

While working in Al Hada hospital in Taif, Saudi Arabia. I took many trips during vacation times. This is an account of one trip.

### **A TRIP TO THE PHILIPPINES, RICE TERRACES, AND BORACAY ISLAND - 1983**

I have just completed a 2 year contract, working in a hospital for the King, royal family and military, in Taif, Saudi Arabia, and am on the way to my home in California, but stopping in several countries on the way. I've been in Singapore and Malaysia and now want to go to the Philippines. Following is the journal I wrote, as I traveled. I am 68 years of age.

Today I leave the Cockpit Hotel in Singapore (a high class one) which was booked on my "Singapore Stopover" package. It was luxurious, compared to the past 21 months where I spent weekends camping on the beach, or in mountains of Saudi Arabia, with a huge rock or a bush for bathroom privacy! At the airport I was charged 49 Singapore dollars for overweight luggage, on the 2 bags I checked. I carried the leather case, and shoulder bag with me. We landed in Manila in 3 ½ hours, it was warm and sunny. Went through immigration and customs, and changed money. They use pesos and centavos here, the rate of exchange today was .0922 P per U.S. dollar. Just outside the exit door, tourist agents and hotel reps swarmed over you, one lady named Martha, took interest in me, explained details of all the places I was interested in, outlined them, showed their position on a map. I took her suggestion for a hotel. She had a car and driver, for the Los Palmas hotel, neither expensive nor fancy, but clean, and with private bath; it was also close in to business district. The driver handled my big bag and the other case, so transfer from airport was not as painful as I thought it might be. The hotel was an older one, but was okay. Martha said I could leave the two heavy suitcases here, when I went north to the rice terraces, at no charge, and claim them when I came back. The rice terraces are reached by a bus ride to Baguio, overnight at a hotel, then a 10 hour ride to Benaue, way up in the mountains. The rice terraces, built over a thousand years ago, are considered one of the modern day "7 Wonders of the World".

After getting settled and relaxed, I walked around the corner and found the Handicraft Center. This is a huge place with stall after stall, of beautiful handmade items. I wanted to buy a lot of things, but I am overweight now on my luggage. As I walked around, I smelled the odor of bar-b-q shish ka bob cooking, followed the odor and went into an open air, bamboo structure, where I ordered some. A middle-aged waitress seemed to take a liking to me, her name was Helen, and she was very friendly and helpful. She talked a lot with me, when she was not busy. Everyone is surprised that I travel alone, and seem to want to protect an "older lady" like me, out traveling on her own. Then a waiter who also served me, a young Filipino boy, told me there was an ongoing vaudeville type show going on in the next portion of the building, and I should just walk in, take a seat, and view it. I did, had some beer while I watched. It was lovely, all talented participants did juggling acts, acrobatics, and then there was a cultural Filipino show of graceful dancing and tribal events, the costumes were stunning. I left about 9:45 p.m., walked across the street to Hotel Las Palmas, and retired. At 11:00 p.m. I was awakened by a phone call from Martha

(she had just finished working) in response to a message I left her, that I would like to go to Baguio in the morning. She will guide me to the bus station, and secure the ticket. I slept again, awoke sometimes to the sound of the A/C going, but the room was not hot, and there were no mosquitoes.

## TUESDAY JANUARY 11

I took the two suitcases down to the lobby, checked them with the clerk, and then had them call Martha, the tour lady, had coffee while I waited. She appeared and said that for 50 Pesos (P) the driver would take me to the bus station, she would go along and get my ticket to Baguio, and put me on the right bus, at the large station. She did all these things, it was a great service. The depot was a long way from the hotel, and in that time I got to see Manila in the morning traffic rush. It was full of people, and like most all big cities, noisy and dirty. The "jeepneys", trucks with seats along both sides in back, a roof, covered and decorated brightly, and statues of horses out on the hood, were all over in the streets, carrying people to destinations very reasonably. They are so different; have family names painted on them, and bright feathers or pom poms flying from roof ends. In Bangkok, they have the "tuk tuks", a 3 wheeled vehicle that provides cheap transportation, in Singapore and Malaysia, it was the "trishaw", a 3 wheeled bicycle with a passenger seat

Arriving at the bus depot, Martha got my ticket, the driver waited with us, and then she put me on the right bus. (I would not have known the right one, there were so many). She talked to the lady in the seat ahead of me; said I was traveling alone, the lady then came and sat with me, said she would guide me. The bus trip was long, 4 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  hours, with 2 short stops. We arrived at Baguio at 3:15 p.m. The last part of the trip, up the mountains, gave us fantastic scenery, waterfalls, steep dropoffs, rocky areas. Previous to that we saw many rice fields, some with water in them. At some places groups were putting the young plants in the water, in other areas, water buffalo were pulling a plow through the mud and water, the workers were walking along in calf deep mud. I think I will appreciate rice much more after viewing this. In some of the dry fields, workers were beating a shaft of either rice, or grain, up and down over a rack, threshing it by hand. The old ways are still prevalent here. Fields of sugar cane appeared in many places also, and we passed a sugar processing plant at one spot. It reminded me of the trip John (my husband) and I took to Puerto Rico many years ago, and we went through the sugar cane processing plant there, saw the molasses tanks and the raw brown sugar produced from the cane. Later it is refined into white sugar.

At Baguio it was sprinkling a bit as I got a room at the Mountaineer Hotel, which Martha had suggested. The bus driver was going to take me right to the hotel, as she requested (and it was out of his way) but a dirt road was slippery from the rain, it was closed, and so he let me out where there were taxis, I took one to the hotel. The desk clerk was very nice, helpful with tips about getting the bus tomorrow morning, to continue on to Benaue, and the rice terraces, said the bus leaves at 5:30 a.m., and that the station was walking distance from this hotel. Baguio is very old, not modernized, though there are two universities here. It sits right up in the steep mountains, some streets are paved with asphalt, but there are no sidewalks, stones and broken concrete are underfoot. The market place was huge, I walked through it all: there were sections of fresh; beautiful vegetables, dried fish, fresh

chickens and eggs, even some red eggs for sale! I asked about them, they are from a certain kind of ducks. There were sections of clothing, shoes, and other garments. The handwork on dresses, was fabulous, everything seemed very reasonable. People spoke English, so there was no language barrier. Strawberries are grown here and are in season now; I bought a bottle of strawberry wine, made locally and named Baguio. I had a small glass of it before I retired, was tasty. It will last me all the time I am in this area, and it is nice to taste a product made locally. Since I travel alone, I don't like to go into a bar and purchase a glass of wine, would rather have a glass in my room, it is safer. I ate in a local eatery, had a "sopa", the dough puff with meat and corn inside, tea, and a good pastry. I'm glad I came here, it is really "old world". I also bought a mango and some rolls, which should be good to eat on the bus tomorrow.

