

# AUROVILLE TODAY

March 1991

C.S.R. Office, Auroville 605101, Tamil Nadu, India

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## February 28th, 1991



Archive photo

### *Auroville's Birthday Diary*

5.00 a.m.

A huge golden moon, low on the western horizon in the cool morning mist, illumines the paths of Auroville as about 500 people converge on the Amphitheatre. Sounds of cars and motorbikes rend the early morning silence, their lights stabbing the darkness—the usual preliminaries of Auroville's bonfire.

5.30 a.m.

The bonfire climbs the dead wood, cracking the silence and challenging the end of night with sparks soaring into the dark sky—illuminating Auroville's silent aspiration to the Divine.

*A huge golden moon, low on the western horizon in the cool morning mist, illumines the paths of Auroville...*

6.15 a.m.

The dawn of a new day ever so silently, almost imperceptibly eats the darkness into a light pink that silhouettes the trees along the rim of the Amphitheatre and Matrimandir's majestic presence. The fire crashes into flaming embers, as the children stand outlined around the urn.

6.45 a.m.

People begin greeting each other as the children run to discover their friends and see the flower arrangements below the urn. Gradually everyone is moving, some go to the fire, some move to join groups of conversations, others are drifting toward the next event.

7.15 a.m.

The new Visitors Reception Centre is covered with people and flowers for its inauguration. The soft natural earth colour of the domes and arches seems to gladly welcome the large crowd, who by now begin to collect their share of the traditional all-Auroville breakfast. On all the roof terraces little groups are happily drinking their hot chocolate or tea and munching croissants and doughnuts. Swirling around the inner open courtyard is the Auroville Dance Group in classical renaissance costumes, doing quaint medieval dances to enhance the festive mood. Laughing faces abound, and a sense of community pervades. A Council member rushes around to remind everyone to go over to the Bharat Nivas for the next event.

9.00 a.m.

The Centre of Indian Culture is packed with Aurovilians gathered to meet the new members of the Governing Board. Auradha recites Mother's Dream, and then Aster introduces Dr. Karan Singh, Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan and Mr. Tayal who with her form part of the nine-member Governing Board. The ceasefire in the Gulf is announced to a joyous reception. And then Dr. Karan Singh speaks eloquently of historical junctures, ages of transition, and the auspiciousness of this particular day; of Auroville's special ambience and the beginning of a new chapter in this noble experiment. He ends with a recitation of Sri Aurobindo's poem *Who*, and is then presented, along with the other members of the Governing Board, with sachets containing Auroville earth so that—as Aster put it—"the Foundation keeps it in safe custody for Auroville."

10.30 a.m.

Cease-fire in the Gulf.

1.00 p.m.

Some members of the Governing Board meet with Aurovilians for lunch at the Centre Guest-house.

4.00 p.m.

Champaklal—Sri Aurobindo's life-long attendant—visits Matrimandir. He is carried up into the Chamber on an improvised palanquin, and there he meditates together with about 40 people. Champaklal is visibly moved as the beam of sunlight, reflected down from the newly installed mirrors on the roof, dances on the scaffolding pipes and the concrete surface of the model globe. Later he is carried to the Amphitheatre where he sits silently contemplating the rise of the full moon, visible between the structure and the Urn.

8.00 p.m.

On the moonlit roof of the Pitanga Hall, some hundred people attend a musical performance. Improvising on guitar and violin, supported by the background sounds of the tambura, Nadaka and Holger offer us a fusing of Indian and Western sounds. We let ourselves be captivated by something truly new and inspire!

Later...

The magic of a full moon at the beach that night. Impressions of silver light dancing over the waves.

Silence.

One goes within. □

"An arrow shot into the future..." was how Dr. Karan Singh described Auroville in the Indian Parliament in 1980. And that sense of adventure, of dynamism and new beginnings was very much among us on Auroville's birthday this year, the day that Dr. Karan Singh revisited us as chairman of the newly-appointed Governing Board. For as we moved from the intense concentration at the bonfire to the whirling dancers at the inauguration of the new Visitors Reception Centre, and on to the Centre of Indian Culture to hear Dr. Karan Singh's inspiring speech, we were carried on a wave of fresh vigour and purpose, a wave that was sweeping us—whatever our doubts—into the

next phase of our collective endeavour.

On this day of extraordinary confluences and auspicious events—the day of the full moon, of the great Hindu festival of renewal, Holi, the day of the cease-fire in the Gulf—one image lingers on. That of a deeply moved Champaklal sitting quietly among the scaffolding pipes in the almost completed chamber of Matrimandir, while a beam of sunlight—reflected down by the newly-installed focussing apparatus above—danced upon a model globe. Silence. The still point of our turning world. A promise and a reminder. That the real Auroville, Mother's Auroville, is close. But still awaits our call.



# "A new chapter is beginning"

## Fellow Aurovillians,

Junctures come in human history which come but rarely. One age draws to a close and a new age begins—an age of transition, transformation and transmutation. There have been several such transitions, in the long and tortuous history of the human race, from the very dawn of time. There were 3 billion years of pre-biological evolution, a billion years of biological evolution, perhaps 500,000 years of human evolution, and 15 to 20,000 years of human history. There have been transitions from the ocean, the repository of life, to the land, the caves, to the forests, to pastoral civilization, to settled agriculture, to pre-industrial, industrial and post-industrial civilization. But now it is clear that humanity is poised for the most crucial and the most difficult transition it has ever sought to accomplish. And that is the transition to global consciousness, a transition to a new level of awareness and being. Sri Aurobindo, the greatest evolutionary philosopher of modern times, has pointed out how the human being today is a transitional creature, poised somewhere half-way between the animal and the divine. And how the next phase in evolution will not be so much a physical transformation immediately as a psychological and spiritual transformation. And his entire life, and the corpus of his philosophy and writings, which stand as a magnificent monument to human intellect and intuition, put before us the problems, the methodology and the importance of the transition. The Mother, his closest collaborator in this great and divine work, together with him, brought forward the idea of evolutionary consciousness and tried to make it manifest at the level at which we can comprehend it.

The Sri Aurobindo movement today is spread throughout the world. There are people everywhere who have been influenced by the teachings, by the thought of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. There is the Sri Aurobindo Ashram here, with the Samadhi. But there is a very special ambience in Auroville, because Auroville was envisaged by the Mother as a concrete manifestation of

**"It is this courage to mould a new consciousness, a new civilization, that Auroville has to represent."**

the new consciousness, as a living laboratory where the higher consciousness would be worked out, as an arrow pointed towards the future of evolution. And that is why Auroville is so extremely significant for the future of the human race. Never forget it is not only important to those who happen to live here. Certainly you are important, because it is you Aurovillians who are doing the work and making the experiment, but your work far transcends barriers of space and nationality and even of time. Because what is sought to be done here is nothing less than the transmutation of consciousness.

I remember visiting Auroville twenty years ago, when it had just begun, when Matrimandir was simply a hole in the ground; ten years ago, when it had started coming up; and now on this occasion. As soon as I was nominated as Chairman of the Governing Board, I decided we would have the first meeting of the Governing Board in Auroville on Auroville's birthday. But I look

## Dr. Karan Singh's speech to the residents of Auroville on the morning of the 28th February, 1991

upon this Foundation as not just another Act passed by Parliament, but as something much deeper and more profound. And when you go into the depths of consciousness, symbols become very important.

I think that there is an extraordinary, auspicious *sangama*, or confluence today—as you know, in the Indian tradition, when three rivers join together, it is considered to be extremely auspicious. So we have today the birthday of Auroville—that beautiful ceremony this morning, the lighting of the sacred fire, *Agni*, which represents the aspiration of the human for the Divine. The fire, in the Vedic tradition, is the intermediary between the human consciousness and the Divine consciousness. The divine fire, the pentacostal fire, the Kundalini fire, which is within each of us, was symbolized by that great fire that was burning this morning. You also have an extremely auspicious day—the day of Holi and the full moon. I think it is an extraordinary... I would say synchronicity, not coincidence—I prefer the Jungian term synchronicity—that the full moon today should be the day on which we should be meeting. Because I believe that today a new chapter is beginning in this great and noble experiment of Auroville. And the third auspicious happening... All of us must have been praying for peace and you may have read the letter I wrote to President Bush in my capacity as Chairman of the Temple of Understanding, which is an inter-faith body, urging there should be a cease-fire. Many of us have been praying and just before we came here we heard that the terrible conflict, which has taken so many lives, which has left so many people crippled, which has destroyed the ecology of an important area of Mother Earth, those vast black clouds of hatred and conflict and war and tension, that we all saw on TV, that bombardment will stop in the course of our Governing Board

meeting. So whether you look upon that as fortuitous or synchronistic—the point is, that today is a very auspicious day.

