

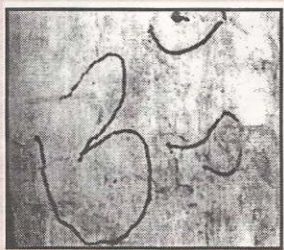
Auroville Today

SINCE 1988

DECEMBER 2000, No.143

COVER STORY:

How to make the yoga living?



- A grassroots spirituality
- Is this some kind of cult?
- Limited vision

- The Matrimandir foundation stone
- The Matrimandir guard

pages 1, 4 & 5

Many visitors comment upon the lack of overt signs of spirituality in Auroville. Those who stay longer learn that Aurovilians are engaged with much more than the outer manifestation of Auroville. Yet it is difficult to understand exactly what this 'other' Auroville is about; for when it comes to the way that Aurovilians practise yoga, there are no agreed methods or paths. Generally, these differences in approach generate little friction. However, there are instances when the fact that Aurovilians hold different perceptions of the nature of the yoga can lead to clashes on the material plane. A lot of the controversy generated by the 'Galaxy' model of the township, for example, is based upon different understandings of the 'weight' of Mother's words. When she approved the plan, did this mean that nothing could subsequently be changed, or was it to be understood as a first step in an evolving process? Those who tend to the more 'fundamentalist' end of the spectrum resist any modification on the grounds that we have no right to question 'Mother's will'. The 'evolutionists' argue that the yoga is an evolving yoga, therefore Mother would definitely have modified the original plan if she had been here today.

What really matters is to make the yoga living, to access and embody the truth which is manifesting today. How do we do this? How do we prevent, in other words, the yoga becoming either a matter of dogma or of personal whim? In the following pages different individuals reflect upon this crucial challenge.

"Is this some kind of cult?"

By Gordon Korstange

This question came from a friend of ours when she heard the story of Ruud Lohman wanting to temporarily leave Matrimandir, and the Mother replying, "Are you not useful at Matrimandir?" Our friend assumed that there was some kind of entrapment or exploitation going on.

I dismissed her question at the time but then wrote an article in *Collaboration* referring to an excellent book called *Spiritual Choices: The Problem of Recognizing Authentic Paths to Inner Transformation*, by Dick Anthony, Bruce Ecker and Ken Wilber (Paragon House, New York, 1987).

I am revisiting what I wrote ten years ago because I feel a necessity to relate to Sri Aurobindo and Mother more authentically. I have grown spiritually lazy, in part because their persons and spiritual achievements have assumed such towering proportions. I often find myself more "fascinated" with them and their spiritual worlds than I find myself ready to dedi-

cate myself to doing sadhana. I am "in the Yoga," included in the select group, but increasingly not "of the Yoga."

I think that I'm not alone here. We are living in the light of our gurus who are no longer on earth and must turn to the writings, to stories about them, and to commentaries extolling them. The danger is that these means of contact become the contact itself, the veritable finger pointing at the moon, not the moon... The authors of the above book classify spiritual groups on the basis of ethical monism (all individuals are inherently one with the Divine) or dualism (only some will be united with the Divine).

continued on page 5



Photos of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother among religious icons on a roadside stall in Pondicherry

A grassroots spirituality

Dr. Ananda Reddy is well-known in Auroville because of his weekly classes in Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine* at the Savitri Bhavan. He grew up in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram "at the feet of The Mother", then went on, with her permission, to become a liaison between the Ashram and Auroville. Soon afterwards, in 1970, he joined Auroville to teach at the Aspiration school. He left Auroville in 1976, obtained a Ph.D. in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy at the university of Madras, and is today one of the few scholars worldwide who present Sri Aurobindo's thought within India and abroad. Recently he founded the Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research (SACAR) in Pondicherry. Auroville Today interviewed him on his work.

AVToday: How do you generally present Sri Aurobindo's thought?

Ananda: It depends on where I am in the world, and whether I am addressing an audience that already knows about Sri Aurobindo, or one that is hearing his name for the first time. With Aurobindonians, I can go more into depth and speak from the heart. If there is a general audience, I speak from the mind and give basically Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of life, and in a later phase his metaphysics. I do not talk about Sri Aurobindo the person, because I am aware that there are many cults in the world, and people are bound to label us as one more cult.

If there is a series of lectures, I talk about Sri Aurobindo as a person in a second and third lecture. I present him as a person whose life has been integral, as one who has developed this thought on the basis of his own realizations. I explain how he has embraced the philosophical thoughts of India and the West, and how he has gone beyond religions towards a universal spirituality. Then I explain how his spirituality dif-

fers from the normal idea of spirituality, that there is no withdrawing from life but rather of divinising life and, ultimately, Matter. In this way there is a balanced presentation of the thought and the man behind it. If I would reverse the order, it would most probably be taken as a cult.

The tendency to turn Sri Aurobindo's teaching into a cult seems to be prevalent everywhere. Many quote the words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, often out of context and to suit their own purposes. Is there a danger that by doing this we will turn the Integral Yoga into yet another religion?

I once asked Champaklal why Sri Aurobindo's philosophy was being subjected to this sort of religiosity, and he answered that it was a passing phase and that Sri Aurobindo's thought and consciousness are too universal to be turned into a religion.

It is true that many people are getting into the trap of "Mother said". In fact this is a passive complacency, it is not the right attitude. It is a metaphysical truth

that what we call "the Mother's Force" is at work in this world. But if there is sunlight outside, I still must open my window to let it in. Quoting Mother and Sri Aurobindo does not imply that you let that force into your life — and perhaps, many who quote do not.

Quoting is often a sign of a beginners' aspiration. When one is a newcomer to this yoga, one needs external symbols to hold onto one's faith.

It is like putting a fence around a young plant to protect it. Quoting Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, offering incense or flowers at their Samadhi, paying homage to their pictures are necessary external aids to help one's aspiration. They are like ladders that help us to climb up.

To embark on a spiritual life requires a great amount of courage. The human mind is often not ready to give up its religious attitude — and that is the reason why many who have accepted Sri Aurobindo and The Mother continue to worship different god-heads and gurus.

(continued on page 4)

New entry document approved

Page 3

Where have the coconuts gone?

Page 6

Auroville Horse Tournament 2000

Page 7

**Architects Awards
Adopt an AV kid
Botanical garden project
In brief
Speaking from silence**

**2 Tamil heritage theatre 7
2 Short news 7
3 Towards a greener fridge 8
3 Language Lab beginnings 8
6**

Awards for Auroville architects

Ajit and Ratna won a UNESCO "Outstanding Project" award for the restoration of Hotel de l'Orient in Pondicherry. Anupama won the 1999 Young Architect's Award for her house in Auroville.

UNESCO instituted the "Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation" in order to help improve heritage conservation efforts in the Asia-Pacific region. For the year 2000 Award, twenty-six project entries were submitted from Nepal, Lao PDR, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, China, Australia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Antarctica. There were three private homes, three hotels, five commercial structures, five historical sites, two educational facilities, four religious structures, and four cultural institutions. In making their selections, the jury was particularly mindful of the project's impact on the local community, the use of appropriate materials and techniques, and respect for the building's history.

Hotel de l'Orient was a historic residence in the formerly French quarter of Pondicherry. It was renovated and converted into a ten-room hotel incorporating some new construction. The UNESCO Panel considered that "restoration of the Hotel de l'Orient proves that

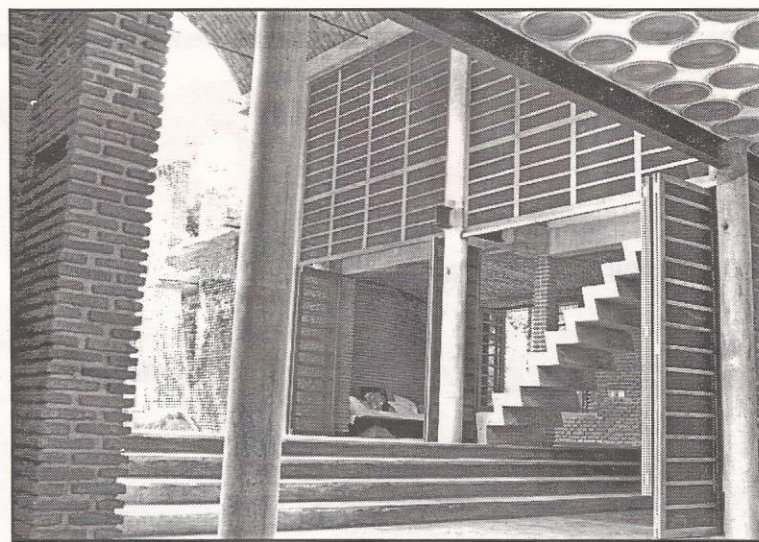
successful heritage conservation does not require massive intervention or rebuilding. This inspiring project was completed with minimal intervention, done relatively inexpensively, and maintained the integrity of both the exterior and the interior original architecture. The care and attention given to original design elements in the interior restoration gives to the Hotel de l'Orient admirable charm and historic authenticity. The addition of two guest-rooms and a staircase in order to make

the project economically viable illustrates the creative approach to the structure's adaptive conservation. In addition to contributing to the cultural enhancement of the community, the popularity of the hotel has underscored the validity of the decision to restore the building rather than demolish it."

UNESCO's award is particularly important as Ajit and Ratna Koujalgi, as members of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, INTACH, are actively engaged in educating the public about the need to preserve Pondicherry's unique architectural heritage, where traditional Tamil architecture and French colonial architecture exist side by side. UNESCO's award is an important recognition of the significance of INTACH's work for the Pondicherry union territory. (more on INTACH and Pondicherry in AVToday # 123, April 1999)

Anupama's house

The 1999 Young Architect's Award, sponsored by the Indian company J.K. Cement, was set up about 10 years ago "in an attempt to bring to the fore outstanding talent in architecture and design in India and neighbouring countries". The panel selecting the winners for AYA 1999 comprised eminent Indian architects. Anupama Kundoo won the award under the category of "India State Architecture Awards — Karnataka and Tamil Nadu States," for her house in Auroville, which, ironically, used very little cement in its construction.



Inside Anupama's house

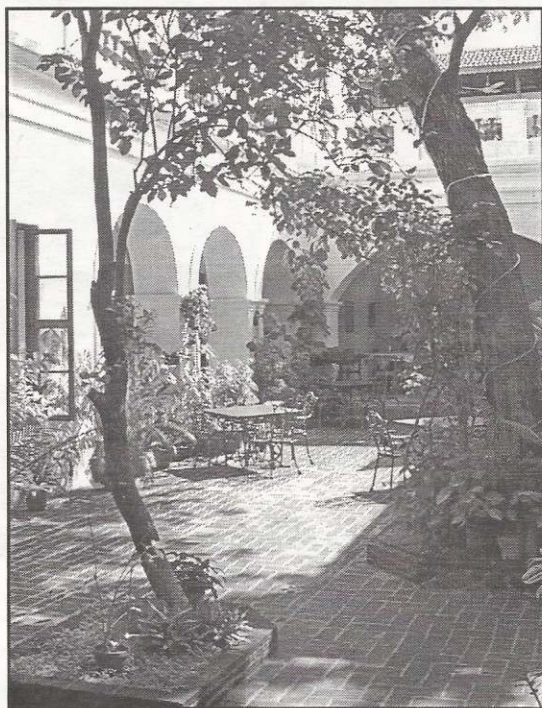
Anupama's house is essentially the manifestation of a research project. This search was a two-fold exploration. The first was for healthy and climatically comfortable low impact technologies that can form the basis of an aesthetically pleasing building language. The second search was for an eco-friendly structure in terms of integrated water, waste and energy management using renewable sources.

