

# SICA



The Subud International Cultural Association (SICA) is a nonprofit organisation providing programs and services to Subud members and other organisations working for the public benefit across all fields of cultural endeavour.

SICA provides information, training, networking, and support services as well as opportunities to engage and collaborate with cultural initiatives and events around the world.

SICA works at the intersection of creativity and spirituality to advance and celebrate activities that grow out of the development of the human soul.

# Today's Universal Culture



This situation today is very different from the olden days. In the olden days most people were farmers. A few people were soldiers. Very, very few people dealt with culture, and the development of their heart and mind.

So, in general, it was not a burden, or it was not a difficulty, to live one's life, say, for a month without using the nafsu, without constantly having to make use of the heart and mind. But in today's world, almost everybody constantly lives their life practicing or involved with a form of culture which requires the intelligence of the heart and mind, which requires the constant exercise of the understanding of the mind. This form of culture, which is universal today, is called technology.

So it is clear that what was relatively easy in the olden days is today very hard. And when we say it was "easy" in the olden days, of course the fact is that, easy as it was, it probably wasn't all that easy. But Bapak is speaking relatively.

SO.....Bapak was talking about the activity of mankind and the use of the heart and mind as an expression of individuality.

# An Instrument that is Empty...

When we say empty - we are not talking about the violin playing of the celebrated American comedian Jack Benny, who's playing was described as sounding like the gut was still in the cat...although Jack Benny was probably someone who Bapak would have described as a natural comedian - who only had to stand there to make people laugh. What Bapak said was:

An instrument that is empty can produce sound, clear sound.

This is something Bapak very much hopes for you. In fact, if you are really empty, the latihan will bring out of you a pleasant voice. But so far your voices still frighten people. They are not pleasant to hear but rather frightening. (Bapak barks like a dog)

If you are really like a beautiful violin - to take a violin as a symbol - you sound like this (Bapak sings in a beautiful voice): and not: 'Ait, aut, ait...' (Bapak barks like a dog and makes other such sounds) . . . No.



# Yet Shaped Like the Human Body...

What is the reason and why is it necessary that instruments should have a certain shape ?

**For instance, why is the violin shaped like this? ( Bapak illustrates with his hands. ) Why? It is shaped like the human body.**

**This signifies that it gives expression to sounds coming from the djiwa. So the voice originates from within, from emptiness:**

'Nge-eeeeek' ( Bapak makes sounds like a violin ), and it symbolizes that the origin of this sound 'ngeeeeeek-ngeeeeeek' is not the physical body of man.

**But people do not understand that this sound comes from deep within.**

**The sound does not originate in this physical body.**

**So look for what is inside you. If you can find it, you can make any kind of sound or note you need.**



**If you come to a moment of quietness and emptiness,  
and let the latihan be active in you and go on in you,  
then out of the emptiness can come sounds like this: 'eeeh'  
(Bapak sings a melodious sound)...**

**Bapak spoke of culture as being "very wide" and "including everything."**

**He spoke of cooking being as much a part of culture as music, painting or theatre. Each is a practice that comes about as a result of the threefold unity of 1) Its existence; 2) Its nature; 3) Its working (function). These three produce the outcome or the result.**

**In other words, not only does a meal or a painting exist, but it also has an intended function of some kind, as well as an actual consequence.**

**Achieving that threefold unity in expression can make observers or participants as Bapak put it "really aware of their lives."**

**So this indicates that people can develop a feeling for Subud and the Latihan by eating food that is prepared with content, or attending a concert and hearing music with content, or seeing an exhibition of paintings with content, or being treated by a practitioner who applies content, or reading a book that is written with content.**

**It no doubt also indicates that it can be through working closely with someone in a technological, business, health, social or educational environment where the approach is one of guided content and surrender.**

**This clearly is a much broader scenario than the arts per se, although the arts, from an anthropological historical point of view, are the basis of cultural expression - Bapak cites the Wayang Shadow Puppets and the arts of self defence as being examples.**

# Poems For Peace



**Mayor of Austin — and City of Austin, Texas — honours SICA  
by proclaiming September 21, 2013 Poems for Peace Day**

Austin City Council Member, Laura Morrison, congratulates SICA Chair, Latifah Taormina (holding the proclamation) and Austin's Poems for Peace event director, Robert Faires at Austin's City Hall.

(Austin's City Hall, by the way, was designed by Antoine Predock!)

