

MASAK MINYAK RITUAL IN LO CIA BIO TEMPLE

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Abstract This article describes the ritual of Masak Minyak as a traditional medicine at the Lo Cia Bio temple. This healing ritual is held during the birthday ceremony of Lo Cia/Ne Zha as the host deity of this temple. The research methodology and data collection technique used is a qualitative method, in the form of collecting data by direct interviews and field observations. Field observations were carried out during the ceremony of Lo Cia's birthday from 10th October to 14th October 2021 with a descriptive analysis design. The aim of this study is to describe the preparations for the Lo Cia's birthday ceremony, as well as to explain the ritual of *Masak Minyak* as a traditional medicine at the Lo Cia Bio Temple. The results of the study show that the Lo Cia's birthday ceremony is a form of cult and pray to Lo Cia and the ritual *Masak Minyak* is a form of pray as a Chinese traditional medicine in that ceremony.

Key words :Chinese traditional medicine; cult of deity; Lo Cia Bio temple; masak minyak ritual

Abstrak

Artikel ini menjelaskan ritual masak minyak sebagai pengobatan tradisional di Klenteng Lo Cia Bio. Ritual pengobatan ini diadakan pada saat perayaan ulang tahun Dewa Lo Cia sebagai dewa tuan rumah klenteng ini. Metodologi penelitian dan teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah metode kualitatif, berupa pengumpulan data dengan cara wawancara langsung dan observasi lapangan. Observasi lapangan dilakukan pada saat perayaan ulang tahun Dewa Lo Cia tanggal 10 Oktober 2021 hingga 14 Oktober 2021 dengan desain analisis deskriptif. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menggambarkan persiapan sampai proses perayaan hari ulang tahun Dewa Lo Cia, serta menjelaskan tentang ritual masak minyak sebagai pengobatan tradisional di Klenteng Lo Cia Bio. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perayaan ulang tahun Dewa Nezha/ Lo Cia merupakan salah satu bentuk penghormatan dan doa kepada para dewa, selain itu ritual masak minyak obat juga menjadi permohonan besar untuk pengobatan tradisional Tiongkok dalam kegiatan perayaan tersebut.

Kata kunci : klenteng lo cia bio; pengobatan tradisional Tiongkok; penghormatan dewa; ritual masak minyak;



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1. INTRODUCTION

Klenteng or bio is a place of worship for adherents of traditional Chinese beliefs in Indonesia. According to Cangianto; Initially, the term kelenteng was used more by the Javanese than by the Chinese themselves because in general the Chinese called their place of worship is bio (miao 廟) (Cangianto, A. 2022)

Jakarta as the capital which is the center of the economy, politics and culture certainly has many temples with Chinese history and cultural characteristics, one of which is Vihara Bodhi Dharma or Lo Cia Bio (哪吒庙 nézha miào). This temple which is also known as the Kampung Duri temple is located at Jalan Duri I, no. 19, Cibunar, Duri Pulo sub-district, Gambir sub-district, Central Jakarta. Lo Cia Bio has been established since 1959 as a place of communal worship that is open to anyone.

Lo Cia Bio was founded by Chinese people who came from the island of Sulawesi, so Lo Cia Bio has a strong influence from Manado. This temple is famous for maintaining traditions in religious rituals and medical services by mediums or tangsin ((童神 tongshen).

The name of the Lo Cia temple is taken from the name of the main deity, Nézha (哪吒) in the Hokkien dialect Lo Tjia/Lo Cia, who is believed to be a patron deity in Chinese belief. Lo Cia Bio has many celebration days held every year, such as Cap Go Meh (元宵节 Yuánxiāo jié), Cioko (中元节 Zhōng yuán jié), and also *sejit* or the god's birthday in the temple. One of the big celebrations at Lo Cia Bio is the birthday celebration of Lo Cia on the 9th month of the 9th lunar calendar, which falls and is celebrated on October 14, 2021.

