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# DAKINI

DAKINI 5

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A news-sheet for women Order members, mitras and Friends, produced at Amarāvati, 30 Cambridge Park, London E11 2PR. Telephone 989 5083

## EDITORIAL - DHAMMADINNA

This is the 5th edition of DAKINI, which now goes to about seventy Upasikas, mitras and Friends all over the world.

This particular issue is mainly concerned with articles and news from Amarāvati (FWBO Wanstead) and Mandarava (the retreat centre in Norfolk) which is now a branch of Wanstead.

Both communities have now been going for about two months and a lot has happened, both in terms of the development of the people living there and with the actual work being done.

Now that both communities are settled, there has been more communication between the two and people moving between either for short or long stays, so we have a situation where there is a large city community doing a lot of building work and a smaller country community with more land work to be done, which provides an overall balance.

Both these communities involve together 15 women, which is the largest number of women working together in the movement, so obviously a lot of energy is going to come out of these situations. However, please don't think that in order to write something for DAKINI you have to be involved in either situation. Personally, I don't care who you live with or how, be it with men or women or both, or on your own, in the country, in the city, with or without children or animals, in a semi or in a tree house! What matters is that you're involved in the spiritual life, that your main aspiration in life is to change, grow and evolve. That is what links us all together. So there are now so many of us linked through DAKINI, all trying in our various ways and in our various circumstances, to evolve - the sharing of this should produce a DAKINI which should, to quote someone, 'leap out of the envelope and grab you by the throat!' - so please write.

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## AMARĀVATĪ (FWBO Wanstead)

The following 8 articles are written by people living in the community and express various people's feelings about life and work here. For all of us, this is an entirely new situation. None of us has ever done anything like this before. Most of us have lived in communities of various sorts before, but mainly in the large overall mixed community of Archway and involved with a large and flourishing centre. Now we are in quite an isolated situation, 5 or 6 miles from the next centre and communities (Sukhavati, Golgonooza and Beulah). This means that we are in an intimate and intense situation living, practising and working together, with no friends around the corner to pop round and see if things get tough here. This has led to a deepening in communication, more honesty, more openness and understanding and to the need to resolve any conflicts pretty quickly.

We have now been here two months and so many things have changed in that time it's difficult to know what to say. We started off by working like stink, then suffered 'battle fatigue' and are now beginning to find our own rhythms and how to use our energy to the best of our ability and also how to balance work and play, communication and being alone and so many other things. The whole venture is a learning situation, not just in terms of the actual techniques we need to master, but on every front. This means the situation is continually changing and shifting and every day is different. We are learning how to do things each in our own way, without haste, or fear or guilt, or competition, or will, and to allow the whole thing to harmonise.

Workwise we have done an enormous amount, starting as we did from scratch. There was the initial period of clearing out and knocking down things which took about 2 to 3 weeks. We have decorated one room for a dining room; one ring main has been inserted and work proceeding on others, a kitchen sink has been plumbed in (cold water) and a complete bathroom - bath, wash basin, loo and immersion heater (hot water) windows have been put in; carpentry - door frames etc. At the moment we are working on the guest room, a converted stable in the garden and the second shrine room. This involved for the stable, a new roof, wire brushing, scrubbing, repointing and painting the walls, sanding and varnishing the ceiling, and reconcreting the floor, with similar things to be done to the shrine room. We hope this will be completed in the next three weeks when Bhante comes to stay. Much preparatory work has been going on in terms of scrubbing walls, and repointing, and burning off paint work. There is still an enormous amount to be done in terms of redecorating all the rooms, finishing off the glazing, fitting new doors and window frames, completing rebuilding of the kitchen, finishing off the ring mains and then attacking the lighting circuits for the whole house, and replumbing the other bathroom which involves complete new piping to and from the watertank, and then sussing out the gas system. No doubt there are many other things I have left out.

All the work, and the regular mediation, puja and taped lectures provide our basis for individual change. I hope it doesn't all sound too serious and too much like hard work. The atmosphere is mainly light and happy, with people freer and more themselves than they've probably ever been. We work hard, both on the house, and on ourselves, but we have a lot of fun. Sometimes the work skips along to a variety of rock music, sometimes quietly, sometimes everyone feels quiet and sensitive, sometimes impromptu wrestling matches and shrieks break out everywhere.

