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The Power of Strangers in Flores and Timor

R. H. Barnes

Abstract. – Pitt-Rivers notes that the stranger is dangerous and sacred because he belongs to an extraordinary world and must be "socialised, that is to say secularized, a process which necessarily involves inversion." A striking feature of the traditional histories of several local state structures in eastern Indonesia is how often they maintained ruling authority is in the hands of persons whose ancestors came as strangers and successfully became absorbed into the local communities, often by means of just this sort of inversion. Another recurring pattern is that of the outsider taking active leadership, while indigenous authority remains relatively immobile. This essay looks at several examples on Timor and Flores of attempts to cope with the disjunction of status and power, such as Dumont attributed to India, and with the constructive dilemma of how to combine legitimacy of authority with the prestige of the stranger. *[Indonesia, Flores, Larantuka, Timor, stranger king, authority, power]*

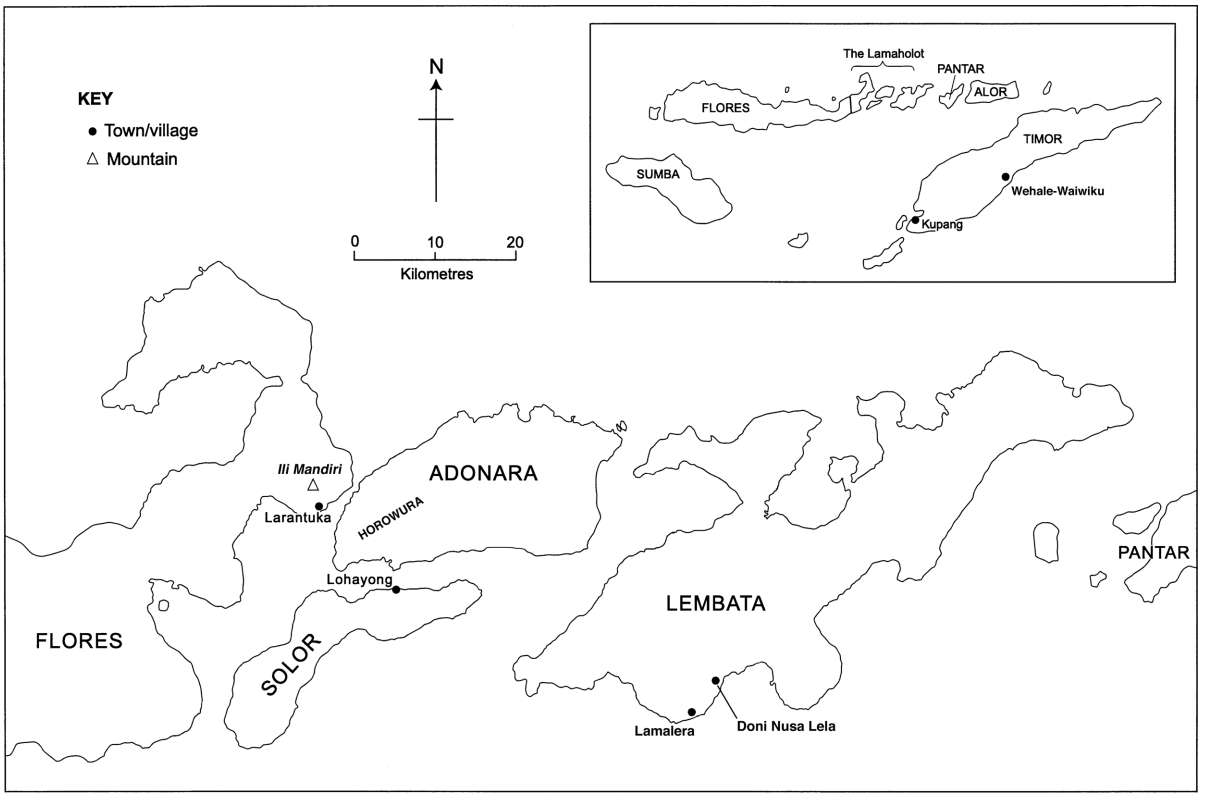
R. H. Barnes, Professor of Social Anthropology, University of Oxford, fellow of St. Antony's College, Oxford. – He has conducted extensive research on Lembata and Adonara and surrounding islands in eastern Indonesia. – His publications include: "Kédang. A Study of the Collective Thought of an Eastern Indonesian People" (Oxford 1974); "Lamakera, Solor. Ethnohistory of a Muslim Whaling Village of Eastern Indonesia" (*Anthropos* 1975); "Lamakera, Solor. Ethnographic Notes on a Muslim Whaling Village of Eastern Indonesia" (*Anthropos* 1996); "Ba Naruq. An Eastern Indonesian Narrative" (*Anthropos* 2002); "A Ritual Resurgence in Eastern Indonesia" (*Anthropos* 2005). – See also References Cited.