The celebration of the birth of a god is commemorated and interpreted as respect and gratitude to the god. In the case of worshipping gods practiced in modernity, this shows human efforts to stay in touch with something sacred, supernatural powers, and the interdependence between the immanent and transcendent worlds (Hartati,C.D, 2020). As the main deity, the birthday celebration for Dewa Lo Cia is celebrated in a lively manner and is different from the accompanying deities in the temple. Especially in 2021, at the same time as Lo Cia's birthday celebration, there is a ritual that is carried out and originates from Manado, namely the *masak minyak* ritual.

This ritual is one of the major rituals passed down in Taoist teachings besides the stepped coal ritual. *Masak minyak* ritual is a kind of science with special knowledge and abilities. Therefore, not every temple or ritual officer has the knowledge or skills to carry out this ritual. Lo Cia Bio held this ritual on the birthday of Lo Cia as a form of respect and at the same time asking for great blessings in the form of medicinal oil concoctions to help people in need.

Masak minyak ritual is a tradition that is carried out every three years by Lo Cia Bio. *Masak minyak* ritual is an activity of cooking herbal medicines or traditional medicines with heated oil for approximately 12 hours and is believed to be medicinal oil which has properties for curing all kinds of diseases. This medicinal oil is made from 26 traditional Chinese medicinal herbs, as well as the help of spiritual powers of various gods in form of amulet paper (符).

Masak minyak ritual at Lo Cia Bio Jakarta is a big ritual and a means of medicate Chinese people, especially those living in the Jabodetabek area, have been waiting for. Alternative medicine or traditional Chinese medicine is very well known and there are many types, such as prescription herbal

medicines, acupuncture, Chinese food therapy, Tai Chi martial arts (太极 Tàijí) and others. Traditional Chinese medicines are based on the teachings of Taoism. Means of treatment at the temple can be done by asking the gods using *ciamsi* (签诗 Qiān shī) medicine, or asking for treatment through the *tangsin*, which is also called community service.

The treatment performed by a medium or *tangsin* is carried out by medium whose body becomes a temporary vessel for the spirits of the gods who are invited to the human realm to do good, namely by helping people who are sick or experiencing life problems. Traditional Chinese medicine through using this medium spiritual powers is considered effective for both Chinese and non-Chinese people who believe in this treatment. People who interact with *tangsin* who are being possessed by a deity regarding their complaints will be blessed, given instructions, prescribed medicine and also given direct treatment.

The same is true for *masak minyak* ritual, which during the process receives many instructions and blessings from the deities through the mediums. Through this ritual, palm oil that has been cooked for 12 hours becomes a sacred object and brings blessings to cure illnesses. *Masak minyak* ritual is a tradition and teaching of Chinese people who migrated to Manado. Since the establishment of the Lo Cia Bio Temple, there has been strong influence and teachings from Manado, so members of the *hu huat* (护法 Hùfǎ) Lo Cia Bio have special abilities that have been taught to carry out *masak minyak* ritual. Apart from that, Lo Cia Bio's extended family is also often invited to hold *masak minyak* ritual during big celebrations at other temples in several areas such as Karawang, Tangerang, Tegal and Pekalongan.

Coconut oil, which was originally a profane thing, turned into a sacred thing through this ritual. The transformation from profane to sacred occurs through a ritual, similar to Hartati's writings through her research at the Hok Lay Kiong Temple; who stated that amulet paper became sacred because the medium spirit of Hok Lay Kiong Temple write an amulet of Hian Thian Siang Tee. Usually in a trance, the medium stabs a sword at the tongue. With the medium's blood bleeding during a trance state, he writes the spell on the fu paper with his blood, as ink, making the paper then become sacred. The medium's blood is believed as a sacrifice for good, which would cleanse the area of the evil air carrying disease, disaster, criminality, and other terrible omens. Without the blood spell written on fu papers, they would not possess their sacred nature (Dewi Hartati, C & Rudyansjah T, 2021).

The coconut oil become a sacred thing and has a function as a medium treatment similar to amulet paper or *hu* paper becomes a sacred thing and has a function as a medium healing through ritual held by medium spirit as stated by Hartati (2021).