The first line of research resulted in various experiments. Anupama decided to minimise the use of steel and cement as much as possible, in view of the fact that their manufacture makes huge demands on India's energy production, and that additional energy costs are incurred in bringing these materials to the building site. The main walls of her house use therefore traditional *achakal* bricks (local village bricks that are 2.5 cm high) in lime mortar to which 10% cement was added to give the bonding its initial setting strength. For the roofs, experiments were made using not less than six different techniques. One roof vault has been built with burnt clay tubes

stacked along a catenary curve so that no structural steel for reinforcement was required. Another roof vault was built out of hollow burnt clay trapezoidal tubes, assembled in between trapezoidal beams with a minimum of structural steel reinforcement. A third interior slab that did not require insulation was made in RCC using burnt clay pots as fillers. The idea was to increase the effective depth and thereby save on steel, while at the same time reducing the volume of concrete.

In her search to fulfil the second ideal, the house runs on solar photovoltaics and uses passive solar systems for hot water etc. Water bodies have been integrated into the living space to provide for natural air-conditioning; they can also be used for a dip in summer as well as to water the garden, using a solar pump. The search for an eco-friendly structure was based on Anupama's handbook on the design methodology for integrated urban eco-planning, which she wrote in 1998 under a fellowship with the Indian Vastu-Shilpa Foundation.

Carel



Courtyard of Hotel de l'Orient

ECONOMY

ADOPT AN AV KID FOR 25 \$ ONLY

(with 100% tax exemption)

You can promote an AV teenager. You will receive monthly a smiling picture of your pupil, a progress report and a personal hand-written postcard.

Some of the AV's teens are facing a real financial crisis: living on their own, studying or working as trainees, they can't meet their basics needs. Their minus at Central Fund increases regularly without any other issue possible. Help them to find a more comfortable place in the new world. Don't judge them, just express your good will, your support..

This message appeared on October 14, 2000 on the front page of the Auroville News No. 858. It evoked a wide range of reactions among its readers. Some took it with humour, others were shocked or even scandalized. Still others were simply happy that the issue had been raised. But no matter how the message was received (and as it turns out it wasn't supposed to be taken literally), it definitely brought attention to a problem which the Auroville community must address. While it is difficult to make generalizations about young people as a whole, it is a fact that some face great financial difficulty.

Often this is a reflection of the economic circumstances of their families. Some adults in Auroville are self-supporting by virtue of access to foreign currency or the management of commercial units. Such families can afford to meet the daily expenses of their children, in addition to the costs of higher studies in some cases. When the parents themselves live on an Auroville maintenance, however, then their children must rely solely on the community for support. This has tremendous implications for the kinds of life choices these young people can make.

The Gratitude Group was established to administer the maintenances of Auroville youth. For students living with their parents, the maintenance is officially set at Rs 1500. Young people living on their own either as students or trainees can receive between

Rs 1500 to 2500. As each individual situation differs however, the Gratitude group is not always able to follow its own guidelines. According to Jean-Francois, a member of the Gratitude Group and author of the ironic AV News message, "Often decisions about how much maintenance to give are made based on 'feeling', based on the perception one has of a particular young person...and according to one's own set of values. Many judgements are based upon impressions, rather than reality."

Part of the difficulty in allotting youth maintenances lies in the subjective nature of evaluating which individual young people are contributing to the community, either through work or in terms of their dedication to academic studies. Usha, who in the past worked as a trainee at the Lumière graphics unit and later on at the Financial Service, feels that, "youth must prove themselves concretely, not just with words. They must prove they are serious in what they undertake." Demonstrating seriousness, however, may not be easy for everyone, especially since young people in Auroville receive very little academic or career guidance.

When it comes to higher studies, there is no doubt that young people who live off maintenances do not have the option to study elsewhere in India or abroad. The inability to educate oneself in the field of one's choice can be a significant obstacle to any individual's growth.

Yet this is not the only challenge posed by limited funds. For those young people who prefer to remain in Auroville, working in the area of their interest is not always easy. Some, after their initial studies are over, feel a pressure to forsake their real interests in order to do work which allows them to earn a more substantial maintenance. Matthieu, a 16-year-old Last School student heavily involved in music and arts is one such case. "When my studies are over, I will find a job to earn a maintenance which can cover my costs. As I am more oriented towards art, I don't think the job I will find will be related to my basic interests." Martanda, a 22-year-old who has worked in various capacities and is presently looking for the right job, finds himself in a similar situation. "I want to do what interests me, something which I can learn from. I think that Auroville should support me financially in this."

Auroville economy failings

This problem is linked to more general shortcomings in Auroville's present economy. As Usha points out, "If you work for a service, the maintenance you can receive is very minimal." In this way young people, like adults, are actually encouraged to work in commercial units which offer more substantial maintenances. Yet considering the fact that services have an important role to play in Auroville's present and future society, shouldn't the maintenances be raised

in order to equal those paid in commercial units?

Naturally, the pressure that any one individual feels to earn a certain maintenance depends upon her/his expenses. In addition to basic living expenses, many young people incur costs which correspond to their social needs. One major expense is petrol, as youth have a particular need for freedom of mobility. Then there are the cafes and restaurants, both inside and outside the community. Finally, there are more personalized needs, such as clothes, cigarettes for those who smoke, or music CDs. However, in Auroville, contrary to western society, the youth don't have the option to work to earn enough money in order to buy luxury items such as a music system or a motor bike, or go on a travel trip. The motivations behind the spending habits of young people are varied due to cultural differences. Also, Aurovilians, like everyone else in the world, are to some extent part of the global society of consumerism, in which one is often encouraged to spend regardless of one's actual means. Equally important is the fact that operating solely through an account, instead of cash, can lead people to spend without thinking twice. Those who spend the most are not necessarily those who can afford to do so. The question arises as to who is instructing young people in the proper handling and management of money. Says Jean-Francois, "Youth often replicate their perceptions about adult

behaviour. Frequently, the adults they are most exposed to are not those who work eight hours a day..."

In the end, it would seem that resolving the problem of the youth economy in Auroville cannot be only at the level of finance. The issue is far greater than a question of money, as it touches upon social relations among people. As Jean-Francois proposes, possible solutions might lie in "more solidarity, taking care of people at different levels, bringing out more activities for the youth, and maybe, creating more possibilities for them".

There is no denying that the youth of Auroville have a great deal of freedom at their disposal, given that many of the pressures and conventions found in other societies are not imposed here. At the same time, restricted access to resources and guidance imposes severe limitations on what young people can choose to do with their lives. Ultimately, this will affect the progress of Auroville, as it is only through the growth of all individuals that the community as a whole can progress. Although the youth of Auroville does not represent a large segment of the society today, there is every indication that its numbers will grow in future and that young people will play an increasingly important role in the life of the community.

Emmanuele

Emmanuele is a 21-year-old french Aurovillian. She joined AVToday recently.

New Entry document approved

Entry Group plans to re-open Auroville soon

After a one-year process, a new document on joining Auroville has been accepted by a meeting of the Residents' Assembly. The main changes are that the newcomer period has been extended from one to two years and that newcomers are expected to participate in the Economy 2000 experiment. The document also contains a confusing statement about housing, to be clarified in a future attachment. A declaration that the newcomer understands and agrees with the document and commits him/herself fully to the realization of the ideals of Auroville, has to be signed.

The way this new document has come about raises certain questions. When Auroville closed its doors to newcomers in October 1999, the reason given was that Auroville could not offer decent housing to its newcomers and that newcomers were often housed in inappropriate structures. Members of the Entry Group explained that about 40% of the new applicants — an average of four persons every month — were not in a position to provide the finances for their own housing and hence ended up living in storeroom-like structures. By closing Auroville, the Entry Group was attempting to find solutions by "referring the problem to the community" — in other words, by putting pressure on the community to find a solution to the housing crisis.

While waiting for the community's response, the Entry Group — witnessing, in the words of some of its members, "the development of a class society where affluent Aurovilians built houses in the price range of 10-30 lakhs (US \$ 20,000 - 60000) while

others had to struggle to find a decent accommodation and break even with the monthly expenses" — embarked upon an attempt to rewrite the entry policy. This effort was stimulated by the introduction of the Economy 2000 experiment, in which more than 300 individuals opted to share their income, and moves were set in motion to make it mandatory for newcomers to join the experiment. This provoked strong protests within the community as the Economy 2000 experiment is not universally regarded as a step towards the ideal economy Mother had described. The final wording was modified to read "newcomers are expected to participate". Objections were also raised to other strong statements in the first and subsequent drafts of the revision. (See AVToday #135, April 2000 and #137, June 2000)

It took the Entry group, together with other interested Aurovilians, about one year to come to a new policy document. It regularly called upon the community to participate, and published drafts and final versions of the document in the AVNews before the Residents' Assembly meeting was called to ratify it. The 70 or so Aurovilians who attended this meeting — the choice of the day and time for this meeting, Saturday afternoon at 5 p.m., should be questioned — soon learned that the time for discussion was over. It was 'yes' or 'no', a process with which not all who attended agreed. Finally, only 45 people voted: 30 in favour and 15 against. The Entry Group then announced that the docu-

ment had been ratified with a two-thirds majority.

"Those who expressed reservations may please acknowledge that it is exceedingly difficult in Auroville to reach consensus on any policy document, even after having followed all the necessary steps — in this case, a transparent one-year process, with regular calls for participation to the whole community, resulting in a wide-spectrum involvement. Still, at one point, a conclusion has to be reached for the work pertaining to the document to start, in this case, for the entry process to resume," wrote the Entry Group in the Auroville News, announcing the ratification of the document. And the Entry Group later confirmed that, as soon as the two appendices to the document "Joining Auroville" (one on housing policy the other on economy) are ready, newcomers can join again.

Uneasiness

While it is good news that Auroville will soon reopen its doors to those who aspire to join, feelings of uneasiness remain, notwithstanding all the good intentions and the hard work done to come to this new document.

The main criticism is, of course, that the reason why Auroville was closed — to solve the problems of those who would like to join Auroville but who do not have the financial means to contribute towards a house — has not been solved. The attempt of the Entry Group to pressurize Auroville to find a solution by closing has failed. What is worrying is that even today no working group is

engaged in finding a solution to this problem.

Another criticism concerns the way in which the new Entry document has been made, as the process was less transparent than the Entry Group maintained. What was presented for ratification was what a certain group of Aurovilians felt should be the new entry rules for Auroville. Many of the suggestions for changes or deletions of parts of the document or to improve the document did not get incorporated in the final draft because those responsible for the rewrite did not agree with them. These suggestions were never presented to the community.

This problem touches upon one of the core problems of decision-making in Auroville. The case of transparency would certainly have been served by publishing all the suggestions made in the AVNews, together with the reasons for rejecting them, even though this process would have been very time consuming.