Strangers always pose an at least implicit challenge. They represent danger or potential gain and must be met with hostility or hospitality, brought into the community or expelled from it. The problem of how to deal with strangers Julian Pitt-Rivers (1977) has loosely called the law of hospitality. Under this "law," he discusses a variety of responses, including the ordeal, rules governing sanctuary, obligatory feasting, tests of cultural competence, and investigations of identity and intention. The law of hospitality, Pitt-Rivers says, is founded on ambivalence. The stranger is dangerous and sacred because he belongs to an extraordinary world. "If his danger is to be avoided, he must either be denied admittance, chased, or enticed away like evil spirits or vampires, or, if granted admittance, he must be socialised, that is to say secularised, a process which necessarily involves inversion" (Pitt-Rivers 1977: 101).

Themes

How cultures deal with these ambiguities varies of course, although the problem is universal. In eastern Indonesia, strangers who arrive without obviously hostile intent are generally accorded high status, but not inevitably. What is striking about traditional histories of several local state structures prior to the twentieth century is how often they maintain that ruling authority is in the hands of persons whose ancestors came as strangers and successfully became absorbed into the local communities, often by means of just the sort of inversion that Pitt-Rivers refers to.[1] This circumstance relates to another pattern, which has often been described and has been the subject of a comparative survey by

1 Sahlins (1981) has compared traditions concerning "stranger-kings" in Indo-European and Polynesian societies, and Oosten (1988) has criticized some of his formulations. Neither, however, has anything directly to say about these issues in so far as they relate to eastern Indonesia. Some further relevant comments may be found in Bellwood (1996).



Map: East Flores and the Solor Islands.

van Wouden (1968; see also Scholz 1962), namely a disjunction of some kind between spiritual influence, frequently associated with the land, and executive authority or power. This pattern is often called diarchy or complementary governance (Needham 1980: 73).

Another recurring part of the pattern at various levels of government is that of the outsider taking active leadership, while indigenous authority remains relatively immobile. For example, Beckering (1911: 173f.) reports that district heads under the so-called Kakang of Horowura, Adonara (one of ten such dignitaries subordinate to the Raja of Larantuka), were not permitted by customary law to present themselves to strangers nor to travel overseas. In an earlier period, several were not known and when they were called to appear in Larantuka, they sent a surrogate. Sometimes these surrogates were then appointed to the office, causing confusion. When in 1910 Beckering toured Horowura with its Kakang, the Kakang did not know some of the heads, even in parts of his realm he had visited in the previous year.

Histories

There is some evidence to suggest that the rulers of Lohayong, Solor, where the Portuguese built a fort in the sixteenth century and which became a focal point in the Dutch struggle to wrest control of the sandalwood trade with Timor from the Portuguese in the seventeenth century, were by origin Ternatese (Barnes 1987: 219f.). Later the rajas of Adonara claimed descent from an ancestor of Seran origin who subjected the various parts of his realm by peaceful means (Beckering 1911: 171).

The core clans of the village of Lamalera, Lembata, deem themselves to descend from persons who travelled through the islands from a homeland in Luwuk, Sulawesi. Their itinerary took them to Seran, Goran, Ambon, and through the islands of the south Moluccas back west to a land called Lepan Batan, lying in what is now the strait between Pantar and Lembata. When this land was destroyed by natural disaster, its population fled west, and many settled in the Lamaholot-speaking communities of Flores, Adonara, Solor, and Lembata. The group which eventually founded Lamalera travelled along the south coast of Lembata, encountering turbulent seas when rounding capes. At a site

named Bobu, they requested permission to settle. A man sitting in the top of a lontar palm answered that they should not come ashore. He deceived them by claiming that Bobu was so full that there was no room left and that some, like him, lived in the tops of trees.

After further misadventures, they arrived at Doni Nusa Lela, on the edge of what later became the greater area of Lamalera. Here they were accepted and lived peaceably with the local inhabitants, who already were subject to the Raja of Larantuka and held an office of *kakang* from him. Eventually the strangers assumed this office in an exchange which also involved giving the art of pot making to the people of Nusa Lela and receiving from them the knowledge of how to forge iron harpoons. A subsequent move, allegedly to facilitate their fishery, brought them further west to the present village site. Until the 1960s, the Kakang of Lamalera administered the wider district or Haminte Lamalera, although the village had little more land than was necessary to accommodate its housing. Spiritual authority remained vested in two district *tana alep*, "lords of the land," from adjacent and traditionally indigenous villages. The people of Lamalera regarded their home village on Lepan Batan as having been named Lewohajo, a name they preserved in their travels until settling at Doni Nusa Lela. They also recognized a common history with other refugees from Lewohajo who settled in West Solor and at Lohayong where the Portuguese and later Dutch fort was located on Solor, and with inhabitants of the hamlet of Lohayong at Larantuka, Flores, who are associated with the office of Vice-Raja in the Larantuka structure of government (Barnes 1996: 54–61).

