Smithsonian
National Museum of Natural History

Guide to the Ngaben film, 1978

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Human Studies Film Archives
Title:	Ngaben film
Date:	May 1978
Identifier:	HSFA.1981.01
Creator:	Holaday, Duncan Institute for Intercultural Studies Chin, Woon Ping (Production personnel)
Extent:	1 Film reel (22 minutes; color sound negative; 800 feet; 16mm)
Language:	Undetermined .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Received from Duncan Holaday in 1981.

Processing Information

Titles are supplied by the archivist for untitled films.

Preferred Citation

Ngaben film, Human Studies Film Archives, Smithsonian Institution

Restrictions

The collection is open for research. Please contact the archives for information on availability of access copies of audiovisual recordings. Original audiovisual material in the Human Studies Film Archives may not be played.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

Biographical / Historical

Duncan and Ping Holaday are Fulbright Professors at the University of Indonesia; I Gede Wisura is a Political Science lecturer at the University of Indonesia.

Scope and Contents

Footage of a *ngaben* a Balinese Hindu cremation ceremony in the village of Penyaringan, Bali, May, 1978, documents one of the most elaborate rites of passage performed by Balinese householders whereby the dead, through cremation, are transformed into purified spirits whose assistance can be enlisted in human affairs. Documentation includes: *ngentenin* (a Hindu ceremony to waken the soul of the dead) led by a

Brahman Priest for members of the Gede family; construction of a *wada* (seven-tiered cremation tower signifying the levels of the Kesatrya caste), the performance of music and dance in a specially constructed pavillion for guests, procession of the wada to the cremation site where it is burned, a tooth filing ceremony, and a procession to the sea where the ashes of the deceased are cast into the water.

Crossing and recrossing the river is significant in the procession to the burial ground and returning. Holy water brought in bambo containers used to sanctify the bones of the dead. A special pavilion for guests is the site of music and dance. Drums and a bamboo gambioion are the musical instruments. Gifts of pig and white cloth to the Gedes family. Members of the family are identified. A photographic portrait is used in the cermony. A pig is sacrificed at the start of the cermony. Food is prepared, sausage is made. Holy water is brought to sanctify the Wada, the bones are placed, and the procession continues to the crematon site. At arrival on the site the bones of eleven are placed on a platform and cremated to ash. ; The Wada is burned as the music increases in intensity. A procession for the tooth filing cermony. The cermony ends the next day with a procession to the sea. The ashes are thrown to the sea.

The cameramen are I Ketutm Wiryana and I Gede Wisura, a Political Science lecturer at the University of Indonesia. Sound is not sync sound. Supplementary materials: 4

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or Anthropology Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

Local Number

HSFA 1981.1.1

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

> Dance
> Funeral rites and ceremonies
> Music
> Musical instruments

Types of Materials:

> Sound films

Places:

> Bali (Indonesia : Province)
> Southeast Asia