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## **Philippine Kinship and Social Organization from the Perspective of Historical Linguistics**

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# Philippine Kinship and Social Organization from the Perspective of Historical Linguistics

Based on a reconstruction of Proto-Philippine kinship and social organization terminologies, this article characterizes early Philippine kinship as bilateral with possible quasi-lineages. These features support the reconstruction of the Proto–Malayo–Polynesian system made by George Peter Murdock (1949) rather than that of Robert Blust (1980). In terms of leadership, the early Philippine community is described as dualistic in nature, allowing achieved and ascribed or hereditary chiefdom—thus deviating from the ancestral concept of hereditary leadership in the Proto–Malayo–Polynesian system. Changes in the Philippine kinship system are traced to show innovations in nomenclature and behavior toward certain kin.

**KEYWORDS: HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS · CULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION · KINSHIP · SOCIAL ORGANIZATION · CULTURE HISTORY**

“**T**he real world is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group” (Sapir 1929, 209). In its strongest sense the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis sees language as a tyrant of the mind that plays a central role in constructing our reality. However, some linguists do not go to the extent of viewing individuals as “being at the mercy of their language” (Sampson 1980, 89). Instead, language and thought exist in a bidirectional dependence in that both exert a certain influence on the other. Following this interpretation of the Sapir–Whorf hypothesis, we see that our minds, and consequently our culture, are influenced and expressed by the words we speak. Thus, a description of the culture of a certain group of people entails an examination of the language spoken by that particular group. Such is the interdependence of words and worlds.

If we take this hypothesis one step further, the culture of an earlier group of people can be reconstructed through the protolanguage spoken by that particular group. A protolanguage is an ancestral language representing the origin of a set of related languages. For example, based on the similarities shared by Tagalog, Cebuano, and Hiligaynon, a common “mother” language can be traced. Using the comparative method of historical linguistics, we undo the changes these languages underwent until we come up with a rough reconstruction of the possible protolanguage from which these “daughter” languages developed. The reality of protolanguages is not without theoretical issues. On the one hand are the formulists, who regard such protolanguages as abstract representations of the sound correspondences that exist among a set of languages. This protolanguage is thus seen as a formulaic expression of the relationship of a group of languages, which may not have existed historically (Crowley 1997, 109). On the other hand are the realists, who regard protolanguages as a recreation of an actual language spoken by an ancestral speech community. The realist interprets the results of the comparative method on the basis of a “historical plane . . . given historical significance and validity” (Fox 1995, 13).

Certain limitations concerning protolanguages need to be noted. Anthony Fox (ibid., 11) writes that these reconstructions are “often demonstrably inaccurate, and it is therefore illegitimate to place too much faith in reconstructed forms.” Moreover, because they are never complete, reconstructions are a very rough approximation of the protolanguage in question.

In light of these limitations, we need to treat the interpretation of protolanguages with caution. Pieces of supporting evidence from other

fields such as archaeology and anthropology are helpful in establishing a middle ground. In any event, the conclusions that may be reached based on reconstructions can be quite significant. For instance, just like any real language, we can assume that a reconstructed protolanguage, under the realist lens, is a record of the culture of its speech community. Thus, cultural reconstructions derived from our reconstructed forms present a sketch of a particular culture no written records can provide.

This particular technique of cultural reconstruction follows the *Wörter und Sachen* (words and things) movement. The basic premise of this technique is to regard a reconstructed form as culturally important and environmentally salient in the community of its speakers (Crowley 1997, 302). Using the reconstructions that can go as far back as a few thousand years, one can derive an approximate overall picture of the culture of a particular group.

Based on the *Wörter und Sachen* technique, the homelands of various protolanguages have been identified. The migration patterns of earlier populations have also been worked out, such as the massive Austronesian expansion from Asia to the Pacific. The universality of the system of kinship also offers a good starting point for cultural reconstructions. The works of Robert Blust (1980, 1993) and George Peter Murdock (1949) deal with the reconstruction of the social organization of Proto-Austronesian (PAN) and Proto-Malayo-Polynesian (PMP).

As a continuation of the aforementioned works, this study deals with the development of the Philippine kinship system and social organization. Starting from its Austronesian and Malayo-Polynesian roots, the development of the Philippine kinship system is traced using the technique of cultural reconstruction. Based on previously published works on the reconstruction of the Proto-Philippine language, the ancestral language of present-day Philippine languages, we look at the reconstructed kinship terminologies in order to reconstruct the early system of kinship. Finally, the development of the kinship system as seen in contemporary Philippine society, with particular focus on Tagalog, is discussed.

## **Reconstructing Early Kinship System and Social Organization**

In historical linguistics the reconstruction of the kinship and social organization of ancestral societies begins with an examination of the reconstructed kinship terminologies of the relevant protolanguage. Kinship relations focus on the Ego—a universally definable category—and his or

her relations to other individuals. A combination of universally defined kin categories forms culturally defined genealogical categories (Blust 1993, 26), and from such terminologies an entire cultural reconstruction can be derived. Universally defined kin categories include the father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, husband, and wife.

Based on kinship terminologies across different Austronesian languages, Blust (1980) argues for PAn descent groups with preferential matrilineal cross-cousin marriage (i.e., the Ego marries a woman in the category of the mother's brother's daughter). Reconstructed sibling terms for PMP show both historically primary sibling terms (\*betaw 'sister', \*ñaRa 'brother', \*kaka/aka 'elder sibling', and \*hua(n)ji 'younger sibling') and secondary cross-sibling terms (\*anak 'child' plus a gender modifier).<sup>1</sup> Functionally, the existence of these secondary cross-sibling terms overlaps with the primary ones (particularly \*betaw 'sister' and \*ñaRa 'brother'). Blust (1993) interprets this functional overlap as evidence of an earlier PMP system of wife giving and wife taking in a preferential cross-cousin marriage. To put it simply, this terminological overlap is assumed to have arisen from the semantic expansion of the terms for wife giver (=children of the brother) and wife taker (=children of the sister) to brother and sister, respectively.

