

BOATBUILDING OF THE SAMA

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The Place and the People

One of the man's earliest inventions is a boat. The exact date of its invention, no historian can tell. The origin of the boat is claimed by mankind. The primitive man was its inventor. He invented the boat in order to progress. He used it as a means of transportation and communication, principally for food gathering; secondarily, for war and conveying passengers.

Egyptians, Palestinians, Tigris-Euphratians or Sumerians, Chinese, Japanese, Greeks, Romans, Carthaginians, Arabs, Indians, Danish, Anglo-Saxons, and Vikings were early mariners who invented their own kinds of boat. Pacific islanders, the Polynesians, Melanesians, and Micronesians, emigrated from Asia on their own boats. The Indonesians and the Malaysians that spread throughout the insular Southeast Asia to inhabit the islands, crossed the seas and channels on their own kind of boats. In like manner, the Sama¹, an ethnic group in Tawi-Tawi² in southern Philippines, built their own boats, perfecting their craft through the centuries.

The bulk of the Sama are in Tawi-Tawi.³ In the 1970 census, they numbered about 110,116. About 50,000 Sama also inhabit Sulu islands, particularly in Manubal, Sibud on the fringe of Pandami Island, Sisangat, Siasi, Laminosa, Kabing-nga-an, Pangutaran Group, West Jolo, and Tongkil Group while 100,000 Sama inhabit the provinces of Basilan and Zamboanga del Sur. In the provinces of Cotabato and

Davao there are about 50,000 Sama. In Southern Palawan there are about 30,000 Sama. Scattered elsewhere in the Visayas, Manila, and other provinces are Sama spread throughout the insular Southeast Asia.⁴

In Tawi-Tawi province the municipal distribution of Sama inhabitants is as follows:⁵

South Ubian	12,749
Tandubas.	27,069
Balimbing	10,556
Bongao	20,983
Simunul.	12,135
Sitangkay	13,738
Kagayan Mapun.	12,577
Turtle Islands	309
Total	110,116

The populated islands are separated from one another by sea and channels, except the island of Tandubas and the island of Secubong which are connected by land under shallow water. The distance between islands is generally 5-15 miles. Between channels are strong sea currents during high tide or low tide; when the northwind comes, the channels are generally difficult to navigate in small boats due to large waves and strong currents.

The Sea: The Challenge To Move Over There

The Sama has the distinction of having developed a *sea culture*. *Sea culture* is a concept and idea, a way of thinking, an action, a series of activities — economic, educational, political; it is an idiosyncrasy, a personality, an aspiration, a dream, and a lore, as well as a way of life adaptable to an ecological situation.

The Lore of the Sea

“The last echo of the song of a sailor arouses a lass from her deep slumber; the song of a lass brings the sailor home.” This Sama saying

underscores the lore⁶ of the sea. To a Sama, the lore of the sea beckons a challenge to sail to faraway lands across the sea where lies a mountain of gold, a beautiful woman, other peoples' adventures in which he can do deeds of valor or heroism or win a princess. Between where a Sama sits or stands and the island far away is a sea, perhaps calm, perhaps turbulent. One way to get there is by swimming but it requires much stamina. So a Sama thinks of a boat to bring him over to a dreamland.

The lore of the sea is constantly evoked among the Sama. It is heard everyday: through the sounds of the *tabuli* (conchs) at dawn and evening, the songs of the sailors at dawn and moonlit nights, the sounds of paddles, and the rattling of fishing gears. To the Sama, the sea holds many stories, tales that are told and retold by the elders to the young in boat-trips, at home, in the *street-haman*, and anywhere the tales seem like impelling forces to the Sama to build a boat, bring jewels home for his wife and daughter, and prosperity to his kinsfolk.

Fortune Every Day

To a Sama, every day is a day of fortune, (*sukod*)⁷. In fishing, fortune is open to the Sama in the morning when the tide is high, the water is clear and the weather is calm; it is time to move by boat. When it is low-tide in calm mornings, it is time to catch fish in the reefs and lagoons for fish are left trapped in the embankments when the sea recedes. During high tide, fishing is called *nantong*, with the Sama using either harpoons, hooks and line, or fishnet on the corner of a cove, or at the end of a causeway. On dark, calm nights, the Sama fisherman uses a *no-o*, coconut torches or *magkulait*, bright lamps, to attract the fishes; but on moonlit nights, when the weather is calm, they fish in the famous fishing grounds: Ubian-Lehaleha-Pasigan-Kalupag reefs, Bubuan-Maningkal-lat deep, Pandanan-Tumbangan-Basbas deep, Kongti-payan deep/shoals, Sal-lang Kambah-kambah of Tandubas, Latuan-Mantabuan deep, Banaran-Bilatan channel, Baseh-bulih reefs, Bilatan-Simunul-Bongao-Apo islands deeps/reefs, Sitangkay, and the far north Tahu/Pearl Banks.

Every day is a day of fortune because a boat from the sea brings luck, food, and jewels, unless the weather has been unjust. When a boat

moves out to sea and unfurls its sail, there must be this belief.

When a boat returns and is caught by low-tide, it would drop anchor beyond the sandbar or at the opening called *lab-bangan* and the news and the story of fortune, *laba* (its opposite is *logie*, not profitable). When a boat arrives at high tide, it anchors immediately on the causeway, *pantan*, and sailors' kinsfolk would be at hand to meet it. The news of its arrival and *laba* is spread quickly.

A boat that brings fortune every time it sets to sea, would not stay long at home. It will be used again either by the owner or his kinsmen, or is rented out to others at high rates.

The Advanced Knowledge of Navigation

Almost every island, point, cove, sandbar, reef, lagoon, channel, embarkment, shallow or deep area in the sea, the distance from one island to another, are all marked by reference points called *panduga*. This knowledge (*pitua*) is orally transmitted from one generation to the other.

The *panduga* are two or more marks on two opposite points between two islands. When a Sama or his boat is in the middle, in perfect line with the *panduga*, the application of the *pitua* had been realized. The *panduga* are also applied to Southeast Asian places where ancient Sama sailors have navigated. Many times, Sama boats have drifted, capsized, wrecked, or burned. But these incidents enriched the Sama's *pitua* and around them were built the tradition (*salsila*), an aspect of the Sama culture. The experiences of the Sama not only produced many tales of adventures but significantly developed boat building, bringing about changes in the boat's design and structure, and advanced knowledge of navigation, which had been tried, tested and proven accurate.

In the sea, a Sama learns to keep the *papata*, a permanent traditional lesson. One of his navigational guides is the star (*bintang*). *Bintang* also means *to think*, a reminder for him that in navigation it is best "to think" what is right, easy, and quick or to act fast with accuracy.

Crossing the sea from one island to another is a daily activity of the Sama that began in ancestral times and has continued to this day.

The Sama has to cross the sea to procure food. In ancient times, it was mainly to fish; much later, it was also to kidnap slaves or to visit friends. Today it is done so the Sama could do business—by barter and trade or by selling sea and farm products. The Sama thus developed not only advanced knowledge in navigation but in business, as well. Contacts with people of other islands also widened the Sama's world.

When a Sama has an idea he would discuss it with another Sama, either in *opama* (talking with facts) or *paru-paru* (talking fictively). Such talk may end in preparation (*pagpan-pan*), principally of a boat and its fishing gears and tools (*kasangkapan*).

The News Everyday Heard About

News is *haka*. *Batuk-batuk* is the circulation of the *haka*. Sometimes *habar* is also spoken as news; though of Malay origin, it is of local usage. *Haka* is characterized as the latest; it also implies urgency, emergency and prompt response. In the past, *haka* was the news of war, death, famine, and surprises. The *haka* on catastrophic events such as famine, fire, earthquake, tidal waves and typhoons, needed speedy and immediate responses from the people. *Haka* still retains most of its old implications, but has today taken new, more optimistic connotations, that of things, especially the future socio-economic well-being.

Batuk-batuk borders on a-gossip. However, a *batuk*, the larger scheme, and *batuk-batuk*, smaller scheme, being repeated have some verifiable truth in them. *Batuk-batuk* concerns the many phases of the socio-economic life and activities of the Sama. It is spoken daily by Sama of all ages and sexes and is widely circulated. News of limited circulation is called *soli-soli*. It is topical, common interest spoken among few friends. *Soli-soli* is also the seemingly endless conversation, the interminable conversation between two persons; oftentimes, one of them relates his achievements.

Harbar as news has political and social implications. It is circulated among the elite, hence, obviously it is high class news limited to a small number of people.

News, any news for that matter, has some value to the Sama. If the news has economic value, the persons who discuss it may come to planning (*magkiril*), enlarging their circle to include their kinsfolk and to form a conference (*magisson*).

Musay Magusaha: To Paddle and Earn a Living

Musay Magusaha is the Sama way of earning a living.

The etymology of *musay* is *mu* for moving, *usay* for straightened and corrected, and *say* (pronounced *sai*) for whom. Literally, *musay* means "who moves forward?" If *mu* is modified into *bu* and combined with *say*, the word formed would be *busay*, meaning "paddle." Prefixed with *mag* (*magbusay*), the word means "to paddle." *Magbusay* is the activity/action, while *musay* is the business of the journey, which implies economic process and infinite direction of wealth, gains, a trip across the sea by boat. Many Sama elders speak of their knowledge of *musay* to far away land, *Madday*,⁸ were people are called *Lan-nang*.⁹

Magusaha is to earn a living. The Sama people earn their living principally by the use of their boats in many ways. *Magusaha* implies a journey by a boat to places where the Sama people can barter or sell their products, which generally come from the sea; to transport merchandise from one port to another and from one island to another. *Magusaha* also implies a business with a rapid turn-over of goods; of working, in industries in large communities; and even pursuits in the high seas.

The Origin of Boat Building

The Sama is racially a Malay. The Sama today claimed that his ancestors (*kambo-bo-an*) once lived in Malaysian Barat or *Sadupan* but their offsprings (*palanakan*) came in several waves to Tawi-Tawi by

boats. From tradition (*salsila*), Sama elders relate that the boats that carried the *palanakan* were either the flat bottom type (*bet-tu*) or the chopped hull type (*berok*). These two kinds of boat are still spoken of by the Sama, especially those living in Bakut Tawi-Tawi.

The Sama's habitat promotes boat-building. Tawi-Tawi, where the Sama lives, is a group of islands, accessible mainly by sea. Furthermore, Tawi-Tawi abounds in trees. Lightwood, especially *lauan*, can still be obtained from its islands and forests. Today, the Sama boat builders obtain their materials from various sources — Basilan, Zamboanga, Cotabato, Davao, and mostly from Sabah.

Craftsmanship is a major requirement of boat building. A good boat builder must be able to make a boat that is both light but can carry a heavy load: it must be large but swift. Craftsmanship include originality in structure design and motifs.

Boatbuilding is highly competitive. The best builders command high prices — in cash or in goods — for their boats. A builder, who works alone, generally finishes a boat 25-30 ft. long in three to six months. A builder with assistants usually build larger boats, 40-60 ft. long.

The Indian Influence

The history of Southeast Asia tells us that five colonies were established by the Pallavan sailors and merchants. Two of these colonies were established in eastern Southeast Asia, one in Kutai and another, possibly, Tawi-Tawi.¹⁰ Tawi-Tawi was a hub of commerce in about 4 A.D. The sailors who sailed between Kutai and Tawi-Tawi were Pallavans and Sama and used the boat called *adjong*.

Indian influence is evident in Sama boat building. For instance, the carvings (*ukil*) on the hull of boats have motifs that appear to be of Indian origin. These motifs resemble those found in Hindu temples. Other examples of Indian influence is the boat with an extended prow and (*jung-nga*) and extended stern. (*boli kamon*) which is similar to the scilla's tail. The *jung-ngal* and the *boli kamon* are found on a types of boat called *sappit* and *hawi* and on another, but smaller boat, called *lepa*.

Indonesian Influence

Although the Indonesians, especially the Javanese, were Hinduized,¹¹ and were influenced by Indian sailors and merchants of the first century A.D., they still retained their indigenous crafts and originality. Such crafts are reflected in the *parangkang*, a type of boat still used today by Indonesian fishermen or traders, specially those who sail between Tawi-Tawi and Banjarmasin-Samarinda¹² in Borneo and Makassar-Menado in Sulawesi. It was this same type of boats that carried the first Indonesians who drifted to Tawi-Tawi shores. According to tradition, *Samarinda* was named after a Sama princess.¹³

The Indonesian *parangkang* has the same shape as the Sama *kumpit* of the Balimbing type. Both the *parangkang* and the Balimbing type of *kumpit* use either a single- or three-legged mast. It may be noted that the *sappit* or *pelang*, also uses a three-legged mast but not the *kumpit* of the Ubian Timbang type.

The *parangkang* uses two types of sails — one, similar to the Sama *lepa's* sail is called *kagan-sakkit* and the other is like the *todjak*, the sail of the Sama *lunday*.

Arab Influence

Arab influence also seeped into Sama boat building. The Arab sailors had traveled far and wide, by land and by sea, in Asia even before the advent of Islam. From these travels were woven legendary tales, notable among them, that of Sinbad the Sailor in the reign of Caliph* Harun Al-Rachid** of Baghdad. Sinbad's adventures are found in Sama folklore (*kissa/quisah kambo-an*), particularly in the epic of Lourdjoumann, the great Sama sailor that is oft told in Tawi-Tawi and even in Eastern Borneo (Indonesian Kalimantan and Sabah, specially in Umaral Island). The kind of ships used by Sinbad and other sailors are described in the *kissa/quisah*.

* The Arab title for a king; from the First Four Rashidun Khaliful Al-Islam, Abubakar, Omar, Usman, and Ali.

**He reigned in 786-809 A.D.

Arab merchants sailed through the eastern African coasts, stopping over to trade in Zanzibar, Mozambique, Malagasy; then to Maldivian Islands in the Indian Ocean; finally to Southeast Asia. The type of boats, including their sails used, were similar to the *lepa*. It is possible that the early Arab merchants, who came to Southeast Asia through Gujerat of West India, might have introduced the *lepa*-type of boats. They regularly went to the eastern islands up to the sixteenth century where they may have come in contact with the seafaring Sama. This contact may have led to technological diffusion, particularly in boat building. Further contacts were made when the merchant-missionaries, notable among them, Makdum,¹⁴ came to Southeast Asia. In fact, Makdum's first Sama convert to Islam was a native of Tawi-Tawi. Makdum used a Sama boat in his travel around Tawi-Tawi and Sulu islands.¹⁵ The Islamicized Samas later accompanied Shariff Kabungsuwan when he introduced Islam to Cotabato.¹⁶ In fact, Sharif Kabungsuwan employed the Sama as both sailors and warriors. As warriors, they subdued the Maguindanaws¹⁷ paving the way for the latter's conversion to Islam at Paiguwan, Cotabato, circa 1475 A.D.¹⁸ According to tradition, the people of Maguindanao¹⁹ were converted to Islam through Tawi-Tawi.²⁰ To this historical event the Sama's important contribution was the boat. Without the boats, what would Shariff Kabungsuwan use?

Chinese Influence

Another evident influence on the Sama boats is Chinese. The Chinese, aboard a *sampan* (or *champan*) or junk, had sailed through Southeast Asia to trade. The Chinese *junk* would usually sail from China during the north monsoon and would return when the southwind blew. Many Chinese traders go to the southern islands, as far as Lesser Sunda, passing through Tawi-Tawi where they traded with the Sama. In some cases, Chinese traders established trading posts in Sitangkay and Bongao in Tawi-Tawi where they bought sea products from the Sama; contacts between them and the Sama were also made in trading posts in Siasi, Sulu and in Borneo. Through constant contacts, the Chinese had influenced the Sama's way of life. This can be seen in the Sama attire —

long trousers (*saowal*) which the Chinese also used and the Sama's adoption of the structure of the Chinese junk.

In North Borneo, the Chinese used the iron pieces to join together two boards; they also used nails. For patching the joints and plugging holes, jute thread, almaciga, oil, and petroleum were used. The Sama once used the hard wood, *sibukaw*, to join together two boards: to patch the joints or plug the holes, he used the soft bark of mangrove. But when the Sama saw the advantages of the materials used by the Chinese, they at once changed the materials for their kumpit. More evident, however, is the Sama's adoption of the structure of the Chinese junk. The result has been a blending of Chinese and Sama craftsmanship that has made the Sama *kumpit* a seaworthy and swift vessel.

The Sama Boat Builders: Their History and Training

Boatbuilders are highly skilled carpenters. There are only few of them in Tawi-Tawi, found mainly in large communities. They work everyday, accepting two to three orders at a time. Some Sama boat builders are found in Basilan, Zamboanga City, Jolo and Palawan but the best builders are in Sabah.

Boatbuilding in different stages in the Sama history was not the same, because of syncretization. Before 1511 A.D., when Alfonso Albuquerque captured Malacca, boat builders underwent training and education through these aspects:

1. **Heredity and environment** A boat builder would be a son of a boat builder and a grandson of boat builders. He grew up in a place where he saw boats being built by his father, uncles, brothers, and relatives. The best examples of such places, where boat building is a dominant trade, are Deum Tabawan, Balimbing, Malassa, Sibutu and Sabah.

2. **Childhood toys and games.** A Sama child is taught how to make toyboat for play, as well as for the toy-boat contest during the northwind (*utala*). When he is old enough, he can join boat racing and fishing.

3. **Assistantship or apprenticeship.** A boy's interest may be kindled as he sees around his yardl boats being built, as he observes how the builders use their tools, sharpening, chopping, cutting, joining, hammering, plugging, and closing the ends of the boards. Soon he becomes a participant in the making of boats. He becomes an apprentice, generally to his boat builder father, uncles, brothers, and relatives. At first, he is assigned to rough work which the Sama call *ba-ul* (sometimes *ba-ul* refers to a box). His work would not require carving, joining and fitting. But he soon learns how to soften hardwood; to make it pliable to his will.

The Sama training on boat building is a continuous process from childhood to manhood; it is passed on from one generation to another.

Migration and spread of boatbuilding. The Sama's migratory habit is a factor in the spread of boat building from one community to another. Keen competition and disputes have also pushed some boat builders to other communities where there is less competition. Most migratory builders are from Ubian Timbang spreading to far away places. Our migratory builders are from Balimbing, Malassa, and Tabawan. They have resettled at nearby islands and have not ventured out to distant islands.

