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Balinese Family: "Keluarga"

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Abstract

In Balinese, this word means “family.” In Banjar Wani this word means “everyone,” because everyone feels like family. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Bali, Indonesia, family, home, village

Disciplines

Asian Studies | East Asian Languages and Societies | Family, Life Course, and Society | International and Area Studies

Comments

This piece is part of the Bali Soundscapes collection, which features photographs, audio essays, and written essays by Gettysburg College students who took the *Language, Culture, & Immigration in Bali* course during the summer of 2013. See <http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/balisoundscapes/> for more.

Keluarga

In Balinese, this word means “family.” In Banjar Wani this word means “everyone,” because *everyone* feels like family. Within this small village of very large wonder, the separation between those who are family and those who are not is as fluid and seamless as the small river that runs through it. During my short time in Banjar Wani, I was a member of this collective family. Never did I walk through the village without meeting faces painted with kind smiles, or lips pursed to utter a friendly “hello.”

Keluarga means that everyone is always welcome. While several girls from the village were showing some of us other girls around town, we stopped to view their homes. Candra invited all eight of us inside to rest our feet following an afternoon of touring around Banjar Wani. Shortly after that, Merta brought all of us into her home to meet her family. She introduced us to her mother, Ibu Surani, and her little sister Tu Ani. I recognized Merta’s father from our gamelan practices at the Wantilan -- he never missed a rehearsal. On another day, I was able to visit Pak Sura’s home with his son, Kedek. Kedek kindly showed me around, pointing to the room where he slept, his father’s nearby, or the room where his older brother lived with his wife. I learned that Kedek was only one of seven people living at the home, for including those already named, his grandmother and two aunts also called this house their home.

Keluarga means love. In Banjar Wani, it seems as if love is a palpable entity. Love runs in a supply that is as endless and indefinite as the river; it is all-encompassing, all-enduring. In this village, love is everywhere and everyone because family is love, and *everyone* is family.

...it takes a village.