

The Spirits Seller's Spirit

— Case 76 —

Folks in southeastern USA would make it from corn and call it “white lightning,” but in the island nation of Sri Lanka, they make it from the sap of coconut trees and call it “arrack.” Sammy Fernando was a skilled maker of arrack. Folks all up and down the river would buy the strong spirit he distilled at his jungle hideout. Unfortunately for Sammy, he often partook rather freely of his own product and so he was drunk when he stepped from the store, where he had just bought some cheap cigars, and was run over by a speeding truck.

Sammy's funeral was exceptionally well attended, not so much by his many distraught customers, but because he was known as a generous man who gave freely to those in need.

Sammy's death by lorry (a term for truck that the Sinhalese [Sri Lankans] picked up from the British) happened in January of 1969, in the town of Gorakana. Seven months later and about 5½ miles away, in Mt. Lavinia — a suburb of Sri Lanka's capital — the family of Ulysses and Nadine Jay welcomed a new addition whom they named Lucas. And only 8 months after that, Nadine noticed something she thought was most strange. At a time when Lucas was being obstinate about taking his milk, in the midst of a conversation she happened to say the word “lorry,” whereupon the babe immediately began to suckle. It didn't take the mother long to discover that her new child's cooperation could be almost magically obtained by simply uttering that normally innocuous word. Clearly, but mysteriously, baby Lucas was really afraid of trucks.

At that time, the Jay's had no thoughts of reincarnation; but some 10 months later, Lucas started talking about a previous life. His name, he said, was “Gorakana Sammy.” He clamored to be given cigarettes and arrack and to be taken to Gorakana. His parents, naturally, declined to supply booze and smokes, and resisted the trip to a town where they knew no one.

So far, the tale of Lucas and Sammy may seem typical of child-recall cases, but it has two features that make it quite special. One is that the number of confirmed facts and recognitions is exceptionally large (see the table below) as is the number of people interviewed by the research team (more than 35). The other special feature is that 16 of Lucas' statements were written down by an unimpeachable witness prior to any contact with the Fernandos. The witness was a Buddhist monk who resided at a temple near Mt. Lavinia. He not only recorded the statements but he followed up by going to Gorakana and verifying each of them, again, before anyone who knew the Fernando family had become aware of Lucas' claims.

[Note: Buddhism teaches that a soul enters its new body at the moment of conception. The overlapping dates of Sammy's death and Lucas' apparent conception did not, however, deter the monk from objectively researching the case.]

This is one of the thousands of cases carefully investigated by Dr. Ian Stevenson and company from the University of Virginia. The case is presented in great detail in Stevenson's book, *Cases of the Reincarnation Type, Vol II*. Included is a table cataloging 40 separate statements and 19

recognitions made by Lucas concerning the life and family of Sammy Fernando. The more significant and telling statements are given here:

Confirmed Statements Made by Lucas Jay About the Life of Sammy Fernando [Statements followed by a ★ were recorded and verified by the Buddhist monk when Lucas was 18 months old.)	
Statement	Confirmation/Fact
His name was Sammy and he lived in Gorakana. ★	There had been a man named B. Selvin Fernando who lived in Gorakana since his birth in 1919. He was generally called Sammy and sometimes referred to himself as "Gorakana Sammy."
His father was named Jamis. ★	Sammy Fernando's father was named B. Jamis Fernando. [Note: in Sri Lanka, first initials generally connote a family relationship rather than a given name.]
When he mentioned his father, Lucas would cover his right eye. ★	Jamis' only had one functioning eye, his left.
He used to travel by bus and train. ★ This was indicated via sounds and motions.	Sammy used to take a bus to get to his job on the railroads.
He had attended the "dilapidated school." ★	The school Sammy had attended was known literally as "the dilapidated school" as it was in serious need of repairs.
At school, he had a teacher named Francis. ★	Sammy's widow remembered that he had had a teacher named Francis.
He had a niece named Kusuma to whom he gave money ★ and who would cook noodles for him. ★	Sammy's sister's daughter was named Kusuma. She told researchers that Sammy had sometimes given her money and that she used to prepare one of his favorite noodle dishes.
Lucas asked his grandmother to give him money so that he and Kusuma could put it in the alms box at Kale Pansala. ★	There is a Buddhist temple near Gorakana where Sammy used to spend a lot of time as a child. To this day, some old-timers still call it by the name Kale Pansala, although its name officially changed about a decade before Sammy's birth.
There were two monks at the "Kale Pansala" temple, one of whom was named Amitha. ★	True, at the time of Sammy's death.
He had a wife named Maggie and a daughter, Susan.	Sammy's wife, Maggilin Awis, was usually called Maggie. Susan was his daughter.
Lucas sometimes asked those going to the store to buy him some Four Aces cigarettes. No one in his family smoked.	Sammy's favorite brands of cigarettes were Three Roses and Four Aces.

He used a boat to transport the arrack he distilled. Once the boat overturned and all the arrack was lost.	The boat dock was behind Sammy's house. The liquor-loss incident occurred about 8 years prior to his death.
He had been drunk and quarreled with his wife and was following her down the road when he stopped to buy smokes. As he left the store he was hit by a lorry and died immediately. Lucas would lie down and demonstrate the position of Sammy's body on the road.	All true, except that Sammy was not pronounced dead until a couple of hours after he was taken to a hospital.

The discrepancy in this last item is suggestive of an NDE, in which Sammy's spirit exited his body and observed it lying on the road and then departed for other realms, leaving his physical body to struggle on for a few more hours.

Lucas' actions were in tune with his verified statements. He often asked — and sometimes demanded — to be taken to Gorakana. Once, when he was asked why he was waving at cars on the road, he said he was getting a taxi to take him there.

He would often ask for arrack or pretend to be drinking it and then stagger around as if drunk. When Lucas was visited by Sammy's friends, he seem to know which had been drinking buddies and he would suggest that they drink together. Stevenson (who was a psychiatrist) comments, "I doubt if any child has shown as vividly as [Lucas] has the several types of behavior that characterize the conduct of alcoholics." Lucas also asked to be served the hot, spicy foods that were a favorite of Sammy in particular and arrack drinkers in general. His family, which did not drink arrack, occasionally ate spicy foods but wisely refrained from giving any to a small child.

Lucas asked for a sarong and, although he was really too young, he was allowed to wear one at times. He would tie the knot with a flap protruding which, he explained, was for holding his money. No one else in his family did likewise — but Sammy Fernando did.

Source

Stevenson, Ian, *Cases of the Reincarnation Type, Vol II: Ten Cases in Sri Lanka*, University Press of Virginia, 1977, pp. 235-280.

[Note: As with other case write-ups in this series, some names have been "translated" into English-sounding equivalents for ease of comprehension by Western readers. See note with further explanation on page 3 of Case 71]



Copyright 2013 Miles Edward Allen

[A Survival-Top-40 case](#)