

Balinese Culture - Rites & Festivals

Festivals and ritual ceremonies are the important part of Balinese daily life, held according to Balinese calendar. Temple festivals held mostly in every 210 days or every six months; and life-cycle ceremonies since the human embryo lives in mother's womb, having birth, birthday, tooth filings, wedding until funeral rites and cremation.

Ritual ceremonies and festivals in Hindu Balinese classified into five kinds:

- Dewa Yadnya: Rites related to worship God, gods, mainly temple festivals.
- Rsi Yadnya: Rites related to prophet, priest or priesthood.
- Pitra Yadnya: Rites related to the death.
- Manusa Yadnya: Rites related to social human beings.
- Buta Yadnya: Sacrifices to placate the negative or demonic forces (Butas).

Provincial Government maintains and holds every annual festivals. Annual Art festival that usually held on every Saturday in the middle of June until in the middle of July. Performed exhibitions of various kinds of art works, cultural achievements, kite festival. **IMPORTANT FESTIVALS**

Galungan & Kuningan

Galungan and Kuningan ceremonies are the biggest festivals on Bali. In front of every houses and places decorated with Penjor (a tall decorated bamboo stakes) Galungan ceremonies always begin on Wednesday and held for three days. During Galungan festival, the gods descend to the earth and stay with the people. After 10 days, on Saturday, it is Hari Raya Kuningan, a kind of all souls' day. In the morning people bring offerings to their ancestors and gods. The next day Sunday is Manis Kuningan. Held at the temple of Sakenan on Serangan island, where the BARONG LANDUNG dance usually performed.

Nyepi

Nyepi is annual purification on the Hindu-Balinese New Year, determined by Caka lunar cycle calendar. Nyepi usually celebrated at the beginning of the tenth Balinese month or at the end of March or at the beginning of April.

In the evening peoples leave their houses carrying Ogoh Ogoh, a big puppet represent an evil. Everybody make noise as much as possible to frighten the evil; so that they flee as far as possible from Bali. The Nyepi day, all peoples on Bali stay at their homes. There is no traffic on that day and no noise may be heard outside the house and no light may be seen.

Pagerwesi

Ritual ceremony for strong metal and spiritual defense in welcoming Galungan.

Saraswati

The day of Dewi Saraswati devotion, the God manifestation as the beautiful goddess of knowledge, art and literature. On this day, all books of knowledge, manuscripts and the Weda are blessed. **TEMPLE FESTIVAL**

Odalan

Odalan ceremony considered as a birthday, annual ceremony of a temple based on Balinese calendar 210 days. There are big number of temples on Bali; and they held the ceremony in three days. **LIFE CYCLE RITES**

Life cycle rites are ritual ceremonies according to phases of life cycles:

- Beginning from the union of husband and wife that will create a fetus in the womb.
- Seventh month pregnancy rite (Megedong-Gedongan).
- The birth rite (Penyambutan).
- The rite of the seventh day for the fall of the umbilical cord (Kepus Pungsed).
- The rite of the twelfth day.
- The first Otonan rite (the 35th day).
- The 47th day rite.
- The third month rite.
- Otonan anniversary (birthday anniversary) in every 210 days.
- Mesangih rite (teeth filing) for welcoming adulthood.
- Mepadik rite (engagement).
- Mesakapan rite (wedding ceremony).

- Ngaben (cremation rite).

Hindu Balinese believe in incarnation of human soul and cosmic notion. The five cosmic elements (Panca Maha Bhuta) consists of: air, earth, outer space, fire and water. These cosmic elements will accompany the soul in his after death journey; and help him to achieve the Moksha or eternal release. If failed, it means that the soul is still bound to the chain of incarnations.

The following are the details of well known life cycle rites:Ngaben

Teeth File

A ritual ceremony that the six front teeth in the upper jaw are filed. This ceremony is to released the teenager from six evils: anger, greed, jealousy, dipsomania, stupidity and unbridled lust. After the teeth file ceremony he or she belongs to the grown up people, with all the rights and duties and ready to marry.

Ngaben

Ngaben is a cremation ceremony, a symbolic rite that the soul will be released and returned onto the cosmic elements. It takes place depends of the ability of the family to pay for it. Sometimes it takes several years before a Ngaben takes place. As long as there is no cremation, the soul cannot rise up to heaven. The body will be buried, waiting for a propitious day for cremation.