

The workshop wave

The tourist season is the high season for workshops in Auroville. This has not always been the case, but in the past ten years, as new venues have become available and Auroville has acquired a reputation on the international workshop circuit, more and more workshops are being offered by both Aurovilians and visitors.

Smørgasbord

At this time of year, community noticeboards are stuffed with colourful fliers for workshops. In the final week of January alone, and in addition to numerous regular classes, Auroville workshops or retreats were offered in world dance, Watsu and Liquid flow, QiGong, meditation and awareness through yoga, drawing, healing sounds and voice, initiation to the timeless Tarot of self-knowledge, Reiki, Russian healing and regeneration techniques, Tai Chi, clowning, wellbeing, peas versus pills, 'Sense of Auroville', South Indian drumming, life coaching, 'henna, hands and healing', open heart yoga, papier mache, physical theatre and creative expression, and 'inner work' (an introduction to the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo). Other workshops offered during January included 'AcroYoga Abundance', Family Constellation, 'Leela, the game of self-knowledge', 'Who am I?', Aviva for Men, 'Animal spirit guide: masks, meditation and music' and 'Are you predator, prey or partner'.

This is quite a smørgasbord, but clearly there is an emphasis upon different forms of bodywork, healing and introspective yoga, reflecting the particular ethos of Auroville.

The venues

At present, the main venues for courses and workshops are Quiet Healing Center, Vérité and Pitanga. Quiet Healing Center was established in the mid 1990s and has become the prime focus for workshops and courses on aquatic bodywork, including Watsu ('water shiatsu'), massage and healing therapies. "Everything here relates to health and healing," explains Guy, one of the managers. The guest season between January and March is their busiest time: this year they will run around 40 courses and workshops during this period.

The Vérité project was established in 1985. "From the beginning," says Dhanya, one of the coordinators, "there was a lot of focus on health and healing and working on and with the body. From 2005 onwards we started to reorganize and professionalize Vérité's therapies and services which, over the years, significantly increased the amount of programmes we offered." Like Quiet, Vérité is residential. This adds another dimension to their workshops. It also enables them, at times, to host outside groups who come with their own workshop leaders (although, when booking groups, Vérité gives preference to groups which open spaces for Aurovilians to participate).

Pitanga cultural centre was constructed 22 years ago, but has been hosting workshops for only about 12 years. "Sri Aurobindo and Mother talk about perfecting the different layers of the being, and this was very much why this place was constructed," says Bridget. "So here in Pitanga we work not only with the physical but also with the mental and vital aspects of the being. We see it very much as support for community members to enter and progress in the yoga." At present, 25% of the programmes are for children.

Auroville Consulting, a relatively new commercial unit, also organizes a number of workshops

among its other activities. The workshops are in two different areas. The 'Green Practices' workshops, which are organized mainly for architectural students, focus on sustainable practices like bamboo and earth construction, waste management etc. 'Auroville Retreat' hosts retreats in the health and wellness sector.

Other larger workshop venues include Arka – where there is an emphasis upon preventing and redefining ageing – the Unity Pavilion and the Tibetan Pavilion, in addition to a number of much smaller, back-garden, venues like the charming Butterfly Barn in Svedame.

Challenges

Auroville workshops are attended by both Aurovilians and visitors. The proportion varies with the venue, workshop and season but, overall, Aurovillian participation in workshops at the Tibetan Pavilion is roughly 75%; in Vérité 45%; in Pitanga 75%; at Unity Pavilion guests make up half to two thirds of the attendees for 'open workshops' (in workshops directly related to Auroville almost all the attendees are Aurovilians) while the Green Practice workshops are run exclusively for outsiders. With regard to the facilitators, all are Aurovilians in Auroville Retreat and in Green Practices workshops; the figure for Quiet is around 60%; in Vérité it is "a real mix"; most of the presenters at the Unity Pavilion are Aurovilians; while in the Tibetan Pavilion most of the presenters are guests.

Generally the workshops are very well received by the participants, as evidenced by their obvious popularity: some are booked up months ahead. And the venue managers, though overworked, find their work fulfilling. "It's crazy at this time of year," says Bridget, "but very satisfying." Many of the workshop leaders are Aurovilians and it is an opportunity for them to get financial support and to impart their impressive skills. This is part of Auroville's unique offering, 'outbreath', to the larger world. At the same time, visiting teachers bring with them skills and insights which support many Aurovilians in their professional development and which enrich our lives with new perspectives and deepen our pursuit of the yoga. As one Aurovillian put it, "I need to make new discoveries and these workshops help me. Otherwise I get stuck."



COPYRIGHT IRENO GUERCI FROM WATERBEING PROJECT

Water dance workshop at Quiet

In the early days of workshops, some Aurovilians were resistant to the idea of workshops being run in Auroville. The resistance has diminished as more and more Aurovilians have participated in them and experienced the benefits. Nevertheless, some Aurovilians remain less enthusiastic about the workshop wave. Their concerns relate, broadly, to three aspects: the financial aspect, quality control, and the appropriateness of certain workshops to Auroville. To clarify the situation, it is important to examine how workshops are managed in Auroville today.

The financial aspect

With the exception of Pitanga, none of the workshop venues receives financial help from Auroville. This means they have to find ways to cover or partially cover the costs of putting on workshops and of maintaining the venues. Almost all the venues are adamant that they do not want to charge Aurovilians and Newcomers to attend workshops – partly as a matter of principle and partly because some Aurovilians couldn't afford to pay – so when a workshop is charged for, visitors are charged at a rate which subsidizes Aurovilians' participation. However, where workshops include additional costs like lunches and teas, Aurovilians and Newcomers may be asked to contribute towards these. Some workshops may also invite Aurovilians to make unspecified contributions towards the cost of a workshop, but it is up to them whether they do so or not.

Unity Pavilion, like the Tibetan Pavilion, does not allow mandatory workshop rates either for guests or Aurovilians. They encourage voluntary contributions instead because, "Here we encourage the gift economy," explains Jaya. "When you know how to give, you get it back," says Kalsang of the Tibetan Pavilion.

On the other hand, Auroville Retreat is the only workshop organization which sets a workshop price for Aurovilians. At present it is 50% of the rate charged to guests. "Workshops have to be paid for and we don't see why Aurovilians should not be asked to participate," says Vikram of Auroville Consulting. He notes, however, that Retreat was not set up to make a profit and they would never turn away an Aurovillian who could not afford a workshop. "And, by the way, the Aurovillian rate does

not even cover our basic costs."

What happens to the money generated by workshops? Some goes as a contribution to the central Auroville Fund, some is used to cover the expenses of the venue. If the workshop facilitator is an Aurovillian, he or she will also receive a proportion of the income if they wish. In fact, one of the prime reasons for setting up Auroville Retreat was to supplement the income of Aurovillian facilitators. Guest facilitators, however, are not supposed to receive cash in hand because of visa restrictions. Instead, Pitanga allows guest workshop leaders to participate free in other Pitanga classes during their stay, while Vérité and some other venues find ways of offsetting facilitators' expenses while they are within Auroville. (Quite a number of workshop leaders do not require any compensation as they offer their workshops *pro bono*, as a service to the community.)

Some people are concerned that workshops do not particularly benefit the larger community but only those who are running them. When a group comes with its own workshop leader and simply uses Auroville as a venue, people wonder if any income trickles back into

the larger Auroville. But the reality is that visitors who come to attend workshops also spend money in Auroville guest houses, restaurants and shops (from which a significant percentage of the profits goes to the Auroville Fund to support community services and development).

Quality control

The response of participants to Auroville workshops is overwhelmingly positive. However, as each workshop venue chooses which courses they will run and how they will run them, some people wonder how workshop leaders are screened and if their workshops are monitored for quality. This is important because giving a workshop in Auroville has a certain status on the workshop circuit and more and more teachers would like to include it on their curriculum vitae. There is also the consideration that if something goes wrong in a workshop, Auroville will be held responsible.

Of course, many workshop leaders are well-known. They are either Aurovilians or, if visitors, have been offering their workshops for many years. Even here, however, there are unpredictable elements.

This is why all the major venues are scrupulous when it comes to choosing which workshops they put on and who will run them. Some courses simply don't fit with the ethos or special focus of a particular venue. Vérité also has a Code of Commitments (see box) which has to be signed by everybody – visitors and Aurovilians alike – who wants to run a workshop there, along with an explanation that, if they are a visitor, they cannot earn income from giving a workshop there. "These are already strong filters," says Dhanya.

Vérité, Pitanga and Quiet, as well as most other venues, require that any new and unknown workshop leader sends details of his or her qualifications and website. Pitanga will not take any decision until they have actually spoken to the person and ascertained, among other things, what their motivation is for offering a workshop in Auroville. "We want to know what their connection is to Auroville," says Kumar, who helps manage Pitanga, "and if they are willing to offer their workshop as a service to the larger community." Vérité operates the same policy.

continued on page 2

- Running workshops in Auroville - a teacher's experience
- Anand - at home in Auroville and in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram

page 3

- Mumbai's airport terminal T2 opens
- Creating seabed scapes
- Building Sound Wings

pages 4 - 5

- New Auroville boutique opens in Pondicherry
- Evolving beyond borders - The United Nations and Sri Aurobindo

page 6

- News in brief
- Passing: Joachim Kochenburger
- New solutions for Auroville's disappearing beaches?

pages 7 - 8

continued from page 1

Susan, one of the Vérité coordinators, says they will turn down people who have insufficient training, or who make grandiose claims, "like promising enlightenment in just one session. We've also turned down a few 'guru-trippy' people, the ones who want to bring or enlist new devotees. We tell them we don't do it this way in Auroville. You are not here to give darshan, you're here to share something."

Guy from Quiet Healing Center points out that the majority of their teachers are Aurovilians, so it is easy to check their credentials and skills. As to visiting teachers, for aquatic bodywork courses everybody must be certified by an international organization called WABA. "In Quiet it has always been a beautiful exchange. There hasn't been any abuse; these people come only with goodwill."

