



The Myth of "Weton" in the Wedding Ceremonies of the Gedangan Community in Lamongan Regency

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Abstract

Myths remain prevalent in society, especially among the Javanese community known for their profound spirituality. One intriguing myth that still exists today is the 'weton' myth regarding marriages. This article is an elaboration on the myth of 'weton' calculations in marriages conducted by the Gedangan village community in Lamongan Regency. This article explains the myth of calculating "weton" in marriage ceremonies conducted by the community of Gedangan Village, Lamongan Regency. The article argues that the myth of calculating "weton" in marriage is not merely a superficial myth without any meaning or significance. Using a descriptive method, this article describes that the calculation of "weton" in marriage is the result of the interaction between ancestors and deities or other mystical entities, which, when viewed from Mircea Eliade's perspective, is commonly referred to as the sacred. This sacred element then manifests itself as symbols and myths in the form of the Javanese calendar system, which is later used as a reference for calculating "weton."

Keywords: Weton, Pernikahan, Mircea Eliade, Myth.

Abstrak

Mitos menjadi hal yang masih sering dijumpai pada kehidupan masyarakat, terutama masyarakat Jawa yang terkenal dengan ketajaman spiritualitasnya. Salah satu mitos yang menarik dan masih eksis hingga kini adalah mitos weton pada pernikahan. Artikel ini merupakan uraian perihal mitos perhitungan *weton* pada pernikahan yang dilaksanakan oleh masyarakat desa Gedangan Kabupaten Lamongan. Artikel ini berpendapat bahwa mitos perhitungan weton pada pernikahan bukanlah hanya sekedar mitos belaka tanpa mengandung nilai dan arti. Dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif, artikel ini menguraikan bahwa perhitungan *weton* pada pernikahan merupakan hasil dari persentuhan leluhur dengan dewa atau hal ghaib lain, yang jika ditinjau melalui perspektif Mircea Eliade biasa disebut dengan yang sakral. Yang sakral tersebut kemudian bermanifestasi menjadi simbol dan mitos berupa sistem kalender Jawa yang nantinya digunakan sebagai patokan perhitungan *weton*.

Kata Kunci: Weton, Wedding, Mircea Eliade, Mitos .

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Introduction

Mircea Eliade is one of the early researchers who initiated the study of religions in the world. His thinking tends to differ from previous thinkers. For Eliade, a humanistic approach to religion is emphasized, rather than reductionism as presented by other thinkers. Religion is a system that emerges from something sacred or sacral. To understand religion itself, researchers must enter prehistoric life, then separate the sacred from the profane. The sacred here refers to something metaphysical and not easily forgotten. The profane refers to everyday life, including regularly performed activities that are not very impressive.

Myths have always been interesting to examine their truths, and various myths are still prevalent in various regions today. This is also the case among the Javanese community, known for its rich myths. One of them is the *weton* myth in the marriage of the Gedangan Sukodadi Lamongan community. Marriage is generally a significant moment in a person's life that cannot be easily ignored, just as they go about their daily lives. Marriage has a legal basis in Islam and state law, and after marriage, husband and wife have their respective responsibilities and roles in their household.

One marriage tradition in Javanese society is to calculate the *weton* or birthdate before wedding celebration. The wedding celebration is a ceremony that marks the agreement between two individuals to live together with the aim of legitimizing the marital bond in accordance with legal, religious, and social norms. Marriage fundamentally involves more than just the union of two individuals of different genders for the recognition of its legality in various aspects such as law, religion, customs, society, and the state. Additionally, marriage also aims to unite the two extended families involved. All activities and events related to the couple, including issues or conflicts, activities, as well as their daily life interests and needs, are integral parts of the essence of marriage. (Khotijah et al., 2023, p. 22) In the village of Gedangan, Sukodadi District, Lamongan Regency, when determining the birthdate or *weton* for marriage, they follow the *primbon* or matchmaking prediction according to ancestral customs. Generally, people determine their birthdate by seeking guidance from someone considered knowledgeable about auspicious days and months for marriage. *Weton* is the calculation of the *neptu* or day and *pasaran* (a Javanese week system) when someone is born. In Javanese, *weton* means to come out or be born, and it is suffixed with "-an" to form a noun. The concept of *weton* combines the day and *pasaran* when a baby is born, to ensure a smooth marriage without obstacles and

disasters. However, in Islam, there is no distinction between good and bad days (Setiawan, 2022, p. 82).