A couple of the following articles deal with men, which is not



surprising since for most of us this is the first time we have consciously excluded them from most of our lives. No men are allowed on the premises. What people do in their own time and outside the community is up to them. No rules of celibacy are imposed. I don't think anyone feels a lack of men, we don't seem to talk about it all that much. If anything I think the feeling is freedom and space to be what we really are. The place doesn't have, as far as I'm aware, that awful feeling of female institutions which I remember from college days. Most people tend to be afraid of single sex situations, probably because we have memories like that or of convent schools, or we think in terms of restriction and repression. But the feeling is much more pagan and primitive than that, and it's a spiritual community, with everyone working together and being here because they want to be, which makes a difference.

We also seem to have created a situation which is neither institutional nor a home, in the negative sense of the word. People in the main have their own rooms, but we practice and work together, cooking is done by two people and we eat together, many things like kitchen equipment and so on have been pooled. Money is pooled and much personal property is shared or loaned freely. There is not much of a feeling of personal territory, but people feel free to withdraw when they need.

I hope the following articles give you some idea of life here, of the work, of its warmth, of its energy, of its happiness and of the growth and change that is going on. Please come and visit or stay.

Amarāvati means the 'happy to know', 'the very thought of which fills one with bliss', and is the Eastern Heaven of Indra equivalent to Akshobhya's heaven - where Milarepa went after his Parinirvana.

#### ON WANSTEAD - MOREEN SCOTT

Being only a new mitra, as opposed to a senior mitra or an Order member; being of an excitable personality as opposed to a calm person, what is happening in Wanstead here in Amarāvati, the Eastern Heaven, the very thought of which fills one with bliss? Listening today to a lecture given by Vessantara I found in some of his words the essence of what is sprouting here. Vessantara spoke of revolutionaries, of what they had in common. He said they felt a need to band up together to form a stronghold where the external forces could not get in and harm it. He said this was the same as what happened in a spiritual community. A strength exists whereby the outside forces of greed, hate and of ignorance cannot get in. This is what is happening here in Amarāvati. It is in no way a cosy easy escape because inside my own person there dwells greed and hate and ignorance but here they are faced with a situation that provides them with no food but they don't just die overnight, so what happens to them? Vessantara also speaks of this. He tells a tale of a Prince who gave parties for all his subjects. They come and ate and drank and they were happy, but after a while the people were not so happy, they began to feel ill, even the King himself began to feel ill. He doesn't know what the matter can be but one day while wandering through his orchards pondering on the matter he sees an ugly mangled black tree. At once he suspects that this must be the poison. He orders his woodchoppers to cut down the tree, but when they try the tree springs forth more branches more ugly and threatening than ever before. After a while the King sees that it is useless trying to chop down the tree, but the poison is still there and he does not know how to remove it. One day a wise man comes to the district and the King presents him with his problem. Perhaps the wise man will know of some way to kill the tree. But the wise man says leave it, don't try and uproot it but



plant a white tree next to it. Feed it, water it and give it love. Eventually the white tree will grow, water it more, it will grow more its branches will grow as tall, then taller than the black tree. Then the black tree will be overshadowed, it will die, it will kill itself.

Here in Amarāvati is the stronghold of the white tree. A place where women may grow through the dharma, out of their greed, their hate and their ignorance into more wise and compassionate individuals who may then become seedlings of other white trees in other strongholds so that more and more people may evolve and find the truth of the Buddha's teachings.

#### SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT MEN - SANGHADEVI

After seven weeks in Amarāvati - the new women's community in Wanste I'm just beginning to experience my first strong anti-men feelings - in fact I don't like the way men project on me - as a woman - put another way - I don't like the way I sink into a grossly sub-individual state with men when I'm lacking in confidence.

I can feel how easy it is just to go with the flow as it were and just avoid throwing the projections back at them. When one is not feeling grounded, self-confident and integrated it is impossible not to fall into the trap which most people play most of the time.

