

Auroville Today

DECEMBER 2001, No.155

SPECIAL THEME: Research in healing

pages 1, 4, 5 and 6

- The Samalin system
- Working with Bio-Resonance
- Sound healing with ch'i
- Helping to deepen the inner contact

Auroville with its holistic attitude towards health and healing offers primary health care as well as a wide range of what are often referred to as "alternative" healing therapies. In the early years developing primary health care for Aurovilians and the local residents was of immense importance as medical facilities were not available in the backward Auroville area. Simultaneously, given the age-old spiritual belief that physical health is largely governed by the lack of balance in the different aspects of one's being, Aurovilians started to practise and develop alternative healing therapies that stimulate the natural healing capacity of the body. Today, Auroville is perhaps the only centre in India that offers over twenty-five different healing modalities. According to a recent count there are eight trained allopathic doctors, two acupuncturists, two Bach and other flower therapists, eight homeopaths (including bio-chemics), five foot reflexologists, one osteopath, two lymph drainage specialists, about six masseurs, three physiotherapists and two polarity therapists. Many other therapies are practiced as well. Besides, a Tibetan doctor visits Auroville regularly to dispense Tibetan medicine, and nearby Pondicherry also offers an array of ancient and modern therapies.

For quite a number of Auroville's health practitioners, healing implies continuous research. In this issue of Auroville Today we present four such research activities: Western Bio Resonance and Square Wave machines; the East-Asian Samalin method of healing; the ancient Chinese system of Ch'i; and healing through deepening the inner contact. We also feature the ancient Indian tribal Adivasi system of healing, which recently became available in Pondicherry.



Putting someone's back together

For those suffering from a dislocated bone or disc, the Samalin system of healing comes close to being a miracle therapy that achieves in a few treatments what may otherwise weeks of bed rest may fail to heal.

A sudden twist of the head, a surprise turn of the back, a violent throwing of oneself into a yogic asana or other physical exercise, they can all cause a disc between two vertebrae to slip. The resulting pressure on the surrounding nerves causes intense pain. The muscles, trying to minimise the pain, respond by adjusting themselves, sometimes forcing the body into abnormal postures such as walking at a crooked angle. Usual remedies may involve weeks of bed rest or traction, keeping the muscles warm to get them relaxed and perhaps, at a later stage, manipulation and physiotherapy.

Aurovilians who have experienced the pains of a slipped disc have welcomed the arrival of Bob Neal to Auroville in 1998. Bob is an adept of an esoteric ancient East-Asian healing technique called Samalin. This method seems deceptively simple. The patient, lying down on the belly, will experience two fingers pressing certain spots in the back for a few minutes; then, for

a short time, a heavy pressure is exerted on the spine. Bob then closes the therapy session by 'sending' some energy to the injured spot. For most people, that's all there is to it. They just get up carefully, and after listening to a small lecture about what they can and cannot do in the next 7 to 14 days – be careful when driving a motorbike and try not to pick up any object in excess of one kilogram! – they walk out; end of treatment and beginning of the healing process which may or may not be free of pain. Where does this unusual treatment come from and why it is not more widely known? I ask Bob.

"Samalin is the anglicised name of a religion that originated centuries before Christ in a country in East Asia. Its priests developed this advanced healing technique. They knew how to amputate limbs without causing pain by putting pressure on nerve points to switch off the nerves, and they had a great knowledge of the use of herbs to prevent infection. But in its country of origin, the religion and the healing

technique no longer exist. They were eradicated when the priests refused to teach to the military the techniques to switch off the nerves, for they knew that the techniques would be misused to disable or kill in hand to hand combat, rather than be used to help in the healing of people. In retaliation, nearly the entire Samalin priesthood and its followers were massacred, their temples were razed to the ground and the name Samalin and all references to it were struck from the literature. Even today, in that particular country the use of this healing technique remains forbidden, and so thorough has been its eradication that few of the younger generation know that it ever existed. Those of the older generation who know about it keep silent out of fear of prosecution. But a few priests escaped and fled the country. It is thanks to them that the knowledge still survives, for they taught it to one person, who taught others. One of the students in turn taught it to me."

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Pavilions in progress

The work to manifest the International Zone and its Unity Pavilion is gaining momentum.

It is almost thirty years ago that the construction of Bharat Nivas, the Pavilion of India in the International Zone, was started. During recent years, work on finishing the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium, its main building, has progressed steadily. The plans for the completion of the entire complex are ready, but work on the other buildings waits for release of government funding. Bharat Nivas will gradually assume its original purpose as the Pavilion of India when many offices of the Auroville administration, which up to now have been mainly housed there, will move into the Town Hall Annex next year. Also the Pavilion of Tibetan Culture is nearing completion. The building could be finished in a relatively short time if funds were available. Meanwhile, one of its rooms is used as consultation room for the visiting Tibetan doctor, and two of its halls as exhibition spaces. Another room has been offered as a temporary space for the International Zone Group office, until the Unity Pavilion is ready.

Apart from these two buildings, work to manifest the International Zone was almost dormant for years. A few Pavilion Groups of Aurovilians inter-

ested in the nation-soul of their own country were created. Some of them organised cultural activities, like the Italian Pavilion Group's exhibition on Rome and India a few years ago.

However, since the last two years the work has accelerated. An International Zone Group has been formed. Two main focus points have been the emergence of the concept of the Unity Pavilion and the willingness on the part of Auroville International USA to start funding the US Pavilion project, which resulted in the consecration ceremony for the Americas site in February. The International Zone Group is also researching an idea of creating a European Pavilion, a multi-purpose building.

For this year's Auroville International Meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia, the International Zone Group prepared an exhibition and talks followed on the present development. This inspired many Pavilion Groups to intensify the focus on 'their' pavilion work, and to look anew at the raison d'être for the pavilions. On August 15th, the German group had a consecration ceremony for the German Pavilion in the European area.

Meanwhile, the US Pavilion team is embarking on a unique collaboration with the University of Washington, Seattle. Thirty two students, five professors and five teaching assistants will descend on the Americas site January 4th, with all their youthful energy, to design and build a student Guest House along with local masons, carpenters and young Aurovilians. They have also been asked to submit drawings for a caretaker residence, kitchen and library as the first buildings of the US Pavilion complex.

The Auroville International meeting in St. Petersburg also gave a push to create a Russian Pavilion. Blessed with a substantial donation, the Auroville Russian Pavilion Group is now working on a concept and building plan that takes into consideration the different national and ethnic groups of the former USSR. The Group is interacting with Auroville International Russia on this and other topics, such as creating an Auroville website in the Russian language.

Plans for a French Pavilion were discussed with the visiting French ambassador in November to see if the French government would lend its support. The German Pavilion Group has recently expressed the idea to develop a concert hall with teaching facilities as the first step for the German Pavilion. Plans for building the House of Africa, (a student hostel with meeting facilities) in the African area in order to facilitate interaction between Auroville and the states of Africa, are in an advanced stage.

The purpose of the International Zone is for it to be a living expression of Unity in diversity. For this to happen, every country has to be able to participate, also those that would not yet be ready to build their 'own' pavilion. Out of this deep concern, the idea to build a

"The most important idea is that the unity of the human race can be achieved neither by uniformity nor by domination and subjection. Only a synthetic organization of all nations, each one occupying its true place according to its own genius and the part it has to play in the whole, can bring about a comprehensive unification which has any chance of enduring. And if this synthesis is to be a living one, the grouping should be effectuated around a central idea that is as wide and as high as possible, in which all tendencies, even the most contradictory, may find their respective places. This higher idea is to give men the conditions of life they need in order to be able to prepare themselves to manifest the new force that will create the race of tomorrow."

The Mother,
MCW 12, "An International University Centre".

Unity Pavilion was born. This Pavilion could act as a transition space for those nations: it could temporarily house their exhibitions or cultural activities. The idea has been warmly received and a first donation was received for its realisation. After two years of preparation, the work on the Unity Pavilion has now progressed to the point where the digging of the foundations will start in December and the inauguration and start of construction has been fixed for February 27th, 2002. Within one and a half year, the building should be ready to house the offices for the International Zone group, for the Auroville International liaison in Auroville and for the Pavilion Groups. The fact that the various Pavilion Groups would be working in the same space would naturally facilitate a more spontaneous development, opening a whole vista of research and expression of the Unity underlying all this diversity.

Unity, the joy of all the different expressions of our multiplicity – individual, cultural, national, and international – is the basis of Peace. In this

context it became clear that the Unity Pavilion complex would be THE appropriate place for the Asian Peace Table which is housed in Auroville. (The other two are housed in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City and in the Russian Academy of Arts in Moscow.) The Unity Pavilion will have a Hall of Peace where the Peace Table will be installed, surrounded by walls of the porous and luminous "Light Matter" created by Aurovillian artist Pierre Legrand. The intention is to create a simple and artistic environment that can generate an atmosphere of peace, inwardness, lightness and beauty.

Though the work has been moving forward, and there is a great harmony and energy in the current progress of interaction, more work remains to be done. Especially since September 11th, we feel a strong urge not to be tardy. The work to manifest all individual expressions as well as the development of the International Zone in its entirety requires all support for it to proceed with full speed.

Jaya and Jill

ORGANISATION

Collective Health Fund proposed

The Health Care Group and the Economy Group propose a co-operative insurance system for all Aurovilians and Newcomers to cover the increasing costs of medical care.

For quite some time the Health Care Group and the Economy Group have been studying possible ways to take care of the costs of hospitalisation and other medical expenses for all Aurovilians and Newcomers. Various options have been thoroughly looked into, including going to an outside insurance company.

As an outcome of these discussions and research the groups have proposed that, from January 1st onwards, the community experiments for one year with an in-house co-operative insurance scheme called the Auroville Health Fund. The main reasons for choosing this option are that the groups feel that the creation of such a co-operative health fund would be closer to the aims and ideals of Auroville and that it would be able to cover more health costs than would be done by dealing with an 'outside' collective health insurance company.

