

## **Symbol Reinterpretation as a Motivation for Integration of Chinese Muslim Ethnic Identity**

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### **Abstract**

This study focuses on research with a phenomenological approach regarding the symbolic meaning of the ethnic Chinese Muslim identity at the Lautze 2 Mosque in Bandung City, which focuses on concluding the meaning of ethnic symbols in Chinese New Year as a means to integrate in the form of friendship and participation with the Chinese extended family; the meaning of Ethnic Symbols in Feng Shui which is still used and believed among Chinese Muslims; the meaning of the ethnic symbols in the lion dance which is still preserved as an art in various Chinese performances and endeavors; and the meaning of ethnic symbols in the Lucky Cat, which is still practiced in some Chinese Muslim circles, and is valued as part of the wisdom of the Chinese ancestor. The study attempted to remain integrated with a more significant initial ethnic identity. For Chinese Muslims, family ties or relatives are essential in maintaining friendly relations, and believing Islam is the teachings of *rahmatan lil 'alamiin*. In addition, there is a reinterpretation of the symbols of Chinese ethnicity as a form of strengthening the identity of the Chinese Muslim ethnic group. This study can be used as theoretical knowledge in the form of theoretical conception to enrich the theories of the study of religions to assess the religious phenomenon associated with symbols of ethnic identity and religious identity, even acculturation between newcomers and natives. In addition, practically from the research, it is suggested to be an academic consideration for various government policies to build inter-religious harmony and harmony between ethnicities and groups, especially regarding religious conversion and belief and taboo issues in Indonesia.

Keywords: Ethnography; religious harmony; social identity; social interpretation.

### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini berfokus pada penelitian dengan pendekatan fenomenologis mengenai makna simbolik identitas Muslim etnis Tionghoa di Masjid Lautze 2 Kota Bandung, yang berfokus pada penyimpulan makna simbol etnis di Tahun Baru Imlek sebagai sarana untuk berintegrasi dalam bentuk persahabatan dan partisipasi dengan keluarga besar Tionghoa; makna Simbol Etnis dalam Feng Shui yang masih digunakan dan diyakini di kalangan Muslim Tionghoa; makna simbol etnis dalam barongsai yang masih dilestarikan sebagai seni dalam berbagai pertunjukan dan usaha Tionghoa; dan makna simbol etnis pada Kucing Keberuntungan, yang masih dipraktikkan di sebagian kalangan Muslim Tionghoa, dan dihargai sebagai bagian dari kearifan nenek moyang Tionghoa. Studi ini berusaha untuk tetap terintegrasi dengan identitas etnis awal yang lebih signifikan. Bagi Muslim Tionghoa, ikatan keluarga atau kerabat sangat penting dalam menjaga hubungan persahabatan, dan meyakini Islam adalah ajaran *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. Selain itu, terdapat reinterpretasi terhadap simbol-simbol etnis Tionghoa sebagai bentuk penguatan identitas kelompok etnis Tionghoa Muslim. Kajian ini dapat dijadikan sebagai pengetahuan teoritis berupa konsepsi teoritis untuk memperkaya teori-teori kajian agama-agama untuk mengkaji fenomena keagamaan yang terkait dengan simbol-simbol identitas etnik dan identitas keagamaan, bahkan akulturasi antara pendatang dan pribumi. Selain itu, secara praktis dari penelitian ini, disarankan untuk menjadi bahan pertimbangan akademis bagi berbagai kebijakan pemerintah untuk membangun kerukunan dan kerukunan antar umat beragama dan antar suku dan golongan, khususnya mengenai isu pindah agama dan keyakinan serta tabu di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Etnografi; kerukunan umat beragama; identitas sosial; interpretasi sosial.

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## INTRODUCTION

Religious conversion is a truth-seeking process that accepts or changes one's religious attitude (Boys, 1982; Chen, 2013). Religious conversion can be two: (1) Moving/entering another religion. For example, previously someone embraced Christianity but now has embraced Islam or vice versa, someone who previously embraced Islam then converted to Christianity; (2) changes in religious attitudes in their religion. In this context, religious conversion shows a change in a person's attitude towards his religion, the change or change in a person's attitude is caused by problems in his faith. This shows an increase in one's understanding or practice of religious beliefs; For example, a person is disobedient in carrying out his religious practices, but after a religious conversion (change) in his attitude, the person becomes more obedient in carrying out orders in his religion and leaves religious traditions that do not exist in his religion (Hamali, 2012). It can be proven by the presence of typical Chinese carvings on the Mantingan Ancient Mosque, Jepara; the minaret of the mosque in Banten's Chinatown; construction of the door of Sunan Giri's tomb in Gresik; the architecture of the palace and Sunyaragi Park in Cirebon; the construction of the Demak Mosque (symbol of the slate and tortoise); or the link between the Kali Angke and *Gouw Tjay* mosques and the Kebun Jeruk mosque that was founded. This fact shows the social status of Chinese Muslims in Indonesian Muslim society. Some of them hold strategically essential positions in the development of *da'wa* and the spread of Islam in Indonesia (Abidin, 2017).

