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www.goldenchain.org

The Golden Chain

Alumni Journal of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education



Reunion 2003

Mother said many times: "Whoever gets my touch, whoever has a second of true aspiration, true love for me, he is finished for life, for all lives — he is bound to me. I have put a golden chain round his neck, his heart is bound eternally to me."

It is a thing nobody can see, you yourselves don't see; but it is a fact, it is there. The golden chain is there within your heart. Wherever you go, you drag that chain, it is a lengthening chain. However far you may go, it is an elastic chain, it goes on lengthening, but never snaps. In hours of difficulty, in hours of doubt and confusion in your life, you have that within you to support you. If you are conscious of it, so much the better; if you are not conscious, believe that it is there. The Mother's love, Her Presence is there always.

Sri Nolini Kanta Gupta (to the final-year students of the Higher Course on October 26, 1976)

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The Golden Chain

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THE EDITORS' PAGE

Join together, speak one word, let your minds arrive at one knowledge even as the ancient gods arriving at one knowledge partake each of his own portion....

One and common be your aspiration, united your hearts, common to you be your mind, — so that close companionship may be yours....

Rig Veda X.191

It was wonderful to be together again. We had our first get-together in 1993 for the golden jubilee of the School — a memorable reunion that culminated in the ex-students' torch drill during the 2nd Dec programme. We were together again in the year 2000 to usher in the New Millennium. And finally in the last week of last year, 2003, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the School and the 125th anniversary of the Mother we were reunited once again.

To renew our bonds with SAICE and the Ashram, with old friends and teachers is always a memorable experience. Through the exhibitions, the talks, the programmes, the collective activities, we relived the years at SAICE, we celebrated our shared heritage, we reawakened our identity as ex-students, we became conscious once again of our responsibility as children of the Mother.

It is also interesting that every time we rekindle that collective ex-student consciousness, we take one step forward towards creating a structured and functioning ex-student body.

The first step was taken during the reunion of 1993 with the birth of *The Golden Chain* magazine. Over the last ten years *The Golden Chain* magazine has become, to a certain extent, a link between ex-students and our home base here.

In 2000, during the get-together for the millennium, another step was taken towards a structured integration. A proposal was mooted for the creation of a legally recognized ex-student body which would be the publisher of *The Golden Chain* and could also serve as a channel for ex-students to involve themselves in a wider constructive action (as and when it evolves). This

took the shape of The Golden Chain Fraternity.

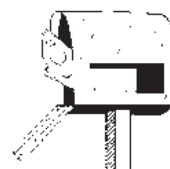
In the 3 years since then, there has been some consolidation of that effort. The Fraternity and the magazine are on a somewhat firmer footing. Our office that was inaugurated during this reunion will allow us to be better organized and involve many others in the movement.

Now with the 2003 reunion, we have to look ahead to try to understand what we as a collective ex-student body can do. What is The Golden Chain Fraternity for? Apart from organizing such get-togethers and publishing a magazine is there anything else that we can do? Are we going to celebrate our reunions with much fanfare and then lapse back into indifference — until the next reunion. Or can we find worthwhile projects that we can collectively take up as Alumni of SAICE? And what would those projects be?

For that we have to better understand our identity as ex-students. That might not always be very easy. We are such a varied lot — with such diverse interests and opinions. There are scientists and artists, armymen and teachers, Ashramites and businessmen. But this diversity can be a great strength. The fund of knowledge and creativity, the financial resources and the human energy that can be tapped is huge. What we need to do is to find that which inspires us as a collectivity and to work concertedly towards achieving those goals.

We can identify the issues that inspire us and the goals that are worth pursuing by focusing on that which unites us in spite of all our diversity — our shared faith in, and our love for the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, for SAICE and the Ashram, for Their larger work in the world. If we can promote Their work here and elsewhere in some way, we will be doing something worthwhile.

We have all studied in Mother's School. We are all bound to Her by Her Golden Chain. May be some of us choose to ignore that golden bond, and some of us cling on to it. Many of us actually do a bit of both... sometimes ignoring and sometimes clinging. If we allow that unseen chain to guide us we will not lose our way.... ❧



EYE DONATION

On reading Jayasurya's article "An Encounter" (GC, Aug 2003) I was reminded of a small statement made by Champaklal which I would like to share with the readers of *The Golden Chain*:

1966

I mentioned to the Mother that I wished to donate one of my eyes for anybody who needed it. If Mother did not approve of the donation of one eye, then both of my eyes stood donated after death.

Mother: "No, no, no. Your eyes belong to me. Your eyes belong to me. This is a hostile suggestion. I do not approve of this donation of eyes at all."

Champaklal Speaks
(3rd ed., p. 259)

Tarun Banerjee '64
Pondicherry

SOULFUL WORDS

I was enchanted by the interview with Sri Gangadhar (*A happy child of the Mother II*) published in one of the issues of *The Golden Chain*.

I very much appreciate the touch of editorial wisdom in presenting the words of Gangadhar as they were, without any grammatical or editorial corrections or meddling to make it more elegant or coherent. Any such meddling would have spoiled the simple and innocent charm of the words pouring out spontaneously from that beautiful soul.

In our present jarring media-environment, filled with soulless smart-ass journalism, the soulful words of Gangadhar stand out as a clear proof that language and style do not matter when the soul of the man shines out like a diamond behind the words.

Srinivasan
Pondicherry

IN DEFENSE OF THE FROG

The ex-students who go outside or those who choose to stay on need not feel like frogs in the well but can very well appreciate the beauty of a deeper truth that Batti-da depicted (GC, Aug 2003) by taking the frog simply as an image in a given context.

An image or a symbol is merely a vehicle to point to an

idea or to project a deeper truth behind the apparent. And it is totally out of place to miss out the beauty of the truth behind that matters and be bogged down by these little labels of imagery — be that anything, a frog, a prince or a princess.

The whole of the cosmic spectrum from the macro to the micro is upheld by the Divine Mother and no individual or group can ever hope to achieve any true greatness (sun-eyed children, hero-warriors) whatever be their inherent potential (princes, princesses or otherwise) with a "don't care attitude" towards the so-called insignificant or little (frog):

The hand that sent Jupiter
spinning through heaven,
Spends all its cunning to
fashion a curl.
Sri Aurobindo
(SABCL 5: 40)

The f(r)og seems to be more in our attitude. Clear the attitude, the vision is bound to improve. Here are some divine eye-drops from Sri Aurobindo :

Lift your eyes towards the Sun; He is there in that wonderful heart of life and light and splendour. Watch at night the innumerable constellations glittering like so many solemn watchfires of the Eternal in the limitless silence which is no void

but throbs with the presence of a single calm and tremendous existence; see there Orion with his sword and belt shining as he shone to the Aryan fathers ten thousand years ago at the beginning of the Aryan era; Sirius in his splendour, Lyra sailing billions of miles away in the ocean of space. Remember that these innumerable worlds, most of them mightier than our own, are whirling with indescribable speed at the beck of that Ancient of Days whither none but He knoweth, and yet that they are a million times more ancient than your Himalaya, more steady than the roots of your hills and shall so remain until He at his will shakes them off like withered leaves from the eternal tree of the Universe. Imagine the endlessness of Time, realise the boundlessness of Space; and then remember that when these worlds were not, He was, the Same as now, and when these are not, He shall be, still the Same; perceive that beyond Lyra He is and far away in Space where the stars of the Southern Cross cannot be seen, still He is there. And then come back to the Earth and realise who this He is. He is quite near to you. See yonder old man who passes near you crouching and bent, with his stick. Do you realise that it is God who is passing? There a child runs laughing in the sunlight. Can you hear Him in that laughter?...

