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Lam Ang

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THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

(Ilocano Epic)

The Ilocano *Biag ni Lam-ang* is the oldest recorded Philippine folk epic and the only complete epic to come down to us from the Christian Filipino groups. The earliest recording of the poem was given by Fr. Gerardo Blanco to Isabelo delos Reyes, who published it serially in *El Ilocano* from December 1889 to February 1890, with a Spanish translation in prose, and also reprinted it in his *El Folklore Filipino*, Vol. 2 (Manila: Imprenta de Santa Cruz, 1890), under the title “*Vida de Lam-ang (antiguo poema popular de Ilocos)*”, with the Ilocano texts and text translation in Spanish. Important subsequent editions of Lam-ang are those published by Canuto Medina in 1906; the one serialized in *La Lucha* from Feb. 20, 1926 to June 5, 1926; the Parayno version of 1927; and the composite version of L. Y. Yabes of 1935.



Coming to light as it did just when the awits and *corridos* (metrical romances) were becoming very popular, the story of Lam-ang inevitably came to be retold also in awit form. As a matter of fact, it is the awit version of Lam-ang, published in 1927 by the Imprenta Parayno Hermanos (Calasiao, Pangasinan), which specialized in the printing of Iloko awits (or *panagbiags*), which became the most popular version of this folk epic. It carries the long title characteristic of awits, *Historia a Pacasaritaan ti Panagbiag ni Lam-ang iti Ili a Nalbuan nga Asaoa ni Doña Ines Cannoyan iti Ili a Calanotian*, and opens with a religious invocation, also characteristic of awits. According to Manuel, Yabes relied mainly on this Parayno version when he did the composite version of Lam-ang in 1935 and translated it into English. The Yabes English translation of Lam-ang, is, by the way, the most widely-known translation in the Philippines today.

(Source: Damiana L. Eugenio, (ed.). *Philippine Folk Literature: an Anthology*, Philippines :Folklore Studies Program and The U.P. Folklorists, Inc. , 1982.)

THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

Translated by Angelito L. Santos

Listen then while I narrate at length
The life of Lam-ang
Because his mother conceived him that month.

She did not abstain from any edible fruit;
Tamarind fruits tender and thin as bamboo strings,
Kamias, *daldaligan*

Oranges and pomelos;
Butcher fish, striped bass, fishes of all sorts;
Clams and bivalves big as plates,

Maratangtang and sea urchins;
Sea algae, aragan and *arosip*;
Shucked oysters, crayfish caught with net;

Blue crabs baited with *salelem*,
Deer tracked down and killed, boar trapped,
All of these she tasted on her eating binge.

Until Namongan, the woman Unnayan,
Wife of Don Juan Panganiban,
Was done conceiving.

Ilocano Epic

And when they had made whole
A new soul,
Her womb grew bigger.

“Listen, my husband Don Juan,
Go check on our bamboo groves
In the mountain of Capariaan.

“Then make me my reclining bed
The bed I shall use
Right after giving birth.

“Being God-given, my husband Don Juan,
The custom cannot be gainsaid.
So go cut me some mature bamboo shoots.”

He prepared to leave and once there
Went around the grove.
Then he hailed the strong winds.

As well as the torrential rains
And cavernous clouds.
Lightning and thunder came in waves,

Hitting the groves again and again
Till it looked like the choicest shoots
Had been cut down by a trained bamboo cutter.

“It is unseemly, such a shame
For me to carry you, bamboos.”
They thus went ahead, Don Juan behind them.

Having reached the home he came down from,
In the town of Nalbuan,
The bamboos rearranged themselves in the yard.

THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

“My husband Don Juan,
Let my reclining bed be of hardwood:
This part of molave and *gastan*;

“That part of *dangla* and guava,
Whose barks have been skinned,
Then buy me a pot, husband Don Juan,
And a stove to heat my bathwater.
And a one-man pot too
For our child’s umbilical cord.”

And having procured all these, he trekked
To the blackest mountain, upstream,
To fight the Igorots there.

