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Appendix A Agta kinship and social organization 95–100



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Appendix A: Agta Kinship and Social Organization

1. AGTA KINSHIP

Kin relations are described as consanguineal or affinal according to terms of reference (to the living or deceased), occurrence with personal markers (i, ni, and te, which mark proper names and certain kinship terms) or impersonal markers (ya, na, and ta, which mark the other kinship terms), terms of address, and meaning symbol. The meanings of the symbols used in Tables I and II are as follows:

B	Brother
C	Child
F	Father
H	Husband
M	Mother
P	Parent
S	Sister
Sb	Sibling
Sp	Spouse
W	Wife
af	affinal
e	elder
f	female
m	male
y	younger
/	and/or
()	conditioned by preceding or following term
2	2nd ascending or descending generation
3	3rd ascending or descending generation
4	4th ascending or descending generation

Examples:

Sb^e = elder sibling

PSbC^m = parent's sibling's male child

B/PSbC = brother and/or parent's sibling's child

af(B/PSbC^m) = affinal brother/affinal parent's sibling's male child

C² = child's child

P³B = parent's parent's parent's brother

TABLE I. CONSANGUINEAL RELATIONS

<u>REFERENCE</u>		<u>MARKER</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>SYMBOL</u>
<u>Living</u>	<u>Deceased</u>			
dama	mināma	Pers.	ama	F
hina	minena	Pers.	ina	M
kabāgis		Impers.	kabāgis	Sb
kaka	minakka	Pers.	abe	Sb ^e
wagi	mināwagi	Pers.	wagi	Sb ^y
anāk		Impers.	aleng (m) aboy (f)	C
kākay	minākākay	Impers.	kākay	PF/P ² B
kāko	minākāko	Impers.	kāko	PM/P ² S
kākay ta tud		Impers.	kākay	P ² F/P ³ B
kāko ta tud		Impers.	kāko	P ² M/P ³ S
ulitag	minolitag	Pers.	utte	PB
masina	minekit	Pers.	ina	PS
kasinsin		Impers.	abe (e) wagi (y)	PSbC/P ² SbC
kapidwa		Impers.	abe (e)	P ³ SbC
pangānakan*		Impers.	aleng (m) aboy (f)	SbC/SpSbC/PSbCC
afuk**	mināfuk	Impers.	aleng (m) aboy (f)	C ² /SbC ² / SpSbC ² / PSbC ³ .
afuk ta tud***		Impers.	aleng (m) aboy (f)	C ³ /SbC ³ / SpSbC ³ / PSbC ⁴

*Any affinal or consanguineal relation in the same generation as ego's child.

**Any affinal or consanguineal relation in the same generation as ego's child's child.

***Any affinal or consanguineal relation in the same generation as ego's child's child's child.

TABLE II. AFFINAL RELATIONS

<u>REFERENCE</u>		<u>MARKER</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>SYMBOL</u>
<u>Living</u>	<u>Deceased</u>			
atawa	minātawa	Impers.	(name)	Sp
katuhangǎn		Impers.	ama (m) ina (f)	Sp(P/PSb/PSbSp)
katuhangǎn ta tud		Impers.	kākay (m) kāko (f)	Sp(P ² /P ² Sb/ P ² SbSp)
manuhǎng		Impers.	aleng (m) aboy (f)	(C/SbC/PSbC ² / PSbC ³)Sp
manuhǎng ta tud		Impers.	aleng (m) aboy (f)	(C ² /SbC ² / PSbC ⁴)Sp
kabalay		Impers.	kabalay	CSpP/CSpPSb
kāyung*		Pers.	kāyung	af(B/PSbC ^m)
ipǎg**		Pers.	ipǎg (m ego)	af(S/PSbC ^f)
ipǎg		Pers.	ipǎg (f ego)	af(Sb/PSbC)
kabirāt***		Pers.	kabirāt	SpSbSp/SbSpSb
kabalwǎn****		Pers.	kabalwǎn	

*Male ego's affinal brother or male cousin.

**Male ego's affinal sister or female cousin, or female ego's affinal sibling or cousin.

***Spouse or sibling of ego's affinal sibling or cousin.

****Ego's widowed affinal sibling or cousin.

2. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND BEHAVIOR¹

The only social unit with observable solidarity is the nuclear family. First cousins manifest hardly any more social interaction than two persons completely unrelated by blood. The family shows some matrilineal features. A child usually learns his mother's language at the expense of the father's if there are two languages in the home, as is the case in fifty percent of families. The bride's relatives come away from a wedding with the lion's share of the spoil. A child is given his name(s) by his mother rather than his father. Residence has a tendency to be matrilineal. An Agta always insists that the settlement where his mother lived as a child is his "real" hometown.²

Within the family, the status of the husband and wife is fairly equal. Between the children, younger siblings defer to older ones,³ and girls defer to brothers near in age.

Proper names

An Agta may have a half dozen different names. His mother will give him one or two during his early childhood selected from the traditional stock of Agta names, though sometimes they may be Ilocano or English borrowings, or even some natural species. Many Agtas sooner or later are given one or two Spanish names like most Filipinos. This may occur if an Agta attends school for a few weeks, or if he presents himself to municipal officials for registration of his marriage. Many officials are loath to put "pagan" names on their books, so they rename tribespeople as a symbol of their becoming civilized and "Christianized." The name a person will be best known by may be any one of these names.

