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The Ascent of Mount Apo: 1859-1958*

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

Pero lo más admirable que aquí descubrimos era la vista del mismo volcán, que logramos contemplar ya en toda su magnificencia. Grandes y escarpadas peñas coronaban su cima y desde su profunda abertura, que corre a lo largo de su pendiente, se elevaban espesas columnas de vapor de azufre lo que, unido á la elevación en que estábamos y al silencio que por todas partes reinaba, presentaba... el aspecto de un inmenso altar de sacrificios.

—Carta del P. Juan Doyle S. J. al R. P.
Rector del Ateneo de Manila, 30 de
mayo de 1888. *Cartas Vill* (1889) 198.

I

THOSE who have been to Davao cannot fail to have been impressed by the high mountain that rises in the distance, to the west, dominating the entire region. Its head is almost always lost in clouds; but in the early morning when the air is clear and the sky cloudless, it towers in spectacular grandeur, its eastern face gleaming with a white covering that glistens in the morning sun like a layer of snow. This is Apo, highest¹ of Philippine mountains.

* With photographs by R. Villarica, T. Fitzpatrick, R. Malasmas, J. McKeough, E. Reyes, F. Claver and the author.

¹ Apo is officially listed as 9690 ft. high, a figure obtained by Smith in 1908. But others have obtained other figures. See Appendix C below.

A snow-capped mountain in the tropics would of course be an oddity, and Apo's white-covered summit has naturally aroused speculation. My attention to this unusual phenomenon was first called from an unexpected quarter. The Carmelite nuns are a cloistered congregation shut off from the world; but though they shun the world of men, they love to look out upon the world of God, to gaze at the beauty of sky and sea and mountain. From the windows of their monastery in Davao they can see the splendor of Apo. One of the nuns, born and bred in France under the shadow of Mont Blanc, was talking behind the grille. One could not see her face, but in her voice one could sense the vitality of those who love the mountains. She wanted to know what that glistening substance was that crowned Mount Apo, for she was of course certain that it was neither ice nor snow.

THE "SNOW" ON APO

She was right. It is neither ice nor snow. It is sulphur—hundreds of tons of sulphur covering several acres of the mountain's face. It issues from the mountain's depths in gaseous jets, which then cool off and solidify upon the ground in cones of pure sulphur.² Indeed, what seems white from afar is really not white but yellow. The best way to appreciate this fact is to go up in an airplane to a height of some eight thousand feet and to circle around within a mile or two of the mountain. From the airplane, one can see the mountain's magnificent

² Phelps Whitmarsh in 1900 reported that the sulphur field "covers perhaps ten acres, is about one thousand feet below the crater and is doubtless the weak spot where, if Apo again becomes active, a new crater will be formed. Scattered over this area were eight or ten sulphur cones from six to twenty feet high, and hundreds of smaller jets. They were shaped at the top like a steamship's ventilator and emitted choking fumes with a noise half puff and half grunt and had incrustated the entire surroundings with about half an inch of sulphur."—"The Ascent of Mount Apo" *The Outlook* 67 (New York 1901) 678-682 and 728-732. In 1908 Smith estimated the amount of sulphur at from 500 to 1000 tons, but was not enthusiastic about its commercial possibilities. (Smith MINERAL 17-18.)

cone gleaming golden-yellow in the morning sun. (See pictures.)³

The nature of the "snow" atop Mount Apo was of course no secret to the men who knew the area well, which included the missionaries who worked in the region. As early as 1660 the Jesuit historian, Father Francisco Colín, noted that "*el otro volcán dá azufre*," referring to Apo.⁴ Two hundred years later, his fellow Jesuit, Father José Fernández Cuevas, Superior of the newly reestablished Philippine Mission, was making a voyage of reconnaissance around Mindanao and he noted, from the deck of his steamer as it sailed up the Gulf of Davao: "*Al amanecer contemplábamos desde al vapor la cumbre del monte Apo, por donde revienta el cráter de un volcán; la cumbre, cubierta de azufre, parecía nevada con el reflejo de los rayos del sol.*"⁵ The British ornithologist, Walter Goodfellow, who visited Apo in 1903 and 1905, remarked how "The white slope viewed from a distance conveys the impression of a snow-capped summit, and it is difficult to believe that it is not so. At sunrise and sunset it glows with all the beautiful tints of a snowy peak."⁶ And in the 1930's Father Miguel Selga S.J., Director of the Manila Observatory and of the Philippine Weather Bureau, was amused at the number of people who told him that from the belfry of San Pedro Church in Davao, "snow" could be seen upon the face of Apo.⁷

³ I am grateful to Mr. Paul Kiener for enabling me to make such an air reconnaissance on a brilliant morning in April 1958, and to the Department of National Defense for granting clearance to publish pictures of Apo taken from the air.

⁴ COLIN-PASTELLS I 44 note.

⁵ "Relación de un viaje de exploración á Mindanao" CARTAS VIII (1889) 39.

⁶ "Notes on Mrs. Johnston's Lorikeet" *Avicultural Magazine* IV (January 1906).

⁷ Father Selga published a bibliography on Philippine volcanoes in 1939 (NRCP No. 23 p. 123). In 1941 he was preparing for publication a bibliography on Apo with appendices. His notes were stowed away for safekeeping when the Japanese army seized the Manila Observatory buildings. They reappeared through the kindness of friends after Father Selga's death. In these pages I am leaning heavily on these notes.

These were the well-informed men. But there have been others less well informed. Incautious journalists have rushed to the periodicals breathless with the "news"—and unwary editors have published a picture or two (taken of course from a great distance) purporting to "prove"—that snow had fallen at last upon a Philippine mountain, only seven degrees from the equator!⁸

Thus, whether seen from land or sea or air, Apo is a magnificent mountain. It is also a powerful volcano. Although there is no record of any explosion in historic times, its great filled-up craters are proof of past eruptions, and its steaming solfataras are a perpetual reminder that within the mountain's depths vast forces are at work that may some day prove explosive.⁹

THE MOUNTAIN'S NAME

It is not surprising that such a mountain, so majestic, so alive with mysterious energies, should exercise a spell upon the primitive imagination. To the Muslims of the river valleys of Cotabato, who lived afar off and who could thus look upon the mountain with detached objectivity, Apo was not a very fearful mountain. They gave it a matter-of-fact name—*Sandauan*—meaning solfataras.¹⁰ The suggestion has been made that the Sicarnan in Orozco's map of the Philippines (1699) and in Murillo Velarde's (1734) was a misspelling of

⁸ As late as 1885 the exact location of Apo was not known to Jordana y Morera, *ingeniero de montes* of the Philippine government. He thought it was *approximately* in the same latitude as Davao and *half-way* between that town and Cotabato! (JORDANA p. 13).—MUSPER-VAN PADANG give the location of the "principal peak" as 6°59' N and 125°16' E; that of the "north crater" as 7°1½' N and 125°18½' E.

⁹ ANDAL-YAMBAO state that there has been no known eruption of Apo. Smith (GEOLOGY) believes that a tremendous explosion occurred at one time.

¹⁰ COLIN-PASTELLS I 44 note. Cf. also COMBES-RETANA *Tabla segunda, lugares geográficos*. Our Manobo guides in 1958 told us that the "white slope" of Apo is called *Sandaua*.

Sandauan. But to the peoples who lived nearer the mountain, in the forests and hills that surround it (for to this day no one lives upon Apo itself), this enormous piece of rock, reaching to the sky, clothed more than half-way in dense mysterious forests, and emitting smoke from half a dozen solfataras, was a compelling presence indeed. They gave it a respectful name¹¹—*Apo*¹²—which means both “lord” (with connotations of superiority, authority and power) and “ancient ancestor,” the “grandfather of the mountains.”

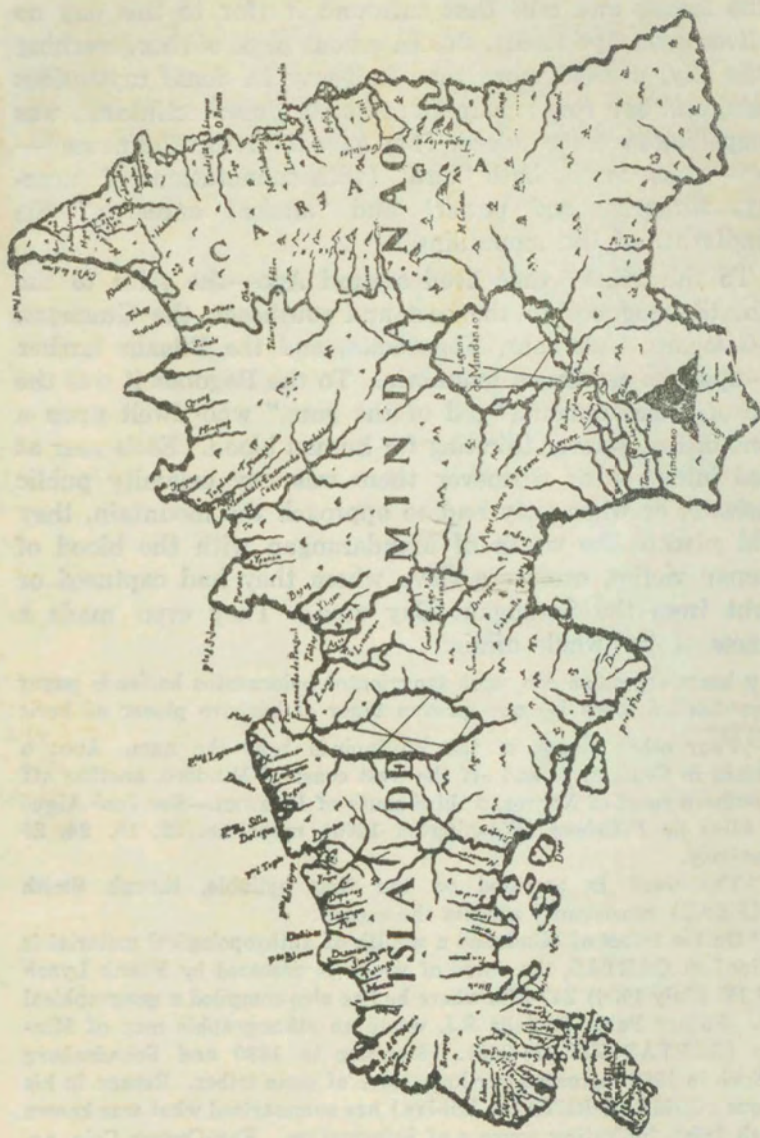
To the tribes¹³ that lived around Apo—the Atás to the north, the Bagobos to the east and southeast, the Guiangas, the Calagans, Culamans, Tagacaolos, and the Bilaans farther off—Apo was a dreaded mountain. To the Bagobos it was the home of Mandarangan, “god of the gore,” who dwelt upon a throne of fire, forever thirsting for human blood. Each year at stated intervals, or whenever there was any calamity public or private, or when they had to approach the mountain, they would placate the wrath of Mandarangan with the blood of a human victim, usually a slave whom they had captured or bought from the Sarangani Bay area. They even made a business of the whole affair:

. . . y hasta especulan con estos sangrientos holocaustos haciendo pagar una cantidad á todos los que quieren tener el bárbaro placer de herir

¹¹ Four other places in the Philippines bear the name Apo: a mountain in Cebú, an island off the west coast of Mindoro, another off the southern coast of Negros, a third south of Palawan.—See José Algué S.J. *Atlas de Filipinas* (Washington 1900) maps no. 22, 15, 24, 25 respectively.

¹² The word is accented on the first syllable, though Smith (MINERAL) consistently accents the second.

