

Collaboration

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Facsimile of the Cover of the *Karmayogin*

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Reaching the YSMPs with Advertisements for the Self

A businessman stares wearily into a mirror as he knots his tie and sees a photo of Christ on the wall behind him. The caption below the photo asks him if he has everything he needs out of life. Something from Billy Graham, you think? Or Jerry Falwell? No, it was an advertisement placed in the *New York Times* by a Benedictine Monastery in Newark, New Jersey trying to recruit monks. As one of the fathers stated on National Public Radio, "In America, advertising is a way to express values."

Why not? It's time we stopped talking vaguely of outreach and start to upscale the yoga, begin to target the young, spiritually mobile professionals out there in image-land. So as a service to various groups in this country, *Collaboration* offers some suggestions for ways in which they can effectively present themselves.

First, a generic ad that any group could use to make Sri Aurobindo relevant to a large segment of the population which grew up with an archetypal American image: A photo of Superman, hand raised, speeding above Metropolis. But instead of the rugged, blue-haired face of the man of steel, there will be the calm visage of Sri Aurobindo. The caption reads: "Faster than the mind of light; more shakti than Mahesh Yogi; able to leap planes of being in a single bound."

Another generic ad: Photo of an Auroville *wadai* (eroded gully) in the soft light of sunset. A man and a woman, both in shorts and sleeveless t-shirts, are lovingly examining tree seedlings as they hold beedies (short, hand-rolled, Indian cigarettes) in their hands. Below the picture it says, "Come to where the flavor is."

A photo of eighty people weeping and embracing each other as they are welcomed to a sun-drenched landscape dotted with hot tubs and redwood trees. The caption reads: "AUM is where the heart is."

Here's one for our friend Advait Dwivedi, a Long Island dentist. A close-up of a gleaming, white tooth projected so that inside it we see a faint, yet shining boat with white-clad figures. The caption reads: "Work with me to save your teeth from extinction. Work with me for the Supradental Manifestation."

For the Merriam Hill Center: A picture of Sherlock Holmes in traditional attire, hat and all, but with the wispy-bearded face of a Chinese sage. He stands in the cupola of Coolidge House sticking pins into Dr. Watson's bare back. Holmes is saying, "What! Not understand Organizational Energetics? It's elemental, my dear Watson, five elemental!"

Two photos: In the first a family, wearing discount department store shorts and fake Izod shirts and smiles, grills hamburgers in a landscape full of puny, potted willow trees. On their miniature color TV they watch the Iran-Contra hearings. The caption reads: "Tired of wilting willow views and global gold greed?" The next photo shows the same family dressed in

It's time we stopped talking vaguely of outreach and start to upscale the yoga, begin to target the young, spiritually mobile professionals out there in image-land.

Views of the Gita

by Jeanne Korstange

Editor's Note: This is a review of Modern Indian Interpreters of the Bhagavad Gita by Robert Minor, State University of New York Press, Albany, NY, 1986.

Like a kaleidoscope, this historical study of the *Bhagavad Gita* takes the multifaceted interpretations of philosophers, politicians, spiritualists, and seers and turns them round the gems of truth embedded in the 2000 year old text. The beauty of all these elements falls into place with each turn of the page. Each interpreter's search for a piece of religious tradition from the *Bhagavad Gita* creates a unique vision of how the *Gita* supports the modern seeker on the path to self-realization.

Robert Minor, the editor of this collection of essays by professors of religious studies like himself, prefaces the work with the statement that it is representative of the significant Indian interpreters whose commentaries on the *Gita* have profoundly influenced religious thought in India and the West. These interpreters continue to influence interpretations of the *Gita* by Indians and Westerners today.



Aurelia Walton of Willow Gold Farm in Tibetan dress.

exotic, flowing clothing, sitting crosslegged beneath shimmering, golden willow trees on a small farm somewhere on the moon, as they watch the earth rise above a hill. The caption says: "Try Willow Gold and Global Views."

A photo of the original McDonald's in California with sign changed to read "Matagiri's." An insert shows Eric Hughes serving up *The Synthesis of Yoga* between two sesame buns. The caption reads: "Remember when there was only one? Coming soon to a franchise near you. Get ready for the great taste of Matagiri. We do yoga right."

Lastly, for this issue of *Collaboration*: The picture would show Hamlet standing on a map of the USA, staring dumbfoundedly into the smiling face of Krishna. "West meets East," it might say. Or "Is he Hamlet the Jain?" Or "He wouldn't believe his father's spirit. Can Krishna convince him?" You decide, dear reader. Is there a better caption—or story—for a meeting between the prince of inaction and the lord of Karma? Our next deadline is September 15. See you back AUM.

Gordon Korstange

*At the turn of the century,
the image of Arjuna surveying the
battlefield of Kurukshetra, struck a chord
with the spiritual and political
leaders of the time.*

The commentaries studied in this volume date from the late 1800s to the 1960s. The book begins with the Theosophists and follows with Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave, Vivekananda, Radhakrishnan, Swami Sivananda, and Swami Bhaktivedanta. Each essay includes a biographical sketch and the historical background of the interpreter. Thus, a disciple of Sri Aurobindo has an opportunity to look at Aurobindo's interpretation of the *Gita* within the context of Aurobindo's yoga and within the larger context of the period.

At the turn of the Century, the image of Arjuna surveying the battlefield of Kurukshetra, struck a chord with the spiritual and political leaders of the time. Sri Aurobindo and almost all of the other commentators in this study were concerned with supporting the struggle for India's independence. They drew upon the *Gita* to justify their political activities. Arjuna symbolized the new man who would turn from inaction and renunciation of the material world to moral and ethical action and an acceptance of self-realization in this life.

The *Gita* with its concept of Karma Yoga became the text of the Hindu Renaissance. Sri Aurobindo, along with nearly all of these other modern interpreters, recognized the importance of its practice. I think most disciples of Sri Aurobindo believe that Karma Yoga is an essential element of his teaching. The majority of people who take up the path do so through some kind of work. Whether they plant trees and bund fields in Auroville or print books and grow flowers in the Ashram, work is the medium for the yoga. In the context of washing dishes in the Ashram kitchen or bending steel on the Matrimandir the sadhak seeks experiences through which she/he can interpret their spiritual evolution.

"Know then your self; know your true self to be God and one with the self of all others; know your soul to be a portion of God. Live what you know; live in the self, live in your supreme spiritual nature, be united with God and God-like. Offer, first, all your actions as a sacrifice to the Highest and the One in you and to the Highest and the One in the world; deliver last all you are and do into his hands for the supreme and universal Spirit to do through you his own will and works in the world. This is the solution that I present to you and in the end you will find that there is no other . . ."

From *Essays on the Gita*

Modern spiritual seekers in the West, as well as in India, turn to the first six chapters of the *Gita* because the message that lives there is still relevant today and is accessible to everyone. Who has not experienced Arjuna's dark night of the soul? At some point in our lives we realize that only through detachment from our own personal desire and equanimity of mind and spirit can the insight to true action manifest.

These modern interpreters of the *Gita* took this image of Arjuna to people all over the world. While they used it to explain the basis of spiritual consciousness they also colored it with their own personalities and used it as a vehicle for the development of their own religious and spiritual messages.

Gandhi is an example of a modern interpreter who taught and lived the *Gita*'s image of Arjuna as the ideal model for ethical and moral action. In J.T.F. Jordan's essay on Gandhi's interpretation of the *Gita* it is clear that the *Gita* provided him with the religious tradition for his practical moral and ethical code. Gandhi taught this code to his followers and to India through his personal example. The *Gita* was Gandhi's "Spiritual Dictionary." It was a set of steps which could lead human beings to become masters over their own desires. It taught people to renounce all egoistic attachment to the fruits of their labors.

After reading this chapter on Gandhi it became clear to me that his interpretation of the *Gita* was limited. I believe there is more to the *Gita* than a moral code or ethical action. Personally, I find that I cannot start with a rule of behavior or a moral stance when approaching the battlefield of life. There are no easy solutions to moral dilemmas in the nuclear age. There are no rules, the black and white has turned to shades of grey. The decisions, the actions I take will be based on an aspiration for equanimity and detachment from desire in order to see all sides of the issue. I am not always successful in being impartial or listening to the inner guide. But I do believe that I am aware of what underlies my decision and I do accept the responsibility for the action I take. Thus I seek a level of action higher than my own moral inclinations and of benefit to more than myself.

*There are no easy solutions
to moral dilemmas in the nuclear age.
There are no rules, the black and white
has turned to shades of grey.*

I see myself being more attuned to Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the *Gita*. While Aurobindo recognizes the importance of the *Gita*'s moral and ethical stance he teaches that the text should not be reduced to the idea of doing one's duty in life. Nor should the image of Kurukshetra be reduced to a symbolic image. Sri Aurobindo tells us that the Kurukshetra is a reality. In *Essays on the Gita* he says:

"But God in the world and you in the world are realities, the world and you are true and actual powers and manifestations of the Supreme."

This study of modern interpreters of the *Gita* makes clear that the most important contribution the *Gita* made to modern India was the new image of a spiritual seeker who acted rather than obeyed and who was outward directed rather than spiritually withdrawn. There are many interesting examples in this text of how these interpreters turned to the *Gita* to inspire Hindus to a new expression of their spirituality.

Readers will see this in the essays on Tilak and Bankim Chandra Chatterji in particular. Tilak was a leading politician of the Indian independence movement. Robert Stevenson describes him as the British rulers did: "the father of Indian unrest" who stirred up a religious fervor in his followers with the image of the man who takes the necessary action for the good of his people.

According to Ajit Ray, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, the famous Bengali novelist, took the image of Krishna and used it as an example of the ideal Hindu man. Bakim wrote that Krishna was:

"the ideal, the wise, the eternal man, who brought to this world the richness of human virtues, and who proclaimed a religion which was elevating, universal and beneficial to all."

