

# Reincarnation Accounts From Before 1900

Most cases of past-life memory were published after 1960, when Ian Stevenson began researching such claims. However, several instances were described earlier in the twentieth century, and a few before 1900. These early accounts, almost all concerning young children, are similar in structure and features to more recently investigated cases, suggesting that past-life memory is a natural phenomenon, not something constructed from religious beliefs and other culturally sanctioned ideas.

## Introduction

In his classic *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*, published in 1903, FWH Myers declared that, 'for reincarnation there is at present no valid evidence'.<sup>[1]</sup> This was long before the investigations of [Ian Stevenson](#) began to establish reincarnation as a real possibility (see [Past Life Memories Research—Overview](#)), but Myers was apparently unfamiliar with accounts of past-life memory that had appeared in the nineteenth century and before.

The honour of having the first recorded past-life memory goes to Pythagoras (sixth century BCE), who believed that he had lived before as the Trojan fighter Euphorbus. Pythagoras is said to have recognized Euphorbus's shield when he saw it in the temple of Juno at Argos.<sup>[2]</sup> Another Greek with past-life memories was the Neopythagorean philosopher Apollonius of Tyana (first century CE), who believed he had had an encounter with pirates as an Egyptian ship's pilot.<sup>[3]</sup>

Reincarnation researcher [James Matlock](#) distinguishes between cases and accounts of reincarnation: 'By *case* I mean set of events that have been investigated or closely observed. An uninvestigated *account* is a story or anecdote about whose reliability we can say nothing'.<sup>[4]</sup> Most pre-1900 reports of past-life memory are accounts in Matlock's terminology. The memories of Pythagoras and Apollonius are especially vague, providing little substance by which to judge them. It is not even clear that their memories came to them in childhood. More detailed stories of children's past-life memory in the years before 1900 come from China, India, Japan, Syria, Burma and the United States.

## China

Dutch historian of religion JJM de Groot culled several accounts from Chinese books and documents dated from before the end of the first millennium of the Common Era. British folklorist Gerald Willoughby-Meade discovered others from the same period and later.

### Pao Tsing (200s BCE)

The earliest account that de Groot discovered derives from the period of the Tsin dynasty, 255-206 BCE. When he was five years old, a boy named Pao Tsing told his parents he had lived before with other parents, whom he named, in another town, which he likewise named. He said that when he was nine, he had died after falling into a well. His parents tracked down the family he talked about and confirmed the things he said about the previous life.<sup>[5]</sup>

### Yang Hu (226 CE)

Yang Hu (221–278) was a renowned general of the Western Jin Dynasty.<sup>[6]</sup> De Groot quotes the following from his biography:

When he was five years old, he asked the nurse [nanny] to give him a metal [gold] ring he used

to play with. The woman said, “You never had one,” on which words Hu forthwith went to the mulberry trees at the eastern wall of his neighbor Li, and there pulled out a ring. “This ring was lost by my child,” exclaimed the owner of the tree in great fright; “I say, why do you take it away?” The nurse informed him what had preceded, and her words cast deep sorrow into Li’s heart. People at that time were greatly astonished, and maintained that Li’s son was a previous existence of Hu.<sup>[7]</sup>

### **Hiang Tsing’s Daughter (500s or 600s)**

In a book from the time of the Sui Dynasty (581–618), de Groot found the account of a daughter of a man named Hiang Tsing. Tsing’s elder daughter had died when she was only a few years old. At the beginning of her terminal illness, her mother found her playing with a knife. She tried to take it away but the girl resisted and accidentally cut her mother’s hand.

A year after her death, another daughter was born. When she was four, this second daughter asked her mother for her knife. Her mother replied that she had never had one but the girl insisted that she had. They had quarreled about it, she reminded her mother, and she had wounded her hand with it. Astonished and rather afraid, the mother related these events to Tsing, who asked if she still had the knife. She confessed that she did; she had kept it in memory of her late child. Tsing suggested that she present it to their daughter together with other knives, to see if the girl could identify the correct one. The mother did this and ‘the girl looked at the knives and, delighted, immediately picked out her own’.<sup>[8]</sup>

### **Chao’s Nephew (600s)**

The following account was included in *Fayuan Zhulin*, a Chinese Buddhist encyclopedia compiled in 668.<sup>[9]</sup> A Buddhist monk with the lay surname Chao related that his elder brother’s son was recognized as the reincarnation of a child of the Ma family, residents of the same village.

