

naokuyihan to velita, narika mualtra pha.¹

na- oku- yihan to vel- lita, na- rika mual-t- ra pha
SUB.3P-lift-IMP 1SG POSS-word, SUB.3P-NEG HARM-PTCP-ADVB blood
yous-take my word, they-no harmingly blood
Take my words, they do not harm the blood.

nizef teim potesim nananwe mo lisan,²

nize- f tei- m potesi-m na- nan-we
sibling-PL three-NOM brave- NOM SUB.3P-COP-PRES
siblings three brave they-be
There are three adventurous siblings,

mo lisan pitu kasis narankvenwe.

mo lisan pitu kas- is na- r- ank- ven- we.
who 3PL land high-ACC SUB.3P-OBJ.3S-walk-road-PRES.
who they land high travel
who are traveling across the highlands (the surface).

nartulwe lisan ainkusola, mo lis moshumyi kotinr ainluf,

na- r- tul- we lisan ain- kusola, mo lis mo- shum-yi ain- luf
SUB.3P-OBJ.3S-find-PRES 3PL POSS-friend, REL 3SG SUB.3P-fall-PAST POSS-foot
they-him-find their friend, who he he-fell at-cart's foot
They find their friend who had fallen off a cart,

mohaienyi kohani pani velakelof.

mo- haien-yi ko- hani pani vel- akel- of
SUB.3P-drop- PAST LOC-down bag INSTR-fruit-PL
he-dropped at down basket with-fruits
and spilled a basket of fruit.

ai, mits malaimowela ainpon kolis.³

ai, mits ma- laimo-we -la ain- pon ko- lis
oh, bug SUB.3S-fly- PRES-up POSS-top LOC-3SG
oh, bug it-flying (in past) at his above.
Oh, a bug was flying over him.

zi, naruron fanseian ane yin.

zi, na- r- uron fansei-an ane yin
next, SUB.3P-OBJ.3S-do child-PL what QUES
next they-it-do children what?
What do the children do next?

zhot narsashwe ainkulosalo

zhot na- r- sash-we ain- kulosa-lo
aid SUB.3P-OBJ.3S-give-PRES POSS-half -DAT
help they-it-give their-friend-to.
They give help to their friend.

fanseianen nui akelis naluhilwe kopani ainma

fansei-an-en nui akel- is na- lu- hil- we ko- pani ain- ma
child-PL-NOM small fruit-ACC SUB.3P-OBJ.3P-gather-PRES LOC-bag POSS-inside
children little fruit they-them-gather to-bag of-inside
The little children put the pears in the basket.

hazn nanui, narika westra zhuan,⁴

hazn na- nui , na- rika wes- t- ra zhu-an
but SUB.3P-small, SUB.3P-NEG have-PTCP-ADVB leg-PL.ANIM
but they-small, they-not havingly legs.
But they are young, they don't have legs,

anelo naluwe hanitra, narikawe latatra lamyolo.

anelo na- lu-we hani-t- ra na- rika-we lata- t- ra lamyo-lo
why SUB.3P-go-PRES down-PTCP-ADVB SUB.3P-NEG- PRES trade-PTCP-ADVB thing-DAT
why they-go downly, they-not tradingly for thing
(That is) why they walk away, and don't ask for anything in return.

zi, morvaimwe rowun fanseim uholis,

zi , mo- r- vaim-we rowu-n fansei-m uhol-is
next, SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-find-PRES big- NOM child- NOM hat- ACC
then, he-it-find big child hat
Then the older child finds the hat,

mo uhol mokehaienwe.

mo uhol mo- ke- haien-we
REL hat SUB.3S-PASS-drop- PRES
who hat was dropped
the hat that was dropped.

morokuwe, mokesashwe kofansei mo veltinr.

