

The Common Ground

Hineleban Foundation

In pursuit of peace, a businessman struck a deal with Bukidnon's Lumad tribes and another with Maguindanao's Muslim rebels. Those deals ushered in other business agreements that have helped bring peace and development to both provinces.



WISDOM IN ACTIONS

In the Talaandig-Higaunen tribe's traditional language, *Hineleban* stands for the highest mystical Spirit-Tagulambung of Service Leadership in the Talaandig-Higaunen Tribal tradition. In simple terms, it means leadership, unity, and peace. In December 2012, the Hineleban foundation and sister firm Unifrutti signed a "Sacred Customary Compact" with the Seven Tribes of Bukidnon duly assuming their role as the "Custodians of the Forest." Now, Tuminugan Farm is a tourist attraction and the country's sole biodiverse rainforest grown from grassland.



Half-American and agribusiness magnate John Paul C. Perrine of the Peace Council for Mindanao once harbored a distrust of Muslims until he met Datu Ibrahim "Toto" Paglas III in 1996.

And when both met on the Unifrutti company's planned banana plantation project in Maguindanao, John asked a question that nobody had ever dared.

"Why would I trust you?" John blurted out without batting an eye.

But without breaking his gaze or touching the .45-caliber pistol tucked in his waist, Datu Paglas calmly and firmly replied: "I will never ask you for more than we agreed. I will protect your investments. I commit this to you by my heart."

John quickly knew that Datu Paglas meant every word he said, straight from the heart and with all conviction.

Datu Paglas' uncle Sheik Hashim Salamat affirmed that vow and did just that up to the time of his death on July 13, 2003. His followers continue to do the same up to this time.

BUSINESS WITH A CAUSE

Truth to tell, John grew up in Mindanao, where he and Renee Araneta got married and shared the same vision of peace. They founded the Hineleban Foundation in a portion of their 64-hectare Tuminugan Farm at the foothills of the 2,899-meter-high Mount Kitanglad in Bukidnon's Manolo Fortich town.

THE BEAUTY IN FARMING

Through Hineleban Foundation, John and Renee's Tuminugan Farm progressed with the help of the locals. Now, cupped by international Q graders periodically, the farm's coffee consistently gets an excellent score.

SWEETEST COFFEE

"The enzymatic flavor of the coffee [comes] from how you grow it. Sugarbrowning is from how you process it. Dry distillation is how you roast it. So it's not all about the roaster. You also have to thank the farmer and the processor for the taste of the coffee," explains Renee on the variety and quality that is unique to the *Bukidnon Highlands*. The unique taste is also achieved with the use of proper machinery for coffee processing—like coffee pulping machine (left) and coffee hulling machine (right)—provided by DTI.



NATIVE PRODUCT WITH NATIVE PEOPLE

Hineleban partners with indigenous people to produce Bukidnon Highlands, a coffee variety not found anywhere else in the country. They also taught farmers how to use SALT or Sloping Agricultural Land Technology. To make it easy for the indigenous farmers to earn their keep, the couple decided to buy the berries back at three times more than the going rate.



DID YOU KNOW?

Just smelling the coffee can already wake you up. The aroma of coffee can alter some genes in the brain, reducing the effects of sleep deprivation.

The Hineleban Foundation partnered with the Talaandig tribes for Mount Kitanglad's "rainforestation" with *Arabica* coffee and other trees, through which John and Renee have shaped a model of community development from a mere cogon land when they acquired it in 1975.

And to help the Talaandig tribes earn their keep, the couple buy the berries back at three times more than the going rate.

BETWEEN THE FARM AND THE TABLE

That scheme worked, with the Shared Service Facilities (SSF) program of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), which provided coffee processors with incentives and assistance that included product development, packaging and label design, and marketing and promotion.

"Coffee is coffee. It's what you do with it that makes it good or bad. The enzymatic flavor comes from how you grow it. So it's not all about the roaster. You also have to thank the farmer and the processor for the taste of the coffee," explains Renee.

Their beans are of a variety and quality that cannot be found elsewhere in the Philippines. It is now branded as Bukidnon Highlands.

"The higher you go up, the sweeter the cup," Renee says of the "sweet coffee" that *Arabica* is called by the Bukidnon tribes. *Arabica* also has significantly lower caffeine compared to its *Robusta* cousin.

COFFEE TREES FOR PEACE

Since then, DTI's help and John's pursuit of peace have gone a long, long way.

John has been signing agreements, pouring investments, and triggering development from the uplands of Bukidnon to the war-torn valleys of Maguindanao.

John was not just talking peace over a cup of brewed ground coffee. His was a common ground for the palates and hearts of men regardless of creed. Anyone can contribute to these peace initiatives by purchasing Hineleban Coffee.



BACK TO THE EARTH

To minimize their environmental impact, Hineleban Coffee launched a *Sip & Reforest* campaign, where the foundation will plant a tree for every coffee bag purchased. Anyone can monitor the growth of their tree by registering the tree-codes in the packaging in their website.

And to provide the best quality, it is packed into breathable bags—air-tight bags with one-way valve that will protect the flavor of the coffee while still allowing the gases to escape.

HOW DTI HELPED

DTI's **Shared Service Facilities (SSF)** project practically helped the Hineleban Foundation put up a state-of-the-art processing facility with top-of-the-line production machinery and a vast market reach, making Bukidnon Highlands attain the global standards in coffee grading.