

FAMILY TIMES

Family Times



Families are very important in Balinese culture. Parents teach good behaviour by showing great respect to their children.

Birth

When a baby is born it is thought to have come from heaven, and is not allowed to touch the ground (which is thought to be impure) for the first 105 days of its life. During this time a child is thought to belong to the gods.

A special _____¹ called **oton** is held at which the child touches the _____² for the first time. Family and friends give the child _____³ that have been soaked in holy water, and which represent future wealth and prosperity. This is when the _____⁴ is first considered human, and the child of its parents. It is also when the child begins to be called by _____⁵. When a child is one year old (210 days in Balinese year) a temple blessing ceremony is held with a great feast afterwards. This is an expensive time for a family, as many _____⁶ must be invited.

gifts ground name child people ceremony

Names

A child's given name is chosen according to order of birth, and is the same whether a girl or a boy!

- First child - Wayan, or Putu, or Gede
- Second child - Made, or Kadek, or Nengah
- Third child - Nyoman or Komang
- Fourth child - Ketut

The choice of names then repeats in order for any other children born into a family.

Home

Families live in **kuren** or family compounds which are surrounded by a high wall. When a woman marries, she moves into the husband's family compound. Within the compound may live extended family members, such as grandparents, and uncles, aunts, and cousins. Each family group may have its own sleeping house, and share other buildings such as washing, cooking, and play areas. Older children are responsible to help look after younger family members. Parents are expected to teach their children traditional beliefs and skills (e.g. dance, art, carving) and in this way the family cultural heritage is passed from one generation to the next.



Who lives in your home?

Work & Play

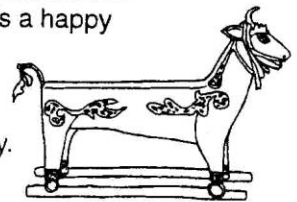
Growing rice has traditionally been the main work for many Balinese, and there was plenty of time for cultural activities such as learning to dance, play gamelan instruments, paint and carve. The rice harvest is a whole family activity as are temple ceremonies. A most important task of adult children is to look after elderly parents.



Who looks after whom in your family?

Death

When the parents have died, it is the responsibility of the eldest son to make sure a cremation ceremony is held. Even this is a happy occasion, as the Balinese believe that the person's soul is released to heaven to return again as a new baby.



Twins

Once the common caste thought that it was a bad sign when male and female twins were born, but the higher castes thought this to be a double blessing from heaven.

1. Make a list of things that Balinese parents might teach their children.

2. Make a comparative list of things that your grandparents and parents teach you.

3. List activities that you think Balinese families do together and compare to things your family does.

4. List special occasions in Balinese family life and in your family life.

5. Why do you think these occasions are important family times?

6. Write about your favourite family activities and draw a picture.