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## 141. Philippine Naming Practices

1. Introduction
2. Personal Names (*pangálan*)
3. Family Names or Surnames (*apelyédo*)
4. Place Names
5. Ethnonyms
6. Selected Bibliography

### 1. Introduction

As with just about every other culture, Filipinos name themselves (personal names) and their family origins (surnames or family names), their environment (place names), and their social groups (ethnonyms). In so doing, however, they draw upon three separate traditions: native terms (words from any of the over 700 communilects spoken throughout the archipelago), loanwords (from Spanish, English, or Arabic), and coinages (words invented to suit). The degree to which any of these are relevant depends on whether the people are lowland Christians (Tagalog, Bisayan, Bikol, Ilokano, Pangasinan, Kapampangan), southern Muslims (Sama, Maranao, Magindanao, Tausug) or highland traditional groups (Bontok, Ibaloi, Ifugao, Ilongot, Hanunoo, Batak, Molbog).

However, in unravelling the linguistic details of this naming process, we must never lose sight of

the complex social interaction that goes into the string of identifiers a person has from birth through the hereafter. On average, a Filipino has ten names — although socially at any given time he or she may be known by only two or three of them depending on with whom he or she is dealing.

### 2. Personal Names (*pangálan*)

Babies are rarely named at birth. The reluctance to give an infant a name is based on the association with the true essence of an individual. For example, it is feared that elderly relatives (especially grandparents) would like to take a child along with them into the next life. Little children may thus be given unattractive or bad names in all but the most urbanized sectors of the country. A generic term like *tótó* 'butch' (for a young boy) or *néné* 'sis' (for a young girl) may be used well into the first year (or later). Once a child's health and good fortune are secure, a christening may safely take place.

Lowland Filipinos tend to adopt Spanish Christian names (*Juan, Pedro, Antonio, To-*

mas, Nicolas, Rosa, Aurora, Maria, Anna, Ramona, Patricia). English names (such as Henry, Tony, John, Joseph, Alice, Rose, Tessie) have also become popular. At Baptism, since Catholics must carry the name of some saint, it had been common in some circles, now associated with the older generation, for Catholic women to have *Maria-* as a prefix (*Maria-Eva, Maria-May*); less commonly men have *-Marie* as a suffix (*Jose-Marie, Donald-Marie*).

After World War II, and into the 1960's, blends or calques were the vogue in many areas. Names such as *Minviluz* or *Luzviminda* (from the three island groups of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao) or *Andrebon* (from the national hero, Andres Bonifacio) can be encountered among the 30–50 year old generation. My wife's name, *Nellie*, is actually the product of such blending; based on her father, *Nicolas*, and her mother, *Lily*, yielding [*ni.li*]. Her elder sister's name, *Evelyn*, represents the sum of her maternal aunts and mother: *Evangelina, Venus, Lily*, and *Nella*.

Islamic people of the south generally have Muslim names, most of which are drawn from Arabic (*Hassan, Hadji, Hamsa, Ibrahim, Yasmin, Sarah, Maryan*), but native words that serve as loan translations are also known (*Batua* 'luck, favor of God').

Highland Filipinos draw upon native vocabulary for their stock of personal names. This tradition, however, has become popular with any Filipino who has come to feel either a strong sense of nationalism or anti-Westernism. It is reported that in Cebu, at the turn of the century, some women with the Spanish name of *Luz* were re-christened *Sugá* 'light.' In Tagalog-speaking areas, names of natural phenomena, *Amihan* 'north wind,' *Liwaywáy* 'dawn,' *Luningning* 'sparkle' and of flora or fauna, *Máya* 'chestnut mannikin bird,' *Lonchura malacca* have also become popular.

### 3. Family Names or Surnames (apelyédo)

The majority of lowland family names are of Spanish origin (*Cruz, Acevedo, Bautista, Mendez, Prado*). Local histories tell of friars ripping out pages from Spanish registries and giving these to their newly-baptized flocks. As a result, in some regions, entire towns

might have had surnames beginning with a single letter, so that one could tell from where a family hailed by just the *apelyédo*.

However, as a result of a nationalistic attitude prevalent even several centuries ago, some families still carry *banság* 'pre-Hispanic surname' (Tagalog *Sumulong* 'rush forward,' *Magsaysáy* 'narrator,' Aklanon *Makabáles* 'can revenge').

Names such as *Pangarungan, Dimaporo*, and *Makaraya* are associated with Muslim families of the south. Many Islamic people tend to follow the tradition of having a surname based on the chosen name of the family's first male convert. In such cases, then, a family name is a male personal name (e. g. *Hassan*). In still other instances, a regional identifier may be used (*Bayabao* traditional eastern subdivision of Lanao province).