Of course, concerns about the quality of teachers relate less to 'bread and butter' workshops like earth architecture than to those that work with the subconscious and subtler layers of the being. Here it is important to know that the workshop leader can, in therapeutic terms, 'hold the space', meaning support the group's psychological identity while being able to deal with any emotional outbursts which may occur. He or she should also take care not to create co-dependency between the teacher and the participants. "These are very particular skills," says Vikram of Auroville Consulting, "and the only way we find we can assess it is to first experience the workshops ourselves". So far, he has not felt the need for ethical guidelines, although he agrees that confidentiality is an important one.

Ultimately, of course, it is impossible to verify beforehand how even a highly-qualified teacher will 'perform'. The Pitanga managers recall an instance many years ago when a workshop leader who had agreed to all their guidelines began selling crystals during a workshop. The managers of Pitanga and Vérité will only initially allow a new teacher to take one workshop or session. This will be carefully monitored and discussed afterwards with the teacher, the participants and the organizing group.

Does it fit?

While Savitri Bhavan runs regular classes and talks on Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, there are very few workshops in Auroville that focus specifically on the Integral Yoga.

In fact, some of the workshops at this time of year offered seem to have little obvious connection with the spirit of Auroville or the path of Integral Yoga, leading some Aurovilians to question why they are being run here. So how do the managers of workshop venues decide which workshops they will run?

Kalsang, of the Tibetan Pavilion, says the first and most important thing they consider is if a proposed workshop is "close to the Auroville atmosphere". Kumar says he feels that certain work-

shops do not fit in Auroville, and there are certain workshops which they won't run in Pitanga. Guy doesn't feel the issue arises at Quiet Healing Center as all their activities are related to health and healing. However, he admits it is a very complex issue. "Vipassana meditation is an excellent meditation technique, but if you look at the philosophy behind it, it is not aligned with Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's vision. So should we stop running Vipassana workshops in Auroville?"

"But who has the authority to decide this?" asks Dhanya. "That's why, personally, I go back to The Charter as the widest framework to work with. This speaks, among other things, of 'unending education' and 'taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within', meaning the whole world. This is an evolutionary yoga, so our challenge is to take the main tenets of the yoga and synthesise and integrate them with new discoveries."

Meanwhile, Susan wonders which Auroville workshops Mother would object to. "Dance? Yoga? Non-violent communication? I think she would be very much in favour of these."

So, is there a borderline? And, if so, where does it lie? For Dhanya, the line is crossed when workshops are run for primarily commercial reasons. Guy recalls that years ago some Aurovilians were promoting the teaching of a guru in Chennai. "What I found very interesting in this case was that the Council made a statement that it was up to each Aurovillian to decide which spiritual path they wanted to follow, but other spiritual paths should not be promoted in Auroville."

Vikram of Auroville Retreat has no problems with gurus running workshops in Auroville – "if somebody is offering something out of sincerity, trying to help another person on the Path, what is wrong with that?" But he draws the line with people who make statements that make you dependent on them and who make you join their organization. "That is the definition of a cult, and Auroville should not become a cult which says you can study this and not that. True Gurus present a Path and then let you choose whether you want to take it or not. So I don't think you should decide based on the nature of the workshop, but only on the intention of the person who is running it."

Auroville Retreat has recent experience of dealing with this kind of issue. A few weeks ago, they advertised a 5 day intensive workshop called 'Awakening the Illuminated Heart'. The introductory information said that it was "based on the ancient knowledge of activating the Mer-Ka-Ba and preparing for ascension as taught by Drunvalo Melchizedek." Drunvalo is described on the internet as a New Age guru who is preparing people for the coming of a new world order, an "ascent" to a higher order of being.

Vikram says it generated a lot of discussion



Healing workshop in the Integral Learning Centre at Vérité

among the organizing team. It would have been the first time that a non-Aurovillian (trained by Drunvalo and living in Australia) would run a workshop under the Retreat umbrella, the workshop was very expensive – Rs 20,000 for guests and Rs 15,000 for Aurovilians – and there were questions about the content of the course. Vikram didn't feel that having an outside presenter or the cost were major considerations, "but the crux is the modality itself. We spent a lot of time trying to understand the link between Sri Aurobindo's teachings and those of Drunvalo. Are there parallels? Contradictions? I had attended one of these courses in Australia but I am not an expert on Sri Aurobindo. In the end we couldn't find anybody who could adequately explain the connection, plus there were certain aspects of the Drunvalo organization that made me wonder whether it is a cult. So we decided not to run it under our umbrella, and handed it over to an Aurovillian outside Auroville Retreat to take it forward and run it in Auroville."

The way forward?

Do workshop managers feel the need to coordinate more with each other? Bridget notes that in Auroville we are not strong on exchanging knowledge and information with each other, "so maybe there is a need for us to look collectively at how we want this scene to develop and how we navigate the future." Susan recalls that the LEAP programme tried to coordinate timings some years ago, without much success. "It would be a good idea to have similar rates and policies – we already

share information about these with Pitanga and Quiet and there are not huge discrepancies – but to get everybody to agree to this would be very difficult. In the meantime, I think each venue will develop its own personality and area of specialization, any maybe this is also fine."

What about an Auroville code of ethics or behaviour for workshop leaders? This is generally welcomed, and Dhanya points out that Vérité's 'code of commitments' has already been shared with Quiet and Pitanga. Susan believes it would be good to set up some kind of process to deal with complaints, "a group of peers who would look into any complaints regarding workshops and make recommendations".

However, all the workshop managers agree that they don't want some kind of 'supergroup' which would oversee the Auroville workshop scene, lay down guidelines and decide which workshops could be run. "When people start making rules and regulations," says Guy, "you stifle life." "We need structure," says Dhanya, "but one which supports the growth of diversity rather than one which imposes uniformity. I don't think we have the capacity to do this in Auroville at present."

"Today, anybody can create a workshop in their back garden," says Martin. "There is a certain craziness in this, as well as concerns about the quality of some of the offerings. But there is also a lot of creativity and fun, and definitely we shouldn't lose this."

Alan

Vérité programs and treatments: code of commitments

Vérité and Auroville are special settings for personal growth, development and healing work. This document expresses the values that guide Vérité in what it offers to the Auroville community and its guests. We ask all teachers and practitioners to care for themselves and their clients, with respect for the principles of Auroville, the customs of the local culture, and the law of the Indian government.

Ethical standards and responsibilities are described as commitments which our teachers and practitioners want to fulfill (Part I). The Support Process (Part II) describes a protocol for addressing any concerns that may arise in relation to Vérité's programs or treatments.

As Auroville evolves closer to its ideals, we imagine that this kind of document will become obsolete. In the meantime, we recognize that a clear statement of commitments can help to establish an atmosphere of trust and security between Vérité's teachers-practitioners and participants-clients.

PART I: COMMITMENTS

Our purpose as practitioners

- To enhance the well-being of the participant.
- To help participants develop their capacities as conscious collaborators in their own evolution.

Our values

- Service – Practitioners elevate service to others above their own self-interest; pro bono service is expected to some extent, and no Aurovillian or Newcomer will be turned away because of inability to contribute financially.

- Dignity and inherent worth of each individual – Practitioners treat participants with care and respect, mindful of cultural, ethnic and gender differences.
- Integrity – Practitioners work from a basis of trust, honesty, high ethical standards, transparency and professional competence.

Commitments to self Practitioners:

- are aware of their need for their own self-care and seek support when needed.
- commit to ongoing education and self-development.

Commitments to clients Practitioners:

- accurately represent their education and training, and the purpose, limits and scope of the treatment or modality.
- do not provide medical diagnosis or prescriptions unless properly trained and credentialed; nor do they promise cures.
- are aware of "roles" – i.e. the inherent vulnerability of the participant role and the (often unconscious) projections of power on the practitioner role.
- use "informed consent" for all procedures, including touch.
- support the self-determination of the participant and his/her right to refuse, modify or terminate sessions at any time, regardless of prior consent given.
- assume full responsibility for setting and maintaining clear, appropriate and culturally sensitive boundaries, taking all necessary steps to protect participants and avoiding all sexual innuendo (verbal or energetic) and sexual contact.

- safeguard the confidentiality of all participant information (unless disclosure is authorized by written consent of participant, required by law, or there is indication that the participant poses a clear and imminent danger to self or others).
- terminate services responsibly (e.g. give participant advance notice whenever possible; transfer to another practitioner when necessary).

To larger collective Practitioners:

- cooperate with Vérité procedures and collaborate with staff.
- maintain a smoke, drug, and alcohol-free atmosphere.
- inform appropriate working groups if a participant poses a danger to self or others.
- agree to participate in Vérité's support process if they have a grievance related to their work in Vérité, or in case a concern about their work is raised.

PART II: SUPPORT PROCESS

The Vérité core team and programming team agree that all concerns or complaints will be handled with an attitude of care and support for both the participant and the practitioner, and with the highest aspiration for fairness. Vérité's commitment is to the protection of the participant and Auroville, with appropriate support for the practitioner as a primary concern. We seek to maximize the potential for learning, growth, healing and transformation through careful processing of these issues.

- Concerns/complaints must be in writing, including all relevant data (dates of sessions,

nature of the issue, etc.) and submitted to the Vérité programming group within 14 days of the incident.

- Vérité staff will meet separately with (and maintain the confidentiality of) both the participant and the practitioner; joint meetings will be scheduled when deemed appropriate and acceptable to both parties. All parties have the option to ask a support person of their choice to attend these meetings.
- Teachers and/or other practitioners of the particular modality shall be consulted whenever possible.
- After careful review, Vérité staff will make recommendations to the practitioner and communicate those recommendations to the participant.
- Under certain circumstances, practitioners may be asked to suspend or stop practice, and/or to seek professional guidance and support. If legal violations are deemed to have occurred, or there is a threat of legal action, referral will be made to appropriate working groups in Auroville.
- In cases where the participant is deemed to have an invalid complaint, Vérité staff will inform the participant and, if necessary, the appropriate working groups in Auroville.
- Vérité staff will make every effort to come to full consensus on their recommendations. When this is not possible, an extra support person will be brought in to assist. If, after this, consensus is still not achievable, the majority viewpoint will prevail.