The Ma’s son died in the last year of the Ching kwan period, 649. On his deathbed, the boy told his mother that he had past-life connections to Chao Tsung, and that he would be reborn as that man’s grandson. His mother made a black spot on his right elbow, in order to identify him in his next life. Chao Tsung’s daughter-in-law dreamed that a child that looked like the Ma boy came to her, saying, ‘I must become your descendent’, and she became pregnant. When her son was born, he had a black mark on his right elbow. When he was three years old, he went to the Ma house, without anyone having shown him the way, and declared that it was his former home.<sup>[10]</sup>

### **Tscai-Niang (700s)**

An eighteen-year-old girl, Tscai-Niang,<sup>[11]</sup> made an offering to the Weaving-Girl, the patron goddess of industrious women. That night Tscai-Niang dreamed the Weaving-Girl came to her and asked how she could be of assistance. Tscai-Niang wished for dexterity in her work. The goddess gave her a golden knitting needle, stuck in a sheet of paper, and secured these in the girdle of her skirt. She promised Tscai-Niang that if she kept the secret for three days, she would be rewarded with remarkable dexterity, but if she did not keep the secret, she would become a boy in her next life.

Unfortunately, on the second day, Tscai-Niang told her mother what the Weaving-Girl had promised. She tried to show her the gold needle, but in the girdle of her skirt there was only a sheet of paper with holes in it. Tscai-Niang then fell mortally ill and at the same time her mother discovered that she was pregnant. Because Tscai -Niang was the fifth of her daughters to die, her mother did not want to have another child and sent away for drugs to stimulate an abortion. She was about to swallow them when she heard Tscai-Niang cry out from her deathbed, calling her a

'murderess'. Tscai-Niang told her mother that the child her mother was carrying was a boy and that he was to be the body of her next life. Her mother refrained from taking the drugs and shortly thereafter, Tscai-Niang expired.

De Groot continues:

After the burial, the mother, whose sorrowful thoughts did not turn away from the child, collected the things the latter was wont to play with, and put them away. Before the usual months of pregnancy had elapsed, she gave birth to a son. Whenever anyone touched the concealed playthings, this child began to cry, and wailed also whenever the mother bemoaned her daughter, not stopping until the mother stopped. And when he could speak, he always wanted to have the toys. Being the second existence of Tscai-Niang, they gave him the [same name].<sup>[12]</sup>

### **Ku Huang's Son (700s)**

Willoughby-Meade discovered another Chinese case in an eighth century book. The narrative tells how a man named Ku Huang lost his only son at the age of seventeen, after which

the boy's soul hovered about in an uncertain state without leaving the house. Ku gave way to bitter sorrow, and wrote a verse in which he lamented that he was seventy years old, and would soon have to enter the grave also. The boy's soul, hearing his father recite the verse he had written, was suddenly heard to say, in a human voice, 'I will again become a son in the Ku family'. Presently the soul felt that it was being seized and sent before an Official of the Underworld, who ordered it to be reborn as a child in the Ku household. Then the soul became insensible and after a little while, opening its eyes, it recognized its home and its relations, but remembered no details of its former life as a son of Ku. When the reincarnated son was seven years old, however, an elder brother jokingly gave him a slap, so he retorted, 'I am your elder brother. Why do you slap me?' Thereafter he related a complete history, without any mistake, of his former seventeen years of life as a son of the family.<sup>[13]</sup>

### **O-lien (900s)**

The account of O-lien is dated to the beginning of the Sung or Song dynasty (960–1279). It concerns a 'foreign Çramana'<sup>[14]</sup> who greatly admired the Chief of the Inner Court Archives of the House of Tsin, a man named Min. He told his fellow students, 'If I may become the son of that man in my next existence, my wishes of this life are fulfilled'. When this came to Min's attention, he assented in good humour. The Çramana then

sickened and died, and somewhat more than a year after his death Lien was born. No sooner could he speak than he understood foreign languages; he gave the names of all curiosities and things of value in the whole realm, and of bronze objects, pearls and cowries he had never seen or heard of; and he could tell also from where they came. And he showed a natural affection for the Western foreigners who came to China. As everybody regarded that Çramana as his former existence, Min gave him the cognomen of O-lien (the Selected?), which became his proper name.<sup>[15]</sup>

### **The Rebirth of Tsui-Lin (First Millennium)**

The date of the story of Tsui-lin is not clear, but like most of de Groot's past-life memory accounts, it likely belongs to the first millennium of the Common Era.