A picture of how the rajas of Larantuka regarded their own history is given by an account[2] which Raja Lorenso Oesi Diaz Vieira Godinho provided his son, the later Raja Servus, during Raja Oesi's exile in Java following his deposition by the Dutch in 1904. Among the salient features of the legend is the fact that the Diaz Vieira Godinho line derives from a male outsider and is not the original stock of the rajas.

The history begins with a man named Lian Hura, a woman named Watu Wele, and a younger woman also named Watu Wele.[3] Raja Servus later told the ethnographer Ernst Vatter (1932: 34) that Lian Hura and his sister Watu Wele came out of the Ili Mandiri mountain, that they lived in the forest, and that they were covered with long hair and had long nails. Lian Hura married a woman behind Ili Mandiri, which towers above Larantuka. The older Watu Wele married a man from Lewoleba on Lembata, with whom she had the sons Laba and Samon. The younger Watu Wele married a man named Pati Golo Arakian from Waihele, Timor (that is Wehale, the center of the south Belu empire, later destroyed by a Portuguese expedition from Larantuka). Their sons founded various important villages and hamlets. This account clearly stipulates that at that time there was no Raja and that each district and village governed itself. One of the sons, Padu Ilé Pook Wele, had a son named Sira Demon Pago Molan (a name which Vatter or Raja Servus translates as "Sir Demon, Rich in Magical Power"), who when he was grown was strong, clever, and brave, to the point that all districts became afraid of him. (Some myths say that Padu Ilé found Sira Demon, who was brought down from heaven by an eagle.)

One day Sira Demon heard the sound of drums from the island of Lembata. When he travelled there he found Laba and Samon. He said to them, since you are sounding drums in order to form a princedom, will you recognize the sovereignty of Sira Demon or of (the then contemporary) Sira Paji of Adonara? They answered that they would recognize Sira Demon, but they did not believe him when he said that he was himself Sira Demon. He then told them that if in a week they saw no sign from the mountain Ili Mandiri, then it would mean that he was not Sira Demon, and as there was no one else who was Sira Demon, they would need have no fear. If, however, they did see a sign, they should bring a buffalo from Lamadua, Lembata. After a week, Sira Demon climbed Ili Mandiri and danced so hard that the land around shook as in an earthquake and the dust rose like smoke from a volcano. Everyone became afraid, but Laba and Samon were the most afraid. Accordingly they caught the buffalo and took it to Sira Demon, who divided its meat among all present. These included Laba and Samon, plus the heads of Horowura, Lewoingu, Pamakayu, Wolo, Mudakaputu, Lewotobi, Lamalera, and Lewolein (thus making up the ten districts of the rajadom, each under a district head or *kakang*). Each took a piece of buffalo meat home and mixed it with that of a goat and a pig, which he then distributed to the population as a sign of subjection to Sira Demon Pago Molan.

In the version of the legend given by the colonial officer Seegeler (1931: 76–80), Sira Demon

2 "*Tjeritara pendek dari katoroenan radja di tanah Larantoeka*" (Short History of the Descent of the Raja of Larantuka), found in the Netherlands General State Archives, The Hague, LeRoux Collection No. 7 (Couvreur 1907).

3 For a discussion of the possible reason why there are two women named Watu Wele see Dietrich (1995: 132f.).

travelled to each district in succession before calling the meeting in which the realm was founded. Another discrepancy is that in Seegeler's version, Sira Demon was not descended from Pati Golo Arakian and was not related to him at all. Pati Golo Arakian did come from Timor, however. He arrived in Lewonama (Larantuka) in order to cut sandalwood and saw fire on top of Woto, a hill between Ili Mandiri and Larantuka, where he discovered a wild woman covered with hair like a monkey. He married this woman with whom he had Sira Napa. Sira Demon had a son named Pati Laga Labalu, who died without offspring. Before Sira Demon died, he turned control of the realm over to Sira Napa, who took over without opposition.

Vice-Raja

The Larantuka realm had the odd arrangement of a vice-raja, spoken of in Malay as *raja kedua*, "the second raja." The family name was Belantran de Rosari. According to legend, their ancestor was part of the great diaspora of people fleeing the destruction of the island Keroko Pukan (the same as Lepan Batan) to the east, and they settled in the Larantuka hamlet named Lohayong, adjacent to Lokea which is associated with the Raja. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there was much intermarriage between these two families; and the Dutch turned on various occasions to the Belantran de Rosari family to provide a replacement for a deposed Raja.

