

Matrimandir

May 2023

When describing her early vision of the Park at the center of Auroville the Mother said: "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) and, if possible, a small waterfall." [23 June 1965]

Now, more than 50 years later, almost all of the Matrimandir Gardens which have been built hold small water features, whether they are cascades, or silent lotus filled pools.

In fact, if you stand in the gardens and close your eyes you will be able to identify, with just a little practice, which garden you are in simply by listening to the sound of the water flow in that garden.



Unity Garden is easy to identify with eyes closed, for it contains the large multi jet fountain designed by Roger Anger, architect of Matrimandir. Its sound is that of the solid cascading of its multiple jets as they fall into the white stone clad pool below.

In the Garden of Progress, if you again close your eyes, you will hear the soft bubbling of the spring-like fountain that emerges from the topmost stone of a small series of granite slabs, flowing down in a

sparkling sheet to a tiny pool at its base.

In the Garden of Consciousness there is a quite different sound to the water feature there.... From its large lotus filled upper pool, water flows over a lip clad with gold tiles to move down a series of descending pools. The sound of the water flowing over the top most lip is that of a smooth sheet of water dropping just 30 centimeters into the first of the six small pools.



All of these water features attract people, who love to either stand and watch or sit quietly, sinking into contemplation aided by the water's soothing sounds.



Most recently added, in the Garden of the Unexpected, there are two water features whose sounds draw quiet listeners at all times of the day.

First, there is a small pool in the section of this garden called “Birth”. A single simple jet of water shoots up, not too high, to fall back with a gentle splashing sound into a shaded living pool which features blue, white and violet lilies.

The second water feature in the Garden of the Unexpected is much more visible, – this is the 30-meter-long slender stream which flows from the shallow rectangular pool near a pagoda at the upper end, down to a “mirror pool” at its lower end where the water spreads out into an even sheet just a few millimeters deep before flowing into its recycling sump concealed below. All of the gardens, by the way, use this feature of recycling the water, whether from a concealed underground sump, or from an open pool integrated into the

garden’s design. Closing one’s eyes in this section of the Garden of the Unexpected, the Garden of Youthfulness, one can hear the gentle tinkling of the water as it drops over small waterfalls that link different sections of the limestone river bed.

The shaded grass nearby is often occupied by people sitting very quietly absorbed in this field of water sound. Another sound dimension is added here, for there are wind chimes fixed high up in the Neem trees which add their melodious notes to the natural water sounds. It is a pleasure indeed to close one’s eyes here and drift along the subtle river of sound which flows in this garden.

On hot afternoons in summer, the sound of children splashing happily in these cooling ponds adds their laughter to the magic symphony.

In addition to these existing, developed gardens, there are new water features being developed for two more of the gardens of Matrimandir.

In the Garden of Bliss, already built some years ago, the central circular area is being remodeled to enhance the beauty and soundscape of this 18-meter-wide circle. This area will feature a series of five large bowls of various sizes which will be filled continuously with water. Overflowing from the circular rims of the bowls, the splashing curtains of falling water will create a musical sound bath. These bowls are now being clad with marble mosaic and soon will be mounted in the center of the garden and joined to its water circulation system. By the time of our next newsletter, in August, we will be able to show you the visual presence that these bowl-fountains will create. We do not yet know what the water in this garden will sound like, but it is certain that it will be distinctive and easily identified by the closed eyed listener.



Also underway is the construction of the Garden of Light, just adjacent to the Garden of Bliss.

The Garden of Light will feature two water elements: a lower, silent pool and a long central stream which will drop into this pool after flowing, arrow straight, through the full central length of the garden. This narrow stream, V- shaped and about 40 meters long, will be clad with white marble tiles to symbolize a Ray of Light within the garden. Again, there will be distinctive sounds as the water moves, – for the long stream will hold pebbles and small rocks in its central groove so that the flowing water will have

to bubble and swirl around them as it flows towards the silent pool. Here again, with closed eyes a listener will be able to say “Ah! I am in the Garden of Light”.

Water is ever-present also in the seven-meter wide rain water harvesting channel which runs, one kilometer long, encircling the whole oval of the Park of Unity, before overflowing into the first section of the Lake which has been built on the south east edge of the gardens.

This water channel is more and more filled with beautiful lilies, and lotuses too. Closing one’s eyes here, one may not hear water sounds, but the distinctive calls of the large water birds which come to feed on fish and insects living in the channel will give you a sure clue as to where you are!



Work on the Lake itself is now concentrated on reinforcing and raising its end walls made of concrete blocks, so that the walls will be high enough to contain the rainwater to be harvested from the upcoming winter monsoon. The lake now holds a vast quantity of crystal-clear water, about 3.8 meters deep, which was harvested from last year's winter monsoon. Standing at the lake shore in the evening, with eyes closed, there is very little sound, — perhaps it is this silence itself that will let you know that you are in the presence of this wide still expanse of precious water.

Its silent presence is like a promise of things to come.....

REGARDING OFFERINGS TO MATRIMANDIR

Please note that all cheques/DD offered to Matrimandir should be payable to **AUROVILLE UNITY FUND**. The cheque/DD should be accompanied by a letter/ email from the donor specifying the offering for MATRIMANDIR. This letter/ email should contain full address, phone and email details and, in the case of Indian donors, PAN DETAILS.

You may also send your offerings for Matrimandir by BANK TRANSFER to **AUROVILLE UNITY FUND**. Write to matrimandir.donations@auroville.org.in requesting **bank transfer** details.

Matrimandir (offerings desk): 0413-2622051

REGARDING BOOKING FOR MEDITATION:

Now, Matrimandir Inner Chamber is open to visitors every morning except Tuesday and Sunday. For bookings go to <https://mmaccess.auroville.org.in/visitors/new>.