



Collaboration

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Vol. IX No. 2



WEST COAST MEETING: JUGHANDLE CREEKFARM

FRONT ROW: L to R, Mary Alexander Holding Iyoti, Shyama Zelnick Holding Amrit, Sunora Skye, Madeline Shaw, June Maher, Lucy Barbera, Julian Lines Holding Alexander; **SECOND ROW:** Satyavan Alexander, Nandini Gray, Jocelyn Gray, Ardis Walton, Navaja Llope, **BACK ROW:** Steven Walton, Stan Alexander, Chris Gray, Jack Alexander, Taddy Neogy, Maria Gray.

In the last issue of *Collaboration* we asked our readers to send us material. This issue is in large measure the result of one person's thoughtful response to that request. Rani Turner's interview with a young Aurovilian who now lives in the U.S. inspired the series of interviews with young people that are included in this issue. We are hoping that these will inspire some of you to go forth and do likewise.

But, do not confine your imagination to interviews with

young people—interesting as these are. We would, for instance, also be interested in interviews with adults: how we lead our lives integrating or not what we know of Sri Aurobindo and Mother's teachings, our successes and failures, dreams and ambitions, beautiful moments and daily struggles.

Beyond the interview we want your contributions of stories, sketches, poems, articles. We solicit your best efforts

and will consider all for publication. There is also a new Letters to the Editors section for your thoughtful comments and criticisms.

Virtually all of the photos that appear here were taken by Julian Lines. We thank him for so generously giving his talent and time, as well as the prints: A special thanks also to those who conducted the interviews with young people: Lucy Barbara, Jeanne Korstange, Navaja Llope and Rani Turner.

*Gordon Korstange,
Jeanne Korstange,
Navaja Llope,
Margo MacLeod*



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BECAUSE YOU ARE

Because you are a delicate
cathedral in construction
faery spires exploring space
to find that sphere in which
all in you is a spire

I love you, Child of my fire

Because you are a fiercely pure
determined mason of your soul
wielding a trowel of trust for concrete
buttress to ensure its thrusting
whole into the infinite

I love you, Child of my soul

Because you have not turned away
the gargoyles of your past who long
for light, but with humility
give cornice room where doves
in sanctuary find their peace

I love you, Child of my loves

Because you dare to build in Time
the Timeless substance of your Self
transforming stubborn stone to pinnacles
of beauty, in your life's nave apart
to kneel for truth alone

I love you, Child of my heart

Now causeless and to silence hushed
before the Architect and arch
of vision seen through your rose
windowed sight disclosing
all the colours of Eternity

I love you, Child of the Light.

— *Syrl Schochen*
Boulder, Colorado

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CONNECTIONS EAST AND WEST

THE WEST

THE MEETING

From February 25th to the 28th, a diverse group of adults and children who had lived in Auroville and the ashram gathered at Jughandle Creek in Mendocino, California. The meeting was held on the occasion of Auroville's birthday. It was an outgrowth of the meetings which have been held during the past nine months on the East coast.

"It is not the end! It is another beginning!" So it was expressed by some who had struggled, as we all have, in these intervening years, struggled with the seeming failures, the seesaw of confidence and doubt, coping with new circumstances, new phases expressed in real and unreal ways—the failure of ourselves to live the ideal, the doubts that perhaps the ideal could not be lived yet. The anguish of leaving our spiritual home, the seeming necessities of having to leave, the myriad irreconcilables . . . and the desert of those long, long years of change in connecting with the new environments, to somehow get established, find a niche for ourselves, the efforts to gain a foothold . . . and to continue on the path . . . many, many are feeling the need to share and be together.

Jocelyn and Chris Gray, along with Mary and Jack Alexander organized this meeting, and due to their work brought together people from all over the States.

Who would have thought, who could have imagined so many of us would be back in the States?! And now, sitting together around this wonderful kitchen table in the warm old farmhouse, so friendly in feeling, two large stoves manned by Chris and Jack turning out flapjacks endlessly, drying our clothes soaked by the drenching rains over the wood burning stove, sipping tea and some smoking acrid beedies from India, the transplanted sounds of Jack and Taddy speaking Tamil, with its familiar inflections bringing dear and not-so-dear memories of our lives in South India . . . most especially the feelings of a cherished fellowship, the spiritual grace and Touch of the Mother pervading . . .

Jughandle Creek Farm, which is a nature preserve overlooking the Pacific Ocean, includes creek canyons, beach and tidepools, redwoods, and pygmy forests. It provided a marvelous setting for this gathering of individuals who all had the common bond of Sri Aurobindo and Mother.

And the wonderment of the variety of us, many who may not have known one another well in India, but truly, after the long separation of changes in our lives, how clearly the profundities of Mother's Touch is perceived . . . like the "haut-relief" of Her sculpture of humanity . . . the intense sharing of experiences since, and times there . . . the marvel of seeing the children, awkward at first with the shyness of not remembering their old friends in new-grown bodies, especially with all those expectant adults standing around, saying, "remember?, remember?!" . . . gradual relaxation into shared memories and ensuing peals of laughter, Monopoly and more Monopoly. From the first evening when everyone seemed to arrive at the same moment, and we peered at one another through the softness of a moist and misty dusk, the great spread of bluffs and sea and breeze and evening held us in deep and loving embrace. Monday morning's parting found a special sense of community, conversation had been

free flowing, and ages and years had blended. The element of rain had been an integral part of the atmosphere. (Sri Aurobindo defines it as the descent of Grace or of the higher consciousness, which is the cause of riches, the spiritual plenty.) How it gave beauty that weekend! With the deluge we would be inside, sharing, and when the clouds parted to the sun, with wisps of mist and many rainbows ("sign of Peace and deliverance") so silently present, we would troop out to explore or work for the farm.

As the trials of life in America were expressed, needs and future goals grew. People came to the understanding that resources could be pooled, and talk of commitment to a common enterprise took shape. Practical or professional skills and knowledge can be utilized in creating a physical focus for the group. This includes exploring business possibilities as well as making a master computer list of addresses of Ashram/Auroville returnees living in America.

At the end of these three days everyone came to feel a common aspiration for a community place, and possibilities began to be explored. Plans were made to meet again. If you wish to participate, contact Jocelyn and Chris Gray, 2341 Parker Street, Berkeley, CA 94704 or Mary and Jack Alexander, 411 Nineteenth Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.



Maria Gray, Sunora Skye, Taddy Neogy

Because of my interest in education and community, I looked forward to attending the gathering of Auroville and Ashram friends on our trip to California. Here was my chance to meet people who could tell me more about what the actual process of growing up in community such as Auroville is like.

"What is unique, what is the same, what will my own son experience there that he could not experience anywhere else?" With these questions in mind I interviewed Taddy, Maria, and Sunny.

In Taddy, I found a coherence and thoughtfulness on the issues of education and community. In Maria, there was a lucidity and spirit of love of learning that to me is the essence of education. In Sunny's recollections, I felt a real sense of the sun and sky and air of Auroville.

I feel grateful to have met them all and would like to share a little of them with you.

Taddy Neogy was born in Africa and lived there until he was three. He lived in the Ashram from 1965 to 1969. Then in Auroville from 1969 until last year. He currently lives in Santa Cruz, California.

— Lucy Barbara

Lucy: Did you go to the Ashram School?

Taddy: Yes.

Lucy: What was it like there?

Taddy: Very disciplinarian, a lot of teachers had a very dogmatic approach to the whole way of going about education. They were very good people and very good teachers. They had something to give. It definitely was something special. I think after the Auroville School, I can't see it in the same context. The Auroville School was much different. I don't know if you have any idea what it was like.

L: Tell me, because it would be good to know how you felt about it as it was happening and how you feel about it now.

T: What school we had at that point was run by Ashram people. So in a sense a lot of what we learned and believed in was carried over, as well as trying to incorporate a different approach and a different . . . I am not looking for difficult words because it doesn't help; a different attitude fundamentally.

Mother said this (A.V.) school is in no way going to parallel this other one; they are both different experiments, and she wouldn't guarantee success or failure. It was a "free school" in the sense that you had some things you were required to study, but you could choose. It was very flexible in that sense. The teachers were very into what they were doing. They were learning at the same time. It wasn't like, "We're here to teach you something." That always changes the whole perspective. It broadens the thing when you are learning with someone else as opposed to them teaching you. Actually, it was very sad when they decided to close it down.

L: Why did they do that?

T: They said, "Oh, we don't need a school." Since then there actually hasn't been a school. As far as I'm concerned, education is one of the most important things in Auroville.

L: You said it was "sad." Did the other children and young adults who were going to school feel that way, too?

T: Well, initially we were very pleased. We said, "Great, now we can just do nothing." After doing nothing for six months, we ended up being very frustrated, and losing the ability to focus and direct energy and concentrate to follow something through. That is something you learn in school by the regularity of it. Doing things because they have to be done and you want to have them done. For the last four years or so that hasn't been available.

They tried an alternative method which was to have people come and offer to teach a subject and you go to their home. That just didn't work out because there was not enough concentrated energy in one area where everyone is together concentrating. That makes it much easier.

So then we had an All-Auroville All-Children meeting and we all came together and talked about it. They asked us what we wanted to do and we all said we wanted to go back to the old school. The "old school," they used those words. The grownups didn't want it. They said they had to try something different.

L: Was the building still there?

T: Oh yes, they made it into a guest house. So, in a sense it's limbo for a particular age group. They feel very lost, because the kindergarten up to Junior High is there and that's fine and they're very happy. But the group from fifteen and older at this point needs something to hold onto. I

would not say direction, but they need something coherent, something that is functioning already. They need a setup that they can work with as opposed to making their own setup.

It's just that however independent children seem, they need something that that they can hold onto and use as a rail or guide.

L: Very well put.

T: It's very nice to have that other side come out, that whole psychic awareness, that whole openness in sense and a receptivity. It's very beautiful and important. But that's not all, that's part of it.

L: Did any of the children or young adults feel the way the parents felt, that actually you didn't need a school or were most feeling like you do?

T: That is very hard to answer because everyone has a different idea about what school is. You go to school your whole life.

L: But the majority wanted a central place where everyone could come?

T: Oh yes, for sure.

L: That's what I was interested in. I assumed that, but I wanted to make sure.

T: Yes, they wanted one concentrated area where they could all go.

L: Were all the parents against this or just a few?

T: It's never the parents in Auroville, it's always someone else who feels that, "Oh, the Mother would want it another way." Usually the parents were for whatever the kids wanted. There are a lot more people who are without children who were very active in rallying and so forth. The parents were being parents and busy doing that and other things. The attitudes toward schools and education were so varied. Everyone had a totally different opinion.

I feel that there is a very big area that definitely needs a concentrated energy to sustain it and keep it going.

L: What is the situation now?

T: At the moment there is kindergarten and junior high school, without grades, of course, we never had grades. There was no grading whatsoever. You went by your ability and interest.

There is a large group of children who don't have the initiative to follow something through. At the same time, they are looking for something and would like to be involved.

L: Meaning a structure within which to work?