mo- r- oku- we, mo- ke- sash-we ko- fansei mo vel- tinr
SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-lift-PRES SUB.3S-PASS-give-PRES LOC-child that with-cart
he-it-lift, it-him-given to child who with-cart
He picks it up, and gives it to the child with the cart.

marshal meni fansei ozela,⁵

ma- r- shal meni fansei ozel- a
SUB.3S-OBJ.3S-know this child balance-N
he-it-know this child balanceness
This child understands the balance.`

teili velakel naozelwe.

tei- li vel- akel na- ozel- we
three-OBL INSTR-fruit SUB.3P-balance-PRES
three with-fruit they-reciprocate
He repays him with three fruit.

moankwe hani, naozelwe fansei wi nizef.

mo- ank- we hani, na- ozel- we fansei wi nize-f
SUB.3S-walk-PRES up , SUB.3P-balance-PRES child and friend-PL
he-walk up, they-reciprocate child and friends
He walks back, the child trades the fruit with his siblings.

nalei, lata mozel kofo.

na-lei, lata mo-ozel ko-fo
SUB.3P-say, trade SUB.3S-balance LOC-back
they say, trade it-balances to-back
And so, the trade is balanced again.

Notes and Annotations:

Word Order

In Lanfali the word order is used to convey structure on a conversation level.

Sentences have a subjective property that we'll call "*upward*" or "*downward*".

An upward sentence tend to be VSO or VOS, and adjectives and such tend to go before the head.
An downward sentence tend to be SOV or SVO, and adjectives and such tend to go after the head.
Passive verbs appear far more often in downward sentences.

Conversations tend to alternate between upward and downward, though the pattern is not strict.

An "upward" sentence signifies a lead-in, such as a question, introduction, command, greeting, etc. It can indicate that the speaker is not finished speaking. Sometimes it indicates dominance or high social standing.

An "downward" sentence signifies a follow-up , such as an answer, response, elaboration, factual statement, etc. Sometimes it indicates submission or low social standing.

This system suits the Lanfali language because long and complex debates are important to their culture. This information would be expressed by body language, pauses, and subtle conversational cues in English, but explicitly encoding it in the language itself facilitates a smoother flow of conversation in Lanfali.

Since Lanfali speakers are so used to this system, they still use it even when just one person is speaking. When telling a story, a Lanfali speaker will switch word order back and forth to indicate ups and downs in the story's flow, or relations between things interacting in the story. Often they will insert filler sentences or rhetorical questions to maintain the alternating up-down pattern.

-

1. Because illusion magic is common in their world, Lanfa culture developed a distrust of physical senses. They believe good traits are generated inside you, specifically from the flow of blood, while bad traits come from the outside world and invade you through your eyes and ears.

This is embedded in their language: they tend to avoid words involving physical senses, so "I saw John last night" would instead be "I visited John last night" or "I met John last night".

They wouldn't be able to communicate with each other if they're constantly distrustful of each other, so their culture created oaths of swearing to tell the truth, to establish trust. The introduction of the story evolved from such an oath.

2. The surface of their world is incredibly dangerous, people who go aboveground must be brave and daring adventurers. This makes the story seem like a children's adventure story to Lanfa people. Since their children are raised communally, they would assume that the children were all "siblings".

3. This is an idiom, an animal flying over one's head is a symbol of bad luck.

4. Lanfa culture views children differently from us, Children are considered less creative and less capable of conversations than adults. This metaphor compares children to unfinished crafts or sculptures.

5. Debating and bartering is culturally important, they always keep track of social favours and debts. They believe maintaining a "balanced" relationship is key to peace and unity.

Lanfali people would view the blue shirt child as the oldest and wisest one, since he actively goes to the cyclist to trade for pears - engaging in negotiation and barter. The fact that he was slacking off while the other kids were picking up pears wouldn't mark him as immature, because he repaid them later with pears. In fact, always doing things for free is a sign of childishness.

So this story may be a pedagogical story to teach children how to act according to the values of Lanfali culture.