### **WEDNESDAY JANUARY 12**

I was not warm enough during the night, didn't sleep too well, there was only one blanket on the bed, also I was anxious about getting up on time for my bus to Benaue. At 4:15 a.m. my wakeup call came, by a rap on the door. I got ready, had things packed up already, at 5:15 a.m. walked out of the hotel and to the Dangwa Tranco bus depot, which was very close to the hotel. It was very dark outside, but people were already on the streets. I purchased my ticket, 52.05 P, and took a seat on the primitive bus, put my suitcase in the aisle next to me. What an assortment of stuff came into that aisle, in the next 10 hours! This is the only way to get to Benaue, where the rice terraces are, way up in the mountains, a long trip. We drove through fantastic scenery, on rugged mountain roads, steep rising of the road, curvy areas, forested throughout except in village areas, where there were cultivated plots for growing vegetables. There were banana trees at lower elevations, then pine trees, very tall and straight, as we ascended the mountains. I am used to being in the high mountains of Saudi Arabia, camped in them very often, but they do not have lush growth as I see here.

As we drove up higher the road became worse, it had been black-topped in the early part, then it became worn away, with holes and pits all over. The bus groaned and shuddered a lot. We jolted along steadily, the driver took sharp turns at a fast pace and we slid from side to side. I tried to take some pictures but many times am sure I only got branches. We made about 4 stops, at different times, for "potty breaks" and to get snacks. The "comfort stations" here were like the Arab bathrooms, a hole in the floor and an urn of water nearby, to wash hands, and to pour some in the hole. At snack stops in a village, food vendors would approach the bus with rolls, fresh fruit, and a juice drink. We rode all day this way. There were a young man and his sister, speaking English, on the bus, they were from Switzerland, and going to the same place as I, we became friends and have remained so. As we got into remote areas, higher up, the natives appeared more like tribal characters, dressed in a skirt wrap around, and a jacket. It was quite cool at higher elevations, I had my black knit cap on my head, and wished I had a sweater with me. I left all warm tings in the other suitcase. Little children playing, or being held by mothers, were often bare from the waist down.

The terraces we saw first were planted with vegetables, were neat and lovely to look at; in some places had huge piles of cabbages which were harvested, neatly piled up and ready

to truck away. As we stopped at villages of small, corrugated tin houses, people got off the bus, others got on. Everyone had several shopping bags of articles, also gunny sacks of feed, wood, vegetables and other items. On top of the bus were tied many boxes and sacks, other baggage went into a compartment under the bus, and the aisle was full of all kinds of things, people had to jostle over them, when getting off and on, including me! Mothers with small babies got on, rode to another village and departed, someone else took their place. This was the transportation between villages, the bus was always full during the entire 10 hours. Oh yes, we had to stop once because of a flat tire, the bus driver and ticket taker changed it, got very muddy doing it for it had rained. Sometimes the road was wide enough for only one car, but when another was met the drivers managed to squeeze through. We were often on the edge of the drop-off, with no guard-rail present. But, the drivers do this every day and seem to manage well. The terraces and steep mountains were a beautiful sight, very unusual. Often we saw water buffalo in a rice paddy, pulling a plow, or saw them grazing next to the road. We noted ladies in the terraces, planting in the mud and water, also sometimes carrying dry straw bundles on their heads, away from fields of dry grain. Late in the afternoon, when we were in very rural areas, young men who cut wood into small lengths, would get onto the bus with large bundles of shaped sticks, their cleaver type large knives in a holster at their side. I guessed they earn money cutting this wood, they rode to the edge of Benaue and then got off, after a long bumpy, jerky ride.

Arriving at the end of our journey at 4:30 p.m., young girls entered the bus asking if we would take lodging in their homes, a room could be had for 20 to 30 P a person. So I went with one girl and took a simple room, sparsely furnished with 2 cots and a chair, but it was clean, had to use the bath for the household. It would suffice for my time here, there were no hotels in the village. Monika, her brother, and the Turkish and German young men who rode here on the bus also, found rooms in other homes. I was hungry, went to a simple restaurant across from my room, had delicious fish, salad and hot coffee. I ate with the 3 Turkish young men, who came to the same restaurant, we discussed getting together in the morning, and finding a way to get to the rice terraces, then returned to my room, had a glass of the strawberry wine, and retired.

### **THURSDAY JANUARY 13**

My bed was hard, but guess it was good for my back, for I slept very well and the kink I had felt in my hip was gone. I heard church bells ring at 6:00 a.m., would have liked to go to mass, but it was dark yet, didn't know the way there, and had to be ready at 7:00 o'clock to eat breakfast and meet with the group going out on our trip today. We met, Monika arranged with a jeepney driver to take us out. She and her brother have done a lot of world traveling, on a small budget, and knew how to bargain and get the best deal. There was a group of 12 travelers, German, Turkish, Swiss, American (I was the only one) in the jeepney, most of us had come on the bus yesterday and had become friends on that long journey. It cost 180 P to be taken to the terraces, and be picked up, and the fee was divided between us, was so cheap!! We were lucky, the sun came through the clouds, for on many days there is much fog here, and one cannot view the area. This remote village is reached by terrible road, the streets are very muddy for it rains often, and the streams run down from the mountains carrying water through the town. There are only a few houses, mainly of corrugated metal, as is the common type in this area. The villagers welcome

tourists into their homes, call them lodges, earn income this way. The Filipinos are very clean people, but live with few conveniences, I learned they just got electricity into this town last November. Some of the shops still have lamplight at night. Our jeepney took us out of the town for about 10 kilometers, on a rough track, we hung on and bounced along, then they let us out, and now we would be walking all day, gaining elevation, and walking on and through, the rock walled terraces on the mountainside. We walked first to the village of the tribal people who live here, in huts with grass topped roofs. The animals, pigs and chickens are on the ground level, cooking is done here, they go up a ladder to the second level, where they sleep. This tribe still keeps the ancient customs, men wear only a woven loin cloth, which drops down in front, and a band in their hair. Women wear a skirt of woven material and a woven belt, also a wreath of woven material in their hair. Children go to the school in the village, they learn to speak English along with their native language, are very poorly dressed, some in tattered clothes. Young children under school age don't wear any pants or diaper, just a tee shirt, are often carried on the backs, or against chest, of an older sister or brother, in the shawl type carrier. Babies are tended by grandparents, while the parents work in the rice terraces.

