

## **First Programs in Belgium in 1982.**

*From Robbert Ruigrok:*

I got my realisation in Paris in September 1981, had one meeting and follow up both with Shri Mataji (Warren Reeves was there, and Marie Rouger), Then I travelled (hitch hiking) to Lille for another meeting, then stayed at the violinist's place who also played sitar and whose wife had read hair and whose young daughter was 9 year old. They had just been in London Chelsham Road for re-marriages - they had just had a Puja in that flat in Lille with Shri Mataji and they recommended I go to London. I stayed there for 10 days in Bramham gardens in Earl's Court, where Shri Mataji and Sir and several yogis were staying in a hotel. Shri Mataji went to the US but came back disappointed and then went again. She said to me that I needed to go back to my studies - which I had not told anyone - a sign for me that She knew everything. From Oct 1981 I was alone in Belgium, read the Advent, got visits from Alexandre Pichovski (from Paris) in Ghent and at my parent's house; I travelled often to Paris or Lille for the weekend. Alexandre convinced me to hold meetings in Ghent, and I had small meetings in my student flat (Stokerijstraat 51 Ghent near the Ghent port), where the old Gaston came, one in the ASLK bank on the Kouter, but Shri Mataji cancelled the trip - it must have been spring of 1982. Then there was Sahasrara Puja in Le Raincy where I took the photo of Shri Mataji cooking against yellow background and smiling in the camera which is now on the latest edition of the Cooking with Love book. Then Shri Mataji went on a trip to Lille, and I made a leaflet and organised a trip there with 2 or 3 cars (including my parents, an architect from Ghent, who had come to a meeting in Ghent, Jos a fellow art student, and Johan Dumoulin from the Ghent art history university library. Grégoire was there in Lille. It is there that Mother said that Johan looked like Rembrandt - (a story that turned into the funny rumour that Johan is an incarnation of Rembrandt. :-))

Later in the summer I went to Guru Puja in London (July 4<sup>th</sup>) in Nightingale Lane, then (July 31<sup>st</sup> and August 1<sup>st</sup>) there was Cowley manor seminar - which was Shri Adishakti Puja and we went (August 2<sup>nd</sup>) with 36 yogis and Shri Mataji to the "7 springs" where the Thames starts in Gloucestershire.

## **Shri Mataji's first visit in Belgium in 1982.**

*From Robbert Ruigrok:*

Then early September 1982 first Rodrigo came to help (he was asked to do so by Mother) and then I travelled back from England to Belgium with Warren Reeves to help prepare Mother's trip and to establish a small group of yogis, and that is when Patricia Deene and her daughter Nathalie first came to SY - we even had a meeting in the lawn behind the Gravensteen castle in Ghent.

In September 1982 Shri Mataji did come to Belgium.

Shri Mataji arrived 1st time in Belgium on 20 Sept 1982. She landed in Zaventem airport. I could not drive, so I went to pick Her up in the car of a Ghent 'artist'- letter sign painter (name forgotten). She was accompanied by Gavin Brown. When we drove on the motor way from Brussels to Ghent She said this is a 'heavy' country. (What can we still do to make it lighter?) but if remember well She also said that it was the Vishuddhi of Europe - unless it was Warren Reeves who had said that --- to be verified.).

We drove to Ghent, in fact to Merelbeke to the house of a couple who had been following Steiner before. Several yogis were there, I believe Douglas and Devyani, Nick Kerswell, Gavin Brown, Alexandre Pikovski, Matthew the son of Pamela Bromley, etc.

I mention them since they might have recorded a speech by Mother, of which I have no recollection. Mother was not happy at that house, I called my mother and with her and Shri Mataji's permission we drove to my parents' house in Maarkedal (Rijksweg 82, 9681 Nukerke, Maarkedal - not far from Brakel where the current National centre is). I don't remember if Mother gave a talk at our house. What I do remember is that it was 20 Sept, since it was my father's birthday (by the way for that occasion Shri Mataji took off Her finger a diamond ring which She gave as a birthday present to my father). I have always wondered if any speeches of our Mother were recorded during that trip.

The next day (21 Sept. 82) we drove to Patricia Deene's house South East of Ghent.

*From Patricia Deene*

Sept. 21<sup>st</sup> we had a Public Program in Brussels. Only one person came. Even Patricia could not attend the Program as she could not find any parking place and thus stayed in the car.

*From Robbert Ruigrok*

And the next day (Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>) we had a Puja (well knows for the famous photos with the Blue Veil). Again, I am not aware of talks, although I have photos.

We had the nice hall in the ASLK bank again, Andre Posman came to that meeting. Mother said at my parents's house (it was 20th September 2982 and my father's 52nd birthday - and Shri Mataji took a diamond ring off Her finger and gave it to my father as a birthday present. My parents evacuated their ensuite bedroom for Mother and the reproduction of the Madonna of Filippo Lippi was above the bed and it was a pleasure to later see that same image in Mother's house in Her living room in Ealing (just a detail, sorry, but fun for me). It is also there that the miracle of the never-ending fridge food supply happened in my mother's kitchen, which she still remembers - since she had had no chance to shop before the arrival of Mother and the 14 yogis who stayed there. I have photographs of all this that I will send later with this same text. Then we left in the car with Mother, and when all the yogis and my parents stood in front of the house to wave farewell, Mother said 'beautiful'.

