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# DAKINI



DAKINI 7

FIRST ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

JANUARY 1978

A Newsletter for women Order Members, Mitras and Friends, produced at Amaravati, 30 Cambridge Park, London E11 2PR. Telephone 989 5083.

EDITORIAL

ANOMA

Dakini is one year old! The idea for a magazine for women in the Friends came up in a study group in Balmore Street late in '76, and in January '77 the first issue was produced. In the early days it was more of a news-sheet, but recent issues have contained more articles and contributions covering various topics. Though they have taken a bit of time to arrive, I'm glad to say that this issue is the fullest yet, with contributions from quite a few people. I hope that DAKINI will continue to thrive and that everyone will consider contributing something at some point; if not actually an article, then maybe a letter, which needn't be very long but would communicate something of yourself and what you're involved in. Also, if you have any comments on articles in DAKINI, do write in.

Next DAKINI - March

Copy date: MARCH 15th

TARA'S VOW

Dhammadinna is currently reading 'The Cult of Tara' by Stephen Beyer and the other day she read me an extract from it which we both felt would be good to include in DAKINI...

A beginningless time ago, we are told, there was a worldly realm named Various Lights, in which there appeared a Tathagata named Sound of Drums, and to him the princess Moon of Wisdom showed a great faith and devotion. For a thousand billion years she did reverence to the Buddha and the measureless host of his retinue, the Bodhisattvas and Worthy Ones, and finally, she awakened the supreme thought of Enlightenment. "The proper thing to do," the monks then said to the princess, "is to make an earnest wish that your body (with which you attend to the teachings) may become that of a man, for surely this desire will be granted." She replied: "Since there is no such thing as a 'man' or a 'woman' (and no such thing as a 'self' or a 'person' or 'awareness') this bondage to male and female is hollow: Oh how worldly fools delude themselves!" And this is the earnest wish she made: "Those who wish to attain supreme Enlightenment in a man's body are many, but those who wish to serve the aims of beings in a woman's body are few indeed; therefore may I, until this world is emptied out, serve the aim of beings with nothing but the body of a woman."



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#### AMARAVATI NEWS - ANOMA

Anjali, previously living in Brighton, will be moving into the community in a week or two. We look forward to having her here. There will then be 4 Order Members in the community - the first time that 4 women Order Members have lived together!

We have just finished renovating and decorating Anjali's room and another basement room which Sanghadevi has just moved into. Her old room will soon be the back half of what will then be our shrineroom. The two basement rooms, which were previously damp and murky, have turned out really well and look bright and pleasant. We've also finished a ground floor room which Anne Murphey is now inhabiting, and decorated Dhammadinna's room while she was away in India. The kitchen, which was the most damaged room in the house, is also nearly finished. A new ceiling has been put up, walls have been rendered and work surfaces and shelves been built. The next jobs are decorating the bathroom (plumbing and other basic work in here having already been done) and then we move on to what will be our new Shrine-room.

Kusa Cushions has been very busy and is our main source of income, Kay and I have been involved in typing the whole of the Bodhicaryavatastra Seminar transcript, Kay and Anne have been taking yoga classes, so what with all this going on, as well as administrative work, cooking, shopping etc., we haven't all been able to work on the house as much as previously. Maggie, who's in charge of this work, and Helen, our expert, have been soldiering on with help from whoever is available. Considering this, we've really got a lot done.

We've been studying the Bodhicaryavatastra twice a week, using the tran-



script. This has proved really enjoyable and stimulating, bringing up lots of good stuff for us to get our teeth into! The Bodhicaryavatara has been very much in evidence in the community - with the study groups, typing the seminar transcript and we've also been having a long reading from it on Sunday nights in our puja.

At the beginning of November the whole community went up to Mandarava for a week's retreat with the Mandarava community. Marichi came too, and Anjali for a few days. The retreat immediately got off the ground, almost from the moment it began. It was quite intense, with some of the most dynamic communication exercises I've experienced. One evening, near the end of the retreat, we spent 4½ hours in the shrineroom, meditating, walking and chanting, listening to a long reading about the Buddha's Enlightenment from "The Light of Asia" (during which we had howling winds outside which literally shook the shrineroom!), a tea ceremony, offerings, chanting and puja. I think it would be fair to say that this was a mind blowing experience!

For the two weeks over Christmas, I lead a Mitra Retreat at Mandarava - I'll be writing a bit more about this separately. Some of the community were there with me and some stayed at Amaravati where they had a three day "loose" retreat including time for painting together (the dining room was decorated with the results of this when I returned!) They were also joined by Malini and Lois from Mandarava, Anne from Glasgow and Dhammadinna back from India.

So Amaravati now enters another era. With Dhammadinna back from India and Anjali soon to join us, the community will again house 11 women; 4 Order Members and 7 Mitras. As always, women visitors are welcome - just give us a ring first and let us know you're coming.

The community has now been together for 7 months. During our study on the Bodhicaryavatara recently there was a section on how rare it was to be born in human form and that one should therefore make the best use of this opportunity. Bhante went on to say that you could apply this to going on retreat - it's an ideal opportunity for growth, and you don't know when you might have it again. You might be ill, or not have the money. And yet some people still don't make the most of the opportunity. This made me think of our situation here at Amaravati and that it too is an almost ideal situation for growth. It might not always be easy, but that's partly why it's such a good place to grow! So this made me reflect how lucky I am to be here and to try not to take it for granted. I don't know when I might have such a good opportunity again!

PLEASE SEE PAGE 26 FOR NEWS OF AMARAVATI'S FIRST WORKING WEEK RETREAT!

#### SOME REFLECTIONS OF INDIA - DHAMMADINNA

I rather doubt if I can capture my India experience on paper. For me it was mainly a sensual, visual experience which rather than stimulating me to write, encouraged me to relax and soak up the atmosphere; the sights, the sounds and the overall feeling of a totally different culture. I did like India, in fact I fell in love with it at first sight on the taxi ride from Delhi airport to Delhi; the hot sun, the people with their wide open faces, walking or squatting by the road; the bright colours, the camels, the crazy traffic; but I find it quite difficult to pinpoint exactly what



it was I loved about it.

Back in England, looking at a pale blue wintery sky and leafless trees, India seems a long way away, and yet I can still close my eyes sometimes, and in my imagination relive every step of the walk from the Trimurti Lodge (where I stayed in Pune for 6 weeks) down the road to the restaurant where we used to eat after Pranayama classes; or see very clearly all the sights on the cycle route to the yoga institute in the mornings. In terms of sights there's nothing very startling or beautiful about either of these routes, but I suppose it's their ordinary everyday quality in itself, so different from my everyday experience here, which makes them stand out and seem special.

In the mornings in Pune, during the yoga course, I would wake around dawn, which I could see from my room, the sky pink behind my favourite palm tree, eat a couple of bananas (very cheap in India) because I often seemed to wake ravenous; wash, which involved throwing buckets of hot water over oneself; meditate; and go down to the restaurant underneath for a coffee. As we frequented the restaurant many times during our stay we all became very friendly with the waiters, who although they worked really long hours, always seemed to be cheerful, and ready to talk, and would bring the coffee without being asked. Thus fortified, we would cycle at about 7.30 a.m. up to the Institute.

Cycling in India was one of the great simple pleasures, and I was very sad when I finally had to return my bike to the hirers. That time in the morning the roads weren't too crowded with the local brand of traffic; three-wheeler taxis (rickshaws), bullock carts (the bullock with painted horns and bells around their necks) horse and carts, motor scooters and bicycles; but there would be a fair number of people around, perhaps stopping off at the corner Hindu shrine to offer a garland of flowers on their way to work. Stalls and shops and cafes would be open, and also the many bicycle shops where you could get your puncture fixed for 50 piase (about 3p) or air in your tyres for 5 or 10 paise. Of course every morning was warm and sunny and the ten minute cycle ride woke you up and got the circulation going before the yoga class.

The ride was mainly through a residential area and on the way you'd see people getting up, naked children running around, women in bright coloured saris, walking in their usual elegant, graceful way, carrying enormous bundles of washing on their heads, or brass pots full of water. On the way we'd pass a large pond, which I liked very much. Half of it was stagnant with an old withered tree sticking up out of it, but it always looked beautiful to me in the early morning or later in the day with the sun setting over it. Further on in the rather rich road the institute was in, we'd cross a little stream in which at the same time you'd see people, washing themselves and their clothes, or maybe even washing their bicycle!

