

PINU

পুণ্য-প্রশস্তি

Punya - Prasasti
(in praise of the sacred)



2008

PUNYA - PRASASTI

(In Praise of the Sacred)

La Seveille
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This book is dedicated to the memory of
Srimati Sati Devi and Sri Lakshminarayan Chattopadhyaya



Sati Devi and Sri Lakshminarayan Chattopadhyaya c.1967

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Introduction

This book is based on accounts of the life and early death of Punyabrata Chattopadhyaya (1930-36), known as Pinu by his family.

The autobiographical writing by Pinu's mother, Sati Devi, written in Bengali, was begun twenty eight years after Pinu's death, but is as fresh and alive today as the events she described. She wrote poems herself and designed drawings for the katha (baby quilts she made from soft used saris for her children, grand-children and great-grand-children). At the time of Pinu's death she had ten children, three boys and seven girls, born between 1910 and 1935.

The life story written in Bengali by Pinu's father, Sri Lakshminarayan Chattopadhyaya in the Bengali year 1344 (1937), appeared a few months after the child's death, but his father's name was not on the original manuscript due to the fact that it was for private circulation to family and friends, who well knew the events described. It is written in the third person as an observer of events rather than as a participant in them, although it was evident that 'the father' was very much present and also pursuing his own dreams through the child.

The Bengali manuscripts and a translation into English have been brought together with the original drawings by Pinu and some new photographs from the family archive.

The location of the story is Gauhati, Assam, India. The family had moved there from Chinsurah, Hoogly District some years before Pinu's birth and he was the eighth child of Lakshminarayan and his wife, Sati Devi. His father was a respected teacher and learned in Sanskrit, Philosophy and English and the family were Brahmins.

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*'You are the father of all this life
And you are always aware and awake.'*



An autobiographical account by Sati Devi (Chattopadhyaya) as lived with her son, Punyabrata, known as Pinu, (1930-1936). Begun around 1964, twenty eight years after his death.

Twenty eight years have gone by (since Pinu's death). Now I think of all the storms that have blown over me. About my little boy. As if I can observe the olden days in front of me. This boy was born after five daughters. When he was three and a half we all went together to our ancestral home (Chinsurah) when my husband (she did not refer to him as her husband but as 'he' as was the custom) had the Puja vacation. I was then carrying in my arms my two and a half month old daughter (Lalita).

I went through trauma when my boy was born and passed through many hazards and lot of pain before the child was born. The boy was named Punyabrata. I lovingly called him Pinu. The son was about to be born and I was going through a lot of pain. At that time my oldest son-in-law became ill with smallpox. He lived in Gaya. As soon as he heard this my husband took some money and went to Gayadham. I stayed behind suffering the pains. The neighbours were looking after me. Two days after my husband left the son was born. My oldest daughter (Basanti/Basu) was with me as my husband had brought her from Gaya a few days before. Anyway in god's immense blessing my son-in-law became better. Everyone was very happy that Pinu was born after all the dangers and complexity. A son, born after great expectation and who had all our affection.

We went to our ancestral home and there, along with son and daughters and grand-daughter we slept on the floor. Had been sleeping like that for some days. Suddenly one morning I discovered Pinu's face very swollen. The doctor was consulted and said he must have caught cold. It was the month of Aswin. It was cold then, that was my luck! When my husband's vacation finished we returned to Gauhati and his swollen face became normal after a few days. After a month his face was again swollen. This time we were rather concerned and called the doctor, who examined urine and stools but nothing found. His blood was tested but nothing wrong. Then not only the face but the legs and hands swelled and this time my husband took Pinu to the big hospital. After a lot of tests they found the root of it- nephritis. Albumin was coming through his urine and doctors said this disease had no medicine. There is no special diet either. Salt was stopped, rice and many foods were stopped because Pinu's body could not bear them. That three and half year old son, how could he have that disease, without medicine or diet! Who was there to whom I could express what was going through my mind at that time. Assam is a wet land; he picked up nothing there. We went home during Puja and there he picked up this incurable disease.

The doctor finally gave a diet. Pure milk and fruit juice but Pinu's body could not take fruit juice easily and he suffered acidity and wind and his stools were bad. Yet he was gasping all the time as his body was swollen. It was almost impossible to watch him. I worried what good food I could give. Days passed Assam was a wet country; his disease was increasing day by day. He wore woollen clothes all the time, we stopped him wearing cotton. We bought a goat so Pinu had goats milk daily. That little boy what could he have done wrong that he caught this dangerous disease (karma).

What could I have done wrong at god's feet that I had to bear the suffering of this little boy and could not as a mother give my son anything to eat.

Fortunately Pinu was very restrained. He had no greed for food but at one point he didn't want only milk so the doctor said he could have a little khai (puffed rice) with milk. He didn't like it either. One day there was one mourri (another kind of puffed rice) in the mixture and Pinu called, "Ma, Ma." I rushed to see him holding that mourri in his hand and he said, "you are my mother and you have given me poison to eat." I was dumbstruck. I said just throw it on one side. He said, "first tell me you didn't give me poison." This was how days passed.

The disease was not getting better. Albumin increased in his urine. Alopathic, homeopathic all were tried. Nearly a year passed with great worry. He was suffering so much I could hardly watch him. What is the Almighty wishing, He only knows because He is the One wishing. With my mind and heart I called Him to make him better. I couldn't bear to see it any more. The doctor finally said, "I have already told you there is no cure but I believe it can be eased in a dry climate. In wet climate it increases. If you can take him to a dry climate as soon as possible then he will improve."

I faced a serious problem and began to think. Gauhati is a wet place and the disease started in Chinsurah. To make him feel better and hopefully to make him live we took him to Bhagalpur in case Pinu feels good with a change of air. There my oldest daughter was living. We arrived with the ill son and five daughters. After one and half months Pinu's illness remained the same. So we began Kaviraji treatment (ancient Indian medicine). The Kaviraj said Pinu would need manmanda. So we arranged this. Forty or fifty year old powdered rice and mankchu, powdered mixed together, boiled for a long time, strained and mixed with milk and sugar daily. There was a huge earthquake in Bihar just before this and my eldest son-in-law Priyanath Mukherjee was an important officer in Income Tax. In his honour a lot of people sent old rice but it was often very dirty and full of stones. We had to wash the rice carefully before it was powdered and from

Calcutta we brought a basketful of mankchu which had to be finely sliced like fish scales and spread over a madure (straw mat) to dry. When they were dry like paper they were ground in a pestle and mortar or in a silnorha (stone grinder). Then it was sieved in a thin cloth before boiling. The recipe was two spoons of rice powder, four spoons of kachu powder boiled for two and half hours, mixed with goats milk and sugar and given to Pinu.

This too was very painful work. The day I sliced kachu I almost collapsed. It took three to four hours to cut one into fine slices. If it was cut over a few days it became reddish. It didn't remain white, that's why it had to be done in one day. That's why it took three to four hours and in pain. The hand became almost paralysed. But this was the medicine and food for my son. This is how it was.

My husband's summer vacation was over and he went back to Gauhati where he was a professor in Gauhati Cotton College. My eldest son-in-law was very good and took responsibility for us all. Especially the child patient with great care and love.

We spent our time there well and suddenly my second daughter Annapurna had fever. That turned out to be typhoid. This daughter looked after my Pinu a lot. Told stories and kept him mentally occupied. Then I suffered a lot. Two small children with disease. I hardly had a moment to spare. Toileting, urinating, making food, each one had different needs. Pinu had hardly strength in his legs. When he went to toilet his legs had to be held under the knee, like that day and night four, five, six times the toilet, then urinating many times. In the night alone six, seven times. This urine had to be kept, measured boiled to observe how much albumin comes. If too much the cup became like yoghurt. If less like milk. If even less it was like 'ghoul' (buttermilk). We had to write down these descriptions. How many ounces, what does it look like etc. In the morning the results were sent to the doctor. When his disease started, the first year the urine was sent to a hospital which cost a lot of money. After the doctors said that if you take some in a spoon and hold it in the fire you can write the result. I could hardly sleep. That's how it went night after night. Not one but a few daughters had to be cleaned after toileting, feeding, and on top of it Anu was very ill and Pinu very ill and increasingly impatient. Doctors told me Pinu should not walk or cry a lot. This I had to remember. Whatever he needed and wanted if he didn't get it, he would start screaming. Everybody in the house, three, five, seven-year old daughters were always aware. One of Pinu's demands was to make images of gods

with dough. Day and night whenever he needed it the dough had to be made and given to him. He was always very happy and would make with expert hands Kali, Durga, Siv, Ganesh, Kartik, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Hiranyakhya, Krishna, Ajun, etc. He made them out of his own imagination. He didn't copy or see anything. Some people can draw by looking at something, but this is how exceptional the situation was. As soon as he demanded, it was made and given.

He made things beautifully and people enjoyed looking at them. Other people visited and enjoyed seeing them. When they went home they told others and by word of mouth it became known and more came to see the gods and goddesses made from dough. Some even took them home and kept them. We also kept them, Pinu's labour of love. They were so beautiful that those who hadn't seen them it was difficult to explain just how beautiful they were.

After five or six days they began to stink, then we had to throw them away. What else could I do. If it was made from earth we could have dried and kept them. He would only make out of dough..... Pinu's hands also sometimes became inert. His whole body used to stiffen. He lost his ability to speak and I used to think any minute he will die. What could I do.. I used to cry and get the neighbours to call the doctor. Doctor used to say that he hardly had any blood left and he's always playing with dough and water. Naturally he would stiffen up. Normally after giving hot compress it would reduce.

My next daughter's illness was increasing day by day. A thirteen-year old girl (Jogomaya) in our house was still well and she looked after the patients. My son-in-law did and my eldest daughter did. That was really a very hard time for me. Pinu already had a serious illness and on top of it he got pneumonia. Became constipated and stomach became inflated. He had difficulty breathing. He had to be massaged and warm compress given on chest and stomach.. Somehow he was made to go to the toilet. He nearly died in that kind of situation. In the meantime my second daughter was having blood in stools and doctors almost gave the final answer that she may not survive. She was given ice on the head and stomach and no end to her passing stools. She was 15 years old at that time and in the beginning the doctors that saw her were worried because of her age. Apparently 15 is a dangerous age for typhoid. Anyway that was the condition of my daughter, and son even worse. These disasters were over everybody's head. For seven or eight days she suffered a lot. The son lost consciousness and had difficulty breathing. Then the other three daughters

and the grand-daughter caught bronchitis. Which one do I see at this time. I was massaging old ghee and giving compress of akanda leaf one by one. Then my oldest daughter suddenly went into labour. I felt completely lost with so many patients. How much can one serve. Physically and mentally I was at my wits end. We wrote to Gauhati to ask (my husband) to come; sent telegrams and also wrote to our oldest son to come. Tried everywhere in Bhagalpur Town to get a nurse but couldn't find one. At that time we were not allowing our oldest daughter to do much. Only my 13 year old daughter was well. That Shejameye (third daughter) was my only support. How many persons can I serve. How many people's toilet and urine can I throw. Giving food, medicine, dietary treatment, I was losing my mental strength and forever calling god, "oh kind god give me please strength and energy. If I lose strength now who is going to look after these people." But I went on working with extraordinary stamina. The worry was not only for one person. How would Pinu get better and regain consciousness. How would my second daughter live. How would my oldest daughter give birth without difficulty. All these worries going round in my mind.

From the beginning Dr. Bhupati Mukherjee was looking after my second daughter (Anu). Another doctor also saw her. Bhupati Babu had already said he wouldn't be able to save her but also said he was not giving up hope. He suggested we get other doctors but I was against it. It would only create confusion between treatments. What else could they do. Bhupati Babu is a good doctor. If my daughter survives she will survive under his treatment. Anyway the three daughters and grand-daughter became slightly better whilst my second daughter was in the last stage. When a nurse was not found two or three neighbourly women came to look after her. Partly they were doing this out of respect for my oldest son-in-law and my husband whom they knew well. They used to love us. In this great trouble for two three days they came and looked after my daughter. I am grateful for life.

In the meantime my husband came from Gauhati and Annapurna said to him, "it was not possible you would not come and see me." She was happy to see her father but almost immediately after she became unconscious, became incoherent, avoided answering questions; any moment she could go. Those who came to look after her I will never forget their sympathy and identity. Next day just before evening my daughter died. For 21 days she fought the disease but the 22nd. day she emptied my heart.

Anu had cried almost every day, “why doesn’t my oldest brother come to see me.” This was the year he was taking MSc Botany and as soon as the exam finished he came about 8 or 9 o’clock. By then my daughter had lost her speech but she was conscious. My dear ‘mother’ stared at her Dada’s face and couldn’t say anything. Tears trickled from her eyes. My son Debabrata brought oranges and grapes for her. I squeezed them and tried to give the juice. Nothing went in. It went round her lips and came out because by that time her teeth were clenched. In early morning I went to clean her face. She spoke, “I am very unwell mother. Why have you come to see me. Why have you left Pinu?” She was on the verge of death but still thinking of Pinu’s good. Once I heard that and looking at her face I couldn’t stop my tears and they flowed. To become a mother is very painful. I told her that I would have a quick bath and go to see Pinu. The whole day she was given injections by doctors but they couldn’t keep her. Her father, as soon as he arrived, got another doctor but he too couldn’t do anything.

There is a little history of this second daughter of mine. My husband went to Kashi and was so full of reverence and love for the Mother (goddess) Annapurna that he found it difficult to leave the image and come home. In front of the temple to Annapurna he cried and cried and eventually became unconscious. Couldn’t leave his ‘mother’. My brother-in-law (Jageshwar) went with him to Kashi. He wrote and told me this. He is the one who managed to bring his older brother back. My brother-in-law is called Nani (nickname). Soon after he came back I was pregnant with this daughter.

My husband believed that because he could not leave ‘mother’ Annapurna she herself came to get rid of the suffering and kindly arrived as the daughter. This daughter was born in Chinsurah and he was in Gauhati. As soon as he heard that we had a daughter he wrote, “please look after this girl carefully. She is Om Ma Annapurna. She has come as a daughter bringing compassion.” I also thought I am an ordinary person. If a goddess wants to be born in my humble womb that is incredible. My husband had that amazing belief. My husband wrote quite a few letters giving advice. Couple of them secretly I had washed in Ganges water and dried like a birth certificate but I didn’t tell anyone else, only my husband. How come I washed these letters in dirty Ganges water of Bhadramash (rainy season) but there is no mark and ink was not washed out. Amazing! I used to look at them from time to time and knew the great kindness of my goddess ‘mother’ (Annapurna). I must explain why I washed them in Ganges water. In our country there are strict rules about how to behave after a child is born. You must not be touched or touch anyone and whatever is given has to be thrown away. This is why I took the letters and washed

them. I myself took them to Ganges and dipped them, always worrying in case somebody saw them. I had to do it secretly and dry them secretly. Amazing that the ink is intact. These letters are forty two years old and still seem recently written. I also sometimes feel the blessings of my 'mother' but never told anyone.

When my daughter was dying she was gasping and was taken to lie under the tulsi (basil) plant. They were reciting religious texts. The father of the daughter said to her, "Anu, your father Biswanath, has come to take you. Go and pronam him." My 'mother' Anu was taking the hands up to pronam (pray to) him but each time they fell down. That was quite a scene. At that time my husband asked about those letters. I think he wanted to show them to my son-in-law. I said I had left them in Gauhati. My daughter was dark, her hair like Elokeshi, her face was very beautiful, her eyes particularly beautiful and the glow of the goddess used to come from her dark body. Anyway this particular test of mine ended as she went to her father, Biswanath.(Lord Siva). My oldest son Debu who had a rather soft heart arrived that very day. When Anu went and I began to cry he fainted. When I took him to Pinu and gave him a fan to fan Pinu he fainted. I ran in holding him up. My daughter or son-in-law came and locked us in. Pinu in the meantime was unconscious. If he regained consciousness he would probably have had heart failure. Anyway that was my first real mourning. Didn't even get time to weep and cry because I had to control myself for Pinu and my oldest daughter who was suffering birth pains. Of whom can I think and whose face can I see. God gave me indescribable sorrow. I silently bore that.

The time for impurity was coming to an end. We had to trim the nails. My husband brought a barber under the mango trees and had taken me there to trim my nails and would take me to the Ganges after that to do my ablutions.

In the meantime the aunt of my son-in-law had gone to our house crying and asking for me. 'Please come, please come. My Bouma (daughter-in-law) is behaving peculiarly,' (gone into labour). How could I go to the Ganges at that time. Then my husband said, "run home first and put your head under the tap and then go and see Basu. One who is coming is more important. One who has gone is no more, so if you cry all your life and crack your head she will not come back."

True we can't ever get her back. It was true but at that time one doesn't like listening to that. I somehow accepted it and took my husband's advice

and patiently bore everything. My little thin unconscious boy, I looked after him; my little girl in my arms one year; my grand-daughter one and half years I looked after them all. When the next daughter was born to my oldest daughter she suffered a lot. Dr. Bhupati Babu delivered the baby. It wasn't a lady doctor after all. The lady doctor herself went and brought Bhupati Babu. He came and delivered, God tested me by giving me lot of worries and pains at the same time. I still shudder today when I think of it.

The three daughters who were ill were a little better but quite weak. Pinu had regained consciousness. He was a little better and the days were passing somehow. If I didn't eat rice my oldest son-in-law wouldn't eat and go to work. That's why I had some rice and a glass of water and finished that routine. Then I could go and tell him that I had eaten and he would eat and go to work.. I am very lucky to have a son-in-law like that. My daughter could not look after me because she had just given birth. That's why my son-in-law tried hard to feed me every day. I also did not want to disappoint anybody. After all in this world stomach is the biggest thing. You have to eat. Today a little rice, tomorrow a bit more. Little by little I ate whatever I could. Didn't want people to suffer for me. That would make me hate myself if others suffered for me so I always put something in my mouth whether I liked it or not. The aunt of my son-in-law was always surprised to see this. She would say " how strong she was. How able to bear the sufferings, how intelligent etc." and used to say, "when our brother died, for three months we didn't get up or eat. Others came and took us, bathed us, fed us." Anyway, indescribable pain. God has given me the power to bear and I have born it, that's what I now think.

It was decided that my husband and oldest son would go back to Gauhati, leaving me there. They had now finished the religious ceremony for 'my mother', fed the Brahmins, Pinu was a little better but I didn't want to stay in Bhagalpur any more. I also wanted to go back to Gauhati. On the eleventh day I bathed my oldest daughter and leaving her there I went back to Gauhati with my son and daughters. I was thinking all the time alas, we came to Bhagalpur to give Anu away. Wept all the way to Gauhati and on arriving my heart was breaking with the memory of Annapurna in every room, in the sun outside. Anu loved trees, flowers, fruit. Before we left she had planted many trees and shrubs and in the rains they had become full of flowers and fruit. Today she is not there. Who was going to caress and love her plants and flowers. Whenever there was a new flower on a plant she would hold the plant and caress it and show the neighbours. It gave her tremendous pleasure. She had a Mynah bird and bought a little ankle bell (in Bhagalpur) to put on. I brought it all the way

to fulfill her dream. When we had gone to Bhagalpur we had left the bird with a neighbour Hem Babu. When we came back I brought the bird and put the bells on its ankle. Hem Babu was like my son. Always helped us in need. He loved my children. Used to call me Kakima. But the Mynah bird didn't last long and suddenly died. When I wrote that Pinu drank goats milk, we kept the goats with a doctor. Doctor was my husband's student and Pinu's doctor. His name was Lahri. We brought the goats back. As soon as my husband had arrived in Bhagalpur, Anu asked about the goats. She loved Pinu and served him well and liked the goats.

Anyway days passed. Again Pinu's illness was not getting better. The doctor came every day. It increased a few days, became better a few days like that. I had lost my peace of mind. I called god, I always called god, "oh kind and compassionate please make Pinu better. I cannot bear his suffering". The doctors again asked us to take him to a dry climate. I just shivered. How can I. Last time I had to give Anu, and my son hardly got better. I always think of the possible dangers. The doctors kept saying there is no medicine, only solution is a dry climate. In the end thinking of Pinu in case he gets better and is saved I finally decided to go to Hazaribag. I plucked up enough courage.

According to Doctor's instructions really we had to go. None of my own people, husband or sons could go with me. My husband was working, sons studying they couldn't come. My husband had taken me to Bhagalpur, at that time there was a vacation in the college. After the vacation when he went back my oldest son-in-law and daughter took responsibility and looked after us with care and affection. My second daughter died after serious illness and my husband arrived only one or two days before she died, but my oldest son-in-law took all the responsibility so I never felt I was abroad.

This time I was getting worried. How could we go without an escort. Not only the thin ill son, I had five daughters. My youngest only five months. How would they take it, how would they survive, what should I do, I could hardly sleep. Anyway, through gods unending blessings I kept my head. I suddenly remembered that my aunt had a son not working and at home because he wasn't keeping well. He was a little older than me. (Ganesh, from Bhangamora). So I wrote to him. "Dada, will you take responsibility and take us to Hazaribag and you will also feel a bit better there." He agreed and came to Gauhati from my ancestral home.

With him, a cook and five daughters and ill son we began our journey to Hazaribag. Aghrayan month (winter) was nearly ending. My husband came as far as Amingaon and put us on the train before going back to Gauhati. We remembered the name of Ma Durga and began our journey. When I arrived in Calcutta there my sons and brother Kali were at the station. My brother worked in railways. He is the brother who had come from my mother's womb and his name was Kalicharan Bandopadyhya and he stays in the railway quarters in Tala. He took us all there to have food. We ate and came back to the station. The cook looked after our luggage. My sons also looked after the luggage and allowed the cook to have a bath and fed him luchi (puri) from a shop. After they reserved a first class compartment and saying 'Durga Durga' we began our journey that evening.

Hazaribag, Hazaribag! The town is a long way from the station, we had to go by bus. Quite a problem taking all of them in the bus in Winter. I forgot to say one thing. After the train left Calcutta either just before or after the train left Bardhaman a thief jumped in the running train. We had made the compartment into a room and everyone was sleeping. My husband told me to keep a window slightly open so we opened it and put a stick there. Suddenly with a loud noise the stick fell down and a young man with a vest and strong body jumped in front of me. I was shocked and could hardly sleep. Two little daughters, one under my arm and the other hand holding the boy on the seat. The cook and Dada were sleeping on the bunk above. The door was locked from inside and the thief came through the window absolutely next to me, next to my body. I shouted, 'Dada Dada Cook Cook' but before they came down the thief jumped out of the window again. He is inside my inner eye. God knows what would have happened if I was asleep, but the Ever Kind is always kind.

My husband had a young friend whom he looked after like a brother. He was from Chinsurah and his name was Hem Chandra Mukherjee, Prof. of St Columbus. He was son-in-law of Anurupa Debi. My husband asked him to rent a house for us and look after us. I called him Hem Thakurpo and my sons and daughters called him Hem Kaka. He took us to his house and his wife and daughters received us well. We ate and in the afternoon he brought us to our rented accommodation and explained everything. The house belonged to the grand-daughter of Bhudev Babu. Her son was also a Professor in St. Columbus College. His name was Raghunath Babu. His mother was like my grand-mother. She was the aunt of my young sister-in-law (Kali's wife). She was one of our own. She came often and loved us very much. We got strength by seeing her. Where we were there were not

many people nearby. Open fields around and town a bit far. At night the Shantals (a tribal people) used to be drunk and noisy and laughed. The barking of the fox and their drunken noise and laughter made me quite afraid so I could hardly sleep. Pinu was already suffering from his disease, often going to toilet, vomiting, the youngest daughter only five months, next one two years five months. She needed to be taken up at night to urinate. These three required my attention all the time and because of Pinu I could hardly sleep. Then Hem Thakur Po came morning and evening to take news. His college was not far from our house. Their house was two to four miles from town too. My Didima came every day to see us.

Time was passing quite well. But the very reason we had gone there to make Pinu better was not successful. His illness was not going. I was full of worry all the time. During the Christmas vacation my husband, my sons and son-in-law and daughter and an aunt came to see how we are for a few days. After a couple of months we got news that my aunt was very ill. I plucked up courage to send my Dada back. My aunt had already lost seven sons and two daughters and the only one alive was this Dada. His name was Ganesh Chandra Bandopadhyaya. He was very reluctant to go leaving us alone abroad. I thought if my aunt dies she will not see her only son before she dies and will not receive the water and the fire from him. That is not right. I had to persuade him a lot before he went back.

Pinu's illness became more acute. I stayed there alone, my only support was god, and then a crisis suddenly came and I had to call a doctor. Hem Thakur Po stayed a long way from us, but I had to get a doctor. He brought Bankim Babu, Civil Surgeon (ed. probably trained abroad). When he saw Pinu and what he said made my heart jump. He raised his voice and almost with pride shouted, "that little boy with only 7 per cent albumin has a mother who believes he will live." After that he said he would take the patient for only seven days provided I give the medicine he recommends, food he suggests and test the urine every day. Wherever he asked me to take the urine I must do and gave more instructions. If the albumin came down he would accept the patient and do the treatment. I cried a lot and tried to make my mind understand as I looked after Pinu. My husband was not with me. If the illness increased what should I do in this foreign country. I was worried and sad. What could I do but cry.

This doctor rather rudely said a lot in front of me though he said truth, but the truth rings on my heart. Whatever he organised I tried to do. He said, "soak some tishi (linseed) in warm water and then strain it and give the water to drink." Then small green figs had to be boiled and the water

strained with sugar and given. Semolina to be boiled and once cooled mixed with soda and made into chapatis to feed him. We did all these things. The hospital was far and every day the urine was examined there. It cost 5 rupees a day. Going and coming by rickshaw 7 rupees a day, we spent a lot of money. Another thing he said was to take cream off the milk before giving him milk. How could we do that. We brought all kinds of instruments. I couldn't get the cream off. Maybe in their country they get milk without cream. I worked very hard but couldn't get rid of it. What a serious problem and a crisis for all of us. They milked the cow in front of me and tried to get rid of the cream. The son was very hungry and cried. My mind was restless and upset. What could I do; doctor's instructions. I had to boil the milk and feed the child. I passed a really hard time. Another thing he said that the child should only wear white, nothing coloured. I went through another difficult time for the life of the child. Spent a lot of money, bought white woollen material to make coat and pants, shirt and punjabi because my darling boy would always wear woollen clothes. He would never wear anything cotton. Little boy soon soiled the white clothes that's why we had made everything coloured. At that time doctors had never recommended white. Cost 60-65 rupees for each warm white suit. If this made Pinu better it would be a great help. But it didn't at all in any way.

Afterwards the doctor washed his hands of him. My mind was like a storm. What else could I do to make Pinu better. Suddenly I remembered that when I left Bhagalpur I had taken advice of local people there. I wrote to Doctor Paresh Babu giving a description of Pinu's disease. He sent two doses of medicine and that made him better for a few days. He got some strength and was walking about a bit. Doctor said he could eat everything and he was quite alright. Then I thought maybe if I could take Pinu to this doctor he could see him personally and examine him and under his treatment Pinu might get better. My mind became anxious about it so I wrote to my husband and he also agreed.

My Dada had in the meantime come back. My aunt was better. He had five or six children but he brought his only son with him (Anil). He was crying seeing his father about to leave so what else could he do but bring him. Another little one added to my list. He was 3 at that time. He stopped my Dada doing everything. Wherever he went the child wanted to go. The house was far from town and his demands were not easy. You can't always easily get a vehicle. In the meantime Didimoni came and was very angry with this Civil Surgeon, with the big mouth who shouts and screams.

Why did her son bring him. He couldn't cure the disease only scream a lot. She liked me a lot and when I cried it made her very sad.

We were thinking of going to Mihijam to see this doctor, but who would organise it and rent a house. I gave the job to my son-in-law. At that time he was in Bhagalpur. I wrote to him about finding a house to rent near the doctor and to take us to Mihijam. He organised all that and sent a person to take us. This person was like a brother to Priyanath and worked in the same office. His name was Mahindra. Very nice boy, called me mother and cared for my second daughter when she was unwell. I call him Moni and because he respects me very much Priya had sent him so I don't have any hesitation or shyness. He took all responsibility. He rented a place, contacted the doctor and came to Hazaribag to take us. As soon as he arrived he said, "Ma, we have to go to Mihijam straight away. I have contacted the doctor and he will take responsibility for the patient according to Priyada's instruction. After taking you to Mihijam I will have to go back to Bhagalpur. Come."

I was very pleased to see Moni after a long time but couldn't get up and go just like that. I had to give up the house. I needed a day. Had to pay the milkman, anyway he gave me a day and we organised everything. Went like that. Pinu was impatient so we decided not to go by train which took more time. We would go by car. It took only 5 hours, cost a lot that's true but Pinu would be comfortable. Cost was 70-80 rupees. The car in the meantime went to Ranchi but didn't come back. We hoped to leave at 5 in the morning. We got up at 3, all organised ready to go. The idea was Dada would stay one more day because the washerman had not returned the clothes and there were more people to pay. He would finish the work and come by train. Because we would reach in 5 hours we didn't prepare food to take. But the car didn't come back so Moni and Dada went and rented another car and we had the same arrangement. He took half the price before leaving and the rest on arrival.

It was 6.30 or 7 before we left. It was the month of Chaitro (roughly corresponds to March/April - there are twelve months in the Bengali calendar) and earth was very hot. We remembered the name of Durga and got in, the thin ill boy, my nephew, 5 daughters, Moni, the cook and me. Luckily the car was large but we had no difficulty. After some time we had a burst tyre. After a couple of hours a second burst tyre. The driver went to the local grocer and with his help mended it. After another half hour another burst tyre. Our bad luck was increasing. The wind was blowing like fire. Couldn't sit under a tree, no-body around, we were all thirsty

and hungry. Whatever we carried was finished. What could I give them. What a problem. We were waiting for the car to be right in this hope but the day went by. Because of Pinu's suffering we did not go by rail but in the end we had more suffering. If you have suffering written on your fortune no-body can stop it.

So sitting in the field we were all suffering. No sweets or anything. The children suffering. It became late. Moni said, "Ma you cannot stay here with animals and snakes." I said what can I do. Moni said that nearby was a dak bungalow and in the end we all went there. It was 10 o'clock at night. A few Memsahibs (white women) brought bottles of wine. What could we do. We were stuck. Where could we go. The bungalow had only 2 rooms. It was not that we had come on official work. If no work you can't stay there.

Moni said we could not stay there. "These people may get drunk and humiliate you in a bad way. They may not understand at all that we are rather stuck. They would not appreciate our helplessness. They might ask us if we are on official business. I have to tell the truth, I cannot lie. They will not understand our helpless situation. I cannot trust them. If they treat us badly and humiliate us, especially with all these girls with us, I am afraid ." We had left Dhanbad a few miles before. Moni said, " let us go back to Dhanbad to the house of Saroj Sen." I said how could we go walking at that time of night with all the children. How could we introduce ourselves. Moni said we would just have to be truthful, that's all. I got more worried about my son and the little children. Two or three miles is a long way to walk. The road was not great and no street lights. Then the driver said he would drive us there slowly taking about 2 hours. That's what happened. Again we started, taking the name of Durga, and arrived at Saroj Sen's house at midnight.

We introduced ourselves and he was told I was Priyanath's mother-in-law and why we were going to Mihijam. Moni gave the story of our journey. "I know you will give us a roof over our heads." We thought at that time everyone would be asleep and we would have to wake everybody. But we didn't have to because Saroj Babu was going to Calcutta for work and the train was at night so everyone was still up. Saroj Babu introduced us to his mother and wife and left. They welcomed us affectionately and gave us a room. Whatever bedding we had with us we spread and got something from here and there. They gave Horlicks to the children. They made hot water for us. Poor ill child suffered all day; as soon as he lay down he fell asleep. I think I was a bit worried to let the child sleep on the floor so

Saroj Babu's wife gave a small wooden bed. I found a little peace after he slept. Then Saroj Babu's mother said why don't you and your little daughters have some food and rice, they must be starving. I said, "please do not mind, we don't eat anything not cooked by Brahmins and though the daughters are young we don't let them either. Allow our cook to cook rice and vegetable. Whole day we have not eaten." The daughters were allowed to eat what they had cooked and after eating one handful they vomited because they said it smelled of onion. They had cooked mushur daal (lentils) and small fish with onion and our daughters had never had onion. But the wife and mother got upset about why the daughters vomited. Then Jogu, Apu, Tonu said it was the smell of onion. They were shocked and surprised.

I told them everything; that in our house onion, fish, meat didn't come. Even bread and biscuits didn't. My husband was very orthodox and followed the rules and regulations strictly. Whatever the rules of being a Brahmin, after the sacred thread ceremony he followed everything. He ate nothing from the shop, not even sandesh and rosgulla (milk sweets). If invited to a wedding he would have a little ghur (molasses) from the worshipping room of that house. My only sister-in-law was a widow at the age of 9 or 10 and he taught her all the rules, how to live like a widow. At that time he also gave up eating fish. When I got married I was 11 years 6 months. My husband 20 or 21. I did not understand everything but heard there was a great uproar in our family - what to feed the groom who did not eat fish! That was long, long ago.

It turned out that the uncle of Mr. Sen's wife used to live in Gauhati and knew my husband. She was happy and excited to hear my husband's name saying, "who would not know your husband." Whilst she was staying with her uncle, whatever she heard or saw about my husband she remembered and was happy. She was very young then but whoever saw my husband once would always remember him. He was good looking and handsome. He was not only Professor of Sanskrit in the college but in whichever house in town there was any religious ceremony, wedding, sacred thread ceremony (for boy's initiation), funeral, rice-eating ceremony (for babies), he would always take responsibility and perform the duties, standing by them. If anyone was ill he would be there, bringing ice, medicine. If anyone died he would give the shoulder to take the body to cremation and stay all night by a patient. He would take the dead body to cremation, sing the 'Hori Nam' (Chanting of the names of Krishna) and explain Gita, Bhagabat. He was President of the Sanskrit Toll, a wise and knowledgeable person and called by everybody in need. They accepted

him as part of their life. Their work would not proceed if he didnt go and stand by them. The people in the town depended on him. He never took any money to read and explain Gita or Bhagabat to people. When this girl was young she had heard his story from her uncle and when she met my husband she liked him straight away. That's why she was happy and pleased to know the name of my husband and allowed my cook to cook rice and daal.)

Saroj Babu's mother was a widow so used only stone utensils. She gave them all. Anyway I said it was so late we would have boiled rice with potatoes. They had no potatoes so daal and rice was cooked, my cook had a bath and then cooked and at 2 oclock we four ate; me, Moni, cook and driver. We were very hungry. Rice and daal were like nectar. I don't think I had ever had only rice and daal in my life. I always thought daal (lentils) was to bind rice and then with boiled potato or something fried, or vegetable curry and eat. But that day it was wonderful, we ate well and even now I remember how wonderful it was, like nectar.

I remember still how much we enjoyed the taste. All the people in Saroj Babu's house were very nice. At night, eleven of us arrived and their hospitality was amazing, with great care and affection. They could hardly sleep but I'll never forget their care for all the guests. The wife of Saroj Babu, as soon as she heard my identity, respected me a lot. Debu and Basu, she asked about them. (Eldest son and daughter). Called me Mashima (aunt). Saroj Babu's mother was also wonderful. When she heard about the strict rules my husband followed and that he was very restrained and looking after others and a learned man, she was even more astonished and caring. Continued to say there were not many like him in the world. My husband used to buy dry wood and keep it for burning dead bodies in case someone needed it. He would bear the expense himself. At midnight, 2 or 4 o'clock ,people would come to call my husband to take the wood. Sometimes he could hardly sleep in peace. For the orphans and poor he gave money to buy books. Sometimes he kept them in the house, paid their fees for school or college. Saroj Babu's wife had heard all this from her uncle and as soon as she heard who he was she said, "who will not know him."

We spent the night well, chit-chatting and talking. As soon as it became morning they bought semolina and ghee and made halva, we all had it. Their sons also helped them. My daughters felt great relief eating halva. The night before, they went to sleep after vomiting. Late at night when the food was cooked I did not wake them. My mind was rather upset that I

had eaten and they had not but because they were sleeping I did not disturb them.

The driver got some new tyres and said, “ let’s start straight away”, but Saroj Babu’s mother and wife said, “ who knows what will happen, have rice before you leave.” I also thought it was a good idea. So they made kitchuri (a dish of rice mixed with lentils and containing vegetables), brought potatoes and we ate soon and started around 8 o’clock. The five daughters, my nephew, my thin little boy, Moni, the cook and me. We created a lot of problems for Saroj Babu’s family. God was so kind to us. They patiently accepted all these people with smiling faces. I hope the kind god will look after them and give them peace. This I prayed and remembered Ma Durga before we began our journey.

It was the month of Chaitro and the earth so hot that in one hour we had another burst tyre. We mended it but again in an hour another burst. This time we really suffered a lot. All round were open fields and the wind was like fire. On top of it a dust storm. Dust came in our eyes and faces. I felt as if the fire was burning our bodies. Couldn’t drop the child on my lap and I felt afraid the branches might fall on our head. I began to pray to god. There was no shelter nearby or house. No human being, we were dying of thirst. The diseased child made our condition terrible. This was how we spent 2 hours. Everywhere around were coal mines. Finally nature calmed a bit and I saw a man appearing with a bucket and a rope. He was coming to take some water. Nearby there was a well. We asked him to give us a bucket of water which he kindly gave and saved our lives. There was no food in the car and it was 2 o’clock. The children were hungry so I said there is nothing but jars of plum marmalade. That’s all, because in Hazaribag there were big plums and I made jam. Sometimes one prefers this to rosagulla (milk sweets).

Those few bottles became very handy. The sun was hot, everyone hungry and thirsty, then these huge plums. I gave two each time and they kept them in their mouths. Then some water helped to cope with hunger and thirst. Moni would not take them. He said “I cannot take this soft sticky stuff”. I made him take one and then he said, “it is not at all soft and gooey. It’s really lovely”. He began to eat. How long could we stay by the road. The car was not getting right. The place was probably called Jamtara, about an hour from Mihijam. The lorries were passing and we asked them to take us. One said he could only take luggage not human beings. That was an awful time. Our throats dry, our lives nearly gone in hunger and thirst. How long could we last in the fiery weather. The little

girl suckling could not find enough milk and tried to eat me. I felt really sorry for her.

Finally a lorry stopped after a lot of entreaty and said he would take 2 rupees per person. We bought the tickets. Me, five girls, Moni Baba, my nephew and the thin boy. All nine of us started. The cook stayed with the car. When it arrived in Mihijam we would give the rest of the money.

Calling Ma Durga we got into the lorry, but Ma was not kind. She added suffering on suffering. In the lorry we nearly died with the jerking and shaking of the lorry, as if more fire came into the stomach and we all felt sick. It was beyond my imagination. Everyone was holding one child in their lap. I could not pass one child to another. Every minute I thought my life was going out of my body.

That's how we reached Mihijam, an amazing place. No cars, rickshaws, no horse carriage or bullock carts. Anyway Moni started walking on the hot road with my nephew. I carried the thin boy. He was just over 5 years then and tall for his age. Because the body was swollen he was quite heavy. There is a saying, 'the tree does not find its fruits heavy', but I must be truthful that even as a mother I could hardly carry my son. I could not put him down. My waist was nearly breaking. It was almost impossible. My eyes were full of tears. What suffering! The land was cracking in the heat and the air like fire. How harrassed we were.

Now I felt sad we had left our cook behind. Pinu had a rule that he would not touch anyone who smoked cigarettes or chewed tobacco. Luckily we got a cook who didn't do any of these things. In any problem like this he would have picked him up. I felt sad we didn't bring him with us. Because we were late the person who rented the house thought we were not coming and had locked the house and gone away. Moni said he would go and find him. In the heat he went and couldn't find him. Then, appreciating our suffering he said he would jump over the wall and see if he could open the door from inside. "Wait in the shadow a bit." Walls in that country are low, 6 to 8 hands high. Inside there was no shadow and we could not open any room. Moni went to the doctor's house to get a rope, bucket and key. He had asked him to leave the key there. We needed water from the well as we were nearly dying of thirst. The hot air had gone in our stomachs in the lorry and created a burning sensation. We hoped to have some water to quench our thirst. Our feet were also burning. If we could only throw water on the floor but there was no chance. Moni was not returning. We hoped he would come back soon. Suddenly I noticed a woman taking

water from a well near the house. I asked her, “ whose well is this, can one drink this water?” She said; “ the well belongs to this house and the water is very good.” I asked her to fetch water for us. She was very kind and brought water. Drinking that we saved our lives. How sweet was the water and how cold.

Our lives were saved. We put water on our hands and feet. I asked what her caste was. She said they were potters. We can drink their water. After all they make our pitchers and buckets. I asked for two pots of water and said I would pay for the pots. She was very pleased and said, “ if you want me to work for you I would love to.” In the meantime, Moni came back and said the owner didn't leave the key with the doctor. If we had to break the lock we would have to pay for a new one. That's what we did.

A new place, didn't know where to buy things or drop a letter. No shops nearby. We did what people did when they came from Asansol. So hot, none of the children went out. They were crying a lot and hanging round me. What could I do. How could I clean the house, cook, feed the children. I couldn't do anything. They were like leeches. What a pity I didn't bring the cook. The suffering of the road, of hunger. Poor Moni was suffering for us. I couldn't get peace of mind until I cooked and gave him food. He was trying hard to find this and that. To clean the kitchen and cook.

At this moment Pinu began to cry because he wanted to write a letter to his father. His father was at that time in Syllhet. Gone for a meeting of the Toll. He was Chairman of the Sanskrita Tolls. Three times a year he went to Sylhet. In the months of Chaitra, Jaistha and Bhadra. Pinu was counting the days when his father would return to Gauhati.

After Pinu became unwell he would draw pictures, make sculptures of gods and goddesses. This was his daily routine. 20/25 pictures he drew, immaculately without copying anything, every day. When he was four and a half years he drew a picture of Ma Durga. That one he painted and framed. Every year during Durga Puja Pinu asked his father to worship that image.

Pinu's father would usually go to Chinsurah just before the Puja holidays. A well-wisher had looked after my husband in a difficult time. His name was Ashutosh Chattopadhyaya. He loved my husband more than his own life. He worshipped Durga during Puja in his own house, that's why Pinu's father went to him from Gauhati to help with all the arrangements. That he

had asked my husband to come, and when (my husband) was there he could do something for the worshipping of Ma Durga, this made him feel honoured.

In the meantime, the Durga drawn by Pinu was not worshipped . Pinu would cry and request his father to worship the 'Mother' drawn by his son, saying, " you would go to worship the Durga of your older brother." I once said, because he was crying, "don't worry, your older brothers will read the text and do the Puja for your Ma Durga." That made Pinu cry more. 'His Mother would be worshipped by his older brothers! They are Babu's of Calcutta; eat eggs and meat!' They didn't eat at home but Pinu would tease them and say they were Calcutta Babus. Pinu believed that those who worshipped Ma Durga didn't eat fish or meat. He always saw his devoted Brahmin father and formed this opinion that way. Then he realised that his 'Mother' would not be worshipped and decided from then on Basanti Puja (Spring) would be worshipped using his image.

There was no time. The child had no time. He said he did not want the Puja of Ram, he wanted the Puja of the Demons. The demon King Ravanna worshipped Ma Durga out of season, in Springtime. Let that be his worshipping too. He immediately wrote to his father about it. As soon as he returned, "please do a Basanti Puja on the Ma Durga I have drawn." To satisfy his demand, postcards, envelopes, paper, pencils, colours, all drawing equipment had to be kept and had to be given as soon as he demanded them. When he demanded this postcard, he was given it and as soon as he had finished writing it it had to be put in a postbox. He cried and cried. What could we do. Moni took the letter to the postbox.

When his father returned to Gauhati and received the letter, he did Basanti Puja for three days from the very next day. Fortunately he had returned the day before the Puja day. Pinu timed the letter in such a way that if it was one day late Basanti Puja could not have been done. This worried him very much because he believed that no-one but his father could do the worshipping and that during Aswin he (father) would always go to Chinsurah anyway. Also Pinu must have intuitively known that he would not live- we didn't. I could not believe it in my heart and mind that he would go. After the Puja and during Vijaya, (my husband) bought 5 kilos of sweets and asked the two neighbour's girls and their aunt to distribute them in the lane to all the children. Tina and the two daughters loved Pinu and were rather pleased that the Ma Durga drawn by Pinu had been worshipped and were pleased to distribute the Prasad (offering). A bit of the offering from that Puja my husband sent in the letter. Pinu was so

happy receiving that in Mihijam. He broke it into little bits. The flowers and sweet he gave to everybody, and after he himself had some.

That letter was carefully kept. Alas the letter is still with me. I sometimes bring it out and read and cry. That Durga drawn by him I also keep carefully. Poor boy did not see with his own eyes that his 'Mother' had been worshipped. He left in the month of Agrayan. I have hardened my mind and wept and wept for three more years and worshipped that image. Got to complete for 4 years once you start the worshipping. In the same way he did the Jagadhatri Puja (for the goddess who holds the world together). The first year there was music. We fed the Brahmins very well. About 400 people were invited. I made all the sweets myself. This worshipping was done with pomp and grandeur in case by worshipping the Goddess of Energy he was finally released from his illness. The next year it was done with great difficulty. Pinu was almost going, and went soon after the worshipping was over. Similarly we had to do two more years to fulfill Pinu's vow. His father worshipped the image drawn by him, in Aswin, using also an earthenware pot. So many things Pinu managed to get us to do I think.

In the meantime with difficulty (in Mihijam) I cooked and fed everyone. Poor Moni had suffered a lot and I don't think I could feed him properly. Because Moni was late my son-in-law sent a telegram to ask me to send him back immediately. Luckily the cook arrived early in the morning and my Dada next day. Then I let Moni go. Three or four days after arriving in Mihijam I got a letter from my older sister-in-law that one of my Dada's daughters was very ill. 'If you want to see her before she dies come straightaway'. My Dada said how could he go leaving me in a foreign country. We hadn't found out anything about the place yet. "I don't think I can go and make her better. I would not be able to save her by going. If she is to live, she will live." I faced a serious crisis. I had no power over Dada who had come to take responsibility for me. That was all very good but if the girl died my sister-in-law would forever say that he looked after his sister's family in need but not his own daughter. It would be natural for her to think so. So I plucked up courage and, depending on god, forced Dada to go back.

He went in the morning and that afternoon my third daughter Jogomaya had a temperature and I was very afraid. From next morning she became unconscious. The whole body became yellow. With tremendous headache she was banging her head but couldn't speak. She was without consciousness. I called the doctor. He came and said it was very bad

malaria. Immediately we had to inject. I told the doctor that when my second daughter had temperature the doctors in Bhagalpur said it was malaria and gave an injection. That disease increased and she had typhoid and died there . She was 15.

Now this daughter was also 15 and I was unsure. Then the doctor said, “if the mother is full of doubt let’s not do it”, but the next day he said that the patient was out of his control. Then you can imagine my mind. When I think of it now I shudder. Last time I sacrificed a 15 year old girl. Now this daughter is so ill she has lost consciousness. The colour of the toilet was like young turmeric root. In her delirium she was not keeping her clothes on her body and all the clothes are full of toilet. She looked like a dead woman. My condition was indescribable. What could I do. How could I keep my head. No-one was there in this crisis. My Dada was not nearby. Anu was never unconscious; only the day before she died, whereas Jogomaya was unconscious on the first day. I was at my wits end seeing all the symptoms. In this crisis, in my heart, my life was drying out. I was calling always to Almighty God, kind god, and it must be his unending kindness to me that I didn’t become mad.

But I kept my mind firm and head normal to do everything necessary. The thin little ill boy and nine month old baby in my lap, the one above only two and a half years old and my nephew only three. Who should I look to and what could I feed them; whose cough and toilet could I clean first. The big girl was herself in an incredible condition. This I had to cope with day and night. I was praying to god just to make sure I could keep my wits about me and at least keep me healthy, otherwise who would look after them. Everyone was helpless.

Dr. Paresh Babu was looking after them. I told him, “this patient I am offering to you.. You will make her better and save her. Even if you say it is beyond you I will not let you go. I am trying to gain strength and continue to serve everyone.” We had written to my husband and sent a telegram again and again but he couldn’t come because in our Gauhati house he had guests. The whole family of Roma Prashad Mukherjee had arrived. He was unable to leave before they went. My mind in the meantime was even more disturbed. More symptoms had shown in Jogomaya and consciousness hadn’t returned. For a month she had been unconscious. After 8 or 10 days my Dada came back but no change in my daughter.

