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BUDDHISM AROUND THE WORLD

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PREFACE

The history of mankind records how the Buddha got enlightenment and showed a path which not only leads but also guides the world till date. That is solely to emanate wisdom and offer insights which help us overcome numerous challenges and achieve the welfare of humanity.

Recognizing his pragmatic approach, values and contribution of Buddhism, the United Nations in a resolution in 1999 decided to celebrate the Triply Blessed Day of Vesak (Birth, Enlightenment and Passing Away of Gautama), falling mostly in a lunar calendar in the month of May. The first celebrations were held way back in the year 2000 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and subsequently the day has been celebrated hugely in different countries.

Today our planet is confronted with a number of crises and unprecedented natural disasters. The imminent threat of terrorism and ethnic violence, tackling poverty, providing education and sustainable development leads us to strive for social justice. There is an urgent need for concerted and constant planning and right effort at an international level to foster permanent peace in the societies and in the lives of individuals.

Against the backdrop of such widespread misery and strife leading to complex issues and crises, Buddhism with its rich heritage of tolerance and non-violence can contribute immensely and inspire us with His message of loving-kindness, peace and harmony in today's world. The United Nations Day of Vesak (UNDV) 2019 is a testimony to this fact.

Vietnam got the chance and responsibility of hosting this international Buddhist event UNDV in 2008 and 2014, respectively. The event proved an amazing spectacle of religious and spiritual festivity, with thousands of Buddhists from around the world converging in Vietnam, to spread the Buddha's message of peace, love and har-

INTER-RACE, RELIGION AND CULTURAL TOLERANCE: THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM BY TJONG FAMILY IN MEDAN, NORTH SUMATRA, INDONESIA

by Erond Litno Damanik*

ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe and understand inter-racial, cultural and religious tolerance by Chang Hung Nan or Tjong Yiau Hian or better known as Tjong A. Fie (1860-1921) in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia. In the plantation era (1863) until now, Medan was a pluralistic and multicultural city. This city is called miniature Indonesia. In this city there are 16 ethnic groups that reflect cultural heterogeneity, namely Malay, Karo, Simalungun, Mandailing, Angkola, Pakpak, Toba, Aceh, Minangkabau, Java, Banjar, Ambon, Arabic, India, Japan, China and Europeans like the Netherlands, Belgium, United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Poland and Czech. In addition, there are different religions such as Islam, Methodists, Protestants, Catholics, Hindus, Buddhists, Confucians and Pemena namely the original Karo ethnic religion. Tjong is a Buddhist, originally from China and plays a prominent role in Medan. Various titles were given to him such as businessmen, leaders, billionaires, and philanthropists. His attention to each ethnic and religious group was demonstrated through donations for the construction of worship facilities (churches, mosques, and temples), education, health, housing, and other public facilities. He banned human slavery on plantations, banned human-

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drawn rickshaws, or suggested using the Malay language at the Medan City of Council meeting. Tjong is a pioneer of inter-racial, religious and cultural tolerance in Medan. This study was carried out qualitatively with a historical approach. Data is collected through colonial archives such as notes, reports, and photographs. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with the Tjong family in Medan. The data are analyzed with an in-depth description. The findings of the study are: (i) tolerance is a virtue that has a core inter-racial, religious and cultural peace that comes from practice and life success, (ii) the success of life becomes a source of philanthropic attitudes to help others regardless of racial, religious and cultural differences (iii) Tjong is the first public figure in Medan to appreciate and develop tolerance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Based on statistics, Buddhism in North Sumatra Province reached 2.82% of the total population of 14,102,911 people (BPS, 2016). While 65.45% are Islam, 26, 62% Protestant, 4.78% Catholic, 0.19% Hindu and 0.14% other. The number of places of worship reached 21,933 Mosques and *Mushalla*, 12,209 Protestant Churches, 1,848 Catholic Churches, 323 Buddhist temples, 61 Hindu temples, 11 Confucianism monasteries (Harahap, 2018). In addition to these officially recognized of worship in Indonesia, there is 4 *Malim* religious worship in North Sumatra. Buddhism in North Sumatra was spread by ethnic Chinese. However, not all Chinese ethnicity is Buddhist. Some have embraced Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, and Confucianism (Lubis, 1999, 2011). In general, the spread of Buddhism in North Sumatra has been recorded since the era of Dutch Colonial Plantation in 1863 (Tan, 2004; Hamdani, 2013). However, traces of Buddhist civilization have been found since the 12th century AD in the Kota Cina site, Medan Marelan. The traces of Buddhist civilization is the discovery of stone sculptures (McKinnon, 1984, 1996).

