirts will go towards scholarships for the next AUM.



Workshop

On December 19, 20, and 21, Arya Maloney, a resident of Auroville, South India will lead a workshop entitled "Healing as Transformation" at Oasis Center for Human Potential, 7463 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago, IL 60626 (Phone: 312-274-6777).

The workshop is based on the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Its aim is to awaken the healing power of images in the mind, emotions, and physical body by removing blockages in the body's energy fields, healing via the waking dream, talking to the cells of the body, and collective imagery in group healing.

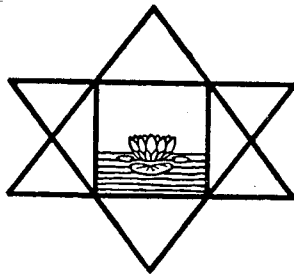
Healing

I am happy to announce that I am now publicly doing individual holistic healing work including body attunement, energy balancing, Reiki, meditation, and food.

Miriam Belov

Words of the Mother

SRI AUROBINDO'S SYMBOL



The Descending triangle represents Sat-Chit-Ananda.

The ascending triangle represents the aspiring answer from matter under the form of life, light and love.

The junction of both - the central square - is the perfect manifestation having at its centre the Avatar of the Supreme - the lotus.

The water - inside the square - represents the multiplicity, the creation.