I would like on this occasion to very warmly greet you, not so much as Chairman of the Governing Board—which when I was asked to do it, I accepted immediately because anything to do with Sri Aurobindo, and the Mother and the evolutionary consciousness is important. But also as a fellow Aurovillian. Nobody can own property in Auroville. The entire property belongs to Auroville. But there is a house, nine-tenth of which belongs to Roger A. and one-tenth to me. (laughter) There is in the Hindu terminology the *dashansha* which means 10 per cent. As long as you have that it is enough. So even if I am a *dashansha* Aurovillian, I consider myself part and parcel of this great community. And I would like to feel that the fact that I have become Chairman of the Governing Board is in order to work out the beginning of a new phase in the development

of Auroville. I'm not saying that I will be able to bring about the development, but the Divine forces work through all of us, and all of us must keep ourselves open to the Divine to see how they work.

Let me make it very clear—the Governing Board is only one of the three elements of the Foundation. There is the Governing Board, there is the Residents' Assembly—those of you who live here—and sooner or later a Working Committee which you are going to select, and there is the International



From l. to r. : Governing Board members Mr. Tayal, Dr. Karan Singh, Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, who were present in Auroville on the 28th.

Advisory Council. Between them they constitute the Auroville Foundation. It is now my hope that leaving behind past conflicts and bitternesses, we will be able to move rapidly forward. I have a sense of urgency. I went to the Matrimandir, that magnificent structure, designed by Roger and his associates—the golden orb coming out of the earth, a fantastic symbol of the emergence of the new consciousness from material manifestation. But it has taken a long time, my dear friends. It has taken already twenty years. Mother has said this is not a status-quo community—a community where people live happily ever after. It is a community that constantly struggles outwardly and inwardly with the difficulties in evolution.

And the heart, the soul of this community is Matrimandir. It is extraordinary that you have done so well for 23 years without a soul! (laughter) My prayer is that by 28th February, 1993, the 25th anniversary of the founding of Auroville—by whatever methodology and simplification, you can get Matrimandir ready. The crystal is ready now, and with the crystal will come a new inner strength and power, a new vision, a new transformative energy. And this now has to start functioning if we are to move onwards. You've had an extraordinary career so far—Auroville has reached a certain level. What we need now is a major push into the future. The arrow that I spoke of in 1980 in my speech to Parliament must not get blunted, because the arrow is moving forwards as the arrow of time and evolution. If humanity does not begin making the transition in the

next few years, then this experiment in consciousness could come to a disastrous end.

I travel widely. I can see the new consciousness developing and I can see the barriers of race, of creed, of sex, of economic status, of nationality, of religion, of ideology—I can see those barriers breaking. And on the other hand, we have the negative forces. Always remember, when the positive forces develop, the negative forces become active. Jung said that the darkest shadow is opposite the brightest light. As we work on, the dark forces will also emerge. Look at the ending of the Cold War—we thought there would be a new world community, a peace dividend—and within one year there was the most destructive and technologically savage

war in history. So the two things are balanced. The balance between the *devic* and *asuric* forces, as Sri Aurobindo has pointed out in his magnificent *Essays on the Gita*, is not only out there but deep within our consciousness. It is within our own consciousness that the *asuras* (demons) and the *devas* (gods) are arrayed against each other in perpetual conflict. And it is in the crucible of our consciousness that we have to find the light and the power, and the energy and inspiration to move onwards to a new kind of living, or society, or civilisation. This is the task before Auroville. It is a task of staggering immensity. It is a task that may or may not be completed within the lifetime of those of us here. But it is a task to which we must put all our wisdom and energy to make the breakthrough. It is a difficult path. Thousands of years ago, the *Upanishads* pointed out that this path is dangerous, 'like unto the razor's edge'. But there are no soft options, my dear friends, for individual greatness or collective transmutation. We work for the inner spiritual development, but also for the welfare of society. Both these works have to carry on together.

I would like to bring to you a sense of the urgency, of the significance of the work that you are doing. And to appeal to you, that with this new beginning, we should break from old moulds and structures, and be prepared to move on. And I will end with that great mantra from the *Katha Upanishad* which exhorts us 'to awake and to arise.' Many people may appear to be awake but they are not, because their inner consciousness is asleep. And many people may appear to be



(“A new chapter..”, continued)

arisen and running around, but if they are not doing it with a sense of dedication to the Divine, then it is of no spiritual importance.

We have to awaken, arise and move onwards across the razor-edged path, because on the other side there is the Divine shining in its splendour beyond the darkness. It is this courage to mould a new consciousness, a new civilization, that Auroville has to represent. And that is the message I bring you today on your birthday, on the day of the full moon, on the day of Holi, on the day of the ending of a terrible war, on a day of auspicious conjunctions.

rittishtat, jāgrata, prāpya, varānnibodhatā  
kshurasya dhāra nishtitā duratayā  
durgam pathastat kavaya vadanti

(Arise, awake, realise (that Atman) having approached the excellent (teachers).  
Like the sharp edge of a razor is that path, difficult to cross and hard to tread, so say the wise.) □

## Profiles

**D**r. Karan Singh, the Chairman of the Governing Board of the Auroville Foundation, is a man with many interests and talents. The only son of the last Maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir, he is a scholar and has written 16 books, the first of which was a study of Sri Aurobindo's political philosophy entitled *Sri Aurobindo--prophet of Indian Nationalism*. A long-time devotee of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, he was deeply interested in the ideal of Auroville from its beginnings, and obtained the Mother's permission to build a house here.

He has visited Auroville a number of times. After this last visit, he declared himself full of enthusiasm and joy for the work that needs to be done here to realize Mother's dream, and happy to participate actively in it.



Aster Patel

**Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan** is an internationally renowned scholar in the field of Indology. With a background in dance and education, she worked for many years in the Ministry of Education, Government of India, where she rose to the post of Secretary of Culture. For many years, she handled UNESCO affairs on behalf of India, and she has been involved as an organizer and participant in many major cultural and artistic events and

### From Interviews with Dr. Karan Singh on the morning of February 28th

*Auroville Today: What is your feeling about Auroville now?*

Karan Singh: I have a very good feeling. As you saw, I was at the morning function today. I was able to speak with the Aurovilians. I found a very compatible and

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friendly atmosphere. I think there is generally a feeling of new beginnings. We've had a very good Governing Board meeting; our first meeting went very well. There are a number of very complex issues involved. It is not as simple as it might have appeared. But personally I am sure that with the Divine Grace, which is most important of all things, and with goodwill we shall be able to move toward trying to solve some of these issues. So I am leaving with a really positive feeling.

*The Mother has spoken of a very flexible set-up for Auroville. How do you see the Foundation in that respect?*

Certainly the inner work has to be flexible, the methodology has to be flexible. Also the administration to some extent, but it is necessary that there is some structure, like the Matrimandir has a structure—you cannot have a temple without a structure. There is a certain minimum structure that is required within which Auroville can

movements in India and abroad. At present, she is Member-Secretary of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi, a unique and prestigious concept which aims to holistically study and offer experience of all the arts within the dimension of their interdependence and their relatedness to nature, society and the Universe.

Of Auroville, she said that while she understood the ideal very well intellectually, she has yet to touch and understand the experience of Auroville. Until she does that, she does not wish to speak about Auroville to others.

**Mrs. Aster Patel** has been in Auroville for a long time. She was one of first children to be accepted in the Ashram by the Mother, at the time when Sri Aurobindo was there. The education of the children was then in Mother's care.