Before 1900

From 1511 to 1900 boat building declined, mainly because:

1. The Sama were at war with foreigners—the Portuguese, Dutch, and the British in Southeast Asia and the Spaniards in the Philippines. History has recorded the Sama war efforts as piracy because the Sama in many occasions marauded islands in Luzon and the Visayas.

2. The Spanish military incursions into the Sama territory disrupted not only economic activities, but also boat building. For over 300 years, builders did not set up shops openly to avoid invasion and possible destruction of their boats by the Spaniards. They built their boats in secluded places, later called *tapi-an*, meaning "to build a boat." A *tapi-an* was usually located in a cove or at the mouth of a river. The increase in the number of "*tapi-an*"* in a locality, eventually brought

*To form the plural of "*tapi-an*," the Sama prefix is with the word, *Heka*, which means "many."

about the establishment of a new settlement. Such process of settlement formation is still evident in Sabah today.

In Tawi-Tawi, the word "*tapi-an*" has three meanings: (1) a shop for boat building; (2) a place where boats are safely secured from destruction, and (3) the establishment of a settlement, or a farm beyond the *tapi-an*, either at the headwater, in the hills, or in the hinterland.

Because of their war with foreigners, the Sama built warships known as *bagya*, *belamput*, *garay*, *sappit*, and *lepa*. *Pelang*, though not a war craft, was used for swift raids on Spanish settlements in the Visayas and Luzon.

Development Up to 1941

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the number of raids against the Spaniards decreased and boatbuilding for war declined while that for commerce grew again. By 1900, the Sama built boats that can carry an average load of 1,000 sacks of rice or copra. The *garay* for some time was in demand because it could carry heavy load. But since in navigation it was inferior to the *sappit*, it lost its prominence. Today the *sappit* is in demand both for its load and navigational capacities.

In the early 1900's, boats became a necessity to every family. Correspondingly, the boatbuilding communities increased. The census of 1903 shows that compared to Tawi-Tawi's population of 15,243,²¹ the boat building communities populace of 5,939 was more than one-third of the former's. A breakdown of boat building communities is as follows: Banaran, 170; Buan, 79 (later on Balimbing); Tabawan, 630; Sibutu, 280; and Ubian Timbang, 4,780.

Still, boatbuilding did not rapidly progress because the market for boats had contracted due to the decrease in commercial opportunities. Heavy-load boats were no longer in demand. There was some demand, though, for the *pelang*, for fishing and pearling. The market was further affected by the aggressive American government policy against the smuggling of opium which utilized boats. The market contraction drove some builders into more lucrative work like farming and fishing. Training and education of Sama children on boat building also was adversely

affected by the decline in the industry since apprenticeship then had become an uncertain proposition.

Boat builders also left their shops to engage in trade in distant lands. Furthermore, the Sama builders were no longer needed to maintain the naval power of the Sultan of Tawi-Tawi/Sulu, or in alliance with the sultans/datus in the mainland of Mindanao.

The First Quarter of the 20th Century

From 1900 to 1925 the old models of boats were gradually replaced by new types, particularly those better suited for trading and fishing. First, the *garay*, then the *jung-kong*, became less and less in demand. *Sappit* and *lepa*, as well as the *pelang*, *damas*, and *lunday*, retained their usefulness, especially the last three because of their lightness which is suitable for trading and fishing. In addition, the *pelang* is easy, and cheap, to build. The largest *pelang* at that time costs P 30 compared to today's smallest *pelang* which is priced at P 300.

The *biral*, gained brief popularity among the Sama. In structure, it was a cross between the *sappit-lepa-garay* and the present *kumpit*. The *biral* was generally built in Sabah; its best kind in Tawi-Tawi was owned by Panglima Sahid of South Ubian. The *biral* eventually evolved into the *kumpit*.

The Development of the Kumpit

From 1926 to 1941, boatbuilding was marked by the rapid development of the *kumpit*. Such development came about because the *kumpit*, among others: (1) Can load ten times more than the *pelang*, but is smaller than a *sappit*; (2) is seaworthy even in turbulent seas; (3) Can traverse up to 10 degrees toward the wind direction, whereas the *sappit*, *lepa* and the *pelang* cannot; (4) Can move faster than any kind of boat built by the Sama, regardless of size; (5) Can readily, float (it is even lighter than a *sappit*).

The test of a *kumpit*'s speed came in 1932. That year, 500 *kumpits* bearing Sama sailed from Tawi-Tawi to Moluccas for pearl fishing. But in Moluccas, the Sama were apprehended by Dutch government authorities. A number of Sama escaped in 55 *kumpits*

According to the Sama sailors the *kumpits* were faster than the Dutch government motorboats.

During the war years, from 1941-1945, boat building was not disrupted because the builders obtained their materials far from enemy positions. *Kumpits* were then used for transportation and communication purposes by the warring parties: Filipino-American and Japanese forces. However, *kumpits* were used more by the Filipino-American forces:

1. When Biteng Brothers, led by Ladjabite Biteng,²³ and their men reported to Gen. Douglas MacArthur for assignment with the Filipino regiment;
2. To transport American Army officers from Palawan (through Tawi-Tawi)²⁴ to Australia;
3. To transport soldiers and contacts of U.S. submarines that carried arms and ammunition;
4. For contacts by the Filipino-American forces in Tawi-Tawi with the allies in Mindanao and Sabah;
5. As minesweepers after the war ended.

Development Toward 1962

After World War II, boatbuilding developed faster. Builders had broadened their knowledge through contacts, observations, and study of the U.S. PT Boats and Cutters. Such knowledge was applied by the Sama in redesigning their boats, specially the *kumpits*.

Toward 1962, when Sama trade was progressive, boatbuilding was likewise progressive due to two principal factors:

1. Malaysian independence. The Malays, with whom the Sama have traded for many centuries, still welcomed openly the Sama sailors-traders. This relatively free trade atmosphere created a greater demand for boats for trade.
2. The intensive anti-smuggling campaign by the Philippine Government in the Sulu Sea. The hitherto traditional trade between the Sama and the Sabahans and Indonesians was not given legal recognition, hence it was labelled as smuggling. Because the trade was vital to

their livelihood, the Sama resisted the legal sanctions. In order to elude law officers, the Sama developed a better type of boat.

The anti-smuggling campaign intensified, the Sama shifted from sailboat to motorboat. The engines of the *kumpits* were leased by Sabah merchants to Sama traders under a special contract.

From midyear of 1962 to the present the Sama traders increased their barter trade with Sabah, loading their goods in *kumpits* that they renamed “*temper*” and “speedboat.” Boat building developed very rapidly because the Sama were no longer satisfied with the design and engines of their old boats. Recently, the Sama have brought a new type of swift boat, the Volbo from Scandinavian countries.

Compensation of a Boat Builder

Boatbuilding among the Sama is a must; without it they cannot survive. It begins with a *dream boat* by a merchant-sailor; it is an outgrowth of the imagination and ambition nurtured in conversation (*opama*) among the *merchant-sailors*.

A boat builder is contracted by a *merchant-sailor* for a kind of boat to be built/to be bought. The kind of boat, materials, costs, and length of time to build would be discussed in the presence of the builder's family and his merchant-sailor's friends. The compensation for the boat-builder are divided into: 1. cash—the amount would depend on the type of boat; 2. equipment; 3. foodstuffs — i.e. 16 sacks of rice, coffee.; 4. kitchen utensils; 5. cloth (for sail) or clothes; 6. jewelry; and 7. gold coins; gold bars . . .

The master builder may demand as is all of the aforementioned items, as is the practice in Sabah, since he has no time to buy them while building the boat. However, master builders in Tawi-Tawi demand only some of the items while those near or within a large community/city, like Zamboanga, may demand only cash.

The materials — lumber, nails, etc. — for the boat are furnished either by the boat builder or the *merchant-sailor*. The boat builder's demand for household articles reflects the wishes of his mother, wife (wives), daughters, and sons. It is in the sixth and seventh items that reflect the whims and caprices of the boat builder's family. The build-

er's possession of such items indicate that he is a man of wealth.

Tools and Equipment Used

Sama boatbuilders are master carpenters, highly skilled artisans. In building a boat they use these tools:

1. **Axes.** There are two kinds — the *patok* and the *kapa*. Their main difference is their shape. The *patok* heads are removable from their handles. A big *patok* is used to cut trees and rough wood. A small *patok* is used to cut small pieces of wood and to smoothen surfaces, particularly curved ones. Both *patok* and *kapa* are used to hew the log into a hull of a boat.

2. **Bolos.** There are several kinds of bolos, the most common of which is *bari*. A *bari* is commonly used in cutting a thin board, rounding and curving.

3. **Augers.** There are two types of augers. The chisel type called *pa-at* is an indigenous Sama tool. The other type — a revolving auger is a western tool. A *pa-at* is used to bore peg (*pasok*) holes. A *pasok* joins two boards to form the wall structure (*tapi*) of a boat. The *pasok* have been replaced by iron pegs in bigger boats like the *kumpit*, but they are still used in the *lunday*.

4. **Knives, chisels, and liners.** The knife used for carving *ukil* is called *lahut*. The chisels (*sangkap*) are of two makes — wooden and iron. Both are to split a log. Liners are of two kinds — the *jang-nga-tan* and the other one is made of a strong twine wound in a case filled with of indigo, or the sap of a tree, or the exudate of cuttlefish.

5. **Grindstones.** There are two kinds of grindstones (*asa-an*), the rough and smooth. Grindstones are generally local-made, though some grindstones of Chinese, American, and European make have recently been cutting into the local market. Other tools and accessories needed are the hammer (*tokol*), saw (*gawrari*; Malay *gragari*), and nails (*lansang*).

Steps in Constructing Each Type of Boat

There are three major considerations in the construction of any boat — material, type and structure, and value of the boat.

Places where materials are obtained. The Sama used to obtain the materials for constructing their boats in the vicinity of their settlements in Malaysia, Sabah, Indonesia, in Tawi-Tawi, and anywhere in southern Mindanao. Construction was done at the site of the materials. Scarcity of materials later pushed the Sama boatbuilders into getting the materials elsewhere, far from his "*tapi-an*."

Until the beginning of the twentieth century the Sama, especially the builders of *sappit* and *lepa* of Balimbing, and Mulassa obtained their materials from mainland Tawi-Tawi. Boatbuilders of Tabawan obtained materials for the *pelang* from Basilan Island. *Kumpit* builders of Sibutu got their materials from Sibutu Island and Sabah while those of Ubian Timbang obtained their materials from mainland Tawi-Tawi, Basilan and Sabah.

In the last 400 years the Sama boatbuilders used hardwood like *nala* (*nara*), *ipil*, and *gar-gil* that came from mainland Tawi-Tawi. By late 1930s *nala* and *ipil* became scarce in Tawi-Tawi; by 1960s, the *gag-gil* also became scarce. The advantage of *nala*, *ipil*, and *gag-gil* is their durability, but they are difficult to obtain, their source being in the deep interior; besides, they are very heavy, thus boats made of them are slow.

In recent years, however, *lauan*, was obtained from Basilan and Sabah. The Sama call this wood *manakayan* (white and red). This wood was popularized by boatbuilders of Tabawan and Manubal for the making of *pelang*, *damas*, and *lunday*. *Kumpits*, hitherto made of *gag-gil*, are now built from *lauan*, which is lighter than *gag-gil*.

Building the boat. Any kind of boat built by the Sama follows a common pattern. The pattern of the past is reflected on present practices. In boat building the Sama follow these steps:

1. The **log-type boats.** The log-type boats are *bet-tu*, *peddas* (*pedlas*), *birok*, *bog-goh*, *jungkong*, *lunday*, *damas*, *zing-ninging*, and *pelang*. A boat-builder knows from which forest he would get the wood. He is familiar with the forest and would mark a tree. When he cuts the tree, the boat's dimensions have already been determined. The bottom of the boat would be the side that struck the ground; the hull the upward side; the prow is towards the root, and stern towards the treetop. This has been the practice for many generations. Deviation

from this practice is a violation of tradition, customs, and nature and called *songsang*.

The upward side of the log is shaped and chopped to make it lighter, thus easier to move towards the sea. The shaping and chopping which the Sama call *bina-ul* (from the word *baul*) would take days. When a boat is finished, it would be moved out to the sea. Such moving out is called *longsad*.

2. **The steamership type boats.** The boats belonging to this type are the *bagya*, *belamput*, *jalampah*, *adjong*, *gulita*, *parangkang*, *garay*, *lepa*, *saapit*, *biral*, *kumpit*. Early boats were of hardwood; later types used *lauan* (white or red). The keels of early boats were made of such logs as *bagya*, *belamput*, *jalampah*, and *lepa*; as well as braces (*givak*), latter day boats were fashioned out of mangrove (*pahapat*).

Sketches of the Structure of the Boats

Figures 1-8 illustrate the tools the Sama used to build boats. Figures 9-29 show the boats built by the Sama since about 2,000 years ago. Fig. 30 is "*bintang belas*" (meaning the *single star*) made up of two *lunday* or two *bog-goh* and which the author designed in 1955 for fishing.

The Earliest Types of Boats

The earliest boats. The earliest types of boats were the log-type, either with or, without, outriggers. Four earliest boats were called *bet-tu*, *peddas*,²⁵ *birok*, and *bog-goh*, all of them having common dimensions: 10-15 ft. long, 24-30 inches wide, and 15-20 inches deep.

Bet-tu and *peddas* were invented between the first century B.C. and the first century A.D. *Birok* and *bog-goh* were invented circa 600 A.D. These boats were used mainly for foodgathering. *Bet-tu* is thin and flat and can easily be carried. It is made of lightwood and is not durable. *Bet-tu* is still used today, generally along riverbanks and for short distances along the seashore. *Peddas* is a thick and flat boat, made of hardwood. Its life spans from three to four generations. The *peddas* was used for foodgathering from the lagoon (*ambiol*) of the sandbars.

Tools

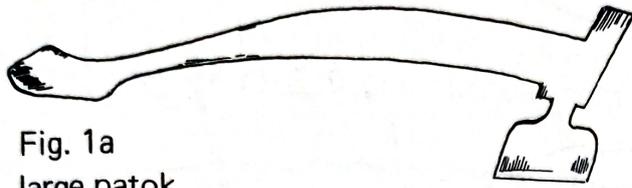


Fig. 1a
large patok

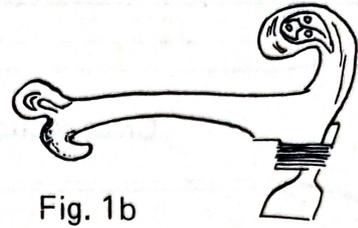


Fig. 1b
small patok

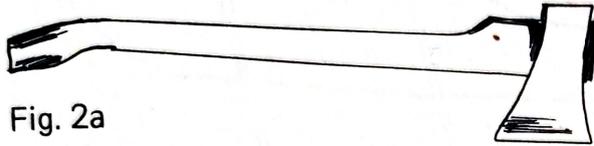


Fig. 2a
large kapa

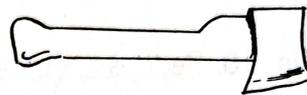


Fig. 2b
small kapa



Fig. 3
Bari

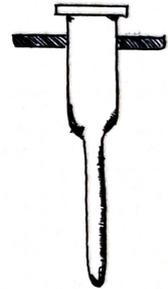


Fig. 4
Pa-at

Tools/Equipment B

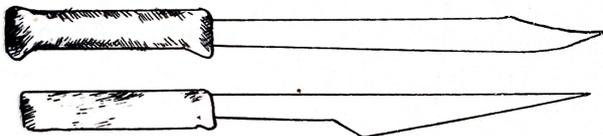


Fig. 5 Lahut

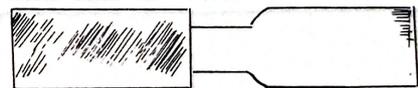
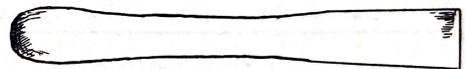


Fig. 6 Sangkap

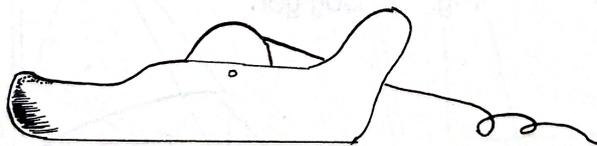


Fig. 7 Jang-nga-tan (liners)

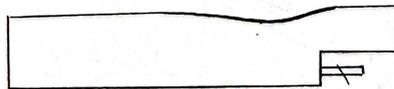
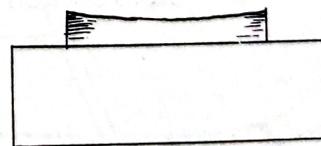
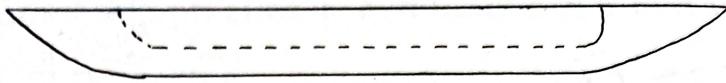


Fig. 8a old

Asa-an (Grindstones)

