

Recent Publications

SABDA

Both Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had an artistic side to them. While Sri Aurobindo had chosen poetry as his field of expression the Mother was an accomplished musician and artist. Most of us are acquainted with the Mother as a musician but her skills as an artist have somehow not received as much attention. In the following pages we focus on that relatively unexplored facet of her personality. Her paintings and drawings are like windows which reveal to us glimpses of the various phases of her life...



Lion drawn with brush and ink by the Mother.

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THE MOTHER AS AN ARTIST

The Mother's spiritual personality is so brilliant that it often eclipses from our view her other aspects. One among them is her life as an artist. In a way it is just as well, because she herself gave no importance to it. It was only a means to an end. However, for a seeker it is important to know this lesser-known side of her life because it shows us how she prepared herself and followed her own inner discipline before she came to Pondicherry and created this marvellous world that is the Ashram and guided so many on their spiritual path.

The word "artist", in today's world, has become so loose a term that almost anybody can call himself an artist by doing almost anything. But at the end of the 19th century, when the Mother was in Paris, this word had a very specific meaning. The artist of that era had undergone years of training and had mastered the techniques needed to express himself before he could call himself one. His work had to adhere to specific criteria of beauty and in most cases a certain relation to reality. This was the period in the history of art when it began to undergo a tremendous change. The turning point came when photography gained

importance and the artist felt the need to adapt himself to this new situation where an inert machine could do better than him the work of copying reality. With the passage of time the artist, who until now had been basically a craftsman, wanted to morph into a philosopher. From being a faithful recorder of reality he wanted to interpret it. The Mother belonged to that period of the development of art in Europe when it was in an upward swing, the period of Impressionism, which produced some of the great artists of the world such as Monet, Manet, Renoir, Degas and many others. The Mother herself speaks of this phase and how a downward trend began to set in afterwards when the artists wanted to paint their mental life or their vital life rather than the physical life.

Impressionism gathered momentum in Europe and produced so many worthy artists in various countries that there are special art galleries and museums exhibiting only their works. Strangely enough all the big names of that movement are of men; women don't figure anywhere. On most lists one finds the lone



Roof of Daiunji Temple. Black and white reproduction of the original oil painting on board done in Japan, 1918.

name of Berthe Morisot. It was not because women did not paint well, it was just that they did not have the opportunity to make a career out of this activity. If they were taught to paint it was as a part of their general education. Rarely was a woman encouraged to make it her profession or a whole-time occupation. The world of artists who painted to earn a living at that time was entirely populated by men. In this context when one sees the Mother's works one is amazed at the level of excellence she attained in a field where women were not given the sustained encouragement needed to grow and develop.

At a very young age the Mother studied art at the Académie Julian in Paris which gave her the formal base. After her marriage to the professional artist Henri Morisset she was introduced to the circle of the well-known artists of her time. Even though she continued to paint until the age of thirty it was not her aim to gain fame or repute. It was a part of her own inner seeking towards perfection.

The collection of the Mother's artistic works which are now in the Ashram is only a fraction of what she must have produced. Having travelled so much, and having changed her surroundings so often, she did not keep many of her works with her. But the real reason why she did not encourage any effort to recover her paintings which were scattered in various regions of France was because she considered them a part of her past life which had no importance to the work in which she was engaged in the Ashram. She had no sentimental attachment to them.

The Mother's early paintings which are in this collection and which were done when she was in her late teens or early twenties, are mostly oil on canvas. In this category we find studies of human figures and landscapes. A certain number of the Mother's paintings can be seen in Sri Aurobindo's room. These are all interiors showing mostly furniture and objects and evoking an atmosphere of tranquillity. Only in one of these pictures can we see a human figure. These paintings show the Mother's skill in bringing out the texture of different objects, such as metal, wood, cloth, marble, and porcelain. The next group of paintings are the ones done in Japan. Here we see a glimpse of her life: the people she knew, the temples she visited and the surrounding landscape. It was also in this country that she started doing drawings with brush and ink. There exists a drawing of



Barindra Kumar Ghose (Sri Aurobindo's younger brother). Pencil drawing done in 1920.

Rabindranath Tagore, which the Mother did in this style, when the poet visited Japan and met her along with some common friends.

The most interesting section in this collection, of course, is of the portraits she has done with pencil or charcoal of people who were around her. Once she got involved in the organisation of the Ashram she had no time to paint. The only way she could still give expression to her artistic ability was in doing these portraits. The surprising fact is that these drawings were done in between two activities, while waiting for something, making use of a few free minutes in her busy schedule. She generally drew these portraits in a few quick strokes. For us these drawings are all the more fascinating because most of these people are very well known in the Ashram. We can see not only the resemblance but also something of the person's nature in them. Of course, the portraits that stand out in this series are the self-portraits and the portrait of Sri Aurobindo done in 1934–35. We must bear in mind that there was a period of nearly thirty years during which the Mother had strictly forbidden any photography of herself and of Sri Aurobindo. These portraits give us an idea of their physical likeness during those years.



Self-portrait done with pencil in 1934.

Once Champaklal asked the Mother why she had chosen to be born in France rather than in India. This is a question that could come to anyone. After all, Asia is the land of spirituality and it is here that most of the great spiritual figures have taken birth. The Mother answered that question by saying that it was because a special education was necessary. The work for which she had come into this world required that she should have this special education. Her work of translating Sri Aurobindo's thought into a living reality could not have been possible if she had not had this knowledge of the physical world and the ability to bring perfection into the very material level of our lives. This answer of the Mother to Champaklal shows that there had been a very conscious preparation within her, from the beginning of her life, all through those years which she spent in various parts of the world, for the work she was to take up in Pondicherry.

The Mother considered beauty an important part of spiritual life. She has said that it is in beauty that the Divine expresses himself in the physical world. In the Integral Yoga all aspects of life must be brought to their highest state and this includes our physical surroundings.

In our technology-driven world the connection

between art and beauty is no more the same because the whole definition of art has changed. Yesterday's artist is today's designer and his work is to put beauty into the objects of our everyday life. The seeking for beauty hasn't gone away. We now look for it on another level.

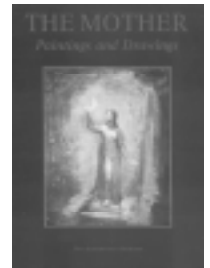
Here are a few words of the Mother, taken from her book *On Education*, which reveal to us how this principle of beauty is a vital link between Matter and Spirit.

