

## TO AWAKENING, PART 8

Professor Stevenson's scientific proofs of reincarnation have been appreciated by the Western medical community. He not only reported many cases of reincarnation but concluded some theories from these cases, which were published in his book *Where Reincarnation and Biology Intersect*.

### **Where Reincarnation and Biology Intersect**

The Pollock twins were born in 1958 in England. Between the time when they were two and four years old, they were able to remember their past lives as their own deceased sisters—Joanna and Jacqueline—who had been eleven and six years old when they died in a car accident in 1957.

When the mother was pregnant again after the twin's death, the father, without rhyme or reason, said that she would deliver twins this time. The doctor denied that Mrs. Pollock was pregnant with twins, but the father insisted she was. It turned out that he was correct. Mrs. Pollock gave birth to twins and named them Gillian and Jennifer.

When these twins were two or three years old, they claimed that they were the two sisters who had died in this family. Investigators tested them; for example, when the twins were given the toys of their deceased sisters, they would retrieve their own favorite toys of their former life. They would identify their toys by the made-up names the two deceased sisters had given them.

One time, while the family was driving through an area where the twins had never been, they suddenly pointed to a building and shouted out: "Hey, that is the school we studied at before!" Both claimed that they had studied in this school and even described some swings in the back of the school where they often played.

### **Learning Capabilities Might Be Retained Between Lives**

Joanna, the older sister of the deceased sisters, had loved to teach her younger sister to write. In this life, Gillian, the older twin, was a fast learner and learned very quickly to write, while the younger one struggled to hold a pen correctly and learned more slowly.

The learning capabilities of people vary. Some people seem to be especially smart, learning things quickly, while others struggle. When one seems to learn something particularly fast, he might be remembering some of the training from a past life. Otherwise, how can you explain someone like Mozart, a musical genius who began composing large, complex symphonies before he turned six years old? The explanation is that learning acquired in past lives sometimes carries over.

In Buddhism, the things we do often are called karmic habits, which are accumulated as karmic seeds in our consciousness through past lives' doings and thinking. In the teaching of Consciousness-Only, it divides our consciousness into 51 mental factors\*, (\*Skt. caitasika) in which there are 11 mental factors of goodness and 26 mental factors of evilness.

*The Sutra of the Fundamental Vows of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva* states, "The sentient beings in Jambudvīpa, having uncertain aspiration and character, mostly practice evilness. Even when having brought forth good intentions, they easily regress and their mental factors of evilness grow rapidly when they encounter evil conditions."

From this paragraph, we realize that our minds are scattered and uncertain, and our consciousness has more mental factors for evilness than goodness, so we tend to be influenced by evilness. I believe everyone will agree that it is very difficult to retain a good habit yet pick up bad ones so easily. Therefore, it is extremely important to create good conditions for ourselves, such as choosing good friends, good environment. Only then can we guard ourselves against bad habits to become the seeds in our consciousness that activates and harms us in the future.

## **Professor Stevenson's Birthmark Theory**

Both the Pollock twins were born with birthmarks in the same locations as their deceased sisters. Professor Stevenson proposed a theory that birthmarks and other characteristics, such as appearance, are related to one's former life and might stay with a person for several lives. The following cases of his are even more convincing.

In 1961 in the U.S., Winnie died in a car accident. About six months later, Winnie's older sister suddenly dreamed that Winnie would be coming back home. Her mother became pregnant soon after, and gave birth to Susan later!

When Susan was two years old, she began to talk about having been a girl named Winnie. She often repeated sentences beginning with “When I was in school...” and then started to chat with her parents about her past life.

Interestingly, there was a large birthmark on the left side of Susan’s hip. This birthmark corresponded exactly to the wound left by her deceased sister’s car accident. Professor Stevenson went to the hospital where Winnie died and examined the autopsy chart. He verified that the injured part of Winnie’s body was consistent with the birthmark that Susan had in this life.

### **Physical and Mental Trauma Can Be Passed on to the Next Life**

Based on cases like this, Professor Stevenson believes that if a person died from certain kinds of trauma—a sharp blade, a puncture wound, or impact—the injured area would leave a birthmark on later incarnations. He used more than 200 cases that he investigated to confirm his theory, including an Indian boy who remembered his own previous life when he was shot by a bullet that passed through his chest. The position of the bullet passing through is shown in the autopsy report that Professor Stevenson found in the hospital. He was born with a birthmark which was indeed like a bullet wound.

A senior practitioner in Amida Society once shared a story about her son whose face was deformed since birth. She said, “Until encountering the Pure Land Method, my family experienced indescribable misery since my son was born.” Due to having tasted such bitterness of life, she started to recite Amitabha so conscientiously that one night Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva manifested in her dream. The Bodhisattva told her that her son of this life was the husband of her past life's housekeeper who lived in to do house chores in her family after the husband was locked up involving a corruption case. When the husband came home a few years later, not knowing where his wife was, he killed himself by knocking himself against a wall. His head was badly injured and he died. When his soul found his wife, a great resentment arose towards the boss of his wife, and in this life he reincarnated as the son of this practitioner who has a face deformed.

Death is very painful. Tragic death is even more tormenting. Professor Stevenson explained that anything inflicted too strongly can scar us. Imagine when we are injured, our heart still feels pain even after the wound is healed. So, deaths that cause great pain physically and mentally will leave an imprint on the soul, and this imprint may be

retained as a birthmark on the body of one's later incarnations. The story of this practitioner indeed proves this birthmark theory.

## **The Five Blessings of Life**

The Chinese people conclude the blessings of life into five categories: wealth, well-being, longevity, good virtues, and a good death.

People who have a good death go through their dying process easier and will transcend to a better realm. But this can only be achieved by cultivating good virtues. If we don't cultivate good virtues, a good death will be impossible to obtain. We must cultivate good virtues now so that our eventual death will be smooth and easy.

In the next part, we will introduce to you the mental disorder of a salesman, who had been a sailor during World War II, being cured after a hypnosis treatment. Most importantly, we will explain to you the cause of mental disorders - not understanding the illusory existence of the universe - and why hypnosis can sometimes engender a magical effect.