

# **CONFESSION**

**A MEMOIR**

**by**

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**Translation into English by SUBAGIO and Andy SELWAY**

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## PREFACE

I was born to Raden Mas Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo (referred to as Bapak throughout this book) who was later to become a world figure.

During his life, Bapak travelled around the world many times, visiting many countries and cities. He stayed up to several weeks in each country, solely to take the Latihan Kejiwaan of Subud to whoever wished to receive.

As a result, several hundred people in no less than 90 countries, of many different nationalities and religions, have come to know and practise the Latihan Kejiwaan of Subud.

Many Subud members, especially those from foreign countries, because of their admiration and reverence for Bapak, asked me about the brighter and the darker sides of my life as Bapak's son.

As his son, naturally I have been involved in the life of Bapak. Because of this involvement it is natural that my children and grandchildren, and other people of this or future generations, may want to know about my life.

This book is an endeavour to answer the above two questions.

This book is presented in the following Chapters:

The first Chapter is titled "Personal Profile". This Chapter presents what I perceive and understand of myself in broad outline. It is a cross section or profile of my person without too much detail. I started writing this book with my personal profile simply to help myself remember how I had approached various problems I faced, and also how I would decide on available options of action and how I would make my decisions.

The next Chapter is titled "Involvement in The Field of Kejiwaan", which is separated from the Chapter after that titled "Involvement in Worldly Matters or Enterprises".

The last Chapter is "Miscellaneous", where I mention a few experiments and experiences (in Subud they may be called receiving) which I hope will provide a certain "flavour" to this book.

This presentation is essentially a self examination through the author's own eyes. Therefore the truths which are presented in the book have been filtered through "the sieve of personal values" which has developed within myself. Therefore it would not

be surprising if different truths are found from other sources or by other persons regarding the same circumstances.

I would like to add here, that this “pengakuan” also in fact constitutes a process and method for my own understanding the Latihan Kejiwaan of Subud. Therefore I hope that this book can also contribute towards comparative views and understanding of Subud to the readers.

Haryono Sumohadiwidjojo

Jakarta, August 1997

CHAPTER I : PERSONAL PROFILE

### 1. Author’s Note.

I should like to make some explanation regarding the noun - word “Pengakuan” which I used as the title of this book. I am using the Indonesian verb “mengaku” in its two different meanings, sometimes in its first meaning of “to confess “ or “to admit” and some other times in its other meaning of “to claim”. Perhaps the two different meanings of “mengaku” can be demonstrated in the following sentences: Si Pandir still does not “mengaku” (admit ) that he has until now illegitimately “mengaku” (claimed) valour in the victory of the last war.

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### 2. Childhood Environment

People say, my father has supernatural power

I was born in 1930 and we lived until 1945 in the city of Semarang.

My childhood environment was very much influenced by Bapak’s role.

Bapak used to make our toys from wood or cardboard; on Saturday mornings, he used to take us for a walk barefooted to brush our feet on the morning dew to climb the Candi Hills; every Sunday Bapak took us for a visit to his friend; every time we heard applauses and cheers from a nearby soccer oval, Bapak would immediately take us across the river to the oval to watch the soccer match; Bapak never let us play too much with the other boys from our kampong.

My natural mother, Siti Rumindah, died in 1937, that was when I was only 7 years of age. In 1941 Bapak married Ibu Siti Sumari. I thought remaining single for 4 years was long enough for Bapak, but when I try to recollect my earliest memory, the

events of the past seem to overlap: it is no longer clear in my mind which mother was present when events took place.

We were not rich then, and we lived simply. The following will give a measuring stick as to how simply we lived. At that time the island of Jawa was still under the Dutch colonial control. In general the indigenous people lived simply. I remember in those days when people had a party or “selamatan”, they did not serve the eggs in whole but they divided up into four or even eight sections. After breakfast I was given half a cent coin as pocketmoney to spend at school. My school friend, the son of a teacher at the school, had two and a half cents pocket money, a coin called “sebenggol” at that time. With half a cent I could buy one stewed soya bean cake, or a handful of glutinous rice, or two small pieces of fried cassava. So my school friend was five times better off than I was.

In Semarang we lived in a kampong. Kampong is a housing complex, where the houses are built individually and privately, as distinct from the Streets or Lanes, where the houses alongsides are built by the Government or Real Estate company. In a Real Estate housing complex bitumised streets are already laid out nicely.

Although it was a kampong, it was served with reticulated water and electricity. In the kampong there was a “surau”, a small community building where muslims do their communal prayer, which was equipped with tiled floor for washing clothes and a public water collection place. To my memory the water was plentiful, and perhaps it also functioned as a fire hydrant outlet. Although it was called a kampong its layout was not that haphazard. In those days people seemed to be a lot more disciplined than they are today.

All houses in our kampong were built from timber, or weaved bambu walls or with the bottom half of brick walls and the top half either from timber or from weaved bambu walls with roofs of terracota tiles or corrugated iron. Our house was the only house which was built with full brick walls and teak timber window and door frames and even the roof trusses and purlins were of teak timber. Bapak told me that he had much difficulty in obtaining approval from the City Council to build the house. This house was built when Bapak was still an employee of the “Gemeente” - now it is called the “Kantor Walikota” (the City Council).

That house was one of the reminders that Bapak did have some money when he was still working as a Government employee. I can't remember when Bapak was still active at work. Once Bapak took me for a walk to show me the building where he worked. Another reminder was the good and expensive toys which I had. I had a pedal car made of pressed steel, with duco paint, which ran very smoothly when I peddled it. I also had a hand driven factory-made wooden toy carriage which was very nice to ride on, a set of Meccano toys in a big box, and a model train complete with rails which at that time seemed very long to me.

Those toys and the wooden toys which Bapak made himself kept me and my younger brother Haryadi amused at home.

Now when Bapak no longer went to work, I did not know how Bapak supported the family and I never asked.

We had a very quiet life. Perhaps nowadays one would call it a contented life. In those days of course there was no television. We did not have a radio, so when we wanted to listen to a play on the radio, we threw a reed mat on the ground against the fence and quietly listened to our neighbour's radio which normally was turned on loudly.

Our house was in the corner of the street. It consisted of two buildings, one of bricks - the main house - and next to it a smaller house of bricks and timber walls as a pavilion. On the right hand side, across the road lived a christian family. Skewed across the road lived a Semarang "indigenous" family, owner and operator of a ferry on a big river called the "Banjirkanaal" on the edge of the city. This was the family which owned the radio on which we used to eavesdrop to hear the radio play. I remember the head of this family smoked a pipe and that was how he was nicknamed Pak Min-Pipe. During one of the city pageants, then it was called "bloemenkorso", Pak Min decorated his float in the form of a giant pipe.

Across the main street where rivers ran along either side, approximately 200 meters from our house stood a Dutch army barrack with its parade ground which was also used as a soccer field. It was to this place Bapak used to take us in the late afternoons to watch a soccer match.

Exactly opposite our house, we could only see the back of three new brick houses which were facing the main street. These three houses were occupied by Dutch doctors from the hospital standing on the other side of the hills.

The family from the house in the middle had a daughter of my age. One day as Haryadi and I walked home from school past their house, we saw them getting out of their car. I said to Haryadi:

"When I grow up I would like to marry a white woman, and I would like to have a bald head like that Dutch man".

It turns out now that I am bald, but I am not married to a Dutch woman but to a truly beautiful woman from West Java.

Actually it was not the first time that I saw a Dutch woman. The headmaster of my school was a full-blooded Dutch. Two of the other teachers were Dutch young women, or perhaps they were half-castes. They both looked very beautiful to me.

As children we never went out or went away for recreations like the way my children do now, like going to the mountains or the beach or sailing. It is true as far as I can remember that those who stayed at the hotels in the mountains or at the beach were only Dutch children.

If we went out, we only went to see a wayang performance ( Javanese

Shadow Puppet Performance). Very occasionally we went to see a film at the cinema with the school. I often accompanied grandmother to see wayang performances (I remember my grandmother as very close to me and fond of me). My grandmother and I were often hiding away from Bapak to go to the market. On the first Moslem month of Suro Bapak always took me to the village of Banyumanik, a village on the main road before you get to Ungaran. The village head was a follower of Bapak, and there we were invited to see a wayang performance lasting the whole night.

On long school holidays, we were sent by train in the company and care of a train conductor who was boarding in our house, to stay with grandfather at Pamotan, a small town in the lime hills near the town of Rembang. There we were known as city boys who came to the village. Our clothes were admired by the children in the village and when there was a badminton competition we always became the champions.

When we were a bit bigger, my older sister, Siti Rahayu was given a pushbike. I did not know who bought that for her, as I remember Bapak's financial situation did not seem to have changed for the better. We used to receive presents from other people. Before the end of the month of Ramadhan we would get a present in the form of new clothes from "Westerling" emporium, from my auntie whose husband was a nurse at the Hospital in Semarang.

With our pushbike, we got up to a lot more mischief. I used to go with my sister on the pillion of her bike for common purpose and destination, but sometimes I was only accompanying her. My sister always seemed to have somewhere to go. Sometimes she went to see her girlfriend, but other times for purposes rather mysterious to me.

Also because of that pushbike a horse cart ran over my sister's ankle-joint.

One day a "Bemo", a three wheel taxi, ran into us on our pushbike at a three-way crossing, with me on the pillion of the bike. At the impact, on reflex I kicked the "Bemo", causing the "Bemo" to overturn, and a young Dutch woman crawled out of it frowning and sour faced, while our bike remained upright with my sister holding it.

When we got home we told our grandmother what happened. Grandmother laughed and said:

" You were lucky you have been protected by your father by virtue of his supernatural power ".

### 3. Period of Introduction to The Latihan of Kejiwaan

We took things naturally as they came  
As if as a matter of course

I had a habit of playing or experimenting with my limbs. One day I was wriggling my foot, then I found it would not stop moving.

When we returned from Bogor to Semarang, I was 6 years old, and had to repeat pre-school. In the class room I was taller than the rest of the class, so I was given a seat right in the very back row. Because I thought no one could see me, while listening to the lady teacher I liked to play with my limbs. When I was on my seat and writing, I wriggled my toes. Suddenly I found my toes were moving as if doing a “zikir” (repetitive movement during prayer) and they would not stop moving. They only stopped moving when I held them fast with both hands.

When I got home I asked Bapak what that meant. Bapak only replied with a smile:

“Don’t you worry. Just let it go”.

I did not know whether other children of my age experienced the same things as I did.

I observed that my physical growth took place in integral steps.

When I was 6 years old, I narrowly escaped a fall, which convinced me that I would never have a fall in my life. By observing my own body I could feel the intuition that if I stumbled or slipped I should roll or balance myself and I would end up on all fours.

It also happened later on, one day when I was 16, that I felt as if something was slipping from my body. I felt as if the “shroud” enveloping my body was peeling off and immediately after that I felt as if I put on a new one. I even heard from Bapak, that humans had a growth cycle measured in “windu”, a period of eight years.

As a child I was given three dubious attributes: “jirih”, “medhit” and “jelitheng”.

“Jirih” means timid, they said because I was born at noon. “Medhit” means stingy, because I had a tail at the back of my head. “Jelitheng” means coal black because I had a dark skin.



Whether those attributes had indeed influenced me by way of self-suggestion, or whether the character of a person is decided by the time of birth or the physical features - as our ancestors thought - I really do not know.

I must admit I am timid, I feared darkness, and I always closed my eyes in a horse cart when a car was passing us.

I found it hard to accept the attribute of “medhit”. It is true I am careful and calculating in any transaction, but I did not feel I was “medhit”!

I am proud to be called “jelitheng”. Black crickets are always winners in a cricket-fight. In a wayang epic, the story of Mahabharata, “Jelitheng” is the name for Kresna who is wise, has great knowledge and is endowed with supernatural power.

I did not like fighting, but usually in debates I came on top.

The Latihan Kejiwaan was introduced to us by Bapak himself when we were still children. When I was only 9 or 10 years old, I and my younger brother, Haryadi, were asked by Bapak to stand against the wall. We had our eyes open as normal and then Bapak asked us to remain still and wait. Then Bapak said:

“ Now try to feel what sensation you have in your hands!”

Then I felt that my fingers were “dancing” as if they were playing the piano and I felt as if a weak electric current or a tingling sensation ran through my arms. After 1941 - that was after Bapak had married Ibu Sumari - Bapak often told stories while playing the “gambang” (wooden xylophone). On a certain occasion while telling a story and playing the “gambang” Bapak asked us to close our eyes and said:

“ Observe what happens to your feeling and your emotion.”

I would feel ever stronger beat in my chest with every beat of the gambang. While the sound of the music was swinging high it often brought melancholy within my heart. Bapak did not ask any questions of us. Bapak would close his eyes as he was playing the gambang as if he enjoyed his own music.

As far as I can remember as children we did not ask many questions. We were still very much influenced by Javanese culture and traditions in how we should behave toward our elders. We knew that Bapak on certain nights of the week had a meeting. Grandma told us that those people who came to the meetings were Bapak’s followers. So Bapak was perhaps some kind of a teacher. One day Bapak himself told us that those people who came to our place were to do a practice. The word practice was taken from the Dutch word. At that time we children had not heard of the word

Latihan Kejiwaan. Neither had we heard of the word “Subud”.

Usually we could hear occasional laughter from those meetings. It seemed they had something to talk about as they sat next to one another and they did not seem to be too serious. Whenever Bapak started to talk then we could hear some laughter as if there was something funny.

We children often had a peep into the room, especially when there were a group of people from Jogjakarta. Among those people from Jogjakarta there was one character who drew our attention. When everyone else was laughing this man did not join in the laughter. But his face is always smiling. This man was still young and the way he sat was like Wayang actor playing Arjuno or another knight in the Wayang Story. It turned out later that this man was to become my brother-in-law.

There appeared to be no lectures or religious teachings. It was as if Bapak was telling a story to us. Without giving advice Bapak would tell epic stories from Mahabarata or other stories. I suspected that many of the stories came into Bapak’s head spontaneously and instantaneously.