(SABCL 12: 475)

Sudhakar Kamboj '89
Pondicherry

THE GC CD PROJECT

We regret to inform you of the delay in bringing out the GC CD by the 21st of February as planned earlier. As we were extremely busy arranging various programs on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the School, it was simply not possible to get it ready on time. The work is going on and we are confident that the CD will now be ready in time for our August issue later this year.

CLARIFICATION

Recently there have been books / articles / letters appearing purporting to have been published / written by "Alumni" of SAICE. These have no connection to *The Golden Chain Fraternity* whatsoever. Any publication brought out by *The Golden Chain Fraternity* will specifically mention it as such.

LOGO

The Golden Chain Fraternity now has a logo. It symbolises the links of the golden chain that bind us all:



NEW OFFICE

We are happy to inform you that *The Golden Chain Fraternity* now has its own office premises. The address:

2 bis, Rue de la Compagnie (opposite Marbling Dept.)

NEW PHONE NUMBER

We have also got our own telephone connection now. The number:

2224140

We would like to hear from you!



PROPHECY

Devanshu Arya '91 recounts a strange incident

The following incident occurred some years ago when I was visiting London. It is not an experience that everybody that goes abroad has or should have; however it is very interesting because there is an element of the 'other' world involved here.

I was working at the time as an Assistant Director to Rajiv Menon on his Tamil feature film *Kandukondain, Kandukondain*. We had planned to shoot a song sequence with Aishwarya Rai and Abbas in Scotland around a beautifully restored castle. There was a tiny village around that castle

everybody helping each other, houses remaining unlocked and Scotland so magnificent!

Then we returned to London. On our first evening out a friend and I thought we would 'sight-see' around London by taking a walk. It was around 9:45 pm. As we walked, we suddenly 'stumbled' upon Trafalgar Square. It was truly a magnificent sight, with the Nelson column and all. As we were strolling around looking all wonderstruck, six black men approached us. They all seemed in their twenties, though one of them may have been older. They surrounded us; I thought they were being friendly so

I smiled — after all everybody in that small village in Scotland was smiling! But then I received a not-too-friendly fist on my cheek and I realized we were being mugged! They pushed us on a nearby stone bench and asked me for my purse, which I promptly surrendered along with the 150 pounds and 2000 Indian Rupees in it. They took my friend's watch, and they asked for mine. I told them it was so cheap it wasn't worth it. Now they were getting nervous and decided to leave. However one of them wanted my rings.

I got up now (I don't know where I got that strength but somehow I wasn't scared) and told them that both the rings on my fingers were precious: one had Mother's symbol on it and the other was my wedding ring! They



On shooting location opposite the Eilean Donan castle near Dornie village in Scotland

and we had rented out a Bed and Breakfast place whilst we were shooting. The people of the village were very kind and helpful and always smiling. Truly it seemed as if that place was lost in time:

were getting jittery now and before I could do anything the biggest guy swung his hand and hit me on my right eye. Then they all fled the scene screaming joyously.

I don't remember what happened then, but my friend said that I fell some metres away and my eye literally burst open. My jacket was covered in blood. We rushed to the nearest phone booth and dialed the emergency number. Help was prompt and I was taken to the nearest hospital. Luckily my eye was saved, though I got seven stitches around it. The doctor comforted me by saying that generally they stab the person — I was 'lucky' that I was just hit.

We returned to where we were put up. As I lay with my eye the size of a cricket ball, an incident that had occurred some years ago crossed my mind. I was in Pondicherry visiting a boutique with my sister when we met a lady who was a Reiki master. Somehow we got talking and my sister wanted her to demonstrate the power of Reiki. She decided to make me the guinea pig; the lady held the tip of my hands and closed her eyes. Then she opened them and said that I had to be very careful of a black man. He would approach me as a friend but would do me much harm. I looked at her puzzled: What did she mean by black? Black

as in the colour of the skin or black as of African origin? She clarified and said she meant someone of African origin! At that time I had no clue where I would meet a black man and forgot all about it. This happened two years before my visit to London.

Lying there with my swollen eye, I wondered how that lady had prophesized this incident in Pondicherry so long before it happened. Did it



Devanshu, on a recent visit to the Trafalgar Square, at roughly the spot where the incident took place

mean that I really couldn't have done anything to avoid it? That if something is 'written' in your fate then it happens... however forewarned you may be?

To this day I am baffled by that incident.... ❧

If you see some catastrophe coming, can you, Mother, by your effort change it?

That depends upon the nature of the event. There are many things.... That depends also upon the level from which one sees. There is a plane where there are all the possibilities, and on that level, as there are all the possibilities, there is the possibility also of changing these possibilities. If a catastrophe is foreseen in that plane, one can have the power of preventing it also. [...]

There are other cases [...] when you are simply forewarned. [...] In reality, it is to help you to prepare within for what must come, so that you may take the right inner attitude to face the event. It is like a lesson telling you: "This is what it must teach you." You cannot change the thing, but you can change your attitude and your inner reaction. Instead of having a bad reaction, a wrong attitude towards the experience that occurs, you have a good reaction, a good attitude, and you derive as much benefit as possible out of what has happened.

The Mother (MCW 5: 190-192)

SHE STEPPED INTO MY LIFE

Shyamoli Kapoor '78

After three months of illness I expressed my impatience to my uncle that hot afternoon of June 2002 in JIPMER. “Why aren’t the Mother and Sri Aurobindo doing anything to stop my fever? It is nothing for Them. They can easily stop it. I am praying to Them day and night but They are not bothered!” My uncle promptly replied: “How do you know that They are not doing anything? Look, even after three months of high fever, so many needle-pricks, one major operation and anaemia, you look good! That is because They are doing a lot for you.”

Yes. My uncle lifted the veil from my vision. That afternoon, temporary impatience and lack of faith had blurred my perception. It occurred to me that the Mother and Sri Aurobindo cannot go wrong, but somewhere I definitely was going wrong. Due to my ignorance I had become blind to all that They were doing for me from Their divine plane. On so many occasions in the past, I had had the taste of Their Grace which the best of words fail to express. “I will become alright,” I uttered to myself, “it is only a matter of time.” In awareness I strengthened my faith. I remembered reading for a month during my earlier treatment at the Ashram Nursing Home, in the Mother’s own handwriting: “Finally it is faith that cures.” At that time how much I had vowed to remember this always! So I held on to this singular life-giving message and from then onward remained calm, learning to endure.

Endurance was the word loud and salient in my mind. I remembered Sri Aurobindo’s aphorism: “Pain is the touch of our Mother teaching us how to bear and grow in rapture. She has three stages of her schooling, endurance first, next equality of soul, last ecstasy.” For the following two months, I was excited and curious at moments as to how and when Mother and Sri Aurobindo would make me alright. I also put forward, through regular prayers, my own preferences, but remembered Sri Aurobindo’s words:

“Fix not the time and the way in which the ideal shall be fulfilled. Work and leave time and way to God.” So I did my work of praying and waiting.

