

# DAKINI

DAKINI 11

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A Newsletter for women Order members, Mitras and Friends, produced by the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order (Wanstead), Amaravati, 30 Cambridge Park, London E11 2PR. Tel: 01-989 5083

## EDITORIAL ... Anoma

A short Editorial from me this month as there's so much else to go in, I'm pleased to say. A cup of tea on one side, a pile of contributions on the other, and Kay's loyal but not terribly trusty typewriter in front of me. Stencils, correcting fluid, dictionary and odd notes strewn around. Another Dakini.

This will be a quiet couple of days typing sandwiched in between a three day seminar at Padmaloka with Bhante, a three day visit to Mandarava, an afternoon visit to Croydon and Aryatara and then this weekend, a visit to Brighton for the Buddhist blessing of Judi Fewell's marriage to David Leach. Judi is a Mitra and David a Friend. Marichi will be performing the ceremony and the Amaravati community have all been invited. I'll then be staying on a couple of days to give a talk at Amitayus, entitled 'The Ultimate Adventure'. I haven't actually written the talk yet, but the idea was inspired by something that came up on the seminar. Bhante felt that adventure was something that was missing from many people's lives and that it might be good to put across the spiritual life in this way sometimes, to inspire people. After all, the spiritual life is an adventure! It's exciting, risky, enjoyable and expansive. You don't need to go anywhere exotic for the spiritual adventure. You don't need any special equipment. Just yourself and the desire to go beyond yourself. As one explorer has said, 'The last and greatest adventure left to man is to scale the inner heights'.

So I'm busy gathering together material for this talk; I'm typing Dakini, travelling around, feeling expansive, finding community life enjoyable and stimulating, and seeing, sometimes painfully, where there are holes in my efforts and trying to do something about them. All part of the ultimate adventure!

There's lots of forthcoming events at the end of this issue. Please do read them carefully. One Mitra missed the last Mitra Day as she 'Didn't notice it in Dakini'. It's all there in black and white (or pink or yellow) so perhaps it'd be a good idea to make a note of relevant dates in your diary.



Thanks for all this month's contributions. I look forward to receiving lots more for the November issue.

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#### NEW RETREAT CENTRE      Anoma

FWBO (Wanstead) has just been given a cottage in Sussex for retreats. It's situated in a small farming settlement called Bishopstone, which is near Seaford. The cottage, which can hold up to 12 people, is built in white stone and backs onto the downs. It's only half an hour's walk to the sea. There's a wood close by, historic church, and lots of nice walks. The nearest town is Seaford, which is a mile away, and where you can get all provisions. The cottage is 15 minutes walk from the nearest bus stop and British Rail.

To make it a viable proposition, we will be letting it out to centres for retreats, but of course we want it to be made good use of by women in the Movement. It will be very convenient for retreats for women from the Brighton and Surrey centres and for small study retreats for women everywhere. We also want to let it out for short solitaires (up to 2 weeks) or for people who'd like a few quiet days in the country, either by themselves or



with some friends. So if you're interested in this, the cost would be £1.50 per day if you're alone or £1.00 per day if there's more than one. Please contact either myself or Anjali.

We are currently equipping the place and spending odd weekends there to do some work that needs doing, so by the time this issue of Dakini comes out, it should be ready for use.

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### AMARAVATI NEWS     Sanghadevi

Amaravati continues to be a rich and exciting place to be. It some times seems quite amazing to me, the way that it combines the qualities of change, of movement, and also stability.

On reflection I realise that this is, after all, the nature of the spiritual life itself. Each of us must change if we are to move ever nearer to Buddhahood, and yet, this change is not something uncontrolled, it is movement and yet it is stability. It is stability because the change occurs within the context or framework of our spiritual aspiration. Each change is consolidated within us, integrated in us, taking us one step nearer to our goal. It is by creating a balance between what is called the Five Spiritual Faculties that we achieve this state. That is of balance between Faith and Wisdom, Energy and Patience, with mindfulness or awareness providing the balance.

So, if everyone in the community is making an effort to grow, wanting to grow, is growing, each in her own way, then it's not surprising that we can feel this atmosphere of movement, yet stability at Amaravati.

So, what has happened since the last Dakini? Well, everyone in the community had at least a week at the women's summer retreat at Mandarava, and I think I speak for everyone in the community when I say that it was a beautiful retreat. We all came back changed, some people a lot.

I was on the retreat for two weeks, one of which I lead. I enjoyed doing this, and learnt a lot about myself in the process.

The culmination of the retreat was the Ordination of Maggie and Liisa; now Vimala and Shridevi.

After the retreat everyone seemed to adjust to getting back to work very well. Vimala and Hilary have already completed their first painting and decorating job; wallpapering and painting a living room and bedroom for an elderly woman. They have now launched into their next job. Although there are plenty of other painters and decorators advertised in the local paper, we have had a good response to our own advertisement. I believe they've only been turned down once so far on the grounds of being women. Anjali, who took the telephone enquiry, assured the person in question of the reliability of the decorators but he said he'd much rather have men. No doubt they will always meet a few such people, let's hope not too many. They have called themselves "Spectrum Interior Decorating and Soft Furnishings", the 'Soft Furnishings' refer to the upholstery and curtain making department of Kusa Cushions.

Kusa Cushions has also been busy; Joan making loose covers and Kay and Anjali making baggy pants for orders we received over the retreat period. Also a steady flow of cushion orders.



Anne Farnham decided after much thought, to move to Manchester and left Amaravati on September 11th. I wish her well in her new venture. There is an FWBO Centre in Manchester, so she will be able to go to classes there.

Anne Murphy who, like Anne Farnham, was one of the founding members of Amaravati, has moved to Mandarava, which everyone at Mandarava is very happy about. Anne has worked full time in the Movement for several years as layout designer for the various FWBO publications such as Mitrata and the Newsletter. For the last year she has worked at the design studio in Bethnal Green. Although now in Norfolk, she still wants to continue working on these publications and hopes she will be able to do quite a lot of work actually at Mandarava and commute/hitch down to London when necessary. I wish her well and happy also.