Murdock (1949, 229), on the contrary, analyzes early Malayo-Polynesian society as typically Hawaiian type, in which cousin and sibling terms are the same. Such type also exhibits “limited polygyny, the bilocal extended family, generation terminology for aunts and nieces, bilateral extension of incest taboos, and bilateral kindreds or demes” (ibid., 229). Bilateral kinship recognizes descent through both sides of the mother and the father and is negatively associated with the formation of lineages or descent groups (Blust 1993, 27). As we have seen, such reconstruction is different from the claims of Blust (1980, 1993) in that Murdock claims PMP neither shows evidence for preferential marriage nor for apparent descent groups.

However, in the context of the ancestral PMP right to land ownership associated with one's membership in a certain kin group, Ward H. Goodenough (1955) concludes that a lineal descent group is necessary to facilitate issues of inheritance. Robert Lane (1961) puts forward a similar system of descent group. Based on the claims of Edwin Burrows (1938, cited in Lane 1961, 711), who see the seemingly simple PMP Hawaiian type of kinship as a breakdown of a more complex system, an ancestral lineal descent group for PMP is reconstructed. This shift to a simpler bilateral descent or kindred might have

been triggered by an extensive depopulation in the areas under consideration, resulting in the abandonment of complex kin terminologies alongside the dissolution of the associated kin groups (ibid., 717).

As seen in the aforementioned works, reconstructions dealing with kinship largely focus on the level of PAn and PMP. As a continuation of these earlier studies, this article deals with the reconstruction of the kinship and social organization of Proto-Philippines (PPh), a descendant of PAn and PMP and the putative ancestor of the languages spoken in the Philippines as well as in some parts of Taiwan and Indonesia.<sup>2</sup> As reconstructions of the relevant protolanguage are prerequisite to this cultural reconstruction, I utilize PPh reconstructions from previous studies, namely, those of Blust (2005), Matthew Charles (1974), Consuelo J. Paz (1981), and David Zorc (1986).<sup>3</sup> This study is thus largely interpretive in that it deals merely with the interpretation of the currently available reconstructed forms. Moreover, because reconstructions are never complete, I also utilize data from collected word-lists for additional support.

## Proto-Philippine Kinship System

The Austronesian migration out of Formosa<sup>4</sup> shows the descent of PAn to its major subgroups (which include PMP) and subsequently to the various lower-order subgroups, such as Western Malayo-Polynesian (WMP), Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian (CEMP), and others (fig. 1).

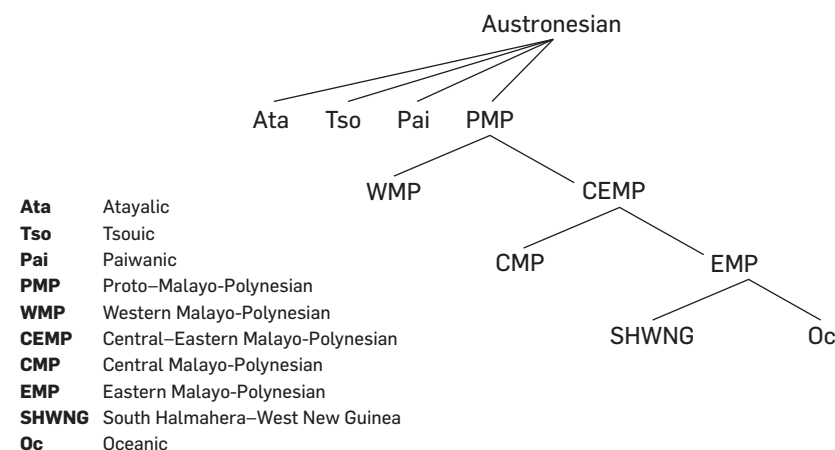


Fig. 1. Subgrouping hypothesis after Blust 1978

Under the WMP branch of PMP, Philippine languages are hypothesized to have descended from a single Philippine subgroup.<sup>5</sup> Paz (1981) reconstructs the phonemes and morphemes of the common ancestor of these Philippine languages, highlighting definite features of the subgroup that can then be used as basis for reconstructing the lower order protolanguages. Zorc (1986), moreover, presents a significant number of reconstructions, which he regards as concrete PPh innovations. Blust (1991, 2005), arguing for the validity of PPh, claims that this protolanguage caused the extinction of several PMP descendants that were believed to have been spoken in the same area as the aforementioned protolanguage.

Despite the works dealing with the reconstruction of the Proto-Philippine language, very few cultural reconstructions are available, particularly works concerning the reconstruction of early Philippine social organization. Perhaps the most relevant study would be that of Alfred Louis Kroeber (1919), which in spite of its incompleteness served as the starting point of subsequent works detailed above. Kroeber's reconstruction of PPh kinship system is summarized in Table 1.

Kinship relations are made either by blood or by marriage, that is, consanguines and affines, respectively. Consanguines are also classified either as lineal (i.e., relations form a direct line such as that from grandparents to parents to children) or as collateral (i.e., all consanguines outside the lineal kin group).

Deducible from Kroeber's reconstruction, despite its simplicity, are significant culture features of the early Philippine system of kinship, namely: (1) a merger of lineal and collateral consanguines, in that *bapa* may represent a generic term for the father's generation (uncle, father-in-law, stepfather, and even including the father himself) and its possible female counterpart analyzed the same way; (2) the parallel treatment of consanguines and affines, as kinship relations formed by marriage almost mean the same as relations formed by blood/common descent; (3) the treatment of spouses as one; (4) the lack of distinction in terms of sex (except for parents and perhaps uncles and aunts); and (5) an apparent generation system (meaning no lineages were present), in which descent is bilateral.

