

Myth of the Queen of the South Sea and Kasunanan Palace as a Tourism Attraction of Baluwarti, Surakarta

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Abstract

This study intends to seek the influence of the myth of Kanjeng Ratu Kidul as the South Sea ruler toward the attractiveness of Kasunanan Palace as one of the remains of Islamic Mataram kingdom. The approaches used are a qualitative approach, collecting data in the literature, and interviewing public figures in Baluwarti, Surakarta. Data is presented descriptively analytical.

The findings in this study show that the myth about the meeting between Kanjeng Ratu Kidul as the ruler of the South Sea and Kanjeng Sunan Pakubuwana as the king of Kasunanan which takes place in Panggung Sangga Buwana can be a tourism attraction of Baluwarti, especially for Kasunanan Palace. There are a number traditional ceremonies as an attraction for tourists related to the myth of Kanjeng Ratu Kidul, the ruler of the South Sea. It can be concluded that as an archipelago, the sea affects the way of thinking for Javanese people and produces various ceremonies which can be tourism attractions.

Key Words: Baluwarti, kasunanan palace, kanjeng ratu kidul, myth, the queen of the south Sea.

1. Preface

Indonesia is known as the largest archipelago country in the world with 17,508 islands (National Portal RI-Geography, 2016). As an archipelago, the sea area, which reaches 7,900,000 km² is much larger than the land area, which reaches only 1,904,569 km² (BPS, 2016). There are about 633 ethnic groups in Indonesia (BPS, 2016). The geographical conditions make the Indonesian people own a wide variety of ethnic groups with a variety of cultures in the various islands which affects the way people view the ocean. The community's perspective, among others, appears in the form of myth. Myth becomes a tool for humans to understand the universe as a form of human consciousness toward the dependence on nature (Levi-Strauss, 1978; Malinowski, 1982; Champbell, 2011). Human uses myths to understand the universe. Myth has a function (Malinowski, 1982) and meaning (Levi-Strauss, 1978) for the public supporting the myth. So do Javanese community. Their view of the South Sea brings up a figure ruler named *Queen of the South Sea* or *Kanjeng Ratu Kidul*.

The myth of *the Queen of the South Sea* as a ruler often encourages the tradition of hereditary and develops into a tourist attraction. The attraction arises not only because of the implementation of certain traditions, but also because of the belief in the power of certain owned or in the myth itself. Ahimsa-Putra (2004) stated that the myth associated with certain religion or belief has a certain tourists. Related to the existence of the myth as a tourist attraction, this research is intended to analyze the influence of the mythical *Queen of the South Sea* as a tourist attraction of *Kasunanan* Palace. The approach used is a qualitative approach. Data was collected through the literature and interviewing public figures in Baluwarti. Data is presented descriptively analytical.

2. Myth: Intangible Heritage

Kasunanan Palace, located in Surakarta, is one of the cultural heritages that drove the city became the first city in Indonesia as a member of Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC) in 2008 and *Jaringan Kota Pusaka Indonesia* (JKPI - the Indonesian Heritage Cities Network) initiated by *Bank Indonesia*. The reason of the membership is that Surakarta has a lot of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible ones. The cultural heritage owned by Surakarta becomes the main tourist attraction since Surakarta does not have a natural one.

Cultural tourism attracts many tourists to visit because the culture becomes the signature of the place which makes it different from others. Jamieson (1998) defines cultural tourism as a travel related to visual experiences and performing arts, heritage buildings, area, nature, special way of life, the values, traditions, as well as performances, including crafts, language, gastronomy, art and music, architecture, historic sites, myth, religion, clothing, technology, festivals and events.

In general, the cultural heritage is distinguished between the tangible and intangible ones. Tangible cultural heritage includes historic buildings and

places, monuments, and artifacts which appears as real things. Intangible heritage includes a special way of life, values, traditions, and performances, including crafts, language, gastronomy, art and music, myth, religion. The above explanation shows that the myths belong to the intangible cultural attractions.

3. Myth as a Tourist Attraction

Eliade in Susanto (1987) stated that the myth emerged as one of the religious elements that underlied the development of religion in the past. Myth was formed due to human thought and experience that happened in the universe as an attempt to know and to understand the universe (Levi-Strauss, 1978). Myth appears as a religious embryo (Susanto, 1987) and a belief as the natural development of human thought (Levi-Strauss, 1978). For certain tourists, religion and belief can become a tourist attraction (Ahimsa-Putra, 2004).