Whilst two Annes have moved out, another Anne has moved in; Anne McMillan from Glasgow. It's very nice to have her in the community. At the moment she is damp-proofing her prospective room in the basement and hopes to have it completed before she starts work as a librarian in Ilford Library on Monday 16th September. She will probably work full time outside for several months. Diana MacEwan and Shridevi will be moving in a couple of weeks, from Brighton and Helsinki respectively. Dhammadinna is having a month's solitary retreat in Cornwall, and Vimala is off to the same place for a month, when Dhammadinna returns.

We've had our first Speakers Class; Vimala based her talk on The Four Sights in an attempt to answer a question which she has been pondering for some time, namely; why is it that some people start following the spiritual life and yet others perhaps never will? I really enjoyed the evening, it felt like a new and creative dimension of coming together with one another, of communicating with one another. I look forward to hearing other people's talks in the future.

We seem to have a lot of weekend activities over the next three months involving all or part of the community. There is a trip Glastonbury planned and one to Brighton. The latter will combine buying equipment for White Row; the house in Seaford which Diana has generously given to FWBO (Wanstead), and attending a Buddhist blessing ceremony given by Marichi on the marriage of Judi Fewell and David Leach.

There are Order Days for the Order Members, a Day Retreat for Aryatara women Mitras, a jumble sale, a women's weekend retreat at Amaravati, another in Brighton for Brighton women, and another Mitra Day. All this adds up to a lot of creative energy which will hopefully benefit quite a lot of other people as well!

There will also be another three week open retreat at Mandarava over Christmas, following along the lines of the Summer Retreat. Three Order members will lead a week each, and the last week will be closed. See the back page of this issue for the dates of this and other future events of general interest.

Also, if any of you have any jumble you can get to us by October 14th, that would be marvellous. If you live in London we may even be able to collect it ourselves.



Since Sanghadevi wrote this report, she has decided to make a move herself. She will be moving to Beulah, which is very near the London Buddhist Centre (Sukhavati), where she will be involved with classes and the Centre generally. A couple of people from Beulah have moved out and so there will be room for Sanghadevi and Shridevi, who will be Secretary of the centre. So there will be Sanghadevi, Shridevi, Janet Martin, Dominique Buisset and Dominique Llomet (and son Steve). Sanghadevi has been one of the stalwarts in the setting up and running of Amaravati and I'll be very sorry to see her go. Specially as our relationship hasn't always been the easiest, and yet over the last couple of months, it's been getting more and more creative and I feel there's something positive and good between us. But though I'll be sorry, at the same time, I feel she's doing the right thing. To have a women's community with two Order members involved with the Centre, and three Mitras, very closeby, will be excellent. And I'm sure Sanghadevi's move will bring the two communities into closer communication with each other. Sanghadevi will remain on the Council of FWBO Wanstead and so we will still be in good contact - besides of course personal visits to and fro. I wish her very very well and happy.

Anoma

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#### MANDARAVA SUMMER RETREAT      Anoma

A few words about the retreat to lead into five contributions written either on or after the occasion. It was the longest, biggest and probably the best women's retreat we've had so far. I lead the first week, Sanghadevi the second and Srimala the third. We arrived from Amaravati on the Friday afternoon to find Chris Smith, John Roche and Ray Chipps (all Norwich Mitras) putting the finishing touches to the new shrineroom. They've done a beautiful job of converting a former rather dismal looking garage into a spacious, wooden beamed and peaceful shrineroom, with a sea blue carpet and white walls.

Over 40 women spent varying lengths of time on the retreat, several staying the full stretch, including Anjali and myself. Accommodation included the house, converted railway wagons, cowshed, chicken hut; plus three caravans, three tents and one woman in the back of her van! As I said in the last Dakini, there were women from lots of different places in Britain and from Germany and Finland too. There was a lovely feeling of Sangha amongst us all - of expanding ourselves through communication with so many different women.

The work periods were very rewarding with real wholesome jobs like sewing lawns, digging, painting the outside of the house and emptying the Elsans!

It was the first time different Order members have shared the leading of a retreat and it seemed to work quite smoothly and happily. I enjoyed the first week very much and then settled into two weeks of my first retreat not leading or organising for over two years. The programme included meditation, communication exercises, yoga (which I did for the first time in ages and experienced it in quite a new way), pujas, lectures, discussions and special long reading of one of the Milarepa stories about a women disciple of his called Sahle Lui.

Of course Maggie and Liisa were ordained at the end of the retreat, but more of that later. Here now are the five contri-



butions mentioned earlier, starting with:

THE START OF A RETREAT     Anne Rowlands

Stillness and contentment begin gradually to filter into my being as I sit in the new shrine room, my eyes resting on the tranquil figure of an unfamiliar rupa. Previous responsibilities and worries drift noiselessly away and leave my mind free to expand during the meditation and puja which follow. Long after the final bell I sit on enjoying this new sense of freedom and peace, allowing Tara's warmth to flow through me unhindered. ...

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The next contribution is from Noel Lehane, who goes to the EEMC. She arrived at the retreat and stayed in her large Commer van, parked between the house and the shrineroom. This is a poem which she wrote and offered to the shrine during one of the special pujas.

Anoma

A SONG OF GLADNESS: BEING HERE     Noel Lehane

The van is soft in candelight with door open wide clear and airy in the morning. few and basic are its furnishings. simply could I dwell in this excellent van for ever!

warmly wooden is the toilet, once a shelter for hens squatting in bushy undergrowth like a witches forest home easily could I shit in this serviceable old chickenhouse for ever!

the spade is cold and hard: sodden and heavy the ground knobbly with hidden stones but how rapid the transformation! meditatively could I dig in this good earth for ever!

each day I look unbound into unknown womens eyes. thoughtless and reflectively could I watch there and they into me for ever!

in the glowing nighttime darkness sitting on the step I am star amazed: now and again one flashes from infinity to infinity humbly could I gaze on these wonders for ever!

rain falls - in the shrineroom gentle voices responding - Nammo tassa bhagavato arahato samma samBuddhasa mindfully could I walk chanting these sounds for ever!

