

# Choice in Reincarnation

A frequently-asked question about reincarnation concerns the circumstances of a person's new life. Are these destined by karma or decreed by a deity? Alternatively, might they be purely random, a matter of chance? And does the individual have any say in the matter? Reincarnation research suggests that in most cases many aspects of the new life are in fact freely chosen by the individual, although this is not always the case.

## Introduction

[Reincarnation](#) researchers have collected more than 2,500 cases of people (mostly children) describing spontaneous past-life memories. Of these, more than 1,700 are solved, meaning the identity of the child's previous incarnation has been discovered from information about or given by the child and verified through records or witness memory. In a sample of 1200 such children, 276 (23%) stated that they remembered the [intermission](#) (the time between lives) prior to their current life.<sup>[1]</sup> These testimonies and certain patterns of the reincarnations themselves offer tentative solutions to the problem of how the characteristics of the future life are determined, which reincarnation researcher [James Matlock](#) has termed 'the selection problem'.

## Selection Beliefs

Beliefs about selection are in three categories:

- free choice, held by tribal cultures with animistic beliefs and in the developed world by the New Age movement
- juridical [karma](#) due to 'natural laws' or decrees by deities, held by Hinduism, Buddhism, [Theosophy](#) and others
- random allocation, a common assumption

The New Age notion of choice tends to include such defining or mitigating concepts as:

- mandatory life plan that includes all significant events, by necessity requiring precognition, with the purpose usually being learning a truth of some sort
- soul contract, a quasi-legal agreement binding the incarnate person to a certain assignment
- soul group, a permanent assignment of souls to live successive lives together and plan them in consultation with each other
- soulmates or twin flames, pairs of souls permanently joined in successive lives

## Overview of Findings

No large-scale statistical analysis on selection has yet been performed. However, reincarnation researcher [Ohkado Masayuki](#) and doctor Ikegawa Akira co-authored a 2014 paper surveying parents and children on their intermission experiences, using a sample of 21 children who had claimed recall of them. Of the 21, seventeen said they chose their parents. Nine said they chose their mothers and eight that they chose both mother and father; of the eight, four said they chose the mother first and four, both parents simultaneously.<sup>[2]</sup>

Other reincarnation researchers including the pioneer of the field, [Ian Stevenson](#), have noticed a similar preponderance of free choice, occasionally with selection assisted by a spiritual being. More rarely, selection appears to have been forced or in some instances forbidden. Motivations fall into distinct categories, as will be described below.

While many people see the concept of karma as inextricable from the concept of reincarnation, the reincarnation beliefs of many cultures including the Druze, a reincarnationist sect of Shia Islam, and tribal cultures worldwide, do not include karma. Evidentially, Stevenson found support for karma almost nonexistent, stating:

In the cases that I have investigated, I have found almost no evidence of the effects of moral conduct in one life on the external circumstances of another. When I examine the cases that include the feature of a marked difference in socioeconomic status between the families concerned, I can discern no pattern indicating that the vicious have been demoted and the virtuous promoted.<sup>[3]</sup>

Matlock adds:

For juridical karma to be operative, the decisions of discarnate actors (in elective reincarnation) or nonhuman spirits (in assisted reincarnation) would have to be constrained by karmic laws, and there is nothing to suggest that they are.<sup>[4]</sup>

At least with karma, children sometimes speculate that disadvantages they have in this life were caused by behaviour in past lives, for example, [Ma Tin Aung Myo](#) and Wijeratne Hami (see below). Children who are the subjects of spontaneous reincarnation cases that have been systematically investigated have not been heard to mention soul contracts, soul groups, soul mates, or twin flames.

## **Planned Reincarnation**

Indications of free choice are suggested by cases in which the previous person remembered by the child was said to have declared a preference or intention to reincarnate into the child's present circumstances. However, these do not include mention of detailed 'life plans'. Three sample cases follow.

### **Marta Lorenz**

[Marta Lorenz](#) of Brazil recalled the life of Maria Januarina de Oliveiro, better known as Sinhá, born around 1890. Having been twice prevented by her father from

marrying, Sinhá committed suicide by purposely contracting tuberculosis. According to her close friend Ida Lorenz, on her deathbed Marta stated:

When reborn and at an age when I can speak on the mystery of rebirth in the body of the little girl who will be your daughter, I shall relate many things of my present life, and thus you will recognize the truth.