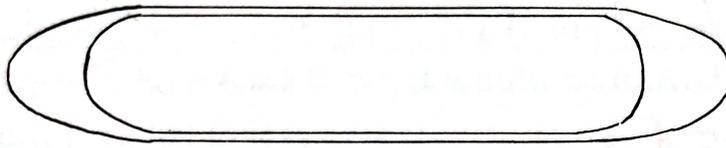


new Fig. 8b



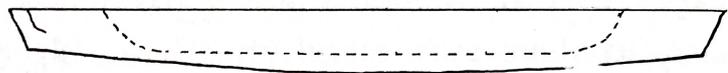
Cross-section

Fig. 9. Bet-tu



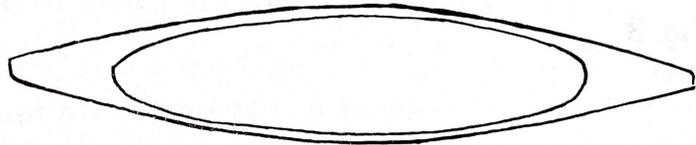
Top-view

Fig. 10. Peddas

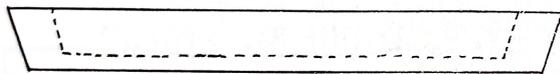


Cross-section

Fig. 11 Birok



Top-view



Cross-section

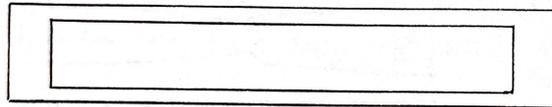
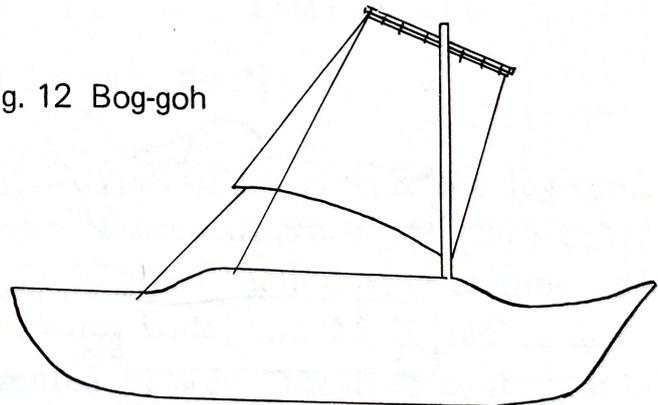
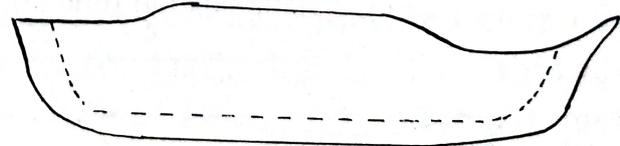


Fig. 12 Bog-goh



With sail

cross-section



Top-view

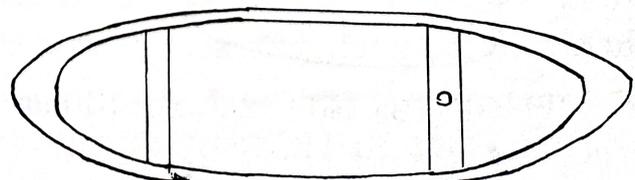


Fig. 13 – Jungkong

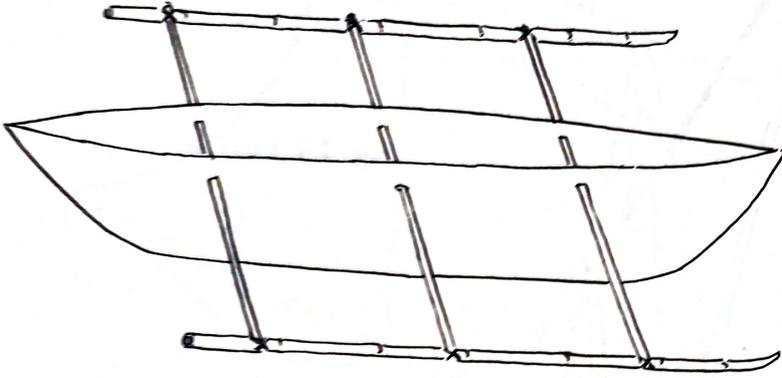
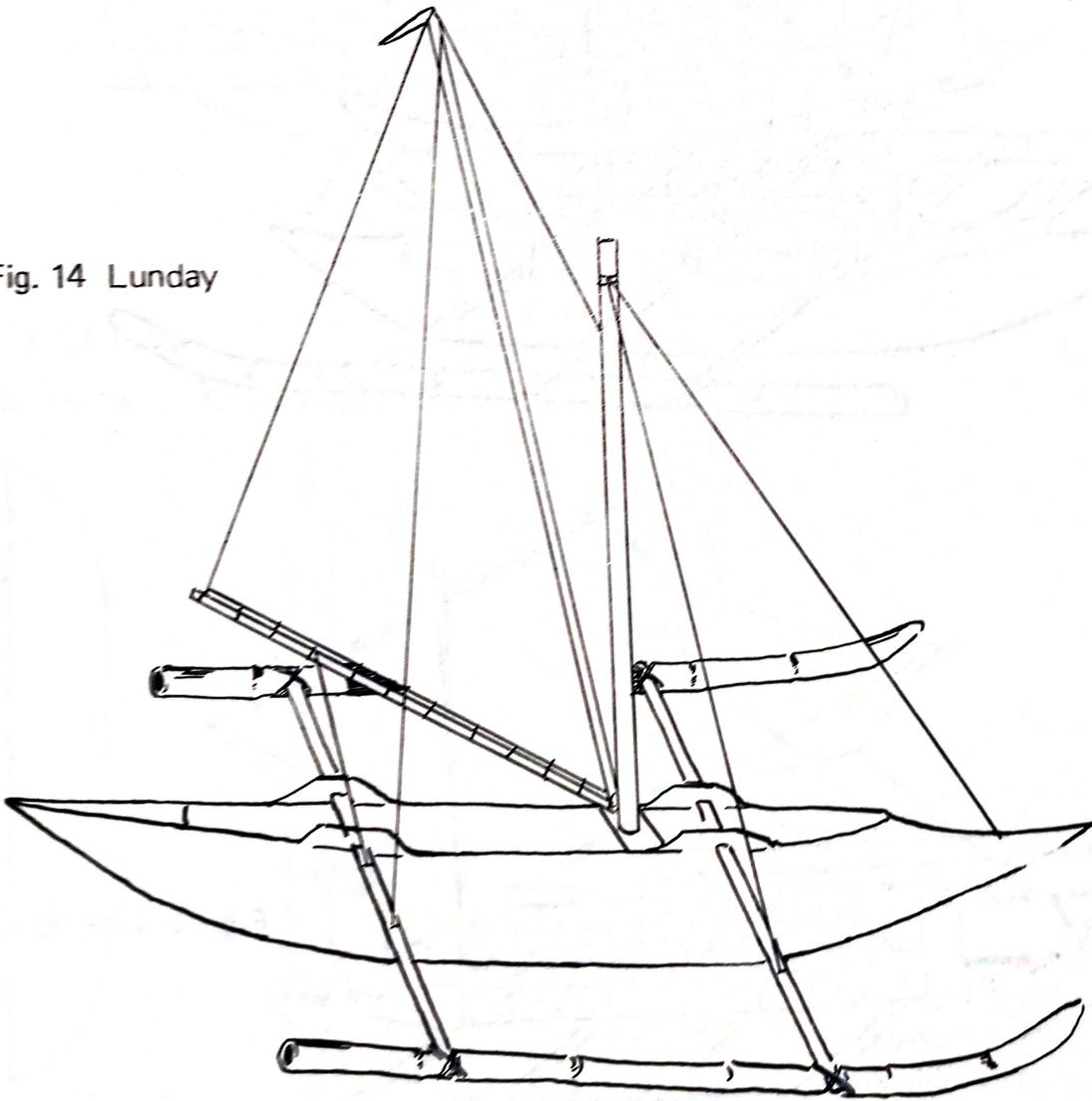


Fig. 14 Lunday



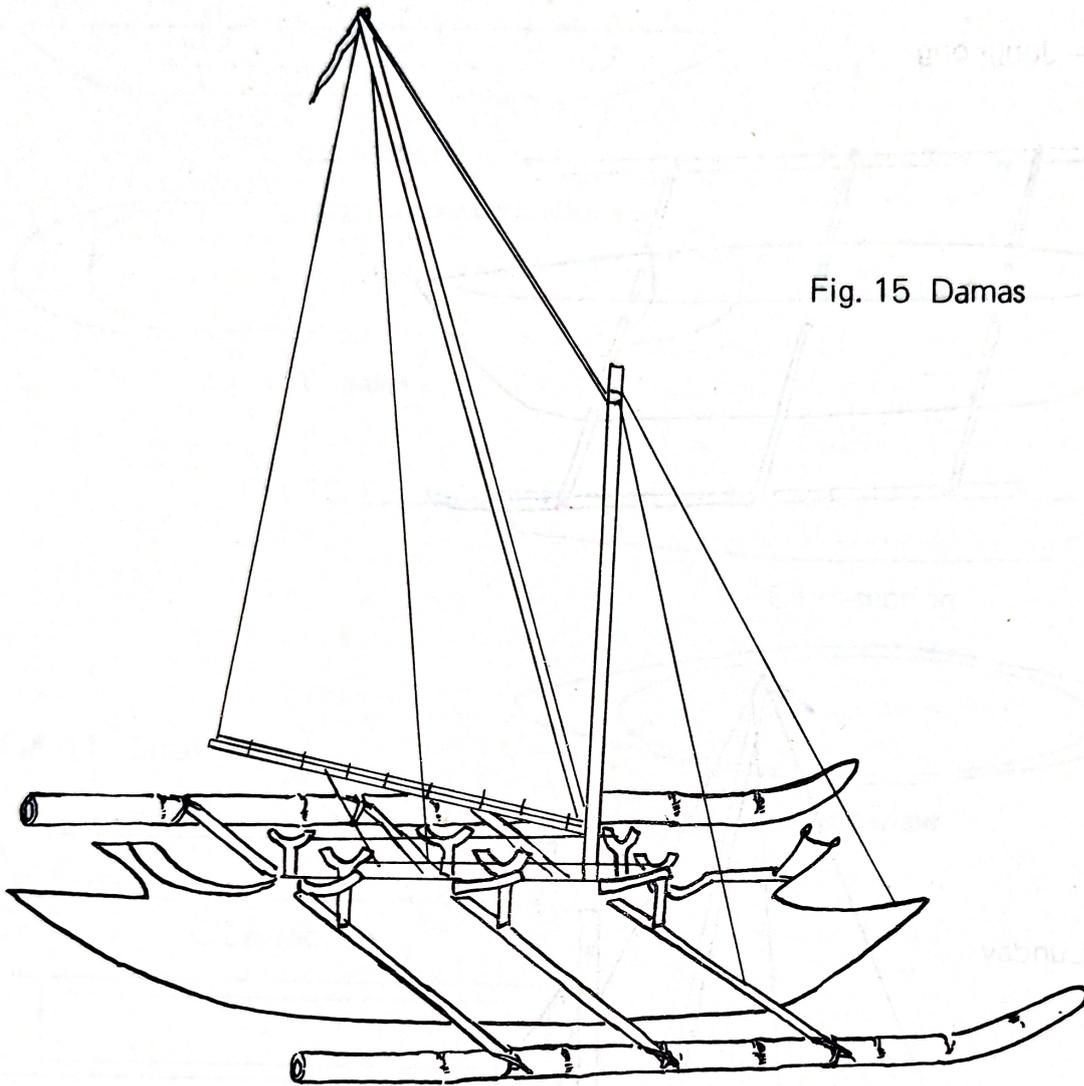


Fig. 15 Damas

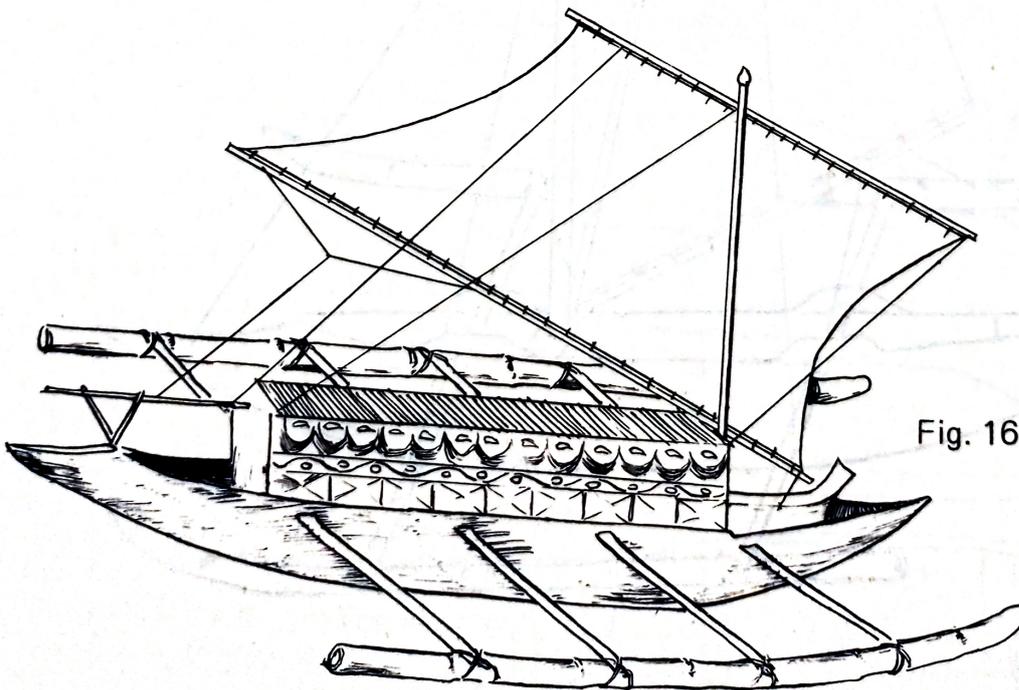


Fig. 16 Zing-ning

Fig. 17 Pelang

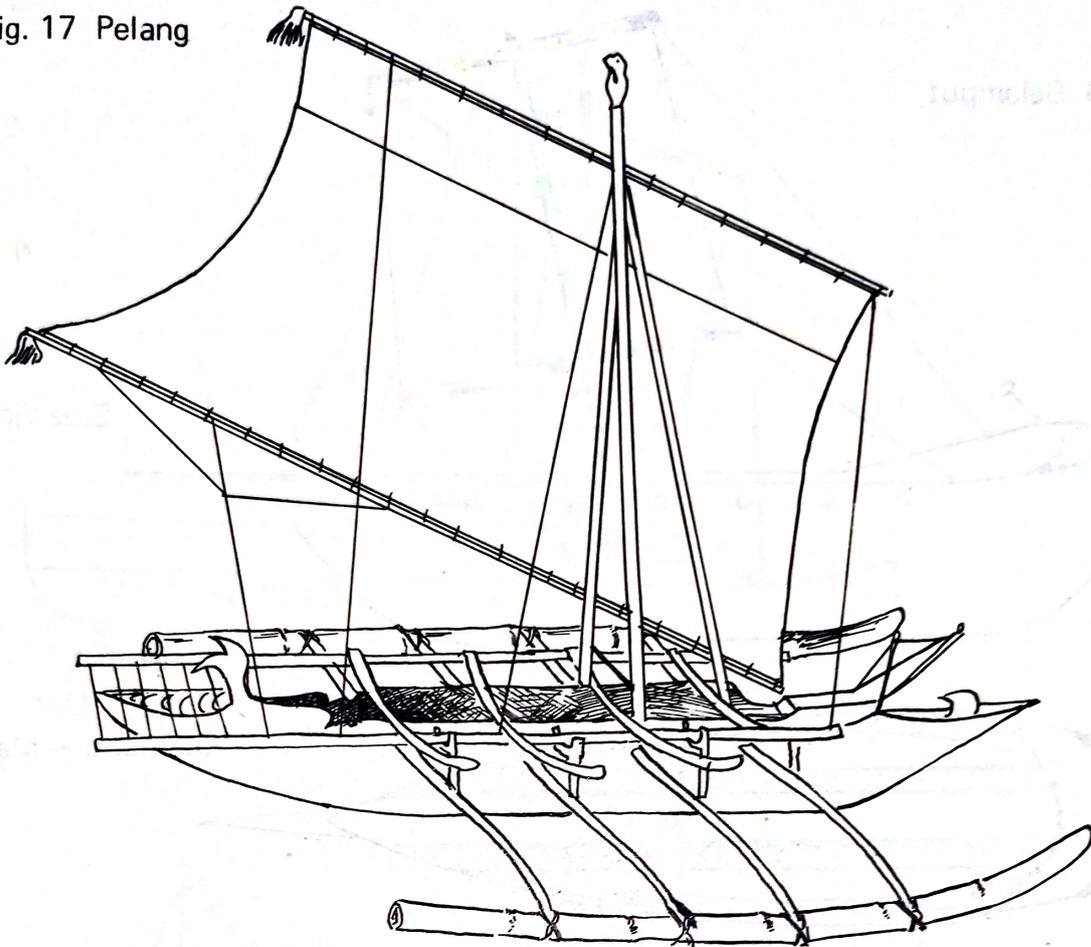
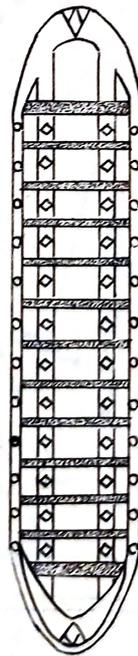
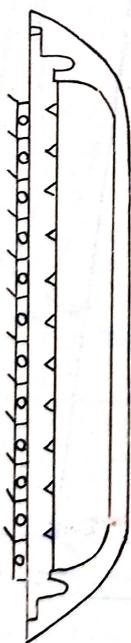
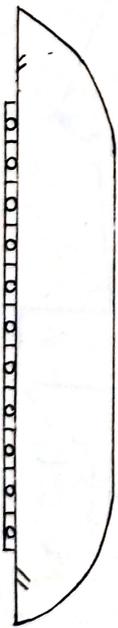