PRACTITIONER STATEMENT

I have read, understood and agree to the terms of the Vérité Code of Commitments.

Teaching workshops in Auroville

Dariya has been offering workshops for over 15 years in different areas of bodywork and inner exploration.

In my mind, you have always been associated with dance.

I have always loved to dance. When my son was a few years old I started to take every dance class in Auroville, and for some time became part of the Auroville dance company which even travelled to a few places around India, giving performances of *Savitri* and *Mantra*.

I became interested in dance as a means of expressing and communicating what is alive within us. I feel often we are so much in our heads or in the doing that it is very important to work more in and with the body, finding ways to just be and allow. And you don't have to have an extraordinary body to dance; everyone can dance.

I ran my first ongoing workshop for Aurovilians in 1998 based on Japanese Butoh dance. It's often very slow, and is about authentic, organic, nature-inspired movement. Later I started with *Dance Space*, which has evolved over the years. It's a combination of diverse elements. It has a meditative space at the beginning and end, in between it flows free, and, depending on participants, includes contact improvisation. It's amazing, I have been doing this for about 12 years and every session is different, with people of all ages and experiences participating, connecting, creating community.

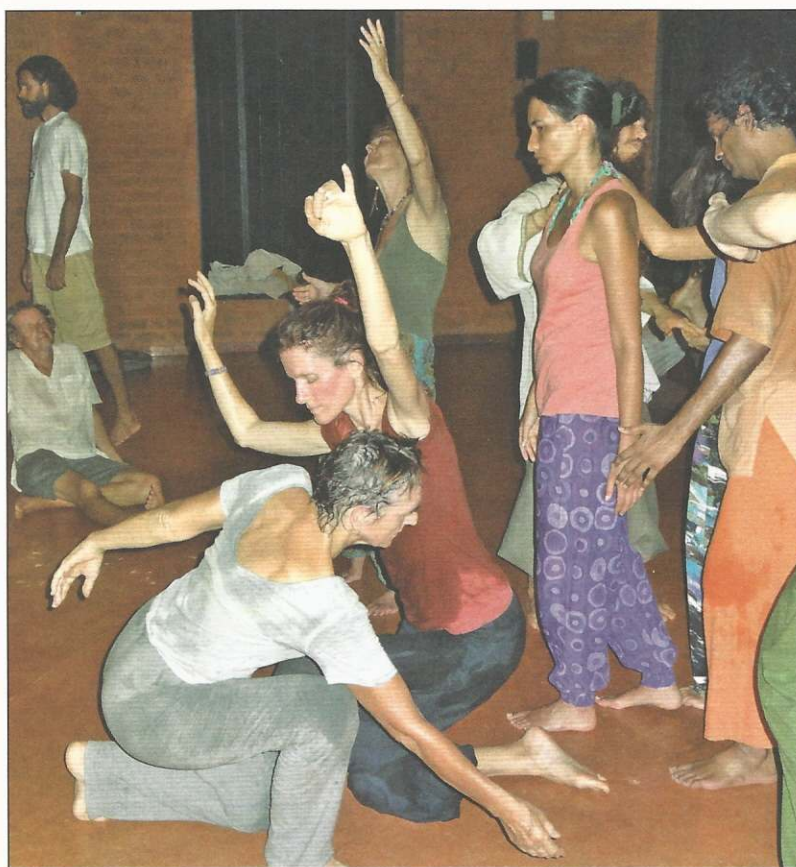
12 years ago I started to train in Watsu and other Aquatic bodywork modalities that combine elements of

massage, stretching and deep inner work. Soon I started to assist visiting teachers. As we had no regular teacher in the beginning, two years later, after attending various trainings, I began teaching together with Daniel.

I had been physically unwell some years back, so out of my interest in self-healing I got a scholarship and got certified in 'The Journey' process by Brandon Bays. Here you guide a person on a kind of a vision quest into the body, welcoming arising images, memories, emotions, without 'digging' for issues. The process of self-healing takes place by connecting the subconscious with the conscious and bringing forgiveness where needed.

I see all these different workshops as tools towards deeper awareness and self-healing. The monthly workshops 'Who am I?', that I run these days, combine movement, meditation, creativity and bodywork, which are all tools towards bringing awareness to our habitual responses and help release the outgrowth, mostly hurt and fear-based, patterns that limit our responses, so creating spaces for more ease and joy.

We just gave a two day workshop called *Water and Dance*, where we combined aquatic bodywork with movement on land. Water provides an environment where you can much easier let go of inhibitions; on land it is easier to ground and be introspective. We had a mixture of ages from the early 20s up to 70 and a mix of Aurovilians and guests, and for me that combination is perfect. It was very joyful, and every time it is amazing how much depth comes out when a group of people stays together and commits to being present.



Dariya (fourth from left) in a dance workshop

How do you handle the emotional 'stuff' that is sometimes released in participants when working at this deep level?

You cannot hold space or support people unless you yourself are really present and centered. In workshops it has happened that somebody has broken down, but I've done a lot of process training, both in Watsu and other supportive modalities, and I've

experienced so many things in my own body that I trust inherent self-healing abilities. Staying present and allowing the person to go through is mostly enough. And I trust that I have enough integrity that if I couldn't cope, I would be able to call somebody who could help further.

What about the danger of creating dependency in those who attend your workshops?

I am in a place where I believe that everybody has the resources for their own healing. As a therapist, I am here to hold the space and possibly share some tools for that to take place, not impose my own views or make people dependent upon me.

Some people look at the community notice boards at this time of the year and wonder what some of these workshops have got to do with Auroville. Some even wonder if we need workshops at all if we have the writings of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.

I know that some people believe that Mother and Sri Aurobindo's writings are enough, but for many of us I don't think this is so. A while ago I read an article where Sri Aurobindo was quoted, saying that in Integral Yoga everybody needs to find their own tools as part of their path. And who can say what is appropriate and what not? I would rather trust that if there are activities that don't belong here, they will not remain.

At the same time, I have moments when I have issues about people who come for a couple of months to Auroville to offer workshops, make money, and then fly out again. In a way we are 'competing' for the same participants.

However, I feel grateful because I share what I enjoy doing, what is meaningful to me, holding spaces for connections, for unity, for growth and celebrations of shared humanity. I wish more people would share what they love to do and create spaces where people can connect in this joy and exploration.

From an interview by Alan

PROFILE

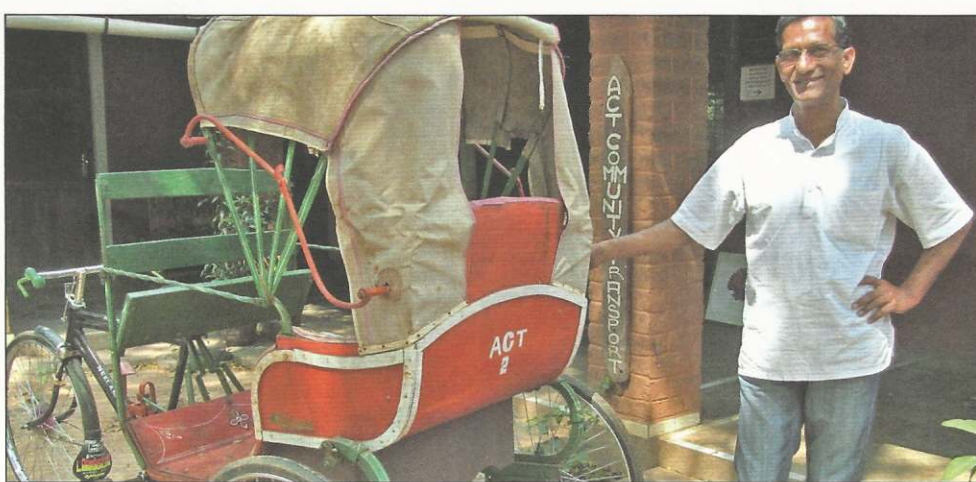
At home in Auroville and the Ashram

Originally from Bihar, Anand was brought up in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram from 1965. His mother, who had been an Ashramite since 1962, got him admitted into the Ashram school and, later, into the Ashram. For him, life in the Ashram was like living with a family of 2000. "In those days we were extremely close, everyone knew all the students, and the Mother was like my own mother. I had no inclination for a divine life; I was simply at home." In 1980 he graduated from Knowledge, the Ashram college, his studies focusing on language and Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, with additional work in economics and psychology. From 1980-1983 he was an Ashramite, giving his service in the sports ground as a caretaker.

In 1983, against the wishes of his mother and his brother, who was also an Ashramite, Anand decided to leave Pondicherry for Calcutta because he wanted to have a family. Once he had made the decision, he had no qualms about it. Moreover, the Ashram authorities were very kind and gracious, making the decision easier. A year later he married Preeti, whose family also was connected to the Ashram. He started a business supplying one of the leading paper mills in Calcutta with bamboo pulp and discarded exam papers he collected from the various schools and colleges. He also was close to the Sri Aurobindo Centre in Calcutta, which had a nice atmosphere and many people connected with the Ashram, helping him to feel comfortable there.

But Preeti wanted to live in Pondicherry. Originally from Delhi, her sisters and brothers had studied in the Ashram school, but she didn't manage to get admitted. Not having the opportunity to study in the Ashram school, she felt she should at least have the opportunity to live near the Ashram. So in 1987, they returned to Pondicherry, which for Anand felt like "a great coming back home."

Anand found another good business opportunity to work with Surendra Gupta, another ex-student from the Ashram. He was running CUSAG, *Commerce Under Sri Aurobindo's Guidance* (the name given by the Mother), and worked with him closely on this project for almost seven years. They supplied many government departments and units with office machines and building supplies. "Our aim was to do this kind of business with the



Anand next to ACT 2, one of Auroville's first community transport vehicles

government, which normally involved much corruption, without any misuse of money. You can find many good people in government also, and when we approached them we would inspire them and take them into our fold. Of course, we could have done more business giving bribes, but that wasn't our aim."

