Last School

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What's inside this issue:

- THE AIM OF EDUCATION
- WEFTS & WARPS
- WONDER AND PROGRESS
- SINGAPENNE





FROM LAST SCHOOL TO NO SCHOOL

DEEPTI TEWARI

From Auroville's very inception there has been a paradox: A futuristic city that must manifest itself in a treeless, canyon-riven plateau. A marvellous birth ceremony filled with inspired symbolisms juxtaposed, the very next day, with a barren, dusty emptiness. Indeed, it took the first pioneers many months to break ground, physically occupy the land and generate thereby a settled living presence and action.

The bridge between the dream and its actuality has been constructed gradually – one sapling, one check-dam, one borewell, one habitation at a time – but through it all, there has been an unstated confidence that the very multiplication of these steps would build a wholeness. It is this faith-filled Karmayoga that has given us a forested plateau filled with bird-song and returning animal life.

Auroville has been offered the unique opportunity to build a city in complete harmony with its material, psychological and social environment. But, to achieve this, it must harness a conscious spiritual focus as its pathfinder – and that vast endeavour has only just begun.

It is a truism that in its first iteration, an idea can be ahead of its time. How appropriate this is of the Auroville experiment!

Collective human consciousness, in its present self- centred state, seems largely unable to measure up to the demands called forth by Auroville's aim of Union!

An all-inclusive unity, that celebrates multiplicity, can materialise only when collective self-development becomes a conscious and willed growth of consciousness.



IN ITS FIVE DECADES OF SELF-EXPRESSION, THE COLLECTIVITY'S BUDDING SPIRIT HAS SEEN MANY MOODS.

The early years needed a wholehearted focus upon the physical environment. There tended to be an impatience with 'thinkers' – it was the doing, the action, not the thought that predominated. The physical base did need to be somewhat secured before the evolving collective consciousness could turn its attention to deeper essential questions and challenges:

COULD A NEW MIND, A NEW, CONSCIOUSLY EVOLVING, HUMAN COLLECTIVITY, BE FOSTERED IN THIS EXPERIMENTAL CITY?

There have been glimpses; inspired moments. Auroville exists materially because of the expansive, uncalculated self-giving which created such a manifold, vibrant enclave in what used to be a denuded environment.

The change has been achieved because there has always been that inner scaffolding of souls, sincerely dedicating themselves to the experiment.

As any discerning visitor can sense – there is something in the air of Auroville – a way of being that calls forth an intensity of response.

But much of what continues to be collectively articulated is still rough and immature, too expressive of lower life patterns.

The thing to be done is *'AS LARGE AS HUMAN LIFE'*, it is said, so a sense of tardiness seems inevitable.

Today's time-spirit shows an impatience with this situation.

There appears to be a demand that Auroville measures up – lives collectively in its soul and spirit.

The struggle between an inward growth of consciousness and Auroville's outward ability to create new forms that demonstrate it is sharply heightened.

> *"THE IMPORTANT THING IS THE EXECUTION WHICH IS TO BE CARRIED OUT WITHOUT EVER LOSING SIGHT OF THE IDEAL WE WANT TO REALISE."*



Educational Experimentations:

The field of education too has been vexed inevitably with the paradoxical pendulum swing between the ideal and the actual.

What should be the contents and methodologies of an Auroville Education?

AUROVILIANS ARE ASKED NOT TO REPEAT WHAT IS DONE ELSEWHERE – BUT WHAT DOES THAT ACTUALLY MEAN?

It has been argued that at least some of the patterns which exist elsewhere could be adopted. What of subjects and Auroville's approach to them? What of textbooks with their subtle orientations?

By virtue of the schooling previously experienced, everyone is opinionated in this arena! Each one is oriented, even hampered by particular personal experiences.

Thus, the early years of Auroville's learning and teaching experiments were a cacophony of inchoate feelings and ideas.

So many points of view, so many socio-cultural roots to be worked upon. And, through it all, an impatience with philosophical or psychological questions. It has not been a conducive environment to explore deeper ideas of yoga psychology!

And, by default, the option frequently espoused, has been the approach of dominant team members. For many years it was the books and the teaching methodologies that came out of American, British or French education systems that came to be adopted.



Last School – 1985 to the Present

Through these years, Last School and its team, plowed a somewhat lonely furrow. From 1985 onward, the team persistently held on to the idea of a Free Progress approach. It consistently refused to adopt any specific syllabi or certification system. It was partly as consequence and also to meet what seemed to be the dominant demand, that many other schools came up which offered a more conventional approach.

THE LAST SCHOOL TEAM HAS SEEN THE MOTHER'S LIST OF NAMES FOR SCHOOLS IN AUROVILLE

AS A PROFOUND SUTRA.

