

On Mother's Flag and Symbol

On Matrimandir's twelve gardens and rooms in its "petals".

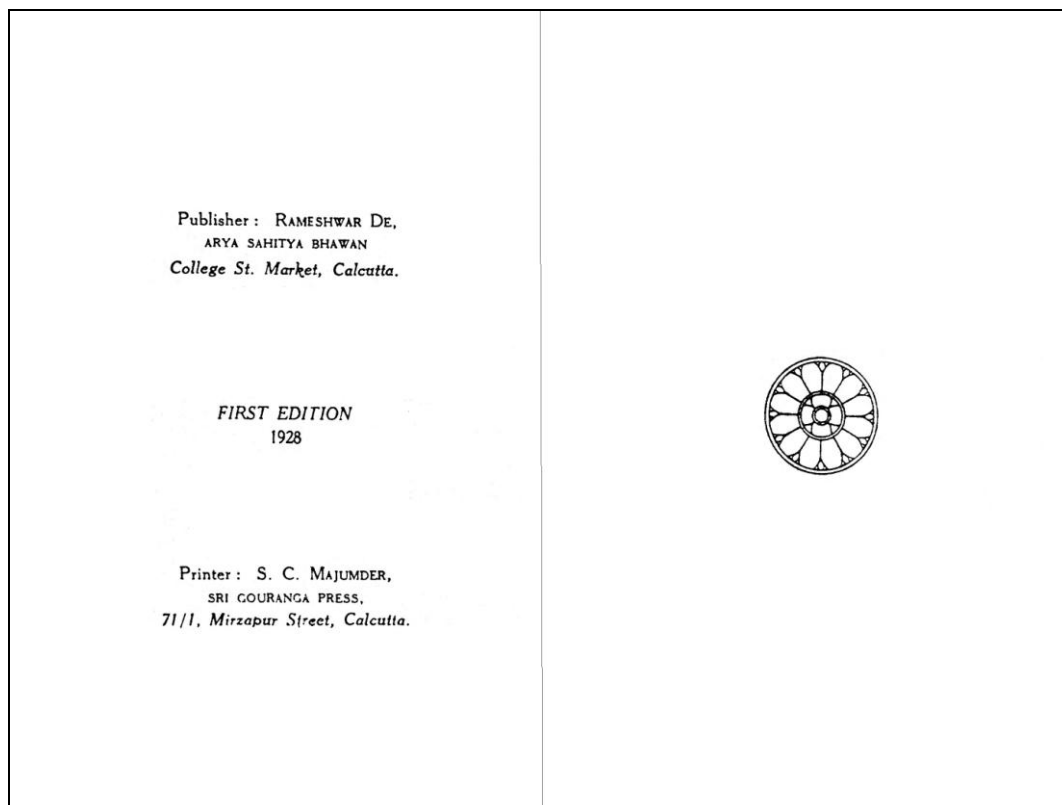
On their names and their respective positions.

On the colours of the rooms in these "petals".

May 2016 version

**Chronological study by Gilles G.
Auroville Archives**

1928: *Mother's symbol is used for the first time – on Sri Aurobindo's book "The Mother".*



Back cover and first page of Sri Aurobindo's book "The Mother"
On its first page, it displays Mother's symbol as designed originally.¹

It obviously represents a flower – in fact a lotus in full bloom – which symbolises the divine consciousness.

* * *

1933, June 24th: *Sri Aurobindo writes:*

"The Mother, with letters of the Mother", by Sri Aurobindo, p 55.

"The Divine Mother is the Consciousness and Force of the Divine – which is the Mother of all things."

* * *

1934: *Sri Aurobindo provides some explanations on the colour-scheme of Mother's symbol:*

One disciple, Dr. Naik, has the idea of making a large painting of Mother's symbol and writes to Sri Aurobindo to ask how to colour it.

On 20th March 1934, Sri Aurobindo sends the following instructions to Dr. Naik:

"The Mother" by Sri Aurobindo SABCL, p. 359, 'Champaklal's Treasures', p. 126, 'Mother's Agenda' (19.1.72).

"Centre and four powers, white."²

The twelve all different colours in three groups:

top group red, passing to orange towards yellow:

next group, yellow passing through green towards blue; and

third group, blue passing through violet towards red.

If white is not convenient, the centre may be gold (powder)."

As $12/3 = 4$, it seems obvious that each one of these "three groups" consists of 4 petals and that the "top group" consists of the four top petals (two on each side of the vertical) – but it is not yet clear in which direction to rotate.

¹ Sri Aurobindo's symbol will appear five years later, in 1933, and will be used on all his books.

² Note that Sri Aurobindo speaks here of the four inner petals as representing "Powers".

The Ashram's Archives keeps several other letters of the correspondence between Sri Aurobindo and Dr. Naik on this topic. From the following letters, it appears that this symbol was to be installed horizontally upstairs upside down, on the Meditation Room's ceiling – above Mother's head. As getting it there was a problem, it must have been quite large.

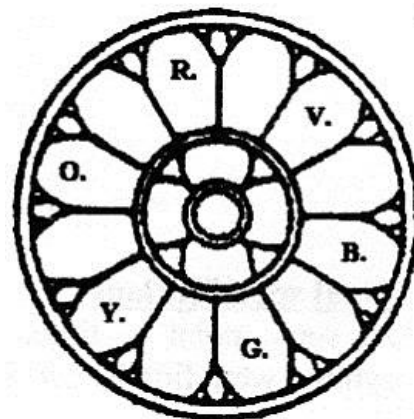
- *Dr. Naik writes to ask what should be the petals' respective colours in this particular case.*

Mother replies by indicating in Her own hand where the six main colours should be respectively:

R. = Red O. = Orange Y. = Yellow
G. = Green B. = Blue V. = Violet

Mother thus clarifies that in this particular case (placed horizontally upside down), the colour scheme given by Sri Aurobindo is to be applied anti-clockwise.³

Note that as the symbol is to be placed horizontally, the orientation of the symbol still needs to be clarified.⁴



- *Dr. Naik asks this question and suggests pointing the red petal either north, or east towards the Mother. Sri Aurobindo answers that the red petal should point West.⁵*

After receiving Sri Aurobindo's directives on this symbol's colours Dr. Naik writes back to Him:

"I have been frequently thinking of the Mother's symbol of 'Chakra'⁶ and its significance. I have understood it as follows:

- Central circle – Transcendental Power.
- Four inner petals – Four powers working from the Supermind to Overmind.
- Twelve outer petals – Division of four into twelve powers from Overmind to Intuition and mind.

Do you think I have understood the significance correctly?"

Sri Aurobindo answers:

"Essentially (in general principle) the 12 powers are the vibrations that are necessary for the complete manifestation. These are the 12 seen from the beginning above the Mother's head⁷. Thus there are really 12 rays of the sun not 7, 12 planets,⁸ etc.⁹

As to the exact interpretation of the details of the powers, I can see nothing against the arrangement you have made. It can stand very well."