Aster completed the higher course studies in philosophy and psychology in the Centre of Education at the Ashram and taught there. She then wished to read Sri Aurobindo against the background of thought and culture of the West and asked Mother's permission to pursue further studies in philosophy at the Sorbonne, Paris. Mother was very supportive of this effort and over the eight years she was away (returning every 18 months or so), she guided her in integrating into her inner development that which was most valuable in the western experience.

On finishing a doctoral thesis in Comparative Philosophy at the Sorbonne, Mother asked Aster to represent Auroville at a meeting of international youth, organized by the

develop. And I think that the Foundation is an important step in providing that basic structure. I don't think that it is a rigid body; it should not be. In fact it is designed in order to help the development of Auroville and the achievement of Mother's ideals.

*The Mother speaks also about no government involvement in Auroville. We don't really know what the Foundation will mean for us. There is a certain fear.*

The Foundation is not the Government of India. It is an important point you must remember. It is not the Government of India. It is a separate autonomous body set up by an Act of Parliament. And therefore it is not the Government. Of course, any Act passed by Parliament means that the government has supported it, members have supported it, but I think that it has the necessary flexibility not to create problems in any way. And if you look at the membership: out of 9 members on the Board, two are Government of India representatives, and seven are private citizens, private individuals. I am a private individual. I'm not even a member of Parliament. So I think there need to be no fear. On the contrary, this sort of a structure may give the necessary input, which only a structure like this could give, to grow. I think we should give it ten years. By 2001 we should know how the Foundation has done, whether it needs any change. I think we should not have any fears. We should give it ten years to work, and then judge. It is all open to Parliament to amend. It is an Act passed by Parliament. What I am saying is that if the Constitution of India can be amended 43 times or whatever, there is nothing to prevent an amendment of a Bill later. But I think at this stage it should be looked

upon as a positive development and we should all put our psychic and spiritual energies into making it work.

*What does it mean to you personally to be connected with Auroville through the Foundation?*

I have been connected with the movement of Sri Aurobindo for many years, I look upon this as a progression, as part of that process. I look upon this as also a symbol of Divine Grace and the fact that there is some role that I have to play in the further development of Auroville.

### Dr. Karan Singh's comments during a conversation with some Aurovilians on the evening of 27th February.

WHERE are the people, I'd like to ask you. Where are the people? Who are the people you are building the City for? You can't say 'build the city first, and then the people will come'. That is a circular argument. How are you going to get the people, and who are you going to get?

One of the things I raised in the meeting with the Auroville Council is "What do you do to get more Indians involved?" It seems to me there are lots of Europeans, Tamils, very few from other parts of India. If you can't get people from other parts in India, how is Auroville going to grow?

*What is your feeling about Matrimandir?*

K.S.: My feeling is it should be finished very quickly. I'm not satisfied with the way it's going. It will take another ten years at this rate. You must speed it up. In my mind I already fixed the 28th February 1993 for it to be ready. The 25th anniversary of Auroville. So it is for you now to simplify your plans. □

united Nations in New York. She returned to the Ashram with an understanding of the limitations of the Western intellectual approach and a keen perception that a new cycle of culture for man will spring up in India, from within the fold of the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. She resumed teaching at the Centre of Education at the Ashram.

On being invited to hold the Sri Aurobindo chair in Philosophy at Benares Hindu University, she spent some time there.

The attraction of Auroville began to grow and take hold. She is, presently, coordinating research and other activities of the Centre of Research in Indian Culture at Bharat Nivas. She is particularly interested in exploring the true relationship that exists between the experiment of Auroville and the deeper India and to see how such a coming together can lead to a greater fulfillment.

Aster described the first meeting of the Governing Board in Auroville as very useful.

In attempting to identify their approach to the work, members felt that as Auroville is unique and very complex, no existing model of functioning could apply. The need was felt to first understand the specific processes of growth that pertain to the experiment of Auroville and then to create modes of functioning that would help this growth and not hinder it.

**Shri S.R. Tayal** is a member of the Indian Foreign Service. At present he is Director of the UNESCO unit in the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. He is one of the two ex-officio members of the Governing Board.

The other members of the Governing Board were not able to attend the first meeting. They are **Shri Kireet Joshi**, **Mr. M. Krishnan**, **Mrs. Bilkees Latif**, **Dr. Ashwin Das Gupta** and **Shri K. Koshalram**. □

### A Note to our Subscribers

Dear Subscribers,

We mentioned it already in our previous issue: for many of you it is time to renew your subscription. All those who are due for renewal should meanwhile have received a reminder letter.

We wish to thank all of you who have already renewed, and who often added such encouraging comments!

The Eds.



# Servicing the Dream

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF COLLECTIVE SERVICES

It's an arresting image; the days after Auroville's inauguration on 28th February, 1968, the crowds and dignitaries had disappeared, and all that remained was scraps of paper blowing across a desolate landscape broken only by a banyan tree and a marble urn. It's a symbol of those early years when the ideal was strong but everything, everything had to be done.



Aurora at Aspiration Community Kitchen

The needs of the first settlers were uncomplicated—water, shelter, simple food, a cycle. And while it was the villagers who drilled the wells, who helped build the huts and dig the earth, the umbilical cord for many of the other necessities ran to the Sri Aurobindo Society office in Pondicherry. Every month, on the model of Ashram

'Prosperity', the early Aurovilians would make up an order for toothpaste, soap and other essentials, and then go and collect them at the Society's Beach Office. And it was from there that, for many years, all the major decisions regarding the organization, the planning and growth of Auroville were made.

As Auroville's population grew and began to focus in two main areas—Aspiration and around the Centre—there was a need for the community to evolve its own collective services. Rajan's drilling rig and team, which drilled many of the early wells, was the beginning of a Water Service, and in 1971 Vijay set up a food purchasing service at 'Udavi' which was the forerunner of 'Pour Tous'. At about the same time, Larry and Sundaram began the first Auroville bakery in Kottakarai, and community kitchens were constructed in Aspiration and at the Centre. Slowly, gropingly, the threads were being drawn together.

In the next few years, a carpentry training workshop for villagers was set up at 'Abri' with help from the Tamil Fund—later a mechanical workshop began also there—Claire set up 'Pour Tous' as a food purchasing and distribution service, a small Health Centre was constructed, a kind of free store operated out of a shed near Matrimandir, and 'Aurofuture'—the architectural and planning office—moved out to Auroville from Pondicherry.

At the end of 1975, after years of disputes and confrontations with the Aurovilians, the S.A.S cut off all funds, and the community was on its own. It was a catalyst that drew the

Aurovilians together in a spirit of courage and idealism. On the 1st January, 1976, 'Pour Tous' took over responsibility for the community's finances. Aurovilians were asked to deposit their money with Pour Tous, and this money was used to purchase food and to support other community budgets. Unfortunately, the need always exceeded the supply, and in 1978 Pour Tous went bankrupt.

During these years, other services like the electrical service, a Free Store and 'Nandini'—a store providing basic necessities—came into being and a small group made up of Francis, Prem and Diane formed to help process visa applications. The major services continued to draw up budgets for their weekly needs, but under the 'Envelope' system which operated between 1978-'83, many donations were specified for particular purposes, and some services ended up with very limited funds. It was a difficult time for everybody. For the Sri Aurobindo Society was waging an intense campaign to disrupt Auroville and to assert its so-called management rights over the project.

The passing of the Auroville (Emergency Provisions) Act, in November 1980, was a turning point. It provided for the taking over of the management of Auroville by the Government for a limited period and also allowed the community to evolve its own way forward. At the end of 1982, the Society's appeal against the Act was turned down, and next year the Auroville Trust was formed as the main channel for donations into Auroville. At the same time, a Land and Estate Management group was formed to supervise the purchase and exchange of land, a Visa Service was organized to process visa applications, and a few tables and chairs formed the beginnings of the Secretariat.

By the end of 1983, almost all the major services of today were in place and functioning. In the next few years, the Auroville Resource Centre (A.R.C.) which had been established by Gilles to comprehensively survey the lands and physical assets of Auroville was replaced by a born-again 'Aurofuture', a Financial Service was set up to organize the internal circulation of money in Auroville, and a greater community consciousness regarding our impact upon the environment has led recently to the setting up of solar and waste recycling services.

