



Analysis of feng shui principles in the design of *Tien Kok Sie Temple*: A historical and field observation study

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Tien Kok Sie Temple* was built in 1745 in Surakarta and has been recognized as a cultural heritage building. As a place of worship for the Tridharma community, predominantly of Chinese ethnicity, the temple embodies cultural and religious values. One notable aspects of temple's design are the application of feng shui principles because Chinese people believe that feng shui can bring harmony and prosperity in life. This study aims to analyze the implementation of feng shui principles in *Tien Kok Sie Temple* based on data collected through field observations and historical research. **Methods:** This study employs a qualitative research approach to analyze the application of feng shui principles at *Tien Kok Sie Temple*. The research process is structured into three key stages: data collection, data processing, and data interpretation. **Findings:** The application of feng shui principles in a building involves several critical aspects, including the selection of the building's location, its orientation, the interior layout, and the symbolism embedded in colors and ornaments used. **Conclusion:** *Tien Kok Sie Temple* effectively applies feng shui principles in its design and spatial arrangement. Additionally, several adjustments have been made over time to align the temple's features with feng shui practices. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** The study goes beyond typical architectural analysis by exploring how feng shui influences the temple's cultural, religious, and spatial dimensions. It reveals how these principles are adapted over time, emphasizing their role in preserving the temple's cultural and architectural identity. This approach offers fresh insights into the impact of feng shui on the design and functionality of sacred spaces in the Chinese tradition.

KEYWORDS: feng shui; chinese ethnic; *Tien Kok Sie Temple*.

1. Introduction

Ethnic Chinese have been interacting with the archipelago for centuries. One of the oldest Chinese records of the archipelago is the travelogue of a monk named Fa-Hian who lived during the Tang Dynasty. In later times, the Chinese and the people of the archipelago established close trade relations. By the 14th century, the people of the archipelago had become accustomed to Chinese goods such as silk, porcelain and other glassware. This trade relationship encouraged the migration of ethnic Chinese from China to the archipelago, especially along the North Coast of Java (Carey, 1985).

Ethnic Chinese played an important role in the economic and social sectors of the Mataram Kingdom in the 17th century. Not only trading in the port cities of the North Coast of Java, ethnic Chinese also worked as farmers in almost all areas in the Mataram Kingdom. The importance of the role of ethnic Chinese in turning the wheels of the economy, made

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the colonial government also provide an important position for ethnic Chinese (Carey, 1985). The migration of ethnic Chinese to the archipelago was accompanied by the influx of Chinese cultures that were held firmly by ethnic Chinese. Belief is one of the cultural aspects that ethnic Chinese brought to the archipelago. Ethnic Chinese beliefs are called Tridharma teachings which include Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. In addition to the belief system, the practice of feng shui is also carried and maintained to this day by ethnic Chinese. Feng shui is a practical guide to create harmony between humans and the surrounding environment (Kustedja et al., 2012).

The temple is a religious building that uses many elements of Chinese culture in its building. The concept of feng shui in the application of buildings affects several aspects including the focus on location selection, building orientation, spatial arrangement, use of color, and symbolization of ornaments. *Tien Kok Sie* Temple is the oldest temple in Surakarta which was built in 1745 and has been designated as a cultural heritage building. Although there have been many studies on this *Tien Kok Sie* temple, no one has specifically discussed the application of feng shui in this temple.



Fig. 1. *Tien Kok Sie* Temple

2. Methods

This research uses a qualitative method to provide an analysis of the application of feng shui at *Klenteng Tien Kok Sie*. This method refers to Sharer & Ashmore's book which includes formulation, implementation, data collection, data processing, data analysis, interpretation, and publication. These steps are then narrowed down into three stages, namely data collection, data processing, and data interpretation. Primary data collection includes direct observation of the architecture and layout of *Tien Kok Sie* Temple. Secondary data collection is obtained from secondary sources such as books, journal articles, and interviews with the head of the *Tien Kok Sie* temple management, Mr. SD, in providing other information about the temple that cannot be obtained from the literature review.

Data analysis is carried out after all data is obtained, both primary and secondary data. The analysis of *Tien Kok Sie* Temple uses feng shui concepts such as *Yin-Yang*, *Wu-Xing*, as well as color and ornament symbolism. The author looks for feng shui aspects applied in buildings such as location selection, building orientation, space layout, and the use of colors and ornaments at *Tien Kok Sie* Temple. Data interpretation is the stage of concluding from the data collection and analysis results that have been obtained during the research. In this case, the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple building is adjusted to feng shui concepts by paying attention to the application of feng shui concepts such as the concept of *Yin-Yang*, *Wu-Xing*, and the use of symbolism to the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 History of ethnic Chinese in Java

Ethnic Chinese played an important role in the economic and social sectors of the Mataram Kingdom in the 17th century. Not only trading in the port cities of the North Coast of Java, ethnic Chinese also worked as farmers in almost all areas in the Mataram Kingdom. The importance of the role of ethnic Chinese in turning the wheels of the economy, made the colonial government also provide important positions for ethnic Chinese (Carey, 1985).