Buddhism, Confucianism, Protestant Christianity, Catholicism, and Islam are some of the religions embraced by the ethnic Chinese community. Followers of Islam come from ethnic Chinese, who are a minority. Ethnic Chinese Muslims are a "minority amid a minority" in sociological terms, meaning they are already a minority as ethnic Chinese. As Muslims, they are more than ethnic Chinese as a minority. When the minority position is associated with the attention of various parties to those still very small, the minority position is increasingly felt. According to the latest data from the Indonesian Chinese Islamic Association (PITI), 15 percent of Chinese descent is Muslim out of 238 million Indonesians. If this is the case, the number of ethnic Chinese who converted to Islam in Indonesia is more than 1.8 million (Gufon, 2019).

Lautze 2 Mosque in Bandung City, located on Jalan Tamblong, Bandung City, is a physical building that reflects the diversity of Chinese Muslims. From 2016 to 2021, the total number of converts who took the creed at the Lautze 2 Mosque in Bandung was 151. In 2016 five people took the creed, in 2017, as many as 28 people, in 2018 as 32 people, in 2019, it increased again as many as 48 people, but in 2020 when it entered the pandemic period, it decreased again, which was only 31 people. But the decrease was not significant, only a difference of 17 people. The reason for the decline was because at the time, at the beginning of the pandemic, many mosques were closed, including the Lautze 2 Mosque in Bandung. As of 2021, only about 11 people have made the creed (Rahmat, 2021).

Based on the visible observation that Lautze 2 Mosque in Bandung City, located on Jalan Tamblong, Bandung City, the architecture is very thick with Chinese culture, which shows Chinese identity despite having carried out the process of religious conversion. The physical building of the mosque combines Chinese with Islam which implies social interaction and gives the concept that Islam is tolerant and *rahmatan lil 'alamin*.

This study argues that research on the Lautze 2 Mosque in Bandung City is the object of this research. This mosque's existence and social interaction can be observed in the form of symbols that are part of the religious identity of the Chinese Muslim ethnicity. The symbols of identity are embodied in physical buildings or used by ethnic Chinese Muslims at the Lautze 2 Mosque in Bandung City in their activities related to the mosque. The various phenomena related to the symbols and identity of the Chinese

Muslim ethnicity are phenomena of religious experience expressed in social activities which are very interesting to be studied more deeply, especially research from the perspective of the Study of Religions which specifically analyzes the meaning of symbols of the ethnic Chinese Muslim identity.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative method with a social interpretation approach (Hammersley, 2019; Schutz, 1972; Tada, 2019) to the social phenomena (Vincini & Gallagher, 2020) of a minority group in terms of race and a minority in religion, namely the Chinese Muslims in Indonesia. This study examines how the Chinese Muslims in Bandung live their religion mixed with Chinese customs. Therefore, the analysis of the respondents used Husserl's phenomenological theory and Alfred Schutz's theory of the life world.

Respondents were selected based on rich information, namely the organizers of the Lau Tse 2 mosque organization in Bandung. Other respondents are those who often participate in activities at the mosque. All of the respondents were interviewed in the context of the importance of their existence in the religious framework of the people in the city of Bandung.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Chinese Muslim Community in Bandung City**

Chinese New Year is often celebrated in various parts of the world, including Indonesia (Qian, Abdur Razzaque, & Ah Keng, 2007; Yeung & Yee, 2010). Long before, through Presidential Instruction No.14/1967 the Chinese community in Indonesia was prohibited from conducting open religious ceremonies. The Chinese religion was banned in Indonesia, so many Chinese people converted to a religion that the State recognized. Including the name of their place of worship. The New Order government prohibited using the temple's name through a government instruction on December 14, 1972, so many temples changed their name to Vihara. After the New Order fell, the Presidential Instruction was revoked by President Abdurrahman Wahid through Presidential Decree No. 6/2000, so every Chinese religious ceremony was allowed to be performed in public. The lifting of the ban on the Chinese New Year ceremony warmly welcomed people of Chinese descent from different religious backgrounds, especially the Chinese who follow the Confucian religion. They consider that the Chinese New Year is their property obtained from the inheritance of their ancestors.

Confucianism is a social, political, ethical, and religious thought system based on Confucianism and its successors (Crim, Bullard, & Shinn, 1989). Placing religious traditions in the form of contextualization with the dynamics of social change is necessary, thus creating a new face for religious teachings. They carry out the Chinese New Year celebration ritual to give rise to a remarkable impression or label of Confucianism as a religion that maintains traditions in social change (Abdullah, 2000). As Koentjaraningrat argues, religious ceremonies in the culture of an ethnic group are usually the most visible elements of culture (Koentjaraningrat, 2002).

Chinese New Year (*Im*: month, *Lek*: calendar) comes from the Hokkien dialect, which means lunar calendar. Chinese New Year is traditionally celebrated in February. Ethnic Chinese celebrate Chinese New Year at temples to express gratitude and ask for protection and goodness for their families in the coming years. The Chinese New Year celebration is intended to express gratitude for the blessings and abundance

obtained in the previous year and requests for blessings and help from *Thian* (God), gods, and ancestors in the following year (Dewi, 2015).