So much happened in the next two months. The doctors in JIPMER looked helpless. A spontaneous pity took the better of me and I said: “I am now going through a bad time.” The doctor simply replied, “Yes, come back after two weeks, we will operate upon you again and try to cure you.” No guarantee, so no sure cure.

I told one of my friends and well-wishers who visited me every day “My stars will change around my birthday, in August. Then there will come a break-through and I will get well.”

After one and a half month’s stay at JIPMER, I was shifted back to our Ashram Nursing Home. I felt so good.... Immediately my fever dropped by one degree. At last here I had over my bed the large photos of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and I could look at Them feeling enveloped in the Mother’s arms, and pray to my heart’s content in the clean, caring atmosphere. Soon I started looking better. However my health definitely was going down from the medical point of view — more so because no remedy could be found. I was smiling and joking with the sisters nonetheless, and calmly awaited the good time coming my way as the month of August neared.

August came and the feel of a fresh spiritual atmosphere was tangible in the air. I was reminded of the special Grace of our Gurus pervading Pondicherry, and devotees thronging to avail of it. A new wave of hope overwhelmed me and I started planning my own cure! The young lady doctor who came in her daily rounds to check me up, also came as a friend full of sympathy and hope, and I told her, “This is the month of Sri Aurobindo’s birth. His Grace is in plenty and surely there will be a break-through.” I prayed more ardently and hoped to get well before the 15th, to be home by 13th or 14th and to be present in the Ashram on 15th morning for meditation.... But soon I reminded myself that I was not to decide

or demand anything. So I said silently to my Guru within my heart, "Let thy will be done."

The break-through came. I was taken to Apollo, Chennai where I would be given the best medical attention, with up-to-date methods of investigation, and thereby a conclusive diagnosis would be arrived at. My belief was that I was surely going to get alright.

On 14th August I was admitted. Following five months of high fever, and the inability to eat any food, my blood count had dropped drastically. The first thing I needed was blood transfusion. On 15th, Thursday (Guruvar), on my Guru's birthday, I was given blood. What Grace!

While the various important tests were being carried out, so many thoughts crossed my mind: "What will be the diagnosis? What medicine will they come up with? Will they at all be able to find any medicine for me? Will they need to do another operation in case no suitable medicine is found?" I was hoping against hope that they wouldn't open me up again, but then I told myself that I was not to decide anything. So I kept chanting "Let thy will be done." I felt that something wonderful was going to happen to me. The Mother would surely save me from drowning. So many times she had saved me from catastrophic situations, and this time the situation was truly catastrophic, so surely she would come to my rescue. Such was the way I reasoned it out. But then had I not heard the doctor tell me that only after he opened me up, he would know if the operation was possible! That didn't matter, it was one of the best hospitals, so surely they would find the right medicine.... Thoughts played in this way, making my idle mind their stage, but my faith in the Mother was bright. She was positively coming to make things alright. I had only to wait and watch.

The tests revealed negative results, so no medicine for me. The doctors decided to go ahead

with another major operation. I was by now prepared for it. I had to cooperate with the will of the Mother and not put any resistance. Again the doubt of the doctors was getting magnified in my mind: "Would they be able to operate upon me, or would they just open me up and stitch me back like in JIPMER, and I would have to go home an incurable case?" What was the Divine's wish I couldn't know. I was only waiting quietly to feel what the Mother did.

The operation was fixed for Tuesday. Another four days to go. I was not bothering to check the date. The sister attending to me was at my head-side and someone asked, "What date is Tuesday?" "20th," she replied right into my ear. "What! 20th August. SHE is coming on my birthday!", I heard my mind whispering to itself, filled with a sudden and overpowering surprise and joy. She is coming to give new life!

In a splendid moment I got what I had waited for for five months — the sound of Her footsteps. I could clearly see HER present in the operation theatre on my birthday doing the inoperable operation though the team of doctors. Unfortunately, they wouldn't feel nor know anything of the Mother's presence, but I knew. I felt fully secure, for now

I was in Her divine embrace, and no power could snatch me away from Her.

I basked at my rebirth four days in advance and expressed my gratitude in plenty to the Divine Mother. I waited eagerly to hear Her approaching foot-steps ever louder and feel Her stepping into my life big and wide.

Today I am just as fit as I was before this prolonged illness. In quiet moments I wonder how it is. The secret truth emerges — it is because the Mother was carrying me all the while.

Through all my life say I will
O Mother, beautiful gracious and sweet
I live because of Thee, so for Thee. ❧





REUNION 2003

Images and voices from the ex-students' get-together

2003 marked the sixtieth anniversary of our School. As most of you must be aware, *The Golden Chain Fraternity* (with the help of the School and the Ashram) organized an ex-students' reunion on this occasion. The get-together turned out to be a memorable one. The various functions were spread out over a week between 26th December and 31st December. The sequence of events was as follows:

On 25th the entire SAICE family was present as usual for the Christmas celebrations at the Theatre.

On 26th December, there was the inauguration of an exhibition of photographs from the personal collections of some ex-students at the Salle d'Art. In the evening, there was a programme by the current students for the occasion.

The next day, on the 27th, at the Salle d'Art, some of the senior members spoke of their experiences. In the afternoon, the office of *The Golden Chain Fraternity* (opposite the Marbling Department), was inaugurated with a short meditation.

On 28th December, a trip to Lake was arranged. Everyone assembled on a piece of land adjacent to Merveille which *The Golden Chain Fraternity* proposes to acquire. There was a short meditation and a tree-planting ceremony. Then smaller groups were taken around Merveille. Later in the morning everyone gathered at Basabjit's land by the lake. There discussions were held regarding the future of *The Golden Chain Fraternity* and after that people were free to walk around, sing, chat, swim until they gathered again for lunch.

In the evening of 29th December, the former students presented a variety programme. This was held in the School courtyard and included chantings, recitations, songs, a playlet, a quiz and a short talk by Batti-da.

On 30th December ex-students made a trip to Auroville which included a visit to Matrimandir, the new Town Hall and some pavilions in the International Zone.

On 31st December, at daybreak, there was a collective chanting of hymns and prayers in the School. Later in the morning ex-students visited Sri Aurobindo's Room. Some of the former students then addressed the present students. In the evening, there was the projection of a video made by Shivshankar '98 of the get-together, covering the various events.

It was a week of camaraderie. It was wonderful to see friends we had not seen in a long time and to meet and to participate in a different activity each day. The period we spent together was filled with the happy remembrance of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

For those of you who could not make it we have recorded the special moments in the following pages as a collage of images. We have also included brief descriptions of the events and the voices of the participants and organizers.

The experience left those present longing for an encore. Many felt that even though we cannot have such large get-togethers very often we can maybe keep the last week of the year to hold a small reunion of all those who are in Pondicherry and those who can come without much difficulty. Let us know what you feel.