¹³ On the tribes of Mindanao a wealth of anthropological material is contained in CARTAS, the value of which is assessed by Frank Lynch in PS IV (July 1956) 247-272, where he has also compiled a geographical index. Father Pablo Pastells S.J. wrote an ethnographic map of Mindanao (CARTAS VII 326-349). Montano in 1880 and Schadenberg and Koch in 1882 increased our knowledge of some tribes. Retana in his prologue (COMBES-RETANA lxii-lxx) has summarized what was known of each tribe, indicating sources of information. Fay-Cooper Cole, assistant curator of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, has published a profusely illustrated book on *The Wild Tribes of Davao District, Mindanao* (Chicago 1913).



THE ISLAND OF MINDANAO FROM MURILLO VELARDE'S MAP (1734)

The black cone indicates Mount Apo

á la víctima. Suelen igualmente redimir el asesinato los miembros de estas tribus pagando a las personas interesadas cierto número de platos de loza ordinaria que hace las veces de moneda.¹⁴

The callousness with which the Bagobos butchered their victims was in keeping with the callousness with which they butchered their own children when born deformed,¹⁵ with the result that the Bagobos were a remarkably handsome race—the envy, doubtless, of the most advanced eugenists.

Today such savage practices appear to have completely disappeared, though superstitious offerings of food, tobacco, money and cloth are still made. We came upon two such sacrifices during our ascent of Apo in April 1958. (See pictures.) But as late as 9 December 1907 a human victim was killed in sacrifice at Tabon by the Bagobos, of which a detailed account has been given by a party of geologists who passed through that way a month later.¹⁶

GEOLOGY OF APO

The geologists tell us some interesting things about Apo. It is a volcanic cone, built up in Pleistocene to recent geologic time, and sitting upon (geologists would say “burying”) a cordillera or folded mountain range which had itself been built up in an earlier geologic epoch (Pleiocene to Pleistocene era). Apo is thus like a rider on horseback. In this case the rider is sitting squarely on the horse’s back, for “this volcanic mass is elongate in north-south direction and its apex appears to coincide approximately with the axis of the folded range which it apparently buries.”¹⁷ In this respect, Apo differs from other volcanic masses in the area, for both Mount Matutum and

¹⁴ J. Fernández Cuevas “Relacion” CARTAS VIII 41.

¹⁵ COMBES-RETANA *prologo* col. lxiii-lxiv. Details of the human sacrifices among the Bagobos are given by Father Gisbert in several letters, particularly in one written from Davao, 4 January 1886. (CARTAS VII 119-121.) That letter is translated into English in BR 43:229-254.

¹⁶ W. D. Smith “An Account of a Human Sacrifice Held by the Bagobos, District of Davao, Mindanao, P.I.” PJS, A, III (1908) 188-196.

¹⁷ IRVING p. 146.

Parker Volcano are built up somewhat to the west of the axis of the folded range.

The cordillera upon which Apo is sitting is one of five that rib the island of Mindanao. This particular one is called the Central Cordillera by some, the Bukidnon-Davao Cordillera by others. It extends across the entire island from Diwata and Sipaca Points in the north to Sarangani Bay in the south. It is "the longest, most continuous, and including the volcanic mountains, ascends to the highest elevation of any of the cordillera in Mindanao."¹⁸ Basement rock has been found at various places along this cordillera,¹⁹ but the rock of Apo itself is igneous. Montano, who climbed Apo with Governor Rajal and Father Gisbert in 1880, brought down rock specimens from the summit, which were later identified as andesites by Velain.²⁰ The chief geologist of the Philippine government, at the time, Warren D. Smith, climbed Apo in 1908 and also found andesitic rocks. He surmised that at some time in the immemorial past, Apo must have had a violent explosion, Krakatoan in magnitude.²¹

TOPOGRAPHY

The fact that Apo is, so to speak, a mountain sitting upon a whole range of mountains makes it more than ordinarily difficult of access. All the more so, since both the volcano itself (up to a height of 8500 feet) and the entire mountain range that surrounds it are covered with virgin forests, semi-temperate in the higher elevations, dense tropical jungles in the lower. The British ornithologist, Walter Goodfellow, whom we have already quoted, describes the topography well:

The picturesque and active volcano of Apo stands about twenty miles inland from the S.E. coast of the Davao province, and appears to fall away in a succession of gradual forest-covered slopes to the

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 145.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 147. See also his *Review of Philippine Basement Geology and Its Problems* (Manila 1951; PJS 79, 1950, 267-307).

²⁰ G. F. Becker *Report on the Geology of the Philippine Islands* (Washington 1901) p. 41.

²¹ Smith RECONNAISSANCE.

sea; but, on nearer acquaintance, these slopes are not nearly so gentle as they appear to be from a distance, for the luxuriant forests hide many a deep gorge where raging torrents rush down from the heights above and whose waters must be traversed for considerable distances and crossed again and again with no little danger to travelers. Cliffs must be scaled at dizzy heights where scarce a foothold exists beyond that afforded by a few clinging roots. Turning some ugly corners in this manner is extremely risky work and at first sight appears an impossibility. There is another and longer trail up the mountain to the highest Bagobo village of Tandaya, by which the worst part of the waters is avoided; but it is in some ways more tiring and is only used by the natives during the rainy season when the former is impassable.

The whole mountain is covered with dense jungle up to about 8500 feet, beyond which comes a broken, white stony slope and crumbling cliffs intersected by many burning fissures from which proceeds an incessant noise as of colossal machinery at work underground.....

The upper forests are dark and gloomy, and the thick, hanging—and often black-looking—mosses which cover every trunk and branch give a funereal aspect to the whole. One seems to come upon this depressing region with a strange suddenness, for a little below are many deep arms in the mountain containing hot springs where the steam, always arising, causes a rank growth of the most verdant tropical vegetation imaginable to spring. Giant ferns and beautiful orchids here struggle with each other for supremacy.²²

This, then is Apo—the “lord,” the “grandfather of mountains”—which dominates the entire region that surrounds the Gulf of Davao. Indeed, it is from Apo’s fiery nature that the gulf gets its name, for we are told that Davao—a name applied to gulf, city and province—was originally *Dabaon*, a word that means “full of flame” (*daba-on*).²³

Such a mountain, so magnificent, so seemingly inaccessible yet so temptingly near, stands as a perpetual challenge to all who love the heights. And for the past one hundred years, that challenge has been repeatedly accepted.

II

The first attempt to conquer Mount Apo was made a hundred years ago. It was a disastrous failure.

²² “Notes on Mrs. Johnstone’s Lorikeet” *Avicultural Magazine* loc. cit.

²³ COMBES-RETANA *Tabla segunda, lugares geográficos*. p. 752.

OYANGUREN'S DISASTROUS EXPEDITION

In 1859²⁴ the governor of Davao, Don José Oyanguren, organized an expedition of sixty-seven men, comprising a lieutenant of the army, a naval officer (*alférez*), thirty soldiers (one third of the *guardia civil* force of the region), twenty penal exiles, thirteen Bagobos and two (Christian) civilians. They walked from the seacoast up the Tagulaya River, but "they encountered so many hardships and so much suffering that they had to return without accomplishing their mission." The expedition was not only a failure, it was a fatal disaster. Of the sixty-seven men, twenty died shortly after their return to Davao.²⁵

Such a disaster would naturally discourage any further attempts, and for eleven years the mountain was left strictly alone. At least it was left alone by Christians, for we are not certain if during this time the Bagobos ever got to the summit of their greatly feared mountain.²⁶

SEÑOR REAL 1870

In 1870 a second attempt was made by a somewhat smaller expedition organized by Real, commander of the Davao Sub-division. There is mention of one "patron" and thirty sailors, "*con los recursos necesarios*." They tried to approach the mountain by way of Tabon. But "encountering dangers and hardships at every step of the way," they had to turn back in defeat.²⁷ Though there were no casualties, another ten years elapsed before another attempt was made.

RAJAL'S CONQUEST 1880

In 1880, twenty-one years after Oyanguren's disastrous expedition and ten years after Real's, a third and this time a

²⁴ Montano in a footnote gives the date as 1852, an obvious mistake. (*Voyage aux Philippines et en Malaisie*, Paris 1886, ch. 9)

²⁵ AF II 357. Rajal in his *Exploración del territorio de Davao* (Madrid 1891) mentions Oyanguren's expedition.

²⁶ Father Gisbert implies that Bagobos had ascended to the top, not however without sacrifice of human victims. CARTAS IV 143-148.

²⁷ AF II 357 ff.

successful attempt was made under Don Joaquín Rajal, who had just been made governor of Davao.

He was a military man, "*hombre de valor*" as Father Mateo Gisbert calls him. On his way to Davao to assume his new post, aboard a vessel that set sail from Basilan and Zamboanga, he found himself traveling with a French scientist, Dr. Joseph Montano, who was on a scientific survey of the Philippines. The two became friends²⁸ and when Rajal decided to make his attack upon Apo, Montano was invited to come along. So was Father Gisbert, the Spanish Jesuit recently arrived in Davao²⁹ who in the course of twenty years of missionary work in the region would come to know the Bagobos well and would compile a dictionary of their tongue.³⁰ One of their chief leaders at this time was Datu Manig,³¹ a warlike individual who had just submitted to the Spanish government. From Manig there came at first dire predictions of failure and attempts to discourage the project. Indeed everyone tried to discourage it, Europeans and Visayans alike. But Rajal extracted from Manig an escort of Bagobos and a promise not to offer a human victim in sacrifice. Manig agreed, but on his own terms: he would not let the Bagobos carry the baggage, and when they came to the actual ascent of the volcano itself, the Bagobos would not precede but follow.

Three independent accounts have been published of this historic expedition. Father Gisbert³² and Governor Rajal³³ wrote theirs in Spanish, Dr. Montano wrote his various

²⁸ This trip is described in Montano's *Voyage aux Philippines* ch. 7.

²⁹ Father Gisbert was born in Spain in 1847 and came to the Philippines in 1880 to work as a missionary in Mindanao until 1903. He died in Manila in 1906.

³⁰ The dictionary was in two parts, Spanish-Bagobo, Bagobo-Spanish, both printed in Manila in 1892.—COMBES-RETANA *prólogo* col. lxxvii.—The copy I have examined is in the collection of Luis Ma. Araneta.

³¹ This man's name was variously spelled: Manig by Gisbert, Manip by Doyle, Mani by Montano.

³² Letter to the Superior of the Philippine Mission, from Davao, 19 October 1880 (i.e. just six days after the expedition returned from Apo) in CARTAS IV (1881) 143-148. An extract from this letter is in AF II 357 ff.

³³ Joaquín Rajal y Larré *Exploración del territorio de Davao* (Madrid, Establecimiento tipográfico de Fontanet, 1891). The account contains interesting remarks on the flora and the social customs of the natives of the region.

accounts in French.³⁴ The following excerpts from Montano's account gives an idea of the difficulty of the journey:

October 7 — At seven in the morning we were in the middle of the Tagulaya, which ran along with much noise through a twisting canyon. The sidewalls were vertical and we had to abandon the hope of moving along the bank. "This rough way will soon be smooth," said the hypocrite Mani. Actually the Datu, who dared not refuse to lead us to the volcano since we were armed was trying to discourage us by heaping difficulties on us. For five long hours we struggled painfully against the stream amid foam, falling with each step over the polished stones. A dozen times we were forced to cross the stream to make headway against the furious whirlpools and often we sank to the shoulders in water, which seemed cold to us. The scenery nevertheless was marvelous. On each side arose to the height of 50 to 100 meters perpendicular cliffs formed by dark conglomerate rock over which cascaded down many streams of water. Long curtains of tropical vines and orchids hung down to the surface of the water and half-hid large caves blocked by rolled-down stones. We would be completely hidden by these overhanging growths, if we had been able to stop while making this difficult passage. Above us a vault, thick with growing trees, sifted the rays of the sun and produced the most beautiful light-effects on the water, which rushed on in a series of swishing rapids. Our Bagobos, simply clothed in abaca shorts that glistened, struck their lances against the rocks and gave to the scene a strange magic touch, and truly, had we not been drenched to the bone, sore and covered with bruises, we could have believed ourselves in a dream.

