

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS

After collecting research data through interviews and reading relevant written sources, the writer attempted to answer the following three research questions, which are how the procedure of *Djit Gwee* ritual done by Chinese Semarang's people is, what the functions of *Djit Gwee* ritual in Semarang are, and why Chinese Semarang still performs and keeps the ritual as a part of their life. The photos during the ritual were taken by the writer. The discussion in this chapter starts with the procedure of *Djit Gwee* ritual.

#### 4.1 Procedure of *Djit Gwee* Ritual by Chinese Semarang's People

Every ritual has its proper procedure. Rituals are not a string of randomly selected actions but they are structured, planned actions, with fixed words and gestures (Beyers, 2008). Based on the interviews, the writer divided *Djit Gwee* ritual into three parts. They are the opening (*Pai Tian Kong*), the middle (*Ciak Peng*), and the closing ritual (*Pakpui* (卜杯)) in doing *Djit Gwee sembahyang* or *Djit Gwee prayer*. One important requirement to meet to carry out a proper ritual is the presence of ritual attendees, in this case the presence of family members. In an interview with the first informant, the writer found interesting information when interviewee 1 emphasizes the importance of conducting the right ritual and the presence of all family members. He asserts that

“Kalo mau ngelakuin sebuah ritual apalagi buat mak engkong harus tau ritualnya itu yang bener kayak gimana, sanak keluarga juga harus kumpul semua ben leluhur seneng liat e, kumpul-kumpul gitu” [if you want to do ritual especially for your grandmother and grandfather, make sure to do it in the proper and right way. All families must gather together to get the ancestors happy] (I1, interviewed on 15 June 2020).

It means that the presence of family members is necessary to make the ancestors happy because they can see that their living descendants live in harmony. Interviewee 2 also said “*Djit Gwee tu ada tata cara tertentu buat yang sembahyang di rumah buat mak engkong*” [*Djit Gwee has its own procedure to pray for those who pray for the grandmother and grandfather (ancestors) from home*] (I2, interviewed on 15 June 2020). The interviewee 2 proves the statement from Catherine Bell (1953) that ritual has its own step by step.

#### **4.1.1 The Opening Ritual of *Djit Gwee* (*Pai Tian Kong*)**

*Pai Tian Kong* is the very beginning step to do the ritual. The meaning of *Tian Kong*(天) is God in Confucius belief, while *Pai* (拜) means the gesture to honor the God (*Tian Kong* (天)). Interviewee 1 stated that the first thing to do the ritual is asking permission to the God (*Tian Kong* (天)) and do *Pai* (拜) using Chinese incense (*Hio* (香)). The Chinese incense should be in odd numbers. For example, using three sticks of incense (*Hio* (香)). The *Pai Tian Kong* aims to ask permission to God so

that the ancestors can attend the ritual and enjoy the offerings provided by the family. The interviewee 2 explains if the oldest person in the family member does not ask permission to the God, they believe that God will not let their ancestors to come down to another realm to meet their family. It strengthens the theory from Baker (1979) who points out that in Chinese culture, the oldest son has an important role in the family as he is responsible for the tradition to worship their ancestor in the family. It includes on one of the classifications of high context ritual from book titled *Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of People and Their Traditions* by Sims & Stephens (2005) that the ritual is conducted by a particular person.

To do the ritual, ritual objects are needed to be prepared. Ritual objects are prepared at the house of the oldest member in the family with the presence of all family members. Teiser (1986) explains that ritual objects are the important part in doing some rituals because they deliver the meaning to the ritual. According to interviewee 1, before doing the first step of the ritual, some objects needed to be prepared for the spirit are the photos of the ancestors, cutlery, three kinds of fruits (orange, watermelon, and banana), a glass of black coffee, tea, Chinese wine (*Wong Jiu, Pai Jiu* (白酒)), two candles, Chinese incense (*Hio* (香)), three kind of Chinese breads (*wajik, miku, moho*), the dead favorite food, *Samseng* 三牲 (three kind of stew foods from animal from the element of water, land, and air (milkfish, pig, and chicken/duck), money for the dead (*Kimcoa*), a glass filled rice to put the Chinese

incense after offering the prayer, and two coins with the same nominal price. Each object has its own purpose. For example *samseng* (三牲) is purposely for sacrificed offerings during mourning.