Myth is often associated with certain religious rituals or beliefs. Graburn (1983) stated that in tourism, the ritual became one of the attractions for tourists to come. Myth becomes a tourist attraction not only because of the performed rituals, but also because of the myth itself. The research done by Wendy Gao et al (2012) on Shangri La Chinese travel destinations, Andriotis (2011) on Mount Athos Greece, and Buchmann et al (2010) in New Zealand, showed that tourists's arrivals were driven by myths that developed on these destinations. Aspects belief that the place is holy, sacred, or has certain supernatural powers that can affect human life into a myth that attract certain tourist arrivals (Ahimsa-Putra, 2004).

Reisinger and Steiner (2006) stated that myth may arise from the owners of these myths as well as from other parties, both from businesses and from tourists. Tourists who come for the myth have the potential to hold a certain ritual (Ricky-Boyd, 2012). Wendy Gao et al (2012) found that the myth of Shangri La has nothing to do with the reality of history about the place. Myths deliberately created by media solely for marketing and commercial purposes. Some of these studies indicate that the myth can become a tourist attraction because it has tourists with a specific interest.

4. Myth of the Queen of the South Sea

Javanese Community's Perspective against The South Sea

South Sea of Java island, which is also called Indonesian Ocean, is known as the expanse of the high seas with high waves. Many victims have been carried by big waves of the South Sea. The immense, tempestuous South Sea which often takes the victims has shaped the Javanese community's way of thinking. Suwahyudi (1984) stated that the religious life of the Javanese community has a distinctive cultural characteristics. Among them were animism and dynamism which was the original religion of the Javanese community before the arrival of the Hindu-Buddhist influence. Animism considers that every object has a soul that can affect human life (Suwahyudi, 1984), whereas dynamism considers that

certain objects have power. It seems animism and dynamism still have a very strong influence for Javanese community, so it raises the views of the ruler of the South Sea. The malignancy and immensity of South Sea has formed Javanese community's view that the vast oceans has a figure who rules all spirits which can either help or interfere with human life. The trust is the result of the Javanese community's wisdom in understanding and being friendly to nature.

The myth of *the Queen of the South Sea* spreads a lot along the coast of the South Sea of Java island, stretching from West Java¹ to East Java. The existence of the spirits ruler of the South Sea has been imaged since the days of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom under the rule Panembahan Senopati. Purwadi (2004) showed that the role of *the Queen of the South Seas* as the protector of the king of Mataram that reigned in Java became the legitimacy of the kings in Java to rule. The mythical *Queen of the South Sea* was used as a symbol of the forces of nature who gave her blessing to the king (Purwadi, 2004). The legitimacy had become a tool of king's hegemony who ruled over the people. Twikromo (2000) stated that the *Queen of the South Sea* existed just as a symbol because people wanted to live in conformity, harmony and balance. Babad Tanah Jawi compiled by W. L. Olthof (2012) shows how the myth of *the Queen of South Sea* began when Panembahan Senopati met *the Queen of South Sea* who promised to help the king who reigned in Java since Panembahan Senopati (1585-1601) ruled up to his future descendants.

Myth of the Queen of the South Sea and Kasunanan Palace

Historical development of *Kasunanan* Palace can not be separated from the Islamic Mataram kingdom in Yogyakarta. Mataram kingdom had been split into two, *Kasunanan Surakarta* and *Kasultananan Yogyakarta*, since Giyanti agreement in 1775. Nevertheless, the myth of *the Queen of South Sea* remains legendary in each kingdom. *Kasunanan Surakarta* and *Kasultananan Yogyakarta* claimed to be the descendant of King Mataram, and would have a magical bond with *the Queen of the South Sea*. Magical bond with *the Queen of the South Sea* is the legitimacy of the power of each kingdom (Purwadi, 2004). Since Mataram kingdom moved from Yogyakarta to Surakarta, later on moved to Kartasura, the king took the title *Paku Buwana*. In particular after the Mataram kingdom split, the title of king in *Kasunanan* Palace is *Sunan Paku Buwana*.

The occupants of the palace believe that *Kasunanan* Palace² is thoroughly guarded by magical forces in the four wind. The magical forces are symbolized by the figures of spirits that rule and protect the palace. The mystical guardian figures are:

¹ Robert Wessing in " A Princess from Sunda : Some Aspects of Nyai Roro Kidul " , Asian Foklore Studies Vol . 15 of 1997 stated that the Queen of the South Sea was the daughter of Galuh Kingdom in the 13th century . Since the time of birth , the baby girl was able to talk and said that she was the master of all *lelembut* (spirits) in Java and would rule in the South Sea .