Then we had a first Puja at Patricia's house, where Mother was wearing the light blue scarf (famous photograph. Interesting anecdote: her cat sat under Mother's chair, and Mother explained that they feel the vibrations.

**Shri Mataji's visit in Belgium in 1985.**



*From Robbert Ruygrock:*

Johan Decocker gave the keys to his house while he was in USA. Yogis stayed there, and I remember Mother went there. But I do not remember much of the talk Shri Mataji gave there - it could have been about science. Arneau de Kalbermatten and his wife or Engelbert may remember. I am pretty sure this was the same year Shri Mataji stayed in my grandmother's house in Ghent / St Amandsberg, Groot Begijnhof 48.<sup>1</sup> The story is as follows. I had booked the Europa Hotel in Ghent for Shri Mataji to stay in - I was not satisfied with the hotel, but all other hotels were fully booked, so I reserved the hotel anyway. However, Arneau and a team of international yogis were there (Arneau will remember it since he had come in a van, I joined in his van and I drove him crazy when I guided him through Ghent while not really knowing the way! :-)) he got really cross with me which is quite amusing!). Anyhow, Arneau and all of us went to see the hotel beforehand and indeed found that the hotel was 'tacky'. Then I guided everyone to the cute house of my grandmother 'Nina' Trudi Guasco in the 'Begijnhof' - or 'beguinage' (which Richard knows well since we stayed there often). My grandmother was away on a long holiday in her native Brazil, so the house was empty and available. Since I lived there at the time, I took the decision to invite Mother and the yogis to stay there - to the great dismay of my mum who turned up and was amazed we had taken over the place without her knowledge. She left soon though. We moved all the furniture in a way suitable for Shri Mataji. I and I think Patricia Deene bought loads, (really loads) of very fragrant pink lilies and filled the front living room with them. Mother stayed there a few days, and was even interviewed there by a young gentleman-journalist who published his article in a Flemish colour magazine, with photos of Mother taken in my grandmother's enclosed back garden (with white walls, it was a sunny day) and also Nathalie (later Robert Hunter's wife). One episode I remember well is that Mother, on the first floor - the bedroom was surrounded by yogis who were sitting on the floor, I was there too, with my camera, and attempted to take good photos of Mother and moved around a bit to find the right angle. Shri Mataji commented that the 'trick' of great photography is the combination of the right angle and the right moment. I took several pictures. When I later opened the camera I realised to my astonishment that the camera was empty -- one of those mayas... I also presented a painting to Mother (painted after the famous Australian picture of Mother's face where she looks upward into the sun, smiling with Her mouth slightly open showing Her teeth, and a shawl over the top of Her head - of which She had given me a large print a few years earlier in Nightingale lane Ashram, London. As we know Her face is not easy to paint and She commented that it was not so good - which I fully and humbly accepted. Mother mentioned the great artist Rubens from Belgium, and I remember I asked Her is She did not find he painted too much flesh, but Mother explained that She preferred strong physiques than the very thin religious figures of the Middle Ages. Another memory is that there were a few etchings of mine on my grandmother's wall, and Mother asked of one of these what it was. I explained it was a dead bird, and Mother commented something about 'these artists' - that 'they know' - I understood that she meant that artists know that before realisation, they are like the dead bird that needs its second birth - although I never had thought of that when I choose to study in an etching the beauty of the feathers of a female blackbird that I had found on the road near my parents house about 8 years earlier. Another memory of that stay is that after the evening programme in Ghent, Shri Mataji came back - after 11 PM - time at which the gates of the béguinage were closed; I had the keys, and we could only open a small door so we could not drive Shri Mataji in to the béguinage. Shri Mataji walked with us to the house in the night - a very silent and joyous walk. After Her stay She went to Holland on the train. She had asked me to bring the double cassette player I had (a good Sharp) so She could copy cassettes since Yogi Mahajan

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<sup>1</sup>Correction: the house where Shri Mataji was staying was number 43 - see photo attached and see Panoramic view of the same house and the church right in front of it. Mother's room was the large window on the left on the 1st floor.

had asked for a copy of Her Talk (he must have a copy of that public programme and maybe other talks in Ghent 1985, which I have never heard since. I brought the cassette recorder with me but for some reason I missed the train in which Shri Mataji travelled - with I think Engelbert (?). I arrived later in Holland at the Puja place and went to bring Mother the cassette player. That was also the year in which Shri Mataji asked my parents to come to Holland to speak with Her, and it was when She asked them to look after me and take me to nice places - which they did - the supported me very well during the rest of my studies and indeed we travelled to see places of beauty and art historical importance in Belgium.

