

4th Chapter
Construction Work
Foundations & 4 pillars up to 1st level
21st Feb. 1972 – 4th Nov. 1972

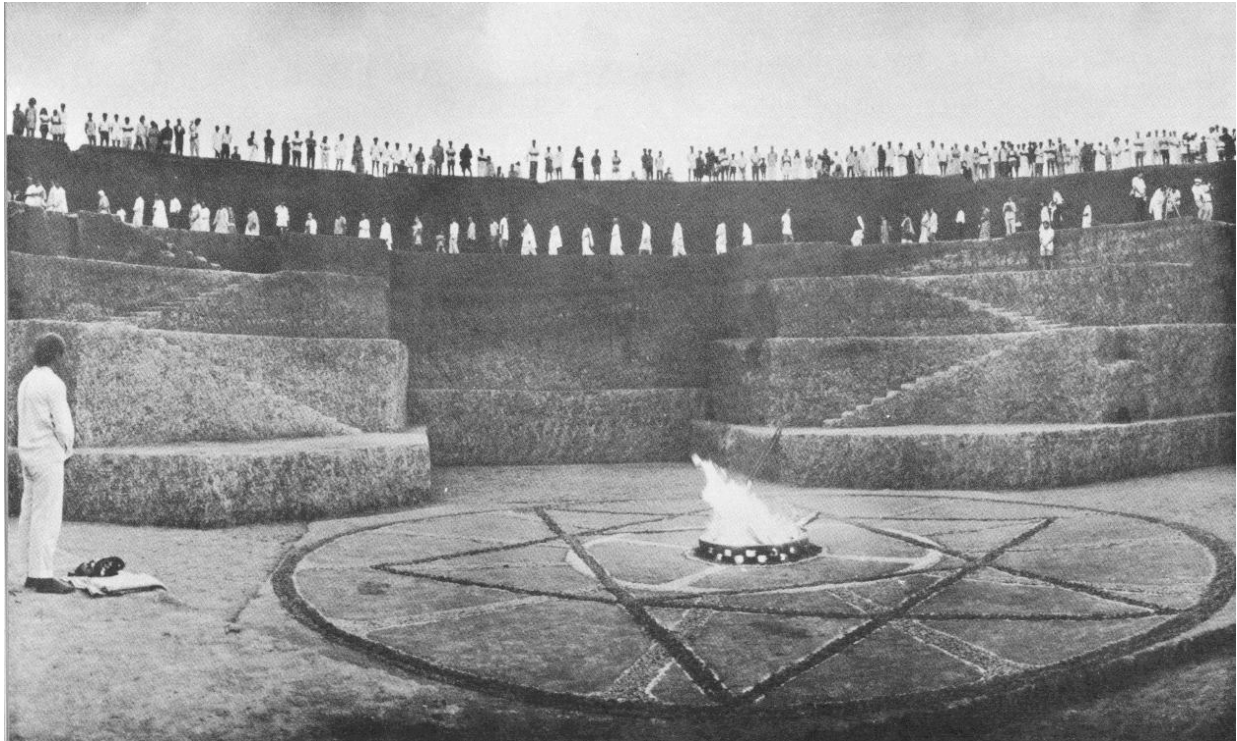
1972, February 21st: Mother's 94th Birthday

Ceremony marking the beginning of construction work at Matrimandir

Excerpt from Ruud's "Matrimandir Diary":

English.

This morning we had [like last year] another grand solemnity, at sunrise. Again hundreds of people¹ had gathered in the splendid light of the rising sun. We were standing now all together around the beautiful, deep crater, an imposing sight, reminiscent of the Colloseum or the pyramids, another wonder of the world under reconstruction. On the hill formed by the excavated earth, twelve fires were lit and later on another big fire was lit in the centre of the crater. This time we had gathered officially to commence the next phase of the work: the casting of the four huge pillars which rise up from the crater's base to ground level and upon which the large sphere will rest.



A procession was formed led by Shyam Sunder, Mother's representative in Auroville matters. It was an impressive group of people who are mostly very close to the Mother. Very remarkable, and new as far as I know, that there were exactly twelve people, a clear symbol, an occult or sacred number and certainly not just a matter of chance.²

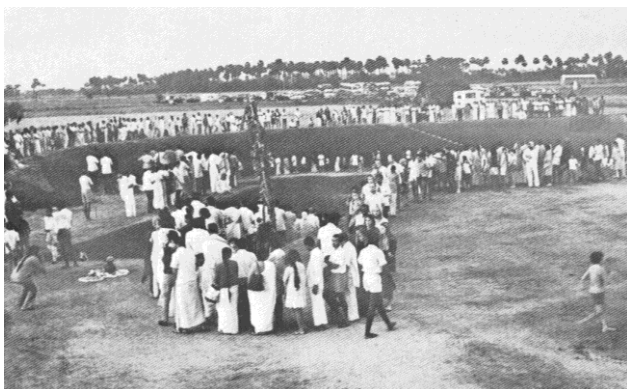
The group made their way down towards the first level, at three metres depth, where each of them received a stone. They walked in procession all around the excavation and then each put his stone into the cement mixer.



¹ The booklet "Matrimandir", published by "Auropublications" in February 1977 speaks of 2,000 people participating in this function.

² Mother had personally nominated these 12 disciples. Are easily recognisable on this photo: Shyam Sunder, Nolini, Nirodbaran, Navajata and Prem Malik. As Roger was part of these 12, he was probably the last, behind Prem. In an interview, Prem remembered that when Mother mentioned his name to Roger as one of the twelve, Roger had not felt like telling Her "But Prem is out of station and not expected to be back in time". Amazingly, Prem who didn't know at all about his nomination, returned days earlier than expected and happened to be back just in time to join the twelve. He was astounded because he felt Mother had known that he would be back in time – which he didn't expect.

Following them were hundreds, even thousands of people each contributing his pebble. In the meantime the group of twelve sat down on their meditation mats, at the west side of the crater. Beautiful music composed around Mother's reading of Sri Aurobindo's "The Hour of God" was played.



Aurovilians, Ashramites & other well-wishers queue to put a pebble in the concrete mixer

The remarkable intensity in and around the crater was this morning more perceptible than ever. At Matrimandir you are one with a tremendous stream flowing through the centuries and driving you on towards higher realisations. You are one with all great events and all great people of history and of this moment, you're one with the greatest consciousness and the consciousness. A Divine Presence manifesting in the world in ever-increasing intensity and clarity.

*



Getting ready to place the stone at the base of the East pillar

"Report on the Quarter" in the "Bulletin", April 1972, p. 101

On 21 February, 1972 a solemn function was held at the Matrimandir site in Auroville timed at sun rise. Last year, on the same date was laid the foundation stone. This time marked the end of the heavy excavation work and the commencement of the next stage – the construction of four pillars.

At 6.15 a.m. with the music of "The Hour of God", those present there started putting, one by one, a stone in the concrete mixer.

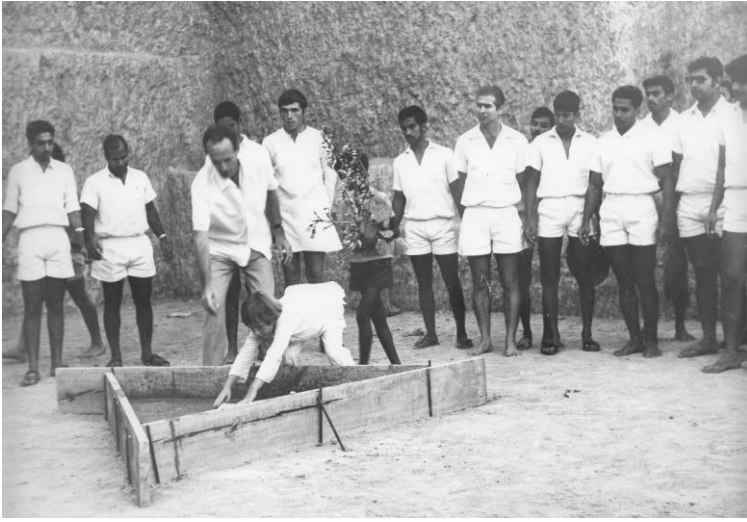
A stone³ bearing [the date,] the Mother's writing (Om) and Her signature was put in the base of the [East] pillar by Martha⁴ and L. Ramalingam⁵.]



³ This 'stone' (actually fossilised wood) had been found on the spot during the excavation work at Matrimandir.

⁴ Martha is the eldest daughter of Piero and Gloria.

⁵ This is the Aurovillian Ramalingam who worked for many years at Matrimandir and lived at Matrimandir Nursery.



Marta and Ramalingam present the stone and then lay it, watched by Piero



*Aurovilians, Ashramites & other well-wishers queue while the first twelve are sitting.
Nolini sitting on a chair in front of a mike. Nolini standing & reading Mother's message*

*At 6.45 a.m., Nolini read this Message:*⁶



Let Auroville be the symbol of a progressive Unity.

And the best way to realise this is a unity of aspiration towards the Divine Perfection in work and in feeling, in a consecration of the entire life.

*Auroville veut être le symbole
d'une Unité progressive
Et la meilleure manière de la réaliser
est une unité d'aspiration vers
la Perfection Divine
dans le travail et les sentiments
dans une consécration de la vie toute entière*

* * *

⁶ "Auroville veut être le symbole d'une Unité progressive.
Et la meilleure manière de la réaliser est une unité d'aspiration vers la Perfection Divine dans le travail et les sentiments dans une consécration de la vie toute entière."

1972, February 22nd: Note written by Mother:

MA, p. 69
French

All day long on the 21st I had a strong feeling that it was everybody's birthday, and I felt the urge to say "happy birthday" to everyone.

A very strong impression that something new was manifesting in the world, and that all those who were ready and receptive would incarnate it.

In a few days, probably, we will know what it was.

*

Report published in the "Gazette Aurovilienne", Vol. 1, No 5-6

The work was begun by Aurovilians and Ashramites in March. After October, workers from neighbouring villages were also engaged. Now with the digging of a hole, 9m deep and 30m wide, the excavations for the foundations of the Matrimandir have been completed.

The construction of the four foundation pillars has started and they are scheduled for completion before 15th August 1972.

* * *

1972, February 28th: Auroville's 4th birthday. Note sent by Mother:

Typed message on AV letterhead
French

28th February is Auroville's birthday.

On this day we shall meditate, wherever we are at the designated time, 11:30, with the resolution of working better and of working always more and to open ourselves more and more to the Divine's Will.

Blessings⁷

*

Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":

DML, p. 126
English

- *Shyam Sunder mentions to Mother that the next day, 29th February, at 6 a.m. concreting work of the Matrimandir pillars⁸ will start and that there would be a meditation.*
- *Sebastien wanted to dance at the Matrimandir the next day in the evening in the foundation-hole. Shyam Sunder commented that the concreting work was to start in the morning and these things disturbed the work.*

He can dance elsewhere.

* * *

⁷ "Le 28 février, c'est l'anniversaire d'Auroville.

Nous méditerons ce jour, n'importe où nous sommes à l'heure désignée, 11hrs 30, avec la résolution de mieux travailler et de travailler toujours plus et de nous ouvrir de plus en plus à la Volonté Divine. Bénédiction".

⁸ In fact it is concreting work of the Matrimandir foundation starting with that of its pillars."

1st Phase of construction work: Foundations

1972, February 29th: 4th leap-year celebration of the Golden day of the Supramental Manifestation. Concreting of the foundation's first layer (a 30 cm thick PCC 'mat')



Excerpt from Ruud's "Matrimandir Diary":

The fourth anniversary of the supramental Manifestation (the fourth leap year since 1956) was celebrated as a darshan day, except for the fact that there was no darshan; the Mother did not appear on the balcony. Early in the morning, at about 6:00 a.m. there was again something going on at the Matrimandir. This time something more typical of the new consciousness: not meditation but work. Having symbolically initiated the second phase of the construction on February 21, today the work began in earnest with the casting of real cement. From the mixer it came down the chute, whence the pans of cement were handed along a chain of about fifty people and finally poured. Again there was that beautiful charged atmosphere which makes you clearly aware that even this gray cement is much more than just lifeless matter, it becomes something golden, something alive; physically working with it is a kind of ceremony, an alchemy, a transmutation of matter into spirit. I realised how it was a priestly act, really an experienced act of consecration and transsubstantiation of the Body of God.



* * *

1972, March

1972, March 2nd: *Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":*

DML, p.128
English

Mother was pleased to see and touch the first cube of concrete cast at the Matrimandir, offered by Piero to her.

The cube was sent to the Auroville Exhibition as suggested to Shyam Sunder by Champaklal.

