



Who are the Bantenese?

The Bantenese are found in Banten province, the most western province of Java-Island, Indonesia, particularly in the districts of Lebak and Pandeglang. It is a people group of more than 4.3 million people (2010 census). They used to be part of the Hindu Sunda kingdom, before they became Muslim through the establishment of the Banten Sultanate.

Languages

The Bantenese speak a dialect of Sundanese that is regarded as less cultured by Sundanese people. The younger generation is also fluent in Indonesian, though it is not their heart-language and older people only speak Bantenese.

Livelihood



Many Bantenese work as farmers and produce apart from rice also cassava, corn, sweat-potatoes, soy-beans, chili, onions, tomatoes and green vegetables. Sadly, the farmers generally are impoverished. The educational level in rural areas is very low. Those who reach a higher level of education do not want to become farmers anymore. Many have therefore moved to the cities like Cilegon, Serang, Tangerang, South-Tangerang or Jakarta. They find work there or in the industrial belt stretching along the

motorway from Tangerang to Cilegon. Here we find the steel industry, chemical industry, machinery, textile and shoe industry. In the city they become domestic workers, builders, taxi or motor-taxi drivers or factory workers.

History

Before the Sunda people of Banten became part of the Muslim Sultanate of Banten, they were part of the Hindu Sunda Kingdom, Padjadjaran. The Sultanate was established 1526 and lasted until 1813, when it was defeated by the Dutch. The Sunda became Muslim, but have retained many of their former beliefs and occult practices. When Indonesia became independent in 1945, Banten became part of the province of West-Java until a separate province was formed in 2000. Though there are overlaps in culture with the Sundanese of West-Java, the Bantenese are distinct particularly because of their different, less cultured language. Their Sundanese also distinguishes them from the Java-Serang, who speak a form of Javanese.

Beliefs

With the advance of Islam under the Banten Sultanate, the Bantenese came to embrace Islam. On the surface, their previous Hinduism has disappeared. The Bantenese are very devout Muslims.

However, below the surface, many of their former beliefs and occult practices have been incorporated into their form of Islam. They possess magic swords, can fill swords with power, practice Debus – an occult art of becoming immune in warfare - go to the shaman or visit the graves of powerful people to gain more power themselves. It is said that Debus can only be practiced by very devout Muslims.

The believers among the Bantenese are far less than 1%. Till now, few workers engage with them. The few followers of Jesus who are seeking to share the Good News with the Bantenese face many difficulties and barriers to their efforts. Like soil that is hardened by chemical fertilizers and pesticides, so their hearts seem to have been hardened by the many lies and occult bondages.



Population: 4.3 million
Location: Java, Indonesia
Languages: Bantenese, Bahasa Indonesia

Prayer Points

Pray that their hearts to be soften by God so that they are receptive for the "Seed" of the Good News and that that they would be freed from their occult bondages.

Pray for more followers of Jesus to be ready to share the Good News and to share the truth with love.

Pray for people among the Bantenese, prepared by God to be raised as agents of truth and love within their community.

Pray for opportunities to demonstrate God's love to the Bantenese through community development and business, so that through their words and deeds God's presence becomes visible.

Pray for the level of education being raised so that the Bantenese can raise their sources of income but also their ability to learn spiritual truths.

Pray for the government that they would create the conditions that makes becoming a farmer more attractive for the younger generation.

Pray for the eradication of corruption that hinders in many places urgently needed development and improvements

For more information about the Bantenese, visit: www.apeopleloved.com/bantenese