Rather than merely names for school buildings, the list was grasped as something to be internalized, explored, analysed and understood. A second and deeper look seemed to suggest a developing pattern of material and psychological growth.

It was agreed that all the patterns and structures of the school's timetable and subjects could be built around this more inward perspective.

Sri Aurobindo's many books about the psychology of social evolution, of history and culture, became base texts to guide the search and focus on luminous periods of the human adventure of consciousness.

Besides the evolutionary vision of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, were there other historical suggestions that could be derived from this exploration?

What immediately emerged was the effulgent Upanishadic period of India's development. The dominant quest of that age could be summed up by the question:

KASMIN VIJNATE
SARVAM IDAM VIJNATAM?

WHAT IS THAT KNOWING WHICH, EVERYTHING HERE CAN BE KNOWN?



Numerous stories illustrating a seeking for soul-hood above all other pursuits have come down to us from this period.

To achieve their aim, these great Upanishadic guides, recognised the human individual in its instrumental nature, as a mental being primarily.

They saw that this part of the being could be an ideal 'leader' for the life-being and the body: Manomaya Purusha Prana Sharira Neta.

While, the purpose of education was aimed at touching the Essence –

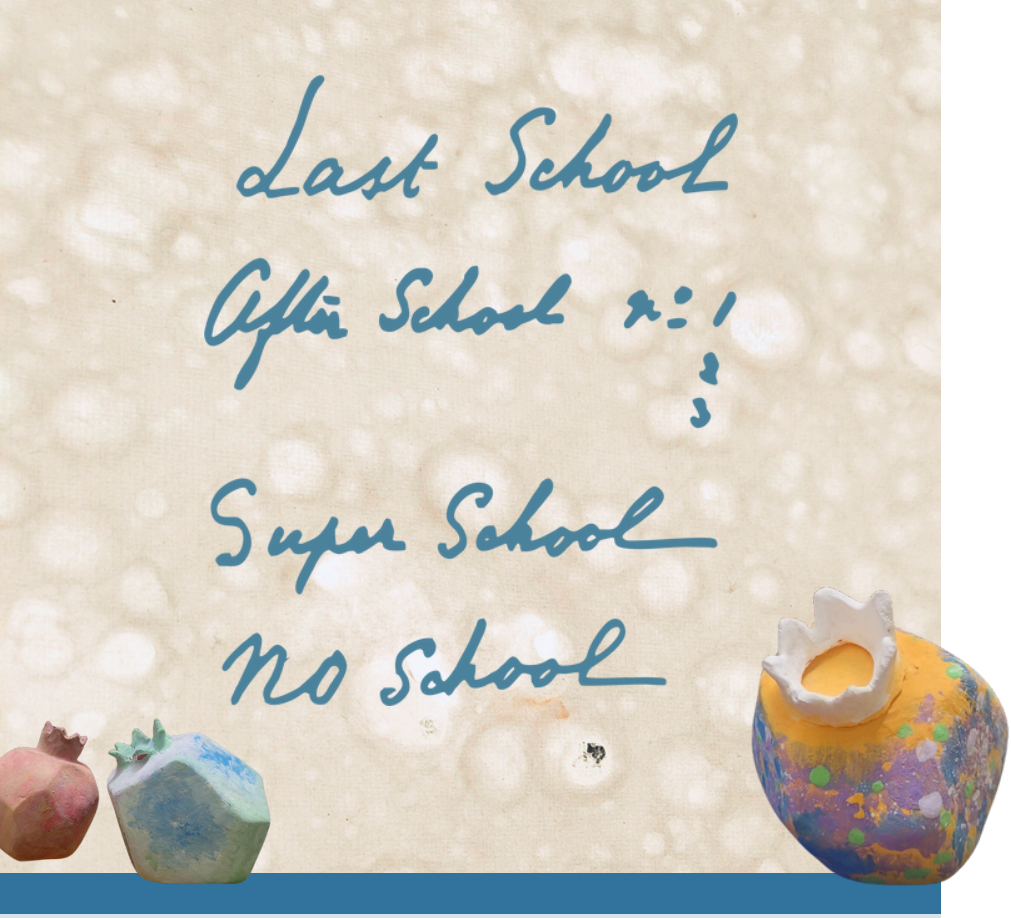
AHAM BRAHMAN ASTI;
SARVAM IDAM BRAHMAN ASTI

– the means adopted was an awakening, refining and deepening of this part of the instrumental nature.

The intent was to make it capable of deep reflection, to develop vichar leading to vivek: a mental consciousness with an awakened, expansive, synthetic capacity.

Last School, unreservedly embraced this luminous guidance!





MOTHER'S SUTRA

as stages of psychological development

It is a truism that every individual in their psychological nature is at one stage or another in the complex developmental phases of the triple instruments of mind, life and body. Each part of the being, conditional on its capacity, may need to undergo various modes of studying and developing.