And when her time came
To deliver the blood made whole,
There was not one who was not called:

The masseuse-midwife, the fish-hooker, Alisot;
The diver Marcos; Pasho the rich man.
Since none of them could induce delivery.

They remembered the woman
Shrivelled with age,
For she was known for her strong fingers.

The baby started to talk as soon
as the old woman delivered him.
“Namungan, my mother,
Let my name be Lam-ang when you have me baptized.

“And let old man Guibuan be my godfather.
Mother, I must also ask you if I have a father;
Whether or not I arose like water vapor.”

Ilocano Epic

“My son, Lam-ang; if it’s your father you speak of,
You were still in my womb when he left,
Left for the forest, the place of Igorot.”

Lam-ang then said:
My mother Namungan, please let your son go,
For I would seek Father whom I came from.”

“Ah, son, brave-man Lam-ang,
Please don’t go.
For you legs are like bamboo string.
“And your hands are like needles.
And you were born, my son,
Even before your ninth month inside me.”

All the more the brave man Lam-ang still persisted.
He left for the forest, the place of Igorots.
For he wanted to see the father he sprang from.

For he had with him the stone of *sagang*,
The stone of *tangraban*, of *laolaoigan*,
A wild carabao’s amulet.

When he passed by a grove of *caña vernal*,
The shoots bent down
For he also had the amulet of centipede.

Ang having reached the river’s ford,
He spied the tallest tree around, a *rancheria*,
A landmark of tattooed Igorot country.

He cast his eyes around
And saw this root shaped like a stove
And went to wash his one-man pot

THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

And placed his foot inside it,
The pot of mound-dwelling dwarves,
That cannot suffice for more than one traveller.

Having eaten his fill,
The man Lam-ang gratefully rested,
Amiable host to the food, the filling grace.

He rested his shield against his body;
Stuck his spear into the ground by his feet;
Unsheathed his *campilan* from its sheath;

Then fell into a light sleep.
Then came the ghost of his father, saying,
“My friend Lam-ang, go quickly instead;

“Right now they feast around your father’s skull.”
Lam-ang was jolted out of his slumber
And at once collected his weapons and started to go,

Walking on and on,
Upon reaching the blackest mountain
At Maculili and Dagman,

He went directly to the assembled revelers.
For he had seen his father’s skull facing the east,
Caged in the woven end of a bamboo pole.

“Tattooed Igorots, just tell me
What foul thing my father I came from did.
It is only right that it be paid.”

“Our friend, Lam-ang,
It is only right, too,
That you go back to the house

Ilocano Epic

“You stepped down from.
Or else, you’ll be the next (to die)
After the man who was your father.”

“You tattooed Igorots...
I cannot be satisfied (with your number),
You Igorot captain,

“You Bumacas so-named,
communicate (thru a letter) with every single one,
(The members of your tribe):

“At Dardarat and Padang,
There in houses at Nueva, Dagodong and Topaan,
There in Mamo-ocan and Caoayan,

“There in Tupinao and Baodan,
Sumbangue and Luya, Bacong and Sosoba,
There in Tebteb and Caocaoayan.”

They came, having received these notes (from Bumacas)
In a rush, the tattooed Igorots,
From the neighboring towns nearby,

Like chicken attracted to grains thrown to the ground.
Oh, their number indeed was remarkable
For one cannot keep count of their number.

He then caressed his stone of *lao-laoigan*,
And jumped but once to an open field,
The man Lam-ang.

And the man Lam-ang made thunderclaps
With his armpits and thighs
As well as with both his arms.

THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

Soon they had crowded around him...
As a moving river (of bobbing heads), so to speak...
The man Lam-ang.

And having completely surrounded him,
They cut loose on him with all their arms,
On the man Lam-ang.

Like a torrential rain at dusk,
The spears fell (thickly) on him,
The man Lam-ang.

He embraced these crisscrossing spears
As one would accept
Betel-nuts passed on to him.

And when the tattooed Igorots had run out
Of sharpened bamboo poles, spears, lances,
But could not hit him even just once,

The man Lam-ang said to them:
“Now comes my turn,
I unsheath you, *campilan*, trust-worthy weapon.”

