

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

After completing the research, the writer answered the three research questions: how the death ritual practices by Confucians Chinese Indonesians are carried out, why the Confucians Chinese Indonesians practice their death rituals, and what the ritual objects are used in the rituals and their superstitious meanings. Then the writer will continue the analysis appropriated with the steps written on Method of Data Analysis. A qualitative research conducted by depth interview to *Wen Shi* (Confucianism religious leader), a Confucians Chinese Indonesian, and a Buddhist religious leader who really knows Confucianism's rituals, particularly on its death rituals. To get complete answers from the informants, the open ended questions were applied to figure out the details of ritual processes, the reasons of Confucians keep practicing death rituals, and ritual objects used in death rituals with their superstitious meanings. The photo sources were taken whether by the writer herself, internet, and courtesy of *Budi Kasih* funeral organizer album. The writer took notes and recorded the conversations, sorted out the significant information, analysed each ritual, and gave pictures of ritual objects as well as their superstitious meanings.

4.1. Death Rituals Practiced by Confucians Chinese Indonesians

As has been said earlier by an American author, Anthony J. Blasi, rituals are actions done frequently by communities to reveal their identity. Rituals are closely related to birth, puberty, marriage, and death (Blasi, 2009). Furthermore, they are

usually shown because of some life switchovers which is followed by some related parties (Mason, 2006). This research, however, focuses on one of their aspects, death rituals. In this case, the writer took a deep look into Confucianism's death rituals. This is a rare topic investigated, virtually it is highly interesting to be examined, because every movement, every action, every thing done has its own meaning. Therefore the aim of this study is to familiarize Confucianism's rituals, notably in death.

Based on the open ended questions asked to the three interviewees, the writer got enough information about Confucianism's death rituals. Fundamentally all of the informants mentioned the same ritual sequences: *Pai Kui*, *Jiep Bok*, *Moy Song*, *Jiep Gong*, and *Sang Cong*. Yet, a few differences are seen in the ritual objects.

In this modern time, lots of funeral organizers exist in Indonesia, Semarang is no exception. Organizers like *Arimatea*, *Budi Kasih*, *Santa Maria*, *Budi Tjipto*, *Omega*, *Tabita*, *Agape* are the examples. Based on a book by *Tong Chee Kiong*, in Singapore, families often use funeral organizers. Singaporeans tend to call it "services of a ritual specialist" (Kiong, 2004). There are many funeral organizers exist throughout places in this world. They usually handle all necessities related to death, starting from the beginning until the end, either buried or cremated. There are no standardizations in using these funeral organizers in Indonesia, like a Buddhist can use *Santa Maria* Organizer and Confucians can use *Budi Kasih* Organizer. These kinds of funeral organizers could prepare all things related to the rituals or things which are required by the family. They tend to apply a simple way. Like one of the interviewees said, in this era people are likely to have the simpler

one, which is not as complicated as the traditional custom (Hok, 2017). However, there is MAKIN or Council for the Confucian Religion in Indonesia which is willing to manage rituals like what should be, although it is more complicated and it needs much more money. In this part the writer is going to describe each ritual specifically one by one.

4.1.1 Coffin Prayer Reception (*Pai Kuitoward the coffin*).

There are four rituals done when the dead is in the funeral home and one ritual in the crematorium or cemetery. The total days of the deceased staying in the funeral home until the procession for cremating and burying the deceased are always be odd, whether three, five, or seven days (Kiong, 2004).

The first ritual is called "*Pai Kui*" (Hokkien Language) in front of the coffin or Coffin Prayer Reception. According to the *Wen Shi*, *Pai Kui* is always done in each ritual as well (Kim, 2017). This ritual, particularly, may be the simplest one because it takes only the son as the doer. If there is no son, the first child has to take his place.

When the coffin arrives, the first child has *todo pai pai* in front of the coffin (pray for the dead, in this case praying for the new house of the dead as if the coffin is the new house, by clenching both hands into one fist while at the same time he says "Dad/ Mom, the new house has come. We (children) buy it for you." As already said above, *Pai Kui* is a position where the person clenches both hands into one fist while praying. The act is followed by putting and lifting the forehead to and from the ground or the floor. The person puts his forehead on the ground or the floor, he

needs to take a few seconds before he lifts it. This action has to be done for seventeen times if the dead is a parent.

There are some provisions of *Pai Kui* depending on who died. If the deceased is the parent, the children must do *Pai Kui* near and in the direction of the coffin eight times. The children must also do the additional nine times *Pai Kui* in the direction of the coffin for *Thian* or God. The totals are seventeen *Pai Kui*. It requires approximately only five minutes to finish this ritual. There is no certain prayer in this ritual, however people must pray as a sign of homage, because the dead has ever helped, taken care, and protected him. The good deeds of the deceased are like a debt of gratitude, so people return the favor by doing *Pai Kui* and praying.

The coffin itself, has no specific criterion, but the *Wen Shi* suggests a brown for the coffin colour, because brown symbolizes the colour of soil, the final form of human being or living things after they die and are buried (Sinartyo, 2017). As the *Pai Kui* is done, the coffin will be brought to a distinctive room nearby to bath the dead body. The bathing is done by one or two people chosen by the funeral organizer. Soon after the bathing has finished, the body will be put inside the coffin dressed in his or her most favorite clothes. His other clothes for change, spectacles, books, comb, slipper, and things thought necessary by the family are also put inside the coffin. As written in a book by *Tong Chee Kiong*, the deceased need those objects, as they believe that the dead will move to other world (Kiong, 2004). Confucians believe they have to prepare things to be worn by the dead for the length of forty nine days. There is a joke told by one of the interviewees, that things such as gold, silver, or some other valuable things must not be put in the coffin because

it actually does not have any superstitious meaning at all. It is very risky to leave valuable things in the coffin because it indirectly invites criminal actions. Thieves might come and dig the tomb to be able to get the gold inside. Although it is expressed as a joke but the interviewee's idea makes sense.

4.1.2 Coffin Closing Ceremony (*Jieb Bok*).

Based on my interviewee's explanation, when the dead is aman, the dead will wear two layers of clothes. The first layer is his favorite shirt, while the second layer is his suit. When the dead is a woman, the dead will wear her favorite dress. Confucians believe if the family does not prepare appropriate clothes for the deceased, the spirit of the deceased will present in the family's dreams constantly until the deceased gets the demand (Hok, 2017). Therefore, it is better if the family can provide the clothes early and obey the rules. These provisions are quite light compared to the conditions found in Singapore. Chinese Singaporeans dress the deceased with seven to nine layers. The families just want to make sure that their beloved has enough clothes for all seasons in his new life (heaven) (Kiong, 2004).

The words *Jieb Bok* mean wooden coffin that is closed. This ritual is freely joined by the relatives or the kin either man or woman, kids nor adults, colleagues, and even people who do not have any relationships with the dead. However, the close-knit family has to come and follows the ritual, especially the nuclear family. According to Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, nuclear family is parents and children (Merriam & Merriam, 1831). Their presence is central because if the main families do not come then the deceased will be looking for them (Hok, 2017). One

of the interviewees have other perspectives (Sinario, 2017). He said that although all people are free to follow this ritual, they apparently may not want to do it because they are not the family.

John H McDowell said on his research that ritual needs a religious leader to hold on the structures or arrangements (McDowell, 2009). This ritual also involves a *Wen Shi* to perform *Jieb Bok*. *Wen Shi* leads the ritual from beginning to the end, which includes reciting foreword and the related prayer. This prayer is specifically used in *Jieb Bok* Ceremony with Indonesian translation spoken by *Wen Shi*. The prayer is originally translated from Mandarin Language. Confucians believe that every living thing, after they finish their obligations, in their lives will surely pass away. Like Yin and Yang, both are the opposite of each other, yet they need each other. Such as bright and dark, no daytime without night, like a wheel that is constantly spinning and never stop. Similar to this life, people come and in the end they go. Those who are born, in due time will fulfill the death. All of it are listed on the prayer written in a piece of paper.

There are also some other hopes to *Thian* (God) expressed in the prayer mainly for the spirit of the dead and his family so that (1) the soul lives peacefully in the hands of God, (2) the bereaved family has strength and power to face the grief and could carry out Confucianism death ceremonies as instructed by the religion believed. They also pray to get God's mercy and guidances so that they are able to keep doing their life's obligations in God's virtue, and (3) the family has firmness of faith, health, safety, ability and strength to keep on doing their obligations in this world even though they have lost their loved ones. Basically, the content of the

prayer is to remind participants that death is a completeness to strengthen the bereaved families, as said by one of the interviewees who is a religious leader(Sinaryo, 2017).