The important position given to the ethnic Chinese from the colonial side was accompanied by privileges, one of which was the regulation of fines that would be charged twice if killing a Chinese compared to killing a local resident. However, the good relationship between the Chinese and the colonial government changed in the 17th century. The trigger for this change was the arrival of many Chinese immigrants due to the fall of the Ming Dynasty in 1644. The increasing number of Chinese immigrants made the colonial government make regulations in the form of a ban on Chinese immigrants to come to the archipelago if they did not have permission (Daradjadi, 2013).

As a result of these regulations, there was frequent extortion of ethnic Chinese which triggered a rebellion. The rebellion was finally realized with an attack on the colonial government's territory. The attack, which took place at the city gate and was poorly armed, was eventually suppressed by the colonial government. After the small rebellion, the colonial government took the rebellion more seriously by searching Chinese-owned buildings and arresting Chinese people found during the operation. The reason for the arrests was to rid the area of rebels. The operation succeeded in arresting around 500 Chinese people indiscriminately who were then executed on October 10, 1740 at Stadhuis (now the Jakarta History Museum) (Daradjadi, 2013).

The massacre became known to the Chinese, which sparked emotions and sparked a much larger rebellion. The peak was on October 11 where the number of Chinese rebels numbered around 5,000-6,000 people. The place where this rebellion occurred is known as Kali Angke because the rebellion caused thousands of lives to be lost from both the colonial and ethnic Chinese sides until the place was filled with human carcasses. This massacre and uprising of ethnic Chinese is known as *Geger Pacinan* (Daradjadi, 2013). Oghokham in his book explains that after 1740 or after the Geger Pacinan incident, a rule was enacted so that residential areas were separated by ethnicity to facilitate supervision and maintain security.

Apart from Batavia, the ethnic Chinese in Central Java, precisely in Kasunanan Kartasura, also planned a rebellion. This ethnic Chinese rebellion occurred in 1742 and caused the Kartasura Palace to be destroyed by fire, forcing the palace to move and look for another area to build a new palace. The area chosen to build the new palace was in a village called Sala Village. The new palace in Sala Village was the new capital of the Mataram Kingdom which was named Surakarta Palace, this also caused Sala/Solo (Indonesian spelling) to be known later as Surakarta (Rustopo, 2006).

Regulations related to residential grouping based on race were also applied in Surakarta, making the palace provide land for Chinese people around Pasar Gede which is also known as Kampong Balong, for Arabs given a location around Pasar Kliwon, indigenous people placed on the outskirts or villages with many trees or shady plants, while Europeans were excluded around *Vastenburg Fort*, Dutch Military Tangsi in Stabelan and Kestalan, and in Villa Parak Banjarsari (Rustopo, 2006).

3.2 Ethnic Chinese belief system

Most ethnic Chinese up to now adhere to the beliefs inherited from their ancestors called Tridharma. Tridharma or *sam kauw* in Hokkien means three truth teachings which include Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Confucianism is a teaching that focuses on moral and ethical rules in order to learn to be a whole person. Confucian teachings

emphasize the importance of empathy, compassion, respect for elders, and good relationships between people (Tu, 2005).

Confucius in his teachings asserts that one can be religious in the absence of absolute reality with the promise of the pleasures of heaven or the threat of hell. Confucians believe in one god, the One True God, referred to as *Thian*. Confucian teachings provide interpretations that are derived from moral concepts and thus provide new interpretations (Lan, 1990).

Taoism comes from the word *tao* or *dao* which means the way of truth with its teachings that emphasize humans to live in harmony with nature and create harmonization between humans and nature (Keene, 2006). Taoism by ethnic Chinese can be seen as a philosophy or *tao chia*, it can also be seen as a religion or *tao mao*. Taoism as a philosophy teaches people to follow the laws of nature while Taoism as a religion teaches people to defy the laws of nature (Lan, 1990). In practice, these two views do not clash because religion and philosophy have no clear boundaries in China. Taoism was developed by Lao Tzu (604-517 BC) who wrote down his teachings in a book containing short poems on ethics, psychology and metaphysics. The book was later used as a sacred book containing the rules of Taoism (Widisuseno, 2016).