He struck the ground with this.
Ang the earth which stuck to the blade of the *campilan*,
This he ate—

A stick of rice cake
So long and large—
So their incantations would not affect him.

“Tattooed Igorots, watch me closely now.”
He beckoned to the south wind
And with it lunged at once at them.

Ilocano Epic

As though felling down banana trunks,
His bolo bit into flesh two ways, swung left or right,
The man Lam-ang.

They were mowed down in an instant,
Only one tattooed Igorot was left unharmed,
Whom he mocked at, then pinned down.

“Now comes your end.”
He slashed at his mouth, his eyes;
Cut off his ears, arms and legs.

He then let him loose, the tattooed Igorot,
Who received no mercy at his hands.
“That your relatives and your tribe may all see you.

“And your carabao’s amulet (help me)
For I now bind the lances and spears,
My booty and trophy from the Igorot.

“And now I leave you, battleground.”
The blood flowed from the dead Igorots
Like the Vigan river.

He prepared to leave, the man Lam-ang, and return
To his mother Namungan.
And having reached the town of Nalbuan:

“Mother Namungan, if I may ask,
What foulness he perpetrated,
The father I sprang from?”

“My son, Lam-ang,
If it is your father you speak of,
We never quarrelled, not even once.”

THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

“Mother Namungan, strike the *langgan*
That my younger sisters
May all come to my aid,

“The maidens numbering twice nine,
Nine times nine.
That they may shampoo my curly locks.

“At the Amburayan river.
For it had become quite dusty;
During the day-long battle yesterday.

“Mother Namungan, Do let us pay a visit
To the old barn with molave posts,

“Floored with *derraan* and polished *bellaang*.
And please ask them to sweep off the barn’s door,
The dead cockroaches, spiders, and their mess.

“For nine years have passed
Since we last visited
Our palay called *samusam*,

“*Buan* and *languingan*,
Lumanus and *lampadan*,
Maratectec and *macan*, *gaygaynet* and *balasang*.”

And having looked over the barn:
“Young maidens, pull out the panicles
From each name (of rice variety).”

“And thresh these.
And what grains one accumulates thus
Is already hers to keep.”

Ilocano Epic

And this was done.
“Young sisters, bind the straws.
Get also the coconut shell tong

“And pick some embers with it.
And younger sisters, please,
Return the charcoal later,

“For it is of *paticalang* wood.
At the Amburayan river we shall bathe.”
At the riverbank,

He cast his eyes around and soon saw
The bubbles made by the crocodile.
“My young sisters, burn the rice straw.”

Since the straw could not burn,
Lam-ang beckoned to the strongest wind—
And the straw burst into flames.

The people of San Juan were alarmed
By the sparks that reached them;
The people of Bacnotan ran

Thinking there was a conflagration,
And when they could not control the fire,
He beckoned to the torrential rain

And the cloud shaped like a precipice.
Lightning and thunder came in waves
And only then was the fire extinguished.

“Younger sisters, please do not worry while waiting
For I’ll just swim awhile
And play with the largest crocodile.”

THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

Lam-ang dived into the river
Unaware that the crocodile
Had gone downstream,

While he went upstream.
And then he went downstream,
They soon spotted each other
And began to fight.
Lam-ang became angry

And in one thrust subdued it.
Then, he carried it on his back,
And beached it,

“Younger sisters, take its teeth for a necklace
For they can be amulets when one travels;
Younger sisters we must now return
To the house we came down from.”

“Mother Namungan please pay
The wages of these, my younger sisters
A peso for each step, coming from
And back to the house.”

And this having been done:
“Mother Namungan, please open the second room.
And therefrom get my most valuable clothes.

“I must change my clothes...
Into my striped trousers, embroidered shirt
And ornate handkerchief.”

This done:
“Please open also the third room
And take from there the gold.

Ilocano Epic

Bulaoan of nine coils which breaks
When exposed to the sun
Whose heat is intense enough to sting one's heel.