We were always overawed by Bapak’s ability to tell stories. I longed to be able to emulate Bapak. Also he was able to make those characters of knights and heroes my idols. The characters from the Wayang stories became my idols, especially Kresna and Arjuna. They are very different from the idols of my grandchildren such as the robot man or Ninja.

On one evening during the Japanese occupation in the early forties Bapak asked us to come together on the steps at the back of the house. While looking into the evening sky Bapak said:

“ Let us read the history from the sky.”

We saw groups of rolling clouds in the sky. It seemed that the wind was very strong up in the sky. Then suddenly the clouds were broken up and scattered. What happened then was like a pageant of clouds of various shapes of boats and ships. Bapak said :

“ That shows our present history, the Japanese come in their ships.”

The clouds kept drifting. Now they formed into a string of smaller clouds. But then came along a group of bigger clouds in the form of ships. We kept watching the sky; sometimes I could feel my heart thumping.

At one moment the clouds gathered together, moving very slowly. A new form was taking place, gradually it became clearer and resembled a picture of a Javanese giant. I called it a giant because it was so big, almost covered the whole sky. I called it Javanese because it looked like “he” was wearing a Javanese head-dress with a “bun” at the back

like the head-dress from Yogyakarta.

Bapak said :

“ There comes the Indonesian National Leader.”

I was watching it with amazement. But then that figure too dispersed away. Then the sky started to get darker and the clouds got thicker. Bapak took us inside the house.

The next day, at about the same time, we all gathered again on the steps at the back of the house. The sky was again covered with clouds as the day before.

My sister Warnati, daughter of Ibu Sumari, whose name Bapak later on changed to Rochanawati, had the pluck to ask Bapak:

“Bapak, do the shapes of clouds always have meanings ?”

Bapak replied:

“We ourselves give meanings to those shapes. We match the understanding which already exist within our own feeling through our eyes with those outward objects.”

We looked again into the sky. In the eastern sky a human head was taking shape. The longer we looked the clearer it showed itself, it developed into the head of Queen Wilhelmina similar to what is on the old two and a half guilder silver coin.

My brother Haryadi asked Bapak:

“ Will the Japanese be defeated in the war Pak?”

Bapak did not reply, instead he took us all back inside the house.

At that time Japan was still in a dominant position. As a little boy who had great admiration for the Japanese army for setting us free from Dutch colonisation, I was taken aback by Haryadi's question. That night Haryadi would not stop nagging for an answer from his elder sister Warnati. Haryadi and I were suspicious that sister Warnati knew or had been told by Bapak about the coming end of the world war. We were both nagging until late at night for an answer, but our question remained unanswered.

As far as I can remember, that was the only time that Bapak was “playing a game” with clouds to us. Since then Bapak never again asked us to read clouds.

#### 4. Seeds of Character Building.

The aforementioned environment of childhood had contributed to my shyness. As a shy child I used to behave towards adults in what one would probably call a low profile manner.

I did not know where I got it from, that I had a good ability of hiding my emotion, I could be irresponsive to people, or sometimes I even reacted with stoic resignation towards what was happening around me. Later in my life it was obvious that with that personal quality I was able to remain detached and looked at the problems I faced without being emotionally involved.

I am aware that behind or within that “calm” quality was a hidden energy of two different types. The first one is my creative energy. Creativity in the arts of painting, drawing and writing. Also creativity in producing a play, although as a behind the scene player. By watching how Bapak worked with his hands when making our toys, I gained dexterity with my hands. I was able to make a lamp shade with a piece of cardboard. Secondly, behind that quietness I had a tendency to disrupt the peace of others. I enjoyed teasing other people without being malicious.

Quietly I enjoyed taking the opportunity of teasing female friends. I enjoyed looking at a girl in my grade 5 Primary School who was known as the prettiest girl. One day shyly and quietly I approached her. She was with several other girls eating sour tamarindes. I asked her:

“What are you eating?”

The girl replied;

“Would you like some?”. I nodded.

The next day just before we finished school the girl came to me with a string of tamarinde for me to take home. I felt overwhelmed that my interest got a response from her.

At the same school, I had a lady teacher who was a teacher of Japanese language. She rather liked me because I was very good at learning the Japanese language. But the negative thing about it was that she was using me. Apparently this teacher was in love with a male teacher from

the other class. When she was teaching my class (actually she was the guardian teacher of grade 3, and I was in grade 6) she would ask me to take a letter to that male teacher. I must say it was a rather risky assignment!

The class that the male teacher taught was upstairs. Our school was formerly a mansion belonging to a rich Dutch land owner who had died. That building had a big and grand concrete stair case, and it was dark. There was a story that at night one often saw a Sister without legs sitting on the stair. Therefore each time before climbing the stairs I drew a deep breath, closed my eyes, and ran upstairs as fast as I could.

When we were short of teachers due to illness, I was often asked to supervise grade 3 class when they were having a test or copying out a lesson from the blackboard, while the female teacher taught language in my class. My job was to sit in the teacher's chair, doing my own study, while watching out for any mischief making among the children.

In that grade 3 class there were 3 girls sitting together. Two of them I regarded as beautiful and the other one was sweet. Whenever I was there to "sit" for the teacher, the three girls never stopped giggling. Perhaps there was something funny they could see about me, and it made me feel uncomfortable.

One day, I could not remember why, our class was dismissed. So I borrowed my sister's bike and I rode towards the school at school break up time. I was hoping that I would meet the three pretty girls from that grade 3 class. Sure enough, from a distance I saw them giggling. I intended to turn around my bike but I was too embarrassed.

When we met, they mobbed me. Each one gave me a quick soft pinch and ran away laughing. I could not do anything else but stand still holding my bike.

The stories which Bapak told us were an important factor in the building of my character. According to Bapak, apart from those stories the development within myself through the Latihan Kejiwaan complemented the building of my character.

As I have mentioned before, the two wayang characters Arjuno and Kresna became my idols from the stories which Bapak told me. Bapak also told us of many other wayang characters, but generally they are characters similar to Arjuna and Kresna. Although I no longer remember their names anymore I am sure those characters shaped me into a real Javanese. I do not mean Javanese mystic. I do not remember Bapak ever taught me Javanese mysticism.

I am not an impressionable person, or in the Javanese word I am not "gumunan" (easily influenced, impressionable or gullible). I believe that this quality is considered as a fine part of "Priyayi Djawa"

(Javanese high class society). There is another desired quality of “Priyayi Djawa” according to Bapak, namely “tidak grayak” or self-restraint in argument or in fighting for possession of material things (particularly with regard to inheritance).

There was a very dramatic story told by Bapak. It was about a war between two brothers. In the story, which took Bapak several successive days to tell us, the war between the two brothers lasted for many days. That war was to win the crown and inheritance. To cut the story short, the war did not end with a winner or a loser, because their father cursed them to become animals. The two brothers made peace but it was already too late, they had become animals. Humbled and humiliated they climbed up and down the mountains and ravines, and never stopped wandering.

We were not rich. Bapak was not a king. Therefore my brother Haryadi and I never thought of inheritance. It has been ingrained within me that fighting for position in front of one’s father is very lowly conduct.

The above quality of not “gumunan” has made me a cold person, or as if I am “frozen” or aloof. I am proud of this attitude of stoic aloofness, the kind of quality which Arjuna demonstrated when he came face to face with Cakil, the Ogre, in the war between the two men. Arjuna would remain aloof, stoic: unmoved by the agitation of Cakil. Cakil would look Arjuna up and down, trying to incite him, and then shower him with stones, touching and commenting on every part of Arjuna’s clothes. Cakil would even size him up, measure his height, weigh his muscles yet Arjuna would remain still, not even moving a finger. Only when Cakil tried to hurt him, Arjuna reacted proportionately.

During the Japanese occupation I joined the other boys in the kampong to learn “pencak silat”, an Indonesia martial art of self-defence, from Bapak. During those periods the people in the kampongs organised communal activities. Bapak was once elected to become the Head of a communal organisation called “Rukun Tetangga” or Neighbourhood Togetherness, and that was when he started a “pencak silat” group. My problem in learning “pencak silat” is that I did not have good reflexes. I was too “frozen” and indifferent. I needed to practise my reflexive responses, which were almost non-existent because of my “frozen” nature I mentioned earlier.

Later on my unimpressible nature together with my ability to hide or suppress emotion became very clear when I heard the news of the death of my brother Haryadi. It was in the evening of July 1955. It was already dark when someone knocked on the door. When we opened the door we were told by the man at the door that I should come to receive a phone call from Jakarta at the Wirogunan Prison. We lived approximately 300 metres away in the same street as Wirogunan Prison. I hopped on my bike to go to the Prison. When I picked up the telephone I heard Bapak’s voice

from Jakarta. Bapak gave me the message of Haryadi's death and asked us to come to Jakarta as soon as we could, then he asked me:

“ Apa kamu sudah tahu ?”

( This question has 2 interpretations: 1. Do you know already? 2. Do you understand already?)

I answered :

“Iya, sudah tahu.”

(This answer could also have 2 interpretations; 1. Yes I know already. 2. Yes I understand already)

The next morning after the funeral, Bapak made the point of asking me of how I had heard the news of Haryadi's death, because the day before I told him that I had heard.

With red-faced embarrassment I explained to Bapak that it was indeed from Bapak that I first heard the news. I did not mean to answer Bapak on the telephone with the words “sudah tahu” ( I know already ) but with “sudah jelas” ( it was clear, or I understand already ) your instruction.

During my visit to Australia, I also had to hide my emotion. In 1977 my wife and I made a visit to Australia. I had just arrived in Sydney when I received a telephone call from home that my son got hurt in a motor bike accident in Jakarta. I was also told that my son had to be taken to the hospital for treatment and that his condition now was stable.

According to the itinerary we were yet to spend 2 days in Melbourne, 2 days in Perth and 2 days in Singapore. Only after 5 days had passed – the day before we flew from Singapore back to Jakarta – did I tell my wife Ismana the news about the accident our son had had.

## 5. The Germination of the Seed of My Conceited “Ego”

I am a quick learner, whether in exact sciences, general knowledge or languages. In performing arts, whether drawing or singing, I always excelled in the class. I was not the brightest student in my class, but I had a good ranking, at least third in the class. I was not jealous of the student who got number one or number two ranking, because I got my grade without even trying hard.

I used to see Bapak helping people by giving them a “rajah”. “Rajah” is a piece of white paper on which a continuous line is drawn with ink. This paper is to be burnt, and the ashes put in a glass of water to drink. Bapak's followers asked Bapak for a “rajah” for different purposes. Some were to cure some illness, some for getting rid of depression, and some for personal safety before a long journey from

home.

I also asked Bapak for a “rajah” for getting rid of my laziness and he gave me one too. I burnt the “rajah”, put the ashes in a glass of water and then drank the water. But even now, in my old age I am still as lazy about learning as I have always been.

Actually, I asked for a “rajah” not for getting rid of my laziness, but to show off to Bapak that I could still do well at school without studying.

I did not spend too much time studying, but I did contemplate a lot. This was my new favourite habit since entering Junior High School. I contemplated anything. If I was sad then I would develop that sadness to the utmost intensity I could imagine.

If I had a pain, then I would dwell on that pain. One day I had a toothache, and I contemplated the ache, dwelling on it by concentrating on the pulses of the pain. As I continued observing the pain, suddenly it was gone.

People said that I had a very high threshold for pain and very reticent about it. What I did actually was learn always to observe the pain until it disappeared itself. I use several other similar methods to the one mentioned above for dealing with pressing unpleasant feelings. For instance, to deal with a stomach ache, I take very deep breaths in a controlled regular manner. I use the same method to stop seasickness or airsickness. I could hold back the pressure of going to the toilet for at least one hour by the same method as above.

Since Junior High School I started reading books on subjects outside the school curriculum. One book which had a very strong impression on me was on the development of character. That book, the author of which I no longer remember, explained the development of character through the various ways a child overcomes and solves the problems facing the child.

A child has to overcome one problem after another through the passage of its life. At first perhaps a child has to face the problem of how to hold or catch an object it wishes to have in its hands. Then it has to solve gradually more and more complex problems. Say at first a child has to climb a ladder, then the time will come when that child has to jump over a fence, later on he/she might have to cross a ravine. The ladder, the fence and the ravine are but examples of what I mean by more and more complex problems.

The development of a child’s character will take place proportionately with the development of the child’s ability to overcome those problems. There are children who are more willing to overcome problems than the others. Some children are afraid of and would rather avoid problems. The more problems a child is prepared and able to solve, the more mature



and stronger the character will become.

On the contrary, the more a child avoids problems or shies away from challenges, the smaller the world of that child will be. That type of a child will be metaphorically speaking like a fine ceramic, which breaks easily at the slightest touch. That type of a child is very sensitive and has a fragile character. In its extreme, a child of that character will always feel lonely and isolated.

The more challenges children can meet successfully, the stronger their self-confidence becomes, making them very capable with a wide outlook.

The ways children solve and overcome their problems, not only determines their maturity but also the colour of the character of the child. Depending on the situation and the type of problems or challenges, each solution requires a specific mode of execution. The combination of all these specific ways will give individual colour to the character of each child. This further explains why it is not surprising if a child would later choose to become a priest, or to become a communist, or even to become a cold-blooded murderer.

Later on in my life, when I had grown up and already started to work, the influence of that book on me made me think that all actions were essentially to meet a certain need. Therefore I find it difficult to believe that a person can have a bad intention, especially a bad intention against me. I found it difficult to believe reports that there was a dishonest employee, or that someone tried to defraud money in a transaction. As a consequence, thieves got the upperhand over me.

I was also trapped by a book of psychology which explained in an enthralling and enchanting way, that within a person, the seed of competition between a boy and his father was there the moment the baby was born.

I realize now that through reading those books I began to become conceited. Without being conscious of what was happening I found myself at the beginning of my wandering.

## 6. A Period of Wandering

My wandering was not in the physical sense, but in the emotional sense of the word. Emotionally I moved further and further away from Bapak.

