

1st Chapter
Period ending on 31st Dec. 1969
Preliminaries

This first Chapter shows that Mother seems to have become very seriously in this new township project in June 1965, after receiving a letter in which Huta wrote to her that Mother should live at the centre of this town “because without the Spirit of Auroville, the whole town would be lifeless”. Mother, who had not come down from her room at the 2nd floor of the Ashram since 1962, decided to have instead a “Pavilion of the Mother” at its centre – which she later named “Matrimandir”.

The first entry in this compilation shows that, as early as in 1905, while living in Calcutta, Sri Aurobindo had written about the need to build such a Shrine: “Bhawani Mandir”.

1905, August: *Sri Aurobindo, then a nationalist leader living in Calcutta, writes in “Bhawani Mandir”:*¹

A temple is to be erected and constructed to Bhawani, the Mother. To all the children of the Mother the call is sent forth to help in the sacred work... We need a nucleus of men... (who) having the fire of Bhawani in their hearts and brains, will go forth and carry the flame to every nook and corner of our land.²

Eventually this idea will be dropped but would come back in a different form – as Matrimandir.

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1914, March 29th: *Paul Richard and his wife (née Mirra Alfassa, whom Sri Aurobindo will later refer to as “The Mother”) land at Pondicherry and meet Sri Aurobindo.*³ *This first meeting opens a new phase in their respective lives.*

* * *

1915, February 22nd: *Paul and Mirra Richard leave Pondicherry after Paul received an order to return to France to serve in the military in the ongoing [first] World War.*

* * *

1920, April 24th: *Mirra is back for good in Pondicherry.*⁴ *Her return marks the beginning of a new chapter in Sri Aurobindo’s and Mirra’s lives and action. Years later, She will say about this day:*

The anniversary of my return to Pondicherry, which was the tangible sign of the sure victory over the adverse forces.

* * *

1926, November 24th: *Sri Aurobindo’s “Siddhi Day – The Day of Victory”: Sri Aurobindo and Mirra, whom Sri Aurobindo had started to refer to as “the Mother” have the decisive realisation of the descent of a higher state of consciousness – the delight consciousness of the Overmind – into the physical. This results in Sri Aurobindo withdrawing in his apartment for good and handing over to the Mother the material and spiritual charge of His disciples. They will both say that the Ashram came into existence on that day.*

* * *

1928: *First publication of Sri Aurobindo’s booklet: “The Mother”.*

According to the publisher of its latest edition:

“The Mother” consists of six chapters, all of them written in 1927. The first chapter was originally written as a message, the second to fifth chapters as letters. The sixth and longest chapter was written for inclusion in a booklet that eventually comprised the message, the letters, and Chapter 6. This booklet was first published under the title The Mother in 1928.

In one of its chapters, Sri Aurobindo speaks of the three aspects of the Mother: “Individual, Transcendent and Universal”. Later, in a letter, he will confirm that Mirra was indeed “The individual Divine Mother”.

*Biographers have written that Sri Aurobindo wrote these texts to try and explain to his disciple that Mirra was in fact the “Individual Mother” of which he speaks in this booklet.*⁵

* * *

¹ Building such a temple is said to have been an idea of Barin (Sri Aurobindo’s younger brother).

² Sixty years later, Mother will decide to build at the centre of Auroville a Shrine dedicated to the Universal Mother.

³ Paul Richard had already met Sri Aurobindo in 1910, soon after his landing there (on 4th April 1910).

⁴ She will remain there till the end of her life, 53½ years later. Paul Richard, who had returned with her, will soon leave for good.

⁵ Though many of his disciples recognized spontaneously and by themselves who Mirra actually was, some others found it very difficult to accept as their spiritual master a foreign lady. (Despite Sri Aurobindo’s repeated assurances, some would never accept it.) We will see that Matrimandir is a shrine of the “Universal Mother.”

1964, August 14th

On the last day of its 1st World Conference (held in Pondicherry), the Sri Aurobindo Society (SAS), whose President is the Mother, adopts six resolutions; the third one originates from its General-Secretary, Navajata⁶, and aims at:

“Developing a township near Pondicherry, with all the amenities and facilities for residence and work for those who want to prepare for a better life.”

The SAS stated what its intentions were at that time in a document it handed to India’s Supreme Court in 1981:

“At the Society’s first World Conference in August 1964, the members and delegates expressed their need of a place in or near Pondicherry where they could build their houses, start different avenues of work and practice the yoga of Sri Aurobindo under the Mother’s guidance. Shri Navajata, then General Secretary and treasurer conveyed this to the Mother – the President of the Society. A big place was also required to serve as headquarters of the Society’s various national and international programmes. The Mother sanctioned the setting up of a township by the Society. This is how Auroville was born in response to the need of the members and the work.”

The Rules and Regulations of the SAS stipulate that for any decision to be effective, it needs to be approved by its President, the Mother. At first, she shows very little interest in this new township project. Though she had long felt the need to develop a more ideal society/city and had already made two attempts to build one (in 1938 and then in 1956), which had not materialised, she seems to be waiting for some signs that “the earth” was now ready for a new attempt to be successful.⁷

* * *

1964, October – 1965, March:

Available records seems to indicate that, sometime between October 1964 and March 1965, Mother gave her approval to this township project and named it “Auroville”.⁸ Her approval may have been progressive and the very positive feedbacks this project received may have been perceived by Mother as signs that this was indeed the thing to do at this point in time.

October 1964, the SAS purchases its first plot of land for Auroville. It is now in Aurobrindavan – that is on the west side of the NH 32 (Puducherry-Tindivanam road). At first, the lands purchased by the project were all between the NH 32 and Osudu Lake.

Early 1965, the SAS accepts the first contributions for ‘having a plot of land in Auroville’.

March 1965, Mother exchanges letters with the French architect Roger Anger⁹ who agrees to build her “ideal town” for her.

* * *

⁶ In 1960, Navajata (Keshav Dev Poddar) had already launched, with Mother’s full support, the SAS, with the aims of establishing Sri Aurobindo Centres all over India and the world and raising funds for the Ashram.

⁷ In “A Dream”, published in the August 1954 issue of the *Bulletin*, Mother described an ideal society and then wrote: “The earth is certainly not ready to realise such an ideal, for mankind does not yet possess sufficient knowledge to understand and adopt it nor the conscious force that is indispensable in order to execute it; that is why I call it a dream.”

⁸ In the March 1965 issue of the Information Letter of the SAS, Navajata wrote: “You will be glad to know that the Mother has taken up the model township project. She has named it ‘Auroville’.” As the previous issue was dated October 1964 and didn’t mention anything about this ‘township’ project, this “taking up” and naming must have occurred sometime between Oct. 1964 and March 1965.

⁹ Roger had visited Mother for the first time in 1957, together with Françoise Morisset (Mother’s second granddaughter and his future wife) and they had been visiting several times since then.

1965, Early

The township's scope and magnitude increase dramatically¹⁰ with, among other things, the inclusion of projects Mother had intended to do earlier but had not been able to do as yet – such as building pavilions of the various cultures of the world and a labour colony.

* * *

1965, early:

Vidyota, a cousin of Huta,¹¹ who has recently arrived from East Africa (and been given this name by Mother), writes to Mother to say that she wants to be the 'guardian of Auroville' to let in only the 'servants of the Truth'.¹²

* * *

1965, June 20th:

Huta, who had already expressed her wish to have a house in Auroville, writes a letter to describe to Mother a vision she had in the night of 19th and then another one to describe old dreams. Unfortunately, Huta won't reproduce these two letters in the books she will later write on Matrimandir, but, years later, in her book, "The Spirit of Auroville", she will remember writing to Mother that:

"[Mother] should have Her house in Auroville, because, without the Spirit of Auroville, the whole town would be lifeless".

The same day, Mother writes back to Huta:

You have indeed a very sweet soul who makes very sweet projects and beautiful dreams – all that is passed on directly to the Lord who will show us clearly what is His decision.

Meanwhile it is not to Nava that I shall show the letter but to the architect of Auroville when he arrives and see with him the way of giving a concrete realisation to the beautiful plans.

But I must warn you to be patient because all that may take more time than you expect. However there is also a joy in waiting, the joy of expectation.

The following day, Mother writes to Huta:

In your yesterday's letter you spoke of a dream of your childhood, 'the most beautiful spot of the world'. This was also a dream of my own childhood – So our dreams have met for realisation. Now it is only to be worked out. When we know how to wait, we put Time on our side."

Three days later, Mother will tell Satprem, Mother:

[Huta] wants a house where she would be all alone, and next to it a house where I would be all alone.

Huta wants to be in peace, silence, far from the world.

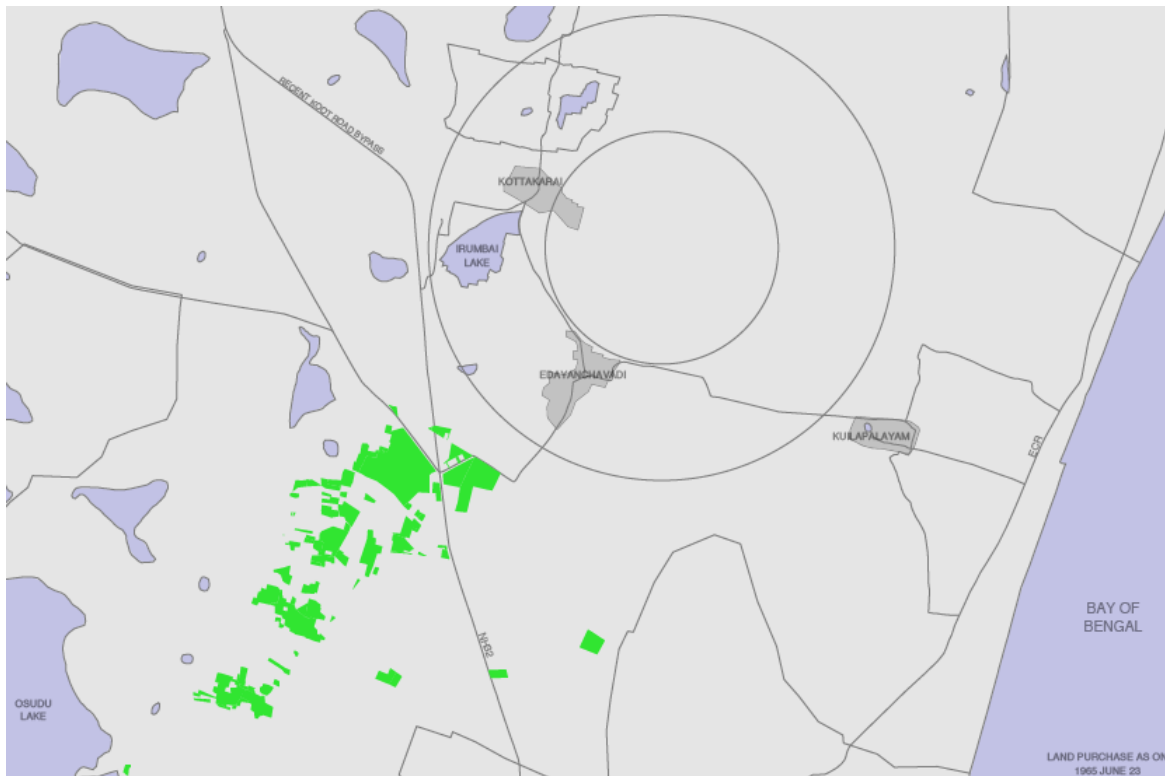
Huta's two letters have the enormous merit of making Mother fully interested in Auroville, of inspiring her to have a Pavilion of the Mother at its centre and of making her receive her town plan. They will also result in Mother appointing Huta as Matrimandir's "guardian".

* * *

¹⁰ Who is responsible for this increase. Mother? Navajata? Both? Other disciples? Probably Mother. It wasn't Roger because he was in France, had not yet been appointed the project's architect and wasn't even aware of its existence.

¹¹ Huta Hindocha (1931-2011) was an artist who joined the Ashram in 1955.

¹² *Mother's Agenda*, 23.6.65.



Auroville's land holdings on 23.6.1967¹³

1965, June 23rd: *Excerpts from a conversation Mother has with Satprem:*

Have you heard of Auroville?...

Satprem: Yes.

For a long time, I had had a plan of the “ideal city”, but that was during Sri Aurobindo’s lifetime, with Sri Aurobindo living at its centre.¹⁴ Afterwards ... I was no longer interested.

Then, we took up the idea of Auroville again (I was the one who called it “Auroville”), but from the other end: instead of the formation having to find the place, it was the place¹⁵ that caused the formation to be born; and up to now I took a very secondary interest in it because I hadn’t received anything direct.

Then that little Huta took it into her head to have a house there¹⁶ and have a house for me next to hers to offer me. And she wrote to me [on 20th June] all her dreams; one or two sentences suddenly awakened an old, old memory of something that had tried to manifest – a creation – when I was very small (I don’t remember what age), and that had again tried to manifest at the very beginning of the century when I was with Théon. Then I had forgotten all about it. And it came back with that letter: suddenly I had my plan of Auroville.¹⁷ Now I have my general plan; I am waiting for Roger to make the detailed plans because since the beginning I have said, “Roger will be the architect”, and I have written to Roger.

[...]

[Mother takes a piece of paper and draws a sketch of Her plan and comments it to Satprem:]

My plan is very simple.

¹³ The 2 circles (around the banyan tree) define what will become Auroville’s planned urban area and its master plan area. The size of the Tamil villages is as it is presently. The Kootroad bypass (shown here) didn’t exist at that time.

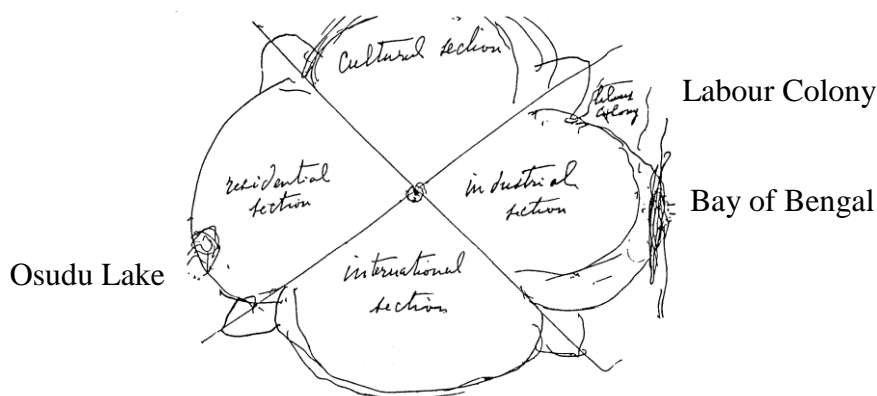
¹⁴ Mother refers here to her first attempt, in 1938, to build an “Auroville” in the then princely State of Hyderabad.

¹⁵ In the Agenda “near the Lake” was added, which Mother didn’t say. (According to the audio recording.)

¹⁶ In the Agenda “near the Lake” was again added, which Mother didn’t say – and is a misconception.

¹⁷ Note that this means that, prior to these letters Mother did not have a plan – and that she now needs to communicate it to Roger. She may have sent him a copy of this sketch and a transcript of this conversation.