Dr. Naik's painting of the Mother's symbol remained in this place during two years, after which it was taken out because it got damaged. Nothing remains of it – not even a photo or a copy of it.

* * *

³ We will see that, later and in usual cases, Mother will have this colour-scheme applied clockwise. Could this difference be explained as follow??? In the case of a symbol installed horizontally upside-up, this colour-scheme is to be applied clockwise – but in the case of a symbol installed horizontally upside-down, it is to be applied anti-clockwise so as to be the mirror image of a symbol installed horizontally upside-up below it (in which case, every petal of the upside-down symbol is placed above the petal of the same colour of the upside-up symbol).

⁴ Because the "top group" should not necessarily become the "North group" – as we will see.

⁵ Does He mean the red petal should point west or that what is otherwise the 'top group' should point west?

⁶ Dr. Naik and other disciples referred to Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's symbols as 'Yogachakra' or 'Chakra'.

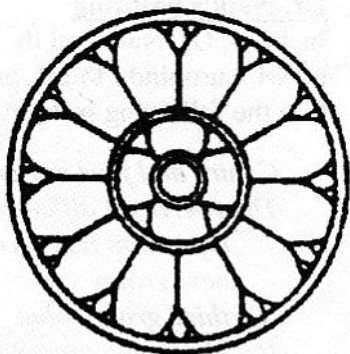
⁷ While speaking of Tlemcen (Algeria) where She sojourned at the Théons, Mother said, "That was where Madame Théon recognised me, because of the formation of twelve pearls she saw above my head; and she told me, 'you are that because you have this. Only that can have this!'" (Mother's Agenda 11.05.63)

⁸ Many celestial bodies orbit around our sun. The scientific community's conditions to be fulfilled by 'planets' has been changing in recent years. As it is too small, Pluto doesn't qualify anymore as our sun's 9th 'planet'.

⁹ In a talk on 3rd March 1971, Amal Kiran elaborated: "According to Sri Aurobindo, 12 rays (creating colour effect) come from the sun, not 7 as we believe. I may note that the Greeks seem to have seen only three: they discerned nothing more than red, blue and yellow in the rainbow. We have obviously developed more colour-sight..."

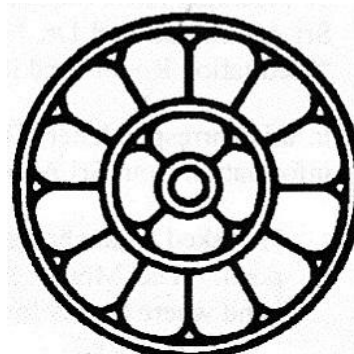
On 19th & 22nd March 1951, Mother told Her class that we have altogether 12 senses, nor just the 5 we all use. (Max Théon had also written about our 12 senses.)

1946: *The design of Mother's symbol is slightly modified and becomes final.*



as used from 1928 to 1946

Mother's Symbol



as used since 1946¹⁰

Note that in the original design there are 12 small petals between the 12 outer petals.

* * *

1947, August 15th: *India is free from British rule but partitioned and small parts of its territory are still ruled by Portugal or by France.*

Years later, Nirodbaran will write:

"Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo", pp. 160-61

"It was on this occasion that for the first time the Mother hoisted Her flag on the terrace of Sri Aurobindo's room. The Mother called it the spiritual flag of India."

About "the Mother's flag", Mother says on that day:

"Collected Works of the Mother", Volume XIII, P. 360

"It is the flag of India's spiritual mission. And in the accomplishment of this mission will India's unity be accomplished."

* * *

1949 March 14th: *In answer to a question, Sri Aurobindo explains the significance of the Mother's flag:*

"The Mother, with letters of the Mother", by Sri Aurobindo, p. 598

"About the blue flag. I presume you mean the flag with the white lotus. If so, it is the Mother's flag, for the white lotus is her symbol as the red lotus is mine. The blue of the flag is meant to be the colour of Krishna and so represents the spiritual or Divine Consciousness which it is her work to establish so that it may reign upon earth. This is the meaning of the flag being used as the Ashram flag, that our work is to bring down this consciousness and make it the leader of the world's life."

* * *

1950, December 5th: *Sri Aurobindo leaves His body.*

* * *

1950, October 18th: *Mother draws an outline of the spiritual map of India on a wall in the Playground, from which is prepared a relief map in plaster. Thereafter She takes the salute standing in front of the map during march pasts by P.E.D. groups.*

"On the Mother", by K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, p.858.

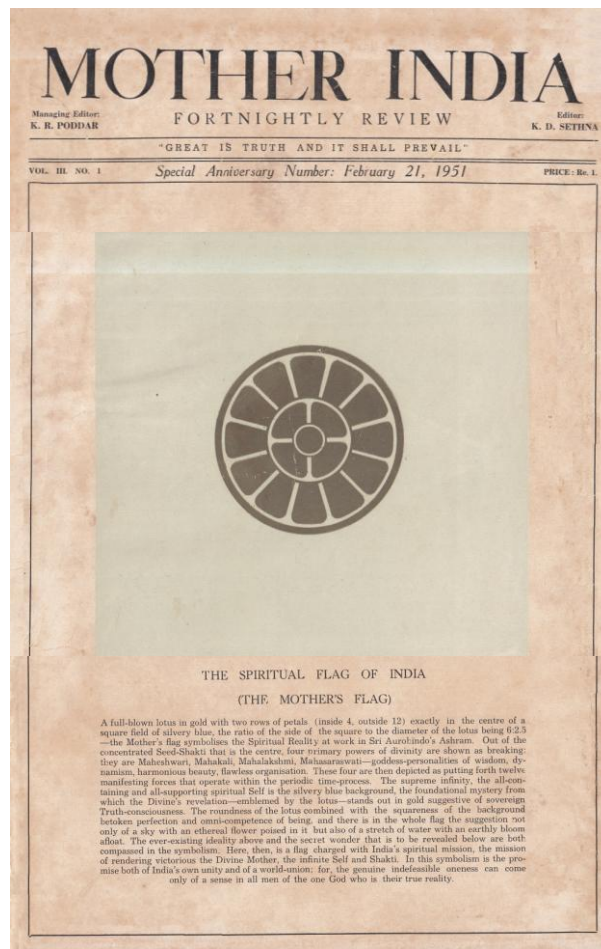
Note that Her symbol is oriented as it was originally.

* * *



¹⁰ However, as we will see, this symbol was rotated by 45° for some time and/or purpose.

