



Raymond Lee Interview – PART 1

Harris Smart interviews Raymond Lee about how he came to Indonesia and the connection he has had to Bapak and his family including his work as interpreter and translator for Ibu Rahayu...

Harris: I've been watching a lot of talks, so I've become very aware of your role interpreting for Ibu Rahayu. How did it come about that you began to interpret for Ibu?

Raymond: Usually when Ibu was traveling on international trips, she would be accompanied by Astuti and Sharif and they would do the translation. They were living overseas at the time. So from a practical point of view, the fact that I lived next door to Ibu with Muti in Jakarta means that I'm the most convenient translator when Ibu gives talks in Indonesia.

As for how I came to translate for her? Ibu asked me to do it, or rather, Muti suddenly told me that Ibu wants me to translate. Obviously, through my marriage to Muti, I've been involved in the family for many years and also when working with S. Widjojo, so I had worked with Ibu Rahayu for a long time before.

Harris: When did you first come to Indonesia?

Raymond: 1982.

Harris: And what was your aim when you came? What did you hope would happen?

Raymond: I was coming to get married. I was going to marry Muti and that's what we did. Also, at the same time I started working for S Widjojo.

Harris: How did you meet Muti?

Raymond: Through Bapak visiting the UK and through her sisters, Indra and Tiqna, who were living in London. I was active in the Central London group. I was driving Bapak for a while when he visited the UK. At some point Subud UK had purchased a very large house in the Wentworth Golf Estate, which was called Villa Rahayu, for Bapak's use when he visited the UK. Indra and Tiqna, Muti's younger sisters, were going to live there, and I was asked to stay there too, so that there would be a man around the house. My mother was also employed as a housekeeper for a while. That's basically how Muti and I met.

Harris: You said you grew up in England?

Raymond: Yes, Scottish by birth. Lebanese, Yorkshire, Scottish, Welsh by genealogy.

Harris: Okay and how did you find Subud? What led you into Subud?

Raymond: I found out about Subud through my mother who joined in the sixties. I became aware of it from the books and magazines that appeared in our little apartment when I was 14, or 15, and when I was 19, I was opened.

When I was 17, I decided to fast that year, as my mum had started doing the Ramadan fast. >



Raymond Lee interpreting for Ibu Rahayu at the talk for young people at the Christchurch World Congress.

I tried it for 10 days, and after that, Subud just seemed to be for me, Subud was just always the most important thing in my life, nothing else seemed to in any way compare to Subud. As a teenager, when I looked out to the world, it was a very grey place, and of all the possible things I could do in it, Subud was the only thing that made sense.

Harris: I guess it's true for a lot of us. What professional training did you have? What career path were you on?

Raymond: Well, I was an engineer, a civil engineer. I studied that at university, and worked as an engineer for three years. Then I had some advice from Sharif to learn about business. So, I worked for a bank for three years, just doing basic banking, then fund management. Then I decided to become an accountant, and I shifted to Price Waterhouse. I was there for two years, and then I came to Indonesia. I was making very successful career moves: each time I moved my salary was less.

Harris: But more satisfying, and better in some way? Was there a recompense for it?

Raymond: Yes, well, it gave me a very broad background. Jack of all trades, master of none. The engineering and the accounting certainly helped. I was always looking for something, but I didn't know what. And, yes, those experiences certainly helped.

Harris: How old were you when you came to Indonesia?

Raymond: Twenty-eight.

Harris: Was there a lot of culture shock in coming to Indonesia? Was there a lot of adapting to the reality of being part of Bapak's family?

Raymond: I think being part of Bapak's family was the easier part, coming to Indonesia was the tough part. It took me a long time to adapt culturally. It took me a long time before I accepted that Indonesians are not going to do things the way they're done in England, and I'd better start figuring out why they do things the way they do here.

I think that happened after about seven years, when I said to myself, "I'd better stop complaining." That was pretty important, and I actually now give short presentations and training on how to do business here in Indonesia, how to survive Indonesian culture. I can do that because of those challenges and having to go through that and try and understand what's happening. I've had to learn so many things and I'm still learning.

Every time I give this presentation, I learn something new from the audience, who will be Indonesians and non-Indonesians. I do some work with the World Bank in Jakarta, and they've now asked me to give that presentation four times. They have new international staff coming into Indonesia on a regular basis who have to deal with the government and local staff in a very big office here. They keep asking me back to talk to the next batch of international staff who have arrived. Discussions are always very, very interesting.

Harris: Can you give me any particular examples of how one has to adjust to business in Indonesia?

Raymond: A simple one. When you go into a government ministry, just chit chat. Just chit chat and at some point, someone will say, "Why are you here?" At which point you have the opening to talk about business. So, the relationship is very important. Relationship comes before business.

I think the American style of business, which I've also experienced, is the opposite. You do business with no relationship. It's all smiles but there's no relationship outside the workplace or the transaction that you're conducting. In Indonesia, if you don't have a relationship you don't get to do business. That's fundamental.

Another very simple one where again I contrast Western culture, American culture with local cultures. If you go in and want to demonstrate how competent you are and the great experience you've got and all the great things you have done, and what you can do for the ministry or this project or that project, that can backfire, and you will be seen as arrogant.

From the Indonesian perspective, it seems arrogant, by doing that, you make the Indonesian director general look bad in front of his staff and therefore they are not going to do any business. There's a total mismatch in perceptions of what should be done to sell yourself versus what works.

It's such an interesting field and I'm able to convey that in a fun way and tell fun stories and people respond well to it.

Harris: Do you think it's significant that Bapak encouraged marriage between his granddaughters and Westerners? Do you think that expresses something symbolic about the nature of Subud, the meeting and marriage of opposites?

Raymond: I have no idea what the answer is to that. I don't think Bapak encouraged or discouraged that.

I don't think it was a deliberate plan. In fact, I sometimes joke that I have three brothers-in-law – two now since Leonard van Hien has passed away – who are all British, but pseudo-Brits. Leonard was of Dutch-Armenian descent, I have Lebanese-Scottish roots, Sharif Horthy is of Hungarian descent, and Ridwan Lowther grew up in South Africa.

So somehow, those pseudo-Brits married into Bapak's family. I don't think it was a deliberate plan in any way and I never read anything into that. *[laughs]*

Harris: Did you have any particular experiences with Bapak that were very significant to you? Did he ever give you advice or did you ever bring a problem to him or...?

Raymond: One time I remember coming out of a meeting with Bapak when the late Isaac Goff was with us working here in Jakarta. I think it was on the hotel project at that time. We had been listening to Bapak talking about who to involve in the project, and I remember Isaac saying afterwards, "It's really interesting, Bapak just takes people exactly as they are and doesn't expect them to change. So, he doesn't have any expectation that you should be like this or you should be like that. Bapak just sees people as they are."

Of course, people change, but the number of times you're in a business or a partnership and you think, "Oh, if only so and so would be like this" instead of accepting what's in front of you. I think Bapak accepted everyone, everyone as they were. He treated everyone with the same love and compassion, which I also see with Ibu. So that's a great lesson since we all tend to have favorites and those who are not so – "I don't like that person so much." Bapak wouldn't do that, and I always found that very interesting. He was very realistic and totally accepting of people as they were.

Harris: Any other particular experiences?

Raymond: I think it's just Bapak's being that was significant for me. Seeing how he would treat everybody with such compassion and love. He would sometimes tell people very blunt things. We saw that in testing – when Bapak would do testing. You must have been in those testing sessions with 2,000 people in a hall and Bapak would test someone in front of everyone. Then he'll say this and that. Blunt in the sense of, "Oh well, this person is like this and that," and everyone laughs, and nobody takes offense including the person who's being tested. That's remarkable.

Harris: It is.

Raymond: It's extraordinary. I don't know anybody else in the world who could do that.

Harris: Sure.

Raymond: Imagine being at the National Congress, Harris, and the National Congress test you in front of the delegates, and then tell you all your key flaws. *[laughter]* Would you be able to take that?

Harris: Yes. Who else could get away with that?

Raymond: Bapak could-- because it was just his seeing the situation, the reality of it, without any judgement, just compassion.

The other thing about Bapak is that he was always on mission. If you sat with him, he would inevitably start talking about his experiences, about the importance of Subud, about whatever project was uppermost. He would join in conversations and chitchat, but eventually, when he starts talking, he's always on mission – he would give a talk. That's his mission and he was always on mission. But not in an obsessive fanatic way like some people are. Nothing like that. It was more like: "can you believe it, this amazing thing happened to me."

Harris: I think you were with Bapak when he was dying, weren't you, and he asked if a million >

“ *Bapak accepted everyone as they were and treated everyone with the same love and compassion.* ”

people had been opened in Subud?