--oOo--

Anne McMillan arrived for the last week of the retreat direct from a short solitary in Cornwall. This is a song she wrote and gave to me during that time.

Anoma

SONG FOR THE SANGHA     Anne McMillan

Thought I'd sit and write a poem  
Put how I feel today  
Thoughts are tumbling round inside my head  
All the things I'd like to say  
But to put it down on paper  
Isn't easy after all  
The muse is out for dinner  
And she isn't gonna call.  
So I'll just sit tight and have me a rest



Then put what I'm feeling and hope for the best  
And maybe when I'm finished it'll pass the test.

Well first of all I'm grateful  
And I'd like if you all knew  
Just how much my life has altered  
Since I first met all of you  
And my day-to-day existence  
Is much brighter than before  
So I'd like to just say thank you  
You help me more and more  
So I'll just sit tight and have me a rest  
Then I'll put what I'm feeling and hope for the best  
And maybe when I've finished it'll pass the test.

Now sometimes I feel frightened  
With deep primeval fears  
And sometimes there's a loneliness  
That comes out in my tears  
But mainly I'm excited  
For who knows what lies ahead  
And I'm really looking forward  
To the path I hope to tread  
Well I just sat tight and had me a rest  
Then put what I'm feeling and hoped for the best  
And now that I've finished - does it pass the test?

#### ORDINATION OF MAGGIE AND LIISA - NAMEGIVING BY BHANTE

On the last Friday evening of the retreat, Hilary Blakiston went to pick up Bhante from Padmaloka for the private ordinations of Maggie and Liisa. Malini had previously prepared the converted chicken hut into a lovely little shrine for the ordinations. We did a period of Metta whilst Maggie and Liisa made their way to the small shrine for their ordinations. Then Bhante returned to lead a puja.

On the Saturday about eight other women from Norwich and Amaravati came to Mandarava for the public ordinations. This day also happened to be Bhante's birthday and Dhammadinna and Marichi's Fifth Anniversary of their ordination! Before the ordinations Bhante held a question and answer period with some quite interesting things being asked. This was taped so perhaps some of it will be transcribed and included in Dakini some time. Then followed the ordinations. It good good to see nine Order members attending - Malini, Dhammadinna, Marichi, Jinamata, Sulocana, Srimala, myself, Sanghadevi and Anjali.

Here is what Bhante said when giving Maggie and Liisa their new names.

"A new person needs a new name so I usually give quite a bit of thought and reflection to this particular question, but in the case of these two Friends it wasn't too difficult. The name that suggested itself in the case of the old Maggie, who is now dead and buried or if you like cremated, that floated into my mind, was Vimala. Literally it means immaculate or stainless, or if you like just pure. Not pure in the puritanical sense, if you know what I mean, but pure in the sense of chemically pure, that is to say, integrated with nothing extraneous, nothing that doesn't really belong, only what is essential, no fault, no stain, nothing to spoil the unity, the harmony, the integrity. So I



thought this would be appropriate for the old Maggie, for over the years she has really shown herself to be attending more and more to what is really essential and getting rid of all the inessentials, all the malas, all the impurities, so that she is Vimala, with the final long syllable.

Pirkko-Liisa is a very nice name, but I'm afraid we shall hear it no more. But I hope we may hear an even better and sweeter name, Shridevi. I hardly need tell you what 'devi' means - 'devi' means goddess, literally a 'shining one', one whose degree of positivity is so high as to be heavenly, as it were, so that it radiates and shines. And 'shri' means something like noble, holy, auspicious. So it's the noble, or holy, or auspicious goddess, or high positive radiant person, and of course it's the name of a very important figure in Tibetan Buddhism, usually known as Palden Llamo, which is the translation of Shridevi, a sort of inspired Buddha-come-Bodhisattva-like figure, a sort of Tara figure, if you like, but with the energy and vigour, even determination, not usually associated with the Tara figure. So Shridevi represents something like this."

So after the ordination, lunch and a lovely chocolate birthday cake made by Marichi and then lots of sad goodbyes. The Amaravati van, packed with cushions, tools, luggage and us, trundled its way back with one necessary stop in a beautiful cornfield. A few hours after our return, Noel, Susanna (a Mitra from Helsinki), Do and Anni (from Aryatara) fell into Amaravati, dropped off Susanna and then continued on their way.

A few days later, Susanna handed me this article:

AFTER THE MANDARAVA RETREAT    Susanna Laurola

I'm sitting here in Sanghadevi's room in Amaravati and trying to surprise Anoma by writing a few lines for Dakini. So my first long retreat of twelve days in Mandarava has finished and I'm trying to recover, i.e., to realise that there's another world outside Aslacton too. It has really been a beautiful time. When I arrived the retreat had been on over one week and there were just few women I knew. Still it was surprisingly easy to settle down. The first few days I felt like having a solitary retreat, in a positive way anyhow. I had some troubles to get my English back and I tended not to listen when other people talked to each other. Still I was with them with my eyes; I watched them and enjoyed seeing so many happy beautiful faces. Another visual experience was the surroundings; the funny looking house with sunflowers, the garden, the greenhouse and finally the beautiful shrine room. In addition I learnt to know the wasps quite thoroughly by watching them eating marmalade on my finger. Anyhow my talkative nature didn't stay quiet for very long and so I started to communicate. And it really was worth it; I've never met so many lovely people at the same time and even when this feeling stayed right up to the end of the retreat, I'd say it even deepened during the last few days. I think my only trouble was to find an 'enemy' for metta bhavana. In addition to all these inspiring women I enjoyed the regular life which isn't possible for me in Finland because of my job. And these work periods. I really felt like getting more positive energy by painting and digging and cooking and afterwards having a double meditation to counterbalance.