The Institute itself was a really lovely building, spacious and quiet (except when a class was in progress when three sets of Indian voices would be shouting instructions at you!). The yoga room was amazingly equipped with all sorts and sizes of benches, stools, chairs, special frames for backbends, ropes, mats, etc. etc. I don't know if I can describe the yoga experience itself. Every class (1½ to 2 hours asanas



in the morning and  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour breathing in the afternoon) was completely different. You never knew what was in store for you or what sort of mood Mr. Iyengar would be in. He really is an expert when it comes to yoga practice and teaching, and one of the main things which struck me was his totally creative approach to teaching. Each pose would be approached completely afresh each day. Points learned in one pose or set of poses, would be applied to a completely different set of poses which hadn't in my mind at least seemed particularly connected. All the time one practised in the class (non-stop) a continual stream of instructions and points would rain down on you until in the end you had to stop trying mentally to put everyone into practice and work more directly from body awareness. Other people who had been at the institute some time said that during our stay there, Mr. Iyengar gave the best teaching he had given for a long time. This I think was due to the fact that during the month we were there, there was little coming and going and new people to be absorbed, and also because we were a cohesive group of people who had all worked together over a period of years. There was also another group of people working with us and everyone seemed to be at the same kind of level. Mr. Iyengar is not one to give praise easily, but after the course was over, and we thanked him, he said we had worked hard.

After a couple of hours of class in the morning we would race off on our bikes to the nearest eating house. We were lucky in that we lived in the student area of Poona which apart from being a really nice area of town, was supplied with about 3 or 4 vegetarian grade A restaurants which supplied excellent food at very cheap prices. Afternoon activities varied from sleeping and reading, to exploring around town on bikes, or by foot around the maze of streets which made up the market area across the river, to more mundance things like going to the bank, washing clothes, writing letters or shopping for various necessities, etc. The Institute was open for individual practice in the afternoons and then late afternoon there was a Pranayama class, a cycle ride back with the sun just setting over the stagnant pond, the Poona rushhour, a second meal and either a wander around or an expedition into town (the bazaars and markets are open at night) puja and bed.

I thought when I first arrived in Poona that I would find it rather boring as it seemed more westernized and civilised than the other places I had visited in my travels on the way, but having lived there for several weeks I came to like it very much. I met and made friends with Indian people, grew to know my way around and felt very at home there.

I've always found shopping in England rather exhausting and a drag. Two minutes in Oxford Street is an instant wipe out, but in India it was a delight. The market and bazaar areas are always full of life and colour and bustle and there was so much different and interesting to look at. Perhaps shopping is the wrong word because it wasn't necessary to buy anything to enjoy oneself. A trip down to the Laxmi Road and the surrounding back street markets was a stimulating, colourful, noisy experience and there was always the chance that you would, quite by chance, come across something really interesting or exciting, like the procession of three large and magnificent elephants covered in heavy embroidered covers, ridden by men in velvet jackets and turbans. The procession was preceded by one band and followed by a more ethnic band of men playing flutes and banging cymbals. This particular procession's



purpose was to take a particular god (dressed up and surrounded in flowers and seated in a sedan chair) out for a walk from one temple to another. You could put some money in your hand and the elephants would pick it up with their trunks and pass it up to their riders. Or perhaps you would see a band of holy men or sadhus. There seemed to be many different kinds of these; some dressed in rags with belts of ropes and enormous cow bells around their ankles and necks with white painted faces; some dressed rather more orthodoxically in pale orange; or one group we saw wore elaborately patchworked coats and enormous staffs and looked rather fierce. The Laxmi Road itself consisted mainly of fabric and sari shops and thousands of different coloured saris would flutter outside the shops like so many butterflies. In the back streets was the enormous covered fruit and vegetable market, with mounds of unknown exotic looking foods, as well as apples and oranges and things we knew. People would call at you to buy their wares, and one little man in the fruit market would always let you try things before you bought. There were rows of stalls selling decorations, lengths of coloured ropes, mounds of kum kum powder in brilliant colours, beads, peacock fans, rows of stalls selling little pots, or candles and incense, spices, a whole row of stalls selling glass bangles of all colours and descriptions, stacked up on all sides. The streets were crowded with Indians also adding to the colour with their brightly coloured clothes.

It was always a pleasure to go out into the streets in India. People live out on the streets much more than here and there is a very strong feeling of human, even animal, warmth around you; a feeling of being in contact on quite a simple level, and of course to all of us everything we saw was new and therefore interesting and exciting.

In Poona life was obviously more settled and structured than in my travels before and afterwards. I wrote letters, received news from home, read books, saw more of the rest of our party and other Westerners on the yoga course, but it was really good to have both the experience of travelling and also of being settled in one place and getting more in touch with day to day India and the people.

One of the really nice things about being in Poona was the opportunity to meet the people, the new Buddhists, who had known Bhante when he worked among them in the fifties and early sixties. First we made contact with Mr. and Mrs. Maheshkar and their family. Mr. Maheshkar had been Bhante's translator for all the talks he had given in Poona, and his wife had been a mainstay of the Poona womens Buddhist association, who had set up and organised many of his lectures. They lived on the other side of town from us in Agawal colony along with many other new Buddhists. It was quite different meeting people in their own homes rather than out and about, and also Indians who were Buddhist and very keen to get a Centre going in Poona and revitalise Buddhist activities. They lived in a very small house, or rather two rooms, with their two children Amrita aged 9 and Aryamitra aged 13, both of whom spoke excellent English, and were very sharp and on the ball, and various other relations. Around the room were pictures of Dr. Ambedkar (the man who initiated the mass conversion of untouchables to Buddhism) and a number of Buddha images.

Lokamitra who visited India as an Anagarika, visited them many times, held meetings, gave talks, ran meditation classes and study groups and visited many different groups of Buddhists and will no doubt write about his experiences when he returns. 6



My contact was more social though I did attend an open air day retreat, and other meetings. I enjoyed these very much. It never ceased to amaze me how many people, men women and children could pile into one small space and that space not feel particularly crowded. I think Indians, because of their large families and their gregariousness, don't seem to have that same need for personal, private space that we do. Again there would be this warm open feeling in which it seemed impossible to stay shut off or insular. It obviously had its negative side in that it's very difficult to be on your own if you share living and sleeping space with up to 20 other people and if you want to meditate or study you just have to go completely away, or get everyone else to join you. On the other hand you get the feeling that they have the basis of the arm healthy extended family group feeling and that if people decide to go forth or become a monk or sadhu, that very natural human need has been so satisfied that they're not looking for it in the spiritual life. In this country, on the other hand, many people have missed out on human warmth as children or have never felt part of a community, so that often people are unconsciously seeking for that when they come in contact with a spiritual 'group'. This is why Bhante stresses the need that we become happy and healthy and human first, that we create a positive healthy group, and then go forth from that as individuals.

It seemed to me that in general people performed their natural functions naturally. Children, for instance, were obviously accepted and liked (not to be seen and not heard or not seen at all). Amongst themselves they'd play (without any toys) and be noisy and exuberant but around adults and in meetings they would be in the main, quiet and attentive without being repressed or squashed. There seemed to be very little neuroticism between children and parents. They didn't seem to be around to fulfil the unfilled wishes of the parents, or as status symbols etc., and I had the feeling that the solid extended family and community background gave the children enormous emotional security which gave them the space to be quite independent fairly young. And they really loved the meetings and would sit and try and meditate and loved the chanting in which they were the main participants.

It was also great to meet people who had such a high regard and affection for Bhante and who made us so welcome on that account. I realised anew what an amazing person Bhante is, what tremendous work he did in India, what he has done in creating the Friends and the Order in England and how exciting and rewarding it is going to be fusing those two things with a Centre in Poona. Most people don't realise that there are thousands of new Buddhists, some of whom barely know what Buddhism is all about. Those who are really interested in the spiritual side rather than the political implications are very keen to get things going and are really Dharma thirsty. We met some really fine people, who would obviously with regular contact become Mitras and Order members very soon. As I was in Poona mainly to do yoga and get my physical state sorted out a bit, and as the yoga was pretty taxing, I didn't go to as many meetings as I would have liked, and I would really like to go back to Poona and see much more of the people I met there. As well as being impressed with Indian children, I was impressed with Indian women. I read the following extract from 'The Feminine in Fairytales' by Marie Louis Von Franz (worth reading) just yesterday before I began to write this, which seemed very relevant.



"In our Christian civilization, i.e. in a strictly patriarchal tradition, the image of the woman is not represented. As Jung has said, she has no representative in the Upper Parliament. You can say that man's anima is neglected and the real woman is uncertain as to her own essence, her own being, of what she is, or could be. So either she regresses to a primitive instinctive pattern and clings to that, which protects her from the projection which civilisation exerts on her, or she falls into the animus and builds up a picture of herself to compensate the uncertainty within her. In a matriarchal structure, such as Southern India, women have natural confidence in their own womanhood. They know their importance and that they are different from men in a special way, and this does not imply inferiority. Therefore they can assert their human existence and being in a natural way.