Chinese New Year is a time for all family members to meet once a year. This family gathering becomes meaningful when family members and neighbors share experiences, establish love, nurture each other, and start a new chapter (with new clothes). The interaction between Chinese Muslims and their families is evident in Chinese New Year celebrations. This is as expressed by Budiman as a non-Chinese resident around the Lautze 2 Mosque, stating that:

They need guidance from us who have already converted to Islam; he needs an ustad so that he doesn't enter because there is no guidance, he's afraid that he will return. Back to another religion. It's gradual, I'm worried that if you enter, it will continue to be prohibited; you can't do that, well what's there is even running away. As long as it doesn't conflict with Islamic teachings, it doesn't matter; even what I know is that those who have just converted to Islam will join in or come to Chinese New Year events and vice versa during Eid; their non-Muslim brothers also come to their house, the point is that they have a good relationship (Budiman, Personal Communication, December 23, 2020).

Chinese New Year celebration activities are sensuality and a series of activities that contain meaning according to tradition. These activities include the relationship between humans and humans and supernatural powers. The relationship factor between humans is seen when they make the big day a moment to visit relatives and friends to stay in touch. Ustadz Rahmat, the administrator of the Organizers of the Mosque Lautze 2 of Bandung explained that:

What's more, *he* is currently celebrating a big day such as Chinese New Year; usually, there is a family gathering during the celebration, the celebration is used as a gathering place for relatives and family members who have not Islam, *right* relationship is highly recommended in Islam, is not it also can be propaganda, he must be aware of when it should be ensured food grain kosher food (Grace, Personal Communication, December 20, 2020).

What is expected is a visit from children to their parents, where the child usually pays respects to parents or elders. On the other hand, visiting parents typically give gifts in red envelopes (*angpao*) containing money or jewelry to the child or younger. In Chinese tradition in Indonesia, red packets are usually only given to young unmarried children. This gathering activity is carried out by fellow Chinese and between Chinese citizens and Muslims; it is intended to foster mutual respect and maintain good relations between ethnic Chinese and Chinese Muslims. Opinion Ustadz Rahmat as caretaker DKM 2 Bandung Lautze Mosque explains that:

In addition, *angpao* also has a deep meaning in every Chinese New Year, which is to share with others or ordinary saying such as "welfare transfer." *Angpao* is also a tradition and an ancestral heritage; older people must give *Angpao* to the younger ones; the point is to help each other (Rahmat, Personal Communication, December 25, 2020).

In particular, the system of religious ceremonies contains four aspects of specific concern to anthropologists: where and when religious traditions are performed, the ceremonial objects and tools, and the people performing and leading the ceremony. Meanwhile, according to Koentjaraningrat, there are eleven elements of the ceremony itself, namely offering, sacrificing, praying, eating with food that has been purified by prayer, dancing a parade dance, singing holy songs, having a profession or parade, playing sacred drama arts, fasting, intoxication or clouding the mind. by taking drugs to achieve a state of *trance*, drunkenness, meditation and meditation (Koentjaraningrat, 2002).

So only with Chinese New Year as a religious ceremony (rite) do those things to do in preparation for Chinese New Year exist. Namely, (1) Neat and Clean Tradition, i.e., cleaning the place of business and the residence location a week before Chinese New Year arrives to get rid of the old and welcome the new. If cleaning is prohibited during Chinese New Year because it is believed to drive away fortune; (2) Decorating the house with flowers and small trees, buying new clothes and cutting hair, and washing hair, which is believed to bring good luck. Highly recommended red shirt; (3) Decorate the house with papers inscribed with lucky poems paired with red which symbolizes good wishes; (4) Pay all existing debts and may not borrow on that day. All behaviors and actions taken on Chinese New Year are believed to determine the person's actions in the one year he will experience; Lucky humans are humans whose today is better than yesterday. The Chinese New Year celebration has 47 characteristics: red ornaments, basket cakes, red packets, firecrackers/firecrackers, lanterns, and lion dances. This event is intended as a gesture of permission for Chinese citizens to hold crowds in public places. In addition, the form of greeting is indicated by the expression of congratulations, "*Gong xi pa cai*."

### **The Meaning of Ethnic Symbols in Barongsai**

The art of lion dance is one of the elements of Chinese ethnic culture that can affect the lifestyle of the people who have that culture. The entry of the Lion Dance culture into Indonesia will further increase the variety of cultures in Indonesia, leading to a mix of cultures that will impact people's lifestyles (Yap, 2017).

Lion Dance is one of the results of culture in art. "Art" itself was originally a human process (Dissanayake, 2015; Hauser, 2012). Art is the process and result of selecting a medium, a system of rules for using that medium, and a set of values that determine what is appropriate to be sent through that medium to convey ideas, experiences, feelings, or beliefs. Art is the work of civilization which also serves as a bridge between different cultures. His art serves as a window into the culture of the people. Art is a form that can be perceived with the senses, but the term "art" refers to something other than art. Therefore, art in Lion Dance is a subjective value that reflects a person's reaction to something based on experience and knowledge.

