

JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

Philosophical and religious teacher

Jiddu Krishnamurti, the Indian philosopher and religious teacher, died on February 17 at his home in Ojai, California. He was 90.

Krishnamurti never sought publicity yet for fifty years thousands of people all over the world regarded him as one of the great religious teachers, and his many books, translated into numerous languages, had a wide circulation. *Krishnamurti's Notebook* (1976) in particular, is a remarkable mystical document.

Born on May 25, 1895, at Mandanapalle in South India, Krishnamurti was the eighth child of a Brahmin family of 10. His mother died when he was young and in 1909 his father, a retired civil servant and Theosophist of long standing, went with his four surviving sons to live at Adyar, the international headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Madras.

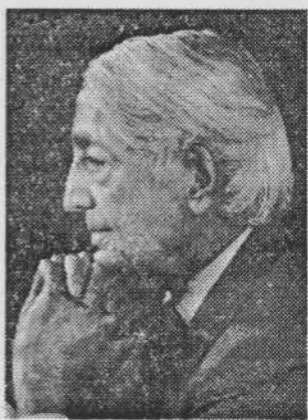
Mrs Annie Besant, President of the Society, and her colleague, C. W. Leadbeater, soon noticed Krishnamurti; Leadbeater immediately saw in him, the spiritual teacher of the future.

It was then a tenet of the majority of Theosophists that all the great religious teachers were in fact the same being, the Lord Maitreya, who every two thousand years or so showed himself in human incarnation through the body of a chosen vehicle in order to help humanity in a time of special crisis. His last appearance according to the Theosophists, had been in the body of Jesus.

In 1911 the Order of the Star in the East was founded by Mrs Besant with Krishnamurti as its head. Its members were convinced that a new Coming was imminent and that Krishnamurti was the vehicle whom the Lord had chosen.

Mrs Besant took Krishnamurti under her guardianship and made herself responsible for training him for this awesome role. In 1912 she sent him to England to be privately educated. He remained in Europe, becoming thoroughly westernised, until 1921 when he returned to India.

It was then that he began to travel round the world addressing audiences. Gradually, however, his followers began to doubt whether he fitted into the pattern laid down for him, as he was no longer saying the comforting things they expected to hear.



It came as a traumatic shock to thousands, who had for eighteen years been preparing for the Coming, when in 1929 he dissolved the Order of the Star (which then had a membership of over 46,000) and declared that he did not want followers, that truth was a 'pathless land' and that his only concern was to set men psychologically free - free in particular from all spiritual authority.

The inside story of those extraordinary years was not fully revealed until he allowed his letters to be published in 1975 in *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening* by Mary Lutyens.

In 1983 a second volume of his biography appeared, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Fulfilment* taking the story of his life up to 1980.

From 1930 onwards Krishnamurti went his own way, travelling the world, giving private interviews and talks to an ever-increasing audience.

Education had always been one of his chief concerns, as he considered that the conditioning of children in the narrowness of nationality, race and religion accounted for most of the violence in the world.

Krishnamurti had no permanent home and the minimum of personal possessions. Foundations in England, the USA and India made themselves responsible for the publishing of his books and for administering the funds voluntarily contributed for the propagation of his teaching and the running of the schools he founded.

There are now Krishnamurti schools in Hampshire and at Ojai, California, and five in India.

Krishnamurti's influence grew steadily. Each year a larger proportion of young people attended his talks and scientists and psychologists became interested in his ideas of time, thought and death.