In all conscious learning and growing, the initial rung begins with the training, structuring and ordering of the dispersed parts of the being: this is what the 'Last School' stage offers.

As the consciousness develops, refines, and deepens itself – whatever may be its field of exploration and study – it passes through the three stages of 'After School'.

Next, it arrives at a place where learning plunges into intensities, depths and profundities – the stage of 'Super School'.

Finally, when the steps of 'schooling' are no longer essential, the developing being can emerge into the free, uniquely individual, evolving processes of 'No School'.

It is here that life can indeed become an

'ADVENTURE OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND JOY'

– a field of conscious yoga – and the

'HARP OF LIFE BECOMES FITTED TO THE RHYTHMS OF THE ETERNAL'.

OVER THE YEARS, LAST SCHOOL HAS HAD, IN ITS REGULAR PROGRAMME, ONE OR OTHER OF THESE DEVELOPING PSYCHOLOGICAL STAGES ACTIVE AND PRESENT.

From the beginning, youngsters have been encouraged to start teaching – the lines between the 'teacher' and the 'taught' are sought to be blurred as early as possible – you 'teach' in one session even as you may be a 'student' in another.

Certainly, there is no 'lesson' more penetrating than to uncover one's understanding of a subject as when one attempts to 'teach' it!

Such tryouts exemplify the emerging patterns of the After School stage, as do the occasions when youngsters take up larger responsibilities for the school and its environment.

There are also adults who come to study Sanskrit or to deepen their skills in the various plastic arts and crafts. Last School also encourages its older youth to actively sign up for apprenticeship programmes in the larger Auroville context.

Additionally, for three decades, there have been study groups, many that include older long-term Aurovilians, who come to Last School to participate in sessions exploring the profound evolutionary vision offered by the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

All these categories of learning could be designated as the Super School stage of growth.

A Historical Perspective

In fact, there was a period, from 1999 to 2004, when the whole school would halt all other classes to participate in the intense sessions, organised especially for Last School students, that were offered by Shri Kireet Joshi, when as Chairman of the Auroville Foundation, he made regular visits to Auroville.

THIS WAS A PROLONGED MOMENT THAT CREATED A DEEP DIVE INTO SRI AUROBINDO'S EVOLUTIONARY WORLDVIEW.



"AUROVILLE IS THE PLACE WHERE THIS NEW WAY OF LIFE IS BEING WORKED OUT,

IT IS A CENTRE OF ACCELERATED EVOLUTION WHERE MAN MUST BEGIN TO CHANGE HIS WORLD THROUGH THE POWER OF THE INNER SPIRIT"



"IT SHOULD BE KNOWN AND WE SHOULD NOT HESITATE TO PROCLAIM IT—THAT THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF OUR SCHOOL IS TO DISCOVER AND ENCOURAGE THOSE IN WHOMTHE NEED FOR PROGRESS HAS BECOME CONSCIOUS ENOUGH TO DIRECT THEIR LIVES.

This was also the first instant when an attempt was made to define Super School.

For many years, 'Super School' became a separate account head with a nominal budget under the Auroville Financial Service.

Here then is the formulation that was made (2 decades ago) to define this effort:

"Super school is a school where the subjects are of the higher levels of human thought and action and are treated in a holistic manner. The programme is pursued at a "super" level and at a "super" or accelerated speed.

The aim is to "summarise" the human past so quickly that one can have all the energies to pursue the development of the future.

This requires a great deal of "schooling". Super School prepares the being to enter into "No School" which is the condition when the instrumental nature is fit to pursue on its own integral growth, i.e.:

WISDOM; HEROISM; HARMONY; SKILL IN WORKS"

AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL

LAST SCHOOL WORKSHOPS





WEFTS & WARPS

SHONA

Each new term Last School begins with a new exhibition and weeklong workshop.

Woven pages

This project was proposed by Lola, who for several decades has been at the heart of the Last School Art Centre. In April, she left us a paper card of her making. In which she had woven paper scraps and leaves, with touches of ink.

Bhavyo pulled this thread and worked on it some more during the summer. We decided on the folding card format to be the size and frame for the work. Everyone first made some trial weaving on a small format, then had to carve out a rubber stamp of a leaf and make black and white leaf prints on their cards as well as on paper to be used for weaving.

The cards weaving was a limited palette of black white and gray and only at the end they could choose a warm colour paper of orange and yellow or a cool colour of blues, to bring in a highlight or accent.

The idea of weaving was challenging as the work becomes two-sided and it needs to work visually from both sides, then there were other challenges like straight cuts or curved cuts as well as the use of texture printed papers. For this reason colour was kept to black and white with one limited colour. The skills that everyone developed was the use of a stanley cutter.