We walked about 4 kilometers first, along a track, then ascended through thick jungle growth on a path that went almost straight up. It was very tiring, and the temperature now was hot. We passed waterfalls often, the path was muddy and slippery. The Turkish men in the group, Joe, Ahmed and Darwish, were very helpful and gave me a hand when I needed it. Later on Monika, the Swiss girl, asked how old I was, when I responded she said I was great, to tackle this trip. I didn't know we had to walk this area, thought the jeepney would take us all over, like in Chng Mai, Thailand, when I went up in a mountain area to see a hill tribe there. I have done a lot of hiking and climbing, while camping in the mountains of Saudi Arabia, so am quite fit. When we finally got to the end of the trail, we were at a view point above the village of thatched huts, Bandot. The rice terraces were beautiful, here we now were right in them, stone walls about 10 feet high held the dirt planting areas, one above the other, over the whole mountain. We rested a bit, and had hot tea at a stand nearby, run by a man of this tribe, naked except for his loin cloth. He spoke with us, let us take pictures, and said his parents had lived here before him, in these terraces, were natives of the tribe. There was a thatched roof hut nearby, which he had built, one could stay in it all night for a fee of 5 P. Sleeping area was on the second floor, reached by climbing up the ladder. It was all very interesting, one can hardly believe this territory still exists, so primitive, with living still carried on in the old way.

Then we started walking down to the terraces below, and into clusters of huts for the people who plant and harvest these fields. We slipped and slid, climbed down muddy paths and onto rock walls, and sometimes right into their living areas. Pigs roamed around, chickens with 5 or 6 baby chicks following, pecked at the ground, also saw some ducks and 2 ducklings in a paddy that had water in it. The people were often chewing beetle nuts, which they peel and chew the inside kernel, the juice stains their mouth red, one lady told us she chews it for a bad tooth she has, it will take away the bacteria!! It seems to be a common practice, they all have red juice in their mouths. It was thrilling to be right on these paddies, most had water on them, with young plants growing. The people walk right in the mud and water, barefoot, to put young plants in the ground, they wear big straw hats, protection for both sun and rain, as it rains very often here. We were lucky, it was a nice sunny day, and

quite warm. I was wearing long pants when we started, but had shorts in my backpack, and changed into them as we walked (doing this behind bushes).

As we left the huts, we had to walk on the dividing small dam of earth and stone, then the terrace below us was about 10 feet down the rock wall (built over 2000 years ago), it supported the upper rice bed. Once, as we balanced and walked on the narrow dams, I turned quickly to get my camera out of my backpack, so I could get a picture of a mother water buffalo and her baby; I lost my footing, my left foot slipped down into the rice paddy. I sat down quickly, got my foot very muddy, but there was no harm done. At least, I didn't fall down the 10 foot wall. Monika laughed, took a picture of me in that position. We walked to the top of the paddy areas, then rested near the school. Pupils were singing and we looked in, there was a male teacher and two separate classrooms, students were divided by age. Next we started the upward climb, to return to our starting point. It was very steep, we would walk and then rest a bit. I was puffing sometimes, so was Monika, but we slowly continued upward. Ahmed was so good, sometimes he held a pole out, I grabbed the other end and he would give me a pull over the difficult places, when climbing up a terrace wall. It took us over one and a half hours to walk up. On reaching the top we rested, then walked out to the road where the jeepney would pick us up. It took us back to Benaue, where we went to our lodgings and cleaned up. A shower felt so good! We gathered at the restaurant for dinner, I had pork adobo, it was very tasteful. The group asked me to go with them to their next spot in the Philippines, an island to the south, reached by a 24 hour trip on a ship. I agreed, and plan to do it, as I want to go to a beach area, and swim amongst coral. Later on in the evening, I walked out on the dark, muddy street, I wanted to buy some post cards, didn't find any, but heard singing and guitar playing, right across the street from my lodging. I went inside and found Monika and Joe sitting, listening to a group of local youths. I sat with them, at their invitation, and sang also. Later on, the young man passed the guitar to me, and I played and sang a couple of songs. Then, as they resumed the music, Joe and I danced a bit – what a fun time! They were all so friendly and nice. At 9:00 p.m. they all left, as the place closed for the night. I went to my lodging and retired, I must be up early tomorrow.

## **FRIDAY JANUARY 14**

I awoke before dawn, arose at 6:00 a.m. and started getting ready for the 7:00 a.m. bus to Manila. It was very foggy, not nice and clear, like yesterday, and the street was so muddy! The group that I hiked with yesterday all got on the bus too. The ride took us until 2:45 p.m., it was a better bus, and on much better roads than those we used to get here from Baguio – that journey took 10 ½ hours. It was foggy most of the way. An American man and lady who were on the bus, sat near me, in conversation they said they were going to San Francisco tomorrow. I asked if they would drop a letter in the mailbox there, they were agreeable, so I quickly wrote to daughter Mary. It will reach her in a day, from San Francisco, and that way she will know I am o.k. and will be staying here longer than originally planned. I will not have to phone her.

When arriving in Manila, we took a taxi to the South Harbor, where Monika said we would get the ship to Panay island, but she picked the wrong harbor, and we had to get to North Harbor. She bargained with a jeepney driver, we arrived at the right place, but found that

the ship goes out tomorrow night. All the tourist class tickets were sold, but we got first class ones, paid 144.50 P each. Then we took another cab to a pension (hotel) where Monika had stayed before, and luckily, got a room which Monika and I shared. It was very nice, a lovely couple operated it. After a shower and shampoo, I put on a dress, we went out and ate, walked around a bit, came back to the hotel, and I retired. It is very nice to be with someone who knows the city, and different places to stay. Monika has been here previously for 6 days, travels on a tight budget, is able to bargain with the cab drivers. She and her brother are courteous and pleasant. The three Turkish young men are nice also, call me "Mom", and carry my suitcase for me at times – it's quite heavy too. I left the very big one and the leather duffel bag at the Los Palmas hotel, to be picked up later.

## **SATURDAY JANUARY 15**

This was my wedding date, 46 years ago, I never forget that. John, my husband, has been deceased for 7 ½ years, God rest his soul. I awoke very early this morning, about 5:00 a.m., had slept very well, in a good bed. I got up quietly at 7:15 a.m. and went to the desk, asked the way to church. I heard mass at 8:00 a.m. and received the blessing of the Lord. Manila is like any big city, noisy, full of traffic, autos, trucks; the jeepneys are flying all over, taking people to their destinations. There is no mass transit system, the jeepneys provide cheap transportation. It only costs 65 centavos to ride, but one must know which one to take, they don't have a regular route. After mass I went back to the Pension and had coffee with Monika. I had bought a ring of cinnamon rolls on the way back from church, and we shared them. Then I called the airline office, to check on my exit from the Philippines, when I wish to leave. I must take Cathay Pacific, or the Philippine Airlines, but don't need to reserve yet, for I don't know the date I'll be leaving Boracay.