We finally left the torrent of Tagulaya whose marvels and difficulties I will always remember. Then we climbed over a massive slope where dark-grayish rock came through the soil in places and we arrived exhausted toward noon at several houses surrounded by small fields of corn. This was the village of Tagaydaya, which belonged to the Datu Bitil, an ally of Mani. The Bagobos of Tagaydaya had never seen Europeans. At first they seemed fearful. Reassured, they finally furnished us voluntarily with some food that they could spare. . . .

³⁴ *Voyage aux Philippines et en Malaisie* (Paris, Librairie Hatchette et cie., 1886) pp. 245-264, with photograph and sketches. Also *Rapport a M. le Ministre de l'Instruction Publique sur une Mission aux îles Philippines et en Malaisie 1879-1881* (Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1885). The account in this latter work is based on his earlier accounts in *Tour du monde* (1884) and in the *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* (June 1881).

October 8 — Another of our companions, being put to the proof by the day's journey, got a bad fever.... And so we were forced to leave the sick fellow at Tagaydaya with some quinine and under the care of one of his friends and a couple of the most exhausted soldiers.

October 9 — On the 9th we pursued our way climbing Mount Pupuq, which from 789 to 1080 meters high, stood forth covered with vines with red flowers (*Melastoneés*) and with vegetation moderately high. The temperature went up noticeably, and the atmosphere was charged with sulfurous odor. At the foot of the northern slope of Pupuq we crossed one of the sources of the Tagulaya torrent. On the side, which was very sloping, the vegetation changed completely. The trees, that dominated the scene up to now, gave way to a forest of growing ferns from 10 to 20 meters in height. Their trunks like the ground is covered with a bed of mosses and lichen (*Hypnum*, *Usnea*, *Sticta* etc.). The humidity was very high and water ran in rivulets across the ground, the tree-trunks, the leaves, and gave the landscape the appearance of being an underwater forest. At two o'clock in the afternoon the slope lessened and we entered an almost dried river-bed. We rested a half-hour here at 1689 meters altitude. The Bagobos call this place Baclayan or Siriban, which means a sandy beach.

Again we made our way along the bed of a stream formed by a deep fissure in the mountain. When it rained, this fissure would be filled with cascading water. Happily at this time there was almost no water, and we not without difficulty clambered up over large boulders and vertical outcroppings shadowed by foliage. The obstructions met us at every step. Our soldiers were very exhausted since they were heavily burdened because of the treachery of the Bagobos. One of them lost consciousness and collapsed on a narrow ledge above a crevass. He was about to die from pulmonary trouble. Only with the greatest difficulty were we able to hoist him up to the point where we made camp at an altitude of 2229 meters after having passed through places where the melastomas and rhododendrons grew. We found ourselves in a region of medium height bushes which dripped moisture. During the night my thermometer registered 8 above zero [centigrade].

Here the aid from our Bagobos stopped. We saw very clearly the volcano and I sketched it. Apo stood before us showing its southern slope. This slope has a large crevass, from which escaped clouds of steam. It seemed impassable to us. Our climb would have to be up one of the mountain's sides, and we decided to tackle the east side. This choice was made since it was the only practical way of getting to the top.

October 10 — Although we had reached an altitude of 2229 meters, still we had a long way to go. For the next few hours our climb was

painful. Growing trees had disappeared at 1900 meters, and now we found ourselves surrounded by thick vegetation that was shrub-like. Branches were numerous, knotty and thick, making a thick springy bed underfoot and one advanced over this covering by jumping from branch to branch. After negotiating a great number of rapids without any great difficulty which tired us very much, we reached a point where the stunted scattered vegetation offered no obstacle to our progress. The altitude was 2390 meters. We began the climb properly so-called amid boulders of grayish rock and cinders, covered in great part by a layer of sulphur, one to two centimeters thick. In the cavities of the rocks washed by recent rains we found good tasting water which stood us in good stead. The packed cinders contained fragments of stone which served as convenient steps.

At ten o'clock we were at the edge of the large crevass running up the middle of the mountain which we had seen yesterday. It was about 50 meters wide and its vertical sides varied from 20 to 60 meters high and were composed of gray rock and cinders. From the walls of the crevass escaped streams of sulfurous gases with a sharp hissing sound. The white color of these escaping gases cut vividly into the yellow tint of the thick sheet of sulfur that covered the whole crevass. The sun became burning and the dryness of the air increased. Several juniper-trees grew alone in the cinders.

At this juncture the Bagobos stopped, hesitating to continue. Seeing us determined to push on, an old slave who was a sort of sorcerer, told his companions that they could follow us without fear, since he had just seen Mandarangan leave the crater and fly away in the clouds. Immediately several Bagobos cried out that they too had seen this. Perhaps they spoke truer words than they thought. The arrival of Europeans in this sanctuary, up to then respected as the abode of a savage divinity, was a step forward for civilization and truly the gods of murder and slavery must flee before civilization.

At noon we came to the foot of the crater in a little valley whose northern slope was much lower than the southern. This northern slope seen from Davao seemed to be the top of the volcano. At this moment just when I would have made some interesting topographic observations of the country, clouds swept in on us. We decided however to continue climbing the mountain. In spite of the steep climb up the outside wall of the crater, we came to the top without encountering any great difficulty, thanks to the location of blocks of stone which formed almost everywhere a comfortable staircase. Exactly at the time we reached the end of our climb, clouds which surrounded us became thicker and we were wet by a fine but persistent rain. I could hardly see into the interior of the crater, which measured about 500 meters in diameter and which like its exterior walls was covered with stunted juniper-trees. Dense clouds filled the bottom of the crater. To cap our

misfortunes, Marcelo, my faithful boy, who was carrying my instruments and who had been most sedulous in following me up to this point, came to a halt exhausted about 100 meters below and no remedy was at hand to overcome his fatigue and dizziness. I could make a barometric reading only by going back to the place where Marcelo had stopped. The error resulting from this fact, was very small since it could affect only the value of the altitude measured between the place of taking the reading and the summit of the crater. This error could not be more than 25 meters, a negligible distance when compared to the total altitude of 3133 meters. The thermometer read 15 degrees centigrade.

We set about our descent as rapidly as possible since we feared bad weather. Returning to 2400 meters altitude we enjoyed magnificent vistas. Behind us the crater, clear of clouds, stood like a huge ruined rampart and outlined against the sky its jagged crest. Around us was spread a vast carpet of sulfur, whose contours were lost in violet tints that radiated lazily about our feet. About this curtain of clouds our eyes were filled with a splendid panorama; the thick forests covering the slopes of Apo and far away the blue waters of the gulf into which the peninsulas of Dumalac and Malalac, the islands of Samal and Talicud projected with their somber green foliage.

We hardly had time to enjoy this marvelous scene for we reached the accursed scrubby forest and a fierce rain-storm blinded us and almost froze us. I lost in this tempest the greater part of the plants that I had collected up the mountain. In the middle of a deluge we came to the frightful bivouac of yesterday. There we spent the night on pallets hastily made of knotty tree-branches.^{34 b1*}

Rajal's conquest of Apo was significant from several points of view. Geographically, it established the height of Apo—a figure which, however, was revised by later measurements. It also gave the western world a more accurate knowledge of the ethnography, and of the flora of the region—although Montano's botanical specimens were all swept away by a squall as he mentioned.

But the expedition's greatest glory (as Father Gisbert pointed out) was that it opened the way both to further scientific studies and to the advance of Christian civilization, an advance that was eventually to destroy the dominion of Mandarangan and of the other savage gods.

^{34 b1*} *Voyage aux Philippines loc. cit.* Translated for this article by Father John Bauer S.J. of the Ateneo de Manila.

THE SCHADENBERG-KOCH EXPEDITION 1881-1882

But if Spain and France could get to the summit of the highest mountain in the Philippines, could Germany—the vigorous, powerful Germany of Bismarck and the Kaisers—be far behind? Germany lost no time in getting to the top, in the person of two scientists, Alex Schadenberg and Otto Koch.³⁵

Schadenberg, a native of Breslau, had come to the Philippines to accept a position as chemist in the wholesale drug firm of Pablo Sartorius, which afterwards became the Botica Boie. Towards the end of 1881 he and another German, Otto Koch, went on a scientific expedition to southern Mindanao. By December they had established themselves in the Bagobo village of Sibulan. During their stay of about six months in the area they made, we are told, important ethnographic studies, drew up a vocabulary of the language, assembled an extensive collection of botanical and zoological specimens (including thousands of butterflies) which they got with the help of a young Bagobo whom they trained for the work. One of their most interesting discoveries, north of the volcano, was a giant parasite (*Rafflesia Schadenbergiana Greppert*), the open flower of which measured eighty centimeters in diameter. We are told that young buds of this plant, growing together on one stem, were found on one occasion to weigh as heavily as a double-barreled gun and six solid bullets.

They climbed Mount Apo in February 1882. Starting from Sibulan (700 meters above sea level), they and their

³⁵ There was a big splurge of publicity given to the Schadenberg-Koch expedition. The primary source was an account sent by them from Davao and published in two issues of the *Diario de Manila*, Wednesday and Thursday, 19 and 20 April 1882. Ferdinand Blumentritt translated this account into German: "*Ersteigung des Volkans Apo aus Mindanao durch Dr. A. Schadenberg und Dr. Koch*" in *Globus* 42 (Brunschweig 1882) 55-57. It soon found itself in French: "*Ascension du volcan Apo dans l'île de Mindanao par le docteur A. Schadenberg et le docteur O. Koch*" in *Bulletin de la Société Académique Indo-chinoise* 2nd. series, II (Paris 1883-1885) 496-501. It also appeared in Spain: "*El volcán de Apo según los naturalistas alemanes A. Schadenberg y Otto Koch*" in the *Boletín de la Sociedad Geográfica de Madrid* 14 (Madrid primer semestre 1883) 186-198. The *Diario de Manila* account is quoted in part in AF II 359-360.

party of Bagobos who carried their photographic and other equipment (for the Bagobos had become more accomodating) went up a conical rise of some 2000 feet elevation and dropped down to the Balacio River which ran northwards to where it joined the Sibulan.³⁶ Then they began the ascent of the skirts of Apo, spending the night at the village of Tagudaya (the Germans spelled it Tagodeia), some 1150 meters above sea level, from where one could see the whole of the eastern coast of Davao, and the islands of Samal and Talicut and the town of Davao. It was a cool night. The temperature early the following morning was 13°C. Their journey next day lay through virgin forest with trees over a hundred feet in height and the vines over thirty feet long. At a height of 1320 meters they forded the Vaigmaint River, which according to the natives was extremely hot at its source. Farther up they came upon another torrent with the waters rushing down, but undrinkable because they contained sulfuric and hydrosulfuric acid in solution. The air was likewise thick with sulfuric fumes. At 2700 meters they found the first solfatara in the form of a large crack with others of smaller size, emitting sulfuric gas in large quantity. The ground was hot and strong rumblings could be heard like the sound of a ship's motor. It was here (they claimed) that they found a brick tile with the inscription: "*Apo, Unica expedicion Rajal, 1880.*"³⁷

From the sulfuric region, they got up to the northernmost of Apo's "three peaks." The southeast peak, the highest of the three, was difficult of ascent as the ground was soft and yielding. It was on this peak that the crater was situated, containing a lake of moderate dimensions and a large pyramid of enormous rocks, all covered with sulphur. We have something to say about these peaks later on.