Taking part in the art workshop at the beginning of the school year as an assistant was both a joy as well as challenging for me. The focus and atmosphere of deep concentration which was held by everyone taking part of the Workshop brought me great joy as I witnessed it carried everyone through the difficulty of the technical aspects of weaving paper through cardboard which was no easy feat as well as combining textured printed patterns with hard line cuts in the paper.

As an assistant facilitator it was challenging to help so many people and feel that I had given enough help and guidance to everyone equally and at the same time I took great pleasure in observing the different approaches, solutions and characters which I saw in the individuals and their pieces. To my mind it was no easy task to weave through cardboard and that the work has to have strong visual composition on both sides of the piece and yet the final outcome at the end of the week surpassed my expectations and was a wonderful surprise.

IN LIFE, NOW I SEE MORE PATTERNS OR THINGS THAT ARE PERMANENTLY WEAVING.

GAIA



STUDENTS' IMPRESSIONS

As a new student, I was nervous about fitting in and trying new stuff, especially having heard that art weeks are generally quite taxing, but I was pleasantly surprised. Since it turned out quite easy-going, and even therapeutic, I really enjoyed it being hands-on and creative.

I never realised how much patience goes into making something this intricate, and it gave me a whole new perspective on looking at things. I also feel a lot more comfortable in the space and around all these new people than I would have otherwise.

Working on both sides of the paper was like trying to see the bigger picture while paying attention to small details at the same time. It's a reminder that even when things seem ill-fitting or messy, if we keep working on it, we can create something meaningful.

Knowing that we were all going through the same frustrations gave me a sense of camaraderie. I also feel more familiar with these people, because each work was so expressive and telling of the person who created it.

ATISHA

I very much enjoyed the fact that teachers and students were all working together. One thing that really struck me was the silence. I am not used to that. Sometimes it got slightly frustrating, so I would take a walk in the corridor ...

One thing I learnt, which I found particularly interesting, is that weaving is everywhere. I had never noticed that until it was mentioned. Now I realize that everything is weaving. Our clothes are woven, but also our thoughts, our lives, our connections. I understand that weaving is more than simply weaving paper together.

MIRABELLE

I REALLY APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT WE ALL STARTED OUT WITH THE SAME INSTRUCTIONS AND ENDED UP MAKING VASTLY DIFFERENT PIECES.

NITIMEY

I was amazed at how some of the younger students threw themselves so easily into the atmosphere of the workshop.

I also really appreciated seeing all the work put in by the team to organize this workshop for such a big group. It must have been quite a challenge for the teachers to guide all of us toward the vision they had in mind.

To express my experience of the workshop, I want to say thank you. I feel gratitude for the absolute dedication.



Intentions

The second day, Bhavyo told us to put in the intention. I couldn't understand what that meant, so I asked him, and he told me to figure it out. So that was my plan for the day. Even as I'm writing this essay the weekend after the workshop, I still don't know what it means. I would like to use this year to find the answer.

I thought the answer was planning. Maybe it is, but the more I planned, the less I liked the final piece and the less I planned, the more I liked the final piece. So naturally, I chose to do the latter most of the time.

However, in my mind, great artists take time with their art. So to make my art more detailed, I started thinking more. But I enjoyed the process less, and neither was I happy with the result. I went back and forth with this, trying to find a balance.

When it came to the final piece, the heart was the most difficult. We had prepared so much that I was scared to go wrong. I was done with the preparation, before word of the others, so I waited. For what, I don't know, but I waited. Once I finally started, I didn't stop till the end...

From the start, I knew what I wanted my final piece to look like; I had planned everything. What I made looked exactly how I thought it would. Yet, something was missing. Maybe it was the intention. I still don't know what the intention is, but I know what it is not.

ISHA MEENAKSHI

In this together

The main difficulty was me stressing about the pattern too much. I sat at the table, staring at the paper, placing the strips like this and like that, making zero progress. The way I overcame that was just by making that first cut. After that, everything came much better, and the further I went, the easier it got and the more I trusted the process.

Working with others provided a refreshing other perspective on the task at hand. When I was stuck in a certain place, I would walk around the art centre, and seeing all the diversity helped me come up with something of my own. Also, seeing that I'm not the only one struggling helped morale, and reminded me that we are all in this together.

EGOR

The first few days of the workshop were a time of adaptation for me. I was not used to at all to the techniques we were using, and they asked me to do a lot of brain gymnastics. I overthought all the decisions I had to make and froze a couple of times. I was really afraid of messing up and failing in projecting in the real world my expectations of my work, which were not realistic because everything could not work on the first try.

From the end of day three onwards, things got smoother. I grew more confident in my ability to make decisions. Even if I made mistakes, they were fixable, so messing up was not such a big deal after all. I still feel like there is a long way to go until I'm not afraid to fail and I can just try, but this workshop definitely helped me in decision making and self-confidence. ... I cannot say I've overcome this challenge; I think it will come back, but at least I know more about it now, and I'm a bit more equipped to deal with it in some contexts.

