

Auroville Today

JANUARY 2005, No.192

Tsunami brings devastation

Local villages and Auroville coastal settlements badly hit

Repos beach on a Sunday morning is usually a place of relaxation and fun. But Sunday, 26th December was different. For, beginning at around 8.30 that morning, a series of huge waves hit the beach and flooded into Repos community. "The first one was maybe four metres high," wrote Anton at the time, "the next ones were less. It all looks like a 'tsunami', caused by an undersea earthquake."

It was a good guess. A 'tsunami' or series of tidal waves had been triggered by a massive quake – measuring 9.0 on the Richter Scale, the biggest worldwide in 40 years – off the west coast of Sumatra, over 2000 kilometres away. The quake displaced massive amounts of water which struck Sumatra and Thailand but which also raced across the Indian Ocean to crash with devastating force onto the coasts of southern India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Nicobar and Andaman Islands and the low-lying Maldives. Even Somalia and some other East African countries were affected.

At first, the scale of the devastation was not realized. Repos itself escaped relatively lightly, as did the community of Quiet to the south. But then reports came in of many homes being destroyed in nearby villages and of the deaths of villagers (almost 20 in Kalapet alone), particularly among the fishing communities which live close to the water's edge. In fact, it soon became clear that villages and Auroville communities to the north of Repos had been very hard hit: although no Aurovilians or visitors were missing or seriously injured by the waves, there were a number of close escapes as houses were devastated in Sri Ma and Eternity was almost completely destroyed.

Further afield Chennai was also badly

near Auroville. As there were warnings that further tsunamis could be generated by aftershocks, (17 aftershocks were actually registered by geological monitoring stations in the next two days, but of a much lesser intensity than the original quake) many villagers fled to higher ground, carrying whatever they could of their possessions. Many began to congregate in Kuilapalayam and Kottakarai villages which are on the plateau. Aurovilians set up an emergency tent-village near New Creation to provide shelter, blankets and food to the displaced villagers, who soon numbered over 1,000, and a relief centre was created in a Night School in Kottakarai to care for after another 200 villagers.

The Villupuram Collector visited and thanked Auroville for its efforts and timely intervention.

Meanwhile residents of Auroville beach communities put out an urgent call for Aurovilians to assist them in cleaning up the mess and in guarding whatever was left (as all the fences had been swept away by the water, there were security concerns).

At noon on Sunday the BBC announced that several hundred people had been killed by the tsunami in south India and Sri Lanka. This figure was soon revised steeply upwards. By Friday morning over 80,000 deaths had been confirmed in Indonesia, 27,000 in Sri Lanka, over 7,000 in mainland India (6,200 in Tamil Nadu alone) with unconfirmed reports of up to 6,500 victims in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and 1,500



The aftermath: dazed community members evaluate the disaster at Waves

biggest relief effort the world has ever seen" was swinging into action as governments and relief organizations around the world rushed supplies and aid personnel to the countries affected. Apart from the human cost, the damage to the countries affected has been reckoned in billions of dollars. The Union Home Minister estimated that 100,000 families had been displaced in Tamil Nadu and a further 30,000 in Pondicherry State. Many of these families have lost not only their bread-winner and livelihood but also their houses and all their possessions. But the horror for the survivors is not necessarily over: now there is the danger of communicable diseases breaking out. Moreover, wherever the tsunami reached (in some places up to 3 kilometres inland) the soil and water is now heavily polluted and salinated, making it utterly useless for cultivation and drinking purposes.

The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Jayalalitha, has assured the affected people that the Government will adequately compensate them, while the Central Government immediately allocated 25 crores rupees to the Pondicherry administration to assist with disaster relief. Various Relief Funds have also been set up by private and public organizations in India. In Auroville, 40 people got together to form the Auroville Tsunami Relief Committee (tsunami@auroville.org.in). Based in an office opposite the Aurelec compound, this will coordinate immediate relief and long-term rehabilitation for the local villages and Auroville settlements affected. The first basic relief needs (rice, clothing and cash) have now been provided by the government but the longer-term needs of the survivors are for housing (500 homes have been destroyed in the Auroville area) and fishing boats. Two accounts for donations, one to assist the villagers and one for the reconstruction of Auroville beach communities, have been opened (see accompanying box). On January 1st, a jazz benefit concert was put on by Aurovilians to raise additional funds.

This was the first tsunami in over 60 years to hit Tamil Nadu. However, as this quake happened on an active fault-line which stretches from south of Sumatra to as far north as the Nicobar and Andaman

Islands, the east coasts of India and Sri Lanka are clearly in a danger zone. What can be done to prevent such destruction in the future? It's been pointed out that if there had been a tsunami early-warning system covering the Indian Ocean and Bay of Bengal, like the one that already operates in the Pacific Ocean, many lives could have been saved. After all, it took over two hours for the tsunami to travel from the epicentre of the quake to the coastline of India. The Minister for Science and Technology has now said

that the Centre would put together a system to provide advance warning of tsunamis. This may involve, among other things, India joining the International Coordination Group of the Tsunami Warning System.

Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, ex-Chairman of the Auroville Foundation, also pointed out that coastal mangrove forests provided good protection against the tidal waves and suggests the widespread regeneration of such forests.

Alan

How and to what can you contribute ?

Your support and contribution is more than welcome. Even small, it will help in the present tragic circumstances. Two accounts have been opened by Auroville for the immediate relief of the surrounding villages and Auroville communities:

- 1 – Village flood relief (account No 0901)
- 2 – Flood relief Auroville beaches (account No 0909)

1. From India

Donations from India can come in the form of drafts or cheques in the name of Auroville Fund "Tsunami Relief" or transferred to State Bank of India Auroville Township, Kuilapalayam Auroville 605101 TN India Branch Code – 03160, account – Auroville Fund, number – 01000013310, description: "Tsunami Relief" Please note that Indian donors can ask for a tax exemption under Section 80G of the Income Tax Act.

2. From abroad

A. Online donations

Secure online transactions via AVI USA: http://aviusa.org/donations_donatenow.html Secure online transactions via AVI UK: <http://www.aviuk.org/fundraising.htm>

B. Via normal mail, drafts or cheques can be sent to
AUROVILLE TSUNAMI RELIEF
Aurelec
Prayogshala
AUROVILLE, T.N. 605101
INDIA

C. by bank transfer through SWIFT to:
STATE BANK OF INDIA
AUROVILLE TOWNSHIP,
Branch Code – 03160
Swift Code – SBININBB474
Account – AUROVILLE FUND
Account Number – 01000060095
Description: "Tsunami Relief"

D. You can also contribute via your local AVI Centres in your Country and obtain tax deductions.

***Under Details please specify if you want the funds to go for the Village Relief Work or for Auroville Beaches Relief.
***You could also give a percentage allocation
***We advise you to send an email to inform us of your transfer.

For further information, contact:
tsunami@auroville.org.in
Auroville Tsunami Relief
Opposite Aurelec, Kuilapalayam
Auroville – 605101
Tamil Nadu – India
Phone: (91) 0413 2622184



Simple graves on the beach mark the sites where the bodies of villagers drowned in the tsunami have been laid to rest

affected. Here 131 people were washed away, including walkers and children playing cricket on the Marina Beach, while one of the atomic reactors at nearby Kalpakkam power plant was shut down when seawater entered the plant. The majority of fatalities, however, were in Nagapattinam district in south Tamil Nadu.

In the immediate aftermath there was panic and shock in the seaside villages

in Thailand. As thousands are still missing in the 11 countries affected, these figures are bound to rise: it is likely that the final death-toll for all countries may approach 150,000. Worldwide, 500,000 people have been injured in the destruction and up to 5 million displaced. As one expert put it, "A tsunami of this size happens only once in a generation."

By Wednesday what was described by a U.N. Relief Coordinator as "the

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The Auroville Tsunami Rehabilitation Effort

The first wave of the Tsunami hit the Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu coast at 8 AM on 26th December 2004. Seven thousand people died on the spot.

By 9.30 AM, a team from Auroville swung into action. A first emergency meeting was called in the house of two Aurovilians and it was immediately decided to set-up a camp for the persons affected by the tidal waves. By 12 AM, eight tents and seven *shamianas* (awnings), donated by the children of Auroville (who use them for their annual summer camps) were erected on a field near one of the Auroville communities. Two portable 5000 litre tanks, two generators a field kitchen with four cooking ranges, eight ladies and four cooks were straight away put into service. Three of Auroville's load carriers, two tractors and two buses to pick up refugees were also commissioned. The camp was manned by more than sixty Tamil youths from the villages within Auroville, as well as many Aurovilians from all parts of the world. By 2 PM, 750 people were fed and 350 food packets distributed. All throughout the afternoon, refugees kept streaming in and another 1200 people were fed in the evening. Blankets were arranged as the night was cold and windy. On the second day, everybody was moved to the Kulapalayam Trust School, which is run by Auroville, as rain was threatening. There, the refugees were spread out in eight buildings as well as two tents and food was prepared this time for 1400 people, along with another 500 food packets for distribution. Clothes and blankets were also handed out.

The extent of the disaster was then becoming clear. A quick survey was done amongst the villages and the Auroville communities that dot the beach. In Ganagachettikullam, a village of fishermen at the extreme limit of Pondicherry State, the Auroville team was met by utter desolation: the mud houses which were the first ones on the beach front had been totally destroyed, or sometimes washed away. Broken furniture was lying on the side of the road, TVs beyond repair were nevertheless put in the sun to dry, pieces of thatched roof were blocking the road, electrical lines had fallen down, the steps leading to an old stone temple had also collapsed. Three days after the catastrophe, women were still wailing, some of them foaming at the mouth, out of sheer desolation. On the beach, the team met Ranjani, a pretty girl of 18. That fateful morning of the 26th, her mother and father had gone to the market to sell the fish caught in the early morning and she was left alone with her little sister of 3 years, Anusuya. Ranjani was cooking the morning's meal, when suddenly her sister ran to her and clung to her shirt. Ranjani looked up and saw a huge wave advancing towards the house. "I climbed on a stool and as water reached my shoulders, I clung on a rafter from the roof with one hand, while holding my little screaming sister

with the other, she recalled sobbing. After a few minutes my hands went numb and suddenly I saw that my sister had disappeared". Ranjani cried and cried for help, but nobody came. Anusuya was found dead a few hours later, one kilometre upstream in the village which has been totally flooded. 26 other people, mostly children and elderly persons, lost their lives. 75 houses were totally destroyed and 265 families affected in one way or the other by the Tsunami which hit Ganagachettikullam.