A man named Chang Khoh-khin takes up with a concubine during his university studies. When she

remains childless after a year, his mother, who wants a grandson, appeals for assistance to the God of Mount Hwa. The concubine conceives and in due course gives birth to a boy, who is named Tsui-lin. Five years later, after graduating, Khoh-khin marries a different woman. When she too remains childless for a year, his mother again sacrifices to the God of Mount Hwa. The wife duly becomes pregnant, but Tsui-lin falls ill. Khoh-khin's mother prays to the God of Mount Hwa, and that night a man visits her in her dreams. He explains that he helped the concubine conceive, but with this new pregnancy, Tui-lin 'had necessarily to become incomplete'. Unfortunately, he is powerless to stop this from happening. He thanks Khoh-khin's mother for her offerings, and disappears. After Tsui-Lin dies, his father and grandmother

mark his right upper arm with red, and over his eyebrows they make a black mark, and thus they bury him. Next year, Khoh-khin is invested with the dignity of prefect of Kia-ming in Li-chieu. There he serves his time, then settles in that part. Once he sees in the house of a certain Wei-Fu, a secretary in military service, a girl approach him with polite curtsies. It strikes him how closely she resembles Tsui-lin. He goes home, and informs his mother of it. She has the girl fetched to see her, and forthwith the latter, exhilarated, says to her kinfolk: "These people here are my family." Then they look for the painted marks, and find them all just as they have been made. The family of the girl send their men to fetch her back; but the affection she has taken to her former kinsmen is so intense that she cannot forbear to leave them.<sup>[16]</sup>

### **The Hunter of Henan (1600s-1700s)**

One of the tales compiled by Willoughby-Meade was drawn from a collection made by P'u Sung Ling (Pu Songling) (1640-1715) and presumably contemporary with him. It tells of a Buddhist priest of the Ch'ang Ch'ang monastery who died suddenly at the age of eighty. Around the same time a young man from a wealthy family who was out hunting hares with falcons fell from his horse and seemingly was killed. However, as his servants gathered round him, he revived, disoriented, and claiming to be the Buddhist priest. Willoughby-Meade continued his summary,

Thinking he was merely delirious, the servants escorted home their master's body (containing the old priest's soul); but he refused wine and meat, avoided the society of his wife and her handmaids, and very soon set out for Ch'ang Ch'ang, as he was anxious about the welfare of the community in his absence. He told the servants to look after his 'home' affairs. When he reached the monastery, he asked the monks what had happened to the old priest. They showed him a new grave, in which the body had been buried. He gave the monks some advice and went back to the rich young man's house; but in spite of his wife's entreaties, and after several attempts to live as a layman, he returned to the monastery, and told the monks so many details of his priestly career, that they eventually accepted him as having the old priest's soul in the youthful body of the dead layman. Some time later, some old friends visited him at the monastery, and found that, although he had been over eighty years a priest, he did not look more than thirty years of age.<sup>[17]</sup>

### **Mrs Li (1756)**

A similar instance of [replacement reincarnation](#) is dated to the year 1756, when a married woman named Li died at the age of thirty.