The tradition of calculating *weton* is not only present in the village of Gedangan but also in several other regions, including throughout the Javanese regions where prospective couples often face obstacles in calculating *weton*. This calculation of *weton* has become a special tradition for the Javanese community, especially in the village of Gedangan, as if it has become its guide in determining marriages. Although most of the people in the village of Gedangan are Muslims, when their child is about to get married, the elders first match the birthdate and *pasaran* in the Javanese calendar, which consists of *pahing*, *wage*, *pon*, *kliwon*, and *legi*. This requirement is complicated, but it convinces them that their future married life will be free from unwanted things or misery in building a household.

The *weton* myth in Javanese society has always been an interesting and important subject for research, especially in the context of the village of Gedangan where no research has been conducted in that area. As a reference, researchers attempt to present some previous studies that have similarities or intersections of topics. First, the research by Dwi Arini Zubaidah (2019) titled "Determining the Compatibility of Marriage Partners Based on *Weton* Calculations". The results of the research concluded that the concept of compatibility exists in the rules of Islamic law, positive law, and customary law. (Zubaidah, 2019, p. 207)

Second, the research by Meliana Ayu Safitri and Adriana Mustafa (2021) titled "Traditions of *Weton* Calculation in Javanese Marriages in Tegal Regency: A Comparative Study of Customary Law and Islamic Law". From the research results, it was revealed that the use of the tradition of *weton* calculation in Javanese marriages is known as a method of matching the birth dates of the two prospective spouses. The use of *weton* calculation is also considered as an effort and form to reduce doubts about the continuity of the couple's relationship in the future, given the cyclical nature of life. Therefore, the principle of caution must be applied. (Safitri & Mustafa, 2021, p. 156)

The difference between this research and previous research in the location object and research focus. Therefore, this research aims to understand the meaning of the *weton* marriage myth from Mircea Eliade's perspective.

Method

In this study, a qualitative descriptive analysis method was used. Qualitative research aims primarily to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the thoughts of a subject under investigation. The qualitative research approach emphasizes natural qualities, with a focus on understanding, concepts, values, and characteristics inherent to the research subject. According to Lexy J. Moleong, this method focuses on a specific understanding of the phenomena experienced by the subjects, such as behavior, perception, actions, and so on. The research utilized two types of data sources, namely primary data, and secondary data. (Moelong, 2017, p. 59) The primary data was obtained from the book titled "The Sacred and The Profane" by Mircea Eliade and interviews. On the other hand, secondary data included relevant scientific articles related to this research.

In data analysis, a critical analysis method is employed. The critical analysis method is used to delve deeply into a specific research subject and examine the relationships between descriptions and concepts to clarify the understanding or concepts related to the subject being studied. The process of data analysis is carried out in the following three stages: 1. data condensation, 2. data description, 3. drawing conclusions. (Miles & Huberman, 2007, p. 278)

Result and Discussion

The Myth of "Weton" in Wedding Ceremony

It has been a well-known secret that Javanese society has long been renowned for its sensitivity and sharpness in spiritual matters, which implies the abundance of traditions and myths it possesses. Javanese people residing in their original regions tend to uphold, practice, and believe in their Javanese traditions. Thanks to their sharpness and sensitivity, the Javanese community can give meaning to the transition of days, months, years, and windu (a Javanese unit of time). For the Javanese people, everything in nature is a symbol of life (Zubaidah, 2019, p. 144). The meaning given does not imply defying fate but rather an effort to be more cautious in living life (Nuhaa, 2022, p. 25).