Living in a community with ten other people of my own sex in a situation which feels very much like being on a permanent retreat, one really comes to grips with one's own projections and this sensitises one to people in the outside world - in particular to men. In the same way as living in such a situation seems to me to be the best way of breaking through such projections with one's own sex so also does it seem to be the way to break through them with regard to the opposite sex. It feels like a question of confidence and, of knowing oneself, of knowing one is as worthy a being as anyone else - any other woman, any other man.

I am the van driver at Amarāvati and have been going out 'in the world' as it were in an active role quite a lot - shopping, and seeking out information and have felt fine doing this - although I've often been quite het up before I've actually got going on a new venture. I've been in contact with a lot of men in working situations - mainly car mechanics for several reasons I'll not expand on! - and I've noticed that when I've been accompanied by a friend (a woman friend) from the community they have been the subject of far more vigorous male projections than myself. I feel it's because they have been in a passive role as far as the men are concerned and have also been feeling that themselves. It doesn't help the situation when one does in fact feel that one is in the passive role - it seems to prevent one from responding creatively in the situation or at least not becoming blocked. Whereas if one has something to do anyway the energy is flowing and a lot bounces off one.

It doesn't seem very good for a woman to be in a passive state when relating to men in general - that's not to say that one has to go charging round like a bull in a china shop being totally insensitive - though that may happen for a while - may even be necessary - more, it seems when women go out and confront men they should have some sort of purpose behind them - some clear feeling of what they want. It's not helpful to be an onlooker in a situation unless one is feeling sufficiently in touch not to succumb to male projections. Social chat with a lot of men can be potentially lethal if one is just



beginning to build up for the first time some more integral 'you'.

It feels in Amarāvati that we are independent of men in a healthy sense. We are doing everything that needs to be done quite happily and in fact it doesn't feel like there is any tension in the situation. There is no question of having to "prove" we can cope on our own - we just seem to be doing it naturally. And to the extent that we are developing naturally it feels easy to ask for help and advice should we need it. There is nothing wrong in asking for help from other people - women or men - but one needs to develop a true receptivity in the situation, not one where one is passive and feeling like a nobody - just a helpless woman.

I feel that all of us at Amarāvati are growing towards being true individuals, enlightened individuals - which seems to have nothing to do with being a woman in the way I see the women in the streets of Wanstead. I must say it is quite horrifying when one experiences people of one's own sex even, as if they were from another planet - but in a way women not involved in the spiritual life are as difficult to relate to as men not involved in the spiritual life. It seems like the only way more women are going to become more aware of their own identity as individuals is through experiencing contact with growing individuals who are also women - and this is where I feel Amarāvati will have its value not only for all of us here but for all women everywhere.

So - I recommend all readers of Dakini to richen their contact with fellow women in the Friends and with all of us at Amarāvati. Spiritual Fellowship is the whole of the spiritual life according to the Buddha and I feel that for quite a while spiritual fellowship with other women is more than half of it!

#### WHY NO MEN - MOREEN SCOTT

People ask 'why a women's community? why not work with men to solve the problem? being apart you are just exaggerating it - or some who are a little more broad minded still gulp when they hear men are not allowed into Amarāvati'. So why is it? Are we eleven demonic men-hating women?

The first thing that seems to come as a surprise is that eleven women should actually want to live together. While I cannot speak for any of the other ten I would like to give my own reasons for why such a situation is the most desirable.

I am a person, a woman, who wishes to grow and develop as much as I possibly can. Having made that decision, it seems necessary that at least for the time being I have as little contact with men as possible. We only have so much energy at our disposal and the amount needed to keep a relationship going is quite vast, but - and this is just so much more important, while involved in a duo set up with a man, we are relying on him for our masculine or animus side. This is probably the reason why so many men and women only feel whole when they have someone of the opposite sex to lean on. This is no new discovery. We all know the term 'other-half' which pinpoints the situation exactly.

At least as bad as accepting a second-hand animus is the next factor. No matter how hard we try, we are going to find ourselves trying to live up to his projection of his femininity, or anima in us. It is a funny thing about couples. People are prepared to give up a lot of themselves in order to please their partner, in order to feel whole! This seems to be a trap that women are all



the more likely to fall into and wonder after a while why they feel like a 'cabbage'. They think that it is because they don't have enough to do but it is not that, it is because they are so out of contact with themselves, it is because of the years spent trying to please their 'other half' and even should they realise that their relationship is no good it is so hard to leave because half of their being is HIM! Some people cannot even finish with the worst relationship until they have found someone else to fill the animus (or anima) role.

