

Balinese man lets irrigation water into rice field as he begins to prepare soil

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A Balinese man lets irrigation water into his rice field from the flooded terrace above as he begins to prepare soil with a hoe at the lower level for transplanting seedlings. He works barefoot, deep in the mud, wearing shorts and a straw hat. A house, trees, and hills are visible in the background. This man spent twelve hours of one day, from dawn to dusk preparing and transplanting seedlings into two plots of his terraces. The irrigation systems of Bali are amazingly intricate. Most water for irrigation flows from the mountains and is led to the wet-rice fields through a series of canals bordered by grassy earthen dikes. The water passes through and fertilizes each field before being allowed to descend to the fields at lower elevations. Therefore, all fields irrigated from a single water source must be planted in succession from the highest to the lowest elevations. The staggered planting schedule is regulated by a series of water temple festivals that signal to villagers when it is their time to access or release the water that nourishes the wet-rice crop prior to its final ripening stage.



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