

AUROVILLE TODAY

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IS the world ill?

It has bouts of fever. Politicians try like doctors to heal it, using either strong and dubious medicines, or alternative methods. But wouldn't it be better to try to maintain its good health, balance and harmony? Auroville is an integral part of the world, and when the world suffers, Auroville suffers. But while we include in this issue some reflections from Aurovilians who recently returned, we prefer not to add our political analysis to the market place flooded with opinions and information sold by the media.

It seems important for *Auroville Today* to stress that one of the aims of Auroville is to embody Human Unity. But this idea of harmony begins with ourselves. In this issue we introduce some Auroville approaches to establishing health and harmony in the body. We will explore this topic further in future issues.



photo Sven

The Body Can Do Anything!

Goupi came to Pondicherry in 1966 and met Mother. He stayed on, and until 1977 was a teacher in the ashram school. In that year he moved to Auroville, and almost immediately began working intensively on people's bodies, using a massage approach he was learning from Biren-da, an ashramite. It continues to be his main work today.

Alan interviewed him recently.

Auroville Today: What is your definition of 'health'?

Simply happiness in the body.

And how do you try to achieve this—both for yourself and in your work with others?

It's not a matter of trying. If you try, it doesn't work. It's learning to be, surrendering to Mother. When I began this massage work, somebody told me that when you put your hands on somebody, you have to send your mind packing. You have to learn to listen to the body with your hands and your heart, not your head. I just try to be a channel for Mother's force to come through my hands. And when that happens, everything becomes light and just flows.

When I began this work, I felt I had a responsibility to cure people. Then one day, while I was working on an Aurovillian, I suddenly didn't feel this anymore—and it was like a big weight lifted off me. Suddenly I was much happier. All I can do is be sincere. Then people will receive what they need to receive.

So you are working intuitively rather than from a set approach?

Each person requires a new approach, a new way of listening. Yes, in general, I don't know what I'm looking for in

somebody's body. But sometimes it's as if the body calls "go here": Or my hand will go somewhere, do something and the whole body is freed, becomes light. Because one tiny black spot can cause problems everywhere.

What do you mean by a black spot?

In the physical, it can be a knot in a muscle, a squeezed nerve. And when you press on it and dissolve it, there's a chain reaction as everything is interconnected. Sometimes people cry and you realize something has been unblocked on another level, but you don't know what. Sometimes even a word is enough, a promise to treat somebody next week. Because then the body doesn't feel lonely anymore, and starts healing itself—and then the person doesn't come back!

One day, Biren-da, my teacher, badly

damaged his knee. Mother's doctor advised an immediate operation. But Mother showed him how to massage it and it recovered very quickly. It proved to Biren-da that the body is capable of anything, of healing everything. Nothing is impossible. It's a matter of giving it the confidence that it can do it. Too often, it is uncertain, fearful. And fear, Mother wrote to Biren-da, is worse than any illness. Very often it is fear that is the source of the dark spots in the body. And even when the physical problem has been removed, it can remain—to trip up the body again later.

When I give a massage, I try to give the body confidence in itself, put it in a certain state to trigger something. And then the body will continue working on itself. It's just a matter of waking something up. And to do that, you sometimes have to shout a bit!

contd. on p.2

"There are all kinds of freedom: mental freedom, vital freedom, spiritual freedom, which are the results of successive stages of mastery. But there is also a totally new kind of freedom: that of the body. For instance, during the flu epidemic, I was living every day among people carrying the germs. And one day I clearly felt that the body had decided that it wouldn't catch the flu. And it wasn't a 'higher will power' making the decision... it was the body itself deciding... the body has DIRECT control, without any outside intervention. It isn't a higher consciousness imposing itself on the body: it is the body itself awakening to freedom in its cells, it's a cellular freedom."

*The Mother
Satprem, Mind of the cells,
op.cit.p.134.*

"We are still at the basic stage"

A view from the Auroville Health Centre

Lucas came to Auroville for the first time in 1973. During his second stay from '75 to '79 he began helping in the new health centre in Aspiration.

In 1988, after completing his studies in Germany and working in a hospital, he returned to Auroville 'for good'. At present he is working in the Auroville Health Centre as part of the staff.

What do you see as the major challenges confronting you as a doctor working in the villages?

For me, the major challenges relate to

nutrition, health, family planning and the eradication of infectious diseases. Regarding nutrition, the situation in the Auroville villages is better now than 20 years ago. But there is still much malnutrition and there are many cases of vitamin deficiency which can develop into severe diseases. Interestingly, even the rich families suffer deficiencies because there is hardly any knowledge regarding nutrition and food values. Kirre (spinach or any green leafy vegetable) and papaya are cheap and rich sources of Vitamin A, and the millets are good sources of vitamin B and proteins as they are

cooked as a whole grain. The problem is that millet has traditionally been seen as a poor man's food and the papaya fruit is associated with abortions. But slowly these attitudes are changing. For example, we have begun 'mother and child health' classes where I talk about these things, and the women are very responsive and keen to learn.

Family planning is quite a delicate subject and I've not touched it much yet. But my general impression is that there is more birth control now than twenty years ago, not because of the Health Centre, but be-

contd. on p.2

Q: I am still wondering why there should be doctors and a dispensary at all. Isn't it a paradox — the Divine sending his disciples to the human physician?

Sri Aurobindo: Rubbish! This is a world of the play of the forces, sir, and the Doctor is a force. So why should not the Divine use him? Have you realised that if the Divine did everything, there would be no world, only a show of marionettes?

from: Sri Aurobindo on Himself

The Body Can Do Anything! (contd.)

You see each body as unique. But are there also certain patterns or physical problems that are shared by many Aurovilians?

(laughs) Yes! The Tibetan doctors who came last year said that the source of many of the Aurovilians' physical problems was the stomach. I find the same.

But what does this mean?

The stomach is the powerhouse of the body. It affects everything else. The Tibetan doctor said that Aurovilians have a tendency to live their ideals too much in their head. They don't bring them down into matter. And this causes a blockage, a

disconnection in the body which prevents harmony and the flow of energy. The stomach needs this energy to work well.

This tension in Auroville, created by the gap between the ideal and the reality is for me the real cause of all these physical problems. It's in the atmosphere, waiting to descend, like a big amoeba.

So Auroville is not a healing environment?

Auroville is a fantastic healing environment. But there is also this constant pressure here to progress, to change, and when you are not sincere, this throws up resistance.

It's as if the Divine is pressing on the body of Auroville, pressing out the black spots?

Exactly! And quite often when I'm

doing a massage, I don't feel I'm working on a particular body. It's as if I'm working on all bodies, a whole world.

At times, I feel I would like to be working at Matrimandir or at the school. But immediately more people start coming for massage, and I feel that by helping this one or that one to find their own space, I'm helping the whole. Sometimes individual problems are clearly related to community problems. And if I can help dissolve something in the individual, I feel it also helps dissolve it in the community. In this sense, doing massage is no different from teaching or building or planting trees. We're all doing the same work, which is trying to embody our aspiration in a physical activity. □

"We are still at the basic stage" (contd.)

cause of advertisements and government propaganda in the media. However, legalised abortion is still often used as an acceptable form of 'contraception', and the pressure on a family to have at least one boy still results in big families.

As for hygiene — well, the water availability in the villages has improved tremendously since Auroville has been here, but the hygiene situation is far from satisfactory. There is no proper drainage in the streets or at the water taps, and there are virtually no toilets in the villages. It is the women who have to get the water, and as their freedom to defecate and urinate in the open is very limited, it is mainly they who are concerned and ready for change. The women are the key to many decisive changes in the villages, changes of attitude and changes of habits.

What about infectious diseases?