EILENE



ONE CHALLENGE WAS NOT ALWAYS FEELING CONNECTED TO WHAT I WAS MAKING. I WASN'T SURE IF I LIKED HOW IT WAS TURNING OUT. EVENTUALLY, I SIMPLIFIED MY APPROACH AND FOCUSED MORE ON THE PROCESS THAN THE RESULT.

LUCE

ONE THING THAT REALLY CHANGED THE ATMOSPHERE FOR ME WAS THE SILENCE: IT HELPED ME OVERTHINK MY DECISIONS LESS AND CAUSED FEWER DISTRACTIONS.

ISHA SOPHIA





I liked how each step was connected. We were given time to experiment, and overall the atmosphere was peaceful. Cutting our work into strips taught me how to let go and look at the bigger picture.

I gave myself a challenge to finish my work in the given time frame — not just during the workshop, but throughout the year. I tend not to hand in work because I feel "I can do better," but during a course I attended this summer, it hit me that that kind of mindset is not going to take me anywhere.

Hence, I've been making a conscious effort to do my best within the time frame. I managed well during this workshop.

SIMRAN

Working with the whole school did help me, but at times it also made me nervous. It helped because everyone was there, so I could ask for advice or help if I needed. It was also nice to do something all together. But sometimes, when I saw some of the other kids way ahead while I was still behind, it made me nervous. Still, I think it pushed me out of my comfort zone, which is a good thing.

ALYHA

It was a new experience working on a project where my teachers were doing the same thing as me, on the same level as me. For me, it was a very good experience. We all bounced off each other really well. There were times I didn't know how to move forward or what to do next, and an older student who had done similar work before helped me out.

And there were times when I had gone a bit faster than others, and they asked me for help. In that sense, we all worked really well together.

SOPHIA



TOWARDS

INTEGRATING KNOWLEDGE ACROSS DISCIPLINES



ON WONDER AND THE SCIENTIFIC MIND

IN CONVERSATION WITH JEAN LEGRAND

Mathematics is a language, a way of seeing and understanding the world. It is the language and joy of imagination.

Have you made a discovery?

At the start of each class I ask the students,

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO TODAY? DO YOU HAVE A PARTICULAR QUESTION? HAVE YOU NOTICED SOMETHING OR MADE A DISCOVERY?

There is not often a response, it's very rare. I continue to ask the question.

I don't teach math. I try to bring in the capacity for reasoning, for organisation and logic.

You see it is not about inculcating a library. Math for the development of thought, of the organisation of thought. It is interesting and worthwhile of course to develop some capacity for memory of the processes, to find them easily.

For this exploration of reasoning, geometry is very interesting, *tres sympa*...

I use math as a starting point of action, of development.

Now do we really need to go in that direction?

I do not know... but some bon sense seems a little important.

ONE OF THE BEAUTIES OF MATHEMATICS IS THAT IT IS IMPERSONAL.

There is no psychology, no complications of human lives in mathematics.

A UNIVERSAL SUBJECT

Mathematics is a universal subject built on logical reasoning. Yet, when most students think of mathematics, they often feel fear or a lack of confidence.

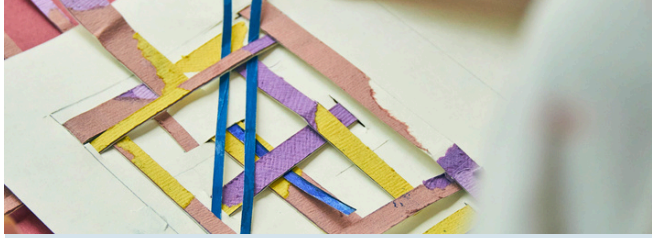
As a teacher, half of my task is to help them overcome that fear and build confidence—and doing so already goes a long way in helping them understand the subject better.

To achieve this, I try to break down complex ideas and reveal the logic that underpins them. There's never just one way to approach mathematics, as a teacher I have to be more versatile to my approach on the topics and learning styles.

Whenever possible, I introduce puzzles and problem-solving activities to develop students' logical reasoning, spark their creativity, and help them find the joy in learning the subject.

ASHWIN EZHUMALAI

"THE WILL TO KNOW IN AN INCONSCIENT WORLD."











> TO SEE A WORLD IN A GRAIN OF SAND
> AND A HEAVEN IN A WILD FLOWER,
>
> HOLD INFINITY IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND
> AND ETERNITY IN AN HOUR.



MARVELLING AT INFINITY

TANISHA MANN

Since childhood, we are capable of instinctively calculating the odds of a misdeed, of intuitively adjusting the arc of a thrown ball, of marvelling at the infinity of the grains of sand or stars in the sky.