Sinhá died in October 1917 at age 28. Ida's daughter Marta was born on 14 August 1918 and uttered many accurate statements about her previous life as Sinhá.<sup>[5]</sup>

### **William George Jr**

Stevenson studied 46 reincarnation cases in the strongly reincarnationist Tlingit Native American culture of the Pacific Northwest. Of these, 10 (22%), featured planned reincarnations declared prior to death.<sup>[6]</sup> One case concerned William George Sr, an Alaskan fisherman who was sceptical about reincarnation. Several times he is said to have told his son Reginald and Reginald's wife, 'If there is anything to this reincarnation business, I will come back as your son, and you will recognize me because I will have birthmarks like the ones I now have,' pointing out three large moles on his left arm and shoulder. At age sixty, he handed Reginald a gold watch given to him by his mother and said, 'Save this watch for me.' Several weeks later he fell off his fishing boat, and his body was never recovered. Some nine months later, Reginald's wife bore a child with three moles in precisely the same places as her father-in-law's. Accordingly, he was named William George Jr. As he grew, he exhibited behaviour appropriate to his grandfather, for instance recognizing the watch when his mother took it out of her jewellery box and consistently calling it 'my watch.'<sup>[7]</sup>

### **Wijeratne Hami**

This Sri Lankan boy had many memories of having been his father's younger brother, Ratran Hami, who had murdered his fiancée for jilting him, and been hanged in July of 1928 in punishment. Shortly prior to his execution he told his brother, Tileratne Hami, that he would be reincarnated as Tileratne's son. On 17 January 1947, Tileratne's wife gave birth to Wijeratne. As a young child he remembered many facts from Ratran Hami's life including details of the murder and hanging.<sup>[8]</sup>

## **International Cases**

Researchers have found that most reincarnations happen within the same nation, community and often family, and usually within a maximum radius of 25 kilometres,<sup>[9]</sup> contradicting the random-allocation model.

Matlock, in his analysis of international cases (those in which the person is reincarnated in a different country from where they died), found only fourteen solved cases. He hypothesized that discarnates must have some special motivation to travel across borders (and sometimes over long distances), and believes these are in fact evident in the sample, despite its small size, categorized as follows:

- to return to be with their previous family, friend or compatriot (four cases)
- to return to their homeland (four cases)
- to spread the word about Buddhism (three cases)
- to leave homeland (two cases)
- no known motive (zero cases)<sup>[10]</sup>

The first motive accords with the well-established tendency of people to return to be with [people they know](#). Two ‘returning home’ cases, those of [Wael Kiwan](#) and [Suzanne Ghanem](#), relate to the Druze belief that Druze always return to their homeland; two more involve soldiers killed in foreign lands returning home, one of them being [James Leininger](#), a manifestation of attachment (see below). The three cases motivated by Buddhist mission work are all of [Tibetan lamas reincarnated in the West](#).

The two cases that Matlock classes as leaving a homeland are [Barbro Karlen](#) and [Yael Shahar](#), both of whom apparently reincarnated away from Germany and surrounds after dying in the Holocaust. They are representative of a larger observed tendency of Holocaust victims and perpetrators both to reincarnate away from Germany and lands it occupied.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Suicide Cases

In his collaborative book with [Erlendur Haraldsson](#), Matlock performed an analysis of nine [suicide cases](#), mostly investigated by Stevenson, and found two striking features: the length of intermission was shorter than the norm, and there was a stronger tendency than usual for the deceased by suicide to be reborn in the same family. Matlock pointed to this as evidence of free choice in selection.<sup>[12]</sup>

## Twin Cases

Stevenson performed an analysis of 42 cases of [twins with past-life memories](#) for his two-volume work *Reincarnation and Biology*.<sup>[13]</sup> He found that 86% of the previous incarnations of the twins had had a ‘verified or claimed close relationship’<sup>[14]</sup> of various different types: siblings (including twins), relatives of other types, married couples, friends, acquaintances or business associates. This percentage rose to 100% in the 31 cases in which both twins had verified past-life memories.<sup>[15]</sup>

## Announcing Dreams

[Announcing dreams](#), in which a mother-to-be or other person dreams of a deceased person announcing their intent to reincarnate as the child of a certain set of parents, are a common feature of reincarnation cases. This can be seen in 22% of 1,100 cases, mostly investigated by Stevenson, in the computerized database at [the University of Virginia](#), according to reincarnation researcher [Jim B Tucker](#).<sup>[16]</sup> They provide strongly suggestive evidence of free choice on the part of the discarnate.

