

# Traces of Robusta Coffee in Buleleng: Historical Journey and Its Impact on Tradition and Economy

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**Abstract.** The existence of robusta coffee in Buleleng cannot be separated from the history of the arrival of coffee to Indonesia by the Dutch at the end of the 17th century. At the end of the 19th century, the development of coffee in Indonesia, especially the robusta type, experienced a significant increase. In Bali, Robusta coffee was originally planted as a plant to prevent erosion and pests that attack Arabica coffee plants. At the beginning of the 20th century, in Banyuatis Village, Buleleng, Bali, a puppet artist named Jro Dalang Gelgel started home-scale robusta coffee production. The development of robusta coffee in Buleleng has had a significant economic impact on the local community. The coffee industry is the backbone of the economy, creating jobs and driving infrastructure development in the region. Robusta coffee is not only an economic commodity, but also has deep cultural value for the Balinese people. Drinking coffee at a local shop has become part of a daily ritual, strengthening social ties. Local artists even use coffee as inspiration for their works of art, reflecting the life and values of Balinese people.

**Keywords:** Robusta Coffe, Banyuatis, Tradition, Economy

## 1 Introduction

In the 21st century, coffee has become one of the most popular drinks in various parts of the world. The history of coffee begins in Ethiopia, where the coffee plant originates, then spread to the Middle East, Europe, and finally worldwide. Initially, coffee was known as a drink that increased energy and concentration. Over time, coffee has become an inseparable part of the culture and lifestyle of global society. In Indonesia, coffee has a special place in people's culture and traditions. As one of the largest coffee producers in the world, Indonesia has various types of coffee with unique flavors, such as robusta, arabica, luwak coffee, Toraja coffee and Gayo coffee. This diversity of coffee types has attracted interest not only in the country but also in the international market [1].

In Indonesia, coffee has a special place in people's culture and traditions. As one of the largest coffee producers in the world, Indonesia has various types of coffee with unique flavors, such as robusta, arabica, luwak coffee, Toraja coffee and Gayo coffee. This diversity of coffee types has attracted interest not only in the country but also in the international market.

In the last decade, there have been significant changes in coffee consumption patterns, especially among young people. Coffee is no longer just considered an ordinary drink, but also

as part of a lifestyle and a social symbol. This phenomenon can be seen in the proliferation of modern coffee shops and cafes that offer a coffee drinking experience that is more than just taste, but also atmosphere and aesthetic [2].

The trend of drinking coffee among young people is influenced by several factors. First, developments in technology and social media have made coffee a popular topic on platforms such as Instagram, where artistic coffee photos and interesting coffee places have become widely shared content. Second, the emergence of a flexible work culture and remote working has made cafes an ideal place to work and socialize. Third, increased awareness of the quality of coffee and the process of making it has encouraged many young people to explore various types of coffee and brewing techniques [3].

Not only from the consumer side, this trend also encourages the growth of the local coffee industry. Many young people are starting to get into the coffee business, either as baristas, cafe owners or coffee roasters. They not only bring innovation in the way coffee is served, but also contribute to improving the quality of local coffee through more sustainable and environmentally friendly practices.

Thus, the development of coffee and the trend of drinking coffee among young people is an interesting phenomenon for further research. This not only provides insight into changes in consumption culture, but also opens up opportunities for the development of more creative and innovative coffee businesses. These developments also show how coffee, as a commodity, can be a tool to connect people and create closer communities.

Meanwhile, the history of coffee in Indonesia began at the end of the 17th century when coffee plants were first brought by the Dutch. In 1696, the Dutch brought Arabica coffee seeds (*Coffea arabica*) from Malabar, India, and planted them in the Batavia area (now Jakarta). This initial experiment was unsuccessful because the coffee plants were destroyed by flooding. However, in 1699, efforts to plant coffee were made again and this time it was successful.

In the early 18th century, coffee plants began to be planted in various areas in Java, such as Priangan, and then spread to other islands such as Sumatra, Sulawesi and Bali. Coffee plantations in Indonesia developed rapidly under the forced cultivation system (*culturstelsel*) imposed by the Dutch colonial government in the 1830s. This system requires farmers to grow coffee and other export crops on their land, the results of which are then exported to Europe.