This gap occurs because there is no record of Buddhism in Medan since the 12th century until the era of colonial plantations. Even if some ethnographical writings are found, the article only mentions Chinese exploration and trade (Groeneveldt, 1964; Huan, 1970; Wibowo, 1999). Today, the Chinese population in Medan is widely studied not about religion but rather economic and cultural

disparities (Lubis, 1995, 2012; Agustrisno, 2007). This problem permeates the national scale in the context of ethnicity and politics (Afif, 1999; Suryadinata, 2002, 2005; Coppel, 2003; Suparlan, 2003). However, archaeological findings explain that the influence of Buddhism in the 12th century had entered North Sumatra. In the 16th Century developed Islam according to the discovery of gravestones in the *Kota Rentang* site (McKinnon, 2012). In the Dutch colonial era, the Catholic and Protestant religions developed in Medan (Perret, 2009).

The impact of colonization in Medan City does not only appear from heterogeneous religions. However, the pre-colonial homogeneous society turned into a heterogeneous society in the colonial era. A number of Asian migrants such as Arabic, India, Japan, and China are present in Medan. Indonesian local immigrants such as Simalungun, Toba, Mandailing, Angkola, Aceh, Java, Banjar, Minangkabau, Ambon are present in Medan. A small but dominating number of politics and economics are Europeans such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, Switzerland, Japan, the United States, Britain, Germany and the Czech Republic (Stoler, 1985; Pelzer, 1988; Breman, 1989). This situation changes Medan to become a pluralistic and multicultural city. The city is a miniature according to race, religious and cultural diversity in Indonesia.

When viewed from a residential aspect, colonial politics reflects ethnic polarization through the formation of ethnic villages (Pelly, 2013). The city was from the beginning set out as a modern town with parks, a villa quarter for the Europeans and separate areas for the indigenous, Chinese and Indian populations (Buiskool, 2009a). While from the aspect of employment, indigenous people are employed on plantations, Indians as transporters and Chinese as foremen, wood craftsmen, and traders. After the arrival of Chang Hung Nan or Tjong Yiau w or Tjong A. Fie hereinafter referred to as Tjong (figure 1), the colonial political constellation began to change. The tolerance embryo was developed by Tjong since getting a solid social position. The success of Tjong's life is an entrepreneur, billionaire, member of *Gemeenteraad* (council of the city), and member of *Cultureraad* (council of cultures). By these two positions, Tjong became a Chinese Major in 1911 replacing his

brother, Tjong Yong Hian.

The success of life pushed Tjong to be honored in Deli. Not only by the Sultan of Deli but also the by Colonial Government. Through the success of life, Tjong dedicated his life to virtue. Tjong donated his wealth to help poor people, build worship facilities, and public facilities. Tjong became the main philanthropist and was very popular in Medan. Through its social and political position, Tjong made it easy for ethnic groups to establish and receive donations for the construction of houses of worship. Every ethnic group has the freedom to develop its cultural expression. Tjong made a donation at the Toba and Karo Cultural Exhibition in *Batavia* (Jakarta) in 1919. This situation only happened when Tjong, a Buddhist and Chinese migrant had a strategic economic and political position. In other words, the embryo of acculturation between races, religions, and cultures only took place in Medan since the late 19th century. This acculturation was closely related to the presence of the Dutch Government which gave economic and political positions to the Malay Sultan (Milner, 1977) and Tjong.



