

A FEW OBSERVATIONS AT THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

January 2011

When I first arrived at Congress on the first day, having known that attendance was not going to be high, it all felt a bit “flat” to start with. No one from the men’s side had nominated for chairman and I got the feeling that there was a sense of desperation in the air to find a new chairman. The ex-chair seemed a bit concerned because he had stated with no uncertain terms that he would not be standing again and being the “seasoned” Subud member that he is, God bless his soul, his concern was surely valid. So testing around “what is my role at the congress” and so on seemed to be appropriate.

Anyway when I started meeting those from all over the country and after a few latihans, the lower forces were soon put in their rightful place and a congress atmosphere soon prevailed. Attendance came to around the 60 mark (small by Australian standards which usually peak at around 200). Also the New Zealand Chairperson and another committee person from NZ attended and together with a French visitor gave the congress an international flavour. And of course there were the many international officers that live in Australia in attendance.

Well after the first day or so of kejiwaan activity, two persons were nominated for chair and we were very fortunate when it was clear that a very experienced Subud sister was the person for the job. Everything at congress lightened up with smiles all round.

The main outcome for me was when we met with all the National Helpers and we had a moment together at the end of one day when I really felt connected to all. We sat quietly together in a circle and that moment felt very special. Everyone must have felt it because we were all reluctant to let go of the moment. A connection with the Australian NHs had been made.

For most of the congress, I felt myself as an observer watching the NHs working their way through congress and allowed myself to be “visible” and available all the time. I attended some kejiwaan sessions with doctors and other health care workers that mainly had to do with health and career issues. Congratulations to the NH's who worked really hard to satisfy the needs of congress. There was an incident where a member from my group went into a crisis and the NHs had to spend time with him. When it became clear that the NHs were needed, I took over the task to spend time with this member so that the NHs could get on with their work. He calmed down quite a bit and later the NHs came to relieve me.

I also attended a Susila Dharma workshop and found myself to be the only male amongst 11 or so women. And when some testing was required and only the room we were in was available, which naturally the women used, I opted to just walk around the corridors of the building to do my testing. It all worked out just fine. Also a new very talented young lady took on the task of SD chair. The AGM went really well indeed and all proposals, etc. were unanimously agreed.

I have tried to keep this as short as possible.

Please forgive any shortcomings or mistakes.

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NOTE: I have also purposely left out all names of individuals because I didn't feel any need to name anyone except myself.