I had time to pack leisurely and vacate our room at noon, then Monika and I, and Andrew Rozfelds, a friend of Monica's brother, who was also going to Boracay, walked to the post-office to get stamps. Monika also gets mail there, at General Delivery, for she has been traveling for about 2 months, in various areas, and this is where her parents can contact her and her brother. She received 6 letters and was very happy about that. Before we left the Pension this morning, she took a small bottle of Holy Water and made the cross on my forehead and chest with it, said her mother gave her this when she left to travel, and hoped it would bless me too. She is a sweet girl. We found our way to the port, and onto the ship that would take us to Panay island. Getting onto the ship reminded me of my trip across the Red Sea, from Jedda to Egypt, in 1981. It was so crowded with people and their baggage as we pushed our way through the third class deck, then up stairs to the next deck, which was second class, then through this area to the forward part called "special tourist". This was full of double deck cots, numbered, and was air conditioned but terribly crowded. We were then shown to the first class section, further forward, and given a compartment, air conditioned, and with eight bunks. They were soft enough to be comfortable, each had a blanket and pillow. There were three ladies already in the compartment and the five in our party completed the eight people assigned there. I was surprised that they placed men and women in the same room. Our suitcases were on the floor, there was not much room then, to walk about, but we were settled.

I found my way to the top deck and watched the busy scene of Manila harbor, and the skyline before me. Monika came also, then she went back to the dock and bought rolls and hard boiled eggs, we sat up there and ate. When it was time to depart, everyone had to go to their assigned place, for ticket check. Later, at sunset, we came up again and enjoyed the sky. During the evening we were introduced to the Captain and First Mate, later on sat and talked to apprentice seamen, three young Filipino boys who were friendly and told us of their experiences on ship. They let us stay up on top deck awhile, after they sent everyone else down and closed the hatch door. We said we had met the captain, they then agreed to let us stay up on deck. One left soon, it was his time to take watch, the other, Rosalio, told us he was chairman of the youth group at his community church in Cebu city, his home, said he was anxious to learn about countries all over the world. About 8:45 p.m. I went down to the cabin and climbed into my upper bunk, pulled the sheet and blanket up, and retired. No one took off clothing, slept in their day wear. Lights stayed on all night, the three Turkish men played poker during the night, on the suitcases. I slept quite well, awoke a couple of times, but fell right back to sleep again. Earlier, when I was sitting up on deck, the sky was full of stars, the little dipper was right above me, and I thought of all the lovely week-end camping on the beach, or mountains, in Saudi Arabia that I had done the last couple of years, with our group of friends there, Corrie, Pat, Russell, Fimi, Hans and Afaf, I really miss them.

## **SUNDAY JANUARY 16**

At 5:15 a.m. I got up, washed face and hands, went up on deck to watch the sunrise. It was just getting light, the rosy color appearing in the east. We passed a couple of small islands. At 6:20 a.m. the sun shone over the sea, through a hole in a large cloud bank, then it rose higher, but was swallowed up in the grey clouds in the east, 'twas a very beautiful sight. I never get tired of the early morning sky. (30 minutes later) And then the rain came!!! The sun had disappeared into the cloud bank and the shower started. I had my blanket wrapped around me, watched the sky for awhile, as I stood in the shelter of the bridge, then went down below. All my traveling companions were still asleep. I had to walk through the tourist section on my way to my compartment, noted how packed these people were in the double deck bunks, with narrow aisles, and baggage crammed all over. I was glad for the first class compartment we were in, even if it was for 8 people, it was o.k. Our suitcases were safe there too, as one of our group was in the compartment all the time. The shower stopped quickly, I went up on deck again for I love to be outside, and watch the sea. About 8:00 a.m. Darwish came up to tell me it was breakfast time, meals are served on the trip too, all for the fee of about \$16.50. The meal was served to first class passengers in the lounge area, at tables. There was a plate of rice, another plate with fried egg, a small fish, fried potatoes and a sausage. The egg was cold, but being hungry, I ate about everything. Water was served with the meal, but being afraid to chance drinking it, I asked for coffee (the water has been boiled) and they brought a whole pot of it to our table. I have found the Philippine people very gracious, and trying to please, during my stay here. They often talk to me, ask me my country, where have I been, and wish me a pleasant stay here.

I spent almost the entire day up on the deck, in the sun. A cool breeze kept one comfortable. We passed islands often, I have learned there are about 7000 of them



belonging to the Philippines. At noon, another meal was served, a chicken soup with pieces of hard boiled egg in it, was good, also a plate with very fine noodles, some chicken, a piece of meat loaf and cucumbers was given to each person. The tourist class passengers, I noted, had their own plastic plates and went to a serving counter to get their food, then ate it on their bunks. Quite messy! Conditions on the lower deck, in third class, must have been terrible. But, these island people don't have much money, and do the best they can. We are sailing on the south China sea, and Borneo is to the west of us.

A note I must make here: when I was in mass yesterday morning I noted the statue of the patron saint of that church (up over the main altar) was of dark skin, then when I walked out, noted a large statue of Jesus carrying the cross, was different in 2 ways. First, He had dark skin like the natives (I also noted this in Hawaii) and also He wore a beautiful red cloak with gold decoration all over it. People stopped, lifted the robe a bit, and kissed the foot of Jesus, with reverence. Another thing I noted about the church, the tops of the high ceiling walls were open doors, and birds flew in and out all the time, even up in the sanctuary, fluttered about and went out again. Of course, the openings also let a good air flow through the building, it gets very warm in this climate.

The trip on the sea to Roxas City, on the island of Panay, ended at 5:00 p.m., we were on the water for 24 hours. The push and shove, to get off the ship, reminded me of my trip across the Red Sea from Jedda to Egypt, on a local ship. Virginia Aubry, the French girl was with me, and the crush of people trying to get off, and the local baggage carriers trying to get on and contact a passenger to carry their cases and boxes, so they could earn a little money, was unbelievable. Police were trying to keep order, lashed out at the baggage carriers with ropes, and knotted belts, trying to maintain order. It was complete chaos!!! Today was not quite as bad, but it was a struggle. Many jeepneys were waiting outside the port gate, and Monika and Joe bartered with several of the drivers, until they got a price of 20 P per person, to take us to the village of Kalibo, a 2 hour ride. Well, the driver loaded the vehicle with more and more passengers, besides our group, inside the back of the truck, on the roof, and hanging onto the sides. We had a fast, bouncy, dusty ride.

