

Matrimandir

February 2014



The Fountain in the Garden of Unity

If you close your eyes and listen to the sounds of the late evening at Matrimandir, you will hear all the usual members of the evening orchestra. Always there are the crickets, with their high-tuned chirp and buzz forming the backdrop to all the rest. Then there is the wind, especially in the winter season. You can hear it rustling the leaves of the Banyan, or the Peepul tree, or moving through the branches of the Neem, Service and many other ornamental trees that are to be found along the edges of the gardens of Matrimandir. As a part of the back ground music there can be heard often the sounds from the villages close by, with their temple festivals, marriages or seasonal celebration songs being broadcast over loud speakers and drifting from several directions into the center of Auroville. A little later at night, you will hear the occasional screech from one of the small owls living in the Banyan tree, occupying the hollowed out spots along the main branches that have been formed over the years as larger branches have broken off or decayed. And now, since Christmas, there is a new sound that has been added to the garden's orchestra. This is the gentle splashing of the fountain in the garden of Unity, just beyond the Banyan tree. This fountain, presently running in a trial mode, is composed of four branches of water jets which shoot up in a curved series rising towards the tallest jet at the center, - then all fall back with a pleasant splashing sound into the crystal clear waters of the pool.

It was with great joy that we were able to commission this pool and fountain, just before we entered into the new year.

The stone cladding of the walls and floor of this twelve meter wide pool have been under way for about two years. We have shown you photos of the work as it was progressing. Simultaneously with the stone cladding work, construction of the support frames for the multiple-jet fountain has been under way in our metal workshop, just on the edge of the gardens. Once completed, the first set of stainless steel frames for the fountain were carried by two dozen people over the gardens and installed in the pool. Plumbing work was done to link the pool to a filtration pump that would have the job of passing the water of the pool through a sand filter to help keep it clean. A second pump was installed in the center of the pool to power the set of water jets within the pool. Yet to come is a third pump and another set of stainless steel frames, with nozzles, that will add a grid of low-rise water jets to the fountain. Just now we are running it in the first test mode.

It is wonderful to see this fountain,- it has become a very attractive focal point in the garden of Unity with its mini amphitheater, a set of sandstone clad steps, where people may sit to enjoy the fountain and gardens, or musical performances by people who will be playing from a stage mounted in the center of the pool. For the moment, that central stage is not yet there, but even so, we have begun to use the space for musical presentations. On New Year's Eve, there was an enchanting playing of Russian bells on this spot to mark the closing of the year and to look forward to 2014. It was a fine evening, which showed great promise for the use of this beautiful space in future.



The New Year's Eve playing of Russian bells at the pool in Unity Garden.

The pool and fountain which we have been describing are situated near the banyan tree, close to Matrimandir. Over at the main amphitheater, one hundred meters from the Banyan, another work has been moving ahead strongly over the last few months. This is the completion of the four pathways that lie along the far side of the Amphitheater. (See site photo on last page) These footpaths facilitate circulation around the outer perimeter of the Amphitheatre and also link, in three places, the Amphitheater to the oval road surrounding the whole gardens area of Matrimandir. They lie inside a

