

## Women stand by platform preparing offerings for large cremation ceremony

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Half a dozen women dressed in formal wrapped batik skirts, colorful jackets, and sashes stand by a veranda platform preparing offerings for a large cremation ceremony. The scene is viewed from behind the busy women. The women, working side by side, are operating as a kind of production line to complete palm leaf and other offerings needed for an August 1986 cremation. The platform they face is covered with rattan baskets and plant materials for use in the creation of offerings. When someone dies in Bali, a drum is sounded and every family in that person's residential neighborhood is expected to send someone to help prepare for a funeral. In the background of the scene, a street sign advertising soap reads, "Lifeboy removes dirt...and germs." In Bali, the preparations for the cremation of important people can take months or even years. Special foods and offerings are made. A cremation is considered a happy time because the object of the ritual events is to release the soul of the deceased so that it is free to be reborn. Families also gain prestige from sponsoring a grand ritual with fine foods, beautiful decorations, and inspirational performances of Balinese orchestral music and dance.



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