And finally the ordination and Bhante's visit. It was the first ordination ceremony I've been to and I was deeply touched, especially on Friday evening during the private ordination. When Bhante started chanting the Sevenfold Puja with his clear and penetrating



voice I felt like having had absorbed the words into my every cell. The next day's public ordination was quite a contrast to the private one. The atmosphere was nearly hilarious. It released the feeling of the parting a little bit.

I hope you all had as good and positive time as I had. Thank you for your friendliness. Hope to see you soon.

Lots of metta

Susanna

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ME     Anne Rowlands

When I first started work as a teacher three years ago, before I knew of the FWBO's existence, I had it in mind to do my probationary year and then leave: quite what I would do at that point I didn't know, but I just had a vague inkling of something not being quite right about leaving school to go straight onto college and then to follow the conveyor belt around back to school again. However, one year slipped by and almost before I knew what had happened I found myself in September in the same situation as I had been the previous September. A few unquiet thoughts went through my head at this time but I quickly pushed them in a neat little bundle into the back of my mind.

By now I knew a little bit about the Friends through doing yoga but it wasn't until the January of the following year that I eventually mustered up the energy and enthusiasm to attend a beginner's meditation class. Nor was it quick sailing from then onwards as it took me four months to decide to graduate to a regular's class and attend my first retreat and then a further three months before I finally took notice of a little voice inside me which kept making itself heard - uncomfortably so at times - and asked to become a Mitra. By this time I was back at school for my third year.

Ten days later I was flat on my back with two slipped discs and I had temporarily lost the use of my right leg. Thoughts began to zoom in from all directions and I experienced a great deal of difficulty - actually trying to sort them out, so I asked for the discussion of my decision to become a Mitra to be delayed. I now knew that I just had to give up work before I found myself back at the school for a fourth September, though I was not freed from many doubts which continued to assail me. I eventually became a Mitra in November, and January found me back at school. I had decided that I wanted to complete the academic year before leaving. Time passed by and I eventually handed in my notice, with some regret, at the end of May. Doubts and regrets frequently crossed my mind, but when I actually thought of the possibility of returning yet again to face another classful of 32 youngsters in September, I knew I just couldn't do it. I had also begun to think quite seriously about the possibility of living in a women's community somewhere and working full-time with Friends, to involve myself more in the activities of the FWBO.

I still had to wait until the end of July until I could actually leave and I went through many different phases during that waiting period. At some times I would really enjoy being with the children and at others I just couldn't wait to leave. As the time drew nearer and more and more of the administrative work was being completed and handed in for the last time I could really



feel a weight being lifted not just from my shoulders but from my whole being and I felt as though I was working myself out of a tangled, knotted situation. I began to feel less tired, more energetic and more positive about things in general.

I can't say that I actually enjoyed leaving the school - I was more carried along in a sort of dream, on a wave which I am still riding. Soon I shall be moving to Croydon, and even when the wave has deposited me there and disappeared I feel certain that I shall have no regrets and I look forward to setting up a community with Anni and Do, to living and working within the framework of the FWBO.

--oOo--

THOUGHTS ON FOOD     Diana MacEwen

I've been a neurotic eater for quite a long time, but I hadn't really thought much about my reasons for over-eating until a couple of weeks ago, when I decided to fast for ten days.

I asked myself why, when I know that I've eaten all that my body needs, quite often I find myself craving to eat more. And I began to think of the kinds of situations when this happens... On the whole, it seems to be when I'm in the company of other people, and when I'm in a particularly unaware state. Why, then, should I want to eat? Are my feelings of unawareness and alienation hiding something? Yes, I think they are. First, I began to think that it was my confusion at existing in the middle of a group of people which made me want to eat, - to escape, by eating, from acknowledging their presence. Then I thought it might be that I feared them. But although both of these are probably true to some extent, I think my fear of groups of people is lessening. So I seem to be hiding something else...

I began to try to remember how I had behaved in groups of people when I was a child, and before I met the Friends. I remembered that I used to spend most of my time being very unnatural - I used to try to be like what I thought the people around me wanted me to be like (- in order to gain acceptance), and I think this mechanism is still at work. But now, nobody wants me to be anything. And, gradually my real feelings are beginning to surface.

But I still have that conditioning, that I should not show them - that I should appear peaceful and contented. So something in my subconscious seems to switch the eruption of feelings into doing something which, even as a child, I was free to do - to over-eat. So I over-eat, to hide them, but often also so that I don't have to acknowledge even to myself that they are there. I use food to stop myself from experiencing my feelings.

I think I've also cast food into the role of a mother - a mother who is available whenever I want her. That warm feeling in my stomach is comforting - something to which I run when feeling confused or unhappy. But this 'mother' doesn't actually resolve any of these feelings - she just makes me feel more blocked, and causes me to become sluggish. She also causes a lot of self-hate after eating, I hate myself for not having had the discipline not to eat.

I can think of two other reasons for over-eating: an unwillingness to accept myself, and a difficulty in accepting warmth from, and having a giving attitude towards, the people around me. Being in such a warm-hearted group of people, I think both of these



are gradually lessening.

I found spending ten days without eating to be a really purifying experience. Besides becoming more aware of my negative emotions, I also found positive ones - sometimes I felt joyful, and light, and peaceful. Even to actually feel fear, anger and craving was good. And I was really surprised by the speed at which my emotional state changed from negative to positive, positive to negative. Sometimes in the space of just one minute I'd feel both like dancing and shouting for joy, and like throwing a brick through a window!

But the overall feeling of contentment at living simply and not indulging my cravings, and no longer having that split between wanting to eat and hating myself for doing so - were all very positive experiences. And I've found that by becoming more aware of my reasons for over-eating, I've contacted more energy, and have also a greater determination to gradually overcome my cravings for food.