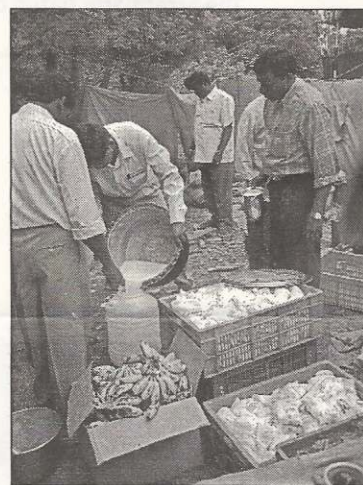
Next to Ganagachettikullam, one finds Eternity, an Auroville beach community. There lives a wonderful family: Yuval the father is an Israeli, his wife Anna is from Holland with five kids, all raised in Auroville, each of them speaking several languages. Yuval and his family moved in 20 years ago on this piece of barren land on the beach where nothing grew. With hard work and dedication they turned it in a green forest, a place of beauty and peace. They also painstakingly built houses in the community, mostly using local material: mud walls, palmyra leaves, thatch roofs, with one solitary high hard concrete house. On that fateful morning of the 26th, Anna had one of her daughters with her, Jitta. Jitta has two children: a daughter of two years and a son who is barely eight months old. As usual in Auroville, where everybody sleeps early, everyone woke-up at 6 am for an early morning tea in the community kitchen. At 6.30 AM, Yuval felt the earth shake and jokingly asked his wife 'if she was dancing on the bed'. At 8.15 AM, Jitta decided to put back her son to sleep on the ground floor of a house which was 200 meters away.

Everything looked so peaceful and no different from a thousand other mornings in Eternity beach community. But suddenly Anna heard a noise that sounded like the rushing of water. She went outside. "I saw this huge wave rushing toward me and it immediately flashed in my mind: Tidal Wave." She grabbed her granddaughter, climbed on the first floor and shouted at her daughter to go and get her son in the nearby

hut. Jitta ran as the water was already swirling around her, managed to get her baby just as he was being swept away, shouted at two guests who were sleeping in another hut – and would have otherwise died – and seeing that there was no way to go back to where her mother was, ran towards a higher ground on the opposite side of Eternity. After ten minutes, Yuval and Anna saw no sign of Jitta and her son and thought they had died. "We screamed and screamed and scanned every part of the community, while water was still rising", Anna recalls, still sobbing. When the second wave receded, they were able to find their daughter and grandchild a-l-i-v-e.

Today Yuval and Anna have lost everything and are painstakingly trying to salvage some of their personal belongings, thanks to an amazing wave of solidarity amongst Aurovilians and a lot of help from the nearby village. "I put so much work in this land and God took everything back, but he spared our lives and that is a miracle", says Anna. But like the inhabitants of Ganagachettikullam, their lives have been shattered and Anna still breaks down from time to time when she recalls the time when she thought her daughter and grandson were both dead, taken away by the terrible Tsunami waves.

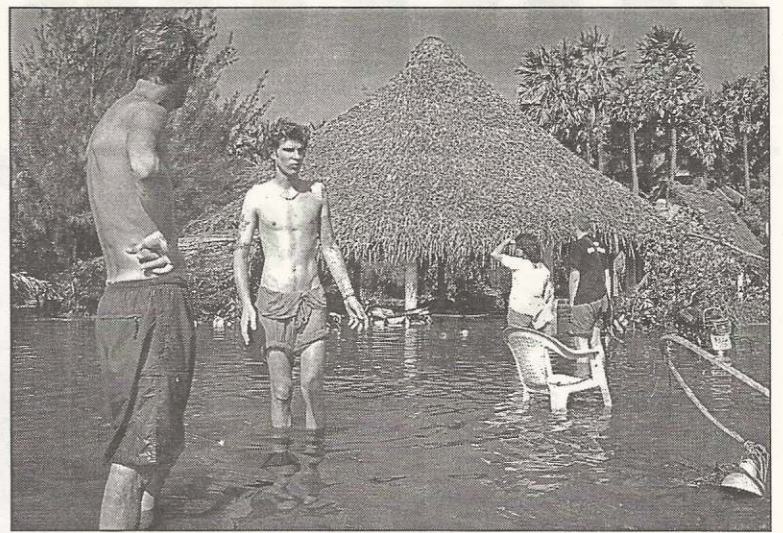
By the fourth day, it became clear to Aurovilians that they had to shift from immediate relief measures to long-



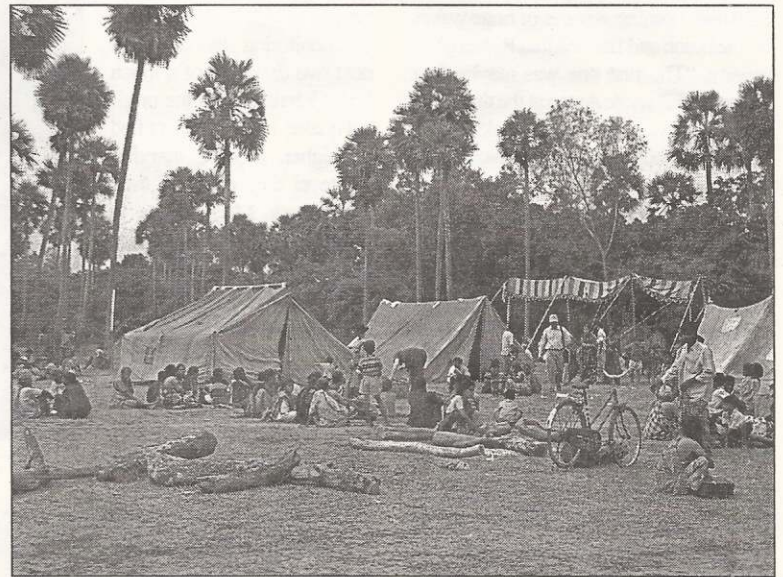
Top and right: scenes of the disaster at the Sri Ma community

term solutions for the affected villages. The Auroville Tsunami Relief Committee was established with Hemant and Jos as main coordinators. An office has been opened equipped with computers, telephones and internet as well as ample storage space for goods for the next phase of the rehabilitation.

Two teams from the Village Coordination Group went for the first assessment of the damage to nine coastal villages around Auroville in Villupuram district. It was found that a total of approximately five hundred houses have been destroyed and 62 deaths registered. It also became clear that the first basic relief: rice, clothing and 2000Rs cash, had already been given by the Government. What people



The situation at Waves.



Top: The relief camp for the bereaved villagers nearby New Creation
Left: Milk and fruit for the camp.



ing an accounting team and channeling funds through two new created accounts in the existing Financial infrastructure of Auroville which offers tax rebate and foreign donations facility with 80G. "What we need," one of the members of the team said, "is more funds that goods in kind, specially from the West, as it has been shown in the past that grain can rot in godowns, long before it is distributed and for most villagers using firewood to cook, Western food stuff and utensils are often not compatible. However, blankets, tents and trunks are welcome". Another member of Auroville's Rehabilitation team emphasized: "This is a catastrophe of unparalleled dimensions, specially after the another tsunami warning of the 30th December noon, which again sent thousands of people from the coastal area of Tamil Nadu towards higher and safer grounds. We invite the world community to extend their generous support to rebuild the shattered lives torn by nature's fury". And he adds: "If we receive sufficient funds, we will not only look after the rebuilding of the 12 coastal villages we have taken charge off, but we will include all those reaching up to Marakkanam (40 kilometres north of Pondicherry)."

Transparency was ensured by creat-

Francois Gautier



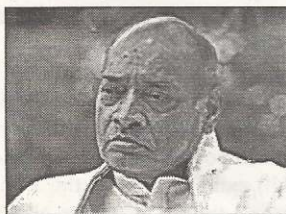
Total destruction of a keet house in Eternity

P.V. Narasimha Rao

The former Prime Minister of India, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, passed away on December 23rd, 2004, at the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi. He was 83. The Central Government announced a seven-day national mourning and the Union Cabinet recorded Mr. Rao's "dedicated services to the nation" and the "leadership he provided in carrying out the economic reforms."

The major achievements in the political career of Pamulaparti Venkata Narasimha Rao were when he served as India's ninth Prime Minister from 1991-1996. In the period 1980-89 he had held several cabinet posts.

In 1980, Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, gave him the position of Minister for External Affairs. It was during that tenure that he became involved with Auroville. In 1980, the Indian Government had passed the Auroville (Emergency Provision) Act to vest the management of all the Auroville undertakings in the Central Government for a limited period. Under this Act an International Advisory Council was constituted. It consisted of Mrs. Ludmila Zhivkova from Bulgaria; Mr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, then Secretary General of Unesco; the Indian industrialist Mr. J.R.D. Tata; P.V. Narasimha Rao, who was the Chairman of the Council and, as Secretary, Shri Kireet Joshi. Although this Council only met a

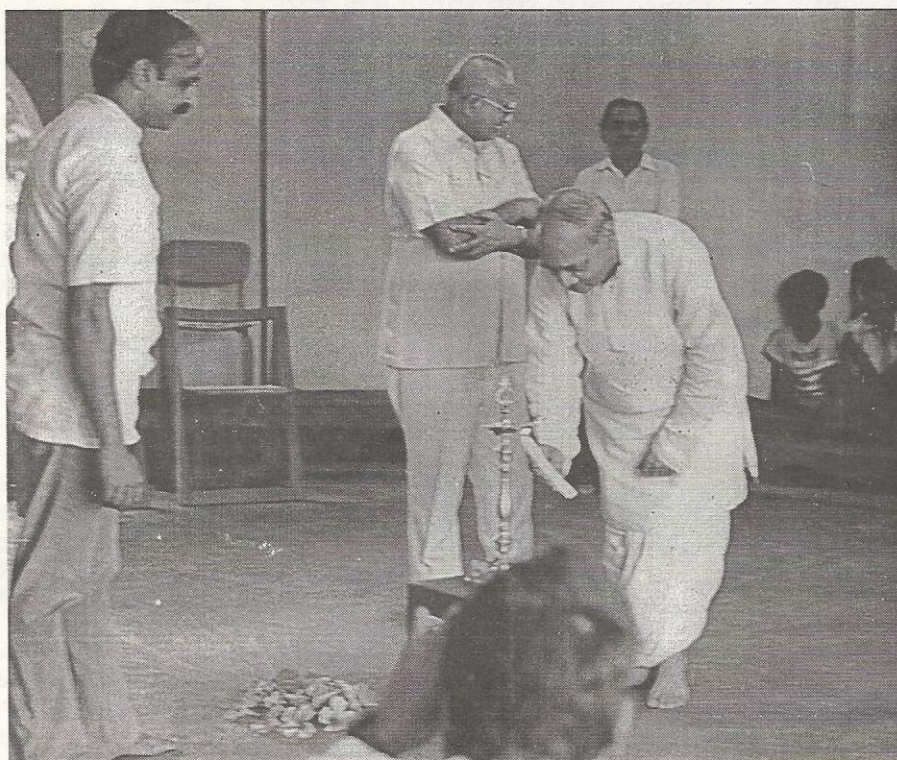


few times in the period 1981-1986 - five times in all in New Delhi - it did play a very important role for policy decisions regarding Auroville. After Indira Gandhi's death in October 1984, Rajiv Gandhi became the Prime Minister. In his new government, Narasimha Rao was made Minister for Human Resources Development which

included the Department of Education that dealt with Auroville affairs. He thus became the minister in charge of Auroville under the Auroville Act. It was on the 23rd of August 1986, that he, together with Mr. M'Bow and Mr. Tata came to Auroville for a meeting of the Council.

