

NOTES

1. Summary of the Sama Culture

The 300,000 Sama people of the Philippines live in Sulu and several places round the Mindanao coast. Most of them are oriented to the sea; about 80,000 of them living in pile villages just off shore from the many islands of the Sulu archipelago. These are referred to as Sama Dilaut, (Sea Sama) and Jaji who told this story is one of them. Their whole economy is based on a protein-starch exchange with land oriented people.

The men are usually fishermen, and use a patrilineally inherited fishing technique - trap, net, line or spear fishing. The sea is their home and that is where they feel at ease and it is the rare Sama Dilaut who chooses to sleep ashore when he could sleep in the safety of his boat or sea house.

The Sama Dilaut of the Siasi lagoon area (Central Sulu), have conventionalized relationships of a limited nature (mainly economic) with land-based Tausugs who speak a different language.

The villages in the Siasi lagoon area have populations of 1500 to 4000. Each village is segmented according to kindred lines, with the segmentation reflected in fishing methods. Houses within each segment are connected by narrow bridges. Adjacent clusters will have very little to do with each other because the Sama regards himself as responsible only to his fairly wide circle of kin and not to the outsider even though he may live only a few yards away and speak the same language. Leadership is exercised by an elder of each kindred who deals with low-level civil problems. Kindreds tend to be endogamous.

The hearth religion of the Sama Dilaut is worship of ancestral spirits. This religion has an elaborate set of rituals to cover every aspect of life from birth to the grave. In addition to their basic animism the Sama Dilaut are professing Muslims. Like many other Muslim groups of S.E. Asia it is the disposition to be Muslim that counts rather than orthodoxy.

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