

# Matrimandir

November 2020



*The Test Pond excavation as seen from the top of Matrimandir during September.*

The Matrimandir gardens are looking green and vibrant after the generous rains of early October. To save on water usage during the dryer months of August and September we had cut down on watering the grass on some outer portions of the gardens, but now the slopes are happily a lively green again.

Matrimandir has come out of the slow months of the Covid lockdown with a significant increase in the energy of its activities. The large test pond, shown here in a perspective photo from the top of Matrimandir has almost reached its full length and width of 100 meters x 90 meters.

On October 8th we had excavated, for the first time, down to the target depth of 10 meters below the zero level (i.e.: below the level of the oval road which runs around the gardens' outer edge). It was a significant moment in the progress of the work, and was marked

by a symbolic concentration held on that deep, sandy layer of the excavation.

Having dug down 10 meters, several distinct types of earth, gravel, sand and clay have been exposed, each layer being a testament to the forces of wind and water that shaped the Auroville plateau over many millions of years. One dreams of being able to watch a time lapse movie of these immense stretches of time, observing the play of nature's forces as these different earth layers were deposited here. Work on the test pond will slow down when the monsoon comes, as we have seen that even a little rain makes it impossible for the earth-laden lorries to climb up out of the excavation over the slippery earth. We are focused now to complete certain parts, drains especially, that should be ready to channel the upcoming heavy rains.

Three other developmental projects are also underway on site: – the continuing development of the Garden of the Unexpected, the construction of a new section of the cobble stone road encircling the Matrimandir gardens and, a new project, the building of the foundation for a very special group of large quartz crystals which is to be installed in the garden of Existence.

### **The Garden of the Unexpected**

This, the newest of the gardens of Matrimandir, is being built in four sub sections. In the first section, called the “Garden of Birth”, a pond has been completed and planted in the last few months with a variety of water plants, including lovely pink and blue lilies.

The fourth section, called the “Garden of the Eternal Child”, has recently had two new additions, which have come in an unexpected way! While excavating the test pond we were obliged to transplant two rare iron wood trees. The first had been moved about four months ago to a location on the outer bank of the test pond. It was observed for three months and found to be putting out new green shoots and leaves, confirming that the transplant was successful. Taking this as a positive sign we then embarked on the project to shift the second, much larger, iron wood tree out of the test pond site. The root ball of the tree, about 2.5 meters wide, was wrapped and carefully bound in layers of geo-textile to keep the tree roots safe during the transplanting. Then the tree with its bound root

ball was gently slipped sideways on to the open back of a lorry, waiting to drive away with the tree to its new location in the Garden of the Unexpected. After placing the tree carefully in its new location, a pipe structure has been built up around it, and covered with green shade net in order to shelter the tree from the sun’s hot rays while it recovers from the transplant operation.

It took three tries before we were able to successfully lift the nine ton weight of the tree,– first a week earlier with one crane, then with two cranes working in tandem, but the weight was too much and too awkward to handle. Finally we came upon the idea to lower the road level just beside the tree, so that it could be simply pulled sideways, by two JCB’s working together, onto the waiting bed of the lorry. This was quite a dramatic sequence of events in itself! To top it off, the final successful move was accompanied by the arrival of a big thunder storm. We had watched the heavy gray clouds and sheets of rain approaching as the tree was being loaded on the lorry, hoping that we would still have the few minutes needed to get this done, and get the lorry out of the low spot before the expected flooding. We had just managed to move about a hundred meters along the road when the storm struck. All vehicles soon were stuck in the mud created by the dramatic rain,– two JCBs, a crane and the lorry. Everyone involved in the operation was soaked to the skin under the thunder and lightning



*The iron wood tree on the open backed lorry being moved to the Garden of the Unexpected (The thunder storm struck just after this photo was taken)*

of the down pour. But finally, there were smiles all around when the tree was unloaded in the Garden of the Unexpected.

This is one of the unexpected additions to the Garden of the Unexpected. The other addition was the 14 ton granite stone that had stood till recently in the Garden of Existence. That stone, having been installed 11 years ago, was removed after long deliberation in order to make way for a new center piece for that garden. Finding its new home in the Garden of the Unexpected has been a very welcome finale to this story of the stone, as it now sits quietly and massively near the central circle in this new garden.

It is, coincidentally, placed just a few meters from the freshly transplanted iron wood tree shifted from the test pond area. Perhaps these two beings, the tree and the stone, whisper to each other in the quiet of the evenings, sharing the stories of their earlier homes and of the adventures of their nearly simultaneous journeys to the Garden of the Unexpected.

### **The Garden of Existence.**

As mentioned above, the large central stone in this garden was lifted from its spot in order to make way



*The 14 ton stone from the Garden of Existence being settled in place in the Garden of the Unexpected*

for a new center piece for this garden. The large stone was placed there in 2009 and for 11 years formed the central focus of the garden. After making a survey within the community, it was noted that it could perhaps be shifted to find an appropriate new home. Roger Anger, architect of Matrimandir, had always commented that the Matrimandir gardens would be “evolutionary” and so the possibility was open to make changes if the need was felt and if the moment was right.



*The concrete foundation for the crystal group in the garden of Existence being completed in October.*

On 7th August the stone was lifted out of its place by a heavy duty crane and then kept for some weeks near the carpentry shed, just beyond the gardens. Then on 26th September the same crane was called in again to relocate the stone to the Garden of the Unexpected. Weighing in at 14 tones, it was no easy feat for the crane to move it, even along the horizontal road, towards its new location on the opposite side of the gardens oval. But finally the job was done, as the stone was well settled into the earth just adjacent to the large central circle in this new garden.



*A portion of the oval road, 130 meters long is being prepared for its surface cladding of granite cobble stones.*

In its place, a new structure is being built in the flat oval of the Garden of Existence. This is a very strong foundation for a group of natural quartz crystals that will be installed here. The crystals have come mostly from Brazil, which is famous for its magnificent natural quartz crystals. Work on the foundation is now being completed. This project will be paused during the monsoon months and taken up when the skies are clear. The placement of the crystals, about 32 in number, will be a very delicate job, as some

presently have begun to lay the cobbles on 130 meters of the road lying just behind the completed gardens of Bliss and Consciousness. Laying of the granite cobble stones is an art. Stones of two colors, grey and red, need to be laid down in an even pattern on the prepared road bed. The work proceeds steadily and, in the months to come, the oval road will be built along much of the eastern side of the Matrimandir gardens.

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### **Important information on sending your offerings.**

Contributions to Matrimandir are exempt under section 80G of the Indian Income Tax Act. You can send us your offering by post with a DD/Cheque payable to “**Matrimandir**”.

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

You may also send your offerings for Matrimandir by bank transfer to **Auroville Unity Fund**. To do so please follow the procedure as mentioned below:

- 1) Write to [matrimandir.donations@auroville.org.in](mailto:matrimandir.donations@auroville.org.in) requesting bank transfer details. We will send you the appropriate account number. (Account numbers are different for offerings coming from outside of India or from within India.)
- 2) During the transaction, please specify that it is for Matrimandir.
- 3) After the transaction, please send another email to [matrimandir.donations@auroville.org.in](mailto:matrimandir.donations@auroville.org.in) with transaction details. If you need a tax exemption receipt, please send PAN DETAILS in this email.

**Phone number** for accounts : 0413- 262-2228, **Email:** [matrimandir@auroville.org.in](mailto:matrimandir@auroville.org.in)