

= Kubah =

Kubah (literally Cupola or Dome) is an Indonesian novel written by Ahmad Tohari . It follows a poor man named Karman who becomes a member of the Indonesian Communist Party , only to find himself a victim of the ongoing political struggles in 1950s Indonesia . After the Party 's destruction he spends twelve years as a prisoner at Buru before returning to his hometown and becoming a devout Muslim .

Tohari 's second novel , Kubah was written in two months and based on the events surrounding the Communist Party and the 30 September Movement coup in 1965 . Published in 1980 by Pustaka Jaya , Kubah came at a time when literary works with similar themes ? the victimisation of Communist Party members ? were scarce . The novel has also been characterised as dawah (Islamic preaching) . Reception of Kubah was mostly mixed ; critics praised the novel for its subject matter and criticised it for its predictability . It received a literary award in 1981 , and in 1986 it was translated into Japanese .

= = Plot = =

After twelve years imprisoned at Buru Island , the former Communist Party of Indonesia (Partai Komunis Indonesia , or PKI) member Karman returns to Central Java . During his time at Buru , his wife Marni has remarried and the area has modernised considerably , rendering him uncertain where to go . He decides to stay at his cousin 's home for a while . Meanwhile , Marni has heard of Karman 's release and realises that she still loves him , and would thus feel uncomfortable if he returned to their hometown of Pegaten . However , their grown daughter Tini wishes to meet her father .

In a series of flashbacks , Karman 's life is told . He lost his pro @-@ Dutch father during the Indonesian National Revolution and was raised in poverty before going to work for the rich merchant Haji Bakir as a child , babysitting his daughter Rifah . In the two years Karman lived with them , the family raised him to be a devout Muslim ; Karman , for his part , was a diligent worker and cared deeply for Rifah . When his uncle returned from the front , Karman was brought back home and educated until junior high school , dropping out for a lack of funds . When he was in his twenties Karman found a job at the local village chief 's office with the help of a civil employee named Triman and a teacher named Margo .

Unknown to Karman , both men were PKI members and intent on making him join the party . They gave him communist pamphlets and indoctrinated him in Party philosophy . When Karman was late in telling Rifah his feelings , losing her to another man , the PKI manipulated his emotions to make him leave Islam and hate Haji Bakir . Ultimately this was successful : Karman abandoned his mandatory prayers and began to espouse the Party 's politics . After Karman was refused marriage to Rifah a second time , following her husband 's death , he had Haji Bakir imprisoned . In this time Karman married Marni , intending to convert her family to communism .

By 1965 Karman had become a respected member of the PKI , although the public knew him as a member of Partindo . However , following the failure of the 30 September Movement (Gerakan 30 September , or G30S) coup in the national capital at Jakarta ? orchestrated by the PKI ? Karman realised that his position was unsound . He and his fellow PKI members began praying regularly , but many were ultimately killed ? including Triman and Margo . Karman escaped from Pegaten hours before soldiers came to arrest him and managed to avoid capture for nearly two months , generally hiding in cemeteries . After his capture Karman was exiled to Buru .

In the present day , Karman has returned to Pegaten to a warm reception . Marni , although she admits that she still loves Karman , insists that she will stay with her new husband ; Haji Bakir , Karman 's uncle , and Karman 's mother have likewise forgiven him . Tini and Haji Bakir 's grandson Jabir are betrothed as planned , and , when the villagers renovate the dilapidated mosque , Karman makes the cupola . He receives much praise for his work and finds a sense of belonging in the mosque .

= = Background and writing = =

Kubah was inspired by Indonesian history , beginning in the 1940s and continuing until the 1980s . Following the national revolution from 1945 to 1949 , the country was set in a state of political turmoil and abject poverty which became increasingly severe towards the end of the 1950s . By the early 1960s the PKI and other leftist parties had the support of President Sukarno , giving them greater power ; PKI membership grew quickly in this period , aided by a hyperinflation and widespread poverty .