Buddhism is a religion that was born in India in the 6th century AD by Sidharta Gautama. Buddhism has three basic frameworks, namely philosophy, morals, and religious ceremonies based on five main teachings, namely: (a) *Tri Ratna* (Buddha, *Dharma*, *Sangha*), (b) *Catur Arya Satyani* and *Hasta Arya Marga*, (c) the law of *Karma* and rebirth, (d) *Tilakhana*/three general patterns consisting of *anitya*, *anatman*, and *dukha*, (e) the law of *Pratitya Samuppada* or the law of interdependent cause and effect. From these five main teachings, Buddhism elaborates the concepts of divinity, cosmology, human beings, ethics, religious rituals, as well as the structure of society and matters related to it (Sutrisno, 1993). Ethnic Chinese combine the three religions into one teaching, namely Tridharma, because it is considered that there is no conflict in the teachings of the three. The combination of these three teachings according to ethnic Chinese actually complements and fills each other and is in line with the philosophy of life of the Chinese community.

3.3 Feng shui

The Chinese community in the past mostly made a living as farmers so they had an image of the ideal location of the settlement was like a village protected by hills, surrounded by rivers that flowed gently irrigating rice fields to support their farming activities. This ideal location was written down in ancient manuscripts with descriptions of their philosophies and experiences, creating concepts that became known as feng shui (Kustedja et al., 2012). Feng shui in its early development was familiarly referred to as *zhan-zhai* (residential forecasting), *xiang-zhai* (residential form), or *zhai-fa* (residential rules). The concept of feng shui simplifies the ancient Chinese philosophical idea of a complex and diverse universe into a harmonious form that is measurable and accessible to the five senses. The main principle of the application of feng shui is to unite the *chi* energy of the earth (*Yin*) with the *chi* energy of the sky (*Yang*) which is believed to bring positive influence to its inhabitants (Kustedja et al., 2012).

Chi is a force, energy, or vibration generated from everything in the world and influences life that can be strengthened, weakened, and directed according to human interests. *Chi* is said to be good *chi* if the *chi* energy is well organized so that it can bring good luck to humans. However, *chi* can also be bad *chi* that has a negative impact on humans and the environment if *chi* energy is blocked or unevenly distributed (Darmawan, 2003). Broadly speaking, the feng shui concepts used to calculate *chi* energy include the concept of *Yin-Yang*, five elements (*Wu-Xing*), *Ba-Kua* and *Lo-Shu*, as well as color symbolism and ornaments (Too, 1993).

3.3.1 Yin and Yang

Yin-Yang is a basic duality concept depicted by two opposing forces that are complementary and inseparable. *Yin* is described as a negative/passive force symbolized by women, soft, valley, moon, water, and others. While *Yang* is described as an active/positive force symbolized by male, strong, highland, sun, fire, and others. *Yin* and *Yang* are very important concepts in feng shui because they apply the principle of balance. Buildings constructed based on feng shui must be arranged in such a way as to create harmony with the surrounding nature (Darmawan, 2003). Residential buildings for the living are considered the *Yang* force and ideally the front of the building is directed to the south *Yang* as it is associated with life, light, sun and fire. Meanwhile, graves are considered the *Yin* force and ideally the direction of the corpse's head is directed to the north which is associated with death, darkness, the moon, and water (Kustedja et al., 2012). *Yin-Yang* symbol can be seen in Figure 2.

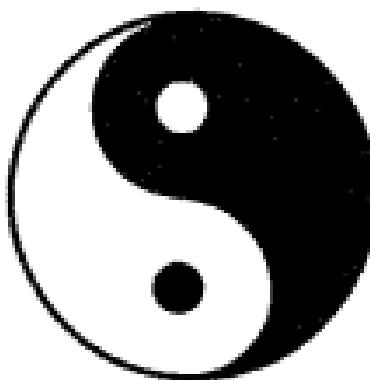


Fig. 2. *Yin-Yang* symbol
(Darmawan, 2003)

3.3.2 Wu-Xing

The five elements or *Wu-Xing* in Chinese means five activities, referring to the symbolization of dynamic forces that influence each other. In feng shui, *Wu-Xing* is used to understand how to balance energy in the environment, especially in architecture and spatial arrangement. The five elements in question are symbolized as wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. In each *Wu-Xing* symbol, there is a relationship between the elements and the colors and cardinal directions. In addition to being associated with colors and winds, fellow elements can affect each other, known as productive cycles (supporting each other) and destructive cycles (destroying each other) (Darmawan, 2003). The relationship between *Wu-Xing*, cardinal directions, and colors can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The relationship between *Wu-Xing*, cardinal directions, and colors