Fig. 18 Bagya

Side-view

Cross-section view

Top-view



Oar

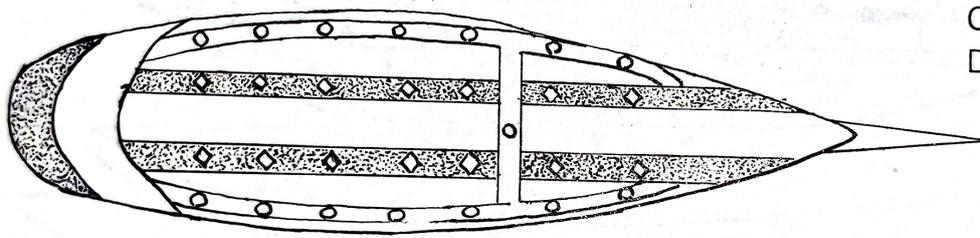
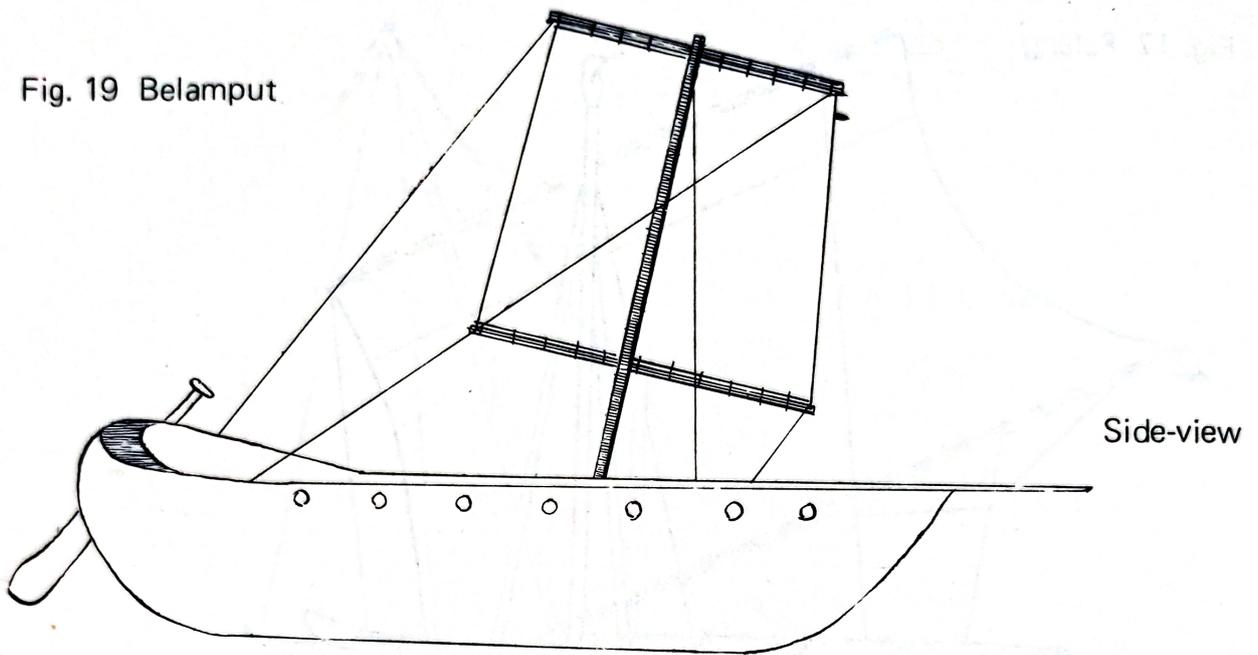
Legend

Circle – Oar

Triangle – Board on feet

Diamond – Man

Fig. 19 Belamput



Legend
Circle — Oar
Diamond — Man

Fig. 20 Jalampah

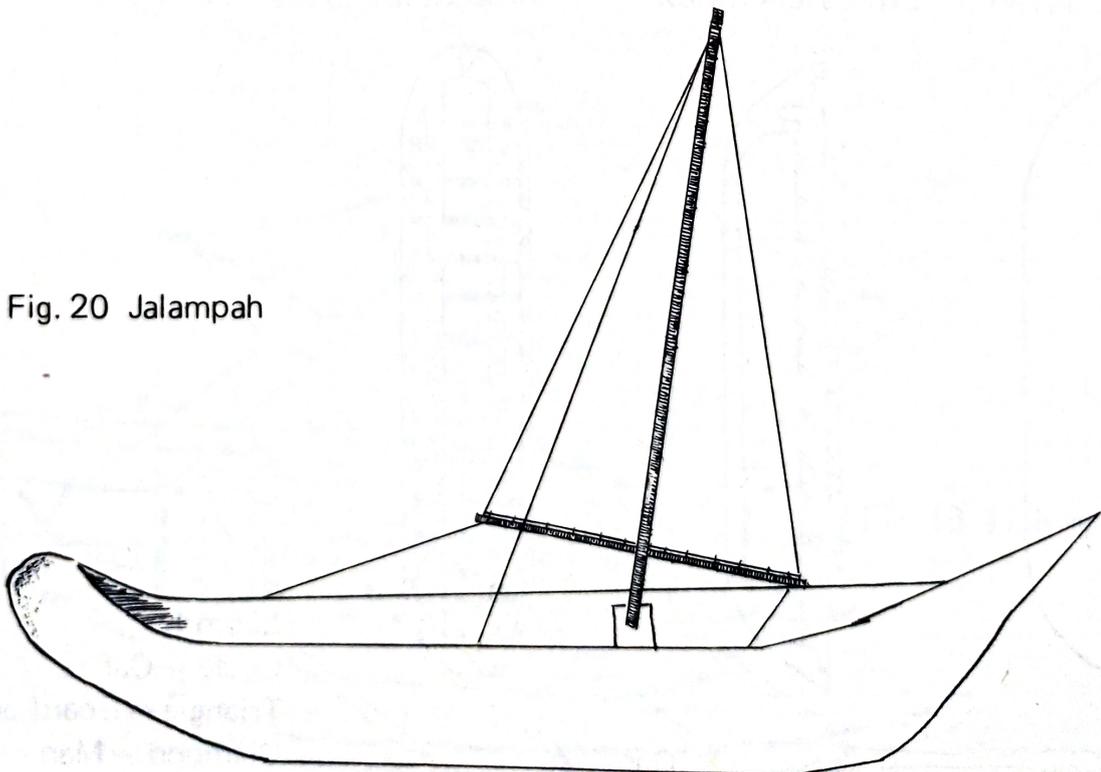


Fig. 21 Adjong

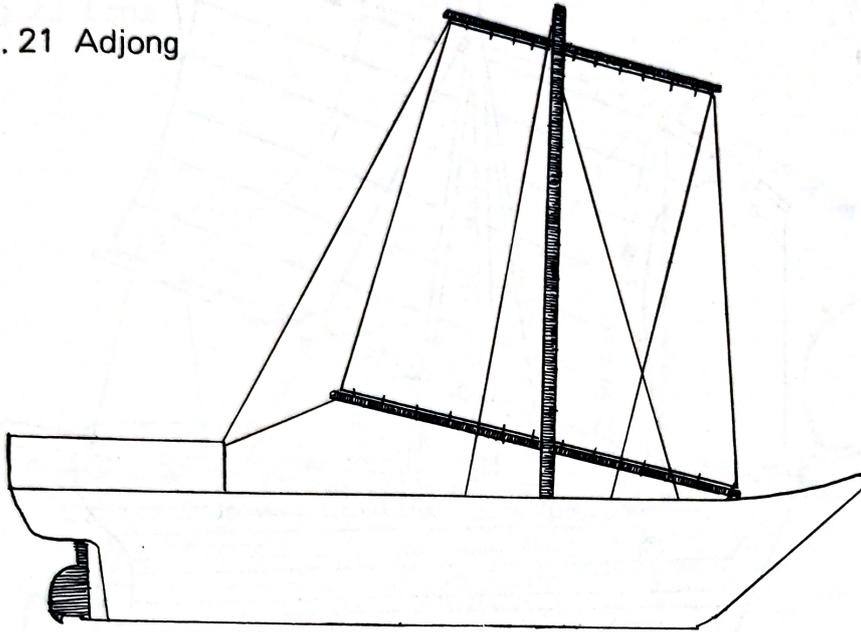
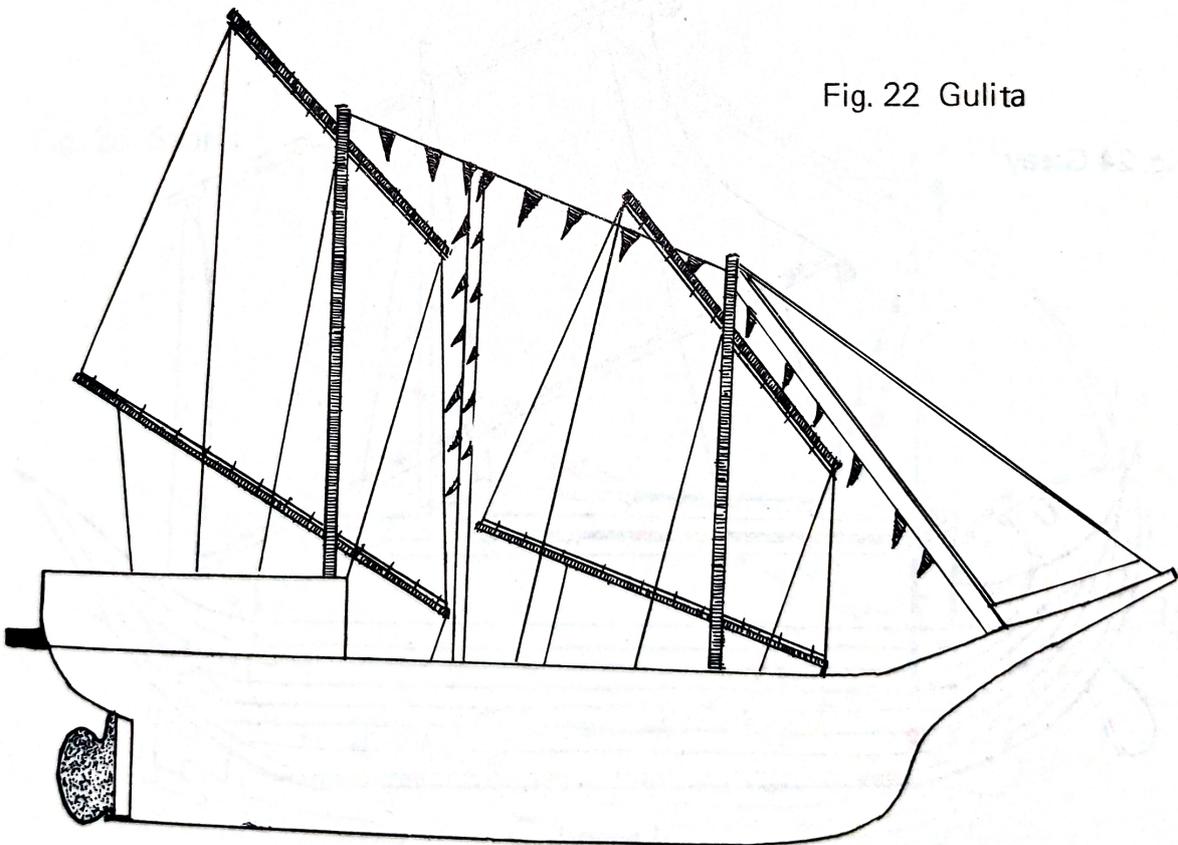


Fig. 22 Gulita



A small gulita, say 50 feet in length, has only one mast. The ropes strung with banners are called *sambolayang*. *Sambolayangs* are still used these days during weddings among the Sama.

Fig. 23 Parangkang

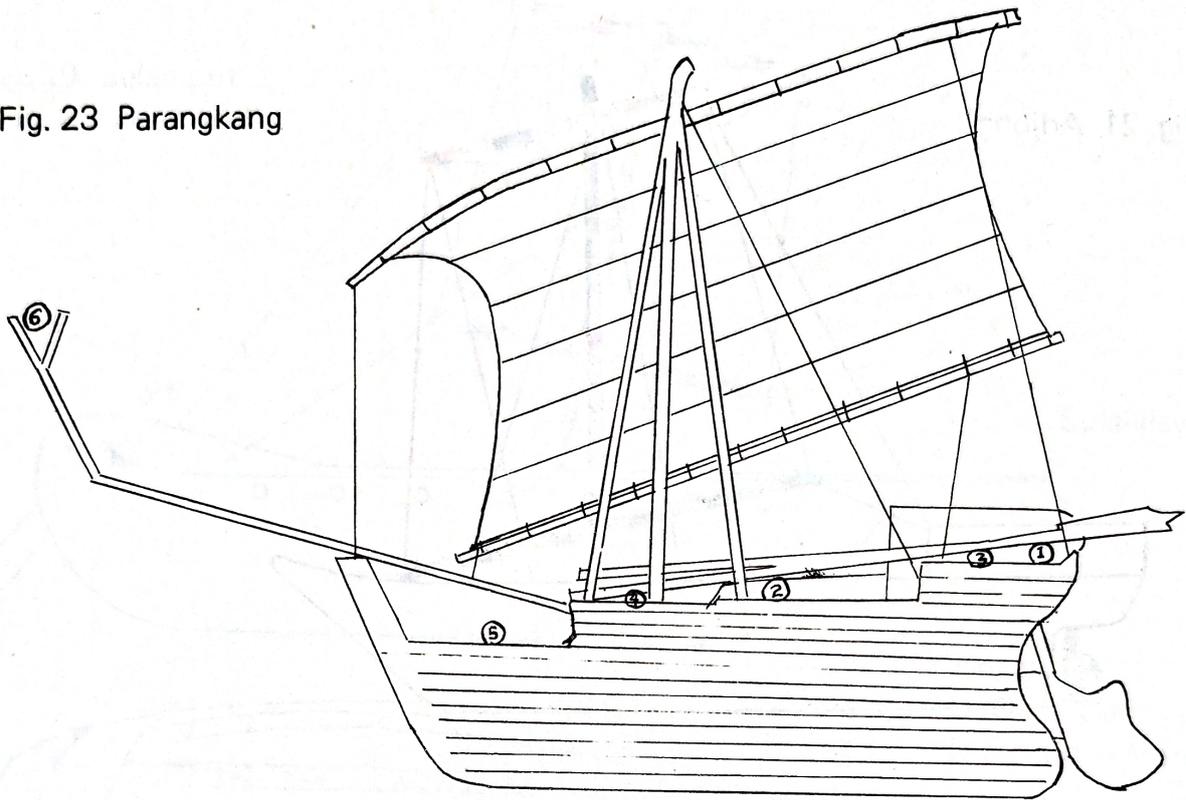
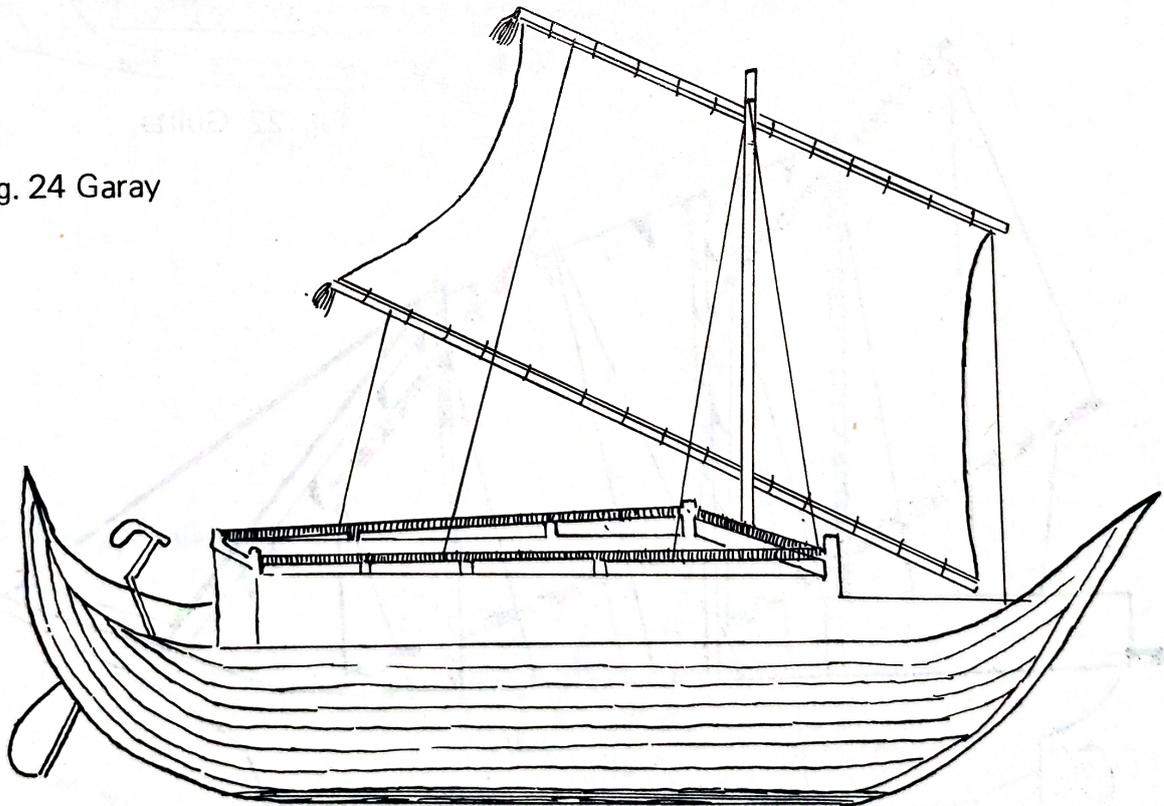


Fig. 24 Garay



Legend

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 - Nakora | 4 - Bowman |
| 2 - Asst. Nakora | 5 - Bowman |
| 3 - Water/Fuel Utility Man | 6 - Long bow for fishing |