³⁶ The Sibulan and the Tagulaya are of course the same river. It changes its name from one to the other as it descends towards the coastal plains.

³⁷ Smith believed that Rajal's commemorative tile was either "carelessly" or "maliciously" removed from the top where it had originally been placed and brought down to an altitude of 2350 meters.—PJS, A III, 473-499.

Upon descending from the summit, they found two new solfataras below the northeast peak which did not exist when Rajal's expedition was made. About a hundred meters lower an odorless water vapor was leaping out. From there they started on their journey downward without incident (except a torrential rain which made the trail difficult) and arrived back at their headquarters in Sibulan.

THE JESUIT EXPEDITION OF 1888

The third ascent of Mount Apo was made by the Manila Observatory in 1888 for the purpose of making magnetic measurements. Father Martín Juan S.J., founder and head of the magnetic division of the Observatory, and Father John Doyle S.J. of the Ateneo de Manila, set sail from Manila aboard the *Luzon* on 4 April on a voyage that was to take them through Palawan, Zamboanga and Cotabato, arriving in Davao in early May. They lost no time in preparing for the ascent of Apo, enlisting for the purpose the help of the governor of Davao and of Father Mateo Gisbert, the veteran of the Rajal expedition, who consented to accompany them as far as Datu Manip's village.³⁸

They left Davao at 5 a.m. on 8 May and went with all their equipment by banca to the mouth of the Tagulaya to the Moro village of Darong. The Mohammedans received them hospitably, and they were joined that same day by two sets of armed escort: one provided by the governor, of twelve men

³⁸ The primary account of this expedition is contained in four letters written by Father Juan Doyle to the Rector of the Ateneo de Manila: CARTAS VIII (Manila 1889) 87-93, 124-129, 183-190, 195-208 respectively. The letters were written from Joló 16 April 1888, from Cotabato 27 May (apparently an incorrect date; it must have been 27 April), from Davao 22 May, and from aboard the *Francisco Reyes* 30 May 1888. This expedition is mentioned in Espasa (*Enciclopedia universal ilustrada* V 1006) and in Smith (GEOL.) Likewise in Masó (HIST. pp. 104-106). The scientific data obtained are used in Masó VOLC. pp. 27-29. The Rector of the Ateneo (1887-1894) was Father Miguel Rosés.

with Remington guns, the other of Bagobos led by the son of Datu Manip who walked ahead of his men armed to the teeth with shield and kris and other warlike implements. It looked more a warlike than a scientific expedition, but Father Doyle, who tells the story, noted a happy coincidence: it was the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, the conqueror of demons, and the banca they had come on was called the *San Miguel*. It seemed an appropriate beginning for a journey to the lofty lair of the demon Mandarangan.

From Darong they went through forests and *cogonals* to the home of Datu Manip. They were a large party, for besides the Christians and Bagobos, the Mohammedans of Darong also accompanied them part of the way. Their next stop was Tagudaya, Datu Bitil's territory.

The rest of Father Doyle's account of this expedition makes excellent reading for its anthropological, geographical and botanical detail, not to mention its human interest. We are told of the Bagobo *bicharras*, and how the Bagobos listened gravely to the sounds of an automatic organ which Father Gisbert had brought along, how Datu Bitil's villagers were highly amused by the attracting power of the magnets which were part of the Jesuits' scientific equipment, and how everyone put on complete regalia to pose for photographs. One night there was an earthquake—a "*temblor de oscilación*" in northwest-southeast direction. The next morning Father Martín Juan fell off his horse. He was of course a scientist, not a horseman, and may have had little contact with that noble animal!

But if they were not good horsemen, they were excellent hikers for they soon had to leave their horses behind and the walking required great courage and resistance. "*Tanto el P. Juan como yo quedamos sepultados varias veces hasta el cuello en medio del espeso ramaje, y si al fin superamos la dificultad, fué á costa de sumo trabajo y no pocas heridas.*" (We were many times neck-deep in the dense growth, and when we finally extricated ourselves it was at the cost of much labor and not a few scratches.)

Eventually the two Jesuits and their Visayan and Bagobo escort got to the foot of Apo, and they noted as they looked up to the summit from a river bed that this colossal column of rock, emitting smoke from its solfataras, looked to them like a gigantic altar of sacrifice.

At an elevation of 2700 meters they took magnetic observations. They were within 300 meters of the summit, but the refusal of the Bagobos to go up any further and the torrential rains that came made them give up the plan of taking observations also at the peaks. They descended precipitately, in drenching rain, going down in one hour when it had taken them five hours to climb.

This was the first scientific expedition sent by the Manila Observatory to Apo. It was a costly expedition, for it almost certainly hastened Father Martin Juan's death. He died two months after the Apo climb, in Surigao, before he could return to Manila.³⁹

³⁹ Father Martin Juan was born in Spain in 1850 and studied mathematics and sciences at Stonyhurst, Paris, Avignon and Barcelona. He arrived in the Philippines in 1886 and was put in charge of the magnetic section of the Manila Observatory. His one published work (posthumous) was the result of his last trip: *Observaciones magnéticas verificadas en Paragua, Joló y Mindanao* (Manila 1890) 34 pp. in 4° with 2 figures. —Father John Doyle was born in Wicklow, Ireland in 1862, but entered the Society of Jesus in Spain. He was a scholastic, teaching at the Ateneo Municipal de Manila at the time of his Apo ascent. He returned to Spain for studies and ordination, and arrived back in the Philippines in 1896. He was sub-director of the Manila Observatory for two terms, and died in Manila in 1918. His published works are: *Tifones del archipiélago filipino y mares circunvecinos* 1895 y 1896 (Manila 1899) 133 pp. in 8° with 12 plates; and *Magnetical Dip and Declination in the Philippine Islands* (Manila 1901) 14 pp. with 4 plates. —The Manila Observatory sponsored Father Pierre Lejay S.J. in a gravimetric survey of the Philippines in 1938, which included the Apo area. He published several monographs on the subject, including *Gravimetric Survey of the Philippines* (Manila PMO Vol. IV No. 1, 1939). Also *Caracteres généraux de la gravité dans les îles Philippines* (NRCP no. 21) pp. 65-66, 100. The English version of this work is published as NRCP no. 20

FATHER BARRADO 1892

Between 1889 and the turn of the century we have no record of any further expeditions to Apo, except that of Father Eusebio Barrado S.J. who made an eleven-day journey in 1892 from Kabacan in Cotabato to Davao, across the mountains and over the northern flanks of Apo, at a height of some 2000 feet. He did not climb Apo itself. His letter to Father Miguel Rosés, Rector of the Ateneo de Manila, gives valuable information on the topography and vegetation along the trail.⁴⁰ This journey was important as it showed that Apo could be approached from the northwest, i.e. from the Cotabato side—a route fully exploited thirty-six years later by Governor Gutierrez, and by all subsequent Jesuit expeditions, including our own of 1958.

III

During the forty-one years between 1900 and the outbreak of war in 1941 we have record of about ten expeditions to Apo or the Apo area, although there may have been others of which we have no knowledge.

The first of these was by Phelps Whitmarsh, an American correspondent who found himself in Davao for an enforced stay of about a month. He climbed Mount Apo in company with Lieutenant C. O. Thomas of the local garrison. They approached Apo from the east, from Astorga and Datu Bitil's territory and spent a night on top.⁴¹

THE SMITH EXPEDITION 1907-1908

An important expedition was that of Warren D. Smith, head of the division of geology and mines of the Bureau of Science. Smith was interested both in the geology of the Apo region and in the commercial possibilities of the sulphur deposits near the summit. It was during this ascent that the official figure was obtained of the mountain's height: 9690 feet. (Actual-

⁴⁰ CARTAS X (1895) 133-137.

⁴¹ P. Whitmarsh "The Ascent of Mount Apo" *The Outlook* 67 (New York 1901) 678-682 and 728-732.

ly in two separate readings two figures were obtained by hypso-meter: 2956 and 2902 meters.) At the summit Smith found a brass tube deposited in a cairn by Dr. E. B. Copeland who had ascended to the top in 1904. The tube had a screw top marked S. C. Inside was a neat scroll of the Sierra Club of California.⁴²

In 1914 John M. Garvan went to the Apo area to collect ethnological specimens for the Pacific-Panama Exposition. He claims to have found a new tribe, whose tribal existence was hitherto unknown.⁴³ We leave this rather bold claim to the ethnologists to assess.

BIRD COLLECTORS

Meanwhile, a regular fever for collecting birds seems to have developed between 1903 and 1905. Walter Goodfellow, the British ornithologist who discovered the Mikado Pheasant in Formosa and had led the British Ornithological Union Expedition to New Guinea, visited Apo in 1903 and again in 1905. His main purpose seems to have been to collect live birds for Mrs. Johnstone, a well known aviculturist who received an award for breeding the lorikeet named after her. Goodfellow's collection was subsequently acquired by the British Museum. One of his discoveries was named after Apo: *Zosterops volcani*.⁴⁴

Likewise in 1903 a Danish ornithologist, Waterstradt, roamed the area and found, among other birds, two new species: *Prioniturus Waterstradti Rothschild* and *Dicaeum Apo Hartert*. Waterstradt had previously conducted extensive expeditions in Ceylon, Borneo, the Malay Peninsula, the Moluccas and Palawan.⁴⁵

In 1904 an army surgeon, Major Edgar Alexander Mearns, climbed Apo, also in search of bird specimens.⁴⁶ Among his finds was a very rare bird, a new genus and species (no other representative had been seen as of 1929). He called it *Leonar-*

⁴² Smith RECONN. (But HACHISUKA speaks of a steel cylinder.)

⁴³ J. M. Garvan "The Obos: a Pygmoid People of Mindanao" *Philippine Touring Topics* II (1934) August pp. 33-37, November pp. 35-66.

⁴⁴ HACHISUKA pp. 41-45.

⁴⁵ HACHISUKA p. 41.

⁴⁶ HACHISUKA pp. 45-46.

dia woodi, after the commanding general of the American forces in Mindanao and Sulu who was also president in 1903 of the Philippine Scientific Society and was later to become governor general.

After 1905 there seems to have been a lull in the bird collecting fever until 1929 when the Japanese ornithologist Masauji Hachisuka led an expedition to the top of Mount Apo, taking with him a party of fifty men, mostly Bagobos.⁴⁷ He established his bird-collecting center at Galong where a sulphur spring had been discovered by an American about 1915. From the Davao side he climbed Mount Apo, but descended toward Quinatan and Kabacan on the Cotabato side, probably along the route followed the previous year by Governor Gutierrez, of whose expedition we shall speak below. Hachisuka was thus the first to traverse Apo completely. He left an inscription at the summit, carved with a bolo upon a rock in Japanese Kana characters which meant: "Hachisuka, 11, II, 1929." One member of the party spent a night at the summit to take photographs of the peak. Photographs (one from afar and one from near) were also taken of the crater lake discovered the previous year, of which we shall have occasion to speak later.

APO FROM THE COTABATO SIDE

The Gutierrez-Bruns expedition of 1928 was historic as it was the first ascent of Mount Apo from the Cotabato side. The route, we are told, was discovered by Manobos working for Governor Gutierrez of Cotabato, but it must have branched off from an ancient route as Father Barrado in 1892 had gone that way to Davao. Governor Gutierrez, with a party of American military officers stationed at Manila and Zamboanga, traveled from Cotabato along the Rio Grande de Mindanao and then climbed Apo from the northwest. They discovered a lake, without outlet or inlet, which they called Lake Faggamb. Hachisuka described its water as not clear but rather amber in color. We shall have more to say about this lake later. At the summit the expedition left a quart bottle with the following note:

First to climb Mount Apo
From the Cotabato side

⁴⁷ HACHISUKA.