* * *

1972, March 3rd: *Note from Shyam Sunder to Piero:*

Handwritten note kept at AV-Archives
French. Translation G.G.

Dear Piero,

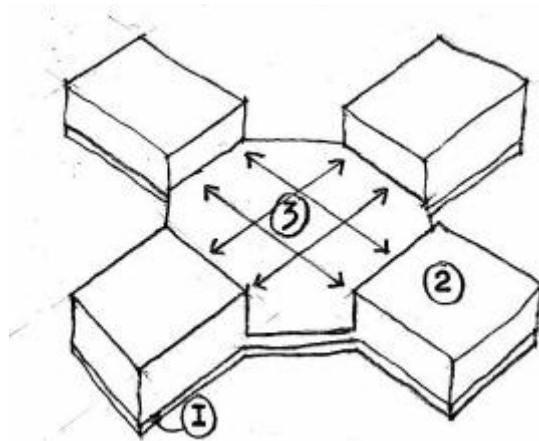
Mother was happy to see the first cast.

She touched [not sure?] it and we placed it at the exhibition on Auroville.

* * *

1972, April 10th: *Piero's Progress Report:*

This is the first of a regular series of reports on the Matrimandir, in which we will explain the progress of the work.



The sequence of the Work

With excavation to a depth of 10.50 meters below ground level completed, a "mud-mat" of concrete (1) 30 centimetres thick was poured. We made many different kinds of concrete mix, with different ratios of cement and water, and produced test cubes which were tested at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education laboratories. From these we were able to select the strongest mix to use when we start the foundation "footings" (2).

These foundation footings contain steel reinforcement so as to be strong enough to support the 1,500 ton load per foot transmitted by the total weight of the Matrimandir and its pillars. The four foundation footings have to be made homogeneous, and will be connected by a "Tie-slab" (3) of reinforced concrete 22 centimetres thick, which holds the foundations together to act in structural unity. When the footings and tie-slab are completed, work will commence on the four pairs of pillars, which will reach up to the present ground level, each being over 10 meters high. It is hoped to have the work, plus the construction of a water tank for monsoon drainage, together with its pumping system, completed by 15th August.

Progress

Before we can pour the concrete for the foundation footings and tie-slab, much preparatory work has to be completed:-

(i) Delivery of materials; stones, sand, steel, cement, and equipment.

(ii) Preparation for concreting; brick walls to make "shuttering" for the exact shape of the foundation footings. Modification of the chutes down which the concrete will be poured. Preparation of steel reinforcement involving two welding sets and a team of barbenders working around the clock. About 15 tons has already been prepared, and has now to be put in place, before pouring the concrete. This work is proceeding well, and unless interrupted by power cuts will be finished in a week. Then concreting will commence again in two weeks.

In addition, the wooden shuttering for the pillars is being prepared. This involves planning, cutting and assembly of 400 cu ft. of timber to make the moulds for the concrete pillars. Temporary sheds have been erected for the carpenters workshop, the steel workshop and extra storage space for concrete and other materials.

Design Work

A research institute in Madras has a team of structural engineers preparing the structural designs, and using computers for their calculations. Detailed designs for the footings and tie-slab have just been received, with precise data on the sizes and quantity of steel. This work is now being executed. The architects are preparing detail designs for the parts of Matrimandir, and are at present designing the water tank and drainage system within the Matrimandir crater.

Much time is taken up in organisation and supervision of construction work on site.



30cm PCC layer complete and brickwork underway as side shuttering for the RCC slab

* * *

1972, April

1972, April 10th: *Piero's Progress Report:*

Preparation for Concreting the Tie-Slab:

Preparation for the next concreting operation, laying the tie-slab, is now being completed, and concrete will be poured on Wed, 3rd May. Preparation was hampered by power cuts and the demises of a new welding machine which burned out from overwork. The machine was under guarantee and is being replaced

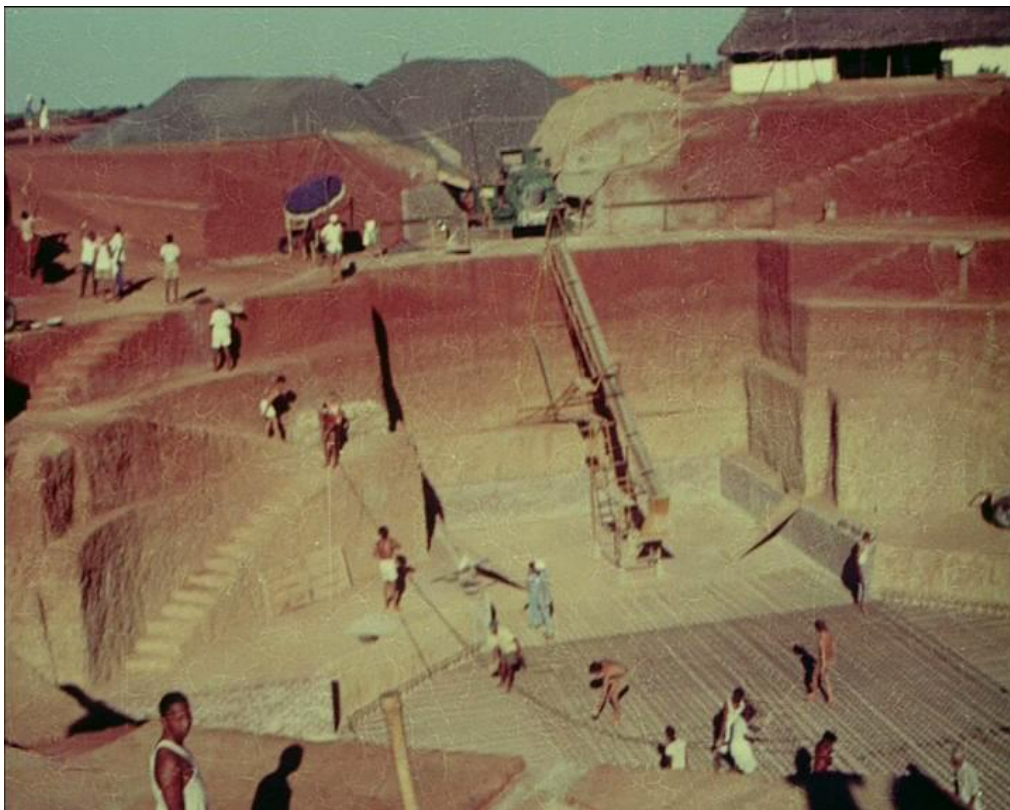
The delivery of 48 tons of steel to the site has been completed. Welding was completed on 24th April using a welding set loaned by HARPAGON workshop of the Ashram, with a team of welders. Laid and to end, the welded joints would reach 300 meters length.

The first layer of steel reinforcement (200 bars weighing a total of 10 tons) was laid in position by Sunday working parties of Ashramites and Aurovilians. It required 10,000 joints and "3,000 spacer blocks" (small concrete cubes with wire ties) to position and secure the steel bars accurately. The tie-slab has a second layer of steel reinforcement (plus the steel for four diagonal tie beams) which will be completed by 1st May and inspected by the engineer on 2nd May. The overall thickness of concrete will be 25cm. As a result of preliminary cube tests, we have selected a concrete mix with a strength of 250 Kg per sq. cm., and about 60 cu. m. will be poured on 3rd May.

Foundation Footings

Preparation work for the next step, the reinforcement for the foundation footings is well under way. The steel has been cut and shaped and is being placed. It is anticipated that concrete will be poured more frequently, thus minimizing the apparent lulls of activity between pourings, although there is a possibility of being held up by the effects of sudden rain-showers, and a shortage of cement caused by strikes at local factories.

HARPAGON has loaned us oxy-acetylene equipment with its operating team, to cut the large diameter (20 mm. and larger) rods of high-tensile steel. This equipment cuts a thousand rods in a day, like a knife through butter. The carpenters have finished the first set of shuttering for the pillars.



Other Work

A shed of 180 sq. m. area is nearing completion, containing a cement-store, a materials store and carpenters shop. A building containing showers and toilets is being designed, and extensions to the Workers Camp are planned, providing more rooms and facilities for Aurovilians working on Matrimandir. At present there is a regular work-force of 12 Aurovilians working on Matrimandir's design and construction.

* * *

1972, May

1972, May 1st: Letter from Piero to Mother:⁹

AV Archives
English

Douce Mère,

After two months for preparing the reinforcement in the foundation of the Matrimandir, Wednesday evening finally, we will start the concreting.

Give us, Douce Mère, a message for the first day and night, so that for all the work will be light and guided from You.

Can we symbolise in the four piers of the Matrimandir the four personalities of the Divine Mother?

Wisdom

Strength

Harmony

Perfection

Thank You to have given to us the Matrimandir.

Piero

* * *

1972, May 16th: Piero's Progress Report:

AV Archives; Ruud's Matrimandir Diary, entry dated May 16th. Message only: MoA, p. 5; CWM, XIII, p. 233
English

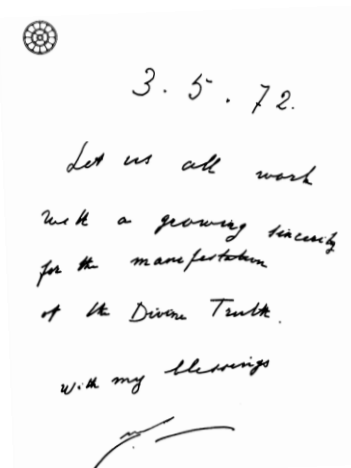
Tie slab

On **May 3rd**, the 40 tons of steel reinforcement of the tie-slab was inspected and certified as satisfactory by the engineers, Sri Santhanam and Sri Natarajan, of the Structural Engineering Research Centre (S.E.R.C.), Madras.

At 4 P.M, Shyam Sunder delivered a special message from the Mother:

**Let us all work with growing sincerity for
the manifestation of the Divine Truth.**

With my blessings



The operation of pouring the 76 cubic metres of concrete then commenced and continued for 26 hours, finishing at 12 noon on the **May 14th**. The only interruption was for cleaning the cement mixer.

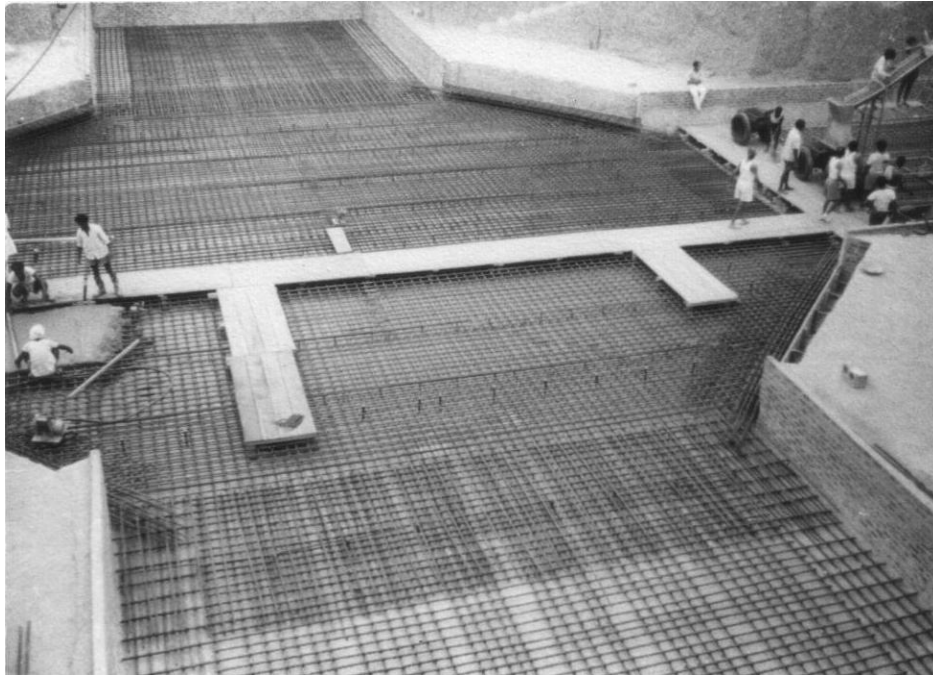
The result of the sample cubes taken during the pouring was excellent. The target strength was to be 250 kg/cm². The test cubes were strong enough to take loads of 320 and 360 kg/cm² before crushing.

Approximately 120 people participated in the work, which was done in an atmosphere of harmony and joy, and was a memorable collective experience.