In contrast to the situation in the Western affluent countries, a doctor here has to treat many infectious diseases. E.g. bowel parasites are something villagers and Aurovilians both have; in the villages it might be about three-quarters of the population. As we share the same water sources and supply systems, as we are exposed to the same environment and to similar sources of prepared food, we are one in sharing worms and amoebas. The local villager, however, is generally less well nourished and therefore much more prone to suffer severely from relatively harmless infestations and infections and to get in-

fectured with more disabling diseases like tuberculosis and leprosy.

You treat both Aurovilians and the villagers. Do you notice that they have different attitudes to health and healing?

Yes. Western Aurovilians have a different approach to their body. The Western attitude expects the body to be healthy, and acts immediately if something goes wrong. Whereas among the villagers there are many who have grown up in a poor environment and who might never have experienced a really healthy state: they often don't go to a doctor until it's really serious.

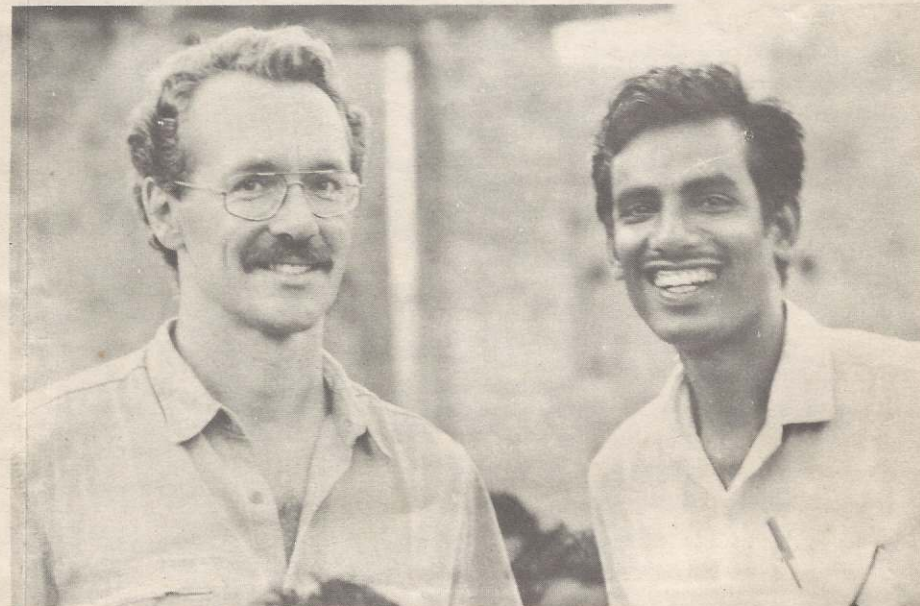
In other aspects, the differences are more superficial than actual. For example, villages patients demand an injection which, for them, is the symbol of quick-acting and effective medicine. Auroville patients often demand a homeopathic pill which, for them, is the symbol of a more subtle, 'spiritual' medicine. But I find that both demands are for the same thing — to insert something into the body to cure it, due to uneasiness and anxiety. For me, the real step beyond the normal attitude is to heal oneself — without referring to any outer mediating aid — by the power of consciousness. This I believe to be definitely possible. But who of us can do without these outer aids if his physical integrity seems threatened by something destructive?

I would say that many of the health projects existing in Auroville are — to judge from my experience with the patients of the Health Centre — idealized concepts not very much in touch with the basic physical needs of the local people and maybe the Aurovilians. In my opinion, there is lots of work to be done for many years — e.g. regarding hygiene and nutrition — before I dare to think about less physically oriented therapeutic concepts on the one hand and technologically more sophisticated medical care on the other.

How do you see your role?

I want to be a doctor for any patient regardless of his race and beliefs and regardless of his official status towards Auroville. I see myself engaged in what the WHO has called the struggle for "health for all by the year 2000", recognizing the organization of a health scheme as an important factor in the struggle for social justice.

Next, I am happy to be a practitioner of scientific medicine which is much more than *allopathy*. It also includes psychosomatic aspects, preventive community care, physiotherapy etc. I always prefer to use no



Dr. Lucas and Sundaram

medicine at all, but the main obstacle is the psychological need for drugs. For example, the scientific treatment for any diarrhoea, including cholera, is to replace the loss of water and salts by drinking. I would be extremely happy if all the villages knew this, and there would be no need for injections or fanciful magic, and also if all the Aurovilians knew this, and there would be no need for allopathic or non-allopathic drugs. This for me is basic medical care. And if I use powerful allopathic medicines, I deviate from the standardized approach by trying to assess how much strength there is in the individual to combat the disease, prescribing accordingly.

I believe that any scientist as well as a medical scientist has to adopt an attitude of humility, because the further you go, the more you understand how much you don't know. Having read Sri Aurobindo and the Mother many years before I started medical studies, I've never been indoctrinated by the feeling that medical science is the 'last answer'. For finally, of course, as Sri Aurobindo pointed out, it is the body — the miraculous powers inherent in nature — that heals itself. If the body doesn't cooperate, there's no drug on the market that can help.

And your attitude to other therapies?

There is a lively discussion going on in Auroville regarding allopathy versus alternative therapies. I have no problem in accepting other healing approaches, but I really think they all have to bear the test of therapeutic effect. As I use allopathy, I observe its limitations and disadvantages daily. But there are advantages and disadvantages in every other therapeutic system; and I do not believe in one all-powerful panacea. To be a doctor or a healer or a helper means to constantly be approached with a feeling of trust and belief in your skill and power, and there is a great temptation to feed on this trust and to neglect self-criticism and clear discrimination as to your limitations.

It seems to be almost a global problem that for many doctors basic and primary

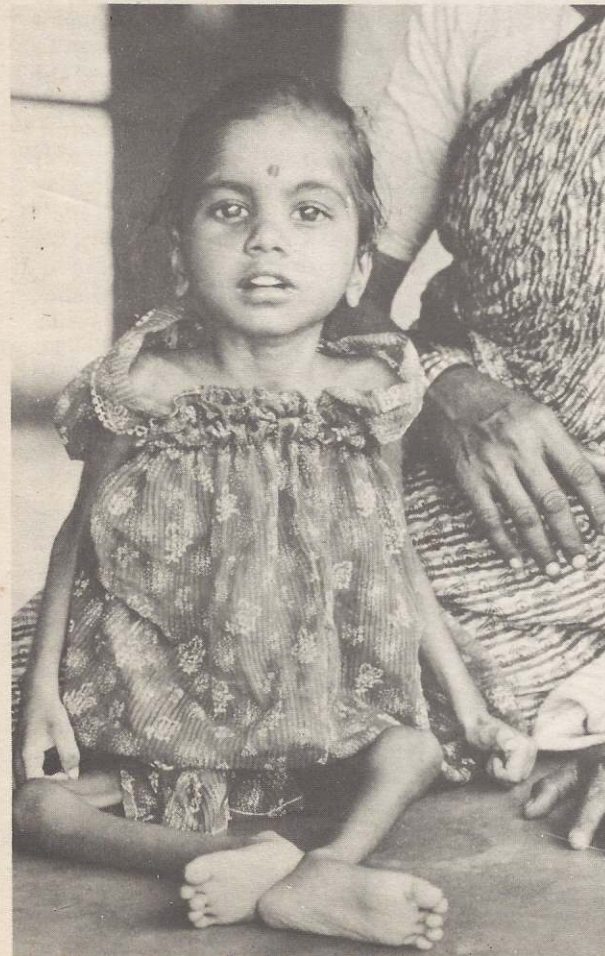
health care in a rural area of a tropical developing country bears no challenges. I think it is quite possible to discover many interesting aspects, to feel challenged and fulfilled by the psychological richness of the work.

For me, spiritual development also means very much coming down to earth, doing away with illusions and letting your surroundings reach and touch you.

What would you like to see happening in the next ten years?

