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Human Development as Human*

VITALIANO R. GOROSPE, S.J.

MODERN CONCERN OVER BASIC HUMAN VALUES

As we pass from the first development decade into the middle half of the second development decade (ominously called “the angry seventies”), the need to revise the quantitative to the qualitative approach to development has increasingly been recognized. There has been a significant shift from the economic index of development in terms of GNP, to new social criteria of social change, and today to the ethical norms of total integral human development in terms of fundamental human values.¹ Past development efforts have served only to widen the gap between the affluent few and the many poor, individuals as well as nations. The modern anxieties over peace in the Middle East, the oil crisis and worldwide inflation, over the massive poverty of peoples in the Third World; the growing concern over life and environmental pollution, the abuse of sex and drugs and the stability of the family, youth and women’s lib, the communication of truth and values through mass media, the problem of individual freedom and the role of governments, nationalism and internationalism — these “signs of the times” point to modern man’s growing concern over basic human values.

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1. Charles Elliott, *The Development Debate* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1971), Part I.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

The theme of this Seminar is "the preservation of human values in the process of economic development." This statement needs some qualification. First, the *crystallization* of some traditional Asian values can be an obstacle to rationalization or development. Human values are not fixed but growing. It would be more accurate to speak of the *evolution* and *enrichment* of human values as concretized in various cultures and levels of human development. Second, there need not be a dichotomy between human values and economic development. Rapid economic development in the Asian region is of primary necessity, if Asian peoples are to advance from the sub-human or less-human to the more human conditions of life. Yet the misplaced objectives of economic development can jeopardize the very basic human values which should be the goals of all development, including economic development. To stress human values is to call attention to the indispensable *ethical* dimensions of development.

The purpose of this presentation, from one perspective of the Philippine educational and religious sector, is twofold: first, to identify in general some basic human values which should be the object of all development and some of the problems connected with economic development for the sake of human values; second, to discuss the ambivalence and relevance of Asian and, in our case, Filipino attitudes to population problems, with the hope that government family planning programs in the Asian and Pacific region will respect the basic human values which are inseparable from the Asian way of life.

THE VALUES OF FREEDOM, TRUTH, JUSTICE,
AND CONCERN FOR OTHERS

The needs and aspirations of Asian peoples today clearly point to four basic human values which should be the goals of all economic development. First, is human *freedom*. One of the major changes of our times is the twofold aspiration of workers, of youth and women, and of underdeveloped nations for greater *equality* and *participation*, the two new forms of *man's dignity*

and *freedom*.² Every individual aspires to be equal to every other man in dignity and human rights. Every nation which was a former colony aspires to equal rights with other nations. Every person and every nation wants to participate in the decisions which affects their own lives and destinies. But no person or nation can attain full personhood or nationhood except in growing interdependence on other persons, other nations. Hence, today there is a twofold desire for "personalization" and "socialization" without which total integral human development for all is not possible. Yet, despite rapid economic progress in most Asian countries, when we ask whether the vast numbers of Asian peoples are really free in the sense that they have the genuine *opportunity* to decide their own self-development, we have serious doubts.

Second, for individuals and nations to make real choices with regard to their own development, they must have access to the *truth*, to all the human knowledge necessary for human development. For instance, in the matter of family planning, the Asian family must have access to all the necessary information, both medical and moral, in so far as possible, on the available methods of family planning in order to make a real choice. If a government opts, disseminates and supports one method of family planning to the practical exclusion of others more consonant with the moral and religious convictions of the people, poor and ignorant families really have no choice.

Third, the main problem in Asia is massive poverty and socio-economic inequality. The problem of inequality, from an ethical perspective, is also the problem of *justice*. Contrary to the dominant economic position today, Gunnar Myrdal, in his book, *The Challenge of World Poverty*³, contends that socio-economic equality is the necessary condition for economic development. Whatever school of economic thought one holds, one thing is clear: the problem of equality or justice, whether

2. Paul VI, Apostolic Letter, *Octogesima Adveniens*, May 14, 1971 in Philippine edition (Pasay City: St. Paul Publications, 1971), p. 31.