According to their legend, after fleeing Keroko Pukan, they arrived in Larantuka while Sira Napa was holding a festival at the village temple. When the person who filled the position of *kelen*, in a four officer system central to the ritual structure of the realm but which cannot be described here, held the legs of the sacrificial animal, they were unable to sever its head. The same occurred when others held the animal. Sira Napa then agreed to call people from the boat full of refugees. Three persons from the boat "Pelang Kakatua" came. They were named Suban Main Kaki, Payong Laga Doni, and Demon Gawe Lewa. At the temple they were asked who was oldest, and the oldest was requested to hold the legs. Suban Main Kaki refused unless he was recognized as head. Sira Napa then asked him if he was a prominent person in his own land and if he had proof. Suban Main Kaki took from his boat two elephant tusks, a bronze drum (*moko*), a sharpening stone, and a Chinese plate. Sira Napa was not satisfied with these objects, whereupon Suban showed him a rattan baton decorated with a stylized flower. In the event of a successful sacrifice in which Suban held the legs, Sira Napa promised to make Suban Main Kaki the *raja kelen* (*main kaki* is Malay for "play with the legs"). According to Seegeler, the objects offered as proof were still in the possession of the family when he wrote (1931: 80–82). After Raja Lorenso Oesi was deposed in 1904, the Dutch replaced him with his father's sister's son, Dom Luis Balantran de Rosarie, who served until 1906. Dom Joan Balantran de Rosarie held office until 1912, when Raja Lorenso's son Dom Johannus Servus Diaz Vieira Godinho took over (van Eerde 1923: 105).

Stranger Kings

Dietrich (1995) has analyzed in great detail the versions of the Lian Hura and Pati Golo myths, some of which he has collected himself. He states quite firmly that the Pati Golo story has nothing to do with the motif of a "stranger king." Instead it represents the type of origin myth in which the opposition mountain-sea operates. However, he does subsequently concede that in respect of Lenurat (Lian Hura), Pati Golo is indeed a stranger king, but he emphasizes that via Wato Wele, the rajas of Larantuka reckon themselves autochthons (*ile jadi*) as opposed to the true stranger king, the second rajas, or vice-rajas. In some versions Pati Golo is born on Flores, but in Dietrich's interpretation he is always a secondary figure, as the rajas stress their autochthonous origins through Pati Golo's wife Watu Wele. In relation to the vice-raja, the raja is the superior authority, autochthonous and associated with the mountain, while the vice-raja is a secondary authority, a stranger and associated with the sea (Dietrich 1995: 127f., 137). I am prepared to accept this interpretation, but I do wish to stress the ambiguity in a patrilineal society of a king who is descended ultimately from a foreign prince. Indeed I encountered just this objection in eastern Adonara concerning the disputed position of a clan which claims precedence through its autochthonous origins, whereas the opponents of this claim stress an origin account for this clan that describes its first male ancestor as coming from outside and, like Pati Golo, marrying an autochthonous woman (Barnes in press).[4] It would seem very much in the interest

4 Dietrich (1995: 128) says that one should not be mislead by the fact that the origin myth of the royal house is a story about Pati Golo. The relevant status-legitimating figure for the royal house is in the first place (the female) Watu Wele. On Adonara the legitimating figure, and thus the crux of the

of the Raja of Larantuka to distract attention from this ambiguity. Perhaps we could look for an explanation of the odd arrangement of having a separate line which supplies the vice-raja precisely in the function of removing from the raja the onus of being the stranger.

The Realm of Larantuka

The realm of Larantuka as described in the records of the recent period is complex and the result of a complicated history. It is marked by a long period of alliance with the Portuguese and Catholicism. The center was Portuguese- and Malay-speaking. In 1831, Raja Dom Lorenso Diaz Vieira Godinho bore the Portuguese title Kolonel and wrote and spoke Portuguese fairly well, although he was addicted to opium, to which he was introduced by Buginese (Francis 1838: 395). At the same time, he held sway over a Lamaholot-speaking alliance and his realm was shaped by Lamaholot institutions. The Raja also spoke Lamaholot.

The rajas certainly were able to raise armed force and wage war, which eventually led to conflict with the Dutch. Dietrich concludes that the Raja's authority was intangible, however, and did not result directly from the use of physical force, which seems to be the point that the various legends of the founding of the realm try to make. Sira Demon became Raja through his extraordinary abilities, not by waging war, although in Raja Oesi's version he did threaten to do so, if the ten districts did not recognize his supremacy. Dietrich further feels that the relation between the Kakang and the Raja was a ceremonial, rather than administrative, one. Rather than a regular tax, the Raja received from them gifts of respect on ceremonial occasions, such as his installation or in the case of his own funeral. Through his personal esteem, he was able to exercise influence locally (Dietrich 1989: 32f.). Furthermore, his authority was conceptually a shared authority, through his position in the ritual four office system and through the relation to the Lord of the Land (Seegeler 1931: 43).

