

# AUROVILLE TODAY

September 1992

Number Forty-Four

PHOTO ALAN



Keeping her balance at the Aurolympics... (See also page 3.)

## Visit of the Governing Board

Seven members of the Board came to Auroville: the Chairman, Dr. Karan Singh, Mrs. Aster Patel, Dr. (Mrs.) Kapila Vatsyayan, Mrs. Bilkees Latif, Mr. N. Krishnan, Mr. S.R. Tayal and Mr. Sudeep Bannerjee. Mr. Ajoy Bagchi and Mr. Kireet Joshi did not come. In addition, Mr. L.K. Tripathy, Secretary to the Governing Board, attended all the meetings.

In the morning, the Governing Board visited Matrimandir to review progress, and then held its own meeting at the Merriam Hill centre. In the afternoon, they met with the Working Committee and various Auroville work groups, including the Development Group, the Fund Raising Group and a delegation from the Residents Assembly. The delegation presented a discussion paper on the relationship between the Residents Assembly and the Governing Board (see 'Auroville Today' no. 43). Finally, the Governing Board met 30-40 members of the Residents Assembly. At this meeting, some of the Aurovilians expressed their fears about the Residents Assembly losing the freedom to develop towards Mother's ideal in its own way and at its own pace under the Foundation; Office Order No. 5 was cited as an example of an insensitive 'bureaucratic' document which did not take into account our collective process. Dr. Karan Singh replied that the Governing Board was a very sympathetic Board and had no wish to impose anything on the Aurovilians; that the Board, through the Secretary, had helped accelerate processes like land purchase and Matrimandir construction; and that the Aurovilians should have more confidence in the future. Quoting Churchill, he said, "The only thing you have to fear is fear itself". He agreed that meetings with members of the Residents Assembly would be included in future visits of the Governing Board.

On 14th August, the Governing Board of the Auroville Foundation visited Auroville and held one of their twice-yearly meetings.

In this single issue of Auroville Today we provide a brief overview of the day, which included meetings with Auroville working groups; we interview two members of the Governing Board; and we publish an article by Dr. Karan Singh—drafted on his flight back to Delhi on August 15th—in which he replies to an article in the previous issue which characterized the Auroville Foundation as travelling at the pace of a "bullock cart", and shares his thoughts about organization and freedom.

## THE FOUNDATION: AN AIRPLANE NOT A BULLOCK CART

by Dr. Karan Singh  
Chairman, Auroville Foundation

An article in the August issue of *Auroville Today*, which I saw when I arrived in Auroville for the fourth meeting of the Governing Board, compares the Auroville Foundation to a bullock cart which makes its way "slowly and jerkily", and asks "But who is the driver?". I would like to respond to both these observations and share some of my own hopes and aspirations for this unique experiment in international living based—in theory at least—on the concept of higher consciousness articulated by the Mother and flowing from Sri Aurobindo's soaring vision of humanity poised for the next leap in evolution.

It is not my intention in this article to pronounce judgement as to how far, in my opinion, the residents of Auroville, individually and collectively, have in fact risen to a higher level. In any event, matters pertaining to inner consciousness do not lend themselves to easy quantification, and outer appearances are often deceptive. However, in a natural progression from the widespread dialogue that I had with a broad spectrum of Aurovilians, those belonging to specified working groups as well as others, I thought I might share some thoughts with the community of which, as I said in my first speech on 28 February 1992, I feel myself to be a spiritual if not material part.

For a start, the bullock cart analogy seems to me to be peculiarly inappropriate. In fact, the speed with which the Foundation has started functioning since it was notified on 29 January 1991 is quite astonishing. To take as an example the Matrimandir, which the Mother rightly called "The Soul of Auroville", the progress in the last eighteen months has been astonishing, specially on the crucial inner chamber which Piero and his team are rapidly bringing to completion, and for which they deserve our warmest commendation. This has been possible by a massive mobilization of funds, and the acquisition of the land necessary for Matrimandir, which had been pending for years, was achieved by the Secretary and the Land Development Group in a few months, thus ensuring that the Mother's vision and Roger's magnificent interpretation get translated into reality. At the rate the construction

was going before the Foundation was set up the completion would have taken us well into the 21st century!