Her husband went into the town of Ling-pi (An Hwei), where their home was, to buy her a coffin. On his return he was overjoyed to find that she was alive. But when he went near her, she cried, 'You must not approach me. I am Miss Wang, of such-and-such a village, and I am unmarried. How did I get here?' The husband was frightened and communicated with the Wang family. They had just buried an unmarried daughter, and came post haste to Li's house; so the

resuscitated wife of Li embraced them, and said so many things about the past life of their daughter that they could no longer doubt that Miss Wang' superior soul was reincarnated in Mrs Li's body Presently Miss Wang's affianced spouse came, and the apparent Mrs Li blushed and showed him that she knew who he was. The case was brought before the Sub-Prefect, Wang Yen-T'ang, who decided that the lady in dispute must be held to be Mrs Li.<sup>[18]</sup>

## India

### The Return of Rawat Sukharam (Early 1700s)

At the end of the seventeenth century, the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (1618-1707), then ruling India, heard about a child with past-life memories. Aurangzeb summoned the child to his court and personally interviewed him, making this the first known case to be investigated by outside parties. The story was told in the Persian chronicle, *Khulusat-ut-Tawarikh*, composed during Aurangzeb's reign. It was translated for Stevenson from an eighteenth century book written in Urdu.<sup>[19]</sup>

In the 40th year of the reign of the emperor [1699], there was a village headman named Rawat Sukharam in Village Bhakar. He had an old enmity with another person, who after overpowering, wounded him in the back and in the root of his ear. Due to these injuries Rawat (mentioned above) died. A few months later a son was born to his son-in-law named Ramdas. This boy had a mark at the back as well as the root of his ear. News spread that Rawat Sukharam, who had died after being injured had reincarnated and was born again. And this boy, when he was able to communicate, said that he was Rawat Sukharam. He gave the correct address and other information which were verified and found correct. When the emperor heard about this strange incident, he called the child to his court and personally satisfied himself about these facts.<sup>[20]</sup>

## Japan

A second investigated case from before 1900 is that of Katsugoro, made famous by Lafcadio Hearn in his 1897 book, *Gleanings in Buddha-Fields*. In a later book, *Kwaidan*, Hearn described another nineteenth-century Japanese account, concerning a boy named Riki-Baka.

### Katsugoro (1800s)

Katsugoro was born in 1815. From an early age, he had memories of a boy named Tozo, who had lived in a different village and had died of smallpox five years before his own birth. Katsugoro did not talk about his memories, though, until he was eight. One day he asked his elder sister Fusa whether she remembered her previous life. She did not. He asked her not to tell their parents what he had said and Fusa promised not to, provided he behaved himself. Thereafter, whenever the children disagreed over something, Fusa would threaten to tell Katsugoro's secret, and he would back down. This went on until one day their parents overheard Fusa making her threat, and demanded to know what Katsugoro had done wrong.

Fusa explained and Katsugoro then told the rest of his family about his memories. He spoke especially to his grandmother, with whom he slept, leaving his mother free to suckle a younger sibling during the night. He said his name had been Tozo, the son of Kyubei and Shidzu of Hodokubo. Kyubei had died when Tozo was five and Shidzu had remarried a man named Hanshiro. After Tozo contracted smallpox and died the following year, he was buried in a jar in a graveyard on a hill overlooking the village.

Following his death, he had returned home, where he stayed for a few days before an old man with a

beard appeared and escorted him away. The man led him to his present home and told him that is where he would be reborn. Katsugoro could see and hear what was going on in the house. Because his father was so poor, it was thought that his mother would have to go away to work, and Katsugoro initially did not want to be reborn there. However, when it was decided that his mother would not have to leave after all, he changed his mind and entered the house and then her womb. He recalled more when he was younger, Katsugoro said, but his memories were fading.

Katsugoro asked repeatedly to be allowed to visit Tozo's mother and step-father in Hodokubo. When his grandmother Tsuya accompanied him back to the village, he led the way through winding streets to a certain house, and ran in. Tsuya followed and learned that everything Katsugoro had been saying was correct for a boy named Tozo. After dying of smallpox when he was nine, Tozo had been buried in a large earthen jar, as was the custom in Japan in those days. Before Katsugoro and Tsuya left Hodokubo, Katsugoro wanted to visit Tozo's father's grave. Katsugoro was permitted to visit Tozo's family in Hodokubo on several later occasions.<sup>[21]</sup>

As word of Katsugoro's memories spread, officials came to investigate his case. Hearn presents translations of a series of signed and sealed documents preserved in a local Buddhist temple, copies of which were acquired by a collector of odd tales. There were two later investigations by other teams. Katsugoro became a farmer and died in 1869 at age 55. In 2015, this case was the subject of an exhibit in Tokyo marking the 200th anniversary of Katsugoro's birth.<sup>[22]</sup>

This important case is the subject of [a separate article](#) in the *Psi Encyclopedia*.