1951, February 21st: *The first page of this day's issue of the fortnightly "Mother India", which Sri Aurobindo used to call "my paper", displays the Mother's flag and this explanation:*



"THE SPIRITUAL FLAG OF INDIA (THE MOTHER'S FLAG)"

A full-blown lotus in gold with two rows of petals (inside 4, outside 12) exactly in the centre of a square field of silvery blue, the ratio of the side of the square to the diameter of the lotus being 6:2.5 – the Mother's flag symbolises the Spiritual Reality at work in Sri Aurobindo's Ashram. Out of the concentrated Seed-Shakti that is the centre, four primary powers of divinity are shown as breaking: they are Maheshwari, Mahakali, Mahalakshmi, Mahasaraswati – goddess-personalities of wisdom, dynamism, harmonious beauty, flawless organisation. These four are then depicted as putting forth twelve manifesting forces that operate within the periodic time-process. The supreme infinity, the all-containing and all-supporting spiritual Self is the silvery blue background, the foundational mystery from which the Divine's revelation – emblemized by the lotus – stands out in gold suggestive of sovereign Truth-consciousness. The roundness of the lotus combined with the squareness of the background betoken perfection and omni-competence of being, and there is in the whole flag the suggestion not only of a sky with an ethereal flower poised in it but also of a stretch of water with an earthly bloom afloat. The ever-existing ideality above and the secret wonder that is to be revealed below are both compassed in the symbolism. Here, then, is a flag charged with India's spiritual mission, the mission of rendering victorious the Divine Mother, the infinite Self and Shakti. In this symbolism is the promise both of India's own unity and of a world-union: for, the genuine indefeasible oneness can come only of a sense in all men of the one God who is their true reality."

It is very difficult to imagine that the editor of "Mother India", Amal Kiran, could have published such a text without it originating from Sri Aurobindo or the Mother, or it being approved by at least one of them. (As said, Sri Aurobindo had left His body two months earlier.)

* * *

1951 or 1952: *Some time in 1951 or 1952, the Spiritual Map of India and Mother's symbol are both redrawn:*



In answer to a question, Mother will later write:

*La carte a été faite après
la partition.
C'est la carte de l'Inde
véritable en dépit de toutes
les apparences fugitives, et
cela restera toujours la
carte de l'Inde véritable.
quoique les gens puissent
en penser*
29-7-64.

“This map was made after the partition. It is the map of the true India in spite of all passing appearances – and this will always remain the map of the true India, no matter what people may think of it.”
(Mother, 29.7.64)

Note that, compared to the map drawn on 18th October 1950 (shown page 4), Spiritual India now includes large parts of Myanmar as well as the Andaman and Nicobar islands.

Note also that, as was the case on the cover of Mother India in 1951, here, Mother's symbol¹¹ has been rotated by 45° compared with the original and how it is now. We don't know why.

* * *

1954, November 1st: *‘De facto’ merger with India of France's remaining territories there.*

To celebrate the occasion the flag with Mother's symbol at its centre is hoisted at the Ashram at 6.20 a.m. when Mother reads out the following message:

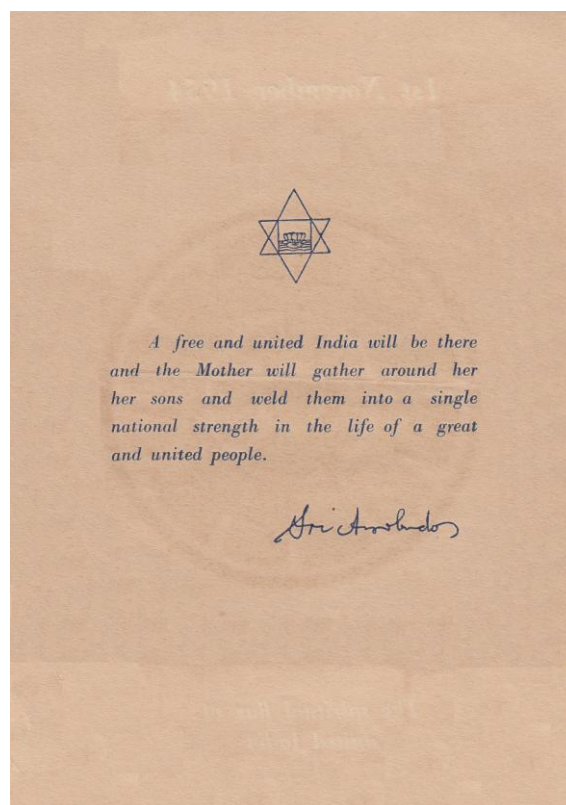
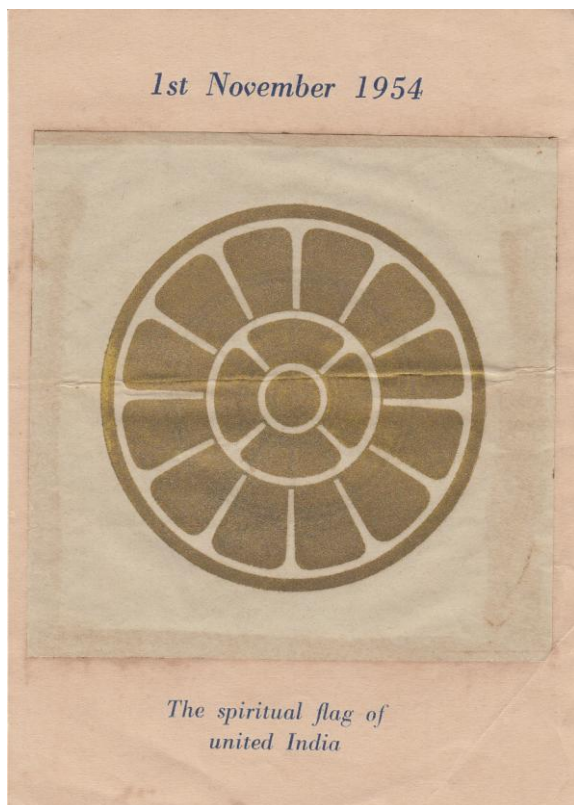
“Collected Works of the Mother”, Volume XIII, p. 362

“For us the 1st November has a deep significance. We have a flag which Sri Aurobindo called the Spiritual Flag of United India. Its square form, its colour and every detail of its design have a symbolic meaning. It was hoisted on the 15th of August 1947 when India became free. It will now be hoisted on the 1st November 1954 when the settlements get united with India and it will be hoisted in the future when India recovers other parts of herself. United India has a special mission to fulfil in the world. Sri Aurobindo laid down his life for it and we are prepared to do the same.”



¹¹ That is its 4 central petals as well as its 12 outer petals: the separations between central petals are in the shape of a + and not in that of a x. There isn't any “top group” of 4 petals; the “top group” can consist of 1, 3 or 5 petals.

On that day, this card is also issued:



Unfortunately, the cloth stuck on this card (kept at Auroville Archives) has lost its light blue colour (as has that represented on the cover of 'Mother India' in 1951).

Note that the symbol has been rotated back by 45° to its original (and final) orientation.