Reincarnation researcher Dieter Hassler relates the case of Mario (not his real name), a youth who, after being in a non-fatal accident on a highway in Germany,

emerged from his car, ran down onto the highway and was hit by another car. He died in the arms of Mrs Wolf (not her real name), a psychotherapist and former nurse who had stopped to help him. According to Wolf, that same night the youth appeared to her in a dream asking to return as her child, which she strongly opposed. He repeated the request in dreams the following two nights, the second of which featured his funeral taking place near a lake in Italy. Wolf now responded he could be her son under three conditions: he had not committed suicide (which was unclear, as he might have wandered onto the highway in shock); he had cleared up matters with his family; and he should return no sooner than eighteen months. He agreed and happily embraced her. Precisely eighteen months later, 'Rolf Wolf' was born, and at age four said he recalled the accident, and showed behavioural and physical signs of having been Mario.<sup>[17]</sup>

Three days before Necip Ünlütaşkıran of Adana, Turkey was born in 1951, his mother dreamed that a man came to her house and told her 'I am going to stay with you.' She asked that he leave and argued with him, but he insisted, saying 'I am from Mersin and I am going to remain with you.' He also told her he had been killed with a knife during a quarrel. She had a second dream three days after her baby's birth, in which he told her his name was Necip, though the parents had given him a different name. He showed her bleeding wounds that matched birthmarks on the newborn's body. Once able to speak, he recounted memories of the life of Necip Budak, who had indeed been from the town of Mersin and died from knife wounds inflicted during a drunken quarrel. An autopsy report showed that the fatal wounds corresponded with the birthmarks.<sup>[18]</sup>

## Assisted Selection

In some cases, the discarnate may be assisted in their selection by a spiritual being, generally in keeping with the belief system of their current life; that is, children being raised Christian will mention God or Jesus, while children being raised Hindu will mention Hindu divinities.

[Titus Rivas](#), in his book *Reincarnation as a Scientific Concept* (coauthored with Kirti Swaroop Rawat) describes intermission memories recalled by a Dutch boy, Kees (not his real name).

[He] resisted the angels who tried to convince him that it would be for his own good. They practically pushed him – though they did so lovingly – back to earth, as it was time for him to get to work again. The angels told him: 'You know, when you go to earth, you will be accompanied by assistants'. He would be protected after he returned. The 'Big Light' told him: 'To make a good life is your own responsibility'.<sup>[19]</sup>

Matlock notes that in Asian cases the decision-maker often is a man dressed in white or yellow.<sup>[20]</sup>

A Burmese Buddhist monk born in 1921, the Venerable Sayadaw U Sobhana, recalled that during the intermission before his current life, an old man in white, dressed like a Buddhist lay devotee, had led him first to one house, then changed his mind and led him to another, saying 'You must stay here'. The discarnate did

not feel constrained or overborne, though, but reassured. It was the house of his soon-to-be parents. The same figure also appeared to the mother-to-be in an announcing dream and to his previous incarnation's widow in a [departure dream](#).<sup>[21]</sup>

An example of assistance combined with free choice is the English boy John Rhodes, who recalled from the intermission that God prompted him to choose his father. On the divine urging, he selected as his future father a boy who, when a string on his violin snapped during a concert, continued playing. The father later confirmed that incident, which had happened while he was in school.<sup>[22]</sup>

## Forced or Forbidden Selection

Very rarely, a spiritual being's decree or order overrides the individual's choice. A Burmese girl Ma Par, born shortly after the end of World War II, with blond hair, blue-grey eyes and fair skin, recalled having been a British airman who died when his plane crashed near the village in which she would be born. She remembered that during the intermission he had returned to his family in England, but the 'King of Death' forbade him to stay there and sent him back to Myanmar. After a second attempt to go to England he was again pulled back to Myanmar and 'ordered to be reborn' for reasons Ma Par could not remember being told.<sup>[23]</sup>

