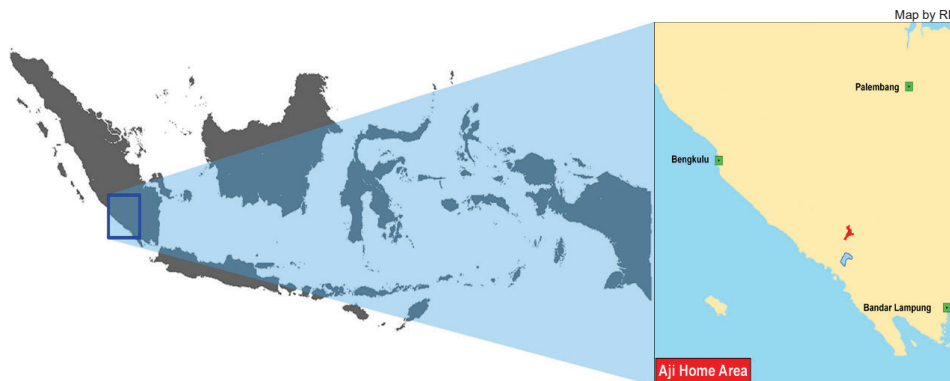


# AJI



Photo by RD



Demography	Aji Language	Status
Loc: Lampung, Sumsel Population: 16.500 Major Religion: Islam	Bible: No Jesus Film: No Online Media: No	Believers: < 50 Engaged: Yes Indigenous Church: 0

## Identity and Location

The Aji are a small community who live in a mountainous area of South Sumatra Province. They are often called the Haji people because according to a folktale they are descendants of a “Haji” (a person who has completed the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca). The Aji live in 14 villages. Eleven of the villages are clustered together in the Muara Dua District of southern Ogan Komering Ulu Regency (OKU): Sukarami, Tanjung Raya, Kuripan, Peninggiran, Surabaya, Sukarena, Karang Pendeta, Kota Agung, Pulau Panggung, Pirikan, Telanay and Sukabumi. In addition, three Aji villages are located outside the Muara Dua District cluster: Lubar Village in the Simpang District of southern OKU, Rantau Panjang Village in another area of Muara Dua, and Palas Haji Village in the Palas District of Southern Lampung Regency in the Province of Lampung.

## Society and Culture

The Aji live in mixed communities with the Daya and Komering people. The Aji have a very small population, quite different from larger neighboring people groups such as the Ogan, Daya, and Komering. According to a local folktale, the Aji language was created from twelve different languages. According to the tale, in the days of their ancestors, when it came time to distribute the languages, the ancestor of the Aji people group arrived late because he overslept. In the end he was forced to ask for a just a little bit of language from each of twelve other people groups, which combined to become the Aji language. The Aji language differs from that of other surrounding people groups; however the Aji can understand almost all the languages of South Sumatra. They are very proud of this fact.

*The Aji judicial and legal system governed by this local customary law is called “Sumber Karta 12”*

In the time of the Majapahit Kingdom, the Aji were ruled by a duke from Majapahit who ruled from Saka Aji (now Tanjung Raya Village). They did not want to be colonized by the Netherlands so they formed an army. The current Aji social stratification is still based on the stratification of that time: Ratu (king), Panglima (commander), Kerio Perang (troops) and ordinary people. A traditional institution, led by descendants of the king, commander, and troops, handles social issues. It provides sanctions and penalties for those who violate the community norms and customs (such as engaging in extramarital sex). The judicial and legal system governed by this local customary law is called “Sumber Karta 12.”

Most Aji people make a living by growing two crops: coffee and rubber. Coffee as a commodity represents the primary source of income for the flatland areas of South Sumatra including the Aji homeland. However, almost all Aji young people move out of the area searching for jobs in other areas. Most of them go to Java, with Jakarta as the most frequent destination. Most Aji people also raise goats or chickens as household pets.

## Beliefs

The Aji people are Muslims and a mosque can be found in each of their villages. The Aji maintain good relationships with people of other religions and no religious disturbances have been reported in their area. However they still practice cultic worship of objects that were passed down to them by their ancestors, especially war relics.

## Needs

Small business management and home industry training could help improve the economy in Aji areas and bring work opportunities to young Aji people. Nowadays, almost all Aji young people leave the Aji area in search of work.<sup>(RD)</sup>