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# Reflections on Buut-Loob-Nakem

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LEONARDO N. MERCADO, S.V.D.

**F**ilipino philosophy is an aspect of Filipino thought. In the first place the word "philosophy" has various definitions. Aristotle and the traditionalists define philosophy as the science of first causes. But the modern philosophers, especially the existentialists, are for a plurality of definition, each according to its meaningfulness to life as the individual philosopher sees it.<sup>1</sup> This second sense is individualistic and elitist. A third way of seeing philosophy is not elitist but is concerned with a people's world-view, namely, to explain the reasons behind a particular people's way of thinking and behaving. This third sense may somehow also include the first two shades of meaning.

Every people has its own existential postulates, as the anthropologists testify. Filipino philosophy is implied in the Filipino's way of thinking, but the former still has to be explicated. We are at this groping stage. Hence the results are still fragmentary and imperfect.

A particular problem would be this: how does the Filipino look at himself? Let us face this problem with our usual methodology which involves three steps: (1) a metalinguistic analysis, (2) then a comparative Oriental philosophy, and (3) an analysis of Filipino behavior in the light of the previous

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<sup>1</sup> For an overview, see Emerita S. Quito, *Address on A New Concept of Philosophy* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1967).

two steps.<sup>2</sup> If the explanation is coherent, then it most probably is correct.

### METALINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

Language is considered as the window of the mind, for language and thought are interrelated. The considerations will be limited to the biggest three Philippine languages, namely, Visayan, Tagalog, and Ilocano. These three can represent the other Philippine ethnic groups which anthropologists claim as descending from the same stock.<sup>3</sup>

The linguistic data were gathered from dictionaries and from informants.<sup>4</sup> The following data are not exhaustive in the sense of using all affixations possible because the Philippine languages can build hundreds of words from a single stem through affixation. Rather the following are among the most significant usages of *buut-loob-nakem*.

A few explanations on the tables. The stems are italicized so that they can be recognized where metathesis occurs. With regard to spelling we have followed Wolff in Cebuano Visayan. He says there are only three vowels in Cebuano, namely, i, u, a. Hence, *buut* and not *buot*, as other dictionaries spell the word. Although Panganiban agrees with Wolff as to the vowel sounds in Tagalog (namely that /e/ and /i/ as well as /o/ and /u/ are interchangeable or allophonic), still the for-

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<sup>2</sup> Leonardo N. Mercado, "Filipino Thought," *Philippine Studies* 20 (Second Quarter 1972): 207-272.

<sup>3</sup> To include the other major Philippine languages would be unwieldy. Moreover, the terms are similar.

<sup>4</sup> John U. Wolff comp., *A Dictionary of Cebuano Visayan* (Special monograph issue of *Philippine Journal of Linguistics*, June 1972); Tomas V. Hermosissima and Pedro Lopez, *Bisayan-English-Tagalog Dictionary* (Manila: Pedro B. Ayuda and Co., 1966); Pedro Serrano Laktaw, *Diccionario Tagalog-Hispano* (2 vols.; Manila: Imp. y Lit. de Santos y Bernal, 1914) Jose Villa Panganiban, *Diksyunaryo Tesauro Pilipino-Ingles* (Quezon City: Manlapaz Publishing Co., 1972); Morice Vanoverberg, *English-Iloko Thesaurus* (Baguio: Catholic School Press, 1958).

Of the various Ilocano informants, the author is much indebted to Dr. Marcelino A. Foronda, Jr. for the Ilocano data.

mer uses /e/ and /o/ in his dictionary.<sup>5</sup> We shall therefore follow Panganiban's spelling in Tagalog as well as for Ilocano.

The English meaning of every expression is put after each usage of *buut-loob-nakem*. The use of the word determines its meaning and definition, says the mature Ludwig Wittgenstein, an influential philosopher of language.<sup>6</sup> Under the column "Common English Meaning" the brackets indicate that two languages coincide in the meaning of a particular usage, whereas the bracketless meanings show unanimity.

The expressions are grouped according to their common areas of significance. The various tables show that not all the three Philippine languages coincide in every usage of *buut-loob-nakem* but they agree in general lines. Rather, what is implicit in one may be explicit in another language. The blanks in the tables mean that the language concerned uses a different equivalent.

A comparison of the tables will show that Tagalog has more usages of *loob* than Visayan and Ilocano have for *buut* and *nakem* respectively. Hence, for the sake of simplicity we shall use *loob* henceforth to mean also *buut* and *nakem* in their combined meanings. (Another possibility would be to shorten *buut-loob-nakem* to *bulonak*, just as "Con Con" stands for the Constitutional Convention, "Gomburza" for the three national heroes, Gomez, Burgoz, Zamora, as well as "Luzviminda" for Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.) But if the nine biggest Philippine languages are compared, *buut* and its derivatives are used together by Cebuano Visayan, Panay-Hiligaynon, Bikol, and Samar-Leyte Visayan, whereas the closest to *loob* in Tagalog is *lub* in Kapampangan. *Nonot* or *kanonotan* in Pangasinan might be related to *nakem* in Ilocano, whereas the Maranao counterpart is *amanat*.

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<sup>5</sup> Panganiban, *Diksiyunaryo*, p. x.

<sup>6</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, G. E. M. Anscombe, trans. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), Part I, nos. 31, 40, 43, 49, etc. This maturer view is the opposite of what Wittgenstein held in his earlier positivistic phase which demanded an exact, mathematical definition for every word.