## Factors in Choice

### Attachment

Stevenson posits that the strongest motivator in free choice selection is emotional attachment to other people, the same sort of psychic connection that underlies [crisis impressions](#) (also called Peak in Darien experiences).<sup>[24]</sup> He attributes the frequency of same-family cases to this, noting that almost all cases are same-family among the Burmese, the Igbo people of Nigeria and Pacific Northwest tribal cultures such as the Tlingit and Haida tribes, where it is traditional to be reborn into the same clan.<sup>[25]</sup>

Twin reincarnation cases have been investigated as far back as the late nineteenth century, when Henry Fielding Hall reported in 1898 on the cases of twin boys Maung Gyi and Maung Nge. Both made many statements based on past-life memories, knew their way around their former home village, and recognized people they had known. Their previous lives had been first as childhood friends and then as a married couple.<sup>[26]</sup>

Stevenson considers how exactly a pair of discarnates arrange to become twins. First, he speculates, they must choose the same parents; then they would need to wait for two ova to be fertilized at about the same time (perhaps causing two ova to be released at the same time.) In the case of monozygotic twins, he points out, the discarnate personalities must somehow cause a single zygote to divide.<sup>[27]</sup> In a later work he comments that 'it is unhelpful to imagine two discarnate personalities cleaving it in two as one might halve a round cheese with a kitchen knife. A better analogy would be that of two overlapping magnetic fields (in which iron filings have become aligned), which then separate and form two new magnetic fields, each

taking with it a portion of the iron filings'.<sup>[28]</sup> However it is done, it cannot be easy, suggesting strong motivation.

A second finding in Stevenson's twin study suggests that shared death is a bonding experience, generating strong attachment. The twin cases showed the [typical preponderance of death by violence](#) found in reincarnation cases. But also, among 34 twin cases for which the timing of death is known, 21 (62%) died at the same time and/or of the same cause.<sup>[29]</sup> This is reflected in the case of U Kalar of Myanmar: as a child he recognized the reincarnation of another soldier who had been serving with him in the British army, and with whom he had strayed away from his unit, upon which both were brutally killed by local villagers. The boys became firm friends.<sup>[30]</sup>

Stevenson identified other types of attachments in reincarnation cases as indebtedness, attraction to a supplier of alcohol and business relationships.<sup>[31]</sup>

More examples of relationships persisting across lives can be found [here](#).

Aversion may be defined as attachment, of a negative nature. In the Lebanese case of [Zouheir Chaar](#), born in 1948, the family farm of his previous incarnation, Jamil Adnan Zahr adjoined that of another family, and their irrigation water supply was shared. One daughter of the other family, Samiya, habitually directed the water onto their fields before Zahr had finished irrigating those of his family, infuriating him. He was reported to have said he hated her and never wanted to see her again. Nonetheless after his death he managed to be reborn to her, and, as well as making many statements about his past life, began at a very young age to reproach his mother for 'stealing his water', only ceasing to do so at age ten.<sup>[32]</sup>

## **Geographical Proximity**

Stevenson finds two types of cases where selection seems determined by geographical proximity: people reborn far from where they had lived, but close to where they died; and people reborn after one parent, usually the mother, came close to where the previous incarnation died.<sup>[33]</sup>

In the first category falls cases of Japanese soldiers who died in Myanmar during Japan's World War II occupation of that country, then were reborn there. As reborn children, they tended to speak an incomprehensible language prior to learning their mother tongue, to prefer Japanese-style food over Myanmarese, to be afflicted by the heat, to yearn for all things Japanese,<sup>[34]</sup> and even to look more Japanese than other Myanmarese children.<sup>[35]</sup> In at least one case, a pair of brothers serving as Japanese soldiers were killed together and attempted to return home:

They thought that they had been killed by the explosion of their own grenades. When this happened, they thought of their aged mother in Japan and even called for her help as they were dying. They then – after dying – found themselves instantly in Japan, where they saw their mother. They could not, however, communicate with her, and she did not see them. They felt sad and frustrated. They did not remember what happened to them after that until, at

the age of about 3, they began to remember the previous lives 'as if they were awakened from a dream.'<sup>[56]</sup>

From his observations of violent or abrupt-death cases, Matlock has postulated that the trauma somehow disorients the discarnate, causing a kind of loss of control or intention.<sup>[57]</sup> This group of cases can possibly be considered examples.

