

2nd Chapter
Conception
1st Jan. 1970 – 20th Feb. 1971

1970, January

1970, January 1st: After conversing with Mother, Roger writes this note:

note a Mère du 1 janvier
70

Note to Mother dated 1 January 70

Mère m'a dit avec précision ce matin
Je veux te dire aujourd'hui quelque chose
sur Auroville -

J'ai depuis quelques temps clairement
la devant mes yeux, la vue du centre -
Il y a une grande surface couverte
avec quatre colonnes ^{assez hautes} éclairée par le haut
par des trous dans lesquels entre la lumière
~~correspondant à chaque heure~~
à chaque heure
de la journée

Cette vision se répète depuis maintenant
un certain temps, c'est la chose à réaliser
en premier lieu, ~~mais~~ l'accent
ne viendra que lorsque cela sera construit.

Il suffirait si l'on pouvait construire
que l'extérieur, à l'extérieur y n'aurait
rien que les rayons de lumière qui
viendraient converger sur quelque chose
très simple pas de meuble.

Il n'y aurait pas de fenêtres la lumière
venant d'en haut par les ouvertures qui
Il suffit d'une grande surface couverte
avec rien au sol
voilà veux tu y réfléchir

Mother told me this morning with
precision:

Today itself I want to tell you
something about Auroville.

Since some time I have clearly before
my eyes the vision of the centre.

There is a large covered area with four
columns¹, quite high, lit from above by
openings through which the light enters
corresponding to each hour of the day.

This vision keeps on coming since
quite some time now, it is the thing to be
carried out in the very first place; money
will come only when this has been built.

It would be sufficient if we could just
build the interior – the outside after. Inside
there would be nothing except the rays of
light converging onto something very
simple – no furniture.

There would be no windows; the light
coming from above through openings
corresponding to each hour of the day.

A large covered area would be
sufficient, with nothing on the floor.

Voilà, will you reflect on it?

Original in Roger's personal archives.
Manuscript in French. Scan disponible.

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1970, January 2nd: Mother has a clear vision of Matrimandir's Inner Chamber:

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1970, January 3rd: Mother describes Her vision of Matrimandir to Satprem, and then to Paolo:

Satprem: Mother, I told Paolo to come. You had told me to bring him. He is waiting outside.

Yes.... There is an interesting thing.

For a long time I had been feeling something, then we spoke about it [4 days ago], and... I told Roger about it, I asked him to see Paolo, and I also told him that I had seen what should be done. Naturally, he didn't say no, he said yes to everything, but I felt he wasn't too keen.... But here is what happened. I clearly saw – very, very distinctly saw, which means it was like that, and it still IS like that, it's there (gesture showing an eternal plane) – the inside of that place [the Matrimandir].

¹ Two days later, on Jan. 3rd, Mother will speak of 12 columns.

S.: Maybe you should tell Paolo about it?

Tell him right now?... All right.... I'll speak more easily if I am alone with you.

S.: Fine, then tell, sweet Mother.

I could describe it. It came like this. It will be a kind of hall which will be like the inside of a column.² No windows. Ventilation will be artificial, with these things there (Mother points to an air conditioner), and just a roof. And the sun [beam]; or, when there is no sunlight (at night or on overcast days), electric spotlight. The idea is to build right now an example or a "model" for a hundred people or so.³ Once the city is built and the experiment is made, we will make a BIG thing of it – but then it will be very big, for one or two thousand people. And the second one will be built around the first, which means that the first will go only when the second is built.

There's the idea.

Only, in order to tell Paolo about it (and if possible, if I see it's possible, to tell Roger about it), I wanted to have a plan. I'll have it made – not myself, I can't do it anymore; I could have done it in the past, but now I don't see clearly enough. This afternoon, I'll have it made in front of me, and then, with that plan, I'll be able to explain really well. But to you I simply wanted to say [what I have seen]....

It will be a tower with twelve facets – each facet representing one month of the year – and the top, the roof of the tower will be like this and then like that.



(Mother makes a gesture showing something like this😊)

Then, inside, there will be twelve columns⁴ – the walls and twelve columns – and right in the middle, on the floor, my symbol, with, above it, four symbols of Sri Aurobindo joining in like this, to form a square, and above it ... a globe. A globe, if possible made of a transparent substance, with or without a light inside,⁵ but the sun will have to strike this globe; so, depending on the particular month or the time, it will be from here or there or there ... *(gesture showing the sun's course)*. Do you understand? There will always be an opening [in the roof]⁶ with a sunbeam. Not a diffused light, but a beam that has to strike [the globe]. That requires technical knowledge for its execution, and that's why I want to make a drawing together with an engineer.

But inside, there will be neither windows nor lights, it will always be in a sort of clear half-light, night and day: during the day with sunlight, at night with artificial light. And on the ground, nothing, except for a floor like this one [in Mother's room], that is, first a wooden floor (wooden or something else), then a sort of thick rubber foam, very soft, and then a carpet. A carpet covering everything, except for the centre. And people will be able to sit anywhere. The twelve columns are for those who need a backrest!

But then, people will not come for "regular meditations" or anything [of the kind] (the internal organisation will be taken care of later): it will be a place for concentration. Not everyone will [be allowed in]; there will be a time of the week or the day (I don't know) when visitors will be allowed in, but without mixture. There will be a specific time or a specific day to show [the visitors], and the rest of the time only for those who are ... serious – serious, sincere, who truly want to learn to concentrate.⁷

² Note the unusual way Mother describes this space, which she only saw from inside. Yet, Udar will draw a vertical elevation (that is an outside view) – and a horizontal section.

³ Note that Mother mentions the Chamber's seating capacity (*a hundred people or so*) and not its dimension.

⁴ Note that, 2 days earlier, on the 1st, Mother had told Roger that there will be 4 columns only.

⁵ Note that Mother mentions here the possibility of this transparent globe having a light inside, which seems to mean that it would be like a light bulb.

⁶ Mother seems to mean that there will be many openings in the roof to let a sunbeam enter at any time of the day and any day of the year. Note that on Udar's drawing, there will be a single hole – at the ceiling's centre/apex.

⁷ "Tout le monde ne pourra pas venir; il y aura un moment de la semaine ou un moment de la journée (je ne sais pas) où on laissera venir les visiteurs, mais enfin pas de mélange. C'est une heure fixe ou un jour fixe pour montrer [aux visiteurs], et le reste du temps, seulement pour ceux qui sont... sérieux – sérieux sincères – qui veulent vraiment apprendre à se concentrer."

So I think that's good.

It was there (*gesture of vision above*), I still see it when I talk about it – I SEE. As I see it, it's very beautiful, really very beautiful. ... A sort of half-light: one can see, but it's VERY peaceful, and with very clear and strong light beams (the projected light, the artificial light will have to be slightly golden, it shouldn't be cold – it will depend on the spotlight).⁸ A globe that will be made of plastic or ... I don't know.

S.: Crystal?

If possible, yes.⁹ For the smaller [temple], the globe won't need to be very big: if it were this big (about one foot), it would be enough. But for the bigger temple, it will have to be big.

S.: But how will the bigger [temple] be built? Over the small one?

No, no, the small one will go.

S.: Oh, it will go, another one will be built.

But the big temple will be built afterwards, and then on a huge scale.... The smaller one will go only once the bigger one is built. But of course, for the city to be completed, we must allow some twenty years (for everything to be in order, in its place).

It's the same with the gardens: all the gardens that are being prepared are for now, but in twenty years, all that will have to be on another scale; then it will have to be something really ... really beautiful.

And I wonder what substance that globe should be made of, the big one?... The small one could be made of crystal: for a globe this size (*gesture of about 30cm*)¹⁰ I think it will do. One should be able to see the globe from every corner of the hall.

S.: It shouldn't be too high above the floor either, should it?

No, Sri Aurobindo's symbol doesn't have to be very big, it has to be this size....

S.: twenty-five, thirty centimetres?

At the most, at the very most.¹¹

S.: So it would be more or less at eye level.

At eye level, yes, that's right.¹²

And a VERY peaceful atmosphere. And NOTHING, nothing but big columns... It remains to be seen whether the columns would be columns of a style ... whether they will be round, or they too with twelve facets ...

But TWELVE columns.

S.: And a roof with two slopes?

Yes, a roof with two slopes so as to get the sun [beam].¹³

It will have to be so arranged that rainwater can't get in. Something that needs to be opened and closed every time it rains won't do, it's not possible; it will have to be in such a way that rainwater

⁸ Note that if the sunbeam would be too powerful, the room wouldn't be bathed by a "half-light". A proper balance will need to be found.

⁹ Note that, at first, Mother spoke of a plastic globe – but immediately agreed to it being made of crystal.

¹⁰ Note that Mother is saying for the second time that the diameter of the globe will be of 30cm approximately, whereas Udar will mention 70cm on his drawing.

¹¹ For Sri Aurobindo's symbols to support the globe, they will need to be less wide than the globe they support.

¹² Note that, on that day, Mother didn't give any measurement to Satprem. She simply told him that the Chamber should hold 100 to 200 persons and showed him with her hands the globe's approximate diameter. Note that Udar's drawing gave it a 70cm diameter, which is more than twice the size Mother had indicated to Satprem. Why? Was it because she agreed with Satprem that the [centre of the] globe should be at eye level and that's what she told Udar?

¹³ Note that Mother seems to be under the impression that having a 2-slopes roof would make having holes in the roof easier. Such isn't the case.

can't get in. But the sun, the sun must get in AS A BEAM, not diffused. Hence it [the size of the opening] has to be limited....

It requires a clever engineer, who knows his job really well.

S.: When would they start?

I'd like them to start immediately, as soon as we have the plans. But there are two questions: first the plans (workers can be found), and then money... I think that with this idea of building a small sample ("small," well, it's a manner of speaking, because to hold a hundred people easily it will still have to be big enough), a small sample to begin with – and then while building the small sample we'll learn, and [we'll build] the big one when the city will be finished – that won't be right now.

I told Roger about it, and the next day he told me, "Yes, but it will take time to prepare." (I said nothing of all I've just told you, I just spoke of doing something.) Afterwards I have seen it; so I no longer need anyone to see how it should be – I know.

What's needed is an engineer more than an architect, because an architect ... It has to be as simple as possible.¹⁴

S.: I told Paolo what you had seen, that large room, empty, without anything. This has touched him a lot. In fact he was seeing that large empty hall. He understands quite well. So "empty" simply means a shape.

But a shape ... like a tower,¹⁵ but ... (that's why I wanted to have a sketch to show) twelve regular [facets]¹⁶, and then we need a wall that's not straight, a wall slightly like this [*gesture of a slight slope*], I don't know if that's possible. And inside, twelve columns and then here, we'll have to find a way to capture this [sunbeam], so that at any time of the year it can get in.... It must be someone who knows [his job] well.

The roof is like this and then like that...

As for the outside ... I didn't see the outside; I didn't see it at all, I only saw the inside.¹⁷

I wanted to explain to Paolo once I would have the papers, it would be easier, but since you have already called him ... let him come in.

(Sujata goes out and comes back with Paolo, who comes in with a garland of pink "Harmony." Mother gives him an orange hibiscus – Auroville's flower – looks at him, and starts speaking.)

Since we decided to build that temple, I have seen – I have seen the inside. I have just tried to describe it to [Satprem]. But in a few days I will have plans and drawings, so I'll be able to explain more clearly. Because I don't know at all how the outside is,¹⁸ but the inside I know.

*Paolo: The outside comes out of the inside.*¹⁹

It's a kind of tower with twelve regular facets representing the twelve months of the year, and absolutely empty.... Only, it will have to hold one to two hundred people.²⁰ So, to support the roof, there would be inside (not outside, inside) twelve columns; and right at the centre, the object of concentration... And with the sun's collaboration, all year round it will have to get in AS A BEAM (not diffused: it will have to be so arranged that it can get in as beams); then, according to the time of the day and the month of the year, the beam will revolve (there will be some device at the top)

¹⁴ Indeed, we will see that both Paolo and Roger will immediately make the room less simple than it is on Udar's drawing – and will be realised.

¹⁵ Note that this is another unusual way of describing a room.

¹⁶ Regular facets" means the Chamber's floor being a regular dodecagon – that all its facets will have the same length.

¹⁷ Again, and yet, Udar will draw a vertical elevation – that is a view from outside.

¹⁸ This explains why the architects felt free to do what they felt like.

¹⁹ Those who are familiar with Sri Aurobindo's yoga know that things are always "from within to without": the outer appearance reflects the inner reality.

²⁰ After saying twice in this conversation that the room should hold 100 persons, Mother now says it should hold "one to two hundred people" but does not give any measurement. On 10th January, She will speak of it holding 200 persons.

and it will be directed onto the centre. At the centre, there will be the symbol [of the Mother], then Sri Aurobindo's symbol supporting a globe. A globe which we'll try to have made of a transparent substance such as crystal or ... A large globe. Then people will be let in in order to concentrate – [laughing] to learn to concentrate! No fixed meditations, nothing of the sort, but they will have to be able to... to remain there in silence – in silence and concentration. This will require an organisation...

P.: It's very beautiful.

But the place should be absolutely ... as simple as possible. And the floor in such a way that people are comfortable, without having to think that it hurts here or there!

P.: It's very beautiful.

And in the middle, on the floor, my symbol. At the centre of my symbol, we'll have in four parts (like a square),²¹ four symbols of Sri Aurobindo, upright, and these symbols upright, like this, supporting a transparent globe.

This has been seen.

So I'll have small plans prepared by an engineer, have simple plans prepared to show, and then I'll show you when they are ready.

There. And we'll see.

As far as the walls are concerned, they will probably have to be in 'concrete'.²²

P.: The entire structure can be in reinforced concrete.

The roof will probably have to be sloping, and at the centre there will have to be a special device for the sun.

S.: You said that you saw the walls slightly sloped.

Either the walls or the roof will have to have a slope – whatever will be easier to build. The walls can be straight with the roof sloping. And the higher part of the roof supported by the twelve columns. And up there, the device for the sun.²³

Inside, nothing. Nothing but the columns. The columns ... I don't know, we'll have to see if they will be with facets (like the whole thing), twelve facets, or simply round.

P.: Round.

Or simply square – it is to be seen.

Then, on the floor, we'll have something thick and soft. Here ... (are you comfortable when you are sealed?... Yes?), there is first a wooden floor, then that sort of rubber,

S.: A "Dunlopillo"

"Dunlopillo". Yes, that's it!

And above it a woollen carpet.

S.: With your symbol?

Ah! The symbol will be above it.

S.: It will be a carpet with your symbol.

Not on the carpet. The symbol, I first thought it should be done out of some solid material.

P.: It has to be in stone... or in some metal.

²¹ This doesn't necessarily mean that the height of this 'cube stand' (as Udar calls it) should be equal to its width.

²² Mother says this word in English, not remembering at that instant the French word "béton armé".

²³ Note that, after saying that there will be many openings to let the sun in at all times during the day, Mother speaks now of "up there the device for the sun", which seems to mean that the sunbeam will be reflected by a some device located above or close to the apex of the Chamber's ceiling, above it.

The symbol ... everything will be around it, of course. The symbol will not cover everything, it will only be at the centre of the space – [laughing] people shouldn't sit on the symbol!... It will be in the middle.

The proportion between the symbol with respect to the whole has to be seen carefully, in relation with the height.²⁴

P.: The room will be rather large?

Oh, yes, it should be. There should be a sort of half-light with those sunbeams – the sunbeam should be SEEN.

A sunbeam.

So, depending on the time of the day (the time of the day and the month of the year)... [the sun will go round]. And then, at night, as soon as sun disappears, we'll switch on spotlights which will have the same effect and the same colour. Night and day the light will remain there. But no windows or lamps or things of the sort – nothing. Ventilation through air conditioners (they're set inside the walls, that's very easy).

And SILENCE. No talking inside! [Mother laughs]

It will be fine.

So as soon as my papers are ready, I'll call you to show them to you.

P.: Very good.

(Speaking to Sujata:) Give me a rose for him.

(Mother gives two red roses, Paolo withdraws.)

I didn't ask him if he had seen Roger because ... Roger is quite in nowadays' "practical" atmosphere.

It's good, it has to start off! It's good!

That's what I have learned, religions: the bankruptcy of religions was because they were divided – they wanted you to be like this, to the exclusion of all others. And all human knowledge have gone bankrupt because they were exclusive. And man has gone bankrupt because he was exclusive. What the New Consciousness wants (it is on this that it insists): no more divisions. To be capable of understanding the extreme spiritual, the extreme material, and to find ... to find the meeting point where ... it becomes a true force. And this is trying to teach that to the body too, through the most radical means.

[Passage omitted]

On a practical level, I'll try to make Roger understand. But I have seen, it seems to me that what is needed is that ... when Roger is here, he looks after "Auromodel," the practical side, all that (it's very necessary, it's very good), but for this construction of the Centre, I'd like Paolo to do it, and so I'd like Paolo to stay here when Roger is gone: let Paolo be here when Roger is away, and with Paolo we would do that. Only, I don't want either of them to feel that it's one against the other (!). They must understand that it's to complement each other.

S.: But this, Paolo will understand it...

I believe Paolo will understand.

S.: But how... Roger will take it as an encroachment on his responsibilities?

Maybe not, I'll try. I'll try.

No, when I told him that it was necessary – that I have seen it and it had to be done – he didn't object. Only he told me, "But it will take time." I said, "No, it has to be done right now." And then, that's why I am getting those kinds of sketches made by an engineer, so as to show him, because

²⁴ Note that Mother leaves it to the architect(s) to decide on proportions and hence on the exact size of the various components of the object of concentration and the Inner Chamber.

it's not the job of an architect: it's the job of an engineer, with precise calculations for the sunlight, very precise, very precise. It has to be someone really skilled.

The architect will have to see that the columns are beautiful, the walls are beautiful, the proportions are accurate – all that is quite all right – and also that thing at the centre. The aspect of beauty is for the architect to see, naturally but the whole aspect of calculations ... And the important thing is the play of the sun on the Centre. Because it becomes a symbol – the symbol of the future realisation.

Mother's Agenda, XI, pp. 15-24; CWM, XIII, p. 286-94
Oral in French. Audio recording of this conversation available.

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The same day, Mother describes her vision to Udar who takes notes and then goes to his house to draw it. After completing the work, he hands his plans and notes to Mother.

Excerpts from Udar's four known attempts to remember the circumstances in which he drew Matrimandir's Inner Chamber:

1. Three years after the event, on 10.1.73, when Mother was still in Her body and there was no controversy as yet, Ruud Lohman wrote in his Matrimandir Diary what Udar had told him and others on that day:

"One day (he could not remember when it was, but we reconstructed that it must have been in October or November 1969) Mother asked Udar, "Do you know how to draw?" Udar answered, "I am an engineer, so it is my profession to make drawings as well." Mother told him that She had had a vision of Matrimandir. She saw twelve triangles, a crystal ball, and light coming from the ball and from all sides, reflected again and again in the triangles. Mother gave some more ideas of what She had seen and asked Udar to make a drawing. Udar also made notes with as many details as he could remember. Though he once tried to find these notes, they remain hidden somewhere. For our sake he will search again. When Mother saw the drawing, She said, "You got it". Mother then kept the drawing. The rest of the story we will have to hear from Roger, for Udar left everything to Mother and Roger.

We asked him whether the twelve columns which we had seen in one of the earlier designs for the upper room of the present sphere, were part of the vision. Udar confirmed this. For aesthetic or other reasons, they have now been eliminated from the design. A sphere with pillars inside is architectonically too much. That was all that Udar could say without referring to his notes. He could only add that, in his memory, the drawing according to the vision was completely different from the present Matrimandir."²⁵

2. Seven years after the event, on 9.3.77, Udar wrote this first open letter:²⁶

"The vision of The Matrimandir came to Mother at the beginning of the year 1970. It was soon after the descent of the great Light and Force which came down at midnight of 31st December 1969, as the year 1970 was being born. This descent was felt by me and some others and Mother later identified it as the descent of the Superman Consciousness²⁷ and it was then that Mother asked me to start Sri Aurobindo's Action²⁸. Mother informed me that Sri Aurobindo has Himself come into Action and so this organisation has not only a fine

²⁵ Udar would have been right if he had said this prior to 20.9.72 but, as he wasn't involved anymore in Matrimandir, he wasn't aware that, on that day, the scientists of S.E.R.C. had agreed to re-do many of their calculations to take into account major changes in Matrimandir's design (incl. of the Chamber), which had been suggested by Piero and agreed upon by Roger. From that day onwards, the Chamber became as drawn originally by Udar except for the single entrance staircase from below and for the columns which were brought back later.

²⁶ Udar's memory was excellent for Sri Aurobindo's poem, "Savitri", and worsening for everything else as time passed.

²⁷ Udar is mistaken, this descent took place exactly one year earlier, on New Year's night 1969.

²⁸ "Sri Aurobindo's Action" was registered as a Society on 17th June 1970 – NOT in 1969.

name but a very meaningful one. The vision of the Matrimandir came to Mother soon after that²⁹ and so I feel that there is a strong connection between the two.

It was on the 3rd January, 1970 that Mother spoke of the great vision She had to Roger³⁰, Satprem and perhaps others and then to me. Mother had been waiting for this and it came, soon after the descent of the force of Action and so part of it.

My role in this matter was to make a drawing of Mother's vision. Mother said that it was not for an Architect to do this but for an Engineer and so I had that great, great privilege. Mother gave me a detailed description of Her vision and I took notes on it very fully.

Then I went home, locked myself in so as not to be disturbed and made the drawing on my notes and brought all to Mother as soon as I had finished – the same day, as far as I can remember. Mother said that my drawing was exactly according to Her vision and I felt very happy to hear this. Then Mother took from me the drawing and all the notes, so I have nothing of all this with me now.”

3. Seven years after the event, on 1.4.77 (at a time when a controversy was raging about the dimensions of the Chamber and the absence of the twelve columns), Udar wrote this second open letter at the request of the Gazette Aurovilienne, where it was published:

“One morning, Mother said to me that She had had the night before a very wonderful vision of the [Matrimandir] that must be built at Auroville, in the very centre of it. Then Mother asked me to take notes on what She recounted of Her Vision and when this was done, I went home and prepared a drawing based on these notes.

When I gave this to Mother, She was very pleased and said that I had been able to get down Her Vision exactly as She saw it. So I also was very happy to hear this. Then Mother took from me the drawing and all the notes so I have nothing left with me at all except the sweet memory.

Now writing from memory I can only say that there were two things which I can remember as important. One is that Mother gave a great importance on the twelve pillars and said that they had a great significance. The other is that Mother described Her Vision of the Temple as a whole, something that was already there, and Her Vision was of the whole. So She saw it [the Chamber] from the outside and not from the inside and so the measurement of the central Hall to which also She gave much importance, on its measurement, was 24 metres on the outside³¹.

4. Almost 18 years after the event: on 16.11.87, Udar wrote the following letter to Constance (AVI-USA) who had written to him asking for the circumstances of this drawing:

“I have asked Mother about your question³² and She reminded me of how She gave me the details of Her Vision of what She called “The Temple of The Soul”. With regard to Meditation Room in the centre of what is now known as the Matrimandir, Mother gave very special importance to this. She did not give me the measurement but paced out, in the room we were in, the length and the breadth of the room and I measured the points marked by Her and after Her approval, I entered this in the notes She had asked me to take down. With regard to the height, Mother showed me a place up on the wall and I hooked the end of my tape to that point and read the measurement to the floor. So, whatever came from these measurements are the dimensions given for the room.”³³

²⁹ From Mother's conversation with Satprem on 3rd, she seems to have had this vision during the night of 2nd.

³⁰ Udar is again mistaken, Mother spoke to Roger on the 1st and then, on the 3rd, to Satprem and Paolo.

³¹ This refers to a controversy that was raging at that time (mid 1970's). We will come to it later.

³² 17 years after the event, Constance had written to Udar to know from him in which manner Mother had given him the dimensions of the Chamber. Udar answered at first that he did not remember, but that he will “ask” Mother.

³³ This account doesn't seem plausible at all – probably because Udar's memory had gone very bad. Note however that he says here that Mother didn't give him any dimensions in metres or centimetres.

With regard to the Dome itself, Mother said very definitively that it must be a Gold Dome. It seems that in the Auroville Committee, it is held that it was Roger who proposed a Gold Dome and that Mother approved it. This is not correct. Mother said it was a Gold Dome even before the notes and the drawings I made were handed over to Roger.”³⁴

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Scans of Udar’s Drawings

Piero retrieved these plans from the office of “Auroville’s Future” when it closed down in 1978. They are now kept at AV Archives.