Those who thought that this was the first visit of Mr. Narasimha Rao to Auroville were in for a surprise. When he addressed the community he recollected a scene from fourteen years ago. "In 1972, I visited here on the Shravan Purnima day. The Mother was kind enough to give me a special darshan. It is very difficult for me to describe that experience. I can only say that in my long enough life of 65-66 years I have not had anything like that, any experience of that kind. The interview was over within one minute, no words were exchanged, it was just something

passing from one point to another and probably being absorbed there to the extent I had the capacity to absorb. Nothing more, nothing less. Then I was told that the Mother wants me to pay a visit to the place where Auroville was taking shape. I drove there to find all around barrenness. There was nothing there except a small structure about which I was told that the soil of all the countries had been brought there. And that was the only structure which I could see. I was remembering that scene while driving here. It was impossible for me



Shri Narasimha Rao as the Chairman of the International Advisory Council, lights the lamp during the IAC's visit to Auroville on August 23, 1986. To the left is Sanjeev, and behind: Dr. Kireet Joshi and Krishna Tewari.

PHOTO: COURTESY AUROVILLE ARCHIVES

to believe that I am coming to the same place. So much has happened in these years, even from the point of view of outward appearance...it is unbelievable that within a comparatively short span of 13-14 years, all this has been created by the inhabitants of Auroville. I have nothing but admiration.

"But you know what we hear about you in Delhi (laughter). That is the contrast...nothing but petitions, letters, complaints that the inhabitants of Auroville are divided against themselves, totally worthless community, they do nothing except quarrel (laughter)...But the difference which I see between what we hear about Auroville in Delhi, and what we actually see with our own eyes, that actually confirms that seeing is believing." And he expressed his confidence that Auroville will be a success. "It's you who have to run the show. It is

yours. Whatever the legal difficulties, whatever the other difficulties, the basic fact is that this Auroville is yours, and you shall run it. When, how, in what manner, all that are matters of detail. This is the truth and I would like to assure you that we all believe in this."

It was with his help that under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister Foundation Act 1988 was passed by the Indian Parliament. But he did not again become part of the International Advisory Council when it was reconstituted under this Act 1988. In 1987, he once again had become Foreign Minister and gradually his contacts with Auroville diminished. After Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated in 1991, he succeeded him as Prime Minister until 1996. He became known as one of the most effective and creative prime ministers of India.

Carel

AUROVILLE INTERNATIONAL

What is the role of Auroville International?

What is the true role of Auroville International? In January, 2005, members of Auroville International (AVI) will hold a meeting in Auroville on the theme of 'Auroville and the World'. Helmut Ernst, member of Auroville International Germany and friend of Auroville, offers his views on how Auroville and Auroville International could develop their partnership.

After reading the report of the annual Auroville International meeting 2004 in Brazil I pondered some time about the two questions the AVI Board had asked itself in Brazil in June 2004:

What is the aim and purpose the AVIs see for their work and action?

What is the role the AVIs are given and should be given from the side of Auroville?

In my analysis I came to the following answers:

First of all, the important question is actually, what is the relationship of Auroville to the outside world? Does Auroville see any meaning and purpose in dealing or interacting with the outside world, or should Auroville be exclusively concentrated on its own processes of inner growth and preparation for the emergence of the future man?

Based upon the answers to these questions, AVI can define its proper

role as an organization which is essentially rooted in the outside world and highly motivated to assist Auroville in fulfilling its mission. There is no other mission of AVI. Once this is accepted, it will be obvious what AVIs can and should do, and Auroville would be naturally happy to get this assistance.

However, if there is no such outward-aiming mission of Auroville, then AVI's role will also be a limited one in future. It could only be a kind of umbrella organization of the friends of Auroville, collecting money and doing some public relations work for Auroville by organizing events on the international level or the national levels, having study circles on the teachings of Mother and Sri Aurobindo, etc. In other words, AVI would just reflect and diffuse the light emitted from Auroville.

Mother wrote: "Auroville, the city the earth needs." If this is true then we (Auroville and the Auroville International Organisation) have to find out what the needs of the world are now and how and if Auroville is willing to contribute to fulfilling these needs. AVI's role would be then essentially to help Auroville in this process of interchange with the world.

I see a lot of what "the earth needs" desperately now. For example,

ing human unity in diversity instead of division;

◆ a general care for the earth as our common home and outer being (spiritual ecology);

◆ a new scientific paradigm which gives the inner experience of each human being the same rank for gaining understanding of total reality as outer physical instruments;

◆ a new spirit and methodology in our social and economic interaction which is human, just, and sustainable;

◆ a change in our perception of finance so that it is seen not as an end in itself but as a medium of unlimited collaboration and the sharing of our common wealth. (It is high time to question the merits of "globalization" in its present form of "neo-liberalism", before it is too late.)

The point is that it is not enough to respond to each of these needs separately, but to show to the world that only an integral approach will lead to the desired results and a sustainable future. Auroville is the only place which I know of where there is sufficient momentum and consciousness for this integrality to manifest on a collective level. Auroville could be the seed crystal for forming and concentrating the collective endeavour of the Earth in this direction. If not in Auroville where?



Helmut Ernst

The next steps (but not the only ones) needed to reach there are:

◆ for AVI and Auroville to develop a deep understanding and a common consciousness about the outward-oriented mission of Auroville.

◆ to define the steps that need to be taken for Auroville in collaboration with all members of AVI to realize this mission.

The first step should start with the next AVI-Meeting in AV in January 2005. It is obvious that the International Zone of Auroville is the most important focal point in this whole process.

Helmut Ernst

In brief

Matrimandir fundraising

The Matrimandir Management Group is calling for funds now that most design and technical issues have been resolved. If funds become available, it is possible to complete all structures of Matrimandir and make them useable as early as 2006. "Now is the time for all those who feel a connection with Matrimandir to join hands and together work towards the completion."

Conflict Resolution Coordination Group

The Auroville Council has created a new working group, the Conflict Resolution Coordination Group, to assist the Council in coordinating the work of mediation, arbitration and review procedures. The group will respond to requests for help from the community and from the Council and will work in close collaboration with the 33 Aurovilians who have expressed their willingness to act as mediators or arbitrators.

Auroville Platform

A new working group to deal with issues between Auroville and the surrounding villages has been formed. It has invited a group of Tamil elders to play an advisory role.

Rights of children

The Auroville Council reported that it received feedback in favour to its question of whether there is a need to take a firm stand regarding the rights of children of separated parents to have access to both parents. The Council intends to create a study group to work out detailed guidelines.

Guest policy

The Auroville Council is preparing guidelines on standards and rates of Auroville's guesthouses and the kind of participation Auroville expects of its guests who stay longer than a few weeks, as Auroville is not 'just another place for tourists'.

Personae non grata

The Auroville Council has declared three visitors as persona non grata following misbehaviour in Auroville.

Working group membership

The Auroville Council reported it has checked the rumour that Indians are under-represented in major working groups in Auroville. It found that the allegation was incorrect.

Matrimandir publications group

The Matrimandir management has constituted a Matrimandir publications group to ensure that the publication and sale of all items concerning the Matrimandir is done in good taste and quality and that those who produce and market these items do so in a spirit of offering. The group asks that those who wish to use the image of Matrimandir or write about it, obtain prior written permission and assure that all proceeds will be offered to Matrimandir.

Teachers needed

Transition school has requested people to join as teachers and offers training for new teachers. New classrooms are being built for which an additional Rs 4 lakhs (US \$ 9000) is required. Without these classrooms and new teachers, Transition will not be able to accept new children.

Nurturing the Tamil Heritage in Auroville

Meenakshi and Angad share views on manifesting the Tamil Heritage Centre

"It is there and also it is not there," says Meenakshi of the Tamil Heritage Centre. "The idea has always existed, but the visible structure is not there. But despite all this, we are rich in activities." The Tamil Heritage Centre was officially inaugurated 3 years ago, with a site consecration ceremony held under the banyan tree. The first brick is, however, yet to be laid. "People outside have received the idea well. It is we within Auroville who have been unable to prioritize it." The basic elements to begin construction are ready - a site approved by the Development Group and a building design by Anupama. "All we are waiting for now is some initial funds to print a brochure that will explain our aims and mission. With this we can seek financial support."

Angad explains why he believes there is a need for a Tamil Heritage Centre, "A Heritage Centre, even if it may not bubble with activities and happenings, will help us in Auroville to focus on real and equitable ways of dealing with local people and problems, as well as educating the people coming from the outside. The Centre would serve as a window on Tamil Nadu for Auroville; for Tamil Nadu, it would be a window on Auroville. Plus it would be in our own self-interest, especially as Auroville continues to absorb the neighbouring lands, and a large number of people are going to be left in a vacuum. He believes that Auroville cannot follow the path of the big corporations that come into India through buying people out - "It will lead to suppression and disenfranchisement, and will be disastrous for Auroville. The most sensible thing to do is to culturally empower the people."

For Meenakshi, it is no surprise that the Mother chose this part of Tamil Nadu to start Auroville. "If we look at this area in the context of it being a part of one of the oldest living civilisations of the world, it makes great sense." Recent scientific evidence has shown this to be true. "In Bommaliarpalayam, Indian scientists have excavated a Neolithic site with a



Children floating oil lamps in the pond at Irumbai Temple on the occasion of the 'Thai poosam' festival in January

fossilized hominid skull dating back to 187,000 years!" shares Angad. "And there is evidence that the Auroville plateau was formed off a sandbar in the mouth of the Sankaraparan River, which was lifted up during the Eocene age to form the Eocene cap."

This is the period when neither the Himalayas nor the Indian subcontinent had formed! So the area where we are located is very ancient."

Many obstacles have come up along the path to physically manifest the Tamil Heritage Centre. However, these have not deterred Meenakshi or the others. "Activities are happening and things are very alive," she says positively.

"There is something amazing in Auroville - when you say or repeat something many times here, it creates ripples. We see that several villages have taken up the idea of cultural heritage and have started centres, while here we haven't even made a building. In Sanjeevinagar, there is the Mohanam Cultural Centre; Kuyilapalayam has a thriving cultural centre which was inaugurated last year and

it forms an important hub for both children and adults in that area; and now I hear that something is happening in Periyamudaliarchavadi and Bommaliarpalayam with the youth. In Auroville also, two new groups have formed, the Mirra Women's group and the 'What we can do for Auroville' group, whose impact we are already experiencing within our community."