² Kasunanan Palace in www.kerajaanmusantara.com/id/surakarta-hadiningrat/istana-utama/

1. East: *Sunan Lawu Tua*, and *Sunan Lawu Bagoes* in Mount Lawu
2. South: *Queen of the South Sea (Kanjeng Ratu Kencanasari)*, *Kyai Udonanggo (Kyai Widonanggo)*, and *Ratu Kencanawungu*.
3. West: *Kanjeng Ratu Sekar Kedhaton*, *Kyai Sapu Jagad*, and *Kyai Sapu Regol* in Mount Merapi
4. North: *Kanjeng Ratu Bathari Kalayuwati* in Krendhawahana jungle.

As a form of gratitude and thanks of *Kasunanan* Palace to the guards, each year the palace extend ritual offerings, which are delivered in accordance with the position of each guard. The ritual is commonly called *Labuhan* ceremony. Babad Tanah Jawi (Olthof, 2012) mentioned that *the Queen of South Sea* and the King of Java have a bond as husband and wife. Sunaryo (Merdeka.com, 2014) wrote that the marital bond of Sunan Paku Buwana only occurred from PB I to IX. Myth told that when PB IX met *the Queen of the South Sea* on Panggung Sangga Buwana, he brought along the 3- year-old crown prince who later on became PB X. When climbing the stairs, the crown prince slipped and *the Queen of the South Sea* saved and claimed him as her son. Since then the marital bond between Queen of the South Sea and Sunan Paku Buwono was broken and turned into a mother-child bond.

5. Myth of the Queen of the South Sea and Tourism Attraction in Kasunanan Palace

The myth of *the Queen of the South Sea* with Sunan Paku Buwana becomes a tourist attraction in *Kasunanan* Palace. Data from the Department of Culture and Tourism shows that *Kasunanan* Palace still has a tourist attraction in Surakarta. The following is a table of tourists visiting some tourist attractions in Surakarta.

Table 1: Visits Rating based Attractions in Surakarta in 2012-2014

No	Tourism Spot	2012		2013		2014	
		Foreign Tourist	Domestic Tourist	Foreign Tourist	Domestic Tourist	Foreign Tourist	Domestic Tourist
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1	<i>Kasunanan</i> Palace	810	47.331	1.504	66.652	5.251	63.410
2	Mangkunegaran Castle	23.413	27.051	19.650	17.678	19.934	24.720
3	RadyaPustaka Museum	3.092	13500	520	6.996	686	7.750
4	SriwedariPark	-	5.039	-	6.995	-	-
5	SriwedariPuppet Show	136	17.222	250	29.664	169	31.094
6	Sriwedari Fair	16	309.391	73	355.798	34	308.916
7	Batik Museum	1.177	12.601	1.220	109.417	1.759	13.275
8	Jurug Zoo	-	272.197	-	326.338	-	305.295
9	Balekambang Park	2.084	1.387.832	288	1.541.665	782	2.482.002
	JUMLAH	35.797	2.097.125	30.500	2.454.188	28615	3.236.462

Source: Department of Culture and Tourism, 2015

As the tangible cultural heritage, *Kasunanan Palace* attractiveness also includes the myth of the relationship between *the Queen of the South Sea* with Sunan Paku Buwana. The attractiveness associated with such myth are Panggung Sangga Buwana, Bedhaya Ketawang dance, and Labuhan in the South Sea .

Panggung Sangga Buwana

Panggung Sangga Buwana is the name of one of the buildings in *Kasunanan* palace in the form of tower. The top of the tower is shaped like a spherical cap ornated with a dragon ridden by a man while shooting an arrow. Babad Sala (Sajid , 1984) stated that the ornament had a meaning in what year the building was constructed. The calendar was shown in the form of the Javanese calendar, which was read *Naga Muluk Tinitihan Janma* that referred to the year of Javanese calendar 1708 (1782 AD) . The building was called *Panggung Luhur Sinangga Buwana* and is known as Panggung Sangga Buwana built by Sri Susuhunan Paku Buwana III.

Panggung Sangga Buwana has a height of 30 m and consists of four storeys. There is a huge clock overlooking the North on the third storey. Top storey is used by the king for meditation. The roof is called *tutup saji* (octagonal food cap) or *hasta wolu* and the peak is ornated with a dragon ridden by a man while shooting an arrow. People believe that the building becomes the place where the kings of Kasunanan Palace and *the Queen of the South Sea* meet. The stage is in a straight line to the main street of Sala-Wonogiri, because it is believed that *the Queen of the South Sea* will come from the street. This stage is still used by Sunan that is reigning in Surakarta as a place of meditation.