My son-in law with two grand-daughters and his parents and sister arrived. He had been transferred to Darbhanga so he was taking his parents to Purulia which was their home. I was in the meantime really suffering because of my daughter, so they came to see us. At that time her temperature had not gone down for 13 days and many symptoms. My husband couldn't come. On the 14th. day my husband finally arrived. Until then I spent days and nights with the patient, and looking after the little ones too. Don't know how I spent the days and at night hardly any sleep. My head was always worried with fear. Not only because I couldn't look after the children but the cook slept quite far off and the walls were low so from the verranda I could see 2 miles across fields. A thief or dacoit could easily cross the wall. I was terrified really. I used to call the ever kind god and go out onto the verranda

I noticed an amazing thing though. Every day three or four dark black dogs would come to our house after midnight. There was a mango grove and two mango trees inside our boundary. They used to climb the trees and from the branch come to our wall. Then they climbed on the toilet and came to the trees inside our compound. I thought how come I never see a dog all day, until 10 or 11 at night I don't see the dogs. How come at night these dogs, quite bulky, they walked on a thin branch that bent down, to come to our house. They were all dark black dogs. I was very surprised but who could I tell. I could not leave the home. Nobody came to see us. When I told the cook he said, "why don't you call me and show me." Finally I called him one night and he came with a stick. As he tried to hit them they disappeared. Such heavy bodies, how quickly they disappeared. Both of us became full of doubt. What could it be. My mind became anxious and fearful. Why do these plump black dogs come at night. How could they climb the branches of a tree. And why climb a thin branch that comes down in our courtyard.

My father loved dogs. He had many English pet dogs. One of them, a greyhound, was kept to climb trees to get rid of the monkeys. That's the only time I saw a dog climb a tree. Horrible looking dog like a stick but could climb easily. I have never seen fat, big dogs climbing trees. I thought of many things.

One day I mentioned it to the mother-in-law of the doctor. She immediately said, "oh, you are staying in the haunted house. No-body can stay there. How often people have rented it but after two or three days had to leave because of the disturbance of the ghosts." You can imagine my mind at that time. What else can I do and where can I go, my daughter was

so ill. The daughter was so ill, there was no-one of my own people nearby; no son, Dada, husband. And all those people, where could I take them. I was thinking maybe the ghosts are influencing Jogomaya otherwise how could she be still unconscious. I called my god, "please, those who can see ghosts let them see. Let me only see dogs." Yet the way the doctor's mother-in-law spoke how could you not be afraid. I plucked up courage and continued to see the dogs every night. I became convinced that those who saw ghosts had seen the dogs come down the tree and thought these were ghosts. Then I wasn't frightened. I used to go out at night by calling Ram, Ram. Interestingly I saw, as soon as my Dada, my husband, my daughter and son-in-law arrived the dogs disappeared. Maybe the ghosts ran away seeing my courage. It's true that they never bothered me. I was taken through a big test in my life.

I passed my days worrying until my husband came from Gauhati. He must have sent telegrams to my sons, 'whoever can come to Mihijam please come'. My oldest son had a very soft heart. My second son was studying medicine in college. Year before he stood first in all the annual exams and got a gold medal and a scholarship (Sibu). When he arrived in Mihijam naturally he could not sit the next exam. and he himself fell ill. His wisdom teeth gave a lot of trouble. Could hardly eat anything. Always restless. The local doctor Runu Babu operated twice. The boy came to help me but himself suffered. Wisdom teeth give a lot of pain. That grown boy had to lie down in pain. This is my luck.

My days passed with great worries about my daughter. Dr. Paresh Babu treated her and because he was hard of hearing brought another doctor from Asansol. Can't remember his name. He was a very gentle person. After seeing my daughter he did not want to go away, he would sit and look at all Pinu's drawings. He was very surprised that a little child could concentrate and draw gods and goddesses. "It is not possible to learn all this in his short life. He must have practised and trained life after life to draw this so well and so quickly." Within 10 or 15 minutes he could draw a Durga or a Siv. "Those poor unfortunates who do not believe in an after life, come and see this child. You can say stupid things like can a dead cow eat grass. You don't want to perform a funeral for your parents. Come and see this child." He didn't want to go home. That was an additional problem for me and in the end I had to make some halva or luchi for him. He would eat and say, "this amazing child of yours is ill, but forgetting all his suffering he is forever drawing. Where else can I see this, mother. I have forgotten hunger, I am just watching the activities of gods."

Jogomaya was finally becoming better. The illness was improving. For almost a month she suffered and remained unconscious. After she was given the first food she began her convalescence. Then we moved from that house. We went to a better house. There was no car so everything was carried on the head by people. We made a cart for Pinu in Hazaribag, like a pram and used to take him out for a ride. We used that to take the sick daughter, son and little daughters to the other house. Rest of us walked.

The house was very nice. We were in comfort. In two or three trips we reached there. The first house was old and had lots of scorpions. We had not seen scorpions of this size before. They were the size of a finger and the pincers were like the crab in the sea. Never in my life I have seen pincers as big as that and I have seen many scorpions in my life. The first time I saw one I thought it was another insect of this land. Pinu was sitting drawing and two and a half year old Lolita was sitting nearby. Suddenly she screamed. I thought the hurricane (lamp) had overturned and she was burned. I ran and found that insect had at that moment come to the room and I took my daughter away and the animal was killed. When the locals saw it they said it was a scorpion. Unless someone sees it nobody would believe it. They used to come out quite often and we had always to be very careful.

This house was very nice. There was a mango grove beside the other house and the leaves once they dropped became dry, in heaps that gave shelter to many scorpions. In that country there are also many snakes. They were very poisonous. Paresh Babu was a doctor but if snakes bite he used to cure it by giving special medicine and save the people. He discovered a new medicine. The name is Lekseen. Now all the hospitals around have that medicine. I have seen two children bitten by snakes who were brought to him half dead and he saved their lives by giving Lekseen. Paresh Babu himself had discovered this medicine from his own research. Even if the snake is very poisonous this medicine can save people. My mind was always rather worried that Pinu's disease was not getting better. I was very hopeful that if I could bring Pinu in front of the doctor, once he saw the patient he would be able to cure him because the medicine he sent without seeing him made him feel better. This was my mind being tested by god. Pinu's disease was not getting better. The doctor was not giving any hope. My husband's college would open soon after the vacation and he would have to go back to Gauhati. I didn't feel like staying any longer. After all the son wasn't getting any better. After a lot of effort and the kindness of god my daughter was better. She had had no chance of living

but now that daughter was reasonably well therefore I didn't feel like staying any longer.

Suddely there was talk of my daughter Jogomaya's wedding. My oldest son went to Mihijam for the summer vacation. He had a friend who was very good and they were enquiring about the possibilities of a bride for him. Hearing that, my husband told my son, " why don't you try so he marries Jogomaya." The wedding was fixed without anyone seeing the daughter. We received a telegram that this wedding would go ahead. The groom was the brother of my husband's student. He was a friend of my eldest son and the father of the groom was a well-known friend of my husband. Therefore in every possible way he was known to us. My husband said if my daughter's wedding is really fixed we could go to Gauhati with everybody. That's what happened. The older brother of the groom wrote, ' my mother and everyone are very keen that your daughter marries my brother'. Naturally we repacked everything and gave up the house next day to go back to Gauhati.

One by one people came to see us to say goodbye. One was an alopathic doctor. They were Brahmas (followers of a Hindu reform sect) and his wife came with him. We met very briefly in the other house, and I gave her a thin small stool to sit and I sat with Pinu and talked to her. The stool wasn't strong and it was unsteady. Pinu in the meantime had drawn a Siv. She was surprised and said, 'how beautifully he has drawn the Siv. This little child, how incredible.' The stool was moving, we talking and Pinu drawing. She again said how could he draw like this. In two or four minutes he drew a wonderful Siv. I had never seen one like this. I told her he was almost addicted to draw and I had to continually supply paper and pencil to him.

In the meantime Pinu was calling her mashima (auntie). Suddenly he said, "Mashima will you take this Siv." She said, " Baba, I am a Brahma (follower of a Hindu reform sect). What shall I do with it, I don't worship gods and goddesses." Pinu said, "but your mind is full of Siv. I know you hide it in a basket". When she heard it she fell at Pinu's feet and began to cry. "How did you know all this". She said to me, "sister, I have been fond of Siva from childhood but once I was married my husband did not follow any of this so in case he gets upset I have a little image of Siva in my pantry and cover it with a basket . Your son has never been to my house. How could he know. What kind of person is he. How lucky you are to have a son like this."

At night he drew a very big Siva on foolscap paper. As soon as he got up in the morning he cried, "take me to Mashima's house. I will give this Siv. to Mashima". That day we were leaving for Gauhati. Lots of work, whole house to be cleaned, but Pinu would not listen. Then I tried to explain to Pinu that Mashima's husband did not like these things, and if he took the Siv. to Mashima he will be upset. Then Pinu said to me, "if something is within you it will certainly come out one day. You must certainly take me there". What could I do. I put him in the pram and pushed him there. Calling Mashima and giving the Siva to her, she was really happy.

Her only son was a medical student with my son Sib. Once when we stayed in Ranchi 13 years ago, my daughters were walking on the street, as one of my daughters was staying in Ranchi at that time, mother of a son, and with her other two daughters had gone for a walk near the house. Suddenly they saw an old lady coming towards them leaning on a stick. She asked, "where do you live and where have you come from, what's your father's name." My daughters told her, then the old widow said, "Ma, as soon as I saw your face that's what I thought" Then she said, "you had a small brother who was very ill and you came to Mihijam to consult Paresh Babu. He was ill but drew beautifully all the time." Then my daughters said, " its true, we were very small and can't remember everything but have heard a lot from mother. We have seen his drawings. Mother shows them to people and cries." Once she heard all this she asked where we live. The daughters told me this and I realised who she was. (wife of the doctor in Mihijam). Never thought someone else would speak and remember. Pinu is always alive in my mind and heart. I have kept carefully all his drawings. I look at them sometimes and cry and show them to everyone who wants to see. Alas, everything is there except him.

Some days went by and suddenly one day Runu Babu's wife arrived leaning on her stick. I could hardly recognise her poor woman. Her only son had died and her husband who was the doctor also died when he was visiting a patient outside Mihijam. Now she was completely disabled with arthritis but walked with a stick somehow. She had come to visit her nephew. I once went to their house and met her very old mother as well. She was still alive but very disabled. My husband used to recite Bhagabhat and a lot of people came to our house to listen. He recited at the request of the people. She also hobbled over with her stick to listen to him and was very gratified and pleased. She would tell me how she had framed the Siv. that Pinu drew and kept it carefully.

We went back from Mihijam to Gauhati and within seven or eight days Jogomaya got married. The groom's father had already died so naturally the responsibility was with the groom's older brother. Whatever he decided is where the marriage took place. They had already looked for a suitable girl and my oldest son had come to Mihijam and told us. His brother said that our daughter should marry Dinesh and this was their dearest wish. That's how it happened.

We went back for the marriage but Pinu was not well. We had to go ahead. After the marriage the groom's party, my daughter and son-in-law went back to Dibrugarh. Pinu told his father, "you have no intelligence. My Nawdi (Anu) went to heaven and now you have given away my Rangadi (Jogomaya). You have sent Rangadi to her in-laws house. You do not understand how much my mother suffers. Who will look after me. How much can my mother do." Pinu's father said, "why should you worry about who will look after you. Your Apu Didi is there, Tonu Didi is there." Pinu said, "they are rather restless souls. I don't feel like being cared for by them." Poor child didn't have to bear it for long. He only lived four months after Jogomaya's marriage but at that time Jogu was with us at Pinu's death.

My new son-in-law was a good sportsman. He came from Silchar to Gauhati for two or four days and they came and stayed with us. Pinu did not allow him to laugh and talk with his wife or sisters-in-law. Whenever Dinesh was laughing and talking to Pinu he got irritated and angry. He said, "Dinesh Dada, why are you so worldly, laughing all the time. Why can't you talk about god and religion." I felt ashamed that he spoke like that to the new son-in-law. God knows what he was thinking. I said, " why are you talking like this." Pinu said, "Yes I will. You be quiet." Then Pinu said, " Dinesh Dada, tell me some religious stories." Then Dinesh said to Pinu , "do you know any religious stories?" and Pinu replied , "of course I know. Religious stories of gods and goddesses, Monis, Risis, great men." Dinesh said, "you know all about them. Then allow me to say a few worldly words." Then Pinu got really impatient. He pushed Dinesh Dada into a room and locked them both in. He started to tell Dinesh religious thoughts. However many days he was with us as my son, he made a lot of fuss and made us swallow a lot of religion! Even then, we were not really aware of it.

In the month of Aswin, on the day that clay was added to the image of Ma Durga, from that day four or six times a day he had to go and watch in case a mistake was made. The potter/image-maker normally came from

Krishnanagar to the house of Chuni Babu where he made the image of Durga. At that time a horse carriage was rented on a monthly payment basis so that Pinu could go as often as he wished. Sometimes twenty rupees, sometimes thirty. We paid whatever the fare was. This potter also made the image of Jagadhatri drawn by Pinu. Pinu was very pleased to call the potter Nagen Dada. He loved to go and sit next to him and watch him. When he couldn't sit any longer he would come home in the carriage. He was not able to walk all the way and one or other had to go with him. For three days of Ma Durga's Puja, Pinu would go every day and gave Puja with flowers. On the eighth day he said to me, "can you organise everything correctly and send it to the Puja." Which meant the offerings. I was not keeping well so I said I couldn't do that. Normally every year I made sandesh, coconut balls and fruit and sent them to Dharmasabha (a hall where religious meetings, theatres or worshipping took place) but that year we didn't. I didn't do it even after Pinu asked me to do it. In the meantime, Pinu asked the cook to carry him and took a rupee and bought sandesh and fruit and went to Chuni Babu's house to give the Puja. I knew nothing of this. I did not know when he took the money from his Apudi. He had a little bag for money and whoever gave him money he kept it there. My daughters knew where it was, therefore his Didi (older sister) was able to give him a rupee for the Puja. Suddenly at three o'clock he called the cook and told him to go to Chuni Babu's and bring the offering from Ma Durga. "Tell them that the sick son of Lakshminarayan Babu has given the Puja in the morning and is expecting a little prashad." The cook went and brought it. Then Pinu told me, "Ma you did not do Puja. Was that right? I like Chuni Babu's mother that's why I offered prayers to 'Mother' (Durga). It is not that troublesome or labour-intensive to offer the Puja. I went and bought a small earthenware plate, some bananas and sandesh and offered the Puja for my 'Mother'. It was not that time-consuming either." He distributed the prashad to everyone himself.

On the ninth day of the Puja Pinu demanded that he should go and see every single image being worshipped in Gauhati; wherever it was; Pan Bazaar, Fansi Bazaar, Bhorulimukh, Ujan Bazaar, etc. In the meantime the coachman we had appointed for the monthly rental said he could not do it, someone else would do it five or eight times. We would give a separate rental for that. I agreed because he only got five or ten rupees a day. Pinu demanded to see all the images. The carriage left and there were no others in the stable. Pinu was crying and restless. I tried to explain to him but he didn't listen. Hearing the noise of another carriage, he walked out and sat in it and told the driver, in broken Hindi, to take him and show all the Durga 'Mothers'. "Don't be afraid I will not cheat you". The driver told

him, "Babu I will show you one but not the second." I was in a fix and tried to hug him but he was not getting down. The driver was impatient and asked him to get down. He wouldn't. It was getting dark. The other sons had gone out and Pinu's father was in Chinsurah. In the end I had to go to the street and get into the carriage and drag him out. He made me promise that the next day being Vijay Dashami I would take him to the river to see all the images (being immersed), only then he would get down. "So I can see all the 'Mothers'."

The problem was that even when he went by carriage someone had to carry him. Yet this kind of persistence he had. Alas this ability to see the 'Mother' was coming to an end. He would not see the 'Mother' the next year. Maybe that's why the demand was there. I was in a fix. If he did not get off, this driver might take him somewhere else. In the end I agreed. Then he came to my lap. I brought him to his bed where he sat down. The demands he made were always fixed. If he shouted he could have heart failure. That always worried me. He said again and again, "Remember tomorrow." I repeated again and again, "Yes, we will do that". As I brought Pinu to the bed my other two sons came back. I tried to explain to them that Pinu had done quite a thing. He caught hold of an unknown driver and was not willing to come down. He had shouted and screamed and I was afraid. Pinu had no strength but was full of hope. Because I told all to the brothers Pinu became dark faced. Usually he would not eat from other's hands only mine but that evening he would not take even a little milk he was so angry. After a lot of crying and weeping he finally took a little milk.

On the day of Vijaya I enquired but could not find a single carriage. All had been rented out the day before. What a crisis! I went next door and asked Satish Babu's wife, "Didi, have you already fixed your carriage to go to see the immersions?" Didi was very fond of us and said she had rented a carriage. I told her of the crisis and that Pinu was extremely eager to go. "When you reach the river, if you could please send the carriage back to me, then we can go and pay the same fare again."

That's what happened. They sent the carriage and I went to the riverside with my daughters and Pinu. My sons had locked the house and gone to another side of the river. When we went there Pinu felt ill and was collapsing. I was holding this heavy swollen body of the son and he was watching the Durgas. My waist and feet were giving way and I couldn't hold him up. There was a great crowd and he wouldn't be able to see so I had to raise him above them. I held him on my chest but he was limp.

Normally I never take Pinu in a crowd. I didn't go to plays, cinema, temples, arati (worship with a lamp), in case Pinu suffers in a crowd. I never went alone. If there was less crowd we may go quickly and come back. But there was always a big crowd by the river and we only went because of his longing and desire. There he was obviously suffering. I was also suffering but couldn't take him down. He cried, "I can't see 'Mother'". I said to him, "let's go home" and he agreed.

I couldn't see my other sons and the house was not that near and no carriage. To carry him was impossible. I looked round in the crowd in case there was someone to accompany me. How to explain the condition of my mind if something happens to him on the riverside. Then I saw Rajen Babu and clung to him and asked him to accompany me. It was very hot and I was sweating. I had a hand fan which I used but it wasn't helping him. How could I reach home. Rajen Babu called his wife and children and went with us home. I carried Pinu all the way and thought I would never manage it. We finally reached there and put Pinu on the bed but he began to behave strangely, not opening his mouth or speaking at all. My heart was palpitating; god knows what would happen now. As soon as the sons came back I told them that he had suffered in the crowd and was unable to speak. That made Pinu angry. "Why did I tell his Dadas these things". Poor boy; because this was his last sighting of Ma Durga, it was as if his desire was not properly met. We did not realise that soon everything would end for the poor boy and his desire to see all the Ma Durgas was not fulfilled.

Anyway this was how days were going. The month of Agrayan arrived when Pinu's promised Puja of Jagadatri would take place. The illness became more pronounced. We asked Jogomaya to come. The Puja was concluded. He continuously said, "I will have the prasad of Ma and see the Puja of Ma." He persisted and was very eager. We let him sit on the easy chair to see but he couldn't sit long or even pray with flowers. We brought him quickly to lie down but even then he asked for the prasad. The doctor said he could have any prasad.. He realised that Pinu would not last. I tried to feed it to him but it wasn't going down. He did not even touch the payesh (rice pudding). He said, "when I get better, again make the payesh and give it to Takur (god)," and I said I would, but he did not stay long enough. After his father arrived from Chinsurah Pinu demanded to be in his lap all the time. It was not possible as his father was at college but when he returned he would hold him, even during the night. He was obviously suffering inside and thinking that if his father held him tight on his lap he would suffer less, but he didn't.

He finally went to Ma Durga, sitting in his father's lap. Everything became dark; everything empty. Nothing to do. How could I exist without doing anything. For three years I had no minutes to spare. There was so much to do for Pinu, no end to work day and night. Now I didn't know how my empty days would end. Pinu reached eternal peace on the evening of 19th. Agrayan. His mind was full of Siv. and Durga and in the end he went to the lap of Ma Durga. A few days ago my oldest daughter gave birth to a son in Dwarbhanga. Pinu was very happy that he had a nephew but never saw him. Leaving my oldest daughter in Dwarghanga, my son-in-law brought his two daughters to me in my lap and said, "mother now you have nothing to do. Look after the grand-daughters".

Anyway, one that I could not keep, trying so hard, She who owned Pinu got him back. I did not have Her strength. It was Her gift and went back to Her. That I could not save this boy because in the end it was Her victory. My husband told me, " if someone trusts you and gives you gold or jewels to look after, wouldn't you be pleased when they come and you can return everything to them. This is like that. You haven't brought anything of your own therefore you cannot demand it. Whoever owned it, it was Her right and She has taken him. You must be relieved that you have returned this safely to Her."

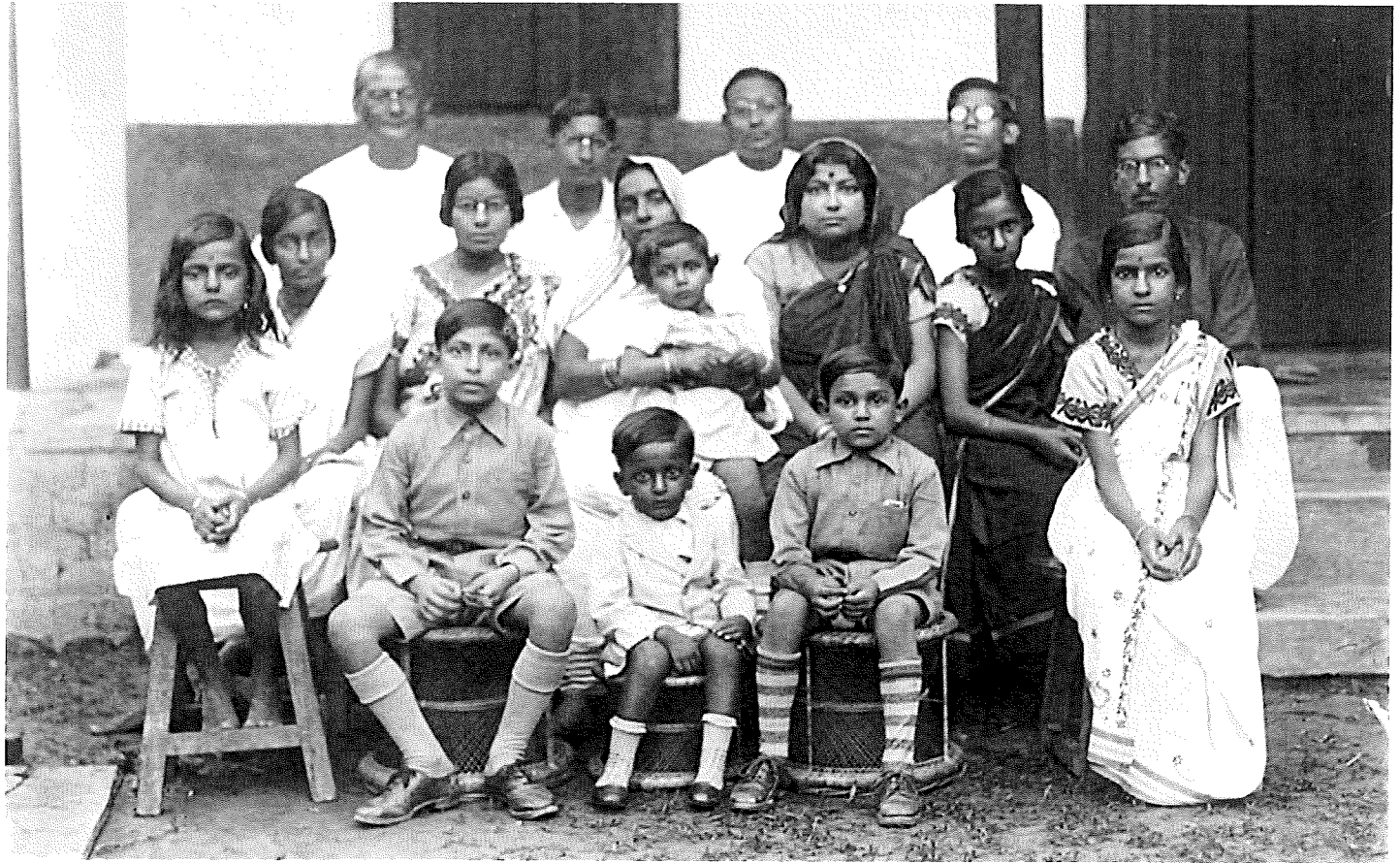
Very true and very valuable advice but the mind bound by illusion (maya) does not want to understand. I have held him in my womb with great suffering and pain and brought him up with great trouble. How can I say he is nothing to do with me. I can't understand. But maybe the truth was revealed in the end. If we could not keep him with all our efforts, we had not failed him in any duty or responsibility. We had done everything possible within the limit of money and ability. Pinu's father did not earn a lot of money but he spent a lot of money for this boy. He wrote a little biography called Punya-Prasasti when he died and whoever knew and loved Pinu was given a copy of this book. Pinu was six years and six months when he went, but already he was known to many people in many places. Many people wrote to express their feelings after he died and some were printed. If anyone does not believe or wants to see proof I am still keeping that letter of Pinu and those drawings. For me they are very valuable and I will keep them carefully and show anyone who wants to see them.

For three years he suffered. How much he went through. It also meant I had unending anxiety and worry and could hardly sleep at night. I looked

after him day and night. If he had lived I probably wouldn't have remembered these things. Now I think it was all in god's ruling. I have to bear this and hope he can always stay in his Ma Durga's lap. This is my prayer. He was my eighth pregnancy. If he lived he probably would have done a lot of work. In a few short years he showed his potential and influence. It is almost thirty five years since he went and even now the pain and his story is alive in my life. Hoping that Pinu will be finally free if we worship Jagadhatri (one who holds the world together), we worshipped this Energy. The first year we brought four hundred people to eat and I made one maund (forty Kilos) of sweets and Pinu watched it with great joy. But the year after, we worshipped with great hesitation, really for Pinu and then the next two years I worshipped with my tears. One must worship for four years, that's what I believed firmly.

Post script.

We did a lot of things for Pinu. After Anu went, Jogu used to bring forth Anu's spirit on a planchet (a three-legged table). One day Anu told Jogu that Pinu had forgotten to say something to his mother before he went. That was to ask his mother to go to Puri (the town in Orissa where there is a temple to Jaganath) to give a Puja in his name. I do not know what it was about Puri or how he came to know it, and I said I didn't believe a word. I would only do it if Pinu himself came and asked me. Anu then let us know that Pinu was on the tenth stage (in heaven) at that moment and said he could not come down. I suppose he wanted to ask me to do it before he went but forgot. Anyway I trusted this and after two or three years went to Puri and worshipped Jaganath in Pinu's name. There the bhog (cooked offering) is given and Brahmins are fed and gifts given to Brahmins. I did everything. The panda (one who helps with the worshipping) had wept a lot for Pinu particularly when he knew he was not alive any more, but the Puja was performed according to his wish. This panda was a very good person. His name too was nice - Gopal Khutia.



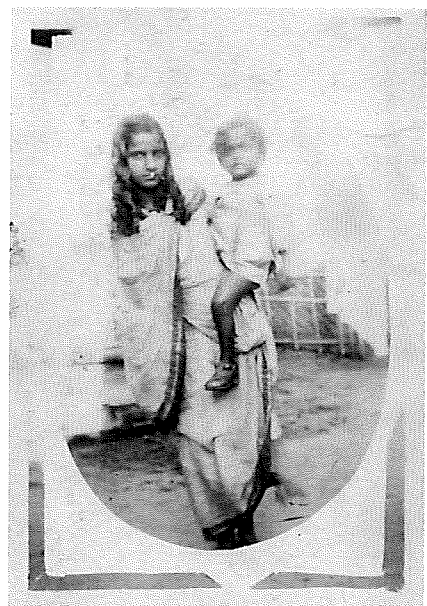
Rear : Lakshminarayan Chattopadhyaya (Pinu's father), Sibabrata (Sibu - Pinu's older brother), Taracharan Chattopadhyaya (Lakshminarayan's older brother) ? ; Priyanath Mukherjee (son-in-law of Sati Devi), Debabrata (Debu- Pinu's eldest brother).

Middle : Mrinmayee Devi (Tonu), Annapurna Devi (Anu) - Pinu's older sisters, Basanti (basu) - Pinu's eldest sister married to Priyanath Mukherjee, Sati Devi with Lalita, Umasundari Devi (wife of Taracharan) ? ; Jogomaya Devi (Jogu), Apurna Devi (Apu) - (Pinu's older sisters).

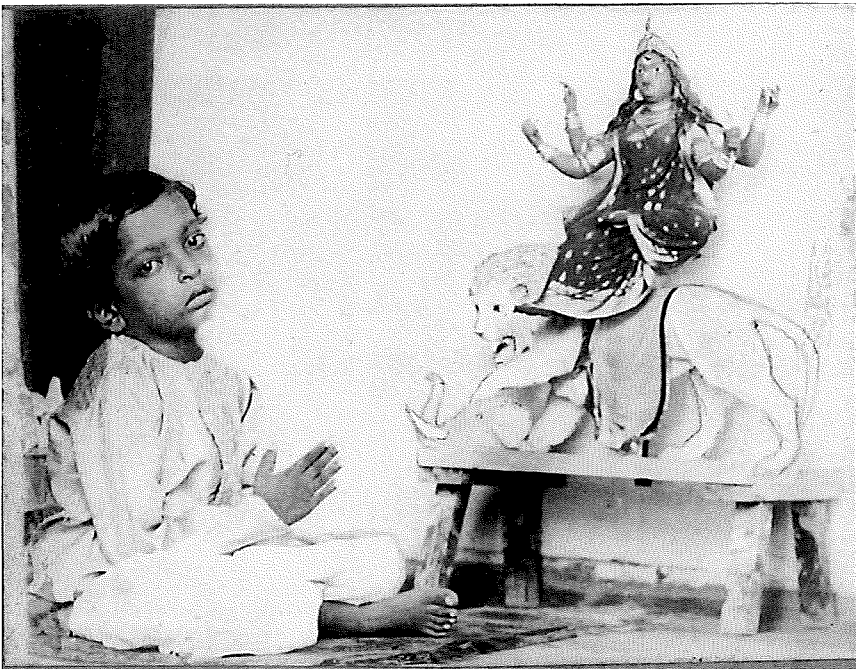
Front : Satyabrata ? (cousin), Pinu, Priyabrata ? (cousin) - referred to as Pinu's older brothes. c. 1933



Sati Devi, Akshay Kumari (widowed sister-in-law), Apu, Pinu, Tonu, Jogu c. 1934



Jogu with Pinu c. 1931



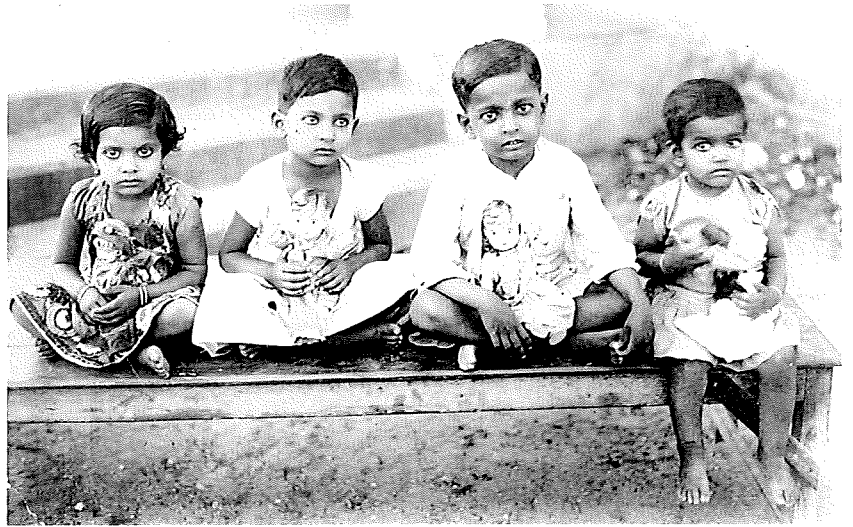
Pinu worshipping goddess Jagadhatri (who held the world) c. 1936



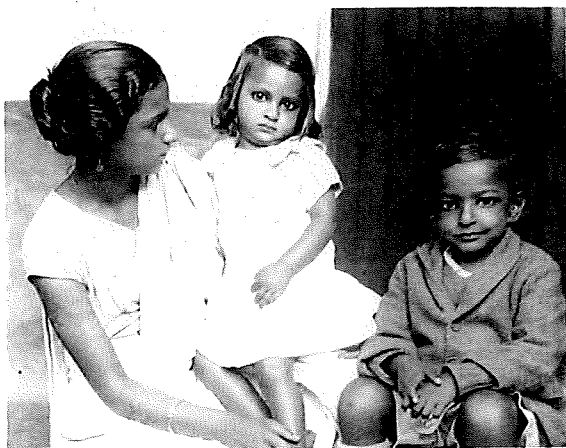
Pinu in cotton suit



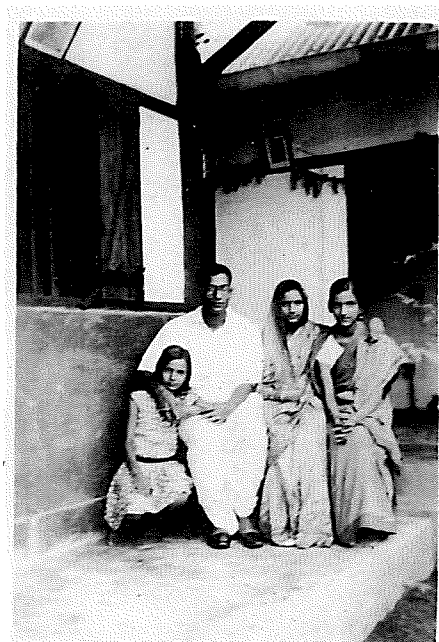
Pinu in happy mood in Gauhati, Assam



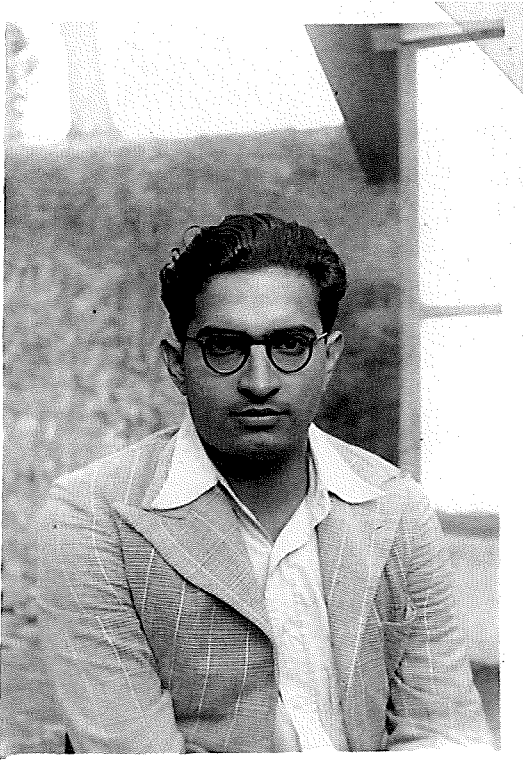
Doll's wedding. June 1936 Gauhati
Tara (Basu's eldest daughter), Lalita, Pinu and Gauri (Tara's younger)



Jogu with Lalita and Pinu C. 1935



Dinesh Mukherjee with Jogu, Apu and Tonu C. 1936



Sibabrata Chattopadhyaya c. 1930's



Debabrata Chattopadhyaya 20.9.1936



Immersion of the images after Durga Puja (worshipping of the goddess) C. 1930

Punya - Prasasti
(in praise of the sacred)

1344 (1937)



Sri Sri Durga
 Sharanam (seeking Durga's protection)

Punya- Prasasti

Appearance - 27 Baishak, 1337 (10th.May, 1930)
 Sat. 10.52 Gauhati

a)	shu 4 bri 5 bu 3	Raw 2 Raa 1	maw 27
	long	Jatachacra	
	Chaw 14	kay 15	shau 20
b)	venus 4 jupiter 5 mercury 3	sun 2 moon- eating monster 1	mars 27
	?	life's horoscope	
	moon 14	monster who eats the moon 15	satu rn 20

Disappearance - 19 Agrahayan 1343 (5th.Dec.1936)
 Saturday 7pm. Gauhati

(The horoscope cast by Punyabrata's father on his birth)

Appearance

Preparations for the appearance were going on, as if he planned that the father be sent away from the place of appearance to the sacred place of pilgrimage, Gayadam; the planning was amazing. On 8th. May a telegram came from Gaya. The gist of it was, 'the son-in-law has smallpox, somebody has to be sent to look after him.' Who will go?

Only a few days before, the daughter came from Gaya to look after her pregnant mother. The birth pangs had already begun. How could the daughter now go? The child was the mother's eighth pregnancy. Well-wishers, especially women, were expressing a lot of anxiety, so the daughter had a dual problem. The husband had a dangerous illness of pox, so seeing her dry, sad face the father said, " don't worry, I'll go".

Thus depending on the beautiful feet of 'she who always wishes good to others' (ie. the goddess), he left. Next night he arrived in Gaya in the son-in-law's house and going to his bedside took over his care. Anyone who has a good heart can imagine his mental state between the time of leaving Gauhati and arriving at Gaya. On arrival, seeing the son-in-law, part of his anxiety abated but the other part remained as fully as before.

Next day at noon, sitting in Gaya, he got the telegram that in Gauhati a male child had appeared. In the sacred place where offerings are always made to the forefathers (Gaya) the father mentally sent his respects to the lotus feet of Vishnu (the preserver).

Naming

The two elders (brothers) of the guest child and his older uncle's two sons had names ending with 'brata'. What kind of name could be given to this child that would be harmonious with his

older brother's names and yet also contain an inkling of the father's inner heartfelt wish? That naming became the wish of the father's heart, but he didn't express it to anyone. When the son-in-law was a little better he left Gaya for Gauhati.

On reaching there he asked the eldest son and next two daughters, ' what should the name of the new-born be ?' The daughters had already decided on a name for him - Punyabrata. The amazing thing was that the name had already appeared in the father's mind, so he agreed with full consent.

Explaining the word 'badarayahi', S. Goswami (Bhagavath 10/80/5) has written that Byasdev went to Dadarika Ashram and prayed in a standing position for a long time. As a result the god, Sukhdev appeared; in other words Sukhdev is like an idol created out of Byasdev's respectful and long-standing prayer. Sridharswami (Bha/1/12/4) has said, regarding the birth of Pariksit, that because of the kindness of Sri Krishna, even an unattached king like Judhishthir could have a grandson like Pariksit. Bishunath Chakravarty has said of this, " the great attachment and love of the king for Krishna is the main reason for him to have such a grandson." I think we can deduce from this that the respect for Sri Krishna was in the mind of Judhishthir - as if his subconscious mind wasn't quite satisfied, and he nurtured a desire out of this dissatisfaction that alas any day spent in childhood without respect for Krishna was a waste and that if it had been possible he, from within the womb, might have been born with a natural affinity to Krishna, so that his life would have been gratified. It would not be wrong to say that all these different ideas and desires working in Judhishthir's mind were transformed into the form of his grandson, Pariksit.

Sometimes in life (sansar) one sees a great musician born into a family of non-musicians. In a family of non-artists an artist appears. Scientists working on heredity and trying to find reasons for these idiosyncracies and exceptions, sometimes

explain that the new-born (called a 'grandson') achieves the father's unfulfilled desires. It is possible that here the father's subconscious or unconcious can explain whether he had any secret desire before the arrival of Punyabrata, and that in wholeheartedly naming him thus, he was trying to give some form to his own latent desires.

Punyabrata's first uttered words

Like all children, this child also grew up giving joy to parents and relations. The child was nearly five months old. The father was trying to care for him and to make him speak. The child was looking at the father and smiling and laughing. One day he suddenly said " Dudda"(Durga); this is exactly what the father was wishing for. From that day there was a continuous increase in the father's affection. The child did not say 'Ma' or 'Baba'. The first word was 'Durga'. From then on as long as he was alive in this mortal body one could see his special love for Durga manifest. We will discuss this in detail later. About Pariksit, it is written in Sri Madbhagbat- ' he was religious from childhood and from birth naturally attached to Krishna'. If we change this quotation slightly ie. ' from childhood he was religious and from birth fond of Durga', that gives this child's proper identity. (i.e. Punyabrata)

Nine month-old child's 'aviman' and rigidity of mind

Teeth had already appeared. He was smiling, showing his teeth and giving everyone joy. It was the eleventh of February 1931 and he had completed 9 months the day before. The mother was suckling the child and was bewildered seeing the beauty in the child's face. Suddenly he bit her nipple with his new-born teeth! In pain, the mother said restlessly, " I'm gone, I'm gone! Are you killing Putana"? (a demoness sent to kill the infant Krishna, but whose breast was bitten off by Krishna when she tried to suckle him and thus Krishna killed the demon). The

child stared at his mother's face with large eyes and slowly opened his mouth to release the breast. He never suckled again. Many a night my wife put her breast in the sleeping child's mouth but he moved his head away. Worrying that his mouth and throat would be dry, the mother squeezed the breast to give milk in his mouth but he spewed it out. A few days after the 11th. Feb. when the pain of the milk in the full breasts made her suffer, she entreated him to drink, but he only smiled and would not touch the breast. From this date he never touched the breast and it was not possible to give it to him.

The child's attraction to Dharma (religion).

From 8 to 9 months one could see special behavioural patterns developing in this child. He began to show interest in going to the Thakur Ghar (worshipping room). If someone was carrying him his eyes went to this room. Immediately he would lean towards the room and begin to cry that he should be taken there. The demand would not end until he was taken. In the event of him going to the toilet in the room, no-one wanted to take him for fear of soiling the sacred place. One day the father noticed his interest and that people were not willing to take him. He gave unrestricted permission that should he want to go he should be taken. That evening the father himself took him. He was given a separate seat (a square of cloth) and sat quietly all the time his father was worshipping. When he began to walk he used to go whenever he wished and sit down. He would pretend he was worshipping by taking water in the small brass vessels (long). After he learnt 2 or 4 words (a few) he would go to the Takughor and tell his sisters, "close the door behind me" and would spend time there alone. When asked what he was doing he replied, "I was calling Ma Durga".

1338 Jhulan Jatra. (the celebration on a full moon night of the swinging of Radha and Krishna). The child was one year three months old. A mile from home there was a celebration of

Jhulan Jatra in a Marwari home where there was a little temple. After evening prayer and at Sondhya (the moment at the meeting of day and night), the child's father was taking everyone to see the Jhulan. The child was carried by the father. After some time he wanted to get down and began to walk. When his mother tried to pick him up he smiled and ran off. The father said, "if he wants to walk, let him." He walked all the way to the temple.

There the Jhulan of Sri Radha Krishna was going on against a bright, well-lit, beautifully decorated backdrop. Everyone was watching but the child avoided all the adults and went beyond the crowd to sit alone in front of the Tulsimanca (an elevated structure holding the sacred plant (Basil) which most houses had). At first only the father noticed. He went back to the temple and asked the others, "WHO d'you think has come to see the Jhulan?" The mother mentioned everyone else's name. Then the father said aloud, " come and see WHO has come to see the Jhulan." They all came out to the Tulshimanca and were surprised to see the child sitting there. Some Marwaris had by now garlanded him and hugged him saying "Gopalji, Gopalji"(Krishna). The child just sat and smiled.

A few months went by. The child completed 1 and a 1/2 years. Punyabrata's mother took him to the foothills of the sacred Kamakhya Hill to the ashram of a Sadhu. The intention was to have 'Sadhu dharsan'(an encounter with the Sadhu). He caressed Punyabrata and the mother sat beside the Sadhu's wife. He gave Punyabrata a rose. He took it and said 'rose', taking it to the little temple which was a part of the ashram where there was an image of Om Jagendranath (Siva) and tried to put the flower on his head. It fell down so he tried again. It fell again and the Sadhu smiled and placed it on Siv's head. But the child wasn't satisfied. Standing on tip-toe, he plucked the flower and put it on the 'gouri pith'ie. the lower part of the Siv.linga, and

started clapping and dancing. The Sadhu picked him up, praising him again and again as he took him to his mother. From this time on, Punyabrata accompanied his father to the worshipping room during evening prayer and followed his father in doing Sandhyahnik (prayer at the meeting of day and night). Only when really unwell did he not take part.

He was now 3 years and 6 months. During this time he mesmerised people by his sharp intellect. He asked questions on every subject of his father, who answered as best he could. He did not stop answering just because he thought the child might not understand what he was talking about. Among the questions were complicated ones about religion; also about creation and creativity.

In 1340, during the Saradiya puja (takes place in Sarat or Autumn), his parents took him to their (ancestral) house in Bengal (Chunchura). One morning they noticed Punyabrata's eyes and face swollen. As soon as they came back to Gauhati they consulted a doctor. Advised by him, the urine was tested and found to contain albumin. After further investigation the doctor expressed the view that the disease was called Nephritis.

The patient was given milk and fruit juice and occasionally vegetables without salt. He had to lie down most of the time and only occasionally sit up. The doctor's opinion was that if he moved a lot, the disease would increase. For two or three months after birth he was quite healthy, but after that he was never completely well, and at 3 and 1/2 it took a serious turn. From then he could only lie down or sit, which meant he needed someone with him constantly, who would tell stories and amuse him to keep him sitting on the bed.

About this time we discovered that he did not like listening to folk tales. He only liked stories from the religious books. Listening to events and stories of Markandayachandi,

Ramayana of Krittibas, Mahabarat of Kashidash, Srimadbhagabat, within a few days most of the subjects became well-known to him. If for some reason the person who told stories to him every day couldn't come, another person was asked to tell them. If the new person told the story differently or made a mistake there was serious protest. He would scream and correct them. There was no escape.

Whoever saw or heard the child once, loved him. Hearing that he wasn't well, a few people came to visit him. He always asked his father in an aside, "can I ask these people some questions?" On getting affirmation, he would ask the guest, whether male or female, about the Puranas. Almost every time, he defeated them by his questions. At the beginning a few people came but once his knowledge of the Puranas became known, many people came and the child became even more stimulated to ask questions.

He was most fond of the story of Om Chandi. Sometimes he heard the first part, sometimes the middle and sometimes the last part. Gradually it became clear that the middle part, in which Om Durga killed the Mahishashur (water buffalo demon) was his most favourite. From then on, whatever story was told he would insist on hearing Durgacharit again. Even here he was fond of hearing which part of Ma Durga's body was made by the energy of which god/goddess. He was lost in just listening to this part of the story over and over and would gladly tell it to people he liked best.

Many a day went by, when late at night he should have been asleep but hadn't slept. He disturbed everyone by shouting, "tell me a story, tell me a story" and heard story after story. But sleep would be far away. Finally the father would come and as soon as he appeared the child said, "Baba, I will fall asleep as soon as you tell me the story of Ma Durga." The father started the story but before it ended he would be fast a sleep. Now I have doubts

whether it was sleep or something else. Sometimes in the middle of the story, the father would say Sanskrit stanzas from Om Chandi. The child too said in Sanskrit, “ this buffalo god, undefeated, has won over all the gods including Indra.” The conjugation between ‘maw and tau’ and the aspirant of Mohiashwa was pronounced so well by the child that sometimes I thought a great Sanskrit scholar was speaking.

1340- Chaitra Mash (last month of the year) and the day of the Anapurna Puja. Om Ma’s Puja took place in the house of Sri Chunilal Dey and the image was normally very beautiful. Punyabrata used to go almost every day to see how the image was being made. The day before the worshipping puja, the image with all her ornaments, glowed on the puja stage in all her glory - the queen of queens. Punyabrata was not very well but his desire to see the image was more than anyone else’s. The father carried the son to the ‘pandal’ (tent-like structure created out of cloth and bamboo) and made him sit on the end of a bench and sat next to him, holding him.

After looking at the image for some time the child said, “there is a mistake. There is no Rudraksa (garland of the seeds of a particular tree) on Siva’s neck.” He quietly told the landlord not to worry that it had happened this year but to make sure that the next year Siv. had a Rudraksa. After some time he said, “what’s on the crown of Anupurna?” so everyone looked. Then the child, with finger in the air drew OM. He did it like a learned man, not a child. The people present were surprised and looked at the crown of the goddess. There they saw tiny, delicate writing in silver filigree - Pranab (the name for OM when physically written). From that moment the father’s problems started in earnest.

