

## Overview of Tien Kok Sie Temple in Solo City, Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

Tien Kok Sie Temple is the oldest Chinese temple di Solo, Indonesia. It has a history more than 300 years. Until this moment, many people will go to the temple to praying or have sightseeing this temple. Solo Cultural Department has announced that Tien Kok Sie Temple has become on of the cultural heritage buildings in Solo. Tien Kok Sie Temple also represents the integration of Chinese Culture into Indonesian local people, also it is very harmonious.

### KEYWORDS

Chinese-Indonesian; Solo; Tien Kok Sie Temple.

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is the largest country in Southeast Asia and known as “The Country of a Thousand Islands”. The population itself has reached more than 2.4 billion people, is the fourth country with the largest population in the world. Because of the historical and geographical reason, Indonesia has a lot of religions and ethnics group. Based on the law, Indonesia has 6 religions: Islam, Christian, Catholic, Hinduism, Buddhist, and Confucianism. Based on the data published by the Indonesian Government in 2014, Indonesia has 300 ethnics group, among them is 45% Javanese; 14% of Sundanese; 7.5% of Maduranese, 7.5% of Malays; 5% of Chinese, it is more than ten million peoples.

In every city in Indonesia, it has Indonesian Chinese people ethnic groups. So, in every city at least has one Chinatown, that includes Solo. When it comes to Chinese ethnics, of course it is related with the Temple. In Solo, Chinese people are living in the three areas. One is the Balong Town, second is Coyudan Town, and the third is Keprabon Town. Because Solo has a lot of population of Chinese ethnics, this city has Chinese temple. For example, Tien Kok Sie Temple. Tien Kok Sie Temple in Solo has 300 years of history, and is the biggest, the oldest Chinese Temple in Solo. Until today, still a lot of people went there to praying or sightseeing.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The main research of this paper is about the present condition of Tien Kok Sie Temple in Solo. Since there are few or no books on this topic, so the research method is mainly to using the interview method and the visiting method. This paper is aimed at Solo. Writer interviewed the representatives of Chinese People, they are: 1) Sumartono Hadinoto, Public Relation of The Association of Chinese People in Solo; 2) Ratna Setiyaningrum, The Culturist of Chinese People in Solo; 3) Henry Susanto, The Management of Tien Kok Sie Temple; 4) Ari Kristiyono, The Senior Reporter in Solo.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *1. The history and the present of Solo Tien Kok Sie Temple in Solo*

#### *1.1 The present of the Tien Kok Sie Temple in Solo*

Tien Kok Sie Temple is the oldest temple in Solo. Located in the Solo's Chinatown. In the Chinatown itself, it has big market there. In the big market, Chinese Medicine, Lanterns, praying equipment, etc. could be purchased here. In every year when Chinese New Year is coming, there will be a lot of lanterns in the Chinatown premises. Not only the people of Solo, but also there will be a lot of people from neighborhood city come to see the lanterns. This also proves that the Chinese culture has assimilated into the life of Indonesian locals. When there is Chinese people, there will be temple and markets. Tien Kok Sie Temple has the total area of 250 m<sup>2</sup>. Because in the old days, river is the important transportation line. So the temple is also located in the behind of Kali Pepe River. In the front of Tien Kok Sie Temple is Pasar Gede traditional market, this market still has a very representative role from the old days until today. There is royal palace nearby the temple, back then it is a city center. There is a lot of businessman from another city and they don't have any place to live, so they use Tien Kok Sie Temple as their rest area, especially the Chinese People, they will go worship and ask for the blessings before they start their business.

Just like the other religion's temple, this temple is aimed for the people of Chinese ethnics group of Solo. This temple is divided into few sections and there are several phenomena of Gods. When we enter the temple, we will see a small pond, that small pond is for us to wash our hands and feet. After we pass the small pond, there will be a small table to worship. There is the statue of dragon and monkey in the two sides of the table. Jin Li, the place to burn the paper is in the front of the temple, there are a lot of Buddha statues in the middle of the temple. There are three large statues in the behind of Guanyin Bodhisattva, representing three-ringed Buddha. There are also smaller statues of Buddha besides it.

Inside the temple, there is a lot of lanterns where people can hang their own name below it, this means that their hope that everything they want will come true and everything will go well. Beside lanterns, the Chinese people also use candles to pray, so that is why there is a very big candle inside the Tien Kok Sie Temple.

Temple usually built in the location where the Feng Shui is bad because they hope it will remove those bad things by building the temple there. Tien Kok Sie Temple also was built in the location where the Feng Shui is bad, it is in the T-Junction. Usually people will know that this location is very unlucky, so that is why they chose this place to build the temple.

#### *1.2 The history of Tien Kok Sie Temple*

During Tang Dynasty (618-907), China sent their armies to the Southern China. From that moment on, a lot of Chinese people go to Southeast Asia and live there. During Song Dynasty (907-2217) a lot of Chinese people come to Southeast Asia to do business, and that also includes Indonesia. They come to Indonesia to sell tea leaves, cloth, Chinese medicine, ceramics, and they bought a lot of Indonesian spices to bring back home.

During Tang and Song Dynasty, Chinese people starts to immigrate to Indonesia. They come to Palembang first, because at that time Sriwijaya Kingdom is the business center. And then after that, they went to Java to search for spices. Chinese people come to Indonesia brings the Chinese Culture, that includes the religion. In this way, Chinese Culture has gradually become part of Indonesian Culture.

The history of The Chinese Indonesian (Chinese-Born Indonesian and The Chinese Indonesian who returns to China) has undergone a very long time, especially in Java Island which is earlier than the Russians came to Indonesia. Most of the Chinese Indonesian in Java Islands are doing business. They chose to build their home in the city center for the convenience of their business.