Raymond: I was in the bedroom when he asked that question. There were a number of other people there. That was in the house before we left for the hospital. He died en route in his Mercedes. I was in a car following. They tried to resuscitate him in the hospital when he got there.

Harris: He asked that question, did he?

Raymond: Yes, for sure. I witnessed that.

Harris: Do you remember exactly what he said?

Raymond: I think he just said, "Is it a million yet?" My interpretation was that it meant, "Have I completed my mission?"

Although we always say Subud doesn't seem to be growing, I think that if you were to go back through the records and figure out how many people had been opened since Subud first came, I wouldn't be surprised if it was a million. That was my sense.

In the next issue of Subud Voice, we plan to publish Part 2 of this interview with Raymond in which he talks about interpreting for Ibu.

One Reader's Response

One reader's response to December 2022's issue of Subud Voice. Rohana Darlington, Subud UK, writes...

Hello Harris

Thank you so much for December's excellent issue of SV, I think it's one of the very best you've ever produced. And that's saying something! I was particularly pleased to read Ashwin Rajaraman's article about the recent gathering in Assisi, as we'd have loved to have gone to this, but Mashud's health wouldn't have been up to the travel.

So to read all about what happened there was so good for people like us. His writing style and beautiful photos helped us to feel how it was for everyone there. After so long since a big international gathering like this, it felt it was really important for Subud's development. So thank you, Ashwin, for such a brilliant contribution.

And the article about Emmanuel Aronie and his life in Ukraine is extraordinary. It's so inspiring and I found his poems really moving as well as horribly shocking. As you said before, this is the courage that Bapak said we Subud members should be showing after years of Latihan.

And I thought it linked in so well with the article about Patricia's portrait, showing that although we can't all be brave enough to follow Emmanuel's example, Anastasia's painting of Patricia has helped Rod so much in his grief, that in itself is a different kind of inner strength both Rod and Anastasia are showing.

Yesterday I emailed my whole family so they could read the article in SV and see Patricia's portrait, and they are all absolutely thrilled.

They said they thought it was really touching and I felt it was such a good way of sharing what Subud is doing in the world. So thank you so much for publishing this. And for advertising my Christmas card project.

I also loved reading Mardijah's article about Holy Communion and her early days in Subud, she was a member of Central London years ago when we were both young! And I'm so glad that Amanecer has been sold to Subud people and will be used for such useful projects. I transcribed Simon Guerand's interview for the WSA Memories of Bapak project and he really is one of the good guys.

So a big thank you, Harris, and I hope your eyes are healing well and you're coping with the vagaries of climate change. I loved reading about the Ozzie pioneering spirit during the flooding when bananas and milk were hoisted on Heath Robinson contraptions to keep everyone alive. Let's hope you don't have any more floods next year. And all the very best for 2023.



Rohana Darlington.

“ Thank you so much for December's excellent issue of SV, I think it's one of the very best you've ever produced. ”

INTRODUCING SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR SUBUD VOICE

Dear Readers,

Every January, I appeal to our readers for donations to keep us going for the next 12 months. At present, our financial future is particularly perilous. We have enough money for two more issues and then, that's it.

For the last 12 years we have managed to keep Subud Voice going on the basis of donations, but this is not providing enough income to keep going. We have many readers, but only a few people have been donating. Therefore, the only way to increase and regularise our cashflow is to go back to a subscription system, as Subud Voice was funded in the beginning.

SO, FROM THE FEBRUARY 2023 ISSUE OF SUBUD VOICE, WE ARE REINTRODUCING A SUBSCRIPTION SERVICE. YOU CAN SUBSCRIBE BY MAKING AN ANNUAL PAYMENT.

We are keeping the **subscription to what it was 12 years ago: \$60 per year for 12 monthly issues.** Of course, we would always appreciate more, but also understand some of our readers live in difficult circumstances. (*AU\$60 equivalent to US\$38, Pound Sterling £31, Euro 36*)

We want to make Subud Voice accessible to everyone, so if you are not able to afford the subscription, please contact the editor at: www.subudvoice.net



YOU CAN EASILY SUBSCRIBE USING YOUR CREDIT/DEBIT CARD BY GOING TO THE SUBSCRIPTIONS BUTTON ON OUR HOME PAGE AT www.subudvoice.net

IF YOU WANT TO SEND US MORE THAN \$60 YOU CAN ALSO SEND US A DONATION THROUGH THE PAYMENTS BUTTON ON OUR HOME-PAGE AT www.subudvoice.net

Subscribers will receive an email each month with a link to that issue of the magazine.

The subscription service is set up, so why not go and subscribe now in order to be able to continue to receive Subud Voice without interruption.

Subud Voice is a living, growing archive of Subud experience...

We have continued without interruption through the COVID epidemic which has so radically affected the whole world. We try to be a source of support and linkage for Subud members living through these difficult times.

If you look at the issues over the past year (all stored in the Archive section of our web page (www.subudvoice.net), you will find we have paid attention to virtually every aspect of Subud life including the organization, enterprises, welfare projects, SICA, Youth, as well as members' personal experiences.

All these articles go to make a library of Subud life, invaluable not only to us but also to future generations as a living growing archive of the experience of Subud.

We are the only independent, international regular monthly news and comment publication in Subud. We have always been absolutely reliable bringing out *Subud Voice* every month for the last 31 years.

Our enthusiasm for this task is unflagging. I think the past year has been one of our best. We produce on a shoestring, but we still need some money to operate in the material world...

Harris Smart, Editor of Subud Voice

TO KEEP US GOING FOR ANOTHER YEAR (IN AUSTRALIAN \$)

Bank charges and administration	650
Printing & transcriptions	400
Travel (to Subud events)	750
IT services	800
Phone/Internet	1500
Design & Layout	3400
Editorial	5000
Software	500
Hardware	500
Legal and financial	500
TOTAL	14000
Contingency 10%	1400
Total	AU\$15400

(Equivalent to US\$10377, Pound Sterling 8632 Euro 9572)

WSA CHAIR'S OBSERVATIONS AND PROPOSALS



Nahum Harlap, Chair of WSA.

Nahum Harlap has written of his observations and proposals arising from his experience as Chair of the World Subud Association. He begins...

When I was tested in to my role, someone from among the observers/delegates asked me what is my vision/what are my plans.

At the time, all I knew was that I should put my name forward for the role – that's what I received, and I had no plans or a vision – I trusted that I shall be guided to observe what needed attention and attend to it as best I can, and, frankly, I thought it would be presumptuous to come into the role with pre-conceived ideas. Well, four years later, it is time for me to report back to you on what I have observed, and what, in my opinion, needs attention.

Where I can, I shall try to distill the proposals into such that can be put in front of the World Congress, but we must be clear that it is not in my power to push through such proposals – it would be up to the member countries to consider such proposals, discuss them, amend them and where they see fit, put them in front of the World Congress for a vote.

I hope this document provides a basis for such discussions, with enough time to develop useful proposals for the World Congress to vote on.

I started my journey by listening to the recordings of the 1979 and 1983 World Congresses, when Bapak was still with us and provided his later guidance regarding the structure of our organisation.

The WSA has been working on a book that would put together Bapak's advice regarding the organisation, just as we have a book for his advice to helpers.

This is still a work in progress, but close to completion. What I aim to do here is to highlight areas that require some attention, and primarily to clarify matters that, from what I observe, are not as clearly understood as they could be – certainly, matters that were not sharply clear for me prior to the guidance to attend to them.

To read Nahum's complete document click here:

<https://www.subudvoice.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Nahum-Harlap-WSA-suggestions.pdf>

He welcomes direct comments: nahum.harlap@subud.org

“ *It is time for me to report back to you on what I have observed, and what, in my opinion, needs attention...* ”

HOMELESS IN PLAIN SIGHT

Review of a new book by Livingston Armytage...

The editor writes...

Livingston Armytage has come out with a new book of photographs which documents the plight of homeless people on the streets of Sydney, Australia.

I asked Livingston if there had been a seminal moment in which the idea of doing this project arose. Was there some particular experience that triggered it?

Well, it was not so much that there was an epiphany moment, it was more that the idea crept up on me. What happened was that as I walked through the streets of Sydney and passed homeless people, I felt very uncomfortable.

What was this feeling of discomfort all about?

I remembered an experience I had as a child. I went with my parents to visit one of my grandmothers. As we were driving away on a cold midwinter afternoon, I glanced through the back window of our car and I glimpsed an elderly woman sheltering from the pouring rain under a railway bridge.

And she instantly reminded me of my grandmother. How would it be for my grandmother if she should ever find herself in that situation? And it became my resolve to never fall into that condition myself, and to never let those closest to me, or anyone for that matter, fall to that condition.