Besides Table 3, one finds other references to emotion besides *loob*. The obvious example is "heart" (*pusò, kasing-kasing*). Physiology teaches that the brain is really the center of emotion whereas the heart is just a symbol. But the heart is not the only symbol in oriental cultures. Expressions in Visayan also denote the liver as seat of emotions. Thus, 'makapakúlú sa atay' (literally, 'makes the liver shrink' is equivalent to 'make the blood curdle'), 'makapadakú sa atay' (literally, 'enlarges the liver' meaning 'makes something go to one's head'), 'makapabukad sa atay' (literally, 'makes the liver swell' or 'makes one feel elated'). Although these expressions may not be found in Tagalog and Ilocano, further comparative research on the centers of emotion as the people see and express it will prove rewarding.

Table 5 shows that Visayan and Ilocano are silent in this miscellaneous grouping. This is striking because the three languages always concurred in the previous tables. The probable explanation is that *loob* in this table is equivocal or homonymous to the previous tables. Table 5 reveals that *loob* here focuses on the theme of (1) internal and its cognates as well as (2) robbery. For 'internal'/'inside' Visayan has *sulud* while Ilocano has *uneg* and *loob*. (This does not deny that *loob* in the previous tables is internal.) For 'robbery' Visayan uses *tulis/panulis* and Ilocano *panagtakaw* and other synonyms.

A comparison of the first four tables reveals the connectedness of *loob* as intellectual, volitional, emotional and ethical. This fact suggests that whereas the Westerner compartmentalizes his faculties of thinking, willing, feeling, and being good (as seen in the English translation of *loob*) the Filipino has a holistic view of himself.

The semantic multifacetedness of *loob* is also true in other words. This seems to be a characteristic of oriental languages.

#### COMPARATIVE ORIENTAL THOUGHT

A previous study has shown that the Filipino is Oriental.<sup>7</sup> We shall limit our comparison to three Far Eastern peoples,

<sup>7</sup> Mercado, "Filipino Thought," p. 239-41.

namely, India, China, Japan and one Near Eastern people, the Hebrews as documented in the Bible. We shall use the distillations of scholars who have gone through the enormous literary sources, for to go back again to each source would go beyond the scope of this little study.

### Indian Thought

Some key concepts in Indian philosophy are also multifaceted like *loob*. Among the conclusions in his comparative study of the various schools of Indian philosophy, P. T. Raju observes: "the concept of Dharma is the most important concept of [Indian] philosophy. It is difficult to translate. In the terminology of the Indian schools, it has many meanings: quality, entity, nature, duty, merit, religion, law, justice, and even reality."<sup>8</sup> Likewise "reason (*buddhi*) is not understood by the Indian schools as merely intellectual but also as ethical and even aesthetic."<sup>9</sup> Another key concept is *atman*.

In philosophical discussions *Atman* means the self. But the Upanisads use the word to mean several things; the physical body, the vital principle, mind, reason, the bliss body, and the metaphysical principle as well as the Brahman. In popular literature, it means also one's own nature, striving, and steadfastness.<sup>10</sup>

In the *Upanishads* (or Upanisads), the *atman* (self) is compared to the lord of the chariot in control of the other faculties: the body (the chariot), the senses (the horses), the intellect (charioteer), the mind (the reins), the objects of sense (the paths).<sup>11</sup>

The word *atman* in its general usage refers to the 'I' in the third person. When we say, 'I am happy' it is not the body that is happy, it is not even life, mind, or reason. We speak of 'my mind' and say 'I observe my mind's activities'. The 'I' is farther back than is mind.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> P. T. Raju, "The Concept of Man in Indian Thought," in *The Concept of Man*, S. Radhakrishnan and P. T. Raju, eds. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1966), p. 310.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 312.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>11</sup> Gardner Murphy and Lois B. Murphy eds., *Asian Psychology* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968), p. 51.

<sup>12</sup> Raju, "The Concept of Man," pp. 240-41.

TABLE 1  
INTELLECTUAL THEME

VISAYAN	TAGALOG	ILOCANO	COMMON ENGLISH MEANING
<i>Buut</i> (motive, intention)	<i>Isalooob</i> (to bear something in mind)	<i>Nakem</i> (motive, intention)	(motive, intention)
Kapin nga buut (ulterior motive)		<i>Nakem</i> (mind, reason)	(mind, reason)
<i>Buut</i> (thoughts, mind, reason)		Nadeal ti nakem (to be crazy)	
Wala sa buut (not in the mind)		Awan ti nakemmo (You are stupid)	
Walay buut ka (You are stupid)			
<i>Kabuut</i> (understanding, perception, mental discernment)		<i>Nakem</i> (understanding, perception, judgment)	(understanding, perception)
<i>Pagbuut</i> (judgment, decision)	<i>Pagkakalooob</i> (judgment, decision, adjudication)	<i>Nakem</i> (judgment, decision)	judgment, decision
<i>Magbuut</i> (to decide, to dictate)	<i>Loob</i> sa saklawin (to comprehend, to understand)		
Ikaw ang magbuut kun pila (You decide how much)	<i>Mapasaloob</i> (to occur to one's mind)		
<i>Buut</i> , panimuut, kalibutan (consciousness, consciousness)		<i>Nakem</i> (consciousness, conscience, awareness)	(consciousness, conscience, awareness)

science, awareness, degree of intelligence)

Walay buut kay bata pa man siya (He has not yet reached the age of discretion because he is still a child)

Tigmaan ug buut (regain consciousness)

Ang iyang panimuut sama sa batang tulu ka tuig (His mental age is like a three-year old child's)

*But-an* (possessing reason, sense)

But-an ba siya u buang? (Is he sane or mad?)