In the physical world, of all things it is beauty that expresses best the Divine. The physical world is the world of form and the perfection of form is beauty. Beauty interprets, expresses, manifests the Eternal. Its role is to put all manifested nature in contact with the Eternal through the perfection of form, through harmony and a sense of the ideal which uplifts and leads towards something higher.

For centuries beauty in the physical plane has been considered a distraction from spiritual seeking, even something to be shunned by spiritual seekers in certain parts of the world. Perhaps it is by bringing beauty into the field of spirituality, which is so revolutionary, that the Mother has taken humanity a step forward in its seeking for a divine life on earth.

All the drawings and paintings of the Mother referred to above are reproduced in the book *Paintings and Drawings*.

This is a book whose importance has escaped the attention of many. The Mother's life, like Sri Aurobindo's, was not lived on the surface and wanting to know its details would take us away from the most important aspect of her physical existence – her role of the spiritual guide to the thousands who turned to her. However, trying to understand this facet of her life, the years she spent in studying art and living in a milieu where she was surrounded by artists, helps us to better understand her ultimate achievement. There is a definite link between the two, as one finds out in this tastefully produced volume. The drawings and paintings are printed on art paper and the accompanying text has an elegance which makes it a pleasure to read the book.



— Sunayana Panda

Paintings and Drawings (Hard Cover Rs 500, 198 pp., size 23x29 cm, ISBN 81-7058-276-8)

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

ENGLISH

*The Mother***About Savitri: With some paintings (Volume III)**

— Paintings by Huta with passages from *Savitri* and explanations by the Mother

Publisher: The Havyavahana Trust, Pondicherry
180 pp., ISBN 81-87372-08-7, Rs 300

In 1968 the Mother commenced her work on *Savitri* with Huta. The Mother read out passages from *Savitri* and then after a deep contemplation gave her comments which were tape-recorded and later transcribed by Huta. The Mother named the work *About Savitri*. In 1972 Huta offered to the Mother copies of *About Savitri*, Part One (now out of print), consisting of Book One Canto One. The Mother's message for the book was: "Savitri – The supreme revelation of Sri Aurobindo's vision."

Part Two of *About Savitri* consisting of Book One Canto Two was published in 2000 (also now out of print).

Here is Part Three of *About Savitri* consisting of Book One Canto Three, with the Mother's explanations on the passages, and including 41 paintings by Huta inspired and approved by the Mother. *see page 10*

Compiled from the Works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother**Sri Aurobindo on Hinduism**

— Compiled from the Works of Sri Aurobindo

Publisher: Smt. Maya Chattopadhyay, Kolkata
116 pp., Rs 50

This is a compilation on religion in general and Indian tradition in particular. It is especially relevant in the context of the current debate on secularism and revivalism, and the ongoing reevaluation of the place of religion in public life.

The material is drawn from *The Renaissance in India and Other Essays on Indian Culture* (formerly *The Foundations of Indian Culture*) as well as from Sri Aurobindo's other cultural and philosophical writings.

Happiness and Peace

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry

28 pp., ISBN 81-7060-234-3, Rs 15

Simple passages with a practical orientation on the subject.

Reprints from All India Magazine

Published by Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry

Mahalakshmi (Mahalakshmi Aspect of the Mother)

48 pp., ISBN 81-7060-243-2, Rs 15

"Read Sri Aurobindo"

48 pp., ISBN 81-7060-240-8, Rs 15

True Love

48 pp., ISBN 81-7060-239-4, Rs 15

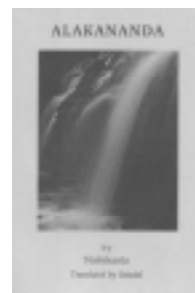
*Other Authors***Alakananda**

— Nishikanta

Publisher: Smt. Maya Chattopadhyay, Kolkata
78 pp., Rs 50

Nolini Kanta Gupta wrote of the mystical Bengali poet Nishikanta, "[His] poetry is the embodiment of the Mother, Her living image created through words."

Here is the English rendering of Nishikanta's book of Bengali poems *Alakananda*.

**Conversations of the Dead (Mriter Kathopakathan)**

— Nolini Kanta Gupta

Publisher: Smt. Maya Chattopadhyay, Kolkata
89 pp., Rs 30

Sri Aurobindo wrote five "Conversations of the Dead" in 1909–10. Nolini Kanta Gupta translated these into Bengali, and himself wrote thirteen similar conversations in Bengali. All these were published as part of a book *Mriter Kathopakathan*.

This booklet contains English translations of the thirteen Bengali "Conversations" by Nolini-da. The conversations are presented as between famous historical figures such as Akbar and Aurangzeb, Chandragupta and Asoka, and Buddha and Lao-Tze. *see review on page 12*

K. D. Sethna (Amal Kiran)**An Introduction through Interaction**

— P. Raja

Publisher: Busy Bee Books,
Pondicherry

124 pp., ISBN: 81-87619-08-2, Rs 100

In this series of interviews, K. D. Sethna, the grand centenarian, reminisces about his childhood, a variety of relationships, his poetry, his critical works and his inner quest. The book brings out "the vision of a man who has encapsulated in his hundred years the turmoil and exuberance of the 20th century".

**Love and Death: Critical Essays**

— Edited by Ananda Reddy

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research, Pondicherry

140 pp., ISBN 81-901891-4-X, Rs 100

Sri Aurobindo composed *Love and Death*, a narrative poem in blank verse based on a theme from the Mahabharata, in 1899 while in Baroda. Written in "a white heat of inspiration", it "bore already the impress of the future poet and prophet".

This book contains the original poem, relevant letters of Sri Aurobindo, a study by Amita Sen dealing especially with “the cohesiveness of the narration and the enrichment brought to the Sanskrit version” which inspired it, and several literary criticisms by other authors.

see review on page 13

Of Past Dawns and Future Noons

Towards a resurgent India

— Shonar Joshi

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry, in association with UBS Publishers’ Distributors Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi

535 pp., ISBN 81-7476-536-0, Hard Cover Rs 595

Principles and Goals of Integral Education as propounded by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and the experiment at Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry

— Jugal Kishore Mukherjee

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department, Pondicherry

144 pp., ISBN: 81-7058-806-5, Rs 75

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were not only spiritual masters, but great educationists as well. This book presents the principles of Integral Education as enunciated by them. It also examines the role and responsibility of teachers, the basis of the “Free Progress” system, and the aims of and courses at Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. It is written for all types of seekers — spiritual aspirants, scholars, teachers and educationists.

