



# The Contribution of Klenteng Soetji Nurani in Cultivating Tolerance for Society

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**Abstract:** *Klenteng* is a temple, place of worship for Chinese people. One of the two temples in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan is the Klenteng Soetji Nurani, located in Jalan Veteran. The temple was erected in 1898, built by two generals who came directly from China. The existence of the *klenteng* can be used as a mediation of tolerance in society. This article aims to describe Klenteng Soetji Nurani is used in instilling tolerance in the community, especially in Banjarmasin. A qualitative approach



with descriptive methods is used in this research. They were collecting data through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and verification. The data is then validated through triangulation of sources techniques, extensive observations, member checks, and peer discussions. The study results show that the Klenteng Soetji Nurani has a building used as a place of worship and as a tourist destination in Banjarmasin. Other uses include social activities at the Klenteng Soetji Nurani, such as distributing free staple food and free medical treatment every two to three months. Besides that, the temple's additional building also has its function on each floor, such as an office on the ground floor, weddings, and wushu training. The existence of activities carried out at the Klenteng Soetji Nurani shows that the temple plays a vital role in cultivating tolerance in society. The shrine welcomes anyone who sees, visits, and even participates in these activities without religious or other differences.

**Keywords:** Tolerance, klenteng (Chinese temple), social values

## Introduction

Society generally has their respective places of worship according to their beliefs. One of the many communities is the ethnic Chinese in Indonesia, whose worship place is the temple or famously called klenteng. Klenteng is generally built for the Chinese with a specific purpose. It is a sacred building for the Chinese people to worship God, spiritual beings, and their ancestors related to Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism teaching (Widiastuti & Oktaviana, 2016). The Chinese of Banjarmasin city has two temples, one of which is the Klenteng Soetji Nurani. They view the temple not only as the place of worship for them but also people of other religions. Society has pros and cons on this broad perspective of tolerance that may lead to differences in values between one society and another. But it is a natural thing starts from differences in religion, social environment, beliefs, and places of residence (Abbas, Winarso, & Meilina, 2019).

Klenteng Soetji Nurani has three religions that can both use the temple. The three religions are Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Apart from being a place of worship, there is a three-story additional building on the site that functions as a tourist spot. The building is used as a tourist destination in the city of Banjarmasin and a place for social activities such as social service and free medical treatment carried out in the temple building.



The tolerance for freedom of all religious communities must be protected and should not be ignored. Patience is meant here as mutual respect (Mutiani, 2019; Rina, Caroline, & Nunung, 2016), creating, respecting, and not mixing up their religions' teachings during worship. Such as the opinion that tolerance means action not to combine or interfere with one's affairs and behavior, we can manifest patience by understanding that the various existing cultures require cultural strengthening and provide opportunities for differences to become something equal (Rina, Caroline, & Nunung, 2016; Mutiani, Abbas, Syaharuddin, & Susanto, 2020). The tolerance that appears in the community can be seen clearly from the existence of social activities carried out in cooperation that bring out the values in it. These values arise directly from individuals who interact even though different religions, ethnicities, and races work together regardless of differences (Faridah, 2013; Abbas EW, 2020).

Society is different from one culture to another (Soeroso, 2008; Lestari, Abbas, & Mutiani, 2020). Social values are always related to goodness, ethics, and religion. A society that adheres to social values is usually associated with what the community considers acceptable and insufficient or wrong. The study of social studies with social sciences has something in common (Mutiani, 2019; Abbas EW, 2013), namely, as a study in which both study individuals' lives in community groups even though the terms are different. Social studies' scopes in a social context or humans as social science members are academic theoretical, while social classes are practical. Generally, values are learned communication the results between individuals in a group such as religion, family, society, and certain people. These values vary according to the diversity that appears in the community. This diversity will raise society's social life (Sapriya, 2012; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2020).

Social values can be used as a way of life for people who like to hang out according to what they think is good and evil. Cost is fair, aspired to, desired, and considered essential to society. The social value itself can be interpreted as an appreciation for something acceptable, necessary, appropriate, and has its function for personal development (Subiyakto & Mutiani, 2019; Abbott, Teti, & Sapsford, 2020). Thus, this article aims to describe how Klenteng Soetji Nurani is used to instill tolerance in the community, especially in Banjarmasin.



