

A LEGEND OF MOUNT ARAYAT

By ROMAN C. TUAZON *

RISING abruptly from the plains of Central Luzon is a mountain which has long been famous among the inhabitants of that part of the Philippines. This mountain is known as Mount Arayat. It is the highest mountain in the central plain of Luzon.

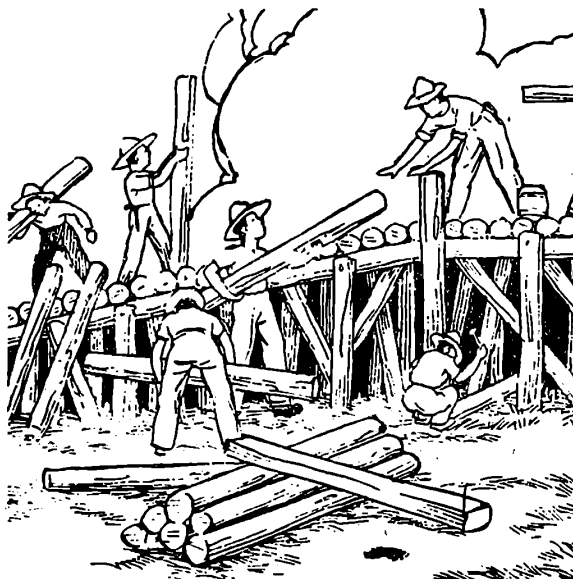
People who live near Mount Arayat tell a legend—a story which is not true, at least, not entirely true, and which has been told from one generation to another—about this famous mountain.

According to this legend, Mount Arayat was not always located where it is now, near the town of Arayat, but at one time it rose near the town of Candaba. Furthermore, according to this legend, the mountain was taken to its present location by means of powerful magic. This is the story which some of the old inhabitants living near Mount Arayat tell:

Close by the town of Candaba, on the slope of Mount Arayat (which long ago rose near Candaba), there once lived a man named Pinatubo and his daughter Sinukuan. This man understood magic, but nevertheless, he was a good, kind man who never used his magical powers for any evil purpose.

Pinatubo loved his daughter Sinukuan very much. "I must do everything in my power to see that no harm ever befalls my lovely daughter," said he. "It would break my heart if any misfortune ever overtook her."

Sinukuan, the daughter of Pinatubo, was both beautiful and good, and loved her father dearly. As Sinukuan developed into womanhood, the fame of her beauty and charm spread far and wide.



Many suitors came to woo her, but all were dismissed by her father because he thought they were not good enough for his beautiful daughter.

Now it happened that in the town of Candaba lived a man named Mayumo. He had heard of the beautiful Sinukuan, and decided to see if he could get her for his wife.

Accordingly, as was the custom in those times, Mayumo sent his best friend to talk with Pinatubo, the father of Sinukuan, to ask for the hand of this desirable young woman in marriage.

Mayumo's friend went to Pinatubo. He said, "Mayumo wishes to marry your daughter, and I have come to ask for her hand in marriage for my friend. Mayumo, as you know, is rich. He owns much fertile land in the plains of Luzon. He has many carabaos, and flocks of goats, and herds of swine. He owns groves of coconut trees, and fields of sugar-cane. He has gold, too. He will

(Please turn to page 119.)

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A LEGEND OF MOUNT . . .

(Continued from page 103)

give your daughter a very handsome dowry if you will give her to him in marriage."

Pinatubo did not answer at once. He realized that Mayumo could bestow riches upon his beautiful daughter, and yet he was not entirely satisfied with him. But he was not entirely satisfied with him. But he was afraid to refuse the offer of Mayumo. So he said, "Tell your friend that I will speak to Sinukuan about this matter. She and I will make a decision. Return in three days and you shall have the answer to take to Mayumo."

After talking to Sinukuan, Pinatubo decided that Mayumo was not the man to be his son-in-law. And yet he was afraid to refuse the rich and powerful Mayumo. He thought and thought, and finally decided upon a plan whereby his daughter would be saved from marrying Mayumo.

When Mayumo's friend returned after three days, Pinatubo said, "Tell Mayumo that if he wishes to marry my daughter, he must do one thing. If he cannot do it, he cannot marry her."

"What is it that you would have Mayumo do?" asked Mayumo's friend.

"Pray tell it. Mayumo will do anything for your daughter Sinukuan. He is a rich man."