It takes place up there, on the way to Madras, on top of the hill.¹⁸



*Mother's sketch of the Auroville Township*¹⁹

Here we have (naturally in Nature it's not like this: we'll have to adapt – it's like this up there,²⁰ here, a central point. This central point is a park I had seen when I was a little girl (perhaps the most beautiful thing in the world with regard to physical, material Nature), a park with water and trees like all parks, and flowers, but not too many (flowers in the form of creepers), palm trees and ferns (all species of palm trees), water (if possible, running water – it must be running water)²¹ and, if possible, a small waterfall – running water.²² From a practical point of view, it would be very good: at the edge, outside the park, we could build reservoirs that would provide water to the residents.

So in that park I had seen the "Pavilion of Love" (but I don't like to use that word because men have turned it into something ludicrous); I am referring to the principle of divine Love. But it has been changed: it will be the "Pavilion of the Mother";²³ but not this [*Mother points to herself*]: the Mother, the true Mother, the principle of the Mother. (I say "Mother" because Sri Aurobindo used the word, otherwise I would have put something else – I would have put "creative principle" or "realising principle" or ... something of that sort) but it doesn't matter.

And it will be a small building, not a big one, with just a meditation room downstairs, with columns²⁴ and probably a circular shape (I say "probably" because I am leaving it for Roger to decide)²⁵. Upstairs, the top floor will be a room, and the roof will be a covered terrace. Do you know the old Indian Mogul miniatures with palaces in which there are terraces and small roofs supported by columns? Do you know those old miniatures? I've had hundreds of them in my hands....

But this pavilion is very, very lovely: a small pavilion²⁶ like this, with a roof over a terrace, and low walls against which there will be divans where people can sit and meditate in the open air in the evening or at night. And downstairs, at the very bottom, on the ground floor, simply a meditation room – a place with nothing in it. There would probably be, at the far end, something

¹⁸ "Ça se passe là haut, en route pour Madras, sur le haut de la colline." Mother speaks here of a particular area she used to call "the top" on the NH 32 (which is why an Ashram farm in this area was named "the top"). Mother used to drive along this road in the evening (which is probably why she told Frederick and others that she had been to Auroville. Does this mean that, at that time, by drawing this sketch (which shows the city extending from Osudu Lake to the sea – a 10km diameter city...), Mother had decided that the Auro-Orchard – Aurobrindavan area would be the centre of the future town? Records show that at that time Auroville owned land only west of the NH 32.

¹⁹ Note that the distance between Osudu Lake and the sea (and hence the city's diameter) is roughly 10km and that hence its centre (according to this sketch) is somewhere near the village of Edayanchavadi.

²⁰ The Agenda added: "*in the ideal*" which Mother didn't say – but probably meant.

²¹ The Agenda omitted this "*it must be running water.*"

²² The Agenda omitted again this "*running water.*"

²³ Mid 1966, Mother will name this Pavilion: "*Matrimandir*".

²⁴ Note that Mother speaks already of having columns.

²⁵ Note that Mother is leaving it to Roger to decide whether it will be a circular building or not.

²⁶ Note that, during the first quarter of 1970, this Pavilion will become very large.

that would be a living light (perhaps the symbol made of living light), a constant light.²⁷ Otherwise, a very calm, very silent place.

Adjoining it would be a small dwelling (well, a dwelling that would still have three floors), but not of large dimensions, and it would be the house of Huta, who would act as guardian – she would be the guardian of the pavilion (she wrote me a very nice letter, but she didn't understand all this, of course).²⁸

This is the centre. All around, there is a circular road, which isolates it from the rest. There would probably be an entrance gate (there has to be one) into the park. An entrance gate or there would be a guardian of the gate. The guardian of the gate is a new girl who has come from Africa who is Huta's cousin (to whom I gave the name Vidyota) and has written me a letter saying she wanted to be the "guardian of Auroville" to let in only the "servants of the Truth" [Laughing] It's a very nice plan (!) So I will probably put her as guardian of the park, with a little house on the road, at the entrance... We shall see.

[...]

Satprem: And you will be there, in the centre?

Huta hopes so! [Mother laughs] I didn't say either yes or no to her, I told her, "The Lord will decide." It depends on my "health". Moving from here – no: I am here because of the Samadhi, I remain here, that's quite certain; but I can go there on a visit (it's not so far away, it takes five minutes by car). Only, Huta wants to be in peace, silence, far from the world, and it's quite possible in her park with a road around it and someone to stop people from entering – one can be really in peace – but if I am there, that's an end to it! There will be collective meditations and so on. So if I have signs (physical signs, first), then the inner command to go out, I will go there in a car and spend an hour in the afternoon – I can do it from time to time...²⁹ We still have time, because it will take years before everything is ready.

[...]

The centre in my drawing is a symbolic centre.

But that's Huta's hope: she wants a house where she would be all alone, and next to it a house where I would be all alone – the second part is a dream because for me to be "all alone" ... you just have to see what goes on! It's a fact, isn't it, so it doesn't go well with the "all alone". Solitude must be found within, it's the only way. But on the level of life, I will certainly not go and live there, because the Samadhi is here; but I can go there on a visit. For instance, I can go for an opening or certain ceremonies – we'll have to see, it won't be for years. It's going to take years to be realised.

[...]

As regards the construction, it will depend on Roger's plasticity³⁰... I am not concerned about the details at all, there is only that pavilion that I would like to be very pretty – I see it. Because I saw it, I had a vision of it, so I'll try to make him understand what I saw. The park, too, I saw – those are old visions I had repeatedly.³¹ But that's not difficult.

²⁷ Note that, eventually, the "play of a ray of the sun" on the object of concentration will create this "living light".

²⁸ Hence, Huta's wish to have a house next to that of our Sweet Mother, "to be alone with Her", results in her being appointed "Guardian" of the "Pavilion of the Mother".

²⁹ Note that, from December 1958 onwards, Mother had stopped playing tennis and going to the playground for her class and came only rarely out of the main Ashram building. From 18th March 1962 onwards, she never came down from her second floor room.

³⁰ On 14.3.1951, Mother explained to her class what she means by 'plasticity': "That which can easily change its form is "plastic". Figuratively, it is suppleness, a capacity of adaptation to circumstances and necessities. When I ask you to be plastic in relation to the Divine, I mean not to resist the Divine with the rigidity of preconceived ideas and fixed principles."

³¹ Underlining by the editor because the Matrimandir and its gardens as described by Mother in June 1965 are very different from those of 1971.

The biggest difficulty is water, because there is no nearby river up there; but they are already trying to harness rivers. There is even a project to divert water from the Himalayas and bring it across the whole of India (Louis [Allen, in-charge of the Lake Estate, an Ashram farm] had made a plan and discussed it in Delhi; of course, they objected that it would be a little costly!).³²

But anyway, without going into such grandiose things, something has to be done to bring water; that will be the biggest difficulty, that's what will take the longest time. As for the rest – light, power – it will be made on the spot in the industrial section – but you can't manufacture water! The Americans have given serious thought to a way of using seawater, because the earth no longer has enough drinking water for people (the water they call "fresh"... it's ironical); the amount of water is insufficient for people's use, so they have already started chemical experiments on a big scale to transform seawater and make it usable – obviously that would be the solution to the problem.

S.: *But it already exists.*

It exists, but not in a sufficient proportion.

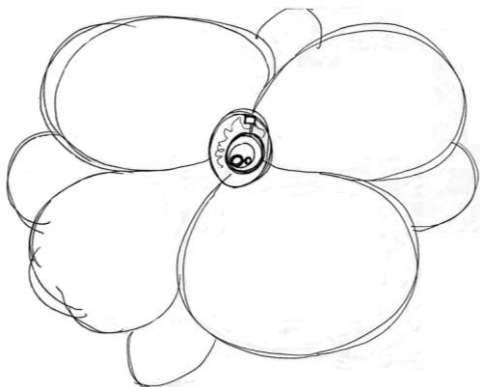
S.: *Yes, in Israel.*

They do it in Israel? They use seawater? Obviously, that would be the solution³³ – the sea is there. It has to be studied. Then water would have to be sent uphill.

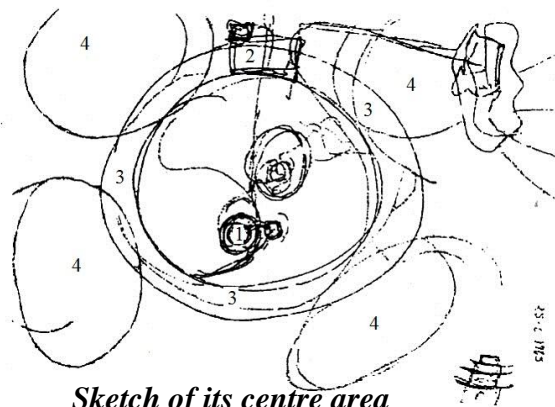
Now that she has her plan, Mother needs to send it to Roger, along with some explanations. As Satprem is anyway transcribing their conversations – in French – for her Agenda, the easiest is to send to Roger a transcript of it. Such seems to have been the case because the report Roger will bring with him in September will be fully consonant with this description.

* * *

1965, June 25th



Sketch of the town



Sketch of its centre area

Mother draws in front of Huta several sketches of Her town and gives her two out of these. She explains that Her town plan is in the shape of a flower, a hibiscus, "Godhead", to which She had recently also given the name "Auroville".

*As the proper orientation of these two sketches is not mentioned; their orientation here may not be correct. Both may need to be rotated by 90° counter-clockwise.*³⁴

*Explanations of the reference numbers of the sketch describing the centre of the town:*³⁵

- *The pagoda-shaped sketch (bottom right) would describe the "Pavilion of the Mother" which at that time was going to look like Kyoto's Golden Temple – except for the shape of the roof. (As Mother will tell Huta on 1.9.65.)*

³² This project is not as extravagant as it seems because the Government of India has been considering for several decades a project that would link all major rivers and thus bring water from the rivers of the north to the south.

³³ Desalination is one of the options which are being investigated.

³⁴ In a letter to Roger, dated 17.10.77, to which this second drawing was attached, Narad wrote that Mother had said that the entrance should be from the West – which is also what Roger seems to have understood at that time.

³⁵ These reference numbers and their explanations were also given on the above-mentioned letter from Narad.

- *The two very large ovals at the centre would represent the lake. (ref. 3)*
- *The Mother's Pavilion (ref. 1) would be on the eastern part (left) of the island. A point and two con-centric circles would represent it (the two concentric circles could represent a smaller lake around it).*
- *Huta's house would be just next to it (to its north) – represented by one circle.*
- *The other lines on the island may represent gardens, water bodies, cascades, pathways, etc.*
- *One has access to the island by one bridge located on the west side (ref. 2). The small rectangle at the bottom left angle of the larger rectangle represents the house of the "Guardian of the Gate" (as explained to Satprem two days earlier).*
- *The four large circular areas (ref. 4) in the four corners would represent areas planted with "huge trees". These four parks would represent the four Powers of The Mother.*
- *The "mountain with the fir-trees" (top left) would be represented at the top left (North West), outside the lake.*

[After describing the main points of her sketch of the town, Mother describes its centre area:]

Ah! Now, the Mother's Pavilion. This will be a separate island surrounded by a lake, tall trees, gardens with various kind of flowers.

I especially want the creepers of red hibiscus (Power) upon the outer dome of the Mother's Pavilion. They will look like living jewels against the white marble.

There will be rockeries in Japanese style, varieties of cactus, small waterfalls, small pools with lilies, lotuses, small bridges, various kinds of fountains and marble statues – one of them will be Shiva in deep trance. From his matted hair flows the water like a fountain...

There will be only one entrance. I want precious, semi-precious and artificial stones to be paved from the gate to the Mother's Pavilion in gradations, because they are full of meaning.

The Pavilion will be in white marble and will have three storeys.

The ground floor will be a huge marble hall. Nothing material is to be kept in it except an arrangement by which there will be a perpetual flame representing the Immortal Flame of the Supreme Truth.

This flame will burn in a lotus built in the centre of Sri Aurobindo's symbol and my symbol combined in a design made of pure gold. The Supreme Truth will be invoked in it.

For the second floor, I do not know yet, but on the third floor there will be a terrace garden and from this top floor the whole of Auroville will be seen.

On the terrace, I would like to have carved marble seats with satin cushions – you know marble seats – you know, they carve peacocks, flowers and things like that in marble.

The Shrine must have a vast area – not like this (Mother takes her handkerchief in her palm and closes her hand), so small. Also there must be a silent zone. No vehicles should move in this area, there should be no noise of any kind.

The Park of Unity will be divided into twelve gardens, which will represent the Twelve Attributes of the Supreme Mother and her Four Powers.

In these gardens, I would like to have varieties of flowers – especially the different kinds of hibiscus – the Divine Consciousness.

On the other side, towards the boundary of the gardens, I wish to have a lake, huge trees like palms, pines, various types of ferns, neem, Indian cork trees, eucalyptus and many other beautiful big trees. They all represent Unity and Aspiration.

When the lake will be dug, all the soil will be collected on one side in order to make it look like a small mountain where there will be fir trees. You see, in future there will be snow.

Beneath each tall tree around the Mother's Pavilion there would be small carved marble seats. People will meditate in the open and be one with the vastness of Mother Nature – the Mother of the multitude and Her Creation.

And you will be the guardian of the Mother's Shrine. Your tiny house in the shape of a lotus bud will be built on the island very close to my house.

Look! All these letters of yours have started the Mother's Shrine.³⁶ I will explain to you more when I have spoken to the architect [Roger], who will come in September.

Note that Roger wasn't in town at that time and that it seems unlikely that Mother gave the same explanations to Roger. On 17.12.77, Narad will share with Roger Mother's sketch of the Matrimandir area with some explanations. He had not seen this sketch earlier.

* * *

1965, September 1st: While looking with Huta at a photo of Kyoto's 'Rokuon-ji' (Golden Temple), Mother tells her:

Child, this is exactly what we shall have except for the shape of the roof³⁷ – it must be a terrace and a dome, but the surroundings will be the same – lake, flowers, trees, rockeries, small waterfalls and so on.

Ah! you know, I saw this Golden Temple at Kyoto when I was in Japan. It is beautiful.



Kyoto's 'Rokuon-ji' and its water body

There is no record of Mother saying the same thing to Roger.

* * *

1965, October 1st: Typed letter from Nata to Roger:

Roger's personal archives. Scan available
French

Ashram, October 1st, 1965.

Dear Roger,

Herewith attached you will find my report to Mother with regard to the problem of water. It seems that the possibility of supply by deep wells is starting to look promising. The opinion of the two or three experts of Auroville's aquifer, whom I have consulted is rather encouraging.

I have the data of some thirty wells which are all located within the zone of Auroville and its vicinity.

As I told Mother, my study is not over, but I am not far from reaching definite answers.

As you see, in the case of desalinisation as well as in the case of deep wells, the problem of water is not a water problem but a financial problem.

Sometime after you had left Pondicherry, I had a look at our topographic equipment. At present it is very unsatisfactory because the only apparatus shown to me was a dumpy level manufactured in India. I had been promised that work would start after a week, but till now the surveyors haven't shown up. According to the information I could obtain from Navajata it seems they will arrive tomorrow or day after. I keep trying to hasten things as much as possible.

What I consider to be the most urgent is a well done and well thought evaluation because according to what I heard from Navajata it seems that the only financial source, which would be sure and in plenty, is that of the Government of India. In order to be taken into consideration, there is a need to present something well done and convincing. There will be donations but one should not rely much on them. In order to produce this evaluation we need to have the urban project.

³⁶ Note that this is the first time on record of Mother referring to this Pavilion as "The Mother's Shrine".