One of the myths that still exists today is the myth of *weton* in marriage. *Weton* refers to a calculation based on the Javanese calendar and can be interpreted as the day of birth. *Weton* comes from the Javanese word "*wetu*", which means "to come out" or "to be born (Gunasasmita, 2009, p. 20)". The purpose of *weton* here is the combination of the day and the pasaran (a Javanese week system) when the baby is born, which is then referred to as "*neptu*". Here is a table of *neptu* values for each day (Gunasasmita, 2009, p. 11).

Table 1 Table of *Neptu* for Each Day

Day	Count
Sunday	5
Monday	4
Tuesday	3
Wednesday	7
Thursday	8
Friday	6
Saturday	9

Table 2 Table of *Neptu* for *Pasaran*

Day	Count
Kliwon	8
Legi	5
Pahing	9
Pon	7
Wage	4

If viewed from a historical aspect, the naming of *neptu pasaran* is derived from five spirit names: Batara Legi, Batara Paing, Batara Pon, Batara Wage, and Batara Kliwon. According to the beliefs of the Javanese ancestors, these five spirits are part of the essence of human beings (Zubaidah, 2019, p. 145). Based on the *neptu* details, a man and woman who intend to continue their relationship to the marriage level must add up their respective *neptu*, resulting in a new number that will determine the compatibility of the couple. If they are compatible, they can proceed with the marriage, but if the calculations are not compatible, the marriage may be at risk of failure or even prohibited. For example, there is a man with the *neptu* Sunday which is count as 5 and the *pasaran* is *Wage* which is count as 4. Then all the numbers are added up; $5+4= 9$. Next, there is a woman with the *neptu* Monday which is count as 4 and the *pasaran* is *Legi* which is count as 5. Then all the numbers are added up; $4+5= 9$. The next step is to add up all the numbers for men and women, which is $9+9= 18$. The final numbers will be interpreted according to the *primbon* book used (Gunasasmita, 2009, p. 54).

In the tradition of the Gedangan community, the calculation of *weton* has become a prerequisite for many families who want to marry off their family members. (Sunari, personal communication, 4 April 2023) According to the myth, an incompatible *weton* calculation can affect the sustainability of the marriage. The Gedangan community, who still adhere to this tradition, do so not solely based on complete belief in the results of the *weton* calculation. For the Gedangan community, this is done to preserve the ancestral

heritage that has been cherished since ancient times (Mariatun, personal communication, 4 February 2023).

Mircea Eliade in History

Mircea Eliade was born on March 9, 1907, in Bucharest, Romania. On April 22, 1986, at the age of 79, he passed away in Chicago, USA. Merica Eliade had a father who was a military officer named George Eliade, while her mother was named Loana Stonescu Vasile. Mircea Eliade was a historian of religion, a phenomenologist of religion, a novelist, and a short story writer. Eliade was one of the most influential religious scholars of the 20th century and a leading interpreter of religious symbolism and myths in the world.(Kusumawati, 2013, p. 140)

Eliade studied philosophy at the University of Bucharest, earning his MA degree in 1928 with a thesis on the philosophy of the Italian Renaissance from Marsilio Ficino to Giordano Bruno. After studying in Calcutta, mainly under the guidance of Surendranath Dasgupta, he spent six months practicing Yoga in Rishikesh under the direction of Swami Shivananda. Upon returning to Bucharest, he wrote a dissertation on the comparative history of Yoga techniques, for which he received a Ph.D. in philosophy in 1933. Appointed as an assistant to Nae Ionescu, the scholar he admired the most,(Fiamrillah Zifamina, 2022, p. 82) While at the University of Bucharest and in Italy, Eliade delved into Platonic concepts put forth by Italian Renaissance scholars, and he even shared experiences about Hindu thought on spiritual unity with the Supreme Soul beyond this world. Consequently, Mircea Eliade had a profound understanding of various religious beliefs and academic intellectual heritage.(Pals. D. L, 2011, p. 15) Eliade joined the faculty of the University of Bucharest and taught courses in philosophy, religion, Hinduism, and Buddhism. In the 1930s, he became an influential literary figure in Romania, especially after the publication of his highly successful novel titled "Bengal Nights." During World War II, Eliade served as a diplomat at the Royal Legation of Romania in London and Lisbon.(Douglas, n.d.)

