

Traditional Boats in Batanes

IVATAN AND ITBAYAT, BATANES ISLAND GROUP PROVINCE, NORTHERN PHILIPPINES. *“Tataya” is generally used to refer to Ivatan and Itbayat-made boats. However, the term specifically refers to fishing boats manned by three or less boatmen, powered by oars or sails. Ivatan and Itbayat boats are the only “traditional” boats in the Philippines that are not paddled but rowed.*

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A traditional Ivatan fishing boat retrofitted with a roof and motor, plying the Ivana-Sabtang island route when ferrying people.



TRADITIONALLY, boats in Batanes were grouped into three categories, those used -

1. for fishing around the islands such as the Viyung, Paychatanian, Paychanavagan, Suhuan and Panineman;
2. in interisland traffic within the province such as the Chinarem, Falua, Chinedkaran and Motor; and
3. for trade outside the Batanes group of islands such as the Avang or Pontin.

Based on size, Ivatan and Itbayat-made boats may be classified from the largest to the smallest:

Avang/Pontin – The biggest boats that are Ivatan made, these have a resemblance to the Yami *vasinian* of Formosa. Later, the stern became like the *falua* (*falua*). It is the only Ivatan boat with a closed deck. It is about 14-18 meters in length and about 5 meters high. It has a pilot house near the stern. It is provided with two masts with sails of woven pandanus leaves, and later, *kacha* (canvas cloth). The bow and stern are higher than the middle. It is propelled by fifteen pairs of rowers and it can carry 300 cavans of rice. After two years of disuse, the last *pontin* of Batanes was dismantled in 1910.

Chinedkeran – An open deck row-boat built principally by the Itbayat and used in the interisland traffic between Itbayat and Basco, run by sail or rowed. It can be bigger or smaller than the falua, accommodating from five to thirteen pairs of rowers. It has one mast with pandanus or kacha sail. They have high sides and wide bodies due to the rough seas they navigate.

Falua – An open deck boat made by the Isabtang and the people of Batan. It is from 8 to 12 meters long, with six to ten pairs of rowers and a tiller, with a maximum capacity of thirty passengers. It is used to transport goods and people between Sabtang and Batan islands and has one mast if sailed. Nowadays, these are run using engines. Some are smaller than the chinarem, but the difference is the stern. The falua had a cut transom while the chinarem has a stern like its prow where the rudder was connected.

Chinarem – This is generally smaller than the falua but bigger than the *pangdayan tataya*. It is 6-8 meters long, accommodating three to four pairs of rowers and a tiller. The stern is pointed like the tataya. It can be sailed and used to ferry ten people across the Ivana-Sabtang strait. These boats are built in Sabtang and its name derived from the pointed prow and stern.

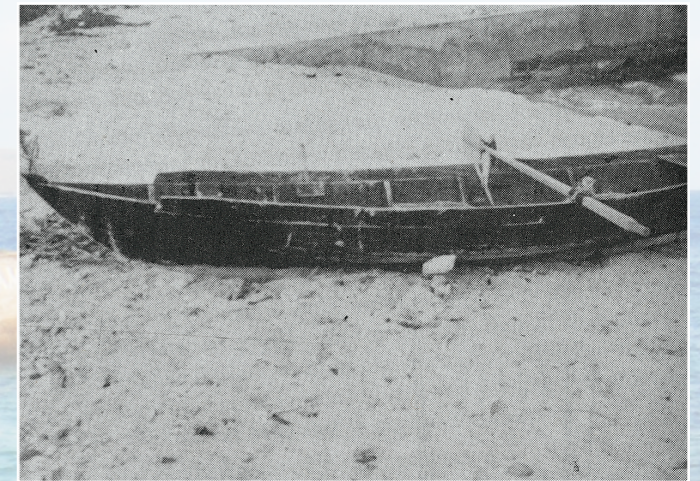
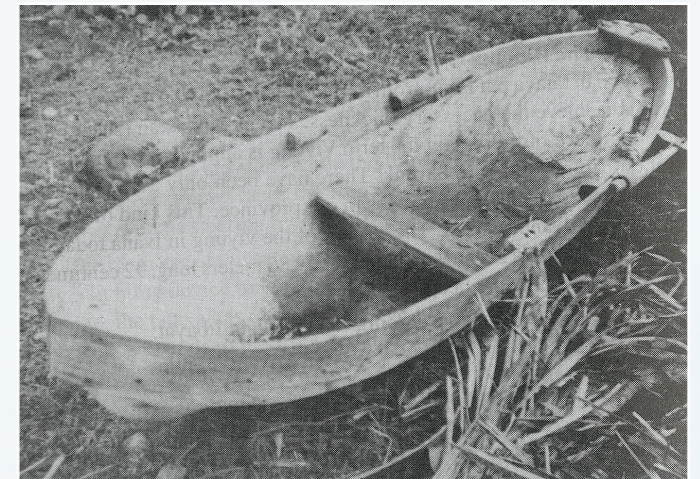
Panineman – Built by the Itbayat, it is slightly bigger than the pangdayan tataya. It can be manned by three pairs of rowers and a tiller. The name is derived from an island near Itbayat from which the people ride this boat to fish. It may be found in islands near Itbayat: Dinem, Siayan, Tarm, Maysanga and Madudis. It can be sailed or rowed.