3. Read "The Equality Issue" in Gunnar Myrdal, *The Challenge of World Poverty* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), pp. 49-77.

economic, distributive, or social, remains the main challenge and task in Asia today. Justice means that certain basic human rights and values necessary for subsistence cannot be postponed or delayed in favor of some future "take off" stage of economic development.

Fourth, in view of the increasing interdependence of individuals and peoples, *concern for others* or service of one's fellowmen becomes the ideal human value. Whereas justice is the minimum due to the other, universal love or concern for others is the maximum due to individuals as well as nations. Concern for national development must transcend exclusive concern for one's family. The value of the family in Asia is paramount, yet close family-centeredness should not be an impediment to nation-building. The basic values of the family must be preserved but restructured toward service of the community or national development.

THE TASK OF SOCIAL JUSTICE, HUMAN LIBERATION, AND DEVELOPMENT

It is heartening to know that the Asian churches and major religious groups in Asia have made social justice, human liberation, and development of Asian peoples the main thrust of their mission.⁴ From the perspective of some Third World theologians, it is claimed that the development process cannot be achieved unless the liberation process is first begun.⁵ The majority of Asian peoples must be liberated from three obstacles which stand in the way of human freedom and development. First, they must be liberated from the brute forces of nature, e.g., the untamed soil, tropical climate and diseases, typhoons,

4. Proceedings of the Asian Ecumenical Conference on Development, held in Tokyo, July 14-22, 1970, published in *Liberation Justice Development* (Madras: Diocesan Press, 1970). For the implications of the AECD for the Philippines, *Philippine Studies* 9 (January, 1971) is devoted to the AECD Echo Seminar proceedings.

5. Gustavo Gutierrez, *Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1973), Chapter II, in the Philippine edition entitled *The New Man in a New Society and the Church: Theological Reflections from Latin America* (Quezon City: Cardinal Bea Institute, Ateneo de Manila University, 1973).

floods, drought, pestilence, etc. as natural causes of poverty. Then there are wrong attitudes and values, habits of life, conditions which make life less human, e.g. ignorance and superstition, blind conformity to nature, fatalism, indolence, etc. The second obstacle consists in unjust and oppressive structures of domination and dependency, e.g. institutions which no longer serve the people but only the elite few; some systems which have become forms of institutionalized injustice, e.g. inequitable farm tenancy, government graft and corruption, the plight of migrant workers, slum and squatter dwellings, etc. The third obstacle is human injustice, e.g. lust for profit, abuse of sex and drugs, greed and selfishness, the abuse of power, violence and human exploitation.

Although the decade of the sixties emphasized economic and social development, total integral human development is taken to mean the full development of the whole man, of every man, of every people, including the cultural, moral and religious dimensions of development. Human development is the process of bringing about that condition of society, both national and international, in which all peoples, especially the poor and powerless nations as well as individuals, may *have* more (economic development), *do* more (social and political participation), *know* more (educational, cultural development), in order to *become* more than ever in the past (total integral human and spiritual development).⁶ In short, human development does not mean merely "having more" (mass consumer society), but "becoming more" of a human person (a more just, free, and humane community).

PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH HUMAN VALUES AND DEVELOPMENT

Suffice it here to mention the more problematic *ethical* issues connected with economic development for the sake of human values. First, the problem of socioeconomic inequality in Asia

6. Paul VI, Encyclical Letter on The Development of Peoples (*Populorum Progressio*), March 26, 1967, in the Barbara Ward edition (Glen Rock: Paulist Press, 1967), p. 33.

and the demand of social justice for a more equitable distribution of both the rewards and costs of development, is more complex than it first appears. The value of social justice, based on the dignity of the human person, includes the relationship of man to the material world and to the socioeconomic structures of society, the social nature of property, and the relations between rich and poor nations. In my own country, income distribution is excessively unequal. A culture of poverty has become a way of life for 70 percent of my people. It is difficult to speak of the dignity of the human person, if one faces the stark realities of poverty, malnutrition, and housing in the Philippines. There is an imbalance of power both in the agricultural and industrial sectors, based on unbridled profit and the concept of private property as absolute ownership without social responsibility rather than as a stewardship. However, the problem of inequality, imbalance of power, injustice exists not only on the national but more significantly on the international level. Social justice is easier said than done because the reality of justice operates on many levels — individual and social, technocratic and humanistic.