Starting in the late 1980s, news about Eliade often focused on accusations and counter-accusations regarding his personal life and political views, particularly his political writings and involvement in Romania in the 1930s and in London and Portugal during the war. Critics accused Eliade of concealing his past when he was a sympathizer, participant, and defender of the brutal right-wing, antidemocratic, intolerant, xenophobic, and anti-Semitic Romanian fascism. Nevertheless, some of the accusations have been deemed unsubstantiated, and political charges have been exaggerated. None of these can diminish

the significance of Eliade's scholarly and literary contributions. (Fiamrillah Zifamina, 2022, p. 79)

In the decade following the war, Eliade resided in Paris, where he built his international reputation as a historian, morphologist, and phenomenologist of religion. In 1956-1957, he was appointed as a visiting professor and later as a professor and chair of the History of Religions department at the University of Chicago, where he taught until his retirement in 1983. (Saragih, 2021, p. 2) Eliade showed a deep interest in ancient life and thought, and he endeavored to provide intellectual interpretations within the framework of Western intellectual tradition. His works have made him famous as an expert in the history of religion and the phenomenology of religion (Dibyasuharda, 1990, pp. 159–160).

Eliade was a highly productive writer, speaking of a "dual vocation" as a fiction writer and a scholar. His fiction works were written in Romanian, while his main scholarly works were written in French; approximately 35 of his books have been published in English. Eliade wrote many popular books, such as "The Sacred and the Profane" (1959), and published collections of articles, mostly on myths and symbolism, in books like "Myth and Reality" (1963) and "The Quest" (1969). His most ambitious and challenging novel was "Forêt interdite/The Forbidden Forest" (1955). This novel was created between 1936 and 1948 and contained some of Eliade's views on the historical tragedy and the fate of the Romanian people. The novel also revealed the structure and transhistorical meaning of Eliade's major myths and symbols, as well as his central belief that religious meaning is hidden and disguised in contemporary Western experience (Douglas, n.d.).

In his final moments in India, Eliade expressed that his experiences in the country had a profound impact on him. He identified three key things: first, that sacramental experience can profoundly alter the course of one's life. Second, symbols play a central role in one's spiritual journey. And third, India is a place rich in terms of folk religious heritage, where sacred elements and symbols can be explored and studied (Ayu Kusumawati, 2013, p. 147).

Eliade always kept a journal, and he published volumes of autobiography and essay collections that contained personal reflections on his life and work, as well as the scientific, religious, social, and political developments in Romania and the world. Eliade's scientific and literary approach to myths, symbols, and religion was determined by several assumptions and key principles. First, he argued for the "irreducibility of the sacred." He believed that religious phenomena should be understood as something unique and not reducible to psychological, social, economic, historical, or other non-religious factors.

Eliade often criticized those who attempted to reduce religion to psychological, social, economic, historical, or non-religious phenomena. According to him, they failed to do justice to the essence of the unique and irreducible religious experience: the sacred (Douglas, n.d.).

Starting in India and ending in Chicago, Eliade's career and life were a meeting of two poles: East and West, traditional and modern, mysticism and rationality, contemplation, and critique. He lived in Chicago until his death on April 22, 1986. He also launched the journal *History of Religions* and *The Journal of Religion* and served as the editor-in-chief for *Macmillan's Encyclopedia of Religion* (Ayu Kusumawati, 2013, p. 148).

Mircea Eliade's Perspective

1. The Sacred and The Profane

One of Eliade's phenomenal works that encompass his fundamental thoughts on the study of religion is "The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion." The work "The Sacred and the Profane," published in 1957 by Eliade, serves as a profound introduction to the study of religion. Eliade emphasizes the need for a historian to step out of the context of modern civilization and immerse themselves in the lives of humans in prehistoric times or within ethnic or culturally marginalized groups. These primitive human conditions are closely linked to a place where everyday activities are filled with interactions with nature, such as hunting, fishing, or farming (Daniel L, 2006, p. 199).