⁹ As we have seen, on 15th Jan. 1972, Mother had given these names to the 4 pillars (and names to the 12 rooms in the "petals") but this fact had not been shared with people as deeply involved in Matrimandir work as Piero. Decades later, Piero told this editor that he heard this fact as a rumour and wrote this letter to know whether it was true.

Foundation Footings

The next concreting operation will be the foundation footings. Preparatory work has included erecting scaffolding to allow the erection of the steel reinforcement for the pillars. This reinforcement has to be in place before the footings themselves can be poured. The heavy rain of **May 11th & 12th** interrupted the work schedule. Approximately 200m³ had to be pumped out, the mud that was washed into the excavation removed and everything cleaned. Reinforcement for the first pillar was erected by **May 15th**, and the steel for the second Pillar is now being put up.



Other progress

The stores for materials and workshops have been completed. The welding set which burned out has now been replaced. There are now thirteen Aurovilians working regularly on the site.

Next concreting operation

The next operation will be the pouring concrete for South & East Foundation footings, which are each about 100m² in area and 1.20m deep. The total quantity of concrete to be poured is 240m³, as compared to 76m³ for the tie-slab. It will be poured into each footing in 4 layers of 30cm each.

It is intended to commence this work on Saturday **20th May** at 4 p.m., pouring one layer per night (30m³ of concrete) for eight consecutive nights.

Each working shift will therefore be from 4 PM until approximately 2 AM.

All Aurovilians, Ashramites and other persons of goodwill are invited to help.

A special kitchen will again be in operation

Any change of plan will be notified.

* * *

1972, May 18th: *Letter from Piero to Mother:*

Typed

English

Douce Mère,

Saturday evening will start the concreting of the two foundations south and east of Matrimandir. With your protection the work will run for 8 days, mainly made during the night from Aurovilians and Ashramites.

Douce Mère, be with us and give us your blessings, so that harmony and goodwill will flow in our hearts during these long week of work.

Your child

*

Note from Piero to Shyam Sunder:

Typed note
English

In the last letter to the Mother (1.5.72) we have posed a question regarding the symbolic names of the piers. Do you have asked? If not and if it is any think again, it will be possible to ask the question this time? The question was:

“Can we see in the four piers of the Matrimandir the symbol of the four Personalities of the Divine Mother?”

*Equanimity
Strength
Harmony
Perfection*

Thanking you.

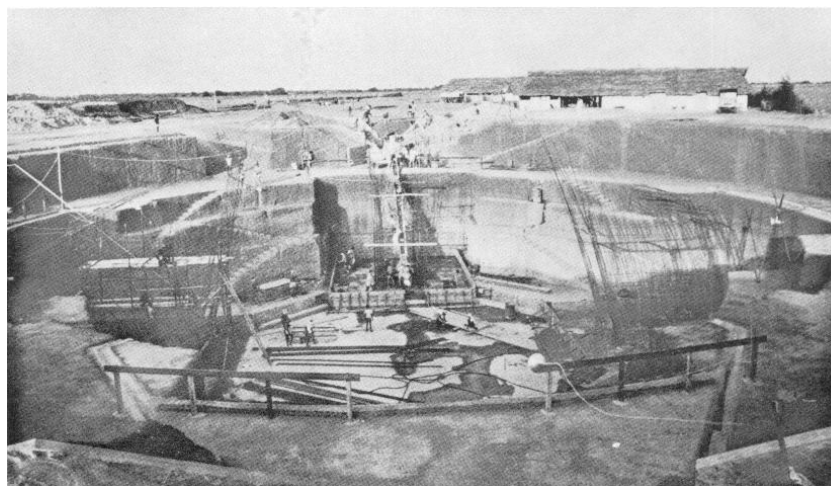
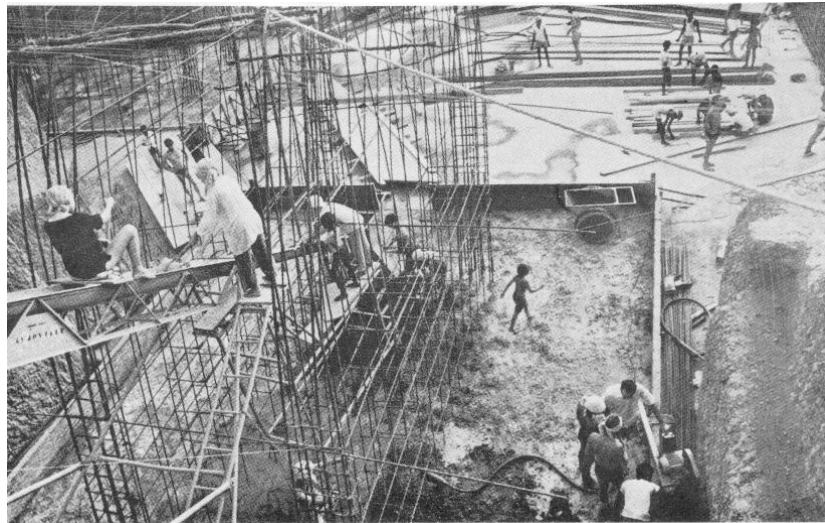
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1972, May 20th: *Excerpt from Savitra’s “Auroville, The First Six Years – 1968-1974”:*

AV6, p.85
English

Concreting south and east footings (100m² - 1.20m deep)

Quantity 240m³. to commence May 20th – one layer/night, 8 consecutive nights, 4 p.m. - 2a.m.



Concreting the footings of the pillars – one by one

* * *

1972, May 28th: *Letter from Piero to Mother:*

AV Archives

French

Douce Mère,

During eight days, Aurovilians and Ashramites each evening from 3 till morning 2 or 3 have worked for the concreting of the two foundations East and South of the Matrimandir.

With your blessings the work was finished yesterday night in an atmosphere of joy and love.

Thank you Douce Mère for your presence between us.

Your child,

[The next day, Shyam Sunder writes in his hand: "Mother is informed".]

* * *

1972, June

1972, June 6th: *Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":*

DML, p. 186; AMW, p. 187

English

The Madras engineers [from S.E.R.C.] came yesterday. They say that the quality of the Matrimandir construction work done so far is satisfactory.

*

1972, June 8th: *Notice signed by Mother with Blessings:*¹⁰

DML, p. 187

Matrimandir Workers' Camp is meant for those who:

1. Work whole time at the Matrimandir or in the Matrimandir Garden Nursery.
2. Do not take alcohol or drugs, and live cleanly.
3. There should be no smoking or sex-indulgence in the Matrimandir area.

With blessings.

*

Excerpt from Savitri's "Auroville, The First Six Years – 1968-1974":

AV6, p. 85

English

4 foundation footings completed 8 June. (480 m³).

* * *

1971 or 1972: *Dr. Tim Rees, a British Aurovilian cum hydrologist has the opportunity to explain to Mother his expert opinion about Auroville's water situation*¹¹. *After listening to him, she concludes:*

Personal verbal communication by Dr. Tim Rees to the editor.

English

There is enough water. The Aurovilians will have to use of their ingenuity to utilise it.

* * *

1972: *Mother agrees with the discs being covered with real gold:*

Personal communication from Shyam Sunder to the editor, confirmed by Mrs. Dayanand.

*In India and in other Asian countries, people like to cover with gold the roof of the sanctum sanctorum of their most sacred shrines. Feeling deeply that Matrimandir should be covered with real gold, Mrs. Anjani Dayanand*¹² *shared her feelings with Shyam Sunder and Roger, who then spoke to The Mother and received Her approval to use real gold for the discs*¹³.

* * *

2nd Phase of construction work: The four RCC pillars

1972, June 11th: *Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":*

DML, p. 188

English

The basement of Matrimandir pillars is finished. The construction of the actual pillars is to start.

The work will be slow now due to lack of resources.

Mother apparently did not like the slowing down.

* * *

¹⁰ This framed message used to hang in *Matrimandir's Workers' Camp's* on the outer face of its bathrooms wall.

¹¹ As long as the average yearly rainfall will remain in the range of 1,300mm/year, Auroville's water challenge won't be one of lack of sufficient resources but one of managing them properly.

¹² Anjani was a member of the then 'suspended' "Comité Administratif d'Auroville".

¹³ Until then, Roger's idea was that Matrimandir's outside face would evolve together with the consciousness of the Aurovilians. To start with, he had planned gold coloured plastic discs.

1972, June 15th: *Excerpt from Ruud's "Matrimandir Diary":*

Two months from today will be the Centenary. The four pillars are supposed to be ready by then. It is, in a way a pity to have to work according to the calendar, for one of the most attractive aspects of the yoga and the Matrimandir is that the whole concept of time does fall away and that one tunes into a much wider stream in which time is relative. The days pass here like a wide sea and there are comparatively few fixed points by which to measure it. The Centenary Celebration is one of those. After the busy month of May we are in a slower period now, in which small things have to be done with precision.

One of the most striking things I experience in my transition from theology and psychology and books in general to working with matter is matter's lack of precision. In the more abstract approaches to reality everything always fits, things are identical or relevantly different, but with steel and cement it is always just a bit bigger or smaller or longer or thicker than you measured them to be the day before. A picket you stuck into the ground to indicate a fixed point has moved slightly a week later. The forty-metre long wires spanning the excavation are often our starting points for measurements, but they continuously sway in the wind and contract and expand as they like. It seems that we are not meant so much to achieve perfection as to limit the lack of it. Construction seems to take into account rather large margins, but at Matrimandir we happen to be aiming at perfection – one of the aspects of the Divine – and so we measure and re-measure, even if that slows the work down. And even so we miss the Point.

After **May 3rd and 4th** festival we had sixteen more festive evenings in the same month. The crater is round with perpendicular walls, but at the four compass points corners have been dug out in which the pillars are projected. On the bottom, at a depth of 10.20m was a second mat of steel connected to the central mat. After casting the central slab we started to erect the frames for the pillars. The first pillar, the South pillar was done by three Aurovilians: Piero, the architect in charge of executing Matrimandir, Gérard Maréchal and myself, with the help of a group of ten to sixteen Tamils. The carpenters had constructed a wooden scaffolding, on the model we used to learn in the scouting movement constructing with wood and ropes. Against it and around it we filed the steel rods, straight up but with an incline towards the centre. That is one more instance of matter's recalcitrance that you can fit connecting wires and supporting beams to your heart's content, but that the right incline has just changed a little bit by the next day. It is a continuous measuring and re-measuring process, fitting and refitting. At the narrow side which faces towards the centre, there are 4 rods of 3 cm thickness each and a length of 12m. Behind them stand 2cm thick by about 10m long rods, whole rows of them. The mat, supporting the pillars is about 10m long and 10m wide. In the beginning I thought that the four pillars would be of about that size, but to our surprise we saw that these large feet are going to support some slender legs. In each of the four corners there will be two pillars of 7.5m long, 9m high and only 60cm wide, so that in fact there will be eight pillars. At the top, where they will touch the sphere, they will be only 40cm wide. On the face of it, it looks surprisingly tiny and weak, but the whole of Matrimandir has been calculated on a computer in Madras, so I guess it's all right. Erecting the steel frames took about four to five days for a set of two and the last one we did in two days. It was an interesting experience for Gérard and I, neither of us having anything done in the line of construction, working with Tamil workers whose language we hardly, or rather not at all understand, just being allowed to do that job. When the first two steel frames were done, the pouring started again. Around the foot of the pillars, the ten-by-ten metres apart, a brick wall of 1.20m high was erected. That entire place had to be filled with concrete, so that the slender pillars got a tremendous footing. These 1.20m were cast in four layers. We started with the South and the East pillars. On the first evening we did 10cm. In the East pillar, next evening the same amount in the South pillar, in turns. It started every day at about 4 or 5 p.m. with the people from Aspiration and Centre, and about 9:30 p.m. members of the Ashram came to finish it. For the first few evenings work went on till morning before the job was completed. Later on, we sometimes finished even before midnight. On an average it lasted until 2 a.m. In the daytime we continued putting up the frames in the North and West pillars, in the hope that we could go straight into the next concretings after the first eight evenings. Within three days' difference we succeeded.

And so the second marathon began soon after the first. It started out smoothly. Sometimes fewer people came, so that everybody was not in each other's way. The atmosphere remained tremendous throughout and it was pleasant as well. Tea and bread were served in large quantities from the field kitchen. Everyday either the current went off or we got rained out, but then we just waited patiently until it was over and then we started again.

Last Thursday night the four footings were completed. Now we are still busy with the preparations for the next phase: the shuttering for the actual pillars. We'll start with a thin layer of cement, 30cm deep; the wooden frames, forming the shutterings will be fixed against this. This 30cm layer has to be executed with the utmost precision, for the calculations we make now will be repeated all the way up to the top of the sphere and every missing centimetre will grow into a serious deflection. We are concerned too with putting the basis in such a way that the pillars will be precisely opposite each other or at precisely 90° angles.