A third criticism is that, since the meeting of the Residents' Assembly was called only to cast a vote, better systems could have been thought of to allow for a wider community participation, such as voting by mail or e-mail. For can it truly be said that the community has accepted a document if only 30 out of the 900 adults explicitly approved it?

And finally, in view of the large number of people within the community who objected to the closing of Auroville, the question begs to be answered why there was no vote called on formally ending the closing.

Carel

ENVIRONMENT

Planting hopefully

The new botanical gardens project

In March 2000, Auroville bought a 50-acre plot of land in the green belt from a real estate developer, which the latter had planned to turn into a large scale residential area called "Peaceful City". The land had been stripped of its trees and had been divided into 700 housing plots. The land, which has a three meter high barbed wire fence around it, will now be turned into a botanical garden.

The proposed botanical gardens are described by Paul Blanchflower, member of the Auroville Botanical Gardens group, as "a living textbook of botany". The project includes a 10-acre formal garden where ornamental plants and various specialist gardens including orchids, cacti and medicinal plants

will be grown in landscaped grounds beside a lake. The largest part of the project, the arboretum, will cover 80 acres, displaying up to 1,500 trees and plants from around India, Africa, Australia and the Americas. There are also plans for a herbarium, an information and environmental centre, educational facilities, a caretaker's house, a laboratory, accommodation for visiting students, and plant and tree nurseries.

But first attention will be given to an area adjoining the Success sanctuary which will provide an undisturbed environment for plants and animals. Here greenworkers Paul, Nevi and Walter have launched headlong into preparations for planting 5,000 tropical dry evergreen trees. The first tree-plantings in the sanctuary will include Miracle (*Memecylon umbellatum*) and Ebony (*Diospyros ebenum*) and other varieties from the specific forest type occurring only in the 60 kilometer-wide strip along the southeast Indian coast.

"The idea for a botanical garden has been a dream for a long time," reads the project outline. More specifically it has been the dream of the three people steering the project. Arriving in Auroville in 1978, Walter Gastmans founded the Shakti Nursery and has run the Index Seminum and



Seedlings at the Shakti nursery ready for planting.

kept the Auroville Herbarium for ten years. Born in Auroville, Nevi Pingel, besides running a nursery for drought-resistant ornamental plants and managing an orchid collection intended for the gardens, also coordinated a Canadian-funded reforestation project in Auroville. Arriving in 1991, Paul Blanchflower brings to the project a B.A. in Ecology and Forestry Science from Edinburgh University (Scotland), as well as experience gained in coordinating forest group plantings and

managing the Fertile forest since 1995.

The project holders admit they're ambitious — they've begun work on a long-term project without even having secured the funds to cover this year's labour, compost and tools, but they are hopeful that support will materialize as it has done for other Auroville environmental projects in the past.

Jesse

"What we are suggesting for the botanical gardens is a collection of plants from all over the tropics, from India, Africa, Australia and the Americas. These plants will be able to grow in our environment, but will have evolved in many different niches. To see them all together in one place will be an education in itself. For the future of the planet lies in planting trees, not in cutting down forests. Auroville's new botanical gardens project hopes to communicate this message to the world."

Paul

In brief

● Kireet meets community

On October 27th, Dr. Kireet Joshi, Chairman of the Auroville Foundation, addressed a large gathering of Aurovilians and expressed his concerns about Auroville's development especially as regards organization, economy and education. He stressed that Auroville's organizational problems should be resolved on the basis of the inner aspiration for all to agree, that Auroville should realize an internal economy without exchange of money at the earliest, and that the children should be put at the centre of Auroville.

● Platform elects W.C.

The Executive Council, feeling strongly that "the Platform experiment is a useful and wonderful tool to hear and to listen to the voice of the community, and that it should be developed as a functional working gathering," called for a platform meeting to clarify the position of the interim Working Committee. Only 30 people attended the meeting, which agreed to recommend 4 people as formal members of the Working Committee for a 2-year period till September 2002. The community has 2 weeks to give feedback.

● Master Plan to Delhi

The Auroville Master Plan, which was approved by the Auroville Residents Assembly and the Governing Board and was subsequently further elaborated with the help of Mr. Meshram, Chief Town Planner of the Urban Development Ministry and his team, Delhi, and by Mr. Dattatri, Former Chief Town Planner, Chennai, has been sent to the Ministry of Human Resource Development at the beginning of December.

● Housing Service Report

Between July and October the Housing Service spent nearly Rs 5 lakhs on 36 different roofing and maintenance repairs, and Rs 5.3 lakhs on construction work for a family house and renovating the 'Carpenters' housing complex. It also facilitated 'loan agreements' with long-term guests and newcomers to the tune of Rs 25 lakhs, as well as the transfer of eleven houses between Aurovilians. It is also involved in the collective housing projects of Rêve and Creativity and engages in mediating in housing disputes.

● Aurosoya S.O.S.

Aurosoya, Auroville's tofu, soymilk and tempeh manufacturing unit, has sounded the alarm. It needs to shift to a new location since it will have to move out of the Bharat Nivas restaurant, and it also needs new equipment. For more information contact Diksha at Aurosoya, Bharat Nivas, Auroville 605101.

● Obituary David Brower

David R. Brower, Chairman of the Earth Island Institute, USA, the eminent environmentalist who helped to shape the face of the environmental movement, died at the age of 88 on November 5th. Brower, who was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times, was a staunch supporter of Auroville.

A grassroots spirituality

continued from page 1

There is a certain amount of human inertia that prevents people from exploring the spiritual life on the basis of their inner faith alone. But if one learns to consciously use the external forms, even the adoration of the gods, as a "ladder," then one comes to a stage where one feels the Presence within and the outside help is no longer needed. When one is up, one no longer needs the ladder.

Some Aurovilians feel the need to use other methods and techniques to realize a spiritual consciousness — perhaps as another 'ladder.' What are your views on this?

It all depends on the individual. Normally I would say that if one feels the need to relate to other approaches for one's spiritual growth, that's fine. I do not believe that any barriers should be imposed in Auroville, that one must do only this and nothing else. Let individuals choose any technique that they want, let the experience be rich, and let's not narrow spiritual life into one strict path. The only conditions needed are sincerity and the aspiration for a higher life, what I would call faithfulness, the faith the Bhagavad Gita speaks of, the *shraddha*, the inner dedication, the inner wanting to be that ideal. Let's guard against becoming another 'ism'.

One should not perhaps even insist that a person follow Sri Aurobindo or the Mother, but as the Mother herself emphasized, one should be a sincere seeker of the Divine Truth and Perfection. At one point something within the person may drive him or her to that discovery which is the Mother's Presence or Force. For those who have chosen to live in Auroville, I would say that, sooner or later, something will lead them to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother because of the special atmosphere that They have established in Auroville. It is not a question of developing mental knowledge and reading *The Life Divine* or *The Synthesis of Yoga*, but of developing an inner need where it becomes essential to find Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in one's

life. It is the need for the inner discovery.

When I wanted to leave the Ashram to continue my studies in America in 1970, I asked The Mother's permission. Her answer was remarkable: "If...you aspire to get ready for the future and the new creation it prepares, remain here and prepare yourself for what is to come." On another occasion when asked about the Divine help being available everywhere, She said something to the effect, "The Divine help is available everywhere, but we have prepared here a special atmosphere because of which it becomes easier in this place for one to realize one's soul."

The presence of such an atmosphere, which is so needed for the psychic realization is, I believe, the reason why so many people visit the Ashram in Pondicherry. Somehow, in some way their psychic being has reached a point where it is coming forward and they need to breathe this atmosphere. This perhaps explains also the pressure of people wanting to come to Auroville.

For those who already have the inner connection, I do not believe that experimenting with different paths is of any help, it is only a waste of time. For instance, I have noticed that the so-called gains of meditation retreats are only temporary. For a week or so, the ego feels satisfied, for one achieves a certain mental silence or clarity, but then one falls back into the usual chaos of one's life and no change is effected in the outer workings of life. If one's goal is Integral Yoga or the transformation of oneself, then as Sri Aurobindo says, it is the Mother's Shakti alone that can help us in reaching the goal.

So for those who do not have an inner contact, these practices are good approach points, but those who do should not go back to them. They are windows to enter the house, but not doors to go out.

It is often argued that, even after one has established an inner connection

with the Mother, there are times when one feels disconnected, and that one is not progressing in one's spiritual life. Then there is sometimes a desire to follow other paths.

But I do not believe that in these instances experimenting with different paths will help. It is much better, as Sri Aurobindo has explained in many letters to his disciples, not to be perturbed, not to ask yourself too many questions about whether you are progressing or not. For how do you know that you are not progressing? It is only your mind that might think otherwise, for often something is being worked out in us behind the surface being. If one remains quiet, with a quiet trust in The Mother, then suddenly something new comes and we have the certainty that we are on the way once again! For those who have that inner connection, a silent aspiration, a deep trust and reliance on Mother's force are of great importance.

There is a danger in Auroville of a constant dilution of the spiritual atmosphere, as there is a continuous inflow of new people who have not had any exposure to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. For that there must be a core group of conscious sadhaks there to withstand this kind of inflow, and to serve as living examples. For instance, in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, after the Mother's passing, we looked to Nolini and Champaklal and a few others for help. So, if there is a concrete vibration from an inside group of sadhaks who are open exclusively to the Mother's Force, then the newcomers will feel the difference in that vibration and seek it out for guidance. But it is important that the newcomers are aware of the reason why they want to join Auroville. If one comes to Auroville drawn by any of its outer aspects, then things do not work out. If one comes to serve the Divine Consciousness — call it Mother, Sri Aurobindo or whatever — as stated in the Auroville Charter, then spiritual progress is bound to happen.

You speak about 'opening to The Mother's Force' and 'finding Sri

Aurobindo and the Mother in one's life'. Could you explain in a few words what exactly is meant by this?

What we mean by the Mother's Force is the Divine Force that descends from above to transform our nature into the divine nature. It is specifically the transformative force of the Divine that we call the Mother's Force.

One can open to it by opening the heart centre and the mind centres to all that is above and behind them. This can be done principally by aspiration, prayer, bhakti, surrender to the divine Force and rejection of all that stands in the way of what we aspire for.

As regards finding them in our life what I mean is that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother represent a certain Consciousness which stands for a transformation of one's nature and not for an individualistic inner realization alone. Most may not be ready for such a change of consciousness or transformation of one's nature. They may not even feel the need for such a thing. And as long as they do not feel such a need they are not inwardly ready for the discovery of Sri Aurobindo in their life. But, it is alright. Not all are meant to be disciples of Sri Aurobindo. There are myriad ways of evolution and each soul chooses its own destined path!

Earlier you had mentioned that Sri Aurobindo's concept of spirituality is different from others. In what way is it so?