* * *

1954, November 10th: *During Her Class, Mother answers two questions on Her symbol:*

Collected Works of the Mother, Volume VI, *Questions & Answers*, p. 395.

Q.: *Mother, in your symbol the twelve petals signify the twelve inner planes, don't they?*

It signifies anything one wants, you see. Twelve: that's the number of Aditi, of Mahashakti. So it applies to everything; all Her action has twelve Aspects. There are also Her twelve Virtues, Her twelve Powers, Her twelve Aspects, and then Her twelve Planes of manifestation and many other things that are twelve; and the symbol, the number twelve is in itself a symbol. It is the symbol of manifestation, double perfection, in essence and in manifestation, in the creation.

Q.: *What are the twelve aspects, Sweet Mother?*

Ah, my child, I have described this somewhere, but I don't remember now. For it is always a choice, you see; according to what one wants to say, one can choose these twelve Aspects or twelve others, or give them different names. The same Aspect can be named in different ways. This does not have the fixity of a mental theory. (*Silence*)

According to the angle from which one sees the creation, one day I may describe twelve Aspects to you; and then another day, because I have shifted my centre of observation, I may describe twelve others, and they will be equally true.

* * *

1955, December 2nd: Mother writes to Huta the “meaning” of Her symbol:

Pp. 84-85 of Huta’s “The Story of a Soul”, Volume One 1954-55.

2. 12. 55

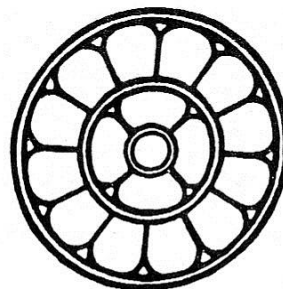


*My dear little child,
I am sending you two
copies of the symbol.
On one symbol I have
explained the meaning,
My love and blessings
M.*

*Here is the correct design of
the symbol.
The central circle represents the
Supreme Mother, the MahaShakti.*

“Here is the correct design of the symbol.

The central circle represents the
Supreme Mother, the MahaShakti



*The four central petals are
the four aspects of the Mother -
and the twelve petals, Her twelve
attributes.*

The four central petals are
the four aspects of the Mother –
and the twelve petals, Her twelve
attributes.”

* * *

1958, January 24th: Mother’s writes the significance of Her symbol:

Documents reproduced with the date (24th January 1958) in “Glimpses of the Mother’s Life”.

24. 1. 58



*The central circle represents the Divine
Consciousness.*

*The four petals represent the four powers
of the Mother.*

*The twelve petals represent the twelve
powers of the Mother manifested for Her work.*

M.

“The central circle represents the Divine Consciousness,
The four petals represent the four powers of the Mother.
The twelve petals represent the twelve powers of the Mother manifested for Her work.”

* * *

1961, May 11th: *Mother explains to Satprem:*

“Mother’s Agenda”

The twelve is the figure of the MahaShakti. It is the essential creation, the creation in its essence the creative Power. And perfection, too: the Perfection in the execution. The twelve is a very important figure (24 is two times 12, and 36, three times, 48 is four times 12). It’s an extremely important figure. Extremely important¹².

* * *

1965, June 25th: *While describing to Huta Her plan of Auroville, Mother explains that at its centre there will be a “Park of Unity” and that, within it there will be a Pavilion which She will later name “Matrimandir”. She adds:*

“The Park of Unity will be divided into twelve gardens, which will represent the twelve Attributes of the Supreme Mother.”

* * *

1968, February 28th: *Auroville’s Inauguration Ceremony:*



Kiran Poddar carries Mother’s Flag. Her brother, Vijay, has just placed Auroville’s Charter sealed in a stainless steel cylinder, together with earth from Sri Aurobindo’s Samadhi in the Urn.

During Auroville’s inauguration ceremony, one of the posters in the exhibition under the Banyan Tree gives the following names for Matrimandir’s twelve gardens – in French:

Existence,	Conscience,	Félicité	Existence,	Consciousness,	Bliss,
Lumière,	Vie,	Pouvoir	Light,	Life,	Power,
Richesse,	Utilité,	Progrès	Wealth,	Usefulness, ¹³	Progress,
Jeunesse,	Harmonie,	Perfection	Youth,	Harmony,	Perfection.

¹² This obviously explains why the figure 12 and its multiples are so omnipresent at Matrimandir: the walls of the Inner Chamber have 12 facets; its ceiling has 12 facets; it has 12 columns and is inscribed in a 12 metre radius cylinder. There are 12 radial pathways, 12 large ‘petals’, 12 small ‘petals’, 12 meditation rooms and 12 gardens. Matrimandir’s horizontal diameter is (3 x 12 =) 36 metres and the length of Matrimandir Island is ten times larger; that is: 360 metres, etc.

¹³ As in the book, “Flowers and their Messages”, “Utilité de la nouvelle creation” is translated “Usefulness of the new creation”, Richard Pearson (Ashram) feels that, in English, this garden’s name should also be “Usefulness” – rather than “Utility”.

To our knowledge, Mother hasn't explained what these twelve names represent together:

On 10.11.54, She had explained that the twelve petals of Her symbol could represent:

“the twelve Aspects of Her action, Her twelve Virtues, Her twelve Powers, Her twelve Aspects, and then Her twelve Planes of manifestation and many other things.”

- *Do these twelve names represent Her twelve “Attributes”?*

Possibly because, on 25.6.65, Mother had told Huta that such would be the case.

- *Do these twelve names represent Her twelve “Powers”?*

Possibly because 10 out of the 12 ‘central flowers’ which Mother selected for these 12 gardens are hibiscus¹⁴ and Mother had given “Power” as generic name for all hibiscus.

* * *

1971, February mid: *Roger presents to Mother a Model of the future Matrimandir Island which shows Matrimandir surrounded by twelve segments of crater and the twelve gardens Mother had spoken about to Huta on 25.6.65 and whose names She had given prior to Auroville’s Inauguration Ceremony on 28.2.68. These twelve segments of crater are called “petals” because Matrimandir and its immediate surroundings are seen as a giant lotus in full bloom – as is Mother’s symbol.*



* * *

1971, late or 1972, January, early: *Roger and his team realise that it would be easier and thus cheaper if these twelve large “petals” were hollow – which means that there would be a large empty space within them. So, they naturally wonder what to do with these empty spaces. The idea arises of creating a meditation room within each one “petals”, to name them after the twelve petals of Mother’s symbol and to paint them in their respective colours.*

Interestingly, p. 143 of his book “I remember”, Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya wrote that “way back in 1945-46, Mother had told him that:

“She would have a house built whose walls would be transparent. Different colours would shine out from different rooms and glow through the walls. Depending on their state of being people would choose the room with the appropriate colour to stay in.”

Hence, this old idea of Mother was finding a new and interesting way of becoming reality.