In addition to progress on Matrimandir, the whole planning process for Auroville's growth has become much more structured, concrete and realistic. Numerous sanctions and tax exemptions have been or are in the process of being secured, as a result of our efforts in Delhi with the concerned Ministries. The Register of Residents envisaged in the Auroville Foundation Act is under preparation, the process of accounting and preparing papers for placing before Parliament has begun, and the members of the Governing Board have made every attempt to allay the legitimate concerns in the community regarding the nature of the arrangements envisaged under the Act. I may add that the Board includes only two government servants, as against seven private individuals, including myself, who have for many years and in many ways interacted with the thoughts, and in some cases the persons of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

During my conversation with some Aurovilians I came across the curious belief that any structure whatsoever was an impediment to spiritual growth. This is not in fact the experience of humanity. Often it has been the harshest structures that triggered the most dramatic spiritual transformation—witness, for example, Sri Aurobindo in the Alipore Jail in 1907! But here we are striving to make the structure as harmonious and mutually supportive as possible. To claim a total freedom from all outer structures is a luxury unattainable and, even if attained, not necessarily desirable. It can lead to lack of coherence, aimlessness, even licentiousness, which are certainly not conducive to inner growth. Instead of a knee-jerk 'fear' reaction against all structures, therefore, I feel that all sections of Aurovilians, regardless of their internal differences, should cooperate with the Foundation so that the initial arrangements are made on a harmonious and non-confrontational basis.

(continued on next page)



## The Foundation...

(continued from page 1)

All this is not to say that I am satisfied with the pace of development. There are, clearly, two areas where we have not yet been able to make a breakthrough, though this has certainly not been for lack of trying. The first is the arrangement between the many productive units of Auroville and the Foundation. The Act lays down that all assets of Auroville vest in the Foundation, but that structures will be set up to ensure maximum flexibility in management by the Aurovilians. On the one hand the relatability to the Foundation, accountability and financial contribution need to be ensured; on the other the management should not only be allowed maximum autonomy but also be supported in such matters as guaranteeing bank-loans. Several options in this connection have in fact been studied, but so far no satisfactory arrangement has emerged. It is my hope that, with the special attention that the Secretary and the representatives of the Units are paying to this problem, a solution might be found in the next few weeks. Conceivably, this could also deal with the vexed and divisive Aurelec issue which has created so much bitterness in the past.

The second area in which we have not made necessary progress is in the setting up of the International Advisory Council. Renowned personalities around the globe have been approached, but several have declined due to their heavy commitments. We now have three firm names—J.R.D. Tata, Maurice Strong and Ervin Laszlo—and I am expecting to secure two more by the end of the year so that the Committee can meet early in 1993.

These two areas apart, we are now moving in right earnest. Rather than a bullock cart I would like the Foundation to be an airplane that has been fuelled and is taxiing onto the runway for take off. And who are the pilots? Clearly Sri Aurobindo and the Mother are the pilots in this unique undertaking. The Foundation can at best be looked upon as the cabin crew, designed to facilitate you the passengers—the Aurovilians. And where is the flight heading? In a speech in Parliament I had described Auroville as an arrow shot into the future. That's where.

As Sri Aurobindo writes:

*"When humanity was first created, the ego was the unifying element. It was around the ego that the different states of being were grouped; but now that the birth of superhumanity is being prepared, the ego has to disappear and give way to the psychic being, which has slowly been formed by divine intervention in order to manifest the Divine in the human being. It is under the psychic influence that the Divine manifests in man and thus prepares the coming of superhumanity."*

And that, surely, is what Auroville is all about.

New Delhi,  
20 August 1992

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

Editorial team: Tineke, Roger, Jill, Carel, Bill, Annemarie, Alan. Typesetting on computer: Annemarie. Barbara helps with the proofreading.