The current reconstruction of the Proto-Philippine kinship system is far from complete. The gaps in the data represent unconstructed possibilities. Our current knowledge regarding PPh can supply these gaps and update Kroeber's work via the reconstructions proposed by Blust (2005), Charles

**Table 1. Kroeber's reconstruction of Philippine kinship terms**

KINSHIP RELATIONS												
CONSANGUINES						AFFINES						
LINEAL				COLLATERAL								
(1) apo/nono	(2) ama	(3) ina	(4) anak/ wata	(5) bapa	(6) ***	(7) kaka	(8) ari	(9) ***	(10) ***	(11) ***	(12) ***	(13) asawa
parent's parent, son/ daughter's son/ daughter'	father	mother	son, daughter, sibling's son/ daughter, son/ daughter's spouse'	father/ mother's brother, husband/ wife's brother	father/ mother's sister, husband/ wife's mother	elder sibling	younger sibling	sibling	parent-in- law (may be related to 5 and 6)	brother- in-law	sister- in-law	spouse

\*\*\* represents unconstructed possibility

Source: Kroeber 1919, 81



that both share the same and equal responsibility in the nuclear family (such as child rearing). However, in Tagalog the kinship system has evolved to distinguish sex between the husband and the wife, as in *tao* and *maybahay*, respectively. We can assume that social behavior has evolved alongside this change of terminology (or vice versa). Perhaps the superficial difference in the division of labor between the husband and the wife in PPh became more pronounced in the daughter societies.

### Parent and Child

The reconstructed form PPh \*qamay 'father' < PAn \*ama (Blust and Trussel 2015) and ina (after Kroeber 1919) 'mother' < PAn \*inaq (Blust and Trussel 2015), as well as PPh \*qanak 'son/daughter' < PAn \*anak (ibid.) indicate the relationship between parent and child, reconstructed as PAn \*maRe-anak by Blust and Trussel (ibid.), clearly a derivation of the form \*anak 'child'. The term has expanded to mean family in the daughter languages, such as the Tagalog *mag-anak*. This terminology may indicate that the concept of family in Austronesian societies centers on the relationship between parents and their children, rather than the husband and the wife.

While sex is distinguished for the terms for parents, it is not indicated in the case of the children. This sex distinction is motivated by economic reasons, that is, the division of labor; however Kroeber (1919, 83) claims that this distinction is based physiologically rather than socially. As the ina carries and nurses the child, the \*qamay is responsible for the other household chores. This division of labor is largely based on a physiological basis, and both \*qamay and ina are expected to be responsible for child rearing, especially in the socialization and instruction of the \*anak. For the children, a generic \*anak is reconstructed; we can say that the responsibilities of children to parents (possibly providing support in the household as well as the field) are the same regardless of sex.

### Sibling and Sibling

With regard to sibling terminologies, PPh indicates a distinction of relative age, but not of relative/absolute sex. The sibling terms *kaka* and *ari* in Philippine languages are clear retentions of PMP \*kaka/aka 'elder sibling' and \*hua(n)ji 'younger sibling', respectively. It is also apparent that the terms distinguishing sex, namely, PMP \*betaw 'sister' and \*ñaRa 'brother', are lost in PPh. Thus, we can say that the division of labor between siblings is based

on relative age and not sex, with the elder sibling, *kaka*, responsible for the instruction and discipline of the younger, *ari*.

If age is indeed seen as an important factor in the division of labor among siblings, terms for birth order are also expected, as in the Tagalog *panganay* ("firstborn") and *bunso* ("lastborn"). However, such ancestral terms pointing to this concept of absolute age (versus relative) are yet to be reconstructed.

At present, it is evident that sex has become an important factor in the division of labor among siblings. As a result of contact with foreign cultures, the daughter languages have evolved to accommodate gender distinctions. Tagalog has terms that distinguish male from female siblings, namely, *kuya* ("elder brother") and *ate* ("elder sister"). This change in kinship terminologies entails a change in the expected responsibilities and obligations, with the *kuya* expected to help the father (perhaps in the field) and the *ate* expected to help in the household.<sup>6</sup>

### Generational Terminology and Bilateral Kinship

The kinship terminologies reconstructed for PPh indicate that a single term is used to refer to the father's generation (*bapa*) and its female counterpart to refer to the mother's generation (an unconstructed possibility at the moment). The comparative word-list for Philippine kinship terminologies (Elkins and Hendrickson 1984) suggests that the same pattern applies. Seen in different languages across the various microgroups of the Philippine branch of MP, the terms for parent's brother and parent's sister are clear derivatives of the primary *ama* (father) and *ina* (mother), respectively (tables 3 and 4). The same pattern may be expected to apply to terms for the nephew/niece (sibling's son/sibling's daughter) (table 5) and cousins (parent's sibling's son/parent's sibling's daughter) (table 6).

Such set of kinship terminologies is called "generation terminology" (Murdock 1949, 142). The data support Kroeber's (1919) observation about the merger of lineal and collateral terminologies, and even partly extending into the affinal kin. What does this generation terminology say about the kinship of Proto-Philippines? From this system may be derived several speculations based on the functional determinants presented by Murdock (1949), particularly regarding the rules of descent and residence.

According to Murdock (ibid., 158), a generation type of terminology is typically associated with the system of bilateral kindred, in which the sides of both the mother and the father are recognized. Moreover, these sibling



**Table 3. Terms for uncle (parent's brother) (=Ego's father)**

LANGUAGE GROUP	TERM FOR UNCLE
Dumagat, Casiguran	amay
Dumagat, Umiray	mama
Ibaloi	pang-ama-qan
Kalinga, Southern Tanudan	ama/ama-qon
Kallahan, Keley-i	peng-emma-an
Kankanay, Northern	pang-ama-qen
Mamanwa	ama-qen
Pangasinan	pang-ama-en
Tagbanwa, Calamian	amey
Tausug	ama-qun

Source: Elkins and Hendrickson 1984, 19

**Table 4. Terms for aunt (parent's sister) (=Ego's mother)**

LANGUAGE GROUP	TERM FOR AUNT
Dumagat, Umiray	nangnang
Ibaloi	pang-ina-qan
Ifugao, Amganad	ina-on
Kalagan, Tagakaulu	ina
Kalinga, Southern Tanudan	ina/ina-qon
Kallahan, Keley-i	peng-inna-an
Mamanwa	ina-qen
Manobo, Ata	ina-yon
Manobo, Cotabato	inaq
Manobo, Dibabawon	lag-inaq
Manobo, Sarangani	ina-yun
Pangasinan	pang-ina-en
Sambal, Ayta Botolan	nana
Tagbanwa, Calamian	iney
Tausug	ina-qun
Tiruray	inaq