Trying to be an individual is not an easy job. It isn't a business of just doing what we consciously want; we have to get in touch with our unconscious feelings and parts, both positive and negative. Sometimes it is very hard; what we are discovering in ourselves is something we just don't want to accept. It goes against all our conditioning. It is not something we want to be at all! But in order to grow we have to experience these things in ourselves, these things which we wish weren't there. To have the confidence to go through this difficult period we should seek the best conditions possible. We have even to begin to experience our femininity in it's unpolluted form.

We all know about projection. We've all experienced it. Men and women project on each other all the time. We could say it's the most ingrained part of our conditioning.

It is because of all that I have written here that I am glad to be able to live for a while with other women, getting to know myself and other women as whole individuals.

#### THE CARPENTRY REPORT - JOAN GRAHAM

"Right! That has got to go there!" When it comes to carpentry, Helen knows her onions. "OK" I say. After four days sanding the wood beamed ceiling, working at waist level promises to be a treat.

Carefully I listen as Helen explains - listen don't argue!

Quick where's the measure, the square? "Yes I'm holding - level? Yes!"

Slowly it takes shape - each end shaped, holes cut, will it fit? Surely and with slow majesty, one end lowered into the floor, the other swings to reach, touch, and slot, ah! Bit more out of the left!" Down she comes, once more with the chisel. The hall is still with expectancy. Again, lift! Bit more still! What's wrong with action replays, what's the hurry?

And again - yes nearly - well bit o' boot and - yes - gleaming in the dusty hall, a new stairpost.

"Carpentry's great!" I say.

Now the drill. Pressure from the shoulder, dust fills the air - the chair squeaks and sways underfoot - do we have a union? Screws and elbow grease - hot work - get in you - ! Where's the hammer?

Helen juggles some planks in the open space. I tidy the tools, sweep around, watching as the banister emerges.

"Sand and plane" Helen says.

Carefully I slot each plank into the open vice. Slowly the grain emerges. My eyes focus hard in the wake of the plane - not even yet, one more time! Ah! too deep! In a hurry again.



Arms and shoulders ache. Dust, trickles down my back. Head a bit sore - something on my mind. It's that hammer. I'm sure it got left in the garden. To the left of the pear tree, beside the roses. It will be partly in the shade by now, maybe attracting butterflies or a bird.

Carefully I put down the plane - better to take a quick look, it might even need a thorough search - maybe a whole half hour - can't chance good tools rusting.....

#### ONE MORNING AT WANSTEAD - MAGGIE OAKSHOTT

Clearing a small room to be a temporary office  
I walk up and down the same flight of stairs several times  
carrying large tins of paint  
10 litres in my right hand  
10 litres in my left hand  
On the journey down my shoulders are pulled and my spine  
Feels like an S - bend about to bend even S -er  
On the journey up I feel as though I ought to be able to fly  
reaching the store room I stack the tins thankfully  
and then coming out I see  
the top half of Hilary Swain disappearing through the floor boards  
into the Black Hole with electrical wires.  
Another journey or two up the stairs  
In another realm halfway up on the landing  
Through an open door I see  
Dhammadinna in the mudra of plumbing the bath  
bib and brace, knitted hat, spectacles, wrench  
another journey  
I stand at the junction of the stairs on the ground floor  
My ears take in  
Neil Young and  
Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band  
To keep the plumbers happy  
Bopping down from the record player above in Kay's room  
Mixed up with  
Melodious Pink spaced out Floyd  
Wafting up from the basement  
Where bent double in the future food store  
Sanghadevi is re-pointing the walls  
Alice in Wonderland  
Had nothing on this  
Who knows  
What else may manifest next?

#### MY RETURN - ANNE FARNHAM.

After spending three weeks alone, meditating, yogaring, pujaring, eating brown rice, drinking herb tea, sleeping, dreaming and painting, I felt apprehensive about my return to Wanstead.

