

Testimony of One of Krishnamurti's Tutors at Adyar in 1909



Krishnamurti and his brother, Nityananda, at Adyar, circa 1910

Russell Balfour-Clarke, arrived at Adyar in 1909, having met Annie Besant in London the year before. Along with Ernest Wood, he assisted C. W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant with the upbringing and early education of the two boys J. Krishnamurti and J. Nityananda at the headquarters of the TS in Adyar between 1909 and 1911. He is the author of the book The Boyhood of J. Krishnamurti (Chetana Books, Bombay, 1977). He passed away at Adyar in 1980 at the age of 96. We reproduce below some of his reminiscences of his time at Adyar, originally included in his book above mentioned, when Krishnamurti was being prepared for his future role.

When I visited Madanapalle [Andhra Pradesh] Krishnaji was about fourteen or fifteen years old, and had not yet made his mark in the world, as he has since done with such benign dignity. And yet as I stood there, in the place of his birth, I realized that there was something about this Indian boy which had touched me as with a finger of fire, and for me that cradle and the room wherein it hung were holy and sanctified. I felt the grace which flowed there and drew strength from it to follow the Light of which he is now so radiant and glorious a manifestation.

Krishnaji's family moved from Madanapalle in January 1909 and came to live at the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar. At first they occupied a house just outside the Theosophical compound, not far from the Vasanta Press, but it was inadequate for the accommodation of so large a family, and was in many ways entirely unsuitable. Annie Besant, the President, later permitted them to move into a better house (though still much too small) situated quite near to the main buildings of the Society, where the famous Oriental Library and her South Indian home were located.

C. W. Leadbeater (C.W.L.) was then living in the historic Octagonal Bungalow, also close to the Headquarters on the bank of the Adyar river. J. Narianiah, Krishnaji's father, was an old member of the Theosophical Society; he had retired from Government service as a Tahsildar and had taken up some official work in the Society. I think it was partly for this reason that he came to live at Adyar

From all that has happened subsequently it would seem that the causes which moved this family to Adyar served a mightier purpose than that which was known at the time to any of its members; no one then knew what were the silent intuitions of this boy who, so soon after his arrival at Adyar, became the chosen of Our Lord the Bodhisattva.

Previous to the momentous meeting between Krishnaji and his brother and their future benefactor C.W.L., they made the acquaintance of Ernest Wood and a Brahmin friend S. V. Subrahmanyam. Wood and Subrahmanyam were then living in the quarters called the Quadrangle. Krishnaji and his brother used to bring their homework from school down to the Quadrangle, seeking the assistance of Subrahmanyam and sometimes of Wood and they both helped them in their studies. Later Subrahmanyam became their instructor in Sanskrit, Wood ultimately taking up their teaching after Subrahmanyam left Adyar.

Not long after C.W.L. noticed these two boys as standing out prominently from the other people there by reason of their inner development. I remember his telling me that the somewhat unusual size of aura, especially that of the elder brother, forced itself upon his attention. It soon became apparent to him that these two brothers were, occultly speaking, children of one of the Masters of Wisdom, and that they had come to Adyar for special training in the ways of the inner life — a training for which C.W.L., the older disciple of the Great Lodge, was so eminently fitted. C.W.L. and the two boys soon became friends, and so it was that in the cool twilight of the early Indian morning, just before sunrise, these two neophytes came to offer their daily salutations to C.W.L., the venerable and wise *Arhat* who lived in the Octagonal Bungalow by the Adyar river near where it flowed into the sea. Each day after the boys returned home from a local village school they were to be seen walking with their tall white-haired and bearded English friend through the palm-grove and onwards to the golden sands of the seashore of the Bay of Bengal, where they sported themselves in the scented breeze, and learned to swim.

On August 1, 1909, the two boys took their first definite step in the occult life — that of probation. (Krishnaji reached 'acceptance' as a disciple of his Master on January 1, 1910 accomplishing the amazing feat of 'entering upon the Stream' only eleven days after.) It was towards the end of August 1909 that I arrived at Adyar. I remember well that I was unable to meet C.W.L. during the first few hours after my arrival. I was told that he was attending what is called the Thread Ceremony of some Indian boy (it was Nityananda). But I soon met him in his octagonal room where he sat dictating letters to Ernest Wood.

It was not long before I had the pleasure of being introduced to the Master's two Indian children, Krishnaji and his brother Nityananda, the two proteges of C.W.L. It is curious to look back and to see how I, an Englishman, with my typical and narrow-minded prejudice towards a race which we had been taught at home to regard as inferior, did not turn my face from this association. On the contrary, I recognized almost immediately that I was in the

presence of those who were my spiritual superiors, and this seemed to count more than anything else in our relationship in times to come.

I was very happy indeed to be admitted to the wonderful friendship of these, to me, remarkable boys. It was the beginning of a new harmony in my life. In the past I had had friends, some of them intimate, but there were moments, when their company taxed me. Now it was a different experience, for with these two boys and particularly with Krishnaji, I felt a harmony that was beyond anything I had known before and it lasted throughout the period I was associated with them. I eagerly hastened to consolidate that friendship by cooperating as far as I could with the work which C.W.L. was trying to do for them. It was at about this time that quite unusually detailed instructions were given by C.W.L. with regard to the daily life of his two young pupils. There was much to be done.

Dick Balfour-Clarke was closely associated with C. W. Leadbeater from 1909 until his passing in 1934. Before Balfour-Clarke passed away at Adyar in 1980, he wanted to leave his own written testimony about CWL's integrity in view of the ongoing accusations against him, which continue to this day. We include below the transcription his statement, followed by the facsimile of the original document.

Concerning Mr (Bishop) C. W. Leadbeater

I am 91 years of age, and one of the few living people who knew Col. Olcott, A.B. and C.W.L., on this 2nd of June 1976 and before I die I have to place on record that being fully aware, since early boyhood at Boarding School and afterwards, of the various sexual happenings which can occur between boys and boys, men and boys, girls and girls as well as between males and females [sic] I am not a virginal innocent regarding such matters and consequently I could not be easily deceived.

I therefore state that during my long and intimate association with C.W.L. in India, Australia and the UK and with all the young people who were placed in his care I have never seen or heard anything which would give support to the lying insinuations made about him by Mrs Katherin [sic] Tingley and many others, some of them who had never met him. I always found his influence to be one of upliftment towards self-control and freedom from undue sensuality of any kind. Krishnamurti and his brother and other boys who had been under C.W.L.'s care and instruction signed statements to the Sydney Police, Australia to the same effect, as has been stated by Mary Lutyens in her book "The Years of Awakening, Krishnamurti" [sic].

R. Balfour-Clarke

Concerning Bp. (Bishop) C. W. Leadbeater

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 R. Balfour Clarke.

Russell Balfour-Clarke statement about C. W. Leadbeater's integrity (1976)