

TO AWAKENING, PART 5

People Who Remember Their Former Lives

The studies of people who remember their former lives involve a great deal of time, manpower, and money; from making a case, tracking observations, confirming the evidence to writing a report, it usually takes several years or even more than a decade. The scientists who persist in their efforts on the study in this area are admirable. No wonder Dr. Ian Stevenson, who spent 40 years on 3,000 cases, was honored as the Galileo of the twentieth century!

A Fascinating Case Designated by Gandhi

One famous case is a classic example in the 1930s of an Indian girl, Shanti Devi. Her case is unusual because it drew hundreds of experts to study, and the Father of India, Mahatma Gandhi, even designated a committee to investigate. Professor Stevenson also personally conducted twenty-four tests to confirm this case. They all came to the same conclusion that this was a case of reincarnation, and that reincarnation does exist.

Shanti was born in the city of Delhi, India. Early in life she claimed that she had lived in the Indian city of Mathura and was married to a man named Kedar Nath, the owner of the first cloth shop in that area. Her past life's name had been Lugdi. Lugdi suffered complications during childbirth in 1925 and died nine days later. One year and ten months after her death—on December 11, 1926—she was born again in Delhi.

Shanti began describing the details of her past life as soon as she was able to talk, including the fact that she died from a C-section. At the time, her parents both thought that their daughter was talking nonsense. But one day, a doctor friend who came to visit the family heard this six-year-old girl describing the process of a C-section in great detail. He was shocked. Why? Because even he, as a doctor, was not as familiar with the complex C-section surgery as this little girl.

Meeting Her Previous Family and Remembering Everything

The little girl even remembered her previous address. Her parents wrote to the family at that address and invited them to meet.

After receiving the letter, Shanti's past-life husband, Kedar Nath, confirmed that Shanti's description of her past life was mostly true. He agreed to visit this little girl and brought along his brother, his second wife, and the son she gave birth to by C-section.

At the time they met, the scholars pointed to her husband's brother deliberately to confuse her and said, "This is Kedar Nath, your husband in your past life." But the little girl said, "No, he is not my husband, my husband should be him!" She pointed to the one who was really her husband and told her parents, "Didn't I tell you that my husband has a mole on his nose and wears glasses. His skin is very light. It's him!"

She was not confused by the deception at all.

During lunch, the little girl told everyone that her past life husband liked potato pancakes and pumpkin juice. Kedar Nath was startled, how could this little girl know him so well? Later, he spent some time alone with this little girl. They talked about a lot of details of their married life which were impossible for anybody else to have known. So, Kedar Nath said to the professors, "I believe, without a doubt, that this little girl's past life was indeed as my wife."

No Obstacle Between Hearts

When little Shanti saw the son she had given birth to by C-section, she burst into tears. Even though he was now older than her, she quickly ran to her room and brought out all of her toys to the boy. her son.

People asked, "At the death of your past life, your son was just a newborn baby. How could you even know that he is your son?" Shanti answered, "My son is part of my heart. Even if the body is different, there is no obstacle between hearts." Everyone was surprised that this little girl could say such words!

Confucius defined human relationships into five categories: parents-children, leader-subordinate, husband-wife, siblings, and friends. Among all these, the foremost is the innate affection between parents and children. Confucius, for all his life, advocated this kind of love and regarded filial piety as the most important education. When we follow the nature of this beloved affection between parents and children to

educate the public to be filial to their parents, the hearts of human beings can then be salvaged and society returns to its order.

What is Eternal Love?

When little Shanti was speaking with her former life's husband, she described enough details of their lives to convince him of her identity. Shanti pointed at his second wife and said, "Didn't we make an agreement that you would never remarry?"

This made her husband very embarrassed.

The kind of love that our worldly people speak about—romance—is like popular songs describe: my love for you will be everlasting until the seas dry up and the rocks crumble. Yet this kind of love cannot be relied upon, because a vow stimulated out of the desire for love is not reliable. Only the kind of love arising from a pure heart, such as Buddhas' and Bodhisattvas' compassion, will be eternal.

On November 24, 1935, the committee took little Shanti to find the home of her past life's husband. Even though Shanti had never been there in this life, she was like a tour guide, describing what would be ahead and even what route to take.

When these people arrived at her former husband's house, she recognized her father-in-law at first glance. And when she returned to her own parents' house, little Shanti hugged her parents and burst out sobbing. The members of the committee at the scene were all very touched.

In her former life, she died before her parents! A single breath not taken had sent her to the next life!

One Missed Breath Sends You to the Next Life

One day, the Buddha had a discussion with his disciples. He asked, "Please think about it and tell me, how quickly can a person's life end?" One disciple said, "People's lives can end as fast as a night and a day." The Buddha shook his head and said, "Wrong!"

Another disciple said, "People's lives can end as fast as the time of eating a meal!" But the Buddha still shook his head.

Finally, there was one disciple who said, "People's life or death are merely within a breath." The Buddha then nodded his head. One breath missed will send you to the next life!

A story in Buddhism mentioned a middle aged man who suddenly died and complained to King Yama who takes charge of humans' birth and death, "Why did you take my life without giving me any notice?" King Yama said, "I sent you three notices, didn't you get them?" "No, I never received any notice." King Yama said, "Your neighbor died from cancer, that was the first notice I sent to you. Later, your friend died in a car accident, that was my second notice. And a while ago, your cousin gave birth to a child, the baby died a few days later; that was the third notice I sent."

"But, King Yama, how would I know that those notices were for me?"

"Well, the truth of life is that everything is impermanent! If you take everything for granted and think that death is only for old and sick people, you lose your sensitivity to impermanence. I hope you have learned now!"

The time of human life is very precious yet very short. We should seize this fleeting time to diligently cultivate our virtue and learn the truth of life and the universe. Otherwise, with one missed breath, we will have no idea where we are heading to. Life is impermanent, we must awaken!

In our next part, two very rare cases of a soul reviving a dead body to tell of their past life's encounters help us to understand what decides their next life's destination and its fortune.