If you really want me to dream — I would like to see a very clean, quiet Health Centre and sub-centres with the same atmosphere in other villages providing reliable treatment with warm human care, and the invisible spiritual healing force presiding over it. I'd like preventive and educational programmes to be established, like the 'mother and child health' classes we've just begun. And I'd like to see beautiful changes in the villages — well-kept water places instead of mud-pools without drainage, clean toilets in the houses instead of fields of human excreta around the villages, nice roads with greenery in between, rich and varied food prepared with cleanliness and beauty... Much of this dream should be achievable in quite a short time, but only in proportion to the will and cooperation of the village people. What I like about the Tamils is that they are warm and friendly and have open hearts. If they see you have goodwill, you can make mistakes and they will tolerate you and your doings. But there is this tendency in us Westerners to be rude and impatient and intellectually brutal, imposing our well-meant ideas about how to improve things. In this respect, the proposed Kuilapalayam project presently being worked out (see the previous *Auroville Today*) is interesting and full of hope and promise. For the proposed improvements, I am convinced that money will not be a problem. The real problem will be the reconciliation of different views and the cooperation of a team of diverse people.

Interview by Alan



But there is still much malnutrition...

HEALTH IS BALANCE

An interview with an Auroville homeopath

Auroville Today: What do you understand by health?

Barbara: Balance. This is not easy to obtain, because we human beings are not only dependent on our physical surroundings, but we are also open to influences that come from the universe and from our unconscious, our subconscious level. To get balance means for human beings to become conscious. Homeopathy treats not only the physical plane. It treats through finer impulses and vibrations.

How do we obtain balance? That's the whole question about health. Everything is linked. But whatever happens on any level reflects on the physical level. Most of our illness comes from emotional problems, frustrations. And when our emotions get stuck, it could affect the kidneys, because the kidneys are the harbour, or the spring, of our emotions. If the energy is blocked the glands get affected and all the corresponding organs. If we don't release what we suppress, if we don't accept and transform it, it will all be projected into our atmosphere. What we deny in ourselves, we will get back from the outside. If we don't realize that, we get even more upset, more unbalanced, and it will be even more difficult to clear up. Sometimes it is very useful to go into the emotional state and find out why one is frustrated, where one is stuck, what is not acceptable right now.

"It is Her energy. If we could say, 'I can do nothing without Her', many health problems would disappear."

Is homeopathy for you a way to help people to find their balance?

Often, when people come with ailments, talking about it clears it up, and then homeopathy is not even needed. Sometimes people are so blocked that first I have to give them a remedy to make them feel better. The next time they come, they can talk about their problem in a more precise way and they can start the treatment. All things are connected. It is no use simply treating a boil, for example, when it is the result of an inner cleansing process. It is more important to correct the weakness of the corresponding organs even if it means getting another boil.

There are periods in Auroville when everybody seems to work out individually

problems of the same kind. It makes me feel that we are just one body, all connected. It is beautiful.

Do you notice that there are some common diseases in Auroville?

I see two big problems. First there are many liver problems. The Chinese call the liver the 'great commander'. When the liver energy is low, the stomach juices are also low, and then the overall energy is low and digestive problems occur. And then you get gas. Liver problems are very much connected with trying to keep things under control, not letting go. We are afraid that everything will be dissolved if we don't hold on.

Another big problem is our inability to communicate. On a physical level this affects the lung or bronchi, and the connecting symptoms are coughing, blocked noses, polyps in the nose, sneezing and high fevers. We feel insecure about each other and about our surroundings as we are living in a foreign country with all the difficulties that are unfamiliar to us. We still don't understand that we are here to try to do something new. For years and years we have been trying in all kinds of ways to organize ourselves and nothing is satisfying. I think we don't understand that WE can't do it ourselves.

Many people don't know how to control their vital. They think themselves indispensable, that they have to do everything themselves, and then they blow up like a balloon, with a lot of gas. This does not mean we have to suppress the vital energy, which gives joy, energy and creativity. But we have to understand its purpose. It is Her energy. If we could say, "I can do nothing without Her", many health problems would disappear. It is a way of surrendering. If the load is too heavy, She is there to help you.

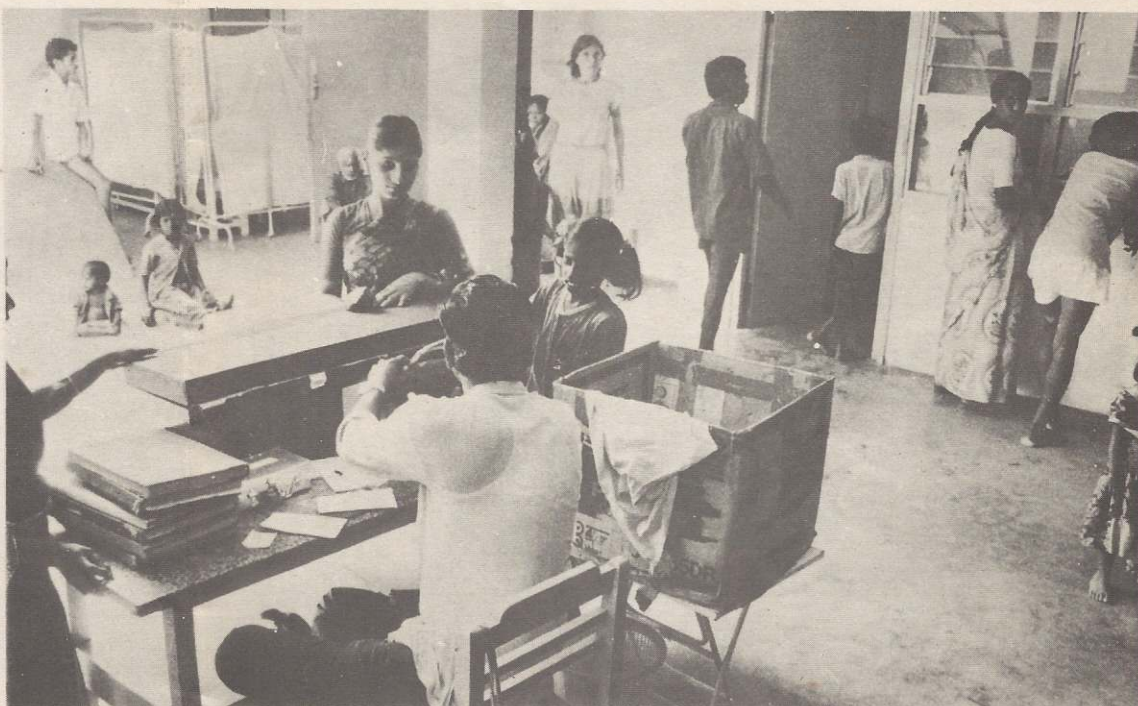
Interview by Tineke

Barbara has lived in Auroville for about 14 years, and has been practising homeopathy for 7 years. She came into contact with homeopathy when all other treatments for the malaria and chronic kidney problems of her oldest son failed. A visiting homeopath cured him and Barbara started studying homeopathy. For the past 4 years she has also incorporated astrology in her treatment.

There are three states we could say: the state of Harmony—that is the one we reach towards all the time, and sometimes we catch it for a few seconds, then everything works out as if by miracle; then the usual state of Disorder, in which we are constantly on the verge of something unpleasant, in a precarious balance; and when the disorder grows more visible, there is what they call an 'illness', but it isn't real. You see, we think the body is in good health, that it's balanced, and that 'something' is introduced from outside which causes you to fall ill, but it's not like that! We are ALWAYS off balance, the body is always off balance (more or less), and it is something else, above, a Will or a Consciousness, that holds it up and makes it work. So if we can call on that Will—that will for Harmony—and if we can have the flame within, that flame of aspiration, and make contact, we emerge from the so-called illness, which is unreal, an unreal and false sensation and just one way of being of the general disorder, and we enter into Harmony, and then everything is fine.

Mother's Agenda VI, p. 164-5

Morning consultation at the Auroville Health Centre.



Alternative medicine in Auroville

Mallika, originally from French Guyana, lives in a house of baked earth, constructed on the model of ancient Egyptian houses. She does not call herself a doctor, but rather a 'healer' who practises homeopathy, acupuncture and massage.

