



Once again: If my memory fails, I'll make something up that sounds right and makes me look good.



When we left the story Bob Berg had quit the TV station and was working full time as a broker. I think the brokerage was called Flying Dutchman, started by my old buddy Will Eickholt. They were selling Tayana 37's with good regularity.

One day Bob came into the office and said he had an idea for a new boat. He wanted a 30' version of the Tayana 37. It should be a heavy little boat with the emphasis on the interior layout. Bob already had the interior laid out in his mind down to the last detail. My work on this layout was simply to draft Bob's ideas. So, while I would love to take credit for the interior of the Baba 30, I can't. It's all Bob Berg. The office joke was, when you open a drawer on the Baba 30 inside it, you'll find another little drawer. Bob didn't let a cubic inch go unused. I was skeptical.

But I'm not going to design a hull without doing my very best to make it a good performing boat. That's a challenge with 12,000 lbs. on 30'LOA. I essentially used similar shapes to those in the Tayana 37. The Baba 30 would be a chunky monkey but curvaceous. I'm sitting here now, at my computer, staring up at the Baba 30 half model on my wall. I'm trying to figure out what I did that was "special". Can't see it myself. But we'll get into the performance of the 30 later. On my wall the half model of the Tayana 37 is right above the

half model of the Baba 30. There are more similarities than differences. One thing I notice as I stare at the photos, and the model is that the leading edge of the "full keel" is farther aft on the Baba 30 than it is on the Tayana 37. This may account for the better helm balance on the Baba.



We tore into the design of the 30 and before long the boat was being built in Taiwan at a new yard, one I had never heard of, Ta Shing, Mandarin for "Big New". I have always translated Ta Shing as "Big Star" "Shing" meaning "star". But I was recently corrected. I hate looking stupid. With the build well underway Bob thought I should make a trip to the yard to check on the progress. I met Bob in Taiwan, and he was accompanied by his inspector, Tim Ellis. Tim, an Englishman about my age lived in Taiwan and really knew the ropes. We met early in the morning at the hotel in Taipei and off we drove almost the length of Taiwan to the new yard in Tainan.

Ta Shing was located down a narrow lane in a series of co-joined brown brick buildings that looked less than impressive. The approaching lane was narrow, and I had to move chickens out of my way to get to the front door of the yard. The actual Boatbuilding area of the yard was small and dark. There was the Baba 30 to one side and a quarter tonner being built for a Japanese client on the other side. I just stared at the 30. It looked like it was perfect in every way. I was blown away by the quality and level of finish. It was a handsome little hooker all dressed up with teak everywhere. But that was Bob's style. i.e. put teak on

everything. Keep in mind that this build was at a time when labor was cheap in Taiwan. I would question a client on a labor-intensive detail and get the reply, "Forget labor cost. It's nothing." So, here were the first two Ta Shing boats I ever saw. Two boats that could not be more different, an IOR quarter tonner and a very heavy little double ender. Both built beautifully.



Everybody was happy. The yard wanted to take Me, Bob and Tim to dinner. The problem was that we had made other dinner plans back in Taipei. This was a problem. The solution was lunch with the guys from the yard. Off we went for a "modest" lunch. The Taiwanese are not good at making modest meals. I was the guest of honor and along with about six men from the yard we sat down to an extravagant feast in a private room at a nice restaurant. These plush, private rooms were common in better restaurants in Taiwan. The room layout was simple, a series of big armchairs lining the four walls and a big circular dining table in the middle.

The Taiwanese don't drink during a meal the way we do. If my observations are correct, the Taiwanese only take a drink after they have toasted the guest. They employ an unfair tactic here. They gang up on the guest. I was the guest of honor, so I was the toasting target. I had

six guys toasting me in quick rotation. Each toast was "gumbei" or bottoms up. We were probably drinking Taiwan beer which is a most excellent beer. I don't know. I passed out. I woke up in one of the overstuffed chairs with a wet towel over my face. As I came to and removed the towel I looked to my right and there was a Taiwanese guy, Jackson, passed out with a towel over his face in the next chair. Leaving the restaurant I said to Tim, "I must have lost face passing out like that." Tim said, "No, Jackson passed out first." You're fine.