Women in India seemed to be in touch with their femininity in a way that is very rare to see here. They can do heavy work, and lead their own lives without being butch about it, and they are feminine without being weak or wishywashy and without just fulfilling mens fantasies about women. I felt when I got back to England that in so many women I saw around me femininity and sexuality was something "stuck on", as it were, from the outside. Sexually provocative clothes didn't mean they were in touch with their sexuality in a real natural way, probably quite the opposite, jeans and dungarees and more butch clothes often seemed like "stuck on" confidence and pretty feminine clothes and make up and hair do's etc., the dolly look, seemed like only a parody of femininity because based on passivity and pandering to an image.

Indian women were like flowers, but they were also strong. The clothes Indian women wear are in fact very kind to women. Everyone wears the sari, however old, young, fat or thin. It's a graceful, elegant garment with a vast variety of colours and patterns, so within the uniformity there is great scope for difference. There is no fashion for the young, (though young people do wear western clothes especially in the cities) and little old ladies in their saris with their hair still long, looked much more elegant than their western crimpelened-blue-grey-rinsed sisters. Also you don't grow out of your sari and it doesn't go out of fashion so you just keep stockpiling them. You don't need special clothes to be pregnant in, and Indian women work quite happily in their saris. Or there is the punjabi suit, baggy trousers a top and a scarf. These have been updated in the cities and are favoured by college girls who wear the tops rather fitted and made up in little prints. I preferred the more ethnic versions we saw out of the cities, where brilliant coloured tops and trousers are mixed together or contrasting prints are worn and the style is to have the top long and loose. Little girls look especially nice in their little punjabi suits. The muslim women in India wore some fantastic clothes. Some wear chirridas, which are trousers very tight in the calves but baggy above, work with long knee length tops and a large coloured scarf often covered in sequins, or they wear the same trousers under a lacy dress, or satin baggy punjabi trousers with heavily embroidered sequined cuffs. The gipsies around Pune wore very full skirts (20 yards I was told) with loose tops and head scarves. The tribal women of Gujerat, who were certainly to me the most stunning, wore full printed skirts or mirrored skirts, in brilliant colours, with contrasting tops or mirrored and embroidered tops, and with a large printed shawl over the top. They also wore amazing jewelry, their whole arms covered in ivory bangles (or plastic imitations!), enormous nose rings, head jewelry, and large silver anklets. This was their



ordinary everyday dress which they wore sitting in the market selling bananas or whatever. It was interesting that these tribes women who are not caste Hindu, and apparently have much more freedom (especially to work and sexual freedom) were very bold and friendly towards us, in a way that Hindu women were not. I only wished I had spoken Gujarati. Anyway the main point is that there are certain sorts of dress which have a uniformity, but everyone looks different and individual and the clothes seem attractive, graceful on all ages and sizes. I remember seeing a party of moslem women in Bombay. One was enormous and was wearing white tight trousers topped by a white knee length dress (fitted waist, gathered skirt) and a scarf over her head. She looked really beautiful and very dignified. The other thing is the bright colours. Coming back to England everyone seems to wear grey and brown and the eternal denim.

One can't obviously pretend to be an Indian woman. But it is interesting to be among them and pick up the difference and to see what is existential and what is cultural, though cultural conditioning obviously goes very deep. And to see from a different angle that what many of us are trying to do is to become healthy, happy and human as women and to get in touch with a real experience of femininity, which may mean not having contact with men for a while so that one can begin to find confidence, worth, self respect, and inspiration from within oneself and in other women, rather than seeking it outside all the time from men; and to quote Marie Louis Van Franz again - "to assert our human existence and being in a natural way". Later she says, "...Man in our civilisation is ahead of woman in the civilising process. In Southern India, the humanizing of women, and of eros, seems to be ahead of the West. There, women are proud of their femininity, and there is a more differentiated attitude to eros. In the West, there is toughness, vulgarity, and lack of differentiation of the eros level, and far greater logos differentiation than in the East."

I was also quite staggered as I travelled around India at how many really beautiful people I saw. In general peoples' faces were open and soft, and not lined or marked by the sort of alienation or anxieties one is familiar with especially in cities in England. I remember one morning on a train I got off my bunk to go to the toilet and stumbled over several men sitting on the floor in the corridor. They smiled and all looked gentle and soft in a childlike way. I was stunned to see on my way back that they were prisoners chained together. Perhaps none of them had actually committed any fiendish crime, perhaps they had, but it certainly didn't show on their faces. Time and time again I saw men, women or children out in the streets, perhaps really poor people, who had such beautiful faces and expressions that one could not help thinking that perhaps they were in a high spiritual state. In the main most people seemed emotionally and psychically pretty healthy, and everyone had a certain sort of dignity even the really poor and the old.

It might sound as though I saw India and its people through rose coloured spectacles. Perhaps I did, but although I was told that there was a lot of violence, disorganisation, corruption, mismanagement, political unrest, economic and social problems, that there were thousands of very poor people, that the caste system was repressive etc., and although it is obvious that this is true and that India has



enormous problems, my main impression remained positive. My experience of India albeit in the main as a tourist, was a positive one and I myself saw great poverty, witnessed political demonstrations, talked to people, and read the papers. After all in England we also have violence, our own level of poverty, corruption and social and political troubles, yet people in the main in India seemed healthier and saner there (and the insane could wander free and unmolested). My outlook was positive and positivity came back to me, although I did not shut my eyes to the poverty and difficulties around me. I did find that some people seemed to read the papers and quote statistics of road accidents and violence at me, as a front to stop them from experiencing the present moment, and in fact they picked up on those experiences as a result. India is not a kind of experience for those too stuck in their heads, to those who are afraid of the irrational, the emotional, the more primitive aspects of life, or for those who expect western standards of efficiency and time to prevail. To enjoy India you need to relax and let go a lot of Westernisation, to take things as they come, and not to be in a rush.

Some of the nicest times in India were when completely unexpected things happened; when you are travelling and you have to let go into whatever is going to happen. One of our favourite occupations was to get lost somewhere!, to get away from the main streets and just wander around, and see what happened.

There is so much more I could tell, so many more images which come to mind; Annie and I wandering lost through the crazy streets of Benares vaguely in the direction of the Ganges, being taken by a passing stranger through the labyrinth streets of the Moslem quarter to a burning ground at dusk; being rowed down the Ganges at dawn to see the faithful bathing; the 2½ hour journey by horse and cart from Buddhagaya to Gaya through the beautiful countryside where the Buddha must have wandered, the streets of Sarnath swarming with crimson robed Tibetan monks; Indian railway stations, platforms and waiting rooms covered with sleeping bodies; days spent rolling across India in Indian trains; the streets of Ahmedabad teeming not only with Hindus but with tribes-people in the most amazing costumes I saw in India and where bullock carts were replaced by camel carts; the scene by a lake outside Poona where we saw a man shaving his water buffalo; Diwali (new year) fireworks and decorations - coloured lanterns, chalk patterns on pavements - in Aurangabad, and out at Ajanta. So many images and so many other stories.

I was glad I didn't go to India searching for anything Spiritual, I think it would be very easy to get confused or mislead. I don't think I could tell if a wandering saddhu really was spiritual or merely stoned!, well you know what I mean. As far as Buddhism went, I did meet some very kind, friendly, positive and happy bikkhus, I attended a Japanese, Tibetan and a Sinhalese puja, but felt very much that as far as I am concerned the Dharma is firmly established in Britain and wherever the FWBO is, in a living, growing way, and that we have much to offer the East. As far as attending the pujas was concerned, the Tibetan and Japanese pujas were particularly moving but were not participative and therefore to me were lacking in that essential feeling which comes out of actively being involved in a seven fold puja. After all the definition of ritual (Fromm's definition as used by Bhante in his lecture the Psychology of Buddhist Ritual) is that is is "shared action expressive

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of common striving rooted in common values". And I became very aware that one cannot take on another culture, to be pseudo Tibetan or whatever is no good at all.

So now I'm back with not too big a pile of bright Indian clothes, lots of tales to tell, and the memories of a really unforgettable experience which I wouldn't mind repeating again at all. It's also really good to be back in Amaravati, which is a really special place.

FROM JAYA CHIPPS (a Mitra with husband and children, who has recently moved from London to Norfolk. This article is dated 6/12/77)

Six weeks have elapsed since our departure from the noise and dirt of London. These six weeks have seemed like six months, with London and its memories, trials and disappointments swiftly fading, while a new life among the Norfolk Sangha has begun. The move has offered us both the possibility of Right Livelihood and an environment suitable for spiritual growth.

There had been a few moments of apprehension and strong feelings of attachments to familiar places, but as the last days dragged on, the prospect of a new life in Norfolk grew brighter until it occupied the mind totally. There was no time to grow sentimental over past experiences, people and places.