So I started stopping to talk to these people and again and again I heard "this could happen to anyone". It was an oft repeated story of people riding high in life, had everything, the wife, the family, the big house, the big car, the big boat, and then lose everything. And I realise this was the source of my discomfort when I walked past the homeless people. This sense, that there but for the grace of God, go I.

So it was talking to these homeless people that lead naturally to my taking photographs of them and this was how the book developed.

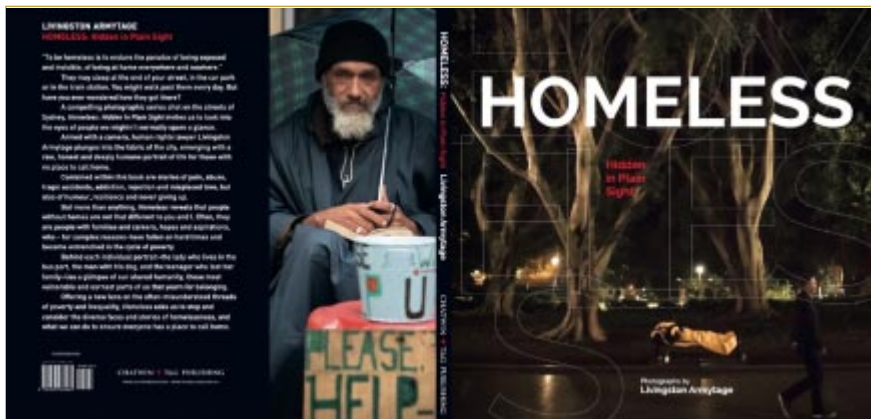
THIS REVIEW OF LIVINGSTON'S BOOK APPEARED IN DHARMA CARE & SINE CERA DECEMBER NEWS

Having worked in more than 50 countries far beyond the tourist path, Livingston Armytage is an Australian photographer who takes the viewer behind the postcard view to illuminate and show the lives of others.

"My camera teaches me to see. In these photographs, I express what I have seen – both beautiful and ugly – for the viewer to contemplate. While pursuing beauty, I have found that it can often be found in unexpected places. I use the camera as a documentary tool to portray a reality that can affect the viewer in ways that words cannot. Some images are joyful: but others are confronting, even profoundly disturbing. My challenge is to capture these realities with balance, respect and integrity."

Before becoming a photographer, Livingston worked as a lawyer spending many years building fairer societies in remote parts of Asia and the Pacific. In 2018, he was awarded the Order of Australia for his services to justice.

Livingston has been working for a number of years on a compelling photographic series, shot on the streets of Sydney, Australia, *Homeless: Hidden in Plain Sight* invites us to look into the eyes of people living without housing.



Armed with a camera, human rights lawyer Livingston Armytage plunges into the fabric of the city, emerging with a raw, honest, and deeply humane portrait of life for those with no place to call home. He aims to use photography as a documentary tool to portray a reality that can affect the viewer in ways that words cannot.

Fascinated by the work and the stories, we wanted to hear how this came to be and the effort required to capture such emotional human warmth in the beautiful people he met, and their own unique stories.

[How long did it take you to shoot the images in your book and then release it ?](#)

This has ended up being a three-year project. The shooting phase took much of the first year (2019), which was quite intensive for 4-5 months meeting and talking with homeless people across Sydney, 'rough sleeping' on the street in Newtown (which I found extremely challenging), doing late night shoots, and after midnight taking the 'night trains' for the last stragglers home beyond Wollongong and returning with the early risers the following morning. Here I discovered a whole lifestyle of homeless people who shelter in the dry warm trains each night, and I witnessed the wordless compassion of the railway staff who let them do so.

The second year was spent finding commercial publishers, which is always difficult – and doubly difficult for me to find two because Chatwin (US) would only publish with another local publisher (T&G) in Australia. And the third year was devoted to curating, formatting and editing the collection. This final phase was frustrating and sometimes agonising to me, as the artist, having to make unavoidable compromises with the publishers on how the work should be presented.

Overall, I believe they did a very professional job, and I've learned a lot from them, though I would have done it differently. I can't explain why the publication process was so slow; none of my other 7 books have taken more than about 6 months to be published. Perhaps it is because printing photographs in full colour – which they have done extremely well – is very expensive. And certainly, Covid didn't help!

[Was there a process in getting to know individuals before you could then shoot such intimate moments with them?](#)

It took some time for me to explore and find the best way to build trust, which ended up also being the simplest. I would explore the streets until I found a homeless person. After observing them for a while, I would find the right moment to approach and say "G'day, how's your day?" (or some such).

If they were responsive – and they always were – I'd get down and sit beside them, rather than stand above them. After some chitchat, I might reach out to touch them, shake hands, touch their elbow, something to bridge the gap and show I was not afraid of catching social leprosy. I'd ask them to tell me their story. They would have been checking me out, of course.

They could see I was really listening, they always did. It wasn't difficult for me to listen once I'd decided to reach out to them, though their hardship often shocked me. Then I'd ask if I could take their picture. Sometimes they became wary. I explained I wanted to publish a book showing their lives and telling their stories. There was never any problem; they always agreed.

Some explained that they were happy to share their stories, if it would help others avoiding their plight. I was moved by their generosity. I had only one knock-back, and this was from a woman who wanted to keep her whereabouts secret from her family for security reasons. It's really lonely being homeless, hidden in plain sight. Most people just walk past perhaps, like me, because they feel uncomfortable or perhaps because they think they are undeserving.

[What is a key lesson you learned from people who are](#)



experiencing homelessness?

I have learned a lot photographing “Homeless”: obviously, I now really understand that this could happen to me, to anyone – no amount of education and hard work can actually guarantee it won’t.

I met executives, PhDs, professionals, old and young – all sorts. I have discovered that no one is immune from becoming homeless. There are many causes: child abuse, severe injury, psychosis, retrenchment, family estrangement – and of course always poverty. Drugs are a symptom, but rarely the cause. It’s quite frightening; all it takes is one trauma too many to shatter a life’s equilibrium. Many people I talked with remarked that they could never have imagined becoming homeless themselves.

I also learned that it’s a tough existence. Really tough! I tried ‘sleeping rough’ on the streets, and after just 24-hours had a gut-full. Instantly, I became invisible. People I would normally consider my peers walked past me without blinking. Others looked down with a mixture of pity and disgust. I felt judged and shunned.

Some of the homeless have been trapped in a churn of subsistence survival on the streets for over a decade. Anyone who thinks for one moment that the homeless are ‘dole bludgers’ has no idea of the reality. No one wants to be homeless. Ultimately, I have learned to respect them for their dignity, their resilience, their courage and their patience. The homeless reveal how we choose to see the state of our community. It is our humanity that is on display.

Were there any noticeable similarities or differences between the homeless people you got to know in different regions of Sydney?

I don’t really know. Some may move out of Sydney and go up north for the warmth of Coolangatta or beyond, but the situation may remain largely unchanged, though their costs are lower – that is, it may be more financially viable.

Did you observe different attitudes towards supporting homeless people in the CBD versus Newtown for example or other regional areas?

I’m not sure. I’d like to think that country folk may have more time to engage and more heart to be compassionate. But many homeless come from the country, so perhaps that’s not so. While most passers-by ignore the homeless, there are also always others who are compassionate, who do stop, share some moments of company and give them a sandwich or small change. The best experience that I heard was of a businessman giving a homeless woman \$500. Others give meals.

When a stranger stopped and wordlessly gave me \$5, it was like the lights were turned back on; it reduced me to tears.

What is the one thing that governments or people could do to help alleviate homelessness?

I have read of studies that document it would cost society more to leave the homeless until they require urgent police, paramedical and hospital attention costing many thousands more than it would cost to allocate affordable housing. Sadly, there is evidently a hocus-pocus policy bias against providing ‘incentives’ to becoming homeless. In NSW the waiting list for affordable housing is as long as 15

“ *To be homeless is to endure the paradox of being exposed and invisible, of being at home everywhere and nowhere...* ”



years, which is grotesque for an affluent society.

It is my hope that this book may dispel some of these unreasoned prejudices.

What's next for you?

I'm mulling over some other ideas now. As a development lawyer, I used to spend many years of my career travelling around the world to build fairer societies through advocacy and by helping the law courts deliver better justice.

In this book, I have grappled with some of the local injustices that surround us even in affluent societies like Sydney.

Homelessness is not our only social injustice. Time will tell.

Thank you to Livingston for taking the time to give us more insight into the book.

You can purchase the fantastically touching Homeless book now, in Australia.

<https://www.chatwinbooks.com/shop/homeless> for International orders.

All proceeds from the book sale go to Matthew Talbot Hostel.

Read more about the homeless crisis in Australia and what is being done to solve it, and you can support Dharma Care's Emergency accommodation project in the Northern Rivers region.