Fig. 25 Lepa

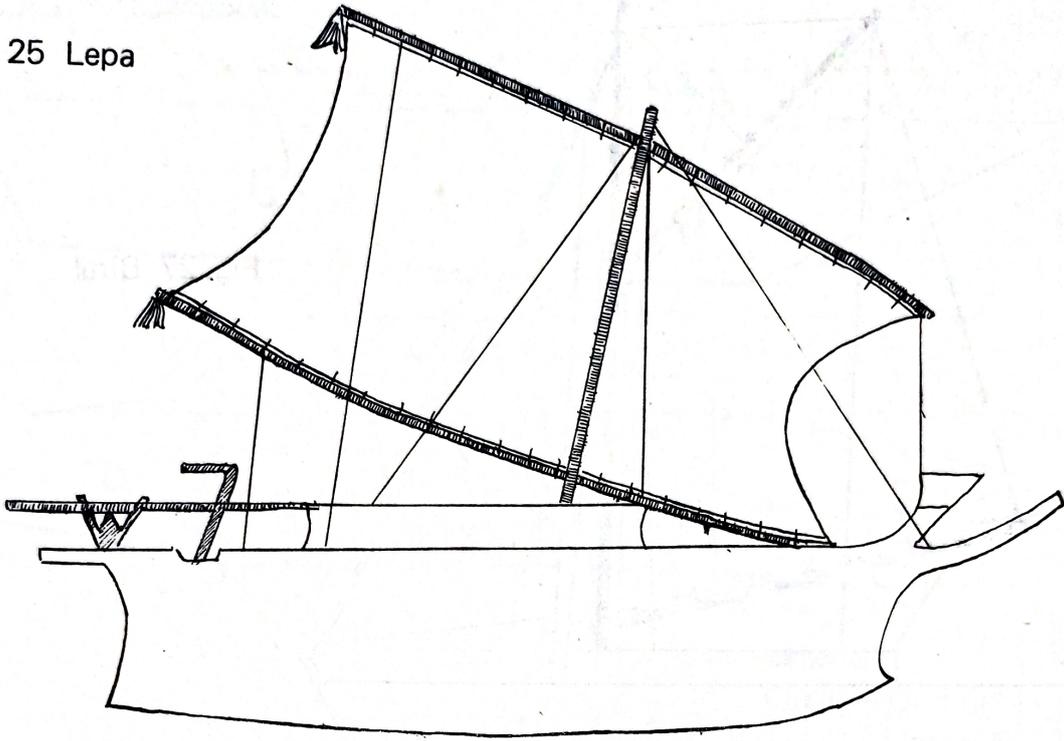
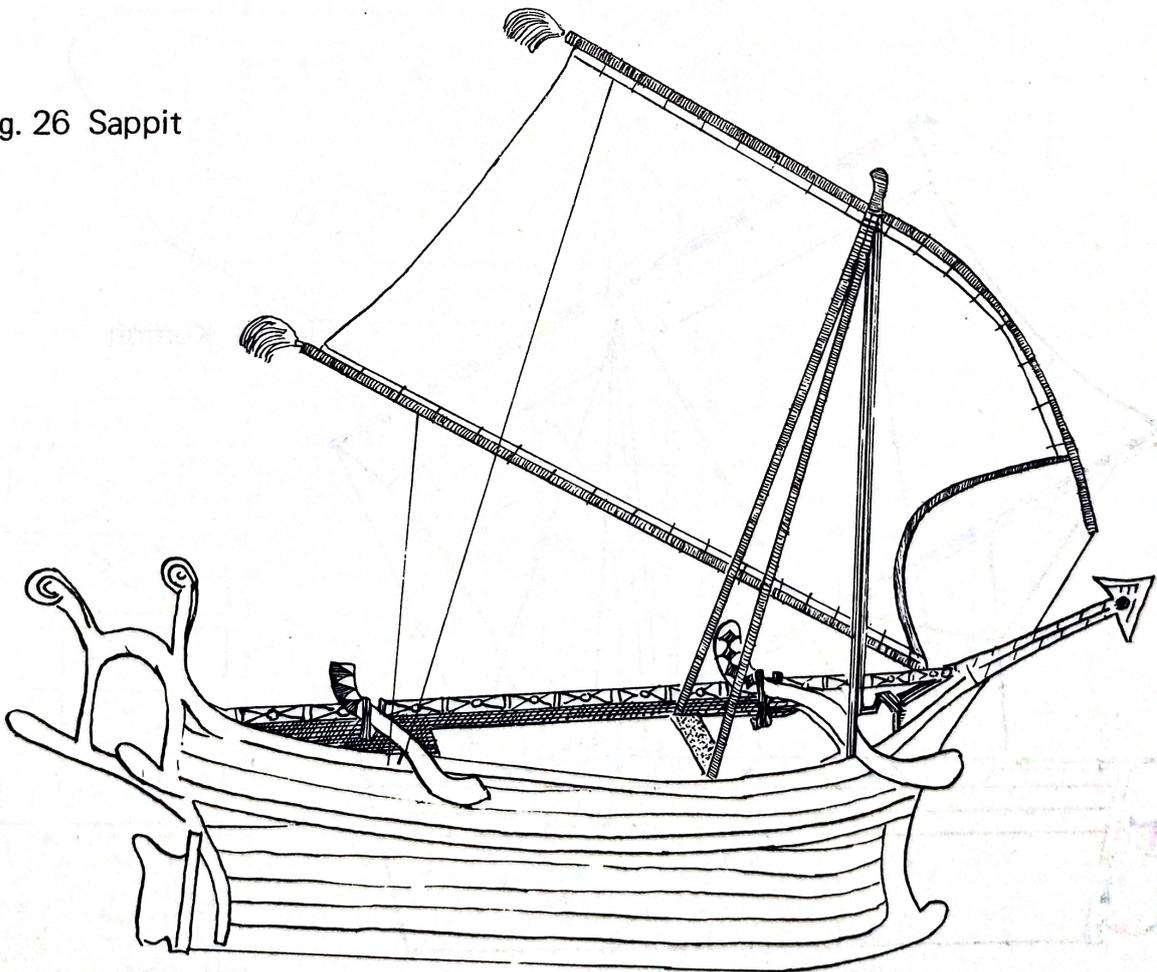


Fig. 26 Sappit



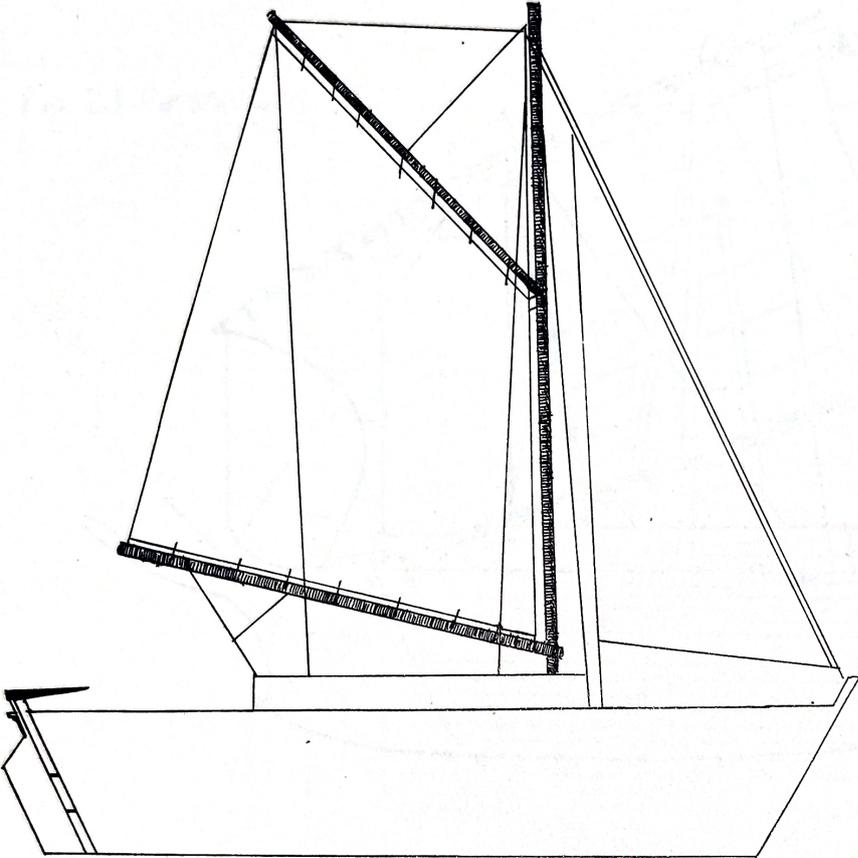


Fig. 27 Biral

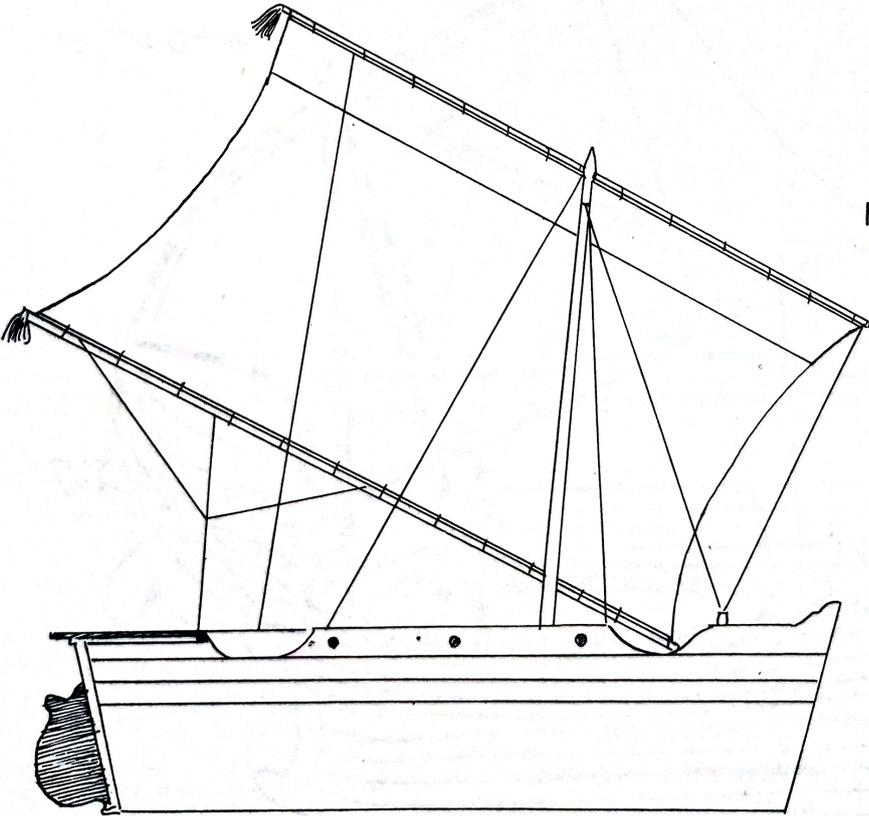
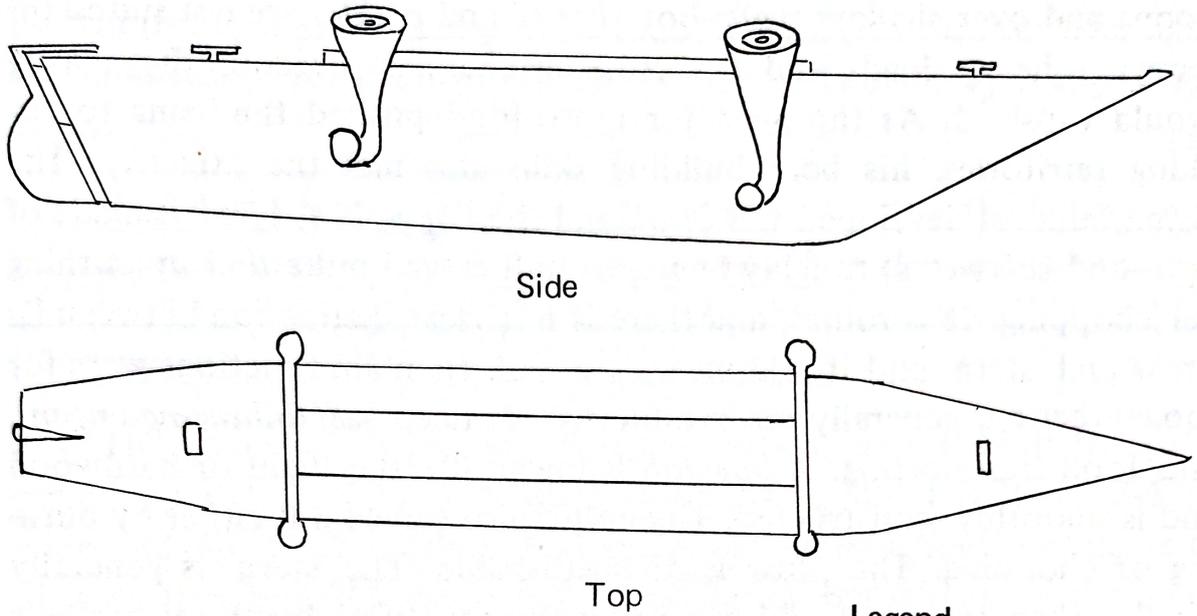


Fig. 28 Kumpit

Fig. 29 The "Speedboat"



Side

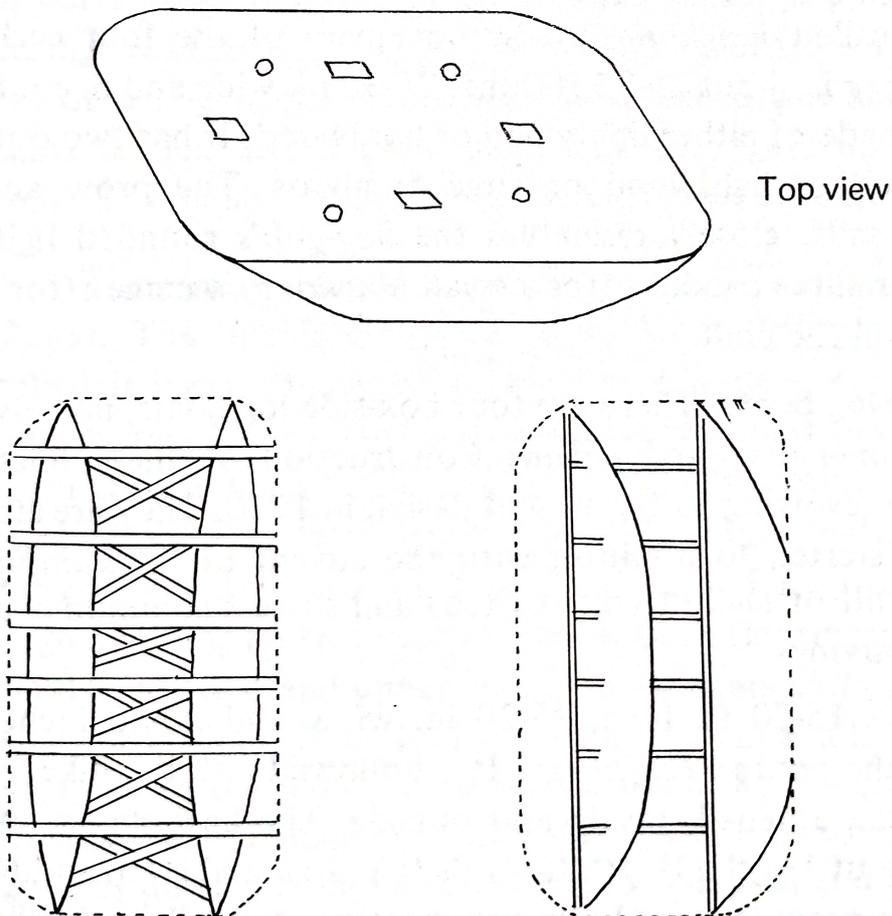
Top

Legend

Circle – Outboard

Motor: 500 H.P.

Fig. 30 Bintang Belas



Top view

Cross-section (top)

Cross-section (side) From Side

Today it is still used for gathering food (fish and seaweeds) from the lagoons and over shallow reefs. Both *bet-tu* and *peddas* are not suited for carrying heavy loads and for crossing channels because they easily would capsize. As the need for more food pushed the Sama to far-flung territories, his boat building skills also met the exigency. The Sama builders developed the *birok* and the *bog-goh*. A *birok* is made of light and softwood, roughly hewn, its hull carved out either by burning or chopping. It is round, and there is not clear distinction between its prow and stern and it seldom uses a sail. Its main functions were for foodgathering, generally sea products from deep sea (*Ibihing-nga-ngan*), and food transporting. A *bog-goh* is made of either light or hardwood and is smoothly constructed. The hull is also carved out either by burning or chopping. The prow is distinguishable. The stern is generally smaller than the prow and can be clearly identified by the steerman's sitting board. A *bog-goh* uses sail. It can cross a channel and is used for gathering and transporting of food.

A transitory boat (first stage). In about 1000 A.D., the Sama invented a boat called *jungkong*, an improvement of the four early boats. The *jungkong* is about 25-35 ft. long, 25-30 in. wide and deep. It has round body made of either lightwood or hardwood. It has two outriggers made of either lightwood or large bamboos. The prow and stern, as well as sails, closely resembles the *bog-goh's* rounded light hardwood. Two or three paddlers (for a small *jungkong*)/oarsmen (for a large *jungkong*) man the boat.

The box-side-log boats. There are four box-side-log boats, namely, *lunday*, *damas*, *zing-ning*, and *pelang*. Construction of these boats started circa 1300, evolving to its present design in 1730. They are still in use today but started to diminish with the advent of the *kumpit*. These boats are built of *lauan* (white or red) and share a common characteristic — *ukil* carvings.

The *lunday* is 15-20 ft. long, 15-20 in. wide, and 20-30 inches deep. The hull is the entire keel (*lunas*). It is hollowed out, box-like, as its exterior, and smoothed, inside and outside. The keel curves upward at a point about 1/6 the length towards the prow and stern and to deckside level. The prow is curved like a crescent. A small *lunday* do not have any flooring, even a lower one (*kanha*). The sail called *todjak*

is on a single mast and is rolled when not in use. A *lunday* is principally used in fishing and for transporting food, it is seldom used for overnight crossings except for fishing in familiar grounds. The *lunday* is still in use today.

The *damas* is larger than a *lunday* but smaller than the *pelang*. It is built from the same material as the *lunday*'s. The *damas* has a curved arm (*tarik*) in the middle which the *lunday* does not have. It is used for long voyages.

The *zing-ning* is larger than the *damas*, and is built from the same material, along the same structure. It is 50-70 ft. long, 3-5 ft. wide and 3-4 ft. deep. It has a permanent canopy (*kadjang*) made of nipa or thin boards. It was converted into a houseboat by the *Sama Delaut* whom many people, specially foreigners, call *Badjaos*. The *zing-ning* is the type of boat that may be seen for months in lagoons and coral reefs of Tawi-Tawi. The sailor-owner moves out of the lagoon or coral reefs only when the alliance/kinship group also moves, usually during seasonal winds; from north to south or from south to north. The sail of a *zing-ning* is small and is designed like the *lepa*'s. When the *Sama* settled and became sedentary they gave up this kind of boat which has remained so dear to the *Sama Delaut* until this day.²⁶

The *pelang*, called *depang*²⁷ by the Tausog, is bigger than the *damas*. The Spaniards and the rest of the people in the Philippines called it *vinta*. *Pelang* is the name, not *dapang* nor *vinta* for the large outriggered boats. The material and structural design is no different from the *lunday* or *damas*. The *pelang*'s dimensions are: length, 35-55 ft.; width, 3-4 ft.; and depth, 3-4 ft. The largest *pelang* has two or three *tarik*s (large and long outriggers); large and long upper arms (*sa-am*); large and long reel (*dandang*); double deck floorings; lower *kaka* for dry goods and food and upper *lantay* for quarters, *ukil* carvings at the prow, stern and sides; three legged-mast, and a large sail. The boat is manned by three to ten men. The principal use of a *pelang* is in earning a living (*mauusaha*)— fishing and pearling (especially by Tandubas who has gone as far as Luzon, Palao Penang in Malaysia, and Bali in Indonesia. It is a swift seacraft and was used in the war against the Spaniards during the three centuries of colonialism in the Philippines.²⁸ In the first quar-

ter of the twentieth century, the *pelang* reached a height in uses — for communication, commerce, and social, as well as political contacts.²⁵

Boat Already Out of Use

The 700 years of boatbuilding, from 1200-1900, were a great period of maritime trade of the Sama in Southeast Asia. They built nine types of boats that carried their goods from port to port. These boats were known as *bagya*, *belamput*, *jalampah*, *adjong*, *gulita*, *parangkang*, *garang*, *lepa*, and *sappit*. Only *lepa* and *sappit* survived to the present day. The other types of boats fell into disuse because the severe restrictions imposed on them by the colonial powers — the Portuguese, Dutch, English, and the Spaniards — made difficult their existence. The colonials, with their political and war machines, had reduced the Sama boats to impotency.