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During a hectic day, Auroville Today managed to interview two members of the Governing Board with powerful but contrasting personalities, each of whom is highly respected and influential in their sphere of work.

Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan is an internationally renowned scholar in the field of Indology. With a background in dance and education, she worked for many years in the Ministry of Education of the Government of India, where she rose to the post of Secretary of Culture. For many years, she handled UNESCO affairs on behalf of India, and she has organized and participated in many cultural and artistic events in India and abroad. She initiated, and is Member-Secretary of, the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi, an exciting concept which studies

and offers experience of all the arts through an interdisciplinary approach.

Mrs. Bilkees Latif was born into an aristocratic family in Hyderabad. Her mother was French, her father Indian. She and her family, who had a very close contact with Mother, lived for two years in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Later, she moved away and married. Her husband subsequently became Marshal of the Indian Air Force, Governor of Maharashtra and India's Ambassador to France. Mrs. Latif has written several books—including a biography of her mother—and has been involved in women's causes and social work for many years. She was Chairman of the Women's Social Board for Andhra Pradesh and is at present involved in the activities of Bal Bhavan, a national children's welfare organization with its headquarters in New Delhi.



The visiting members of the Governing Board. From left to right: Mr. Sudeep Bannerjee, Mr. N. Krishnan, Mrs. Aster Patel, Dr. Karan Singh, Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, Mrs. Bilkees Latif, Mr. L.K. Tripathi (Secretary) and Mr. S.R.Tayal.

### Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan

**Auroville Today: What do you feel are the challenges that Auroville is facing at present?**

Dr. Kapila: There is something you should guard against in Auroville. That is the feeling that there is only one centre, and that Auroville is the centre of the universe. For the journey that you are taking, in its very nature, requires that you recognise multi-centredness; in other words, that my centre, my way of approaching things, may be quite different from yours. I'm not saying that this exclusivist tendency is there in Auroville at present, except, perhaps, subtly, but as a growing community you should guard against it.

The problems are far more difficult on a collective level than on an individual level. For example, all movements that have begun with an individual inner experience face the problem of retaining this experience when they are externalised into institutions.

**AVT: This is precisely one of the fears expressed by some Aurovilians regarding the Influence of the Auroville Foundation.**

Kapila: But the Foundation is simply a legal framework that came into being because of problems the Aurovilians were having.

**AVT: But how do you match legal requirements with the spiritual dimension of a place like Auroville?**

Kapila: This is always a problem. However, the moment there is an inner discipline in Auroville, you probably won't need all this legal framework. This is what you should work towards. The value of the Foundation is a matter of how the collective psyche of Auroville perceives itself in relationship to

the world. It can be an instrument for expanding out into the world if you wish it to be.

**AVT: From your own experience in administering the Indira Gandhi Centre in Delhi, how successfully has the original vision been retained during the process of its institutionalisation, of drawing up procedures, regulations etc.?**

Kapila: I am the maker of the vision and the maker of the regulations. And the day that I feel I have replaced the vision with regulations, I will quit.

No, all these concerns obscure the real problem. And that is that when you are stuck inside, you look outside and blame the circumstances around you. You all came to Auroville for an inner order. The moment that inner order is there, that you reach a point of spiritual ascension, there can no longer be a possibility of outer chaos. You know the story about the Devil? There was chaos in the world, and the Devil came along and told everyone, "No problem. I'll help you organise this chaos!"

**AVT: What does it mean to you to be a member of the Governing Board of the Auroville Foundation?**

Kapila: I don't think I'm obliged to answer that just because you are an Aurovillian. Let's not get into this, "I thought it was Mother's call that I should do that work etc. etc." If there was something on this level, I certainly wouldn't want to communicate it for public consumption, because the moment that I did this I would have negated its very value. Let's just say I'm a poor little bureaucrat, with the Devil's skill in organisation, who is trying, in some small way, to help.

**AVT: You seem to be saying that Aurovilians need to be more rigorously honest with themselves about what they are doing here, and not to accept easy answers.**

Kapila: Absolutely. You've got it!

