

AUROVILLE TODAY

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Hymn to the Mother of Radiances

*A*n inner fullness has come in like the coming in of light in dark caves. It fills, it illumines, it liberates, the multiple strings of life; It has found the contact with the forgotten achievements of the past to enable me to start the new ones of the future on the basis of the changing formations of the present. The currents of life well up to meet the descending rays of light from the upper heavens for transmutation of the base and the dark into the luminous and the true, for transmutation of the ugly and the wrong into the beautiful and the right.

When there are no more darkening shadows about me; when you see me bared of all shams and shows in every part of the being; when you see in every cell of my body an eternal home for you and an eternal temple; when you see me one with you in identity and still worshipping you; when you melt the compact gold of knowledge in the living and running waters of devotion; when you break the earth and release the energies; when you turn my pride into power in your hands and my ignorance into light, my narrowness into wideness, my selfishness into a true gathering together of forces in one centre, my greed into a capacity of untiring search after truth for the attainment of its substances, my egoism into the true and conscious instrumental centre, my mind into a channel for you to descend, my heart into your hearth of pure fire and flame, my life into a pure and translucent substance for your handling, my body into a conscious vessel for holding what of you is meant for me; Then, O Mother of Radiances, my aim in life now and hereafter will be fulfilled in the true and right and vast way. Aspiration wakes in me!

Achieve in me all that I flame for!

Sri Aurobindo

In this issue, we give news of the first summer camp at New Creation, the end of the Pony Farm as it used to be, a Tibetan Lama's schooling in Transition, some health developments, new publications, brief news and a trip to Rameswaram.

As August 15th is the Birthday of Sri Aurobindo and the Independence Day of India, we quote his vision of her destined

This Month

role: "India of the ages is not dead nor has she spoken her last creative word; she lives and has still something to do for herself and the human peoples. And that which must seek now to awake is not an

anglicised oriental people, docile pupil of the West and doomed to repeat the cycle of the occident's success and failure, but still the ancient immemorable Shakti recovering her deepest self, lifting her head higher towards the supreme source of light and strength and turning to discover the complete meaning and a vaster form of her Dharma."

PHOTO: FRANZ

Pony Tale II

The Price of Paradise

Is it the end of the pony tale or will it be a never-ending story? Five years ago Auroville Today wrote about the Auroville Pony Farm located in Kottakarai and managed by Gaya and Achilles (see issue # 10, October 1989). The article ended with: "Let's hope this brave new venture will succeed." Last month the caretakers felt they had to close the Pony Farm. Bill and Tine noted down their story:

For us it became obvious that we couldn't keep on going the way things were. The Pony Farm was a dream, too much for this reality. There were two main problems: not enough money, and too much work. This dream took shape over a period of five years. Now it seems it has to become a dream again...

Apart from dogs, cats, chickens, cattle and the ponies, there are three adults and three children living at the Pony Farm. Our task was to maintain ourselves, the place (ca. 10 acres of land), the ponies and horses, give attention to the kids who came, train young ponies and retrain older ones, give instructions about the care of ponies, give riding lessons, provide snacks for the hungry kids after riding; in short, to keep the whole thing going. For a long time the place was open for all the children who were interested in nature and animals, even for kids who didn't want to ride. We did, however, insist on a certain attitude towards living beings.

Our monthly budget was about Rs. 30,000 (US \$ 1,000). We received Rs. 7,000 from the Central Fund. The rest of the money we had to find ourselves and very few cared how. Within Auroville there were very few people who helped us financially throughout these years; some did so occasionally, but the main flow of cash had to come from outside. Fundraising was a real burden right from the start. We had to approach the same few people who were willing to help us again and again. That is neither a nice situation nor is it a permanent solution.

AVI Germany did a lot to help our project; the other AVI Centres (except UK) didn't even answer our letters. For the Economy Task Group it was out of question to increase our budget. Maintenance was granted only for one person

possible to find sufficient maintenance for her work.

By the way, if we are talking about a dream, we don't mean something we have been dreaming up just for the fun of it or because we were too bored with our "former" life. This dream was the consequence of a reality; the reality of stray ponies all over the place, underfed ponies, neglected ponies, ponies tied to the same tree for several days, mistreated ponies, undesired ponies...that kind of reality made us start the Pony Farm.

Life has changed in Auroville. There are more gardens, more fences, better roads with reckless traffic, there is a different life style. Ten years ago children were riding horses to school and to other places but now it is dangerous with all the traffic. The first generation of kids, those who were here when we started the Pony Farm, were very involved. They participated in every aspect of the Farm, they helped with feeding, grooming, clipping the hooves, repairing tack, fences - we did it all together. There was a lot of improvising - and fun - because the ponies were coming in faster than we could build shelters and fences. Finally we had most of the pony population of Auroville - 29 ponies in all.

Years ago there were maybe less activities and attractions for the kids who would spend much of their free time and holidays with the ponies. But even with all the different possibilities offered these days, we still had about forty kids coming regularly to the Pony Farm. With the "modern age", the attitude of many children also changed. There was no way we could muck out the stables together, like we did in the beginning. Things seem to have to be provided. We heard remarks like "I want to ride, but I don't want to brush" and so on. We started wondering how kids could be so reluctant to do manual work. Could it be that they have learned "somewhere" and from "somebody" that manual work is something inferior, to be done by hired servants or "other people"?

a horse is not a bicycle or a motorbike, but a living being that has a certain nature and certain needs.

Our days used to start at 6 a.m. with coffee. After that we started with the morning feeding and milking session, usually with the help of our kids. After breakfast grooming, hoof-care, necessary medical care, till noon. Until last year Achilles worked three mornings a week at the Financial Service. The mornings without Financial Service were dedicated to the training of young horses, or preparing something "special" for the afternoon. At 2 p.m. the first kids would come for lessons. Riding and lessons would go on until 4.30 p.m., followed by snack for the kids. Immediately after snack, evening feeding, milking, preparing everything for the night (straw, water, checking the fences etc.). After dinner there was the correspondence for fundraising, making postcards, selecting photos or picking horse-flies until we couldn't keep our eyes open anymore. There was little private life, since people (mainly visitors, tourists) would drop in at any time; little time for

our own children too, maybe too little.

For quite some time, we gave away the "compost" for free within Auroville and we concentrated on the riding for Auroville kids exclusively, also for free. Circumstances forced us to start charging for the compost and to dedicate some time to guests, tourists and customers from Pondy who had to pay for their riding. We wanted the Pony



Farm to be an experience of the Auroville feeling and spirit, not a commercial enterprise. It worked in a way - and in a way it didn't work. For the "feeling" it worked, since almost all the guests and tourists visiting our place were fascinated and called it a "fairy tale" or "paradise". They didn't inquire what it takes to keep paradise going.

Other people, mainly Aurovilians, gave us a lot of advice on how to run the Pony Farm better and more economically, like having half of the pony population killed and then seeing how it worked with the remaining half. How could we follow such advice when the very aim of our project was to create a place where these creatures were allowed to be? To prevent the existing herd from growing any further, we had nine stallions castrated in the course of the years. That was as far as we were prepared to go.

It was interesting to see how out of general indifference, and sometimes even hostility, there emerged benevolent supporters of the Pony Farm when their children were at the age when they got interested in horses and riding. When the children outgrew this age, the support faded away. Apparently a project can only be accepted and supported by those who have direct benefit from it, with very few exceptions. Why can't something just exist because of its use for others, because of its beauty or harmony? To our knowledge only two persons within Auroville without children ever supported the Pony Farm financially.

When we finally started to give ponies away it was not surprising to see that most of them could be placed in Auroville. So the money to maintain them is there. How come that people refuse to support a collective project when they can easily find the finances for the thing or the animal when it becomes their own or their children's? Afraid of fraud? No trust in the people running the project? The wish to possess? It may be of nobody's interest, but we have kept painstaking accounts of every rupee that went through the Pony Farm, money from Auroville and otherwise.