The Auroville Health Fund would be set-up as a co-operative insurance system. This implies that all the income of the Auroville Health Fund, which would come from contributions and donations, would be used to cover the medical expenses of those who have agreed to participate. If, at the end of the year, there were any money left over in the Auroville Health Fund, that money would be carried over to the next year. In the case that there was no money left over by the end of the year and that the Auroville Health Fund had more expenses than income, the deficit would be shared proportionally among all the participants. This means that every participant would pay a bit extra in proportion to the amount paid by him/her. For example, if the total income of the Fund is Rs 40 lakhs (US\$ 84,000), and there is a total deficit of Rs 10 lakhs (US \$ 21,000) and a person has contributed Rs 2,400/year (US\$ 50), the extra contribution to be made by the participant would be Rs 600 (US \$

12.50). In this way the community would carry the medical costs of all Aurovilians and Newcomers together. It is proposed that initially the contribution for each Aurovillian and Newcomer of 18 years and older would be Rs 200 (US\$ 4.2) per month and the contribution for each Aurovillian and Newcomer below the age of 18 would be Rs 100 (US\$ 2.1) per month. This amount would be paid either by the unit for which the Aurovillian or Newcomer works or by the Aurovillian or Newcomer him or herself. The Auroville Central Fund would carry the costs for those Aurovilians who receive a maintenance from the Central Fund.

A main feature of the proposed system is that in all normal cases an Auroville doctor is to be consulted and his/her advice followed before treatment is started or hospitalisation takes place. In extraordinary circumstances, such as an accident or a health problem that occurs elsewhere in India, the fund would cover the costs incurred.

According to the research done it appears that at the above rates of contribution it would probably not be possible to cover all expenses. However, the proposed contributions are at present the maximum the community could support at this time. The groups therefore propose that, as with any other insurance system, the Auroville Health Fund will not cover certain medical expenses.

The proposed Health Fund would be run by the Health Care Group, which would also decide on the payment of any disputed bills. The Health Care Group would be authorised, in exceptional cases, to decide that the Health Fund would fully or partially reimburse costs that are not normally covered by it, and would report yearly on the running of the Health Fund. The Economy group would keep an overview of the income and expenditure of the Health Fund. *Carel*

The Unity of Pavilions

"The unity of all the nations is the compelling future of the world. But for the unity of all nations to be possible, each nation must first realise its own unity." *The Mother – 13:p.371*

Recently an Aurovillian raised the point that we could greatly benefit from re-evaluating Auroville's International Zone concept, consisting of the pavilions of the nations of the world. What are the benefits of the proposed pavilions, outside the common utility of housing books, magazines and cultural exhibitions? How can we prevent these pavilions from becoming merely pretentious, expensive and stale expressions of a tired history? Is it at all useful to pursue, as many believe, a kind of mundane utility concept of the pavilions? Or, perhaps more succinctly, can we not, somehow, make them expressions of the spirit and soul of a nation?

Auroville is wonderfully multifaceted and it is not easy to explain exactly what it represents to those outside of Auroville. Certainly one facet of Auroville, which is quite visual, is the many projects we have taken on. Although one may judge them for their mixed successes, in fact some projects have succeeded and those that have done so, have done so quite spectacularly. There is a reason for this, not often spoken of, which is that Auroville offers not only commitment, but also the field experience that comes from a dedicated and lasting continuity. Guests of government agencies, for example, marvel at the success of our re-afforestation projects. A question sometimes raised is why similar projects outside of Auroville, funded by the government,

fail? One reason is that the Auroville project holders live on the project site itself and in so doing animate them with a kind of vitality that is so characteristic of Auroville. Another reason, doubtless, is the integrity of Aurovilians. While it is a well-known fact, to those involved with project funding, that major parts of grants allotted through government agencies get siphoned off as they approach the project, Auroville's track record in this respect is blameless.

If one looks at the sources of funds that have been donated to Auroville in the last 30 years, one finds that funding from foreign governments is distinguished by its almost complete absence. There might be an identifiable reason for this. In a recent verdict of a German high court, the stigma of sectarianism was lifted from the name of Auroville. The fact that this stigma at all existed indicates that those who rule over foreign nations doubt the authenticity of Auroville. It is this kind of wrong perception of Auroville that can be addressed by a focused International Zone working group. For something more concrete, outside the lofty ideals we claim to represent, seems necessary for foreign governments to relate to. A zone dedicated to acting as a liaison between foreign governments and Auroville might fulfill such a requirement. One can imagine the benefits of having a place to invite foreign dignitaries, students or lecturers where they would feel comfortable and welcome.

There are, of course, people in Auroville who object to such developments. Auroville has lived a rather sheltered existence and it is understandable why some would shrink from too much attention from those outside our circle. For those people these new contacts might seem more like intrusions. But if Auroville claims to be the City the Earth Needs, well then the Earth might just arrive to take a closer look.

Going beyond this kind of utility these pavilions could offer, there is something more fundamental to Auroville, closer to Her heart, and this is the possibility of a positive experience of Unity among the nations represented. There is of course Unity and then there is unity. One is a supreme manifestation of a spiritualized collective experience that will be the source of the Divine living that Auroville seeks to develop. The other form of unity, no less important really, is the experience, also on a collective level, of working towards a common goal and this too is a great power.

One is confident that whatever manifests itself in the International Zone will be uniquely Aurovillian. Perhaps it is the secret of Auroville that Unity must be sought through the diversity and even through the discord. We must never forget that Auroville's journey towards Unity is the most ardent and enthralling of all Her quests and perhaps the greatest of joys are in the seeking itself.

Roy (Aurodam)

End of the Matrimandir Crane

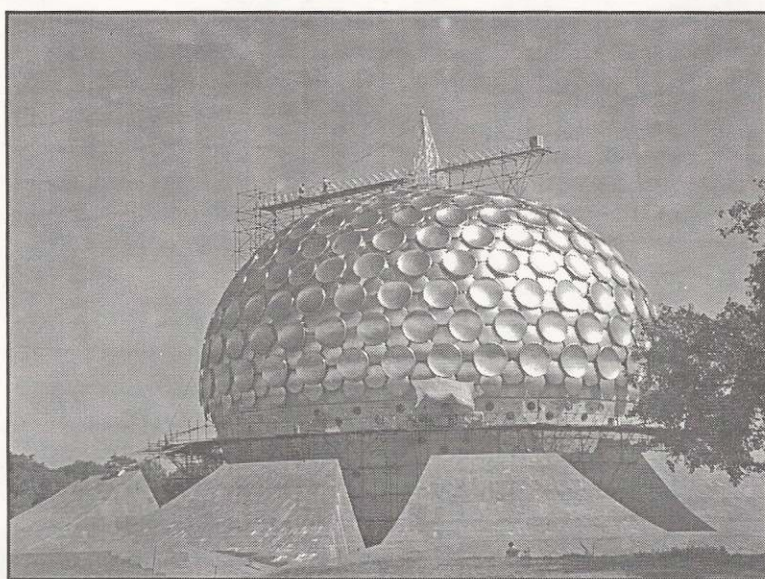
During the months of October and November the crane on top of the Matrimandir has been removed. The two arms and the central tower were cut into short pieces, and then lowered by rope and pulley to the ground.

The crane was built in the Matrimandir workshop during 1979-80 for the job of lifting into place the 1100 pre-cast concrete beams, each weighing up to 400 kgs. that were to make up the spherical space-frame of Matrimandir. This work lasted till 1987. Then the concrete for the massive top cap of Matrimandir was lifted for the prolonged concreting which was completed on the significant date of 8.8.88.

The crane's attention was then turned to the Inner Chamber. The 1140 slabs of pristine white marble that make up the twelve inner walls of the Chamber were carefully lifted up by the crane. These slabs, having come to Auroville from Italy in 1978 slept for years in the Amphitheatre's underground rooms before being hoisted through the Tamil Nadu sunshine to their final station during 1989-90.

Having lifted Plaster of Paris for the ceiling and Rajasthan marble for the floor, as well as the four doors of the Inner Room – massive 6 cm slabs of white Italian marble, the crane then faced the toughest task it had ever been asked to meet: lifting the 12 huge columns that stand inside the Chamber.

Weighing in at over 800 kgs. per column, each with its multiple coats of brilliant white paint and wrapped for protection in specially made mattress covers, these columns were lifted one by one over a period of several months up to the Chamber level. They were swung into a horizontal position outside the rib of the structure then moved carefully in on wheels through the Chamber door and winched gradually to their final standing positions. After tackling its heaviest load, the crane was entrusted to lift its most precious one: the 450 kg crystal globe for the centre of the room. After checking the steel cables of the crane and ensuring that all was OK, the crane control button was pushed on



A last photograph of the Matrimandir with the crane on top. The scaffolding to dismantle it is already in place.

April 27th, 1991 and, holding our breath a hundred Aurovilians watched the cubical wooden box holding the priceless globe rise into the air. The trip to the Chamber level was over within a matter of minutes. The crane had done its job flawlessly once again.

After the Chamber was completed the crane took up the job of lifting the

hundreds of ferro-cement triangles that were fixed to the concrete space-frame to make up the solid outer skin of Matrimandir. That task was done during the years 1992 to 1995. Then, for a while, the crane had a little rest. It was perhaps meditating on what it had done and looking forward to its last and most visible task – to lift into place the hundreds of golden discs

that now dress the outer skin of Matrimandir.

After a few trials with different samples of discs, the definitive lifting job started in early January 1999 and has continued till September.

Now the disc fixation has reached to just below the equator level of Matrimandir, and that is as far down as we can go using the crane, for the subsequent rows, where the sphere curves inwards, cannot be reached by the crane without risk of damaging the golden discs above. So the career of the crane, long and illustrious, has come to an end.

There is more than one generation of young Aurovilians who have never seen Matrimandir without its crane. For more than twenty years, school children here, when asked to make drawings of the finished Matrimandir, have almost always drawn the finished building with the crane on top. Soon they will see, as will we all, the shape of Matrimandir in its spherical purity. But in our hearts there will be many of us – not only the children – who will still see that crane perched high up on Matrimandir, and will remember it fondly and with gratitude.

John

Work re-organisation continues

In the months of October and November, meetings regarding the work at Matrimandir continued. (see issue #154, November 2001 of Avtoday). A Matrimandir workers group has been constituted to coordinate and reorganise the work at Matrimandir in all its aspects – finances and fundraising included. Matrimandir workers and other interested persons met twice weekly to discuss the execution of those areas of work which are undisputed, to obtain

detailed information and to pay collective site visits. This group will function as the coordination body of the work at Matrimandir until a new one is formed.