Barongsai art is a traditional Chinese ethnic dance using a sarong that resembles a lion. *Barongsai* art is thought to have entered Indonesia in the 17th century when there was a great migration from South China (Dawis, 2003). In its development, the Lion Dance in Indonesia experienced a boom when the Chinese Hwe Koan association was still there. Every Chinese Hwe Koan association in various regions in Indonesia is almost certain to have a Lion Dance association.

The lion dance consists of two main types: the northern lion, curly hair, and four legs. The northern lion's appearance is more natural and lion-like than the southern lion, with scales and many legs that vary between two or four. The Southern Lion's head is equipped with horns, sometimes similar to the Kilin animal. According to Chinese belief, the Lion Dance attraction can bring abundant blessings. The movements between the North Lion and the South Lion are also different. While the Southern Lion is famous for its intricate head movements and bobbing and the beating of gongs and drums, the North Lion's movements tend to be more agile and full of dynamics because it has four legs. One of the main movements of the Barongsai dance is the movement of a lion eating an envelope filled with money which is known as "Lay See". On top of the envelope is usually affixed with watercress which symbolizes a gift for the lion. Eating "Lay See" takes about half of the whole Lion dance.

During the Soeharto era, the Lion Dance was not allowed to be played (Hoon, 2009). The development of the Lion Dance then stopped in 1965 after the eruption of the Rebellion of G 30 S/PKI. Due

to the political situation, all forms of Chinese culture in Indonesia were silenced. The only place in Indonesia that can display the Lion Dance on a large scale is in the city of Semarang, precisely on the big stage of the Sam Poo Kong temple, also known as the Gedong Batu Temple. Every year on the 29-30th of the sixth month according to the Chinese calendar (*Imlek*), the Lion Dance from the six universities in Semarang is performed. The six colleges are: (1) Sam Poo Tong, in a white-orange-black uniform (shirt-belt-pants), as the host; (2) Hoo Hap Hwee in white and black uniform; (3) Djien Gie Tong (Budi Luhur) in a yellow-red-black uniform; (4) Djien Ho Tong (Dharma Hangga Taruna) in a white-green uniform; (5) Hauw Gie Hwee in a green-yellow-green uniform and then replaced by Dharma Asih in a red-yellow-red uniform; (6) Porsigab (Joint Silat Sports Association) with a blue yellow-blue uniform.

Although those who play Lion Dance on behalf of the six groups it does not mean only the people of Semarang. The six colleges have branches spread across the island of Java and even to Lampung. At the Gedong Batu pagoda, usually, the *Barongsai* (or in Semarang it is also known as Sam Sie) is played with 52 Liong (dragons) and *Say* (the head is formed from a round shield, and is decorated to resemble a Lion and its tail). *Barongsai* in Indonesia began to gain popularity and grew when the Chinese organization Hwee Koan was founded in 1900, becoming one of the prominent supporters of developing Chinese arts and culture in Indonesia. Almost every Chinese Hwee Koan organization throughout Indonesia and associations of silat (Kung Fu) or other Chinese cultural and social arts such as Hoo Hap have lion dance associations.

Since the reformation era in Indonesia, the *Barongsai* dance has become commonly seen everywhere. Changes in the political situation in Indonesia after 1998 revived the art of lion dance and other Chinese cultures. Changes occurred after 1998, namely during Gus Dur, which allowed the appearance of the *Barongsai* art in public and indirectly revived the *Barongsai* association. Even now, Chinese youth and indigenous Indonesian youth are participating.

Based on the opinion of Ustadz Rahmat as the administrator of the DKM Lautze 2 Bandung Mosque, *Barongsai* is treated differently between the *Barongsai* art related to ancestral beliefs and the view of *Barongsai*, which is treated as art by releasing its relationship with rituals. As stated by Ustadz Rahmat, namely:

This is not easy for Chinese converts when faced with ancestral or ancestral culture. It seems that it seems simple, only limited to dances, but *if you* study the origin of the Lion Dance, and its relationship with the ancestors; some are against it because it is against monotheism or polytheism, but on the other hand some argue that lion dance has nothing to do with certain religious rituals (Kurniawan, Personal Communication, December 18, 2020).

Suppose the lion dance is interpreted as art without any relation to ancestral beliefs. In that case, it can be argued that lion dance is an artistic game of a combination of art and martial arts skills (Kung Fu), because it is required of a player to have a healthy, strong, quick reaction, flexible, high stamina, agile, agile, and has a horse and strong muscles. Because of this, many lion dance associations originated from the Kung Fu martial arts school. A player must also master the basic acrobatic moves to jump, somersault, roll and maintain body balance. But now, many *Barongsai* associations are founded by cultural arts associations and not only from silat schools. As is the case with the Lion Dance itself, which originated as a product of cultural interaction between nations and later became part of the Chinese culture, the art of Lion Dance is also expected to enrich Indonesian cultural treasures. Every time the Chinese New Year arrives, the faces of colorful lions called Lions (sometimes also referred to as *liongsai*) always appear everywhere.