There is something else, something unpleasant in our attitude that doesn't affect only the Pony Farm. There must be more to life than economics. There must be more to our relationship with animals, fellow creatures, than economics. Do we want to follow the same circle the rest of the world is following with rather disastrous results, a world we wanted to leave behind in search of something else, something different? Do we also want to see everything in



Children participating in the work at the Pony Farm

by SAIER (Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research). In addition to running the Pony Farm, we also had to earn our living. The postcard unit "Ananda" made some profit until more people had the idea of selling postcards. Now it is hardly any help. In the beginning of this year, Bettina joined the Pony Farm team when our daughter Isis was born. Also for her, it was not

The main thing kids seem to be after now is entertainment. Maybe Fertile Johnny's and the Pony Farm were the last places where kids did something with their hands, together, and had the opportunity to get dirty. We made brushing the horses and helping with their feeding a condition for being allowed to ride. We are not sorry for that, even if it kept some kids away. It has to be clear that

terms of money: the trees are money (timber, firewood).

Living beings have a nature of their own and they have specific needs. Everybody knows that, you will say, tell us something new. Well, the news is that with our domesticated animals we don't seem to care all that much. We care about economics.

Birds are not made to live in cages, not even if it involves the pleasure of mankind, no matter how we justify this pleasure; cows are not made to live at the other end of a short rope, tied to the same tree or pillar every day and every night; bullocks are not made to pull loads as heavy as possible with as little food as possible; dogs are not meant to be their owner's toys or flea and tick-ridden guardians of their property and otherwise pretty neglected; horses are not made for status and pleasure only, never being allowed to run free and enjoy themselves. This does not mean that we are against people benefitting from their domesticated animals. It does mean that we are against exploitation of them, we are against cruelty, ignorance, indifference. Because the way we behave towards animals is usually also the way we treat fellow men.

Sages of all time, including the ones whose followers we pretend to be, have told us about the right attitude towards animals: respect and compassion. Do we even try to behave in that way? All the things mentioned above we did not see "somewhere else in the world" - we saw them in Auroville. But you can't talk to Aurovilians about it. You will immediately hear a flood of arguments and excuses. There has to be a harmony in the relationship between man and animal, a balance of give and take and the responsibility lies with the species that claims to be more developed, us. When there is no balance the whole relationship is wrong.

Back to the Pony Farm. We do remember the good times we had with the ponies and with the kids, the full moon rides, the fly picking sessions at night, the sleep-overs in the hay, the cooking and eating together, the music and

singing, the times when all went wrong and the times when we were in almost perfect harmony with each other and the horses. We experienced the spirit of horses together, the beauty and the power. Most of the ponies will go to Auroville children within the next few weeks. Some have gone already. We don't want them returned to their "old state", underfed and neglected. There are a few old ones, and some difficult characters we would like to keep here. There are a few ponies who have been at the service of

Auroville for almost twenty years. They deserve a quiet "evening" of their life. We can feed them, look after them and give them all they need for Rs. 600 (US \$ 20) a month. For this we need help.

We are grateful to the Divine for letting us have this experience, for giving us this opportunity to learn so much about the nature and spirit of horses - and even more about the nature of humans.

Gaya and Achilles



"Where have all the riders gone . . . ?"

Children Learn what they Live

Summer Camp at New Creation

With the mercury hovering around 40 degrees (Celsius), it is not exactly fun to spend one's summer holidays at Auroville. It is even worse for the children in the neighbouring villages (the "first Aurovilians", as Mother termed them) as they rarely get a break from the daily routine of their lives. This summer, however, proved to be different.

New Creation, had something new to offer to the children in and around Auroville. The teachers from the New Creation school and other volunteers from Auroville organized a two-week summer camp for kids from June 10 to June 25. The motto of the camp, featured on T-shirts sold at Pour Tous to raise funds, was: "Children learn what they live . . . Why not the best?"

About a hundred and ten children between the ages of seven and fourteen years participated in the camp. The children, transcending all borders, came from Auroville schools, night schools sponsored by Auroville and village schools. They all lived together, in groups of six or seven led by an adult, at the New Creation community.

So what was lived and learned in that fortnight?

There was Subash, who offered "Harmony" flowers to The Mother's picture everyday and who was pleasantly surprised to find that after the first few chaotic days, the camp functioned smoothly and harmoniously.

The day began at 6 a.m. with a round of warm-up exercises in which everyone participated. Then there was a session of "yoga asanas". And at 6.45 a.m. when Joy led the children in the recitation of Sanskrit hymns, a distinct peace pervaded the atmosphere.

After breakfast, which the groups took turns in preparing, the children dispersed

for various creative activities. There were a host of workshops to choose from: wood work, painting, leaf design, paper work, clay work, sculpture, puppetry, dramatics, dance drama, singing, embroidery, computer operations and science activities. A certain number of boys who had acquired a reputation for playing pranks took a keen interest in conducting scientific experiments; once their energy was channelised, they no longer disrupted other activities.

Evenings were meant for relaxation with board games, outdoor sports including swimming, and video shows. In an effort to offer the best to the children, only carefully selected, award-winning films were shown. In addition to these daily activities, there were guest lectures on Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, recitals of

Indian classical music by friends from the College of Music and the Annamalai University, and flight demonstrations of model airplanes by the National Cadet Corps of Pondicherry.

At 7 p.m., Mother's music was played and everyone came to the courtyard for a silent gathering. Two eight year old kids said that they found the music soothing and that they spontaneously recollected it at night, while going to bed. One of them further declared, "Now, I am no longer afraid of ghosts at night!" One evening, the electricity failed, and Mother's music could not be played; yet, all the children came on their own accord, and sat there in silence for twenty minutes.

The camp ended with a two-day stage performance of dances, plays and songs by the children. Highlights of the performance were: a Bharat Natyam dance featuring the

story of Radha and Krishna, "Initiation," a play based on one of Mother's tales in English; a dramatic scene from "Othello" translated into Tamil; the enactment of a children's version of the tale of Savitri from the Mahabharata; and a cultural potpourri of songs in English, Telugu, Tamil, Tibetan, Russian, Sanskrit and German. Unfortunately rains, sudden failures of electricity and disturbances in the acoustic system marred the show; even then the audience was suitably impressed by the kids' performance. There was also an exhibition of the paintings, handicrafts and science models that the children had made during the course of the camp.

For the organizers, volunteers and participants, the camp was a success. To the group leaders, what mattered more was not the final performance of the last two days, but what was lived and learned during the two weeks. Sydo, who directed the dramatized version of Savitri, admits that there were times when he despaired: "There was not enough interaction between the groups, there was a lack of information, it was too hot, and the kids were always too tired when they came in from practice." Yet, it all worked out in the end. Sydo continues, "It was really heartening when in the last few days of the camp, some of the kids took the initiative and worked together to make the play a success."

And of course, as Andre of New Creation, says, "The camp was merely a beginning, a demonstration of the principle of 'learning through living'. Two weeks is not sufficient time. We must daily aspire, daily endeavour to live an higher life, so that children can learn from our behaviour."

Bindu



A musical moment during the camp

From Feet to Flowers

She is a newcomer from France, named Arlette. Along with her husband Jean-Jacques, she settled down in Auroville four months ago "to live a love story" as she calls it. A small announcement in the "Auroville News" was sufficient to provide her with a full-time job: "I am a chiropodist, a podologist, a reflexologist. I have practised podology since 1972, reflexology, Kirlian effects, flower remedies since 1985 and in recent years, chromatotherapy. I will start my work at the Health Centre in Antenatotherapy, and if you need, I invite you for an evolutionary work through foot massage."