*Knowledge by identity becomes
the underlying principle of Aurobindo's
yoga. From the time of these experiences
Sri Aurobindo does the yoga of the Gita.*

In every essay in this book the reader will find interpreters applying this practical code of behavior which is contained in the *Gita*. Even Sri Aurobindo explains that it is the basis of yoga. Man cannot progress on the path of spiritual realization without what Sri Aurobindo described as "an active life of disinterested service sacrificed to the Divine."

There are other interpreters who, like Sri Aurobindo, went beyond the first six chapters of the *Gita* to speak from its larger themes. In fact, the Theosophists were the first to attempt to speak to the development of a spiritual consciousness through the *Gita*. They took the *Gita* as an allegory, on both an individual level and the level of the world community.

The essay, by Ronald Neufeldt, on the Theosophists shows how they interpreted their evolutionary ideas into the *Gita*. They thought that on the individual level the *Gita* teaches people to struggle to overcome the evils of desire and egoism in order to become liberated from their lower selves so that they can develop into spiritual forms of being.

Annie Besant took the *Gita* on to an historical level. For her, the *Gita* proved that nations can enter on a path of action which can be harmonized into a divine unity. She believed that India was the spiritual leader among the community of nations in the world. The *Gita* was used to spread the Theosophists' ideal of universal religion which would bring forth a spiritual world.

Sri Aurobindo also believed that India could guide the world community through her spiritual vision. He believed that only as in independent nation could India fulfill her role as "the divine means for spiritualizing the human race." But Sri Aurobindo did not stay on the level of an allegorical teaching of the *Gita*. Aurobindo had the experience of the *Gita*'s vision, that all is the work of Krishna, in the Alipore Jail and at his trial. Mr. Minor points out that these experiences at Alipore were a turning point for Sri Aurobindo because he experienced the central truth of the *Gita*. By surrendering to the Divine within, to his own inner guide, Aurobindo began to base his own yoga on the authority of his spiritual insights and experiences. Knowledge by identity becomes the underlying principle of Aurobindo's yoga. From the time of these experiences Sri Aurobindo did the yoga of the *Gita*. He is a "Gita Yogin," as

Mr. Minor proclaims in the title to his essay on Sri Aurobindo's interpretation of the *Gita*.

The question for disciples of Sri Aurobindo is how doing the yoga of the *Gita* differs from the practical application of a moral and ethical code of action. There is a qualitative difference in that he had the vision of Divine Unity and believed in the authority of his own inner guide to whom he had unquestionably surrendered. I thought of Mother's message of what Sri Aurobindo represents to the world: "a decisive action direct from the Supreme." Minor points out that when Sri Aurobindo wrote *Essays on the Gita* his yoga was not yet complete. As his spiritual experiences developed Aurobindo came to believe that his experiences went beyond any written text. From 1909-1920, Sri Aurobindo developed his evolutionary theory of higher levels of consciousness which were, at that time, unexplored by humankind. Even though Sri Aurobindo never attained all the levels of consciousness which he envisioned and mapped out, he realized that his yoga went beyond the yoga of the *Gita*. For while the *Gita*'s aim was that of the cessation of birth in the world, Aurobindo's aim was that of the evolution of consciousness until one reached the Supramental level of Truth-Consciousness. This Truth-Consciousness is then brought down into matter as a means of transformation. So while the *Gita*'s principles and images were significant factors in the development of Sri Aurobindo's yoga they were not essential to the aim of his yoga. Nor is the text used as a system for achieving his realization of the Supermind. Mr. Minor states that Sri Aurobindo transcends the *Gita* through his principle of knowledge by identity which affirms an eternal Becoming of the Absolute.

Here is where I think we find a subtle difference in doing the yoga of the *Gita*. Rather than apply a rule Sri Aurobindo applies the practice of surrender to the Divine, the inner guide, to the realities of life. This becomes evident through the reading of this book. In Minor's essay on Sri Aurobindo, the reader sees a progressive interpretation of the *Gita*. It moves from Sri Aurobindo's experiences. In other interpreters the *Gita* often begins and ends in the same place. For Gandhi, Vinoba, Tilak, and Bakim it was useful on a very practical and concrete level.

In Minor's essay on Sri Aurobindo, the reader sees a progressive interpretation of the Gita. It moves from Sri Aurobindo's experiences. In other interpreters the Gita often begins and ends in the same place.

Interpreters like Vivekananda and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan certainly went beyond this initial level of inspiring the Hindu Renaissance. But their themes of spiritual unity are limited in comparison to Sri Aurobindo. Vivekananda spoke to the need for people to rise above religious dogma. Using the *Gita* as a basis for his ideal of tolerance and respect for all religions, he taught Western disciples the *Gita*'s principle of the unity of paths. While in the United States he told an audience that "It does not matter whether one approaches the destination in a carriage with four horses, in an electric car, or rolling on the

ground. The goal is the same." For Vivekananda the *Gita*, of all Hindu texts, taught self-realization in such a way as to embrace all who sought it. He also attempted to teach Westerners that intuitive religious experience like Krishna's revelation of self as the universe to Arjuna was the basis for spiritual knowledge. Vivekananda encouraged Westerners to have confidence in their own spiritual insights. When he returned to India from the States, Vivekananda taught his own people to be self-reliant in both their material and spiritual lives through the images in the *Gita*. Radhakrishnan, who was president of India from 1962-67 and a delegate to UNESCO, studied, wrote, and inspired many people all over the world with his interpretation of the *Gita*. Like Sri Aurobindo he went beyond the first six chapters of the *Gita*. He developed a concept of world spirituality from the *Gita*'s message of the Universal Oneness which is found in the last portion of the *Gita*. At a time when Oppenheimer quoted the *Gita* as he watched the first atomic explosion, Radhakrishnan quoted the *Gita* to reconcile scientific thought and its threat to human existence. Minor quotes Radhakrishnan as saying, "It is the *Gita* which tells us that love alone redeems our lives." Radhakrishnan sought a more humane world and the growth of the human spirit through his interpretation of the *Gita*.

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There are other comparisons and parallels to study and ponder in this text. It is evident that the *Gita*'s message is applicable and part of our ideas and definitions of spirituality. This book puts together the people, the time, the yogic aims, the cultural ideals and the great teachings of the *Gita*. It gives examples of how these elements form a teaching which spiritual seekers rely on for attainment of their goal of self-realization. It will challenge disciples of Sri Aurobindo to realize more fully his level of interpretation and what role the yoga of the *Gita* plays in his yoga. It may even open up new insights into a fuller understanding of the aim of Aurobindo's yoga. We, too, may find ourselves leaving behind practical applications and poetic images for an intuitive seeking of the Truth-Consciousness.

"That which the *Gita* teaches is not a human but a divine action; not the performance of social duties, but the abandonment of all other standards of duty or conduct for a selfless performance of the divine will working through our nature; not social service, but the action of the Best, the God-possessed... and as a sacrifice to Him who stands behind man and Nature."

"The modern mind has exiled two essential things, God or the Eternal and spirituality or the God-state."

"The *Gita* does not teach the disinterested performance of duties but the following of the divine life, the abandonment of all Dharmas, *sarvadharmas*, to take refuge in the Supreme alone."

A Talk With Robert Minor

Robert Minor is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas. He is the author of *Sri Aurobindo: The Perfect and the Good* (Columbia MO: S. Asia Books, 1978); *Bhagavad Gita: An Exegetical Commentary* and *Radhakrishnan: A Religious Biography*, as well as numerous articles. While in graduate school at the University of Iowa, he became interested in Sri Aurobindo who, he felt, had a complete system of religious/philosophical thought. After research on his life, however, Professor Minor decided that Sri Aurobindo was a "yogi in progress" who affirms a "continuous becoming."

According to Professor Minor, Sri Aurobindo laid out general principles for yoga while responding concretely and practically to individual sadhak's efforts. He "integrated everything at the expense of everything," transcending logic to allow people to do the kind of yoga best suited to their personality beginning from the level they were on.

As an historian, Professor Minor sees Sri Aurobindo in the traditional Indian pattern of guru-vada in which the guru personally and authoritatively is accepted as a guide by each seeker. At his passing, this role was passed on to The Mother who, he believed, was the incarnation of the Supermind and had even transcended Sri Aurobindo's own experience.

When asked about Sri Aurobindo's yoga in the USA, Professor Minor said that, for Americans who want things quick and easy, Transcendental Meditation and other paths are easier to follow, like "taking two aspirins and expecting a cure." In addition, the absence of Mother and Sri Aurobindo as authenticators of spiritual experience can be very frustrating. When a guru-vada movement is left to interpreters the result can be schism and Professor Minor sees obvious evidence of this in India among Auroville, The Ashram, and the Sri Aurobindo Society.

Questioned on what he would say to Americans involved with Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, Professor Minor suggested that reading their works was the best way to confirm one's understanding—to make sure one's own interpretation was correct. Seeking out the viewpoints of others outside the yoga would also help define and clarify one's relationship with Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga.

Arjuna Remembers

You want to know if he was really blue,
That Krishna? Well . . . more of a smoky hue,
A shifting color that we couldn't name,
The ever-changing cover for a flame
That leaped with sudden flare and ran through
The gamut of colors. Now they all say 'blue,'
A radiant shade suited for a god . . .
We weren't sure. One minute we'd be awed
By something . . . remote in him—stern yet bright.
And then he'd joke of Bhima's appetite
And we were kids again.

I held him dear . . .
But never dreamed he'd be my charioteer
In that war, those days of madness brought
By Karma's law—the revenge our cousin sought.

Against us were the standards of our kin
And teachers, Drona, Bhishma. What greater sin
Than to take arms against these two?
They had taught us everything they knew
Of honor in war. Were we then to repay
Their love with bitter death? I felt my world sway . . .
I gasped for air like a dying elephant.
My guts quaked—moaned. "No! I can't!"
I shrieked at him. "I won't fight this war!"
The battle field became a distant roar.