Lion Dance is also often used as the theme of Chinese New Year advertisements. Many lion dance associations have re-emerged; young Chinese play the lion dance, but many young indigenous Indonesians also participate in the lion dance, one of which is the Indonesian Barongsai Arts and Sports Association (Persobarin). Players and fans are also not limited to or exclusively from Chinese ethnicity anymore; residents from other nationalities participate in this Lion Dance dance. This phenomenon often causes social changes in various fields, including economic, behavioral patterns, social values, beliefs, norms, cultural elements, social interactions, and attitudes.

Regarding the opinion that Barongsai is interpreted as an art medium for social interaction of the Tonghoa ethnic in society. Ustadz Rahmat expressed his opinion, namely:

Yes, how to deal with it, just think of the Lion Dance as a tradition for entertainment after a long time it only appeared in general during the time of Gus Dur. In addition, the existence of the lion dance can be used as a cultural icon for the Chinese community. Besides that, the lion dance can be used for social interaction for people of different ethnicities; usually, when there is no pandemic, the general public flocks to see *if* there is a lion dance parade on the street (Kurniawan, Personal Communication, December 18, 2020).

Another opinion is if the Lion Dance is associated with ancestors' beliefs from ancient Chinese traditions, it can be understood from the belief in the myth of the lion as a magical creature and the belief in the Dragon as a sacred animal. The history of Lion Dance can be traced back to the Qin Dynasty around the third century BC. Ethnic Chinese believe the lion is a symbol of happiness and joy. The Lion Dance is believed to be a performance that can bring good luck, so it is generally held at various vital events such as opening a restaurant, establishing a pagoda, and course, celebrating the new year.

The lion is not a native animal from China's habitat. But according to its history, since the Han Dynasty, China has had trade, cultural and diplomatic relations with other Central and West Asia through the silk route, such as with Persia (Sasanian dynasty). It is said that ambassadors/envoys or traders from Persia sent or gifted several lions to China, China admired these animals, finally over time, lions were adopted into their cultural traditions and entered into the imagination of the Chinese people so that the image of the lion became like other mystical animals such as dragons and others. The lion has since symbolized courage, strength, confidence, and luck and has become one of the venerable animals.

So from a historical point of view, such as Buddhism, the origin of the Lion Dance and the Lion statue is a cultural inspiration and belief from the interaction product of high civilizations, such as Persia and India, adapted in Chinese culture and faith and society.

### **The Meaning of Ethnic Symbols in Fengshui**

The majority of ethnic Chinese in Indonesia come from the provinces of South China (Guangdong and Fujian). Since most of them are from the working class, the architecture they contribute reflects that heritage. This is far from China's rich architectural heritage, which includes imperial structures from the North China region that have nothing to do with popular culture. In subsequent developments, changes in Chinese architecture can be observed in the residential areas of Chinese ethnic groups in Chinatown. In the opinion of Naniek Widayati:

In developments outside of China, many known as "Chinatown" such as in Asian, European, American, and Australian cities can be found Chinatown as a city landmark that attracts foreign tourists. The identity of China Town in these countries with the characteristics of the activities that live in them becomes a historic environment which is generally a collection/group of buildings that form a community of Chinese people with distinctive building characteristics/characters, has

various decorations and elements as well as gates. as well as a place for retail trade (business) activities such as restaurants, shops, theatres and other recreational buildings (Widayati, 2004).

Changes in Chinese ethnic architecture are also influenced by the development of Chinese ethnicity in the Chinatown area. Until the 1900s, the Chinese presence in Javanese cities was concentrated in Chinatowns. The Dutch colonial government had severely restricted the mobility of the Chinese from places with Chinatowns since the rule *wijkenstelsel* was adopted in 1835. The restriction was lifted in the 1910s, although many Chinese-style buildings were still in Java's Chinatown until the 1900s. The Peranakan Chinese community in Java experienced extraordinary growth after 1900. The ethnic Chinese settlements that occupied strategic trading areas throughout the city, known as Chinatowns, grew out of the Chinatowns where some local ethnic Chinese elites built modern houses. There was a change in the architectural style, as explained by Handinoto that:

The change in renewal had a direct impact on the architectural appearance. Coupled with the opening of Dutch schools that were allowed to be entered by a small number of Chinese such as HCS, MULO and AMS, the construction of modern Chinese houses indirectly resulted in the depletion of traditional Chinese architectural elements could even be said to have disappeared altogether. Incidents like this continued until after independence in 1945 (Handinoto, 2008).

Architecture and layout in the Chinese ethnic tradition are referred to as Fengshui. Fengshui is based on the ancient concept that humans should live in harmony with the cosmos. The laws governing the maintenance of this cosmic harmony, especially the rules for building buildings, should be harmonized. Since the 17th century, this approach has been used in Java. Experts, for example, use a complicated-looking compass called a *loa* to determine direction, while a special ruler with a length of 43 cm indicates the size (Handinoto, 2008).