“I am going to tie my white rooster, yellow-legged hen,
And my hairy dog.

“For I am going to play at Calanutian
Where Doña Ines Cannuyan lives
As news has it...

“A clean-living maiden
Who can spin nine spools overnight.”
“My son, brave man Lam-ang,

Please don't go yet
For you do not look like one
Whom Doña Ines Cannuyan

“Can fall in love with.
For her suitors are many
Including a number of Spaniards.

“Yet she has not favored any of them
With even just a glance.
And look at you...

“Can you be the one to win her love?”
“Mother Namungan, I must go.
I must enter the competition.

“At the town of Calanutian,
Who knows, Doña Ines Cannoyan
May look on me with favor.”

THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

“My son Lam-ang, if it’s a spouse you seek,
This town is full of nubile maidens,
And you can take your pick from them.”

This is what the man Lam-ang said in turn:
“Mother Namungan, of those you allude to,
I cannot choose anyone;

“Not one of the maidens you speak off.
So please don’t detain me
For I must, will go.”

“My son Lam-ang, by God,
Please tarry longer.
For they may drench you.

“With foul-smelling urine...
Spare yourself the embarrassment.”
The white rooster then said,

As well as the yellow-legged hen:
“Our mistress Namungan, we dreamt last night
That Doña Ines Cannoyan.

Cannot help becoming your daughter-in-law.”
“Mother, please take out the oil
Just heated yesterday

“So I may anoint my yellow-legged hen
And we may both look our best
When we go to the town of Calanutian.

“Mother, please hand me
The nine coils of gold bulaoan.”
And having received the gold coils,

Ilocano Epic

He tied his white rooster
Ang his hairy dog as well.
And the task completed,

He prepared to leave.
He carried his cock, the yellow-legged rooster
“May God remain with you.

“My son Lam-ang, God go with you;
Be careful, especially on your way there
Which you know more to be dangerous.”

Having heard out the advice,
Lam-ang went his way
To Calanutian, the town of Doña Ines Cannoyan.

He walked untiringly
And midway to his destination,
Encountered the man Sumarang

Whose eyes were big as plates
And whose nose was wide as two wheels.
This is what he at once said:

“My friend, brave man Lam-ang,
Where are you headed for?
Which forest do you intend to trap in?

“Which mountain do you intend to hunt in?
My friend Lam-ang?”
Replied Lam-ang:

“My friend Sumarang, may I also ask
Where you came from—
The town, the locality you visited?”

THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

Said Sumarang:
“Since you ask me, I came from the north,
The town of Calanutian.

“I went there to compete
For the hand of Doña Ines Cannoyan.”
Lam-ang said:

“Where you came from
There I also intend to go.
With the same purpose, my friend Sumarang.”

And he added:
“My friend Sumarang,
We must go now our separate ways.

“For I must go now to Calanutian to compete—
Who knows, I may be chosen by Doña Ines Cannoyan.”
“You need not go on your way.

“You cannot be, with your looks,
One Doña Ines Cannoyan can possibly choose.
So many rich men and Spaniards are there already.

“And Doña Ines Cannoyan has yet
To look out her window for anyone.
I say it again: It is futile

“For you to continue your journey.”
Sumarang (suddenly added):
“Prepare for your end

“And try defending yourself
From my spear—
It will be too bad if you can't catch

Ilocano Epic

“My hooked spear.”
Said Lam-ang then:
“Do what you will, I await your move.”

Sumarang threw his spear
To his friend, Lam-ang
Lam-ang caught it

With his little and ring fingers
As though it were betel nut
Proffered by a maiden.

Then,
He twirled it nine times
Around his neck and body.

“My friend Sumarang
I will return to you your spear
For I don't want to be in your debt.

“What you handed to me is too hot
Though its handle is cold
The handle of your spear.

“My friend Sumarang
Now wait for its coming
If you don't beware

“Your corpse will be littered hereabout
by this weapon which now comes
By your leave.”

The brave man lam-ang,
He waved at the seawinds.

THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

Then, simultaneously,
He let go of his spear
Across nine hills.

“That’s how bad manners end up.
Friend Sumarang, now I must depart
From this, our battleground.”

He carried his white rooster
And prepared to leave.
He had walked a long way

When he came across the house
Of the maiden Saridandan.
She said:

“Older brother, do stop by.
Please hurry up
And let me embrace you.

“For so long has she pined for you
The woman Saridandan.
Her eyes have grown tired

“Keeping watch from this front window
For your appearance.
The betel leaves have since dried

“At the tray which held them
In anticipation of your coming.”
This is what Saridandan said.

“Ah, woman Saridandan,
Try not to detain me any longer.
It would be futile.

Ilocano Epic

“I must go to the town of Calanutian
And try to meet Doña Ines Cannoyan.”
Saridandan said:

“How could you do that, older brother?
Why can't you accede to my request?”
He prepared to go, the man Lam-ang

And soon he approached the town
Of Calanutian.
So many were the competitors

That one can easily lose sight
Of one's companion.
One can easily walk on the heads

Of the suitors
Without missing a step.
It would be easy to plant palay

In the holes made by the spears on the ground.
One can even transplant rice there
Since the sputum of the suitors were so thick.

Lam-ang said (aloud to himself)
“What should I do to approach
The erected outhouse

“Where Doña Ines Cannoyan is wont
To take a walk?”
He opted to go between the legs

Of the massed suitors.
And the man Lam-ang finally
Reached the middle of the yard.

THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

He set down his chicken, the white rooster.
It flapped its wings once
And the outhouse fell into shambles,

Prodding Doña Ines Cannoyan to look
Out her window
His hairy dog then howled

And the outhouse was restored;
Worn parts became new;
What was already torn was restored.

Her parents then said:
“Our daughter Cannoyan, wear your best dress
For your older brother Lam-ang is here.”

Dressed up, Doña Ines Cannoyan stepped down
And walked to the outhouse towards Lam-ang.
The Spaniards and the rich Ilocanos

Were shamefaced when they saw her thus
Cannoyan said:
“Sir Lam-ang, walk faster, give me your hands.

“And let us embrace.
For the woman Cannoyan
Has long pined for you.

“And sir, let us go to the house
With the bamboo roof,
Which, being of the thin and delicate variety,

“Can break beneath the hot sun
And therefore needs the shade”
Of the biggest tree in the yard.

Ilocano Epic

Having gone up the hut:
“Father, to whom I owe my life,
Please bring out the golden chair

“Plated with bulaoan gold
Made by people from the north.”
And everyone having taken a seat:

“Mother Namungan, to whom I owe my life,
Please cook some rice
On the pot for one.

“A pot of ground-dwelling dwarves
Which can allow for others on their way
To share of its inexhaustible bounty.

“For it is only right
That we prepare food
For brave man Don Lam-ang

“Father to whom I owe my life
Please catch the caponed rooster
Fattened for my older brother Lam-ang.”

The food cooked, they sat down
To eat at the dining table
Lam-and and Ines Cannoyan ate

From the same plate with their fingers.
Where Cannoyan pinched her food
There also did Lam-ang.

And where Lam-ang sipped his soup,
There also did Cannoyan.
The luncheon over, Cannoyan said:

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“Mother Namungan,
Please pick some betel leaves
Which smile when approached

“So we may offer a chew
To older brother Lam-ang.
Mother, please roll, too

“Some tabarcan tobacco
Planted east of Cagayan.”
This over, her parents spoke thus:

“Our son Lam-ang, please tell us now
Why you came;
What you wish, what you desire.”

The white rooster replied thus:
“We have come to compete for the devotion
Of your daughter, Ines Cannoyan.”

“Respected elders,
Subject to your judgment,
We come to unite our families.”

This is what it said, the yellow-legged rooster.
And the old man and woman replied thus:

“Our son Lam-ang

“If you can fulfill
All that we assign to you
You can marry our Cannoyan;

“If your means allow you
To match the wealth
We shall enumerate for you.”