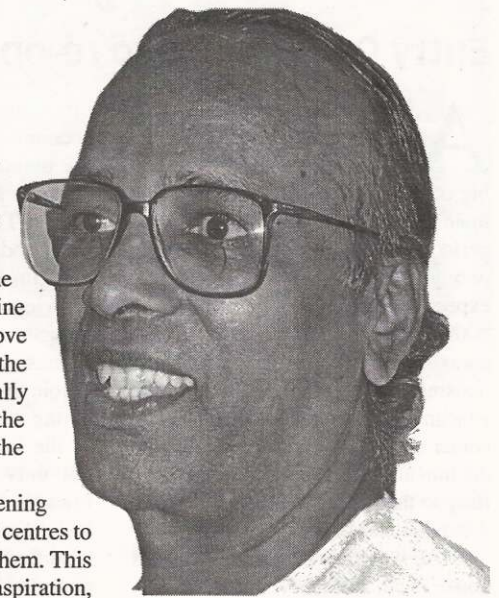
Sri Aurobindo's concept of spirituality differs from other concepts because of his insistence on surrender to and reliance on the Universal Shakti, what we call the Mother's Force. This crucial concept in the Integral Yoga represents the working of a Force from above that can help us in our sadhana, and carry us to our goal. It is often not realised that this reliance on the Mother's Force is the greatest possible shortcut for man's spiritual growth. In fact, it is an invaluable spiritual boon given to mankind by Sri Aurobindo.

To develop this relationship between oneself and the Universal Shakti, reading the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother — even if one is experimenting with other spiritual paths — is very necessary, because the consciousness and force of their words sink into your subconscious and hasten the discovery of your inner being.

But there are, of course, also other ways to connect with this force and with the presence of the Mother within — to the awareness of your own psychic being. The Mother stressed the importance of work for all sadhaks of this yoga. Once She wrote to me: "It is in the work that we must progress and purify ourselves". It is my own experience that the most intense contact with the Mother is through work. Meditation is still born of the mind and has a tendency towards withdrawal from life. But work is of extreme importance in Integral Yoga, work that is inwardly dedicated to the Divine in the spirit of karma yoga. Work per se, of course, has no value.

The Mother said that after fifty years, Sri Aurobindo's thought will have been accepted in the world. How far has that been realised?

I think fully. Sri Aurobindo's consciousness has established itself in the world in different ways. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have sown seed-thoughts all over the world and Auroville is one such seed-thought blossoming out into reality. Today, I find all open-minded thinkers in the



Ananda Reddy

world expounding ideas that have been outlined by Sri Aurobindo. The terms that they use differ according to their cultural and social background, but the general line of their thinking is in keeping with Sri Aurobindo's vision and understanding. The concepts of evolution of consciousness, transformation, the validity of a spiritual life as the only way out for our present problems are spreading throughout the world.

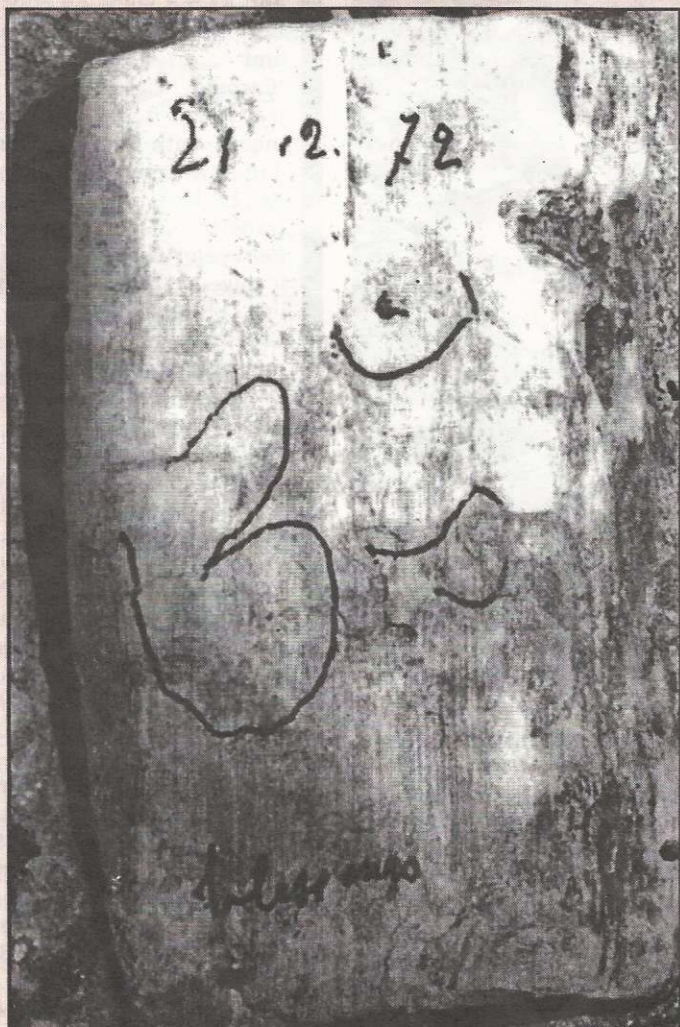
It may well be that in the future Sri Aurobindo's name will not be known, but all will be united by his consciousness — the Supramental. Sri Aurobindo may not be accepted necessarily as a spiritual leader — in fact he need not be for then his philosophy would become another narrow 'ism' — but as the herald of a new consciousness, the Supramental Consciousness, and as the harbinger of the New Race beyond the human species.

What effects of the working of the Supramental Consciousness do you see in the world?

One of the workings of the Supramental Consciousness is in the cleansing of all falsehoods. All these millenia falsehood was lying low and disrupting spiritual progress from behind. Now, due to the working of the Supramental Consciousness, everywhere, wherever there is a falsehood — in the individual, family, caste, group or nation — it is being exposed. Religion has allowed falsehoods to hide, but now, it is an open battle. That's how I view the struggles in the world today, and I am not disturbed by all the violence and the wars that are going on in different forms.

Another working of the Supramental Consciousness is the inexplicable universalization of spiritual thought. Everywhere one finds a growing number of individuals who are embarking on a spiritual quest. Tomorrow's world may not need *avatars* or *vibhuts* anymore. The time of the great spiritual leaders and intellects and visionaries will slowly recede. In the same way that grass springs up after the first rainfall, a new spiritual consciousness is emerging everywhere due to the downpour of the Supramental Force and Consciousness on the world. That new Consciousness will approach each open and aspiring individual at the grassroots level in the manner needed by him or her. It is the time of the spirituality of the common man. The spirituality of tomorrow will belong to mankind as a whole, not to the religious and moralist elite. That is why I emphasize that it does not matter if Sri Aurobindo is known or is not recognised much tomorrow, for the Supramental Consciousness will awaken mankind in general to spirituality and thus fulfil the work for which both The Mother and Sri Aurobindo have taken birth this time.

Interview by Caryl and Bindu Dr. Ananda Reddy can be reached at: sacar@vsnl.com



Matrimandir foundation stone

What astounds me, thinking philosophically, is that The Mother has given Matrimandir the foundation of AUM, chiseled in hard granite, with her name signed underneath. For no other building has The Mother given AUM for its foundation. In one of her writings She gave the significance of AUM as 'the signature of the Lord'. What does it mean? The scriptures say that from AUM the world was created. We have here a second AUM in Matter, in the foundation of the Matrimandir — which itself is the symbol of the Supramental action of the world. That places the true importance of the Matrimandir not only in the presence of The Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's symbol and of the crystal, but deep in its very foundation. It turns Matrimandir literally into the cradle of a New Creation, from Matter upwards, just as the first one had been from the Spirit downwards.

Ananda Reddy

Limited vision

Devotees' views of Sri Aurobindo and Mother.

The images we hold of Sri Aurobindo and Mother tend to be sanctified and one-dimensional. Why? And what are the consequences of viewing them in this way? Alan reflects.

I can't help feeling that Sri Aurobindo and Mother have had a bad press...and mainly from their followers. For when I read what Sri Aurobindo and Mother have said or written, and when I talk to those who had met them, I get a very different picture from that which emerges from the books about them. Sri Aurobindo and Mother — to put it palely — eluded categorization. Not only were they barrier-breakers who constantly challenged stereotypes and convention, but, on a more intimate scale, they also related to each sadhak in a different way. Yet the images which emerge from many of the biographies and reminiscences about them tend to be one-dimensional and sanitized, the typical products of hagiography.

Why is this? In Sri Aurobindo's case the answer comes pat: "My life has not been lived on the surface for men to see", he wrote. Yet there is more than enough evidence in his writings and in his letters of his playfulness, irony, unstuffiness and willingness to make risqué statements, qualities which tend to be downplayed in biographies in favour of an image of Olympian detachment. In Mother's case, the documentation is far more complete, yet even here one sees her biographers picking and choosing the aspects which they want to emphasize, and ironing out the apparent contradictions. An avatar who wears lipstick? No way!

Avatarhood, or, rather, their followers' assumptions about how an avatar should behave, is surely another reason why there is a certain unwillingness to portray their more 'human' qualities. To take but one example: there was (and still is) a widespread belief among their followers that Sri Aurobindo and Mother could never make a mistake. If they misspelled a word, well, it wasn't a mistake, there was a higher reason for it. Similarly if Mother translated or read a line of Savitri which later turned out to contain a mistaken transcription, under no circumstances could the line be

changed because Mother, through reading it, had given it her spiritual imprimatur.

Sri Aurobindo himself pointed out that this common view of the avatar's infallibility regarding material details was quite beside the mark:

"Men's way of doing things well is through a clear mental connection; they see things and do things with the mind and what they want is a mental and human perfection. When they think of a manifestation of Divinity, they think it must be an extraordinary perfection in doing ordinary human things — an accurate memory, not making mistakes, not undergoing any defeat or failure...All that has nothing to do with manifesting the Divine." (Letters on Yoga, pps 410-11)

The assumption of avatic infallibility also leads Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's biographers to portray their yogic path as a linear one, a straight line of constant progress culminating in triumphant achievement. Yet the reality — as evidenced by Sri Aurobindo's frequent revisions of his major works and by Mother's comments in the Agenda — is quite different. Both Sri Aurobindo and Mother were feeling their way — and sometimes they had to backtrack or modify previous statements in the light of new discoveries. Sri Aurobindo, for example, doubted that the physical mind could be an instrument of transformation, whereas Mother was later to discover that it could be a very powerful lever.

Another example of the way in which biographers practise selective vision is in the way they ignore certain aspects of Mother as revealed through the Agenda conversations. In these conversations Mother is often moving from 'poise' to 'poise', from one level of consciousness to another. She was not always speaking as the supreme Mother: at times she could be an irascible old lady growling out her disapproval of sadhaks' behaviour, or someone who was misled by the intrigues of some of her disciples. This 'other'

Mother is not mentioned by the biographers presumably because they assume, once again, that avatarhood and human fallibility cannot coexist in the same person. Sri Aurobindo's response remains clear. "...not making mistakes, not undergoing any defeat or failure...All that has nothing to do with manifesting the Divine."

But one of the main reasons, I would suggest, why Sri Aurobindo and Mother are often portrayed as remotely perfect figures who have achieved all is that this relieves us of the responsibility of making our own spiritual discoveries. This is a tricky one. Sri Aurobindo and Mother explained time and again that if the sadhak made a true surrender to them, they would take full responsibility for that sadhak's yoga: this is the powerful path of surrender, of bhakti. However bhakti can shade into passivity, and neither Sri Aurobindo nor Mother wanted door-mats for followers. They wanted a self-giving which was a product of free will, and they certainly didn't preclude people questioning them or even challenging them as a means to arriving at this end.