Anand met Chandresh in 2007 after Chandresh had returned from the US and was in the process of becoming an Aurovillian. Chandresh was just one year senior to Anand in the Ashram school, so they had grown up together. "We met by accident one day, and he told me he had a vision for certain projects in Auroville, which I found very inspiring. He didn't ask me to join him, but I immediately told him, 'Chandresh, if you are looking for someone to help you in a physical way - I am not an intellectual - but to work physically to get something done, if you want, I can join you.' He was very happy. Right from our childhood we had seen Auroville growing, so this was a great opportunity to be connected with Auroville and to do something for Auroville."

"So from 2007 we started working together. Whatever projects he took up, I became involved with. Right now we have six or seven projects we are working on. Being involved in these projects makes me feel at home here and inspires me to do my work as sincerely and positively as possible."

Their first project was to make a collection of poetry written by various devotees of Sri Aurobindo

and the Mother. Lloyd Hofman and Vignan Agni selected a set of poems from this collection which was published as an anthology by Chandresh's *Integral Enterprise* under the title *Devotion*.

They also started working on Chandresh's idea of the SARACON incubation centre, which has helped many Aurovillian entrepreneurs get started on their business ventures. Anand helped look after the administration and kept the daily accounts. This administrative and accounting work gradually extended to all the projects they took up. "I am busy with all these different projects, but I enjoy it. In the Ashram school we learned to be disciplined and to manage many different tasks at the same time. So now I am able to organize things in such a way that I can keep up with all my tasks here in Auroville."

Towards the end of 2007, they started working on Chandresh's idea of *Auroville Community Transport* (ACT). "Now the bus service is having financial difficulties because it is not being fully utilized. Being such a small community, it is difficult for a public transport system to cover its costs without assistance. We have a proposal with BCC for providing support, but it is still under consideration."

They are now in the process of starting the *Ongil Prototype Lab* in a shed in Udavi which they have renovated. They are presently equipping it with various machines for making product prototypes. "Previously, if you wanted to show a

prototype of a product to a client, you could show them a three-dimensional image on a computer, but you couldn't give it to them to hold in their hand. With these tools we will be able to manufacture a three-dimensional prototype - for example, an innovative water tap - so the client can hold it and look at it. If the client likes it, it can be sent for manufacturing; our job is just to make the prototype."

They expect to start operations this month. The Tapasya unit, which incubated at SARACON and does building design and construction, has various clients lined up who want to see prototypes of specially designed features for their buildings. This is now the main focus of Anand's efforts and probably will continue to be so for a couple more years.

Just now he is also busy helping organize the 7th Auroville Marathon to be held on February 9. "When we started these marathons there were just three organizers, but now we have a nice number of volunteers who come in at various stages." This year, 2800 runners have registered for the half-marathon or full marathon.

Work on these various projects takes up most of Anand's time. He cycles every day from his home in Pondicherry to Auroville and reaches by 9 or 9:30, returning around 6 in the evening. In the evening he likes to just spend time with his family. Preeti teaches Hindi in the Ashram school as a service, taking about 10 periods a week in the afternoons. Anurag, the oldest of their two sons, who is 25 and has completed his education from the Ashram school, has just published a novel, a love story set in Israel and Palestine in the midst of the conflict there. He is now working on another. The younger son, Druv, is 15 and studying in the Ashram school.

While busy working on many projects in Auroville, the Ashram remains important in Anand's life, with his wife working there and his second child still attending the school. He finds this arrangement very comfortable and satisfying, and feels no inclination at this time to formally join Auroville. "I know what I am; I am part and parcel of Auroville and the Ashram. I don't feel I need a certificate from anyone saying I am a member. I am an Ashramite, though I don't have a certificate saying so. In Auroville also I feel that I am with my family."

Larry

Creating seabed scapes



The three artists' water installation

The water installation of T2, part of the *panch mahabhuta*, the India Elemental theme, is designed by film director Shekhar Kapur together with Rajeev Sethi. A ten-metre high blue-turquoise ceramic wall forms the backdrop. From it, and from a series of blue-green pillars in front, emerge ancient water spouts that spew water onto a ceramic installation that represents a cityscape. Place your hand in the water, and you hear a sound. Move your hand in the water of another spout, and you hear a different note. If you don't mind getting wet hands, it is possible to play a small melody as you move your hands underneath all the spouts.

Below this installation you find the illuminated seabed scapes of Priya Sundaravalli. "My work came in as an afterthought of the designer," she says. "In September 2012 there was the Auroville Festival at the India International Centre in New Delhi, where I exhibited my installation of ceramic objects. [see *Auroville Today* # 279, October 2012] The exhibition was coming to an end, and I was visiting museums in Delhi, when I received a call to come immediately – that Rajeev Sethi wanted to speak to me. I rushed back to find this gentleman standing there, quietly taking in my work. He said he liked what he saw, enquired about the price and then bought the installation for the new airport in Mumbai. I had no idea what he was talking about. He invited me to visit him and his design team at his office next day to see for myself what he planned to do with my work."

It was there that she learned that her

installation would be put under a glass walkway and form the base of the water installation of the five elements theme. The model had already been fully developed. The Pandit family (father-son team of Padmashri awardee B.R. Pandit and son Abhay Pandit) would make the wall and pillars; artist Vipul Kumar had been assigned to make the



Priya Sundaravalli at her installation

ceramic cityscapes – a work inspired by the Mumbai monsoons falling upon the blue tarpaulins that cover the slums – and sound engineer K.J. Singh had been roped in to solve the problem of how, by touching water, you can produce musical notes. "To this original idea, Rajeev had now added a new design element which was my installation. It was going to be placed beneath a raised glass walkway, with two glass stairways leading into it."

It was a great model. But the airport builders had their doubts. For this installation, unlike any of the other art works at T2, required major structural changes. The airport's engineers had to find a way to support, on the third floor of the terminal and in an area of 45 square metres, 15 tons of stone water spouts and ceramics, 20 tons of iron, 5 tons of water and

2.5 tons of white *kolam* (limestone) powder. At first, nobody believed it could be done. But ultimately the solution to this complex engineering riddle was found.

"I only learned about this issue much later," says Priya. "They had asked me about the weight of my pieces – which altogether weighed not more than a 75 kilos – but were concerned when I told them that the weight of the *kolam* powder and the bricks which I needed for making the seabed would exceed several tonnes."

Priya, from her side, was uneasy when she was heard that the dimensions of the glass floor walkway would be 9 metres by 4 metres. "It was more than three times the size of my Delhi exhibition! How was I going to fill that space up? I knew that the Delhi installation with its 120 odd pieces had been rather closely packed and that my pieces would show better with more space around them. But three times the display size!" She decided to make 200 more pieces, at no additional cost for the airport. "This was my chance to offer the best of what I could for the



Ancient water spouts splash water at the city scapes of Vipul Kumar

country." And so, in March 2013, 16 boxes with more than 300 pieces of fragile ceramics and 2.5 tons of *kolam* powder left Auroville by lorry on its way to Mumbai.

But it was only in October 2013 that the work of the other artists had sufficiently proceeded for Priya to start her work on the floor. It was far from plain sailing.

"I call it my 'groundhog days', after the 1993 movie *Groundhog Day* where the main character is forced to relive the same day over and over again until he changes personally," she says. "I had estimated that it would take me 10 days to create the seabed and install my ceramics – but it took almost 40 days! The workmen who had been assigned to help me were not always at their motivated best, and there was a lot of *tamas*! Often the work had all to be done all over again. Then there was a big leak in one of the tanks. Water flowed like a brook through the installation out on the floor in front. And once again, all the work had to be redone."

But it was a great learning experience. "After a couple of failures I realised that I was being too nice to the workers, expecting that they would respond with prompt and perfect work. When it didn't happen, I switched to being a nasty bully – perhaps it made me unpopular for a while, but I got respect and what I wanted! I learned that I had to insist on perfection the first time around and never take 'no' or 'later' for an answer. This was a big learning for me."

Now that this installation is over, does she have specific plans for the future? "In March I will start a four-months internship at the Gimhae Clayarch museum in Korea. I want to study architectural ceramics; to create something big and also combine clay with other media such as fibre glass or metal, possibly with kinetic elements." She smiles. "But I have no specific concepts in mind. I am certain I will be guided."

Carel



A part of the seabed scape installation is visible through the glass staircase

Mumbai's airport terminal T2 opens

***Jaya He*, T2's airport museum and one of the world's largest art programmes in public space, hosts art by two Aurovilians.**

Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport, named after the 17th century Maratha emperor, Chhatrapati Shivaji, has a new terminal, conveniently abbreviated as T2. It was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, on January 10, 2014, and will start commercial operations on February 12.

T2 is unique in many aspects. For one, the terminal, designed by New York's Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (who also designed Dubai's Burj Khalifa and Chicago's Willis Tower) is stunningly beautiful. The design of the four-level high terminal – another novelty in India – has been inspired by the dancing white peacock. The giant white pillars with their peacock feather motif that are holding up the terminal's 11-acre roof are awe-inspiring. The wide interior spaces, the lotus chandeliers and the diya curtain of grey steel, with hundreds of LED lights shining through cut outs resembling traditional oil lamps, are a feast for the eyes. Even the six-lane elevated access road, which connects the new terminal to the Western Express Highway of Mumbai, has been aesthetically designed and is an example to road planners all over India.

The art programme

But what sets apart this terminal from others is that it has a soul. Says Sanjay Reddy, the Managing Director of Mumbai International Airport Pvt. Ltd. (MIAL) which built and runs the Mumbai airport, "There was a beautiful body, but devoid of soul." He contemplated how to change that. "What if we transform this area into a temple of nourishment, into one gigantic show gallery to host the country's largest collection of art in public space? What if we create a tribute to India's finest art?" That's how *Jaya He*, the GVK New Museum at T2, was born.

Jaya He means *Glory to the Nation*. And Glory to India it certainly is. For unlike most other airports, which do not express a strong national identity, *Jaya He* makes people aware that they are in India. For the Art Programme not only shows the works of more than 100 contemporary Indian artists, but also showcases ancient Indian artefacts sourced from all over India. One can find painted doors from Sikkim, 11th century water spouts, temple cars from the South, beautiful inlaid boxes, carved wooden doors, metal lamps from Kerala, wooden chariots, stone pillars, large scenographic objects, ancient and modern *jhalis*, and huge 19th century wooden totems from Nagaland. Murals created by tribal artists from Gond and Warli stand next to works of contemporary artists. The art works are made of all possible media; a rather unusual medium is waste. There is a map of Mumbai made of computer circuit boards with resistors and condensers shaped as buildings and art work made of bottle caps. There are also statues made of cow dung.