Christmas
25th Dec '03





Photo Exhibition

26th Dec '03





Inaugurated on 26th Dec, this was a special photographic exhibition in the sense that the photographs were mostly borrowed from the private collections of our former students. It was a graphic flashback in various hues and tones of the wonderful days we spent in our School, and reflected the loving bond between teachers, captains and students which is so characteristic of this institution. On display were the various activities in the daily life of the School, including the fun and frolic of picnics and life in the boardings. The photographs served to remind us of the remarkable infrastructure we have: the beautiful School buildings, the lab, the various well-maintained grounds and facilities for physical education. The exhibition echoed our refrain of gratitude for the wonderful opportunity we have had of studying in this very special institution.





Photo Exhibition continued...



On the evening of the 26th, current students presented a programme in the Hall of Harmony to mark the occasion.

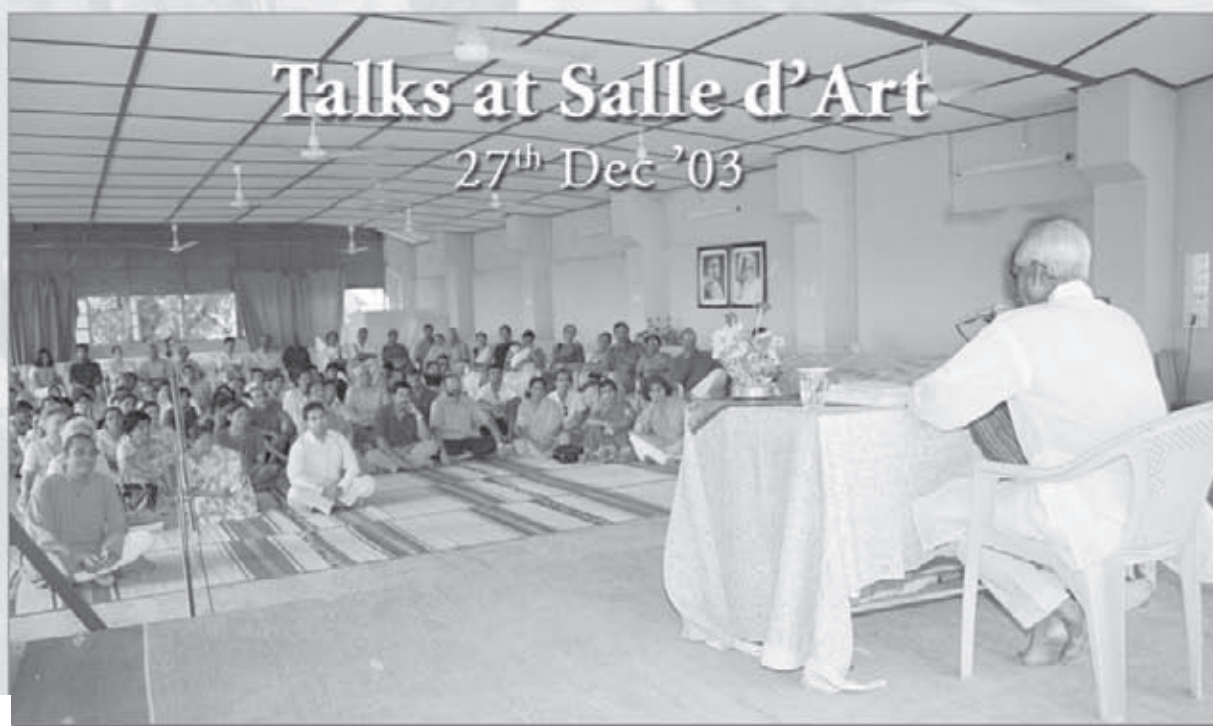




On the morning of 27th December we gathered at the old Art Gallery, now known as "Salle d'Art" to share our experiences. There were six speakers: Manoj Das Gupta, Aster Patel, Tapas Bhatt, Ananda Reddy, Ajit Sarkar and Sraddhalu Ranade. Maurice Shukla '75 introduced the speakers and conducted the session. We present here some excerpts.

I recall another prayer where Mother says "Chaque fois qu'un cœur tressaille à Ton souffle divin un peu plus de beauté semble née sur la terre, l'air s'embaume d'un doux parfum, tout devient plus amical." And I am sure in these sessions there will be many "cœurs" who will have the occasion to tressallir "à un souffle divin"....

Manoj Das Gupta '58





We always share with each other the love that we have received from the Mother and which we still continue to get. In fact what binds us into a beautiful family is nothing but Her love. It's Her love that binds us. It's not our feelings for each other. Really, it's much more than that and that's what you mean by the words "Golden Chain" that you have taken up....

Aster Patel '55

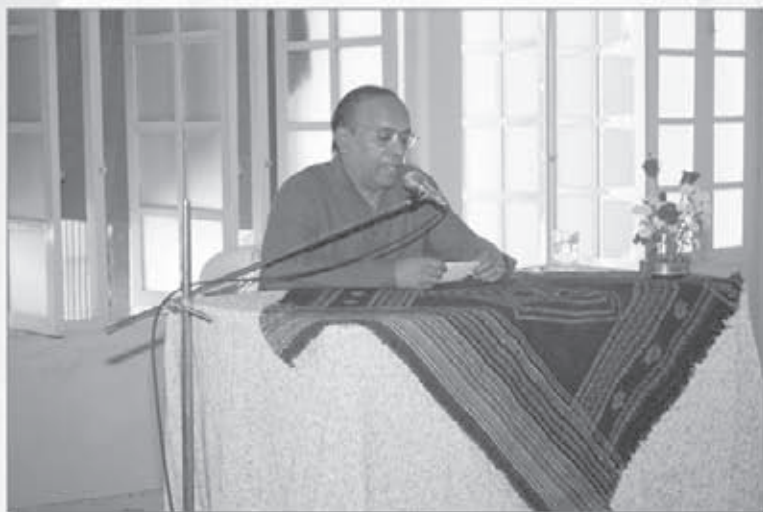
*T*hat inner journey made me ultimately come back to this place and engage myself in this new project that the Mother has created, which we all know as "Auroville".... But I think, if you are here, whether in Pondicherry or Auroville, it's a large laboratory for research. We are basically here for research.... In order to hasten our growth, accelerate our work, our pace and remember not to settle down like in an ordinary life....

Tapas Bhatt '75



I knew that consciously I must depend on Her for every little thing.... The time came when I said "That is the true lesson of life. Let me depend on Her more and more for everything, from the physical level up to the spiritual level." And I am sure many of my colleagues here have had the same experience in their own ways.... We have our own mission to fulfill. Each one of us has something to reflect of the Mother....

Ananda Reddy '69



You know very well that Mother and Sri Aurobindo have given a totally different sense to physical education; that it is to educate the body. And in that aspect we can utilize all the different forms of physical activities.... But what changes is the aim and the attitude with which we practise.... The main aim of physical education must be to express health, beauty and harmony through the body and the body becomes a perfect instrument to express the highest of ideals....

Ajit Sarkar '60



We are those who have been privileged, who have been given an opportunity, in whom the Mother has pumped Her force... so that we may do Her work. We are those ambassadors. But an ambassador has two roles to play. First, he must be the ambassador, he must truly represent that which he is supposed to represent. And second, he must act, act to hasten the agenda for which he has been sent out. In our first role, our priority is to be truly Mother's children....

