



## STUDY OF THE POTENTIAL OF THE MYTH OF PESUGIHAN AS A TOURIST ATTRACTION IN PESAREAN GUNUNG KAWI, MALANG REGENCY

Benedicta Pahar<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tourism Studies, Tourism Faculty, Udayana University  
Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia

\*1e-mail: benedicta.pahar@yahoo.com

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### **Abstract**

*Myths are part of folklore that become the cultural identity of a community that is passed down from generation to generation and has sacred value for its adherents. One of the myths that has been passed down from generation to generation is the myth of pesugihan (Indonesian term that refers to the practice of gaining supernatural wealth often by making a pact with supernatural entities) at Gunung Kawi, which still survives today. Pesarean Gunung Kawi is one of the pilgrimage tours and spiritual tours located in Malang Regency. This pesugihan myth arises because of the belief that someone will become rich after performing rituals at Pesarean Gunung Kawi. Of course, the myth of pesugihan is an unfavorable image for this tourist destination which causes someone to hesitate to visit this destination. The purpose of this research is to find out the potential of this pesugihan myth to become a unique tourist attraction and identify tourism products that can be developed in this destination by utilizing the pesugihan myth. This research uses descriptive qualitative methods with data collection techniques using interviews, observation and documentation.*

**Keywords:** *Myth Tourism, Tourism Potential, Pilgrimage, Gunung Kawi Malang*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

One of Indonesian cultural heritage that has the potential to become a new alternative tourism is the existence of myths. Many myths and legends in the community can be used as potential for developing new tourist sites. Of course, it is necessary to attractively package a myth and legend of the community so that it can finally become a tourist product that can be enjoyed by tourists (Amanat et al., 2019). Malang Regency has many diverse tourist attractions and one of the famous spiritual tourism is Pesarean Gunung Kawi. Pesarean Gunung Kawi not only has tourist destinations as an attraction, but the development of the *pesugihan* myth is a story and attraction in itself that is still attached to this Tourism Village. The myth of *pesugihan* developed because of the narratives of the success of people who prayed and made pilgrimages to the Gunung Kawi Cemetery (Suistyorini, 2020). This legendary *pesugihan* myth is a unique and interesting value for Pesarean Gunung

Kawi which can be utilized as an attraction for tourists to visit. A scientific article written by A'Yuni in 2024 states that the myth at Gunung Kawi is a form of oral literature that has developed from generation to generation where Gunung Kawi is considered one of the sacred mountains that has a myth of *pesugihan*. The existence of mysticism at Pesarean Gunung Kawi is seen in sacred objects such as tombs, *dewandaru* trees and water in jugs that are used by the community as *pesugihan*. Renold et al in 2020 in their writing stated the results that myths and history play an important role in developing and increasing visits to tourist attractions where tourists generally assume that visiting a place with a myth is a challenging experience and there is hope for a better life. The survey results show that the myth of *pesugihan* or other mystical stories is also a tourist attraction for people who will visit Pesarean Gunung Kawi. Instead of eliminating myths that have been attached since time immemorial, the current challenge is to make myths a unique attraction to attract people to visit this destination.

The Manager of this destination along with the Government has made various efforts to eliminate the myth of *pesugihan* which is considered very negative by emphasizing cultural tourism and pilgrimage which is considered more positive. This research seeks to explore the potential of the *pesugihan* myth, which is considered negative, to become a tourist attraction in Pesarean Gunung Agung that can attract visitors to come and enjoy cultural attractions. The results of the research are expected to increase tourist visits with the aim of enjoying cultural attractions and rituals without any doubts and fears.