>From the day I entered the Senior High School I had decided that I was not able to compete with my younger brother Haryadi. Haryadi was always closer to Bapak, in the kejiwaan as well as in worldly relations. This became a contributing main factor of my turning away from Bapak to myself.

I said previously that my wandering was in the emotional sense of the word, because physically I was still in the same house with Bapak and the family: we ate together and still had fun with each other. I was still participating in the latihan with Bapak's pupils. My wandering was mainly an intellectual wandering. My intellectual development seemed to gradually separate me from Bapak. I even felt that my intellectual development was also separating me from myself. Therefore in a sense I was wandering away from myself.

At certain times I felt that I had a multiple-personality. I was convinced that the development of my inner had no connection with my intellectual development.

Because the development of my intellect was gathering pace I even began to believe that everything we did in this world could not and should not be connected with what we experienced or even what we received from the Latihan Kejiwaan. What we did in every life in the society was totally apart and need not be relevant to the fact that one was practising the Latihan Kejiwaan. Subud is not in the slightest responsible for what the members did in the society, whether good or bad. This theory and attitude of mine was vehemently opposed by my Subud friends and my contemporary friends from the university, such as Muhammad Icksan, Syafruddin Achmad and others. One day I was involved in a debate with Bapak because I stubbornly argued that one has to learn at school to develop one's character and personality. On the contrary Bapak said that Latihan Kejiwaan was the most important thing in the development of character, although according to Bapak the process was not as fast as most people wished it to be. I said to Bapak that I found it difficult to accept his explanation because Subud members who were university students became too lazy to attend lectures: they would rather do the Latihan.

I told my university Subud friends my theory that there was no such thing as "love": that the institution of marriage was a human invention.

Sexual life between married couple was completely separate from life during the day. What took place in the bedroom was nothing to be remembered or talked about at breakfast time. Likewise, quarrels and arguments which took place during the day should not prevent a warm relation in bed.

I proceeded with my intellectual wandering with great enthusiasm, such that my friends, especially those who engaged in discussions with me dubbed me a rebel-child. Strangely, I was proud of that "title".

I still practised the Latihan, but I also enjoyed having discussions with my non-Subud friends.

The older members of Subud, particularly the "Pembantu-Pelatih" (Helpers) were not concerned with what was going on inside me. At the

group Latihans they took the opportunity to ask me to do my “duty” as Bapak’s son to “project” my personality to those members who took part in the Latihan. Sometimes I could do it well, but most of the time it was stressful for me.

## 7. A Detour

One of the amazing things (some say it is a drawback) about Subud is, once one is “opened” then one can’t be “de-opened” or “closed” again.

In the previous Chapter I said that I went through an “intellectual” wandering. In the Chapter before that I described it as a process going on inside me which gradually gave me a split-personality. In this Chapter I will deal with the other side of me that did not take part in the wandering. Perhaps this side of me constitutes the “vessel” that always receives and senses the inner life vibration which later on was called the Latihan Kejiwaan.

When I talk about the other side of me, it sounds as if it was true that a split-personality had developed inside me. But actually I can’t be certain myself if it was so.

I never went through a formal opening. It was the same with the other children of Bapak. But after we had lived in Jogya for some time, perhaps it was after 1947 - after I entered the Senior High School - I was allowed and was often asked by Bapak to participate in the Group Latihan. Sometimes I and Haryadi, my cousin Sugiono and several other university students did the Latihan together as we were asked by Bapak while Bapak was present. We did the Latihan under the tree in the ground at the back of Jayaningprangan house, when the sun had gone down and it had begun to get dark. We did the Latihan in a spacious ground so that we could feel free and uninhibited (and not to get the benefit from the big shady tree!). Indeed we did our Latihans energetically. I used to run with a rhythm as if I was riding on horse-back. After the Latihan we would be soaking wet with perspiration.

In those days many members had a very active Latihan. But there were also many of them who went through strange crises. We use the word “crisis” to describe a situation or a condition when a member could no longer have control of self. There was a case, where every morning when my brother opened the front door of the house he saw a Subud member already sitting cross-legged on the ground in front of the house with bare torso. This episode went on for about one week. This member would only go home after he saw Bapak and Bapak told him to go home. This member was going through what was called a “crisis”. He walked to come there every morning not because he had wanted to from his own will, but because the inner told him to do so. Now we would say, as a weak excuse, that when there was a student who did not want to study and

stayed away from the lectures, he was undergoing purification and some sort of crisis.

Secretly, I was always in fear of a “crisis”. Therefore in doing my Latihan I was always cautious. When I felt that my Latihan was getting too strong and I felt as if I was “floating” I stopped. Then I started again with a more gentle Latihan. When in Latihan I was running fast around and around or doing the “pencak silat” strongly, then I tried to maintain equilibrium to remain “whole and well”.

I was aware of this weakness of mine, and often did testing for myself. For instance I tested what influence my head had on my Latihan. When I did that, then I would feel doing the Latihan and feeling as if my head was frozen like stone. When I tried to look up and do my prayer, then I would find the sky blocked from my head by an object having the shape of an umbrella.

Friends who came to our house did not know the existence of Subud activities. Perhaps they did not notice anything strange about me. If there were young people or students who came to register themselves to join in the Latihan, it was only because their parents or their teachers or some other people sent them.

Secretly, from time to time I tried to use the Latihan Kejiwaan for worldly advantage. When I was in the school ground, I tried to draw the attention of a girl student friend by telepathy. When I was preparing myself for an examination and time was short, I asked my hand to show me the pages I should read from the Organic Chemistry Textbook by Holleman which was thick.

I remember when I was a bit younger, in grade 2 Senior High School, I used to tell my hand to draw graphs. It was in 1948, when I was 18 years old. At that time everything was scarce and hard to get in Jogja. Many children and even parents tried to work as a middle man. They went around surreptitiously offering or seeking goods to trade. Why did they do it surreptitiously? Perhaps because they did not want too many people in the chain of middle men: to limit the number of commission takers. Perhaps also because the goods they were offering were prohibited, such as morphine or other drugs which were controlled by laws. Indeed it was an engrossing human preoccupation, such that even my school was neglected and in disarray. These activities were motivated by big profit: each middle-man doubled the price he got from the previous middle-man. Therefore it was not surprising that the offering price from these middle-men was always sky-high. In those days this human economic activity was called “nyathut” (“pulling out a nail with a pair of pincers”).

In these activities I used to ask my hand to draw a graph of my financial prospects. But what exasperated me was that the graph my hand drew for me was always flat, meaning I would not be successfully

concluding transactions and would not be making money, so I would not become very rich. But I still would not believe it. Perhaps this was the romanticism of life!

This out of the ordinary life did not last very long because it was interrupted by war and the Dutch occupation. Apart from that Bapak gave me some advice: using the Latihan for such purposes was not right. Making use of Latihan in that way would actually make us less sensitive to more important and more useful guidance. Further, if one was too absorbed by one stage of Latihan Kejiwaan and busy trying to extract the benefit of it, then one would miss the opportunity of enjoying further progress onto the next stages.

One senior member even advised me – advice I later respected and agreed with whole-heartedly – that not everything should be tested in Latihan Kejiwaan. Because if one misuses the Latihan for the wrong things it means a misuse of God's power.

In truth serious and useful guidance which we really need always comes to us when we do not ask. One day during the Dutch occupation time in Jogjakarta, my group and I had camped in the outskirts north of the city. On that day our group was planning to come down and enter the city. Strangely, on the way while walking along a paddy field dyke, I slipped and fell down three times. Therefore I asked permission from the group leader to be exempted from coming with them to the city, and returned to the camp.

The group continued their walk to the city. Because it was already dark, I did not go straight back to the camp but stopped on the way to join another group, and to get a food ration for the night. The following morning, before sunrise, I walked back to the camp and to my surprise saw my group was already back at the camp. My friends, who were in general 2 or 3 years older than I was, greeted me some coolness and glum faces – I did not know why – saying that they failed to enter the city, because the city was completely encircled by the Dutch Army. I did not have time to find out the reaction of my friends, but I went straight to do my Latihan Kejiwaan and prayed for protection and guidance from God The Almighty.

## 8. The End of Wandering

For man, above what is good there is always a better one, and  
above what is true there is always a truer one.

The year 1959 was to be the end of my wandering. It did not mean that in 1959 I suddenly became a new man. My return to the fold from my wandering happened gradually.

As I have said in the Chapter I, in “Period of Introduction to the Latihan Kejiwaan” above, at certain times I felt, or was even convinced, that I was going through phases of change inside. In 1955, after I had passed my 3rd “windu” I began to feel loneliness descend over me. Several times I felt an intense anxiety that nobody would know or care for me should something happen to me, whether bad or good. I did not see that anyone would care for me. I needed a life companion. This choking feeling lasted for several years. But gradually it ebbed away, and eventually was gone altogether.

By 1959, I even felt that I was able to look after myself and to take care of all my own needs. I had finished my study and obtained an engineering degree. As a bachelor I got a job with a Government- owned gold mining and refining company. I had many female friends, either from work or from Subud, who came to me or opened their heart for me to come to them. While the chill of loneliness which I mentioned before had all disappeared, yet my mind started to tell me that I should get married soon. I knew that I needed to get married before I turned 30, because I knew if I had not married at the age of 32, then I would likely remain single.

Therefore that very year I wrote to Bapak, who at that time was overseas, and asked him if he would ask Ismana’s parents on my behalf for Ismana’s to be my wife and to give his blessing to my marriage to Ismana. The wedding took place on the 21st February 1960.

In the same year a younger brother of Ismana who was only 19 years old fell into a personal crisis. He was very close to me, so without further delay I decided to open him. Since then he has been very close to me.

The wisdom I gained from the crisis of Ismana’s brother meant a great deal to me. Every time we were together, we got involved in a debate. He liked to attack my pride and ego. In the end I relented, one day realising that I was not the greatest, but just like any one of my Subud brothers, who needed Bapak’s guidance and help. I examined myself for a while, then I made a solemn declaration and vow to myself. I began to feel in my inner, that I was on my way home from my wandering.

Indeed it was not easy for me to realise rationally, but apparently the urging of my “Jiwa” had an important role in my returning home from my wandering.

I had learned a lot from my talks with someone in a “crisis”. Among other things, in answering questions about Subud, our replies constitute an explanation to ourselves: within ourselves there are so many things which we do not know.

Is there any real meaning in my return from my wandering ?

Yes there is. As soon as Bapak returned from overseas I visited him. But I only remained silent. Within me, I asked Bapak for forgiveness. I felt there was moisture in the corner of my eyes, but it was the fact that I had not been able to cry for a long time.

--- It is not the end yet ---

## 9. A Period of Storms

When a storm moves from the ocean to the land, it loses a lot of its energy. Although the energy is already diminished it still capable of inflicting considerable damage onshore.

I felt that inside my system, there is a very wide and deep terrain. I always deliberately absorbed and magnified every sadness which fell upon me, in such a way that I could no longer feel that sadness. I always face a problem from a distance, so that the problem would not affect my emotions. Therefore as I started this section of “ A Period of Storms ” I found it very difficult to remember if there has actually ever been any storm in my life.

But if what I call storms were the periods of emotional instability, then there were several experiences and happenings which brought about storms in my life. There were not many, but at least 3 of them I will mention here.

Storm one, was loneliness without apparent reasons. There were times when I suddenly plunged into acute loneliness, a vacuum, without any reason. Perhaps there was a fleeting reason which disappeared from my mind as soon as it came. In that situation I was in a desperate need for help, but I felt that there was no-one and nowhere to go for help. When I was still a young man I could absorb this kind of feeling until it disappeared. But as I got older, it seemed that the energy which used to enable me to absorb this kind of feeling had deserted me. Now if I am faced with that kind of situation I would do the “sholat” (prayer) or do the Latihan Kejiwaan or a combination of the two to overcome it.

One day, together with the other members of the family, I visited the elder sister of my natural mother who was on her death bed. I tried to search my own feeling. I could not find sadness there, but suddenly I saw stars in my eyes just like when I was still a child and about to faint. I did not know the reason why, but I was quickly taken out by a relation who was a doctor who told me that with so many people in that

small room perhaps I was not getting enough oxygen. I asked myself, was it possible that it was caused by sadness or some sort of emotional turmoil, but buried in my sub-consciousness?

Storm two, was a gripping fear of not being able to cope or to know what was going to happen: the fear of an unfathomable threat. Perhaps it could be called a panic rather than a fear. Among these gripping fears or panics which I experienced was one in 1948 when we were outside the city of Jogjakarta, the city being occupied by the Dutch at that time. After the attack by the Dutch on our camp, I was separated from Haryadi. Only after three days had passed were we safely re-united. All the time during my search for Haryadi with that attitude of surrender, I was expecting good news, but I knew deep in my feeling there was this unstable emotion.

Storm three, was falling in love. I said above that I did not believe there was such thing called love, but in reality I fell in love easily. Each time I fell in love the feeling was very intense such that emotionally I was thrown off balance. But this falling in love was no different from having an itch on the skin: when you scratch it, you only makes it worse. But if you let it alone it will go away by itself.

Another storm in my life which is worth mentioning happened in the night in 1948, when Bapak, Haryadi and myself with several other people from the kampong were arrested and taken away by the Dutch Army. In complete darkness we were locked in a room inside their headquarters. Inside that dark room there were already many people, I did not know how many. Some of them could be heard saying their prayer, others reciting some part of the Qur'an. What was most disconcerting to me was some were praying and at the same time moaning loudly. From some distance I could hear the screaming of a young man being tortured. Following what we learnt from a film, Haryadi and I took out pieces of paper we had in our pockets (I was not sure if some of them were banknotes) and chewed them up and swallowed them.

Other very anxious moments which I experienced were when I had to attend civil court hearings. In one law suit I lost a case and with it a house. In another, when PT. Widjojo was sued by a plaintiff, even though eventually I won the case on appeal, it took an anxious 5 year wait.

Such storms may perhaps be necessary in everyone's life. They contribute a lot to the process of growing up.