Lieut. Col. E. C. Bruns
Gov. D. Gutierrez
Capt. L. L. Gardner
Lieut. A. Montera
Major A. S. Fletcher
February 16, 1928

The bottle was placed securely in a cache on the pinnacle of the highest peak, and there it was found a year later by Hachisuka, who in his account quotes liberally from Major Fletcher's notebook.⁴⁸

THE NAPAN TRAIL 1939

On 9 May 1936 President Manuel L. Quezon signed Proclamation No. 59 which set aside Mt. Apo as a reserved forest and national park. The reservation comprised 76,900 hectares. Among the projects proposed for the development and beautification of the park was a road that was to lead to Napan Hot Spring. A preliminary reconnaissance for this road was undertaken by the Bureau of Forestry from 20 to 25 March 1939. The party climbed to the top of Mount Apo, and a detailed report was made to the Director of the Bureau of Forestry, Florencio Tamesis, by Ranger Rufino A. Sabado who took part in the ascent. This manuscript report contains a detailed description both of the trail and of the vegetation along it. Father Selga had intended to publish it in 1941 as an appendix to his Bibliography on Apo.

THE ATENEO DE CAGAYAN ASCENT 1941

In 1941 Father Theodore E. Daigler S.J. and three students of the Ateneo de Cagayan, with a party of Manobo guides and porters, climbed to the top of Mount Apo by way of Mu-an in Cotabato. Father Daigler's account deserves to be published. Father Selga had intended to publish it in 1941 as an appendix to his Bibliography.

With the outbreak of the war, of course, all excursions to Apo had to stop. It is interesting to note that in the U.S. Army maps for 1945, while minute details of topography are given for all places, Apo and its immediate environs are left blank

⁴⁸ HACHISUKA pp. 56-57.

for want of information. The U.S. Army intelligence units cannot have consulted the published material on Apo, nor even the reports of the Army officers who climbed the mountain with Governor Gutierrez in 1928.

POST-WAR ASCENTS

But after the war, there have been excursions to Apo almost yearly. In 1948 an American zoologist, Charles H. Wharton, spent several fruitful months in the environs of Apo, photographing animals and birds. His account and photographs are extremely interesting.⁴⁹ In 1950 a party of five Americans also ascended the mountain by the Cotabato trail, one of them a woman. I have no further information about them except that their guide, a Cebuano who had settled in the Mua-an area and who had never before visited Apo, was also our guide in 1958, his second visit to the mountain.

But most of the post-war expeditions have been by Jesuits, especially those stationed at the Ateneo de Davao. Father Joseph Smith and Rubén Ruiz made the climb in 1952 and have left a manuscript account. Other Jesuits followed, some successful, others not. One Jesuit has gone to the summit three different times: Francisco Claver S.J. of the Ateneo de Davao, an experienced hiker whose speed along the difficult mountain trails has amazed even the best Manobo guides and hunters.

IV

MASS ON MOUNT APO

Against this historic background — of a whole century of grappling with this great mountain — our own modest expedition of 1958 dwindles into insignificance. Yet it was not without a historic justification. The year 1959 marks an important centenary in Apo's immemorial existence: one hundred eventful years during which, from the dreaded inaccessible throne of the blood-thirsty Mandarangan, Apo has become a civilized mountain, accessible to all who would accept the hardships of the journey. The history of these one hundred

⁴⁹ C. H. Wharton "Seeking Mindanao's Strangest Creatures" *The National Geographic Magazine* 94 (1948) 389-408.

years should be written; there is plenty of material for it; but whoever undertakes to write it (even *in parvo* as we are doing) should have some first-hand acquaintance with the mountain and its environs.

Photographs too were desirable, for although pictures had been published before (by Montano, Hachisuka and others)⁵⁰ there was room for more copious photographic documentation.

More important than all these was the fact that Mass had never been said upon Apo. Three Jesuit priests had climbed it in the past ninety-eight years, but they had not had the opportunity to say Mass there.⁵¹

Yet Mass should be offered upon the summit of Apo, not only because it is the highest mountain in the Philippines, but also because of its terrible history. A passage from the account of the 1888 expedition comes to mind:

The most wonderful thing that we found there (in a river bed high up in the mountain) was the sight of the volcano itself which we could now see in all its splendor. Great rugged rocks crowned its summit, and from the huge fissure that runs down its entire (southern) face, thick clouds of sulphur smoke were issuing. And this (as Father Juan remarked), together with the great height at which we were and the profound silence that enveloped us on every side, made the mountain seem like an enormous altar of sacrifice.⁵²

Indeed it was: an enormous altar that for centuries had been desecrated with the blood of human victims.⁵³ It was an altar deserving of a better offering—the pure oblation of Him Whose blood was shed on Calvary.

⁵⁰ Montano published several pictures and sketches, including two of the Tagulaya River, one of the great fissure on the southern face, and a panoramic view of Davao Gulf from the summit of Apo. Fathers Doyle and Juan had to leave their photographic equipment behind in Manip's village. Hachisuka published a distant and a closer view of the lake.

⁵¹ Fathers Gisbert (1880), Juan (1888), Daigler (1941). To my knowledge no other priests except Jesuits have climbed Mt. Apo, with the exception of Father Henri Desjardins P.M.E. who went with Father Daigler in 1941. The Jesuits who climbed Apo in postwar years, were scholastics, not priests.

⁵² *Cartas* VIII 198. See epigraph to this article.

⁵³ The human sacrifices were of course offered in the foothills, not at the summit.

It is an immemorial custom to plant the cross upon the mountain tops. Christians have been doing it for centuries. As late as 1953, Edmund Hillary had left a crucifix upon the peak of Everest. Yet the cross is merely symbol: the Mass is both symbol and reality.

So we went to Apo to plant the cross there and to say Mass upon its summit.

On Friday of Easter Week, 11 April 1958, after a three-day hike, seven of our fifteen-man expedition reached the summit of Mount Apo. There, upon the northeastern cluster of peaks (which we called the "Gisbert" in honor of the first priest to climb the mountain), upon a pile of rock at the edge of a filled-up crater, two Masses were said. The first, at 11:20 a.m., was offered by myself, with Father Rodolfo Malasmas S.J. and Rodolfo Villarica S.J. serving. The second, immediately after, was offered by Father Malasmas, with Thomas Fitzpatrick S.J. and myself serving.

As a table upon which to lay the altar stone and altar cloths, we used a metal plaque upon which was a cross and an inscription. Immediately after the Mass, we affixed this plaque to the summit of the highest of Apo's many peaks, at an altitude of 9950 feet. This highest of Apo's peaks, to the southwest of the Gisbert and separated from it by a deep col, we called the "Rajal," after Apo's first conqueror. And to a third peak, a fine looking cone, we gave the name "Xavier," after the Apostle of the East and the patron of Xavier University, chief sponsor of our expedition.

EPILOGUE

THE JESUIT EXPEDITION OF 1958

During the first week of April 1958 the members of the expedition converged from various parts upon Davao, where Father Paul Finster S.J. and his community of the Ateneo de Davao provided cordial hospitality. The day of departure was set for Easter Tuesday, 8 April.

One member of the expedition failed to arrive. On his way to the Manila airport to join the expedition, Ephraim Caedo of the Ateneo de Manila met a serious automobile accident which sent him and his

parents to the hospital, the latter with serious injuries. He was thus prevented from making the climb—a great loss to us as Caedo was to have been our chief photographer.

Another member of the expedition who also failed to arrive was Father Francisco Araneta S.J., Rector of the Ateneo de Cagayan and our chief sponsor. He had intended to make the ascent with us, but the Ateneo de Cagayan had in the meantime been elevated to university status (renamed Xavier) and the many details that this change entailed prevented the Rector from leaving his post.

Others however took their places at the last minute: Rodolfo Malasmas S.J. (Ateneo de Davao), James McKeough S.J. and Thomas Fitzpatrick S.J. (Xavier University). With Rodolfo Villarica S.J. (Berchman College) and myself (Ateneo de Manila) there were thus three priests in the group and two scholastics. (In nationality, three Filipinos, two Americans.) The five Jesuits left Davao on the 8th; guide, porters and armed escort were recruited at Kidapawan and Perez in Cotabato province; and the fifteen-man expedition set out on Wednesday, 9 April, from the Padilla farm in Balabag, near Perez.

It had taken a year to prepare. We first had to find sponsors who would finance the project, then obtain permission for the undertaking from the proper authorities. Both hurdles were easily overcome, due to the generosity of superiors and of our many friends.

GUIDE, PORTERS, ESCORT

Our guide was an experienced woodsman, a Visayan from Cebu named Pascual, who had been to the summit of Apo once. We were fortunate to find him, for not all guides were reliable, and one hiking party had come to grief only two weeks before, when after so much labor and exertion they found that their guide had brought them up the wrong mountain!

Our seven porters were a mixed crew. One of them was a Christian Visayan, newly landed in Mindanao from Panay. Another was a Bagobo, an animist in the tradition of his fathers, who however was one of the most loyal and thoughtful of our companions. He made it a point to stay behind to be ready to succor the weakest member of the party, to carry extra burdens, and in general to do the things that needed doing without being told. Someone had given him the name Gonzales. He had no other name, and signed himself Gonzales Bagobo. The other five porters were Manobo converts to Islam. At their head was Silang, handsome, competent, personable, a good talker and with a good sense of humor. It was Silang whom we hired first; he recruited the rest. Silang spoke English rather well, having gone to elementary school in prewar years when English

was still well taught in the elementary grades. To everyone else we spoke Visayan.

Our armed escort consisted of Sergeant Pedro Mandig (with a Garand) and Corporal Nicanor Cuyugan (with a carbine), both volunteers from the 69th Company, Philippine Constabulary, and both excellent soldiers. Their marksmanship stood us in good stead when we needed venison, and their woodsmanship stood them in good stead when they had to hike by forced marches without a guide through the forest to catch up with us, for we had a head start on them.

THE SAYABAN FOREST

We followed the same trail (substantially) as had been followed by Father Daigler in 1941. The trail went east and then southeast, past clearings in the forest where logs over a hundred feet long were lying on the ground, past wasteful kaingins where the ancient trees had disappeared into stumps of charred charcoal, past the last Manobo house with a broken anvil and forge in the yard, into the great Sayaban forest where the trees (mostly laua-an) seemed to reached the sky, where the ground was cluttered with fern and plantain and arbor vitae, where now and then an enormous tree took five of us, with joined hands outstretched, to encircle its trunk.

There are four great menaces in such a forest. The first are the snakes—but we encountered only two of those, both of them small, though Father Matthew Casey O.M.I. at Kidapawan had some well authenticated stories of pythons that had devoured human beings. The second was the man-made trap, the *batik*. Our Manobo companions told us never to step on a stick lying across the path. One false step and the trap is sprung and the unwary offender is gored by the hidden spear. The third were the leeches: but because of the eight-month drought, everything was dry and the leeches were in hiding. I had no hesitation, when tired, in lying down full-length upon the soft forest floor. But our good fortune in this regard ended on the fifth day of our hike, for then it began to rain in earnest. It rained continually for two days. The leeches took over.

There was a fourth, the rattan. The rattan is a vine that grows to a good many feet in length. It is ubiquitous in the forest. One need never fear thirst where there is rattan, for in its hollow bore is a delicious drink. And it makes excellent cane furniture. But when rattan is young it is a menace, for its very slender vine, full of thorns, hanging down almost invisibly across the path, tears and claws at one's hat, one's clothes, one's gloves (for it is essential in a forest to wear gloves), and tears at and lacerates one's unprotected face.