Mother once described Sri Aurobindo as 'a direct action from the Supreme'. This in itself should be a sufficient warning against attempting to define him, to frame him in terms however grandiose, for the Supreme is not constrained by our conceptions of how It should act. It is more akin to a force, to a free and agile movement which takes up and uses everything in order to hasten transformation. Identifying Sri Aurobindo and Mother too closely with their historical manifestations, or with images we have superimposed upon them, may cause us to miss the unfolding, the flow of the Becoming which, moment by moment, births a totally new set of conditions and possibilities.

Paradoxically, we may need to abandon the Sri Aurobindo and Mother whom we think we know in order to contact, to live, what they truly represent.

The Matrimandir guard

His name is Jayaram. He has known Auroville since its very beginning. He was there when the amphitheater was built, working as a "mason's helper" for half a rupee a day. He saw the inauguration of Auroville. He worked at the Matrimandir nursery, he worked at many other places in Auroville, then toured India as a bus driver for six years, but he always came back to Matrimandir. For this, he says, is his place.

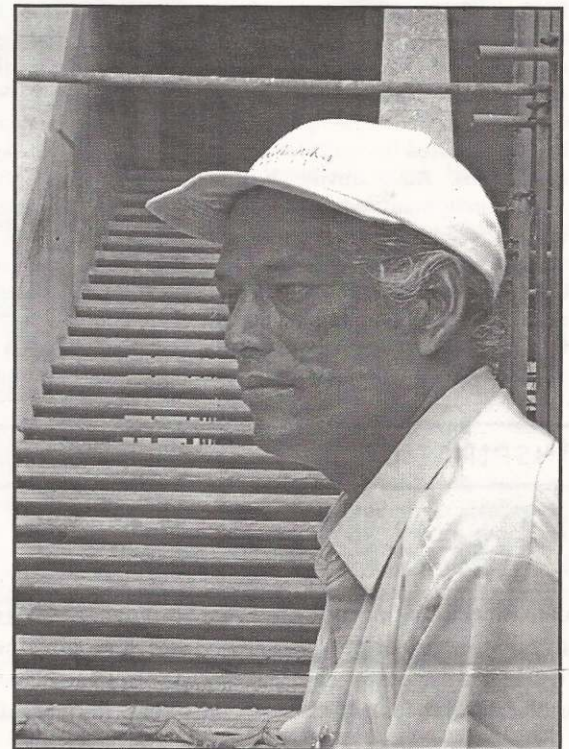
"I want to become Aurovilian," he used to say in those early days. "Why?" Mother asked, when he stood in front of Her. "To give service," was his answer. She accepted him.

Today, you will find him at the entrance to the Matrimandir, seated on a stool with a big book in front of him, and a crutch by his side ever since he lost a leg some years ago. "Namaskar," he greets visitors, before asking them to sign their name in the book. The Aurovilians pass by with a greeting. He knows their names and doesn't bother to ask them to sign — for many of them don't like what they perceive of as bureaucracy. Jayaram quietly writes their names himself.

Jayaram's 'duty,' as he calls it, is from 8 in the morning until 8 in the evening. Sitting there, watching people, signing their names. His is a quiet presence, indicating that access to Matrimandir is subject to a minimum of rules — please sign the book. And for those who are visiting Auroville, please bring your pass. Problems are rare, and have invariably to do with Aurovilians bringing guests without a pass or guests overstaying the allotted time in the Chamber. All problems are solved,

mostly quietly.

Jayaram also organizes the schedule of the Aurovilians and newcomers who volunteer for 'Chamber duty'. Sometimes this is difficult, as people are not always available. But Jayaram does not do Chamber duty himself. In fact, Jayaram has never seen the



Jayaram

Chamber. Why? "I'm not ready," he answers with a shy smile. "Mother will tell me when my time has come."

"When there are few visitors, I become silent, sitting here in the shadow of the Matrimandir," confides Jayaram. "One feels the peacefulness of the place entering oneself."

Carel

"Is this some kind of cult?"

continued from page 1

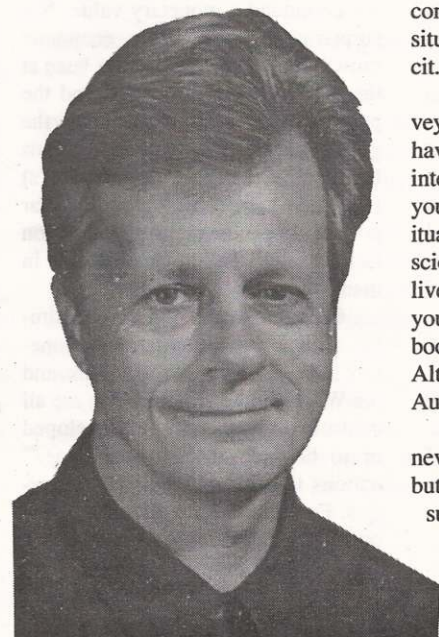
Clearly Sri Aurobindo and Mother's path is monistic, yet there is a tendency to elevate that path, and by implication those who have chosen it, into a select group following the Truth.

Some of this has to do with the complexity of the Yoga and its far-reaching evolutionary goals and some with our self-protective egos. The issue is the belief that we are inherently purer than others simply because we have chosen the Integral Yoga.

An interesting area of dualism I find present among us is the often arrogant dismissal of religion. Recently, at the All-USA-Meeting, Dr. Karan Singh's talk on efforts to promote the unity of religions was given a strongly critical greeting by some in the audience who were voicing a common attitude in the Yoga. Once again, dualism triumphs, even though the complex difference between the religious and the spiritual is seldom investigated thoroughly. Mother said, "No religion," therefore we are not religious. End of discussion.

It does not help matters when we characterize ourselves as in the forefront of evolutionary consciousness,

"Mother's Helpers" in birth after birth. We can believe that we were "meant" to be on the golden boat, or we can say that we happened to be a part of humanity at a certain place at a certain time and are now faced with living up to the inner urge that drew us into the Yoga.



Gordon Korstange

Another fundamental division between spiritual paths is technical or charismatic (practice vs. guru relationship). Our yoga is charismatic: a personal, intimate relationship with the guru who is God-realized is the means of sadhana, "and the task of spiritual practice is then to keep the master's company, internally, throughout the situations of daily experience." (op. cit., p. 84).

So how do we do this? If you survey Aurobindonians about whether we have a "practice," you might get an interesting variety of answers. Ask yourself — do you have a regular spiritual practice that helps you to live consciously? Or is it enough for you to live and work in Auroville? To have your house decorated with photos and books? Or to simply be "in the Yoga?" Although I don't presently live in Auroville, these apply to me.

Of course, practice alone will never take the seeker the whole way, but without it "fascination" can easily substitute for felt knowing of and self-surrender to them. I find this

particularly evident in the large role that the occult plays in this Yoga, along with speculation about transformation of the cells and the supramental manifestation.

Fascination with these elements of the Yoga can become, in fact, a kind of belief system akin to any religion. What's worse is to try to "prove" these "beliefs" by referring to actual events in the physical world, as several disciples have tried to do recently. The problem is that Mother and Sri Aurobindo, even while warning us against this fascination, were not shy in talking and writing about it. It is hard to tear ourselves away and remember that "there is nothing like a definitive understanding of spiritual teachings, except for the understanding that comes with ultimate or final enlightenment." (op. cit., p. 42)

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have left us much to ponder. Until the time when I can become more at-one with them, my task is to question and wrestle with their legacy. Perhaps this is because I was born and raised in the rational West. However, the true master does not encourage dependency but "... repeatedly throws the disciple

back onto his or her own resources to 'find' the master internally and receive the master's guidance." (op. cit., p. 85). This is what Mother did to Ruud when she asked him, "Are you not useful at Matrimandir?"

Is this some kind of cult? It is if we accept Mother and Sri Aurobindo's teachings as irreproachable truths or if we treat the Mother as a goddess — as a presence outside of us to be worshipped rather than one inside of us to be sought.

However, if we think of "cult" in the sense of "cultivate", to grow, then we can look inward toward the seed that Sri Aurobindo and Mother have planted in us and that we must tend carefully, watering it not with fascinating experiences that are not ours, but with, as Mother said, "the small, still peaceful voice which speaks in the silence of your heart."

Gordon Korstange was accepted by the Mother to live in Auroville, and did so from 1971-1980. He now lives in the USA. He was the editor of Collaboration magazine for many years, and is presently on the board of the Foundation for World Education.

Where have all the coconuts gone?

"It is Rs 9 at the Pour Tous snack bar, Rs 10 at the Ganesh Bakery, and Rs. 11 at the Visitors' Centre. We refer, ladies and gentlemen, to the price of Coca-Cola at various places in Auroville" announced the "Akademik Genius Brothers" — a community cabaret show — with obvious sarcasm. Bindu makes a case against globalization in the context of Auroville

Hardly five years ago Coca-Cola was not available anywhere in Auroville. One stopped for a sip of green coconut at Vinod's organic food shop or a chai at Ganesh Bakery in Kottakarai. Today, Vinod's shop has changed from an exclusively organic food outlet to a mini super mart where, as in Pour Tous, the community's main grocery store, one finds chocolates from USA, pasta from



Italy, olive oil from Spain, apples from South Africa and tinned sausages from Australia. The sale of green coconuts is minimal because of the lack of demand. Ganesh Bakery, while continuing to supply chai, has invested in a huge fridge which is stocked with Coca-Cola and other soft drinks, which are increasingly becoming the preferred beverage for thirsty Aurovilians. An Auroville Village Action Group study indicated that the sale of green coconuts has drastically dropped in the neighbouring village of Kuyilapalayam as the villagers too, seduced by invasive advertising, opt for Coca-Cola to quench their thirst. Coca-Cola, long recognized as a

symbol of the global economy, signals Auroville's mute acceptance of the prevailing economic order in India and the world. In the early nineties, when India made its first hesitant step towards opening its market to the global economy, I confidently assumed that India was too diverse, too gargantuan and unmanageable in its economic base to succumb to the homogenizing effect of globalization.

Today, as India increasingly frees up its markets, allowing the powerful tentacles of the corporate global economy to reach out to the most inaccessible villages, I no longer have the blithe confidence that India can so easily weather the changes of globalization.

To be sure, the initial effects of a global economy or globalization have been positive. As with the political colonization by the British, this recent economic colonization has shaken up the country from its lethargic stupor of inefficiency and corruption that were the hallmarks of its socialist economy. At first sight, a free market, by virtue of open competition, makes available better quality goods at lower

prices. But there is more to globalization or a so-called free market economy than meets the eye.

Free market theory

The concept of a free market stems from the long-standing theory of foreign trade that it is economically advantageous for products to flow from the places where they are most efficiently produced to the places where they are most needed. For centuries, this policy did not adversely affect the quality of human life in individual nations as the volume of foreign trade was small. In modern times, the advances made in technology, transport and communication facilities have shrunk the world, and with the saturation of the markets of the developed world, corporations have turned their attention to the teeming populations in developing countries as potential consumers who can further their economic growth. Consequently, an aggressive policy of foreign trade, based seemingly on a "free market" system but in reality dictated by corporate power, has come to dominate the world economic order.