Today, for the first time, the budgets of all the major services are covered under a Central Fund scheme, about which we have reported in previous issues of *Auroville Today*.

**Two issues ago we focussed upon Auroville's productive units, which are helping us to become financially self-sufficient. But self-sufficiency has also to do with mutual support or service, service to each other and to the community as a whole. In this issue we introduce the topic of Auroville Services, which have struggled for many years under very adverse conditions, to assist the community in improving its basic living standards and to reach towards our shared ideal of a transformed society. As Mother expressed it in 1954, "There, work would not be a way to earn one's living but a way to express oneself and to develop one's capacities and possibilities while being of service to the community as a whole, which, for its part, would provide for each individual's subsistence and sphere of action."**

## Daring to Care...

Visitors to Auroville, that somewhat maligned breed, often do us a favour. They help us to see ourselves afresh. Listen. 'Why do you call yourself a community?' they ask. 'We don't see much sign of community around here.' Ask them what they do see and they'll tell you about the neo-colonial 'palaces'; the residential groupings that share little except the name on the gate-post; the inequalities of wealth and resources; the poverty of our community communication; the lack or scarcity of communal facilities like a transport service, restaurants, art centres; our failure to provide even minimal support services for the old, the sick, the lonely, the depressed, the strung out—all of whom are very much here in 'the City of the Dawn'.

Of course, like good Aurovilians, we're ready with the explanation. "You don't understand", we say. "We've been so busy getting the basics together that we haven't had time for everything. In a desert you begin with drilling wells, not with erecting old people's homes." There is something in this. And it's also true that a community like Auroville is not defined by its external social structures. It's something deeper. Something to do with sharing a common, intense experience made up of a thousand frustrations and opportunities that are registered, communicated, in a gesture, a look. And much to do with our reading, our contact, with Sri Aurobindo and Mother, which has given us

a shared orientation, like a hidden language of the soul. As Nicole put it on her return from Iraq, "I believe that any other Aurovilians would have handled the situation in the same way as we did."

And there's something else that makes it difficult to grasp the sense of community here, at least on a short acquaintance. Because in Auroville there is a certain distrust of the outward gesture, of mechanisms and therapies that claim to effectuate individual or social change. In a New Age era that offers quick-fix therapies, instant enlightenment and stir-fry siddhis, this has the ring of sanity.

But it's also helped to block the free-flow of our expression. Somehow, along with our watersheds, we've banded our hearts.

For this is our failure. By not recognizing caring as one of our basics alongside afforestation and the construction of the city, we've crippled one aspect of our development. We've got millions of trees, but also lonely and unfulfilled people. We can link into global information networks with our computers. But often we don't know what is happening on the other side of our neighbour's fence. We propose 60-crore development schemes, yet some Aurovilians

still don't have a decent roof over their heads.

Like any other city on earth, in fact. Or, rather, somewhat worse. Because in the West, at least, there are social services and many other forms of institutionalized and 'unofficial' caring that we lack here. The challenge is clear. If we really accept that we have all stumbled to this remote, lateritic plateau for a purpose which is both individual and collective, then we must create the conditions—both inner and outer—for the unfolding and celebrating of that purpose. And this includes, along with the spiritual practices, simple, practical ways of supporting and caring for each other, something as uncomplicated as a baby-sitting service or a reading service for the aged. Or a fund allowing long-term Aurovilians who have given everything to the community to visit their parents in the West. We are challenged, in other words, to move from unconscious towards conscious community. To move from the typical evasion of 'That's not my problem—it's their Karma' to 'Let's try and work on this together.'

Alan





# The Community Kitchen

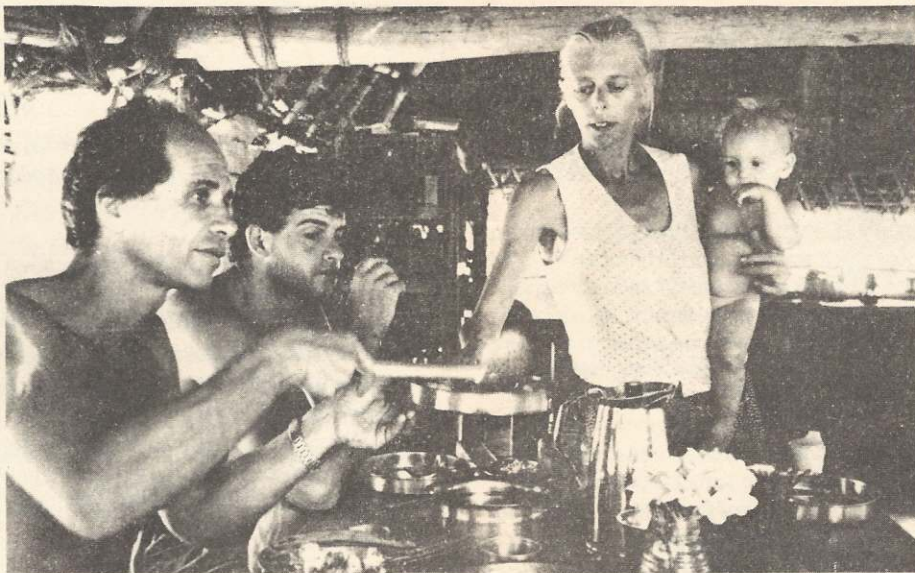
Still simmering in the past of many Aurovilians are old traumas about community kitchens. That's why you get a 'forget it' response if you mention the idea to many veterans. In theory, a collective kitchen is ideal—efficiency and economy at so many levels. In practice, well, it was not so easy in Auroville. In the first years, scattered pioneers created their own simple kitchens and some grouped together. Aspiration and Matrimandir Workers' Camp (Centre Kitchen), which were well established by 1971, became the archetypal community kitchens. They suffered in the economic crisis of the mid-seventies when the Sri Aurobindo Society blocked all the funding for Auroville—and this was the period during which many Aurovilians had their community kitchen trauma.

But although economics are a critical factor, the larger issue of proper management and support from the participants in organizing and doing the work is the necessary ingredient to make the whole thing digestible. The smaller community kitchens (8 - 16 people) can self-destruct over personalities, irregular schedules of the members, and regular surprise emergencies that don't blend well with the required three meals a day and all the kitchen cleaning chores. (See: "Have you seen the butter?" )

The situation today is that Aspiration has survived as the largest and most consistent community kitchen—perhaps because of a stronger group sense, being closer to Pondicherry and next to Pour Tous Food Service, and the French interest in food. At present, Centre Kitchen has only a lunch service for a small number of people. The Bharat Nivas Kitchen provides lunch for all the schools.

The relative lack of well-functioning communal eating facilities means that most people have to have their own private kitchen or access to one. As the population grows, the ideal of a wide variety of community kitchens and experimental foods as stressed by Mother when founding Auroville must obviously become more real. The prospect for communal dining is brightening in today's Auroville with a new bakery, a continually improving Pour Tous Food Service and the maturing of the orchards, farms and dairies. *De gustibus non est disputandum* notwithstanding, there are still differences over the tastiest recipe for a sustainable community kitchen.

