

INTERESTING PLACES

ANTIPOLO



ANTIPOLO is the chief pilgrimage spot of the Philippines. For many years, people from different parts of the country have come to this little town nestling among the mountains to pay their homage to "Our Lady of Peace and Prosperous Voyage".

Journeying to Antipolo in the old days involved hardship and sacrifices. In the first place, there were very few vehicles which could reach the place. No good roads could be traveled on, so many devout Filipinos went to Antipolo on foot or in rattan hammocks carried by hired men. Sometimes, caritelas could be hired to convey passengers to the pilgrimage place, but few horses could stand the difficult passes and rough roads.

At present, however, the trip to Antipolo has been made very easy. Good roads lead to the church and enable automobiles and trucks to do good business. The trains have their own buses which take passengers from the station of Taytay to the heart of the town itself. Even the small taxis can

now reach Antipolo. Transportation is very easy for the present-day pilgrims.

The town of Antipolo is on a mountainous section in the province of Rizal. The fame of the place sprung from the miraculous patron saint called Our Lady of Peace and Prosperous Voyages. The image of the Virgin is among the most beautifully decked images of the Philippines. The garments and bright jewels which adorn it are said to be worth about a quarter of a million pesos.

The miraculous image was first brought to the Philippines by Juan Nino de Tabora who was appointed Governor-General of the Philippines in 1626. The image was brought here to insure the galleons or old trading vessels of safety at sea. According to the legends, the Virgin crossed the Pacific eight or ten times besides the first trip. On each voyage, she had calmed the tempests at sea. She was said to have appeared one time on the branches of the antipolo or bread-fruit tree. So the town was named Antipolo in her honor. It is believed that she was not burned when the Chinese cast her into a roaring fire in 1639, but the incident made her very dark. She also gave the Spaniards victory over 12 Dutch ships when they fought off Mari-veles.

In 1672, the image of the Virgin was removed to Antipolo where it has since stayed. Yearly, during the month of May, people from many provinces travel over the mountains to attend masses and join processions held in honor of this beloved saint. In accordance with pledges and vows made in time of trouble, devout Catholics accomplish trips from the door of the church to the altar on bended knees.