## CHAPTER II : INVOLVEMENT IN KEJIWAAN

### 10. The First Congress in Jogjakarta

The success of a long journey depends a lot on the first step. That was how we planned the inaugural Congress of Subud in Jogjakarta.

The year was 1954 and the venue was the former Capital City of the Republic of Indonesia, Jogjakarta.

At that time I was 24 years old, a student of Chemical Engineering at Gajah Mada University of Technology.

The atmosphere before the Congress when the delegates were arriving in Jogjakarta was very tense, so tense that it could have been compared to the eve of a war. That Congress was the very first Congress. None of us had ever had any experience of organising a congress, let alone a Subud Congress.

Those who felt able and capable gave their labour and ideas in the preparation and the holding of the Congress. Subud had some members with some organisational experience, such as those who occupied high positions in the Government or were managers. There were enough students who were active or had been active in some activist organisations, or had been commanders of student freedom fighters. I myself was a member of Students' Senate at the Faculty of Engineering of Gajah Mada University.

My participation in the Congress could be regarded as my first official involvement in Subud or in Kejiwaan for that matter.

There were a few important aspects of this Congress which I can remember, namely;

1. Separation of Bapak or Kejiwaan from the organisational side of Subud, with a line of communication maintained.
2. To shape and explain the organisation and its operational tradition.

I knew a bellicose atmosphere was developing when suddenly I saw Congress participants polarising into groups. There was a group of young men who were planning to alienate themselves from the older members.

One member of the delegate from Jogjakarta said it was an impossibility to regulate the Kejiwaan organisationally. He said that in Kejiwaan, regulations and laws were already on the tip of his tongue, but they could not be put in writing. One member from Sumatra stressed the importance of referring to Islam in the Constitution. This very same member even threatened, if it turned out that Subud deviated from Islam,

that he himself would lead the eradication of Subud from the soil of Sumatra.

I presented a working paper. Other participants also put forward their aspirations, mostly unwritten.

I was not able to gauge the feeling of each of the participants. I myself was anxious because judging from their aspirations, the group was heading in every direction.

That tense atmosphere reached its peak in the first session during the agenda item of "General Opinion". But after Bapak had given his message everyone bowed their head, as if they had lost their mind, speechless, let alone able to speak with emotion.

The next morning I was moved to write a draft preamble. I showed this draft to Bapak to be used as the Preamble of the Constitution. I explained to Bapak that the aim of the preamble in the Constitution was to encompass all aspirations which had been voiced, as well as answer the unique needs of an organisation like Subud.

Bapak approved, and he even said that the Preamble was a declaration of what Latihan Kejiwaan of Subud was supposed to be.

With the new concise but flexible Constitution and its Preamble adopted the Congress was closed. The Congress also appointed a new Committee. This Constitution was immediately registered for approval by the Government as published in Government Gazette No.34 - 1961 Government Decision dated 23rd May 1961 No. J.A. 5/57/1.

In 1961 the Committee underwent some changes. The new Committee was:

Chairman : R.M.M. Soerianata Djoemena  
Deputy Chairman : Wisnu Hudojo  
General Secretary : Hanafi Sutawidjaja  
Deputy Secretary : Samiadji  
Treasurer : Harun Siregar  
Deputy Treasurer : Mudjiono

As can be seen above, important positions in the Committee were filled by retired high Government officers.

Not long after that, as published in the Amendment of State Gazette R.I. dated 4 /12 / 1964, Determination of the Minister of Justice dated 19th October, No. J.A. 5 / 111 / 7, Bapak had expressed his wish to make the Preamble of the Constitution complete with his own draft. At the same

time, to stabilise the Committee, he changed the term of duty from 1 year to 2 years.

The following is a copy of the draft Preamble and its amendment written by Bapak himself which we have used until now.

“We herewith declare, that the Latihan Kejiwaan which we receive and practise in its reality happens only by an attitude of complete and sincere surrender to the Greatness of God the Almighty.

It is clear, that when we surrender our inner with sincerity to the Greatness of God The Almighty then suddenly our heart and mind would stop being active by themselves, and at the same time we would feel a “vibration” within our body, feeling and consciousness which would manifest in movements and energy, which we called: the Latihan Kejiwaan.

Throughout the Latihan Kejiwaan, we are conscious that our heart and mind are inactive, nevertheless we maintain the awareness of a serene consciousness, which enables us to follow the inner vibration which arises, which manifests in movements and energy, the nature of which is to guide and to show us the way to the worship to the Greatness of God The Almighty.

>From what we have experienced and received in the Latihan Kejiwaan, we are convinced, that only God The Almighty Whom we worship, and no other, guides, leads and takes us to Him, and that only He can change us for the better and make noble our self-awareness and soul according to His Will.

That is the nature of the Latihan Kejiwaan that we receive and practise. The fundamental nature of the Latihan Kejiwaan - or of what we receive during the Latihan Kejiwaan – is in reality the worship of God The Almighty. With His guidance we are shown the way towards a nobler character and soul as willed by God The Almighty.

Because the Latihan Kejiwaan which we receive is from the Mercy of God The Almighty, Who is worshipped by all His creation, the spread of this Latihan Kejiwaan throughout the world and its embrace by men and women of different nations and religions is only possible through our attitude of sincere surrender to His Will.

Nevertheless, because we are merely human, living on Earth, we still have the needs for clothes and food and other material needs for our safe and peaceful lives in our human society. Therefore, apart from worshipping God The Almighty, we need to form an organisation so that through this organisation we will be able to conduct our lives as we normally should in this world.

It is of course very necessary that the form of our organisation should be in conformity with the society it is in and with the laws and all the

regulations of the country where it is established.

Therefore it is necessary that the Organisation is formed and regulated by a Constitution which contains nothing to contradict the Preamble nor conflict with the laws and regulations of the country where it is established;

as follows:

Article 1, and so on.

I mentioned above that Bapak said that the Preamble of our Constitution constitutes a declaration of what Latihan Kejiwaan of Subud is. Until this day I have not found a concise and comprehensive written explanation of what Latihan Kejiwaan of Subud is. Further more, that Preamble defines the vision and mission of the Subud Organisation. Therefore it is gratifying that the Preamble, especially in Indonesia, is always read at the opening of official Subud meetings.

Now kept as an archival record, the first and original Preamble –which had served its function as precursor – reads as follows:

With all our being, we are convinced;

That it is the will of God The Almighty, that while we live in this world for our worldly needs we must work and utilise all our worldly resources; but for the life in the hereafter and for producing better offspring, God has given us a Jiwa, and this Jiwa needs an opportunity to continually develop, eventually able to give meaning and direction to all movements and actions, in our everyday life according to His Way.

That, in our endeavour for the development of our Jiwa and in appealing to our fellow man to follow the same path, there would arise worldly problems.

In our journey together, groups came into existence, those who lead and those who are being led, the young and the old. We have a common desire to get together in a noble common purpose, to be united, and that by being so it will give us the understanding that this is the way towards the perfection of our task and the achievement of our purpose.

Towards that purpose, it is necessary to create a suitable instrument and environment for the achievement of our common purpose. For the development of our Jiwa, we join together into one Brotherhood, based on brotherly and sisterly principles, irrespective of Nationality, Religion and Denomination, to be formed and regulated under the following Constitution:

Article 1, and so on and so on..

The Congress in Jogjakarta was closed on a high note. Everyone was happy and relieved. There was not the slightest sign indicating the heated debates that had occurred during the Congress.

## 11. A Discussion on Conduct and Behaviour

In 1970 in the course of the reconstruction of Government Enterprises I was transferred from my position as Managing Director of a Silver and Gold Mining, Smelting and Refinery Plant to a “Combined Office” in a Government Department. I had the impressive title of “Staff Expert Adviser to the Board of Directors”. I became confused like a lost lamb. Before, I had a number of troops behind me, now I had to be able to look after myself and even to serve other people.

In the meantime at home Bapak talked about the possibility of me becoming his ambassador: for my wife and I to live in England for about 2 years, to serve Subud members in the whole of Europe.

It seemed to me at that time there was no need to think it over, and in the end I submitted a letter of resignation to the Minister of Mining. What happened actually was that on one evening I gathered my wife and children around the dining table for a conference: they heard that their father would no longer be a director from the following month and would be without any job whatever. (I secretly had misgivings about facing a change of profession: since the Congress in Jogya in 1954 I had been busy with my own life and had little to do with Subud activities).

When I asked Bapak whether I would be able to carry out the task which Bapak gave me, he answered:

“Why not? You and Ismana will be able to carry out your task. Your task is to give help when asked. It is important that you behave naturally as you would do here, just be your normal self. Beyond that you only need to wait for God’s guidance with your inner feeling.”

But then I asked myself: what is “natural”? “Is there a dividing line between being natural and not being natural”?

1. What is natural is what is not super-natural.
2. What is natural is what is not excessive.
3. What is natural is what is plain, straight forward and honest.”

What is super-natural is not the same as a miracle. Miracle is a gift from God The Almighty and could come at any time, but miracle can not be requested. It is said that miracles which come when requested are called magic.

Being natural also means not being excessive, and not more than what average people would do, whether in conduct or behaviour, in intention or in capability. We are not so fanatical about Subud that, whenever

we meet anyone, whether in a public toilet or in a cinema, we would try to promote Subud.

Talking about behaving or conducting oneself naturally, I have a story to tell from when I was with Varindra Vitachi, Chairman of World Subud Association. It happened in the nineteen seventies: perhaps it was not long after the World Subud Congress at Cilandak Jakarta. A group of foreign visitors, among others Varindra Vittachi, accompanied Bapak to inspect a tea plantation, or precisely what was left of it, which Bapak had just bought at Citalahap, an isolated place south of Sukabumi, in West Java.

Not long after we left the main road, on a winding unsealed village road which used to be called a plantation road, the car in which Bapak was travelling had a flat tyre. Hence the motorcade had to stop. Everyone came out of their car offering to help change the tyre. After the flat tyre had been changed, the motorcade started to move again. But barely 3 or 4 kilometer we had travelled, another tyre of Bapak's car went flat again. We could not help but wonder what was going to happen next. That sort of misfortune did not happen everyday, and as usual the car only carried one spare tyre.

While we were thinking what to do next, Varindra Vitachi took me by the arm to sit down on a paddy field divider dyke, away in private from the others, and said:

“How could this sort of misfortune have happened to Bapak, it does not seem natural!”

Some people even tried to analyse the situation and tried to find who was at fault, a scape goat, who was responsible for this misfortune to happen; who had done something wrong that brought misfortune to Bapak?

Later on at another opportunity I asked Bapak regarding Varindra Vitachi's comments and other people's analysis of what happened at that above trip, and here is what he said:

“Varindra is an example of a person who is excessively spiritual. Supposing one could see a reason for that misfortune: it is enough for one just to try to keep it to himself and not to discuss or to analyse it.”

In my experience of living with Bapak for years, I had seen many miracles happen in Bapak's life. But during the same period I also witnessed ordinary things which happened naturally to ordinary people also happen to Bapak: e.g. our house was once broken into by a burgler, and other misfortunes which I do not remember clearly anymore.

We have been brought up to believe, that we were always under the protection of God The Almighty. But when we are to be on the winning

side and when we are to be on the losing side, the choice is not in our hands, it is in God's hand. Whichever choice is made for us, we believe it is the best for us. We were brought up by Bapak to be always in worship or prayer. But we were also brought up always to have normal and natural intentions.

During my life I have seen many members, even among the senior members, who became over-enthusiastic about Kejiwaan. They had many strange stories to tell, some of them classics, but bordering on the superstitious. But what I liked most was Bapak's explanations: why Bapak was not wearing a beard or a robe, why he was wearing every man's trousers and a coat. Bapak did not speak with a throaty voice, he did not interrupt his talks with coughs, but talked clearly, sometimes in a singing tone with zest and mirth. Because Bapak said that Subud is not to make people become "odd", but to stay natural and to adapt themselves to the society they are in.

In the month. the year.. I resigned from the State Company and and in May 1972 I, my wife, all the five children and Ismana's younger sister left for England.

As I mentioned above, I had not been involved in Subud activities for a long time. Now I was not merely on the sideline, but was making a foray into a Subud life.

We lived in East Finchley, still in London. We occupied a house which was specially vacated for us by a member of Subud, in Shakespeare Garden. It was a pleasant area to live in. Our children soon adapted themselves very well and the five of them were admitted to a Comprehensive School from grade 1 to 10 and 11( for children of 10 and 11 years of age).

Generally speaking, my assignment and Ismana's, was to attend group latihans in various cities, including those in Europe. We attended meetings of National Helpers' Dewan. Several times we had to care for members in crisis. As far as I can remember, it did not happen very often that I had to give advice. I was required to give opening speeches at official gatherings. A liaison officer among the members was assigned to accompany me. The liaison officer assigned to me was the owner of the house at Shakespeare Garden, and he was also the person who drew up my work program.

Our program was very heavy. We did not really set a target for the number of members, although one day one member took the initiative of comparing the number of members before and after I arrived. I do not remember the figures because I was never interested in it.

Our duty was to help the Helpers, so everyday we communicated and mixed with them. I remember I often encouraged members who were a little too serious to loosen up a bit. A different case from the members in Spain

who were light and bright from the beginning.

Every country showed its own special characteristics. We felt at home in England where the members were reserved like the Javanese. In Basel, Switzerland, we felt as if we were scrutinised and studied. In Spain we had to be a bit more careful with members who tended to disregard religious hierarchy.

In March 1973, we, the whole family were recalled back to Jakarta, because Bapak was ill.

According to Matthew Sullivan from England, during my 10 month stay in England, Ismana and I had visited 42 English groups and attended 5 meetings, such as the National Congress and Helper's General Meeting in England.

Within the above time-frame, we had visited Austria, Switzerland, France, Denmark, Norway, The Netherlands, Portugal and Spain.

We had experienced an interesting and gratifying life, and made many friends while we were there.

