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Could a boy somehow accurately know events from the life of a snake that died before he was born? (1971Yes/iStock)

DISCOVERY

3-Year-Old Remembers Past Life as Snake, Gives Verified Details of Encounter With Hunter

BY TARA MACISAAC

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A young boy named Dalawong in **Thailand** was 3 years old when he met an acquaintance of his father's, named Mr. Hiew, for the first time. The boy seemed to know in detail about a confrontation Hiew once had with a snake—but how Dalawong knew these details remains a mystery.

Dalawong claimed it was because he was that snake in a previous life. He said he was in a cave when he encountered two dogs. He fought with the dogs before

was in a cave which he encountered two dogs. He fought with the dogs before confronting their owner, Hiew. Hiew killed the snake. These details were all confirmed by Hiew. Dalawong said that after he died, he saw that his current father had eaten a piece of this snake. It is true that his father ate a piece of the snake Hiew killed at that time, before Dalawong's birth.

Dalawong touched Hiew's shoulder, recalled his father, and said Hiew had been bitten there by a snake. Hiew did, indeed, have a scar on that shoulder from a snake bite. Though Dalawong was initially upset with Hiew, the boy forgave him. Dalawong said it was not good to be a snake, and Hiew released him from that misery. The boy started killing snakes often, which he felt was a good deed. Incidentally, Dalawong was born with a skin condition which caused the lower half of his body to be covered in scales, like a snake.

This account was investigated by Francis Story, an associate of the late Dr. **Ian Stevenson**, a psychiatrist and **reincarnation** researcher at the University of Virginia. Dr. Stevenson's successor in reincarnation studies, Dr. **Jim Tucker**, recounts the case in his book, "Return to Life: Extraordinary Cases of Children Who Remember Past Lives."

Tucker wrote: "I may be well past your boggle threshold now, the point at which a story becomes too mind-boggling to accept. I confess this case approaches my own boggle threshold." Even for people who believe in reincarnation from human life to human life, it may be hard to accept the idea of reincarnation from animal to human form. Dr. Tucker said he has heard other cases of children purportedly remembering **past lives** as animals, though these cases are rare within the thousands he and Dr. Stevenson have compiled of past-life memories.

He gave another example of an animal reincarnation case. An American boy named Peter was given a candy necklace, which seemed to trigger a thought or memory of a **past life**. Peter said he "remembered" when he was a chimpanzee at a zoo a boy had thrown a candy necklace in his cage. He didn't know what to do with the necklace, so he threw it back at the boy. He told his mother in detail how he had been captured from the wild and brought to the zoo.

Tucker wrote: "Though I might be able to believe that a chimpanzee could have some conscious memory of a candy necklace, I certainly don't believe a snake would remember details about a particular location and a series of events, and

years later be able to recognize a man who was its final nemesis. It's true I don't know what goes on in the mind of a snake, but that does cross my boggle threshold."

Tucker has been convinced that reincarnation exists, that the mind survives the body, after studying many cases in which numerous details of past-life memories have been verified—details so hard to come by, he said, the families or children clearly did not fake it. Tucker wonders whether Dalawong picked up the knowledge about the snake confrontation in some other way—some way nonetheless mysterious, but not necessarily involving a snake reincarnating as a human.



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