The rest is vague. He reasoned with me
About the warrior's job, tried philosophy,
But Drona's hand had helped me bend my bow,
And Bhishma sang us of how, long ago,
The Kshatriyas came to rule this land.
Then Madhava tried to make me understand
That what I saw was not the final truth,
That the soul alone escapes the mouths
Of worms. I stopped my ears—could stand no more.
"Enough talk!" I cried. "Show me a door
That opens wide, a path I will not lose.
I see only blood. I cannot choose."
Then, I think, a mocking smile, a sound,
A thousand suns . . .

I woke up on the ground
Trying to recall some of what he'd said
About death. Hari stood there, his head
Aglow still with whirling radiance.
He looked down. I could not meet his glance.
I got up, climbed into the car
And heard the conch's call begin the war.

Of course he had to pick me to kill
The two of them—I who had the skill
And Shiva's magic bow. By that time
Both sides were so soaked in slime
You could not tell the living from the dead.
Bhishma's car approached. I felt the dread
Again within my bones. And when he saw
Me crouch behind the hermaphrodite and draw
My bow, he knew the ancient curse was true . . .
And flung his weapons down,

then drew
Near with something like relief upon his face.
My fingers froze on the taut string. The pace
Of slaughter slowed as all about the field
Warriors stopped and waited for the deed
I could not do. Then Krishna slowly turned
And smiled at the little boy in me who yearned
For a father's arms. He spoke one short phrase:
". . . I am born again from age to age."

Boy, I hardly felt the arrow leave the bow
And never really saw our grandsire fall.
I wandered lost inside an endless well
Drowned in light. Enough! What more can I tell?

Gordon Korstange

The Supreme Person

by Jesse Roarke

Existence, however large and intricate, is an order and a living being. The figure of a World Tree is familiar from Norse mythology, where it was very prominent; but where, however, it had a tragic meaning of eventual death, its roots being gnawed by unregeneracy. There was some kind of suggestion, promise or hope of a rebirth, but any idea of a *spiritual* culmination was meaningless in this context, quite foreign to these people. The Norse vision of life was of an heroic striving, that at best came to a kind of stoical equality.

In India, of course, we may expect almost any figure to be given a larger and profounder meaning than elsewhere; and though seeing the world in terms of a tree seems never to have caught greatly the Indian imagination, such a vision is expounded briefly by Krishna in his "Blessed Song." Here the tree is sensation, clinging and karma, the thirst of the unregeneracy, never truly known or in beginning or ending: a figure like the wheel, of an entangled bewilderment. It is knowledge that is vain, separative and bound by ego, in Maya's enchantment. The luxuriant spreading is the three worlds of ignorance and the processes of the gunas and, though the root is above in the Unmanifest—meaning that the growth is not wholly and not fundamentally illusory—all the beauties and fragrance of the buds, branches and leaves, the fruits and flowers, the sturdy bole itself immense beyond thought, the whole strong and intricate profusion and expansive glory, must hold fettered and deluded; and one must swing the axe of detachment and fell the tree for the liberation. Thus far the *Gita*: There is no idea of a *transformation*, of the growth of a greater Tree, that shall be wholly a divine splendor of life. One is to take refuge in the Being from whom the world's currents flow; not to find that Being in the world itself, and grow fully to the divine nature. Though this culmination, this fulness is certainly implied in the *Gita*, it is not expressed.

*It is knowledge that is vain,
separative and bound by ego,
in Maya's enchantment.*

To the Norse the tree of life was tortured and, lamentably, must fall; by Indians it has been seen more profoundly, as itself the torture and frustration, delusion, darkness, and ignorance, that one must cut down, fell, and be wholly dissociated from, to live truly; not in one of the heavens of the popular religions, in the subliminal, on one of the inner as yet occult planes—for all this, too, is part of the tree—but beyond all manifestation, in a superconscient, supracosmic transcendence. The Norse vision is one of an endless instability and violence, not even Valhalla being sure forever; the Indian a triumph and overcoming only at too great an expense and by a kind of superviolence that destroys or subliminates the problem rather than solving it: truncating the being and thwarting, to the extent that it takes great souls out of the manifestation, the divine development. It solves the great world-enigma and the central difficulty only to the extent that the confusion is made less by individual withdrawals. But, of course, refusal of participation leaves the process fundamentally where it was and, in fact, is a kind of treason of the man of high development, a refusal of the true

meaning and purpose of life: a refusal truly to *see* life, or to try to see it beyond all stop-short vision and formulation, and to deal maturely with it.

But in the *Gita*, and especially the great fifteenth book, section or song that may almost be seen as an epitome of the whole teaching, some way is shown to a greater transcendence, to a divine Being that is not only transcendent but also immanent, at once individual and universal, impersonal and personal, all Spirit indeed and all Nature, in most consummate harmony, identity of essence and substance, power and consciousness, pure being and bliss ineffable. Here alone, in the Knowledge of the Supreme, is the full reconciliation of work and knowledge, perfect impersonal Peace and perfect, most personal and most intense Love.

This great Being is not wholly unknown to the yogis of a

*To the Norse the tree of life
was tortured and, lamentably, must fall;
by Indians it has been seen more profoundly,
as itself the torture and frustration, delusion,
darkness, and ignorance, that one must cut
down, fell, and be wholly dissociated
from, to live truly;*

lesser persuasion, for they are not wholly disintegrated and given to one path and one development only. They could not live here at all if they were. The world is sustained by the Supreme, is the Supreme, and always there is some touch and influence of his Light and Truth in the evolution. There could be no order, no cohesion of the different paths and elements without it. The most withdrawn yogin of Knowledge, so long as he remains in the world, works, acts in it, which means that he finds work and action in it to be possible; his transcendent status has not abrogated the possibility, or the necessity. Even asleep, or in a higher sleep of trance, he does not annihilate the divine Energy that is inseparable from the divine Consciousness and thus is the occasion of work here—of that secular activity that shall eventuate in the creativity of the divine—and that, for the eventuation, must be, and evolve. So the yogin of Work, as he progresses, comes closer to the ineffable Peace beyond and finds indeed that the quieter he becomes, the more detached and impersonal, the stronger his energy, power and skill for working. And the Devotee can combine and merge the calm and the activity with his force of surrender and flame of adoration, to come to the higher, the decisive reconciling realization that of the complete, the Integral Yogin is required. There are always hints, promises and lesser manifestations of the great things, otherwise one could not grow, and the Divine would defeat his own purpose here.

But there is another being,
Called the highest, Self transcendent,
Who as lord beyond mutation
Enters and sustains the three worlds.

(BG 15:17)

It is this being alone that is and that one seeks, this Third who is at once the mutable and the immutable, the perishable and the imperishable, the relative and the absolute, the manifestation and the non-manifestation, the supreme and highest—Purushottama.

Continued on page 14

Counting the Trees of Auroville: An Interview with Narayanan and Binky

Editors' Note: Narayanan Raj and Binky (Suzanne Long) have recently arrived in the USA from Auroville where they were very active in afforestation, outreach, and village development. Narayana's father worked for the Indian Forest Department at the game preserve of Mundanthuri in the Western Gats of South India. After studying for his Pre-University Course Degree, he met Dr. Rauf Ali and became his assistant in studying monkeys. Dr. Ali recommended him to the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore as a research assistant. Binky was a student at Dartmouth in Hanover, New Hampshire when she became interested in Auroville. Collaboration interviewed them together at the Merriam Hill Center.



Suzanne Long & Narayanan Raj.

Collaboration: Narayanan, how did you come to Auroville?

Narayanan: When I was working at the IIS, part of my joy was to help a scientist do a survey of trees, mostly in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. That time, I happened to come to Auroville with him. When I went back, after some months, people in Auroville wrote a grant to the Indian Department of Environment for an afforestation project. It was funded for three years and they invited me to Auroville. So I came. It was a good thing I did it (laughs).

Collaboration: What were your first impressions of Auroville?

Narayanan: I surveyed the land, doing some mapping. Then, just before the monsoon, in this place called Aurobrindavan (west of Moratandi) I went to do some contour bunding for the soil conservation for a couple of months. Then I was documenting the tree species in different soil conditions. Plus I helped the American students from Merriam Hill go to the wildlife preserves.

Collaboration: Which brings us to Binky. How did you get to Auroville?

Binky: While I was at Dartmouth I happened to live on a farm next to Suzanne MacDonald (a Merriam Hill coordinator) and she told me about Auroville and India. As an undergraduate I had studied biology and tropical ecology in Kenya, Costa Rica, and Germany. This international experience, especially in environmental studies, was what attracted me to Auroville—

because of the work they were doing in the tropics with bio-agriculture. I was interested in the philosophy around Auroville, but the first thing that drew me was the land work. So I went with the Merriam Hill student exchange of 1984 and, while in Auroville, did some survey work for the International Council of Agro-Forestry based in Nairobi. It was good to have a focus there. The report I eventually wrote up is still being used in Auroville, especially to show visitors.

One day, during that first stay, I was riding down the road with Suzanne and a man was approaching us on his bike. She turned to me and said, "Oh, this is the most wonderful person I've ever known!" That's how I first met Narayanan. I'd go out with him and count trees once in a while and he took us to the wildlife sanctuary. During that three month visit I became interested in the interaction between Auroville and the Tamil villagers—what effect Auroville was having on all those places... especially land use. After I returned I got a fellowship through Dartmouth and the Center for Technology and Society in Boston to go back and do research. Visa problems forced me to delay for six months but I finally made it!

I wanted to see how much technology was being transferred from Auroville to the village farmers. But very soon I found out that there's not much in Auroville that's ready to be applied outside. What's much more applicable is the afforestation work. So both Narayanan and I got involved with people who would come from outside—not the surrounding villages so much—but from volunteer organizations, teachers, and social workers—groups interested in environment from other parts of India who came to Auroville to see what was being done. Auroville has become quite a showcase for afforestation.