Roger shares this idea of these twelve meditation rooms with Mother and asks Her for their names.

* * *

¹⁴ The two exceptions are: “Wealth” (water lilies) and “Riches” (cactuses) for the garden of Wealth and “Psychological Perfection” (Plumerias) for the garden of Perfection.

1972, January 12th: *Mother tells Satprem that She is looking for “the twelve Attributes of the Mother”:*

Mother’s Agenda

“Do you happen to remember where I wrote the twelve Attributes of the Mother (the symbol with twelve petals)? There’s one, four, and twelve.”

Mother’s note (dated 24.1.58 and shown on page 8), which gives the significance of Her symbol is found and handed to Her:

“The Mother’s Symbol

The central circle represents the Divine Consciousness.

The four petals represent the four powers of the Mother.

The twelve petals represent the twelve powers of the Mother manifested for Her Work.”

Mother remembers and continues to converse with Satprem:

“I wrote something, or rather I told Sri Aurobindo, who wrote down what the twelve petals were (the four petals are the four main aspects of the Mother, and the twelve are the twelve qualities or “virtues” of the Mother. Her powers¹⁵). I said it one day, and Sri Aurobindo wrote it down; that’s when we were living in the other house.¹⁶ I put it in a drawer among other papers of mine, but the drawer disappeared when we moved here, someone took it. Who, why, how, I have no idea. But the drawer disappeared. Then, I remember writing the twelve names again on a piece of paper which I kept with me, but now I can’t find that one either.... Strange.”

Satprem: When you made the sketch for Auroville [in June 1965], you said there would be twelve gardens, each one with a particular meaning.

That’s Auroville – that’s not what I am talking about.

Satprem: But don’t those twelve gardens correspond to the twelve qualities you mentioned?

No, no. No, I wrote it at least twenty-five years ago, at the very least – oh, even more than that! I don’t remember when we moved here, when was it?...

Satprem: In 1927 ... forty-five years ago!

It’s the same with the four. What are the four?

Satprem: They must be Mahakali, Maheshwari, Mahalakshmi, and Mahasaraswati.

Yes, but I don’t mean the popular deities. Sri Aurobindo gave each one a special significance.

Satprem: Yes, you mean what he wrote in “The Mother.”¹⁷

But that’s a long text.

What are these four? ... (*Mother tries to remember, in vain*). How strange, I’ve forgotten.

(*silence*)

Did you read in the *Cosmic Review* about the “cosmic square”: 1, 2, 3, 4, and one in the centre? The cosmic square was conceived by Théon, and I know he put Love in the centre. But the four sides ... what are the four sides? I don’t remember anymore. I used to know all that so well; it’s all gone. I know there was Light, Life, and Utility – the fourth was Utility, but the first? Utility was the last. What was the first?... It’s all gone.¹⁸

That would have given me a clue.

¹⁵ Underlining is by the editor.

¹⁶ Satprem’s note: “Library House,” or west wing of the Ashram, which they left on February 8, 1927, to move to “Meditation House,” in the east wing. These two houses, along with two others (“Rosary” and “Secretariat”), form the Ashram compound.

¹⁷ Sri Aurobindo wrote about the four “Aspects” or “Personalities” of the Mother in “The Mother” and in “The Synthesis of Yoga”, pp. 752-53.

¹⁸ According to Theon’s writings, “Pouvoir”, “Power” was the name Mother couldn’t remember on that day. Interestingly, Mother had spoken of the Matrimandir as the Pavilion of Divine Love (on 23.6.65) and She gave the names “Light, Live and Power” to the 4th, 5th and 6th garden of Matrimandir and “Utilité” to the 8th.

I remember writing down the twelve. Yesterday I even recalled three of them, but now I don't remember. The first one was Sincerity....

I don't know anything anymore.

(silence Sujata goes out to look for another text)

When it comes, it doesn't come as a thought: it comes as a vision. So when it's gone, it's gone.

I know there was Perseverance.

When it's there, it's clear, it's obvious. It's like a vision, you know. But then when it's gone, it's really gone.

[...]

(Sujata returns with "Words of Long Ago")

*Satprem: Mother, here in "Words of Long Ago" you have written the twelve "Virtues."¹⁹
First you mention Sincerity.*

Yes.

Satprem: Then Humility.

Yes.

*Satprem: Then Courage. Then Prudence, Charity, Justice, Goodness, Patience,
Sweetness, Thoughtfulness.... And then Gratitude.*

Yes.

The first is Sincerity; the second, Humility. Yes, that's how it came back to me the other day – Sincerity, Humility.

Satprem: And Courage.

Perseverance came first, then Courage followed. Sincerity, Humility, Perseverance and Courage. That I remember. But there were twelve.

Satprem: Next you mention Prudence.

That's not it.

Satprem: Charity.

No.

Satprem: Goodness.

No.

Satprem: Patience, Sweetness, Thoughtfulness....

No.... That was written before I met Sri Aurobindo.

* * *

1972, January 19th: *Mother speaks again with Satprem about Her symbol:*

Last time I told you I was looking for the twelve attributes.

(Mother takes out a sheet of paper).

Here they are, someone found this.²⁰

Sincerity,	Humility,	Gratitude,	Perseverance,
Aspiration,	Receptivity,	Progress,	Courage,
Goodness,	Generosity,	Equanimity,	Peace.

The first eight concern the attitude towards the Divine, and the last four towards humanity.

¹⁹ Mother wrote the tale "The Virtues" in 1904. Years later it was included in Her "Words of Long Ago".

²⁰ This mist that this list of 12 names was not drafted specifically for this particular purpose (Matrimandir).

And we also found a text from Sri Aurobindo (*with a coloured chart of the twelve petals*):

Centre and four powers, white.

The twelve all of different colour in three groups:

top group red, passing to orange towards yellow.

Next group, yellow passing through green towards blue.

And third group, blue passing through violet towards red.

If white is not convenient, the centre may be gold (powder).

(March 20, 1934)

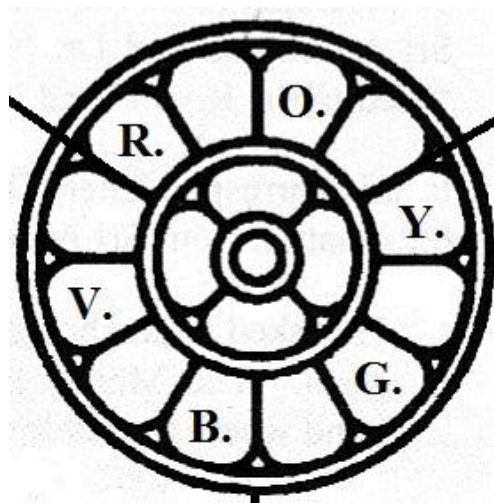
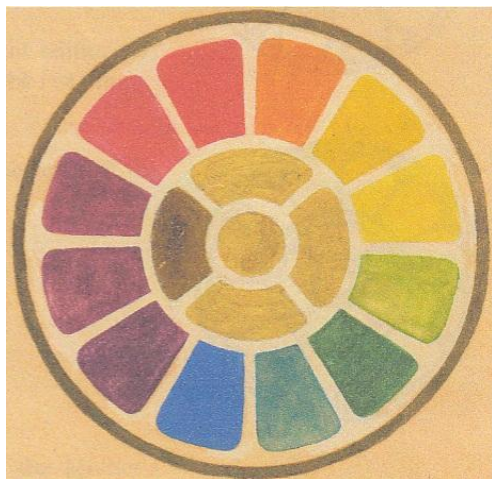
The centre is gold.