Bill



A simple family kitchen at 'Eternity'

## "Have you seen the butter?"

**Scene: A small community kitchen at 7 a.m. A and B are preparing breakfast.**

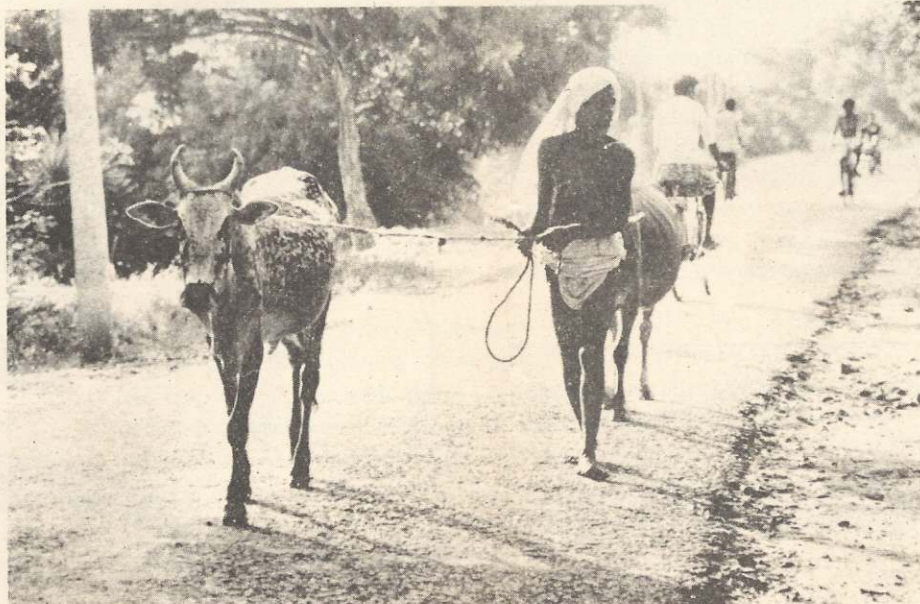
A: (looking around) Have you seen the butter?  
B: Try the fridge.  
A: Where do you think I looked!  
C: (entering) Good morning.  
A: Good morning. Have you seen the butter?  
C: (lightly) I think I finished it last night.  
A: But there was half a packet.  
C: Yes, I made a cake for J's birthday. He's a great kid.  
A: I don't care what kind of kid he is. I'd like some butter on my bread.  
C: Don't be so attached to such things.  
A: Attached!  
B: O.K. O.K. Cool it.

(Silence)

A: Has anybody seen the tea?  
B: It's on the second shelf.  
A: But we usually keep it in the cupboard.  
B: Yeah, I know. But it doesn't make sense. We should keep the tea with the sugar. So that's where I put it.  
A: Look, perhaps you'd consult the rest of us before you start changing everything.  
C: You think you're so perfect? You never consulted us about missing kitchen duty last week.  
A: I had no time. The pump broke down.  
C: You think we've got time? You think you're the only one working round here?  
D: (entering and chanting loudly) OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO MMM!  
(Silence)  
D: (examining the cooker) This cooker needs cleaning.

A: (walking over) Looks all right to me.  
D: I'm sure it does. But if you care to look at the rings, you'll see they're filthy.  
A: Look, I think you're a bit obsessed about this. Did you have some problem with your mother or something?  
D: That's great. Obsessed. And what does that make you? Your idea about cleaning up the kitchen is throwing everything in the sink. You never clean the floor, you never wipe the table. And everybody has to run around after you, cleaning up your mess. At least I managed to get out of nappies!  
E: (entering breathlessly) I've had the most fantastic dream. Fantastic. I was a tiny tadpole, swimming in an ocean of light...  
D: (interrupting) If you don't mind, I'd prefer, just this once, not to hear about your ocean of light dreams.  
E: Something wrong?  
B: No, no. Just the usual pleasantries.  
A: You think yourself funny?  
C: The toast's burning.  
A: (examining the charred remains) Great. And there's no more bread. I keep saying we should increase the order.  
B: Look, you're the one who eats most of it. Why don't you just buy extra?  
A: Hey, did I get it wrong? I thought we were trying to share or something. Not everybody with their little desires and shopping lists and food safes.  
B: If sharing means having to listen to you every morning, I'm happy to stay unenlightened. That way, I can just build my own kitchen and eat my breakfast in peace...

Alan



One of the few 'good' roads. Roads in Auroville need frequent maintenance.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES

### Food

**POUR TOUS (Aspiration)**  
Food purchase and distribution, gas bottles.  
**BAKERY (Douceur)**  
Bread, buns and biscuits.

### Technical assistance, maintenance

**WASTE RECYCLING SERVICE**  
Coordinates the collection of recyclable waste.  
**ROAD SERVICE**  
Repair and maintenance of the roads.  
**SOLAR SERVICE (Abri)**  
Advice and practical assistance with installing and servicing photovoltaic systems.  
**ABRI**  
Mechanical workshop, repair of punctures.  
**ABRI ELECTRICAL SERVICE**  
Administrative link with TNEB. Advice and practical assistance with wiring and electrical connections.  
**WATER SERVICE (Abri)**  
Servicing wells and pumps.

### Personal

**CARING SERVICE**  
Assists Aurovilians in need.  
**FREE STORE / NANDINI**  
Used articles, and articles provided by the Auroville units are available for all. 'Nandini' provides a tailoring service.

### Health

**HEALTH CENTRE (Aspiration)**  
Medical advice, tests and treatment.  
**DENTAL SERVICE (Protection)**  
Teeth!

### Planning & Administration

**VISA SERVICE (Bharat Nivas)**  
Processes visa extensions, residential permits, visitor forms and census data.  
**FINANCIAL SERVICE (Bharat Nivas)**  
Processes financial transactions inside the community.  
**SECRETARIAT (Bharat Nivas)**  
Administrative centre of Auroville.  
**AUROFUTURE (Bharat Nivas)**  
Town planning.  
**LAND SERVICE (Bharat Nivas)**  
Coordinates purchase and exchange of land.  
**ABUNDANCE (CSR, Auroshilpam)**  
Project writing service.  
**HOUSING GROUP**  
Coordination of house exchange and repairs.

### Information

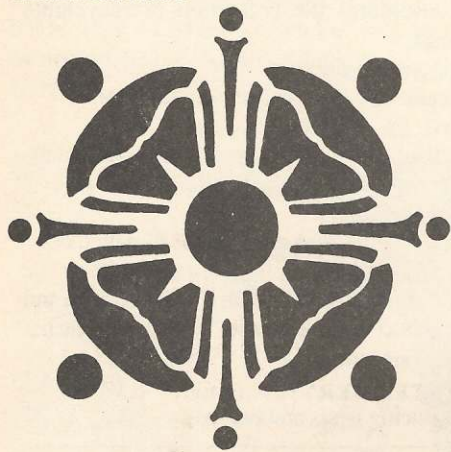
**INFORMATION CENTRES**  
Information to visitors about Matrimandir (opp. Matrimandir gate) and about Auroville (at Information & Reception centre).  
**LIBRARY/LABORATORY OF EVOLUTION (Bharat Nivas)**  
Books, documentation, Auroville archive materials.  
**RENEWABLE ENERGY PROMOTION SERVICE**  
Provides solar equipment and information on appropriate technology and renewable energy systems.  
**AUROVILLE NEWS**  
Weekly internal newsletter  
**MESSENGER SERVICE**  
Delivers information and letters to the Auroville communities.  
**AUROVILLE GREENWORK RESOURCE CENTRE (Isaiambalam)**  
Library, information and consultation for afforestation and organic agriculture.

(This is not a complete list as many activities in Auroville have a service aspect.) □



# Is Auroville a dissipative structure?

It is always exciting to discover that recent trends in science are paralleled in Auroville. It is as though an invisible cross-fertilization were taking place between seemingly widely different areas of human activities.



One such case in point is the revolutionary discovery in 1977 of the Belgian chemical physicist, I. Prigogine. He found that certain systems in nature are self-organizing and, what is more, moving towards a higher form of life, thus going against the generally accepted theory of entropy which maintains that the universe is running downhill. This new theory proved to be a breakthrough with far-flung consequences. Prigogine called such structures 'dissipative' because the entropy created is dissipated by interaction with the environment. Subsequently it was found that this theory can be fruitfully applied to other fields beyond chemistry, such as biology, social structures, eco-systems and, excitingly, not only to the earth as a whole but to evolution itself.

This link with evolution should be no surprise to followers of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and certainly not to Auroville for, as we know, this is the revolutionary message at the very centre of Sri Aurobindo's teaching. He saw an ascending evolution in nature, and this almost half a century ago. The interesting fact is that science now points to the hidden mechanism working in Nature and Life that informs this ascension.

Prigogine outlines three conditions for a dissipative structure to form. They are, as applicable to social structures and eco-systems:

**Openness:** matter and energy must be able to flow between the system and its environment.

**Far from equilibrium:** only if the system is not in equilibrium or near-equilibrium can self-organisation persist. In equilibrium or near-equilibrium the system behaves like any other system—there is increasing entropy.