Since the end of the 19th century, the coffee industry in Indonesia experienced significant changes with the introduction of the Robusta coffee type (*Coffea canephora*) as a response to the coffee leaf rust (*Hemileia vastatrix*) epidemic which destroyed many Arabica coffee plants. Robusta coffee is more resistant to this disease and is better suited to the climate and soil conditions in many parts of Indonesia. Currently, Robusta coffee is one of the main types of coffee produced in Indonesia.

## **2 Research Method**

Every scientific research always has a method with its own goals and methods. To achieve this goal, researchers use appropriate steps or instrument methods to utilize the

achievement of research objectives according to scientific principles[4]. Likewise this research, of course, uses methods to achieve research objectives [5]. The research method that will be used by the author in this research is the historical research method because it is in accordance with the research entitled "Traces of Robusta Coffee in Buleleng: Historical Journey and its Impact on Tradition and Economy".

### **2.1 Heuristics**

Heuristics are actions to search for data that can then be verified. When conducting historical research, what needs to be considered is the form of historical sources that will be collected[6]. Historical sources are classified into two, namely written historical sources and unwritten historical sources [7]. Written historical sources include books, archives or documents, travel notes, magazines or journals and sources related to the problem to be researched, while unwritten sources include artifacts, oral history explores information using interview techniques with sources who know about the trail of robusta coffee in Buleleng: The course of history and its impact on tradition and economy. The steps that researchers need to take to support the collection of information in this research are as follows:

First, observation techniques. Researchers made direct observations at the robusta coffee processing place in Buleleng, namely the Bali Coffee Banyuatis Company, to dig up valid information about the historical journey of robusta coffee in Buleleng and the role of Bali Coffee Banyuatis as one of the largest coffee powder producing companies in Bali.

Second, Interview Techniques. For interviews, researchers obtained data by directly asking informants who knew about the history of robusta coffee in Buleleng Gede Pusaka Harsadena as the owner of the Bali Coffee Banyuatis company.

Third, document study techniques. The document study that the researcher carried out was to obtain additional data, namely by using several book sources, archives from Bali Coffee Banyuatis as well as local libraries and written references on the internet.

### **2.2 Source Criticism**

Source criticism in historical research greatly influences the results of historical research. Therefore, criticism of historical sources, whether internal criticism or external criticism, needs to be carried out to sort data in historical research to assess the accuracy of the sources that will be used. Source criticism in the research on the Traces of Robusta Coffee in Buleleng: Historical Journey and Its Impact on Tradition and Economy was carried out by analyzing data. The data that has been collected will go through a selection stage to find the validity of the information obtained, so that researchers will obtain valid facts [8].

### **2.3 Interpretation**

Analyzing data in historical research is an interpretation of the meaning or facts studied. In this stage, the facts accepted as references in writing must be based on an objective and rational attitude so that the reconstruction of historical facts becomes a true story.

## 2.4 Historiography

The data obtained is then collected and interpreted, then the final stage of historical research is historiography about the traces of robusta coffee in Buleleng: Historical Journey and its Impact on Tradition and Economy. In writing history to produce interesting and in-depth historical stories, by applying the 5 W + 1 H in historical research, namely What, Who, Where, When, Why, and How.

## 3 Result And Discussion

### 3.1. History of Robusta Coffee in Buleleng



**Img. 1.** Banyuatis Coffee Seeds

Source: Tatkala.com



**Img. 2.** Banyuatis Coffee Products

Source: Internet

Coffee was first introduced to Indonesia by the Dutch at the end of the 17th century by bringing Arabica coffee seeds from Malabar, India. However, at the end of the 19th century, an epidemic of coffee leaf rust (*Hemileia vastatrix*) hit Arabica coffee plantations throughout Indonesia, including Bali [9]. This disease destroyed many Arabica coffee plants, causing a drastic decline in coffee production. Robusta coffee cultivation in Bali began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, especially in areas that have lower altitudes compared to areas ideal for Arabica coffee. Robusta coffee is starting to be planted in various areas in Bali, including Buleleng, which has suitable climate and soil conditions for this plant. Robusta coffee began to be grown in Indonesia at the end of the 19th century as a response to the coffee leaf rust epidemic that destroyed Arabica coffee (*Coffea arabica*) plantations [3]. Meanwhile, according to Gede Pusaka Harsadana, the presence of robusta coffee in Buleleng began when the Dutch still controlled Indonesia. However, according to him, the preservation of robusta coffee in Buleleng has been carried out since the early 1900s by his ancestor Jro Dalang Gelgel [10].