Fig. 1 Tjong A Fie, 1911. Source: Col.Tropenmuseum, TMnr 10018656

Tjong, the legendary Chinese merchant in *Tanah Melayu Deli* (Deli Malay land) as a benefactor and his success embraces the whole heterogeneous society. The kindness of Tjong famous until the whole of North Sumatra without distinguishing tribe, religion, and race (Harahap, 2018). Tjong is different from a number of Chinese figures in Medan. Although he is a Buddhist, he has an

understanding of differences in race, religion, and culture. That understanding made Tjong also create an atmosphere of mutual support, mutual trust, mutual respect and coexistence between different religious groups, races, and cultures. The emergence of Tjong with a strategic economic and political position facilitated acculturation. This acculturation is very important to create integration, harmony or coexistence in the plural and multicultural society in Medan. In the colonial era, Tjong was an embryo of racial, religious and cultural tolerance in the city of Medan.

This study was compiled to describe and understand the contribution of Tjong to spread inter-racial, religious and cultural tolerance in a pluralistic society. This explanation simultaneously leads to the spread of Buddhism in the city of Medan. Although indirect, the spread could be traced in the 12th Century in the *Kota Cina* site, Medan Marelan, long before the period of colonialism. This period was used as an initial description of Buddhist civilization in the city of Medan. However, the period studied in this text is the era of Dutch colonialism which became the beginning of the creation of plural and multicultural society. The main description that wants to be built in the development of racial, religious and cultural tolerance in a pluralistic society which began in Tjong. Therefore, the scope of the study focused on the role of Tjong to create tolerance for pluralistic and multicultural communities in Medan. The approach used is a historical perspective supported by colonial archives and recent studies of tolerance in the city of Medan.

2. THE TRACES OF BUDDHIST CIVILIZATION IN MEDAN, NORTH SUMATRA

The spread of Buddhism only occurred after the fall of *Srivijaya* (7-11 AD) in Palembang in the late 12th century (Coedes, 1918; Wolters, 1970; Bronson, 1974). In that century, trade interactions were formed between the coast and the interior of northern Sumatra (McKinnon, 2009; Perret, 2009). This statement was confirmed by the discovery of archaeological evidence in the form of 2 stone sculptures on the *Kota Cina* site (Hallewijn, 1876; Krom, 1914; Miksic, 1979; McKinnon, 1984; Perret, 2013). The first reference to record this evidence of archeological discovery is Anderson in 1823 (Anderson, 1971). In 1914, the Archaeological Service of

the Netherlands recorded the name of this region is 'Kota Tjina' (city of China) which refers to findings originating from China. The discovery of the Buddha statue (figure 2 and 3 below) is still complete (base, 43 cm x 38 cm; h. 86 cm), made of white granite and seated Buddha image, wearing a robe, hand gesture describing 'dhyānamudrā's, right hand placed on the palm of the left hand.



Fig. 2 and 3 Buddha sculpture from Kota Cina, Medan. Source: (Setyawati, 1981)

The second Buddha statue was found incomplete (figure 3). The head was damaged and not found (base, 67 cm x 32 cm; h., 62 cm), made of black granite, depicted as seated Buddha image, wearing a robe, 'dhyānamudrā's' hand attitude. The robe layer dangles from the front left shoulder to the abdomen. The traces of Chinese trade are found in various historical sites in North Sumatra such as *Benteng Putri Hijau* (Damanik, 2012). All of these archaeological discoveries reinforce the assumption on two things: (i) since the 12th century there has been trading contact between natives and foreign traders namely China and India, and (ii) findings in the form of statue fragments and temples allow a fortified settlement occupied by Chinese (Soedewo, 2011). Note from Anderson in 1823, that natives in Medan at that time were Malay and 'Carrau' or 'Karau-karau' or Karo (Anderson, 1971). This archaeological finding proves that the influence of Buddhism in the 12th century has entered North Sumatra. In the 16th century, Islam developed in North Sumatra. The assumptions are based on gravestone findings in the *Kota Rentang* site (McKinnon, 2012). In the Dutch colonial era, the Catholic and Protestant religions developed in Medan.

