

## TWO



### GILYAK KINSHIP IN A SIBERIAN FRAME<sup>1</sup>

[4–9; 33–44; 132–136; 62–68]

IT IS INTERESTING to see what relation the Gilyak system of nomenclatures has to those of neighboring peoples such as the Ainu, the Tungus of the Amur region, the northern Paleo-Asiatics, and the Ural-Altaic group of peoples in general. During the long-standing process of communication between the Gilyak and their neighbors, some borrowing must undoubtedly have taken place [63].

Comparing the Gilyak terms of relationship with those of the so-called “Ural-Altaians” and “Paleo-Asiatics,” we find the following groups of analogies.<sup>2</sup>

1. The largest of these groups shows forms which often occur in the terms for “parents.” I refer to the combinations *pa*, *ap*, *ta*, *at*, for “father,” and *ma*, *am*, *na*, *an*, for “mother.” From the time of Buschman onwards these have been held to have

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<sup>1</sup> [**Editor’s note:** Earlier titles for this chapter include: “The Classificatory Kinship System” (AMNH Russian typescript) and “Kinship Terms and Forms” (Shternberg, *Giliaki*, and Shternberg, *Sem’ia*). The AMNH English typescript called it “Relations between Gilyak Terms of Relationship and Those Used by Neighboring Tribes.” I have simplified this last version. While I verified the use of Gilyak words in this chapter and elsewhere with Gilyak (Nivkh) speakers, the difficulties of confirming the additional 19th century terms of address from the many languages here has meant that I have deferred to both Shternberg’s handwritten insertions to the AMNH Russian typescript and Shternberg, *Sem’ia*. It is hoped that the reader will forgive any errors. Ethnonyms are those used by Shternberg, with Library of Congress terms shown in brackets at first usage.

In this chapter, as elsewhere, earlier versions differ widely. A shorter version of this chapter, containing no tables, is found in the AMNH Russian version, 4–9, complete with handwritten insertions by Shternberg; Koshkin followed this in *Giliaki*, 132–136. The AMNH English typescript, by contrast, devises a series of lists to present more extensive linguistic terminological comparison; these are closely, but not exactly, reproduced by Koshkin in Shternberg, *Sem’ia*. I defer to the content of the AMNH Russian typescript and the form of the AMNH English typescript for their extra detail.

This version does not include four opening paragraphs found in Shternberg, *Sem’ia*, 62–63 (corresponding to the three opening paragraphs in *Giliaki* 133–134), comparing Gilyak kin terms to Ainu and Tungus (Evenk) analogues. That both 1933 editions list Koshkin (Al’kor) as editor, yet contain these and many other divergences, suggests that the work of Shternberg’s posthumous editorial commission was truly a collective enterprise.]

<sup>2</sup> This comparative study is founded partly on my own studies among the Tungus [Evenk] and Ainu, partly on the works of Radlov, Castren, and many others, as well as on personal information kindly given to me by many reliable investigators of different Siberian tribes. The material on the northern Paleo-Asiatics is taken mostly from the works of Messrs. Bogoraz and Iokhel’son.

sprung up everywhere independently from the language of children, and are called by him "natural sounds" (German, *Naturlaute*).<sup>3</sup>

Since there are many languages that do not have *Naturlaute*—as for instance the Gilyak—I regard the analogies as due rather to mutual interaction than to a spontaneous origin from the language of children.

In the Gilyak language we find the following phonetic combinations of Buschman's scheme:

(a) *at* in the terms *atk* or *atak*, *atik*, *adr*, *edr* (*k* and *r* are suffixes), meaning "uncle," "grandfather," "father-in-law;" *it* or *itk* (rarely *ota*), meaning "father," "paternal uncle"; *ik*, "old man."

Analogous terms occur in Tungus languages. It is suggestive that they have also the same suffix *k* [64].

