

The Changing of Cultural Landscape Coffee Shops in Aceh

Description



Source: <https://detak-unsyiah.com/>

When we lived in Southern Thailand, there was a character of the Malay community, namely: drinking tea, eating bread, and weapons. Even drinking tea has become a very significant tradition for the local people. They call it 'eating tea' (*Makan teh*). This tradition is a drinking and eating event carried out by the community during a particular celebration. They will carry out 'eating tea.' Here, 'eating tea' can be a personal, family, even social celebration. In this tradition, efforts to raise funds or support to go to parliament are also carried out through 'eating tea.' Because of that tea mixed with milk has become a symbol of friendship in Southern Thailand, especially among the Malay community.

This tradition is almost similar to the tradition of drinking coffee in Aceh. As for what we know, Acehnese drinks coffee in the *warung*, not in their homes. In addition, the duration of our stay in Acehnese society was not that intense. Because, from madrasah to college, it was tough for us to drink coffee in the shop. In addition to still "receiving a scholarship" from parents, which is why there is not enough money in the pocket to go to a coffee shop every day. When in Yogyakarta, *Warung Burjo* and *Angkringan* are regular customers for boarding houses. In addition to food and drink prices that are friendly to students' pockets, the menu is also straightforward and instantly filling. Because of that, the Burjorupiahs and Angkringan stalls have become favorite places. In essence, these two stalls are only for the lower class, if you may say. After 20 years, we returned to Yogyakarta, where burjo stalls are becoming more and more popular with prices according to the times.

However, this Gudeg City has hosted cafes that seem to be more devoted to the upper-middle class.

When we returned to

Aceh, working as lecturers in Darussalam, we became familiar with coffee shops. However, we returned to Aceh, just as the NGO helping the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Aceh left the province. Therefore, the coffee shop that we envision is precisely like the café in big cities in Indonesia. The menu list has changed to English. The price list is already fantastic for the Acehnese. Likewise, there is a tradition of drinking coffee with a group in the Aceh. No matter how many participants drink coffee at one table, only one person will go to the cashier. Because of that, I am a bit worried about going to a coffee shop if I have not stopped at an ATM.

Even though I eat and drink together, I am in Australia, then

“you pay what you eat and drink.” Even though more than ten people, the cashier will count around the table, asking what we ordered. Therefore, there is no worry when we exit the café. I also got this view when I made a short visit to the United States, where the tradition of “you pay what you eat and drink.” However, in the United States, each customer must pay more, not more than 15% of the price of food, as a tip for customers. Waiter. A guide whispered that these waiters should be given a tip because their salary is not that much. When cleaning our rooms, this tipping model has become a culture in the United States, including putting money under the pillow for hotel cleaning service officers. It can be said that America The United States is a “tipping country.”

However, it is different from drinking coffee together in Aceh.

Here applies the principle of “you pay for those eat and drink with you.” So, whoever and how many people drink coffee in warung or café, only a person will pay for it. In Malaysia, this tradition is known as ‘belanja.’ However, people who buy drinks and food will first tell their friends because there is a happy event for those who will pay for food and drinks. In Aceh, paying for coffee and other meals is commonplace. Therefore, in the tradition of drinking coffee, there is social status there. Those who will pay will be respected.

What is more, the person will

also pay for his acquaintance or his friends at another table. He will give the code to the waiter to calculate which table he will pay for. Usually, this is done in secret, to give a sense of surprise to those paid for drinks and food. After that, those at other tables will remember the excellent service of the person who paid for it. As for those at the table itself, those who pay for the bill should have a relatively high social class. The habit is that they will pay, usually those who are respected or always dominate the conversation.

There is one story where a group

of Acehnese drinking coffee at a prominent restaurant. Due to the unfriendly

prices of drinks and food, it is estimated that the figure exceeds 2 million. Participants who drank coffee did not dare to go home first or call the waiter to calculate how much they had to pay. Everyone looked at each other, trying to find out who would pay for the coffee money. They chatted with each other but stared at each other. Until midnight, they finally appeared a kind-hearted person to bear the food and drink. The participants from the upper-middle class were finally able to go home. Paying coffee money above 2 million in front of the middle and upper social groups, apparently not because they do not have money, but targeting those who desire to invite coffee. Usually, whoever invites to go to *warung kopi* will pay the bill.

Assistant, aide, or office treasurer will pay for their boss or higher officials who drink coffee or vice versa. Those who work as military officers will usually pay for coffee to anyone who will be invited to a coffee shop. Likewise, entrepreneurs will compete with the bill when there is a “desire” for something. Activists will usually pay each other when one of them has more income. The point is, whoever and how many people drink coffee at one table in Aceh, who will pay is still one person. Because of this tradition, every time I go to a warung or café in Aceh, I prepare more than 300 thousand rupiah. If a café “strangles” a customer’s neck, then I will prepare 500 thousand rupiahs or a debit card. Often, the money used is money for groceries at home, pocket money for children, pay for something, and other needs. Because I often pay money for coffee in Aceh, I have understood the various tricks of friends who join coffee. Someone pretended to take a wallet, but he had no desire to pay. Others came and drank coffee altogether, then left first. There is also a sudden bill that someone has paid without notifying in advance.

