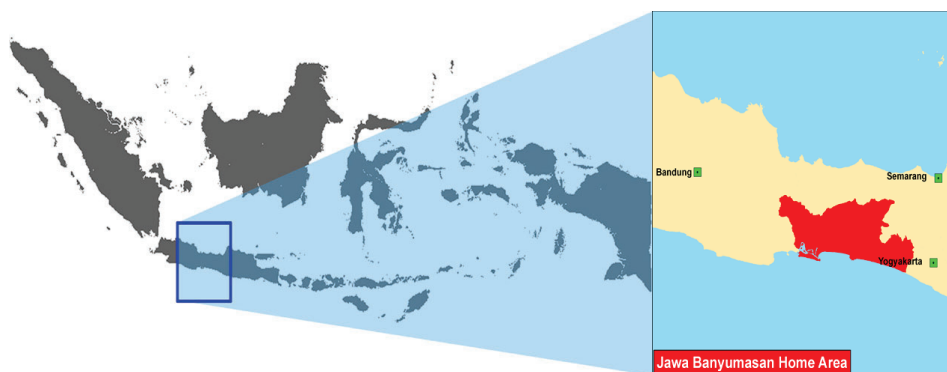


# JAWA BANYUMASAN



Photo by TK



Demography	Jawa Language	Status
Location: Central Java	Bible: Yes	Believers: <20.000
Population: 8.800.000	Jesus Film: Yes	Engaged: Yes
Major Religion: Islam	Online Media: Yes (Kromo)	Indigenous Church: Some

## Identity and Location

The Jawa Banyumasan people live in the southwest part of the province of Central Java, particularly in the regencies of Cilacap, Kebumen, Purworejo, Purbalingga, Banjarnegara, and Banyumas. The Jawa Banyumasan people are one of the subgroups of the Jawa (Java Island) people groups, but they have their own customs and culture, which differ from other Jawa people groups.

They are often called the Jawa Mendhoan or Jawa Serayu. They are called this because one of their best-known foods is mendhoan tempe, a local delicacy prepared from tempe (fermented soybean cake) dipped in spiced batter and then fried until half-cooked. The name Serayu is sometimes used because the Serayu River runs through most of the area where they live.

The Jawa Banyumasan language differs significantly from standard Jawa language, especially in phonology, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Jawa Banyumasan people can easily understand other Jawa dialects because the “ngoko” (lower) level of the Jawa Banyumasan language is nearly identical with the “ngoko” levels of other Jawa languages. Other Jawa people groups, however, cannot easily understand the Jawa Banyumasan language because of the many differences. Compared to other Jawa people groups, the frequency of the “a” sound over the “o” sound makes it easy for the Jawa Banyumasan to learn the Indonesian language. Like other Jawa people, they use the Kromo and Madya dialects only: a) when they meet someone they don’t know who they believe is from Surakarta or Yogyakarta, or b) in certain ceremonies.

## Society and Culture

Most Jawa Banyumasan people make their living from farming, but compared to other Indonesian people groups, they are fairly

advanced in this field. They use their fertile land well and make use of modern farming techniques and technology. The industrial sector is also experiencing rapid growth. For example, the city of Cilacap is becoming an increasingly industrial city, including both heavy industry and growing sectors of small industry (such as woven bamboo and brown sugar products). These products not only meet their own local needs but are exported to other areas of the country as well.

## Beliefs

The majority of the Jawa Banyumasan are Muslim, though most are nominal (abangan) in their faith. A smaller number are serious Muslims (santri) who strictly follow Islamic teachings and are faithful in their religious practices. Some Jawa Banyumasan continue to follow traditional animistic beliefs. They believe in invisible spirits such as the bujungan (shrouded ghosts, shaped like a corpse in burial cloth), jangkrong (ghosts shaped like a human skull), and dhemit (spirits inhabiting shrines). Graves, mountains, caves and seas are often considered sacred places. Some of the Jawa Banyumasan still seek help from a dukun (shaman/healer/occultist) if they are sick or bothered by spirits. They often hold ceremonial meals (selamatan) or ritual feasts (kenduri), which include use of mantras and offerings to spirits for the purpose of protecting their homes and communities from calamity.

## Needs

The Jawa Banyumasan people still need agricultural assistance to help increase the quality and quantity of their crops. They need more dams and better irrigation systems to increase their harvests to more than three times per year. The opening of more work opportunities could decrease migration of youth to Cilacap and other urban areas. Development of new industry is still needed outside the city of Cilacap.