The move to Wanstead happened while I was working five days a week, plus the odd baking for jumble sales and curtain making for Kusa Cushions in my spare time. I knew changes had taken place inside, down in the depths of my unconscious, but I wasn't sure quite what. My solitary was the means to find out these pending questions.

It is only now back in Wanstead that these questions are being answered. Working and living in the community has clarified what has been stirred up from the depths on my solitary. Now I'm experiencing my emotions rather than projecting them out on to people and situations.



My apprehensions about my return to Wanstead had been about being in a retreat situation with 10 women, sharing a room, the noise of the endless traffic, the work and living routine and falling back into old patterns and habits. I'm very, very, very happy to say that Wanstead has changed with me and rather than mara enticing me to enter through the doors of the endless cycle of the reactive mind, Wanstead is the space where every moment the creative mind can manifest itself.

THIS IS AN EXTRACT FROM MY DIARY.....KAY ROBERTS. Thursday 27th July.

We are all alone. There is a cruelty, a brutality in life; there is no easy way. You go through it the hard way, the only way.

I am alone. There is nothing I can do for you, nothing you can do for me. I can only see as far as I can see. I am barely human, but I cannot be stronger than I am, I cannot, just like 'that', be more real, more in touch, more human. Oh, I hate that, I reject it, I RESIST. I hate my blindness, my fragility. I hate my hate!

I see so many people who are NOT HUMAN, not nearly human. As blind as animals. And my heart breaks. It weeps. Oh, why is it so? When there is such a vast, unimaginable beauty, such width, such depth, and here we are, "Chicken scratching for our immortality", on the surface, on the very edge, not daring to take hardly one step into the ocean that lies underneath.

I feel sorrow and bitterness. I am fed up at myself - I hold on, I hold on, cannot let go. This is the Yoga Retreat. So much fear has come up, overwhelmed me. Corpse pose. Meditation - I am stiff and tense like a board - my chest constricted, my breathing tight and hard, as if my body could not breathe on it's own. I am saying "help, help, I cannot go on, I cannot go on". But I will go on, gently. It is the only way.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### MANJUSRI!

Thy flaming sword  
breaks through the bonds of ignorance,  
of fear, of hatred.  
Surging forward on a wave of energy,  
Manjusri within me  
cuts through this darkness,  
this heavy clinging fear.

I will be free.

I will be real.

I will not lose sight of positivity,  
of compassion.

I do not sink down into the darkness  
of Sangsara - I surge forward, into light.

I rejoice with delight  
in the form of Manjusri!

\* \* \* \* \*



Subtitled 'Losing your will - gaining your heart'

Sub-subtitled "Surrender, in the name of the game"

This Friday (26th August) I shall be four years old. Buddhistically speaking that is. Four years ago on that date - it was a hot sunny day - Bhante ordained me, along with three others, at Abhirati in Norfolk. The shrine room was packed as people had come from all over to see Bhante, who had emerged for the first time after a year away in Cornwall.

Ordination is a rebirth, a spiritual rebirth. The old self is left completely behind and a new one steps forward. On that day Sheila Tait disappeared forever and Dhammadinna was born. The name shocked me somewhat. I didn't think much of my knowledge of the Dharma and my powers of communication were pretty poor.

Not long afterwards I flew off to Greece with the current boyfriend (the penultimate one) who I discovered bored me stiff in unlimited doses and who wouldn't let me sit in the Greek sun and read my Survey for more than five minutes without interrupting!

I came back and began to find my feet as a new Upasikā and a new being.

So now I've reached the ripe old age of 4, learnt much, changed much, and done a lot of things I would never considered myself capable of four years ago. Infact most of the things I've done are like that.

Perhaps each birthday should be a new rebirth, especially one's spiritual birthday. I don't recall my first three especially. The first was spent on a summer retreat, the second on an Order Convention and the third on a solitary. But this year, the idea of great change, new beginnings and rebirth seems to be very relevant.

Sometimes life or one's spiritual life, is doing, striving, even acquiring, learning, sometimes it's non-doing, flowing, letting go.