After all of the ritual objects are complete, the oldest person in the family does the opening prayer to the God (*Tian Kong* (天)) using Chinese incense (*Hio* (香)) (Tang, 1995) to get permission to do the ritual and continue with praying to the ancestors. They use the even number of the Chinese incense, usually two sticks to deliver their prayer, because the even number of the Chinese incense is for the dead ritual and the odd number of the Chinese incense is for the offering prayer to the God or *Tian Kong*. After the ritual is opened by the oldest person in the family, the family members, one by one, from the older to the younger go forward to the altar to pray to the ancestors using Chinese incense (*Hio* (香)). They do *Pai* (拜) right after they deliver the prayer to the ancestors. *Pai* (拜) is a gesture started from standing, bowing, until kneeling down. When they are kneeling, they bend forward until their head touches the ground/floor and their stretching arms to the ground/floor. They usually repeat the movements until 3, or 5 times (odd numbers), and so on.



**Figure 4.0.1 Money for the dead (Kimcoa) (photo taken by Keiko, 2020)**



**Figure 4.0.2 Family members doing the ritual (photo taken by Keiko, 2020)**





**Figure 4.0.3 Ritual Objects (photo taken by Keiko, 2020)**

#### **4.1.2 The middle ritual of *Djit Gwee (Ciak Peng)***

The ritual continues with the family eating together and having a conversation with each other while waiting for the Chinese incense (*Hio* (香)) to get shorter. *Ciak Peng* is *Hokkien* language which means eating or having a meal. The ritual commonly starts from the morning until 12 0' clock at noon, a perfect time to have breakfast or lunch together. Interviewee 1 explained that *Ciak Peng* is an act where all family members from the living to the dead (the ancestors) come together to enjoy and eat the food that has been provided by the family, “*Kalo makan bareng-bareng gitu kan rasane kayak makan sama mak engkong, leluhur ya seneng anak cucu ne kumpul makan bareng gitu. Ya percaya ndak percaya tapi menurut keyakinan Kong Hu Cu*

*dan Buddha arwah itu ada*” [If we eat together it feels like you are having a meal with your grandmother and grandfather. The ancestors feel happy to eat and gather with her/his daughters/sons and his/her grandchildren. Believe or not, according to the Confucian and Buddha’s belief the spirit exists] (I1, interviewed on 15 June 2020). During the ritual, the families and the ancestors eat the food together, that includes the ancestors’ favorite food when they were still alive.



**Figure 4.0.4 Pai (Namaskara) (Sulan & Darma, 2014)**

#### **4.1.3 The Closing ritual of *Djit Gwee* (*pakpui*( 卜杯))**

The last ritual that is explained by the interviewee 1 and 2 is the closing of the ritual called the *pakpui*( 卜杯) that includes the using of two coins which are prepared from the beginning. *Pakpui*( 卜杯) is an act of having conversation with the ancestors using the two coins as a media. The purpose of *pakpui*( 卜杯) is to ask to the ancestors whether they think that of meeting with the family and having the feast together are already finished, and whether they want ritual to go back to their realm or not. When the two coins are thrown and come back with a head and a tail, it means that the ancestors agree to end the ritual. On the contrary, if the two coins show two heads and two tails, it means that the ancestors have not finished so the family must wait.