The brain behind India's largest art programme, spanning over three kilometres, is India's leading curator and scenographer Rajeev Sethi, known for his organisation of *Festivals of India* all over the world. In his *Curatorial Note on the Artwork Programme* he explains that, "In India we mark and celebrate every rite of passage, particularly in travel – every threshold and doorway is enriched by a ritual, consecrating the journey through it. Our ambition was to bring this sensibility to the airport, infusing meaning into the huge spatial volumes of T2 Mumbai." Mumbai has already two other noteworthy thresholds: the Gateway of India for those arriving by sea, and the iconic Chhatrapati Shivaji railway terminus. It was only fitting that a third one, for air passengers, would be added.

Integrating arts and crafts

Sethi decided upon a full-scale integration of crafts and arts, where works from tribal, folk, and contemporary artists stand next to or are integrated with ancient art objects. Together with his team he travelled all over India and hand-picked over 5,400 ethnographic artefacts – from towns, villages, markets and collectors, and from an art museum in Kochi which was to be sold off to a client abroad. But all were in various states of degradation. Without conservation, they would have been lost forever. Sethi brought in a Heritage Conservation Agency to restore them to their original splendour.

He also contacted over 100 eminent and upcoming artists, amongst them two Aurovilians, and commissioned works to unknown master craftsmen working within traditional idioms. In so doing, the Art Programme reached out, as he says, "to the threshold of those who have great skills, but whose works have never seen the light of day." *Jaya He*, he says, has brought together designers, artists, artisans, architects, art historians, anthropologists and conservators with technicians, all working together to distil and interpret India culturally, aesthetically, historically and socially.

Jaya He is divided into two areas. One is for arriving passengers, called 'layered narratives'. This is a series of installations along the travelators about the city of Mumbai, such as Alexis Kersey's 'Party in the sky above Mumbai' and there are Bollywood movie poster paintings. Also kinetic installations by Gond and Warli tribals decorate the walls. Then, upon arrival in the baggage claim area, the weary traveller is greeted by the soft sounds of dozens of wind chimes operated by subtly hidden motors, made by *Svaram* in Auroville. To rest the eye while waiting for the luggage, the islands in the middle of the baggage carousels display an assortment of antique Indian trunks and exquisitely carved boxes.

Departing travellers will be able to enjoy the main part of *Jaya He*, which is located along the 18-metre high, 1.2 kilometre long art wall, which runs as a spine through the terminal. "We call it the Threshold of India," writes Sethi. The wall has six themes. *India Greets* is presented as a tableau of doorways, façades, and porches replete with symbols of welcome and protection, such as lotuses, musical angels, and celestial guardian figures of stone and wood. *India Seamless* consists of four installations, from each corner of the country, depicting the myths, histories and popular culture of these regions. An 18-metre tall installation recreating backdrops and props popular in Marathi theatre is part of this theme and plays homage to the host state of Maharashtra.

India Elemental is based on the concept of the *panch mahabhuta* and expresses each of the five elements – space, air, fire, water and earth. It is here that we find the works of the two Auroville artists – the wind chimes of *Svaram* (in the section 'Space') and the ceramics of Priya Sundaravalli (in 'Water'). *India Global* represents an India in the making, where new forms, materials and ways of being coalesce in novel ways, the old and new co-existing. *India's Silent Sentinels* is composed of architectural and sculptural elements traditionally featured in thresholds of homes, water sources, and religious architecture, marking the space of auspicious transition. *India Moves* represents different modes of transportation including *vaahanas* – the vehicles of the gods – palanquins, carts and rathas.

The art along this wall can be viewed from all four levels of the terminal. It can also be viewed from the perspective of the makers. Visitors will be able to learn about each artwork by copying the CARM (Complex Asset Resource Management) of the art object onto their cell phones, or visiting the information kiosks along the wall. A museum boutique will be set-up in the shopping area, where DVDs, a coffee table book and a catalogue will be on sale, as well as works from selected artists. The museum is also planning a comprehensive public outreach programme to promote Indian art, crafts and culture, globally and in India.

If there is a problem about *Jaya He*, it is that one needs an air ticket to enter – and probably more than one as it will take many trips and long hours to appreciate all art on display. And there is the catch. As Sanjay Reddy predicts: the art will be such an attraction that people may miss their flights.

Carel

Building Sound Wings

For Aurelio, the creative director of Svaram, the story started in 2011 when he got a call from Veenapani Chawla, the director of Adishakti near Auroville. She said that a Mr. Rajeev Sethi was there and 'was looking for something for the airport', for the section 'space' of 'India Elemental'. He needed something that produced sound. "We met and talked about various possibilities, such as using sound-stones or wind-chimes. It was all very informal; we had no idea about the required dimension," he says.

In the following years that idea became clearer. Sethi wanted two large chime installations at the entrance of the baggage claim area, near carousel 1, each hanging between two six-metres high pillars. "Those pillars are nine metres apart! We realised that for each installation we had to hang eight metres of chimes, from small to large, with pipes gradually increasing from 1 to 3 metres in length, the largest with a diameter of 9 centimetres. It would be our largest order ever, but we wondered if we could build it."

"Our first reaction was not to do it, it was too big," says Jan, who is responsible for the production at Svaram. "We were talking about making 400 tubes of different dimensions,



Top: One of the wings of *Sound Wings*

Below left: The middle section of the *Sound Wing* installation has music-making angels and *ghandarvas*
Below right: Aurelio and Jan next to a sound-stone



each of them to be hand-tuned and afterwards electronically-verified. Moreover, we had no clue how to make them sound. We produce wind chimes, but the airport is temperature-controlled and there is no wind. Then there were all those security restrictions. The sound could not interfere with the announcements – that excluded the possibility of using artificial wind – and should not exceed 35 decibels. That's a conversation in whispers. All in all, it wasn't very promising."

Then there was MIAL's contract, about 1 centimetre thick and exceeding 20 pages. "I'm an artist and not familiar with legal language!" says Aurelio. But as things happen sometimes in Auroville, unexpected help came. An Aurovilian and a newcomer specialised in robotics, helped with developing a device which, at regular intervals, rotates a wooden hammer against the tubes. Other help came from Ulrike, a German lawyer and a friend of Auroville. She had already supported Svaram in the past by restructuring its operations. She now studied the contract and simply scrapped the unacceptable clauses. "We had no idea that we could propose changes. She simply did and her changes were accepted," says Aurelio.

The two halves of the installation are separated from each other by statues of angels and *ghandarvas* playing musical instruments, which Rajeev Sethi bought from different parts of India. "That gave us the idea of *Sound Wings*, where our installations are like wings on both sides of the angels – like the spread-out wings of a bird. For the tuning we choose the *Hamsadhvani* (meaning *sound of swans*), a raga in Carnatic music in the pentatonic scale, which symbolises the sound of the bird of the soul," says Aurelio.

As could be expected, the project met with setbacks. At some point, MIAL told them they were too expensive. They pro-

posed they cut out the 50 electronic motors and the sound stones, which they had also been asked to supply. "We rather liked the idea – for at that time, the electronic part was still a nightmare," says Jan, "but how could we supply chimes that don't chime? We decided against the proposal, and almost gave up on the project." Negotiations fol-

lowed. "At the end we agreed to do the project close to cost price – for it is a great honour and opportunity to be allowed to showcase your product at this prestigious airport.

The installation followed. "It was chaotic," says Jan. "The electronic equipment is all hidden, and we will need access for maintenance. When the project was already in an advanced stage, we found that the initial drawings had been changed in such a way that only a small child would be able to creep through the maintenance duct. Despite our protests this could not be changed, and access is very limited."

As a corollary of this project, Svaram is look-



ing into ways of bringing its own functioning to a different level. "To purely become a business venture isn't very attractive," says Aurelio. "We want to continue our research and create a learning campus for instrument building," Jan agrees. "I would prefer to concentrate on producing a few specialized high profit items and have a team of skilled crafts people. But in any case I am sure that wherever we go with Svaram, it will be creative and rewarding and we'll find a balance in our growth which works for all involved."

Carel.

For more information visit www.svaram.org.



Sound Wings as seen from the baggage reclaim area

New Auroville boutique opens

On December 14th, 2013, Bobby and André of Auromics Trust opened 'Boutique St. Laurent', a new Auroville boutique at 10 Rue du Bazar Saint Laurent in Pondicherry.

Auroville Today: Why a new boutique?

Bobby: It was a spontaneous decision. We hadn't been planning to start a new boutique. Then somebody said there was shop space available in a house in Pondicherry, I went and saw it and was straightaway taken with it. The people who own it wanted it to be an Auroville shop. It is in a high-end area of Pondicherry which is going to develop further. You can still walk in this area, you can still park.

André: There are all these French schools and nice boutique and heritage hotels around. I'm discovering a brand-new world because a lot of French people are coming to the Boutique whom I have never met before but who have been living in Pondy for years. The feedback we get from people like this is that the shop is a good idea; there's a great atmosphere and it's good to have many Auroville products in one place.



Inside the new boutique

You are opening a new boutique when we hear that the Auroville economy is not doing at all well and many other commercial units are struggling. It sounds as if your units, Auromics and Amano, are doing well. What is your secret?

Bobby: Auromics is doing well because we supply niche products. Our hand-knit pullovers can't be found anywhere else.

About two thirds of our knitwear goes for export. Here we have another major advantage: we recently got the GOTS – the Global Organic Textiles Standard – certification. It was a huge work, but some customers, particularly in Germany, only want to buy products with this certification. It would be good if other Auroville garment units went for this certification as it does help business.

André: Amano's leather bags also are niche products. Most are hand-stitched; hardly anybody makes bags this way today. But for us, exports count for only 20% of our turnover. We concentrate mainly on the Indian market.

