

# Matrimandir

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December 2008

Sitting under the shade of the 'Bodhi' tree (*Ficus religiosa*, also known as the Peepal tree), in the area reserved for the Garden of Harmony, one can get a good view of the eastern half of the Matrimandir site: the area to be developed as the garden of Youth is on the left, and that of Perfection is on the right.



'Psychic Power in Existence' blooming in the gardens

The garden areas radiate outward from each of the twelve petals towards the Oval perimeter road. For the moment the gardens are quiet, their grassy slopes are neatly cut and trimmed. Each area contains a 4-m diameter circle, within which large pots hold particular plants that the Mother has designated as the central flower for each of the gardens. In the circle in the garden of Existence, a hundred meters to the right, one can see a profusion of the pink Hibiscus flower that Mother named 'Psychic Power in Existence'. The flowers and grass grow silently, happily one feels, under a grey November sky of gathering clouds. They perhaps can feel that their future accompaniments are coming, the flowers, shrubs and pools that will make up the garden environment around Matrimandir. Design teams are at work to bring the

gardens of the Matrimandir first into drawings and models and then into being. Their concentration is on the first three gardens -- Existence, Consciousness and Bliss (Sat-Chit-Ananda in Sanskrit) – as these three form the beginning of the series of the 12 gardens around the Matrimandir. The Garden of Unity too, near the Banyan tree, is also a focus of attention for the designers.

On the structure, the installation of the mechanisms that will move the four main doors is in progress. These doors are designed to slide upward along the curve of the building to close each of the four main entrances when they are not in use. Finding the way to make this movement quiet, smooth and safe has been a real challenge for our engineers. We are also busy fixing the remaining waterproofing rings around the portholes of the outer skin, and with the final details of fixing and adjusting of the golden discs. But the feeling in the air is very much one of shifting gears, of the imminence of a new phase. And the commencement of the gardens is chief amongst these new directions, for which the energies here are already gathering.

Just beyond the garden of Existence, outside the Oval road that borders all the gardens, work is well underway to empty and clear away the large rather ramshackle stockroom and workshop that have stood there for several years. This large structure once housed the first experiments in fabricating the round portholes for the outer skin, and then our trials to manufacture the triangular inner skin panels from glass – we had built a large gas-fired brick kiln there in which the colour trials for the big triangles were carried out. It was here that the first discs for the outer skin were created in polyester with their stainless steel circular frames.

We have passed through such a history of experiments and research while creating and finishing the Matrimandir structure! The results of those bygone years of adventure and research have led to the completion of the Matrimandir as we see it today. Now this large old workshop, with all its memories, is going to be dismantled. The reason for its removal is to fully widen the access road that runs behind it and have a clear and natural backdrop to the garden of Existence.



Gluing the orange tiles onto the hexagonal centerpiece

Behind the garden of Harmony, on the other hand, the situation is different. Here our main metal workshop and the gilding workshop are still located. These workshops continue putting their energy into the last bits of the construction, with the metal shop finalizing the mechanisms for the four main doors and the gilding team gluing the tiles onto the last two centerpieces to be mounted over the south and east entrances to Matrimandir.

Care and time are being taken to bring these works to a perfect completion, the same care and time that have gone into building the Matrimandir for the last 37 years.



Bobcat preparing soil in the Garden of Unity

Another aspect of change on the site these days can be seen in the commissioning of new equipment. A dynamic new entry into the garden work, a powerful 'Bobcat' has been donated to Matrimandir. This one-ton creature with muscles of steel arrived here from Germany on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September. The Bobcat, a versatile mini-excavator used the world over, can dig trenches, lift heavy pallets and, with suitable attachments, do a host of other jobs. During the fall, one of our people was given professional training in the operation and maintenance of this diesel-powered vehicle. The Bobcat can now be seen at work all over the site, moving compost and lifting heavy loads onto our tractor trailer. It is fascinating to watch as each of the operator's hands is used separately to move and turn the vehicle, while his feet work to control the lifting and tilting of the front-mounted digging tools – there is no steering wheel! A powerful presence on the site, the Bobcat will surely be a valued participant in the future development of the gardens.

The new batteries which will store the energy of our 36 kW solar plant have also arrived on the site at the beginning of November. Nearly all the 484 solar panels of the plant had been replaced under warranty last year after almost ten years of service and now, with a generous donation making possible the purchase of the 240 new batteries, we will again be able to harvest the abundant sunshine and use it, largely at night, to power the lights and fountains of Matrimandir. The revival of the solar power plant is a very welcome event here, for not only is the sunshine abundant in India but so too are the power cuts!



Panels of the solar power plant located outside the Oval

Finally, in terms of on-site organization, a significant change came into force at the end of November with regard to visitors and the use of the Inner Chamber. As intimated in our last newsletter, the reception of visitors for concentration has been shifted to the mornings. The noisier activities still going on in the building (some drilling and hammering!) have been moved to the afternoons, along with the daily cleaning of the interior of the structure, so as to keep the atmosphere quiet for the visitors.

Matrimandir has taken on a new rhythm, a new pulse. The earlier construction energy is moving more towards the gardens, with cleaning and clearing being the dominant theme in the areas beyond the Oval road.

**Please note the new timings for visits to the Chamber:**

**Bookings** : 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. daily  
**Concentration** : 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. daily  
**First-time visits** : 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. daily

On a practical note, we have decided not to print a new year card this year. The present economic downturn has also affected Matrimandir, and it is clear that the funds available have to be used solely for the ongoing work. In other words, it is not a 'business as usual' time...so our simplified New Year greeting is coming to you along with this December newsletter and not as a separate mailing. We hope you will understand and continue to support the Matrimandir to whatever extent it is possible for you to do so in the months ahead. Please make your cheques and DD's payable to 'Matrimandir'.

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