*But-un* (to expect)

*Mabuut* (civic-minded, considerate)

*Kabut-an, kamabuut* (prudence, sensibleness, smartness)

*Kabut-an* (controllable, manageable, tractable)

*Saloobin* (attitude)

*Salooban, isaloob, magsaloob* (to distrust, to suspect)

*Saloob* (suspicion)

*Magpasaloob* (suspicious, malicious)

*Awan ti nakemna gapu ta ubing pay* (He has not yet reached the age of discretion because he is still a child)

*Makinakem* (to follow advice) *Patien ti nakem [ti sabali]* (literally, to believe in another, i.e., to follow advice)

TABLE 2  
VOLITIONAL THEME

VISAYAN	TAGALOG	ILOCANO	COMMON ENGLISH MEANING
<i>Buut</i> (wish, desire, will) Ituman ang buut mo (Your will be done)	<i>Loob</i> (wish, desire, will) Sundin ang loob mo (Your will be done)	<i>Nakem</i> (wish, desire, will) Matungpal koma ti nakemmo (Your will be done)	wish, desire, will
<i>Pagbuut</i> (will) Pagbuut sa Ginuu (the Lord's will)			
<i>Buut</i> (state of mind, disposition, mood) Maglain ang iyang buut ug mapildi sa sugal (He gets into a bad mood if he loses in gambling)	<i>Loob</i> (state of mind, disposition, mood) Ano ang nasa loob mo? (What is in your state of mind?)	<i>Nakem</i> (state of mind, disposition, mood) Ania ti adda iti nakemmo? (What is in your state of mind)	state of mind, disposition, mood
<i>Pabuut</i> (to allow some to have the say, to allow, to permit) Ug pabut-un aku nimu (if you allow me)	<i>Loobin</i> (to allow, to permit)	<i>Bay-an agnakem</i> (to allow, to permit) <i>Bay-an nga agnakem nga agtalaw</i> (Let him escape)	to allow, to permit
<i>Buta-a, but-on</i> (to accept freely without restraint)	<i>Kusang loob</i> (voluntary, initiative)		
<i>But-anay</i> (to impose each other's will on one another)	<i>Wala sa loob, laban sa ka-looban</i> (involuntary)		
<i>Buutbúut</i> (to act without permission, to presume, to take on oneself to do something)	<i>Hilig sa loob</i> (liking, preference, impulse of the heart)		
<i>Kabubut-un</i> (will, volition) Mga tawu nga maayug kabubut-un (Men of good will)	<i>Kalooban</i> (will, volition) Mga taong may mabuting kalooban (men of good will)	<i>Pakinakem, panagnaknakem</i> (will, volition) Tatao ti naimbag a panagnaknakem (men of good will)	will, volition

TABLE 3  
EMOTIONAL THEME

VISAYAN	TAGALOG	ILOCANO	COMMON ENGLISH MEANING
Mausab ang <i>buut</i> (to change attitude or feeling)	Magbago ang <i>loob</i> (to change attitude or feeling)	Pabaruen ti <i>pakinakem</i> (to change attitude or feeling)	to change attitude or feeling
	Matigas/malakas ang <i>loob</i> (to feel brave or courageous, animated)	Napigsa ti <i>nakem</i> (to feel brave or courageous)	(to feel brave or courageous)
	Buong buo ang <i>loob</i> (courageous)	Napigsa ti <i>pagnaknakem</i> (courageous)	(courageous)
	Sumigla ang <i>kalooban</i> (to be revived in spirit, to be lively or enthusiastic)	Pumigsa ti <i>nakemna</i> (to be revived in spirit, to be lively or enthusiastic)	(to be revived in spirit, to be lively or enthusiastic)
	Buhay ang <i>loob</i> (lively)	Kabuhayan ng <i>loob</i> (liveliness, courage, spirit)	
Himuut (to be pleased)			
Wala niya kahimut-i ang imung gibuhat (He was not pleased with what you did)			
Kahimuut (pleasure)			
Kahimut-anan (at which one can take pleasure)			

(Table 3—Emotional Theme, continued)

VISAYAN	TAGALOG	ILOCANO	COMMON ENGLISH MEANING
Maham- <i>utun</i> , mahimut-un, mahimut-anun (feeling great pleasure)	Pukawin/gisingin ang <i>loob</i> (to inspire)	Tignay ti <i>nakem</i> , pareg- taen ti <i>nakem</i> (to in- spire) Paregtaen ti <i>nakemna</i> tapno agadal (In- spire/motivate him to study)	(to inspire)
	Nakapupukaw ng <i>loob</i> (inspirational) Kabuhusan ng <i>loob</i> (fall- ing in love)	Makapatignay / m a k a- paregta iti <i>nakem</i> (inspirational)	(inspirational)
	(Mabagabag ang kalooban (to give a sigh, to pity)	Matignay ti <i>nakem</i> (to give a sigh, to pity)	(to give a sigh, to pity)
Malain ang <i>buut</i> (short-tem- pered, of the sort that gets easily angered)			
Mainit ang <i>buut</i> (hot-tem- pered)	Mainit ang <i>kalooban</i> (hot- tempered)	Napudot ti <i>nakem</i> (hot- tempered)	hot-tempered
Madaut ang <i>buut</i> (to be in bad mood)			
	Ipahalata ang <i>nasa loob</i> (to show one's feel- ings)	Ipagriknam iti adda ti pa- kinakem (to show one's feelings)	(to show one's feelings)

