



生命提昇

2010年11月 香港
2010年12月 台灣
(逢月初出版)

雙月刊
第二期

Life Enlightenment
Bimonthly Issue No. 2

November 2010

「植物人」還有「意識」嗎？

科學能否揭示「當我們死後將會發生甚麼事呢？」

防癌、治癌，有辦法嗎？

有前世記憶為佛教僧人的兒童

真實個案：死後至投生前的奇妙經歷

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**Is There Consciousness In a
'Vegetative' Patient?**

**Can Science Discover What Happens
When We Die?**

HK\$10

香港

NT\$120

台灣

ISSN 2218-6530-0



9 772218 653002

ISSN 2218-6530



9 772218 653002

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Children Who Speak of Memories of a Previous Life as a Buddhist Monk: Three New Cases (2)

by Erlendur Haraldsson and
Godwin Samararatne

Case 1: Duminda Bandara Ratnayake

When Duminda Bandara Ratnayake was about three years old he started to speak about a life as a chief-monk at the Asgiriya monastery in Kandy and often expressed his wish to visit that temple. The Asgiriya monastery is one of the largest monasteries in Sri Lanka, and its monks share with the Malvatta monastery the privilege of guarding the Temple of the Tooth, one of the foremost places of pilgrimage in Theravada Buddhism ([Seneviratne, 1978](#)).

Duminda was born on June 16, 1984, of Sinhalese Buddhist parents. He was the second of three sons. He lived with his mother at the farm of her parents, who are small landowners in Thundeniya, a mountainous rural area some 16 miles by road from Kandy.

Duminda's Statements and Behavioural Traits

Table 1: Statements Made by Duminda About his Previous Life

- 1 He had been a senior monk (nayake-hamduruvo, loku-hamduruvo, lokusadhu) at Asgiriya temple.
- 2 Had pain in chest and fell, was brought to a hospital and died (used the word apawathwuna, which is only used for the death of a monk).
- 3 Had owned a red car.
- 4 Had been teaching the apprentice monks.
- 5 Had an elephant.
- 6 Had friends in the Malvatta Temple and used to visit it.
- 7 Longed for his money-bag which he had in Asgiriya.
- 8 Longed for his radio in Asgiriya.

In September 1988 we learnt about the case and interviewed the principal witnesses to the boy's statements; his mother, grandfather and grandmother.



Duminda

They all had heard him say that he had lived in the Asgiriya monastery, had owned a red car, had taught other monks, had suffered a sudden pain in his chest, fallen on the floor and been brought by some monks to a hospital and died. Duminda mentioned no personal name. His statements are listed in

Table 1:

Duminda showed some behavioural features unusual for a boy of his age. He wanted to carry his clothes in the fashion of a monk, wanted to be called 'Podi Sadhu' (little monk), went every morning and evening to a chapel (vihara) close to his house, visited the temple regularly, plucked flowers to bring there and placed them down in the typical Buddhist fashion.

Cleanliness was very important to him, he did not want to play with other children, and wanted to become a monk and to wear a monk's robe, which his mother only seldom allowed him to do. He liked to recite stanzas (religious statements, usually short) in the way that monks do. He recited these in Pali,



Duminda visiting Asgiriya which is the ancient language of Sinhalese Buddhism, used and learnt by monks only.

Table 2: Some of Duminda's Behavioural Traits

- 1 Often talks about wanting to go to the Asgiriya temple.
- 2 Expresses early a wish to visit the local temple in Thundeniya.
- 3 Wants to visit the Malvatta temple.
- 4 Wears and treats his clothes like a monk.
- 5 Likes and shows great cleanliness.
- 6 Goes to vihara (place of worship) every morning and evening.
- 7 Requests a monk's robe and fan.
- 8 Wants to wear a monk's robe (only seldom allowed).
- 9 Wants his family to call him 'podu sadhu' (little monk).
- 10 Wants to become a monk.
- 11 Tried to build a vihara (place of worship) at home in the fashion that children build toys, e.g. houses.
- 12 Plucks flowers and brings to vihara 2-3 times a day on Poya-day (Buddhist monthly holiday) as monks do.
- 13 Does not like wrong-doings of anyone and killing of insects.