Sraddhalu Ranade '88



Talks at Salle d'Art continued...

To celebrate the occasion, on the 27th of December the Dining Room invited all students, teachers and ex-students and their families for lunch .



Lunch at Dining Room

27th Dec '03



GC Office Opening

27th Dec '03



No one quite knows how we managed to bring out *The Golden Chain* for ten years without actually having an office. Many of our editorial meetings took place on the roadside or over the phone. So when, after much hunting and many false leads, we finally did get a place to ourselves, opposite the Marbling Department, we were absolutely delighted. In fact, the Ashram Eco-service is sharing this space with us. We are grateful to the Ashram authorities to have allowed us to have this lovely place, surrounded by gardens. Work went on almost round the clock and what had once been a run-down old garage was transformed into a beautiful new office.

On 27th December, in the afternoon, with a short meditation, we inaugurated our office. We began working in it from 6th January (the day the Mother opened the School building in 1952). Henceforth, although somebody or the other will be working there at odd hours, we shall endeavour to have one of our members attending it regularly at least from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

As the Eco-service is sharing the space with us, a few words about it. Organised to address Ashram's environmental needs, its area of work includes garbage disposal, rainwater harvesting, parking, general beautification and electricity consumption. It proposes to work along with the departments, farms, guest-houses and residential complexes of the Ashram.

When we were very small, in the early years of the School, Mother used to often teach us French, as well as much much more, through single sentences – very simple, very short, but always very deep. We would have to repeat them to Her when we went to Her the next time. One of those sentences was – “Tous sont les enfants de l’unique et même Mère!”

In fact, this sentence, if I am not mistaken, was printed on the cover of the Students’ Note Book, perhaps to remind the children that they all have the same Mother in whom all are linked. It is in Her that we are, by Her that we are. Let us also tell ourselves that it is *for* Her that we live. Then the Golden Chain will truly become a living and vibrant force, for She is not only the Golden Bridge, but also the Golden Chain.

May we never forget that. Let us also remember that the comradeship and joy that we feel today in being here together is because of Her Presence holding us close, specially in this marvelous garden of Hers where every leaf and every breeze is filled with Her Love.

Jhumur-di addressing the gathering at Merveille before the tree-planting.

Merveille Tree Planting

28th Dec '03





On the morning of Sunday, 28th December, 2003, Project Ecolake and The Golden Chain Fraternity organized a tree-planting programme at Merveille in Lake Estate. Jhumur-di spoke movingly on the occasion of all being children of the same Mother, and of the Mother's keen interest in the Lake. Prakash-bhai explained briefly the work of Project Ecolake and looked at prospects for the future with collaboration between the Centre of Education and The Golden Chain Fraternity. As an initial expression of this collaboration, it was proposed that a plot of land in a picturesque setting adjacent to Merveille be acquired by The Golden Chain Fraternity. This would help to extend the Merveille garden and mark the beginning of The Golden Chain Fraternity's direct involvement at the Lake.

As part of the main function, six tree saplings were planted, one each by those who had completed their studies in the fifties, the sixties, the seventies, the eighties, the nineties, and 2000 and beyond, including present students of the Centre of Education. The six trees planted were, respectively, Service (*Peltophorum pterocarpum*), Supramental Action (*Barringtonia asiatica*), Spiritual Aspiration (*Terminalia catappa*), Beginning of the Supramental Realisation (*Butea monsperma*), Imagination (*Cassia fistula*) and Realisation (*Delonix regia*). This part of the programme was followed by the holding of hands by all present to form a chain symbolizing their commitment to work together to realize the Mother's vision.

Then, after refreshments, participants were shown around Merveille, and they also helped to plant over twenty saplings in the Merveille garden area, including Hibiscuses, Jasmines, Calliandras and Plumerias.

At the end of this part of the programme, participants moved to Basabjit's land on the northern shore of the Lake for a get-together, discussions, lunch and other activities.





Tree Planting continued...



After the tree planting everyone assembled at Basabjit's land by the lake. There were discussions regarding the Golden Chain Fraternity, followed by people being left to move about and take a dip. It then concluded with lunch.

Organising the Reunion

Sunayana interviews Gaurishankar Patnaik '80 (Munna)

Why did you choose Lake as the venue for the Sunday get-together?

We were basically looking for a place that was near enough because the children of ex-students who would also be there would have to get back in time for group. The Lake area was one of the first spots that came to our mind. We also wanted a place that was big enough, because we expected somewhere around 500-700 people. I had personally been to Basu's land quite a few times and thought that it was an adequate place to bring together so many people. And Basu was very forthcoming. He immediately agreed to my proposal that we could have the picnic there. In fact he said, "I will be very honoured."

Having decided that, we went into further details. We thought that tree planting should be one of the most important aspects of our get together, for its symbolic value as well as for the sake of the environment. When we spoke of tree-planting, some of the people with whom I was talking about this whole effort said "Why not do the tree planting in one of the Ashram lands?" So that is how we went to Prakash-bhai. He gave us the real inner picture of Merveille and the vision that the Mother had, not only for Merveille but for Lake in general. And then suddenly it dawned upon us that Merveille was absolutely the place where we must have the tree planting and spend some of the time, because firstly the Ecolake project is something new for those of us who have passed out long back, and secondly it has come as a new dimension to the activities of our Centre of Education. Previously we had cultural activities, sports and academics, but the eco-dimension of education was not as well-organized as it is today, thanks to Merveille.

Putting all these things together, we thought we'd first go to Merveille and then shift to Basu's land. And this was finally the format you saw for the picnic. The pieces of the puzzle fell into place as we went along.

What was the most difficult aspect of organising the gathering at Lake?

One problem was that Merveille is just not designed to receive the 500 to 600 people that we had envisaged. So we hit upon the idea of meeting on this "G.C. land" which is adjacent to Merveille and can easily accommodate so many people. Only this "GC land" is not very obviously accessible. But with Prakash-bhai's help that was all worked out. Then we started thinking about how to visit Merveille from there. We decided to make small groups of 20-25 people, and Prakash-bhai arranged for young students who know Merveille well, to be volunteers for each group and to take them round Merveille.



How did you plan for those people who were coming from outside?

That was always a grey area for us, particularly as picnics require the maximum of logistics. To start with we made a rough list of ex-students here in Pondy, ashramites and non-ashramites, families. We came to a figure of around 500 or so. Some of the ex-students living outside Pondicherry were good enough to confirm their participation either through friends or by e-mail and telephone. This helped us, but the number of such ex-students was not very big.

So as a very logical approach, from as early as November, we started collecting the names of the local ex-students who wanted to join in the picnic. I knew that the bulk of the participants would be from Pondicherry.



Picnic by the Lake
28th Dec '03





Finally, the turn-out from outside Pondicherry was not as huge as in 1993, but we were nevertheless pleasantly surprised by the quite big turn-out. And what was even more satisfying was that we came across people we had never seen, who had not come to Pondicherry for a very, very long time, people who had left our School in the 50s. So that was, you know, quite a wonderful experience.

From the point of view of transport did you have any problem?

