

# AUROVILLE TODAY

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Photo Sven

*Then the Unmanifest reflects his form  
In the still mind as in a living glass;  
The timeless Ray descends into our hearts  
And we are rapt into eternity.*

*Savitri, Book II, Canto 11*

Language. That invisible net we weave around the world, capturing some things, missing others. Language. It brings us together, it keeps us apart. It frees us as we soar on the wings of great poetry; it imprisons us in its logic of syntax and grammar. It's used to persuade, to enlighten, to create hatred, to evoke love...

Auroville, with its many different cultures and nationalities, is something of a melting-pot for language. For in the daily embrace and collision of different tongues, language is stretched and pulled into new forms, and exotic hybrids emerge as we reach towards a language that is more plastic, more capable of capturing the shifting surfaces and dimensions of our lives here. Yet, even as we seek a common language, linguistic misunderstandings remain frequent in a community where barely a third of the population have any mastery over the common language, English.

This issue of *Auroville Today* introduces this crucial topic of language as it relates to Auroville and a world in need of new, more efficient forms of communication across cultures. And we also touch upon another kind of universal language or mapping of the cosmos: Astrology.

## Mother on Sanskrit

And the revelations would probably be more exact if we had a more perfect language. Our language is poor.

Sanskrit is better. Sanskrit is a much fuller and subtler language, so it's probably much better. But these modern languages are so artificial (by this, I mean superficial, intellectual); they cut things up into little pieces and remove the light behind.

I also read *On the Veda* where Sri Aurobindo speaks of the difference between the modern mind and the ancient mind and it's quite obvious, especially from the linguistic point of view. Sanskrit was certainly much more fluid, a better instrument for a more... global, more comprehensive light, a light containing more things within itself.

In these modern languages, it's as if things are passed through a sieve and broken up into separate little bits, so then

you have all the work of putting them back together. And something is always lost.

But I even doubt that the modern mind, built as it now is, would be able to know Sanskrit in this way. I think they are cutting up Sanskrit as well, out of habit.

We need a new language.

We need to make a new language.

Not some kind of Esperanto! - but sounds springing straight from above.

The SOUND must be captured. There must be one sound at the origin of all language... And then, to capture it and project it. To make it vibrate... because it doesn't vibrate in the same way here as it does above.

That would be an interesting work.

The words must have a power—an expressive power. Yes, they should carry the meaning in themselves!

*Mother's Agenda, Vol.I, p.430*

"Language is the sign of the cultural life of a people, the index of its soul in thought and mind that stands behind and enriches its soul in action. Therefore it is here that the phenomena and utilities of diversity may be most readily seized, more than in mere outward things; but these truths are important because they apply equally to the thing which it expresses and symbolizes and serves as an instrument. Diversity of language is worth keeping because diversity of cultures and differentiation of soul-groups are worth keeping and because without that diversity life cannot have full play; for in its absence there is a danger, almost an inevitability of decline and stagnation".

*Sri Aurobindo, SABCL 15, p. 496*

## Sanskrit: The mystery of a language

India is a land of mysteries and contrasts. It has nine hundred million inhabitants of whom 80% live in the countryside. Even today, women go out to fetch the water they need to live. Every day, men work the earth and expect it to sustain them. These are noble ancestral, traditional exploits, as ancient as their gods. They are the wisdom and the everlastingness of India.

But what binds these men and women of today to those of 3000 years ago? It is more than a country, a faith, a vibration, it's a way of praying to the Gods.

Sanskrit, a vehicle of devotion, language of rites and knowledge, is above all sound, a mantra, a prayer, an incantation to the gods to obtain a boon or thank Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva, or the elephant-headed god Ganesha for a divine intervention.

Sanskrit is an Indo-European language that goes back to the middle of the second millennium B.C. and which has continued to exist and reach into all the domains of human knowledge..

Sanskrit literature begins with the Rig Veda and continues up to the first millennium B.C. After this follows the epic literature with its best-known masterpieces, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Puranas. There is also a very rich technical Sanskrit literature which encompasses architecture, philosophy, logic and religion and finally there is a lyric, erotic and dramatic literature. Very soon Sanskrit infiltrated the Indian languages, especially the Dravidian languages under the influence of the Pallava dynasty.

The culture of Sanskrit expression has been transmitted from generation to generation, especially in the families of lettered Brahmin laymen, called *pandits*. This knowledge touches essentially upon the technical literature, that is to say the teaching of grammar, logic, philosophy and all the human sciences. Every family is specialized in one aspect or *shastra*. These families of lettered men, if they don't have a fortune of their own, generally furnish the universities with their professors and researchers.

*continued on page 2*



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In 1947, when the very young government of independent India dreamed of a unified language for the whole peninsula, Sanskrit was considered. But it was the Hindi language, which is derived from the Sanskrit, which was chosen and which up to today continually provokes extremely violent reactions, especially in the South. Every year, in the North and especially in Benares, the Ramayana is presented in its original wording by an impressive number of mostly itinerant theatre groups. There exists also a governmental organization for the promotion of Sanskrit of which Mr. Kireet Joshi and Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, two members of the Governing Board of the Auroville Foundation, are fervent supporters.

But it is not only Indians who are interested in the Sanskrit culture. Eminent researchers in Europe have for more than a century studied deeply its richness and have attempted to pierce its secrets by translating the treasures that its literature contains.

In Pondicherry itself, the French Institute of Indology has existed since 1955 and continues a work that was initiated in France more than 100 years ago. The work consists of collecting and preserving, translating, explaining, indexing and editing texts, and at the same time of manufacturing the means to facilitate research. In the Sanskrit section directed by Mr. Grimal a great number of Brahmins or pandits, all versed in traditional Sanskrit, work together.

At the French Institute, the primary work is to preserve the palm leaf manuscripts in the Sanskrit language, specifically of South India, which have been collected for more than 30 years. This is done by coating the

leaves with citronella oil. Then the manuscripts are copied and translated, and the major part is indexed and a few are published. The researchers of the Institute work on the Shvite religious literature and the classical literature written between the 7th and the 13th centuries. They are working among other things on a dictionary of the terminology of Sanskrit grammar. In collaboration with Aurosoft of Auroville, they have produced a computer programme for Sanskrit which will make the preparation of such publications more efficient.

What do they think of the future of Sanskrit in India?

"It is unthinkable that an educated Indian at one moment or another does not need to learn Sanskrit to know more about his culture", said pandit Ganeya Sharma. Mr. Grimal explains: "We must distinguish between the language itself and the Sanskrit culture. As a language, Sanskrit will certainly continue to live for a very long time in the religious world and in certain traditional Brahmin families, and a little bit in the universities and in research institutions. The question of the future of Sanskrit culture doesn't arise. We must hope that people become aware of its importance in order to understand the Indian civilization as a whole. As regards the role Sanskrit will play for the formation of the young people, it will have to be the role that Latin and Greek have played in the West, and this can evidently be done only if this heritage is preserved, and if it is explained to all, especially those who do not have access to the tradition."

And if we refer to what Sri Aurobindo and the Mother thought about it, we can hope that Sanskrit will have a great future and a development that will expand beyond the frontiers of India...

Yanne

The brochures on Auroville neglect to mention that Sanskrit is one of the languages of Auroville. The Mother was particularly fond of Sanskrit and gave this note in 1970: "Languages to be studied at Aspiration School.