Within all of nature, from the smallest mineral to the largest animal, there is an intricate and patient mathematics.

Surely there's a reason that most noted artists, musicians, inventors, poets and philosophers throughout history have nurtured a love for mathematics!

For me, math is about revealing the inherent simplicity in the world around us and inside us. I enjoy rewording a complex problem simply, watching a student solve it instinctively, and then asking -

CAN YOU FIND OUT
WHAT YOU JUST DID?

IS THERE A PATTERN?

When someone declares math isn't their thing, it feels like someone giving up on blurry vision because sight simply isn't for them.

I believe the real issue isn't a lack of ability, but a lack of connection.

Enjoying math has little to do with being "good" at it; it's about appreciating its elegance and immersing oneself in its fantasy world of reason.

LIKE ANY LANGUAGE MATHS
HAS ITS RULES, BUT THAT HAS
NEVER STOPPED US FROM
CREATING POETRY.

For me, if a student can begin to enjoy this poem, getting the correct answer to a problem is a small win in comparison.



TEATIME ENTOMOLOGY

JANA EARLY

Steam curled gently from our cups at the Last School tea table, where conversations often wander from the school schedule to the mysteries of the universe.

The Great White Shark of the Insect World

Jean had sent Jana a video of a so-called "murder wasp," and his voice still carried the thrill of this horrific discovery.

"Did you watch the 'Murder Wasp' video? The wasp seems to have jaws that can eat anything!" Jean's eyes sparkled with both horror and wonder.

It is a Killer hornet. Order Hymenoptera. A hornet is a subset of wasps. In South India we have Vespa soror, a social hornet—an apex predator, like the great white shark of the insect world. It hunts grasshoppers, mantids, butterflies, and especially honey bees, keeping populations in balance.
Yes, A shark with wings—imagine.
Deepti leaned closer. "Balance or not, my friend was stung by one. She ended up in hospital, swollen like a gourd. The sting is no joke."

Only the female stings. The sting defends the colony, yet the same organ lays the eggs that continue life. A weapon, and a cradle. And for a moment, the buzzing world outside felt vast, terrible, and beautiful all at once.

A TEACHER IN TRAINING

DUNYA GRISHINA

Teaching my first proper biology class to a room full of teenagers who I've never met was unsurprisingly nerve wracking.

So it begins...

The first step to ease the atmosphere was to make it clear that questions are welcome and encouraged; by continuously asking them clarifications myself they got in the habit of explaining concepts to each other when things were unclear.

It was very important for me to set up a foundation of knowledge, as well as present how the class will be structured.

I FIND THAT TAKING NOTES IS ESSENTIAL

to understand complex topics and remember them afterwards.

Once the new term starts the plan is to incorporate more varied activities such as: art, presentations from the students side, group projects, and some experiments.

Additionally I plan on assigning weekly responsibilities to the students, primarily summarizing the class and posting the notes on the class group chat.

This will not only keep a record of their work for the future record, but also help out anyone who is not present for certain classes stay on the same page.

Overall my approach is to try and give them academic information as well as promote responsibility, self-awareness, collaboration, and critical thinking skills, which all will be invaluable skills throughout their life.



APPROACHING PHYSICS

I rediscovered my interest in physics through my passion for learning languages.

We had a Russian book in school called "Занимательная физика" which translates to *Entertaining or Amusing Physics* by Yakov Perelman.

He authored many popular science books which explained scientific concepts through simple and practical examples from daily life.

Since I was working on improving my general vocabulary in Russian, I started reading this book and was amazed by the simplicity, logic and sense of wonder it could deliver based on simple phenomena that we observe around us.

Inspired, I then started reading up more about the basic concepts of physics such as motion, gravitation, work and energy etc.

EVERYTHING I HAD STUDIED MYSELF AS A STUDENT YEARS AGO RETURNED, NOW WITH A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE AND AWE.

The wish to share this new found passion where we explore together the

"HOW"

and

"WHY"

of what we perceive through our physical senses led to me conducting the physics class.

SATYAVAN BHATT









"WORLD AFTER WORLD DISCLOSED ITS GUARDED POWERS,
HEAVEN AFTER HEAVEN ITS DEEP BEATITUDES,
BUT STILL THE INVISIBLE MAGNET DREW HIS SOUL."

A LITTLE LIKE MAGIC

ASHWIN EZHUMALAI

Chemistry can be boring or fascinating—it really depends on how it's taught and how the student takes it in.

And when it comes alive...

I think that's true for pretty much anything we learn in life. I was lucky when I studied chemistry in school.

Once we got used to our teacher's way of explaining things, he made the subject come alive by mixing experiments with theory. Finding that balance is important, because sometimes you need the "boring" theory to make sense of what's happening in the experiment.

That's pretty much how I like to approach teaching too.