<i>Wu-Xing</i>	Direction	Color
Wood	East/southeast	Green
Fire	South	Red
Earth	Northeast/southwest	Yellow/brown
Metal	West/northwest	White
Water	North	Blue/black

3.3.3 Ba-Kua and Lo-Shu

Ba means number 8 in Chinese, when it comes to Ancient Chinese Manuscripts the number 8 describes 8 natural phenomena: heaven (天 *tian*), earth (地 *di*), thunder (雷 *lei*), water (水 *shui*), mountain (山 *shan*), wind (风 *feng*), fire (火 *huo*), and swamp (泽 *ze*). These

eight natural phenomena in Ancient Chinese Scriptures used *Yin* and *Yang* to explain things. Finally, the triogram (*gua/卦*) consists of three lines composed of a solid “-” representing *Yang* energy and a broken “--” representing *Yin* energy (Zhang, 2021). These eight triograms or *Ba-Kua* are used to analyze and understand the flow of energy (*chi/气*) in the environment, especially in building layout, orientation and spatial arrangement. Each triogram has certain attributes related to elements, colors, and directions that can affect the energy in a space (Zhang, 2021). *Ba-Gua* attributes can be seen in Figure 3.

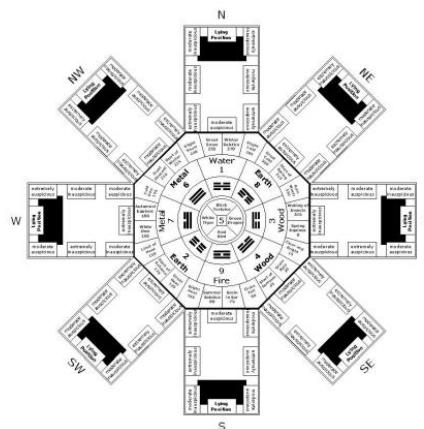


Fig. 3. *Ba-Gua* attributes
(Zhang, 2021)

The *Ba-Gua* concept also recognizes numbers in a 3×3 matrix grid known as the nine magic squares or *Lo-Shu*. This 3×3 pattern was used for the basic planning principles of Chinese Imperial cities and traditional Chinese houses. *Lo-shu* is adopted in feng shui as an energy map to identify and balance the flow of chi energy in a space (Zhang, 2021). *Lo-shu* matrix 3×3 can be seen in Figure 4.

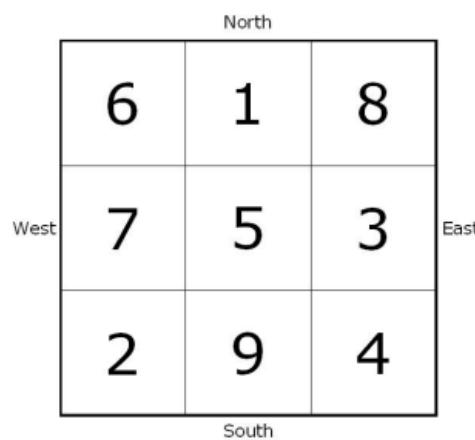


Fig. 4. *Lo-Shu* matrix 3×3
(Zhang, 2021)

3.3.4 Ornamental symbolism

In Chinese philosophy and Tridharma teachings, it is believed that the ornaments used in a building have a certain philosophical meaning and can bring positive benefits to the building. Ornaments that are often used can be grouped among others fauna, flora, natural phenomena, legends, and geometric motifs (Moedjiono, 2011). Other motifs are natural phenomena that generally describe natural conditions such as the sun, moon, lake, rain, forest, and others. Legendary motifs are also often encountered, the most commonly depicted being the eight gods that symbolize longevity, prosperity and happiness; the ten last courts as a reminder for humans to avoid criminal acts; and the story of *Hang Sin* and

Sam Kok which is a legend from a famous novel (Moedjiono, 2011). The meaning of fauna and flora ornaments can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. The meaning of fauna and flora ornaments

Ornament		Symbolism
Fauna	Dragon	Strength, endurance, goodness, courage
	Phoenix bird	Luck, prosperity, beauty
	Lion	Strength, courage, justice, protection
	Qilin	Luck, prosperity, longevity
	Turtle	Longevity, wisdom, stability
	Fish	Prosperity, good fortune, fertility
	Crab	Prosperity, good fortune, endurance
Flora	Poeny	Wealth, prosperity, good fortune
	Plum blossom	Courage, patience, wisdom
	Orchid	Elegance, purity, wisdom
	Bamboo	Longevity, wisdom, good fortune
	Lotus	Purity, wisdom, good fortune
	Pine	Purity, wisdom, good fortune

3.3.5 Color symbolism

Colors are closely related to feng shui concepts and are believed to influence the flow of *chi*. There are five colors that are often used which also symbolize the five elements, namely red, yellow, green, black, and white (Zhang, 2021). Each color has a meaning that can be explained in Table 3.