Tim, Bob and I were not in good shape for the drive back to Taipei. But off we went in Tim's little car, cruising down the brand-new end to end of Taiwan highway. The highway was not finished but this did not deter the Taiwanese drivers. They sped down the divided highway totally oblivious of which side of the highway they should be on. There were abrupt 4" high changes in the highway level at frequent intervals. Small Taiwanese cars that had never been driven over 40-mph were lined up, broken on both sides of the highway. Tim always prided himself on his ability to take advantage of the free form style of Taiwan driving rules so to keep us awake he would do very strange things on the highway. It was exciting.

We pulled up to my hotel THE SANTOS to find our dinner party waiting for us in the lobby. Great. I asked for time to clean up before dinner. One at the dinner party went up to my room with me. I don't remember his name, but he was about my age, maybe even younger. He was extremely curious about all the things I traveled with. I travel heavy. He literally went through my bag asking what each item was for and how much I paid for it. I thought it was funny and I truly admired his curiosity and keen effort to learn. I have no recollection of dinner at all. It was a very long day.

Aside:

I just called Bob Berg. I wanted to know what a Baba 30 costs when they were introduced. Bob is going to get back to me on that. But in conversation about my blog, I asked Bob if he remembered the time I passed out at lunch. His reply was, "Well, that happened several times." Some friend he is.

It would take me some time to realize that it was socially OK to say, "Ee pan" meaning "one half". Avoiding the bottoms up trap. Also, in time I got to the point where I just couldn't take the "let's-drink-the-big-under-the-table" tactic any longer. I devised my own plan. When asked to dinner by a hospitable builder, I would decline, explaining that I had a previous dinner engagement. This worked well. But in time it backfired, and dinner invites became few and scarce. I was left to fend for myself at dinner time and Taiwanese food is not best enjoyed alone. But eating alone in a crowded Sichuan restaurant did at times lead to some interesting situations. My favorite place to eat by myself was Y. Y's Steak House on Chung San be loo. They knew me there and I never had to order. They would just bring me the exact

same thing I had eaten the previous time at the very same table: Fried salami appetizer, a gin and tonic, corn chowder, salad, a fabulous New York steak and a bottle of Torres Sangre de Toro Spanish wine. I never had the heart to change my order. I thought it would have disappointed them. The head waitress was Jessica. I felt at home there in that strange steak house with an ambiance of a mixture of Scottish hunting lodge and African safari bungalow. One night I returned from Kaohsiung late and went straight to Y. Y's. I had called and made a reservation. When I got there the help was sleeping on the bench seats in the deserted dining area, but they got up and sprang into action when I walked in. Y.Y. had his four-year-old son there. I ate my dinner while Y'Y's son stood at my table singing Twinkle Twinkle Little Star over and over and over. Y'Y's is probably my most favorite restaurant in the world.

An aside:

You have probably noticed that I don't call the people of Taiwan "Chinese". This is a very thorny issue, and I am not smart enough to explain it in accurate detail. But the way I see it is this: If you came to Taiwan before Chang Kai Shek, you consider yourself Taiwanese. You probably speak Taiwanese when you get together with your friends. If you came to Taiwan with Shang Kai Shek or after Mao took power in China, you probably consider yourself Chinese and you would speak Mandarin first and Taiwanese as a second dialect. However, today, my young 30 something Taiwanese friends are fiercely independent, and I get a very strong feeling that they want to be Taiwanese and totally separate from China. This is causing some problems. Attending Wayne Chen's mother's 80th birthday party everyone was speaking Taiwanese. I asked why they were not speaking Mandarin and I got an earful. Dui bu xi (I'm sorry). Thanks to my Taiwanese friend Wayne Shen for going over these details with me and correcting me.

Xie xie loaoshi. (Thank you teacher)

When the first Baba 30 came to Seattle I was pleasantly surprised at how well the snug interior worked. Bob was right and I should not have been skeptical. But how did the little "brick" sail? It sailed very well, thank you. It is very light on the helm and well balanced. It is surprisingly quick in light air. One weekend of the Perry Rendezvous we had an informal race to the harbor. Due to my son's soccer game, I got a late start and began motoring the Valiant 40 down the Sound. Up ahead was the Rendezvous fleet with a Baba 30 in last place. It was flying a big, colorful cruising chute in the light Northerly. Well hell, I couldn't just motor over or under the Baba 30. That would be really bad form. So, I did the only thing I could do. I put up the sails on the Valiant 40 and started sailing. About what seemed like an hour later I pulled ahead of the Baba 30. Mind you I did not have a big cruising chute but still. I thought the Baba 30 was moving very well and I gained more respect for the boat that day.



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