The existence of robusta coffee in Buleleng began when a puppet artist who was also a coffee farmer named Jro Dalang Gelgel started the first coffee industry in Buleleng, thanks to the results from his coffee plantation which had quite a large production value in Banyuatis

Village, Banjar District, Buleleng-Bali in early 1900's [1]. Since then, Jro Dalang Gelgel's coffee production has continued to increase until in 1950, Jro Dalang Gelgel's son, Putu Dalang, made improvements to coffee production from his parents' garden. At that time, Putu Dalang was more focused and interested in improving the plantation system and methods for selecting coffee beans on his plantation.

With consistent effort and hard work, his coffee plantation produces the best quality coffee beans. Until 1960, the coffee plantation and home industry processing robusta coffee beans was continued by Ketut Englan, who was the son of Putu Dalang. In that year, Ketut Englan began adding the "Kopi Banyuatis" brand to his ancestor's coffee production. According to Gede Pusaka Harsadana, this brand is based on the fact that many people prefer coffee made by their ancestors compared to other coffee [11].

Even though it looks simple, the brand name "Banyuatis" is taken from the name of their village so that it is easy for people to remember. As the popularity of this brand increased, Ketut Englan decided to expand the distribution of his coffee throughout Bali. Then, he increased production significantly by establishing a coffee processing factory in Singaraja, Buleleng-Bali. Until now, Banyuatis Coffee has been passed down to the fourth generation of Jro Dalang Gelgel, named Gede Pusaka Harsadana. Under his leadership, Kopi Banyuatis has become the largest company producing ground coffee from Arabica and Robusta types in Bali [9].

Geographically, Buleleng, which is located in the northern part of Bali, has fertile volcanic soil and a tropical climate that supports the growth of Robusta coffee. Robusta coffee from Buleleng is known to have good quality and distinctive taste. This area is one of the centers of Robusta coffee production in Bali [9]. Farmers in Buleleng use traditional farming methods passed down from generation to generation. This method involves planting coffee together with other crops in an intercropping system, which helps maintain ecosystem balance and soil fertility.

### **3.2. The Impact of Robusta Coffee on Traditions in Buleleng**

Unconsciously, the development of robusta coffee in Buleleng was born and grew from the spirit of a puppet artist named Jro Dalang Gelgel in the early 1900s. Thus, the relationship between robusta coffee in Buleleng, especially Banyuatis Coffee, has a commitment that is maintained to this day. Kopi Banyuatis' commitment to preserving Balinese art, especially Buleleng, cannot be doubted. This coffee company, which was started in 1960 using traditional methods, is almost always present as a sponsor in every arts performance activity. Banyuatis Coffee, with the production of robusta coffee, continues to collaborate with various art studios in the Buleleng area to not only strengthen the relationship and spirit between coffee and culture, apart from that, these efforts are a step to preserve regional culture by combining tradition and culture. coffee. The collaboration between the two further confirms that this coffee company, which has been managed for generations, is indeed committed to preserving art, whether traditional, modern or a mixture of the two [12].

Indeed, in terms of social structure, the existence of coffee and art is a unit that has continuity. As is done by Kopi Banyuatis, in various art events, the coffee company from North Bali always participates and contributes to various art activities carried out in the Bali region,

especially Buleleng. The relationship between Banyuatis coffee and art has given birth to a theater performance entitled *Legenda Rasa Kopi Banyuatis* in collaboration with the Mahima Institute involving local actors from Buleleng several years ago. This theater performance is part of the process of documenting the history of Banyuatis coffee which can later be remembered as a lesson for future generations. Especially for Balinese coffee lovers [3].