I have done a lot of things since I became an Order Member. I've been Secretary of a Centre for two years; given lectures; led loads of classes; organised and led many retreats; led courses; fund-raised, administrated, written loads of letters, answered telephones; given advice, led study groups; got communities together; taught yoga; written articles; been Convenor of women Mitras; and in my spare time, earned my living!

And sometimes, life is letting go. Since I've been here I've let go of a lot of things, let go of responsibility in the sense of RESPONSIBILITY; let go of a lot of attitudes and ways of going about things; ways of thinking; let go a lot of strain and stress and worry; stopped forcing things.

The last year was quite hard, a lot of things needed to be done and no one else to do many of them. I've had bad health which I've not considered too strongly and I never seemed to have time to do the things I wanted to do. Innocent things like play music, read books, go for walks, or rides on my bike, listen to the radio, draw silly pictures, talk to people because I want to not because they want to talk to me in a certain way. Now I do all these







Spiritual Life. Even meditate. You can do all these things wilfully, without receptivity, with ego. And it ends in disaster one way or another. Either you just don't change. Or something is changing underneath, as it were, and will eventually, however hard you try to stick to a certain way that is inflexible, burst through and knock you flat. Good job too. Most of us work a lot from will, not from our hearts. We approach everything in this way. Some people have stronger wills than others, some people have phases. Working from will shows a basic insecurity. You try and maintain situations, you even try, if things are really bad, to manipulate situations. You force yourself and you force others. When you feel happy, inspired and enjoying what you are doing, everything and everyone flows along with you. When you don't, then everyone isn't trying enough, they are all lazy good for nothings etc. Do you recognise this state? There are all sorts of manifestations. Paranoia; inability to communicate and be really open and honest; (Jung in his Memories, Dreams and Reflections was analysing a dream of Freud's and asked for some more personal information to which Freud replied 'but I'd lose my authority' - from which point he had lost any authority over Jung); a feeling of maintaining territory, of maintaining authority, of being cut off, alienated. You feel threatened by other people who are open and honest; you can't take criticism; individuals change into the group all pointing their fingers at you; You find it hard to take advice with an open mind or perhaps I should say heart. You can't change your way of doing things if others have different ideas - you freeze up, get angry, feel insecure inside; you can't follow so you will never be able to lead. Etc. Etc. Etc. It goes on and on. How could we not be like this, ignorant and spiritually unenlightened as we are.

So though we need to think in terms of doing, that is cultivating energy and the heroic ideal, of being fearless, of having aspiration and determination and of continually making an effort and of not giving in when the going gets tough, these more dynamic virtues don't grow out of wilfulness or ego. They grow from receptivity, from an open heart.

It's interesting that the opposite side of wilfulness quite often is over-sensitivity. When we are not being aggressively wilful we are collapsed with sensitivity. When we are sensitive we can't endure other wilful people, and when we are wilful we can't endure sensitive people! Not to mention when we are wilful we can't take other wilful people (clash!) - when we are sensitive we can't take other sensitive people (squelch!) Our hard crust breaks for a moment and the quivering jelly inside is revealed! So our wilfulness isn't real action in the sense of Perfect Action, and our sensitivity isn't real sensitivity in the sense of Spiritual Receptivity, because it's still Me-based. Real receptivity is strength, it's an ability to be open, not to cover anything up, not to pretend, and not to be so affected by other people and things outside ourselves that we can't function or cope. We have to climb out of wilfulness and over-sensitivity, and simultaneously, if possible, develop Giving, Morality, Patience (receptivity, forbearance and love) and Vigour and Meditation and Wisdom. It's not easy. We just have to start where we are by being honest with ourselves (Not easy either), listening to what others tell us about ourselves, practising metta and puja, learning ourselves and discovering our hearts, developing the positive emotions. All this is best done in a community where you get continual feedback. Where you can test it all out, where your ego and wilfulness rebounds back at you quickly, as does in a positive sense, your receptivity and metta.