Editor’s comments on these drawings:

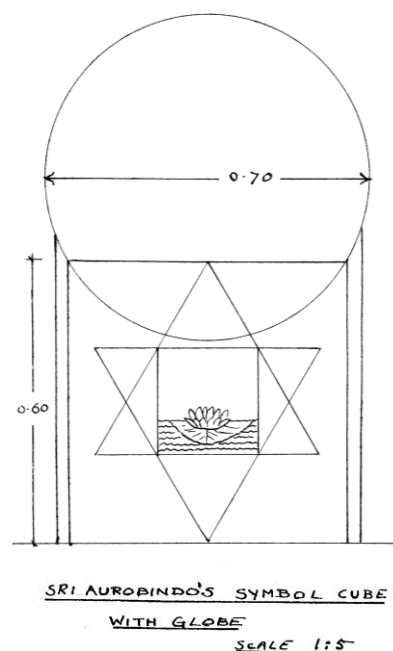
Udar first made 3 drawings of Matrimandir’s Inner Chamber on two sheets of drawing paper:

1. *An elevation (scale 1:50)*
2. *A plan in [horizontal] section (scale 1:50) together with “Sri Aurobindo’s symbol cube with globe” (scale 1:5)*

He then redrew these two drawings on tracing paper, from which Piero was given a blueprint.

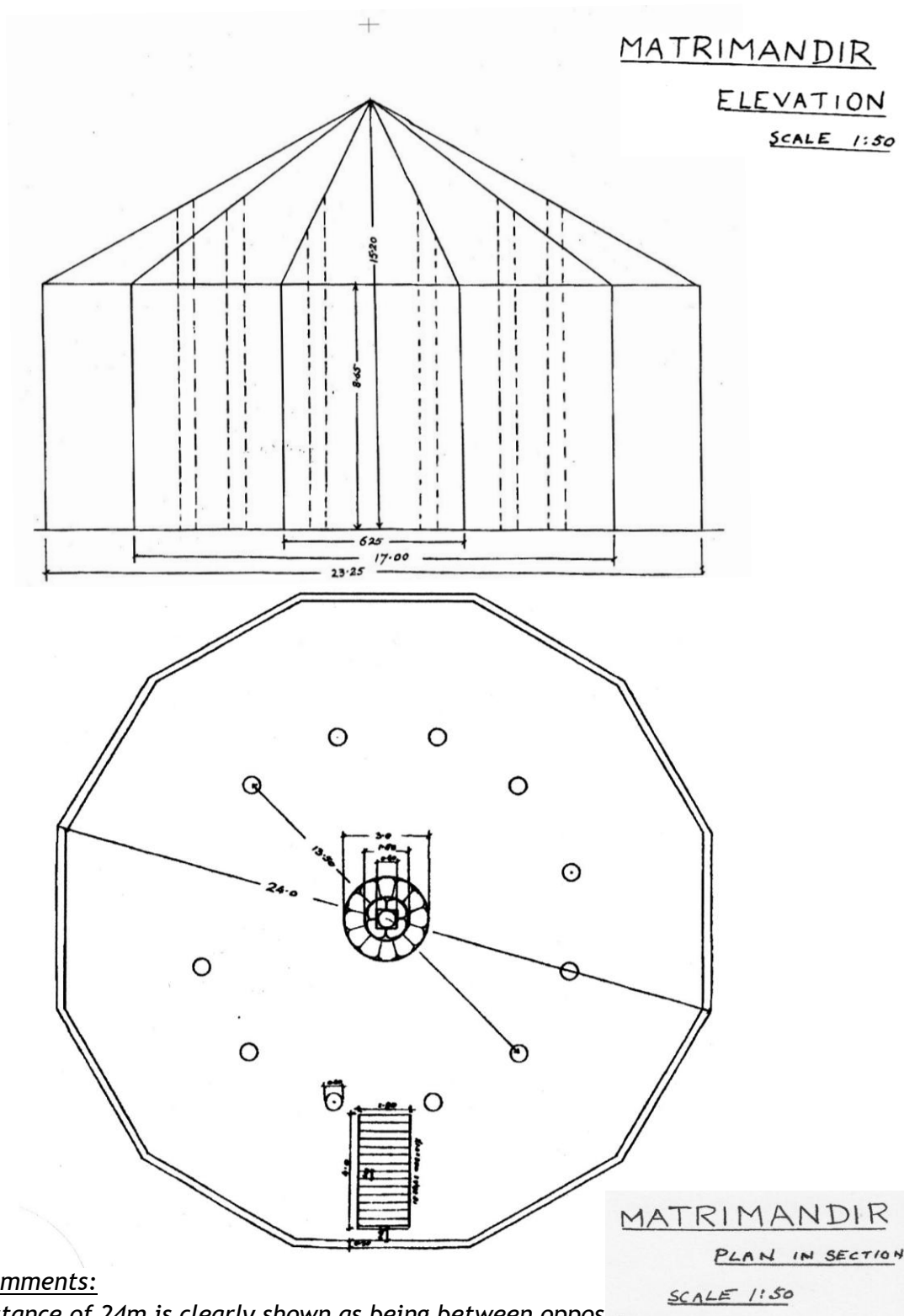
Note that Udar made several mistakes in this drawing:

- *This [first] version of Sri Aurobindo’s symbol is outdated since 1962. Udar should have drawn its 3rd and last version which dates from 1964 and whose width is bigger than its height.*
- *Sri Aurobindo’s symbols should touch each other at the tip of their triangles, which works much better with the final version of this symbol.*
- *If Sri Aurobindo’s symbols were to be carved in stone slabs, these should be hiding the globe’s lower portion. If not, the horizontal line joining the upper tips of the 4 symbols shouldn’t be there.*
- *The two parallel lines which seem to indicate the thickness of the stone slabs (or of the symbols) shouldn’t be there - or not like that.*



³⁴ On 15th October 1987, one month before Udar wrote this letter to Constance, a marathon meeting had been held at Bharat Nivas, to opt – among other things – either for a Matrimandir with golden disks (model presented by Roger), or for a Matrimandir covered with white marble triangles (model conceived by Paolo Tommasi). Those present at the meeting voted in favour of Roger’s model and its golden discs.

Speaking to Huta of Kyoto’s Golden Temple on 1st September 1965, Mother told Huta: “Child, this is exactly what we shall have except for the shape of the roof – it must be a terrace and a dome”, BUT, on 17th January 1970, She will tell Satprem that one of her own ideas was a pyramid – which explains why Roger presented on 24th March 1970 three models (out of five), which are neither domes, nor golden. It is probably only in 1972 that, in answer to a request from Mrs. Anjani Dayanand, Mother agreed that the discs should be covered with real gold.



Editor's comments:

- The distance of 24m is clearly shown as being between opposite outer corners.
- On this drawing (on drawing paper), Udar forgot one column, which he didn't forget on that on tracing paper.
- The point marked above the top of the Chamber has been added on the elevation by the editor to show the other possibility Udar explored as apex of the roof. Though he had erased the lines showing this alternative roof slope, they remain clearly visible on the drawing on tracing paper. The fact that he explored this possibility seems to mean that Mother had not specified this 15.2m height to him. Which dimensions did she specify to him - if any?

* * *

1970, January: In the first part of an open letter, dated 20.04.77, when a controversy about the Chamber's dimensions and the absence of the twelve columns, Roger will write:

"In January 1970, Mother explained to me her vision of the Matrimandir and asked me to prepare plans for it in view of a speedy construction.

She had then laid emphasis on the simplicity of the hall, its lighting, its colour: the atmosphere that this room should have with its twelve sides and its twelve columns, having at its centre her symbol and that of Sri Aurobindo, which would support the ball lighted by the sun's rays.

To sum up, she told me over again – broadly speaking – what she had explained in detail in the course of talks she had had with Satprem and Paolo. She gave me, a few days later, a plan saying that in this drawing were all the detailed dimensions of the inner chamber of the Matrimandir, and that I was to change nothing with regard to the dimensions which must be respected.³⁵ As for the exterior, she left me the liberty to submit blue-prints to her. I, therefore, set myself immediately to work after having put to her, on various occasions, a certain number of further questions, which were necessary for purposes of study and for the working out of the plan.

In this context, I, therefore, asked her what was the utility of the columns because in one of my sketches the hall was raised from the ground and the problem of its structure arose before me. Mother replied to me: "But these are for supporting the roof of the chamber". Having explained to her that they were not necessary from the technical point of view because the construction would probably be in concrete-screen³⁶ (voile de béton) she said to me: "Well then, if they are of no use, you can remove them.""³⁷

*Gazette Aurovilienne, V, July 1977.
French. Published in French and English.*

* * *

1970, January 4th: Roger meets Paolo at his place.

* * *

1970, January 10th: Excerpt from a third conversation Mother with Satprem on Matrimandir.³⁸ She shows him the plans of the Inner Chamber made by Udar and explains them to him.

Satprem: I have a letter from Paolo, which I didn't read to you the other day....

I am going to see him this afternoon, Paolo so it would be better...

Did I tell you that I saw the central construction of Auroville....? I have a plan. Would you like to see it?... Here, there are some scrolls there – one scroll.

(Mother unrolls the plan while explaining it:)

There will be twelve facets. It's a circle.³⁹ And, at an equal distance from the centre, twelve columns.⁴⁰ At the centre, on the floor, like this, my symbol, and at the centre of my symbol, there

³⁵ In a 1971 interview with the Journal of the Institute of Indian Architects, Roger said: "[Mother] gave precise indications about the measurements and the arrangement of the main inner chamber of the Matrimandir. The measurements were precise almost to the centimetre." Roger was definitely under the impression that the dimensions mentioned on Udar's drawings should be retained, which is why he kept them. He guessed that Mother had given all these dimensions verbally to Udar. But, was it really the case?

³⁶ "Concrete shell" may be a better way of saying this.

³⁷ The fact is that, from then onwards, Roger did not show any columns in his drawings & models. As he presented them to Mother, if she had objected to their absence, he would have added them. It will be the community that will decide to install them sometime in the 10 year period during which Roger withdrew from all Auroville activities.

³⁸ This is a translation of the literal transcription of this conversation from its recording.

³⁹ This may explain why Udar started by drawing a 12m radius circle, within which he then inscribed a dodecagon.

⁴⁰ Note that the distance Udar mentioned between the centres of opposite columns is 13.5m, which means that their centres are located on interesting points geometrically which are NOT at equal distance from the centre and this

are four symbols of Sri Aurobindo, upright, forming a square. And atop the square, a translucent globe⁴¹ (we don't yet know what substance it will be made of).

Then, from the top of the roof, when the sun shines, the sun will fall on this (nowhere else, only there); when there is no sunlight, electric spotlights will send beams (again, beams, not a diffuse light) only on this, on this globe.

Then, no doors, but ... after going deep down one climbs back within... one goes under the wall and climbs back inside – it's again a symbol. Everything is symbolical.

And then, no furniture, but there is, on the floor (like here), first wood (probably) then over the wood, a thick “dunlop”, and over it, a carpet, like here. We have to choose the colour. The whole thing will be white. I am not sure if Sri Aurobindo's symbols will be white ... I don't think so. I don't know it. I didn't see them white, I saw them with an indefinable colour, between gold and orange.⁴² A colour of that sort. They will stand upright, carved in stone.⁴³ And a globe which is not transparent but translucent. Then, at the bottom (below the globe), a light will be projected upward and will enter the globe diffusely. And from outside, rays of light will fall.... No other lights: no windows, electric ventilation. And no furniture, nothing. A place ... to try and find one's consciousness.

Outside, it will be something like this (*Mother unrolls another plan*).... We don't know if the roof will have a pointed shape or...⁴⁴ Very simple, very simple. It will hold about two hundred people.⁴⁵ So then, Paolo's letter?

“Very sweet Mother,

I saw Roger on Sunday, he came to my room and we had lunch together. With love I arranged beautiful flowers for You and Roger You were with us. We spoke a lot. I felt Roger like a brother.

I told him that Auroville cannot be born like any other city (urban, social, economic problems, all of them to be seen later). The starting point must be “something else.” That is why we must start with the Centre. That Centre must be our lever, our fixed point, the thing we can lean on to try and leap to the other side – because it's only from the other side that we can begin to understand what Auroville should be. And that Centre must be a form manifesting in Matter the content that You can transmit to us on every plane (occult included). As for us, we should only be the open and sincere means through which you can concretise that.

Then I told him how I felt the need for all of us to approach all this while living the experience inwardly and all united – people from the East and the West – in a vast movement of love, because it is the only “concrete” possible for building “something else”....”

What he says is fine.

circle. Otherwise the distance between columns should have been 12m. This seems to mean that Mother had not given this distance to Udar and that she did not read it properly on his drawing.

⁴¹ Though, on 3rd January, when her vision of the Chamber was just one day old, Mother had told Satprem three times that the globe will be transparent; she now says several times that it should be translucent. What happened in the past week for Mother to change her views on this? Did Udar explain to her that a beam of light falling on a thin and hollow transparent globe wouldn't produce any interesting effect?

⁴² Golden pink or golden orange is the colour of the Supramental body (as well as that of the “Auroville” hibiscus) and that which Mother will choose for Matrimandir's Inner skin.

⁴³ Note that Sri Aurobindo's symbols were to be carved in some golden-pink stone slabs. This means that, in Udar's drawing, the lower portion of the globe shouldn't have been seen, because it is hidden behind these stone slabs.

⁴⁴ “*On ne sait pas si le toit sera tout à fait pointu ou...*” Udar tried a steeper roof because Mother had not yet decided on its slope. Hence, it is very unlikely that she gave him verbally this 15.2m height.

⁴⁵ People will later believe that Mother gave the dimensions of the Chamber to the centimetre to Udar. Maybe she did not give him any dimension but told him to dimension the room so that it can “hold about 100 to 200 persons”. He may then have made a quick calculation mentally and suggested a 12m radius which would encircle a 450m² area and provide approximately 2 to 4m²/person. Mother may have approved this radius on this basis.

"..... And that Centre can give us that love right now, because it's the love of You!

I told him that, on the practical level, we could begin with a moment of silence, gathered together, try to make a complete blank, and in that blank, with everyone's aspiration, bring down the signs for the beginning. But all of us united and together, especially the more spiritually advanced – the Indians.

Roger agreed entirely. He said we should really do that. "

(Mother nods her head)

I'll see Paolo this afternoon to give him this plan.⁴⁶ Because this, this is what I saw.

We'll do it in white marble. And it is Udar who said he would go and get the marble, he knows the place.

S.: You mean the whole structure ...?

Yes, yes.

S.: But Paolo told me one tiling which I felt to be correct. He said, We'll build this Centre, we'll put all our heart and aspiration into it, into this Centre ...

Yes, yes.

S.: And over the years, it will get more and more "charged"....

Yes.

S.: So this Centre should be definitive, we shouldn't remove this temple to build a larger one later on.

I said that to calm people who think we need something huge. I said, "We'll begin with this, and then we'll see," you understand. I said this, this should be there until the city is completely built, and then, afterwards we would see – afterwards we won't feel like removing it!

Because a lot of people thought of something "huge."

S.: But Paolo says that from an architectural standpoint, it is very possible to extend the thing from outside without touching what's already built.

Oh, yes, it's quite possible.

You see, Roger asked me, "And then, what are we going to do afterwards?" I said, "Well, we'll think about it afterwards!..." – That's the trouble, they don't know ... they don't know that one must NOT THINK. As for me, I wasn't thinking about it at all, not at all, not at all – one day, I saw it like that, as I see you. Even now, it's still so living that I only have to look and I see it. And what I saw was the Centre and the light falling on it, and then, QUITE NATURALLY, while observing, I remarked, I said, "So that's how it is." But it wasn't "thought," I didn't think, "Twelve [columns] and then twelve [facets] and then..." I didn't think any of that: I saw.

It's like those symbols of Sri Aurobindo.... It's like, when I speak of the Centre, I still see those four symbols of Sri Aurobindo joined at their angles, like this, and that colour ... strange colour ... I don't know where we'll be able to find that. It's an orange gold, very warm. And it's the only colour in the place: all the rest is white. And the globe, the globe, translucent.

S.: He said he would inquire right now in Italy, at Murano where they make large crystals, whether they can make, say a one-foot globe, in crystal.

There is the dimension... it ought to be written there.

S.: They have big glassworks there.

⁴⁶ As, decades later, Paolo will say that his only conversation with Mother on Matrimandir was together with Satprem (& Sujata) on 3rd January 1970; on 10th afternoon; Mother probably handed him these plans without talking with him.

Oh, they do marvellous things there.
Isn't it mentioned, the globe, its dimensions?

S.: Seventy centimetres.

Its diameter?⁴⁷

S.: is all this in centimetres? Yes, seventy.

This is one metre, it is more than one metre...
It could be hollow. It need not be solid, it could be hollow? So as not to be too heavy.⁴⁸

(silence)

S.: I will tell him all you have said. I will give him... I transcribe with a typewriter all that you have said. Like this it is his brief.

He's fine, Paolo.

S.: Yes, Mother.

That underground passageway to enter ... People will enter some ten meters away from the wall, at the foot of the urn.⁴⁹ The urn will mark the starting point of the descent. I'll have to choose from which direction....⁵⁰ Then, later on, the urn might very well be INSIDE instead of being outside this thing. So perhaps we could simply have a big wall all around, and then gardens. Between the wall and the building we will build now, we can have gardens and the urn. And that wall will have one entrance (one ordinary door or several doors). One will be able to move around in the garden.

Then there will be certain conditions to be met before one is allowed to descend into the underground passage and emerge into the.... It will have to be a bit initiatory: not quite "like that," not just anyhow.

(silence)

To Roger I said, "We'll see that in twenty years!" So that kept him quiet.

But the first idea was to surround that with water, to have an islet so that one has to cross the water to reach the temple. It's quite possible to have an islet...⁵¹

Mother's Agenda, XI, pp. 34-37; CWM, XIII, p. 295
Oral in French. Audio-recording of this conversation available.

* * *

1970, January 17th: *Excerpt from the fourth conversation Mother has with Satprem on Matrimandir. He shows her some drawings made by Paolo and explains them to her:*⁵²

What did you want to tell me?

S.: I had a visit from Paolo and Nata... There are two things. But first there is the plan of the Centre – to be precise, of the outside of the Centre.

The outside, I didn't see anything. There is a sketch by Udar. I didn't see anything at all and I am open to all proposals. So then?

⁴⁷ As Mother asks whether the globe's diameter is 70 or 35 cm, it is unlikely that She had given its diameter to Udar.

⁴⁸ The crystal globe that is in place weighs some 450kg.

⁴⁹ Mother is speaking here of the Inaugural Urn which stands at the Amphitheatre's focal point.

⁵⁰ This means that Mother is yet to decide on this important point – though an arrow on Udar's drawing shows that entrance to the Chamber is from the South and Roger seems to have understood that entrance should be from the West radial.

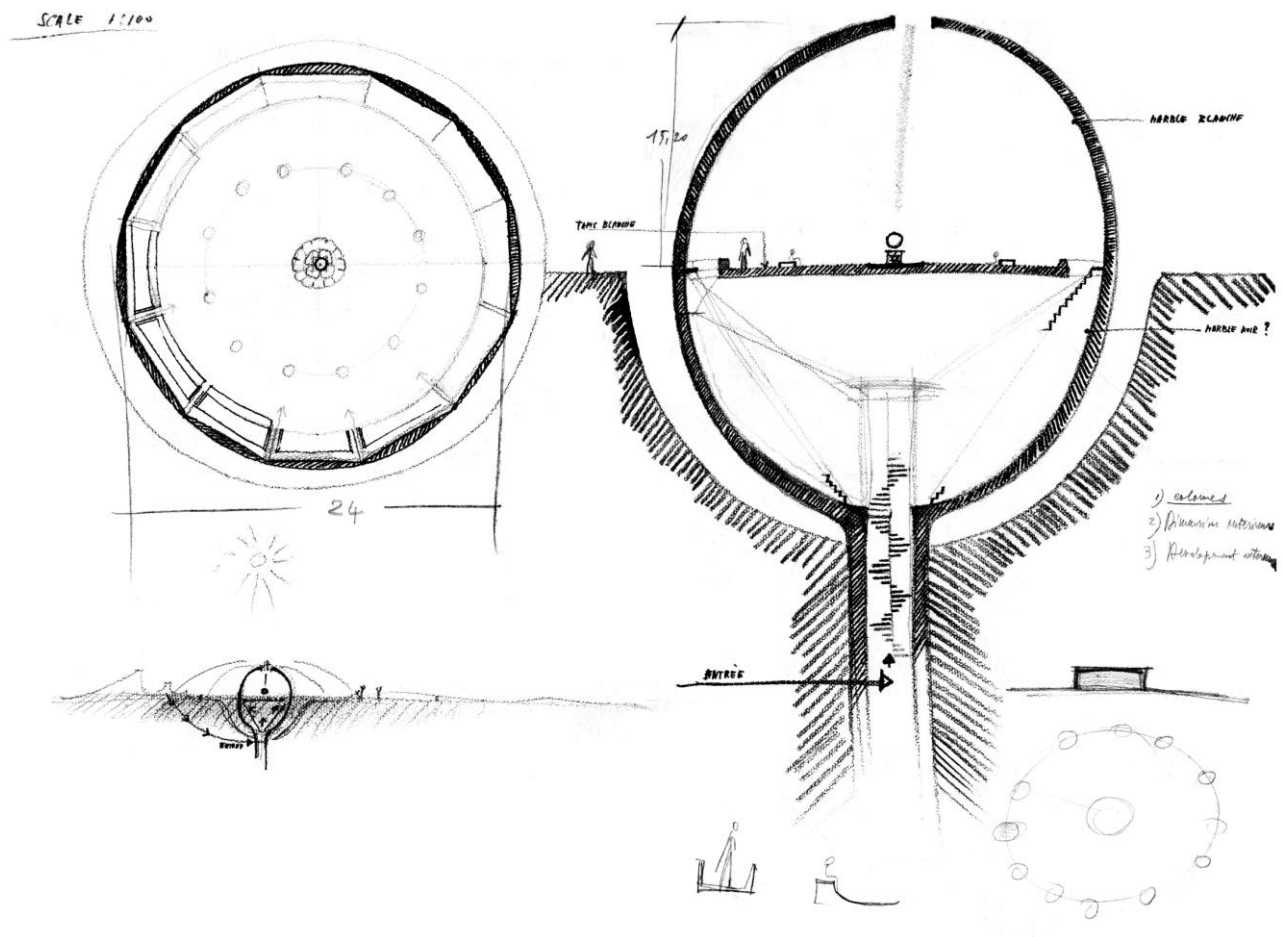
⁵¹ "C'est très possible de faire un îlot..."

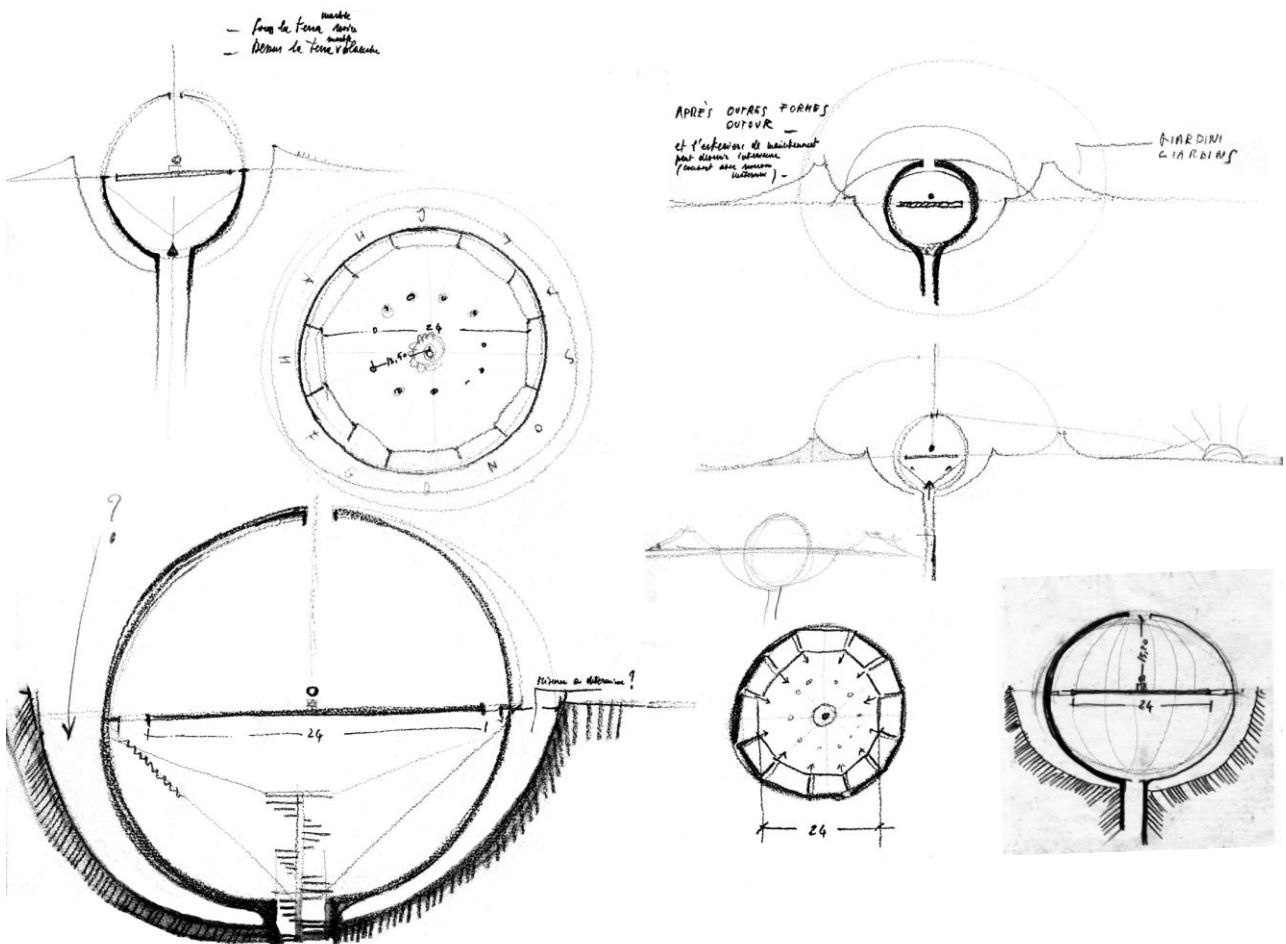
⁵² If one remembers that, on Jan. 3rd, Mother had told Satprem: "*What's needed is an engineer more than an architect, because an architect... it has to be as simple as possible*", one is amazed to see that indeed, the first thing Paolo and then Roger did was to make the Chamber less simple.