On a personal note, Angad shares, "When I first came to Auroville, there was a very strong pressure on Tamil Aurovilians to break away from one's family and one's past. Though I am not Tamil, I too went through a stage where I thought I should break off links with my past. But then I realized that this was absurd. We are in a continuum, and I think of the Heritage Centre as something that enhances the continuity that the universal city of Auroville should have."

"If you look at the Tamil culture of the Sangam period, it was very modern," shares Meenakshi. "It may appear even scandalous from some of the current standards of society.

There was no marriage, elopement was accepted, feminine liberty was not an issue and women were in the forefront.

They could choose their partner and they had all the rights that men had. The society was not tied by the *Varnashrama Dharma* (four-caste hierarchy). The archaeology of the area is also very exciting as it predates even the Vedic times! So Tamil Heritage can be looked at from several angles - history, geology, cultural anthropology, archaeology, and arts and crafts."

The team has many ideas for the Tamil Heritage Centre. "It will be a place to experience through all five senses!" declares Meenakshi dramatically. "The Tamil

Heritage Centre will have a *kal mandapam* (auditorium of granite) for performances, a *thamarai kolam* (lotus pond), a sacred grove with traditional flora and lots of space for open-air activities. There will be a *Sandhai* (market) for our village craftsman where they can both display their wares and have workshops or demonstrations. This will promote self respect and dignity for our village neighbours. Already we have started several activities - like reviving folk and classical music, *Bharatanatyam* dance, *Nila Mutram* or moonlight gatherings to read poetry, classes in spoken Tamil, exhibitions on ancient scholars and their works like the recent show on Thiruvalluvar, visits to historically important sites, celebrations of traditional festivals at the Irumbai temple - the list is endless.

Publications are also being put out, like the monthly newsletter from Ilaingal school, or the proposed series of books on Tamil Heritage worked on by Marti and Auroville Press with assistance from UNESCO. Two issues in this series '*Kolam*', and

"The Tamil culture which is one of the oldest in the world, has a unique role to play in the city of Auroville," reads a statement by The Mother on 19th September 1970. The essence of Tamil culture are the ideals of fraternity and brotherhood. '*Yaa-thum urey Yaavarum Kaelir - Every town my home-town, every man my kinsman*,' declares a poem in the ballad of *Purananooru* written in the Sangam period (800 BC - 200AD). Its relevance to today's Auroville is striking. The Tamil Heritage Centre in Auroville will be a place to honour this ancient and living culture.

'Temples of Tamil Nadu', are ready for publication.

"We also wish to create a Site Museum with displays of the megalithic burials and other artefacts, describe their discovery, and create a learning exhibition. This would give an opportunity for visitors to learn of Auroville's rich history.

"Let there be no fear that with a Tamil Heritage Centre, Auroville will become more of a Tamil town, or that Tamil culture will be plonked down on top of us," says Angad in parting. "It is just the opposite. It is to try and debunk the myth that Tamil culture is what one witnesses now in the films, or as the filth in bus stands at any town or city, or as the loud music blaring onto the streets, or as in temple towns where one is aggressed by touts.. The Tamil Heritage Centre in Auroville will be an anchor for the local population, open the eyes of the outsiders to the richness of Tamil culture, and certainly benefit young Aurovilians growing up in the township, many of whom have little touch with the various aspects of this culture."

Priya Sundaravalli

AUROVILLE FOUNDATION

Regulations

On December 20th a meeting of the Residents' Assembly approved a proposal on organisation. A proposal on Entry and Exit and Categories for Admission to Auroville awaits approval. Why has this spate of regulations suddenly hit Auroville?

For the Mother it was obvious. Rules and regulations for Auroville should be made with great care, if at all. "Any regulations will be as liberal as possible and very flexible. Rules should arise according to the requirements," she stated in August 1966, less than two years before Auroville was founded. And in December 1967: "No rules or laws are being framed. Things will get formulated as the underlying truth of the township emerges and takes shape progressively. We do not anticipate." She explained: "... men establish mental rules according to their conceptions and ideals, and then they apply them (Mother brings down her fist to show the world in the grip of mind), and that is absolutely false, it is arbitrary, unreal, and the result is that things revolt or wither or disappear.... It is the experience of LIFE ITSELF that should slowly work out rules that are AS SUPPLE and AS WIDE as possible, in such a way as to be always progressive. Nothing should be fixed.

That is the great error of governments: they make a framework and say, 'There you are, we have set this up and now we must live under it', and so, of course, they crush the life in it and stop it from progressing. It must be Life itself developing more and more in a progression towards the Light, the Knowledge, the Power that should, little by little, establish rules, as general as possible so that they are extremely flexible and amenable to change, to change with the need AS QUICKLY as needs and habits change." And she concluded: "The problem finally reduces itself to this: to replace the mental government of intelligence with the government of a spiritualized consciousness."

However, circumstances soon forced Mother to make a minimum of rules for Auroville, such as 'You must choose between living in falsehood and living in Auroville, the two are incompatible' (April 1968) and more explicitly, not to use drugs. (February 1971). Some Aurovilians did not

understand. One of them was Alain Grandcolas who asked, in March 1971: "Three years ago, you said: 'I have been asked what the rules are for life in Auroville. Thank God, as yet there are none. As long as there are none, there is hope.' In July, again you were telling the young people of Aspiration, 'I do not want to make rules for Auroville as I did for the Ashram.' But recently you wrote, 'Drugs are prohibited in Auroville'. Has there been a change in your vision of Auroville?" To which Mother replied, politely, "Perhaps Aurovilians have not yet attained the level of consciousness expected of them."

Whatever levels of consciousness were attained by individual Aurovilians, a hearty dislike of anything remotely resembling formal rules was universally shared. This became obvious, for example, in the dogged resistance which was shown in formulating Rules and Regulations appertaining to the Auroville Foundation Act. During the terms of

office of the first two secretaries of the Auroville Foundation, the establishment of the Auroville Foundation Rules was successfully stalled by successive Working Committees. It was only when the third secretary, Mr. N. Bala Baskar, took office that awareness had grown that Rules were unavoidable. The then Working Committee, grudgingly, cooperated in their formulation, ensuring in the process that anything relating to the functioning of Auroville itself was omitted. The Rules, which were published by the Government of India in November 1997, deal with the functioning and powers of the Governing Board, the International Advisory Council and the Secretary, but say nothing about the Residents' Assembly.

But Mr. Bala Baskar, conscious of the requirement to formulate regulations, wasn't ready to let things slip. In autumn 1997, in cooperation with a senior Aurovillian and members of the then working committee, he formulated regulations for Auroville's internal organisation. They specified how the Resident's Assembly and the major working groups: the Working Committee; the Entry Group; the Evaluation Committee and the Funds and Assets Management Committee, should function. After obtaining the blessings of Auroville's lawyers

Sriram Panchu and Mohan on the draft regulations, they were submitted to a General Meeting in January 1998. But this meeting forced the Working Committee to backtrack and write to Mr. Bala Baskar about the meeting's "great unease with the draft regulations, as it felt that too much had been regulated, which, ultimately, might undermine its right and freedom to experiment and might reduce Auroville to just another institution which is run on democratic principles. ... The Regulations as have been drafted are 'old hat', in other words are copied from well tested systems of decision making which exist all over the world...The draft Regulations do not testify to Auroville's aspiration to 'boldly spring towards future realisations'... It was decided that the discussion on regulations should continue, but that the regulations in the present form cannot be submitted to the Governing Board." And there the matter rested. Though quite a few attempts were made to create a novel organisational model for Auroville, none gained the approval of the community. The only regulation it accepted was the elaborate Housing Policy framed by the FAMC in July 2000, which deals with the management of Auroville's houses. The Regulations on organisation remained in cold storage.

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As the bard sings... a profile of Murugesan

The Auroville I witnessed - the source and beginning, ancient and new, before people arrived and after it was born, of these aspects is the story that I share with you. The legends of the Irumbai Makaliswarar, Poraiyaramman and Ilankali and their divine games; the tales of Kurumar who ruled over this land; of Kaduvelli Sidhar whose actions led to the explosion of Makaliswarar lingam; the story of Rauthar who tried enslaving Poraiyaramman but who was in turn destroyed by Ilankali, these are ancient tales. And now after Auroville arrived, miraculous events continue to unfold... So begins the preface to the book 'Auroville: Aathiyum Aarambamum' (Auroville: Its Ancient Beginning) by Murugesan a seventy-seven year old Tamil Aurovilian who lives in Kottakarai, in the community of Celebration.

My introduction to Murugesan happened through a chance remark by Meenakshi and Angad during the discussion about the Tamil Heritage Centre. "She should meet you know

who," quipped Angad mysteriously, and at the end of our talk, promptly took me to Celebration to meet Murugesan.

It was an honour and a treat. Murugesan is frail, thin and slightly built, but his voice is full of life. He welcomes us warmly and lead us to his spare keet hut nestled between the pucca homes of his two sons. "I prefer to have my own space," he explains. "This is more than enough for my needs."

Murugesan's contact with Auroville began even before Auroville was inaugurated. "I was a construction worker when the Amphitheatre was getting built in 1967." Later he got involved in reforestation work working along side Daniel and Jaap planting saplings by the thousands. "The forests you see now have our sweat!" he says with a hint of pride. Murugesan finally became part of the Matrimandir Nursery where he worked for over



Murugesan, a living treasure in Auroville with his vast knowledge of local legends and ancient Tamil literature, with his grandson

two decades until two years ago, when he decided to retire. All through this time, his one steady passion was poetry.

"Literature has always been a part of my life since my youth but it was only after I got involved with Auroville that I felt compelled to express something through my own words." Late into the night when all became quiet, he would sit with a kerosene lantern, a notebook and a fountain pen, and immerse himself into the world of local legends and lore. "My wife used to complain that I was not resting, and I had to gently tell her to sleep and leave me to my work. The night was the only time I had some peace and my mind could travel undisturbed." Murugesan was lucky to have had an education at a local school seventy years ago. "It was called the Grand School and I still remember my Tamil Vathiyar (school-master). He was lame and his name was Dharmalingam. He earned five rupees a month. And how much I learnt from him!" In every piece of writing that Murugesan pens, there is always a poetic homage paid to this teacher.

His personal writing took off soon after his involvement with Auroville. "Perhaps it was the right

time, or perhaps there was much inspiration and encouragement," he muses. "At one time, there was a gathering at Bharat Nivas where I was told that poems were being written to honour the four directions, and that one for the East was not done." He immediately set himself to the task and the poem came to him. He breaks out into a tune unselfconsciously. It is in Tamil, and hard to translate.