*atki* (northern Tungus), "father" and "elder brother."  
*etk* (Amur Tungus), "uncle," "elder brother of father."  
*itki* (Amgun Tungus) [Negidal], "father-in-law."  
*idiki* (Ulchi) [Nanai],<sup>4</sup> "husband's junior brother."  
*adi* (Gol'd) [Nanai], "husband."  
*ide'k* (Turukhansk Tungus), "uncle."  
*itsi* (Amur Gol'd) [Nanai], "paternal uncle."  
*atki* (Orochon), "wife's father."  
*otki* (Transbaikai Tungus), "father-in-law."  
*at-anga*, *anga* being a suffix (Ulchi, Orochi), "grandmother."

In Turkic and Finnish languages we have, all with the meaning "father,"

*ata* (Kyrgyz) [Kirghiz].  
*atsa* (Altaic).<sup>5</sup>  
*Ati*, *ata* (Ostiak)[Khant].  
*atte* (Chuvash).  
*atai* (Votyak) [Udmurt].  
*aca* (Cheremiss) [Mari].  
*äcci* (Old Turkish, "paternal uncle" (cf. Gilyak *ik*).

In the Mongol language, belonging to this group, is the term *otok*, a division of the clan.

In the Paleo-Asiatic languages we find

*a'te* (Chukchi), "father."  
*athak*, *adak* (Aleut), "father."

<sup>3</sup> Buschman, *Über dem Naturlaut* (Abhandlungen der Academie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, 1852).

<sup>4</sup> [Editor's note: The Library of Congress references Ulchi, who the 1989 Soviet census listed the nationality of 3233 people as Nanai.]

<sup>5</sup> [Editor's note: Shternberg, *Sem'ia*, lists only "Altaitsy" (Altai), but I have switched this to Altaic to recognize the many different peoples who identify themselves under this rubric. For more on the Altaic family, see Ronald Wixman, *The Peoples of the USSR: An Ethnographic Handbook* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1984), 9–10.]

*atsa* (Ainu), “uncle.”

*etsi’e* (Yukaghir), “father.”

*atsitse* (Koriak), “grandfather.”

(b) *ap* in the term *app* (*appak*, *appik*). In Gilyak this term is a synonym of *atk* (see above), and should be regarded as borrowed directly from the Tungus language because it is mainly used by those Gilyak bordering closely on the Tungus tribes. Similar terms are found in all Ural-Altaic and Paleo-Asiatic languages:

#### Tungus

*apa* (Amgun), “uncle.”

*apanga’*, *-nga* being a suffix (Orochi, Orok, Ulchi), “uncle” (father’s senior), “grandfather,” “wife’s brother,” “husband’s elder brother,” sometimes “father.”

#### Turkic

*apa*, *aba* (Altaic), “father.”

*abaga* (Yakut), “paternal uncle,” “maternal grandfather.”

#### Mongolian

*aba* (Khakhas), “father.”

*abre’* (Buriat), “paternal uncle.”

#### Paleo-Asiatic

*apa* (Ainu), “father.”

*a’pa* (Chukchi), “father.”

*apats* (Kamchadal), “father.”

It is noteworthy that *appa* with the meaning “father” occurs also in north-western America (Athabaskan) and among the Dravidians, the classificatory system of which stands very close to that of the Gilyak.

(c) *na* occurs only in the term *nana* (*nanak*), “elder sister,” “paternal aunt.” Among the neighboring nations an analogy is to be found only in the Ainu term.

*nana* (Ainu), “mother.”

(d) *im*, *um*, *om*, in the Gilyak terms *imk*, *uma*, *oma* (“mother”), *um* (*ga*) (“woman”), find analogies in

*uma* (Biar Tungus), “elder brother’s wife.”

*imkhi* (Gol’d), “wife’s sister.”

*ama*, in some Tungus dialects “mother”; in others, “father.”

#### Turkic

*yimik* (Chuvash), “younger sister.”

*amakh* (Yakut), “old woman.”

#### Mongolian

*omok*, “a division of the clan.”

## Paleo-Asiatic

*ama* (Koriak), "grandmother."

(c) *an* in the Gilyak terms *ankh*, *ang'rei* (female, "wife") has analogies in

## Tungus

*ine*, "mother,"

## Turkic

*ana'*, *ina* (Yakut), "female," "mother."