	Maglihim/magkubli ng na- sa <i>loob</i> (to hide one's feelings)	Illem-eng ti sakit ti <i>nakem</i> (to hide one's feel- ings)	(to hide one's feelings)
Mabus ang <i>buut</i> (to be sad, to be in a low spirit)	Mababa ang <i>kalooban</i> (to be sad, to be in a low spirit)	Nasakit ti <i>nakem</i> (to be sad, to be in a low spirit)	to be sad, to be in a low spirit
	Masakit ang <i>loob</i> (resent- ful, to hurt one's feel- ings, to feel sorry)	Nasakit ti <i>nakem</i> (resent- ful, to hurt one's feel- ings, to feel sorry)	(resentful, to hurt one's feelings, to feel sorry) (to feel depressed)
	Masama ang <i>loob</i> (to feel depressed)	Nasakit ti <i>nakem</i> , <i>sakiten</i> ti <i>nakem</i> , (to feel de- pressed, to regret, to grieve, to repent, feel contrite)	
		Sakit ti <i>nakem</i> (remorse, contrition, attrition, penitence, repentance, grief, sorrow)	
	Masira ang <i>loob</i> (to be discouraged, to lose confidence)	Madadael ti <i>pakinakem</i> (to be discouraged, to lose confidence)	(to be discouraged, to lose confidence)
	Mangingitngit ang <i>ka- looban</i> (to feel an- noyed)		
	Pagtatanim sa <i>loob</i> (hate, resentment)		
Magaan ug <i>buut</i> (in a good mood, having a light disposition, gay, care- free, at ease)	Maluwag ang <i>kalooban</i> (to feel appeased, gay, carefree, at ease)	Nalag-an ti <i>nakem</i> (to feel appeased, gay, carefree, at ease)	gay, carefree, at ease

TABLE 4  
ETHICAL THEME

VISAYAN	ILOCANO	ILOCANO	COMMON ENGLISH MEANING
	<i>Loob</i> (courage, valor)	<i>Pakinakem</i> (courage, valor)	(courage, valor)
	Lakas ng <i>loob</i> (courage, valor)	Tao a napigsa ti <i>pakinakemna</i> (a man of courage)	
	May <i>loob</i> (brave, courageous)		
	Tigas ng <i>loob</i> (hardiness in valor, bravery)		
	Pagkalooban (to give something)		
	Pagkalooban mo ako ng tubig (Give me some water.)		
	<i>Kaloob</i> (gift, donation, favor, benevolence)	Sagut gaput naimbag a <i>pakinakem</i> (literally, gift because of good will; gift, donation, favor, benevolence)	(gift, donation, favor, benevolence)
	Nagkakaloob (giver, donor)	Ti nangted ti sagut gaput' naimbag a <i>pakinakem</i> (giver, donor)	(giver, donor)
	Pinagkakalooban (receiver, donee)	Ti naikkan ti sagut gaput' naimbag a <i>pakinakem</i> (receiver, donee)	(receiver, donee)
Utang- <i>buut</i> utang nga kabubut-un (debt of volition, "gratitude")	Utang na <i>loob</i> (debt of volition; "gratitude")	Utang a naimbag a <i>nakem</i> (debt of volition, "gratitude")	debt of volition, "gratitude"

Utang- <i>buut</i> (please)	Utang na <i>loob</i> (please)		(please)
Utang <i>buut</i> , ayaw pagsul- ti niana (Please don't say that.)	Utang na <i>loob</i> , huwag mong sabihin iyan (Please don't say that.)		
	Ganting- <i>loob</i> , pagganting- <i>loob</i> (grateful recip- rocity, gratitude, com- pensatory act of gratefulness)		
	Sa tanang <i>loob</i> , tutohanan ng <i>loob</i> (heartily, sin- cerely)		
Dunay <i>buut</i> (attentive, cour- teous, obliging)	May <i>loob</i> (attentive, cour- teous, obliging)	Adda <i>nakemna</i> (attentive, courteous, obliging)	attentive, courteous, oblig- ing
Walay <i>buut</i> ('innocent' — when applied to children. But it means 'ignorant,' 'irresponsible' when ap- plied to adults.)	Walang <i>loob</i> (inattentive, vile, unpleasant, low)	Awan <i>nakemna</i> (inatten- tive, vile, unpleasant, low)	(inattentive, vile, unpleas- ant, low)
	Mababang- <i>loob</i> (submis- sive, humble, meek)	Ababa ti panagnak <i>nakem</i> - na (submissive, hum- ble, meek)	(submissive, humble, meek)
	Kababaang- <i>loob</i> (humili- ty, meekness)	Ababa a panagnak <i>nakem</i> (humility, meekness)	(humility, meekness)
	Kalubayang- <i>loob</i> (affabili- ty, meekness, gentle- ness)	Nasayaat a panagnak <i>na-</i> <i>kem</i> , naimbag a pa- nagnak <i>nakem</i> (affabi- lity, meekness, gentle- ness)	(affability, meekness, gen- tleness)
	Magandang- <i>loob</i> (gener- ous)	Nasayaat/naimbag a pa- nagnak <i>nakem</i> (gener- ous)	

(Table 4—Ethical Theme, continued)

