



A Lesson from Japanese Fishermen

*The typhoon-proof otoshi-ami
is ideal for Philippine climate*

THE TYPHOON is one of the scourges of Philippine fishing. Yearly, thousands of pesos worth of equipment and catch are lost because of the typhoon. Some 20,000 Filipinos are dependent upon fishing as their main source of livelihood. Loss due to typhoons, therefore, represents substantial deprivation.

All these might change when a new trap called the otoshi-ami becomes popular. This is a Japanese fishtrap that is woven

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out of synthetic twine and anchored to the bottom of the sea with sand weights. Virtually typhoon-proof, it can also trap fish in places where the baclad is useless. It can be used throughout the year.

With the baclad, fishing is a gamble. In fishing towns, stories of big losses are rife. There is the case of a fisherman in Bataan who invested his life-

time saving in a bamboo trap. In the first week, he was very lucky. His new trap brought in about ₱10,000 worth of fish. Feeling the flush of success, he sank everything he had in more traps. The next week, a storm came his way and destroyed his traps. He is now poorer than when he started.

The experience of this fisherman is not unique. It is shared by everyone who is engaged in trap-fishing. For this reason, fishing in the Philippines is done only during the calm months of April, May and June. With the first hint of storm, the fishermen remove their traps. The rest of the year they have very little or no income.

The otoshi-ami, in comparison, can withstand an ordinary storm. When the storm really gets rough, all that the fisherman has to do in order to save his trap is to cut the lines that connect it to the outriggers. The trap will sit out the storm on the floor of the sea.

The baclad also is useless in depths exceeding ten fathoms. Hence, it can snare only small fish — dilis, sardines, mackerels, talakitok and the like. Very seldom does it catch the giants of the deep.

The otoshi-ami, on the other hand, is good up to eighty fathoms. The really big ones can be used in the high seas. It is estimated that about 35 percent of the 2,362,000 kilos of tuna



on the Japanese market is caught by the otoshi-ami.

AN OTOSHI-AMI costs as much as a baclad. A big baclad costs about ₱10,000, which is about the price of an otoshi-ami. The big ones naturally cost more. The price of an otoshi-ami depends upon the quality of the synthetic twine.

The otoshi-ami is more durable than the bamboo trap. An ordinary baclad lasts only six months at the most. The Japanese trap is good for at least seven years.

It is granted that the ordinary fisherman cannot afford an otoshi-ami. However, if the fishermen would group themselves into cooperatives, the financing of this enterprise would be easier. To this end, the Bureau of Fisheries is organizing the fishermen.

This would be the most practical method of financing the business since the banks do not give substantial loans to fishermen. However, the government is exploring ways and means of extending loans and technical assistance to fishermen who are interested in this new type of fishing.

The use of the otoshi-ami might open the synthetic industry in the Philippines. The materials necessary for the manufacture of synthetic twine are available in the Philippines. The raw materials are coal and lime-

stone. Synthetic twine is light, water-repellent and corrosion-resistant.

It is hoped that the otoshi-ami might improve the fishing industry of the Philippines and increase the country's food supply. It is well-known that the waters around the Philippines teem with more fish than the waters around Japan and yet the Japanese have more fish than the Filipinos. An otoshi-ami takes in, on the average, \$25,000 worth of fish. The heaviest baclad catch is only worth ₱4,000.

The Bureau of Fisheries is charting the areas in the Philippines where this kind of trap can be exploited to the greatest advantage. The migrations of different species can be followed and exploited commercially. As a general rule, the Bureau prescribes escape routes from coves and bays, as the ideal location for this fish-trap.

THE AREAS in the Philippines that are ideal for the otoshi-ami are Balayan Bay, Manila Bay, the coast of Bataan, the northern coasts of Capiz and Antique, the Sulu Sea, the Moro Gulf and the Mindanao Sea.

The otoshi-ami will greatly help in increasing the income of our fishermen and in protein-supply problem of our country. Our people do not get enough protein and the cheapest and most abundant protein

food in our country is fish. The lack of protein accounts for the general physical weakness of our people. The government,

therefore, and our fishermen should do everything they could to popularize and put into use the otoshi-ami.

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All About Fish

ALL KINDS OF FISH, whether deep-sea or fresh water, are excellent sources of protein—the substance young bodies need for growth and everybody needs to repair tissues constantly being used up in daily activities. Fish also provides iodine, phosphorus and some of the B-complex vitamins. Small varieties of fish like soft-shelled crabs, shrimps or anchovies, either dried or fresh, when fried and eaten whole, are excellent sources of calcium for healthy bones and teeth.

With the wide variety of fish available in this area, menus can easily feature it and still be varied from day to day. Fish readily lends itself to frying, broiling, roasting, stewing, steaming, for soups, salads and croquettes. It is generally cheaper than meat or poultry and is just as nutritious.

When buying fish, see that it is absolutely fresh, as even the slightest decomposition will cause unpleasant taste, and in many cases, stomach upset. Red gills, firm flesh, bright and full eyes, and a characteristic fresh odor are good indications of the freshness of the fish.

Fish when prepared to be served hot is best when cooked just before it is eaten. When frying—in fillets, steaks or as a whole—coating it with seasoned flour or thin batter before dropping it into hot oil will seal in its flavor. Cook it to a delicate light golden color; overcooking will make the flesh tough and strong the same effect.

When broiling fish over coals or under electric units, dab on a little butter, margarine or unflavored oil after seasoning with salt and pepper to prevent its natural juices from dripping.

As in frying, avoid overcooking, and serve as soon as done. Many people enjoy seasoning their fish with lemon or lime juice. Seasonings and sauces for fish dishes naturally vary with the traditions of different peoples. But in all cases the important thing is to serve the fish to give the most nutrition and enjoyment.

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