T: Yes. And there have been experiments where they had kids run a company or this or that and that's fine, but it gets very monotonous. Once they learn from the experience and get something out of it, they don't want to sit in an office and fill out vouchers.

I see Auroville in a much different context than many people who work for it or with it do. I believe that the stage that it is at now is a small part of the total picture. At the moment it is struggling with water and land and very mundane day to day work.

In my picture, the whole spectrum of life would be there. culture will be one of the mainstays, one of the most important things. It will give an opportunity for the rest of the world, and within India itself, to have some type of interchange. I see all the arts and crafts as having a very, very important place in Auroville, and being very significant. We have gone through various phases. The first ten years was a phase of settling in and drilling wells and setting up

an infrastructure. now I see a new role and phase which encompasses much more.

L: It seems so appropriate that you, as the second generation, are thinking about the next stage or step for Auroville.

T: I think the priorities are coming up now, are pointing strongly toward education, culture and more than anything else, an exchange; a give and take as opposed to focusing on just Auroville. Now Auroville can start reaching out and giving and have a real exchange on a much bigger level than it has. I think it is vital for Auroville to survive, for it to grow and for its consciousness to grow wider.

L: What are you doing now, Taddy? Are you interested in attending school in the United States?

T: What I came to do and am trying to do at this time is to study instrument building, particularly guitar. I found two people who are totally into what they are doing, their work building and repairing guitars is Zen. It is so beautiful to work with them. That's what I have been doing for the last two months. I pay them to be an apprentice.

L: Do you plan to stay in the States or would you like to return to Auroville?

T: To return. Absolutely. I had a desire to study and create and to be in an environment that strove for perfection that I didn't have in Auroville because so much was put into survival. What I see as a realistic possibility is to study something and bring it there, and have it as part of the exchange that I was talking about. When they have the Bharat Nivas together, (that's the cultural pavilion of India), I can envisage all types of crafts and incredible interchange.

L: It must be quite a change to get used to, being here, even though you've been here six months now.

T: I never felt that I left Auroville in the sense that I don't think of Auroville as being there. I talk to other people who have left and they really miss it. I don't miss it at all, I feel as if a part of me never left.

America is very different. It's a place where if you have something you want to do and you are clear and focused on it, you can follow it through. Things work here. The current stays on and the water comes out of the tap. There is so much that you just don't have to deal with. You can really move.

So much is hung up in Auroville because of something else ("Because of this, we can't do that.") We wanted to set up a music studio, but could not do it, not from a lack of people to run it, but because there is never any current.

L: Yet there has been so much progress.

T: It has been totally transformed. When I moved there, there were no roads, no trees at all, no water, no people. All the villagers had to go for miles to get their water. On a physical level the changes have been dramatic. The environment is such that any change is a big one.

Everyone seems to come and work through Auroville in their own way, with their own visions. I think it is one of the most important things about Auroville. Everyone has his own vision of Auroville and they're all equally valid. It's all-inclusive. As long as it can stay that way, it will grow.



MARIA GRAY

Maria Gray was born in Spain. She was four years old when she came to live in Auroville and left when she was nine. She is now seventeen and lives in San Francisco, California.

Lucy: What was your main focus in Auroville?

Maria: Playing. I remember talking to my mother and saying, "I am sure I went to school all the time in Auroville because I love school so much now."

She started laughing and said that when something would start, I would go for the first couple of days and afterwards would just forget it and go playing.

I remember playing in the canyons. They were beautiful. There were rocks and caves, too; it was fun. And going to the beach. It was so shallow and good for swimming.

Five years is a short time. I feel like I was in Auroville much longer.

Lucy: In terms of years it was short, but in terms of experience, it was a great wealth.

Maria: Yes, exactly.

L: When you left Auroville, did you feel it as time for a change, or was it just because your mom decided to leave that you left?

M: I don't think at that particular time I, personally, would have said or thought I needed a change. I was having fun. The way I remember it, I did not mind leaving. So maybe I was ready to leave. Maybe I did want something else. I knew when I got to the States it was so different. It was another process.

L: What was the biggest difference you had to come to terms with?

M: I think the attitudes of the other kids. There wasn't any animosity among the kids in India; here there is so much. I think that's the biggest difference. The whole attitude about living, the people here are so high-strung, working so hard.

I feel so lucky to have been able to travel, because I not only lived in India, but I traveled around Europe.

I feel that I know more than the kids here. I feel like I can understand more.

Another thing is, I feel that the kids in the States just look like [puts her hands to the sides of her eyes].

L: With blinders?

M: Yes, exactly. I can relate to the world and I know other people and I know different cultures. I can understand different things that happen. Sometimes it's sad for me to see the kinds of things kids think about and the things they do. And I think, "If only they had been able to do some of the things I had a chance to do."

L: It would give them a broader view.

M: Exactly, to just know what's out there.

L: What kinds of things do they do to make you feel sad about them?

M: All the prejudices they have. It is so horrible to see kids Nandini's age, eleven or twelve, put each other down so much.

L: I didn't hear any of that this weekend.

M: No, not here.

L: As a teacher, I've found it to be a difficult problem to solve.

M: I see people on the bus and young kids always calling each other bad names, and I wonder why.

L: What do you think?

M: Insecurities and narrowness. A lot of them don't really know that they are just following a pattern. Kids follow other kids, and kids follow the patterns their parents set. They don't realize what they are doing to each other by putting each other down so much.

Another thing I find is pressure. Everyone is doing so much. They're trying to do so much. They try to do everything at once. Other kids just do nothing. Maybe they reject the whole thing. I don't know if they're bored. They don't think they're bored, but if they could travel, they'd know that they were bored and they really had nothing to do and nothing to think about.

Another thing I found is that most of the kids at school are not there to learn. They are there because they have to be there. They don't know what an advantage it is to be able to have such good schools. The teachers also make me mad. Seventy-five per cent of the teachers do not know how to teach. That is another thing that discourages students a lot. People say it doesn't matter about the teachers, that if you're motivated, you'll learn. Many students are not motivated and they need good teachers.

L: You want someone you can respect.

M: Exactly, and you know that they're teaching you something significant and that you will learn and the class will be made interesting at the same time. People don't seem to think about the people that they hire to teach, about what the teachers can give their students, and for me that would be significant.

Four years ago when Proposition Thirteen came up and they cut school funds, it was disappointing because school is so important.

L: What is your main interest in school?

M: There are so many things. One thing I found out this year is that I thought that I would like science a lot, especially chemistry. Now I don't like it very much which disappoints me. The way it was presented worked for some people. For me, I think more lab science would have been helpful, more time experimenting and working with elements instead of just learning them and trying to think in your head about what happens when you combine them.

I took a semester of chemistry and I decided if I wanted to continue, I would take the course over again. I don't feel I learned the material as well as I would need to go on. A lot of people who did not learn the material well enough did not care. It did not matter to them. They went on just to pass the course just to get into college.

I am taking a physical science class, and the teacher is concentrating on astronomy. The class is fun, so I am interested in it and I like it.

L: How do the spiritual aspects of living in a place like

Auroville translate into living in the States?

M: I received something really very, very special from Mother that I'll always have with me. That is, it is so special and I don't know what I would do if I hadn't met Her. I know I would have survived; I think I'm the type of person who would be able to survive. But I was so lucky to have met Her. When I first came to the States, I thought of Her a lot and prayed to Her a lot, and talked to Her a lot. I still do; not as much, just every once in a while. I feel like it doesn't matter because I have Her inside me and I feel like She is watching over me and is with me.

I don't understand the types of religion that happen here. I don't like it at all when someone from India comes. I am not sure what they're called . . .

L: Gurus?

M: Gurus, and I don't like the scenes of the people. I remember my mother took me to one and I didn't like it at all. We were in a big room and everyone was kneeling. Maybe I did not know what was going on; I just don't like those kinds of scenes. I don't like going to church.

L: It is really different from your experiences.

M: A lot of people rely on religion too much and they don't do much for themselves. I learned about myself. I got something special because Mother made you work with yourself and learn about yourself.

Here, they pray to whatever God they want and they are not finding out about themselves, I don't think. They are not concentrating on themselves, which, for me, is the most important thing. To know yourself, to concentrate on yourself, and to believe in yourself, from that I think you can help other people and help yourself. It's very important. I don't know if I am right, but that's the way I feel.

L: Do you plan on going back to Auroville?

M: Yes. I don't plan on living in the States. I plan on traveling much more. I might want to study in Europe.



SUNNY SKYE

Sunaura (Sunny) Skye was born in Auroville and lived there until she was two and-a-half, then visited often. She has lived there six out of her ten years. She currently lives in Santa Cruz, California.

Lucy: You said that Mother gave you your name. Do you remember that?

Sunny: I was a little baby and my mom went to Mother and asked Her what my name should be and She told her. She also gave my sister her name. She also gave my brother his name even though he was not born yet.

Lucy: It must feel special to you to have been named by the Mother.

Sunny: Yes, except it seems strange to a lot of people.
L: What seems strange?
S: Usually they have names like "Sue."
L: Do you explain how you got your name?
S: Once I tried to explain to people at my old school, but there was this really ratty girl and she didn't believe me. She thought I was lying.
L: What do you remember about living in Auroville?
S: The furthest back that I can remember is my sister and I would run out without any clothes and climb trees, and sometimes we would sneak away and go into town.

I remember once when I was about two years old, my friends and I were sitting around in a circle in this hut. All of the sudden it started to collapse. No one really got hurt, but I was on the bottom, so I got pretty scraped up and had a big scratch on my face.

L: Everyone fell on top of you?
S: Yes, my mom was pregnant with my brother then, so she couldn't run fast.

I remember how we used to swim in this little swimming pool. It was deep and it had a shower. I remember when we were all riding bikes. I had just got a new bike, so we all had bikes. There was this little teeny hill that kind of went like this [indicates sloping around and down]. I was afraid to go down, so my sister went down. I could have walked my bike down easily, but I was too afraid. I did not want to go down. A bus came by and I put my bicycle on the back and I got on and the bus driver let me ride for free and I went home. That was the first time I ever went on a bus by myself. I was really proud of myself.

L: What are the best parts about living in Auroville that a child here would not experience?

S: Well, here it's kind of like living in jail. You can't just run around. There are lots of houses everywhere. There, there is so much land and you can go where you want. I also liked the Center where they have a kitchen that we all share. I even got up early to go there.

L: You like it because it's for everyone?

S: Yes, and for free, too!

L: So you had a lot of freedom in Auroville.

S: Yes, I could say, "Mom, I won't be home right after school today," and she wouldn't worry about me. I could stay out five hours and go and do what I want.

L: Why wouldn't she worry?

S: Well, in Auroville, I knew the whole place all around, so she would not worry.

L: What seems better for you here in the States?

Long pause . . .

S: I could do without all the noise in Pondy.

I remember these two beggars. Every time we used to go to town every other week to get food, these two sisters would come up to us and beg from us. Once we gave them a dollar and they came back because it had a hole in it, so they did not want it.

