

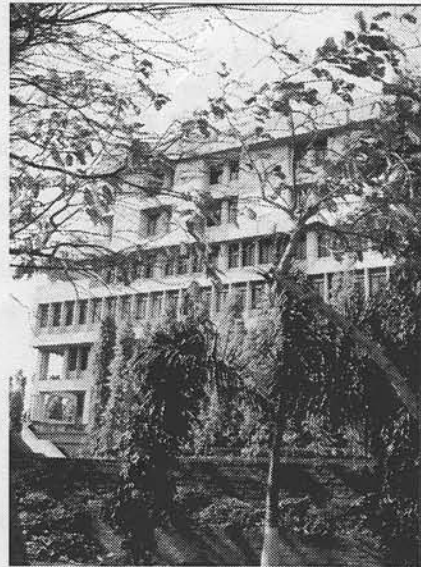
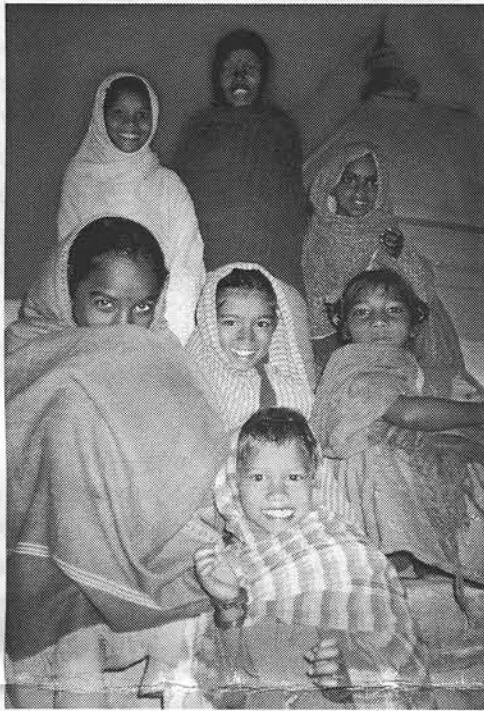
SALUTATIONS

The Yoga Society of Hong Kong Newsletter

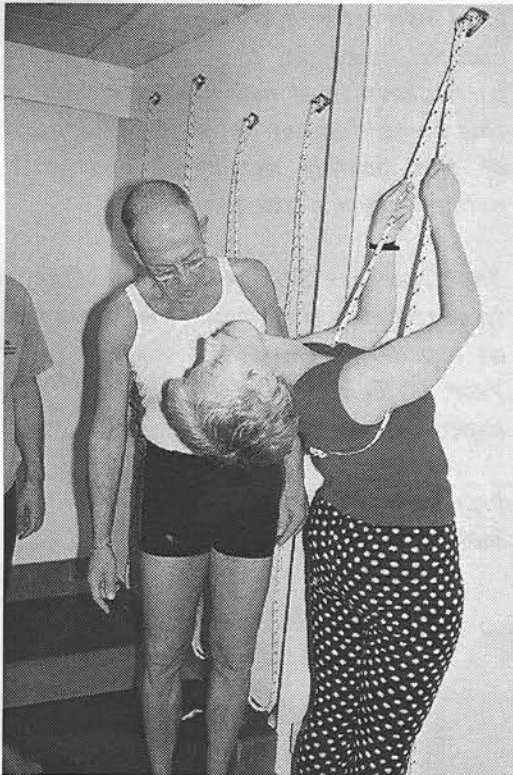
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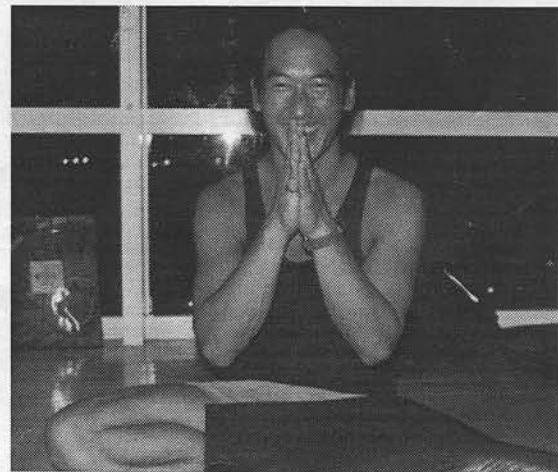


Left: Some of the people who have already been helped by *Sivananda Math*, a charitable organisation affiliated with the first yoga university (**above**) in the world. See page 10.



Left: Cle Sourren instructing student Sarah Abbot into a deep back bend. (No, we didn't hang ourselves!) See page 4.

Below: The world-renowned yoga teacher, Rodney Yee, who received an enthusiastic reception in HK. For a schedule of other visiting instructors, see page 3.