Also a Matrimandir Design Study group was created. Its mandate is to conduct an impartial assessment of the various aspects of the design problems in consultation with all concerned. The group plans to evaluate each design problem in accordance with a number of specified criteria and then present

its findings to the community. If following this consultation process a consensus on a solution emerges, the agreed upon design will be referred to the Matrimandir workers meeting for execution. If a consensus does not emerge, the various aspects of the problem will be presented to a community meeting for a decision.

In order to test the feasibility of this process, the group will start with a few design problems that are recognised as a priority. Carel

OPEN FORUM

Towards an actual Human Unity

Bindu opines that Auroville needs to improve its relationship with the surrounding villages in order to achieve greater unity.

“Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual Human Unity.” Thus reads the final line of Auroville's charter. While some would argue that an actual Human Unity can only come about with the birth of a higher unitary consciousness, it is interesting to note that the very site, that is to say, the very location of Auroville in the midst of rural villages in South India, poses a challenge to the manifestation of human unity.

Somehow however, this facet of Auroville, its relationship to the villages, is often overlooked in our plans to build the city of the future. Many Aurovilians who are drawn to the Mother's vision, do not perceive their relationship to the villagers as an integral part of Auroville's ideals. A case in point is the fact that despite all our idealistic experiments with a cashless society, Auroville is being literally built and maintained by the 4,500 or so hired workers from the villages. That is to say, there are three times as many workers as Aurovilians. The presence of hired workers in Auroville also implies that we are building Auroville with hard cash and are subject to all the lower forces that money brings – greed, oppression, deception etc. Also when we equate work or human labour with money, we tend to impersonalise the worker, and seek to get maximum returns on our monetary investment. This, I feel, is detrimental to Auroville's ideals of work, money and human unity.

Besides, many Aurovilians, especially those who moved here in recent times, are not really aware of the socio-economic reality, the dire poverty, of their workers. Newcomers are not introduced to the social and economic conditions or the cultural traditions of the villagers. And many have probably never visited the villages, even those that are located within the so-called “city area” of Auroville.

Ironically, Aurovilians tend to believe that Auroville was started on a barren land, and we even call the first Aurovilians, “pioneers”. They tend to overlook the fact that this very land was being cultivated (although unsustainably) and was occupied by people whose lives had shown little change over the decades. Contemporary development practices are chary of introducing change in an existing community, for changes cannot be fully controlled and are a mix of good and bad. Auroville, by its very existence and its pattern of development, has similarly brought about good and bad changes. While the positive impact of Auroville on the villages has been well documented in our public relations brochures, we rarely gauge our negative impact on the villages, unless as has been the case recently, things come to a crisis.

In human history, wherever another race, usually better empowered, settled in a foreign land, it led to colonialism and abuse of power. In this context, Auroville is a remarkable evolutionary step for mankind in that different races have settled here, amidst an old, local civilisation, with an ideal

of human unity and not domination. And yet, the very karma of colonisation in the human race also opens Auroville to the darker forces so that they may be transformed. To transform old habits is a goal to which Aurovilians, individually and collectively, should consciously aspire.

One of the aspects of colonialism is that it assumes a position of superiority over the disempowered people that it rules. Aurovilians often exhibit a similar sense of superiority towards the villagers whom they find to be largely poor, uneducated and unskilled. To guard against a judgmental attitude towards the villagers, we should remember the Mother's words of February 1972: “A simple and ignorant peasant here is, in his heart, closer to the Divine than the intellectuals of Europe. All those who want to become Aurovilians must know this and behave accordingly.”

It is important to recognize that our interaction with the local villagers is complex and multifaceted, perhaps with each society benefiting and exploiting the other. And sometimes, because of their different world-views, the two societies perceive the same reality in completely opposite ways. Despite these challenges, Auroville needs to keep its highest ideals constantly before it. These ideals ought to be reflected on the personal level in its relationship with the villagers. The more we can share our spiritual ideals through our words and actions, the closer we will be to manifesting an actual human unity.

Bindu

In brief

Build a little closer

The Interim Development Group is interested to develop ideas towards building at closer densities in the Residential Zone, in a sustainable and environmentally conscious way. Solutions to problems connected with living closely together, such as sound disturbance, will need to be studied.

Road safety

Safety on the roads has become a prime concern after a recent increase of road harassment and thefts. One of the ideas proffered was to organise yearly Auroville Sangamam reunions where people from Auroville and the villages can meet in order to foster a sense of belonging together to Auroville and its ideals.

Central Fund deficit

Central Fund income for the month of October 2001 was Rs 86,533 short, which implied that eight budgets, which in normal cases are already insufficient, received less than the usual monthly amount.

Seminar on waste-water treatment

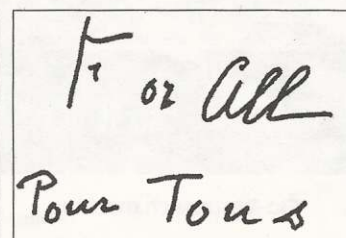
At the request of the Central Pollution Control Board of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Auroville's Future hosted a one and a half day non-governmental organisations (Southern States) meeting on awareness and propagation of ‘Decentralised waste water treatment systems.’ About 15 representatives of different NGO's, students from the Pondicherry University and representatives of the Government were present.

Matrimandir Journal

Matrimandir Journal # 9, dealing with Mahalakshmi, the Mother of Harmony and Beauty, has just appeared. Available from Matrimandir.

Pour Tous

A marble slab engraved with a copy of Mother's writing of the



name “For All Pour Tous” was placed in the front garden of the compound that houses Auroville Fund, Auroville Maintenance Fund and the Pour Tous stall and snack bar. It is meant for the future site of some of these activities in the city centre.

Mr. N. Bala Baskar

Mr. N. Bala Baskar I.A.S., the former Secretary of the Auroville Foundation, has joined the Government of the north-Indian state of Haryana at Chandigarh as Commissioner, Public Health, on November 21st. Writes he: “It is difficult to adjust to the Government environment after five years of wallowing in the red earth of Auroville! However, life goes on and one has to adjust.”

“Sponsor a tree” matching program

An anonymous donor will twice match the first forty \$25 donated towards the planting of, caring for, and labelling of a tree in Auroville's Arboretum. The double matching offer of \$50 for each US\$ 25 donation (up to \$2,000) will be given to general green work in Auroville. For more info email: info@aviusa.org

Healing through Bio-Resonance

Afsaneh heals with Bio-Resonance and Square-Wave machines in the Quiet Healing centre.

The idea that diseases can be cured and viruses and bacteria destroyed by exposing the patient to electric, magnetic or electromagnetic fields came up by the end of the 1800s. In the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century many machines were being invented that 'worked' on the patients with a wide variety of results. Most experiments failed badly, but there was a growing body of evidence that some of them did improve the condition of seriously ill people. The discovery of radioactivity and X-rays fuelled this field of interest even more.

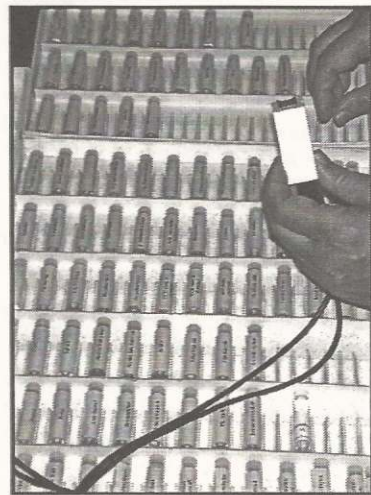
But it was a matter of time before the medical establishment and the drug industries mounted calls for regulation, stating that these types of devices were at best harmless but in some cases seriously dangerous. Eventually, the interest declined until the 1960's when 'new age' ideals re-introduced research into these appliances. Much of the mainstream medical establishment though, had meanwhile firmly entrenched itself against this type of 'quackery'. Present day objective research shows however that some appliances do work.

One country whose medical establishment strongly opposes anything deviating from the allopathic path is Germany. Homeopathy, acupuncture and a vast array of other 'alternative' healing methods are but slowly finding acceptance in the official circles. Most of the country's powerful health insurance organisations still refuse to cover the costs of these types of treatments. Given this trend, it is amazing that over 3,500 German doctors and practitioners are nowadays treating their patients with Bio-Resonance machines.

Bio-Resonance is an offshoot from electro-acupuncture. Acupuncture relies on the vibration of solid needles inserted into certain spots of

ter. Bio-Resonance, in other words, re-activates the person's cells.

Voll and Morell's research has formed the basis for the Bio Resonance Machines that are now operating in many places in Germany as well as in Auroville. Iranian born Afsaneh, who grew up in Germany before joining Auroville in 1981, found a new vocation in healing patients with this machine. Says she: "My interest in healing was awakened by my father, who is a chiro-



practor. But when I decided to come to Auroville I broke off my studies as health practitioner in Germany. Instead I built a place in Kottakarai and started a bead workshop. But the latter didn't work out financially, and I asked my father for financial help to build a guesthouse so that I could get some income. This resulted in ten years of pretty exhausting building activity. Then my life arranged itself in such a way that I decided to go back to Germany for some time to finish my schooling as a health practitioner. I took other exams and learned massage, acupuncture and chiropractic. One day someone exposed me to the Bio-Resonance system of healing. It completely changed my outlook. I studied it and did some more exams and then opened my own practice in Germany. After four years of practice, it was time to return to Auroville. At the time the Quiet Healing Centre was being built and I was invited to join. I brought my Bio-Resonance and my Square Wave machine to Auroville and for the last two years now I am working with them in Quiet."

Bio-Resonance is a developing healing method and Afsaneh does her share of empirical research. Most Bio-Resonance machines are operating in the temperate climates of Europe and the USA. Afsaneh is one of the few healers who works with tropical diseases. "We keep email contact to inform one another on recent development and I return regularly to Europe to learn about new treatment methods and share my research results. As many tropical diseases have migrated to cooler climates because of increased travel, there is a lot of research going on in Germany, so I am not alone."

