



RECOVERING FROM POLIO thanks to U. S. sailors of harbor defense unit at Yokosuka, Mayumi Ikima thanks them individually for money they donated for medical care when they learned of her plight last spring. (International)

SCIENCE AT WORK

By DELOS SMITH
United Press Science Editor

New York — (U.P.) — Psychiatrists the world over are pondering the exceedingly strange case of the living-dead Hindu who for seven years departed from this world yet, in the flesh, remained around. You may enjoy pondering it, too, since it shows there are still mysteries within men which pale mystery fiction.

The Hindu was 56 when it started. He was father of 10 children, had been an employee of a government department for 22 years. His chief had died. He was in line to succeed. But other government workers in-

trigued. First, he was transferred to another department. Then he was suspended. No one would tell him what the charges against him were.

He fretted and fumed. Two months passed, while he kept saying he didn't feel too well and was afraid he might become ill. One day his temperature shot up to 103 degrees. He was semi-conscious. Malarial parasites, but of the benign type, were found in his blood. After two days of fever, he became like a dead man except he was alive. No Folk Tale

It is a state in which the word "stupor" is applied, but in its medical sense. Living-dead is the clearest way of describing that sort of stupor. His body kept right on functioning. But his mind no longer cared to exercise sovereignty over it. He was gone, yet he was there—on a bed and breathing. Mind you, this is no folkish tale from mystic India. It is a sober and factual medical account of something that happened.

One of the man's sons was a fully qualified physician. Thus, the resources of modern medicine were brought to bear. Every test was made to find out what was wrong with this vegetating human body. The collective result was—nothing was wrong. Temperature was normal. But reflexes were non-existent. No part of the body moved, unless it was moved. An arm or a leg could be twisted into a grotesque position and it would stay there until gravity straightened it. There was no evidence that the body felt sensation of any kind.

In this state the man remained for seven years. Once each day, all his joints were massaged, including the small joints of fingers and toes. Each day, nutrition was put into the body by injection or by stomach tube; each day, waste substances were removed.

Explanation Wanted
During the seven years, pneumonia developed. It was treated with penicillin and cleared up in eight days. During the second year, he developed an abscess on the back. It was treated surgically—without anesthesia, and "the patient did not show the slightest movement of his body during the operation."

One evening the man's temperature—which, remember, had remained normal—suddenly shot up to 105. Blood tests were normal but again revealed malarial parasites. For four days his temperature readings were on a two-way escalator. On the fourth day, he had convulsions. Thereafter, the body moved again on its own, at long last. The first movements were in the fingers.

Within a few days the toes moved and so did the eyeballs. Slowly, over weeks, the mind came back, exercising more and more sovereignty. Now the man is normal—"bright and cheerful as he was before his illness." The charges against him were dropped during the first year he was away from the world. His memory is sound save for the seven years. For them, it is a blank.

The report on this strange case was made by Dr. N. S. Vahia of Bombay to a technical journal of the American Psychiatric Association and to journals elsewhere in the world. Science would like an explanation.

Eugene Electric Rate Reduction Due

Eugene — (U.P.) — Some 22,000 customers of the Eugene Water and Electric Board will receive rate reductions next year.

The reductions, approved at a meeting here Monday night, will become effective "on or before" Feb. 1, 1956.

It was expected the changes would mean an eight per cent cut in residential electric bills and a 13 per cent cut for commercial users. It was decided to maintain the 10 per cent surcharge to electric customers outside the city limits.

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