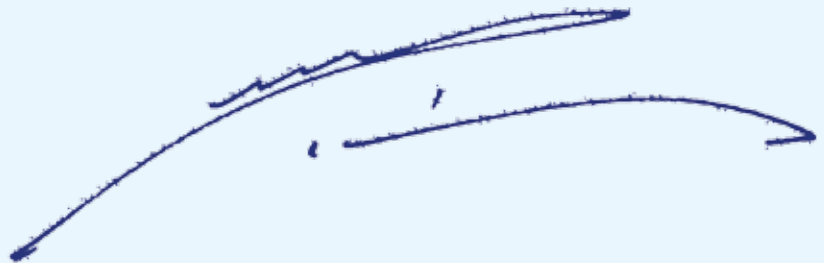


Matrimandir

February 2021

Let the Matrimandir
be the living symbol of Auroville's
aspiration for the
Divine



This month marks 50 years since the inauguration of Matrimandir

On February 21st 1971, the Mother gave the message shown above for the occasion: “**Let the Matrimandir be the living symbol of Auroville’s aspiration for the Divine**”.

The event was recorded by several people: “The Foundation stone of Matrimandir was laid at the centre of Auroville on 21st February 1971, exactly at sun-rise at 6.30 am. A fire, symbol of the human aspiration, had been lit in front of a simple yet magnificent altar

and the large gathering sat in a semicircle, facing the East, while the air resounded with the Mother’s message and the music.

Sunil had composed a piece of music for the occasion, incorporating Mother’s reading of the message in both French and English. Nolini and Aurofilio had brought a precious wooden box from Mother, which was sealed in the ground between the banyan tree and the present site of the Matrimandir as the land for the Matrimandir had not yet been purchased.” Navajata and Roger Anger were also present for this important symbolic ceremony.

Looking back

Since that concentration in the cool dawn air on February 21st 1971 the construction proceeded in a magical way, always with a combination of solid, down to earth work in matter, and always with that overarching atmosphere of Light and constant support by the one whose project it is, the Mother.

It is impossible to tell the whole story, — the story of the thousands of people who have spent days, months or most of their lifetimes contributing to the growth of the Matrimandir.

A wonderful, complex, interwoven tapestry of lines of energy, always intimately linked to the growth and

development of Auroville, — the story of Matrimandir is like a magical flow .

There have been intense moments of creation, a constant flowing of that deep joy that sustains the work, and sometimes difficulties as we confronted material or human problems.

But always with that Divine Smile behind, supporting all, bringing in the most unexpected ways and unexpected moments the help and sustenance needed to keep moving forward.

We present here a pictorial summary of the stages of growth of the Matrimandir over fifty years.



The inaugural dawn fire on 21 February 1971.

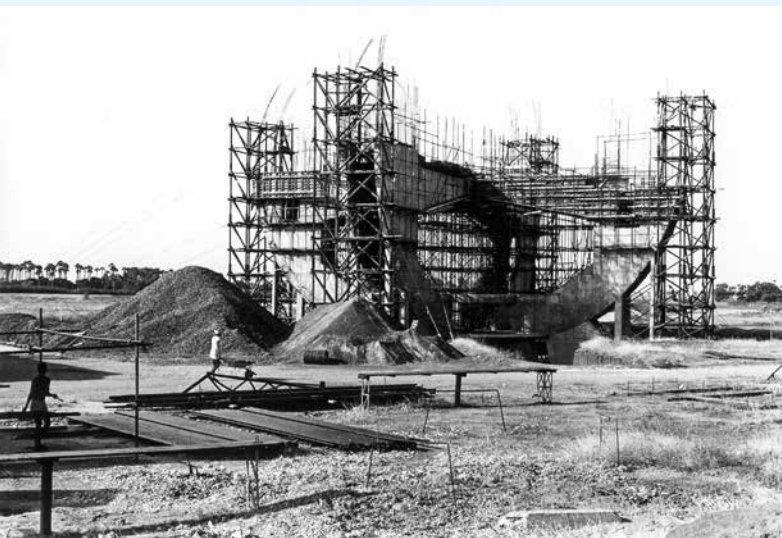


Roger Anger, architect of Matrimandir, carrying a model of Matrimandir. The Mother had described her vision of the Inner Chamber of Matrimandir to Roger and others in early 1970.

