

Gods Of Education In Chinese Mythology

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Abstract. The placement of statues of gods in a monastery is adjusted to the needs of the people. By knowing what statues are placed in a monastery, we will know what monastery is intended for believers. In general, statues that in a temple are always placed main statues, then there will be other statues that describe specifically the statues worshipped in a group of people in accordance with the beliefs of the community that carries it.

Keywords: Vihara, Statues, Tionghoa

1 Introduction

Ethnic Chinese came to the archipelago through several stages. The arrival of ethnic Chinese in the archipelago has at least existed in classical times, known from the existence of archaeological remains scattered in almost all classical sites in the archipelago in the form of ceramics originating from China. The existence of this ethnic Chinese coincides with the people originating from India which in the early days of its arrival was marked by cultural influences better known as HinduBuddhist Culture.

Unlike the presence of ethnic Chinese found in Java or other regions in the archipelago, the arrival of ethnic Chinese in Medan is much younger. They entered Indonesian territory on the proposal of TJ Cremer to J Nienhuys who at that time needed additional labor in new areas due to increased European investment in the tobacco plantation sector around 1869. The ethnic Chinese community was brought in as Chinese coolie workers living in Penang (Reid.1991:200 and Breman.1997:23 in Akob. 2015:52). Of the many Chinese tribes found in Medan, among others are Hokkien, Teochiu, Khe (Hakka), Canton (Khong Hu) and Liok Hong. They generally work according to the traditions passed down by their ancestors, for example the Hokkien tribe is generally traders, Teochiu works as farmers, Cantonese people work as gold traders and carpentry and people from the Hakka tribe generally work in medicine or trade (Tan.2016: 16).

The people of Medan City call these sacred buildings the center of religious activities of the Chinese community as pekong, which comes from the title Tua Pek Kong or Da Bo Gong, which is the God of Taoism known by overseas communities in Malaysia and Indonesia which means Uncle Agung. Toa Pek Kong is very popular among Malaysians and Sumatrans, related to the story that he was a student from Fujian who fled to Malaysia during the Qing Dynasty (1736 – 1790). He is considered a pioneer and worshipped at a temple named Tua Pek Kong.

(<https://www.tionghoa.info/dewatua-pek-kong-toapekong-da-bo-gong-大伯公/>). The naming of the temple

probably comes from the term Kwan Im Ting, which is the building where people worship the Goddess Kwan Im. From the word Ting. The name of the temple became increasingly popular with the use of small clappers in Buddhist ceremonies that read "teng-tengteng". The term vihara was used to give the face of Buddhism in Indonesia considering the political situation that developed at that time, so that the Tridharma adherents added to the Buddhist aspects in their worship (Lombard and Salmon, 1985: 48).

Inside a monastery there is an altar for prayer with different spatial layouts. The layout of each monastery has a specific purpose and purpose, as well as ornaments filling the space. The layout of the monastery can affect the activities of the people who worship in it. In addition to having a different spatial arrangement, the monastery also has many ornamental varieties in the form of elements and symbols that are not only used as space fillers or aesthetics but have their own meanings (Polniwati Salim, 2011).

This paper discusses various aspects contained in an East Mountain monastery, including statues that are worshipped in the hope of being able to reveal the historical background of the ethnic Chinese community by understanding the symbolic meaning through elements contained in the temple area. With the many objects, decorations, and ornaments contained in the temple building implies many meanings contained in the monastery thus there will also be more and more things about Chinese culture, art, and teachings that can be revealed in a temple building (Herwiratno.2007: 83).

2 Theory

Usman Pelly in his writings states that ethnic Chinese have stereotypes, including "rich traders, exclusive and disloyal foreign descendants, manipulative and so on. Manipulative attitudes are shown in many aspects of life. The trading tricks that were carried out required Chinese people to carry out manipulative attitudes to gain profits from their trading efforts. Apart from that, manipulative attitudes are also shown by the principle of "dual citizenship", belief in predictions and even the gods they worship, they tend to be manipulative (Pelly.2016:68).

3 Discussion

Vihara is a sacred building of the Chinese community to worship God, Prophets, and spirits of ancestors related to the teachings of Tridharma (Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism). In Chinese belief, the worship of holy spirits can be classified into three groups, namely:

1. The god who rules the universe who has a territory in the sky. The gods of this group are led by the highest gods, namely Yu Huang Da Di, Yuan Shi Tian Zun, including the Star Gods, the God of lightning, the God of Wind and others.
2. The gods who rule the earth, who have power on earth, even though they are actually angels of the sky. Their dominion is the world and man, including the end. In Daoism they are said to be the gods who rule Wu-xing (Ngo- heng-Hokkien) or the Five Factors, namely: Wood (God of the forest, god of the pole and so on). Fire (God of fire, God of Kitchen). Metal (God of wealth in the earth). Water (God of Wells, God of Rivers, God of

the Sea, Angels of water, God of rain and others). Land (God of the earth, God of the Mountain, Lord of Akherat, God of the protector of the city and others).