### Mrs. Bilkees Latif

**AVT: I have heard you came with Mother to the Auroville plateau long before Auroville was inaugurated.**

Bilkees: Yes, it was in 1948 or 1949. Mother used to go for drives and on a number of occasions she asked me to accompany her. On this particular occasion, the car stopped somewhere near the sea. She got out and sat on a small folding stool, while we sat on the ground around her. First of all, she looked at one of my portraits—I was sketching at this time—and made some corrections. Then she looked around and said, "I have a strong feeling. I envisage a time when there will be people from all over the world here, living together in harmony." There was a very strong atmosphere, a sense of peace. And although I drove with her on other occasions, this is the one that stays in my memory.

Many years later, when I heard that Auroville had been founded, I wondered if it was in this place. So last year, when I came for the Governing Board meeting, I described to Aster the place where we stopped, and she recognised it as being on the path to Auroville, not far from her house in 'Auromodel'.

My family used to visit the Ashram frequently. When my mother, who was French, first saw Sri Aurobindo, she said there was a golden light around him so strong that she fell at his feet. I remember seeing Sri Aurobindo at darshan time. He sat there, very very peaceful and very distant—as if he was seeing something else. Whereas Mother would take us children up to her room in the afternoons, and read to us from 'Prayers and Meditations', explaining each prayer. She told us so many things about herself, including occult experiences—I wish somebody had noted them down. How, for example, she had seen a vision of Sri Aurobindo before she came to India, and how she had sketched it. Later, her husband, Paul Richard, on meeting Sri Aurobindo for the first time, had recognised him as the subject of the sketch.

But to me the loveliest thing in the Ashram was the exchange of flowers. When you entered, there was this room of flowers where you could choose some to give to Mother. She would reply by giving you a flower with a special attribute. I remember once she picked up a flower and said, "I give you Sri Krishna's peace in the consciousness. May you always have it." There were many special moments like this.

When I was asked to be a member of the Governing Board, it came straight out of the blue. "Why me?" I wondered. Auroville is a fantastic concept. That's why any disharmony brings a lot of sadness, because I know that people have given up so much and come from all over the world because of a belief in this place. It means so much to so many people, but, somehow, it has to be realized that Auroville is something above the ego, something above everything else, if it is to succeed. And nothing comes easily. Mother said there are forces which always fight against something like this. And that we must always be conscious, and not let these forces descend into us. We must all work together to make a success of Auroville.

I understand your concern about not taking orders from outside, but no one on the Governing Board wants to impose anything. Rather, we are here to help safeguard Mother's dream.

Interviews by Alan



## BRIEFLY...

### Aurolympics '92

Auroville's yearly sports event, the 'Aurolympics' (after the dress-rehearsal in Barcelona came the real thing!) took place at Certitude on the 16th of August. It was a Sunday, and a hot one at that, with temperatures reaching over 100° F (38° C) in the afternoon. But there was good participation. The event had been organized mainly for the small and not-so-small kids of the Auroville schools, but the occasional courageous and sporty adult took his/her chance as well.

There was an unusual degree of organization. All competitors were wearing specially made T-shirts; each participant's scores and timings were entered into a computer, set up on the spot. Activities this time were limited to field and track events and gymnastics, which went off without a hitch. A big Olympic symbol (computer-designed) was on display, with a slight variation on the traditional one... as the central ring was white instead of black. It had been completed on the final day of the Olympic Games and was inspired by Mother, who spoke about the occult meaning of the various colours of the Olympic rings. (see box)

### "Counting Knots On A Rope"

For 35 minutes on a Sunday afternoon, we lived in a different Auroville. We became a Native American tribe. Aurovilians suddenly had Red-Indian features and dress and Auroville was no more in Tamil Nadu... could it have been the Grand Canyon?

We were watching a new release from the Auroville Video Team. The story: A boy (played by Ole) asks his grandfather (Alain A.) to tell him once more the story of how he was born and how he crossed his first 'dark mountains'. Gradually the story reveals that he was born blind ('with a dark curtain in front of his eyes'). He is called 'Boy Strength of Blue Horses' as some horses had come to bless him as a baby. His grandfather teaches him to ride a pony. At the end he participates in a big pony race.

