

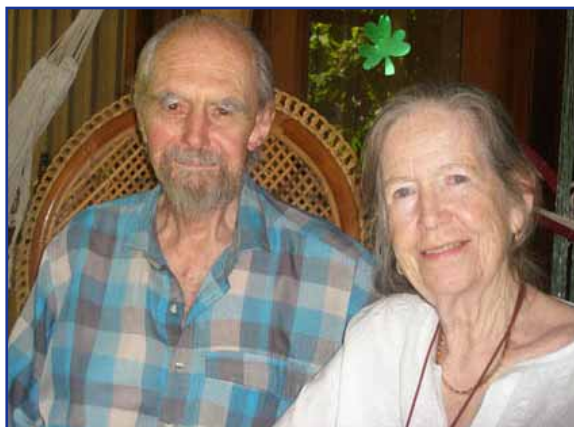
However, his aim gradually changed to creating a conference centre to be used for meetings in which Subud Australia, Subud Perth and occasionally our international family could take part. Many meetings have taken place there where the joy of sharing the latihan and our life's experiences together have taken place with a great sense of fulfilment.

Although he worked so hard with often little support he never boasted or claimed success or asked for thanks or even financial support. Only 2 to 3 weeks before his death he was busy seeing that everything was in order for our regional Subud gathering. Certainly an ancient aboriginal site.

In order to make an enterprise which would support his and Salamah's effort to create a space for Subud gatherings, it was hired out to groups interested in environmental welfare and all the spiritual fringe groups which flourish here in Perth. It was through this that he maintained contact with the wider community.

I, like many of us, feel so grateful to have had Abdullah as a true friend and brother and to have been a witness to his sincerity, his generosity and his tolerance and love of his fellow man.

He arranged his funeral a few days before he died and asked for the "Dream of Gerontius" to be sung. I think many of us could sing or hear the first line of that hymn. "Go in the name of God" and remember his passing with both happiness and sadness. ◆



Abdullah Pope and his wife Salamah shortly before his death

Bapak Subuh: the man and the Messenger of God

Abdullah Pope was a much-loved Subud member who passed away in 2010. Noted for his kindness and friendliness, he was an architect and builder of domes. He was opened when Subud first came to England in 1957, and he subsequently lived for a long time in Indonesia and became an Indonesian citizen, a very difficult thing for a foreigner to do.

*He wrote a wonderful autobiography, *Reminiscences of Bapak and of My Life*, which includes many interesting and illuminating encounters with Bapak Muhammad Subud, the founder of Subud. This is the last article he wrote for Subud Voice, shortly before his death on November 16, 2010...*

My wife Salamah and I had the extraordinary good fortune to spend some 28 years of our married life in Bapak's compound, the Wisma Subud, just south of Jakarta in Indonesia.

Some members have said to us, "It must have been an amazing life". Well, it was, of course – but not all the time. We had to earn a living and bring up our children, like everyone else. We had our great moments, but short-term visitors who came to the Wisma Subud for a month or two often had much more dramatic experiences than we did.

Bapak himself occasionally said, when chatting as ordinary Indonesians do so often about the price of rice or cars, "This is not the real Bapak talking to you now." The real Bapak, we gathered, was perhaps off on some more important mission elsewhere. In fact Bapak was an ordinary man like us, as he often claimed: but he was also an extraordinary man and, I believe, the latest Messenger of God.

In the early days, in the 'sixties, as an ordinary man Bapak often used to sit talking on the Guest House porch with his Indonesian cronies, men of his own age. The conversation would often be about current affairs, the political situation, and the ever-rising price of household goods and other commodities. The few of us foreign residents who were there at the time rarely joined in unless

we had a specific question to ask Bapak. But it was good just to sit there, and watch Bapak, and feel the latihan.