So neither of your units has really been affected by the recession?

André: We were affected because the prices of raw materials increased.

Bobby: But recently we had this magnificent jump in the exchange rate which has compensated for this to some extent.

What does it mean to get a new project like this off the ground?

André: I'm exhausted, that's what it means! I've been running to Pondy daily for the past two weeks. We had this huge empty space which had to be repainted, we had carpenters to put up shelving etc., and I had to keep checking up on the work being done. And all this was happening under time pressure. Originally we had planned to open on 15th January but later we changed that to 14th December, so we could catch the Christmas sales.



Bobby and André

Bobby: To get a project like this off the ground, first of all you have to have capital, ready cash. We couldn't rely on Auroville, because the owners of the house wanted to know within two days if we were going to sign a contract – and if we had requested Auroville for financial help it would have taken much longer.

Then you have to have the stock. Luckily all the Auroville units we asked to provide stock immediately said yes. Maroma helped a lot here. Finding employees was another challenge – we are still looking for qualified people. And then, selling food and having a small coffee shop is a whole new thing for us.

Now it's the tourist season. But how will you cope in summer when there are far fewer tourists around?

Bobby: That will be the biggest challenge. That's why we have Marc's coffee, Kalya's cakes and Auroville bakery bread. Also Foodlink wants to offer organic vegetables. As people can make regular orders for all these things, I'm hoping this will bring in the local people. This would help tide us over the summer months.

André: Word has already got round that we have Rucola from Foodlink and people are already coming just for that.

Bobby: We are convinced this project is going to work. But we still have to put a lot of effort into it.

Alan

BOOK REVIEW

Evolving beyond borders

Countless books have been written on the United Nations – about its symbolism, its functioning over the years and its proposed structural changes, such as enlarging the Security Council to give permanent seats to countries like India and Brazil. In *Evolving Beyond Borders – the United Nations from the perspective of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy* Kosha Shah and Dr. S. Jacoby approach the United Nations from a philosophical and psychological perspective, researching the role of this institution in the unification of humanity as predicted by Sri Aurobindo.

The book rests heavily on Sri Aurobindo's books *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *The Human Cycle*, and *War and Self-Determination*, all written between 1915 and 1918 and revised in the late 1930s and once again in 1949, mainly by adding a *Postscript Chapter* to *The Ideal of Human Unity*. But is it fair to examine entities like the United Nations through the lens of a philosopher whose political works date to almost a century ago? The authors answer the question in the positive because "the essential question from the Aurobindonian point of view is how we can change human nature, not just how we can reform the institution of the United Nations, for the latter would be merely tinkering on the surface leaving the roots untouched... Our endeavour has been to take an overview and analyse the movement in humanity toward a greater unity as we have understood it from the perspective of Sri Aurobindo."

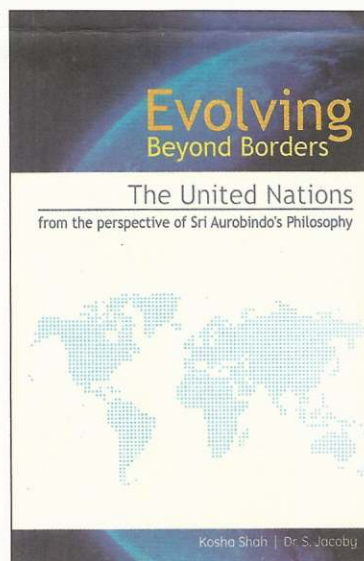
In the brief Prologue, the authors highlight Sri Aurobindo's concept of liberty, which translates into self-determination at the level of nation states, a topic to which they later devote an entire chapter. They discuss the differences between 'nation' and 'state' – the latter defined as a structure of government for a country within its borders; the former as a psychological and cultural entity whose borders may or may not coincide with the borders of a state. They explain in the section 'colonialism' how many

countries in Africa, whose borders were drawn by the former colonial powers regardless of ethnic, cultural, linguistic or historical factors, are states rather than nations – at the cost of many civil wars. Lastly, they mention Sri Aurobindo's views that a nation is a group-soul which, "having attained to a separate distinctness, must become more and more self-conscious and find itself more and more fully...even the physical being of the society is a subjective power, not a mere objective existence."

Sri Aurobindo was a keen observer of the world situation and has written much on the United Nations' predecessor, the League of Nations, and on the United Nations in its early stages. These comments take a major place in the book. But the authors have also painstakingly outlined the developments which led to the creation of the League and subsequently to the United Nations and the monetary institutions set-up by the Bretton Woods Conference – the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

In the chapter on the League, the authors discuss its origins in the First World War and the Treaty of Versailles, and its failure because it had been set up as an instrument of the interests of some of the big powers which won the war. They mention the main failings of the League – the fact that the USA did not become a member; the Manchurian crisis in 1932 which culminated in the attack of Japan against China; and the attack of Italy on Ethiopia and Italy's annexation of the kingdom of Abyssinia. They also discuss some of its successes, the main one being that the League was a first framework for a partial unity, a starting point without which the next stage of the United Nations would not have been possible.

Likewise, the authors extensively describe the origins of the United Nations, as developed during World War II which finally led to the birth of the United Nations on 26 June, 1945. The authors then discuss the principle organs of the United Nations today – the Security Council, the General



Assembly, the Secretariat and Secretary-General, the International Court of Justice and the Economic and Social Council.

The main problem, as noted by Sri Aurobindo, was that the big powers were not willing to renounce their privileged status. "A strong surviving element of oligarchy remained in the preponderant place assigned to the five great powers in the Security Council and was clinched by the device of the veto," he wrote. Acknowledging that these were concessions to the needs of the time and could perhaps not be avoided, he warns that "to leave them unmodified prolongs a malaise, an absence of harmony and smooth working and a consequent discredit and a sense of limited and abortive action..."

The next chapter of the book entitled 'War and Peace' deals with the subsequent expansion and development of the United Nations and describes the difficulties it encountered – the Cold War, the Korean War, the many peace-keeping operations, the Gulf War, the war in Rwanda, and the civil war in Yugoslavia. It shows the strength and weakness of the Security Council, depending on the political will of its members to take action. And the authors wonder if restructuring of the Security

Council by, for example, allocating a permanent seat to India and Brazil, would lead to any major changes – would new members act differently? For experience has shown that the more the vital interest of the Security Council's members are involved, the more they tend to act out of self-interest, irrespective of their international legal obligations.

In the chapter "Money Matters" the authors elaborate on the views of Sri Aurobindo that the "economic principle is the governing principle of society" and that money is as much a tool of war and peace as are weapons. For Sri Aurobindo, therefore, a fair economic mechanism is an indispensable cornerstone to human unity and he saw the need for a firm international authority to control a balanced economic system. They then discuss the founding principles of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and the impact of the economic policy which the rich countries imposed on the rest of the world – the neo-liberal dogma that liberation of markets and trade are the key to a prosperous economic growth. That this dogma has proven to be wrong was acknowledged by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in 2002, which observed that trade liberalization "has been associated with rising incidence of poverty." (Notwithstanding, many economists and governments, including India, still espouse neo-liberal economic principles) In this chapter they also discuss the role of the G-20, the group of 20 of the world's leading industrialised nations, which now often take decisions by bypassing the United Nations. They also show how the fight against poverty has become one of the core issues of the United Nations, as the developing countries now have a majority in its General Assembly.

The book does not end with discussing the United Nations, but also goes into great detail concerning the history of European unification – the Council of Europe and the European Union – and how the latter has become

the closest political and economic union between free nations that exists in the world today, to the extent that nations have agreed to surrender their national sovereignty in an ever increasing number of areas. The authors show how a part of Sri Aurobindo's vision of a united Europe has materialized. But is the European Union a precursor of a larger free world union as foreseen by Sri Aurobindo? The authors discuss to what extent the European Union meets Sri Aurobindo's prerequisites, particularly, to what extent the economic and political progress of the European Union has been matched in the hearts and minds of the Europeans. Has Europe reached a common humanity, as Sri Aurobindo called it?

In the epilogue the authors examine if Sri Aurobindo's vision of human unity, expressed either in the form of a world-state or in a free world-union, is possible to achieve, as the world appears to be having more centrifugal than centripetal tendencies and many countries have not yet achieved peace within their own borders. According to Sri Aurobindo, "a well-united World State with the nations for its province would be the final outcome". A world-union would be a further step and could only evolve if humanity has reached a higher level of consciousness and has entered a new evolutionary stage.

We are far from either, conclude the authors. But, they say, the fact that it has become more difficult for Member States of the United Nations to indulge in national egoisms shows that the road has been paved for a truly new experiment in human history, aimed at arriving at the core issues of Sri Aurobindo's political thought, a true and lasting human unity.

Carel

Evolving Beyond Borders – The United Nations from the Perspective of Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy by Kosha Shah and Dr. S. Jacoby. 212 pages. Published by Readworthy Publications. Available from SABDA. Price in India Rs 495.

Governing Board on Land for Auroville

Governing Board chairman Dr. Karan Singh, in an open letter to all Aurovilians dt. December 5, 2013, expressed the Board's dissatisfaction with the progress of the land purchase for Auroville and mentioned that the city envisaged by The Mother is under serious threat from speculative developers buying large tracts of land in the neighbourhood. Stating that land prices have risen exponentially, making it difficult for Auroville to raise the resources required for the purchase of all the remaining lands in the city and greenbelt, and that funds from the Government of India for the purchase of land cannot be expected, Auroville has no option but to raise resources through sale or lease of lands outside the Master Plan area, or to exchange these lands for more critical lands in the city and greenbelt. Given this scenario, there can be no dogmatic approach to selling or exchanging Auroville lands outside the Master Plan area. Stating that "it is incomprehensible to me and my colleagues in the Board as why the possessive attitude of a few Aurovilians refusing to move from their present location should block all progress in land consolidation," he informed the community that the Board has authorised the Secretary of the Auroville Foundation to have exploratory talks with the Swamy of Mailam temple who owns and controls a large plots of land in the Greenbelt. He called on all residents to understand the seriousness of the city issue and close ranks in a sincere effort to secure all lands in the city area by 31st March 2015. It is also necessary that a clear strategy is evolved for protecting the Greenbelt through acquisition and/or exchange of critical lands to control access.