- 1) Tamil
- 2) French
- 3) Simplified Sanskrit to replace Hindi as the language of India
- 4) English as the international language."

In a later conversation, Mother talked more about the future language of Auroville. "There's beginning to be a question of knowing what the language of Auroville will be. I have the impression it will be a language that—(laughing) it's the children who provide the example: they know several languages and they make sentences using words from all the languages and—it's very colourful!" Later in the same conversation she continued: "Some people who speak Esperanto have written me an official letter to tell me how many of them there are (a considerable number) and to say that they would like their Esperanto to be the language of Auroville..." Satprem remarks: "But the language of Auroville will just have to be born spontaneously!"

"Yes," Mother continues, "naturally! Oh, there's no need to interfere."

(Agenda, XI 134-5)



Shankar our Tamil teacher

#### To our subscribers

As it takes time for many subscription renewals to reach us, we are sending this issue of *Auroville Today* even to those whose subscriptions have expired. Those who have not renewed yet are requested to do so at once.

The Editors



## The Tamil Language

The word *Tamil* means literally "the one that is within you" or "the one that comes from within". It is one of the oldest living languages. According to legend it was already spoken "when the rocks appeared, but before the sand was formed". The very first scriptures were lost to the sea when parts of the south (Poompuhar and Madurai) were flooded. Traces of this Dravidian language have been found as far North as Mohenjo Daro and Harappa (now in Pakistan). And it is still spoken in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, the Fiji Islands, Mauritius and South Africa.

The first book of grammar, "Tolkapiyam", dates back to 500 B.C. Around that time, another book of grammar was written, "Agatiam", compiled by the Rishi

Agastya, who, it is rumoured, lived at the spot where later the Sri Aurobindo Ashram was founded.

Some well-known words have their root in Tamil: **catamaran** (literally: wood tied together); **pariah** (the lowest caste); **cash** (from *cassu*); **rice** (from *arisi*); the German 'Ur-', and the Dutch 'Oer-' (meaning: very old) come from the Tamil *oor* (meaning: base, nativity); **navy** (from *navai*); **coolie** (the one who receives payment in return for hard labour); **mul-lagatawny** (lit. pepper water; now meaning 'curry soup')

Tamil people worship their language. For them it is not only a language, it also has a deep occult inner force. □

## INGA VAH

"Ah yoh, tappu, tappu! Inga paringa." (Mistake, mistake! Look here.) It's Monday evening—Tamil class. With a twinkle in his eye and endless patience Shankar corrects our attempts to learn a bit of spoken Tamil.

Who is Shankar, and who are we?

Shankar, 24 years old, comes from Kuilapalayam, the village next to Fraternity. He studies at Pondicherry University, where he hopes to get his Master's Degree in Philosophy at the end of this semester. Every afternoon he teaches English and Tamil at Ilaigalkal, Meenakshi's evening school. Twice a week he teaches spoken Tamil to us, a small group of interested Aurovilians.

"Four years ago I taught formal Tamil, reading and writing, but that turned out to be too difficult and also not very useful for day-to-day conversations. I stopped until last year Meenakshi asked me to start a beginners' conversation class at Matrimandir."

As there are hardly any books available on spoken Tamil, Shankar focuses his classes on the needs of his students. Many people have gardeners and household workers and

much of the vocabulary is geared to communication for day-to-day interaction. But if someone works at the Health Center, medical terms will also be taught. "Many Aurovilians know already some words, but they lack the knowledge of how to form sentences. They have to speak and practise in front of me, so that I can correct them."

With a great sense of humour and with the help of a joke or a short story, Shankar manages to introduce us to this ancient, foreign language. "I feel it is important for Aurovilians to learn Tamil because when they are living with the surrounding people, they should learn the language as soon as possible. Only then can they communicate with them. They cannot expect people from the village to learn their language."

After he finishes his studies in a few months, a stipend from SAIER will enable him to visit several colleges and universities in South India to collect books on grammatical Tamil, and write a book on teaching spoken Tamil.

Tineke



# Choosing a Working Committee

in 128 Easy Stages

**T**he Auroville Foundation was notified on Friday, February 1st. Soon afterwards, the Council decided it was time to form the Working Committee, as designated under the Auroville Foundation Act, and they initiated a process which, true to the Auroville dynamic, promptly exploded in many different directions.

The Act specifies that the Working Committee, which will consist of no more than 7 members chosen by the Residents' Assembly, will assist the Residents' Assembly and the Governing Board in discharging their duties. Fine. Except... what exactly does this mean? It was this generous vagueness which allowed, in the following weeks, a flood of proposals regarding the functioning and status of this group to go sweeping through the community. Among the suggestions emanating from teashops, towers and ad hoc meetings:

- The Working Committee should be primarily a communication and facilitation group with little or no executive power.
- The Working Committee should be an externally oriented wing of the Council, with executive powers.
- The Working Committee should lead Auroville towards the future by concentrating the community's energies upon crucial projects.
- The Working Committee should be Auroville's ambassadors to the world.

In fact, these diverse suggestions reflect Aurovilians' radically different views about where the decision-making powers should reside in the community, as well as different evaluations of the present Council's performance. To generalize, those Aurovilians who wish to see the Working Committee as primarily a communication/facilitation group favour a decentralization of power and a strengthening of the role and efficiency of working groups and of the Residents' Assembly. Many of this group are dissatisfied by the performance of the present Council, which they believe has failed to adequately involve the community in its decision-making processes and to communicate transparently. The result? As they see it, elitism, 'group-think' and a failure to sense the 'pulse' of the community on important issues. On the other hand, those Aurovilians who favour an executive Working Committee perceive a need for a strong leadership group who will give Auroville direction. Practically, they see that any group that has to work with the Governing Board must have sufficient flexibility and power to respond quickly to any immediate challenges or opportunities that are offered to it. For the Residents' Assembly, they feel, finds it notoriously difficult to make quick and conscious decisions.

In mid-March, after 2 mini-seminars and a number of splinter group meetings in various corners of Auroville, a large ad-hoc group began meeting weekly to explore and refine the various proposals. As the weeks passed, and the sense of urgency increased, the emphasis shifted from the functioning of the Working Committee to the problem of how to select it. Sure enough, the same differences emerged. On the one hand, those who wanted the participation of the whole community; on the other, those who favoured what they called a 'more conscious' selection process by a group of Aurovilians with the capability and willingness to take up Working Committee and Council work.

The first official meeting of the Residents' Assembly under the new Auroville Foundation was called to make a decision on the selection process. The result? By a clear majority, a decision was made for a community-wide vote on the 14 names proposed for the Working Committee, with the possibility of casting negative as well as positive votes for the candidates. But wait. How many votes do we get? Some people thought 14, some 7. And doesn't negative voting leave a nasty taste in the mouth? More animated discussions, climaxing a week later with a proposal that all 11 candidates for the Working Committee (3 having meanwhile dropped out) could receive either a positive, a negative or a 'possible' vote; the positive,

negative and 'possible' votes receiving a different weight on the basis of a system used in French football.

And so, on to the final stage. Voting forms were sent to all members of the Residents' Assembly and, a week later, 222 Aurovilians (approx. 45% of those eligible to participate) had replied. The result? The four candidates with the most experience of Auroville Council work all failed to gain sufficient points, while of the 7 selected, two had no previous experience and two were relative newcomers to this work. In other words, a vote for change.