To view a video of Livingston talking about the book click here:

https://www.youtube.com/shorts/UNbu5HVwO_w

ENTERPRISES

Lawrence Brazier writes...

There appears to be many poor people in Subud. At the Freiburg Congress we were made aware of Subud members from South America who were obliged to obtain a bank loan just to get there. Nevertheless, those members were enterprising and endeavoured to take up the monetary slack by selling things they had made.

Money is not a pleasant subject – you know, the root of all evil, etc.

Our founding member – I shall endeavour not to write, “Bapak said” more than just this once, although, actually, he did lay everything on the line and is eminently quotable. He maintained that the influence of the material force, which is currently raging around the planet, is indeed satanic. However, he did not simply step aside and, as befits a human being, he was able with God's grace to fathom the problems of our all-too material world.

Probably one of the best things about enterprises is that they keep us from thinking about spiritual things. Enterprises gives our minds a focus, which amounts, in fact, to a sort of diversion. Like giving your mind a book to read. “Here, mind, read this and leave me in peace.” We obviously need to be aware that we are not our minds.

I loved that bit from our founding member when he said, “I was walking along feeling quite happy, with nothing much on my mind.” Gorgeous! What if you could bottle “nothing much on your mind” and sell it? Well, obviously that sort of grace can't be bought and sold in the conventional sense, or any other sense for that matter.

As far as enterprises go, we first need to become aware of our talent. We all know that. Thus, it gets tested. We are informed that testing is entirely suitable for bringing members to a focussed latihan – as long as the questions tested are reasonable and testing is not turned into a hobby.



Lawrence Brazier being enterprising at the Freiburg Congress.

“ As far as enterprises go, we need first to become aware of our talent...” ”

Nevertheless, (a quote from a similar source as our founding member) Ibu Rahayu said that Bapak received 100% correct when testing. Ibu said she received maybe 80% correct. Therefore, if the rest of us can claim even 50% correct in our testing, we may as well toss a coin – or even turn to Googling. As always it is mostly about getting the wording of the question right. Paramount, of course, is that the latihan is fostered.

Finding a job...

So, what is the right way to find out about which enterprise, or even job, (a vast number of kids leave school with not the foggiest notion) would be right for us. I'm sure you know the answer – you do what you love and what you have the ability to do. Right?

Shortly after being opened, I was working at a company that printed long-playing record covers. Yes, that long ago. On the front of an LP cover was usually a picture of the band, and on the back were what in the business are known as liner notes. The liner notes were a piece of text about the band, the details of their lives and aspirations, and so on. One of the texts I read was in the form of an interview with the lead musician.

It was a fairly standard question and answer approach. How did you get interested in music? Answer: There was always music at home. My mum played organ in the church; my uncle could play trumpet pretty well. So how did you get started? My dad bought me my first guitar for my seventh birthday. I loved it and strummed, you could hardly call it playing, all the time.

“Enterprises keep us from thinking about spiritual things...”

So how did you become a professional musician? Well, one day I got to thinking that people should realize, become aware of, what they do quite naturally, as a matter of course, like doodling on a piece of paper and suddenly seeing that one of the doodles was cool and had possibilities and wasn't all that bad and that doing it was enjoyable. I then figured that people should take their personal realization and practice at it, and practice at it, and practice at it – until they got so good that somebody had to pay them to do it.

Many may ask, what if all you like to do is watch TV? The answer is practice writing content for television. I remember one story from our founding member about a couple who loved going to restaurants, and he admonished them to start their own restaurant. In other words, we should become providers instead of being merely consumers.

So anyway, what happened to me after getting opened was the initial realization that this was going to be a rough ride. At one point I sent up a prayer that went something like: “Dear God, one day I may wish to leave Subud, please don't let me.”

I had spent my life floating. Biblically, “Like a leaf blown in the wind.”

I could hear our founding member exclaiming: “For crying out loud – DO SOMETHING.” Romana, my wife, once received one of his famous smiles. I had eye contact with him just once. No smile – just a short, sharp nod – a pull-yourself-together nod coupled with an empty glint in his eye. I am aware that sounds contradictory, but I can't find a better way to express it.

We had four children in rapid succession. We moved to Austria, and I became the most sacked, job-losing man, in the entire country. But the seed had been planted. The latihan had somehow struck a spark. I finally felt the need to be responsible. I got sacked again and again, but all the while learning a shaky form of the German language. At one point I realized I had actually understood an entire newspaper article in German. That felt good.

Of course, I couldn't write German and my spoken German is still abysmal. But I was getting it. Somebody asked me to translate a German text into English and I was aware that I did not need to have a perfect understanding of the language to do it. I just needed to understand what the text was about.

Many of you reading this, and have learned a foreign language, will know about the horror of articles. Nevertheless, even if the German author had made a mistake and written, for example, der auto (the car) and it should be das auto, it was ok because I knew what he meant and, anyway, it's all “the” to me. And, anyway, there was no way that I was going to translate English into German. >

Translation agency...

Things were looking up, although I was again redundant. I got the occasional translation to work on. One day I said, “What the heck, let’s do it. Let’s start a German into English translation agency.” We sure as shooting did not test it. We went self-employed and winged it. Romana was terrified. I had in the meantime acquired the kind of optimism that surpasses all common sense. But I liked translation.

“ One day I said, “What the heck, let’s do it. Let’s start a German into English translation agency...” ”

I was also being published as a journalist. My first published piece, while still a teenager, was a short review of a jazz gig in a pub, which was written in pencil and paid for with a single pound note, sterling. Years later, and after being opened, I got a regular writing job supplying content for an airline’s in-flight magazine. I currently enjoy regular publication in a Muslim magazine, *The Fountain*, in the US. The chief editor, who is now a good friend, knows that I am not a Muslim, but there is no problem. We get along splendidly.

It was now that my writing skills became useful in undertaking translations. Again, I must emphasize that at no point did we do any testing. It was all a natural, if somewhat bumpy, flow of events. At the time, I did not feel that the business was a spiritual undertaking. What was a spiritual undertaking is what the latihan was doing to me, and that in turn became applicable to our enterprise. I did not see angels, but I did acquire a genuine fear of laziness. (I was starting at the bottom, you see.)

My built-in *manana* attitude got the chop. If I decide to put something off until later, a feeling of gloom and doom arises, like a raincloud dripping into my stomach. My Subud experience is ongoing, and tackles, unavoidably if I wish to be honest, the less than useful appetites I have given to my lower forces. My journalism also came in for scrutiny.

On one occasion I wrote a jazz-club story and related of being so enthralled by the music that even if – I entered the name of a famous voluptuous Hollywood actress – gave me a me a nod and a wink, she would have had to drag me away by my hair. I submitted the story. Then the doubts arose. I had “enjoyed” writing the little slightly off-colour joke. But my recently acquired conscience protested. An inner struggle arose. I eventually surrendered and phoned the editor to suggest that he delete the joke. God is kind, of course and the editor said, “Don’t worry, Lawrence, I have already cut it.”

This little occurrence may sound as if I were pretty awful as a Subud member, but there I was, dealing with stuff that was still very basic, so, yes, I am pretty awful as a Subud member. There is a Biblical link related to what you say (or by extension, write) as Jesus related that it is not what you put in mouth that makes you bad, but what comes out of it.

Since writers are sort of gabby persons, it is easy to make mistakes. But as far as speaking is concerned, humour can prevail somewhat and I remember reading what is one of the most famous of all spiritual quotes, from Lao Tzu. “Those who speak don’t know, those who know don’t speak.” But Lao Tzu actually spoke those words. Perhaps that famous mystic was indulging in a bit of humorous self-irony.

Linked to the latihan...

It eventually became evident to me that enterprises were indeed linked to the latihan. It must be obvious that the latihan favours, or fosters, a motivated life, albeit attuned to personal situations, whether mental, physical, especially psychological. We are informed that only God is good, and we are all, individually, somewhere along the road. I got it, as our American brothers and sisters say. Enterprises gave me, personally, a kick in my spiritual butt. Enterprises put me out there, in the world.

Many Subud members will maintain that I am stating the obvious – but if I stop getting out there – in the world – I would be refusing the chance to get practical proof of where I am at. Thus, this writer needs enterprises. And yes, in my case I can see a long, often scary, road ahead.

I can see what our founding member was driving at all those years when he stated, again and again, the need for enterprises. It was not just about making money, which of course is no bad thing, but all the more about unlearning some of our defects and being able to be in the world >

without adding to the prevailing global chaos.

It takes a while before one can actually perform properly, inwardly and outwardly, one's daily duties. To be able to produce something useful without the wish to get rich, however, has a rather Zen-like feel to it. There is only one "wish" (a tricky word) and that is to simply give the world something useful and, even, aesthetically appealing. The good part is that in doing so people are actually going to pay you. A lovely bit of Shaker philosophy reads: "Never make something that is not required and useful. If it is required and useful do not hesitate to make it beautiful."