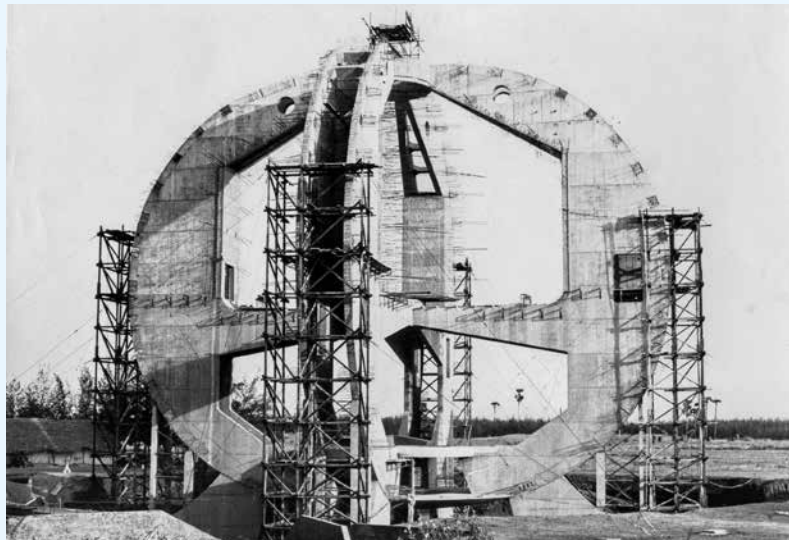
▼ The excavation of the foundation crater for Matrimandir was carried out by hundreds of people throughout 1971, after some early Aurovilians had begun the work and realized its immense scope.

▼ Upon completion of the excavation, the construction work was inaugurated on 21 February 1972, and soon the four massive concrete pillars of the Matrimandir began to rise up from the foundation slab.



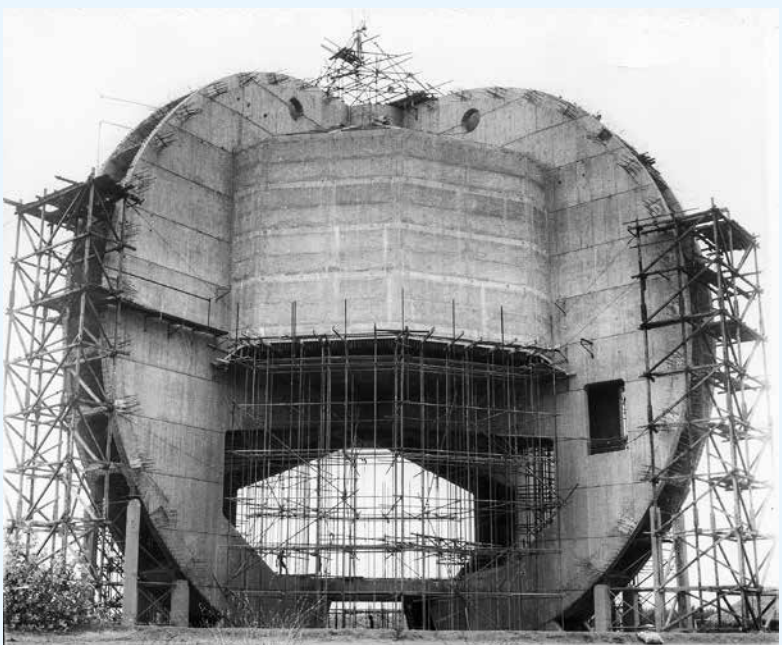


By 1974 the four massive ribs of the structure had reached almost mid-level and were already visible from far across the wide empty plain of Auroville.



The four pillars were joined at the top in a ring concreted on May 29th 1976.

The first stage of construction was thus complete.

