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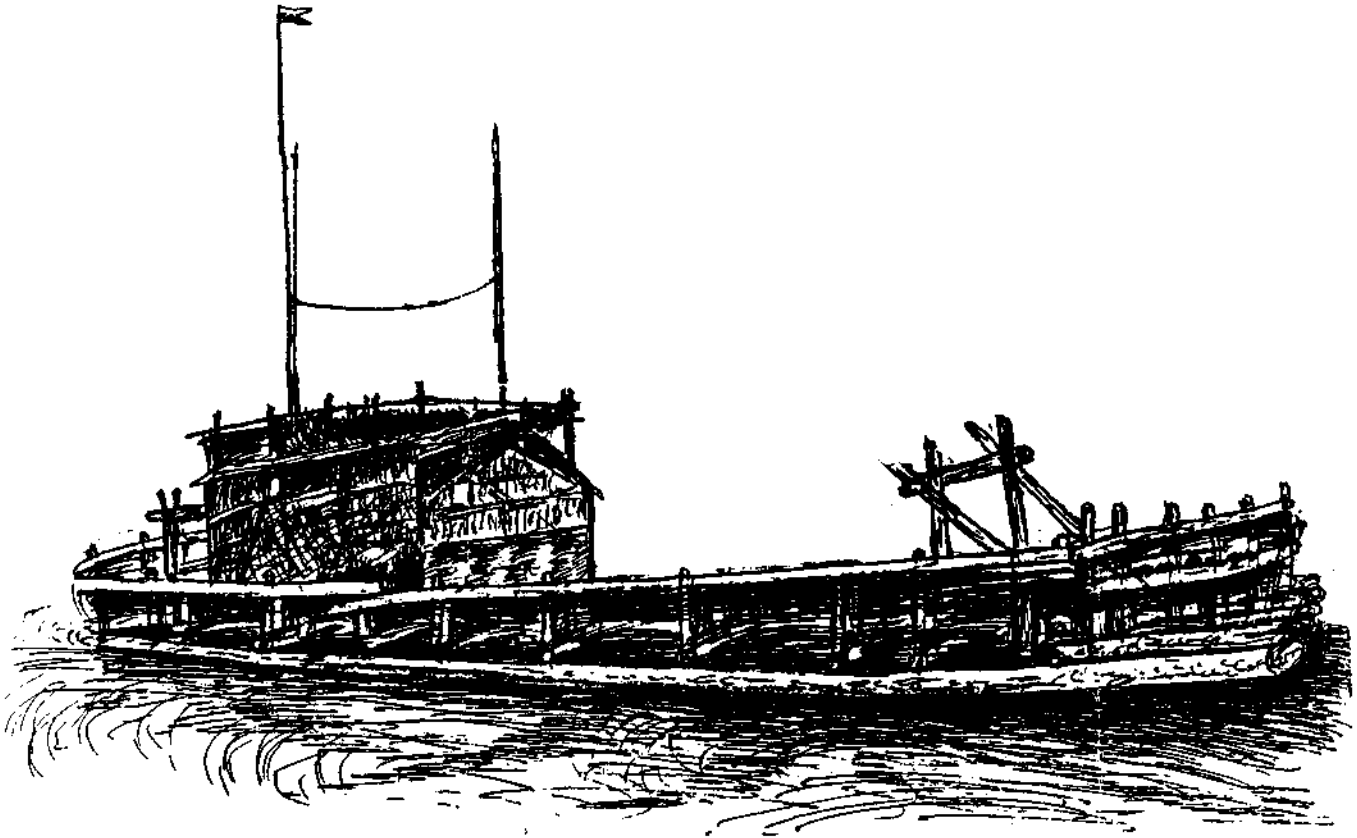
ON A BURMESE FISHING RAFT DRIFTED TO MADRAS*

On 6-12-1987, a fishing raft with three crew members was brought to Madras by local fishermen. The raft was from Piyapong Chonkaa, Burma. On 21-11-'87 the raft was anchored in River Iravati. Due to sudden floods in the river, the anchor got lifted and the raft drifted to the sea with three fishermen. The vessel drifted with the current in south-westerly direction

for 16 days in the sea and was rescued by the local fishermen near Pulicat on 6-12-1987. There was no net in the raft at the time of rescue.

The raft (length: 12 m; width: 3 m) was fabricated with bamboos in two tiers (Fig. 1). Twentyfive bamboo poles were spread in rows to form the floor and they were tied with ropes. Casuarina poles supported the sides of the raft. The raft had a hut, which was partitioned; one room was for cooking and the other

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for shelter. The approximate value of the raft was Rs. 10,000/-. The raft was later dismantled and sold in Madras and the money was used for the stay of the three fishermen in Madras.

✦ This is not the first time that fishing boats from Burma have drifted towards Tamilnadu Coast. On 10-2-1986, a raft landed in Mudiveeranpatnam (Ramnad

District). On 29-3-1987 a similar fishing raft with five fishermen landed in Devanampatnam coast. This vessel was said to have left the Burma coast on 12-2-'87. Later, another fishing raft was rescued near Mandapam on 28-1-1988. It may be noted that all these boats were drifted during November-March, when the current is in south-westerly direction in the Bay of Bengal.