Smith and Kelly in 2006 (in Pitana and Narottama, 2021) meant by spiritual tourism is a type of tourist activity that has the aim of developing, treating and improving the health of the body, mind and soul. According to Pendit in 1994 (in Pitana and Narottama, 2021), spiritual tourism is a type of tourism related to religion, customs, beliefs of people or groups in society. One of the tourist activities includes visits to holy places, to the graves of great people and glorified leaders, to hills or mountains that are considered sacred and to places that are famous in legends and myths. For tourism businesses, spiritual tourism can be viewed as special interest tourism where travel is motivated by the desire for spiritual benefits. Therefore, tourism businesses study the characteristics of the potential tourists to be served, especially regarding their wants and needs. The reason for its specificity is the fact that spiritual travel is highly individualized because the same object is enjoyed with different depths between individuals (Anom et al., 2020).

The term pilgrimage is defined as a trip made by a person or group of people by visiting holy places, worship, certain places that are considered sacred or noble to carry out special traditions or rituals that are still considered important by the community (Pitana & Narottama, 2021). Karyono in 1997 (in Pitana and Narottama, 2021) defined that pilgrimage tourism is a type of tourism associated with religious beliefs or customs in society. Pilgrimage tourism is carried out by individuals or groups in order to visit tombs and holy places, people and leaders who are revered. The goal is to get blessings, happiness and peace. Attractions of pilgrimage tourism such as tombs, mosques, churches, monasteries, temples, or other places. Javanese people have a tradition of making pilgrimages to the graves of their ancestors by visiting the graves to do *nyekar* and pray for those who have been buried. Many pilgrimages are made to the tombs of religious leaders such as the Wali Songo tombs. Pilgrimage is a trip to holy and sacred places where activities are only limited to rituals related to the religion or belief of the perpetrator. While religious

tourism is a tourist trip to places related to religion and certain beliefs that are not always sacred. Objectives include travel to recognize sites related to the history of religious travel (Pitana and Narottama, 2021).

Scientifically, talking about myths cannot be separated from the sciences of cultural anthropology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, literature and even religion. Myths are closely related to records of the past, beliefs, figures, and traditions that influence the way individuals think in their community life and reflect the cultural identity they inherit. Studying myths will be difficult to realize if only using common sense, expecting explicit truths, purely adopting exact sciences. Sensitivity, accuracy and understanding are needed to first accept the content of a myth without rejection (Anom et al., 2020). Of all the forms of folklore that are widely studied by anthropologists or other social-humanities experts are folk prose stories which are divided into three major groups, namely: myths, legends and fairy tales (Bascom in Danandjaya, 1991; Anom et al., 2020). Traditional myths are part of folklore and can be distinguished from fairy tales, legends and the like. Myth is a sacred story and almost always exists in every culture of society although in the millennium era myths tend to be equated with fairy tales, fantasy, cliché, far from the truth and are seen as an ancient identity that is not prevalent today. Some societies are surrounded by myths that have sacred value for their adherents, both traditional and modern societies. In carrying out various social and religious activities and even economic and political activities, there are always myths that are raised to make people believe that what is mythical has a sacred value that should not be underestimated, let alone destroyed and destroyed (Anom et al., 2020).

Tourism potential is a variety of resources such as atmosphere, events, objects, and services owned by a place and can be used as an element of tourism development. These resources can turn an area into a tourist attraction that can be utilized for economic purposes while still paying attention to other aspects (Pendit, 2003). Tourism potential is the potential of a region or area to develop and utilize nature, people, and human labor for tourism development. Tourism potential can be identified by considering internal and external possibilities. The internal potential of a tourist attraction is the tourism potential contained in the object itself, which includes factors such as the physical condition of the object, the quality of the object.

Tourism product development must meet four criteria in order to be of interest to tourists. What needs to be done there is to give tourists, after seeing the tourist attractions there, a feeling of joy and well-being, relaxation in the form of recreational facilities, be it a game area or a typical dining room of the place. It is to do something useful and can make tourists feel more comfortable being there. Buying something is one of the shopping options for tourists and can be used as souvenirs, usually because it is a characteristic or symbol of the area. In order for a tourist attraction to become an attractive tourist attraction, the integrity of the target proposition and infrastructure is a very important factor. The wisdom that can be learned, tourist attractions must also provide educational value (Yoeti in Ivanka and Liliana, 2023).