Bagya. This boat was made of a large log, 50-60 ft. long and 40-60 in. wide and deep. The hull was either dug out, or, chopped, or burned, to the desired size. There was no distinction between the prow and the stern. It was moved by 10-50 oarsmen; it used no sail. It was a warship, that as the *salsila* tells us, moved from Tawi-Tawi to Da-era Buansa, capital of the Sultanate of Sulu, at very high speed. Its speed was measure by a piece of cloth which had been wet in Tawi-Tawi. Before the cloth became dry, the *bagya* already reached Da-era Buansa. In the same way the distance from Da-era Buansa to Bohi Mahya, could be negotiated before the wet cloth became dry. According to the *salsila*, the *bagya* was invented circa 1300-1400 A.D. Datu-Rajah of Tawi-Tawi had this boat built for trade between Tawi-Tawi and Borneo. The trade was the result of the marriage of a Banjarmasin princess to the Datu-Rajah of Tawi-Tawi³⁰. The use of *bagya* for both war and commerce became outmoded with the development of a new seacraft, the *belamput*. The *bagya* was difficult to maintain because it always needed several men to row it.

Belamput. This was a twin and successor to the *bagya*, except that its prow was distinguishable from the stern. The prow was extended and pointed; at its stern was a platform where the captain may be stationed during the voyage. It had a large single sail; it moved with oars when the sail was not in use. Its size was 40-60 ft. long, and 40-60 in.

wide and deep.

The *belamput*, according to the *salisila*, developed sometime in 1400-1500 when Sama chieftains in Tawi-Tawi expanded their commercial relations with the neighboring states of Sulu, Mindanao, Bulugan, Kutai, Samarinda, Bajarmasin, Bugisland, and Brunei.

The *belamput* was so named because its oarsmen had to alternately stand and sit while rowing. The usefulness of the *belamput* lasted 200 years. Like its predecessor, it was difficult to maintain because it required a considerable number of men to man it for any journey.

Jalampah. This boat invented circa 1500-1600 was intended to complement the *belamput*. Smaller in size than the *belamput* it measured 15-45 ft. long, and 3-4 ft. in width and depth. This was first Sama boat built with a keel (*lunas*) different from the *bagya/belamput* keel. The keel was smaller than the hull of *bagya/belamput*. The name *jalampah* reflected the boat movement during a strong wind or current or when hit by large waves. It was slow-moving, as well as poor loader, due to its rounded and weak structure; hence it easily outgrew its usefulness for commerce, trade and general utility.

Adjong. The *adjong* (circa, fifth century A.D.) was a contemporary of the *birok* and the *bog-goh*. It was an adaptation of the Indian ships used by the Pallavan merchants-colonists and was in use until the end of the 17th century. The size was about 40-50 ft. long, and 7-10 ft. in width and depth. Its design and structure was reflected in the *belamput* which adapted its shape. The keel was smaller than the *belamput*, obviously to give room for expansion.

The *adjong* was built of either light or hardwood and was the first Sama boat that used a rudder – the vestige of its alien origin. It had been used for commerce and trade with the states of Bulungan, Kutai, Samarinda, Bajarmasin, Pontianak, Tanjongpora, and Brunie.

Gulita. This boat built circa 1600-1700 was an outcome of the European display of their war and commercial ships that roamed Southeast Asia. The Sama, who had watched carefully the progress of these strangers, built their own ship that could match the intruders' vessels and called it *gulita*. The *gulita* was 50-70 ft. long, and 7-10 ft. wide and deep. It was the foreunner in structure of the *kumpit* and the *sappit*. The keel, bottom, prow and stern resembled the *sappit*'s. At the prow

was an extended point called *jung-ngal* and at the stern, the *pamalung*. It had two masts with several shapes called *tipas-tipas*.

The *gulita* was slow. It was the favorite of the merchant (*saudagar*) only when the wind and current were favorable for navigation – and there was no hurry.

Parangkang. The Sama built the boat *parangkang* circa 1700. The *parangkang* was an Indonesian invention. It had likeness, in its structure with the *gulita*, *sappit*, and *kumpit*. The keel was of the *gulita*, the prow of the *sappit*, and the stern of the *kumpit*. Its dimensions are – length, 50-70 ft., width and depth, 7-10 ft. Its load capacity was 2,000 sacks of rice. In the past Sama merchants in *parangkang* traded with merchants in Celebes and Java. Indonesian merchants in *parangkang* to this day trade with the Sama in Tawi-Tawi. Sometimes they sell or leave their *parangkang* to the Sama. At other times – as when they would be stranded in Tawi-Tawi due to strong winds – they got married and thus used their *parangkang* in earning their livelihood among the Sama of Tawi-Tawi.³¹

Garay. The *garay* came into being in about 1000 A.D. in Malaysia and became outmoded in the early part of the twentieth century.

The early *garay* had outriggers and were made of either light or hardwood. It spanned 50-60 ft. long and was 4-5 ft. wide and deep. Structurally, it was the progenitor of the *zing-nging*. *Garay* means “scattered, a boat of many outriggers.” The Tagalogs of Manila Bay called it “*balangay*” whence came the name of the historic boat “*barangay*.” The Malays, proud of their independence, built the *garay* for their search for freedom in eastern lands. The Malay Annals, *Serajah Melayu*, recorded that the Cholas of Tanjore of Southern India destroyed Ganganara on the Dinding coast and a fort on the Johore river tributary and captured Temasek (the old name of Singapore) in 1030. Due to this conflict in the southern regions of Malaysia, the *Sama Malays* departed for the eastern islands.³² In their search, they were carried by strong winds to Tawi-Tawi,³³ according to the *salsila*.

By the beginning of the 19th century, the *garay*'s outriggers were removed. Except for the prow's extension, the *jung-ngal*, both ends looked the same. The prow side from the center, was higher, wider, and deeper than the stern side. There was also dimensional modification. The length was reduced from 50-60 ft. to 40-50 ft. The width and

depth were increased from 4-5 ft. to 7-10 ft. It had two masts, with large trapezoidal sails. The 19th century *garay* was generally for war, although it was also used for commerce and trade.³⁴

The *garay* is now outdated but only after being in use for about 700 years (1000-1925) in Southeast Asia.

The Surviving Types of Boats

Three Sama boats — the *lepa*, *sappit* and *biral* — have survived for about 200 years. *Lepa* and *Sappit* were invented circa 1800; the *biral* about the beginning of the 20th century. These boats are built in Balimbing, Malassa, and Sabah. The *lepa* and the *sappit* are made of *nala*, *ipil*, and *gag-gil*; the *biral* of light or hardwood; but generally *lauan* white or red).

Lepa. The *lepa* (30-40 ft. long, 5-7 ft. wide and deep) has keel/hull (*lunas*) that resembles that of the *peddas*, with width of 3-5 ft. and depth of 1-3 ft. The prow and stern are of similar design. To increase the height of a *lepa*, guides (*tappi*) — two at the prow and two at the stern and one in each side — are used. The guides form an angle at the prow and stern, and extending upward, they form the bow, *jung-ngal*. The rest of the *tapi* are joined to the prow-stern guides. An additional one or two *tapi* on each side might be used — one, for the upper frame, *dandang*, and the other, for the cabinet, *malokoh*. At the stern, an arm (*sa-am*), where a steersman could sit is added in most large *lepa*. A large *lepa* uses a rudder; a small *lepa* does not. A *lepa* uses any kind of sail — the *sakkit/leha* of the Sama Delaut/Balimbing/Malassa Sama or the *todjak/lamak* of the island Sama.

The *lepa* was mainly for commerce, and trade in Southern Mindanao, Southern Palawan and to distant ports Sabah, the few *lepas* still in use are principally for transporting farm products from Tawi-Tawi to island-communities, and are used mainly by the Sama Delaut in Sitangkay and in the eastern communities of Sabah.

Sappit. The *sappit* is an outgrowth of the *lepa*. The major difference between them, is size: A small *sappit* is as big as a large *lepa*. The large *sappit* measures 40-50 ft. long and 7-10 ft wide and deep. The *sap-*

pit's upper structure is a modification of the *lepa's* upper structure. *Ukil* carvings decorate the *sappit's* *jung-ngal*, *bingkay*, *sa-am*, *malokoh*, and stern. The prow has a long bow, *jung-ngal*, and the stern has a large extension, *pamalong*. It has two or more arms (*sa-am*) that hold the mast and sail and which are *ukil*-decorated. The cabinet (*malakoh*) is built inward rather than on the side of the boat. The deck of a large *sappit* is fixed and unmovable. The mast is a bamboo pole set on a *tripod*; the sail is similar to that of the *lepa*.

A large *sappit* is used to load heavy products such as firewood, sacks of rice. A writer associated the *sappit* with piracy as can be gleaned in a caption of a photograph taken in 1902. The caption reads: "Balimbing, the stronghold of the Celebes sea pirates."³⁵

Biral. This boat is 30-40 ft in length, 5-7 ft. in width and depth and is shaped like the 19th century *garay*, except that a *biral* has straight keel whereas the *garay's* is curved. The keel is 5-7 in. in diameter. Ten or fifteen braces (*giyak*), 4-5 in. thick, are nailed to the keel. On these braces, seven to eight boards (12' x 6" x 1 1/2") are nailed together by iron pegs. The boards joints are plugged with *sansong*, which is made up of almaciga, oil, and threads. The deck is fixed and is at the same time a canopy with one or two more boards (*tapi*) built higher for safe walking and as protection from the waves. A *biral* uses a single mast (*tarok*) and the *todjak* or *lamak* type of sail.

The *biral* is principally used for commerce and trade along the coasts of Tawi-Tawi, southern Palawan, Sabah, and eastern Kalimantan of Indonesia.

The Progressive Types of Boats

There are three types of boats that belong to the progressive status, namely, the *kumpit*, *speedboat*, and a *bintang belas*.

Kumpit. In make and structure, the *kumpit* is exactly like the *biral*. The principal difference is that the *kumpit's* stern has an expanded upper structure patterned after that of the *sappit*, *gulita*, and *adjong*. The *kumpit* always has a *sa-am* at the stern for holding the rudder. A *kumpit* ranges from 30 to 70 feet long.

The early boat building communities of the *biral* and *kumpit* were

the Sama clusters in North Borneo, now Sabah, notably the island of Nonoyan. In Tawi-Tawi, the well-known communities which build *sap-pit*, are Balimbing and Malassa. Sibutu Island is known for *kumpit*-building of the eastern Borneo pattern while Ubian Timban follows the Nonoyan pattern. One Nonoyan expert, the noble Kuriri, migrated to Ubian Timbang and became the master builder of many *kumpits* in Tawi-Tawi. The expert *kumpit* builders in Zamboanga City, who established shops at Campo Islam, came from Ubian Timbang.

The principal use of a *kumpit* is for commerce and trade and fishing and pearling. It has journeyed far and wide. Panglima Sahid Sumagpi of Ubian Timbang sailed on a *kumpit* to Polao Penang in 1924, to Andamanese in 1930, and to the Maldive Islands, now a republic in the mid-Indian Ocean, in 1939.³⁶ The noble Lamboh Hadji Uddin of Ubian Timbang went on a *kumpit* to Batanes Islands in 1930. Attorney Ladjabet Beting of Tandubas boarded a *kumpit* in his journey to the south and the northern seashore of Australia in 1943.

In 1946, Hadji Hussin Hashim of Ubian Timbang took a *Kumpit* and went pearling on the coast of Sansapor, New Guinea. Hadji Hussain Nambi of Ubian Timbang journeyed on a *kumpit* to Sumatra where he sojourned at Bencolen for three months bartering with the Sumatrans in 1950. In the same year, Dizal Paipuddin of Tandubanak of Sibutu Island sailed twice on a *kumpit* to the Spratly Islands and once to Panduranga of North Vietnam.

The *kumpit* changed from sail to engine in 1951. The most popular engine was the Japanese-made Yanmar because it had simple mechanism.

The *speedboat*. The Sama speedboat is actually a *kumpit*. It spans 50-60 ft. long, with width and depth of 4-6 ft. Some speedboats are equipped with four outboard motors of 500 h.p. each. These are mainly used for the barter trade between Sabah and Tawi-Tawi.

Bintang Belas. This small seacraft invented in 1955 has two *lundays*, each 20 ft. long, joined together by six cross braces and canopied on top with boards to serve as a deck. These *lundays* make easy the loading or unloading of goods. *Bintang Belas* uses a sail or an outboard motor, 10-30 h.p. It is used mainly for coral (*bungsod*) fishing, seaweeds-culturing, and collecting seashells.

Political Organization of the Sama Boat

Boatbuilding is one way of organizing a political order. The organization of Sama boatmen is primarily political; secondarily, military (naval) organization. Of course, the prime objective of the organization in the boat is economic, which is ephemeral in nature, lasting only during the voyage. The leader, however, might continue to carry his title, rank, and prestige, until his death or as long as he commands a boatmen organization. His title is not hereditary although he might be of a noble rank which could be claimed by his descendants.

Captaincy

In order to understand the boatmen organization, it is necessary to know the leader, historically and functionally. A boatmen organization has a captaincy. The captain is called *nakora*. The syllable phoneme, *na*, means to meet, get ready, to challenge, to call to attention, to go, to be alert, to command, to warn anyone (a friend) or to frighten an enemy (*saguina*). The phoneme, *kora*, means a horse, to ride, to mark, and to commit. Put together, the two syllables, *na* and *kora* (*nakora*), mean to command, to commit, and explicitly to lead; thus a leader is born.

A *nakora* is a skipper, a captain, an admiral, and a king. As a leader he commands the boatmen. A *nakora* is a leader in politics, economics, and social functions of the boat. His rank is not a royal title and he has no royal authority. But a datu or a sultan could be a *nakora*. A man could become boatmen because of his talent, strength, and courage. He might be selected because of his wealth; in most cases, because he owns the boat. He might be chosen because of his spontaneous assertion over the others. In some instances, a superior authority appoints a *nakora*. In such cases when power is appointive the enterprise would be doomed to failure. A spontaneous leader is like a father or an elder brother or an elder cousin who asserts himself when a *nakora* is sick, or has been captured or killed.

The size of *nakora's* command ranges from two persons, including the *nakora* to a thousand men. A *nakora* is not only first rank in the boatmen organization but also in the military organization. When a man is chosen a leader of a boatmen organization he is at once a skipper, a

captain, or an admiral. When he commands a ground force, he is a general or a king.

A great *nakora* is both a king and a sea captain, who commands a fleet of ships. Such was (Nakora Saddang) Tuan Nahoda/Nakora Rajam, a sultan (emperor, king) of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Brunei, and Manila. He was the first Sama who became a sultan. The Sama ballad of *Tuan Nahoda* or *Sir Captain* is popular in Tawi-Tawi. It is generally sung by a woman who portrays Tuan's beloved, the queen Dayang-Dayang Manjanay. The theme is about the Tuan's wife's death. That Tuan wife pretended that the Tuan was alive to elude and deceive the skipper and the boatmen under the command of Tuan Nahoda. The song is known as *dindang sayang*; her singing it allows the dead man to remain in authority, and also hide his death. The ballad's setting is Brunei and Da-era Buansa and depicts Tuan Nahoda's greatness and dominion which extended from Brunei to Manila and Mindanao.³⁷

In some cases, the political organization of a Sama boat evolved into the sultanate system. In the Malay Peninsula, the *salsila* tells that seven Daing brothers came to rule there. One of them settled in Ubian Timbang, another in Sibutu, the third in Bulugan, and the fourth in Kutai. The three others who settled in Riau Archipelago circa 1670 became its rulers in 1722. By 1745 Daing Merwan and Daing Chelak became sultans of Selangor, Perak, and Kedah with Johore under their protection.³⁸

The *nakora system* is still practiced in Tawi-Tawi, particularly in the islands of Ubian Timbang, Tandubas, Secubong, Latuan, and Mantuban.

Piloting and Navigation

The *nakora* is the captain, the commander, and the chief pilot of the boat. He is an experienced sailor and expert skipper, and excellent navigator, master of the geography of the places he is travelling, expert in forecasting the weather and wind direction, versed in determining the current — high or low tides, an expert cook, skilled carpenter, a diver, and a swimmer. Besides these qualifications, he is a mathematician and a financial master. He speaks many languages — example: Bahasa Indo-

nesia and Bahasa Malayu, both Besar and Kichel, and can write, too.

In the past, a *nakora* of a fleet was known as *Ladja Laut-Rajah Laut*, meaning a king of the 'ocean, and was given the rank of an *admiral*³⁹. As an admiral, a *nakora* would no longer pilot the ship. It was possible that a *Rajah Laut* might have been a king/ruler or of noble and royal blood. A noble man might not necessarily be of a royal blood. A man of royal blood claims descent from the Prophet of Islam.

The chief pilot is an experienced seaman, an expert navigator. He can withstand many nights without sleep. He is relieved by the sailor he trusts, usually an assistant or an apprentice. Piloting the boat is a major skill learned by all Sama sailors, regardless of their assignment during the voyage.

