During these intense periods, when a pandemic reshapes global conditions, the relevance of Auroville becomes more and more acute. While we are all brought back to the basics, so is our effort to manifest The Mother’s Dream: we are compelled to look at the foundation. The base of Auroville is The Mother and Sri Aurobindo – for the physical manifestation, it is the land. In her words and actions, The Mother emphasized the necessity of securing the land. Here are key moments that I remember from my personal experience.

The Mother looked at the map, concentrated, took her pen, pointed and said “This is the Centre”.

So there is in her the power of rooting, of connecting to the land. Something very very powerful. But there is also something alive and growing that is essential, that is very important.

There is one experience before the Inauguration where she indicated to me – we were working. At that time I was taking Ashramites, youngsters, to Auroville and we were planting trees around the Centre.

**She said “My Force cannot be received because there is no living matter.”**

So then we planted 21 Transformation trees for her birthday. Mother Nature had agreed to collaborate and requires the soil and the land and the earth for Her City.

She said that She actually knew the place for the Centre.

**She said “I know, I know because I had walked in these places, I know the place.”**

She used to walk in the afternoon and Pavitra, one of her secretaries, would drive Her, and then she’d get off and walk around there. There were no roads really but She would walk and Pavitra would drive behind Her.
I think this connectedness with the soil and the need for having a place was obviously and strongly symbolized in that unbelievable experience of the Inauguration.

For those of us who were there, it felt as if a meteor had struck the ground, something from another world.
She allowed me to use some of the money to buy a tractor because I had said the land we are buying is very poor and is not being made fertile. “The people are starving here in the villages; we are buying their land which was used for monsoon-fed crops. We are not doing anything – we can identify the Auroville land because it is lying barren. This is really a bad start!”
So I bought this tractor – She allowed me – and I remember driving it from Lake Estate. I had decorated it, and I was singing “Victoire à la Douce Mère – now we are putting the land of Auroville under the plough.”

Middle of May – solid hard concrete ground here! I remember Centre Field where I scratched at the surface, I couldn’t even penetrate the soil. The only thing I did was make a huge wave of dust. And then I mentioned we should spend some money (which Navajata was using for buying the land), let’s say 10%, 15% to make that land fertile?

She wrote back very strongly: “The most important thing is to secure the land now!”
She made it quite clear that it was essential not only to secure the land but also to protect the land by having people live on it and begin to develop Auroville.

There was a tendency to just buy the land, and for everybody live in Pondicherry. Every morning the bus would come out, pick up us workers and future Aurovilians for us to do our work in Auroville and later in the day we were brought back to Pondicherry.

So then she allowed me to build a house with the money I had given her and use this house.

*She told me, “Build a house in brick and concrete to show the world that we are here for good.”*

So again, this was something very specific, very solid, very located.

Three times The Mother referred to the material location of Auroville in the Charter, calling it:

“A PLACE” … “A SITE” … “A BRIDGE”
A long time ago, before the Inauguration, I was sitting in Auroville, looking at the dark monsoon clouds gathering above over the land, and recalled The Mother mentioning in the Agenda that there was a moment when it was not yet decided whether the New Force would manifest in one spot, like Auroville, or would, by entering the terrestrial atmosphere, would break up into many shards and lodge itself in various places around the world. Later on, The Mother said it had been decided that the New Force would concentrate in one spot.

It is now about 50 years since this photograph was taken in the Matrimandir excavation site!
In these years, Auroville has survived, grown and prospered. It is recognized around the globe as a vibrant source of inspiration, an effort towards global outreach and human unity.

Let us hold hands in the quicksand of the present crisis and stabilize the ground for Her Dream to fully manifest - by securing the last remaining pieces of land!

Contributed by Frederick, based on his personal account in the film “Early Days Landing Auroville”

with additions and revisions made while in confinement in Paris on 22.2.20