## 12. A Discussion on Perception.

Bapak had shown us some guidelines, or perhaps what could be called attitudinal approaches – but not a set of teachings – so that we could be more successful in doing our Latihan Kejiwaan of Subud. Some Subud members who had too much energy invented acronyms for these recommended approaches as SIM or SITM for “SABAR”, “IKHLAS”, “MENYERAH” or “SABAR”, “IKHLAS”, “TAWAKAL” and “MENYERAH”. ( PATIENCE, SINCERITY, SURRENDER or PATIENCE, SINCERITY, FAITH and SURRENDER ).

An attitude of PATIENCE is indeed very hard to apply. The longer one has practised the Latihan Kejiwaan, the more naturally one can do and feel it. Day after day the Latihan would seem the same, and nothing different from everyday life happens. There might be a very long period when one's Latihan seems to remain static and unchanging, and this condition could easily make one impatient.

In Latihan Kejiwaan, when we are enveloped by the power of God to move our body and to make our body alive, we know a process is going on. The process takes two directions. The first one is to “awaken” and “rearrange” every part of our being such that we are better able to feel the way of God The Almighty. The second one is to “purify” every part of our whole being. In the “period of static condition” as mentioned above, even the process of purification would seem to stop. In fact the process of purification is still there and is continuing outside our awareness.



In the above state one could easily be tempted – by others or from within oneself – to get engaged in a debate on the nature of Latihan Kejiwaan, or try to find useful practical applications of the Latihan in daily life. I should like to mention here a few examples of the above condition.

In September 1992 my wife and I were in Amsterdam, Holland for several days awaiting for a visa to go to Portugal. Because of the East Timor issue Indonesia and Portugal had broken diplomatic relation. Citizens of either country who wanted to visit the other country had to undergo specific extra procedures. My child and her husband – a Subud member of Portugese nationality – were already there to meet us with their two children.

I had some time to visit the Subud Centre in Amsterdam and join in the Group Latihan. Taking this opportunity, a Dutch member specifically asked for a meeting with me. But I was informed by the other members that this man would better be called a former member, having not been to the Group Latihan for a very long time. It was suspected that he had formed his own group.

This Dutchman was an architect. He came to the hotel with another Dutchman, who was a Subud member and a medical doctor by profession. To my surprise, he came with an audio and video recording equipment. Hence we had to find a quiet corner on the verandah outside the hotel's coffee shop. They set up the video camera on its trypod and two audio recorders on the table. The two audio tape recorders were operated in such a way that their recording overlapped each other, so that one of the two was always in operation when a tape had to be turned over or changed. I could not help feeling that I had been set up! I was worried momentarily, but in the end decided that I would not use my mind in answering their questions: instead I would just wait for what was going to come out of me. I still have no idea what they were trying to achieve from the interview by using audio-video recorders and what not!

When everything was ready, then he started to speak first:

“ I think Subud has lost its momentum to spread, because it is not accompanied by tangible practical applications in everyday life”.

I replied:

“I can't give any comment on what you just said yet, because I still do not know the direction of what you are talking about.”

Then my interviewer went on.

“One day I had a dream. It was not an ordinary dream, because this dream was different from any of my other dreams. This dream was very

clear, in a neat sequence, and left me with a deep impression when I awoke. In this dream, I was visited by Bapak. In short, I was given a gold sword. Bapak said that because of this sword I will be able to heal people from sickness or alleviate their suffering from sadness.

“Then I talked about this experience with this doctor friend of mine. We agreed to carry out Bapak’s advice (from the dream) and opened our own group outside Subud The Netherlands. This new Group which we formed was concerned mainly with healing. We are growing and have attracted many new members. We would like to hear Haryono’s opinion regarding the truth of this receiving dream of mine and the truth of my application of it.”

I replied:

“About that dream, it is your own dream, and that is truth for you. I do not know which Bapak gave you that gold sword. About the new group which you had formed I would say it is both right and wrong.”

Consequently I was drawn into an argument. During the argument the lens of the video camera was directed at me all the time. I was convinced that he already knew that the Latihan Kejiwaan in our life is a process. Latihan Kejiwaan passes through stages of “ability”: one moves from one ability to the next. They both realised that when one is trapped into “dwelling” in one of these stages of ability, the development or progress of the Latihan will be inhibited: “stagnant” was their word for it. They also argued further that without practical applications Subud will not attract more members, even existing members may leave because they are impatient with this apparent “lull” in their progress.

My answer was;

“It may be true that you have attracted many people, but they come as your patients and not as new members”.

I also pointed out to them what is written in the Preamble of The Constitution (see the Chapter on the First Congress) regarding the aims of Subud and its vision.

As for the new group they had formed, which they believed was in accordance with Bapak’s instruction or advice, I was of the opinion that it was right but also wrong because the new group was no longer a Subud group but a splinter group of Subud.

In August 1993 The Association of the Brotherhood of Subud held their 16th National Congress. I was specifically invited to attend because it was said that I was nominated to be National Chairman.

As one member of Bapak’s family I always receive an invitation to attend every meeting, such as “Halalhilhalal” (End of Ramadhan), Selamatan for Bapak’s Birthday, or the opening Ceremony of the World Subud Council,

which happened to be held in Indonesia. We normally come as visitors without being involved in the discussion in the official program, although sometimes we the family are asked to give an opinion or an opening speech.

Subud Congress is the highest institution in the organisation. But Subud Congress is not only an occasion where delegations from Branches and Groups with 4 delegates from each Branch and Group meet, but also a place for ordinary members from all over Indonesia to come together periodically once every two years.

Bapak made a pronouncement before he died that there would be no successor to Bapak. Members' Latihan will be waited on by Helpers ("Pembantu Pelatih"). What Bapak meant by the word "pelatih" is: those who practise the Latihan. For structural needs a Branch "Dewan" (Council) of Helpers is elected through testing for a term of 4 years. An area "Dewan" of Helpers is formed to serve a group of Branches within an Area, equivalent to a province. On the national level, a National Dewan of Helpers is formed for the same period of 4 years. Bapak had decided that this National Dewan of Helpers shall "fill in" Bapak's function in the development of Kejiwaan in each country. For the world as a whole Bapak decided to form an International Dewan of Helpers, whose members are elected from various countries, for a period of 4 years. The number of International Helpers elected each time is 18.

We members of Bapak's family are in general agreement, that because of Bapak's stipulations mentioned above, that we should stand outside, both in the affairs of the organisation as well as in matters spiritual ("Kejiwaan") – and in matters of membership. The only exception is when acting in accordance with the above procedures as explained by Bapak.

I had accepted the invitation for nomination as National Chairman in accordance with the above guidelines given by Bapak.

After the testing in that Congress, I was elected to become National Chairman for the period 1993 - 1995.

As I already mentioned, before I went to the Congress in Bandung I was already asked if I was willing to be nominated as Chairman. Nevertheless the result of the election by the Congress put me in a position of unpreparedness. And how I felt my unpreparedness, when I had to give an acceptance speech, which I saw as an obligation to deliver an inaugural oration, or some sort, as the Chairman elect.

I did not prepare beforehand an acceptance speech as Chairman Elect. I do not remember everything I said: but there were two things I remember from what I said which I consider important, and would like to reiterate here:

“ My presence here as Chairman, evokes the feeling inside me of being a lost child who has come home “.

“ I will be advancing the motto: BACK TO BASICS”.

I shall come back to the subject of BACK TO BASICS later in the next Chapter: “A Discussion on Concept”. But now I shall turn to the subject of “The Coming Home of a Lost Child”.

In fact the Lost Child, whose story has been told in Chapter I, Section 6, “A Period of Wandering”, had not lost communication altogether. On my return home from Europe as Bapak’s representative, I was given a task by Bapak in a Kejiwaan mission, but it had nothing to do with Latihan. Bapak gave me the task of dealing with the perception of Subud by non-Subud people, that had to do with giving out information.

During the time when Bapak was still alive among us, I remember at least 3 occasions when I was engaged in the above task as a spokesman: together with the Committee and Kejiwaan Secretariat when we met the Parliamentary Commission; when we met and answered questions from a group of students and lecturers from IAIN (Islamic University); and when we accepted an invitation from an Islam Study Group of Mr. Adam Malik’s family, the former Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia.

As I also heard from other Subud brothers, whenever we were given a task to do in Subud, in reality we are given both the task and the opportunity to learn. Similarly for Helpers when they had to answer questions from probationers. We never knew what the questions were going to be and so we never prepared ourselves with answers beforehand. Every time we put those questions to ourselves, the answers we gave to those questions were really a teaching to ourselves. But later we forgot easily those answers we gave to others. Therefore it is not surprising that after a couple of years, when that member comes to put his (her) arms around you and thank you for the advice you had given him (her), you have forgotten the advice you had given.

Recently, on 9th November 1996 when I was still National Chairman, we had a visit from the lecturers and students of Syekh Yusuf Islamic University. I recorded the questions and answers in the Majalah Aneka Subud No. 167 - 1996 (Subud Miscellaneous Magazine). Perhaps that writing can serve as an account of my perception of the Latihan Kejiwaan.

Reproduced from Aneka Subud No. 167 - 1996.

A VISIT BY STUDENTS FROM SYEKH YUSUF ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF TANGERANG

by : Haryono Sumohadiwidjojo

On Saturday 9th November 1996, Wisma Subud Cilandak, Jakarta, received 20 students from Syekh Maulana Yusuf University of Tangerang headed by a lecturer Mr. Drs. H. Ali Affandi.

Before that, Wisma Subud had a similar visit from IAIN, a group of Parliamentary members, and a group of students headed by several lecturers from overseas, namely from Sweden. Essentially all the visits were for getting acquainted with and to know Subud.

The students from Shech Maulana Yusuf were from semester V and VII. They were all from the “dakwah” (religious information) main stream and their visit was part of their curriculum “Kebatinan” (Mysticism).

To receive these students we made sure that the following people were going to be present: the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the National Committee, several members of the Committee, the Coordinator of Dewan of National Helpers, male and female, and several Area Helpers from Jakarta. The National Helper from West Java Ir. Sudarsono was also present at the meeting, so were two overseas members, residents of Wisma Subud at Cilandak.

The National Chairman opened the meeting stating that Subud was honoured by their visit, and at the same time he stated that Subud was a spiritual brotherhood which practices the Latihan Kejiwaan based on surrender. Subud does not give any teaching, therefore in Subud there is no teaching. Therefore to know and understand Subud the students were invited to find out from the experiences of Subud members who were present at that meeting.

Leaflets introducing Subud were distributed to the students. In addition, a special publication of “Introduction to Subud”, an extract from the former. Then Dr. Rahardjo, the Coordinator of Dewan of National Helpers, gave a presentation covering the material in the leaflets, aided by an overhead projector.

A more interesting session was questions and answers: the first part gave the group as a whole the opportunity, like a class-room discussion; then after lunch they were given a second opportunity to ask questions on one to one basis.

The following is the recorded questions and answers as conducted in the classroom, which may help our thinking or refresh our understanding.

Question: It is said in Subud that in Latihan Subud members receive the contact of God’s power through surrender. Those who are doing the “sholat” (moslem prayer) are in fact also in surrender. Why is it that the same attitude of surrender can bring different result?

Answer: We would say that Subud members do their Latihan Kejiwaan only after they went through an “initiation”, or “opening”. We say also,

that the “opening” is in fact the First Latihan the probationary Subud member is doing accompanied by one or more senior members of Subud who are called “Pembantu Pelatih” (Helpers).

Question: Because “sholat” is also in its nature a surrender, would it not be better for those who follow the religion of Islam to enter the Latihan through “sholat”?

Answer: It would be good and is possible. When we are doing the “sholat” we are going through a definite pattern. It is possible (and this is done by many Subud members) that when they are doing the “sholat” after the “salam” and entering the “zikir” they would suddenly enter into Latihan Kejiwaan state.

Question: In Subud there are members who come not only from the Islamic Religion, but also from Christian, Hindu or other faiths. If those religions represent different Gods, how is it possible that they are able to do the Latihan together and surrender to God The Almighty?

Answer: That question implies a concept of God through the mind. It is true that sometimes members may ask how to get rid of the habit of visualising a Cross, or concentrating the mind on a certain part of the body at the opening or during Latihan Kejiwaan. But it appears, by the Grace and the Will of God The Almighty, that all this can be overcome by an attitude of sincere and total surrender without any expectation, and without even trying to stop imagining with the mind.

Question: Are there certain times when members can have Latihan, either by himself or with the group?

Answer: No. We can have Latihan at any time, if one has the Latihan alone he/she can do it at a time of his/her own choosing, though a group Latihan is held only at agreed times.

It is true there is a recommendation not to have Latihan Kejiwaan too often, because the progress of the “Jiwa” can not be forced. We have a group Latihan twice a week, plus individual Latihan once or twice a week.

That was the coverage of the questions and answers with the students.

We who were given the task of receiving the students had agreed beforehand, that we should not feel more knowledgeable in religion than the students, let alone in Islam, therefore we agreed that we should not involve ourselves in a debate about religion or Islam.

We also agreed that we should not use this opportunity to try to “win” them over to Subud: not to promote Subud. Nevertheless in the opportunity of informal one - to - one questions and answers, there were a number of students who expressed the wish that a Subud branch be set

up in Tangerang, and there were those who wanted to know more about Subud by attending information sessions for probationers on Sunday mornings.

The questions put to us indicated they had been preconceived. Although the questions came from several different people, the questions were asked as if to lead to a certain target, they were not haphazard random questions.

If we studied again the questions and if we reconstruct them, perhaps the questions may sound like these:

1. Are there human inventions in Subud ?
2. Is there intervention from the mind, such as meditation or concentration or transmission of thought in the Latihan Kejiwaan.
3. Are there telepathic interference in the Latihan Kejiwaan, taking advantage of the synchronisation of the Latihan.

### 13. A Discussion on Concept.

Above, in A Discussion on Perception, I mentioned that I introduced to the National Congress at Bandung in 1993, a working motto of “ BACK TO BASICS” for the Committee. I was aware that this motto needs to be popularised not only among all sections of the Committee and members, but also to myself. I felt I needed to know myself what was in fact the complete meaning of this motto.