A free market or an open competitive market implies a capitalistic economic system that in turn implies the



Drinking coconuts.

accumulation of capital as the primary aim of economic activity. It further means that corporations that have a greater capital at their disposal have a greater say in the market. Viewing corporations as "engines" powering globalization, social thinker Tony Clarke points out that "70 percent of global trade is controlled by just five hundred corporations; and a mere 1 percent of the transnational corporations on this planet own half the stock of foreign direct investment". Furthermore, in their bid to maximize economic growth, corporations encourage unbridled consumption and insidiously target a change in the mind-set of people through massive advertisement campaigns. Clarke estimates that "transnationals spend well over half-as-much money in advertising as the nations of the world combined spend on public education".

Growth: who pays?

What is deliberately overlooked by the money-spinning corporations, and remains an issue that has not received sufficient public attention and debate, is the fact that the limited resources of the world cannot sustain continued economic growth. What goes largely unchallenged is the concept that greater economic activity (measured by the Gross National Product and Gross Domestic Product of a nation) means a healthier economy. If economic growth were the only criterion of a society's health, then activities such as the depletion of natural resources, the making of bombs and armaments, the selling of body parts of human beings and animals, would all be justified while other activities such as unpaid household work and child care, production of food to be consumed etc. would be regarded as undesirable since they do not command a monetary value. Not surprisingly, the greater economic growth in the world today has been at the cost of the environment and the poor who are marginalized by the global order. The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP's) Human Development Report this year poignantly exposes how globalization has worsened the human condition in many countries.

Global financial and trade institutions, namely the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization are all controlled by a handful of developed or to be precise, "over-developed" nations that protect their own interests. Economist Jerry Mander points out that loans from the World Bank "are granted only to countries that agree to dismantle their economic and social structures and redesign them

according to an imposed free market/free trade ideology." The international humanitarian institutions of the United Nations are emasculated from doing any real good by the fact that they have no economic power.

In short, as poet and ecologist Wendell Berry puts it, those who believe in a global economy believe "a farm or a forest is or ought to be the same as a factory...that for all practical purposes a machine is as good as (or better than) a human; that the industrial standards of production, efficiency and profitability are the only standards that are necessary; that the nature of the ecology of any given place is irrelevant to the use of it; that there is no value in human community or neighbourhood; and that technological innovation will produce only benign results. ...that knowledge is or ought to be property and power...that education is job-training...that the summit of human achievement is a high-paying job that involves no manual work."

Laissez-faire in Auroville?

I fear Aurovilians are ignorant of the destructive forces that are behind globalization, or worse still take a *laissez-faire* attitude towards it. If we continue to stock our shelves with imported goods ignoring local goods, if we continue to subscribe to globalization without sufficient thought or public debate, we make a complete mockery of our own collective economic experiments and our ideals of a socio-economic system where "money is not the sovereign lord".

I admit that for many Western Aurovilians, it is indeed tempting to finally be able avail of the food that they are culturally used to. But, one should realize that not all, especially those on a "maintenance" salary from the community, can afford the imported goods that are now available. More importantly, if we are here to bring into being a new world, if we are here for the founding of a truer world order, then we should not blindly accept what is being dictated to us by the world economy. We should have the courage to experiment, as the Mother wanted us to, with a local self-sufficient economy. While there are as yet no fool-proof formulas as to how to achieve local self-sufficiency, there is a sizeable bank of knowledge on how communities can manage local economies. It is true that green coconuts can still be found, but they may not be around for long if the advocates of globalization continue to have their say. Without resistance from conscious individuals and local communities, not only coconuts but whole coconut plantations may soon disappear, to be replaced by shopping malls.

INSPIRATION

Speaking from silence

One way of looking at life in the yoga is to see it as a series of journeys, of unfoldings triggered by successive discoveries or personal epiphanies. One such journey began for me at the AUM conference in America this year when I first heard the expression "speaking from silence". Although I didn't fully understand it, long afterwards the phrase kept resonating within me as if it contained some elusive key...

On my last evening in America, I was staying in a friend's flat in New York. Opening a book at random I came across a reference to the practice of 'dialogue' as developed by the physicist David Bohm. Dialogue, I gathered, is a collaborative practice in which people try to untie the habitual knots in thinking embedded in language to access a whole other level of wisdom. It was late, I was tired, and I didn't read more. But 'speaking from silence' and 'dialogue' became two new unexplored planets circulating within my solar system.

Back in Auroville I discovered that a book was being excitedly passed from hand to hand: it was 'Synchronicity: the Inner Path of Leadership' by Joseph Jaworski. Jaworski's father had been the Special Prosecutor responsible for the later stages of the Watergate investigation, and Joseph had been so sickened by the revelations of corruption in high office that he had begun searching for alternative models of leadership. Among the people he 'happened' to meet was David Bohm who explained to him his concepts of the 'implicate' and 'explicate' order. Everything, all wisdom, knowledge and potential, Bohm believed, is holistically 'enfolded' in an implicate order, aspects of which take outward or 'explicate' expression to become our material reality. Bohm explained that normally we are unconscious of the process of unfolding. However, if we become capable of living fully in the moment, untrammelled by previous habits of thought and perception (and this is where his practice of dialogue comes in), we can become conscious participants in the unfolding. Jaworski's experience is that at such moments "there is a flow around us, things just seem to happen", something which he referred to as "predictable miracles".

The idea of being at the point of

the unfolding excited me enormously. It reminded me of how excited I felt when I first read Mother's description of "the Becoming", the continually evolving expression of the divine manifestation in the world. Somehow, it answered to a very deep longing within me to live free of established forms, to escape from the net of determinism.

So when a meeting was called a few weeks later to practise Bohmian dialogue I went full of expectation. I was to be disappointed: nothing new emerged. At first I thought this was simply because we were all very new to this form of dialogue, but later I began to understand that there is something inherently limiting in an approach which uses thought to examine thought.

But two weeks later a new door opened with the announcement of a workshop on 'Insight Dialogue'. Greg Kramer, the visiting workshop leader, explained that he had also tried Bohm's dialogue method and found it unsatisfactory. Consequently he and a colleague developed a method which brings together *Vipassana* meditation practice with dialogue or 'talking circle' techniques.

In Insight Dialogue the individual moves between silent meditation and communication with others until, ideally, the two become simultaneous in a form of 'meditative dialogue'. As I began to experiment with this, it suddenly flashed upon me: this was what was meant by that koan-like phrase "speaking from silence". And it was this quality of inner centredness informing outer discourse which I'd missed in so many of our meetings, as well as in my daily interactions with others.

Insight Dialogue is, to put it mildly, extremely challenging because at first it seems so unnatural. It's easy, or comparatively easy, to be turned within. It's easy to speak to others. But to

do the two together! As an aid in bridging this chasm Greg provided a series of guidelines to practice while we engaged in conversation. These include pausing, relaxing and contemplating before responding, releasing roles, seeking out assumptions, observing judgements and "trusting emergence": in other words, trusting that whatever spontaneously arises will have value. Along with these action guidelines are a parallel set of 'attitude' guidelines. These include non-attachment, humility, mindfulness, equanimity and compassion.

So was the workshop a success? The failure of the previous dialogue experiment had caused me to lower my expectations, so I was totally unprepared for the intensity and depth of this two-day experience. On a personal level, Insight Dialogue helped me recognize two contradictory tendencies within myself: one is to trivialize conversations as a means of keeping people at arm's length, the other is a very deep thirst for more authentic and meaningful contacts with others. On the group level, the second afternoon was a revelation because it was then that the thirty participants succeeded in creating a 'zone' in which, I felt, anything could be expressed without it being judged, a zone which also had the potential to draw out our deepest creativity. This was something I had never experienced before in Auroville.

It didn't last. But I'd had a taste of what someone later described as "supporting each other to become more than we usually are". For ultimately the workshop was not about acquiring new tools of communication: it was about deepening our state of Being, of taking into our greater self, and then taking that self out and expressing it, as 'purely' as possible, in our everyday interactions.

Which sounds to me very much like integral yoga... Alan

Auroville Horse Tournament 2000

Tine, a horse-lover, shares her experience.

Sitting on my horse, waiting for my turn to enter the competition, my mind suddenly went back to the past, remembering that horses and ponies are part of Auroville's life since the beginning. In the 70's and even in the 80's, kids rode to school barefoot and bareback on their ponies. At Transition School the pony was tied wild-west style with a rope around a tree and left to graze the whole morning, while the rider sat in class. I remember many beautiful morning rides from Aurogreen through the Gaia forest to Matrimandir. We entered at the Center Kitchen gate (there were no watchmen at that time), then hung out a bit around the banyan tree and let the horses graze, leaving Matrimandir around the right side, heading towards what later was to become Surrender and Vikas. There were no fences, no houses, no traffic, only some footpaths wriggling through tall grasses and trees — ideal horse country. We were very sad when the fences came up around Matrimandir and the communities of the Residential Zone came up, as this was the end of exploring that whole area on horseback.

Pony Farm

Many kids at that time kept some ponies in their garden, and they were scattered all over Auroville. Eventually these kids grew older and lost interest in their ponies. Achilles and Gaya kept some horses and ponies at Kottakarai Farm and they agreed to take care of some ponies. In no time at all they saw themselves involuntarily surrounded by 25 or more ponies — and thus the "Pony Farm" was created, which later was to become a riding school for children. Forecomers, Akashwa, Sharanga, Aurogreen, Discipline — these were places with "big" thoroughbred horses. Recently Evergreen and "Eric's place" in Kottakarai have joined the horse-lovers-scene and managed to turn rides-for-fun into real professional dressage and show jumping.

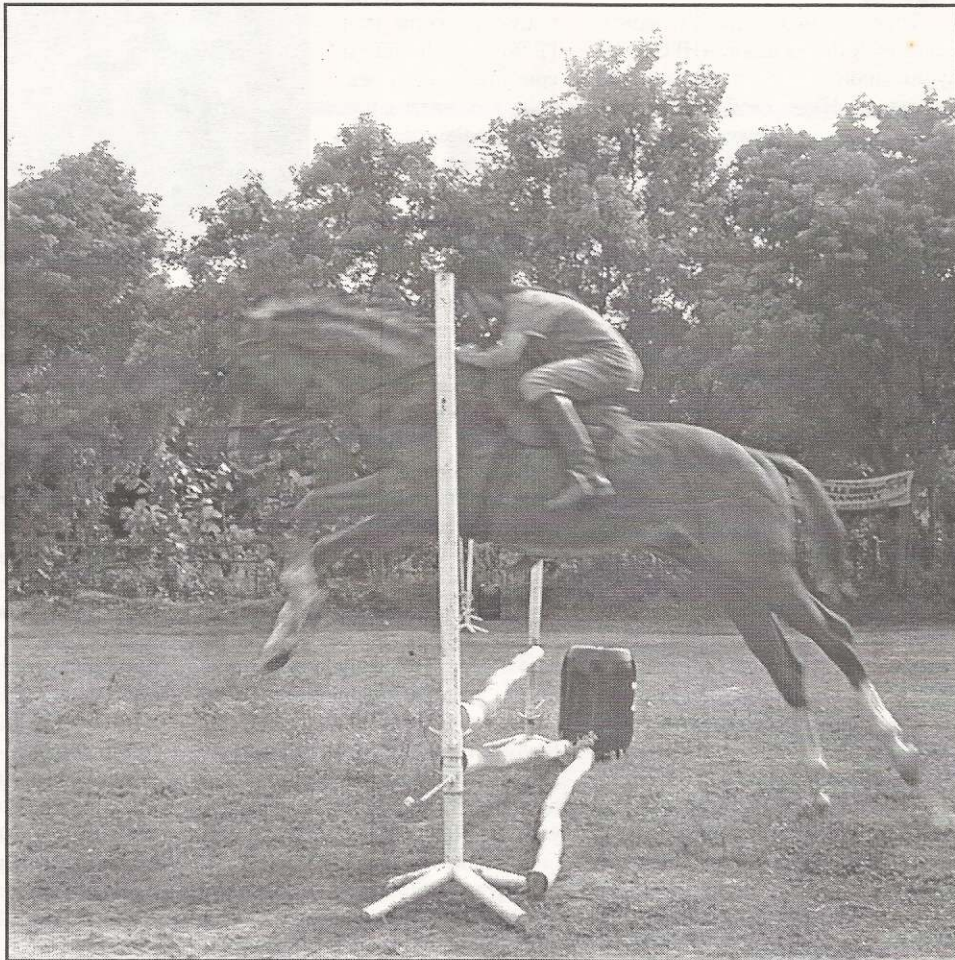
"Jetzt schau dir mal genau an wie die reiten, damit du keinen Fehler machst," Janna told me, meaning I should pay attention to the horses riding the test. "Ah yes," I thought, "that's easy enough, trotting and cantering in circles." And then suddenly it was my turn: Dressage Preliminary 2 for Seniors and my name was announced over the loudspeaker. First I had to trot down to the judge who had come espe-