At 11:20 a.m. there was a sudden sound like the bleating of sheep. It was the cry of the *kalaw* (*Bucerus galeatus*) such as Montano had

described, and our Manobo porters, who had no timepieces, said that it must be eleven o'clock. *Tilimad-on sa mga manobo nga sa pagtingog sa mga kalaw, a las once na.* At 12:00 there was another sound, a shrill sharp whistle like that of a siren. It was the cicadas, millions of them, starting their daily chant which lasted all afternoon.

There was a fifth danger, from which also we were eventually freed: fatigue. One of our party, not in condition and not used to the walking, could no longer keep up with the pace, and we had to make frequent and prolonged halts to allow him to recover enough strength for the next few paces. It was seriously considered to send him back with some of the porters, but he was a brave and cheerful man and eventually got acclimated to the forest.

We were now climbing a ridge, with the roar of the Marbel River far below us to the left, and the roar of the Matingao River far below us to the right. Both rivers run northwards from the slopes of Apo. We reached a high point of 4650 feet above sea level, and then plunged down almost in precipitate descent to the bed of the Marbel River, four hundred feet below. It was 1:47 p.m. We had been walking six hours. We bathed among the rocks of this rocky river and had lunch.

THE MARBEL RIVER

The Marbel River is a sight to see. It roars down a steep gradient, between high banks, falling in sharp cascades or brawling over and between the innumerable boulders that fill its narrow bed. The river must have resulted from some great upheaval—an earthquake or a volcanic eruption. And indeed there is evidence everywhere of its volcanic source, for the waters are milky white, and the rocks are every shade of brown and red. There is a junction where a rivulet contains pure, crystal-clear water, forever flowing into the milky white stream.

Up this river we went for some two hours, climbing over the boulders, jumping from rock to rock, hurting our shins and other bones when we slipped, climbing up the steep sides of waterfalls, and plunging knee-deep (and occasionally waist-deep) into the cool milky water as we crossed the river innumerable times whenever the overhanging cliffs gave us no foothold on the sides. At sundown we left the river, climbed the cliff, and spent the night in a grass lean-to which some hunter had left. We had been drenched. The night was cold. We built a fire, dried our clothes and shoes, and disappeared into our sleeping bags.

A humorous accident happened during the night. Father Tom Fitzpatrick, trying to dry his shoes, had pushed them too near the fire. They

were burned. Luckily I had brought along an extra pair of canvas shoes in my knapsack, which fitted him if he wore it without socks. Thus shod, and thus handicapped, he was one of the seven who got to the summit of Apo.

THE SPUR

The following morning (after our three Masses) we began the ascent up the wooded spur that was to lead us to Apo itself. The trail was magnificent, but very steep, but really without danger though it was along a very narrow defile, with chasms many hundred feet deep on either side, and with several crevasses that had to be crossed on natural bridges (the roots of trees or fallen logs). At one point we saw a beautiful waterfall on our left. At another, an accident was narrowly averted. A member of the party sat down on a log at the edge of a precipice to rest. The log turned out to be rotten and collapsed under his weight. This and many a slip and fall afforded matter for merriment.

Near the end of the trail, we spent forty anxious minutes while the guide tried to find the way. At length there was a victorious shout from afar. Our guide had found the trail again. The shout was relayed by the men in front. It was taken up by the men behind. The cool forest, dark at midday with the fog closing in, became alive with the clamor. And it was in this victorious mood that we tackled the steepest climb of all, a short but steep (85 degrees) ascent across a crevass and up a cliff, like a natural wall, with roots of trees serving for ladder-steps, and then we found ourselves on a plateau wild with greenery. We were at last on a shelf of the great mountain itself.

The jungle suddenly ended and we found ourselves in a different kind of forest, clean of underbrush, with tall trees that looked like birches. On the ground were large yellowish-green mounds standing some two feet high. They were mounds of moss, softer than any mattress. This is the enchanting forest that borders the lake. Walter Goodfellow in 1903 had called this type of forest "funereal." We saw nothing funereal about it. It was like the forest of Arden. (See pictures.)

THE LAKE

We found the lake, not as Hachisuka had found it in 1928, filled with amber-colored water, but as Father Daigler had found it in 1941, dried up completely, except for a small portion of the northeastern end, and for a narrow and shallow ditch in the middle which runs the entire length of the lake, in which was a sluggish trickle of maggot-infested water. For want of any other, we had to boil this water

and drink it. It had a most repugnant taste. The lake is several kilometers long and over a kilometer wide. An airplane could land on it but it would probably sink for the ground, though dried up and cracked in crusts at the top, is soft and yielding and is apparently a bottomless pit beneath. One of Father Daigler's companions sank waist-deep in the mud in 1941 and would have been sucked in deeper had he not been rescued in time. Our Manobos never ventured upon this dried-up lake alone. They always went in pairs. Along the sides, one can see the high water mark, several feet above the present lake-floor. And in the middle of the lake are the trunks of trees, some of them petrified. The water at one time must have eaten into the shore, carrying away the trees and leaving them in the center when the water evaporated. I say evaporated, for the lake has no outlet. And it has no inlet, either, not even a spring with which to feed it. It must be an old crater or a caldera created in some explosion and gradually filled up with mud. But its southern and northern edges are covered with a very fine close-creeping grass, and upon this lawn, on the southeastern edge of the lake, we established our headquarters: two lean-tos made of branches and grass.

The lake is surrounded on three sides by low hills, but on the fourth, the southern side, it is dominated by the majestic cone of Apo, rising straight up, densely forested at first, then covered by acres of laurel, and finally tapering into what seem to be only two peaks, but what in reality are clusters of many peaks, separated by deep ravines or by ancient craters now filled up. (See pictures.)

That night we heard the barking of a stag, which sounded very much like the barking of a big dog, only hoarser. Then a shot. And half an hour later, our soldiers and porters came back in triumph and deposited their four-antlered catch at our feet. That made sleep impossible for the rest of the night while the venison roasted in the roaring fire.

Before sunrise of Friday, April 11, Father James McKeough said Mass upon a flat boulder, which the rest of us (wrapped up in blankets for it was cold) attended. Father Malasmas and I deferred our Mass to the summit which we hoped to reach before noon. The two scholastics with us also deferred their Holy Communion, so that they could receive the Eucharist at the summit.

TO THE SUMMIT

It had been decided that Father McKeough, with Corporal Cuyugan and six of the porters, should remain at headquarters and explore the lake region. They would take pictures and collect specimens of

plants and insects. Only seven would climb to the summit: Fathers Malasmas, Fitzpatrick, Villarica and myself, with Pascual our guide, and Gonzales Bagobo, and Sergeant Mandig. We had breakfast before starting out—a great convenience rendered possible by the new discipline of the Eucharistic fast.

The climb was very steep but pleasant on the feet, for the loam was almost everywhere covered with thick carpets of moss. The forest was dense at first, but at an elevation of 8,500 feet it suddenly ended, giving place to a whole sea of laurel, growing taller than a man at first, then growing shorter and shorter until it was nothing but a shrub of three or four feet. The climb, as it became more steep, became also more pleasant for the summit was now in sight. At 10:50 we reached the northeastern peak. At 11:15, on a pile of rock at the edge of a filled-up crater, I offered Mass. At 11:50 Father Malasmas offered a second Mass. Then we had lunch and tuned in our transistor radio, and through the air waves came fine music from the Notre Dame station at Cotabato and later also Davao. We then explored the nearby peaks.

We were not as fortunate as former expeditions in the matter of weather. The mountain top was enveloped in fog almost the whole time that we were there. We arrived at the summit in brilliant sunlight, and it was actually hot when we were saying Mass. Then the fog closed in, with a distinct smell of sulphur, and it grew cold. It was 11°C at one o'clock p.m.

DESCENT

We descended after three o'clock. On the way down I discarded my walking staff in favor of another—a sapling that our guide Pascual cut for me in the forest some 8500 feet up. We were soon lost, unable to find the marks that Pascual had made with his bolo on the tree barks on our way up. The result was that our descent was both rugged and rapid. Meantime there had been discovered in two opposite places around the lake, two pagan offerings to the spirits. One was a small square platform of twigs, upon which were placed a plate of rice, an egg, three cigarettes, a coin, and the picture of Gonzales Bagobo. The other was a platform triangular in form, made to resemble a flower, with pieces of cloth upon it. I find no mention of such offerings in Fay-Cooper Cole, but they seem quite usual among these tribes. One finds almost the identical type of offerings upon square platforms at the approaches to a long-house village of the Land Dayaks in Sarawak, Borneo.

We broke camp the following day and spent the night, in drenching rain, at the Marbel River. It was still raining the following day

when we went back through the Sayaban forest. We got back to Davao that night, the 15th of April.

The news of our climb was in the Manila papers the following day and over the Davao radio. Telegrams of congratulations began to arrive, including one from Father Clark, the Jesuit Provincial, and one from the Caedos who were still laid up in the hospital. But the British Ambassador, Mr. George Clutton, who passed through Davao the next day, paid us the best compliment of all. "Next time you go mountain climbing," he said, "I am coming along."

APPENDIX A

HOW MANY PEAKS DOES APO HAVE?

The summit of Apo is variously described by the various authors, some of whom speak at first-hand, others at second. Schadenberg and Koch spoke of three peaks as does Montero y Vidal who is obviously following them.¹ But others speak of only two peaks, while Hachisuka speaks of ten! This is of course confusing and at first sight contradictory. The reason is that Apo, unlike Everest (or, among Philippine volcanoes, unlike Mayon or Canlaon) does not taper to one single peak, but its summit is really a cluster of peaks, some of them very sharp, others less so. Hachisuka, following the notes of Colonel Fletcher who was in Governor Gutierrez's party in 1928, probably gives the most accurate account of all: Apo is a series of ten peaks, superimposed on one base two miles in diameter and about 1500 feet below the highest peak. The present peaks form an almost circular group, with the highest peak near the north side. Between these peaks are five or six old craters.

Much therefore depends on what one calls a peak. The north-eastern peak, which we named the Gisbert (in honor of Father Gisbert, the first priest to climb Apo, for it was upon that peak that we said Mass), is really a cluster of some four peaks with a central flat area which, from its softness, appears to be an old crater filled up. (Father Daigler, who walked barefoot on this portion, found the ground there warmer than in the surrounding areas.)

The Gisbert is separated by a deep col from two other peaks which are directly west of it. One of these, the more northerly, of

¹ José Montero y Vidal *Historia de la piratería Malayo-Mahometana en Mindanao, Joló y Borneo*, 2 vols. Madrid 1888, Vol. I, prólogo pp. 4-5. Cf. also his *El archipiélago filipino y las islas Marianas, Carolinas y Palaos*, Madrid 1886, pp. 366-367.

the two, is sharply pointed and difficult to climb. We called it the Xavier, after the Apostle of the East and the patron of Xavier University. The more southerly of the two seems to be the highest peak of all. We called it the Rajal, after Apo's conqueror, and upon its summit we affixed a plaque—the same metal plaque which had served us as a flat table upon which to put the altar stone during all our Masses thus far in the journey.

Hachisuka and the previous accounts that precede him speak of the old craters being small lakes. Even this appears to have changed in the recent past. Earthquakes or the drought may have broken up the old craters that served as cisterns to hold water. Fathers Francisco Claver and Edgardo Reyes who climbed Apo after us made it a point to climb down to the floor of one of these craters, and to take a picture of its sides.

APPENDIX B

HOW HIGH IS MOUNT APO?

