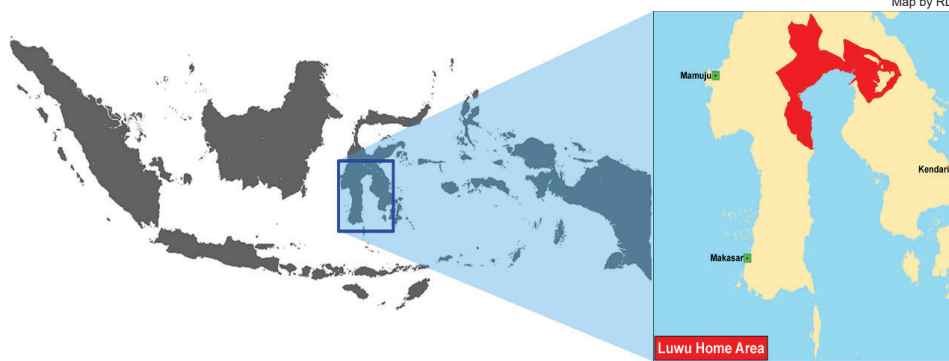


LUWU



Photo by RD



Demography	Luwu Language	Status
Location: South Sulawesi	Bible: No	Believers: <150
Population: 350.000	Jesus Film: No	Engaged: No
Major Religion: Islam	Online Media: No	Indigenous Church: 0

Identity and Location

The Luwu people live in the Luwu and North Luwu Regencies in the province of South Sulawesi, mostly near the Kalaena River. The Luwu are part of the same cluster as the Toraja people, of whom a majority are Christian. The Luwu people’s language is Tae, so they are sometimes called the Tae people. They sometimes consider themselves part of the Bugis people, because both groups are Muslim, rather than connected to the Toraja people. The cultural differences between the Luwu and Toraja peoples are greater because the Luwu are influenced by Islam and the Toraja by Christianity. If a Luwu person becomes a Christian they would be considered no longer Luwu, but rather Toraja.

In the Pangkep regency, there is a cave named Supang Bitu, consider to be the home of Luwu’s ancestors who lived over 5,000 years ago. On the wall of Sumpang Bitu there is an old drawing of the palm of a man’s hand, the sole of a man’s foot, a boat, a deer and a wild boar. It is thought that these elements show the former lifestyle of the Luwu people. Ancient artifacts from 300-100 B.C. have been discovered in the Tomatua Kaciancang cave. Other archeological sites in the area include Bole Batu Cave in Barebo District and Pattae Cave in Turikale Distict.

Society and Culture

The Luwu generally live as farmers. Besides planting rice, they also grow corn, nuts, chili peppers, cassava and potatoes. They also grow coffee and tobacco for trading. Some Luwu gather snails, eels and small fish from the irrigated rice fields that are not yet planted. Most farmers use water buffalo to plow their rice fields.

The Luwu are well known for their houses and rice

barns, which are decorated with complex carvings. Many houses also have large statues of wealthy Luwu nobles. Luwu villages are fairly small and either located on hills or spread along a plain. These villages consist of extended families, with four to six families living together in one house. They stress the importance of diligence, respecting their elders, and putting the needs of the family before the needs of the individual.

Luwu parents and older relatives sometimes arrange marriages, but today many young people choose a spouse themselves. After marriage, the new couple may choose to live with either the husband’s or the wife’s family.

Unlike other communities, the Luwu often adopt children of a friend or relative. They believe that family bonds can be broadened and strengthened by allowing relatives or friends to adopt their children. The children end up being raised by both their birth parents and their adoptive parents.

Beliefs

The Luwu follow Sunni Islam yet animistic practices influence their lives. They consider burial an extremely important event. They believe the ceremony enables the deceased person to leave the world of the living and continue the journey to the hereafter. Their burial ceremony varies in length and complexity, depending on one’s wealth and status.

Needs

The Luwu need to be introduced to modern farming of a more practical and productive nature to replace their traditional methods. They also need training to improve crop production for increased revenue.