## **2. RESEARCH METHODS**

### *2.1. Research Approach*

The research to be carried out is qualitative research. According to Dukeshire & Thurlow (Sugiyono, 2022) qualitative research collects and analyzes narrative data, not numbers. Qualitative research methods are mainly used to obtain in-depth information about the problem or issue to be solved through focus groups, in-depth interviews, and observations. This research uses a descriptive

approach. A descriptive approach is an approach used to describe the social situation under study clearly, comparing various events from one social situation to another or from a certain time to another, or being able to find patterns of relationships between certain aspects and other aspects, so that hypotheses and theories can be found (Sugiyono, 2022).

### *2.2 Research Location*

The research location will be Gunung Kawi Pesarean, Wonosari Village, Malang Regency. The research took about two months from December 2024 until January 2025. The researcher will visit and make observations at Pesarean Gunung Kawi accompanied by a representative of the destination manager, namely the Ngesti Geni Foundation.

### *2.3 Data Collection*

The data sources used in this research are primary data and secondary data. Primary data sources for this research are in-depth interviews with relevant informants. In-depth interviews will be conducted with the Ngesti Geni Foundation Manager, representatives from the Malang Regency Tourism Office. Researchers will conduct random interviews with the community around Gunung Kawi Pesarean and food vendors and accommodation owners at Gunung Kawi Pesarean. Secondary data for this research is data on the number of tourists visiting Gunung Kawi Pesarean in the last five years. Researchers will use supporting literature such as books, scientific articles and information on internet sites that discuss myths as cultural capital for tourism, the myth of pesugihan in Pesarean Gunung Kawi and studies on tourism potential.

### *2.4 Data Collection Methods and Techniques*

For this research, data collection techniques are direct observation, documentation, and interviews. Researchers will interview key informants, namely representatives of the Tourism Office, which is related to the involvement of local governments in the management of Gunung Kawi Pesarean and provides an overview of the development of tourism in Gunung Kawi Pesarean. The main informants in this research are the parties involved in destination management, namely the Ngesti Geni Foundation, which manages Gunung Kawi Pesarean and organizes the organization of cultural attractions in this destination. Ngesti Geni Foundation is a descendant of the family of Eyang Djugo and Imam Sudjono. These figures were chosen to fulfill the data or information needed by the author to complete this research. The researcher will make observations or direct observations again in October 2024, coinciding with the Monday Night Pahing and Friday Night Legi celebrations. Researchers will observe and follow directly the series of celebrations of Monday Night Pahing and Friday Night Legi. The researcher was accompanied by Mrs. Putri as a representative of the Ngesti Gondo Foundation to tour the Gunung Kawi Pesarean area and visit several tourist sites. On the occasion of the event, the researcher was able to see the celebration procession firsthand. The researcher will document all activities and events encountered during direct observation using a camera with the permission of the relevant parties using a cell phone camera. Data analysis techniques used in qualitative research include transcribing interview results, data reduction, analysis, data interpretation and triangulation.

Current research on rural tourism and myth-based tourism faces several key limitations that hinder its effectiveness in guiding sustainable and data-driven policymaking. One major issue is the **overreliance on qualitative research methods**, with a limited number of studies incorporating **quantitative data or mixed-method approaches**. While qualitative research provides rich narratives and cultural insights, the absence of measurable indicators makes it

difficult to assess the economic, environmental, and social impacts of tourism development.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 Overview of the Gunung Kawi Area**

##### **A. Pesarean Gunung Kawi**

The tourist attraction in the Gunung Kawi area that has the attraction of pilgrimage tourism is well known among the people, especially in Java and has a strong history, namely Pesarean Gunung Kawi. The location of Gunung Kawi is on the southern slope of Mount Kawi, approximately 40 km from the southwest of Malang City. Pesarean Gunung Kawi became famous because of the final resting place or tomb of two important community figures, namely Eyang Djoego and Eyang Raden Mas Iman Soedjono. These two figures have charisma that continues to be remembered by people from various ethnicities as if it is not limited to religion, culture, or social strata (Wahyu Handayani, 2024).