Acres for Auroville

The board of Auroville International France has started Acres for Auroville, a fundraising programme to help acquiring the remaining lands for the City. Fundraising efforts will be made for a week around each darshan day, e.g. April 24, August 15, November 24 and February 21. Donations can be sent to the AVI centre in your country, through the COLAAP website www.colAAP.org, or via the Auroville Donation Gateway at the Auroville website <http://auroville.org>.

Land Resource Management reports

The Land Resource Management group (LRM) extensively reported on its work protecting the Auroville lands by fencing and ploughing the lands and repairing survey boundary stones. To solve boundary disputes with adjacent land owners and to avoid Auroville lands from encroachment, LRM plans to survey all Auroville

lands. LRM is also dealing with land encroachments and the destruction of a canyon by a few private land owners who tried to create an access into the canyon from their lands. On behalf of the Auroville Foundation, LRM is also involved in all court cases dealing with land.

Beach erosion

LRM also reported that during 2013 it has made many efforts to save Repos, Waves and Gokulam communities, doing rehabilitation work and re-fencing the sea side. Since the erosion was unpredictable LRM had to fence the places three times. Now that the sea erosion has temporarily come to an end, due to the seasonal change of drift, LRM hopes the fences will remain for a longer duration.

Failed Residents' Assembly decision making

The Residents' Assembly Service reported that, on January 20, 2014, the Residents' Assembly (RA) has not made a decision on two questions put before it due to the lack of a quorum. According to Auroville's RA Decision-Making Policy from 2007, for a community decision to be considered valid, at least ten per cent (quorum) of the community must participate. With 1718 Aurovilians listed in the Register of Residents, the quorum was 172. However, only 144 people voted, (127 'yes' and 17 'no') on the proposed new way of selecting the Working Committee and Auroville Council, two of Auroville's main working groups. On the proposed revision of the mandate of the Funds and Assets Management Committee, another main working group, only 135 people voted, 84 with 'yes' and 51 with 'no'. As Auroville's Decision-Making Policy makes no allowance for what happens when a quorum is not reached, the Residents' Assembly Service has asked for feedback on how to proceed.

Green belt survey

In July 2013, the Town Development Council (TDC) completed the survey of the immovable assets (buildings) in the city area of Auroville. The TDC has now started a survey of the Greenbelt area which is necessary for making a Greenbelt plan and to collect reliable data for taking allocation decisions. The survey will be done for all the Greenbelt areas except villages and tanks (traditional water storage structures) but will include all built-up structures; roads, bullock cart ways and walking paths; boundaries of lands where access is not possible; wells; canyons and water bodies; topography; electrical lines (HT); etc. The survey will be done by Landmark Surveys from Chennai.

Kalpana siting dispute

The TDC has received objections to its choice of site for the Kalpana housing and sports ground, between the Vikas radial and the Kailash building. A site announcement is information to the community that a project is under preparation and that a certain area will be reserved for a period of maximum two years for preparing proper architectural drawings for a building application. Kalpana will have 42 fully-equipped apartments, four offices, a community office and internet centre, laundry, store room, public toilets, and hybrid energy systems solar/TNEB. The housing project will be fully landscaped with pathways, benches and street lighting, so that there will be good connectivity to the sports facility and neighboring communities. The Kalpana Sports Center is envisaged to be open to all and will offer well-maintained facilities such as a swimming pool, gym, table tennis and cafeteria. 50 % of the cost of this project will be donated by the project holders, Satyakam and Devasmita, who, as members of the Housing Service, are daily confronted with the scarcity of houses in Auroville.

Objections centre around the need for keeping this area as a park and not for residential development as well as that it would go against the Galaxy footprint envisaged by the late Roger Anger. The TDC has also not explained why it has moved the project from the site originally indicated, an empty field behind Arati community.

Mangalam radial

The TDC, pursuing the development of the Industrial Zone, necessary for the growth and employment of Auroville, has started the work of building Pony Farm/ Mangalam radial road. This road runs from the parking shed of the Town Hall to the Pony Farm.

Sacred Groves

The Sacred Groves housing team reported that it has revised the designs. Now it plans a much larger built-up area with more windows and doors open to the front and back of each house. Each row of houses will share a common hall which could be used as a child-play area, socialising space, clothes drying area amongst other uses.

During the past months the site for water, power (both solar & wind) has been secured and a new road from Edayanchavadi for truck access to the site has been made and a base-camp for volunteer workers established. Also a site office for volunteer architects has been created, using a container.

Ongoing work includes finishing a 100,000 litres rain water tank for the base camp, to be used for construction. Green-work on the land has

started by the planting of some TDEF trees in the proposed forest groves and setting up of a small vegetable farm.

Purity guesthouse

The Housing Service, looking at ways to find accommodation for Newcomers, has done a survey of non-Auroville guesthouses to study the possibilities of renting all the rooms for a two-year period. This was done after the Funds and Assets Management Committee and the Entry Service agreed that Newcomers can live outside of Auroville, if the building comes under the care and supervision of the Housing Service. By December 2013, all available Newcomer houses were allocated. No more houses were available to encourage a flow of new arrivals. The Housing Service, after protracted negotiations, then entered into a formal agreement for the renting of Purity Guesthouse near Samriddhi community for a period of 2 years. Housing Service however realizes that this is not an ideal solution and that Auroville should not invest in the neighbouring guest-houses but build Newcomer accommodation within Auroville instead.

Solar Kitchen Financial Crisis

As Solar Kitchen is struggling with a severe shortage of income versus an ever increase in expenses, it has increased the price of dinners to Rs. 80 per day or Rs 1,900 per month for Aurovilians. The price of Sunday lunch has been increased to Rs. 125 for Aurovilians, according to actual expenses. With the exception of elderly Aurovilians (above 70), who are not able to come in person, the lunch-tiffin service has been discontinued as the amount of food provided via tiffins is quite "generous" and the expenses to prepare them far exceed the income from the same. Everyone is therefore requested to take lunch in the Dining Hall. In addition, filling of tiffins at the Dining Hall counter will no longer be allowed.

The new and updated rates are not giving any profit to Solar Kitchen. Although an essential service, Solar Kitchen is 100% self-supporting and all of its expenses are being met from the income it generates. Another financial burden on the Solar Kitchen is that it is the main purchaser of Auroville-grown produce, including organically grown grains, which is often much more costly than produce purchased from Pondicherry. This is so especially for crops which are available in abundance during certain seasons. The Solar Kitchen no longer receives donations from the Auroville farms during the high seasons and the prices for food, gas and fuel keep spiralling upwards every year.

Children with special needs

A 25-minutes informative film about the work of Deepam with differently-abled children from the surrounding villages, called 'Children with special needs' was shown in Auroville's Cinema Paradiso. The film, edited by Doris and Francis, and Srinivassan and his Yatra Multi-media team, can also be seen on YouTube in English and in German.

Auro-orchard goes organic

One year ago, Auroville's farm Auro-orchard began the process of organic conversion, and stopped using any chemical input. Among countless other steps, it created an experimental free range for 100 hens in October last year, which, says Auro-orchard, has improved the hens' health condition. The free range will be extended in 2014, after the poultry sheds have been rebuilt.

Beware of dogs

The Auroville Council, upon receiving complaints of residents being bitten by dogs owned by Aurovilians, has appealed to the owners to keep more control over their dogs and warned them that they are responsible to pay damages, including medical expenses, in case of dog bites.

Introducing Auroscrap

Auroscrap is a new Auroville service that buys bulkier, less run-of-the-mill waste items. It is established by Suryan, who says that this quiet enterprise has big potential to generate funds that will help with reducing and processing Auroville's waste. Auroscrap will help clean up Auroville by taking away and even paying for old piles of junk lying around Auroville's communities. Suryan estimates that 1-2 lakh worth of trash streams out of Auroville monthly which can be kept within Auroville. As Suryan puts it: "Auroscrap provides a service but if you use it, you're providing a service as well. You're giving back to the community."

Auroville on Tamil Nadu TV

A recent visit of a film crew from young generation station Puthu Yugam TV (meaning New Era TV) has resulted in three episodes of "Bicycle Diary" on Auroville. Pictured were mainly Swaram on experimental musical instruments, the International House using recycled tetra packs as a building material, the Youth Centre and the Visitors' Centre. The programs (in Tamil) were broadcast all over Tamil Nadu. They can be seen at YouTube.

LETTER

Dear Auroville Today,

Your January issue has an opinion piece on education which attributes some remarks to me. The words are both factually inaccurate and create a false impression.

First, the article wrongly credits the Last School team with the series of publications that commenced in the '80's with the 'The Aim of Life' and continues with monographs on a variety of historical personalities and events. There is a team working upon these and there are several individual contributors/authors of these works. These books have been published by SAIER, The Mother's Institute and also the Shubhra Ketu Foundation.

Secondly, the article argues for bringing a greater presence and awareness of Sri Aurobindo into the educational processes of Auroville. This is both valid and important. Unfortunately and problematically, the writer, while highlighting the 'reading Sri Aurobindo' sessions in Last School, has attributed to me the claim of being 'guided' by Sri Aurobindo!

The reading sessions are an exploration of Sri Aurobindo's books, they are a free-wheeling conversation that looks at life in Auroville in relation to Sri Aurobindo's words, and there is no question of anyone having absolute guidance or authority. Sri Aurobindo cannot be approached prescriptively, and nor should he be; he has to be discovered in the joy of an absolute freedom. Consequently, the format is rather that of a Socratic dialogue or a symposium, which I consider truer to the spirit of freedom of self-finding that are at the basis of Auroville.

More importantly, many of us have seen how Auroville's trajectory has been distorted by people claiming guidance by a higher power, a distortion generated by our present limited egoistic personalities which has led to egregious errors.