As the crowded, dusty streets of London disappeared for the last time, I felt the last feelings of stagnation, bred by city life vanishing, to be replaced by a boldness and an eagerness for the change. I felt like a child embarking on a new, unknown adventure.

The whole thing started in March, one grey, wet morning at Sukhavati in Subhuti's office, where we literally barged in, uninvited. We felt lonely and isolated as a Buddhist family living in Greenwich and as we became more involved in the Dharma and the Movement, the lack of contact with the Sangha left a great emptiness in our lives. I often grew overwhelmed by conflicting emotions as regards my commitment to the Movement. But as the possibility of our move to Norfolk became a certainty, I felt myself spontaneously drawn into it. There was not any time or space for doubts or fears to arise.

So eight months later, after a few disappointments and setbacks, we arrived in Blofield, a small village 6½ miles outside Norwich. One could go on for pages describing the beauty of Norfolk, the open spaces, the wide skies and the deep quietude that pervades the land. It was not easy trying to be mindful or develop metta with juggernauts roaring past the windows day and night in London! So once I had overcome the strangeness of the silence, I abandoned myself to it and deeply inhaled it to permeate it throughout my being. The results were excellent. I felt myself slowing down, gradually unwinding and opening out. There is more awareness, concentration and integration in all actions.

I discovered myself as an individual but at the same time, I felt closer to my family. I feel that the Dharma and my family are not separate aspects of my life. As time goes on, the fusion grows stronger. It is very refreshing and somehow strange to find myself referred, not as a mother or a wife, but as an individual. Going for Refuge to the Three



Jewels with the family has created a great awareness and respect for each other's individuality.

It was interesting to note that in the past our only reason for leaving London was to run away from certain people and situations and all our attempts had proved futile. But this time we made an effort to improve our communication in our existing situation without running away. The results were remarkable. It created a great deal of positivity and harmony. Each one of us arrived here a changed person and we continue to change.

I feel that without the help and constant encouragement of the Sangha, we could not have made the break. Their support has been invaluable. We have had a great deal of contact with the Sangha since our arrival. This contact is very important if we are going to develop as individuals. Without it, we could easily withdraw into an isolated family unit. Apart from the Sangha, we found the local people very positive and friendly. At first, the conditioning of the city life made us a little suspicious of their open and friendly nature! They seem positive about everything, including and especially the weather. My heart is filled with despair everytime one of them cheerfully describes the North wind that blows down from the Arctic with no land masses in between to impede its freezing onslaught!

Despite the cold weather, we are happily established in Norfolk. I have not encountered any obstacles or difficulties in following the Dharma as a woman with a family and I sincerely hope that any woman in the same position will find encouragement from my experience to seek out a new life with a greater contact with the Sangha.

#### WANSTEAD SCENE - MAGGIE OAKSHOTT

The end of dusk on a winter evening. Deep purple clouds scudding across the glowing, deepening sky. Orange street lamps, like notes of music, singing down the sky while the rush hour traffic roars down the road. A symphony of noise and coloured light surges around the roundabout, lorries and saloon cars, brake lights and rear lamps, revving and changing gear, red, orange, and white lights, black cars and red buses, deep blue-black sky and scudding purple indigo banks of sculptured cloud behind the tall two-dimensional block of flats patched with glowing coloured curtains towering over the bus terminus. The unremarkable scrub land, flat Essex grasses, have become magical, light-filled opalescent stems in the last vestiges of the dark daylight, and a man and his dog disappear, dark moving shapes into the darkness, and the almost individual trees become one matted clump of shapelessness discernible between earth and sky.

#### LETTER FROM JINAMATA

Gleditschstr. 44  
D-1000 Berlin 30.  
(3.12.77)

Dear Women,

Reading Anoma's suggestion that the next 'Dakini' should be a 'bumper' one, I thought I'd send you a letter too. Well, I don't know how many of you know me, so I'll just say a few things about myself: I was born in Germany and lived there till I was 21. Then I came to London where I lived for 12 years and where I worked and then studied psychology at



the London School of Economics, culminating in a Ph.D. in 1976, on the subject of how children learn to understand and speak about time. I was ordained nearly four years ago, in January 1974, when I was seven months pregnant. Although some people thought that it was terribly 'unspiritual' to be pregnant, Bhante does not seem to have any prejudices against ordaining pregnant women, as he's done it since with Shrimala. But then, I don't think much of 'spirituality'. Bhante gave me the name 'Jinamata' which means 'the mother of all the Buddhas or conquerors' and is a title of the Prajnaparamita, the Perfection of Wisdom. I find that quite a thing to live up to. But the way I can understand why he gave me this name is when I remember that since the age of 8 I have wanted to become wise. When I was 8 I realised with absolute clarity that, unless one became wise, life was a progressive death, and that, therefore, I had to become wise. Exactly this sentence once went through my head when I was sitting in a bomb-site, and somewhere there was the colour blue associated with it. I don't remember whether the sky was blue or what. The sentence went through my head or heart (I'm not sure which) in German, of course.

Well, last year, after finishing my Ph.D. I went back to Germany, or rather, to that part of Germany which is West Berlin. I didn't think that it would be so difficult to start here again, and that was just as well, because I might not have had the courage to go. Now, the worst seems to be over. I've found a flat where I live with Lila, my daughter, who is now 3½. And after 1 year of unemployment, it looks now as if I've got a job lecturing in developmental psychology, particularly, language acquisition, at the Technical University of Berlin. Lila goes to Kindergarten where she is very happy. She is very happy, anyway, and fortunately, also very independent. My job will start in April 1978. A very good thing about it is that it will give me enough money to rent a flat in which to start a Buddhist meditation centre and to support one Order member to come over here and help run courses plus teach Yoga. I have already been teaching an introductory course on Buddhism and meditation at a 'People's College' here. But, of course, it is much better to have a room which is for meditation and yoga only. The people who came to this course are quite serious and interested and more than half of them want to continue when the course finishes. So, it's time I got an FWBO place.

I feel very close to 'Amaravati' and everyone there (I hope I've got the name right - I'm not very good at remembering Indian names). I'm very happy that the women have got a place like that, and it's the place I feel most affiliated to in FWBO. At the same time, here, I have to provide (whatever I can provide) for women and men. I feel it would be good to be just with women from time to time, so I'll have to visit 'Amaravati'.

I feel very supportive towards the new feminist movement. The feminists (the German word is 'Feministin' - with a feminine ending) have grown in strength rapidly during the last 2 years throughout West Germany and particularly West Berlin. There are women's book shops, women's pubs, many living communities, women's 'do-it-yourself' teams, a women's centre, and a newly founded women's health centre where you can get medical advice, particularly gynaecological advice so that you don't have to submit yourself to the possible brutality and feelinglessness of male gynaecology. As West Berlin is a closed island, everything which happens you notice very much. So, the feminists are very noticeable. Some of



the women are very radical indeed (I think without having met German radicals, it's hard to imagine how radical they are), some of the women absolutely hate men, others are searching little girls - searching for identity, not men - still others are really beautifully intelligent, insightful and feelingful. Not male computer-intelligence, but intelligence with mind, heart and intuition. The feminists here have a tendency to withdraw from society and build their own society, which is surely necessary because they are a young movement. A bit like 'Amaravati'. For myself, I feel, however, that I'm quite happy right in the middle of society, as long as I have a place, my home, where I can be alone or just with Lila, but, at any rate, for the time being, without men.

One issue which is on my heart is one taken up by the Finnish woman Helvi Sipilä, chairwoman in the UN Department of Social and Human Development, who states that it is necessary to effect a change in language, so that human being is no longer = man, and a chairman is not a chairman but a chairperson, etc. I never used to feel the importance of this language issue. But ever since last year, all the 'he's' and the equation of human being = man have been causing me intense pain. I cannot and do not recite the 'Basic FWBO Puja' in English any more, with 'The Buddha was a man/as we are men'. (In German the situation is different). And the footnote that 'man' is like 'human being' doesn't help - it seems like a sort of pathetic excuse for a prejudice with a degree of touching helplessness about it. There is a stinging pain in my heart, and no footnote can take it away. Equally, there is a stinging pain when I read that the Buddha was asked if women could attain enlightenment. So he answered 'yes'. But - isn't the question alone a slap in the face, an expression of male arrogance and contempt of women? This hurts. So, then the women were allowed to become nuns but accepted certain rules which meant obedience to monks in certain respects. - Why? Why would the Buddha talk against the caste system but leave the subjugated position of women unchanged? Why would he want to change one social injustice but not another? Or do these rules not come from the Buddha (one mustn't forget that nothing was written down till 500 years after the Buddha's death), but are they an expression of how far (or not far) women were able to get in a strongly patriarchal society like India at that time and of how men try to keep women as servants? I do not know - I do know, however, that the whole affair stings in my heart with pain. I'm glad Bhante didn't take the same approach.

