1. Introduction

In his book titled *Inuman Pinoy* (Philippine drink), Alegre, a Filipino folk culture specialist, reported on the local alcoholic beverage and drinking culture in the Philippine Archipelago and briefly discussed the palm wine industry in the Philippine Islands (Alegre 1992). Because of his excellent notes, we learned of the distilled alcohol made from palm wine and the aging process of palm wine practiced in the Philippine Archipelago. However, his description may lead us to suppose that all Filipinos in the islands make and enjoy palm wine and its distilled brandy. It is, of course, not the case. To my understanding, there exist regional differences in palm wine production.

In the present essay, I have two objectives. One is to propose an establishment of two distinct palm wine cultures in the Philippines. To do this, I would like to employ data that I obtained during my fieldwork and also historical records written by early Spanish colonial officers. Another objective of this essay is to reconsider the role of Austronesian historical linguistics, which can greatly contribute to Southeast Asian studies.

2. Tuba?

In the Philippines, palm wine is generally called *tuba*? The first record of coconut wine was seen in Magellan’s travel to the islands in 1521. He drank coconut wine as well as distilled variety. After Magellan, many colonial personnel wrote about it. For example, Loarca, a high officer assigned to Panay Island in 1582, gave a detailed account as follows:

> In all these islands are great number of cocoa palms. They drew a great quantity of wine from the palm-trees; one Indian can in one forenoon obtain two arrobas of sap from the palm trees that he cultivates. It is sweet and good, and is used in making great quantities of brandy, excellent vinegar, and delicious honey (Blair and Robertson 1906, vol.5:169).

Antonio de Morga, once acting Governor, noted in 1609:

> Their drink is a wine made from the tops of cocoa and nipa palm, of which there is a great abundance. They are grown and tended like vineyards. Drawing tuba, they distil it, using for alembics their own little furnaces and utensils, to a greater or less strength, and it becomes brandy. This is drunk throughout the islands. It is a wine of the clarity of water, but strong and dry. Mixed with Spanish wine, it makes a mild liquor, and one very palatable and healthful (Blair and Robertson 1906, vol. 16:80).
Although the Spanish appreciated palm wine in the Philippine Archipelago, they economically did not pay attention to it. Rather, the coir from the coconut husk was an important commodity for the Spanish Galeon ships, because high quality rope was made from the coir. Coconut only became commercially important in the late 19th century when coconut oil became a source of soap.

American biologists, on the other hand, first paid attention to the economic importance of palm wine. In the beginning of the American regime, Gibbs (1911) studied the productivity of several palms and reached the conclusion that coconut palm (Cocos nucifera), nipa palm (Nypa fruticans), sugar palm (Arenga pinnata), and buri palm (Corypha utan Lam.) yield high productivity.

In those days, those four palms may have been used for sap collection throughout the Philippine Archipelago. However, to my understanding, presently, coconut palm is mostly used for wine producing purposes. Nipa palm may rank the second most utilized palm in the Philippines for sap collection (Evangelista 1973).

3. Tapping Tuba?

The method of tapping is an old practice that requires considerable skill and courage. Pigafetta, while in Cebu with Magellan, described the process of tuba? making as follows (Jocano 1975:23):

They bore a hole into the heart of the said [coconut] palm at the top called palamito, from which distils a liquor which resembles white mist. That liquor is sweet but somewhat tart, and [is gathered] in canes [of bamboo] as thick as the leg and thicker. They fasten the bamboo to the tree at evening for the morning, and in the morning for the evening.

This method has not changed and it is still practiced. In the Philippines, the sap tapper is a distinct occupation that requires special techniques. It is considered a good job, because few other jobs provide a daily income as large.

To understand the tapping process, it is necessary to be familiar with inflorescence. The fully opened bud, piton (Seb) or puso (Tag), consists of a central stalk from which branch out smaller stalks that bear the male and female flowers.1 At an earlier stage when the inflorescence is not yet open, the entire cluster of flowers and stalks is found tightly packed within an enclosing spathe and the whole band is called the spadix. The dimensions of the spadix are 3/4 to 2 meters long and 8 to 13 centimeters at maximum girth.