So good luck Ananda, Carel, Gilles, Guy, Jothi, Sanjeev and Yoka. You will need it!

Alan

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## The Third Economy Seminar

**T**he ongoing process of developing Auroville's economy towards the practical realization of Mother's dream has been highlighted in various issues of *Auroville Today*. In this issue we report on another such development. For on Thursday, April 18th, about 50 people from the community met for a one-day seminar to discuss three proposals presented by Auroville's Economy Task Group.

The first seminar on Auroville's economy was held in November 1988. Its immediate outcome was a study group, its final result four months later, the creation of a Central Fund to take care of our collective responsibilities. Also the so-called Rs 200 scheme was introduced, a scheme in which every Aurovillian was asked to ensure that Rs 200 per month for himself would be paid to the Central Fund. It all took effect in June 1989, when 23 collective budgets began to be supported by the Central Fund.

In November 1989, the Auroville services expressed their view that they should be supported collectively instead of by individual Aurovilians via a system of billing. Another study was undertaken to obtain more facts and figures about Auroville's economy. Four months later, in a general meeting in March 1990, the study group presented its findings, and the community decided that the monthly running expenditures of all Auroville services would be covered by the Central Fund. In that same meeting, an Economy Task Group was formed to implement this decision, and to study further steps towards a more collective economy. On August 15th, the services' budgets were integrated into the Central Fund, and a number of services were henceforth supplied free of charge.

Since August 1990, the Central Fund has made remarkable progress. The total income of approximately Rs 1,00,000 in August 1990 increased to more than Rs 3,00,000 in April 1991. It showed that there was active support from the entire community. And it showed more. As one of the Economy Task Group members wrote in the *Auroville News*:

"Looking at the overall receipts and payments for April, we are feeling - and would like to share this feeling with everyone - a real touch of Her Grace, a strong positive response from an inner dimension to the community's effort in this field. There are certain goals we want to achieve quickly and already this month the means are available for several of them - it feels wonderful."

The seminar this April dealt with three issues.

The first one was the creation of an Auroville Maintenance Fund. This fund could pay all personal maintenance based upon contributions from all Auroville units and individuals living on personal resources. The fund would also reduce cash transactions between participating individuals and Auroville units, simplify administration, and eliminate the necessity to pay sales tax on Auroville products consumed by Aurovilians.

The proposed Auroville Maintenance Fund would be a very flexible vehicle facilitating further steps towards realizing the ideal situation where Aurovilians contribute their energy and/or their money to Auroville and Auroville provides for the area of their work and all their material needs.

The second proposal was that every Aurovillian would be guaranteed a basic minimum maintenance in relation to the work contributed to the community by him/her. The Economy Task Group proposed that, in view of the present situation and the actual cost of living, Rs.1,200 monthly should be regarded as the basic minimum for maintaining an Aurovillian working full-time for the community. It also proposed to guarantee a minimum maintenance for each Auroville child who needs it. Guaranteeing this should be considered as a first priority in Auroville's maintenance needs.

The third proposal dealt with possible ways of realizing the short-term objectives of the Economy Task Group. To increase children's maintenance to the minimum proposed, to increase the running educational expenses of Auroville's schools (including an increase of personal maintenance for teachers to the basic minimum proposed), to increase some of the existing Central Fund budgets, and to fund several new service and community budgets, a total extra income of Rs 1,12,000 per month is required. Moreover, a one-time lump sum of Rs. 75,000 to Rs. 1,00,000 has to be found for urgent repairs and maintenance work on school buildings, and for purchasing some basic furniture and equipment in view of the coming school year.

Based on approximate calculations and projections, the Economy Task group concluded that the means for all this are available within Auroville, but that participation from everyone will be needed to manifest these means on a communal level. It

proposed that, as a general principle, commercial units contribute at least 33% of their annual profits to the Central Fund, that 5% of the budgets of all development projects be made available to the Central Fund, and that Aurovilians with substantial means and/or a regular income from outside contribute 10% to the Central Fund.

During the afternoon session the participants gave detailed feedback on the proposals. Guaranteeing a basic minimum maintenance of Rs. 1,200 at present in relation to full-time work (min. 30 hours a week) for the community was approved, though some felt that maintenance should be delinked from work, and especially from the proposed amount of working hours. Some people felt that at least 35 hours a week should be considered as full-time, and people should not be afraid to be questioned about their work. "What is needed is a clear commitment to work for Auroville's development; this will automatically generate more energy and more money in the community." Others warned that we should not forget that a maintenance of Rs.1,200 for a 30 hour/week is high according to the standards of the surrounding villages and that we should be careful not to create more economic motives for villagers joining Auroville. The community should also develop new patterns of maintenance by increasingly providing goods instead of money. It was also stated that at present Rs 1,200/month is too low, and that it should be at least Rs 1,500/month.

The questions about how to generate the extra income needed were also discussed in detail. There was a unanimous 'Yes' to the proposal that 33% of the profits of Auroville commercial units go to the Central Fund, as well as to the proposal of 5% for new project budgets.

Those present in the seminar also agreed that individual Aurovilians with substantial financial means and/or a regular income from outside be asked to contribute 10% of this income to the Central Fund. In this respect, however, it was mentioned that individuals prefer to give specified or to put the money into their own budgets, as e.g. green-workers.

The seminar ended with a general feeling that we are on the right track and growing a little bit closer to the realization of the ideals expressed by Mother.

*From a report of the Economy Task Group.*



**To cast a horoscope completely is one of the most difficult operations known to science. The astrologer is born not made. It is as impossible to manufacture a perfect astrologer by education as to manufacture a poet.**

Sri Aurobindo, SABCL, 17, p. 255

## An interview with Amrit

**O**ne can study astrology on many levels. The most mundane is the physical level, the level of marriage, money and work, and so on. There is also what one can call a psychological level where one can study the different aspects of one's being and the forces that act on it. And then there is a symbolic level, where one can study the universal aspect of symbols, of the relationship between the individual and the solar system and the universe. This level brings one to the study of the symbols of different civilizations, like Egypt and Persia and India. And lastly, there is a level that approaches spirituality, but this is quite rarely studied.

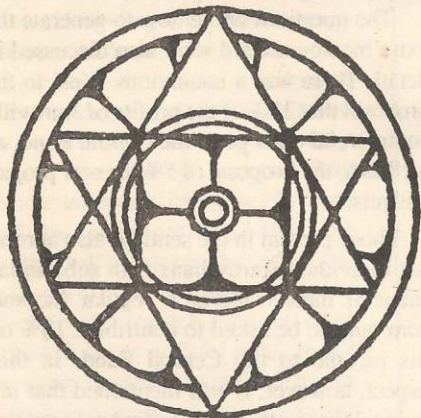
Amrit has lived in Auroville since 1969, and has studied astrology for 19 years. During the last 17 years he has developed a particular system in order to understand the relationship between spirituality and astrology.

