

## **Lota Script of Ende, Flores**

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The focus of this paper is the information on Ende script, which is also called the Lota script. This script can be found among the Ende ethnic community in central Flores in the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur. There are three issues to be discussed: a) brief history of the Lota script; b) the Lota script; and c) contemporary uses of the Lota script.

Early written information on the Lota script was delivered by S. Ross (1872) and discussed by Suchtelen (1921) in *Encyclopaedisch Bureau Endeh Flores* section “De Taal”, pages 221-250. According to him, Ende people had no original script. The script found in Ende came from Bugis (Suchtelen, 1921:222). Other information was told by Emuch Hermansoemantri (1986) who says that the Ende script, the Makasar and the Bugis scripts from South Sulawesi, and the Bima script from eastern Sumbawa derived from Sumatran script. Furthermore, Ambo Enre (1986) states that Ende and Bima once had scripts similar to the Bugis script. Jan Djou Gadi Ga’a (1959, 1978, 1984, and 1991) conducted research on the Ende’s Lota script and the research resulted in a manuscript titled “*Lota Huruf Ende*” (Lota’s Ende Script). I (1993) carried out comprehensive research to find Ende’s Lota script. I drew my secondary data on previous findings and research, and my primary data on several Lota manuscripts owned by people. The result of the research can be found in a book titled “*Aksara Ende*” (Ende Script) (2005).

The Ende’s Lota script derives from Bugis script and adapted to Ende language. A few important notes: a) there are 10 similar scripts; b) there are 8 Bugis scripts that are not available in the Ende’s Lota script; c) there are the Lota scripts that cannot be found in the Bugis script; d) the process of adaptation takes place according to the language system and the cultural environment in Ende. The contents of the Lota manuscript consists of *woi* (lament songs in the form of narrative poems about natural events, someone’s life, or relationship with the God).

The Ende’s Lota script is currently in an endangered situation due to the weakness of lota writing tradition. In order to revitalize and preserve the script, efforts can be done to include the script as a local content in the development of educational and cultural characteristics in Ende.

This explanation on the existence of the Ende's Lota manuscript and script emphasizes the importance of promoting the use, the development of writing tradition, and the preservation of the Ende's Lota manuscript and script.