3. OVERSEAS TO DELI: A BRIEF SUCCESS STORY

The opening of Tobacco plantations in Deli (East Sumatra) in 1863 had an impact on the import of *coolies* from Java, India, and China (Reid., 1970; Heidhues, 2003). Jacob Nienhuys, the pioneer of Deli tobacco plantations, imported labor from outside North Sumatra since 1869. The success of tobacco plantations became a major attraction of migration to Deli. Not only in the plantation sector but a large number of Chinese workers are also employed in oil mining in Langkat, trade, the informal sector and 'Panglong' in Medan (Chinese word: *pang* is board and *long* means warehouse). Chinese workers are known to be a skilled craftsman, so much is needed to build houses, offices, warehouses and public facilities in the Dutch colonial era (Erman, 2017). In the period 1870-1933, a total of 300,000 Chinese workers were present in Deli (Reid., 1970; Buiskool, 2009a).

One of the migrants from China who migrated to Deli was Tjong (1860-1921). Tjong is a *Hakka* from May Hsien, Guangdong, China. Tjong was 20 years old when he arrived in Deli in 1880. He followed his brother, Tjong Yong Hian who had already migrated to Deli in 1875 (Bruin, 1918; Bool, 1930). While in Deli, Tjong was known as a businessman, billionaire, leader, and philanthropist. Based on colonial records, Tjong donated a lot of money to build schools, temples, churches, mosques, hospitals or other public facilities. In Deli, Tjong owns plantations, factories, housing, hospitals, pharmacies, banks, and social foundations. Not only in Deli, but Tjong also has businesses in Minangkabau, Singapore, Malaysia and China (Huan, 1964; Chang, 1981; Nim, 1993). The entire business was controlled from his large and majestic house in *Kesawan* (China town) in the city of Medan.

In 1885-1890, Tjong formed a business partnership with The Big Five Hokkien Families on Penang Island (Wong, 2007). Through its social foundations, social activities are carried out to help fellow communities in the city of Medan. Donations made without regard to race, religion, and culture. Tjong founded a rubber plantation, *Sie Boelan* in 1906. Tjong was known as the first Non-European to own plantations and employ Europeans in his company (Chang, 1981; Buiskool, 1999). This fact made Tjong the first Chinese to own a plantation in Deli. Tjong is known to be active in resisting

penal sanction, which means that it is not allowed to leave the plantation during the contract period, which made them virtual slaves. In spite of his criticism, Tjong was highly appreciated by the Dutch Government. This was mainly because of his philanthropic activities.

The influence of especially Tjong can hardly be overestimated. Around the turn of the century owned, according to several sources, about 75% of the real estate of the fast-growing city of Medan and practically the whole new build city of Tebing Tinggi. Hotels and from 1906 was the first Chinese on Sumatra who owned plantations. Tjong served as Chinese officers, official representatives of the Chinese in Deli. The Dutch government appointed officers, the rank of lieutenant to major, selected from successful individuals who enjoyed respect and status in their community. Tjong managed to create a fortune in real estate, hotels, banks, plantations, palm oil, and sugar factories and even their own railroad line in South China (Buischool, 2009a).

In 1911, his brother Tjong Yong Hian was passed away. His position as the Major of China was immediately replaced by Tjong while continuing to do social work. Many educational institutions managed by Christians, Muslims, and Chinese themselves receive great attention. In fact, the development of the Methodist School is one of his contributions (Huan, 1964). Many other contributions made by Tjong can be seen not only in various temples, mosques, and churches. The construction of the *Kwan Im* temples in Labuhan Deli (Siagian, 2017) in 1885 (figure 4 below) or *Setia Budhi* monastery was contributed by Tjong to Buddhists in Medan. This building became the first temples in the city of Medan that Buddhism used to worship. Tjong also contributed to the construction of the *Sri Mariamman* Grand Temple, built 1884 and located in *Kampung Madras* (Madras village) (figure 5 below). This temple was built for Hindus in Medan. Until now, the building still stands in Medan which is adjacent to the *Khalsa* School, a Hindu school in the Dutch colonial era.