To help me do this, a few days ago I took some vows about eating. They included a vow to fast one day each week for three months, and also a positive vow, - to try to be more open with people about my feelings.

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#### THE MEETING OF TWO MITRAS    Lois Paull

(Lois is a Mitra who went to America in January of this year to do a course in music therapy. Before that she was living at Mandarava in Norfolk. She keeps in good communication with people here and recently sent this article for Dakini - Anoma)

It was a sweltering, muggy Monday, and like every day in this community for handicapped children, it had been quite a one! Even though the children were away on their summer vacation, things were still humming (not least the crickets and cicadas and other such creatures). Having rushed around like a maniac all day, I only just got to the station in time to catch the little suburban train that was to carry me to downtown Philadelphia (all one carriage of it, though with two guards, of course, string vests glowing through their shirts. Typical American excess!)

On the strength of a none-too-explicit phone call, I had vaguely arranged to meet Lesley on the corner of 17th and Market Street (s). She is a Mitra who has miraculously found her way to Philadelphia from Scotland along with Peter, also a Mitra. I could hardly believe my good fortune! Not until I saw it, anyway! When I arrived at the vast underground labyrinth of the station, it was the rush hour. It seemed I was the only human being out of thousands trying to get out of the station - most of Philadelphia seemed to be swarming in. I eventually surfaced into the heat, the concrete, the press of people and the noise and fumes of big cars at 16th and Market. Sixteenth??! ('Oh no'! everybody cries. Real on).

I walked down a block, ogling the people, feeling very much like a country girl, unused to city folk with their colourful, smart clothes and hard faces. Of course, every crossroads makes four corners, which was something I had forgotten. I joined the flow of people and carefully crossed all four of them, waiting a while at the most likely one, where people were simply 'hanging out' as they say here. I did many mental spot evaluations, but drew a



blank with all likely candidates. (Why hadn't I asked her what she looked like? Why wasn't anyone wearing baggy dungarees like me?) I walked back a block and down the other side of the street, past all the porn movies, with a feeling of desperation slowly starting to rise. The street was carpeted with people and it had begun to look hopeless. I tried to phone Peter, but my dime kept on coming back out of the machine (was I really that unacceptable?!)

Back to 17th and Market, and to the likely corner, cars roaring away from the starting line as the lights turned green just inches away. But wait a minute - who was that on the far side of the street? A girl (hopeful) quite smartly dressed, but softer looking, and carrying a really nice basket, and looking around her (sun on blonde hair). Her lights changed and the six-deep crowd beside her surged forward. I willed her not to move. She didn't! My lights changed and I decided to cross. When I reached the other side I hesitated (though I was so certain!), marched up to her and said, "Are you Lesley?". "Yes", she replied, "Are you Lois?" I said yes too. "If only you knew how many people I've accused of being Lois!" said this lovely Scots accent, and off we went to find a cool drink and a slice of pizza to celebrate. The heat, the fumes, the noise, somehow didn't seem to matter any more.

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#### FIRST LONG RETREAT     Faith Johnson

(Faith's first long retreat was a mixed one held this summer at a place called Toddington in the West Country. Here are two poems written by her on the retreat - moma)

##### Week One

In the night  
I lie awake  
The others round me sleeping.  
Time here's too precious  
To be spent in sleep.  
Holding the moments, clutching the hours  
Clinging to the experience.

But loosening every hold is to retain,  
To watch pass by is to remember.  
This truth I know  
As well as my own name.  
Yet in the dark awake  
I grieve to watch the hours pass by.

##### Week Two, feeling more skilful

The eyes of spiritual friends smile into mine,  
I see my own experience reflected there.  
A subtle influence draws together  
People into unity.  
No-one pairs with another  
All are one.  
Laughter wells up, discussion, reasoning,  
and always  
Meditation.  
So the days harmoniously interweave  
Effortlessly deepening the atmosphere.  
And in the evenings shrine room, softly lit  
We reverence the Buddha.



I would like to tell you all a bit about a book I've been reading recently. It's called 'Flying' and it's by Kate Millett.

I don't actually know that many 'hard' facts about Kate Millett but what I do know I'll tell you. I hope it's reasonably accurate. She became a figurehead in the Womens' Movement in America in the late 60's/early 70's. She wrote a book called 'Sexual Politics' which brought her, and the movement as a whole, into the public eye in a big way. I haven't actually read this book, but intend to in the future.

In her own words, she was just one woman in the Womens' Movement, not the representative of the whole movement, but true to its form, the press perverted the truth for its own ends, setting her up in the public eye as a leader, the leader even. Making her the front page of Time Magazine when she'd told them to use a picture of crowds of women, not a single one. Using the fact of her bisexuality to try and confuse issues.

Although bisexual she realised that politically speaking it was a cop-out, and in a press conference where she was forced to discuss her sexuality she admitted to being a lesbian. This brought confusion everywhere, and it suddenly became official that the Womens' Movement supported Gay Liberation.

Kate finds herself naked and almost alone. Alone with her own confusion about her thoughts and feelings; her life as against her life in the movement; her mothers' pain at the fact she is bisexual; the demands made on her by women in the movement.

She feels she has got to write, must write if she is to survive, retain her sanity. Must express herself as a human being when so few do see her as a human being. 'Flying' is written during one year, the year after 'Sexual Politics'.

What is it about? It's about Kate, or rather it is Kate. I find myself writing Kate, rather than Kate Millett. That's the effect it's had on me, reading 'Flying' - it's as if I were a friend of hers.

She is just so open, so honest. It's an expression of her thoughts and feelings during that one year period; about the past, the present, the future.

I nearly didn't read the book. Her style takes a bit of getting used to. Short lines, single words, odd phrases. Often jumping rapidly from one period of time to another. I got used to it though, got into her thought patterns, realised they were thought patterns. Realised my thoughts would look like this on paper if I was in a certain state of mind. I also found the first part of the book quite depressing. In a way it is; Kate is depressed. But if you pursue it, it changes as she changes.