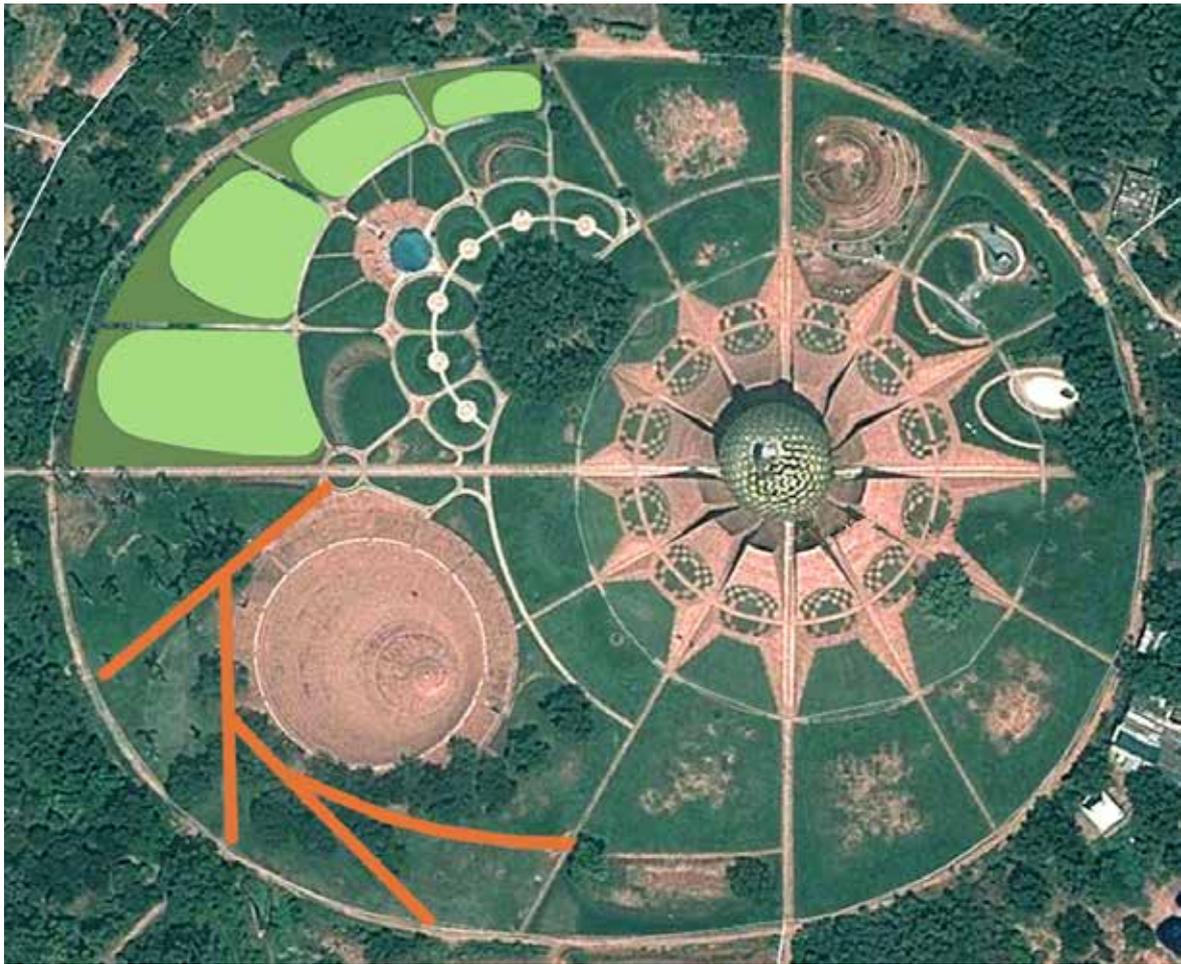
park area where there are large trees and wide quiet grassy spaces. During December and January there was a series of day-long concretings to lay down the foundations for these four paths. Our trusted cement mixer, the very same one that was used to mix the concrete for the foundation slab of Matrimandir in 1972, was used for these four concretings. It was truly amazing to see it still in action after 42 years of building Matrimandir. Surely this great mixer machine deserves a premier place in the Matrimandir Hall of Fame!



Building the pathways on the outer edge of the main Amphitheater.

We began the work of cladding the paths as soon as each path was cast, using cream colored slate and red Agra sandstone slabs, as for the other pathways in the Unity garden area. When these four paths have been fully clad, it will mark the completion of all the main pathways in the gardens oval of Matrimandir. Within this framework of pathways the nine remaining gardens will eventually be formed. These gardens, yet to come, have been given by Mother the names: Light, Life, Power, Wealth, Utility, Progress, Youth, Harmony and Perfection. It will be wonderful indeed to watch their growth over the coming years!

The designs for these nine remaining garden areas are yet to be developed. In preparation for the phase of detailed design work, our design team has been exploring for some months in the realm of ideas, of basic concepts. One of the understandings that guides them today is that all the gardens are United, and even One, as assembled in a large and unique garden that they have started calling The Garden (singular) of Matrimandir with its 12 segments. Much has been learned from the building of the first three garden areas (Existence, Consciousness and Bliss). One sees that more softness and flexibility are called for, - less of solid structures, more place for subtler, more fluid elements to express the essential aspects of The Garden and its nine segments which are yet to be built. In this planning for the future gardens the designers are immersed in a deeply fascinating exploration. We will keep you updated as proposals are developed.



The Gardens oval of Matrimandir as seen on Google earth. This photograph was taken from space on 11th Dec. 2012. The four pathways now being completed are shown as bold orange lines close to the Amphitheater. The Park of the Unexpected is shown in light green at the North Western edge of the oval. The Garden of Unity, near the Banyan tree, is marked by its six segments, with circular seating areas in the center of each. The gardens of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss, as photographed a year ago, are seen at the upper right on the North Eastern edge of the oval.

There is another green area in the planning stage in the offices of the gardens design team at Matrimandir. This is a large park area on the North West of the oval that occupies the space outside the mini amphitheater, beyond the outer bound of the Garden of Unity. (See Google photo above) This area is referred to as the Park of the Unexpected and is focused on the Child in all of us...A place of discovery and freedom, of exploration through the senses, of touch, of hearing as well as of sight...to create an environment where one can encounter, in a joyful way, the Unexpected, and enter pathways of self discovery. Exploration of how to create this space is ongoing, through conversations with teachers, for example, with people experienced in seeing through a child's eyes.... Here too, the work is a fascinating exploration, leading towards fresh perspectives of design... Here too, we will keep you updated as designs for this area progress.

People of goodwill from all over the world have been working to translate the Mother's vision of Matrimandir into reality. It is through individual contributions and offerings that the Matrimandir and its gardens are being built and maintained.

A lot of work remains to be done and financial support is needed. If you wish to collaborate in this effort, and to receive more information about the work, please write to Matrimandir, Auroville -605101, Tamil Nadu, India.

Contributions to Matrimandir are exempt under sec. 80G of the Indian Income Tax Act. You may make your cheques, money orders or DD payable to **'Matrimandir'**

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