This prayer is recited by *Wen Shi* in front of the table while others fervently follow. On the table itself, there are some offerings prepared by the children or family. It is a sign of homage. If the person who dies is a parent, for example a mother, so the children must say this prayer,“ These are the offerings we prepared for you mom. When we were child, you prepared them for us. Now, we prepare these food and drinks as a reminder that you had taken care of us since we were born in this world.” They are doing it whilst holding food, fruits, and snacks in front of the table. It is a sign of filial piety or an appreciation from the children to their parents. The family’s participation in this ritual is also a form of homage to the deceased. As reported by Sukarno, Confucians do honor their ancestors and do appreciate others(Sukarno, 2014). There is one part in this ritual where families bow their body toward the coffin several times as a symbol of respect for the deceased. Finally the written prayer paper where the list of prayers put will be burnt after all sentences are phrased whilst accompaniment of the song echoed. The burning paper is put in a bowl that has been prepared on the offerings table. At the end of this part, it is closed with a spiritual song in Mandarin.

After *Jieb Bok* is done, the family burns *Sio Gim* or silver paper money. The family burnt as much silver paper money as possible or as much as they want. The silver money is burnt inside a crock which is placed beside the coffin. Confucians

believe if somebody dies, he will go to another world so the family needs to deliver supplies such as money in the form of fake paper silver money. Thus through the symbolic of burning fake paper money, it is expected that those fake paper money will be able to get to the other side and be received by the deceased. So, the deceased will not lack of anything in his current world.

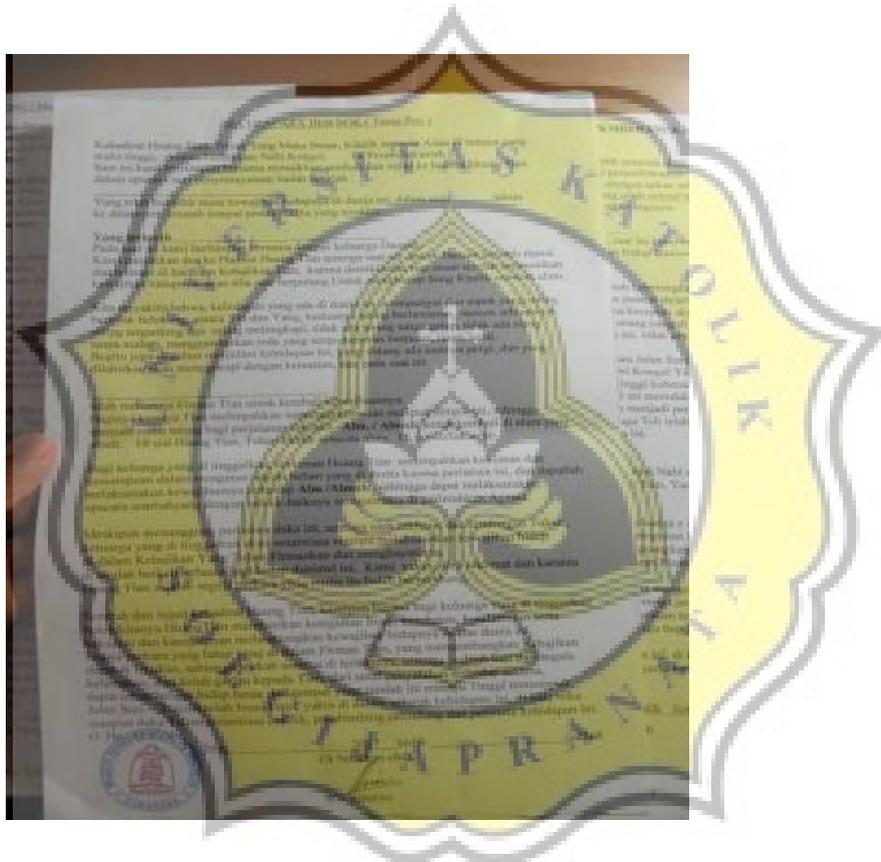


Figure 4.1 *Jieb Bok* prayer that has been translated into Indonesian Language (photo taken by Wiwik, 2017)

The procession is continued by closing the coffin. A group of people from the funeral organizers closes the coffin which has been filled with the deceased's

favorite things like slipper, glasses, jacket, pants, clothes, as an inventory for the deceased in his new realm. Besides favorite things of the deceased, there are also fake paper money, seven pearls, paper placemat, eau de cologne for fragrance, and a long white cloth to cover the top. Those objects are put alternately inside the coffin by all families who are taking turns to put them down appropriated with some specific arrangements. After entire objects are perfectly put, the coffin is ready to be closed. While waiting, the family continues to burn *Sio Gim*. Compared with other rituals, *Jieb Bok* or ceremony for closing the coffin is the one which depends on “good hour”. Confucians believe there is good time for the coffin to be closed so the time must not be randomly decided. In order to fit in the “good hour”, the family usually asks the *Wen Shi* to tell them the best hour for closing the coffin. Other rituals do not have the special “good hour”, so the time to do other rituals are free depending on the families’ decision.

4.1.3 The Final Night Ceremony (*Moy Song*)

Usually the deceased stays in a funeral home for three days, or more as long as the days are odd, either three or five days. Chinese, the most ethnic group who embrace Confucianism, tend to choose odd number (Rainey, 2010). “We have to choose odds, because that is how it counts. Culture, that is it. We have to obey” (Hok, 2017). While the *Wen Shi* explained that the selection of odd number has a specific meaning. Odd numbers will not be divisible by another number, in contrast to even numbers that can run out if divided by even numbers. This is likened to sustenance. The bereaved families are expected having a never-ending fortune by choosing odd numbers (Sinartyo, 2017).

Day changes and the next ritual is ready to be implemented. *Moy Song* means last night. It is a ritual that runs at the night before the dead is brought to the grave or crematorium in the following day. This final night ceremony is a ceremony where the whole families, relatives, associates, and people who know the dead, gather and show their sympathy. Vesakamurti (The *Pandita*/ Buddhist Leader) revealed, although taking place in the funeral home, this ritual contains a slight impression of “party”. Sometimes the family prepares food such as Indonesian chicken soup and chicken rice, a typical food of Semarang often served in *Moy Song* in which the rice is cooked with coconut milk. Those are two dishes usually served for the guests (Kim, 2017). The act of serving food makes sense because actually this ceremony is nearly at dinner hour. Therefore it is deemed necessary to prepare food and drinks for people who take time to come. According to the Buddhist leader, Peng Kim, in this ritual, people send prayers to the ancestors and pray about the heavenly world of *sokawati* (another name for “heaven” used by the Buddhism). The complete *Moy Song*’s prayer covers contents and pleas like (1) a hope that the deceased goes peacefully and eternally, (2) a reassurance that life or death, rich and noble, long or short life, everything has been determined by God as written in one of the Confucianism holy books, *Lun Gie*. Thus, people should not regret the way they live because there is none to regret for as long as they live wisely, fully respectful to others, and truly in accordance to commandment, (3) a form of reverence to the deceased, as commanded by *Kong Zi*, the prophet, who says people should escort the spirits with prayer. This form of reverence is done as if the deceased is in front of them, along with the living, and (4) a firmness of faith, health, safety, strength

and ability to keep on doing obligations in this world with the guidance and protection of *Huang Tian* (distinct name for God).

According to the religious leader, the main purpose of this ritual is to send prayer because in the following morning the deceased's body would be buried or cremated “We send out prayers to him (the deceased) and tell that tomorrow his body will be brought to the grave or crematorium” (Sinartyo, 2017).

With regard to life after death, Confucianism does not explain much about it. It emphasizes more on ancestor worships. Confucians believe in the existence of spirits, therefore they honor the ancestors in many ways, such as preparing offerings, providing ancestor's needs, and *sembahyang* (praying). Confucians believe that the spirit of the dead as well as the ancestral spirits will always exist. The spirits are believed to be still looking after their family all the time and controlling their fortunes or luck. No wonder that the family does care for them and provide their needs in after world. If the family does so, the ancestors' spirits will “reward” them with some good things. Confucianism teaches that a person will experience life after death after they have fulfilled their obligations in the profane world; it is when they acknowledge what life after death is (Epih, 2015).

There are three parts which are always done by families in every ritual equally, that are bowing toward the coffin several times, *Pai Kui* and offering food for the dead by the children. Actually they are all done as a form of homage for the elderly. If the deceased is a parent, neither father nor mother, the children

are the ones who have to prepare and do the bowing and the praying. Yet if the dead is unmarried, the nephews will set them up.