What is the attitude of the Aurovilians towards alternative medicine?

It seems that Aurovilians are naturally attracted by what is called alternative medicine, either because they had a bad experience with allopathy or its secondary effects, or because they try to be more aware of their bodies. Whatever the reason, the alternative approach very well suits those who do a real work of transformation on their whole being.

But it is no less true that certain infections require, according to the individual concerned, stronger medicines and respond better to allopathy.

human being as a whole, unique being. It works not only on the molecular level, but also, more subtly, on the vibrational level.

How have you become involved in healing?

I had the chance to work for two years with an acupuncturist, masseur and osteopath, who had a small clinic in Pondy. But I have no official diploma except the one given to me by my teacher. Auroville has given me the opportunity to practise immediately. Yet I consider two years of acupuncture studies far from enough to become a master and I work always together with a doctor, who backs me up and allows me to practise while I continue to learn.

How do you work at the health centre?

We work in close collaboration with the allopathic doctors. We send each other cases according to need or if there is a doubt. For instance, one day I saw a woman from Cuddalore arrive with an acute rhinitis, a difficult case. I sent her to Dr. Lucas, who diagnosed a chronic infection of the bronchia and the sinus he directed her to Dr. Assumpta, ENT specialist. Under her supervision, I treated her with acupuncture—with success.

We treat about 30 to 100 people per month, in two sessions per week, and I have noticed that often villagers, who

know nothing of alternative medicine, are more sensitive to it.

The freedom which one has in Auroville allows everybody who is interested in alternative medicine to practise healing. But... one should not play the sorcerer's apprentice—and use the patients as guinea pigs. A strong awareness of one's capacities is necessary when one wants to heal and help others.

Interview by Yanne.



What is an alternative remedy?

There are two kinds of approaches: scientific medicine, and traditional medicine. Allopathy is connected with scientific medicine which concentrates on the symptoms and proceeds by analysis, considering the patient as an agglomeration of different organs.

Traditional medicine, such as acupuncture, Ayurveda, massage, naturopathy and even homeopathy addresses itself to the

Of Dolphins...



Not everyone found their sea-legs at once...



First sighting (from l. to r. Tineke, Hilde, Shona)

Fins!

In July of this year an Aurovilian attended the second Dolphins and Whales Conference in Australia. Hilde, who came to Auroville 12 years ago and has delivered there more than a hundred babies so far, was mainly interested in the presentation of Igor Charkovsky on his experiences with delivering babies under water. At the conference, she became interested in and inspired by what she heard about dolphins and their relationship to human beings. Hilde met and befriended Joan Ocean, author of the book *The Dolphin Connection* and invited her to Auroville. This is how Joan Ocean and her artist friend Jean Luc came to Auroville in August and gave a presentation of their work for a group of interested Aurovilians. A boat trip was organized to investigate if the dolphins are also present and willing to be contacted in the Bay of Bengal.

Ten adults and three children left one morning to embark on an adventurous trip into the ocean... with Joan Ocean, the 'dolphin lady'. On a Pondicherry fishing boat we sat in a circle and held hands and meditated together, which brought everybody into a quiet and mellow space.

For hours we sailed into the ocean which turned ever more emerald clear and... turned some people seasick! Some of us had a swim and we just marvelled at the clearness of the water. Relaxed and refreshed we decided to go back, passing

the coast and the Auroville beaches. Silently we had given up the idea to meet any dolphins today.

But then... Fins! Fins! There and there! Oh, so many!!!

All of us crowded together on the narrow front of the boat and craned our necks to see the awesome and unbelievable sight of these big dolphins racing the bow-surf. They were all around as far as we could see. Dolphins swimming in front, besides and behind us. There must have been at least some thirty fins breaking the water.

For an hour they stayed around the boat, retreating when we entered the water and coming back to play when we started the engine again. We could see the scars on their backs as well as the baby dolphins, their eyes looking at us when they jumped out of the water. It was our first meeting. Everyone is elated, suddenly nobody is seasick anymore.

On the way back we indulged in dreams of going again, getting our own boat, of making friends with them. In the night, sun-burnt and happy, Hilde remarks: "I am as energized and flowing as if I have done a delivery and seen a newborn baby!"

Since that day, every weekend a boat has been leaving from Pondy with a group of enthusiastic dolphin watchers. And yesterday the dolphins were actually at the place where we usually get on to the boat. Is this the beginning of a friendship with our neighbours?

Auroville Today had an interview with Joan Ocean, author of the book *The Dolphin Connection*, during her visit to Auroville.

Auroville Today: When you gave your presentation in Auroville you said that you believe the dolphins live in another, higher dimension. Can you try to explain how you know this and how you perceive this?

our cells, changing the cells of our body by what they send out from their cells. It is a full body transformation that is occurring. Not only something psychic, emotional or spiritual. And it gives joy.

Joan Ocean: To me the aspect of it is telepathic communication. That is the way they communicate to me. They are communicating like that with each other and with me all the time and sometimes I am able to pick it up. As I mentioned in my book, I found it to be not really telepathy but *telempathy*. We think of telepathy as something that happens with the mind, but with the dolphins they seem to be sending messages with their entire body, a cell to cell communication. I really believe they use this method amongst themselves and with us to ignite our cells and to transform

A lot of people seem to retain in their cells a lot of negativity and dwell on the memories of experiences that were not good in their lives. And then their whole life is determined by those cell memories. What has come to me through the interaction with the dolphins and whales is the need to remember all our positive memories and focus on those. The more we learn to focus on this and all the beauty that surrounds us, and the more we begin to activate all those memories in our cells, the more our cells will become purified and our physical body change and become healthy..

"Can we expect this body which is now our means of manifestation on earth, to be able to change progressively into something capable of expressing a higher life, or will we have to abandon this form altogether, and enter another form still unknown on earth?"

*Will there be continuity or a sudden appearance of something new?
... Will the human species be like certain other species that have disappeared from the earth?*

Mother (1957)



The art of struggling aboard...



Hitching a lift.

...And Water-babies...



Dolphin duet.

Igor Charkovsky

Igor Charkovsky was born in 1937 in Altai in Siberia. In 1987-1988, he delivered 50 babies in the Black Sea with a special crew trained in under water deliveries. A pod of wild dolphins was always present not only to observe but also to help if they can.

Igor became inspired to do this work after his experience with his daughter. His daughter was born too premature to survive according to the doctors, but she did survive after he put her into a bath tub filled with water, in which she practically lived for two years. She grew up into a normal strong child.

The following is from the brochure of the second International Dolphin and Whale Conference:

Charkovsky believes that underwater delivery is the most gentle transition from the womb to the outside world and that early training in water makes for better and more rapid physical coordination in children. He passionately feels that if we learn to accept water without fear, then human potential can be better developed. It is clear for him that waterbabies, having a trauma-free birth, are happier, more intelligent and better adjusted than other children.

The water therapy programme that has them immersed in water on a regular basis from their first moments builds a stronger, more resilient child than the norm: a child that feels so at ease it does not know the meaning of violence or aggression.

During all the deliveries following Charkovsky's way, there have been no unexpected emergencies and each mother and child develops a deep friendship with the dolphins. The dolphins seem to pass their intelligence on to the babies in a one-to-one communication. The children maintain a telepathic communication with the dolphins and return every year to the Black Sea to be greeted by the same dolphins.

Hilde: "We have been looking for a long time for a way to bring children into the world and keep them in touch with these subtle qualities even when they grow up."



A real Tamil catamaran ride to the boat

On Water-births

An interview with Hilde.

Auroville Today: You went to the conference mainly out of interest in Igor Charkovsky, who is famous for his 'water birthing'. How was his presentation?