**AVTODAY: Sri Aurobindo and The Mother have said quite a lot about astrology, including that the astrological chart can be looked upon as a map of the soul. Can you explain this?**

AMRIT: There is a way which is connected with the yoga of Sri Aurobindo and Mother in which one can look at an astrological chart to study inner progress. Now the general mundane chart is based on a cross, the symbol of matter, basically represented by the 4 points of the compass. When one follows this particular system it shows one what happens on the mundane level, the mental, vital and physical levels.

But if one wants to study what happens when an individual evolves spiritually in his consciousness, when he starts to come in tune with other, more universal movements, not just with the movements of his individuality, one has to change the cross of the chart into another kind of geometrical formation, which has to do with the triangle.

The triangle in Indian spirituality is the symbol of the divine. In fact Ramakrishna said that the form of god is the triangle. I have developed a system which is based on the two intersecting triangles of Sri Aurobindo's symbol (also known as the Seal of Solomon), the starting date being November 24, 1926, Sri Aurobindo's *siddhi* day. With this and other dates—March 21 and July 23, 1926—and also by making use of the combined symbols of Mother and Sri Aurobindo (which is also in traditional Indian spirituality the symbol of the heart chakra),



one can calculate certain times when the higher energies will be activated. These higher universal evolutionary energies are directly connected with what is called "the procession of the equinoxes", which basically determines what particular astrological age the earth is passing through. For example, 1926 would mark the beginning of the "Aquarian Age". The more the individual

develops spiritually, the more he aligns himself with these movements.

In the individual chart this does not necessarily imply that these activations will indeed influence the person spiritually, because this depends entirely on his evolutionary level of development. And that one may or may not get from the chart. The more evolved a person is, the more it will be likely that these forces will influence him. In an ordinary human being, someone who is totally closed, who has no interest in these things, who lives a totally ordinary life, there may be absolutely nothing.

If one is open on the lower vital level, one will express it that way; if one is open on the mental level, in that way; and if one is open on the psychic or spiritual level, in that way. It depends entirely where one is.

**Sri Aurobindo also said that at a certain point in one's spiritual development, the stars do not rule anymore.**

Yes, absolutely. But everything depends on the way in which you approach this. If you see it clearly as a configuration of forces that govern you, that are outside of you, then of course, I would agree that the determinism of the planets is definitely not absolute, and that there are higher levels of determinism, of which the highest is the spiritual. Actually, astrology works only because you are yourself the planets and the entire universe, you are one with everything. What happens then is that the lower forces represented by the planets become instrumental for the action of higher spiritual forces, just as one's body, life and mind can become conduits for the Supreme Force.

**Why did you choose Sri Aurobindo's siddhi day as starting point, why not any of the other important dates such as the date of supramental descent?**

It just happened that way! I have experimented with this date for some 17 years now, and it has consistently worked. It has been applied not only to individual charts, but also to the earth. You see, there is a definite way in which the signs of the zodiac can be put on the earth, using India as the key, and also using the system of the symbols of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

**Why did you take India as the pivot?**

Well, if you take the traditional astrological sign for Capricorn, and you look at the outline of Mother's map of unified India, you'll find that they are the same. So, superimpose the sign of Capricorn on India, and

# Astrology: Making

**From the beginning of 1990 there was an activation of a softer, more psychic influence in Auroville's atmosphere.**

then superimpose all the other signs on the earth. To the west, Aquarius, Pisces, etc., and to the east, Sagittarius, Scorpio, etc.

When doing that I found that on the borderline of the signs there are often some natural barriers: for example, the river Nile forms the border between Aquarius and Pisces; between Capricorn and Sagittarius, you have the confluence of the rivers Ganga and Brahmaputra; at 0 degree Cancer you have the Mississippi river; at 0 degree Leo you have the Sierra Nevada Mountains and so on.

You also find some definite indications of the nature of the signs among the peoples of these different areas. Europe falls primarily under the sign of Pisces. Europe is also the center of Christianity, ruled astrologically by Pisces, and one could say that the physical center of Christianity is Rome, Italy. The interesting thing is that Pisces also governs the feet... and Italy is shaped in the form of a boot.

I have tested the validity of this system by actual observation and experimentation. One of the most recent examples is Kuwait. At the beginning of August 1990, a cycle was passing directly over Kuwait city when the Iraqis invaded. Another cycle was passing over Germany at the time when there was that influx of refugees from East Germany, and over Berlin when it became the capital of united Germany. During Mrs. Gandhi's emergency rule it was passing over Delhi; at the time of the Bangladesh war it was passing over there.

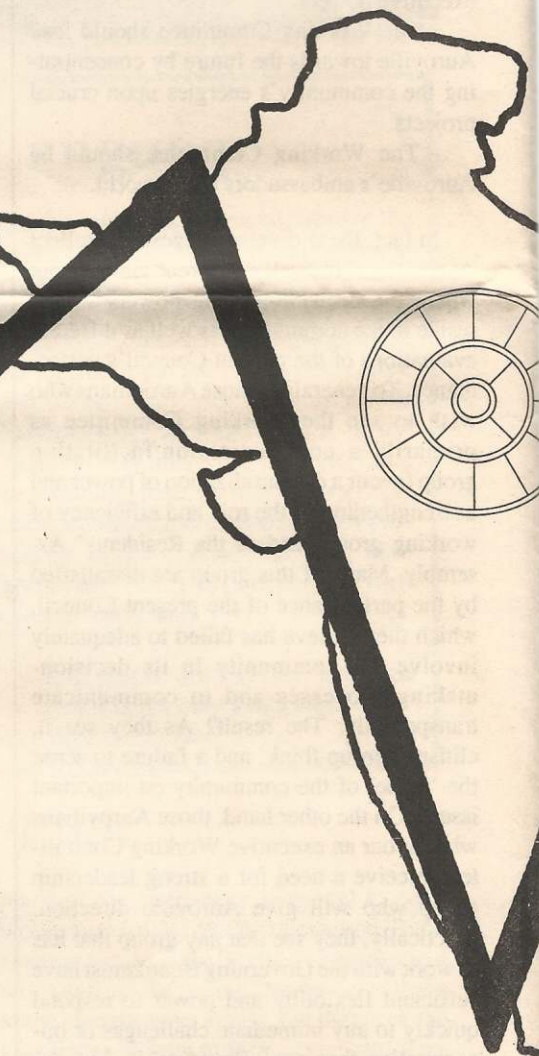
This cycle that began with the invasion of Kuwait is now passing over Iraq, and will stay there for a couple of years. Most likely Iraq will be in turmoil for some time. Particularly after the middle of this year, towards October or November it will pass over Baghdad, so it could be that at that time Saddam Hussein will be overthrown.

There is another way to look at these cycles moving on the earth, and that is in a more general, evolutionary pattern. For example, the period between 1926 and 1986

witnessed the resurgence of a lot of basic, karmic difficulties in humanity: the rise of totalitarianism, of fascism, of communism, of all sorts of divisions, atrocities, fanaticisms, some of the worst aspects of human nature manifested.

That period ended in 1986-1987. After 1987 the more creative forces, the forces of ascension and truth have begun to become more dominant.