Beside the same activities found in each ritual, there is also the same closing sentence in each prayer, which is written: “*O .. Ha ..Ai..Cai..*” which means God deigns to grant the prayers. Similar with other rituals, the prayer paper will finally be burnt in a red bowl that has been provided after it is read by the *Wen Shi*.

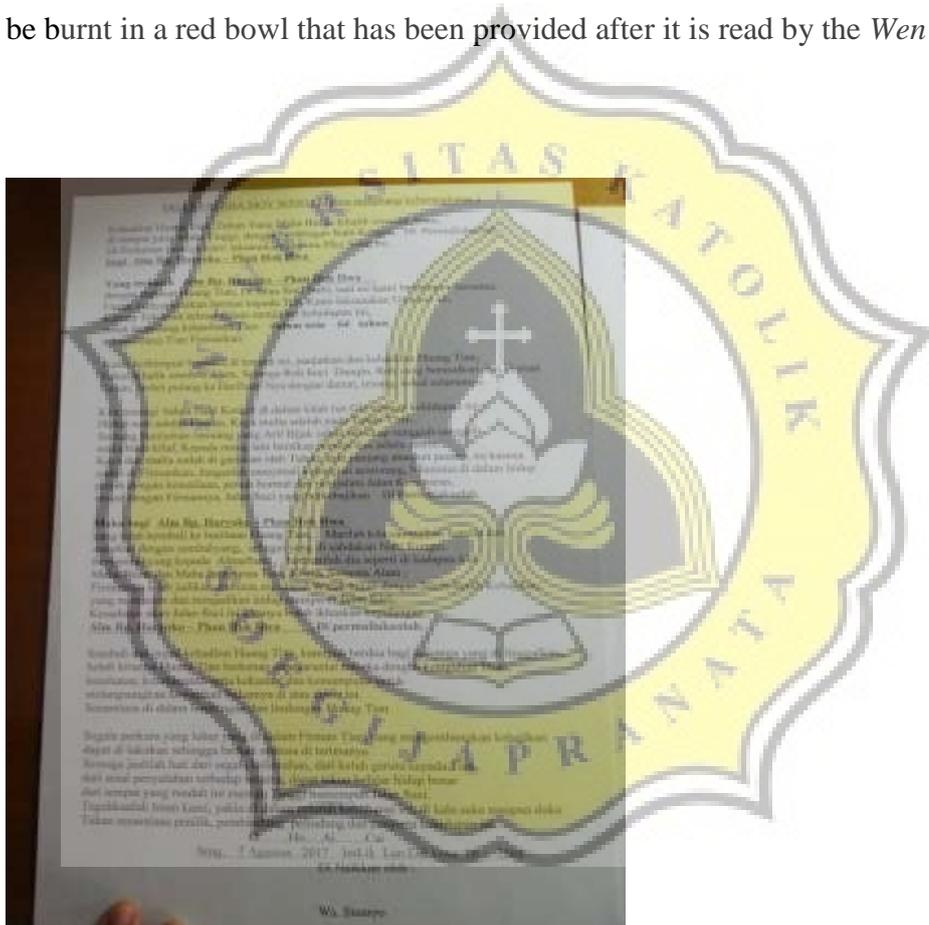


Figure 4.2 *Moy Song* prayer that has been translated into Indonesian Language (photo taken by Wiwik, 2017)

4.1.4 Departure Ceremony for the Deceased (*Sang Cong*)

Before the deceased departs to the burial or crematorium, the last ceremony that has to be done is called *Sang Cong*. Words *Sang Cong* have a meaning of corpse departure. This ritual contains of a farewell greeting for people who accompanied the departure of the deceased to the grave so they will be safe until they arrive in the destined place. Normally *Sang Cong* is carried out in the morning, around 08.00 to 10.00 a.m. Then the ritual is continued by leaving the funeral home to go to the cemetery. Similar to the two rituals that have been done earlier, *Sang Cong* ritual is also led by a *Wen Shi*, and it has a distinctive prayer. Basically the prayer contents are not so different from the previous prayers, the contents are approximately the same. However, these are a more detail content of this prayer:

- Farewell phrases to the deceased.
- A reminder to the family even though they are deeply in grief, but they have to realize that nothing is everlasting.
- The teaching of *Kong Zi's* five virtues: developing seeds of love, upholding the truth, being polite and respectful, acting wisely, and being trustworthy. The dead, during his lifetime surely has tried to do so. Therefore, the realization that the deceased has done his good deeds can ease the grief of the bereaved family and give strength and consolation for the family. After all, the deceased has fulfilled his life duties.
- The expectation that the deceased can live peacefully within the glory of *Thian*, the most magnificent and immortal being.

- A praying for the bereaved families, again, they are prayed that *Huang Thian* may grant them with firmness of faith, health, safety, strength and ability to keep on doing their life obligations and live in accordance to the guidance and protection of God.

This prayer, however, needs to be equipped with mandarin spiritual song. According to the *Wen Shi*, the complementary song is necessary. It is a compulsory at a closing, because they believed that the song will make the prayers granted (Sinaryo, 2017).

In each ritual, includes *Sang Cong*, the religious leader, in this context the *Wen Shi*, should be escorted by two Confucian companions. Nowadays, as revealed by one of the interviewees, looking for companions is pretty hard. So if there is none of them, the ritual is still able to be carried out with the guidance of the religious leader (Sinaryo, 2017).

After a series of activities is completed, the deceased is ready to be brought to the cemetery. Ordinarily, before the coffin is lifted into the hearse, the family representatives will give short gratitude speech to the guests who took time to attend the ceremony, both in that morning and later when they accompany the deceased and the family up to cemetery as well as when they follow the last ritual, *Jiep Gong*. According to John H McDowell in his journal discussing *Kamsa* Ritual Language, those who ought to follow a ritual properly belong to one of ritual compositions, accessibility (McDowell, 2009). Even in Confucianism's Death Rituals, there is a unique belief trusted by most Confucian Chinese Indonesians that is related to

accessibility. Although all people may join in each ritual, yet some people are forbidden to see the moving coffin, such as when the coffin is lifted to the hearse or when it is downed from the car. They should not see to avoid bad luck or undesirable things. These people are those whose *shio*, Chinese zodiacs symbolized by twelve animals, contrary to the deceased. It can be seen by the religious leader, in this context is the *Wen Shi*.

Immediately after the coffin has been entered into the hearse, one of the family members is ready to break the watermelon and some of them are also burning paper house as a symbol of his next home. Nevertheless, if the family or children do not want to, they can skip the ritual as it is not compulsory. They, who burn paper house for the dead, just feel more relief because they have already sent a future house to the deceased. Literally it is just a tradition like one interviewee pointed out (Kim, 2017). After that, five family representatives line up in front of the hearse. One of the eldest holds the deceased's photo, while the other stand beside him and ready to shower flowers. They accompany the departure of the hearse on foot as far as two until three meter ahead. After that they join the family entourage to the cemetery or crematorium.

The hearse then slowly moves while four relatives shower flowers in front of it and one hold the deceased's photo. The rest of the relatives and colleagues follow behind the car. Basically that kind of activity is also done at the end of all departure ceremonies. It lasts just a few meters and soon the deceased is brought to the cemetery.

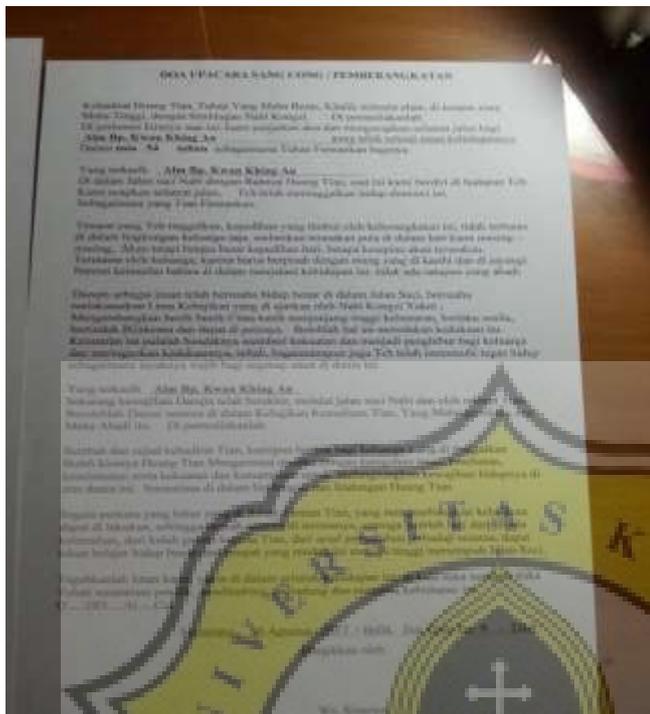


Figure 4.3 Sang Cong prayer that has been translated into Indonesian Language (photo taken by Wiwik, 2017)

4.1.5 The Funeral Ceremony/ Prayer of Perfection (*Jiep Gong*)

There is one ritual left, done in the cemetery or crematorium place, *Jiep Gong* translated as entering the grave. This is the last ritual done by the participants. It is such a separation ritual between the dead and the living.