Sanskrit and the Evolution of Human Speech Based on Sri Aurobindo’s Linguistic Theory

— Dr Sampadananda Mishra

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences, Pondicherry

171 pp., ISBN 81-7060-236-X, Rs 125

This book presents Sri Aurobindo’s views on linguistics in general and on Sanskrit in particular. It compares Sri Aurobindo’s approach to the problem of the origin of human speech with those of other philologists.

Sri Aurobindo has extensively studied some of the word-families of Sanskrit to find out the original mind-impressions that the root-sounds have within them. Discovering these, he shows how Sanskrit has preserved the original primitive structure of language and the system of simple root-sounds.

Some original writings of Sri Aurobindo on the subject are included.

Contents:

- I. Study of Language and Sri Aurobindo
- II. The Origin and Development of Language:
Sri Aurobindo’s Theory
- III. Growth of Language from Seed-sounds

IV. The Creative Word:

A New Approach to the Study of Language

V. A True Interpretation of the Vedas:

Need for a New Science of Language

see review on page 11

Sri Aurobindo’s Savitri

Essays on Love, Life and Death

— R. K. Singh

Publisher: Prakash Book Depot, Bareilly

176 pp., ISBN 81-7977-140-7, hard bound Rs 250

Sri Aurobindo’s poetry, written “for the future”, offers a “rewarding investigation into the connections between philosophy and aesthetics, literature and culture, spirituality and divinity, consciousness and spirit...”. More specifically, “*Savitri* as a work of art is a complex metaphor which conveys the ‘real presence’ of God.”

In this collection of essays the author attempts to reflect on the epic in new and challenging ways, relating them to “things now”. He believes it will supplement what a reader already knows about *Savitri* as an epic or Sri Aurobindo as a poet.

Timeless Treasures

Part I: 128 pp., Rs 40 (*In English and Hindi*)

Part II: 118 pp., Rs 40

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Education Society, New Delhi

A collection of prayers, poems, inspirational passages, and ‘quotable quotes’ from Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, and various eminent personalities. A large part of the material appeared in *Inspired Thoughts*, an earlier publication.

Reprints

Nationalism, Terrorism, Communalism

Essays in Modern Indian History

— Peter Heehs

Publisher: Oxford University Press, New Delhi

174 pp., ISBN 0-19-565302-5, Rs 195

During his political career, Sri Aurobindo was one of the leading exponents of anti-British nationalism in India. At the same time he was the inspiration behind a clandestine group that planned to overthrow the colonial government by force. The sort of violent acts that this group carried out are regarded by social scientists as “terrorism”, using that word in a technical sense that was current before recent events altered its meaning. Sri Aurobindo’s writings have sometimes been regarded as giving expression to a specifically “Hindu” form of nationalism. The author shows, however, that his nationalism was inclusive and not directed against any religious community. The seven scholarly essays that make up this book will be of interest to students of the Indian freedom struggle and of Sri Aurobindo’s early thought. (*Now available with SABDA—was briefly available in January-February but went out of print with the publisher*)

On the Mother Divine

— Pasupati

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Karmi Sangha Trust,

Habra-Prafullanagar

124 pp., Rs 75

This book is about the life and teaching of the Mother. It traces the growth of the Ashram and the Centre of Education, and the birth of Auroville. The personality of the Mother in its various aspects is effectively portrayed in a simple and intimate manner.

On the Mother Divine was first published in 1968. This second edition has been brought up-to-date with the addition of new chapters. *see review on page 16*

OTHER LANGUAGES**FRENCH****La Vie Divine**

— Sri Aurobindo

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Ashram

Publication Department,

Pondicherry

1153 pp., ISBN: 81-7058-784-0,

Rs 1050 (hard cover)

« La Vie Divine » contient les fondements de la vision créatrice de Sri Aurobindo. Remontant jusqu'à la source de la spiritualité indienne millénaire et révélant par-delà ces vastes territoires les horizons plus vastes encore qui s'ouvrent devant nous, Sri Aurobindo nous montre que l'aspiration humaine n'a pas changé au cours des âges : c'est une aspiration au Divin, à la Lumière, à la Liberté, à l'Immortalité. Mais elle s'est élargie et tend aujourd'hui à englober tous les aspects de la vie, et à redéfinir la place de l'homme dans l'univers.

Dans « La Vie Divine » nous suivons la grande aventure de la Conscience : l'involution du Divin dans l'Inconscience apparente de cet univers matériel ; l'évolution de la Vie dans la Matière et du Mental dans la Vie ; enfin, l'évolution du Supramental qui émerge et façonne ses propres formes au coeur de la création mentale.

« L'humanité traverse à l'heure actuelle une crise évolutive qui secrètement recèle le choix de sa destinée, » écrit Sri Aurobindo. Chaque jour la faillite de notre organisation mentale du monde nous devient plus apparente, et nous pressentons que la solution est ailleurs : non pas dans des réformes politiques, éthiques ou religieuses, mais dans un changement de conscience et une transformation intégrale de notre vie et de notre nature. Nous sommes entrés dans un nouveau cycle évolutif, le cycle d'une « évolution spirituelle ».

Dans « La Vie Divine », Sri Aurobindo nous montre comment cette création nouvelle, la création supramentale, lentement se prépare à changer notre vie et notre monde.

**Le Secret du Véda****Suivi de Hymnes choisis du Rig-Véda avec Commentaires**

— Sri Aurobindo

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Ashram

Publication Department,

Pondicherry

470 pp., ISBN 81-7058-791-3

Rs 260

Sri Aurobindo met en lumière le sens caché des hymnes védiques, et montre en quoi la réalisation spirituelle des grands Rishis demeure pour nous une source toujours vivante d'inspiration. La deuxième partie de cet ouvrage comporte une sélection d'hymnes traduits du sanskrit et commentés par Sri Aurobindo.

Ce livre épuisé depuis cinq ans est à nouveau disponible dans une nouvelle traduction.

**Paroles vivantes****Glanées dans les œuvres de****Sri Aurobindo et de la Mère**

— Anthologie de A. S. Dalal

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Ashram

Publication Department,

Pondicherry

252 pp., ISBN 81-7058-789-1

Rs 110

Les paroles de Sri Aurobindo et de la Mère recueillies dans ce livre par A. S. Dalal demeurent « vivantes », car elles sont une évocation et une expression directes de l'âme.