The origin of Gunung Kawi Pesarean occurred when during the lifetime of Eyang Kyai Zakaria II or Eyang Djoego advised his student, Raden Mas Eyang Soedjono that he wanted to be buried on the slopes of Mount Kawi as his final resting place. In 1871 or precisely after the departure of Eyang Djoego, Eyang RM Soedjono and several other students of Eyang Djoego moved and settled in Wonosari Village, Gunung Kawi to take care of the grave of Eyang Djoego and create a local community. In 1876, Eyang RM Iman Soedjono died and was buried next to Eyang Djoego which can now be found in the grave area of Pesarean Gunung Kawi. Both tombs are still visited by pilgrims from all over the country.

##### **B. History of Gunung Kawi Pesarean**

Eyang Djoego, also known as Kyai Zakaria II, was a descendant of Susuhunan Paku Buwana I who ruled the Mataram Palace from 1705 to 1719. At the time, Eyang Kyai Zakaria II's father was a famous scholar in the Kartasura Palace. In his youth, he already showed great interest in learning about Islam. He was able to change his name to Kyai Zakaria II according to Peparing Dalem Asmo with the permission of Kanjeng Susuhunan Paku Buwana V. Eyang Djoego and Eyang Raden Mas Iman Soedjono. In addition, he became a soldier in the Diponegoro War, like the fighters of Bangkalan. Kyai Zakaria II changed his name to Eyang Sadjogo or Eyang Djoego for short when he traveled to East Java after Prince Diponegoro was arrested in Magelang by the Dutch. He no longer used the name of a nobleman or famous palace cleric and changed it to a name that resembled a commoner so that his identity was not easily known by others, especially the Dutch.

Eyang Djoego died in his hermitage in Jugo Village, Sanan Subdistrict, Blitar Regency on Sunday Legi, Monday Pahing Night at 01.30 WIB, January 22, 1871, or the 1st of Selo Dhulhijah in 1799. After a long journey from Jugo Village to Wonosari Village, the body of the deceased arrived on the slopes of Mount Kawi on Wednesday Wage, January 24, 1871. On Thursday Kliwon, January 25, 1871, his body was buried in a Muslim manner led by Eyang Raden Mas Iman Soedjono. The funeral was conducted in accordance with Kejawen customs, and on Friday Night Legi, a Tahlil Akbar was held at the Pendopo of Eyang Djoego's Tomb. All the followers of Eyang Raden Mas Iman Soedjono and the late Eyang Djoego from all over Malang Regency and Blitar Regency attended this Tahlil Akbar.

The Gunung Kawi Pesarean Hall and the Gunung Kawi Pesarean Mosque 2 are the origin of the Friday Legi and Monday Pahing ceremonies, which to this day are still performed every month in the Gunung Kawi Pesarean area. At first, Eyang Raden Mas Iman Soedjono guarded the hall of Eyang Djoego's tomb. Until 1876, he

passed away and was buried next to Eyang Djoego, his beloved son and disciple. The Surat Kekancangan from Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Palace, owned by Haji Raden Asim Nitiredjo, the grandson of Eyang Raden Mas Iman Soedjono, contains the entire genealogy of Eyang Raden Mas Iman Soedjono. Sultan Hamengku Buwono I, who ruled the Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Palace from 1755 to 1792, was the ancestor of Eyang Raden Mas Iman Soedjono. Raden Mas Iman Soedjono married Raden Ayu Saminah, also known as Nyi Djuwul, a member of Laskar Langen Koesoemo. They had a beautiful, flexible, and soft-spoken daughter named Raden Ayu Demes. Raden Ayu Demes' descendants currently serve as the caretakers of the Gunung Kawi Pesarean and are members of the Ngesti Gondo Foundation.