Furthermore, it is also interesting how to see the landscape of coffee shops and social status. While drinking coffee at one of the warungs in Banda Aceh, when we sat at the front table, almost all visitors’ eyes were on me. As a newcomer, you certainly do not understand the table positions and often sit at these tables. There is a rule that the table in front of the warung is reserved for VIPs or local officials. The tables in the stalls are usually for academics, employees, members of political parties, social organizations, and social groups who are “located.”

Meanwhile, journalists, activists, and intelligence agents who “hunt for the latest gossip” in coffee shops prefer to sit at tables behind the shop. Usually, guests from outside the area will invite or be invited to a coffee shop. Because of the position of the table and social status, choosing a table will be very important so that guests are comfortable from all eyes of coffee drinkers.

The table and social status are also related to the social relations of the Acehnese people in

enjoying coffee. There is a coffee shop that is especially crowded before Fajr's prayer. Usually, this is a group of people who will trade in the early hours of the morning. After 9 am, this shop was deserted from visitors. There is also a coffee shop known to be busy after Fajr prayers. Usually, the Fajr congregation will drink coffee until around 7 am. After that, they prepare themselves for the office or other activities. Not a few coffee shops are crowded after 8:45 because the employees drink coffee after "fingerprint" from the office or taking their children to school. There is also a coffee shop that is full at lunchtime because there is a lunch cart that is crowded with customers at midday in front of the shop.

Meanwhile, there are coffee shops that are busy in the afternoon because workers or employees stop by for coffee before returning home. Usually, the busiest hour in a coffee shop is at night. Here, all coffee connoisseurs or those who like coffee shops will pour out—crowded parking. The atmosphere of the shop is like a market. Cigarette smoke danced above customers' heads—the smell of perfume mixed with the aroma of coffee and cigarette smoke.

More than that, there is also a coffee shop that looks like a cemetery. Quiet and silent. Because they make a coffee shop to surf in cyberspace. Some play games or gamble online—complete coursework. Chat with friends in cyberspace. Some are addicted to the internet, so they have one cup of coffee with them and can meditate in a coffee shop for hours. The phenomenon of coffee shops as "graveyards" has become a symptom in Acehese society. Here the coffee shop can be said as a public facility for co-workers. So coffee shop owners should provide Wi-Fi facilities because it will invite unique customers to have coffee while surfing the internet.



Source: <https://www.bbc.com/>

Therefore, the re-functionalization of coffee shops in Aceh has taken place. Before working in the fields or the sea, a coffee shop that was initially a place to stop turned into a place to hang out. Finally, it also turned into a place of work. Of course, this change occurred in line with the shift in the concept of *meukupi* in Tanah Rencong. This shift can be interpreted as the Acehnese concept of *meukupi*.

The *meukupi* tradition is no longer limited to filling out the public landscape for the benefit of the community but also shifts the function of the family in Aceh. Some Acehnese have started taking their families to coffee shops. They have breakfast, lunch, and dinner at a warung or café with their closest relatives or family.

It can be said that coffee shops have also shifted public places for social relations among people. Those who rarely go to coffee shops are seen as anti-social. Coffee shops are also places to show social status. Those who rarely pay coffee money are clandestinely known as the social class that does not belong, not to say stingy. Coffee shops are also places to build social alliances. Those with social, religious, political, and economic interests will naturally be familiar with coffee shops.

However, some coffee lovers' complain about the quality of service at coffee shops. Some cafes have waiters who are far from friendly to customers. The smile of the waiter is very "expensive." The way of bringing and placing food to customers is like "serving it to the cat." Said the waiter, who sometimes broke the customer's heart. The smell of the waiter's body sometimes disturbs the customer's appetite. Menu availability is sometimes non-existent. The unique thing to complain about is the prices of food and

drinks far from common sense. In addition, sometimes, the language in the menu is used in English. Different languages, different prices. If you want to live in cafes, you have to understand English, even though the waiters cannot speak English. Similarly, the prices in the menu list are unreasonable in some warungs or cafes.

For example, *Mie Goreng Tumis* at one of the famous warung in Tungkop only costs 10 thousand rupiahs. On the other hand, *Indomie Goreng Telor*, at a café in Lamgugob, costs 15 thousand rupiahs. One glass of avocado juice with espresso at Pango café costs 35 thousand rupiahs. The same menu is in one of the cafes at Jalan Teuku Umar is 25 thousand rupiahs. Here, there is no standardization of prices. It has not become a concern for coffee connoisseurs in Aceh. Not to mention that there are three methods of calculating: using your eyes, calculator, and computer. As for those who wear eyes, they always meet the price. Using a calculator is often not the same if you are asked to be calculated repeatedly. Meanwhile, if you use a computer, the price of food and drinks can make your eyes startle. Such is the tradition of our coffee shop in Aceh.