Hilde: The first images that we saw on the video he brought with him were quite shocking. We saw him making a hole in thick ice. The mother and the baby entered the cold water. The next shot is of a baby with his face down in the snow. Then you see Igor filling up a tub with water from the sea and pouring a bucket containing the baby and the water into the tub! We were not prepared for what we saw and it was such a contrast with the joyful atmosphere of the dolphin and whale conference that the tension in the room became very strong. He demonstrated his special method of teaching the babies to swim. He puts them head first in the water, lets them go, then takes them out. After a few seconds the baby is about to scream, but he doesn't have the time because he is plunged in again. He does that for 10 minutes and then hands the baby to his mother who breast-feeds him right away in the water. While the baby is feeding Igor throws water into his face. He gasps for air, but holds on to the breast. Igor explained that this is exactly what they should learn: to go on drinking and to stop breathing. This trains them to stay under the water longer. He tells the mother: "It is OK. Don't be scared because if you are scared your baby will pick up on the vibration and get scared too."

Igor radiates calm and confidence and you feel he has love but he doesn't allow any sentimentality. He pushes the babies to the maximum of their abilities and capacities. And it is this confidence that gets transmitted to the children and that gives the amazing results.

Personally, I do believe in his work but I don't know if I would want to put my child through that experience. I think it can also happen in a less harsh way. I have met people at the conference who teach babies swimming like Igor, but in a much gentler way with good results.

What is interesting is that the babies Igor teaches are all able to swim in one or two weeks. Then they go fully into the water and play and develop the capacity to hold their breath for 5, 10 or even 15 minutes under water. He has children who sleep in the water and when they need air they automatically come up and go down again. It is quite amazing.

He also has a full programme of massage and limb manipulation treatment for babies, and the children take up full Hatha-yoga positions.

Parents will also tell you that the children are much quieter. They are not aggressive and know much better how to share with others. And they have very strong muscles and coordination and willpower. They know exactly what they want.

What is the importance of water births?

The whole idea of being born in the water is that the baby passes into the world without the direct impact of gravity. The effect of gravity on the brains has been studied. As the child leaves the mother's womb, the baby encounters a gravity shock and his oxygen consumption jumps four fold. All the powers of his organism go into adapting to this gravity force. In this process the brain suffers certain damage —

in the most subtle parts which, according to Igor Charkovsky, relate to abilities like telepathy.

But then when they get lifted out of the water they will be under the pressure of gravity?

Yes, but they seem to be able to make readjustments in their body and keep their special abilities even when they grow up.

Igor claims that water is an incredible medium to open up the brain. If the children are at ease in the water they have the ability to open up and get into contact with themselves and with the dolphins. Because dolphins seem also to be very telepathic and the water children seem to be able to communicate on a different level with them.

Would you think of trying water births in Auroville?

It is definitely something to try out. But you can't do it just like that. You have to prepare the parents — which doesn't mean that you have to make it into something 'occult'. On the contrary, it is something very normal and you can do it at the right moment with the right people.

I spoke with a midwife who has experience with water births in normal bath tubs and she told me that there are two types of mothers. One type knows it is really good for them and the baby to give birth in the water, but has not really worked out their own fears. They think that if they go into the water everything is going to be O.K. But it doesn't work like that, because the water is a strong conducting medium. When fear is there, you will not be able to deliver the baby in the water. Then there is the other category that doesn't know much about it, but is basically at ease. Then it goes very well.

It is not just a matter of putting the mother in the bathtub to have her baby. You have to have the set-up and back-up. And it is very important to prepare the parents. Otherwise the baby will feel this fear and then something can really happen.

I am ready now and confident enough to do it in Auroville and I know I have to prepare myself to make it possible. In the meantime we have started with teaching swimming to the babies and toddlers.

People at the conference spoke about the incredible energy that was around when the babies were born into the water. Well, I have had very strong experiences with babies born in Auroville. Each baby here is born with this very strong energy field around him and for a couple of hours after the delivery it definitely is there. Maybe other people have only experienced this phenomenon when they deliver babies under water.

Water delivery is interesting. We have been looking for a long time for a way to bring children into the world and keep them in touch with these subtle qualities even when they grow up. It must be a fantastic thing. It is one of the biggest gifts we can give to them. But it is a means, not an end in itself, it is one of the possibilities.

Bringing the children into contact with the water might be a means to help them manage their aggression and jealousy. This is such a strong and blocking force and if we can re-channel it, it can provide an enormous release of energy for something else. Which is what we are here for actually.

Interview by Sonja

REDISCOVERING AMERICA

An interview with David

David came to Auroville in 1976 and has been involved in tree-planting projects since 1980.

Recently he went back to America for the first time in 14 years, and on his return was interviewed by Roger.

Auroville Today: Why did you return to America?

David: In 1990 I discovered I might have cancer of the lower eyelid, and my brother and friends pushed me to go back to America. It was a quick decision. I packed an hour before I left on February 19th. And I must admit I was scared, very scared when leaving. I was unsure of the situation there, and I did not know what to expect. You see, fourteen years ago I had left America because it was a dead end for me at the time, and I think it was a dead end for America as well. So suddenly now, here I was, fourteen years later, having to go back to America—not having the funds, not knowing if I would be received by my parents or not, and with cancer of the lower eyelid as well.

What were your first impressions upon your return to New York City?

Well, after India, it just wasn't crowded! But it was wintertime and everyone was indoors. Emotionally there were no strong feelings. Even when the plane was landing, I could almost see the house on Long Island where I used to live, and somehow everything seemed the same to me—the technology didn't amaze me and I immediately felt adapted and fine. However looking back on it, months later, I think I went through total culture shock.

My departure had been hectic, but just before I left Goupi handed me a blessings packet, and I held onto it all the time I was in America, and I felt the protection was always there. I didn't have time to think a lot. I went to the hospital the day after I arrived, and there was so much to get used to, getting on the subway, arranging for welfare, hearing the doctor confirm I had cancer and that it could have gone to the brain...

I was amazed at how friendly New York City was, and how international it had become! Whites have become a minority, and I felt very comfortable with all these Vietnamese people, people from South America and the black people—who had always been there. I found people to be open, but nonetheless very separated, it's not like here where we live together, and are bound up together like a knot.

Once I was there my fear was gone—it was O.K. with my parents, I had a home, I was concentrated on what I was doing; I had the blessings packet. Also, not being emotionally involved in issues such as the Vietnam War this time round, I was more at ease in America. I didn't feel the loneliness of America anymore and the loneliness I used to have within me was no longer there. I was a different person and I think this was a result of the yoga of life in Auroville—I think Auroville has given me strength.

On April 24th, Darshan day and also my birthday, there was a meditation at Connie Buckley's house in New York, to which I was invited. There were a lot of old Aurovilians there and the meditation was very intense. I was staying at Miriam's and she asked me to tell her something about my tree-planting experiences in the Palani Hills. (see *Auroville Today* no. 15). The next day she phones up to say she had just met Hannah Strong at the U.N. (her husband Maurice founded the U.N. Environment Programme and had just been appointed Assistant Secretary General of a U.N. conference, to be held in Brazil in 1992, on the Environment and Develop-

ment). Hannah wanted to meet me at the Yale Club. When I arrived they wouldn't let me in—I had a patch on my eye and was wearing a leather jacket—and they went to call her. Hannah came to the door and said to me, "But you're not wearing a tie". I suddenly remembered that they hadn't let the Beatles in for the same reason! But she vouched for me and I got in. We talked for about ten minutes in the garden. I talked mainly about Auroville, and then she said, "You must come to Baca." Then she had to go, so this is all I knew: There was this Hannah Strong—a very nice lady; a community called Baca that someone had said was a wonderful place for a retreat and where I knew Seyril lived; and that I'd be going there on May 2nd. On the 28th of April my eye finally healed.

Tell us about Baca.

The Baca project covers an area of 50,000 acres, bought by Maurice Strong in the name of the Manitou Foundation, a group that is dedicated to achieving world peace through spiritual means. The area is considered a very strong power point by the native American Indians and one local mountain is believed, by the Hopis, to be where the fourth creation started. The San Luis Valley at 6,000 ft above sea level is the largest valley at that height in the western hemisphere. It is flat and almost desert-like, and it is surrounded by snow-capped mountains that reach up another 6,000 ft. It is very magical.