On 1 October 1965 , a group of Indonesian National Armed Forces members calling themselves the 30 September Movement killed six Army generals and announced that the president was under their power ; the coup was quashed the following day . Contemporary reports indicated that the PKI had been behind the G30S , a position endorsed by the Indonesian government . As a result , hundreds of thousands of registered and suspected PKI members were killed or exiled over the following decade , effectively destroying the Party . By 1974 Buru held some 10 @, @ 000 prisoners , while others were held elsewhere or forced to stay abroad . Political prisoners began to be released by the 1970s , but saw systematic discrimination at all levels of society : they found themselves under surveillance and with little hope of employment .

Kubah was the second novel written by Ahmad Tohari , who had been in senior high school when the G30S announced its coup . A devout Muslim who had trained as a doctor and ran a pesantren (Islamic boarding school) in Central Java , Tohari began to focus on writing when his first novel , *Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak* (*On the Foothill of Cibalak* ; 1978) , won a prize from the Jakarta Arts Council . He finished *Kubah* in two months , first making a thematic overview for each chapter and then developing it further while writing . He deliberately left the novel 's ending open to interpretation , intending for readers to think for themselves .

= = Themes = =

Kubah is an early example of literature dealing with the G30S and PKI , although earlier examples exist . Former Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid described it as the first to deal with reconciliation between PKI members and general Indonesian society after G30S , an issue which was " hyper @-@ sensitive " at the time . The historian Anna @-@ Greta Nilsson Hoadley writes that *Kubah* explored why a person would be motivated to join the party , emphasizing poverty , cultural pressure , and active propaganda by the PKI . In the end , Karman is ultimately an " innocent victim " , who only joined the Party to improve his own standing . Even after his release Karman remains in a state of fear , " marked by a prisoner 's vulnerability . " The literary critics Maman S. Mahayana , Oyon Sofyan , and Achmad Dian wrote that , in this sense , Karman becomes representative of all PKI members who were arrested following G30S .

Mahayana , writing elsewhere , sees Karman as undergoing an existential quest to establish his identity , seemingly finding an answer in the PKI but ultimately becoming trapped by them . Mahayana indicates that a religious message is evident beginning with the novel 's opening , in which Tohari provides a four @-@ line quote from an old Javanese text regarding faith and becoming more explicit later on . He finds Karman 's dealing with the raftsmen Kastagethek while escaping from the government the most explicit expression of Tohari 's intent ; unlike Karman , Kastagethek is a devout yet simple man who is happy in his poverty , leading Karman to question his own views before ultimately finding his identity in Islam . Mahayana thus argued that *Kubah* was meant as dawah , or Islamic preaching , with its message that humans should recognise their status as creatures of God conveyed through characters ' dialogue and actions .

= = Release and reception = =

Kubah was originally published by the Jakarta @-@ based Pustaka Jaya in 1980 ; unlike *Di Kaki Bukit Cibalak* and most of Tohari 's later novels , it had not been serialised first . Since 1995 it has been published by Gramedia , seeing four printings as of 2012 . The work was translated into

Japanese by Shinobu Yamane in 1986 , under the title Shinsei .

The novel 's reception was mixed . It was awarded the Buku Utama Prize in 1981 for " increasing knowledge , spreading manners , and maturing Indonesian culture , " an award which included a trophy and Rp . 1 million in prize money . Mahayana found it worthy of this prize , praising Kubah 's use of flashback and the complicated issues it raised . Wahid , at the time an active Islamic intellectual with the Nahdlatul Ulama , wrote in 1980 that Kubah had poorly realised its potential ; he characterised it as a beginner 's work : lacking suspense , overly moralistic , and predictable .

Tohari 's trilogy Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk (The Dancer of Paruk Village ; 1981 ? 1985) , which has proven to be his most famous , also dealt with the G30S and the PKI . However , unlike Kubah , parts of Ronggeng Dukuh Paruk remained censored until 2003 . Numerous novels dealing with G30S and the PKI , written by other authors , have also been published since Kubah .

= = Explanatory notes = =