Nowadays, Confucians prefer to do cremation rather than burial. As disclosed by one of the interviewees, Hok (Hok, 2017), people at this time tend to choose cremation because of some reasons such as economic factor or simplicity factor. Cremation also decreases the possibility of eviction. As time goes by, the price of the land is very high. Moreover, the danger of eviction that may happen at any time,

making burial very risky. For this reason, cremation is better than any other type of funerals.

Compared to burial which is very costly, cremation is the best. Cemetery should be visited at least once a year and the family shall pay the cemetery management to take care and clean the tomb. When someone is cremated, the cost will not be as much as the person buried. The ash as a result of cremation process will be directly set adrift to the sea. The family does not have to visit and take care of the ash. Beside set the ash adrift to the sea, the ash can be saved in the house of ash which should be visited at least once a year. In short, it does not cost a lot and is not risky. However, the proper teaching of Confucianism is by way of burial.

Jiep Gong Ceremony is held at the cemetery or crematorium place, depends on the family early agreement. Just like the four other rituals that had been executed, this ritual also has a distinctive prayer. In the same way with others, it is led by a religious leader and followed by all the families as the main participants. The main core of this ceremony is to pray for the dead so they will blend with the ground, which are people's origins. They will also pray for those who mourn to keep the spirit, even though their loved one has just passed away and left deep sorrow. In some places at past, when somebody dies, there is a special person paid for crying along the rituals. Basically it shows to people that they are in mourning atmosphere because of losing their beloved one. Yet nowadays, this habit is faded. Based on my interview to the *Wen Shi*, he explained that the loss of this habit is also due to the fading of sympathy against others, in this context are parents and children. When the children lost his parents, they are no longer grieved because they have

felt independent and do not really need their parents anymore. So that the crying habit starts to fade now and is not as exist as in the past (Sinaryo, 2017).

These are the more detail contents of the written prayer which will be burned after it is read. The contents are:

- Asking God's forgiveness for all the deceased's mistakes done during his lifetime, so he can get bright way to get back to Him.
- Telling to the deceased that this is the time he should be back because his worldly life has ended and now is the time for the funeral of the physical body to where the body should be returned.
- Religious teaching for human lives to make them aware about unity and harmony, between spirit and soul, inner and outer life so those who were born will fulfill death in the due time. The body will return to the ground, so the pure soul will hopefully be back to the hands of *Huang Thian*, Almighty God.
- Praying for the deceased so he is able to go peacefully into God's eternal glory; that the soul will be peaceful and everlasting.
- Expressing the last hope for the families that the bereaved families get firmness of faith, health, safety, strength and ability to keep doing their life obligations as well as live in the guidance and protection of God. It is also hoped that the families will be able to forsake themselves from evils, complain to *Thian*, and continue to live rightly here (in the world) so that they are able to keep forward in the holy path. Moreover, praying

to God with the purpose to watch the families, lead, and bless them either in joy or sorrow.

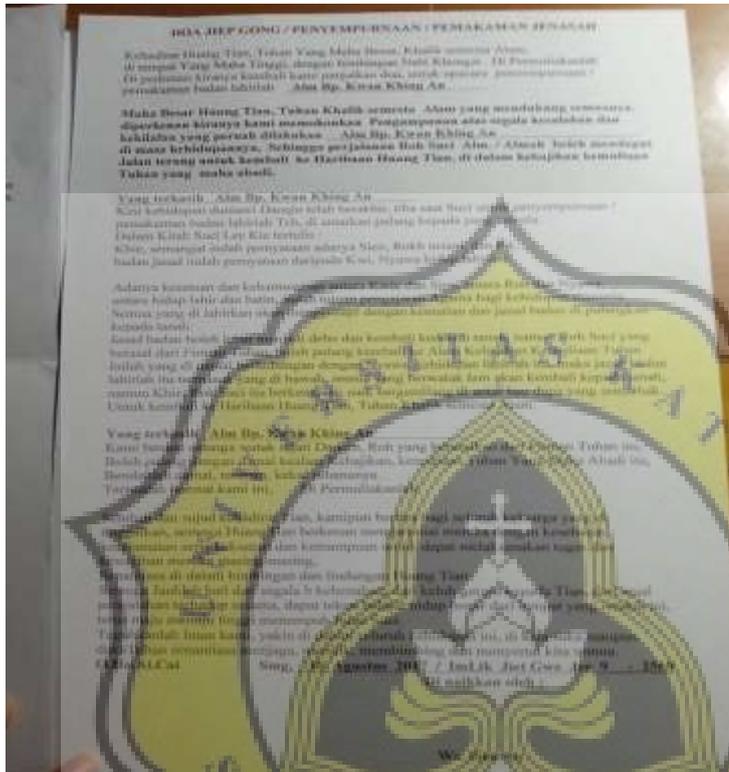


Figure 4.4 Sang Cong prayer that has been translated into Indonesian Language (photo taken by Wiwik, 2017)

According to the *Wen Shi*, Confucianism believes in the existence of heaven and hell, but they have a different name for the heaven. It is called *Haribaan Thian* which is literary translated as “hands of God” (living in the prosperous home in God's virtue)(Sinaryo, 2017). That is a kind of heaven for Confucians. Therefore, spirit of the dead is expected to enter and stay there forever. Similarly, the Christians who believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior will have eternal life with the Father in heaven.

This ritual is filled with several activities such as re-smashing watermelon as a symbol of separation between the living and the dead or showering flowers, soil and seeds in all sides of the burial pits or cremation pits. According to Hok, a Confucians Chinese-Indonesian (Hok, 2017) and Vesakamurti/ Peng Kim, a Buddhist Leader (Kim, 2017), when the ceremony is a burial ceremony, the grains are partially showered after the coffin is put into the grave. It is expected that the grains will grow on his burial place. The rest of the grains will be given to the heirs. When the ceremony is a cremation ceremony, the grains is partially showered to the ground before the coffin enters to cremation chamber. The rest is also given to the heirs to be saved. The ritual ends when the coffin has entered the grave or combustion chamber for burning the coffin, depend on the choice that has been chosen by the family. Then the families stand in line to thank participants' presence and the participants themselves can leave the place and say good-bye by greeting the families one by one.

4.2. The Reasons for Confucian Chinese Indonesiansto Practice their Death Rituals

Confucianism or more familiar with “*Kong Hu Chu*” in Indonesia is one of the religions accepted by Indonesians. At first, *Kong Hu Chu* is just regarded as a belief, even when the writer interviewed the interviewees, two of them plainly asserted that Confucianism is actually not a religion. However, KH. Abdurrahman Wahid, the fourth President of Indonesia declared *Kong Hu Chu* as one of the official religions in this country which can be freely adhered by Indonesians (Alanu, 2017). Nonetheless the number of Confucians are not as many as the members of

other religions. Yet the small number of adherents does not preclude them in practicing the Confucianism teaching. The adherents show their identity as Confucians in special ways; one of them is by doing repetitive actions and rites called ritual.

Rituals are not only repeated ceremonies, but they also a means of revealing identity of a community, showing what a community wants, and doing actions that imply love and fear of a community (Purdy, 2016). It cannot be denied that ritual has been known worldwide and done by societies living in this world. Although somehow its existence is not realized by people, but ritual is actually ubiquitous and does take place in society, even in Western culture (Purdy, 2016).

In the following part the writer is going to reveal the answers of three interviewees on their reasons for practicing rituals, mainly death ritual.

❖ Hok's reasons for practicing rituals

The first interviewee is Hok. He is a seventy seven years old man who learns Confucianism from both of his parents. Early on he said that Confucianism is not a religion but a kind of teaching which comes from China and regulates the pattern of human life. According to him, this religion emphasizes manners and respects to the ancestors as expressed in *sembayang leluhur* (praying for ancestors), as well as human relationships, that of a man with other human beings. Hok's statement agrees with Sukarno's report in 2014 which states that Confucianism teaches how to maintain good relationships between man, himself, with others or man with his ancestors.