Second, human values and development are closely tied up with the existing socioeconomic and political order which often demands radical reform. While it is true that it is for the Asian peoples themselves to determine the kind of development they want, it belongs to the government of each country to plan and carry out the economic development of their respective countries. Herein comes the controversial role of government control over the people in order to insure rapid socioeconomic development. Asian societies have traditionally been authoritarian or paternalistic. While democracy still offers the best guarantee for individual human freedom, the experience of American-type democracy in Asia or at least in the Philippines is not without its own serious problems. There is need to balance the private good of the individual or group with the common good of the nation. A few even claim that certain civic and political values can be delayed or postponed for the sake of economic and social values necessary for subsistence. The Filipino people are still groping for a "middle way" between the extremes of traditional Filipino

paternalism or authoritarianism and of the type of democracy they have experienced, which proved a hindrance rather than a help to development. Here lies the significance of Martial Law and the New Society in the Philippines. Asia has become the arena of two conflicting ideologies and models of development — the Communist model which gives priority to progress over freedom and the Capitalist model which gives priority to freedom over progress. Caught in this dilemma, Asian peoples will have to search for their own national ideology and for a realistic balance between the requirements of progress and freedom, between the demands of economic development and those of human values.

Third, no one doubts the indispensable contribution of science and technology to human development. What Asian countries need today is more science and technology, more industrialization and modernization. Environmental pollution may now be the problem for highly developed nations; for us Asians, it is still extreme and massive poverty. But there are ethical limits to scientific and technological growth even in Asia. Take the case of "miracle rice," which requires the continued use of fertilizers which in turn might destroy irreparably the natural fertility of the soil. The Filipino farmer faces the dilemma of either going back to the traditional way of rice production or adopting the new and scientific way of "miracle rice," with its high costs of a depleted piece of land which can no longer take care of itself without fertilizers. The use of science and technology to solve one problem often creates worse problems. This is a challenge to the scientist.

Furthermore, Asian peoples need not pattern their development after the model of the highly developed nations which is based on "the myth of unending production and consumption."⁷ Science and technology can always produce a better aspirin and a better motor car, but frequently, the better the consumer product, the higher the cost, so that it becomes the luxury of the affluent few and becomes less and less accessible to the great

7. Ivan Illich, "Re-tooling Society," *Philippine Studies* 21 (1st & 2nd Quarter, 1973), pp. 125-185.

masses of the people. A spiraling mass consumer society serves only to widen the gap between the few rich and the many poor. In view of the pervasive and subtle influence of a new form of cultural colonialism through the importation of foreign values and life styles through a mass media which sells "the good life" of the West, there is always the danger that Asian peoples may be hooked on "the myth of endless production and consumption." Therefore each Asian nation must determine for itself what kind of development is good for its people. There must be an ethical limit to the "revolution of rising expectations." Modern man must learn to voluntarily put limits to his escalating needs which can always be satisfied by science and technology, because their satisfaction may not be humanly, socially, and ethically feasible. The affluent few, individuals as well as nations, should become "socially aware" of the fact that by "having more and more," the many poor and powerless may "have less and less." In short, the scientific and technological imperative is not always the ethical and more human imperative.

THE AMBIVALENCE OF ASIAN VALUE-ATTITUDES: HELP OR HINDRANCE TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Basic human values of which we speak in this paper find concrete expression in Asian cultures and Asian values. Each culture is a way of becoming human. Therefore, no basic human value is uniquely or exclusively Asian or Filipino. Elements of these individual and cultural values are also found in the value-attitude systems of other cultures and other peoples. The differences are matters of the way these values are ranked or emphasized or combined, so that they take on a distinctively Asian or Filipino slant or cast.