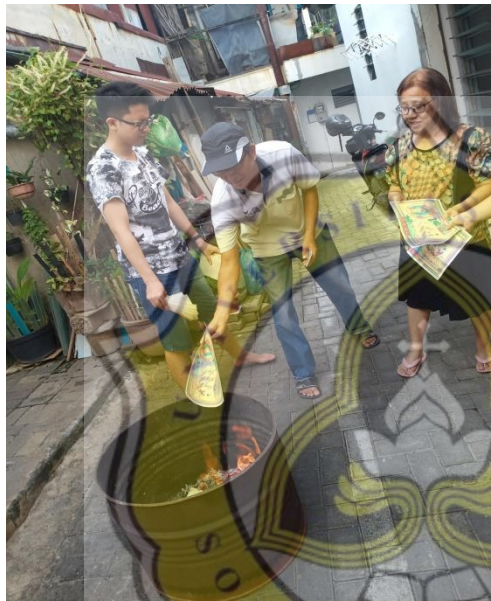
The two coins will be thrown again later until the ancestors agree to leave. The act of throwing the coins is done by the oldest person in the family; someone who has started the ritual must close the ritual decently.

After the ancestors leave, all family members gather around to burn the money for the dead called *Kimcoa* in some kind of barrel. While burning the money for the dead, they splash the black coffee, tea, and Chinese wine (*Wong Jiu, Pai Jiu* (白酒)) in the outer side of the barrel and put a little part of the food that is served before into the barrel to burn together with the money. The act of burning is purposely done to deliver all the things to the ancestors. The interviewee 2 said that the act of burning the money for the dead and other goods is a little act that can be done to thank the ancestors for their willingness to leave their realm to visit their family.,

*“Kalo dah selesai tu leluhur pulang lagi ke alamnya, kita harus kasih sesuatu buat bekal mereka di sana. Malahan ada keluarga yang bakar baju sama rumah buat mereka biar di atas sana mereka punya rumah, makanan, baju, dll. Ada kehidupan lain yang ndak kita ketahui itu ada”* [When the ritual ends the ancestors get back to their realm, we should give them something for their supply there. There is a case where a family burns (replica of) a house and (replicas of) clothes (made from paper) for them so they have a house, food, clothes, etc there. There is another life we do not know that really exists] (I2, interviewed on 15 June 2020).



After the ancestors return to their realm, the very last act of ritual is dividing all of the foods and fruits that were served in the beginning equally to all family members. By dividing the foods and the fruits equally among the family member, it is hoped that the blessings from the ancestors can be delivered to all family members.



**Figure 4.5 Burning the money for the dead (photo taken by Keiko, 2020)**

#### **4.2 Functions of the *Djit Gwee* Ritual in Semarang**

Functions are the basis for the formation of a ritual. Based on Smith & Stewart (2011) every ritual has their own functions. Ritual functions are different depending on the culture, nation, religion, and even tradition. According to Beyers (2008) rituals become indispensable parts of the expression of faith. The writer discussed the functions based on the answers of interviewees below.

### A. To Pay Homage to Ancestors

Interviewee 1 and 2 mentioned that the main functions of the ritual are for respecting and honoring the ancestors. The functions mentioned by interviewee 1 and 2 are similar to functions stated by Tanggok (2010) that ancestors are respected and honored by the members of the family. Interviewee 3 also said *“Itu penting yo buat ngehormati mak engkong e kita biar kita sama anak e kita besok bisa tau leluhur e kayak gimana”* [The ritual is important to respect our grandmother and the grandfather so that we and our children know what kind of people our ancestors were] (I3, interviewed on 2 July 2020). It means that through the ritual, the family members can know their ancestors better.