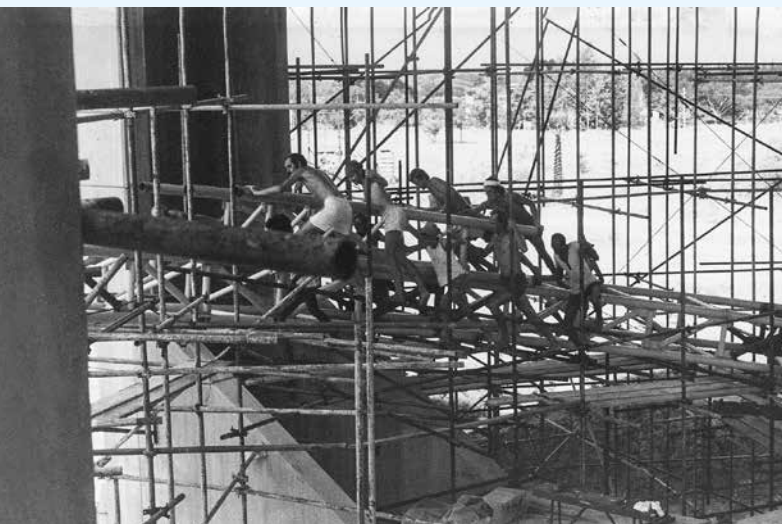


The floor of the Inner Chamber was cast during the November darshan days of 1976. The construction of the 12 walls of the Chamber and the sloping roof sections was carried out in 1977 and completed in early 1978.



▲ For the next nine years, from 1979 to 1988, the outer space frame, made of precast concrete beams, was built up layer by horizontal layer to form the spherical globe shape of Matrimandir.

◀ During 1979 the twin spiral ramps leading up to the Inner Chamber were installed. The massive sections of these ramps had been constructed from steel pipes in the Matrimandir workshop. They were carried one by one to Matrimandir and then pushed up the ramp scaffolding by a team of a dozen people.





The spherical shell of the space frame was completed with the concreting of the top cap on 8th August 1988.



The polished white slabs of Italian marble were mounted on the Inner Chamber walls in 1989 - 90.



The twelve columns, each 9 meters long and bundled in protecting blankets, were lifted by crane into the Chamber and then hoisted upright in early August 1991.



▲ The 70 centimeter crystal globe, made in Germany by the firms of Zeiss and Schott, was carefully lifted up to the Chamber by crane on 27th April 1991.

◀ The white carpet for the Inner Chamber, made of unbleached wool, was meticulously laid on top of the marble flooring in February 1994. It was a very special moment to see this carpet, six months in the making in northern India, being installed so carefully by the team that had created it.





Piero Ciconesi, who guided every detail of the construction for the first 20 plus years, designed a heliostat to catch the sunray to be directed onto the globe in the Inner Chamber from the top of Matrimandir.



During the early 1990s the sweeping shapes of the 12 petals were constructed around Matrimandir as the labor force expanded to take up not only this work but also that of finishing the outer shells of Matrimandir.



By 1996, the spherical space frame had been closed with prefabricated ferrocement panels. The first trials of mounting the golden discs on the outer shell began.



The creation of all the golden tiles for the discs and doorway shields was carried out in the Matrimandir workshops during the period from 1995 to 2007.

