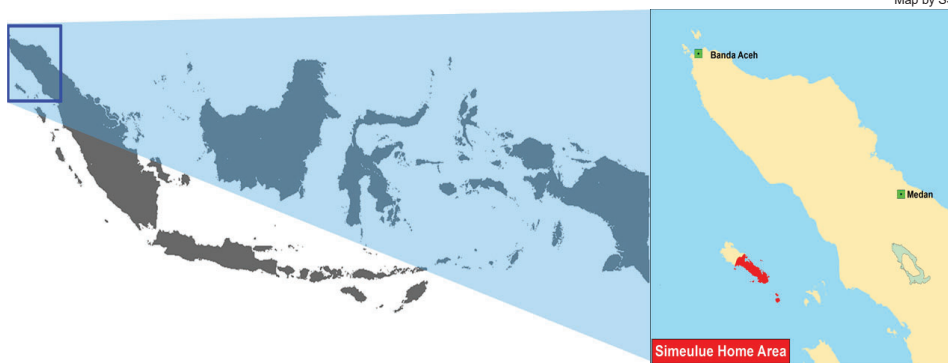


SIMEULUE



Photo by SS



Map by SS

Demography	Simeulue Language	Status
Location: Aceh Population: 44.000 Major religion: Islam	Bible: No Jesus Film: No Online Media: No	Believers: < 5 (439) Engaged: Yes Indigenous Church: 0

Identity and Location

The Simeulue people live on the island of Simeulue, located 200 km from the western beach of the Special Islamic Province of Aceh. Sinabang is both the largest city and the political capital of Simeulue.

Aside from Sinabang, Kampung Aie is also very important as the historical site of Tengku di Ujung: the story of Islam's spread from Kanmpung Aie throughout the rest of the island. The Simeulue people use the Ulau language, which means "Island."

There are two dialects of Ulau. Simolol dialect is very polite and pure and is used in the eastern part of Simeulue. Devayan is the other dialect, which is used in the districts of Simeulue Timur, Teupah Barat, and Teupah Selatan. Some residents also use the Jamu language, which resembles the Minang language. Yet another language used by some is Sigulai, which resembles Nias language.

The Simeulue people are famously friendly and brave. They are sometimes said to have a physical appearance that resembles people from North Asia. This is because their skin is brighter than that of most Indonesians, including the peoples of mainland Aceh.

Society and Culture

Generally, the Simeulue people make a living by planting cloves and coconuts, and by catching fish. In every area of this region there appears to be a mosque or at least a musholla. Apart from corporate worship, mosques are also used for large public meetings to discuss religious matters, to hold social events, to make public announcements from the government, and to gather people for public works of community service.

In Simeulue the head of a village is called the kecik. In the past, Simeulue was ruled by a king, but in time the kingdom was subjugated to the king of Aceh, and the island has since been considered a part of Aceh.

Since the tsunami of 2004, most people live in the temporary housing built to give relief just after the tsunami. They continue using those temporary houses, and have only added a place to cook. Usually Simeulue people live together as a family, including parents, their unmarried children, and the families of their married sons. This group is called walli or wali akrab, meaning "close uncle." Their family line is reckoned through the father, making them patrilineal.

A newlywed couple's living arrangement may be one of three main patterns. In the first pattern, the new couple live near the husband's family. The second pattern is called, paladangan satuan duo in the Devayan dialect or beladang satuan duo in the Sigulai dialect. In this pattern, the newly married couple lives near the bride's parents for several years, during which the groom must help his in-laws. After that, they move near the husband's family for the rest of their lives. In the third pattern, called mafanofano, the new couple lives near the bride's family and must stay there forever, with the husband helping his in-laws. This last one occurs primarily when the bride is her parents' only child.

Beliefs

Even though most Simeulue people are listed as Muslim, many still live with strong influence from animism and superstition. Most of this comes from the felt need for protection through supernatural power, and is manifested by attempts to control and appease both good and evil spirits. .

Needs

The drastic drop in the market value of cloves, through governmental decree, has seriously shaken their main economy. They need opportunities to trade and perform other types of work. (E-SS)