Chinese people believe that there are three religions, it is Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddha. But those three religions have no differences or any kind of conflicts, in the other words those three religions are meant to be one. Lastly, those three religions are called Tridharma. To worship with other religion believers, they built the Chinese temple.

There is one very old Chinese temple in Solo, it is built in year 1745, until now it almost has 300 years of history. So now there's a lot of outsiders come to Tien Kok Sie Temple to praying or to have a sightseeing. The land of this Tien Kok Sie Temple before is used to be Thoreau's palace to build the Chinese temple. In the old days, a lot of people who are involved in business came to Solo, they live in the temple to save the money. There are a lot of Goddess inside the temple, for example: Fude Zhengshen, Lady of Heaven, Xuantian God, God of Wealth, The God of Kitchen, The God of Door, Dizang the King of Bodhisatva, Zhong Liquan, Zhang Guolao, Li Tieguai, Lu Dongbin, Cao Guoji, Lan Cai He, Han Xiang Zi, He Xian Gu, Bun Cu Po Sat.

After through the first door, there is a dragon statue on the left side. Dragon represents the good things and wealth; they believe that dragon is very mysterious, it can shrink and grow bigger to fill the world, their life is decided between them when they want to live. In the direction sign, the blue dragon is to protect the east and arrange the rain and wind. There are white tigers arranged for autumn in the west. There are black snakes in the north specially arranged for the winter. Phoenix in the south specially arranges summer. In the lunar calendar, in every year of May 5<sup>th</sup> is the Dragon Boat Festival, and dragon boat races are held generally. The front of the boat is the head of the dragon, and the back of the boat is the tail of the dragon.

They believe there are 4 kinds of dragons: one is the Sky Dragon, which specializes to manage the sky; second is God Dragon, which specializes in arranging wind and the rain; the third is the Earth Dragon, which has the rights to all water and rivers in the world; and the last is the Blue Dragon, which specialized in keeping our finances. In our right side, we can see a picture of a tiger, tiger is a sign of courage. Chinese ancient army always stick the picture of the tiger's head in their front door to prevent the ghost come inside their homes. The legend said, tiger's hair could turn white after 500 years. They believe that dragon and tiger could prevent ghost, so the ghost will not enter the temple.

Inside the temple's wall there is a lot of pictures, through the history we knew what those pictures are representing. Sometimes those pictures are similar with the homophonic in Chinese Language. All the pictures inside the Tien Kok Sie Temple have the cultural heritage. Based on the Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddha, there are few great Chinese people in the temple who deserve to be our role models. All Chinese myths will be painted on the temple walls.

Temples originally is the place to worship or to recall the memory our ancestors or relatives who passed away, but in the end has become the place to pray and to learn the religion. Everyone can come to the temple because this place will make people feeling peaceful.

In the life of the people, colors are very important because colors could determine someone's feeling are good or not good and could determine someone's luck. Through the

colors that we like, we also knew that our personality and our feelings. In the special days or festival days, we also need to wear different colors of clothing to represent our mind.

In the Chinese culture, every different environment surround has its own meaning, the colors also. The colors inside Tien Kok Sie Temple mainly are red and yellow. In Chinese Culture, red is the best colors. The plus point of red colors such as wealth, warmness, bravery (courage), and love. Especially during weddings, all stuffs are all red that represents an abundant happiness. During the first night of the wedding, the bride will prepare a red cloth to represent that the women still a virgin. If there is no red cloth, peoples will assume that the women are not virgin anymore. Chinese people always giving out red envelope, especially during Chinese New Year. There are also some red stuffs inside the Tien Kok Sie Temple, one of them is the lantern. Lantern usually uses to brighten the light or usually uses during Cap Gomeh Festival. Below the lanterns, people will hang their own name, hoping that they will get peace and happiness. There are 12 red pillars inside the temple which divided inside and outside. And there is a lot of candles, there are large and small candles. Red is a very good color, so a lot of Chinese people use red colors to decorate their homes.

In the Chinese Culture, yellow represents dignity, glory, and flourish. So, there are stuffs with yellow color inside the temple that represents glory and flourish. Burning place and the “paper money” also in the golden-yellow color to send the money to the families or relatives that has passed away for their happiness in their other world. Like the other colors, in Chinese Culture the green color also has the plus point. Green represents growth, fertility, freedom, and balance. The green colors’ stuff inside the temple are rarely seen, even it is not seen. Green colors represent wisdom and the women’s color. In the Chinese Culture, the green color will make people feel jealousy and arrogant.

The blue color inside the Tien Kok Sie Temple usually used in the body of the dragon, because dragon is the Goddess of Car. It will make people feels peace and happy, the color fits in the rest area. But blue also has shortcomings, it means that someone is not confident enough.

White represents holiness or rebirth (reincarnation), clean, and white is the color of men. But white color has the shortcomings, the color of white represents calm or there is no life. White also is a very boring color because it is very monotonous. It is the same as the other color, black usually represents mysterious and the independence. And it could represent death, dark or black magic.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper is focused on the topic of Tien Kok Sie Temple and interviewed quite a lot of Chinese People that could represent the topic to come to the following conclusions: even though Solo has a lot of cultures integrated, but they are harmonious, that The Chinese Culture through Tien Kok Sie Temple that could be preserved. Tien Kok Sie Temple is dedicated to worships of Buddhists, Confucians, and Taoists, so there will be many Goddesses in it. The decorations of Tien Kok Sie Temple are mainly yellow and red, and there are also statues of dragons and lions. Each color and statue have its own meaning in it.

Thus, writers are proposing some of the suggestions: it is better for the keeper of the Tien Kok Sie Temple to starts writing the history book of Tien Kok Sie Temple, so the visitors will know more about the historic time and the present time of Tien Kok Sie Temple.

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