I saw this beggar and I asked my mom if I could have some money for him. He had a nice big smile and he was in a cast and he wasn't even begging for money. He just had a bowl in his hand for money.

L: If you had your choice, where would you live?

S: I would live half my life in India and half here. One thing is, I don't have as many friends in Auroville. There are seven kids, and two of them I don't like.

L: Kids your own age?

S: Yes, big kids like ten, nine and eight.

L: Did you like school there?

S: I liked the cottage instead of brick or cement walls. There were no grades because we hadn't gotten to build a big enough school. Shyama says she wants to get a million dollars and build a great school in India. I wish that would happen.

L: In cottages, with grades?

S: Yes.

L: You like the idea of grades?

S: When you're with different level kids, some are more ready and some are not. Sometimes there are advantages, but sometimes you work on something more than you need to because the younger ones don't understand. Sometimes you rush too much, because bigger kids are tired and you have to catch up. I want to feel that we're even.

L: Well, that makes sense. You want to be on the same level as the kids you're learning with.

S: Yes. I wish most of my friends here would be there. Then I would always want to be there, because I like living in Auroville much more.

L: Thanks for talking with me. Those are all the questions I had in mind, but if you have anything else you would like to say, I'd love to hear it.

S: Well, one thing I really like are the dirt roads. I like how they have carts instead of cars.

L: Did you like going to meditation?

S: I have gone up to Mother's room. There are lots of squirrels up there, it's really neat. And all the beautiful flowers, when you bend down, it smells so good — oh I love it!



SATCHI ALEXANDER

At the February weekend at Jughandle Creek, California Navaja Llope interviewed Satyavan Alexander who is now eleven years old. He lived in Auroville from age 1 to age 6.

Navaja: Well here we are at Jughandle Creek with lots of people from Auroville and Pondicherry. How was it for you when we all arrived and met again? Did you remember people?

Satyavan: I remembered Taddy. He used to have snakes in his room when I was in Auroville but he's a lot different now.

Navaja: What about Maria and Sunny? They were there when you were.

Satyavan: Yea, but I didn't really remember them. I kind of knew who they were not by remembering them but by people talking about them. I remember certain things. Like I might remember their face and name but not have put them together. I remembered a lot of stuff over this weekend. Like sometimes I just sat down and tried to think about stuff. Like certain things. Who lived where. The location of different things. I remembered more stuff over the weekend than I had before.

N: I noticed that you really sit down and pay attention inside. Have you always been able to do that?

S: Yes. I like to listen and get information. If I have forgotten something, then when they talk about it, it comes back to me.

N: How does it make you feel to come back to what you have forgotten?

S: You might have forgotten something you liked a lot. Like I remember that person now and might not have remembered before this weekend. This weekend is like remembering how it was when I was little. I was listening when they interviewed Sunora. She talked about the pool that they had out in the nursery which I had forgotten. It has a little side part that had steps which came out of the water. That's when I started remembering all this stuff. I remember Mitra and I playing by the pool. We were chasing remembered Mitra and I playing by the pool. We were chasing each other and he fell in the pool. I remembered that and then one memory clicks another . . . I then remembered playing tag with Renu one day. There were a lot of puddles they were full of water and I was running along and I fell into one. They had a lot of pits around the place that I kept falling into. I remember this pit they had just dug for burying trash. I was over by it with a friend. We were looking over the edge and I was throwing rocks into it and one of the sides broke and I fell in there. I was in there for maybe an hour trying to climb up the sides. It was about 10 feet high and I wasn't that big. I was scared because I didn't want to stay in there. When I got out I was pretty happy and went home.

N: How old were you when you came back from America?

S: I had just turned 6. I had my first birthday in India and I went to see the Mother.

N: When you came back from India to America what did you feel like?

S: I thought it was pretty neat. I liked TV a lot. I saw TV in Madras but I couldn't keep up with what they were saying in Tamil.

N: How did you find the kids here?

S: I didn't meet anyone when we first came back because it was August and school hadn't started yet. I just stayed in the house and watched TV. When School started I remember the first day I had to put my name on my cubby. I didn't know how to spell my whole name so I just put Satchi because my grandmother called me that. Ever since then I have been going by that. Right when I got back they had a birthday party for me—they took us to Disneyland. I remember getting tennis shoes in India just before we came back. I had them until second grade when I got some new shoes. I went right into first grade when I came back. I had a big adjustment to make because of the amount of work. It was demanding. They should have put me in kindergarten first so I could have just played for a while. It really wasn't until fourth grade that they realized what an adjustment I had to make. Now I'm fine—I'm reading at ninth grade level. I don't like being behind.

I didn't really know how to communicate. I didn't start talking on the phone until I was 8 or 9. As long as I could avoid it I wouldn't talk on the phone.

N: What would you like to do the most?

S: You mean if I could do anything?

N: Yes.

S: Probably go back to Auroville. My thinking of it this weekend made me want to see what changes had happened,

new people that came. It'd be pretty nice to have a vacation like that. Sometimes I just get fed up with school.

N: It sounds like school has been a big adjustment for you.

S: I've moved around a lot. I've been to 7 different schools. I don't find many kids at school who have moved around as much as I have. Most kids I know haven't even left the city where they are now. They grew up drinking kool aid and watching TV. We didn't really have a TV until I moved to Kansas. Then I liked to watch cartoons on TV. Then I could talk to the kids at school about the show on TV. I fit in a little bit better then.

N: What is the most important thing to you?

S: That's a pretty hard question. I guess the most important thing for me right now is to get established around here. Find something to hold onto. Get roots. Get a friend. Know the area and the streets. Just this past week I sorta wanted to call up my friend in Wichita, but he likes to talk on the phone. He might talk for a couple of hours and that would get pretty expensive here.

N: You spend a lot of time taking care of your sister Jyoti, don't you?

S: It kind of made me more responsible. Like having to watch for her. Taking care of her when my parents have to work. It's more difficult now than when she was a baby. She likes to get into stuff now.



YOUNG AUROVILIAN FUND

The Auroville Association (P.O. Box 2780, Santa Cruz, CA 95062-2780) has started a special fund to aid young Aurovilians who want to come to the U.S. for planned study and travel programs. Recently a yard sale for the benefit of this fund was held at June Maher's house in Aptos. She reports, "Rain was forecast—the usual California report these days, but the day was warm and sunny, the kind of weather that makes people glad to part with their money . . . for bargains, of course. The driveway was filled with tables of donated household items, books, gee-gaws, clothes, pictures and lots of potted plants from the garden. Shyama and I started a month ago to transplant and pot herbs, shrubs, and flowers that I had started in the greenhouse. As it turned out we were our own best customers and we ended up with 'new' clothes or found something that we needed. We also sold helium balloons. Lots of people came especially after we posted signs at all the entrances to Aptos pointing them to our house. We ended up with \$180.16, enough to complete another month of study for Taddy and some for the Association. Most of all a lot of fun doing this together."

Taddy is studying guitar-making at Santa Cruz Guitar Co., and would like to continue the six month apprenticeship as he intends to bring this new skill back to Auroville. Tax deductible contributions to help him continue his studies and to assist other young Aurovilians can be sent to the Auroville Association at the above address.



MORE FROM THE WEST COAST



CONNECTIONS EAST AND WEST

THE EAST

THE MEETINGS

Since August 1982, a group of people living in New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut have been gathering together under the name of the East Coast Nexus. The first meeting which was held in August in New York City was a follow-up to the May 30th meeting held at Matagiri and reported in the last issue of *Collaboration*. Julian Lines of Pine Hill, New York organized and hosted this meeting so that David Wickenden and Sally Walton could personally inform people about their travels and the work they had done in America before leaving to go to the Planetary Village Conference at Findhorn. Chris and Jocelyn Grey from California were in New York at that time and attended this meeting much to the surprise and delight of everyone present. The group chose their name, set up a collective fund and made a commitment to gather every six to eight weeks at different locations within the East Coast area.

Jean and Gordon Korstange hosted the second meeting in September at their apartment in Middletown, Connecticut. As a group we explored the possibilities for collective action and reaffirmed our commitment to contribute to the East Coast Nexus and to organising future meetings. The Navaratri festival which is held every year at Wesleyan University was celebrated by all the participants who went to a Bharata Natyam performance and a Saraswati Puja in the World Music Hall on the campus.

Tom O'Brien organised the third meeting in November at Merriam Hill, New Hampshire. This center sponsors the Learning Exchange which is helping the communities of Auroville, Arcosanti and Findhorn to communicate with each other and the world through student exchanges. The old farmhouse and remodeled barn provided enough space and accommodations for the 17 people who attended this gathering. The weekend was spent getting to know each other better, doing some gardening for the center, meeting the people who maintain it, and exploring ideas for collective action.

June Maher, from the Auroville Association in Aptos, California came to the fourth meeting which was held at Merriam Hill in January. Her participation in the group's meeting made the dream of direct communication between people on the East and West coasts a reality. Everyone sensed that it was possible to think of one body of people in America who could work together on building the network of relationships and communication among the people who have lived in Auroville and the Ashram and who are now in America. Peter Calloway, an organizing member of the Merriam Hill Center came from Boston to meet the members of the group on the last day of their weekend stay. In a group discussion on that final day we discussed how to participate in helping children in Auroville who wish to study in America. Both the Learning Exchange and the Auroville Association are involved in doing this by supporting individual students. The East Coast Nexus felt there was enough interest among members to join in this project. At the end of the weekend funds were collected for the Matrimandir and the Learning Exchange Scholarship Fund.

A meeting was held over Easter weekend at Merriam Hill for the purpose of meeting the American students who had visited Auroville from January 9 to March 23 through the Learning Exchange. It was also an opportunity to hear from our own members who had gone to the West Coast gathering in California. Although there were only a few of us present, we felt that the group was really beginning to make connections with others in America. The four students from the Learning Exchange were of special interest to all of the group. They were spending a couple of weeks at Merriam Hill to re-enter into America after their stay in Auroville and travels in India. Debbie, David, Christin and Sue all expressed their appreciation for the opportunity they had to experience a life style they would never find anywhere else. They informed us of the recent events in Auroville and the new steps the community was taking to organise itself. They had news and photographs of our dear friends in Auroville. We were entertained with tales of a sandcastle building contest which Christin organised on the beach, the February 28th birthday party which the community celebrated at Kottakarai with a picnic and swim, and their travels in India to visit Mudanthra, a game preserve in Tamil Nadu, and to the Meenakshi Temple in Madurai.