Based on the opinion of Ustadz Rahmat as the administrator of the DKM Lautze 2 Bandung Mosque, the Chinese Muslims believe that Fengshui is a science of architecture and spatial planning in the ethnic Chinese tradition; intellectual wisdom in building a balanced atmosphere between human space and universe space. In other words, most ethnic Chinese Muslims still accept Fengshui with a positive meaning without associating it with conflicting beliefs. Ustadz Rahmat, namely emphasized this:

When you want to build a building, there are usually Chinese calculations, better known as feng shui. The meaning of symbols characterizes Fengshui, for example, symbols on buildings, because Fengshui is believed to be a form of luck or safety in terms of determining or setting the house's location or spatial layout that will be used. However, some do not pay attention to feng shui calculations because it is contrary to faith; there are still images of dragons or animals such as tigers, turtles, and phoenixes. But this feng shui is seen not as polytheism but as a form of scientific calculation balanced with the environment so that it is balanced (Kurniawan, Personal Communication, December 18, 2020).

David G. Khol in "*Chinese Architecture in The Straits Settlements and Western Malaya*", suggests the characteristics of ethnic Chinese architecture as alluded to above. According to Khol, the ethnic Chinese architecture in Southeast Asia consists of: (1) Courtyards; (2) the distinctive shape of the roof; (3) exposed structural elements sometimes accompanied by ornaments; (4) distinctive color (Kohl, 1984). Regarding these characteristics, it can be explained as follows:

*First*, the courtyard is an open space in a Chinese house. This open space has a more personal feel. Usually used in conjunction with a garden or garden. Yards are not very spacious in size in Chinese Indonesian houses in Chinatown. Even if there is, the courtyard allows natural light in during the day or just for ventilation. In Indonesia, the square of Chinese architecture is often replaced with a reasonably



large terrace. *Second*, the emphasis is on the distinctive shape of the roof, including the type of gable roof with an upward curving tip known as the model *Ngang Shan*. This form of *Ngang Shan* is the most widely used in Indonesia. *Tirds*, decorative ornaments sometimes accompany open structural elements. As part of the building structure in Chinese architecture, carving and wood construction can be seen as a characteristic of Chinese buildings. *Fourth*, use of distinctive colors. Although many colors are used in buildings, red and golden yellow are the most widely used in Chinese architecture in Indonesia (Handinoto, 2008).

### The Meaning of Ethnic Symbols in Lucky Cats

The lucky cat is a unique phenomenon or event in the Chinese ethnic community in understanding an experience and their view of the culture. The subjects in this study were traders and Chinese ethnic community who used the Lucky Cat. Based on the findings from the research of Micshir Leen, Eko Harry Susanto, and Nigar Pandrianto, the Lucky Cat is described as follows:

The Lucky Cat is a statue in the form of a cat waving its right or left hand back and forth. The Lucky Cat or Zao Chai Mao is a symbol or symbol of good luck for the Chinese. Lucky cats are believed to make the business they are engaged in prosperous and always have sustenance. Cats are considered mystical animals because of their ability to see in the dark and can ward off evil spirits or bad influences... In addition, cats can also predict when it will rain... For Chinese culture, rain is a good sign because it brings fortune or blessings ... Lucky cats have many kinds of colors. The color often found is gold, which means it brings good luck and prosperity in life. Lucky Cat's raised hand has a different meaning. If the right hand is raised, the meaning is calling profit, but if the left hand is raised, it means calling the customer. However, if both hands are raised, it means protection or prosperity (Leen, Susanto, & Pandrianto, 2019).

Lucky cats symbolize good luck for the Chinese and are often found in businesses or shops. Intercultural communication in the Lucky Cat culture is where Chinese Ethnic people with economic, political, religious, and other backgrounds try to join in carrying out the Lucky Cat culture. The symbol will have meaning if someone puts value on it, especially the Lucky Cat, which means a symbol of good luck, which is generally agreed upon among the Chinese (Leen et al., 2019).

Lucky cats are an ethnic Chinese culture because they have cultural characteristics and spread through various interactions between family, friends, religion, and others. The purpose of one's belief is to identify the meaning of the Lucky Cat so that the value given will encourage communicative actions and the influence of the Lucky Cat symbol, especially for people who believe in it. The lucky cat is also a culture that responds to changing one's circumstances, especially regarding luck and well-being. Ustadz Rahmat also stated this as caretaker DKM Masjid Lautze 2 Bandung, who found cats lucky as a symbol to preserve the identity of ethnic Chinese, as he said:

Suppose again that the suspect told the cat lucky, the symbol that has deep meaning, *he we* We have to maintain the culture of our ancestors, we not just get rid of it. Cats lucky if at us have the meaning of luck; if we look like *clay* in the shops right, the color of gold-colored cat *hislucky*. Well it symbolizes luck. In addition, his hands like to wave, it has a meaning like calling a customer or *customer*. Besides that, according to the ancestors, cats can call rain,, the *so* according to Chinese culture rain is the same as in Islam, when it rains it is a blessing (Kurniawan, Personal Communication, December 18, 2020).