I was riding down the road with Suzanne and a man was approaching us on his bike. She turned to me and said, "Oh, this is the most wonderful person I've ever known!" That's how I first met Narayanan.

Collaboration: Then there's not much farming being done in Auroville?

Binky: There's still a few people doing it, but now people are moving from farming and gardening to tree crops because it's a lot easier.

Collaboration: Why do you think there's so little farming in Auroville?

Binky: The water situation is so unreliable. The soil isn't that good. It's still being built up. Insects are a problem—even though sometimes people won't admit it. It's difficult to get good crops year after year without using chemicals. But there are some who are working on it with a lot of dedication and in time some interesting things could come out of it for Auroville. And these farmers will say that they're still in the experimental stage.

Collaboration: So you had to re-structure your research proposal? Can you describe what you did with the people who came to Auroville to see the afforestation?

Binky: OK. The wonderful thing about Auroville is that you can take people to different places and show them different stages of afforestation. At Aurobrindavan, for example, the land is still very degraded and eroded. But you can see the bunding and first planting, then second, third, and fourth year planting and its effect on a piece of land. Other places in Auroville also show these stages. It's a wonderful way to teach. It stimulates all sorts of questions.

The wonderful thing about Auroville is that you can take people to different places and show them different stages of afforestation.

Collaboration: What kind of people would come?

Narayanan: Local farmers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Those people come to get advice from Auroville on what kind of species to plant. Teachers, too. The government had a new educational program for teachers and a local headmaster is interested in environment. He organizes this program and advised the schoolmasters to go to Auroville.

Binky: They would have a 10-15 day program and one of those days was in Auroville. We would talk about general environment with the focus on trees.

Narayanan: Most of the people are fascinated by Auroville afforestation because, normally, only 2-3 different species are planted by groups in India, but in Auroville—at least, I documented 45 different species.

Binky: Also, the survival rate is much better. The forest department will plant a lot of trees and the goats follow right behind, eating them. This is a new concern, after literacy and economics, for the NGOs. They might get a little excited about it in Auroville, but when they return home it's a different story.

Collaboration: How did the different tour groups respond to your program?

Narayanan: Ah yes! You need not expect that all would respond. You should be happy if 2% . . . it depends on the way you teach . . . to the schoolmaster, the student, the villager. Slide shows are the best technique for educated people. You can talk and explain more. The kids and villagers like video—it's not so boring. If you give a lecture you should make up posters and drawings—they will pay attention.

When people write in we start by arranging their accommodation. Local farmers have to stay in their style. City-wallah people in their style. Government officials in their . . . usually they would stay in Pondicherry. Food also. Most people who came like spicy food. The best place for that is in Kottakarai at Ivar's school. Then we have to arrange tours of different places. Aurobrindavan for forestry, Charlie's (Aurogreen) for farming. In the evening we would show videos for entertainment.

Collaboration: What kind of transportation did you use?

Narayanan: Often a problem. For forest officials we'd hire a van. For schoolteachers a tractor and cart. Sometimes bicycles for those staying more than three days.

Binky: Yes, logistics are very complicated. Much more than here. I found that in the beginning I'd say, "We're going to do this at this time . . ." and Narayanan would say, "We'll see." He was always right. Fortunately other people would help us



Suzanne Long with her English students in Auroville.

since we were running around doing twenty things at once.

Collaboration: Who financed these tours?

Narayanan: Sometimes the Village Action Group would give money. Sometimes the volunteer organizations would pay their own food and accommodations.

Binky: Through the government we did 200 teachers in groups of 50. We found that big groups weren't the best. You couldn't really talk to them and, like Narayanan said, you were lucky if 2% showed a spark of interest. The groups of farmers were exciting and fun. There would be a lot of exchange. They would say to us . . .

Narayanan: "You shouldn't plant like that." They were smart. They would say, "Why are you planting all kinds of trees? Why you don't plant indigenous trees that grow well in this area?"

Binky: Also, they couldn't understand why there were so many forest trees instead of fruit trees. They'd say, "You have all this land and you aren't growing any food."

Narayanan: If they have land, they must live off it. If they planted trees they would have to wait another 15-20 years to get the money. They all depend on that land. Government subsidies—so much each month—for growing trees is one way to change this.

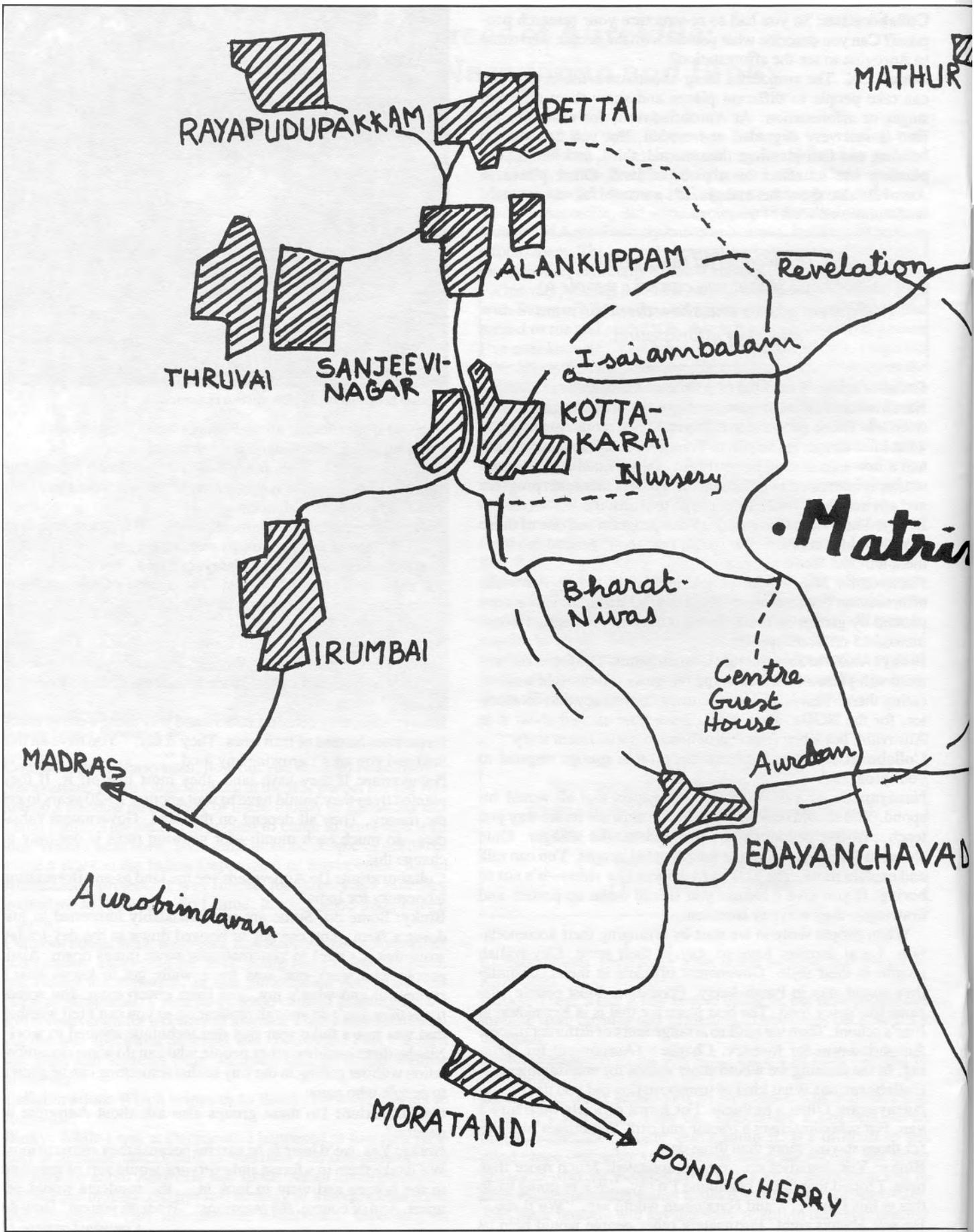
Collaboration: Do Aurovilians see the land as an afforestation laboratory for India?

Binky: Some do. Some are understandably interested in just doing a farm. You can get so bogged down in the day-to-day work that it's hard to systematically write things down. Also, people who work one area for a while get to know what's successful and what's not, just from observation. But sometimes they don't do enough replication so you can't tell whether that was just a fluke year that that technique seemed to work. Maybe there could be other people who can do some documentation without getting in the way so that something can be shown to people who come.