No, I don't think we had any problem. We slightly overshot the mark, in the sense that the Ashram was kind enough to give us both School buses and I had hired one bus from PTDC. We could have almost done without the PTDC bus, because many people went in their own vehicles.

In fact, many of those who had four-wheelers came at the right time to Corner House to pick up their friends. So we really did not have any problem. In fact as I said, we overshot a little as far as our logistics were concerned. But then when you have such a big gathering, it is better to have more than less.

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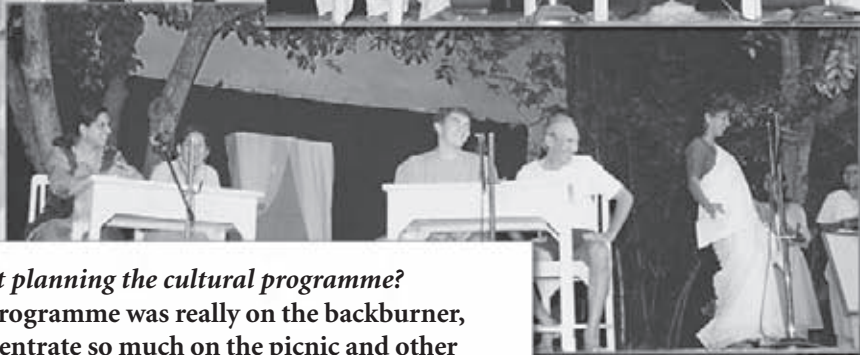
The cultural programme of the former students was held on the 29th evening in the School courtyard. There were songs, recitations, a playlet, and even a quiz. Batti-da spoke about the old days of the Ashram. At the end of the programme there were recitations of prayers which we had all learnt as students. We concluded by singing "Vande Mataram".



Ex-Students' Programme

29th Dec '03





How did you go about planning the cultural programme?

See, the cultural programme was really on the backburner, because I had to concentrate so much on the picnic and other aspects. Although I knew that I had taken up the responsibility of arranging the cultural programme along with you, I could not start working on it in detail until the last few days.

We had been very clear from the word go, that it would be a combination of nostalgia and gratitude. So the format had to be arranged accordingly. The notice for the cultural programme was put up quite early (as it was in fact for the entire programme). But I did not get many proposals, suggestions or offers from our friends. I was expecting most of the ex-students who live here in Pondicherry to come forward, but it did not happen, or it happened rather late. I did get a response from a few corners, but it was not overwhelming.

We had decided to do the programme for an hour and a half. So I had to go and approach people. We also had 11th hour hiccups: two of our major programmes were cancelled because the participants could not make themselves available on the 29th evening. That is how it went on, but I think one of the most interesting things that happened was the quiz. The idea came almost simultaneously from you and me. My only intention behind the quiz was that we couldn't make a one-and-a-half hour long programme completely serious and prayer-like. I was looking at a format where the content would be serious, useful, but at the same time the presentation would be a little lighter. The quiz is also something rather contemporary because of the television shows you have these days. We hit upon this idea and it went off quite well, not to speak of the fabulous input from Batti-da. Everything fell into place towards the end.

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Auroville Visit

30th Dec '03



On 30th December we visited Auroville. We set out at 8 o'clock in the morning in two buses and several smaller private vehicles.

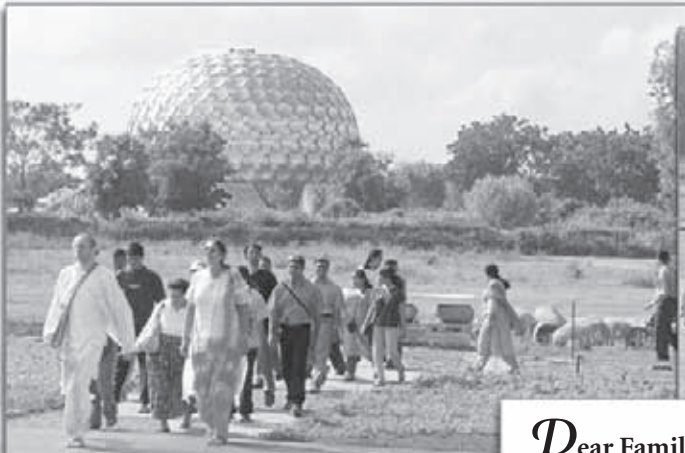
At first we were split into two groups. While the first batch went to the Matrimandir the other was taken to the Town Hall where a presentation on Auroville's various activities had been arranged. The visit to Matrimandir was the high point of the day.

We gathered again at the Information Centre where we were given a short talk on the International Zone. We walked through some of the pavilions which have already been built. After that we stopped at Bharat Nivas, where Aster and Frederic spoke to us.

After lunch at the Solar Kitchen those who were tired came back in one of the buses while the others went to visit the Botanical Gardens.

We enjoyed the visit very much and were very touched by all the care and concern shown to us.





Dear Family... this is the only word that comes to my mind when I think of you... us, because we are the family that is bound together by the golden chain to Her. The true and real family.

Just a few words to tell you how wonderful it was to have all of you here in Auroville on 30.12.03. A most memorable day!

It was not just me who looked upon it as a very very special occasion but any and every Aurovilian I talked to about it considered it to be a very special event too. They all encouraged me and helped me to make it happen. In fact it could not have taken place without their help. Shivaya and Guy especially organised most of the event.

I want to specially make you aware that there is a tremendous amount of goodwill towards you here. I myself wasn't aware of it until I began the process of organising your visit here. Most of us here feel that we should work together to make Mother's Dream come true.

Therefore I feel it was a wonderful beginning which must be followed up in a concrete way. As some of you suggested... why don't we start by doing some work together. Once a week (on a Sunday perhaps) would be a good way of offering our work to Mother's Auroville.

We are in the process of organising and identifying areas of work which could be usefully done by us one morning a week.

If you are willing and enthusiastic, our doors are wide open to welcome you and to re-establish our true kinship through work and collaboration. Let us say "Jaima!!" and start.

Here is an opportunity to thank Her for all She has given us and continues to give us. Ours is the great and extraordinary privilege of living in Her Light and Her Atmosphere.

Victoire à la Douce Mère! Bande Mataram!

Srimoyi '78 (Bui)

P.S. All those willing to offer their work as suggested above or in any other way are requested to contact Devendra Surekha '80 (2339848 (Res), 2220778 (Off)) for further information.

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What was the experience of organising the get-together like?

The first experience for me was the kind of support we received from the Ashram and the School. We're thankful not just that they supported us in certain areas of logistics and space, but the spontaneity with which they supported us underlines how much we are all still considered children of the Ashram. That was a very positive thing as far as I am concerned. Also the realization of how much we all love our School, despite having gone away, and the intensity of this commitment. It is probably there in everybody, but the expression of love manifests itself much more intensely in people who have finished School and then moved away both in time and space. We see a marked difference in them and those who are near both in time and space.

I also witnessed on the one hand how much goodwill there is among many ex-students, and on the other the scope that exists to be together, to work and grow together. Both things co-exist. The only thing that we require now is a coordinated effort, so that this goodwill and the scope of growth can be brought together, one resulting in the other. The positive energy that this reunion has produced has to be kept alive.