A second example given by Stevenson is Maung Win Aye, born in the Burmese town of Thalun. She recalled the life of a woman who had been travelling by train from her hometown of Tatkon to Mandalay but had been taken off at Thalun for medical treatment which proved futile. Maung Win Aye's mother-to-be was among local people who had gone to see the stranger who had suddenly died and helped to prepare the body for the funeral. She became pregnant with Maung Win Aye shortly thereafter.<sup>[58]</sup>

Examples of the second group of geographically selected cases, those in which a future parent approaches the previous incarnation's corpse, include U Kalar (mentioned above), whose father was named U Maung Sein. By U Kalar's account:

U Maung Sein came along with his cart, and he put our bodies onto his cart. Then he went beyond the village to the north, where he reached a kind of cliff. There he dumped our bodies out of the cart and went home. I followed my father home, back into the village ... I was reborn in Soo-dut-gyi village. I was a discarnate for 7 days.<sup>[59]</sup>

In the Thai case of [Bongkuch Promsin](#) the previous incarnation had lived in a town, Hua Tanon, and had been murdered at a fair there as a youth. However he was reborn near Tha Tako, about 320 kilometres distant, about nine months after his father-to-be journeyed to Hua Tanon for a meeting, having apparently followed him to his home on a bus.<sup>[40]</sup>

Reincarnation researcher [Ohkado Masayuki](#) reports on a case of what could be termed geographical proximity if the intermission were a physical place: he interviewed four children who all claimed to have met 'up there' and decided to stick together as friends in their next incarnations. Interestingly, some of them referred to a 'reflection room': a dark place one could voluntarily enter while discarnate if one felt one had done wrong in incarnate life, so as to reflect on it, and then to reincarnate when ready.<sup>[41]</sup> This is the closest thing to the 'life review' so commonly referred to in [near-death-experience](#) cases to have come out of reincarnation investigations.

## **Observed Good Character**

In some cases the child claims to recall choosing parents who seem to be of good character. An example is John Rhodes (mentioned above) who, it is implied, chose as a father who demonstrated good qualities.

The American case of [James Leininger](#) is an international case; the previous incarnation, an American World War II pilot had been shot down by the Japanese during the Iwo Jima operation, but was reborn to American parents. In his discarnate journey he apparently travelled to Hawaii, which would have felt like



home ground for a Navy pilot based in Pearl Harbour. The following is excerpted from his parents' book *Soul Survivor*:

Bruce had a sudden impulse to hug his son. He picked him up and kissed him and said how happy he was to have him as a son.

James replied, in a tone that seemed eerie to Bruce, "That's why I picked you; I knew you would be a good daddy."

Bruce did not know what he had heard. "What did you say?"

"When I found you and Mommy, I knew you would be good to me."

This was not the voice of a child, although it came out of the mouth of a four-year-old.

"Where did you find us?" asked Bruce.

"Hawaii," James replied.

Bruce said that James was wrong. They had gone to Hawaii just that summer, when they were all together.

"It was not when we all went to Hawaii. It was just Mommy and you."

Although profoundly shaken, Bruce managed to ask where he had found them. And James said, "I found you at the big pink hotel."

Bruce remained dumbfounded as James added, "I found you on the beach. You were eating dinner at night."

In 1997, Bruce and Andrea had gone to Hawaii to celebrate their fifth wedding anniversary. They had stayed at the Royal Hawaiian, the landmark pink hotel on Waikiki Beach, and on their final night, they had a moonlight dinner on the beach. It was five weeks before Andrea got pregnant. And James had described it perfectly.

This was not something that either parent had ever discussed – certainly not in detail.<sup>[42]</sup>

## **Other Motivations**

Ohkado published an unsolved case of a Japanese girl who recalled having lived as a woman in India, and had a birthmark in the centre of her forehead, the location of the traditional *bindi* mark that Hindu women wear. She said, 'This corresponds to what I wore in India [*bindi*]. The goddess I met in heaven stamped it on me so that I would not forget about my life in India.' She explained her motivation for rebirth in Japan: 'It was a mistake to be born as a woman in India, where women are treated badly. So I decided to be born in a place where women are treated nicely. I heard a voice calling for a girl and I decided to be born to my mother'. Her mother had been praying for a girl.<sup>[43]</sup>

## What Can Be Chosen

As well as location and family, some other aspects of the next incarnation can apparently be chosen at least some of the time by a discarnate soul, including gender or other physical aspects.