The machine requires regular updating. A recent addition is working with magnetic mats in order to improve the healing effect, bringing the machine's overall value up to Rs. 12 lakhs (US\$ 62,500). Given that Afsaneh doesn't charge Aurovilians for her treatments, updates are exclusively financed by donations from well-wishers.

Though she is the only person working in India with this type of machine, the technique is not unknown here. "Recently I received a visit from a doctor based in Madras who was also working with bio-resonance – a different type of machine – and was happy to share information.



Top: Afsaneh (left) doing an electro-acupuncture diagnostic test on Agnes (right) while Roswitha (middle) operates the Bio-Resonance machine.
Left: A few of the over 2000 ampoules with pathological information.

It would be very good if some kind of all-India network could be created," says Afsaneh.

A first encounter with Bio-Resonance starts with Afsaneh diagnosing the body using the bio-resonance machine in combination with the ancient Chinese "five elements" system (wood, earth, water, fire, and metal). A first check-up takes between two to three hours but it almost always, she says, results in establishing the origin of the disease. "Then I give a first treatment. Normally, another ten follow up treatments of on average one hour each are required to restore the patient's health to 'normal.' I also advise on a diet to help the body to regain its balance and heal itself."

Physical diseases, according to some doctors, are results of psychological disorders. Bio-Resonance acknowledges this and has established what it calls "the psychology of each organ," aiming not only at healing the disease but also at healing its psychological origin. "We give the organ the push to find its balance, and the therapist helps the person by explaining this psychological link so that the patient can become conscious of the psychological habits which may have caused the disease, and work on it. This is an area where I want to do more research," says Afsaneh.

Nevertheless, there are limits to the Bio-Resonance healing method. "We don't play God," says Afsaneh. For example, you can hardly treat cancer with Bio-Resonance, perhaps only when it is in its first phase. But after that, Bio-Resonance cannot help. Another area where Bio-Resonance is ineffective is in dealing with psychological diseases like schizophrenia."

The attempt to heal cancer with electric frequencies is not new. "In the first half of the 20th century there was an American researcher called Royal Raymond Rife who had invented a machine with which he claimed he could heal cancer," continues Afsaneh. "Rife held that cancer was caused by parasites and viruses, and that by exposing them to certain frequencies the cancer disappeared. Experiments did indeed show that his machine worked, but afterwards there was a massive opposition to his work. His laboratories were torched, his research was discredited, he was heavily attacked and his life ended in misery. Interest in his inventions has re-awakened, though, and many peo-

ple are now trying to re-build Rife's original machines, as its technology was wantonly destroyed and has been lost. What has resulted so far is the so-called 'Square Wave' machine, which effectively kills parasites,



Square-wave machine

viruses and bacteria. I have brought one of these machines along and use it frequently. I have observed that its effect are indeed as claimed."

Though working with Bio-Resonance and Square Wave

machines in Auroville does fulfil a dream, the work situation at Quiet is far from ideal. The main problem is the lack of funds. Quiet provides free treatment to Aurovilians and members of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, and gets the necessary income from visitors. This income, however, is insufficient to cover the costs of assistants, machine updates and maintenance and additional equipment to guarantee continuous electricity supply. Added to this there is the question how useful the treatment is for short-term visitors. "The main problem," says Afsaneh "is that visitors like to get a diagnosis but do not bother to get follow-

up treatments in their own country. They are attracted by the idea of being tested – for which, in Germany, they would pay between 400 and 500 German Marks – but not in the follow up treatments that would cost them another 100 to 150 German Marks each. That makes this work for them pretty useless."

The Aurovilians and Ashramites, however, are eager patients. Afsaneh's schedule is booked months in advance, which by itself shows that the treatment does have positive effects. "Dealing with Ashramites in particular is very rewarding," says Afsaneh, "I am time and again touched to the core by the total devotion for the Divine these people express in their way of being. That, indeed, makes this work very fulfilling."

Carel

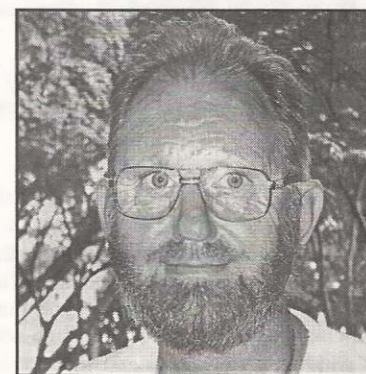
Putting someone's back

Continued from page 1

We are seated on the terrace of his house, which offers a splendid view of the Bay of Bengal. Bob, who travelled worldwide with his wife Jean before joining Auroville, now spends most of his time "putting someone's back together," as he words it. What does this mean exactly?

Bob: "The Samalin method that I have learned and which I am teaching now deals mainly with the manipulation of the bones of the body. The first step is to make a proper diagnosis, to find out if the patient's problem is indeed caused by a dislocation of a bone or a disc. If it is, I can apply pressure on certain nerves to numb them, to 'switch them off' as it were. After a few minutes, I directly manipulate the bones or the discs to rectify the problem. For example, if the problem is caused by a slipped disc, I apply pressure to open up the space between the two vertebrae and press the disk back in its place. The same technique is used whenever there is a dislocation in a foot or shoulder or elsewhere in the body, or when something inside a joint is wrong. Other applications of Samalin are to heal broken nerves and to mend torn muscles, something like spot-welding them, using different techniques."

I am often asked to heal old problems, cases where a disc has been out of place for years. In those cases the

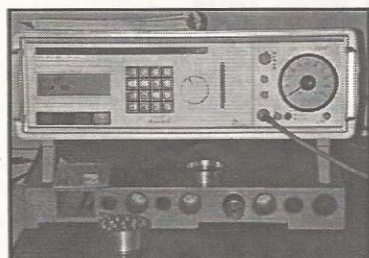


Bob

back muscles have learned to work, as it were, around the problem. They have taken a position to compensate for the dislocation. Now when I put the disc back in place, the muscles, tendons and ligaments will have to re-adjust and that is usually a slow process. If a disc has been out of place for say five years then it can take about five months for the body to re-discover the correct position of the tissues.

Usually the process of putting a disc back in place is relatively painless, because the nerves have been numbed. Sometimes a persons suffers from pain after the treatment, which can be caused by the muscles having to adjust to the new situation or nerves releasing previously pent-up pressure or deep tissue bruising.

At the end of each treatment I always advise the patients to take it



Bio-Resonance machine

the body to cause through resonance an effect elsewhere in the body. Electro-acupuncture creates this resonance by applying small currents to the inserted needles.

In the middle of the previous century two German electro-acupuncturists, Voll and Morell, found out that it is possible to diagnose the body through electro-acupuncture. They discovered that the body's cells communicate with each other by means of certain wavelengths (frequencies), unique to each person. Through experimental research the overall parameters for a healthy person could be established.

A disease is known to disturb and distort the base frequency. Empirical research was able to identify the patterns of distortion – each disease has its own unique pattern – and so to establish the frequency patterns of presently known diseases. The next step was to see if the base frequency could be re-established, and the disease healed, by either exposing the patient to its own base frequencies or by transforming the frequency patterns of the disease. At a later stage they discovered that, if those base frequencies were sent through an ampoule containing a mixture of homeopathic and other medicinal material, the healing results were bet-

Sound healing with ch'i

Healing with ch'i, the intrinsic energy, using sound as a carrier, is an area of research practised by Dr. Pascal.

Pascal joined Auroville eight years ago. Trained as an allopathic doctor in France, he started to work at the Auroville Health Centre and in the surrounding villages. "But soon," he says "I had to stop because this way of working did not fit anymore with my own inner development and with the research in healing I wanted to do." Though he had already received additional training in alternative healing methods such as homeopathy, acupuncture, trace element therapy and reiki and had learned some of the basics of Tibetan medicine, none of them really satisfied him. In Auroville, he trained in Ayurvedic massage and did a three-year foot reflexology training. While the reflexology changed his way of working, an intensive T'ai Chi workshop with 75-year old French master Vldy Stevanovitch finally broke new ground. For Stevanovitch is not only a martial arts master with a 60-year experience in T'ai Chi, but he is also an adept in techniques using the ch'i [intrinsic energy, in India known as *prana*] for healing the body. "The knowledge that the ch'i can also be used for healing is in fact no discovery of Stevanovitch," explains Pascal. "This kind of healing technique has been used in many countries in Asia for centuries if not millennia. But today, most T'ai Chi teachers concentrate on the martial arts aspect only. Stevanovitch decided to teach medical doctors to work with this energy."

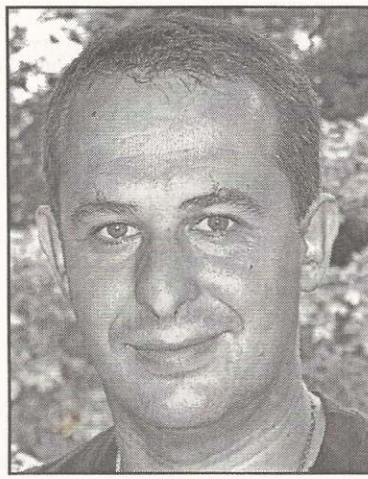
Contrary to an allopathic or homeopathic doctor whose own state of health doesn't influence the patient, doctors wishing to heal by using the ch'i have themselves to be healthy both in body and spirit. Stevanovitch teaches doctors the required techniques such as how to be centred within, how to breathe with the Tan Tien, [an area located approximately three inches below the navel and two

and one-half inches inward corresponding to the main energy centre of the body] so as to become aware of the ch'i. Afterwards he teaches the techniques that can be used for transmitting the ch'i to a patient. Through a physical contact, normally by putting a hand on a patient, the doctor can then direct the energy flow in certain pathways, so that it can heal the specific disorder of the patient. Another way to transmit the ch'i is through sound. It is well known that advanced martial arts masters can use sound as a tool to temporarily lame an opponent. There are stories of Chinese masters whose shout could make a bird drop from the sky – and likewise, who could heal the same bird with another shout. These sounds, which can only be produced after a very complex body preparation, are nothing but carriers of the ch'i.

"Stevanovitch had the idea to record these sounds full of ch'i and, in co-operation with European institutions that research sound, to investigate them," says Pascal. "Special software has been developed that not only analyses sound, but also amplifies the amount of ch'i carried by a sound, creating a new recombined sound. In this way you can multiply the amount of ch'i of a sound by fifty, hundred or even 150 times.