### **Riki-Baka (1800s)**

Riki-Baka was a boy Hearn met in Japan. He was retarded, with the mental age of a two-year-old; his name translates as Riki the Simpleton. Although he was seventeen when Hearn made his acquaintance, children would not play with him because he could not learn the rules of their games. His favorite occupation was riding a broom as a hobby-horse up and down the slope in front of Hearn's house, laughing riotously as he did so. Eventually Hearn found this so annoying that he asked him to take his sport elsewhere and he never saw him again.

After some time, Hearn asked the woodcutter who supplied his neighborhood with fuel for their fires if he knew what had become of Riki-Baka. The woodcutter told him that he had died nearly a year before, apparently of some sort of brain disease, but that was not the end of his story. After his death, his mother tattooed the two characters of his name into the palm of his left hand. She prayed that he would be reborn into happier circumstances. Some months later, she was contacted by a wealthy family whose son was born with 'Riki-Baka' engraved on the palm of his left hand. She was glad to know that her son had a good life to look forward to, but his new parents were unhappy about the 'Baka'. They inquired where he was buried and sent someone to collect clay from his grave, so that this character could be removed. This was the only method by which unwanted characters appearing as birthmarks could be effaced, the woodcutter explained to Hearn.<sup>[23]</sup>

### **Syria**

Physician and longtime resident in Syria John Wortabet wrote in 1860 that he heard of many stories of past-life memory among the Druze people, but he relates only the single instance described below. Another writer, a Col Churchill, records an event he heard from the Lebanese Druze during the same period. Upon hearing sudden gunfire, a schoolboy 'stopped his ears with his fingers' and 'displayed symptoms of alarm'. Asked why, he explained that he had been murdered in his previous life.<sup>[24]</sup>

## **Buried Treasure (1800s)**

A five-year-old boy from a mountain village complained about his parents' poverty. He had been a rich man in Damascus, he asserted. After his death, he had been reborn in another place, but had lived only six months there, and now was with his present family. He pleaded to go back to his former home in Damascus and his family agreed to take him there. Along the way, he astonished them by naming the different places they passed and when they reached the city, he led the way through the streets to a house he said had been his. He knocked at the door and called the woman who answered by name. He identified himself as her husband and inquired about their children, relatives and acquaintances.

Wortabet says:

The Druses of the place soon met to inquire into the truth of the matter. The boy gave them a full account of his past life among them, of the names of his acquaintances, the property which he had possessed, and the debts which he had left. All was found to be strictly true, except for a small sum which he said a certain weaver owed him. The man was called, and on the claim being mentioned to him, he acknowledged it, pleading his poverty for not having paid it to the children of the deceased. The child then asked the woman who had been his wife, whether she had found a sum of money which he had hid in the cellar; and on her replying in the negative, he went directly to the place, dug up the treasure, and counted it before them. The money was found to be of exactly the amount and kind of specie which he had specified. His wife and children, who had become considerably older than himself, then gave him some money, and he returned with his new friends to his mountain home.<sup>[25]</sup>

## **Burma**

In *The Soul of a People*, Harold Fielding-Hall tells us that many Burmese children remember previous lives. As the children grow older, their memories fade, 'but to the young children they are very clear'. He adds, 'I have seen many such',<sup>[26]</sup> and describes two cases he personally investigated and a third case, of adult past-life memory, that was related to him.

## **The Returning Monk (1800s)**

We do not know whether Pythagoras and Apollonius had impressions of what they believed to be previous lives in childhood or adulthood. The English philosopher John Locke wrote in 1694 that he had met a Mayor of Queenborough who believed he had once been Socrates,<sup>[27]</sup> but again, it is not clear whether the apparent memories surfaced in childhood or adulthood. A clearer and more developed adult account was included by Fielding-Hall in *The Soul of a People*. Unlike Fielding-Hall's personally-investigated child cases, however, this one is reported at second-hand.