Motor – This is any of today's Ivatan-made seacrafts ran by engines.

Tataya – These are small row/sail boats used for fishing around the islands. It is generally a round-hulled, wooden, two-prowed boat, with variations according to localities.

- a. *Suhuan/pangdayan/karakuban tataya* – This is their biggest boat made for fishing. It can carry eight people and three crew members (two rowers and one tiller, *maniped*). The tiller sits facing the prow and helps not only to row but also to steer. It measures 4-4.28 meters long and 1.20 meters wide with a depth of 38-50 centimeters.
- b. *Peban* – A boat shorter than the *karakuban*, at times as long as the *paychanavagan* but wider in body. It is from 1.20-1.4 meters to 3.5-3.8 meters wide with a depth of 40-48 centimeters. It is designed for one to two persons only. Its length is 2.8-3.8 meters with a width of .98-1.35 meters. It has two pairs of thole pins (*pasitan*).
- c. *Paychanavagan* – This is made for two crew members, although often used by only one. It is used for hook and line fishing. Its length is 2.8-3 meters and has a width of .98-1.35 meters. It has two pairs of thole pins (*pasitan*).
- d. *Paychatanian* – It is built for a single person and used for fishing in Batan and Sabtang. It has a length of 2.8-3 meters, width of .98-1.1 meters and a depth of 38-45 centimeters.
- e. *Dinong/viyung* – This dugout canoe is a paychatanian tataya cut from a single tree trunk. Used by Ivaneos only lately, it measures 2.8 meters long, 92 centimeters wide and 40 centimeters deep.

Zeroing in particular on tatayas, the following is a description of those crafted and used in specific towns and barrios in Batanes:



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(from top) Uyugan Tataya at Centro. Dinong/Viyung. Sabtang Tataya.

- a. Basco and Mahatao – The tatayas are identical in these two towns since they share the same fishing ground and techniques. The boats are nicely rounded. Their *lagkaw* (ribs) are thin at 2.5-3.5 centimeters with a width of 7-9 centimeters. The planks measure 1.75-2.5 centimeters thick. It has three *tavas* (planks) plus the *pamekpekan* (topmost part of the plank). Its front portion is raised higher than the middle. The width is almost the same throughout at $\frac{2}{3}$ of a meter from each tip at which point it curves to join the *lachid* (stern). In the water line, however, the *tavas* are given a twist to create a sharp tip to the *lachid*. The tatayas they build are smooth. Its *varukan* (caulk) stay close together and is generally well cared for.
- b. Itbayat Tataya – The tataya here is built for stability: wide body, flat bottom and has four *tavas* plus the sheer plank. The prow and stern are rounded, not pointed as in other towns. The *manpid* (second-tier plank from the bottom) is 2.5-3 centimeters thick but the planks are thinner above the water line. The sheer plank is only 1.25-1.5 centimeters thick. It has a *patid* (outrigger) that is only used in the bigger boats in the other municipalities. The people do not build tatayas smaller than the *suhuan*. Their *suhuan* is about 4 meters long, 1.10-1.35 meters wide and 48 centimeters deep in the middle, built of strong yet light wood.
- c. Sabtang Tataya – The front and stern of tatayas made in Sabtang are very pointed and shallow. The *karakuhan* is 4-4.8 meters long, 1-1.25 meters wide and 38-40 centimeters deep. Its *tavas* are very thin at 1.5-2 centimeters; they use only *pasitan*. It also has a *sintas* (a part that makes the boat more steady) which is not found in tatayas made in Ivana. A *pinatapid* (third-tier plank) is also attached to the *pamekpekan* and the *pasitan* is fastened and placed on top of it.
- d. Uyugan Tataya – The tatayas are built for durability, maneuverability and stability. It is shorter than the tatayas of Mahatao and Basco and the sides are higher than those in Ivana and Sabtang. It is about 4.20 meters long, 1.2 meters wide and 48 centimeters deep. Its *tavas* are thick at 2.5 centimeters and its side is open. It is very heavy compared to others.
- e. Ivana Tataya – They build maneuverable tatayas. The height is slightly lower than the Uyugan tatayas. The *suhuan* are short and wide, 3.8-4.20 meters in length and an average of 1.15 meters wide. Height averages 42 centimeters. The *lagkaw* is almost squared 4-5 centimeters in thickness and 6-7 centimeters in width. It does not have a *sintas*. The *lagkaw* from other tatayas in other towns are only 2.5 centimeters thick. The *managad* (keel) and the *manpid* are made from a single log, saving one step in tataya making, making it sturdier. However, the finish is not at par with the workmanship of Sabtang and Basco, Mahatao tatayas.

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