Sincerely,

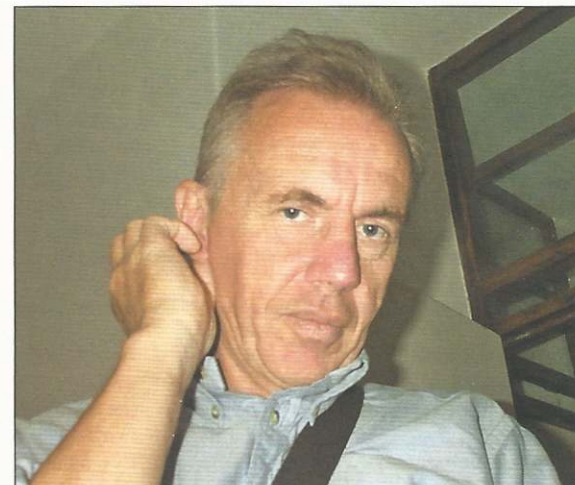
Deepti

PASSING

Around midnight of January 19 Joachim Kochenburger (German national), left his body in the house of a friend in Bommaiarpalayam. He may have suffered a sudden stroke as he had not appeared to be ailing and seemed in good health. He was 71 years old.

Joachim started the community of Arya some 25 years ago, when he bought the land for Auroville and erected his 'tower' house. Always keeping a low profile and having binding connections and business activities in Berlin, Joachim has been coming and going to Ashram and Auroville from the late seventies onwards, staying during his later years mainly in the Ashram. His deeply felt love for Sri Aurobindo and the Mother kept him connected throughout his life.

Joachim's remains were cremated by the Ashram in Lawspet, with Ashramites and Aurovilians attending.



New solutions for Auroville's disappearing beaches?

On 21st and 22nd January, a major international convention on coastal management took place in Pondicherry. Organized by The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) and PondyCAN, it brought together senior government officials, researchers and activists from India, Pakistan, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh to share their experience of issues affecting the coasts of South Asia.

In the closing Open Forum, which was attended by a number of Aurovilians, the focus shifted to the catastrophic erosion which is washing away Auroville's beaches. The cause is clear – the construction of the Pondicherry harbour 25 years ago has blocked the natural littoral drift of sand up and down the coastline. Pondicherry has erected a seawall and groynes to protect its coastline, but experts argue that this doesn't get at the root problem but merely transfers the erosion effect north – to Auroville's beaches and the neighbouring villages. So what should be done?

Anil Premaratne, Director-General of Sri Lanka's Coast Conservation Department, noted they experience similar problems in parts of Sri Lanka. One solution is sand nourishment – taking sand from where it has accumulated and transferring it back to the sand-starved beaches from which it originated. However, he admits it is difficult to take the sand from accumulated beaches as the local people resist giving any of it away. The options then are either to mine the sand at sea, or to make harbours responsible. "Normally, when we give a permit for new harbour, each harbour has to calculate how much sand it traps each year, and that amount has to be pumped to the other side." He noted that the problem with the Pondicherry harbour is that, while provision for sand pumping was incorporated into the construction from the beginning, it has hardly ever been used.

Sand pumping, however, is tricky. Sand is very abrasive, causing pumping machinery to frequently break down, and it is expensive: Filio of PondyCAN estimates it will cost about 12 crores annually to replenish the beaches north of the harbour, and this would be a year-on-year expense. He points out that the expense of pumping is actually far less than the expense of constantly having to keep constructing new groynes and seawalls and repairing old ones, as well as the loss of livelihoods and homes caused by continuing coastal erosion. Nevertheless, as Sunita Narain, Director-General of the Centre for Science and Environment and editor of the environmental magazine *Down to Earth*, put it, "I think we have to try and find a way to move beyond this as it's going to be very difficult to depend on structures that have to continually pump sand. If our experience in India teaches us anything, it is that structures like these are the first to get shut down."

Anil Premaratne still favours sand nourishment as an immediate

solution for our local beaches. But he also suggested remodelling Pondicherry harbour to minimise interference with the natural littoral drift, pointing out that they had done this successfully with the harbour in Colombo. Filio from PondyCAN feels this is a promising path to pursue. "The Pondicherry harbour was designed as a commercial harbour, but no commercial activity is taking place there; it is only operating as a fishing harbour. If it was redesigned as a much smaller harbour, we could reduce the sand replenishment cost by 50% to about six crores a year."

Ajit, an Aurovillian, made an even more radical proposal. He pointed out it is time to do a cost-benefit analysis of what it would mean to completely remove the present harbour. "I think this harbour adversely affects a lot more people than it benefits. If this is the case, the harbour should be removed and the people who have benefited by it should be rehabilitated."



Sunita Narain

The proposal received much applause. The chances of it happening, however, seem to be minimal as, on the previous day, the Chief Secretary of Pondicherry had mentioned that "many" people still request that the port expansion project, which has been shelved, be put back on the rails.

All these options were too long-term for Frederick, who is involved with the Meera Youth Camp in an Auroville beach community. "For many years, people from PondyCAN and Auroville have tried to find a soft solution, but right now the situation is so serious – in a few months we will have lost another 20 metres of land and another 20 huts will have disappeared – that I think we have to get out of this 'hard-soft' dichotomy and find integrated solutions that offer immediate remedial action." He mentioned that they and the local vil-

lagers had heard that they would have got protective groynes by now if PondyCAN had not brought a court case against the Pondicherry government, resulting in the suspension of this work.

Responding for PondyCAN, Filio admitted that they were conflicted because they were just as much concerned about the local issues as the larger ones. "But someone has to look after the larger picture, the larger public interest, and it is difficult for us to go back on that." He felt the problem is that the local people are asking for the wrong things. If, instead of demanding seawalls and groynes, they demanded sand nourishment he was sure that this would happen.

Reflecting on the Open Forum next morning, Sunita Narain said she felt 'very saddened' by what some of the Aurovilians had expressed. "I felt they were about to give up the fight. It's always the biggest challenge when you want to fix

the world and your own home is under threat. But if we start adopting the same damaging 'solutions' as everybody else, like groynes and seawalls, how can we ask anybody else not to do so?"

From her experience of battling environmental devastation all over India, what is her advice? What makes the difference in the successful cases that she knows of?

For her, there is no magic solution. "You have to be persistent, you have to have luck and you need to be strategic. You're in a battle, and when you



The erosion at Quiet Healing Centre has entered the compound, destroying an ornamental pond. The beach has returned temporarily, but erosion will resume within two months

are in a battle you constantly have to see what you can do to win." She favours the remodelling of Pondicherry harbour but points out that before the authorities are approached, research has to be done to answer questions like, What is the best design? How much will it cost? What successful precedents can be pointed to in India and other parts of the world? "You need to be able to put all this on the table before you start pushing, but I don't think this research work has been done yet as all the focus has been upon sand replenishment."

She admits, however, that the local situation here is a very tough one. She points out there are vested interests in the construction of expensive groynes and seawalls; there is the apathy of engineers who say they know how to construct groynes but not redesign a harbour; there is lack of political will; and there are bureaucrats who say that the Right To Information Act makes it impossible for them to take risks, to do anything different and imaginative.

As editor of *Down to Earth*, she is very aware of the multiple challenges facing India's environment, and of how the few success stories are heavily outweighed by the failures. Does she not feel, then, that we are running out of time, that the whole destructive dynamic of modern development is far stronger than that favouring greater environmental protection and social justice? "Of course we are running out of time, the planet is running out of time. The whole dynamic of modern development is against us. But should we give up? Some of us are mad enough to say we have to fight these kinds of things. And it's a good fight to fight."

"That should be Auroville's fight, too. It's not easy, but you cannot give up. I really hope that Auroville will not succumb, because when you give up a lot is lost. And I really hope we find good answers to the present coastal crisis, not just here but everywhere in the world where coasts and people's livelihoods are threatened."

Alan



Sand bags at Meera Youth Camp are an attempt to protect the community

Subscription rates (including postage):

- ◆ One year subscription rates: India Rs. 450; other countries Rs. 2,000 equivalent.
- ◆ Two year subscription rate: India Rs. 800; other countries Rs. 3,700 equivalent. Those for whom the subscription rate is an obstacle are invited to contact *Auroville Today* for information on reduced rates. *Auroville Today* does not receive any funds from Auroville. Your subscription (or your supporting contribution of double the amount) helps us to continue this work.

There are three ways to subscribe:

1. **Through our website:** Subscriptions can be ordered and paid on-line through www.auroville.com/auroville-today
2. **By sending your contribution directly to Auroville Today:** Surrender, Auroville - 65 101, Tamil Nadu, India. Cheques sent directly to *Auroville Today* should be made payable to Auroville Unity Fund, specifying: 'Contribution for *Auroville Today*'. Personal cheques are preferred to bank cheques. Please do not send postal money orders or cash.

3. By sending your contribution to:

- ◆ **U.K.:** Auroville International U.K., c/o Martin Littlewood, 30 The Green, Surlingham, Norwich NR 14 7AG. Tel.: 01508-538300, fax: 01508-537122, email: info@aviuk.org

◆ **USA:** Make checks payable to Auroville International USA and send to:

USA: Pondicherry, 12 Tinker Street, Woodstock, NY 12498, tel.: (1) 845-679-2926, email: info@pondi.biz

◆ **Germany:** Auroville International Deutschland e.V. Solmsstrasse 6, 10961 Berlin, tel. (49) (0)30-42803150, fax: (49) (0) 30-92091376, email: info@auroville.de. GLS Gemeinschaftsbank, BIC: GENODEM1GLS, IBAN: DE16430609678019389200.

◆ **The Netherlands and Belgium:** Auroville International Netherlands, Athlonestraat 77, 6524 BJ Nijmegen, Triodos Bank nr 1984.20.927, IBAN: NL26 TRIO 0198 4209 27, BIC code : TRIONL2U, email: penningmeester@avinl.org.

Editorial team: Alan, Caryl, Larry, Mandakini. Proofreading: Alan. DTP: Caryl. Photo editing: Jean-Denis. Published by Caryl Thieme on behalf of the Auroville Foundation. Printed by Brihat Consultants, Pondicherry, and published at Surrender, Auroville - 605101, Tamil Nadu.

Auroville Today does not necessarily reflect the views of the community as a whole.