"Independently from Stevanovitch, another Frenchman, Doctor Nogier, – the founder of Auriculotherapy and Auriculomedicine – also did pioneering research on the healing potential of frequencies, in particular the frequencies of light. Nogier discovered that certain frequencies have an impact on specific diseases or specific tissues. These discoveries are nowadays used in laser acupuncture. Stevanovitch closely follows Nogier's research. The trick is to find the exact frequency required, and to filter the other frequencies out.

"As per today a kind of catalogue



Pascal

classifying the effects of various sound frequencies doesn't exist," says Pascal. "But some of the particular effects of a few frequencies have been identified. There are sounds that are relaxing for the muscles, there is a sound that appeases pains, there is a sound that works on the bones, and there are sounds that regenerate one's energy whenever one feels depleted. But the indications are not yet precise. There are also sounds that are too rich in ch'i and cannot be used. The research into this area of healing has only just started."

Nowadays Stevanovitch is doing his research in co-operation with a worldwide team of about 20 medical doctors, one of whom is Pascal. They all work with the methods Stevanovitch has been teaching, keeping detailed statistics and meeting regularly to exchange experiences and learn from each other. Pascal describes his own research results as 'pretty amazing.' "The idea of sound therapy is not to make the patient listen with his ears to the sound – though that may happen – but with the body. I put 4, 8, 12, or even 16 earphones at a time on the acupuncture points for example. The

sound played by a CD player has the effect of acupuncture, but without needles. I use my hands to further direct the ch'i in the body.

In Auroville I have achieved astonishing results: in more than 80% of the cases healing was effected. That is a high percentage. One of my experiments is to reduce pain by using sound therapy. In one case, the treatment even eliminated pain caused by a bone metastasis of a cancer. In this case, the ordinary painkillers were no longer effective, and the doctors were at the point of prescribing morphine-like sedatives. After the fourth day of sound treatment, however, the patient stopped the allopathic anti-pain treatments, because the pain had gone almost completely. I continued for one month with a daily treatment, after which the pain disappeared for several months. So far, however, I have not discovered a sound treatment that could work on the cancer itself." Does the therapy have limitations? "Actually, we don't know yet," says Pascal. "On the physical level I think we may expect big breakthroughs. At the psychological level it may not be effective, though some of my colleagues claim successful treatment of psychological disorders such as insomnia and depression. It has a total effect on body and mind, but it is no panacea for every illness, and I certainly wouldn't treat schizophrenic patients with this system," says Pascal.

Sound can also be used to kill, or to charge medicines. Explains Pascal. "Stevanovitch recorded a sound with which one can kill bacteria. Once the original sound was amplified 735,000 times, he bombarded a box containing bacteria with it and after some time all the bacteria were dead. Another possible usage, – the experiments here are still in their initial stages – is to 'charge' medicines. You place a medicine within a sound

box, and then expose it for a month or two to a particular sound.

I experimented in this way with an anti-allergy medicine as I suffer myself from allergies. When, after two months, I took the vial in my hands, I could sense it emitting a stream of ch'i. I had an allergic attack at that time, and I could sense the medicine flowing through my hands into my body. After two hours, I was fine again. But I had not taken my usual medicine! And if I don't do that, I suffer for days! This shows that it is possible to enjoy the effects of the medicine without swallowing it, and also, without suffering from any side effects. This area of research, which I have just started, is very interesting."

Pascal has been giving 'sound' treatments now for two years. "What strikes me most working with this technique is its intrinsic beauty," he says. "I am working with something which is extremely delicate and for which I have developed the deepest respect. And then there is the human factor. Treating a patient involves the mind and body of the doctor. Sometimes a point is reached where the differences between the patient and me are receding, and there remains only one. There is a sensory participation with the energy flow inside the body of the patient. At such moments I feel in my own body what the patient experiences. The identification is with the ch'i and in those cases the work becomes a kind of dynamic meditation. And so this methodology has become a tool for my own spiritual progress, I practise and do an inner work at the same time." Pascal's full schedule is an indication that his work is very much appreciated. For one of the positive aspects of sound-treatment is that the well-being produced is not only physical, but holistic.

Carel

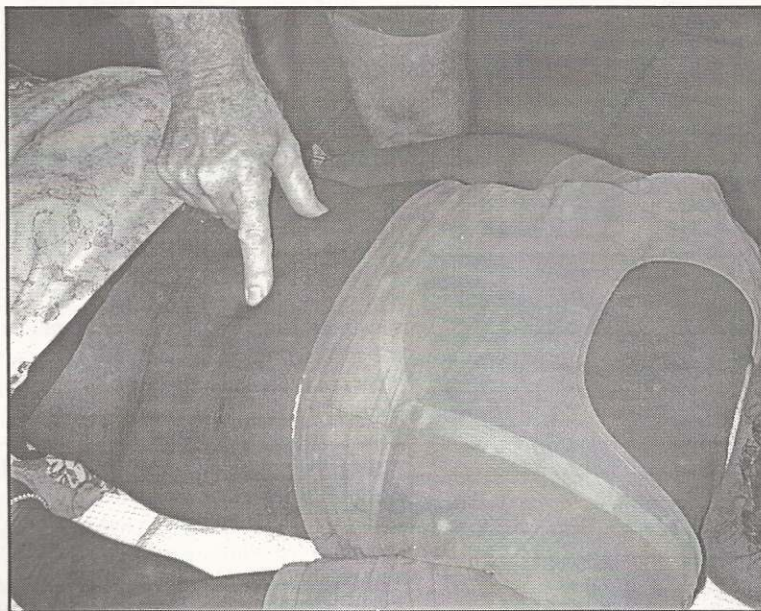
Put it back together

easy for a few days, and not to lift heavy objects, so that the muscles of the body can get habituated to the new position. If they are careless or the body is not ready it will easily put itself back into the old position with the disc out, trying to heal itself."

Samalin thus explained sounds very similar to chiropractic techniques and osteopathy. "But," says Bob, "there are essential differences. In the Samalin technique, I am able to manipulate a joint or a spine directly. Osteopathy and chiropractic techniques use indirect manipulation, they bend and twist to get the ligaments and muscles relating to a particular point in such order that they allow you to indirectly manipulate the joint. That is more like fighting the body."

The Samalin success ratio is high. Says Bob: "Most people respond very well and recover very quickly: 95% of the people get better. But there are people who come back time and again. Those people I have to teach how to become conscious of their body and to accept its limitations, to build a different relationship with their physical body.

For example, two men here in Auroville, both of whom had problems for about forty years, came to see me in the same month. Their problems were complicated, both of them needed more than one treatment. When the treatments were over, one person never returned. He had a close rela-



Pressurising nerves to numb them before pressing the slipped disc back into place.

tionship with his body, and everything stayed in place. The other person kept coming back for months. I would put one disc in place, then another one would come out. He went through a lot of pain. He needed to build up a positive relationship with his body and I had to tell him how to deal with the body: as if he were dealing with a child, talk to it, explain to it what it has to do. This may sound silly, but it works to get the body's co-operation. For example, if you need to lift a heavy object soon after a treatment, the best solution is to talk to the body before you lift it, asking for is co-operation – this doesn't have to be an

external talking, it can be an internal, mental talking – and I can almost guarantee that in nine out of ten cases the disc will remain in place."

Continues Bob: "The conscious relationship with the body is in fact the main healing factor. Some people are simply unconscious; they do not care about their body, are dismissive of it and ignore its pain signals. That, as a rule, doesn't pay off in the long run. It causes problems that may take a long time to heal.

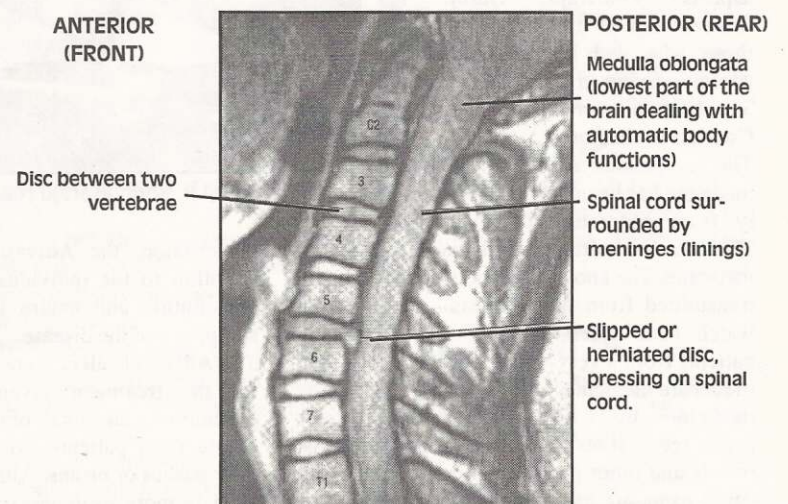
There are, on the other hand, people who are very much working with their body but with inappropriate attitudes: they do not want to respect its

limits. I have had hatha yoga teachers who could not accept their limitations and literally forced their bodies to do more than they could, causing dislocations. One person even had the pelvis pulled apart by people on either side pulling the body into the required spread-leg position. I have also dealt with a number of young people from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram who came with severe problems of knees, backs, and shoulders. They had been pushed by their physical education teachers to carry on with their exercises and ignore the pain signals that their bodies were giving. Only when really in

an excruciating state of pain were they allowed to stop. But this is bullying the body, and, judging from the point of view of physical education, that makes no sense.

"Physical education implies becoming aware of what your body can deal with. Each body is unique, different from the others, and some bodies can do things that other bodies just cannot. If you expect your body to do something for which it has not been designed, then you need to encourage it rather than bully it to achieve the impossible."

Carel



Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan showing the vertebrae in the neck from the cervical (C2) to the thoracic (chest) T1.

Helping to deepen the inner contact

Mallika integrates prayer, acupuncture, homeopathy, massage, reiki, and pranic healing according to the patient's needs.

Mallika is a small woman born and raised in French Guyana. She started working in 1986 in the Auroville Health Centre giving massage, acupuncture and homeopathy. The treatments soon included reiki and pranic healing. She continued her training with healers visiting Auroville and she was introduced to the work of Phyllis Crystal through her book *Cutting the ties that bind*.

