

The South Sulawesi Coffee Cooperative

'Petani Kopi Organik Toraja'

The history of coffee cultivation in the northern parts of South Sulawesi is covered in mystery. It is not known when the inhabitants started to cultivate coffee and how coffee arrived. It's only known that coffee was cultivated well before the Colonial period and thus goes back hundreds of years. The most famous part of the coffee area in Sulawesi (previously called Celebes) is Toraja, which is in the center of the coffee production area and located in the highest parts of the Sesean Mountains. Torajan people are descendants of Indochinese (possibly Cambodian) oceanic traders who crossed the sea to settle in the Sulawesi highlands and take up agriculture. They are a very independent ethnic group which has managed to maintain their true original cultural identity reflected in their language, social manners and religion (called 'Aluk To Dolo'; *The way of the Ancestors*). They build their houses, called Tongkonan, in the shape of their original boats. Great craftsmanship and eye for detail is something one notices in these buildings and Torajans are known for these skills which are reflected in the dedicated way they cultivate their coffee crop.



Tongkonan

Toraja is known for producing one of the finest Arabica coffees in the world and is grown on the island of Sulawesi. The 'mellow' Toraja coffee is known for its high body, low acidity, spice, sweetness and very mellow aftertaste which will linger on the palate for many, many minutes. It is grown at altitudes of 1400 to 1900 meters.

Until the late 1980's the entire annual crop amounted to 400 tons Toraja and 200 tons Rantepao coffee. The exclusive original varieties fetched price of up to \$12 per lb. Since then cultivation of coffee has increased substantially, resulting in much lower prices, but the exclusivity of the excellent cup qualities remains.

Our newly established Cooperative, 'Petani Kopi Organik Toraja', consists of 780 farmers (small-holders) with farms, locally known as 'gardens', with an average size of about 1 to 1.5 hectares each. They are located in Toraja, the heart of the coffee production area. Now and in the past this coffee is and was 'Organic' by default.

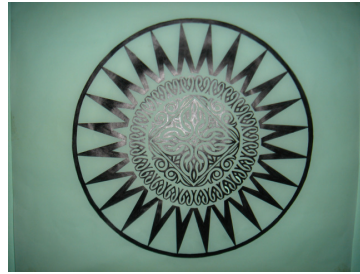
Consequently today coffee is cultivated and harvested the same way their ancestors did; traditional and organic. These farmers now have the opportunity to join with the first

Organic certified coffee Cooperative in Sulawesi, 'Petani Kopi Organik Toraja', to sell their coffee as Organic Certified (SKAL: NOP/JAS) and thus receive a premium for their coffees. The Cooperative has additionally obtained Fair Trade and Rainforest Alliance Certifications during the 2007/2008 crop season.

The goal of 'Petani Kopi Organik Toraja' is to produce the best (Organic, Fair Trade and Rainforest Alliance) Sulawesi Toraja Arabica available and to improve the livelihood of all farmers and their families, both socially and economically. The cooperatives' traditional Toraja belief in ornamentation is even seen in the exports of their coffee. The symbol for the sun, or *Bariallo* in the Torajan language, represents good health, luck and prosperity. To ensure all three for them and their families, the marking on their jute bags is the Bariallo.



Traditional Bariallo in color



Bariallo for coffee jute bag