## Methods

A qualitative approach is an approach used in this research method. This approach is intended to describe Klenteng Soetji Nurani's contribution to instilling tolerance in society as a social value. Collecting data uses observations such as researchers observing community activities, what activities are taking place there, and recording the activities there so that Klenteng Soetji Nurani can create an attitude of tolerance (Moleong, 2002; Mulyana, 2008). As for interviews, this research was conducted divided into academics and society. The academics come from the Tourism and Culture Office. These academics support why Soetji Nurani Temple has become one of 36 tourist destinations in Banjarmasin. The academician is Ehsan Alhak as the Head of the Tourism and Culture Office. The community figures are Tiono Husein as the chairman of the Klenteng Soetji Nurani and Heri as the Pasar Niaga Timur Temple administrator. The documentation in notes is used that support research and found on research subjects and recordings of interviews with informants. This article's documentation data structure is in pictures of the Klenteng Soetji Nurani building, recorded interviews with sources, and photo documentation from the Banjarmasin Post newspaper (Sugiyono, 2008; Saebani, 2009).

As for the data analysis technique using the Miles and Huberman model, namely data reduction, the researchers in this article compile the necessary data. So which data is supported in this article? The researcher reduced the community's data, such as interviews, videos, voice recordings, photographs, and documents in the form of newspapers. The researcher discarded unnecessary data and directed existing data about the contribution of Klenteng Soetji Nurani in cultivating tolerance. The researcher presents the data according to the research results collected from various sources and data collection techniques in the data display. In this stage, the researcher used the data presented in the narrative text, which then showed the data to describe the community's condition with the Klenteng Soetji Nurani existence. The last stage is conclusion by the researcher (Kasiram, 2010).

The data's validity was carried out by triangulating sources, techniques, an extensive observation, member checks, and peer discussions. Triangulation of research sources double-checked the data obtained from various sources to re-examine how Klenteng Soetji Nurani had contributed to the existing society. The data is processed again into accurate data so that there is a no different

view. Technique triangulation checks data using other techniques such as data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Discussions with the relevant sources are held to ascertain whether the data is correct. Extension of the word is a re-observation conducted by the researcher because this research is still insufficient, and the data needed is still not much. The member check tests the process of checking the data obtained by the researcher and the data submitter. To find out how correct the data will be used to adjust to the acquisition of research, the last one is peer discussion, namely research techniques by discussing the study results with friends who are both researching the temple or those directly related to the task.

## Findings

A place of worship in a community is a dedicated place considered holy or sacred to carry out religious activities. In Banjarmasin, people who live at Jalan Veterans have a place of worship for Chinese people, namely the temple or klenteng. The temple is named Klenteng Soetji Nurani. This temple has a long and unique history and contributes directly to the community participating in social activities at Soetji Nurani Temple.



**Figure 1.** The appearance of Klenteng Soetji Nurani in Banjarmasin  
(Source: Personal document, photo taken on June 12, 2019)

There are two klenteng in Banjarmasin, first The Po An Kiong Temple or Klenteng Karta Raharja in Niaga Timur Market. The other is Klenteng Sutji Nurani, which became the famous name of the surrounding area. Some people visiting the temple for the first time may be confused by the temple's additional buildings, statues, and ornaments. It is easy for people who visit the temple for



the first time. The colorful and distinct Chinese architecture contrasts with the more monotonous pattern of the business neighborhood around. The klenteng itself has changed its function from purely worshiping purposes to social activities and further a tourist attraction. Following the renovation in the past, an additional three-story building was founded beside the original one. The wall now is covered by ceramics from the previously only using materials of ironwood floors and fences.

Based on the results of an interview with Tiono Husein (74 years old), the ornaments in the temple are and. Now many such as hong birds, lions, dragons are the particular characteristics of the temple. The hong bird is defined as the consort-empress who accompanies the dragon to guard a kingdom, while the lion means the guardian of evil creatures who want to enter. Besides, the temple has unique characteristics, namely red and yellow. Red means prosperity, and yellow means prosperity. He also added that the additional three-story building has the use of each of the first floor being used as an office for people who want to visit and ask questions about the temple, the second floor is used as a place for matters or weddings, and the third floor is used for players, Wushu. With the many other uses, Klenteng Soetji Nurani has contributed to the community in cultivating tolerance in the temple because anyone can visit and participate in the activities there.