It has been claimed that some traditional Asian or Filipino attitudes and values are an obstacle to modernization, rationalization, social change and development. Development in Asia, Gunnar Myrdal says, calls for a change and "improvement of attitudes and values." The mythical and magical world-view of Asian peasant and agricultural societies must give way to a rational and scientific world-view demanded by modernized and

industrialized Asian societies. The Philippine nipa hut and the attitudes, values, and way of life it stands for, fits very well in a *barrio* setting, but it is anachronistic and an impediment in the heart of a highly urbanized city like Greater Manila. The typical Filipino farmer with his "mañana" habit and unpunctuality makes a very unreliable and inefficient factory worker.

The problem seems to be the co-existence of two conflicting societies based on two different and conflicting sets of values and ways of life. In the view of a Filipino philosopher, although there is no basic conflict in principle between the Filipino system of values and the principle of rationalization or modernization, there seems to be a time-lag between the reality of modernization and the corresponding proper attitude and value, between the social reality which has already begun to be transformed by the Filipino and the old views and values, with which, he unknowingly still persists in comprehending the new as if it were the old.⁸ This is illustrated by the jeepney driver who leisurely and carelessly weaves in and out of traffic as if he were driving a horse-driven *calesa* or *tartanilla* in the *barrio*.

One of the most significant scientific findings to illustrate how traditional Filipino folk attitudes and values can be an obstacle to social change and development is in the matter of family planning. It has been found that the strongest negative determinant against the adoption of family planning are still the the conservative Filipino cultural views and folkways. Families are not planned but left to fate of the "*bahala na*" attitude (fatalistic resignation, or escape from decision and responsibility). Filipino rural households still consider large families fortune or luck (*suwerte*) and their only wealth; many children are seen as built-in security for old age. Children as labor assets are more economical in a rural setting because they can help in the house or on the farm. Then there is the stereotyped image and ideal of the Filipino male as *machismo* or *tunay na lalaki*, if he has children not only by his wife but also by his mistress(es).

8. Ramon Reyes, "Rationalization and Culture," *Shape of Theological Education and Role of Field Experience in the 70's* (Manila: ISPFE, St. Andrew's Seminary, 1971).

Nuptiality and fertility patterns in the last two decades show that Filipina women want and go about having many children.⁹

The Filipino value system is the product of a vari-cultured historical heritage — Oriental, Spanish, and American influences. It is precisely the blending of East and West that constitutes the Filipino of today and makes his contemporary value-system uniquely Filipino. In the past, Filipinos, especially the young generation, have been apologetic about Filipino values as if they were “weaknesses” rather than “strengths.” Why? Because Filipino attitudes have been blamed for most of our national ills. For instance, authoritarianism or paternalism, family-centeredness (*pagpapahalaga sa pamilya*), customary respectful behaviour towards one’s family and kin (*paggalang*), the Filipino kinship system or clannishness, small-group centeredness (*pagbabarkada*), have been blamed for nepotism, graft and corruption, regionalism and factionalism, and lack of national character or discipline. Other Filipino values such as family ownership (*pagmamay-ari*), social class consciousness and the use of honorific titles (*pagkatitulado*), *pakikisama*, *utang na loob* (sense of gratitude or reciprocity), *hiya* (shame), have been branded as “obstacles” to modernization, democratization, and national development. Therefore it is most relevant to this Seminar to ask whether Asian or Filipino values are a help or a hindrance, catalysts or obstacles to social change and development.

I contend very strongly that Asian or Filipino values are embodied in patterns that are ambivalent, that is, they can be a help or a hindrance to the full human development of Asian peoples, depending on how they are understood and more significantly on how and in what context they are made to operate.

9. Mercedes B. Concepcion, “Philippine Population Policy and Program,” in *The Filipino in the Seventies* ed. by V. R. Gorospe, S.J. & R. L. Deats (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1973), pp. 51–60. Note that the percentage of Filipino women declining marriage and staying single has been growing steadily since 1948. For traditional Filipino attitudes and folkways adverse to family planning, see *Responsible Parenthood in the Philippines* ed. by V. R. Gorospe, S.J. (Quezon City: Ateneo Publications, 1970), Part I.