Fig. 4 Kwan Im temple at Labuhandeli, Medan 1890. Source: kitlv.nl



Fig. 5 Interior of Hindu Shri Mariamman temple at Medan, 2018.

Source: Privat doc. by Erond L. Damanik

Tjong also donated to the construction and renovation of the Catholic Church on *Jalan* (street) Pemuda Medan (figure 6 below). The architect of this building is J.M. Hans Groenewegen, a popular architect from the Netherlands. The same donation was given to the construction of the Protestant church on *Jalan* (streets) Sugiapranata. Both of these buildings became houses of worship for Protestants and Catholics in Medan. Until now, these two buildings still stand majestically in the city of Medan.

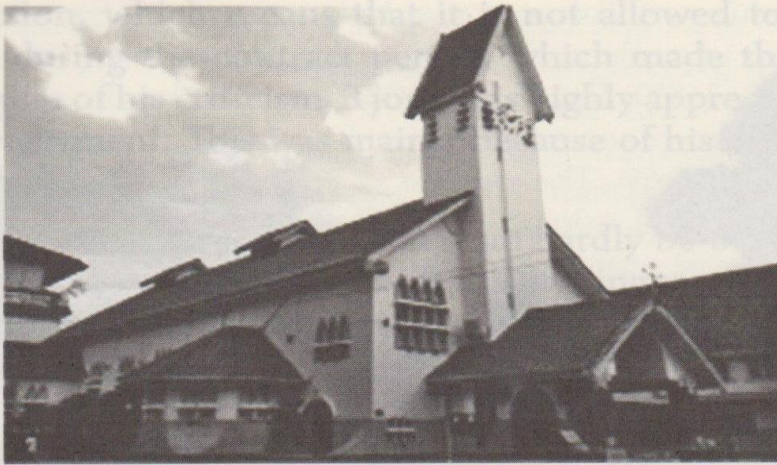


Fig. 6 Immaculate Conception of the Cathedral of Medan, 2019

Source: Privat doc. by Erond L. Damanik

In addition, Tjong also donated the construction of the *Almashoem* Grand Mosque (figure 7 below) and *Gang Bengkok* Mosque. The *Almashoem* Grand Mosque was built in 1906. Both mosques are places of worship for Islam. The construction cost of 75 percent comes from Tjong. He also assisted in the construction of the *Maimoon* Palace, the *Deli Malay Sultanate* Palace. Both of these buildings still stand majestically in the city of Medan. In honor of his generosity, in *Kek Lok* Temple located in *Ayer Itam*, Penang, stands with the magnificent statue of Tjong (Harahap, 2018).



Fig. 7 Almashoem Grand Mosque, Medan 1915. Source: kitlv.nl

Various public facilities development shows the contribution of Tjong in Medan. The construction of the Bridge of Virtue that connects Madras Village (little India town) with *Jalan* (street) Gajah Mada. The entire cost of building this bridge comes from

Tjong. This bridge was built in 1916. Other donations were donations of the Clock Tower in the Medan Mayor's office, the construction of a railway line in China or public facilities in Malaysia showing the philanthropic of Tjong. He also helped finance the construction of a special Leprosy Hospital on the island of Sicanang, owned pharmacies, housing or assistance to the poor. Because of his generosity, the Sultan of Deli proposed it to the Colonial Government to become a member of the city of councils and the council of cultures.

