

« AMIS DE MEHER BABA »

PRESENTE

**WALKING ON MEHER BABA'S FOOTSTEPS  
IN MARSEILLE AND OTHER PLACES  
HE VISITED ALONG THE RIVIERA  
BETWEEN 1931 TO 1937**



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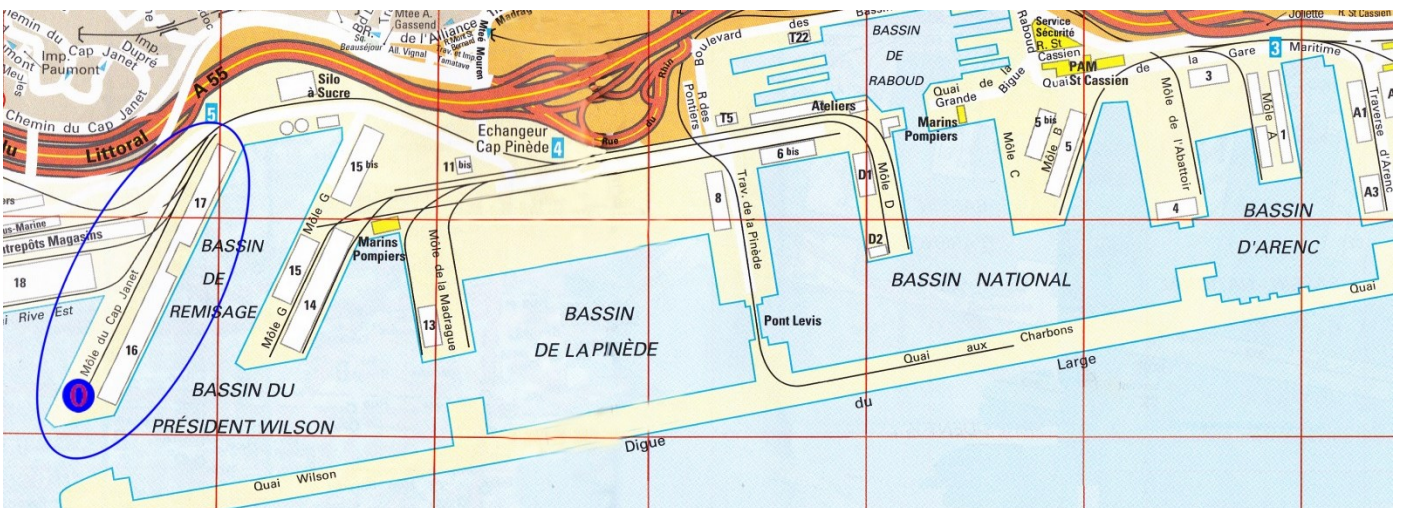
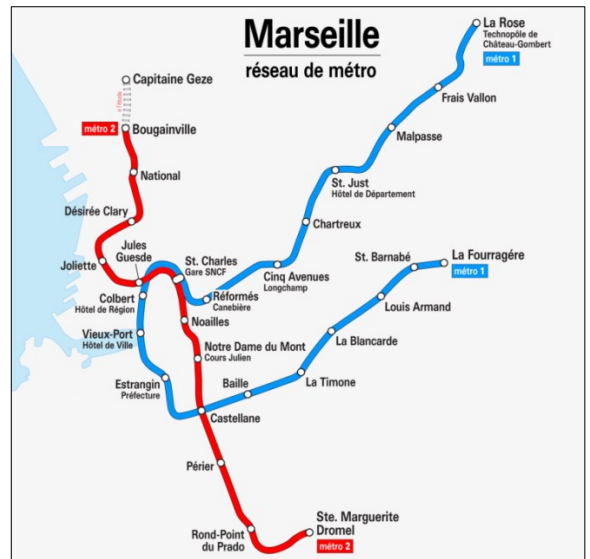
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# WALKING ON MEHER BABA'S FOOTSTEPS IN MARSEILLE