To understand this, you can go back all the way to the American Revolution of 1776. In that year, the planet Uranus was in conjunction with a certain star in the constellation of Taurus called Aldebaran. (This star,



interestingly enough, is called the divine man, and has also a particular connection with Sri Aurobindo's individual chart. One could even call it Sri Aurobindo's star.) Now at the time of the American Revolution there was this tremendous upsurge of idealism for more freedom, for democracy, for a different type of society. Uranus has a cycle of 84 years. In 1860, 84 years after 1776, the American Civil War began, once again a fight for freedom. Again 84 years later we come to 1944: the time of the second World War, the fight against totalitarian fascism. The conclusion is that there seems to be a correspondence between the cycles of Uranus and certain happenings on the earth.

Sri Aurobindo said during the time of the second World War that in the years 1943,



# a Map of the Soul

1944 and 1945 there was a descent of souls to counter the rise of totalitarianism on earth.

This is the generation that now has come to power everywhere in the world: and it is also the generation that started Auroville. It was the same generation that was very much connected with the civil rights and peace movements in the USA, the flower children, the 1968 riots in Paris and so on.

In the late eighties and early nineties you have a similar movement upon the earth. We are witnessing now these ideals, for which people fought in the forties and sixties, sweeping the entire earth. We are witnessing

primarily represented by the Americans is democracy, freedom, human rights, whatever the distortions may have been. Communism is a child of the French Revolution. These two basic movements, which each have a certain truth, individual freedom and collectivity, also played their roles in Auroville. In 1981 there was the height of the movement towards some kind of collectivism, after a period of initial individualism. Again we are witnessing, both on a world wide level and in Auroville itself, an attempt to synthesize these two apparently contradictory tendencies.

*This brings us to the role of Auroville. What is its relevance, and can you explain in what ways that relevance acts in the world? Mother said that one of the reasons for the creation of Auroville was the prevention of a third World War. Can one indeed say that Auroville is a kind of microcosm through which the macrocosm would change?*

I can only say that I feel what Mother said is true. But I think that the most important factors in this aspect are, first, the completion of the inner room of Matrimandir, and second, that through that completion individuals in Auroville begin to open to a higher level of consciousness than has been the case up to now. That conscious working of Auroville in regard to the earth can only happen when individuals in Auroville become more conscious themselves.

At present I do not believe that Auroville is affecting the earth. It may or may not be, I cannot judge that, but I think that one has to be careful about an inflated spiritual ego that tends to come from such things.

I do believe that Auroville has ultimately a role to play in working out many of the earth's movements, for example, the one between individual freedom and the collective ideal. Sri Aurobindo said that the French Revolution realized from its banner of liberty - equality - fraternity only equality and not liberty and fraternity. Perhaps Auroville will have to realize these as well.

**T**he astrologers themselves say that there are two forces, *daiva* and *purusakara*, fate and individual energy, and the individual energy can modify and even frustrate fate. Moreover, the stars often indicate several fate-possibilities; for example that one may die in mid-age, but that if that determination can be overcome, one can live to a predictable old age. Finally, cases are seen in which the predictions of the horoscope fulfil themselves with great accuracy up to a certain age, then apply no more. This often happens when the subject turns away from the ordinary to the spiritual life. If the turn is very radical, the cessation of predictability may be immediate; otherwise certain results may still last on for a time, but there is no longer the same inevitability. This would seem to show that there is or can be a higher power or higher plane or higher source of spiritual destiny which can, if its hour has come, override the lower power, lower plane or lower source of vital and material fate of which the stars are indicators.

Sri Aurobindo, SABCL, 22, p. 468

**I** must, however, guard against the idea that the signs and planets determine a man's character or fate. They do not, they only indicate it, because they are the sensational, celestial and astral influences or nervous force in Nature which become the instruments of our Karma. That is why the European mystics gave the name of astral planes to the plane of sensational or nervous existence and astral fluid to the magnetic power or current of nervous vital force in a man. It is this same vital force which pours upon us from all parts of the solar system and of this physical universe. But man is mightier than his sensations or vitality or the sensational or vital forces of the universe. Our fate and our temperament have been built by our own wills and our own wills can alter them.

Sri Aurobindo, SABCL, 17, p. 258

*Can you explain the importance of the Matrimandir?*

One can go very deeply into the symbolism of the Matrimandir. There are the three basic rings, one at the top, one at the level of the crystal and one below, and these represent the three basic chakras, the head, the heart and the base of the spine. The two stairways are very similar to what, in Indian tradition, is called the *idapingala*, the two nerve centers on either side of the *sushuma nadi*. The combination of Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's symbols in the center represents the heart chakra. The crystal stands very clearly for the psychic. In the Inner Chamber, a ray of sunlight will fall on the crystal. Symbolically, a ray from the sun, representing the *para atman*, the supreme soul, touches the crystal, the individual soul.

The way in which the Matrimandir has been constructed is no accident. It is a very clear representation of the human body, of the body of Auroville, and, in fact, of the entire earth.

Mother has sometimes spoken about her body as being a representation of the earth. When she exerted her consciousness on some portions of her body, it would influence certain events upon the earth. And this can only be because all is one. The same goes for the Matrimandir. In a sense Matrimandir is Mother's body, and at the same time it is also the body of the earth. In fact, the astrological concept I am working with at present is based on this triangular formation of those 3 basic chakras and the perception that the microcosm and the macrocosm are one.

*You said that you have based your astrological system on the siddhi day of Sri Aurobindo. Are there ways in which you could predict the occurrence of the other important dates in Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's yoga?*

Yes. At certain moments there are re-alignments of these two triangles of Sri Aurobindo's symbol. They appear every 30

years, a major re-alignment every 60 years. Consequently, there was one in 1956, which was the supramental descent. That would also indicate that in 1986 another descent took place, which would have been a total re-alignment of forces upon the earth. It was the beginning of what I would call the concrete manifestation of Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's work on the earth. It is evident now that there is something happening, and I think it has to do with that re-alignment.

*You have, of course, also drawn the chart of Auroville. What does it say? And what does it say about Auroville's future?*

Well, Auroville is strongly influenced by Uranus. I spoke already about some manifestations of Uranus. In Auroville other manifestations are clearly visible as well, such as the fundamental instability, which appears a lot in human relations in Auroville and also in Auroville's power structures. Uranus is not an influence that is conducive to stability or to conservatism. It is constantly breaking up formations. Uranus governs the mid-heaven in Auroville's chart, and that shows that until there is a true manifestation which is in touch with a higher force, nothing will work as an Auroville government.

As far as the future is concerned: from 1988/89 Auroville has entered a new phase. This does not mean that the difficulties are over, but since that time Auroville has become more energetic, more forward looking, more creative, etc.. From the beginning of 1990 there was an activation of a softer, more psychic influence in Auroville's atmosphere.

Around 1996-1997 there will be a release of a certain power of love which will influence the life of the entire community, but accompanied at the same time by some type of working out of power and authority, perhaps internally, perhaps related to the Indian government. And there may be a conflict of some sort, not exactly along the lines of the past, but something which Auroville has to face.

*There is a conversation of Mother where she talks about the level of evolution of the individual soul, and says to the children of the Ashram that at some point in time they must have all have known a certain inner awareness, otherwise they would not be there. Can you conclude that also for the Aurovilians?*

Yes, absolutely. When I have looked at charts of Aurovilians, I have found that, in spite of appearances, in most cases there has been an activation of some sort of these spiritual energies. Obviously, there is some openness, and this is actually what has given me a lot of hope for Auroville.