A British army officer travelling in Burma told Fielding-Hall that he once stopped at a rural monastery for the night. He was struck by its size and the beauty of its teak construction, especially given the seclusion of the nearby village. He learned that on this site there had been a small building, built of bamboo and grass, as were other rural monasteries. Distressed that he had so little space for his school, the monk who resided there had planted and carefully tended teak trees so that a better structure might eventually replace it. Knowing that teak trees take a full century or more to mature, he promised that he himself would return in a future life to finish the job.

The monk died and another took his place. The bamboo monastery was rebuilt many times. After a while the monks stopped coming there and the place declined. The village felt its absence, because it had lost its school. Then one day a young monk came walking out of the forest. He identified himself

as the rebirth of the one who had planted the teak trees and announced that he had come back to harvest them and build the new monastery. He knew the path to the old monastery and the names of the hills and streams in the area. He answered all the villagers' questions correctly. He had been born far in the south of Burma, he said. As a child, he had recalled nothing about his promise to return, but later the memory had come to him in a dream, and he had set out for the village.<sup>[28]</sup>

### **The Okshitgon Twins (Late 1800s)**

Maung San Nyein and Ma Gywin were born on the same day in neighbouring houses in the village of Okshitgon. They grew up playing together, fell in love and married. They had a happy life together but died in middle age on the same day, of the same disease. This was the year after the British Army had taken over Mandalay (in 1886). There was unrest throughout the country, especially in the area around Okshitgon, causing many people to leave their homes for safer places. Among those who left Okshitgon at this time were a young couple and their newly-born twin boys, Maung Gyi and Maung Ngé.

They moved to the village of Kabyu, where the twins grew up. When they began to talk, their parents were surprised to hear them refer to themselves as Maung San Nyein and Ma Gywin. They recognized the names as those of the couple who had died in Okshitgon shortly before the twins' birth, so they took them there to test them. The children were familiar with everything in Okshitgon. 'They knew the roads and the houses and the people, and they recognized the clothes they used to wear in a former life; there was no doubt about it. One of them, the younger, remembered too, how she had borrowed two rupees from a woman, Ma Thet, unknown to her husband, and left the debt unpaid. Ma Thet was still living and so they asked her, and she recollected that it was true she had lent the money long ago'.

Fielding-Hall met Gyi and Ngé not long after these events, when they were just over six years old. He was struck by their difference in appearance. 'The elder, into whom the soul of the man entered, is a fat, chubby little fellow, but the younger twin is smaller, and has a curious dreamy look in his face, more like a girl than a boy'. The twins told him much about their lives as San Nyein and Gywin, and also what had happened after their deaths. They had existed for a while without bodies, wandering through the air and hiding in trees. Then they were reborn as twins. Their memories used to be clearer, Gyi said, but they were becoming 'duller and duller' and they could no longer remember all that they used to.<sup>[29]</sup>

### **Rebirth of a Marionetteer (Late 1800s)**

Another child Fielding-Hall encountered was a seven-year-old girl who recalled having been a man who worked the dolls in a travelling marionette show. Even as a young child, she could manipulate the strings on a marionette doll. When she was four, she recognized a particular booth and dolls as her own. 'She knew all about them, knew the name of each doll, and even some of the words they used to say in the plays'.

She had been married four times, the girl told Fielding-Hall. Two wives had died, one she had divorced, and the last was living at the time of the man's death and was living still. The divorced wife had been a 'dreadful woman.' She pointed to a mark on her shoulder. 'This was given me once in a quarrel', she explained. 'She took up a chopper and cut me like this. Then I divorced her. She had a dreadful temper'. The mark had been present at her birth, Fielding-Hall determined. 'I was assured that it corresponded exactly with one that had been given to the man by his wife in just such a quarrel as the little girl described'.<sup>[30]</sup>