During the entire week Gérard has been working with a team of bar-benders to get the steel frames back into their right position and into the correct decline. Through the rather rough treatment they received during the concretings, the rods which are 11.20m, were pushed slightly out of place, in fact just a bit too much. Everywhere now wires, ropes and beams have been fixed and perfection is almost restored, for so long as it lasts. It all goes slowly, but quite accurately.

Tonight the preparations for the North and West pillars were completed so that tomorrow the carpenters can start putting the planks which form the shutterings for the 30cm layer. The day after tomorrow we may be able to start concreting again.

Yesterday night somebody asked Shyam Sunder, who was giving the Study Circle, how Yoga and work are related. His answer: "As long as you make this distinction between yoga and work, the work has not become yoga."

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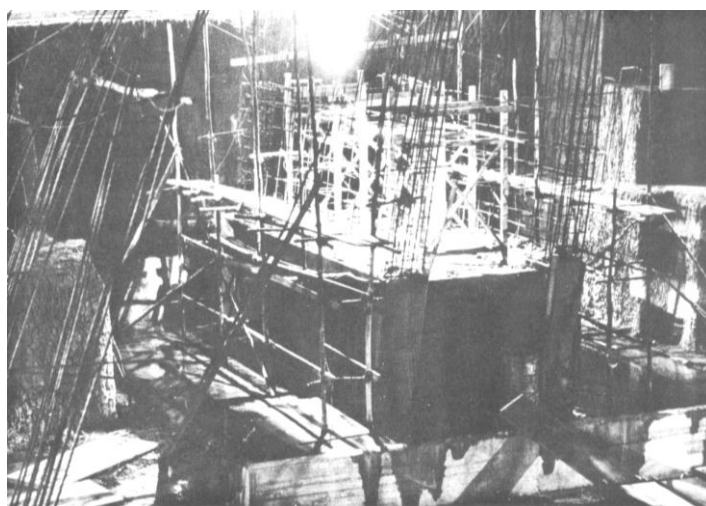
1972, June 19th: *Excerpt from Savitri's "Auroville, The First Six Years – 1968-1974":*

AV6, p. 85
English

4 paired pillars begun, taken up to starter level of 30 cm by 19 June.

West pillar, 2 m. poured; East, shuttering and form work.

Projected: 4 levels to be poured, 3 - 2m. each,



Night concreting of the first layer of the first pillar

* * *

1972, June 24th: *Note from Piero to Mother:*

AV Archives

French

Douce Mère,

In the last month an old infection from amoeba has started again to be active.

A doctor from JIPMER said that it will be dangerous to proceed without a special treatment with emetine. But for that is necessary to go to JIPMER on Thursday for 10 days.

Is it what I should do?

I am sorry that another difficulty has come for the construction of Matrimandir. With your help the work will not suffer.

Your child.

Piero

Note from Piero to Shyam Sunder:

Dear Shyam Sunder,

For these infections, I have already tried different treatments from Dr. Sen, Kamala, Nripendra, without result. At the moment the infection is only intestine. I was in JIPMER yesterday.

Sorry for the new difficulty. I am trying so that the work at Matrimandir will not suffer. For this I have asked the doctor three days time.

Fraternally, yours.

Piero

* * *

1972, June 25th: *Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":*

DML p. 192.

English

Piero, the architect looking after the Matrimandir work, is going to hospital for ten days.

Mother asked about the continuation of the work. We have made alternative arrangements for it.

* * *

1972, July

1972, July 1st: *Excerpt from Roger Toll's diary:*

Champaklal, Mother's lion, came to us at Matrimandir today, and with him came a profundity of peace and calm. We were all at work deep in the pit, then saw him walk along the edge of the hole, his long beard and hair flowing in the breeze. Only a few addressed him. It was like a meditation.

* * *

1972, July 3rd: *Piero's 4th Progress Report:*

Excerpt from Ruud's "Matrimandir Diary"
English

Foundations

The four foundation footings were completed 8th June; approximately 480m³ of concrete was poured.

Pillars

Work on the pillars has commenced. The four pillars were taken up to a "starter" level of 30cm by June 19th. In the West (Mahasaraswati) pillar, a 2.0m. level has been poured, and a slab is being cast, creating below the room in which the pumps for monsoon and decorative water will be housed.

The form work and shuttering for the same work on the East (Maheshwari)¹⁴ pillar is being erected.

Future work

Altogether there will be four levels to be poured, three of 2m each and one of 2.64m, taking the pillars up to the existing ground level. After this work is completed, one hopes to continue with the present construction staff, the work of building the structural ribs and the Meditation Hall of the main body of the Matrimandir.

*

Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":

DML, p.195
English

Informed Mother of the solution of a technical problem in the construction of Matrimandir.

Regarding the financial difficulty she remarked:

C'est dégoûtant [It is disgusting.]

* * *

1972, July 10th: *Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":*

DML, p. 197
English

Matrimandir's second pillar has come up to two metres. Now we take up the third one.

* * *

¹⁴ Editor's note: South is Maheshwari and East Mahalaksmi.

1972, July 17th: Referring to the 12 meditation chambers named by Mother exactly six months earlier, Roger asks Her to clarify how to match the twelve "Virtues" with their respective colours and in which direction to rotate:

Roger's personal archives
French

Visit of 17 July 72

Mother gives the following answer:

The colour light blue for Sincerity
and dark blue for Peace.

One rotates towards the left.

Agreement for this solution.

Mother is likely to have also told Roger where to start.

* * *

visite du 17 juillet 72
reponse Mere donnee par
la couleur bleu clair
pour la sincerite et bleu
foncé pour la paix -
on tourne vers la gauche
Accord pour cette
solution -

1972, July 20th: Excerpt from Ruud's "Matrimandir Diary":

We are again one and a half months and some 800 bags of cement further. Now it is really a race against the calendar for the Centenary will be here within a month. Last year it was just an idea in somebody's head to write to Mother that we would complete the excavations for Her birthday and the four pillars for Sri Aurobindo's birthday. But at that -time all that that implied was not yet known and even now it is not clear whether we will make it. In fact we have given up hope of finishing it, however fast we go. But we know by now what is involved. Six or seven weeks ago we worked with three or four Aurovilians and that all but forced us into the role of supervisors. The heavy work was done mostly by our Tamil workers. We dreamed of a team of Aurovilians who together would be able to do everything. And now it has come. We are twelve to fifteen Aurovilians and the actual construction is fully in our hands. The atmosphere has changed fundamentally in the crater since we experience and do everything together; it has become more part of the Yoga which is, firstly, collective, and secondly, working with matter. Sometimes we have too many people and then we are in each other's way, but on some days, when there is much work, it all fits.

The pillars will consist of five layers. On all the pillars – four sets of two each – the first layers of two meters have been cast. That's the first solid piece of construction work we accomplished together and it taught us a lot. The rest of the layers are in fact only repetitions of the same process: erecting the 52 wooden panels will all their reapers, connectors, through-bolts, hook-bolts, big bolts, small bolts and nuts. It looks great, that woodwork, four walls of two-metre high panels, thirteen to a row, beautiful wood with regular connecting beams. It is a lot of bolting, measuring and fitting, but we are now able to put up the whole thing in about five days. Then again we have the night concretings, always with Aspiration in the evening and the Ashram at night. The group here works from the beginning till end. It is interesting to observe how everybody has found his or her place and how we manage to build a rhythm in which the work becomes something sacred, lifting you above yourself.

A day or two after casting the first layer, a connecting slab between the two parts of each pillar was cast. Later on the first layer of the pillars will disappear underground, but at the very bottom there will be pump houses to pump the rainwater out of the central collector. The concrete slab between the pillars are the roofs of these pump houses. So now we have garage-like structures, two metres high with flat roofs on all four sides of the crater. The fourth roof still exists only in wood and will be cast tomorrow night. These are minor concretings lasting one-and-a-half or two hours which is nothing to get excited about. For us it's only interesting when we can smell fresh concrete for ten to fifteen hours at a stretch.

This week we started the second level. The preparatory work in steel was already begun the week before. When we fitted the steel rods in May, we bound them together at the top to give the structure some solidity. Now that we're going higher, we have to untie everything, put new steel against it – the horizontal layers, the 'stirrups', and to correct the incline. Now that part is finished, just the first pillar, the East pillar representing Harmony, and we have started to construct the shutterings

with a new set of wooden panels, which will be 2.60m high this time. On the inside of the pillars they rest on the roof of the pump house, but on the outside of the pillars, scaffoldings have to be erected. Nobody working here knows how we'll get the concrete into that shuttering this week, for the chute which we have been using up till now is no more needed, yet the pouring level is still more than one meter below the level of the concrete mixer. That is what makes the work so interesting for us! All of us are amateurs and none of us knows what the next step is going to be. Piero is supposed to know that, and he will have to find a way, but he is ill and had to withdraw for some ten days. Now it is up to the amateurs, though the perfection does not suffer from it. Maybe just the contrary: because we all feel that this building is something so exceptional, so clearly a manifestation of a new world, we work to millimetre precision and try to achieve absolute perfection, insofar as it is possible with such dense materials. According to those who know there is a great difference – in atmosphere as well as in the finished product – between Matrimandir and professional construction sites. Happily!

We are all so much engaged in the construction that nothing else exists for us. The danger of one-sidedness could easily be there, and of closing your eyes to other aspects of reality and things happening in the world; yet we feel we are fully engaged in the developments of the world, that we are not isolated in this barren land somewhere in South Asia, ten metres below zero-level. We don't experience it as an exclusion of all the rest. We see so clearly how Auroville has a function in the present-day cultural confusion and renewal, – the function of pioneer and guide in the manifestation of a new consciousness which will be the basis of a new age. Matrimandir is no doubt a focal point in it: nowhere in Auroville is the totally new, the totally different of our adventure experienced so strongly as here. Rationally considered, our effort and its results are of course nonsense. From humanitarian angles, a large golden sphere in south India is of no use to anybody. It doesn't help India's development, given the way things are being developed these days; it doesn't fit into any of the accepted techniques and methods, nor does it aim to. Something else is involved. Maybe it isn't there for the villagers in India or for India itself, or for us, or for the world, but just for itself, for the Divine consciousness, for God's manifestation and revelation. Maybe. And we go on constructing, almost continuously, just too much, we don't do anything else, through many nights and till late most evenings; and when we're not working in the crater, we meditate in it or just sit here. It is for us a magnet which only very seldom releases its tension a bit.

* * *

1972, July 23rd: *Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":*

DML, p. 202
English

Matrimandir's four pillars have been constructed up to two metres high. The concreting of the second level begins tomorrow.

* * *

1972, July 27th: *In the course of a conversation, Mother tells Huta:*

SA, pp. 139-140
English

A few days back I told Roger to build a small house on the island near the Matrimandir. It must be simple: one sitting room, a sleeping room and a bathroom.

* * *

1972, July 30th: *Excerpt from Ruud's "Matrimandir Diary":*

In certain old and ancient things I was never interested, because they fell out of my field of vision. But now suddenly I can relate to them. Ancient Egypt with its temples monuments and mysteries takes on a tremendous importance, more than, say, the political situation of yesterday or today. Even occult and mythical events such as Atlantis begin to fall inside my field of vision since I've been allowed to become intensely involved in Matrimandir's construction, as if Matrimandir has everything to do with it, continuing the occult lines, moving on a layer of reality which penetrates infinitely deeper than the normal and more superficial history. I notice I am inclined, much more than before, to believe

fantastic unbelievable stories and to take into account beings and laws of other levels of reality. Around the pyramids and temples of Egypt and the Aztec culture, and perhaps also some of the medieval cathedrals, people moved and situations occurred, laws were at work which developed into wisdom now beyond our reach, but which still exists in one way or another, on some layer of reality. It looks, while building Matrimandir, as if we are coming into contact with those earlier traditions. The other side of it is that we are losing contact with a number of things considered "important" in the present-day world. The awareness of how different this place is becomes stronger and stronger, though we are by far not able to realise the degree and manner in which Matrimandir is different. No one here was very interested in talking to begin with, but now even that minimum of words seems to be decreasing. Amongst ourselves there is no desire at all to discuss things, the more so since we are not searching for a meaning. What talking goes on is rather an exchange of experiences, an expression of feelings and insights in which we recognise each other. It is a talking surrounded by silence. It becomes more and more difficult to relate to the many visitors who are passing through in increasing numbers. Their questions come from a world so different from the one in which we move, this one of silence, that we can hardly answer them. What we prefer to do with guests is to go and sit with them in silence at the edge or the bottom of the crater, and to let the crater and its forces do its work for us. If one experiences nothing, then talking will not help in any case. And if one experiences something, then there is no need to talk.