Source: Elkins and Hendrickson 1984, 20

**Table 5. Terms for nephew/niece (sibling's son/sibling's daughter) (=Ego's son/Ego's daughter)**

LANGUAGE GROUP	TERM FOR NEPHEW/NIECE
Atta	kanak-an
Balangao	a-mo-na-en
Blaan, Sarangani	anak
Dumagat, Umiray	m-anak-on
Ga'dang	pang-anak-an
Ifugao, Amganad	a-mu-na-qon
Ilocano	ka-qanak-an
Itneg, Binongan	ka-qanak-an
Ivatan	anak-en
Kalagan, Tagakaulu	anak
Kalinga, Southern Tanudan	a-mu-nak-on
Kankanay, Northern	ka-qanak-an
Mamanwa	anak-en
Manobo, Ata	anak-on
Manobo, Dibabawon	anak-on
Manobo, Ilianen	enak-en
Manobo, Sarangani	anak
Manobo, Western Bukidnon	anak-en
Mansaka	anak-un/anak da
Pangasinan	ka-anak-an
Sambal Ayta	angken
Sambal Botolan	ka-qanak-an
Subanon, Western	kom-anak
Subanun, Sindangan	gm-anak
Tagbanwa, Calamian	angken
Tausug	anak-un
Yakan	kam-anak-an

Source: Elkins and Hendrickson 1984, 22



**Table 6. Terms for cousin (parent's sibling's son/parent's sibling's daughter)**

LANGUAGE GROUP	TERM FOR COUSIN
<i>(=Ego's elder sibling)</i>	
Atta	kaka
Dumagat, Casiguran	aka
Maguindanaon	kaka
Manobo, Cotabato	kakay
Manobo, Dibabawon	kakoy
Manobo, Sarangani	kakay
Manobo, Western Bukidnon	akey
Sambal Ayta	kakaq
Sambal Botolan	kakaq
Tausug	kakaq
<i>(=Ego's younger sibling)</i>	
Balangao	en-awdi
Blaan, Sarangani	twali
Dumagat, Casiguran	wadi
Ibaloi	adding
Itneg, Binongan	adding/in-aqodi
Magindanaon	ali
Manobo, Cotabato	hadi
Manobo, Dibabawon	hadi
Manobo, Sarangani	adi
Manobo, Western Bukidnon	hazi
Sambal Ayta	ali
Sambal Botolan	ali

Source: Elkins and Hendrickson 1984, 11–12

terminologies suggest that PPh evidently falls under the relative age type, and such system is also directly associated with the rule of bilateral descent (Murdock 1968 in Blust 1993, 30). Similar to the findings of Kroeber (1919) and Murdock (1949), the reconstructed PPh kinship terminologies point to the aforementioned rule of bilateral descent, in which the Ego is affiliated with some members from both the sides of the mother and the father. Such feature is clearly retained in the daughter societies, such as Tagalog, in which bilateral kinship is still recognized.

## Rules of Residence

The PPh generation terminologies also point to a possible rule of bilocal residence (ibid., 152). This observation, however, contrasts with the study of Fiona Jordan and colleagues (2009, 1962), which applies the method of cultural phylogenetics—the genealogical history of a group in which ancestor–descendant relationships are hypothesized based on the notion that cultural forms of various scales are descended from other forms—to deduce the evolutionary process of the Austronesian kinship system. According to the latter study, matrilocal residence is primitive to the ancestral Austronesian speech community, and the phylogeny of the Philippine subgroup clearly retains such rule of residence.

The groups/languages in figure 2 are labeled according to the group's residence pattern (i.e., [★]=matrilocal, [◆]=patrilocal, [no symbol]=ambilocal). The intermediate nodes also reflect the rule of residence of the respective ancestral society (i.e., blacked out circles represent matrilocal rule of residence). Based on figure 2, Philippine ethnolinguistic groups may be classified as matrilocal, patrilocal, or ambilocal. Applying phylogenetics to the data, intermediate nodes (interpreted as protolanguages, with Proto-Philippines as the highest node in the tree) show a reconstructed matrilocal rule of residence, a retention of the Austronesian feature.

We are currently faced with conflicting evidence from historical linguistics and phylogenetics. Generation terminology, as discussed, is associated with bilateral descent and bilocal residence. Although a bilateral rule of descent typically follows a bilocal system of residence, Murdock (1949, 209) recognizes that it is also not impossible for such system to follow a unilocal one. Perhaps, given time, if the bilateral descent of PPh persists in its daughter societies, then it is highly possible for the rule of residence to evolve from a unilocal into a bilocal one.

Phylogenetic evidence indeed points to a matrilocal rule of residence, and the generation terminologies of PPh, although not directly pointing to such a claim, are not negatively associated with it. Thus, if we assume an ancestral system of matrilocal residence in PPh, we can take this analysis one step further by claiming an endogamous system of marriage in PPh, that is, the individual marries within the group or community (as opposed to exogamy in which the individual marries outside the group). Murdock (ibid., 214) presents compelling evidence pointing to the direct correlation of matrilocal residence and community endogamy. As seen in our comparative word-list,

