

Matrimandir

May 2018

Important information on sending your offerings:

Contributions to Matrimandir are exempt under sec. 80G of the Indian Income Tax Act. You can send us your offering by post as a DD/cheque payable to “Matrimandir”. You may also give your offering in cash or as a cheque or DD at the Matrimandir Office during your visit for meditation.

Postal address: MATRIMANDIR – AUROVILLE 605101 – TAMIL NADU – INDIA

Land line for accounts : 0413- 262-2228 Email: matrimandir@auroville.org.in

As some of you have requested information on Bank Transfers, please bear in mind that Matrimandir does not have its own bank account for that purpose, — we function through the Auroville Unity Fund. However, if you wish to send an offering by Bank Transfer: 1) please send the transfer to the Auroville Unity Fund, specified for Matrimandir 2) please send an email soon after to matrimandir.donations@auroville.org.in to enable us to follow up and send you the receipt. Details for such Bank Transfers are available upon request by email to: matrimandir.donations@auroville.org.in



Masses of purple flowers bloom on the *Lagerstroemia speciosa* trees in the Garden of Progress

It is mid April, and there is a certain calm on the site after the high level of activity that led up to Auroville's 50th Anniversary celebrations in the month of February. There had been a strong push to complete as much of the work as possible before February 28th. A thorough cleanup of the site was also undertaken. Now, in April, after the dust has settled as it were, we look forward to the new projects lying ahead of us, making trials with some such as the upcoming rain water harvesting project, and for others, like the gardens construction, planning on how to move ahead.

Completion of the Green Room

One of the key work areas that called for completion well before February 28th was the Green Room, under construction beneath the rim of the Amphitheater as a space where all performers could prepare themselves to offer their best in the Amphitheater. It is a place for putting on costumes and makeup, a quiet space to wait before moving out via the passage through the Amphitheater steps to the open space near the Urn.

In our last Newsletter there were images of details of one of the completed rooms. Here is a wider view

of one of the green rooms mirror walled spaces that have been created under the eastern edge of the Amphitheater.

During the months of February and March, the room was put to very intensive use, as it supported the participants of several large programs, including the SEAS programme by about 100 dancers, acrobats and fire jugglers on Feb 17th. A major part of the preparation for the Water Ceremony on Feb 28th was also carried out here as about 130 Auroville youth and children assembled to participate. Samples of water had been brought from all over the world (321 separate samples from lakes, rivers, mountain springs and ocean bays were brought, - even one sample from an iceberg in the Antarctic!) All of these were poured by the children, one sample after another, into a large receptacle near the Urn just after the bonfire concentration of the 28th.

On February 25th the honorable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi visited the Matrimandir site. Information panels on the history of the construction of Matrimandir were displayed after the site got an extra special cleaning up!



One of the two sections of the completed Green Room.

Garden of Progress

Also during the last three months, the Garden of Progress has been brought very close to completion.

The 7 m x 7 m pool in its outer portion has been completed, as well as several details in the large central area which features an ascending line of granite stepping stones moving through the three level terraced areas of the garden.

Multi-colored Progress flowers are happily blooming there and the Lagerstroemia speciosa trees, with Mother's significance of "Intimacy with Universal Nature" are showing their purplish blooms. Her comment on this flower was: "This intimacy is only

possible for those who are vast and who are without preference or repulsion." (See photo on p. 1)

In the portion of this garden nearest to the Matrimandir, a curving pathway has been built, moving beside and above a narrow winding water body. The final feature of this garden, a low fountain at the base of the line of granite stepping stones, will be finalized during the coming summer months.

Water Harvesting Project

As we enter the dry summer months preparations are being made to realize a long intended goal for the Matrimandir gardens area, — this is to harvest as much of the runoff water from the stormy winter



The pond in the outer part of the Garden of Progress



The flowers named "Progress" by the Mother bloom in a multitude of colors in this garden



The Garden of Progress seen from the top of Matrimandir in April

monsoon rains as we can. Water harvesting is more and more a subject of interest in Auroville, as water levels in the underground aquifers are rapidly lowered during the summer due to intense usage by Auroville and the surrounding bioregion as a whole.

While it is true that recharge of the aquifers through rain fall is an important yearly occurrence, geologists note that less than 25% of the rainfall actually gets added to this recharge,— thus if one can catch some of the rainfall and store and use it directly at the surface it could contribute greatly to our water balance in the city. Matrimandir is ideally suited for rainwater harvesting, as all three catchment areas in the gardens oval can be separately and easily dealt with. Out of the 86,000 sq. mt. of this oval, some are very near or below the Matrimandir. Water falling here is already collected in a large underground tank below the building and pumped back to the surface when needed by a set of pumps.

Water falling on the 4420 sq. mt. of the Amphitheater can also be easily collected. To do this, we will construct an underground sump in the line of the currently existing large drainage pipe, and redirect this water flow into our catchment area.

The third collection area is the web of paved pathways and plazas which lie between the gardens on site. These pathways all slope outwards, towards the edge of the gardens oval. Thus here, at the edge of the gardens, we will now construct an open channel, about one meter wide and one kilometer long around the oval to collect this runoff water. The water from all three sources will be directed

in a large test pond which is to be made on the southeast edge of the gardens oval.



A trial sample of the open storm water collection channel being created at the edge of the oval road in April

It will be interesting indeed to make this experiment of collecting the runoff waters from the garden area. The catchment pond will have to be lined with a waterproof HDPE liner and will be stocked with fish and water plants to create a living and beautiful water body.

This project, which is being taken up now will be monitored over the next few years: it will be a real test of the concept of rainwater harvesting in Auroville.

We note that the ancient villages surrounding Auroville, and throughout Tamil Nadu as a whole, had mastered the technique of seasonal water harvesting a thousand years ago! We are now trying to recreate this idea in more modern ways.

Important information about Matrimandir closure for Maintenance:

This is to inform you that Matrimandir remains closed for renovation and repair works from **4.6.2018 to 3.7.2018**. Matrimandir reopens for visitors concentration from 4.7.2018.

The booking services by phone, email and the Visitors Centre Booking Office remain closed from **3.6.2018 to 1.7.2018**.

Booking for concentration reopens from **2.7.2018**, closed on Tuesdays.

Booking requests for July 4th 2018 and onward are to be sent no earlier than July 1st 2018. Please keep in mind that **3rd July is a Tuesday**.

The Visitors Centre and the Matrimandir Viewing Point remain open as usual from 9 am to 5 pm, **Sundays from 9 am to 1 pm only**.

Kindly plan your visits for concentration accordingly.

We regret any inconvenience caused.