



*Pak Rame with his family at the tooth filing ceremony; with Keith Clemson's class in the 1970s.*



## Sampai Bertemu Kembali... Until We Meet Again...

Many of us in the JIS community will someday leave Indonesia and move on to other exciting locations or return to our countries of origin. However, if you have been fortunate to work with a colleague like Bapak I Made Rame Widartha, at Pondok Indah Elementary, perhaps you too will want to return to Indonesia to awaken old memories and make new ones as former JIS teachers, Curt and Keith Clemson did. Bringing daughter Mari, they visited longtime friends, Bapak Rame and his family in Bali.

Together again, the two families, JIS expatriate and Indonesian host country, shared a unique Balinese Hindu rite of passage, a tooth filing ceremony.

Rame's initial contact with our school was through JIS teachers, George and Arlene Anang, in 1971. Leaving his home on the sunny beaches of the family compound in Kuta, Bali, Rame moved to Jakarta. He lived with the Anang family and finished his education. In 1975, Rame was hired by JIS as a teacher's aide and began his tenure working with kindergarten teacher, Keith Clemson. The combination was magic! For six years, they shared children and culture in that unique symbiotic relationship that forms when Indonesian teacher aides graciously support the classrooms of expatriate teachers, newly arrived from foreign cultures.



*Pak Rame with the Clemsons' at their home in Sante Fe, New Mexico, 1983 (above). Teaching a Balinese dance at an ISTA Festival 2005 (below).*

During this time, Rame married Ibu Yati and they had a daughter, Tini, who is a teacher's aide working with Rimi Kochar at Pattimura Elementary. Tini is the same age as Mari Clemson. The children grew up together as Ibu Yati looked after the Clemsons' two daughters along with Tini. As the friendship deepened, the Clemsons invited Rame to visit their home in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1983. Upon returning from holiday, Rame was appointed JIS elementary swimming instructor and Keith transferred to third grade. Although the close working relationship ended, the friendship continued through the years.

The Clemsons returned to the USA in 1984. The two families stayed in touch, sharing transitions and life challenges. Keith, Kurt and Mari returned to Jakarta in November of 2003 and spent a delightful week with Rame, Yati and Tini. Their other two children were introduced for the first time, Dewi, 14, and Yasa, 12. It was during this visit that Rame discussed his family's plans to hold a traditional Balinese tooth filing in March, 2006. The Clemsons vowed to return and share the unique rite of passage to be performed in the family compound, just off Bemo Corner, in Kuta.



Yasa and Dewi participated in the ritual, fulfilling a life requirement for all Balinese called, *manusa yadnaya*, one of five important rituals every Balinese person (soul) must perform to ensure a smooth transition between life, death and reincarnation. Six teeth are symbolically filed. With the first tap of the hammer, the child 'dies' and upon successful completion of the filing ceremony, the child is reborn as an adult, fully equipped to begin the next stage of life, including finding a suitable life partner. The first tap on the tooth is considered an exceptionally dangerous time as the human spirit is vulnerable to 'black magic' and must be protected by the close presence of loved ones. The Clemsons were there, lending support and love.

At Jakarta International School, teachers are offered a unique opportunity to work side by side with Indonesian classified staff and host country teachers, promoting educational excellence for students. Without their loyal support and hard work, our program would not be as



*The Clemsons in Bali at the tooth-filing ceremony with their daughter Mari (second from right) and a family friend.*

successful. Rame serves as a tireless ambassador for JIS through his devotion to the institution and willingness to serve humanity through teaching the fundamentals of swimming. He has given 31 years of service and loyalty to students and staff. Rame continues to touch the lives of expatriate teachers and families as well as hundreds of international students. He is thankful for the international people he is privileged to work along side, like the Clemsons and for the friendships and experiences working at JIS continues to afford him. How many of you learned to swim, and more, from our host country teacher, Pak Rame?

**Helen Bendall-Hughes, PIE Teacher**