*yinge'* (Chuvash), "senior brother's wife," "paternal junior uncle's wife" [65].

## Finnish

*ana'*, "mother."

## Paleo-Asiatic

*anak* (Aleut), "mother."

2. Among the terms that have no relation to Buschman's *Naturlaute*, I mention, in the first place, the Gilyak terms

(a) *aki* (adj. from *akand*, vocative *aka'*), "elder brother" or "elder sister." This term is familiar to all Ural-Altaic languages. In many cases the similarity covers not only the root (*ak*), but also the suffix (*i*, *n*, *nd*).

In the Tungus language we find the following analogies, all meaning "elder brother" or "paternal uncle" (more frequently the junior paternal uncle):

*akha*, *aki* (Ulchi).

*akhi* (Amgun) [Negidal].

*aki* (Orochon).

*aki*, *akan*, *akin* (northern Tungus).

*akind* (Birar).

In Mongolian we have:

*akee'* (Buriat), every person older than the speaker.

In Turkic:

*aga*, *aka*, *axi'n*, *asu'n* (common forms), "elder brother."

*ara* (Yakut), "elder," "father."

*akka*, *ara'i*, "elder sister."

In Finnish:

*aki* (Vogul) [Mansi], "paternal uncle." In the Ainu language we find the same term *aki*, but with the meaning "younger brother."

(b) *er*, a designative term meaning "father," bears a striking similarity to the Turkic *ar* and Mongolian *er*, *ere*, both signifying "male," "man," "hero" (Turkic), and "male adult" (Mongolian). There is good reason to suppose that this term has been

borrowed, because in Gilyak *er* with the meaning "father" is but a subsidiary term of reverence, whereas the original term in all dialects is *itk*.

(c) *yirk*, *izn*, "mother." This term, like the preceding, may be supposed to have been borrowed, for it is a subsidiary term to *imk*. In the Mongolian we find a similar term, *izi*, also meaning "mother."

(d) *oglan*, *ola* ("son," "child") coincide with the Turkic *o'g'lan ogli* ("young man," "boy") and *ol* ("son").

(e) *kivung* ("brother" in relation to sister) may well be related to the term *khi-bun* ("son," "young man"), so far found by me only in the Buriat language. It is likely that we shall find similar terms in other Ural-Altaic languages.

(f) *askh* (W.D. *atsik*), "younger brother," is analogous to the Tungus (Biar dialect) *atskha'* ("father's younger brother").

(g) *tuvng* may be analogous to the Chuvash term *tuvan* (Kyrgyz, *tugan*), "relation."

(h) *atsk* (*ar*, root; *k*, suffix) or *asi*<sup>6</sup> (dialect of the eastern coast of Sakhalin), "grandmother," "maternal uncle's wife," "mother-in-law," recalls the Tungus terms *atki* (Orochon), "husband's mother;" *asi* (Amur, Transbaikalia), "wife"; *asi* (Turukhansk), "wife."

(i) *pilan* (*pi* root, *lan* usual suffix for adjectives), "father's younger brother," "elder," may be related to the term *piy* with the same meaning in the Yakut and Chuvash languages and with the meaning "elder," "chief," "superior," in other Turkic languages.

3. The following Gilyak terms have undoubtedly been borrowed from neighboring Tungus tribes:

*okon*, "husband."

*ivi*, *ive*, "brother's wife" (speaker being male).

*ora*, "son" or "brother-in-law."

These terms are in use exclusively among the western Gilyak, who are neighbors of the Ulchi, and who have intermarried with them. But these Gilyak have conserved at the same time the corresponding original Gilyak terms *pu* and *imgi*. It is interesting to note that the term *okon* ("husband") occurs also in the Ainu in the form *oko* with the same meaning. At the same time there is no reason for thinking that this form has been borrowed, for the Ainu terms are completely isolated from those of their neighbors.