This feeling of unity with the ancient mysteries was reinforced this week when we heard that Roger, the chief architect, had asked Mother who would be allowed to enter Matrimandir after its completion. "Just anybody?" "No", She answered. Then who? It seems that only certain members of the Ashram and certain Aurovilians will be allowed to enter the sphere. Certainly not just any visitor, guest or tourist. That certainly sounds like those ancient secret temples for initiates! We presume that a good deal of protection is involved as well, for the Force will be so powerful that one will be unable to stand without preparation or training. Roger then asked how it will be determined who is allowed and who isn't. She said something like "wait and see".

* * *

1972, August

1972, August: Excerpt from Roger personal notes after meeting Mother:

Original in Roger's personal archives.
French

À tout 7e

À propos du Matrimandir
la qualité du silence
Je voudrais qu'on garde le
silence, il faudrait écrire
ici on garde le silence, en
Français en Anglais en Tamoul
- Pas de musique
À propos des fleurs
Pas de fleurs à l'intérieur, il
faudra une salle pour les garder
dans un couloir.

À propos des gens admis au
Matrimandir -
Pas pour les visiteurs en principe
réservé aux Aurovillais mais
Tout le monde ne sera pas admis
la 1^{re} condition pour ceux qui
voudront y aller, le demander.
Pas ceux qui auront contribué
à la construction seront admis
en premier lieu, s'il y a des cas douteux
on me les soumettra. Tous ceux
qui ont une présence douteuse
n'iront pas, si on a le moindre
doute on ne présentera le cas.
Les gens doivent être connus, ^{the} pour
leur qualification

Porte Uddin
on ne peut pas laisser ouvert!
il faudrait alors des gardiens
volontaires, jour et nuit. Je crois
que la porte c'est plus simple -

* * *

August 1972

On the topic of Matrimandir

Quality of silence:

I would like people to keep silent. It must be
written there that one keeps silent, in French,
English and Tamil.

And no music.

About flowers:

No flowers inside. There should be
a room to put them in, in a corridor.

About admissions to Matrimandir:

Not for the visitors in principle
reserved for Aurovillians but
Not everyone will be admitted.
The first condition for those who
want to go there is to ask.

Those who have contributed to the construction
will be admitted in the
first place. If there are dubious cases,
they should be referred to me. All those who
have a dubious presence won't go.

If there is the slightest doubt, the case
will be referred to me.

People must be known for their qualifications.

Matrimandir door:

One cannot leave it open.
Then voluntary guardians would
be needed, day and night.
I think it's simplest with doors.

1972, August 1st: Excerpt from Ruud's "Matrimandir Diary":

Today's date is 1.8.1972, which taken together reads 1872, the birth year of Sri Aurobindo. The Centenary Celebration seems to have started seriously now, and there is a festive feeling in the air. Two facts determine our lives: the Samadhi of Sri Aurobindo in the main Ashram building, with Mother's room, and the Matrimandir. For me, for us here, the accent is slowly shifting. The Samadhi, around which the Ashram and our lives pivot, where it is quiet and clean and nice and where the presence of Mother and Sri Aurobindo is very intense, is the place where we always used to go for re-charging and finding new force. Because of the opening celebrations, there are at this time many guests and visitors, even around the Samadhi. It is already crowded, a bit confusing, noisy and there is a kind of holiday-atmosphere. After sitting there for a while, I rushed back to Matrimandir, where it is wide, large, cosmic and futuristic. The Ashram does have a different atmosphere, especially when

many people come there to spend their holidays. From today onwards, a programme of music, dance and drama is being presented. At Matrimandir the work continues as usual, more intensively. The Ashram has something devotional, which you notice all the more when your own yoga is in steel and cement. Matrimandir is sturdy, certainly not devotional, not religious. That was once made very clear when I stood at the crater with the Archbishop of Madurai, not up in the air but right down here. The presence of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is maybe stronger than elsewhere. Mother seems to have said something like that. But the nature of that presence is different: more vivid maybe, but I am not alone in them: all of us feel something like that and we have heard the same from people in the Ashram who come here to work.

* * *

1972, August 3rd: Piero's Progress Report No. 5:

Concreting of the pillars

The East pillar was cast in two consecutive night concretings, with its second layer of concrete 2.64m. deep, and involving approximately 25m³ of concrete. A movement of the shuttering produced an inaccuracy on the front face of one of the pillars' piers of up to 5cm. This was removed by chiselling and made good with cement, and its repair is now, virtually indistinguishable from the rest.

Quality of the concrete: The sacking with which the first layer of the pillars was shrouded is being progressively removed as the curing process is completed, and the quality and appearance of the concrete is first class.

The steelwork for the second layer has been erected on the North and West pillars, and it is in process of being erected on the South pillar. The scaffolding and shuttering for the West pillar is ready, and concrete will soon be poured, both piers in one day and one night. Scaffolding for the third layer of concrete on the East pillar is being erected, and a pulling hoist system will be used to lift the concrete to the level from which it will be poured, which is 1.20m higher than the level of the concrete mixer.

Other work

A metal workshop has become operational. A steel yard for stocking steel for all of Auroville has been set up in a field near the construction site of Matrimandir. The pieces of land immediately to the south of Matrimandir excavation have recently been purchased, and the tea shop which was there has been moved to a nearby location.

Design work

Detailed design work, and working drawings for the erection process, continue to be prepared and implemented. The recent design team meetings considered aspects of the future planning, in particular the location of services and utilities. A large working model to explore various detailed aspects of design is to be constructed. Another model will examine the ventilation needs, suitable for testing in a wind tunnel. This will be prepared by the Auroville Centre for Environmental Studies (ACES) in association with the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Higher Course students. New design proposals for meditation chambers beneath the "petals" are being worked out. The chambers, named by the Mother according to the state of consciousness each symbolises, are: Sincerity, Humility, Gratitude, Perseverance, Aspiration, Receptivity, Progress, Courage, Goodness, Generosity, Equality and Peace.

*

Excerpt from Savitri's "Auroville, The First Six Years – 1968-1974":

AV6, p. 85
English

East pillar concreted 2 layers, 2 consecutive nights.

Steelwork prepared on north and west, south in process.

Metal workshop begun.

Steel stockyard established in field.

* * *

1972, August 5th (Saturday): *Excerpt from Ruud's "Matrimandir Diary":*

Maybe Matrimandir is not so difficult to understand, after all. We are at the cradle of a new creation with a New Man. And for one whom we expect to be that first new being, must there not be a house, a New Dwelling? One of the cantos of Savitri is called "The House of the Spirit and the New Creation". For we have known for ages that the new being will be a spiritual being.

* * *

1972, August 8th: *Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":*

DML, p.209
English

The Matrimandir pillars are to be completed in four stages. Two pillars have come up to the second stage. The second stage of the third one has started. We are going ahead with the work.

* * *

1972, August 12th: *Letter from Piero to Mother:*

AV Archives
French

Douce Mère,

In Matrimandir we are now working at the central portion of the pillars. This type of work require a great concentration for these reasons we are not able to accelerate the work and complete the pillars for the 15th of August. The pillars will be completed only in the beginning of October. At that time I will have also completed the part of the construction of which you gave me charge last year.

Now may be is the time to decide for the future.

The following part, the construction of the sphere, if made at the actual¹⁵ speed, will require two years: one for the main structure and one for the construction of the outer shell, for the hall and the ramps.

More and more I am experimenting how much this construction is made with your protection and help and many of us are feeling that Matrimandir is the true beginning of Auroville.

We are ready to face the quantity of work, technical difficulties and responsibility of the execution.

We hope that our capacity of concentration will be adequate and that the period of construction will not be too long for our enthusiasm.

But only You, Douce Mère, can tell us what to do after the completion of the Pillars.

Is what we have made till now good?

Will it be good to proceed with the future work in the same spirit

Your child

* * *

1972, August 13th: *Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":*

DML, p. 211
English

Piero writes that the Matrimandir construction requires concentration and it is not possible to accelerate it so as to finish the pillars by 15th August.

No hurrying.

Shyam Sunder: He wants to know what is to be done after the pillars.

We will see.

* * *

1972, August 14th: *Excerpt from Ruud's "Matrimandir Diary":*

In two and a half hours the Centenary will be here. I have never known any day which has been so intensively lived towards as tomorrow. People expect all kinds of things: "August 15th" has become a mystical date, after which nothing will come any more. A bit like the magical year 2000. Many

¹⁵ Piero means "present".

people expect miracles. The beginning of a new creation. The return of Sri Aurobindo in our midst. Sri Aurobindo's appearance on the Darshan balcony together with the Mother. The conquest of all weaknesses and human imperfections. The break-through of the new being. And so forth and so on. But that would be an act of conjuring, not the birth of a new creation and a new man, I think. I have a strong feeling that the emphasis is not so much on tomorrow, itself but on the days, months and years after tomorrow: as if now it is getting serious, as if the time of cosily tinkering is over and now we have to put ourselves to it. It won't be so nice any more, it won't be a holiday camp any more, not a place for superficial freedom and for pleasures which have not yet become joys. The transformation of man and matter looks like a laborious task and not something for one day.

And yet... there are forces in the air which make many things possible, and in this yoga we may not declare anything to be unfeasible. None of the old conceptions are applicable to the birth of the new world.

The Mother keeps repeating it: we are at the hour of the birth of the new age, a new world. Be conscious of that at each moment, she says; get up and go to bed with it, let it determine your life and actions. Sri Aurobindo wrote a beautiful very powerful little essay entitled "The Hour of God", in which he says that there are certain historical ages or moments – "hours of God" – in which in a short time great and determining things can take place with relatively little effort. Happy is the one who is ready then, he writes. Mother has said, not so long ago, that we are now at one of these "Hours of God". Things apparently happen through a force not belonging to our ordinary nature: fast processes of growth and breakthroughs in persons and groups, a spiritual project like Auroville which, after all is just getting off the ground. In this light, some of the expectation for tomorrow may be right.

It is again typical of this yoga that we inaugurate the Centenary with work. We are having a concreting now, with the help of the Ashram. We started at 8 o'clock and we should finish just before-midnight. At exactly 12 o'clock, five fires will be lit on the three-meter level, after which we will have a half-hour meditation. It's not hard to grasp why work is so important, for matter itself is involved, not only man. Insofar as we ourselves are involved, it is important that the new consciousness be a continuous state – not a soaring over the summits with eyes closed, but being totally and all-round conscious in daily life, working with nice, and difficult and impossible people, with hard or soft materials, under any and all conditions. That is much more difficult than meditating with eyes closed: you grow into it more slowly, but each little step is worth much more than lucid visions in meditation. Otherwise, things will remain the same.

Of course, the four pillars will not be complete for the Centenary. But we are almost half way, which means it will take another two months, more so because the higher up we go, the more difficult it becomes. The second level has been cast on two pillars – the West and the East, and we are at this moment casting this level on the North pillar.

It has been a silent day today; as if everything and everybody is closer to the source of his being. Becoming quiet is the great art. Then only can we hear It and Him and Her.

* * *

1972, August 15th: Sri Aurobindo's 100th Birth Anniversary

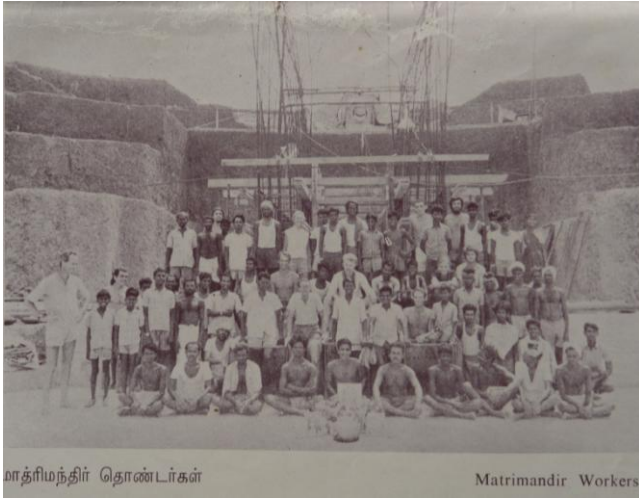
MoA, p. 104; CWM, XIII, p. 233; Matrimandir, p. 39
English

Excerpt from Ruud's "Matrimandir Diary" (dated Sept. 13th):

On August 15th there was a special midnight meditation to celebrate Sri Aurobindo's Centenary, and a collective meditation at 10:00 a.m. Matrimandir workers were presented with a souvenir poster carrying photographs of Sri Aurobindo, the Mother and the construction team, and Mother's message:

"Good will and peace to all. Blessings."