## **United States**



## Nellie Horster (1892)

Although this account, published in the *Milwaukee Sentinel* on 25 September 1892, is very slight, it is similar to other accounts of this type. JG Horster wrote to the newspaper to tell of his daughter Nellie, who insisted that she be called Maria, the name of a daughter he had lost in early childhood, three years prior to Nellie's birth. When Maria was alive, the family had resided in Effingham, Illinois, from which they had moved since her death. When Nellie was nine, Mr Horster had a need to return to Effingham and took Nellie along with him. Nellie recognized the house in which they had lived as well as several people known to Maria. Nellie reminded her father of the schoolhouse she had attended and asked to see it again. When taken there, she walked without hesitation up to the desk which Maria had once occupied, and said, 'This is where I used to sit'.<sup>[51]</sup>

## Pre-1900 Reincarnation Accounts vs Modern Cases

Thirteen of these eighteen stories from before 1900 are accounts in Matlock's sense. Only four are cases – the Indian case investigated by Aurangzeb, the Japanese case of Katsugoro, and Fielding-Hall's two Burmese child cases. All subjects save the Burmese monk who returned to build his teak monastery are children.

There have been no notable criticisms of these early cases. For the most part, sceptics appear to have been unaware of them, but the numerous parallels in the structure and recurring features of the pre-1900 accounts and cases and more recent cases presents a challenge to the idea claims of past-life memory are always culturally-conditioned fantasies, faulty memories or the like. True, there are some culture-linked patterns, but there are numerous cross-culturally universal patterns in reincarnation cases also.<sup>[52]</sup> (see [Patterns in Reincarnation Cases](#)).

Among the recurring features of these fourteen accounts and cases from before 1900 that appear also in later cases are:

- the predominance of male subjects
- the early age at which most of the memories are reported
- the fading of the memories by middle childhood
- the veridical (demonstrably factual) nature of many of the memories
- the reports of communications in dreams or as apparitions
- reported memories of the intermission (inter-life period)
- behaviors and personality that are consistent with the identified previous person
- physical traits, including birthmarks matching death wounds, as well as a general resemblance, consistent with the identified previous person
- the preference for reincarnation in the same cultural or ethnic group, sometimes in the same family or among friends

James G Matlock

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## References

### Footnotes

1.^ Myers (1903), vol. 2, 134.

2.^ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, book 15, line 161.

3.^ Philostratus, *Apollonius of Tyana*, book 3, chaps. 23-24.

4.^ Matlock (2019), 91; italics in original.

5.^ de Groot (1901), 143.

6.^ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yang\\_Hu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yang_Hu)

7.^ de Groot (1901), 143-44. Compare the less-literal translation by Empress Zhang of Yang Hu's biography, uploaded to the Scholars of Shen Zhou forum by Aaron K. on 25 November 2013, <http://the-scholars.com/viewtopic.php?t=23349>, 15.

8.^ de Groot (1901), 146.

9.^ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fayuan\\_Zhulin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fayuan_Zhulin)

10.^ de Groot (1901), 144.

11.^ Name printed as Ts'ai-Niang in the original, normalized here.

12.^ de Groot (1901), 147-48.

13.^ Willoughby-Meade (1928), 76-77.

14.^ 'The Buddha said, 'Those who leave their parents, go out of the home, understand the mind, reach the source and comprehend the immaterial, are called Çramana' (Suzuki, [The Sutra of Forty-Two Chapters](#), chap. 1, line 1).

15.^ de Groot (1901), 145-46.

16.^ de Groot (1901), 149-50.

17.^ Willoughby-Meade (1928), 6-7.

18.^ Willoughby-Meade (1928), 9.

19.^ Stevenson (2001), 284 n3.

20. ^ Matlock (2019), 89-90, quoting from a document preserved along with related correspondence by the Division of Perceptual Studies of the University of Virginia Medical Center.
21. ^ Hearn (1897), 267-90.
22. ^ Haraldsson & Matlock (2016), 180.
23. ^ Hearn (1907), 175-78.
24. ^ Churchill (1853), 171n.
25. ^ Wortabet (1860), 308-9n.
26. ^ Fielding Hall (1898), 338.
27. ^ Locke (1694/1975), §§14, 19.
28. ^ Fielding Hall (1898), 335-38.
29. ^ Fielding Hall (1898), 338-41.
30. ^ Fielding Hall (1898), 348-49.
31. ^ Shirley (1936), 67.
32. ^ Matlock (2019), 177-78.