Thus, the presence of robusta coffee in Buleleng with the development carried out by the Banyuatis Coffee company has had quite a big impact on traditions in Buleleng. Where, the relationship between coffee and art gave birth to contemporary traditions involving art activists in the region. In other words, not only can coffee be enjoyed in taste, but it can also be enjoyed in real life with various performances presented by collaborations from various parties. So it's not surprising, that the trend shift, where coffee was originally consumed by older people, is now the result of various introduction efforts involving art and tradition, the existence of coffee has become a benchmark or a fashion trend for young people in this era [2].

### **3.3. Economic Impact**

Robusta coffee plays an important role in the local economy in Bali, especially in areas such as Buleleng [2]. Coffee production provides a source of income for many farmers and communities in the Buleleng region. In addition, the Robusta coffee industry has created jobs in other sectors, such as processing, marketing and tourism. Robusta coffee also has important cultural value in Bali. The tradition of planting, harvesting and processing coffee has become part of the daily life of local people. Coffee events and festivals are often held to celebrate the harvest and introduce Balinese coffee to a wider market. In Bali, Robusta coffee has become an important commodity that contributes to the local economy and culture.

Coffee production and sales have become the main source of income for many families in Buleleng. With relatively stable coffee prices and increasing demand, coffee farmers in Buleleng can enjoy better income compared to other agricultural commodities. This increase in income allows them to better meet basic needs such as food, education and health.

The robusta coffee industry in Buleleng not only provides economic benefits for farmers but also creates jobs in related sectors. The coffee production process involves many stages such as planting, cultivation, harvesting, processing and distribution. Each of these stages requires significant labor, thereby helping to reduce unemployment rates in the area. The success of the coffee industry has also encouraged investment in infrastructure in Buleleng. Road construction, storage facilities, and coffee processing factories are some examples of infrastructure developed to support coffee production and distribution. Better infrastructure not only facilitates the coffee industry but also improves people's access to public services and markets [1].

The economic success of the coffee industry has enabled various community initiatives and educational programs in the Buleleng region. Successful coffee farmers often invest in their children's education, which in turn improves the quality of human resources in Buleleng. In addition, training programs and workshops on sustainable agricultural techniques and financial management are also often held to improve farmers' abilities and knowledge [3].

With increased income and better access to public services, the quality of life of people in Buleleng has also improved. Access to better health services, better quality education, and adequate housing are some of the aspects that have improved. Prosperous communities are also better able to participate in social and cultural activities, strengthening community ties [9].

In the modern era, there are efforts to improve the quality of Robusta coffee from Bali through more sustainable farming practices and better processing techniques. The government and various organizations have played an active role in providing training and support to coffee farmers to improve the quality of their products. Apart from that, the promotion of Balinese Robusta coffee in the international market is increasing. Coffee festivals, exhibitions and other events are held to introduce Balinese coffee to global consumers. This not only helps increase farmers' income but also promotes Bali as a coffee tourism destination.

#### 4 Conclusion

The development of Robusta coffee in Buleleng, Bali, has had a significant impact both economically and in maintaining local arts and traditions. Economically, the Robusta coffee industry is the main pillar in increasing the income of local communities. Coffee production not only creates direct employment in the agricultural and coffee processing sectors, but also encourages the development of infrastructure and the local economy. With stable prices and increasing demand, coffee farmers in Buleleng can enjoy better income, which in turn improves welfare and strengthens the community economy.

Apart from that, the role of Robusta Coffee in maintaining Balinese arts and traditions is very important. Coffee is not only involved in traditional ceremonies and rituals, but is also a part of everyday life that goes beyond the consumption aspect. Drinking coffee at a local coffee shop is not just a social activity, but also a cultural ritual that strengthens social ties and encourages cultural exchange between individuals and groups. Additionally, local artists use coffee as a medium in their art, creating works that uniquely Balinese life and culture. Thus, the development of Robusta coffee in Buleleng not only has an impact on the local economy but also plays an important role in preserving Bali's artistic and traditional heritage. This emphasizes that coffee is not just a commodity, but also a reflection of the diverse and rich cultural life on this beautiful island.

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