**Self-reinforcement:** certain elements of the system are self-reproducing. (See Peter Russell, *The Awakening Earth*. London, Arkana, 1988. p.51)

Dr. Edith Schnapper has written a number of books upon spirituality and is the ex-chairman of Auroville International U.K.

Auroville Today provides information about Auroville on a monthly basis and is distributed to Aurovilians and friends of Auroville in India and abroad. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the community as a whole.

Editorial team: Yanne, Tineke, Roger, Carel, Bill, Annemarie, Alan. Photos: Sven. Typesetting on computer: Annemarie. Franz (Prisma) assisted with the final stage. Printed at Auroville Press.

Openness then is the first pre-condition, openness towards the environment so as to allow a free flow and interchange of energies across hitherto accepted and excluding boundaries. To express this interchange the new biology, in this connection, speaks of 'moving boundaries'.

The second condition, 'non-equilibrium' and the presence of self-reproducing trends, posits the existence of fluctuations within the system which exert a constant push towards self-organisation, aiming at a more complete and more coherent whole. In Auroville's case a more coherent collectivity. If the conditions outlined are not met, the process of self-organisation is slowed down or even halted and entropy increases. Instead of 'moving boundaries' which means openness to the environment and a two-way flow of energy, there is exploitation and depletion of the environment on an increasing scale, as we can witness all around us today. As it has been said, there will be a breakdown instead of a breakthrough.

However, we are told that such open systems will maintain their coherent structure by the input and output of energy, in interchange between the inside and the outside, between the collectivity and the environment. Also the greater the complexity, the greater is the need for an increased exchange of energy so as to safeguard the stability of the whole. The keynote is change and movement; it is this that makes for fluctuations likely to lead to a temporary instability, imbalance and even disharmony characteristic of such dissipative structures, and it is this very imbalance and lack of equilibrium that, at a critical point, is instrumental in inaugurating a search for new ways in order to transcend the impasse and arrive at a new and more comprehensive level of coherence.

This is clearly a process that repeats itself in various ways and explains much of the inner dynamics working in Auroville. New needs appear which have to be met and which, in their turn, lead to the emergence of new trends replacing what has gone before. This points urgently to the role Auroville is destined to play. For here this ascending evolutionary movement of self-organisation has become a conscious pursuit. Herein lies the unique and global importance of the Auroville experiment. For participation in this process, in full awareness of its evolutionary significance, is synonymous with a change of consciousness characterized by the realization of the prior oneness and wholeness of all phenomena. As Sri Aurobindo saw it, by partaking consciously in this process man, and indeed life, become transformed.

Edith Schnapper

## New publications

### आरोविल का परिचय



सकल शुभेच्छाओं को आरोविल का नमस्कार।  
आरोविल में वे सब आमन्त्रित हैं जिनमें प्रगति की प्यास और  
उत्तर तथा सत्यतर जीवन की अभीप्सा है।

An Introduction to Auroville  
(Hindi version)

□ The Auroville Aujourd'hui Magazine, a compilation of past Auroville Aujourd'hui articles. (In French)

□ Mala the Mongoose is a new publication from the 'Children and Trees' project. It's a 52-page book with drawings which explores water control and land management through the eyes of a mongoose and an owl. The reader develops an understanding of the importance of water to the environment and methods for water conservation, including bunding and tree planting.

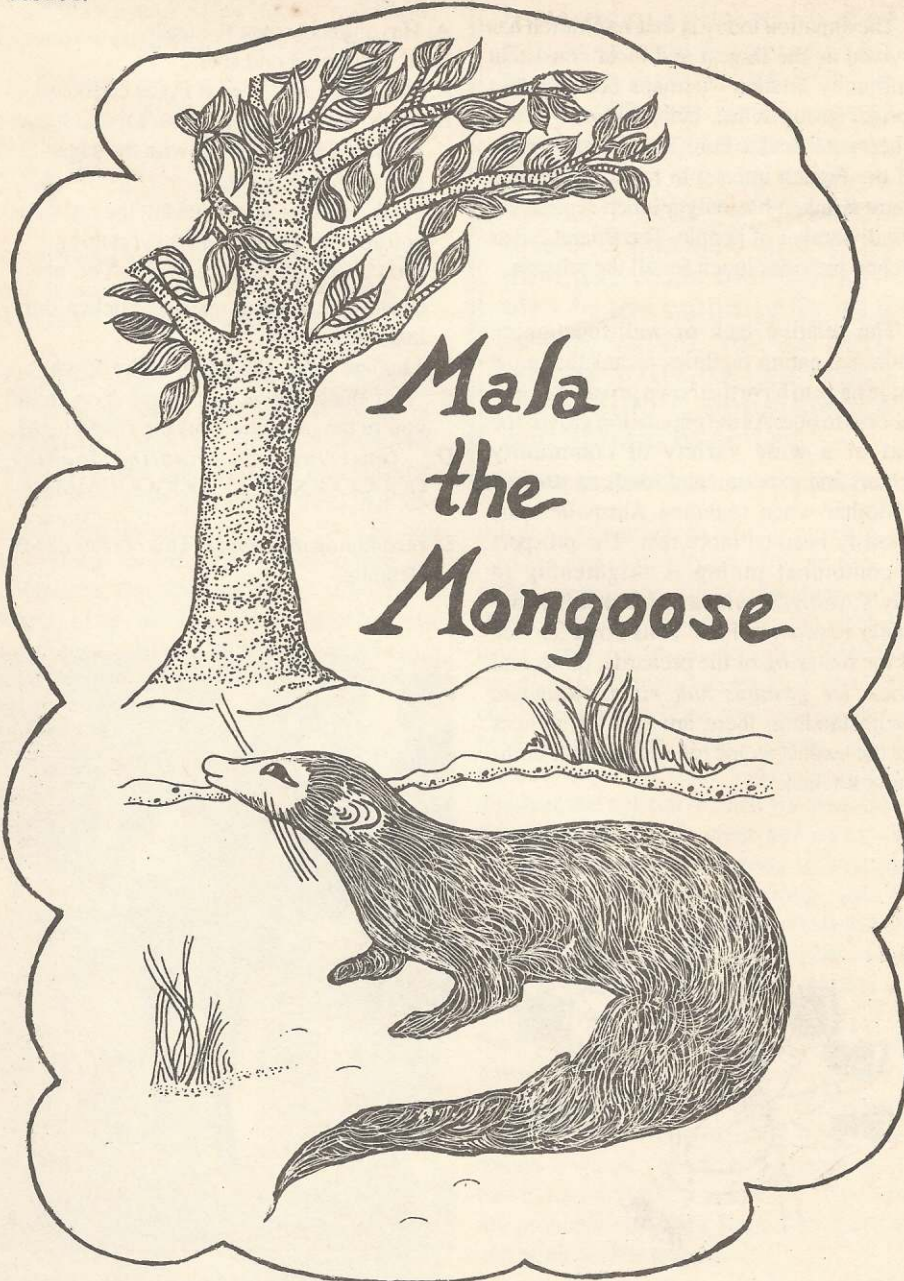
In the small pamphlet format:

□ Auroville: The Greening of a Wasteland. Chronicles the history of greenwork in Auroville and the challenges that lie ahead. Available from the Auroville Greenwork Resource Centre (A.G.R.C), Isaiambalam, Auroville 605101.

□ The Auroville Building Centre (AVBC). Describes and illustrates the alternative building techniques used in the construction of the newly-opened Information & Reception Centre. Available from the Centre for Scientific Research (C.S.R.), Auroshilpam, Auroville 605101.

□ An Introduction to Auroville has been translated into Spanish, Hindi, German and French.

All pamphlets sell for Rs. 1.75 plus postage and are available in bulk from the Auroville Publication Group, Fraternity, Auroville 605101.



Drawing by Marti



# The Transformation game

ABOUT a year ago Findhorn, a spiritual community in Scotland, donated a copy of their "Transformation Game" to Auroville. Many Aurovilians have since enjoyed playing it. Recently Sonja, an Aurovilian who acts as facilitator of the game in Auroville, went to Findhorn on a grant to follow a training course in advanced facilitation. Auroville Today spoke to her about the game, her experiences and the characteristics of the 'average' Aurovilian. The object of the transformation game is self-development and holistic growth—a growth on all levels of the being at the same time. A team of four people play with—not against!—each other, guided by a facilitator. The game gives each player feedback on a key question they ask themselves on their present situation or future path.