So my own experience over the past few weeks has led me to these



reflections. My living here in this community has made it all possible. I've been able to abandon my tough, wilful crust and reveal the jelly quivering underneath. I'm learning to love my jelly. For the moment I'm not thinking too much (except when I get an attack of the wilfuls) of doing anything or of being anything in particular. I have a feeling that if I can 'get right' with myself, then my physical problems will clear up or lessen to more manageable and less painful proportions. Perhaps, sometime in the future I shall be active again and do the same things I did before, but hopefully from a different space. I'm leaving here shortly to go on a yoga retreat, spend some time in Mandarava to be with the people there, and because nature is very healing, and then shortly after that going to India on a yoga course, which I hope will also help my physical state. If I know anything of Mr. Iyengar any attacks of the wilfuls there will be firmly curbed! And then, who knows. When you are dominated by will and fear the future is frightening and insecure. When you are not its a great big open space, with no limits that you just want to move into waving your arms with joy.

I express my thanks and love for all my friends at Amarāvati, who seem to love my jelly also, for being who and what they are and for allowing me to be the same.

#### ONE OF MILAREPA'S FINAL SONGS BEFORE HIS PARINIRVANA

O Father and Protector of all Creatures, Thou Who hast Thine Own  
Good Wishes realized,  
Translator Marpa, I bow down at Thy Feet!

O my disciples, here assembled, harken unto me,  
Kind, indeed, have ye been unto me,  
and kind I have been unto you;  
May we, thus bound together by ties of mutual helpfulness,  
Meet in the Realm of Happiness.

Ye donors of alms, who are seated,  
May ye live long, and be e'er prosperous;  
May no perverted thought find entry to your minds;  
May all your thoughts e'er pious be and lead to your success  
religiously.

May peace harmonious bless this land;  
May it be ever free from maladies and war;  
May there be harvests rich, and increased yield of grain;  
May every one delight in righteousness,

May all who beheld my face and heard my voice,  
and all who have my history known, and borne it in their heart  
And all who have but heard my name and story,  
Meet me in the Realm of Happiness.

May those who make a study of my life  
and emulate it, and dedicate themselves to meditation;  
And each who shall transcribe, narrate, or listen to my history  
Or whoso'er shall read and venerate it,  
Or take it as their rule of conduct,  
Meet me in the Realm of Happiness.

May every being in future time  
Who hath the will to meditate,  
in virtue of mine own austerities  
Be free from all impediment and error.



To them who for devotion's sake endure hardships,  
There cometh boundless merit;  
To them who shall lead others to the treading of the Path,  
Boundless gratitude is due;  
To them who hear the story of my life,  
There cometh boundless grace:  
By the power of this boundless merit, gratitude and grace,  
May every being, as soon as they shall hear (my History) attain  
deliverance,  
and (True) success as soon as they shall contemplate (it).

May the places of my sojourn, and the objects whereon I have rested,  
and every little thing which hath been mine,  
Bring Peace and gladness wheresoe'ver they be.

The earth, the water, fire and air,  
and the Ethereal spaces wheresoever they pervade  
May I be able to embrace them all.

And may the Devas, Nagas, and the Spirits of Eight Orders,  
And the local Genii and the sprites,  
Do not the least of harm;  
But may they each fulfill these wishes in accordance with the  
Dharma.

May none of living creatures, none even of insects,  
Be bound unto saṃsāric life; nay, not one of them;  
But may I be empowered to save them all.

\*the realm of Happiness is Amarāvati (Tib: Ngön-gah)

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MANDARAVA - Street Farm, Aslacton, Norwich, Norfolk.

Mandarava is the name given to the women's retreat centre in Norfolk,  
and apart from being the name of a mythical flower (with Mandarava,  
blue lotus etc....) is the name of one of Padmasambhava's women  
disciples.

Mandarava was a princess, who was born with the 32 signs of a  
Buddha and a yogi, announced that she was the daughter of a God,  
and should not be given in marriage, but should renounce the world  
and become a yogini.

The King, however, demanded that she choose a suitor, and locked  
her up until she did so. She managed to escape and once outside the  
palace gave away her rich clothes and pulled out her hair and  
scratched her face so that she would be unmarriageable. When the  
King heard he dismissed her suitors and built them a palatial  
monastery where they could follow the spiritual life.

Padmasambhava arrives in his usual manner, and instructs Mandarava  
and her sisters in the Dharma. Further adventures of Mandarava  
and Padmasambhava are recounted in the Tibetan Book of the Great  
Liberation by W.Y. Evans-Wentz.