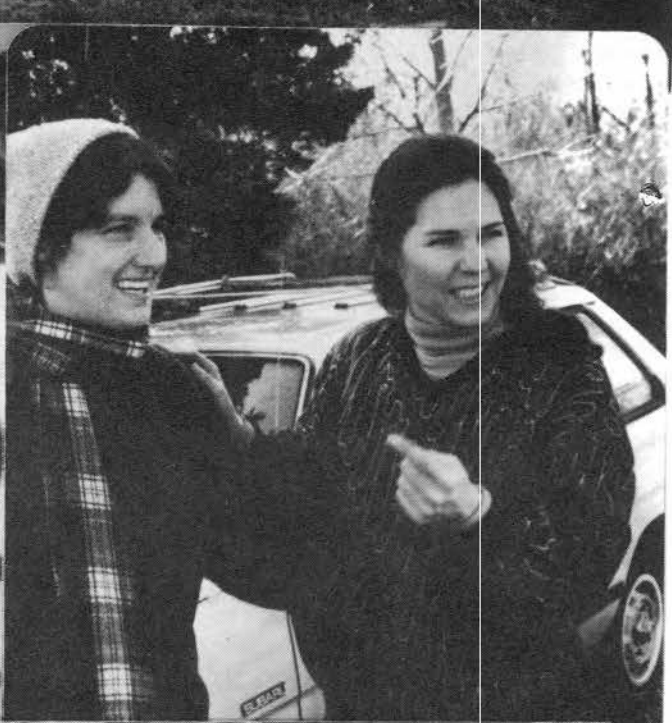
Julian and Lucy shared their experiences of the meeting at Jughandle Creek which brought us in touch with happenings on the West Coast. We also discussed local events for the group and projects which we might be able to take up in the summer months.

SAVITRI

Our Knowledge walks leaning on Error's staff,
A worshipper of false dogmas and false gods,
Or fanatic of a fierce intolerant creed
Or a seeker doubting every truth he finds,
A sceptic facing Light with adamant No
Or chilling the heart with dry ironic smile,
A cynic stamping out the god in man;
A darkness wallows in the paths of Time
Or lifts its giant head to blot the stars;
It makes a cloud of the interpreting mind
And intercepts the oracles of the Sun.
Yet Light is there; it stands at Nature's doors:
It holds a torch to lead the traveller in.
It waits to be kindled in our secret cells;
It is a star lighting an ignorant sea,
A lamp upon our poop piercing the night.
As knowledge grows Light flames up from within:
It is a shining warrior in the mind,
An eagle of dreams in the divining heart,
An armour in the fight, a bow of God.
(Savitri X:3)



EXUS MEETINGS





TANYA ELDER

Tanya Elder is a young woman of eighteen who has been attending school in the United States for the past year, after living for 10 years in Auroville. She has joined her father here in his current residence in the Berkshire Mountains of Western Massachusetts, while her mother Jocelyn, is presently in California. The following interview with her was conducted by Rani Turner, a friend and advocate of Auroville, and Erika Riddington, a young woman residing in South Amherst and attending the ninth grade of high school there. Neither had actually met Tanya before and both thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to do so.

Erika: So all in all, how many different countries have you traveled through?

Tanya: A lot! I was born in Spain, and I lived there until I was 5. Then I moved to Switzerland for a year and that's where my parents split up, and I went with my mother to India. And as we went overland we went through . . . we lived like a month in Italy, a month in Afghanistan, it took about 6 months to get across.

E: Did you go by car?

T: We had a Volkswagen truck. In the daytime it looked like it had seats and at night you folded it out and it became one big bed.

E: Oh, we had one of those.

T: Then I lived in India for 10 years. But I came back twice during the 10 years. I returned once to France and once to Sweden. Once to France for a summer and once to Sweden for a winter.

E: I was in the southern part of France. I stayed two months in Orange, then went to Châtillon in Dauphine. I only stayed in Paris a few days. (laughter)

T: That sounds like my Paris visit. I drove through it one time on my way to England.

E: When you came here, did you feel like an American citizen, or like an immigrant, or someone who's visiting America, or someone who's just going to stay here for a while and then finally go back to . . . wherever?

T: I don't know. In the beginning I felt very, very like I was definitely a visitor and I didn't belong here. I think it was especially because at that time my knowledge of English wasn't as good, (I had just come from a Swedish school) and I made so many mistakes in the English language, I just didn't feel at home. But now after a year, I feel like I can walk around without feeling that I'm wearing the wrong kind of pants . . . and all sorts of small things like that which everyone knows here but I had no idea about. It took a while to learn—everyone was so helpful . . . they didn't tease me too much (laughter), so now I feel like I belong

here more, but I don't think I'll ever really live here. I want to go back to a developing country or third world country, because I've lived there for so long and I know the problems and I feel that people here don't know the problems and it would be much harder for them to go back and work there to help it. Because I've lived there for 10 years in the midst of them, I think I could be more useful there.

Rani: Now when you say in the midst of them do you mean Auroville with its connection to all the rest of the South Indian culture?

T: Auroville . . . all of it. Even in our Swedish school we were exposed to it. There was an old persons' home, and hospitals in the area. We lived . . . I mean most of the time you see it there.

R: What do you see as the problems of the third world, or of a developing country?

T: That's what I'm writing about eight papers on at the moment for English. You had to choose a topic and I said, "The social problems of India: their roots and origins." I've been doing a lot of research, and there are a lot of factors. One is the caste system which degrades a majority of the Indians so they can't get jobs, they can't in any way become anyone. They'll always stay the untouchables. An untouchable is considered so dirty and polluted, nobody is even allowed to walk in his shadow or they'll get polluted and they have to go and take a shower immediately.

E: Is that really true? Really?

T: It is, it happens a lot. It depends in what village it is. If it is a village in which there are very many upper class Brahmins, which is the highest caste you can be, definitely a lot of that goes on. That's one of the problems I was studying.

R: When you say it is one of the problems you were studying, you mean that you are studying now, right?

T: Well yes, I've witnessed it a lot, but right now I am going into depth.

R: That's what I was wondering; these things started with what you observed and experienced there and because of that you are now following them up with research.

T: Right. Another problem is that the educational system is not that good, if it can even be called an educational system. In fact, we got very involved in it at the Swedish school that I went to in India and we did a five day school trip in which our teacher took us on a tour of Indian schools. We went down to the plains and traveled around visiting the school systems. We got to see little schools where first grade through tenth are all together. They don't really learn anything. They sit on the ground and if you learn to recite the book, you've learned it. They never learn to read, they just learn it by heart. And there will be one classroom with three classes, one teaching math, one English, one Hindi. So they'll be screaming at the top of their voices to be heard over the other teachers and the students will be screaming to answer back, the whole thing is very chaotic and not much use.

We also went to some schools for grown ups which gave classes in the evening where they could come after work and learn to read. What I found most important about this was that they came and discussed things together; they would read an article about something they didn't know and then they would sit and discuss and argue and debate.

And finally towards the end of the trip we went to an experimental school that an Englishman had started and he was teaching Indian children from the villages, and it was incredible! With a very good education they became such great people, they could really talk about issues, speak three languages, perfectly, by the age of 15. They were good in art, the girls would take carpentry, the boys would take sewing (that didn't happen in our Swedish school!), they did experiments in chemistry. They became such open individuals, such real people, while with the others in the government schools you couldn't even have a discussion with them.

So, there is a lot to be done there, and I don't know where to begin!

R: So far we have talked about your experiences in Indian culture, or developing country culture, what about Auroville? How do you feel about Auroville, besides of course the political issues. (laughter)

T: Auroville did a lot with the Indians. There were a lot of Indians going to the school in Auroville when there was a sort of school system there, and they were great kids. The only problem was that the parents were so scared they were getting modernized, they married them off at the age of 13. But they all learned English perfectly, they all became, just totally friends, it wasn't like anything different. And in that way Auroville worked very well with the Indians. That was the only place where I went to school, with Indians, and could share their culture. We'd be invited to their houses for the different festivals and you'd sleep over there and eat their Indian foods and then you'd invite them over to your place. That didn't happen at the Swedish school in India that I went to, you were just with Swedes.

R: What was the school in Auroville that you were at?

T: At one point, I had just moved to Auroville, I was about 10. At that point a lot of people had come from the Ashram and were teaching. It was very interesting. It wasn't like you had courses that you had to take, there were just these things offered and you wanted to take them. We had gym every day after school, and there was Sanskrit taught and French taught and English taught and math taught and there was a sort of history and anthropology combined, and ornithology. That lasted for two years I think. Some people said it didn't work, it wasn't a good educational program, (especially my father didn't think it was worth anything) but in my opinion I really liked it and I thought I learned a lot, despite what anyone else says. We had cooking classes and . . .

R: Why did your father think it wasn't worthwhile?

T: I don't know . . . unorganized, kids didn't have to come to school.

E: It wasn't a strict instruction.

T: . . . it wasn't a school, you could come if you wanted and that's what made me really interested, that you could come if you wanted and here were all these opportunities, and these people willing to do it. I really enjoyed it. The thing was that your classroom wasn't a building, your classroom was . . . well, if you took sewing you'd go to the sewing place—that's where all the Indians are doing the embroidery and the weaving in Fraternity. If you wanted to do cooking, you would go to the Aspiration kitchen and they would take you and do cooking with you. And the thing was that you traveled, it wasn't like "This is the school

building."

E: It's like an apprentice program.

T: In that way you got to work with the grown-ups, and with younger students. I like the idea behind that kind of educational system where you learn through interest and actually taking part, not just sitting in a classroom being taught. It's more like you're exploring.

E: I remember a Japanese story I read about a boy who apprentices with a puppet maker. And when I listen to you talk about the schools and everything, it sounds like a storybook. I could imagine living there and that being my life—not just going there for a vacation and doing these activities—but living there, becoming a part. It's very hard. I'd love to have the experience. I'd love to have some kind of machine where you could push a button and you could learn and be with a culture, like be an Indian for a day!

T: That would be great wouldn't it. We need that kind of machine. That's why I feel I'd be able to return to India and do something. That's why it's very hard for someone here to say "Oh I'd like to work in India and help." I mean, first of all, they don't know what they're going to help, and if they haven't studied the problem, or *seen* the problem, with their eyes, then it's very hard to say "well then I'll have to become a teacher to do it." I mean, I don't know what I'll have to do to help, but I do know at least what kind of help they need.

R: It's interesting though, because if you feel that people who have grown up here in this country are almost unable to identify with the cultural context of a developing country, and therefore really haven't got much to offer in terms of help, how is there ever going to be a growth of unity between cultures?

T: They can, they can . . . it's just that no one is made aware of it. At Amherst High there is a group which has just been started that I'm very interested in which is called the Growth and Solidarity Group. This is a group which is to broaden the students' and faculty's minds on issues like racism, sexism, cultural diversity. It started a year ago when someone wrote . . .

E: Oh, I remember, they wrote racist graffiti on a mural celebrating the third world. They wrote something like 'niggers die'. The first time they erased it and painted over it, the second time they just left it as a kind of . . . so people would be aware that this kind of thing is happening in Amherst.

T: They got speakers to come and talk about racism and other issues that students are not usually aware of. I think that's very important to help them be more open to all these different things. So, I'm not saying that people can't do anything, but maybe the first step is actually working here to help make people aware of it.

E: I think your telling me about India would have been a lot harder to comprehend, but . . . my mother has just worked with a Cambodian refugee family that has come to Amherst to stay. When I first saw them, I met them at the plane, and they came with the stuff they wore in Cambodia, with bare feet . . . and this was in the middle of winter. And just before they had come we had seen a movie that showed the refugee camps: wall to wall people, and when you looked at it, it was hard to know, well, that it's real, it isn't just a movie somebody made to be a box office hit, that's a real movie.