Prasad and a centenary napkin were also presented.



மாத்ரிமந்திர் தொண்டர்கள்

Matrimandir Workers



15.8.72

Good will and peace
to all

Blessings

**Good will and peace to all.
Blessings.**

* * *

1972, August 17th: *Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":*
DML, p. 211-12
English

Mother was very pleased to know that the Kulapalayam village has contributed Rs 210 for Matrimandir. It is a village of 300 houses and the village elders say that the amount is very small, but they give it as a token of their expression of brotherhood, goodwill and co-operation with Auroville. Shyam Sunder has spoken to Dyuman and they think that the Centenary napkin could be given to each house there.

Yes, yes. I was thinking that something should be given.

Narad has written to Mother about the smallness of the Matrimandir gardens fixed by Roger.

I have never told Narad that it should be very big... Roger is the best judge.



Photo of the rosewood model of Matrimandir and its gardens

Editor's Notes:

In order to understand why Narad wrote about the smallness of the gardens, one has to know that, at that time and for decades, they were supposed to be as small as shown in this rosewood model and not as large as they are presently.

What is shown in this model in rosewood was to be concreted and paved with the same material (tiles, stone, or other) as the small and large "petals" which are now covered with red sandstone. As can be seen in this photo, Roger's intention was to have one or two small ponds in each one of the gardens and to have there on islands and/or around these ponds some plants in vats or pots.¹⁶

This concept was completely different from that which Mother had described in 1965 and later, when She spoke of Matrimandir gardens being in the style of Kyoto's "Rokuon-ji" (golden temple).

Many felt, and told Roger, that people and plants would surely bake under the hot sun with such a huge surface of stone or tiles reflecting the heat. We will see that, mid March 1974, Roger will agree to replace most these paved surfaces with lawns and that at the beginning of the new millennium, he will agree to enlarge the gardens very substantially.

* * *

1972, August 18th: *Mother answers five questions on meditation sent by Seyril and Sadhana of the Matrimandir Workers Camp:*

DML, p. 212
English

Q.: should we assemble for meditation as a community in the Matrimandir excavation?

I do not like so much going inside the excavation.

Q.: Should the meditation be held as in the Ashram with tapes? Or in complete silence?

As they find convenient.

Q.: How many times a week should there be such community meditations?

According to me once a week.

Q.: At what hour should they be held?

According to convenience.

Q.: Our aspiration is to realise our group unity in You-Sri Aurobindo. In what ways may we do this best?
The Mother concentrated and kept silent.

* * *

¹⁶ As we have already seen, in an interview published in the April/June 1971 issue of the 'Journal of the Institute of Indian Architects', Roger explained about the concept described with this model: "First of all we come to a circular area composed of 12 gardens designed like opened lotus petals. None of these gardens is similar to the others. And yet they make up an overall design. They are separated by streams that originate at the four points of the compass. These streams delineate the shape of the 12 gardens. All together they reproduce the symbol of Mother. Separately now, they express each of the aspects of Mother through a floral decoration that may be changed according to the artistic will of the gardeners. The flowers are placed in removable vats."

Note that such is the case in front of the main of the Ashram building, where flowers are in movable pots and vats.

1972, September

1972, September 13th: *Piero's Progress Report No. 6:*

Concreting of the pillars

The East pillar has been concreted up to the fourth level and at 8.64m above, the foundation begins to rise up out of the excavation. Its curvilinear shape gives a clear picture of its final form, and the steps, which have yet to be cast, are indicated by the protruding steel reinforcement. An impression of the movement of ascent into the bosom of the Matrimandir is now possible.

Shuttering for the third level of the North pillar is being erected, and concreting will proceed in a few days. On the South and West pillars the steel reinforcement for the third level has been erected. It is hoped to finish the concreting of the four levels of all the pillars by the end of September.

Construction process

There are now two teams of Aurovillians at work on the erection of the shuttering for the pillars and this has speeded up the work. A crane of one-ton capacity was constructed in the Matrimandir workshop and is being used to lift concrete from the mixer level up to the pouring level on the pillars.

Engineers' visit

The consulting engineers from Madras visited the site recently and judged the concrete as first class. They were impressed by the exactness of the steel reinforcement and by the density, overall quality and appearance of the concrete. A guest engineer, who had worked at Chandigarh, remarked that it was the best concrete he had seen in India. Discussions were held on questions of design and construction in the future.

Water supply

A second pump is now supplying water near the workshop. A shower and field toilets will be built shortly.

Other Events

On the 15th August there was a special midnight meditation to celebrate Sri Aurobindo's centenary, and a collective meditation at 10 a.m. Matrimandir workers were presented with a souvenir poster carrying photographs of Sri Aurobindo, She Mother and the construction team, and Mother's message:

“15.8.72 Good will and peace to all, blessings, Mother”

Prasad and a centenary napkin were also presented.

Early in September, Udar gave a talk on the construction of Golconde.

*

Excerpt from Savitri's "Auroville, The First Six Years – 1968-1974":

AV6, p. 85
English

East pillar up to 4th level, 8.64 m. Begins to rise up and out of excavation.

Curvilinear shape clear, steps indicated by protruding reinforced rods.

Aurovillians increased to 2 teams.

Crane of 1-ton capacity constructed in workshop to hoist concrete from mixer level to pouring level.

* * *

1972, September: Excerpt from Savitra's "Auroville, The First Six Years – 1968-1974":

AV6, p. 72

English



Michael [Tait], a young Englishman who had gained construction experience in the initial stages of Bharat Nivas, established a keet workshop in September '72 adjacent to the Matrimandir to meet its growing need for machine maintenance – vibrators, mixers, hand tools. But with the evolving complexity of the construction work, the workshop soon outgrew its simple quarters, inheriting a dozen power tools and a new, expanded cinderblock and asbestos building. It designed and constructed its own furnishings, and in addition to overseeing the multiple spheres of work concerning the Matrimandir – welding, bar-bending, production of scaffoldings, shutterings and tubular support-frames – it also services miscellaneous needs in other areas of Auroville, including the construction and assemblage of two trailer wagons for the reforestation program.

* * *

1972, Sept. 14th: Letter from Piero to Shyam Sunder:

Typed & signed

English

Dear Shyam Sunder,

Maybe it is better that before to read the letter to Mother you tell her about our meeting on Tuesday 12th, and about the favourable opinion of Roger on the quality of our work.

I have also mentioned the question of the time, that seems for somebody very important, as expressed at the meeting at Matrimandir on the last Sunday of August.

Thanking you, sincerely.

*

Letter from Piero to Mother:

Typed & signed

English

Douce Mère,

We have completed last night the Pier East of the Matrimandir. Many of us were feeling it was an important moment, as the conclusion of the work started on February 21st.

The specialists of Madras, making the design of the structure, have expressed the opinion that the quality of the concrete work made by us is excellent.

On August 12th I have written to you asking about the construction of the sphere. Technically it is necessary to know from now how you want to proceed:

- To employ a contractor

• To go on building the Matrimandir by ourselves as now.
Your answer was “we will see”.
Maybe has now come the right time of a decision?
Your child.

*

Excerpt from Shyam Sunder’s notes published in his “Down Memory Lane”:

DML, p. 222
English

Last midnight we have completed one pillar of Matrimandir. The other three pillars we expect to complete in six weeks. Lack of money is a big difficulty.

*

Excerpt from a report published in the “Gazette Aurovilienne”:

Gaz, Vol. II, 1972, No. 2, p. 18

On the 14th of September, the Mother gave her blessings for Aurovilians to continue the construction of the Matrimandir, beyond the four foundation pillars.

The four foundation pillars have now been completed. Consulting engineers from Madras visited the site recently and were highly impressed by the exactness of the steel reinforcements and by the density, quality and general appearance of the concrete.

A second pump has started supplying water near the workshops of Matrimandir.

* * *

1972, Sept. 15th:

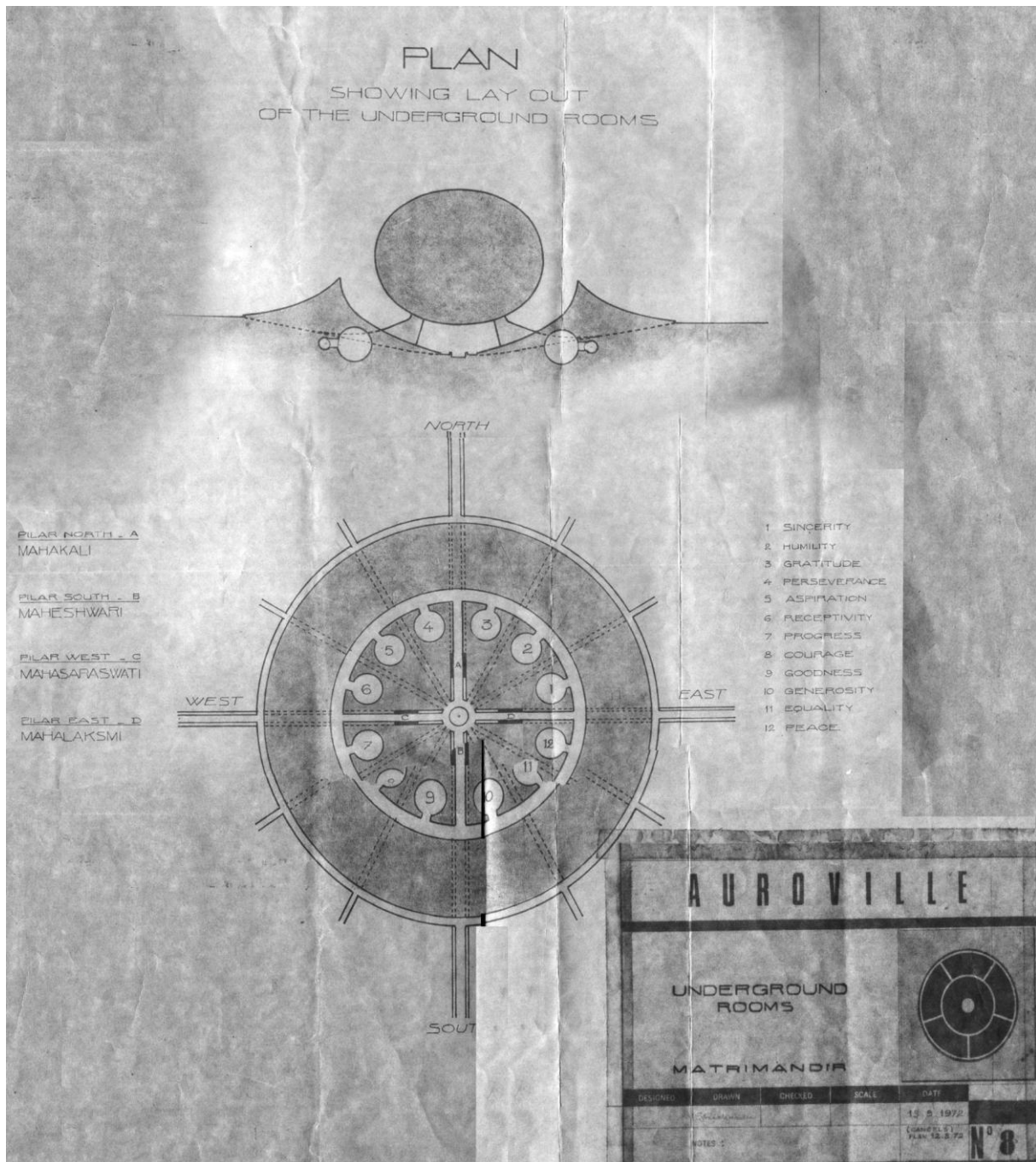
Excerpt from Shyam Sunder’s notes published in his “Down Memory Lane”:

DML, p. 223
English

The Madras engineers, who came to inspect the construction of the Matrimandir, have found it to be very satisfactory. Roger is going on 20th. That day he will give them further instructions at Madras.