Throughout the country, Chinese surnames may be encountered (*Lim, Li* or *Lee, Ong, Ongpin, Chua, Sin*). Possibly due to resentment by Filipinos against the high rate of financial success of many Chinese, some such names have been disguised to appear either Filipino or Spanish (*Llamzon = Li Ang Soon, Cojuangco = Ko Ju Ang Ko, Locsin = Chin Luk*). Apart from intermarriage, such surnames are not adopted by Filipinos.

### 4. Place Names

Most of the seventeen towns of Aklan province represent a microcosmic view of place naming practices. Native words form the majority, describing flora (*Bánga* 'pandanus tree,' *Orania* species, *Baliti* 'large *Ficus* tree sp.,' considered a spirit residence), local terrain (*Malinaw* 'calm' and *Madalág* 'murky,' referring to the state of the water of the Aklan River along which each is located), or events (*Kalibo* 'one thousand' (that many were baptized there on a single day)). There are two Spanish loans (*Numancia* and *Altavas*) and an English one (*New Washington*).

Some Philippine place names can be phenomenally resistant to change. This may well be based on traditional animistic beliefs that a name was sacred and was related to the spirits associated with a given locale. For example, *Agutaya* Island is formed on a Kuyonon word for a species of 'wild banana' (*agutay*), but *Agutaynon* people now live there, and their own (cognate) form for the same plant is *kalutay* (from Proto-Southern

Philippine \**qaRútay*). Not only have they kept the original Kuyonon place name intact, they use it for themselves and their language as well (i. e., *agutay-nen*, not \**kalutay-nen*).

Many well-known Philippine sites have transparent etymologies (*Cotabato* originally from Sanskrit *koṭa* 'fortress' via Malay + Austronesian *batu* 'stone'; *Mindoro* < Spanish *mina* 'mine' *de* 'of' *oro* 'gold'; *Capiz* Province = *kapis* 'seashells').

There are those for which the meaning is a matter of some controversy (*Manila* = *may* 'there is' + *nila* 'indigo plant' or *maynilad* flowering plant species; *Baguio* City = *Bágiw* a plant species or *bagyó* 'storm, typhoon').

## 5. Ethnonyms

Group names are more often than not associated with the language of the area. As Afable notes: "Speech is coterminous with identity, although not necessarily with culture, for many elements of this are known to be shared with neighboring cultures." (1989, 185)

In some instances, an ethnonym is based upon actual language words (*Kelanguyya* = *kelay* 'why?' + *ngu* 'also' + *iya* 'this' as opposed to *Kelanguttan* = *kelay* 'why?' + *ngu* 'also' + *itan* 'that (near you)'; *Waráy Bisayan* 'there is none,' *Ja'ún* Surigao Bisayan 'over there').

In still others, it may be based on a speech characteristic (*Kamankihhang* = *ekisang* 'loose, not tight' referring to the tense vowels of Kallahan as perceived by the Ibaluy as opposed to *Kaman-ippet* = *ipet* 'tight' referring to the lax vowels of Ibaluy as perceived by the Kallahan). (Afable op. cit., 90 f.)

As with place names, some ethnonyms are not without controversy. Zorc (1977, 42 ff.) outlines four competing etymologies for the word *Bisaya*, dismissing Sanskrit *vijaya* 'victory, victorious' and *vaiçya* 'third caste' (on phonetic grounds), but accepting as probable either Sanskrit *visaya* 'subject; territory' (based on its regionalistic connotations) or Malay *bicara* 'speak, talk' (based on some dialects reflecting this loan as *bisaya*, a characteristic that may have been extended to the whole group).

As with a term such as *Bisaya*, which applies to no less than 37 central Philippine language groups, an ethnonym can undergo considerable extension of meaning. With the term *Igullut* (*Igorot*), language may be the primary distinguishing feature, encompassing virtually the entire Kallahan linguistic com-

munity. However, the same word also includes their non-proximate neighbors (*Ibaluy*, *Iuwak*, *Kankana-ey*). In yet a further extension, it may apply to all of the rest of the indigenous highland dwelling non-Christian populations of the original Mountain Province. (Afable 1989, 102)

Besides indigenous names for one's own group, there may be a plethora of ethnonyms for other groups (what the Kallahan call the Ifugao [*Ikkinyangan*] the Bontok [*Ibbuntuk*], or the Kalinga [*Kalingga*]).