The height of Mount Apo, like almost everything else about the mountain, is given variously by various authors. Montano, who was in Rajal's expedition in 1880, gives two different figures: 3133 meters in his *Voyage aux Philippines et en Malaisie*, 3141 meters in his *Rapport a M. le Ministre de l'instruction publique*. Father Gisbert who went up in the same expedition gives the figure as 3141 meters. (This is equivalent to 10,302 feet.) The truth is that Montano's barometric reading was taken some 100 meters below the summit, so that his total figure is a guess. Schadenberg and Koch in 1882 got a barometric reading of 513 mm., which they interpreted as an elevation of 3300 meters. Subsequent writers merely adopted one or other of these figures. Thus, the *Diccionario enciclopédico hispano-americano* (II 405) gives the height as 3140 meters, as does Espasa (V 1006). Karl Supper gives the figure 3143 (*Vulkankunde*, Stuttgart, 1927.)

In 1901 Whitmarsh brought an aneroid barometer to Apo's summit and got 9450 feet. Smith in 1908 got two readings with the hypsometer: 2956 meters and 2902. He also gives the figure 2955 meters (or 9,692.40 feet). Father Miguel Saderra Masó S.J. in an article on Philippine volcanoes published in Cologne in July 1925 cites Smith and gives the figure 2912 (which in feet would be 9,551.36). In his **VOLCANOES** (see list of abbreviations) he gives the figure in feet: 10,311. Musper and van Padang follow Smith: 2955 meters. Collier's encyclopedia gives the figure roundly: 10,000 feet. A *Pro-nouncing Gazetteer and Geographical Dictionary of the Philippine Islands* (Washington 1902 p. 300) gives one foot more than Father Masó: 10,312.

More recently IRVING (see abbreviations) gives the official figure 9690 feet. ANDAL-YAMBAO give 2953 meters.

In view of this disagreement among the experts, we shall not presume to decide the question. But our own aneroid altimeter at 1:40 p.m. on Friday, 11 April, registered 9305, the Kollsman number being set arbitrarily at 29.94, the temperature being 11° C. Through the kindness of Major Fortunato Ledesma of the Philippine Air Corps, this and other data (including the corresponding Kollsman numbers at Davao and Cotabato) were given to Major Felino Millare of the Air Corps, who computed our altitude as 9950 feet above sea level.

Without therefore presuming to decide the question, and without necessarily assuming our own figures to be free from error, we might say that Smith's figure is probably too low, and that those may not be wrong who found Apo over 10,000 feet in height.

Of late there has been some speculation as to whether Mount Quitanlad or Mount Katalungan, both in Bukidnon Province, might not be higher than Apo. Quitanlad and Katalungan are now officially listed as 9680 and 9670 feet respectively. In the absence of proof to the contrary, Apo's claim to being the highest of Philippine mountains seems well founded.

APPENDIX C

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

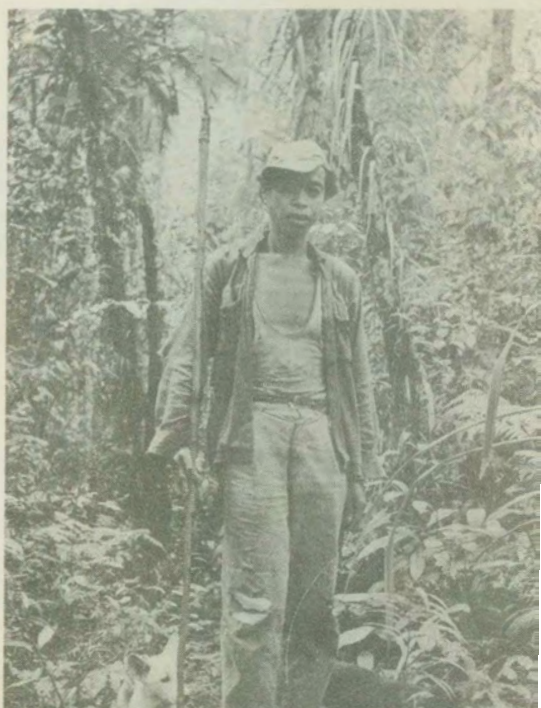
Besides the sponsors and patrons who made the expedition and its publication in these pages possible, there were many others who cooperated to make our journeying both possible and pleasant. To them all we wish to express heartfelt thanks. In particular: To Father Paul Finster and the Jesuit community at the Ateneo de Davao, for gracious hospitality; to Dr. and Mrs. Roque Monfort of Davao and to the Obosa family, also of Davao, for considerable assistance in procuring supplies; to Father Matthew Casey O.M.I., then of Kidapawan and now of Midsayap, for cordial hospitality and generous help; to Dr. Eduardo Rellin and Mr. Domingo Frondosa, both of Kidapawan, for transportation to and from the Padilla farm; to Mr. Marino Panis, manager of the Padilla farm, for generous hospitality and other help; to the Philippine Air Lines and to Captain Silvano Quimbo of the PAL staff, for the loan of an altimeter; to Captain Causing, commander of the 69th Company of the Philippine Constabulary at Kidapawan, for providing an armed escort; to Berchmans College in Cebu, for the loan of cameras and some camping equipment; to Mr. Paul Kiener, for air reconnaissance; to the Honorable Undersecretary of National Defense, Mariano Yenke, for military clearance of photographs of Apo from the air; to the Reverend Francis Xavier Clark,

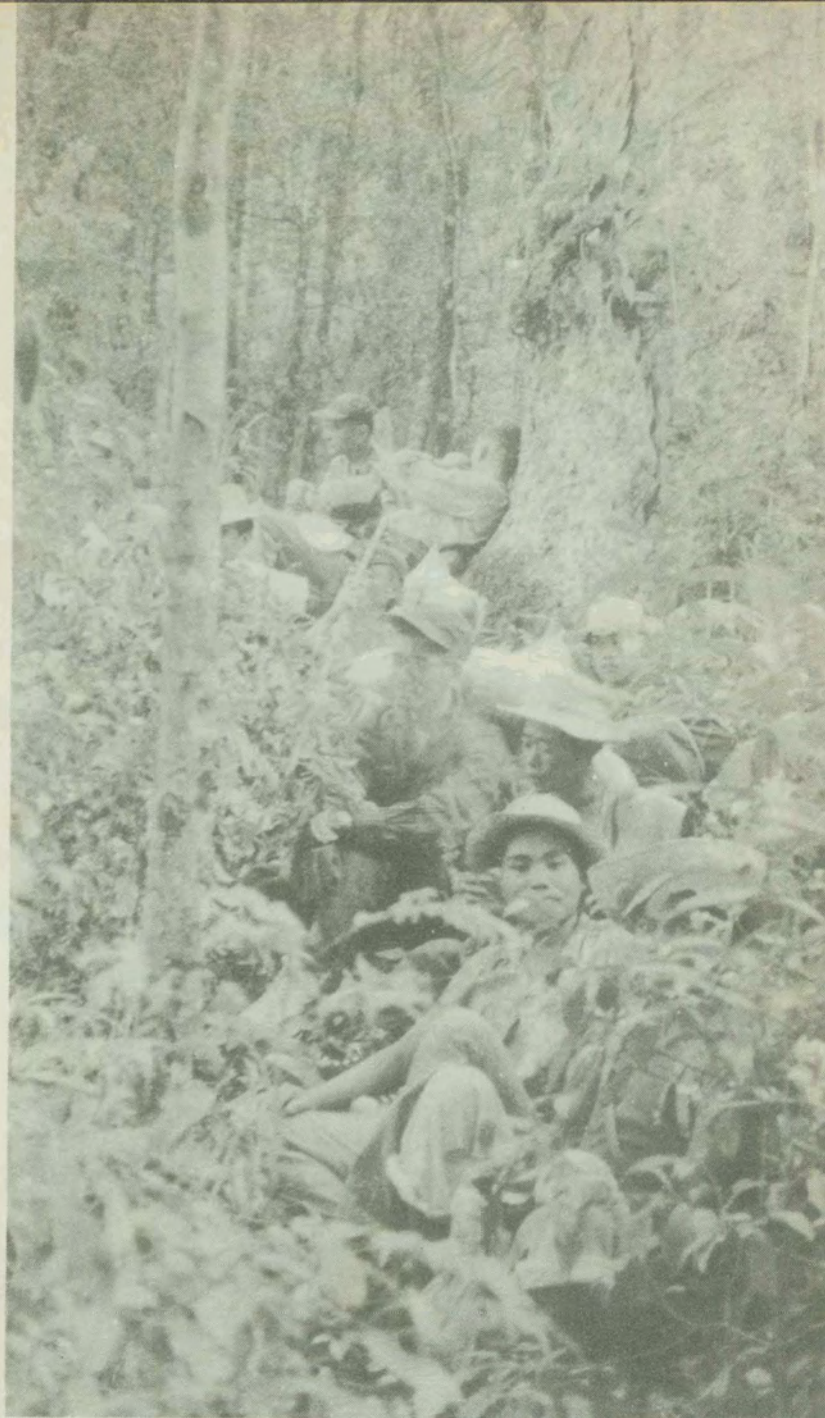


The "snow" on Mount Apo (shining brightly in the morning sun) is really a layer of sulphur deposited on the mountain's face by steam jets issuing from the volcano's depths.



(Above:) Ancient trees, more than a hundred feet tall, fall to axe and fire in the clearings that dent the great forests that surround Apo. (Right:) A Manobo hunter chases his prey with dog and spear in the Sayaban forest.



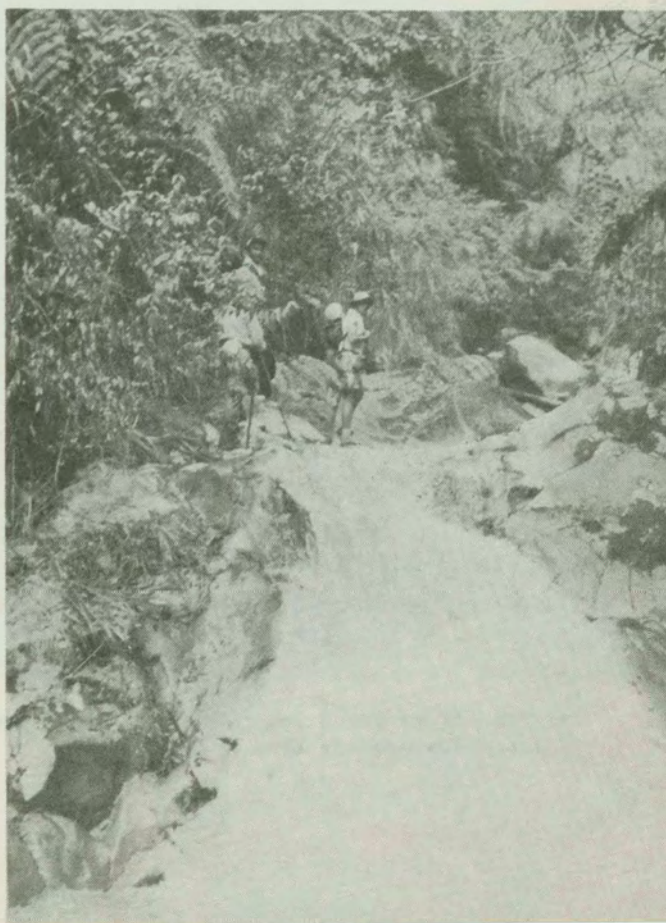


A brief rest in the Sayaban jungle. The giant tree in right background took five men to encompass.





The Marbel River
roars down a
steep gradient
between high
banks, falling in
sharp cascades or
brawling over
and between
the innumerable,
many - colored
boulders that fill
its narrow bed.