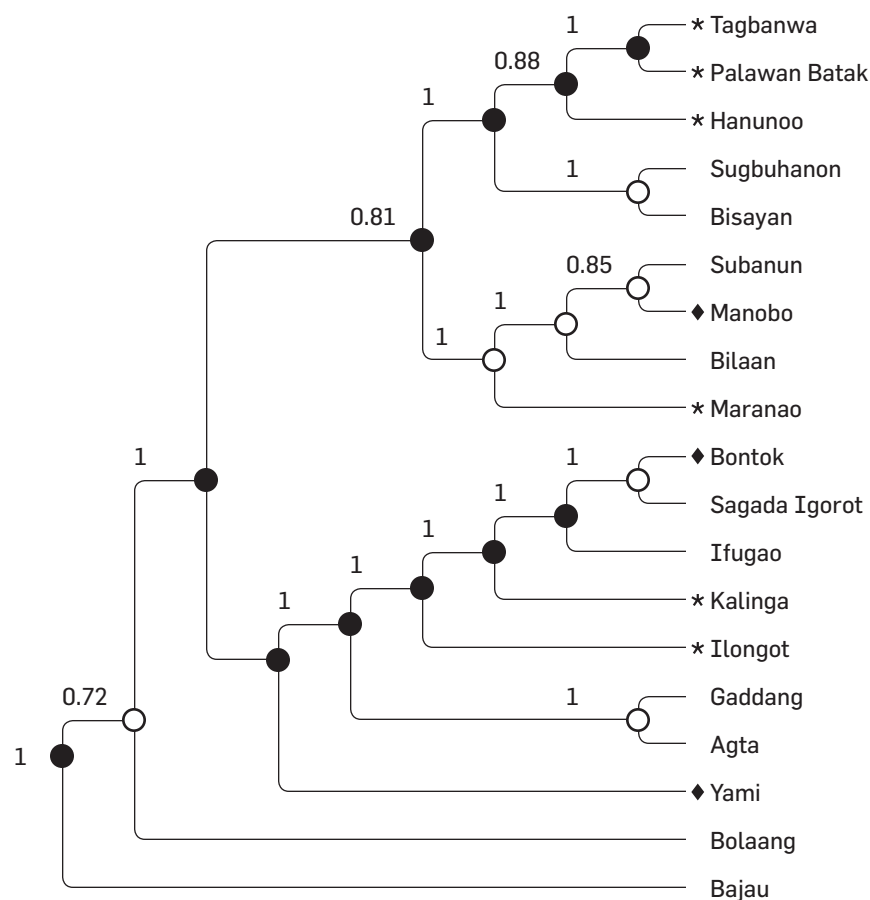


Fig. 2. Phylogeny of the Philippine languages  
Source: Jordan et al. 2009

moreover, the extension of sibling terms to cross-cousins and parallel cousins also points to endogamy in PPh (ibid., 160).

It is not difficult to picture this scenario in PPh society. When a man marries a woman from the same community, he merely packs his belongings and transfers to the residence of his wife. By practicing such rule of residence, the man has no difficulty in continuing his work in the field, while providing assistance to his in-laws. As the bride remains with her parents even after marriage, the man is not expected to pay any form of bride price, but he may perform some kind of bride service (ibid., 20). Some contemporary

Philippine societies still practice such bride service, and it is not difficult to assume that such tradition dates back to the ancestral PPh.

This matrilineal residence is also motivated by economic reasons. For instance, the parents of the wife also take a major role in nurturing the child. Thus, close ties are observed among the affines to the point of treating each other as close as blood kin.

If we now trace the descent of PPh to its daughter societies, it is evident that the culture evolved to allow other rules of residence to apply. For example, neolocal rule of residence can be observed alongside matrilineal and patrilineal ones. This neolocal rule of residence may have been a result of contact with other foreign cultures. With the separation of collateral kin, the criterion of collaterality is highlighted, giving rise to newer kinship terms distinguishing collateral from lineal kin. Tagalog now has *tatay* ("father") versus *tito* ("uncle"), *nanay* ("mother") versus *tita* ("aunt"), and *anak* ("child") versus *pamangkin* ("nephew/niece").

### Preferential Matrilateral Cross-Cousin Marriage

Kroeber (1919) and Murdock (1949) both claim no form of preferential marriage in PPh and PMP, respectively. In contrast, Blust (1980, 1993) argues for the existence of preferential matrilateral cross-cousin marriage in PAn (and PMP) society. Based on evidence on primary and secondary sibling terms, Blust is led to assume that the secondary terms PMP *\*(anak) bahi* and *\*(anak) ma-Ruqanay/laki* do not refer to "sister" and "brother" historically, but instead refer to "wife taker" and "wife giver," respectively. The existence of such terms argues for the practice of cross-cousin marriages in PAn.

Blust (1993, 52) reconstructs *\*babahi* 'sister' and *\*laki* 'brother' for PPh from the evidence presented in tables 7 and 8. If indeed there is such an expansion of the terms for wife giver and wife taker to refer to the Ego's siblings, the issue here is whether the semantic expansion happened pre-PPh or afterwards.

Evidently PPh manifests no reflexes for PMP *\*betaw* 'sister' and *\*ñaRa* 'brother'. Based on the claims made by Kroeber (1919) and Murdock (1949), it is apparent that the relative sex distinction in PPh has been lost. Phylogenetic evidence also points to the nonexistence of relative sex in sibling terminologies in PPh (Jordan 2011). It is possible then that the terms distinguishing relative sex as seen in tables 7 and 8 developed after the break-

**Table 7. Terms for sister (reconstructed by Blust [1993] as PPh \*[anak] bahi)**

LANGUAGE GROUP	TERM FOR SISTER
Bontok	ka-babai-an
Ilongot	[bekur] <sup>a</sup>
Maranao	babai
Tiruray	[libun]

<sup>a</sup>Forms in brackets (*bekur* and *libun*) are noncognates but exhibit the same pattern of semantic derivation

Source: Blust 1993, 53

**Table 8. Terms for brother (reconstructed by Blust [1993] as PPh \*[anak] ma-Ruqanay/laki)**

LANGUAGE GROUP	TERM FOR BROTHER
Bontok	ka-lalaki-an
Ilongot	raki
Maranao	laki
Tiruray	lagey

Source: Blust 1993, 53

cousins, i.e., mother’s brother’s daughter (=wife) as opposed to father’s sister’s daughter (=cousin) as well as mother’s brother’s son as opposed to father’s sister’s son should be evident in the language. Data from different Philippine languages provide evidence that no such specifications are made.

It is easy to see the difference between the reconstructed kinship terms under PPh and those of groups with evident cross-cousin marriage systems. Rodney Needham (1968) writes about the practice of cross-cousin marriages in Endeh in Indonesia, in which the son or daughter of a man marries the daughter or son of his sister, contrary to the prohibition of marriage between the children of two brothers or two sisters. In the Endeh kinship terminology, *nasa* is used to refer to the mother’s brother’s daughter (i.e., possible wife), whereas father’s brother’s daughter as well as one’s own sister are both called *vata*. Similarly, the Ego’s mother’s brother’s son (that is, possible husband) is called *eja* in contrast to the father’s brother’s son called *arikaē*, which is also used to refer to the Ego’s brother (ibid., 315). Parallel cousin marriages are

up of PPh rather than as a retention of the concept of wife giving and wife taking proposed by Blust (1993).