³⁷ Note that Mother had drawn a small pagoda on the sketch of the centre of the town she had made in front of Huta on 25.6.65.

Without it would be totally impossible. I can move ahead with some things, and I will surely do it, but the comprehensive financial study cannot only be made with your project or with your preliminary project completed.

Even for the drainage of the land, it is something I will do as soon as the topographic study will be over.

I am waiting for news from you and pray you to accept the sense of my friendship.

Nata

I was just told that the topographers have started today. I will keep you informed soon

* * *

1965, September 7th: *Roger visits for the first time since his appointment as Auroville's architect, 5 months earlier. He brings along with him a report on the future town, which seems to be based on the description Mother made of her plan to Satprem on 23rd June, or on a very similar one.*

One of Roger's recommendations is to protect the "Park of Unity" and the "Pavilion of the Mother" by shifting the centre of the town eastwards, away from the NH 32, to the area between the villages of Edayanchavadi, Kottakarai and Kulapalayam. Mother agrees and, in addition, writes on a page of a small note-pad:

The park of Unity must be surrounded by some kind of isolating zone so that it is solitary and silent.

One has access to it only with permission.

*Le parc de l'Unité
doit être entouré
d'une sorte de
zone isolante
afin qu'il soit
solitaire et silencieux
on n'y a accès
qu'avec permission*

* * *

1965, October 1st: *Typed letter from Nata to Roger*

Roger's personal archives. Scan available
French

Ashram, October 1st, 1965.

Dear Roger,

This first report is about the problem of the artificial lake. I gave it the first place in the order of things to be done, considering its utility for the execution of your preliminary town plan.

I won't give you the boring details of the calculations. I limit myself to the essential, to what is useful for your work. I shall send to you in Paris the graphs and tables which are already drafted. However, the figures obtained are more useful to the hydrological study than to the study of the urban plan.

According to the information received from the National Buildings Organisation, the annual rainfall in the Madras area is of 1,234.44mm.

The data on evaporation have been obtained with perfectly valid artefacts. I hope to get from official organisations information obtained from direct observation and experimentation, but I think they will not differ much from what I write here below.

According to the figures obtained, each year one must pour into the lake an amount of water sufficient to replace the 951.56 mm lost by evaporation.

To give right now an idea of the practical relevance, you may consider that, in the case of a 100,000 m² lake one has to pour in it every year some 95,000 m³.

Besides this, for the first filling one cannot rely on rainfalls; one must rely exclusively on artificial means; that is, one must pour into the lake water that comes either from deep wells or a desalination plant. In this case, supposing the depth of the lake to be 3 meters (average depth), the volume of water required for this first filling would amount to 300,000 m³.

If one converts the yearly volume into an hourly volume, 11 m³/hour will be required to compensate for the losses due to evaporation, while, for the initial filling 417 m³/hour will be required during one entire month.

Considering that the cost of desalinated water may be of Rs 0.60/m³ (a rate that may be close to reality), you will find that the first filling will cost Rs 180,000 and that the yearly maintenance cost will be of Rs 57,000.

One must be careful not to get confused regarding the following: The study states that 10 months out of 12 the lake will be empty unless there is artificial intake – this is obviously contradicted by what anybody can observe in the Auroville area, where there are numerous small lakes whose water remains visible for at least 6 months without any other input than rainfalls. Our case is however different. Our lake is situated at the centre of a town, without any possibility of rivulet receiving surface water and feeding it into it thereby creating a watershed infinitely larger than the lake itself. In our case, the help we will receive from rainfalls will be limited to the exact surface of the lake.

I remain available if you require any clarification; please accept the meanings of my friendship.

Nata

* * *

1965, October 31st: *Typed letter from Nata to the Mother, copy to Roger, Navajata & Gilbert G.:*

Roger's personal archives. Scan available
French

Mother,

Report on Auroville's Hydrological situation.

This is the first report pertaining to the two Auroville projects I have been entrusted with: the hydraulic project and the electric project.

Out of the two we have first approached the hydraulic question. We have given it preference because its solution must be preceded by the solution of the hydrological problem, of which the research data depends entirely on site information, a meticulous study of the characteristics of the existing wells, and also, possibly, of the larger hydrological basin. All this will enable us to know in depth the possibility of supplying Auroville with water drawn from deep wells, or to opt for other solutions. Only then shall we be able to approach the hydraulic study.

There also exists the possibility which you, Mother, have envisaged, to obtain drinking water by desalinating seawater. It is a process which is at once very ancient and very modern – thanks to the impulse given to it in the USA, but which is still at an experimental stage, insofar as a system both viable and economical has yet to be found, even though large industries such as Westinghouse and Fairbanks Morse have already built installations which function fairly well to mention only the most important ones.

The main drawback in this process is the very high purchasing cost and the even higher production cost. To have an idea of these costs, it is enough to think that the cost of installation ranges between Rs 2,500 and Rs 3,000/m³ of drinking water, while the cost of production is about Rs 0.70/m³, an exorbitant cost if one compares it to the Rs 0.10/m³ of Pondicherry. This without taking into account other equally difficult and disconcerting problems...

It is for the above-mentioned reasons that “desalination” is only taken into consideration in cases where the concerned area offers no other possibilities (natural sources, underground, rivers, etc.).

In view of all the above, all efforts have for the time being been directed at studying the possibility of supply through deep wells.

Hydrological study

At Neyveli: According to information received at Cuddalore, it seems that the hydrological basin supplying water to the Auroville area is situated in Neyveli's vicinity.

Thanks to the support of Montecatini-Ansaldo, an Italian company which is building a complex for the production of urea to be used as chemical fertilizer, we have been to Neyveli to seek the required information. There was always the danger of exhausting the aquifers in the basin through excessive pumping required by the large groups of industries located in this very same area of Neyveli. Fortunately, it has been observed that this danger does not exist as, on the contrary, the difficulty is to eliminate the excess water. For the exploitation of the underground lignite it is indispensable to eliminate this excess water, a work which has to go on day and night without stop lest all the installations become submerged. To this end about 50 high-yield pumps are functioning constantly.

Water rises from the ground at very high pressure. This is the data which interested us most. This fact allows us to think that if the aquifer in the Auroville area is truly originating from Neyveli (to know this with certainty one would have to conduct very serious geological studies), one can then assume that for a fair number of years Auroville won't lack water.

All clues seem to confirm that the aquifers originate in a quite large hydrological basin formed by a pebbly area with a high filtering capacity, of which Neyveli is the nearest point being exploited.

At Cuddalore: From the Assistant Engineer in the Agricultural Department, upon which depended the boring of the wells in the Auroville area, we have received rather interesting information. I do not wish to bore you with the endless details of our conversation, but all the information we were able to collect evokes a real possibility to have water from underground at an average depth of 75 metres, with an average output of $35\text{m}^3/\text{hour}$. There is a well at the Medical College, of 50m depth, which yields $120\text{m}^3/\text{hour}$ with the help of a compressor (about 200m^3 with a pump: this represents a maximum).

Historical data go no further back than 7 years, except for one well which was bored 20 years ago and is continuing with the same yield as in the beginning.

Until now all wells bored during the past 7 years of the Department's existence have continued to yield the same amounts from the start, except for some seasonal variations.

I hope, in my next report, to have completed the preliminary study and to present the conclusions, so that you may decide on the choice of either sweet water through desalination or water from deep wells.

Nata

* * *

1965, October 10th: *Excerpt from a letter from Mother to Huta:*

It is Roger who will lay the first stone of the Pavilion, in front of a few people (one of each country) and you will be there. Roger will come back in February or March of next year 1966; so the ceremony cannot take place before that. According to your wish, the money you gave me will be used for that purpose.

Once more, I warn you not to, listen to what people tell you, whoever they are, about Auroville, because nobody except me knows the exact thing. If you want to know something about Auroville, ask me, and nobody else and about the Pavilion I will certainly let you informed of all happenings.

* * *

1965, December: Excerpts of some of Mother's answers to questions from two questionnaires, with suggested answers, prepared by Gilbert Gauché.

2: Who has taken the initiative for the construction of Auroville?

It is the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, located at Pondicherry in the South of India.

Le Seigneur Suprême

The Supreme Lord.

3: Who participates in the financing of Auroville?

Universal town, Auroville will be financed by funds originating from many countries.

In each country, donations will be made by people sharing Auroville's ideal and wishing, either to help in the realisation of the project, or to put it themselves in practice by coming to live in Auroville.

Le Seigneur Seigneur

The Supreme Lord.

* * *

1965, December 24

Mother tells Huta that [as suggested by Roger] the site has been shifted north-eastwards:³⁸

The place for the Mother's shrine is chosen. It is really a very nice place.

* * *

1966, February 20th

Mother draws a sketch of the entrance of the Mother's Pavilion and explains it to Huta who notes the following:

- 1) Small bridge connecting the two sides.
- 2) The door, the entrance to the Matrimandir.
- 3) Box-room where the cleaning equipment for the Shrine would be kept.
- 4) Waterfalls or Fountain at which people would wash their feet before entering the Shrine.



* * *

1966, March 4th: Excerpt from a conversation during which Huta asked Mother when the foundation stone of Matrimandir will be laid:

Child, Roger is coming on the 7th and I am going to see him on the 8th. I shall tell you all about the plan when you come on the 10th.

* * *

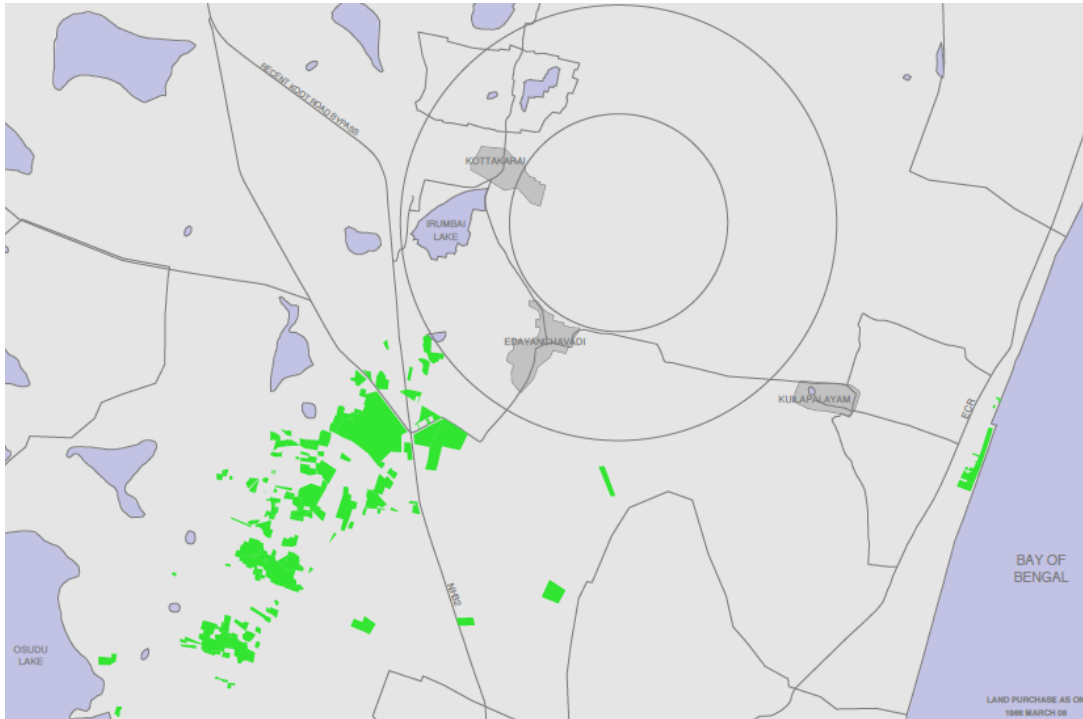
1966, March 7th: Excerpt from a letter from Mother to Huta who had written to ask again the same question as on 4th March:

I have left everything to the Lord³⁹. It is He who decides and will always decide for this body – As yet, for this matter, he has not let me know His will – That is why I have not answered.

* * *

³⁸ Maps showing the location of the 3km diameter 'Nebula' and 'Macrostructure' models show their centre as being in the Grace – Gaïa area. It is only early 1967 that the Banyan tree will become the centre of the town.

³⁹ Note that the Mother keeps repeating this.



Auroville's land holdings on 8.3.1966⁴⁰

* * *

1966, March 9th: *Having arrived from Paris, Roger presents to Mother two models of the future town conceived in Paris by two of his office teams. A rectangular model and a circular model known as the “Nebula”. (Roger is likely to have overseen both teams.)*



Rectangular model⁴¹

This rectangular model conceived by a team lead by Pierre Puccinelli and Michel Loyer.⁴² The “Pavilion of the Mother” is shown in red on the larger of the two lakes and described as follows:

⁴⁰ Though, according to Huta the decision to shift the centre of the future town was taken at the end of December, land purchase doesn't seem to reflect this decision.

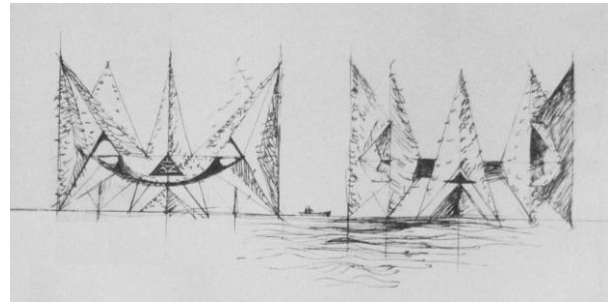
⁴¹ This model is carved into an acrylic sheet. It has been photographed here using a red cardboard as background so that its features are better visible.

⁴² According to Anupama Kundoo's book on Roger Anger, p.119.

The Pavilion of the Mother and Garden of Unity:

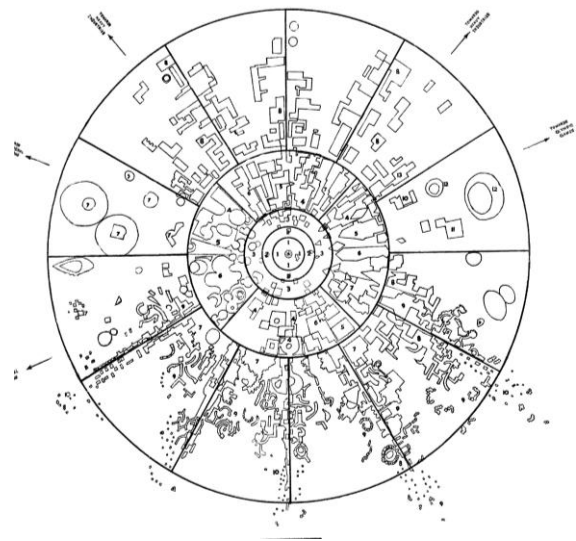
The Mother's house is resting on the garden of Unity, a luxurious aquatic garden where natural elements are grouped in a symbolic manner.

The building is simply resting on water in the vicinity of all things, without any ostentation or grandeur, or bareness, like a sculpture expressing human life.



Mother discards this rectangular model and opts instead for the "Nebula" model, which, unlike this one, is based both on the sketch she drew in front of Satprem on 23.6.65 and on her symbol.