Writing a poem is not just stringing words together, there needs to be meaning and a soul," he explains. Murugesan holds a rich repository of stories and legends. He shares, "I have heard so many tales from the elders - my grandfathers and father. That is how I used to pass my time in my youth. I was never into drinking, smoking or any such bad habits."

His other past-time was Therukoothu (street plays) both watching and occasionally playing roles. "I have put on make up, even doing female roles a few times. Once I played Goddess Saraswathi," he adds with obvious pride. He explains how in those days all characters, male or female were played only by men. "It was easier to do scenes that required physical contact, especially when so many stories revolve around

love. Also we performed late into the night, sometimes even traveling to other villages."

"I myself have written two plays," he shares, and brings out a carefully preserved notebook. Its pages are yellowed with age, but the writing scribed in long hand is neat and beautiful. "The first one is the story of Kaduvelli Sidhar and Sundaravalli, the dancer."

He says that the play on Kaduvelli Sidhar has been played twice with him doing the lead role both times. "We first performed it in the village for a temple inauguration, and the next time it was in Auroville arranged by Bhavana." He adds that he hopes to play it one more time before he passes away.

The other play is an imaginary tale of love and war involving prince Sathiyaseelan, princess Rathnavathy, and an evil asura Mandimahaasuran. "I did want to have both these published, but the printers asked for Rs.2000 for publication costs and that I could not afford. Then when my wife passed away eight years ago, I was heart broken and suddenly felt my own mortality." This pushed him to publish two of his shorter works; the first on the origins of Auroville and Irumbai legend, and the other a viruttam (devotional verse) celebrating Ilankaliyamman whose temple he visits almost every day. He lets me in on his latest project, a work-in-progress - a poetic narrative on the renowned female bard Avvaiyar. Suddenly he looks up quietly. "In case I pass away without having shared what I have written, could you please play your recorder so that people can listen my songs. This is what I want to be remembered by." I nod mutely.

Long after I leave, Murugesan's viruttam to Ilankaliyamman continues to echo inside me. I hear his sing-song nasal voice soulfully reciting the verse in an ancient and haunting melody.

Priya Sundaravalli

Understanding the month of Margazhi

"Margazhi is the Tamil month that falls under the constellation of Dhanusu or the archer. This entire month (mid December - mid January) is considered inauspicious as it symbolizes the death of the sun, and therefore demands a lot of appeasement through devotional music, prayers and offerings. I remember from my childhood that musicians would go around the neighborhood in groups very early in the morning singing Bhajanai (devotional songs). Alas now all that has disappeared and we have recorded music blaring through loud speakers. It shows that Kaliyugam, the fourth and last era where Kali is the Avatar, is indeed ripening..."

Margazhi is also the month when Tamil women make elaborate kolams across the thresholds of their homes before dawn break. The month ends in mid-January with the last day celebrated as Bhogi pandigai when the old gets replaced by the new. Bonfires are lit to symbolize renewal, homes are freshly whitewashed and the people prepare to welcome the new month of Thai. There is a saying in Tamil - "When Thai is born, hope is born". The harvest festival of Pongal is celebrated at the beginning of Thai. On the first day is perum pongal or the large Pongal, a day dedicated to the sun and the harvest. The second day is maattu pongal honoring cattle. On this day, all these animals get a ritual bath, get decorated with flowers and paint and fed special treats. It is the day when there are cattle runs or races like the one in Kuyilapalayam. The last day of the Pongal festival is karinaal, a day to recuperate from the festivities. It is a wonderful time to meet friends and families, visit each other, exchange token gifts and have feasts."

Regulations

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Asked in his departing interview with AVToday in November 2001 what he thought about the absence of Regulations governing the Auroville society, Mr. Bala Baskar warned that the community is damaging itself by its refusal to create Regulations. "The community has a lot of power. But unless there is some kind of framework in which this power is exercised, it will remain difficult for the community to assert its will...The absence of a framework will lead to mistrust, and to people seeking other ways to solve their problems." And he stressed that the absence of a framework puts the Secretary in an awkward position. "My question is always: 'How am I to know that a decision is in accordance with the will of the community expressed in a resolution of the Residents' Assembly of Auroville?'" Asked whether he also favoured regulations for the termination of an Aurovilian's status, he replied "How can I not be in favour? The Auroville Foundation Act describes specifically that the Residents' Assembly has the power to terminate persons in the Register of Residents in accordance with regulations made by the Governing Board. At present you have no such regulations in place and you depend on the government to

evict a person by recalling his residential permit or visa. And how do you evict Indian people? You need a regulation even if you want to expel a person temporarily."

For almost two years, the vacancy created by Mr. Bala Baskar's departure was not filled. An acting Secretary took charge of the running affairs. Meanwhile, the community continued to experiment, particularly with two issues. One dealt with Auroville's organisation: how to make meetings of the Residents' Assembly meaningful, what is the selection process and what are the mandates of the Working Committee and the Auroville Council? The second issue dealt with entry and exit. Attempts were made to improve the Entry process - extending the newcomer period from one to two years. Confronted with acts of Aurovilians that went against the spirit of Auroville, the question how and when an Aurovilian can be made to leave needed to be solved.

Soon after joining the Auroville Foundation in August 2003, the fourth secretary of the Auroville Foundation, Mr. S.R. Sharma, made it clear that, contrary to than his predecessor, he was not inclined to accept the 'unruly' internal organisation of Auroville. He stressed that from all the working groups in Auroville he only recognized the Working Committee and the Funds and Assets Management Committee -

the first because it is a body under the Auroville Foundation Act, the second because it had been created under the Auroville Foundation Rules. He also questioned the way of functioning of the Residents' Assembly - asking, as had Mr. Bala Baskar done so many years earlier, how he is to know what constitutes a valid decision of the Residents' Assembly. When the Secretary proceeded to cancel the category of Long Term Guest - a status created by the community in cooperation with Mr. Bala Baskar for people who want to stay in Auroville for longer than six months but not permanently - and refused to recommend the extension of the residential permit of a 17 year old girl who was studying at one of Auroville's schools as she was a minor who was not accompanied by her parents, the community realised that it could no longer avoid making Regulations.

In December 2004, two sets of proposals were published. One set deals with Auroville's internal organisation. "It was prepared," said one of its authors, "by a group of people who only had one thing in common, namely that it held different viewpoints." From June onwards they had been meeting once a week, and it was described as 'a kind of miracle' that all finally could agree. The proposal describes how each Aurovilian can participate in study groups to prepare policy decisions and how the

Residents' Assembly then makes decisions. The document also creates a new selection process for members of the Working Committee and the Auroville Council. Each Aurovilian will nominate 10 persons for a Selection Committee. Those with most nominations will form the Committee, which will consist of 50 people. This Committee in turn will select the members of the Working Committee and Auroville Council. Their decision will thereafter be submitted to Residents' Assembly for their approval. The Committee will also provide assistance in the selection of members of other major working groups.

The proposal finally described the mandate of the Working Committee and Auroville Council and lays down the term of office of the Selection Committee, the Working Committee and Auroville Council as two years. After these two years, this proposal will be reviewed.

This proposal was, with a few minor modifications, approved by a meeting of the Residents' Assembly on December 20th.

A second set of proposals dealt with Entry and Exit. Based on entry current practices, the group involved drafted two documents. The first document is entitled "Regulations concerning Admission to Auroville and Termination of a Resident's Registration in the Register of Residents". It describes the constitu-

tion and mandate of the Entry Group, and how one can appeal its decisions. It further describes what the community can do in case a resident's behaviour is incompatible with Auroville's ideals or standards of social conduct. Lastly it deals with the constitution of an ad-hoc Review Committee to decide upon the termination of a registration in the Register of Residents.

The second document describes the various categories of persons who come to live in Auroville either permanently as Aurovilian or for a limited period, such as Students, Partners of Auroville and Associates. The conditions for admission of each of these categories have been laid down in detail.

It is the intention that, once the community has approved the Entry and Exit regulations, they will be presented for approval to the Governing Board for its meeting in February 2005.. As per the Auroville Foundation Act, the Regulations shall come into effect on the date they have been published by the Central Government in the Official Gazette. Once the Governing Board has approved the documents, they will be published on the Auroville website and the Auroville intranet so that anybody who wishes to join Auroville, either permanently or for a limited period will know what the conditions for joining are.

Carel

Sri Aurobindo Darshan

The University of Tomorrow

Sri Aurobindo Darshan: The University of Tomorrow is an online educational facility offering introductory and graduate level programmes on the ideals and vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother to anybody in the world. "You may take up the journey by joining our Orientation Programme, continue with our spiritual practice-oriented Science of Living course, then move on to our master's level Academic programme in Sri Aurobindo's Thought, and finish with our doctorate level Advanced Research Programme on Sri Aurobindo," writes founder Dr. Ananda Reddy in the website's opening address. And he adds, "As a final reward, you will enjoy being on the cutting edge as a pioneer of a new world with the New Consciousness."

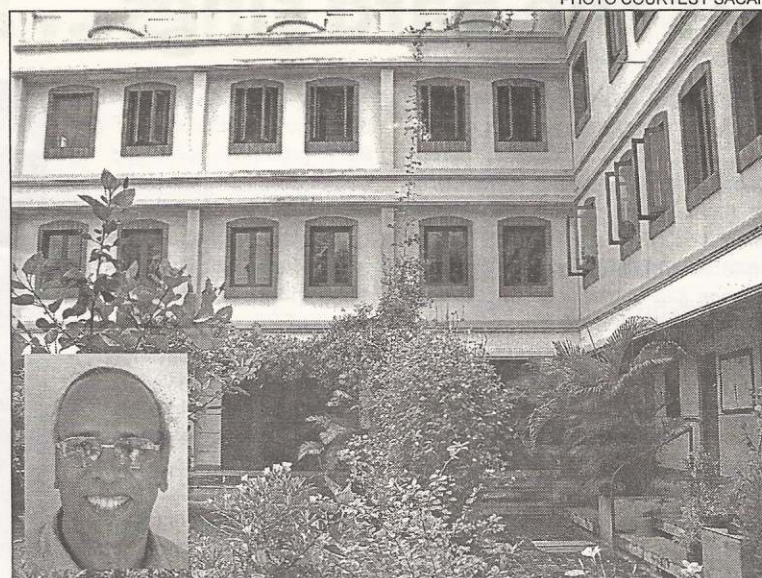
The virtual university is a gift for all those who are struggling to understand Sri Aurobindo's writings and a bonus for advanced researchers in aspects of Sri Aurobindo's vision. At the Indian university level, only a few philosophy and literature departments have experts in Sri Aurobindo's thought. World-wide, the situation is worse. The on-line university makes it now possible to deepen one's knowledge from a distance, guided by a group of professors from different countries. Four professors from the USA, one from the UK, two from Calcutta, one from Hyderabad, and specialists from Pondicherry have agreed to join forces to make The University of Tomorrow a success.