And then the Bodhisattva. You read a wonderful text.... and the Bodhisattva does such and such.... suddenly it hits you: 'he' does such and such. Somehow your heart drops. Is this you? No. Is this your ideal? No. It can't be - there is a cold metal wall between you and this Bodhisattva all of a sudden, you can't identify. This Bodhisattva is a 'he', so it cannot be a 'she'. It cannot be you.

Then you ask yourself: is a Bodhisattva male? No. A Bodhisattva can be male or female. Then, why do we use the pronoun 'he'? Surely, traditional use of language is no excuse, as traditions can be given up. Also the argument that the use of the pronoun doesn't mean anything doesn't hold. Because the use of the pronoun does mean something.

Historically, it means that primarily men ('he's') are regarded as representing the human species and as being truly human. Only 100 years ago clever philosophers and psychoanalysts analysed whether women had a 'soul' - needless to say these humans were men. Only 50 years ago we



were given the right to vote - and the English suffragettes fought a lot for this.

Emotionally, these 'he's' are really destructive. They stop me from identifying with this Bodhisattva figure. Of course, ultimately, it does not matter whether one says 'he' or 'she'. But I'm not interested in eternal truths. I'm interested in exercises which help me to grow. So, when I could not bear the pain of reading the 'he's' and started to shut Buddhist texts because of them, one day I did a simple thing: I substituted all 'he's' by 'she's'. Read this (from Bhante's 'Survey of Buddhism', p.434):

'Out of Compassion the Bodhisattva aspires to emancipate all beings; by means of Wisdom she realises that in truth no beings exist. Far from stultifying each other, these seemingly contradictory attitudes are interdependent, and must be cultivated simultaneously; for the Bodhisattva courses in a realm transcending logic. As with the emotional and intellectual, so with the static and dynamic, faculties. In the language of Jung's psychology, the Bodhisattva is both introvert and extrovert. She looks both within and without. External activities do not for her preclude internal calm and recollection, neither do her indefatigable exertions on behalf of all sentient beings prevent her from enjoying uninterrupted perfect peace of mind. In the beautiful words of the Ratnagotravibhaga:

Like a fire her mind constantly blazes up into works for others;  
At the same time she always remains merged in the calm of the  
trances and formless attainments.

(Ratnagotravibhaga, I. 73, Conze's translation)

Well, like this, as a 'she', this Bodhisattva lives for me. I do not suggest that 'he' must now always be substituted by 'she'. I am practising exercises which bring the Bodhisattva to life for me, in me. This one, with the pronoun 'she', takes flesh and blood, she's a being with whom I can identify. She feels wonderful.

With metta,

(signed) Jinamata

P.S. I would be very interested to hear if anyone else of you women have feelings and thoughts similar to the ones I've described on the use of language. Please write (either in 'Dakini' or to me) and let me know.

LETTER FROM CAROLINE EYKMAN (A Mitra from Arnhem, Holland) 11.12.77

Dear Dakini,

You do not know me and I do not know you, but I want to express my enthusiasm about the Dakini news-sheet. I did receive it for the first time in September. I did not know it existed, so it was quite a surprise for me. I really was impressed by the honest way everyone of you was expressing themselves. It inspired me again in trying to be myself and no more or less and to grow from where I am. I need inspirations like that and am really grateful when I get them. Especially the 8 articles in Dakini 5, they were so different and personal. In some I recognised quite a lot of myself and that gave me the relief I can be who I am. Others had such a different way of expressing themselves, that I got really interested to see what it can be like for



other people. So all of you, thank you very much!

I am Dutch and since 3 weeks a mitra, the only one in Holland. We have a very small group of friends here (about seven) who come regularly and some new people around it, who are not sure whether they want to go on or not. We meet once a month and organise twice a year weekend retreats. So we are very much in the beginning.

I must say that in our being together, there is no problem about men and women. We are equal there, I am happy to say. But in myself and in society it still is difficult. So after having had my resistances, I felt a sort of relief to know there is a group of women together, where I can go to. As a matter of fact, I am planning a visit to England to see what the life of Friends is like in England. I just cannot imagine so many Friends together! (We already got panicky when 13 people wanted to come to the weekend retreat we had). If it is possible, I would like to come to Amaravati and to stay for a week or so. I am thinking to come in springtime, in March. Would that be a convenient time and would that be possible? I'll write again when the time is nearer. It also depends on when we will have our weekend retreat. I really would like to meet you all.

With metta,

(signed) Caroline

LETTER FROM MEGHA (from Wellington, New Zealand) 7.11.77

Greetings and Salutations,

Some many moons ago I meant to send over some money to Dhammadinna for Dakini. According to the postal note stamp the bits of paper have almost run out of time. So I hope these arrive in time. These will mainly cover previous copies I have received. I'll send some more in the new year.

Dhammadinna wrote an article in Shabda (September) about her and Wanstead. It brought tears to my eyes. She wrote descriptively and it touched my heart. It sounds an area where much exploration, breaking of bonds that holds one back, and most of all a field of positivity. I look forward to hearing more information.

At the moment (almost literally) I'm swotting for exams, which is rather time consuming. Though the year has been very interesting. In the Occupational Course, we learn many skills - in craft, general body movement, a little woodwork, as well as all the theory. It also teaches skills in being able to assess situations, to identify problem areas and how one is going to go about achieving ones aims. I expect to use these skills outside of the usual 'occupational therapist' role, especially in connection with the FWBO. How or when I don't know.

In Wellington enthusiasm was high in the beginning of the year leading to some people, living together, with the centre underneath. Now this energy is not as concentrated and many feel they don't want to be so closely involved. So the end of the year will see the splitting up of this household. Hopefully I'll be able to find a place suitable where I can live and a shrineroom. And activities will be kept ticking over until Achala returns after his visit to England. He plans to spend at



least 3 months from the time of the Order Convention.

While it would be a shame to let activities die down here, I do wonder the value of an FWBO branch/centre where there is only one or two Order Members, when there are no very active, strong Mitras. A core centre is invaluable. But no doubt this is the way we will have to move in New Zealand for a few years yet.

Lots of Metta, may it be abounding and plentiful,

(signed) Megha

You may remember in DAKINI 6, Kay wrote about the writer, Anais Nin and I asked if anyone else had been inspired by a particular writer, they might like to write about them. Anjali has done this and this is her article on Shelley - Anoma.

#### A REVOLUTIONARY INDIVIDUAL - ANJALI

In September last year, when Bhante visited Brighton, he happened to mention in the course of conversation, a book which he'd recently been reading called 'Shelley The Pursuit' by Richard Holmes. He was very impressed both by the book and Shelley himself. My recollection of Shelley's poetry from school days (having to learn a poem by heart between maths and physics homework) didn't tally with the revolutionary character that Shelley apparently was, so I decided to read this biography. The 700 page paperback looked pretty daunting, but I plunged in and was immediately captivated by Richard Holmes' style. "Then there was the orchard and the south meadow, and beyond an even bigger lake which was called Warnham Pond. It was two lakes really, joined by a stone bridge. In Warnham Pond there lived the Great Tortoise. Sometimes at night it rose out of the depth of the water and came trundling over the lawns. In the woods there was another monster, the Great Snake. Sometimes he told his sister about the Great Tortoise and the Great Snake, and she was very frightened. But she was only two."

Shelley read widely from an early age, forming his own ideas and opinions, and came up against the resentment and eventually persecution of traditional early 19th century society. While at Oxford he published a pamphlet called 'The Necessity of Atheism', which led to him being estranged from his family and expelled from the university. I haven't read this or any of his other prose works on Christianity, except the notes (in essay form) to his first long political poem "Queen Mab". Shelley's precise logic, proving that God doesn't exist, isn't dry philosophical argument but forceful conviction, sometimes quite humorous. It's refreshing to read such wholehearted stuff. I've recently been feeling an atmosphere of superstition in the Christian beliefs, and these essays helped clarify my mind. In Shelley's day one could be prosecuted under the blasphemy law for saying that one didn't believe in God, and it's interesting to note that this law still exists today. A pamphlet entitled 'Blasphemy in Britain' gives a history of prosecutions under this law and goes on to outline the current proceedings, taken by Mary Whitehouse, which recently led to the conviction of "Gay News" for having printed a poem which portrayed Jesus Christ as a homosexual. Other publications have since printed the poem and not been prosecuted, so perhaps in a forthcoming appeal this law will be changed or repealed.