This "Nebula" model was conceived by a team led by Mario Heyman and Pierre Braslawski.⁴³



Nebula model and its road network, which is based on Mother's symbol

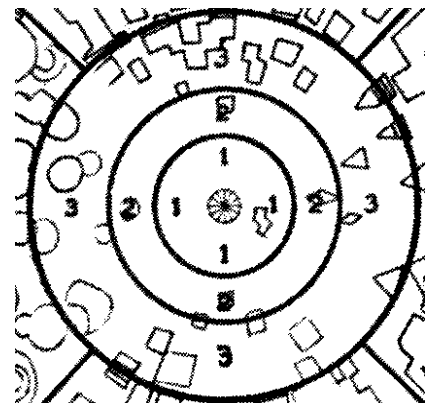
A first exhibition on Auroville is organised at the Ashram where this model, plans and photos are exhibited. It opens on 16th March.

A brochure depicting this model/concept will soon be published (in English, French and Italian) and sent to all UNESCO Delegations in Paris, ahead of their General Conference at which a first resolution in favour of Auroville is to be presented. It says:

The axes of penetration towards the centre create a convergence, a densification of buildings, increasing to a point where they suddenly open out upon the gardens of Unity. In the centre of these gardens, surrounded by a lake, will be situated the "Sanctuary of Truth", and the Matrimandir.
(Shrine of the Mother).⁴⁴

At the centre of the town, the Park of Unity is formed by a crown of gardens (3) over-hanging the lake (2) which surrounds the Sanctuary of Truth (1) with the Matrimandir.

The Sanctuary of Truth by its form and position will be the heart of the town, the dominating point of Auroville opening to the light.



⁴³ According to Anupama Kundoo's book on Roger Anger, p.119.

⁴⁴ Underlining is by the editor to point out that this is the first record of these terms being used.



Photos of the “Nebula” model showing the Matrimandir at the centre of the town

The above-mentioned brochure is the first record of the name “Matrimandir” being used. It is likely to have been first used either for the first exhibition on Auroville which opened at the Ashram on 19th March 1966 or, a little later, for this brochure.

Did Mother come up with this name or was it suggested to her – and later adopted by her?

The first record of Mother using this name dates from 7th January 1968 – that is some two years after it was used in publications. During these two years, she used other expressions.

Note that, in this fac-simile, the words “Matrimandir” in English and in Sanskrit don’t seem to have been written by Mother.⁴⁵

मातृमन्दिर

Matrimandir

L’oratoire de la Mère

The Mother’s Shrine

*

Excerpt from the June 1966 issue of the “Information Letter” of the SAS:

There is a little story behind the plan as it has emerged at present. After many weeks of research full of doubts as to what solution should be adopted, one of the architects saw the nebula in vision.⁴⁶ Next morning the architects found the same nebula in a photograph appearing in a magazine.

From then on the work developed in an extraordinary atmosphere, the architects feeling as if they were guided. The original nebula has spontaneously developed into The Mother’s symbol giving shape to the township.

In the town’s centre is conceived the Park of Unity and the Sanctuary of Truth with the Matrimandir⁴⁷ surrounded by a lake.

*

Excerpt from the “Report on the Quarter” of the April 1966 issue of the Bulletin:

... The new scheme which arose originally from a dream of a nebula⁴⁸ and developed quite unwittingly into the form of the Mother’s Symbol⁴⁹ representing the four Aspects of the Mother.

* * *

⁴⁵ Could “Matrimandir” have been written by Roger?

⁴⁶ Note that Vijay Poddar (Navajata’s son) and Piero told this editor independently that the architect who had this vision was Pierre Braslawski. (Mother will refer to him as “the Russian communist”.)

⁴⁷ Note that the word “Matrimandir” is also used in this publication.

⁴⁸ The French word “nébuleuse” is translated “nebula” in the *Bulletin* and “nebula” in *Mother’s Agenda*.

⁴⁹ Note that, like the “Information Letter” of the SAS, the *Bulletin* also speaks of a dream (or vision) which “developed quite unwittingly into the form of the Mother’s Symbol”.

1966, March 10th: *Excerpt from a letter from Mother to Huta:*

I have said nothing about Auroville this morning, because I had not yet had a talk with Roger. Yesterday, I saw only the plans and models of the town that are simply wonderful, just as I wanted them to be. They will be exhibited in the Auroville office in front of the Ashram. You can see them there, and I am sure that you will be happy as the Truth Pavilion is a kind of island in the centre of an artificial round lake and looks like an immense lotus opened towards heaven.

I talked with Roger only this afternoon and he told me all his plans of action and work which are excellent. He says the foundation stone must be laid only when the work of construction will start; and naturally things are not yet ready for that. It will take some time more, which is quite right and wise. You see, that is why the Lord did not give his answer to your prayer because the time is not yet come for it.

* * *

1966, May 20th: *Mother's answer to Huta who was not very convinced about her supreme Vision and had expressed her feelings that everything seemed to be a dream:*

My very dear little child Huta,

You say that Auroville is a dream.

Yes, it is a "dream" of the Lord and generally these "dreams" turn up⁵⁰ to be true, much more true than the human so-called realities!

With all my love.

20.5.66
My very dear little child Huta.
You say that Auroville is a dream -
Yes, it is a "dream" of the Lord
and generally these "dreams" turn
up to be true, much more true
than the human so-called realities!
With all my love /

* * *

1966, December 14th: *Excerpt from a letter from Mother to Huta who had heard a radio program on the project of Auroville:*

Just a word to tell you that there is no question of laying any first stone of Auroville for the moment.

When the question will arise, certainly the first stone must be that of the Truth Pavilion or whatever it will be called and I shall remember your offering.

* * *

1967, January mid: *Roger visits for the first time in 1967.*

*It is during his first 1967 visit that Roger asked Mother to fix the location of the centre of the future town by pointing her finger on a map.*⁵¹

The map below shows that, one year prior its Inauguration Ceremony, Auroville owned only very few plots east of the NH 32 and none in what will become its urban area.

The Inauguration Ceremony is nearing; the site for it (that is, the centre of the future town) needs to be defined so that, on that day, there is a road access to it and enough land owned by Auroville there to host the function. During the 11 remaining months, efforts will be made to purchase as much land as possible at the centre of the future town.

A map of the area is brought to Mother; she concentrates and points her finger at the future centre of the town. Roger and others go and see that place and, on their return report to her that that there is a large Banyan Tree there. She is said to have been happy about it.

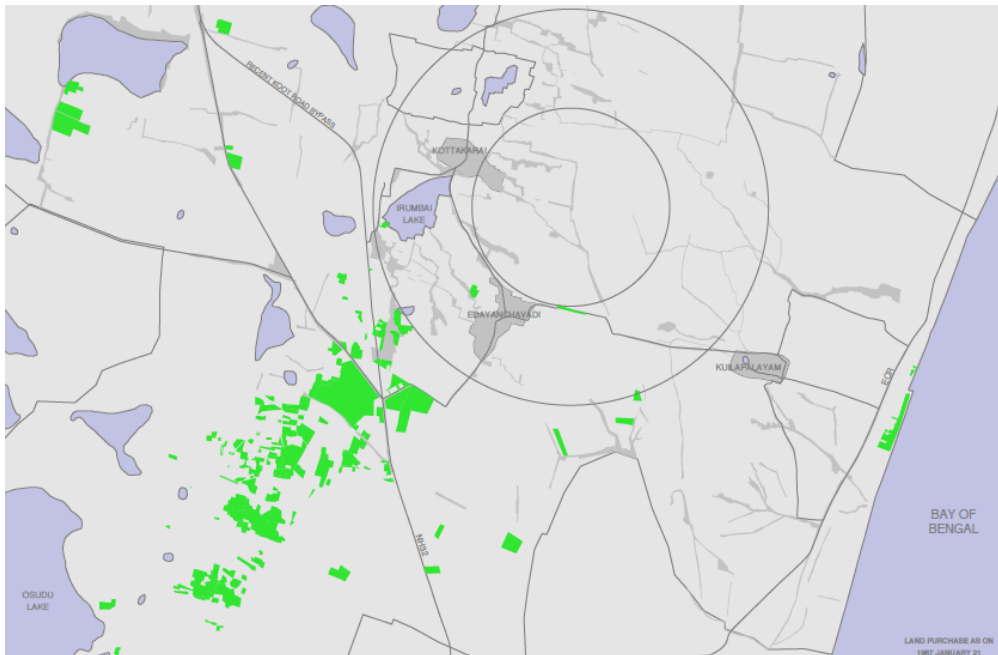
⁵⁰ Mother probably means "turn out to be true".

⁵¹ The only maps available at that time were showing the location of field boundaries (and hence the location of the existing government owned canyons and roads and dirt tracks) and of the existing Tamil villages.

Mother points at the crossroad of two dirt-pathways on poromboke lands. We won't know whether Mother, who was always very practical, pointed purposely at a crossroad or if the present land holdings were not a consideration when she performed this task.

As the centre of the future town thus became much closer than earlier expected to the villages of Kottakarai and Edayanchavadi, in order not to plan the new town on existing villages and to retain its circular shape, Roger will feels the need to reduce the town's diameter from 3km to 2.5km – thus increasing the average density of its population by 43% (from 71 to 102 inhab./ha)

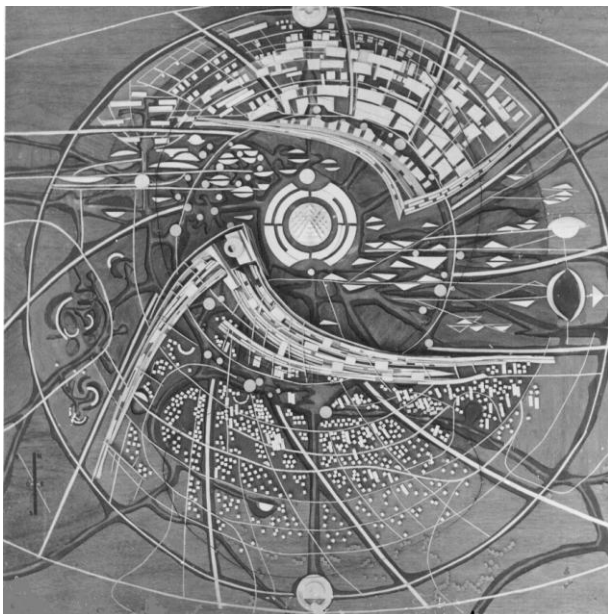
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Auroville's land holdings on 21.1.1967

* * *

Late August or September: *Roger visits for the second time that year and presents to Mother a third model of the future town, that of the 'Macrostructure'. He gives also an interview on this new concept/model to the Auroville magazine "= 1"*



"Macrostructure" model



Central Area of this Model

*In an interview with the Auroville magazine “= 1”, published early 1968, Roger explains: Thirty years later, in a 1996 interview with Aryamani and Luigi, Roger will explain:*⁵²

“I brought to Her another project which was interesting – which started to be a little more dynamic; which was spinning a little.’

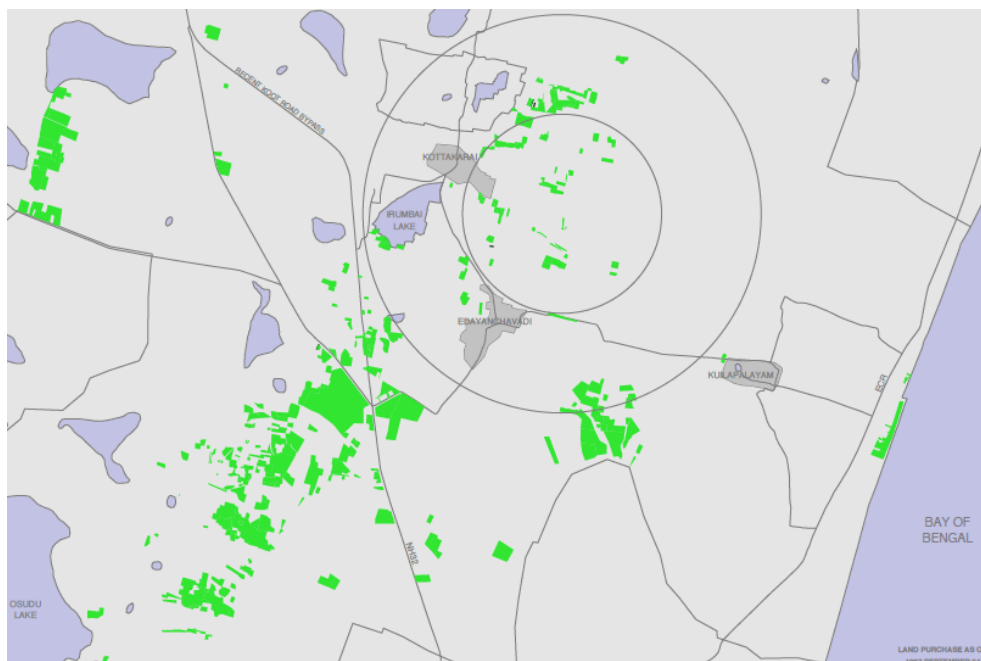
Like a Yin and Yang [symbol] with two energies.

It was blocking [the view of Matrimandir] without blocking it; but it was enclosing the Matrimandir in a kind of valley with buildings which locked it up a bit. It was interesting but it was a mega-structure. It was extremely theoretical but what was interesting is that it triggered the Galaxy. So, I showed it to Mother. I must say that I felt it was not up to the mark when I showed it to her. She did not say anything... She said it was interesting but I could feel that it had not reached its potential. I also felt it had included something more but that it wasn't it as yet.”

We are approaching the ring and the canal of the Great Curve where thousands of waterfowl play freely, and we go over one of the town's few bridges. As in a fairy-tale, we start climbing intriguing staircases rising and turning so softly and capriciously against the sharp edges of great terraces that one may promenade for hours, contemplating all the faces of the town. Strolling along covered passages we discover handicraft makers and artists holding continual exhibitions; we play hide-and-seek with light and shadows, with activity and tranquility, stopping at last at the edge of a sculptured open space. At the foot of this regal balcony, on the inner side of the ring, stretches the Garden of Unity, encircling a shining lake whose running waters supply Auroville's canals, waterfalls, fountains and paddy-fields.

From this lake rises a symbol of all manifestation, the intersection of all intersections, an unattainable white and golden island, burning like a high flame. This is the centre of Auroville, not a geometrical centre, but the core around which the ring gravitates in two waves, two helicoid movements trying to catch each other like Yin and Yang, like two facing complementary galaxies, a symbol of Auroville's deepest dynamism.

* * *



Auroville's land holdings on 4.9.1967

* * *

⁵² In all likelihood, Roger and his team had already started to work on the following model – that of the “Galaxy” – but, 30 years later he didn't remember it.

1967, September 7th: *Excerpt from a conversation Mother has with Huta:*

We are planning for 1968. We haven't yet decided who will lay the foundation stone, but it will be interesting to find who it will be. I am now waiting for an order.

* * *

1967, September 11th: *Excerpt from a conversation Mother has with Huta:*

Ah! Now I am telling you how it will be. We want young people – teenagers – young in body and in mind.

Here we have 600 children. They will invite the children of the world. They will come with the soil of their countries. This soil will be collected in an urn of a special kind, and the urn will be sealed up.

The Truth Pavilion and your tiny house will be very close to each other – your house will stand between the Banyan tree and the Truth Pavilion. All these will be on an island – surrounded by water, trees and the Gardens of Unity.

It will take five years if we have sufficient money. Yes... otherwise.... But I want the whole town to be built within ten years' time...⁵³

* * *

1967, November 15th: *Excerpt from a letter from Mother to Huta:*

"... the Mother's Shrine will be an empty place, empty of all material things, meant only for meditation, concentration and prayer... and I hope, filled with light, spiritual force and the presence of the Truth."