After Tjong Yong Hian was edited in 1911, Tjong succeeded his brother as major and thus became the leading representative of the Chinese on Sumatra's east coast. Together with the appointment as Chinese officers came commercial privileges. They were involved in supplying plantations and mediated in the recruitment of coolies from China. It was not long before they became the official suppliers of crucial products as sugar and opium. Until 1918, the Dutch government sold a monopoly to the highest bidder, mostly to rich Chinese traders. Tjong acquired the opium monopoly and made a fortune (Damanik, 2018). As the Chinese officers of the Tjong knew in advance the city planning of Medan, the adjacent land and built rows of houses in Chinese-European style. In 1886 Tjong built a meat market, a year later in 1887 a fish market and in 1906 a vegetable market (Buiskool, 2009b) and went to the foundation Tjie On Djie Jan. In collaboration with uncle Tio Tiauw Siat and where he had intense contacts with Singapore and Penang (Buiskool, 2009b).

The biggest undertaking with uncle Tio Tiauw Siat has been the Swatow railway in South China. Long before the revenue farm system on Tjong has already acquired plantations. In 1908 Tjong bought his first plantation, in 1919 he owned almost twenty estates. For the administration of estates, Tjong employed the Dutch Dolf Kamerlingh Onnes. After Tio Tiauw Siat's death in 1916, Tjong established the Batavia Bank together with Batavia Major Khouw Kim An. Tjong also distinguished himself as a philanthropist. He financed schools, bridges, Chinese temples, mosques and hospitals on Sumatra, in Malaysia and China. With his enormous wealth and philanthropic activities, Tjong has become a legend during his

lifetime. No other person in Medan's history has been contributed to social projects as Tjong. On February 4, 1921, Tjong breathed his last breath due to *apoplexy* or cerebral hemorrhage at his residence on *Kesawan* Medan. Thousands of people flocked to come and deliver to the last place in the area of Brayan Island (Kuhr, 1921).

The overall contribution above shows Tjong's generosity in Medan. He helped donate the construction of houses of worship regardless of race, religion, and culture. Generosity is formed from the success of life experienced in economic and political aspects. The stability of his social position guided Tjong to social activities namely helping everyone regardless of their racial, religious and cultural background. This understanding is formed from the virtuous religious experience of the Buddha. This virtue is a tool to build tolerance in the city of Medan.

4. PHILANTHROPY: LIFE'S GOODNESS BUILDS TOLERANCE

Philanthropy is the attitude of life that looks typical of Tjong. Philanthropic is a virtue of life to help fellow humans regardless of race, religion or culture. Philanthropists are born from social, economic and political positions, namely the realization of life's success. However, not everyone who has a strong social, economic and political position has the virtue of living in the form of generosity. Although the virtues of life such as generosity can be experienced and carried out by every mania, not everyone can do it. The virtue of living in the form of generosity is not artificial. He must be born in man. This virtue is realized because of the success of life, namely social, economic and political positions.

Tjong is different from his brother, Tjong Yong Hian, or a number of Chinese people in Medan who experienced the success of extraordinary life during the era of Dutch colonialism. The social, economic and political position of Tjong during the colonial era made his life perfect. He was written and remembered in history. He became a patron. He became a leader. Help and donations to various public facilities in Medan show the true attitude of a Tjong. Through these actions and attitudes, make his social position increasingly respected. The business is increasingly overwhelming and its influence is getting stronger.

Even though he was of a different religion, a Chinese, and an immigrant in the city of Medan but did not limit his steps to help fellow humans in Medan. Through the stability of his life, he built tolerance between people of different races, religions, and cultures. Even though his childhood is difficult, but does not make him arrogant when experiencing life success. He remains attentive to the poor, rich communities, small entrepreneurs and wealthy entrepreneurs. In this way, the business is more stable so that it becomes a channel of blessing to all people. Although he has a closeness with the Colonial Government or the Malay Sultan, it does not make him forget himself. The success of life experienced, it is actually used to help others sincerely. This trend is what most people lack very much.

At present time, many people help others but tend to be political in tone, think of economic rewards or economic opportunities. The success of the Tjong story gives clues to three things: (i) social, economic and political positions can be used as a tool to create tolerance and acculturation in plural and multicultural society. This strength is a good example for everyone to never stop creating tolerance and acculturation as the main capital of success in life, (ii) the virtue of living in the form of generosity does not reduce the wealth a person has. Life's attitude to help each other actually results in wider stability of life, (iii) the success of life is a channel of blessing to help fellow people regardless of racial, religious and cultural background.