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## 📍 - Marseille Harbour

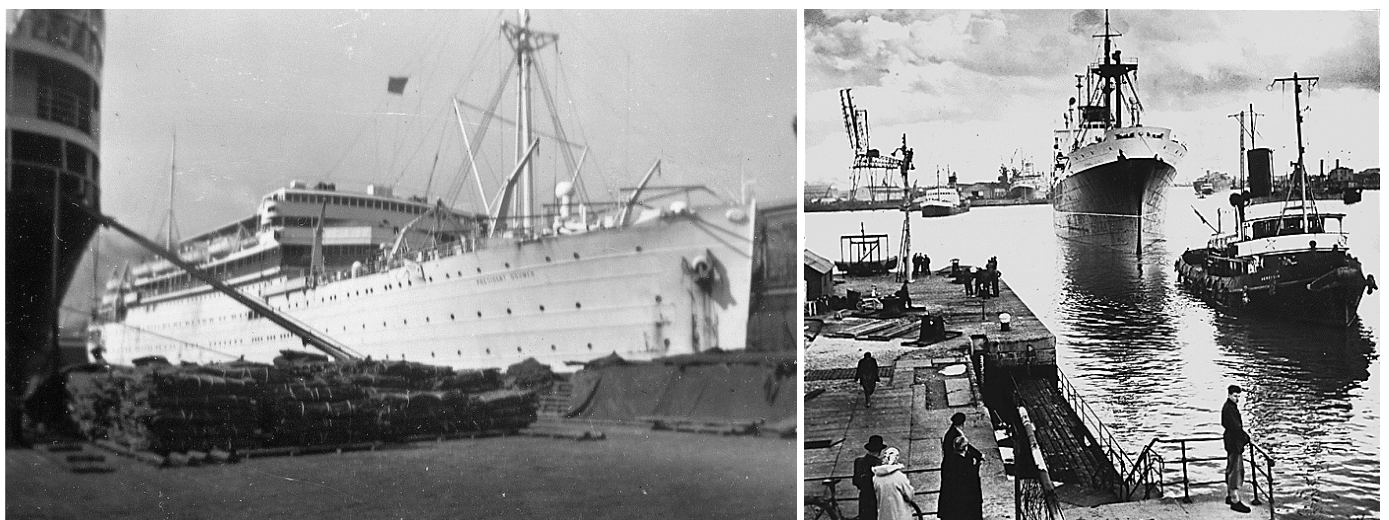
Môle du Cap Janet, 13015 Marseille  
Chemin du Cap Janet, Hangar 17 & 18

Exit 5 off the A55 motorway

In the 1930s, two basins in the port of Marseille were used by the French and English lines from the East and the Far East: the President Wilson basin and the Pinède basin. According to our research, the P & O S.S. Rajputana would have docked at the Cape Janet Mole quay in President Wilson's basin on September 11, 1931.



The extension of the old harbour had long been envisaged, and it was in 1833 that engineer Poirel began the construction of the Algiers seawall with the new technique of large concrete blocks, which were less expensive and far more resistant to waves than the old masonry works. Being the second port of France, the stakes become too high and the decision eludes the city. By the law of 5 August, 1844 the government ordered the construction of the Joliette basin, North of the Old Port, and then the auxiliary port of Friuli was enlarged. The extension of the port continued in 1856 with the construction of the Lazaret and Arenc basins, and the construction of the Napoleon Basin in 1859. To connect the old and the new port, the new Imperial Street was drawn.



French line for the Orient ocean liner in Marseille harbour; liner docking.

The extension of the harbour, made necessary by its growing activities, was carried out on the Gulf of Fos in the 1960s. The traffic in the port became more and more diversified, in particular due to the reduction in oil activity. The transport of goods in containers was booming and solid bulk increasing. Similarly, in terms of passenger transport, while passenger ferry transport had been declining since 2012, the cruise port, on the other hand, was growing rapidly, becoming in 2015 the fifth of the Mediterranean.