I was told to make myself comfortable, walk around the land, get a feel for it, and get myself healed. Hannah had felt I shouldn't be in Brooklyn and that the land around Baca had healing powers. She was also very interested in my tree-planting experiences as she is in the process of setting up an Earth Reafforestation Corps whose aim is to help other organisations around the world plant something like 9 billion trees over the next ten years. People at Baca often know about Auroville. Right now there are about three hundred people living there. Almost everyone is interested in the spiritual life but they live separately—there are no financial ties between them at all. At present there is a Babaji

Temple, a Zen Centre, a Tibetan Centre—and the night before I left, Laurence Rockefeller funded a project for a Tibetan medical Centre, a branch of the Tibetan medical institute in Dharamsala. Given the altitude of the San Luis Valley they can grow many of the plants there that they need for their medicines. And there is a centre for experimentation in high-altitude agriculture.

I met Russians as well. There was Marianne and Gregory who know about Auroville and are connected to Russian environmental groups and are working through the U.N.

Finally there are the native American groups. I had an immediate contact with them—I felt the divine very much there, and I particularly connected with the Sioux Indians from South Dakota. They would have 'sweats' in a teepee to which I used to go every night. The teepee was very low to the ground, we were close together and rocks would be made very hot, water would be poured over them and prayers and ceremonies would be conducted in this scalding, steaming atmosphere. I was particularly open to what I feel is a renaissance American spirituality that is very present in Baca.

I was asked to give a talk on tree-planting to American native groups from Canada as a lot of projects are now being started on different reservations which have been destroyed by mining and drilling for oil. In fact they've been destroyed by just about everything. According to my Indian friends who came from South Dakota—where extensive uranium mining has been going on for decades in the Black Hills, which are sacred territory for them—their people are totally gone on drink, T.V., cigarettes, liquor, drugs, welfare and gambling. They have been given 2,000 acres in Baca to reawaken some of the values of their tribe through rediscovering nature and how to help nature heal itself.

I feel we in Auroville could have a lot to learn from Baca, a place that is attempting to achieve human unity through spiritual means, and at the same time they could have a lot to learn from us and our experience of a more established collective

life over the last 22 years.

This trip was a very good learning experience for me because for years I had always wondered in the back of my mind if I was living in Auroville because I was not able to make it in the States. In Baca and several other places I was offered the possibility of staying on, but not for a minute was there a doubt about coming back here, that Auroville was where I belonged. But nonetheless I look forward to going back and participating with the native Americans in their environmental programmes. □

LETTERS

Dear Friends

Since a few years I am reading your magazine. I want to tell you about the effect the last issue (*Auroville Today* no. 18) had on me. In order to understand you ought to know in what state of mind I was.

I felt almost completely shut off to the influence of Sri Aurobindo and Mother and due to that my life seemed so unhappy and meaningless. I had become negative and cynical and to try to break through this seemed impossible. Spiritual effort seemed to produce only stress. In that depressed state which lasted already since years I read the interviews with the teachers and children from Last School.

Then all of a sudden I became cheerful and happy! There was such an irresistible joy and strength in the things these children said. I became thrilled. The whole black mood had disappeared! I wanted to see these children; I wanted to talk and laugh with them.

In the past I paid yearly visits to the Ashram and Auroville but since three years that had all stopped. I began to think it was all over... but then and there I decided to go to India again. After two weeks I left.

I want to thank the children for their frankness and cheerfulness and for the strength that put into me, and I want to thank you for publishing this material. It must have done a lot of good to more people. I hope this will give you confidence in what you are doing and the strength to continue. With best wishes,

P.D.

The Netherlands

Hi there! A friend of mine shared a few copies of *Auroville Today* with me.

I was introduced to Sri Aurobindo's writings at the university of California in 1977. To see how much of a reality Auroville has become is evidence of the Divine manifestation Sri Aurobindo and Mother introduced into this world.

All of you in Auroville have my deepest respect and highest spiritual support. I hope to visit Auroville some day and try to help in every way that I can. Keep up the great job and thank you so much for letting us follow your progress through *Auroville Today*. Namaste,

*Michael Osterhoudt
California.*

Dear Auroville Today!

Of all the reactions to *Auroville Today* the prize for the most stupid one can go to Auroson and Auralice in *Auroville Today* no. 20 ('Get it?'). No, I didn't get it at all! How long ago is it that they have talked to a genuine newcomer?

I started reading Francis' newcomers story (*Auroville Today* no.19) at 11 p.m. and went on laughing loudly for at least one hour—I recognized so well all the repetitive frustrations you go through as a newcomer and they were rendered so full of humour. Thank you Francis, very much!

*Corry
Auroville*



Dance Experiment

What was announced as a 'Dance Experiment' by Anu and Joy took the audience by surprise. Innovative dance movements, music by Stefano, with a simple and beautiful stage setting by Pierre, superb sound-mixing by Mikel, showed us that Auroville is quite capable of offering high-class cultural events. The programme opened with an invocation, sung by Joy and danced by Anu. Anu, who has been studying Bharat Natyam for several years, is trying to find new ways of expressing herself in this dance style. *Once upon a Star* was a good example of this style danced by her. Joy beautifully portrayed a little boat rocking on the sea. In *Images* Joy and Anu danced mutual movements, mirroring and complementing each other, forming beautiful 'images'. An evening like this... well, makes us want to experience more of this kind of creative expression. Bravo.

"It's all a question of how people relate to each other"

An Aurovilian reflects on his experience in Sri Lanka.

Diego came to Auroville from Switzerland in 1980. Earlier this year, he spent 7 months in North-West Sri Lanka, working for Swiss Disaster Relief as a site supervisor on a hospital project. Recently he returned.

Auroville Today: This was only your second trip outside India in 10 years. Did you find it difficult to adapt out there?

Diego: No. The climate there is similar, they speak Tamil, and I was basically doing what I'd been doing here before I left — except that in Sri Lanka I had a 250 cc Honda motorcycle and an air-conditioned Nissan car! What I wasn't used to was the work hierarchy. The day I arrived, my boss made it clear that I had to do what he wanted. That's not something I've been used to in Auroville. But I learned to adjust. One thing I noticed was that the ex-patriates are excellent in their fields, but they don't appreciate that there's a different rhythm out here. They wanted to do things the same way as they did in Switzerland — and they didn't know how to relate to the Tamils. When the local people learned I spoke Tamil, they immediately responded and I could break through this traditional hierarchy. I enjoyed that. Another thing I found difficult to get used to was the way the big charities spend their money out there. So much goes for administration, and many of the projects are unfinished because there's no proper supervision or understanding of local conditions. In Auroville we have much less money but we use it much more consciously.

Were you working in a war zone?

For the first five months it was quiet,

The beds in this hospital were a united effort — the Tigers supplied the wooden slats and the army welded the metal frames. But, of course, they didn't realize they were cooperating!

although both the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan Army (S.L.A.) were preparing for a fight. It was a strange situation. Rebuilding this old hospital we had to work with both the Tigers and the S.L.A. The Tigers controlled the jungle, and I would go there to buy wood. And the Army helped us with specialized jobs. The beds in this hospital were a united effort — the Tigers supplied the wooden slats and the army welded the metal frames. But, of course, they didn't realize they were cooperating!

After five months the Mannar hospital project was completed, and I went to Colombo for a rest. I had another job afterwards — supervising the construction of a new rural hospital near Trincomalee — and I was really looking forward to it, because I had full authority to introduce alternative technology like solar fridges and windmills. But then the fighting began and I couldn't reach the site.