"The Sacred and the Profane," does not explain the sacred experience as something else, such as the sacred as a psychological experience (Joseph Campbell) or the sacred as a sociological phenomenon (Walter Burkert). (Fiamrillah Zifamina, 2022, p. 69) For him, the sacred cannot be defined as something else. Eliade shows that the sacred has a real, tangible, eternal, and permanent space, and time, while the space and time of the profane are always changing and unstable. According to Eliade, the sacred is a holy, transcendent, absolute, divine reality that manifests itself. On the other hand, the profane represents worldly, random, relative realities that are more inclined toward day life (Eliade, 1957, p. 70).

His study is based on the life of prehistoric (archaic) societies, which separate life into two realms: the sacred realm and the profane realm. The sacred realm refers to the supernatural or metaphysical realm, while the profane realm refers to day life (Saragih, 2021, p. 5). Still in his book "The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion," Eliade distinguishes religious experiences into two types: traditional and modern. (Eliade, 1957, p.

75) Traditional humans (homo religious) have an openness to sacred experiences. Traditional humans often strive to remain within the sacred realm. Modern humans, on the other hand, lack openness to sacred experiences like traditional humans; they only live in the profane world.

The sacred eventually manifests in various forms, which Eliade calls Hierophany. In archaic societies, Hierophany is often found in the form of a tree or a stone, and according to Eliade, anyone who has had a religious experience can perceive the universe as a Hierophany (De Jesus, 2022, p. 6). Eliade acknowledges that every human action involves symbolic elements, and even symbols are used as specific means to understand religious aspects. Because humans are beings limited by the reality of the world, direct access to the sacred and transcendent cannot be realized. Human knowledge of the sacred depends entirely on human effort and rational intellectual capability. In this context, the use of symbols becomes a way to enable the sacred to manifest itself to humans, and through these symbols, humans can achieve an understanding of the sacred and the transcendent. (John A, 1976, p. 54)

In the context of Javanese society, they fundamentally understand that everything that exists and happens in this world has a causal relationship. Therefore, Javanese society takes preventive measures when choosing a partner by using "weton" calculations. The calculation of "weton" does not emerge without a process. The current "weton" calculation is the result of the interaction of past individuals or ancestors with the experiences they had. In Eliade's perspective, these experiences are referred to as the sacred.

2. Myth and Symbol

Another work by Eliade, "Pattern in Comparative Religion," explores religious symbols in depth. If we want to see how symbols work, Eliade emphasizes that everything ordinary in life is part of the profane. (Eliade, 1958, p. 20) However, at certain moments, profane things can become sacred. All symbolic things such as objects, cows, fire, stones or stars, caves, rivers, blooming flowers, or even a person can be considered dual. On the one hand, they remain the same as before, but on the other hand, they can become new and different from before (Eliade, 1958, p. 210).

Eliade also refers to the concept of logical structure in symbolism, which emphasizes that symbols can be systematically explained and translated into rational language. However, the distinction between concept and symbol is clear; a concept is a

specific product of human reason or intellectual ability, while a symbol involves the entirety of the human being. Symbols speak to the holistic aspects of humans and not just their intellectual facets. Symbols exist in the context of religion because all religious phenomena involve the whole human being, and not just intellectual and imaginative efforts alone. When the dominance of conceptual thinking, rationalization, and systematization becomes too strong, it indicates a lack of attention to symbolic thinking within the individual (John A, 1976, p. 56).

For example, the Kaaba, which may appear as just a pile of stones, is not so for Muslims. In Islam, the Kaaba is sanctified. The Kaaba, which was originally a profane object, can transform into the sacred when touched by Muslims. The Kaaba is not just an ordinary stone; it is a sacred object that contains the sacred within it.