Avatar Meher Baba descends from the bridge of the liner which docked early, on the morning of September 11, 1931, at the port of Marseille. He is dressed in a white sadhra, a dove-colored chinchilla coat and a pink scarf around his neck and head. It's 8 a.m. and it is the first step of the Avatar in the West in the strictest incognito, amid a large crowd and a slew of journalists and photographers who came to welcome Mahatma Gandhi who also travels on this same liner. In this frenetic effervescence on the dock of Cape Janet, the God-Man slips away in silence.

Meher Baba left Meherabad for Bombay on July 29, 1937 to begin his journey to France. He was accompanied by Mehera, his sister Mani, Naja, Khorshed, Soonamasi, Valu, and also Chanji, Kaka and Nilu. De Nasik came Norina, Elisabeth, Nonny, Rano and Malcolm. Jean and Tom had arrived in Bombay a day early, with Rustom's second son Falu, who was going to England for his studies. After spending a day at the Regent Hotel in Bombay, Meher Baba and the whole group boarded the P & O S.S. Strathnaver on Saturday July 31 at 1 p.m. for Marseille, accompagnied by the two dogs Kippy and Canute. They arrived in Marseille at 6 a.m. on August 13, 1937. They were greeted by Delia DeLeon. They then took the train to Cannes where they arrived around 4 p.m.

#### ① - Geneva Hotel

3 Bis, Queen Elisabeth street, 13001 Marsei  
Metro line 1, station: Vieux-Port



This hotel is located a stone's throw from the Old Port and the Canebière, near the Beglian wharf, in the shadow of its competitor, the Modern Hotel. It was able to go through the years and stay alive unlike many establishments in the nearby Canebière. The Geneva Hotel closed its doors in the early 90s and is now called the New Hotel Vieux-Port.

It's Meredith Starr and Herbert Davy who took Meher Baba to freshen up at the Geneva Hotel where Meredith, accompagnied by Rustom, Chanji and Agha Ali, had booked rooms on the upper floors.



## 📍 - Saint-Charles Train Station

Square Narvik, 13232 Marseille

Metro line 1 & 2, station: Saint-Charles

The Saint-Charles station is best known for its monumental staircase at the top of which you have a superb view of the city. It was inaugurated in 1925.

It is in the afternoon of September 11, 1931, at 1 :30 p.m., dressed in Western clothes, that Baba, Chanji, Rustom, Ali, Meredith and Herbert took the train leaving from Marseille for London via Paris. Herbert had worked hard to organize all stages of the trip, to ensure the comfort of the group. He had even planned vegetarian food to take during the trip. On September 12, they arrived in Paris at 5:30 a.m. They changed stations to continue their journey by train followed by a ferry, the Biarritz, via Boulogne and Folkstone. They arrived at Victoria Station in London at 4:15 p.m. on a cold and wet afternoon.



They arrived in Marseille on June 22, 1934 aboard the liner P & O S.S. Mongolia, expected by Rano Gayley and Ruano Bogislav. After spending the day in Marseille, Meher Baba and the mandalis took the train to Paris.

On July 16, 1934, after ten days in Zurich, Meher Baba returned to Marseille by train and arrived at Saint-Charles station.

On November 29, 1934, Meher Baba and the group took the train to England via Paris. They arrived the next day in London at Victoria Station at 7 p.m.

On November 11, 1936, Meher Baba left Paris by train and arrived at Marseille station at 10 a.m. The whole group went to the Terminus Hotel.

## 📍 - Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde

Rue Fort du Sanctuaire, 13281 Marseille

Metro line 1 & 2, station: Castellane

Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde, in Provençal, “Nostro-Damo de la Gardo”, often nicknamed “the Good Mother”, is one of the minor basilicas of the Roman Catholic Church. It is located astride the Roucas Blanc and Vauban districts, on a limestone peak of 149 meters above sea level raised by 13 meters thanks to the walls and foundations of an old fort. The Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde hill has been a classified site since 1917.