Ten years later she reached a turning point. Many outer and inner influences compelled her to change her method of healing. She stopped working at Auroville Health Centre and started work at her house, as the atmosphere was more congenial.



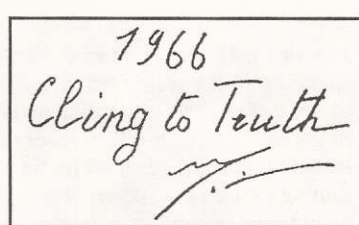
Mallika treating a patient with acupuncture.

Says she: "My work starts when a person seeks an appointment, somehow that's the moment when the healing begins. The persons who come to me have, to a greater or lesser extent, a contact with Mother and Sri Aurobindo. And part of my work is to make this contact more clear, so it can help them to become more aware of their problems and find in themselves the resources to solve them. For me,

prayer has become the most important part of my healing method."

Helping a person establishing a deeper contact with Mother and Sri Aurobindo is sometimes not enough to effect a cure. Mallika also uses Aurosoma therapy, a technique of "healing through colour, plant, and crystal energy" as described by Irene Dalichow and Mike Booth in their book which has the same title. Aurosoma therapy offers different products: 'balance' bottles, essences, quintessences and a device which adds light to the whole process.

Research to find the right healing system in each case continues daily. Self-training through workshops and inner teaching is essential to Mallika to find the proper synthesis of the different arts of healing that she has experienced or practised. "I use different techniques for each person," she says. "What the pranic healing and the 'self' healing have taught me is that it is important to try to find the origin, the root cause of the problem. During the



treatment, my concentration keeps being connected to Mother's words "Cling to truth," which you see framed when you ascend the staircase to Sri Aurobindo's room in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Helped by my training in homeopathy, acupuncture, pranic healing, etc., I sense and 'understand' the indications I receive from the person. Sometimes they are nothing but side effects of a vaccination that have not been treated; sometimes they refer to an emotional trauma which, consciously or unconsciously, has been suppressed – a childhood sexual abuse, or something connected to the family. Sometimes it is some karmic stuff from past lives. And

sometimes a person is open to the influence of a hostile force. If I'm asked to deal with such a person, I always ask for Her protection and instruction.

"Doing this work I learned that one cannot judge anyone, one doesn't know anything. But as one has to act, the first work is to make the patients conscious of their problems – if they are not already aware of them – and make them responsible for what is going on."

Concludes Mallika: "I like my work even if it is sometimes exhaustive as each session is a concentrated prayer. I am grateful to the Mother who granted me the possibility to help people in this way. People who come for treatment, loaded by a problem, show another part of themselves too which is always beautiful and aspiring, though that side is usually covered-up. The more the person is in contact with Mother and Sri Aurobindo, the more fulfilling the session can be."

Tineke

AUROVILLE AND INDIA

"All mankind must be healed"

Tribal Adivasi Healers of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh give medical consultations in India's cities. Recently they came to Pondicherry.

India has a great variety of traditional healing systems. Over the centuries, the tribal Adivasis of Andhra Pradesh have developed their own system. A decade ago, a group of its healers decided to create awareness amongst the public about 'the divinity of Adivasi medicine' by travelling all over the country and setting up camps in different towns. Since September 2001, this group of Adivasi healers, hailing from Gandasiri village, in the Khamam district of Andhra Pradesh, has set up their clinic in Pondicherry. The group is headed by the tribal chief and leading medical practitioner, Guruji P. Srinivasaraju and his father and Guru B. Sahadevaraju.

Until some fifteen years ago, the tribal Adivasis of the Khamam district lived in the deep forests, like their forefathers remaining naked except for the lower parts of their bodies, which they covered with bark, animal skin or loin cloth. It was only recently that the Government allotted them land, where they started cultivating chillies. Although some of them have accepted 'modern civilization' to some extent, they still follow their traditions and their children are still taught the old ways, including the use of bow and arrow. They have their own systems of governance and organization. Votes are cast orally, and the candidates get elected as leaders when they have a majority. They do not depend on the police or judiciary system to solve problems and settle conflicts. Although about five villages, out of the eleven tribal villages of the region have merged with neighbouring towns, there are many Adivasis who refuse 'modernisation' in all its aspects. Oralaraju, Guruji P. Srinivasaraju's brother, is one of those, who, with his wife and child, continue living in their native forest. The Adivasis worship Vanadevi, the Goddess of the Forest.

The indigenous Adivasi system of medicine has been handed down orally from generation to generation. There are no written records on this branch of medicine. The knowledge and skills are usually transmitted from father to son. The children watch their elders diagnosing and treating patients from a very young age, and are taught to prepare medicines. All the ingredients for the medicines are derived from nature. Besides herbs, seeds, roots and barks, various minerals, metals and other natural matters in their powdered form, are used for the preparations. The healers themselves gather all the necessary plants and herbs that grow wild in the forests

intoning special prayers. The medicines are mostly prepared using a mortar and pestle to pound the various ingredients together.

The Adivasi healers touring the country speak about five Indian languages, including Tamil. Their mother tongue is Telugu. The Telugu name for their branch of medicine is "Erhulu Patchala Mulighalu".

The Adivasi healers claim their medicine can cure over three hundred and fifty diseases, including different types of colds and headaches, skin and eye ailments, various types of paralysis, asthma, tuberculosis and certain cancers, diabetes, problems of infertility and impotency.

The system of diagnosis is through the reading of the pulse. The healer then makes a brief commentary on the patients' constitution and prescribes treatment, which is then prepared by the youngsters of the group. Many of the patients they have successfully treated over the years had previously been seeing allopathic doctors, who had not managed to find a cure to their ailments. The Adivasi herbal medicines have absolutely no side effects. On diagnosis and

mercial cultivation of medicinal herbs. Chemical fertilizers would be used to increase the yield and they feel this would seriously affect the efficacy and healing powers of the herbs.

Traditional herbal medicine in general is of late facing a new threat. The modern pharmaceutical companies are plundering the herbal wealth of the forests for manufacturing their medicines. This endangers the very survival of the species and makes it more difficult for traditional healers to find the herbs they need for their medicines. Measures must be taken to prevent this from happening before irrevocable damage has been done. Another great danger is deforestation, and the Adivasis have already held many protests against this practice, as for them, the forest is their whole life.

The Adivasi healers tour the country and set up camps in various states and different towns for six months in a year. For the remaining six months, they return to their native village to gather the herbs necessary and to prepare medicine. They also gather herbs from forests in other states. For the last decade, during their touring, they have met with many important personalities, such as successive presidents, prime ministers and other ministers and have treated some of them.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had visited their settlements when Guruji P. Srinivasaraju's grandfather was the tribal leader and was received with great pomp and celebration. His daughter Indira Gandhi later came to visit their village and expressed the wish that their indigenous system of medicine be spread throughout the country because of its great efficacy. Former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, N.T. Rama Rao was also greatly impressed by their

system of medicine, and during his tenure, he allotted them forty acres of land so they could cultivate their medicinal herbs, without the use of chemical fertilizers and set up a centre for manufacturing their traditional medicine. He too expressed his wish that they propagate and create awareness amongst the public of their traditional medicine, which they had, until then, only practiced within their own community. That is how the program of creating awareness on Adivasi medicine was initiated and the tribal healers began touring the country. They



Traditional herbs used by the Adivasi healers



Guruji P. Srinivasaraju reading the pulse of a patient

prescription, the Adivasi healers pay more attention to the individual patient's physical constitution and nature than to the specific symptoms of the disease.

The Adivasi healers do not charge a fixed rate for the treatment given. Their livelihood depends on 'dakshina', or offerings, which they accept from patients, who give according to their wishes or means. Although they stress the need for more awareness on this branch of medicine, the Adivasi healers do not want to 'sell their tradition', and they are against the com-

have also traveled abroad and set up camps in countries like Malaysia and Singapore. Today, a great number of people have discovered this unique system of medicine, a great number of the diseased have been cured, and they are all grateful to those tribals who have come out to offer their ancient medical knowledge.

In the future, the group of Adivasi healers plans to return to their native village and set up an Adivasi Institution there, while cultivating medicinal herbs on the land allotted to them by the Government. The camps being held throughout the country would then stop. The new generation would become the Adivasi healers' representatives. They would continue to travel the country, and while the medicines would now be prepared in their native village, they would bring them to the patients. The elders hope that the youth, who is presently being educated will, in the future, document their system of medicine, so that this precious knowledge is not lost for the next generations. As Guruji B. Sahadevaraju was quoted as saying in "The Hindu", in 1999, "Nature is an abundant store of herbs with magical properties, but not many are aware of this. We, who are brought up in the lap of nature, know it."

One can only applaud Guruji P. Srinivasaraju and his group, for their dedication to keeping their ancient medicinal traditions alive and making their medicines and cures accessible to all. For, notwithstanding the so called 'progress and development,' more and more people are becoming aware of the shortcomings of 'modernisation' and are looking for alternatives, in life styles and in systems of healing. The Adivasi healers help ensure that the traditions and knowledge from the ancient past are not forgotten and discarded by mankind and that modern city dwellers keep a contact with nature.

Emmanuelle with Shankar as translator

Guruji P. Srinivasaraju and his group can be contacted at 81, Kamaraj Salai, Thattanchavady, Pondicherry.

Russia is opening up

Since the last Auroville International Meeting in St. Petersburg, reported in Auroville Today #151, August 2001, a lot is happening in Russia, writes Dimitri Melgunov from St. Petersburg.

On August 15th, Auroville International Russia organized a collective meditation on the spiritual awakening of Russia in which people from all over the country participated. It seems that Russia is opening up, not only on the personal level, but also on the official one. There is a new dynamic in Russian-Indian relationships. The Prime Minister of India visited Russia in November and the first city he visited was not Moscow as usual but St. Petersburg where we have our main centre of work. Many new agreements were signed. One of them will create a special council for cultural, scientific

and economical relations with India, on the level of the city's authorities. This council is supposed to organize, among other things, an exchange of Indian and Russian students, enabling many Indian students to study in our high schools and universities, first of all in St. Petersburg.