Switching to myths, according to Eliade, myths need to be distinguished from what are called stories/fables, words, or sacred actions. Eliade believes that myths and religion are two sides of the same coin that cannot be separated. (Sartini, 2014, p. 195) From the perspective of archaic societies, myths are not superstitions, fairy tales, or lies as they appear in the eyes of reductionists and modern thinking. Myths are not just what we think beyond reason in religious phenomena; instead, they form or action of religion shows the overall reality of religion (Wulandari, 2014, p. 167). In the end, myths can be seen as the key to understanding the sacred, as they reveal the patterns of the relationship between God, nature, and humans in all religions.

The calculation of *weton*, which is a manifestation of the sacred, is then symbolically manifested through the naming of *neptu* days and *pasaran*. Looking back at history, the *weton* calculation is based on the Javanese calendar system used in the year 1633 AD, first created by Sultan Agung Hanyokrokusumo. The Javanese calendar itself was introduced by Mpu Hubayun in 911 BC (Safitri & Mustafa, 2021, p. 4). The *weton* calculation system has different methods and processes depending on which primbon book is used. The Primbon book is used as a reference for *weton* calculations and their meanings. Depending on the author, the Primbon book may contain different paths. Throughout history, Javanese people have had their uniqueness in labeling the results of *weton* calculations. The myth of *weton* is not just an idea or a sign but a concept derived from the interaction received from ancestral gods or the unseen world, presented in the form of a story (Simamora et al., 2022, p. 47).

PANANGGALAN TAUN DJAWA WEWATONE KANG BENER
Churuf Alip Djam'ijah Legi
 Wiwit taun Alip 1555, tumeka taun Djimächir 1674

Panengeran taun wuntu	Dina umuring taun	Araning taun 8	Dina pasaran kawitaning taun	Sesebutaning taun
Wuntu . .	354	1. Alip	Djum'at Legi	Sukra Mangkara
	355	2. Ehé	Selasa Kliwon	Anggar: Rekata
	354	3. Djimäwal	Ahad Kliwon	Dité Kenaba
Wuntu . .	354	4. Djé	Kemis Wagé	Respati Mintuna
	355	5. Dal	Senèn Pon	Soma Wretjita
	354	6. Bé	Sabtu Pon	Tumpak Ménda
Wuntu . .	354	7. Wawu	Rebo Paing	Buddha Maésa
	355	8. Djimächir	Ahad Legi	Dité Kenaba

Picture 1 Different Methods of Calculating Weton Based on Primbon Book

For the Gedangan community, calculating "weton" (Javanese birthdate-based astrology) before stepping into marriage is a tradition that must be upheld. The reason is simple: this tradition of calculating "weton" has been a long-standing belief passed down through generations since ancient times. It's also influenced by the potential repercussions if a marriage doesn't begin with this calculation. Among these effects is the potential mismatch in "weton" calculations that remain undetected from the start, potentially affecting the longevity of the marital bond. However, some millennials in the Gedangan community have experienced a shift in paradigms. Some consider "weton" calculations merely a myth, yet they feel compelled to adhere to it because it's deeply rooted in society. This myth isn't inherently negative, though, as the essence of calculating "weton" lies in the careful consideration of a once-in-a-lifetime decision: marriage. (Khoiruddin, personal communication, 27 November 2023).

Conclusion

From all the explanations above, religious symbols express their deepest meanings because myths are a set of interconnected symbols revolving around themes and arranged in narrative form. Religious myths are not merely intellectual reflections or products of reflection, but mental and spiritual orientations used by people to communicate with the divine. Primitive societies did not see creation myths to discover the first cause, the main principle, or the foundation of the existence of the world and humanity, but myths reveal the existence of basic needs, the existence of humans, and the world. The symbolism and myths of different societies talk about their specific needs in life situations and life orientations. As observed by Mircea Eliade, regardless of their diverse cultural origins, religious symbols arise from people's need to live in an ideal world where they can primarily participate in the lives of gods and supernatural beings. Religious communities

understand that this universe and the human order within it are manifested through the actions of supernatural and divine beings.

Suggestion

This research focuses on the community of Gedangan. The next researchers are expected to investigate the myths of weton in various other regions on the island of Java, specifically.

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