The country we rode through was flat, with rice fields all over, and also gardens of vegetables, and coconut palm trees in abundance. Many people were walking along the road, going to a village store, or carrying things into a field. No one appeared to have autos, the jeepney is the mode of travel, also motorcycles are used a lot. There are 2 operators of the jeepney, the driver and the man who stands on the step in the back. He takes the fare, and signals the driver to stop and let someone off, or to start up again when a new person gets on, or someone climbs down from the roof, by pounding on the roof with his hand. The back of the truck was so crowded, the driver could not see what was happening, and when he should start the truck moving again. There were children walking along the road, going to school. The girls of a particular school all wore skirts of the same color, each "barrio" (township) had a school and a church, and I noted the colors of girl's skirts varied as we rode along, blue, green, wine, navy. Education is mandatory here, even in the rural areas. That jeepney ride through the country is an experience I'll never forget. The statues of horses on the hood, fringed decorations hanging from roof edge and inside the back of the truck, flying in the wind, made one feel festive, even though so crowded. I

counted about 28 passengers riding most of the time, the fare-taker man said there were more!

We arrived at Kalibo, a small village, just at the end of a festival, called Ati-Ahan, and many people were clustered about. A parade had just ended, and participants were walking by in costumes of feathers, carrying spears, their faces were blackened or painted. This is a yearly event, and attended by people from all over the world, we were told. We had to stay overnight here, as jeepneys drove no further at night. Monika and I stayed in a local pension house, the three Turkish young men and her brother went looking for a room, we did not see them any more that evening. In the morning, to continue our journey to the island of Boracay, we had to hire a “tricycle”, a motorcycle with a side car, to a further part of town, where more jeepneys were congregated, it cost 2 P each for that ride. There we found a jeepney going to Atiklan, a tiny village at the end of Panay island, where we would get a small boat. It was a 2 hour ride over bumpy roads, but not as dusty this time, for it had rained a little during the night. The jeepney was full as we started, but it picked up people as we went along. Coconut palms grew all over, also there was jungle-like growth of trees and bushes, where the land was not cleared for cultivation. When we arrived at a high area, could see the beautiful water of the south China sea ahead, we were nearing our destination of the coral reefs. The village of Atiklan was small, but there were people waiting at the beach, to take us by “pom” boat, to Boracay. That island could be seen in the distance, with beautiful white sand beaches, tall coconut palms outlining the shore, a true tropical island, uncluttered, waiting for our arrival. A boy took my suitcase, I rolled up my pant legs, and barefoot, followed the others in our group, who were walking to small local boats in the water. They were like long, narrow canoes, made of wood and with wood outriggers extending out on each side. Each boat was powered by a truck motor. We climbed in, suitcase was put next to me, there were no seats, we sat on the struts. The ride took about 15 minutes, we paid 5 P each to reach Boracay island, in these native boats. Arriving, Monika knew which group of native bungalow huts to go to, for her brother had stayed here 2 years ago, and enjoyed the snorkeling and the island. We got off the boats at Yaps Rest House and Mila’s restaurant, found a room in one of the bungalows very near the shore, the price was 15 P a day!. It was very rustic, the bungalows are made of bamboo and woven palm fiber. Split bamboo wood pieces formed the floor, and cracks there allowed air to come through. The windows were covered with woven palm fiber shutters, which swung open, or could be closed against rain. The temperature is always warm here, sometimes very hot. There were 2 beds with mosquito nets draped from the ceiling, to come down over each one, no chair, no dresser, just a small stool with a glass jar containing oil, and a wick extending up from it, also some matches. There is no electricity on this island. At the end of a porch there were 2 toilet stalls, with a pipe on the wall, the height of a person, for a shower – no hot water, so we were to live with just the essentials of hygiene. Very primitive! The people living permanently here, grow vegetables, have pigs, chickens, a goat or cow, and have a water buffalo to till the soil. They mainly depend on tourists, to get cash. This is such a beautiful place, unspoiled, I’ll bet it will grow in tourist trade in the future, when more Westerner’s learn of it. The air is warm, but not too hot, there is a nice breeze, sun shines most of the time, the water is warm for swimming, and there is coral in the sea. I will stay here several days.

As soon as I was settled, I went into the sea, found the white sand very soft and fine, the water was not as warm as the Red Sea, but was very comfortable, also very clear. I could not see any fish, or coral, later was told one must go to a certain spot further out, to find it. I spent the day relaxing in the water, on the beach, or walking the paths through the jungle type growth area, it was really nice. Some young fellows who had rooms near us, an Australian, a Chinese and a Filipino, joined us on a long walk, they come here often and gave much information, were pleasant, called me "mum". In the evening they invited us to eat with them in the restaurant, really an open sided native building made of bamboo, it had a sand floor and was furnished with bamboo tables and chairs. Everyone who went to the restaurant, carried their little oil light, or a flashlight along the paths leading to the building, it looked pretty to see the lights glowing. There were lamps in the restaurant. We sat together, conversed as we ate, and traded stories about countries we knew. We did not drink water here, but ordered beer with the meal. This is safe to drink. Later, back in the bungalow, Monika and I retired by lamplight, sleep came easily after our long day.

## TUESDAY JANUARY 18

I slept very soundly, awoke to the noise of the chickens, ducks, a rooster crowing, arose about 7:30 a.m. and decided to spend the day close to the area near our bungalow. At breakfast, I asked Mina, the proprietress, where the coral was, did plan sometime to go out on a boat and snorkel amongst it, but she told me I could walk to the north end of the beach. There, after walking over the low mountain on a path (a short walk), go into the water and I would find large coral heads. I did this, later in the morning, swam out a way and found an abundance of coral. This is what I hoped for here!!! I've done many scuba dives in the Red sea in the past 4 years, and seen so many beautiful corals and fish, I really enjoy it. The water was clear, warm, and beautiful. I found many of the same type corals we would see in the Red sea, but these were not as colorful, with grey and light brown tones prevalent. On the coral head I observed very large, plate size, tube worms swaying gracefully in the current, also the largest Picasso trigger fish I've seen. Most of the fish were a little smaller, butterfly, clownfish, goat, wrays, schools of tiny "fry", etc. I saw one school of "jacks" about 20 inches long, there must have been 75 to a hundred of them, swimming quickly past me. There were several kinds of the soft corals, gorgonians, alcyonarians, and sea fans. It was so good to be viewing these beautiful sights again, it made me feel relaxed and happy. I also saw the very long creatures on the floor of the sea, about 5 feet in length, that look like a vacuum hose, tan in color, and called a sea cucumber. It has tentacles at the front end, and moves along the floor and the corals, eating as it goes, cleaning the sea floor. This one was strung around a large brain coral head. I've only seen one once before. As I dove down I found a few small shells, which I'll take as souvenirs of the South China Sea. I spent the whole morning snorkeling, and resting on the beach, got quite tan in the sun.