cially from Madras to Auroville for the event and greet her. Immediately my horse shied away from white upright poles on the right and refused to walk past these scary things. Quietly I convinced her to trust me, greeted the judge and started to ride the dressage competition. After a few minutes I was called back — I had not waited for the bell to ring! By that time I already felt terrible, with everyone's eyes and attention fixed on me, and my horse was stiff, her head up, nostrils flaring — I had thought this would all be fun and now I was excited! As though in a dream I remembered what to do, talking quietly all the time to my horse to calm her down. She overstepped the boundaries twice, which should have disqualified us immediately, then she went into left outside canter, cut the corners, didn't walk in a straight line but looked left and right and so on. Oh well! I realized I should have practiced in a real corral and not just in some grass fields without boundaries. Others had done much better than me, their horses beautifully collected and under control. It suddenly occurred to me that the Auroville pony rider generation of the 80's have matured and needed new challenges.

This was the first Auroville Horse Tournament, staged on 11th and 12th of November. The programme included team events with four riders and horses, mounted games, beginners and advanced dressage, and jumping six 70cm jumps clear round. We had invited special guests, the Chennai Equestrian Academy (CEA), which participated with six horses and twelve riders, all under sixteen. They had even brought their own stables!

Show jumping, the last competition of the tournament was most popular. The arena was packed with people. Now everybody could see who was winning which was not evident to lay spectators in the dressage tests. Seven or eight horses dared seven hurdles of

three tournaments for Aurovilian junior riders, scheduled to take place in Madras and Bangalore before the end of December, are already fully sponsored by a cement company. These will be the "National Junior Competition", the "South Equestrian



A leap towards the future?

70 cm, one of which was new to them, a bright red wall, which almost all of them at first refused. It was very exciting. The timing was announced over loudspeaker and the rider received minus-points if they didn't clear a hurdle or refused. After three refusals, the rider was disqualified. The crowd cheered and clapped, it was quite a spectacle. A TV crew was present, filming the whole event, and people were able to admire the Auroville Horse Tournament 2000 on national Star TV that evening.

Future plans

Someone from Pondicherry had sponsored the Auroville Horse Tournament in its entirety. The next

Tournament", and the "National Championship of India" in which 250 horses are registered to participate. The events will be for adult and children but all riders would have to ride a difficult dressage test and jump as high as 1.20 metres!

As for the future of the Auroville horses, we hope that soon we will find a suitable place outside of the city area where most of the horses can share facilities and where we can start a professional riding school. A project to manifest this is already underway and ideas are abundant. Different approaches to riding will be allowed to satisfy the needs of a variety of horse lovers.

Celebration of Tamil heritage

Theatre and everyday life mingle

The Palmyra tree is not just a traditional source of raw material; it is an important symbol of the rich heritage of Tamil culture. In November, Meenakshi and the Ilaigarkal team explored the ancient significance of this multi-purpose plant in their production of the original play, "The Palmyra Tree and the Native People", performed at the Bharat Nivas Restaurant.

Opening with a round of vigorous drumming, the ensuing play resembled forms of street theatre, with the actors using singing, gestures, and rounds of call-and-response dialogue to create various environments and scenarios with minimal props and set decoration.

The 20 participants in the staging, all students of Ilaigarkal, hail from local villages. Many work a full eight hours every day in Auroville and make time for their continuing education from 5-6:30 in the evenings, before they return to their homes to assume their household duties. Although employed as domestic workers, carpenters, masons, etc., their enthusiasm for theatre was evident. The actors had rehearsed well

and clearly enjoyed performing for their families and friends.

The performance was based upon the Doen model of theatre in which statistics and facts are interwoven with mythical narratives and folk songs. Meenakshi and her collaborators at Ilaigarkal have been compiling information about the Palmyra for some time now, including data about its nutritional value, its myriad practical uses, in addition to the many references made to this plant in Tamil literature. This information provided the structure for the play, but the actual dramatization was developed during a two-month workshop with Drs. Shibu Kottaram and Jeeva of the Aptist Theatre Group of Pondicherry.

The participants in the workshop were encouraged to actively engage in

all aspects of the process. As the weeks went by, they collected stories and images about the Palmyra from their villages and then improvised stagings for them during the class. In this way the directors of the play figured as guides, with the primary creative impetus coming from the actors themselves. When it came to designing costumes, the actors ingeniously put together ensembles using rejects from the Auroville Free Store. In addition, they constructed and painted all of the props and arranged their own set lighting. After the play made its debut on November 1, the participants came together and evaluated their own experience. They expressed their gratitude for one another, appreciating the contribution that each had made to the best of his or her ability.

"As a result, I don't look at this as just theatre," says Meenakshi. "The play was a kind of management training. It gave everyone the experience of doing it all themselves, with minimal input from outsiders and with minimal cost."

A video screening of the performance is tentatively scheduled for some time around the New Year in conjunction with an exhibition of products from the Palmyra Product Training Center, Cuddalore. At this time the primary audience will be day school children in Auroville, although adults are certainly welcome to come learn and enjoy.

Shanti

Short news

Thurman lecture

Prof. Robert Thurman, holder of the Chair of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies, at Columbia University, New York, nominated as one of the '25 most influential Americans' by TIME Magazine in 1997, gave a lecture on India's Spiritual Gift to the World, The Second Renaissance, at the Pavilion of Tibetan Culture.

Tibet exhibition

A photo exhibition "Glimpses of Tibet" was held in the Pavilion of Tibetan Culture. It was organised by Friends of Tibet, India, the Tibetan Parliamentary and Policy Research Centre, in association with the Tibet Museum, Dharamsala.

Classical music recitals

Visiting German pianist Katharina Bertram gave a recital featuring music by Beethoven, Chopin, Mozart and Liszt in the Salle Auropax at Auromodèle. Aurovilians Marcello and Pushkar gave a cello and piano recital of works by Schubert, Messiaen and Brahms. Visiting German pianist Sylvia Hewig-Tröschner gave a recital of music by Bach-Busoni, Mozart, Beethoven, Berg and Brahms.

Flower Book

The Spiritual Significance of Flowers, a two-part book containing the spiritual significances of 898 flowers as given by The Mother, illustrated with 630 colour photographs, has finally been published in English, French and German editions. Available from SABDA, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 605 002, e-mail sabda@auroville.org.in. Approximate price in India Rs 2000 (see also AVToday #133, February 2000)

Flower Calendar

Auroville photographer Ireno Guerri has produced a 2001 calendar on the theme of "Flowers and their spiritual meaning." The calendar is available in desktop and hanging versions. Price Rs 195 plus Rs 45 mailing in India and Rs 75 abroad by air mail registered book post. Order by sending your cheque to Ireno Guerri, Sangha, Auroville 605101, e-mail: ireno@auroville.org.in

Rock bees attack

Panic and chaos filled the first moments of a meeting of members of the Forest Group at Fertile on Friday November 3rd. Swirling masses of rock bees descended and otherwise placid adults were seen scurrying across the yard, shrieking and madly flailing at the attacking hordes. They sought safety and security in every direction, and only by using their highly developed sense of intuition did they manage to regroup and resume the meeting at Mike's place in Samridhi forty minutes later.

Solar Kitchen dinner

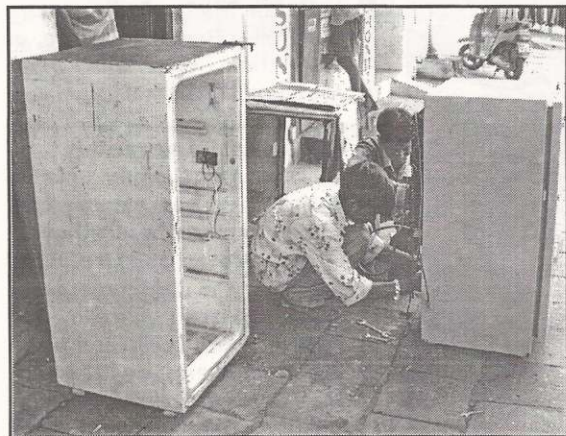
From Monday November 27th, the Solar Kitchen has extended its service to prepare dinner. For the time being, dinner will be supplied in tiffins, to be picked up by those who wish to avail of the service. Serving dinner in the dining room will take somewhat longer, as additional equipment will be required.

Towards a greener fridge

Auroville hosts international and national workshops

In November an important workshop was held at the Centre for Scientific Research (CSR) in Auroville. People from different parts of India were trained as facilitators to help fridge technicians in the 'roadside' sector to switch to 'greener' fridge technologies. This was only one of several such national and international workshops to have been held in Auroville over the past two years.

In the 1920s a new wonder chemical was developed: chlorofluorocarbon (CFC). CFC was cheap, non-flammable and seemingly inert. By the 1950s it was in widespread use in refrigerators and air conditioning systems, aerosols and solvents.



Pondicherry roadside technicians

However, in the mid-1970s it was discovered that CFCs could break down ozone, and when a hole was detected in the ozone layer — the layer of the earth's atmosphere which protects life from harmful ultraviolet radiation — alarm bells began to ring worldwide. The result was the Montreal Protocol (1987) which laid out a timetable to ban the use of CFCs worldwide. Subsequent amendments stipulated that the developed nations had to stop using them by 1996, while developing countries were required to phase them out by 2010. (CFCs can remain in the

atmosphere for over 100 years, so this solution will only take full effect in the long term.)

