

= Ivatan people =

The Ivatans are a Filipino ethnolinguistic group predominant in the Batanes Islands of the Philippines . The origins of the Ivatans remained untraced among scholars . Ivatans were free before they were colonized by the Spaniards .

The culture of the Ivatans is partly influenced by the environmental condition of Batanes . Unlike the old @-@ type nipa huts common in the Philippines , Ivatans have adopted their now @-@ famous stone houses made of limestone , designed to protect against the hostile climate .

= = Origins = =

Documents do not show much about the history of the Ivatans and at present , scholars who study their origins are still unsure as to their exact origin . They question whether the pre @-@ historic Ivatans came from the northern part of Luzon or southern portions of China and Taiwan . There is evidence that they might be a surviving Christianized remnant of a people that once resided on all the islands between Luzon and Taiwan . However , they have considered the close racial resemblance of the Ivatans to the Malays and the structure of their language could mean they came from other parts of the Philippines . Tracing their roots through Batanes ' folklores , genetic studies of Omoto , a Japanese anthropologist , of the Yami of Orchid Island ( Lanyu ) show closer genetic affinity of the Yami to the Tagalog and Visayan and linguistically to the Batanic ( Bashiic ) sub @-@ branch of the Malayo @-@ Polynesian branch .

= = Early settlement = =

Ivatans already lived in Batanes before the Spaniards arrived in the Philippines in the 16th century , and lived autonomously long thereafter . On June 26 , 1783 Batanes was incorporated to the Spanish East Indies . In 1571 the capital of the Spanish colony in the Philippines was established in Manila . In 1686 , Ivatans were " forced " to settle in the lowlands of Batanes . The Ivatans were under Spanish rule for 115 years , and gained their independence on September 18 , 1898 . Ironically , June 6 is celebrated in Batanes as its founding day .

= = Physical attributes = =

One of the earliest accounts of the Ivatan is that of the British buccaneer William Dampier in 1687 . Dampier described them as " short , squat people ; hazel eyes , small yet bigger than Chinese ; low foreheads ; thick eyebrows ; short low noses ; white teeth ; black thick hair ; and very dark , copper @-@ colored skin . " They also have strong mixture of the short type of the Mongols , and there are some individuals who seem to have some physical characteristics peculiar to the Ainus of Japan .

= = Demographics = =

In 1990 , population of the Ivatans was 15 @, @ 026 , an increase of 24 % over the 1980 population of 12 @, @ 091 . These were distributed to the six municipalities , with 38 % residing in Basco , 23 % in Itbayat , 12 % in Sabtang , 11 % in Mahatao and 8 % for Uyugan and Ivana . In the 2000 census , 15 @, @ 834 Ivatans were among the 16 @, @ 421 population in Batanes .

The mother tongue of the Ivatans is the Chirin nu Ivatán , but is commonly known as Ivatan . A distinct Austronesian language , the Ivatan has two dialects including the Basco , the Itbayáten and possibly the Yami . The Ivatans widely speak and understand the Ilocano , Tagalog , and English languages .

Today , most Ivatans are Catholics , like the rest of the country , although some have not converted practice ancestral worship to their anitos . However , there are growing Protestant denominations specially in the capital town of Batanes .

## == Culture ==

The Ivatan 's culture have been largely influenced by the climate of Batanes . Exposed to high risks of disruption to their agriculture , Ivatans have adopted strategies in order to live . Traditionally , because of the frequent typhoons and drought , they plant root crops able to cope with the environment . These crops include yam , sweet potato , taro , garlic , ginger and onion , as they ensure higher chances of survival during awry climate conditions . The Ivatan study the behavior of animals , sky color , wind and clouds to predict the weather . The Ivatans usually gather their animals and stay in their houses when they see that the cows take shelter from the payaman ( communal pasture ) and birds taking refuge in houses or in the ground . A pink sky with an orange hue also heralds a storm . The sea is vital to the Ivatan 's way of life . Although abundant only in the month of March to May , they depend on the flying fish ( dibang ) and dolphinfish ( arayu ) present on the shores of Batanes . They have a native delicacy called uvod ( the pith of the banana stalk ) which is served , along with the wine palek , on festive occasions such as weddings .

Before Spaniards arrived at the Philippines , Ivatans built their houses largely from cogon grass , small and well situated , designed to protect against strong winds . The Spaniards introduced large @-@ scale production of lime for the construction of their now @-@ famous stone houses . With meter @-@ thick limestone walls , the type of their infrastructures are designed against the harsh Batanes environment , which is known as a terminal passage of typhoons in the Philippines . The basic cogon grass is still preserved as roofs of their houses , thickly constructed to withstand strong winds . These houses are comparable to the white houses in New Zealand , Ireland and Scottish Highlands .

One of the endemic clothing of the Ivatans is the vakul . A vakul is a headgear designed to protect the wearer from sun and rain . It is made from abaca fiber of the vuyavuy palm .

The Ivatan have three different folk songs : the laji , the kanta and the kalusan . The laji are ancient lyrical songs that are supposed to be sung when they are merry or just finished work . The kalusan on the other hand is sung during work . The Ivatan also have legends that are called kabbata . They also have the rawod , chants that chronicle the adventures of the Ivatan 's forefathers as they escape a disaster .