### Being Born At All

The difficulty in determining whether we have a choice between becoming incarnate at all or not is that we tend not to hear from those who have chosen not to, if there are any. However those who have been born can and do provide reasons.

The subject of a famous Indian case of the 1920s, [Shanti Devi](#), attributed her return to incarnate life to an extreme inclination to cling to it. She states, 'I was not empty enough ... I had so many desires and yearnings ... I had a tremendous yearning to be a woman again, to be a person, a mother and a wife<sup>[44]</sup> In keeping with her strongly-held Hindu belief, she also said, 'If I hadn't longed so desperately to come back, I would not have needed to incarnate again, but would have been reunited with Brahma and eternal life.'<sup>[45]</sup>

In Ohkado and Ikegawa's study, thirteen of the 21 children said they remembered why they decided to be born. Three said it was to meet or help their mothers, five said it was to help other people; two said it was to become happier than they were in their previous lives, and three said it was to enjoy life.<sup>[46]</sup> A six-year-old boy recounted: 'I was flying in the sky, looking for my mother. Looking down. I could see my mother and chose her. I thought she was the best person. She looked lonely, and I thought, "If I come to her, she will not feel lonely anymore".'<sup>[47]</sup>

### Gender

In the cases of [Maung Aung Cho Thein](#), [Paulo Lorenz](#) and [Gnanatilleka Baddewithana](#), the previous persons had all been heard to express a wish or interest related to reincarnating into a body of the other sex.

Stevenson notes that the wide cultural variance in the incidence of sex-change cases – ranging from zero in the Druze, Alevit, Haida, Tlingit and Wet'suwet'en cultures to 28% in Brazil, 33% in Myanmar and 50% in the Eastern Kutchin tribe,<sup>[48]</sup> and corresponding with beliefs about sex-change reincarnation – are evidence of choice.<sup>[49]</sup>

Stevenson speculates that a spirit may choose its next-body sex not only by embryo selection but also by influencing the process of conception, citing reports by pregnant women of cravings and other inclinations reminiscent of their unborn children's past lives as evidence of biochemical influence. He notes that since the majority of conceptions fail very early, a spirit can perhaps intentionally abort conceptions until one of the desired gender is achieved. Alternatively, he proposes, it may psychokinetically alter the viscosity of the fluids through which sperm swim to favour male sperm, since these have greater motility.<sup>[50]</sup>

### Physical Features

Bruce Peck (not his real name) was a member of the Haida First Nation, a tribe with strong reincarnation traditions, who lived on the Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia, Canada. He was born in 1949 with a shortened right arm and rudimentary digits which were later surgically removed. Though he made no past-life-memory-based statements, he was considered to be the reincarnation of his paternal grandfather, Richard Peck, a renowned fisherman, since Richard had repeatedly said that he wanted to live his next life with only one hand, in order not to have to work so hard. This avowal had been witnessed by at least three people and was sometimes accompanied by a gestural miming of chopping his forearm above the wrist. Richard died of accidental drowning after falling off a boat. Behavioural signs suggesting that he had returned as his grandson included a marked childhood phobia of water, making Bruce unable to learn how to swim until the age of 22, but also, paradoxically, an attraction to water and a longing for the life of a fisherman. He only tried it for a short time, however, instead turning to clerical/administrative (and therefore sedentary) activity. Stevenson notes that his particular type of birth defect is rare and was not exhibited by any other family member.<sup>[51]</sup>

## Parental Influence on Choice

While reincarnation usually seems to be the choice of the child, the research data suggests that neither parent has much say in the matter (with some exceptions given below). Children who remember the intermission period tend to speak of freely moving into a mother's body without impediment. Similarly, announcing dreams are termed as such because the individual announces an intention to be born to the parent, as opposed to making a request.