VISAYAN	TAGALOG	ILOCANO	COMMON ENGLISH MEANING
Maayung kabubut-un (kindness, generosity, benevolence)	Kagandahang- <i>loob</i> , kabutihang- <i>loob</i> (kindness, generosity, benevolence)	Naimbag a panagnaknakem (kindness, generosity, benevolence)	kindness, generosity, benevolence
	Mapagbigay- <i>loob</i> (indulgent, affable, tolerant)	Nagundawayan iti naimbag a panagnaknakem, (indulgent, affable, tolerant)	(indulgent, affable, tolerant)
	Bigay <i>loob</i> , pagbibigay <i>loob</i> (condescension, affability, graciousness)	Naimbag/nasayaat a panagnaknakem (condescension, affability, graciousness)	(condescension, affability, graciousness)
	Magaan ang <i>loob</i> /magaan ang dugo (pleasant, likable, charming)	Naimbag/nasayaat a panagnaknakem (pleasant, likable, charming)	(pleasant, likable, charming)
	Tanging- <i>loob</i> (unsociable; NB: tangi — alone, exclusivistic)	Awanan ti nasayaat (naimbag) a panagnaknakem (unsociable)	(unsociable)
	Katapatang- <i>loob</i> (uprightness)		
Buutan (morally good, conscientious)	Maloobin (morally good, conscientious)	Nanakem (morally good, conscientious)	morally good, conscientious
Buutan nga bata (a good child)	Maloobin na bata (a good child)	Nanakem nga ubing (a good child)	
	Pagbabalik- <i>loob</i> (religious conversion)	Nagbaliw ti pakinakemna (religious conversion)	(religious conversion)
	Pagbabagong- <i>loob</i> (change of heart)	Panagbaliw ti pakinakemna (change of heart)	(change of heart)
	Tumatapang ang <i>loob</i> (to be confident)		

Knowledge for Indian philosophy does not just involve the intellectual faculty but involves the total man.

Where knowledge implies transformation of one's being, it comes to have ethical and spiritual significance. When we see this point, we can appreciate the significance of *jñanamarga* or the way of knowledge. Knowledge in this sense is not a pale hovering awareness but is also the being of the object known. But such knowledge cannot be had without inner ethical and spiritual transformation. And this is the reason for laying great emphasis on the ethical qualities of the person following the way of knowledge.<sup>13</sup>

Another main trait of Indian thought is interiority. "For all the schools, man is a wayfarer; the way, however, lies not from one point of space to another, but from the world of outward reality to the inward realm. The direction of the process of the world is from the outward to the inward. Life is the inwardness which matter attains; and mind is the inwardness which life attains in the process of the world we observe."<sup>14</sup> An example of such interiority is *dharma*. According to Swami Nikhilananda:

. . . *dharma* is the law of inner growth by which the embodied soul is supported in the present state of his evolution and also shown the way for his future development and ultimate liberation.

*Dharma*, formed by a man's past actions and thoughts, determines his attitude toward the outer world and governs his mental and physical reaction in a given situation. It constitutes his righteousness, his code of honor.<sup>15</sup>

### Chinese Thought

For the Chinese *ch'ang* stands for 'intestines,' 'feelings,' 'emotions.' A sad person is said to have 'his intestines broken,' or 'tied up into a hundred knots' but western translators would render it 'his heart is broken.' "These intestines are broad or narrow, depending on whether a man is generous or mean. A

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 313.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 310.

<sup>15</sup> Charles E. Moore ed., *The Indian Mind* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1967), p. 235.

man whose ideas run dry and who constantly stops during writing is said to have 'dried-up intestines.'<sup>16</sup>

Like Indian philosophy, Chinese philosophy has many branches. We shall exclude here Chinese Buddhism, which is an amalgam of Taoism and of Indian Mahayana ("Great Vehicle") Buddhism, for it is of late arrival and does not belong to the classic period of Chinese philosophy. Taoism is also to be excluded, since it is more concerned with the metaphysical Tao (Way) instead of man. Likewise the Legalists, the right wing of Chinese philosophy (which is close to Communism and Fascism) shall be disregarded because pure Legalism disregards all moral and supernatural sanctions. Its only standard is the arbitrary will of the ruler. Hence Legalism does not represent Chinese thought. What remains is Confucianism. Confucius or Kung Fu Tzú (ca. 551-479 B.C.) did not consider himself as an originator but as a defender and formulator of the unwritten traditions of the past. He therefore represents the true Chinese thought.

A concept similar to *loob* in Chinese is *hsin*, which has a variety of meanings.

The term "mind" (*hsin*) was used in early China to denote many things, including "intentions," "feelings," the location of the desires, cognitive activity, and evaluative activity. The expression "evaluating mind" . . . refers to the functions denoted by either or both of two terms: *bi*, the sense that discriminates what is proper and required as a duty in a given situation; and *chih*, "moral knowing," the sense that discriminates right and wrong (*shih-fei-chih-hsin*) and approves or disapproves.<sup>17</sup>

Confucianism considers the evaluating mind as common to all men. It is also the reason for human equality.

An innate part of *hsin* is the concept of *jen* (human—heartedness, love, man).<sup>18</sup> It is an innate love for kin and for all

<sup>16</sup> Lin Yutang, *The Importance of Living* (New York: John Day Reynal and Hitchcock, 1937), pp. 434-35.

<sup>17</sup> Donald J. Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), pp. 50-51.

<sup>18</sup> According to Chan Wing-tsit, "the Chinese concept of *jen* [is] a word perhaps best translated as love. The two words, *jen* as

people. Human nature is called *jen-hsing*, the combination of *hsing* and *jen*.<sup>19</sup> A common *hsing* makes all men brothers, and *jen* also makes such an innate humanism possible.

One may have the impression that Chinese philosophy is only ethics and eternal behavior. Such a view would miss the spirit of Confucianism as contained in the *Great Learning* ("Ta Hsio"), one of the four Confucian classics.