"Evolutionary work through foot massage" sounds intriguing by itself, even apart from all the medical jargon which the illiterates of the Auroville Today team were able to decipher only with the help of a good dictionary. We took the easy way out and asked Arlette herself to explain her novel contribution to Auroville's medical world.

Arlette: After my medical studies at the University of Lille I first specialised in podology. This science concerns itself with the posture of the body, the way a person stands and walks, paying particular attention to the feet, the eyes and the teeth. I studied with two of France's greatest specialists in this field, Dr. Bourdiol and Dr. Bricot. (Dr. Bourdiol, by the way, was happy to learn that we were going to live in Auroville as he had met Mother!)

The study of the posture, the "postural tonic system", is done through a meticulous exam of three parameters: the

"chappals", a particular kind of footwear which has neither counters nor elevations to allow the foot to rest permanently on the same place. This hinders the action of the tiny elements placed on the insoles. For the eye, in the absence of an ophthalmologist in Auroville, I send my patients to the School of Perfect Eye Sight in Pondicherry. And for the jaws, I aim to work with the dental clinic, but the equipment is costly and the clinic faces an acute shortage of funds.

There are many back and knee problems in Auroville. I suspect that this results from the use of the motorbike in combination with the bad roads. I believe that the use of the motorbike generates stress on the jaws because one clenches one's teeth and this results in muscular tension particularly at the level of the neck. Many people also fall with the motorbike which often causes serious traumas. This is where chromatotherapy helps, for this method of healing by the use of colours is perfectly suited to the treatment of traumas which create energy blockages and affect a person's health.

The science of chromatotherapy was developed by a neuro-psychiatrist, Dr. Christian Agrapart and his wife Michèle Delmas. Dr. Agrapart was led into the study of this science because he was dissatisfied with the idea of prescribing tranquilizers as they do not really change anything. Thus chromatotherapy is not an esoteric or a psychological system, but is a well-documented medical science. It is based on the principle in Chinese medicine of the four energies which rule the human body: heat, cold, humidity and dryness. These four energies should be balanced, and if they are not, illness can result. This can happen at all levels of one's being, including the psychological. For example, when one falls from the motorbike, the body gets a shock. In energy terms, this means an overdose of "cold". Normally, the body will adjust itself. But sometimes it does not manage to do so. Then there is a blockage or a disequilibrium which I try to adjust by applying chromatotherapy.

There are three ways of applying colours: direct colour on the spot which is in pain; sending a colour beam into the eye; and sending colour to the acupuncture spots, a technique which is called chromatopuncture. In France, I had very good results with this technology. It is important to mention that chromatotherapy requires an extremely profound and detailed examination because an actual pain can be the consequence of an old trauma in another place of the body. Thus in order to practise chromatotherapy, one has to have a detailed knowledge of pathology and what it represents on the level of energies; then once the problem is determined, one has to find the corresponding colour that will cure the body. This is not easy and requires a lot of work. Chromatotherapy also treats problems which have a psychological origin.

I believe that this healing method is suitable for use in India as I have already treated numerous cases of infections due to motorbike falls, and abscesses without antibiotic treatment. Other cases such as tendinitis, sprains, torn

ligaments, and muscular contractions (old and recent ones) have been solved without too many problems. There are problems because the humidity in the Indian climate attacks the gelatine layers of the filters used in chromatotherapy. Some Aurovilians are working at finding a way to solve the problem of humidity. Similarly, there are other problems that arise from the Indian way of life and the food patterns that prevail here. To solve such problems, I keep contact with Dr. Agrapart in France and share my observations with him.

Foot reflexology makes use of the knowledge of pathology, the discovery of pathological problems and their treatment through massage of the reflex points. Foot reflexology also deals with symbolic knowledge and thus it not only determines pathological problems and the external signs of an illness, but it also ascertains the deeper causes of the illness. There are several types of massage: one for relaxation; one for the treatment of a temporary or chronological pathology; and one that calls for evolutionary work and is termed antenatotherapy.

Antenatotherapy is a specific massage which allows, in a work of dialogue and co-operation, to go back to the origin of a problem and to resolve it. So the essence of my work is to help the patient to discover the deeper reason underlying his blockages, his difficulties, and his pathologies. Symbolically the feet represent the unconscious, just as the hands represent the conscious. In the feet there are nerve endings that connect to every part of the body, and also, a specific zone of the foot bears traces of our life from conception to the day of birth. This zone is massaged in antenatotherapy. Foot reflexology in general, and antenatotherapy in particular, can be considered as a tool in the evolutionary approach to healing.

Often while using foot reflexology, I propose the use of flower elixirs. I have been working for ten years with flower elixirs, those of Dr. Bach and those of Deva, a French organisation. But I do not prescribe these elixirs, I just propose them. Sometimes, only if the patient asks for a prescription, I indicate which elixir would, according to me, be the most suitable for the given case. This remedy has to be taken fully consciously, I cannot prescribe it without informing the patient about all its effects.

I plan to do a detailed research into flower elixirs, in particular into the correspondence between the flower elixirs of Dr. Bach, those of Deva and those made from flowers which Mother has named. For example there is "Cosmos", a flower that Mother has called "supramental influence in the sex centre". Deva has made an elixir of it, and they prescribe it as the elixir for oratory, that is to say, the essence is given to those who have great fear of speaking in public. What remains to be done is to find the link that will allow us to pass from one meaning to the other.

Our project in Auroville is to create a place for experimentation, elaboration and distribution of those elixirs. This is a project of love, of contact with the divine, of evolution, of transformation for the whole of humanity by working with the flower elixirs of Auroville, charged with Mother's meanings.

In conversation with Carel

"The action of these remedies is to raise our vibrations and open up our channels for the reception of the spiritual self; to flood our natures with the particular virtue we need, and wash out from us the fault that is causing the harm."

Dr. Bach on the power of flowers



"Evolutionary work through foot massage"

PHOTO: BILL

feet, the eyes and the jaw. The postural tonic system allows one to stand upright, to sit and to move in space. Simply stated, nerve receptors, situated principally on the feet, the eyes and the teeth, transmit information to a central computer system, the brain. If the information transmitted is erroneous, the result is a deregulated postural tonic system, from which the following disorders can often arise: rheumatism, arthritis, sciatica, hernia, etc. More than 90% of the population have, for various and more or less explicit reasons, an imbalanced postural tonic system. If one can suppress the pain through medicine one does not treat the mechanical reason for the problem. But by the application of holistic podological methods, much suffering can be relieved, and surgery can be avoided.

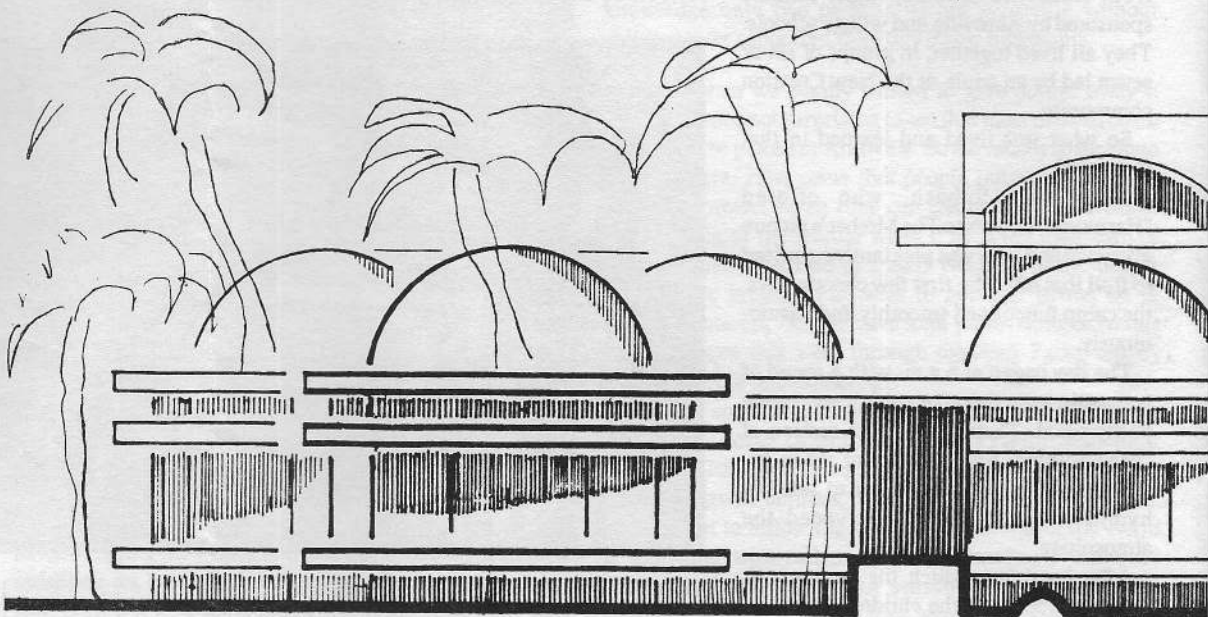
The purpose of the exam is to re-program the postural 'tonic' and that re-programming is carried out on the basis of three parameters:

- ✱ by positioning certain elements of cork (no thicker than two mm) on very precise spots on the insole of the shoe or "chappal" under the foot in order to bring about certain muscular chain reactions;

- ✱ on the level of the eye by different techniques which allow for the restoration of good optic mobility;

- ✱ on the level of the jaw, principally by a good functioning of the articulation and correct dental occlusion;

In my actual practice in Auroville, the solutions have to be adapted and will undoubtedly evolve in the future. Concerning the foot, we should take into account the fact that the majority of Aurovilians go barefoot or use



Now is the time of the tiny flies and the big, black ants. What they bring (besides a reminder of the power of obstinacy and the joys of collective labour) is the knowledge that even seemingly small efforts, repeated often enough, can bring about significant changes. Which brings me to the story of the Village Health Education through Theatre Project.

This project, which I am coordinating, brings together the creative talents of a Kuilapalayam theatre troupe called Revolutionary Flame and the Auroville Health Center - specifically, Dr. Assumpta and her dedicated band of village health care workers and sub-center employees who wrote these plays (in English) and then had them translated into Tamil.

At the moment, there are ten plays, with more to follow. They have exotic titles like: Scabies, Tuberculosis, Waste and Pregnancy.

The inspiration is easy to find: you just have to see the health and hygiene conditions in the village and, if you don't get too involved with putting up walls to keep it out, you will discover something you can do to help. Dr. Assumpta helps. She has involved herself with rural health care around Auroville and so far three health sub-centres have been created. The idea was to send a theatre group to these villages and, through humour, to entertain and teach.

The plays are short, usually 20-30 minutes, and the situations familiar. A

Village Health Act Premiers

family gets scabies and they try to cure it by a visit to the local medicine man; or, two children only want tea and biscuits and their grandmother makes them eat healthy food while she pretends to be deaf to their pleas for sweets. Our first performance was in Edyanchavardi, a village of about 1500 people close to Auroville. The theatre group (12 members — we use 7-8 for each show) rehearsed for two weeks to perform two plays. There was also 45 minutes of pre-show activity — dance and a comic introduction to warm up the crowd. Because I was a theatre director in America, some problems were quite familiar to me, and others very new.

Coordination through the sub-centre meant getting permission to use the village temple electricity for our light and sound equipment. This meant making sure all the local headmen of the village were approached and the request was made with the proper amount of respect and deference. Anyone feeling slighted or left out of this process can (literally) pull the plug on your performance!

A big problem is not being able to get women to perform on stage. In India, theatrical performances are almost exclusively performed by men. However, the primary health care giver in the family (and most of the health care workers) are

women. So, what to do? Various girls were approached, but they all had the same excuse — my father wouldn't let me, or I'm too shy or... one girl, who works for the health center and whose family is Christian, considered it (performing as a social service), but even she finally demurred.

It was time to take drastic action. I met with the theatre troupe and we decided to try it the old-fashioned way — men in women's clothing, acting the female roles. After all, the stories were comedies, so the message wouldn't be spoiled or the attention of the crowd distracted by seeing boys in saris playing mothers and grandmothers. But what about the role of the health care worker? This called for something a little more dignified. We needed a professional!

Five kilometers south of Pondicherry, in a small village near the Sunamuwadi River called Ariankupam, there lives an actress named Bharati. Srinivassan, the troupe's capable director, assured me she was "super", and so, on a Sunday afternoon, off we went, wending our way down a dirt road that led to a small row of mud houses. With dogs barking and women staring, we were greeted at the door by Bharati, whose crisp manner and clear enunciation told me we had found the right woman. An actress

by any other name, I didn't need to speak Tamil to decide it was worth the guest artist fee to cast Bharati as our woman in blue (all health care workers in Auroville wear blue saris).

That day I played the role of producer to the hilt, meeting the set designer (our "set" was a series of painted backdrops displaying various indoor/outdoor scenes) and the music man, a school friend of Srinivassan's who would play music cum sound effect throughout the plays.

Many cups of tea later, I was home, exhausted but satisfied that we had a show. Now all we needed was an audience.

Would they come? The advertisements went out, announcements were posted, a guest artist, makeup, lights, scenic backdrops — everything had been arranged. That evening, as the twilight deepened and the actors worked frantically to hang the painted screens, the people began drifting in (or out — the stage was outdoors, in front of the village temple). By the time the lights dimmed, 1,000 villagers — old and young, mothers with small children and young men leaning nonchalantly on their bicycles were arrayed in front of the small wooden stage.

Dr. Assumpta, as nervous as any playwright on opening night, was watching from across the road, standing in the shadow of the health centre. As the plays were performed, she would emerge to take pictures, and to smile, bite her lip, and worry. Were they saying the dialogue correctly? Wasn't there too much music (there was). Was the intro too long (it wasn't). Actually, it was wonderful. I watched the faces in the crowd. Smiles, then laughter. Lots of discussion and comments. One scene, in which the wise grandmother pretends to be deaf to her grandson's pleas for sweets, drew a lot of giggles from the old ladies. In the days that followed, we would hear the feedback from the sub-centre — what worked and didn't work. What to do next time, and how to do it better.

It was a beginning. Something was shared — most importantly, perhaps, the feeling about a small effort and the message of caring which was received and understood, beyond the barriers of culture and language. Every month, we will be playing to another village — so, if it's July, it must be Kottakarai!

Jill

Quite a bit of Noise in Quiet

Certainly it is premature to declare hospitals and clinics obsolete but health norms, currently understood as functional and mechanistic standards, are clearly not the end of the story. Health should be the natural and spontaneous by-product of the evolving human species. To go beyond the current criteria of health is clearly an aim within the ideal of Auroville.