T: Just as there has been this growing movement to make people aware about the nuclear freeze, there can be a lot done to make people aware about what's happening across the world. I mean, you *hear* about the famine, but it's really hard to visualize. I mean now I've been here for a year and now I can say well really, what was there? India seems a perfect place. You forget.

E: People will say 'Oh there's a war going on in Afghanistan. Oh, another one,' and it goes in one ear and out the other. It's just something that's accepted. 'Oh there's war, there's hunger, I can't do anything about it, I only make \$200 a week, so leave it to the other people.' They don't understand that the people who are experiencing that, could be people just like them.

T: It's hard to picture, I know being here for a while it's still hard now to picture. You have to actually be there. That used to be a little dream of my own when I was at Mohawk [High School — before transferring to Amherst]. I used to say, if I had one wish I would take 10 of these students and show them India. I think their whole life would sort of change. They wouldn't be the way they are now.

E: That is another thing I was going to ask you about. In the school systems, where there is such competition for who has the prettiest notebook cover and people can get into such squabbles about things like 'Oh look at those pants, the purple doesn't go at all with that,' or, 'Well, she has this kind of blow hair dryer,' it must be so . . . I know even I, who have grown up with this, I get so disgusted with it sometimes, and for you who, coming from other places, seem so uncontaminated, how did you react to it, or had you experienced that?

T: No, I hadn't experienced that much at all. I always thought I was very rich in India, because you had so much more than the other people, and then when I came here, everyone was the same, you weren't the rich person you were there. And there you were never concerned about what kind of tape recorder you had, just so long as you had a tape recorder it was great. You weren't concerned about the style of pants, say, just so long as you had pants. You were just so thankful for having it, you weren't concerned about what type or what it looked like.

E: Or what the critics in the *New York Times* said about it.

T: But I do find that at Amherst High there are a bunch of students who are not so concerned about these things, one has been to and lived in India herself, and a lot of others who I can really talk to. I mean they wear nice clothes, but that isn't their life. Their life involves music, or art, dance or drama, something other than the material. And that is very much what I like about Amherst. Cultural diversity probably did that — opened, broadened their minds.

R: Tanya, you said you were interested in working in a third world country, but we have been speaking only of India and Auroville. Could you just as well see yourself working in South America or Africa?

T: I am very attracted to Auroville because I believe very much in what it is trying to do. But I could just as well work in South America or Africa. I just feel that Auroville is my home and it always will be. I know that I can go there without a penny in my pocket, and be accepted by everyone.

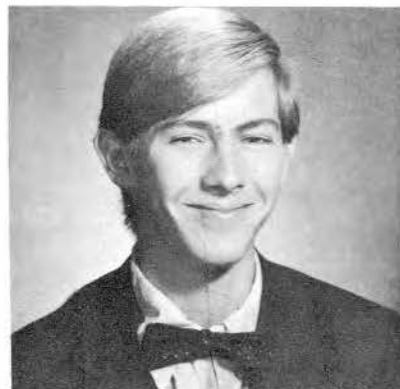
R: Can I put that in the interview? (laughter)

T: Nol Nol (laughter) I mean it's home. It's very beautiful there. It's a very experimental community. I still write to the children there, I like them a lot. It will always feel like home. I've lived there for ten years, most of the time in

Auroville, and I always feel I'm connected there, it just can't wear out. It's not like a home you switch, now you live in Oklahoma instead of Massachusetts. I don't know what it is. Once you've been there you understand what some people are trying to do, and if you understand it well enough, you want to do it too. Ideally, I could work for the United Nations helping to set up schools in all the small villages in the area, but . . .

R: But, given that not working out, you would go somewhere else in India or . . .

T: I would always have Auroville to come back to. It's like your security blanket.



DRAKE MITCHELL

Drake Mitchell is an 18 year-old living in Greenwich, Connecticut. He is a senior at Greenwich High School and will be entering Massachusetts Institute of Technology this fall. He lived in Pondicherry from 1970-76 and attended the International Centre for Education. He was interviewed by Jeanne Korstange.

Jeanne: Why don't you start with giving us the basic information about yourself.

Drake: My mother, sister and myself left the U.S. for India in March of 1970. My sister was two and I was 4 years old. We stayed there for 6 years. We came back to the U.S. in November of 1975. I went to private school for the first 4 years after our return. For the last 4 years, I have been at a large public high school in Greenwich, Connecticut. At the present I am scraping up the funds to go to MIT next year.

Jeanne: Did you go to the Ashram school in Pondicherry?

Drake: Yes.

J: Could you describe what that was like?

D: It's kind of difficult for me to remember. There are certain parts which are very vivid. I vividly remember the Center. The school was very coeducational. You didn't have any of the segregation which I had going to an all boy's private school for 4 years when I first came back here. In India there was an incredible amount of freedom but there was implicit structure and discipline. It wasn't an army camp, there were rules you had to follow but there was an incredible amount of latitude for you to take advantage of. I can remember being introduced to science by Richard. He introduced me to some fundamental physics and chemistry which I know is where I get that interest from. I worked in the computer center. Kamal I remember distinctly. Hmm, I can't remember all the names but I know that was definitely my first contact with computers. I was building the integral parts of a computer. The electronic hardware and

you know here I am today giving this talk at Wesleyan on using the computer as a macro tool.

J: How old were you when you started working with Richard?

D: Oh. I must have been 6. I know I was eight when I started working with computers. I think it was amazing that someone my age even got close to that kind of environment. It was just such a fantastic opportunity and in a sense I find the same kind of openness and freedom in my senior high school. It is very large and diverse and if you have your own motivation there is an incredible amount to be taken advantage of.

Now that I think about it one of the nicest things about the Center for Education in Pondy was that it was incredibly well balanced. You had a lot of emphasis on the physical. An emphasis on sports and athletics which is sustained in the States but probably not as much. In India it was almost 50/50. Whereas in the States its more 80/20 in terms of academics to sports. There was a lot of physical discipline.

J: How was the attitude in the Ashram school towards sports similar or different from the attitude in the States? Was there a focus on competitiveness or on athletic skills?

D: We had our own mini-Olympics every year. In our nonstructured events I played cricket with my friend on Sunday. I spent a lot of time doing it just for the sheer pleasure of doing it. It was so satisfying to hit that connecting hook shot. Over here everything is always performance oriented. You don't really have the Olympic spirit of perfect form. Here it is going for the award. That's fairly well justified. Look at sports in society here and you see that it is certainly money, entertainment and performance oriented.

J: Did you participate in the Ashram sports day programs? You know, when they all do the march past on the sports ground?

D: Oh sure! I can remember preparing for the big event. It was in December sometime. We left before I could do that event. It is sort of symbolic of everything which was left unfinished for me. I regret that I haven't maintained connections back there. I suppose there is some kind of subconscious block. I remember Shraddalu and Hari having written me. Gosh, all these old names are coming back. Um, wanting to write back, but just somehow never doing it. I know I want to visit. The question is, when am I going to do it? I was thinking of taking a year off before going to MIT and just getting a picture on my life. You know, doing a lot of reading and preparation just to get ready for MIT. I feel good and bad about doing that. It's unconventional. Everyone goes straight onto college after high school. It could be a very positive thing to do that and give me a feel for myself. The way it looks now I'll probably be in college for eight years. It might be more practical to visit India after I get my B.A. Have a break and then get back to whatever further education I am going to have.

J: When you first came back and went to this boys' school did you feel very different from the other boys?

D: Oh, incredible. I had an immense amount to adjust to this society. A lot of physical things and a lot of practical things. Actually I was at two private schools when I first came back. The first was a free progress school. The Montessori method. I guess my parents chose it because it had the same basic philosophy. They hoped it would mirror what happened in Pondicherry and would be a stabilizing transition. In fact though it didn't work. Because the premise there is that kids do their own learning. But just

because the way kids here are brought up that desire and motivation just doesn't exist. You are an odd ball and you have to be on your own if you want to investigate something of worth to you in education. The other kids just hack off and goof off and it's a lazy society. I left because I was so unhappy with that. I couldn't find people who could share my interests. I was a little bit different. I had an accent back then, from a combination of multi Indian languages and I looked different. I guess I had a crew haircut. A lot of little physical details that little kids are good at making fun of. I very quickly, physically blended in and that's when I went to the boys' school. That was very different in that I basically think I was alone that whole time. I had some friends but I didn't spend much time with others outside of the school environment. No one was important to me outside this enforced environment. No one I spent time with on my own. I think those 4 years were good because they taught me a kind of discipline. An academic discipline that let me survive in the American school system. When I first got there my grades were very average. Given a year I was up near the very top of my class.

J: Do you feel your decision to go on to MIT and into science—I take it you are going into computer science?—is laid out? Or is it just a general program still?

D: I'm interested, I think, by too many things. I seem to be able to cope with all of them. They all interest me thoroughly. One of my big fundamental problems is what do I want to do. Everything here is geared to what you are going to be or want to be. What are you going to study in college? What university are you applying to? What courses, what is your major going to be? The reason I chose MIT is because from all my available data it's the most open college in terms of free choices. I feel unlimited opportunity. I have cross registration possibilities at Harvard. If I want to, I can get into some liberal arts area. I am going to Boston for the social atmosphere, you've got 50 colleges there. I can't think of anything more diverse and as a package I think it offers me a fantastic 4 years. Although California was attractive. Stanford and Cal Tech . . .

J: Your choice sounds good in terms of giving you the maximum amount of possibilities. I think you feel yourself to have enough individual strength to make good choices.

D: I feel India was an integral part of that. It will always be special for me.

J: Do you feel that your focus is different from most of your peers?

D: Yeah, a good deal of them have a fairly good idea of what they want to do and that's probably pretty prevalent. I think people find in college that you really can't go on preconceived notions. People start in physics and come out as lawyers and doctors. Possibilities are endless. You have to find what is important to you. What is tragic is people get caught up in what they think they should do and it's really not important to them as an individual. I think I have . . . I'm throwing around an idea right now of where my life could go for the next 50-60 years. If I'll be around that long.

J: (Laughing) You're way ahead of me . . .

D: (Laughing) I'm not sure it's the right one. It's really a formidable step in one's life to determine how you're going to spend the rest of it. It's overwhelming. I think it's amazing that people manage to do it. I can't wait until I can say from the other side what it was like.

J: Do you think it's necessary to determine at the age of 18 where the rest of your life is going?

D: Nothing I don't know bothers me. It feels like I should know about now what I'm going to do. That's exactly wrong. Obviously these 4 years coming up will be that experience which determines all that. The way it is now I feel I want to go into artificial intelligence. Which is going back to the computers I was introduced to in India. Well I don't know, but I can cope with not knowing. I'm amazed that people make the right decision after going to college and start working and turn around and say I'm satisfied with the way it all turned out. It seems to me like an amazing stroke of luck. Evidently though it happens quite often. There are a lot of happy people around. There are also some that wish things had gone differently, but successes do happen. It's amazing how that process works.