**Le Regard intérieur****Maîtrise et croissance intérieure : un guide pour le chercheur**

— Extraits des œuvres de Sri Aurobindo et de la Mère

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication

Department, Pondicherry

223 pp., ISBN: 81-7058-793-X, Rs 100

Les textes de Sri Aurobindo et de la Mère recueillies dans ce livre par A. S. Dalal indiquent les étapes et les moyens nécessaires pour acquérir la maîtrise et favoriser la croissance intérieure.

Les Pouvoirs intérieurs

— Extraits des œuvres de Sri Aurobindo et de la Mère

Publisher: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication

Department, Pondicherry

227 pp., ISBN: 81-7058-799-9, Rs 110

Ces textes de Sri Aurobindo et de la Mère réunis par A. S. Dalal traitent des différents niveaux de la conscience, du pouvoir de la pensée, de l'imagination, de l'intuition, de la Yoga-Shakti.

Par où commencer?***Livre élémentaire de Spiritualité Affirmative***

— M. P. Pandit

Publisher: Dipti Publications, Pondicherry

46 pp., ISBN 81-7509-096-0, Rs 30

Dans ces pages, les chercheurs de la perfection intégrale trouveront les grandes lignes d'un programme suffisamment vaste et souple pour être adapté à chaque individu selon les besoins et les circonstances. La spiritualité s'y affirme dans la vie quotidienne.

GERMAN**Sri Aurobindo und Die Mutter (Englisch – Deutsch)****Volume 1 – Band 1**

311 pp., ISBN 3-931172-23-6, Rs 320 (hard cover)

Die neue von Theodora und Eckhard Karnasch herausgegebene, zweisprachige Serie von Sri Aurobindo und Der Mutter lädt zum „Abenteuer des Bewusstseins und der Freude“ ein. Der erste Band umfasst Auszüge aus den Werken:

– Autobiographische Aussagen

– „Aphorismen“, „Gedanken und Einblicke“

– Briefe, kurze Artikel

– Gedichte und das Epos „Savitri“

– „Das Göttliche Leben“

sowie die vollständigen Texte:

– „Der Traum“ ursprünglich in Bengalisches erschienen, aus den frühen Jahren 1909-10

– „Die Offenbarung des Supramentalen“, 1948-50

erschieden - Sri Aurobindos letzte Artikelserie

Die Bände erscheinen in ansprechendem

seidengebundenem Gewand mit goldenem Titeldruck

Nama-Japa im Yoga der Transformation

107 pp., Rs 125

— Ramkrishna Das

Ueber die Wichtigkeit der Wiederholung des Namens der Mutter als ein Mantra im Yoga der Transformation. Eine leicht verständliche Beschreibung wie Sri Aurobindos komplexer Integraler Yoga mit Hilfe der Methode von Nama-Japa, des kontinuierlichen Wiederholens des Namens der Mutter erfolgreich praktiziert und gemeistert werden kann.

SPANISH

The following books are published by Fundación Centro Sri Aurobindo, Barcelona, Spain, and are now available with SABDA.

Sri Aurobindo

Cartas sobre el Yoga Integral y Supramental :

Bases del Yoga; Luces sobre el Yoga Rs 690
ISBN 84-931463-7-4

El Ciclo Humano Rs 760

ISBN 84-932357-4-1

Elementos de Yoga Rs 500

ISBN 84-920805-6-6

El Enigma de Este Mundo Rs 460

ISBN 84-932357-9-2

La Evolución Futura del Hombre Rs 650

ISBN 84-920805-4-X

Guia del Yoga Integral Rs 790

ISBN 84-931463-5-8

Heráclito Rs 510

ISBN 84-920805-0-7

El ideal de la unidad humana Rs 1270

La Madre Rs 510

ISBN 84-920805-7-4

La Manifestación Supramental sobre la Tierra Rs 640

ISBN 84-920805-1-5

Pensamientos y Aforismos Rs 530

ISBN 84-932357-1-7

Poemas de Sri Aurobindo : Edición Bilingüe Rs 610

ISBN 84-931463-6-6

Renacimiento y Karma : El Problema de la

reencarnación

ISBN 84-920805-9-0 Rs 760

Savitri — Une Leyenda y un Símbolo :

Libro I: Cantos I al V; Libro II: Cantos I al VI

ISBN 84-933818-3-7 Rs 1150

El Secreto del Veda

(Tomo I) ISBN 84-932357-0-9 Rs 690

(Tomo II) ISBN 84-931463-9-0 Rs 690

The Mother

Conversaciones

(Tomo I) ISBN 84-932357-5-X Rs 700

(Tomo II) ISBN 84-932357-6-8 Rs 700

Educación Rs 510

ISBN 84-605-3514-2

Las Flores y sus Mensajes Rs 1150

ISBN 84-920805-3-1

Plegarias y Meditaciones

(Tomo I) ISBN 84-920805-8-2 Rs 650

(Tomo II) ISBN 84-931463-4-X Rs 650

Compiled from the Works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother

Acerca del Amor Rs 490

ISBN 84-931463-2-3

Escritos y Pensamientos Rs 540

ISBN 84-931463-8-2

Plegarias y Mantras de Sri Aurobindo y La Madre

Rs 320

El Ser Psíquico : Naturaleza, Misión

y Evolución del Alma

ISBN 84-932357-2-5 Rs 640

Other Authors

Más allá del hombre : La vida y la obra de

Sri Aurobindo y de la Madre Rs 1400

ISBN 84-932357-7-6 — Georges Van Vrekhem

La Extraordinaria Historia de John : El testimonio de un joven soldado en la Segunda Guerra Mundial
— Maggi Lidchi-Grassi Rs 450
ISBN 84-933818-0-2

RUSSIAN

Besedy o joge * Dhammapada : Voprosy i otvety 1929, 1930–31; O Dhammapade — The Mother Rs 175
ISBN 5-7938-0033-6

BENGALI

Ma : Sambhavya Sakal Pathya Sambalita Sri Mayer
Jeebonalekhya — Satadal Rs 60
Ektu Pichiye ... Antare : Srīma-Srī Aurobinder
Lekha Avalambane — Debabrata Majumdar Rs 40
ISBN 81-7060-235-1

GUJARATI

Sri Aravind ane Sri Matajine Lagati Prasangikao :
Transo ne sath satya kathanako
— Shyam Kumari hc Rs 105

HINDI

Kalidasa — Sri Aurobindo Rs 65
ISBN 81-7058-792-1
Antarik Paripoornata Rs 32
— Compiled from the works of the Mother
ISBN 81-7058-787-5
Mahayogi Sri Aravind Rs 180
— Jyoti Thanki
Mrityu ko Param ka Sparsh Rs 35
— Jyoti Thanki
Divyata ki Tejomaya Kiran : Dyuman Rs 20
— Jyoti Thanki
Timeless Treasures (Part I) Rs 40
— Compiled from the works of Sri Aurobindo,
the Mother, and various eminent personalities
(In English and Hindi. See page 6 for more details.)