The video was shot at Kottakarai Pony Farm and had a lot of cooperation from them, and there were superb shots of the pony race against the background of the Hermitage canyon.



Saturday-morning tree planters

PHOTO BILL

It has been officially stated that the five rings of the symbol of the Olympic Games represent the five continents, but no special significance has been attached to the colour of the rings, nor has there been any intention of allotting a specific colour to each continent.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to study these colours and to find out what meaning they may have and what message they may convey.

It is quite well known that each colour has its significance, but the meanings attached to the various colours by different interpreters vary and are often conflicting. There does not seem to exist any universally accepted classification of these significances. This is because these colours are considered from a mental standpoint, or at least because the vision is influenced by the mind of the interpreter. But if one rises above the mind to the truly occult regions beyond, the real meaning of each colour is the same for all those who can read it directly. This is true not only in this particular case but for all occult and spiritual experience. There is a remarkable similarity in the experiences of mystics of all times and places.

The video is a new experiment of the Auroville Video Team (Alain, Patricia and Pavitra) and is especially meant for kids. It is possible to obtain a copy through Auroville Video, Pitanga, Auroville 605101.

### Sangamam

In India, wherever two or more streams or rivers join, is considered a sacred spot. The Sanskrit word for this is the origin of the word *sangha*: the gathering together of persons for a spiritual purpose. *Sangamam* is a Tamil word that means 'confluence' and is used in Auroville for special occasions when Aurovilians and those employed in Auroville enjoy a festive day together. The all-Auroville Sangamams of the past have been huge and therefore sometimes chaotic events. An alternative has been the local area Sangamams, one of which occurred recently in the greenbelt. The sacred spot for the confluence was a barren field between Fertile and Aurogreen. The barrenness was overcome by tents, flags and fun. Participants came from as far away as Forecomers bearing the 'mumpli' ticket and the 'whoopie' coupons. About 200 people had a very good lunch served on banana leaves. Special T-shirts were printed as prizes for the sports events and games. Some new events were introduced especially for the women: there was a fun race with water pots on the head and a *kolam* drawing contest. The 'confluence' ended with a bicycle race that finished with an unexpected multiple crash—but all involved jumped up with laughter...

### Saturday Morning Treeplanters

More than two million trees planted, and it's still not enough! Lots of trees are growing on most of the Auroville land, but that's still only a few thousand acres. Now Aurovilians plant on other land wherever they can, to increase shade and create the other magical, transformational effects that only trees can give. For the past two months, the 'green-

Consequently, if the colours of the rings in the Olympic Symbol are viewed from this standpoint, we shall be able to find their real esoteric meaning and see how they apply to the five continents.

## The Olympic Rings

Green denotes a vast peaceful feeling with a direct contact and a very harmonious relationship with Nature. It could represent a continent with vast open spaces and an unspoiled population living close to the soil and Nature.

Red is the colour of the physical and material world. The red ring could therefore be allotted to a people that has achieved a great mastery over the physical world. This colour would also indicate that material success has given it predominance over the others. In any case it represents a people that stresses physical and material things.

Blue, on the other hand, indicates a young continent with its whole future before it and great possibilities, but still new and growing.

Black is a very unfortunate choice of colour as it can only represent a continent

which is fast falling into deep obscurity—the descent of a declining people into dark oblivion.

On the contrary, yellow is the most glorious colour of all. It is the golden colour of light—the Light which comes from the Source and Origin of all things and which, with its helping hand, will lead evolving humanity back to its divine Origin.

The arrangement of the rings also has a significance. Black is the central colour upholding all the others, and this is indeed an indication of the black chaos which now governs the world and of the blindness of those who are at present struggling to guide the ship of humanity on the dark sea of ignorance.