The first stage is training the bud or the unopened spadix to go in the proper direction, so that the tip points slightly downwards. This may be done by tying a cord around it with the other end attached to one of the leaves below. By slowly tightening this cord the spadix bends. To prevent it from opening, the spadix is tightly bound with fiber: often the fibrous bark of the petiole is used. Training takes nearly a week.

Then the end of the spadix is cut off about 5 to 7 centimeters from the tip and the exposed tissues are gently scratched or pounded. The lower 60 centimeters are then bound tightly with cord to prevent the flowers bursting through. A thin slice is cut off each morning and evening, and within a day or so juice begins to flow. The juice, dropping from the cut surface, is collected, usually in a section of giant bamboo. It is usually about 10 centimeters in diameter and 40 centimeters long.

1 In the present paper the following abbreviations are employed: Seb for Sebuano, Tag for Tagalog, DUP for duplication.
The object of the training is to prevent the juice from running back into the spadix, where it would encourage rotting. Sap is generally collected in the morning, and sometimes twice a day, depending on the tree. The tree has to be shaved twice a day in order to prevent the surface from drying out. In Tagalog, collecting the sap in the morning is called *maninigis* and this is normally practiced around 6 to 7 am. Shaving in the afternoon is called *maghahapon* and is done around 4 to 5 pm.

The flow of juice gradually increases for about 2 weeks and then decreases. According to Piggot, a good palm may produce up to 8 pints (1 gallon) a day, but 5 pints (0.625 gallon) is a good average. The volume varies with the season, usually being higher in wet periods (Piggot 1964:85).

A skillful tapper can, by careful paring and tapping, keep a spadix going for thirty days or more. It depends on how long the spadix is and how thin every slice is. A well-organized tapper prepares for a second spadix during production, when the current spadix becomes short and produces little. It is possible to tap up to 3 spadices on one palm. It appears that tapping can be continued indefinitely per tree as long as the rainfall is satisfactory.

4. A Comparison of *Tuba*?-related Terms

To produce *tuba*?, a sap tapper or a *tuba*? gatherer needs a sharp knife or sickle for cutting the bud. In Tagalog, *karit* is the word for the scythe used in shaving slices from the inflorescence for sap tapping. There exist two interrelated terms to *karit*, which are essential to *tuba*? production. *Karitan* refers to the coconut tree where the bud is tapped. *Manggarit* is the term designated to refer to a sap tapper.

A look at Tagalog morphology provides a key to understanding the relationship among these words. *Karitan* is derived from the root *karit*. The Tagalog suffix -*an* has various functions. According to Vicassan’s Dictionary (Santos 1978:53), it derives a noun that means place of action, as in *tanghalan* ‘stage’, *dula*?an* ‘theater’, *limbagan* ‘printing house’, *tahi*?an* ‘tailor shop’. Thus the word *karitan* is understood as a *karit*-ing place where sap tappers slice the bud. The term *manggarit* may be decoded as *maN*-DUP-*karit*, where DUP is read as reduplication of the first open syllable of the stem *mangarit*.2

Let me compare the *tuba*?-related Tagalog morphology with that of the Sebuano morphology. In Sebuano, scythe is called *sanggut* and a tree for sap production is called *sanggutan*. The relationship between *sanggut* and *sanggutan* is parallel to what I have just observed in the Tagalog example above.