In the afternoon I sat under the coconut palms and made more of my travel tape, talking about the events in getting here. I washed out clothes, then took a walk, to the far south end of the island, carrying my camera, where yesterday I saw a family roasting a pig, on a stick, over a charcoal fire. I found the place, they were roasting another one today, it was already getting brown. This procedure is called "lechong", is a tradition in this area. I had one of the boys snap a picture on my camera as I stood by the fire, knowing I was at the end of a roll of film – hope there was a picture left. I thought they were roasting the pig for restaurant

use, and I said I would like to eat a meal of this food – they replied it was for their family, their 7 children and 19 grandchildren were here for a reunion, but I could eat here too, and pay for my meal. Dinner would be at 6:30 p.m. I accepted the offer, but had to walk back to my place, change from bathing suit into clothing, and get some money. It took me 35 to 40 minutes, I told Monika where I was going, left again and walked on the beach at the water's edge. Monika loaned me her flashlight as I would be returning alone, after dark. She is very kind and thoughtful.

I got back to the family in time to see the pig still on the spit, then taken off and laid on a table on a mat of large banana leaves. A grandson used a hammer and pliers to get the pole out of the roast pig, then proceeded to give the carving job to his father, who cut off little pieces and gave them to the small children running around, a treat for them. He carved the whole pig, put small pieces on plates, rice was brought to the table in several bowls, we helped ourselves to it. There were three other guests present, one a retired man from Germany, another elderly man who sat next to me, was friendly and said he comes here each winter for 4 to 5 months and stays at this lodge, called "Manni's Place". We had beer to drink, safer than the local water, the beer is pasteurized when brewed, microbes cannot live in it. I was happy to experience this meal, a cultural treat. The meat was very tender, not spiced, the only flavoring was leaves from the mango tree, and some from another tree, these had been placed inside the pig, before roasting it. Most of the family ate with their hands, like the Arabs. I did too, for I am accustomed to that, having just lived in Saudi Arabia. I was given a spoon, to use if I wished, so were the other guests. After eating, and thanking the family, I walked back in the dark, along the beach at water's edge, all was o.k. I had done a lot of walking today, was tired, and retired early.

### **WEDNESDAY JANUARY 19**

There is a charter air service, from Atiklan, on Panay island, to Manila and I have made arrangements through the proprietor of my lodge, to fly there. There are supposed to be two flights a day, if there are enough passengers applying for flights. Atiklan is the spot where we embarked on the small "pom" boat, to go to this island of Boracay. By flying, I will not have to take the arduous, and long way of returning to Manila, that we took by ship and jeepneys, to arrive at this great place.

I didn't sleep soundly last night, heard a rain shower once, but still felt fine in the morning, arose about 7:30 a.m. before the sun was shining through cloud layer, and went directly out in the water. I swam north, for Hans (Monika's brother) had told me there was a lot of coral up that way. The tide was out, water was not deep, so I found the coral patches easily in the clear water, some were large coral heads, similar to those I explored in the Red sea, at the Shoiba area. There were more brightly colored fish, than I had seen yesterday, also big brown starfish and some tubeworms, those beautiful flower-like creatures that come out of it's tube, then retreat instantly into it when your hand waves in front of it. It will open out again, in about 75 seconds, I have watched it, and counted the seconds. There were rain showers a couple of times, while I was snorkeling, but that didn't matter, I was thoroughly enjoying myself! Later, as I rested on shore, back near the lodge, looked out over the aqua blue water, the white sand beaches, coconut palms all over the island, saw the friendly people, I thought I had found paradise.

I walked to the little area where there were a couple of little shops, and the post office. I needed stamps for cards I wished to mail, also wanted to buy some very tiny shells, to place between larger cowrie shells, on a gold chain. The cowrie shells needed to be separated, for they fell together on the chain which was given to me by one of my dive buddies in Saudi, and we had found them while at the Farasan Islands, in the far south of the Red sea. He drilled holes in them for stringing, I wear it as a necklace. The lady in the shop gave me quite a few of the proper size, would not take any money for them, as I bought some other items from her.

Later on, Monika's brother Hans, and his friend Andrew, joined me on a walk to the opposite (windward) side of the island. There were no resorts there, nor any development. As we walked through the center of the island, passed a small group of bamboo houses, and a school, then came to a flooded area, with ditches and gullies. I saw a long, thin brown snake hurry along a ditch, that is the first one I have seen here, it just hurried away. On the far side, there is a coral reef, but we were told that it was long way out, not easily accessible. We walked the beach edge, looking at different species of aquatic animals, a brittle star, a 5 arm starfish-like creature found under stones that Andrew turned over in the shallow water. He is a student in marine biology, very knowledgeable, once he found a "Spanish Dancer" nudibranch, something I have always wanted to see, for they are so colorful. It was large, about 5 inches long, and had the scalloped wavy outer edges, was very pretty. We found a few small shells, and some skeletons of sea urchins, they look like a round, fragile pincushion. It was a nice walk. Then we tried to go back again, through the center and back to our side of the island, went along a trail, and found ourselves in a swampy mangrove tree area. It was not easy walking, but eventually found our way up a rising trail, and came to a nice grassy, cleared area, with a house and a family (grandfather, parents, children) living there. There were flowers all around the house, they had the usual 2 or 3 pigs, some chickens, and dogs. Hans had picked up a green coconut as we walked, and asked them to use a knife to open it so we could drink the water inside. It was a small one and had no water inside, so the man said he would get a fresh one, that would have water. He climbed up a tall coconut tree, cut 2 and let them fall (what a thud), then came down and opened them for us, the water was sweet and good! We tried to eat the meat inside, after he cut them in half, I was using my finger to dig it out, he said "wait, a spoon" and cut a piece of the thick green husk into a spade shape. I ate fresh coconut with that, scooped it all out. They were so pleasant, and we had no money with us to give them. I asked if he had any "tubah" to sell. I had been told this is a coconut wine, wanted to taste it, he said he would bring some to Yap's this afternoon, cost 1 P a liter. His wife works in the restaurant at Yap's, what a coincidence. We walked back to our area, and I again swam out and snorkeled over the corals. One just lives in a bathing suit here.