Table 3. Color meaning

Color	Meaning
Red	Protection, good luck, happiness
Yellow	Happiness, warmth, cheerfulness
Green	Growth, health, balance
Black	Deep feelings, mystery, strength, flexibility
White	Purity, cleanliness, simplicity, purity

As feng shui evolved, its application was divided into two schools: the shape school and the compass school. Shape flow is thought to have been introduced by a land layout expert named *Yun-Sung* who lived in the Kiangsi area in South China (Kustedja et al., 2012). The South China area is more suitable for implementing the shape school of feng shui due to the mountainous topography of the region. This flow emphasizes land forms, alignment, and the form of mountains and rivers and the natural surroundings where buildings are erected (Darmawan, 2003). According to the shape school, the right location is determined by the state of nature based on symbols. The most favorable location is known as the green dragon and white tiger formation. If the feng shui expert has found a green dragon, he can undoubtedly find a white tiger so that the best location is obtained (Keling & Savitri, 2020).

In feng shui, it is believed that a good water flow is one that meanders because it is considered to have a current that is not too fast and flows gently, which is good for describing the gentle flow of *chi* in the view of feng shui. According to this view, a good building location is close to a meandering stream to get good *chi*. Trees, electricity poles, or the end of a structure perpendicular to the main door can bring bad *chi*. The triangular roof shape on Chinese buildings should also not face forward, the position of the triangle (*nok*) on the roof must be installed across because it is believed that if the roof *nok* faces forward it will have a bad effect on the building in front of it (Darmawan, 2003).

In addition to natural conditions, the flow of form also states that a good building form is a simple form where the center point of the building is in the middle with a basic form in the form of a square, rectangle, circle, regular pentagon or a combination of several basic forms (Darmawan, 2003). The center point in question is generally the courtyard. Courtyard is an open part of the building (not roofed), considered as the central axis of the building

which architecturally functions to regulate air circulation in the building (Kustedja et al., 2012).

In addition to the compass flow, there is another flow, namely the compass flow or also called the directive teaching flow with its pioneer *Wang Ji* who lived in the north of Fukien province in North China. The compass school is suitable for North China because of its sloping topography (Kustedja et al., 2012). The compass school emphasizes the calculation of planets and eight triagrams (*Ba-Gua*) based on *Wu-Xing* and *Luo-Pan* (Darmawan, 2003).

In order to determine the good *chi* of a place, compass flow can usually use tools to simplify calculations. The tool is known as *Luo-Pan* which is used to analyze the best *chi* power, orientation direction, check wind-affected environmental conditions, and find water flow. *Luo-pan* consists of a round part called the sky board located attached to a square part called the earth board so that the sky board can rotate to any position above the earth board (Kustedja et al., 2012). *Luo-Pan* can be seen in Figure 5.

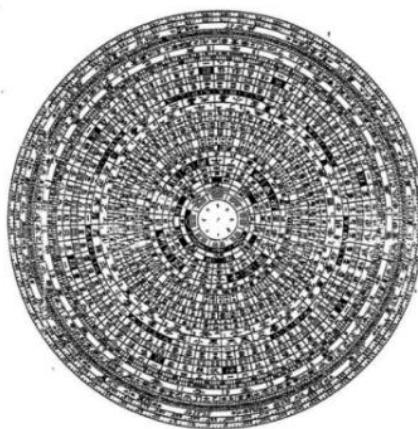


Fig. 5. *Luo-Pan*
(Kustedja, 2012)

3.4 *Tien Kok Sie* temple

Tien Kok Sie temple is located at Jalan RE. Martadinata No.12, Sudiroprajan, Jebres District, Surakarta City, Central Java. Opposite the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple to the north is the Surakarta Gede Market. On the right and left side of Klenteng *Tien Kok Sie* is bordered by a home furnishing shop. It can be said that the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple is located in an area that is bustling with economic activities. The building of *Tien Kok Sie* Temple is oriented northeast with a rectangular plan. The author divides the description of the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple building into four parts, namely the front yard and terrace, the core building, and the back building and roof of the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple.