It is our hope that in the future this black ring will be replaced by a white one, when there comes a turn in the tide of human affairs, when the shades of ignorance are dispelled by the dawn of a new light, the bright, white, self-luminous light of the new Consciousness, and when at the helm of the ship stand those who will face this brilliant radiance and set course towards the Promised Land. (from: *The Mother on Education*)



At the Sangamam festivities: Breaking Olympic records?

PHOTO ALAN

belt gang' has been inviting volunteers to turn up on Saturday mornings to participate with neighbourly togetherness in avenue plantation in an area referred to by some students as 'dinosaur land'. This is heavy work, which involves breaking up the rock-hard laterite with crowbars to make cubic-metre tree pits; but before too long, the bullock cart arrives with tea and topsoil and compost. Then it's a matter of waiting for the rains...

### Don't Call Collect

Translating is always a tricky business under the best of circumstances, but when the pamphlet *Introducing Auroville* was translated into Russian, something unexpected happened. While everything was fine with the text, a telephone number found its way into a strange place—under the serene Cartier-Bresson photo of Sri Aurobindo! However, we would like to advise Russian readers that this is the number of the Auroville Secretariat. Please don't call collect...

### The Weather

Our Auroville weatherman tells us that we are experiencing the driest year in Auroville in over 20 years; only 10 cms of rain since January 1st, whereas the average rainfall for this period is approximately 45 cms. Pondicherry and Madras are not much better off—receiving 11 cms and 17 cms respectively—but the rest of Tamil Nadu has received good rains and the reservoirs are full. What's happened? One theory is that

the 2 million trees we have planted are just not enough to attract rain...

### The Advisory Council

Dr. Karan Singh informed us that Professor Ervin Lazzlo, head of the General Evolution Research Group and editor of *World Future*, the journal of General Evolution, has agreed to join the International Advisory Council, raising the membership to three (Mr. J.R.D. Tata and Mr. Maurice Strong have already agreed to join). The first meeting of the International Advisory Council is planned to take place in Auroville on February 27th, 1993.

### 'Pondicherry' In Woodstock

On August 15th, 1992, a new Auroville Information Office in Woodstock, USA, was dedicated. It gives daily information of Auroville, offers cultural events and sells products from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville through its sales outlet, 'Pondicherry'. Contact Julian Lines, 23, Mill Hill Road, Woodstock, NY 12498. Tel.: (914) 679-2926.

### Correction

In the last issue of *Auroville Today*, it was incorrectly stated that Nirodbaran first came to the Ashram in 1939. This should have read 1930. We apologize for the error.



# AUROVILLE TODAY

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In this issue: The Governing Board; Brief News; Dyslexia; etc.



Sangamam (see page 3): Waterpot race for women. A future Olympic event?

PHOTO ALAN

## WORKSHOP

### Dyslexia Hits Auroville

*Julie Pool, a dyslexia therapist from the Hornsby Institute, London, was invited to Auroville recently by a group of concerned parents and teachers, and she gave a workshop for two weekends to about twenty people. Seven parents and teachers will continue their training with a one year correspondence course. Auroville with its mix of languages accentuates the problem for dyslexia-prone students. Some children have more than one 'first language' and there is not a standardized handwritten script for different European languages, further confusing the issue.*

*Julie approached the problem practically—she tested all the children—and with a zany humour that delighted everyone. She also relieved many fears: "I'm so happy to find out that I'm not stupid—only dyslexic", commented a young Aurovilian.*

*The following contribution is by François Grenier, an Auroville teacher who attended the course, and who reflects Julie's light-hearted but concerned approach to the problem.*

Can you read? Can you write? Can you spell? (I mean can you really spell? Antidyslexia backwards?) Did you cross-crawl properly before you started talking? Which side of your brain predominates? Is your corpus callosum loose? Can you draw a lazy eight? There are a host of other questions which will lead you further and further down the garden path of dyslexia.

Dear reader—better you are told now—you, as well as all of us, are dyslexic.

Relax, there is something you can do about it. But before you can do that, you must do as I did in the last weeks and discover the latent dyslexia in yourself.