Selamatans (prayerful gatherings accompanied by a meal) for a wide range of events (births, birthdays, marriages, moving house, funerals, and so on) were a frequent occurrence, and in the 'sixties Bapak used to attend most of them. Sometimes, if the event was a foreign resident's birthday, for example, few of the Indonesians would show up, so Bapak tended to look a bit bored, without his regular cronies, and a bit lonely. Then he would ask for some music to be played, perhaps someone with a guitar would play some Indonesian tunes, and he looked more cheerful.

Fasting in Ramadan

We (Salamah and I) first did the Ramadan fast with the Indonesians in February 1962, and then most years afterwards. In the old latihan hall during the Nights of Power towards the end of the month, Bapak sometimes asked the men to lie flat on our backs on the floor, in order to be more open to receive the wahyu, the ▶

Bapak was never happier than when members' experiences proved his mission was having results

blessings of God on those special nights.

If anyone felt or thought they had received a special insight or blessing during these Nights of Power, Bapak always seemed keen to hear about it. But you had to have courage, because Bapak might tell you that what you thought you'd received was just your imagination!

On one such occasion I was shown a vision of Kalimantan. I seemed to be high above Jakarta looking across to Kalimantan with the islands of the Philippines in the distance. The land of Kalimantan was sparkling with little blue and gold dots of light, an extraordinarily beautiful sight.

It was so strong a vision that I had no hesitation in telling Bapak about it. When I did so, and asked him what it meant, he explained that I had been shown the gold and diamonds under the ground, and that in the future Subud members would set up mines to excavate



Abdullah Pope, extreme left, with Bapak (seated). Abdullah always liked to keep in the background. Abdullah's wife, Salamah, is holding one of their daughters born in Indonesia

them. This was in the 'sixties, when no Subud members had ever been to Kalimantan.

Some years later, during another similar sort of session on another Night of Power, I had another experience which I thought Bapak might like to hear about. But when Bapak asked, did anyone have any experiences?, this time I kept silent as I was still in those days rather shy and wondered if the experience was important enough to say anything about. I thought Bapak looked

disappointed when no one spoke up answering his question, and I have always felt remorseful that I did not speak up.

When Bapak went on a world tour, on his return many members, both Indonesian and foreign, would go to the airport to greet him. The Indonesians would kiss his hand or bow to him with their hands together in front of their faces, whereas the foreigners would shake his hand.

As a foreigner I usually used to shake his hand, but on one of the last occasions (it must have been in the late eighties), as I did so I became immediately aware that – as a very long-term resident, and an Indonesian citizen to boot – I should have kissed his hand.

I could feel that Bapak was slightly disappointed with me, and I realized I had shown disrespect to someone I knew to be the Messenger of God for this age, and who was therefore due all the respect I could give him. I have always felt sad that I did not act correctly on this occasion either.

Having Results

Bapak was never happier than when he could hear of members' experiences which proved to him that his mission was having results. He once or twice asked the ladies if any of them had ever been to the moon. I believe some had.

He was very pleased that Ibu Rahayu had had an ascension somewhat similar to his own, and I imagine he must have been pleased, too, that Arifin Konrad and Rachmadi Fiedorowicz have both had extraordinary out-of-body experiences in which Bapak took them to somewhere high above the ordinary universe, to realms beyond their ability to describe in words.

Arifin's experience forms the last entry in that, to me, wonderful book of members' experiences of Bapak, collected and edited by Emmanuel Williams, *An Extraordinary Man*, still available from him at: www.anextraordinaryman.com

When Bapak died, early in the morning of 23rd June 1987, the news spread quickly and by morning many hundreds of Subud members had gathered around his coffin in his new house, Wisma Bharata, in Pamulang. The atmosphere was extraordinary; the power of the latihan was everywhere, as if Bapak's great soul had expanded to envelop us all. People only spoke in whispers.

Some time before, Bapak had told his grandson, Mas Adji, that when he died, he would be able to be closer to all of us. So now that Bapak the ordinary man had died, Bapak the Messenger of God is still with us. ◆