S.: He [Paolo] explained something I found very beautiful and would like to submit to you... As a matter of fact, when you spoke of that Centre, you said, "I don't know whether the walls will have a slope or the roof." You seemed to hesitate. Then Paolo says he received a kind of inspiration and saw something very simple, like a big shell, with one part emerging above the ground and another part buried underground. He drew a sort of sketch which I'd like to show you.

Did he see Roger also? Because Roger had two ideas; he came to see me with two ideas, and I told him which of the two I liked better, but nothing is decided yet. Roger has to draw a sketch of his ideas. So I'll see that and I'll tell you his ideas.

(Satprem unrolls one of Paolo's drawings.)





Editor's comments on Paolo's two sheets of drawings:

- At first, Satprem seems to have presented to Mother the sheet on top. Did he present the second sheet?
- A drawing on the top sheet mentions 24m as being the shell's diameter while in the sheet below 24m is the floor's diameter (there is a wide gap between floor and shell). This modification seems to have been done at Mother's request. The drawing shown at the bottom right of the 2nd sheet was drawn on tracing paper and stuck there using some scotch tape. It was probably drawn to make it clear that 24m is the width of the floor and not that of the shell.
- A small drawing on the top sheet shows the long tunnel giving access to Matrimandir from below.
- Drawings in the lower sheet shows the birth of the idea of having a crater around Matrimandir. Later that year, Roger will divide this crater into 12 segments of crater and call them "petals".

S.: So you see, this is the outside, which would simply be like a shell. The inside is exactly as you saw it: that big bare carpet, and the ball at the centre. What determined Paolo's inspiration is that you said one would have to go underground and then to re-emerge inside.⁵³ So he had the idea of going deep down through a spiral staircase here, which would climb back up again, and once here, there would be a series of staircases fanning out in every direction (in the lower part of the shell) and ending inside the temple itself." Then, the whole lower part would be in black marble and the higher part would be in simple white marble. The whole thing is like a big lotus, you see, as if growing out of the earth.

⁵³ This is shown in a small drawing at the bottom left of the top sheet.

Are you sure that he hasn't seen Roger? Because Roger told me, "I want to make a big circle; the inside is exactly a semicircle and the other semicircle would be underground." He told me almost the same words.

S.: Paolo told him his own idea.

Ah! Paolo told him! Ah, that's why.

S.: It's like a bud coming out of the earth.

Yes, yes, that's the first idea Roger told me, almost identically with the same words. And his second idea was a pyramid: leave the temple as we said and have a pyramid. But I also thought of a pyramid and I told him, "I thought of a pyramid...." He said he would make the two plans and we would see.⁵⁴ But if he agrees with Paolo's idea, it's very good.

S.: But Roger's idea is in fact Paolo's idea.

Yes, that's right.

y direction, so that one can emerge into the temple on any side... The centre is absolutely bare, and all around is a sort of footbridge where one emerges from the depths: that's where all those staircases end. And everything bare. There will just be that big carpet bordered from corner to corner by kinds of footbridges. It will appear to be hanging. All white and smooth. Then there was the question of the twelve columns: Paolo said he felt the twelve columns were still an ancient symbol that wouldn't go very well with the shell, and instead he suggested to have symbolically twelve supports, twelve bases of columns that would act as back rests.

Oh, but the columns serve a purpose, because atop the columns we will have spotlights to light up the Centre: there will be light day and night; during the day we'll manage the opening, but once the sun is gone, we'll turn the spotlights on, and from atop the twelve columns their rays will converge onto the Centre.

S.: But Mother, if the purpose of the columns is only for the spotlights, those could also be fixed on the walls?

The columns aren't near the wall, they are here, just halfway...

S.: Because he saw that space in the centre all bare, with just the symbol at the Centre and that big smooth carpet, without any break caused by the columns. But instead big blocks – twelve big blocks – signalling the place of the columns and also acting as supports. Twelve big blocks about 50 cm high.

It makes no sense.

S.: A symbolic sense? Because you did mention those pillars acting also as backrest for people who would want to sit.

Oh, for their backs.

S.: So he said that each of those twelve blocks could, for example, be in a different matter, as a symbol: twelve different materials.

On the outer walls we'll organise the general ventilation, which will be electrical (without windows), and atop the columns, there was the light – I saw the columns, I can't say. I clearly saw the columns.

S.: Well then, I'll tell him.

⁵⁴ Three of the five models Roger will present to Mother on 24.3.70 were of the pyramid kind.

As for the gallery all around, I don't know that I like it a lot... I didn't see it: I saw the walls bare, without windows, also the columns, and then the Centre. I am sure of that because I saw it, and saw it for a long time.

S.: Does the shape of a shell suit you?

In the sense that it makes a perfect circle: half above, half below.... That's all right. Only, we'll need to arrange something for the sun.

S.: Yes, Nata is familiar with the problem of lighting with prisms, because to catch a sunbeam, we'll need prisms. He said he would solve the problem quite easily, he is looking into it. A few prisms will simply be put at a number of places, and they'll catch just one sunbeam.

There must be ONE beam. I SAW the beam.

S.: That's right, with a prism the beam will be seen. Then there will be a number of geometrical openings to follow the motion of the sun... But inside, on the wall, the twelve facets will be reproduced.

Yes, yes.

S.: And this, [Satprem points to the circular gallery] was in principle the entrance points where one emerges from underground.

I don't know if it's good to multiply the entrance points like that.... There will be a practical problem to be solved: if there is a single entrance with a very severe watch there, it is all right, but if there are several entrance points and not enough light, there will be catastrophes.

S.: No, no, Mother outside there will be a single entrance, but when one reaches the base of the shell and climbs up again, there would be that multiplicity of entrance points. Outside, there is only one way down, which ends here, at the foot of this spiral staircase.

(Silence)

S.: He thought of this footbridge all around because he said the all white carpet at the centre would stand out better, as if floating separated, instead of being stuck to the wall.

I did not think it would be "stuck to the wall", there was always a space to circulate around the wall.

S.: So that's the space, with a number of footbridges on which people would emerge. And that idea of bareness was also what made him remove the columns.

What I don't like is the idea of footbridges, because the walls were straight from top to bottom, in white marble.

S.: Oh, but the footbridges aren't high; they are about 20 cm above ground.

Then it's all right.

S.: Besides, he said the carpet could come up at an angle, cover at an angle those footbridges, or rather this circulation all around.

That's quite all right.

(Silence)

All right, then. So they have to agree. But it must be half done already, since Roger told me about the idea. If I had known it was Paolo's idea, I would have said yes straight away.⁵⁵ But it will be worked out. It's all right.

⁵⁵ Note that Mother agrees easily to this concept because Roger and Paolo agree to it.

S.: *So I'll tell him to work on that basis... The only question that remains is the outside: should a void be left around the shell to make the descent of the shell clearly visible? Otherwise, if the gap is filled up, it will simply look like an hemisphere placed on the ground. For the shell's descent underground to be clearly understood, he thought there would be an opening all around.*

I don't know. I told you, I haven't seen anything for the outside, so I don't know⁵⁶.
But that will be dangerous. People might fall.

S.: *Or else we could have a sort of moat with water all around, transparent water that would make the descent of the shell clear, for instance?*

Yes, yes, that could be fine.

S.: *There is also a question of measurements. According to the plan [made by Udar], you gave 24 meters⁵⁷ – 12 meters on each side of the globe. But could some more distance be kept for the outer circle? The plan has 24 m in diameter, and 15.20 meters in height.*

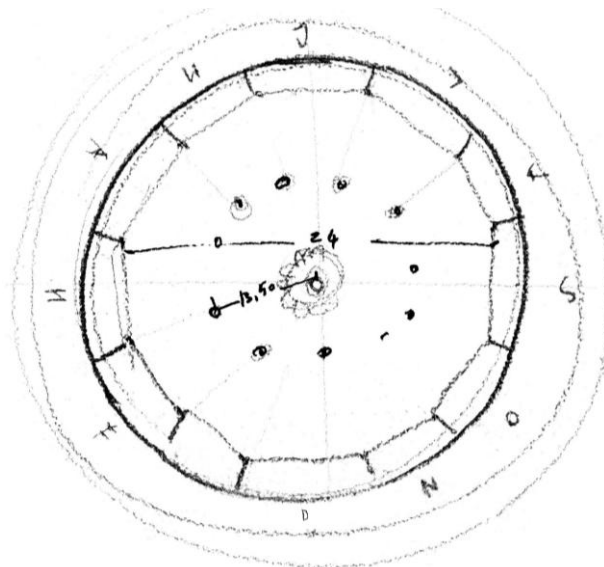
Oh?

S.: *Paolo asks whether these proportions could vary: keep 24 metres for the base of the carpet, but with the possibility, for example, of keeping 2 or 3 metres on each side for passages.*

Where would the walls be then?

S.: *The wall would be here.*

(Satprem points to the outer side of the circular passage).



It's the walls that should be 24 metres apart⁵⁸.

S.: *He says that if those passages are to be there, 24 metres wouldn't be quite sufficient.*

(Silence)

S.: *The height, too is in question.*

⁵⁶ Yet, on 23.6.65, Mother had told Satprem: "there is only that pavilion [Matrimandir] that I would like to be very pretty – I see it. Because I saw it, I had a vision of it, so I'll try to make him understand what I saw. The park, too, I saw – those are old visions I had repeatedly" and on 1.9.65, while looking at a photo of Kyoto's Golden Temple, She had told Huta: "Child, this is exactly what we shall have except for the shape of the roof – it must be a terrace and a dome, but the surroundings will be the same – lake, flowers, trees, rockeries, small waterfalls and so on."

⁵⁷ Satprem assumes here that Mother gave verbally these dimensions to Udar – which is not at all obvious.

⁵⁸ The way Mother says it here, seems to mean from one wall to the opposite wall. This statement will create an enormous controversy when people will become aware of it – in the mid 1970's. BUT, what She simply means here is that the size of the Chamber should not be reduced by including in the 24m the 'circular gallery'.

The question was in fact that it should be a perfect circle.

S.: If it's a perfect circle, then the height should be half the distance between the walls.⁵⁹

Yes.

(Silence)

What would really please me is if they could agree with each other and present me with a project of the two together. That way, it would be easy to execute... I mean, if Roger has adopted Paolo's idea, why couldn't they see together how to execute it?

S.: Yes, that would make things simpler.

Oh, much, much simpler!

(Silence)

What will happen under there?... [Mother points to the underground part of the shell] All that is mental. When you are going to have a big dark underground, what's going to happen in there?.. What's going to happen? – Lots of unspeakable things. Humanity isn't transformed, we shouldn't forget that! And all kinds of people will come.... Even if there is a control at the entrance, you can't stop people from going to see, and what will happen under there?... That was my first objection when Roger told me, "We could build magnificent underground passages!" I asked him, "That's very fine, but who will control what will take place under there?"

S.: I had thought the descent was your idea?

My idea was a rather short descent emerging here [Mother points to the only staircase from below in Udar's plan]. A rather short descent, not a big underground passage like that... But it's possible; it is a question of control, that's all. Only, between an underground passage with room enough for two lines of people (one going up and the other going down) and emerging here, and a huge underground passage like this one, there is a big difference! And now he wants it all black on top of it!

S.: In black marble, yes.

Yes, so then? It means that one won't see very clearly. So what will take place in there?

S.: The underground passages aren't in the shape of narrow passageways: there is a spiral stairway, and when you reach the top of the spiral, it branches out into a series of open staircases, suspended like footbridges. It's not enclosed, it's all suspended.

Won't there be any accidents?... Oh! There's no lack of hallucinated people who might break their heads on the ground.... You see, it's a little too mental to my taste, I mean that from a mental point of view it's very attractive, but in vision...

S.: The idea is primarily the collective construction of this underground passage as symbol....

(Long silence)

We'll see! *(Mother laughs)*

(Silence)

At any rate they should get together. Then I will see.

I'd like to have the two of them together with their paper. That would be very good.

Because the one doesn't tell me that it's the other's idea – he presents it as if it were his own (!), and then the other one doesn't tell me he spoke with the first!...

S.: But he didn't have an opportunity to tell you.

⁵⁹ For the shell to be a sphere with the Chamber's floor at the equator and for the Chamber's height to be 15.2m, the shell's diameter at the equator should be 30.4m; which leaves a 3.2m gap all around between shell and floor.

No, but you mentioned it because I said it to you... But I know. So you understand, we work for “human unity”, and the workers don’t get along!

And I clearly see, I clearly see in each one what’s like this [twisted gesture]. It’s not that I am surprised, but...

My logic is this: “Yes, it’s very good, you are all very nice, you work for human unity – at least be united!...” Do you understand?

S.: But I am sure that Paolo wants only too happy to get along with Roger.

But you surely understand that if Roger has adopted Paolo’s idea, it means he admires Paolo’s intelligence, otherwise he wouldn’t have. So why one side like this and the other side...? We don’t want any more of these petty things.

S.: But when Paolo showed me this plan, I felt something very beautiful... I’ll tell you what I felt; I felt, I am witnessing the birth of Auroville.

No, that’s not true.

S.: The material birth, I mean.

Yes, yes, I understand, but that’s not true.

(Mother goes into a long concentration)

We’ll let dust settle. Because, you understand, to accept those changes, I must be sure that the origin of the inspiration is of the same quality as mine... For the execution, I know very well that we need people who know the job and do the work, but for the inspiration, I must be sure that the source of inspiration is AT LEAST as high as mine... And I am not sure, because I saw so clearly. With Paolo’s ideas, I saw a mixture straight away. His ideas are all mental ideas, I can assure you because for me that’s very easy to see. Well, all of them bring along the same MIXTURE as with anything that’s done in the world. And so... what’s the use of doing over and over and over again?...

Something bothers me. Entering underground is very good, but that huge underground?...

(Mother pulls a face)

(Silence)

We’ll see. Let it settle down, we’ll see.

S.: And for the upper part, do we keep this idea of a shell, or should it be studied further?

Shell... The idea was a sphere. Why a shell?

S.: A “Shell”, anyhow a round, spherical shape.

An eggshell is oblong, not spherical. The egg is really somewhat like a spinning top; so the upper part would be broader and the lower part narrower, with only the staircases... That’s quite possible.

Give me a piece of paper... [*Mother draws an egg while explaining*] So here, all the way down, there would only be the staircases.

Like this, yes.

S.: His idea was to reproduce Brahman’s egg – you know, the primeval egg – so that the temple would represent the primeval egg.

But then, how is it, Brahman’s egg?!...

S.: I don’t know... Like an egg, I suppose!

An egg always has its base narrower than the top. So if we conceive of an egg like this (*Mother draws*) and the base to be the staircase, a spiral staircase climbing up to the temple....

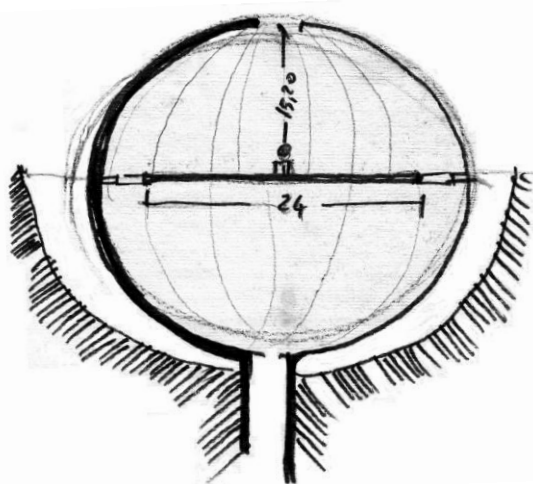
For instance, seven stairways.

S.: Seven instead of twelve.

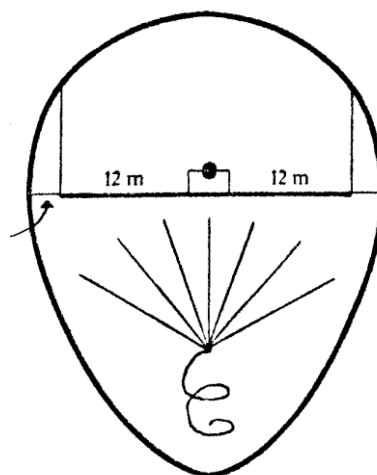
And here (*Mother draws a horizontal line across the “egg”*), it’s twenty four metres and only fifteen and a half metre high. So this way it’s correct.

S.: Twenty-four metres for the entire width or for the carpet?

No, the walls must be straight, they cannot be curved. I saw them straight.



Paolo's drawing



*Drawing reproduced from the Agenda.
It shows what Mother means.*

S.: Straight, and higher up rounded.

From what I had seen, the columns were higher than the walls, and that’s why the roof was sloping. And it was on top of the columns that the electric lighting was placed.

And the widest point of the egg would be here.

(*Mother draws a line at the level of the carpet.*)⁶⁰

S.: At ground level.

Yes.

S.: And you spoke of seven openings?

Seven stairways.

And then an underground passageway leading to the base of the egg, from where the seven stairways begin.

That’s possible.

S.: In other words, the inner walls of the temple should be straight.

That is, for the outside, to the eye the shape can be rounded, but inside, the wall has to be straight.

S.: A straight wall, and over it a dome.

Yes, a dome over the straight wall. But the dome can be the egg’s dome, and I thought that the point at which the dome meets the walls would be over the columns.

Twelve columns.

And here, for the outside, they can prolong the wall in a rounded shape, like this.

(*Mother draws*)

There would even be the possibility of having a space between the outermost wall and the innermost wall. Keeping a space here. It’s to be decided.

⁶⁰ Things are now crystal clear: the walls are vertical, at the floor’s edge, and the 24m distance applies to them and not to the shell. The Chamber’s height at its centre is 15.2m.

S.: *That means, in addition to the 24 metres?*

Yes, that's understood: the 24 metres end at the walls⁶¹.

S.: *And the openings for the seven stairways?*

I'd rather have them outside the wall.

S.: *Yes, it would be better because that would leave more space for the Centre.*

Oh, yes, and the inside would be much clearer. The sight of all those stairways didn't appeal to me. Even one I didn't like it, but seven... While outside, it's fine.

S.: *So a passage outside.*

The passage outside.

S.: *Yes, as in India when you go around the temple.*

Yes. So that's all right.

S.: *And the seven stairways start directly from the base of the shell without this "stem" coming up from the bottom?*

That's up to them. Below, it's the same to me. Whether they want a stairway like this or a stairway... As long as it is not too steep.

(Silence)

S.: *"There is the second part of the problem."*

Oh, what is it?

S.: *Nata and Paolo realised that if Auroville or the construction of this Centre is left to Auroville's people as separate from the Ashram, it will never work: the true force will never be there, those who are there aren't receptive enough to do the work. If there is that break between the Ashram and Auroville, it will never work, it will be one more "construction" but not something new. According to them, the only hope is for that Centre to be built not by Aurovilians but by all the Ashram people, without distinction between Aurovilians and non-Aurovilians; for the whole force to be united in the construction of this Centre, rather than abandon the Aurovilians to an outer break. Just as the disciples built "Golconde" [a guest-house at the Ashram], in the same way all the disciples should build Auroville's Centre, without outside manpower.*

At Golconde there was outside manpower.

S.: *Anyhow with as little as possible of the outside element, so it may be a work of consecration. Otherwise, they told me (Nata especially), Auroville's people are all full of arrogance and incomprehension; they see the outside of things. The force of the people here should be mixed into it. If the Ashram people do not mix with them, do not breathe the force into it, it will never work.... Right now, Paolo told me, Auroville as it appears from outside looks like a necropolis.*

(Mother laughs)

It is the "living" fruit of egoism. The only saving thing would be for the Ashram people to come in and do the work, and for the others to be absorbed in that, otherwise ...

⁶¹ Mother obviously means that the 24m distance applies to the walls and not to the shell. Unfortunately, when in December 1974 a transcript of this conversation will be shared with Piero and then with the Matrimandir team (but without any drawings explaining things clearly), it will give birth to a huge controversy because many will feel that Mother meant that the distance from the inside of the middle of a facet to the opposite one should be 24m; whereas in Udar's drawings (and in those of Roger after him) 24m is the diameter of the circle within which the Chamber and its walls are inscribed – that is the distance from an outer corner of the dodeca wall to the opposite one.

(After a long silence)

But at the Ashram, we have three centres doing building work: there is Phoni [Roy] who looks after the maintenance of houses, Abbay Singh, and Udar... Abbay Singh isn't equipped for that, and moreover he is too busy, because he doesn't have just building, he has all the cars and all those lands; now I consider he is fully occupied and he does his work well, so if we tried to give him too much, he couldn't do it well anymore. As for Udar, he is very interested and even said he would take care of bringing the white marble; he would himself go and choose it. He is very interested and if I told him to do it... But that wouldn't be better.

S.: But that's not what he meant, he didn't mean at all a problem of construction: he meant the problem of having the disciples work with the Aurovilians.... Nata, as an engineer, would look after the construction with the money collected, but the whole manpower would have to be provided by all the Ashram people mingling with the Aurovilians. That's the idea."

That's not possible. All the Ashram people young enough to work are working, they all have their occupation.

S.: He saw a sort of rotation, each giving, for example, an hour a day, or a day a week. Because otherwise ...

They'd be only too happy! For them it would be an extraordinary amusement! I have more difficulty preventing them from dissipating their energies than I would have trying to get them to do some work! For them it would be an amusement.

S.: "Because he says that if there isn't the inner force of the Ashram people mingling with the Aurovilians, the Aurovilians will remain what they are. There is a break between Auroville and the Ashram.

As for me, I don't find it sufficient.

S.: "The break?"

Yes.

S.: Well, then...!

I don't find it sufficient. It's not at all on the same level. The people here...

(Silence)

You just have to imagine if I were gone.

S.: Bah-bah!

Just imagine that and you'll see, you'll soon see what will happen.

S.: Well, it's the only hope.

If they come and tell me, "YOU have to take the responsibility," ah, then I would say, "They are quite right." That's quite different. They have been beside the point. It's not that.

S.: But, Mother, I think that's what they mean, isn't it?

(Mother laughs)

They don't think clearly! It's a muddled thought.

S.: "When they say that all the disciples here should take part in Auroville's construction, as was done for Golconde, they mean that you are the one who gives the disciples the impulse to come and participate in the work. That was the idea. But you say there should be a separation on the contrary – no mixture.

(Laughing)

If you knew things as they are!... Auroville people bring drugs here, they bring... all kinds of things.

S.: Yes, yes, I know – I know, Mother. That's why he says the only hope is...

Is for them to go and catch all those things there!

S.: He says, "Otherwise, there is no hope."

Oh no, he doesn't know! It's all in the mentality, all in the mind. They don't know. WHO knows? It's only when one sees. There isn't one who sees.

It's all thoughts and thoughts and thoughts – you can't build with thoughts."

S.: Can the elements in Auroville do the work?

I am working and working (gesture of kneading) to gather the energies that can do the work. And there has to be some sifting there.

S.: Yes.

(silence)

But you understand, they speak of physical work, and for physical work there are only the young ones at the School – all the ashramites have become old, mon petit! They are all old. There are only the young ones at the School, and those are not here to become ashramites, they're here to be educated – it's for them to choose... Many of them, many want to go to Auroville. So that would mean the Ashram's education going to Auroville – there are many of them. But ... give me names: who can go and work with his hands?

S.: But, Mother, the only possibility is for you to SAY; and then, tomorrow I'll go and spend two hours in Auroville picking up baskets [of rubble]!

(Mother laughs)

Mon petit, you're one of the youngest!... Can you picture me telling Nolini, "Go and work!

S.: Oh, but that would pull all the others along.... Anyway, that's Nata's and Paolo's idea.

(Mother laughs)

Poor Nolini!