2. METHOD

The author uses qualitative methods for taking and data processing in this study. According to Ansem Strauss, qualitative research is a type of research that produces findings that cannot be achieved using statistical procedures or other methods of quantification (measurement) (Strauss and Corbin, 2013). In qualitative research, several techniques were proposed to write this research, namely survey techniques, observation techniques, interview techniques, literature techniques as well as field notes and documentation.

Observation is a data collection method that uses direct or indirect observation (Riyanto, 2010). This observation technique was carried out by the author on the day of the celebration of the main deity Lo Cia Bio and became the main and important thing in writing this qualitative research to collect data. In the observation technique, the author observes, records and takes direct photos starting from the ritual of welcoming the celebration day which is carried out from October 10-13 2021, to the peak of the main deity's birthday celebration and *masak minyak* ritual on October 14th 2021. Researchers use non-participant observation, because researchers only observe directly without being actively involved in direct activities.

Interviews were also conducted to deepen and correct information and data that the authors got from observation techniques. In the interview technique the author obtained data from direct question and answer activities during several visits to the temple administrators, as well as the people who were present on the day of the celebration. Documentation technique according to Sugiyono (2018: 476) is a method used to obtain data and information in the form of books, archives, documents, written numbers and pictures in the form of reports and information that can support research. In this study, the authors complete documentation in the form of photos as accurate evidence from personal documents taken in Lo Cia Bio.

3. LO CIA'S BIRTHDAY CEREMONY

The tradition of god worship is very visible on the temple's main god's birthday festival which is known by Chinese Indonesian especially as *sejit* (shengri 生日). Every temple has a main god who annually is celebrated with a great fanfare. People generally say this festival as a temple birthday.

Usually, when festival of god's birthday is celebrated there are many rituals and performances such as the recitation, the mantra of the main god, the amulet writing, fire walking, the goods auction, and parade. This celebration also becomes one of the temple festivals because this is always filled with visitors both to pray and enjoy the event (Hartati, 2017)

Lo Cia Bio also celebrate the temple birthaday as a Lo Cia's birthday.

The first agenda for Lo Cia's birthday celebration begins at 23.00 on October 13th, 2021. Congratulations to Lo Cia are held at 23.00, the caretaker of the temple distributed a small cup filled with tea to each people. After all the people had a cup of tea, and the medium spirit raised their respective teacups, the people wished Lo Cia a happy birthday and drank their tea simultaneously.



Figure 1
Congratulate Lo Cia Birthday and dink tea
Private documentation

After drinking tea together, the next activity was the medium spirit distributing red packets (紅包 *hóngbāo*) to members of the *hu huat* and foundation administrators. This *angpao* gift is chosen based on the names mentioned by medium spirit. The meaning of giving *angpao* from *kongco* is as a form of gratitude to the members and administrators of the foundation who have taken good care of their temple. Before being distributed, the medium spirit smokes the

red envelope with incense first. The contents of the red envelope nominal can vary and are not a large nominal, but it is the blessing that is symbolized by the giving of red envelope by Lo Cia is actually the most important thing



Figur e2.

Giving Lo Cia's red envelope
Private Documentation

The number of red packets which is distributed was only to the chairman and main committee members, so that they quickly continued with the next activity, namely representatives from the Lo Cia Bio Go Hong Ciong Kun to gather. These five people are representatives like the Five Heavenly Generals who have been chosen by Lo Cia. Deity called them to give blessings and other prayers. After Go Hong Ciong Kun's blessing, the medium spirit gave the red envelope as a gift to the people. The red envelope this time is symbolized by gold paper or spirit money. Giving gold paper is also called red envelope because it has a meaning as a gift for the people. The gift was in the form of gold paper in the name of Lo Cia, so that the people would convey their prayers and requests. In handing over the gold paper, the deity chooses and calls the names of the people who have prayers or hope for a request in their hearts. As usual, the deity blessed the gold paper with incense before handing it over. The people who got the gold paper said a prayer and then burned the gold paper they had obtained.