KANNADA

Matruvani
— Compiled from the works of the Mother Rs 40

MARATHI

Isha Upanishad — Sri Aurobindo Rs 60
ISBN 81-7058-790-5
Bhavani Bharati (Marathi/Sanskrit)
— Sri Aurobindo Rs 50

ORIYA

Sri Aurobindonka Shesha Kabitabali Rs 30
Sri Aurobindo Ashramara Lakshya O Adarsha
— Compilation Rs 35

TAMIL

Annaiyin Arul Mozhigal — The Mother
Annaiyin Nool Thoguthi - 14 (Bagam - 1)
ISBN 81-7058-797-2 Rs 120
Annaiyin Nool Thoguthi - 14 (Bagam - 2)
ISBN 81-7058-798-0 Rs 95
Orumunaippai Valarthu Kolvadhu Eppadi?
— Compilation
ISBN 81-7060-222-X Rs 15
Sri Aravindasiramathin Nokkangalum
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Reflections on *About Savitri*



About Savitri: With some paintings (Volume III)

— Paintings by Huta with passages from *Savitri* and explanations by the Mother

Publisher: The Havyavahana Trust, Pondicherry

160 pp., ISBN 81-87372-08-7, Rs 300

In 1968 the Mother commenced her work on *Savitri* with Huta. The Mother read out passages from *Savitri* and then after a deep contemplation gave her comments which were tape-recorded and later transcribed by Huta. The Mother named the work *About Savitri*. In 1972 Huta offered to the Mother copies of *About Savitri*, Part One (now out of print), consisting of Book One Canto

One. The Mother's message for the book was: "Savitri – The supreme revelation of Sri Aurobindo's vision."

Part Two of *About Savitri* consisting of Book One Canto Two was published in 2000 (also now out of print).

Here is Part Three of *About Savitri* consisting of Book One Canto Three, with the Mother's explanations on the passages, and including 41 paintings by Huta inspired and approved by the Mother.

Nirata-di came to Pondicherry as a child and joined the Ashram's school in early 1945, the second year after its foundation. Since 1959 she has taught English and later painting at the Centre of Education.

Here she reflects on Huta-ben's new third volume of About Savitri.

HERE again is *About Savitri*, this third volume, such a treasure, a boon to mankind.

The Mother assures us that "This earth has been created as a concentrated centre for the Supreme to come down and save the universe," and "We are slowly coming out of a desperate past towards a future full of promise."

The paintings here try to express the higher truths of the occult worlds and are inspired and approved by the Mother.

In one beautiful painting we see how man resurrects into a new light when he consents to be divinised. Some others haunt us with their mystic intimations of a new consciousness which they try to convey with a subtle and suggestive beauty of expression. There is a great power in the pictures where a ray of light pierces the dark and opaque inconscience of the earth. On another page, the Mother explains, "This is a very accurate description of the working of the New Consciousness, this New Consciousness that has come upon earth and is working in all those who are receptive and ready to listen." Then She clarifies, "It is only in a receptive silence – when the whole inquisitive mind stops moving – that one can feel and understand the images in these verses."

What a fortunate artist Huta is to hear these words of assurance from the Mother Herself. One feels that She is speaking to a representative of humanity and we too have a share in that Grace.

It is with this compelling sweetness and divine understanding of our limitations that the Mother, through Huta, has explained to us in Her luminous simplicity the occult and mystic secrecies.

As we read on and see and feel, we are encouraged and feel inspired to rise to a new understanding. For, with an overwhelming divine love She has promised us, "I am putting this Consciousness around you", "the true Consciousness that changes the sense, the meaning and the aim of life".

And She has revealed these inner truths, She says, because Sri Aurobindo wanted these "prophetic" announcements "of what will be" to be made by Her. "If read with the true understanding, this Epic becomes prophetic and announces the events that are beginning to come upon earth."

About Savitri is a treasure trove of visual wealth. Further enriched by the Mother's illuminating explanations, it gives us an insight into Sri Aurobindo's immortal lines and fills us with confidence that we are not altogether unworthy of *Savitri*.

Shall we then not try to be receptive and venture into reading these wonderful revelations and rise gratefully into a New Consciousness with Her help?

— Nirata

BOOK REVIEWS
Sanskrit and the Evolution of Human Speech
Based on Sri Aurobindo's Linguistic Theory

— Dr Sampadananda Mishra;

 Published by Sri Aurobindo Institute of Research in
 Social Sciences, Pondicherry; 171 pp., Rs 125

Can you imagine a world without language? Without speech?

Yet both language and speech are “so familiar a feature of daily life that one rarely pauses to observe the significance of it” says the author, Dr Sampadananda Mishra, in the introduction to his book *Sanskrit and the Evolution of Human Speech*. A reputed American scholar Vyas Houston once said, “Of all the discoveries that have occurred and developed in the course of human history, language is the most significant.” Then more emphatically, “Without language, civilization could obviously not exist.”

This book is a tribute to Sri Aurobindo as a linguist par excellence.

From ancient times scholars and philosophers the world over have attempted to arrive at a science of language, to understand its evolution and processes. Records show that the discovery of Sanskrit in Europe gave a new impetus and direction to the study of language. Indian scholars and grammarians had for centuries recognized the potential of Sanskrit as a means to unravel the mystery of the formation of language.

This book is a tribute to Sri Aurobindo as a linguist *par excellence*. It seeks to bring forth his yet unrecognized contribution in the evolving field of linguistics. Sri Aurobindo declared categorically, “my subject ... is the origin, growth and development of human language as it is shown to us by the embryology of the language ordinarily called Sanskrit ... I base my conclusions on the evidence of the Sanskrit language helped out by those parts of the Greek, Latin and Tamil tongues which are cognate to the word-families of Sanskrit, and by the origins of Aryan speech I mean, properly, the origin of human speech as used and developed by those who fashioned these word-families and their stocks and off-shoots.”