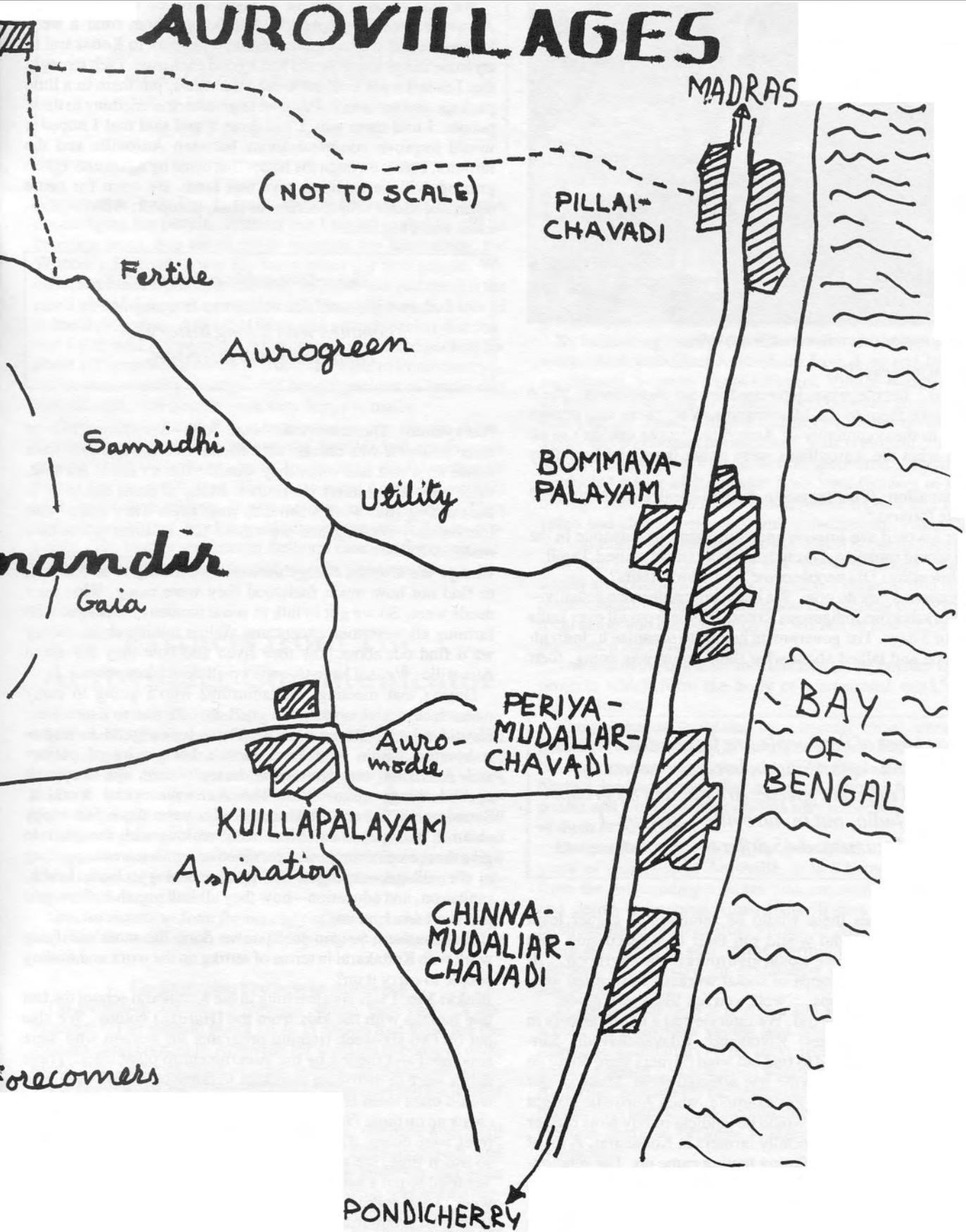
Collaboration: Do these groups also ask about Auroville in general?

Binky: Yes, we'd have to be careful because they were curious. We'd take them to a forest and everyone would sort of gravitate to the houses and want to look in . . . the residents would get upset. And of course, the questions: "What do you eat? How do

Continued on page 12



AUROVILLAGES





Narayanan leading a discussion group in Auroville.

Continued from page 9

you cook? People were interested in Sri Aurobindo. We'd always take them to the Matrimandir. Yes, there was always interest in the community of Auroville. People couldn't at all fathom what the Aurovilians were doing there and how they lived.

Collaboration: What language did you speak to these groups? Say, the farmers?

Binky: I would use English and Narayanan or someone in the group would translate. Narayanan almost always used Tamil.

Collaboration: Did people come from North India?

Narayanan: They do now. We had a big conference actually—The Workshop on Indigenous Trees. People from all over India came for 3 days. The government helped to organize it. Individuals came and talked about what their group was doing, their projects.

Most of the people are fascinated by Auroville afforestation because, normally, only 2-3 different species are planted by groups in India, but in Auroville—at least, I documented 45 different species.

Binky: Sometimes there would be seminars of higher level program directors who would run their own discussion with their own agenda and we would give tours in the afternoon. . . It varied, you know. Groups of social workers were often very interested—other groups. . . well, you felt like a tour guide.

But this wasn't all we did. We interviewed a lot of farmers in the surrounding villages: Kottakarai, Edayanchavadi, Sanjeevinagar. I still wanted to find out what farmers were doing on their land and how Auroville had affected them. Some of our assumptions proved true. For example, when Auroville bought land, the people who sold would be landless or buy plots further away and lease them, especially farmers in Kottakarai. A lot of villagers sold their land. Strong feeling came up. The relationship between Auroville and the villagers is completely complex with a long history to complicate any interview. But since Narayanan wasn't from any of the surrounding villages, the situation was more neutral. They didn't link him with local politics and respected him pretty well.

We also became kind of a liaison between Kottakarai and Auroville for Village Action. We helped them fund a well. Before we left we had a meeting with farmers in Kottakarai to try to tie things together and had a good exchange. I felt strongly that I didn't want to do all these interviews, put them in a little package and run away. I wanted to give back something to these people. I told them why I had done it and said that I hoped it would improve communications between Auroville and the farmers. I went through the issues that came up again and again: grazing (village tradition says that lands are open for cattle when not under crop); access to land; compost; water—pesticides was a big issue.

The relationship between Auroville and the villagers is completely complex with a long history to complicate any interview.

Narayanan: The interviews were long—sometimes two or three hours. It was casual, not official. We'd sit outside their house on a mat and often they would offer us food. All told, there were about thirty interviews. Many of them had to be in the evening after work when they were tired. They had to start immediately cooking and we would talk to them while they made food.

Binky: We also did energy use surveys, mostly in Kottakarai, to find out how much fuelwood they were using, what their needs were. So we got to talk to some women. . . because with farming all were men except one. While talking about energy we'd find out about how they lived and how they felt about Auroville. We still have to write up all this information.

During that meeting, Santamurthy, who's going to carry on environmental work, got a good introduction to Kottakarai. He did a lot of the translation. There was a good feeling to it because within Kottakarai there's been a lot of politics and Auroville and Kottakarai haven't seen eye-to-eye. It opened things up a little. The Auroville social workers, Soundaranaikam and Stephenraj, who were there felt happy about it. Narayanan and I had been working with these two to give them an environmental perspective on what was happening in the villages—trying to tie up the ecology, land, health, sanitation, and education—how they all link together. How you just can't work on one.

Collaboration: So you feel you've done the most satisfying work with Kottakarai in terms of setting up the work and finding people to carry it on?

Binky: Yes. I was also teaching in the Kottakarai school the last few months with the kids from the (Harijan) colony. We also put on two six-week training programs for women who were appointed and funded by the government to plant trees. These ladies were to distribute seedlings to families in their area who would plant them around their houses. The women would then check up on these families for the next six months to see how the trees were doing. There were 15-20 of them and, since we had so much time, we also taught family planning and sanitation. We tried to put a national and even global perspective into their work. Their enthusiasm surprised us. It was rewarding to have a long term group instead of the tours. Santamurthy got a chance to really take charge of the second group and get some more experience. Dee was a big help.

...they couldn't understand why there were so many forest trees instead of fruit trees. They'd say, "You have all this land and you aren't growing any food."

Narayanan: Yes, Dee is really special because she is always encouraging the people. Without her I would probably still be counting trees. She asked me to organize the Sangamam, the Worker's Festival. I was the coordinator for five people. We collected funds from different units in Auroville and spent it for small prizes for sports competitors. Morning they had lots of cultural programs. After that there was a lunch packet distribution for about 1200 people. Unfortunately we lacked packets for about 100 people, so we hired a taxi and went to Pondicherry—we had contingency money—and bought packets of lemon rice and pakodas. The people were very happy actually.

There were a lot of things happening at the Bharat Nivas. Outside the auditorium, Johnny (of Fertile) had made some games like hit the bell for a prize. Inside was a drama written by one of the local villagers. The actors were Auroville workers plus Tamil Aurovilians. Everyone was very attentive. Then some schools and local organizations presented dance programs. The leather workers of Bellaura took charge of preparing food. So many people helped with the Sangamam.

Extracts from The Aurovillage Communicator

Editor's Note: Dee DeCew publishes a monthly newsletter about the Co-Evolution Project in Auroville. This project is a working group of Aurovilians who focus on village oriented projects. The March newsletter and the next few issues which follow it, will attempt to explain the various projects and introduce the people who carry out the daily work. This extract will introduce readers to the location and description of the Tamil villages surrounding Auroville and the Auroville projects which strive to create understanding and interaction between the villagers and Aurovilians.

Special thanks to Jothi for his copy of the map which will give our readers an idea of Auroville's position in regards to the villages.

Co-Evolution Projects in Auroville

Co-Evolution serves 15 villages which they call "Aurovillages." The map on pages 10 & 11 shows that these are the villages close enough to Auroville for workers to come to work every day. Some of these villages border the Auroville lands. Their populations range from 800 to 2500 people and the total of the 15 villages is 20,000 to 25,000 people.

The villages are divided into two groups; the ones which fall within the Auroville city area (Kottakarai, Edayanchavadi, and Kuillapalayam) and all the others. More attention has been given to the first group because when Auroville was settled they were the first villages to be affected by the new communities being built on Auroville lands. The second group of villages are farther from Auroville settlements and, at this point in time, very receptive to what Auroville offers them.

Villagers are poor for the most part. The food they grow, the forests they inhabit, the manual work they offer, all get drained into the cities at low prices, where other people profit from village resources—a reflection of the world's economic system which undervalues agriculture, raw materials, and physical labor.

Co-Evolution is aware of this devaluing of village culture and productivity by the world market and seeks to reverse that trend which impoverishes three quarters of the world's population. Co-Evolution attempts to change this trend in Auroville through their projects.

Village Action carries out preliminary work in the villages encouraging local cooperation and enterprise. The most successful projects are those which provide a wider, more flexible mental and psychological education. As you read through the projects you will notice that all of them are educational.