Until apparently 1873 (see Heynen 1876a: 77), when the "Lord of the Land" (in Malay *tuan tanah)* of Larantuka converted to Christianity, there was in Larantuka a temple (*korke*) which served for the whole realm. This building was taken down by the townspeople in 1874 (Laan 1962–1968, Vol. 2: 336f.). However, Dietrich has observed that Heynen has confused events in the section of greater Larantuka which shares the name "Larantuka" with those in the section called Lokea, where the temple which stood for all of Larantuka in fact stood in the 1870s (Dietrich 1997: 158, n. 151).

The position of the "lord of the land" of Larantuka has caused Europeans confusion. Dietrich (1989: 29; see Laan 1962–1968, Vol. 2: 333f.) quotes the Jesuit Metz writing in 1872 as follows:

> Larantuka consists in a series of villages … The villages belong in part to the Raja's House; the others have their own, subordinate village heads … the villages mentioned have their heathen temples, which are served by the tuhan tanah [lord of the land] or kabellin [Lamaholot title of prominence, from *bélen*, large, important, etc.], among whom there are also Christians … This kabellin is the most important person in the village. Nothing happens without his being told or his agreement, and it is unbelievable how much influence he has. He escapes the eye of the missionary, but strives in quiet for the preservation of all the practices and arrangements of the forefathers … It is self-evident that we oppose him with all our strength.

Heynen (1876b: 83f.) wrote somewhat later that, "The tuwan-tanah of Larantuka is also the head of his own village; he does not govern it himself, but puts in his place a subordinate head. This head stands in for him also in the council, where he, however, may say nothing but what the tuwan-tanah, whose 'mouth' he is, has ordered him to do."

Religion and matters of state in Larantuka, Heynen went on, had always been interwoven. For this reason, the lord of the land took the first place after the raja and was called *raja tanah* or "raja of the land." Among the ambiguities suggested by this statement, and otherwise unclarified, is of course the issue of the relative positions of the *raja tanah* and of the vice-raja. It also brings up the question what was the appropriate opposition to the land. Was it the sky? Or was it the sea? Was there any respect in which in opposition to the *Raja Tanah*, the Raja of Larantuka was *raja laut*, that is, "raja of the sea," inherently associated with the outside?[5]

dispute, is the first male ancestor, thus the precise analogue of Pati Golo. Indeed Dietrich notes that there are versions of the Pati Golo story which locate his place of origin as the mountain (Ili Mandiri).

5 This suggestion goes beyond the available evidence and may confuse local dimensions of comparison. The Raja of Larantuka is called *raja ili*, that is "Raja from the Mountain." However, Andaya (1990, especially pp. 9f.) has described a very similar contrast between the lord of the land and the ruler who deals with outside trade in the North Moluccas of the sixteenth century. Writing about Solor, Arndt (1940: 233) comments, that, "Now frequently there are in a village two leaders: *kepala tana* (land leader) and *kepala téna* (boat

If so, he would then be in precisely the opposite position in relation to the Lord of the Land as that in which, according to Dietrich's interpretation, he was placed in relation to the Vice-Raja.

In Heynen's view the Raja of Larantuka governed the people, while the Lord of the Land protected their homeland against evil, mysterious powers and their effects, as well as against infertility and disasters, with religious offerings and ceremonies. Whereas the Raja possessed the highest temporal power, the Lord of the Land held the highest religious power (Heynen 1876b: 79–81). The underlying issue here is did the Raja really have overall supremacy, as Heynen says, or was the Lord of the Land, as elsewhere, the quiet, invisible superior personage. Was there perhaps a strategic ambiguity about relative status which lay at the center of Larantuka statecraft or even an implicit agreement to disagree about the culminating position in the hierarchy?

There is a legend worth noting in this context concerning an attempt by the Portuguese to put a Raja of their own choosing in place during a period Heynen has estimated at about the middle of the seventeenth century. They had managed to make off with a young boy, who turned out to be the son of the Lord of the Land. Having converted him and travelled with him through parts of Asia, they returned him to Larantuka loaded with gifts. They wished to set him up as the first Christian Raja, but he refused, since there was already a Raja and in any case the young man was in the line of the Lord of the Land, which he later became. Through his influence it became possible for the Portuguese to convert Raja Ola, who became Dom Francisco Diaz Vieira Godinho according to Heynen (1876a: 6–11). There are interesting contrasts in this story with the situation prevailing in the nineteenth century. Here it is a Catholic Lord of the Land who brings a pagan Raja to Christianity, whereas throughout much of the nineteenth century it was a nominally Catholic Raja who paired off with a strictly pagan Lord of the Land.

leader); *kepala tana* is the actual hereditary leader or chief, who must be so according to the adat, the customary laws; *kepala téna*, the perahu leader, boat leader [is he] who was appointed by the strangers, the Company [Dutch East Indies Company] who came to the land in a perahu." Dietrich (1997: 121) has surveyed the existing information about the Raja Tanah, which he says does not lack for unclarity and certain contradictions. We are dealing, he says, with different ideological constructions.