3.4.1 Front yard and terrace of the temple

The front yard boundary of *Tien Kok Sie* Temple is a temple building that is not covered by a roof, including the location of a pair of lion statues, the main gate, to a pair of kilns on the right and left sides of the temple. Meanwhile, the terrace of *Tien Kok Sie* Temple is at the front of the temple which is shaded by the roof until it borders the wall and entrance to the core building of *Tien Kok Sie* Temple.

In the front yard of the temple, there are a pair of lion statues placed after the torotoar and become one with the motorcycle parking area. This pair of lion statues is believed by ethnic Chinese to ward off evil spirits from entering a building. The main entrance gate of *Tien Kok Sie* Temple is a red iron fence with a yellow/gold top. On the right and left side walls near the entrance gate there are two hexagon-shaped kilns with the same height, size and motif. The dominant color of the furnace is red with a little blue and yellow in some

parts with lotus flower ornaments and the top of the furnace which has lotus flower ornaments.

On the terrace, there is an altar of worship to God Almighty, located in the center of the building and right in front of the central entrance. On both sides of the central entrance are ornaments with images of *qilin* and phoenix. The two *qilin* have the same shape with green color and scales on their bodies and both are facing towards the entrance. Other entrances are on the right and left with various ornaments. On the right and left side entrance walls, there are four ornaments depicting flower vases of different shapes and containing various types of flowers. The leftmost vase depicts a brown vase with many roses and green tendrils behind it. Moving to the left, there is a white flower vase with black gradations with peony flowers and red tendrils. Next, there is a white flower vase ornament with a pink flower pattern with roses and red tendrils behind it. The rightmost vase ornament is brown in color with many small flowers and red tendrils behind it.

Each entrance consists of two boards on the left and right sides, so there are a total of six doors, each of which depicts a door guardian god. The door god is depicted as having a fierce face and sharp eyes, believed to be able to guard against the interference of evil spirits. On the right and left terrace walls of Klenteng *Tien Kok Sie* there are 5 ornamental panels each. On the upper left side wall there are two panels, both of which depict the legend of the sky emperor who is conducting a trial. At the bottom, there are three panels, ordered from the far left, depicting a natural scene in the form of a tree growing near a lake with a beautiful natural environment. The center panel depicts a rose with several butterflies hovering around it. The rightmost panel depicts two fish swimming. On the upper right side wall, there are two panels depicting the legend of the celestial emperor. At the bottom, there are three panels in order from the far left depicting three lotus flowers with one unblossomed flower. The center panel depicts a natural scene of bamboo trees set against the backdrop of a clear lake with mountains and a clear afternoon sky. The rightmost panel depicts a wild flower with several bees in the background of a dense forest.

3.4.2 The core building of the temple

The core building at *Tien Kok Sie* Temple is the center of the temple's worship activities with altars of gods and goddesses worshiped in this temple. This core building has several paintings and two large panels of very striking fauna ornaments. There are also several pillars, some of which are patterned and some are plain red. On the right and left side walls of the core building near the entrance, there are many black and white paintings of Chinese legends. Some of the paintings have been damaged and faded, especially at the top. Right in front of the center entrance there is a courtyard that is not too wide because it adjusts to the size of the temple which is not that big. Then there is a flight of steps to enter the prayer place with many altars of gods and goddesses.

On the left side of the wall after the steps, there is a large panel depicting a tiger with a position like it wants to pounce and a dense forest background. On the right side after the steps, there is a large panel depicting two dragons in the sky with a fireball between them. In the center of the building is the altar of *Dewi Kwan Im*, the main goddess of the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple whose altar size is the largest. Altars of other deities are placed around the main altar with a smaller size than the main altar. Several stanchions were also found with some with dragon images, some with lotus flower motifs and some plain brown.

3.4.3 The back and the roof of the temple

Weathering that occurred in the attic at the back of the temple due to old age, led to the demolition of the attic so as not to collapse and cause greater losses. The attic was then built into a room that became the back. The back of the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple building does not have many ornaments. Entering the back building can be through two entrances behind the altar of *Dewi Kwan Im*. The back is more used for temple operational activities such as storage of incense, statues of gods, religious ceremonial tools, and toilets. In addition, there

are several altars that are placed at the back because there is not enough space in the core building.

Furthermore, the roof of *Tien Kok Sie* Temple is made of roof tiles with three roofs that shade the terrace and the core, an additional roof at the back and two roofs on the side of the courtyard. The first roof covers the terrace until before the courtyard, the second and third roofs cover the core building after the courtyard until it borders the back. While the roofs on the two sides of the courtyard are the roofs that connect the first and second roofs on the right and left sides of the courtyard.