*

“Papa” Richardet completes this drawing which shows the location of the rooms in the “petals”:



Gabriel Richardet wrote on this drawing that it cancels a drawing dated 12.8.72. As it will be part of a study of the “petals” presented by “Auroville’s Future” in March 1978, it represents what was understood about the location of these rooms during Mother’s lifetime: the first and last rooms, “Sincerity” and “Peace”, should be on either sides of the East radial – which is also where the first and last gardens, “Existence” and “Perfection” are located. We have also seen that, in March or April 1971, Mother had decided that Matrimandir’s entrance door(s) should face the rising sun on 4th April.¹⁷

* * *

¹⁷ Decades later, Roger won’t remember anymore where to start from. He will accept Jacqueline’s suggestion to oppose diametrically the only garden and meditation room which have the same name: “Progress”. As this brought the “Courage” petal next to the “Mahakali” pillar, they felt good about it because the room “Courage” is red and Mother would wear a red saree on the day of Kali Puja. But why privilege Mahakali?

1972, Sept. 16th: *Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":*

DML, p. 223
English

Piero's letter about the next phases of the Matrimandir construction. He wants to know whether it should be continued by ourselves or by a contractor.

What does Roger say?

Shyam Sunder: He agrees that it be continued by Piero, preferably with the help of the Ashram engineers, if available.

Mother approves of our continuing the work.

* * *

1972, prior to September 20th: *Roger agrees to major structural modifications suggested to him by Piero:*

Note written by Piero in May 2014 to explain how these modifications occurred:

In the middle of 1971 Prof. Chamanlal Gupta, of the Ashram, proposed to a prestigious Institution in Chennai, the Structural Engineering Research Centre (SERC), the assignment of the structural design of MM. The assignment lasted several years and was fulfilled mainly by a brilliant young engineer, Mr. T.K. Santhanam.

A young student of architecture educated in the Ashram's International Education Centre, Ranajit Gupta was engaged in making a full set of drawings that were given to the engineers at the end of September. Unfortunately the architectural design proposed by Roger was not finding an easy structural solution. Major points of difficulties were: the 4 ramps and the slab at the Room's floor level which was designed as 4 floating petals. Roger was upset by the various arrangements proposed by the engineers. In his words: "with crucial changes the architectural impact would be lost". Eventually at the beginning of 1972 the structural design was drifting between exchange of letters and meetings, without finding a near conclusion.

During this period I found Roger in a different mood than before and one day we discussed this matter seriously. Suddenly it came to me that, by going closer to Mother's concept, as shown in Udar's drawings (see entry dated 2nd January 1970), it would be easier to find a way out. I explained this to Roger. Immediately after, I offered him for consideration two ideas in this direction: 1) Let us have only two ramps, starting from the second level and arriving in the ribs at the same level as the Room. 2) Let the Room only be surrounded by the dodeca wall¹⁸ (instead of the same wall continuing down till the second level) and let the Room's floor be continuous.

I waited a few seconds for an answer from Roger: this proposal was touching important aspects of the previous design and I was not sure about his reaction. The answer came and unexpectedly was affirmative: "Oui, pourquoi pas!..." (Yes, why not!...) It was a very intense moment: for Matrimandir and for us all. These were indeed essential decisions.

Roger liked the two proposals, especially to have the dodeca wall and the whole of the Room as a sort of "suspended structure" inside the sphere. Seen from the lower levels would have left the complete visibility of the spiraling ramps and of what later became the inner skin, as it is presently. I was also happy because, thanks to the objections of the engineers, unexpectedly the Room was assuming a more familiar aspect, closer to the simplicity of what Mother had seen and described to Udar.

Mid 1972 the new drawings were finalised: Roger wanted to have them done by his most trusted person, "papa" Richardet. They were given and explained to the engineers in September.¹⁹

Of course after a year of work the engineers were all but happy about the radical changes. But, on September 25th, with an extraordinary composure, controlling their irritation, they wrote to us only

¹⁸ Till then, this dodeca wall (12-faceted wall, an extension from below of that of the Chamber) was going to enclose also the space at 2nd level as shown in the drawings, dated 21.9.71, reproduced here (see pp. 102-04).

¹⁹ On September 9th, T.K. Santhanam and P.R. Natarajan wrote to Roger "you will be sending the revised detail of the junction of the Dodeca wall and slab-2...". Hence, on that day, they were still unaware of these major modifications.

the following essential comment: "...it can be noted that every major structural member has been altered to a great extent. All of the designs done earlier have to be completely recast."

After that the structural design took a fresh moment and was completed without encountering other insoluble problems.

* * *

1972, September 20th: *Roger leaves for France after meeting SERC's scientists in Madras and having them agree to the major changes Piero had suggested.*

* * *

1972, September 25th: *Excerpt from a letter from SERC scientist T. K. Santhanam to Piero:*

Piero's personal archives
English

I am summarising the items discussed on the 20th here at Madras between us when yourself, Mr. Roger Anger, Mr. Gupta, Mr. Ramanathan et al were present on your side and Mr. Ramiah, myself and Mr. Natarajan were present on our side.

The following are the major changes incorporated by you in the structural system of Matrimandir.

- i. The Dodeca wall system is changed and also reduced in area.²⁰*
- ii. The original set of two internal and two external ramps, have been omitted and now there is one pair of ramps whose geometry is yet to be defined.²¹*
- iii. The pair of main piers which were parallel to each other are now made to slope towards each other in the top range.*
- iv. Slab-2 is without any holes now on the outer periphery as a result of the omission of the spiral staircase between level 1 and 2.*
- v. The petal shaped slab 3 is now changed to a regular annular slab. This new slab is made to float on small stubs resting on the cantilever arms and also on a fully circular ring beam towards the outer periphery.*
- vi. The outer envelope which was earlier approved as R.C.C. shell is now changed to a metal space frame with a plastic sheet or similar material as covering.²²*

You have to send us the revised drawings with the various dimensions.

Thus it can be noted that except the slab-1 and to some extent the main piers, practically every major structural member has been altered to a great extent. All of the designs done earlier have to be completely recast.

[...]

* * *

1972, September 26th: *Excerpt from a letter from Piero to T. K. Santhanam:*

Thank you for the hospitality given to us on 20th, when we were in the Centre for the technical discussion. Herewith n. 2 copies of plans and sections of the solution 2, with the discussed modifications...

* * *

²⁰ This 12-faceted wall doesn't extend below the Chamber's floor level.

²¹ These 4 spiral ramps are shown on the drawing p. 103.

²² Note this other major change. Having a translucent skin was Roger's original idea but, probably for technical reasons (and because it would have been seen only from the pair of "exterior ramps", he had dropped the idea of opted for a RCC shell instead. Now, probably because the skin will be seen from the second level and the twin ramps, he insists again on having a translucent skin – though no technical solution has been offered as yet.

1972, Sept. 27th: *Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":*

DML, p.228
English

Three Indians have written to Mother for blessings and guidance for Durga Puja during Navaratra at Matrimandir, Mother said, "Alright".

Shyam Sunder informed Mother that the idea is that near the Matrimandir Workshop the place should be cleaned, Durga's picture be installed and Sri Aurobindo's "Hymn to Durga" be recited.

Mother nodded her approval. When asked for further guidance, or if she has to say more about it, she said, "Nothing."

* * *

1972, September 28th: *Letter from Piero to Mother:*

Typed and signed
English

Douce Mère,

Today we should complete the North Pillar of the Matrimandir.

With humility we ask your blessings for her long life.²³

Your child

* * *

1972, September 30th: *Letter from Piero to Paolo Tommasi:*

AV-Archives
Typed & signed. Scan available

Very dear Paolo,

After you left (but not long after, your vibration was still here in the atmosphere), there was a meeting at Matrimandir to speak about the discs and the internal staircases. Indeed, as I had told you, we have discovered that one would bang one's head in several places. There was a very beautiful and special moment when I felt your presence very strongly. It lasted just an instant but it gave me the courage to propose to Roger a radical modification for the access ramps, by removing some of all these staircases which had been foreseen till then. Just in one instant, Roger under his thick carapace has seemed to understand the message and maybe unexpectedly he too felt you. To the point of wanting to modify the meditation room, going back to Mother's original vision. I am sending you a series of drawings of the new version, which everybody likes. Naturally it created a lot of sparks with engineers in Madras, who reluctantly agreed to redo their calculations (as said, these are very complex calculations).

Regarding the exterior, Roger wants now at all cost a steel structure covered with some plastic material (something called cocoon that will have to be imported from the US or from France. Maybe there is something similar in Italy. Could you check in Rome?). The light effects internal and external it produces at night are not unpleasant. It is on this structure that one would have to attach the discs, which should – it is my view after conducting the test we conducted – be able to oscillate along the vertical diameter, and not in all directions as Roger wanted. The problems to be solved are enormous and full of unforeseen (nobody knows this plastic material) roughly speaking, designs and a decision would be required within 2 months, after that we should have managed casting the lower part of the sphere. Roger is in Paris for two months. If you have the opportunity, go and push him a bit, though I strongly doubt that the project could be born in Paris. He is still fully convinced of these discs. In my view, the structure should somehow filter the light coming into the sphere, like small holes in the shell of an echinoderm [sea star], or like stain glasses, or as through alabaster, or like in an eggshell seen against the light. It would be beautiful to climb up there in an aquatic light.

We have completed two pillars and in two weeks we will complete the two others. We would need 2 to 300,000 rupees to start the second part. Mother has given us her blessings to carry on without labour. A huge quantity of scaffolding is required and we are buying some pipes. By the way, I would

²³ Editor's Note: This is what is written,

have a favour to ask of you: the external diameter of these pipes is 48mm, the same as at our place. Where the suppliers are not clear, is about the tube's wall thickness. According to some the "middle" type which weighs 3.95Kg/m is enough (wall thickness 3.25mm); according to others, the "heavy" type (wall thickness 4.05mm) which weighs 4.83kg/m would be better.

Considering the quantity of pipes required, there is a big price difference. Could you find out from companies which lease out this type of scaffolding what type of tube they normally use? That is to say the weight per running meter; according to my calculation, for our site the "middle" type would be more than sufficient. Here nobody has a big experience of this type of things.

I would very much like to read again, with some distance, Mother's conversations with Satprem and you on Matrimandir. Unfortunately, Nata hasn't sent them to me and I doubt that he will.

I don't know why, I could ask Satprem for them but, at this point in time, I am afraid that he too will invent some excuses, who knows; could you photocopy for me yours? But tell me frankly if it bothers you.

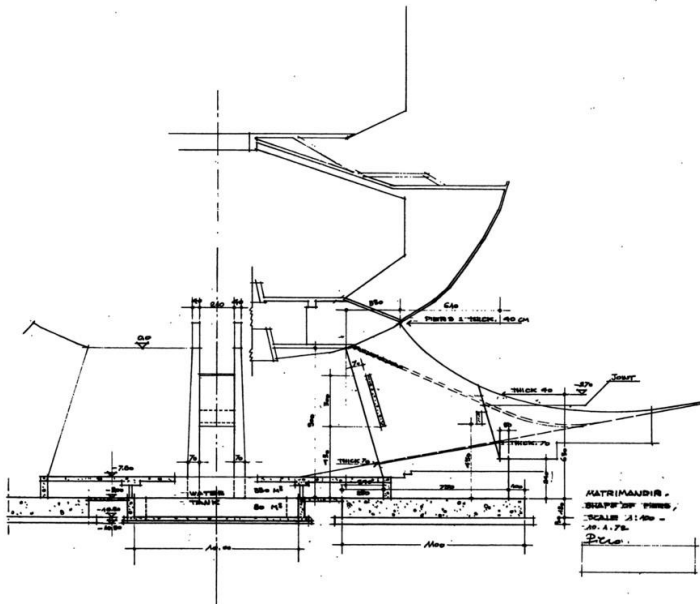
Have you been able to send my watch to my family or did someone pass by to take it?

I hope to receive soon some news from you. We embrace you wholeheartedly. Your Piero.

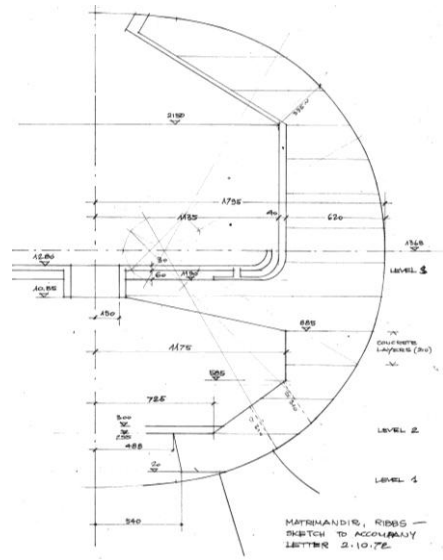
** * **

1972, October

1972, October 3rd: Piero writes to T. K. Santhanam to give him the drawing below and some more explanations.



