

Characteristics of Lamkang Humor

Dead-baby jokes and other tales of Benglam

Jane Lorenzen



Lamkang project:

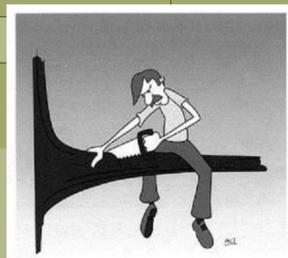
- Endangered language (<10,000 speakers, weak transmission to younger speakers)
- Curate, translate, and publish Lamkang material

Feature	American jokes	Lamkang jokes
Subjects of jokes	Impersonal, unnamed, and generic (except for topical jokes about current events) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A guy walks into a bar... • A priest, a minister, and a rabbi... 	Personal, specific, and named: Benglam
Targets of derogatory jokes	Anonymous, generic members of a category (a blonde, an Aggie, etc.)	Benglam, a cultural folk hero
Depictions of death	Rare; even actions that would have fatal results do not acknowledge the inevitable outcome	Matter-of-fact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “One day Benglam was carrying his child’s body to the cemetery...” • “Some neighboring tribesmen were chasing Benglam in order to kill him...” with no further explanation
Depictions of injury	Implied or denied—no blood, no emergency room visits	Explicitly described, integral to the punch line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...and Benglam fell and broke his back.”



(1) alraang tang'u Benglam paa khat k'am-pi mdit pi ang'u	'Long ago there was one Benglam man, it is said.'
2) ma nao di you leek-da'u mthungbi ngu mnao klruul-rang'au txap-txap-da'u kva pi-di lam-thang-va- ngi kva	'When his son died, he was on his way to bury him, crying and crying.'
(3) ava phak-thuh mdo-kyuul pi	'He wrapped the child in a mat.'
(4) ma nao va phak thuh tklum'i mdoklum ava mdoptlaak pthii lam tha	'He rolled up his son in the mat and dropped him on the way.'
(5) pthlaathi-da vaa-da mphak dak den alruulthi-da krvang	'After he dropped him, he kept going, and he buried just the mat, and then returned.'
(6) knlee pii di mrvang-knelt thungbi snung ki mnao kdi-you mdo-ptlaak-thi'a lam'i kploom data lam'i	'On his way back, there was his child from before that he had dropped, lying dead on the road.'
(7) mdo-ar-van-phaak pi di'u m-thungbi ngu "mi nao ruk'a di yau ngoi-ngo da ploom chdaam da" di-da'u mdit'o	'Coming across it, he thought, "Someone else's child is lying there dead as well.'
(8) "oh nei knao data di you pakdaa kditna mi nao ruk'a hei di yau ngoi-ngo da kploomchdaat'a chdaam da" mdit'oploom	“I thought only my child had died, but look, lots of other people’s dead children are lying all over the place.”

(1) alraang Beenglam tdit mi paa khat'au	'Long ago there was a man we call Benglam.'
(2) ding kphur ra k'hang'au,	'He went to cut down a tree.'
(11) ding han loon thi da mpaar thah k'ong thi da	'He climbed and was sitting on the [branch].'
(3) mbul ktong tha myun phur thungbi ngu beng buk da'u	'When he reached down and cut toward (between himself and) the trunk, it broke off.'
(4) myung tlaak na ngu mrkool beng buk da'u di.	'Then he fell and broke his back.'



References

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