Some such have entered the linguistic literature although they actually reflect a perceived cultural characteristic and are not true names, e. g., *Buhul* 'enemy' is applied by the Kallahan to the Bontok and Ifugao (Afable *Ibid.*, 133).

'The term *Igullut* is to be derived within Kallahan as *i-* origin prefix + *gulut* 'mountain range,' i. e., 'people of the primal territory,' but many Filipinos create a folk etymology based on forms such as Ilokano *ger-rét*, Ifugao *golót* 'butcher, slit the throat' since many groups in this area practiced head-hunting.

There are, of course, group (and language) names that relate to a given place of origin or settlement (*Tagalog* = *taga-* 'origin' + *ilog* 'river'; *Maranao* = *ma-* adjective prefix + *danaw* 'lake,' i. e., 'lake people,' *Magindanao* = *mag-* active aorist + *-in-* inchoative + *danaw* 'lake,' i. e., 'lake settlers,' *Kallahan* 'forest' = *alas* 'tree (other than pine)' + *ka-an* collective = 'people of the forest; *Ikadasan* = *i-* local origin + same as for Kallahan above, referring to the group's practice of swidden agriculture).

NOTE: Words or names not otherwise identified are Tagalog (the basis of the Philippine National Language). I would like to express my deepest gratitude to John Wolff, Harold Conklin, Patricia Afable and Anabelle Sarra for all of their suggestions towards the contents of this study which have been incorporated freely throughout. It goes without saying that any misrepresentations or errors of fact or interpretation are my own responsibility.

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## 142. Australian Aboriginal Personal and Place Names

1. Prolegomena
2. Personal Names
3. Various Forms of Avoidance of a Personal Name
4. The Influence of Christianity: Forcible Sequestration
5. Concern for Past Aboriginal Names of Persons
6. Place Names
7. Meaning in Place Names
8. Group Names
9. To Particularize (former) Aboriginal Presence
10. Conclusions
11. Selected Bibliography

### 1. Prolegomena

While name, person, thing, land, and history might all seem discrete concepts to the modern mind, they are not so separated in the dynamic imaginative consciousness of the Aborigines of Australia — or Kooris, as in more recent times the native people have come to prefer themselves to be called. Thus notions of onomastics embracing the separate realms of anthroponyms and toponyms are not valid for a people who have totally integrated in micro-sociology their vital beliefs about the universe and their relationships with places, animals, plants and other peoples. For the 'Dreaming' an underlying power-filled ground of reality and its manifestation in land and nature constitute the foundations of all traditional Aboriginal thought and of the unexpected yet irresistible cultural renaissance which since the 1970s has revitalised the indigenous peoples of the continent. The 'traditional' (past—present) is also the true History of people and place because it was in that always-to-be-remembered time out of time that the Ancestral Beings moved about, shaping what was nothing into something, forming the landscape and creating the plants, animals and people of the known world. All were related to each other through interactions that had taken place in the dreaming. Laws made then were passed on to man and have moved through the generations. All the universe was in a harmony between the physical and the spiritual.

'Australia' was supposed to exist as a vast southern continent by Mercator in 1569 and the actual

name acquired more general use from the early 19th century. Its total population, of all races, 9,000,000 in August 1954, would double in the next 35 years. [It is now divided into various States and Territories — these regions, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australian, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory — are abbreviated in further reference.] The land itself was progressively usurped from the original inhabitants who have either been left in more inhospitable regions, or, as is largely the case, are now represented by part Aborigines who are largely 'urbanized' in regional towns and in the state capital cities. They were once estimated to have numbered, pre-invasion, perhaps only 300,000 or as many as one million, but suffered terribly from dispossession from their lands, the 1921 estimate of all persons of Aboriginal stock being only 70,000. But the race has rallied very considerably since then, multiplying severalfold.

They had complex and exhaustive naming systems for all persons and physical features, of which latter total only a fraction can be said to survive in widely accepted use, and fewer to be understood as words with cultural meaning.

### 2. Personal Names

#### 2.1. Traditional Naming of Persons

Prior to the collapse of the native civilization, in the 'timeless' cultural situation, a child acquires/ed a personal name when about two years old, that is after learning to walk and surviving potentially fatal sickness. A boy will then receive the name of a grandfather, usually of a 'father' or his own mother's father, and a girl that of a 'grandmother', usually her mother's mother. The 'grandparent' decides without prompting when to do this. Each such name — as established in the desert situation — is a phrase from a dreaming-song. A boy is likely to obtain much of his knowledge of kinship names/terms and behaviour from the old man. Such is more or less the view of modern anthropology as to the traditional practice of (the early) name-bestowal.