PS that was also the year that Mother went to Brussels - a trip that I prepared together with Bogdan - who came before Mother's arrival for that purpose) and the two Dominiques, one is Dominique Courbot and one is Dominique Laprique who is in USA. Steve Rouse (from Swansea ) was also there (he was a dancer in Brussels with the two Dominiques) and also came to my grandmother's house in Ghent . Bogdan has a funny story about me and him going to a journalist of De Morgen newspaper in Ghent - when he said that "Innocence does not exist" - which for Bogdan meant that the whole universe came to a still stand; when Bogdan state that is not true and fought for Innocence to exist the universe came to life again.. Really funny how he tells that story. It was also when in Brussels, Bogdan and I walked into Le Soir newspaper and the journalist there agreed to put an article with a colour photograph on the front of Le Soir with a colour photograph of Shri Mataji! It attracted so many people to the Shell auditorium near the Gare Du Midi in Brussels that we needed to open a second hall next door, where Engelbert gave a speech + realisation session simultaneously with Shri Mataji in the other Hall. This was the year that I had called Shri Mataji to ask for Her advice before Her arrival. I had telephoned Her from a Ghent phone box when She was in Paris to ask if She wanted a few quality seekers, or many, many seekers at the programmes, She said many, (and it was then that the miracle happened with the many 20 Bfr coins - that I had put into the phone, and that fell out of the phone after I put the phone down...). So this shows that after we asked Mother what Her preference was, Her wish became true! This was I am sure also the year of the press conference in the "International Press Centre" in Brussels, in which I remember there was a quite hot headed female journalist of the Flemish catholic paper De Standaard. It was also at that press centre that the journalist was present who a days or so later interviewed Shri Mataji at the beguinage in Ghent.

*From Alexandra's Diary*

### **The Belgian Tour; from June 30th to July 3rd, 1985**

On the evening of June 30th we left for Brussels. The great sanga of Guru Puja dissolved in Paris, and only a few representatives from various countries went on to Belgium and Holland to help Shri Mataji on Her journey through northern Europe to rescue the seekers of those countries, which are a little grey, a little left sided and depressing.

Shri Mataji arrived in Bruxelles on the morning of July 1st where She naturally found ALL the Sahaja Yogis of the country present; each of them carrying a beautiful bunch of flowers. This was a joyful release for all of us from the memories of that dreadful failure to welcome Sri Mataji in Paris; every time (since then) that we have had the possibility of welcoming Shri Mataji at any airport or railway station we have done it in large numbers and with a lot of flowers!

Shri Mataji stayed in Belgium for two days, then on the 3rd (July) She departed for Holland.

The Sahaja Yoga collectivity was staying in a hostel for young people, the YMCA, which had hot vibrations in general, and especially on the Muladhara and left Vishuddhi. In the city we felt a lot of pressure on both the Nabhis and, under the sternum bone, a pressure on the heart.

The evening programme in Brussels was a real success. It was immediately obvious that the hall was far too small for the crowds of seekers who had been pouring in for over an hour. Luckily it was possible to move everybody into a hall which was bigger, but which proved still too small for the six or seven hundred people present. It was therefore necessary to use both the halls at the same time. While Shri Mataji held Her speech to many, many eager seekers, another Sahaja yogi, Engelbert I think, was doing the same in the smaller hall. At the end Shri Mataji also went to the smaller hall to personally give self-realisation to the seekers there.

All the organization was taken care of by two young, very new Sahaja Yoginis, the two Dominiques, together with Bogdan. W\*\*\*\* will stay in Belgium for the follow ups and then he will go to Spain.

From Brussels we went to Gent in a minivan with some Austrians who, together with the Swiss, were present in great numbers. There were also four Italians (Guido, Anna De Nigris, Antonio da Boston and I), two Canadians, two Australians, a lot of English and some French people. On our way to Gent we all got lost, either on the way there or in the city; even those who came by train,

The Gent program was not so well attended but there were some very interesting seekers. We stayed at Johan's house; he is in the States at the moment; and all of us contributed as much as we could to make everybody comfortable. The house was empty, even the owner was not there, so we had to organize things ourselves.

In the evening, Shri Mataji came to visit us and She stayed to talk to us for a while; mostly about Nabhi problems: money, handling finances and marriages. She also talked about A\*\*\*\*, one of the main people responsible for the catastrophe of Guru Puja in Chamarande. She said that the English are unable to handle money and they are miserly. At the puja they had unfortunately offered Her 97 pounds; the most inauspicious number possible and not divisible by any other number. She said that those who manage their money with wisdom are well rewarded in blessings.

From Alessandra's FB message 2012-0215

For the names of the people who were there I remember ENGELBERT , herbert Reininger , Eveline and Brigitta 2 sisters from Austria , Brigitta's husband Edward from Canada ,Georgie and Anne from Austria ,Douglas Fry \_(Duggie) and wife from England , I think also Ray Harris from UK, ,Wolfgang leader of Austria and wife Sabine, Robert from Belgium who now is married to Rachel in UK,