Figure 3
Giving gold paper red as red envelope
Private Documentation

In contrast to the distribution of red envelope, almost everyone who was at the Lo Cia Bio Temple at that time received gold paper red envelope, because there was a large supply of gold paper that would be distributed. After distributing the gold paper, it was followed by a blessing on the ritual cauldron for cooking oil. The medium spirit was immediately brought to the front of the temple's courtyard for the blessing and recited the mantras. Then, the *hu huat* members burned gold paper at five points surrounding the cauldron as protection from Go Hong Ciong Kun. At the same time, the transfer of the statues of Taishang Laojun and the God of Kitchen is being carried out. Two tables and several food offerings have also been prepared for the two statues. *Masak Minyak* ritual is to be held, the statues of Taishang Laojun and the God of Kitchen are always placed close to the cauldron.



Figure 4
Burning gold paper in five points around the five cauldron's point
Private documentation

3. *MASAK MINYAK* RITUAL AS A TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Traditional medicine originating from China is known to cure various diseases. The Chinese medical tradition has a history of more than 2,000 years (Danandjaja, 2007: 360). Traditional medicine or alternative Chinese medicine is known for its use of medicinal ingredients derived from nature, namely plant or animal species. In (Danandjaja, 2007: 360), according to Dorothy Perkins, the use of herbal plants to produce medicines is the only major traditional method used by Taoist healers to cure illnesses, together with treatment techniques such as acupuncture and acupuncture. cupping (moxibustion).

Chinese medicine therapy does not only use medicinal ingredients. Chinese healers also made use of the magical power of amulets. These amulets were mostly ideographs similar to common Chinese characters and were painted black against a background of yellow or red paper (Wallnofer and Rottauscher, 1972: 165). Medicine that uses spiritual or magical powers with an amulet is the expulsion of evil spirits or negative things that cause someone to be sick.

Masak minyak ritual is a ritual that is passed down in the teachings of Taoism. *Masak minyak* ritual is generally a major ritual in a series of birthday celebrations for the host gods at certain temples. Lo Cia Bio held this ritual on the

birthday of Lo Cia as a form of respect and at the same time asking for great blessings in the form of medicinal oil to help people in need. This ritual is also known as the Medicinal Oil Bathing Ritual, because people really apply oil to the parts of the body that need this oil. This ritual is held once in three years.

The oil from this ritual will contain extracts from medicinal herbs and can be used as rubbing oil and can be drunk for treatment. The herbal ingredients used contain and represent the five basic theoretical elements in traditional Chinese medicine.



Figure 5

Tampah contains herbs ingredients for *masak minyak* ritual

In addition to medicinal herbs, *masak minyak* ritual also mixes amulet paper with the names of gods and incantations that strengthen the medicinal energy. These names are in the form of deities worshiped at the Lo Cia Bio Temple such as Lo Cia, Tai Yi Zhen Ren, Kong Tek Cun Ong, Fu De Zheng Shen, Kwan Im, Wang Mu Niang-Niang, Ma Co Po, Er Lang Shen, Kitchen God, and others. The purpose of writing these names is to invite the gods and expect the energy from all of them to be present especially for the ritual of cooking oil.

Continued to *Huat so* ritual, is a ritual activity carried out by two people by tying a rope around their waist and punching the floor several times while saying mantra. *Huat so* is a ritual to summon a pair of dragon snakes to guard

around the temple before *masak minyak* ritual begins. After the implementation of the *huat so*, followed by the ritual of the seven steps of the stars. The Seven Star Steps are taken to carry the heritage flags. There are seven of these heritage flags, two of which are the flags of the dragon and tiger, and the other five are the flags of the five directions. Seven ritual officers then carried one flag each to the front yard of the temple. Everyone took seven steps in the same formation while waving their flags. The seven steps of the stars are also accompanied by drumming and chanting of mantras.