(long silence)

If you knew how many letters I receive from so-called Aurovilians, saying, "Oh, I want to be in peace at last, I want to come to the Ashram, I no longer want to be an Aurovilian." So there. It's just the opposite: "I want to be in peace." There you are.

(silence)

As for me, you know, I don't believe in external decisions. Simply, I believe in only one thing: the force of Consciousness exerting a PRESSURE like this (crushing gesture). And the Pressure keeps increasing... Which means it's going to sift people.

Otherwise, there would be no solution, because, you see, in the past (just some ten years ago) I used to go about and see things... But that's over. It wasn't a decision I made, I didn't at all think it was over, it's not that at all: it was something that COMPELLED me. You understand? So I said all right. It's not incapacity: this body is extremely docile, it does everything it's asked to do; if it were asked to go out, it would manage to go out. It's extremely docile. But that's how it is, there is a Command: NO. And I know why...

So, you know, I only believe in this: the pressure of the Consciousness. All the rest is all the things people do; they do them well or not so well, it all lives and dies and changes and gets distorted and... – all the things they've done. It's not worth it. The power of execution has to come from above, like this, imperative [gesture of descent]. And for that, this (Mother points to her

forehead) has to keep still. It shouldn't say, "Oh, we don't want this, oh, we want that, oh, we must do this..." – Peace, peace, peace, He knows better than you what needs to be done. There.

And as not many can understand, I don't say anything: I look and wait.

I LOOK... For instance, I am given a piece of paper as you just did when you gave me that drawing, I look like that, and I very clearly see the part in the paper that's the result from above, the part that has got mixed, the part... Like that. But you don't go and say all that! – Moreover they wouldn't believe me.

(silence)

I understand very well – very well – why Sri Aurobindo didn't say "superman," why he said "supramental." He didn't say "superman" because he didn't want it to be "an improved man," that's not it. He said supramental because... He said, leave all this.

Supramental – SUPRA, you understand?

These last few days, I saw the photos of those who went to the moon.... Have you seen them? Did you see how decked out they were?

S.: Yes, I saw.

Ah ... so they've become machines.

S.: That's right – robots.

Yes, and then (*laughing*), the Russians said, Why not send robots, it's not worth sending men!... That's the point.

(silence)

You see, Nata has spent his time speaking ill of Roger as much as he could, saying all his plans are bad and his work couldn't succeed. Roger has spent his time saying, "Nata has ruined all my work!" And another says, "This fellow ..." and this fellow says, "That fellow ..." and they are all like that! So I see in a definite way that IF the work is to be done, FIRST they have to overcome all this mean, petty humanity. They "see," they have "ideas" (they have lots of ideas), they have ideas and they see; others see other things and have other ideas, and then, "Oh, that's worthless, my idea is the right one...." They're all like that! And my whole action is like this: a PRESSURE on them to make them abdicate their little person. Until it abdicates, the work CANNOT be done.

As a matter of fact, they seek all kinds of reasons so as not to see the true one.

We need ... phew, a little air!

The body – this body – is undergoing a discipline, you know, oh, terrible... But it doesn't complain, it's happy, it asks for it. And it sees how we are full of VERY SMALL THINGS that are ceaselessly hindering the action of the Force. Well, the first thing is to get rid of all that. We must be like this [gesture of surrender, open] and receive the Force. Then all inspirations will come, and not only inspirations but the MEANS of execution, and the TRUE THING. Otherwise...

And since not all of them are quite ready, I do what the Consciousness does: I apply the Pressure and say nothing – I wait [Mother laughs].

(silence)

If you knew all that takes place, you'd find it very funny... The whole side of agriculture, same thing; the whole side of education, same thing; everywhere the same thing... The international side, same thing: everywhere, everywhere, Man [Mother inflates her cheeks], Man puffing himself up....

FIRST they must understand: abdicate. Then we will see.

S.: Do I convey your message to them?

Oh, no, mon petit! Poor things, they will be terrified!

S.: Do you think so? It would do them good.

Oh, no, no, they'll be in a tizzy. The Pressure is the best thing. Because they don't understand what you think, they don't understand what you say: they understand what they have inside their

heads. They change the meaning of the words... Like what happened with A.R. [the healer], remember how he took it as a personal attack.

S.: Yes, that's true! That's true, I noticed it: they take it as a personal attack.

Exactly. But everywhere that's the difficulty: the person first. So that spoils everything.

S.: You speak the truth objectively as you see it, and it's as if you were attacking them!

Attacking them, yes. So we must wait and wait till they are ripe – a lot of time is wasted, you understand. It's better not to say anything: apply the Pressure. Oh, I am pitiless!"

(Mother laughs a lot)

S.: So what do I do in the middle of all these people?

You can tell them that... In fact, Roger spoke to me (it was the same thing with other words) and I didn't say either yes or no, I was waiting because I wanted to know how others saw the thing. So now I have seen, I see that they agree. If they can agree, the work will go faster! So there. Objections of detail don't matter because you start with one idea and end with another – you progress a lot in between. So it doesn't need discussion, it's only... Only, try to put your energies together so as to start sooner, that's all! *(Mother laughs)*

*Mother's Agenda, XI, pp. 39-57; CWM, XIII, p. 300.
Oral in French. Audio-recording of this conversation available.*

*

Satprem will transcribe these 4 conversations on Matrimandir (31.12.69, 3, 10 & 17.1.70) and hand copies of them to Nata and Paolo - but not to Roger.⁶² So, it is only many years later that Roger will read these conversations and will learn of Mother's reaction to Paolo's ideas and drawings.

Satprem may have had two reasons not to share these transcripts with Roger: 1) Roger had, unlike Nata and Paolo, very easy direct access to Mother and he had no part in these 4 conversations. 2) On 31.12.69, Satprem had spoken derogatively of Roger; hence Satprem may have thought of not hurting his feelings by sharing with him these comments - at least at this stage.

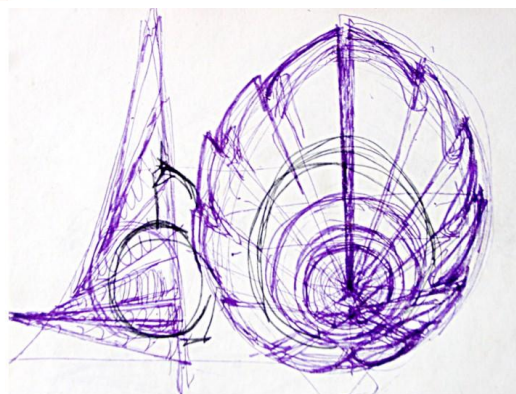
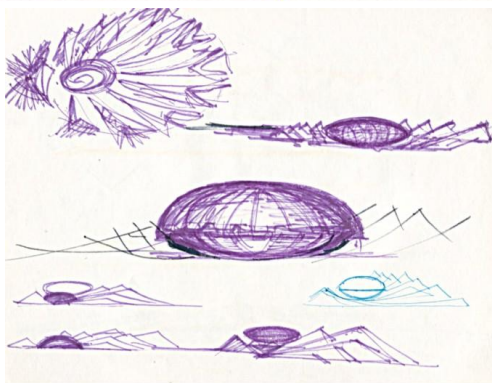
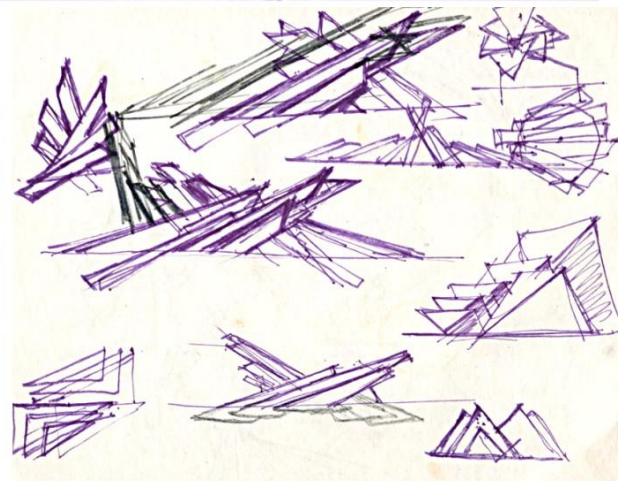
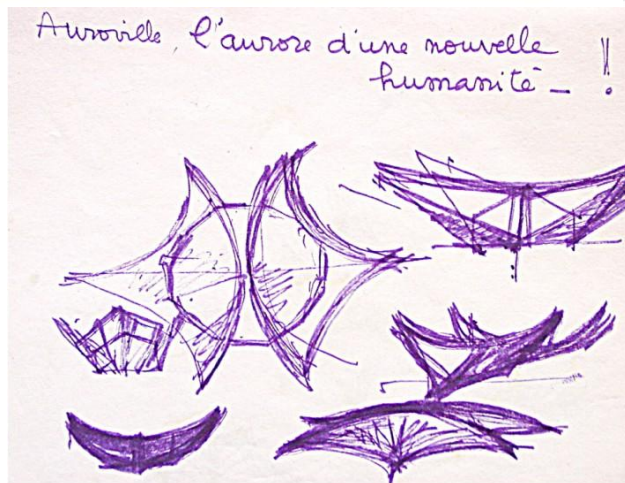
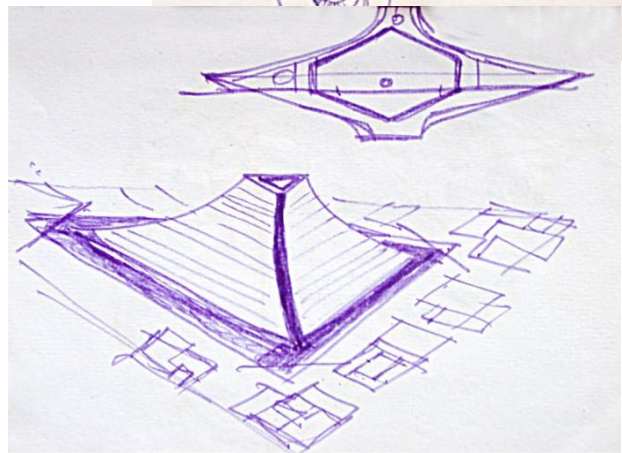
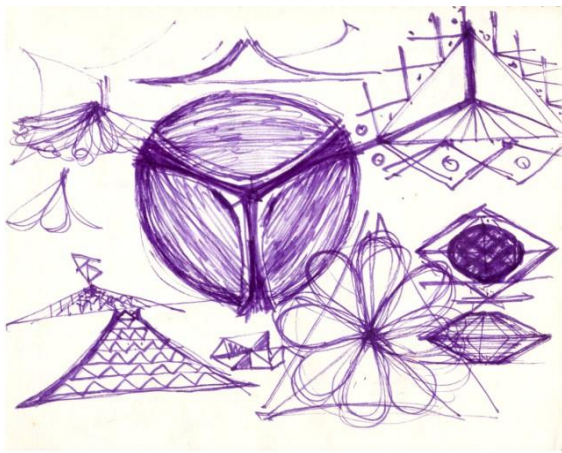
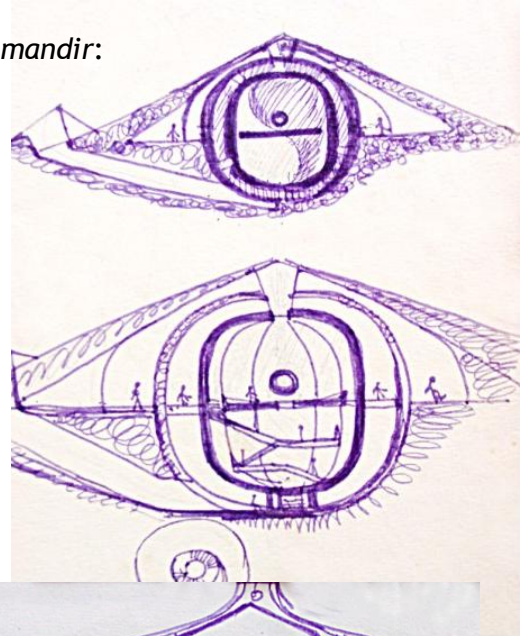
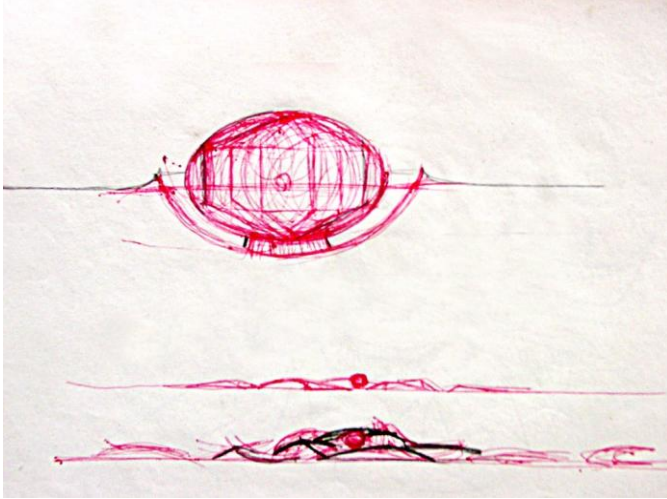
Sometime in 1970, Nata will let Piero read these transcripts - this at a time when Piero had no idea that he would ever work on Matrimandir. Later, when fully involved in Matrimandir, Piero will try very hard to obtain again copies of these conversations, but it will be only in December 1974 that Paolo will hand him a copy and that Piero and the Matrimandir team will be able to study them and that a controversy about the columns and the Chamber's dimensions will erupt.

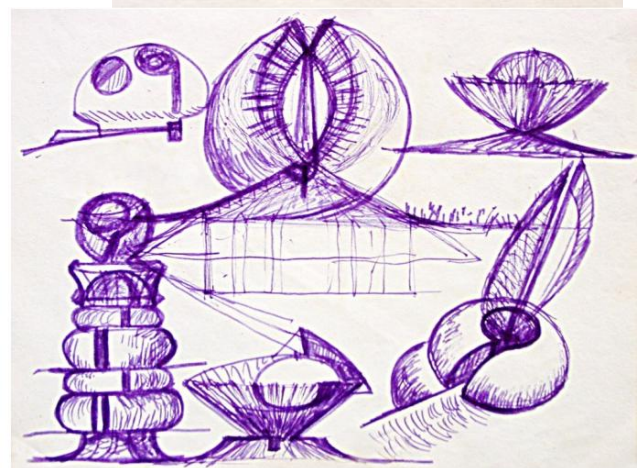
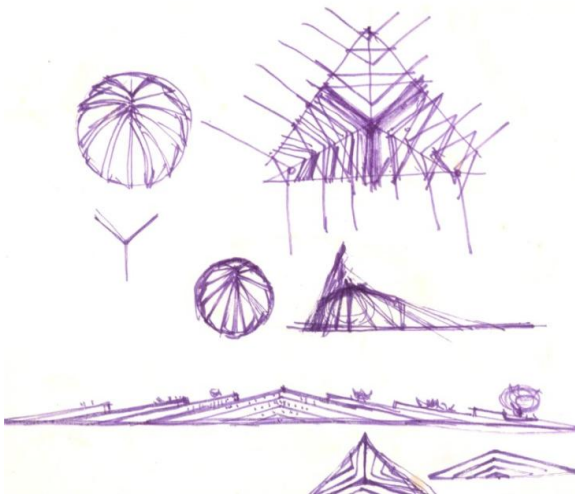
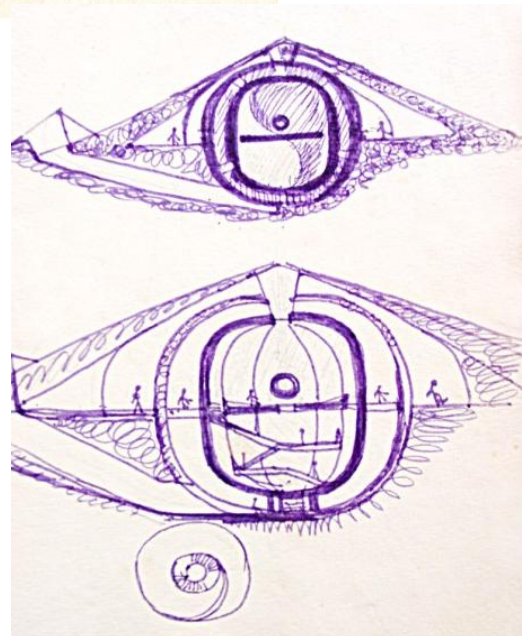
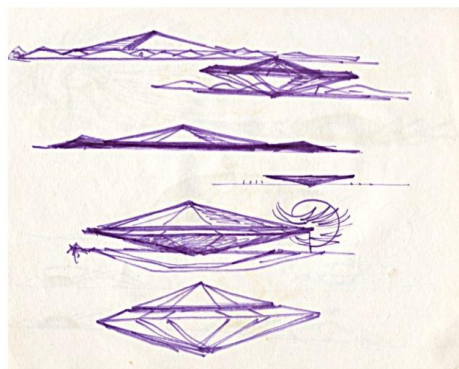
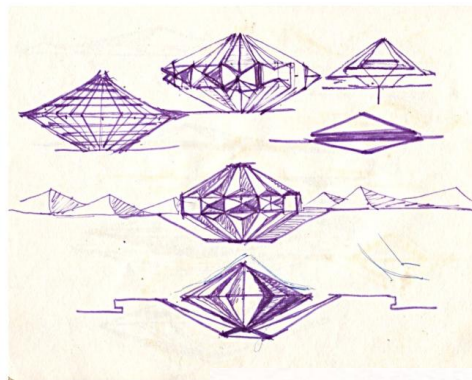
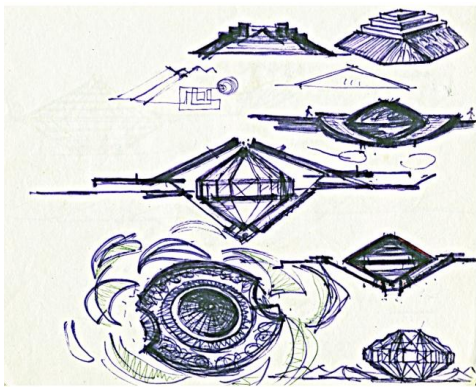
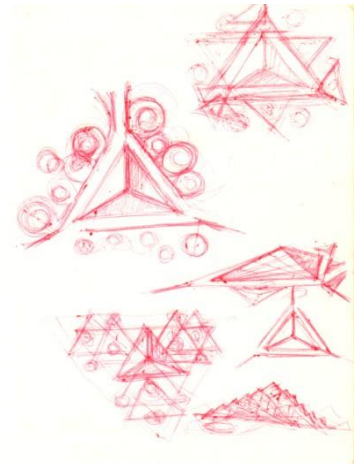
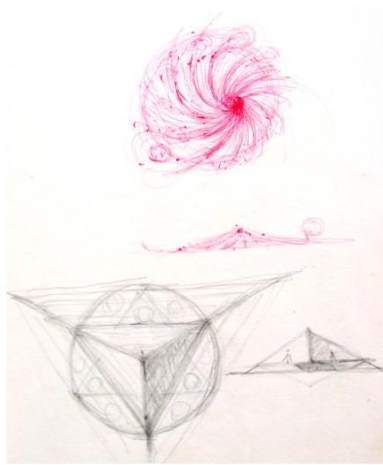
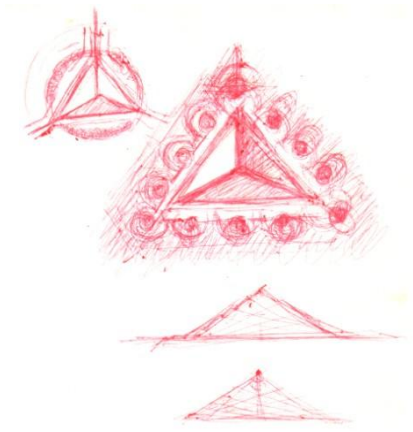
It is important to realise that the conversations which should matter most to us are those Mother had with Udar and then with her architect, Roger. Unfortunately these conversations were not recorded and Udar and Roger didn't keep any notes of them. If these transcripts had been available, the four conversations with Satprem would be far less important. BUT, as no other was/is available...

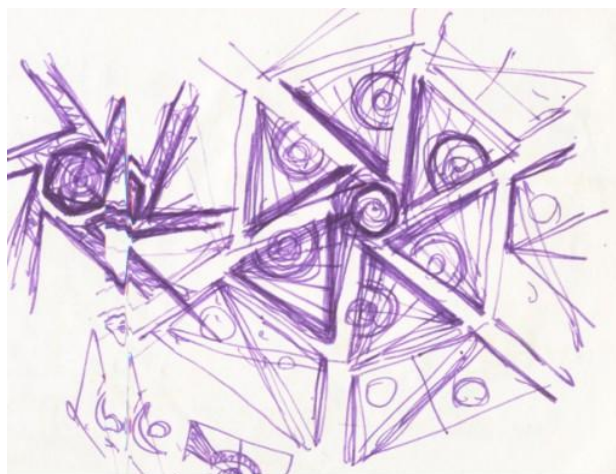
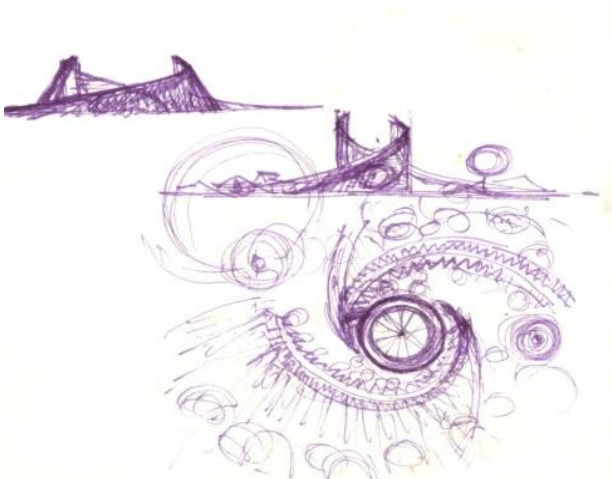
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⁶² Piero remembers that Roger told him he never received copy of these transcripts from Satprem.

1970, Early: Roger does some studies on the future Matrimandir:

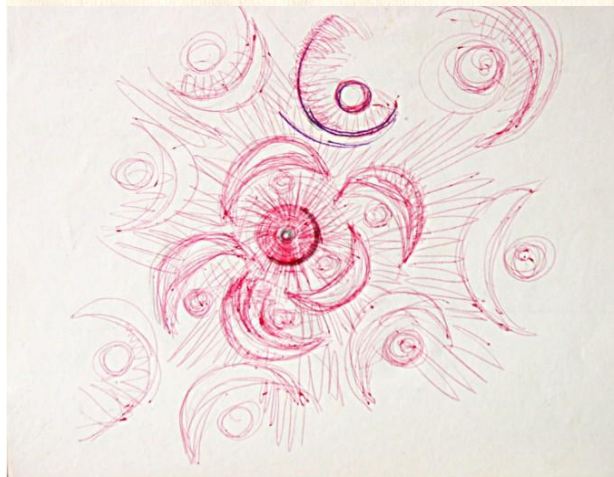
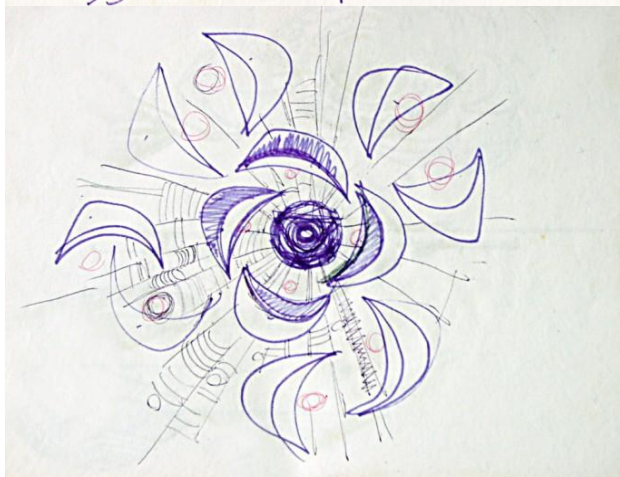
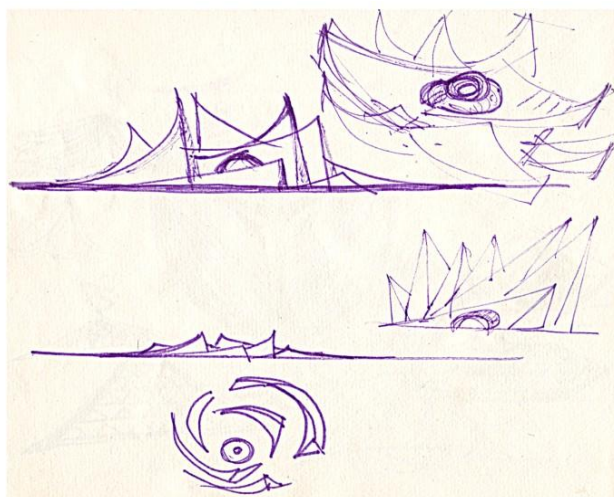
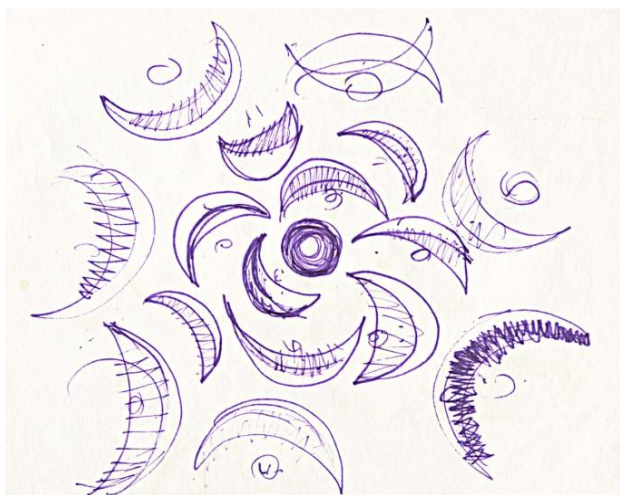






Roger's personal archives

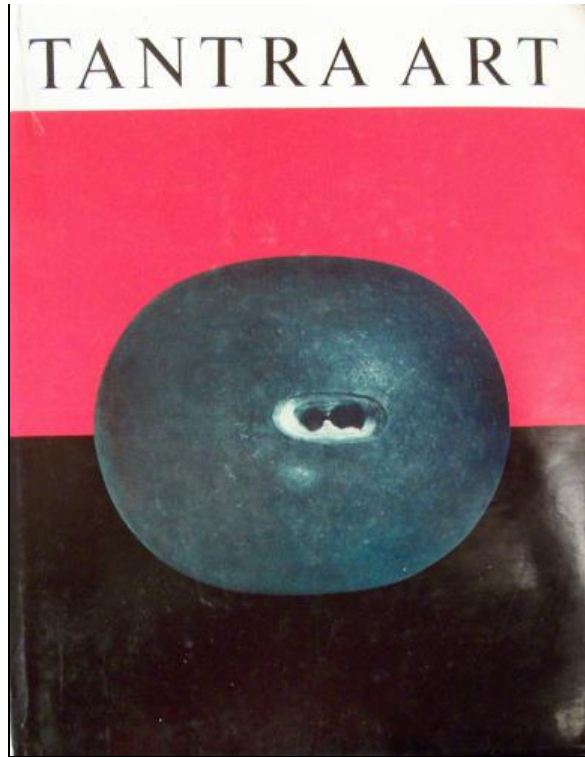
Roger's studies the immediate surroundings of Matrimandir. One can already see that he tries to bring some dynamic movement in the gardens - as he had done with the city.