Then 'Save the Children' Fund U.K., who shared our office in Colombo, asked me to help get supplies through to a big refugee camp near Mannar, close to where I'd been working before. So I started ac-

companying convoys of lorries taking food and medical supplies from Colombo to the north. It wasn't easy. Many of the bridges had been blown up, some of the roads were mined, and we had to get through *check-posts run by the S.L.A. or the Tigers. As a foreigner I had an advantage — I wasn't associated with either of the parties — and so I could make it. But there were tricky situations. Once the S.L.A. used our convoy as an opportunity to advance their position. We had to tell them to go back — otherwise there would have been problems with the Tigers.

I lived three weeks in a huge refugee camp at Mannar — sleeping on the kitchen table because it was the only bed long enough for me! It felt so hopeless. The people there had walked for months through the jungle to escape war, and their one dream was to get to India. But the boat trip was risky — often the boats were sunk or captured by the S.L.A. And the children had never known anything but war; Kalashnikovs, bombs, grenades, death.

On the final trip, it went sour. We'd almost reached camp when we discovered the Tigers had blown up the last road bridge. After some discussion, they allowed us to build a raft to bring across food and kerosene. I got some drums and we welded them together. But at the last moment they changed their mind and wouldn't let us across. Meanwhile we discovered that the S.L.A. had looted our office near Trincomalee and taken or destroyed everything. So I was fed up with both sides. But the refugees — they wanted me to return. And I'm still trying to arrange to get them some tarpaulins before the big monsoon breaks.

Was it good for you to leave Auroville for some time?

Yes. Before I left, I was running like mad just to be able to maintain myself here. Now I've earned enough to be more relaxed, to live more harmoniously, to do what I really want to do — like helping to install and manufacture alternative technology in Auroville.

What I saw in Sri Lanka was that it's all a question of how people relate to each other, and how they deal with the big obstacles — power, sex, money. Of course, I've heard a few negative things about Auroville since I've returned. But the good things never make much noise — you have to search them out. And they're definitely here, I know. I've just come from a battlefield!

I've not had a spiritual background. I don't read so much, and I find it much easier to work with my hands than to do this inner work. But when I was away I got a rash on my finger where I hold my cigarette — and it made me feel I should control my smoking more. So I worked on it. When I returned, I went to the Samadhi and there I got this very strong message — "OK. Now we try to solve the next problem. And then the next. One at a time. All you have to do is keep cool!"

Interview by Alan.

Impressions of Baca

14th August

I wake up in the spacious room that my friend Seyril has put at my disposal in 'Savitri House', the place she built and lives in at Baca Grande, Colorado. Seyril has organised a 'Solar Global Villages Conference' in Baca, and she invited me to represent Auroville during the five days of the conference, from the 11th to the 15th.

What is happening? For the other twenty to thirty people who have been attending — on and off — the various sessions, it seems that the networking of existing places like Auroville and some smaller experiments here and there, including projects like Seyril's 'Savitri Solar Village' in Baca, is a need felt by everyone; this conference is definitely useful for that purpose, allowing each one to present what he/she is involved in, and to hear about what other people are trying to do in a living and direct manner no write-up could replace.

For me too, a lot is happening. In the Seattle area and in the many other places I visited in the States (and in Canada), I met mostly people who were followers of Sri Aurobindo and Mother; I felt quite 'at home' everywhere. Here in Baca, ('the Baca', as they often say in the area), some of the people attending this conference are indeed followers of Sri Aurobindo and Mother, but quite a few are not; we are in the sacred 'Bloodless Valley', where peace was ever to reign among all, as the Red Indians say who lived here before. This precise spot of Baca Grande is one of these 'power places' which have been identified all over the planet. For the first time I have been exposed to a quite different approach, to people for whom 'Mother Earth' is what they relate to and revere, and whose reference points come from Native American ancient wisdom rather than from any Yoga, let alone Integral Yoga.

At first I couldn't relate to all that 'stuff', and my silent reaction against it was so strong that I stubbornly resisted the guided collective meditation which concluded the first morning's session in that vein. While everyone else seemed to be enjoying it thoroughly, I sat there wondering what I was doing there, and whether I should stay on at all in such a place and atmosphere.

But by the end of the second morning, I knew why I was there and why I should, and definitely would stay on: a succession of 'fortuitous' small, but obviously meaningful events had made it clear to me that, instead of rejecting that other approach, I was to include it — not in its rituals or other details, but in its essence, in its aspiration — and carry it in my consciousness, offering it to the Light, putting it consciously in contact with Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's presence and force; to let their influence transform whatever might need to be transformed in that most ancient path of humanity towards the Divine, that it may be used also for the New Creation.

As a matter of fact, we are here in the 'Sri Aurobindo Learning Center' created by Seyril; in this conference, we speak of mud bricks, windmills and solar energy, but all the while a 'global' consciousness is what we are all aspiring for while talking about global villages. When I talked about Auroville and Matrimandir, there was great interest. Other topics included collective yoga, and Sri Aurobindo's vision of the future... And didn't I meet there a Red Indian man who has learnt from an Aurovilian, David Nagel, about reforestation and who has been quietly doing it since then?

15th August

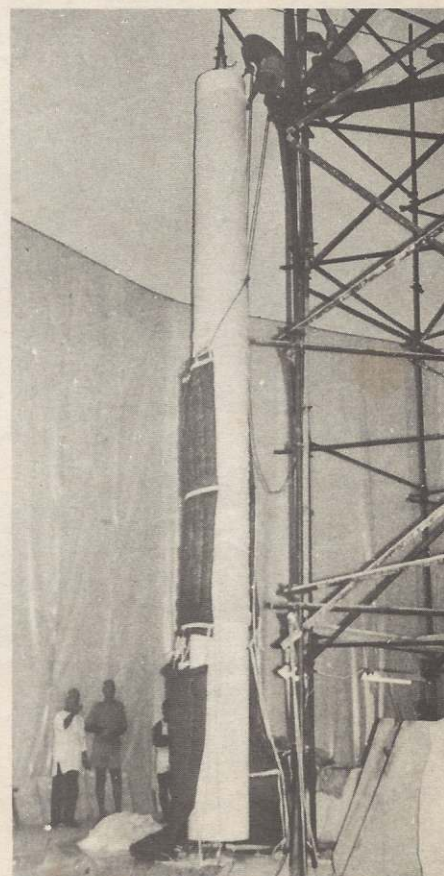
This morning, the dedication ceremony of the Savitri Solar Village garden was quite beautiful. After the preliminary speeches a wonderful lady — a friend of Seyril from India — chanted Sri Aurobindo's *Gayatri Mantra*, and a young Red Indian initiate answering to the remarkable name of White Rainbow addressed us and sang a sacred chant which was very moving. The few texts by the Mother I had chosen and read out were felt perfect for the occasion. The ceremony was 'blessed' by a few minutes of mild rain at the beginning, and we left the spot under bright sunshine...

My stay in Baca Grande will remain one of the deepest and most beautiful memories of my visit to 'America Grande' Thank you Seyril!