Richard Holmes shows how Shelley explored the themes of homosexuality and



bisexuality in his poetry and translations. He also notes that "through the issue of homosexuality, Shelley wished to direct his readers' attention on to the specific limitations of Plato's thought in particular, and Greek society in general, with respect to slaves and women. He regarded this exploitation of slaves and women as mere property as 'the fundamental anachronism of their social and intellectual life'.

Shelley was a vegetarian. In another essay attached to 'Queen Mab' he argued that physiologically we are herbivores, not carnivores, and we only took to eating meat when culinary preparation developed; otherwise we couldn't bear to eat it. He contended that all disease, of the body and the mind, stem from eating meat, and also drinking alcohol. He foresaw that Britain could be self-sufficient on a vegetarian diet. It would be interesting to know Richard Holmes' own views on vegetarianism, because whenever this subject is mentioned in the biography he refers to it as cranky, peculiar or crochety. This may be because he wanted to indicate Shelley's worry about his own health, or the fact that his friends and enemies thought he was a crank, but I get the feeling of a reaction from Richard Holmes' attitude.

Some of Shelley's work concerned his radical social and political ideas of reform. When in his teens he campaigned in Ireland to try and educate the poor and underprivileged about the tyranny of the ruling class. From then on he was under constant surveillance by the Home Office, and in danger of imprisonment. On an individual level he wanted a 'small, intimate and progressive community of friends' and he disagreed with the institution of marriage. His biography shows how his ideas on these topics matured. A prose work entitled "A Philosophical View of Reform" includes a very comprehensive analysis of the 19th century British economy, which apparently influenced the leading writers on economics later in the century.

Shelley accomplished an incredible amount in his short life (he drowned at the age of 30) - and inspiring individual from our own tradition.

EVENTS LEADING UP TO AND INCLUDING THE CHRISTMAS MITRA RETREAT AT MANDARAVA - Background information and overall view of retreat by Anoma; drawing of Mandarava Waterworks by Helen Johnson; On Silence by Anne Rowlands

A couple of weeks before the retreat was due to start and Mandarava was COLD! The main thing to be done to change this was the plumbing in of a Rayburn, thus giving warmth to the kitchen and downstairs generally, and hot water (the electric immersion heater being very expensive). So Helen from Amaravati, whose plumbing track record consists of a couple of days out with Mick (he's done a lot of Sukhavati's plumbing work) and the plumbing here at Amaravati, volunteered for the job. She set off on her motorbike one morning, as the rest of us were piling stuff into a skip, and a week later we received the drawing which you will see on the following page!

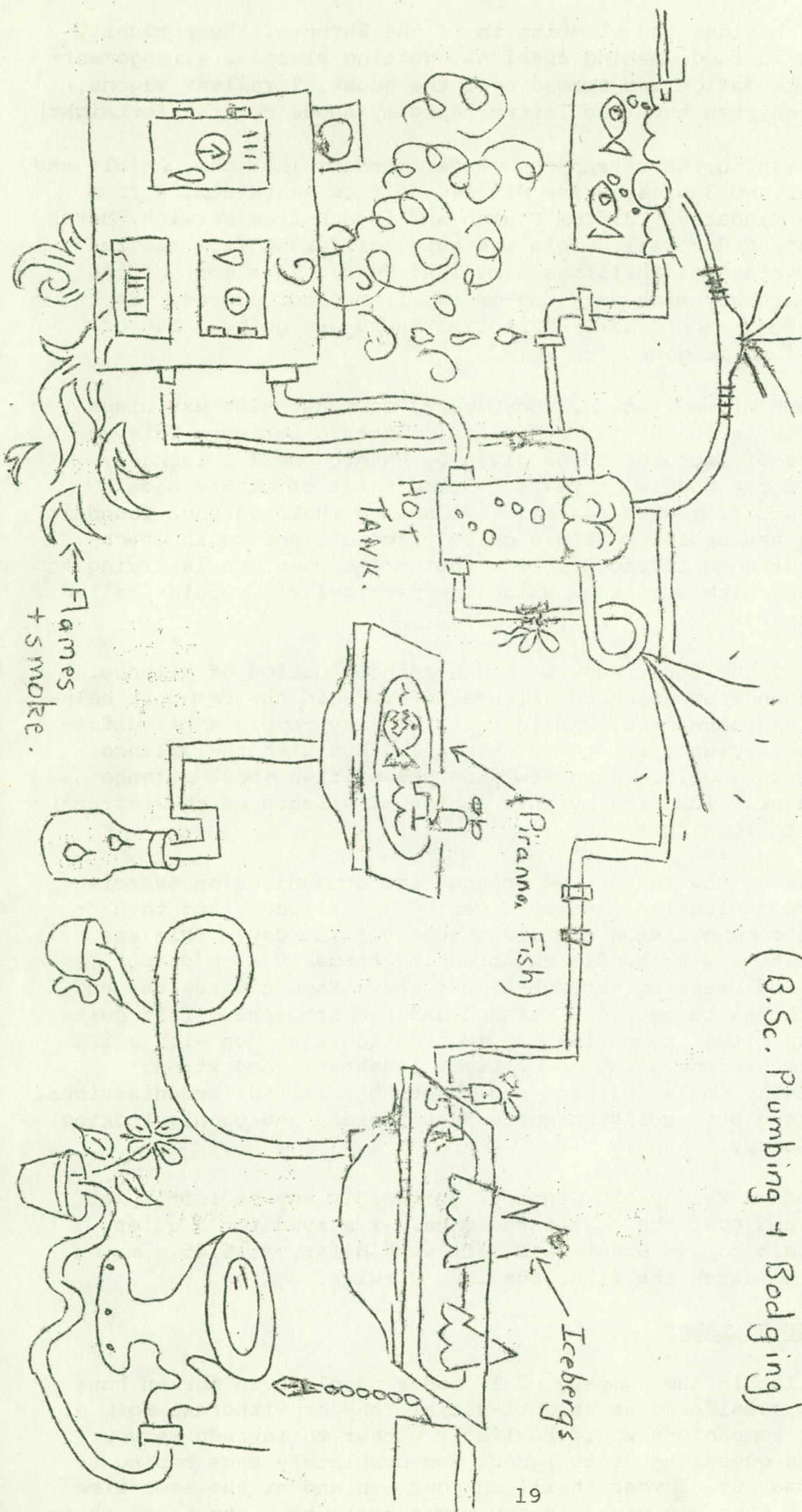


DEAR ALL ... Well, yesterday was the Grand Opening of the Mondarava Waterworks (pictured below) which was celebrated by a hot bath (product of above ↑!! and two halves at the local. SARDHU.)

... No really - it WORKS!

LOTZ OV UV - Helen -

(B.Sc. Plumbing + Bodging)





Up at Mandarava, besides the plumbing in of the Rayburn, the community was busy getting in food, making cushions, getting sleeping arrangements ready etc. Accommodation was spread over the house, 2 railway wagons, a caravan and a chicken hut (the latter being my abode for the fortnight).

There were 18 women on the retreat - 3 Order members (Marichi, Anjali and myself) 12 Mitras and 3 prospective Mitras. 5 from Amaravati, 4 from Brighton, 3 from Mandarava, 2 from Beulah and 1 each from Norwich, North London, Aryatara and Cornwall. This was quite different from the retreat held at Aryatara at Christmas time last year. Then most of the women were from Archway with only one or two from other places. So nearly everyone knew each other. This time there was quite a bit of 'getting to know' to be done.

We had a programme of meditation, yoga, work, communication exercises and 'The Higher Evolution of the Individual' lecture series. This was the second series of lectures to be given by Bhante and I personally hadn't heard it for a couple of years. Quite a lot of others hadn't heard it at all and from what was said, it seemed that everyone found it very stimulating and useful. It's a quite practical series in which Bhante talks about some of the problems that arise when one is trying to evolve, and ending with a lecture which was particularly popular called "Is a Guru Necessary?".

Towards the end of the first week we had a 24 hour period of silence. One person who hadn't experienced silence before said she found it helpful because she had been finding being with so many people a bit difficult, because she couldn't relate to them all. But with the silence, she felt somehow she could. Anne Rowlands has written about silence (I think particularly inspired by this period of silence on the retreat) and her article follows this one.

Around the middle of the retreat we dropped the communication exercises in favour of more meditation, had more periods of silence, and then brought back the communication exercises just for one day. This was quite an intense time with people experiencing themselves on deeper levels, hitting and breaking through blocks etc. Then towards the end of the retreat things became more relaxed and the atmosphere felt quite like that in a spiritual community. Communication was open with quite a few serious discussions going on, lots of laughter, good strong chanting (especially in the walking and chanting), all the organisational things like cooking etc. going on quite hassle-free, and people looking alive, well and happy.

