

Notes on Weyewa Identity

Wey(j)ewa live on island of Sumba, part of Eastern Indonesia. Small agricultural settlements where grow rice, maize and millet, raising water buffalo and pigs. All aspects of life **interconnected with ancestors** – obeying “word” of ancestors. If fail to follow, misfortune befalls family.

In 1987, government condemned a part of “ritual speaking” – killing of livestock during ceremonies – as “wasteful” and “backward.” But in prohibiting, Weyewa in **dilemma**: break legal laws and be fined and go to jail **or** break ancestral law and bring wrath of ancestors.

Lende Mbatu, elder. In stead of age-sets defining one’s relationships, for Lende Mbatu and Weyewa it is the **ancestors**. The dead remain among the living – listening to them, respecting them, keeping one’s promises to them. Also blunting fear of dead, which is so traumatizing in our society, given that when one dies they keep alive socially by other people.