Then came the pottery. It started because Romana and I had become pensioners. The translations gradually eased off, I was still writing but I often had a need to un-twiddle my thumbs, especially because, as usual, my wife was miles ahead of me.

She started going at the garden as if she were in league with Mother Nature herself. I felt deserted. I fumed. Why isn't she in here coddling me? I threw black looks to no avail. It took a week, mostly because I am a bit slow on the uptake, to realize that she not only had the right to do what she loved to do, but also that she was showing me the way to a proper use of our time.

Moreover, it was our founder member's son, Haryono, who turned to gardening during his student days to avoid nightclubbing with his fellow students. When Haryono, the story goes, needed a backup study subject at university, our founder member suggested philosophy. Possibly it was a case of "better the devil you know than the one you don't."

Romana was out there furiously redesigning the landscape of our garden. I felt resentful, miffed, grumpy. God is wise, as always, and reminded me that I had once learned the so-called art of pottery. At least I had learned how to use a potter's wheel more or less efficiently. Hmmmmn, passed through my mind. Then He took over and things started to happen. A religious community nearby had been given a potter's wheel. I was asked to come and teach some of the ladies there.

Showing the basics...

I showed up, showed them the basics. "You knead the clay until it is plastic and contains no hard bits or air bubbles. You place a ball of clay on the wheel and with your cupped hands "centre" it so that it does not wobble. Then you dig a finger into the spinning ball of clay to make an opening. You place one or two fingers into the opening and place one or two fingers, often a knuckle, on the outside of the opening in a corresponding position to those inside. Then you squeeze, and up will rise the wall of a pot. You have made your first ashtray. I then killed all of their interest with, "At this point you must practice every day for two hours for two months, until your fingers know what to do."

However, since I had "received" that I should rejuvenate my pottery interests, I asked the ladies if they would lend me their wheel. "Take it for as long as you like," they said. I made pots and asked a local ceramics teacher at Austria's premier ceramics school if I could use his kiln for firing.

He said, "Yes, but the government had just authorised a new kiln for the school, and I get their old kiln. You can have my old kiln free of charge." What do you say to that? "Hallelujah," at least. Thus, one way or another I received a fully equipped pottery studio free of charge. I mean, I was dealing with worldly things, with fistfuls of help from above.

The first firings were a disaster. My wheel abilities were all right, but I needed a lot of help with the glazing process. You can buy ready-made glazes, but they are expensive. So, I started mixing my own glazes. They comprise prescribed percentages of such stuff as feldspar, dolomite, colmanite, china clay – and lots more, to which is added various oxides to give colour.

One's angelic wife left the garden for a while and took over this all-too-demanding part of the enterprise. (One wonders if God gave me such a wife because I deserved her, or out of compassion – go figure.) A slow boom took place. We were selling pots and there were orders coming in. The boom accelerated. Coffee mugs (of course), teapots, casseroles, jugs, pasta bowls.

We now have four basic stoneware glazes. A midnight blue/black, an off white, a bottle green, >



and what I call a blatant blue, which I don't like, but the customers do. There used to be a classic Chinese tenmoku glaze (which I have lost) and a classic celadon, which I pine to achieve. The stoneware clay I use contains beautiful speckles of pyrite.

Pottery making is a pretty fascinating occupation because there is sufficient stuff involved to keep the most restless of minds focussed. At the same time phase two kicks in when I am compelled to deal with customers. Getting along with people has never been a great strength. But He (not to mention she) is in there socking out the information and, above all, the promptings.

Moreover, He didn't let me leave Subud.

BELIEF IN GOD

Anthony Bright Paul writes...

It is very reasonable for people not to believe in God, especially when one first enquires what it is exactly that they do NOT believe in. I had a husband and wife pass by my gate. The wife, Noelle, was a Catholic and went regularly to Church and was a believer. The husband was also Irish and was quite definitely not.

So I asked him what it was he did not believe in. That quite stumped him for a bit, until I assured him that he was quite reasonable. Who in their right mind could believe in an old man with a long grey beard, sitting on a throne of gold, encrusted with diamonds, perched up somewhere in the sky, *in this day and age?*

So, I asked him one more question. Was he alive? Silly sort of question – of course, he was alive! And that bush is alive? And that dog is alive? And those sparrows and those seagulls are alive? Yes, indubitably, they were all alive. So, you believe in Life? I said. He agreed.

We laughed, shook hands and parted.

A response from Léonard Lassalle

When I was a child my English mother never mentioned or used the word God, she suffered from a religious upbringing. On the other hand, her French boyfriend often would swear and I only heard the word God express negative feelings.

Through the practice of the latihan I have found that I do not need to believe, I do not need to even use this word God. The reality of the experience is what replaces 'the believing'.

My spiritual reality is based only on my experience, not on my beliefs. We do not have to believe in God to receive the latihan kejiwaan.

The latihan is for whoever asks for it, not just only for the believers. My love for you Tony is not a belief, it is something real and I live it.

And thank you all for being my sisters and brothers, with love, *Léonard*



THE WISDOM OF JOKES

Harris Smart writes about the "jokester" tradition...

You are all probably aware that there is a spiritual tradition which conveys wisdom through jokes and amusing anecdotes. We can name it the "jokester" or "trickster" tradition.

You can buy books in the various spiritual traditions which contain such stories. For instance, amusing stories are part of the Zen Buddhist tradition. Here is one such story I like...

There is a Zen Buddhist monk in a village, and everyone respects him for his holiness. Then a girl in the village gets pregnant and she says that the monk is responsible.

So, all the villages are indignant and when the baby is born, they go to the monk and say, "We are very disappointed in you. We thought you were so holy and all the time you are going around getting girls pregnant. Here, you can look after the baby."

"Is that so?" said the monk, taking the baby.

But then a while later the girl confessed that it had been somebody else who got her pregnant and all the villagers went to the monk and said, "Terribly sorry. We know it wasn't you after all. We'll take the baby back now."

"Is that so?" said the monk, handing over the baby.

The point of the story is, of course, to show equanimity in all situations.

The Sufi tradition...

Probably, everyone is familiar with the Sufi tradition which also likes to use amusing stories to awaken knowledge. Many of these stories are attributed to a character called "Nasruddin".

An expert in this tradition who produced many books with collections of these Sufi tales is Idries Shah, to whom John Bennett bequeathed Coombe Springs after he had broken with Subud. Apparently Shah gave one big party in the house and then sold it. I don't know if this story is really true, but it would certainly be in the trickster tradition. One of the Sufi stories that I like goes like this...

Lost his key...

One-night Nasruddin comes home after dark and drops his key as he is trying to insert it into his front door. A few minutes later a neighbour comes by and is disconcerted to see Nasruddin crawling around under the light of the streetlamp.

"What are you doing down there?" asks the neighbour.

Nasruddin replies, "Oh, I am looking for my house key."

"Is that where you dropped it?"

"No, I actually dropped it over there near my front door, but it's so dark there. The light's much better here."

What meaning can we derive from this skit? Well, what it says to me is that sometimes I do what is easy and pleasant even though it doesn't produce a result, whereas I should do what is hard which will produce a result.

So, sometimes people (including myself) will feel very active and busy because they are working very hard, in my case that would be doing a lot of writing for example, whereas what I should be doing is what I don't like doing such as my income tax return. Get it?

An embarrassing incident...

One day Abdul farts while bending over to make obeisance to the Sultan. Stricken with shame, he runs from the room, runs from the city, runs from the country and takes up residence in another country.

20 years go by. Abdul thinks, "Surely, it is safe to return to my own country now. Everyone will have forgotten that unfortunate incident when I farted in front of the Sultan."

So, he crosses back into his own country, and he decides to stop for some refreshment. He goes into a coffee shop and gets into a conversation with the owner. He tells the owner that he has been living in a foreign country for the last 20 years.

"Twenty years eh?" says the owner. "That must've been round the time that Abdul farted in front of the Sultan."

I will let you figure out for yourself what that one means, or you can just enjoy it as a joke. >

A puzzling story...

But there is one Sufi story that really puzzles me. I am not sure what it means. I would be interested to know what you think of it. Here's the story...

A man goes out hunting in the woods but is thrown by his horse. He wanders around the forest until he comes to a river. He sits by the river and just then he notices a cloth-wrapped package floating down the stream.

That's interesting, he thinks, and he gets a branch and snags the package and pulls it to the bank. He unwraps it and finds that it contains a feast of wonderful foods. There is yoghurt and cream and Turkish delights, and all kinds of wonderful fruits all served up in the tastiest spices and syrups. He is quite hungry from his wandering around in the woods, so he tucks in and is wonderfully sustained and rejuvenated.