Another official visitor was Dr. M. Manohar Joshi, the Indian minister of Human Resource Development, [also in charge of the Auroville portfolio, eds.] who came to St. Petersburg to be awarded a honourable membership of the Russian Academy of Physical Sciences. I was invited to the ceremony, and had a

brief talk with Mr. Joshi afterwards. I told him about Auroville International Russia and presented him with a copy of our book on the recent Auroville International meeting in St. Petersburg. He and other members of the delegation seemed happy to learn that Auroville is not only known in Russia but that we are actively connected with it and work here for Auroville's realisation.

The Russian interest in Sri Aurobindo's teaching is growing as well. Our last publication, Sri Aurobindo's *The Upanishads* in Russian translation of which we printed 1000 copies, was sold within three

months. A new publication, Sri Aurobindo's *Bengali Writings* is in preparation. In collaboration with Russian Aurovilians, we will soon publish a journal dedicated to Auroville and Auroville International.

A Russian television group has contacted us with a project to go to Auroville for a special programme on Auroville and the Russian Aurovilians. As they told us, "We do not want our TV showing only terrorists, murders, violence, Chechnya and Afghanistan. We want to show something else, people who live motivated by higher ideals."

Dimitri

NATURE WATCH

Greening the canyon

A flock of silver coloured birds crosses a steel grey autumn sky. The egrets are back again – a sign that the rains have started. Intently, I await what the monsoon will bring this year.

The last two years the monsoons were mediocre at best. This year, so far, some rains have showered their blessings on the thirsty land, but hopefully they are just a prelude to an intense downpour to follow. By mid-December we will know if the rains have brought abundance or, if there will be scarcity again.

Three years ago I started building check dams in Auroville. By now I am finishing check dam number 28. This year's dams were built in the Auroville communities of Certitude and nearby Gratitude and in the surroundings of the coastal village of Bommayarpalayam. The work received a big financial boost from the Dutch group "De Nieuwe Gemeenschap" whose members now visit Auroville yearly. Their financial support allows me to construct a few more earthen check dams in the Success canyon, a work that will start as soon as the monsoon is over, and then the money will have run out.

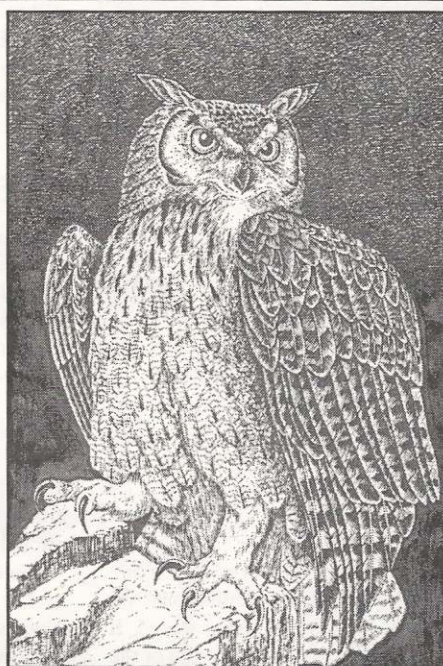
Two large canyons have been fully canalised and no longer transport rainwater to the sea. The water flow is halted by the check dams, forming small lakes that, within a few days, seep down into the underground. Doing so, the groundwater level increases which, we hope, will bar seawater intrusion into the groundwater.

The check dams have been built in such a way that an overflow can reach the sea. This would only happen when it would rain a few dozens of centimetres daily for at least a week, – something, I admit, I am waiting for. I would love to see the large check dams being tested and witness the waters cascading over their tops. But so far, sadly, I have never been able to properly answer those who wish to know if my dams 'hold' and how it is to swim in the lakes.

The check dams change nature considerably. There is a definite greening going on in the canyons where, three years ago, I built my first check dams. Trees, bushes, creepers and other plants have spontaneously emerged. Within a few years they will provide an impenetrable barrier, provided that the villagers won't cut too many trees for firewood. The explosive greening,

however, is not to everyone's liking. Aurovilians who love to go on nature discovery tours, complain that canyon walks have become all but impossible. The flora ensures that rainwater seeps quicker into the underground and it holds the red earth and the topsoil, which otherwise would flow into the Bay of Bengal. The earth remains wet for a longer period, and that in turn stimulates more plants to grow. And without any need for human intervention, the canyon's biotopes recover.

The beginning of this process can be witnessed in the recently finished Utility canyon. The white sand is being covered by red earth, the first grasses come up and small plants mature. Its flowers attract insects and large, colourful butterflies; they in turn provide food for small mammals, reptiles and birds. So far I have seen wagtails, brahminy kites, shikras (a small hawk), the hawk cuckoo also known as the brainfever bird, green bee-eaters, metallic blue kingfishers, redwhiskered bulbuls, hoopoes and, last but not least, the Indian great



DRAWING: ERIC COURTESY SHIKRA

Indian great horned owl

horned owl. This is an impressive bird, who loves the canyon, sitting on a perch watching for prey. As by grace, it sometimes descends on the roof of my house, sounding its low-toned bubbo, with the second syllable much prolonged. Originally there was only one, but recently I have seen three of them which is a convincing sign that nature is recovering.

Kireet (Gerard Jak)

The big snakes are dancing again

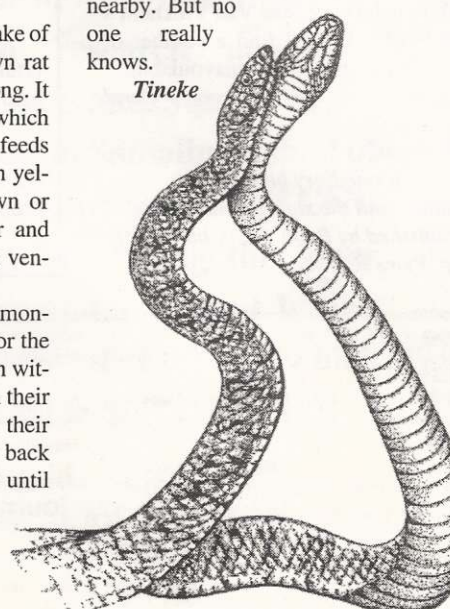
"Ma, ma, vange! Perya pambu ange!" ("Ma'm, come! There are big snakes over there!") One of the boys working at the Centre Guesthouse calls out for me to come and have a look at the dancing snakes. It is already the second time this month that I get to see this breath-taking phenomenon of two enormous male Dhaman or Rat snakes performing their dance.

The rat snake is the largest snake of the Auroville area. A fully-grown rat snake can be up to three meters long. It is a fast moving, harmless snake, which lives close to human habitats and feeds on rodents. Its colour varies from yellowish or greyish-green to brown or jet-black. Because of its colour and girth it is often mistaken for the venomous cobra.

Just before the onset of the monsoon in October is mating time for the rat snake. That is the time you can witness two male rat snakes perform their 'dance'. They stand up high on their bodies, rise vertically, and sway back and forth. They gracefully spar until one makes contact and coils himself around his partner, then both move their heads simultaneously like a graceful,

well-rehearsed dance. During this sometimes one hour lasting 'performance', none of the snakes get hurt, although the sound of snake skin hitting each other can be heard. And then all of a sudden it is over, and both snakes slide away, each going its own way. Herpetologists believe it is a territory or courtship dance and that a lady snake is watching nearby. But no one really knows.

Tineke



DRAWING: ERIC COURTESY SHIKRA

FUNDRAISING

Mahalakshmi played successfully

Thanksgivings day (November 22nd) assumed an extra meaning when Niluro, the Executive Director of Auroville International USA, announced that the fundraising programme "Mahalakshmi at Play in 2001" was successfully completed by Thanksgiving 2001, over a full month before the deadline. Under this programme an anonymous donor would double match any donation made to the "Three for One" programme: the Land Fund, the Matrimandir Inner Skin and the USA pavilion in the International Zone, up to a maximum of US\$ 200,000. It was Auroville International USA's goal to raise \$100,000 before the end of December 2001, so that the double match of \$200,000 would be donated in full. Thanks to the many donors, Auroville International USA has indeed received donations amounting to \$100,000, so that each of these three projects now will receive US\$ 100,000.

Writes Niluro: "In the spirit of Thanksgiving, I would like to extend to all of you a hearty and gracious 'Thanks for Giving!' The Mahalakshmi at Play in 2001, Three for One Matching Program has been a tremendous success. Although this program is now closed to new donations, we would like to encourage you to continue supporting the purchase of Land for Auroville, the construction of the Matrimandir and the USA Pavilion, as well as many of the other wonderful projects in Auroville, such as the Pavilion of Tibetan Culture, Village Action, the Auroville Arboretum, and other projects. We also want to encourage anyone who would like to make a sizeable donation to Auroville, to create other such matching programs – the Mahalakshmi at Play program has shown how eager people are to give when they know that their donation will have 3 times the money-power when sent to Auroville."

In brief

New Canadian AVI-centre

Auroville International Canada-Ontario received its legal papers. Its directors are: L'aura Joy, Andrew Rattee and Catherine Blackburn. Other members are: Auomira Parks, Tripat Bratch and Mr. Devan Nair. AVI Canada-Ontario will start its financial year in January 2002. Among its first activities are an Auroville Holiday Fair, on December 2, in Toronto.

News from AVI-Canada

The new bilingual AVI Canada bulletin Fall 2001 - Winter 2002 is available for download at <http://www.cam.org/~avica/fall2001.pdf> or mirror site <http://claudedavault.tripod.ca/avica/fall2001.pdf>

Deepavali celebration

On the eve of Deepavali, the festival of light, a community celebration was held at the Visitors Reception Centre on November 13th, including various cultural performances by students of Auroville and a fireworks display.

Cable television

Cable television, allowing connections to 40 channels, has been introduced in the communities of Aspiration, Auromodèle, Djaima, Fraternity, Shakti and Utility. Auroprem intends to build a network all over Auroville, targeting the communities around Certitude as next step.

Sacred Vocal Baroque Music

Under the direction of Eugene, the 40-member Auroville Choir gave a performance of works from Buxtehude, Bach, Kuhnau and Pärt. Heinrich performed two solo pieces on electronic organ and harpsichord and accompanied the choir playing basso continuo together with Suzanne from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram on violoncello.

