

Religious Dentistry Reading Passage

Religious Dentistry

World's one of the most culturally rich islands, without any doubt we can say Bali. Actually, the carved temples, dances and cleaned and unpolluted rice terraces all seem too perfect in fact even the people's smiles are perfect. If it looks closer at those smiles the perfect teeth do seem a bit too perfect and for good reason. Those flattered teeth are an important piece of dentistry that young Balinese men or women have experienced in their lifetime known as Potong Gigi or tooth filling. Tooth filling is a part of Bali's tradition and it is not done for cosmetic reasons. In fact, tooth filling is an important ceremony without it, the Balinese believe that they experience serious social problems or they may face behavioural problems in later life or their personality may change altogether.

Balinese religious people were surrounded by belief in a variety of deities. Gods and demons inhabit different levels of the cosmic and real worlds. These deities range from the saintliest in the mountains to the lowest that inhabit the ground and the sea. In every walk of life which has special forces of its own, there are gods and goddesses. They inhabit temple statues, and trees, and even fly through the air. They survive jointly in a dual notion of good and evil, clean and dirty, etc. As such, both the good and the evil spirits must be conciliated, and offerings are thus made at the myriad temples on the island.

It is not only the good spirits that are worshipped, for Bali, there are also demons and evil spirits too. Demons and evils are seen rarely but the ground is the home for these evils and demons that too must be appeased. It is very important to balance between spirits and swarm the island because those demons and evil have the power to take the bodies of humans and animals and wreak havoc on the neighbourhood. Because of this, every person was susceptible to supernatural influences at every stage of life, from demons and layak to good spirits which may bring luck. Distillation of the body and mind is thus central to Balinese devout life and the

tooth-filing formalities represent one such ceremony of transit from childhood to becoming an adult.

Baliess believe that a person with long sharp-edged teeth resembles the fangs of animals and these give the personal characteristics of animal sides of human nature and ferocity. The Balinese have a believe in six evil qualities they are: desire, anger, greed, irresoluteness, jealousy and intoxication. These are responsible for flare-ups, besides animal instincts, When the canines are until now with a sharp edge. Because of these, to prevent this, the points of the canines are filed down, together with any prominent points of the lower teeth in a special Potong Gigi ceremony. Even though this may prevent the person from taking on animal instincts and beautifying the smile, it is, unfortunately, offset by early tooth decay since the protective enamel is removed from the points of the teeth, revealing them to acid decay. The situation is aggravated in those who go on to chew betel nuts since the caustic lime rapidly attacks the teeth.

The Potong Gigi ceremony, since it is very expensive to host, usually is undertaken by members of the same family together. It is a necessity that the youngest child arrives at an expected age. A person must have their teeth filed before marriage and since marriage is early, then the ceremony should be often undertaken as a premarital event. Girls are prepared for their tooth filling only when they have gotten- to adulthood and boys are generally older, about 17 or at least after adolescence.

Balinese choose an auspicious day from the Balinese calendar by consulting with the high priest. Every day has a different function like the best day for rice planting, the best day for cremations and other festivals, as well as tooth-filing days. The dentist's chair, so to speak, is particularly put up for the formalities from bamboo in the form of a frame covered with coconut leaves, quilt and a variety of offerings and frangipani flowers. The entrance of the ceremony room was adorned with a platform surrounded with food for the guests and a huge display of skewered suckling pigs, fruit, and whole roasted chickens.

Religious Dentistry IELTS Reading Questions

Questions 1-6

Choose the appropriate letters A—D and write them in boxes 1-6 on your answer sheet.

1. The Balinese have their teeth filed

- A. to have a perfect smile
- B. for cosmetic reasons
- C. to avoid problems in life
- D. to change their personality

2. Balinese spirits

- A. are usually easily seen
- B. are only found in the mountains
- C. can all fly through the air
- D. can be found anywhere

3. Layak are probably

- A. good spirits
- B. evil spirits
- C. tooth-filing experts
- D. people whose teeth have been filed

4. When do many Balinese have their teeth filed?

- A. just before getting married
- B. as part of the marriage ceremony
- C. in early childhood
- D. when the high priest has time

5. Where does tooth filing take place?

- A. in the dentist's surgery
- B. at the village temple
- C. on a special platform
- D. in the family residence

6. What is the most likely source of this passage?

- A. an undergraduate essay
- B. a scientific journal
- C. a current affairs news magazine
- D. an airline magazine

Questions 7-13

Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer in Reading Passage

- **YES** – if the statement agrees with the writer
- **NO** – if the statement contradicts the writer
- **NOT GIVEN** – if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this.

7. Most Balinese are nervous about having their teeth filed.

8. Only the canine teeth are filed down.

9. Tooth decay soon occurs in the filed teeth.

10. Balinese religious tradition is rich and varied.

11. The tooth filing is done by the high priest.

12. There is a feast after the filing has been done.

13. Balinese custom does not permit the filing to be done for more than one person at a time