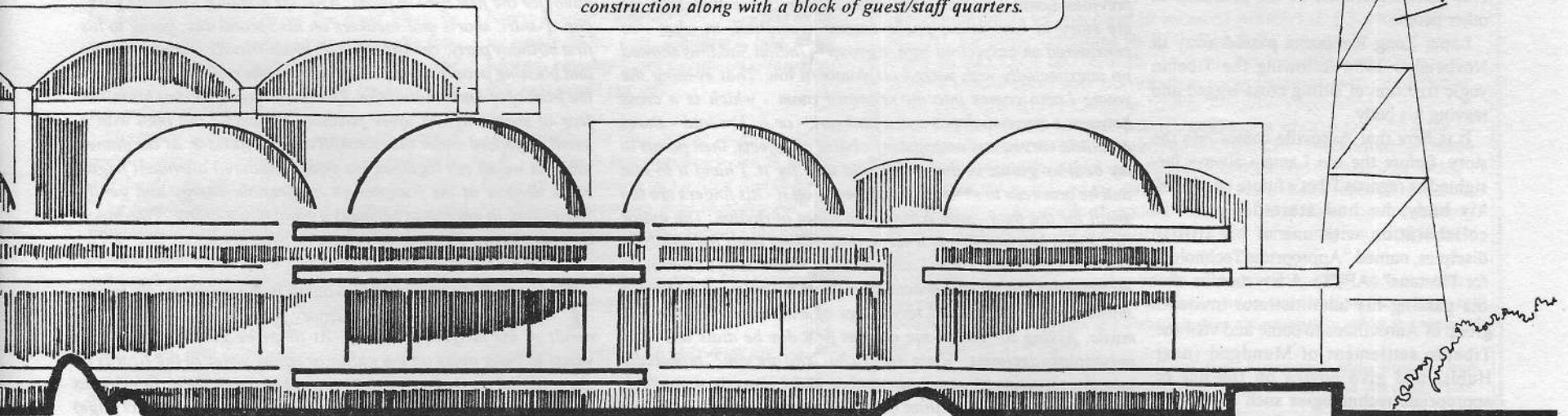
One attempt in this direction is "Quiet", a new facility now under construction. The name was given by the Mother more than thirty years ago to a beach near Auroville. She had remarked on the benefits of the site. It was not until 1987 that the land could be consolidated through the impetus of the International Healing in Evolution Congress in 1987 which supported and promoted the creation of such a facility at Quiet. Major contributions came from the INSTITUT NATIONAL POUR L'ETUDE DE LA REFLEXOLOGIE PODALE ET DES SCIENCES ANNEXES (Paris). Quiet has roots in the homeopathic system of healing but wishes to conduct research on the widest possible basis. What heals through nourishment of the spirit will be most relevant. Quiet organized the Auroville's first attempts to swim with the local dolphins who contribute an amazing presence along the beach. Some initial activities at Quiet have been training camps for youth on environmental awareness, gymnastics, physiotherapy, homeopathy, and massage.

At present, the overwhelming activity is construction of the guest quarters and the main building. The buildings have been sited according to geomagnetic studies and constructed according

to the principles of bio-architecture. Solar energy is being used for electricity and wind energy for pumping water. The entire project is estimated to cost 90 lakh rupees (\$300,000), 20% of which has already been raised and utilized. There is a group of about ten people who help organize the project. The administration is done through the Centre for Scientific Research (CSR). Four Aurovilians and their children live on the site.

As Quiet will not represent a conventional approach or even the usual alternative approach to health and healing, there are those who wonder what its purpose is. To go beyond the traditional medical approach to health whether it be allopathic, naturopathic or etheric, but not to the exclusion of any of these or others, is to enter into a new field of health which is largely undefined. The basis for Quiet can best be understood by the Mother's experiences as recorded in *Mother's Agenda* where the clues for a new human species point to the body as a key. Quiet's purpose is to discover ways to enhance this evolutionary process now underway. What apparently unrelated events are part of this story? For example, during the last two years, Quiet became involved in sea turtle conservation projects that safely launched more than a hundred baby sea turtles. Sea turtles return to the same beach where they were born to lay their eggs. Sea turtles normally live very much longer than people. When a returning sea turtle crawls up the Quiet beach after many decades what will she see, or perhaps more to the point, what sort of person will she meet? Bill

Architect's sketch of the main building at Quiet now under construction along with a block of guest/staff quarters.



New Life for a Lama

This story starts long ago. It is the story of a Lama from Tibet, the Land of Snow. The Lama is known as Zong Lama or Zong Rinpoche.

Our Lama, or religious teacher, was born at the beginning of this century in the Kham province of Eastern Tibet. When he was old enough to start studying the teachings of the Buddha, he travelled to Ganden - one of the largest monasteries of Tibet. Studying under the Dalai Lama's tutor the young Zong became an ardent debater. It is said that his robe was often loose and even torn from the pushing and pulling during the debates.

During his first year in a college of Ganden Monastery he surprised many senior scholars from the other colleges with his skills. He soon became one of the foremost scholars of Ganden and his fame spread throughout Tibet. He was appointed Abbot of Ganden by the Regent of Tibet. During his tenure, discipline and scholarship achieved the highest standards. Then he left the monastery and spent many years travelling through Tibet, healing people and spreading the Buddha's teachings and message of kindness.

Following the events of 1959 many senior Lamas - including Zong Rinpoche - followed the Dalai Lama into exile. Zong Lama immediately started the task defined as a priority by the Dalai Lama: safeguarding as much as was possible of the thousand year old religious tradition of the Land of Snow. A Tibetan Teacher Training Programme was started and Zong Rinpoche became its first principal. It was a nucleus of the future education in exile.

The Rinpoche's last years were consecrated to his spiritual practice and teachings that he delivered around the world. One small incident is worth mentioning here: once, while he was in California, he entered a department store, went to the toy section and started buying all sorts of toys. In spite of the respect due to his master, his attendant dared to ask him what the purpose of this was (the toys later filled up an entire suitcase). The old Rinpoche who was nearly eighty at the time replied: "I know what I am doing: you cannot understand!"

Back in Mundgod in South India, where the monastery of Ganden had been relocated, the old Lama used to have evening walks with his administrator. Very often he would speak about his future incarnation and of how he should be educated. He was in favour of the young boy joining a "normal" school on a temporary basis in order to experience how other children live and learn modern subjects. He was progressive and thought it important for a religious teacher to have first hand experience of the problems of other people.

Lama Zong Rinpoche passed away in November 1984 following the Tibetan yogic tradition of sitting cross-legged and leaving his body.

It is here that Auroville comes into the story. Before the old Lama - always far-sighted as regards Tibet's future needs - left his body, he had started a trust in collaboration with one of his British disciples, named "Appropriate Technology for Tibetans" (APTT). A few months after his passing his administrator invited a group of Aurovilians to come and visit the Tibetan settlement of Mundgod (near Hubli) and give advice on the use of appropriate technologies such as biogas,

or Zong Rinpoche at Transition School

wind energy and afforestation. This was the beginning of a collaboration which is still alive today.

In the meantime, the Rinpoche's new incarnation was born in the vicinity of a famous Shiva temple in Kulu. He was found at the age of five and brought back to the monastery to start his religious training.

In view of the connection between Ganden and Auroville, the young nine-year-old Zong Rinpoche was invited to come and spend a few days in Auroville with his attendants last December on the occasion of the Dalai Lama's visit. The young Rinpoche seemed to like Auroville and had made friends with some Auroville children in the few days he was here. It was during this visit that the words of the old Lama, expressing his desire to attend a normal school in his next incarnation, came back to Tenzing Wangchuk.

It was decided to present an official request to the Transition school: would they agree, as an exceptional case, to take the young Rinpoche in the school for a period of two months? Both sides decided it was an experiment worth trying.

Arriving in Auroville from his monastery was like landing on another planet for the Rinpoche. In the Transition school, the boys and girls of different cultural and racial backgrounds are mixed, all of them speak several languages and have a good working knowledge of English, but none whatsoever of the Tibetan tradition and no particular respect for the "tulku lineage" of Zong Lama! There was the added problem that the young Lama hardly spoke English, but Roger soon offered to give him private classes in the evenings to help him with the basics.