I try to keep my enthusiasm for the subject as high as possible because it's contagious—when students see that excitement, it lifts their own motivation.

It also helps us get through the less exciting theory bits and understand what's really going on behind the experiments, so it doesn't just feel like magic.



THEN THERE ARE THOSE DAYS WHEN THE STUDENTS' CURIOSITY TAKES OVER AND LEADS THE CLASS IN UNEXPECTED DIRECTIONS.

I love those moments.

The learning feels more alive because it's driven by their questions and eagerness to explore.



Just one step ahead

Even if I don't know everything about the topic, we figure it out together. In my experience, that's when the best learning happens.

STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

GROWTH THROUGH INTENSITY

TOWARDS SUPER SCHOOL

It is the most stimulating of experiences to be with young adults who are filled with a transparent energy and enthusiasm to learn and to grow through whatever they encounter.

In July we recieved two SAIIER interns from Science Po. Paris, to explore at Last School the socio-political works of Sri Aurobindo, the raison d'etre of Auroville and spiritual gift of India to the world.

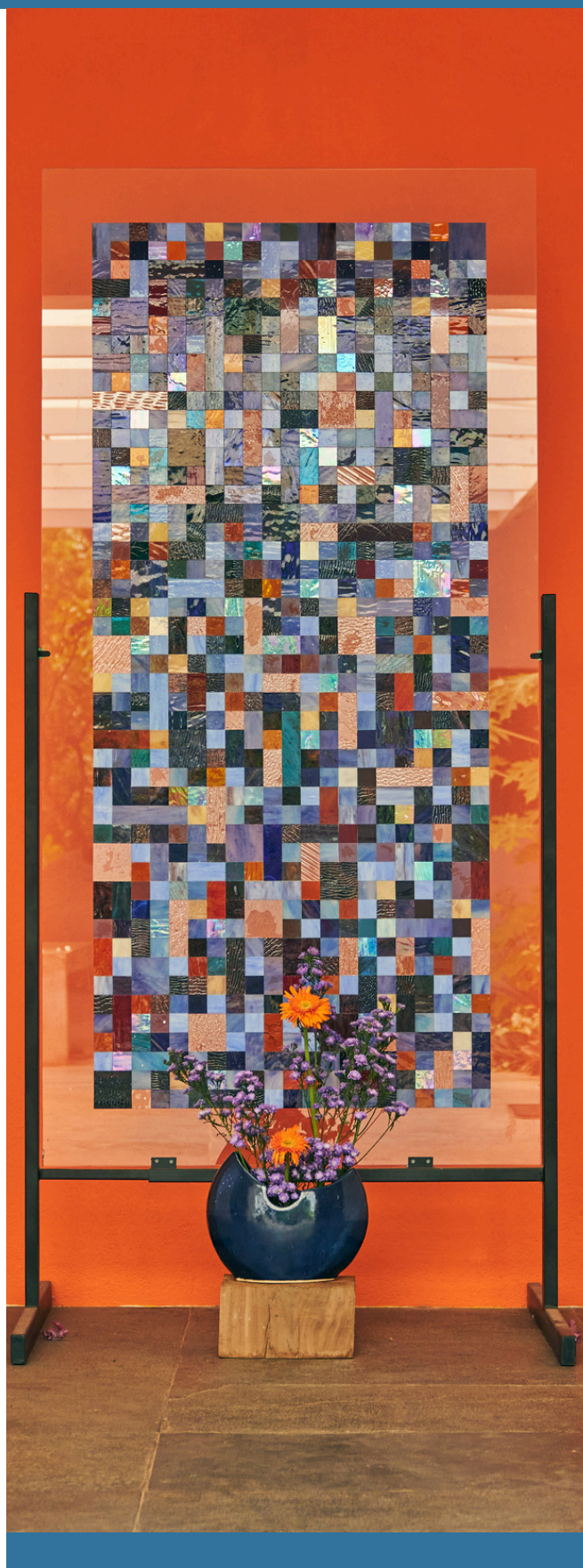
A first impressions

One of the main questions I keep returning to in my life is how to live meaningfully in a world that often feels chaotic, fragmented, or uncertain. I often wonder what it means to live a good life, not just in terms of personal success, but in terms of connection, contribution, and inner coherence.

What it means to be human, in terms of our nature, our morals, our 'essence', our personhood. How do we deal with these bigger questions: death, what comes after it, the purpose of existence as a whole, and how to be happy and make the most of our time on the earth. I also find myself questioning whether we can truly create systems that reflect deeper human values like compassion, truth, and unity. These questions are both personal and political.

I see Auroville as a rare place where people are not only asking similar questions, but actively trying to live out their answers through community, experimentation, and a shared aspiration toward human unity. I hope my time here will give me space to reflect more deeply on these questions and perhaps glimpse new ways of understanding myself and the world around me.

