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In Our Village

Carolyn T. Mako
Gettysburg College

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In Our Village

Abstract

While in the village of Banjar Wani I had the opportunity to meet Kedek and his father Pak Sura. They took me into their home and showed me what an average Balinese house for someone in the Sudra caste looks like. The Sudra is considered to be the lowest classification in the Hindu Caste system. People classified as a Sudra are typically farmers and Pak Sura owns a rice patty. I asked Kedek to show me into his house and below is a drawing of an overview of the house. Kedek walked me into the house through the gate that is used to keep evil spirits away. Every Balinese person has a gate in front of their home that is meant to protect the family. [excerpt]

Keywords

Bali, Indonesia, family, ritual, tradition, 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.

Carolyn Mako
“In Our Village”

While in the village of Banjar Wani I had the opportunity to meet Kedek and his father Pak Sura. They took me into their home and showed me what an average Balinese house for someone in the Sudra caste looks like. The Sudra is considered to be the lowest classification in the Hindu Caste system. People classified as a Sudra are typically farmers and Pak Sura owns a rice patty. I asked Kedek to show me into his house and below is a drawing of an overview of the house. Kedek walked me into the house through the gate that is used to keep evil spirits away. Every Balinese person has a gate in front of their home that is meant to protect the family.

As we walked in I noticed a rack that was used to dry towels and clothing. There were also many buildings, which made up the house and Kedek explained each one to me. He first showed me where his bedroom was located. It was near the back of the property along with two other rooms where his brother Sura and his father Pak Sura live.

Then he showed me to his family temple. He explained to me that every Balinese household must have a temple in their home. The family temple is where they go to pray/worship and make offerings to the gods and spirits. The temple is always located in the north east corner of the home. There is also typically a mini temple in the household that is used for offerings and worship as well.

Kedek then showed me the rice room. Kedek explained to me that the rice room is used to lay and dry out the rice and then once the rice is dried it is also stored in this room. Next to the rice room was the kitchen. Kedek explained that it is lower than the rest of the house because their property is located on a hill. He explained that the kitchen is where all the meals are made and often times the family members can enter the kitchen and eat the food that has been prepared and left for the family members to eat. Kedek explained that it is very rare for families to eat together at meal times. The kitchen in every Balinese home is located in the south west side of the home.

Behind both the kitchen and the rice room there is a little area for all of the pigs and chickens. Kedek explained that most Balinese families have at least chickens. He also said that owning a pig or cow is not uncommon. Kedek also explained that most of the animals are used for food such as for meat or eggs.

Across from the kitchen and rice room is an eating room and two bedrooms. Kedek explained that those bedrooms are where his two aunts and his grandmother live. Kedek explained that the eating room is a place for the family to gather for special events.

Kedek then explained the purpose of a Bale-Bali, which is on the outside of the eating room. This is another place for the family to gather. Often times when a family member dies they will lay the body on the Bale-Bali. Instead of the home simply being one building it consists of multiple buildings many of which do not have walls only a ceiling. Overall, I found it very interesting how a traditional Balinese house is built and organized.