Chanting 31st Dec '03



We were informed of the chanting to be done to celebrate the 60th anniversary of our School. A handful of ex-students availed of this unique opportunity to express our gratitude to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. The main prayer that was chosen was the one inscribed on the Samadhi. It was chanted in English, French and Sanskrit. We gathered for practice from November itself but regular practice was conducted from 16th December onward.

On 31st December, all of us — dressed in white — gathered at dawn in the Hall of Harmony. Quiet and concentrated, we sat facing the Mother's large picture and chanted in devotion, offering our gratitude at Her Feet.

Shyamoli Kapoor '78

Anything else to add?

Yes, there is one thing. It would probably be a continuation of the last question that you asked me. It is the utter harmony that went through the whole reunion. Somewhere it underlines a tremendous Presence without which such a perfect harmony would not have been possible. We did have small hiccups. You cannot get all that you want. But on the whole there was a tremendous sense of participation and a wonderful harmony.

I would also like to add one more point. Honestly speaking, at the end of the whole week there was a disproportionate amount of praise and appreciation for me that I alone do not deserve. It's not only a question of showing my humility but to bring home the point that there have been many, many, many, others who put in a lot of hard effort, lot of understanding of what we wanted to achieve during this whole week and they really worked hard. It so happened that I was involved with the most external aspects of it, which may have been more visible than the others. But it doesn't take away from all the sincerity and work the others have put in. I need not really name people but there were many other activities, the photography exhibition, chanting and many other background preparatory works. Particularly in the picnic, I saw some people, for instance, who had come in at the last moment, perform and participate so voluntarily and spontaneously, with an almost sadhak-like attitude.... I never had to go and ask them. They saw that there is work to do, and they did it. They never even came and told me "Munna, it's over." They knew the work was there, they did it, and then simply, quietly, left the place. The only description I have for it is a very sadhak-like attitude.

continued on next page



Visit to Sri Aurobindo's Room

31st Dec '03



The year-end get together on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the School was essentially an occasion for the expression of our gratitude for the wonderful opportunity we received to study in this unique educational institution. The occasion also brought all close together, renewed our bonds, strengthened the grid of friendship and recharged our link with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Truly, it is now felt that our alumni which is spread all over the world is indeed connected with a Golden Chain so beautifully described by Nolini-da. The general feeling is that we have now attained a critical mass, a new-found identity: The Golden Chain Fraternity. The visit to Sri Aurobindo's room was one special intimate occasion for all of us at the Fraternity to pay our respect in humility and gratitude to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother who have given us so much in every respect.



I think the friendship you have with the teachers and captains is what carries you throughout your life.... Whenever we meet again in Pondicherry there is an instant flood of nostalgia which kind of overpowers you and I think that is what gives you the strength again to leave, wherever you have to go back to....

Manan Bhatt '77

I remember I was in the meditation hall doing my pranam in front of the Mother's photograph. There I saw one of my captains coming down the staircase. He stopped and... there is this message... and he did his pranam to this message and came down. I used to cross this message, I had not actually noticed so much that message: "Cling to Truth". He brought it alive for me. There are very few messages as short as that, "Cling to Truth". It's not even a message. It's a command. If you look at those words, it's the word "Cling" which shakes you afterwards....

Basabjit Deshmukh '73

This very atmosphere automatically creates an environment of discipline.... It pushes you to organize your day, your work, your life. No matter what anyone does here there is a fixed routine and timing for each activity.... At that time, sometimes, we did not fully enjoy the enforced discipline. But today when I look back I value that sense of discipline that has been created in us here, which has become part and parcel of our life....

Another important thing I noticed here over the years is that ageing has no meaning here. Nobody retires from work, hence there is no end to learning. It's a continuous process and now I have to believe that learning keeps one young, energetic and agile....

Ramraj Sehgal '61

It was so beautiful, so wonderful this reunion, that at the end of it a lot of people said "Do we have really to wait 10 years to get back together again? Can't we have such a get together at closer intervals?"

Hopefully we will not have to wait that long. But at the same time you might have to wait for such get-togethers if not ten at least five years. But now that we have come together, it has created such a lot of unity amongst us. A feeling to grow together, to be part of this atmosphere that Mother has created for us here. And now that we have a place, I mean our office, we should make it a habit to be in touch, to know what's happening, to know what the programmes are that we can develop all together. Whether it is the land at Lake, near Merveille, or anywhere where we could get-together, do something constructive. Some people think of going together and working in Auroville, be it in the International Zone or for Matrimandir. I think to be together instead of waiting for get-togethers, is much more important. And if we have really been able to generate something unique in this, then in the near future or in the time to come we should see more of that. Get-togethers like this can always be done with a bit of effort and participation from everybody. But we can't really be jumping from one reunion to the other. We must fill up this intervening gap very meaningfully. ☸

Talks to Students

31st Dec '03



WHEN DID THE MOTHER TAKE CHARGE OF THE ASHRAM?

Raman Reddy '75

On what date in 1926 did Mother take up full charge of the Ashram?

Mother does not at all remember the correct date. It may have been a few days after 15th August. She took up the work completely when I retired.¹

17 May 1936
Sri Aurobindo

The Mother started guiding Sri Aurobindo's disciples from a few days after **15 August 1926** until she "took up the work completely" when Sri Aurobindo retired on the Siddhi Day (**24 November 1926**). But this transition was preceded by a longer period of preparation. Sri Aurobindo began openly mentioning the Mother as his equal from the **beginning of 1926**.² He wrote a letter to Daulat Ram Sharma on **26 March 1926**³ instructing him "not to make a rigid separation between A.G. and Mira" because "both influences [were] necessary for the complete development of the sadhana". In the evening talk of **18 May 1926**⁴, Sri Aurobindo explained why, in his own case, a Shakti was necessary, "By the coming together of Mirra and my-

self certain conditions are created which make it easy for you to achieve the transformation."

At the same time, there was a growing regard for the Mother as a spiritual guide among the disciples of Sri Aurobindo. The case of Tirupati in **February-March 1926** has already been noted in a previous article.⁵ Though his sadhana went in the wrong direction, he was probably the first disciple to accept the spiritual unity of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In **April 1926**, before going on his last trip to Bengal, Nolini Kanto Gupta prostrated himself for the first time at the feet of the Mother.⁶ From **15 August 1926**, there was a further intensification of this movement. Anilbaran Roy offered his pranams to Sri Aurobindo on his birthday and "for the first time entered into Sri Aurobindo's room" where the Mother was sitting, and bowed down to her and meditated at her feet.⁷ Haradhan Bakshi likewise noted in his diary, "On the **15th of August** when I came out of your [Sri Aurobindo's] room after bowing down to Mirra Devi, I became aware that there was something psychic working in and through my mind. From that time forward the psychic element in the mind is gradually developing." On

¹ SABCL, *On Himself*, Volume 26, p 479.

² **Prior to 1926**, there are several instances of Sri Aurobindo mentioning in his letters to disciples that he had consulted the Mother on their sadhana, or even referring them to her for her direct spiritual help, but he does not seem to project her forward as his equal, though the equality seems to be implicit. As Sri Aurobindo remarked in the evening talk of 25 April 1940, her position "was special even from the very beginning" and "there was no comparison between others and Mother".