3. Human Ruling Gods are gods whose job is to take care of matters related to human life such as birth, arranged marriage, death, age, fortune, wealth and others. Included in the group of gods of human rulers are the gods who protect carpentry businesses, gods of medicine, gods of silkworm farms and others. Then added with regional gods who are the protectors of people from the same area. With the introduction of Buddhism from India, the Buddhist gods became the worship of the people on an equal footing with other gods, and were added to the temple together. Among the most popular Buddhist gods are Guan Yin and Mi Lo Fo and Sakayamuni have lost their Indian nature and are absorbed altogether in Chinese culture so that they have acquired the form of pure Chinese gods (Setiawan.1990:17).

Almost every profession has its own gods, such as farmers, silk breeders, paper makers and traders, carpenters, jewelry craftsmen, literati, healers, and even barbers have their own patron gods (Herwiratno.2007: 82).

The main gods and goddesses in a temple can also be one of the historical references for the economic development of the Chinese community in an area. If the Sea Goddess is the main goddess in a temple, it can be estimated that the Chinese community in the area was originally inter-island traders or fishermen. Not surprisingly, this goddess is widely worshipped in the coastal areas of North Java. However, if the Earth God is the main god, it is likely that the Chinese community around the temple relies on agricultural and plantation products (Herwiratno.2007: 82).

The surnames of the main gods and goddesses can also reflect what surnames are dominant in the Chinese community of the area. For example, Sea Goddess Tian Shang Sheng Mu her real name is Lim Bik Nio. So, it can be estimated that many Lim/Lin clans live around the temple. (Tian Shang Sheng Mu), considered the Guardian God of the Ocean. Dou Mu, like Guan Yin, has always provided protection to sailors. North in Taoism is often associated with the element "water", and is a symbol of life and death that is closely related to mankind (setiawan.1990:77). (Tian Shang Sheng Mu temple worship). According to records, Shui Xian worship in the community is mainly carried out by merchants, fishermen's associations and seafarers' organizations (Setiawan.1990: 128). In Semarang, Zhu Sheng Niang Niang worship is found in See Ho Kiong Temple as a complement, because there worship is mainly directed to Tian Shang Sheng Mu (Thian Siang Seng Bo - Hokkian) or Dewi Tara Samudera (Setiawan.1990: 154).

Sailors are aware that life in the middle of the ocean is always full of dangers that can threaten at any time. In order to beg for protection and safety, Lin Mo Niang was later regarded as the guardian goddess of the sailors. And everywhere his statue is always brought with him. Their safety on the voyage was considered the grace and protection of this Goddess. And stories about the appearance of the Goddess in giving help to sailors began to spread one by one. It was customary at that time, before the voyage began, a large prayer was held to ask for his protection. On each ship was always provided a worship room for his statue. (Setiawan.1990:230-235).

Certain clans build special temples for their own clans, of course with the main gods/goddesses who come from their own clan. Some of the guardian gods of the clan include: The patron deity of the Lin clan (Liem), the patron deity of the Huang clan (Oei), the patron deity of the Yang clan (Nyo) and the patron deity of the Xie clan (Setiawan.1990:294-296).

In addition to the gods mentioned above, some monasteries specifically place their statues according to the need for their worship. Among these were the gods of the Human Ruler as well as the patron gods of the profession. The ruling gods of Man include the Goddess of Fertility, the guardian goddess of pregnancy, the guardian goddess of bed, the protector of children from smallpox and measles. The guardian angel of the catastrophe, the gods of matchmaking, the wealth of the deceased spirit protector and so on. As for the patron gods of their professions in their home area, for example, the guardian gods of agriculture, the guardian gods of carpentry and paper industry, the gods of enterprises, the gods of clothing making, the patron gods of silkworm farms, the patron gods of gold and silver smelters, the gods of metal trading, the gods of fortune-telling, the guardian gods of art and so on.

Confucius As God Of Education



Figure 1 : Kong Hu Cu. (Source: orientaloutpost.com)

Kong Fu Zi (Hokkien) is very appropriate to be called the pioneer of Education in Chinese Society. Kong Zi is revered for his services as an educator, philosopher, politician and educator who dedicated his life in the world of Education.

Confucians lived at the end of the Chunqiu period (770 - 475 BC). Kong Zi (Khong Cu - Hokkien) was born in 551 BC and died in 476 BC. Her real name is Qiu or Zhong Ni. He was born in Zou Yi in the country of Lu (now Qufu, Shandong province). Kong Zi's ancestors were nobles from the land of Song. Later, because of his merits, Kong Zi was regarded as the Guardian God of Education.