- 14 Knows a few stanzas in Pali and recites them holding the fan in front of his face as monks do.
- 15 Once when his mother wanted to help wash his hands he told her "You should not touch my hands" (as women are not supposed to touch a monk's hands).
- 16 When brought to Asgiriya Temple, he did not want to sit down until given a white cloth to sit on (as is the tradition for monks).
- 17 Does not like to play with other children.
- 18 Displays calmness, serenity and detachment rarely found in children of this age.

Duminda's mother sought advice from the Ven. Iriyagama Jinorasa, a monk residing in a nearby temple. The monk tried to question Duminda, who did not answer. Perhaps he was shy. He asked for a monk's fan and the monk gave him one. He took the fan, held it in the typical fashion in front of his face and recited one of the Buddhist stanzas. On a later visit to the monk, the boy told him that he had been a monk in the Asgiriya Monastery, that he wanted to see the monastery and his car, and that he had had a room



in the monastery with some belongings. This is about all that the monk learnt from this boy who behaved so differently from other boys. When Duminda visited the nearby temple he would go straight to the stupa to worship, and seemed to be very religiously oriented. As we questioned Ven. Jinorasa, he remarked that he did not believe that the boy's parents could have taught him this behaviour. In the end the monk advised Duminda's mother to take her son to the Asgiriya monastery.



Duminda in monastery



In October 1987 Duminda was taken to Asgiriya by his mother and grandparents. A journalist from the newspaper **Island** learnt about the case and was present during Duminda's visit. The boy's mother had ambivalent feelings about the visit as she feared that the boy might later leave her to become a monk.

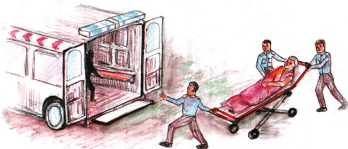


In November 1989 we visited Duminda's family again, when he was five years and four months old. Duminda's mother reported the same statements from two years earlier. The only new statement the boy had made came up when the death of the mahanayaka (chief-monk) of the Malvatta Monastery had been recently announced over the radio.



Spontaneously the boy said that he had known him. His mother further told us that before the boy had started to talk about a previous life he had wanted to carry a piece of cloth around his shoulder as monks carry their robes. He then asked for a robe and a monk's fan to be used as toys. Once when she had helped him wash his hands, he made the remark that she should not touch his hands (women are not

supposed to touch a monk's hands). He had also protested about her calling him 'son'; he wanted to be called 'podi sadhu'. At first when he was brought to pre-school he also protested and did not want to go there because some girls had touched him.



Duminda's maternal grandfather, A. H. Ratnayake, had listened to our interview with his mother. When we had finished that interview and she had left to prepare some refreshments, he told us that two items had not been reported. Duminda's most frequent statements had been that he had lived in Asgiriya, had been a teacher (preacher), and that he missed his red car, and— this was new—that he missed his money bag and radio.



When we asked Duminda's mother about the money bag and the radio, she confirmed that he had mentioned them but was somewhat embarrassed, because these items are not considered appropriate for a monk to have.

When we again visited the family in June 1990 not much had changed. Duminda was adjusting well to school, and his calm detachment and dignity were evident when we compared his behaviour with that of his brothers, who, like normal healthy boys, would never be quiet or still for long.

As far as we could ascertain from Duminda's family there existed no ties of any kind between any member of the family and the Asgiriya monastery. None of them had visited the monastery until they took the boy there, and the name Asgiriya had never come up at his home as far as they could remember. The family had no relative or neighbor who was a monk.

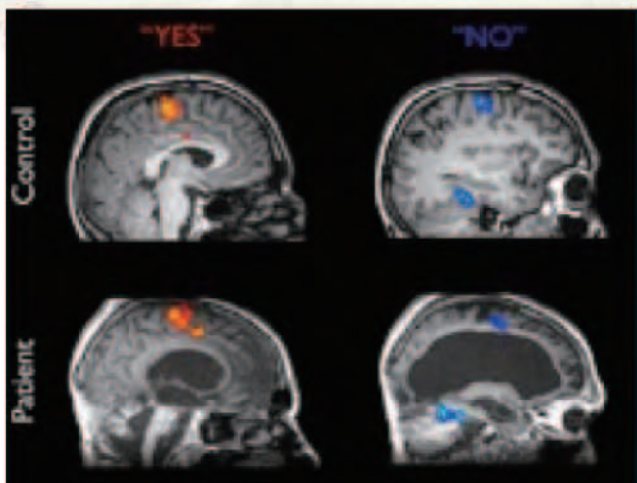
Even before the visit to Asgiriya the family had apparently become convinced that the boy had in fact been a monk at Asgiriya. They found their conviction further strengthened during that visit. This visit is of less importance in our investigation than