Moreover, Murdock (1949, 173) claims that the preferential marriage with one’s uncle’s daughter (specifically mother’s brother’s daughter) determines the common terms used for both uncle’s wife (mother’s brother’s wife) and mother-in-law (wife’s mother). While it seems to be the case in PPh that *ama* and *ina* may refer to (1) Ego’s own parents, (2) Ego’s uncle and aunt, and (3) Ego’s parents-in-law, it can be said that such is characteristic of a generation type terminology indicating bilateral descent. In the facilitation of asymmetric marriage systems, i.e., matrilineal cross-cousin marriage, a certain form of laterality needs to be recognized. Terms distinguishing

strictly prohibited, and incest is called *saranaraweta* or fault brother or sister (ibid., 309).

Comparing Endeh with the terminologies reconstructed for PPh, we observe that the distinctions in terms for cousins and one’s possible spouse, seen in Endeh, are not seen in Proto-Philippines. In order to firmly validate the existence of matrilineal cross-cousin marriage in the PAn, PMP, and PPh societies, such specifications need to be reconstructed. However, current evidence based on PPh reconstructions shows otherwise.

**The Community**

The Malayo-Polynesian and Philippine societies were seafarers whose seafaring technology led to the colonization of island Southeast Asia and the Pacific (Horridge 1995). However, these societies were also predominantly agricultural, as seen in reconstructed terms for grain, root, and tree crops as well as the domestication of certain animals such as the dog, pig, and chicken (Blust 1995, 468). According to Murdock (1949, 81), such agricultural societies required a more or less fixed residence, typically in the form of a village or neighborhood. Indeed, a reconstructed form for neighborhood/village in PPh is available, i.e., PPh *\*hili* (after Blust 2005). Because of the aforementioned claims of endogamy, we can also claim that most people in the neighborhood formed kinship relations with each other. Thus, the land tilled was collectively owned, but “periodically redistributed among families” (Murdock 1949, 82). However, the bilateral kinship system of PMP and PPh societies (ibid.; Kroeber 1919) presents a problem with regard to land ownership and inheritance. Because kindred did not form landowning bodies (Goodenough 1955; Murdock 1949), then some sort of lineage was present to address such issue.

Contrary to the claims made by Murdock (1949) and Fox (1984–1985), the studies of Goodenough (1955) and Lane (1961) support the existence of a descent group in PMP. For PPh society, we can say that such was also the case, based on the reconstructed terms referring to descendants and forefathers (PPh *\*ampu-ampu* and PPh *\*paŋ-ampu*). The claim about the existence of a descent group does not contradict that made by Murdock, who recognizes bilateral descent groups “with reported or possible quasi-lineages” (in Blust 1993, 31).

The community, being “the primary seat of social control” (Murdock 1949, 42), needs a form of leadership. The PMP *\*datu*, Blust (1980, 217)

writes, may refer to a “lineage or clan-linked official.” On the contrary, the meaning associated with PPh \*datu in Philippine languages suggests a semantic narrowing, shown in table 9.

It seems that the “ancestor” component of \*datu has already been lost in PPh, whereas the components “political leader/chieftain” and “of the nobility” have been retained. This loss of ancestor component points to the dissolution of the exclusively hereditary or ascribed leadership in PMP society and the possible innovation of the leadership type based on achievement. Thus, in PPh we might see “dualistic chiefly structures,” one following the traditional PMP ascribed leadership and another allowing “younger or intrusive lines, autochthonous or foreign, to acquire considerable authority” (Bellwood 1996, 25).

We can imagine two scenarios for PPh. On the one hand, this society follows the typical kind of leadership that is passed on from generation to generation, which is thus based on ascription. One who is of noble birth has

**Table 9. Cognate set of *datu* in Philippine languages**

LANGUAGE GROUP	TERM FOR DATU	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Aklanon	dato?	chieftain
Bikolano	datu?	chieftain
Cuyunon	dato?	chieftain
Hiligaynon	dato?	chieftain
Ibanag	datu	chieftain
Ilokano	dato	chieftain
Kapampangan	dato?	chieftain
Maguindanao	dato	chieftain
Maranao	dato?	of the nobility
Palaweno	dato?	chieftain
Pangasinan	datu	chieftain
Samar-Leyte	dato?	chieftain
Sambal	dato?	chieftain
Sulu	dato?	any male member of the nobility
Tagalog	dato?	chieftain

Source: Lopez 1976, 20

the potential to become a leader when he or she comes of age. As the terms for “chief” (\*datu and \*ampu-ampu) are not gender-exclusive, leadership may be open to both men and women. Moreover, it is not sex but age that is important, for the leaders of the group are the \*ampu-ampu or the \*datu who are the elders, the wise ones. Given that in bilateral kinship a strict genealogy is difficult to sustain, possible quasi-lineages in these societies facilitate not only land ownership but also ascribed leadership.

On the other hand, PPh also allows for new and achieved type of leadership, in that foreign leaders are also recognized, as seen in the constant expansion of ancestral societies. The initial expansion of the Austronesians was driven by the population increase brought about by improvements in agriculture (ibid., 30). These waves of migration were facilitated via the PPh \*barangay 'communal boat' (after Blust 2005) < PWMP \*baraŋay (Blust and Trussel 2015). Clearly, these movements resulted in the settlement of new territories or perhaps in the colonization of previously settled ones. The members of these communities were those brought by the \*baraŋay, and the leader of such groups of colonizers would consequently become the leader of the community, hence the myth of the “stranger king”—the foreign ruler of the land (Sahlins 1985 cited in Bellwood 1996, 25).

Nobility can also be said to have played a central role in early Philippine society. That social stratification was evident follows Murdock’s (1949, 87) claims regarding the correlation of slavery and social class. In PPh the concept of slavery is clearly primitive, as we have a reconstructed form PPh \*qadipen 'slave' (after Paz 1981) < PWMP \*qudipen (Blust and Trussel 2015). Thus, people in PPh society apparently belonged to different social classes, possibly based on wealth aside from the traditional hereditary aristocracy. The aforementioned achieved rather than ascribed leadership gives supporting evidence to this claim.