From an ethical point of view, they are a potential for good or evil. Moreover, Asian or Filipino values are not static, i.e. one cannot say that they simply *are* what they *are*. Rather, they are dynamic or evolutionary, i.e. Filipino values *become*. One does not "discard" or "foster" values at will. They are there and will stay there until they disappear because of disuse over time. Disuse will occur when these values lose their survival function, which is unlikely to happen. Values are embodied in patterns that as such are blind; they have no proper objects. These patterns come into play when a *decision* is to be made and not before. *Pakikisama* (sharing, helping, conceding), for example, whether applied in a decision to help in community-building or to join a *kabarkada* (peer group) in gangsterism, is the same pattern. What is different is the foreseen (or unforeseen) *outcome*, not in the pattern involved in the decision to join or not to join. There is no reason for "discarding" a pattern because it has been used in the *context* of some evil act or of an impediment to development.

If Asian or Filipino values are embodied in patterns that are ambivalent in the sense explained above, then these patterns can be understood positively or negatively and thus can be made to function and serve the goals of human development rather than to operate as roadblocks. The Filipino attitude of *paggalang* (respect) can be either deferential (a courteous respect for the ways and wishes of others) and as such is a strength, clearly Filipino, or manipulative (to use *pagkatitulado* to flatter and obtain an undeserved or illegitimate favor) and as such a weakness. One can use *pakikisama* to join a Tondo gang or *Samahan ng Nasyon* to instill mutual and community sharing. *Utang na loob* can foster overdependence on one's family or a debt of gratitude to one's country, so that the individual now asks what he can do for his country. One writer on Filipino values claims that these value-structures in the past have operated to serve the individual or the family or one's kin because of individual or group economic insecurity (we may also add, non-acceptance and lack of social mobility).¹⁰ I find no reason why contemporary

10. Francis Senden, C.I.C.M., "A Challenge to the Modernizing Elite," *Philippine Studies* 19 (January, 1971), pp. 62-64.

Filipino value-structures should remain individual, family, and small-group centered rather than community or nation-oriented. As a matter of fact, the Office of Civil Relations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines is distributing a monograph entitled "Towards The Restructuring of Filipino Values" in order to re-educate the Filipino to make his value-system operate towards the achievement of national development goals under Martial Law and the New Society.¹¹

Finally, one does not change the values of a people by merely telling them to change their negative values for positive ones. Some even doubt the effectiveness of the school system in effecting a change in the value-system of a people. I suggest that one way of effectively changing certain negative values for better ones is by instituting a system of rewards and sanctions, principally the former. Take the value of punctuality, one of the new values pointed out by Gunnar Myrdal as necessary for development. If the boss in any government office reports for work on time, shame or *hiya* will compel the subordinate employees to be on time. Added to this sanction, a system of fines for lateness could be agreed upon by all concerned and this common fund will redound to the benefit, not of the boss, but of the employees. If in the past, Filipino attitudes were a hindrance rather than a help to the full human development of the individual or the people as a whole, perhaps the lack of value-synthesis, in case of conflicting values relating the individual to his family and to the nation at large, is due to a lack of a proper hierarchy of basic human values. This is the task of moral education in the best and fullest sense of the word.

HUMAN VALUES AT STAKE IN PHILIPPINE PLANNING

Population Year 1974 calls attention to the seriousness and urgency of population problems in the world and especially in Asia, and to the need for both economic and family planning. In view of the drastic measures being undertaken by governments

11. *Towards The Restructuring of Filipino Values* (Quezon City: OCR, Philippine Army, 1973).

in the Asian region to curb population growth, it is of vital importance to consider the basic human values at stake in population policies and family planning programs. The conclusions and recommendations of two Asian major religious groups with regard to the preservation of fundamental values in any family planning program are worth serious consideration.