* * *

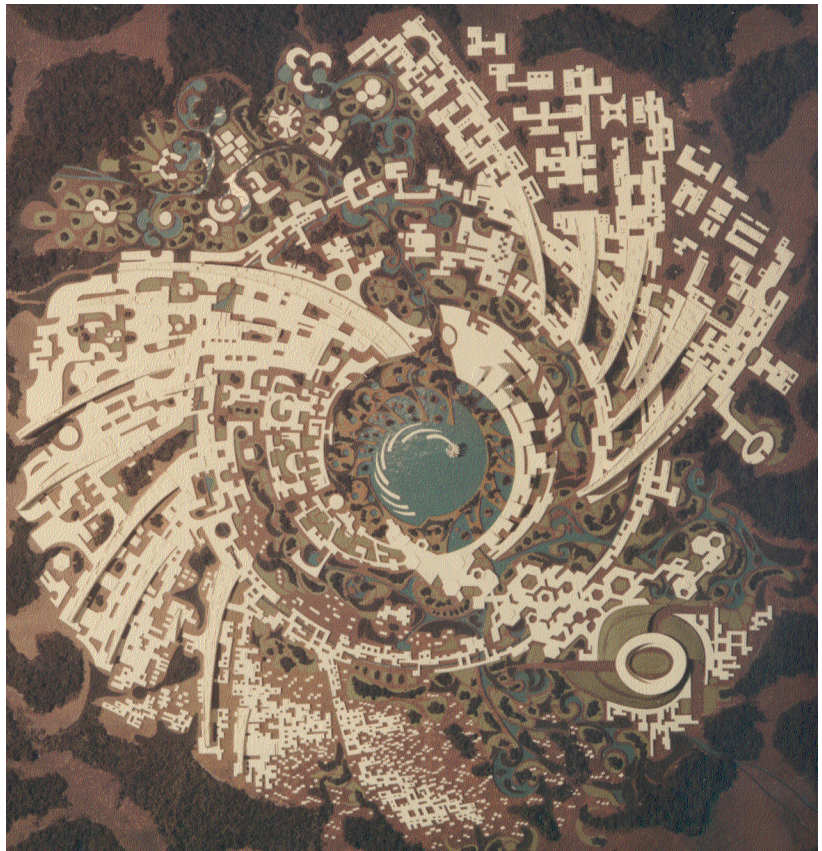
1968, January 21st:

Roger lands in Madras to lead the preparations works for the Inauguration Ceremony.

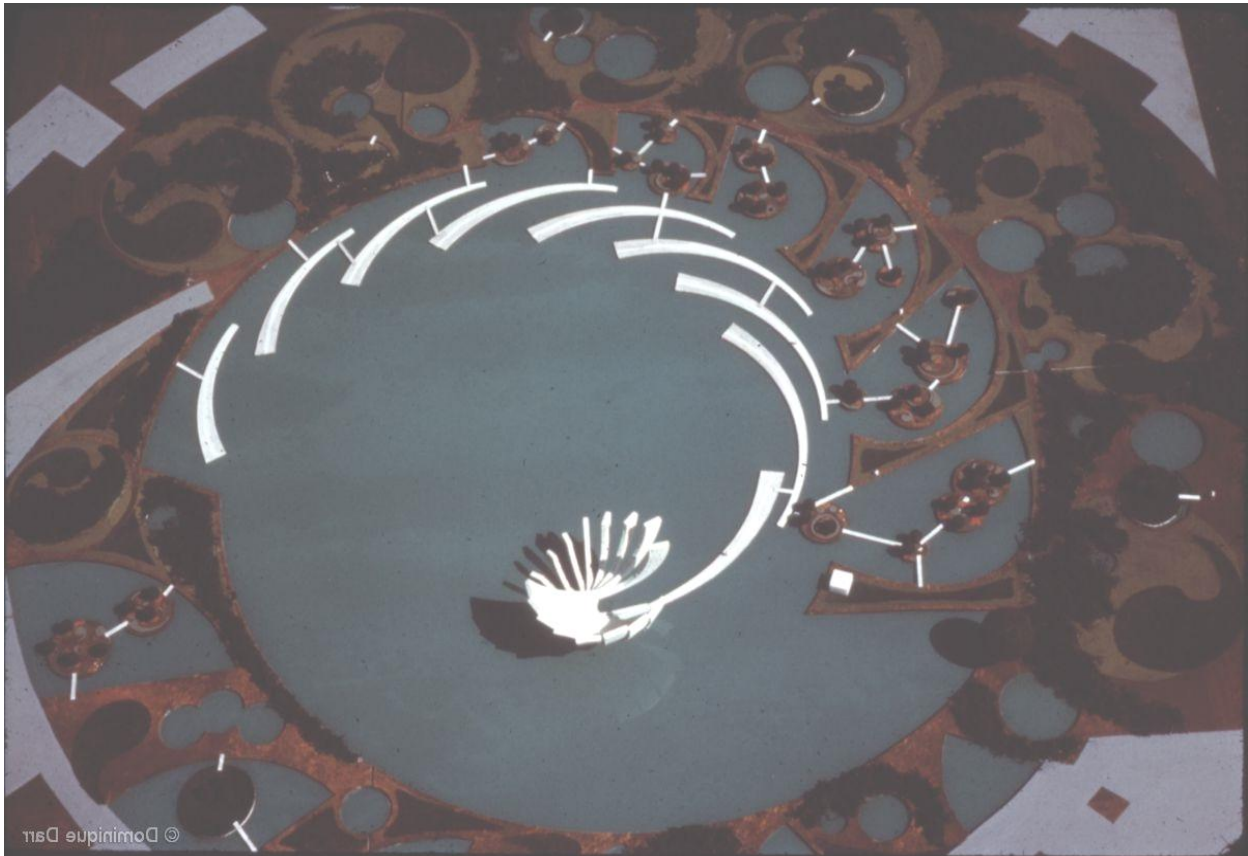
He brings with him this model of his latest concept for the town (known as the "Galaxy") and a model of its central area (below). He had worked in France on this latest model mainly with Charles Gianferrari.

It is probably the following day that he will present to Mother the plans and models he brought and obtain her approval.

Original 'Galaxy' model



⁵³ From early 1965 until at least the beginning of 1970, Roger and others felt that securing the funds and land for such an ambitious project wouldn't be problems. They felt that with Mother at the helm everything was possible.



View of the original Model of the centre area of the “Galaxy” concept

The Matrimandir is represented here by a sculpture emerging from a large lake. It is accessed by a series of bridges. The 12 gardens are located all around this lake, along its outer shore.

This central area is described as follows in a brochure published in 1970 by Michel Caza in French:

Urban centre

At the centre is located the town’s spiritual and symbolical meeting point, the “Matrimandir”, a large water body and gardens surrounded by a row of buildings in which will be gathered all the functions of urban management, administration, public services, spreading over 150 acres.

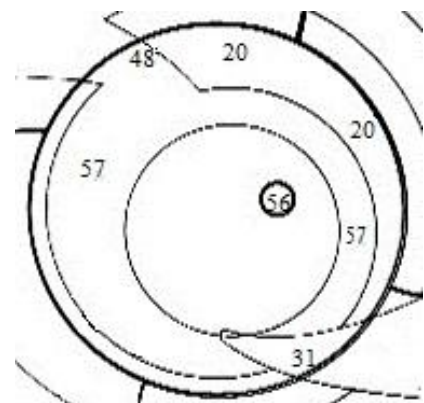
20: Administrative offices

31: Faculties

48: Convention Centre⁵⁴

56: Temple of worship⁵⁵

57: Meditative gardens⁵⁶



It is likely to be at that time that Mother tells Roger that the Banyan Tree and Huta’s house should also be on the island, together with the Matrimandir.⁵⁷

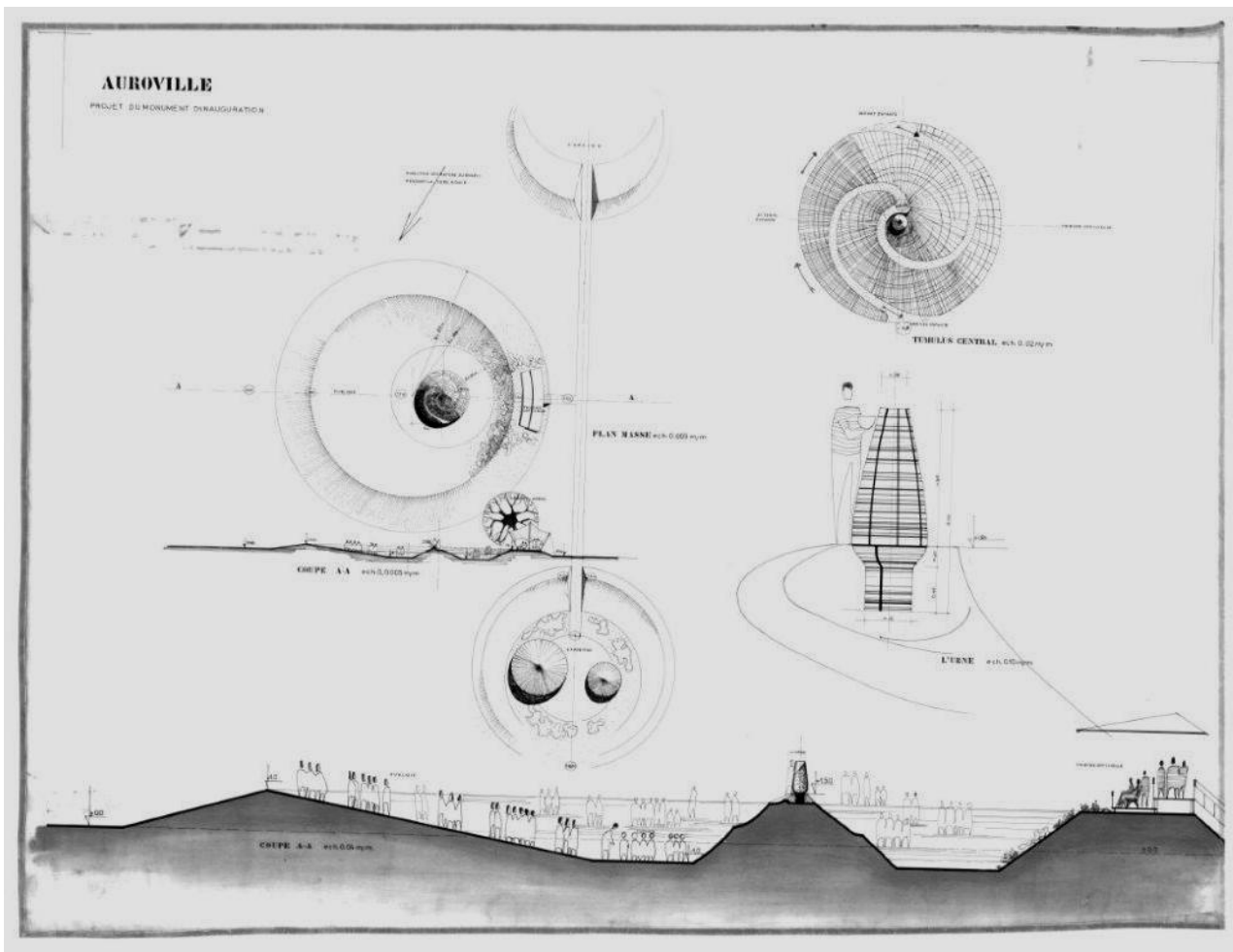
Roger brings also with him the undated drawing below which was drafted in his Paris office and depicts the original Amphitheatre and its Urn:

⁵⁴ Decades later, Roger will design this Convention Centre and name it: “Centre of International Research in Human Unity” (CIRHU).

⁵⁵ Temple de l’adoration

⁵⁶ Jardin de la méditation

⁵⁷ She explained it to Satprem on 31st December 1969 but She is likely to have said it to Roger much earlier.



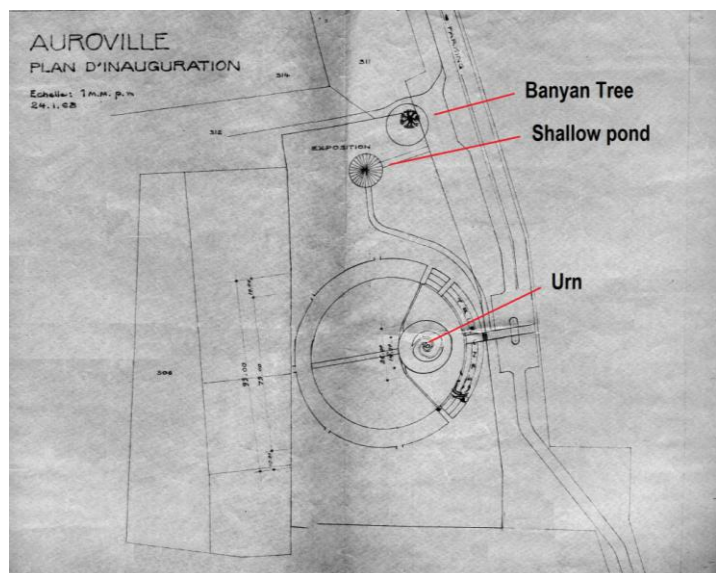
Drawing of the original Amphitheatre and its Urn

The urn was designed by artist Charles Gianferrari⁵⁸ and is typical of his style.

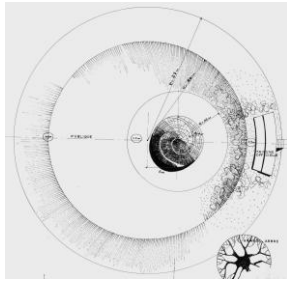
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1968, January 24th: Three days after landing in Madras, Roger finalises his plans for the Inauguration Ceremony and produces this drawing (or gets somebody to draw it for him). It has 3 features:

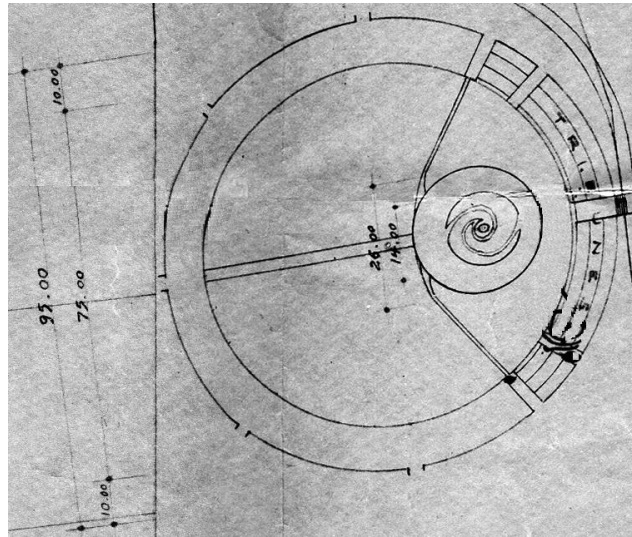
- An Amphitheatre (with its Urn), which Roger has just modified, taking into account both the land owned by Auroville and the estimated number of participants.
- An exhibition space below the Banyan Tree, which Paolo will design.
- A shallow pond at the bottom of which a galactic shape will be designed by Roger.



⁵⁸ Page 182 of her book on Roger Anger Anupama Kundoo wrote "Anger was keen that a tribute be paid to Gianferrari through this book for his overall contribution and especially to the Auroville projects, which is not sufficiently known or acknowledged. His most important work there include the design of the urn at the Amphitheatre." Like Roger, Charles Gianferrari had studied at Paris' Ecole des Beaux Arts. While Roger studied architecture there, he studied "Applied Arts". His website says he is a "sculptor and ceramist".