Kong Zi's persistence was motivated by the difficulties experienced in his childhood. In addition, in the view of Chinese society, his birth was marked by natural symptoms, such as the appearance of a supernatural animal, qilin, and 2 dragons dancing around the roof of the house, this indicates that later the child became a big person.

Kong Zi lost his father at the age of 3 and at the age of 17 his mother followed. The death of his father made Kong Zi live in poverty. This is what actually makes Kong Zi more persistent to achieve a better life in the future. Because of his persistence, at the age of 15, Kong Zi has become a well-rounded person. At the age of 30, Kong Zi has become a respected person for his knowledge and many people come to learn from him.

Therefore he then founded a school, which accommodated enthusiasts who would study, regardless of their origin and degree. This at the same time broke the monopoly of education by the nobility and expanded the opportunities among the public to obtain a more decent life.

In order to develop his moral teachings, Kong Zi in 497 BC traveled to the country to give lectures. He roamed the country but because his teachings were considered useless to the warlike country, he became disillusioned. He returned to Lu at the age of 68, and although he remained respected as an elder, his teachings no longer had a place there. Because the recommended politics did not receive attention, Kong Zi finally focused his attention on the field of education.

Among his leading disciples were 72 men, often called the "72 wise men". Some of the students held high positions, but they did not stop asking their teachers for instructions. This learned group of Kong Zi's teachings formed an intellectual school known as "Ru-jia" which literally means Learned Group.

In old age, Kong Zi began to compile classics. Among the books compiled include Shi-jing (Book of Verse), Li-ji (Book of Ceremonies), Yi-jing (Book of Changes), Giun-qi (Book of Records of Events Surrounding Lu Country from 722 - 481 BC) and Shi-ji (Book of History). These books are masterpieces of Chinese classics and priceless legacies for future generations to study Chinese history, culture and philosophy. Kong Zi is a scientist whose influence in Chinese history is enormous.

The worship of Kong Zi, began during the time of the Han Emperor Wu Di (Han Bu Te - Hokkien) of the Han dynasty (206 BC - 220 BC). Emperors of later times followed his example. Kong Zi Temple has been established everywhere since that era, as well as a place of literary education and cultural education. Kelenten (Kong Zi Temple of Worship) is also called Wen Miao (Bun Bio - Hokkien) which means literary temple. The only temple in Indonesia that specifically worships Kong Zi is in Surabaya.

Patron Deities of the Learned



Figure 2 : Wen Chang Di Jun

Sources: DEWATA PELINDUNG KAUM TERPELAJAR (Kuí Dǒu Xīng Jūn, Fú Yòu Dìjūn, Zītóng Dìjūn, Guān Shèng Dì jūn, Zhū Yī Xīng Jūn) | 3 DHARMA

Wen Chang Di Jun is the patron deity of the scholars, Wen Chang Di Jun is also known as Wen Cai Shen. Wen Chang Di Jun is generally always shown with his helper. Standing in front of the right, there is a demon-faced man, small in stature, carrying a Chinese pencil (pit) and one hand carrying a bushel or measuring device. He is Kui Xing (one of Wen Chang). On the left stood an old man in a robe named Zhu Yi, also one of Wen Chang.

Behind the left and right stood two people called Tian Long (The deaf from the sky) and Di Ya (The mute from the earth). Both were servants and horsemen of Wen Chang Di Jun. They were mute and deaf, so it was impossible to divulge the secret of his master that he would bestow intelligence and literary ability on those who were entitled. Wen Chang Di Jun himself sits in the middle, white-faced, blue-robed and holding a ru-yi or kumala stick as a symbol of kindness.

Wen Chang Di Jun (Bun Jiang Te Kun - Hokkien) is one of the North Star group. The other six stars namely Shang-jiang, Ci-jiang, Gui-xiang, Shi-sheng, Si-ming and Si-lu are gods who have the task of regulating both civil and military ranks, services and education. Their post in the sky palace is Minister of Administrative Affairs. In temples of worship for Kong Zi (Confucius), there is usually an altar for the worship of Wen Chang Di Jun, because Wen Chang is considered the protector of the intellect.

Wen Chang's history varies in places. One of them mentions that Wen Chang Di Jun was born Zhang Ya, in Zhe-jiang province, during the Tang dynasty. From Zhe-jiang he then moved to eastern Sichuan province. Because of his literary acumen, he served as ceremonial presiding officer of the province.

Another story says that he was Zhang Ya Zi of Zi-tong who was born during the Jin dynasty and served as a minister who prioritized education. But he died in battle and was appointed by Yu Huang Da Di as the patron deity of the learned people with the title Zi Tong Di Jun or Wen Chang Di Jun (Zi Tong Di Jun means God of Zi-tong).