J: So there is a part of you that is very anxious about where you are going in the next few years.

D: Oh, yeah. I'm very involved in science right now and analytical science basically because that's what I've been exposed to. It's a very structured, logical thought and provides an excellent framework for dealing with anything in your life. I was talking to a theoretical physicist; he said if you want to go into law or anything you should study physics first because it teaches you how to think.

I'm beginning to see that now, and I'm not sure that I want to focus on a specific pure science topic. I can explain this theoretical fantasy I have on what is a possible life procedure for me. In 51 years I might work on the unified field problem which is something which would unify all of current scientific thinking it was something Einstein was working on. Let's say in 51 years I could solve that. My other option is to work in artificial intelligence. In 50 years to create an artificial intellect and then that one remaining year my artificial intelligence would derive my unified field problem in the space of a few minutes for me. This type of intellect is so superior that it could then rederive all of human existence in a fraction of the amount of time we have actually taken to do it. I see life and the universe as matter organizing itself into more and more patterns. The brain cells have organized themselves to such a degree that conscious thought has somehow arisen. We don't know how it is happening. The nature of mind and how matter organizes itself into such patterning that you get this consciousness . . . you know we have had physical evolution so far, now I think we'll begin to see cultural and consciousness evolution. We'll get out of the physical and it will all be on a consciousness or thought plane. The ultimate quest is; what is the universe? What is everything around us? What is existence? Eventually given a lot of time we'll get there. I see nothing wrong in creating an artificial intelligence to speed that process up. You just get there sooner. Again it is that desire for knowledge, for knowing and getting the answer sooner.

J: I don't understand how this artificial intelligence goes faster than you. Man is the creator of it. Don't your mental limits limit it? Aren't you also capable of advancing with it?

D: What happens is . . . computers are so quick. You have to install a kernel to begin with. You give it your best shot and you give the culmination of what human existence has so far developed . . . what exists right now. You have what is called heuristic process in the computer which modifies itself. When it modifies itself, its original decision is modified so a modified decision makes a new modification. This process goes on constantly. You have an evolution in decision making. This is going on so fast that the computer will

evolve more quickly than biological life has been able to. In 50 years it will evolve equal to the whole of human development so far.

With this we reached a point in time where Drake had to return to the science conference he was attending at Wesleyan. We spent a few more minutes talking about social and artistic interests. Movies, writing science fiction and cross country running were brought out as other interests in Drakes life.



LET THEM EAT CHILDREN

Such long black hair the women weave and braid
And let down to wash at the temple pond
Where they laugh and splash in the cool water,
Then fill their pots and hoist them on their heads
To walk dripping down the dusty street
And sit beside their house and pick the lice
From that mass of dark hair never to be cut
But for the god upon the sacred hill
And never to be loosed but for their lord's
Desire at night upon the marriage mat.

Such love they bear their boggle-eyed babies
Propped and bared to the mad, staring world
Astride broad goddess hips where they watch
Warily the big hands that poke and paw
And suffer the probing grip of grasping love
That planted them into this burning world
To feel the first blasts of biting need
That bear them back and forth from hand to arm
To hungry mouth and then again to sit
Upon the firm perch of their mother's hip.

Such rags they wear, the big-eyed scrawnies,
Frayed and torn as wind-whipped fronds,
Worn on brown skin smooth as river rock;
They meander along beneath bright sun
Behind delicate cattle's bony bulk
Toward the fields that keep their hunger safe
In ancient lowly motion's aching arms;
Toward the empty, sun-worn fields that hug
The sleeping village through the pit of night
And bear the seed the goddess blessed with hope.

Such stares they stare of star-eyed wonder,
Sitting on the moonlit village sand,
At the loud threats of blustering big demons
Who dare to war upon the strutting gods
Until they strangle tight the helpless earth
In their wild struggle for the juice of life,
Above the darkened village they rage and roar,
Ready to throttle the audacious deeds of men
Who try to leave their humbling mother's arms.
Such terror they bear, the children,

such terror,

such love.

— Gordon Korstange

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

Dick Batstone

This is the sixth installment of the series taken from the diary kept by an English disciple of Sri Aurobindo and Mother during his visit to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1959-60.

For those of you who have been following this series we have recently received news of Dick in the London, Auroville International Newsletter. Dick used to run the Sri Aurobindo Centre at Bell Street and after that the Auroville International Center. During the last two years he has married, visited Auroville, moved from London to the West Country, and opened a book shop called Batstone Books. His new address is 24 Gloucester Street, Malmesbury, Wiltshire.

He describes the town and the new bookstore as follows:

"Malmesbury is an ancient town, with several hundred families of 'Commoners' who can claim descent from 9th century inhabitants; however, the new consciousness is at work, as might be expected and we have had two enquiries from people interested in visiting Auroville, and an invitation to give a talk on 'Sri Aurobindo and the future of man' in nearby Swindon. We were able to buy an old stone-built cottage last Easter, and after much restoration, alteration, decoration and operations against damp and woodworm, opened to the public at the end of August, 1982. We have a general stock of second-hand books with a few new copies of recent publications. There is a book case of titles by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother (including the Agenda), and an 'Auroville area' on the first floor, with pictures and information on the wall, and some Auroville bedspreads and stationery, such as the beautiful pressed flower cards and notelets made in Aspiration."

28 November 1959

Gilchrist was particularly sad that the yoga exercises and asanas which he had learned very painstakingly at home where not held in any esteem here at all. So I took him to see Ambu.

Ambu, lithe as a Greek athlete, spread his little mat on the floor and suggested Gilchrist show what he could do. And Gilchrist did, doing some most strenuous contortions. I looked hopefully at Ambu for some encouraging word, but he remained grave and silent. Finally, rather red in the face, Gilchrist came to a halt and also looked up at him from the floor.

"You are too tense," said Ambu. "You must learn to do each of these exercises in a completely relaxed manner, breathing evenly, without effort. I will show you."

Ambu then did some of the same asanas, but as calmly as a cat washing, smiling and bathed in peacefulness. The movements were the same, but the difference was considerable, though hard to define.

Gilchrist was impressed, and they agreed that he should come and practice with Ambu whenever he liked while he was here.

30th November

I told Ravindra that in Ambu's room I had seen a photograph of a Hatha Yogi who was said to have been 350 years old. What about that?

R. said it was quite possible. He had seen such a man himself—a man called Nagna Nareish, or 'the Naked

Prince', who used to live outside Amritsar in the barren countryside thereabouts, walking around and living in the fields: a man of very great robustness and physical health, who throughout the year wore only a muslin cloth round his waist. And this man would never talk of the past or of his age, but said that people who did so were all 'dead men'—that death was behind one, but that in front was only life, and that life was coming to him always out of the future—new forces of health and energy and immortality.

This man said, too, that all men were only 'dead men' because they thought of the past, and reckoned their time according to how many more years they had to live, whereas he rejected death. "Give me your death," he would say, "and I will give you my life." When someone mentioned a great general to him, and how this man had won wars and so on, he had said, "Huh, what is great about killing men that are already dead? If I had killed 10,000 such dead men, what would be the sense of it?"

Ravindra went on to say that 'the Naked Prince' was interesting to talk to, and that he and his brothers would go out and listen to his conversation, often. His youngest brother eventually became one of his disciples. He had first discovered him when on a walk. He had noticed water falling from overhead, and looked up and seen this man high up in a tree, urinating—he would often climb trees. And when he was hungry he would just pluck a handful of leaves and munch them.

In the 1930s, when the nationalist movement was very strong, and people talked to him of the poverty of the country and how it was being exploited and so on by the British, he would say, "Poverty? I see no poverty" and point to the trees and the fields and the bushes, which were enough for him to live on!

He used to say that life came to him from the basic elements, but that men who were 'dead' cut themselves off from these sources of health. Thus they would wear clothes to protect themselves from the air, and shoes to insulate themselves from the currents of earth, and they would shelter from life-giving rain, and so on.

He would not let people do pranam or bow before him but would shout out, "Why do you do that? Why not reverence the life in yourselves. Come, I will show you how to be immortal!" and his disciples certainly seemed healthy, and happy too. They would only eat 'live food'. All cooked food or things made from flour he called 'dead food', so they ate fruit and vegetables and leaves and roots of all sorts . . . and these people, some of them quite old women, developed such heat in themselves that they could sleep without any covering on the banks of canals in midwinter, when the nights were bitter with frost.

If the guru got a fever he would welcome it, as, he said, the heat was good, and burnt up all sorts of impurities in the body.

As to his age—nobody knew it, because he refused to talk of the past. But the oldest people living in those parts said that he had been just the same when they were small children.

Ravindra said that he himself had not felt greatly attracted to this man because he never spoke of spiritual things, and his way of life was so dull and unproductive—like an animal's—and seemed fully filled up with keeping fit. He never did any work . . .

First be sure of the call and of thy soul's answer. For if the call is not true, not the touch of God's powers or the voice of his messengers, but the lure of thy ego, the end of thy endeavour will be a poor spiritual fiasco or else a deep disaster.

And if not the soul's fervour, but only the mind's assent or interest replies to the divine summons or only the lower life's desire clutches at some side attraction of the fruits of Yoga-power or Yoga-pleasure or only a transient emotion leaps like an unsteady flame moved by the intensity of the Voice or its sweetness or grandeur, then too there can be little surety for thee in the difficult path of Yoga.

Imagine not the way is easy; the way is long, arduous, dangerous, difficult. At every step is an ambush, at every turn a pitfall. A thousand seen or unseen enemies will start up against thee, terrible in subtlety against thy ignorance, formidable in power against thy weakness. And when with pain thou hast destroyed them, other thousands will surge up to take their place. Hell will vomit its hordes to oppose and enring and wound and menace; Heaven will meet thee with its pitiless tests and its cold luminous denials.

Thou shalt find thyself alone in thy anguish, the demons furious in thy path, the Gods unwilling above thee. Ancient and powerful, cruel, unvanquished and close and innumerable are the dark and dreadful Powers that profit by the reign of Night and Ignorance and would have no charge and are hostile. Aloof, slow to arrive, far-off and few and brief in their visits are the Bright Ones who are willing or permitted to succour. Each step forward is a battle. There are precipitous descents, there are unending ascensions and ever higher peaks upon peaks to conquer. Each plateau climbed is but a stage on the way and reveals endless heights beyond it. Each victory thou thinkest the last triumphant struggle proves to be but the prelude to a hundred fierce and perilous battles . . .

But thou sayest God's hand will be with me and the Divine Mother near with her gracious smile of succour? And thou knowest not then that God's Grace is more difficult to have or to keep than the nectar of the Immortals or Kuvera's priceless treasures? Ask of his chosen and they will tell thee how often the Eternal has covered his face from them, how often he has withdrawn from them behind his mysterious veil and they have found themselves alone in the grip of Hell, solitary in the horror of the darkness, naked and defenseless in the anguish of the battle. And if his presence is felt behind the veil, yet is like the winter sun behind clouds and saves not from the rain and snow and the calamitous storm and the harsh wind and the bitter cold and the atmosphere of a sorrowful grey and the dun weary dullness. Doubtless the help is there even when it seems to be withdrawn, but still is there the appearance of total night with no sun to come and no star of hope to please in the darkness.

