

COMMENTS*

William Henry Scott**

This morning Dean Catbagan said that our purpose in coming here was to find out the truth, and I wish she were present now so I could say frankly that I do not agree with her. I don't think we are here to find the truth. I think the truth is perfectly well-known. Before we came, I think most of us knew the truth already. It is fairly simple. The government wants to build four dams in the Chico River Valley and the people who live there do not want the dams to be built. We don't really need much more research to find that out. Rather, I think what we are really trying to do here is to find ways in which the program can, or might, be carried out — or perhaps more realistically, how it could be carried out with the least problems and the least loss of life.

On the other hand, if we are indeed looking for the truth, or if somebody doesn't know the truth about the situation and wants to find it out, I am not quite sure that the anthropologists are the right people to ask. I would say the same of NAPOCOR, NEDA, or any other group of specialists. For specialists are not sent out to find the truth. They are sent out to find pieces of the truth — those pieces of the truth which happen to concern them. I think this was made very clear this morning when the speaker referred seven times to that American anthropologist in Pasil and quoted three or four times one isolated economic statistic which he produced in his paper. Surely that one isolated fact was indeed a fact — but I don't think that that one fact will help us solve our problem or that its use this morning would have persuaded me of anything I had not already been persuaded of. Because it was only a small piece of the truth.

Bishop Claver this morning presented a kind of self-examination of anthropologists' techniques and seemed to admit that they do indeed look for pieces of the truth and then describe them very carefully, perhaps even more carefully than anybody wants to know. But he thought that this was a short-sighted technique. He thought he would be taking a holistic view and see the whole picture. I don't know how many anthropologists were ashamed later in the day — as one historian who spends a lot of his time in classrooms, archives, and ivory towers was ashamed — to discover that all the Kalinga participants who came before the microphone had a completely holistic view of the problem. They didn't talk about one ricefield or one cavan of rice or any other segment of the economic truth. They were obviously talking about the whole picture, their whole lives; about the fact that what was involved here

*This paper is a reconstruction of the author's comments on the paper of NPC President Itchon entitled, "The Case for the Multi-Purpose Chico 4 Project."

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was changing their whole way of life; not just whether next year or two years from now they were going to have the 10,000-peso handout or not. They quite correctly and accurately saw that the problem was that their way of life was being threatened.

Mr. Itchon quoted a statistic about the Kalinga way of life to prove that some are poor and some are wealthy. It is really a bit shocking that somebody from lowland Philippines would use the word "poverty" on the Cordillera. Very few people on the Cordillera know the meaning of "poverty" as it is known in lowland Philippines. Anybody familiar with people working in the Baguio mines knows that. As Kalingas, Ifugaos, Bontocs, and Benguetanos working in the mines say, "It is the poor people from Pangasinan who *have to* work in the mines. When we get tired of working because it is difficult and dangerous, we can go home and somebody will feed us. The fields are still there, and if we don't have a field, we can eat *kamote*. Nobody starves. But those poor Pangasinenses have no choice. If they go home they can't even eat one *kamote* unless their landlord gives it to them." The contrast between the Kalinga culture illustrated by the statistics which Lawless brought out of Pasil and that larger, outer culture into which the Kalingas are going to be moved according to government plans, is not a small one. The outer world is a world of wages. It is the world in which the government decides what is a fair wage. And the minimum wage which is supposed to be fair is a little bit below, or completely below what it costs for a man to live. Of course, in a wage earning society, people who don't have wages seem to have no means of living. And since Kalingas have no wages, they therefore seem not to be able to live — but in fact they do. I am not so sure the same can be said for the wage earning society in a place I recently came from: Del Monte and Dole. People there earn wages in a larger system. That system is international; it is tied to the system of other nations and of other areas — as the Kalinga system is not but presumably soon will be. And because of this international tie-up, people at Dole and Del Monte receive wages which are set with the view to the greater good of the whole system — and that greater good is not the good of the individual receiving the wage. That is the lesser good.

It is easy enough to find out what lesser good is. I have done it many times. I just did it yesterday in one of my classes. You could do it in a Sixth Grade classroom; you could do it in a graduate course. You simply go to the blackboard and write down the legal minimum wage for a day's labor. Then you go around the room and ask how much rice cost in the market this morning and you write that figure down. Then, even before you get to asking around the price of fish and meat and *kangkong* — I won't even mention clothes or medicine or school supplies — you can pretty well see that the minimum wage earner is not going to be able to feed and clothe four people. I say four people because the wage earner must not be allowed to have more than one wife and two children if we are going to attain zero population

growth. This is the world into which the Kalinga are supposed to be relocated to escape an even more miserable world presumably illustrated by the statistics produced by Mr. Lawless. But considering the alternate world of the wage earners, to focus on statistics about rice production and meat intake is certainly to distort the holistic truth. For the fact is that the Kalinga way of life is a way of life upon which people have survived and are surviving. If it is such a miserable way of life, why have the Kalingas not revolted against it?