It crossed my mind at one point quite early in the book how creative it was for me to continue to read 'Flying'; getting into another woman's thoughts and feelings, pains and pleasures. I have my own to handle already.

It was/is creative reading. To see someone think out her thoughts and feelings and expose them not just to the people she is surrounded by, but also to anyone who wants to read her book, seems



very courageous to me.

I feel she gives her readers a lot just by being so honestly herself. She teaches/inspires you to be honest too. Honest first with yourself, and then with others. As Bhante says in his lecture on Perfect Speech; in order to be able to speak truthfully to other people, which is one aspect of Perfect Speech, you have to know what you really think, what you really feel. This means knowing yourself, which needs not only awareness, but also total honesty. Unless you can be truthful with yourself you cannot really be truthful with other people, which means you cannot really practice Perfect Speech.

I'm not the only person at Amaravati reading Kate Millett at the moment. Anoma and Kay also are. Perhaps they will write something about "Flying" themselves in a future Dakini.

--oOo--

POEM    Moreen Scott

(I'd like to put this poem in Dakini on behalf of Moreen Scott, who used to live at Amaravati. She gave it to me when I visited her recently - Sanghadevi)

Going to write a pin striped verse  
for anyone  
who wants to listen.  
Can't promise that I'm going to say much  
about anything -

life's like that.

Going to be a big bubble  
in an ocean of people  
swimming people  
moving people  
going people  
dead people

going to be real.

Hunt, hunt, hunt  
it is always a hunt for me  
the hunt is always there  
because things just aren't quite right  
things just don't tie up.

life's like that too.

Going to move out of life  
What life? my life  
going to join the bigger bubble  
the all encompassing bubble  
of real life

not all my little complications.

6th Sept. 1978.

--oOo--



In the last issue of Dakini I included two talks given by Sanghadevi and myself on the first two Brahma Viharas, namely Metta (loving kindness) and Karuna (compassion), which were originally given on a Mitra Day on 14th May. Here are the other two talks given on that day on the second two Brahma Viharas - Mudita (Sympathetic Joy) and Upekkha (Equanimity) by Dhammadinna and Anjali - Anoma.

#### MUDITA - SYMPATHETIC JOY      Dhammadinna

Sympathetic Joy or Mudita is the third of the four Brahma Viharas, or Sublime Abodes. These four Sublime Abodes are the four positive states of love, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, that the Buddha exhorted his followers to practise and remain in constantly.

Like the other Brahma Viharas, the cultivation of Sympathetic Joy depends on the development of Metta. Metta is the basic emotion. Once you have developed Metta strongly then you love all beings equally. If you then see one of these beings suffering, your Metta will change into compassion. Similarly, if you see one of these beings happy, then your metta will change to Sympathetic Joy.

Mudita or Sympathetic Joy, is happiness in the happiness and good fortune of others. Other people may be happier than us, they may seem to have more good fortune or luck, they may get what they want more easily than us, they may not have to struggle in the way perhaps we do, they may seem to get all the breaks. Other people may have better health, more money, be better looking and be more popular than us, but nevertheless, if our metta is developed we will not feel envious or jealous; we will feel happiness in their good fortune and won't even see them as being or having more than us.

So we can see that Sympathetic Joy is the antidote to jealousy and envy, two rather strong and unpleasant negative emotions. I say unpleasant, because often they are very difficult to deal with. Quite often we don't find it that difficult to voice or express our anger or irritation over things that annoy us, or find it difficult to tell someone when we feel down and depressed, but to tell someone we are jealous or envious seems to be much more difficult. And to feel jealous, envious, left out, and resentful is not very nice for us to experience, and we tend to brood on these feelings in secret. So Mudita is the antidote for all these feelings. It might sound as though it is obvious that we should feel happy in the happiness of others but if we are really honest with ourselves we know that often our immediate reaction, if we hear that something good has happened to someone, is to feel envious and also when misfortune befalls someone, although we may respond with sympathy, there is often a first feeling of secret pleasure.

I think it is interesting that people talk a lot about their inability to express anger etc. but this whole question of envy and jealousy is not raised at all. So first of all we have to become aware that we feel these things if we do feel them and to be aware of the sort of situations in which they arise so that we can work on developing Mudita instead. It's not really surprising that we feel envy and jealousy when others succeed better than us because, after all, we have been brought up in a very competitive society where all our qualities are used to compete against others. We are taught to use our brains, intelligence, skills, talents and if we are women, our looks, sex appeal and personality to compete with others for jobs, position, status, prestige, men, love and affection etc. So we are constantly measuring ourselves against others and using ourselves to get what we want, often at



the expense of others. On a more basic level, all negative emotions arise from the fact that we are ignorant. Ignorant of the fact that we are not a fixed unchanging entity but a process. This means that we see ourselves as distinct and separate from others; a knot of hard separate selfhood in competition with and threatened by other people. So we feel shut in and set ourselves against other people. It is true that negative emotions shut you in upon yourself and positive emotions open you up. So the development of Mudita opens up that tight jealous knot and we begin to not only love and accept ourselves for what we are and have confidence in ourselves but we can also be open to and happy in the happiness of others. It's like a bonus. Like getting triple green shield stamps. It's not just that we develop metta and that's that. Positive emotions escalate and lead on one from another so that our positivity builds up and up. Not only do we become more positive as we feel happy in the happiness of others but by not being closed off and jealous and envious, we can be open to that other person, they cease to be a threat and we can be receptive to their happiness and so become even happier ourselves!

Sympathetic Joy is really happiness in others happiness in a worldly sense, that is in ordinary everyday happiness. In the wealth, good fortune, happy family life etc. of others. If we think more in terms of being happy in the spiritual development of others then we are really dealing with Rejoicing in Merits as expressed in the fourth section of the Puja. The spirit of these two feelings is obviously closely linked but Rejoicing in Merits is not an antidote to jealousy as a practice because it is apparently unthinkable that we can feel jealous at the spiritual attainment of others. As Bhante says in the Survey:- 'only a person of very peculiar psychological constitution could ever feel jealous of the actual holiness of another'.