Duminda's statements because it proved difficult to reliably reconstruct what had taken place. Duminda's statements are more important to us because he repeatedly uttered them over a period of more than two years..... **(To Be Continued)** 🌅

World News & Information

News & Information Team



Scans show brain activations in, above, a healthy person as he answers "yes" or "no" to a question and, below, in someone whom doctors have deemed to be in a vegetative state.

(A) Is There Consciousness In a 'Vegetative' Patient?

From a scientific perspective, the mechanism by which **consciousness** arises and **thought processes** take place is still not yet understood. Recently, one of the major areas of research that has been providing incredible insight into the brain based mechanisms that mediate consciousness is the study of people who have been assumed to be in a permanent "vegetative state". Until quite recently, the general paradigm was that people who are in a "vegetative state" do not appear to have any consciousness or awareness of their surroundings.

Newer research that was recently published appears to shed light on this intriguing aspect on the **study of consciousness**. A recently-released new report, posted online by one of the most well respected medical journals the **New England Journal of Medicine**, have found that some patients, who are identified as in the "vegetative state", have shown traces of brain activity, on a brain imaging machine that represented either "yes" or "no", in response to simple questions prompted by doctors.

In this new report, researchers in Britain and Belgium studied 54 patients living in states of persistent **unconsciousness**. Of these, 23 had a diagnosis of **"vegetative state"**, meaning they were not able to signal any response to commands or questions. (The others were termed **"minimally conscious"**, meaning they were intermittently able to respond to commands by moving or blinking.) The results show that a small proportion of patients in a "vegetative" or "minimally conscious" state have "brain activation" reflecting some kind of "awareness" and "cognition".



Experts agreed that this new study exposed the limits of the current bedside test for diagnosing mental state: checking whether patients' eyes can track objects, and carefully looking for any signs — eye blinks, finger twitches — in response to questions or commands. Experts further mentioned that the finding could alter the way some severe head injuries were diagnosed — and could raise troubling ethical questions about whether to consult severely disabled patients on their care. Furthermore, a possible two-way channel to an immobilized, severely brain-injured person also opens up a whole new world of ethical challenges.

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Name of the original article published in the **"New England Journal of Medicine"**:

Willful Modulation of Brain Activity in Disorders of Consciousness

Martin M. Monti, Ph.D., Audrey Vanhaudenhuyse, M.Sc., Martin R. Coleman, Ph.D., Melanie Boly, M.D., John D. Pickard, F.R.C.S., F.Med.Sci., Luaba Tshibanda, M.D., Adrian M. Owen, Ph.D. and Steven Laureys, M.D., Ph.D.

N Engl J Med 2010; 362:579-589, [February 18, 2010](#)

URL:<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa0905370>

The **"New York Times"** posted an article entitled **"Trace of Thought is Found in 'Vegetative' Patient"** online at its URL on February 3, 2010:

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/04/health/04brain.html?ref=new_england_journal_of_medicine



The New York Times

Trace of Thought Is Found in 'Vegetative' Patient

By [BENEDICT CAREY](#)

Published: February 3, 2010

Another version of this article appeared in print on February 4, 2010, on page A1 of the [New York Times](#) news blog, entitled: "Doctor Demonstrates Dialogue With 'Vegetative' Patients"

Another website that reports on this research finding can also be found from England's [Horizon Research Foundation](#) at their URL, with the topic entitled "The Puzzle of Consciousness Continues":

http://www.horizonresearch.org/main_page.php?cat_id=232&pid=12

(B) Can Science Discover What Happens When We Die?

URL: http://www.horizonresearch.org/main_page.php?cat_id=58

Although, the question of what happens to the human mind and consciousness during death, as well as the relationship between the human mind and brain, has traditionally been considered a matter for philosophical debate, in recent years these subjects have entered the realms of scientific study - a field of research that could potentially scientifically answer

one of the oldest questions facing humankind - what happens when we die?