Reaching home the child began to ask, “what is this, what is that? what does this mean, that mean?” Until then the father had never refused to answer questions. That day also he tried his best

to explain to him the meaning of Pranab. Only the child himself knew whether he understood or not! But his face had a beautiful expression of satisfaction that day.

Expertise in crafts

From this time on he would make images of Siva, Durga, Ram from dough. Sometimes he would take a Japanese doll and after putting on a moustache with glue, drawing an eye on the forehead and making a dreadlock of the hair, transform it into Siva. Sometimes he made animals and birds.

Expertise in drawing

1341- Baishakh mash. According to the advice of the doctor the child was taken to Bhagalpur in Bihar for a change of air. He was four years old. One morning he started weeping and when asked why, he said he had seen Krishna in a dream. Everyone tried to console him, but he said, “ don’t try to misdirect me and stop me weeping. Krishna will see me if I weep. Krishna told me that when it is slightly dark and early morning will come, then I will be alright. But I must have a little bit of honey.”

Another day he said, “ I want to draw.” He was given paper and pencil and the first thing he drew was a portrait of his (paternal) grandfather. He had already seen a photo of him. The drawing was not very good but we could see that a man whose face was covered with beard and mustache was sitting down. The child said, “this is grandfather’s picture”. Afterwards he drew an image of Kali. From then on he drew a lot of pictures. Almost all were of gods and goddesses and from stories from the Puranas. Amongst the gods and goddesses two images were beautifully drawn. One was Ma Durga (with 10 hands as she is worshipped) and the other Mahadev (Siva). In 4 or 5 months the child’s ability grew to the extent that he began to draw from

imagination. He drew many pictures based on descriptions of Siva and Ram and had some specialities; for example he would never go over the same line twice and never used a rubber. Sometimes he would draw the image from imagination using one line (did not take the pencil off the paper).

When he came back to Gauhati, a gentleman called Tara Charan Banerjee asked him one day, “who taught you to draw?” The child answered, “Bholanath (Mahadev) has given me a boon.” The gentleman said, “well can you draw a picture of Mahadev giving you the boon?” Within 10 minutes the child drew it. The gentleman wrote its description under it.

Another day the father returned home and saw that he had drawn Ram in a faint. Hearing the news, Sita was running towards him and Lab (Lab was Sita and Ram’s son but he did not know his father) was staring at Sita. That day or the day before he had heard the story of Ram’s Ashwamedh Yagna. The father asked, “what’s this picture?” The child immediately explained to him. The father asked again, “ Ram has fainted after fighting with Lab but why is Lab staring at Sita?” He smiled and said,” Lab has often seen his mother calm and quiet. Today why is she running dishevelled and weeping? Lab is so surprised, he is staring at his mother’s face.” Just as his imagination, so he had wonderful explanations.

Knowledge of Anatomy of limbs

The child requested bigger paper again and again. It must be added that the father from time to time gave him half or one whole ream of foolscap paper. The father bought the paper and told everyone that whatever and whenever he asked it must be given. According to his request a large paper, 66”/ 52” was glued, joining 16 pieces of foolscap, and he could hardly contain his joy. He spread it on the floor and sat in the middle. First he drew a huge, 3- eyed, dreadlocked head. The pencil

moved and the child moved back. Little by little the breast, hands, feet, legs were drawn. A horn became beautiful in one hand and from the waist a tiger skin, elongated. Two feet were glorified in the 'swastikashan' (seat of peace). The child got off the paper and his joy was uncontrollable. The paper was hung from the wall and everyone, with surprise and amazement, saw that a huge Mahadev had been drawn. Hands, legs, chest, stomach, head, everything in proportion. (As he always did, even in small pictures he drew, he said, "the paper wasn't big enough so I couldn't put the snake on his head.") It is unnecessary to say that even when drawing this very big image he never went over a line twice.

Whilst staying in Bhagalpur the child made his father draw a huge image of Durga on the wall. At that time it was noticed that he didn't like drawing small images. In 1341, during Pansh Mash (October, and time of Durga Puja), the father brought from Puri an image of Durga in a glass case, made in Katak. The child was very happy but the small images didn't satisfy him, as if searching for the huge image of Jagamata (mother of the world). From then on he would often draw huge images of Durga on the floor in chalk. He used to sit near the image and guard it in case someone touched it with their feet. He needed a lot of coaxing and requests before these images could be wiped.

Many showed interest in seeing the images drawn by him. He too was eager. Whoever came to visit him he would show the pictures and explain them and obtained great joy from this. Those who were affectionate to him would give picture books eg. the Principal of Gauhati Cotton College, Sri Satish Chandra Roy, M.A. London). Some gave a box of colours (eg. Professor of Sylhet College, Sri Nalini Mohun Shastri and his wife).

The child's love for Durga

We have already mentioned that the first word the child uttered was 'Durga'. As soon as he was able to gain the ability to speak he learnt the prayer mantra of Durga, and going to the Thakur Ghar he used to pray saying this mantra. After hearing the middle part of Chandi he was eager to hear Mohishashur Badh (killing of the water-buffalo demon). The Durga image forms the maximum in number of all the images he drew. Every day he would get up saying 'Durga, Durga'. Every night he would put his hands together, touch his forehead and say 'Durga, Durga' before going to sleep. He would say it before his father left for work every morning. If anyone left the house for another place, he would wish them goodbye by speaking the name of Durga.

In 1341 Pansh Mas, a local advocate (Sri Suresh Chandra Dasgupta) presented Punyabrata with a beautiful picture of the Empress Mary (wife of George V). Punyabrata's elder brother framed it beautifully and presented it to him. He looked at the picture and said, "very nice picture, but it isn't the picture of Ma Durga. I don't want it." The picture is still in our house, but he didn't allow it to be in the room where he stayed.

On the 15th. Falgun (last but one month of the year) he drew a picture of Durga, the lion, water buffalo-demon and Om Ma Durga and applied the appropriate colouring then asked for it to be framed properly. Accordingly it was framed and hung in a place indicated by him.

During the 1342 Durga Puja, the father had to go away. The child requested his two older brothers to take his drawing to the worshipping room but they didn't dare. The child was sad and cried. When his father returned after the Puja he had already heard everything and felt sad at heart. Imagining the child's mental state, he had had an image of Om Jagadatri made. When he heard that the child's drawing had not been used for the Puja he told him, "you will have a Durga Puja now and in one day, we will celebrate three days together." ie. 7th., 8th. and 9th.

days. That's how, according to the rules, the worshipping of Om Jagadatri took place. By then the child was quite ill, yet sat for a long time just beyond the worshipping room to watch the Puja. Within a few days of this, according to the doctor's advice, he was sent under the care of his mother, sister and maternal uncle to Hazaribagh in Bihar to 'take the air'. Towards the end of Falgun they moved to Mihijam, but before leaving the child wrote a letter to his father. The gist of it was that 'his' Durga Puja did not take place according to the one instituted by Ram. He hoped that his father could at least do Puja with the picture drawn by himself and as done by Ravanna, always in the Spring. (Pinu believed that Ram prematurely worshipped Durga but that Ravanna always worshipped in Spring.) On receiving this letter a few days before Puja, the father worshipped Basanti (Spring) Puja. The child was very pleased to hear it.

As soon as the child had reached the time of the threshold of knowledge he had gone to offer his flower on Sanatandharma Sabha's stage. During 1343 Puja he was quite ill but even then went to the stage either by car or being carried, to offer his flowers. That year, on the eighth day (Astami) he asked his mother, "are you not going to worship this year?" Everyone was very busy, with his illness, and mother replied, "where shall I get the time to arrange everything and send it to the Puja?" (Noibedyas-offering of food to the Mother). Every year it was beautifully arranged and sent. This year it didn't go. Punyabrata was a bit annoyed. He went out in the arms of a servant and, using a rupee of his own bought sugar and sandesh and went to the Puja mandap and gave it there, then came home. Then he said, "there's a lot of botheration about making Noibedyas, so I gave sugar and sandesh. How can you not do the Puja for Astami? I like the Thakur of Chunibabu (the image at a neighbour's house) therefore instead of going to Dharmashabha I gave my offering to Chunibabu's Thakur." He was never

satisfied to see the image only once and wanted to see it again and again. People used to get fed up.

On the 9th. day he created a scene. In the afternoon they tried, but couldn't find, a horse-carriage. After waiting some time he asked a servant to carry him towards the Puja 'bari' (hall). Just on leaving they found a carriage and asked the servant to make him sit there. On sitting he asked the servant to go home. In broken Hindi he tried to arrange things with the coachman but they had an argument. The coachman said, "I'll only take you to one place," at the cost of 1 and a half rupees. He had already been requisitioned and was late for the appointment. The child said, "no, take me to every Puja in Gauhati," and said that he could give the money demanded as he had money and could pay. From inside the house they could hear the argument and his mother stepped out and sent one of the sisters to the carriage who also had arguments with the child. At last, promising that during Vijaya Dashami (immersion of the image in the river on the 10th. day) he would be taken to the river and would see every image anyway, he came down. The child probably knew that this was his last vision of Durga Pratima, that's why he was so eager.

The day he made such a fuss, he was hardly able to stand. That year, before Puja, he did another thing that will be revealed later.

Studies

From childhood Punyabrata was always ill with one thing or the other. In 1340, Ashwin, incurable nephritis became his companion. With this condition there was no possibility of his having opportunity to study or learn from books. Yet he learnt. How he learnt is amazing. He used to lie in bed and either his sisters, mother or father would try to please him by telling stories. Sometimes reading was from books. Whenever someone sat by him and read something, if he liked the story he would

say, "where on the page is the man's/god's name written?" After seeing it once, he recognised and learnt words; Sri Krishna, Ajun, Ram Chandra, Durga, Siva etc. By pronouncing the words over and over he managed to connect the inherent sound of the letters with the shape. Nobody taught him Ka, Kha, Ga, Gha, (a, b, c, d) yet following the above process he acquired knowledge of all letters including joint ones and by following the page numbers he learnt numbers and began to read himself. From then on his carers had a little respite! Books were kept next to him and he read as he wished. When he came across a different word he would ask how to pronounce it and its meaning. Amongst his regular reading were Kashidasher Mahabarat, Kritibaser Ramayan, Sri Madbhagabat (Bengali religious poem).

Whilst in Hazaribagh he wrote to his father saying he needed a book of Chandi. Accordingly a simplified version 'full of honey' was sent and he became very fond of it, reading it every day. He also became interested in riddles. A lady there taught him a few

eg. it's not a tree but has leaves but no veins
blind himself but opens eyes to others
like human beings has many names
yet cannot respond or answer if called
like a slave it stays in everyone's house
has no life but serves all the time

Answer : a book

After learning some he got more excited and began to write his own to baffle others. He made a few based on stories from the Ramayana and Mahabarat.

Memory

Once he heard he never forgot. He virtually memorised the whole Chandi. He used to recite, as if mesmerised, the beginning section where energies of different gods were arriving in different vehicles (to create Durga). Another part that he

recited with great excitement was when Shumbha said to Durga, 'fie on your arrogance- your energy is based entirely on other people supplying it.' The goddess smiled and said,

“ Fool! where can energy be apart from me. The whole world's energy is in me because I am the whole world. It is expressed in me, a part of me; In the fighting it is my image that fights; Those beautiful goddesses are born from my glow, And yet, within the blink of an eye they come and look after me, Oh you, who have lost your way.”

Every day Pinu would take his sisters and recite from memory;

Nama Devi (pray to you goddess)

Maha Devi (great goddess)

Siva, Namaste (Siva, I bow to you)

Nami Ma Prakriti (Mother Nature), Bhodhra (I am touching your feet)

Nama Raudra - (pray to you) Sun's Rays

Nama Nitya - (pray to you) Eternal

Nama Jagadhatri - (pray to you) Jagadhatri

With the beauty of Indubhati Gouri who gives all happiness.

He used to pronounce the name 'Jagadhatri' so clearly and beautifully that it always seemed as if some very deep mystery in the word had been made clear only to him. Sometimes he would recite Sanskrit 'stab' (religious prayer), eg. Nama debyoi (Prayer to god, great god Siv., praying all the time etc.).

He could also recite many poems, eg. from the Annada Mongol of Bharatchandra, the Autobiography of Annada and Annada dressing at Jharati; from Rabindranath Tagore : Panraksha (keeping promises); Bandibir (the imprisoned hero); Sharathay banga (Bengal in Autumn) and Kuntikorno Shambadh (news about Kunti and Korno) : Navin Sen's Palashir judho

(Battle of Plassey) - the section 'Britisher Ranabadya Bajilo' (the Instrumental music of the British has begun), etc. From Golan Mustapha 'Kishor' (young boy) and from Kalidas Roy 'Jaffar o banda' (Jaffar and the slave) and 'Goshpoder joy' (the victory of the small pond); from M.M.Dutta, 'Bir bahu bilap' (cry of the strong arm) and from Dilip Ray, 'Anami' (one without name) and the poem 'Siv.', written in Totak metre. The last word in the last section ends in Muktipati (god of freedom) and perhaps he was eager for freedom himself.

In 1343 Punyabrata began to read stories and folk tales eg. Thakurma juli (grandmother's bag); Ajob Desh (strange country) etc. He wrote to his middle brother and procured them from him. Almost all the stories he learnt by heart. He spoke line after line of prose from the books.

At the age of two he was taken to Manipur and always remembered the places he saw and people he met. At three, he saw the neighbour's new bride. After a further three and a half years she again came to see him. Her mother-in-law asked, "Pinu, look who d'you think has come?" and he replied, "Tuluda's wife."

Study of Mathematics

In the month of Agrahayan 1342, Punyabrata went to Hazaribagh. Before that he had learnt numbers up to 100, 200. He could calculate money quite well ie. if one rupee equals 64 paisa, two rupees equals 128, etc. During the Christmas holidays his father and middle brother went to Hazaribagh and one day Pinu said, "Baba, you must teach me maths." So his father sat down to teach. Within one day he had learnt small additions, subtractions, multiplication and division. Before the end of the holiday he said, "5 and 5 make 10; 10 and 10, 20 and his father encouraged him to continue. He went up to $81,000 \text{ plus } 81,000 = 162,240$. Both father and brother were

amazed. He wanted to continue enthusiastically but his father stopped him.

Judgement and Finer Perception

After the 1341 Durga Puja an illustrated Bengali poetry translation of Sri Mad Bhagabat was bought for Punyabrata. As soon as he got it he began to look at the pictures and his father began to explain them. One was Anirudha seeing Usha in a dream. The subject matter was of this kind but in the picture Anirudha was lying in bed and, in the background in a bright and colourful way, were Anirudha and Usha talking together. When he heard the description he began to laugh and said, “there’s a mistake in the image.” When his father asked why he replied, “a dream can’t be that bright.” Father questioned, “what happens when you dream then?” Punyabrata waved his right hand in the air above and said, “Dream is like shadow,” (perhaps he wanted to say ‘vague’). His father asked, “how do you know?” Answer, “I have learnt it from my dreams.” He was then four and a half years old.

There was another picture in the same book, ‘Markandayar Mayadarshan’ (the illusionary vision of Markandaya). On seeing the picture he asked for explanation. The father tried as far as possible ie, the world destroyed and Markandaya having a vision. Pinu exclaimed, “but the world had already been destroyed! Vishnu is lying on the leaves of the Bat tree on the sea of reasoning (karon shamadray); how can Markandaya see all this when he had nowhere to stand!” (ie. everything had already been destroyed). Hearing this difficult question the father tried to explain, and taught him a small ‘sloka’ (verse):

‘When the whole world is destroyed
I pray to that god in the form of a child,
Who holding his lotus feet with lotus hands
Puts them in his lotus mouth and
Floats on the leaf on the water.’

Punyabrata was very fond of this verse. The word 'Binibasayantam' (putting the foot in the mouth), Pinu pronounced and moved his hand to enter his mouth - just as Krishna did. He often recited the poem and, holding two hands together, made 'pronam' (touching the feet of the deity).

Doll's Wedding

He had seen the celebration of 'Garhastaya Dharma' (religion of domesticity) and perhaps had a hidden desire to see his older brother married and to have a 'Boudi' (sister-in-law). This wish was not fulfilled in his life-time. In June 1936 he was feeling a little better and arranged the marriage of the dolls, seeking to fulfil his internal desires.

Father's gifts

Punyabrata had given presents of his own drawings to many people. For three years the father looked after the son without ever getting tired. Punyabrata would laugh and say, "Father, in my last life I must have been your servant and served you. That's why in this life I have come to take your service."

Before Saradia Puja he probably knew that his time for leaving was drawing near and he had not given a present to his father. One morning he suddenly asked for paper and pencil, which was given. He wrote something and folded it and in the father's book 'almira' (cupboard) he put it between two books and said, "I left it in the almira for you." The father saw where it was but forgot about it afterwards. Fifteen days after Punyabrata went to the sacred place, his father remembered the paper. He took it out and read these words, written three times;

Om Ma Durgar Anunta Kirti (The eternal glory of Ma Durga)

ॐ
মা দুর্গার অনন্ত কীর্তি।

The father felt himself honoured to receive this present(advice?)

Preparation for departure

Before the Saradia Puja of 1343 Punyabrata's illness increased enormously. No treatment produced any results. For three years he had suffered indescribable pain and when it was too great the father told the son, "please tell Ma Durga; she will reduce your pain." In the beginning he would do so in his own language. Towards the end he stopped. The day after Shamyama Puja (Kali), the father said, "you're suffering a lot. Tell Ma Durga and she will reduce the pain." The son did not answer. After four or five minutes he smiled and said, "I have after all borne it for three years," meaning 'only a few more days left'.

Punyabrata's favourite goddess, Om Jaghadatri's Puja, was coming near. A few small arrangements were made but his illness continuously increased. Everyone was restless and worried about how this Puja could take place. It was decided that, apart from feeding the five Brahmins, the extras would be abandoned this time, but the Puja of Om Ma would be done according to the rules of Shastra (text). Doubts appeared whether Punyabrata would wait for that day.

7th. Agrahayan (23rd. Nov.) was Jagadhatri Puja. On the fifth, whilst washing his face and mouth in the morning, Pinu told his Didi (older sister), "yesterday Ma Durga told me in the dream, everything will finish for you after Jogadhatri Puja." Didi asked, "what, the albumin in the urine will come to an end?" He answered briefly, "everything will end." When Didi asked again, he changed the subject and started to talk rubbish, finally saying, "please call Ma." No-one gave importance to the dream, but later everyone understood its meaning.

The day of the Puja somehow passed. Once for half an hour Pinu lay in an armchair in front of the image to see Om Ma but was unable to give Pushpanjali (offering of flowers) because he had no strength to sit up. From the day after Puja father and mother stayed up all night. Like a baby Pinu demanded that his father take him in his arms. Whenever he wanted, father would pick him up and sit all night. Night after night passed like this. Before 3 am. on 14th. Agrahayan Pinu was lying in his father's arms. By then his voice had become faint and he was occasionally delirious and talking nonsense.(!)

The father was sitting holding his son not knowing whether he was asleep or unconscious. At 4am. in a normal clear voice, Punyabrata said, "Oh, it will sound on the breast of Mahesh. Why don't you come down and dance, you mad minx." The father was startled and looked round. "Who said this?" The son repeated the same thing. Just before this the tired mother had fallen asleep.

At 5am. the father woke her and asked, "from where did Punyabrata learn this song?" At that moment the mother couldn't answer. The next day at noon after a lot of thought she said that a year or so before, Pinu had said to her, "Ma, I learnt a lot about Ma Durga. Why don't you tell me the two or four poems about Ma Kali." Amongst others on this subject, she told these two lines. Strange that the lines, which expressed the deep feeling of someone so dedicated to prayer, should have left such an impression on a boy's mind, and that in the concluding moments of his life he could remember them. It seemed to us that he was getting ready for the journey by remembering the sacred words of Om Ma. Afterwards we thought of those few days that he was in this mortal world; whenever the father mentioned Om Ma Durga, he had put his hands together and pronamned her.

Departure

19th. Aagrahayan, Saturday, from the morning Pinu had no outer consciousness. His eyes had lost their vision. We can never say definitely that he had no knowledge in him, but that day his lips quivered slightly when we asked him to call Ma Durga. The whole day passed in great anxiety. Before evening the father asked his oldest son and the daughters to be attentive and to say aloud the names of Durga, Ganga, Narayan in right time. Having said that, he went out to wait for the doctor. The pulse was changing regularly and it was important that he should examine the pulse. Five minutes later the father returned and saw that Pinu was eager to go. Immediately he took him in his arms and took him outside and sat. Everyone spoke together, singing the names of Ma Durga. According to the father's instructions one of the daughters gave Ganges water and a Tulsi leaf in his mouth and on his forehead. At 7pm. he went to the sacred place, listening to his favourite names of Durga.

Victory Om Ma Durga Victory

ॐ

মা দুর্গার অনন্তকীর্তি।

“Eternal glory of Om Ma Durga”

পুণ্যব্রত সম্বন্ধে বিভিন্ন ব্যক্তির অভিমত

—তিরোভাবের পূর্বে—

১। পণ্ডিচেরীর শ্রীঅরবিন্দ আশ্রমের শ্রীমার (the Mother's) অভিমত—

পুণ্যব্রতের জ্যেষ্ঠ ভ্রাতার নিকট লিখিত শ্রীনলিনীকান্ত গুপ্তের পত্র হইতে উদ্ধৃত—৩রা জুলাই, ১৯৩৬—

“You may tell your father that the Mother has seen the photo of Punyabrata. The child appears to possess a rather well-developed consciousness in a too young body. This disharmony—the inner growth in advance of the outer growth—may be the original cause of his illness.”

তোমার পিতাকে বলিও যে, শ্রীমা পুণ্যব্রতের ফটো দেখিয়াছেন। অতি কচিদেহে কতক পরিমাণে ঋদ্ধ চৈতন্য এই শিশু ধারণ করিতেছে, এইরূপ প্রতীয়মান হইতেছে। এই অসামঞ্জস্য অর্থাৎ বাহ্য পরিণতির পূর্বেই আন্তরপরিণতি,— তাহার রোগের মূল কারণ হইতে পারে।

তিরোভাবের পরে

২। গোঁহাটী সনাতন ধর্মসভা—৬ই ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩৬—

“বালকের আত্মার সদৃগতির জন্য উপস্থিত সভ্যগণ দণ্ডায়মান হইয়া শ্রীশ্রীজগদম্বার চরণে প্রার্থনা করিতেছেন।”

৩। শ্রীযুক্ত সুরেন্দ্রনাথ চট্টোপাধ্যায় (গোঁহাটী কলেজের ভূতপূর্ব বিজ্ঞানাধ্যাপক) ৭ই ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩৬—

“আমি জানি ঐ শিশুটি আপনার অন্তরের কোন্ নিভৃত কোণে কি আশা ও গৌরব জাগাইয়া বসিয়াছিল।

.....জনসাধারণ তাঁহাকে যতটা আপনার করিয়া চায়, আপনি তাঁহাকে তদপেক্ষা বেশী আপনার করিয়া চাহিতে পারিয়াছিলেন; ফলে, তিনি আপনার আশা পূর্ণ করিয়াছেন।”.....

পুনঃ ২১শে ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩৬.....“সেবাব্রত সফল করিবার জন্ম কোলের উপর পরিপূর্ণ মনুষ্যত্বের একটি ক্ষুদ্র পুতুল দেওয়ার প্রয়োজন ছিল; ভগবান সে আকাঙ্ক্ষা পূর্ণ করিয়া আপনাকে ধন্য করিয়াছেন ইহাই আমার বিশ্বাস। ভরসা করি পুণ্যব্রতের পুণ্যস্মৃতি আপনার কর্মবহুল জীবনে প্রতিপদে উৎসাহ দান করিবে।”.....

৪। শ্রীযুক্ত কালীকমল কাব্যবিনোদ—অণিপণ্ডিত, মীলেট—

৬ই ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩৬.....“পুণ্যব্রত পুণ্যময় হইয়া ভগবৎ পাদপদ্মে আশ্রয় লাভ করুক।”.....

৫। রায় বাহাদুর শ্রীযুক্ত দেবেন্দ্র কুমার সুখোপাধ্যায়—

অবসরপ্রাপ্ত ডেপুটি কমিশনার—কলিকাতা হইতে লিখিয়াছেন,—
৮ ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩৬—

“এক মহাপুরুষ আসিয়া আপনাদের পুত্র হইয়া জন্মগ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার যেটুকু সাধনা বাকী ছিল তাহা শেষ করাইয়া মা পুনরায় তাহাকে নিজের কোলে তুলিয়া নিলেন। তাহার প্রতি আমার বরাবর একটা আকর্ষণ ছিল এবং এবার গোঁহাটী গিয়া তাহাকে শেষ দেখা দেখিয়া নিবার স্মৃতিধা ভগবান যে আমাকে দিয়াছিলেন তাহার জন্ম আমি ধন্য মনে করিতেছি। আমার চক্ষে সে একটি অজ্ঞ শিশু ছিল না, আমি তাহাকে এক ঋষিতুল্য ব্রহ্মজ্ঞানী পুরুষ বলিয়া মনে করিতাম এবং এই জন্মই যেন তাহাকে বার বার দেখিবার জন্ম আমার মনটা ব্যাকুল হইত। ভগবানের নিকট খোকোর আত্মার মঙ্গল-কামনা করিতেছি। আমার দৃঢ় বিশ্বাস যে, সে পূর্ণজ্ঞান লাভ

করিয়াছে; আর জন্মগ্রহণ করিতে হইবে না। এখন মা'তে মিশিয়া থাকিবে।”

[ইনি ৩জগদ্ধাত্রী পূজার সময় গোঁহাটী আসিয়া কয়দিন ছিলেন এবং প্রত্যহ ২৩ বার পুণ্যব্রতকে দেখিতে আসিতেন এবং সুবিধা পাইলেই তাহার সেবা করিতেন।]

৬। পুণ্যব্রতের জ্যেষ্ঠতাত—কলিকাতা, ৮ই ডিসেম্বর ১৯৩৬—

.....“নিত্যধামে তাহার কার্য্য করিতে চলিয়া গেল। প্রার্থনা কর যেন সে পরম ব্রহ্মের পদে স্থান পায়। দিবারাত্র তাহার জন্ম হরিণাম করিবে।”...

৭। শ্রীযুক্ত ভবেশচন্দ্র মুখোপাধ্যায়—ডিব্রুগড়, ৮ই ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩৬—

...“যেই তাকে একদিনের জন্মও দেখে তাই বিশেষত্ব ভুলিতে পারে না।...সে তার উপযুক্ত স্থানেই গিয়াছে।”.....

৮। শ্রীযুক্ত রামনারায়ণ তর্কতীর্থ—দিনাজপুরের মহারাজের সভাপণ্ডিত—৯ই ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩৬—

.....“পুণ্যব্রত যোগভ্রষ্ট মহাপুরুষ প্রারব্ধ ক্ষয়ের জন্মই জন্ম লইয়াছিল, ক্ষয় করিয়া আদিত্যবর্ণং তমসঃ পরস্তাৎ চলিয়া গেল। তাহার যেটুকু সম্পর্ক লাভ হইল তাহাই ফলপ্রদ।... তাহার মূর্ত্তি হৃদয়ে সর্বদা উজ্জ্বল থাকুক, অবলম্বন একমাত্র শ্রীমদ্ভাগবত।”

৯। পুণ্যব্রতের ভগিনীগতি—দ্বারভাঙ্গা—৯ই ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩৬—

...“পিণ্ডের অমানুষিক ভাবগুলোই যেন মনে করিয়ে দিত সে আমাদের মধ্যে থাকবার নয়।.....আমরা তার স্মৃতি নিয়ে ছুঃখ বোধ করব, কিন্তু আনন্দও কম পাব না, ওরকম ছেলের সাহচর্য্য করবার সুযোগ পেয়েছি ভেবে।.....

১০। পুণ্যব্রতের মাতুল—১২ই ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩৬—

...“পিণ্ডুর স্বভাবচরিত্রে মহাপুরুষের লক্ষণ প্রকাশ পেয়েছিল, সে বেঁচে থাকলে আমাদের খুবই গৌরবের বিষয় হইত।”...

১১। শ্রীযুক্ত বিজয়কান্ত রায় চৌধুরী, এম, এ,—মিহিজাম, ১৩ই ডিসেম্বর ১৯৩৬।

...“পিণ্ডুর সম্বন্ধে আমার মনের কোণে একটা গোপন আশা ছিল, হয়তো সে বাঁচবে। তাহার ভিতর দিয়া একদিন জগৎ আবার ভগবানের পুণ্য প্রেরণা পাইয়া ধন্য হইবে।..... পুণ্যফলে ক্ষণিকের জন্য যে ভগবদ্বিভূতি জগতে আসিয়াছিল তাহাকে কিছু কিছু চিনিবার ও পাইবার সৌভাগ্য শুধু আপনাদেরই হইল। তাহার জন্য প্রার্থনা করিবার কিছু নাই— কেন যে দেহ ধারণ করিয়া সে এই কষ্টটুকু স্বীকার করিয়াছিল আমি বুঝিতে পারিলাম না।”

১২। মার্গেরিটা—সেগুনবাড়ী চা বাগান হইতে একজন ভদ্র-মহিলা লিখিয়াছেন—১৫ই ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩৬—পুণ্যব্রতের এক দিদিকে—

....“এত দুঃখের মধ্যেও নিজের অদৃষ্টকে ধন্যবাদ না দিয়ে পারছি না এই মনে করে যে, দৈবক্রমে হঠাৎ ঠিক সময়ে যদি তোমাদের ওখানে না গিয়ে পড়তুম, তো স্বর্গচ্যুত উজ্জ্বল জ্যোতিষ্কের দিব্যদীপ্তি দেখে চক্ষু সার্থক করা আর এ জীবনে সম্ভব হ’ত না। গীতায় পড়েছিলাম—‘স্বচীনাং শ্রীমতাং গেহে যোগভ্রষ্টোহভি-জায়তে।’ এখন তা চাক্ষু্য দেখলুম। ধন্য তোমরা দেবসেবার সুযোগ পেয়েছ।...আকৃষ্ট হ’য়ে কোন দেবতা তাঁর পূজা গ্রহণ ছলে এই দীর্ঘ রোগ যন্ত্রণা স্বীকার করেছিলেন, নতুবা ওরূপ দৈবী সম্পদযুক্ত অলৌকিক শক্তি-সম্পন্ন দেবশিশুর কথা চোখে দেখা দূরে থাক কাণেও শোনা যায় না।...”

১৩। শ্রীযুক্ত শচীপতি চট্টোপাধ্যায়—রাণাঘাট,—১৫ই ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩৬—

.....“সে যোগী পুরুষ,.....জন্মগ্রহণ করিয়া তাহার সাধনা শেষ করিয়াছে। তাহার আর জন্মগ্রহণ করিতে হইবে না।”...

১৪। ভাগলপুর হইতে এক ভদ্রমহিলা লিখিয়াছেন—
১৯শে ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩৬—

...“মা যে মহাপুরুষকে গর্ভে ধারণ করিয়াছিলেন, তাঁর মহাপ্রস্থান যে কি অপূর্ব...। পিণ্ড যে আপনাদেরই ছিলেন তাহা নয়, তিনি আমাদের সকলকেই সমান দেখিতেন। এত অল্প দিনের মধ্যে এরূপভাবে জ্ঞান কোনও সামান্য মানুষের সম্ভবে না। এখন যেন নূতন ক’রে সেই মুখ, তাঁর হাতের ছবি আঁকা, প্রত্যেকের সঙ্গে সম্মান ক’রে কথা, আহ্বান করা সব যেন উথলে উঠছে।” (পুনঃ) “তাঁর আবির্ভাব মাত্র অল্প দিনের ভোগের জন্য, নতুবা এত অল্প সময়ের মধ্যে এত জ্ঞান অর্জন করা ও সকলকে এত ভালবাসা সামান্য মানুষে সম্ভব নয়।”

১৫। অধ্যাপক শ্রীযুক্ত যোগেশচন্দ্র মুখোপাধ্যায়—কলিকাতা,
২২শে ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩৬—

...“পুণ্যব্রত বাস্তবিকই পুণ্যাত্মা ছিল; কেবল কোন একটা ছুষ্কৃতির ফলে সে আজীবন রোগ ভোগ ক’রে সেই পাপের ক্ষয় করলে। এই অল্প দিন সে যে আমাদের কাছে ছিল সেই কয় দিনেই সে তার দেবভাবের পরিচয় দিয়ে গেছে। সে ত পূজা, ধর্মকথা ও আলোচনা আর ধর্মগ্রন্থ পাঠ ছাড়া আর কিছুই ভালবাসতো না—এই থেকেই বোঝা যায় যে সে আমাদের এই পাপপঙ্কিল সংসারে বেশীদিন থাকতে আসেনি;”...

১৬। অধ্যাপক শ্রীযুক্ত নলিনীমোহন মুখোপাধ্যায় শাস্ত্রী—
সীলেট, ২২শে ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩৬—

...“আনন্দময়ী মা তাহাকে শান্তিময় ক্রোড়ে তুলিয়া লইয়াছেন। সে শান্তি পাইয়াছে।”...

১৭। হাজারিবাগ হইতে এক ভদ্রমহিলা লিখিয়াছেন—২৪শে ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৩৬—

...“সে আমাদের কাছে থাকিবার জন্য আসে নাই। অতটুকু ছেলে, কত বুদ্ধিজ্ঞান তাহার ছিল।”—

১৮। স্বামী সেবকানন্দ পুণ্যব্রতের জননীকে লিখিয়াছেন—

...“তুমি যে অমূল্য রত্ন দেবতুল্য পুত্র পাইয়াছিলে সে যে মানব নহে, জননি! অভিশাপ ভ্রষ্ট কোন দেবতা.....জন্মে-ছিল।... ..জীবনাবধি ব্যাধি ভোগই ঐ বালকের অভিশাপের পূর্ণাঙ্গতি।... ..নিত্য তাঁর ফটোখানি বাৎসল্যভাবে পূজা করিও, জননি!

১৯। শ্রীযুক্ত দ্বিজমণি দেবশর্মা, এম, এ,—মণিপুর ইন্সফাল হইতে লিখিয়াছেন—৭ ফেব্রুয়ারী ১৯৩৭—

News has reached me to-day that .. died... ..I now remember how he called me Dijja-mani Dada at Imphal and also how he could recognise me when I came to Gauhati last. I am told that he possessed remarkable potentialities of an artist.

অর্থাৎ আজ আমার নিকট সংবাদ পৌঁছিয়াছে যে (পুণ্যব্রত) মারা গিয়াছে! আমার এখন স্মরণ হইতেছে যে সে ইন্সফালে আমাকে দ্বিজজমণি দাদা বলিয়া কেমন ডাকিত (তখন তাহার বয়স ২ বৎসর) এবং আমি যখন শেষবার গোঁহাটী যাই তখন সে আমাকে কেমন চিনিতে পারিয়াছিল। আমাকে একজন বলিল যে, তাহার চিত্রকর হইবার বিশেষ শক্তি পরিস্ফুটনোগ্রন্থ ছিল।...

২০। শ্রীহট্টের পণ্ডিত শ্রীযুক্ত হরমুন্দর সাংখ্যরত্ন—১০ই ফাল্গুন, ১৩৪৩ (বরাহদ্বাদশী) “পুণ্যব্রত-পঞ্চদশী” লিখিয়া পুণ্যব্রতের পিতাকে উপহার দিয়াছেন।

শ্রীদুর্গা জয়তি

পুণ্যব্রত-পঞ্চদশী

- (১) শাকে যুগ্মশরাষ্ট্রচন্দ্রবিমিতে মেঘং গতে ভাস্করে
মানে সিন্ধুযুগে ধরামরকুলে ।
যো জাতোহষ্টম বালকঃ শুভমতির্নাগে শুভে কর্কটে
হিত্বা বন্ধুজনং বিহায় ভবনং পুণ্যব্রতঃ প্রস্থিতঃ ॥
- (২) বঙ্গান্দে মুনিবহিবহিবধুমৈ চাজং গতে ভাস্বতি
পুত্রহ্নেন ধরাতলে সুরশিশুঃ প্রাপ্তো হতো দৈবতঃ ।
নানালক্ষণপুঙ্গবৈরনুমিতঃ সাধারণো নো শিশু-
র্হা কষ্টং ক গতঃ শিশৌ বয়সি স ক্ষীণায়ুরেযোহত্র বা ॥
- (৩) ধন্যা সা জননী ধরাতলগতা গর্ভে ধৃতস্তাদৃশো
বালোহয়ং হি যয়া ধন্যজনকো দত্তং পয়স্তন্মুখে ।
স্মেহাৎ প্রতিপালিতশ্চ বিধিনা সংলালিতো বর্দ্ধিতো
হা কষ্টং ন হি দৃশ্যতে গ্রহগতিঃ ক্ষীণায়ুরেযোহত্র যৎ ॥
- (৪) আয়স্থা গুরুশুক্রেচন্দ্রতনয়া ভ্রাতৃস্থলে চন্দ্রমাঃ
কেতুর্বন্ধুগৃহে শনৌ রিপুগৃহে ধর্মস্থলে ভূমিজঃ ।
কর্মস্থঃ খলু ভাস্করঃ কুজগৃহে মেঘে সমং রাল্লণা
হা কষ্টং ক গতো বিহায় ভবনং পুণ্যব্রতঃ স্বেচ্ছয়া ॥
- (৫) আসক্তির্জগদন্বিকাপদযুগে বিত্তে বিরক্তিঃ শিশো
র্দেবেষস্তানুরক্তিরস্মা নিয়তং শক্তির্বিপন্নাবনে ।
ব্যক্তির্ভাগবতে মতিঃ পরহিতে ভক্তিগুরৌ সর্বদা
কস্মৈতা যদি তত্র সর্বত ইতঃ পুণ্যব্রতস্যোত্তরম্ ॥
- (৬) বাল্যে যর্হি শিশুঃ পিবত্যতিশয়প্ৰীত্যা জনন্যাঃ স্তনং
হর্ষাদ্বা যদি বালভাবস্থলভান্নাতুঃ কুচাগ্রং যদা ।

আকৃষ্টং নবদন্ততশ্চ শিশুনা মুগ্ধেন বা দৈবতঃ
স্নেহাদ্বক্তি তদা স্বয়ং হি জননী চাক্ষুস্থিতং বালকম্ ॥—,

- (৭) হস্তং মামিহ চোদ্যতঃ কিমু শিশো পানপ্রসঙ্গাজ্ঞতো
দগ্ধাঘাতবলেন বা ভ্রমসি কিং ভো দৈবকীনন্দনঃ ।
দোষো নাস্তি পয়োধরে মম শিশো নাত্রাস্যাহং পুতনা
চিত্রাচ্চিত্রমিদং তদৈব শিশুনা ত্যক্তঃ স্তনঃ স্বেচ্ছয়া ॥
- (৮) নো দৃষ্টো নহি তাদৃশঃ ক্ষিতিতলে বালাভিমানঃ শ্রুতো
নো পীতং জননীপয়স্ত শিশুনা.....
ত্যাগেনৈতদহো ভবেদনুমিতধ্বনেন সর্বং শিশো-
মাতনেী খলু পীয়তে তব পয়ঃ জন্মাবধিমৃত্যুতঃ ॥
- (৯) সঙ্কল্পঃ কিল বালকস্য হি মহান্ ভগ্নো ন চিত্রং কদা
চিত্রং তৎপরতঃ কদাপি শিশুনা স্তন্যং ন পীতং কুতঃ ।
যত্নেনাপি ততঃ শিশোশ্চ গুরুণা পানপ্রবৃত্তিস্তদা
নানীতা, ন কদা পিবামি জননি স্তন্যং ত্বদীয়ং পুনঃ ॥
- (১০) নাস্ম্যস্মিন্ বসুদেবজো ন জননি ত্বগস্যাহো পুতনা
আশীর্ব্বাদবলেন তে ভবতু মে সঙ্কল্পসিদ্ধিঃ প্রসো ।
পশ্যন্তত্র ধরাতলে নরগণা বালাভিমানং পরং
স্তন্যং পাতুমহো কদাপি ন ভবেন্নাতঃ পিপাসা যতঃ ॥
- (১১) মাতুঃ স্তন্যমহো কদাপি শিশুনা ত্যক্তং শ্রুতং ন কদা
বৈরাগ্যং হি তদা শিশোঃ সমভবৎ দিঙ্ মাত্রমাসং বয়ঃ ।
নো যত্নাঃ সফলাস্তদর্থমিহ যে মাত্রা কৃতাস্তেহত্র ভো
নো বালস্য কদাভবৎ কথমহো সঙ্কল্পভঙ্গোহত্র যৎ ॥
- (১২) বালোহয়ং চতুরাক্ষিকঃ খলু যদা চিত্রং পৃথিব্যাং হি তৎ
দুর্গামূর্ত্তিরহো তদৈব শিশুনা চাত্রাক্ষিতা যত্নতঃ ।
নানারঙ্গস্মুরঞ্জিতা দশভূজা সিংহাসনে পার্ব্বতী
দৃষ্ট্যা তদ্ব্যনুমীয়তে ন শিশুনা কেনাপ্যহো শিল্লিনা ॥

- (১৩) দুর্গেয়ং পরিপূজ্যতে ন চ ময়া যাবৎ স্থিতিমে' ভবেৎ
 তাবৎ কৰ্মফলাপ্তয়ে তত ইতঃ ক্ষৌণ্য ময়া গম্যতে ।
 কালেহস্মিন্ প্রবলে কলৌ ন চ ময়া স্থাতব্যমেতৎ পুন-
 ম'তুঃ পাদতলে জনির্মম যদা তস্মিন্ ক্ষণে প্রার্থিতম্ ॥
- (১৪) বঙ্গাদে গুণবেদবহ্নিবিধুমে ভানৌ গতে বৃষ্টিকং
 মন্দাহে গ্রহচন্দ্রে শিশুরয়ং ধাম স্বকীয়ং যযৌ ।
 যস্মাদাগত এয পুণ্যবিভবঃ পুণব্রতস্তৎস্থলে
 শৌকৌ নাত্র তদর্থমত্র সুহৃদা কার্য্যঃ কদা কশ্চন ॥
- (১৫) শাকে নাগশরাষ্টচন্দ্রবিমিতে কুন্তংগতে ভাস্করে
 দ্বাদশ্যাং সিতপক্ষতোহস্বরবিধৌ মানৈ বিধৌ বাসরে ।
 দত্তেয়ং হরসুন্দরেণ কবিতা পিত্রে শিশোঃ শ্রদ্ধয়া
 নাম্না পঞ্চদশী সতী সুসময়ে পুণ্যব্রতার্থং ময়া ॥

Opinions of various people about Punyabrata.

Before he died.

1. Sri Sri Ma of Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry opined:

(quoted from a letter sent to Pinu's older brother by Sri Nalinikanta Gupta dated 3rd July 1936)

“ You may tell your father that the Mother has seen the photo of Punyabrata. The child appears to possess a rather well-developed consciousness in a too young body. This disharmony- the inner growth in advance of the outer growth - may be the original cause of his illness.”

After the death.

2. Gauhati Sanatan Dharmasabha 6th. Dec. 1936

“ The members are standing together and are praying at the feet of Sri Sri Jagadamba for the auspicious passage of the child's spirit.

3. Sri Surendranath Chattopadhyaya (Retired Professor of Science, Gauhati Cotton College) 7th. Dec. 1936:

“ I know in which secret corner of your inner self this child was sitting, enlivening your hope and pride... however much the public wanted from him you were able to ask and accept more. As a result he was able to fulfill your hopes....”

again 21st. Dec. 1936:

“ There was a need for a small doll full of fulfilled humanity to be in your lap to make you succeed in your compassionate service. I sincerely believe that god has honoured you by fulfilling that desire. I hope that in every step of your busy working life the sacred memory of Punyabrata will give you inspiration...”

4. Sri Kalikamal Kavyabinod- anipandit, Syllhet - 6th. Dec. 1936

“ .. let Punyabrata full of sacredness find refuge on the lotus feet of god..”

5, Rai Bahadur Sri Debendra Kumar Mukhopadhyaya (Retired Deputy Commissioner- Calcutta 8th. Dec. 1936 -

“ A great man has come as your son. On finishing whatever was left for his quest Mother has taken him back into her arms. I felt a magnetic attraction to him and feel very honoured that god gave me the opportunity to see him the last time I was In Gauhati. He was not an ignorant child in my eyes. I considered him a person of supreme knowledge like a risi (wise man) and that's why again and again I was so eager to see him. I am

praying for the wellbeing of the child's spirit. I am utterly convinced that he has achieved the supreme knowledge. He wouldn't need to be born again. He will be one with the Mother," (this gentleman came to Gauhati during Jagadhatri Puja for a few days and every day he came to see Punyabrata two or three times. Whenever the opportunity arose he would care for him.)

6. Punyabrata's older uncle, Calcutta 8th. 1936.

".. gone to do his work in heaven. Pray that he gets his place at the feet of god. Pray for him day and night..."

7. Sri Babesh Chandra Mukhopadhyaya - Dibrugarh 8th. Dec. 1936:

" whoever has seen him even for a day can never forget his exceptional quality... - he has gone to the right place."

8. Sri Ram Narayan - Tarkateertha- the court pandit of the king of Dinajpur - 9th. Dec. 1936:

"Punyabrata was a fallen star, born to conclude the unfinished work before he returned. Whatever small relationship he created that was fruitful, let his image be always shining in your heart the only real help is Sri Madbhagabat".

9. Brother-in-law of Punyabrata - Dwarbajanga- 9th. Dec. 1936:

" ..Pinu's superhuman qualities reminded us that he would not stay with us."

10. Punyabrata's maternal uncle - 12th. Dec. 1936:

".. sign of a great man was expressed in Pinu's character and nature, there was no doubt that had he lived he would be a source of great pride to us."

11. Sri Bijaykanta Raychaudhury, M.A., - Mihijam, 13th. Dec. 1936:

" I cherished a secret hope in the corner of my mind about Pinu, that he would live. And through him one day the world would be honoured to receive the sacred inspiration of god..... as a result of merit earned he came briefly in the divinely lit world and you were very fortunate to have the opportunity to recognise and be with him. There is no need to pray for him; the only thing is I still cannot understand why he took human form to accept suffering and pain."

12. A lady from Segunbari Tea garden, Marguerita, has written to the older sister of Punyabrata - 15th. Dec. 1936:

“ amidst all this sorrow, I can’t but thank my fortune that, luckily, when I arrived at your place, my eyes were deeply satisfied to see the divine light of the bright star that fell from the heavens. This would not have been possible without divine intervention. I once read in the Gita, ‘in the auspicious house of a purified man lives the fallen deity’. Now I saw it personally with my own eyes. You are honoured that you had the possibility to serve the divinity... obviously some god was attracted to you to arrive at your place and accept this long suffering from the disease in the disguise of accepting your worshipping, otherwise you would never have seen the divine child with the supernatural energy let alone hear about it.”

13. Sri Sachipati Chattopadhyaya - Ranaghat- 15th. Dec.1936:

“..he was a fulfilled person (yogi).. concluded his quest by taking birth on earth. He will not have to be born again.”

14. A lady has written from Bhagalpor - 19th. Dec.1936:

“..what an amazing divine departure of a great man whom the mother held in the womb. It is not only true that Pinu was yours, he looked at us all equally. Such knowledge and wisdom within such a short time is not possible for an ordinary person. Now, as if his face, the pictures he drew, the way he spoke to everybody with respect, the way he invited everybody, are rising within me.”

Again, “ he appeared to enjoy a few days, otherwise it is not possible for someone to gain so much wisdom and to love everyone so much, it is just not possible for an ordinary person”.

15. Proff. Sri Jogesh Chandra Mukhopadhyaya -Calcutta 22nd. Dec.1936-

“.. Punyabrata was obviously a sacred spirit; but for some bad deed he suffered illness throughout his short life to obliterate that sin. The few days that he was with us, he has identified himself in the expression of divinity. He never liked anything else but worshipping and religion and reading of religious books. From this you can understand that he was not meant to stay for a long time in this sinful world...”

16. Proff. Sri Nalini Mohan Mukhopadhyaya Shastri - Sylhet -22nd. Dec.1936 -

“...Mother, goddess of joy, has taken him in her peaceful lap. He has gained peace..”

17. A lady from Hazaribaag has written - 24th. Dec.1936-

“ he hasn't come to stay with us. That little boy, how much intelligence and wisdom he already had.”