Original drawing of the Amphitheatre



Modified drawing of the Amphitheatre

These two drawings are presented here at the same scale

The drawing on the left shows that the Amphitheatre's inner and outer radius are respectively 20 and 27 m; while the drawing on the right shows them as being 37.5 and 47.5m respectively. Why 3½ time the original area?⁵⁹ Most probably because Roger has just been told that many more people are now expected than when the original drawing was produced.

It seems quite obvious that Roger showed to Mother the modified drawing (dated 14th January) to obtain Her blessings. Being under such a heavy time-pressure, did he also remember presenting to Her the original drawing which (unlike the modified one) shows the Urn's shape and dimensions?

* * *

1968, January 31st: Nata is asked to supervise all these works and to start the following day. Years later, he will remember:

I was told on 31st January that the ceremony for the foundation of Auroville would be held on the 28th of February and that the work should be over 2 days earlier. I immediately went to the Mother, carrying in my hand a kind of sketch⁶⁰ which was the only documentation provided, and I told Her that the next morning I would be on the site to begin the work, but that I could not guarantee that the work would be completed by the date already fixed. She looked into my eyes and said, "Begin the work, and do not worry about anything else."

* * *

Undated: Mother writes a message "to be placed around the Banyan tree" and draws a sketch of the Urn⁶¹:

*Pour mettre autour de
l'arbre
Auroville la Cité au
service de la Vérité.*

Auroville, the City at the service of Truth



Pink or white marble

* * *

⁵⁹ Inner areas of the original plan ($= \pi \times 20^2 = 1,256 \text{ m}^2$) and of revised plan ($= \pi \times 37.5^2 = 4,417 \text{ m}^2$). A 352% increase.

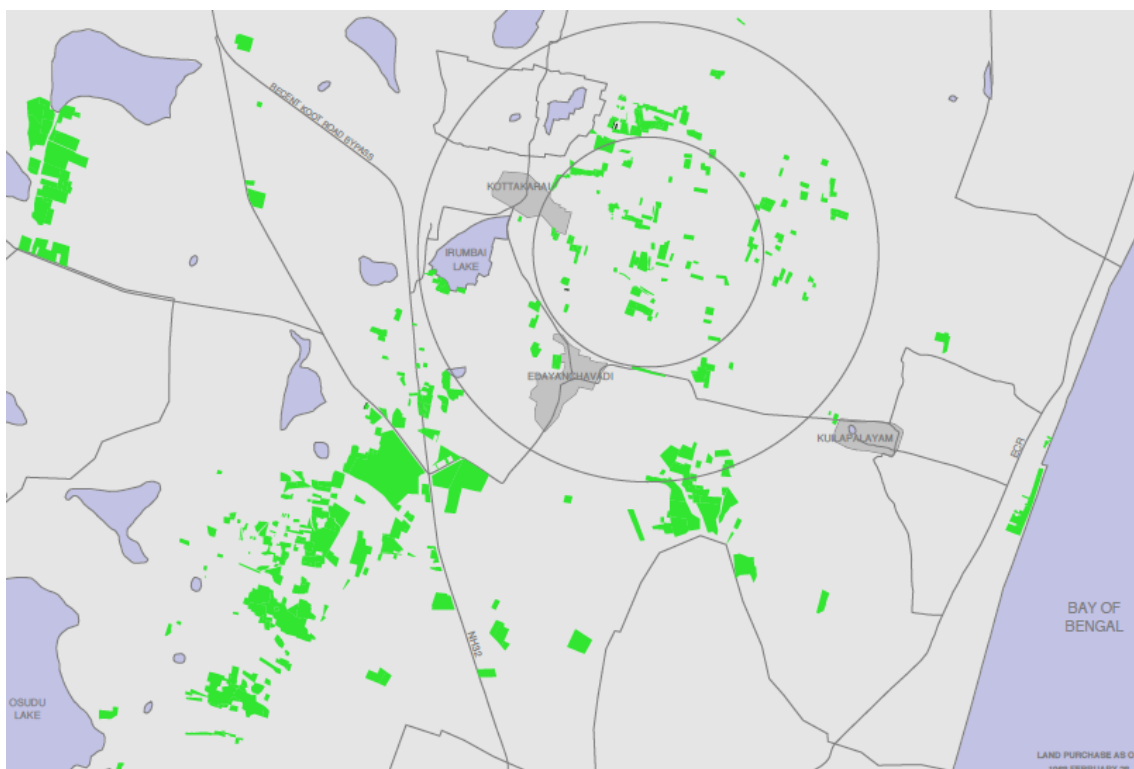
⁶⁰ This sketch was most probably that on the previous page, dated 24th January 1968.

⁶¹ Note that the height of the Urn with its base drawn by Mother is 1,65m while that on Gianferrari's drawing is 2m.

1968, February 4th: Paolo Tommasi finalises his plans for the exhibition under the Banyan Tree. Mother signs them with Blessings and Nata starts executing them:



* * *



Auroville's land holdings on 28.2.1968

* * *

1968, February 7th: *Excerpt from a conversation with Satprem, during which Mother writes the Charter of Auroville:*

1. Auroville belongs to nobody in particular. Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole...

There, that's the material fact. Auroville belongs... I didn't put "to no country"⁶² because India would be furious. I put "belongs to nobody" – "nobody" is a vague term which I put precisely so as not to put "to no human being", or "to no country". And I put "Auroville belongs to humanity AS A WHOLE", because it is the equivalent of nothing! Because we cannot come to an agreement all together, it's impossible! I did it on purpose.

And then, I don't speak of "citizens" or anything like that. I say:

...But to live in Auroville, one must be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.

They are all going to wince at "Divine", but I don't care! You know, it's the explanation of the Matrimandir at the centre. The Matrimandir represents the Divine Consciousness⁶³. All that is not said, but that is the way it is.

* * *

1968, February 16th: *Excerpt from a conversation Mother has with Huta who had told her that according to a rumour, instead of Matrimandir there would be a small lotus and nothing else:*⁶⁴

Yes, nasty people speak against the Truth...

[Mother goes into a trance and then continues:]

⁶² Fourteen years earlier, Mother had written in "A Dream": "There should be somewhere on earth a place which no nation could claim as its own..."

⁶³ Underlining is by the editor to point to this very important fact.

⁶⁴ This rumour must have been created by the central area of the "Galaxy" model as, on it, Matrimandir looks like a large sculpture (symbolising an open lotus?) – and not like a proper house for the Mother or a Meditation Hall.

Your tiny house will be between the Mother's Shrine and the banyan tree. There will be twelve gardens with various kinds of Hibiscus and other flowers, plants, tall trees with marble seats underneath. Marble statues, marble fountains, small waterfalls, small pools with different coloured lilies and lotuses, small bridges, rockeries in Japanese style with varieties of cactus.

There will be only one entrance. The pavement will be decorated with precious and semi-precious stones. This area will be surrounded by a huge lake. On one side of it, there will be tall trees – they mean Unity. On the other side of the lake, there will be hillocks with fir trees. The Mother's Shrine will be on an island.⁶⁵

* * *

1968, mid February: *Vincenzo is asked to clad the structure of the Urn with white marble chips (a very time-consuming work) at the Ashram's "Coco Garden". In his "Auroville – the first six years", Savitri will write the following about its making:*

In mid-February of 1968, Vincenzo, a young Sicilian living at "Promesse" was asked to do the marble mosaic⁶⁶ for a lotus-shaped urn to be used in Auroville's foundation ceremony on the 28th. Though he had never done marble-work before, (perhaps it was assumed that because he spoke Italian?), he accepted the challenge.

During the next two weeks, he had cut 13,000 pieces, fitting the puzzle together the evening before the 28th.⁶⁷

The following day, children from 124 nations and the states of India ascended a narrow spiral at the centre of the unborn city and placed handfuls of earth from their motherlands into the urn, while Vincenzo, exhausted by his labour, slept.⁶⁸



The Urn in-the-making

Note that the structure of the Urn designed by Mother was far more complex to cast and then to clad with marble chips than that clad by Vincenzo – and that, if there was just enough time to cast and clad this urn, there wouldn't have been enough time to cast and clad that designed by Mother.

* * *

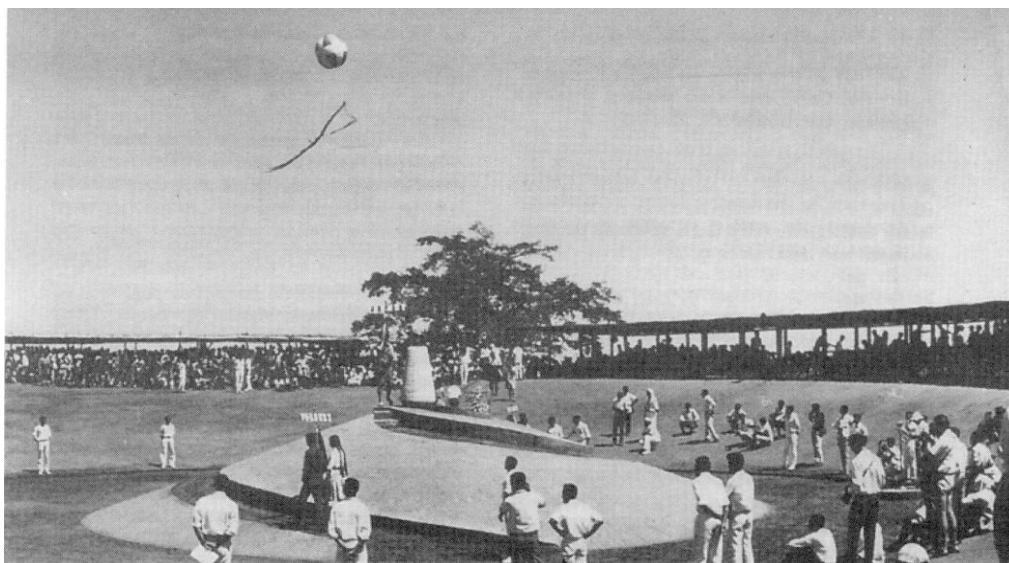
⁶⁵ For some reason, Huta included only the first sentence of this conversation in her "Matrimandir – The Mother Truth and Love", which she published in 1974. She published the remaining part of the conversation in 2002 in her "The Spirit of Auroville". There she published also the third part of this conversation in which Mother described the city. The very strange thing about the second and third parts of this conversation is that it is a repetition – almost word for word of the conversation Mother had with Huta on 25.6.65 – that is, 2½ years earlier. If true, it would be very uncommon on Mother's part as she was always on the move.

⁶⁶ The structure of the Urn was produced at the Ashram's 'Precast Concrete Works', "Coco Garden", which was under Udar's supervision. It seems that it was then transported to "Promesse" for Vincenzo to cover it there fully with small white marble chips. (Vincenzo was living there.)

⁶⁷ No, it is most probably sometime between late on the 26th and early on the 27th that the Urn was installed in place. Why? 1) Photos show it on site in a Jeep's trailer during daytime. 2) Several photos show the Urn in place but still propped during day time with the paving of the mount on which it stands not yet completed. 3) The concrete which holds it in place needed time to set prior to the Ceremony.

⁶⁸ As other photos show Vincenzo, together with Roger and Pierre Braslawski at the ceremony, he may have arrived late at the Ceremony but he was there at least at its end.

1968, February 28th: *Auroville's Inauguration Ceremony takes place in front of 5,000 people:*



Among the exhibits under the Banyan Tree, a poster states the (French) names Mother has given to the twelve Gardens that will surround Matrimandir:⁶⁹

Matrimandir: Love

Existence, Consciousness, Bliss, Light, Life, Power,
Wealth, Usefulness, Progress, Youth, Harmony, Perfection.⁷⁰

Banyan Tree: Unity.

* * *

1968, March or early April: *Excerpt from a typed letter from Huta to Satprem, dated 22nd March 1975:*

AV Archives
English

As regard to the Urn, Shyam Sunder and I were called on the 12th April 1974 at 3:30 pm by Françoise (Pournapréma) to her house. She showed us the Mother's original sketch with her writings, which were given to Roger, because I saw his name of the envelope. Pournapréma told us: "When I showed the photograph of the Urn to the Mother, she was shocked and told me:

"Oh! This is not my vision, this is not what I wanted..."

"And the Mother flung the photograph of the Urn. She was sad and angry. When I asked her whether I could speak to Roger about it, she answered that I must not speak to Roger or anybody. Further the Mother said that let Roger do whatever he likes. Then I promised the Mother that I will not keep quiet – one day I will reveal the truth and get the Lotus made. Then she was happy and held my hands and spoke in French a few words of joy and of satisfaction regarding the matter..."

Further Pournapréma told us:

"The meaning of this Urn is connected with sex, and it is already published in one of the papers in France..."

⁶⁹ This is according to the memory of Richard (Ashram) whose love for flowers is very well-known. Yet, among all the photos taken of the exhibition under the Banyan, none shows this poster.

The names given to these twelve gardens and their respective positions have never been disputed but there is no other record of when Mother gave them, to whom and in which circumstances.

⁷⁰ *Matrimandir: Amour*

Existence, Conscience, Félicité, Lumière, Vie, Pouvoir, Richesse, Utilité, Progrès, Harmonie, Jeunesse, Perfection. Banian : Unité.

Pournapréma also showed us the big card depicting the Golden Temple in Kyoto, which the Mother gave to Roger on his birthday in 1966. And wrote on a card in French about the future of the Matrimandir. I could recall only these words:

“The Matrimandir is the first step towards the New World ...”...

[After Mother’s passing, in 1974, Huta will create a major controversy by launching a vehement campaign to try and change the Urn’s shape. Despite her efforts, and those of her associates, this campaign will fail when Navajata supported Roger who absolutely refused to modify the Urn.]⁷¹

* * *

1968, April 13th: Roger obtains Mother’s approval for starting Auromodel.

* * *

1968, April 23rd: In a conversation with Satprem, Mother shows him a brochure on Auroville, in which the first photo is this one of the Urn. Mother comments it to Satprem:

It’s very good. It has something... I don’t know.

[Mother pushes her fist down into the Earth.]

It’s like a Law of Destiny: something which imposes itself⁷².

**Photo of the Urn shown
by Mother to Satprem**



* * *

1968, April 27th: Excerpt from a letter from Dayanand to Mother and her answer:

Scan of Dayanand’s handwritten letter and Mother’s handwritten answer available @ Av Archives.
English

I have planted 12 Transformation trees near the centre – an outer circle of 7 trees and an inner circle of 4 trees. The seedlings were planted on 24.4.68 between 3:15 and 4:15 pm. They are the first tree seedlings to be planted in Auroville by us. I pray that all the trees live and be symbolic of the transformation that is to take place in Auroville.

I have spoken to Nava.

Blessings

*

Twenty-one years later, in an interview with Auroville Today, Frederick and others remembered:

Fred in the interview “Looking Forward, Looking Back”. Auroville Today, February 1989
English

Fred: I think it must have been her birthday, the 21st February. She gave a message to Bob⁷³ saying:

“There is nothing living at the Centre, there is nothing to receive my Force and I want you to plant some trees.” So we went to plant twenty-one “transformation” trees. And in one of those mad planning sessions – there was already a dichotomy between planners from Pondy and

⁷¹ If Mother had wanted the Urn to be modified, why didn’t she request Roger to modify it? She had 5 years (between March 1968 and May 1973) to ask him. This editor is convinced that, in this case, Roger would have modified it.