Currently, the main method available for an objective and scientific study is to understand what happens to the human brain, mind and consciousness during 'clinical' death. Specifically, this means to study the human mind and brain during cardiac arrest - a clinical



state in which all the clinical criteria of death are met - a person stops breathing, has no heartbeat and the brain stops functioning. This condition is an ideal and effective clinical state for the study of death. This is because from a biological standpoint cardiac arrest is the same as clinical death. It is the final step that everyone goes through during death.

Whenever someone dies, irrespective of what has caused them to die, such as a heart attack, a severe infection, a fatal road traffic accident, cancer etc., their heart stops beating, they stop breathing, and the brain stops functioning. This is what happens during cardiac arrest, which is simply a medical term for 'clinical death' and is used whenever doctors and hospital staff try to reverse the process of death by attempting to restart the heart. If the heart can be restarted then the process of clinical death may be reversed.

Due to the successes in modern medical science and technology, doctors can now revive approximately 10-15% of those who clinically die and are resuscitated.

The reversal of death may take just a few seconds (in some cases) but in most cases can take tens of minutes or even over an hour. So in effect what people experience during those minutes or hour provides a unique window of understanding into what happens to the human mind and consciousness during death. Currently some scientists are interested in understanding whether the human mind and consciousness may continue to function and exist, or is it terminated?

Since more and more people are being revived and brought back from a state of clinical death, there have been very interesting and unusual experiences

recalled by many of them. In fact it is well known that for many years cardiac arrest survivors have reported experiencing certain unusual features during their cardiac arrest, which includes feeling peaceful, seeing a bright light, a tunnel and a state of heightened consciousness and awareness, as well as the ability to recall events from their period of cardiac arrest.

Although the cause and significance of these experiences is not yet fully understood, at least five recent independent scientific studies carried out respectively in the UK, Holland and the USA,



have confirmed these reports. These studies have indicated that approximately 10-20% of cardiac arrest survivors report continuation of consciousness, as demonstrated by lucid, well structured, thought processes together with reasoning and memory formation, as well as claims of veridical perception (being able to 'see' and recall specific details from their cardiac arrest, which have also sometimes been confirmed by resuscitation staff). The features of the recalled experiences are compatible with the previously described 'near-death experience'.

The occurrence of heightened consciousness and awareness during cardiac arrest (activity of the mind) has significant implications, and has also raised the possibility that the mind and consciousness may continue functioning during 'clinical death'. This is a highly significant yet paradoxical observation as numerous studies in humans and animals have shown that during a cardiac arrest and resuscitation by hospital staff brain function ceases.

In view of these findings, the occurrence of such experiences raises the possibility that mind or consciousness may continue to function during 'clinical death' even though the brain has stopped functioning. This phenomenon has yet to be investigated extensively. However, if proven through large scale studies, it will have significant implications for all of humankind.

So far, there have been a number of small studies published on this subject in different highly respected scientific journals, including "Resuscitation" and "The Lancet", but today we have the means and the technology to conduct the largest and most comprehensive study of this subject to date.... (To be Continued)



「生命提昇慈善基金會」的標誌 *Logo of "Life Enlightenment Charity Foundation"*



標誌的下方是一雙手，代表人類互相守望相助，以「**生命燃點生命**」。正在燃點的燭光，表示人類的智慧獲得啟迪，照耀著人類的社會及其文明，引向美好的將來。左右兩旁，分別有兩個人手攜手地往上提昇，表示著人類整體之「生命、精神素質」得以提昇，從而發揚人類的文明，促進世界社會之「和諧共融」。

The two hands at the bottom of the emblem represent the mutual care and support of all human beings through **our motto of "Life Lights Up Life"**. The lamp of the lighting candle represents the enlightened human wisdom will be able to shine upon our human society and civilization, and thus will lead to a better and brighter future. On top of that, at the two sides, the two persons are united and are joining hands together for a higher elevation upward towards the sky. This symbolizes that the "quality of life and spirit" of the whole humankind would be further elevated so as to evolve our human civilization to higher levels of progression and elevation, towards a more universal "harmonious and accommodative" global community.