Most of all the interviewees agreed and mentioned that paying homage to ancestors is the main function of the ritual. Those interviewees were interviewee 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12. Interviewee 4 said *“Menurutku fungsine Djit Gwee ya dewe harus berbakti sama leluhur, harus kenal sama mereka mosok satu keluarga tapi ndak tau mak engkong e sapa kan lucu”* [I think the function of *Djit Gwee* is to do filial piety to our ancestors. We must know them better. It is ridiculous if we do not know who our grandmother and the grandfather are even though we are families] (I4, interviewed on 2 July 2020). It shows that interviewee 4 thought that knowing the ancestors is important and it is weird if the family does not know each other well. The answers from interviewee 6 and 7 are similar to the others'. Interviewee 6 said *“Ooo ya sudah pasti fungsi utama ne tu ya ngehormati leluhur dengan cara nyembahyangi*

*mereka*” [Of course, the main function is to respect our ancestors by praying for them] (I6, interviewed on 2 July 2020) and Interviewee 7 said “*Ya fungsine tu buat ngehormati leluhur dengan cara mendoakan mereka lewat ritual Djit Gwee ini.*” [The function is to respect the ancestors by praying for them in the *Djit Gwee* ritual.] (I7, interviewed on 2 July 2020).

The function of this ritual as a way of paying the homage to the ancestors is indeed the most important function of *Djit Gwee* ritual according to the interviewees. The use of phrases like “*Ooo ya sudah pasti.....*” [Of course.....] and (*itu penting yo.....*) [That is important.....] prove that the interviewees really think this function as the most important. The writer notices that all interviewee mentioned the importance of paying homage to their ancestors as the main function for doing the *Djit Gwee* ritual. Based on the result of the interviews, the writer can conclude that the most important function of the ritual is paying homage to ancestors.

### **B. To Remember All the Good Things from Ancestors**

Tanggok (2010) explains that the ancestors have so many good things that can be emulated. Interviewee 5 said “*Kalo menurutku buat mengenang hal baik mbek pesan-pesan yang diwariske buat kita. Pasti lah salah satu dari mereka tu pernah ngasi dewe pelajaran hidup mbek nasihat-nasihat. Sukur-sukur dewe isa mewarisi sifat baik e mak engkong*” [In my opinion, (the ritual) is to remember good things (from the ancestors) and their advice messages for us. Surely one of them had given us life lessons and advice. Hopefully we can inherit their kindness] (I5, interviewed

on 2 July 2020). Here, interviewee 5 believes that the advice and good things from ancestors should be remembered and done to be a better person in life.

### C. To Get Good Karma

Karma has always been a part of Confucians and Buddhism's belief. According to Ghose (2007), one meaning of karma is "action". It means that if someone did some actions in the past he or she will get the consequences whether they are bad or good actions. Interviewee 1 mentioned that a person who believes in Confucianism and Buddhism knows the basics of what karma is. He said "*Karma itu ada 2, baik sama buruk. Kalo kamu ngelakuin hal yang baik ya berbuahnya karma baik dan kalo yang kamu lakuin hal buruk ya yang kamu petik di kemudian hari ya karma buruk.*" [There are two karmas, bad and good. If you do something good you will get good karma and if you do something bad you will get bad karma in the future] (I1, interviewed on 15 June 2020). Interviewee 2 added "*Salah satu contoh karma baik yang kamu lakuin ya nyembahyangi nenek moyangmu. Ngelakuin sembahyangan Djit Gwee buat mak engkong. Kamu dah memupuk karma baik. Perilakumu itu dah di itung sama yang di atas*" [One of the examples of good karma is when you pray for your ancestors. Do *Djit Gwee* for them. You already cultivate good karma. Your action is already counted by someone up above (God)] (I2, interviewed on 15 June 2020). In this case, the answer from interviewee 2 includes in rituals provide meaning by Smith & Stewart (2011). It means that people do not do a ritual for nothing. There is something cultivate whether it is good or bad when they

do a ritual. Interviewee 8 also believed that he had already done something good so that he would get good karma. He said *“Fungsine juga biar dewe dapet karma baik dapet pahala karna dah ngehormati leluhur lewat sembahyangan Djit Gwee”* [The function is for us to get good karma because we respect the ancestors by doing the *Djit Gwee* ritual] (I8, interviewed on 2 July 2020). The interviewees’ responses strengthen the theory of Wright (2005) that said throughout Asia, karma defines the ethical dimension of culture and remains the key to understanding Buddhist morality. Karma is the teaching that tells the practitioners that what they do throughout their lives matters, as well as how they do it. The writer can conclude that someone who believes in Confucianism and Buddhism will believe that karma has an important role in their life, which is to get good karma.