In the evening, after a shower and application of lotion to my skin (I am really brown), went to the restaurant for dinner. There were two French men and an Australian man, who has lived the past 6 years in New Guinea, sitting with our group and who joined in with conversation, Hans joined us also. I had shrimp, rice, cooked vegetables and pork, all very tasty. The men bought me a beer with my meal. Ruby, the wife of the man who got us the coconuts, had brought the tubah, Andrew and I had a taste of it before dinner, it is tart, I felt no effects from it. After finishing dinner I brought it to the table for all to taste. It is pure juice

from the blossom of the coconut tree, a pipe is inserted away up in the crown of the tree, and the juice (tubah) drips out, drop by drop, nothing is added. This was the end of a very interesting day, I retired about 10:30 p.m.

## THURSDAY JANUARY 20

Slept very well, awoke as the roosters crowed, showered, put on bathing suit and cover-up, and had breakfast at the restaurant. As usual, in the tropical countries, fresh fruit is always served, delicious papaya, melon and bananas today. Hans was supposed to hire a small boat today, to go out to another area, but said it was too windy, and canceled that plan. As we couldn't go, I walked up to the point where the corals were, went through the water this time instead of over the mountain path, and snorkeled again. I went further and covered a larger area, saw more fish today, and more colored corals, also a crown of thorns starfish, a large one, blue-grey in color. I was thrilled! Another snorkeler nearby had gloves on, and after I told him what it was, he pulled it off the coral, it floated down to the sand, then moved slowly to another coral and climbed on it, a nice sight to watch. Later on I saw another one. These are bigger than the ones I've seen in the Red sea. I also saw a long, thin sea snake, my first encounter of one in the water. It was ringed in black and white, and was swimming quite close to the top of the coral. I observed it for a bit, waited to see if it had the small head and small mouth, that the diver who lives in New Guinea told me they had – it did – he said they can't bite big, because of the small mouth. I still don't like to be near them

I snorkeled back to our beach, swimming instead of walking. I had shorts on, over my suit, it had some paper money in the pocket, but that didn't get damaged in the swim. In the afternoon I walked to Roger's place, a little refreshment stand, a man there arranged the charter flights to Manila. I wanted to confirm my flight out of here for tomorrow, but the person I needed wasn't there. I waited a bit, talked to his family, then walked to the stand where I had ordered two pairs of flour sack pants, from a lady who sewed them herself, but the flour sack material had not come in, so she did not have any for sale. She had been so nice to me, I gave her my brown slacks and a white Tee shirt that I wore for diving. She was pleased, and it gave me room in the suitcase, for things I have purchased. She also gave me another shell, a bubble type, and a white cowrie, I don't have the white one in my collection.

Someone made a bonfire on the beach right near our lodge, I sat there for a while, conversing and enjoying the pleasant evening. One of the friends shared a small bottle of cognac with anyone who would have a taste: the little children of the lodge proprietors, Myla and Mila played around us and made sparklers from the burning coconut fronds, a pleasant scene. Andrew was there too, the man who climbed up the coconut tree yesterday came by, stayed a bit, and asked us to come again to his home. Everyone was so friendly. I went to my lodge soon, and there on the large porch were the guitar players, the postmaster and Mila's brother. I was invited to join them, and I did, got my hands on a guitar again. I played a couple of songs, have not played in more than a month, the calluses on fingertips were almost gone! Monika and a couple other people came by, listened, we had a regular party! Such fun, it must have been about 11:00 p.m. when I said "good night" and went to bed. It really has been pleasant here. I bought a sleeveless shirt today, with "Boracay, They Call It Paradise" on it. That is pretty true, no bugs, very few

mosquitoes, no nasty stinging things in the beautiful clear, warm water, a sloping beach, corals at each end of the island, friendly people, and the cost is very low. I'd like to come back some day.

## FRIDAY JANUARY 21

I had told friends, in letters, that I would be home about the 20th, and I haven't even left here yet! I had not heard about confirmation of a flight today to Manila, so walked way down to Roger's place again. He was there and said there probably would not be a flight out today / will possibly be tomorrow, and he will come for me when it happens, I should just be prepared to depart. So, I now had time to go snorkeling again with Andrew, he knows so much about the corals, algae, and sea creatures. We went to the north end of the beach, swam about, and I saw another red "ruffle" egg case, of some sea creature, like I saw yesterday. I have never seen one in the Red sea, but have in my books of the warm seas. Again I saw crown of thorns starfish, several kinds of sea squirts and the sea cucumber, which looks like a long vacuum hose lying on the sandy sea floor. It finds it's food there, like a scavenger. He picked it up, brought it to the surface, it is so strange! I love snorkeling and diving, seeing all these wonderful creatures under the water. It was cloudy all day, and a bit cooler, but nice. The weather here is just lovely. After the swim I showered and washed my hair, put on shorts and a blouse, about the first time since I've been here, have just lived in a bathing suit with a topper over it. I needed to stay near Yap's Place, so if a plane came over, I could get ready to depart, so I rested in my room, also observed the wind surfer class going on right out in front, in the water

At sunset I sat on the beach and watched the beautiful colors in the sky – the sun dropped into the sea, then the reds and orange colors appeared: two huge cloud banks, like high mountains, were in the north and south horizons, what a lovely sight! Some sail boats and pom boats, with their outriggers on each side, went slowly by, silhouetted against the colored sky. Several tourists were on the beach taking pictures, and so was I! I am now out of film, and none is available (for slides) in this outlying place. Andrew and Hans came to the beach, sat and talked for a while, Andrew wanted to know more about Saudi Arabia and it's culture. He has traveled extensively and hopes to do more, when his work on a Master's degree is completed. Our group of friends went to dinner together, in the open sided restaurant. I had pork adobo, it was delicious, then the friends invited me to go with them to the plaza at the post office, just a large cleared area, where boys play basketball at times, and social gatherings are held. All the local people come, children sit around the edges and watch the festivities, dancing to local music, and singing. Hans asked me to dance a couple of times, so I discoed with the young folks, and enjoyed it. I am so many years past their ages, could be their mother, or grandmother, but they treat me kindly, and just like one of them. After a bit I walked back to the lodge along the beach, for it was bright from the moonlight. I had left the oil light burning, so it was not pitch dark in the room as I entered, and I soon retired. As I had sat on the beach with Andrew, a note had been delivered to me from Roger's Place, by a messenger boat, that the plane would depart at 3:00 p.m. tomorrow, so now I know just when I will leave here, this will be my last night on Boracay island. The Australian diver I met at dinner one night, was seated near me again tonight at dinner, he said he leaves on Sunday, and is hosting a roast pig dinner on the beach tomorrow night – if the plane does not leave as planned, and I am still here, would I

join them at Loti's Place, the very fancy place up the beach. That was a nice invitation, I have met very friendly people here, sorry I cannot join them for this local feast.