Satprem: But what did you need these twelve attributes for?

They're going to build twelve rooms around the Matrimandir, at ground level, and Roger wanted each room to have a name: one of the twelve attributes of the Mother, and the corresponding colour.²¹

Having found these 4 documents, Mother hands these three documents to Roger:

1. *Sri Aurobindo's instructions (dated 20.3.34) reproduced just above.*
2. *This coloured symbol of the Mother:*²²



The sketch on the right is by the editor to show that this drawing was indeed drawn according to Sri Aurobindo's instructions.

3. *This list of names for the rooms inside Matrimandir's twelve "Petals":*

Sincerity, Humility, Gratitude, Perseverance,
Aspiration, Receptivity, Progress, Courage,
Kindness²³, Generosity, Equality, Peace.

*Sincerity, Humility, Gratitude, Perseverance,
Aspiration, Receptivity, Progress, Courage,
Bonté, Generosity, Equality, Peace.*

Note that Mother is yet to explain how to match colours and names and where the first room is to be located. (If one knows its position, the position of all others becomes obvious.)

²¹ Satprem's note: It may interest the reader to know that according to Sri Aurobindo, these colours generally have the following significances, though the exact meaning may vary "with the field, the combinations, the character and shades of the colour, the play of forces": red = physical; orange = supramental in the physical; yellow = thinking mind; green = life; blue = higher mind; violet = divine compassion or grace; gold = divine Truth; white = the light of the Mother, or the Divine Consciousness. (See also *Agenda IV*, May 18, 1963.)

²² It is kept in Roger's personal archives.

²³ "Bonté" is often translated as "Goodness" but Mother prefers "Kindness and Goodwill". (CMW, Vol. 12, p. 217)

4. This note which gives the names of the four RCC pillars which support the Matrimandir:

North Mahakali
South Maheshwari
East Mahalakshmi
West Mahasaraswati
Blessings

NORD Mahakali
SUD Maheshwari
EST Mahalakshmi
OUEST Mahasaraswati

* * *

1972, July 17th: Roger notes down what Mother had just told him on how to match the colours and names of the 12 meditation rooms:

Visit of 17 July 72

Mother gave the following answer:

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

One rotates towards the left.²⁴

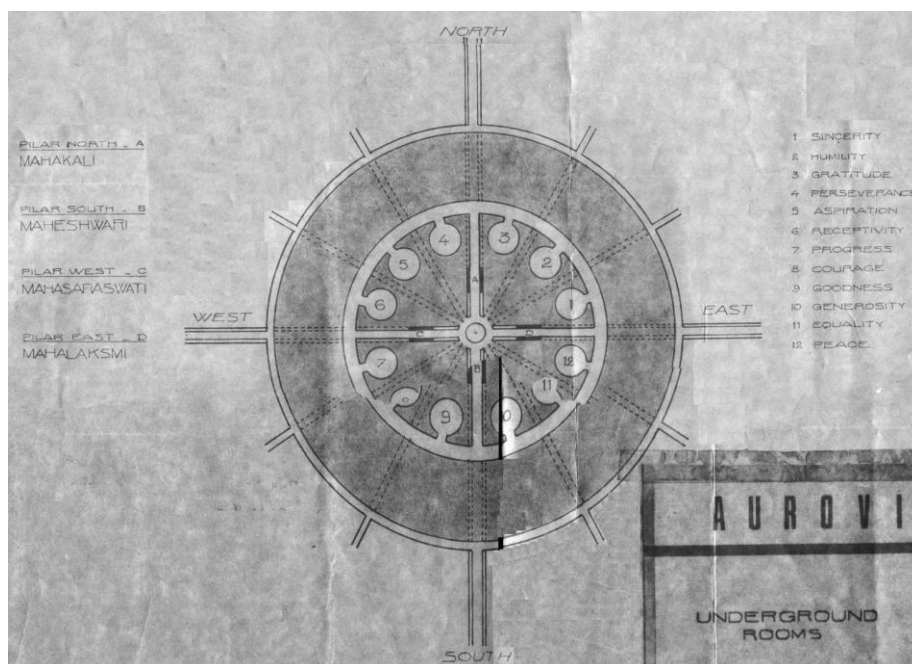
Agreement for this solution.

visite du 17 juillet 72
Mère donne la réponse suivante:
la couleur bleu clair pour la sincérité et bleu foncé pour la paix -
on tourne vers la gauche
Accord pour cette solution.

Note that Roger this note doesn't explain where to start (meaning where the room "Sincerity" should be located).

*

1972, September 15th: Roger's office produces this drawing, which shows the respective positions of the 12 meditation rooms:



Drawing (dated 15th September 1972) produced by Roger's office

²⁴ Let us note that the Gardens too rotate counter clockwise and that so do, on the way up, the twin central staircases and the twin spiral ramps inside Matrimandir.

It is written on this drawing that it cancels a drawing produced on 12.8.72. Hence, either Roger had been told on 17th July where to place the Sincerity and Peace rooms and the previous drawing was cancelled for some other reason, or these rooms were placed wrongly on the drawing dated 12.8.72, but it was shown to Mother for approval and She corrected it as shown here.

Note that the first and last rooms in the “petals” (“Sincerity” and “Peace”) are on either sides of the East radial and that such is also the case of the first and last gardens (“Existence” and “Perfection”).²⁵ Moreover, sometime in March 1971, in answer to a proposal cum question of Alain G., Mother had specified that Matrimandir’s entrance door and hence its east radial should face the rising sun on 4th of April (the day Sri Aurobindo arrived at Pondicherry, in 1910). This conjunction seems very logical.