Ilocano Epic

The yellow-legged hen said:
“If that’s what you say, respected elders,
Lam-ang is prepared to meet

“All your desires and requirements.”

“My son Lam-ang,
Look around you.

“Let the footpath be of gold
At the middle of the yard;
The butchering blocks, too.

“And my son Lam-ang,
Look at the entirety
Of the front yard;

“There are two carved roosters;
Four carved hens; two shrimps.
Swimming upstream as it were.

“Let these be all of gold.
Now, my son Lam-ang
Cast your gaze now

And imagine two pomelos
Also of pure bulaoan gold—
These are Cannoyan’s playthings.

“And also these spinning paraphernalia,
The *tectec* and the *gagan-ayan*,
And the gong, the *longgangan*, too,

“And all the clotheslines—
Let these all be
Of bulaoan gold.”

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Cannoyan's mother then added:
"Our son Lam-ang, do marry Cannoyan,
If you can match all that we told you."

Lam-ang in turn said:
"Mother Namungan,
What you have told me to match

"Cannot exhaust my inheritance;
Not even just the stocks in my fishponds
If sold wholesale.

"And I have in mind
Only the fishpond
Other than those I expropriated

"From the Igorots I conquered.
It is not even a ninth part
Of my inheritance

"From my great grandfathers
Both paternal and maternal.
But should the man Lam-ang still fall short,

"I still have two boats of bulaoan gold
That periodically ferry chinaware
Direct from China.

"For the king of Puan-puan,
Of China,
Is my relative and friend,

"Right now, one of my boats, a *sampan*,
I believe is on its way back
With its chinaware cargo."

Ilocano Epic

This is what they then said:
“Our son Lam-ang, it is only right,
That you go back now

“To the house you stepped down from
At the town of Nalbuan
So you may inform your mother.”

Lam-ang then answered:
“Respected benefactor
And you (gracious) Unnayan,

“When I return you shall hear
The cannon I shall fire
At Sabangan.”

Lam-ang then bade them well
And walked briskly to his town, Nabuan,
The man Lam-ang.

The woman Cannoyan then said:
“Father to whom I owe my life
And mother Unnayan,

“Do let us decorate the streets please
Till Sabangan
Just as we do during Corpus Christi.”

Then they said to Cannoyan,
Both her father and mother:
“Daughter Cannoyan, all your wishes shall be done.”

Soon, Lam-ang arrived at his hometown, Nalbuan.
“My mother Namungan,
How are you at my arrival?

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“I am back from Calanutian.”
“My son Lam-ang, God is merciful indeed
And this cannot be repaid.

“Your mother is hale and strong.
Now must I ask about your trip—
What came of it.”

The yellow-legged rooster said:
“Cannoyan is now
your daughter-in-law.”

Then said Lam-ang:
“Please strike the *longgangan*, the gong
To summon all our townmates.

“That they may ride our two boats
And fill it, too, with bowls and plates;
Big and small pans,

“And drinking glasses
Which can double as mirrors.”
When his townmates had assembled,

“Lam-ang made an announcement.
“Townmates, please come to my wedding feast;
We will ride in my two boats.”

And when the needed things had been loaded:
“My townmates, please go on board one by one.”
When each one had boarded the boat,

Each of his townmates,
Then spoke Lam-ang again:
“Namungan, my mother,

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“Please take with you all
Those that Cannoyan shall wear:
The slippers embroidered with bulaon

“As well as her mounted ring,
Take also the two combs
And her two bracelets.”

His mother took all these
And wrapped them for Cannoyan,
Her daughter-in-law, to wear.

“Mother, let us go now on board
One of the ships.”
Once on board the boat,

The sails were at once unfurled.
Since there was no wind, the ships refused to budge.
Lam-ang gave the rear of each a slap

And at once,
Both ships were launched.
Near Sabangan,

Lam-ang fired a salvo
To let Doña Ines Cannoyan
Know of their arrival.

Cannoyan at once said:
“Father to whom I owe my life
And my mother Unnayan,

“My older brother, the man Lam-ang, has come—
I heard his signal fired from Sabangan.
Let us now hasten to meet the brave man Lam-ang.