An Historical Confusion

The story is historically odd in several respects, especially in view of Heynen's dating. A letter from the Jesuit priest Baltasar Dias, of December 3rd, 1559, reported the baptism of a king and several hundred of his followers at Lewonama, near Larantuka (Rouffaer 1923–24: 205; Biermann 1959: 186), indicating that there were Christians in or near Larantuka and probably Europeans living there already in the sixteenth century. By the middle of the seventeenth century, Larantuka had become the strong point of the Dominican mission in sometimes armed opposition to the Dutch, who had taken the Portuguese fort at Lohayong, Solor, from them in 1613 (Barnes 1987), and in 1630 it was visited by the Dominican Vicar-General Miguel Rangel. Furthermore, Larantuka was by then also the home base of the so-called Black Portuguese, persons of mixed Lamaholot and European ancestry, who for a period established themselves as the dominant military power in the Timor region and dealt the Dutch several bloody defeats (Boxer 1947).

Another historical difficulty about this account is that Portuguese records indicate that in about 1645 a *Payaõ* lived near Larantuka, who was sovereign and received tribute. *Payaõ* no doubt is the Malay *payung* or "umbrella," a symbol of sovereignty and a common given name among the Lamaholot. This personage was baptized by the Vicar of the Solor mission, Antonio de S. Jacintho, and named Dom Constantino. He died in 1661.[6]

As Biermann (1959: 267 f.) points out, however, he was already described in a written report of September 20th, 1625, by the Captain of Larantuka, Francisco Fernándes, as "Dom Constantino, Payam-King and Lord of the native Christians of Solor." The occasion for this mention was that a boat containing himself and many of his relatives was, while returning from a wedding, surrounded and boarded by a marauding Dutch fleet from the Solor fort, but was rescued by a ship under the command of the missionary Luis de Andrada. Vatter (1932: 35) in fact assumes that Dom Constantino was the baptismal name of Raja Ola, whom Heynen calls Dom Francisco; so Heynen appears to be wrong at least in respect to the date of the legend.[7]

6 Santa Catharina (1733: 801 f.), Rouffaer (1923–24: 256 f.), Biermann (1924: 34).

7 Dietrich (1984: 324, n. 15) notes that Portuguese documents give Raja Ola's Christian name as Constantino, but reports that Larantuka oral tradition consistently calls him Dom Francisco. For further discussion of the puzzling figure of Dom Constantino see Dietrich (1997: 137 f., 162, n. 195).

Authority and Power

The authority of the raja was not personal but collective. He was more mobile than the lord of the land, but within the court he had active agents who had even greater freedom of movement. Among such agents were two *kapitan* from the family surnamed Fernándes. These persons may or may not have been descendants of the Solorese Captain Laut (or Commander at Sea), Francisco Fernándes, who often provided effective military leadership against the Dutch in the early and mid-seventeenth century (Barnes 1987: 226) and who forcibly converted the ruler of Sonba'i on Timor to Christianity and then destroyed the kingdom of Wehale-Waiwiku on the south coast of Timor in May, 1642, at the head of a punitive expedition of Portuguese allies (Schulte Nordholt 1971: 164f.). Fernándes is a common name in Larantuka and held by unrelated families. It is remarkable what a shadowy personage the raja is in Portuguese records of the early seventeenth century, considering how frequently and prominently Francisco Fernándes figures. It is almost as though, so far as the Portuguese were concerned, the raja, too, was eclipsed by his external representatives.

Dietrich concludes generally for Flores rajas that they do not much resemble a traditional model of kings. Instead of power being concentrated in the center, legitimate authority and power are distributed horizontally and vertically among the most varied corporate groups. Above all there is no clear hierarchy of administrative office. The various groups remained, until the Dutch changed them, essentially self-regulating unities, quite capable of functioning without the center (Dietrich 1989: 46f.). There appears, therefore, to be little in the way of an overt theory of political power. Instead, the nature of office is presented through myths of foundation and through the structure of ceremonial and political positions. According to information garnered by Kennedy (1955: 177–179), the power of leaders from the Raja down to the heads of descent groups rests on fear of ancestral punishment. Disobedience leads to illness and misfortune.

> The magical power comes mainly from the ancestral spirits, but it is funnelled through the magic stones of authority [*nuba nara*] too. The curse power of an adat chief is very great. The power of the purely administrative chiefs, for example, the kepala kampong, who does not deal with adat, and the kakang, is that of the police, etc. This is actually not so because all of the chiefs are of the proper succession. If they ever tried to put one in who was not so, the people would not follow him, or rather they would do so only out of fear of being sent to jail. Such respect would be given only halfheartedly.
>
> The power of the chiefs, up to the radja, rests on their "blood" or legitimate succession, and on the power of their ancestors, who uphold the proper authority and punish the disobedient by unseen power (Kennedy 1955: 177–179).