#### **D. To Strengthen Family Members Relation**

The answer of interviewee 12 is related to the theory of Smith & Stewart (2011) about rituals enhancing group solidarity. The theory explained if every person does something in the same place at the same time repeatedly, they will get along easily. It makes them realize that they are in the same group and will automatically increase the solidarity of a group. She said *“Kalo ada sembahyangan gitu keluarga semua kan kumpul jadi isa lebih dekat. Kalo ndak ada sembahyangan gitu ndak pada kumpul, kayak susah gitu lho. Biasane habis sembahyangan makan bareng gitu di mana sekeluarga besar”* [When we are doing the ritual, all of the family members get together so that we can get closer. If we do not do the ritual, it is difficult to gather the



big family. Usually after the ritual (we) eat together somewhere with the big family] (I12, interviewed on 2 July 2020). It means that through the ritual the family members become more intimate than before.

### **E. To Commemorate an Important Month**

For *Tionghoa* or Chinese people especially in Semarang, the *Djit Gwee* ritual identifies a ritual that is commemorated by the Chinese people. It has correlation with Sims & Stephens (2005) about ritual as group's identity in the functions of ritual. Sims & Stephens (2005) explained that every ritual has its own way to enhance their local identity through the activity that is performed by the leaders of a group or belief so everyone will understand that those activities are the ideas and the special events to accentuate the identity of a group. It proves that the *Djit Gwee* ritual is a part of the group's identity of *Tionghoa* or Chinese people in Indonesia especially in Semarang. Interviewee 5 mentioned that *Djit Gwee*, seventh month in lunar year, is the important month for Chinese people, "*Djit Gwee tu bulan yang penting buat orang Tionghoa soale dibulan itu kita bisa doain nenek moyang e kita. Ada kesempatan buat kita untuk balas budi sama mereka*" [*Djit Gwee* is an important month for *Tionghoa* people because on that month we can pray for our ancestors. There is an opportunity for us to repay their deeds.] (I5, interviewed on 2 July 2020). The ritual is important for him because he thinks that he has been given a life so he has a chance to pay back his ancestors through the ritual.

### 4.3 The Reasons of Doing the *Djit Gwee* Ritual

The writer also asked about the reasons why the interviewees still want to do the ritual in this modern era. The answers are personal reasons of each interviewees. The answers are discussed below:

#### A. To Remembrance Reminisce of the Ancestors

Interviewee 3 mentioned that her main reason is to remembrance the reminiscent with her ancestors because she does not want to forget them. She answered *“Ya alasanku ben aku ndak lupa kenangan-kenangan sama mak engkong. Kalo ngadain sembahyangan kan ada fotone mereka jadi kayak mengenang kenangan semasa mereka masih hidup”* [My reason is to not forget the memories with my grandmother and grandfather. There are photos of them when we do the ritual so it feels like we remember the memories when they were still alive] (I3, interviewed on 2 July 2020). Interviewee 5 added that the *Djit Gwee* ritual is the important day for the *Tionghoa* or the Chinese to remembrance all the reminiscences of them, *“Djit Gwee itu hari yang penting buat umat Tionghoa karna dapat mengenang jasa dan kenangan semasa hidupnya. Aku percaya kalo mereka masih jaga kita”* [*Djit Gwee* is the important day for the *Tionghoa* or the Chinese people because it is to remember (the ancestors’) good deeds and memories when they were still alive. I believe that they are still guiding us.] (I5, interviewed on 2 July 2020). The statement of the interviewee 5 is in line with that of Tanggok (2010) that most Chinese believe that their ancestors’ spirits still observe and guide them in their present lives.