By facilitating tours of the afforestation and land regeneration work which individual Aurovilians have done and by organizing cultural events by Tamil villagers, Village Action has created positive and open communication between Auroville communities and Tamil Villages and India (c.f. the interview with Binky and Narayanan in this issue). This is evident in the recent list of events which Village Action sponsored. Meenakshi recently led a tour of Panchayat presidents (leaders of villages) through Auroville. The 15 visitors were treated to a feast and video and closed their visit with a discussion. Village Action has sponsored a seven-well project which hopes to alleviate this year's drought by deepening and renewing village wells. And finally an example of the way in which Village Action increases communication among villages was the evening performance of local songs and dances which the women of Bommayapalayam performed for Pettai village.

The following is a brief introduction to the current long term projects which form the body of educational work done by Co-Evolution.

Elaignarkal is facilitated by a trained social worker from Madurai, which is a city in the state of Tamil Nadu. Meenakshi has been an Aurovillian since the 1970s and is also one of Tamil Nadu's leading poets. She has won national honors for her poems and *Collaboration* readers may remember reading some of them in past issues.

Elaignarkal was started by Meenakshi during her first years of residence in Auroville. It is a home for young men from the surrounding villages who are working for Auroville and desire to become Aurovilians. It was seen as a way to facilitate the transition from village to Auroville. The participants stay for one year in the dormitory at the Matrimandir Nursery and receive an orientation to the communities in Auroville.

At the present time it is also a site for a regular after-work school for Auroville youths and other new members of the Auroville community. The most recent addition has been a group of young Tamil women who would like to be members of Auroville. Meenakshi facilitates the integration of these young people with her skills as a counselor and is often called upon to mediate conflicts between villagers, Tamil Aurovilians and Westerners.

New Creation was organized by Andre Tardeil and his wife Mary Babu. This project educates and trains village children and adults in crafts and literacy. The program began with ten children who lived and studied at the New Creation school. There are now 25 boarding school children and a team of Aurovilians who manage the school and hostel. There is also a

day school attended by 200 village children and a craft section for training youths is being built. New Creation sponsors craft cooperatives which are run by master masons, carpenters, and traditional stone carvers from the local villages.

Isai Ambalam, near Kottakarai village, is similar to New Creation. It is a day school for 35 children and has the added dimension of a creche for the children of working mothers. Fifty village children under 5 years old participate in the daily child care program at the creche. There is a hostel for 6 students from the day school and some of the teachers who work at the school live there also.

A Cooperative Society functions there as well. At present 200 women and men work in the craft section which produces hand knitted cotton sweaters, beadwork, leatherwork, silkscreening, and carpentry.

Arul Vari is another project organized by social workers. Shyamala and Varadharajan have lived and worked in Auroville since the beginning of the Aspiration community. They are now located at Promesse where they conduct an evening playschool for Harijan children. During the day they have organized a kindergarten for local village children. With the help of some of the graduates of the Ashram school who live at Promesse, the children who participate in the Arul Vari program are taught sports and body awareness. This program in particular seems to be successful in developing poise and confidence in these young village children.

Like Meenakshi, Shyamala and Varadharajan have been instrumental in integrating many young Tamil villagers into Auroville. They have also been an invaluable asset to the Auroville communities in developing communication between Tamils and Westerners.

Arul Anandam near Edayanchavadi village is the home of an evening school and the dream for a new children's center of Paul Vincent and his wife Deigula Mary. He has the distinction of being one of the best Tamil speakers among the foreigners and she is a trained teacher from Southern Tamil Nadu.

Auroville Health Center has always been village-oriented, treating over 100 villagers a day. Dr. Tewari and Eleanor Louitt conduct once-weekly clinics in some of the other centers, and Janna has started an employee check-up program.

From the **Forest Group**, Binky and Narayanaraj work together with Co-Evolution to carry Auroville Greenwork onto the "next frontier," the neighboring villages. They conduct tours, seminars, and workshops as well as generally encouraging greenwork programs in the villages: bunding, sapling distribution, general environmental education. Recently they drew the attention of the Kuillapalayam village elders to the danger of contamination of the village pond by the washing of insecticide containers there. As a result drums were beat throughout the town telling people not to wash their spray equipment in the tank anymore.

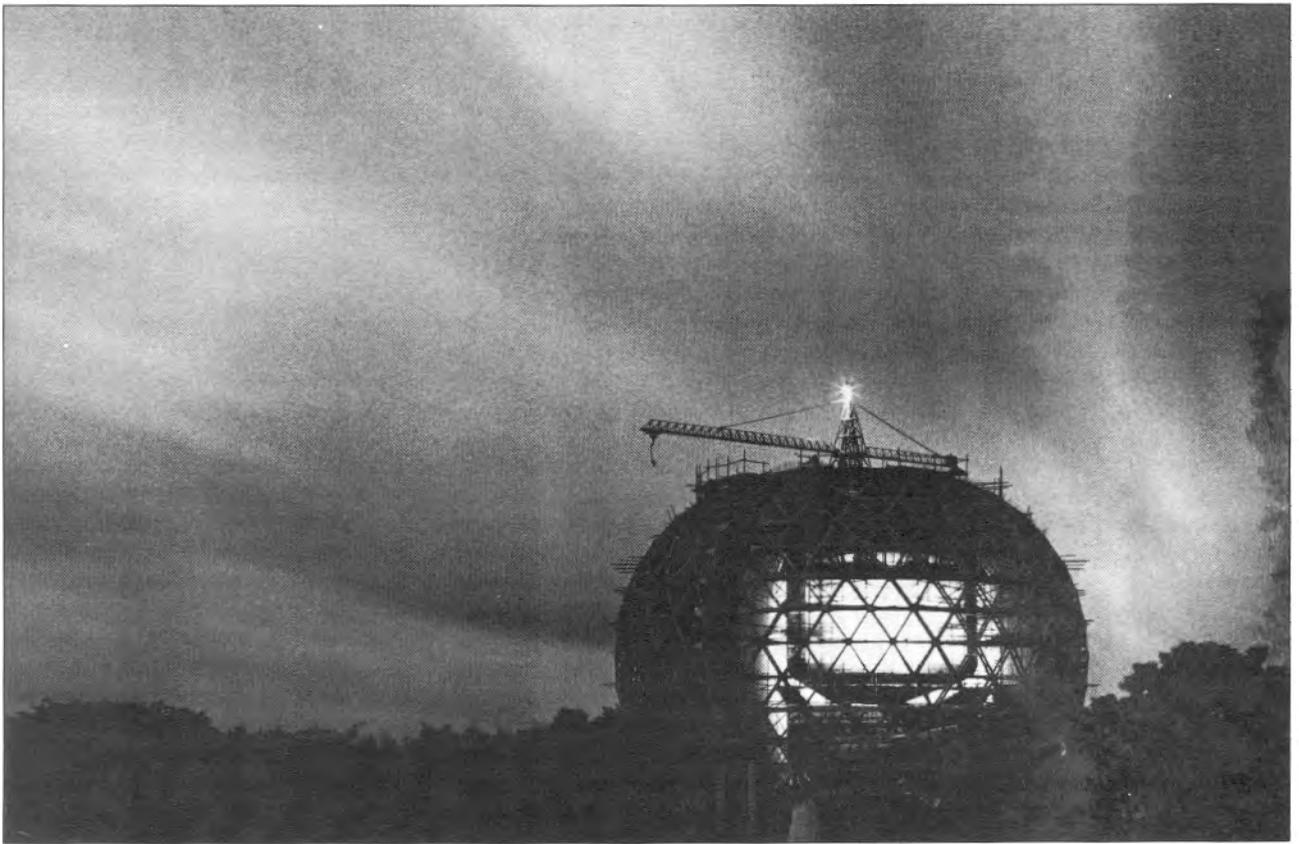
Village Action is the extension wing of Co-Evolution, under the direction of Dee and Meenakshi, which sends village development workers into the villages to encourage local self-help projects and smooth the relations between Auroville and the villages.

Here the most ineffable mystery is reached, in experience that quite defies intellectual formulation. The Supreme who is the very possibility of all existence is the possibility, too, of every particular existence and its very substance and being. He who is utterly beyond is also the presence in the heart, and the vast impersonal is the most intimate personal relationships. He is father and mother with son and daughter, friend with friend (and enemy with enemy), brother with brother and with sister, sister with sister and with brother, lover with beloved. He is teacher and disciple, he is the son and the father, the prodigal and the tyrant, the dutiful and the loving. He is sovereign with people and people with the Lord. He is people alone and in multitude, he is the whole of humankind; he is master with dog and dog with master, he is the tiger and the antelope and the bird and the branches and the sky, clear and with clouds: He is everything. All the sweetness, the delicacy, the joy of existence that grows as humanity grows is He, every relativity and relationship is that Being who is absolute beyond the featureless absolute itself. The love of the heart is not a lesser thing, and disengaged from the vital entanglements it is a direct vision and expression of the Supreme, the very multiplicity-in-unity that is existence. All personalities, all particularities are facets, expressions of his inexhaustible being that is the world, that is not limited in any way, so that continually without diminution or change he can throw himself, as it were, into the cosmic and the infinitesimal, innumerable, and incalculable teeming multitudes, figure on figure of his glory. He is the individual, the universal, the transcendent, because more unspeakable. He is the true Transcendent, of whom the withdrawn impersonal is only one expression, one mode. To transcend the world fully is to be able to live most intimately within it. To realize the unmanifested non-duality alone is to miss the duality and the multiplicity and the infinite play of existence that is also he; and is thus to limit oneself and one's consciousness.

*The world is sustained
by the Supreme, is the Supreme,
and always there is some touch and
influence of his Light and Truth
in the evolution.*

The ultimate word of the *Gita* is the teaching of the Purushotama and the one Dharma that is to turn to Him with complete surrender. The realization of the Supreme Purusha is the third great pillar of the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo; and by this realization alone may one come to the most consummate synthesis, the integration of the whole nature, effectuating it in mind and heart and will, that human life become divine.

(From his unpublished book, Sri Aurobindo and the Bhagavad Gita.)



Recent photo of Matrimandir by John.