For him, the ways Confucians prepare and implement death rituals with the ritual objects are a form of maintaining a tradition or culture. Sack's article titled "Rituals are how civilizations preserve their memory" states that ritual is the legacy of the former and must be preserved from now until the future (Sack, 2013). Therefore, ritual becomes a tradition that keeps alive until now. Another reason is, if a Confucian holds death rituals then other Confucians will come and see that the prepared rituals are in accordance to the rules. So, the guests will feel happy because Confucianism traditions are still maintained until the present time. That the traditions are maintained is a relief for the Confucians. This is supported by an article titled "The Sacred Drama of Ritual and Ceremony" which expressed clearly that ritual defends tradition which is inherited from generation to generation (Bryant, 2002). Consequently, when the adherents of a community know that their rituals are still going on, they feel relief because they know their traditions are not abandoned, that Confucius's teachings are still hold and conducted. Nonetheless beyond preparing those things, Hok stated that their (families and colleagues') prayers are more important.

❖ Sinaryo/ The *Wen Shi*'s reasons for practicing death rituals

Sinaryo is a seventy years old man who learns Confucianism from his father. Mr. Sinaryo is Kong Hu Chu religious leader or Confucians call him "*Wen Shi*". Up to the time of the interview, Sinaryo is a member of MAKIN (Council for Confucianism Religion in Indonesia).

As has been said earlier, Confucianism has three major virtues, they are: humanity/humaneness (*ren*), ritual propriety (*li*), and filial respect or piety (*xiao*), in which those three things are basically related to one another (Adler, 2011). The main teachings of this religion are evolving the moral of human beings to be their best and returning social and political structure to harmony so that people may reach eternal blissfulness (Havens, 2013). Furthermore, it adjusts connections between human beings, their own selves, and this universe.

According to Sinaryo, the main teaching of Confucianism is about behaving and being virtuous. Basically it is about devotion and respect. He also stated that Confucianism teachings put great emphasises on honoring the ancestors. The way Confucians honor the ancestors can be expressed by the implementation of rituals. Therefore, the reason for practicing death rituals is a form of respect to the sacred and eternal spirit of the deceased; the implementation of the rituals is the form of honor and respect done by the families(Sinaryo, 2017). This statement is supported by a journal by *Biao Chen*, that said death rituals done by the Confucians are a sign of filial piety or devotion to the deceased(Chen, 2012).Moreover, apart from honoring the ancestors, ritual reminds people of their rights and structured roles in communities (Havens, 2013).

❖ Vesakamurti/ Peng Kim/ The *Pandita*'s reasons for practicing death rituals

Vesakamurti is a sixty one years old man who embraced Buddhism. He is even a Buddhist Leader. Yet he knows quite well about Confucianism's ritual because it is closely related to his ancestors, the Chinese. Talking about death rituals, for him it is not a matter of Kong Hu Chu, Buddhism, Christian, or whatever, but it is a tradition. For him, even though Confucianism has been an official religion in Indonesia, it is still a kind of belief, "*Kong Hu Chu itu bukan agama sebenarnya, tapi ajaran orang kuno Cina yang kemudian di atas namakan Kong Hu Chu* (Confucianism is not a religion but an ancient teachings of China people which is claimed to be "Confucianism")" (Kim, 2017). Indeed, Confucianism is originally coming from China, although it becomes an official teaching of civilization, conceptual customs, and Chinese Philosophy in the West. However, the West cannot deny that Confucianism is also an official religion (Jensen, 1997).

The core of Confucianism itself, according to him, is to serve the elderly. Confucianism Death Rituals emphasize moral and character of a person to his parents or older people by giving offerings such as food and drink. Basically, it sets connections not only between individuals and their deceased ancestors, but beyond it. Rituals relate individuals and societies, and the universe as well. Ritual such as funeral ceremonies is not just repeated actions or customs without any purposes, yet it builds deep and strong interactions between human beings and all the creations (Sigurdsson, 2004). It is a custom that has already existed since ancient times and has to be preserved to this present time or even further. Moreover, he stated that Confucianism must not be considered as a religion but more of a Chinese

tradition in Indonesia, especially in Semarang. Therefore practicing death rituals is one of the ways of conserve Chinese tradition in Indonesia and it shall be primarily done by Confucians Chinese-Indonesian.

Furthermore practicing death rituals are form of obedience to our beliefs. If somebody has decided to embrace and believe in a religion, so he must strive to apply all the teachings in our daily lives. With so he indirectly reveals his identity to the world and perpetuates what is called by tradition. Mainly for Confucians who do respect their fellows and ancestors, the implementation of rituals and preparing ritual objects are a must for them because those are forms of honoring the deceased done by the family members.

4.3. Ritual Objects and their Superstitious Meanings

Every religion has their own way to express their beliefs, such as ritual. It is done as a way to reveal their identity to other people. Each of them has their unique ways to show to the world. Even some of them do the rituals in some strange ways that somehow confuse ordinary people. Furthermore, there are “ritual objects” which is strongly related to each ritual. These objects are used to complete a ritual, and somehow are believed to have “superstitious meaning”. The example is, Catholics or Christians trust a candle as a symbol of light of the whole world. Basically it is the same as Confucians’belief that burning paper house is providing housing stock for the dead in his new nature.

Below are the ritual objects that are used by Confucians to support the continuity of a ritual, including their superstitious meanings. Each of ritual objects is grouped appropriately with the relevant rituals.

4.3.1 Coffin Prayer Reception (*Pai Kui* toward the coffin)

Coffin prayer reception is the simplest ritual among others. Beside it takes the quickest time, it is also the only ritual which does not involve a religious leader. The ritual object used is just a coffin. Based on the interview, the interviewees said that the son or the first child of the deceased should be the person who has to welcome the arrival of the coffin by doing "*pai kui*" toward that coffin and praying.

The reason for doing "*pai kui*" towards the coffin is that the coffin symbolizes a new house for dead in her or his new realm soon. So, the son or the first child does "*pai kui*" as a symbol of paying homage to his parent's future home.



Figure 4.5 The coffin used in death ceremony (petimati. © abovethelaw.com)

4.3.2 Ceremony for Closing the Coffin (*Jieb Bok*)

Starting from *Jieb Bok*, many ritual objects used in each ritual. Some of them are the same, but some others are different. In the paragraph below, the writer will mention ritual objects used in the ceremony of closing the coffin one by one.

1. Toiletries

Confucians believe that even when a person dies, his spirit still lives on this earth. According to one of the interviewees, it needs forty nine days for the dead to be able to go back into God's hands. Firstly, the spirit just stays at home as usual, then he walks around, and by the forty ninth day, he is slowly back to a place that common people call as "heaven" (Hok, 2017). Nevertheless, before that forty ninth day, the families need to assume that the dead's spirit is still living in this earth, even around them.

Moreover if in case a person has just passed away and lodged in a funeral home, the family has to prepare toiletries such as towel, toothpaste, tooth brush, soap, glass, and washbasin to wash the face. But there should be no shampoo. As can be seen in the picture taken by the writer, the position of the soap and the toothpaste are intentionally a bit opened to facilitate the soul to pick them up. Those things are prepared as if the dead wants to take a shower like what he does every day.

Based on the interview to the *Pandita*, if the deceased is a parent, it is like a sign of devotion from the children to the parent. They serve the parent because he is no longer young so it is hard for them to go anywhere. So that the parent has no

trouble brushing his teeth and taking a bath because the toiletries are available there (Kim, 2017).



Figure 4.6

Toiletries on the chair

(photo taken by Wiwik, 2017)

2. An umbrella

An umbrella is usually placed behind toiletries and near the coffin with the intention of protecting the spirit from rain and heat.



Figure 4.7 A yellow umbrella (photo taken by Wiwik, 2017)

3. A pair of servant or slave puppets

Indeed Confucians assume that the deceased is still living with them, but it is undeniable that he has been in a different world with the living ones now. Therefore servants are needed to help the deceased getting what they ask or what they want. However, each interviewee reveals different ritual objects although they are essentially the same. The first interviewee, Hok said that “*Itu ibarat budak atau PRT (Pembantu Rumah Tangga). Mereka diminta jaga, ibarat bersih-bersih rumah baru.*” [They are like slaves or domestic helpers. They are asked to guard or to clean the new house”](Hok, 2017). Hok’s opinion is approved by the second interviewee, “*Itu pengawal atau penjaga peti. Yah hanya simbol saja. Ibarat almarhum ingin meminta sesuatu juga bisa bilang ke mereka.*” (“It is the coffin watchman. Just for a symbol actually. As if the deceased wants to ask for something, he ask them.”) (Sinaryo, 2017). While different point of view came from the third interviewee, “*Itu simbol orang atau kuli yang memikul peti.*” (“It is the symbol of people or porters who carry the coffin.”)(Kim, 2017).



