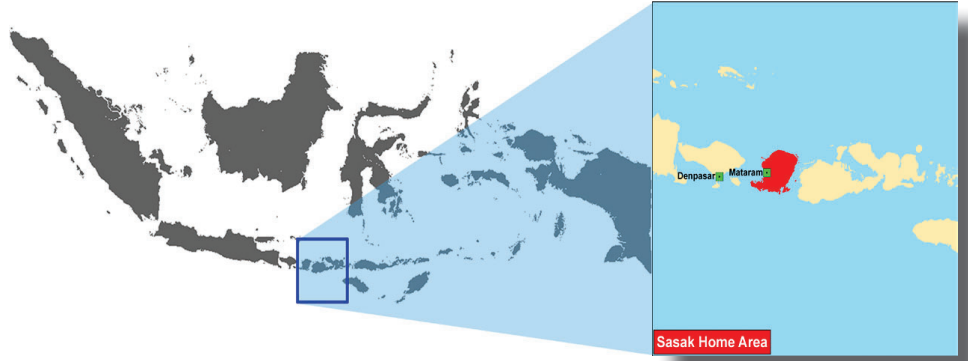


# SASAK



RPC



Map by RD

Demography	Sasak Language	Status
Location: NTB Population: 2.850.000 Major Religion: Islam	Bible: NT Jesus Film: Yes Online Media: Yes	Believers: <500 Engaged: Yes Indigenous Church: 0

## Identity and Location

The Sasak comprise the majority of the population of the island of Lombok in West Nusa Tenggara Province. They live throughout nearly the entire island, but the most densely populated areas are the fertile rice fields south of the famous Mount Rinjani. In the past, anthropologists divided the Sasak into two groups, referred to as the Waktu Lima and the Waktu Telu. The Waktu Lima Sasak predominantly inhabit the central plains close to the roads and trade centers. The Sasak Waktu Telu tend to live in remote villages in the south and in the mountainous region.

The Sasak language is quite similar to the Balinese and Javanese languages, yet it differs in spelling and pronunciation. Many words and terms have been borrowed from the Kawi language (Ancient Javanese), Sanskrit and Arabic, as can be seen in the ancient writing on palmyra leaves. Writings on these palmyra leaves, known as takepan were often read in the past. Sasak society has two classes: the revered nobility and the lower class. For much of their history, the Sasak on Lombok were divided into many small and warring kingdoms. This ended when the armies from Bali subjugated them. In 1894 the Dutch freed the Sasak from Balinese control. Even up to the present, many of the Sasak still do not like the Balinese.

## Society and Culture

To those recently arriving in Lombok, the Sasak seem unrefined, even frightening and aggressive. But for those who get to know them, the Sasak are actually quite friendly and open. Most Sasak are farmers, while others are laborers, fishermen and craftsmen. Traditional woven cloth and earthenware pottery are produced in several villages by skilled workers.

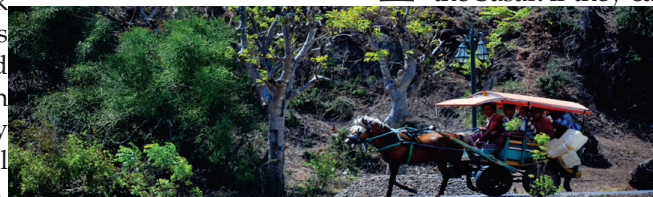


Photo by GD & BW - Kuda

Many of these traditional products are sold to tourists and even exported to Western countries. Many Sasak seek work in the larger cities on Lombok and even on other islands.

Moral and ethical values are called tindih by the Sasak. They work hard to guard the values of strong friendships, politeness and respect within the family, honor for parents, and acting well-mannered as a guest. In searching for a spouse, many Sasak follow the custom of eloping, where the woman voluntarily allows herself to be “kidnapped” and hidden away for a short time. After this, the “kidnapper” contacts the woman’s family to negotiate the terms for the wedding and then the wedding ceremony is held.

## Beliefs

The majority of Sasak are Muslims. Every year many Sasak travel very far to complete the hajj – the religious pilgrimage to Mecca. Many of them have to save up money for decades, or sell land or their car in order to fund their pilgrimage, yet as soon as they return from Mecca they are highly honored by their families and neighbors for the rest of their lifetime. Many Sasak also worship at sacred sites such as the tombs of religious leaders or specific places on Mount Rinjani. They also worship the spirits of their ancestors and other spirits that live in the forest, mountains or rivers.

## Needs

The development of Lombok as a worldwide tourist destination could greatly improve the economy of the Sasak if they can take advantage of this. Much of the time they come in a distant second to the others from off island who are well established in the tourism industry.<sup>(E-RD)</sup>