The idea of a university without walls is an offspring of an old idea. In the early seventies, it was mooted to create a Sri Aurobindo University in Pondicherry on the occasion of Sri Aurobindo's birth centenary in 1972. But the public in those days was not

really pro-ashram. Politics came in and the programme got shelved. "My father, Prof. Madhusudan Reddy, then got inspired to start a Sri Aurobindo university in Hyderabad," explains Ananda. "He drafted the syllabus and wrote to The Mother proposing two names for the university. The Mother approved of 'Sri Aurobindo Darshan: The University of Tomorrow' and that's how the name got fixed. My father managed to get the Government of Andhra Pradesh to donate the land for the University near Hyderabad, but for all kinds of reasons the project never took off and when he passed away in 1996, this legacy came to me. And I re-thought the entire project. Is Sri Aurobindo well-served by teaching his views in a physical campus or by individuals such as me travelling around the world lecturing about him? In February 2000 we had started the Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research (SACAR) in Pondicherry, a beautiful building for conferences and lectures. It serves its purpose well, but its outreach is necessarily limited. Increasingly I get requests for lectures from all over the world, many of which I cannot honour. Then, in 2002, the idea of the on-line university was born, a means of reaching out beyond the narrow scope of a physical university. And perhaps this is also more fitting to the universal stature of someone as Sri Aurobindo. The name 'Sri Aurobindo Darshan: The University of Tomorrow' had already been given by The Mother. For practical purposes we call it The University of Tomorrow, or TUT."

But what about the word 'University'? Doesn't this not imply an institution with many more faculties than the courses on Sri Aurobindo and The Mother offered at 'The

University of Tomorrow.'? "Yes and no," answers Ananda. "The University of Tomorrow is, of course not an ordinary university. But our aim is to help people to discover the fundamental principles of a new society embodying and expressing the new consciousness that has been announced and realised by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. And that work necessarily touches on the whole of human life." And he explains, "You see, Sri Aurobindo is often exclusively referred to as a yogi or a mystic or a poet. But that is a disservice to Sri Aurobindo, who is a multi-faceted genius. In the Orientation Programme we highlight nine different aspects of Sri Aurobindo's genius. He has expressed himself through many aspects, and each of them can be the basis for a study in itself: history, psychology, philosophy, Vedic and Upanishadic knowledge, literature, poetry. The Mother's works are no less important. For example, her *Entretiens* contain an enormous amount of applied psychology, and her yoga in the cells of her body is not even understood." He gives an example from his own field, that of philosophy. "When you study Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine* with The University of Tomorrow, you will be asked to study not only Sri Aurobindo's thought but also the great Indian and western philosophies. Sri Aurobindo has read all the western and Indian philosophers but in *The Life Divine* he hardly mentions anybody by name (except for Shankara and a passing reference to Buddha and Ramanuja.) For he is not dealing with persons but with the development of human thought and explains the various philosophies in the context of their contribution to



The SACAR building. Inset: Dr. Ananda Reddy

human thought and indicates the levels of their inspiration. Plato, for example, wrote that there is a world from where ideas originate. Sri Aurobindo speaks in his own philosophy of different levels of consciousness, and has classified Plato's inspiration as coming from the Higher Mind, just as he wrote about Buddha's inspiration coming from the intuitive mind. Someone studying philosophy at The University of Tomorrow could be asked, for example, to research the relationship between Plato's level of ideas and Sri Aurobindo's levels of consciousness. Like this many things will come up."

The University of Tomorrow does not yet offer recognized scientific degrees. "We are in the process of linking up with the University of Pondicherry which has a 'Sri Aurobindo School of Eastern and Western Thought'. But they have no professor in Sri Aurobindo's studies, so to link up with SACAR and The University of Tomorrow would be also in their interest. Once recognized, The University of Tomorrow would be able to offer degrees through the Pondicherry university.

But there are some administrative problems in it. Let us see what happens. Another possibility which we are looking into is to get affiliated to another Indian university or a university in the USA. For the moment our PhD. level courses will result in the title 'Sri Aurobindo Scholar.'"

The response so far has been promising. The University of Tomorrow started on August 15th, 2004, four months ago. "A few students registered for the various programmes, which has been very good for us to figure out where our approach was correct and where it needed to be adjusted, for we were not experienced in on-line teaching. Now the word is spreading and almost 55 students have registered for the Orientation Programme," says Ananda. He has also offered the programme to Aurovilians and newcomers at subsidized rates so that they can also benefit from the courses offered by this on-line university.

Carel

Visit <http://www.the-university-of-tomorrow.net/>

First class training in information technology

The Auroville Industrial School in Irumbai

The Auroville symbol caught my attention as I zapped through TV channels to get to my favourite news programme. It was an advertisement on a local Tamil channel announcing courses offered by one 'Auroville Industrial School'. Quite strange to see an advertisement caption on the top of the screen while beneath, energetic young men and women gyrated to the beat of the latest Tamil song. 'Auroville Industrial School. Courses Rs. 500 only. Phone: 2671757.' I decided to call.

The Auroville Industrial School is a project of Auroville's Village Action Group (AVAG) and is located next to AVAG's headquarters in Irumbai. Created with help from the German Ministry of Technical Cooperation which funded the buildings and the equipment, the school is managed by Lavkamad Chandra. Hailing originally from Northern India, Lavkamad has a unique perspective having worked for 40 years in the aircraft industry in Germany and France before retiring and returning to India. "I was looking for a spiritual path that harmonizes meditation with work," he says. A chance meeting with a few Aurovilians in the Ashram of Sri Ramana Maharshi in Tiruvannamalai brought him into contact with Auroville. He visited, liked the place and became a newcomer. With his background of senior manager of one of Airbus's computer departments, he was the ideal choice to take charge of the information technology institute of the Auroville Industrial School (AIS).

With its six classrooms, the school's aim is to offer and improve the technical skills of the local people of the Auroville bioregion so as to enhance their employability. "We intend to equip them not only to work for others, but also be

entrepreneurial and be self-employed," explains Lavkamad. "We plan on offering short and long term courses varying from 6 to 12 months in a variety of subjects such as electronics, computer software and hardware, English conversation, business management and social awareness. As the school is recognised by the Government of Tamil Nadu, the long-term courses like electronics, computer applications and hardware and software maintenance will also prepare the student for the official Tamil Nadu Government examinations." He adds that short term courses in computers will not be exam oriented but will provide specialised knowledge regarding MS Office applications, PageMaker and Corel DRAW; and on Local Area Networking.

The school will function as a non-profit establishment. "During the first year of operation, the running expenses will be borne by the German donor, but afterwards we are on our own," explains Chandra. "Our fee structure is modest, varying between Rs 10 to Rs 15 an hour which is about half the price what similar schools in Pondicherry are charging." For very poor families the school is approaching the women's groups within AVAG to provide loans, particularly for the girls who want to study. "AVAG has created more than 100 of these women's groups, and they have demonstrated that they are very effective in managing their collective funds," he



Studying electronics at the Auroville Industrial School

says. "We hope that they will expand their micro-credit loan schemes to include educational loans for students."

While short-term courses have begun, the school is yet to start its long term courses. "When I arrived in Auroville in April this year, the school buildings had just been finished and we were planning to go into operation by July. But as difficulties within AVAG came to a boiling point [see AVToday October 2004], we had to postpone the long term courses. Instead, we concentrated on offering special three to six week long courses at discount rates, particularly for those who had discontinued their schooling after the 9th Standard and who now wanted additional training." Lavkamad adds that this time has been used to publicize the school through advertisements in the local media, and by visiting high schools in the surrounding villages. "We are also in the process of establishing contacts with the

industries in the nearby industrial estates of Pondicherry. This way, our graduates will be able to find jobs once they have successfully passed the courses."

The response has been very positive. "To my amazement many more women than men have applied," says Lavkamad. "It means that we have to focus more on training women in areas that may be of interest to them apart from the usual computer software skills." He feels that courses offering training for the position of secretary or personal assistant, teaching English, business management and accounting will be popular with the women students. "There are many small industries in the surrounding area, so a woman with these types of skills should have little problem finding a job." Students from the neighbouring high schools

have also shown interest and Lavkamad expects that quite a few will join the Auroville Industrial School in July 2005 for long-term courses after passing their 12th standard school leaving examinations. "From next July onwards we expect that all the classrooms will be fully utilized from morning to evening, with evening classes primarily geared towards working adults."

The Auroville Industrial School aims at providing the same high quality education for which Auroville is becoming well-known. Says Lavkamad: "We want to link this Auroville image of quality education to our school, transferring know-how and providing a lot of opportunity for practical hands-on exercises in small class settings. The formula is sure to succeed."

Carel

For more info email Auroville Industrial School at: office.ais@auroville.org.in

Is the International Zone becoming a Cultural zone?

A proposal to create the Shakespeare International Theatre of Auroville in the International Zone has raised the question of the role of the Cultural Zone and the International Zone. Is the International Zone the right place to build a centre like that?

Is it not interfering with Mother's idea of having four zones, including a Cultural Zone for cultural activities like theatre? "Not at all", says Jill Navarre, one of the two project holders. "I think it perfectly fits with Mother's concept of the International Zone (IZ), for the IZ should be a window to the outer world." The slim-built curly haired American elucidates: "Auroville needs a theatre. At present five groups are busy with theatre in Auroville, without a good place to perform. The Sri Aurobindo Auditorium in Bharat Nivas is too big and expensive. To rehearse there costs 1500 Rupees a month. This is the money they need to maintain the building, but for small groups without much budget it is too expensive. The stage at the Visitors Center is not ideal for theatre, there is no wing space and no changing room. The third possibility, the Kalabhumi amphitheatre, is suitable for home grown theatre, but since it is in the Cultural Zone it is not meant to invite audiences from outside", states Jill, who also points out the lack of dressing rooms, space for make up, and problems with the electricity supply. "Also Pitanga and the New Creation Dance Studio are for various reasons not options for playing theatre", she continues. "We are happy with the plot that Jacques from Auroville's Future showed us in the International Zone and we would like to build it there, possibly as a joint-effort by the pavilion groups from the United States and the UK. We'll call the building the Shakespeare International Theatre of Auroville (SITA). By using Shakespeare's name we honour this genius of dramatic literature, but we want to stress that it is not only a stage for plays from Shakespeare. The plot we were shown is situated on