Now, he thinks, I must figure out how to get back to civilisation. I know, I'll follow the course of this river upstream. It is bound to lead somewhere.

So, he walks along all day, and then sleeps by the stream that night, and then in the morning starts off walking upstream again, when lo and behold, he sees another cloth-wrapped package floating down the river. So, he grabs it, and it contains all the same wonderful foods as the day before.

And this happens day after day as the man walks upstream. These parcels of food regularly come down to him.

Then one day he is walking along, and he sees a castle. And as he is looking at the castle he sees a young woman, obviously a serving maid, come down to the stream and put a cloth-wrapped package into the water.

The hunter approaches the maid and asks, "Sister, why do you do that? Why do you float food down the river like that?"

The maid says, "Oh no Sir, this is not food, this is just what's left after our mistress has had her bath."

What do you make of that?

Before I say anything else I would like to make a comment on the parables and sayings of Jesus. I think some of these parables and sayings could be said to be in the trickster tradition since they would have been quite shocking to his audience.

For instance, "Let the one who is without sin, cast the first stone." Or, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

Some of Jesus' sayings and parables relate to heaven as when he will compare the kingdom of heaven to a mustard seed, or a treasure hidden in a field. But some sayings do not seem to me to have to do with the next world but are rather practical earthy advice about how to behave on earth.

A good example of this is the saying, "Don't cast your pearls before swine". This is obviously advice for this place. It doesn't have any relevance to heaven, I think, where there are no pigs.

So, this leads me back to the story of the hunter and the food. Does it have a spiritual meaning this story, or does it just say something about the way things are here on earth, where some people are higher than others, so that what to her is just the leavings of her bath, is to you wonderful food.

One thing I do know...

Is that sometimes the stories can have powerful effects. Once when I was a student at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, I lived in the grounds of an old mansion house which was inhabited by medical students. Attached to the house was a cottage in the garden where I lived. The cottage was said to belong to a Greek Orthodox priest, but he had gone off to Mexico many years ago and no one had ever seen him since. So, the cottage had a series of tenants.

The man who had it before me had a lioness cub. Don't ask me how he got hold of a lioness cub. This was California in the 60s. One day when the lioness cub was pretty much full grown she got out of the backyard and went romping down the street and knocked over a little girl who was playing hopscotch. After that the lioness had to go to a zoo.

The first thing I had to do when I moved into the cottage was remove half an inch of dried blood from the bottom of the refrigerator, all that remained of the lioness's food.

A major problem in the house, as in all shared houses, was that people didn't do their dishes.

One morning we all came down to breakfast to find that there was a large scroll pinned to the >

wall above the kitchen sink. On the scroll was written this story...

A monk went to the master and asked, "Master, how can I be enlightened?"

The master replied, "Have you eaten your rice porridge?"

"Yes," said the monk.

"Have you washed your bowl?" the master asked.

At that moment, the monk was enlightened.

This message caused a big improvement in the dishwashing in the house. For a while... ●

THE PASSING OF FREDRICK BRANCHFLOWER

Oswald Norton writes... My personal story about Fredrick's Impact on me...

Fredrick Branchflower passed away Monday 28th November, 2022

We received the news Monday night that our dear brother Fredrick Branchflower passed away peacefully in his home this morning. Arrangements are just now being made and I'll update you when I know more.

I'm sure that each of us has a story about how Fredrick touched us in one way or the other. At our November Kejiwaan Gathering at the Menucha Retreat and Conference Center – the last time I saw and spoke to Fredrick – we all told stories about either our opening, or something about our Subud journey we wanted to share.

My story concerned the different Subud enterprises that I had been a part of and how each one of them helped me to find what I needed for that time in my work life. One of those Subud enterprises was Branchflower Software.

In 1991, we moved to Bellevue and became a part of the members who practiced the latihan on the eastside. Sometimes we did latihan at the Branchflower's home in Redmond. When we had moved to this area, I fully expected I would continue the work I had started in the Los Angeles area, selling used technology. That wasn't happening and I was pretty depressed about it.

One time after latihan I mentioned this to Fredrick, and he offered me a sales job with his Branchflower Software company. His product was a contact management program for small businesses. I was given the task of training and sales and started to go to conferences with Fredrick's son Stephen.

I didn't make a lot of sales, but I did learn the software business and gained confidence in my abilities, because of Fredrick's confidence in me.

Later Fredrick worked with a partner to create a product configuration software add on for a major manufacturing software company creating the first such product for the new Windows platform. Out of his work I was given the opportunity to sell an entire manufacturing software suite for the same company. I never sold a single one.

However, what I did gain from both of these experiences was the confidence I needed to next be able to work for Microsoft and many other software companies for the next 20 years. All of that success I owe to Fredrick's faith in me.

One last thought on Fredrick's work on enterprise. His desire to leave an enterprise that would provide funds for Subud continued to his last days where he was working on 3 different marketing websites that he hoped would eventually produce profits he could contribute.

For more details on Fredrick (and Melanie's) life, please click on this link to an interview that Paul Nelson did with them, which was published May 28, 2015:

<https://www.subudgreaterseattle.com/the-branchflowers-a-life-in-subud/> ●

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FREDRICK'S CELEBRATION OF LIFE

From Fredrick and Melanie's daughter Isabel Gates...

Dear Subud Brothers and Sisters,

Fredrick Branchflower, our family's beloved patriarch, Subud brother, and dear friend to so many, passed away peacefully in our home on November 28, 2022 at the age of 86. His loving commitment to family, his friendships and service, along with his deep love and appreciation for Subud, were the principles that guided his life.

This week we have been so blessed to receive an outpouring of love from friends sharing their condolences as well as their experiences with him. One poignant card contained the quote, "Sometimes only one person is missing and the whole world seems depopulated."

Dad was born in 1936, raised in both Seattle and Bainbridge Island, a child during the second World War. When he was two years old, his parents took him to meet their dear friend's new baby (Melanie) in the hospital.

One of his famous family stories recalls that twenty years later, in 1958, he impulsively shaved his head after watching Yul Brynner in "The King and I" and then proposed to my mom the next day. Despite the loss of that beautiful head of hair, she said 'yes'! He figured she must have loved him then. Last June, they celebrated their 64th anniversary together.

Dad seemed to naturally embrace fatherhood. I can still hear his loud whoops at our many games or plays and remember so many games of Catch or Pickle in the backyard. He invited us every night at dinner to share about our day. He taught us Mastermind and Go. We felt listened to and challenged.

In his memoir, Dad wrote, "If I was to say what is most important to me, I would say God, Family/Friends and Health would be my top three. It is because of family and friends that my life has been so complete and wonderful."

Dad had friends all over the world, in every walk of life, because he cared deeply about people. He had stories in his pocket from 50 years in Subud, 20 years in the Navy, and was a tireless advocate for the homeless and active as a volunteer in so many organizations we've lost count.

If Fredrick touched your life in some way, our family invites you to come appreciate and remember him with us. A celebration of his life will be held at the Spring Street Subud House in Seattle on Saturday, February 25th, beginning at 3 p.m. Debbie Machado will be preparing heavy hors d'oeuvres, all dad's favorites, so please take a moment to go to

https://www.evite.com/event/0267Z7GUC4V3Q4LSEEPNPAQMW73MA?utm_campaign=send_sharable_link&utm_source=evitelink&utm_medium=sharable_invite

and RSVP so she can prepare the right quantities.

Should anyone wish to make a memorial donation, we know Fredrick would greatly appreciate a gift to any of the Subud charities/organizations.

With love and gratitude, Isabel Gates (and Melanie)

HARLINAH LONGCROFT: A BRIEF OBITUARY

Harlinah Helen Rosemary Evelyn Longcroft, born in Egypt on 22nd October 1934, passed away peacefully on Sunday 4th December, 2022. *Dachlan Cartwright writes...*

I first heard of Harlinah as someone who lived at Wisma Subud and had put out a leaflet on how and how not to behave at the Complex. This seemed to me to be a list of "Thou shalt nots..." in the best memsahib tradition, and it rather put me off.

Later, when working closely with Harlinah, I came to admire her as a



fine, honest and important Subud member, one of those who had obviously been sent by God to help Bapak in his holy mission. She also had a delicious sense of humour.

Around 1986, when I was working in Bandung, Harlinah got in touch with me. She wanted someone who would know the progress of the HOS if she suddenly passed on. Not to continue writing the History, but, from a knowledge of her files and of the stage she was at, to help the next person who would undertake the task of Subud Historian. This involved discussions with Harlinah, and a knowledge of her files librarianship and research work, which I had been trained for.