Among the people there is a belief, that Wen Chang's God of Education consists of 5 gods, while Wen Chang Di Jun is the supreme. Wen Chang Di Jun worship in Indonesia is also quite popular, as evidenced by the many Wen Chang Di Jun worships in Jakarta and Surabaya temples but in other temples many are worshipped as complements.



Figure 3 : Kui Dou Xin Jun

Sources: DEWATA PELINDUNG KAUM TERPELAJAR (Kuí Dǒu Xīng Jūn, Fú Yòu Dìjūn, Zītóng Dìjūn, Guān Shèng Dì jūn, Zhū Yī Xīng Jūn) | 3 DHARMA

Kui Dou Xin Jun is considered the Guardian God of Trials and is one of the seven Xuan Wu (North Star) stars named Kui Xiu (Kui Siu - Hokkien) or Kui Xing which means Kui Star, having tasks related to school exam problems.

It is said that according to Kui Xiu's belief, he once descended and incarnated into the world as a literati whose face was very ugly. Despite his excellent talent, he failed to pass the Zhuang-yuan exam several times (the highest classical degree of the time) simply because of his bad face. Out of desperation, he finally chose the short road to end his life by plunging himself into the river. His spirit was appointed as the guardian angel of the literati who were on their way to the capital to take the scholarly exam. Therefore, Kui Xing is shown by tying a crocodile. The crocodile is considered the epitome of all evil spirits and all that hinders its journey.

Kui Xing is often also embodied with a demonic face, green-skinned, one hand holding a bushel or measure, the other holding a Chinese pen, and one foot trailing back.

He was considered a god in charge of distributing titles to literati who passed the exam, therefore the scholars who would take the exam always prayed before him.

His statue, unless displayed together with Wen Chang Di Jun, is also often worshipped on its own altar. His worship is also unclear since when it began. But during the Ming dynasty, Kui Xing was already so popular. Ancient literati thought Kui Xing or Kui Dou Xing Jun was a guardian angel so that they could gain rank. Because on the 7th of the 7th month of Imlik night, coinciding with Kui Xiu's birthday, they usually hold a ceremony to gather while making verses and papers, not forgetting to be accompanied by dishes. By literati, this event is seen as very



Figure 4 : Zhu Yi Fu Zi

Source : DEWATA PELINDUNG KAUM TERPELAJAR (Kuí Dǒu Xīng Jūn, Fú Yòu Dìjūn, Zītóng Dìjūn, Guān Shèng Dì jūn, Zhū Yī Xīng Jūn) | 3 DHARMA

necessary. In Kong Zi Miao Temple (Kong Cu Bio - Hokkien) as well as in Wen Chang Di Jun temple in Chi-gan-lou, Taiwan, there is this worship of Kui Dou Xing Jun.

Zhu Yi Fu Zi or often called Zhu Yi Xing Jun (Cu I Seng KunHokkien) or Zhu Fu Zi (Cu Hu Cu - Hokkien) was a prominent writer during the Southern Sung dynasty under the name Zhu Xi. His birthday is on the 4th day of the 1st month of Imlik. Zhu Xi is a scholar who specializes in moral issues and ceremonial customs, he has authored 4 books on the above. Writers in the Yuan and Ming dynasties, used these books as the main handbook when they wanted to take undergraduate examinations. They besides studying Zhu Xi's work also paid tribute to him by holding prayers, so that in the answers to the exams would be pleasing to Zhu Xi's heart. Therefore, Zhu Yi is regarded as a Test Angel.

The specific story about Zhu Yi's duty as the patron of the exam, and very popular in China is as follows: An examiner, after carefully examining the exam manuscript of a college student, then put it aside and thought that the work was very ugly and not worth passing. But the manuscript, moving back before it as if someone would return it for re-examination. At the same time, an old man in a red robe appeared and nodded in front of him as a gesture for the manuscript to be passed. The examiner was amazed by the incident and gave his consent for the student to be graduated. Zhu Yi is considered a protector so that an exam can be successful.

4 Conclusion

Not all statues of the gods found in their mythology are placed in monasteries. The placement of statues of these gods is adjusted to their needs in place. Some gods are not even known by the Chinese community in Indonesia, this is because they come from other regions that have different natural, social and cultural conditions with people who worship certain gods. For example, such as the Polar Gods and so on, although in essence, these gods are also manifestations of other gods with other functions. The placement of gods is adjusted to the social conditions of the carrying community. The placement of statues in a monastery building

is able to describe the characteristics of the supporting community, even the historical background and origin of the surrounding community. In certain monasteries even more specifically can be known the background and socio-cultural conditions of the community. These monasteries are generally small monasteries built by certain communities.

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