Moreover, the reconstructed forms PPh \*utaŋ 'debt', PPh \*bayad 'pay', and PPh \*yaman 'wealth' (after Blust 2005; Paz 1981; Zorc 1986) indicate a wealth-based nobility. Similar to the ancient concept of leadership, PPh had a dualistic system of nobility. On the one hand, membership in a certain kin group was extremely important, as being affiliated with a founder or chief entailed a “central position of rank” (Bellwood 1996, 25). Despite this strong “tendency for social status to be hereditary” (Kroeber 1919, 83), on the other hand, it seems that wealth in PPh society was also a crucial factor in dictating one’s social class.

## Conclusion

Previous studies have dealt with the reconstruction of the social organization of societies deemed to be ancestors of Proto-Philippines, namely, Proto-Austronesian and Proto-Malayo-Polynesian. Building on these works and on available studies of PPh, this study analyzed the development of PPh kinship system from these earlier societies by identifying relevant reconstructed terminologies. Moreover, this study also expanded on Kroeber's earlier PPh cultural reconstruction by considering the theorems and functional determinants presented by Murdock (1949) with his statistical analysis of kinship terms in relation to the culture of different groups of people.

In reconstructing the culture of an ancestral society, this study started with the reconstructed kinship terms for PPh and went on to identify the functional determinants that might have given way to the evolution of these terminologies. These relevant functional determinants are already cultural reconstructions themselves. The study combined these features to produce a clearer sketch of PPh society. These cultural reconstructions must be treated with caution. The lack of written records renders the validity of the scenarios painted here difficult to prove. What we have here are merely pictures of kinship and social organization drawn from linguistic historical reconstructions, which serve as a good starting point in understanding the culture of PPh.

It is interesting to relate these reconstructions to contemporary Philippine social organization. The evolution of kinship terms brings about a change in behavior toward the relevant kin. The opposite is also possible in that a change of behavior toward one's relatives may bring about a subsequent evolution of kinship terminologies. Such is the descent of Tagalog from PPh, which manifests change in kinship nomenclature alongside the evolution of this particular daughter society. The change from generation to lineal type of terminology (in which the criteria of collaterality and affinity are important) points to a change in rule of residence and subsequent change in behavior toward affinal and lineal kin. The terms in the vocabulary borrowed from Chinese, such as *ate* (eldest sister), *kuya* (eldest brother), and *diko* (second eldest brother), also indicate contact with foreign groups and thus provide insights on the nature of the interaction and exchanges of Filipinos with other cultures.

F. Landa Jocano (1989, 4) has described the contemporary Philippine kinship system as bilateral in structure characterized by "equal distribution of rights, obligations, privileges, and status among a great number of

kinsmen." Jocano (*ibid.*) has also enumerated several postulates on Filipino social organization, such as the expected behavior of the Ego in relation to his or her kin and community. Based on the reconstructed kinship system of PPh, it can be argued that most of the features and postulates described by Jocano retain the ancestral concept of kinship and social organization in the Philippines. However, with continuous contact from other cultures, foreign concepts have been introduced, such as the Spanish *compadre* or *compradrazgo* system, in which relations between nonkin are formed in rituals such as baptism, confirmation, and marriage (*ibid.*; Kikuchi 1989; Dizon 2011). Mark Dizon (*ibid.*, 368) writes that the early-eighteenth-century kinship system of the groups in Caraballo Mountains of northern Luzon branched out not only through the networks of relatives but also of friends, that is, "the boundaries between kinship and friendship were blurred"—thus going beyond the conventional definition of kinship that is restricted in terms of blood and affinity. Arguably such a concept of kinship goes as far back as the precolonial Philippines. The Ego forms close ties with the people in the community; friends are treated as kin; and the obligations, responsibilities, and behavior toward the people in the community are always evaluated in terms of the concepts of *hiya* (shame, embarrassment, losing face) and *utang na loob* (feeling of gratitude, literally debt in the inside), among others (Jocano 1989; Kikuchi 1989). It can then be said that, despite differences in cultures, Filipinos readily accepted foreign concepts such as the *compadre* system because of parallelisms with the prehispanic concept of kinship and social organization. While this study provides a brief sketch of the kinship system of Proto-Philippine society, it is also interesting to look at the ancestral concept of kinship extending beyond blood and marriage, as this practice will provide a different perspective on the early Philippine social organization.

The ancient PPh system roughly retained the features of the ancestral Austronesian and Malayo-Polynesian societies, particularly the rules of descent and residence. In these societies women were "socially the equals of men" (Kroeber 1919, 83) in that both sexes were expected to perform equal tasks in the family. Relative age was important as it dictated the division of labor among siblings. Membership in a certain kin group was also extremely crucial, as it was a factor in nobility and ultimately the right to a person's chieftainship. However, we see that kinship relations did not exclusively dictate nobility and leadership in the ancestral society. Myths about stranger kings were not uncommon in Malayo-Polynesian societies,



and Proto-Philippine society seems to have allowed such concepts in the sphere of authority and leadership. Ancient Filipinos appear to have placed equal importance on individual achievement as well as on personal history and origins. While the Philippine kinship system has undergone significant changes since its descent from the ancestral PPh, old features still persist. In contemporary Filipino society, particularly palpable in the domain of politics, heredity and nobility still play a crucial role, and achievement (or lack thereof) tends to be secondary. The faults of the past are always easily left behind, and membership in a particular descent group is enough justification to be an “excellent” leader.