Therefore as soon as I was in Jakarta, I galvanised my mind into the writing of “Chairman’s Directives” which I distributed among all members of the Central Committee at the first committee meeting.

Back to Basics was not only a form of perception, but it had a long term meaning that can best be called a strategy. Therefore I treat its presentation here as a discussion on concept.

Why do we have to go back to basics after we have travelled the journey for 46 years? It was not surprising that members of the previous Committee expressed their displeasure, because they took it as criticism that they had been taking Subud in the wrong direction. They saw it as a condemnation: as if the results of their work were no good. One might ask whether back to basics, as a working motto, was not actually an appeal to go backwards.

I was not cornered. In introspect I could see the following defence arguments:

1. Back to Basics is not a step backward, but a pointer, a cue or a guiding line for us to know and understand better **WHERE DID WE COME FROM** and **WHAT VEHICLE DO WE TRAVEL WITH.**

2. Back to Basics is a “protest” against a tendency to work rigidly by norms and rules, forgetting the original spirit and motivation.
3. Back to Basics is a “protest” against the tendency to “adulterate” and “dilute” what Subud is really all about.

If we draw a guiding line, whether we want to or not we will touch the essence or the content. In Subud, as Chairman of the Organisation I have a specific area of duty in worldly matters as distinct from the Pembantu Pelatihu who have their specific responsibilities in the spiritual/Kejiwaan area. But when I speak of the subject of Back to Basics I can't avoid touching on the Kejiwaan aspects of Subud: and this would make some Pembantu Pelatihu feel a little bit uneasy.

In the process of socialisation of Subud, I had the opportunity of holding two seminars on the subjects of perception of Subud and the motto of Back to Basics. On both occasions I received an enthusiastic reception from my colleagues. But after two seminars I never followed up with a third seminar. At one point I was stunned not knowing what to do, except to prostrate myself in prayer for a guiding light from God, because during the above seminars, two close friends of mine died while they were talking. Apart from that I could not find time, because discussion on the subject of perception and explaining the motto of Back to Basics was time consuming, and the two year term as Chairman went by so quickly.

In the field, this motto of Back to Basics led many battles against “human invention”, “standardisation” and “excessive regulations”. There were many members who did not believe my observation that there were human inventions in Subud. They asked me where and what was it that I called human invention.

Human invention is anything which is produced by the human mind or by rationalising.

That product of the human mind may take the form of a plan or a blue print of a building or a development. Therefore it has a strategic and a long term character.

In its life so far Subud has been subjected to threats and attacks a few times. Whenever I was in doubt and alarmed I sought Bapak's advice and he always said: “Subud comes because of the Power of God. Therefore Subud will disappear only by the Power of God. We surrender everything completely to God The Almighty. Bapak's words remind me of the Preamble of the Constitution which Bapak himself had written:

“Because the Latihan Kejiwaan which we receive is from the Power of God The Almighty, the spread of this Latihan Kejiwaan throughout the world, and its embrace by men and women of different nations and religions, is



only by way of our attitude of sincere surrender to His Will. “

True, invention is the product of the human mind. But are all inventions bad and must all be opposed?

I remember when I had a heated argument with Bapak on the need of a child to go to school and develop his/her intellect and character (see Chapter I Section 6. “A Period of Wandering”). Products of the mind are not necessarily bad, what is bad is the influence of the nafsu. In fact Bapak allowed me to complete my study. If we try to separate the mind from the nafsu it would be like trying to split hair. What we are opposing is not the invention itself, but the conceit of the mind which is the nest of the nafsu and lies behind the invention.

A few years after Bapak died, a Meeting of World Council was held in Jakarta. Among other items discussed at the meeting we attempted to understand and explain what the future form and direction of Subud was going to be. I was given the opportunity to speak at the Meeting. I could only give a short speech, to say that I took part in the Meeting to try to understand what the future form and development of Subud was going to be, but I would not agree with any attempt to “engineer” the propagation or growth of Subud.

Indeed, a few times I had encountered difficulties in trying to separate or to differentiate ideas from nafsu: it is as difficult as trying to distinguish the pursuit of truth from the desire to win in an argument.

The more educated members we have in Subud, the more needs will come from members for forums where members could exchange views and “bersilahturakhmi” (social get-together). The idea was that members do not just come together for the group Latihan and leave straight after the Latihan. Some members do need extra activities for intellectual stimulation.

Bapak often said in his talks that for food and exercise of the mind, the appropriate forum is the Subud enterprises. But there are not too many members who are interested in the topic of enterprise.

Somewhere in this book I mentioned the word “standardisation”. Standardisation, ritualisation, codification, explanation or regulation, or whatever one calls it: what I mean by the above words is the summarising or systematising of all the beautiful explanations that Bapak gave about the Latihan Kejiwaan, including its illustrations, into rigid statements. A list of statements of this kind which is originally intended as a clarification of Bapak’s explanation in the end could become a set of rules and teachings. I remember at the Congress in Yogyakarta a senior member whom I looked up to, said in future it will get harder and harder for members to understand Bapak’s explanations, so some people would produce a set of rules, similar to “The Ten Commandments” out of these explanations, except that it would have more

than 10 paragraphs.

What is the objection to this rigid set of rules or guidelines?

This set of rigid guidelines will in fact be an ADULTERATION. A list of rigid rules or guidelines will in fact be a collection of TEACHINGS, while Bapak had so many times stated that there are no teachings or rules in Subud.

Recently there has been a motto of Back To The Origin, a motto which seems very tantalisingly attractive because it reflects a sense of high respect for Bapak. At first I thought that the intention of that motto was to seek clarification about the Latihan Kejiwaan directly from the source, that is Bapak's own WORDS. I had the opportunity and was able to consider this motto of Back To The Origin. But in the end I went back again to the "Back To Basics" motto. There is a big difference between "Back To The Origin" and "Back To Basics". The product of "Back To The Origin" is to "LEARN BY ROTE". While the product of "Back to Basics" is to "UNDERSTAND".

I am basically a lazy individual, as I have mentioned in Chapter I, Section 5 : The Germination of the Seed of My Conceited "Ego". Therefore my reasoning always chooses to UNDERSTAND rather than to LEARN BY ROTE. At university lectures I was always behind with my notes, because I always tried to understand what the lecturer was saying. While my friend sitting next to me thought he did not need to understand because he wanted to write down word by word what the lecturer was saying. This was to my advantage, because later on I could borrow his complete notes.

What was strange when I was studying logarithm, was that I was not able to memorise the formulas, such as those for addition, multiplication and the others. My reasoning is always for Back to Basics. That is to understand what the DEFINITION of logarithm was. From there I derive the formulas for addition or multiplication.

If a problem has been summarised into procedures or formulas then it has been crystalised into a teaching. Formulas or teachings will always tend to be treated like rules. Then if nafsu occupies the mind of an argumentative member, he would be able to argue away those rules from their definition. In the same way an argumentative individual could argue that he could justifiably run across a lawn which has a warning notice "walking on the lawn is prohibited".

Such an argumentative mind is more common among Subud brothers outside Indonesia. Therefore when I had to give a message, such as when I was at the National Congress in England in 1972, I was careful and very specific in my message. I stressed that whenever we carry out recommendations of the Congress, it is not enough to act in accordance with what the recommendations say: it has to be in accord with the spirit of it as well.

Human invention with its tendency for standardisation, would easily lead to over-regulation. As an example, in the Regulations of the Organisation of Subud Indonesia which were in operation between 1995 -1997, all aspects of Kejiwaan and the duties of Helpers have been set out in detail. Likewise a Laboratorium for Kejiwaan has been institutionalised. I see this as a step towards over-regulation as if trying to be ahead of God's work. This over-regulation is one of those tendencies which is opposed by Back-to-Basics.

### CHAPTER III: INVOLVEMENT IN WORLDLY MATTERS AND ENTERPRISES

#### 14. Subud Foundation.

When the draft of this book was written – before the 10th Subud World Congress in July 1997 – there were quite a number of foundations in Subud. Some of them work in the social area. Some of them are for the purpose of looking after or managing Subud's assets, for example

“Yayasan Dana Subud Indonesia” YDSI (Indonesian Subud Funds Foundation), “Yayasan Muhammad Subuh” or YMS (Muhammad Subuh Foundation) and “Yayasan Subud” or YS (Subud Foundation) and “Wisma Subud Cilandak” (Cilandak Subud House) which covers an area of 3.5 hectares and consists of several buildings, including the Latihan Hall which is under the management of Yayasan Subud. one building ( Wisma Indonesia building) is managed by Yayasan Dana Subud Indonesia, a large building, Bapak’s former residence, is managed by Yayasan Muhammad Subuh. One 3-level-apartment block and several semi-detached houses which function as guest houses, are owned and managed by Yayasan Subud. More than ten houses are owned by individuals. Wisma Subud has its own diesel electric power supply. It also has its own central deep-well water supply. Yayasan Subud is the managing body of Wisma Subud Cilandak. Now among the residents some of them have got together to form an association of residents. Within the “kelurahan” (district community structure) Wisma Subud constitutes an RT or “Rukun Tetangga” (Neighbourhood Association) and is headed by Head of RT, who reports to the “Lurah” (District Chief of Cilandak).

Bapak bought the land of Wisma Subud piecemeal in the late fifties, starting with approximately one and a half hectares on the side of the road. I remember when Bapak first used that place for a recreation ground on Sundays or holidays, bringing his grandchildren and some Subud members.

Not long thereafter an apartment block was built to accommodate visitors. Apart from that a large semi-permanent building was erected as a Latihan Hall. Before the “Big House” ((Bapak’s residence) was built, Bapak lived in the apartment block, which was later known as the Guest House. Then approximately one and a half hectares more land was acquired at the back of the original land, where the main concrete domed Latihan Hall now stands.

I never saw a design for Wisma Subud before it was built; I have never seen a plan of the Subud organisation, nor have I ever seen a draft plan of its function or its mission. All of these structures came into existence simply and directly from Bapak’s vision. Nevertheless Wisma Subud Cilandak, both as a Subud campus and a place of worship, is almost perfect in its nature.

Bapak and Ibu and grandchildren were the head residents. A number of Indonesian families lived in the complex to be close at hand when Bapak or Ibu needed them at anytime. Some foreigners, either single or as families, also lived in the complex at Bapak’s recommendations.

Perhaps there were at any one time 25 members from various countries, in turn, who lived at Cilandak, so they could do the Latihan Kejiwaan near Bapak. Indonesian Subud members who wanted to do the Latihan near Bapak also came there to have their Latihan in the big Latihan Hall.

In the afternoon Bapak would often walk around inside the complex, and sit down in the nice cool shade, and invite several visitors to come around him, and then he would tell some stories. Bapak often attended group Latihan.

Permanent visitors, especially the ladies, always had plenty to do. Everyday they allocated duties among themselves to help Ibu in looking after the plants or mending chair upholstery and curtains in the “Big House”. Sometimes they also helped with cooking in the kitchen.

In the complex there lived – possibly at Bapak’s request – several senior members/Helpers, who would answer questions or complaints from visitors (on a temporary basis), when Bapak did not “come down”.

During the fasting month of Ramadhan, overseas visitors who came to observe the fast could swell the numbers 3 to 4 fold.

My involvement in Yayasan Subud was as Founder of the Foundation and as Chairman of the Board of Management. When the Yayasan was founded, and until 1966, I was living far away from Cilandak, that was in Jakarta. Nevertheless I accepted this task from Bapak dutifully. Bapak gave me some advice, which later on I considered as a guiding principle in carrying out my task. Bapak’s advice went like this;

“The Yayasan is founded to receive gifts. These gifts are generally intended for Bapak, therefore they are not for Subud. But Bapak will use them for the development of Subud. You as Bapak’s heir have the obligation to keep and maintain this understanding”.

Other advice given to me was from our brother Muhamad Usman, the Secretary and Treasurer to Bapak: “Wisma Subud Cilandak is a source of income for Bapak and his family to pay for their living expenses”.

That was the background of the formation of Yayasan Dana Subud with its founder, we the three children of Bapak, consisting of myself, my elder sister Siti Rahayu, my younger sister Siti Hardiyati and three people outside the family who were appointed by Bapak, namely brother Muhamad Usman, Dr. Prio Hartono and brother Soedonohardjo. I was appointed as Chairman. All of those committee members were honorary (unpaid).

It was not until 1967 that I moved to Cilandak, a new residential area south of Kebayoran Baru. Only then, after I had moved to Cilandak, could I actively manage Wisma Subud.

Despite my position as Chairperson, I did not know much and I did not involve myself in the financial matters of Yayasan Subud. At today’s value (but not at the time when Bapak acquired the land in the fifties) the asset of Wisma Subud Cilandak would be worth more than half a tonne of gold.

Wisma Subud Cilandak became as big as it is now when the Latihan Hall Building was built for the Subud World Congress in 1971. Since then Wisma Subud became a temporary abode for many overseas Subud members who came to pay a visit to Bapak. During the fasting month of Ramadhan Wisma Subud Cilandak was also full of overseas Subud members who came to observe the fast of Ramadhan. This situation continued until Bapak died. Since then the condition of Wisma Subud Cilandak can be compared to a chicken who has lost its mother hen.

There have been many ideas from members, from within the country and from overseas, regarding how to utilise and manage this very expensive complex. But until today I have not found one idea which seems to merit adoption.

At the occasion of opening the “Halal - bilhalal” (end of Ramadhan social evening), which was attended by many overseas visitors – I forget which year – I put forward a proposal to revitalise the function of Wisma Subud Cilandak in conjunction with Bapak’s residence at Pamulang, Bapak’s Final Resting Place at Sukamulya Cipanas and possibly also to include the birthplace of Bapak, Kedungjati village, as a selection of pilgrimage sites. This proposal of mine received positive responses. Actually this proposal was a follow up of an idea from the Government to Subud.