He could mix freely with children of his age as an equal, and most probably for the first time since his recognition had to queue up for his meals in the common dining room and wash his own plate. He sat and played with all the other children, wore

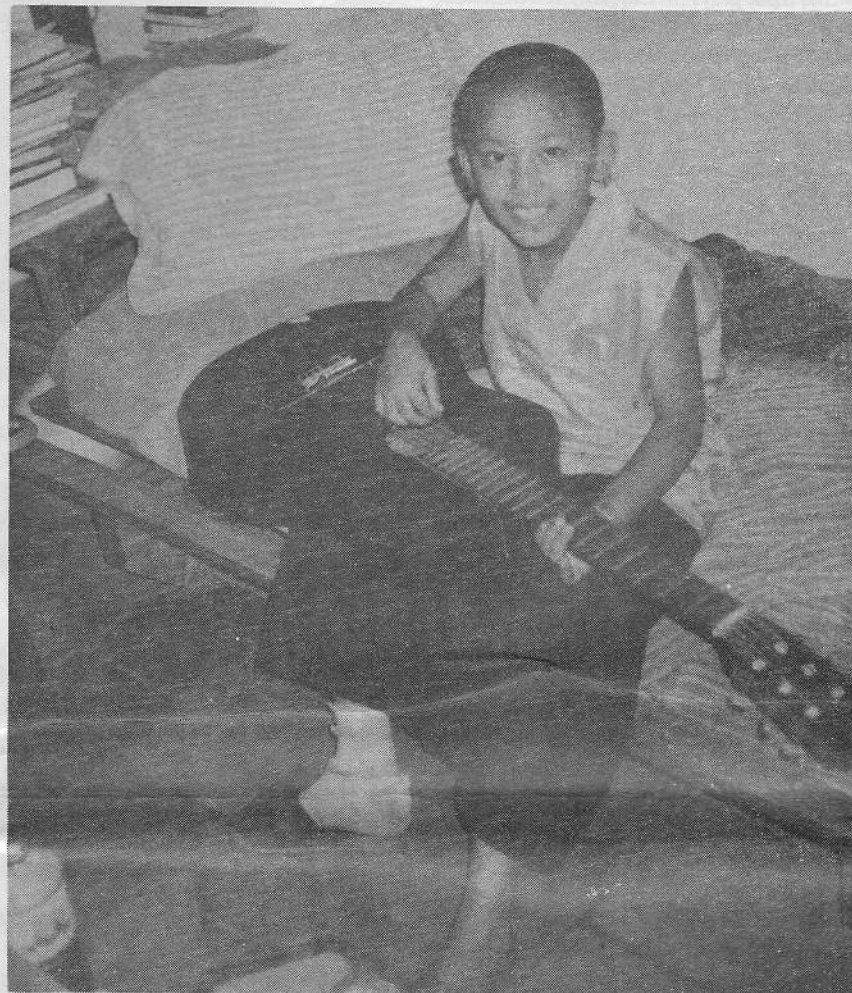
shorts, T-shirts and sneakers instead of his robes and also discovered the sea, swimming and surfing. He tried horseback riding and badminton and loved playing football, until he had a small accident while riding on the back of a moped. But this also was an experience, he was discovering physical suffering for the first time and that in his own body. Rinpoche even acted in a small drama conducted by the teachers for the end

of the term. He played a lion.

Rinpoche has gone back now to his monastery and to his destiny. Does he dream at night of his Auroville friends?

It is difficult to say what impact these two months will have on his life, but for Auroville and the school in any case, it was a very rare, special and pleasant experience; and who knows, perhaps one day Auroville will even introduce the art of debating - at which the old Rinpoche was so good - in its schools!

Claude



Zong Rinpoche at play

PHOTO: ROGER

Samsara and the Transit-Zone

Life in the transit zone - in my case a year spent at Kottarakai guest house - has its surprises. A special one was young Zong Rinpoche, a reincarnated Tibetan Lama who spent two months with us, while attending Transition school.

The evening of the young Rinpoche's arrival we are gathered before dinner on the patio of the Guest house. The young, robed Rinpoche impetuously grabs two tapes I've handed to his friend Sukhamuni, looks at them and then asks me to read out the titles. "Too long in exile" and "Enlightenment". I reply, as his attendant smiles. I then give the Rinpoche a gift: a small brightly coloured wooden elephant from Sri Lanka. He takes it without a word.

The next day I ask his attendant, a protegee and confidant of the previous Lama, whether Zong likes elephants. He then tells me the story of how at his predecessors' cremation, in what was considered an auspicious sign, a group of Indian Saddhus showed up unexpectedly with sacred elephants in tow. That evening the young Lama comes into my cramped room - which is a cross between a museum depot and a junkyard - or so I'm told - stares at a little carved owl amongst my clutter of objects, then points to my beat-up guitar in the corner and asks for it. I hand it to him and he proceeds to strum and bang away on it - his fingers are too small for the frets - with a surprising sense of rhythm. The guitar fascinates him and this is a scene that repeats itself frequently in the weeks to come. Later I am told that guitars aren't allowed in monasteries but his predecessor had taken a particular interest in music and commissioned recordings of traditional Tibetan folk music. Asking for the phone on that first day he dials and then imperiously declaims: "Zong Rinpoche! Who are you?" repeatedly into the receiver. It's a wrong number and I reassure a startled, somewhat shaken Aurovillian on the other end, that everything's

O.K. Before leaving he simply appropriates a small music box that plays the Marseillaise which had been given to me years ago for eventual use at Pour Tous meetings. "That's not for adults. It's for kids. It's mine.", he says.

The face of his previous incarnation, which I saw in a photograph, hovers at times in the back of my mind as I look at the kid. When asked if he remembers scenes from his past life, he answers that he used to, but some of the memories he had when younger are fading. At times in the midst of a conversation he'll stroke an imaginary beard and hiking his thumb over his shoulder, simply remark: "before." His presence fills up the guest house in a joyful way as he plunges into the experience of being a kid, no doubt for the first time in years. Whether donning Auroville garb: cap, T-shirt, shorts and sneakers on his second day; going to his first birthday party; or visiting newly made friends: waving, smiling and blessing people as he passes them on the road while sitting on the front of Ann's motorbike. After rapidly conquering his initial fear of swimming, he loves splashing around in the pool with a small surfboard under the watchful eyes of his tutor. At the dinner table as we all eat together, his good-humoured attendant feigns mock despair at the Rinpoche's irrepressible energy and gently teases him, in what soon becomes a guest house litany: "Too much Samsara today, Rinpoche!"

I start to help him with his reading in the evenings. He learns quickly and has a good memory for new words, probably a result of his religious training. At times he gets abstracted, or wants to bang away on the guitar or squirt water at the lizards on the wall, but we usually manage to get forty minutes in. Sometimes (contd. on the next page)

PROBLEM GARBAGE

Pondicherry faced with an increasing garbage problem, allows garbage to be taken by anyone who wants it. The practice among many local farmers is to take it in large amounts and pile it all along the roads - some that run through Auroville - to decompose as much as possible for use as compost. The serious health and environmental hazard that this untreated waste poses (it includes batteries, plastics glass and medical refuse) motivated Auroville to press the issue, as various solutions for treating the garbage have yet to be implemented by the Pondicherry Government. On July 11, a group of about 200 villagers from a coastal village marched into the northeast section of Auroville. Their complaint was the compliance of the Pondicherry Municipality with a Madras Court Order prohibiting the movement of raw garbage from Pondicherry into Tamil Nadu. The violent reaction to the Court Order that was issued a year ago but only

recently and unexpectedly enforced, was to barricade the roads, slash roadside plantations, burn or break gates of about seven Auroville settlements and threaten the residents of that area.

At an extraordinary four hour meeting between delegations from different villages and Auroville, presided over by the Deputy-Collector from Tindivanam and chaired by the Secretary of the Auroville Foundation, held at Kuilapalayam School Trust on July 16th, complaints were heard and an agreement reached on the compost/garbage issue. It was furthermore decided to establish a Peace Committee of delegations from Auroville and its neighbouring villages that would hold regular monthly meetings in the presence of the Deputy-Collector and the Secretary of the Auroville Foundation to work towards peaceful solutions through dialogue concerning any future problems that may arise between Auroville and the surrounding villages.