Should a bad man succeed to a post legitimately, the people would not revolt, but the ancestors would assure an early death. A succession of bad crops, illness, and so on might lead the people to think that something was wrong, that the chief did not have the right power, but the people would not revolt. Kennedy says of this power that it is called *no'o ike (ng)*, having authority or esteem. It is found in everything, including rice, iron, and trees. Men have more and less such power. The raja has a great deal. It derives from ancestor sanction and indwelling power which comes with the blood of legitimacy.[8]

Comparisons

The power of the Larantuka rajas is not different in kind from that of subordinate leaders. In detail the makeup of the realm is unique, but the nature of power and authority fits as would be expected, despite European accretions, with that of other Southeast Asian dignitaries. There is in this part of Indonesia clearly a tension between the internal, spiritual authority and power of kingship and the external active exercise of power by the ruler. In certain extreme cases the two become separated. Especially, lords of the land, who may well not be nobles in any useful sense of the word and are not inevitably higher in status than rulers, are nevertheless quietly close to the source of their legitimacy and effectiveness, to the point that they appeared sometimes as the true secretive power in the realm. It is not just the Raja of Larantuka's ancestors who influence his power. To call him a sacral king is both to emphasize his ceremonial function and to downplay that of the lord of the land. Essentially, however, they are a unity for the ceremonial control of the realm.

Forman (1977: 103) has argued that the political reality of Timor at the early period of European contact was atomistic and centrifugal, without apical kingdoms on the European model and with effective administration confined to localized territorial groups. These assumptions are not different from those of Schulte Nordholt, who in an

8 Pampus (1999. 163) translates *ikə'* as "inner force, characteristic strength, charisma, magical power."

attempt to piece together the ruling structures of the kingdoms of the Atoni and Belu of Timor inferred that before their 1642 destruction, the concrete political units within these kingdoms were the smaller constituent principalities. It was never true "that decisions affecting the entire realm were made centrally, except that each part was involved in the ritual power of the center" (Schulte Nordholt 1971: 391), conclusions which are similar to those of Pelras (1971) concerning the Bugis principality of Wajo' in the Celebes.

The linguistically distinct, but geographically adjacent, Atoni and Belu regions may once have constituted an overarching unity of semi-independent kingdoms centered on Wehale-Waiwiku (a Tetun district on the south coast of Timor), with subordinate to it the realm of Sonba'i, which perhaps extended over the entire Atoni area. Wehale-Waiwiku was governed by a "Great Lord," also called "Child of God", Maromak Oan, which can also be translated "Small Bright One" (Therik 1995: 71, n. 12). Although male, this ruler was symbolically female. According to Fox (1982: 25), Wehale gave away the power to rule, while retaining authority, resulting in a form of diarchy in which a female center was opposed to a male periphery; indeed the first "Small Bright One" was actually a woman who produced the first dry land from her umbilical cord (for an extended discussion see Therik 1995: 72–109; 2004: 69–99). "To Wehale belonged dark, silent superiority." All dealings with the outside were conducted through an executive lord, the Liurai of Wehale-Waiwiku. The "Great Lord" was also known as the "Dark Lord," while the Liurai was the "Visible Lord." For outsiders, such as Europeans, the Liurai appeared to be the visible representative of Wehale-Waiwiku. According to Fox, the structure of government in Wehale-Waiwiku demonstrated a fundamental principle of Timorese thought, "that power is divisible, but authority, though it may be delegated, is ultimately one" (Fox 1982: 26). The same pattern of feminine and immobile supreme rulers acting as custodians of the sacred objects and counterpoised by masculine wielders of executive power continued into the eastern Atoni areas. Further west the ruler's femininity became less pronounced. The shift happens to coincide with a transition from matrilineal descent groups to patrilineal descent (Schulte Nordholt 1971: 372f.).

Instead of being dispossessed of their religious prerogatives, which Dumont says is the distinctive characteristic of Indian kingship, the "female" rulers in central Timor have maintained their religious functions at the expense of executive power. This is precisely the same situation which has been described over and over again for the lords of the land at the level of villages in these islands. These circumstances nevertheless give rise to a disjunction between status and power which is analogous to that between the Brahman and the king in India. The Maromak Oan and the Lords of the Land, like the Brahman, perform or direct the rituals of the community as a whole. If, however, Heynen is right that the Larantuka Lord of the Land is subordinate to the Raja, then there would appear to be a degree of variability in this part of Indonesia as to whether higher status is vested with religious or executive authority. This particular contrast between Timor and Larantuka is remarkable because of the tradition that Pati Golo, the first of the present line of Larantuka rajas, came there from Timor.