18. Swami Sevakananda wrote to Punyabrata's mother-

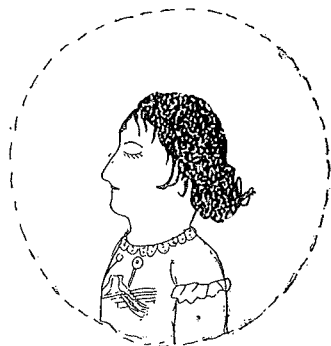
“.. the priceless jewel, rare in god's world, the son that you received; mother, he was not an ordinary human being. Some god fell under a curse..was born...the boy fulfilled the demand of the curse by suffering throughout his short life. Every day do your worshipping of his photograph, full of maternal love!

19. Sri Dwijamani Devasarma M.A. wrote from Manipur, Imphal-
7th.Feb.1937

“.. news has reached me today that..... died I now remember how he called me Dijjamani dada at Imphal and also how he could recognise me when I came to Gauhati last. I am told that he possessed remarkable potentiality of an artist.

20. Sri Harasundar Sankhyaratna presented to Punyabrata's father on the 10th. Falgun 1343 (12th.day of the Pig) the poem 'Punyabrata - panchadashi' -

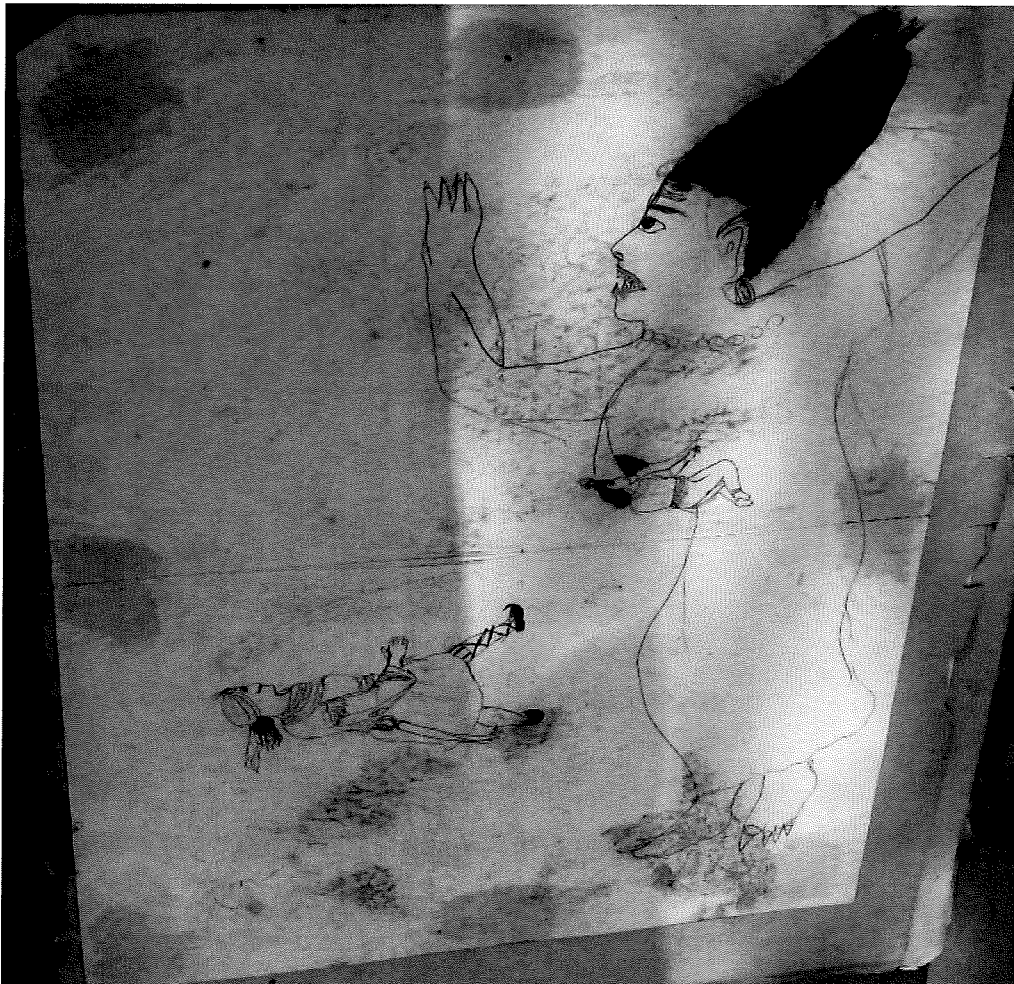
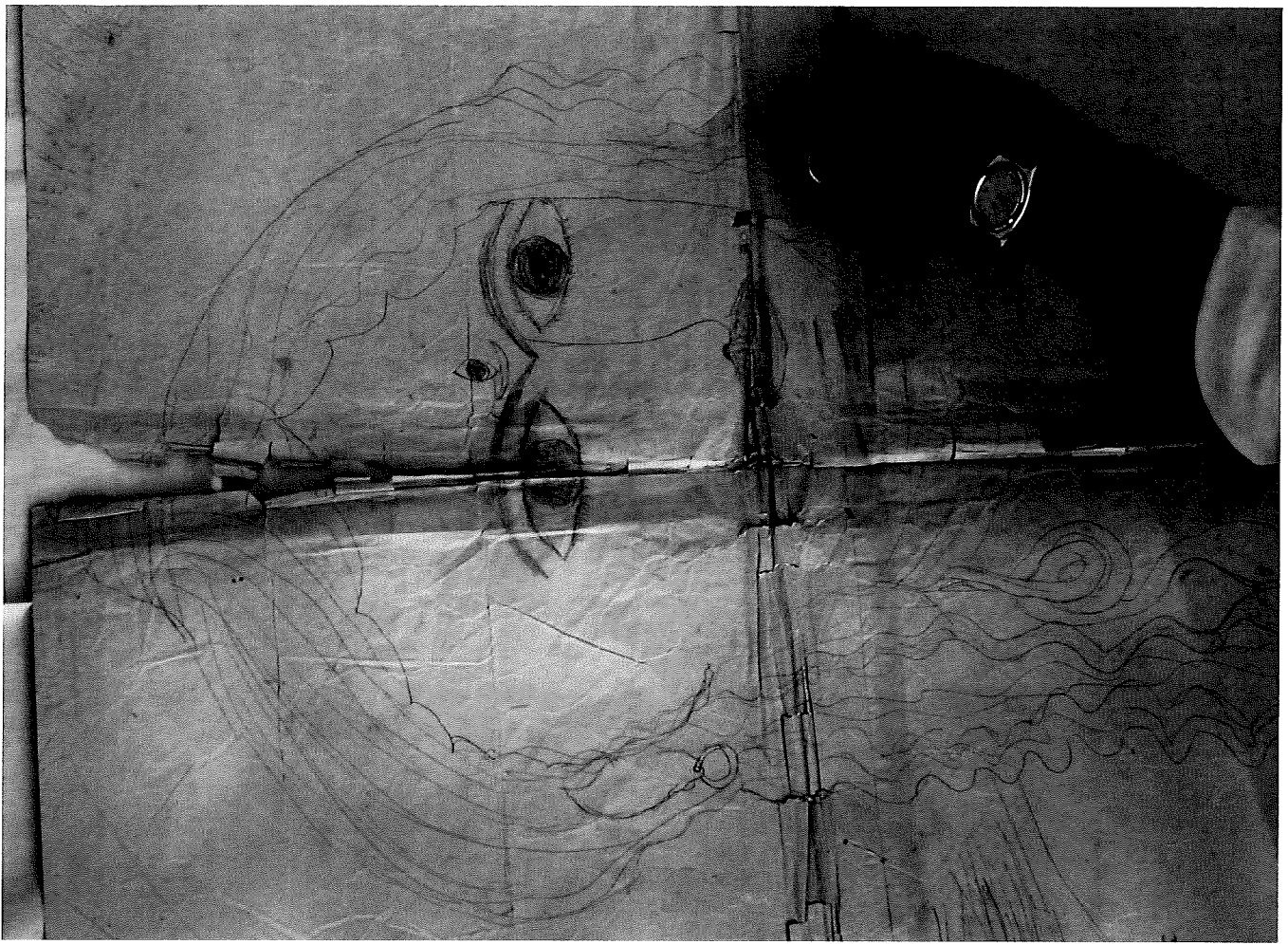
পুণ্যব্রতের অঙ্কিত চিত্রের নমুনা



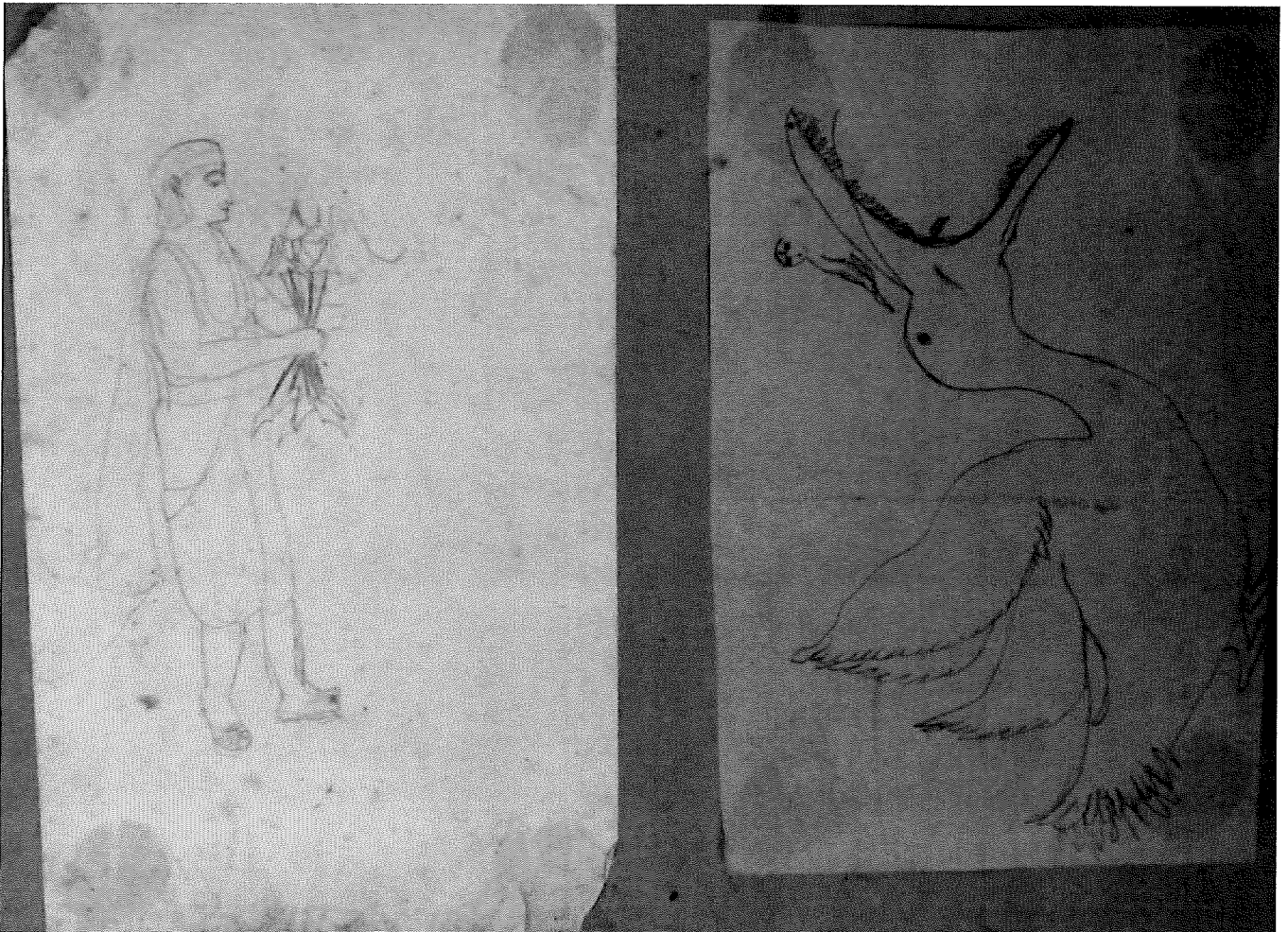
Examples of Pinu's drawings

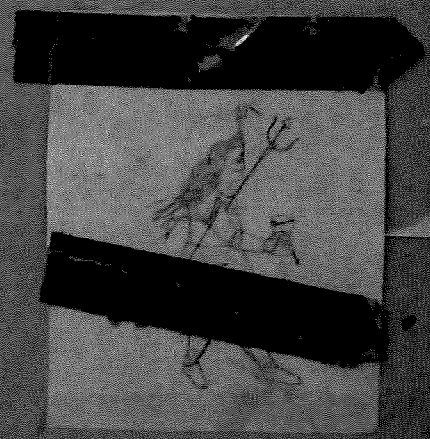
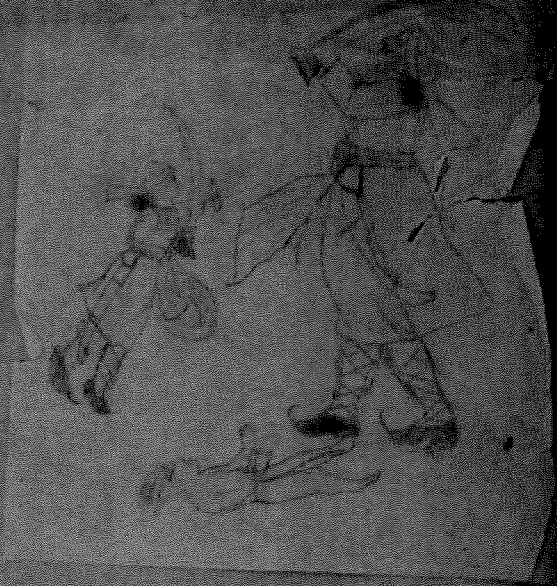


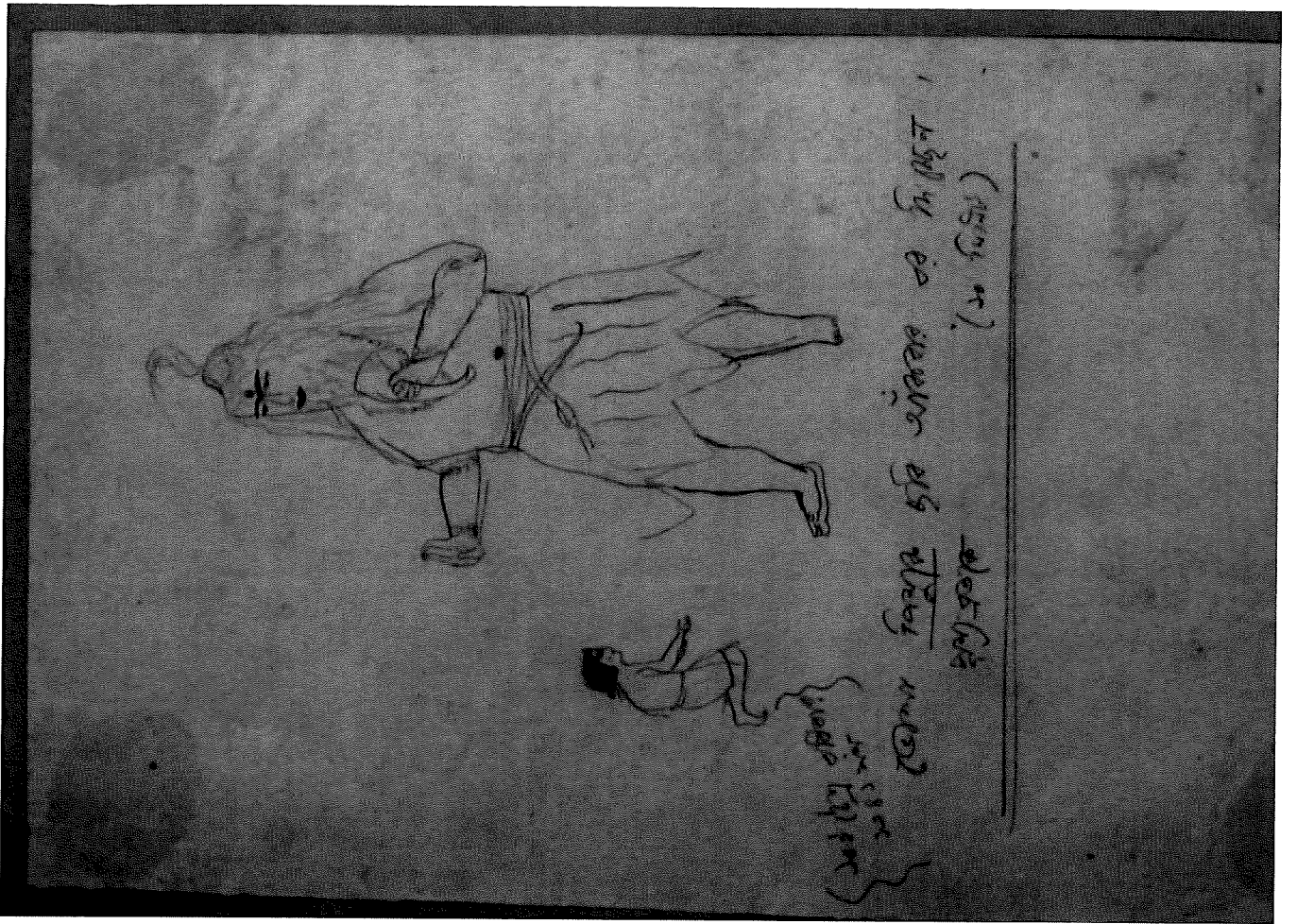


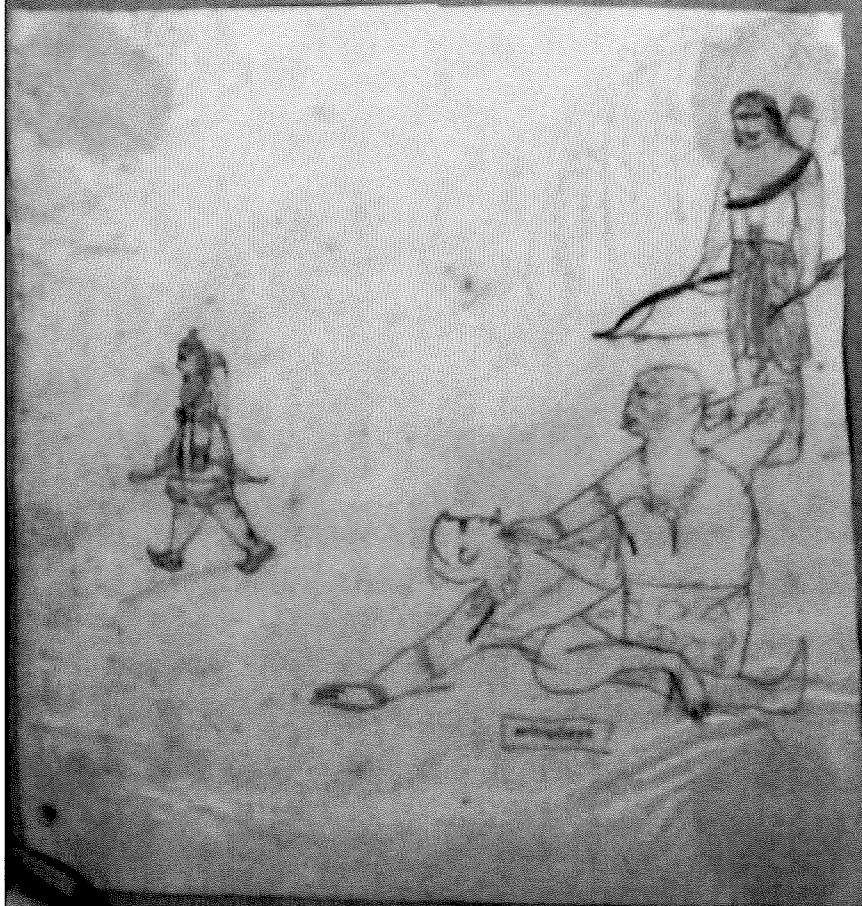




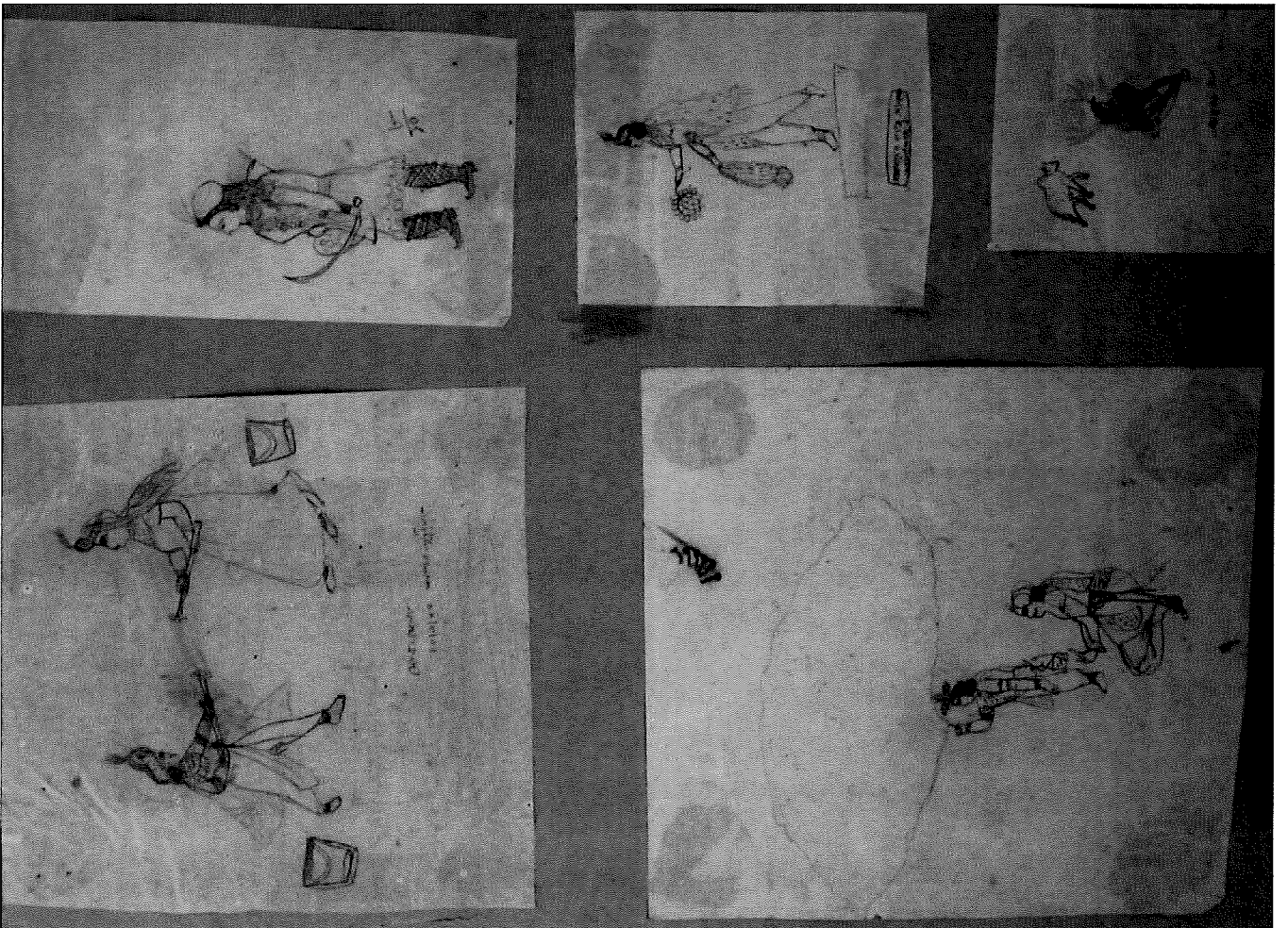
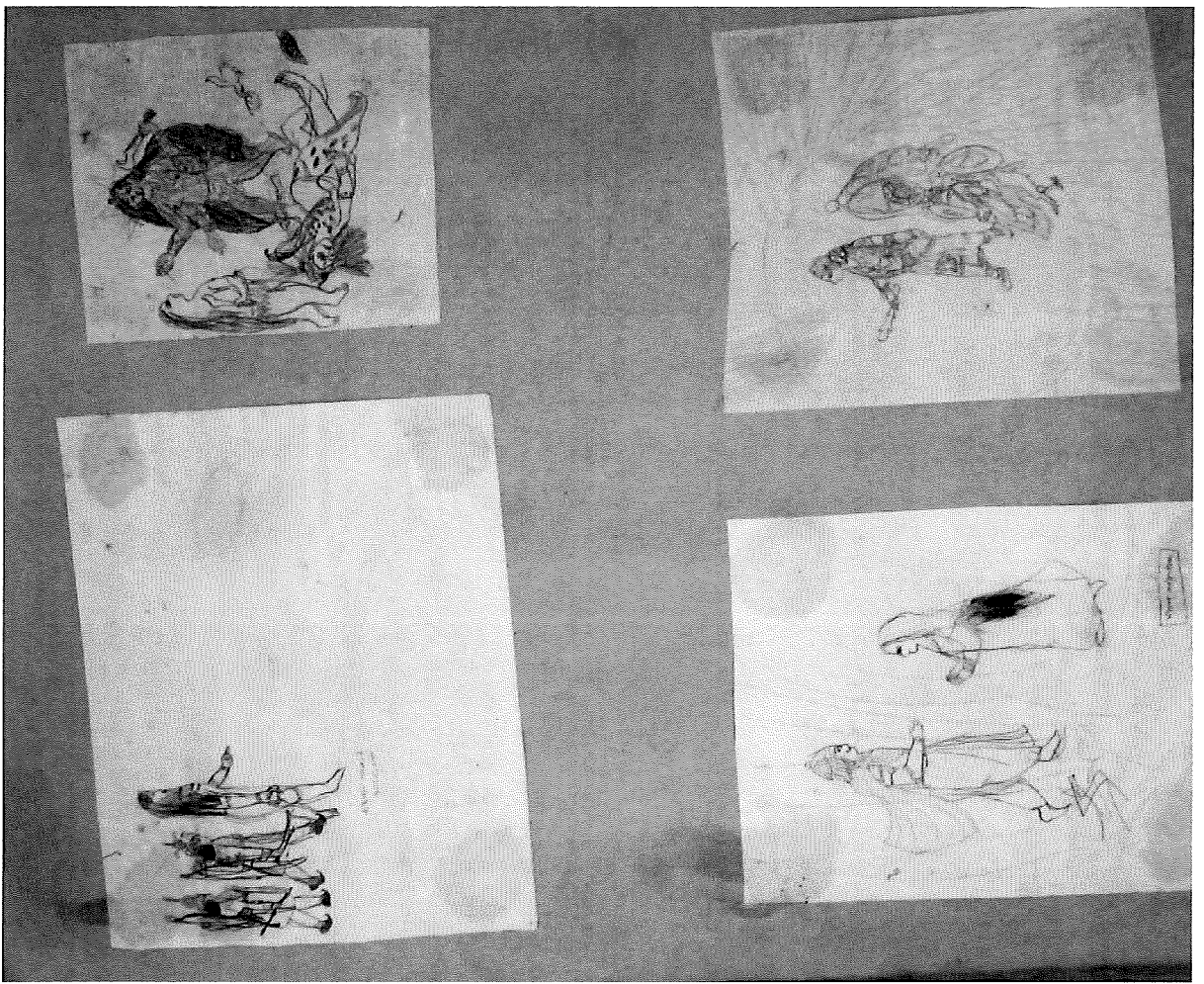


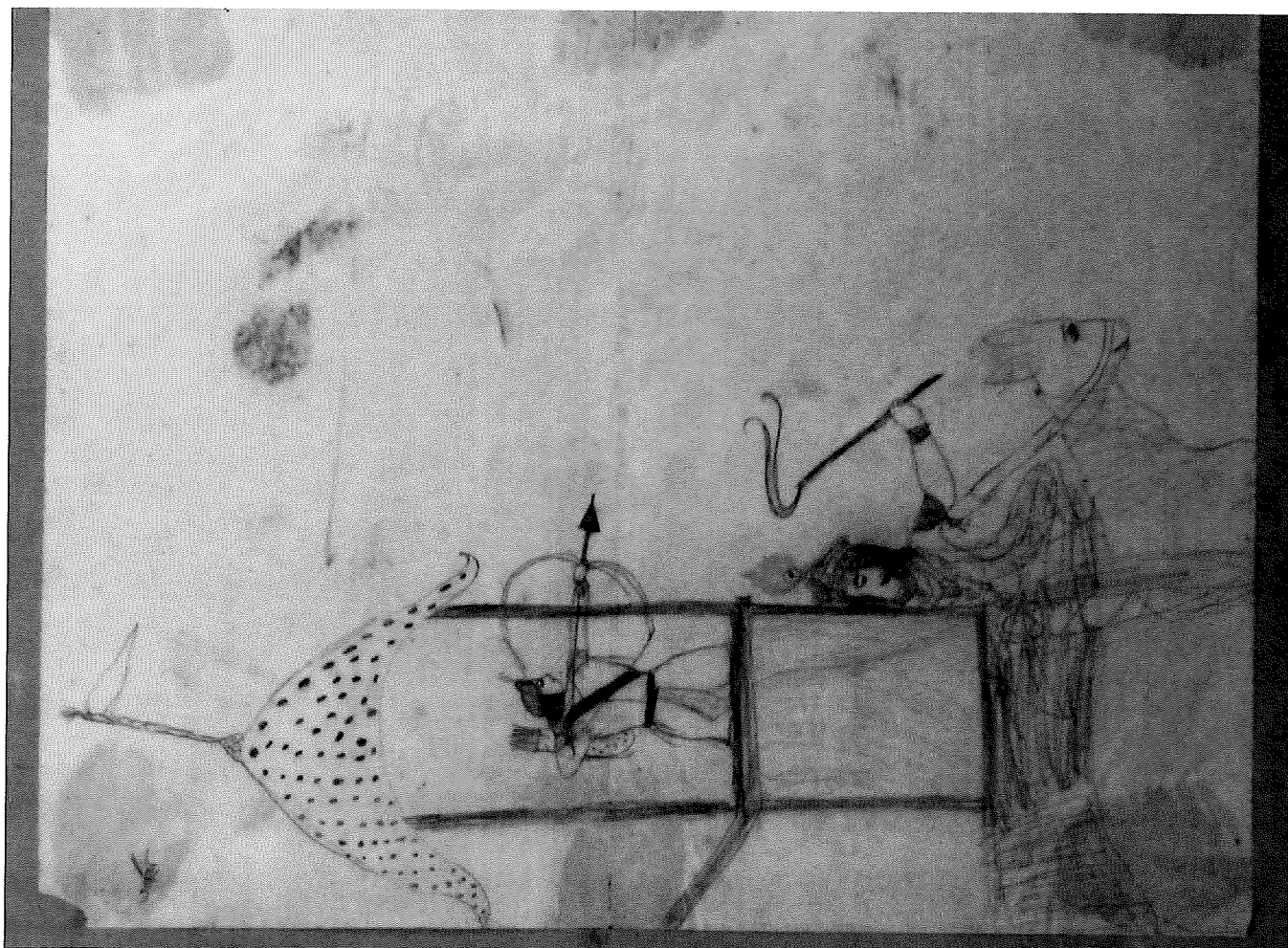
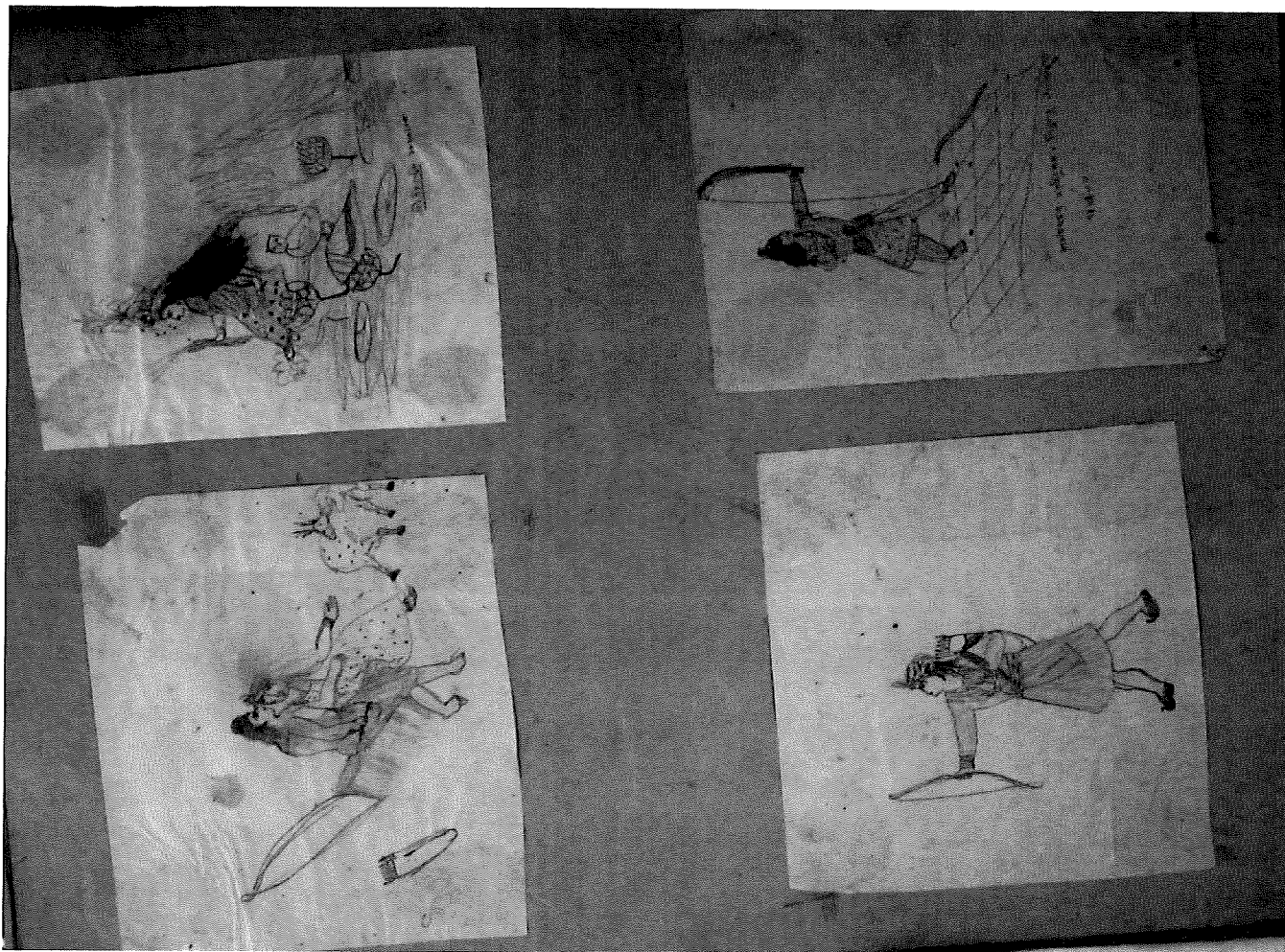


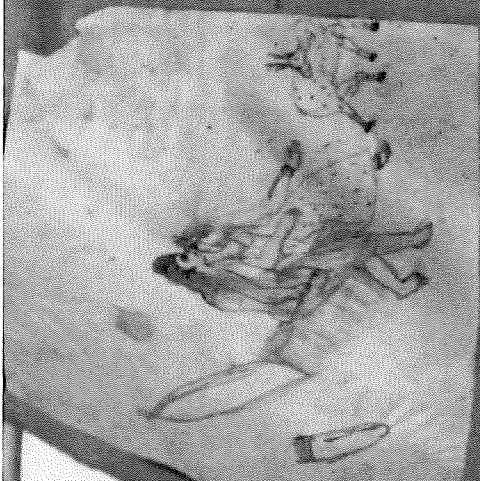
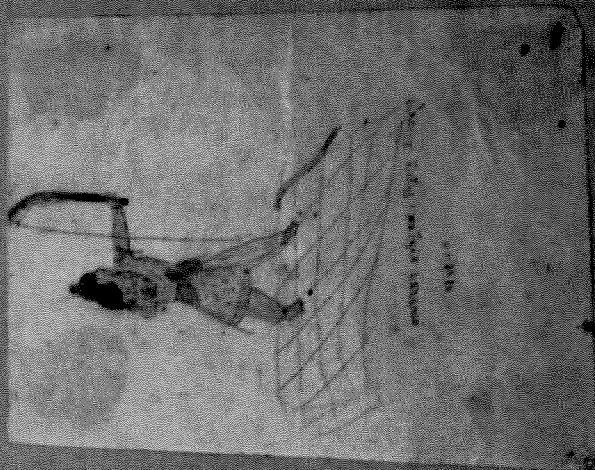
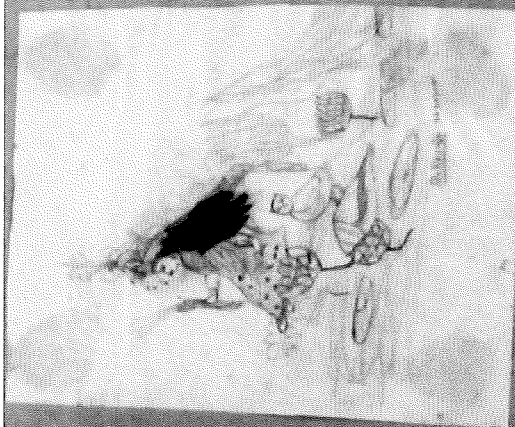
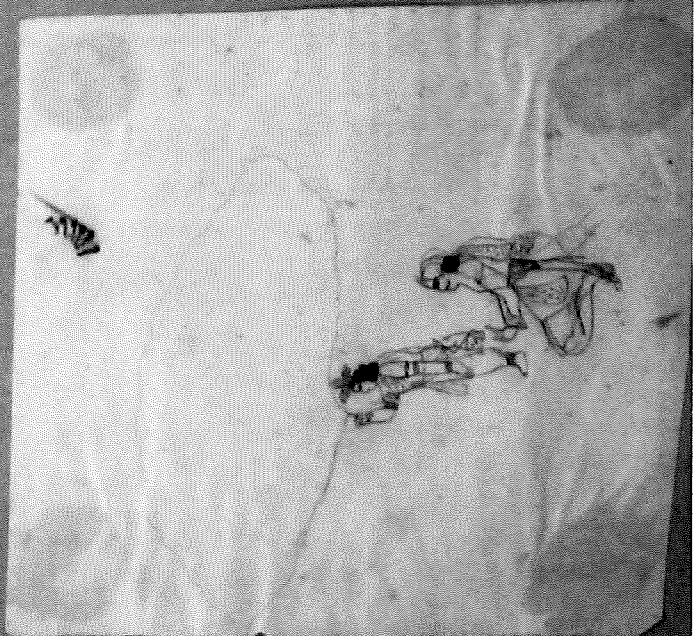
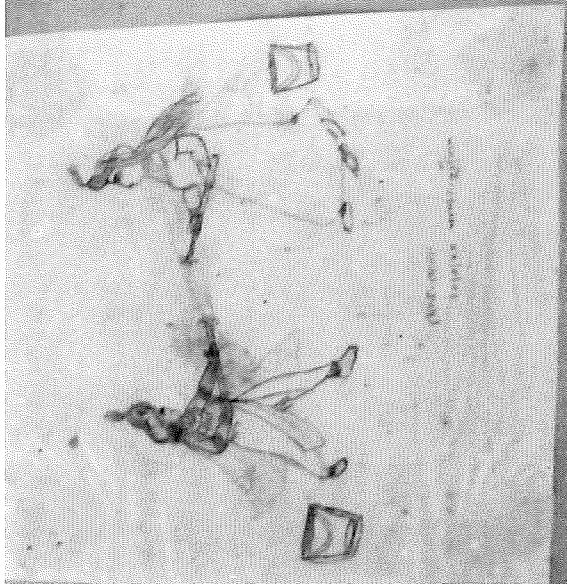
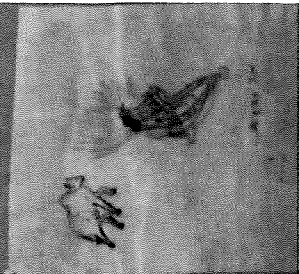
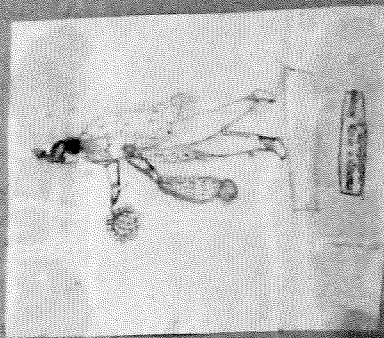
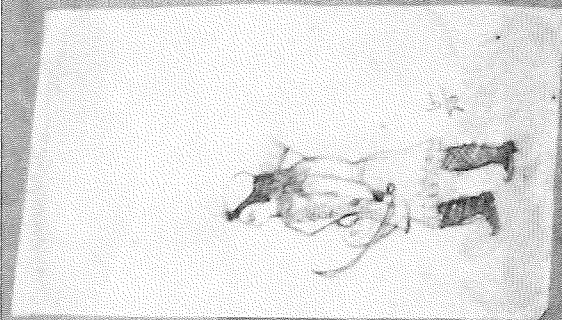