DADU PASSES ON

In mid-July Dadu (Jagan Mohan Das) passed away. He was a familiar and loved figure at Matrimandir since the early years. A cheerful and willing worker, he maintained a steady connection to the kitchen, both the central kitchen at Matrimandir and his own little improvised kitchen in his room in the Matrimandir camp. During the lean years of the 1970's, Dadu's ingenuity to get dinner and even sweets on the table out of practically nothing is now legendary. Friendly to all, Dadu is fondly remembered by a whole generation of Aurovilians as a gentle, dedicated man from Orissa, an example of the special ingredient needed to make a "recipe" like Auroville work.

WHAT'S UP AT AMI?

Rather ask, what's not happening at Ami? The last week before school started (June 27 to July 3), this youth community at Auroville hosted a fun week to celebrate the end of the summer. Ami daily saw thirty to forty youngsters either engrossed in some activity - metal work, sculpting (in clay and wax), carving (wood and shell), repairing antique motorcycles, juggling, painting or just hanging out, being part of and enjoying the scene. Ami hopes to keep the show going by opening a teashop, run by and for the youth.

AUROVILIANS MEET - EVEN ABROAD

From August 5 to 8, there is a gathering in Paris of young people connected to Auroville. The gathering, the first of its kind, seeks to bring together young people who have visited and worked in Auroville and young Aurovilians who are presently, abroad. Aurora who is co-coordinating this meeting at Paris says, "The primary motive is to discuss the themes, 'Why the West?' and 'How can we help the youth in Auroville'". Many others in Auroville also feel the need to reach out to young people all over the world and are considering the possibility of starting an international youth magazine.

New publication: The Dalai Lama in Auroville

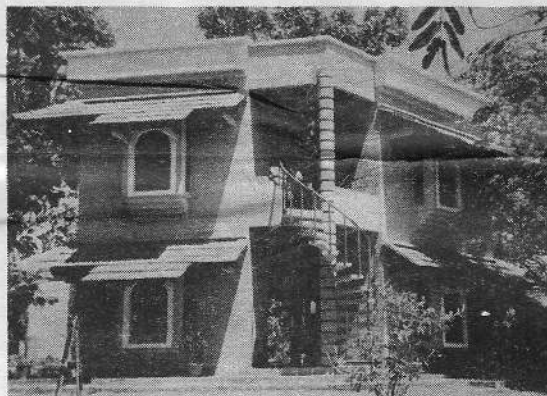
A new illustrated, forty-eight page booklet called *The Dalai Lama in Auroville* has been published by the Pavilion of Tibetan Culture. The book has an introduction by the Director of the Pavilion of Tibetan Culture, Claude Arpi. It contains the interviews with the Dalai Lama conducted by *Auroville Today*, his public address in the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium at the Bharat Nivas, and his meeting with the

Auroville teachers.

Cost of the publication is Rs. 45 in INDIA (includes postage), ABROAD \$3 (includes airmail postage). Two and a half hours of audio cassette recordings of the interviews and address are also available at Rs. 150 (includes postage) and \$10 (includes airmail postage). Orders should be sent to the Pavilion of Tibetan Culture, Auroville, 605101, India.

AUROVILLE SANGHA

A group of people are meeting regularly in an exploration toward the spiritualized society which Sri Aurobindo described: "What I am aiming at is not a society like the present rooted in division. What I have in view is a Sangha founded in the spirit and in the image of oneness." The Auroville Sangha published its second bulletin in June and mentioned in the progress report: "Basically, and very simply, all those present were looking for a way to be practically together without denying diversity. They recognized a similar aspiration for a truer Auroville which they would like to try together to manifest, without being anti-anyone or anti-Foundation or anti-Government. They were looking for a space of freedom where it would be possible to research, experiment, without the shackles of bureaucratic regulations. Not a refusal of authority in itself, but because they would like to submit to the higher authority of a truer Auroville."



BUILDING UP

This is the new guest house at Verite (Photo: Bill). It was built using stabilized earth blocks and ferro-cement elements. Architecture by Poonam.

Essays Divine and Human

This comprehensive volume collects together writings of Sri Aurobindo's that were unpublished in his lifetime. Covering the period from 1911-1950, it includes much material that is new, as well as most of the *Hour Of God*, and other writings taken from the *Harmony of Virtue* and *The Supramental Manifestation* volumes of the Centenary edition. It also includes the complete Thoughts and Aphorisms.

A series of essays on such subjects such as the Silent Mind and Sources of Poetry, dating from Sri Aurobindo's early period in Pondichery, contain seeds that will later flower into book-length works in the *Arya*. Two essays from the same period deal with Theosophy and the Theosophical Movement. Pilate's world-weary skepticism when faced with a great messenger of truth, becomes a starting point in the essay *Sat*, for reflections on the fate of truths and the dogmatic usurpations of history. Usurpations that have ranged from the rejection of the Graeco-Roman era of philosophical illumination "The old philosophical spirit was torn to pieces with Hypatia in the blood-stained streets of Alexandria" to the more recent betrayal by Church and Empire of the original message of Christ. "But the kingdom that came was not Christ's, it was Constantine's, it was Hildebrand's, it was Alexander Borgia's."

Man as a transitional being is the recurring theme, linked with reflections on the ultimate nature of consciousness and the goal of evolution, in the section entitled *Man to Superman*. This comprises notes, drafts and fragments on philosophy and psychology, written between 1912 and 1947.

"All terrestrial existence is the slow surge of a hidden Consciousness mounting up out of an apparent Inconscience towards its own perfect and luminous manifestation. This is the secret of evolution and its significance.

There is a spirit secret even in things immobile, - there is an All - Consciousness disguised in the Inconscient. In Matter life is embedded, in life is an enveloped mind, in Mind is concealed a greater supramental being not yet manifested. These are the significant and illumining terms of the riddle. Evolution is the labour of Nature, or let us say at once of the Energy of the secret spirit, working in in the semblance and under the limiting conditions of an inconscient Power to release these latencies each in its turn out of their involution in the original Inconscience. It is an All - Consciousness that is working, the force of a self-aware cosmic spirit, and the emergence of its secret powers is implied in the very nature of existence; therefore the result is inevitable."

Finally nowhere is Sri Aurobindo's iconoclastic vein more evident than in *Thought and Aphorisms*, where a trenchant sense of irony combines with a consummate use of paradox to subvert mind's vaulted certainties.

Roger

Essays Divine and Human by Sri Aurobindo.
Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, 1994.
580 pages. Rs 125.

(continued)

he asks me to take him by the hand when he goes to the shower as he has an inordinate fear of frogs! He then returns to his house in the garden to memorize and recite prayers and sutras for another hour or so.

Starting with a simplified version of Aladdin and his magic lamp we soon move on to Noddy and finally by the end of his stay to Kipling's "The Elephant's Child". He has a mischievous imagination and we're soon behaving like co-conspirators. Our readings take on a life of their own and everyone in the guest house has a second identity. He is Noddy, my roommate monk is Big Ears, his religious tutor is Plod the Policeman, and I, no doubt about it, am the Clockwork Clown. As for the goblins... well, that's another story. He starts borrowing his

tutor's Tibetan - English dictionary and looks up words on his own. Adventure, tale, idea, wicked, naughty ... we decide on a target of five new words per day.

Finally the day comes when he must return to the monastery. He is in his fobes again, looking like a little Buddha, but we manage one more duel with dry paddle-sized teak leaves (he who destroys the other's leaf wins) before he climbs into the cab. A scarf, a wave from the car, a last wonderful smile and he is gone.

No doubt about it: I already miss the kid!

Roger

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In this issue (8 pages):

Pony Farm, Summer Camp, Health and a Lama



August 1994

Number Sixty-Seven

Journey to . . .