Tjong's generosity did not just appear. Generosity is formed from an understanding of life values, togetherness values, environmental values, wealth values, and position values. Tjong has proven that the success of his life has made him respected. When Tjong died on February 4, 1921, hundreds of thousands of mourned his death. Hundreds of people stood along the road to deliver his death to his burial on Brayan Island in Medan. There is deep sorrow. There is a sense of loss towards public figures who put appreciation on the interests of many people. He was highly appreciated by all ethnic groups, Indonesian, Indian, Dutch and Chinese alike. On the occasion of Tjong's thirty years jubilee as Chinese officers, there was three days festival in town with fireworks, processions, and feasts. All population groups were involved. It was a multi-ethnic event on

the occasion of the jubilee of the Chinese major and reflected the harmonious relationship between the different ethnic groups.

Tjong is not only the economic aspect because of its enormous wealth, but also because it is a community figure that cooperates closely with the other population groups. In a plural society, it is necessary to think outside of the religion it embraces also the truth, although not as complete and perfect as the religion it embraces. This view needs to be grown in society, and when viewed from the truth of each teaching, one still believes that religion is the best and the right. However, at the same time, they had a tolerant attitude and friendship with followers of other religions. In order to realize a positive outlook in the society, it takes hard work by involving many factors: political, economic, social and cultural. This effort can be realized if based on genuine intentions. As mentioned (Veer, 2013) the appointment of the Tjong fortunate hit for the Dutch, whose guiding principle of "letting the Chinese take care of their own affairs" has a recipe for disorder in the sprawling cooled community needed for the boom plantation economy. As it turned out, the Tjong was largely responsible for the recruitment of coolies in the first place were dependable community leaders who the Dutch could be entrusted with the preservation of order in the Chinese community. The Tjong role as a key community leader whose authority is validated from within the community can be seen from their engagement in philanthropy.

Although the Buddhist population in Medan is relatively small, the success of life experienced can provide a positive image for the general public. Such images are shown not only in the Buddhist community but also for people of different races, religions, and cultures. At present, a number of schools and Buddhist houses of worship are scattered in the city of Medan. In North Sumatra, there are 14 Buddhist schools that manage elementary schools to universities. In addition, there is a monastery that stands majestically in the city of Medan, for examples, *Setia Budhi* (*Kuan Yin Kong*), and *Maha Maitreya* Monastery. The *Setia Budhi* Monastery (figure 8 below) is the highest in Medan consisting of 8 floors. The monastery embryo was built by Tjong. The monastery building is currently undergoing renovation from the temple built by Tjong.



Fig 8. Setia Budhi monastery under reconstructions, Medan, 2018.

Source: Privat doc. by Erond L. Damanik

Maha Maitreya (figure 9 below) is a Buddhist monastery that was built in 1991 and an inauguration ceremony on August 21, 2008. The area reaches 4.5 hectares. Maha Maitreya Monastery has a capacity of 4,000 people. The monastery consisting of a *Baktisala* room to worship *Sakyamuni Buddha*, *Bodhisattva*, and the *Bodhisattva Satyakalama Avolokitesvara*. In addition, this complex has a *Baktisala* Holy Patriarch, a guest house in one building that has the most complete facilities, namely the existence of office space, meeting rooms, recording studios, and a communal kitchen.