In June, 1973, the ecumenical churches in Asia held the *East Asian Seminar on Population* in Manila.¹² It was recognized that the goal of economic and family planning should be the quality of human life, that overpopulation is not only a technical but also a human problem involving cultural, moral, and religious dimensions. The solution to the population problem does not consist only in checking population growth. At the same time, it must respect the deeply cherished values of respect for human life, harmony in family and social relationships, and take into account the enrichment of the cultural and spiritual heritage inseparable from the Asian way of life. The Seminar made a plea to population and family planning experts to *listen* to the voice of the Asian family, that is, to respect the freedom of the parents to determine family size.

In my own country, in December, 1974 the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines addressed the Filipino people on "The Population Problem and Family Life."¹³ They called attention to three important reflections which touch basic human values. First, the population problem is not only a problem of numbers but the problem of the care of peoples, the problem of the unequal distribution of wealth. Therefore it is a problem of a change of heart on the part of the affluent few to share their wealth with the many poor. Second, any family planning program must respect the individual's conscience, freedom, and moral integrity. Here I would like to point out that the history of family planning programs in Asia, following the trend of developed nations, shows an escalating and irrevers-

12. *The Church and Population in East Asia* (Quezon City: East Asian Pastoral Institute, 1973).

13. Pastoral Letter published in *Boletin Eclesiastico de Filipinas* 48 (January, 1974), pp. 11-16.

ible pattern from a contraceptive, to a sterilization, and finally to an abortion mentality with its dehumanizing and depersonalizing effects on human sexuality, marriage, and the family, let alone Asian moral and spiritual values. There is need for public scrutiny and criticism of a population policy and family planning program which relies totally and exclusively on external contraceptive control. Third, what is crucial in this matter of population control is not merely external scientific control but rather internal human, rational, sexual, control. Without inner sexual control, a stable commitment to marriage, and a fundamental respect for human life, there can be no responsible parenthood. In other words, unless young men and women are educated to become responsible husbands and wives, responsible parents, we cannot solve the population problem in an ethical and humane way.

To sum up, some of the basic human values at stake in population policies and family planning programs are fundamental respect for human life, for individual freedom of conscience, and the values of marriage, and responsible parenthood. The official Philippine population policy respects these basic human values. As stated in the Population Act of 1971 and revised by Presidential Decree No. 79 (1972), the basic position is as follows:

The Government of the Philippines hereby declares that for the purpose of furthering the national development, increasing the share of each Filipino in the fruits of economic progress and meeting the grave social and economic challenge of a high rate of population growth, a national program of family planning involving both public and private sectors which respects the religious beliefs and values of the individuals involved shall be undertaken.¹⁴

One important feature of the Philippine population policy and national family program is that it is voluntary and non-coercive. Out of respect for the moral and religious convictions of the people, the Population Commission (POPCOM) which implements this policy has officially ruled out abortion as a means of family planning. In officially protecting basic human

14. *Presidential Decrees* ed. by F. D. Pinpin (Mandaluyong, Rizal: Cacho Hermanos, Inc., 1973), Consolidated edition, Book I, Series No. 7, p. 242.

values, the Philippine population policy and program is not dictated or pressured by foreign policies, programs, and models, but can rightly claim to be Filipino in conception and policy.¹⁵ It is my hope that the actuation and implementation of this policy will truly conform to the original spirit of the Population Act of 1971 and the 1972 Presidential Decree No. 79 and thus will avoid the merely contraceptive mentality and trend which has characterized family planning in East and Southeast Asia. To conclude, although a drastic reduction of the birth rate seems to be one of the priorities in the economic development of Asian peoples, ethical imperatives must take top priority if development is to be totally and integrally human.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Population policies and family planning programs in Asia should respect basic human values — fundamental respect for human life, individual freedom of conscience, the right to sovereignty over one's body, the values of the family and education towards responsible parenthood, and the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Asian way of life.
2. As a clearing house, CULSOCEN should update information on ongoing research concerned with human values and development, specifically, the revised curricula of universities and institutions of higher learning and the production of local textbooks on human values and development.
3. ASPAC Council should establish liaison with major non-governmental and religious groups and churches in Asia which have made the main thrust of their mission, justice, human liberation, and development.

15. Aurora Silayan-Go, "Towards a Filipino Population Program," *Development in the '70's* (Manila: U.S. Embassy, 1974), pp. 72-79.