One might almost say that for Kung "rites" or *Li* were the visible expression of the hidden reality of the universe: the manifestation of heaven, or, we would say, of divine wisdom in human affairs and in the social order. . . . One might say that it is in the splendor of *Li* (in all its sobriety and truth) which gives a dynamic and productive quality of wisdom. For when a man participates in *Li* by faithfully performing the rites which are called for by his given situation and by his relationship to others, he thereby is awakened, grows, and is transformed. And at the same time his society (whether the family, the city, or the state) grows and is transformed with him.<sup>20</sup>

love and *jen* as man used to be interchangeable, and in some cases still are. The word *jen* as love is written with two parts, the radical *jen*, meaning man, on the left and two strokes on the right. The two words have the same pronunciation. Most important of all, as the *Doctrine of the Mean* and the *Book of Mencius* have it, '*jen* (love) is *jen* (man).' For this reason, *jen* has been considered the highest good in the Chinese scheme of values. [Jen] denotes the general meaning of moral life at its best. It includes filial piety, wisdom, propriety, courage, and loyalty to government. It requires the practice 'of earnestness, liberality, truthfulness, diligence, and generosity.' A man of *jen* is 'respectful in private life, earnest in handling affairs, and loyal in his association with people.' In short, *jen* precludes all evil and underlies as well as embraces all possible virtues, so much so that 'if you set your mind on *jen*, you will be free from evil.' When one has fully realized *jen*, one becomes a sage" (Radhakrishnan and Raju, *The Concept of Man*, p. 197).

<sup>19</sup> Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China*, p. 49. *Hsin* is 'mind' whereas *hsing* according to Hsun-tzu and Mencius "is innate endowment from Heaven, the same in all men. Generally speaking, it consists of all constances natural to man (seeing, hearing, eating, resting, retreat from danger, and so forth" (p. 80). But in Neo-Confucianism *hsing* means 'moral mind' and 'concrete behavior.' Munro notes (p. 82) that *hsin* has been associated with *hsing* in the Warring States period.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Merton, *Mystics and Zen Masters* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1969), p. 60.

## Japanese Thought

The Japanese, like the Indians and Chinese, think "totally," that is, involving the whole man. According to Junyu Kitayama, "Thinking and feeling, which in the West exist as separate entities, here operate as a single force . . . . The center of gravity of spiritual activity in East Asia lies less in systematic comprehension of the universe and universal history than in real experience of totality through an intuitive perception of that essence in which all mental and sensuous functions combine."<sup>21</sup>

Buddhism (which came from India via China) greatly influenced Japanese thought. Although Buddhism (which denies the existence of illusionary self) is different from the Upanishadic teaching that *atman* or self exists, still the Japanese adapted Buddhism to their mentality. Zen Buddhism is one such adaptation. Whereas Confucianism taught *jen*, Buddhism taught the virtue of *jishi* (mercy).<sup>22</sup> Buddhism likewise influenced the Japanese religious outlook which is interior-oriented:

The main concern of Japanese religions, especially Buddhism, has not been so much with the good and evil of man's conduct as with the attitude of man, that is, how he accepts the given environment. In other words, they put stronger emphasis on the mental aspect of man than on the behavioral aspect. They instruct man how to reach a tranquil and balanced state of mind. Then man can see things just as they are, without any disturbance or bias in his mind. Such mental emphasis on the part of religion makes its relationship to aesthetic value very close.<sup>23</sup>

From the same book just cited, Kawashima Takeyoshi in his essay entitled "The Status of the Individual in the Notion of Law, Right, and Social Order in Japan" discusses how westerners are preoccupied with external contracts and written laws. Such a spirit is contrary to the Japanese mind where a person's word is binding enough.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted by Lily Abegg, *The Mind of East Asia*, A.J. Crick and E. E. Thomas, trans. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1952), p. 14.

<sup>22</sup> Charles E. Moore ed., *The Japanese Mind: Essentials of Japanese Philosophy and Culture* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1967), p. 265.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

### Hebrew Thought

Tresmontant in his book shows how knowledge for the Hebrew involves the whole man.<sup>24</sup> For 'mind' (*nous*) the corresponding concept is *leb* or 'heart.'<sup>25</sup> "To know an object is to have a completely real experience of it as is well exemplified by a 'knowledge' of suffering (Is. 53, 3), of sin (Ws. 3, 13), of war (Jg. 3, 1), of peace (Is. 59, 8), of good and evil (Gn. 2, 9.17) where there is a true personal involvement with far-reaching repercussions."<sup>26</sup> Understanding is not separate from action and from the good.<sup>27</sup>

The Hebrews considered the kidney as the innermost part of man, the seat of his emotions and of his conscience. Likewise the viscera (bowels, belly, entrails) were considered as the seat of emotions but western translators would render "bowels" as "heart."<sup>28</sup>

To sum up, the four oriental groups just reviewed all have a noncompartmentalized view of man. Knowledge, for instance, involves the whole man. Furthermore, they view man from the interior.

From the parallels established, does *loob* also suggest that Filipino ethics is based on interiority? This and similar questions will get further enlightened if we look at Filipino behavior.

### FILIPINO BEHAVIOR

Let us consider the phenomenon of *loob* in 'debt of volition' or *utang na loob*. While sociologists and anthropologists have sufficiently written about this topic chiefly from the

<sup>24</sup> Claude Tresmontant, *Essai sur la Pensée Hébraïque* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1962), pp. 119-39.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>26</sup> Xavier Leon-Dufour ed., *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, P. Joseph Cahill, trans. (Tournai: Desclee, 1967), p. 259. See also John L. McKenie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1965), pp. 485-88.