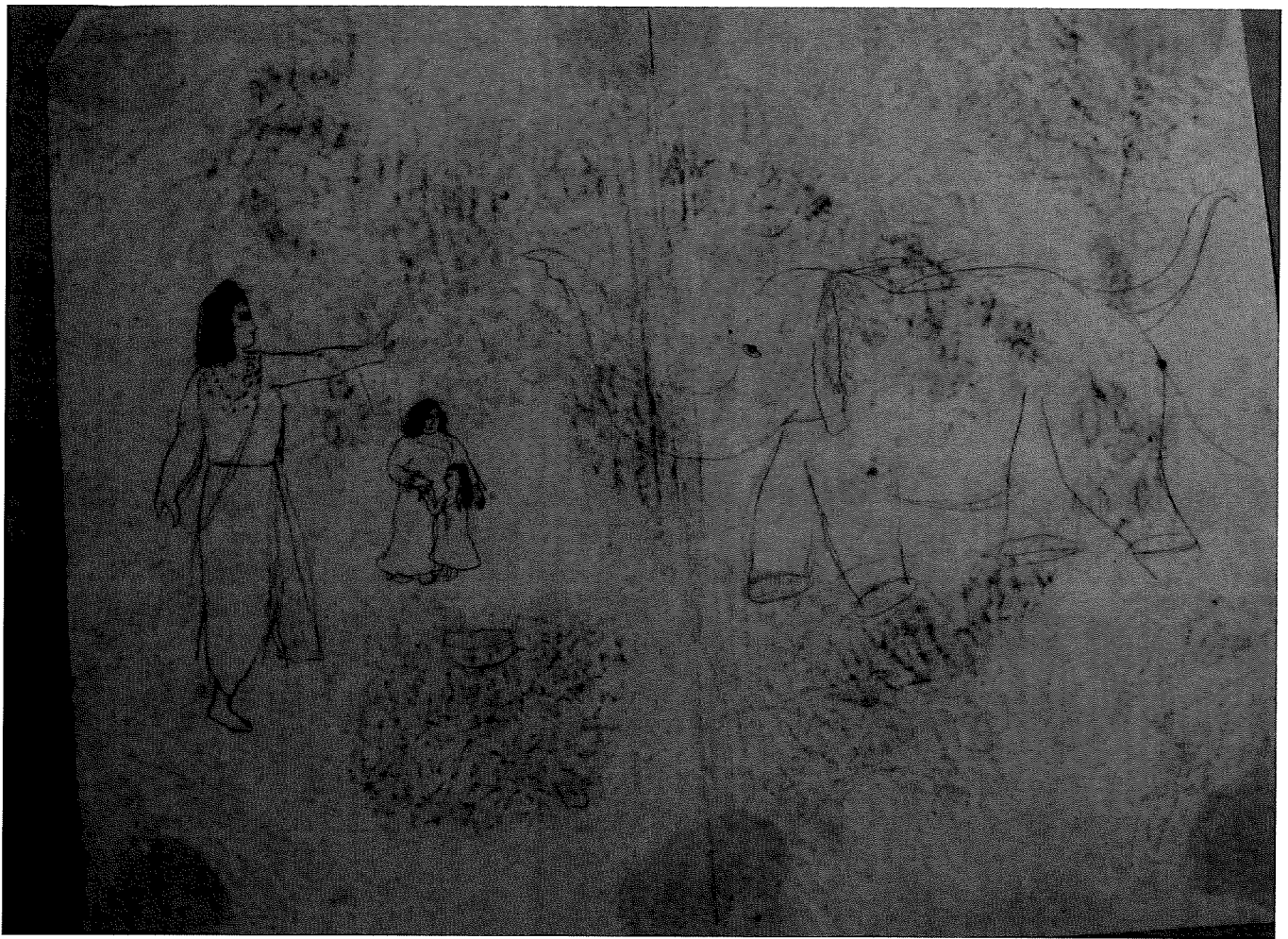


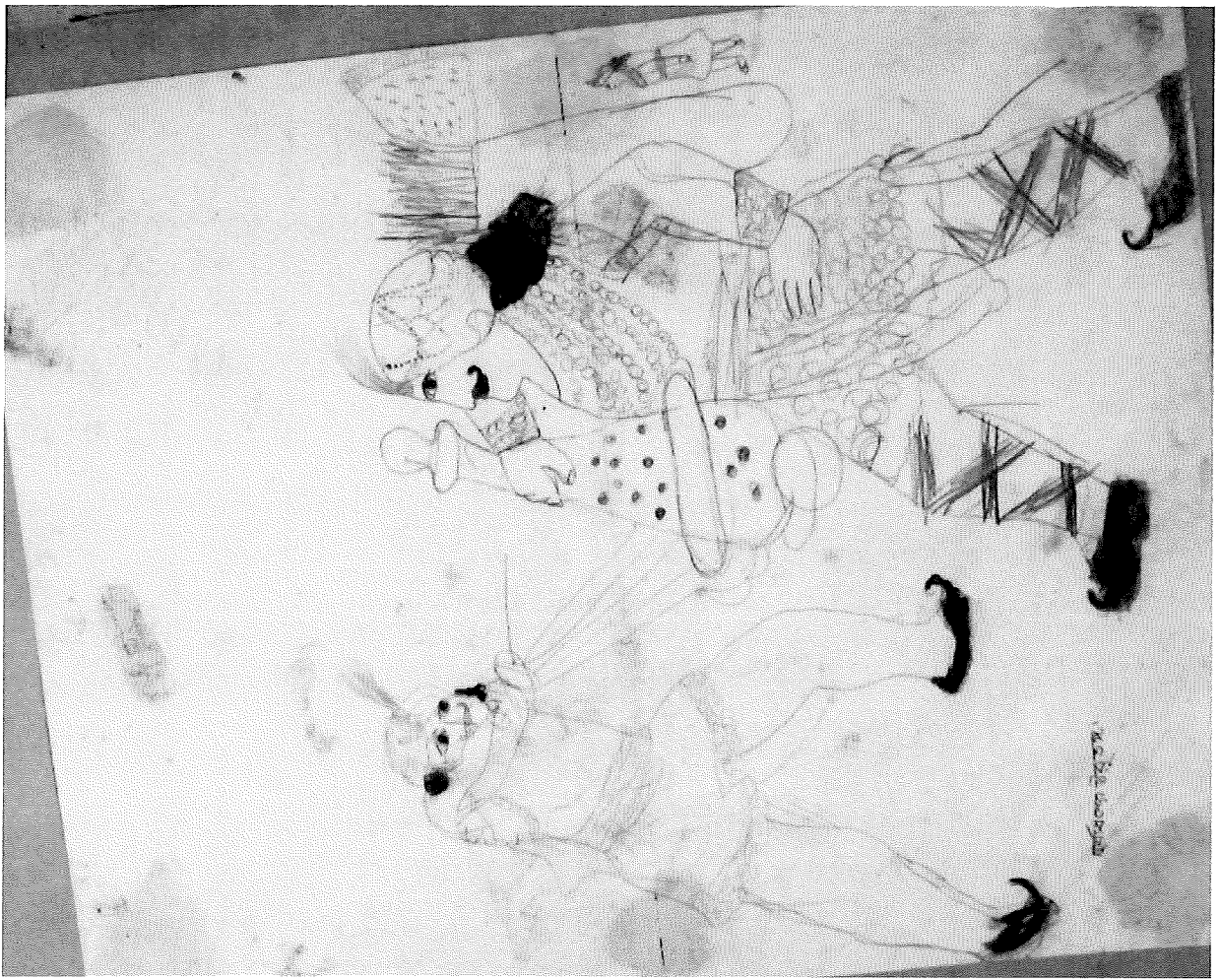


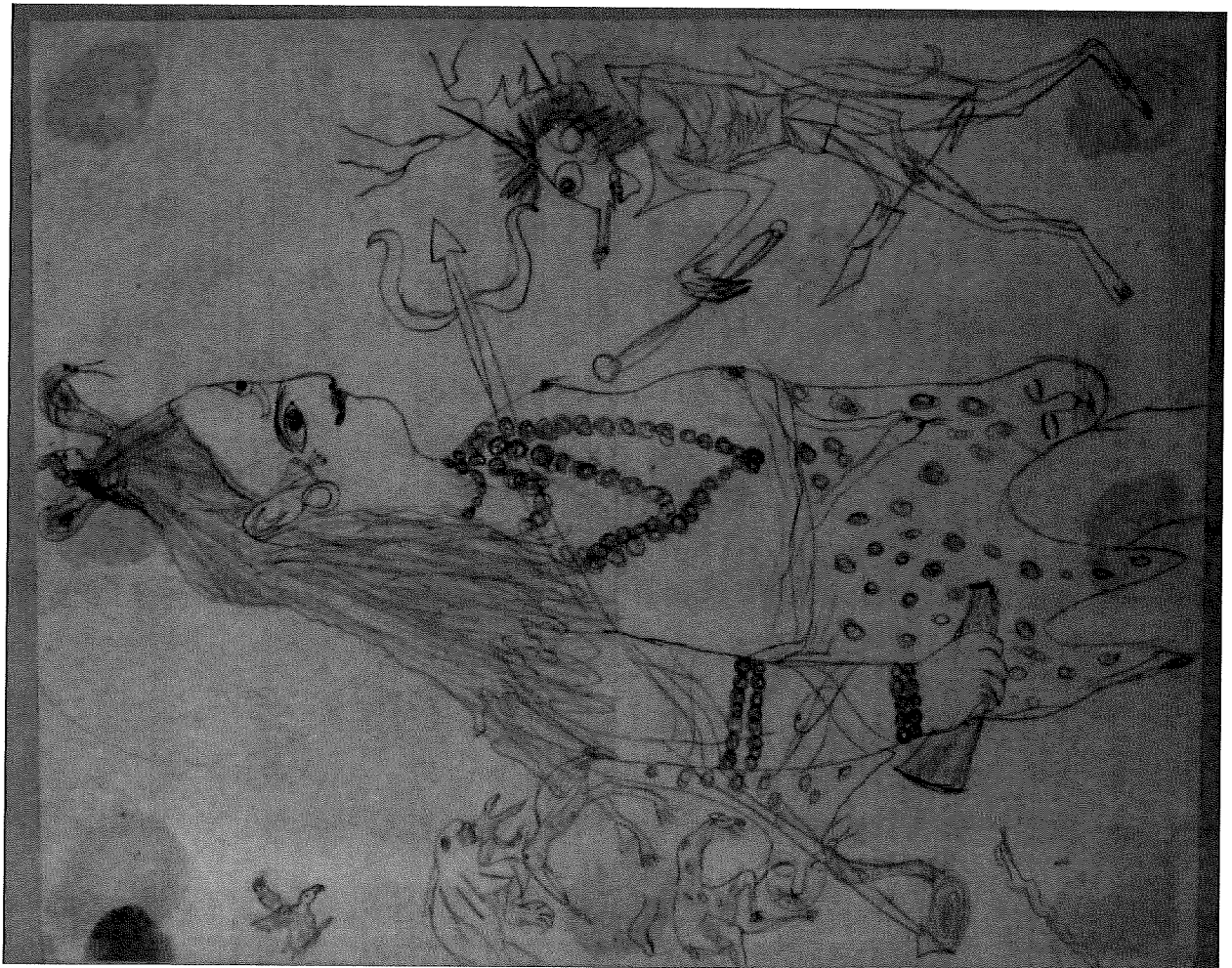
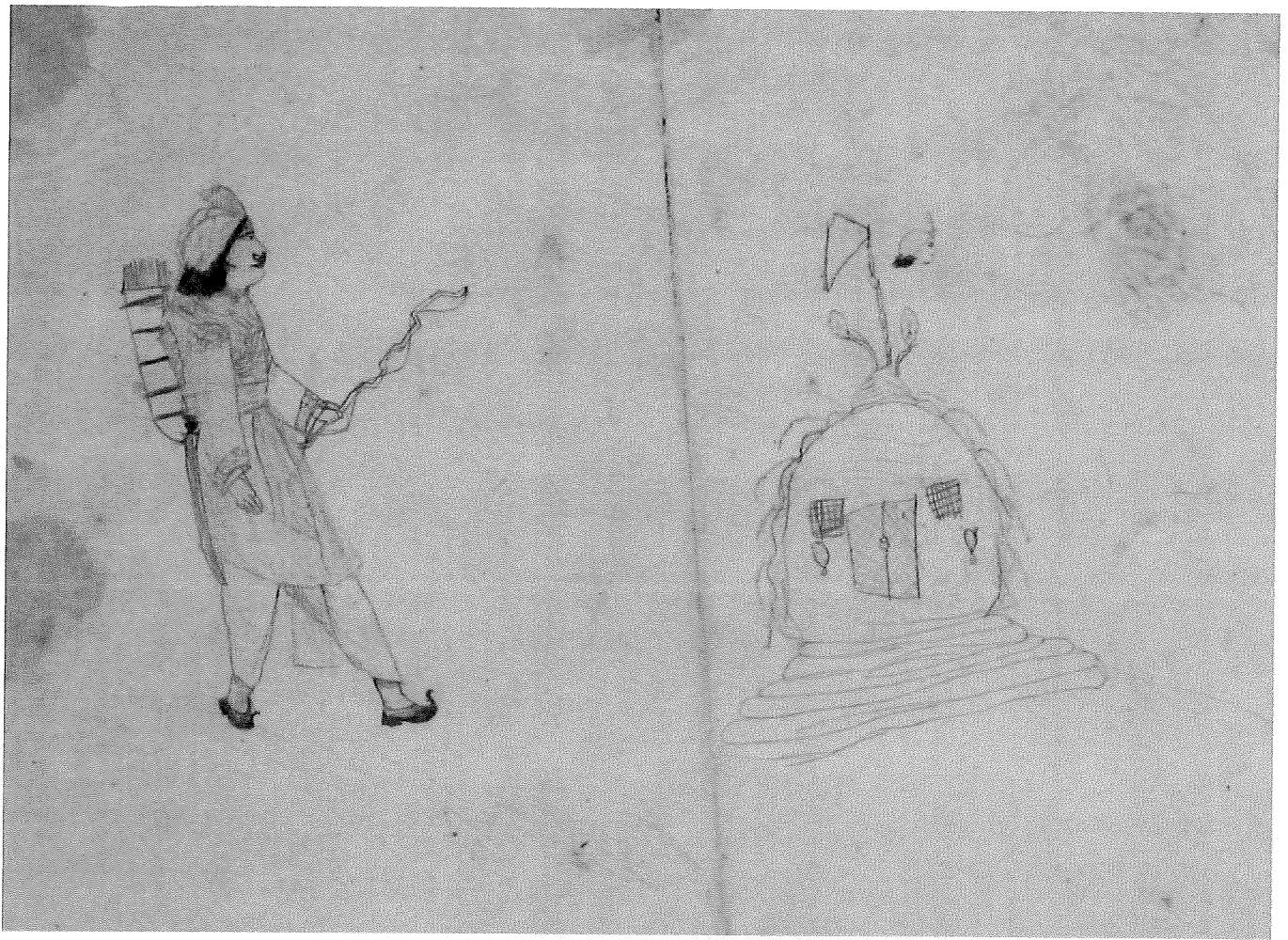


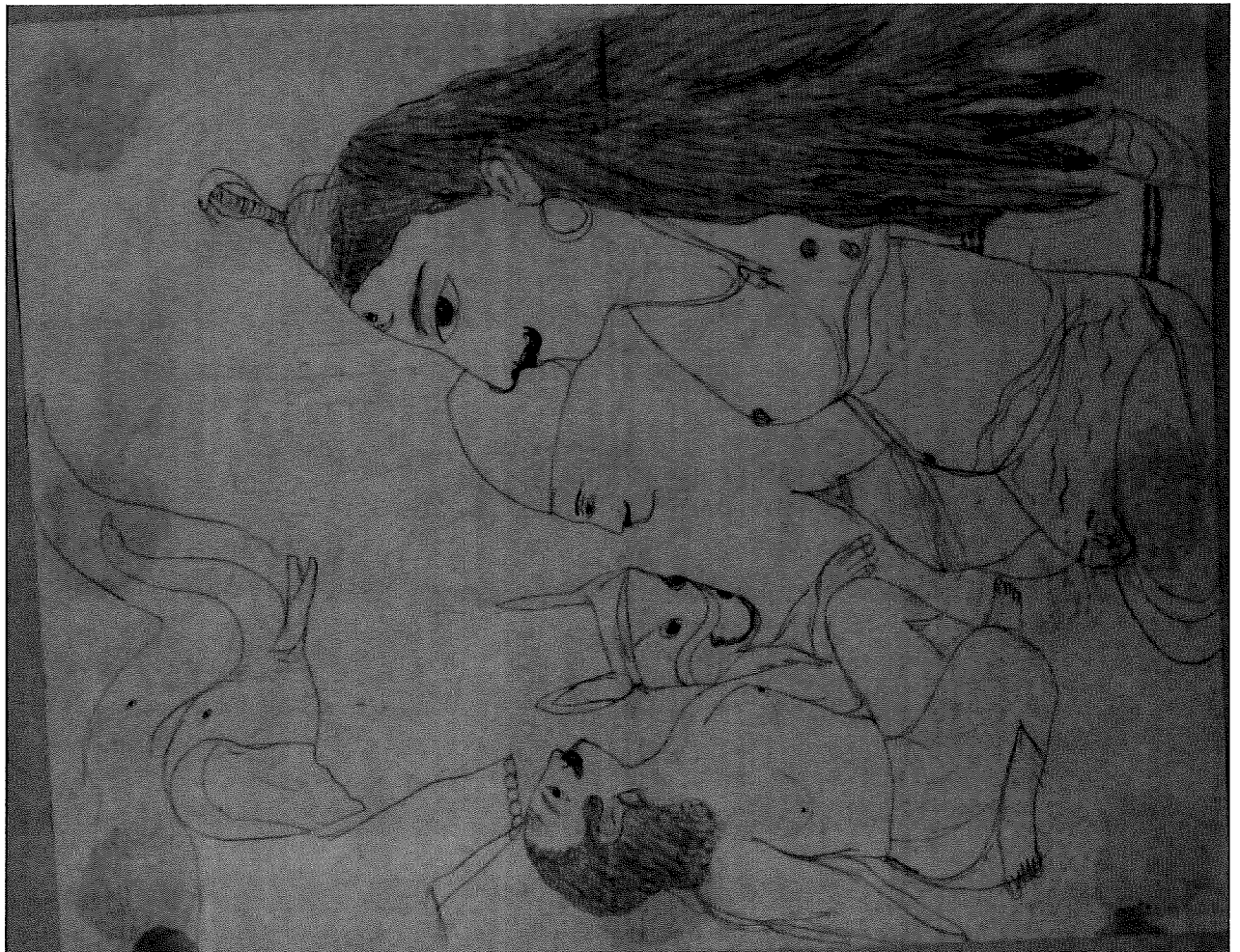
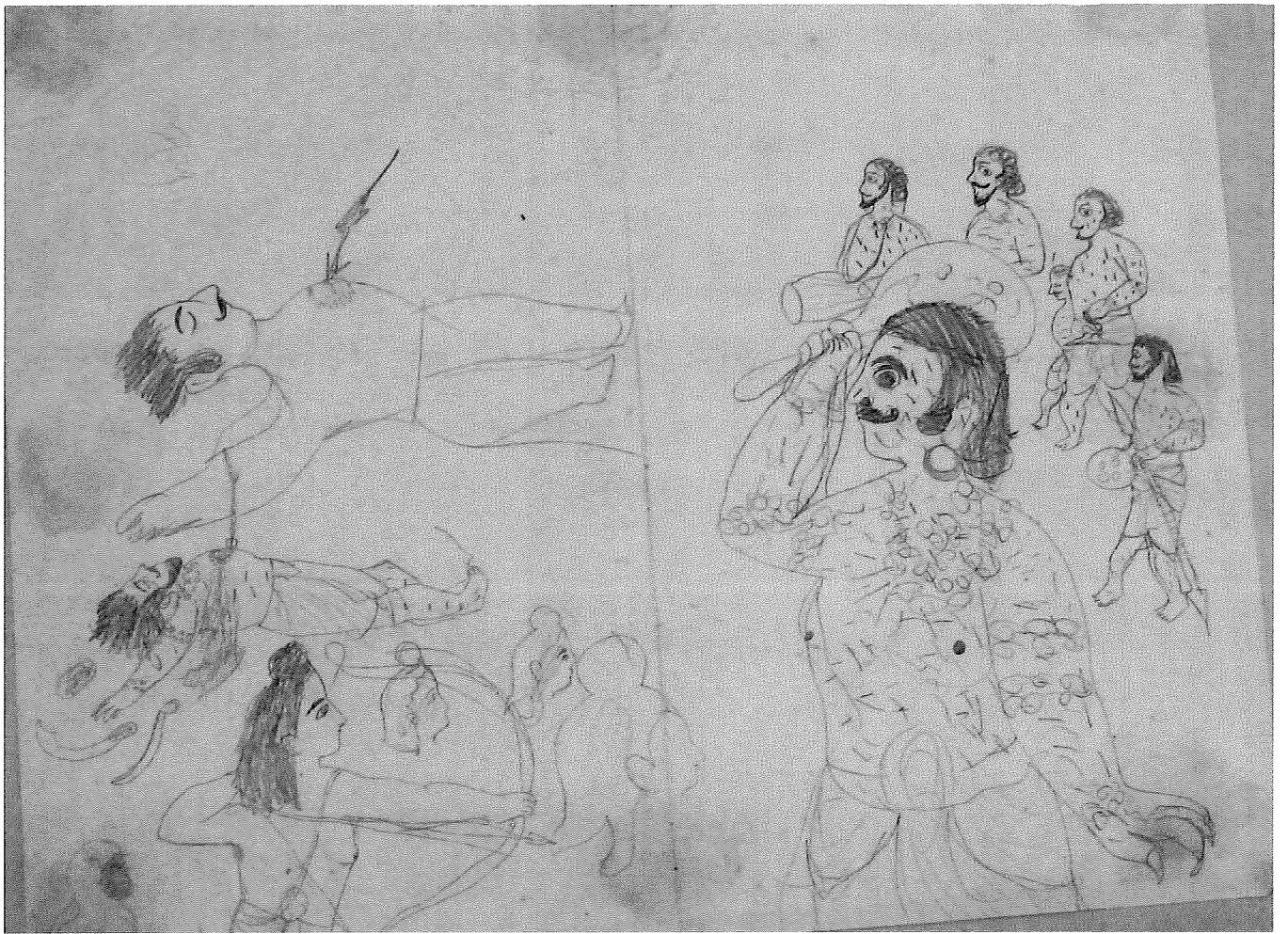


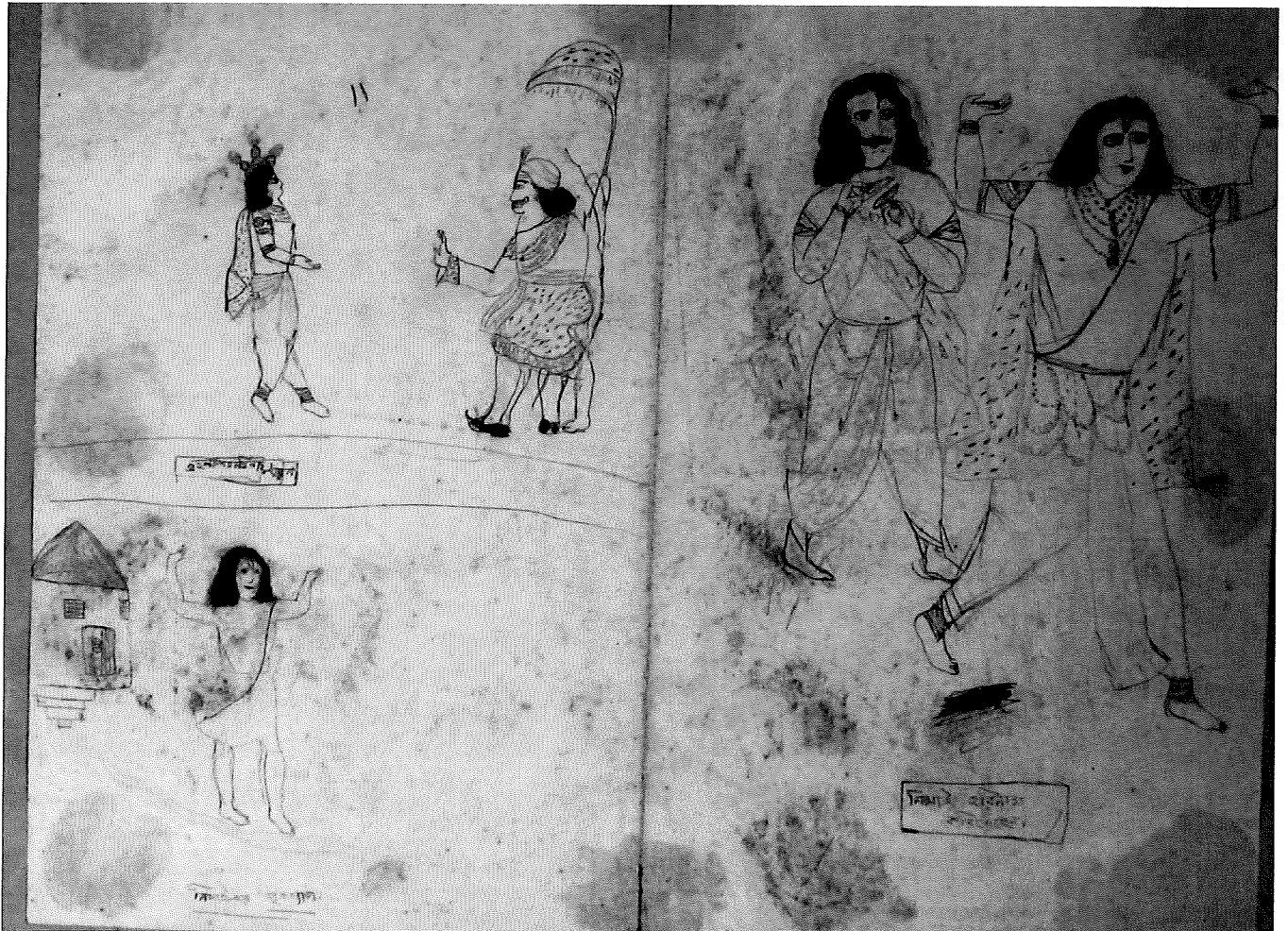
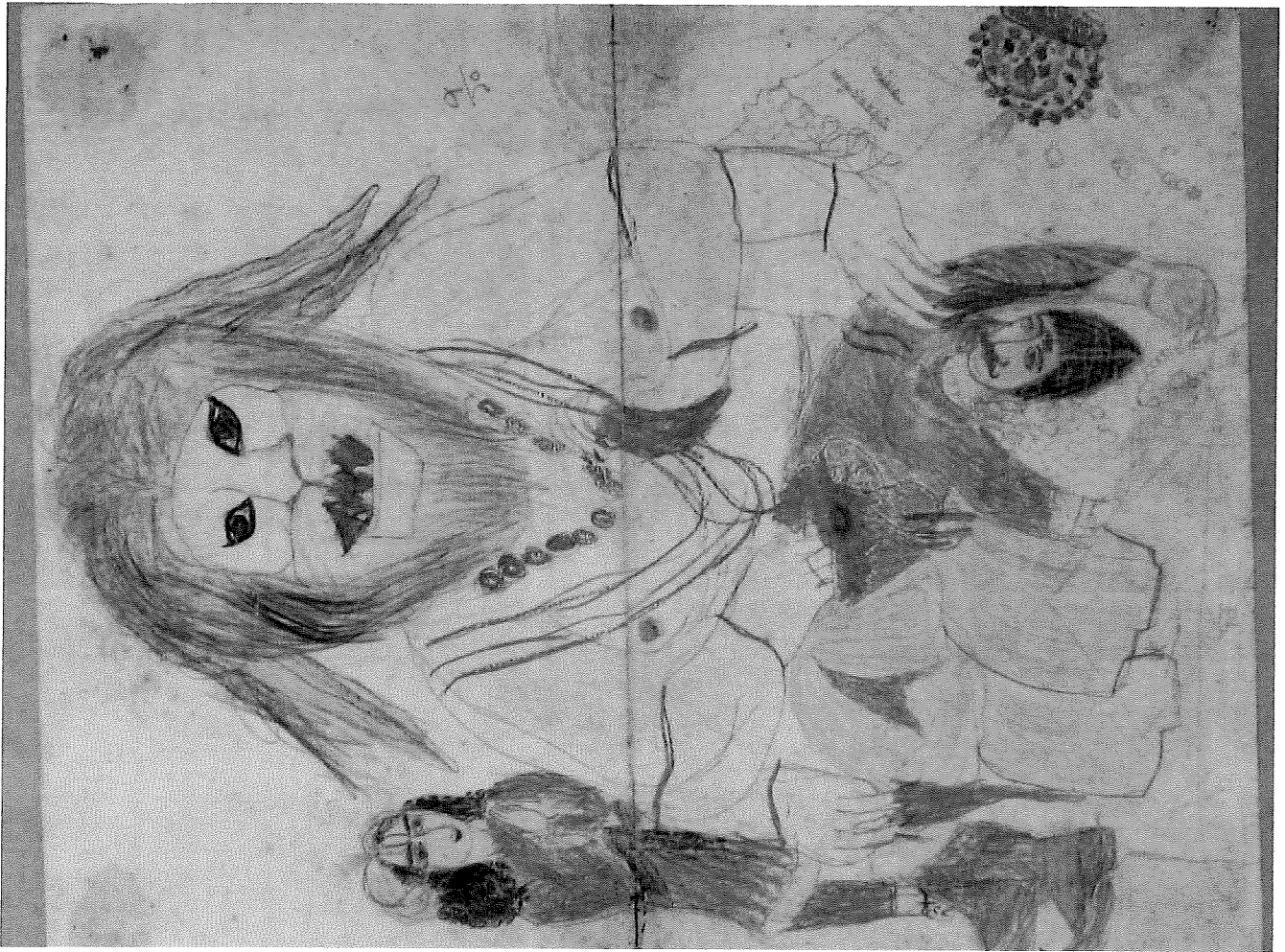


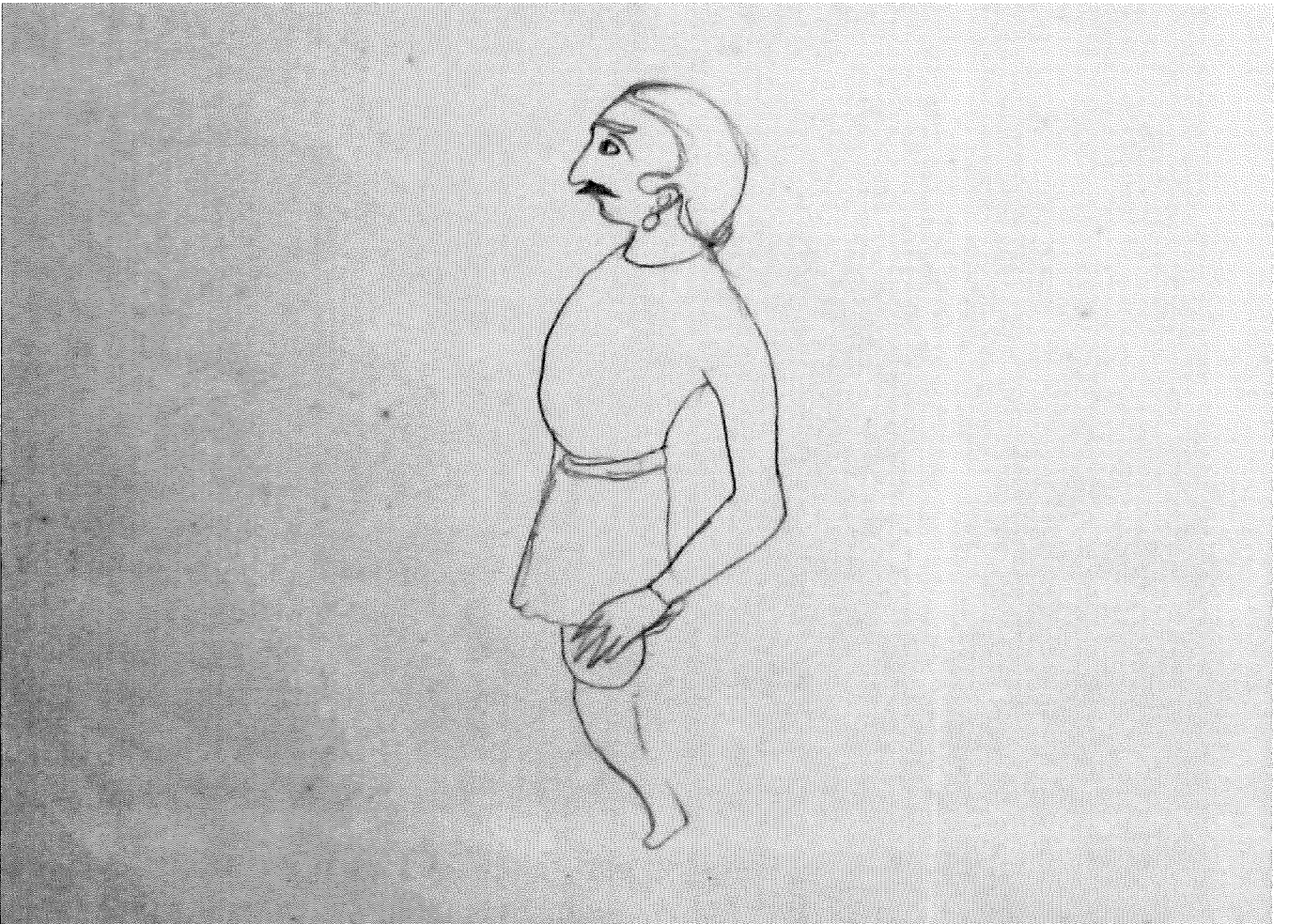
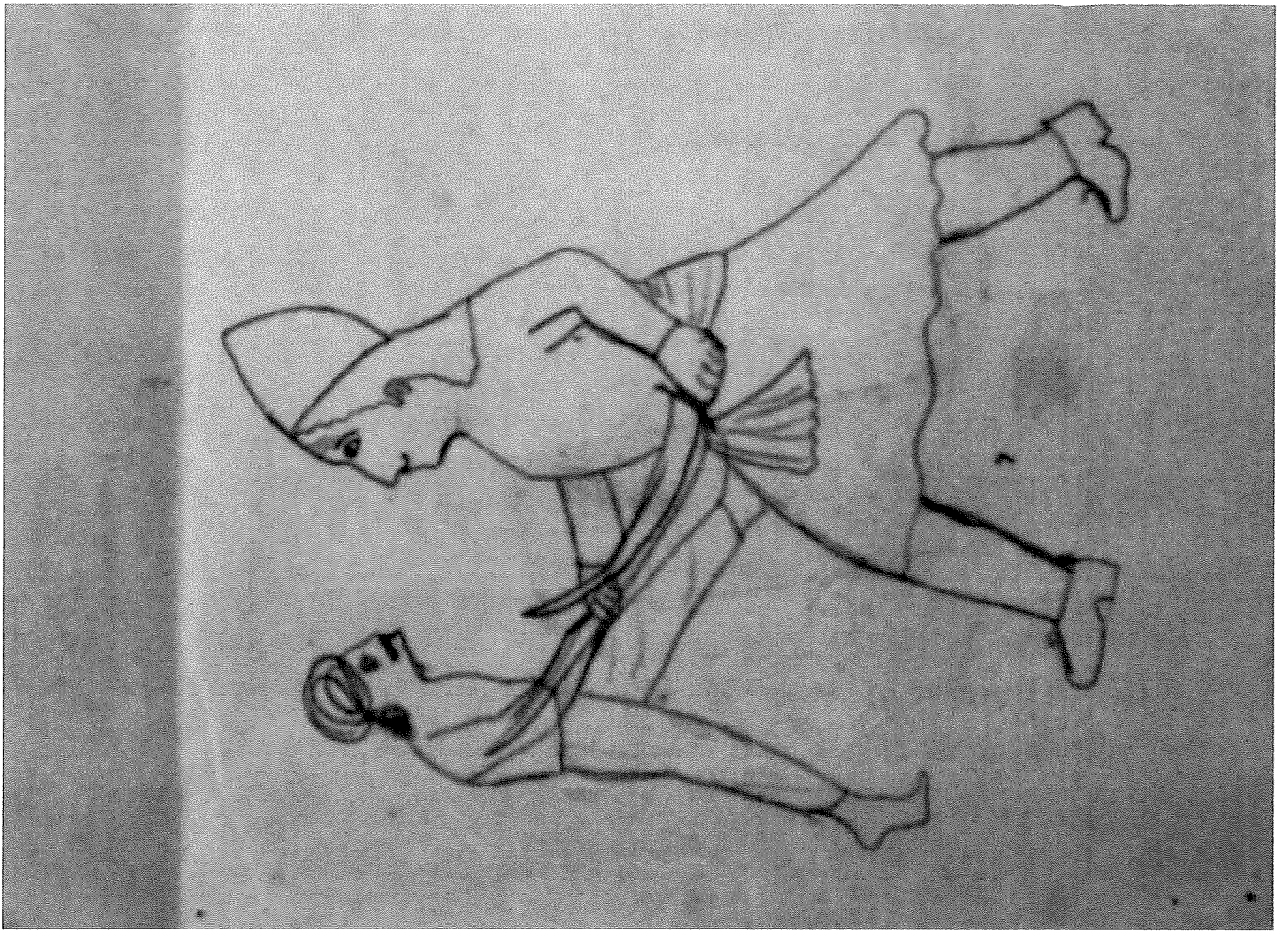


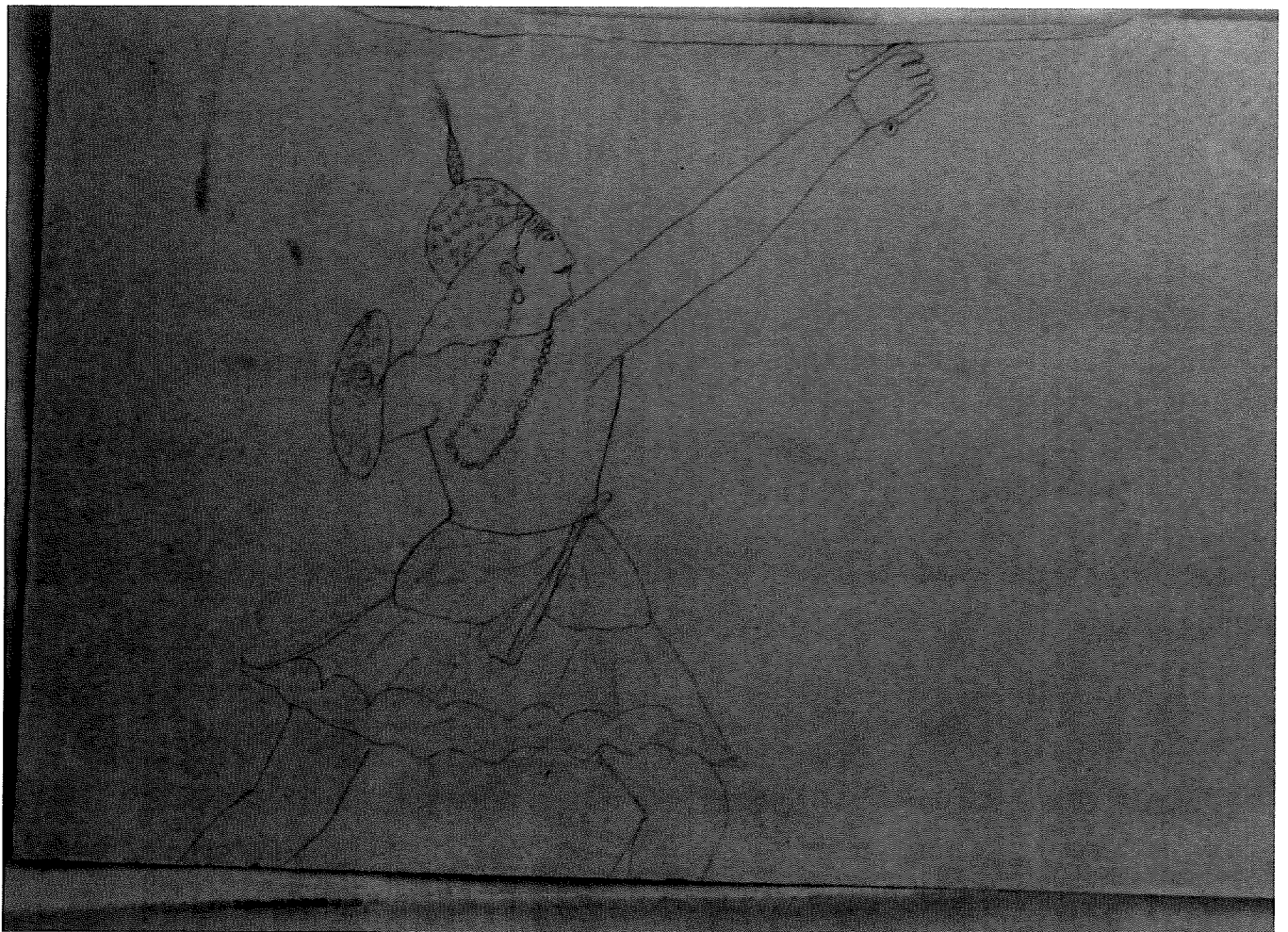
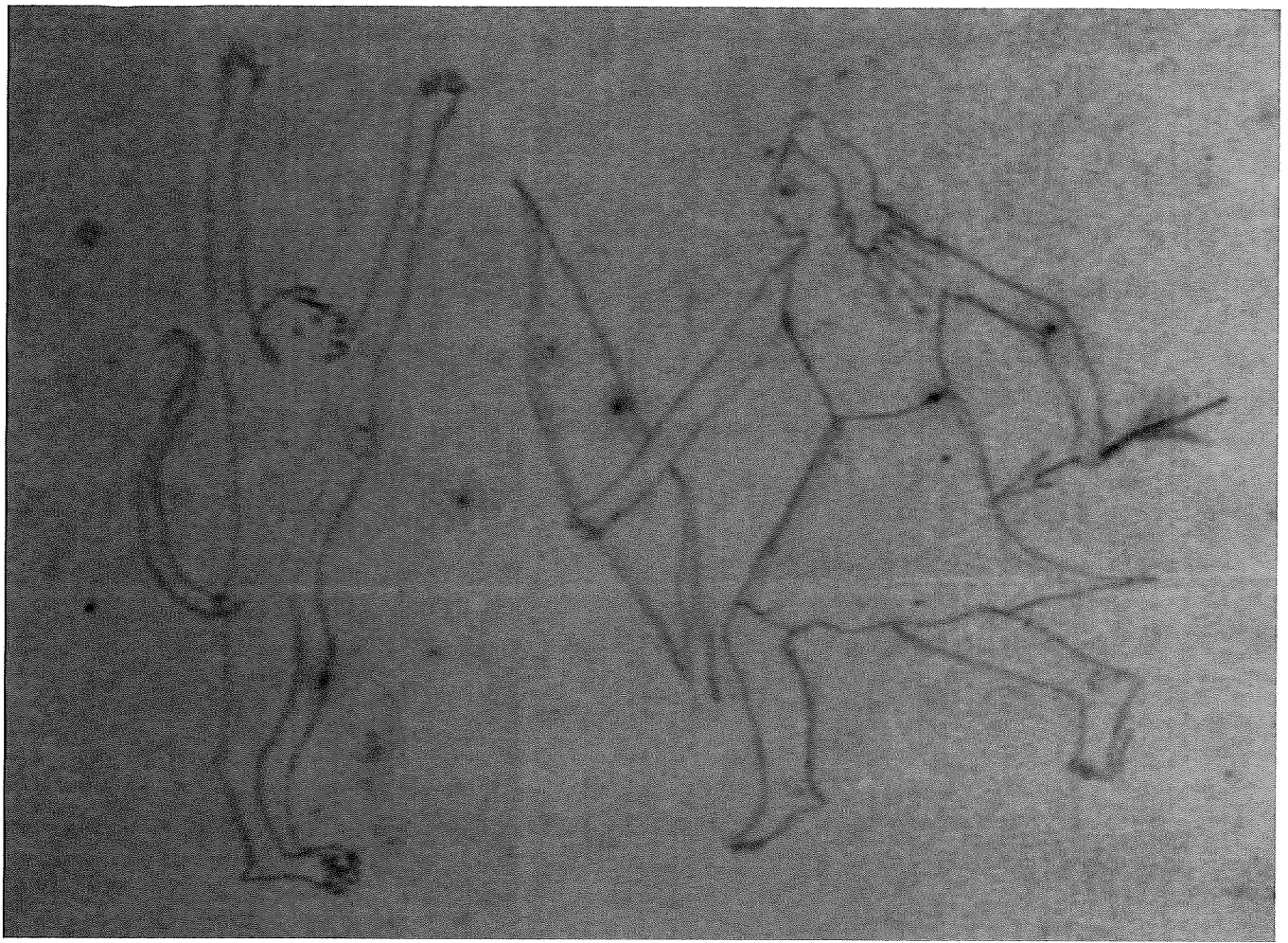


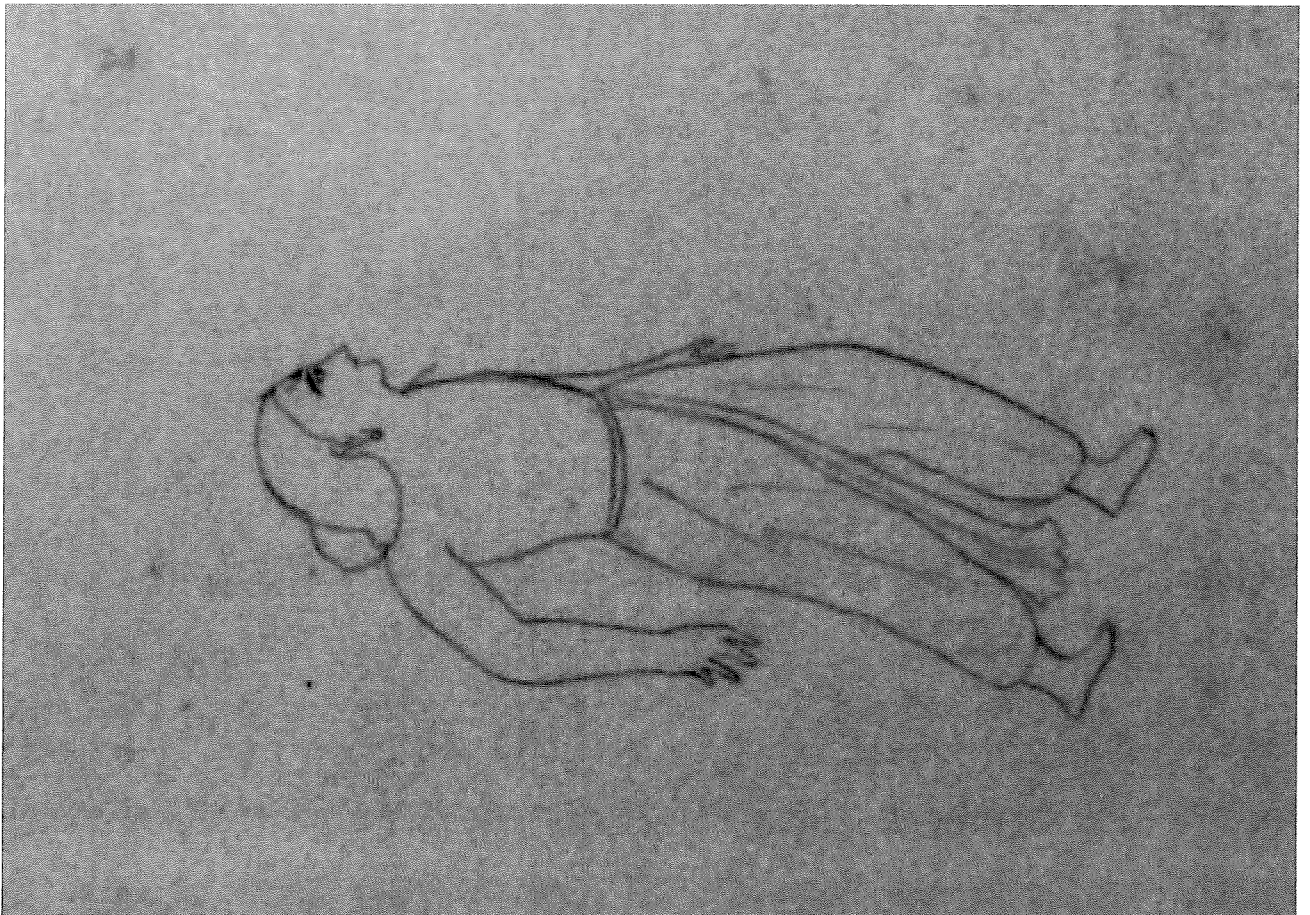
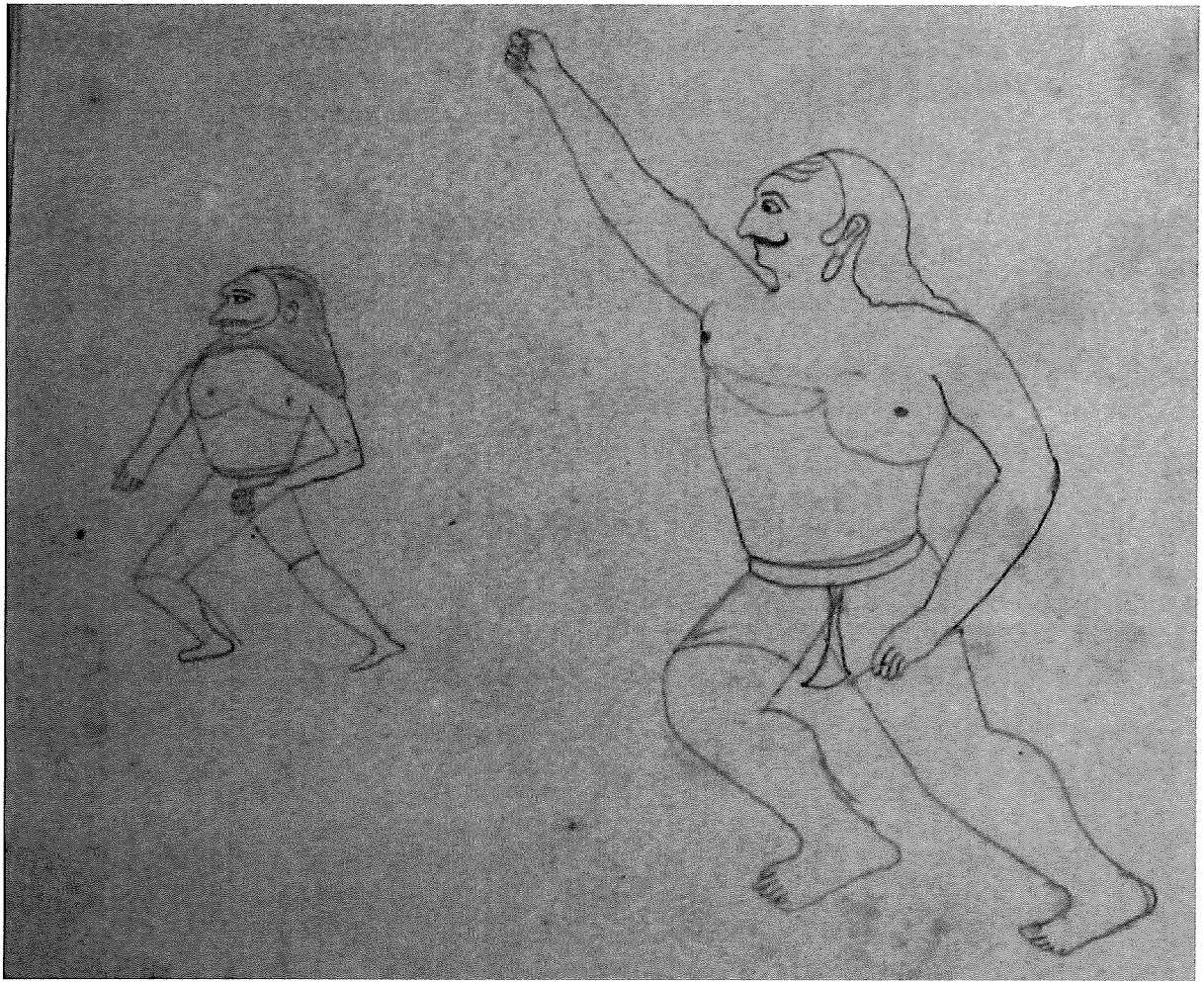


