

The Ibaloi Tribe

The Ibaloy is derived from “I” a prefix signifying “pertaining to” and baloy or house meaning “people who live in houses.” The variants are “ibaloï,” “inibaloy,” and “nabaloi.” They are indigenous ethnic group found in the northern Philippines. The Ibaloi are one of the indigenous peoples collectively known as Igorot, who live in Northern part of Luzon particularly in the mountains of the Cordillera and neighboring provinces.

Language

The Ibaloi language belongs to the Malayo-Polynesian branch of the Austronesian languages family. It is closely related to the Pangasinan language. The Ibaloi in Kasibu inhabit at the southeastern part; they are concentrated in barangay Lupa, Pao, Muta, Pudi, Paquet and Siguem. Some are also scattered in barangay Kongkong, Alloy, Watwat, Antutot, Macalong and Poblacion. The Ibaloi language has a linguistic sound that is close to Pangasinense, the language of Pangasinan Province, possibly due to the free movement of the natives of Pangasinan in the pre-Spanish era.

APPEARANCE

Ibalois are friendly and hardworking people. They have a fair complexion and are usually four to five feet tall. Farming is their chief occupation and rice, their staple. For meat, they raise cows, pigs, and chickens. The Ibaloi customs, traditions, and beliefs are very similar to those of the Kankanaeys, but their languages are not. Ibaloi people are one of the many ethno-linguistic indigenous tribes that inhabit Northern part of Luzon.

POPULATION GROWTH

Ibaloi people are originally from Benguet Province. The population has spread to the neighboring provinces of Pangasinan, La Union, Nueva Vizcaya, and Nueva Ecija. Kabayan is recognized as the center of Ibaloy culture. The settlements are scattered in the municipalities of Bokod, Atok, Tublay, Sablan, and Kabayan. A wide range of dialectical differences are known but not clearly studied. Thus far, (1) Ibaloy Proper and (2) Karao are the subgroups cited.



LIVELIHOOD

To some extent, rice terracing is practiced in the lower reaches of the drainage systems. Sweet potato and taro are planted dry in areas that cannot be irrigated. The terracing technology is at present applied to middle latitude vegetable growing. Rice is the principal and ritual food. Animal husbandry is practiced, although meat is traditionally limited to ritual consumption. The group has a long history of gold and copper mining.

SOCIAL AND RELIGION

The Ibaloy lack the ward system of the Bontoc although in the past there were communal dormitories. A traditional community would have a council of elders (tongtong) whose opinions hold sway over a two-tiered social system: the rich (baknang) and the poor (abitug). Deities collectively called "Kabunian" include the major entity, "Kabigat." Souls of departed relatives (kaamaran) are revered. Ritual celebrations, reportedly numbering more than 40 classes are conducted by mambunung. These include the prestige feast pashit and curing seances that feature animal sacrifice, feasting, and use of fermented rice beer. The rich in Kabayan used to be interred in coffins after mummification in artificially made caves.

STRUCTURES

Houses, generally scattered in fields or on hillsides, are raised about two meters on posts and covered with a pyramidal thatched roof. Subsistence is based on wet rice, tubers, beans, and maize, supplemented occasionally with the meat of pigs, dogs, chickens, water buffalo, horses, and cattle. Descent is bilateral. There is marked differentiation between the rich and the poor, with a considerable concentration of power and influence in the hands of the former. The traditional Ibaloi religion centered on ancestor worship.



Traditional feast

Ibaloi have their traditional feast, certain noted traditional feast and rituals such as the kosdey a rite for the fertility of the soil that is observed when the rice blooms in the field. This rituals is done when moon rises in the month of May. Other feast such as the tehungas, a purification rite with a ceremony held to avenge the ghost of the enemies who killed their people in the past, signifies the purification of those whom they have avenged. One of the major feasts of the Ibaloi is the pesshet. It is a public feast mainly sponsored by people of prestige and wealth. It lasts for weeks and involved the butchering and sacrifice of the dozens of animals.

Dance

Bendiyan Dance- is one of the popular dances of the ibaloi which is participated by hundreds of males and females.

Belief

Kanyao is simply “festival” or ceremony or liturgy or service or rite/ritual, of offering. It is a generic term. “Witchcraft” would be too limited to off the mark describe it. A kanyao” may be performed for thanksgiving for the health of the community, there could be a kanyao (petitionary/intercessory) for bountiful harvest; a family kanyao maybe performed for healing such as a very simple ritual of “seedy” with the use of water and prayer; a “grand kanyao” has the focus of entertainment, cultural shows and festivities. In the Cordilleras the term “menkanyao” is widely used, which means “to perform kanayo” or ritual.

Tradition

The Ibaloi traditionally practiced mummification. The process they used involved smoking the corpse for months to completely dehydrate the dead body, which preserved every part of the body including tattoos and internal organs. They would then encase the preserved body within a hollowed out log and placed in caves that are thought to be spiritual by the Ibaloi.

Marriage

The Ibalois practiced parental marriage, that is, parents chose their children’s mates. This marriage custom eventually waned, however, due to sad experience on the part of the children who were not paired off well. The parents of both bride and groom still decide on what to do during the wedding feast and ceremony. The groom’s parents who shoulder most of the wedding expenses do most of the decision making. An Ibaloi wedding celebration is held at the bride’s house. Although the dowry system is not observed, it is a must that animals like carabaos, cows or pigs be butchered for the wedding celebration which last from two to five days or even longer, especially for rich families. It is considered disgracefull for both parties if no animals are butchered or sometimes if only one or two pigs are butchered.

There are three ways that Ibaloi culture do namely: Kaising, Kalon, and Ngilinar arol. Kaising is an arranged marriage. Engagement happens between the parents of the couple. The marriage is arranged as early during the childhood days of the couple. The Kalon on the other hand is a marriage that has a “mediator” or someone that arranges the marriage. Ngilin or arol is the wedding ceremony that last for eight days at least.





TERMINOLOGIES

Kabunian	-Deities of the Ibaloi
Kabigat	-Major entity, Souls of departed relatives (kaamaran)
Tongtong	- Council of elders
Kosdey	-A rite for the fertility of the soil that is observed when the rice blooms in the field.
Tehungas	-A purification rite with a ceremony held to avenge the ghost of the enemies who killed their people in the past, signifies the purification of those whom they have avenged.
Pesshet	-It is a public feast mainly sponsored by people of prestige and wealth. It lasts for weeks and involved the butchering and sacrifice of the dozens of animals.
Bendiyan Dance	-Is one of the popular dances of the ibaloi which is participated by hundreds of males and females.
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Kaising	-Is an arranged marriage. Engagement happens between the parents of the couple. The marriage is arranged as early during the childhood days of the couple.
Kalon	-A marriage that has a “mediator” or someone that arranges the marriage.
Ngilin or arol	-Is the wedding ceremony that last for eight days at least.
Sulibao	-Is a conical tenor drum .It is played with the palms of both hands. It usually appears as part of an ensemble along with the kimbal, pinsak,kalsa and palas.[1] Sulibao is made from a hollowed out log covered with deer skin.

SOURCE: National Commission for Culture and Arts