A person who believes in Lucky Cats attaches meaning and value to it will determine their communication actions. It can be seen from their efforts that they will install a Lucky Cat and not let their hand movements die. When that trust is formed, meaning is also formed; the sense that arises here is how

someone judges Lucky Cats as being considered right in bringing good luck to their business. When there is no meaning formed then nothing will happen. So that someone's personal belief will give rise to a unique purpose or connotative meaning, namely in the gold color, which is believed to be the caller of money, the hand movements of the Lucky Cat are interpreted as calling for fortune to come. For those who have a connotative meaning, it will have an impact, but those who do not have a personal sense will see it as a denotative meaning, namely, the Lucky Cat is just a statue of a cat moving its hands. And only as a habit that is done repeatedly without any particular meaning (Leen et al., 2019). It is recognized by Agus Kurniawan as Lau Tze Mosque congregation non-Chinese, as he said:

Indeed I am sure there must be a purpose to it all. For example, we like to *see* a lucky cat toy whose head is rocking. There must be meaning because luck must give you a chance or something; we, not Chinese, also like to put it in the car (Kurniawan, Personal Communication, December 18, 2020).

The meaning of the Lucky Cat symbol comes from parents, siblings, and even the beliefs of the Chinese ethnic ancestors. If an identity of a community's ethnicity has essential value for society, it will continue to be passed down from one generation to another among the ethnic generations. Everything or anything that has meaning to someone or is considered a positive thing will continue to be preserved. The Lucky Cat symbol is something that a person believes will bring great importance to their life and view of the Lucky Cat in terms of belief, meaning, and effect. The definition of someone who gives the impression of something or power. For those who believe in it, lucky cats bring them good luck. Lucky cats are usually found in shops to bring fortune or profit to those who install them. In Asep Suryadi as, a non-Chinese Lau Tze Mosque volunteer, he expressed his response to the lucky cat. According to his view:

Those Chinese new converts to Islam too; I never see in the car there was a toy cat *nod-nod* the tablets because if we look at stores, Chinese people also like it there. I don't think it's a problem (Suryadi, Personal Communication, December 20, 2020).

### **Reinterpretation of symbols for integration of Chinese and Muslim Identities**

Afif's research found two psychological aspects that caused the Chinese to convert to Islam, namely: (1) religion Islam as the result of the final calculation in finding a solution to the turmoil of the heart over faith; (2) Islam naturally has become an inseparable part of his inner life. In addition, this study shows that the Chinese Muslim community is heterogeneous; the development of the Chinese Muslim community varies in their daily lives, they belong to various categories based on social background, culture, economy, age range, gender, education, place of residence and others (Afif, 2013).

Establishing harmonious social interactions between Muslim Chinese and non-Muslim Chinese has created interactions that lead to cooperation between the two ethnic groups. In fact, from several studies that have been carried out, especially during the New Order government or at the beginning of the reformation, the two ethnic groups tend to experience disintegration. Interaction problems arise among them, especially if family members decide to convert to Islam; they tend to be ostracized by their extended family.

The factors of kinship and kinship between the Muslim Chinese and the non-Muslim Chinese, whether they are related by blood or in a clan, are the reasons for maintaining family relations, including involvement in various clan associations with members of different faiths. Family or relative ties are essential in maintaining friendly relations.

Changes in belief or religious conversion always get adverse reactions from the internal Chinese family themselves, which is acknowledged by the administrators of the Lautze 2 Mosque in Bandung. This

is as recognized by Koko Hedratno as a Chinese Muslim congregation at the Lau Tze 2 Mosque in Bandung, namely:

The purpose of forming a cooperative indeed is to improve the welfare of members, especially for converts who have been ostracized by their families and even expelled because they have changed religions, this can be used as a form of mutual assistance. Hopefully, forming a cooperative can help (Hedratno, Personal Communication, June 25, 2021).

However, as time went on, Muslim Chinese and non-Muslim Chinese began to experience changes that led to cooperation. The occurrence of integration like this just happens. Still, several factors influence it, including the good interaction between Muslim Chinese and non-Muslim Chinese, openness and acceptance between the two ethnic groups. This integration is a form of strong ethnic identity among Chinese people. Ting-Toomey said that people with strong ethnic identities identify themselves as "members of the group, evaluate their group positively, prefer or are comfortable with their group membership, interested in, knowledgeable about, and committed to the group, and involved in ethnic activities" (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000).

This openness affects the individual's attitude to adjust to the existing situation. The feeling that they come from the same culture and customs has become the glue for fellow ethnic Chinese, both Muslim and non-Muslim. That feeling also makes them always participate in Chinese cultural activities that are always carried out every year. It is recognized by Agus Kurniawan as Lautze Mosque 2 non-Chinese congregation, as he said:

Well, I think it's no problem as long as not contrary to the teachings of our religion. From what I know, their culture is inherent to their ancestors, so it isn't easy to eliminate ancestral culture for granted directly, need the processes. Yes, we should embrace it slowly, but as far as I can see, their culture does not conflict with Islamic teachings. They still like to hang out with their non-Muslim families at Chinese celebration events, but that doesn't mean they don't cut off their relationship; what's more, they still like to wear Chinese clothes when they want to pray; it doesn't matter what is essential to cover their genitals (Kurniawan, Personal Communication, December 18, 2020).

For example, at the Chinese New Year event, awareness of belonging to the same group strengthens the relationship between the two ethnic groups. Even if there are differences in beliefs in one family, it is considered more of an individual's choice without adhering to specific ideas. The attitude shown by the two Chinese ethnic groups is the basis for building good interactions between Muslim and non-Muslim Chinese. Their awareness of accepting differences makes harmonious interactions. In addition, the feeling of one culture and custom is also very influential in interacting with each other. This interaction will persist in the presence of each other (Rusli & Arios, 2020).