* * *

1970, February

1970, January or February: Inspired by the oval shape of a ‘shaligram’⁶³ he sees on the cover of a book on “Tantra Art” by Ajit Mukherjee (first published in 1966), Roger decides to reduce the height of the sphere of Matrimandir by 20%. In a 1971 interview published in the *Journal of the Institute of Indian Architects*, he is quoted as saying: “It is the exact projection into space of an old tantric symbol concerning Creation and Unity”. Basically, Roger understands that this shape represents the primeval egg and hence the unity of creation and he finds it very fitting to have such a shape at the centre of a town dedicated to human unity.



Front cover of Ajit Mukherjee's book on “Tantra Art”

* * *

1970, February: Piero and Gloria get to read a transcript of Mother's four recent conversations with Satprem on Matrimandir.

Decades later, Piero will remember:

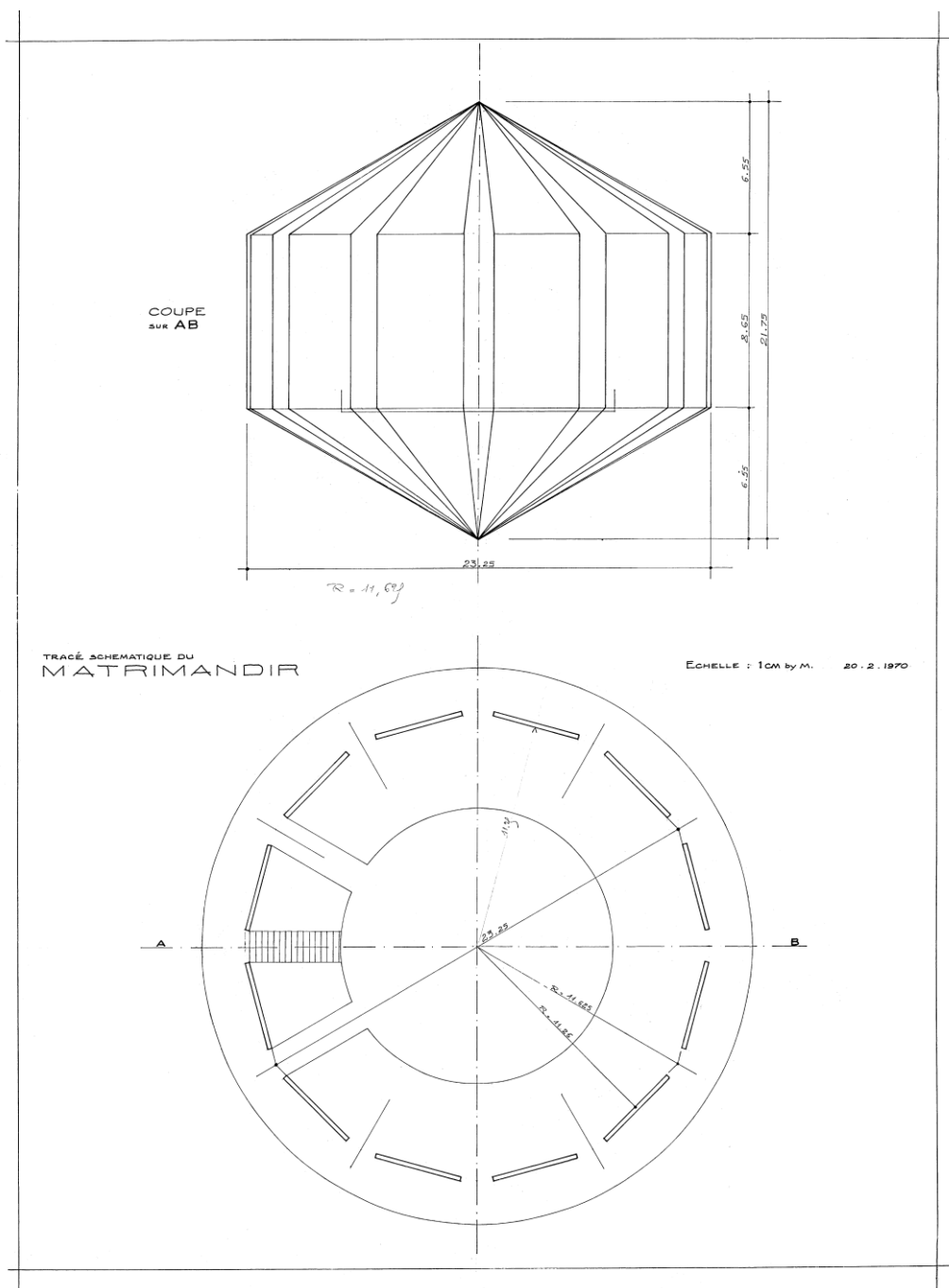
“The year 1970 began for us – Gloria and I – with the overwhelming experience of reading a copy of some 50-odd typewritten pages dealing with the design of this till-then mysterious building called the Matrimandir, which a friend from the Ashram unexpectedly lent us to read. It was, and still is, an extraordinary document describing in the words of the Mother the details of her vision for the futuristic marvellous building which was to be at the centre of Auroville. For us, it was difficult to perceive all that, given our rudimentary daily life at that time, but we were moved. It was also clear that something big was starting to take shape.”

* * *

⁶³ Hila (□□□□ in Devanagari, śīla in IAST) or Shaligram refers to a fossilized shell used in South Asia as an iconic symbol and reminder of the God Vishnu as the Universal Principle by some Hindus. Shaligrams are usually collected from river-beds or banks such as the Gandaki river in Nepal. They are considered easy to carry and popular in certain traditions of Vaishnavism, as an aniconic representation of the divine. They are typically in the form of spherical, black-coloured Ammonoid fossils which have existed nearly a 100 million years before the first humans evolved.

1970, February-March: Roger works on a first drawing of the Inner Chamber.

This drawing is dated February 20th:

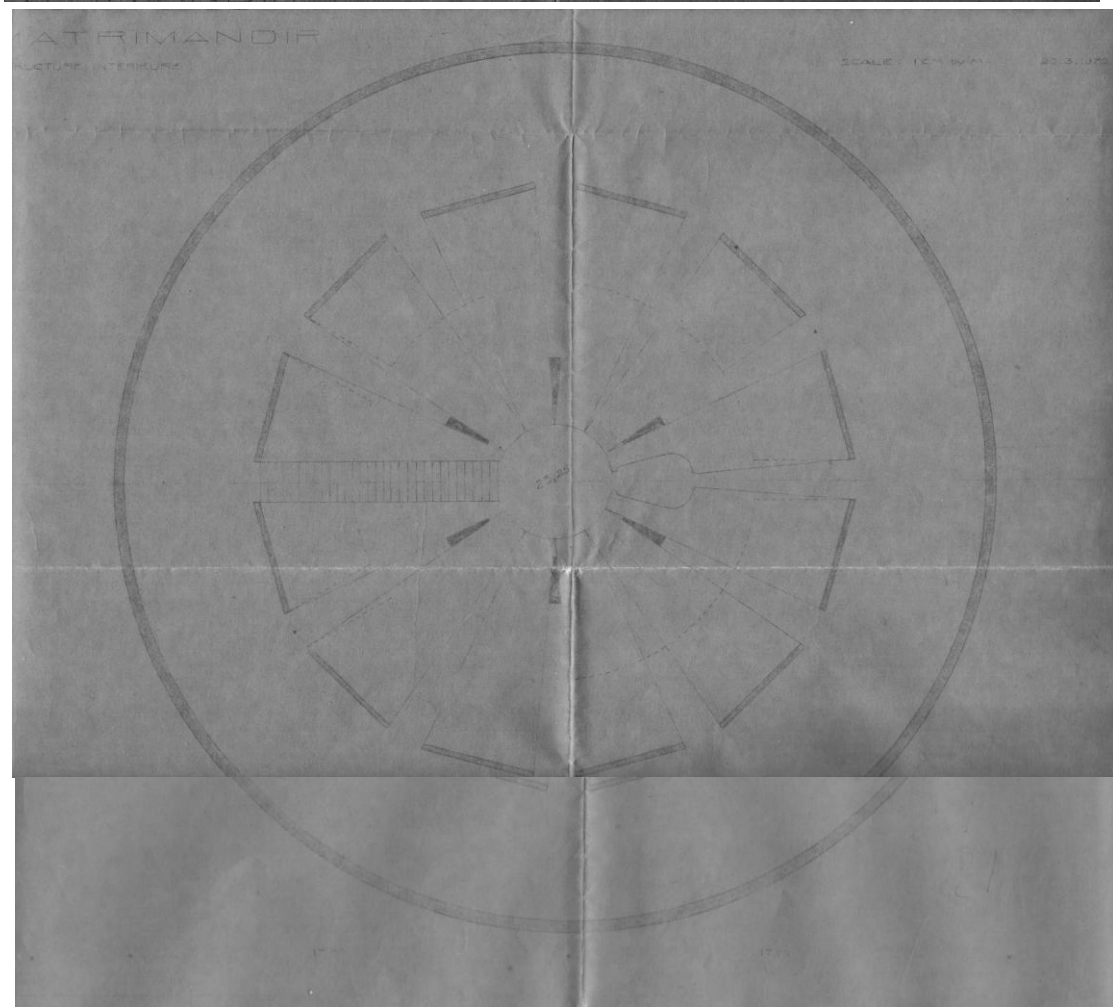
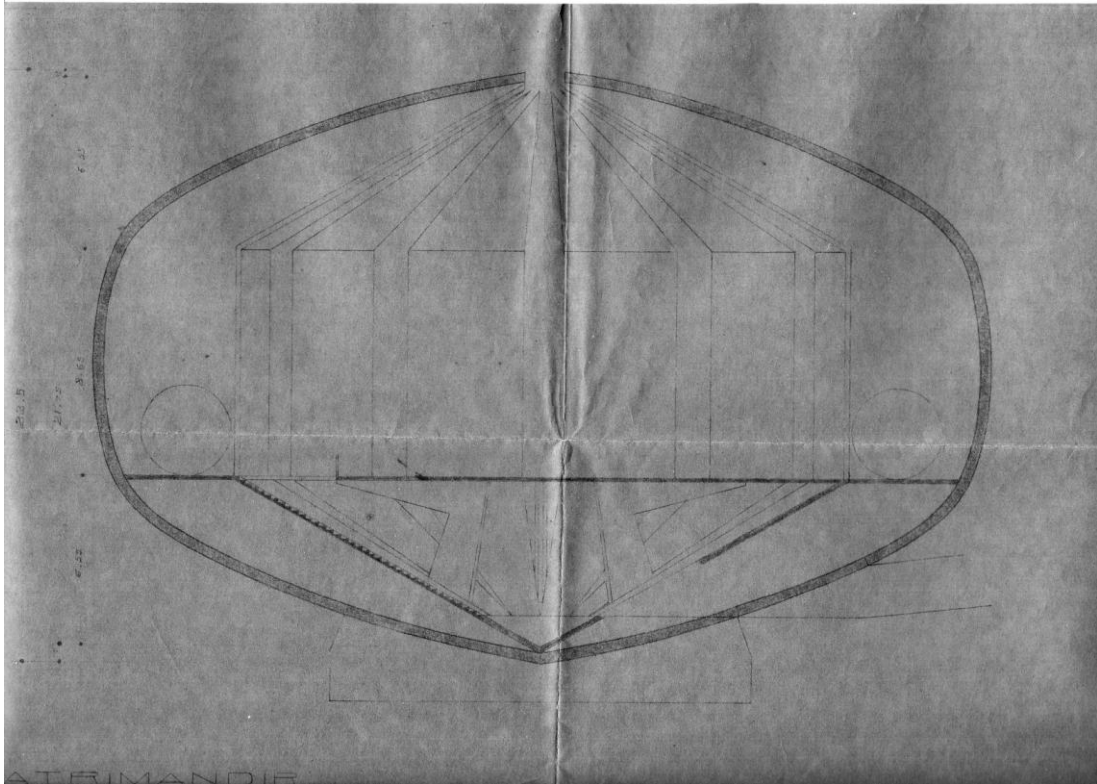


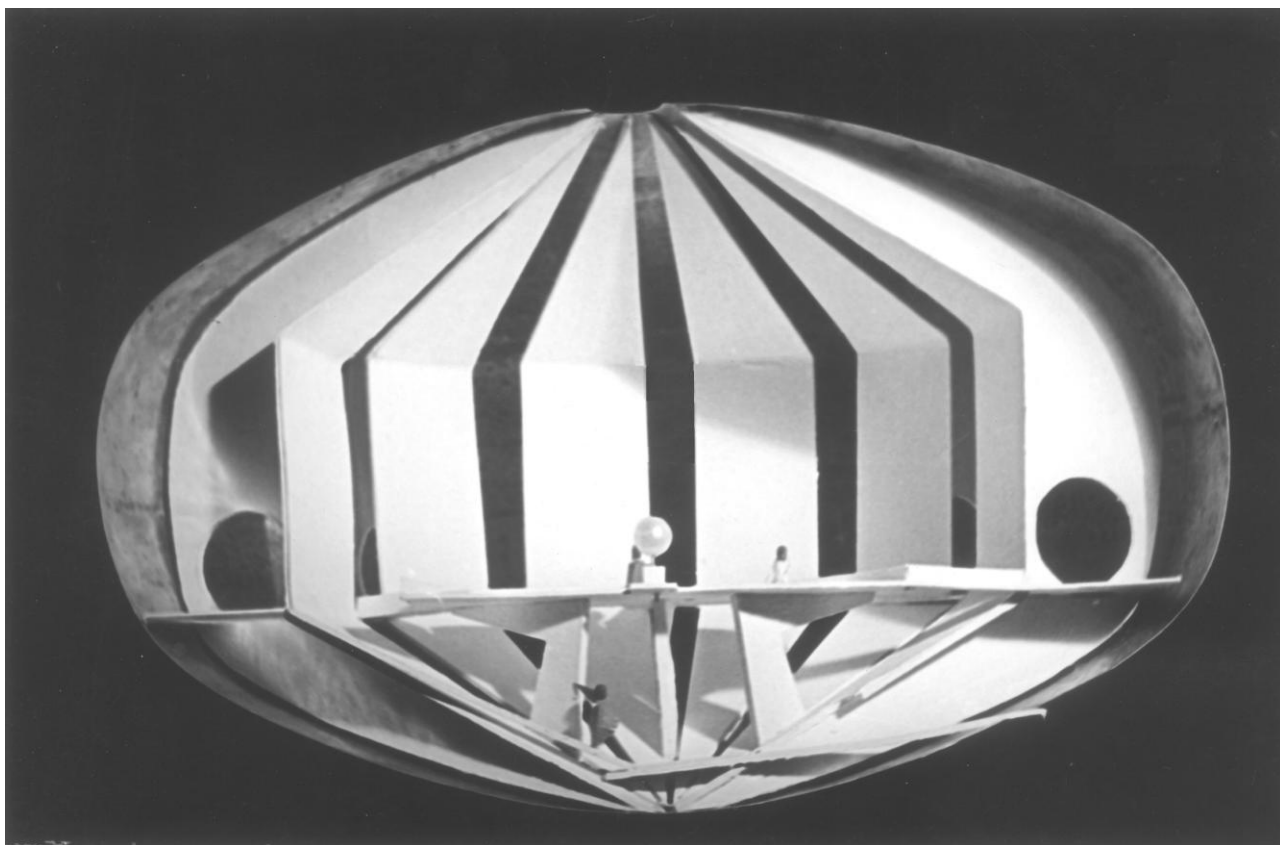
Editor's comments on this drawing:

There are gaps between all facets of the Chamber's wall, ceiling and sub-structure. The floor is circular and its diameter is only 14m (approximately). As the distance between opposite inner corners of the wall is mentioned as being 23.25m, there is a 5m gap between the edge of the floor and the dodeca wall. This circular floor is accesses by footbridges ("passerelles"). Though only three are shown here, the intention may been to have twelve footbridges. There are no columns.

We will see that till September 1972, Roger's drawings showed a gap between the floor and the dodeca wall of the Chamber. This gap was narrower than in this drawing and one entered the Chamber by 4 staircases from below instead of by the 12 gaps between the wall's facets.

This second drawing is dated 20th March 1970

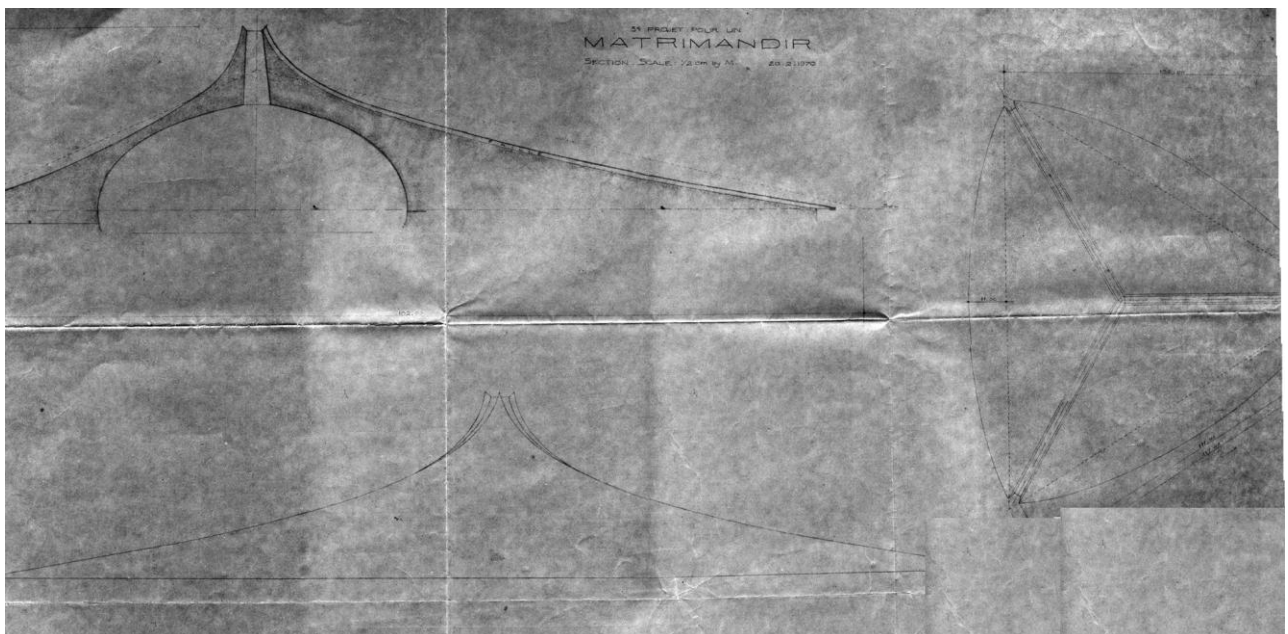
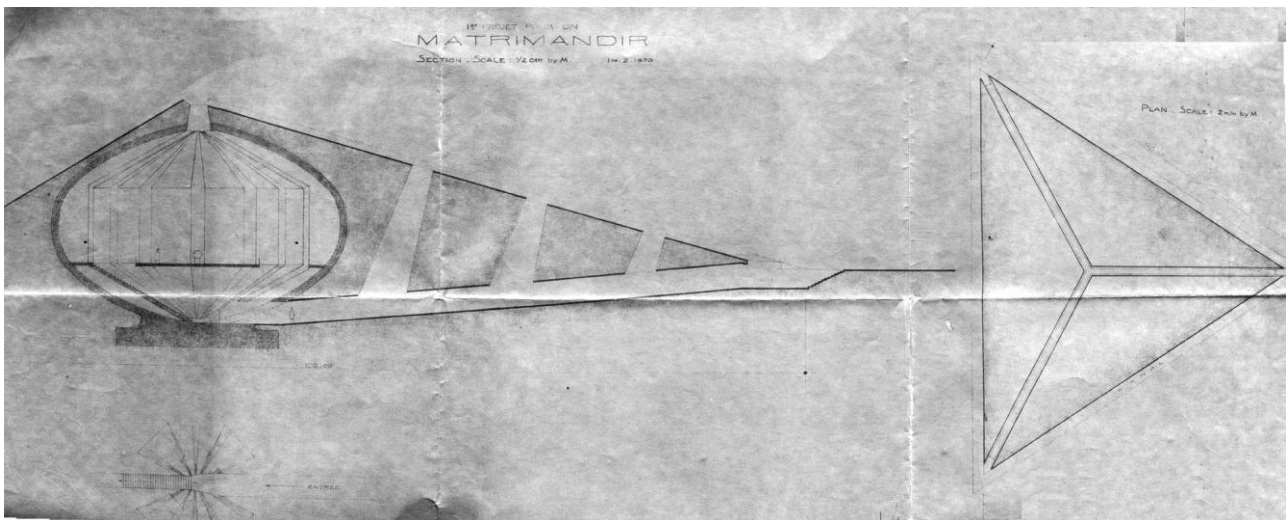
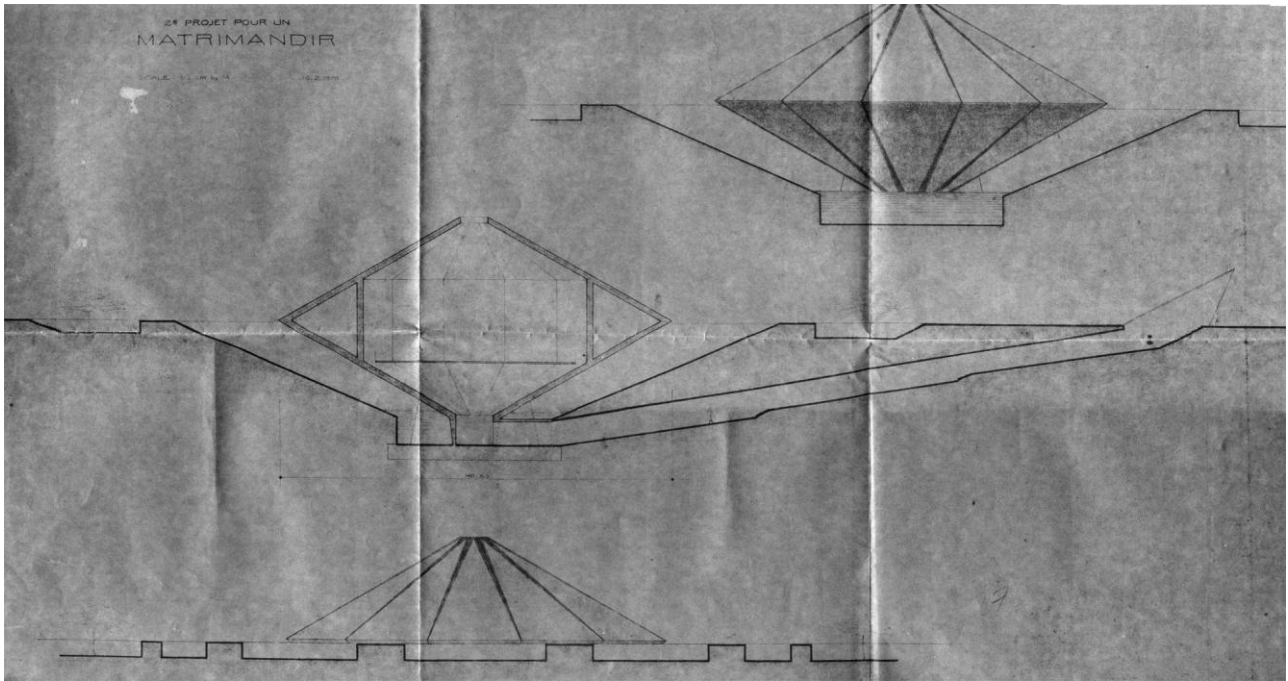


