

Rashid pious late in his life

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YALA: In his twilight years, former leader of the defunct Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) Rashid Maidin was a different man devoting himself to prayer and doing social work.

According to his only daughter Kamariah Rashid, 45, from his second marriage, Rashid never spoke much about his time as a CPM leader to his family.

He preferred to discuss it only with ex-comrades, visitors, politicians and security officials.

"Family for him was about personal matters. Not ideology or politics. He was a great father, often humble and willing to help," she said.

Peng to lead the party's 10th regiment in Bentong, Pahang, before moving into the dense jungles along the Malaysia-Thailand border pursued by the Malayan Armed Forces.

Rashid first came into the limelight at the Baling Peace Talks in 1955 as part of the CPM delegation led by Chin Peng. The Malayan Government delegation comprised Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun, Tan Cheng Lock and David Marshall.

With a self-vested rank of Colonel, Rashid led the 10th Regiment consisting 90% of Malays and was believed to be the No. 3 in the CPM.

Rashid took a second wife, Serama Abdullah - a Malaysian Chinese - who died last year and was buried in their home in Cholaborn 11 village.

The village is one of the several friendship villages in Yala which were established to house ex-CPM members after their surrender.

It was renamed Cholaborn after it became part of the Thai royalty poverty eradication scheme in southern Thailand.

Rashid together with Serama

Rashid, 89, who suffered from old-age ailments, died on Sept 1, at his daughter's home in Sisakoin, Narathiwat, southern Thailand.

During his last months, Rashid spoke mostly about prayer and never expressed regret or doubts from his time as a communist guerilla where he fought against the Japanese, British, Malayan and Thai troops, Kamariah, a housewife, said when met at her home here.

Her husband Mat Surin Che Mat, 50, a bank worker, said Rashid did not disclose much except of his respect for the country's founding father Tunku Abdul Rahman.

"During his time in Thailand, he led by example by being a pious person, advocating Isla-

made trips to Mecca and China, judging from the family photo albums showed by Kamariah.

There were also photographs of him clad in his CPM uniform in the jungle with Chin Peng beside him.

Rashid was heavily involved in religious work in Cholaborn, haying raised funds for a mosque and he taught Jawi besides leading prayers for comrades who followed him to the village.

He grew dokong fruits and cultivated rubber trees in his orchard at a ramshackle home was the largest in the settlement.

Several of his former comrades at Cholaborn said Rashid showed signs of serious illness when he fell from his motorcycle in March.

Kamariah cared for him after the incident and as his condition became worse, he was brought to her home in Sisakoin where he stayed until he died.

Relatives, including his brothers from Perak, and former CPM lieutenants came to pay Rashid their last respects.

mic teachings and performing social work.

"It was like assuming a new life when he resettled here. He showed strong character and never reprimanded his grandchildren or us. Kindness and humility were his assets," Mat Surin said.

Rashid, who was born in Kampung Gunung Mesah, Gopeng, Perak, on Oct 10, 1917, joined the Parti Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (PKMM) in 1951 along with Malay nationalists like Ishak Mohamad (Pak Sako), Ahmad Boestamam and **Abdullah C.D. of Perak.**

After the PKMM was outlawed by the British administration, Rashid opted to join the CPM and was entrusted by then CPM secretary-general Chin

It was learnt that Chin Peng also forwarded his condolences to the family through an emissary.

Chin Peng is believed to be in southern Thailand awaiting proceedings of his court case in Penang where he is seeking the right to return to Malaysia.

An ex-comrade, Abdul Rahman Che Mamat, 42, whose mother hails from Kuala Krai, said Rashid was a disciplinarian Who never allowed his men to see pornography, do drugs or loiter aimlessly.

Abdul Rahman, who joined the CPM when he was 11, said CPM members preferred to engage the Thai Army, who did not seem that committed to fight them compared with their Malayan counterparts.

Another ex-comrade, Kodai Muhammad, 43, said Rashid was a pious person and often advocated Islamic teachings to every villager here.

Kodai said Rashid also disliked current terrorism tactics of planting bombs in civilian areas, saying to fight is to engage in a battle with the army of our foe, not civilians.