Within the Spiritual Community, we should obviously develop both Mudita towards the more mundane good fortune of others and Rejoice in the Merits of others spiritual progress.

Perhaps we can begin to see, from this brief talk that Mudita is an important positive emotion and is very important within the Spiritual Community in general, among Order members and Mitras and also amongst the members of any residential community. Everyone is so different, has different qualities and talents, and advantages. Some people have had a better start in a human sense, having been brought up in a more positive family environment, but, nevertheless we should try not to feel anxious or jealous but try to develop Mudita and be happy, really happy in the good fortune of others.

As well as developing Mudita towards others within the Movement we should also develop this feeling towards ordinary people in the world. I remember Bhante once saying that bhikkhus in the East do not sit in judgement on the lay people. They don't feel jealous, of course, of worldly happiness or wealth because they have consciously decided to leave home and are leading the Spiritual Life out of their own choice. They feel genuinely disillusioned with worldly life rather than merely disgruntled because they can't get what they want out of it. So they wish the lay people well, hope that their family life is happy, that they may have many children, that their crops may flourish etc. They don't look down their noses at the lay people. However if someone comes to talk to a bhikkhu and says, 'my wife has left me, my crops have failed, then the monk feels compassionate and may say, 'Ah well, that's the Samsara!'



Lastly, if we are going to develop Mudita, then we should feel this emotion strongly. Bhante has said recently that we should really feel the positive emotions, that our metta should not be weak and wishy washy but strong, warm, even hot. In the same way our Mudita should be strong, really strong. We should not only feel happy that others are happy, but ecstatic that others are happy, even deliriously happy that others are happy. So I begin to get the feeling that if we could really develop this emotion strongly then we would all be leaping up and down with joy at each others happiness!

So the development of Mudita gives us not only the chance to be happy for ourselves but for everyone else as well and seems to be not only the antidote to jealousy and envy but to despair and gloom generally. If you are feeling blue, all you have to do is find someone happier than you and rejoice in their happiness (though you might have to develop a bit of metta first to get going). So it seems that with all these opportunities to develop positive emotions, metta, compassion, Mudita, dana etc. there isn't any time to be unhappy or negative at all!

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#### UPEKKHA - EQUANIMITY     Anjali

Equanimity is the fourth Brahma Vihara, the fourth Sublime Abode wherein the monk is admonished constantly to dwell. And those of us who've read the latest Mitrata will recall that Bhante advises us, too, constantly to dwell in these sublime abodes, i.e. develop our emotional positivity. We can perhaps understand what equanimity is by considering it's relationship with the lokadhammas. The lokadhammas are traditionally eight in number, and are the four pairs of worldly opposites, namely, success and failure, glory and disgrace, praise and dispraise, happiness and suffering. Equanimity is that state of mind which is unmoved when experiencing the four pairs of worldly opposites. Usually this is not our state of mind - when we're successful, we're elated, when we've failed we're depressed, and we tend to swing between the two extremes - happiness or suffering, praise or dispraise - all the time oscillating from one to the other. But if we're filled with equanimity, then when we're successful we're unmoved, and when we fail we're still unmoved, - so it's a very steady solid foundation from which to experience the world.

I don't mean 'unmoved' in the sense of heartless indifference - not someone incapable of any feeling. We might say it's heartfull indifference, because the state of equanimity (or Upekkha in Pali) is the result of a progression of positive emotion - first we develop metta then from the fullness of metta we develop karuna, then from the fullness of karuna we develop mudita, and then from the fullness of mudita we develop upekkha or equanimity, so our heart is full of all these preceding positive emotions - we've been following the spiral path of the creative mind, progressing from perfection to ever greater perfection.

We've developed our metta with equal intensity towards everybody, we're kind to everybody equally, and rejoice in the happiness of all beings equally. So equanimity is a state of equilibrium and evenmindedness.

In the Mangala Sutta the state of equanimity is also described as asokanivajam khemam. In the seminar on this sutta Bhante described each of these terms as follows: asoka means free from grief, vinaja means free from the dust of the defilements (greed, hatred and delusion), and khema means patience; patience in the sense of



the artist who is patient with his material because he loves his material and understands it, or of the mother who is patient with her children because she loves and understands them. In the words of the Mangala Sutta:

With mind unmoved when touched by the world  
To be grief-freed, dust-freed, serene.  
This is the greatest luck.

Equanimity is also the antidote to 'too much effort'. We may have been trying very hard for a long time and have reached a point where we're just trying too hard - we have to let go and stop trying to get results. There's a lovely dervish tale that illustrates this point.

A conventionally-minded dervish, from an austere pious school, was walking one day along a river bank. He was absorbed in concentration upon moralistic and scholastic problems, for this was the form which Sufi teaching had taken in the community to which he belonged. He equated emotional religion with the search for ultimate Truth.

Suddenly his thoughts were interrupted by a loud shout: someone was repeating the dervish call. 'There is no point in that,' he said to himself, 'because the man is mispronouncing the syllables. Instead of intoning YA HU, he is saying U YA HU'.

Then he realised that he had a duty, as a more careful student, to correct this unfortunate person, who might have had no opportunity of being rightly guided, and was therefore probably only doing his best to attune himself with the idea behind the sounds. So he hired a boat and made his way to the island in midstream from which the sound appeared to come.

Sitting in a reed hut he found a man, dressed in a dervish robe, moving in time to his own repetition of the initiatory phrase. 'My friend', said the first dervish, 'you are mispronouncing the phrase. It is incumbent upon me to tell you this, because there is merit for him who gives and him who takes advice. This is the way in which you speak it'. And he told him. 'Thank you', said the other dervish humbly.

The first dervish entered his boat again, full of satisfaction at having done a good deed. After all, it was said that a man who could repeat the sacred formula correctly could even walk upon the waves: something that he had never seen, but always hoped - for some reason - to be able to achieve.