## **Poems For Peace Initiatives**

**Encouraging SICA activities in other countries** to mark and celebrate Poems For Peace Day on 21 September.

**SICA has license** on this concept/descriptor for arts events of this kind

**Broadens profile of SICA** and is a permanent legacy

**A very effective piece of arts branding**

**Serves as an example of establishing a conspicuous cultural event** that has a legal status and a strongly endorsed potential for bringing people together in a positive and peaceful form of cultural sharing

# Cultural Activities in Australia

- **2013 National Congress in Queensland** in January was a very fertile ground for creative participation - with hat and outfit making parade, impromptu choral singing, instrumental music and individual singing performances;
- **SICA-SIHA Weekend** - Not so long ago we also had a successful weekend where the health interests of SIHA came together with the arts interests of SICA - creating a weekend retreat with a very special feeling and a sharing of insights into the mutual benefits of good health and artistic expression.
- **2012 National Congress in Sydney** was also an example of how, from a cultural point of view, conducive surroundings and venue add to the atmosphere of cultural performances - with some special events in a chapel in the University of Sydney. Hopefully Puebla cultural events will enjoy a similarly atmospheric setting.
- **Musicafe-Gallery Gigs** - About to embark on another series of cafe concerts in Brisbane - 20 Oct - involving Subud artists and Iranian musicians - Nov will be with African musicians - giving the door to the musicians and Cafe to charitable cause.

# Subud Involvement in Centenary of Canberra 100th Birthday Celebrations 2013

- **Irma Gold** published and very successfully launched her critically acclaimed book, **The Invisible Thread: One Hundred Years of Words**, an anthology by writers who have an association with the Canberra region - to mark the Centenary of Canberra
- **'Back to the Island'** - Three of us Subud members - Ian Blake, Maynard Gold and myself - involved in 'Back to the Island' - profiling traditional music in Australia since settlement - attended by many people on the 100th birthday of the Capital.

# SICA International Priorities

- **Organisational Structure** - Establishing legal not-for-profit status (so that SICA and SDIA can operate in countries where Subud may not be able to for political and cultural reasons.)
- **SICA can apply for grant funding for programs that are not under the umbrella of, or available to spiritual organisations** - and if SICA receives such funding it can only distribute it to organisations that are legally separate from their National or Zonal Subud Organisations
- **SICA can be a means of members connecting in countries where there are no Subud organisations**
- **Each national SICA chair or group should investigate his or her individual country and /or zonal requirements and report back to SICA on how to establish an identifiable organisation**

- **NATIONAL SICA ORIENTATION DOCUMENT** (as per SDIA model) - recently drafted.
- Set of clear recommendations for the setting up (including legal status parameters) and running of SICA in respective countries, including suggested kejiwaan approach and organisational structure
- **Document still to be finalised by the SICA Board but is available in electronic form.**



Nourishing Human Values  
Through Art, Culture,  
and Creativity

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National Orientation

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Subud International Cultural Association (SICA)

*The Importance of Culture In Today's World: "Culture is the matrix of every humane society, the power-source of the imagination, empathy, creativity, and resilience needed to activate our innate capacity for moral grandeur and social healing. . . . Today, culture is the laboratory in which we nurture compassion and discover how to improvise a livable future."*<sup>1</sup>

#### Why SICA? For the development of Human Values

As our latihan progresses within the soul of each one of us, it gives rise to something new: the awakening of human culture.<sup>2</sup> The development of this culture will be very broad because it embraces *every kind of talent* that exists within our membership."<sup>3</sup>

"This is why Bapak made the decision to set up a Subud wing called the Subud International Cultural Association, or SICA. Bapak hoped that through SICA, Subud members who had a talent in a particular field would create something truly new or different, something that would touch other people – meaning people who are not in Subud, people outside Subud.

"So by creating something for other people, you may be able to demonstrate something that without their being aware of it, may exert a positive influence on people who are not in Subud. So we hope that Subud will spread through SICA – through activities that other people can see.

"Of course, we need to train for this too (in latihan), as not every member can understand yet what SICA is for. Well, according to Bapak, SICA is for activities that grow out of the development of the soul."<sup>4</sup>

". . . Clearly, culture is concerned with human beings, so that they can know the real direction for human society, for their nations and countries, through the receiving from the peace and calm of their inner feeling. So, culture is very large and very wide, and culture arises from the latihan kejiwaan of Subud.<sup>5</sup> . . .Bapak can feel that in fact, [SICA] is the way Subud will spread.

<sup>1</sup> Arlene Goldbard, *The Culture of Possibility*, 2013

<sup>2</sup> *Kebudayaan*, the Indonesian word for culture comes from *budhi* (as in *Susila Budhi Dharma*) and *daya*, or action: the action the divine power within us sparks the awakening of our inner talents and gifts, and the awakening of human culture.