Sebuano also has the [maN- DUP] form to indicate occupation, trade or habit: *mamamalad* ‘fortune teller’ < maN- DUP *palad* ‘fate’, *mananambal* ‘doctor’ < maN- DUP *tambal* ‘treat, cure’, *mangangahuy* ‘wood gatherer’ < maN- DUP *kahuy* ‘wood’. If Sebuano morphology supports my supposition, a term for *tuba*? gatherer in Sebuano would be *manananggut*. Unfortunately, it does not seem to be the case. The most common Sebuano term for the *tuba*? gatherer is either *mananggiti* or *manangguwete*. These words are probably derived from *sanggut* but they have no reduplication of the first syllable of the stem *mananggut*. This clearly violates the rule. Also, they underwent vowel shifts.

2 The symbol N- represents a prefixed nasal assimilates in various ways with the initial phoneme of the root. Preceding /k/, N- assimilates to the point of articulation of the initial consonant and that consonant is deleted: the stem *mangarit* are derived from *maN-karit* where N- assimilates to /ng/ and the initial /k/is deleted.
Interestingly, the action of tapping the coconut is referred to as *mananggut* by those who call *tuba*? gatherer *mananggiti* or *manangguwete*. In addition, the Bohol dialect of Sebuano refers to a sap tapper as *mananggut*. This form still violates my supposition because no reduplication is employed. However, it is clear that *mananggut* is derived from *sanggut*. Finally, in the Dumaguete dialect, *manananggut* refers to a *tuba*? gatherer, which is the same as one would expect.

Table 1 shows derivatives on *tuba*?-related terms in both Tagalog and Sebuano. Notice that the rule of word formation in the two languages is identical.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Tagalog</th>
<th>Sebuano</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘sickle’</td>
<td><em>karit</em></td>
<td><em>sanggut</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘sap producing tree’</td>
<td><em>karitan</em></td>
<td><em>sanggutan</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘<em>tuba</em>? gatherer’</td>
<td><em>mangangarit</em></td>
<td><em>manananggut</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beyond the surface level, there exists a common basic linguistic similarity among the Luzon and Visayan *tuba*? cultures. Based on this fact, Whorfian linguists would claim that there is a common *tuba*? culture in the Philippine Archipelago. Even though both languages share the same morphology for the *tuba*?-making terminology, there are vast differences in drinking practices as seen in the next section.

5. Luzon-type and Visayan-type *Tuba*? Culture

To my understanding, there are two kinds of alcoholic beverages made from coconut palm in the Philippines. One is fermented sap and another is its distilled form. In Tagalog, the former is called *tuba*? and the latter *lambanog*.

In Southern Luzon, it is common to drink *lambanog*, while *tuba*? is seldom drunk. The Bisayans, on the other hand, prefer raw *tuba*?.3 To the best of my knowledge, the distilled palm alcohol cannot be found in any places in the Visayan Islands except in Surigao, Northeastern Mindanao where there exists a distilled *nipa* palm wine called *sum*, *soy* or *laksoy* (Alegre 1992). Since I am not familiar with the distilled *nipa* wine, the following discussion will be limited to *tuba*? in Southern Luzon and the Visayan regions.

Based on my fieldwork in the Philippine Islands, I presuppose that there exist two distinct coconut wine cultures in the Philippines from the viewpoint of drinking customs. Southern Luzon consists of one *tuba*? culture where *tuba*? is often distilled. Another *tuba*? culture is observed in the Visayan Islands where *tuba*? is not distilled. For the sake of brevity, I will label the former type of distilled *tuba*? drinking culture the Luzon-type and the latter the Visayan type. I will describe the details of the Visayan-type culture below (see Sevidal (1975) for the Tagalog *lambanog* drinking customs).

6. Bahalina

In some parts of the Visayan Islands, palm sap could be classified into four stages: *lina*, *tuba*?, *bahal*, and *bahalina*. *Folk Culture of the Central Visayas*, edited by the Ministry

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3 I will employ Visaya as a geographical term that covers islands between Luzon and Mindanao and Bisaya as people living in Visayan Islands.
of Education, describes *lina* as the fresh and sweet sap of coconuts, which is preferred by children because of its sweetness (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports 1986:62). The book also notes older people like the day-old bitter-sour *tuba*? or *bahal*. If it is kept for two weeks or more and allowed to ferment in a tightly covered container, it turns into *bahalina*.

