

BOOK REVIEW

Reich, Claude V. *Blossoms from the Kalatuchi Tree*. New York: Vantage Press, 1991. Hardcover, 132 pp., black and white photographs. US \$14.95 from Vantage Press, Inc., 516 West 34th Street, New York, New York 10001, U.S.A.

Claude Reich is a talented writer, and an insightful philosopher, and a witty commentator on the human state. He has long been known as a solid scientist in leprosy research circles. It is a pleasure to read his book and share with him his enjoyment and sensitivities to a land, a time, a people, and a career.

The book touches on leprosy as a disease which still exists, and which deserves respect, but does not need to be feared. Drugs "... are the tools that have brought leprosy

out of the dark ages." Glimpses of the author's good-hearted frustrations in attempting to cultivate *Mycobacterium leprae* culminate with the wonderful observations that "counting germs is the basis of the science of microbiology. Leprosy is the ultimate challenge to that science."

Humor, nostalgia, personal challenges met—and some unmet—snapshots of memories and impressions, all mingle into a narrative of 20 years of an American living and working in Cebu in leprosy research. Those were exciting decades in the progress of leprosy research. One can only hope that the next two decades will be equally exciting, and that Cebu and other facilities dedicated to leprosy research can continue to play a role in that progress.—RCH