



The Voyage of the Balangay Book project

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In the 1970s several ancient boats called Balangays were found during construction work in Butuan, Mindanao, Southern Philippines.

The oldest one was carbon dated 320AD or just about 1700 years old.

The type of boat was mentioned in various Spanish and Chinese chronicles and they were used for trade and piracy throughout Southeast Asia.

Art Valdez, leader of the first Filipino Mt. Everest team decided to build an authentic replica of a balangay, sail around the Philippines with his Mt. Everest team to spread goodwill, national pride and concern for the environment.

The Balangay was build by the Sama, a tribal group from Tawi Tawi, the last people in the Philippines who still know the ancient way of shell-first construction of boats. just like the ancient boats using only wooden pegs and robes made out of cabo negro, a fiber made from a palm tree,

It has no naval blueprint but simply flows from the institutional memory of the master boat builder, Ibrahim Abdulla.

The people of Butuan undertook the logistical requirements while the Manobo and Higaonon tribes from central MIndanao provided the special hardwood coming from their ancestral domain.

After building a second one, much bigger Balangay right in the Butuan community, we were on our way to sail beyond the Philippines and around Southeast Asian tracing the migration of the Austronesian forebears.

We sailed all around MIndanao, on to Tawi Tawi, Borneo, Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Cambodia until we had turn around because of rough seas.

A fitting symbol for the border-less trade that dated back more than 1000-years ago.

Everywhere we went we added local artifacts the boats to make it a truly South East Asian effort.

After 15 months at seas we are all safely back home. The Diwata Ng Lahi is displayed in the National Museum in Manila and the Masawa Hong Butuan is home, a proud artifact of Butuan's glorious past.

To commemorate the great journey and to further provide the Filipino people with something they can be proud of we want to make a book. It shall be a beautiful coffee table book with the best of the thousands of photographs we have taken. It will have short stories about our adventures and of course the historic back ground behind it all. We want to continue our effort to educate people about a proud pre-hispanic Filipino heritage and culture. Kaya Ng Pinoy, (The Filipino can do it) Ikaw, kaya mo ? (can you do it as well?) Can yo help us?

Special thanks to Ted 'Everest Doc' Esguerra for the great music.

Look more here: www.Boat.PhilippinesHeritage.ph