Yoga Practice with Cle Sourren

A Personal View

by Ming Lee-Bijj

I've been practising yoga on and off for about nine years. During this time, due to demands from my career, personal obligations and an ever-increasing travel schedule, I have managed only to study sporadically. However, I have always tried to make an effort to study with yoga teachers during my travels in an effort to improve my own practice, meet new teachers and learn new things. About three years ago, when I began to travel regularly to Amsterdam, I looked in the directory of the *Yoga Journal* and was pleasantly surprised to find the Iyengar Institute of Amsterdam.

On my arrival in Amsterdam, I called about the class schedule and managed to make it to class. I was late getting out of a business meeting and arrived a bit flustered. The studio was packed with students and there were two huge yoga studios in a beautiful space.

"Tested to the Limits of my Abilities"

I rushed to change my clothes in the common changing area and scrambled to get into class. The teacher was an imposing figure and was in the middle of instructing the students to start the class with reclining *Virasana*. As I do in all my yoga classes, I endeavoured to follow the teacher's instructions and push myself to my physical and emotional limits. Although the teacher was very demanding, I found him to be very encouraging. Realising that I was new to his class, and that I did not speak Dutch, he made an effort to give detailed explanations in both Dutch and English giving me special attention and support. After class, I was truly exhausted having been tested to the limits of my abilities. Nonetheless, I found his knowledge, teaching and his "exacting" approach a refreshing change from other yoga instructors with whom I had studied.

Once I was a bit more composed, I spoke with him and found out that he was Cle Sourren, one of the founders of the Iyengar Institute of Amsterdam. We had a very pleasant chat and thus began my studies with Cle. I began to drop in for at least one class during my short trips to Amsterdam. During this time, as I made a more concerted effort to improve my practice, Cle and I would have discussions about his experiences as a yoga teacher, and about the yoga community in Hong Kong.

I also became more familiar with what he was doing in his "medical" classes and some of the therapeutic effects of yoga. We chatted about how much fun it would be for him to come to Hong Kong as a guest teacher and Cle expressed a genuine interest in helping to improve and expand our yoga community.

An Effective Therapy

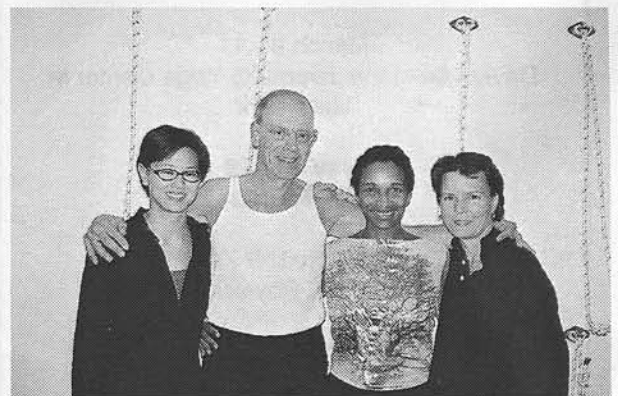
In the summer of 1999, I happened to be in Amsterdam during their summer intensive and re-arranged my business meetings so that I could attend several of the morning classes. This visit also happened to be my first major business trip after having contracted Bell's Palsy six months earlier.

Bell's Palsy is an infection that affects the nerve below one's ear. The nerve canal is very small and as the nerve becomes inflamed, the brain is unable to send the proper signals to the face. The result is a stroke like effect on one side of the face. This illness is generally viewed by the traditional medical community in Hong Kong as incurable without the use of steroids. In hindsight, I did not receive very good medical advice on this disease, in spite of consulting well-known specialists in Hong Kong.

Cle had mentioned to me via email that my yoga practice should improve my Bell's Palsy, but I guess I hadn't been totally convinced and was continually fighting symptoms of fatigue. However, after attending the intensive courses with Cle and another teacher called Nanda, my remaining symptoms of Bell's Palsy reduced dramatically! I spoke with Cle about this improvement and made a decision to more seriously pursue the possibility of having him come to Hong Kong.

On my return to Hong Kong, I attended a Yoga Society meeting to see if they would be interested in sponsoring Cle as a guest teacher. Luckily, one of the Yoga Society founders, Kathy Cook, was going to Amsterdam and was interested in attending one of Cle's classes. Needless to say, the outcome was positive and we began to lay the groundwork for his visit.

Cle's generosity as a teacher, his willingness to share and improve his knowledge with everyone and his ability to integrate yoga into his daily life has deeply influenced my yoga practice and given me more to strive for in my own life. I hope that each of you who attended Cle's classes recently received your own "gift" from his teaching. ☸



Cle Sourren pictured with his partner, Delilah, Ming Lee Bijj (left) and Kathy Cook (right) during his recent visit to Hong Kong