Two warships sit on the horizon out at sea. A few coral reefs further on there's a war. Of course, we didn't come for that, or even for the temples to which hundreds of pilgrims stream daily. We were a group of snorkelers. Nobody else came for that, the crowds all came for purification at the famed thousand-pillared temple in Rameswaram, "the island of prayer" at the southern tip of India. I happened to be part of a student group from Last School on a field trip vacation organized by one of the teachers for the summer break. Our interest was in the biosphere of the coral reef and its intricate beauty. The pilgrims stared at our strange group, unable to fathom what had brought together such a unusual mixture of people, unable to decipher the clues of the swim fins sticking out of the backpack or the boogie board.

But that's all over now. I'm on the way back home with some peeling sunburn, coral cuts, and blisters on my toes from the swim fins. I'm trying to write down these few notes, some reflections on what happened because I'm jammed in a unreserved compartment with double the number of people it's designed for. It's going to be an all night journey with no sleep possible. Fortunately it is now quiet because two obnoxious drunks have passed out and the roar of the train is drowning out their snores. We actually had reserved berths for the next day which was our date of return, but in real life the train starts the night before to get you there on that day! At it. That slip got us into this unreserved mess and a hard day's night. I am surprised as I look at our group of students, at how they have accepted the situation without much fuss and are now sleeping in the luggage racks and contorted all over each other, trying to adjust to the drag of time in forced circumstances.

I am now writing that here's a great opportunity to reflect, but how can I concentrate? Think back on the last interesting image you saw, I tell myself. Yes, that was peacocks out the window. Lots of peacocks quietly standing or slowly walking in the desolate fields along the track with a setting sun to highlight them. Where did they come from? And then there were the wetlands with sea birds, cranes flying from under the trestles as the train crossed with a steel hum. A nice photo; but I have only a ballpoint pen that needs a hard shake to write without skipping.

The world of sleep wants to come and is blocked by the hard wooden seat, lights, heat, the wrong position, jostling bodies, noise and a restless mind. The minutes inch by and the scene becomes more surreal. Some men are trying to play cards and teach gin rummy.

My mind wanders back to Rameswaram as if to a refuge. The skin-diving had been such a relief after the stifling heat, the clutter, the pilgrim congestion. Swimming out from the shore, the temple, the pilgrims and the litter on the beach are still visible and even the sound of the temple music drifts over the waves, but then with the kick of a fin—a world change, silent, cool, soft,

fluid. Shafts of sunlight falling on waving grasses, a patch of glistening sand; a sculpture of coral and up for more air. Back down to explore the coral. A puffer stands his ground assuming that he is frightening you with his appearance but it's his unusual side stabilizing fins that are fascinating. A school of little fish with luminous stripes zooms by and then there's a clown with harlequin colours and I need more air.

Brain corals look disturbing like huge brains lying exposed. Other corals come in rich blues and reds with variegated textures. Manta and sting rays scamper from the bottom in a cloud of sand dust. I laugh as I see the classic villain of so many underwater movies and because he (or she) plays the part so perfectly. It's a moray eel protruding from a hole in the coral with its unnaturally oversized jaws opening and closing with apparent menace. Without the film drama, the moray appears to be acting normally and just trying to gather in any passing morsels. This submerged world of fascinations seems endless and I remembered the warning that it can be addictive. Some divers never want to come back to the surface, forget, and end up in yet another world. I come up for air but people are smoking in the train compartment in front of the No Smoking sign. Complaints are aired and after a few quick and heavy puffs, the cigarettes are tossed burning out the window against the night. How many more hours? I can't believe my watch, it normally eats up the days and nights at a voracious pace.

Back to Rameswaram and I'm in the thousand-pillared temple getting purified with a sip of Ganges water and a puja. The temple is totally damp and humid from the pilgrims who come in dripping sea water after their holy dip and then get another drenching of Ganges water, and later buckets of water from each of the temple tanks complete the rituals. Some appear bored, others are having fun and a few seem to be contacting whatever truth is there. All are very wet. We try a meditation on peace, sending it out over the few waves that divide us from the war. The next day there is only one warship on the horizon instead of two.

I can't write anymore on the train. I can't do anything. I can't get out of my seat because someone is sleeping on my feet and the aisle is a pile of sleeping bodies. What can happen? The train comes to a station and the whole scene starts to reshuffle. I climb out into the night of screaming vendors and buy an ice cream. One of the students is appalled: "How can you eat ice cream in the middle of the night?" I am surprised that he is surprised because it is so easy and it feels like it is saving my life. Maybe it did because I survived that train ride and came home very happy to be back in Auroville. I remember the other worlds, the journey to the bottom and the long bridge that Rajiv Gandhi dedicated to his mother, a bridge guarded by a manned machine gun aiming at you as you cautiously weave through the road block to reach the "island of prayer."

Bill

. . . the Bottom

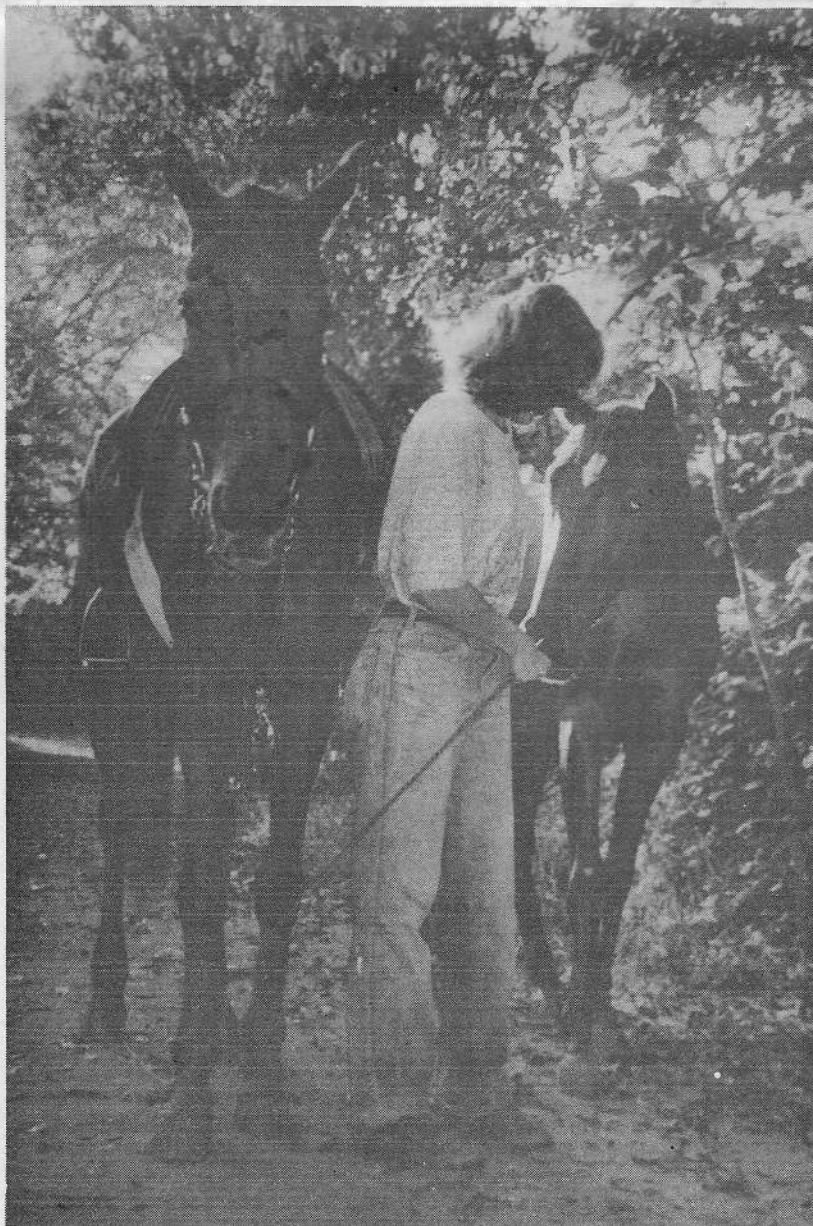


PHOTO: BILL