Panggung Sangga Buwana becomes an icon of *Kasunanan* Palace. The taller building than the other ones around it with a distinctive style of architecture becomes the main attraction for tourists. Panggung Sangga Buwana can be seen clearly from the crowd surrounding, namely from *Alun-alun Utara* (Northern Square), *Pagelaran* and *Klewer* market. The attractiveness is reinforced by the growing myth that the building becomes the place where the kings of *Kasunanan Palace* and *the Queen of the South Sea* meet. Though the marital bond between the Queen of the South Sea with *Sunan* has broken until PB IX, but people still believe in the presence of the Queen of the South Sea in *Kasunanan* Palace.

Bedhaya Ketawang Dance

According to Florida (1992) *Bedhaya* dances were created by Sultan Agung (1613-1646) to memorialize the love story between Panembahan Senopati and *the Queen of the South Sea*. Ananta-Toer (1988) stated that *the Queen of the South Sea* is a myth that was deliberately created to re-raise the prestige of Mataram kingdom. The defeat of Sultan Agung in the raid to Batavia had dropped the royal authority therefore the kingdom needed a way to re-raise the authority of the king as ruler. According to Ananta-Toer (1988) poets needed to create a myth which is capable of restoring the authority of the king in the eyes of community. Thus they created the myth of *the Queen of the South Sea*.

Bedhaya Ketawang Dance belongs to Kasunanan Palace is a magical-religious sacred dance³ (Ratna, 2010). *Bedhaya* means female dancers of the palace. *Ketawang* means sky or something is on top, which has a noble nature. *Bedhaya* dancers must be unmarried women and in a state of purity. It contains a symbolic meaning that everything concerning the relationship with God must be in a state of purity and that everything happens is God's will⁴ (Ratna, 2010). This dance is performed only once in a Javanese year, namely in *Jumenengan Dalem ingkang Sinuwun Paku Buwana* commemoration (king ascended the throne) and dedicated to *the Queen of the South Sea* who became patron of the kings that reigned in Mataram. People still believe that when the dance is performed, *the Queen of the South Sea* will come to participate dancing which is characterized by aura and dance moves from one of the dancers which were more subtle and supple.

Bedhaya Ketawang dance may not perform for public, so for those who want to see require a special permission from the palace. Its scarcity and sacred attract many people. But the ordinary public are only allowed to watch from a distance. Only those who have permission are allowed to participate in the procession of anniversary of the king ascended the throne. Visitors who have permission to watch must wear special clothing. Women should wear *pinjung*, fabric to close chest without wearing kebaya or wearing black kebaya with *samir*.⁵

Labuhan

Labuhan becomes one of the ritual processions which is carried as a form of gratitude and thanks for *the Queen of the South Sea* that has protected and maintained Kasunanan palace and held in Parangkusumo, Parangtritis, Bantul, Yogyakarta. There are several black-colored rocks surrounded by a short wall in Parangkusumo. The rock is believed to be the place where Panembahan Senopati meditated. *Labuhan Kasunanan* Palace includes four compass points surrounding Kasunanan. The four corners *labuhan* are *labuhan* of the South Sea in the south, Mount Lawu in the east, Mount Merapi in the west and *Alas* (forest) Krendawahana in the north. The locations of *labuhan* are in accordance with the sites of the palace which traditionally believed to be the place of Kasunanan's protectors as mentioned above.

The belief in spirits that protect the palace brings *labuhan* which is regularly carried out in certain time, that is before the procession of *Tingalan Jumenengan Dalem*. As it pertains to anniversary of the king ascended the throne, *labuhan* is carried out in different time based on each king who reigns. In particular, *the*

³ Bedhaya Ketawang Dancers of nine symbolize macrocosm (big universe) which is characterized by the nine points of the compass as well as symbolize microcosm (little universe) as the contents of the universe. Bedhaya Ketawang Dance reflects the ability to create an understanding of *sangkan paraning dumadi* (origin of life) and *manunggaling kawula Gusti* (merging of creation and its creator).

⁴ digilib.uns.ac.id/dokumen/detail/19160/Bedhaya-Ketawang-Studi-Nilai-Filosofis-Tari-Bedhaya-Ketawang

⁵ Red and yellow cloth that is worn around the neck as a sign of *kedathon* (palace building) citizens.

Queen of the South Sea occupies a privileged position by offering her a magical *Bedhaya Ketawang* dance.