I have never encountered *lina* during my fieldwork. Because *Folk Culture of the Central Visayas* did not describe the particulars about the places, unfortunately I am not able to confirm the description of *lina*. Therefore, I will describe three stages in fermented sap commonly classified in the Visayan Islands. For example, in Tanauan, Leyte, there is a clear distinction among coconut wine regarding aging (or “daying”) and the price reflects the aging. A Japanese microbiologist, Kozaki, once described *tuba*? as a one-month fermented wine. Two to three month fermentation sap is called *bahal* and more than three months is called *bahalina*. The longer wine is fermented, the better quality it gains and the more expensive it becomes (Kozaki 1990).

As far as I surveyed, *bahalina* is limited to Leyte Island. Bisayans in other islands usually know that *bahalina* is an aged strong *tuba*?, but few have experienced it. Outside of Leyte, thus, there are only two stages of *tuba*? available. Among them, *tuba*? generally refers to the newly fermented coconut wine that is drunk on the same day as collected. *Bahal* is an at least one-day old *tuba*?, which tastes stronger and much sour than *tuba*?.

7. *Tungog*

The Visayan *tuba*? is reddish in color. This is because of the bark of the trees called *tungog* or *balok* (or *baruk*). The words refer to the name of the tree (*Ceripos* sp.) as well as the powdered products made of *tungog* trees.4

The tree grows in mangrove forests. Mangrove is a rank and salt tolerant forest ecosystem of tropical and subtropical regions of the world. Mangroves include trees, shrubs, vines, and palms growing in coastal areas reached by seawater at high tide. Useful products from mangroves include quality firewood, charcoal, tannin, dye, and construction materials. Aside from these, mangrove forests aid in natural land reclamation.

The tannin in *tungog* provides the coloring effect. This is one of the motivations to employ *tungog* in *tuba*? in the Visayan Islands. Locally, *tungog* is believed to give a flavoring effect. The copy on the Dragon brand *tungog* package, one of the major powdered *tungog* packing companies in Cebu, expresses the character of *tungog*, saying: “*Tungog* is not merely for coloring but is also a flavoring to make the native wine a wholesome appetizer and palatable stimulant.” There are other local beliefs on *tungog*. If one drinks *tuba*? without *tungog*, he or she may have loose bowels. In fact, others claim that *tungog* works as laxative. Another belief is that *tungog* functions as a medicine for intestinal disorders.

Scientists agree with the functions of *tungog* in the following two points. First, the tannin precipitates the proteins in *tuba*? and thus the tannins help to clear the *tuba*? from albuminous impurities (Banzon and Velasco 1982:318). Second, the *tungog* helps the wine yeast *Saccharomyces* become active, while it makes various bacteria and wild yeast inactive (Kozaki 1990).

There are several brands of *tungog* in the Visayan Islands: “Dragon”, “Banana”, “LPC”, “TCC”, and “YTC” in Cebu; “Lubi”, “King”, and “Eagle” in Iloilo; “Sunshine” in

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4 Some Philippine languages call this species *tangal*, while *tungog* is most common in the Visayan Islands and Mindanao.
Bacolod; “Tuba” and “Vinta” in Zamboanga; “NFT” and “TKC” in Tacloban; and “UTC” in Tagbilaran. It costs 2 to 3 pesos for 100 to 200 grams. Those brands are simply repackagers because they buy powdered mangrove bark from the dealers in Zamboanga.

There are at least four dealers of tungog in Zamboanga (as of June 1993). Only one of them is run by a pure Sebuano family, but others are “mestizos” of Sebuano and Chinese mixture. They illegally import dried barks from Sabah, East Malaysia because mangrove cannot be cut without permission both in the Philippines and Malaysia. Muslim merchants play an important role in smuggling the bark (See de la Peña (2000) for life-stories of tungog collectors and traders).