* * *

1973, November 17th: *Mother leaves Her body. It isn’t possible anymore to receive some written or verbal clarification from Her. Naturally some other communications are always possible but they are likely to be disputed.*

* * *

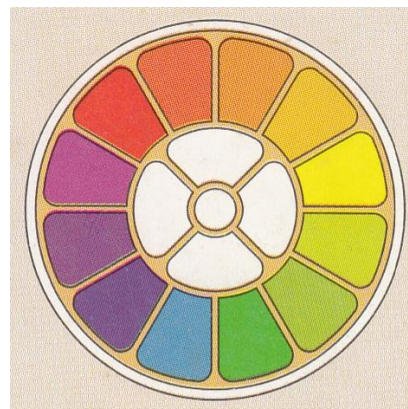
1978, January 10th: *A team of Aurovilians working at “Auroville’s Future” finalises its proposal on how to build the “petals”²⁶ and includes in its proposal the drawing dated 15.9.72.*

This fact seems to prove that the position of the 12 rooms didn’t change during Mother’s lifetime.

* * *

1978 onwards: *The Ashram prints from time to time coloured cards of the Mother’s symbol.²⁷*

Note that the three main colours (Red, Yellow and Blue) are placed as per Sri Aurobindo’s instructions (dated 1934). (See page 13 of this document)



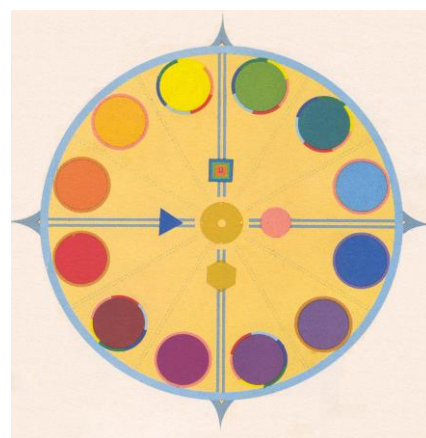
Card distributed by the Ashram on 21.02.03

* * *

1978, February 21st: *Bhaktiben Shah, from the Sri Aurobindo Centre in Mumbai publishes a small booklet on Matrimandir. The rooms are positioned as shown in Auroville’s Future drawing, dated 15.9.72.*

Bhaktiben Shah is said to have asked advice from Champaklal who was very often with Mother and hence had heard Her telling disciples what should be done.

As was the case in the drawing of “Auroville’s Future”, “Sincerity” (light blue) and “peace” are on either side of the East radial - therefore the “top group” of four points West.



²⁵ We do not know when Mother explained whether the twelve gardens should rotate clockwise or anti-clockwise and where the first one (“Existence”) should be located. Yet these two points seem to have always been clear....

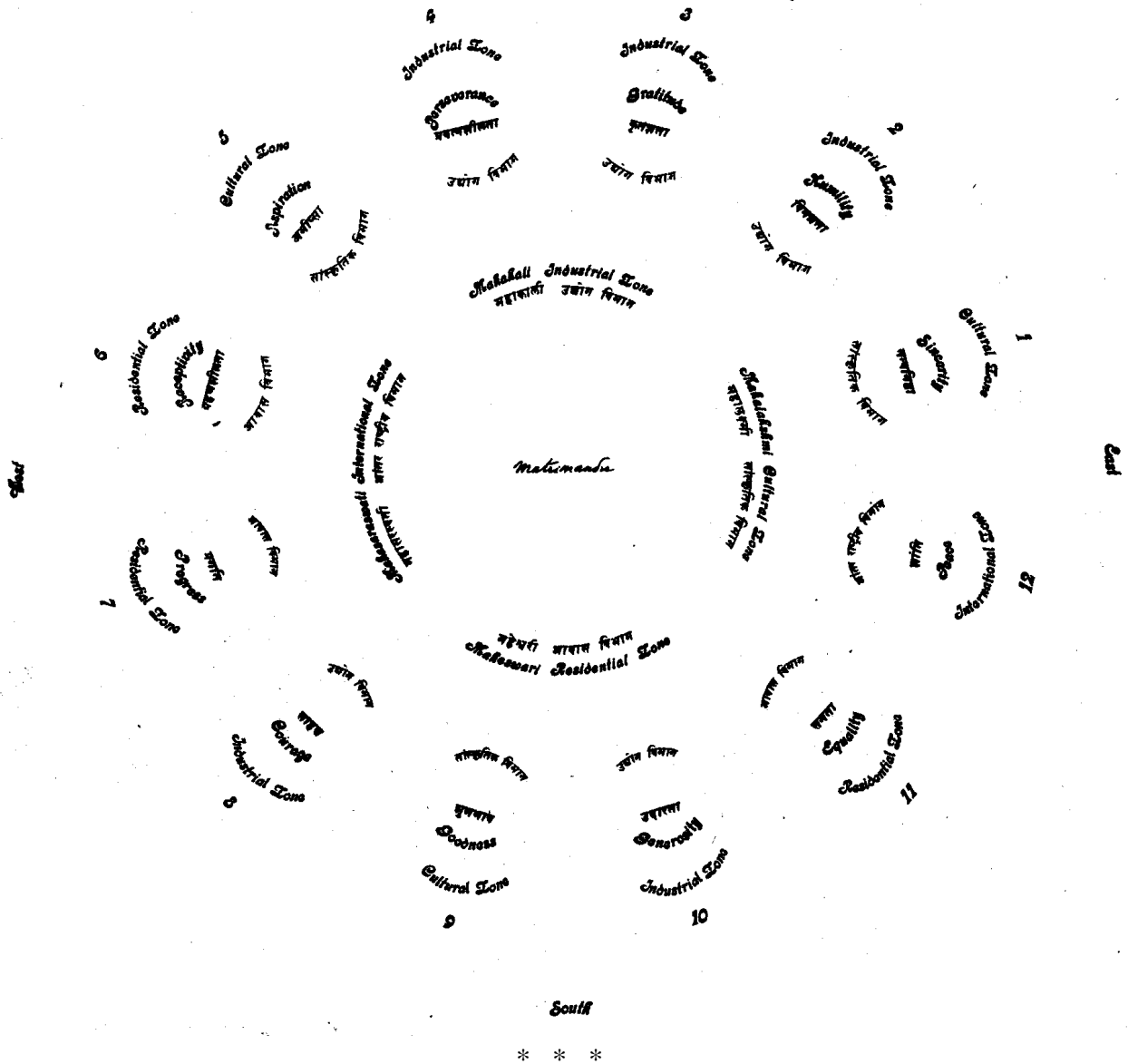
²⁶ Roger was not involved in this particular proposal as he had “withdrawn from all Auroville activities” two years earlier – on 18th December 1975. Ajit K. is said to have been one of the main authors of this proposal.

²⁷ For example, on 21.2.78, 24.4.07 and 21.2.03.