There are plenty of places in the Philippines where people have revolted. We did not have any such revolt in Kalinga ten years ago. But according to the newspapers, we have it at present. I keep reading in the newspapers about NPA activities in one place or another that have been brought to an end. Before I read such headlines, I didn't realize there were any NPA activities in Kalinga. But if they have been brought to an end, they must have been there in the first place. Now, I am quite sure that they were not there ten or fifteen years ago. What happened? Those of us who are not communists are fond of the idea that communism only arises where there is suffering or misery. If this is true, why did it arise in Kalinga during the past seven years when it was not there before? What happened to all those statistics about rice and meat during that period? Did conditions become worse and therefore cause such a reaction? In just seven years? Or on the other hand, is this a question not to be answered simply by counting cavans of rice? Is it not obvious that this is a question that can only be answered holistically — that it can only be answered by taking a view of the whole culture and the total problem of the whole society?

By the statement of our speaker this morning, no such holistic view was intended. Rather, he reiterated, again and again, his goodwill and desire to help the Kalinga people. It was obvious that he was sincere, but it was equally obvious that his idea of helping was not holistic. To him, helping the Kalingas was making it possible for them to take more meat and produce more rice in a relocation site. But he did not seem to notice that the help he was offering was not what was needed ten years ago. That is to say, prior to the desire on the part of the government to build four dams in the Chico Valley, the Kalingas didn't have the problems the speaker wants to help them solve. You know, all the while the speaker was talking about helping the Kalingas solve their problems, I was reminded of the surgery I underwent some years ago. I had turned yellow; that is, I was jaundiced. I didn't mind since it didn't hurt and I wasn't inconvenienced in any way. But my doctor didn't like it and decided to operate. So, suffering no pain, I went to the hospital. During the first 24 hours after the doctor laid hands on me, I began to suffer pain and discomfort. Forty-eight hours later, I was in such horrible pain it took me a month to recover from what the doctor had done to me. But all the while, he was trying to help me. It seemed to me that the speaker wanted this morning to help the Kalingas in the same way. Ten years ago they were suf-

fering no pain. But if they are relocated into another world, they will suffer great pain. And the speaker wants to help them cure that pain. I would like to end by reiterating what the president of this organization called your attention to: this is a meeting of anthropologists and it has implications for your responsibility as an anthropologist and what you might do. I have already made the accusation that anthropologists find pieces of the truth, while it should be the holistic truth that they should be concerned with. But what can you do if it is a case where the anthropologist cannot put the whole scene under his lens or cannot observe it holistically? Well, I would like to make a specific suggestion so that my time before you will not be a complete waste of your time.

I want to make a suggestion for your research-cum-action agenda, as it says in the paper before us. I will base my suggestion on something our speakers have told us. What Chairman Itchon had in mind when he was talking about studying Kalinga culture was that he might extract some particular pieces of information from the culture which would enable him to accomplish the good goal which he sincerely believes ought to be accomplished. Similarly, Mr. Abalanza made reference to "being unable to capture the local imagination" in Kalinga. That is, because he wanted to capture the local imagination, it is necessary to understand the Kalinga imagination. In the Kalinga mind, for example, who are the real decision-makers? Mr. Itchon went to the Bishop to ask. Now, what I want to suggest to you anthropologists is that there is another very important culture in the Chico Valley which has not had this kind of information extracted from it. There is considerable information available about the Kalingas themselves; that is, what is the power structure in this barrio? To whom should I really talk? And when I talk to him, should I shout, or plead, or bow my head? This is the sort of information the anthropologist is supposed to extract and write down, and then, applying the principle of research-cum-action, perhaps hand over to NAPOCOR so the dam can be built with less loss of life rather than greater loss of life. What I want to suggest is that if you want to perform this action successfully, you need to understand that other culture in the Chico Valley: the culture to which NAPOCOR belongs. What is their culture? How do people in NAPOCOR make their living? How do they get their jobs and promotions? What is their standard of life, their value judgments and their goals? Probably very different from the Kalingas. I suggest you find out. I suggest you give this study high priority in your research-cum-action agenda for applied anthropology. I suggest you apply your field research and participant observation to the culture of NAPOCOR and NEDA.

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