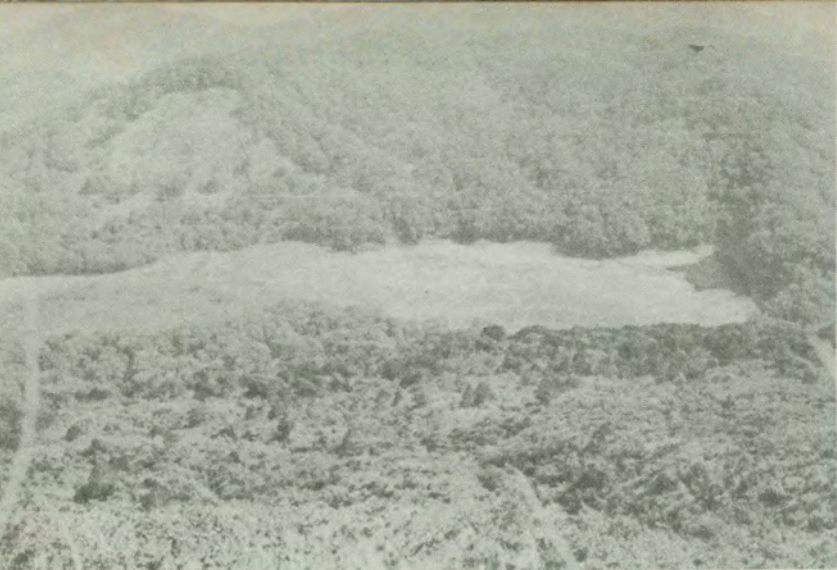


At 7500 feet the tropical jungle yields first to giant ferns and then to a semi-temperate forest of birch-like trees.



(Above:) Looking south through the trees towards the lake. (Below:) Looking north. The summit of Apo is behind the camera.





(Above:) The lake as seen from the summit of Apo. (Below:) The lake, without outlet or inlet, is almost completely dried up, except in its northeastern corner. Note high water mark indicating former water level.



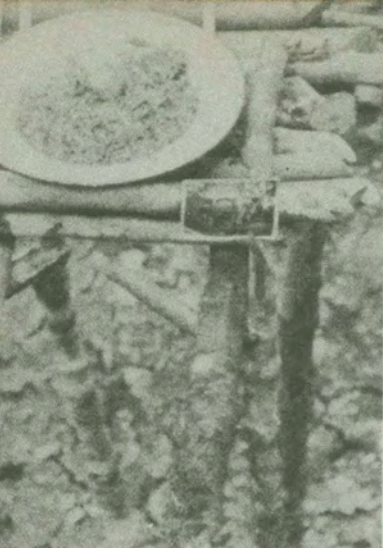


The edges of the lake are covered with a fine grass, but the ground is cracked into a thousand pieces. Beneath the hard crust are several feet of mud.

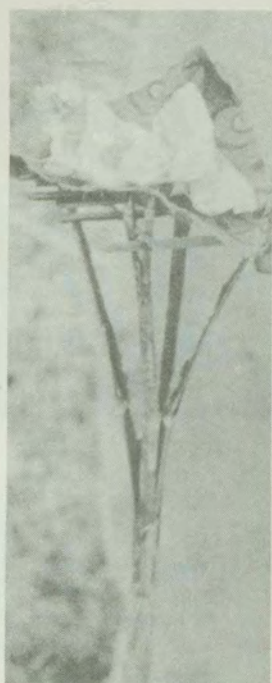
Testing the depth of the mud. A member of the 1941 expedition sank to his waist here but was quickly rescued.



The lake floor is dry, cracked and yielding.



On opposite ends of the lake these pagan offerings were found. On the northeastern shore, upon a rectangular platform, a plate of cooked rice, an egg, a coin, three cigarettes and a photograph of Gonzales Bagobo. On the southwestern shore, on a triangular platform resembling a flower, an offering of cloth.



Enchanting forests, festooned with moss and orchids, surround the lake upon Apo's northern slope 7500 feet above sea level.







Above:) The moss grows
 large mounds along the
 shore. (Right:) Whole
 tree trunks like this one
 must have floated long ago
 and are now left dry in
 the center of the lake.





Two lean-tos made of branches and grass serve as headquarters for the expedition.



Father McKeough offers Mass upon a boulder on the lake shore.







(Left:) Our guide climbs a laurel tree to reconnoitre.
(Below:) Xavier Peak seen through the laurel.

The peaks of Apo stand clearly in the morning sunlight above the lake. Gisbert Peak to the left, Xavier and Rajal to the right.



Laurel and rhododendron cover the mountain slope above 8500 feet. Growing tall at first, the laurel becomes more and more stunted as one approaches the summit.





The Gisbert cluster seen through the laurel from the northern slope. Laurel tuft hides Xavier and Rajal Peaks. (Below:) Fathers Malasmas and Villarica with Sergeant Mandig peer through the approaching fog from the summit of Rajal, Apo's highest peak. (Note plaque in Father Malasmas' hand.)

Xavier, one of Apo's many peaks, is named after the Apostle of the Indies, patron of Cagayan de Oro's Xavier University.





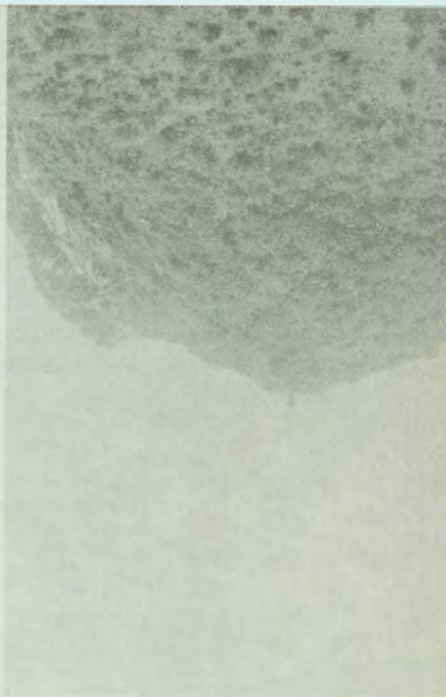
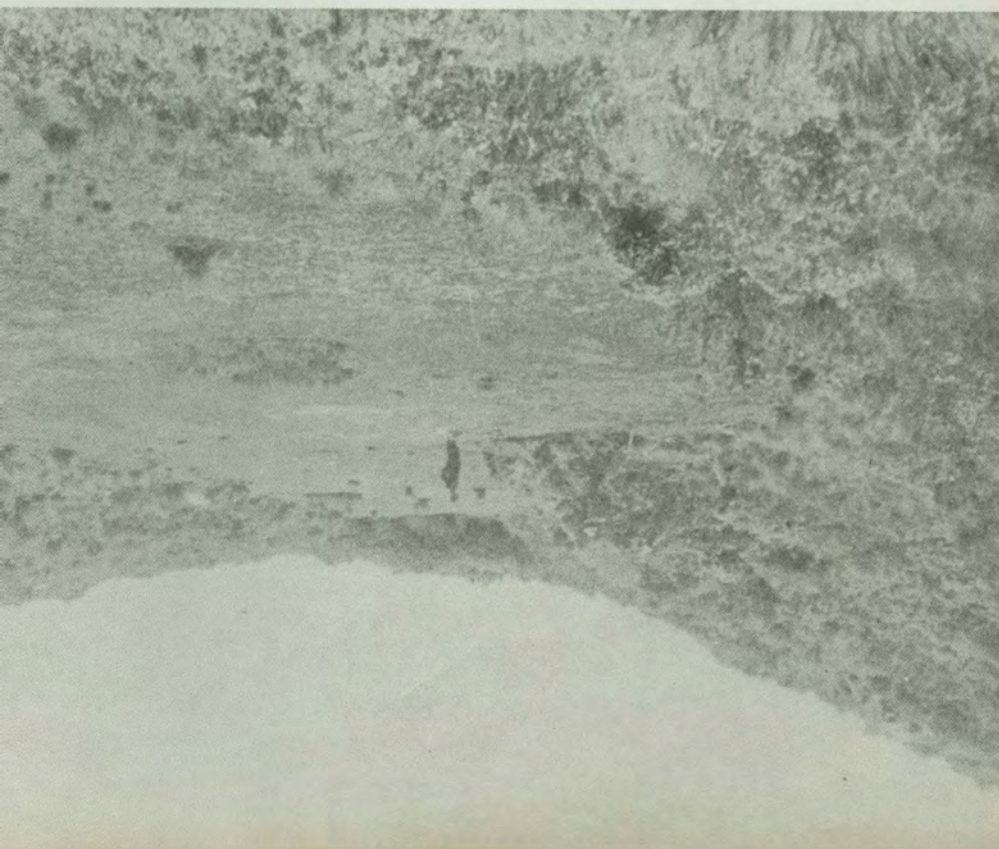
Sulfur issues in hot jets from the mountain's depths. Picture was taken from summit, looking down the steep slope.

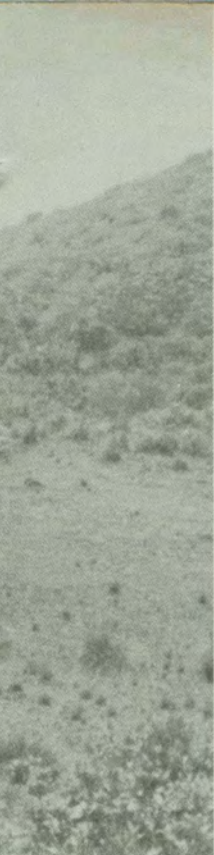
(Above:) Natural cairns are reminders of ancient explosions and upheavals. (Below:) Beyond Rajal Peak to the southwest lies a wilderness of peaks, boulders and ancient craters.





The Gisbert is really a cluster of four peaks with a soft, level, circular portion in the center, probably an ancient crater. Mass was offered on a pile of rock upon left slope, above where Father Villarica stands. (Left:) Member of expedition standing atop one of the four peaks that make up the Gisbert cluster gives an idea of the height of these peaks. (Picture was taken as the fog began to close in.)

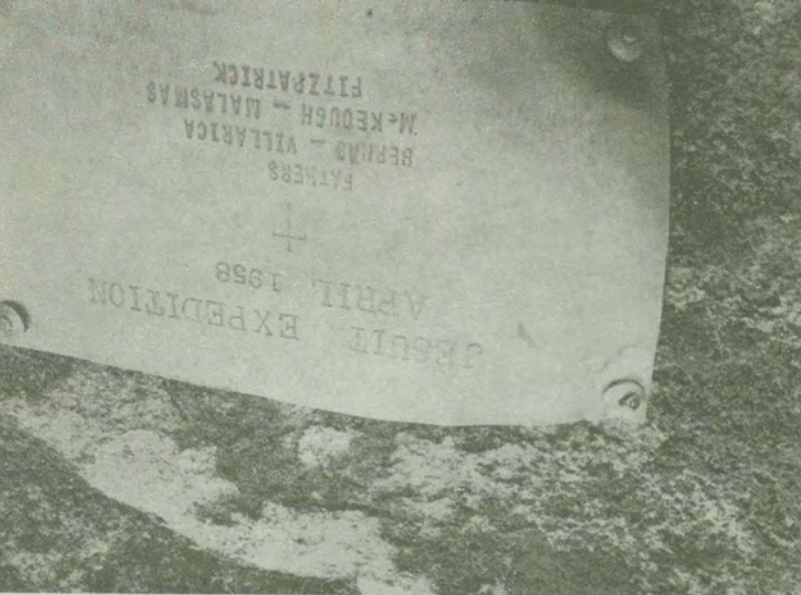




The author (above) offered the first Mass atop Mount Apo, followed immediately after by Father Malasmas (below), with Father Fitzpatrick (right) and the author assisting.







The rocky wall of an ancient crater, seen from the crater floor.

The metal plaque with cross and inscription also as a flat surface upon which the M were offered.