Interview by Carel

the creation of a true world society, a society in which basic ethnic differences will be respected, but where at the same time there will be a general world movement towards a combination of the aspect of individual freedom and the awareness that we are one. By the completion of the third return of Uranus to the same position as in 1776, 1860 and 1944, i.e. the year 2028, these ideals will have been largely realized upon earth.

There is another interesting parallel: 13 years after the American Revolution the French Revolution occurred. In Auroville, 13 years after its foundation, we had our own French revolution, so to speak, culminating in 1981-1982.

If you look at the movements in world history, you can say that the movement





## Das Ist Rumba or Turn Off the Moon!

While back we spoke of the emergence of a strange new 'Creole' of sorts that could be heard slowly intoned, spoken or sung on dusty backroads, on terraces or in people's living rooms, in forest groves, or at whatever meeting you chose to spend your working hours. We baptised this particular dialect *Avlish* (Av pronounced as in rave) and observed that it had a sub-tropical variety of English as its base; an exotic hybrid, we noticed that it had a tendency to subvert, infiltrate or simply undermine the mother tongues and even the minds of any hapless individual who happened, at some point of his existence, to stray within the city limits of the time-warp radius of Auroville's galaxy. People who have survived such close encounters with the Auroville force-field have difficulties recalling exactly what happened, how long the experience lasted, and what exactly it was and what they'd been doing all the time. What they do realise with horror is that they no longer speak the language of their birth and upbringing—that vehicle of life's original certainties—that their thought-processes once so ordered and sequential have become somewhat looped, skewered and splayed, and that they speak a strange colourful *patois* that incorporates words, gestures, attitudes and constructions from a variety of tongues and climes, with a result that is leisurely, musical and even, at times, meaningful.

The intonation in *Avlish*, perhaps due to the mixing of Indian and European languages, is one that is musical and soft, where consonants are not harsh. One astonished mother, who was visiting recently, noticed that it took her daughter only three weeks to pick up the real slow rhythms, the rising and falling musicality of an Auroville intonation; and she repeatedly exclaimed, "*Mais c'est si jolie...*!"

More and more one comes across a colourful use of phrases and expressions that are frequently direct translations from the mother tongue into English. On the other hand, Aurovilians, when speaking their mother tongue, are found to intersperse it with *Avlish*. Basically, *tout se mélange à mort*, and I even caught a French authoress (normally not at a loss for words...) finding herself tongue-tied and incapable of coming up with the French equivalent of a familiar Auroville expression. "*C'est un très sticky situation*," she said. A compatriot of hers was overheard reflecting, "*Depuis le meeting de hier mon mood a changé et je sens un shiftement de phase dans l'air. On s'adapte à la situation.*" "Tu react too much", another

Frenchman was told when he exploded at a remark from an Anglo-Saxon.

"Das ist *rumba*" (Tamil word for very), the Bavarian beauty exclaimed at the performance, when the violinist broke his third string in ten minutes. I could not but agree. Which reminds me of something.

In March the bees had returned to Matrimandir once again, hanging their combs from the beams east of Kali's pillar. As I showed up for my nightwatch duty, some twenty people were gathered in the darkness and whispered conversations could be overheard. The lights were out, and voices drifted down from the vendi armed with vacuum cleaner that dangled precariously from the Matrimandir crane some fifteen metres above my head. Suddenly a shout was heard, followed by laughter. Someone exclaimed, "*Moon off-pana!*" Turn off the moon! It was then that our crack commandoes in the vendi, covered from head to foot in plastic and brandishing the vacuum cleaner, went into action under cover of total darkness. The operation, flawlessly executed, produced over five litres of *rumba* special honey.

Roger



MILK	1-40	பால்
MASALA MILK	2-00	மசாலா பால்
BRU COFFEE	1-50	4௫ காபி
IDLY	0-60	இட்லி
CHILLY POWDER, OIL	1-00	மிளகாய் பொடி, எ.
IDIVAPPAM	2-50	இடியாப்பம்
CHAPPATHI	2-00	சப்பாத்தி
PLAIN OOTHAPPAM	1-75	ஜாத்தாப்பம்
ONION	2-50	வெங்காயம்/கூத்தாப்பம்
TOMOTTO	2-50	தக்காளி
BREAD, BUTTER, JAM	2-50	பிரட், பட்டர், ஜாம்
COLD MASALA MILK	2-50	ஊஸ் மசாலா பால்
COOL DRINGS	4-00	கூல்டிரிங்க்ஸ்
APPLE JUICE	6-50	ஆப்ளில் ஜூஸ்

English as she is understood!



## A New Language

London, Cornwall, Auroville... In the past three decades, I've followed a curve that has taken me from the relative comforts of suburbia to increasingly basic and elemental surroundings. From the hermeticism and stifling certainties of academia to the granite cliffs of Cornwall and the simplicities of life in a small mining community, I was driven to discover my limits, my shape. And for that I had to test myself against something irreducible. Like rock. Or Auroville.

For one of the gifts of Auroville, I quickly discovered, is its refusal to shape itself to individual whims and dreams. Beneath its softening profile, it continues to burn like a diamond under a copper sky, resisting seduction or easy translation. "Take me or leave me" it says, as you stumble over another *bund* and shred your feet on laterite rock. And it's here that we attempt to maintain a toe-hold, schizophrenics of the Dream, alternately elevated by a sense of the absolute and plunged down by the banality of our daily existence.

This gap, this yawning gulf, is evident everywhere and is often remarked upon. But recently, after participating in an Auroville poetry reading and wrestling with yet another article for *Auroville Today*, I've been particularly aware of the limitations of language when it comes to evoking something of the Auroville experience. For language is

like an envelope that you carry with you everywhere, an envelope made up of historical, cultural and personal associations. And however much you stretch or dislocate it in the attempt to encompass Auroville, it always bounces back to its original shape. And the palmyras go striding into the sunset, untouched.

What we need for Auroville, in fact, is a new language. A language subtle and plastic enough to capture the continuous folding and unfolding, the dance with matter, the ever-shifting razor-edge of manifestation. A language of cashews, of shadowed canyons, of quick encounters and strong hands, of dust and dreams, of a craziness that beckons the future. And a language that strikes down, down to bedrock and rings out the bass notes of our adventure here, tuning us to the anthem of the Absolute. A language that is Force, not transcription. A mantric language.

Perhaps, like Auroville, it already exists, omnipresent, blowing through us like dust through a sunbeam, while we struggle with our shopping lists and vouchers. Perhaps, one day, it will ease through the cracks and it will no longer matter which language, which 'envelope', we were born in. For after all the wrong notes, the discords and desperate returnings, we'll all be singing the same song.

Alan



## PASSING THROUGH

### "I'm a verb, not a noun!"

Recently, David Orcutt, inventor and disseminator of 'Worldsign', visited Auroville. 'Worldsign' is intended to be a global communication system that can augment existing languages. It can be represented in three modes: through gestures, through writing and through animation. It consists of about 750 basic signs drawn from sources like the North American Indians, the Australian aborigines, international deaf sign language, and Bharat Natyam and Katha Kali dance forms. But what was David's purpose in attempting to construct a new world language, and what can it offer to Auroville?