Summarizing the data just given, it appears that the Gilyak terms which are analogous to those of other languages may be grouped into three categories. The first is the category of Buschman's scheme—terms originally covering the idea of "father"

<sup>6</sup> The change from *s* to *ts* is very common in the Gilyak dialects; for instance, the term *askh* ("junior") in the Eastern dialect changes to *atsik* in the Western dialect.

and "mother." Against the general opinion that such terms are always independent spontaneous formations derived from the language of children (especially that such terms must be the most ancient and original elements of every tongue), I am inclined to think that during the long process of migration and diffusion, they with many other terms may have been transmitted from tribe to tribe, undergoing (at the same time) manifest changes in the process. Abundant illustrations of such a possibility in the most striking forms are very often furnished through linguistics. In the Osman language, for instance, such fundamental terms as "father" and "mother" have foreign origin: "father" (*peder*) from the Persian and "mother" (*valide*) from the Arabic. In another Turkic language (Taranchi) [Uighur], one single term is borrowed from the Persian: "sister" (*khvar*). We see the same phenomenon in the Finnish languages, where also the single term for "sister" (*sisar*, *siessa*, etc.) is of Aryan origin. Another example is still more instructive. In a tundra clan of the Yukaghir, which has been in close contact with the Lamut [Even], we find that the four most fundamental terms of relationship—"father" (*ama'*), "mother" (*ana'*), "elder brother" (*aka'*), "elder sister" (*aka'*)—have been borrowed from the Tungus. The majority of all the other terms have remained pure Yukaghir. Mr. Iokhel'son, who has described these facts, is quite right in seeing the explanation of this strange case of partial borrowing in the circumstance that the borrowed terms correspond in meaning to the Yukaghir ones, while in all other respects the Yukaghir system of relationships is sharply distinguished from that of the Tungus [66].<sup>7</sup>

So much for the first group of similarities of Buschman's type. The same may be said with still more reason of the second group, especially about such terms as *aki*, *og'la*, *kivung*, etc. To deny the common origin of these similarities would be very difficult, for the explanation of the fact lies on the very surface. There is sufficient historical evidence to show that all the nations of the Ural-Altaian group (the Turk, the Tungus, the Finn, the Mongol) were in close connection in former times and influenced one another extensively. The Tungus tribes, the nearest neighbors of the Paleo-Asiatics, were the mediators between the Ural-Altaian group and the Paleo-Asiatics, especially the Gilyak, to whom they were nearest. As for the third group of similarities (*okon*, *ora*, etc.), nothing can be added to what has been said above. They are used only by a small part of the Gilyak and are undoubtedly borrowings of relatively recent origin, brought about through intermarriages with the Amur Tungus. Thus in the general system of relationship of the Gilyak, only the first two groups should be taken into consideration for purposes of comparison. Nevertheless, whatever the origin of the similarities between the Gilyak and the Tungus-Turkic terms of relationship might be—whether accidental coincidences or the result of ethnic interaction—the number of unquestionable borrowings is so small that the complex nomenclature of relationship remains essentially independent not only in content but in its lexical character as well. When we consider that the process of amalgamation of the Gilyak with their neighbors has been continuous, it really seems remarkable that the various terminologies of relationship should have so little in common. The originality of the Gilyak terminology is attested to

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<sup>7</sup> Iokhel'son, *Materialy*, 240.

by the etymology of the Gilyak terms of relationship, for the majority of them can be traced to their original roots, which indicates their stability through long periods of time.<sup>8</sup> Here are a few examples:

The group *itk*, *ittutk* ("father"), *ut-gu*, W.D., *gu* being a suffix ("man"), *atk* ("grandfather," "maternal uncle"), *itik*, *atsik* ("grandmother," "aunt"), *itskh* ("old man," "husband"), has the common root *ut*, *it* ("body"). The group *imk*, *uma*, *oma* ("Mother"), *um-gu*, W.D. ("woman," "wife"), *imgi* ("son-in-law," "sister's son"), has the common root *um*. Then we have *ang'rei*, "wife" (from *ankh*, "female"); *azmits*, "beloved one," "husband," "man" (from *ar*, "male"; and the verb *mits*, "to be, to become"); *sank*, *sankh*, *rankh*, "woman" and *ranrsh*, "sister"; etc. [67].