Built by the Protestant architect Henri Espérandieu in the Romano-Byzantine style and consecrated on June 5, 1864, it replaced a chapel of the same name built in 1214 and rebuilt in the 15th century. The basilica was built on the foundations of a 16th century fort built by François I in 1536. The basilica has two parts, a lower church of Romanesque style carved into the rock and, above it, a high church of Romano-Byzantine style decorated with mosaics. At the top of a 41-metre-high square bell tower, itself topped by a kind of 12.5-metre high tower that serves as a pedestal, stands a monumental 11.2-metre statue of the Virgin and Child made of gilded copper. Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde has been considered the guardian of sailors and fishermen since the Middle Ages.



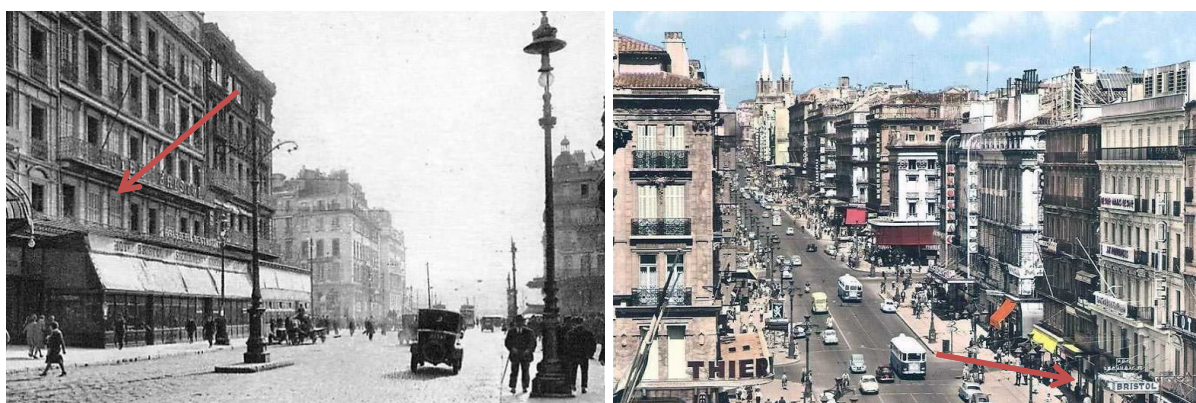
In the morning of December 17, 1931, after having brought the luggage to the ship, after breakfast, Margaret Craske took Baba to visit a basilica called Notre-Dame-de-la-Garde on a hill overlooking the Mediterranean. A beggar was sitting on the outskirts of the basilica. Margaret was about to give him money. Baba stopped her, explaining: "Give it from me. If you give it from yourself, you may receive his sanskaras." In the lower crypt of the basilica there is a statue of the Pietà. As Baba was standing by it Margaret wondered whether Baba would be crucified. Baba immediately replied on his alphabet board: "This time it won't happen, but I am going to endure mental persecution".

#### ④ - Bristol Hotel

21, la Canebière, 13001 Marseille4  
Metro line 1, station: Vieux-Port



This Bristol Hotel is famous for its riot scenes due to the presence of the comic duo Laurel and Hardy filming in the city in 1950. It opened in 1910 and closed in 1980. On the ground floor was the renowned Brewery of the Universe which closed in 1952. The building now houses offices. Notice on the second business card that the Canebière Hotel is written with two "n" which was the old spelling for this street name.



On November 2, 1933, after visiting Madrid and Barcelona, Baba returned to Marseille. They went to the Bristol Hotel to freshen up and eat breakfast before boarding the P & O S.S. Viceroy of India to return to India.

⑤ - Terminus Hotel

1, Place des Marseillaises, 13001 Marseille  
 Metro line 1 et 2, station: Saint-Charles

Formerly Hotel du Littoral, the Terminus Hotel is aptly named, located at the bottom of the grand staircase of Saint-Charles station. It was located in the midst of many hotels of more or less good reputation as is often the case around major train stations. The “Grand Staircase” café is still there, but it has lost the charm of the 1930s. Notice the name “Hotel Terminus PLM” on the hotel’s business card. PLM, which stands for Paris-Lyon-Marseille, was the former name of the French national railroad company, now called SNCF (Société National des Chemins de Fer). Below, you can see a letter dictated and signed by Baba which was sent from this hotel.