The retreat ended on Friday 6th January, but hardly anyone left! We gradually dispersed over the next three days. I stayed for a quiet weekend and a visit to see Bhante and left with Hilary at 6.45 a.m. on Monday morning, to catch the first bus into Norwich.

#### ON SILENCE - ANNE ROWLANDS

To be silent whilst in the company of 17 other people even for an hour would usually be considered as an anti-social, shy or withdrawn form of behaviour. Your companions would be likely either to intrude on your silence by asking questions or to ignore you completely thus hoping to allow you to 'come out of your shell' on your own and at the same time refusing to admit that you might in any way constitute a threat to their



otherwise amiable and convivial atmosphere: all the while an uncomfortable tension is likely to develop because of this strange behaviour. Not to utter a word for at least 24 hours would be taken as an extremely bizarre and abnormal way to behave. And so, in fact, it would be if you had a job to do, a house to run, and a family to manage.

Generally then we have very little opportunity to be silent when we are living and working with people (This sort of silence is a totally different experience to that of being physically alone). A retreat, therefore is an ideal time to experiment. A retreat provides an excellent opportunity for becoming more aware of ourselves and for breaking down at least for the duration of the retreat and hopefully longer, our routine habits. To be silent on a retreat forces you, in a way, to face up to yourself. If you feel ill, in pain or depressed, you are not able to turn to the other people to express your feelings or to receive verbal comfort from them. Here, however, the atmosphere is different to that described above. Everybody is being silent for a purpose. Instead of a moving tension, a calming, more concentrated effect is generally noticed. Your companions will gradually become more open and warm. You begin to realise how much, in fact, you might normally take from people by talking to no real avail either to you or to them. You cannot spend your time in idle chatter and you may start to become aware of the fact that a great deal of our time is spent in social conversation simply because we do not want to face up to some rather unpleasant realities about ourselves or to some situations which we would rather not admit.

At times, of course, it is very helpful to talk to and with other people. Often they can point out to us things which had hitherto gone unnoticed. All the same it can be quite a revelation to experience ourselves in silence, to become aware, perhaps for the first time, how we can use people in many subtle ways in normal everyday life and also, if the silence lasts for a reasonable length of time, to be able to break through various emotional blocks by oneself: all the time being together with people who are also trying to grow and develop and who will probably be sympathetic towards our efforts to evolve even whilst being silent.

#### WADING THROUGH THE MURKY DARKNESS TO THE GOLDEN LIGHT - ANNE FARNHAM

For me, it seems like the more my commitment with the Three Jewels deepens, the more I question all that passes through me. I live at Amaravati, the women's community in East London. It is very fluid and ever changing. It is amazing to be living there. Day Retreats are held regularly and on the last one, the tape "The Spiritual Significance of Confession", from the series on the Sutra of Golden Light was played by popular request.

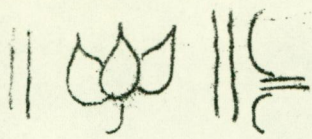
The following is an extract from the tape:

"And whatever evil, cruel act was done by me previously, I will confess it all before the Buddhas. Whatever evil I have done by not attending to my parents, by neglecting the Buddhas, by neglecting the good; whatever evil I have done by being drunk with the intoxication of authority or with the intoxication of high birth or by being drunk with the intoxication of tender age; whatever evil I have done, bad thought, bad word,

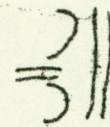








# HARRY AND EADITH



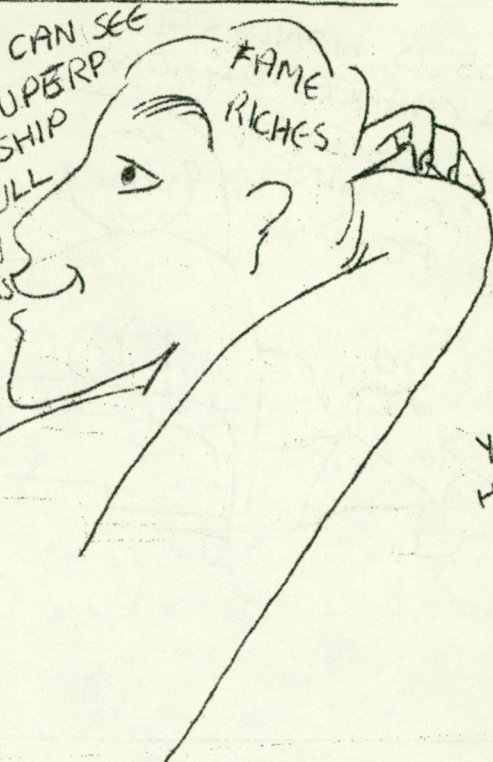
A TRUE STORY BY JOAN

① HEY EADITH - A JOB  
LOOSE COVERS!



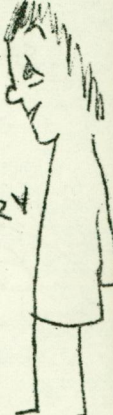
② I CAN SEE  
IT NOW - SUPERB  
WORKMANSHIP  
WONDER FULL  
FINISH IN  
ONLY HOURS

SWELL  
SWELL



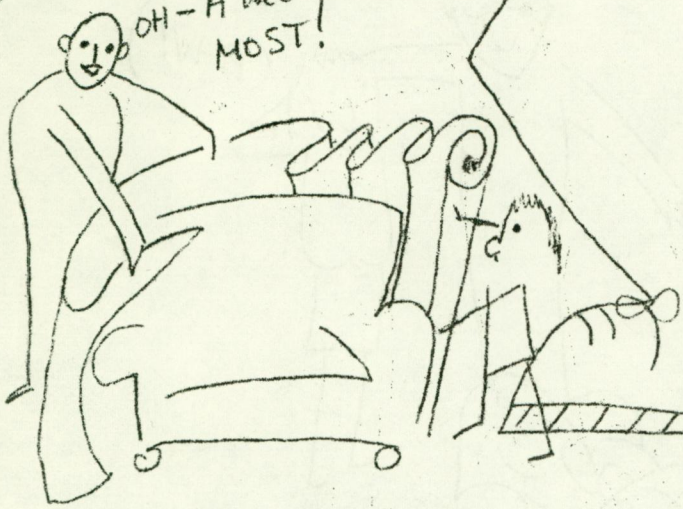
FAME  
RICHES

YES  
HARRY

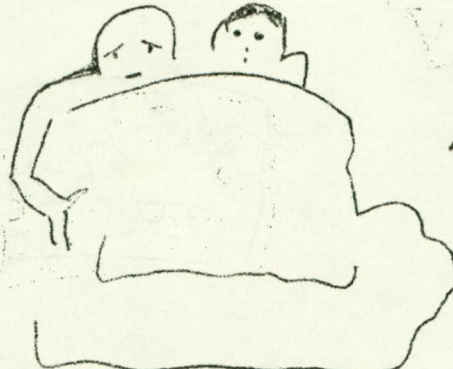


③

OH - A WEEK AT THE  
MOST!