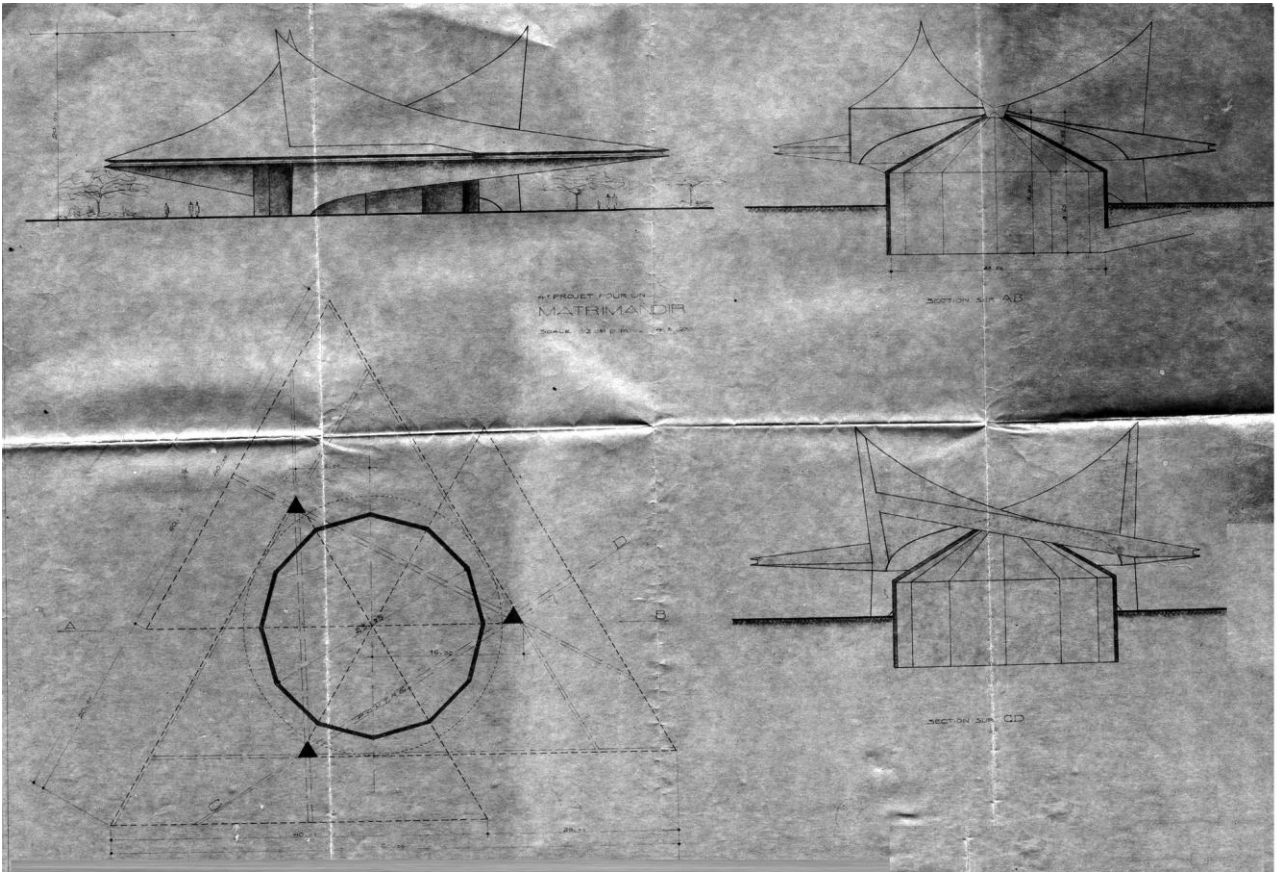


“Maquette” or half-model of the Inner Chamber

This half-model, which Roger holds here in his hand and will present to Mother on 24.3.70, was clearly made according to the drawings on the previous page. Outer circular gallery and outer shell are also shown in this model, which is not the case in the drawings.

Plans of some of the possibilities studied by Roger and his team





Editor's comments on these four drawings:

- The first drawing seems to be elevations and a section of the “polyhedron” concept, of which a model was made and presented to Mother on 24.3.70.
- The second drawing seems to be a plan and a section of a 3-sided pyramid whose 3 facets are flat. The three facets of the model of the 3-sided pyramid that was made and presented to Mother on 24.3.70 were curved and not flat.
- The third drawing seems to be a plan, an elevation and a section of a 3-sided pyramid whose 3 facets are curved, which was made and presented to Mother on 24.3.70.
- The fourth drawing seems to be a plan, elevations and a section of a twisted and curved pyramid, which seem to be different from the model of a 6-sided twisted and curved pyramid that was made and presented to Mother on 24.3.70.



Lisa (mother of Grace & Aurora), Michel Klosterman and some others work with Roger on these drawings and models.⁶⁴

Roger and Lisa

* * *

⁶⁴ According to what Ruud Lohman wrote in his Matrimandir Diary on 28.4.1978.

1970, March

1970, March 24th: Mother selects a concept for the Matrimandir on Roger's 47th birthday:
Second part of Roger's open letter dated 20.04.77:

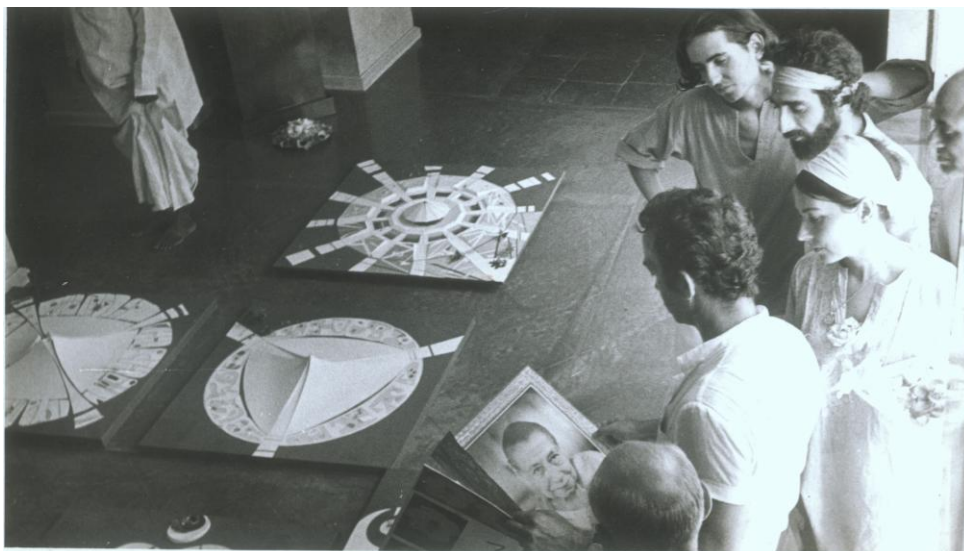
"On March 24, '70, I presented 5 models to Mother and a maquette⁶⁵ presenting the lines of the interior of the hall. The columns were no longer represented in that maquette and there figured already the access to the hall by a staircase leading to a gallery encircling the hall.

After having looked at them for long, having asked for the necessary explanations and having spent time over each of the models, Mother chose one to serve for the elaboration of the concept of the present Matrimandir and she gave me her consent for the work as a whole."

*Gazette Aurovilienne, V, July 77.
French. Published in French & English.*

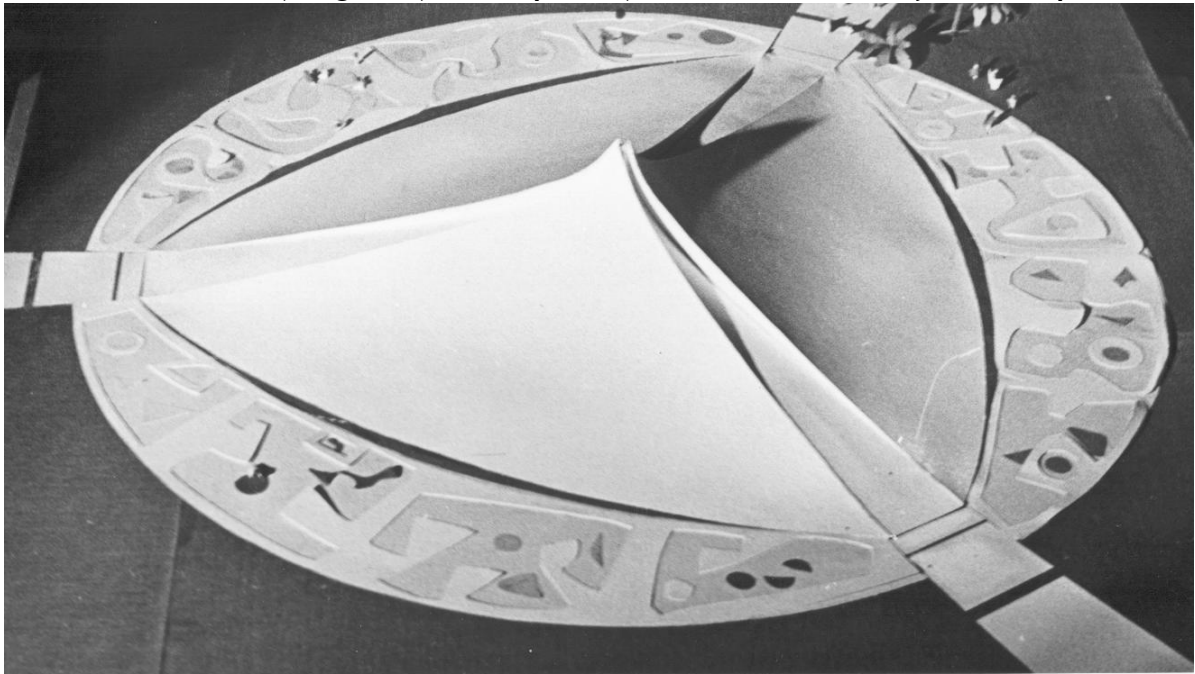


The five models and the half model (maquette) of the Inner Chamber in the Ashram's Meditation Room - on their way to Mother's room

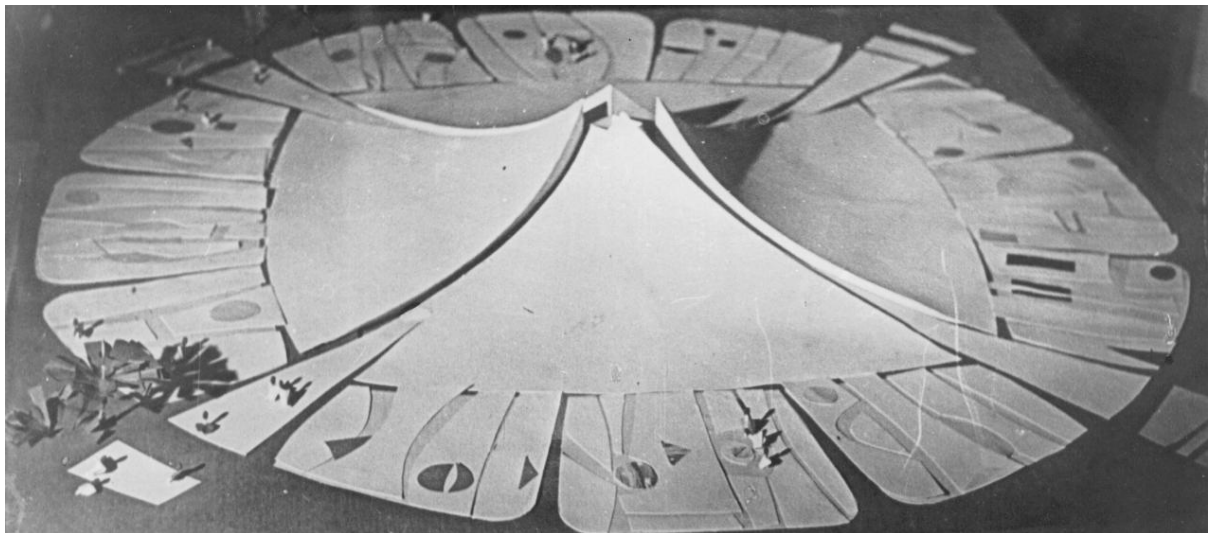


⁶⁵ "Maquette" = French for "model". As Mother had described the Chamber, Roger made a model of it – actually a cut-out model. As can be seen in the Roger's studies (presented in the previous pages), the same Inner Chamber was to be housed in each one of these 5 different models of the outer structure.

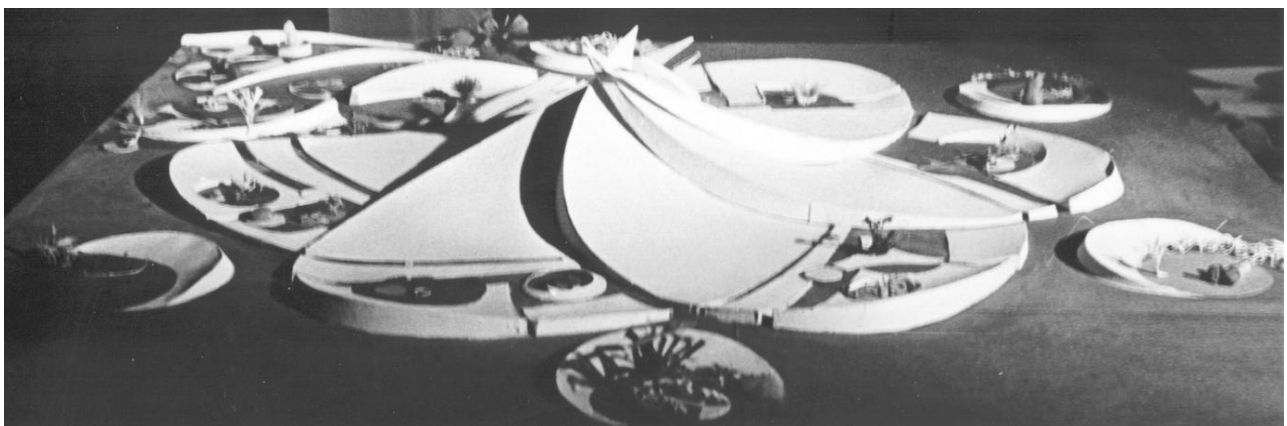
*Three of the five models in the Ashram's Meditation Room.
Gabriel Richardet, Roger A., Pournapréma, André H. and Cristof are also present*



Model of a 3-sided curved Pyramid

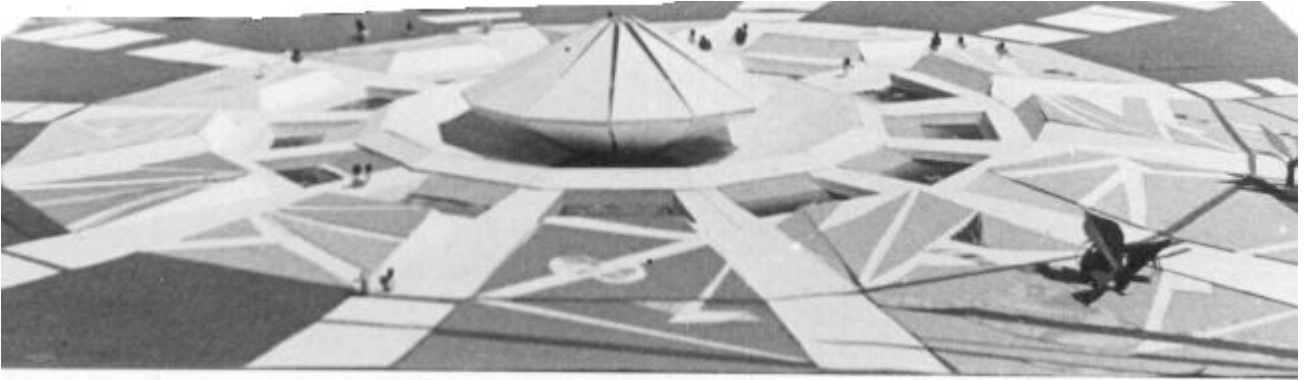


Model of a 4-sided curved pyramid

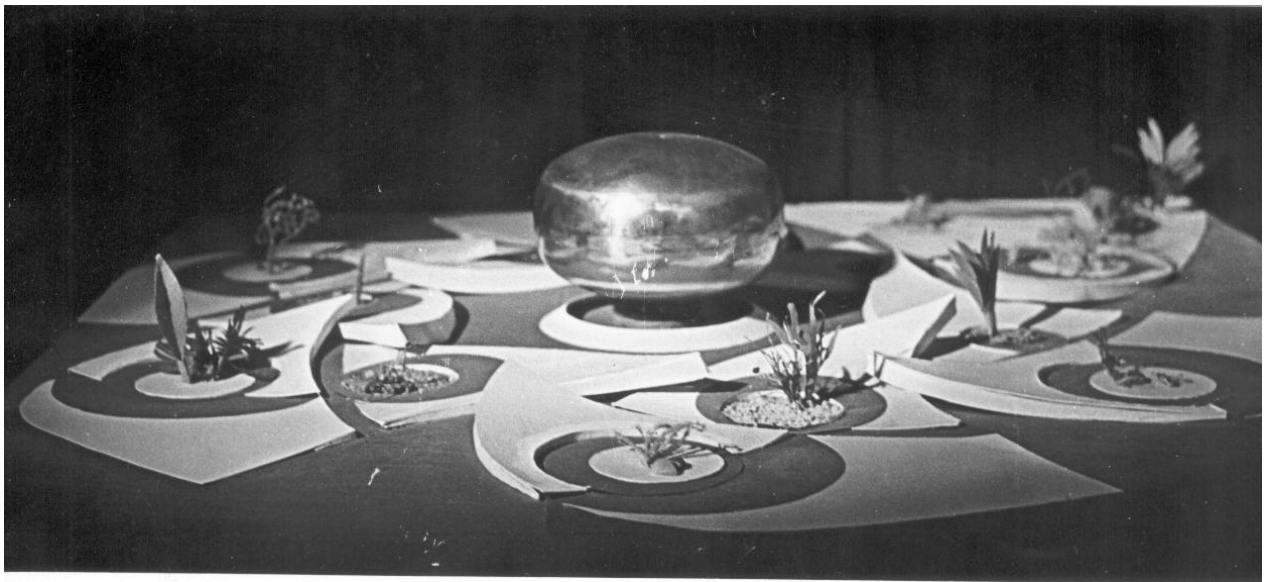
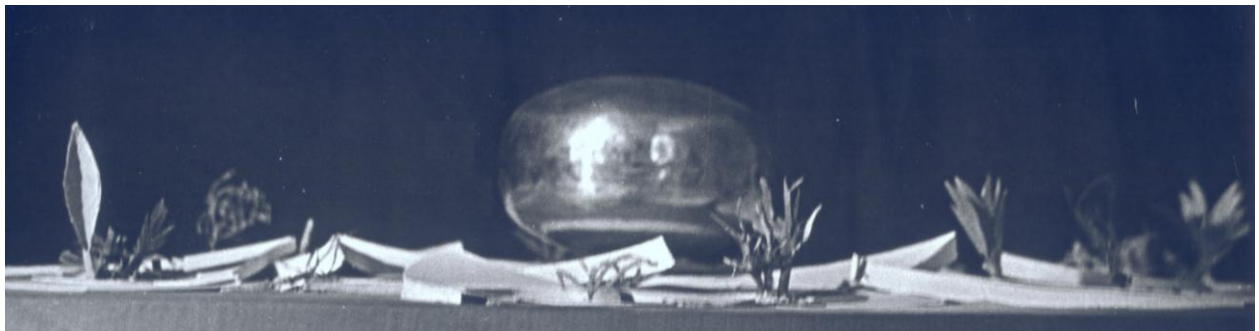


Model of a 6-sided twisted and curved pyramid

André Hababou (who was waiting downstairs when Roger and Pournapréma presented all these models to Mother) remembers that, when they came down Purna said that Mother had rejected the three pyramids saying strongly: "One should not walk on Matrimandir".



Model of a Polyhedron



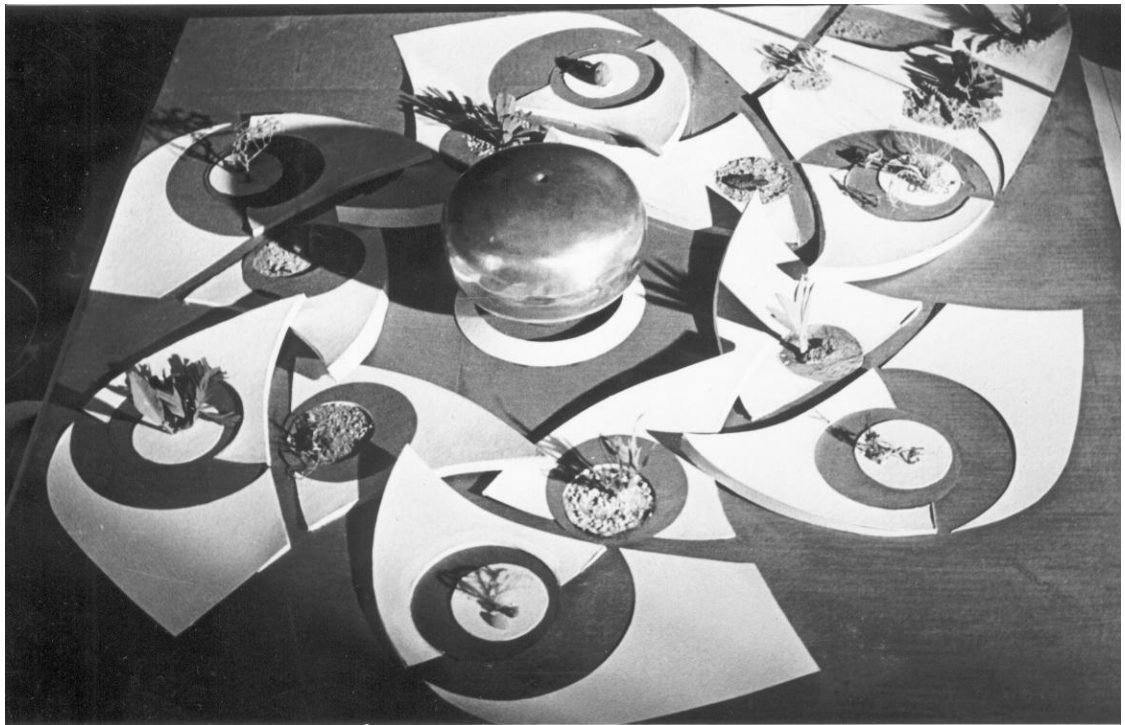
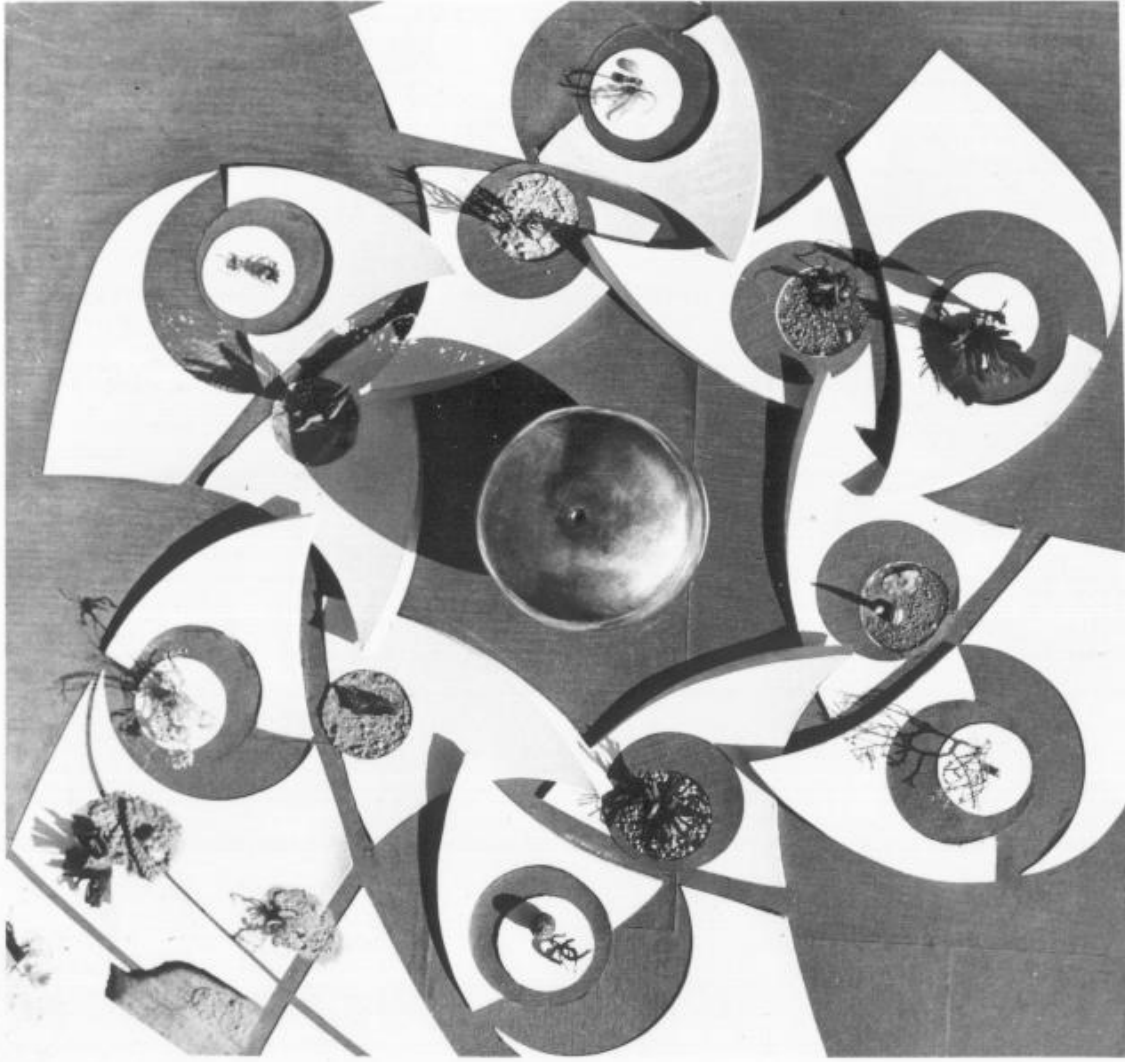
Two photos of the Model selected by Mother⁶⁶

The photo just above was printed on a card in which Mother had written:⁶⁷

Matrimandir

⁶⁶ A small shiny brass pot placed upside down was used to represent Matrimandir.