Piloting is a special skill. Piloting a boat, especially during high and strong gales, is a test of the Sama skipper's ability and intelligence, presence of mind, and skill. Lack of these attributes might result in the boat's getting wrecked and having lives lost.

The *nakora* is the chief navigator. He determines the time (*sa-at*) to leave and to drop anchor whether in the open or deep sea, or on the reef, or on beach. Before leaving, he checks the seaworthiness of the boat. During the trip, he watches the movement and kind of clouds; he also determines the strength of the current by watching the objects across the channel. He observes the movement of the waves on the beach to determine whether at some distant places there are strong winds in his direction. He also observes the movement of fish, birds and insects in the neighborhood, to find out if his voyage would be favorable before he commands his men to leave: *sa-at na; sung na!*

Out in the sea, the *nakora* continues to observe signs that guide him. He may go against the gale by sailing along a cove; in the open sea, he goes with the gales.

Navigation needs education: *pitua* and *papata* of the pilot from the elders and experienced individuals.

Duties of Each Member of the Crew

The size of the crew depends on the kind and size of a boat. For purposes of discussion, let us assume a boat has five crew members. As the boat moves out, the skipper is at the stern, either on the rudder or

is rowing with the crew. In other cases, he might sit at the middle of the boat; he either would or would not row. In some cases, a *nakora* stays at the prow when he also rows. When raising the sail, the skipper holds the highest ropes (*kal-lat dia-tah*). Two of three ropes for control – one for pulling the sail, the other for holding the sail – are held by him. the third – for catching the wind – would be held by other crew members. The lower rope (*kal-lat de-yoh*) is held by a crew member while the lower frame (*baho de-yoh*) is held on the *sukmaran* at the prow. The chief pilot takes his place at the stern and manages the boat direction and at the same time holds the upper *kal-at*. During high gale, three or more men will be at the *sukmaran* to roll the sail, with one at the *bubutan* to control the lowering of the sail. After the sail has been lowered and placed at the *dandang*, the mast *tarok* is lowered. The crewmen quickly do their specific assignment, i.e. paddle/row the boat or drop anchor. Normally, the crew movement is leisurely.

At times, the boat drops anchor to replenish provisions. Only two men will be assigned either to catch fish or fetch water. The rest stays on board so that there would be men on the ship in case of an emergency like sudden strong gust of wind or storm, or strong current, or enemy attack. When attacking or attacked, the crew movements are the same as those during strong gale. These movements are mainly directed towards maneuvering the boat and are therefore tactical in nature. On the beach, the boat may be used as a barricade or defense.

Cooking is done by anyone available at the moment although a crew member is assigned to the task. The skipper might be the cook when the crew is busy on the job, fishing or marketing, etc. The cook, though one of the five men, is specially assigned; cleaning and removing the water from the hull is everybody's job.

Business negotiations, like selling of goods the sailors have, is the skipper's responsibility. It is his principal job to go to the market *pasal/mandal*. The four others are auditors and checkers. Everyone equally distributes the goods, in order to facilitate their sale. The goods are carried by three men, the fourth man remains at the boat on special assignment, and the captain at the negotiation table.

A small boat with less than five men would have a simple organization, short distances and time to travel, and few provisions needed

and of course, small profit. A large boat would be manned by more than five men; its organization would be complex. It would travel to distant places and would be away for a considerable time, three or more months. The larger the boat, the more men are employed; hence the bigger the capital needed.

Cargoes

Cargoes come from three places — the homeland, another island or a faraway community, and the sea. Cargoes from the homeland might be forest products like rattan or vines, and agricultural products like copra or foodstuffs. Cargoes obtained from a faraway land or community might be forest or farm products, dry goods, groceries, and the like materials. Cargoes from the sea are mother-of-pearl, trocus, mollusks, seashells, clams, tortoise, fresh or dry fish. Cargoes from the homeland are obtained from Tawi-Tawi or other islands in the archipelago of Tawi-Tawi. Faraway land are Indonesia, Sabah, Malaysia, Mindanao, Visayas, Luzon, or anywhere else in Southeast Asia. Local cargoes are intended for Sabah, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Likewise, goods from these places are intended for the Philippine markets.

In any type of boat, including the *lunday*, there are always cargo compartments. The *pilang* has four compartments, arranged thus from the prow: 1. for the anchor, ropes, and some stones for the *badjah/lambat*; 2. for water jar, 3. for bench (*kaka*) where food and clothing are stored; and 4. for goods and merchandises. Fishing gears are placed on either side of the boat so that they would be within easy reach of the crew. Harpoons and lances (*sahapang* and *sangkil*), are placed at the prow. Hooks, lines, and nets are placed at the stern when the boat is at anchor and returned to the compartments when on sail. Traps are placed on the sides and the stern.

In a medium-size *kumpit* or a *lepa* or a *sappit*, the compartments are arranged almost like those of the *pelang*, except that firewood, stove, pots, and plates in a *pelang* are placed in the compartment below the mast, whereas in the *kumpit* these are placed below the skipper's place or near it, at the compartment at the stern. The compartments of a *kumpit* that has been converted to a motorboat are similar to those in

motorboats of the western make.

Disposition of goods. Cargoes are for sale. But during strong gale or in the face of an impending enemy attack, cargoes might be thrown overboard in order to lighten the boat for better maneuverability.

Distress at Sea

Sailing with a fleet. A fleet of Sama boats that sail in Sulu, Celebes and South China Seas are usually of the same type. The fastest craft could slow down by releasing the lower *kal-lat* so that there would be less wind pushing the sail. It slows down to let the other boats in the fleet catch up. Exceptions are when the faster boat arrives at a new fishing ground or a new place for gainful business it need not wait for the slower crafts. Sama sailors by consensus wait for the slowest boat in times of distress, but in times of opportunities (*sukod*), they may not wait for the slow boats. Those left behind do not take offense during such occasions. That is why it is very important for the Sama sailor to make his boat strong and fast.

When one of the boats during a strong gale is damaged, the boat nearest it will share its own resources – men, food, etc. Among the sailors of Ubian Timbang and Ungus Matata/Tandubas the sharing of resources is expected of everyone.

When a boat is abandoned, everyone is to himself. But custom, love, and moral obligation for each other still prevails, even to the last breath, among Sama sailors. The *nakora* would command his men to take their weapons (for survival and for a combat), a rope, a canopy (*torung*) of the sail, the mast, and frames (*baho*), of the sail, or any available board to keep them afloat. A rope is tied to one of these life-savers and to crew members. The leader would show in such times care for the youngest crew member (*bungsu*). Anyone thrown into the sea would be rescued by the first man who would see him and together, they would either survive or vanish into the sea.

Survivors may swim for hours, even days, following the current, then the waves that take them to the direction of a channel and of an island. Several tales of shipwreck are told in the *salsila*. The latest shipwreck involved Imam Ukon (before he became an Imam) of Basbas

Island, North Tawi-Tawi. His *kumpit* capsized in 1947 in the Sulu Sea. He and all his crew survived but they had to swim with the canopy (*torung*) of the sail for 18 days, landing at Cagayancillo of Panay Island.

Survivors of shipwrecks in the China Sea also tell their experiences to their folks. Survivors in the Celebes Sea, Indonesian Sea, and Malaysian Sea generally settle down in the places where they land. There they get married, forging kinship ties with Indonesians and Malaysians.

Economic Implications

There are three important economic implications of boat building among the Sama. These are: 1. the boat as a property; 2. the source of income; and 3. the major factor in the development of commerce, communication, education, and change. Owning a boat is prestigious; it is a socio-economic status symbol in the community. A boat owner commands respect, becomes an authority and automatically possesses power. Ownership revolves around two important factors — the boat as an inheritance, and replacement features that induce other economic implications.

Domestic Implications

Boat as a property. Inheritance and replacement features are property elements in boat building. A son who inherits from his father all belongings like the boat and its accessories, tools and equipment, and even the minute gears and gadgets, also inherits his mother's personal property if he has no sister. A child's share of the property — depends on how much the child has contributed to the accumulation of the property. An elder son, who has worked with his father, would be given a larger share of the property. Equal sharing is however the democratic principle in practice, particularly of property which no child had contributed to its accumulation.

A father teaches his son his trades (the mother also teaches her daughter her trades also). He teaches his son the care of the boat while at home; the management of the boat while on the voyage; location of the fishing grounds and similar matters. A son is taught how to remove

the water from the hull of the boat, clean the boat *lukop* (the act is *maglukop*), handling and using the paddles, raising the mast, pulling and lowering the sail, how to untie the ropes, how to tie a knot, to throw a rope, to throw a lance, and use the harpoon, etc. The father teaches his son the many aspects of navigation and chartering the sea, from point to point, using the *panduga*, *pitua*, and *papata*, all to be mastered by the child before he could inherit the boat. When the child is already of age, strong enough to manage the boat, and has mastered the different aspects of boatbuilding, the father would yield the control and possession of the boat; thus a son becomes a partner of his father in the economic activity of their world.⁴⁰

Replacement of a boat can be categorized into two: the first is due to five reasons – it is old, lost, wrecked, sold, or to be changed (*susok*). The second category is better known as bartering or exchanging – similar to tradings in the boat; the Sama call it *susok*. An exchange is made after the boats' values, i.e., speed, materials used, etc., has been assessed by their owners. Any difference in values will be compensated for by the owner of the boat of lesser value through the addition of goods like rice, sugar, coffee, clothes, and machinery. Luck (*sukod*) the boat has brought its owner plays an important role in the exchange. A “lucky” boat would have high exchange value. An “unlucky” boat would have a low exchange value, or zero exchange value. Considered “bad luck” is the boat owner's death, when the boat is seldom brought to a long voyage, and its lack of care.

A Boat as a Principal Source of Income

A boat of any type is vital to the Sama for livelihood; to a family, it is wealth; to kins, it is hope and inspiration; to a community, it is a pride.

Boatbuilders may be an individual working alone, or a team, or a corporation. An individual boatbuilder usually makes small crafts over a relatively long time. When he needs assistance, he may call on his brother, son, or any passerby. Teamwork is done by builders of about equal skills. The work is by piece contract (*padjak*). A corporation has a leader or chief builder whose skill and expertise is above the other builders. Income is shared, and work is piece contract. Once the work is

finished, the corporation breaks up and regroups when there is another contract.

A single boat owner may be a boatbuilder himself, an individual (regardless of the sex or marital status — a woman or a widow), a family head; income from the boat is the individual's income. Single ownership is akin to single proprietorship in business.

A boat may be hired by a group of fishermen or traders under certain conditions. Some of the popular conditions are: 1. a boat owner will share profits equivalent to that of one crew members; 2. if the owner puts up some capital, he earns whatever profits from it, plus profits derived equal to that of a crew member, and 3. when the owner is part of the crew, he gets shares equal to that of a crew member; 4. if the owner is part of the crew and puts up capital, his share is three-fold; first for the boat; second, for the capital; and third, for his labor; 5. if the owner is the captain, he also gets a commission from the goods vendor, the amount of which is not revealed to, but is by practice approved by, the crew. Sometimes the owner/captain is also an intermediary or middleman. In this manner, he easily becomes a rich man.

A corporate ownership is generally composed of family members and close kins. A distant relative or any person not related to the family can also become a corporation member. In concept, the Sama corporation is like any business corporation, sans the complicated organization, accounting, and management. The Sama set-up is always simple and can be easily dissolved any time. Simple recording is, however, practiced in a Sama corporation using the fundamentals of arithmetic: addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. It is applied in matters of production, depreciation, and consumption just as it is in business corporations. Dividends are computed from incorporators' respective shares of the boat, the capital, and cash advance.

Industrial and Commercial Development

Boat building for the Sama has developed business, commerce, trade, industry, education, social, and political relationships with other peoples. The Sama *sailor-traders* can bring their boats to other Southeast Asian countries, even the distant Maldives.

The Sama's commercial development is dependent on the improvement of boatbuilding. Large vessels with speeds of 14-18 knots are not feasible for the commercial development in small islands with a population of 500-1,000 people. The large vessels for commerce will divert the income from the Sama to alien merchants. It is the kind of boats the Sama build that suit their geographical conditions and traditions in Tawi-Tawi, Jolo, Basilan, Southern Mindanao, Visayas, Luzon, Southern Palawan, Sabah, West Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Different kinds of boat are used by the Sama, each suited to the geographical location of boat-builders and boat owners; the kind of goods loaded in it; the nature of transportation and communication involved and employed.

The use of the *kumpit* in the Sama's economic development cannot be overemphasized; it will continue for some time before any radical change could take place. Fishing is the most vital industry; boatbuilding is its inseparable twin; bartering its inseparable partner. The three industries go together. Separate them and the Sama would suffer and die.

Bartering and Trading in Southeast Asia

The Sama have learned from other peoples like the Arabs, Indians, and Chinese and other Southeast Asians the art of bartering and trading. The knowledge they had gained from early contacts with Asian merchants was enriched by their experience and observations of the commercial monopolies of the Portuguese, Dutch, English, Spaniards, and Americans.

Chinese trade. The Sama have a long established commercial relations with the Chinese. The Sama and the Chinese have trusted each other in the procurement, management, and disposition of goods. The Chinese barter their goods with the sea products of the Sama. The Chinese merchants would advance provisions — even food and fishing gears — even before the Sama had any sea products to show. The Sama fishermen would gather only the sea products the Chinese needed, like the trochus (*lak*), mollusk (*lag-gong*), mother of pearl (*tipay*), trepang (*bat*), tortoise shells (*ku-wit tohong-ngan*), sharkfins (*syek*). This barter

trade and the trust they have for one another is still in full practice until this writing. An offshoot of the barter trade was the marketing of opium (*marat*), principally produced by the hinterland people of insular Southeast Asian countries. Opium is generally smoked by the Chinese, although it has other uses, i.e., medical. The Sama transported opium from Sabah to the Philippines. Opium trade reached its height at the beginning of the 20th century. Today, it has drastically declined because there are fewer opium and the government has severely curtailed it.

The Sama have learned to barter and trade with Americans and Europeans. After World War II in 1945, the Sama exchanged goods — mostly cigarettes, later guns and explosives — with the American soldiers. The Chinese merchants also bartered cigarettes, American products which flooded the Hongkong markets. Boatbuilders in Sabah and Sama sailors were known to be chain smokers. Besides, it is customary of the Sama to offer visitors cigarettes (refusal to smoke their cigarettes would offend them). Offering of cigarettes has taken the place of the *pamama* (chewing of the betel leaves, etc.). A main point to be considered very important in the barter trade between the Chinese and the Sama is the honesty in the transactions. A Sama takes away goods from the Chinese store in Sabah/Tawi-Tawi and comes back to pay them after several days or even years. In fact, there were several instances of the Sama, who after having taken the goods from the Chinese, died. But their children paid their indebtedness because of *kai-ya-an* (*hiya* in Tagalog). So it can be safely stated that the barter trade between the Chinese and the Sama started centuries ago would continue for years to come.

The barter trade between the Sama and the Chinese, the Malaysians, and Indonesians would continue so long as the boat remains the Sama's main source of livelihood. Remove the boat from the Sama and he would be deprived of his living; but develop the boatbuilding industry and he would progress and would be very happy.

Care of the Boat

Care of the boat, an aspect of boat building, is part of the training and education of a Sama child. When a voyage is planned and set, one

of the first things the sailors would do is to repair the boat and the sail.

Magtahi lamak means to saw the sail, new or wornout. During this occasion, the women—wives, mothers, sisters, and female kins — would all sew the sail. A large repair work might take the group of women a day or two of sewing.

Magpinda padayao is to change/repair the parts of a boat which are already old and weak. *Magsansong* is to plug the holes and lines of joints with the jute and a mixture or with the mangrove bark (*gal-lun*). Commonly repaired are the two frames (*baho*) of the sail, the rudder, oars, and paddles.. Ropes and fishing gears are also repaired. Repairs take at least a month and is followed by the preparation of the tools or *kasang-kapan* (*pakakas*) and the weaponry *pakokos*.

Magdahik means to push the boat outward or inward. When a boat is pushed outward to the sea, it is also called *maglungsad*, meaning to float, particularly a new boat. It is done during high tide by several persons in the community including passersby. The implication is that the passersby are also sailors; therefore, helping the other fellows is like helping themselves.

Maglukop is cleaning the boat by scrubbing its surface with a coconut husk, usually immediately on arrival or three days after, from a trip. A sailor might send a proxy to do the cleaning for him. *Maglukop* however, might take place during the trip when the sailors would find an isolated island where they could rest. This is sometimes known as *magtang-ngon*, meaning to rest, to lay low over something. This is done by raising the boat above the water or in a dryland. The boat would be placed on two rounded timbers, one near the prow below the *bubutan* and the other at the *sasaitan* near the stern. The timbers are tied to the sides of the boat with ropes or rattan to keep it from keeling over. This is followed by *magloho*, meaning to burn the coconut fibers which have stuck on sides of the boat after the scrubbing.

Magtang-ngon also imply other activities of the sailors such as procurement of food, drying of their clothes and of their catch of fishes. *Magtang-ngon* covers boat repairs and the social activities, including marriage, of the sailors in communities along their route.

Some Social Aspects of Boatbuilding

The participation of the community and the women in boat building, commerce/trade, and other social activities are manifested in their 1. providing a *muddal*; 2. preparing food; 3. attending the burial of a sailor, and 4. the arrival of the sailors.

Muddal is capital. It can be raised from various sources: 1. personal savings, usually cash; 2. jewelry (*pamulawan*) or cash proceeds of mortgaged property. Mortgages are without interests among the Sama but when the sailor comes home he gives the mortgagor a gift (*pasmampang*); 3. gift of parents, a rich brother and a kind sister married to a prosperous man.

At least a month before departure, the sailor's family prepares the food to bring along in the voyage. The quantity of food is determined by estimating the duration of the voyage. In long voyages more food can be obtained from sea or during stopovers. The common food are cassava (*pang-ngi-kayo*), rice, and special dishes such as *bobok* which consists of rice, fish, pepper, salt, little sugar which have been dried and fired, pounded, and preserved in a tight jar (such food will last for more than a year), rice cakes – the *bao-lo*, *pang-nganan*, *pan-nyam*, and the *ja-a* (a kind of cake the present youth call *oral reading*). These cakes are specially made by the sailor's parents, younger sisters and cousins, and sweethearts (*tunang*). The special food is eaten during the night watch when the sailors regale themselves with stories of adventure, love and aspirations. Cassava is eaten in regular meals and is cooked either as *sinanglag* or *poto*. *Sinanglag* is cassava fried without oil or water. *Poto* is cassava cooked without adding water over a pot in a coconut shell. *Poto* is tastier, but more expensive, than the *sinanglag*; the cooking of *poto* consumes more firewood and time than that of *sinanglag*.

