

ABOUT SHAKUNTALA DEVI

Shakuntala Devi is a calculating prodigy who was born on November 4, 1939 in Bangalore, India. Her calculating gifts first demonstrated themselves while she was doing card tricks with her father when she was three. They report she "beat" them by memorization of cards rather than by sleight of hand.



Shakuntala Devi was born in Bangalore, India to an orthodox priestly Brahmin family. At the age of three she manifested an extraordinary love for numbers and by the time she was five years old, Shakuntala became an expert in complex mental Arithmetic. With a divine skill in numbers from the age of three, she has been stunning the whole world with her uncanny skill in computing the most intricate problems mentally, even quicker than the highly sophisticated computers in the world.

By age six she demonstrated her calculation and memorization abilities at the University of Mysore. At the age of eight she performed her unique gift at the Annamalai University in Southern India and the then Vice Chancellor of the University Rt Hon. V.S. Srinivasa Shastriar P.C., CH, LX.D. called her a "living wonder". Around the same time she performed in the Osmania University in Hyderabad and the Vizag University. Soon Shakuntala, who displayed her talents to gatherings of distinguished people all over India, came to be acclaimed as a Child Prodigy.

Problems that took learned men hours to solve, she could solve within seconds. While six years old, Shakuntala demonstrated her talents at the University of Mysore, Bangalore, to a large gathering of students and professors of the University. At that tender age she worked out the most complicated arithmetical calculations with lightening rapidity and scientific precision and kept the assembly spell-bound for two hours.

Still in her early ages, Shakuntala sailed to Europe in 1950. In London on the 5th of October, 1950, the BBC presented Shakuntala to the viewers of Great Britain. Shakuntala gave quick answers to problems posed by the BBC, but when further questions were given, she challenged the problem as set and said it was worked out wrongly. Mr. Leslie Mitchell, the BBC's interviewer did some quick checking and confessed that Shakuntala was right and the BBC wrong!

At the University of Rome one of her answers to the problems was found to be wrong by the calculating machine, but after re-checking it was found that the machine had made the mistake and not Shakuntala!

In Sydney, Australia, Shakuntala matched her wits against their most sophisticated computer at that time, "UTECOM" of the University of New

South Wales. Questions were set by the then well known Professors Mr. R.G. Smart and Mr. Barry Thornton, the Chief Mathematicians, Seconds before the questions were fed to the computer, Shakuntala had the answers. "It's frightening" remarked Mr. Thornton.

Throughout her tours around the world, Shakuntala has performed in Universities, Colleges, Schools, Theatres, and on Television with great distinction.

In England on the 27th of September 1973, Shakuntala appeared on the BBC programme "Nationwide" with the distinguished Bob Wellings on the popular ITV programme "Today" and the Televiewers of Great Britain were left in a daze by the "mind-collapsing" performance of Shakuntala Devi.

She has received accolades and high letters of appreciation from all these Universities. Shakuntala Devi has also performed in the World Bank - Washington D.C. and the United Nation in the year 1977.

Unlike many other calculating prodigies, for example Truman Henry Safford, her abilities did not wane in adulthood. In 1977 she extracted the 23rd root of a 201-digit number mentally. On June 18, 1980 she demonstrated the multiplication of two 13-digit numbers $7,686,369,774,870 \times 2,465,099,745,779$ picked at random by the Computer Department of Imperial College, London. She answered the question in 28 seconds. However, this time is more likely the time for dictating the answer (a 26-digit number) than the time for the mental calculation (the time of 28 seconds was quoted on her own website). Her correct answer was 18,947,668,177,995,426,462,773,730. **This event is mentioned on page 26 of the 1995 Guinness Book of Records ISBN 0-553-56942-2.**

Universities of various countries in which she has performed:

India: Mysore University –Bangalore, Osmania University – Hyderabad, Vizag University, Annamalai University, Benares Hindu University

England: University of Leeds – Yorkshire, Kings College of London, Surrey University, University of London, University of Manchester, University of Birmingham

USA: Southern Methodist university - Dallas, Texas, USC - University of Southern California - Los Angeles, UCLA - University of California - Los Angeles, Staynford University – California, Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, Columbia University - New York, Princeton University - New Jersey, Massachusetts Institute of Technology-Boston, George Washington University - Washington DC, Georgia University - Atlanta Georgia, State University of Pennsylvania, Buffalo University and many others in the USA

Canada: MC Gill University – Montreal, University of Toronto, MC Master University, York University – Toronto

Australia: University of New South Wales – Sydney, University of Melbourne

Japan: Tokyo University

And numerous other universities and schools around the world

Awards Received

- The most distinguished Woman of the year in 1969 at the University of Philippines and a Gold Medal.
- Ramanujan Mathematical Genius Award in Washington D.C. handed over by the then Ambassador of India in the USA in the year 1988.

There are also various other awards.

Books Authored by MS. SHAKUNTALA DEVI

In 2006 she has released a new book called In the Wonderland of Numbers with Orient Paperbacks which talks about a girl Neha and her fascination for numbers.

Some of her Books:

- Puzzles to Puzzle You
- More Puzzles to Puzzle You
- Awaken the Genius in Your Child
- Book of Numbers
- Astrology for You
- Figuring -- The Joy of Numbers
- Mathability
- In the Wonderland of Numbers
- Perfect Murder
- master of game
- The World of Homosexuals