The book is divided into seven parts. The first chapter outlines the development of language as traced by various



scholars through the centuries. It ends with Sri Aurobindo's analysis of the arbitrary and conjectural nature of comparative philology and his questioning of bold claims to establish it as an authoritative science. In the second, the reader is introduced to contemporary theories of the origin of language, with special reference to Sri Aurobindo's research on the *Origins of Aryan*

Speech and the methodology applied by him for its study. According to him the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet are used as seed-sounds which combine to form primitive root-sounds, based on which language is said to have evolved. The third chapter deals with Sri Aurobindo's views on Sanskrit as the key to understanding the evolution of language. Here he elaborates on the role of the Sanskrit alphabet, its relation to root-meanings and gives a few examples to illustrate his point.

While the third chapter deals with the etymological aspects of Sanskrit, the fourth tries to explain the phenomenon of human speech, *vDk*. It discusses the different theories of the nature of speech that have been formulated in Indian tradition. The author talks about the important Indian concept of the four grades of speech, *parD*, *paQyantn*, *madhyamD* and *vaikharn* and their corresponding psychological states, thus tracing its development in man's consciousness from its inception to its expression. He then puts forth Sri Aurobindo's approach to language as being much more than a mere tool for communication. In keeping with the Vedic vision, Sri Aurobindo speaks about the Word as being a Creative Power.

The final chapter is dedicated to a deeper study of the primitive structure of Vedic Sanskrit from Sri Aurobindo's perspective and of the formation of its archaic words. It explains the need to attribute to key words their intrinsic psycho-spiritual sense in order to enable one to grasp the true purport of the symbolic texts.

The conclusion starts with a brief introduction to Sri Aurobindo's linguistic background followed by a summary of the salient points of the book. The final part comprises of Sri Aurobindo's own articles thus providing the readers an opportunity to read him in the original.

The book has been successful in its three prime objectives: to highlight Sri Aurobindo's contribution in the field of linguistics; to create an awareness about the role of language, and of Speech as a Creative Power; to establish the study of Sanskrit as a key to help trace the origin and development of language.

At the outset, Dr Mishra humbly confesses his inability to present a more complete study of the subject but his book has done full justice to the topic within its limited scope. Abounding in references, it is proof of his extensive research in this field. At times a little technical, the book is still very readable for an amateur in this field. It can also serve as a useful resource for anyone who seeks to have a deeper insight into the fascinating phenomenon of human language and speech.

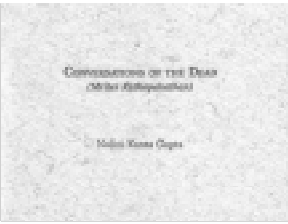
— Anuradha Choudry

Anuradha, a former student of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, is currently doing her Ph.D. on the Vedas as texts of applied psychology. She is also a freelance teacher of spoken Sanskrit with Samskrita Bharathi, a popular movement to promote the language.

Conversations of the Dead (Mriter Kathopakathan)

— Nolini Kanta Gupta (Translated by Satadal)

Published by Smt. Maya Chattopadhyay, Kolkata
89 pp., Rs 30



“It is the egoistic ignorance of man which makes him think he is the highest in creation,” Sri Aurobindo had repeatedly said. “I knew it would astound you,” he again said, when a disciple could not believe

that flowers also have souls and some flowers possess psychic beauty. To the further astonishment of the supercilious disciple, the Master is reported to have said, “Many dogs have got a much finer psychic being than many men!” Regarding the distinguishing feature however, writing to Dilip Kumar Roy Sri Aurobindo observed: “The power to discuss and debate is ... a common human faculty ... Perhaps it is here that man begins to diverge from the

animal; for animals have much intelligence—many animals and even insects, even some rudimentary power of practical reasoning, but, so far as we know, they don't meet and put their ideas about things side by side or sling them at each other in a debate...”

The contenders, mostly familiar characters culled from Indian history, are evenly matched, gripping the reader with their war of words.

Two of Sri Aurobindo's five *Conversations of the Dead* were published in the *Karmayogin*. The first one titled ‘Dinshah, Perizade’ written around 1910 strikingly reveals the Omar Khayami dream to mould this world ‘nearer to our heart's desire’. Dinshah agreeing to Perizade's declaration, “We go down to make the world ... a place of beauty, song and delight ... we shall not be content to leave it till it is utterly changed into the likeness of our desire.” Taking the cue Sister Nivedita had added three more to the series. All these were translated into Bengali by Nolini Kanta Gupta, and thirteen more in Bengali were his own contribution. These again are translated by Satadal for the English readers.

These dialogues are based on professed ideologies and are polemical in content. The contenders, mostly familiar characters culled from Indian history, are evenly matched, gripping the reader with their war of words. It starts with Akbar and Aurangzeb, in which all arguments of the empire-builder and superior diplomat fall flat before Aurangzeb the religious bigot; and he affirms that if reborn, he would forcefully exhort: “Indians! Be religious and Muslim first, then Indians.” Unfortunately the Muslim mindset in India, the neighbouring countries and the world over shows beyond doubt that Aurangzeb's ideas have prevailed.

The only scene from Indian mythology is ‘Savitri, Draupadi’ from the Mahabharata. The re-creation seems more challenging as it amounts to treading on the proverbial razor's edge, being fraught with the risk of deviation and distortion. Draupadi's character has been nothing if not enigmatic. It is not Vyasa's Mahabharata, but the vastly popularised teleserial that puts the cheap jibe into her mouth to mock Duryodhana, ascribing his lack of sight and the fall to his father Dhritarashtra's blindness. Unbecoming of her, the rude joke mars the nobility of her character. If her flowing dishevelled tresses thirsted for

blood from Duhshasana's heart for his gruesome and monstrous crime against womanhood, her unparalleled magnanimity of heart alone could forgive Ashwatthama, the killer of her five sons in cold blood. Completely surrendered to Krishna, in a gesture of 'Yatha niyuktosmi tatha karomi', she was beyond conventional vice and virtue. In India, however, the common folk possess an uncanny sense in this regard, and they worship her as a goddess, so that Alf Hildebeitel in his well-researched *Cult of Draupadi* painstakingly enumerated around four hundred Draupadi temples in Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry alone.

The clash of ideas and the animated debate have resulted occasionally in dazzling flashes, and the *manthan* (churning) has produced some epigrammatic gems. True to the spirit of India which never coveted to grab other lands, Puru's ultimate reply to Alexander the Great was succinct: "I am not a seeker of Samrajya, the outer empire, but of Swarajya, the inner kingdom." Elsewhere Firdausi humbly chastising the mighty Mahmood utters: "A poet is a poet precisely because he turns something puny into something grand, something temporal into something eternal, something ugly into a thing of beauty. Reality is not the only truth, Mahmood." Again, in 'Woman, Man', the unending tangle goes on like the blades of a pair of scissors running counter to each other, yet not drifting apart. Finally they resolve to drift together: "Who knows what the mystery of creation is! ... Let us go then, we are simply marionettes in the hands of an unknown power."