The Inner Chamber: The Soul of Matrimandir

The Inner Chamber of the Matrimandir is not just a room. It is a space in the fourth dimension. To enter into it requires a leap, an inversion-conversion such as Mother speaks about in relation to the psychic being. In a talk on February 8, 1973, She said: "To be conscious of your psychic being you must for once be capable of experiencing the fourth dimension; otherwise you cannot know what it is like . . . my God! Indispensable, indispensable! Life begins with that. Otherwise you are sunk in falsehood . . . and in disorder and darkness. Otherwise in order to be conscious of your own consciousness, you have to mentalize. It's frightening, frightening!" And in one of the "Entretiens" She said, "You must remember that the inner beings are not in the third dimension . . ." To enter the real Matrimandir we have to make a jump. That also means that to bring all the various threads of our being together we have to make a jump, a conversion. It also implies that in order to bring all the various threads of Auroville together in the psychic center we have to collectively make a jump into the next dimension. It is the only point—a huge point or an infinitesimal one, in that dimension it's all the same—where Strength can be one with Wisdom, and together they can be harmonized with Beauty and Perfection; and the Inner Chamber is the only point and, symbolically speaking, the only place where all the other parts and planes of the being can begin to reflect a variegated unity and in which all the other centers of consciousness can be integrated.

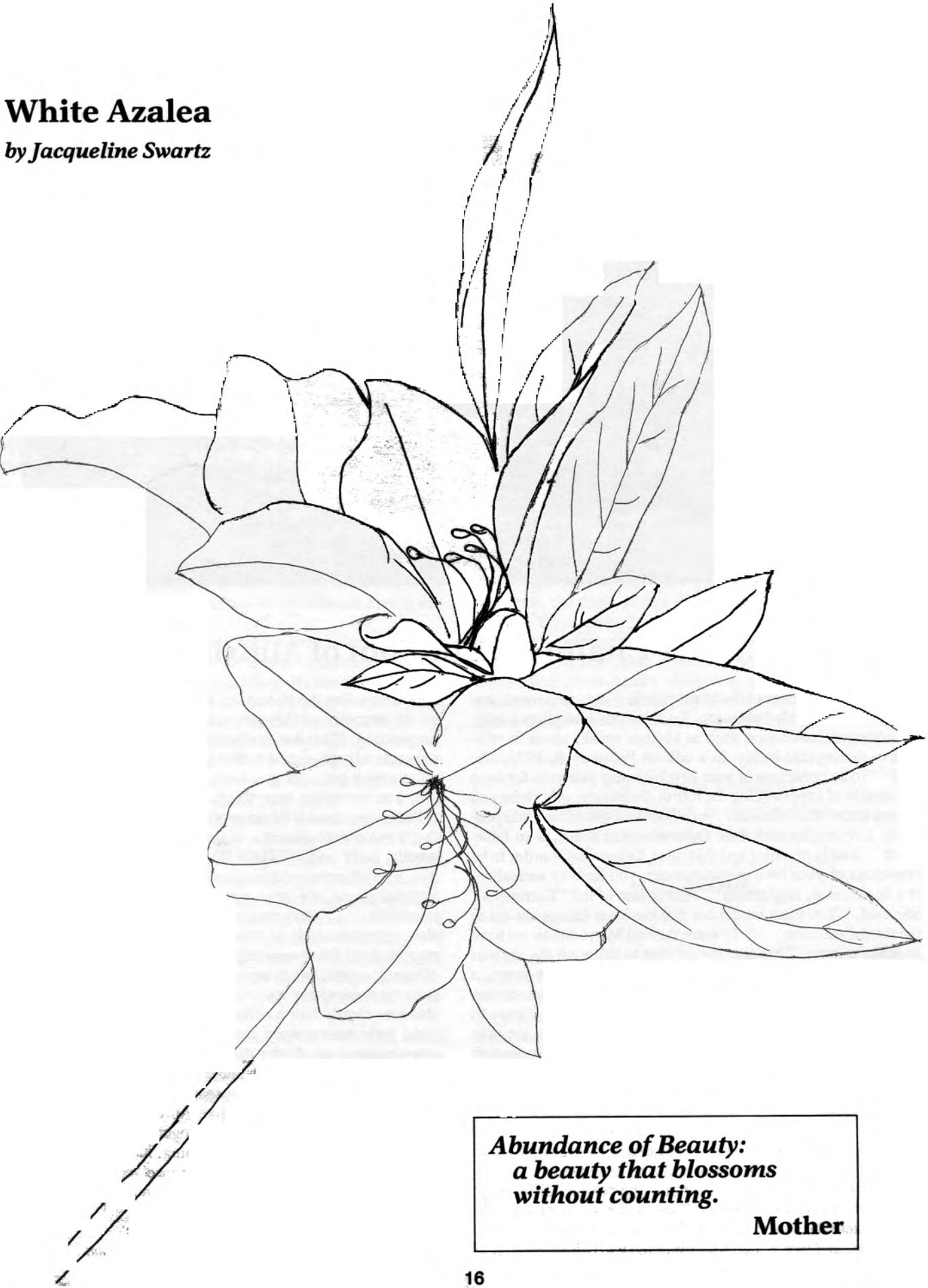
But it is a space which is different. One behaves differently, feels differently, IS different. That is the main problem of entering into the new space: One has to leave behind, to forget, to change, and that is a painful thing for individuals as well as

collectives. But the alternative is letting the world and oneself go on eternally as they are now, and that is also not a nice proposition. What has to change most is the consciousness. In the same talk we quoted earlier (2/8/73) Mother said, "It is the mind which prevents you from feeling it. You must BE, you see, you mentalize everything, everything. . . You, what you call consciousness is thinking of things . . . but that's not it at all, that's not consciousness . . . Consciousness must be able to be wholly lucid and WITHOUT WORDS! . . . There you have it . . . everything is becoming luminous and warm . . . STRONG! and the peace, the true peace which is neither inertia nor immobility . . ." One can understand why the Inner Chamber is also called the Hall of Silence. One can begin to grasp the magnitude of the change required to move into a consciousness of wordlessness, which especially for collectives is a major leap from the noise of our common consciousness. In the symbol one also sees clearly how a collective should be run: The members yield their positions on the various platforms and knots of consciousness at all the different levels, and stations stuck in-between pillars and ribs, and collectively they move, each by shifting into his own psychic space, into the Inner Chamber. Only from there can a place like Auroville be "run" or any other place for that matter. One is together around the Crystal, the Spark, the Soul in silence, listening, integrating, receiving, and then manifesting what had been received. Any other form of government or self-government does not hit the mark, does not bring the New World an inch closer.

From Rudd Lohman's *A House For The Third Millennium*.

White Azalea

by Jacqueline Swartz



***Abundance of Beauty:
a beauty that blossoms
without counting.***

Mother

People

Dr. Rohit Mehta will be in the United States during the summer. We are aware of three programs over July 10-12th: Friday in Connecticut with Jayant Patel; Saturday at Matagiri Mt. Tremper; and Sunday at the home of Advait and Shree Dwivedi on Long Island.

Karunamayee of the Delhi Ashram recently completed a tour of the USA, giving very moving performances of devotional Indian vocal music. In Woodstock, NY, she performed at St. Gregory's before a very appreciative audience. The next morning she sang as an offering to Sri Aurobindo and Mother in Mt. Tremper. On the following Wednesday she gave a wonderful concert in New York City, which included introductions by Sufi leader Pir Vilayat Khan and also Swami Satchitananda, both of whom praised her singing. Her tour was sponsored by Shyam Bhatnagar of the SRI Center.

Marion Nelson of Global View Handicrafts returned from her Winter in Asia. Her annual trip includes leading a tour for Global Views and retail buying of handicrafts. Here are some excerpts from her Spring Report:

In addition to my usual tasks of purchasing and helping



Marion Nelson with her Tibetan family.

craftspeople make their creations more available to an American audience, this trip had some especially poignant moments particularly during my visits with our friends in the area of Darjeeling, India. This region is currently torn with political strife. These visits always involve touching people's lives, meeting the new babies, learning of deaths and illnesses, sharing in the rites of passage and other accomplishments of family members. This year the pain of violence and political anger in the community was added.

All day, as I went from businessman to businessman I shared in the broken hopes and promises, the shattered concept of a peaceful place, and I drank tea and wept with them. I heard over and over again that the loss of money was not the chief concern.

It was the loss of innocence, of peace, of life in a town where doors had not needed to be locked. I learned from these gentle souls that quality of life is the deepest prayer here—soul quality—and I shared from mine my hope for a broken world.

I made a visit to my old friend Mrs. Mukia who is very concerned with preservation of the humane qualities of their

culture. I went on Sunday afternoon and we shared of the spirit. She feels that people need to know that not all Americans are greedy, money-grabbing, military spenders. She loves to hear of Global View and a more natural way of life and says we need to speak of love to a world forgetting how to hear the word.

From Darjeeling I went on to Nepal and Thailand meeting more old friends and new ones. Many are living examples of the pain and beauty of a world being catapulted into the future. And I thank our friends, both Asian and American, for helping me integrate travels, business, and life, as they receive me into their homes and give me experiences that expand our souls.

Aurovilians visiting the USA this summer include **Frederick, Helde, Alain, Patricia,** and **Savitra** (see Merriam Hill News). Alain and Patricia have recent videotapes of Auroville. Anyone interested in contacting these roving ambassadors can call the MSAC High Falls office.

Rose Kupperman, Falls Church, VA, received a graduation dedication from a devotee of Sri Aurobindo and Mother, a young man just completing medical school in Florida. She wanted to share this beautiful announcement with us. The following is a reprint of **Dr. Asim Jani's** graduation announcement. And we thank Rose for this contribution and congratulate

Dr. Asim and his family.

May 30, 87 will be marked as a turning point for me in life. On May 30, 87, Saturday I will be graduating with an M.D. degree from University of South Florida College of Medicine.