Yayasan Subud was originally founded under the name of “Yayasan Dana Subud”, Subud Funds Foundation. But the Committee of the Association of Kejiwaan Brotherhood of Subud – I forget the year – found the need to form Subud Funds Foundation to provide a vehicle for the building of Subud houses in various cities. In order to avoid overlapping of functions, Bapak then recommended that we changed the name Yayasan Dana Subud to Yayasan Subud, and emphasise the international function of the Wisma Subud Cilandak.

One day after Bapak had died, I was approached by Varindra Vitachi who had founded the Muhammad Subuh Foundation located in the United States, suggesting to me the possibility of dissolving or amalgamating Yayasan Subud into Muhammad Subuh Foundation. Varindra visited me in my office, which at that time was still at the International Design Consultants, and we had a brotherly conversation. I remember at that time I called upon my inner feeling and then said to Varindra that at least at that time, I was not in agreement with the suggestion to dissolve Yayasan Subud into Muhammad Subuh Foundation.

Another year – I can’t remember which – there was a claim from one Subud member in connection with the “Anugraha” Convention Centre which went bankrupt and to meet this claim we as Bapak’s family decided to sell the Big House (formerly Bapak’s residence). This Big House had already been put under the name of Bapak as the owner. The sale of this house was used towards payment of the claim from that member.

Through the goodwill and generosity of several overseas Subud members the Big House is still the property of Subud. To provide a custodian for this Subud property Yayasan Muhammad Subuh was formed with Abdullah Pope, brother Ir. Kuswanda and my sister Siti Rahayu as the joint founders. After the Muhammad Subuh Foundation had been established in the United States, then at the Subud World Congress at Spokane, in America, it was decided that the joint founders of Yayasan Muhammad Subuh resign and hand over the custodianship to the Muhammad Subuh Foundation and the sole founder. That is the history of how in Wisma Subud Cilandak complex you find Yayasan Subud, Yayasan Muhammad Subuh and Yayasan Dana Subud Indonesia and also the office of PPK Subud Indonesia (Association of Kejiwaan Brotherhood of Subud of Indonesia).

Now I would wish to hear from Subud members, in Indonesia or overseas, particularly overseas members who asked the question when can Wisma Subud Cilandak be returned to its old function as a place of worship for those who want to be near to God The Almighty.

## 15. Squashed Between Two Cultures

Enterprise culture of the Indonesians is clearly very different from that of Westerners. These differences could even be diametrically opposed.

Bapak reiterated that in Subud harmony is created among people from different nationalities and religions. This had been proven not only in the way we live together, but also in our work and enterprises.

After I had resigned from my job with the Government and from the state owned company, Bapak always put me as the spearhead of the Indonesian side in enterprises where people of different nationalities had to work together. I could mention a few: the Sinar Utama Bahagia (SUB) Sugar Refinery Project, Planning Bureau of International Design Consultants, Sumohadiwidjojo Construction Company (or PT. S. Widjojo for short), Bank Susila Bakti, and the Tangkiling Housing Project called PT. Pancaran Cahaya Bahagia (PCB) with its Gold Mining Subsidiary Company.

I never asked Bapak, but I can only try to guess why he always put me at the spearhead. PT. Widjojo was the only company which Bapak called his own when he set it up, while the other companies were Subud companies in the sense that they were set up together with and by Subud members. By true definition Subud did not OPERATE any company neither did it own one. What were normally called Subud enterprises were companies the capital of which were owned by CERTAIN Subud members – those prepared to work and who had the money – and many of them voluntarily put the companies together as a Subud Enterprise.

I shall say it again, but I can only try to guess what was in Bapak's mind. My guess was that because I was Bapak's son, I was expected to have the influence and personality to relate with our foreign participants. As Bapak's son I was expected to be close enough to Bapak to be able to mediate for the Indonesian participants who did not have the courage to directly communicate with Bapak. But also as Bapak's son I was expected to know Bapak's aspirations. With those guesses I carried out the mission Bapak entrusted to me.

It became obvious to me, that whatever the task or the mission, the result would never be satisfactory: even worse than that if we tried to please all sides, who quite often held diametrically opposed interests. It often hurt my feelings to hear people say I got my position not because of my ability – they even said I did not have any business knowledge – but because Bapak put me there, and that was why the enterprise failed. Yet it was not too seldom either that people appreciated my work, saying that without even trying I brought luck to the business.

When there was an argument between foreign participants and Indonesian participants I was squashed in the middle like meat in the sandwich. I was called a traitor by the Indonesian participants for being too biased towards the foreigners, while the foreigners often still thought that I was not open enough, even sometimes calling me dishonest. I was aware of my weaknesses which often had fatal consequences, such as my easy going nature related to laziness. In negotiations or when money transactions took place, I was too lazy to do my homework, or to take the time to exercise due diligence.

I strongly believe there is a difference in the business-culture of Indonesians and Westerners.

I remember the days when I still lived in the kampong, and that feeling is still there now although in a different application. When I wanted to buy something from one of two adjoining shops, I always tried to avoid being seen by the other shop. I took the trouble of a longer way around just in order not to walk past the front of the other shop. This is one form of Indonesian culture which is very strong in me. Reserved attitude and aversion to argument, coercion and struggle to be the first are part of Indonesian culture. (Ironically though, at receptions or official gatherings, everyone would like to sit at the back, but when it comes to getting onto the bus or train they are not prepared to stand in the queue: everyone struggles to get on first).

There are family values which can complicate matters if applied in enterprise, namely the taboo which forbids "causing problems" to one's parents or superiors. We are expected to keep our problems to ourselves, not to bother our parents and superiors, but try to overcome them ourselves. We only report problems to our parents or superiors when we have successfully overcome them. Another part of Indonesian



culture which I could mention here is an aversion to promote one's own abilities. In the atmosphere of an enterprise, this attitude could sadly be misunderstood or misinterpreted as lack of openness.

On the other hand Indonesian participants regarded almost all conduct of foreign participants as arrogant. When a foreign participant came to offer help, the Indonesian took it as an act of arrogant condescension. To my own ear, when I heard my partner say that there was only one standard in business, that there was no such thing as a difference between Western and Asian cultures in business, it sounded like arrogance.

When I asked Bapak for his opinion on the above contention, Bapak said that every nation had its own cultures, even each group of human society had their own cultures. This fact needs to be appreciated. But if there were conflicts between these different cultures, this was a reflection of the content of the nafsu of the individuals. Therefore it was desirable to build a mutual understanding of each other's cultures and put aside the influence of the nafsu on its application.

In practice, it was not easy to put aside the influence of the nafsu. I had tried several methods. The best technique I have found so far is to avoid wronging another, and never try to find a scapegoat in others. We should be able to articulate to one another the differences in our cultures, and then find common ground, however narrow that ground is and however difficult it was to do. But in Subud enterprises, following this wisdom also often meant the loss of opportunities, and as a consequence loss of time and delay in making decisions.

I was well aware that conditions and competition outside Subud required business knowledge as well as efficiency. We needed to meet the target and production at the lowest possible cost. Without those being achieved I knew very well that we would find it hard to survive. But I still believe that we were also created in this world by God with human dignity, and that God gives us opportunities to achieve and enjoy that dignity. Business knowledge and efficiency themselves are meant for human dignity. Therefore we need to be cautious and alert to the reversed situation, not to compromise human dignity for the sake of economic gain and efficiency. Otherwise it would be allowing material things be our masters, rather than using them to serve us.

I appreciate professionalism but not to the extent of tolerating a cold professionalism, a professionalism which has a tendency to be mechanical, which has no humanist content – like a masseur who is only concerned with the techniques of massage, but who can't connect his feeling with what he touches with his hands.

Nor do I have faith in sterile perfectionism, i.e perfectionism without artistic touch – e.g. a pianist with flawless technique but with very little artistic expression.

I do believe in professionalism and perfectionism so long as they have the content of human dignity and humanity; which delivers services and goods for the improvement of quality of life, for both the receivers as well as the providers.

In trying to marry two cultures I am often faced with imbalance in the participations between the Indonesian and foreigners, it was caused by the fact that many Indonesian members were not able to leave their commitments as government officers. Many Indonesian members could only work behind the scene. Some of them could only offer their influence and voice in the community. That kind of contribution of course was not without risk. These circumstances made it very difficult for me to evaluate and quantify the amount of services or the participation of members, because western culture only recognises tangible participation.

We were brought up not to be business-like among members of family and between friends as this could weaken or even split family bonds and friendship. This could really happen when the pursuit of materialism is given prominence over human values, and the quality of family and friendship.

This could not only happen in the West, but it could also happen in Indonesia, when certain objectives have been set in black and white concrete as if human values no longer matter. Such a situation can happen when, driven by nafsu, words are exchanged for winning an argument rather than finding the truth.

## 16. Behind the Sale of Bank Susila Bakti

In 1986 we had to sell Bank Susila Bakti which we had established with so much sweat and sacrifice. Bank Susila Bakti started its history as Bank Maritim, before it changed its ownership and management to Subud on 22nd June 1973 (refer to Subud Enterprises in the previous Chapter III, Section 15 “Caught Between Two Cultures” ).

Although it is now history, and in many respects it has left behind unpleasant memories, I am of the opinion that Bank Susila Bakti had served Subud well. In its life Bank Susila Bakti had given its services in:

- providing a common bond for Subud members all over the world,
- providing start-up capital for many Subud enterprises, big and small, local as well as international.

I started my involvement in Bank Susila Bakti in ( year.) as member of the Board, and then in (year.) as Chief Executive Officer.

The decision to sell the Bank was analysed and taken by a panel

consisting of the Board of Directors with all its Advisers and Consultants, and expanded to include experts within Subud, directly under Bapak's Chairmanship.

To those outsiders, the sale may have seemed to be very abrupt and swift. But in fact the process of the sale and negotiation took almost one year. The sale of the shares of the Bank, because of technical requirements, was carried out behind closed doors, to avoid panic among investors which could have initiated a rush which would have led to a fall in the share value. As the Chief Executive Officer, occasionally I even had to lie when I answered questions from investors and friends, saying it was not true that the Bank was to be sold, when the sale negotiations were in progress.

Because the sale of the bank appeared to be very sudden, many investors or friends demanded an explanation. This small book is not the right place for my professional explanation, but for the record I shall try to present my experience with regard to this question.

Although considerable time has passed, matters related to a Bank, or any company for that matter, require that confidentiality be protected, especially regarding the names of people.

Approximately two years after Bank Susila Bakti had been sold, the Government issued a new regulation reopening the licencing of new banks. For a long time the Government had closed the licencing of new banks, so many banks changed hands through buying and selling existing licences. Of course we did not foresee this was going to happen. And how I felt that I had The Almighty's protection that we had sold our Bank 2 years earlier.

Real problems had forced us to sell the Bank. The main problems were:

1. Growing conflict and differences of opinion in the management of the Bank.
2. The total amount of credit extended by the Bank had exceeded what was normally called the ceiling by a considerable margin. The beneficiaries of these credits, including Subud Projects, were hit by a recession which badly affected their performance, and they were unable to pay interest or to repay the capital.
3. To rescue the Bank an injection of capital to cover the above bad debts was required. Injection of capital was no longer available from either the Share Holders or the Internal Investors.
4. Morale and the integrity of the employees had suffered badly.

Bank Susila Bakti was a small bank. Its total assets ranked it 25th among 70 or so existing private Banks. But as a "Subud Enterprise"

there were so many hands involved in it, both in its daily management and during the process of selling it. The responsibility of the Directors was to keep daily activities under control and to protect the shareholders from the “upheaval”.

Many friends from the Central Bank (Bank Indonesia ) as well as from Private Banks were sympathetic towards our Bank. All of them expressed their hope that should Bank Susila Bakti change hands, it would still be in the hands of Indonesians.

In the end a sale mission was secretly launched. Directors, members of the Board of Commissioners, members of the Panel and consultants were sent out on their mission. Everyone of them reported his/her work to me, and in turn I reported to Bapak.

We did not come across any competition in trying to sell Bank Susila Bakti. There seemed to be only one other bank which was looking for a buyer or a partner or a merger. On the other hand our secret mission had identified several prospective buyers of Bank Susila Bakti. Of course it was encouraging to know that there were enough prospective buyers, and yet at the same time it also posed some problems. We still had to consult the Central bank, Bank Indonesia, in accordance with the Regulations and to receive guidelines. But what was more bewildering was that there was sometimes a very keen prospective buyer who felt obliged to exert pressure upon us.

In the end all the shares of Bank Susila Bakti were successfully sold to a group of indigenous buyers, as a package including the land for a hotel project owned by PT.S. Widjojo. As a consequence of this sale, the land originally intended for a hotel project was liquidated, but the position of PT.S. Widjojo was now more stable and was able to move forward with the needed reconstruction.

Because it was a package sale, the matter did not stop there. In the final stages it was required to finalise the allocation of rights and obligations among Subud Companies themselves. This was not an easy matter, because every director was fighting hard for the interest of the company he represented: sometimes a very heated argument could not be avoided.

Several hundred pages of documents of transaction had to be signed one by one by each of the authorised proxies of the vendors and the buyers. Those documents were prepared day and night for several days in a marathon between the two parties with the help of their respective legal teams.

Some of the investors and share holders praised the sale, while others regretted it and demanded a better deal. Perhaps it is worth recalling here, that at the conclusion of the negotiation and the signing of the documents – which did not take place until past midnight in the office

of one of the solicitors in Jakarta – there were two Indonesian share holders who had waited patiently in the waiting room of this solicitor’s office, while the negotiation was going on. These two share holders wanted to prove what they received in the Latihan Kejiwaan: that Subud Bank would never be sold.

It took quite sometime for the amicable relationship between those who gave praise and those who were disenchanted to be restored. Almost everyone expressed the wish that sometime in the future Subud would again have a bank of its own.

#### CHAPTER IV: MISCELLANEOUS

##### 17. When I do I feel good

When one has reached the age of 60 years or over, like myself, one may often ask oneself if one has had a happy life. In trying to answer this question one has to search one’s memory: when and how had I felt good?

Perhaps there are differing or even opposing perceptions as to what

happiness is.

Looking into its anatomy, I could see at least two kinds of happiness or contentment. I may perhaps have mixed up these two, because they run parallel.