In general, an Agta is not permitted to say the name of any of his kin of his parents' or grandparents' generation. More especially, there is a strict taboo on saying the name of in-laws of one's father's or one's own generation. In the case of grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles a person is expected to refer to them by the appropriate kinship term, and to address them in a corresponding manner. In the case of parents-in-law and siblings-in-law one may refer to them either by the proper kinship term or by a special in-law nickname. Similarly one may address a sibling-in-law either way, but a parent-in-law must be addressed with the proper kinship term. The in-law nicknames may be words denoting some characteristic of a person, or they may be natural species. Often these nicknames show a phonological resemblance to the person's ordinary name. Not all in-laws necessarily use the same nickname for a given person. An informant will readily give the name of another Agta, except for his in-laws, in which case he will give the in-law's nickname. If further questioned, he will explain that it is taboo for him to say the true name and will ask another person not in such relation to say it for him.

In-law behavior

The relation between a person and his parents-in-law is often a very touchy, emotional one. One father-in-law tried to cut his son-in-law's throat because he did not complete paying the bride price. The fellow left the settlement, but his new wife would not follow him. She died without seeing him again. One mother-in-law was very possessive of her daughter and granddaughter and persuaded her to return with her for a while to their old home. This was done while the husband was working in the planting ground (umoma), and when he returned he was furious. Not only was his wife "stolen" but also his clothes and bow and arrows (to persuade him to follow them). He talked of police action, but after he had waited a week or two his wife returned. A person is expected to spend a certain proportion of his life residing near his parents-in-law, and it is his duty to help and obey them. One man had three daughters, and he had sad experiences with his first two sons-in-law. They neither helped nor obeyed him. They did what they liked. In later years when he would have most appreciated help, they left and lived in other settlements. When it came time to marry off his last daughter, he was very cautious lest he be treated the same way again.

There are several taboos that a person must observe towards his parents- and siblings-in-law. Most importantly, he must not ever mention their true names, only kinship or in-law nicknames. If a true name should be also an ordinary vocabulary item of the language, he must never pronounce that word, but use some synonym. If someone has a slight cardiac disturbance, he immediately concludes that it is caused by an in-law saying his name. A person must also take care not to break wind (magattut 'flatus'), especially audibly, in the presence of an in-law. His shame is greater if he is openly laughed at. Thirdly, he should never throw anything at an in-law, even in jest. If it hits him, a boil is likely to grow on that spot.

These three things are to be avoided (mazigman). A person who does any of them is not only shamed (namatan), but also has to pay compensation (mangawat) to the offended in-law. A man should give money and a woman rice. A father-in-law should receive about twice the amount that a sibling-in-law is due. One informant suggested that if a person should name his father-in-law it would cost him about five pesos. Although behavior towards one's parents-in-law is usually reserved, and some reserve is likewise shown towards siblings-in-law, behavior towards more remote classificatory katuhangan, kayung, and ipag seems to be carefree. Behavior towards an in-law is modified considerably by the personality traits of the two individuals involved. The relationship is also temporarily modified in times of severe stress when, for example, the name taboo is occasionally broken.

Obligations and privileges of relatives

Hospitality is essential to the continuance of the Agtas' seminomadism. The basis for hospitality is blood relationship. When a group of Agtas goes visiting—whether a family, or two close unmarried friends, or even a single individual—they are entertained by a household containing blood relatives of at least one member of the visiting party. If the place being visited is very distant, a strong friendship equivalent to a wagi relationship may serve as the basis for hospitality in the absence of a blood relative. Usually several members of the entertaining household and the visiting party are in-laws, but such relationships have never been observed to be the sole basis for hospitality.

It is expected that a visitor will make some contribution towards the meal(s) provided by the entertaining household. If the visit is very brief (one or two meals perhaps), rice is usually brought. Young men often prefer, however, to give money towards their meals. If a visitor has no provision for his meal, he is too ashamed to eat. If a party stays for more than a day or two, they take part in the host's usual activities of foraging, hunting, or working for cash, sharing equally in the food so gained. Visitors staying for an extended period of two or more weeks will normally form their own household, occupying or building a separate house. In such circumstances, the responsibility of the resident relatives is not now hospitality, but speaking for the visitors' interests.

Private ownership is a strong Agta concept. But as seminomads they exchange almost all forms of property fairly rapidly. One of the chief mechanisms of exchange between Agtas is the custom of asking (magadang). If an Agta sees something he would like to have in the possession of one of certain blood relatives, he has the right to ask for it with a fair expectation of receiving it. Perhaps the commonest relative asked is a sibling, and the best expectation of receiving is from a younger sibling. Grown children sometimes ask from parents, although they are expected to support their parents in their old age. An Agta will freely ask from a son- or daughter-in-law and he expects compliance. A person may ask from very distant relatives, especially if they are younger (in a wagi relationship to him). Not all requests are fruitful. If the item concerned is highly prized by the owner, and if the asking relative is younger or of the same age, a firm but casual refusal settles the matter. Almost every item of their material culture has been observed to enter into such exchanges, especially clothing, but never a man's G-string (bag). A common way of asking is to say: kalakwāk yeyan o 'this little thing will be mine'.

NOTES

1. This section on social organization is from unpublished notes on Agta ethnology by Alan and Phyllis Healey. Where our own personal observation differs from theirs, a note is given to that effect.
2. This may have been true at one time; however, more recent generations do not seem to pinpoint their real residence that precisely.
3. Older siblings often have the responsibility of "baby-sitting" their younger siblings. When conflicts between them arise, as they sometimes do, the older ones are admonished to give in to the younger, who are catered to and given every advantage over the older ones.