⁷² This conversation proves that Mother liked the urn made by Vincenzo as per Roger’s instructions. Moreover, page 207 of *The Spirit of Auroville*, Huta wrote: “Roger told Paolo that he showed the photograph of the Urn to Mother and She was very pleased with it and approved fully.”

⁷³ Was Fred mistaken? Was it 1968 or in 1969? Was it Dayanand (and not Bob Lawlor) who planted 12 trees (and not 21) on another Darshan day?

residents – it was decided that those 21 Transformation trees were planted in the wrong site which didn't correspond to Roger Anger's plan.⁷⁴

Interviewer: This was 1969?

Fred: It must have been 1969, yes. It was her birthday, and they were all cut down again because they didn't correspond to the original plan.

Jan: Isn't there even one left?

Fred: Not at that site. They must have planted some other trees. It was right by the Camp.

Interviewer: They cut down the Transformation trees! It must have put us back about 15 years, at least! Or 21 maybe! How many did they cut down? 21?

Fred: They were meant to be 21. They all took actually. Then later on many more trees were planted. And now it's full of trees. So it's all right.

It was like the conceptual mind saying, "We want to have an empty space where the City descends on top of it; don't disturb it, don't mess it up, don't start living on it if you can avoid it, and leave it *tabula rasa*..." And the others saying, "Auroville is living something else; work it out there on the land" – this dichotomy has never been solved. Most of the organisers and planners never came out. They stayed in Pondy.

* * *

1968, October: *Except from a letter from Bob and/or Deborah (who had moved to Forecomers on 13th July) to friends:*

But the events and work here are much less interesting than the work at the "Center". Arindam made a move to Auroville. He lives in a bamboo hut at the Center, actually the next person after our group to get to the land. It has been very important step for him to attach his energies, his fantasies, his Karma to the realities of earth, of work, or everyday finite transactions. We have grouped together in an attempt to dislodge Auroville from the tamasic grip of Navajata and company. We've raided storerooms, confiscated materials, built and moved around and without and against the dictates of Navajata. The play is now the Gita, it is a battlefield. The symbolic questions of power and possession. Each of us is in a way a representation, and we are all being stirred into situations which might possibly bring another light to bare on these established forms. Navajata has come to represent power without representation, financially oriented movement. We've gone through a sequence of cops and robbers, good guys and bad guys, cowboys and Indians. East against West, vital against tamasic, possession against action. It's been marvelously melodramatic and a little exhausting. The best results have been that 5 of us with the support of a few others have plowed 130 acres of Auroville land and put it under green manure. Frederick obtained the tractor from Louis Allen and completely with his own finances paid for the productive anarchy. Gary, myself, Frederick and Arindam⁷⁵ plowed non-stop 12 hours days ourselves to complete the work, working in 3 or 4 hours shifts. It required about 10-12 days. At the same time Frederick took over the storeroom at the Center, emptied them and made living quarters for people and a kitchen which feeds 110 Tamil workers free lunch 6 days a week. A gesture which has indeed brought a closer feeling between the Tamil labor and the Invaders of Aurobindo, and shocked a bit the class-oriented Indians. All this is to answer how Mother's new rhythm (the withdrawal of her immediate written sanctions) has effected. It is an open play now and truly every man with Mother and Sri Aurobindo as a focus must now do what he feels is right. And the psychological factualities of collective yoga are fully in effect. And our own actions, responses, reactions modify, alter, redirect, distinguish and destroy the action of all those we contact in this intense constant pool of exchange. Arindam, by the way, responsibly and accurately organized the plowing project and worked himself on it very hard.

* * *

⁷⁴ In February 1969, the "original plan" was the original Galaxy: Matrimandir standing on a small island in the middle of a huge lake, with the twelve gardens around the lake – outside it.

⁷⁵ Who was the 5th person? William Netter? He is seen on some photos together with Fred (who sits on a tractor).

1968, late: Excerpt from Savitri's account of how the first AV settlements at the Centre got started:

Peace (Centre)

Through late 1968 and early '69, a young Canadian girl [Janet] and several Americans [Arindam, Gene and others] settled at various places surrounding the Centre. They remained for longer or shorter periods, during which some trees were planted, but the Centre's focus [Matrimandir] had not yet arrived.

* * *

1968, December: Bob Lawlor (who, together with Deborah had settled at Forecomers on 13th July, writes to Mother asking for permission to paint the Amphitheatre's mount (which he calls the "cone") on top of which the Urn stands. He is said to have had a vision of how he wanted to paint it and to have obtained her permission.

* * *

1968, December 29th: Letter from Arindam to Mother and her answer:

My house is finished,⁷⁶
should I have a name for this
house?

Arindam

my house is
finished, should
I have a name
for this house?

Arindam

"Arindam"
T.O. ✓

"Arindam",

I should like this whole place⁷⁷ to be called "PEACE"
and that peace, actual peace, should reign there, not only
between the occupants but with the whole of Auroville,
present & future.

29.12.68.
I should like the whole
place to be called
"Peace"
and that peace,
actual peace, should
reign there, not only
between the occupants
but with the whole
of Auroville, present &
future. ✓

* * *

1968, December 30th: Excerpt from a letter from Bob to Mother, in which he reports on the progress he, Shyama and many others have made at painting the Urn's supporting conical mount:

Excerpt from a collection of letters written by Bob & Deborah.
English

The base of the cone has already been completely coated with an off-white cement primer – one third of the cone has been covered with a bright blue undercoat and one fourth of the cone has been finished in blue mastic painting and 600 rupees worth of paint is already in use. I've been working steadily for 6 days with many other Aurovilians and the project has created a warm wonderful cooperative work experience. The results so far are I feel very good and so many have expressed that they feel it is very beautiful. It is like a circle of fallen sky in the brown earth bowl.

Because the work has moved so fast and so well and because it has provided a communion of work for many people I feel that it is an expression of your Force.

I wonder if spontaneous intuitions which occur to those who are here on the land can also contribute to the design of Auroville as well as drawing board conceptions? And more specifically, since the original bare-brick surface cannot now be re-obtained, would it be possible that of the

⁷⁶ Arindam's house (actually, a keet hut) was in a place now called "Nursery Pumphouse", which lies west of the "Matrimandir Nursery" – that is, outside the future "Crown road".

⁷⁷ By "this whole place", Mother meant the entire "Centre area" (Auroville's 3rd area of settlement), where Janet, Arindam, Gene and several other north Americans had started to settle – which explains why Mother speaks of "occupants". Mother did not mention the exact extent of the "Peace" area, but people living at the centre (MM Worker's Camp, MM Nursery, Centre Field and Nursery Pump House would say/write that they lived at "Peace". It should also be noted that Mother will speak again of the "Peace" area only once during the following week, and that there is no record of her using this name again after that – be it to speak of the city proper, or of its central area.

*mosaic painting were more finished and more beautiful that it may even please Roger? I don't know.
What do you think?
Your impetuous yet obedient child
Robert*

* * *

1968, December 30th. *Excerpt from Mother's answer to Bob's letter.*

Excerpt from a collection of letters written by Bob & Deborah.
English

As Roger is coming soon, it seems wiser to postpone the painting on the bricks at the base of the urn, because he had chosen himself the colour of the basement. (I did not know this detail when I answered your letter.)

Blessings

* * *

1969, January 1st: *Text drafted by Arindam and read by Udar to Mother who approved it on 7th:*

On the 1st January 1969 at 2 a.m. in the morning a Consciousness descended into the earth consciousness and materialised there. It was a most marvellous descent, full of consciousness, force, power, light, joy and peace and it suffused the whole earth's atmosphere.

This descending Consciousness was afterwards identified by the Mother as being the intermediate level between the present mental consciousness and the Supramental Consciousness. This descending Consciousness is that of the Superman which is still that of man but with a very enlarged range and power but not transformed into the Gnostic being. This consciousness of the Superman has not only descended into the earth's consciousness but has established there and is fully operative.

Editor's comment on this event:

This new descent seems to have made Mother feel that the earth was becoming ready for a more ideal Auroville than it was earlier, for that year She reversed two of Her earlier policies:

- Though in December 1965, in answer to a questionnaire, she had written that "money will circulate in Auroville as long as human habits will be such", Mother will now repeatedly say that "the Aurovilians won't have money"⁷⁸; "money won't circulate within Auroville".*
- Though until then, Mother had seemed open to the possibility of some private ownership of houses, businesses and possibly farms, this year she will close this option and clarify that all profits from Auroville business units should belong to Auroville.*

* * *

1969, January 9th: *Mother gives the following message to Arindam for the people living in the area previously known as "the Centre" – which she had named "Peace" on 29.12.68:*

"Peace".

The foremost thing must be Peace. Whatever you do must be by peaceful means.

The second thing necessary is Harmony, not only general harmony but also between the individuals living there⁷⁹.

You must begin to look for the harmony in each individual and not dwell on the disharmony. The disharmony exists everywhere but you must reject that and allow only the harmony to enter. There must be a sense of Order.

⁷⁸ This seems to mean that the Aurovilians shouldn't be able to use their personal money to maintain themselves within Auroville – that they should all be maintained by Auroville. Those who have some personal money being invited to offer it to Auroville.

⁷⁹ Note again that the Mother speaks of an area where people are living. It is not limited to Matrimandir Gardens.

Each individual must have a sense of self-discipline, and actually practice it.
PEACE, HARMONY, ORDER, SELF-DISCIPLINE.

* * *

1969: *Question from Janet and Mother's answer to it:*

Q.: It seems that there is more to the Divine's work at Peace⁸⁰ than other places in Auroville. Is this true? Is there an occult reason for this?

Be confident and peaceful yourself.

That is contagious.

My blessings are with you.

* * *

1969, January mid: *Roger is back. As he doesn't agree to Bob continuing to paint the mount which supports the Urn, the latter doesn't resume his work.*



*The Amphi-theatre with its cone and urn – and the Banyan in 1969.
The white coat applied by Bob and his associates is fading away...*

* * *

1969 February 12th: *Excerpt from a report on Organisation, Town-planning issued by "Roger's office":*

TEMPORARY STRUCTURES (PEACE)

The first people living in the area of future Auroville will have the role of guardians, and must strive to maintain friendly relations with the local population. Their function is an essentially experimental one at the individual level.

This experiment should neither be encouraged nor repeated, because of the risk of creating an area of spontaneous and uncontrolled habitation. These individual experiments cannot be authorised if they come into conflict with the wider interests of Auroville.

For now it is necessary to complete the Amphi-theatre, and to see what help is necessary to allow normal life.

⁸⁰ The 3 quotes on this page, and the 1st quote on the next page, confirm that the "Peace Area" was not at all restricted to the future Matrimandir Gardens. At that time, there was no work at all in the vicinity of Matrimandir; but several small communities had started within the perimeter of the future city. Let us also note that it will take one more year for Mother to take the decision to build Matrimandir.

Nevertheless, the establishment of two similar types of site could be authorised in the future: one in the industrial zone and one in the cultural zone. Once wells have been bored on the sites selected after due consideration, people could settle in these places.

On 13th, Mother writes the following comment on this report:

I am in full agreement and my blessings accompany the realisation.

* * *

1969, February 14th: *Mother informs Huta:*

At the end of March, when Roger will come, the final plan will be made.⁸¹

At the moment the plan of Auromodel is being made.

* * *

1969, October 2nd: *A first 'caravan' of 2 cars and 2 vans arrives from Paris with its 15 members. They settle in "Aspiration".*

* * *

1969, October 17th: *Excerpt from a letter from Huta to Mother and the Her answer:*

Nava told Laljibhai that the Mother had instructed Roger already to make 12 gardens in the central part of Auroville. And Nava asked Rs. 50,000/- from Laljibhai for the purpose. But Laljibhai has refused owing to so many reasons.

All this I came to know from Laljibhai who sometimes tells me about Auroville. He says that he has an intense aspiration to build the Mother's Shrine and the area around it from the money which will come from the industries. He also says that the money people offer for the purpose might be with various adverse vibrations and desires. So the money for the Mother's Shrine possibly can come from one source and that also with a pure intention, or from sincere offering from anyone.

He says that the Mother's Shrine must be built exactly according to the Mother's will and guidance. [...]

Mother, I am sure you will fulfil the aspiration of true and sincere people.

On my side, I pray to you that your Will may be one for everything in all Truth and Love...

Very good. I appreciate Laljibhai's attitude and his intention.

You can be sure that the Matrimandir will be done according to the Divine's inspiration.

With love and blessings.

* * *

1969, autumn: *Mother calls (through one of her secretaries, Udar) Richard and Anie Eggenberger from the U.S.*

* * *

1969, December 18th: *Mother receives Richard and Anie⁸² and asks them to start a "Garden of Unity" around the Banyan Tree.⁸³*

Excerpt from a circular letter, dated 3.4.70, written to friends by Anie:

AV Archives
English

To give some background on how we became connected with the Auroville gardens, and when and how the Mother gave this vast work I shall go back to 1968 just after the inauguration of Auroville. Richard and I were receiving Darshan of the Mother shortly before his return to America. Mother

⁸¹ According to Roger's notes, in 1969, he was in Pondicherry until February 19th and expected to be back on 23rd if sufficient land had been bought. His last notes during this period end on February 13th and resume on April 25th.

⁸² Mother receives them on that day because it is Anie's birthday. Mother would later name Richard "Narad".

⁸³ Note that, as per the original model of the "Galaxy", the twelve gardens of the "Park of Unity" surround the Lake. Hence before starting them, the Lake must be dug and sealed. This explains why Mother spoke of starting a much smaller "Garden of Unity" (depicting also the same Attributes) around the Banyan Tree.

locked very deeply into him and said, "Don't you want to come for Auroville, I think you can do something there?"? Of course Richard's answer was yes.

After his return to America there was a period of intense inner work and much correspondence with Mother, the result of which revealed to him his work; that of designing Mother's gardens for the City of Auroville. Mother told him to prepare for this work by gaining knowledge and experience, but not to approach the work from a mental standpoint, rather, to allow the Force to work through him. He ultimately gained much experience in the California area; studying horticulture, plant combination theory and design at UCLA and by designing and executing the gardens of some of the finest homes in the Southern California area.

Since returning to the Ashram in December of 1969, he again received Darshan of the Mother on my Birthday, December 18. At that time She spoke to us at length about the gardens and the way in which She has envisaged them. (Before Richard's return to the Ashram the Mother had told me that I should work with him in collaboration on this project.) When She spoke to us She said that She wanted the first design to begin around the banyan tree which is to be the Garden of Unity. She said "I have chosen all the flowers". (Each garden is represented by a different Hibiscus flower bearing the inner significance as named by the Mother, and according to the particular garden.) Mother said, "It must be a thing of great beauty, of such beauty that when people come they will say "Ah, this is it." It must be an expression of that consciousness which we are trying to bring down." Mother said, "One must know how to move from consciousness to consciousness". In other words the garden of power must really express power, the garden of love, love, and so forth. The vibration and essence of each garden must be felt....

* * *

1969, December 29th: *Roger is back – from France.*⁸⁴

* * *

1969, December 30th: *Paolo and Nata visit Satprem and convince him of the necessity of starting building the Matrimandir at the earliest in order to focus everybody's energies on a common goal.*

* * *

1969, December 31st: *In turn, Satprem tries to convince Mother of Paolo's and Nata's idea of starting Matrimandir at the earliest:*⁸⁵

Mother's Agenda.