Beautiful is the face of the Divine Mother, but she too can be hard and terrible. Nay, then, is immortality a plaything to be given lightly to a child, or the divine life a prize without effort or the crown for a weakling? Strive rightly and thou shalt have; trust and thy trust shall in the end be justified; but the dread Law of the Way is there and none can abrogate it.

Persevere

AGENDA EXCERPT

[First Mother listens to the reading of some letters from Sri Aurobindo to Nirod. in particular the following hold her attention and amuse her.]

Question: Why not write something about the Supermind which these people find so difficult to understand?

Sri Aurobindo: What's the use? How much would anybody understand? Besides the present business is to bring down and establish the Supermind, not to explain it. If it establishes itself, it will explain itself – if it does not, there is no use in explaining it. I have said some things about it in past writings, but without success in enlightening anybody. So why repeat the endeavour? [10/8/1935]

Question: What disciples we are of what a Master! I wish you had chosen or called some better stuff – perhaps somebody like X.

Sri Aurobindo: As to the disciples, I agree! Yes, but would the better stuff, supposing it to exist, be typical of humanity? To deal with a few exceptional types would hardly solve the problem. And would they consent to follow my path – that is another question? And if they were put to the test, would not the common humanity suddenly reveal itself – that is still another question. [8/3/1935] *[Sri Aurobindo on Himself, pp. 164, 178-179]*

28 June 1972

It's curious, it comes in gusts. All of a sudden, there comes a sort of gust in which everything is clear, in which . . . the Supramental becomes obvious. And the body sees, it even sees what is expected of it. And then, a minute later, ploff! [gesture of crumbling], things are veiled again.

It's like two different ways of being in relationship with the Divine – both are relationships with the Divine: one is the old way, and the other is the new. At one time, you know, whenever I had a problem, I immediately curled up in my relationship with the Divine, and the problem went away. But now that's not the same anymore. It's the very relation with the Divine that is in a different way.

So this . . . [Mother makes a gesture of seeming not to know].

It's as if my recourse, the very recourse that was there throughout my life, which has helped me get through everything; as if it had gone. Now . . . it's not the same anymore. Now that, too, must be surpassed. [Mother shakes her head and raises her hands as if to say: What can I do? She goes within.] *[Mother's Agenda, vol. 13]*

AUROVILLE NEWS

• **Supreme Court Decision:** On November 8, 1982, the Supreme Court of India upheld the Auroville Act, passed by Parliament two years earlier, which allows the Government of India to assume management of Auroville for a period extendable up to three more years. The Act, whose constitutionality had been challenged by the Sri Aurobindo Society, states that the Government: "will endeavor to secure that a) the ideals for which Auroville has been established are encouraged, and b) the members of Auroville are allowed the freedom to grow and develop activities and programs envisaged in the Charter of Auroville."

Provision is made for an International Advisory Council which will offer advice to the Government of India on Auroville affairs. The claims made by the Society that Auroville was their personal property and that it and the teaching of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother represented a religion, were dismissed by the Court. The five-judge Constitutional Bench prepared a hundred page document in which it explains to validity of the Act, declared that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother did not want to found a religion, and highlights the serious financial mismanagement of the Society.

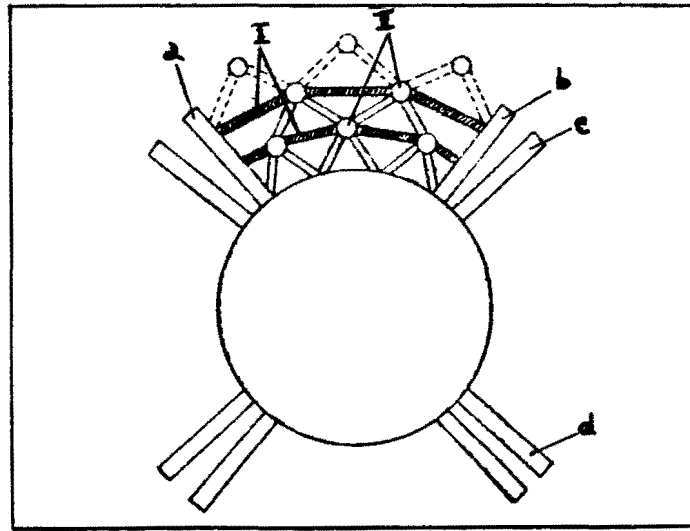
Shortly after the announcement, the Government Administrator set to work. Official notifications were issued to the units and services of Auroville that the Act was in immediate effect. Orders were delivered to Society-managed activities that the Administrator was taking over.

The charge of Bharat Nivas, India's unfinished national pavilion, was officially transferred from the Society to a group of qualified Auroville engineers who will prepare a study of the state of the project and an assessment of the work needed to complete it.

Under the authority of the Administrator, the newly appointed management of these units has been busy with the transfer of assets, account books, and various other documents related to the unit involved. A Land and Estate Management Committee comprised of a team of Aurovilians and chaired by the Deputy Administrator, Mr. Ojha is busy defining new policies for all Auroville lands, and has been receiving all records, papers and properties pertaining to the lands of Auroville and looking into the numerous questions involving lands which were formerly taken care of by employees of the Society, and are defining new policies for the whole of Auroville lands.

Meanwhile, other work in Auroville continues with a new sense of responsibility and possibility. The Cooperative is responsible for the liaison with the Administrator, and is working on various aspects of the meeting of the International Advisory Council to be held in the near future. A newly organized Financial Group has begun to meet to discuss practical steps for improving our economic situation.

In a letter sent from Auroville on November 8, the cooperative said: "After seven years, an old story feels finished. The renaissance will not come tomorrow but it will come, and the unpredicted way in which the Parliament and the Supreme Court of India have intervened in the destiny of Auroville will call a greater future for the 'city of dawn.' Residents and friends of Auroville draw a new breath today in the continuing privilege of building 'the city the Earth needs.' Today, everywhere in Auroville are bouquets of the large gold-yellow allamanda flowers which the Mother has named 'Victory'." [Extracted from the *Auroville Review*]



• **Matrimandir:** On the first of September, concrete was poured into the fifth "side" beam (a); on the second of December, into the sixth "side" beam (b). Two of these "side" beams remain to be done (c) and (d). There are two along each of the four ribs to anchor the two bottom rows of horizontal beams which now encircle the sphere (I).

On September 11, we finished concreting the level three rows of nodes: the joining point of six pre-cast beams which are the structural elements of the skin (II). On December 7, the first quarter of level four received concrete in the "nodes."

The ferro-cement sides are finished on two-thirds of the ramps, and the wire-mesh foundation that will receive that cement plaster on the final sections is now being placed.

Meanwhile in the workshop, pre-cast beam production continues at full speed, from bending the steel through the stages of joining and binding the frame, to the everyday casting process. The marble pieces for the walls of the inner chamber of Matrimandir received a special cleaning and re-packing in the Amphitheatre storeroom. A small wasp had been making nests in the holes in the sides of the marble pieces which are for the bolts to hold the marble to the walls. This caused stains to appear on the surface of the marble. There are about 5,000 holes that are not filled with plaster of paris to prevent staining from the mud the wasp used in his nest.

A prototype is ready of the "mirror" part of the optical device that will track the sun from the top of the structure. The "mirror" is temporarily in polished aluminium to see how it will work in focusing the sun ray that will fall vertically into the inner chamber of matrimandir.

The whole atmosphere is quite pleasant with fresh energy from new people and visitors.

(from *Auroville Review*)

• **Legal Fund:** The Auroville Cooperative Fund has been created to cover legal expenses for liaison with District, State and National government levels. There is a massive amount of misinformation on Auroville that needs to be dispelled and a continuous need for working with the Indian Government. Immediate major expenses will be incurred dealing with liaison and logistical aspects of the International Advisory council meeting. Contributions to this fund should be specified for the Auroville Cooperative Fund.



Auroville Press

• **Auroville Press:** Located in the handicraft complex of Fraternity, a new Auroville Press has started providing printing services within Auroville. So far vouchers, cash bill books, account books and a simplified version of the *Auroville Review* have been printed. From this modest beginning it is hoped to eventually print leaflets and brochures on AV, materials for handicraft units, booklets and books written by Aurovilians, and the thirteen volumes of Mother's *Agenda*. Considerable expenses are involved in making the Press a functional offset printing operation. Details are available at Matagiri for those interested in this project.

• **Contributions:** There is new designation for all checks for Auroville: all checks should be made out to *Auroville Fund*. For mail transfer (bank to bank): Auroville Fund, A/c No. 00019, State Bank of India, Auroville International Township Branch, Aspiration, Auroville, Kottakuppam 605 104. For checks and drafts (postal address): Auroville Fund, Aspiration, Auroville, P.O. Kottakuppam 605 104. Tax deductible contributions can also be sent to Auroville through any of the following U.S. Centers: Matagiri, Mt. Tremper, New York 12457 Sri Aurobindo Action Center, P.O. Box 1977, Boulder Colo 80306 Auroville Association, P.O. Box 2780, Santa Cruz, CA 95062-2780.



• **UK:** Auroville International, 26A Ferme Park Rd., London, N.4. Since the June meeting of the 2nd Conference of AV International held at Boytons, Hempstead the London Center has been hosting an exchange of people and goods throughout the year. In September of '82 David Wickenden and Sally Walton gave a slide show on Auroville and Sally danced two pieces to the music of Igor Wakhevitch who is a composer now living in Auroville. This was held at the Village Hall in Hempstead. Michael Tait visited on his way from Auroville to the Findhorn Planetary Village Conference in October. He gave a slide show and brought the new AV Greenwork brochure. In August they sold AV handicrafts at the Rainbow Fair, an alternative gathering in East Bergholt (Constable Country. They enjoyed the contact they made with the people there and hope to develop interesting shows to take to other country fairs.

The group is doing a lot of work to raise funds for Auroville. They are meeting at Mrs. Margaret Fletcher's flat in London at the present time. They have slide shows of Auroville and keep up their support of Auroville through their newsletter, hosting friends of Auroville and selling Auroville goods.

• **PARIS:** Auroville International France, (Reported in London Auroville International Newsletter). On the 4th of December '82, at the invitation of AV International France, Davide Montemurri gave a private showing of his film, *L'homme apres l'homme*. Davide's film on Sri Aurobindo presents the world as it is—what man has made of it: the wars, the chaos, the inhumanity. Is this the end of mankind? There follow interviews with Satprem and Mrs. Gandhi and visits to AV. The answer, Satprem tells us, is where Sri Aurobindo and the Mother searched for it: in the depths of the cells of the body. The film was shown three times altogether, first on Friday evening, then again on Saturday at 2 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. The hall in which it was shown held over 250 people and on each occasion was packed to capacity with many people sitting on the stairs.