<sup>27</sup> Tresmontant, *Essai*., p. 128.

<sup>28</sup> Louis F. Hartmann ed., *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), col. 1267, 2550-51.

viewpoint of indebtedness,<sup>29</sup> let us consider it from the viewpoint of volition. As the Tagalog proverb puts it, *Ang utang na loob ay hindi mababayaran ng salapi*, (debt of volition cannot be repaid by money). Unlike ordinary debts where stipulations are made, *utang na loob* makes no condition. If X saves Y's life from drowning, Y has an everlasting 'debt of volition' to X. X does not give any terms. But out of his own will (*kusang loob*) Y tries to show his goodness to X whenever he can at his own discretion. *Loob* became an interior law which tells Y to behave generously and amiably to X—even for a lifetime.

Anybody without the sense of 'debt of volition' is considered 'shameless' (*walang hiyâ*), which most Filipinos resent.<sup>30</sup> Likewise to reject a 'debt of volition' leads to *hiyâ*, which may be an expression of interiority. At any rate the Filipino is quite sensitive to his treatment as a person. He wants to keep his self-respect even to the point of sacrifice.

*Loob* then has much to do with the Filipino's notion of selfhood. One often hears the saying: "Better to die than to suffer insult." This can be formulated in various ways but the meaning remains: the Filipino's sensitivity even to slight insults. That Americans openly exchange insults in quarrels but are reconciled afterwards as if nothing happened at all is a surprise for not a few Filipinos to witness. The Filipino may forgive an insult but he carries the wounds for a long time. That is why when Filipinos disagree, they would prefer to use intermediaries or exchange indirect remarks rather than to be frank with each other.

*Loob* can also be observed in the Filipino's religious behavior. But first a slight digression.

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<sup>29</sup> Mary R. Hollsteiner, "Reciprocity in the Lowland Philippines," in *Four Readings on Philippine Values* (IPC Papers No. 2), Frank Lynch, comp. (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1964), pp. 22-49; Charles Kaut, "Utang na Loob: A System of Contractual Obligation Among Tagalogs," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 17 (3): 256-72; Robert Lawless, "A Comparative Analysis of Two Studies on Utang na Loob," *Philippine Sociological Review* 14 (3): 168-72.

<sup>30</sup> For a definition of *hiyâ*, see Jaime C. Bulatao, "Hiyâ," *Philippine Studies* 12 (3): 424-38.

In Oriental religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, religious life is not so much governed by laws from centralized organizations but is left to the initiative of individuals. In spite of this nonlegislative character, Hinduism and Buddhism have flourished throughout the centuries. On the other hand, western Christianity—especially Roman Catholicism—is controlled by canon law. (This is also true of western civil governments which indirectly have been influenced by Roman Law and Roman procedures.)

Let us only consider the phenomenon of Catholicism in the Philippines. In the present situation one can distinguish (1) the official Catholicism which is characterized by laws even in worship, (2) the so-called "folk Catholicism" which consists of tolerated practices beyond the control of the hierarchy, and (3) the practices of "animistic" religion. "Folk Catholicism" and "animism" have one thing in common: they are nonlegislated and flow from within. That is why the interpretation of religious sentiments springs out in many forms. A man who participates in the Black Nazarene procession in Quiapo may do so out of a vow (*panata*) as thanksgiving for favors done to him. It is a sort of religious 'debt of volition.' The devotee manifests his religiosity insofar as he likes it and in the form willed by himself. Religious folk dancing and flagellation are some of the many forms. These practices in "folk Catholicism" as well as those in "animism" (such as the agricultural rituals and food offerings for the dead) reflect the Oriental interiority of religion.

#### "LOOB" AND FILIPINO PHILOSOPHY

The metalinguistic considerations on *loob* has exceeded its boundaries. Such is the nature of language, for it is a mental window which leads to a bigger world.

The manifold aspects of *loob* require a bigger concept which embraces all the meanings listed in the first four figures. That bigger concept would be *self* as viewed from within. While it is true that there are other words for 'self' (*sarili*, *kaugalingun*, *met laeng*), these expressions are superficial and

do not express the essence of the Filipino. *Loob* would therefore be characterized as (1) holistic and (2) as interior.

### Holistic

Western man compartmentalizes himself. This way of thinking is evident in expressions like 'not letting the emotions influence reason' or 'the heart having reasons which the head does not know.' Some western philosophers have been debating on whether the intellect is superior to the will or not. Likewise western philosophy also looks at knowledge as an intellectual apprehension of reality.

But the Filipino, like his Oriental neighbors, has a total way of thinking which is noncompartmentalized. The varied usages of *loob* attest to this fact. Thus 'makasakit and loob'/'nasakit ti nakem' involves sorrow and pain on one's whole being.

Furthermore, this holistic view extends also to the Filipino's nondualistic world-view. Life also is not compartmentalized. The following passage applies also to the Filipino.

. . . Mention should be made of the far-reaching identification of concepts in East Asia; these, with slight differences in meaning, apply equally to all East Asians. Politics, ethics and religion are for them *one*. Politics, for which there is no precisely corresponding expression in East Asia, is really a Western invention which, in the last resort, is connected with the differentiation of psychic functions. In East Asia there was in earlier times no separation of Church and State, and hence the conception of pure politics could not arise.<sup>31</sup>

One more observation. Since *loob* is always mentioned in the third person, it has a certain similarity with the Hindu concept of *atman*.

### Interior

The previous section has shown how interiority is a moving force of Filipino behavior. Let us try to explicate this.