⁶⁷ This card was released on August 15th 1970 in the occasion of a first invocation near the future site of Matrimandir.



Two other photos of the Model selected by Mother

* * *

1970, March 28th: Excerpt from a letter from Huta and Mother's answer to it:

"For the last two months I have been thinking of asking you about Auroville – especially the Matrimandir.

Once you wrote to me to ask you directly regarding Auroville, because you alone knew the future plans of Auroville.

I wonder whether Auroville will be built according to your Vision or according to the vision of human beings!

I feel that there seems to be little harmony, unity, peace, understanding and collaboration among people. Moreover there is no money at all.

Owing to the financial difficulties surely the Divine's plans should not be changed or minimised in any way.

I have heard that there would be no lake around the Matrimandir. The Urn will remain as it is and Matrimandir will be somewhere nearby in a globe-like shape instead of in a lotus shape.

Believe me, I am not anxious about my house over there. I am not particular. House or no house makes no difference to me so long as I am near you.

I shall be grateful and happy if I will know the truth from you about the plans of the Matrimandir.

In case everything will be built in a hurry and on a small scale and not quite according to the Divine's Will because of the financial difficulties, then truly it will be very sad and disappointing for the whole of Auroville. For the Matrimandir is the Soul of Auroville and the Soul of the whole World.

Now will not the Supreme Lord do something for His own Dream?

*Our only hope in life is Auroville."*⁶⁸

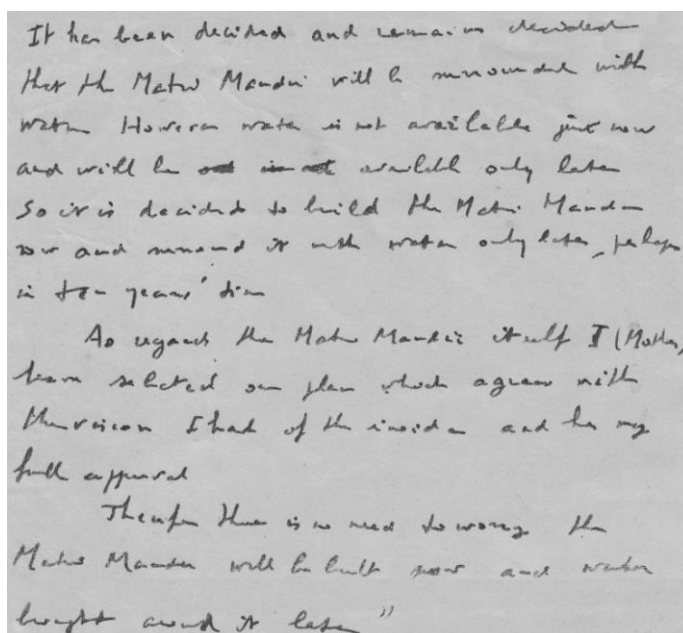
Mother sends a "blessing packet" to Huta and dictates her answer to her son, André Morisset, who handwrites it. It is sent to Huta:

It has been decided and remains decided that the Matri Mandir will be surrounded with water. However; water is not available just now and will be available only later. So it is decided to build the Matri Mandir now and surround it with water only later; perhaps in a few years' time.

As regards the Matrimandir itself I (Mother) have selected our plan which agrees with the vision I had of the inside and has my full approval.

Therefore there is no need to worry. The Matri Mandir will be built now and water brought round it later."

André's handwritten note



It has been decided and remains decided that the Matri Mandir will be surrounded with water. However water is not available just now and will be ~~not~~ available only later. So it is decided to build the Matri Mandir now and surround it with water only later, perhaps in a few years' time.

As regards the Matri Mandir itself I (Mother) have selected our plan which agrees with the vision I had of the inside and has my full approval.

Therefore there is no need to worry. The Matri Mandir will be built now and water brought round it later."

Auroville Archives (Huta's file); Huta, *The Spirit of Auroville*, pp. 100-101. Manuscript in English. Scan available.

* * *

⁶⁸ Huta made several minor changes in her letter while reproducing it in her *"The Spirit of Auroville"*.

1970, April

1970, April 2nd: Message given to Roger (most probably destined to the newly appointed Comité Administratif d'Auroville):



2.4.70.

Mettez-vous tous d'accord.
C'est la seule manière de faire
du bon travail.

avec mes bénédictions

**You must all agree.
That is the only way to do good work.
With my blessings**

Original in Roger's personal archives; Mother on Auroville, p. 43; CWM, XIII, p. 211.
Manuscript in French. Scan available.

* * *

1970, April 4th: Comment on the previous message:

For everyone to agree each one must rise to the summit of his consciousness; it is on the heights that harmony is created.

Mother on Auroville, p. 43; Gazette Aurovilienne, I, 4, p. 14; CWM, XIII, p. 211
French

* * *

1970, May

1970, May 20th: *Excerpt from a conversation with Satprem:*

Satprem: Roger asked to see me this evening.

Oh, really! Why?

S.: Out of the blue. I don't know. Just to make contact.

Things are stirring in Roger! (*Mother laughs a lot*)

He's torn between the old man full of attachments over there, and the new life, the new consciousness which is beginning to be interesting.

*Mother's Agenda, XI, p. 197.
Oral in French.*

* * *

1970, May 23rd: *Excerpt from a conversation with Satprem:*

Satprem: In fact, I saw Roger. I saw him twice.

Really! What did he say?

S.: It's interesting. First, I found him considerably changed.

(*Mother nods her head.*)

S.: He is another man. And I found him near, not far. I had the feeling that he was very near.

(*Mother nods.*)

S.: And he was enormously interested in this new consciousness. He said, "I would really like to experience this new consciousness, so what has to be done?" He told me, "All the spiritual stories tell you 'you shouldn't do this, you shouldn't do that, and you have to do this, you have to meditate and...'"

No, no!

S.: So I tried to explain to him that this new consciousness just wasn't like that.

Yes. But he didn't speak to me about it.

S.: It bothers him a lot: "What has to be done to experience the new consciousness?"

He needs to be helped.

S.: I have the impression he's right on the brink of something.

Yes.

S.: What's to be done to experience the new consciousness?

Well, you could help him.

S.: I tried to tell him something; I don't know if I did...

To me, he doesn't ask anything.

S.: Still he said to me: "Oh, I go to see Mother every morning and it's my oxygen."

Yes, we talk about what's happening out there [in Auroville], and then I tell him (very frankly, I must say) what I see and understand, that yes... But I mean he doesn't talk to me about himself at all.

S.: He's torn by France, by his attachments. But I tell you, I feel he's on the point of something.

Oh, yes! Oh, yes!

S.: He has to hang on yet for some time.

You can help him a lot.

S.: What I tried to tell him is that this new consciousness doesn't demand spiritual athletics, great concentration and meditation and tapasya, or any special virtues...

No.

Satprem: It simply demands trust in something else, a kind of childlike trust, and a need for something else.

Yes, that's it.

S.: He was especially afraid it was again a "matter of spiritual discipline".

No, no, no! No question of that!

But people always fall into that! Even in Auroville: meditation! And I can't decently tell them it's useless! (*Mother laughs*)

S.: He was touched by what I told him and reassured. Only he doesn't know what to do.

But you can tell him things that will help him. It is a very good sign that he asked you to see him.

[*Passage Omitted.*]

S.: Oh (laughter)... Well, you've really transformed him in any case... (Mother laughs)

Me too!

*Mother's Agenda, XI, pp. 203-04.
Oral in French.*

* * *

1970, May 24th: *Question from Shyam Sunder and Mother's answer:*

Q.: For the last three days the idea has been coming that the "Matrimandir" in Auroville ought to be built soon.

It would indeed be good, and would change things in an unexpected way – but this does not seem to have been revealed to others.

On the Path by Shyam Sunder p. 140.
Q. & A. manuscript in French. Scan available.

* * *

1970, July

1970, July 7th: Excerpt from the 8th “Aspiration talk”:

(Cristof reads to Mother a letter written by Rod H.:)

“Divine Mother, there is great confusion about Auroville’s organisation, inner as well as outer. How can we work together towards the realisation of a higher consciousness? It seems that Auroville should become a more homogeneous community with a greater sense of unity.

In order to realise this, would it be possible for all the inhabitants of Promesse, Hope, Aspiration, Peace, etc. to meet in order to work together one day a week on a communal garden, perhaps the garden of Truth?

Or each person could devote one day a week to a communal farm, to produce food for Auroville. That would help us to get to know each other better and make us more capable of organising ourselves in the right spirit. And perhaps the people engaged in individual projects for Auroville could also work together more closely, so as to form a sort of guiding team in Auroville, so that each one’s work could progress more effectively.

Would such a concerted effort in Auroville just now help us to do your work?

With a prayer of perfection.”

The aspiration is good, but... I don’t know whether the time has come.

Cristof: He is not the only one. There are several people working in different places in Auroville who feel this need to unite and to do the same work together.

Yes, the idea is good, but this is how I see it. We want to build the Matrimandir; and then, that was the idea: when we begin to build the Matrimandir, everyone who wants to work there will be able to do so. And that would really be working on the central idea.

And it should be soon. It should have been already. So there, there will be work for everyone. We have been thinking of beginning the Matrimandir for a long time. In fact, everyone should come and work there, except, of course, those who work elsewhere. There will be work for everybody. It is better than... It is the centre of the town.

You could tell him this: in principle the idea is good. But as for the application, for a long time, more than a year, we have wanted to begin the Matrimandir so that everyone could work there. A person would have to say, “No, I do not want to” and have his reasons.

It is like the Force, the central Force of Auroville, the cohesive Force of Auroville.

There will be gardens. There will be everything, all the possibilities: engineers, architects, all kinds of manual work. So you can tell him from me that he has picked up the idea which was in the air, but that we want its application to be truly symbolic. And when we begin to build the Matrimandir, we will put everyone to work on it. Not every day and all the time, but it will be organised.

CWM, XIII, p. 348; *Mother on Auroville*, p. 97
Verbal in French & English. Audio-recording available.

* * *

1970, July 11th: Excerpt from a conversation with Satprem about “Grace light”:

Satprem: Sweet Mother, one last thing, Rod asked a question: he asks if that vast “Grace-Light” or “Truth-Light” of which the Swami⁶⁹ speaks is the supramental light?

Which light?

S.: That vast “Grace-Light.”

⁶⁹ Swami Ramalingam (1823 – 1874), lived near Chidambaram.

Grace-Light... Oh! I liked that very much in his letter... Grace-Light. That's what is at work, you know: the work that is being done through this [the body] is precisely like that, it's just like a "Grace-Light". That pleased me very much. It's just like that.

You know, it's a light that has several degrees, and in the most material it's slightly... this must be the supramental force because it is slightly golden, slightly pink (you know this light), but very very pale. There's one (*gesture indicating another, higher layer*) that is white like milk, opaque – it is very strong. And there is one (*gesture very high*) which is a shade of white... which is of a transparent light. That one is something curious: one drop of that on the hostile forces dissolves them. They melt like that (*gesture meaning "in no time at all"*). I told all that to Sri Aurobindo, he confirmed it completely to me.

That is essentially the Grace in its... (*gesture very high*) supreme state. It's a Light... it is colourless, you know, it's transparent, and that light (I have experienced it, I am speaking of it because I know it): you put it on a hostile being and... It melts just like that. It's extraordinary.... And then, in its guise of what you could call "benevolent" (that is, the Grace that succours and helps and cures), it's as white as milk. And if I want an entirely material action (but this is recent, it's recently, since that new Consciousness came⁷⁰), then in its physical action, on the physical, it becomes slightly coloured: it's luminous, it's gold with pink in it, but it's not pink...

(*Mother picks up a hibiscus near her*). It's like that.

Satprem: Like the "Auroville" flower?⁷¹

Like the Auroville flower. But I DELIBERATELY chose it as the Auroville flower because of that. And I have the impression that that's the supramental colour: when I see beings of the supramental, they are... not exactly this colour... It's not like a flower, it's like flesh. But it's like that (*Mother indicates the colour of the flower*).

Note that, months later, Mother will give a piece of a saree of this golden-pink colour to Roger to show him the colour of Matrimandir's 'inner skin'.



Mother's Agenda, XI, p. 260.
Oral in French.

* * *

⁷⁰ On 1st January 1969.

⁷¹ Mother gave two names to this Hibiscus: "Auroville" and "Beauty of Supramental Love".

1970, August

1970, August 14th: People from Auroville and the Ashram gather for a first invocation of the Matrimandir around a pond immediately to the south of the Banyan tree.⁷²

Message sent by Mother for the occasion:



*Le Matrimandir veut être
le symbole de la réponse du Divin
à l'aspiration humaine
vers la perfection.*

*L'Union avec le Divin
se manifestant dans
une unité humaine progressive.*

The Matrimandir wants to be the symbol of the Divine's answer to man's aspiration for perfection.

Union with the Divine manifesting in a progressive human unity.

Matrimandir, pp. 8-9; Mother on Auroville, p. 4; CWM, XIII, p. 229, SAS Info Letter 28.2 & 36.6, MI 407 Sept 1970 p 470
Written only in French but recorded in French & English

Alain Grandcolas' remembrance:

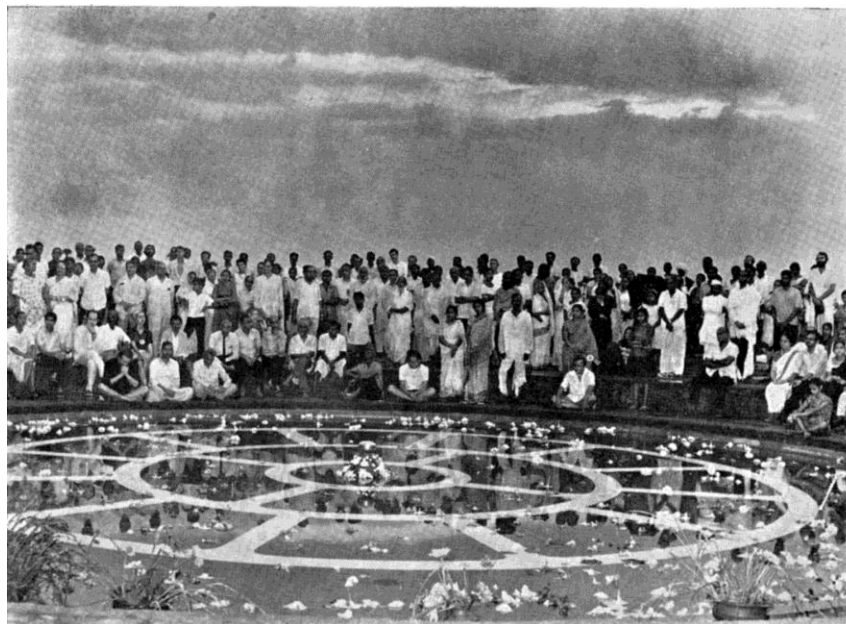
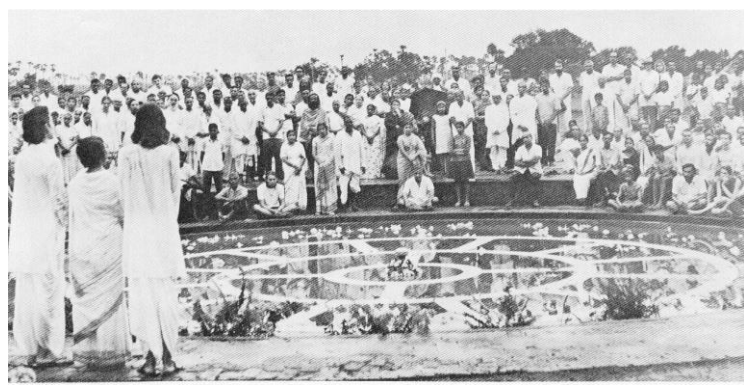
"People wanted to initiate the work on Matrimandir officially and August 14, 1970 was chosen as the great day. It was suggested to start symbolically with a talk in the Ashram playground, officially announcing a fund collection. It was even proposed to put a basket for gifts outside Sri Aurobindo's room so that people could donate after they had gone through his room on Darshan day, but some people did not like this idea at all. A group from Aspiration, including Alain, proposed not to ask at all but rather to use the celebration to make people conscious of Matrimandir. In the end it was decided to hold the meeting near the round basin close to the Banyan tree. The reason not to hold the meeting at the site of Matrimandir itself was, prosaically enough, that the land had not yet been purchased. Satprem was asked for some words to be used for the occasion. He proclaimed the purpose of the celebration to be, "to invoke the new force which shall incarnate in Matrimandir at Auroville".

The meeting was prepared by Aspiration. The area around the basin was done up; the floor or the basin was painted with designs in white lines, and many flower pots were placed around it. Even then, the idea existed that only Aurovilians should participate in Matrimandir. About that time Mother told the group from Aspiration which used to visit Her regularly that the aim of Matrimandir is the collaboration of all.

The meeting on August 14, 1970 began at 6:00 P.M. Ten minutes before the hour, clouds gathered on the horizon and sent down a very strong shower. According to the observation of many, the very same clouds, having passed over, returned to drop another shower at ten past the hour. Several people saw a beautiful light accompanying the rains, which are considered to be auspicious. The children of the Ashram kindergarten sang Bande Mataram. A passage from Book 11 of Savitri was recited and Nolini read out Mother's message for the occasion. After remaining silent for fully twenty minutes at the time of giving the message, she said "The Matrimandir wants to be the symbol of the Divine's answer to man's aspiration for perfection. The Union with the Divine manifesting in a progressive human unity."⁷³

⁷² This shallow pond had been built for the Inauguration Ceremony.

⁷³ AV-Archives keeps a recording of Sunil's music during which Mother reads the above message in French and then in English.



Humanly speaking, the work should have begun after this function. But we did not own the land on which the Matrimandir was to be constructed so nothing could be done. Anyhow, some people wanted, if not to work, to live in the area. Palit, who died last year, Ganguli, Alain and three others wrote to Mother in October 1970 asking her if they could live at Matrimandir. Mother agreed. They wanted to build a hut outside Matrimandir area but had to wait for Roger's permission. When he came back from Paris in the beginning of November he did not like the idea. Actually, Roger did not like the idea of any construction whatsoever in the inner-city area. When people convinced him, however, that some accommodation would have to be provided for the workers at Matrimandir, he agreed to rebuild three huts which had earlier been put up in the area by a group of Americans. A French architect, on a visit to Auroville, designed the place together with Roger. It was November 1970. Around the 24th November darshan, two Aurovilians who were staying in the huts – Dawn and Walter [van Assche, a Belgian carpenter] – began to take down two of the three huts. It was suggested that a contractor be called in to build the Matrimandir's

Workers' Camp but several people on the spot thought that, since the place was inside Matrimandir area, the Aurovilians would have to do it themselves. And they did, the place was ready to house about twelve workers.

The workers came, but not the land. Official sources promised and delayed, promised and delayed again. The tenth of January was the promised deadline, but again nothing happened. Then, one day in January, Roger asked Mother whether the foundation stone could be laid on Her birthday in February. Mother agreed. People could hardly believe it, since we did not even own the land. They wanted to see it in writing, so next day Roger came down and put a large piece of paper on the desk, which read, in Mother's unmistakable handwriting, "February 21, 1971. Pose de la Première pierre du Matrimandir."

Shyamsunder had just become 'the man' in Auroville but he did not succeed in getting the land either. However, by mutual agreement with the owner, it was arranged that the ceremony could be held on his land but that afterwards nobody should enter his property. The ceremony was held on 21st February. (It is also said that on February 22nd, about twenty people from the village came to chase away the few diggers from their land.)

About fifteen days earlier some people, among whom Roger, Dayanand and Alain, came to the area to find the exact site of Matrimandir. They decided roughly on the spot where the centre should be. Dayanand happened to have a pickaxe in his hand and took the opportunity to drive the first wedge into the soil."

Quoted by Ruud on 12th January 1973 in his Matrimandir Diary.
English.

* * *

Undated: Typed and unsigned notice. (It is likely to have been issued by Roger's office.)

Reorganisation of the Centre

The Mother has approved the principle that the centre is a place for those who are willing to work for the Matrimandir. Consequently, we have to study some solutions.

For the present moment, the only work to be done for the Matrimandir is gardening in Richard's nursery. Everybody is invited to join this nursery.

1) Peace⁷⁴

These 3 huts will be renewed to accommodate 8 persons, There will be some work to reinforce the roof, to fell down the walls and bamboo mat panels. The kitchen must be improved too.

2) Janet's hut

This new hut may be occupied by two persons. Ajit and his friend are living there, the basis of which must be checked.

3) Silence

The people living there are invited to come every day to work at the nursery. It is very important to know if they agree on this basis because, if we may rely on them, Richard may start some new plantations. If, after some time, they stop coming, Richard will not be able to upkeep these new plantations.

4) Arindam's place⁷⁵

An extension of Matrimandir's nursery will be settled there. Richard too, is in charge of this nursery and will give advice for the plantations he needs to be started there.

5) Gene's place

Gene is invited to look after the administrative work for this whole place" correspondence, transport...

Ray may help him.

⁷⁴ Mother had given this name to Arindam's place. It seems to be used now for the area closer to Matrimandir.

⁷⁵ This place is now known as the "Nursery pumphouse".

The ideal for the centre would be to start a common life. It would be good if a common kitchen could be settled for everybody. Janet and Ray could be in-charge of this kitchen which would be held in Peace. The food could be carried near Gene's place were the dining room will take place.

6) Pump

A pump must be urgently settled near the Banyan tree to provide water to Peace. Approximately of course: Rs 700.

Steven, who is living with Bob, is told to have offered to Auroville his Volkswagen.

Roger must inquire about this and it would be proposed to him to give his car for Matrimandir's work.

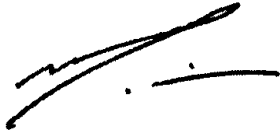
Auroville Archives (Matrimandir file).
Typed in English.

* * *

1970, September

1970, September: Message:

*The Matrimandir wants to be the
Symbol of the Universal Mother according
to Sri Aurobindo's teaching*



The Matrimandir wants to be the symbol of the Universal Mother
according to Sri Aurobindo's teaching.