3.5 *Tien Kok Sie* Temple

Tien Kok Sie Temple is the oldest temple in Surakarta, it was built in 1745 and completed in 1748 with an age of almost 3 centuries. The location of *Tien Kok Sie* Temple is in the Chinatown area of Surakarta, namely Pasar Gede and is in one of the economic center areas, namely Pasar Gede Surakarta. The feng shui concept used to analyze *Klenteng Tien Kok Sie* is emphasized on the concept of *Yin-Yang*, *Wu-Xing*, and symbolization of ornaments and colors. The analysis with these concepts will look at the application of feng shui in the aspects of the location of the temple, the direction of facing, the layout of the space, as well as the use of ornamentation symbols and colors.

3.5.1 Location

A good location in building a residence is a place close to the source of sustenance, which can be symbolized by a river, railroad, or highway (Keling & Savitri, 2020). The building should be placed in the shape of a winding river/road so that the *chi* energy flows gently. The gentle flow of *chi* can bring positive benefits to the people in the building. The location of *Tien Kok Sie* Temple is near the intersection of a winding highway, in the view of feng shui is considered a good location. In *Klenteng Tien Kok Sie*, there are two large panels that are located opposite the image of a dragon and tiger. The two panels can be intended as a symbolization of the location of dragons and tigers which are indeed good opposite each other so that they can increase the *chi* energy in the building.

In addition to the location of the highway and the symbolization of the dragon, what also needs to be considered are objects perpendicular to the temple such as electricity poles and trees. The location of structures perpendicular to the front of the building can block the *chi* energy that will enter the building (Darmawan, 2003). At *Klenteng Tien Kok Sie*, there are no structures such as electric poles or trees that block the building so that *chi* energy can flow properly.

3.5.2 Facing direction

In compass flow feng shui, determining the facing direction generally uses the concept of *Wu-Xing*, *Pa-Kua*, and *Lo-Shu* can also use a tool called *Luo-Pan*. A good facing direction according to feng shui is facing south because it is related to the color red which is believed to be the color of luck, the *Lo-Shu* number 9 which is the highest value, the symbol of metal and the element of fire. *Klenteng Tien Kok Sie* has a northeast facing direction which is related to the color yellow, *Lo-Shu* number 8, mountain symbol, and earth element.

In *Lo-Shu* the northeast facing direction is worth 8, still a high and good number according to *chi* calculation. In addition, the earth element has a productive cycle with fire. Broadly speaking, the facing direction of *Tien Kok Sie* Temple still has a good *chi* energy calculation. The facing direction of the temple is adjusted to the placement of dragon and tiger ornaments at the core of the temple. Placing the two fauna ornaments opposite each other can be a representation of feng shui adjustment. The direction of the roof of *Tien Kok Sie* Temple is also good because the *nok* (triangular tip) of the roof does not face towards the road which is believed to bring bad *chi* and have a bad effect on the building in front of

it. Nok Krenteng *Tien Kok Sie* points to the side with the addition of a pair of dragon ornaments that add to its aesthetic value.

3.5.3 Space layout

In the *Yin-Yang* concept, balance in the building is one of the special concerns if you want to make *chi* energy good and useful. The placement of the courtyard in the center of the building serves to flow *chi* energy evenly throughout the space in the building. Courtyards can improve the air cycle because there is always a change of air so that the building feels cool.

Krenteng *Tien Kok Sie* has a courtyard in the core of the building which is in accordance with the guidelines for placing the courtyard in the core of the building. The balance of space can be realized with a building plan that is usually symmetrical, can be square, rectangular, or combined (Darmawan, 2003). The current plan of Krenteng *Tien Kok Sie* is a combination of rectangle and trapezoid at the back due to renovations carried out.

The spatial arrangement carried out at Krenteng *Tien Kok Sie* is also neat and symmetrical with the altar of *Dewi Kwan Im* as the main goddess larger than the other altars. In addition, the principle of balance can be seen from how ornaments are placed on the right and left sides of the wall. If the ornamental panels are on the left side then on the right side there are also ornamental panels of the same size. There are also two kilns which can reflect the duality of the concept of *Yin* and *Yang*.

3.5.4 Use of color symbolization

Color is one of the important elements in Chinese ethnic buildings because it is believed that color has symbolization that can affect *chi* energy (Zhang, 2021). Color is also associated with *Wu-Xing*, *Lo-Shu*, and *Ba-Kua* so that color selection has a big influence on the application of feng shui to a building. The color that dominates the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple is red, which ethnic Chinese believe is the color of luck. The red color is applied to almost the entire temple building, namely the roof, gate, to the panel on the temple dinidng.