If a sailor dies during the trip, he is buried temporarily in an isolated place. His body regardless of its condition, will be taken home in the return voyage and is placed inside a coffin (*lalong*). On arrival, the sailors would raise a white flag that would announce to the community that a sailor had died. The relatives of sailors aboard would then weep until the coffin is landed. Then burial according to Sama customs would take place.

Another unfortunate voyage is called *beslak*. Voyages that end in a shipwreck, capture by enemy forces and detention by any government for violation of maritime and other laws are called *beslak*. Violations are generally made by the sailors unknowingly. The Sama sailors are ignorant of those laws but the western principle is, "ignorance of the law excuses no one." The ignorant Sama would say, "*awam*," but the law would nevertheless be enforced. The trip would thus be considered *beslak*, unfortunate because the sailors might be jailed and fined, and when they returned, they brought nothing but rancor implanted in their minds and transmitted through their oral traditions.

The arrival of the sailors after a gainful voyage is a lively scene in the community. Both near and far distant relatives, friends, and sweethearts would happily greet them. If a sailor is single, his mother or sister would get all his share in (money and goods) and wrapped *pasampang* are distributed to friends. Anything unwrapped belongs to someone known to the sailor—perhaps his sweetheart or dead loved one and would be given at a proper time. If a sailor is married, his wife distributes the *pasampang*.

Sailors who have journeyed for over a year are known as *manahon*. The community expect them to bring many things home. There is always a thanksgiving (*pasalamat*), usually rendered with prayers, for a successful voyage. The *pasalamat* may be dedicated to the Almighty Creator, to sacred persons, living or dead, or to beloved ancestors.

Boatbuilding and seafaring are tied with kinship and marriages. Boats are built partly for kin upliftment. Thus, it is not unusual for a crew to be composed of close relatives. On marriage, boat would be the bride price. A young goes with a voyage in order to earn the money and goods for a forthcoming wedding. The reason is simple: no wedding is complete without a lively celebration that entails some expense.

The Future of Boatbuilding in Tawi-Tawi

The future of boatbuilding in Tawi-Tawi hinges upon the Sama's economic development. What are now being improved in terms of materials and structure of the boats, and what would the Sama intend

to improve in the future? These questions are crucial in the light of these developments: 1. the shift from sailboat to motorboat, 2. the economic contributions the boats have to the Sama's existence and survival, and 3. the growth of the Sama population.

From Sailboat to Motorboat

The shift from sailboat to motorboat changed the economic lifestyle of the Sama. Distance between islands could now be rapidly traversed. The accelerated speed of travel also hastened socio-political changes among the Sama, including their relationships with the peoples of Southeast Asia, particularly the Malaysians, and Indonesians. In due time, the sailboats would be relegated to sports, instead of commerce. However, medium-sized sailboats the *pelang*, *damas*, and *lunday* have survived. Their survival is due to their lightness and usefulness in the domestic fishing, transportation, and communication. Engines could not be easily installed on them because their box-like structure leaves scant space for the propellers.

In Tawi-Tawi the first to use a motorboat of the *junkong* type was Hadji Muhammad Kurais of Ubian Timbang in 1936. The motorboat used to sail between Tawi-Tawi and Cotabato. This boat had various problems and they had hindered its development; it fell to disuse at the outbreak of World War II. The second person who used a motorboat was Islani C. Sapal in 1939. Sepal, the public schools district supervisor then, used it for his visits to six municipalities under his district. The type of boat used was a *sappit*, named *Sungna*, meaning "let us go." It was unfortunately caught by the Japanese in World War II. It used a Japanese-made engine, Yanmar.

In the next 15 years after World War II no one in Tawi-Tawi used a motorboat until Japan began to export in large numbers Yanmar engines to Sabah and a leading Sabah merchant sold them on installments.

By 1960, there were in Tawi-Tawi about 20 motorboats; by 1965 about 100 motorboats; by 1970 about 200 motorboats for Tawi-Tawi's population of 110,116 people. The number of motorboats have today steadily increased.

Transportation and Commerce

The Sama's economic development hinges on the development of transportation, communication, commerce, and industry – which, in turn, is affected by the development of boatbuilding.

Transportation and communication. In Tawi-Tawi, the Sama live on the beach, except a handful who farm in the mainland. Most islands inhabited by the Sama are about 2-3 km. long and 1-2 km. wide. The islands are generally about 15 miles from each other, except Sibutu, Kagayan Mapun, and Turtle Islands which are over a 100 miles from mainland Tawi-Tawi.

The Sama boat as a means of transportation, hastens 1. out-migration and in-migration; 2. will help develop tourism; 3. will lead to the organization both in Tawi-Tawi and throughout Southeast Asia.

The Sama boat also help communication in three ways:

1. Where there is lack of government communication facilities, a Sama boat is the best means of carrying communication matters – periodicals, books, and any printed material;
2. Where there is no established communication system in a community, the best substitute is a boat network;
3. Where there is no government communication system, i.e. postal, the boat could be used to deliver mail.

Commerce and industry. The development of boat building in Tawi-Tawi would accelerate commerce and industry. It will hasten commercial production, distribution, and consumptions of goods and food. Industrially, boatbuilding will develop the construction industry—from materials flow and manpower to the raising of capital and fiscal management.

Population Growth and Migration

The migration of the Sama from Tawi-Tawi to Southeast Asian countries is a stabilizing factor in the population growth of the Sama. The migration to Sabah is of great importance to the population growth in Tawi-Tawi.⁴⁰ The principal reasons of the Sama's migrating to Sabah

are economic opportunities and accommodation there. In the last 100 years, many Tampakan inhabitants in Ubian Timbang have moved out to Sabah. Recent migrants were residents of Ungus Matata in Tandubas island who settled in the islands near Banguay Island, in Sabah.

Cultural Effects of Boat Building

Boatbuilding in Tawi-Tawi have wrought changes in the Sama's lifestyle. The Sama sailors not only have brought home many material goods such as clothes, buty they have also brought with them knowledge which they had gained from sailors of other lands. This knowledge includes the languages of the people they have visited,⁴¹ and their manners and conduct. The Sama sailors have also observed the facilities and conveniences — the electrical appliances and automated devices available in the large communities they have gone to.

Looking Ahead

Boatbuilding has cultural values that impinge upon the Sama's lifestyle. Historically, the boats were vital in warfare and migration; they have contributed to the Sama's economic progress and social upliftment.

Progress in boatbuilding in Tawi-Tawi will greatly induce the Sama to systematic boat ownership, develop the boat as a more convenient means to transportation and communication, and promote cooperative enterprises.

Boatbuilding is likewise expected to change the transportation business; develop mercantilism; help to equitably distribute wealth and income; promote the division of labor, and increase the value of contract (*padjak*). But boatbuilding in order to have a lasting economic impact, is dependent on these five major factors: 1. the improvement of the skill and craftsmanship of boatbuilders; 2. improvement of the quality and size of boats; 3. the continued competition and the increase in output; 4. the capital needed for boatbuilding and boat-ownership; and 5. the opening of ports where the Sama merchandise can freely flow in and out.

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FOOTNOTES

1. **Sama** is the correct name for the ethnic group. When a native says, **A'A' Sama**, **A'A'** refers to the person (**A'A'** is a cognitive expression; e.g. **A'A' American**, simply means an American) and **Sama** to the ethnic group. **A'A' Sama** generally refers to the sea people that moved about on boats and may thus mean either the Sama or the Badjao. (Muhammad Kurais II, "The Badjao of Sulu", 1964, pp. 1-168). The term "Samal" was used in "The Health and Sex Practices As Influenced By Religion among the Sama of Tawi-Tawi. The inclusion of the letter "l" was a typographical error of the PSS clerical staff in 1966. It is not advisable to use the term "Samal" for it can be misconstrued to be the related term "Samal" which means "dirty."
2. Tawi-Tawi, is a group of islands in the southern fringes of the Philippines. It lies 119.5° – 120.5° long. east of Greenwich; and 4.5° – 5.5° lat. above the equator. The largest island is called Tawi-Tawi. For the meaning of Tawi-Tawi and stories, cf. Muhammad Kurais II, "The Sama of Tawi-Tawi: A Study of their Contemporary Culture," 1,000 pp. The people of Bas-Bas Island believed in the existence of early inhabitants who reportedly reside in a mound called Tawi-Tawi. This author has made three visits to this spot: in 1930 when as a boy he went with some older persons; when he led expeditions on Feb. 20, 1952 and April 16, 1955. Close to it, on the east, is the island of Tabal-Longan, which is not permanently populated. On the west is the island of Sanga-Sanga. The second largest island is Sibutu in the far west. It is separated from Tawi-Tawi by a deep channel **Mangal-lik**, meaning a shrill sound. On the southwestern side known as Bukut Tawi-Tawi are sparsely populated islets – Bal-lakan, Simalak, and Kabangkawan. Their inhabitants generally come from Ubian Timang. On the southeastern fringes are chains of islands Kinapusan, Bintualan, Tabawan, Ubian, Timbang, Tandubas, Secubong, Latuan, Mantabuan, Banaran, Bilatan, Simunul, Manukmangkaw, and Bongao. Other islands in the group are Buan, an island in the Bay of Dungon, Kagayan Mapun Islands.
3. Some 100,000 Samā are reportedly found in Sabah, while another 100,000 are said to be found in Indonesian and West Malaysia.
4. I have visited the Sama clusters in Rian Archipelago, in Sarawak, in Brunei, in Sabah (northern, western and eastern coasts – Lahad Datu, Tawao, Samporna); Umaral Island and Tarakan of Kalimantan Indonesia in 1948, 1952, and 1966. On many occasions, I have also visited the Sama communities in Southern Palawan, Siasi, Jolo, Basilan, Zamboanga del Sur, Cotabato, and Davao. In the Visayas, particularly in Cebu City and in Bato, Leyte, the settlements of **Sama Delaut** were visited by this author.

5. **Special Report No. 3 – Population, Land Area, Density and Percent Change in Three Censal Years 1948, 1960, and 1970: Philippines** (Manila: Bureau of the Census and Statistics, October 1972), p. 33.
6. "Lore" is a traditional description of knowledge, activities, experiences, tales, and the aspirations of the people. **Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary** (Springfield, Mass., U.S.A: C. & C. Merriam Co., Publishers, 1959), p. 497.
7. **Sukod** means luck, to measure, and to challenge another person; depending on the linguistic usage of the prefix **mag** or **nag** as **magsukod** - to be lucky and **nag-sukod** – to be measuring.
8. **Madday** used to refer to Cathay or China. In recent, years, the name was transformed into **Maddas**, which refers to what today is Siasi, Sulu.
9. **Lan-nang** refers to the Chinese of Cathay, later to Chinese of Siasi, Sulu.
10. Brian Harrison, **South-East Asia: A Short History** (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1957), p. 15. Harrison said that the inscription of Malavarman is Kutai (he spelled it Kutei) stated that a settlement was established in East Borneo and eastern islands. It is possible that Tawi-Tawi is the settlement in the eastern islands. In almost every community in Tawi-Tawi there are large families that lay claim to ancestral connections with Kutai, Bulugan, and Brunei royal families.
11. **Ibid.**, p. 10 ff. The **Ramayana** mentions the land **Survanadvipa** and **Yava-dvipa**; **dvipa** is Sanskrit for "land with water on both sides"; that can be Malaysian Barat/ Sumatra/Java/Borneo; **survana** for gold and barley.
12. **Indonesian Review, Volume 1, No. 1**, January 1951, p. 8, for "fishing along the Java Coast." This is on a reflection of the **parangkang**.
13. According to tradition, **Samarinda** was named after a Sama princess. A Sama **salsila** in Tawi-Tawi tells of a "black pearl" (**mutya diyok**) that a Buranon (early Tawi-Tawi inhabitants) gave as a bride price to a Bandjarmasin princess who was brought to Tawi-Tawi by the **Orang Banjar** (ruler of Banjarmasin).
14. Makdum's complete name is Makdum Ibrahim Al-Akbar bin Jamaluddin Al-Hussaini shortened to Karimul (generous, noble) Makdun (who served, the master).
15. Muhammad Kurais II, "The Kinship System of the Sama: Its Social and Cultural Symbolism," paper read at the 9th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, in Chicago, U.S.A., Sept. 1-8, 1973; p. 122 – Location map number 3. Karimul Makdun arrived in Tawi-Tawi circa 1300 A.D. The date cited and believed to be correct is 1340 A.D., not 1380 A.D., the date some writers believed to be the year when, as tradition tells us, the conversion of the Samas into Islam took place at Kalang Pagbiatan in northern Tawi-Tawi.
16. Najeeb M. Saleeby, **Studies in the Moro History, Law, and Customs** (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1904), p. 52. Also Frank Charles Laubach, **The People of the Philippines** (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1925), p. 40.
17. I made a distinction between the spelling of words which referred to the people. I used for the last letter of the word Maguindanaw **w** to refer to the people and to the place. I differ from Fr. de la Costa, who used **u** for both the people and place.
18. Horacio de la Costa, S.J., "A Spanish Jesuit Among the Maguindaus," **Proceed-**

- ings of the First International Conference of Asian Historians (Manila: Philippine Historical Association, 1960) loose-copy pp. 1-2.
19. Cf. footnote no. 14, *supra*.
 20. In fact there is a barrio called Tawi-Tawi at Pagalungan.
 21. General J. P. Sanger, Director; Henry Cannett and Victor H. Olmsted, Assistant Directors, **Census of the Philippines: Bulletin 1, Population of the Philippines by Islands, Provinces, Municipalities and Barrios** (Manila: Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce and Labor, 1904) pp. 14-18.
 22. It should be noted that some communities belong to what today is the province of Sulu.
 23. Now chief legal officer, Philippine Coconut Administration.
 24. Diokno Manlavi, "War Epic: To Australia by Sailboat," **Panorama**, March 3, 1974, pp. 24-25.
 25. The word **peddas** (e as in **bed**) is the same as **pedlas** in Balimbing and Bilatan. Any shift in pronunciation changes its meaning and application. Cf. Harry Nimmo ("Social Organization of the Tawi-Tawi Dajaw," **Ethnology**, Vol. IV, 1965, p. 425) spelled the word **pedlas** with an "i" (**pidlas**), thus changing its meaning and application. The meaning of **Peddas** means flat; **pedlas** is flat and clean; while **pidlas** means **cut**, shattered and destroyed which sharply contradicts the purpose of the boat.
 26. **Kurais**, "Badjaos of Sulu," pp. 1-161 *passim*.
 27. The toyboat of Sama boys during seasonal winds is called **dapang-dapang**, meaning a small boat.
 28. Conrado Benitez, **History of the Philippines** (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1940), p. 287. Citing the work of Jose Montero y Vidal, **Historia General de Filipinas**, Vol. I, ch. xxvii.
 29. Sixto Y. Orosa, M.D., **The Sulu Archipelago and Its People** (New York: World Book Company, 1923 updated and republished 1970 in the Philippines), pictures of the fleet of **pilang** are found on pages 2, 3, 56, 57, 60, 63, and 64 the last two houseboats – **zing-nging**.
 30. H. Otley Beyer and Jaime C. de Veyra, **Philippine Saga** (Manila: Evening News, 1947), p. 18, Plate No. 48. Marriage was between a Banjarmasin princess with a Buranon chief. The tradition **salsila** of the Sama tells that the first people who inhabited Tawi-Tawi were the Buranons.
 31. In 1956-1957 there were three **parangkang** (s) that were drifted by strong gales to the seashore of Ubian Timbang. They were manned by Indonesians from Bugisland, their boats laden with copra. Two of them later married and remained in Tawi-Tawi.
 32. **Harrison, Op. Cit.**, pp. 30-31.
 33. Muhammad Kurais II, "Ascendancy of the Sayyid Sultans (Sulu) in the Philippines," **Southwestern Journal**, Vol. 1, No. 1, December 1959 (Cebu City: Southwestern University), p. 33.
 34. Orosa, **Op. Cit.**, p. 24, two pictures with a caption: "Garays laid up on the beach, with such craft, the "Malay pirates" spread terror in the sea."
 35. A. Henry Savage Landor, **The Gems of the East** (New York: Harpers and Brothers Publishers, 1904), p. 244.

36. Panglima Sahid planned to go to Arabia in 1942 on his kumpit, *Talisay*, but World War II broke out. He is a fifth generation descendant of a Bugis sailor who was shipwrecked but who landed safely in Ubian Timbang on the back of a shark (his descendants do not eat sharks). At one time he was the mayor of south Ubian. He claims kinship and lineage to the rulers of Bulugan and Kutai sultanates in East Borneo and to the sultans of Jahore, Selangor, and Pahang in Malay Peninsula which he has visited.
37. Leonard Casper (*The Wayward Horizon*, p. i-vi), citing the work of Maximo Kalaw, *An Introduction to Philippine Social Life*, (from Austin Craig, *Gems of Philippine Oratory*), said that in 1380 A.D. Nakora Rajam (he spelled it Nakora Ragam) spoke to the people of Manila telling them his blood, his kingdom, his exploits/battles and victories, and what the people of Manila should do in justice and fairness as they were already brought together in relation through his marriage with the princess of Manila.
38. Harrison, *Op. Cit.*, p. 152. the Daing brothers were also mentioned by him. The Daing brothers ascendancy to the sultanates of the Malaysian states is found in the *salsila* which is orally handed down from generation to generation, specially in Sibutu and Ubian Timbang.
39. Property notion and practices among the Sama is discussed in detail in "The Sama of Tawi-Tawi: A Study of their Contemporary Culture" by this author.
40. Muhammad Kurais II, "Population Growth in Tawi-Tawi (Philippines): Its Implication on Ethnic Identity, Migration, Change, and Socio-Economic Development" (unpublished), p. 57.
41. It will not misleading to say that every sailor who travels in Indonesia and Malaysia speaks Indonesian and the Malaysian languages.

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