In his Parable of Ox Mountain, Mencius, a disciple of Confucius, teaches the natural goodness of man and that evil comes

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<sup>31</sup> Abegg, *The Mind of East Asia*, p. 100. Abegg explains at the introduction of her book that China and Japan are her main points of reference when she speaks of "East Asia."

from man's environment. He therefore identifies *jen* with man. *Jen* has its Filipino version in *kaluuy/awa/kaasi* with a variety of English translations: mercy, charity, clemency, leniency, benevolence, generosity, kindness, tolerance. These shades of meanings can be summed up in the expression 'human-heartedness.' Figure 4 shows that *awa* as benevolence and kindness corresponds to 'kagandahang-loob' and 'kabutihang-loob.' Hence to give something is *pagkalooban* (sharing one's interiority). To plead or beg something is *magma-luuy/magmaawa/pakakaasi*. To appeal then to one's human-heartedness is to ask the Filipino to share his innate goodness. The Visayan interjection *intawun* ('alas!') may be translated *kaawa-awa* in Tagalog and *ikakaasi* in Ilocano. The foregoing linguistic evidence therefore indicates that 'human-heartedness' is an interior part of *loob*.

Interiority has also its manifestation in the area of law. The western world seems overconcerned with contracts, records, documents, and other written matters. This kind of mentality is evident in westernized business practices. But pieces of paper and documents are often meaningless to many Filipinos. The early Filipinos who occupied their ancestors' land always considered it as theirs without the use of documents. Philippine history and literature tell how Filipinos were evicted by the mere possession of documents from "land-grabbers." This still happens in Mindanao and among the minorities. What concerns more the Filipinos is not the written, impersonal record but the unwritten tradition of their ancestors.

The word 'ordinary' in English and in the Romance languages connotes what follows an *ordo* (rule, order). The German version, *regelmässig* (what measures up to the *Regel*—rule, law, standard) is even more revealing. But in Philippine languages the non-loaned version for 'ordinary' approximates the meaning of 'customary' (*katalayaan/karaniwan, kaugalian/sapasap, masna*).

The law for the Filipino is viewed interiorly and responsibility also stems from within. But the Westerner views the

law from without. That is why the impersonal and extrinsic laws from Philippine Congress not rarely meet the loophole-mentality (*makalusot*) of the citizens. Employees often do not heed the circulars until they are personalized at least by messengers for their signatures.

The previous consideration on Filipino religious behavior also reveals how interiority is at work in this sphere. Although Vatican II has allowed religious freedom and more liturgical initiative, the spirit of external legislation is still there. This probably comes from the western preoccupation with law. On the other hand, the prophets have always said that God lives in the hearts of men. St. Paul maintained that the letter of the law kills while its spirit enlivens. And Christ said that "true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth" (John 4, 23). Whereas God does not force man either to save or damn himself, men have been more strict than God in religious legislations. Fyodor Dostoevski has dramatized this distortion in the "Story of the Grand Inquisitor" in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Observers who point out that Filipino religiosity is highly exteriorized miss the point. It is the same mentality which accuses Confucianism as merely ritual and exterior when it is the fruit of much interiority. Philippine religiosity, like *dharma*, is interiorly inspired.

Furthermore, interiority manifests itself in freedom. The early Filipinos always resisted being subdued by their colonizers. They had no political unity because they loved their freedom. But this did not mean anarchy because interiority cemented society. In other words, *loob* makes one in touch with his fellowmen.

The foregoing considerations have prepared the way for this final remark, namely, on *loob* as moral conscience. Another Tagalog word for 'conscience' is *budhi*, which can also mean 'understanding,' 'will,' or the faculty of intuitive discernment. Nevertheless, moral conscience is still *buut* in Visayan and *nakem* in Ilocano. Table 4 describes a great deal of moral goodness in terms of *loob*. *Loob*, therefore, as ethical

is inseparable from thinking, willing, and feeling. This again demonstrates its noncompartmentalization as well as its interiority.

The following statement (one of the conclusions agreed upon by the participants of a seminar on Filipino Thought which was held in Tagaytay City) may summarize these reflections on *loob*: "The Filipino looks at himself as a self, as one who feels, as one who wills, as one who thinks, as one who acts: as a total whole—as a 'person,' conscious of his freedom, proud of his human dignity, and sensitive to the violation of these two."

TABLE 5  
MISCELLANEOUS

VISAYAN	TAGALOG	ILOCANO
	<i>Loob</i> , <i>kalooban</i> , <i>kaloob</i> (internal part, inside, within)	
	Sa <i>loob</i> ng bahay (inside the house)	
	Sa <i>loob</i> ng isang linggo (within a week's time)	
	<i>Paloob</i> (to enter, to penetrate)	
	<i>Saloobin</i> (to interiorize, to internalize)	
	<i>Kaloob-looban</i> (innermost)	
	Taimtim sa <i>loob</i> (intimate)	
	<i>Pagpaloob</i> (introduction, becoming an intern)	
	<i>Pangloob</i> (undergarments)	
	<i>Looban</i> (orchard, a piece of fenced land or yard around the house planted with a variety of trees and plants)	
	<i>Laman-loob</i> (giblet, gizzard, entrail)	
	<i>Loob</i> , <i>panloob</i> , <i>looban</i> (robbery, attack, invasion)	
	<i>Looban</i> (to invade, to assault)	
	<i>Mangloob</i> (robber, brigand)	
	Mga <i>masasamang-loob</i> (robbers, criminals)	
	<i>Nilooban</i> (was victimized by robbers)	