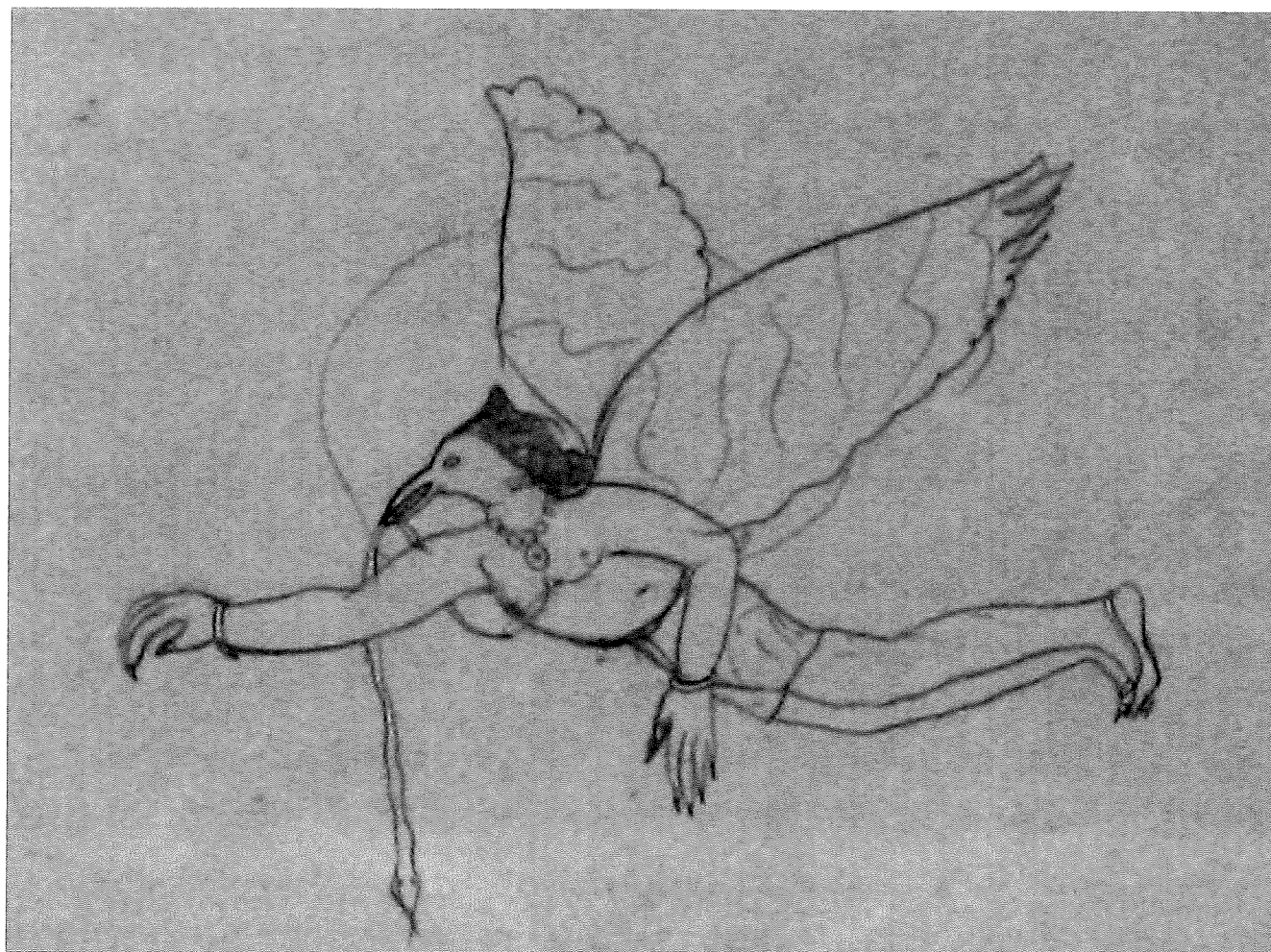
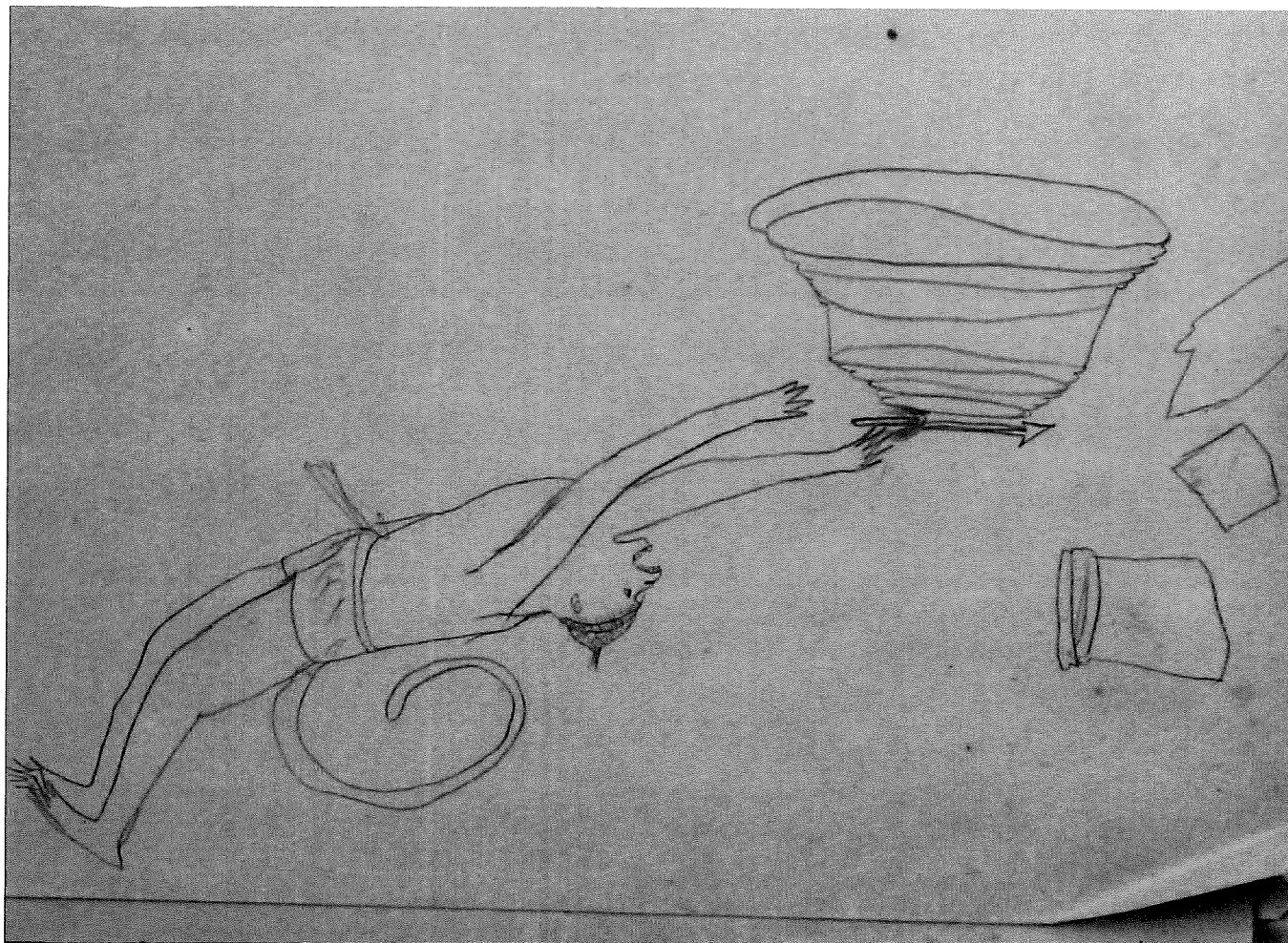


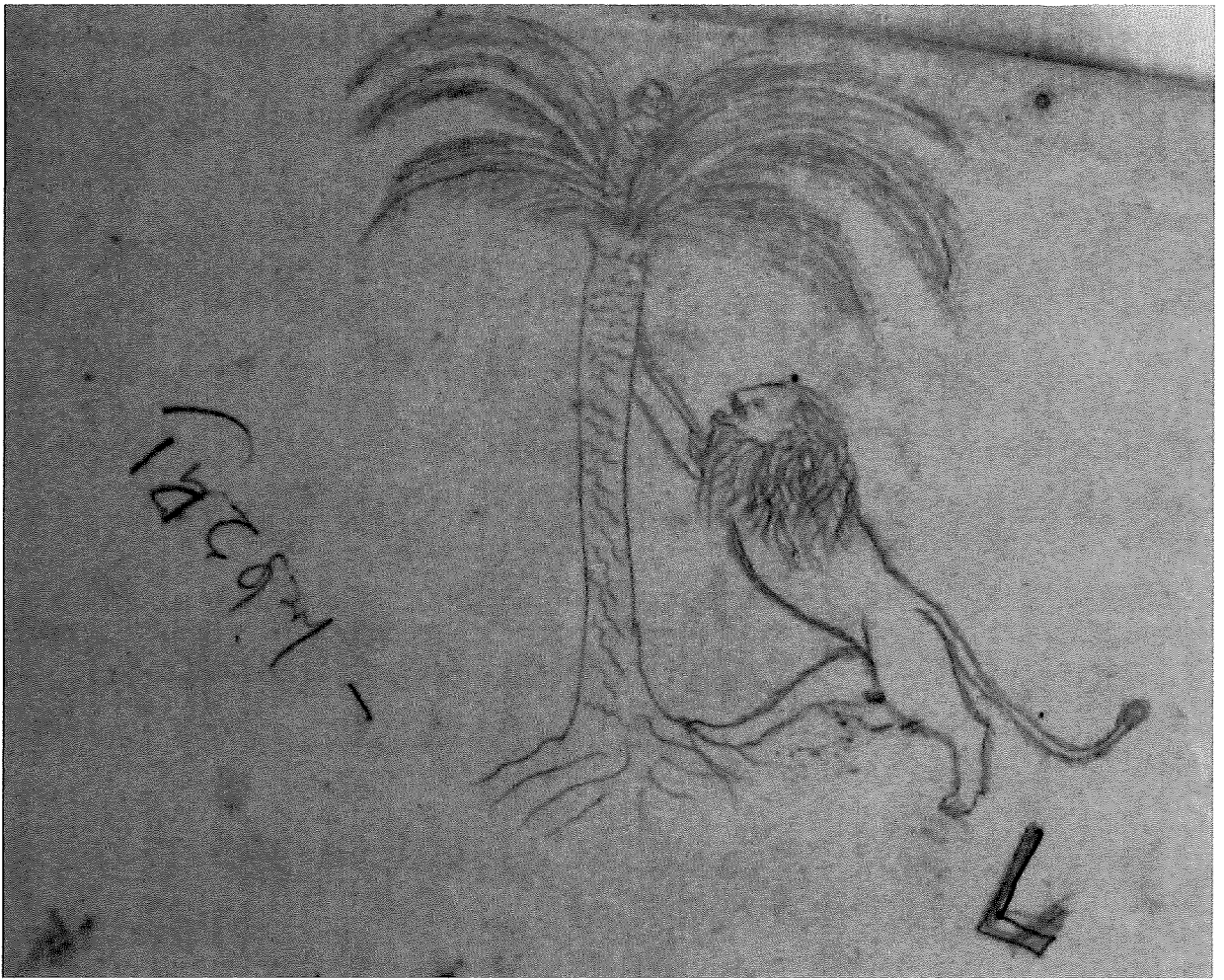


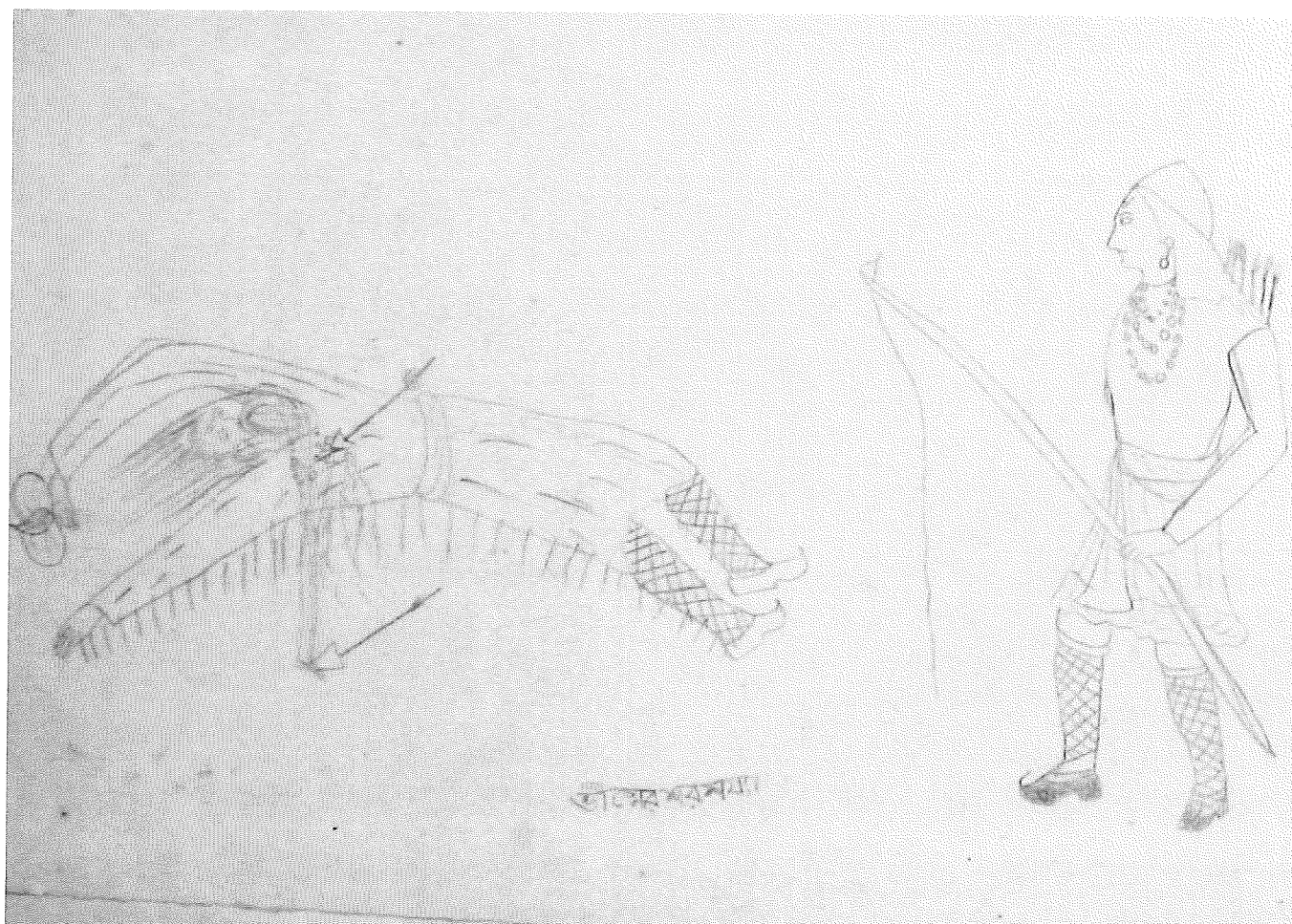




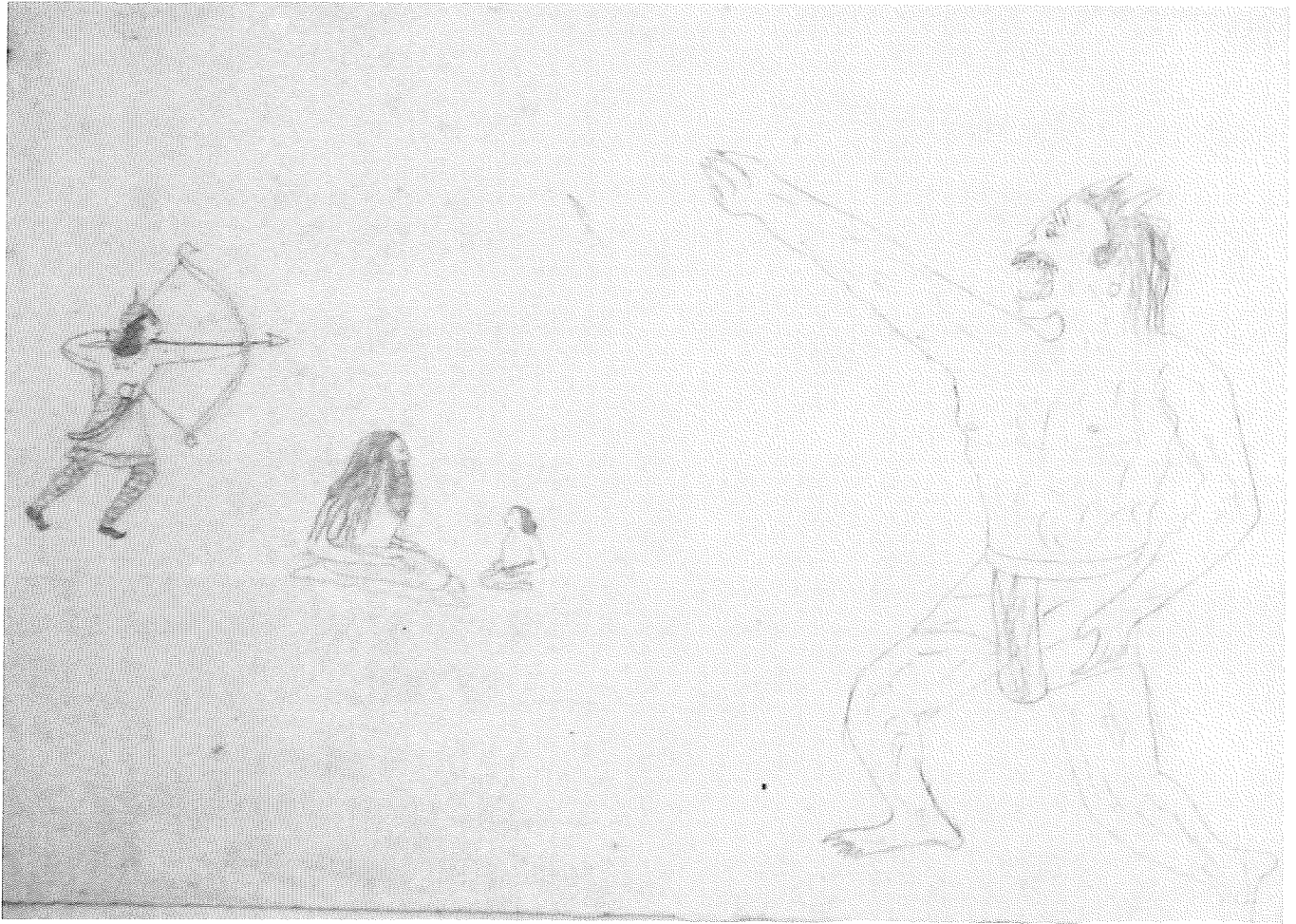


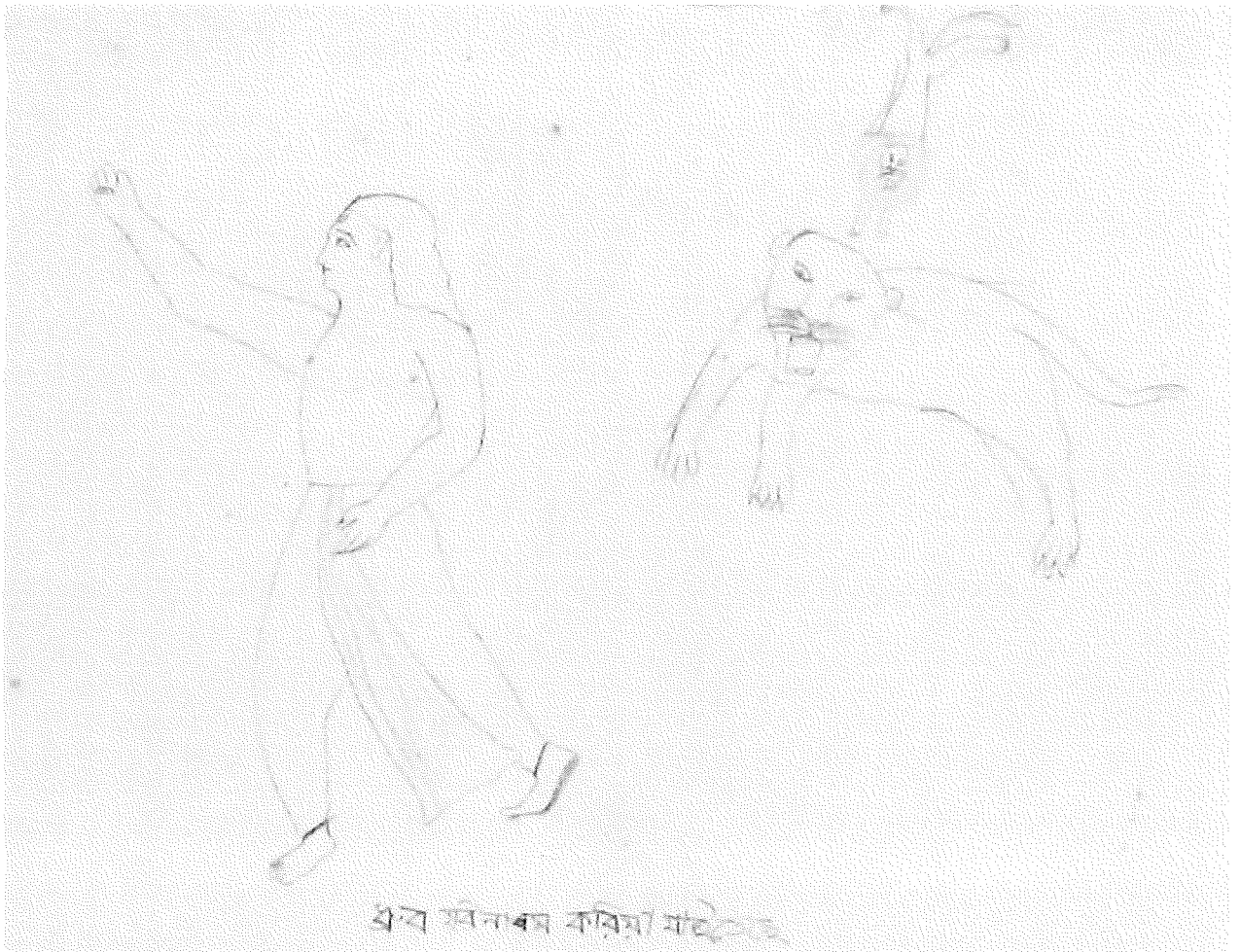
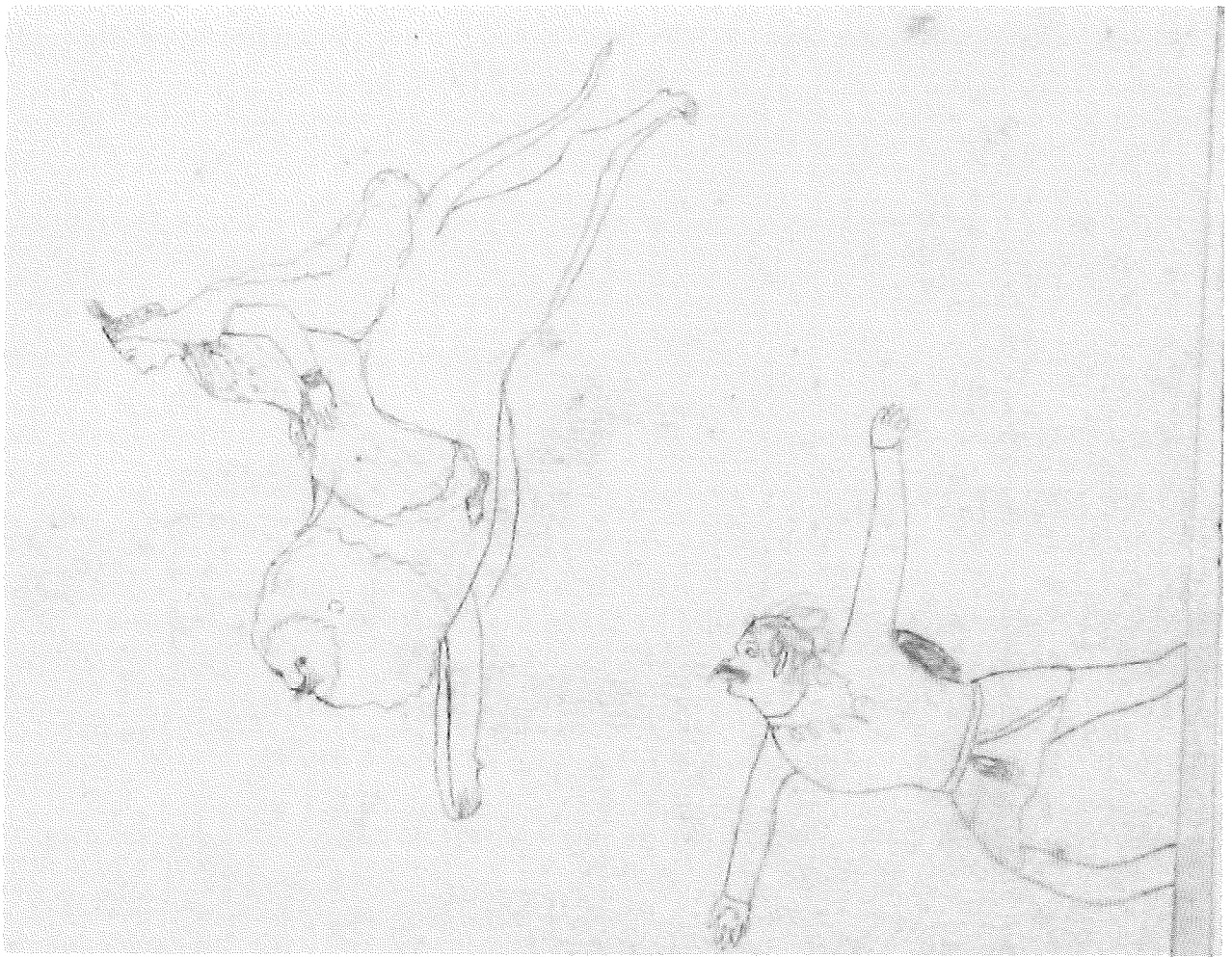




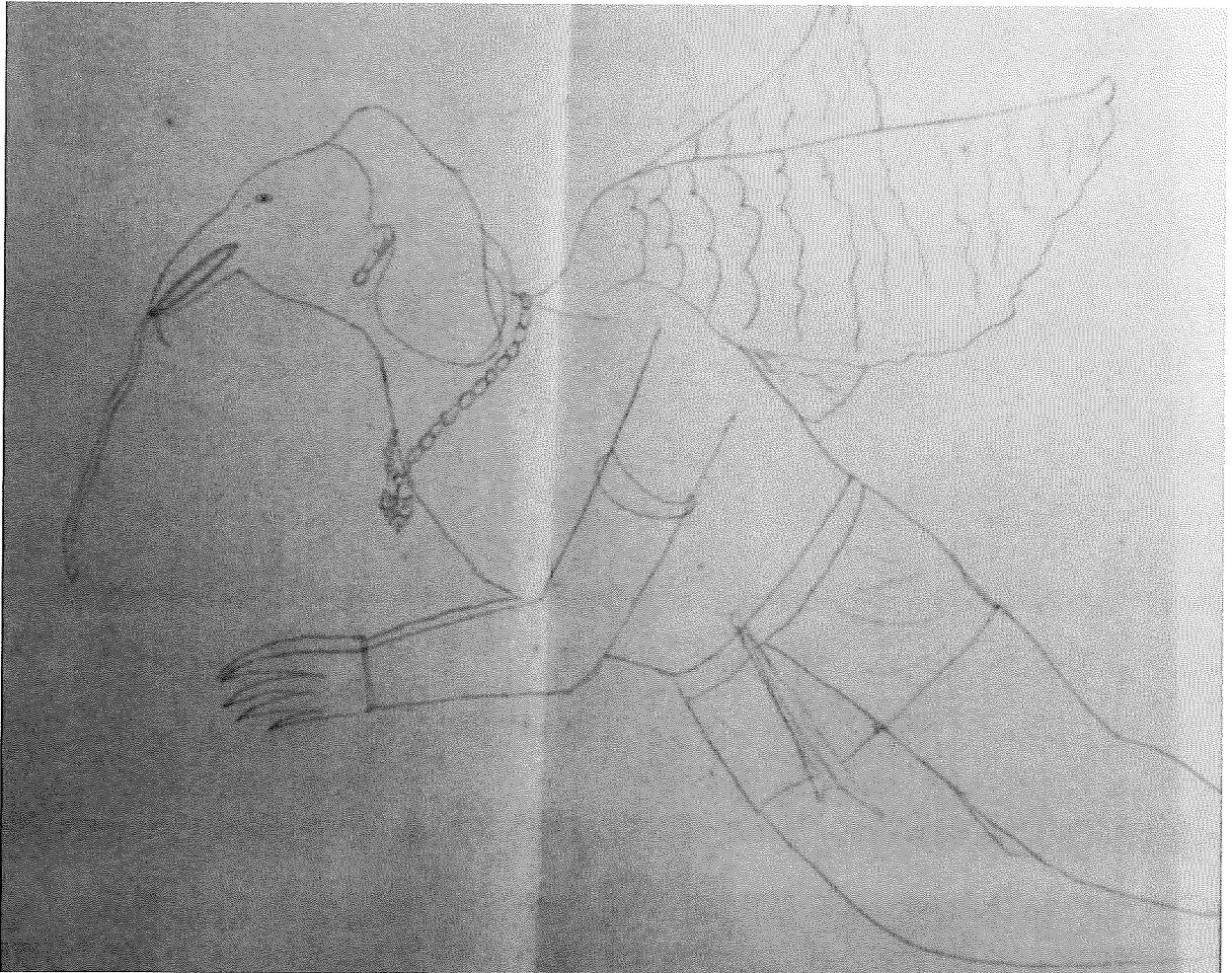
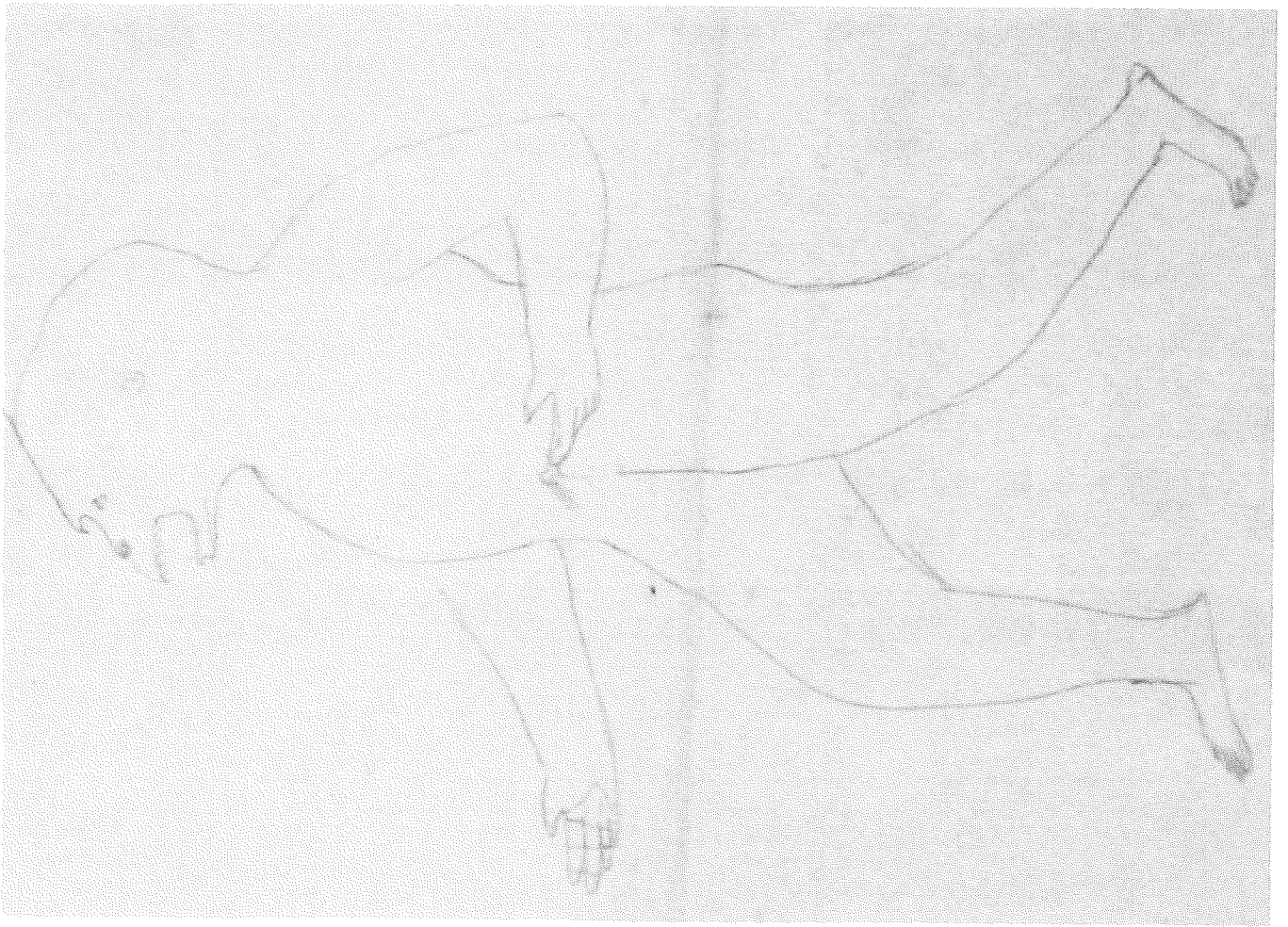


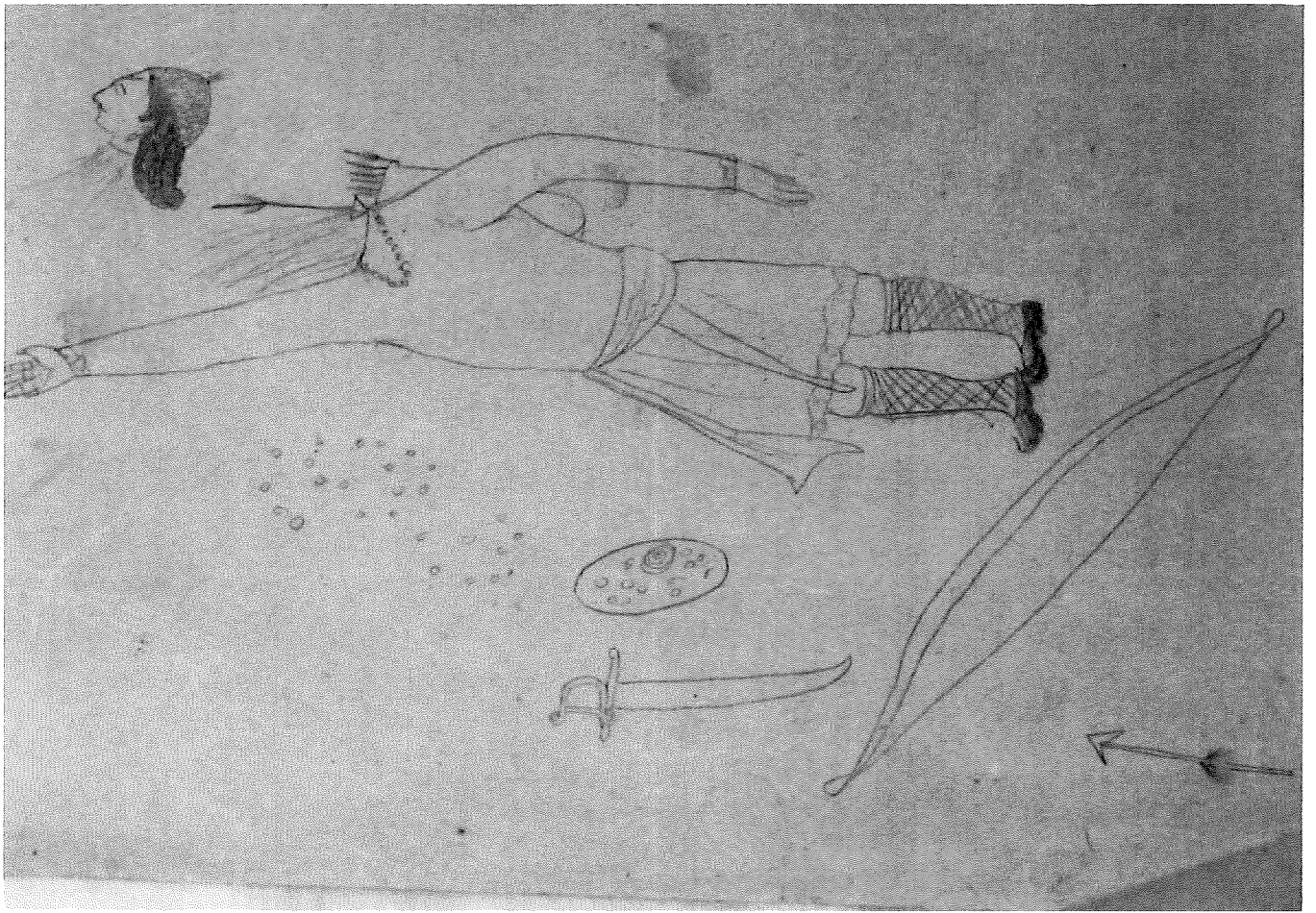


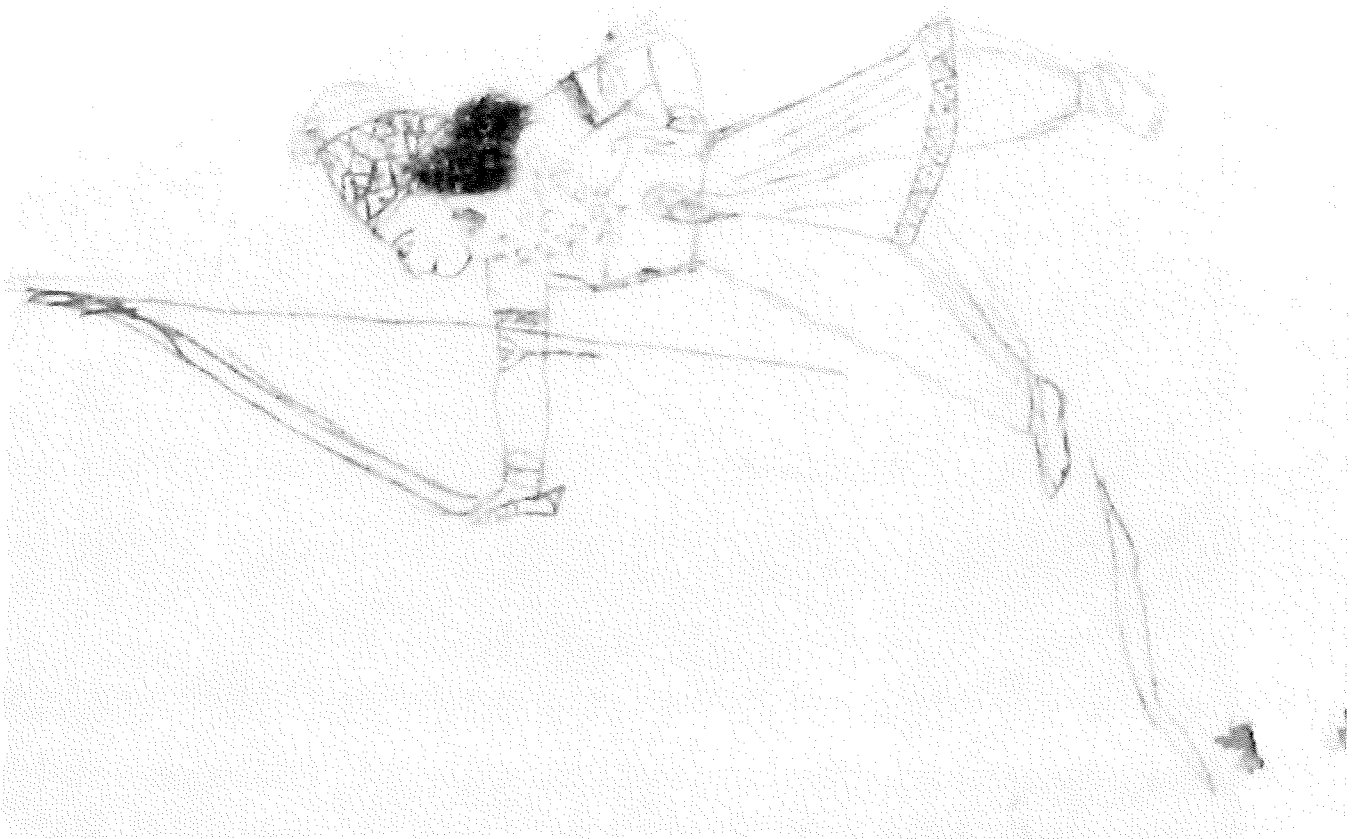
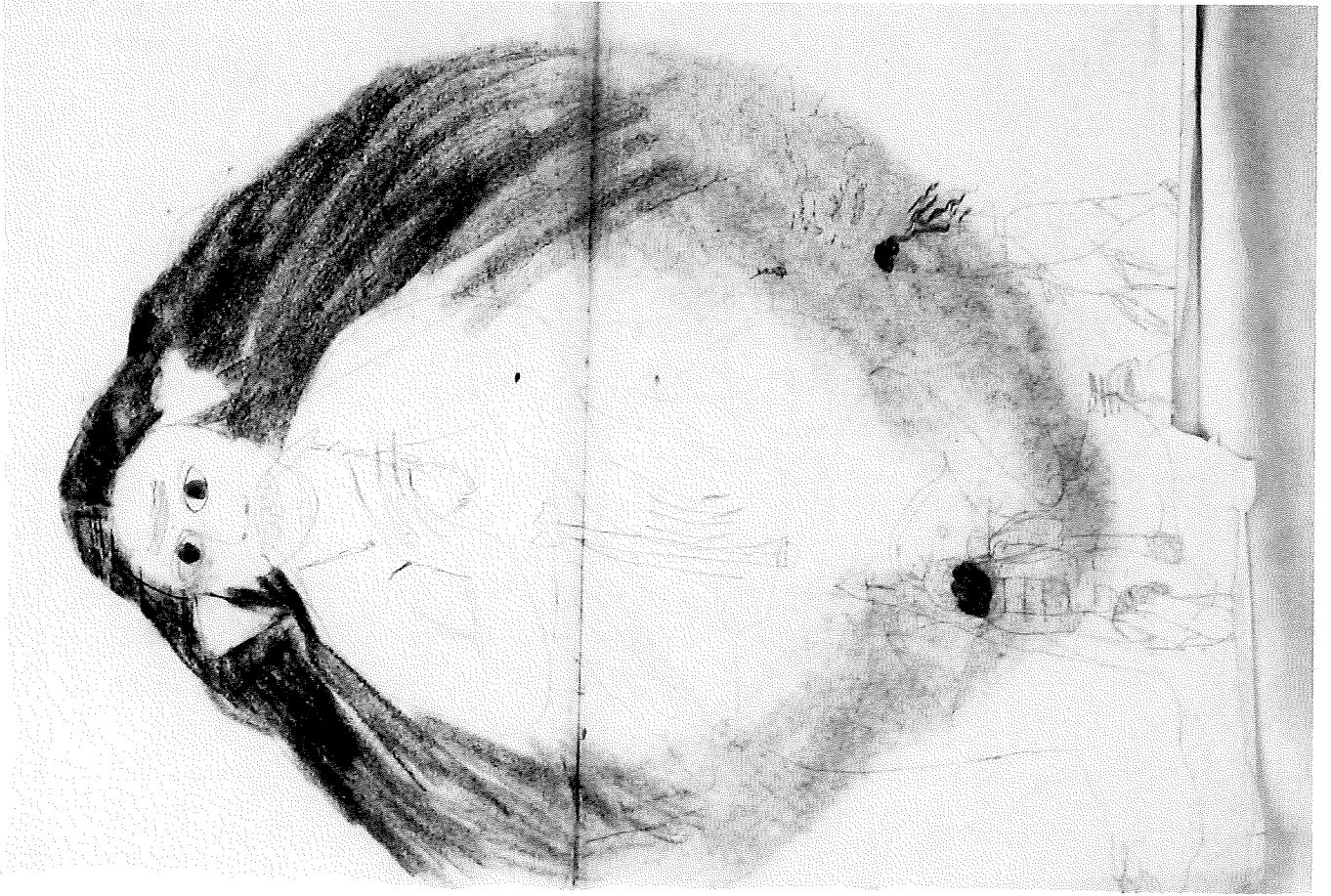


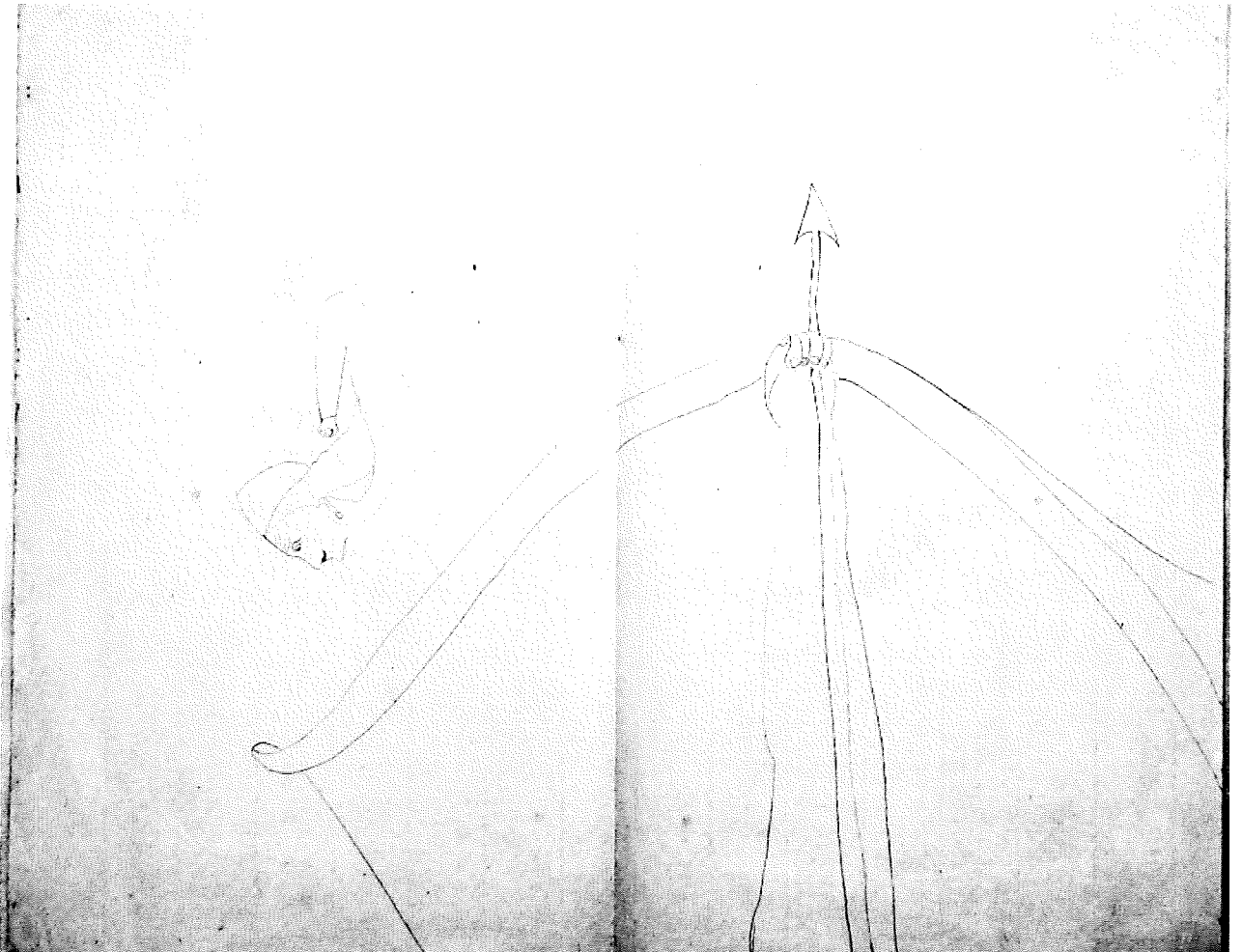
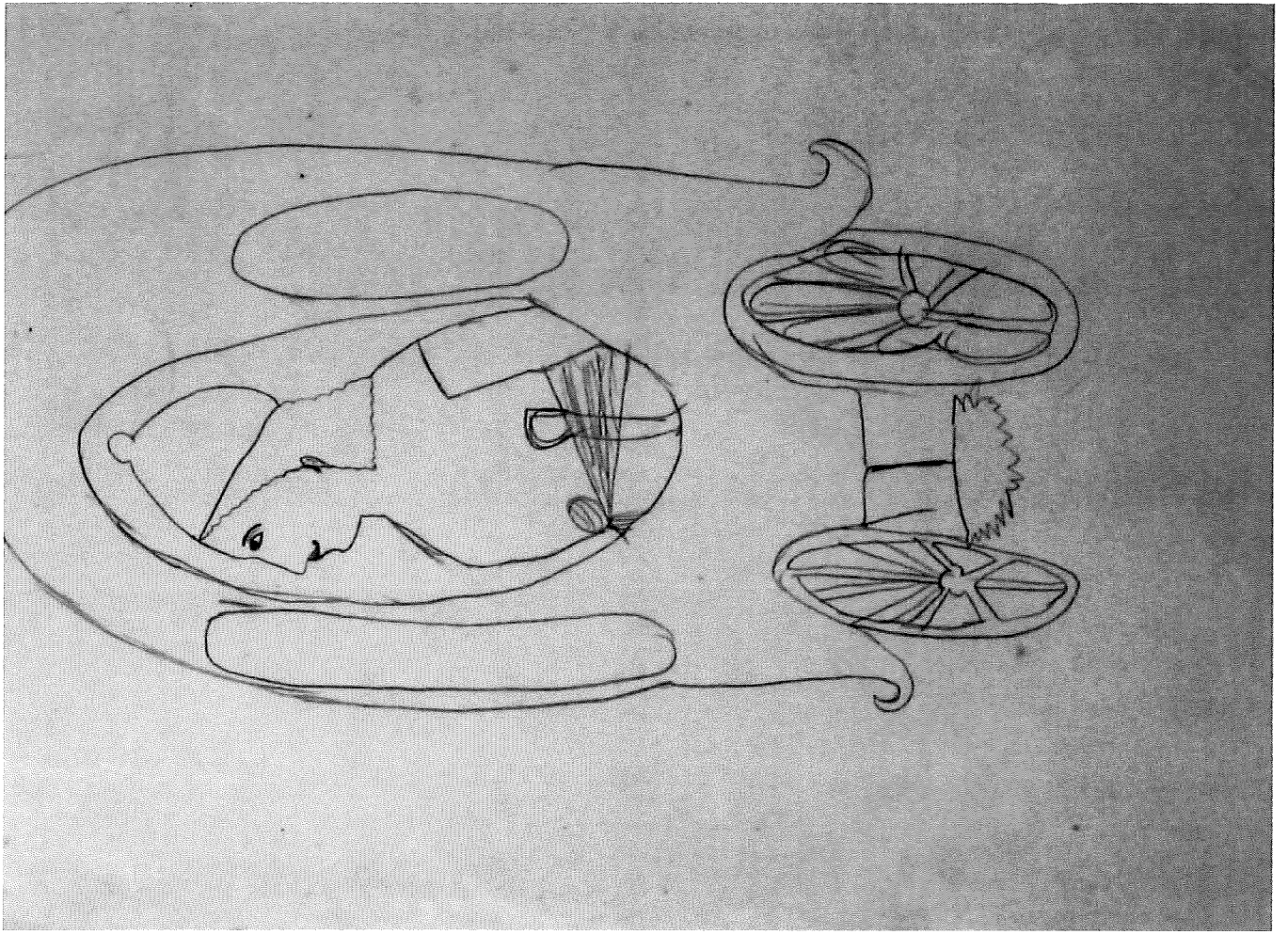