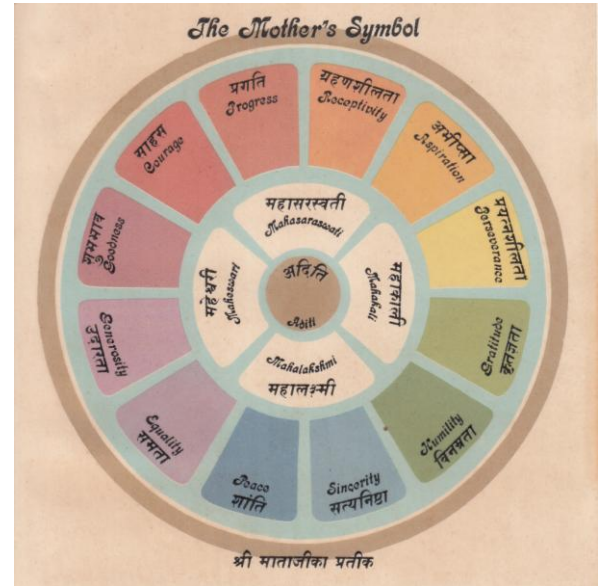
This drawing (enlarged so as to be more readable) is also included in Bhaktiben's booklet. Naturally, it matches also "Auroville's Future"'s own drawing.

Life in Auroville

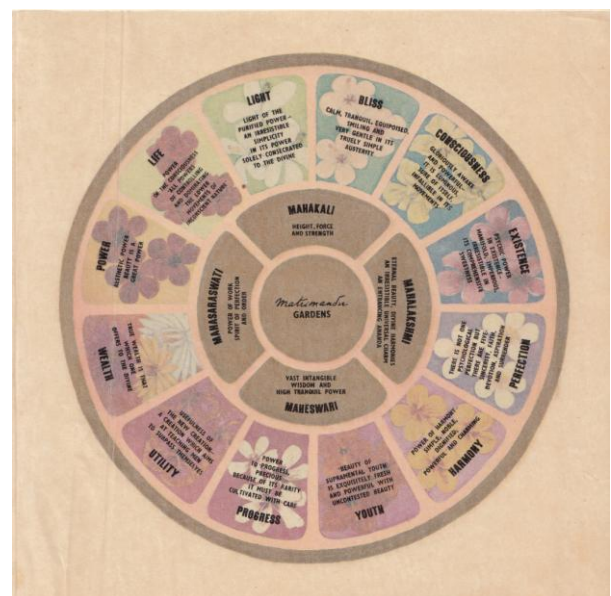
ओरोबिलका जीवन

North

Undated: These two cards on the left, whose origin and date of printing are unknown, are conceived in such a way that they can be covered with a tracing paper on which the significance of the various petals are mentioned. They too are based on the drawing of “Auroville’s Future, dated 15.9.72:



Name and colour of each of the twelve (outer) petals in relation with the 4 pillars.



Name of each garden in relation with the 4 pillars.

These two cards confirm that the first and last petal (respectively: Sincerity and Peace) as well as the first and last garden (respectively: Existence and Peace) are located on either side of the east pillar (Mahalakshmi).²⁸

* * *

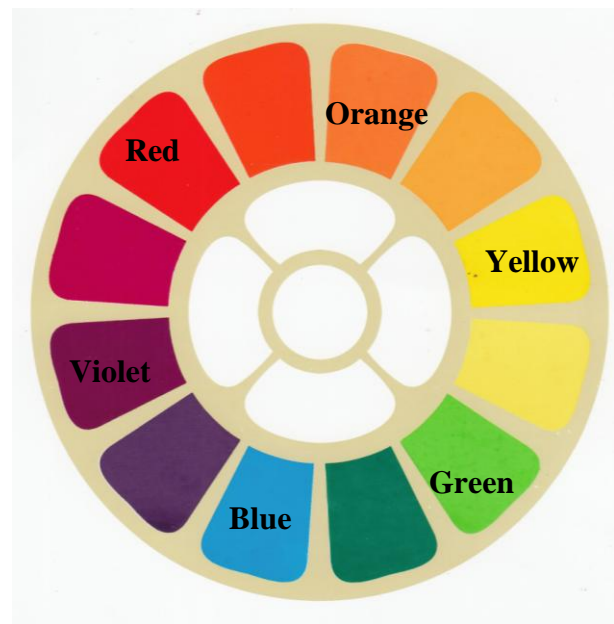
²⁸ These 2 cards seem to have the same origin though the centre of the garden card is larger than that of the other card and their orientation differs: the petal card shows Mahalakshmi at the bottom (in order to show Mother’s symbol as it should be) while the other shows it left – but the position of the North is mentioned on neither of the two cards.

1987, October 15th: Roger, who had “withdrawn from all Auroville activities” twelve years earlier and had started visiting again the previous year, is re-instated as Matrimandir’s architect at the end of a very well attended marathon general meeting held on that day.

* * *

1990’s: Roger is working on how to build the “petals” but doesn’t remember to position them. Instead of opting for the same starting and ending radial as for the 12 gardens, Jacqueline has the idea of opposing the only petal and garden which have the same name: Progress. Doing this was bringing the petal Courage which is of the true red next to the Mahakali pillar, which she found a good idea because red is the traditional colour of Kali’s attire. But this doesn’t create any similar correspondence for the other pillars. Why privilege this particular pillar?

Differences between what was originally planned and has been executed:



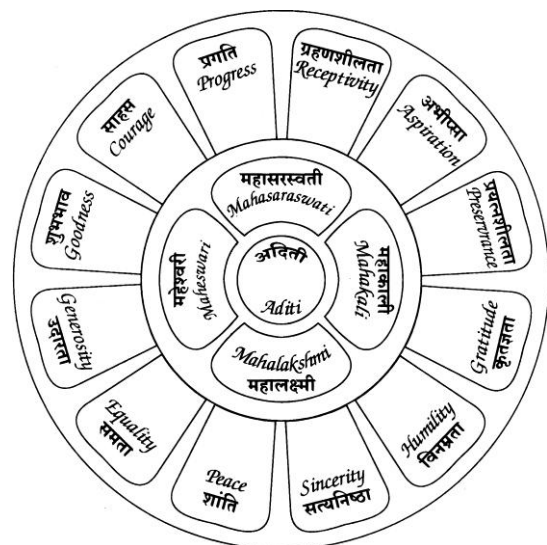
Symbols of the Mother

As depicted in a Matrimandir calendar

The location of the six main colours have been added by the author of this study. The drawing below right is sold with the above card and gives the names of the rooms.

Conclusion: As can be seen, changing the positioning of the rooms in the “petals” has lead to confusion in the minds of many Aurovilians and friends regarding the Mother’s symbol. The mistake should be undone at the earliest. It won’t be difficult technically as it requires 3 modifications: 1) exchanging the objects of concentration (discs) is easy, 2) exchanging the names of the rooms is also easy and 3) as soon as all rooms will have been repainted in white²⁹, exchanging the LEDs which colour this white in the required colour will also be easy.

As depicted on cards sold at SABDA



* * *

²⁹ Using coloured paint in order to obtain the required colour has proven to be a problem. Humidity is such that patches need to be re-painted and it is extremely difficult to obtain the same colour.