Katherine Mitchell (not her real name) conceived a child on 21 May 1997, shortly after the death of her father, who died on 11 May 1997. This gave rise to speculation that the child might be his reincarnation, an idea that horrified her, as her father had sexually abused her throughout her teen years. She tried to shut it out of her mind, but struggled, knowing it hindered her ability to be a loving mother. Her son Craig, aged three years and eight months, was present when she was undergoing an at-home shiatsu massage session aimed at healing the abuse trauma, and suddenly did what her father had never done: he repeatedly and emphatically said 'I'm sorry', adding, 'I never said so'. After an initial period of shock and disbelief, Katherine was finally able to forgive her father.<sup>[52]</sup>

The main geographical exception seems to be in Myanmar, where the testimony of children remembering the intermission and mothers recalling announcing dreams seems to suggest that the norm is a spirit politely requesting permission of the mother. He recounts a Burmese case in which both a husband (while away on a trip) and a wife, on the same night, experienced announcing dreams in which the same deceased friend asked to be their child. His answer was 'yes' and hers was 'no, we are too poor for you'. The friend apparently considered permission to have been given and poverty no object, as the couple's next child expressed memories of his life.<sup>[53]</sup>

In the case of Rolf Wolf, it was a matter of negotiation between the discarnate Mario and the prospective mother, who was initially entirely unwilling, but then set conditions to which he agreed.

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## Endnotes

### Footnotes

1. ^ Sharma & Tucker (2004), 102.
2. ^ Ohkado & Ikegawa (2014), 482.
3. ^ Stevenson (2001), 251.
4. ^ Matlock (2019), 173.
5. ^ Stevenson (1974), 183-203.
6. ^ Stevenson (2001), 98.
7. ^ Stevenson (1974), 231-41.
8. ^ Stevenson (1997b), 1366-73.
9. ^ Haraldsson & Matlock (2016), 232-33.
10. ^ Haraldsson & Matlock (2016), 233.

11. ^ See: Haraldsson & Matlock (2016), 233. See also Gershom (1992, 1996) and Wehrstein (2019).
12. ^ Haraldsson & Matlock (2016), 252-53.
13. ^ Stevenson (1997b), 1931-2062.
14. ^ Stevenson (1997b), 1932.
15. ^ Stevenson (1997b), 1937.
16. ^ Tucker (2005), 9.
17. ^ Hassler (2013).
18. ^ Full report: Stevenson (1997a), 430-55.
19. ^ Rawat & Rivas (2021), 191-92.
20. ^ Matlock (2019), 171.
21. ^ Stevenson (1983), 244-45.
22. ^ Muller (1970), 66.
23. ^ Stevenson (1997b), 1808-16.
24. ^ Stevenson (2001), 236.
25. ^ Stevenson (2001), 236.
26. ^ Fielding [Hall] (1898).
27. ^ Stevenson (1997b), 2082.
28. ^ Stevenson (2001), 256.
29. ^ Stevenson (1997b), 1939.
30. ^ Stevenson (1997b), 1747.
31. ^ Stevenson (2001), 237-39.
32. ^ Full case report: Stevenson (1980), 98-116.
33. ^ Stevenson (2001), 239, 242.
34. ^ Stevenson & Keil (2005).
35. ^ Ohkado (2014).
36. ^ Stevenson (1997b), 2029. Full case report: 2025-34.
37. ^ Haraldsson & Matlock (2016), 234.
38. ^ Stevenson (2001), 239-40.
39. ^ Stevenson (1997b), 1746.
40. ^ Stevenson (2001), 242. Full case report: Stevenson (1983), 102-39.
41. ^ Ohkado (2016), 527, 529-30.
42. ^ Leininger & Leininger, with Gross (2009), 154-55.
43. ^ Ohkado (2012). My gratitude to Ohkado for translating the cited passage in personal communications.
44. ^ Lönnerstrand (1998), 111.
45. ^ Lönnerstrand (1998), 105.
46. ^ Ohkado & Ikegawa (2014), 482.
47. ^ Ohkado & Ikegawa (2014), 477.
48. ^ Matlock (2019), Table 5.3, 182.
49. ^ Stevenson (1997b), 2082.
50. ^ Stevenson (1997b), 2082.
51. ^ Stevenson (1997b), 1361-66.
52. ^ Matlock (2015).
53. ^ Stevenson (1997b), 1517-18. Full case report: 1512-37 (graphic warning).