During the lifetime of Eyang Raden Mas Iman Soedjono, he was not only involved in religious activities, but was also good at farming and maintaining the garden. Later, in the era of Raden Ayu Demes' descendants, Gunung Kawi Cemetery built various facilities to adapt to the times and globalization. Natural heritage such as the Dewandaru Tree and other plants given by Eyang Raden Mas Iman Soedjono are still kept and characterize Gunung Kawi Pesarean. Until now, the descendants of Eyang Raden Mas Iman Soedjono maintain and manage Gunung Kawi Pesarean. The heirs and caretakers of Gunung Kawi Pesarean still have a close blood relation with Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Palace when looking at the roots of the genealogy. Pesarean Gunung Kawi is a place of pilgrimage and cultural and historical tourism. Therefore, Pesarean always tries to provide adequate facilities to fulfill the pilgrimage needs of visitors. The RM Iman Soedjono Great Mosque and the Kwan Im and Tie Kong prayer areas are part of the Pesarean Hall and Pesarean Mosque. At the Snack and Culinary Center, as well as the shopping area, visitors can enjoy Gunung Kawi's specialties and buy souvenirs. In addition, lodging is available in and around Gunung Kawi Pesarean.

In the area of Pesarean Gunung Kawi there are several tourist attractions that become tourist attractions in the most famous area on Mount Kawi. The multicultural theme is very much attached to the type of tourist attractions found in Pesarean Gunung Kawi, which is shown in several buildings that are the main attraction, namely Tomb of Eyang Djoego and RM Iman Soedjono. The tombs of Eyang Djoego and RM Iman Soedjono are located in a special area called Pendopo Pesarean. Pilgrims who want to visit and make a pilgrimage at the two tombs will buy flowers that are available right before the entrance gate to the Pendopo area. There are rows and rows of flower sellers who provide flowers in two basket sizes: large and small. Flowers in small baskets are sold for IDR 5,000 and large baskets for IDR 10,000. Apart from the flowers, the women also sell other praying tools including incense, special money bags for Chinese pilgrims and incense sticks. Some Pilgrims also bring their own flowers.

The Pesarean Hall is open to the public with operating hours divided into three shifts: morning at 07.30 - 11.00 am; afternoon at 13.30 - 16.00 pm and night at 19.30 - 22.00 pm. Pilgrims can directly perform prayer rituals independently or use the services of Cantrik who is officially managed by the Ngesti Gondo Foundation. There are requirements to enter the Pesarean Hall area, namely wearing polite clothes, not open or wearing shorts. For female pilgrims, they should not be on their period. Usually the number of pilgrims will increase at certain times such as on the night of Friday Legi.

Since 1871 after Eyang Djoego passed away, his resting area has been frequented by pilgrims from various regions. Until 1876, Eyang RM Iman Soedjono guarded and cared for his grave, essentially becoming the first caretaker of Gunung Kawi Pesarean. After the death of both of them, the Pesarean area, which until now

has been guarded by the descendants of Eyang RM Iman Soedjono, continues to be visited by pilgrims. After Indonesian independence, customs and cultures such as pilgrimage and tirakat gradually disappeared. These activities were more or less replaced by sightseeing and tourism in the late 70s.

Modernization naturally changed the habits of pilgrims who came to Gunung Kawi Pesarean. Whereas previously pilgrims used to stay at people's houses during their visit, now pilgrims are more comfortable if there are adequate lodging facilities. We also attribute this phenomenon to the emergence of restaurants and convenience stores in the Pesarean area. As a foundation that manages Gunung Kawi Pesarean, we accept gracefully the changes from this more modern world for mutual convenience and economic progress in the area of Gunung Kawi Pesarean.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Pesarean Gunung Kawi is managed by the Ngesti Geni Foundation, which plays an important role in developing pilgrimage tourism. The enchantment attached to the Gunung Kawi Pesarean certainly cannot be released just like that because this stigma has been attached for a long time. However, there are tourist attractions in the form of tombs and efforts made by the Ngesti Geni Foundation in seeking awareness of tourists by disseminating information that there is no practice of pesugihan. The stigma of pesugihan cannot be eliminated but can be packaged into unique tourism products and can increase tourist interest in visiting Pesarean Gunung Kawi.

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