On July 16, 1934, Meher Baba and the group went to the “Terminus Saint-Charles Marseille” Hotel located at the foot of the monumental staircase of Saint-Charles train station. In the taxi, Meher Baba looks at Nonny, he smiles and says using the alphabet board, “he is an angel”, pointing to the driver.

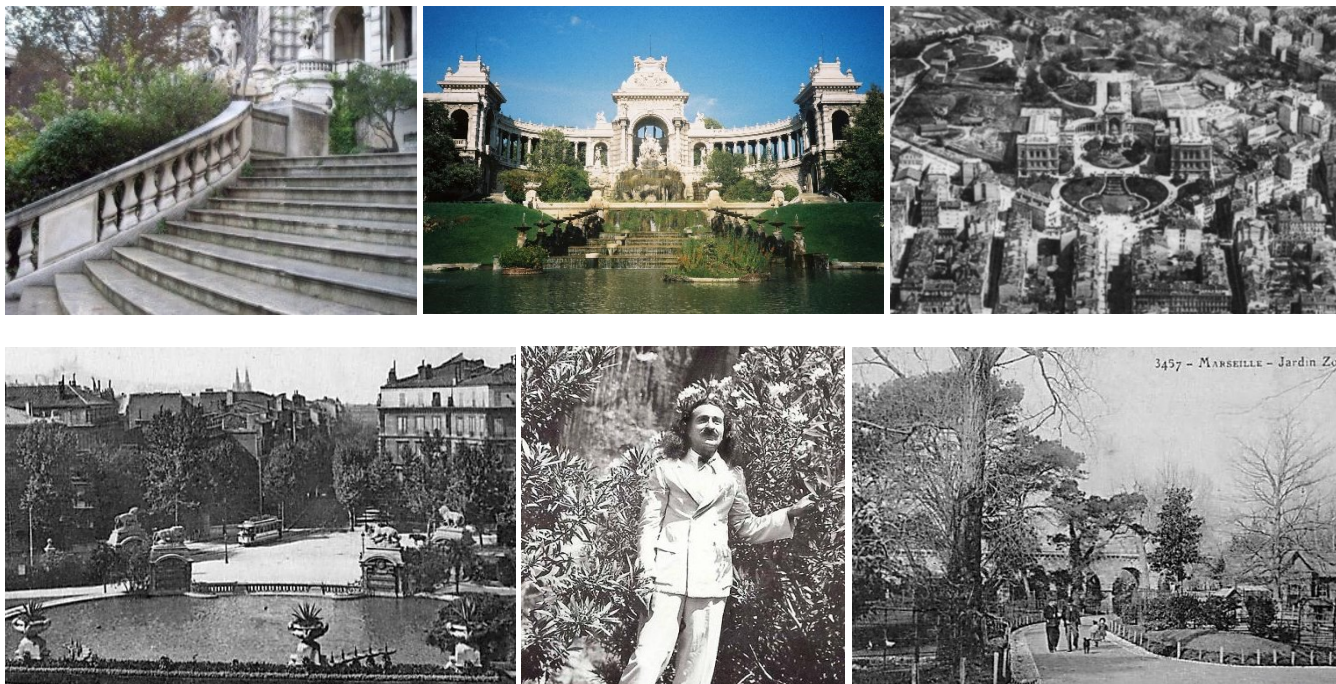
On November 11, 1936, the whole group went to the Terminus Hotel where Baba occupied room 303, the others sharing rooms 304 and 305. Meher Baba was in a hurry and left immediately without taking the time to open his luggage. He had a “spiritual appointment to keep”. Norina and Elizabeth drove him to a city park. Once there, Meher Baba began to walk back and forth along a gravel path. A young French man was sitting on a bench on the other side of a small lawn. Finally, Meher Baba began to walk around the lawn, walking right in front of the young man who got up and bowed his head in a reverential manner with each passage of Meher Baba. Baba then walked away, explaining that the young man was one of his spiritual agents who work for him on the inner planes.