Colour Impact

Five painters from Pondicherry, L. Candappane, A. Soucoumarane, S. Suresh, P. Srivenkateswaren and P. Srinivassan exhibited some of their works in Pitanga. The exhibition was organised by the Colour Impact, a five-men Pondicherry artist group.

AVNews in Tamil and French

A new service, Auro-translations, has started to translate the main articles from the Auroville News into Tamil and French.

Bon appetit!

A private survey showed that the average Aurovillian is hygienically unconscious. Only 20% of the adults who have their lunch at the Solar Kitchen wash their hands before eating, youth and accompanied children do slightly better: 29% wash their hands.

Sunil's Music

In memoriam of Mother's passing, there was a collective concentration at the Amphitheatre with a hour of Sunil's Music on November 17th.

Rectification

The article 'Galloping through childhood' in issue #154, contained incorrect information on the Red Earth Riding School (RERS). RERS gives riding classes at the same rates as the pony farm for those with limited financial means.

Celebrating Vijaya Dashami

October 26, 2001, is Vijaya Dashami, the day which marks the Victory of the Divine Mother over the anti-divine forces. On this auspicious day, the Mother's seat was installed at Savitri Bhavan. The seat is the chair which the Mother used to use when she visited Huta in her apartment in Huta House, where she would sit for concentration in Huta's meditation room. Huta has treasured this chair for over 40 years, but had decided some time back that one day it should come to Savitri Bhavan. But early in October she received a strong inspiration that the precious chair should come to Auroville now, and be installed on the auspicious day of Vijaya Dashami. She said "The Mother will have her seat in Auroville, and many things will change". So on Friday October 26th at 8:30 in the morning, the chair was installed in our Hall, beneath a beautiful photograph taken of the Mother on Vijaya Dashami in 1954, which was also gifted to us by Huta. We displayed and distributed copies of the messaged which the Mother distributed on the day the photograph was taken, as well as a message she had written for Huta in 1957:

Durga

she will fight until

there are no more anti-divine

forces upon earth.



*Durga—
She will fight until there are no more
anti-divine forces upon earth.*

Many Aurovilians came for the happy occasion, and sat entranced by the wonderful atmosphere, as we listened to the Mother's reading of the *Savitri* Book Three, Canto Two, accompanied by her own organ music; and passages from *The Mother*, Chapter 6, accompanied by Sunil's composition "Shakti". The chair remained in place for 24 hours, after which it was moved to the safe room where the Meditations on Savitri paintings are being stored. It will stay there until completion of the Savitri Bhavan main complex, where it will have its own room.

Shraddhavan

Experiencing Oneness

One evening, when I had the opportunity to sit peacefully on the porch with my sleeping daughter in my lap, the rays of the setting sun caressing us with their warm golden glow, the thought crossed my mind "This is just how the Divine's love embraces us always." I realised that the sense of "togetherness" I experienced at that moment, extended more widely to include the whole of Auroville and all the Aurovilians. Looking back in time, I became aware that I came to know this tender side of Auroville when I was expecting my child. Previously, I had only known Auroville as a hardworking community with every Aurovillian pursuing his/her own work and inner development.

When I became conscious about the new life in me, I was thrilled and extremely happy. But if I thought that no one else could feel the joy as I did, I was wrong. The moment I revealed my dear secret to Hilde, Auroville's beloved mid-wife, I saw an unforgettable love come into her eyes which was the beginning of her unwavering support, understanding and guidance. She did her regular check-ups with so much care that it made me feel special. I became quickly aware that pregnancy is respected in Auroville as a very special state. Mother has said, "that the education of the human being should begin at birth and continue throughout his life. Indeed, if we want this education to have its maximum result, it should begin even before birth..." The mother-to-be in Auroville aspires to realise the ideal that her thoughts are always beautiful and pure, her feelings always noble and fine, her material surroundings as harmonious as possible and full of great simplicity, and she finds that there is a network of support

to help her in this endeavour.

As I prepared for the delivery of my child, I had the opportunity to enjoy many of the different therapies offered by Aurovilians, such as the physical exercise classes, foot massage, water treatment and pranic healing, all of which helped me to maintain the right inner attitude during the whole period of my pregnancy and thereafter.

The most interesting exercise classes for expectant mothers were the ones given by Aloka, who also teaches 'Body Awareness' at Transition School. She explains exactly which muscles to work on, which exercises help against back pains, and which ones most help the child to come easily into this world. Her lucid explanations were a stark contrast to the conservative society of my native West Bengal where the discussion of these issues is not so open. The meditations with her, the discussions, and the yoga *nidras* were extremely helpful to become ready to be a mother. I love her for her meticulous care and those moments will live with me forever.

After the birth, Auroville once again expressed its normally hidden warmth, which also comes out often when someone is taken ill. The little one was welcomed most lovingly. Many Aurovilians passed by, people called to know whether I needed something for the new born. Baby essentials were brought to me from all over the world. They all conveyed the message that we are part of one family without any discrimination of race, colour or creed. I would never have imagined that Aurovilians could be so loving and caring if I hadn't lived this experience. Auroville made me feel part of a one huge caring family. Outer appearances notwithstanding, it still makes my heart beat in oneness.

Devaki

Dear God...

Through Eagles' eyes

The Eagle's Eye contains writings from the Eagles, a seventh grade class at Transition primary School. This submission, which was approved by the students for publication in the Auroville News, comes from the Eagle's journal entries. Their English teacher, Lyle, asked them to begin their journal entries with "Dear God."

Dear God, I don't know what to write right now. Oh yeah, God could you tell me what happens after death? If you cannot write it in my book, tell the answer to Lyle.

Luca

Dear God, Today I was really bored and I watched T.V. What did you do? I know you can't answer! These days I don't really work a lot or don't do too many efforts and I think I should motivate myself, but how? I guess just by wanting to!

Bhakti

Dear God, Why do we have to do journal writing? Please help me with your magical power. Make Lyle stop giving us so much homework and journal writing. I wish you would transform him into a giant, slimy and warty toad.

Divyadan

Dear God, Do you have homework? I hope so.

Daniela

Dear God, My mother got her baby at a hospital and she is coming on Monday, 29 October and I am happy to see her back in Auroville. So I can play with my sister as long as I want to play.

Prakash

Dear God, The years are passing so fast. I wish I could stay young forever. Actually that's a lie. I also want to experience life in an older body. It must be very tiring. This morning I saw a CD that a friend made. It was about education in New Creation School. It was really nicely filmed. Then, suddenly I realized that we are all really lucky children. We have food to eat and water to drink. We have school next door; and we have the experience of growing up in Auroville.

Zarah

Dear God, Can you please change the solar kitchen food and make it really good? And I hope you can make The Coffee Shop items cheaper, at least the cappuccino with ice cream.

Angelo

NEW BOOKS

Overman

Van Vrekhem's new book deals with the intermediary being between the human and the supramental being.

Overman, Georges van Vrekhem's most recent book, deals specifically with the transitional being that is to manifest between the mental being that we are and the supramental being which is the present end of nature's evolutionary effort.

Sri Aurobindo first mentioned the probability of a transitional being in a series of articles written for the *Bulletin of Physical Education* between December 1948 and the time he left his body, on 5 December 1950. These articles, later published as *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth* can now be found in *Essays in Philosophy and Yoga*, Vol. 13 of *The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo*.

Sri Aurobindo describes this transitional being as having a body which is still animal-human in its origin and fundamental character, but be possessed already of what he called 'a Mind of Light,' "a mind capable of living in the truth, capable of being truth-conscious and manifesting in its life a direct in place of an indirect

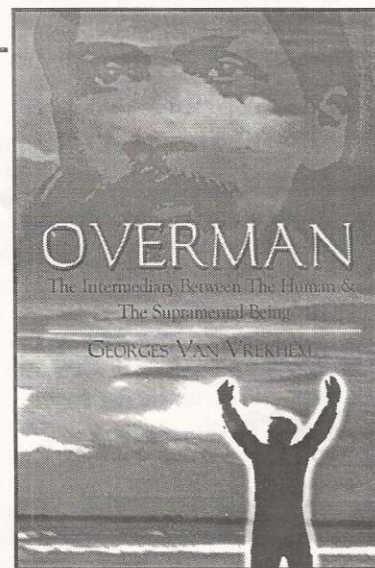
knowledge. Its mentality would be an instrument of the Light and no longer of the Ignorance. At its highest it would be capable of passing into the supermind and from the new race would be recruited the race of supramental beings who would appear as the leaders of the evolution in earth-nature." The Mind of Light is thus a subordinate action of the Supermind.

The book further details the work of The Mother in realising this intermediate being. In a conversation in 1958, The Mother mentions that this was the work she had been doing ever since Sri Aurobindo left his body. The Mother, speaking in French at the time, called this being *surhomme*, of which the literal translation is 'overman.' Georges, in persistently using this term, goes against the translations of these and other texts issued by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and in the thirteen volumes of Mother's Agenda that use the term 'superman' instead. The word 'superman', however, has been used by Sri Aurobindo in his extensive writings to denote the supramental being. "Its

use to indicate the transitional being," writes Georges, "is therefore a calamitous mistake."

The book continues to describe The Mother's work of realising the overmentalisation of her body. This work, which she started after Sri Aurobindo's passing, reached its culmination in January, 1969, when she announced the descent of the Overmind consciousness and describes it: "It was very human, but human with divine proportions. Human without weaknesses and without shadows: it was all light, all light and smiling, and sweetness at the same time." The presence of the consciousness of the overman in the earth atmosphere has since become a permanent fact.

The book ends with a cursory reference to The Mother's further development till she manifested the prototype of a supramental body in May, 1970. "But this," writes Van Vrekhem, "is outside the compass of this essay and has been narrated elsewhere," a reference to his books *Beyond Man* (in the USA *Beyond the*



Human Species) and his biography *The Mother*.

Overman, like its predecessors, is well-written and is compelling reading for all those interested in Sri Aurobindo's and The Mother's yoga. Those who have read Van Vrekhem's earlier books will find a number of repetitions, but this is unavoidable.

Carel

Overman
The Intermediary between the
human and the supramental being.
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