³ *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, 1976, pp 25-27

⁴ A.B. Purani, *Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo* (1995), pp 323-324

⁵ In *The Golden Chain* (15 August 2003)

⁶ Nolini Kanto Gupta, *Reminiscences* (1969), p 85

⁷ *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, 1982, p 40

another occasion, he wrote that “the preparation was going on in a concentrated process from the day of the 15th of August 1926.”

On 16 August 1926, Sri Aurobindo said in his evening talk, “When I came to Pondicherry I got from within a programme of my sadhana. I did it myself but I could not make any progress as to how to help others. Then came Mirra; I found it out with her help.”⁸ The implication was so obvious that it invited the following questions from Anilbaran Roy:

May I ask one audacious question?

What is it?

What is Mirra's contribution to this Yoga?

You can ask that question but I am not going to answer it as you will not be able to understand.

From 2 September 1926⁹, the Mother started having collective meditation with a few sadhikas. Champaklal was the first sadhak to join these collective meditations¹⁰ and, soon, others followed him. Both Pavitra and Haradhan Bakshi first sought guidance from the Mother and had individual meditations with her before joining her collective meditations. Rajani Palit came at the end of October 1926 and immediately asked permission from Sri Aurobindo to meditate with her. At first, Sri Aurobindo acted only as an intermediary between the Mother and the sadhaks, without imposing her on them. When he met some resis-

tance, he explained to them indirectly and with great discretion, the necessity of having a Guru. He did not answer Anilbaran Roy's above quoted “audacious question” on 16 August 1926. But he told him later during the same conversation that “the impersonal attitude [was] not sufficient”. Pavitra found it difficult to understand why there was a great difference between his meditations with the Mother and his own. He asked Sri Aurobindo on 2 October 1926,¹¹ “When I meditated with the Mother last Tuesday the divine force came down. But what is the part of either you or Mother in such a coming down?” Sri Aurobindo replied, “Even in the case of those who look only for liberation, such a help from someone who has realised before, is generally necessary.” However, Sri Aurobindo seems to have made an exception in the case of Jaya Devi. When one day she offered two garlands to him, he asked her to give one of them to the Mother. On 14 October 1926, she was even allowed to perform puja to him and the Mother.¹²

Meanwhile the atmosphere had become intense with the approach of the overmental descent and there began what Sri Aurobindo later called “the brightest period in the history of the Ashram”.¹³ The sadhaks experienced contacts with higher beings and came to know about their past lives in their meditations with the Mother. Pavitra became aware of the emanation presiding over his life. (13.11.1926)¹⁴ The Mother told Champaklal, “The Being which we want to

⁸ Anilbaran Roy, “Conversations with Sri Aurobindo”, *Sri Aurobindo Circle*, 1983, pp 44-45

⁹ A.B. Purani, *Life of Sri Aurobindo* (2001), p 209

¹⁰ *Champaklal Speaks* (2002), p 73

¹¹ “Conversations with Pavitra”, *Bulletin*, August 1971, pp 40-42

¹² In *The Golden Chain* (15 August 2003)

¹³ Going by the Mother's description of the brightest period — “marvellous experiences, contacts with divine beings, and all kinds of manifestations which are considered miraculous” — it seems to have begun even before, though not much earlier than, the Siddhi Day. This extraordinary period of sadhana is linked with the “Overmind creation” which became possible with the descent of the Overmind. When the Mother worked out this “brilliant creation”, Sri Aurobindo said, “It will be a great success. But it is an Overmind creation. And it is not success that we want; we want to establish the Supermind on earth. One must know how to renounce immediate success in order to create the new world, the supramental world in its integrality.” The Mother immediately dissolved the creation. (Collected Works of the Mother, Volume 9, pp 147-48)

¹⁴ “Conversations with Pavitra”, *Bulletin*, November 1972, pp 36-40

manifest in you demands complete surrender.” (20.11.1926)¹⁵ Another day, she said, “The Being has entered into you.” Rajani Palit was told by the Mother that Kubera, the God of Wealth, was descending in him. (5 to 22 November 1926) To Haradhan, she said that he was an occultist in France in one of his past lives. (18.11.1926) As the Mother’s meditations with the sadhaks became “more concentrated and intense”, Sri Aurobindo began to arrive late for the evening sittings. In A.B. Purani’s words:

It was as if Sri Aurobindo was slowly withdrawing himself and the Mother was spontaneously coming out and taking up the great work of direction of the sadhaks’ inner sadhana and of the organisation of the outer life of the Ashram.¹⁶

The last evening talk noted down by Purani is dated 9 November 1926, after which, either it must have been no longer possible to record the talks or the talks themselves might have ceased. Instead of coming “at half-past four, the usual time, Sri Aurobindo came at six or seven, or eight o’clock. One day the record was two o’clock in the morning”.¹⁷ Nolini Kanto Gupta recounts how Sri Aurobindo’s lunch-hour “shifted gradually towards the afternoon” until he came at four o’clock on 23 November 1926.¹⁸ By then, Sri Aurobindo had sent his brother, Barin Ghose,¹⁹ to personally inform all the sadhaks that he was going to retire and that henceforth the Mother would guide them in their sadhana. Mother’s own description

of the Siddhi Day confirms that Sri Aurobindo not only handed over the charge of the Ashram to her on that day but also announced to his disciples that henceforward she would “represent” him and “do all the work”.

... I had begun a sort of ‘overmental creation’, to make each god descend into a being — there was an extraordinary upward curve! Well, I was in contact with these beings and I told Krishna (because I was always seeing him around Sri Aurobindo), “This is all very fine, but what I want now is a creation on earth — you must incarnate.” He said, “Yes.” Then I saw him — I saw him with my own eyes (inner eyes, of course), join himself to Sri Aurobindo.

Then I went into Sri Aurobindo’s room and told him, “Here’s what I have seen.” “Yes, I know!” he replied (*Mother laughs*) “That’s fine; I have decided to retire to my room, and you will take charge of the people. You take charge.” (There were about thirty people at the time.) Then he called everyone together for one last meeting. He sat down, had me sit next to him, and said, “I called you here to tell you that, as of today, I am withdrawing for purposes of sadhana, and Mother will now take charge of everyone; you should address yourselves to her; she will represent me and she will do all the work.” (**He hadn’t mentioned this²⁰ to me!** — *Mother bursts into laughter*).²¹ ❧

¹⁵ *Champaklal Speaks* (2002), pp 69-70

¹⁶ A.B. Purani, *Life of Sri Aurobindo* (2001), pp 211-212

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp 213-214.

¹⁸ Nolini Kanto Gupta, *Collected Works*, Volume 8, p 203

¹⁹ “Reminiscences of Barin Ghose”, *All India Magazine*, November 2002, pp 28-30

²⁰ The word “this” (especially in the corresponding text of the French original) would refer to the very last part of the previous sentence, “she will represent me and she will do all the work”. This sudden responsibility thrust on her appears to be the cause of the Mother’s laughter. Though Sri Aurobindo had already told her “you take charge of the people”, he had not mentioned to her his intention of putting her forward as his representative and making her “do all the work”.

²¹ The last sentence has been highlighted to draw the attention of the reader.