I happened to watch the film 'Rainman' the night before our dyslexia workshop began. Autistics and idiot savants are another cup of tea from dyslexics, no doubt, but the brain's malfunction in the case of the former is very revealing for the latter. How much of our brain do we actively use? (A puny percentage is the answer.) Our idiot savant, the Rainman, has a RAM (Random Access Memory) that would put your latest computer to shame. More shocking, he has computing capacities that are literally mind-boggling (how else can you come up in a flash with the exact number of toothpicks scattered all over the floor!) The price for Rainman's wicked RAM is a mind which can't deal with the mundane; our price for being normal is an overwhelming dependence on computerized electronics and derived information which further dulls the innate capacities of our brains. We are all dyslexic in the sense that we so underutilize our mental potential, we may as well call ourselves mental dullards.

Julie Pool is dyslexic, but in the stricter sense of the word. She mirrors words and sentences because one part of her brain doesn't cooperate with the other one. She has overcome that difficulty, although, as she points out, "you find tricks to go around the problem, but you never get rid of it".

Julie was with us for two weeks last July-August to conduct a series of workshops on dyslexia with parents and teachers, as well as to evaluate and work with a number of children who are dyslexic in one form or another.

Dyslexics are no more and no less intelligent than you and I are. They just have an unusually hard time with basic conventions of reading and writing that the rest of us take for granted.

Dyslexia is elusive. Familiar enough symptoms, such as difficulty with reading, writing (confusing b and d is a classic clue), simple maths, spelling, or even directional problems in more serious cases, combine with the individual's character and personality to give dyslexia a new variant every time.

Our memory is of two kinds: short term and long term. Dyslexics don't have simple access to their long term memory. In computer lingo, you could say there are 'lost clusters', 'bad sectors', or 'parity errors'. Reformatting can solve these problems in computers and something in the same line can be done for dyslexics. Other ingredients for successful recovery, or rather adjustment, include patience, tender loving care, patience, insight, patience, experience, and more patience.

Early awareness of tell-tale signs is of the greatest importance as the sooner the problem is addressed the better. Sceptics beware. You would only be joining hands with those who have helped make the lives of countless numbers of dyslexics miserable. As Julie says, "When someone tells me there's no such thing as dyslexia, I just ignore them and go right ahead with my work." And she does so with gusto well punctuated with humour—a medicine which seems an integral part of the treatment.

Julie's organized mess at the workshop was something to behold, as all sorts of books, diagnostic tests, exercise books, files, boxes of letters and drawings, rubber balls and what not were successively pulled out from underneath each other with some sense of purpose and order. (Being a disorganized teacher myself, I instantly recognized some more dyslexic tendencies in myself.)

This was Julie's first workshop on dyslexia, as well as ours. It was a rare and practical occasion for teachers from the different schools to evaluate their present work and compare notes with each other. Julie's presence was important for those teachers who had come across dyslexia in classroom situations. But much of the material and ideas presented to us seemed to apply just as well to Auroville education in general.

We never got around to figuring out what dyslexia might be like for a Japanese or Chinese reader. Since left and right seem to be a fundamental division in our brains, senses and bodies, dyslexics therefore 'mirror' horizontally in Indo-European languages. Can you also mirror in a vertical direction, like in Japanese script? (We may as well be ready for any eventuality!)

I'd like to share a further debilitating experience. Slap your right knee with your right hand and then simultaneously bring your left hand to your nose, and your right hand to your left ear; follow it up by slapping your left hand to your left knee and then simultaneously bring your right hand to your nose and your left hand to your right ear. Good for you if you can do it but remember, it doesn't make you any more superior.

Many thanks to Julie. I hope you enjoyed your emit ni ellivoruA. Gudbuy.

François Grenier

The contribution for the next 12 issues of *Auroville Today* in India is Rs. 150, for other countries Rs. 700 (US \$ 25). 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% for admin. and bank charges) or directly to **Auroville Today, CSR Office, Auroville 605101**. Cheques should be made payable to **Auroville Fund, specifying: 'Contribution for Auroville Today'.**