A person's accomplishment essentially is a working of the Grace of the Unknown. This Grace pours energy into a person which then becomes a guiding light and sustaining and inspiring force. The fullness and beauty of human action are derived from the mystery and depth of life that cannot be fathomed.

Such a grace I have received as love . . . love so pure, unwavering and undemanding coming from respectable and self-giving relations like ours who have contributed so immensely to my growth.

Now when I am at a juncture of being initiated into a new career of a physician, I am only made more aware of my awesome responsibility toward those who need and have claim upon my energies to render them my services. I feel I am called upon for a more sacred duty.

At this moment of self-dedication I sincerely and humbly pray for your blessings which should be the force of life.

Sri Aurobindo Ashram-Delhi
New Delhi, India 110016
Tel: 667863

The Sri Aurobindo Education Society of the Delhi Ashram announces its annual pilgrimage to the Himalayas. The trip leaves by bus from New Delhi on August 29th and goes to Mussouri, Jamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, Tungnath, Badrinath, and the Valley of the Flowers. It returns to New Delhi by September 14th, 1987.

This trip is organized by the "Sri Aurobindo Education Society" for people with a devotional bent of mind, so as to be able to take this arduous trip in a spirit of harmony and camaraderie with like minded people. The group is select and safe. The day to day program is subject to modification.

A few youngsters are planning to trek to the Valley of Flowers which is an arduous trek. Those who wish to join them may do so, whilst the others will get an opportunity to spend two extra days (day 13 & 14) at Badrinath.

The special feature of the pilgrimage will be that we shall put aside some time daily for remembering Sri Aurobindo and The Mother and offering our prayers while our steps ascend towards the land of the Gods. A Sadhak of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy will be with us throughout to answer questions and lead us towards a deeper understanding of the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.

The idea behind these trips is to provide an opportunity to our people to see something of the beauty of the great Himalayan region and trans-Himalayan zone. Besides, this program offers opportunities of camp life and group activities and a test of one's physical and mental energies. The trip should be taken in a spirit of comradeship. Everyone will be expected to abide by the leader's decisions.

While traveling one has to adopt a different attitude to life, adjusting oneself to circumstances and facing hardships boldly. These challenges boost your self confidence and leave a lasting sense of achievement which you can look back upon with sweet remembrance.

Only those persons who feel up to such a challenge should give their names. In most places we shall be staying in Tourist Rent Houses which are fairly comfortable. Since the program is very hectic, we shall have to eat out most of the time. The Tourist Rent Houses where we shall stay will have dining facilities at nominal charges. Participants will have to be mentally prepared to eat at wayside restaurants (Dhabas) whenever necessary.

For a complete agenda and travel information contact the Sri Aurobindo Education Society at the New Delhi Ashram.

Divine Life Center
1326 33rd Street
Sacramento, California 95816

The Divine Life Center has been revived at the home of Dave Hutchinson. The Center has a lending library of books by Sri Aurobindo and Mother as well as books for sale. There are weekly meditations and a study group. The center is working on a land trust, hoping to find property somewhere in the West for use by devotees of Mother and Sir Aurobindo.

The East-West Center prints up a monthly program. If you would like to know about their special programs call or write and be put on the mailing list. The Center sponsors classes in Hindi, Sanskrit, Punjabi, Hatha Yoga, Psycho-neuroimmunology, and Dance Relaxation. Every Thursday from 8 to 9 pm there is Satsang of readings from the works of Sri Aurobindo and Mother with music and mantra meditation at the end of the evening. On Saturday afternoon in the library from 2 to 4 pm a Spiritual Inquiry group meets to study the teachings and practice of Sri Aurobindo's yoga. Special events are often hosted on Sunday afternoons. During April the center sponsored the following events:

The Creative and Luminous Self: The Impulse of Supreme Importance

A talk by Dr. Alba Losey who is a contemporary fine artist. Her works emerge from the soul and spirit, the essence of creativity which is Truth, Beauty, and Charity, and will be exhibited in Paris and Madrid.

Darshan Day Celebration

This program acknowledged Mother's return to Sri Aurobindo's Ashram in 1920. The program opened with readings, talks, poems, and songs. Poonam Hohan performed a classical Kuchipudi dance. Ramesh Pandey presented his two mime acts; *A Man's Search For Himself* and *My Body Is Mud*.

Because the Center is seeking a new location in West Los Angeles, April was the last month for special programs. The Center's library is open for reading and research every week day from 1 to 6 pm. Books, incense, handmade paper, and stationery are sold at the Center as well.

Merriam Hill Center
2067 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02140
(617) 354-3431

On Friday, June 28th, Coolidge House in Greenville, NH, hosted a full moon concert of Carnatic music by David Reck (vina), Gordon Korstange (flute), and Vasanthi (vocal). The concert and preceding pot-luck dinner were attended by about 30 people.

On August 7-9, at Coolidge House, Savitra (Alan Lithman), an 18-year resident of Auroville, will present a workshop entitled "The Experience of Auroville: An Evolutionary Perspective." The workshop will explore "the lessons (that) . . . Auroville can share with those of us facing the growing density of evolutionary crises. . . using Auroville's actual experiences as reference points—from the reforestation of a million trees to the creation of a computer production unit, from its schools to its decision-making process." To register, call the Cambridge office.

Willow Gold Farm
Route 3
Spring Green, WI 53588

Willow Gold Farm community continues to host its monthly Mother's meditation group. Friends and visitors gather at the

community for readings of spiritual works and a meditation which focuses on the Mother. A different member of the group prepares the program each time and they close with a potluck and personal sharing.

With Spring the flow of visitors has begun. Julian Lines and Elise Gold from High Falls, New York, Joel Goodman from California, Mordechi Neihima and their children from Canada, and Bo and Worthy from Michigan have all visited the farm during May and June.

Brian Walton and Paula Murphy will represent the community at the AUM in California. They have designed an audio-visual meditation program to present at the meeting.

**Global Views
Willow Gold Farm
Route 3
Spring Green, WI 53588**

The second festival season at Willow Gold Farm began in May. These cultural celebrations of music, dance, storytelling, food, and audiovisual presentations bring the daily life of Asian countries to people in the U.S. Through their retail shop, Global View strives to create an appreciation for the traditional life styles which are so closely tied to the production of quality handicrafts. This educational non-profit organization also sponsors cultural programs and Asian tours. If you would like more information contact Global Views and, if you happen to be traveling through Wisconsin, we highly recommend a visit to the retail shop at Willow Gold Farm.

1987 Festival Schedule

May 23-24: Indonesian Excellence

June 13-14: Festival of Costumes and Textiles

July 11-12: Celebration of Thailand

August 8-9: Festival of India

September 5-6: Our Global Family

October 3-5: Himalayan Holiday

Events run 10 am to 6 pm daily and admission is free.

For details call (608) 583-5311.

**Auroville International USA
PO Box 162489, 3112 'O' Street, Suite 13
Sacramento, California 95816
(916) 452-4013**

AVI-USA has been concentrating on the coordination of the 1987 All USA Meeting to be held July 21-24 at the Monte Toyon retreat center near Aptos, CA. What follows is the scheduled agenda for AUM:

Agenda

**Auroville International/All-USA Meeting
July 21-24, 1987**

This is a schedule for planned activities. It was arranged so that there will be a balance between working groups, discussions, meditations, and free time. Attendance at any given activity is not compulsory, yet certain group times, such as the Introduction on Tuesday evening, the 10:30 am meditations, and the group sharing and discussion Thursday evening should create a collectivity at the Conference. We urge everyone to take part in these. They are marked with an * in the Agenda.

- Tuesday, July 21**
- 2:00 pm Arrive and register. Breathe the air; say hello.
 - 4:30 pm Hatha Yoga.
 - 6:00 pm Dinner.
 - *7:30 pm Music, meditation, and intro to AUM. Outline of next 3 days. Orientation to Monte Toyon facilities.
 - 8:30 pm Brief intro to major Sri Aurobindo/Auroville affiliated centers in the USA.
 - *9:30 pm Creative play.

Wednesday, July 22

- 6:30 am Meditation or Savitri reading (choice).
- 7:30 am Breakfast.
- 9:00 am Small groups (see below). More than you think—and many alternatives!
- *10:30 am Group meditation (with Savitri, music).
- 11:15 am Small groups (see below).
- 12:30 pm Lunch.
- 1:30—
- 5:50 pm Open time. Several informal activities: short talks and discussions on yoga, consciousness, health, etc. Also planned trips to beach, hikes in woods.
- 4:30 pm Hatha Yoga or Tai Chi (choice). Guided.
- 5:30 pm Meditation or Savitri reading (choice).
- 6:00 pm Dinner. Informal music/dance following.
- 7:30 pm Panel discussion by several American sadhaks of long standing on "Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, and the Triune Path."
- 9:00 pm Matrimandir slide/video presentation.

Thursday, July 23

- 6:30 am—
- 12:30 pm Same as Wednesday schedule.
- 2:00—
- 5:00 pm Auroville International Meeting. Alternate is Open time (see Wednesday).
- 6:00 pm Dinner. Informal music/dance following.
- *7:30 pm General sharing around the bonfire. Who you are, who we are, what it's all about, how did we get here anyway?

Friday, July 24

- 6:30 am Meditation or Savitri reading (choice).
- 7:30 am Breakfast.
- 9:00 am Tea with friends, various locales. How was it?
- *10:30 am Ending meditation, with reading and music. Quiet time.
- 11:30 am Lunch. Breathe, say goodbye. Thanks for coming.

Small Groups

- A) Working groups chaired by a person already involved in that specific area. Topics and outlines will be available at the beginning of the Conference.
- B) Workshops on matters such as healing, study circles (how to), meditation techniques.
- C) Resource meetings, to bring together people with special talents (fundraising, legalities) as future resources for working groups.
- D) Slide presentations.
- E) Unworking ungroups.