

## MOUNTAIN NOTES

Igbaras--At first glance one would not dare cross the swollen river, but it had to be crossed, twice. Once we crossed it on the hanging bridge with bamboo slats missing, then a second time in a jeep, over a washed out, water covered bridge. The river, swollen from rain out of a recent typhoon, churned with whirlpools.

Artuz--Up a mountain road on no more than a motorcycle trail, the four wheel drive truck, loaded with supplies of food and medicines, climbed the precarious ridge. The road narrowed with drop-offs on each side. Shuddering at the sight, we knew we were in God's keeping and as safe on the hazardous mountain trail as anywhere.

What really bothered me was that before we left for this village, response was slow from the churches to send us simple things-helpful things they all could afford. We had requested antibiotic ointments, baby tylenol, band-aids, vitamins and other simple medications, priceless in the work on the mission field. These are not available in our villages still without running water and electricity.

This is the glorious high tech age of the twentieth century and yet two-thirds of the world lives without basic needs. The response was meager. Disappointment! Were our requests too small to be troubled with, our prayer letter trashed?

Artuz--Our accommodations were upstairs in the village captain's house. The house was built a long time ago and had sheltered his family well. Now, the roof leaks and termites munch away. At bedtime we saw the mother rat had chewed away part of the ceiling to make a home for her new family. They also occupy space in the house. Two dogs lazily lay at the threshold, gnawing at fleas. A mother pig nursed her piglets in the mud under our bedroom window.

This is also home to John-John, a small boy whom I've come to love. He kicks away the mangy dogs if they come too close to me. John-John likes the special treats I slip him-American candy. His mother abandoned him when he was an infant. Now other family members see to him. Chances are slim for him to have any material wealth, but John-John is saved-a child of the King. His small frame curls up on the bamboo cot. He dreams *dreams*; his sleep is sweet.

The rain falls in torrents and the trees bend heavily in the wind. Yet, one tree across the road is twinkling—fireflies are busy at whatever fireflies do but the tree is full of twinkling lights. I wonder at such a lovely sight during a typhoon. Hundreds of them, just in a tree, blinking in the night. I lay watching them until sleep overwhelms me.

Oton--Back at our mission house, rats race across the attic, sounding very large. I am thankful for the "tightly" ceiled house with screens on the windows. Chickens roosted, still crow to one another throughout the night. Geckos call out, "Geck-o-o-o-o-o!" And as I drift to sleep, I'm thankful for our friends back home, praying.