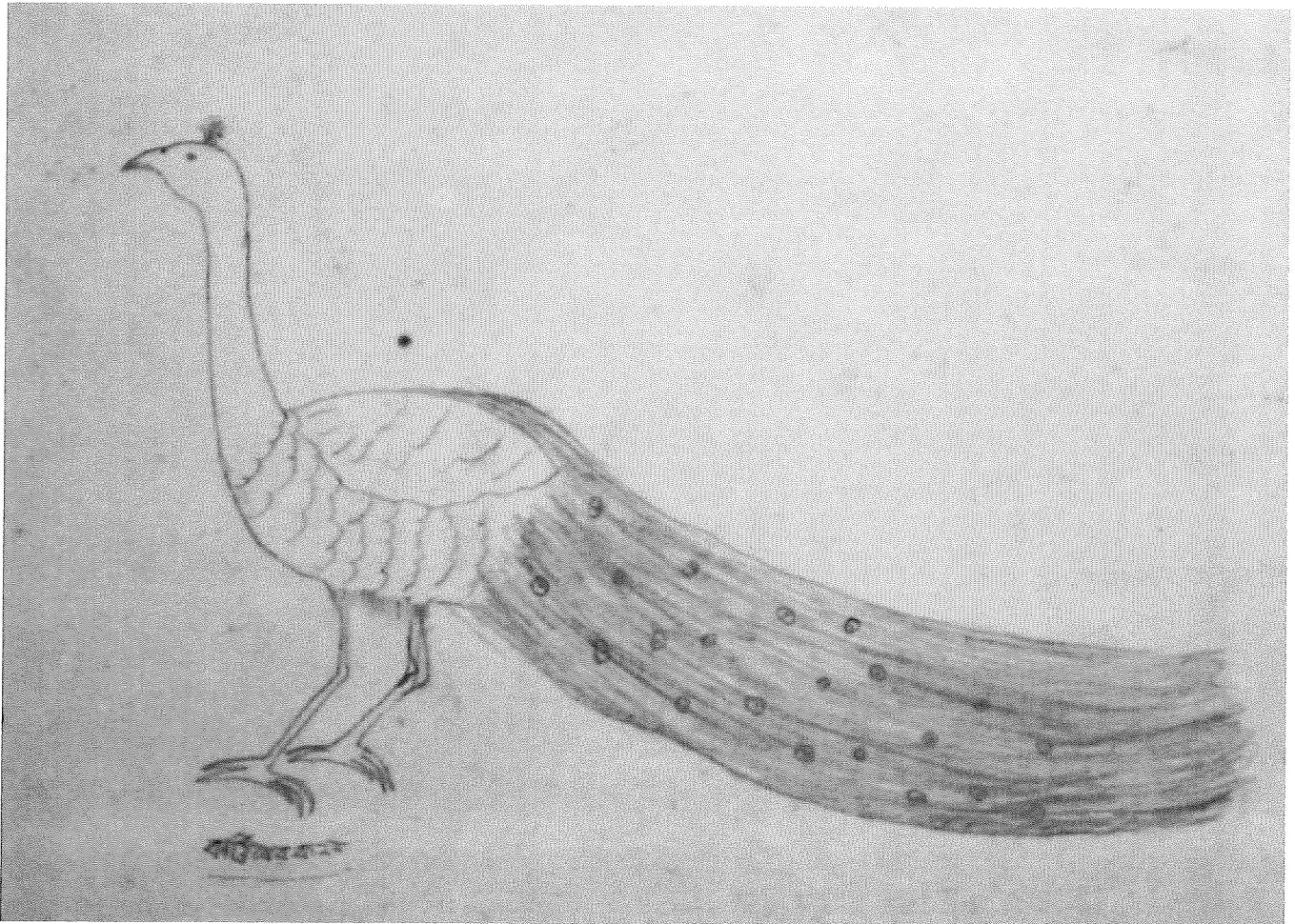
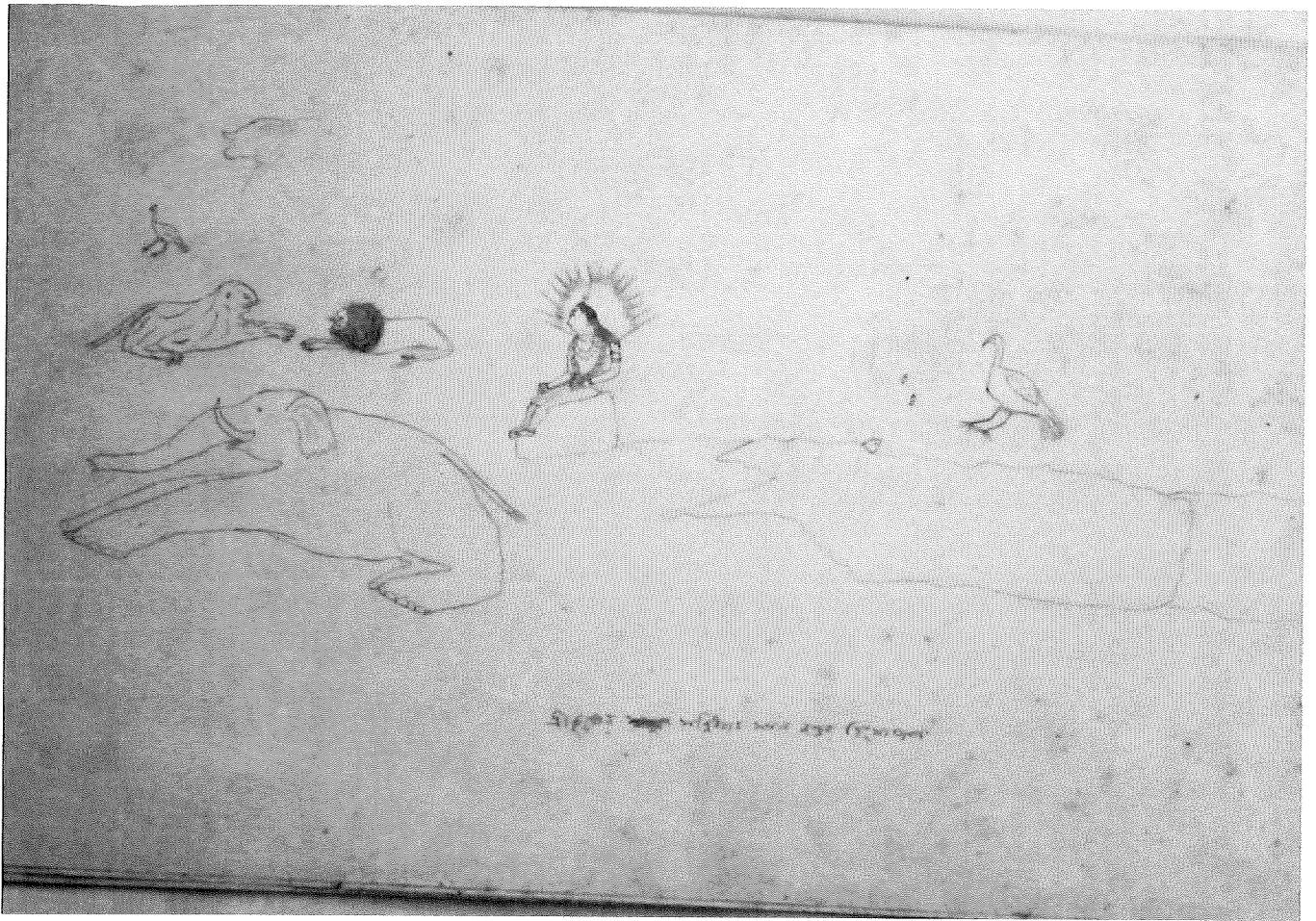
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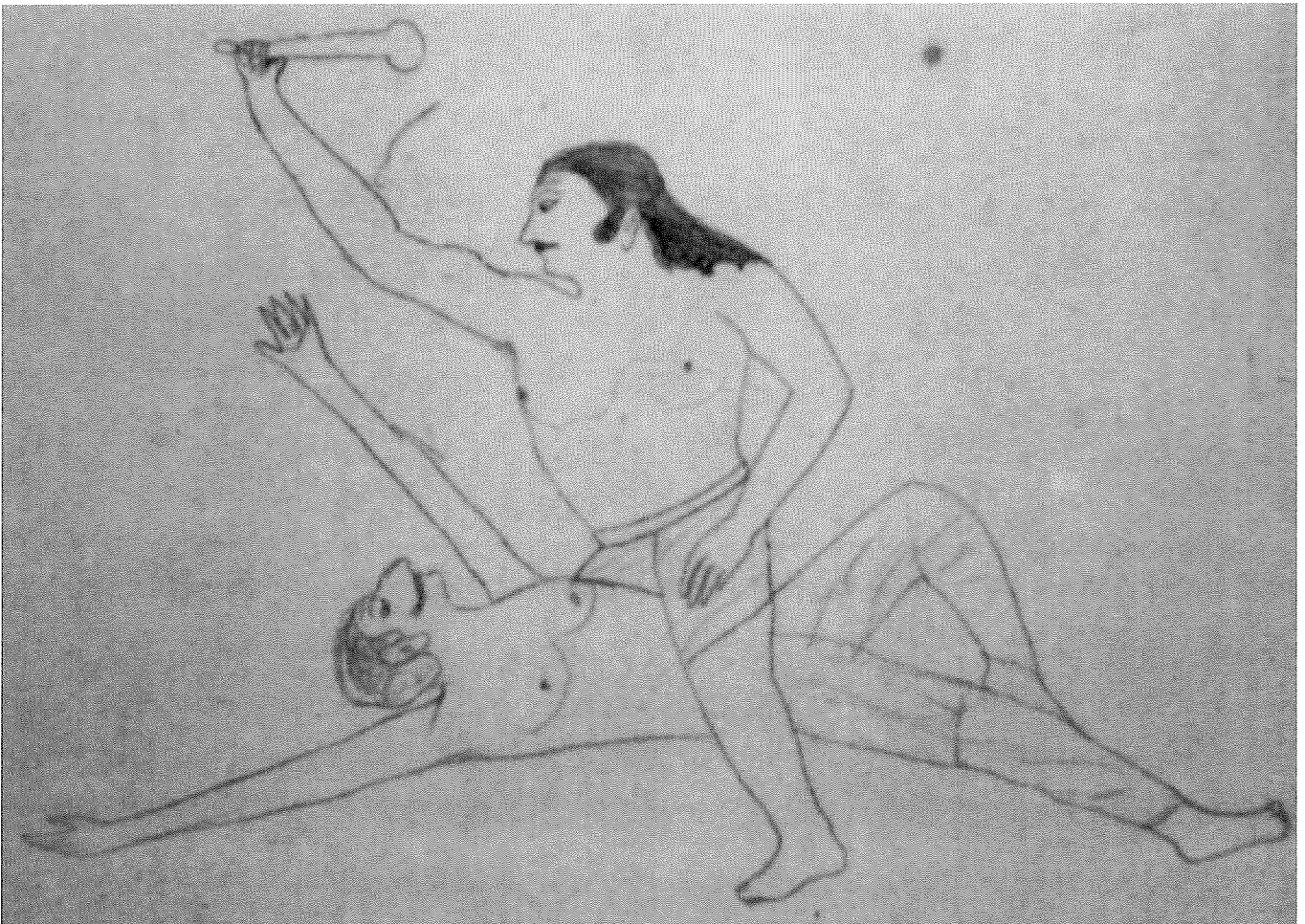
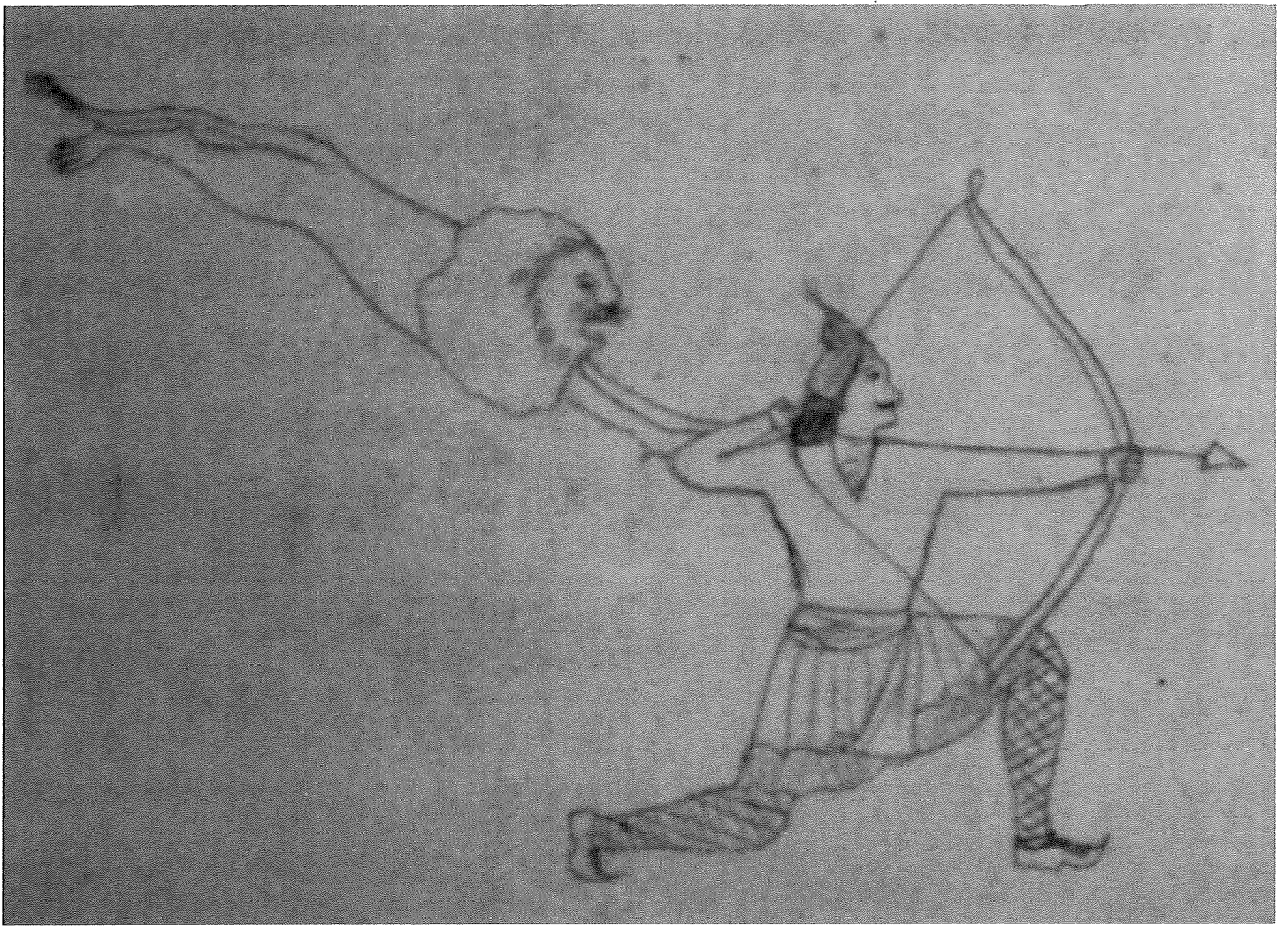


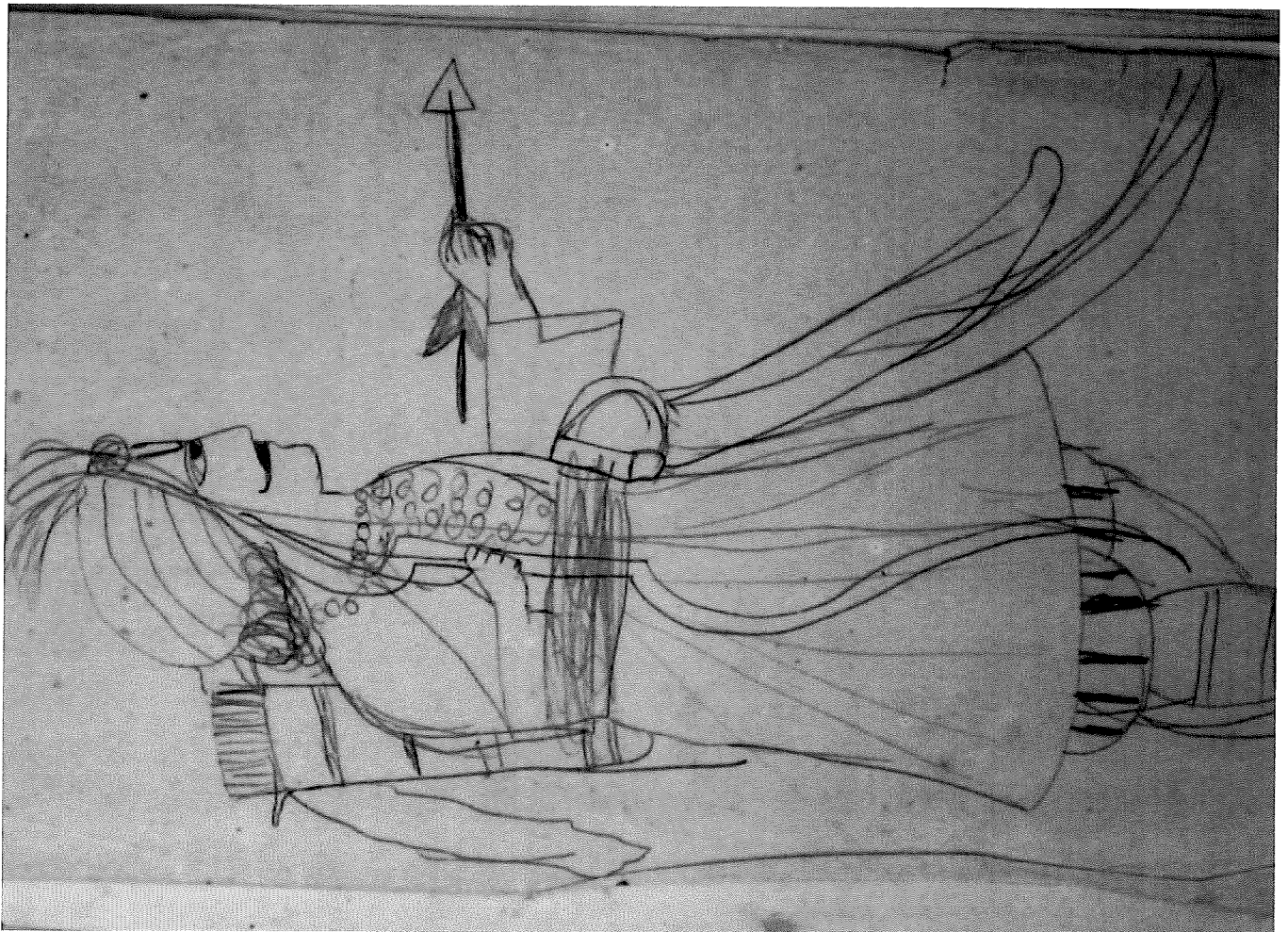
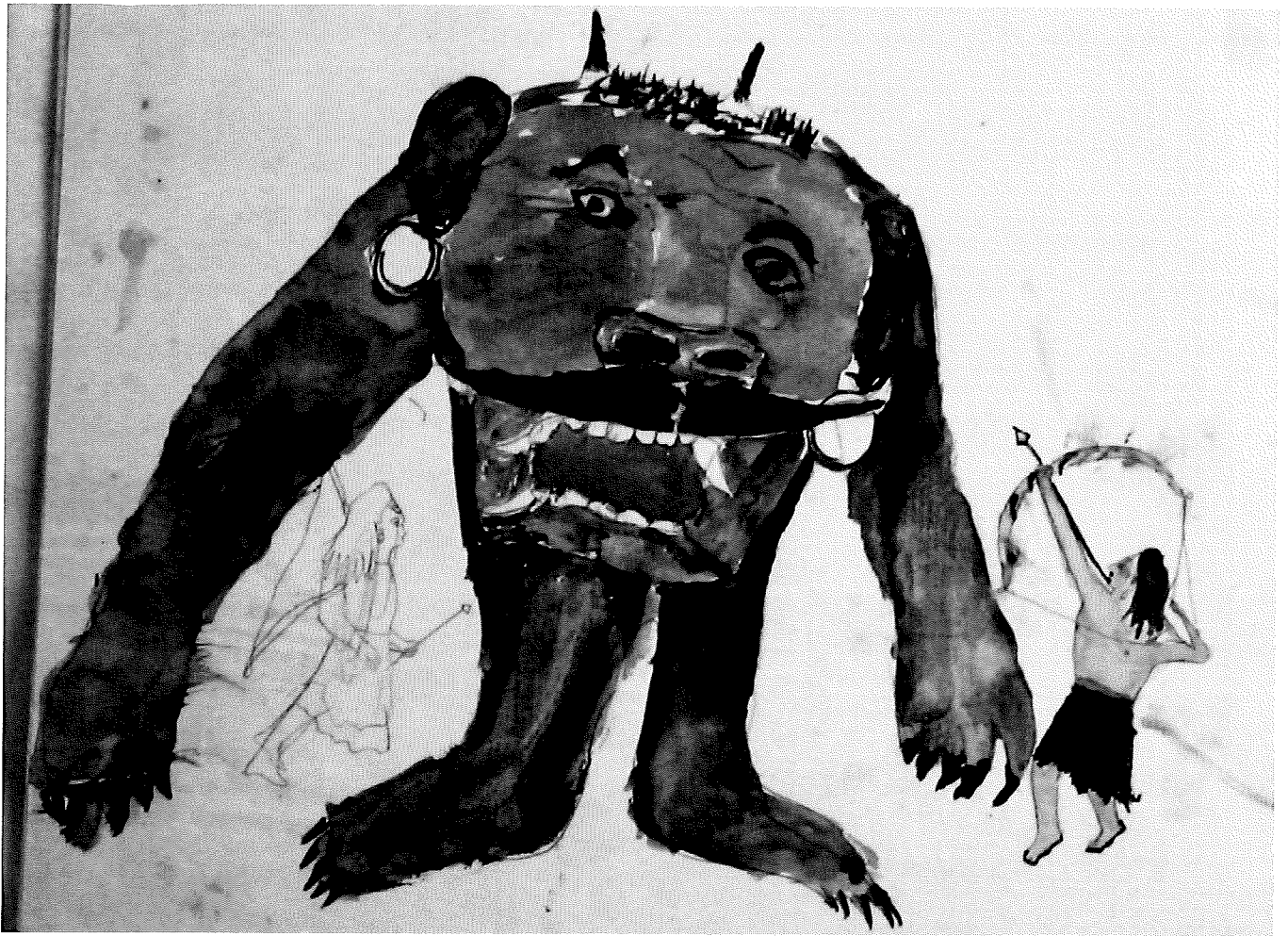


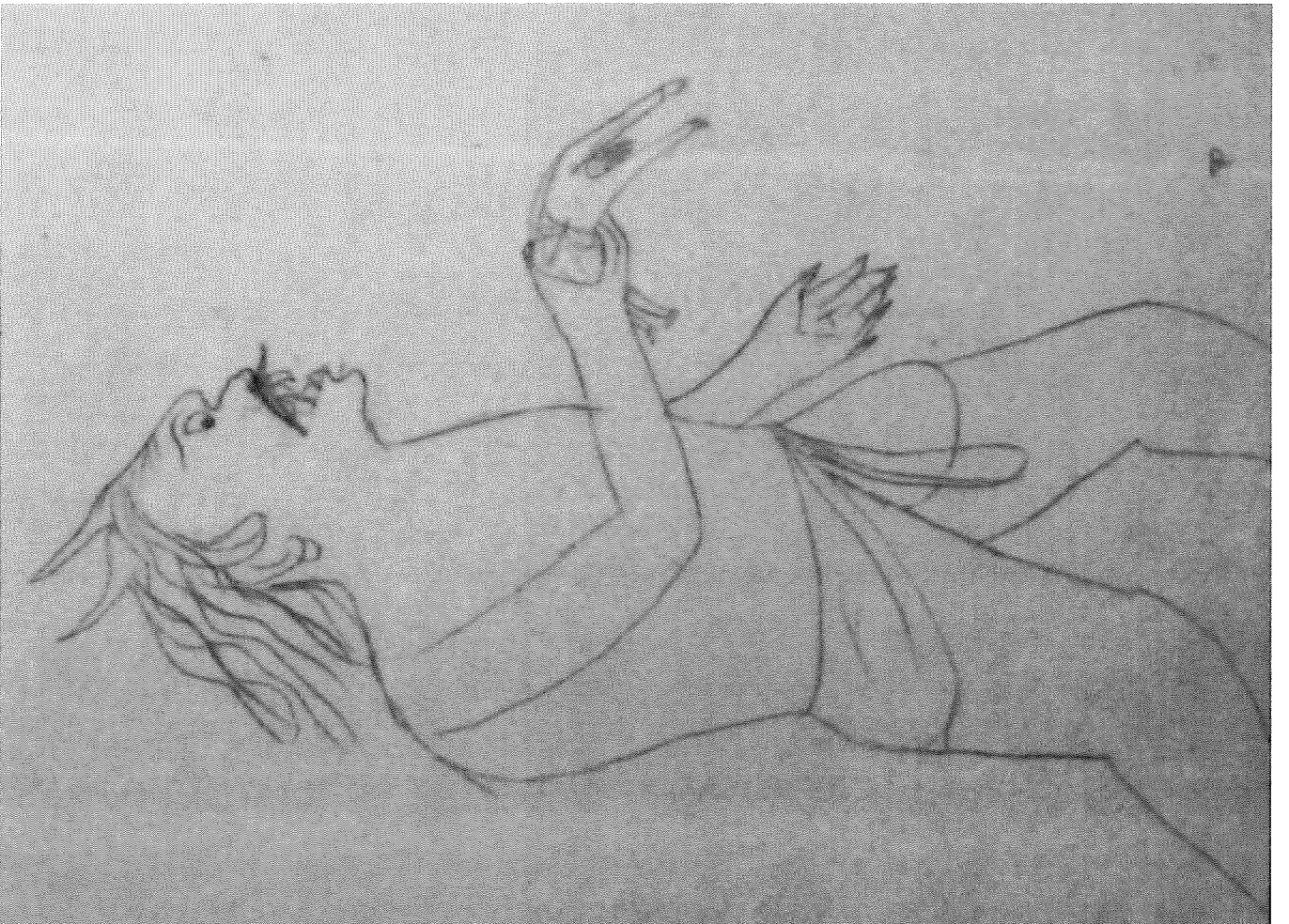
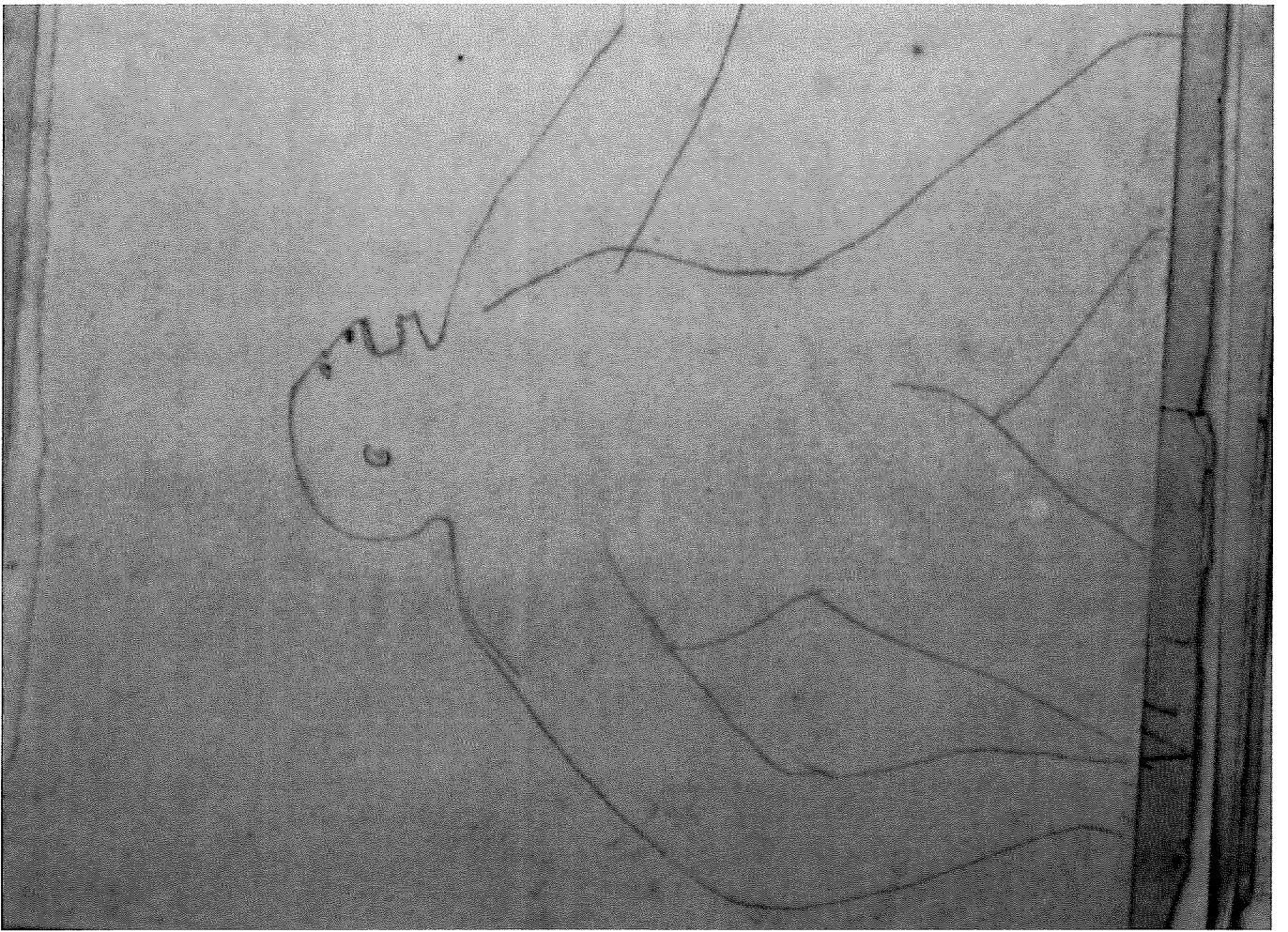












(১৯৩৪ সাল)

ওহেতগবান গাৰ শক্তি

মান

ওহেতগবান গাৰ শক্তি

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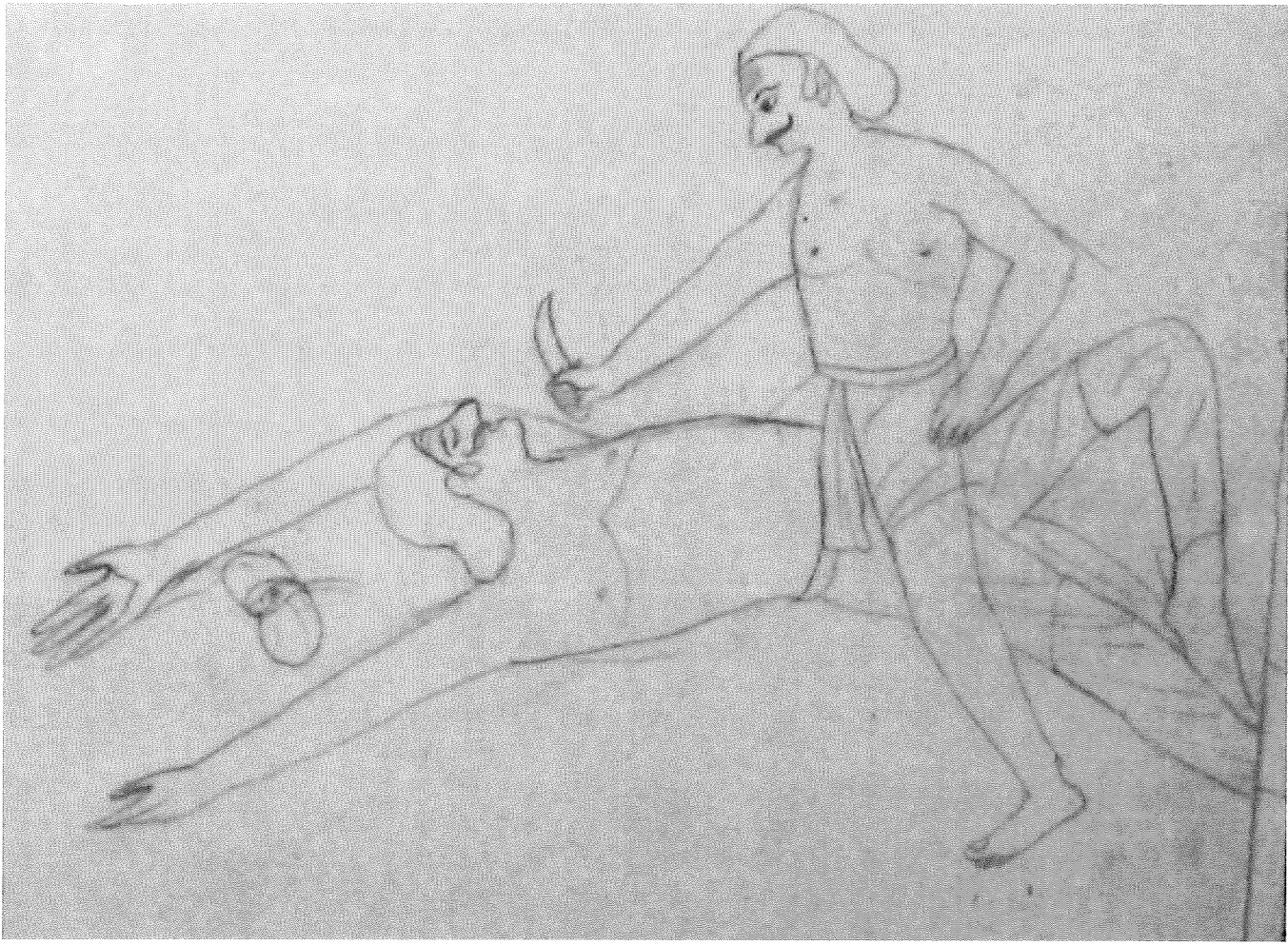
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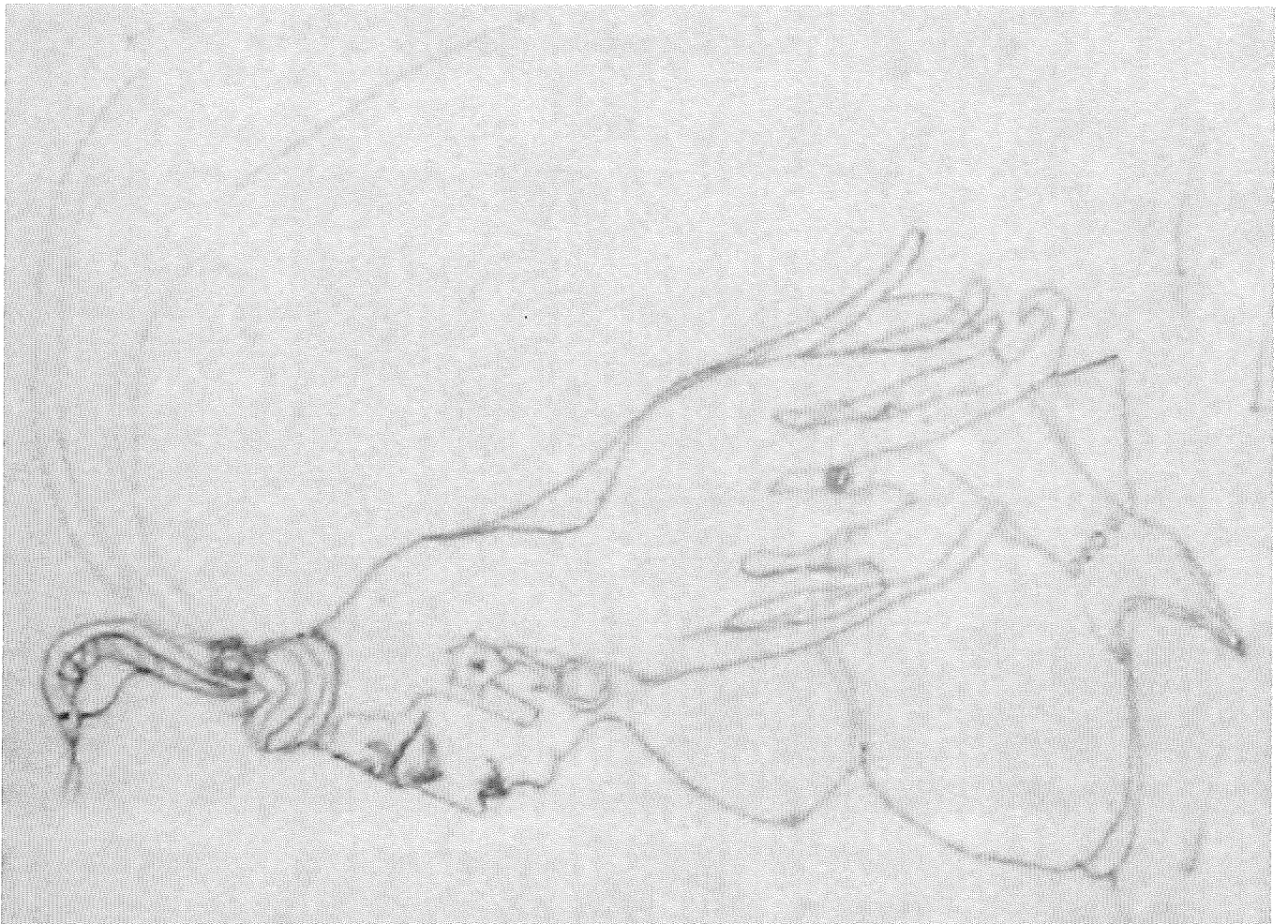
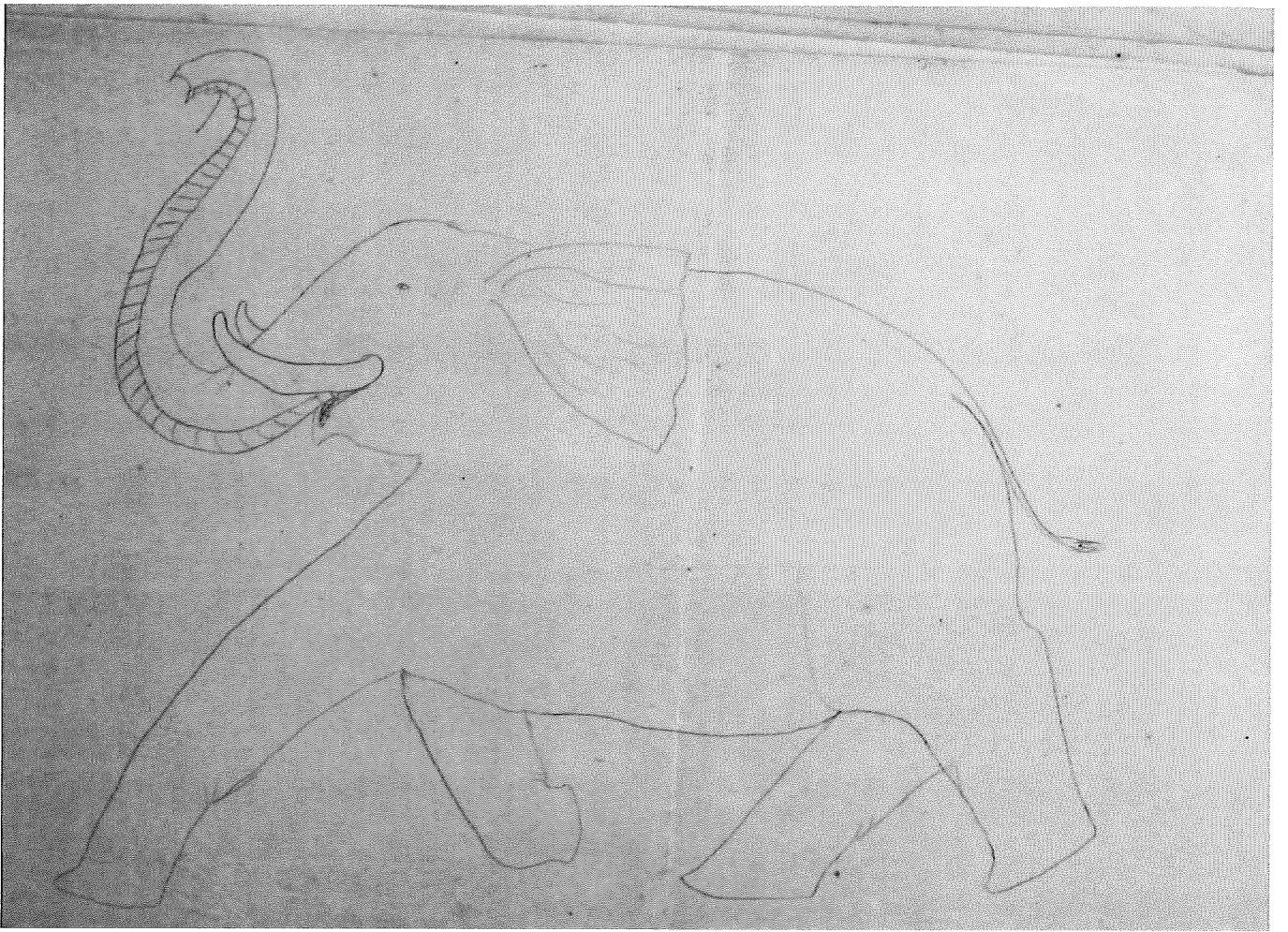
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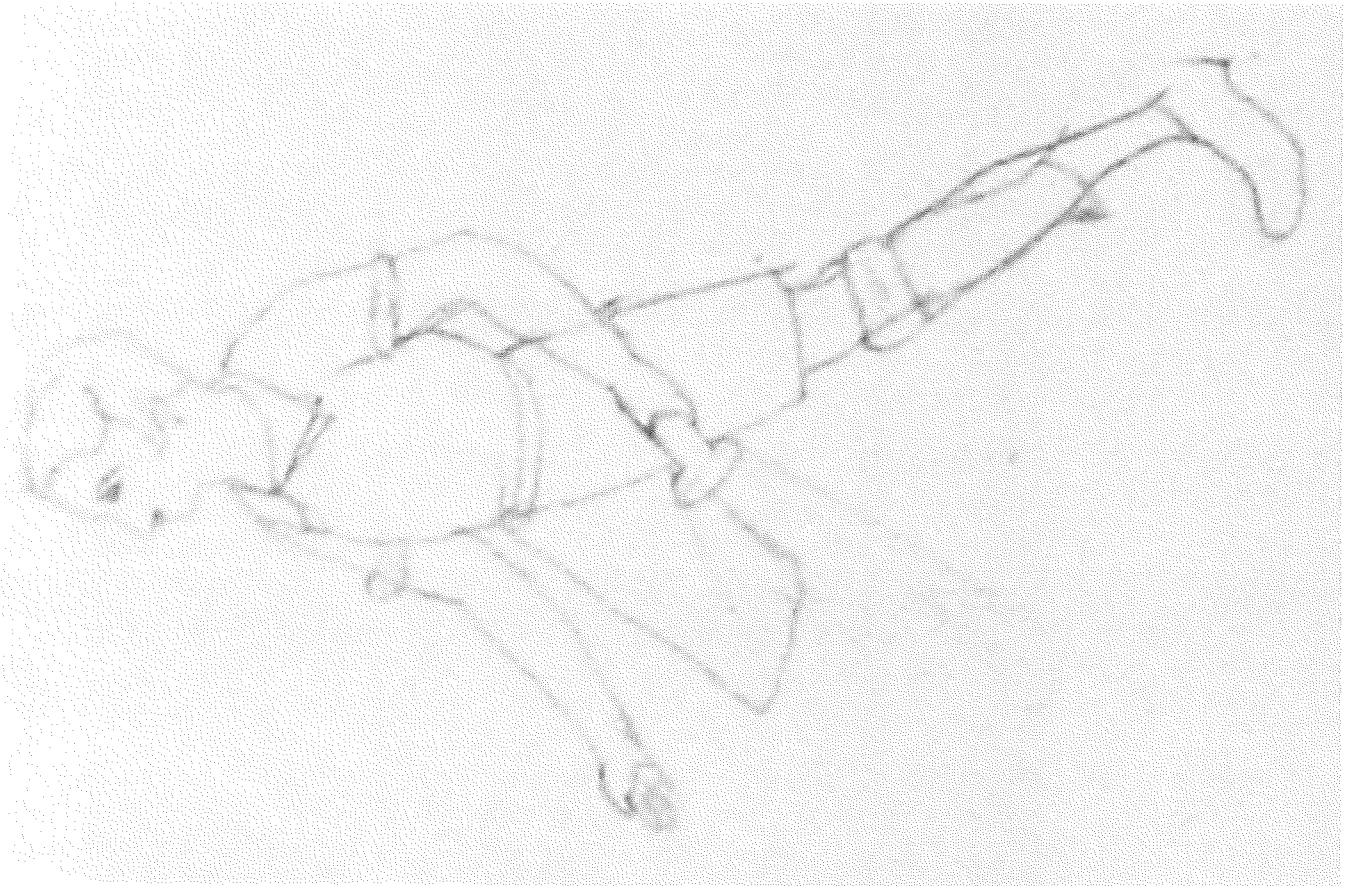
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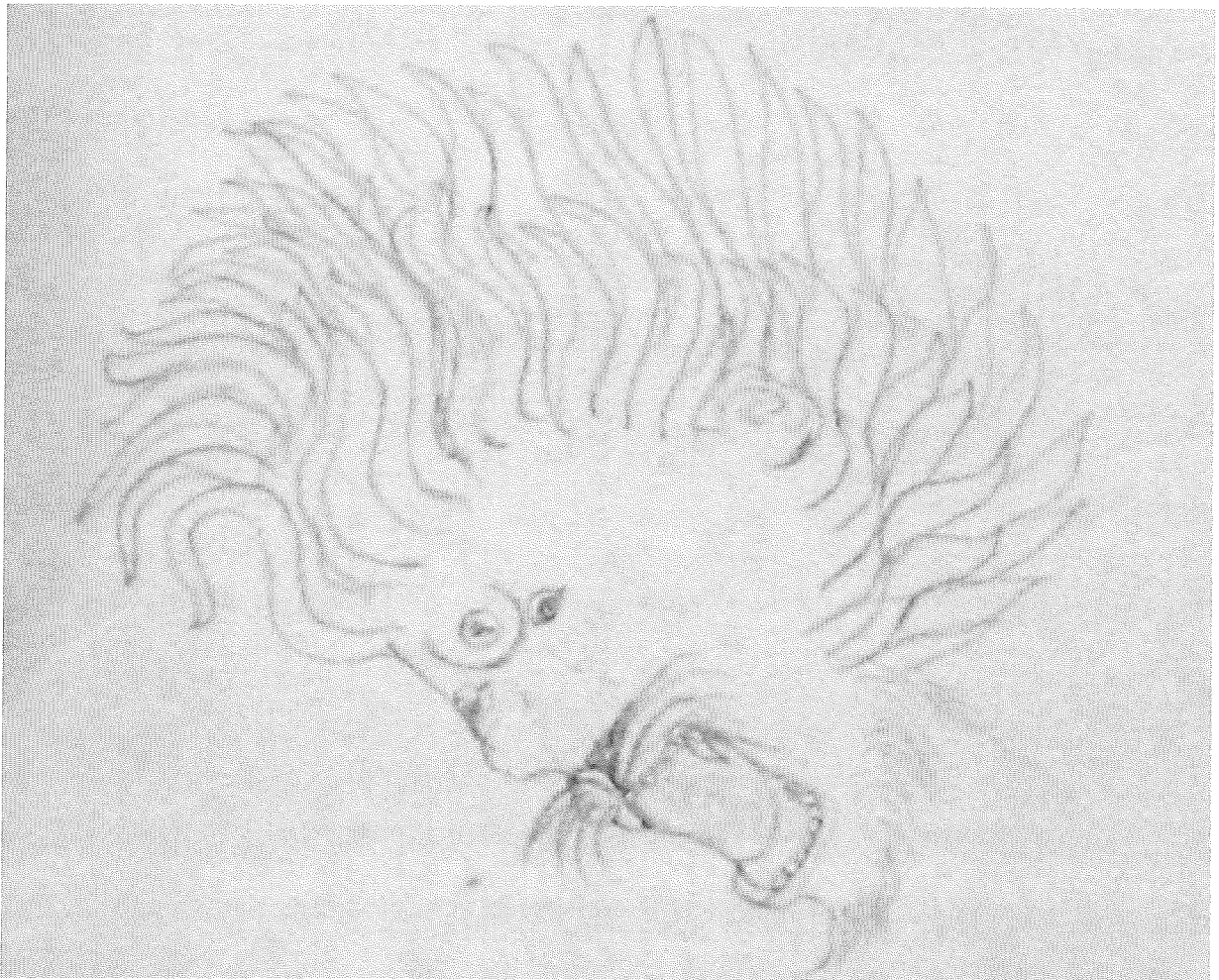
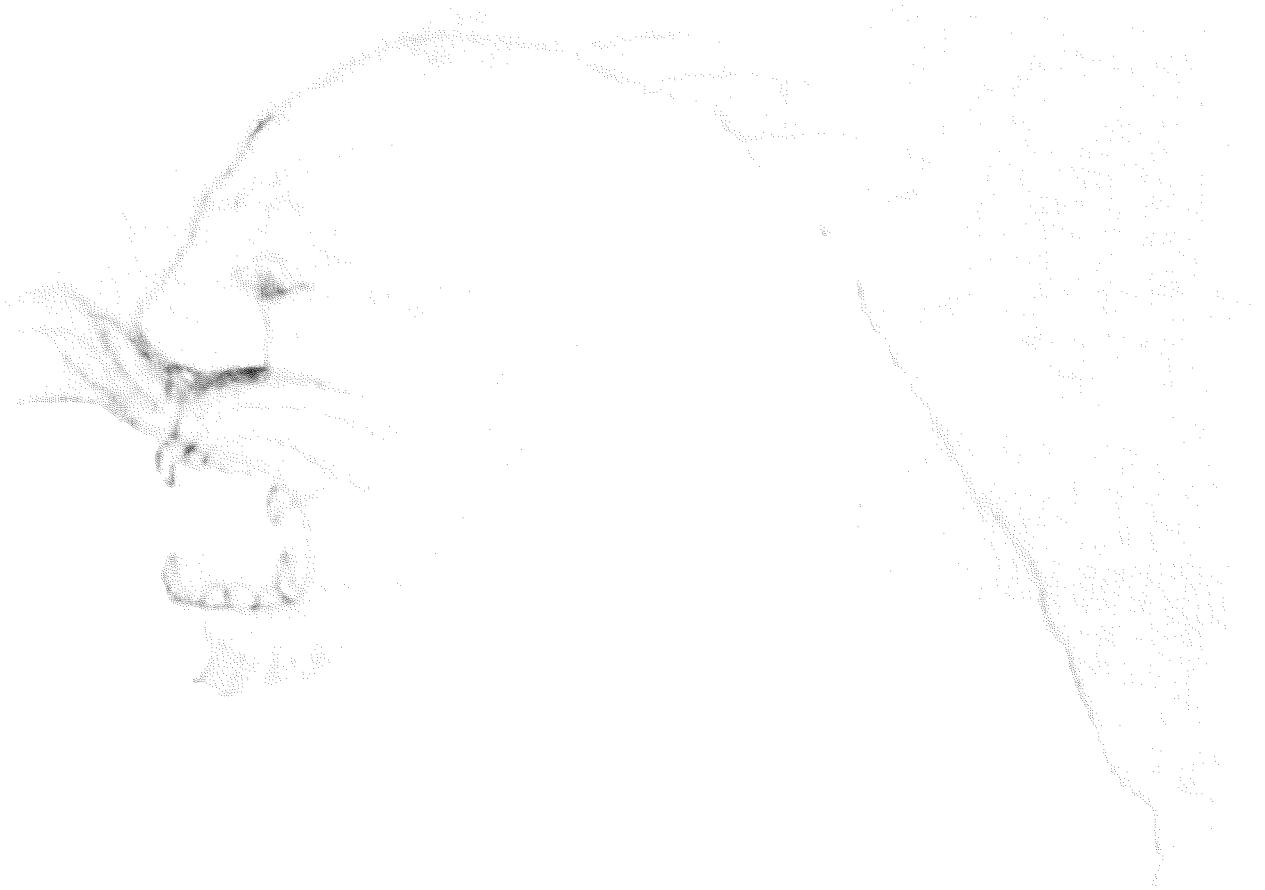
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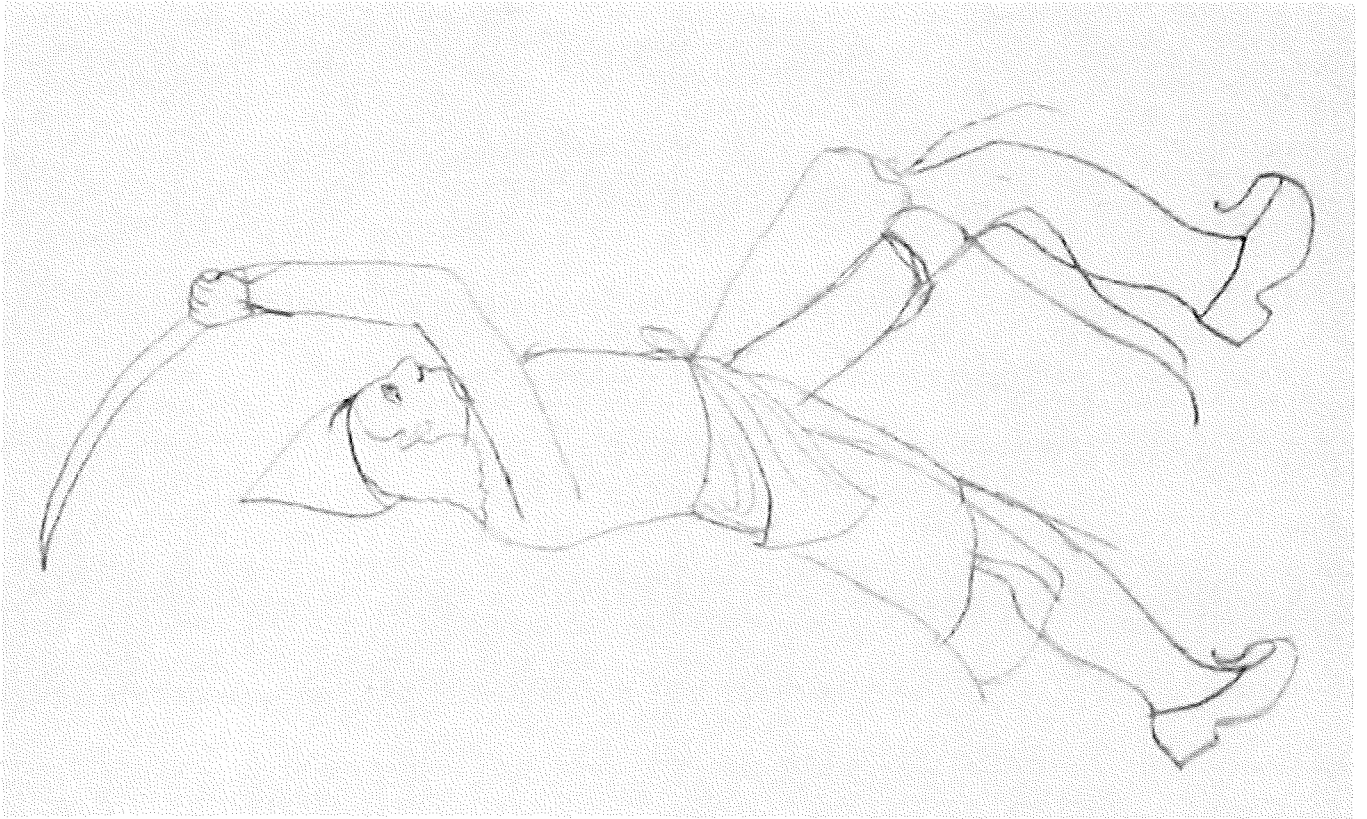