## SATURDAY JANUARY 22

I slept well but awoke before daybreak, as is my usual custom, heard the cocks crow, and ducks quack, the start of another day on this primitive island with no electricity. Since I was planning on leaving here this afternoon, I arose, put on bathing suit and planned an early swim, as I have been used to doing all the years in the past, in Saudi Arabia or at my home in California. I decided to first wash my pajamas and undies, and hang them on the line, they would be clean to pack. As I was walking toward the beach to swim, Roger appeared and told me the plane would go at 8:00 this morning, or about that time, and wondered if I could be ready to go then. I said yes, I could be ready in 15 minutes, for I already had everything packed except the last minute articles – but I had wet laundry on the line!!! I changed clothes, took the wet things from the line, stuffed them into a bathing cap, and put it into my shoulder bag. I quickly took my snorkel tube, a little mirror I carried, and some moisture cream for sunburn, over to Andrew's bungalow, to give to him, for he has been so kind to me here. He was awake, said good-bye, it was nice snorkeling with you, and would I come to Australia some time, and visit him; he was such a polite, friendly young man! Monika gave me letters to mail in Manila, while I was there, I thanked her for being such a nice friend, and to guide me to this lovely place.

I got into the bunker boat and rode to Roger's Place. There, his boy took over driving the boat and Yeve, the French pilot of the charter plane (who had stayed on Boracay last night), got on board. We rode to the mainland of Panay island, the village of Atiklan, then were taken by tricycle (the three wheeled motorcycle) to the air strip. Then we waited, and waited, and waited! At 10:30 a.m. there was still no sign of taking off. There were to be three more passengers, and none had arrived at the strip. After another ½ hour, Yeve went back to Boracay island to see if he could find the other passengers, who had booked the flight. I guess this is typical of charter flight service in these outlying islands - - - so who knows when I will get to Manila, today, tomorrow??????

I was waiting at a house, which also was a small store, and at noon the lady who resided there asked if I would eat with her and the children, if I would be satisfied with their food. How nice of her to do this. Earlier she had heard my story, of the very quick departure from Boracay, and invited me to hang my wet articles on the line there, which I did, and they dried very quickly in the heat. I accepted the offer of food, and ate with the family. I always like learning the foods in other countries. We had shrimp and pieces of flaked fish in coconut milk, which was very good, rice and fried milk fish, which was also delicious. Dessert was guavano, a melon-like fruit, cut into eighths, it was white with black seeds, and there were also bananas. I wanted to give her 12 P, but she said that was too much money, so I gave her 10 P, and she gave me back 5 P, would not accept the 10 P, also told me to take the remaining 3 bananas. I did and they will be tasty when I arrive in Manila. About 12:45 p.m. the pilot came back to the store with 2 other passengers, and said "come now". I retrieved my things off the line, tucked them in the shoulder bag, and boarded the small 4 seater plane, just the same kind my son Tom has. We took off and I had a beautiful view of the islands, and sea below. He flew over Boracay, and I could see the coral through the



clear aqua-colored water, and the white sand beach – so lovely – most of the other islands had tan colored sand beaches. Flying time was about 70 minutes to reach Manila, and the pilot pointed out interesting things below, mountains, the fresh water lake Laguna, the 7 round lakes, etc. It was well worth the \$54 fee to fly back. We landed at the Domestic airport, quite far away from the terminal where the established airline planes landed, and I had to walk about 4 blocks, carrying my suitcase, to get out of the fenced airport grounds, and onto the street. I was lucky, hailed a passing taxicab to go to the Philippines Airlines office on Roxas Boulevard. There I learned their flight to Hong Kong was at 8:00 a.m. tomorrow, that is too early for me to get from hotel, through traffic, and catch that early plane, so walked one block further to the Cathay Pacific airline office and booked a flight for 12:50 p.m. tomorrow. That will give me a chance to go to Mass Sunday morning, in the same Mabini area church that I attended last week. Then I took a cab to the nearby Los Palmas hotel, where I had stayed before, and where my luggage was being held. They even gave me a discount on the room, because I had been here before, brought my suitcases up to my room, there was no charge for keeping them all week. Such a nice service! I spent most of the evening re-arranging the cases, put warm weather clothes in the big case, and for cooler weather, in the small one. This is the end of my warm weather area, I am told it will be windy, and much cooler in Hong Kong. Later I showered, dressed and went across the street to the Handicraft Center, and bought a pretty dress for Shannon, then went back to the hotel and retired.

### **SUNDAY JANUARY 23**

I didn't sleep too well, was awakened by the noise of the air-conditioner, but the bed was very comfortable, so I lay and thought about how lucky I am, to make this great trip, had not become sick, or affected by local foods. I arose at 6:00 a.m., exercised for 10 minutes, dressed and had coffee. At 7:15 I walked out to Mass. The streets in early morning, on old Mabini street were quite deserted, surely quite different than they were last night, there were so many jeepneys, and people, milling about then. At church, a wedding was about to take place during the 7:30 a.m. mass, the bride and groom (she wore a lovely white dress and veil) were kneeling in the sanctuary. There were tall baskets of white calla lilies along the center aisle, and drapes of white cloth were along the pews, it all looked so pretty. How lucky I am to attend this mass, and see the marriage. The white cloth and rope yoke were put over the shoulders of the bride and groom together as they knelt, just like the Mexican custom that I saw once, in a wedding at the church near Olvera Street, in Los Angeles. After mass and communion, I walked back to the hotel, ate breakfast, put a new roll of film in the camera, and prepared to leave Manila for a new country.

I went across the street from the hotel after I had everything packed, to the culture center, to buy a dress with crochet on it, for myself. I found one quickly, also a red beaded fancy top, to go with a skirt of mine. I used all but 50 P of money for this country. While I was in the shop, suddenly someone said "Hi Irma". Surprise!!! It was Pam and Ian Kitching, the British young couple who worked at Al Hada hospital, in Saudi, with me. Ian took care of the maintenance of the exercise pool. They are finished with their contract and are spending 3 months touring in the Far East, before they return home.

I took a cab from the hotel, there were no porters at the airport and I had to lug my baggage to the airline counter, but made it o.k., caught my plane on Cathay Pacific, and now on to Hong Kong!!!

Typed on computer by Irma Kackert in 2003 - Age 87