## ⑥ - Longchamp Palace

Boulevard Jardin Zoologique, 13004 Marseille  
Metro line 1, station : Cinq Avenues Longchamp

Water end point of the Durance river and majestic portal of a magnificent tree-lined space, the Longchamp Palace is the major work of architect Henri Espérandieu. Built in 1862, it was inaugurated on August 15, 1869. The 36-metre-high water tower is bordered on one side by the Museum of Fine Arts and on the other by the Natural History Museum. Behind the palace is the botanical garden and the zoo, although the latter has not hosted animals since 1987. Today the site is a favourite place of Marseille residents for walking and relaxing.



On July 16-17-18-19, 1934, these four days spent in Marseille were hectic. From day one Meher Baba went for a walk in the aisles of the zoo and took the whole group to the cinema twice a day, regardless of the quality of the film! Each time Baba asked Rano to translate the story of the film for him. The movie they saw in the evening was hopelessly boring. Everyone wanted to leave but Baba insisted on staying until the end. The content was a bit hot and featured raw erotic scenes for the time and Rano had trouble translating. She was embarrassed... The film was so bad that most of them were dozing off. At one point, Delia naively asked, "Baba darling, isn't your spiritual work finished yet?"

## ⑦ - Continental Hotel

6, rue Beauvau, 13001 Marseille  
Metro line 1, station: Vieux Port

The hotel is still in a nice location near the Opera and La Canebière. In the old Hachette guides of 1925, this hotel was described as modest, a room was six francs. In the 1940s, Mary-Jane Gold recalls in her memories, that the Continental hotel is of middle class, fairly clean and decent. She specifies that her room



was dark even in broad daylight, and that the elevator stopped at the mezzanine at the top of a wide staircase which descended into the hall.

After the last instructions given to Nonny (Estelle Gayley) and Elizabeth Patterson to come to India four months later, and after ordering Irene Billo to return to Switzerland with the dogs Kippy and Canute, Baba left Cannes for Marseille, early in the morning on Tuesday, November 2, 1937. Elizabeth drove him with the Mandali women and Kitty Davy. The Mandali men and Mohammed the Mast went there by train, chaperoned by Rano Gayley and Norina Matchabelli. In Marseille, the whole group met at the Continental Hotel and spent the night there before leaving for India.



## **WALKING ON MEHER BABA'S FOOTSTEPS**

### **OTHER PLACES HE VISITED ALONG THE RIVIERA**

#### **⑧ - Villa Caldana**

Chemin de Caldana, 06400 Cannes

The Villa Caldana was the villa dedicated to the Oriental women and it is also where Mohammed the Mast stayed. The Mandali women who lived in the villa, Mehera, Mani, Naja, Khorshed, Soonamasi, Valu, Norina, Elizabeth, Rano and Kitty, spent their days walking and playing in the garden. Kitty gave Mani typing and shorthand lessons, and Mehera practiced the piano. Andrée Aron gave sewing lessons. Elizabeth and Irene Billo took care of the shopping together.

The Villa Caldana did not survive the passage of Meher Baba. It is said that after Baba's departure, the owner of this house could no longer rent it. Oddly enough, she decided she would rather have it destroyed than to see it squatted. The land is located on the heights of Cannes. It is still virgin, with a view of the sea and the port of Cannes. The foundations and the floor of the house are still there and are gradually disappearing. Beautiful majestic trees, palm trees, umbrella pines, eucalyptus, prove the magnificence of the garden at the time. On this ground reigns a great peace, an incredible serenity, which lends to meditation far from the tumult of the city. As the place is private and closed, it is now impossible to access it.