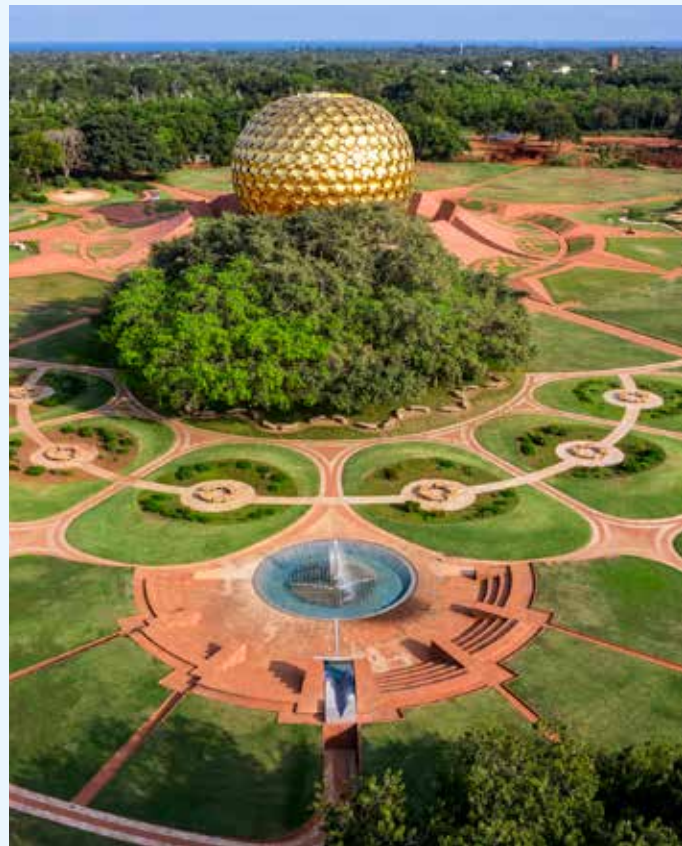


◀ Installation of the light-weight triangular panels of the interior skin took place in 2006-7.



As the structure was being completed, the interior rooms of the 12 petals were finished, each with its separately designed shield, and special illuminating color.

Work on the gardens started in 2009 with the laying of the paths of the Garden of Unity and, two years later, the completion of its central fountain. ▶



◀ Work on the Garden of Existence proceeded simultaneously, as the first of the twelve main gardens of Matrimandir to be built.

By 2014 work was progressing on the third of the main gardens, the Garden of Bliss (on the left as seen here from the top of Matrimandir, with the Garden of Consciousness in the center and Existence on the right.) ▼





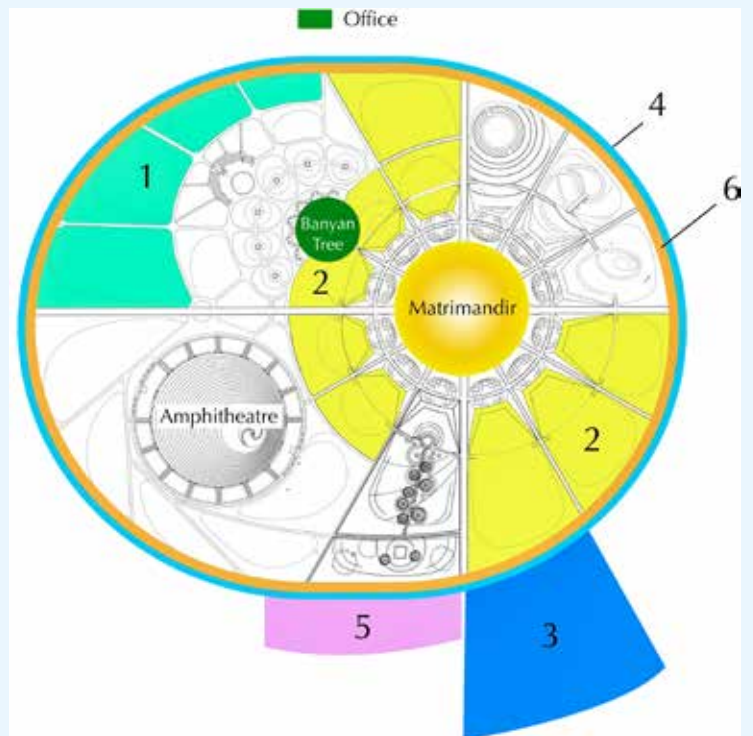
The Garden of Progress was completed during 2017-18.



The Garden of the Unexpected, on the western side of the Matrimandir oval, has been under construction since 2019. One of the four sections of this garden is shown here.



Simultaneously with the work on the Garden of Progress, the Green Room under the eastern rim of the Amphitheater was completed in time to be used for the many programs held to celebrate Auroville's 50th anniversary in 2018.



The Garden of the Unexpected occupies the large area shaded in light green above. Still remaining to be built are the gardens of Light, Life, Power, Wealth, Utility, Youth, Harmony and Perfection, all located in area "2" shown above in yellow. The area above labeled "3" is the location of the first section of the Matrimandir Lake, now under construction, as shown in the photo of the excavation below.



Ongoing excavation of the first section of the Lake which is to surround the Matrimandir garden oval.



Matrimandir today, illuminated under a near full moon night.

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 described below:

- 1) Write to 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 inside or outside of India.)
- 2) Please specify that the transaction is for Matrimandir.
- 3) After the transaction, please send another email to 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