

Everyday Polarity on the Island of the Gods

BY DANIELLE GÉNÉREUX, RPP

Imagine a place where time is suspended, a land dotted with stunning temples and terraced rice fields, a land inhabited by a people so spiritual that they live in harmony with nature and the gods.

"Where is this place?", you might ask. Four years ago, my own spiritual journey took me to Bali, Indonesia, also called the Island of the Gods. Notorious for its breathtaking landscapes, stunning sunsets, numerous temples and unique traditions, Bali is also considered as an energy centre on the globe. After the initial shock of finding myself in such a heavenly place, I started relaxing into it and could not help but notice how Polarity was very much present in the life of Balinese people. Balinese believe that the world, both natural and supernatural, is composed of opposing forces: positive forces (+) or gods, and negative forces (-) or demons. These forces need to be balanced at all times. To do so, Balinese follow elaborate rituals involving dances and music, and special offerings of food, water and flowers.

Balinese people practise Hinduism, especially Bali Hinduism which is a blend of India's Hinduism and Buddhism. Nonetheless, the three main deities they worship are Brahma - the Creator, the Source (neutral); Wisnu - the Preserver (-); and Siwa - the Destroyer (+). Together they can be seen as the three Polarity principles of Air, Fire and Water. The focus of every Balinese community's spiritual activity is the temple or pura.

It is said that there are at least 20,000 temples on the island, each structure having a symbolic significance. For instance, within a temple compound there is a three-roofed (3 Principles), five-roofed (5 Elements) or even an eleven-roofed shrine. Balinese temples are also designed around three courtyards: the outer courtyard represents the secular world; the middle courtyard is the transition zone between the human and the divine world; and the inner courtyard represents the godly world. Each courtyard is divided by a split gate which looks like a tower that has literally been sliced down the middle. The left side (-) represents femaleness, the ida; the right side (+) is the maleness, the pingala; and the middle is the core, the sushumna.

Polarity can also be seen in the way Balinese people look at the human body. For them, a person's head (+) is the most sacred part of the body and the feet (-) the most unclean. For instance, it is offensive and rude to ruffle a child's hair in affection or to use the feet to indicate something. The left hand (-) is also considered unclean and should not be used to pass and receive things, or to shake hands.

With each passing day on the island, it came very clear to me that life is all about Polarity... bringing into balance and harmony the natural and supernatural forces or energies. Since then I have returned to Bali every year, each time bringing people with me and giving them the opportunity to experience Polarity and this fascinating culture. Our days are filled with Polarity

Yoga classes outdoors early in the morning, traditional Balinese massages, Polarity sessions, evening dance performances, visits to temples, markets and local artists, and plenty of free time to not only take in the energy and beauty of Bali, but also to rebalance, recharge and reconnect. If you are interested in a different type of trip, I invite you to join me in Bali from September 20th to October 5th, 2005. At the end of the trip you will emerge feeling totally refreshed and energized. For more detailed information on this 16-day customized program, please do not hesitate to contact me. Hope to see you in Bali!

DANIELLE GÉNÉREUX is a Registered Polarity Practitioner in private practice in Toronto. In addition to Polarity Therapy, she offers sessions in Shiatsu, Reiki, Jin Shin Acupressure and Therapeutic Touch. She also teaches Polarity Yoga classes and Tai Chi. Danielle can be reached at 416-532-0967 or 416-809-0967.