Dried bark is made into powder in factories in Zamboanga and exported, in sacks, to Cebu, Iloilo, Davao, and other major cities in the Visayan Islands. According to a tungog dealer in Zamboanga, Cebu is the largest market for tungog and Davao ranks next.

The tungog dealers in Zamboanga classify two kinds of bark: tungog and bakawan, though powdered final products are simply called tungog. In some other Philippine languages, tungog is identical to tangal, which refers to the Ceriops species. Either bakaw or bakawan often refers to the Rhizophora species.

The tungog packers sometimes mix tungog and bakawan in a package. Tungog is locally evaluated better than bakawan. There is, however, less supply of tungog than that of bakawan. Tungog was, in 1993, imported at 3.5 pesos per kilogram, while it was exported at 7 to 8 pesos per kilogram. The price of bakawan varied between a range of 2.5 to 3 pesos per kilogram depending on the thickness of the bark. Thicker bark is preferred because it is easier to ground than the thin bark.

Once, there used to be found good and thick bark in Tawi-Tawi, Jolo, Basilan, and even around Zamboanga. Unfortunately, there are few supplies from Mindanao or Sulu at present. One of the dealers in Zamboanga explained that the mangrove swamps are in danger of extinction because rapid development of fishponds for prawns or shrimps prevails. He commented since mangroves grow well on their own, it does not harm the ecological systems as long as cutting is limited to tungog production and personal use. It is the fishpond industry that destroys the ecology.

Forest clearing to make way for housing and industrial development, small port development, fishponds and saltponds, and the indiscriminate harvesting of mangroves to meet the increasing demand for firewood and domestic fuel have led to the large scale destruction of mangroves. And, of course, the tungog industry is one of the harmful activities.

8. Towards a Dynamic Comparative Linguistics

There are external differences in drinking practices between the Luzon type and the Visayan type. However, beyond the surface level, there is a common cognitive thread running through the two cultures.

It is not that the Bisayans never knew how to make brandy. As seen in Loarca and Morga’s description (Blair and Robertson 1906, vol. 16:80; vol. 5:169), the Bisayans used distilled palm wine for palm brandy. Today, among the Bisayan peoples, only the Suriganons make palm brandy from nipal palm. As for tungog being added to tuba?, my encounter of the earliest document is written by Francisco Collins, S. J. in 1663. He noted that “the bark of certain trees which give (tuba?) color, heat, and bite” (Blair and Robertson 1906, vol. 40:66). Even from his account, it is not clear whether adding tungog was widely observed in the Philippine Archipelago.

Thus, one question must be answered is why the Bisayans stopped distilling tuba?? One thing clear is that the degree of alcohol plays an important role in differentiating
the drinking patterns between the two types. *Tuba*’s low alcohol (5 to 7 percent) allows
the Bisayans to drink even in the morning. They believe that *tuba* is good for their
health. Some elite Filipinos might think that *tuba* is simply a substitute for expensive
beer for the poor. If the Bisayans like to get drunk, they would go for the hard liquor
such as locally made gin or rum. We need to look for another reason why there are so
many *tuba* lovers.

It is interesting to be reminded of a function of drinking. Drinking is the symbolic
announcer of friendship, peace, and agreement, in personal as well as in business or
political relations. Thus, Magellan and the *datus* (a local chief) enjoyed the togetherness
of drinking.

Another interesting question is “Are the Filipinos a drinking nation?” Antonio de
Morga (Blair and Robertson 1906, vol. 16:80–81) recorded this comment:

In the assemblies, marriages and feasts of the natives of these islands, the
chief thing consists in drinking this wine [*tuba*], without ceasing, when the
turn of each comes, some singing and other drinking. As a consequence, they
generally become intoxicated without this vice being regarded as a dishonor
or disagreement.