**Auroville Today:** "Does the game relate to the yoga and philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother?"

Sonja: Yes, I think so. Its terminology is completely different from that used by Sri Aurobindo, but I have noticed again and again that when people come up with questions about their individual yoga, such as "what is my next step towards transformation", they do get the answers!

I was typing the Dutch translation of the *Entretiens* of The Mother, when that same question came into my mind. I came upon a text dealing with concentration, and I suddenly understood that that is exactly what the game is for. The game allows you the space, it allows you the time, it allows you the support and the sympathy and the intimacy of a group to actually concentrate on your 'growing edge'.

And it teaches us to communicate on a deeper level, to support, appreciate and understand each other's intentions and unique steps of growth, something that is normally not shared amongst ourselves except in long-standing friendships. In this way we really rediscover the shared aspiration in an intimate, loving and fun way.

**How do you see your role of facilitator?**

Facilitation demands that you are receptive and open, and that you constantly ask yourself what is the highest in these persons that wants to manifest itself. It requires that I put all my own judgements and experiences far away and that I follow the people to their core, to their basic belief system of what life is. I try to provide space, attention, concentration, so that the player can go into himself. It demands from me that I call on Mother, to keep the link continuously. It has caused me to work and rely more and more on my inner guidance, and to trust my inner voice. My training in Findhorn was extremely intense. It was two weeks of really hard work in my own inner life, and I changed my own ideas about 'helping people'. I realized that I had to open to the Divine to let unfold what needs to happen, and that I had no responsibility for their growth, that my responsibility is to be sincere and integral. It made me realize how much work I still have to do on myself...

**You have facilitated the game many times now. Does it give you any insight into the characteristics of the 'average Aurovilian'?**



Two examples of the cards used in the game. These are 'Angel' cards, representing helping and guiding forces.



I have played this game with about a hundred people—sometimes with guests, many times with Aurovilians. The remarkable thing with Aurovilians is that they are very determined to work on themselves, and they love the opportunity to understand themselves better. For them, it is a new experience to have time to sit in a group, in very light and happy and joyful surroundings, and to work on themselves.

If I can generalize I would say that Aurovilians have a strong tendency to be extremely critical about themselves. They do not really love themselves, they do not really feel good about themselves. They try to transform themselves, and in doing that, they see the part they try to transform as bad. They do not accept themselves the way they are.

There is a lack of trust, of self-forgiveness. The average Aurovilian is struggling so much that he almost forgets to rely on a spiritual force that is actually supporting him. Aurovilians are very individualized, and there is a strong feeling of 'we have to do it

ourselves'. If there is any fun, "it is only vital". People are very tensed up. Many are too busy in their daily life, they do not take the time anymore to look inside, which is very similar to life elsewhere in the world.

**Do you mean to say that there is a tendency in Aurovilians to overestimate their own spiritual capacities?**

No, I would not say that. There is generally a low self-esteem. They try to conform to a spiritual path which they interpret Mother has given and they forget in the process their own uniqueness. The good quality I meet is an incredible sincerity, the power of concentration, and a real deep love and force. This is what normally does not get expressed so much—maybe only in artistic expressions like in poetry or painting or dance.

But it has taught me that there is a real Auroville inside and that we are not just pretending about being Aurovilians on the inner level.

Interview by Carel

## BRIEF NEWS

### □ A NEW POST OFFICE FOR AUROVILLE

Nobody could find it at first. Now, some little red signs have been put up to direct you through the bushes and around the buildings, till you arrive at the new post office at the Bharat Nivas complex. This post office, which opened in the middle of February, is finally, after years of effort, the 'official' one for Auroville.

The postal code is now 605101, to be used for all addresses in Auroville. The 'Kottakuppam 605104' address should no longer be used.

### □ A VISIT

Unusually large droppings were found on the road in Auroville one fine day. Guesses about whether we would be about to spot a real dinosaur or related relic (which according to some people are still to be found here), were soon overtaken by the facts: a huge elephant was seen carrying high on its back some tiny Aurovilian and village tots, who looked somewhat apprehensively about them as they swung in the slow rhythm of the elephant's majestic gait.

Unfortunately, Sven missed the boat...

### □ BAD LUCK

Actually, Sven (our photographer) not only missed the boat, but much of his camera equipment too... it was stolen recently. They didn't take all the lenses, so if anyone has an old model Pentax screw-mount body with (Pentax) wide-angle lens, which is gathering dust, please contact Auroville Today.

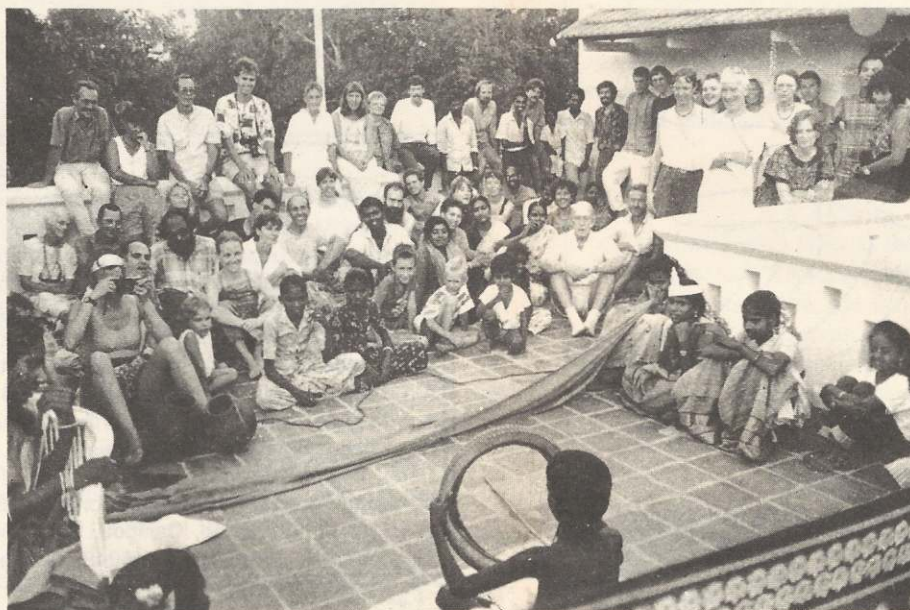
### □ AUROVILLE INTERNATIONAL MEETING

The next meeting of the Auroville International centres will be held near Pamplona, Spain, on the 14th, 15th and 16th of June, 1991. Those who wish to attend are kindly requested to contact the Auroville International centre in their country or Auroville International Spain. (for addresses see subscription box) □

## Cultivating Culture...

A small group has formed to organize and activate cultural events in Auroville. During the past month or two already the cultural scene showed a new, refreshing dynamism. Some of the cultural events of the past month included:

- A talk about the present situation of India by Generals Tewari and Chatterjee, and Arjun.
- An evening of classical Indian dance by Sonal Mansingh, a renowned dancer.
- Improvisational dance and piano to readings from Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* by Carel, Paulo, Ila, Aster and Arjun.
- A talk on 'Sanskrit as a language for Auroville' by Shastriji, a Sanskrit scholar resident in Auroville—with some Sanskrit chants by Joy.
- An exhibition of children's drawings and paintings, based on Sri Aurobindo's poem *Who*.
- A concert by Nadaka with a visiting German violinist Holger, which was a fusion of Eastern and Western music.
- 'Karunchuzhi', a play on evolution by the students of the School of Drama, Pondicherry University.
- Fusion of East and West in music, a recorded concert organized and introduced by Georges. □



During the play, 'Ganga Devi'

On the roof of the newly inaugurated Merriam Hill Centre, children from the Ilaigarkal evening school performed 'Ganga Devi' (The goddess of the river Ganga), an educational play about water. It was the result of a month-long workshop given by Margo Black from U.S.A. and Village Action worker Karpagavelli, to help create consciousness about the use of water in the villages. The play had two more performances, one in Pettai village and another at Transition School. It was done with zest and a lot of resourcefulness using simple materials, and it was well-received. □