French. Audio recording available at AV Archives

You know Paolo, have you seen him? He's nice.

Satprem: He is nice. As a matter of fact, I have something to tell you in this connection. Yesterday I had the visit of Paolo and Nata, both of them, and Paolo explained to me a sort of inspiration he had about Auroville. I found it very beautiful, very good, and important. So I told him, "You must absolutely tell Mother about it directly." So when could you see Paolo and Nata?

Will I hear him? Because the difficulty is that people don't know how to speak; they speak too fast, and I can't follow them.

Tell me what he wants to tell me!

Satprem: I'll take the bloom off [the subject].

Doesn't matter!

Satprem: He says that for a few years, energies in Auroville have been scattered: they are egoistic, everyone wants to build his own little hut, his own little story, or, at best, hopes to build a super-city, which will only be an improvement on all the existing cities of the world. In this Auroville, an axis, a centre is missing. What's missing is ... a unification of the

⁸⁴ This is according to the memory of Alain G. who remembers being on the same flight as Roger.

⁸⁵ The translation of this conversation is more literal from that of its transcript and translation in *Mother's Agenda*.

consciousnesses around a centre, an axis. So he was saying: what was done in the olden days, in the olden days, they built pyramids, they built cathedrals, and around those symbolic constructions, consciousnesses were able to unite ...

[Mother nods approvingly]

... and rise and purify themselves. Well, what should be built in Auroville is an axis, a centre, a symbolic temple of the new world we want to create, and all the consciousnesses should unite in the construction of this pyramid of the new world, or this temple of the new world – and that by making this endeavour, the consciousnesses unite and at the same time help to bring down what must express itself there.

It's very good, that was the first idea: there was the centre, and the city was organised around it. Now they're doing the opposite! They want to build the city and put the centre afterwards

Satprem: And that's why it doesn't work, he says: we should begin with the centre; if we don't we'll achieve nothing.

That was my first impression. But how to have Roger understand that? I don't know. Because it was Roger who changed it; it's he who wanted to begin with "Auromodel," that is to say, with trials and attempts.

Satprem: So the result is that everyone is concerned with his own little story and his own little hut, and there's no "cement," there isn't the Thing that would bind them together and would lift them above themselves and their little stories.

Theoretically, he's perfectly right.

Satprem: Oh, yes. And it is very amazing, because when he spoke to me about it, I almost saw it, I almost saw. He's a boy who could "pull" that down.

Yes, he has the power.

Satprem: he has the power.

But why doesn't he meet Roger?

Satprem: He asked me, "Should I speak to Roger about it?" Because he says it's a problem: "Immediately there is going to be... Roger because... if I'm the one who speaks about it, Roger will withdraw or will ..." So I told him, "No, don't speak about it to Roger; you will speak about it to Mother, and it is Mother who will say what has to be done."

I'll see Roger tomorrow, I can tell him. Paolo is an architect, isn't he?

Satprem: You alone have authority over Roger.

Yes ... no but, if I tell him, "Do it," he won't say no, but he won't do it! ... He has to be convinced All that I can do is to tell him that I am aware of the idea, that I fully approve of it and ask him to see Paolo and work it out with him. This I will do as early as tomorrow.

But I think Paolo has a power of conviction in him.

Satprem: Yes, when he spoke to me, at any rate, I felt the inspiration and the "thing" which was really to come.

It is ready to come! As for me, I've known it for a long time. It's there (gesture above), it's waiting.

Satprem: Well, he has a contact with that.

Yes, yes.

Satprem: When he spoke, you really felt he had touched the true thing. While the others, the others, only think of attracting millions and do propaganda – they do things completely upside down.

I believe that [Paolo and Roger] have never met so far, have they?

Satprem: Yes, yes, they have.

But you understand, Roger's viewpoint is a very materialistic viewpoint.

Oh, yes.

Satprem: I'm afraid he is going to straight away say, "Oh, why is he meddling?"

Ah, no! If I tell him, he won't say that This he won't say.

Satprem: You're the only one who can ...

No, I must be the one who speaks to him.

Satprem: Yes, Mother, yes, because they're putting the cart before the horses, they're doing things upside down.

[After a silence]

I am afraid they may not even have the land. That's the difficulty because the centre of the city has been fixed, but there's still a large part of the centre which, I believe, belongs to the government, so they're trying to negotiate so as to have it.

[Silence]

Roger had an idea; the idea is an island at the centre, with water around, running water which will be used for the whole water supply [of the city]; and when it has flowed through the city, it will again... it will pass through... a plant, and it will go to irrigate all the cultivated lands around.

So the centre is like an islet, and at this centre, there is what we first called the "Matrimandir" – which I always see as a very large hall, absolutely bare, you understand, and getting a light from above: it should be so arranged that the light from above gets concentrated on a spot where there would be ... what we want to put as the centre of the city. At first we thought of Sri Aurobindo's symbol, but we can put whatever we want. Like that, with a ray of light constantly striking it – revolving and revolving ... [tracking the sun], you understand. If it's done well, it would be very good.

And then, below, people would be able to sit and meditate, or just rest, but there would be NOTHING – nothing except something comfortable below so they can sit without getting tired, probably with probably pillars acting at the same time as backrests. Something like that. That's what I always SEE. A hall [with a ceiling] high enough to allow sunlight to come in as a RAY, according to the time [of the day], and strike that centre which will be there.

If that is done, it will be very good. You could explain this to Paolo. So then, for the rest, it's the same to me, they will do as they like.



Model of the centre area of the future town presented by Roger to Mother in January 1968⁸⁶

⁸⁶ According to this model, the 12 gardens (which form part of the Park of Unity) were all on the lake's outside bank. Since January 1968 (when Roger had presented this model to her), Mother had explained to Huta that, besides Matrimandir, the islet would also include the Banyan tree and that her small house would stand between these 2

Editor's comment on this photo:

Matrimandir island was to be enlarged because, on 11.9.67, Mother had told Huta: "The Truth Pavilion and your tiny house will be very close to each other – your house will stand between the Banyan tree and the Truth Pavilion. All these will be on an island – surrounded by water, trees and the Gardens of Unity." The Park of Unity would still remain outside the Lake.

They first thought of building a dwelling for me, but I'll never go, so it's not worth the trouble, it's not worth the trouble, it's of no use at all. And to watch over the islet, it was agreed there would be a small house for Huta who wanted to be there simply as a guardian Then Roger had arranged a whole system of bridges to link that to the other bank. The other bank would be entirely made of gardens all around. Those gardens ... we thought of twelve gardens (dividing the distance into twelve), twelve gardens with each of them concentrated on one thing: a state of consciousness with the flowers representing it. And the twel... [Mother corrects herself]⁸⁷ the last garden would be on the islet, around (not around but beside) of this thing [the Mandir] with the tree, the banyan which is there. That's what is at the centre of the city. And there, there would be an organisation, a repetition of the twelve gardens around, with the flowers arranged in the same way ...

There are now two Americans here, husband and wife [Richard & Anie Eggenberger], and he studied for more than a year in... over there, to know the art of gardening, and he came here with that knowledge. So I asked him to start straight away preparing the plan for the inner garden [that on the Island beside the banyan tree] and they're working on it.

And so, it would be enough... [But then,] the answer is always the same: "We have no money!"

Satprem: But Mother, what I think, and what Paolo too has put his finger on, is that if these ... say, twenty or fifty Aurovilians sincerely unite their hearts in the construction of this pyramid or temple of the new world, it will ATTRACT money, the millions.

It should.

Satprem: It will come. What's needed isn't to "look for millions," it's first to unite the consciousnesses around something.

Yes.

Satprem: That's the key to the millions.

You'll explain to Paolo ... You remember all that I have said ?....

That way we would have something really very fine.

But of course, what's needed ... There are material difficulties: for this islet, we need water – naturally, otherwise it's not an islet! To have the water, we must transform it – there isn't enough underground water.

Satprem: There isn't enough water?

There is water, but it's enough for one or two houses, anyway not enough to create a permanent flow. We would need transformed sea water. In Israel they have found a way to do it economically (we even have brochures on this), economically... but you understand, economical for a city, not economical for an individual! So then, we'd need to have water to make this islet, that's the difficulty.

Satprem: But before building the islet, we can begin building the "temple", the "temple" itself ... One has to start by lifting a pebble.

Yes, we could do that.

features. She had also asked Narad and Anie to create around a "Garden of Unity" around the Banyan tree. In order to contain all these new features, the islet had to be larger than shown on this 1968 model

⁸⁷ "Mother corrects herself" has been added by the editor because this is what she is heard doing on the audio recording of this conversation. Like the 11 others, the 12th garden, that of "Perfection" is along part of the lake's outer bank. The Garden of Unity (the 13th garden) is to be created around the Banyan tree – that is within the island.

Satprem: That's the important point, it's for people to take a first pebble in their hands, put it there, and unite in that – because they'll never unite through their huts and little stories.

Yes, that would be much better.

Satprem: Oh, yes, certainly!

Naturally, logically, or psychologically rather, it's an error to build around first, and the centre afterwards.

Satprem: Of course! Of course!

How to make him understand that? ...

Satprem: Since we want to create "something else," the least we can do is to trust something else.

Yes. I'll speak to Roger about it tomorrow and I'll ask him to speak about it... to meet Paolo and see with him.

I think that to a certain extent, Paolo can help bring in some money, if he is interested.

[silence]

Yes. That is, to build [it] even before it's an islet.

Satprem: yes.

[silence]

For the outside of this sort of temple, Roger had thought of a big lotus. But then, the inside, this play of light, I don't know whether it will be possible with a lotus shape?

If the two of them could collaborate ...

Satprem: yes.

If they came together and one of them were always here – one of them, now one, now another, so there would always be one of the two here – with a single plan made by them, things would go much faster, a hundred times faster.

Satprem: And this, this would seize people's hearts. That's what is required.

Yes. I don't know... This idea of a ray of sunlight ... whenever I look, that's what I immediately see. A ray of sunlight that could come at all time of the day – it would be so arranged... [*gesture following the sun's movement*]. And there would be something there, [at the centre], which would be at the same time upright, so as to be seen all around, and lying flat, so as to receive the full light – what would it be? ... And let it not become a religion, for heaven's sake!

[*Passage omitted*]

That the Force is now at work is without a shadow of doubt. And there is such a great ... (how can I put it?) it is a very active will: NO RELIGION, no religion, no religious forms. Quite naturally, people immediately ... So that's why I have left them very free. This thing... That was why I didn't insist on building the centre first, because that's in fact the cathedral of old, the temple of old, the whole thing of old (Mother makes a gesture of taking firm root), and then everything gets organised around that: a religion – we want NO religion.

Satprem: Yes, but we can "pull down" something other than religion.

But we don't pull it! It's the people who have it. They're very small, they need a religion, or at least they believe they do.

They need ... – I see that, I've received letters again, to which I reply ... [*Mother vainly looks for other papers near her*] It comes every day ... And Sri Aurobindo wrote wonderful things on the question Very recently (yesterday or the day before), I answered a question about of something [an aphorism] of Sri Aurobindo's in which he said that atheism was NECESSARY because of religions and all their misdeeds.⁸⁸ I was asked a question and I answered that also.

⁸⁸ 240 – "Atheism is a necessary protest against the wickedness of the Churches and the narrowness of creeds. God uses it as a stone to smash these soiled card-houses."

People are still very small.

But an interesting sign: from Northern Europe, from Sweden and Norway and Denmark, some priests or some...; there is a priest, there is one who is the head of a church, another is the head of a convent. They write to ask and to say that they want to collaborate so as to get out of ... This is very strong up there. One or two of them have sent me their photos, asking me to help them. And they do some work, they do work for Auroville there. It means that ...

But even our children have such stupid reactions! One girl here wrote to me because I had mentioned to her that the Consciousness had descended on the earth, concentrated on the earth in order to help men prepare for the transformation. She asked me, "How come men have been left un-helped for so long? ..." It's enough to make you howl in despair! They've had their education here and they still ask questions of that sort! ... I had to control myself so as not to tell her, "My poor girl, (laughing) you are really dum!"

[silenc]

Who would be able to find the way of [realizing that]? ... Because there's no lack of sunshine there (of course, on some days the sun is hidden, but still, there are many days when it shines) [It should be so arranged] that from any side, any angle, the ray should fall [on the centre]. It should be so arranged. It's a question of geometry.

You can speak about it with ..., because if he had an idea ...

Satprem: When he spoke, I felt he could pull that down.

Yes. And that's what is needed: something – we'll find what's needed, we'll see – like an altar, obviously, but ... what? [Something that] would directly receive [the light from above], and [laterally] like that.

Satprem: Laterally.

And no other windows, you understand. All the rest in a sort of half-light, and then this light like ... That would be fine, it can be very fine. I'd like someone who could feel that. I don't know at all whether Roger is capable of feeling that, but Paolo is.

If this were well realised, it would be very interesting for people.

It would be a concretisation of something

They'll start saying it's a religion of the sun! [laughing]

Oh, you know, I'm used to hearing all, ALL possible nonsense!

[silence]

Roger's idea and the idea of the people around him is to have industries capable of collecting money for Auroville, so ...

Satprem: They're mistaken, they're mistaken!

It means that instead of allowing the thing to be done fast, it will take centuries.

Satprem: And it means the starting point is the old idea and the old principle.

Yes.

Satprem: The starting point should be something else.

It's out of a fear of religions. It's out of a fear of religions.

Satprem: It could very well be done not as a religion but as the symbol of the new world.

Yes ... We need someone who understands that – maybe Paolo will understand.

Satprem: Yes, certainly!

241 – "How much hatred and stupidity men succeed in packing up decorously and labelling 'Religion'!"

Mother recently commented on these two aphorisms thus: "As long as there are religions, atheism will be necessary to counterbalance them. Both must disappear to give way to a sincere and disinterested search for Truth and a total consecration to the object of this search."

And he would have the capacity to convince people, I think.

(silence)

Yes, I'll see Paolo. It would be better if he comes on a day when you're here, because I am afraid of not hearing him It disconcerts them a lot when they have to speak loudly. So next Saturday, for instance? And tomorrow I'll speak to Roger about it, that is to say, I'll tell him to see Paolo who has excellent ideas, and anyway to work it out with him.

It's very simple, after all: we'll try to have Roger understand and create a collaboration. Roger won't say no to me – but he won't do anything (!) That's how it is, you understand. But anyway, if he can do it, if they can come to an understanding, if it works out with.... then it will be very good, there won't be any difficulties. But if he can't, then Paolo will have to be here while Roger is away, and we'll just have to do it! ... You understand, that's how it is for me! (Mother laughs) Because Roger has enough work (he has a tremendous amount of work). It's not that we are taking work away from him, it's that if he refuses to do it, we'll do it, that's all.

I'll see if they can agree.

Now for me, things are no longer exclusive, not at all. I very clearly see the possibility of using the most opposite tendencies AT THE SAME TIME ... with some slight deftness, that's all. It's not exclusive, I don't say, "Ah, no, not this!" No, no, no: everything, all of it together. That's what I want, to succeed in creating a place where all contraries can be united.

That ... Unless we can do that ... (gesture of going in a circle),

It's good. Yes, I understand: the thing is to build the centre, even if we can't make it into an islet.

Maybe Paolo will be able to convince Roger. I'll speak to him tomorrow, to start the New Year.

* * *