Bhaga

Brief News

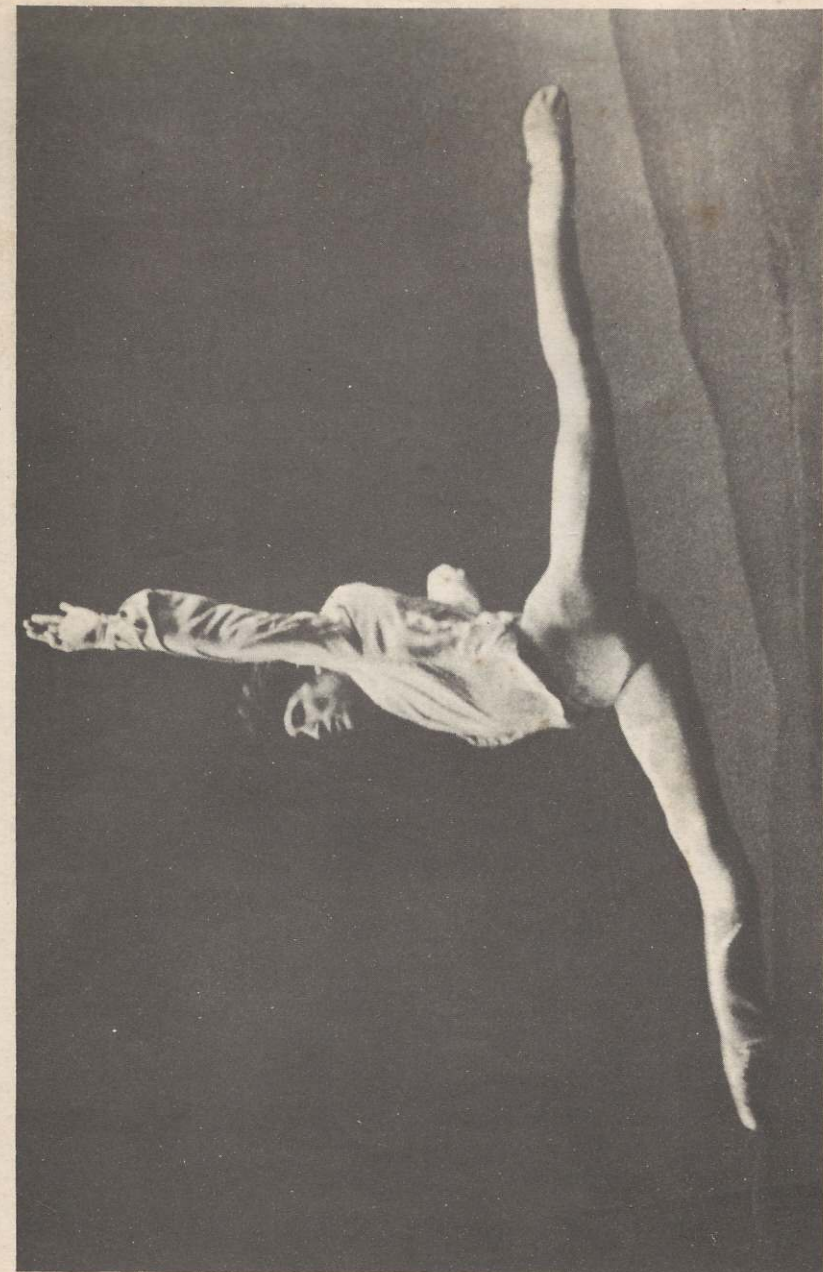
- ☐ At the end of September, the first two finished columns have been permanently installed in the inner chamber of the Matrimandir.
- ☐ The French Pavilion is underway! The Association for the 'Maison de France' has recently come under the patronage of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is hoped that the foundation stone will be laid on the 21st February next, and that the opening will occur on the occasion of Auroville's 25th birthday in 1993.
- ☐ On the 30th September at Bharat Nivas, Chandralekha presented an avant-première of her new performance to Auroville before taking it on the road in India. It was entitled *Prana: Life and Breath*. One of the dancers described it as more of an invocation than a performance.
- ☐ On the 4th October, a new boarding facility was opened at 'New Creation'. This is the first phase of a larger project, and provides accommodation for 10 children and a teacher, as well as a room for complete studies.



Preparing for lift-off...

Auroville Today tries to appear monthly and is distributed to Aurovilians and friends of Auroville in India and abroad.

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The body can do anything...!

photo Sven

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BY AIRMAIL
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This month: Much health; more dolphins... and no bees!

October 1990 - Number Twenty-Two

It is not the medicine that cures so much as the patient's faith in the doctor and the medicine. Both are a clumsy substitute for the natural faith in one's own self-power which they have themselves destroyed.

Sri Aurobindo
Thoughts and Aphorisms

Medicine and the Sex of Angels

by Assumpta Casanovas

"UNLESS I were in a coma I'd never let myself be taken into an operating theatre", one doctor says to the other.

"I'd prefer dying in the streets rather than in a hospital", the other one replies.

"You go in with a certain disease but you never know what other disease you'll come out with—that is if you come out", commented another one.

Exchanges of this nature are frequent among doctors. The majority of us are aware of the danger one encounters when one enters into the workings of a hospital. Your body ceases to be that of a human being and you are turned into a clinical case. The body becomes an object of experimentation for the most unsuspected stuff—a new drug or a new dosage of a known one—or a challenge for a newly licensed practitioner of medicine.

"Watch out", I told a nurse who was about to leave a tray on top of the sternum of a patient: a recently broken sternum, which means risk of a heart attack.

"He bleeds from the bladder, let us give him a hemostatic." "No", I said. Last week he had a thrombosis.

Such barbarisms are so frequent that there is no doctor or nurse who would not seriously hesitate before sending a family member to a hospital. And I would add that the last two examples involved my mother and father respectively in one of the best hospitals in Barcelona.

Such lax, unprofessional and even criminal behaviour happens so frequently that it is no surprise that there are more and more denunciations for negligence every day. Having experienced it many times, anybody will understand how much I agree with all the aphorisms on medicine written by Sri Aurobindo. Everything he says is true, and even more could be said. All the reservations Mother had before she would allow anybody to go to a doctor or let him imbibe the latest fashion in medicines are fully justified and completely reasonable. "You have to be strong in order to take medicines", a wise person once said.

It is not that medicine is poison and surgery a torture—it is more likely that

those who administer it and who passed their exams after last-day marathon hours of study consider themselves as minor gods and haven't the least interest in what comes under their hands. Not to speak of the nurses, who often are frivolous young girls thinking not of the patient, but of their last weekend's date. I insist: the fault is not with medicine, which is more scientific everyday, it is the lack of consciousness in the doctors that makes us fear medicine.

Medicine over the past 40 years has developed in accordance with biochemical and physiological knowledge. The instruments used today were not even imaginable 15 years ago. Nowadays very precise diagnoses can be made. The problem that we are confronted with today is that we often do not know HOW to cure. And hence the interest in the so-called alternative therapies, which are being studied seriously and deeply at prestigious universities.

It seems that in Auroville there are a lot of people who believe that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have said something like "no to doctors". I am not able to gather this from what I have read. Rather, "No to stupid, ignorant, lax doctors"—which is what we obviously all say. Sri Aurobindo and Mother have never made any comments about doctors or illness that were out of proportion or illogical. All they say is, from the medical point of view, either completely correct or at least a very coherent theory. To take a sentence out of context and to apply it to a specific case and then say, "Mother said NO to doctors" is to turn the discussion into a debate on the sex of the angels, Bible in hand. Shouldn't we be at least attentive here in Auroville not to indulge in this habit? "Fortunately we have Sri Aurobindo"—said a friend of mine in Pondy one day, in response to my complaints regarding people's dogmatism. "For I feel if one reads Sri Aurobindo in depth, there is no possibility of dogmatism." I liked this answer so much that in gratitude I gave her a little silver angel (and I cannot tell for sure whether it is a masculine or a feminine one).

Assumpta Casanovas is a qualified doctor and ENT specialist who has practised in Spain for 19 years. She has also studied and practised homeopathy for four years. She came to Auroville in January this year and is working at the Auroville Health Centre.

All photos in this issue are to the credit of Sven, except the photo of the Matrimandir column (page 7), which was taken by Lakshminarayan.

◆ ◆ ◆ To Receive Auroville Today ◆ ◆ ◆

The contribution for the next 12 issues of Auroville Today is for Auroville Rs. 94, for India Rs. 100*, for other countries: Rs. 350, Can.\$ 27, French F. 145, DM 45, It.Lira 31,500, D.Gl. 50, US \$ 22.50, U.K.£ 13.50. This includes the postage by airmail. Please send your contribution (or your supporting contribution of double the amount) either to the Auroville International centre in your country (add 10%) or to the Auroville Today Office, Auroville, Kottakuppam 605104. Cheques should be made payable to Auroville Fund, specifying: Contribution for Auroville Today. You will receive the issues directly from Auroville.

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