6. Kasunanan Palace as Tourism Icon of Baluwarti

Kasunanan Palace is located in the heritage area of Baluwarti according to the decree of the mayor of Surakarta No. 646/116/1/1997 and updated by the decree No. 646/1-2/1/2013. The word *Baluwarti* comes from the Portuguese '*Baluarte*', which means castle. Baluwarti is in the second circle of Kasunanan Palace which has an area of 40.7 hectares and surrounded by a wall with a thickness of 2 m and a height of 6 m. As a cultural heritage area, Baluwarti is a heritage site⁶ which contains both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Kasunanan Palace and their territories, Baluwarti, is an integral part of cultural heritage area. The building of Kasunanan Palace is one of the tangible cultural heritage that cannot be separated from the intangible one. Kasunanan Palace becomes a tourist attraction not only for its architecture but also for its history, traditions, values, norms, and myths. The myth of the Queen of the South Sea which became a legitimacy of the king of Mataram becomes a supporting factor of the tangible appeal of Kasunanan Palace.

The myth of the meeting between the Queen of the South Sea and Sunan Paku Buwana becomes an exciting attraction when people told about *Panggung Sangga Buwana*. The story of the Queen's presence as one of the *Bedhaya Ketawang* dancers in the ceremony of the king reigns, becomes the main attraction which supports the sanctity of the ceremony. Kasunanan Palace, with various myths attached, becomes a tourism icon of Surakarta that still has an attraction for cultural tourists. Every celebration related to the tradition of the palace, like *Grebeg*, *Labuhan*, *Tingalan Jumengan Dalem* or *Jamasan Pusaka* on the first night of *Sura*, the area around Kasunanan Palace will be fulfilled by visitors who come not only from the city but also from out of town.

Of the various ceremonies were held by the palace, the community in Baluwarti produce a tourism activity which undertaken approaching the first night of *Sura* named *Suraloka* Festival that has been formed since 2011 by presenting Baluwarti performing art combined with craft fairs and culinary. Baluwarti slowly began to improve towards the cultural tourist village, with the palace as the cultural icon. The community's seriousness in developing Baluwarti as a cultural tourism village has started since 2011 by forming Village Development Committee for Cultural Tourism in Baluwarti (PPKWB Baluwarti).

⁶ According to RI Law no. 11 of 2010 on the Cultural Heritage, Cultural Heritage Region has the sense of geographical space unit that has two or more of the heritage sites that their located adjacent and / or exhibit characteristics typical layout.

Kasunanan Palace as a tourism icon of Baluwarti encourages the surrounding community to work and be creative. One of the results of art and culture that has been developed is *Arjuna Wiwaha* ballet. The ballet was formed in 2014 by taking certain parts of the Ramayana epic. At first, the ballet was staged during *Suraloka* festival and in the evening before the Independence Day commemoration. Then the local community hopes that this ballet can be performed on a regular basis and be able to attract tourists to visit Baluwarti. Kasunanan Palace currently still becomes the main attraction of the region and is expected to attract tourists to enjoy the creations of Baluwarti society so that the benefits of tourism are not only concentrated in the palace, but also enjoyed by the surrounding community.

7. Conclusion

Myth of *the Queen of the South Sea* is still believed in most of the Javanese community. Besides being believed to be the spiritual wife of Panembahan Senopati and his descendants that reign in Java, *the Queen of the South Sea* was also specifically believed as the protector of *Kasunanan* palace. As a token of gratitude and thanksgiving, the palace always holds *labuhan* at certain determined time. Myth of the relationship between *the Queen of the South Sea* and the king who reigns not only manifested in *Labuhan*, but also depicted in the form of magical-religious *Bedhaya Ketawang* dances. *Labuhan* and *Bedhaya Ketawang* dance organized as a series of *Tingalan Jumenengan Dalem* becomes the attractiveness of *Kasunanan* Palace, Baluwarti, as well as Surakarta.

The Queen of the South Sea as ruler of spirits and reigns in the southern ocean shows how people view the oceans as one of the forces of nature. *The Queen of the South Sea* becomes the image of the universe that will affect people's lives. As an archipelago, nature in general and the ocean in particular becomes the orientation of human in life. Be a myth of the natural ruler, *the Queen of the South Sea* specifically produces certain rituals and evolves into a tourist attraction. Both myth and ritual can invite tourists to come either for the myth itself or for the rituals. The Baluwarti heritage area with Kasunanan Palace as the icon became the foundation in developing the tourism in Baluwarti. Kasunanan Palace as the icon of the cultural heritage and tourism has grown the communities creativity to participate in developing tourism in Baluwarti. The creativity comes in the form *Suraloka* Festival and *Arjuna Wiwaha* ballet. Myth can become a tourist attraction for the tourists to visit.

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