Pigafetta also noted that people in Limasawa drank too much (Jocano 1975:53).
However, on the other hand, Loarca (Blair and Robertson 1096, vol. 5:117)
interestingly observed that the Filipinos seldom quarrel over drinking. He wrote:

They are greatly addicted to the use of a kind of wine which they make
from rice and the palm tree, and which is good. Very rarely do they become
angry when drunk, for their drunkenness passes off in jests or in sleep.

A possible interpretation is that there may be a difference in drinking patterns
between *tuba* and other alcoholic beverages. As far as I experienced, as Loarca noted,
there is no case of quarrel while drinking *tuba*. *Tuba*’an is a term for the place of *tuba* sellers. Most *tuba*’an allow people to drink *tuba* by the glass. Men often enjoy talking as
well as drinking *tuba* at the *tuba*’an.

How to define *tuba* is difficult because it contains both etic and emic problems.
Ethically speaking, *tuba* is, no doubt, an alcoholic beverage. In this sense, Tryon’s
(1995) *Comparative Austronesian Dictionary* listed *tuba* as a fermented drink. However,
*tuba* refers to unfermented fresh sap as well. It is a cover term for palm sap from the
unfermented to the fermented stages.

In this regard, which kinds of palm could be *tuba*? As mentioned earlier, among
the 3,000 palm species, only five palms such as coconut palm, *nipa* palm, sugar palm,*buri* palm, and palmyra palm (*Borassus flabellifer*) are common palms used in Southeast
Asia for sap collection.

Sap from *nipa*, grown in mangrove swamps, is often exploited and surely called
*tuba* (Evangelista 1973). No data on sugar palm and palmyra palm exploitation in the
Philippines are available to me. Sugar palm favors sunny but not dry places. It is
abundant in the Philippine Archipelago and its fruit is often used for sweets called
*ka’on*. Palmyra palm, on the other hand, grows in dry land, and I suspect that it is
seldom seen in the Philippine Islands. *Buri* palm also prefers dry land and it is rarely
used for sap collection. I have only one example of *buri* palm exploitation in the
Philippine Islands. In Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental, palm wine out of *buri* is
exclusively called *gohan*. The newly gathered sap from *buri* is as sweet as that of
coconut, but *buri* produces much more sap than coconut. However, people of
Dumaguete prefer coconut wine to *gohan*. *Gohan* is thought a substitute for coconut
wine. They would rather make vinegar from gohan. Tuba?, thus, is probably an exclusive term for palm sap used for drinking in the Philippines.

Tryon (1995) listed tuak as a fermented drink. What is the relation between tuba? and tuak? Two points are understood from his elaborated Dictionary. First, both terms refer exclusively to palm wine. Second, they seem to be complementarily distributed: the former in the Philippine Islands and the latter in the Indonesian islands.

I suspect that these two terms may be cognate words. This is explained by sound similarities and syllabic equation. Indonesian tuak is probably realized as /tuʔak/, /tuʔaʔ/, /tuwak/, or /tuwaʔ/, which is similar to Philippine tuba?. Regardless of the sounds, both words have a CV.CVC structure. Costenoble, who made a great contribution to Philippine linguistics, once reconstructed *tuʔak or *tuvaʔ as fermented drink and tubaʔ as palm wine (Costenoble 1943[1979]:297, 298). In my opinion, both fermented drink and palm wine should be the same and the word is most probably reconstructed as *tubaʔ. In addition, *tubaʔ has to be a general term for palm sap that ranges from fresh to fermented sap.

Although Tryon did not give us detailed information on palm species, how the palms are exploited is interesting. For example, Northern Sulawesi and Maluku in Indonesia are famous for sugar palm exploitation. People there call the tuak made from sugar palm suguer. Similarly, Makassarese exclusively call sap from palmyra palm balloʔ. Each community in Southeast Asia may have developed a culture based on palm exploitation in accordance with its ecological environment. What is needed for linguists is an etic comparative view and emic insights into the real society and culture.
References