Klenteng Soetji Nurani has three different functions and contributes directly to society in cultivating an attitude of tolerance. First, this temple is used as a worship place where people who worship do not only come from Jl. Veterans, but many also come from outside the region and the city. This temple has no restrictions and an impressive list for those who wish to worship and visit. The klenteng allows anyone who wants to honor their ancestors or Gods regardless of their affiliation and faith as long as they respect the temple's peace. Second, the temple is used as a place of worship and holding social activities that help the community. This activity was carried out to pay attention to a group of donors who assisted in materials, services, and personnel. The activities carried out at the temple also vary, ranging from free medical treatment, which is carried out every two to three months by inviting all residents from anywhere to participate in these activities free of charge. Sutriyanto (47 years) said that: The enthusiasm is more towards our people because they are animated like the lion dance and others. Our people's social service is flooded, such as their new year of dreams, such as sharing zakat, rice, groceries, and others. The social





service event is held behind the temple and has a hall. That is where the social service events and others are held).

Apart from being directly supported by the temple, this free medical treatment activity was now supported by the Gadang Village puskesmas from the start to the end. Besides, the temple also has free grocery and zakat distribution, which is carried out at the temple, spearheaded by donors who want to share a little of their fortune. Usually, this event has been arranged by the temple, which collaborates directly with the heads of neighborhoods in each region. Another important development is the Klenteng Soetji Nurani become one of the 36 tourist destinations in Banjarmasin. The reason for choosing the temple as a tourist destination is the temple's age, which has reached hundreds of years. The unique building is added with distinctive ornaments on each side. The number of tourists visiting is increasingly helping and introducing the temple to the broader community so that anyone can see it.

Klenteng Soetji Nurani provides people of other faiths the freedom to enjoy the temple's ornaments and activities. This matter indirectly facilitates communication between individuals, groups, associations, and people with specific goals (Mutiani, 2019). The contribution of Klenteng Soetji Nurani in instilling an attitude of tolerance can be seen from the activities carried out, coupled with community participation in helping these activities. People help each other even though there are differences in ethnicity, religion, and culture, but it can be integrated with the activities carried out at the Klenteng Soetji Nurani. Based on the research results, community socialization can create various tolerant attitudes, such as mutual respect for different religious beliefs from Islam, Christianity, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

As for other values of tolerance, such as respecting people of worship, because people who worship at the temple are not only from the surrounding area but also from outside the area, as well as people who visit the temple are not only Banjarmasin people but also some from outside the city. The next tolerance attitude is safeguarding places of worship by the community and not destroying places of worship of other religions. Besides, the social activities carried out at the Klenteng Soetji Nurani can help people of different faiths, ethnicities, and cultures interact together in these activities. The community can socialize with mutual tolerance that respects cultural diversity.



Creating an attitude of tolerance can show that for every religious difference, we fellow citizens must respect and support each other's activities without any disputes (Jancsák, 2019). The integrity of the attitude of tolerance with the community's e function and direct role in instilling an attitude of patience because of the activities carried out at the temple. Inter-community respect for human values can be directly linked to cultivating tolerance in the community Jl. Veteran. The highest value obtained is human affection for not having a prejudice against others and shows sympathy towards one another.

## Conclusion

Klenteng Soetji Nurani building has its role in instilling an attitude of tolerance, especially Jl. Veteran. Klenteng Soetji Nurani, which has more than hundreds of years of age, has a long unique history, coupled with its very distinctive buildings and ornaments and statues inside, making this temple one of 36 tourist destinations in the city of Banjarmasin. The primary function of the Klenteng Soetji Nurani is as a place of worship for Chinese people. The people who worship here do not look and sort out because they are welcome to honor anyone and where they come from. Another function of the Klenteng Soetji Nurani is to strengthen tolerance, namely the social activities carried out at the temple. For example, such as free medical treatment that is held and intended for the community free of charge and can be followed by anyone, then there are social service activities such as the distribution of free staple food and the distribution of zakat for the community, which has become a routine activity at Klenteng Soetji Nurani. Community socialization with temple activities can create high and varied tolerance values, such as respecting beliefs and respecting people of worship. Besides, the activities carried out at the temple can help people from differences to become united in interacting.

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