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They hastened
To the cheeks of Sabangan bay.
And by the time they arrived there,

The brave man Lam-ang
Was already there waiting.
“Hurry up, now, give me your hands.

“For the woman Cannoyan
Missed you so much.
Let all your relatives and townmates

“Disembark at once
And wear the clothes I prepared for them—
What one wears, she may keep,”

Announced Cannoyan
To Lam-ang’s townmates.
The two mothers-in-law met

And Namungan deferred
To the other thus:
“My sister, Madam Unnayan,

“It is only proper that we return
To the house you came down from;
At your town Calanutian.”

They left for the house
They came down from.
And their arrival marked the end

Of Lam-angs formal wooing
Of Cannoyan.
Came Monday morning

Ilocano Epic

And Ines donned her best clothes:
Her embroidered slippers;
Her mounted ring;

Her five combs and two bracelets.
So also did Lam-ang wear his best:
Embroidered trousers,

Dyed shirt and serrated handkerchief.
And as they stepped down the stair
The band played.

The joyous ringing of the bells—
A mingling of low and high notes—
Signalled their journey to the church.

The parish priest met them at the churchyard.
And soon the ceremony of coin and veils
Were done.

The mass over,
They stood up and went out,
The man Lam-ang and woman Cannoyan.

“Sister, my friend,
Let us commence the procession.”
A gun barked with every step of Ines.

The gun of Lam-ang created
A shade of smoke.
And when the wedding party reached home,

A multitude trooped as on a field
To the feast of Lam-ang,
The Calanutian folks

THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

Soon all were dancing.
Together with the townmates of Lam-ang.
Soon, everyone was dancing

Fandango and *sagamantica*.
Soon, the refreshments
Were exhausted.

The cooks, by then, were ready
And laid out the buffet tables:
“All of you, townmates

“Come and partake
Of the grace all laid out for you.”
And the townmates of Lam-ang and Cannoyan

Ate on the same tables.
“Listen to what I say—
One may keep his plate.

“Even wrap up food to take home.”
The meal over,
The townspeople doubled back to the dancefloor.

“My friend Lam-ang,
May I see you walk again;
How you carry yourself.

“Should you be less than perfect,
I have the mind
To give you back to your mother.

“Let us repair
To the newly-constructed outhouse
And there show me how you walk.”

Ilocano Epic

The woman Cannoyan,
When they had gone upstairs,
Again teased him.

“Respected Lam-ang
May I see how you walk;
How you carry yourself.

“If your manner of walking fails to impress me,
I shall certainly return you
To the care of your mother.”

He took five steps
And Cannoyan then said:
“Respected Lam-ang,

“How ungainly you look
Your trousers threaten to fall
And your bowlegs

“Make you sluggish.”
“Madam Ines Cannoyan, it is the deportment
Of rich men of Nalbuan you see—

“One I am accustomed to affect
With its air of wealth.
And now Madam Ines Cannoyan,

“Let me see how you walk;
The way you look
When you walk.”

She took five steps, too.
Then this is what he said,
The man Lam-ang.

THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

“Madam, Doña Ines Cannoyan,
I also don’t like your deportment:
Your feet go every which way

“And your bottom thrust out too far in front.”
Then came the two mothers-in-law
Saying to each other.

“I would like to know
If her habits are sensible.
Your child, my daughter-in-law.”

Unnayan said:
“Expect her when the moon is new
If she goes out at full moon.

“When she fetches water from the river.
She mistakes every drifting leaf for crayfish
And turns every stone by the river.”

Unnayan asked in turn:
“May I also ask about your son,
The man Lam-ang, my son-in-law.”

“Speaking of Lam-ang, my sister, my friend,
If he leaves when the moon is new,
He returns when the moon is full.

“If he goes to the forest,
He places cloth beneath every bamboo grove
And there sleeps.”

And then, Unnayan said:
“My sister, my friend,
It’s time to go to your home.”