Figure 4.8 A pair of servant puppets (photo taken by Wiwik, 2017)

4. *Sio Gim*/ Silver paper money

In Confucianism's death rituals, this kind of paper is used twice. First, when it is placed inside the coffin, and second, when they are burnt in crock. The superstitious meanings are approximately the same, to supply stock for the dead so that he would not lack anything there. However, according to Hok, silver paper money that are placed inside the coffin before it is closed having another meaning; it is to stuff the coffin (Hok, 2017). Moreover, the Pandita has his own perceptions. He stated that there are two kinds of silver money: plain silver money or what Buddhist calls as *Tuan Gim* and pictorial silver money. Each of them has its own meaning; plain silver money is a symbol of everything that is empty and that can be filled with thoughts, words, and deeds, while pictorial silver money is a symbol of luck, position, and longevity. People who come to the funeral to mourn use those ritual objects for praying to the dead.



Figure 4.9 SioGim/ Tuan Gim (photo taken by Wiwik, 2017)

5. *Pasuk/ Hiolo/ Crock and Cammock*

These ritual objects do not have specific meanings. They are just tools for burning *Sio Gim*. The cammock itself is just a stick to flip the money burned.



Figure 4.10 Crock and Cammock (photo taken by Wiwik, 2017)

6. *Kimcoa*

Just like *Sio Gim*, *Kimcoa* is also a kind of paper money, but when *Sio Gim* is silver paper money, *Kim coa* is golden paper money. Two interviewees said that this paper is for a placemat inside the coffin. It is used to block the deceased so that the body does not move from its place. That statement is also supported by an article written by Herman Tan in 2015, which discusses the usage of paper money such as

Kim coa and their true and implied meanings. It is previously written that the reason for putting *Kimcoa* inside the coffin as a paper placemat so that the deceased will not shift because those golden paper money support it (Tan, 2015).



Figure 4.11 *Kimcoa* (<https://www.tokopedia.com/erawanjaya/kim-coa>)

7. Seven pearls

These seven pearls are placed on the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth of the deceased. The details are two on the eyes, two on the nostrils, two on ear surfaces, and one pearl on the mouth. The procedure of putting the pearls is not random. The pearl should not be inserted into the cavities; those are put on the skin surface only. Based on the interview with *Wen Shi*, the tradition of pairing the seven pearls is based on the belief that the pearls are the guidance light for the deceased to reach

God's hands "Pemasangan mutiara secara adat sebagai cahaya terang bagi perjalanan Roh Suci almarhum. Jumlah mutiara ada tujuh buah, diletakkan dua dimata, kanan dan kiri, dua di telinga kanan dan kiri, dua dilubang hidung kanan dan kiri, dan satu dimulut.[The tradition of fixing pearls is to serve as guiding lights for the deceased's spirit in reaching God's hands. There are seven pearls: two are put on the eyes, one for the right and one for the left eyes; two are put on the ears, on the right and left ear; two are put on the nostrils, the right and left; and the last one is put on the mouth.]"

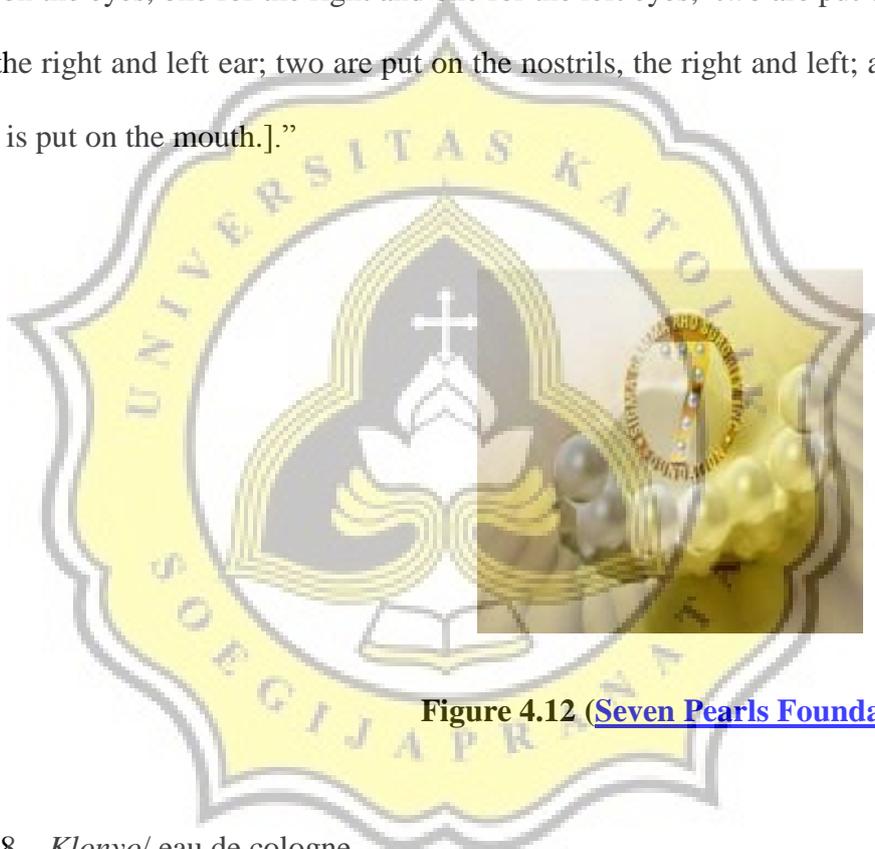


Figure 4.12 ([Seven Pearls Foundation, Inc.](#))

8. *Klonyo*/ eau de cologne

Similar to crock and cammock, eau de cologne which is usually called *Minyak Klonyo*, does not have a certain meaning. It is basically only for perfumery. The families pour the perfume little by little over the body whilst walking around the coffin. There is one provision, though, that the oil is not permitted to touch the dead body's face or skin.



Figure 4.13 Klonyo oil (WISDOMPRODUCTS.COM)

9. Snacks

Like the living who needs taking a bath, eating, drinking, or even snacking, the dead undergoes the same activities. So, the family needs to prepare what is called as “*sesajen*” or offering/son the table which include food, drinks, and snacks. However there are some terms and conditions applied to serve the offerings which are having certain meanings for the dead.

A. *Wajik* or sticky rice in palm sugar and pandan leaves

According to the interviewees, this kind of food together with plantain, red tortoise cake, and *kuemoho* are foremost placed on the table as a symbol of prosperity. *Wajik* itself, has a good superstitious meaning. Because its texture is so sticky, it is expected that the bereaved families are forever united (Hok, 2017). One of my interviewees, Sinaryo, says that *wajik* reminds us that we live with God and saints, so we must respect them all. Sinaryo’s information is the same with other interviewees’, that *wajik* is a symbol of attachment among family members and attachment to God because the texture is so sticky (Sinaryo, 2017).



Figure 4.14 Wajik (photo taken by Wiwik, 2018)

B. *Kue ku/ Ang ku kueh/ red tortoise cake*

Ang Ku Keh is a kind of traditional cake which is made from sticky rice and is filled with sweet green beans. Its shape is unique and it has supple flavor. *Kue Ku* symbolizes generation (Hok, 2017). According to one of the interviewees, red tortoise cake symbolizes longevity that hopefully all families have long life (Sinaryo, 2017). He added that the shape of this snack is closely similar to turtle, which this animal is well-known for its persistence and rarely found ill. Then the same expectation is also intended for the bereaved families.



Figure 4.15 Kue Ku (photo taken by Wiwik, 2018)

C. *Kue mangkok* (flour, rice flour, coconut milk, palm sugar, tapai/fermented casava)

This snack is stated by one of the interviewees. *Kue mangkok* has to be served on the table because it symbolizes the next generation. As portrayed on the photo, its shape is bloomed. It basically gives hope that the families will flourish like that blossomed flower (Hok, 2017).