Andrée Aron, Anita De Caro, Hedi Mertens, Irène Billo-Villa Caldana, 1937

#### **⑨ - Villa Capo di Monte**

77, avenue du roi Albert 1<sup>er</sup>, 06150 Cannes

In 1937 during Meher Baba's stay in Cannes, Villa Capo di Monte was the Westerners villa. Meher Baba went there from 10 a.m. until noon to meet visitors for private interviews. Elizabeth drove him there with Irene. He returned to Villa Caldana for lunch and went back to Villa Capo di Monte at 3 p.m. to meet the men Mandali or the visitors present. He returned to Villa Caldana for dinner at 5 :30p.m. Today, the villa is a small modern building in the district of California, like many large mansions of this district, it did not resist to real estate promoters.





## ⑩ - La Napoule Castle

453, Avenue Henry Clews, 06210 Mandelieu-la-Napoule

The garden is open year-round. From February to November the opening hours are from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and in the winter, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. There is an entrance fee except for children under 8 years old.

The La Napoule Castle houses and preserves the cultural and historical heritage of Henry and Marie Clews, a couple of American artist-patrons. It is dedicated to promoting the arts and international cultural exchanges. It was in 1918 that the couple settled in the remains of the medieval house they acquired to undertake the reconstruction. Henry Clews was the son of a New York banker. He had inherited a great fortune. Thanks to their fortune, the couple was able to restore the buildings and build others from scratch, thus bringing their personal touch. Henry was a sculptor and Marie an architect. They resided in their castle between 1919 and 1930. They were both the owners and designers of their castle and its garden. They designed a neo-medieval work without any archeological research. Henry Clews developed a fantastic bestiary reminiscent of fairy tales. Marie Clews, who designed and drew up the plans for the castle modifications and the gardens, worked directly with local masons, Jean and César Cassano, and twelve stonemasons. The gardens of the Castle created in 1919 are designed so the main park opens with a large French-style driveway giving the entrance to the park all its majesty. On either side of this central axis, beyond the hedges that border it, we discover small green rooms, perspectives, pools, panoramas where the view escapes towards the sea, a small bridge in the middle of large trees... The garden harmoniously mixes spaces designed and built with a “jumble” of greenery and large old trees. Number of small hidden places, invisible from the alley, can only be discovered by random walks. The castle grounds are actually home to four gardens, the main garden and three other small gardens. The Mancha garden, with its terraces, overlooks the sea and the secret garden. The

Mancha garden is the one surrounding the Mancha Tower under which the Clews Mausoleum is located. It is a two-story garden where the rampart of the red stone castle stands out against the sea in spectacular fashion. The terraces overlooking the sea offer a unique panorama over the bay of Cannes and the unspoiled coast of Mandelieu and Théoule. Cypress and rosemary hedges are subject to the attack of the wind and sea spray. The secret garden, where Marie Clew used to go and rest regularly, is a small corner garden bordered by walls where open windows allow you to see the sea. In the centre, a monolithic Venetian well punctuates the arrangement of hedges and borders. The constructions punctuating these gardens, the concierge, the chapel, the pergola, the bridge ... give the walker a feeling of sea and nature which leads to meditation and peace of mind. The garden received the "Remarkable Garden" label from the Ministry of Culture in 2005.



On August 29, 1937 at the Capo di Monte Villa, Marie Clews, wife of the American sculptor Henry Clews, who had died the previous month, came to see Baba. Marie was very sensitive to Baba's Love. She expressed concern about the "evil forces" at work in the world today. Baba reassured her. "This in itself is a sign of the good that is to come. Good souls (realized beings), although very few in number, still work and do much to help humanity with their positive thoughts, words and deeds. The moment is quickly approaching when they will be victorious." Marie invited Baba to visit her house, which is located near Cannes, and a week later, on the afternoon of September 6, Meher Baba, driven by Elizabeth and accompanied by Chanji, Jean and Norina, went to discover this enormous and imposing medieval fortress.

Marie said to Chanji, "I always wondered what the smile of the Buddha was like. When I saw Baba's smile, I understood what it meant."

When Meher Baba admired this garden while strolling with Marie Clews, it was only composed of white and green plants, animals with white plumage walking there in total freedom. There were flamingos, marabouts, peacocks. All this must have given an impression of purity and paradise.





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