# AUROVILLE TODAY

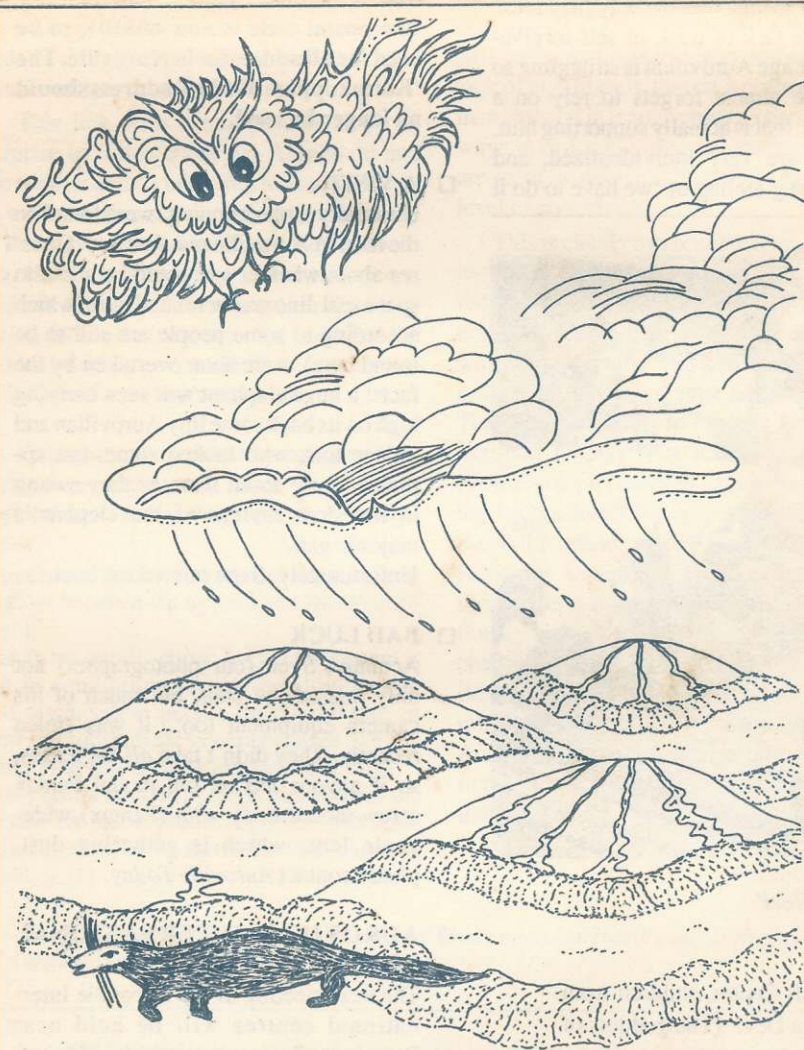
C.S.R. Office,  
Auroville 605101,  
Tamil Nadu - India



In this issue: February 28th - Birthday celebrations;  
Karan Singh's speech, Services, etc.

March 1991 - Number Twenty-Seven

By Airmail  
Bookpost



"You see, Mala, bunds are placed  
across a slope to catch the water  
as it runs down. Some bunds are big.  
Others are smaller."

From: Mala The Mongoose (see page 6). Drawing by Marti

## ZEN

### or The Bliss of Riding an 'Electro'

I have never been to Japan (unless in another lifetime, may be...); I have never sat on my knees trying to reach Satori under the watching eye of a stick-armed Master.

And still I am a Zen meditator of some sort; I have discovered a simple way of reaching Satori (enlightenment) at will: riding an 'Electro'.

Since 1985, among the vehicles one can see in Auroville's parking places, there is a strange moped, its rectangular box-belly almost down to the ground between its front and rear wheels. It is not plain ugly, but one couldn't say (even looking at it with the eyes of love as I do) that it is beautiful; for especially when it is standing among the Hero Hondas (ah, that 'sleek' model...!) and other bikes, the electro-moped's looks are definitely no match.

But its secret charm lies elsewhere: within!

Within that funny rectangular box are... two batteries. The thing runs on electricity. A detail? Rather a most important factor with most important consequences, which make the 'electro' very, very special. First of all, it feels almost alive, compared to these things in which you put petrol, and they run; and when the petrol is finished, they stop then and there. For your 'electro' arrives with you back home at the end of the day in the same condition as yourself—tired and slow. But just plug her in for a few hours and the next morning you'll find her literally full of energy, ready for a new day!

But the Satori effect doesn't come from that; there is something even more pleasant: its silence. I still remember the first time I saw one. I almost reached Satori then and there. Because I could see that thing pass by at the speed of a moped, but I didn't hear anything! It seemed just to glide down the road without a sound. Wow! What could be that miraculous, magic vehicle?

I fell in love with it at once. And if only everybody would do so! Just imagine our cities—and first of all Auroville of course—without the noise and pollution of our usual

crazy vehicles! No noise, no smoke. Everyone gliding about smoothly and cleanly on silent vehicles... Wouldn't it be pure paradise on earth?

To come back to Zen: the one thing I did always delight in about Zen is its 'koans', the riddles that confuse the logical mind. Koans give my mind the fun of humour, plus the thrill and awe of things beyond the mind. Thanks to koans, my mind leaps over itself in what I call a 'koantum' leap!

The first time I reached Satori in that most innovative manner, it happened just by itself, at a most unexpected moment. It was in 1986. The General Meeting I had come to attend was not starting yet, for people were late as usual. Silently waiting in my corner, I was listening to the sound of the motorcycles arriving one after the other; my ear, well trained to that game after years of Auroville meetings, could recognize who was arriving, just by the specific sound of the engine of his/her motorbike. "Ah, here comes so-and-so... And this old BSA, it's so-and-so, of course... Hey! this one I don't know yet! Ah, I see, it's this new guy... Now I'll know! And who is coming now? So-and-so's Bullet! Oh, no! I hoped so much that he would not come today..."

This was going on as usual in my head, when suddenly a question popped up in the empty spaces between my thoughts:

"And me? When I am late, and the others have to wait for me, what do they hear as I come? What is the sound of an 'electro'?"

There was an ultra brief second of blank perplexity in my mind; and then, at once, an ecstatic flash of lightning suddenly flooded my relaxed brain—the Satori, yes...!

What is the sound of an 'electro'?

IT IS THE SOUND OF ONE HAND CLAPPING.

Bhaga

Unfortunately, this Satori electro-moped is no longer being manufactured. But a group in Auroville is keen to work on designing and manufacturing electric vehicles. We hope we don't have to wait too long Eds.

#### ♦ ♦ ♦ To Receive Auroville Today ♦ ♦ ♦

The contribution for the next 12 issues of Auroville Today is Can.\$ 27, French F. 145, DM 45, It.Lira 31,500, D.Gl. 50, US \$ 22.50, U.K.£ 13.50. This includes the postage by airmail. Please send your contribution (or your supporting contribution of double the amount) either to the Auroville International centre in your country (add 10%) or to Auroville Today, CSR Office, Auroville 605101. Cheques should be made payable to Auroville Fund, specifying: Contribution for Auroville Today. You will receive the issues directly from Auroville.

#### Addresses of Auroville International centres:

AVI Deutschland, Bismarckstrasse 121, 4900 Herford, West Germany. AVI España, Apartado de Correos 36, 31.610 Villava, Navarra, Spain. AVI France c/o Marie-Noëlle, 14, Rue Nungesser et Coli, 75016 Paris, France. AVI Nederland, Lobelialaan 51, 2555 PC Den Haag, The Netherlands. AVI Quebec, c/o Francine Mineau, 10589 St. Denis, H3L 2J4 Montreal, Canada. AVI Sverige, Borgholm, Broddebø, S-59700 Atvidaberg, Sweden. AVI U.K., c/o M. Littlewood, Canigou, Cot Lane, Chidham, W.Sussex, PO18 8SP, United Kingdom. AVI USA, P.O.Box 162489, Sacramento CA 95816, USA.

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