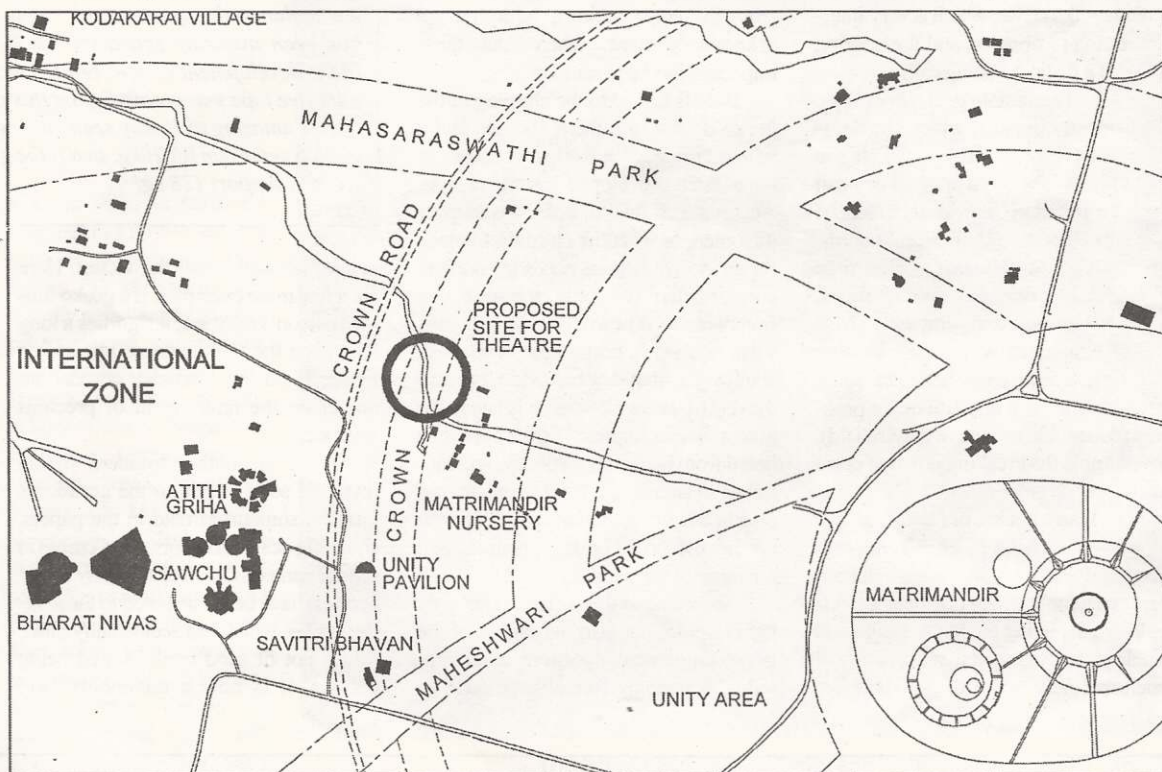
Anne

the future Crown Road, behind where the Matrimandir Nursery is."

Project holders Jill Navarre and Anne Goldsmith intend that the theatre should be a centre for international performance and research into the future direction of theatre. In their view, the Shakespeare International Theatre of Auroville can be the stage where the soul of each nation can be discovered through the arts, especially drama. But why not build this theatre in the Cultural Zone. Isn't this a better place for it? Jill thinks not: "The Cultural Zone is a place for Auroville's artists to teach and to work in a more contained atmosphere. It is quieter and more internally focussed. The International Zone is more to create an interface between Auroville and the world, and that's why this theatre should be in the International Zone." Jill and Anne are enthusiastic about the idea of drawing international artists and attract-

ing international students of theatre to Auroville. They dream of a complete theatre complex with a costume shop and storage room, set design shop, space for props and lighting equipment, besides dressing rooms, showers and toi-

think the idea of the Shakespeare International Theatre of Auroville can be integrated into it", says Swiss social-psychologist and newcomer Ingo, one of the members. "The International Zone should consist of the University of



MAP COURTESY HELMUT

lets. Further, the theatre complex would offer a shaded courtyard where theatre lovers can meet and interact. Here people can dine, snack or just have a drink. A health food restaurant will adjoin the courtyard. The theatre complex should be built in phases. First the main theatre, and later a rehearsal room, library, office, Guest House for visiting artists and students, a café and a caretaker's flat. The finances are not there yet, but the two are sure that the money can be raised. At first Anne and Jill will request funds for the fencing, and water and electricity connections. They have presented the plan to the International Zone Group, which responded positively. Also Auroville's chief architect Roger Anger is said to have given his blessings. According to him the future Crown Road is a good location for it.

Better in Cultural Zone?

But not everybody supports the plan. Why not adapt an existing building? If a new theatre is built would the costs of maintenance be less than 1500 Rupees previously mentioned? Even some in the UK pavilion group have reservations, and so have AVI-UK and the Auroville Planning and Development Council (APDC) who would like to be better informed about Mother's vision and the difference between the Cultural and the International Zone before giving the green light. The APDC wonders why the building cannot be built in the Cultural Zone, for, as we can read on the Auroville website "...the Cultural Zone is meant to explore the fruits of all cultures through their diverse expressions in music, dance, painting, sculpture, theatre etc." Some planners in Auroville's townhall too have problems with it. Says architect and planner Sheril, "They want to build it on the Crown, but then there will be no space left for other future buildings," pointing at a ground-plan hanging on the wall in her office. "Besides, you cannot plan a building when the rest of the International Zone is not yet known." And there she has a point. Though there are rough ideas about how the International Zone might develop, nothing is clear yet.

At the moment a brainstorming group consisting of members of the International Zone Group is developing a proposal for the International Zone. "I

Unity, the Pavilions, and a type of boulevard for pedestrians, and interface buildings that are meant for the contact with visitors and tourists. There should be seminar rooms, a cinema hall, meeting halls, encounter spaces and a multi-purpose building. The second phase of the Unity Pavilion could come up at the same time."

Squatters

Villagers from Kottakarai have squatted on the paramboke (government-owned) land, which Auroville needs for the International Zone, but which has not yet been bought. That is a problem, for some of the 80 Tamil households (300 people) that live there now, have in the meantime legalised their situation. Auroville could try to relocate them, but the task is politically sensitive. The brainstorm group is in favour of integrating the squatters. Ingo: "The local Tamil people could also have a place in the International Zone. We want to implement a village market, a stage for local cultural events, and perhaps even a marriage hall. We are even thinking of asking the Tamil population of Kottakarai to open guest houses for visitors of the International Zone, so that the foreigners can experience Tamil life."



Jill

The brainstorm group has also come up with the idea of constructing 'landing offices' for the pavilions. Auroville pavilion groups and town planners can work here, preparing the construction of new pavilions. At the moment the Unity pavilion could be used for that.

For many years little has moved in the International Zone, but now there seems to be new energy around. In Bharat Nivas the unfinished restaurant building, has been transformed into an art centre, called Kalakendra. Atithi Griha Guesthouse is a success. The Pavilion of Tibetan Culture is blossoming, and in the recently expanded Savitri Bhavan many activities are being organised. The Visitors Centre is also expanding with new shops and a soon to be opened exhibition space to be opened.

The US Pavilion Group has completed a student guesthouse and the first phase of the Unity Pavilion is ready and functioning. But the next big step in the development - building on the Crown - has not been taken. Maybe it was not clear what to do exactly in that zone-section, but maybe also there was another factor: When the Crown is built the International Zone will be much more visible, and thus will start to attract visitors. Does Auroville want that and how will it deal with the crowds? In a well received draft concept of the International Zone Group, Ruslan and Sergei, write: "The International Zone is not an exhibition or an area for casual visitors." In the same draft the two describe the main aims of the International Zone: "...to help the people of different cultures of each nation to become conscious of their deepest roots and their highest possibilities in the context of the Auroville experiment for realising actual Human Unity." It seems that the International Zone will have buildings related to study where casual visitors are not wanted. But how to organise this? Architect Helmut thinks of a more pragmatic approach. He envisions kiosks in every pavilion about things related to Auroville. Tourists could get information on a simple level and could thus also participate in the Auroville experience. Others shudder at the idea and think that only those who are really interested in Auroville, people who are coming for a well defined purpose should be able to enter the pavilions and university. In the International Zone Group a majority favours a restricted entrance for tourists. Issuing passes, just like the passes for the Inner Chamber in Matrimandir seems to be the solution.

The chief architect of Auroville Roger Anger considers the IZ to be the most important of the four zones of Auroville. In a recent meeting with town planners and the IZ Group he expressed that there is an urge to take the next step. In fact he wants clarity on a general master plan for the International Zone within two months.

The theatre proposal and the plans from the brainstorm group could be part of it. The details of these two ideas will be presented at the AVI-meeting, which will take place in Auroville from January 14-18.

Robert

In brief

Remembering Sri Aurobindo

Fifty-five lit candles were placed in a lotus-form in the new hall of the Savitri Bhavan on December 5th on the occasion of the celebration of Sri Aurobindo's mahasamadhi. "All we owe to Thee" was the garland of remembrance offered in gratitude by people connected to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

American values

The Laboratory for Enthusiastic Collaboration presented 'The values Americans live by' in the conference room of the Town Hall. The play was based on a pamphlet written in 1984 by cultural anthropologist L. Robert Kohls who described thirteen American values to demystify the American people for foreign visitors. The world premiere performance of this play was commissioned in February 2004 by Pranab Mukherjee, one of India's most important young theatre directors, for The Delhi Alternative Theatre Festival.

Concert piano 4-hands

Fairy tales from Perrault and Andersen upon music from Hideo Mizokami, Maurice Ravel and Florent Schmitt were narrated by Martine Séguy while Carel and Heinrich played piano 4 hands.



Auroville Children's Choir

Conducted by Núria and accompanied by Pushkar, piano, and Chandra, flute, the Auroville Children's choir gave a concert in Pitanga with multi-lingual folk-songs and songs from Purcell, Collins, Chen, and Naplan.



"Silent Language"

An exhibition of flower photos taken at the Matrimandir Garden compost site was held in Pitanga. Wrote the photographer Maria "after several months of observation I found the little spirit in the plant looking at me and speaking of different qualities, but the language was very silent. My heart can still hear the melody and vibration of unconditional love."

Financial Services moved

The Financial Services, Auroville Fund and Auroville Maintenance Fund, have moved from their office next to Pour Tous in Aspiration to the Town Hall. The present facilities next to Pour Tous will continue to serve as branch office.

Yoga intensive

A three-week intensive course on yoga for dedicated practitioners seeking to deepen understanding of the transformational power of yoga was held in Pitanga. It was facilitated by Sama Fabian from London.

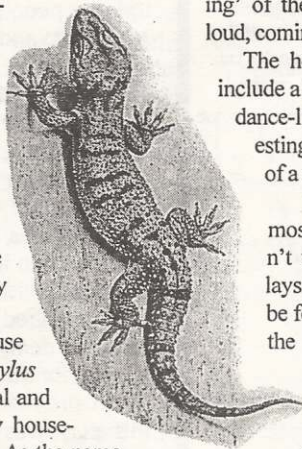
The 'chirping' of the Gecko

A friend suggested that I write an article about geckos. I started observing those friendly little creatures with which we closely cohabit.