"Tell Mayumo," said Pinatubo, "that if he can make a wooden bridge on which Sinukuan can walk from her home on Mount Arayat to the home of Mayumo, he shall have my daughter for his wife."

"Oh, that is very easy!" said Mayumo's friend. "I am sure Mayumo can do it."

"But I have not told you all of the requirement," said Pinatubo. "Mayumo must have the bridge finished within one year from today. One year, mind you. No more, no less. If it is not finished, he cannot have her."

Mayumo's friend left the home of Pinatubo and Sinukuan on Mount Arayat, and hurried to the home of Mayumo, where he found his friend waiting.

"What is Pinatubo's answer?" asked Mayumo.

"You must build a wooden bridge from your home to the home of Sinukuan and have the bridge finished within a year."

"That is very easy," said Mayumo. "Very, very easy! I shall immediately set all of my laborers and many more to build the wooden bridge."

Mayumo called together all his laborers and many more men which he had hired. He said to them, "I want to marry Sinukuan, the most beautiful girl in the world. But her father wants me to build a wooden bridge from her home on Mount Arayat to mine, and have the bridge completed within a year. If I do not get the bridge completed by that time, I cannot marry Sinukuan. Come, let us get to work, and build the bridge."

So they all went to the forest with axes and *bolos* and saws. They cut a great amount of timber. They cut all the timber they could find. Then they began building the wooden bridge from the home of Mayumo to the home of Pinatubo and Sinukuan on Mount Arayat.

Now Pinatubo had resolved in his mind that he would prevent Mayumo from completing the bridge. He would use his magical powers in order that Mayumo would be prevented from finishing the work.

Mayumo and his men toiled day after day in building the wooden bridge. Day after day the bridge became longer than before. Gradually it ex-

(Please turn to page 126.)

THE LEGEND OF . . .

(Continued from page 119)

tended nearer to the home of Pinatubo and Sinukuan. Day after day more trees were cut, and more timber was put into the bridge.

Then a strange thing happened. The greater part of that portion of the bridge already constructed disappeared! When and where it went nobody knew. It just disappeared. You see, Pinatubo was using his magical powers, and by means of magic had caused a part of the bridge already constructed to disappear. Nobody except Pinatubo knew why a part of the bridge had disappeared.

When Mayumo saw that a part of the bridge had disappeared, he could scarcely believe his eyes. But he was not daunted. All the trees nearby had been cut, so he hired twice as many laborers as before and sent them to the distant Caraballo Mountains for more timber. They cut and cut day and night.

Finally the laborers had enough timber collected to complete the bridge. But it had taken them a long time to cut and to carry the logs from the distant Caraballo Mountains to the site of the bridge. The workmen labored day and night and worked as hard as they

could, but the bridge was not completed within the specified time.

Mayumo had failed! He had not been able within a year's time to build the bridge which Pinatubo required! He couldn't marry the beautiful Sinukuan!

"I will steal her at night from her father's home on Mount Arayat," thought Mayumo.

Pinatubo, by means of his magic, discovered the plot which Mayumo had in mind. "I can easily prevent that," said Pinatubo to himself.

Accordingly, by means of his magical powers, Pinatubo moved Mount Arayat from the town of Candaba to its present location near the present town of Arayat. That is why the town is called Arayat. Pinatubo moved the mountain so that Sinukuan would be farther from Mayumo. "I can be more watchful of my lovely daughter," said Pinatubo to himself, "if her home on Mount Arayat is far away from the home of Mayumo. Besides, it will then be more difficult for him to try to steal her at night."

And so Mount Arayat was placed in its present location. If you go to Candaba, you can still see the

where Mount Arayat once stood; at least, that is what some of the old folk will tell you. Where Mount Arayat once stood near Candaba is now a low place filled with water, some will point out. People call the place Candaba swamp.

Near Arayat today we can find a large footprint on a rock. It is said to be one of the footprints of Pinatubo.

As for the beautiful Sinukuan, the legend says that she did not marry Mayumo—thanks to the magical powers of her father Pinatubo—but instead married a more desirable young man, and for many years the happy couple lived peacefully in their home on Mount Arayat.

THE TYRANT . . .

(Continued from page 125)

he does not advertise his presence and invite his enemies by the bombastic roaring in which the lion delights to indulge.

The tiger is an animal of serious mind, and he attends strictly to business. A lion will stalk out in the open, in broad daylight, but the tiger sticks closely to cover until the friendly darkness renders it safe to roam abroad. Then he is, indeed, "the tyrant of the Asiatic jungle."