Section dated 10.1.72



Section dated 2.10.72

Editor's comments:

As these sections are made halfway between the twin pillars, on that on the left, one sees one of the four staircases which were to give access to the Chamber. Note also that there was a wide gap (1m) between the Chamber's floor and dodeca wall

* * *

1972, October 3rd: Letter from Shyam Sunder to Piero:

Handwritten and signed
French, Translation G.G.

Dear Piero,

Mother has given "blessings", herewith attached, for the 3rd Pillar.

For the fourth the blessing packet will be given when the work is being done.

*

Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":

DML, pp. 230-31
English

The second pillar of Matrimandir was completed last night. In the first pillar a foundation stone touched by Mother was placed. Now two blessing packets are asked for the next two pillars.

Mother took two blessing packets and asked Shyam Sunder to choose one. For the fourth, she said, the blessing packet will be given when the work is being done, she said.

* * *

1972, October 20th: *Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":*

DML p. 237

English

At Matrimandir the third pillar is finished. Mother was happy to know.

Day before yesterday when Shyam Sunder went to Matrimandir, there came the idea of starting the work of construction of the twelve meditation rooms and the Matrimandir gardens. Mother was happy.

On the other hand we have no money. There is no money to pay the land already bought, several construction works have stopped; even for the Matrimandir work already done we have borrowed a lakh of Rupees. In spite of this difficulty the idea persists.

Shyam Sunder: I want to know what Mother sees about it.

There is no money at all?

Shyam Sunder: No, Mother.

I see a pressure in the atmosphere... but what to do?

Shyam Sunder: I have spoken to the people at Matrimandir, Piero, Alain. There is the difficulty of money. They have asked me to ask Mother if she says 'yes'. At present, even if one begins, one can begin only slowly.

Are materials necessary?

Shyam Sunder: In the beginning, no, it does not cost much. But towards the end, it will cost a good deal. Mother gave her approval for commencing.

Shyam Sunder: Do I say to the people at Matrimandir that Mother has said Yes?

Yes.

* * *

1972, October 22nd: *Letter from Piero to Shyam Sunder explaining how busy he is already:*

Typed and signed. AV Archives (Shyam Sunder's file)

English

Dear Shyam Sunder,

I was informed today from Alain about your conversation with the Mother regarding Matrimandir.

I am now very busy to execute some drawings to be sent urgently to Madras.²⁴ The same drawings are needed later for the execution of the main structure. Sorry, I cannot see you today.

I am feeling that with the limited material, persons and drawings that we have now, it is for me difficult to see clearly and with a convenient security the execution of the work, especially if we start now the execution of the petals.

I do not feel to be technically and psychologically strong enough to have responsibility in the work in these conditions, especially with a tremendous pressure to do more and more.

Sorry, but I should consider the possibility of giving the honour and joy of building the Matrimandir to somebody else.

Thanking you for all, sincerely.

Piero

* * *

1972, October 24th: *Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":*

DML, p. 239; facsimile of the message at AV Archives and in SA, p. 145

English

A few days ago, Shyam Sunder had spoken about the extension of the areas of work of the Matrimandir construction and Mother had approved of it. She confirmed:

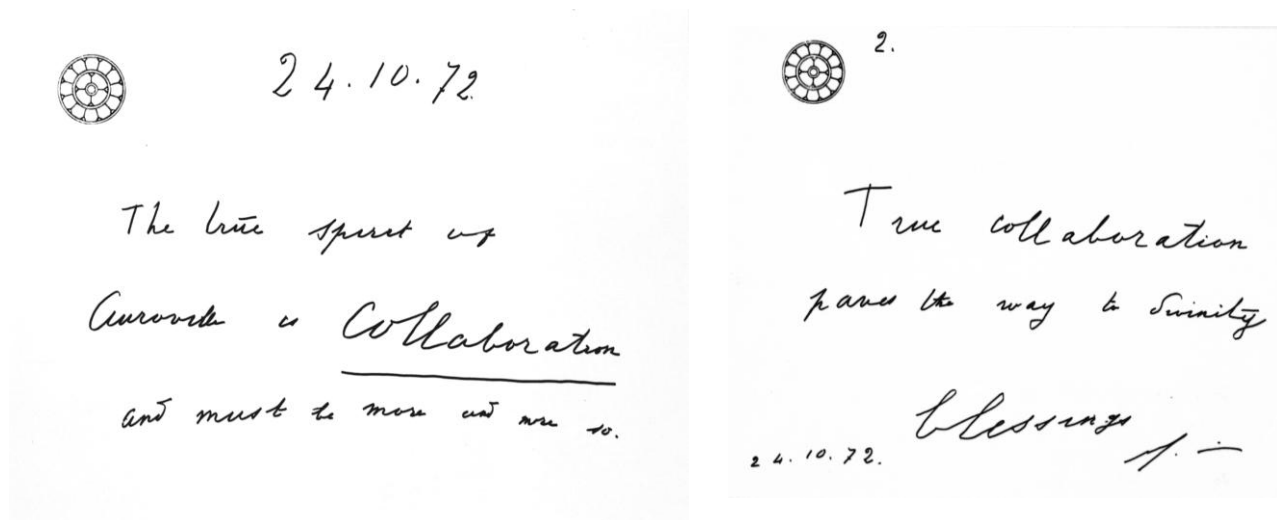
"Yes."

²⁴ Note that major modifications of the main structure had just been agreed upon and that Piero had to deal with their implications as well as with the ongoing construction. Was Mother informed of these modifications and of Piero's very heavy work-load?

Shyam Sunder: But Piero does not agree to it.

Why?

Shyam Sunder read out the letter written by Piero to him and Mother wrote a message:



The true spirit of Auroville is Collaboration and must be more and more so.

True collaboration paves the way to divinity.

Blessings

* * *

1972, October 25th: Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":

DML, p. 239
English

Shyam Sunder: I spoke yesterday to Piero. He says that it is not a question of collaboration or goodwill or faith in Mother. He speaks of financial difficulty; his overwork and increase in work due to change in plans.

Truly, I can't say what to do. I am no architect, not an expert. Each one is sticking to one's own point of view. [She shakes her hands]. What is the solution?

Shyam Sunder: Piero is the most capable person for the construction. He is necessary for the work. I can try to persuade him, Mother.

And if he is not persuaded?

Shyam Sunder: Then I don't know.

Try to find out a meeting point, a common base for the work to be done.

Shyam Sunder: Yes, Mother, I can try.

Mother gives a blessing packet.

* * *

1972, October 26th: Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":

DML, p. 240
English

Yesterday, Shyam Sunder went to Matrimandir, took Piero with him and there was a meeting with the people working there. The talking was done without passion and it is agreed that we should first finish the necessary studies in detail and then start the new areas of work in a few weeks.

Mother was pleased to know of it.

* * *

1972, October 28th: *Mother's answer to a question regarding the celebration of Durga Puja:*

MoA, p.89; AMW, p.447; Gazette 2, 2
English

Some people living in Auroville had asked whether Durga Puja could be celebrated at the Centre; the person who spoke to Mother about it reported her reply to Shyam Sunder in a letter of October 5th. The substance of this reply was later published in this form:

The Mother does not at all approve of any kind of religious ceremony in connection with any religious festival.

* * *

1972, October 31st: *On a request, Mother gives a message for the Matrimandir workers, along with a blessing packet, for the concreting of the four pillars up to ground level.*

DML, p. 241; facsimile in SA, p. 146; Matrimandir, p. 41
English



31. 10. 72

31.10.72

Harmony

Goodwill

Discipline

Truth

**I can work with you only if
you do not say a lie and
are at the service of Truth.**

1-1 harmony

Good will

Discipline

Truth.

I can work with you only if
you do not say a lie and are at
the service of Truth.

* * *

1972, November

1972, November 1st: *Excerpt from Roger Toll's diary:*

Madhav Pandit, at his regular study circle at Peace, gives us the new salutation for Aurovilians written by the Mother: "Au Service de la Verité... At the Service of Truth... Truth."

* * *

1972, November 1st: *Excerpt from Ruud's "Matrimandir Diary" (Progress Report No. 7):*

Pillars

Three of the pillars have been concreted up to four levels. The fourth level of the West pillar will be concreted in the near future, bringing this phase of the work to completion.

Next phase of the work

The portions of the pillars so far concreted have only been those necessary for the structural support

Main structure

The main structure comprises the four pairs of structural ribs which form the main support skeleton of the sphere (continuing the structure vertically from the pillars), and the three central slabs which connect the four pairs of ribs. In the final structure these central slabs, besides being the floors of the meditation chamber and the ante-chambers, serve the structural function of tying the ribs together. The nature of the construction process, however, only permits certain portions of the total structure to be concreted at a time (there will be thirteen layers of concreting for the ribs).

Thus there will be periods when structurally interrelated elements, such as opposing pairs of ribs, will not be connected. This necessitates a considerable amount of temporary support in the form of scaffolding, and entails a carefully calculated evaluation of the temporary play of structural forces of the incomplete structure, and a process of construction tailored to ensure its complete safety and stability. Until a thorough evaluation of the temporary supports and process of construction has been completed, in consultation with the structural engineers in Madras, work on the main structure and the proposed extensions to the pillars (to include the main approach ramps, cannot proceed. However, the evaluation should be completed within a few weeks and it is hoped that the work of the next phase will therefore comprise:

1. starting the main structure of the Matrimandir, the ribs and central slabs;
2. the horizontal extension of pillars to include the ascent staircase and approach ramps;
3. the first of the twelve underground meditation chambers, with its connecting underground tunnels.

The horizontal extension of the pillars and the underground meditation chambers will involve much excavation, and therefore can only proceed if this will not interfere with the temporary support of the main structure, and with the present convenience of access of materials and machinery.

Matrimandir area

Also included in the next phase of the work to be undertaken is the preparation of the Matrimandir area, with its gardens, network of pathways and canals. The amphitheatre has been cleaned up. An experimental construction for determining the best method of making the decorative water canals and monsoon drains has been started. The result of this experiment will determine the slopes, levels and methods of drainage in the Matrimandir area. A bulldozer has been presented to Auroville, and when it arrives in December, sufficient preparations will have been made to start the work of earth-moving and levelling.

* * *

1972, November 2nd: *Letter from Piero to Mother:*

Typed and signed
English

Douce Mère,

Friday or Saturday, for Divali festivity, if the rain will permit we will complete the fourth Pillar of Matrimandir. We wish to have Your Blessings for it.

We all feel a deep happiness to offer to You the part of the construction made till now.

Your child.

* * *

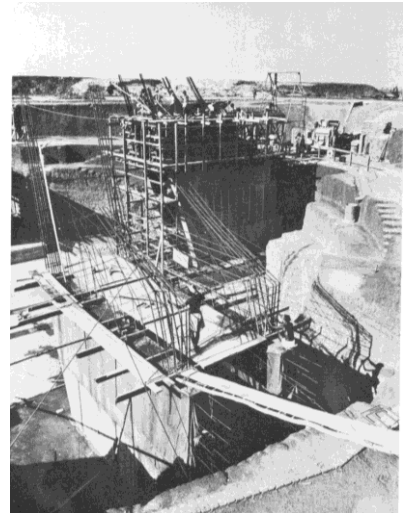
1972, November 3rd: *Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":*

DML, 242
English

The fourth pillar of Matrimandir is going to be completed, if it does not rain.

Piero and Gérard have asked for a blessings packet to be put in this pillar. It is the Western one, Mahasaraswati.

Mother gave a white packet.



* * *

1972, November 3rd: *Huta reports that Shyam Sunder had asked her whether Mother had told her and written to her about Auroville and Matrimandir. Huta answered she had, but could give the material only with Mother's approval. She thus went to Mother and told her about Shyam Sunder's request:*

SA, p. 146
English

Yes, I approve fully. But you must not give him the original letters and our conversations corrected by me. Make copies of them, put them in a file and then give it to him.

* * *

1972, November 4th: *Excerpt from Shyam Sunder's notes published in his "Down Memory Lane":*

TSA, p. 147; DML, p. 242
English

Mother said that Huta will be the guardian of Matrimandir. Her residence is to be built in one of the twelve gardens. She has given money also for it. She must have a kitchenette also.

Shyam Sunder said that when Roger comes back, he will speak to him about it and get it settled.

* * *

1972, November 4th: *Excerpt from Roger Toll's diary:*

The pillars are finished, the last concreting. She, Mahalkshmi, has been kind and generous, and the day is beautiful and festive. Up at dawn, concreting from 7:30 am to 6 pm. Shyam Sunder gives us Mother's message: "Harmony. Goodwill. Discipline. Truth. I can work with you only if you do not say a lie and are at the service of truth."



Matrimandir's four pillars complete up to ground level

The Banyan tree is seen in the background

* * *