<sup>3</sup> Ibu Rahayu, Spokane, 6 August 1997

<sup>4</sup> Ibu Rahayu, Singapore, 10 March 2002

<sup>5</sup> Bapak, Anugraha, 15 August 1983 on the founding of SICA

- **Australian alternative model recently suggested by Hamilton Barnett** - instead of Chair/Board model - a small artists cooperative that meets regularly and exchanges ideas - and supports one another working together on current projects; could overcome challenges of top down administrative structure - could either be informal action group - or artistic operational team that is added to legal structure, with artistic representation from each group - it really is not a lot different than having a SICA Rep in each group that meets all other group reps on a regular basis. Given that many people with a strong interest in SICA are practicing artists, this could be a new way to connect people.
- **Continuity - Establishing a physical and virtual international office;** effective international communications via Board members - connecting with National SICA representatives; institutional memory and continuity of establishment of best practice in terms of national organisational structure.
- **Advancing and Celebrating Cultural Expression of all Subud members** - 'Culture Map' - recording URL's to connect the SICA network globally. Establishing databases of practitioners in different disciplines and locations.
- **Mechanism for sharing and profiling the work of Subud artists** - eg. The Virtual Gallery being organised for World Congress and the plans for creating a stable global platform for Subud and non-Subud music artists to interface.

- **THE KEJIWAAN OF CULTURE - Working with the helpers to encourage and nurture culture as an intrinsic part of our lives** and an expression of the development of the Latihan in each of us - and as a means by which Subud can naturally spread.
- **NB. Looking for a greater kejiwaan investment here for SICCA on the ongoing Helpers program** - to work with SICCA to ensure Subud members are aware and have the opportunity to develop their Latihan in a way that envelopes and nurtures their individual talent in a cultural context. i.e Not a novelty approach of how do I sing and dance from my Latihan when I am not necessarily a performing artist, but more concerned with expressing true culture with regard to their own work in the world - whether that be the culture of technology or otherwise, as Bapak has indicated.

- **Latifah Taormina clearly sees this as a need for helping members develop their Latihan in this direction**, not simply an occasional ad hoc test that is part of a set of regular questions at kejiwaan sessions, but, as Bapak has said this is how Subud can spread, ensuring it is a priority. This is not to suggest it is a campaign to consciously use this approach to sell Subud; it is to ensure that people are able to develop their own Latihan and individuality in the way Bapak prescribed.
- **It's about understanding that our right WORK is predominantly our CULTURE** - not necessarily what we do on the weekend when we are not working (although it might be that too for those of us with more than one talent)
- **There seems to be a need to interpret this WING as the wing of a bird - that is crucial to taking flight** - rather than as it would seem to be at present - a wing or subsidiary that is slightly eccentric but not essential.
- **As Ibu Rahayu put it more recently in a talk**, "This is why Bapak made the decision to set up a Subud wing called SICA...so that Subud members who had a talent in a particular field would create something truly new or different, something that would touch other people...people not in Subud...who cannot understand what Subud is if they have not experienced the opening.

- **WORLD CONGRESS - Puebla 2014** - Agreeing on form of contributions from respective countries/Zones
- **Roland Fraval - Coordinator of World Congress Cultural Activities** - looking for expressions of interest from musicians and live performers - and contacts for performers who will be attending.
- **If Countries/Zones wish to contribute, preferable that they contact Roland and ensure the activity is part of the program**, to ensure a manageable structure to event scheduling and programming. [roland.fraval@subudyouth.net](mailto:roland.fraval@subudyouth.net)
- **Roland is looking for Volunteers to join his core team** - that will work as stage managers, technical staff (sound & light), runners and general helpers and other such roles working on the SICA program.
- **People will work about 30 hours over the two weeks (about 4 hours every other day), so it won't be too hard, but you get free rego!**

- **Fashion Parade** - Some concerns from SICA International that events such as a Fashion Parade are organised and profiled in such a way as to remain close to the feeling and content of the Latihan. Also some creases to iron out in that the space that is being designed to accommodate the parade could curtail numbers for plenary events etc.
- **Virtual Art Gallery** - Solihin Garrard from UK organising. Artists to be aware that tax due if bring hard copy artworks; additional duty if bring more than one and if value over \$300.
- **Zonal Performances** - There is potential to have some area / zonal performances, and if there is energy for this then we will definitely foster it, but only if there is energy coming from people outside the organising team
- **Aim is to find out what people want to have happen at congress.** We are really keen to make the programming a reflection of what the memberships wants and as a team we are in the process of seeking feedback on exactly that.

A special thank you and acknowledgement to International SICA Chair Latifah Taormina, who as an octogenarian, and full time carer for her husband Harun, is also a tireless worker and advocate for SICA International and for ensuring that Bapak's vision for SICA does not fade.

I'd also like to acknowledge my fellow SICA Board Members Erica Sapir, Felix Prieto, Halimah Polk, Rosario Moir and Rosetta Narvaez for their dedication

THANKYOU to Subud Thailand for kindly hosting.

And finally from my to your...  
empty violin-like inner space...





**THANKYOU**