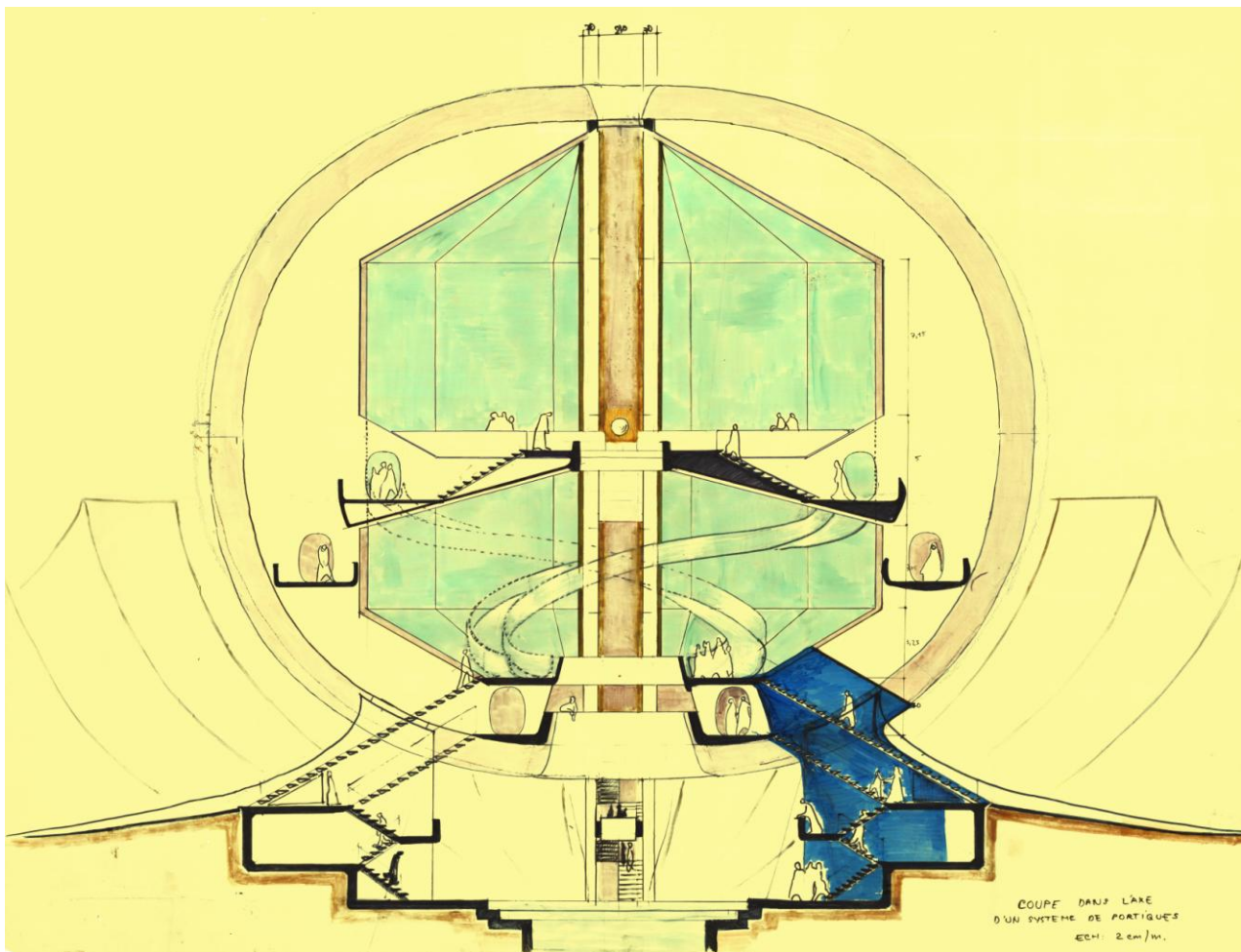
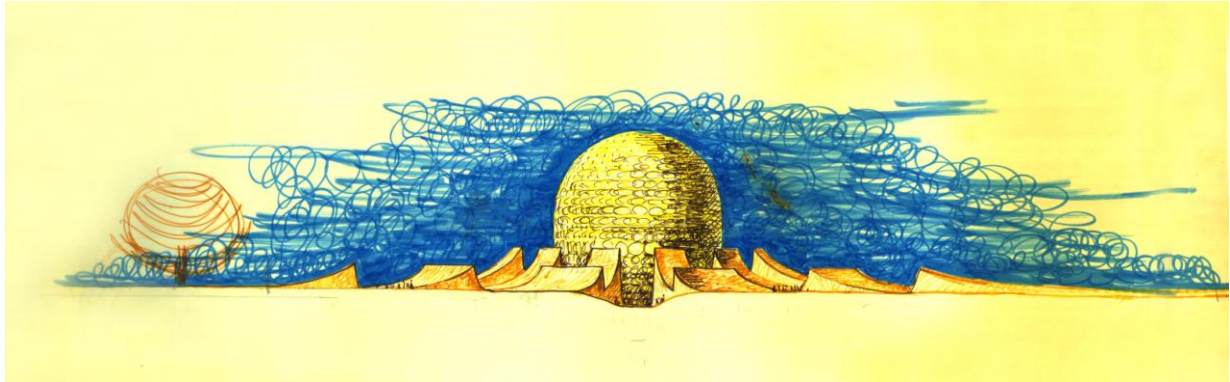
CWM, XIII, p. 229, Mother on Auroville. p. 4.
Manuscript in French & English. Scans available.

* * *

1970, November

1970, November early:⁷⁶

Roger Anger is back from France where he sojourned for almost 4 months. He brings with him a new set of drawings for Matrimandir, which underwent a radical transformation in Paris⁷⁷. It has become much higher and more complex. The simplicity Mother had originally spoken about isn't there anymore. It will thus take a lot more time and money to build. Mother will nevertheless approve Roger's new plans.⁷⁸

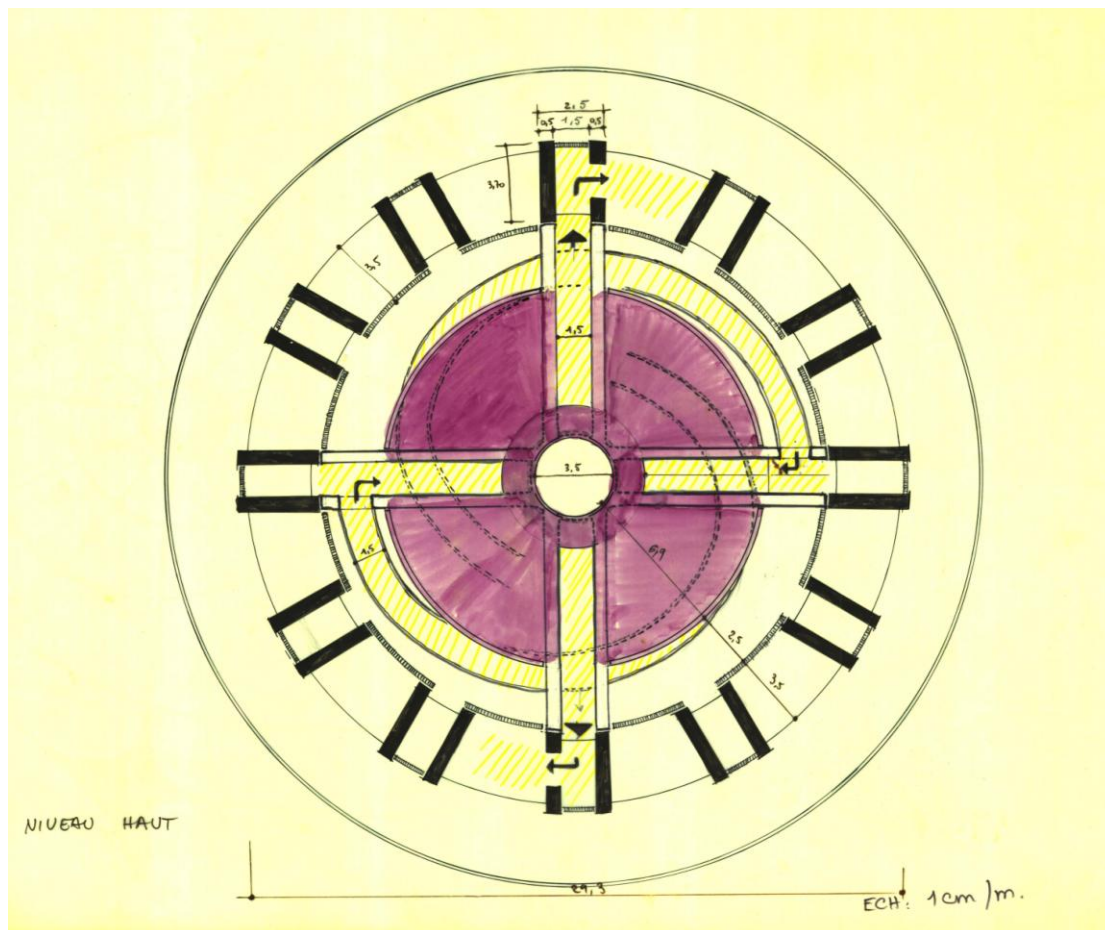


Vertical Section of the Matrimandir

⁷⁶ This date is mentioned by Alain Gr. in his account of the 14th August function at Matrimandir.

⁷⁷ At that time, some Aurovilians disapproved of "Auroville's Soul" being conceived outside of Auroville by non-Aurovilians. Some also thought Matrimandir had become gigantic because of that.

⁷⁸ In his open letter, which the Gazette Aurovilienne will publish in 1977, Roger forgot to mention this episode.



Horizontal Section of Matrimandir's Inner Chamber

Editors comments on this new concept:

- Matrimandir is now covered with golden discs and is now surrounded by twelve 15m high "petals" and twelve smaller petals.
- As was the case in the previous concept, there are no columns.
- Pillars and ribs are somehow similar to what they will be in the final concept. Matrimandir is thus much higher than in the previous concept.
- Entering the Chamber is again from below (as in the case in Udar's drawing), but instead of a single staircase, there are now four, which is better in terms of symmetry but staircases and their guardrails divide the Chamber in 4 distinct spaces. One enters the room very close to the globe which will be very disturbing for those who meditate.
- There is still a gap between carpet and dodeca wall - not for a gallery but to provide headroom for one of the two pairs spiral ramps. This means that the Chamber's seating capacity is much less than in Udar's drawings and in the final concept.
- From Sept. 1972 onwards, the dodeca wall will only enclose only the Chamber and there will be only one pair of spiral ramps. In this concept, the dodeca wall encloses also the space between the lower part of the ribs in the lower hemisphere and there are two pairs of spiral ramps.
- Access to the Chamber is via staircases in the pillars leading directly to the 2nd level and then via a pair of spiral ramps which are within the dodeca wall.
- Exit from the Chamber is via another pair of spiral ramps which are between the dodeca wall and the shell and lead to the 1st level. From there a different set of staircases leads to the space below Matrimandir.
- The spiral ramps rotate clockwise while going up & down.

* * *

1970, November 15th:

Answer to Oscar L. who had asked for 'something' on Matrimandir to be published in the first issue of what will be the "Gazette Aurovilienne":

Le Matrimandir sera
l'âme d'Auroville. Le
plus tôt elle sera là, le mieux
cela vaudra pour tout le monde
et surtout pour les Auroviliens

The Matrimandir will be the soul of Auroville. The sooner it is there,
the better it will be for everybody and especially for the Aurovilians.

* * *

1970, December

1970, towards the end of the year: *Excerpt from a conversation Mother has with Huta:*

Child, your tiny house will be very close to the Matrimandir. I will arrange everything for you. Leave everything to me. I will see to everything...

(Huta takes Her hands into hers.)

Huta: Oh! But, Mother, I have left everything to you, and truly I am not at all anxious about my house, but I am anxious about the Matrimandir. I am ever grateful to you for everything.

Huta, *The Spirit of Auroville*, p. 110.
English.

* * *

1971, January

1971, January 1st:

Excerpt from a short article on Matrimandir in the Gazette Aurovilienne:

“The construction of the Matrimandir Workers’ Camp was started on the 1st January.”

Gazette Aurovilienne No. 2, 1971
English & French

* * *

1971, early:

Savitra’s account of how the Matrimandir Workers’ Camp got started:

“In the autumn of 1970, the skeleton of a workers’ camp emerged in segments: bathroom facilities, a kitchen, and a small hut serving as temporary dining quarters.

On the 21st of February 1971, the foundation stone of the Matrimandir was laid, and by the following month construction had begun on the camp.

By June, the dining room was completed, and in August, the residences as well.

The camp itself, in contrast to the separate clusters of huts in Aspiration, was a single, concentrated unit – the dining area, living quarters, and meditation room being a continuum joined by walkways enclosing gardened courtyards. The walls are of brick construction, and the roof, a series of keet and bamboo waves with low sloping eaves.”

* * *

1971, January mid: *Though the land for Matrimandir hasn’t been purchased as yet, Mother agrees with the proposal of laying Matrimandir’s foundation stone on her upcoming birthday.*

* * *

1971, January 23rd:

Handwritten letter from Shyam Sunder to Mother and her answer:

Q.: For the Matrimandir, Auroville owns only part of the designated land. Since long, no land has been purchased. Would Mother appoint someone to purchase that land?

Pranams

I don’t know anybody for that – except you if you would agree to take care of it with my blessings

Auroville Archives
French

* * *

1971, January 26th:

Handwritten letter from Shyam Sunder to Mother and her answer:

Q.: Yesterday we purchased two acres of land close to Matrimandir for Rs 8,000.

For the Matrimandir itself the land belongs to 14 persons or families. Two of these persons have met with me and negotiation has started. The sellers are asking about 6 or 7 thousand rupees per acre. This price is a bit high. Secondly, they insist that we buy their other lands at the same rate.

According to what I have seen, it would be better to purchase at that rate, together with the other land which would be very important for Auroville after some months and the rate would then be higher.

It is indeed correct and needs to be done.

Blessings

Auroville Archives.
French.

* * *

1971, January 30th:

Handwritten letter in French from Shyam Sunder to Mother and her answer:

Mother,

Yesterday we were able to purchase approximately twenty acres of land for Rs. 1,50,000/-. Money has to be arranged to be paid in three months for the [full] payment. This includes some 9 acres for the Matrimandir, including for its centre.

It is good

Blessings

Auroville Archives.
French.

* * *

Editor's note: *This means for this deal to be sealed and Auroville to gain possession of these lands, this amount needs to be paid latest on 29th April or before. As it won't be paid before February 21st, Auroville won't own this land in time for the laying of Matrimandir's foundation stone. Yet, the owners will allow a bonfire to be lit there on that day - but no earth dug.*

Altogether, early 1971, Auroville had to borrow Rs 25 lakhs from the State Bank of India for land purchase.

* * *

1971, February

1971, February early:

Shyam Sunder's notes of a meeting he had with Mother at her request:

"Purna Préma came to see me one evening, early February 1971, with a message from Mother to see her next morning. It was something very important and in connection with Auroville. She knew what I will be told, but thought it would be better if I heard it first from Mother herself.

Mother had stopped seeing people from early December, and in the latter part of January, Nolini had resumed going to her and, then Madhav [Pandit] also. But it was just coming and going. Work was not resumed yet.

There was some natural suspense in my heart. Never before Mother had sent for me and on the way I felt its importance.

I did my pranam to her as usual and when I lifted my head, she smiled and asked, "Will you do what I say?" It was an unexpected start, but I immediately answered, spontaneously, "Yes, Mother."

She was still very weak and her voice feeble, but clear. She first spoke of the sad state of Auroville and of the way things were being done there. She specifically mentioned the name of Nava and wanted a change.

I have none else in view," Mother said. "You are my last chance for Auroville.

Then she spoke of the hard and difficult work that was being assigned to me, in spite of my weak health of which she would take care. She also said,

Don't think that I am giving you a big and comfortable chair to sit on you will have lots of difficulties; but I will be with you. You will not give up saying that you are incapable.

She added,

And I will hold you morally responsible for all that happens at Auroville."

In the end she said that if I agree to do the work, she would see me daily with my report and problems, and with her divine solicitude and humility, she added,

I will try to help you.

I repeated, "Yes, Mother."

The very next morning she asked with expectant smile,

So, what did you do yesterday?

I reported to her and for further steps suggested to wait for Navajata's return. Mother did not like to wait, and we started full gear.

Shyam Sunder's *Down Memory Lane*, pp. 89-90.
English

Though neither Mother, nor Shyam Sunder said it explicitly, on that day he became de facto her secretary for Auroville's affairs.

* * *

1971, probably early February: Roger shows two models to Mother for Her approval:



Roger in his Pondicherry office (State House) with an early model of the Matrimandir

Third part of Roger's open letter dated 20.04.77:

"Some months later, I took back to her the most advanced version of the selected blue-print as also a maquette of the Matrimandir and of the gardens, and the plans and the cross-sections of the meditation hall with the new details and suggestions which were the result of further work.

The dimensions were naturally consistent with those of the plan given by Mother, but I had suggested to Mother that the centre of the hall be left open under the symbol of Mother and of Sri Aurobindo so that the descending supramental force which would illumine the ball, would also symbolically touch with its light the sheet of water situated at the level of the ground.

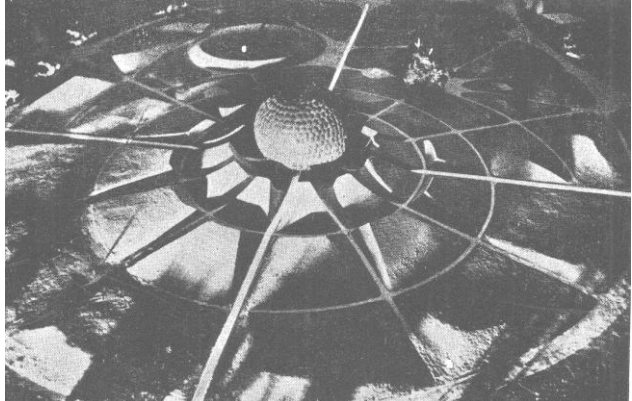
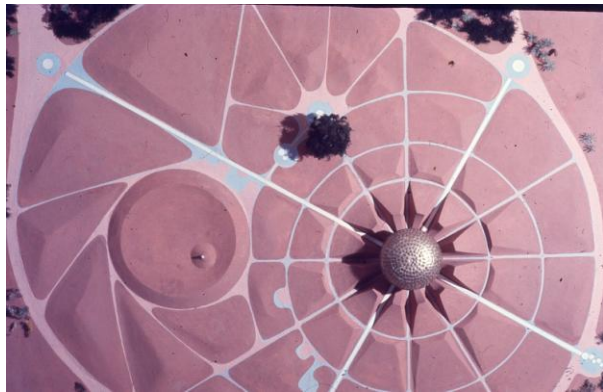
Then, I had explained to Mother in detail about the access to the hall by two helical ramps, leading to two points of entry into the hall.

Mother had given me, the same day, her full consent for the totality of the plans, after having received all the necessary explanations and the detailed information that she had asked from me.

In the same manner, I had explained to her about the covering of the outer shell of the Matrimandir by means of discs reflecting the light of the sun, to give it the appearance of a golden ball coming out of an opening in the earth in the form of a crater consisting of 12 petals."

According to André H, who again waited downstairs, Roger & Purna brought to Mother:

1. A painted thermocol model of Matrimandir's oval Island with the Banyan tree, the Urn surrounded by the final Amphitheatre and Matrimandir surrounded by its petals and gardens.



2. A model of the Matrimandir itself with its golden discs, which Roger took from the yet un-finished “rosewood model”. Mother held it in her lap for several minutes while concentrating and applying her hands on it. Ch. Gianferrari designed its disk pattern.⁷⁹



Roger holds the model of the Matrimandir he is about to present to Mother



Model of Matrimandir seen from above

* * *

1971, early: The land required for Matrimandir had not yet been bought... After discussing the matter with Mother, Roger notes down in French⁸⁰ the conversation he just had with Her:

Can we move a little the place for Matrimandir? One just has to move the town. That's all.
(Mother's drops her hands.)

If only we could go to a place where there has been no question of buying and where people would be happy to sell.

It is a question of decisive will... of not being attached to one's small mental combination. We shall build Auroville very near.

I am sure that if I would go up there by car and would see the place, I would find where one could do it and where people would be happy to sell.

Roger's personal archives.
French

* * *

1971, February 16th: Mother answers a question:

Shyam Sunder: For the construction of the Matrimandir, will only Aurovilians do the work or will there also be hired workers and other people of goodwill?

It is preferable that the work be organised without paid labour so that it is sure to continue in all circumstances.

*Il est préférable que
le travail soit organisé sans
aucun paye de façon que le
travail dure de continuer sans
aucun problème.*

Mother on Auroville, p. 74; CWM, XIII, p. 229
Q. & A. Manuscript in French

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⁷⁹ Ch. Gianferrari had already worked with Roger on the “Galaxy” and had also designed the Amphitheatre’s “Urn”.

⁸⁰ “Peut-être changer un peu la place de Matrimandir? On n’a qu’à déplacer la ville. Voilà tout. (Mouvement tombant des mains.) Si l’on pouvait aller à un endroit où il n’a pas été question d’acheter, et où les gens seraient bien contents de vendre. C’est une question de volonté décisive... de ne pas être attaché à sa petite combinaison mentale... on fera Auroville tout à côté. Moi je suis sûre que si je montais en voiture et que je vois tout l’endroit... je trouverai où l’on pourrait le faire et où les gens seraient contents de vendre.”

1971, February: Roger having received Mother's approval for his concepts of Matrimandir and its oval island, Ved Prakash carries on making a large rosewood model of it which was too large to be taken through the narrow staircase which leads to Mother's room. This model will be presented under the Banyan tree on 21st February 1971 the day of the foundation stone ceremony of the Matrimandir. (This model is now exhibited at the Visitor's Centre.)



Ved Prakash, Roger and others working at the completion of the rosewood model



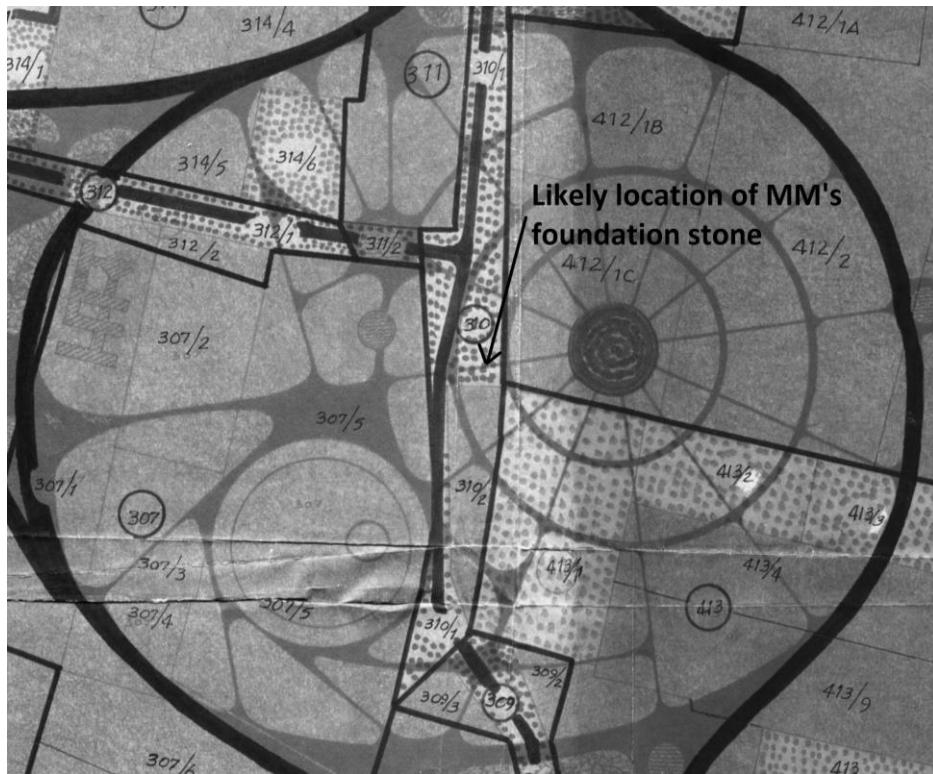
Fixing gold-coloured discs on the Model of the Matrimandir

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Preparations for Matrimandir's foundation stone function:

As said, on 29th January, the owners of the plot of land on which Matrimandir is to be built (and of other lands which they insisted on selling also to Auroville) had signed, against a down payment, a promise to sell these plots to Auroville – provided the full payment is made within 3 months. As yet, it hasn't been possible to do this full payment. The sellers nevertheless agree to have, on 21st, a bonfire on the place where Matrimandir is to be built – provided everything is removed latest on the following day.

As it is not yet possible to lay Matrimandir's foundation stone below its future east pillar, that is 10m below ground level (because Auroville doesn't own this plot of land as yet and because, in any case, there wouldn't be enough time to dig such a deep hole), a sloping trench is dug on Poromboke (Govt.) land, on or close, to the Matrimandir's future west radial, outside the area to be excavated – that is most probably below one of the small "petals" there.



Likely location of Matrimandir's foundation stone

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