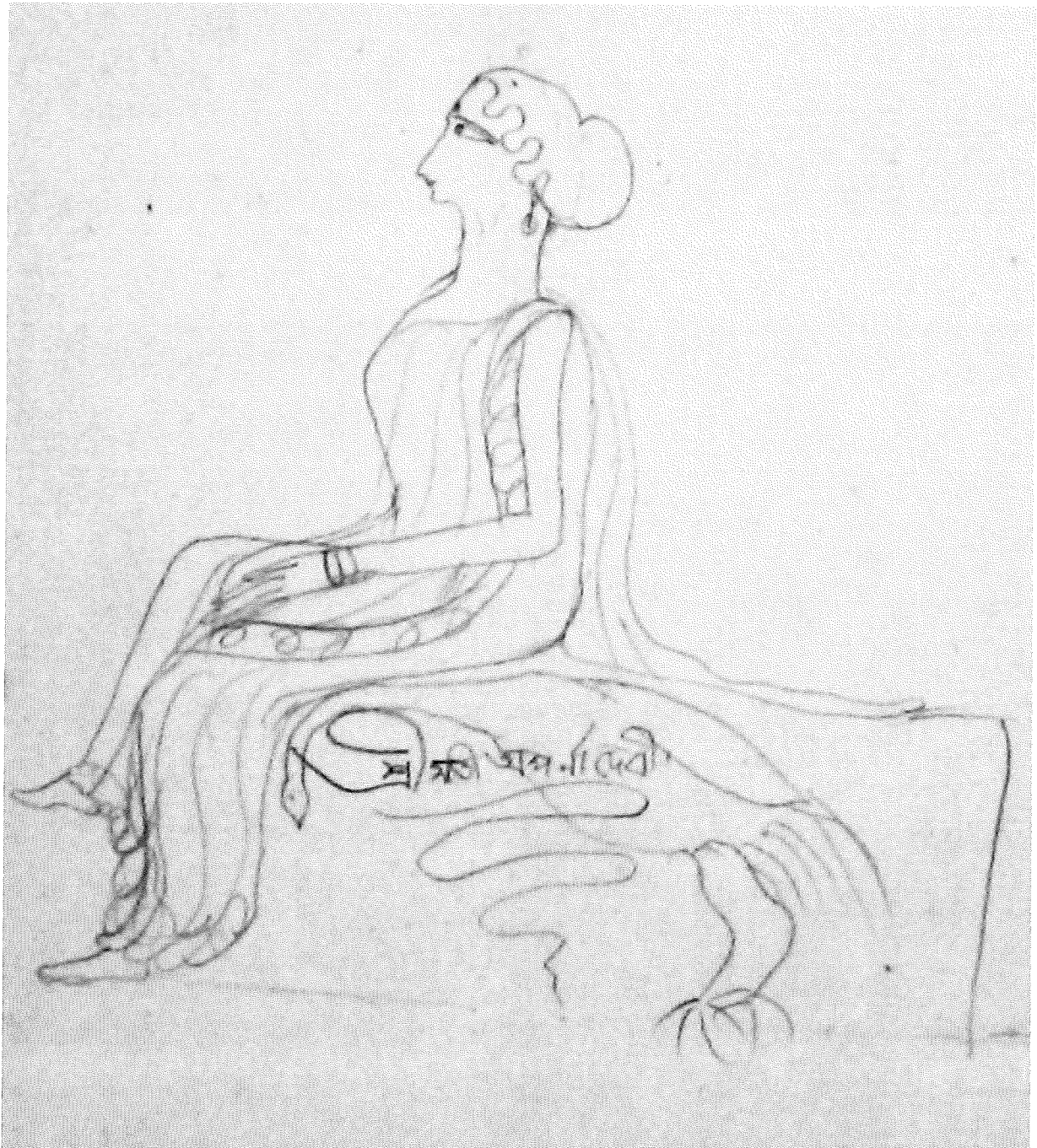


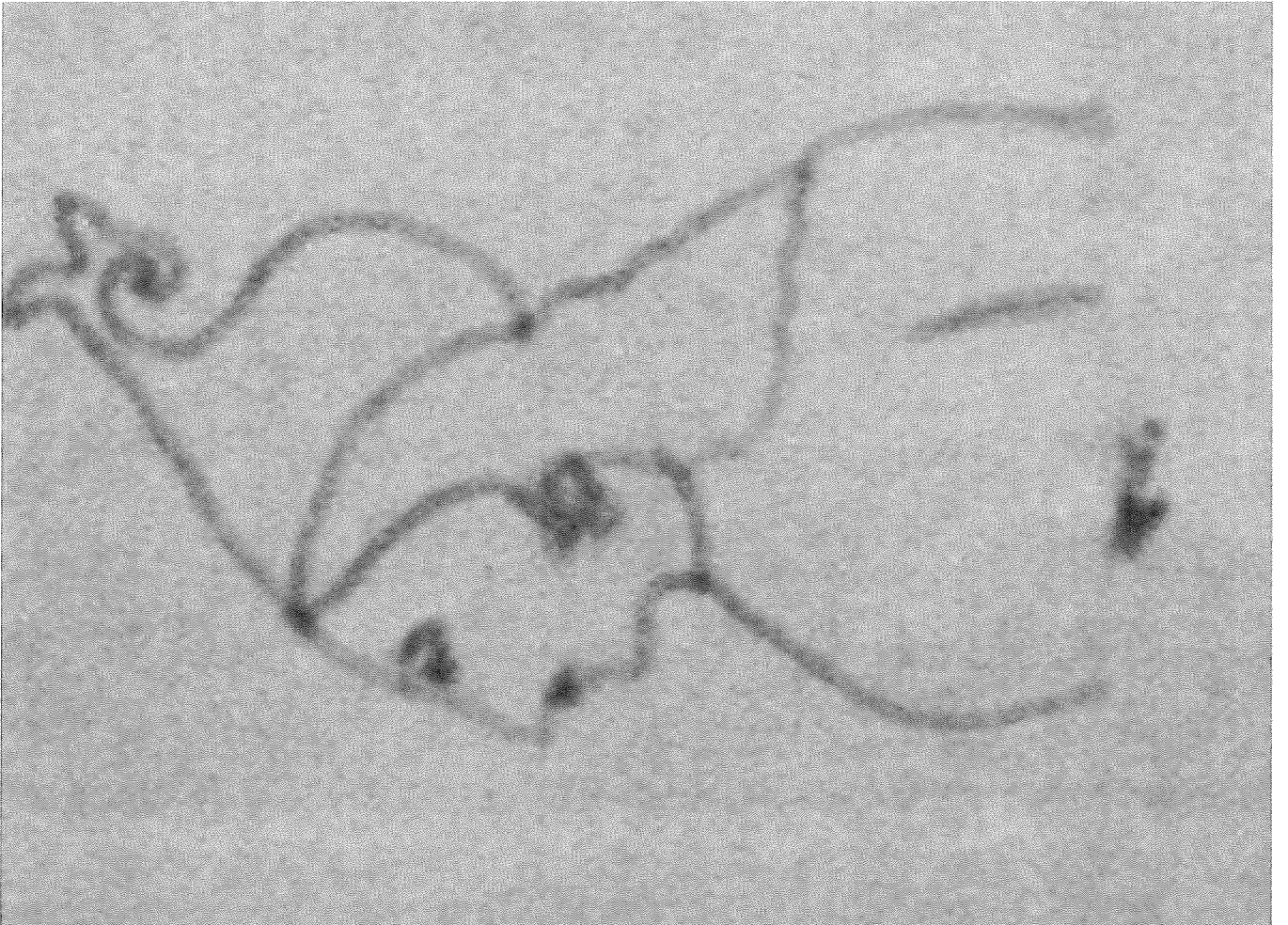
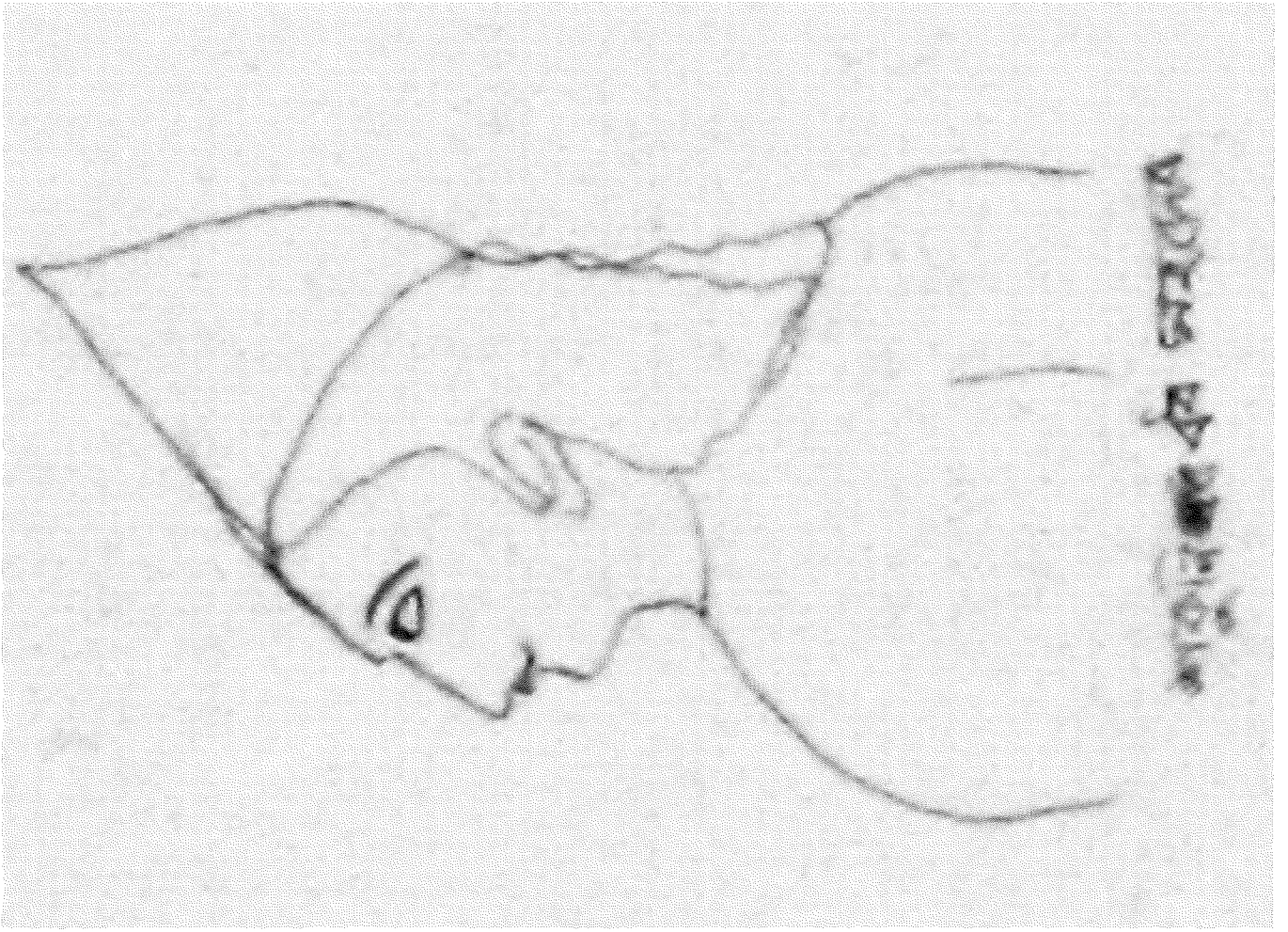








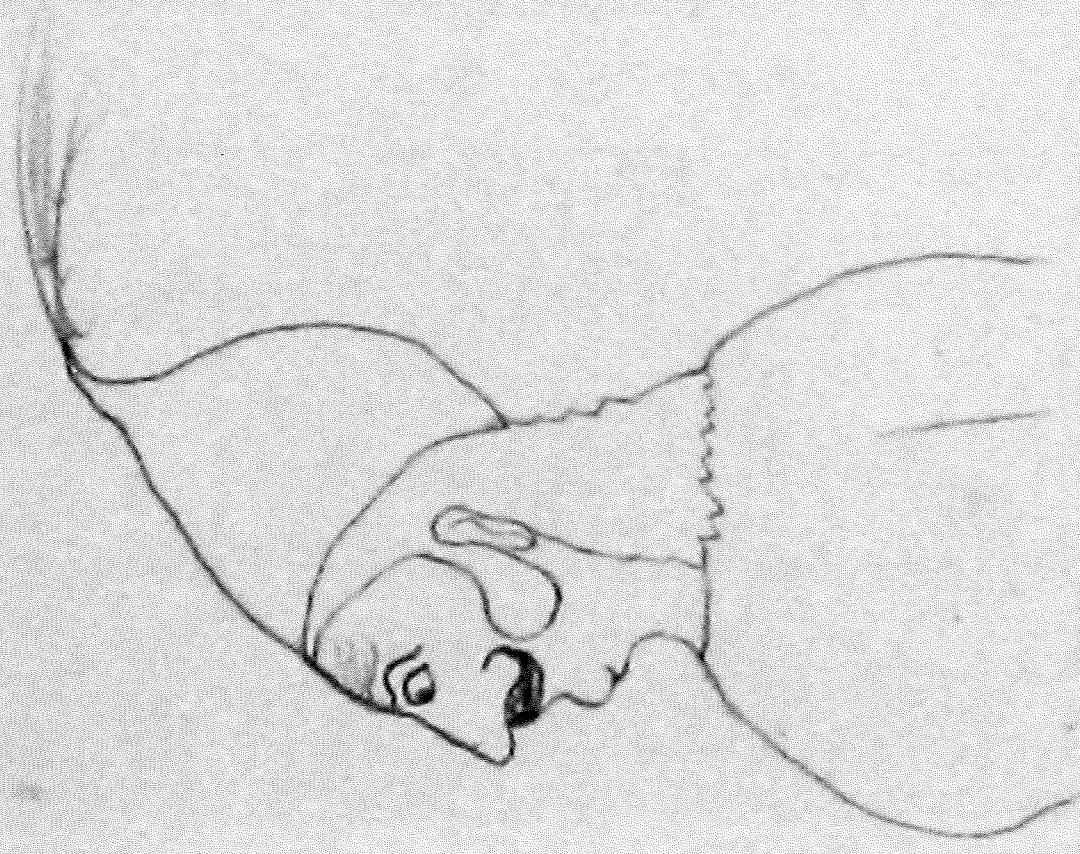


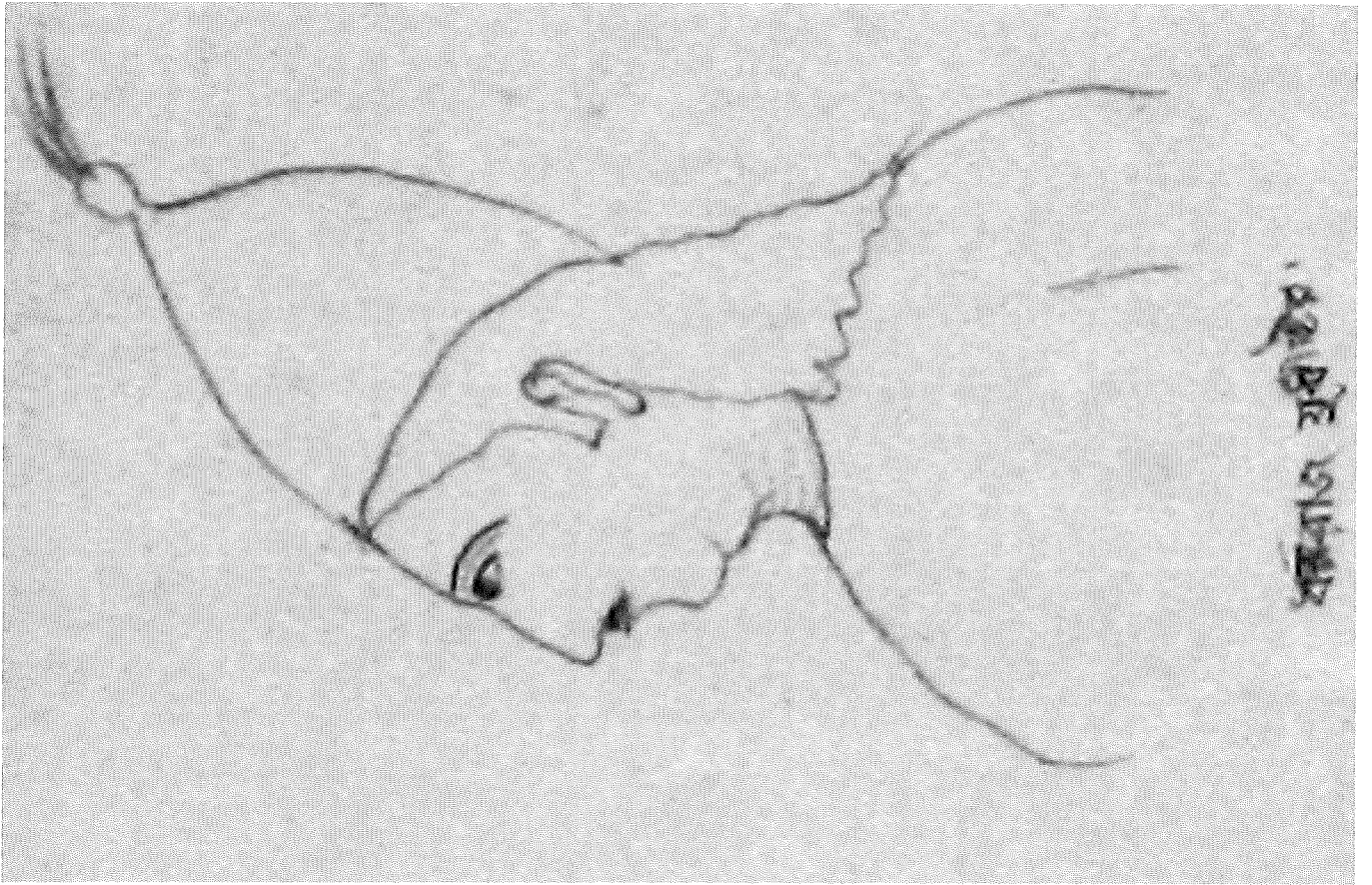


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ਮਿਸਟਰਿ ਵੀ

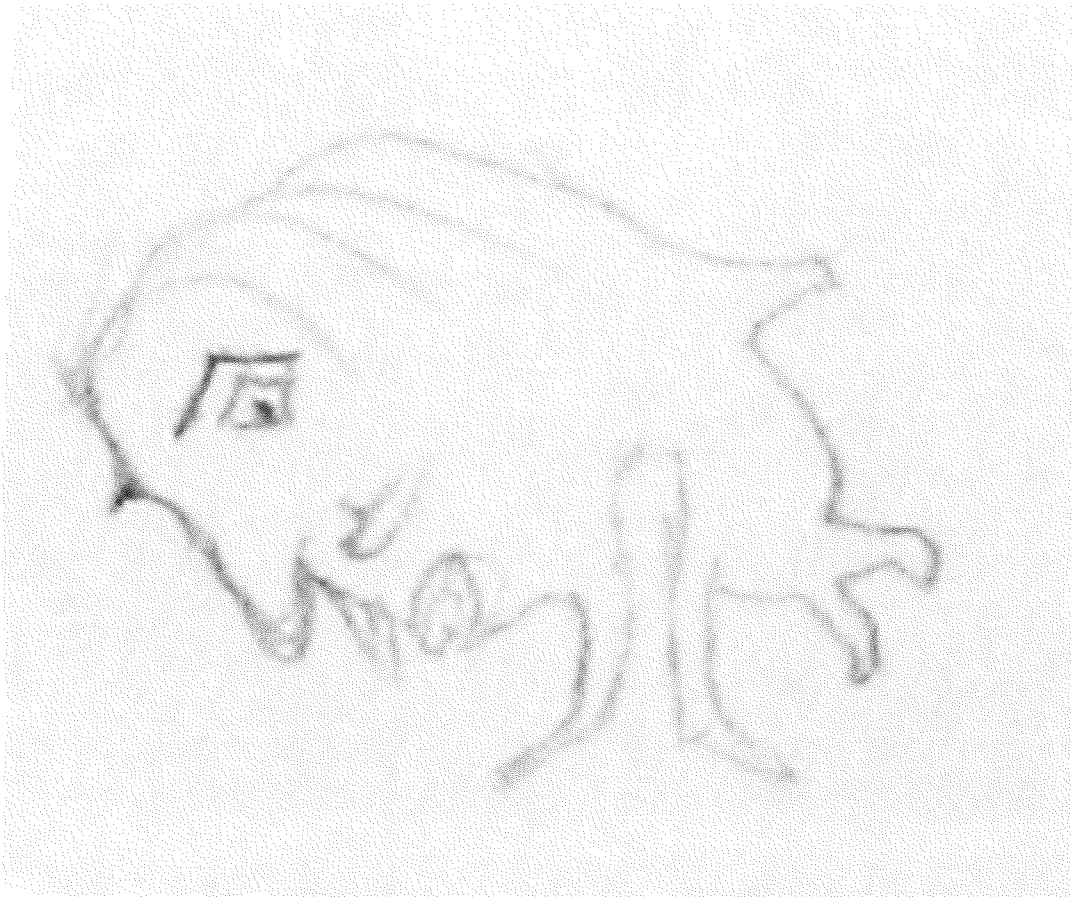


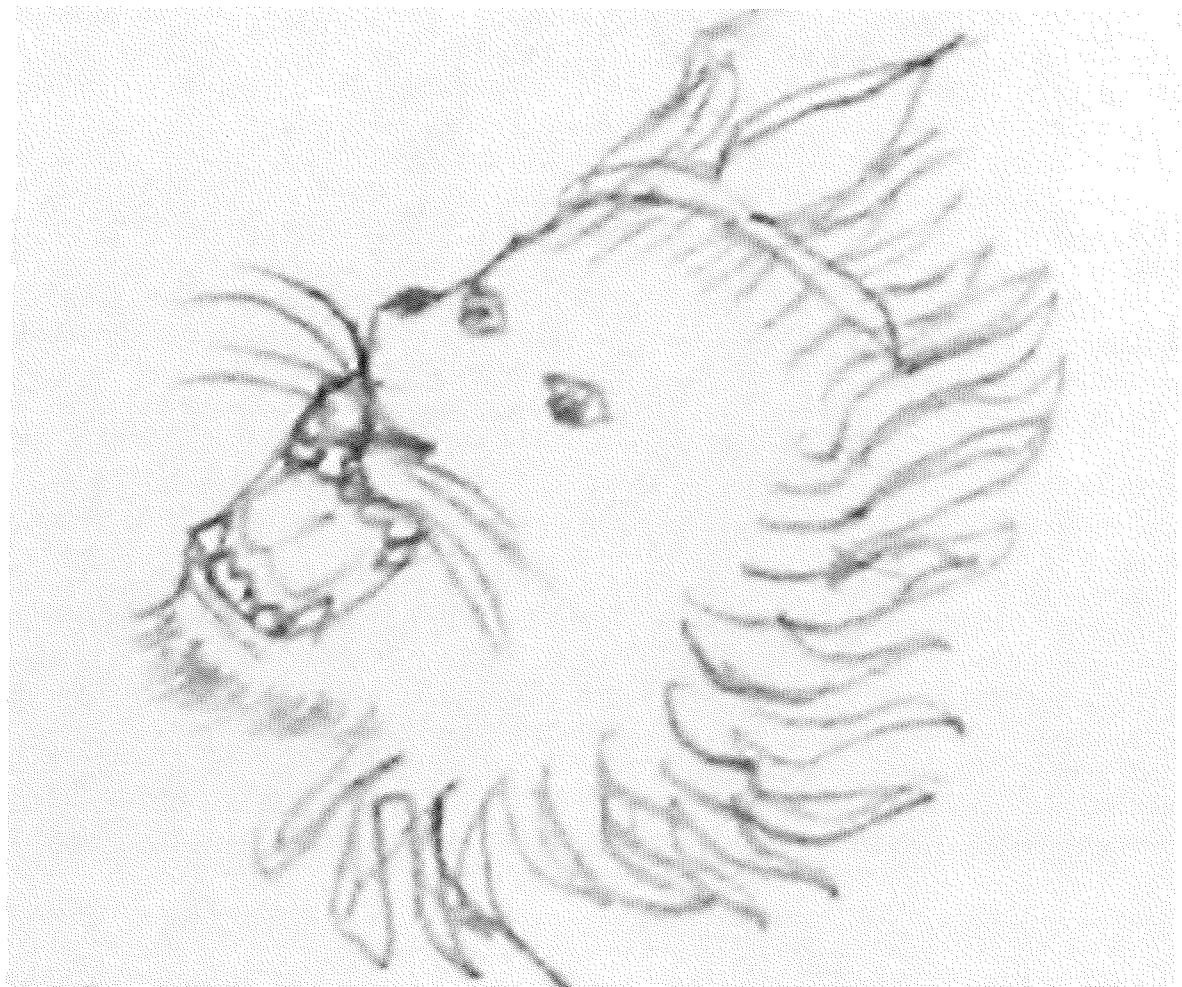
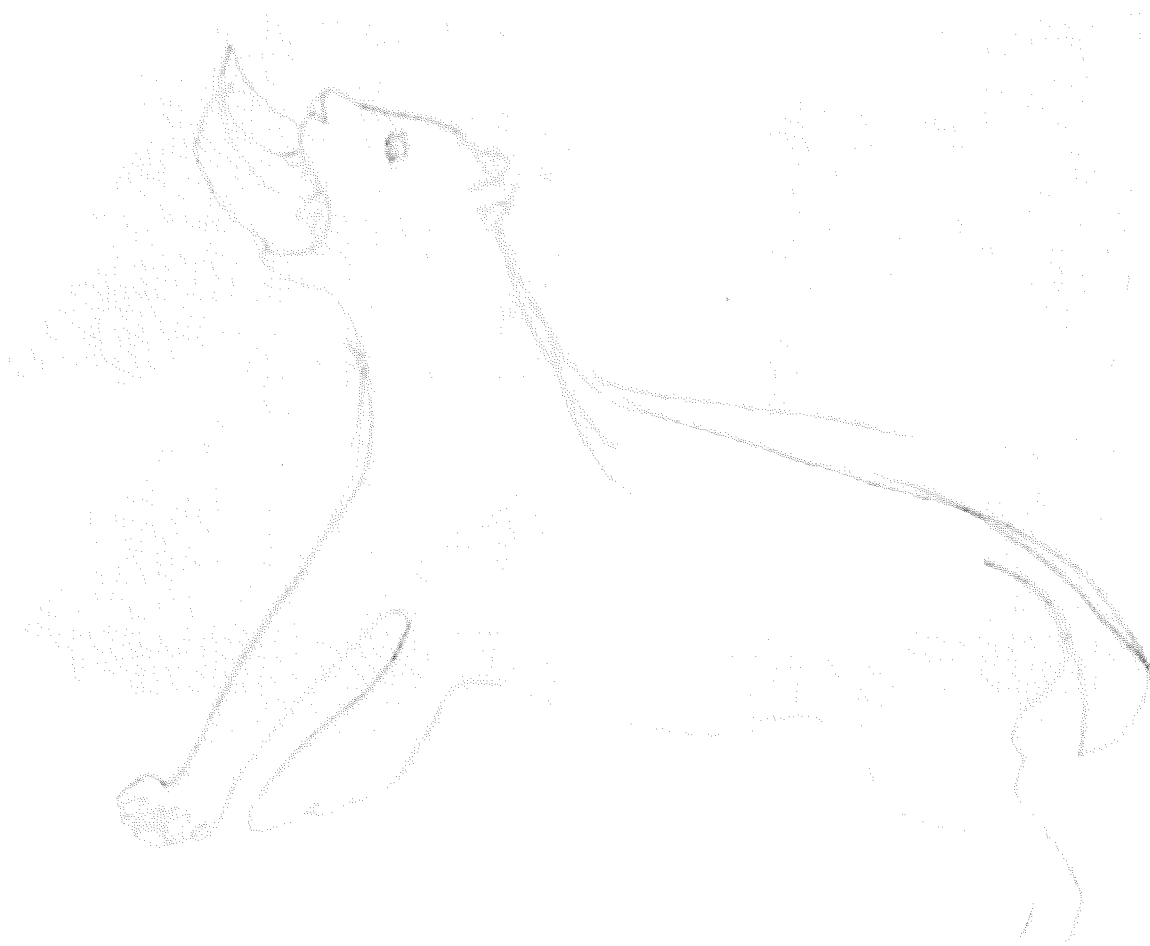


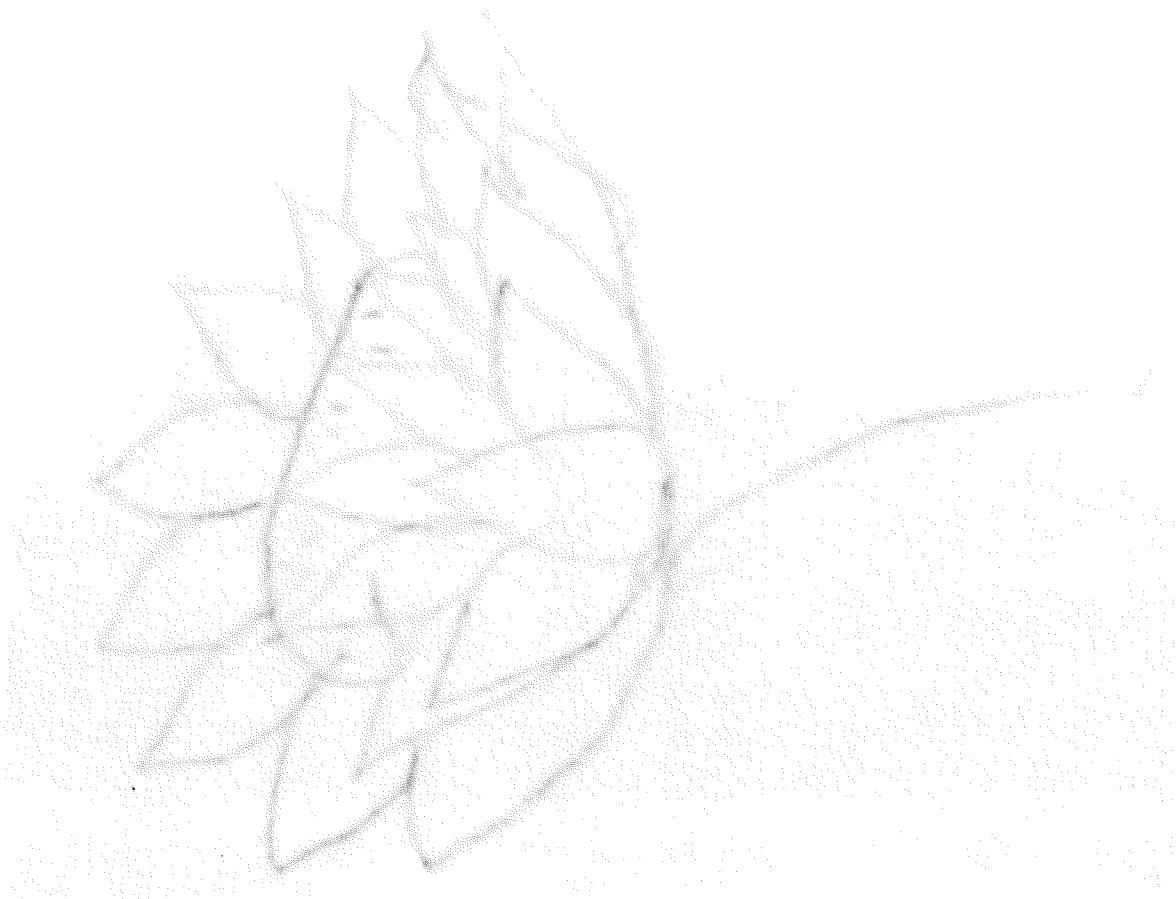
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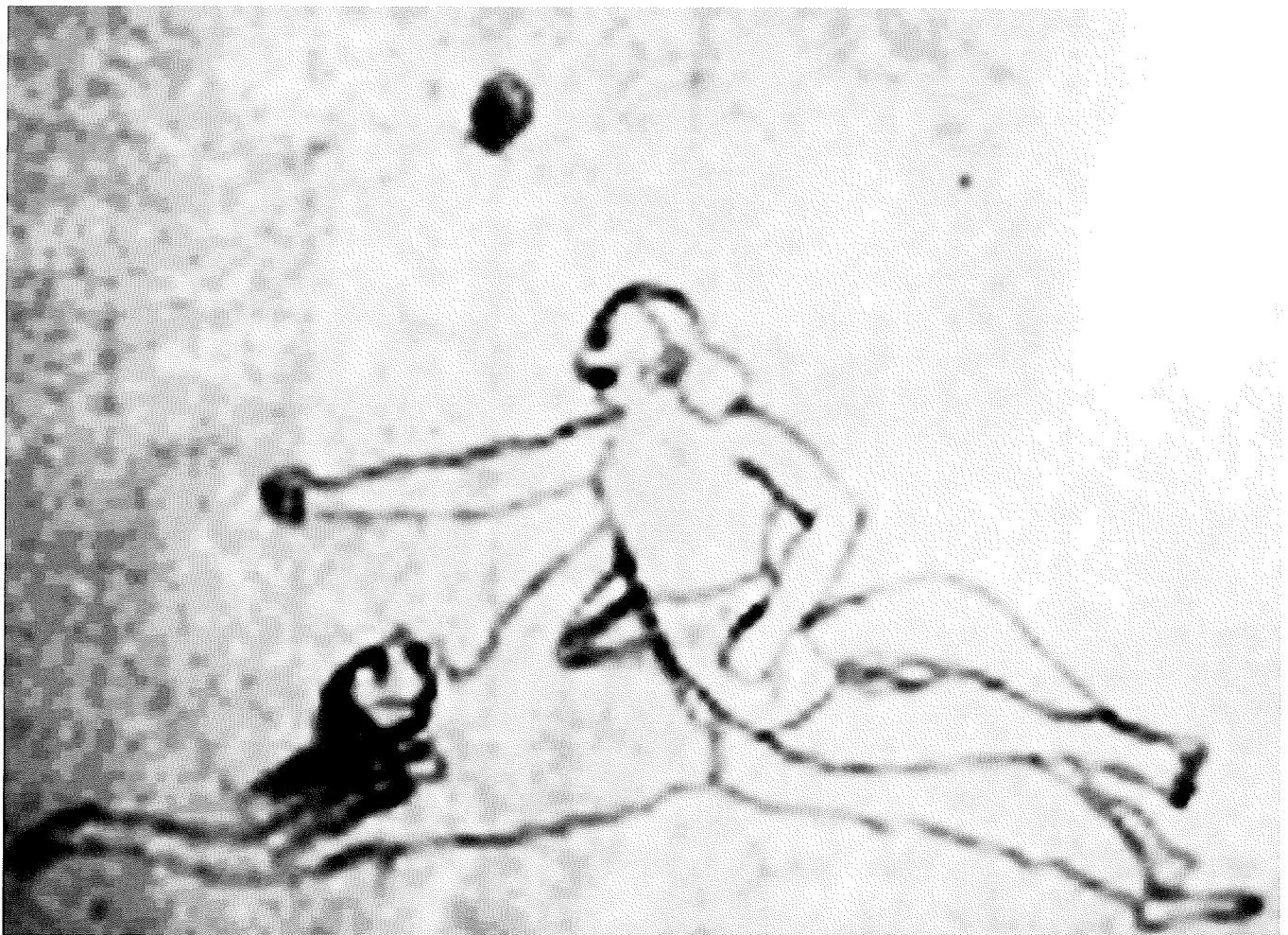
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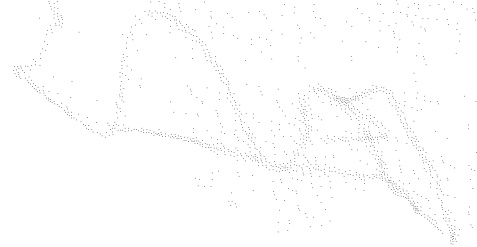


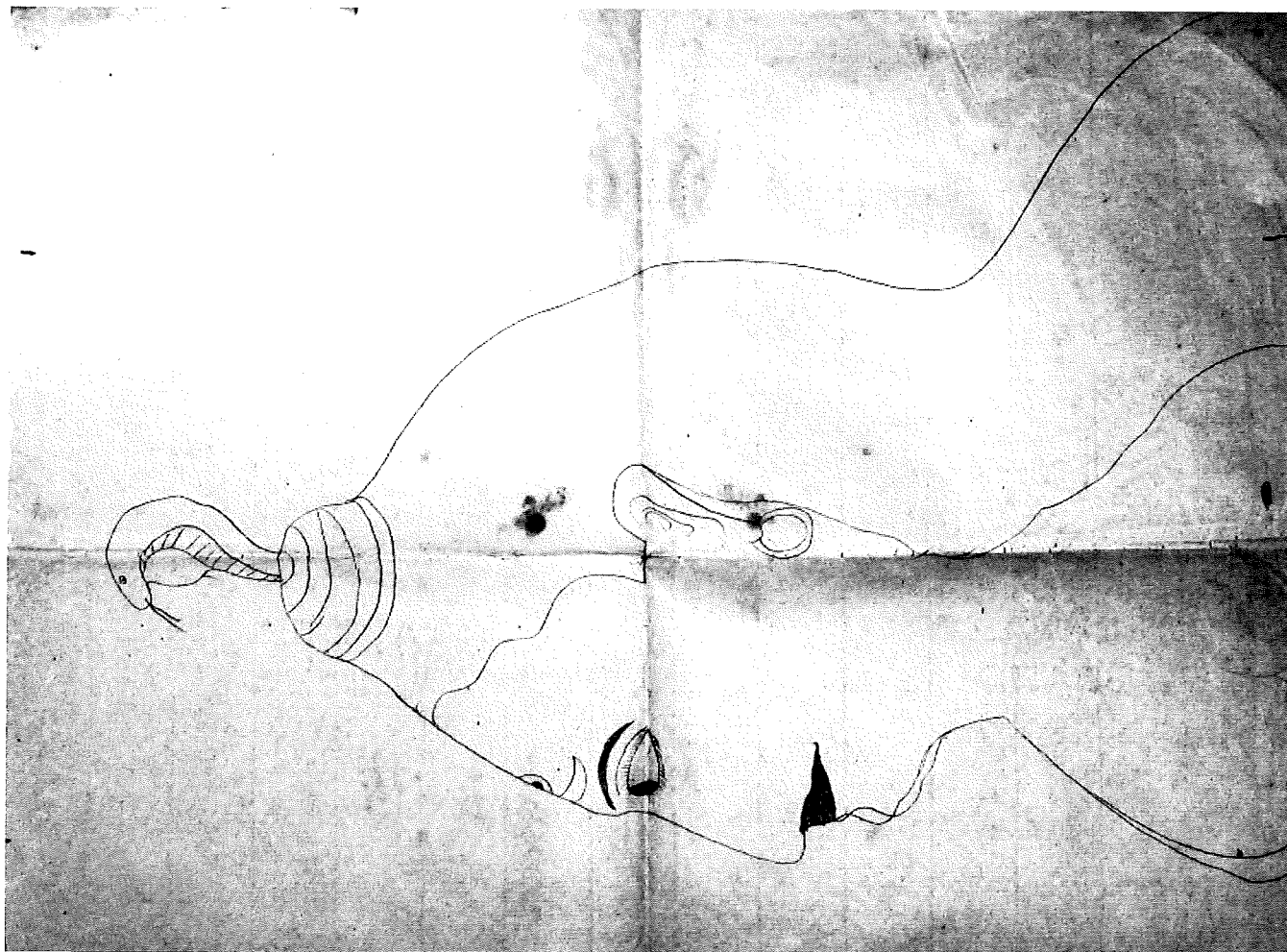














শ্রীমতী পুনঃ

চৌধুরী