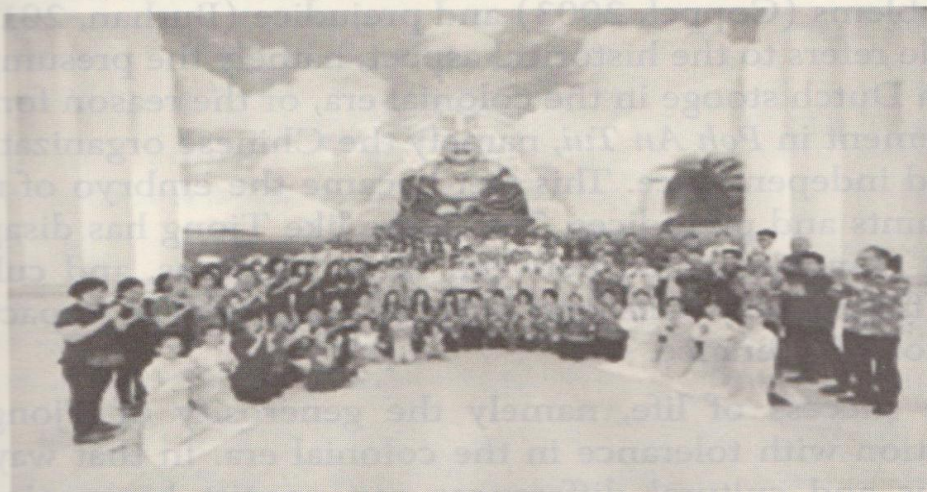


Fig 9. Buddha worships at Maha Maitreya Monastery, Medan 2018

Source: Google Image

A number of other temples are *Gunung Timur* and *Borobudur* in

Medan, or monasteries in *Lumbini Natural Park*, Brastagi, Karoland (figure 10 below). The *Lumbini Natural Park* is a Buddhist monastery that was inaugurated in 2010. The inauguration ceremony was attended by 1,300 monks and 200 laics from all over the world. The temple at *Lumbini Natural Park* is a replica of *Shwedagon Pagoda* in Yangon, Myanmar.



Fig. 10. Pagoda at Lumbini Natural Park, Brastagi 2018

Source: Privat doc. by Erond L. Damanik

Nevertheless, the success of the lives of a number of Chinese people in Medan and even Indonesia creates obstacles and prejudices. The magnificence of places of worship, Buddhist schools that are scattered in various places has become a trigger for problems (Coppel, 2003) and prejudice (Burhan, 2013). This obstacle refers to the historical aspect, namely the presumption of being a Dutch stooge in the colonial era, or the reason for China's involvement in *Poh An Tui*, namely the Chinese organization that rejected independence. This fact became the embryo of negative constraints and prejudices. The figure like Tjong has disappeared so that communication between races, religions, and cultures is slowly fading away. This kind of social reality has an impact on the gradation of tolerance.

The success of life, namely the generosity of Tjong has a correlation with tolerance in the colonial era. In that way, racial, religious and cultural differences can coexist harmoniously. In that way, Buddhism in Medan can live with other religions such as Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, and Hinduism. The virtue of life shown through generosity becomes an embryo of tolerance

which is very important to foster an atmosphere of peaceful living. Economic disparity is often a factor in the emergence of constraints and prejudices. Therefore, to grow back tolerance must grow figures who have the virtues of life. By imitating Tjong's life attitude that radiates virtue through his generosity, this gap can be reduced.

5 CONCLUSION

The virtue is the essence of life. Life's virtues are transmitted through life's success, namely social, economic and political positions. The success of life is the embryo of social generosity, namely life attitudes help each other regardless of race, religion, and culture. Social generosity becomes a tool to foster tolerance, namely the appreciation of every racial, religious and cultural difference. Tolerance is an important capital in social life, namely living peacefully and side by side. Through the success of life, namely the stability of social, economic and political positions during the era of Dutch colonialism in Medan, has a very important role in fostering tolerance. The virtue lives through its generosity, causing it to be accepted by all races, religions, and cultures.

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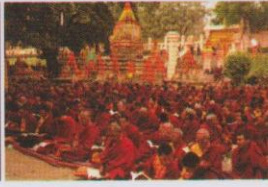
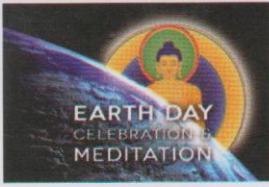
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