Further developments and beliefs have been accepted as a personal right to create tolerance and integration among ethnic Chinese. As also stated by Rusli and Arios, this integration and acceptance occur in meetings and participation in matters relating to the following aspects: (1) participation in ethnic Chinese organizations; (2) participation in the celebration of religious holidays; (3) Meetings and cooperation in marriage events; (4) encounter in the event of death (Rusli & Arios, 2020).

Generally, Chinese identity in religious differences persists in the origins of identity and ethnic Chinese traditions. There has been a reinterpretation of the symbols of Chinese ethnicity as a form of strengthening the identity of the Chinese Muslim ethnic group. In Ting-Toomey's view, strong cultural and ethnic identity characteristics will identify with larger ethnic values and norms. Individuals who have a weak element of ethnic cultural identity will tend to identify less with larger cultural values and norms.

Individuals who adhere to more significant ethnic standards tend to engage in more individualistically oriented practices (Ting-Toomey et al., 2000).

The integration of Chinese Muslims is also carried out by building an identity that the Lautze 2 Mosque carries as being Chinese Muslim Indonesia. This identity is formed in the socialization process. Identity is formed and stabilized in a dialectical relationship between internal and external factors that form identity. External factors about how others see and react can be contradictory or destructive or support and reinforce views of ethnic identity itself. This fact was acknowledged by Ustadz Rahmat as the administrator of the DKM Lautze 2 Mosque in Bandung, as he said:

This is a good question and often asked if anyone does research at the Lautze 2 Mosque in Bandung. In general, the attitude of non-Chinese Muslim congregations when someone converts to Islam is warmly welcomed. *Wah* moved *dah* substantially. A small example, residents around the mosque Lautze 2 is beneficial if we are no events, can be seen is *if* every Friday, *right* that put up tents who if not the people around, the right board home away so *not* maybe we were put up (Grace, Personal Communication, December 23, 2020).

The community accepts the existence of the Lautze 2 Mosque because it can position it as part of the community through its identity as Chinese Muslim Indonesia. The donations given by the congregation are used again for the benefit of the surrounding community such as teaching the Koran to the surrounding children and other *infaq* sadaqah assistance to help the lives of the people around the Lautze 2 Mosque (Mardotillah & Hendro, 2020). As stated by Ustadz Rahmat, "Or something else, many of our brothers who are non-Chinese Muslims like to give *infaq* for the prosperity of the mosque, if every Friday, there are those who give food in the form of lunch" (Rahmat, 2021).

According to Ting-Toomey, the classification of conflict styles with two conceptual dimensions, namely concern for self and respect for others, will give birth to models for handling interpersonal conflicts, namely: (1) integrating; (2) compromise; (3) dominate; (4) oblige; (5) avoid. The integration model carried out by Chinese Muslims reflects the need to overcome conflict and involves a deep concern for oneself and a significant concern for others. The integrating style combines self-interest goals and other interests through negotiation and openness channels. The motivation to integrate into China is a severe concern for the conflicts of interest of others above and beyond the conflicting interests of one's own. It emphasizes accommodating the needs of others at the expense of self-interest (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2005).

## CONCLUSION

The symbols used by Chinese Muslims have meanings that come from the beliefs of their Chinese ancestors, using reinterpreting religious education at the Lautze 2 Mosque, Bandung City. This statement refers to the theoretical argument that the symbols of ethnicity expressed in social reality maintain and preserve ethnic identity. In addition, symbols are always related to reflecting the experience of religiosity, either individually or in a particular ethnic group. Therefore, this study focuses on research with a phenomenological approach regarding the meaning of symbols of ethnic Chinese Muslim identity at the Lautze 2 Mosque in Bandung City.

The meaning of ethnic symbols in Chinese New Year as a means to integrate in the form of friendship and participation with the Chinese extended family. Here, the meaning of Ethnic Symbols in Fengshui which is still used and believed among Chinese Muslims. Also, the meaning of the ethnic symbols in the lion dance which is still preserved as an art in various Chinese performances and endeavors. The

meaning of ethnic symbols in the Lucky Cat, which is still practiced in some Chinese Muslim circles, and is valued as part of the wisdom of the Chinese ancestor.

Chinese Muslims carry out the meaning of symbols of Chinese ethnic identity. The study found an effort to remain integrated with a more significant initial ethnic identity, which was carried out by the involvement of various family events and ceremonies held in clan associations with members of different faiths, this participation was imaged by the use of various symbols of Chinese ethnicity. For Chinese Muslims, family ties or relatives are essential in maintaining friendly relations and believing Islam is the teachings of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*. In addition, Chinese identity in religious differences is still kept to blend in the origins of identity and in ethnic Chinese traditions. There has been a reinterpretation of the symbols of Chinese ethnicity as a form of strengthening the identity of the Chinese Muslim ethnic group. In other words, individuals with culturally solid ethnic identity characteristics tend to identify with ethnic identities with greater ethnic, cultural values and norms, whether based on ethnicity or religion.

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