Apart from red, the color that is often found in the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple is yellow/gold. The yellow color can be found on the roof, the end of the gate, and the panel. Colors that are symbols of other *Wu-Xing* elements are also found in *Tien Kok Sie* Temple such as green, blue, and white.

3.5.5 Use of ornamental symbolism

Chinese ethnicity is also closely related to the symbolization of various fauna, flora, as well as legends and myths. Each ornament is believed to have a certain meaning that can affect life in the temple. Fauna ornaments, flora to legends such as the sky emperor are found in the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple. Dragon is the most widely used fauna ornament, which can be seen on the roof, panels, and pillars of *Tien Kok Sie* Temple. The dragon ornaments on the roof number four and become two pairs and face each other. On the pair of dragons in the middle, there are flaming pearls (*huo zhu* 火珠) that symbolize the sun (Kristihartini & Darmawan, 2022). Other fauna ornaments in the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple are *qilin*, tiger, phoenix, lion, fish, and crab. Lotus flower is the most widely used fauna ornament in *Tien Kok Sie* Temple. Lotus flower ornaments are found on the furnace, panels, and pillars of the temple. Besides lotus, the fauna ornaments found in *Tien Kok Sie* Temple are peony flowers, plum blossoms, and orchids.

Tien Kok Sie Temple also has many ornaments that depict legends and myths. Many figures are drawn in the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple both images of ordinary people and gods such as the god of the door and the emperor of the sky. The ornaments of these various figures have the intention that humans always do good to others. There are also images of Buddha with various sitting positions on the left and right walls in the core. Ornaments that also exist in *Tien Kok Sie* Temple are ornaments depicting natural scenery. The depiction of

beautiful nature means that humans always protect the natural environment so that it remains sustainable because nature and humans are one unit that must coexist in harmony.

The application of Chinese cultural elements including the use of feng shui and symbols is often found in temples. This research shows that feng shui is applied to many aspects of the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple. The location of the temple which is close to the source of sustenance in this context is the highway in accordance with the concept of feng shui. The northeast-oriented direction of the temple is adjusted to the use of dragon and tiger ornaments that are opposite each other in the core building of the temple. The symmetrical spatial arrangement and the use of courtyards are believed to make the flow of *chi* evenly distributed throughout the temple. The choice of the dominant red color, the use of many ornaments that contain a variety of good meanings in accordance with feng shui and Chinese ethnic culture.

4. Conclusions

Tien Kok Sie Temple is one of the cultural heritage buildings and is the oldest temple in Surakarta. The application of feng shui in the temple is believed to bring many benefits to humans. *Klenteng Tien Kok Sie* applies feng shui concepts to the aspects of building location, facing direction, space layout, and color selection. Other cultural aspects such as the use of ornaments of fauna, flora, natural scenery, and legends are also found in the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple.

Determination of the location of the temple based on feng shui flow form has been considered appropriate because it is on a highway that has many branches. In addition, there is no structure blocking the *Tien Kok Sie* temple at the front, allowing *chi* to enter freely. The facing direction of *Tien Kok Sie* Temple based on the concepts of *Wu-Xing*, *Lo-Shu*, and *Pa-Kua* is considered good with some adjustments to maximize *chi* energy. The northeast facing direction that has not optimized *chi* energy because the recommended facing direction is south is maximized by the large use of red in the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple. It is known that the red color correlates with the south direction and the *Lo-Shu* number 9 so that the use of red that dominates the temple is expected to maximize *chi* energy.

The layout of the space focuses on the recommended center point in the form of a courtyard to spread *chi* energy evenly throughout the room. At *Tien Kok Sie* Temple, the placement of the courtyard is in the middle of the current plan so that it can be said that the courtyard is at the center point of the building. The choice of the dominant red color in the *Tien Kok Sie* Temple building according to the concept of feng shui can bring positive energy into the temple. In addition, the use of many ornaments of fauna, flora, natural scenery, and legends can support the aesthetic value and beauty of *Tien Kok Sie* Temple.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this research is that *Tien Kok Sie* Temple applies the concept of feng shui well. The feng shui concepts used to analyze *Klenteng Tien Kok Sie* show that this temple has good *chi* energy with some adjustments to the parts that are not suitable. *Klenteng Tien Kok Sie* is not just a religious building but has become part of the history of the founding of the city of Surakarta. The government and the community should jointly pay attention to *Klenteng Tien Kok Sie*.

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