As a child, I remember doing my homework in the evenings, by candle-light, in the company of geckos attracted by the insects flying around the flame... To me, a house without the odd gecko running about, scaling the walls and chirping to make his presence felt would seem very empty indeed...

The Asian House Gecko or *Hemidactylus frenatus* is an integral and essential part of any household in Tamil Nadu. As the name indicates, the house gecko prefers living in and around human dwellings. It is nocturnal and feeds chiefly on insects, including the dreaded mosquito, and is very popular in households as a 'pest-controller'. (especially on the nights when the winged termites arrive in swarms)

At night the lights in dwellings attract many insects that all the gecko needs to do is cling to the walls or ceiling, which it does with apparent noncha-



lance, and wait for its prey to fly by. Geckos are the most vocal of lizards, and the 'mode of expression' or 'chirping' of the house gecko is startlingly loud, coming from such a small creature.

The house gecko's mating habits include a 'courtship ritual' involving a dance-like chase, which is very interesting to observe, and the uttering of a distinct mating call.

The female gecko lays eggs, mostly in pairs, which she doesn't take care of, but which she lays in sheltered spots. They can be found in the oddest corners of the house (clothes cupboards, switchboards, electronic devices, sports shoes, pots and pans, etc.) These apparently harmless looking little gecko eggs have, in some cases, been known to cause major problems (depending on where they're laid). For example the breaking down of computers...

The house gecko, or 'Balli', as it is known locally, has a place in Tamil religion, and customs. At Kanchipuram, there is a temple where one finds a stone sculpture depicting the house gecko and people go to worship it to remove any ill omen that may befall them. There are

also a lot of beliefs and sayings related to the gecko. One of the most common beliefs is that when the 'chirping' of the gecko is heard the statement which has just been uttered is true. According to my observations, the gecko is indeed very receptive, and often appears to take part in conversations, chirping in acknowledgement when something important has been said.

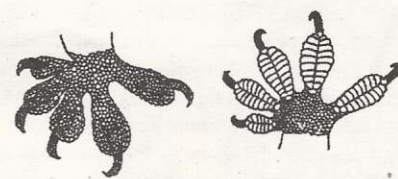
Beliefs linked to the chirping of the gecko do not stop there, though, and a whole "science" linked to it seems to have been developed centuries ago. According to this, in order to decipher the omen, or what the chirping foretells for an individual, one needs to take into consideration not only the direction from which it is heard (north, south, east, west, north-east, north-west, south-east, south-west, above or below...), but also the day of the week when it is heard. To give a few examples: If the chirping is heard from below on a Sunday, it means failure in attempts; if from the south-east on a Wednesday, gain of wealth; if from north-west on a Friday, quarrels and rebellion in the house...

According to this 'science', not only the chirping, but also the falling of the gecko on particular portions of an individual's anatomy foretells the good or

The feet of the gecko

Geckos are well known for their ability to run sideways on walls and upside down across ceilings. A gecko's foot has surface folds, and each fold has millions of microscopic hair like bristles, known as setae. The setae are each tipped with 400 to 1000 spatulae, which act as minute suction cups... When the spatulae comes into close contact with a surface, the van der Waals forces (the force to which the gecko's unique ability to cling to smooth surfaces is attributed) are produced, and bonds the foot onto that surface. This feature of the gecko's anatomy is very particular to the species, and has been inspiring scientists in the development of new, related technologies. In 2003, a kind of synthetic adhesive tape was created using this principle.

As amazing as it may seem, a single seta can lift the weight of an ant; A million setae can lift 20kg; and if the gecko used all its setae at the same time, it could support 128 kg!



evil which will befall the victim. Here are a few more examples: If a gecko falls on a person's right ear, it signifies a long life; if on the feet it means impending travel; if on the forehead, coronation; and if on the navel, gain of precious stones...

There is another 'modern Indian myth' of sorts related to the gecko. As one can sometimes read in the papers, some big scale food poisoning cases (in school canteens or 'free mid-day meal' centres) have been attributed to those little reptiles, which had accidentally fallen into a pot of food while it was being cooked. It is now a commonly held

belief that geckos are highly toxic and poisonous. However, research has been done which proves this wrong, and that the contamination of the food in those cases was not caused by the poor little gecko that accidentally drowned in a pot of sambar.

I just heard the chirping of the gecko. So I just decide, without going into calculations of what day of the week it is, whether the chirping is coming from a north-west or south-east direction, that it is an auspicious sign, and that the gecko acknowledges and is satisfied with the contents of my article.

Emmanuelle

BUSINESS

"It's high time to take the next step"

Marc, the new coordinator of the Auroville Board of Commerce (ABC), floats some of his ideas for strengthening Auroville's business sector

"Actually I prefer the term 'commerce' to business," explains Marc, "because 'business' implies merely profit-making whereas commerce is a broader term: it also includes research, the quality of the product and the welfare of the people who are working in a unit. I think it's the narrow conception of business which some people react to when they feel that business doesn't really belong in Auroville."

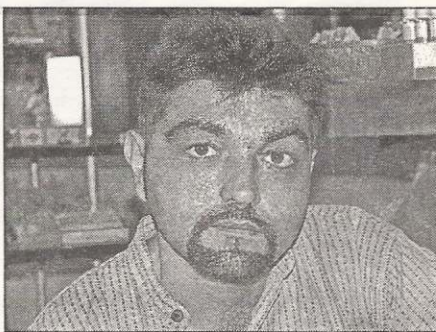
Marc has a background in commerce - he managed coffee shops in Barcelona and now runs a coffee consultancy - and is clear that "only through commerce will we be able to sustain the development of Auroville as well as uplift the local villages." He concedes, however, that the present state of commerce in Auroville is far from satisfactory. Recently he made a study of the financial health of the 120 commercial units of Auroville. Of these, 10-15 had a healthy turnover and profits, 50-60 were making a small to medium annual profit of between 1-7 lakhs rupees, but as many as 51 units were in minus. The bare figures do not tell the whole story, however. Not all the units which are in minus are necessarily badly-run or badly-conceived. "In fact, if you look at the balance sheet of some of these units before they make their contribution to Auroville they have some profits," explains Marc. "However, after making their contribution there is barely any net profit left or they slip into minus. I think we are stuck on the idea that all units should contribute 33% of their profits to Auroville. Certainly, when a unit is healthy it should give this much and

more, but when a unit is trying to establish itself - and when you start a company you need at least three to five years to put it on its feet - it makes no sense to ask more from it than it can give. After all, if the unit collapses it's the Auroville Foundation which is ultimately responsible for any liabilities. By the way, some companies with good profits make only a minimal contribution to the community because they don't believe their contributions are well-managed. But a major amount of the commercial units' contributions to the Auroville Maintenance Fund comes from only one unit, and that is worrying.

"Actually being successful in commerce in the present environment is very hard - you need to be a warrior. No wonder many Aurovilians give up or decide to keep their unit small. But this is where the ABC can play a critical role." Marc lists some of the services which he thinks the ABC should offer to the units. These include supporting prospective entrepreneurs through fast and efficient application procedures, product and marketing advice and loans; offering advice to all unit-holders regarding legal and labour issues; developing quality control standards for Auroville products; encouraging research and development; promoting training programmes for unit-holders and their employees; and assisting with marketing through, for example, organizing annual trade fairs of all Auroville products.

"I want to make ABC the place to refer to for all matters relating to commerce," says Marc. As a first step, he wants the ABC office to have a broadband connection so that any unit-holder wanting commerce-related information can come and browse the internet.

"Then I'd like to start 'coffee and commerce' get-togethers. There would be no agenda, just an opportunity for unit-holders to chat about their needs and their dreams. This doesn't happen at pre-



Marc

sent: in fact, there's not much communication at all between unit-holders."

Why not? "In the early days I can imagine it was very tough to get started as a commercial unit: I really admire what those pioneers have achieved. For most of them the prime motive was to support themselves and their immediate family: it was an individualistic enterprise where everybody felt they had to make it on their own. This attitude has become somewhat entrenched. But now there is a need for the next step, which is to understand that the commercial units do not 'belong' to their founders. Rather, they are Auroville entities which should be sustaining the township for many years to come." For Marc this implies, among other things, that some units need to become more efficient, and that there should be much more cooperation between the larger and the smaller units, for example in the sharing of marketing and financial expertise. Also, the present unit-holders need to be actively engaged in training those who will eventually

replace them.

In many units at present, the person who shares the responsibility with the unit-holder and who often has the most knowledge is the supervisor-manager, who is generally not an Aurovillian. "Often," explains Marc, "there comes a time when the supervisor wants to grow professionally, so he or she asks the unit-holder for more power and responsibility. But the unit-holder cannot make the supervisor a partner because he or she is not an Aurovillian. So sometimes the supervisor uses the skills and knowledge acquired with the Auroville unit to open up a competitor unit in the village turning out second-quality copies."

However, Marc believes there is a solution to this problem. "Auroville's strength is in innovation. The Auroville units should be coming up with new products and making them on a small or medium-scale. But once it is established that there is a good market for a product, the unit-holder could enter into an agreement with a unit based in a surrounding village unit to produce it on a larger scale. Of course, good quality control, marketing and product development is essential - this would be the responsibility of the Auroville unit - and the unit would receive a percentage of the village entrepreneur's profits, as in any licensing scheme. But once all this is worked out, the unit-holder would be able to pursue his creativity without the headaches associated with large-scale production, while the village entrepreneur would benefit from the increased sales which would result from being able to trade on Auroville's name. It's a win/win solution!"

If Auroville units took this path, one possible consequence would be to lessen the twice daily mass movement of

employees into and out of the Industrial Zone. In fact, Marc's vision is of a less-densely populated Industrial Zone with a central building containing various offices for research and development, design, marketing etc., and next to it the ABC office which would comprise a showroom for Auroville products, a conference hall and restaurant. Nearby would be small to medium-sized Auroville units which would be creating and producing the products on view in the showroom. "But all these ideas regarding village partnerships, the role of the ABC and the shape of the Industrial Zone," he stresses, "can surely be improved upon. That's why I need feedback."

Marc described the present situation, where Auroville is heavily dependent upon the contributions from mainly one unit, as "risky and unsustainable: it's like monoculture farming where you put all your eggs in one basket. I can visualise a scenario where there is a better balance in size between the units, and where the common denominator is, say, 15 employees. I don't think it's good to take the big risks which are associated with huge infrastructure and many employees: let the local partners take care of the larger production. At the same time, there are areas of immense commercial potential we could handle ourselves without hiring many outside employees. I'm thinking more of 'ethereal' services which Aurovilians already have skills in, like organizing seminars on issues of global importance. These could all be put under the heading of education. In fact, I'm convinced that the provision of education and educational services could become Auroville's main source of income in the future."

From an interview with Alan

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