

# Where the People ' s Money Goes

By Ninox Antolihao

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## Introduction

In every society, taxes are the lifeblood of the government — a shared contribution meant to sustain the common good. In the Philippines, each peso collected from the working hands of its people carries the promise of better schools, safer roads, and fairer lives. Yet that same peso too often disappears into the shadows of corruption and greed. This reflection asks a difficult but necessary question: Do our taxes truly serve the Filipino, or do they simply feed the few who rule them?

## I. The Promise of a Shared Nation

The foundation of governance is service. Every government, by moral duty, exists to protect and uplift its people. In the Philippines, taxes are designed to fund education, healthcare, infrastructure, and security. These are the essentials of a dignified life. When used wisely, taxes become bridges that connect distant towns, hospitals that heal the sick, and scholarships that lift children from poverty. They are the silent contributions of millions, forming the visible backbone of a functioning nation. In this ideal picture, the government helps the people live, and the people, in return, help the government stand.

## II. The Betrayal of Corruption

But ideals often fall to human greed. Many Filipinos have seen taxes become the currency of deceit — stolen through overpriced projects, ghost infrastructures, and pocketed aid. Instead of reaching hospitals, funds vanish into luxury cars. Instead of feeding the hungry, they feed political dynasties. The same poor communities are photographed during campaigns, then forgotten after elections. This betrayal runs deeper than theft — it steals hope. Because when people lose faith in their government, even good leaders inherit disbelief.

## III. The Truth Between Two Realities

It is unfair to say that all taxes are wasted, because many Filipinos do benefit from government programs: free tuition, emergency aid, healthcare, and roads that connect life to livelihood. But it is equally unjust to deny that corruption still thrives — a parasite on the nation ' s veins. So the truth lies in between: taxes do help, but not as much as they could. The system works, but only halfway. The rest is lost in the noise of politics.

#### IV. The Role of the Citizen

Real change doesn ' t begin in Congress or Malacañang — it begins in the conscience of every citizen. When people learn to demand transparency, read reports, vote wisely, and hold leaders accountable, corruption has fewer places to hide. To ask “ Where does my tax go? ” is not rebellion — it is responsibility. Because the money we give the government is not a donation. It ' s trust — and trust must be earned, not stolen.

#### V. Reflection

A tax is not a burden when it feeds the hungry.

It becomes theft when it fattens the powerful. The measure of a nation ' s honesty is not in the speeches of its leaders, but in the smiles of its citizens. When the people ' s money truly returns to the people, the country rises. But when it fills private pockets, the nation starves — quietly, slowly, and invisibly.

#### About the Author

Ninox Antolihao is a visionary thinker and creator based in the Philippines. As the founder of Stone Grill Restaurant and a community volunteer under Magma Cowboys Hilongos, he bridges business, service, and reflection — believing that leadership begins with awareness and ends with responsibility. Through his writings, Ninox shares grounded truths that challenge comfort, inspire integrity, and remind readers that true progress is not just built by leaders — but by every Filipino who refuses to look away.

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