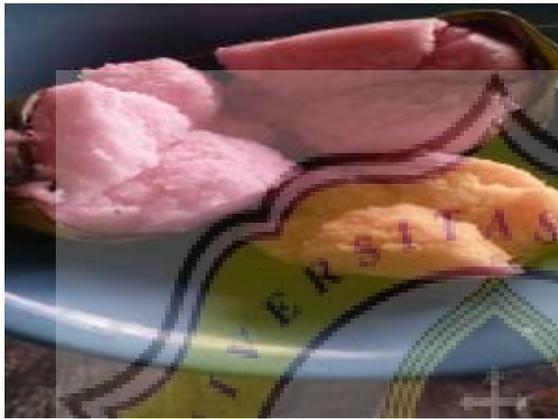


Figure 4.16 *Kue Mangkok* (photo taken by Wiwik, 2018)

D. *Kue Moho*

Kue Moho is one of the snacks which should be prepared on the table. Eventually, this traditional snack has a different name called *hwat kwee* and it is always used as one of the offerings at *Sembahyang Leluhur* (praying for ancestors) in Chinese New Year Event, especially for Chinese-Indonesian in Semarang. This snack has a sense of blessing and luck. For example, the family's business can develop and those who work as employees can get higher position so that the luck is growing to be better like the shape of *Kue Moho* that blooms. Moreover, it is a reminder that prophets, apostles, and ancestors who had ever live before us take parts on that matter.



Figure 4.17 Kue Moho (membuatkuebasah.com)

E. Fruits

On the fruits, three interviewees said different things about their provisions. However according to Hok(2017), there are three best fruit to be served on the table: apples, oranges, and pears. Additionally, other fruits and their superstitious meanings mentioned by the three interviewees are:

a. Plantain

Plantain is a symbol of diversity within the family. As shown in the picture, plantain consists of bananas that are put in their specific positions. It is likened to the position of each family member in the family: grandparents, parents, sister, brother. It is believed that if each of them knows their respective positions, then the family will live harmoniously (Sinartyo, 2017).



Figure 4.18 Plantain (pinterest.fr)

b. Watermelon

Other than the use of watermelon in *Sang Cong* and *Jiep Gong*, this fruit along with pineapple is considered as a good fruit by the leader of the Buddhist religion (Kim, 2017). In the opinion of Confucian religious leader, watermelon is a symbol of separation between the dead and the living (Sinaryo, 2017). According to him, the reason why Confucians should have watermelon is because this fruit is a really fresh one, there are many seeds in it, and considered as fruit which easy to grow in all seasons. Therefore Confucians need to prepare this fruit as offerings on the table and also to be broken in *Sang Cong* and *Jiep Gong* rituals as farewell symbol.



Figure 4.19 Watermelon (photo taken by Wiwik, 2018)

c. Longan

During the interview with the *Pandita*, he mentioned that longan has a sense of far-sightedness. It means that a human being should not be a short-tempered person but be a patient one (Kim, 2017).



Figure 4.20 Longan (photo taken by Wiwik, 2018)

d. Pineapple

According to one of the interviewees, this fruit is a symbol of dignity, so it is suitable to be served with other fruits (Kim, 2017).



Figure 4.21 Pineapple (photo taken by Wiwik, 2018)

F. Food

Besides the fruits, there are also food served on the table. These offerings, mainly food, are routinely replaced three times a day: in the morning, at noon, and in the evening (Kiong, 2004). Although most of them are the same, but the food may also vary. Therefore, the interviewees' perceptions will be described one by one in the following paragraphs.

❖ Peng Kim's Perception

Based on interview with the Buddhist leader who is quite familiar with Confucian's culture and rituals, there are eight good food that is considered as heavy meals for the offerings on the table. They are *Babi Cin*, *Ayam O*, *Cuan-cuan*, Crab, Duck, *Ca bung*, *Sawi Oyot*, and *Tahu Pong Kuah*. The first five cuisines are marine and terrestrial animals. Nonetheless, the Buddhist leader revealed that offerings may actually differ in each city as each place has its own provisions.

1. *Babi Cin/ Babi Kecap*

The main ingredients of this food are pork and some spices. This food is a cross cultural dish of Chinese and Javanese food. It is a typical dish of Semarang Chinese Food.



Figure 4.22 Babi Cin (photo taken by Wiwik, 2018)

2. *Ayam O* / Chicken O

Ayam O or *Ayam Oh* is an ancient recipe that still exists today, especially in Semarang society. It is a kind of chicken soup flavored with *tauco* (a paste made from preserved fermented yellow soybeans), ginger, and soy sauce.



Figure 4.23 Ayam O (kivanti2008.wordpress.com)

3. *Bandeng Cuan-cuan*/ Stew Milkfish with *Tauco*

Bandeng cuan-cuan is also one of Semarang's legendary food. It is made from milkfish and *tauco*, although mullet fish is more often used for this kind of dish.



Figure 4.24 *Bandeng cuan-cuan* (cookpad.com)

4. Crab

5. Duck



Figure 4.25 Cuisine from Crab

Figure 4.26 Cuisine from

Duck Meat

(bandarsemarang.wordpress.com) (vemale.com)

The crab and the duck have no specific way to deliver, so they can be cooked in any type of cuisine.

6. *Ca Bung*/ Pan-Fried Bamboo Shoots

Based on the writer's own experience, *Ca Bung* is one of the food which is usually served during Lunar New Year. However, according to the *Pandita*, this food is an additional food in death ritual.



Figure 4.27 *Ca Bung*(photo taken by Wiwik, 2018)

7. *Sawi Oyot*

Sawi oyot is literally translated as the root of mustard greens. The word “*oyot*” comes from Javanese Language, which means “root”. It is expected that descendants will also “take root”. *Sawi Oyot* dishes is using mustard greens as the basic ingredients. All of its part is cooked including the roots.



Figure 4.28 Sawi oyot (photo taken by Wiwik, 2018)

8. *Tahu Pong*

Tahu Pong is one of the typical food in Semarang. The main ingredient of this food is tofu and fermented fish or shrimp which looks like a thick black pasta.



Figure 4.29 Tahu pong (yukpiknik.com)

❖ Sinaryo's Perception

The interview with *Wen Shi* did not come up with list of heavy meal names that must be prepared on the table. Yet he mentioned that the heavy meals that ought to be served are the deceased's daily favorite food. According to him the number of the food should be even "*Sesaji makanan adalah yang menjadi kesukaan sehari-hari. Harus genap, dua atau empat.*" ("The food offerings are the (deceased's) daily favorite food. the usual food eaten everyday that become his favorites. The number of the food is usually even, two or four"). Actually those offerings are signs of respect and a reminder to the children that the parents had taken care of them when they were young. Those are the main purpose of the offerings when the deceased is a parent.

❖ Hok's Perception

Based on interview with Mr. Hok, there are five kinds of food mentioned. Basically, Mr Hok's list is the same with that stated by the Buddhist leader. They are *Babi Cin*, *Tahu Pong*, *Ayam O*, *Ca Bung*, and *Sawi Oyot* or mustard greens for the dessert. However, he added two other food apart from those five, *Opor* and *Sambal Goreng*, plus one favorite food of the deceased. The additional food is not mentioned by the *Pandita*.

1. *Opor Ayam*/Chicken Stew with Aromatic Coconut Gravy

Opor Ayam is an Indonesian typical food which is associated with Ied (*Idul Fitri*), the biggest Moslem celebration in Indonesia. Surprisingly it is also good food

to be served on the offerings table according to one of the interviewees, Mr. Hok. *Opor Ayam* is incomplete without *Sambal Goreng*, its accompaniment.



Figure 4.30 *Opor ayam* (photo taken by Wiwik, 2018)

2. *Sambal Goreng*/ Spicy Sweet Chicken Liver Saute

In contrast with *Opor Ayam* which has savory taste and is not spicy at all, *Sambal Goreng* is a pretty spicy food. Usually both dishes are served together.



Figure 4.31 *Sambal goreng* (photo taken by Wiwik, 2018)

Mr.Hok revealed the reason Confucians prepare offerings although the preparation take their time and energy. According to him, those offerings may be

seen as a waste but as it is a tradition, they have to keep it. Moreover when the relatives come and see the families prepare all of those, they will feel glad because the tradition is still maintained. “*Sebenarnya terlihat tanpa manfaat, tapi itu budaya, mau bagaimana lagi. Dan alasan lain, ketika kerabat datang untuk layat, mereka melihat sesajen-sesajen itu, mereka jadi senang karena berarti tradisi Kong Hu Chu masih berjalan.* [It looks like a waste, but it is a tradition, what can we say. For other reason, when the relatives come to the funeral, they will be happy to see the offerings because it means that Confucian’s tradition is still kept].” (Hok, 2017).

3. Drinks

Based on the interview, drinks here do not have superstitious meanings at all. It is only for complement, whether tea, *arak* (rice wine), or mineral water.