Arriving at the front yard, each of the seven people immediately tied their flags to the bamboo poles that had been prepared. The dragon and tiger flags are tied on the sides of the Tai Shang Lao Jun altar, and the other flags of the five directions are tied according to the dots representing the east, west, north, south, and center directions. Then, the fire was immediately lit.

After about half an hour of heating, the oil began to boil and smoke began to billow. Next, the ritual members will recite the Sutra of Dewi Kwan Im. The reading of Dewi Kwan Im's sutra aims to invite Dewi Kwa Im to help in the continuation of the oil cooking ritual. They recited the sutras while circling the cauldron for about half an hour. In addition, an attendant was also on duty to stir the oil and herbal medicines so that they were thoroughly mixed.

The sound of drum beats and the recitation of *ciu* signify the start of the *huat so* and the steps of the seven stars. Today's *huat so* and seven star steps are performed in the front courtyard and facing the cauldron. Moreover, the seven star step official stepped towards the cauldron and waved his flag above the cauldron. Officers who have waved their flags, then stand at each point according to the corner flag they are holding. The officer holding the flag keeps waving the flag during *masak minyak* ritual.

Besides that, *cia sin* ritual is being carried out to invite the gods in the temple. After *huat so* and steps of the seven stars were completed, the three medium spirits were immediately directed to the front yard. The medium spirits who were already standing in front of the cauldron made the visitors immediately gather closer. The medium spirit of Lo Cia recites a spell while making hand movements like writing on a cauldron first and immediately signals that the medicinal oil is ready to be used.

With the fire still burning and the oil boiling, the medium spirit immediately dipped their hands followed by the visitors. Before dipping their hands, visitors are advised to first remove the heat-conducting accessories that are being used. For those who have finished dipping or applying oil on their bodies, they step back to take turns with other visitors. Not a few visitors are afraid to feel the boiling oil. Then, the medium spirit quickly pulled the hands of people who hesitated to be dipped into the cauldron.



Figure 1
Visitors were trying medicine oil

The medium spirits several times also smeared oil on the heads and hands of the people. The immersion of the medicinal oil with the fire still burning only lasted about ten minutes. This is because the deities on the body of the medium spirit have implied that the time and protection afforded for immersion in

the boiling oil have run out. The officer immediately closed the cauldron with a wooden lid so that no more visitors would dip their hands.

The remaining medicinal oil in the cauldron was still very much. This remaining oil will be put into the jerry cans to be cooled. After that, the temple staff will fill the small bottles with cold oil. The faithful may take freely the stockpile of bottled medicinal oil. When serving the people, medium spirit can also provide treatment using this oil.

The ritual attendants perform a prayer to express their gratitude for the blessing of God and the gods so that the ritual of welcoming the god's birthday until the cooking ritual has been carried out smoothly and successfully. Ritual officers also set up a burning offering in the front yard to burn the gold paper as an offering of gratitude as well as asking for a wish. Next, nine people each took a cup of tea and wine from the offering table. After paying three respects, the tea and wine are poured onto the fire still burning from the previous gold paper burning fire. The last activity that is done is to complete the expression of gratitude to god and deities.

4. CONCLUSION

The celebration of Lo Cia's birthday which was carried out was a form of respect and a request from the people to Lo Cia. Every people who comes has the opportunity to invoke and ask for treatment by interacting with the spirits of the gods through the ritual activities which are held every night for five consecutive days. Apart from that, the ritual treatment of *masak minyak* which is carried out every three years is the main reason why people come to Lo Cia Bio.

Traditional Chinese medicine is very rich in knowledge and practices in using herbal ingredients for its treatment. *Masak minyak* ritual itself is a ritual of cooking oil with Chinese herbal ingredients, and using supernatural or spiritual

powers from the gods according to Chinese belief in its implementation. Even though there is no scientific fact yet, the ritual of cooking oil is believed to contain extracts and the properties of herbal medicines to become an alternative treatment for those who believe in it. This is caused by factors such as personal experience and their respective beliefs regarding the existence of spiritual magical powers in the ritual.

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