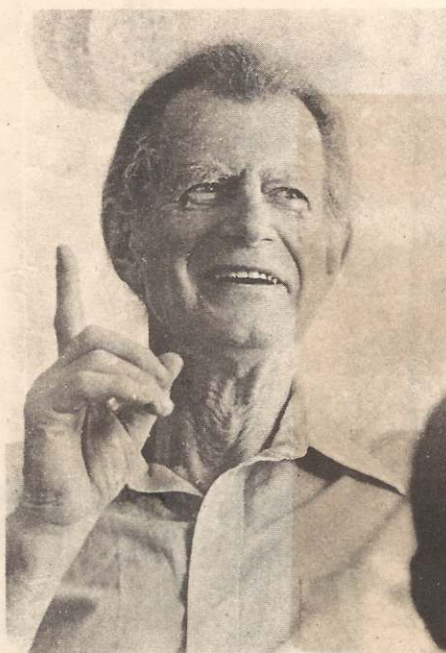
"I've done many things in my life, but from an early age I've been aware of two aspects of my being—the political activist/scientist and the artist—and for many years I looked for a way of integrating them and making myself more complete. At the same time, I was continually frustrated by language, because there was so much I wanted to express but the words were so clumsy. So I was constantly experimenting with new forms of communication. Then my youngest son was born brain-damaged—he was extremely intuitive and had a good sense of rhythm, but the linear logical functions of his brain were not operative. So I began working with signs to see if I could communicate with him in other ways, and I began to get results."

The problem with ordinary language is that it is totally at odds with how the universe 'works'. Conventional language, as David points out, is full of nouns which refer to static entities, but life is continually in process, flowing. As Buckminster Fuller once put it, "I seem to be a verb rather than a noun!" Language is linear—one thing happens after another—whereas in reality, many things are happening at the same time. And conventional language uses only a small portion of our left brain—the hemisphere that deals with analysis and logic—and very little of the right brain—the hemisphere that deals with feeling and intuition. Hence people can be intellectually excited by a concept but fail to do anything about it. Their heads are separated from their hearts.

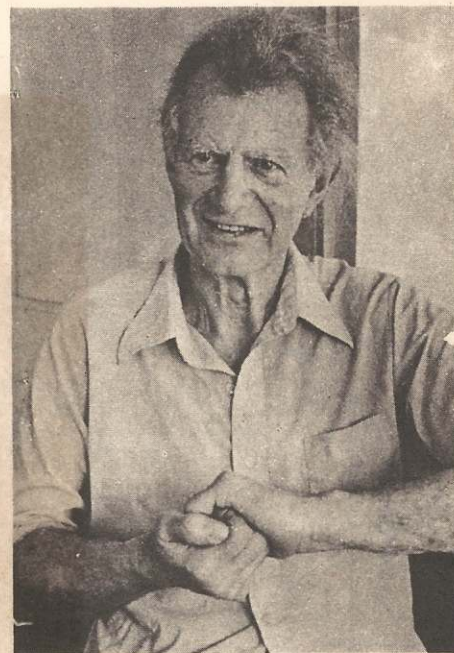
The advantage of 'Worldsign', as David explains, is that as a sign language it uses the body, and this uses much more of both hemispheres of the brain. As you sign a concept like 'year', by passing one hand (the earth) around another hand (the sun), you come much closer to experiencing the meaning. In sign language there is a sense of flow and change as one sign metamorphoses into another. Conventional language tends to separate. For example, the words 'I love you' mean, grammatically, *I am doing something to you!* But in deaf sign language there is no separate 'I' and 'you' in this context; merely the sign for 'love' which is inclusive. In other words, you're not just using a different language, but your way of perceiving the world is also changing.

"I'm convinced", says David, "that using Worldsign will allow people to live more peacefully and harmoniously with each other, as this system of communication uses the body and brain fully and more holistically, it emphasizes connectedness, feeling and flow and, because in graphic form many different ideas and feelings can be represented simultaneously, it allows more possibilities and richness than the linear languages we speak." Interestingly, he points out, the non-literate, sign-using peoples of the world have always been very respectful of the planet. It's as if by using their bodies to communicate, they are strengthening their link to the Earth and all other beings. Using sign language also tends to develop psychic awareness. Many deaf people, for example, are used to sending psychic cues to each other when they want to communicate.

In terms of Auroville, according to David, 'Worldsign' could have a number of uses. Apart from the holistic and individual growth possibilities mentioned above, it could be used to assist in teaching a second language—something that is being experimented with in 'New Creation' school at present—as the signs are very easily remembered and can be demonstrated on a screen beside an unfamiliar foreign word. India, David notes, is particularly conducive to the introduction of a new sign language as, for thousands of years, so much has been expressed here through gesture as in Indian dance and iconography. Again 'Worldsign'



David Orcutt . . . . .



signing unity.

can help different cultures and nationalities to communicate better together. "If you and the villagers learned only a few basic signs, it would already begin to prevent misunderstandings." A further use would be for children with learning difficulties. Because sign language uses more of the brain than conventional languages, children who have problems with linear thought can communicate very easily and richly through signs.

"But the most important aspect of 'Worldsign' for both Auroville and the planet is that it allows us to think and feel in new ways, without the artificial constraint of ordinary language structures. I expect in the next few years to see many societies break down as a result of the world's present exploitative lifestyle. We will need a new language, new concepts, new possibilities in order to survive. I believe that 'Worldsign' is a step towards this."

David has been inspired by Auroville which, he says, "is also preparing the world for something else. When I first visited in 1982, I was struck by how it managed to operate in a very decentralized way, like a federation of separate, decentralized units. I feel this is the way the world has to go in the future, and I'm gratified that Auroville can provide such a living example of unity in diversity."

Interview by Alan

## Crystal Globe arrives

Friday evening, May 26, 10.45 hours.