Figure 4.32 Tea (photo taken by Wiwik, 2018)



Figure 4.33 Arrack (<https://www.floxwines.com.au/shop/chateau-kefraya-arak-750ml/>)



Figure 4.34 Mineral Water (photo taken by Wiwik, 2018)

4.3.3 Last Night Ceremony (*Moy Song*)

Virtually, ritual objects used in *Moy Song*, *Sang Cong*, and *Jiep Gong* are almost the same as the ritual objects used in previous ceremony, *Jieb Bok*. Only that the ritual objects used in *Moy Song* are fewer instead of the objects used in *Jieb Bok*.

Ritual objects such as *Kim coa*, seven pearls, and *Klonyo Oil* are not used anymore because those things are only used in *Jieb Bok* ceremony. On the other

hand, other ritual objects and the choices of food, snacks, drinks, may be chosen equally and should still be served on the table. There is one provision about the presentation of offerings. During the day they have to be changed twice, in the morning and in the afternoon.

Usually in certain rituals such as wedding and death, there is a standardization in wearing costumes. When people attend a wedding party, they wear bright colors, usually red. It gives a sense of taking part in the bride and the groom's happiness. On the other hand, when people come to a funeral, they tend to wear dark colors or just a white shirt. By wearing clothes in those colors, they actually imply their condolences to the family. As revealed by the Confucian religious leader when he was interviewed by the writer, it is free whether the guests choose black or white clothes to attend death rituals, as long as they do not wear red costume. The statement is supported by a book titled "Chinese Death Rituals in Singapore" which states that families of the dead are prohibited to wearing "loud" colors such as red or yellow. They tend to wear simple black or white blouses and trousers (Kiong, 2004). For the *Wen Shi* himself, he must wear black costume, while his two companions: one of them ought to wear black and the other one ought to wear white (Sinartyo, 2017).

4.3.4 Departure Ceremony for the Deceased (*Sang Cong*)

Beside the offerings, some ritual objects are still the same as before. The objects that are exclusively used in *Sang Cong* are:

A. Paper House Miniature

After the whole series of rituals in the funeral home is over, four of the family representatives will come out bringing paper house miniature to be burnt outside the room. The line is preceded by the coffin watchmen. The aim of burning paper house miniature is to send the deceased's provision to his new world. Because the family has sent a place to dwell, the deceased does not need to be worried.

Another perspective is delivered by the *Pandita*. He said that it is fine if the family does not prepare and burn paper house miniature because basically it is only a tradition. It is only that the bereaved families feel more serene if they deliver "a house" for their beloved. "*Rumah dibakar hanya tradisi sebagai rumah masa depan saja, kalau tidak pun tak apa. Cuma ya lebih lega saja kalau orang atau sang anak membakar rumah.*" ["Burning paper house miniature as a symbol of sending a future house for the deceased is just a tradition. If the family does not do so, it is totally okay. However, the family will feel more content if they do the tradition of burning the paper house."](Kim, 2017).



Figure 4.35 Paper house miniature is burning ([iloveconfucius.com](http://loveconfucius.com))

B. Watermelon

If previously this fruit is only placed on the table, in this ritual, an intact watermelon is slammed to the ground by one of the children after the coffin is put into the hearse. He did it in front of the hearse while praying and saying, “*Good bye. May you get the best house with Thien/Thian (God).*” It basically represents the separation between the dead and the living (Hok, 2017).



Figure 4.36 A watermelon is

broken(<http://vincentspirit.blogspot.co.id/2011/12/tradisi-banting-semangka-pada-acara.html>)

4.3.5 The Funeral Ceremony/ Prayer of Perfection (*Jiep Gong*)

Jiep Gong is the last and final ritual in the death procession. In this ritual, the toiletries and heavy meal are not used anymore. Yet there are some new ritual objects used in the funeral ceremony that have certain meanings such as stretcher, an intact watermelon, flowers, soil, and five kinds of seeds, and some coins.

A. Joli/ Tandu/ Kio/ Stretcher



Figure 4.37 King's palanquin (stickpng.com)



Figure 4.38 Stretcher (yuniantoziips2.blogspot.com)

According to the *Wen Shi*, a stretcher symbolizes the departure of the deceased to the new living world (Sinartyo, 2017). Before he goes into the new life, the

deceased is supposed to be carried in a luxurious stretcher like that in Figure 4.33.

However, in the recent years, the stretcher used is that shown in Figure 4.34.

B. Watermelon

An intact watermelon is broken again after the coffin is put into a special combustion chamber. Usually it is done in front of that room by the son. It is a symbol of eternal separation between the death and the living. He also prays and says, *“Good bye, till we meet again.”*

C. Flowers and Grit



Figure 4.39 Flowers (solopos.com)



Figure4.40 Soil (rodalorganiclife.com)

The showering of flowers and grit are done by everyone who comes as well as the families. According to one of the interviewees, each person do three times flower showering and three times grit showering (Hok, 2017). The flower itself symbolizes separation and sweet goodbye, while the grit indicates that everyone has released the deceased to return to the ground.

D. Ngokok (Five Kinds of Seeds) and Some Coins

Based on the interview, two interviewees revealed that these five seeds are symbols of prosperity(Hok, 2017)(Kim, 2017). However, according to the *Wen Shi*, it symbolizes food heritage. All of those kinds of seeds is collected in a red bowl and some of them are showered on all sides by the families with the intention of making the children and even the grandchildren prosperous in their life; the heirs will get their share of prosperity as well. The seeds are added with some coins which number must be in accordance with the age of the deceased. The coins also symbolize prosperity. The heirs who get the *Ngokok* and the coins must keep them;

They cannot use the money. Coincidentally, if the heirs is a person who owns a business then the *Ngokok* is stored in his money box(Hok, 2017).

- a. Yellow soybean seeds
- b. Green bean seeds
- c. Corn kernels
- d. Unhulled rice
- e. Black soybean seeds
- f. Some coins

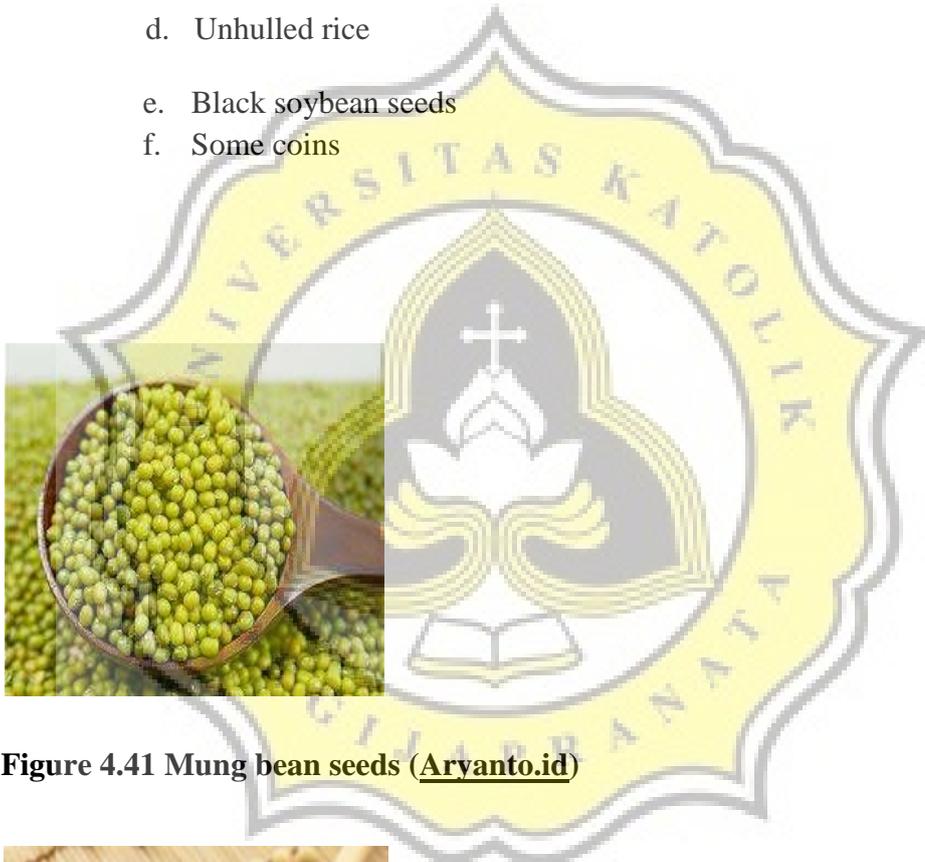


Figure 4.41 Mung bean seeds (Aryanto.id)



Figure 4.42 Yellow soybean seeds (go-dok.com)

Figure 4.43 Unhulled rice
(wikivisually.com)



Figure 4.44 Corn kernels (exportersindia.com)



Figure 4.45 Black soybean seeds (multivitaminherbal.com)