MANDARAVA - TERESA FISHER

It was during the Women's Christmas retreat at Aryatara that the idea  
for a women's rural community which would also become a Retreat  
Centre for women arose and took hold. The four of us began looking  
for a suitable place straight away and found the right one on only



our second search. The last five months or so have, therefore, largely been spent waiting for the legal negotiations to be completed. So it was with great whoops of joy that we finally moved into our new home last week.

We're situated on the edge of a small village, 14 miles south of Norwich. We have just over six acres of land. About four acres are under hay and buttercups. The other two acres include a large meadow, the buildings and a vast area of nettles. The house is an old, steep-roofed, three storey Norfolk farmhouse with lots of barns and an assortment of outbuildings as well. We also have three 75 foot long greenhouses in fairly good repair. With the land and the greenhouses, two of which should have heating installed by the winter, the community should be self-supporting within one to two years.

A single sex, self supporting farming community is not only a new point of departure for the FWBO but I know of no other similar community for women, which is also first and foremost a Spiritual Community existing in Great Britain. Our community-cum-Retreat Centre will also be the first of its kind for women in the FWBO. Up till now the women's communities have mainly be composed of three or four women living together and these have been centred around Pundarika in North London. In conjunction with the setting-up of our own community, in London, Dhammadinna, Anoma and Sanghadevi, as well as eight women mitras are about to move into a large house in Wanstead, where women's retreats will be held. Both communities need a lot of work put into them before they will be functioning properly. In the case of Wanstead, they have a similar situation to Sukhavati, in that the house has been badly damaged by fire. But I can't help thinking that although it's taken ten years to reach this point, who knows what we may achieve in the next ten?

Hopefully such general thoughts and brief facts about what is happening among the women in the FWBO, will convey some idea of the excitement and enthusiasm we're feeling. Approaching the situation of living and working in a women's spiritual community, which is for me, a totally new experience, I found myself with feelings of joy and fear. But I'm also aware of how lucky I am to have the opportunity here and now to work at my own evolution in a positive situation. As well as working towards establishing a situation, in this case, a retreat centre, whereby all women will benefit and thereby also, the Sangha.

However, to return to rural Norfolk and more practical levels. We obviously need lots of help. There's plumbing and re-wiring to do. A moat to be dredged, greenhouses cleared, wall building as well as painting and decorating. We're not a retreat centre yet but we meditate twice a day and there's yoga practice with Annie Leigh - to either set you up for the day or finish you off afterwards - plus a strong positive situation. What more could one ask for! So any women who wants to come and help us from a couple of days to a couple of weeks, contact myself, Malini or Annie or telephone Tivetshall 344.

Whether or not this is an exceptional time, it is certainly one intense activity, when not only a lot is happening generally, but also a lot is demanded.

As one by one we make our own commitment, an ever widening circle of the Sangha grows.



## BRILLIANT MOMENTS

Dhammadinnā

Sometimes, for a brief moment,  
The walls of darkness are no more,  
and in those brilliant moments,  
I've stood on freedom's shore.

and I've seen and tasted freedom  
and known myself to be  
not isolated and alone,  
but part of infinity.

And I have seen with eyes so clear,  
that all duality's a lie,  
and rested and at peace have soared,  
in the oneness of the sky.

And oh those brief, brief moments,  
that come and are so rare,  
can never to the rest of life,  
in any wise compare.

For I have felt Manjusri's sword,  
fire-ringed and burning bright,  
cut through the darkness of my mind  
and sear me with its light.

Or felt my heart born high aloft  
by Compassions silver song,  
while deep within my heart I sang,  
Om Mani Padme Hum.

And though my heart be closed again  
by stupidity, hate and greed,  
I know that deep within my heart  
there shines a golden seed.

Each rare and brilliant moment  
has touched me to the core  
so the world with all its fantasy  
can ensnare me nevermore.

For though I fall, and fall again,  
into folly greed and hate,  
those moments lead me onwards  
to Freedom's shining gate.

And so now I see quite clearly  
that the way of one who seeks  
is to raise each moment of my life  
unto those brilliant peaks

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