LUCIA BOITOUT



SINGAPENNE

The Singapenne Hat is the only Ultimate Frisbee tournament in India organized especially for girls and women under 25 years old, or with less than three years of experience playing. It is hosted by the Auroville Women's Ultimate Frisbee team. Players come as individuals and arranged into mixed teams from different cities, backgrounds etc.



Step up

It gives us the chance to take responsibility — coming up with strategies, facilitating discussions on the field when there's an issue, or off the field after the match during our spirit circle, where we reflect on how the game felt for each team. Taking responsibility and feeling that my presence truly matters in the team allows me to push myself and give more than I would if I were just sitting back, comfortable, thanks to others carrying the weight.

IT'S THE PURE JOY OF BEING ALIVE — FELT IN BOTH VICTORY AND DEFEAT, WITH THE BATTLE RUNNING MUCH DEEPER.

FANNY



A handful of silliness

I made a bunch of silly mistakes this tournament, and I noticed them a lot more than last year. Maybe last year, I wasn't taking as many chances. Maybe I wasn't going for the disc the same way. But this time, I was giving everything I had on field. The mistakes weren't happening because I didn't try, they were happening because I did. When I couldn't catch the disk coming to my hand waiting to be caught, I would get mad at myself. Each time an instance like this would occur I would have to remind myself to have fun, to move on and not get caught up on the mistakes and it would work.

It took me a while to realize that losing also means learning. Every mistake I hated came from making effort, and I realized that I wouldn't improve if I always caught the disc.

Even though I showed up to have fun, to play with new people and make new friends, I take back a lot more than that.

ANANTINI JOAN MOHANTY

Growing together

Through this tournament, we grow we grow together as a frisbee community – especially us girls-, it builds skills like leadership and confidence on field and off field. It provides a safe space to learn and polish skills while we are connecting with more people in the community.

Each tournament teaches me something new, and I always leave with lessons or things I want to practice next time. For me, this tournament was spectacular because my team grew so much in such a short time. We met only an hour before playing our first match, yet we quickly needed to connect and try to be on the same page. We got it.

A big plus this year was having a mentor system to support us. Each team having a mentor as a source of knowledge and guidance for communication and feedback made the experience even more special.

I am still learning and putting my knowledge on practice but I want to say: I learned many things. First, not to put myself in a box. I often feel that layouts define me on field, and without them I don't feel as good.

But this time, I experienced a new role as a handler (even physically I tried something I was not comfortable with) and I realized I am still valuable for the game in many ways — it's not just one skill that makes me special.

I also learned the importance of preparation off field. Something that definitely I want to improve is my stamina and my response to heat or rain for future tournaments. This made me want to be more proactive with exercises and trainings off field so I can play better in any conditions.

And finally, what I come out with and what I stay with after the tournament is to value the experience. Appreciate the time and the people you are with because an experience like that only happens rarely or once a year, and it is never going to be the same. Different environment, vibes, and company.

So appreciating time and being in the present is something I want to keep practicing, because we not only learn a lot from these tournaments, but they are also opportunities to try to be fully in the moment and take as much as we can from them. And make them beautiful memories for the future.

My hope for Women's Ultimate Frisbee in India and in the world is for it to keep bringing and providing this type of space where we can grow and learn together as a community, encouraging and letting women and girls know that while playing this sport we can build our sense of security and confidence in our own lives, and getting skills like leadership on and off field.

GAIA



> SPIRITUAL LIFE DOES NOT MEAN CONTEMPT FOR MATTER BUT ITS DIVINISATION.

WE DO NOT WANT TO REJECT THE BODY BUT TO TRANSFORM IT.

> FOR THIS PHYSICAL EDUCATION IS ONE OF THE MEANS MOST DIRECTLY EFFECTIVE.



Meeting my new team mates was an overall special part of this tournament for me. I immediately felt very happy and comfortable being a part of my team. It's exciting for me to play in these tournaments and be a part of new teams.

It teaches me on how to coordinate as a team with all the different skills and levels and with people you have never met before.

DIA



Last School
After School ?!
Super School
No School

Last School

A UNIT OF SAIIER, AUROVILLE

Last School in Auroville, India, works primarily with teenagers. Its educational approach, anchored in Sri Aurobindo, is centered on an integral development through the method of Free Progress.

The school offers an environment of beauty, where students asking their own questions, approach learning outside the constraints of traditional academic programs or external standards. Thus stepping firmly away from formal diplomas, Last School seeks to develop individuals who are better equipped to address tomorrow's complex challenges, invent new solutions, and contribute to an evolving society, rather than simply integrating into the existing one.



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"IN THE PHYSICAL THE DIVINE MANIFESTS AS BEAUTY"

Mother's message to Last School in 1971