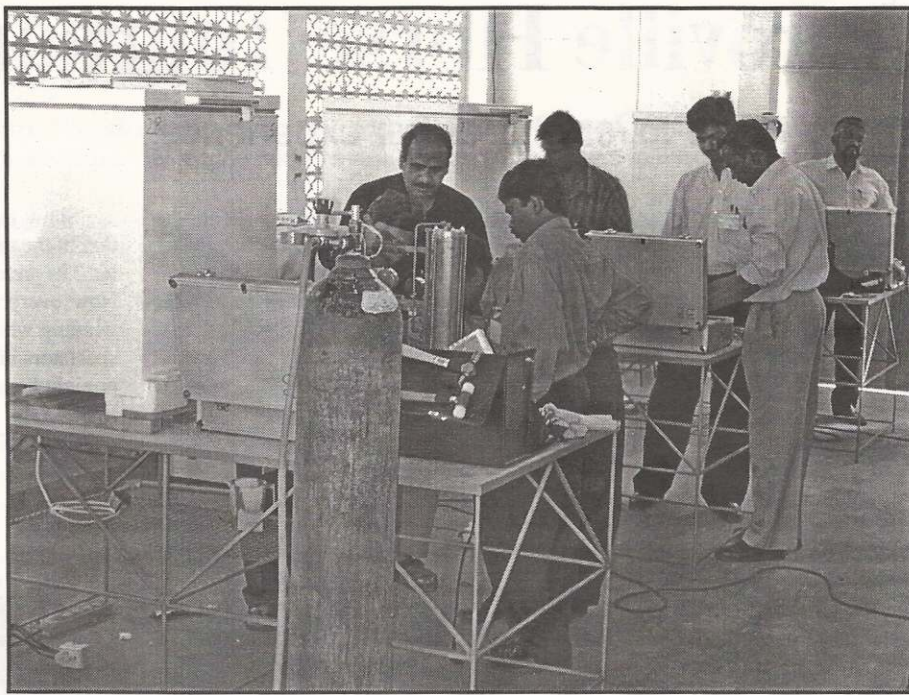
There are two main CFC substitutes: hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and hydrocarbons (HCs). It is cheaper to convert to HFCs, and HFCs have fewer safety requirements than HCs. However HFCs, unlike HCs, are greenhouse gases and are likely to be banned in future under the Kyoto Protocol. The U.S. has gone for HFCs: most European Community countries have gone for HCs. However, the Indian Government is unwilling to specify which CFC substitute Indian industry should adopt, leaving the decision up to individual manufacturers. Consequently, as the environmental magazine *Down to Earth* describes it, "confusion reigns supreme" with some Indian manufacturers choosing HFCs, some HCs, while others continue to sit on the fence awaiting developments.

Today, the refrigeration sector is responsible for something like 60% of the CFC use in India. With 20 million fridges in India, and an additional 2 million being added each year, it is vital that India gets its act together to

phase out CFCs in this sector.

One important initiative has come from IT Power India (ITPI), consultants in renewable and intermediate technologies based in Pondicherry. ITPI has a contract with the World Health Organization (WHO) to train technicians who service vaccine fridges in ten south Asian countries in new post-CFC technologies. It was Terry Hart of ITPI, a world expert in solar refrigeration, who suggested to WHO that the Centre for Scientific Research (CSR) in Auroville should be the venue for this international training. CSR is one of only three centres in the world where such WHO workshops are now taking place.

ITPI was aware, however, that the WHO trainings did not address the urgent need to assist India in its transition to post-CFC technologies in the refrigeration sector. As a result, with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, they have developed and are co-managing with the NGO SwissContact another programme called HIDECOR — Human and Institutional Development for Ecological Refrigeration — which aims at retraining people who work in the small-scale 'roadside' fridge servicing sector. This sector, which undertakes something like two-thirds of all the servicing in India, is poorly



Workshop in progress at CSR

organized and often lacks information about CFC alternatives and how to use them. Moreover, many roadside technicians are poorly trained in handling even CFC technologies, which means that CFCs are often released into the atmosphere during the servicing process.

There are perhaps 150,000 such roadside technicians in India. The ITPI/SwissContact team plans to train 5,500 of them in six States over the next four years in the correct servicing not only of HFC and HC fridges, but also of CFC fridges. For while the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests has specified that no new product using CFCs can be manufactured after January, 2003, existing products which use CFCs will continue to be legal until the year 2010.

India and China are the world's biggest users of CFCs at present. "Consequently, the whole world is watching anxiously to see how well India handles the transition to post-CFC technologies," says Gajanana,

Energy Engineer with ITPI, "and in that transition these workshops may well have a vital role to play." Three such workshops have now taken place in Auroville (in addition to three for the WHO project). Although CSR has so far merely hosted them, ITPI having provided the teaching faculty, Teresa, who is a training manager for ITPI, envisages that in future the course could also provide an introduction to the intermediate and sustainable technologies which are operating in Auroville. "In the beginning, some people questioned our decision to hold the trainings in Auroville," she says, "because it seemed so far away from anywhere. But Auroville has proved to be the ideal venue for such trainings, as it already has so much on the ground in the area of renewable and appropriate technologies. There was no looking back after the first programme."

Alan

(based on an interview with Teresa and Gajanana of IT Power India)

EDUCATION

Bonjour, Vanakkam, Namaste, Good morning!

The beginnings of the Language Learning Centre

It is 10 o'clock on a Monday morning when I walk into the small classroom at Tapas and Mita's house. Three young Tamil men, sitting on the ground in front of a blackboard greet me with smiling faces: "Bonjour! Ca va?" In my best French I answer that I am fine. This is a beginner's French class and the students are Shankar, Arul and Velu. When I ask them why they want to learn French, two of them answer that it would greatly help them in their jobs as waiters at two Auroville restaurants. Arul, a native of Pondicherry, formerly a French colony, feels that French would also be useful since it is still spoken in certain parts of his hometown. Velu works at 'Bijou', a bead workshop where he does not need any French, but several of his friends are French and he wants to learn another language.

After some basic exercises in grammar, the students watch a language instruction video. The actors play out scenes from daily life in

Paris. To me the speed of the conversations seems very fast, but after some time I start picking up the sentences, which are repeated over and over again in a very playful and funny way. The students repeat the sentences for themselves, slowly understanding what is being said. Then it is back to the blackboard. Tapas writes down all the sentences, conjugations and helps them to further understand the video conversations. It is their second French class and I am impressed by how much they have picked up. Remembering my own frustrations in mastering this language, I wish this multi-media method had been available to me.

The Mother had specifically indicated that English, French, Tamil, and Sanskrit should be taught in Auroville. Consequently, these four languages are taught to primary and secondary level students. Classes for adults have been offered on an ad hoc basis at various times and places in Auroville.

Teaching efforts have been frus-

trated by the lack of regular classroom space, apart from the Tamil Language Learning Centre recently created at Last School. Says Vladimir, a Sanskrit teacher, "A proper space would greatly facilitate the process of learning Sanskrit. I strongly feel that as in ancient India, interested students should make the effort to meet the teacher in the classroom and not the other way round. Besides, if there is a room that is used only for Sanskrit, one could build a certain atmosphere there conducive to the learning of the language, such as a permanent display of resource material, the playing of audio cassettes, the building of a small library of essential books and so on. Students could also use the room in their spare time to study on their own or with others." Tapas and Mita have offered their house for the teaching of French and Hindi, but the space available is restricted to only five students. And while students are welcome to drop in at any time except on Sundays to watch a video or borrow CDs, cassettes or videos, there are

definite constraints in terms of time and privacy on turning their house into a classroom.

"The other problem," says Tapas, "is that adults who are working full-time have very little spare time to learn a language. Classes with regular timings do not suit everyone. For this reason, I would like to have a fully equipped multi-media language lab where students can learn on their own." Towards this dream, Tapas bought a complete series of audio and video cassettes for teaching French. With money generously donated by the students she copied the video cassettes onto CD-Roms for wider distribution. Mita constantly searches the Internet for the latest multi-media teaching methods available. She recounts how small miracles have helped them in manifesting their dream, such as Aurovilians donating a TV set when the community's set broke down, and an educationist in Belgium donating free material for teaching French, simply because it was the first time he got a request for

information about his teaching methods from so far away!

To help manifest the dream of a language lab, a group of nine teachers, led by Tapas and Mita, have presently come forward. All of these teachers are currently involved in teaching the four languages of Auroville. The group visualizes a fully equipped Language Learning Centre that will meet the learning needs of adult Aurovilians, using a mix of modern as well as traditional teaching methods. Each of the four languages of Auroville would have a separate room in the Learning Centre, while other languages taught in Auroville would have shared facilities, including a modern library. Ideally the group would like to see the Language Learning Centre built in the International Zone, and at present, Tapas and Mita are concentrating on their efforts on raising funds for this endeavour.

Tineke

For more information contact mita@auroville.org.in

Subscription information: Subscription rates for 12 issues of AUROVILLE TODAY are the following: for India Rs 250; for other countries Rs 1250, Can \$51, FF 195, DM 60, It. Lira 61,000, D.Gl. 65, US \$38, UK £25. This includes the postage by airmail. Please send your contribution (or your supporting contribution of double the amount) either to one of the Auroville International centres below (add 10% for admin. and bank charges) or directly to Auroville Today, Surrender, Auroville 605101. Email: avtoday@auroville.org.in

Cheques should be made payable to Auroville Fund, specifying: 'Contribution for Auroville Today'. Personal cheques are preferred to bank cheques. Please do not send postal money orders or cash. Subscribers will receive a reminder when their subscription is about to expire. Auroville Today carries no advertisements and gratefully acknowledges the generosity of supporting subscribers. Those for whom the subscription rate is an obstacle are invited to contact Auroville Today for information on reduced rates.

The following Auroville International centres will accept subscriptions:

◆Germany: AVI Deutschland, c/o Wolfgang J. Schmidt-Reinecke, Danziger Str. 121, D-10407 Berlin; tel. (0)30-42803150, fax (0)30-92091376; email: info@de.auroville-international.org
◆France: AVI France, 6, rue du Cail, 75010 Paris; tel/fax: (33)-1.40364367, email: avifrance@free.fr
◆The Netherlands: AVI Nederland, c/o Wim de Jong, Zwanewater 51, 2715 BH Zoetermeer; tel. (31)-79.3210671; email: avinl@wolmail.nl

◆U.K.: AVI U.K., c/o Martin Littlewood, Canigou, Cot Lane, Chidham, W. Sussex PO18 8SP; tel. (44)-1243.574099; fax: (44)-1243.576792, email: aviuk@compuserve.com
◆U.S.A (1): AVI USA, P.O. Box 877, Santa Cruz CA 95061; tel. (1)-831 425 5620; email: aviusa@aol.com
◆U.S.A (2): Auroville Information Office, PO Box 676, Woodstock NY 12498, tel: (1)914.679.5358, fax: 5853; email: avinfo@aol.com

Editorial team: Alan, Bindu, Carel, Emilie, Roger, Tineke. Guest editors: Shanti Pillai, Jesse Fox-Allen, Emmanuele. Proofreading: Barbara. All photos, unless otherwise attributed, have been taken by the editors. DTP: Natacha. Photo editing: Matthia. Printed and published by Carel Thieme on behalf of the Auroville Foundation, and printed at All India Press, Pondicherry, and published at Surrender, Auroville 605101, Tamil Nadu, India. www.auroville.org/whatsnew/journals/avtodayfr.html