A few words must be said regarding the differences in dialect for kinship terms. These differences are of secondary character. In the primary terms there are either no differences at all (the terms *itk*, *imk*, *pu*, *ivn*, *ang'rei*, *nanakh*, *ranrsh*, *imgi*, etc., are quite the same in all dialects) or they show differences of slight phonetic character (as, for instance, *atak-atk*; *itik atsk*; *ruf-ruvn' ola-og'la*, *eglan*; *amalakhmalk*; and so on). In those cases where the terms are quite distinct phonetically, this is due either to borrowing from the nearest neighbors, as in *app* and *ivei* which were mentioned before, or to the derivation of the given term from different synonyms common to all dialects. Thus, for instance, *sankh* ("women") in the Eastern dialect has been derived from the common word *ankh* ("female"), while in the Western dialect *umgu* ("woman") is a derivative of the common word *im(k)*, *uma*, *oma* ("mother"); similarly, *utgu* ("man") in the Western dialect is of the same root as *itk*, *utk* ("father"), while the corresponding term in the Eastern dialect, *azmits*, is associated with *ar* ("male").

We are now ready to consider the question of the relationship of the Gilyak nomenclature to that of the neighboring tribes. The latter, to judge from the bulk of the Gilyak terminology, must be looked upon in general as original and independent. As for the similarities in some of the terms, they relate almost exclusively to the Ural-Altaic peoples, especially to the Tungus tribes, whereas with Ainu terminology the Gilyak has almost nothing in common. The few similarities indicated above may certainly be regarded as merely accidental. This statement corresponds fully to historical data, as well as to the data on family organization and system of relationship of these people. The Gilyak are by origin a continental tribe, later moving to Sakhalin, where they first met the Ainu in relatively recent times. Up to the present time, inter-marriage between the Gilyak and the Ainu has been very rare. The differences in the social organization of the two tribes is very great. The Ainu, in contrast to the strict agnatic principles of the Gilyak, count their relationship through the mother and are imbued with principles of matriliney. Their sexual norms are strictly individual, group

<sup>8</sup> This stability is unusual among many historic peoples. Thus V. V. Radlov, the well-known student of Turkic languages, tells me that according to Orochon and Uighur monuments, the Turkic kin terminology, excepting one or two terms, has undergone a complete change since the beginning of the 10th century, with even such terms as "father" and "mother" being affected. It will suffice to compare the Old-Turkic *kan* ("father") with the modern *aba*.

marriages being wholly unknown. Thus since their kinship systems are diametrically opposed, the borrowing of terms could not easily have taken place.

However, the situation changes completely in relation to the Tungus. The Gilyak have from the oldest times lived in close contact with them on the continent. Inter-marriage, especially on the borders of the Gilyak territory, is a common occurrence; most importantly, the Tungus have an agnatic clan, a classificatory system, and norms of group marriage similar in many respects to those of the Gilyak. Lastly, almost every Gilyak speaks a Tungus language. Under such favorable conditions, it is but natural that some borrowing takes place, which in every case must have been easier than between the Gilyak and the Ainu, wholly divided by their language and social system.

The influence of the Tungus extended itself not only to the mechanical adaptation of terms, but psychologically as well. In the Gilyak terminology there are some terms etymologically of true Gilyak origin, but formed in accordance with Tungus norms of sexual relations. Thus, according to the Tungus norms, a man has marital rights to his junior paternal uncle's wife. Therefore, I (being male) call my junior paternal uncle by the same term (*ara*, "elder") as my elder brother. On the other hand, according to the Gilyak norms, I must call my paternal junior uncle "father"; but under the Tungus influence, among one part of the Gilyak, besides the term *itk*, an additional term has been invented—*pilan* ("elder")—a literal translation of the Tungus term *aga*'. Or to take another example, the Gilyak have two terms for designating "elder sister," *aki* and *nanakh*. The latter is not only superfluous but leads to confusion in terminology, because *nanakh* is at the same time a term for one's father's sister. This strange fact can only be explained as due to the influence of the Tungus, with whom one's father's sister and one's elder sister stand to a man in the same matrimonial relation as his potential mothers-in-law.