After one goes through the *Conversations of the Dead*, a pertinent question crops up: can or do people really change for the better, grow or evolve after death, having the added advantage of more time and experience to their credit? Had not the eighteenth century poet John Clare sighed in a letter to his friend: "If life had a second edition, how I would correct the proofs!" With the exception of Rana Kumbha and Meerabai who were reconciled to the truth that real love is of the Divine and for the Divine and not 'what men call love' – and as such there was nothing debatable between them – each contender in the rest of the conversations stubbornly holds his ground and no one ever concedes even grudgingly. Perhaps it would be irrational to expect a diehard to change after he dies. Didactically one may infer that all the desirable change and growth of consciousness is possible only here and now, in this earthly life, and not hereafter.

The last conversation takes place in heaven, and echoing Sri Aurobindo's dream in the initial dialogue the

Heavenly Being declares: "the earth may soon embody the full nature of the deity ... the earth will enjoy the fruit of our realisation.... No more will the earth remain mere clay; it will become a base of luminous consciousness." With this ends the book, and the *Conversations of the Dead* appears to have come a full circle.

In dexterously bringing out the spirit of the original and keeping up the appropriate tempo of the dialogues, Satadal has performed a commendable job to win the appreciation of the readers of *Mother India*. Now that it is published in book form, we hope it will gain recognition from a wider readership.

— Gour Mohanty

G. Mohanty had, during his first trip to Pondicherry with his father in 1953, come under the sweet spell of the Mother, and is since then connected with the Ashram. He is a retired teacher of English.

Love and Death: Critical Essays

Edited by Ananda Reddy;
Published by Sri Aurobindo Centre
for Advanced Research,
Pondicherry; 140 pp., Rs 100



This book contains the original poem, relevant letters of Sri Aurobindo, a study by Amita Sen, and several literary criticisms by other authors.

The book under review fulfils a long awaited need of the reading public. *Love and Death* is perhaps the most satisfying and enjoyable poem composed by Sri Aurobindo during his early poetic career. Written as early as 1898 the poem shows the 'sunrise splendours while lingers yet unseen the glorious sun' or 'what now we see is a shadow of what must come' i.e. the superb Epic of epics, *Savitri*. The poem forms 'a companion legend to the story of Savitri'.

To judge a poem it is always advisable, at the first instant, to see what the poet himself speaks of his creative inspiration, what the poet intends to say and how he says it. 'The poem itself was written in a white heat of inspiration during 14 days of continuous writing—in the mornings,

of course...’, says Sri Aurobindo. Commenting on the speech of the Love-God he gives his self-assessment, ‘I do not think I have, elsewhere [in the poem], surpassed this speech in power of language, passion and truth of feeling and nobility and felicity of rhythm all fused together into a perfect whole.’ There is ‘a certain completeness of poetic sight and perfection of poetic power, which puts it on one of the peaks – even if not the highest possible peak – of achievement’.

The godheads, Love and Death, reveal their complementary action, both leading human beings from ignorance to a more total expression of themselves.

It is gratifying to note that the critical essays in this book, written by distinguished critics and scholars of poetry and literature, have taken well care of the thematic and technical aspects of this sweet narrative poem of Sri Aurobindo. The poem’s thematic side has been well discussed by Amita Sen. Love and Death are two universal Powers that form the foundation of terrestrial creation. ‘The godheads, Love and Death, are not poised against each other but reveal their complementary action in the world where both lead human beings from ignorance to a more and more total expression of themselves,’ writes Amita Sen. Benediction of love is showered on the one who is ready to carry his message of Love into the very abode of ‘the Untimely Dead’.

*A sole thing the Gods
Demand from all men living, sacrifice:
Nor without this shall any crown be grasped.*

The sacrifice demanded here is half the span of the lover’s life.

Prof. K. R. S. Iyengar in his essay takes up the issue of sacrifice of the latter half of Ruru’s life. To him youth is only half the story. ‘On the contrary, he should grow old wisely living the full quota of his appointed life.’ Ruru was shown glimpses of his future:

*... saw himself divine with age,
A Rishi to whom infinity is close,
Rejoicing in some green song-haunted glade
Or boundless mountain-top where most we feel
Wideness...*

A similar note is found in the opening stanza of Browning’s poem *Rabbi Ben Ezra*:

*Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made;
Our times are in His hand
Who saith ‘A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half;...’*

Ananda Reddy takes up in his essay ‘the pathos and the deep tragedy of the untimely death—“the joy of union was not yet old.”’ Life is a journey and a struggle. The poem focuses more on its aspect of love on all its levels—from the joys of sensuous love to the ecstasy of divine love. To Sri Aurobindo ‘ideal love is a triune energy’ comprising the sensual, the emotional and the spiritual. Both Reddy and Sunayana Panda discuss the Greek and the Indian myths—the story of Orpheus and Eurydice with that of Ruru-Priyumvada.

A very important contribution towards the understanding of the technical aspect of *Love and Death* is noted in the essay of that well-known poet-critic, K. D. Sethna (Amal Kiran), countering the adverse criticism of *The Times Literary Supplement* that Sri Aurobindo’s poetry lacks ‘the music that enchants or disturbs’. Quoting a passage from *Love and Death* beginning with the line ‘O miserable race of men,’ Sethna writes, ‘Only a deaf man with his whole aesthetic being grown numb can refuse to find here “the music that enchants or disturbs”.’ From the point of view of the inner music, the thrill of the inspired consciousness, ‘the lines are some of the most perfect in literature.’ Besides, in the ‘tricky’ medium of blank verse the Aurobindonian afflatus has blended page after page of ‘various colours and tones, the rich flexible beauty combined with *epic furor*’. Above all ‘what English poet would not be proud to wield the wonderfully expressive style of that speech, in *Love and Death*, of the God of Love—Madan or Kama...?’; its supporting rhythm, ‘a versatile aptness of metrical technique’, is an important feature in Madan’s speech.

The book under review will serve as a very helpful companion to all readers of *Love and Death*. The poem with its one thousand and odd lines sums up, as Sethna comments, ‘centuries of poetic evolution of the English language’.

—Asoka K. Ganguli
Dr A. K. Ganguli retired as Professor of English, Delhi University. He is the author of Sri Aurobindo’s Savitri: An Adventure of Consciousness, available with SABDA.