Abbreviations Used

<b>CEMP</b>	Central-Eastern Malayo-Polynesian
<b>PAn</b>	Proto-Austronesian
<b>PMP</b>	Proto–Malayo-Polynesian
<b>PPh</b>	Proto-Philippines
<b>PWMP</b>	Proto–Western Malayo-Polynesian
<b>WMP</b>	Western Malayo-Polynesian

Notes

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- 1 Starred forms, i.e., words that appear with an asterisk [\*], represent reconstructed forms under a protolanguage; parentheses represent reconstructed sounds/words that may be deleted in the protoform; angled brackets [<] represent a form directly traced from a protoform (for example, PPh \*daraga 'unmarried woman' < PMP \*daRa is read as: *the Proto-Philippine form \*daraga unmarried woman, traced from the Proto–Malayo-Polynesian form \*daRa*). Following conventions in linguistics, glosses of forms are set off by single quotation marks ['].  
2 Blust (1991) presents a detailed discussion on the issues concerning the term “Philippine languages.” For instance, some languages spoken in the Philippines are not genetically related to the Proto-Philippines, such as English, Chinese, and Sama-Bajaw. On the contrary,

some languages spoken outside the geopolitical boundaries of the Philippines are genetically classified under the Philippine subgroup, such as Yami spoken in Taiwan as well as the Sangiric, Minahasan, and Gorontalo-Mongondow languages spoken in Sulawesi.

- 3 While there are significant differences in the reconstructions proposed by Charles (1974), Paz (1981), and Blust (1991), i.e., the form and number of the protophonemes, similarities can be identified. For instance, the protophoneme \*ʔ reconstructed by Paz (1981) is parallel to the protophoneme \*q reconstructed by Charles (1974) and Blust (1991). The reconstructed lexical items presented here are thus slightly modified to reflect an even reconstruction. Presented below are the approximated phonetic definitions of some of the symbols used in the reconstructions based on the descriptions provided in the aforementioned works:

SYMBOL	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
*q	voiceless, glottal stop	*balaqɨ 'coparent-in-law'
*ñ	voiced, palatal, nasal	*ñäRa 'brother'
*ŋ	voiced, velar, nasal	*qabiŋ 'child'
*R	voiced, uvular, trill	*ñaRa 'brother'
*e	mid, central vowel	*bɛli 'to buy'

- 4 The issue of the Austronesian expansion is mainly based on linguistic evidence. Extralinguistic findings based on archaeological and genetic evidence either corroborate or contradict this theory. Linguistic evidence points to Taiwan as the possible homeland of the Austronesians (Blust 1985, 1995; Tryon 1995; Li 2011). However, Dyen (1965) claims that the homeland is located somewhere in New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago based on lexicostatistical findings. Locating the Austronesian homeland is further complicated by extralinguistic findings, in that Bellwood (1995, 107–8) regards the Neolithic assemblages found in Taiwan and island Southeast Asia as the antecedent of the Lapita Culture of Near Oceania, thus coinciding with the proposals of Blust (1985, 1995), Tryon (1995), and Li (2011), while Solheim (1984–1985) locates the homeland somewhere in Mindanao and northeastern Indonesia based on the stone tools recovered in the region. Genetic evidence also presents conflicting views about the Austronesian migration. Studies such as those of Kayser et al. (2000); Chang et al. (2002); Kimura et al. (2002); Ohashi et al. (2006); and Reguiero et al. (2008) provide support to the Out-of-Taiwan Theory, whereas those of Oppenheimer (2004) and Soares et al. (2011) claim that Polynesian lineages are attributed to Near Oceania rather than island Southeast Asia and Taiwan. On a preliminary critique of the multidisciplinary perspectives in tracing the Austronesian homeland, cf. Lee 2012.
- 5 Reid (1978, 1982) questions the validity of a single PPh subgroup because of the lack of strong innovations attributed to the protolanguage. Ruhlen (1987, cited in Tryon 1995) puts forward a similar view, dividing the Philippine languages into northern Philippines, southern Philippines, Meso-Philippines, and south Mindanao, which fall directly under the Malayo-Polynesian family. Furthermore, Ross (2005) claims that without strong phonological innovations separating the Philippines from the rest of the Malayo-Polynesian languages, the validity of PPh remains questionable. On the contrary, Zorc (1986) and Blust (1991, 2005) present several lexical innovations as evidence for a single Philippine subgroup. Blust (ibid., 39–40) claims that it is the expansion of the protolanguage that caused the extinction of several descendants of PMP

spoken in the archipelago, as well as the displacement of certain languages such as the pre-Chamorro speakers into the Mariana Islands.

- 6 Admittedly *kuya* and *ate* are obvious Chinese derivatives. Since this study excludes borrowings, I currently do not have sufficient data on new/borrowed kinship terms in other Philippine languages with the exception of Tagalog to illustrate the change in the language.

## Appendix

### Reconstructed Proto-Philippine terminologies on kinship and social organization

#### Blust 2005

\*qunaq 'child'  
 \*paŋ-ampu 'descendants'  
 \*ampu-ampu 'forefathers, ancestors'  
 \*balaqi 'co-parent-in-law'  
 \*hili 'village, town'  
 \*hilit 'outskirts, edge of settlement'  
 \*qasawa-en 'to marry, take a spouse'  
 \*ulitau 'bachelor, unmarried man'

#### Paz 1981

\*qabiŋ 'child'  
 \*qamay 'father'  
 \*qanak 'child, offspring'  
 \*qaŋpuq 'grandchild'  
 \*qasal 'custom, source, beginning, formerly, former status, origin as to heredity'  
 \*qasawag 'spouse, wife'  
 \*babayi 'woman, grandmother, term of respect for old woman'  
 \*bataq 'child'  
 \*bayaw 'brother-in-law; sister-in-law'  
 \*kambar 'twins' \*  
 \*lalakiq 'man, male; male of beasts, grandfather'

#### Zorc 1986

\*ilu 'orphan'  
 \*balu 'widow'  
 \*bu-bahi 'woman'  
 \*qutaŋ 'debt'  
 \*bayad 'pay'

#### Charles 1974

\*bayi 'woman, mother'  
 \*tawu 'person'

\*qulilaq 'orphan'  
 \*qadipen 'slave'  
 \*qalagad 'follower; slave, servant'  
 \*bayad 'pay, payment'  
 \*beliq 'buy; price, expensive'  
 \*daraga 'unmarried woman; animal at puberty'  
 \*halagaq 'price'  
 \*taguq 'man, human being, visitor'  
 \*qutaŋ 'debt'  
 \*yaman 'wealth, care, solicitude, property, delicious, savory, gratitude, joy, pleasure'

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