So, an arrangement was made whereby I would come down to Cilandak from Bandung one weekend a month. As I was working fulltime at BIS, I would come down by train on Friday night, and work with Harlinah all day Saturday and Sunday mornings (with an opportunity to follow the Sunday latihan at WS), returning to Bandung by train on Sunday afternoon.

Then on the Saturday morning I would have a delicious breakfast and chat with Harlinah, and then we would get down to work. Harlinah also enjoyed cooking lunch, to which her neighbour Roseanna Sawrey-Cookson came and shared. After the work was done, we would chat. Her guidance, advice, and insights were as valuable in their way as those of my two other Subud “mentors”, Mas Adji and Muhammad Ridhwan Is’haric.

There was no class snobbery, the bane of the English, about Harlinah, although she was the “top drawer” of English society. For example, she had an extensive library, which I believe she kept upstairs in her house. She mentioned that she had some of the original Babar the Elephant books, and also Biggles. Whenever W.E. Johns wrote a new Biggles book, Harlinah’s family received a new mint copy. Wow.

She had spent much of her early life in Egypt, where her father was I believe the representative of one of the British shipping lines. So, she could speak with some authority on this ancient country and its monuments. On the contemporary Middle East situation, she opined that the British should have marched out of Suez with flags flying etc, instead of the humiliating debacle of withdrawal which actually happened.

I don’t know where she went to school, and I don’t think she attended university. She had worked for one of the most eminent of historians, Arnold Toynbee, author of the formidable, magisterial, *A Study of History*. She had been married, but the marriage hadn’t worked.

Harlinah had actually received about Subud before she was opened. She eventually became John Bennett’s secretary at Coombe Spring, and reminisced on what a fine, caring, employer he was. She also explained that Mr B’s head wound in World War 1 affected him, which perhaps was one of the reasons why he would go off at a tangent, embracing one spiritual movement after another.

Harlinah’s receiving could be remarkable. She could hear people think. And observed that most people’s thoughts were mediocre. This was a salutary lesson to me to “censor” my own thinking. Most of us spend our lives with a kind of B-Movie running through our heads, in which we are heroes in imagined situations. It’s liberating if we can be aware of this and get rid of it, except when it’s needed for “refreshing” or catharsis.

It was enlightening to learn how the latihan helped Harlinah as a historian. She was able to receive the truth of a historical situation. For example, we would be talking about Ancient China, and she suddenly went, “Ooh, I’m getting something”. (It was a receiving which confirmed the truth of what she had been speculating on). Another receiving – the Vikings, before they set out on their long voyages, would have a ceremony conducted by a priestess (and I think Harlinah experienced herself as the priestess). Their voyages had the nature of a religious quest. There was also the idea that for Subud members you would receive what was necessary. For example, if you were a scientist you could receive information about science in Atlantis. It’s like “time travel”, not in the sense of HG Wells and his machine, but as an expansion of consciousness present into both the past and the future.

Later we were in email correspondence about receiving the “truth” of various mysteries. “Who was King Arthur?” had long intrigued me, (there are about six “candidates”). She replied, “Well >

“ Harlinah had received about Subud before she was opened...”

Dachlan, you're a Subud helper, you should be able to receive the answer for yourself." And so I did, to my satisfaction.

Her sense of humour showed when Margaret Thatcher visited Indonesia in 1985. The Iron Lady's itinerary included the British Council, then located in the Widjojo Centre. Now Harlinah looked very much like the Leaderine, especially to Indonesians.

In an article she wrote for one of the Subud publications, she imagined herself confusing Dennis Thatcher by flinging her arms around him. On another occasion she was in Balikpapan. The word got round among the locals that Mrs Thatcher was visiting Balikpapan, so she found herself at the head of a procession of curious locals.

Here is another example of the light-hearted side of our own Iron Lady. Occasionally we would spend Saturday nights listening to... country music! a la Roger Miller (not Waylon Jennings). She actually had a TV, but it was never switched on, except when she had some lady guests.

Once she flattered me by saying that she saw me as a knight going off to fight in the Wars of the Roses, LOL. (It would have to have been the Lancastrians under the Welshman Henry Tudor, a great but mean statesman, who balanced the budget, and initiated the discovery of North America by the Cabots. Sadly, everybody looks at his son Henry VIII, a slob who among other things discriminated against the Cymry and their language.)

Harlinah was direct and honest in her opinions. She took no prisoners, whatever their family or official status in Subud. Gossip was anathema to her, but she could be diplomatic when necessary. Once she told me that what she received in group testing was sometimes different from the group receiving, but she went along because the harmony of the group was more important.

My Indonesian wife Srie, who joined Subud after me, and after hearing a "voice" which told her to do so, but remained still skeptical, as our Subud Bandung group was awash with the fascination of kebatinan and "ghost stories", saw in Harlinah someone of total and impressive normality.

Harlinah had more than her fair share of illnesses, suffering the removal of one kidney. Once she was able to transcend a bout of migraine by willing herself to be on a balmy, tropical, island.

She's probably in an even better Paradise now.

“ It was enlightening to learn how the latihan helped Harlinah as a historian...”

Remembrance of Harlinah Longcroft, Our Subud Historian

Daniela Moneta, WSA Archives, writes...

I was saddened to hear of Harlinah's passing; not sad for her but selfishly sad for myself. I worked closely with her for more than four years when I went to Wisma Subud to work on Bapak's archives. She was there to greet me, and we saw each other every day.

When I arrived at Wisma Subud for the first time in 1988, after Bapak's passing, to measure the collection to determine the equipment and the amount of folders and boxes we needed to organize and preserve Bapak's archives, Harlinah was there to greet me with open arms. I had been opened for sixteen years; but I knew very little about the kejiwaan. I didn't even understand why or where I got the determination to never miss latihan. Only once in a while did I feel movement during latihan even though I had a strong voice to sing; it felt like I was always calling out for help.

I had seen Bapak on his visits to Santa Monica, California, where I was from. I had read Bapak's talks, but still didn't have a deep understanding about Subud. Being at Wisma Subud changed all of that. Living in the Guest House, in the apartment



Harlinah Longcroft, Subud Historian. Photo taken probably in mid-1980s.

that Bapak and Ibu Siti Sumari lived in for several years before moving into the Big House, was a tremendous gift. Something deep inside me started to stir. Hearing the Call to Prayer each morning was beautiful and haunting to my ears. The cats running across the tin roofs were delightful. My heart was bursting.

Harlinah taught me so much about the kejiwaan. She taught me all she knew about writing the history of Subud and what Bapak had asked her to do. Not the rules and regulations that I had learned in my training as an archivist – about citing sources, and never stating any fact without having evidence to prove and verify it. The discipline of being an archivist is strictly written in tradition, something that I brought with me to the job. What Harlinah taught me was to look inside for the answers.

We tested many things together about how the archives should be handled, how it should be arranged and organized, how it should be described, indexed, and cataloged. We knew we needed a strong mission statement. I came up with the first half: "to collect, preserve, and provide access to information about Subud in spoken, written, and visual forms".

The Archives strive to contain in their purest form the complete works of Bapak Muhammad Subuh Sumohadiwidjojo, founder of Subud." Harlinah came up with the important second part: "The Archive keeps records that inform and remind people about Subud, bear witness to the activities of Subud members, and the spread of Subud. They provide evidence of the latihan kejiwaan of Subud: how it developed not by our will but by the will of Almighty God, and how the latihan envelopes us in our everyday life."

My experiences grew and developed through the years working with Harlinah. Working in the archives is the greatest blessing I could ever have. A lot of what happened, I don't understand, but it keeps me going.

When working, sometimes the latihan overwhelms me and spontaneously takes over and I have a latihan that goes on for fifteen or twenty minutes. I am never sure why these things happen; was it something I just wrote to describe a document, was it the subject terms that I finally came up with that seem right, or was it something that someone sent or said to complement what I was working on?

I don't know the answer to any of these questions. All I know is that working in the Subud archives is the greatest blessing I, or anyone else, could ever have. The rewards just keep coming. I will miss you Harlinah, but you will always be in my heart.

The WSA Archives website has several interviews with Harlinah; one was made in 1990 by Lawrence Pevec and Bardolf Paul, with many details about what Bapak said about the archives, how it works, and its reason for being. Another interview is from the Memories of Bapak project filmed in 1997.

As well as her books, the writings of Harlinah appear throughout the Subud archives in letters and in newspaper articles. We have a digital copy of *History of Subud, Volume 1, Book 1, Part 1*, that can be read, studied, and searched online.

We also have Harlinah's first book *Subud Is a Way of Life*, written in 1990 that is digitized and available online to read.

If you would like access to the WSA Archives online, send an email to admin@wsarchives.org and we can set you up quickly.