The Indian Spirit and the World's Future

— K. D. Sethna (Amal Kiran); Published by Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry; 185 pp., Rs 150

Sometime back a prestigious magazine featured an article in which India was likened to a film in which there were many sub-plots but no main storyline. A cultural diversity that is unparalleled in the world; more than a dozen main languages and hundreds of dialects; a powerful military; the largest democracy of the world; a history of several millennia; an intellectual heritage which boasts of outstanding contributions in the march of human progress—yet no main story. The critics are hoarse with their descriptions of the seamier side of Indian life. India continues to be a land of ‘a million mutinies’. The population continues to rise and it will not be too long before it overtakes China. Even with our present growth rates we will achieve the level of development of the U.S.A. in some 104 years. The cities are overflowing with people; corruption is thriving; civic amenities are hopeless; the proletariat is sunk in inertia; the water table is falling; terrorism is rampant in parts; the parliamentary system of government is gasping for breath under the weight of coalition politics; the decrepit caste system still flourishes; communal riots are a commonplace of life; there is no link language for the country; cricket has become part of national culture but science still hasn't and remains as a kind of genie to serve our wants: this list can be greatly prolonged.

“Shall India die?” Swami Vivekananda had asked more than a hundred years ago and proceeded to answer his own question, “Then from the world all spirituality will be extinct; all moral perfection will be extinct; all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct; all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest, fraud, force and competition its ceremonies and the human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never be.” Such a thing can never be—what a force of conviction! Such a thing can never be because India preserves that which preserves the world. In a word, “God”. All the other ancient nations have lost their link with their past, India alone retains a living continuity with her ancient past in the form of its spiritual Masters. It cannot be gainsaid that we are a nation beset with contradictions. Yet in the resolution of India's conflicts lies the evolutionary future of the world for the Spirit of India

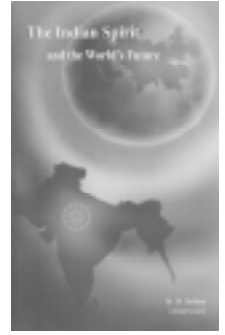
The Spirit of India does not admit any half-hearted compromise as a solution to its problems.

does not admit any half-hearted compromise as a solution to its problems.

The Indian Spirit and the World's Future is a compilation of articles by K. D. Sethna (Amal Kiran). These articles first appeared as editorials in the journal *Mother India* during the period 1949 to 1952 and were issued in book form in 1953. India has changed in many ways since then. Yet we may say of it, *plus ça change plus c'est la même chose*, the more it changes the more it remains the same. This is the rationale for a second impression of the book after a gap of so many years. With great sensitivity and consummate insight, Sethna disengages the Indian Spirit (the main story) from its many manifestations (the sub-plots). In Sri Aurobindo, his Master, he has a being who epitomizes best all that Indian spirituality has to offer and who represents the acme of evolutionary possibility. Revolving around the Aurobindonian *weltanschauung*, these essays are an exploration of several contemporary public issues and some others which are of interest to admirers of

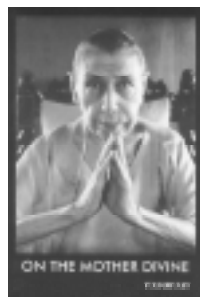
Sri Aurobindo. Espousing a spiritual approach to Nationalism, Sethna points out that this approach is free from the defects of all other approaches. The higher value this lends to the concept and purpose of Nationalism, “not only answers most truly to the Indian genius and thereby promises to advance it the best but also makes a power that can carry India to a future greater than any possible to other countries on the strength of their own Nationalism: it promises to place India in the van of the world as a leader in the evolution of consciousness from the human to the divine.” These words of Sethna at the culmination of the first essay set the tone for the rest of the book, which delights as it reveals a nuanced approach to life mundane and spiritual. Among its many essays is one titled, “The Passing of Sri Aurobindo: Its Inner Significance and Consequence”. This piece was occasioned by the Master's *mahasamadhi*. This essay elicited the following response from the Mother. “It is quite the best thing Amal has written. I would like to print 15,000 copies.” (29.12.1950)

— Hemant Kapoor
Hemant is an M.Sc. in Chemistry from I.I.T., Kanpur. He is on the editorial team of the *Mother India* journal. His interests include poetry and philosophy.



On the Mother Divine

— Pasupati; Published by Sri Aurobindo Karmi Sangha Trust, Habra-Prafullanagar; 124 pp., Rs 75



This booklet of 124 pages is a translation, by the author himself, of his Bengali book entitled *Ke ai Ma* which proved to be a very popular book and has already run into at least eight reprints. The English translation is now being issued in a second edition with some additional material.

The author explains at the start itself how he came into contact with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, occasioned by some serious personal problems in his life. His problems having been solved by this first contact, his interest was awakened and the initial disbelief and lack of faith vanished.

This book does not purport to be a biography of the Mother. It can serve as an interesting initial introduction to the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, and if the interest of the reader is awakened, he could then read the more comprehensive biographies of the Mother available with the Ashram. There are several, one of them wide-ranging and exhaustive, a second one a brief but fairly detailed regular biography.

The book presents a bird's-eye view of the Mother's life, and of the institutions that she helped to inspire and build.

The book is a collection of assorted articles, some of them dealing with briefly stated incidents in the life of the

Mother. Others are the author's own impressions of the Mother. Yet others deal with the various Ashram departments, like the printing press, the weaving section, the tailoring department, the farms, etc. There is also one section dealing with Auroville, the international city for universal brotherhood and harmony. Named after Sri Aurobindo, the township was initiated by the Mother's vision and is still being built with the guidance given by her. The book therefore presents a bird's-eye view of the Mother's life and the various activities that she encouraged and the institutions that she helped to inspire and build.

Some of the information given in the book regarding the departments of the Ashram is incomplete and needs to be updated.

In the article "The Mother's Blessings", the author has given the spiritual significances that the Mother had assigned to some flowers. The list is a short one and by no means complete. In fact, the Mother carried on this work of assigning spiritual significances to flowers for several decades. There is now available with the Ashram a complete set of two books with the spiritual significances of nearly nine hundred flowers, with colour photographs.

The book also contains one section with the short and aphorism-like sayings of the Mother that are simple, direct and appeal straight to the heart.

On the whole, it is a very good introduction to the Mother for the first-time reader.

— Ranganath Raghavan
Ranga-da came to Pondicherry in 1945 and studied at the Ashram's school. He worked at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press from 1961 to 2000, and currently is with the Sri Aurobindo Archives and Research Library.

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