Ilocano Epic

The townmates of Lam-ang and Cannoyan
All went to Sabangan
To board the two ships.

All aboard and the sails set,
The boats refused to move
Till Lam-ang slapped their sterns.

Back in Nalbuan,
Everyone disembarked
And went to the house of Namungan.

The townspeople of bride and groom
Danced again.
Then, they honored Ines Cannoyan

And the man Lam-ang
A dance
All to themselves.

Then they all danced anew
The *fandango*, waltzs and *curacha*.
As well as the *sagamantica* of Pangasinan.

They soon dispersed
And Doña Ines Cannoyan stayed behind
For her mother left without her.

And when Cannoyan's townfolk had gone,
The incumbent captain
Paid the new couple a visit.

“My friend Lam-ang,
your turn has come
To dive for shellfish called *rarang*.”

THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

When the captain had left,
This is what the brave man Lam-ang
Said with a sigh:

“My wife Cannoyan,
I have been chosen
To dive for shellfish called *rarang*.

“I have dreamt
That I shall doubtless be eaten
By the shark *tioan-tioan*.

“I shall give you a sign:
The stairs shall dance;
The kitchen shall collapse;

“The stove shall break to pieces.”
When morning came,
Lam-ang prepared to leave.

Reaching an ideal spot,
He undressed and swam
To where the *rarang* abounds.

He looked through the crystal waters
Then dived for the shellfish
But failed in his first try.

Surfacing, he tried once more to locate them
And having seen some
Dived once more—

Right into the mouth
Of the fish,
A big *tioan-tioan* shark,

Ilocano Epic

And the signs came to pass:
The stairs danced;
The kitchen collapsed;

The stove broke to pieces.
The woman Cannoyan
Then wept.

“My husband Don Lam-ang,
Where can you be now.
There is none I can hire

“To look for you.”
The woman Cannoyan then sought help
And found Marcos, the diver.

She then tied the white rooster,
The yellow-legged hen,
The woman Cannoyan.

She also leashed the hairy dog
With the curly locks
Then cradled the white rooster.

She left and soon reached the spot
Where his clothes were.
There at the spot where Lam-ang was,

Cannoyan cried,
Overwhelmed by sorrow.
The cock comforted her thus:

“Mistress, don't you worry.
Master Lam-ang certainly shall live
If they can locate his bones.”

THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

The diver, old man Marcos,
Dived then.
But he failed to find the bones.

The second time he dived,
He found the bones
Where the shark had expelled them.

The cock said:
“Sir, take all the bones and beach them:
None should be missing.”

And when no more bones could be found,
The cock examined the bones closely.
He found nothing missing.

The bones of Lam-ang
Having been completed,
This is what he said:

“I shall turn my back
While you cover the bones
With your skirt.”

The yellow-legged hen crowed;
The rooster shook its wings;
And the bones started to move.

The dog with the curly locks
Howled twice
Then clawed the ground.

As though to bury the bones of Lam-ang
Then the man Lam-ang
Got up at once.

Ilocano Epic

“How soundly I slept, my wife Cannoyan,
It’s been seven nights
Since we last slept together.”

“Your sleep, you say,
When the shark only expelled your bones.
And all the signs you told me about

“Were cause for my weeping.
For I couldn’t bear it,
Couldn’t bear losing you.

“Dear husband, Don Lam-ang
Give me your hand:
The woman Cannoyan missed you so much,

“The wife whom you left.”
They fainted together,
Like trees fallen

With excessive longing.
Even Don Lam-ang,
For he missed Cannoyan so much.

The man Lam-ang then expressed joy
At seeing once more his cock
And his hairy dog, kissing them both.

Their longing sated,
They prepared to leave.
“That we may reach the house

“We came down from.”
Once there, lam-ang said:
“It is only right to repay

THE LIFE OF LAM-ANG

“The old man, the diver.
My wife Cannoyan,
Give him a pile of coins taller than he is.”

This is how it ended, the life of Lam-ang.
Now, let me greet all of you present,
In this (recounting) of the life of Lam-ang.