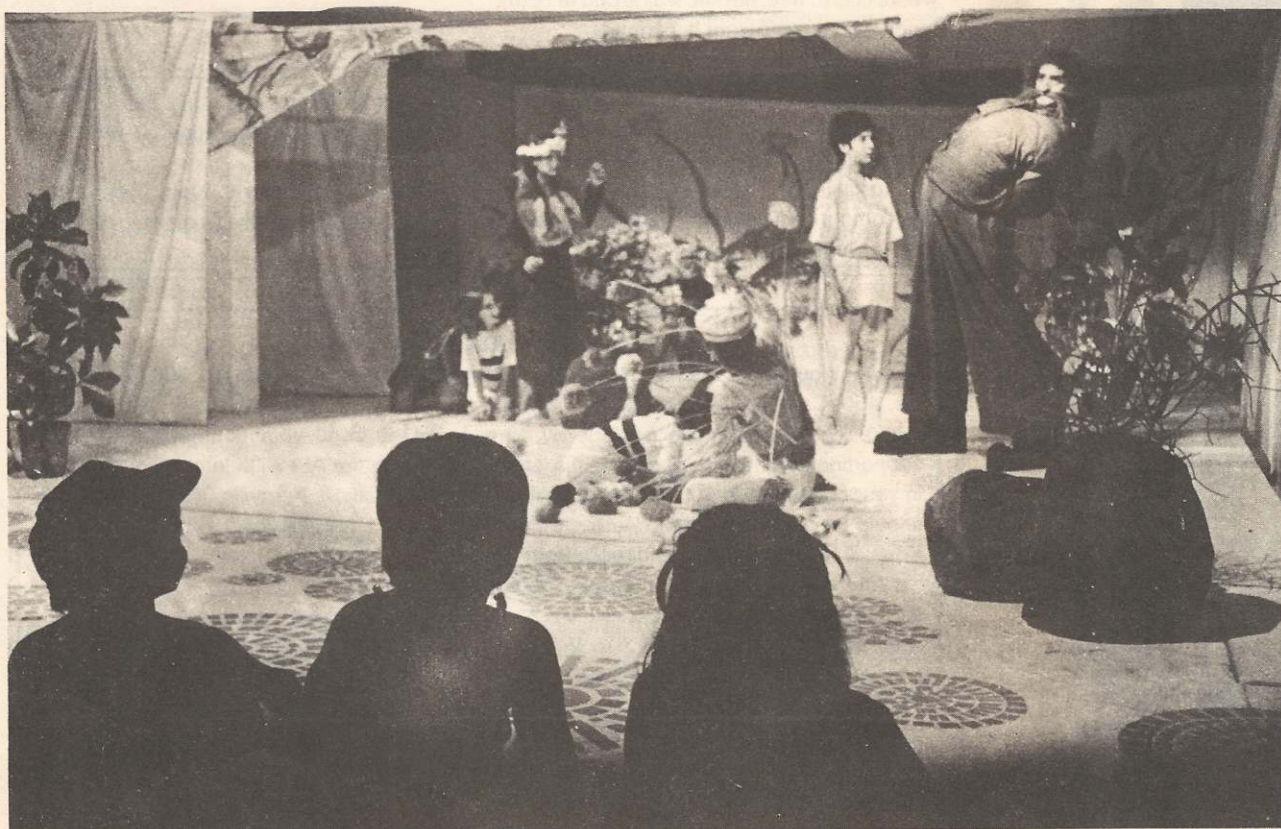
Expectant faces of many Aurovilians welcomed the arrival of the C.S.R. van at the Matrimandir compound. It carried a large double crate.

In it: the core of Matrimandir, the crystal globe.

"Vorsicht, Glass" (careful, glass), warned a German label on the crate, ignoring the fact that in this country, they speak and read other languages. And carefully treated it was, at the airport in Madras, where officials of the airline, airport and customs cooperated in handing over the crate as quickly as possible, until its final hoisting into Matrimandir's Inner Chamber the next day.

There followed the opening of the double crate and people thronged to see the beauty of this heart of Matrimandir, the Soul of Auroville. It rests on a trolley awaiting its final installation on top of the four Sri Aurobindo symbols in a few months. We'll present a report on the Search of the Globe in our August issue.

(see photos front and back pages)



Children and adults performing the delightful play "Mrinmayi's Gift", in French. Conception, direction, music and costumes "all-Aurovilian", of course!



# AUROVILLE TODAY

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By Airmail  
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ANKE AND MICHAEL  
GRACE  
AUROVILLE

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In this issue: Language; Astrology; AV internal organisation;  
Glimpses of the Crystal



The crystal cometh. . .

Photo Sven

## A Village Tragedy

Let's call her Lakshmi. One morning, four years ago, she materialized by our hand pump: a shy, 16-year old village girl in a cheap sari, diminutive between her father and uncle. They had heard that we needed a girl to help in the house. 'Let's see', I said in my exotic Tamil. Sure enough, next day there she was, ready for work.

For the first weeks, she hardly dared look at us, but scurried about like a small whirlwind, sweeping leaves and watering plants. The beginner's gambit, we thought. Soon, when she's sure we need her, she'll slacken off. But it never happened. She seemed to need work, to devour it. And as she brushed the path or scrubbed clothes in her no-nonsense manner, we sensed the spirit and determination in this pert little body.

Within a month, she was picking up on our lamentable Tamil, asking questions, even attempting little jokes. And we discovered she could repair clothes, make coffee that even the connoisseurs of the *Auroville Today* team found acceptable, arrange flowers, cook, chop wood. One day she even drove the bullock cart, leaving our somewhat laid-back vendi driver walking disconsolately behind.

She'd had virtually no formal education—the usual fate of girls in the villages—so we sent her to Meenakshi's school. Before long, she was reading and writing Tamil, her lunch hours spent in practising her letters in a cheap exercise book. "She's bright, very quick", Meenakshi told us. We began to feel that her talents were being underemployed, and fantasized about her running a workshop or teaching other village women valuable skills.

Of certain things, she was sure. "I want to keep working in Auroville. I don't want to get married yet or have children immediately." But by now she was twenty, and family pressure was mounting. Her parents found her a prospective husband, a tailor from Cuddalore. But it would have meant she could not work in Auroville, so she ran away—she told us, giggling—from the marriage negotiations. Then her elder brother married, and his wife moved into the family house. There was little space. "Lakshmi, why don't you marry?" her parents kept asking. She would come crying to work, exhausted by arguments at home. "I'm only happy when I'm here", she told us. We tried to find her somewhere else to live, but she was afraid of being lonely and cut off from her friends.

She, all of us, grew increasingly desperate. Finally, she thought she saw a way out. There was a boy in her village who she'd known for four years. She liked him, he wanted to marry her. He didn't mind her continuing to work in Auroville, and was happy to wait with children. One problem; he drank, but he promised to stop after marriage. Her parents didn't like him—he had a bad reputation in the village—but Lakshmi became increasingly determined.

One morning, she smuggled two saris out of her house and they ran away to Pondy to get married in the registry office. Later, they returned to his tiny house. He had virtually nothing. Not even enough cooking pots. But when she returned to her work with us, she seemed happy.

Within a month, she was crying again. "He keeps drinking. He wants me to stop working in Auroville and just look after the house and have babies. Everything he told me before was lies." A few days later, she'd had enough. She returned to her parents and asked forgiveness. Her brother wouldn't talk to her, her father wouldn't even enter the house. Only her mother would sit with her. "We warned you about him", she said, "and you married without our consent. You can stay here a few days, but after that you'll have to find somewhere else." The family had a small piece of adjoining land. Perhaps she could build a small house there...

Meanwhile her husband called a meeting of village elders. "She's my wife", he said. "She should come back and look after the house." Then Lakshmi spoke. They listened quietly, then told her "Give up your Auroville work, go back to your husband and look after his house. If after some time he is mistreating you, we'll help." Exactly how was not specified, it seems.

So now she sits in the dusty doorway of a tiny mud hut, watching the goats scavenging outside, watching the shadows creep across the courtyard, wondering what time her drunken husband will return that night. If she is lucky, he won't beat her.

Lakshmi. A beautiful soul trapped in a medieval situation. Lakshmi. A light, a sparkle, an innocence, an aspiration about to be snuffed out. Just as it has been for millions of others like her. Tamil Nadu, India, 1991.

Alan

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

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

The contribution for the next 12 issues of Auroville Today is for India Rs. 100, for abroad Rs. 450, Can.\$ 27, French F. 145, DM 45, It.Lira 31,500, D.Gl. 50, US \$ 22.50, U.K.£ 13.50. This includes the postage by airmail. Please send your contribution (or your supporting contribution of double the amount) either to the Auroville International centre in your country (add 10%) or to Auroville Today, CSR Office, Auroville 605101. Cheques should be made payable to Auroville Fund, specifying: Contribution for Auroville Today. You will receive the issues directly from Auroville.

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