④ FIRST FITTING



TOO LOOSE COVERS

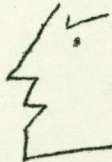
VERY UNIMRESSED  
CUSTOMERS



⑤

WE WILL MAKE IT FIT  
A MINOR SET BACK  
DON'T WORRY

THE MATERIAL  
COST A BOMB - I HOPE YOU  
CAN



⑥ 11.30 THAT EVENING

ZZZ

COLLAPSE



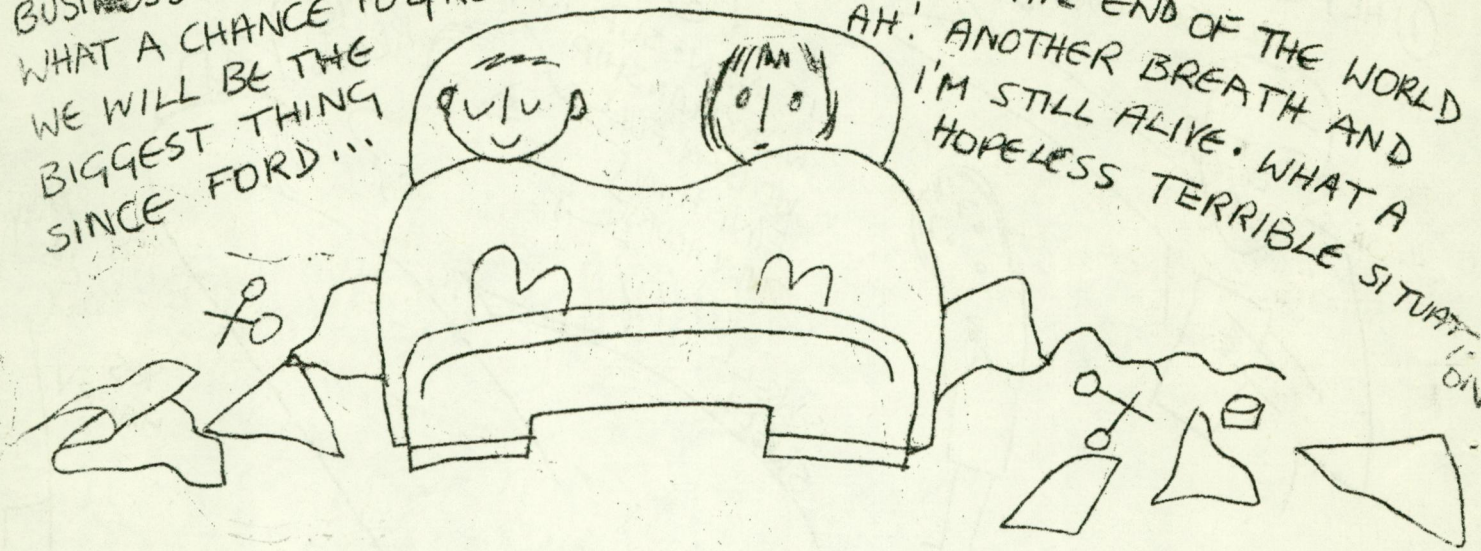
SWEAT (OH HARRY!)  
GROAN



## 7) DREAMS

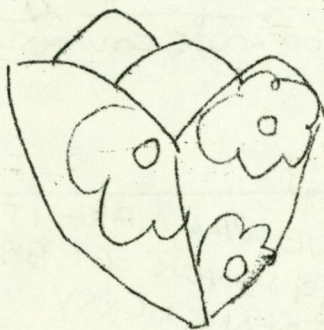
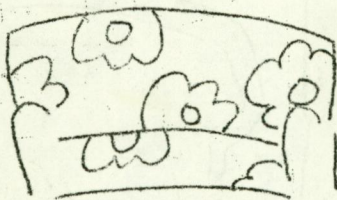
BUSINESS IS WONDERFUL  
WHAT A CHANCE TO GROW  
WE WILL BE THE  
BIGGEST THING  
SINCE FORD...

THIS IS THE END OF THE WORLD  
AH! ANOTHER BREATH AND  
I'M STILL ALIVE. WHAT A  
HOPELESS TERRIBLE SITUATION



## 8) WEEKS LATER

VERY PLEASED



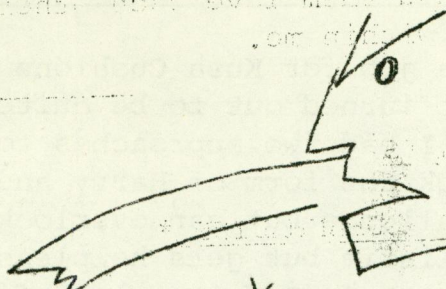
(PEW!)



9. BUT THAT EVENING ...

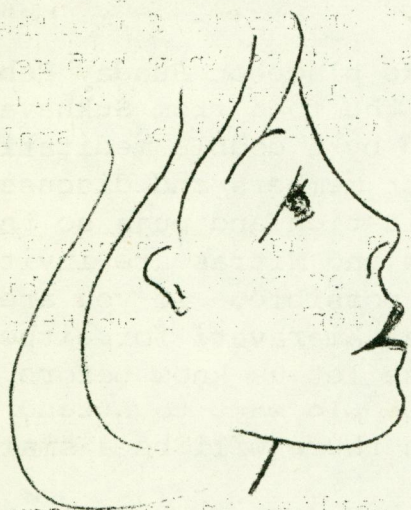


YOU BIG-HEADED IDIOT  
LOOK WHERE YOUR BOASTING  
GETS US - TWICE THE WORK



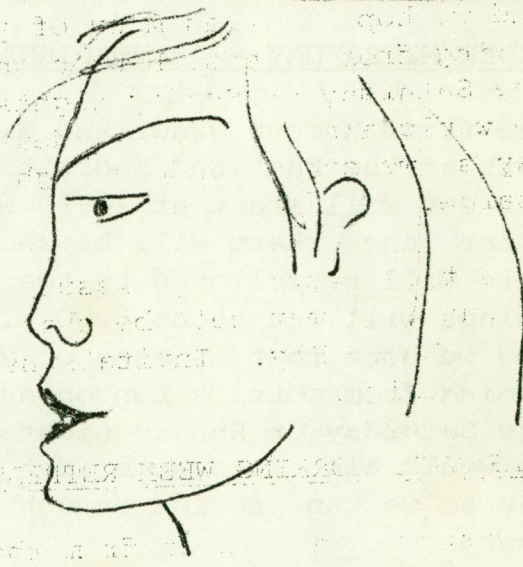
YOU MISERABLE LITTLE  
SWIVELLING NO-GOOD YOU  
HAVE NO CONFIDENCE.

10. THEN ...



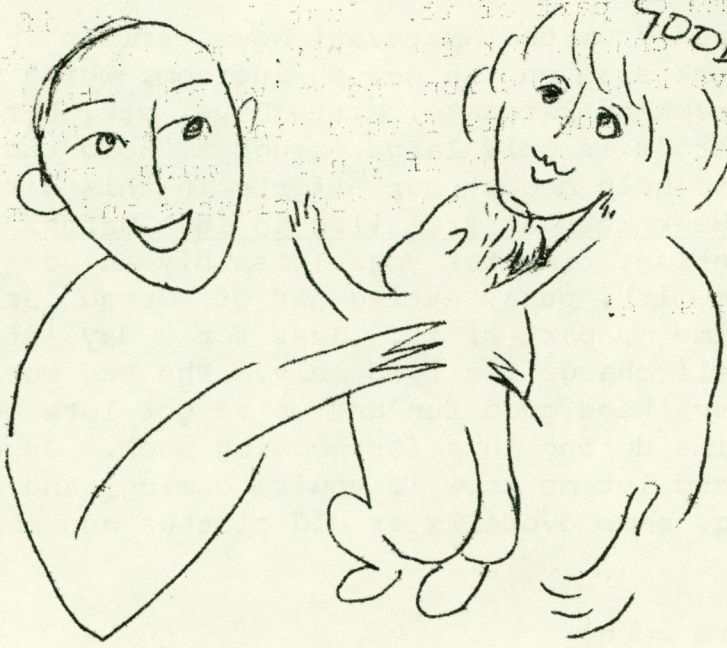
HARRY!

EADIE!



11. SOME MONTHS LATER

I'NT. HE GREAT ED!



INTEGRATED! THAT'S AS  
GOOD A NAME AS ANY.

THE END



This is a note of explanation about the cartoon - Joan Graham.

I've just done a job for Kusa Cushions which was my first experience of this kind and it turned out to be quite a difficult job. During this time I realised I had two approaches to the job, and as they became clearer they took the form of Harry and Eadith, Harry the part that rises to the challenge but can overlook practical details, and Eadith who is more realistic but gets helpless with fears that it won't work out. When I saw them, I felt a lot of love for them both, and so in the cartoon I had them love each other and have a baby, symbolic of an integration within me.

#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

##### ORDER/MITRA DAY - DHAMMADINNA\*

The first Womens Order and Mitra Day will take place on Sunday February 19th at the East End Meditation Centre (down the road from Sukhavati). The day will start at 10.30 with tea followed by a double meditation. After lunch there will be short talks by Order members and discussion. This will be followed by tea and a final meditation and puja so that things will end about 6.00 p.m. All Upasikas and Mitras are invited and we hope that as many of you will come as possible. If you are coming from outside London and want to stay at Amaravati for either the Saturday or Sunday nights (or both) please let us know before hand. We would also like some idea as to how many people want to attend the day so we can provide enough lunch, for which there will be a small charge.

\*(As this extra large issue of Dakini has taken longer than usual to produce, it may well be that you receive your copy actually on this Order/Mitra Day. Invitations were therefore telephoned or written previously).

##### AMARAVATI WORKING WEEK RETREAT - ANOMA

As you will have seen from the Amaravati News earlier in this issue, we want to start work soon on the new shrineroom, which will mean we can start to have weekend retreats, Mitra Days, etc. here at Amaravati. (our present shrineroom is only large enough to hold the community plus a few extra). So to help boost our efforts in this direction, we are holding a Working Week Retreat from 11th to 18th March. The programme will include meditation, time for yoga (possibly an occasional class if people would like it), puja, eating and of course work! You can come for all the time or part of it. Just for a day, if you like. There will be a small charge for food only. The two working weekends we've had so far have been good fun and we've got lots done, so do try and come sometime during this forthcoming week. Drop me a card or give me a ring and let me know if you're coming, and when. You'll need a sleeping bag, some overalls or old clothes and some warm clothes too.

Hope to see you here soon!