Now he could hear nothing from the reed hut, but he was sure that his lesson had been well taken. Then he heard a faltering U YA as the second dervish started to repeat the phrase in his old way...

While the first dervish was thinking about this, reflecting upon the perversity of humanity and its persistence in error, he suddenly saw a strange sight. From the island the other dervish was coming towards him, walking on the surface of the water...

Amazed, he stopped rowing. The second dervish walked up to him and said: 'Brother, I am sorry to trouble you, but I have to come out to ask you again the standard method of making the repetition you were telling me, because I find it difficult to remember it'.

Equanimity is renowned as one of the qualities of Buddhahood, or the Enlightened mind. The scriptures recount how, on the eve of his Enlightenment, Siddhartha, the Buddha, to be, was assailed by



the hosts of Mara - Mara tried to distract Siddhartha from his meditation by conjuring up all manner of frightening images and temptations. But Siddhartha sat mountain like in the midst of it all, and as weapons were hurled at him they turned into flowers and fell at his feet.

Similarly later in his career when the Buddha was wandering from place to place in India, it is said that he was once directly in the path of a stampeding elephant. He just kept walking mindfully along nearer and nearer the elephant. Onlookers were transfixed with fear because they knew that nothing could halt a stampeding elephant, but the elephant stopped right in front of the Buddha and went down on his knees. The Buddha is sometimes likened to an elephant, because an elephant is very steady on it's feet, so perhaps this particular elephant saw a bigger elephant in its path!

Then there is an account of Sariputta, one of the Buddha's chief disciples, given by Ananda, the Buddha's cousin and companion.

"Thus have I heard: On a certain occasion the Exalted One was staying near Rajagaha in Bamboo Grove at the Squirrels' Feeding-Ground. On that occasion the venerable Sariputta and Moggallana the Great were staying at Pigeons' Grotto, and the venerable Sariputta on a moonlight night, having just had his head shaved, was sitting in the open air, and had won access to a certain state of concentration.

Just then two yakkhas, who were friends, were travelling from north to south on some business or other. And they saw the Venerable Sariputta thus sitting. At the sight of him one yakkha said to the other, 'It occurs to me to give this recluse a blow on the head.' At these words the other yakkha replied, 'Hold, friend! Have nothing to do with the recluse! Friend, that recluse is a mighty man, of great power and majesty.'

Then a second time that yakkha repeated his words, and again his friend restrained him. So also a third time. Then that yakkha, disregarding the other's advice, gave the venerable Sariputta a blow on the head. So mighty was the blow that one might have felled an elephant seven to eight cubits high or cleft a mountain peak therewith. Instantly that yakkha, screaming 'I burn! I burn!' fell into the great hell.

Now the venerable Moggallana the Great with clairvoyant sight, purified and more than human, beheld the blow on the head of the venerable Sariputta given by that yakkha. At the sight he approached the venerable Sariputta, and on coming to him asked, 'My good sir! I hope you are bearing up! I hope you have support! I hope you are not in pain!'

'Yes, Moggallana, my good sir, I am bearing up! Yes, my good sir, I have support, but I do feel a trifling pain in the head.'

'It is marvellous, Sariputta, my good sir! It is indeed a wonder, - the great power and majesty of the venerable Sariputta! Why, Sariputta, my good sir, just now a certain yakkha gave you a blow on the head; so mighty was the blow that one might have felled an elephant...or cleft a mountain peak therewith. And yet the venerable Sariputta says, 'I am bearing up, Moggallana, good sir. I have support...yet I do feel a trifling pain in the head.'

'But it is wonderful! It is marvellous, Moggallana, my good sir, - the power and majesty of the venerable Moggallana, that he should behold a yakkha at all. Why, as for me, I can't see even a mudsprite



here'.

Now the Exalted One with clairaudient ear, purified and more than human, heard those two great sages talking in this manner, and at that time, seeing the meaning of it, gave utterance to this verse of uplift:

Whose heart stands like a rock and swayeth not,  
Void of all lust for things that lust beget,-  
To heart thus trained whence shall come aught of ill?

--oOo--

FORTHCOMING EVENTS      compiled by Anoma

OCTOBER

- Sunday 8th                      Day working on Sukhavati hangings at Mandarava. Starts 10.30. For further information contact Anjali at Amaravati.
- Saturday 14th                  Amaravati Jumble Sale at 2 p.m. Wanstead Community House, Wanstead Green, Wanstead Ell. See separate insert for more details.
- Saturday 14th  
& Sunday 15th                Retreat for Aryatara women Mitras.
- Friday 20th  
Sat 21st &  
Sun 22nd                      Weekend retreat at Amaravati. Open to all women everywhere. Cost £8. ONLY A FEW PLACES LEFT - PLEASE CONTACT ANOMA AT AMARAVATI IMMEDIATELY IF YOU WANT TO COME.
- Sunday 29th                    Mitra Day at Amaravati. Starting 10.30 and finishing approx. 7.30 p.m.
- Tuesday 31st                   Full Moon puja at Mandarava. Arrive at 6.  
For further details contact Malini at Mandarava (Tivetshall 344)

NOVEMBER

- Friday 10  
Sat 11  
Sun 12                      Weekend retreat at White Row for all women involved with the BRIGHTON CENTRE only. Booking forms from Brighton centre or Amaravati.
- Tuesday 14th                Sangha Day - see your own Centre for celebrations.

DECEMBER/JANUARY

3 week open women's retreat from Friday 22nd December (evening) to Saturday 13th January. Last week closed. Booking for enclosed. Cost £4 per day. 10% discount if you book for the whole 3 weeks.

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Sorry this issue of Dakini is a bit late - it's due to there being such a lot to put in it!

NEXT DAKINI: NOVEMBER

COPY DATE: November 7th  
(If you have something after this date, please contact me to see if it can be fitted in)