• **QUEBEC:** Auroville International, 1018, De Bellechasse, Montreal H2S 1Y3. The group has a new address which is the home of their new offices and meeting place. They are also publishing a new bulletin entitled *Leurs d'Auroville* which will come out 4 or 5 times a year. The subscription fee is \$8.00 (Canadian) per year. It is a very nicely done review and we recommend it to any of our readers who enjoy the French language and would like to have news from other centers. The group has continued their work of selling goods from Auroville. They were able to send books and food with two of their members who went to Auroville in January. They have contributed funds to the food envelope and to Auroearth. At their meetings they have been listening to the tapes from the *Agenda*. They have organized a showing of the film *L'Homme apres l'homme* for April 16 at Montreal.

• **INDIA:** Aurodashan, 2-2-4/1, University Road, Hyderabad-500 768 Andra Pradesh, India. Aurodashan is an International Centre of Education, Integral and Future Studies, devoted to Sri Aurobindo's vision of the future. They announced that an international seminar on the theme of: "The Next Millennium: Toward a Civilization of New Consciousness" is going to be held in the last week of February, 1984, at Hyderabad. They hope to bring together distinguished scholars, authors and futurists to discuss meaningful alternatives for the future of humanity. They invite anyone interested in shaping their ideas and aspirations for peace and human unity to participate in this conference.

Anyone who is interested in participating in this seminar can obtain more information about it by writing to either of the following people:

Prof. V.M. Reddy 2650 Fulton St. San Francisco CA 94118
V. Madhusudan Reddy Professor of Philosophy Osmania University, Hyderabad, India.



• **INDIA:** Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Navajata, chairman of the Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry, passed away on the morning of 19 January at the age of 61. The name which he bore signifies "one who is new-born." It was given to Keshav Deo Poddar by the Mother when he decided to put himself and all who were of the same mind as he in his family—which meant the whole of it—at her feet. Not that his devotion to her started only when he became an inmate of the Ashram. He had been visiting it ever since he was a boy. His father Ramnarayan used to bring him along year after year on visits to the ashram and he has known numerous darshans of Sri Aurobindo. Before Sri Aurobindo left his body, Navajata had already conceived the idea of a journal which would look at all world-problems from the height of the Master's vision. On 21 February 1949, the journal was launched as a fortnightly under the caption *Mother India*. Navajata's next venture was the founding of the Sri Aurobindo Society. With the Mother's full assent it was intended both to bring extensive financial help to the Ashram and to propagate the teaching of Sri Aurobindo throughout the world. The most far-reaching experiment with which Navajata was linked arose out of the functioning of the Sri Aurobindo Society. In a long talk of the Mother's published several years back in *Mother India*, it was disclosed by her that from her early life she had wanted to establish an international city for World Unity on a Spiritual basis, but that this scheme had remained unactualised for want of material support. She recounts how she mentioned it to Navajata and he at once came forward to bring the support needed. The Mother accepted his offer, for she knew that nobody in her circle could match the genius he possessed for bringing financial aid. Thus "Auroville, the City of Dawn," took birth on 28 February 1968 with a ceremony attended by representatives of a score of nations. Through the Mother's vision Navajata helped to make Auroville a part of the ideals of UNESCO.

(This article is abstracted from an editorial published in the Feb. 1983 issue of *Mother India*)

• **Auroville International America (AVIA).** In January of 1983 David Voremberg was requested by David Wickenden to facilitate the formation of AVIA. The first step in creating AVIA was collecting proposals from individuals and Centers in America to ascertain the way in which they could be involved in such a body and the functions and purpose of AVIA in general.

In February David V. met with a representative from AVI-France where a meeting for the central Auroville International body was to take place. Representatives from Auroville Centers in Europe met to discuss the organization of this international body, its purpose, the roles of the various national centers, their relations to a central body and the relationship between this organization and Auroville.

The February meeting proposed that coordinators from various countries meet in Laubach, Germany June 18th and 19th. This meeting will set the course for support, service to and development of Auroville in the coming years. AVI is conceived of as a parent-type organization comprised of the existing AV centers throughout the world. As an expression of wide-based support, it will have the capability of acting for Auroville on an international scale.

It is important that America send someone to this meeting. David is unable to attend, and Constance Walker, a board member of the Auroville Association in Aptos, California is planning on going. He has lived in Auroville for many years and is now actively involved in supporting AV through the Association in California.

Your views and comments on the future role of Auroville International and on the relationship which should exist between that organization and the centers/individuals in the United States should be sent to Constance Walker, P.O. Box 2780, Santa Cruz, CA 95062-2780. Contributions to make his attendance possible are also needed and may be sent to the Auroville Association, Attn: AI Fund at the same address.

• **Institute for Evolutionary Research:** 200 Park Ave. New York. *The Mind of the Cells*, by Satprem, has been published and is available in paperback from the Institute or from Matagiri. "This is Satprem's latest nonfiction work, which distills the essence of Mother's discovery: The change of genetic programming and another view of death. Perhaps the era of "man outside the fishbowl of the mind" is at hand."

• **The Institute of Integral Psychology, Inc.** 614 Grand VVe., Box "L", Ojai, CA. 93023. This institute offers residential and non-residential programs and enrichment in psychological growth and healing based on an integral view of human nature. The institute was founded on the inspiration of Madhav Pandit during one of his visits to the U.S. They are offering a Lecture-Seminar Series led by Professor V.M. Reddy who is a disciple of Sri Aurobindo and Mother, Professor of Philosophy at Osmania University, Hyderabad, India and a visiting professor at the California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, California. The series is a three-part seminar held over the following weekends and will cover the following subjects: March 26th-27th, The Spiritual Psychologies of India; April 30-May 1st: The Nature of Being and the Process of Becoming; May 28th-29th: The Development of Being. For further information about this series and other programs which they offer, write to the institute.

• **Willow Gold**, Rt. 3, Spring Green, Wisconsin 53588. The community of Willow Gold would like to invite all those in America who have shared an interest in Sri Aurobindo, Mother, Auroville and the Ashram to their annual August celebration of birthdays and anniversaries under the sign of Leo. This will be the weekend of Friday, August 12th through Monday, August 15th.

From Chicago's O'Hare Airport there is a commuter bus to Madison. From Madison to the Willow Gold farm transportation will be provided by Willow Gold.

No specific agenda has been set as of yet: there will be work activities, an informal atmosphere for being with each other and birthday celebrations. The community is open to any suggestions for an agenda and offers an opportunity for everyone to share their particular skills and interests. If you are interested in participating in this weekend, write to Willow Gold as soon as possible so that they can determine needs for accomodating and feeding everyone.

Bryan, Fanou, Auromarichi and Aurelia, whom you met in our last issue, have a new member in their family. Auro Léo was born on Tuesday, February 15, 1983 at 3:07 p.m. at Willow Gold.

Fanou writes that, "The birth has been as perfect as the births of Marichi and Aurelia in Auroville. The presence of the Mother during the birth was very concrete for all of us." Paula Murphy, who has lived in Auroville and is now living in Wisconsin, was the midwife for Fanou. We all share in their joy and join with them in welcoming Auro Léo into the community of Willow Gold.

• **Sanskrit Conference**, New Paltz, New York: Gopal Bhat-tacharya, a resident at Matagiri for the past five years, organized a successful conference on "Sanskrit and Related Studies" this April at S.U.N.Y., New Paltz. Prof. Bhat-tacharya, who teaches courses in Sanskrit and Indian Philosophy for the Center for Continuing Education, received crucial help from his department, his colleagues and the local Indian community which provided the major financial support.

The conference drew outstanding Sanskrit scholars including Prof. B.K. Matilal from Oxford, England, Prof. S.B. Warnekar from Nagpur U., India, Alex Weyman from Columbia U. and Harmut Scharfe from U.C.L.A.

Among other participants were Prof. Vasant Merchant from N. Arizona State U., who commented on points raised by previous speakers and Seyril Schochen, who read from "The Immortal Fire", a play based on Sri Aurobindo's translation of the Katha Upanishad.

The conference was the keystone of what evolved into a month long celebration of Indian culture on the campus including a day-long fair where P.P. D'Souza, Consul General of India, gave opening remarks. Aurosarjan clothes were among the well-received handicraft and food stalls. The day culminated with a sitar concert by Jamaluddin Bhartiya, a senior disciple of Ravi Shankar, who awed the audience with his masterful playing and singing.

• **Holistic Yoga Center**: 1369 S. Ridgewood Ave., Daytona Beach, Fla. Chitta R. Goswami, a follower of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother since 1949, and author of a number of books on them, is organising a trip to India. His wife, who has lived in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Delhi, was requested by the Director of the Ashram to invite people from North America to join the Delhi Ashram members in their

annual summer trip to a number of places in India. The itinerary has not yet been finalised but everything is organised in regards to accommodation, food and transportation by the Ashram. If a sufficient number of people are found to go from the U.S. a special rate may be obtained from some airline to cover the trip between the U.S. and Delhi. If anyone is interested they should contact Chitta Goswami at the above address.

• **Eleanor Montgomery**: New York. Mrs. Eleanor Montgomery, a longtime disciple of Sri Aurobindo and Mother, died 11 February in New York City. She was 74. A Memorial Service was held on the 2nd of March.

Mrs. Montgomery first went to the Ashram in Pondicherry in the late 1940's and had darshan of Sri Aurobindo. In 1953, at the Mother's behest, she established the first Sri Aurobindo Center in America under the name of the Sri Aurobindo International Center Foundation. Through this foundation she was active in raising funds for the Sri Aurobindo International Center of Education in Pondicherry. From 1972-1976 her foundation supported a Sri Aurobindo Center in New York City open to the public. The center provided weekly meetings and meditations, housed a library, and was host to many visiting lecturers and scholars from the Ashram in India. She was also a poet and painter.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Editors:

If the momentum which has been gained with this issue of *Collaboration* can be carried forward into future issues (as we can assume it will) *Collaboration* has truly taken a big step ahead as a dynamic living and active journal. One could feel the excitement of a living consciousness coming through the pages and making us feel that we are truly a part of an active force which is pushing its way through and having its effect on us and the world.

I was a little disturbed by the title of the piece on Mother's yoga. Did Mother really say "My preparation for Sri Aurobindo's Yoga," or was that dreamed up by the editors and presented to look as if She had said it? I think if in fact Mother never used those words, something like "Comments by the Mother on Her Early Yoga" would be more appropriate.

I certainly sympathize with the feeling expressed in the opening comments of *Collaboration* of the frustration at being separated by distance. Since I live here in Japan, my contacts are necessarily few and far between. That feeling of isolation is something shared not only by devotees of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, but by foreigners in general here. One way in which that isolation is overcome to some extent is through letters to the editor in the major English language newspaper here — *The Japan Times*. That column is very widely read and contributes greatly to the feeling that we are in touch with each other and have a way to express our otherwise isolated feelings. I'm not sure if a letter to the editors section would be appropriate for *Collaboration*, but it's something the editors might consider.

Yours truly,

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Eric Hughes chose the title from off the top of his head. We're not sure if it came from the overmind, though.

— Editors