## B. To Become Part of Tradition and Culture

Sims & Stephens (2005) mention ritual as behavior and tradition; that ritual is a part of a particular ethnic group's tradition and culture. Ritual works to teach the importance of a ritual by emphasizing the values or beliefs that become a behavior when a group does the same activity continuously. Interviewee 4 answered "*Alasanku ya karna itu dah jadi bagian dari tradisi mbek budayaku jadi ya aku harus ngelakuin*" [My reason is because it has already been a part of my tradition and culture so I should do it (the ritual)] (I4, interviewed on 2 July 2020). The interviewee 7 also agreed with interviewee 4 by saying that the ritual has been his family tradition since long time ago, "*Aku ngelakuin ya karna itu tradisi keluargaku sejak dulu jadi aku ngelakuin apa yang di lakuin ortuku*" [I do it (the ritual) because it is my family tradition since long time ago so I do what my parents do] (I7, interviewed on 2 July 2020). Similarly, the answers of the interviewee 8, 9, 11, and 12 mentioned that the ritual has been part of their family tradition. Interviewee 8 said that the ritual passed from one generation to other generation in his family, "*Alesanku ya karna sembahyangan Djit Gwee dah turun temurun dilakuke sama keluagaku*" [My reason is because the *Djit Gwee* ritual was carried out from generation to generation by my family] (I8, interviewed on 2 July 2020) while the interviewee 9, 11, and 12 just answered that the ritual has been part of their tradition. From the answers of the interviewees, those mean that the *Djit Gwee* ritual has already becomes their tradition in their life so they automatically follow and do *Djit Gwee* for their ancestors.

### **C. To Preserve Culture**

Based on the interviews there are three interviewees with the same answer. Those interviewees are interviewee 10, 11, and 12. Interviewee 10 mentioned the reason by saying, *“Yang sudah pasti tu alesan e buat melestarikan budaya biar ndak punah”* [The one thing for sure is to preserve culture (Chinese culture) so the culture does not extinct] (I10, interviewed on 2 July 2020). The interviewee 11 said *“Ya karna itu dah kewajiban kita anak muda buat ikut melestarikan budaya”* [Well, because it is our duty as a young generation to preserve the culture (Chinese culture)] (I11, interviewed on 2 July 2020). Those interviewees are students in the Faculty of Language and Arts in Unika Soegijapranata Semarang so they know and learn about culture in their college subject. The reason for preserving culture is the second reason of interviewee 12. The writer can conclude that those interviewees as young generations feel the needs to preserve the culture.

### **D. To Carry out the Message from Ancestors**

According to Tanggok (2010) people who carry such a belief feel a strong obligation to their ancestors that is fulfilled partly by the regular carrying out of the prescribed ritual duties of ancestor worship. Interviewee 10 mentioned about keeping his ancestors' appeal to his parents to do the ritual, *“Aku sama keluargaku menjalankan pesan dari mak engkong. Soale semasa mereka masih hidup pernah bilang kalo harus disembahyangi”* [My family and I carry out the appeal from my grandmother and grandfather. When they were still alive they asked (my parents) to

do the ritual (when they passed away)] (I10, interviewed on 2 July 2020). By doing the Djit Gwee, the interviewee and his parents want to become devoted children and a devoted grandson.

#### **E. To not forget Ancestors**

Based on the answer of interviewee 8, ancestors should not be forgotten by their children and grandson, *“Ya supaya ndak melupakan leluhur dan anggota keluarga yang sudah meninggal”* [Well, it is for not forgetting (our) ancestors and family members that have been passed away] (I8, interviewed on 2 July 2020). He added *“Jangan sampe kita ngelupain anggota keluarga kita yang dah meninggal nanti dikira anak yang ndak berbakti”* [We should try hard not to forget our own family members even though they have already been passed away or you will be condemned as not being filial (to the ancestors)] (I8, interviewed on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020). According to Tanggok (2010) the family members who are united are not only those who are still alive, but also those who are already dead. The writer can conclude that being filial to the ancestors will make us be a good person as well.