The first type of contentment, in accordance with its anatomy, is the fulfilment of one's wish. When this wish in fact is a manifestation of a nafs, then the nature of the contentment is limited to the satisfaction of that nafs.

The second type of contentment is the one connected to the achievement of quality in one's life. As a God fearing man then one would wish for and be able to feel God's blessing in this contentment, and that it is in accordance with the way willed by God.

I do not wish to rationalise those two types of contentment here, because I believe it is more appropriate if we try to feel the difference between those two types of contentment rather than rationalise them. The irony of it is that we only feel it after it has passed.

Whether that contentment is a fulfilment of a wish which is free of nafs, or a simple intention, or a satisfaction of a nafs, it is hard to discern. As I had mentioned before, to tell nafs from a simple wish is like splitting a hair.

When you look at it in terms of its timing, joy, contentment or good feeling, it could be fleeting, momentary, temporary or unexpected in its nature, but there are also those good feelings which are lasting, recurring or expected to happen at later dates.

I define happiness as a collection of continuing or recurring good feelings. I do not want to be merry momentarily like someone who has been drinking and then slumps into depression afterwards. Neither do I want to be on a high like someone who is on a spending spree with the money he has just borrowed from the bank, and then sinks into deep trouble when the time comes to repay his debt. On the other hand I am not attracted to the idea of delaying my happiness either, for instance by doing a "prihatin" (self-restraint), because this future happiness which you are hoping to find is never guaranteed, you might fall terminally ill for instance or become totally incapacitated. Therefore I just want to be natural, to enjoy life as it comes. That is my perception of happiness.

Even trying to remember the things which made me happy, itself gives me pleasure. In this case I do not care what form of happiness it may have been and when it came by. Here I will try to list what gives me a good feeling. I shall not compartmentalise the list, but deliberately mix them up. Nor will I write them in the right sequence to avoid boring

the reader.

I feel happy when I am watching a shadow puppet performance. One of my children might ask:

“What is it that gives you pleasure in watching a shadow puppet play, dad? Do you not already know the story, and haven’t you seen it again and again?”.

It is true I already know the stories back to front, but that does not take away the pleasure in watching it. I enjoy hearing the voice of the “Dalang” (puppet master). I enjoy the dynamic lively sound of the gamelan orchestra. And what I find more captivating is the Dalang’s skill in the way he presents the story: unique with every “Dalang”. That is why I enjoy shadow puppet plays, as I would enjoy beauty and grandeur, but I also admire the Dalang’s heroic endeavour to show off his consummate skill and ability.

My same child would also ask:

“ Why do you like to watch boxing so much, dad?”

I answer the question to myself:

“I enjoy watching the human endeavour to prove ultimate ability “.

Sometimes I have that dubious sense of self-satisfaction if I intentionally miss brushing my teeth before going to bed. I know very well this is a momentary sense of self-satisfaction because I am aware I will pay the price when I suffer tooth decay later on. To me happiness is freedom, and courage. Freedom from the constraint of discipline and having the courage to break any rules. Perhaps it was right that I was called a rebellious child as in Chapter I, Section 6 “A Period of Wandering”. Hence to me happiness is the sense of freedom and having the courage of exercising one’s own rights and making one’s own decisions. Perhaps this kind of happiness also reflects one’s feeling when one has escaped blame for a disastrous business transaction? I also remember the story of an artist friend of mine who was tickled to death. Returning home from a 3 day wander, he had played a trick on the people around him pretending to have lost his mind.

I feel very good and my heart beats fast when I am on the way to play golf. It is true sometimes I get frustrated or suffer from the heat of the sun on the golf course, but to be on the golf course always makes me feel my own boss. Perhaps my grandchildren will try to analyse that feeling of mine.

I have that feeling of quiescent anticipatory happiness when awaiting a visit from my children and grandchildren. Sometimes when coincidentally all my nine grandchildren come together for a visit, and they all talk

at the same time, it gives me a headache. Then I would lock myself in my room: but that does not stop me from looking forward to their visit.

Spending money makes me feel good.

I felt good at the end of the working day, if I had replied to 5 letters or more.

I felt good when Bapak held me on his lap while teaching me how to play the gambang.

I felt good when my writing is published in the magazine.

I felt good when I realised I had my own house.

Likewise when I bought and was driving a Mercedes Benz.

I feel good when my children are together and I know that they love, care for and help one another.

## 18. To help the Insomniacs

My family and friends know me as a person who falls asleep easily. When I have said “good night” and go into the bedroom, one or two minutes later when my wife enters the bedroom she would find me snoring.

I noticed my ability to fall asleep easily when I was a young man, and started experimenting on it. Quite recently, in 1995, an architect staff member from my office came to me with his own problem of insomnia. I gave him the following advice: “Try this technique; control your breathing when you lie down ready to sleep by extending the out breath with a tiny short breath”.

I made an observation on the process of falling asleep when I was sharing a room with a fellow student – from different faculty – at Gajah Mada University, who was also a fellow Subud member. The first thing I observed at that time was that while for some sleepiness was not easy to shake off yet sleep itself was elusive. The two of us were studying together at the same desk in preparation for an examination, but no sooner had we opened our books than he fell into motionless silence, his head resting on his hands, his eyes closed. I played a trick on him flicking over the page of his book. When he opened his eyes, he looked puzzled and looked across to me from the corner of his eyes: but his pride stopped him from asking me. Then I suggested to him that perhaps we could go to sleep now and to go back to our books early in the morning. I fell asleep almost immediately, but before long I was woken up because my friend was restless unable to fall asleep.

I said to him: “If you can’t sleep it is better if we go back to study” and I turned the light on.

But as soon as we got back at the table, his head was on his hands



again. Perhaps he was already dreaming of his examination.

I also quickly noticed that my friend in his study tried to memorise the subject, while I always tried to understand what I studied. I had the impression that he was not interested in the subject he was reading. He said he was not interested in understanding, but wanted to memorise the subject.

In the following days I made further experiments and observations. I wanted to find out what conditions made me fall asleep easily or otherwise. I found the answer in the sound of my breathing and my heartbeat. If I laid down with my eyes closed and heard only the sound of my breathing then I would fall asleep immediately. On the other hand if I could hear my heartbeat then it would take me longer to fall asleep.

The question is how to shut off one or the other from our awareness.

This of course led to further observations and experiments.

For instance if we get excited, annoyed or angry, then we hear our heartbeat much more loudly when we lie down. Therefore before going to bed it is better to avoid getting angry or annoyed. I found there was a much superior method of putting oneself between the sound of heartbeat and the sound of breathing, and that is by putting oneself in one's own thought. Experience showed me that when I put myself in my thoughts as a subject, in the sense that I become conscious of my own being, then my breathing would sound very regular. Conversely, if I put myself in my thoughts as an object, I became the observed, and the sound of my heartbeat would become more pronounced.

As I get older, I have acquired the ability of "putting my brain in my head where I want it to be". I do not know if this could be taught to or understood by those who have not experienced the Latihan Kejiwaan of Subud. I can give instruction to my brain when I want to go to sleep: "Brain, go to the front!". Then I would feel a shift in my head, so that the focal point of activities in my head would be situated behind my forehead and underneath the crown. If I command the brain to move to the back then the focal point will shift to the back of my head. If the focal point is in the front of my head, I would fall asleep immediately. Conversely, if the focal point stubbornly stays in the back of my head, then it would take me sometime to fall asleep.

Actually there is a process for shifting from one method to the other to help one fall asleep. This process is in stages. At first shifting one's attention from the rhythm of heartbeat to the rhythm of breathing is sufficient. As one gets older, this elementary method gradually becomes ineffective. Then one needs to use the next method in addition to the elementary method. In the end, when I find it hard to control the focal point of the brain as mentioned above, then I would modify the method.

Every time I breathe out I would consciously extend it with a short tiny breath. I would breathe in naturally without having my thought in it. In other words, I would be breathing in longer without being conscious of it. This long breathing in of air is very soothing for my throat, and this makes me fall asleep even faster.

With my wife Ismana it is different: she says she did not theorise it. If she has difficulty falling asleep, she does Latihan Kejiwaan, until finally she falls asleep.

As I am writing this I am 67 years old. I still fall asleep easily. But when I have a problem in my mind and have difficulty in falling to sleep, the above method of “extended breathing” only partly works. In the end I would fall asleep, in the sense that I am not aware what is going on around me. But when I wake up, I would feel that I did not have a sound sleep, and feel that my mind is still active.

I never had the chance to ask that architect at my office if he had tried the method I gave him, or if it worked for him, because I had resigned.

## 19. Final Impression

When I stepped onto American soil at the end of July 1997, before we attended the Subud World Congress at Spokane, Washington State, my ears were deafened by TV news on the volume and complexity of world problems around us. But every time I found myself bemused at the simplified solutions offered by politicians.

I have seen in America, as well as in Europe, much too much human problems presented in TV programs, be it in the news, in discussions or even in quiz programs meant to be popular entertainment programs. There was a debate on the moral issue of a doctor who assisted terminally ill patients, and the elderly who had no quality of life anymore, in taking their own life. There was a debate in America on the definition of honesty and dishonesty, in connection with the donation to the Democratic Party Campaign Funds from third party and foreign countries (incidentally, an Indonesian banker was involved in this). Discussion on the conflict between Prince Ranarith and Hun Seng of Cambodia; human bomb in Jerusalem which killed more than ten people. Not to mention the currency crisis in the wake of the crashes of the Baht and Peso.

On the other side there was news which could have positive, but also negative impact on human life. Such as the developments in electronic technology, related to the use of optic cable which will revolutionise world communications. This new technology will promote competition in business, but at the same time it will also encourage cannibalism in business. The horizon is opened up wider than ever, and many will lose their privacy.

But all these complex human problems are never solved at the root. On the contrary, they are politicised for certain hidden agendas. It seems that the solutions are arrived at through very cunning simplifications of the problems: but however hard they tried to hide the political agendas they remained transparent. Perhaps that is why the problems never finish, on the contrary, they are getting bigger and more complex. It is clear that man's effort to solve problems is limited by his own self interest. These simplifications of problems were so obvious in all the news I heard last July. In the situation of Jerusalem for instance, President Clinton had used the following criteria for his solution: 1. It shall be honourable to America 2. It shall oppose any type of terrorism. 3. It shall promote and respect human rights.

In Asia the complex problem of Cambodia has led the Asean countries to base their policy on the following criteria:

1. Political stability of the region. 2. Non-interference by one country in the affairs of another.

Those criteria may appear to give a clear perspective, but I believe that those criteria will never provide lasting solutions which reach to the bottom of the problems.

I am tempted to ask this question: "Where does Subud stand and what is its role in all these controversial problems?"

Our motivation to do the Latihan Kejiwaan of Subud is ever growing. In the beginning we only wanted to know the answer to the gnawing feeling within ourselves, now we want to progress further, to be able to receive God's guidance, to devote ourselves deeper to our worship and to become better human beings according to His Will and His Way. The growth of that motivation extends to the wish of seeing a better society and an improved world environment. Our conviction has grown stronger: that the Latihan Kejiwaan of Subud is given to man, when the jiwa and the intellect of man have strayed away from the worship and guidance of God, and that Latihan Kejiwaan will be responsible for bringing man back to the Path of God. Therefore it is worth reflecting on the above thought.

But we are aware that the "game" of Latihan Kejiwaan of Subud is the "game" of the inner, our inner as human beings. Although we might have witnessed happenings and changes, which can be attributed to the "power" of Latihan Kejiwaan of Subud, we must not be conceited as to believe that we are instrumental in those changes.

We have no reason to be conceited or proud, that Subud will answer and be able to overcome those world problems.

Almost everyone who cared to proofread the draft of this writing suggested that I should change the title from "pengakuan" to some other

word. Ir. H. Kuswanda expressed his regret that the word “pengakuan” might have a connotation of guilt. While my wife Ismana suggested that the title should be “ The Discovery of My True Self ”. Perhaps those proofreaders were right with their suggestions. But nevertheless I stick to that title “pengakuan” so it will arouse curiosity.

Actually that feeling of guilt was there alright. If there had not been a guilt feeling then there would not have been a process of returning home from wandering. Likewise there would not have been a confession that the lost child had come home, and I would have remained proud and conceited.

I do not think that we should be so conceited as to say that Subud is the answer to and would overcome all those world problems. But it is hoped that Subud can INDIRECTLY have an influence on man in trying to solve those problems. Even those who are in Subud could still be sucked into the vortex of any of those problems and drown during the passage of their life. Above I used the word “INDIRECTLY, because we can’t apply Latihan Kejiwaan in solving these problems, and it is not for us individually to claim to have provided the solutions. As humans we always try but we leave the result to God The Almighty for His permission and Mercy.

So long as nafsu accompanies man in his life, problems will arise in human relations with one another and will continue to grow. We like to entertain a dream that Subud will have a role in lifting human dignity and human values in accordance with the Will of God The Almighty. We can only hope that this can be achieved not only through the role of Subud members either individually or collectively, but also through the power of the Latihan Kejiwaan of Subud. We Subud people need not – and we cannot – run away from these problems. Because we are always accompanied by our own mind and nafsu. What is necessary is to be close to God The Almighty and pray that not only strength but also peace and patience are given unto us.

I have spent so many pages dealing with the complexity and difficulty of finding and living one’s own true self. In those pages we came face to face with the complexity of the environment and the world. On these matters we should not be conceited as if we were responsible for the solutions to those complex problems. We need to know where to place ourselves correctly, and reflect on our responsibility. When each one of us knows where our place is, then we are in a position to respect and appreciate the tasks and responsibilities of others. We should pray for God The Almighty’s guidance, that we may be shown the right path.

As a final word, let me say to my own children and grandchildren: “Face the realities and problems of living with resolve. Remember, that life in this world is full of temptations of all kinds and forms of nafsu. Place yourselves close to God The Almighty, be faithful in your worship according to your Religion, and be diligent in your Latihan Kejiwaan of

Subud.

THE END

Part 1.2

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