“ We tested many things together about how the archives should be handled... ”



Harlinah Longcroft, Subud Historian, 1990.
Photo by Laurence Pevec

“ I will miss you, Harlinah, but you will always be in my heart... ”

HARLINAH LONGCROFT & THE HISTORY OF SUBUD PROJECT

Rashidah Pope writes...

The History of Subud Project started nearly 40 years ago when Bapak said to Harlinah Longcroft that maybe one day she would write the History of Subud. Later, under the umbrella of ISC (now called the WSA Executive), Harlinah dedicated her life to writing, researching, and collecting Subud documents and interviews from all over the world.

The first volume of the History of Subud comprises of three books. Book 1 was published in 1993 and covers Bapak's early life and the beginnings of Subud in Indonesia. Book 2 was published in 2001 and describes the spread of Subud outside of Indonesia during the years 1954 – 1957, including Bapak's first visit to the West in 1957.

Book 3 covers the remarkable period of 1958 – 1959 when Bapak and his party carried out their longest journey around the world. He travelled over 88,000 kilometres (55,000 miles) in 425 days and witnessed the openings of thousands of people all over the world.

This was an extremely dynamic time in the history of Subud due to the explosion of world-wide interest in Subud, the powerful effects of the Latihan, as well as the chaos that ensued from so many people being opened in such a short time. The first Subud World Congress was also held during this period, and Bapak outlined and clarified many of the organisational structures and helper responsibilities in Subud.

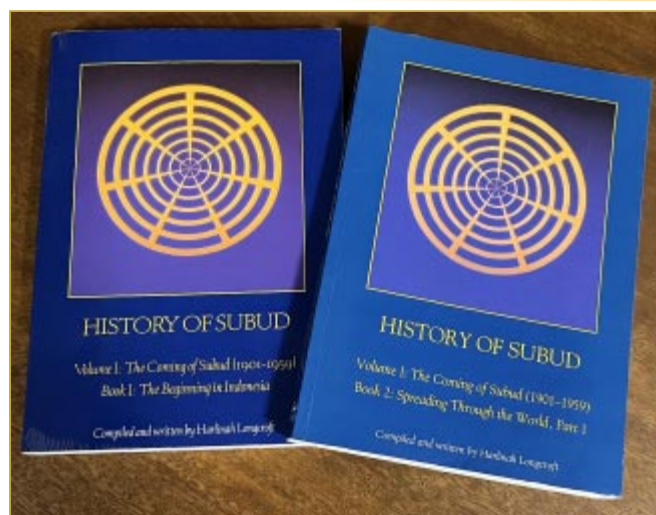
Harlinah had drafted about two thirds of Book 3 before her body prevented her from finishing it. Her optimism kept her inspired and hopeful that she would regain the physical strength to complete the book, but a few months before her passing she realised her work here had ended, and she was preparing to continue her journey.

Several months ago, I was blessed by being asked to help Harlinah with completing Book 3. This was an unexpected gift and blessing, and yet at the same time, I was unsure of my ability to help. The logistics of temporarily moving four thousand kilometres across Australia from Perth to Canberra was also slightly daunting. Thankfully by the Grace of God and with the encouragement, help and blessings of many people, I was able to swiftly arrange my life in Perth so that I could be in Canberra during the last months of Harlinah's life.

Harlinah's enthusiasm and optimism were always tangible and very present right up to the end of her life. Despite being in and out of hospital for the past several years, Harlinah stayed positive throughout the many health challenges she courageously endured.

The remaining work on Book 3 involves compiling and organising the work she has completed and adding the missing information. Once it has been finalised, edited, and published, the hope is to republish Book 1 and 2 to complete the Volume 1 set.

Harlinah passed away peacefully in the early hours on 4th December 2022. We come from God, and we return to God. May God bless Harlinah on her journey. ●



Harlinah's enthusiasm and optimism were always tangible and very present, right up to the end of her life...

REMEMBERING LIENHARD BERGER

Romina Vianden Prudent, Committee Councillor Subud Germany, writes...

Born in Hanover on February, 19, 1935, our brother Lienhard began his journey to the hereafter, on November 9, 2022.

Subud Germany says farewell to one of the founding members of the organisation. After being opened in 1959 in Johannesburg, South Africa, Lienhard moved to Wolfsburg, Germany, in 1964, and served in many national and international functions, starting as a member of the International >

Subud Committee (ISC), during the 1971-1975 term when it was located in Wolfsburg.

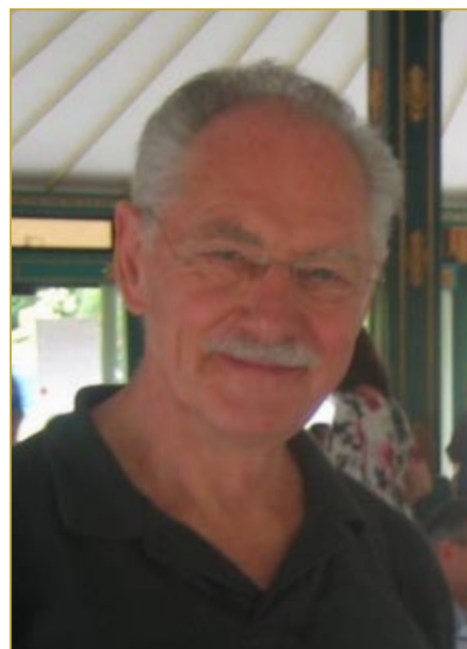
His particular focus was on enterprise, and over the years he was involved in the SKM Bank in Jakarta, the Anugraha Conference Centre in the UK, and the PTS Widjojo building in Jakarta, which he chaired for a number of years in the nineties. Later on he served on the Board of the Muhammad Subuh Foundation (MSF).

Lienhard's commitment to the Latihan Kejiwaan of Subud was outstanding. In addition to the many challenges in his leading position at Volkswagen, and the care for his family with Anna Maria and four children, his commitment to Subud was tireless.

He was a member of the groups in Wolfsburg, Potsdam and Berlin, where he served as local helper, and for many years as national helper. We will miss his charm and smile, his courtesy, and his competence in many fields.

If you would like to hear the story of how Lienhard encountered Subud, and how the Latihan and meeting Bapak touched his life, please go to:

https://www.youtube.com/embed/NercqH_D7H0



Portrait of Lienhard by Viktor Boehm, taken in Rungan Sari, Kalimantan, in 2008.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T S

A New Book from former SICA Chair, Latifah Taormina

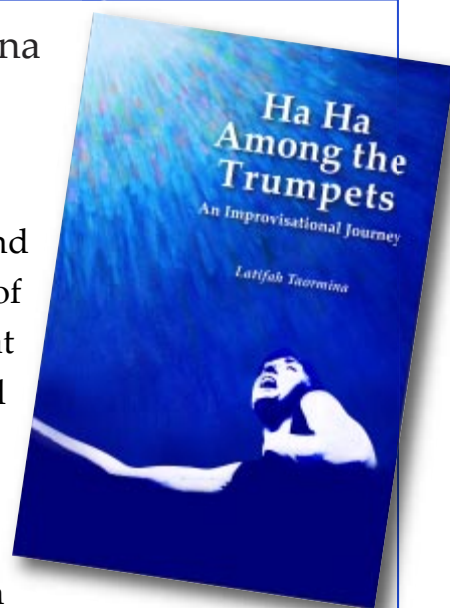
Ha Ha Among the Trumpets

An Improvisational Journey

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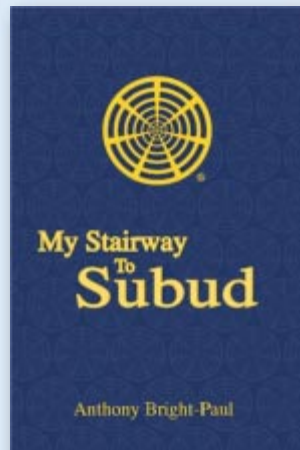
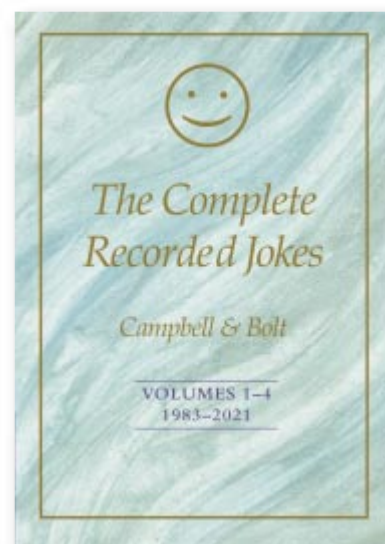
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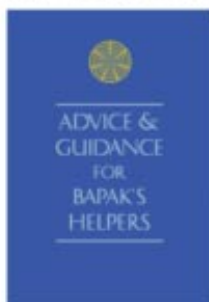
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