Grijzen (1904: 19–23) and Vroklage (1952: 148–153) record several Timorese legends which relate that ancestors of the Maromak Oan and of the Liurai of Wehale-Waiwiku travelled from Malacca to Macassar and then to Larantuka and Bauboin (Waibalun, near Larantuka), where they left some of their party before travelling on to Wehale-Waiwiku via a series of localities including Lamalera, Lembata. Descendants of the group left in Larantuka became ancestors of the Raja and the coastal peoples of Larantuka. In some ways these legends are a confirmation of the Larantuka tradition, reported by Heynen (1876b: 71) that Pati Golo Arakian, founder of the lineage of Larantuka rajas, was a princely scion of Leverei, the Raja of Wiwikoe on Timor, that is of the Liurai of Wehale-Waiwiku. In other words, he was the offspring of the active male leader in the Wehale-Waiwiku scheme of government. He and his offspring, therefore, assumed a position in relation to the Raja Tanah or Lord of the Land of Larantuka which was analogous to the role of the Liurai in respect to the Maromak Oan.

Fox (1982: 24) comments that various ruling houses of Timor claim descent from founding fathers who were sent out by Wehale to "grasp the earth," and that Wehale claims to have given everything away to them (see Francillon 1967: 104f., 111f.; Therik 1995: 255–263; 2004: 154). In this respect, too, the Raja of Larantuka replicates a Timorese theory of statecraft. Therik explains that according to Wehali folk exegesis the dry land produced by the "Small Bright One" expanded until it reached its limit at Larantuka, the name of which is interpreted, incorrectly, to mean "inside the limit" (rather than correctly "midway" or "the middle of the path"). These mutually supporting legends can, of course, be taken as evidence of historical con-

tact. They may be interpreted, too, as referring to events that happened long before the advent of the Portuguese and the Dutch. Nevertheless, they are remarkably reminiscent of events during the period of European contact which closely affected the buildup of Black Portuguese influence on Flores and Timor (Forman 1977: 101; Dietrich 1995: 133–136). Among these events are the fall of Malacca to the Dutch in 1641 and the expulsion of mestizo populations who eventually found their way to Flores, after the Dutch took Macassar in 1668.

Ambiguities about relative status of temporal rulers and religious authorities exist on other islands. On Sumba the highest religious authorities (in some regions usually the Lords of the Land) have been described as the highest class and by others as commoners. Forth (1981: 237) thinks that they are most accurately described as standing apart from the order of classes. This recurring situation, where there is no stable interpretation of relative position, suggests that in truth the two spheres cannot properly be compared in these terms.

By implication, the constructive dilemma of rulers such as the Maromak Oan and Liurai of Wehale-Waiwiku and the Raja and Vice-Raja of Larantuka is how to combine legitimacy with the prestige of the stranger. The response of the Maromak Oan was to become female, immobile, and associated with darkness and the interior, as opposed to the Liurai. This choice seems colored by the fact that in Tetun understanding, they drove out a previous population (called *Melu* in Tetun) who had original claim to the land. The princely ancestor of the Raja of Larantuka, however, married into the local population and remained primarily external and mobile in relation to an indigenous Lord of the Land.

In either case, a transfer of reference from the external to the internal or vice versa would appear to emphasize a different form of superiority. Such a change of perspective is analogous to the reversals which Dumont (1979: 812; 1982: 225) says indicate a shift in levels within an ideology, essentially his definition of hierarchy (but see Fox 1989: 51). Such symbolic reversals especially mark the position of the Maromak Oan (Fox 1982: 32; Francillon 1980: 261).

As Cunningham (1964) has shown, the Timorese conception of statecraft closely parallels the distinction between domestic space, where women take precedence, and external space, where men are to the fore. The Maromak Oan has gone farthest in identifying supremacy with powerlessness and the internal, female realm of reference. This situation makes a virtue of stressing the relative disjunction of status and power. In this respect the Maromak Oan may approximate the position of the Brahman in Indian statecraft, whereas the Liurai and the Raja of Larantuka bear a greater analogy to the Kshatriya. By assuming the central, domestic position, the Maromak Oan appears to obscure the external origin of Tetun rulers or at least to dispense with such power and prestige as may derive from foreign origins. For the Liurai or the Raja of Larantuka such assets may have remained relatively more effective. In either case, leadership required coping with the fact that legitimate authority could be claimed best by those who could maintain an original, indigenous attachment to the realm, and such a claim was precluded for strangers, or descendants of strangers.

This essay was originally written for a conference on "Timor Anthropology. Productions and Language" held at the Museu de Etnologia, Lisbon, Portugal, on December 12–16, 1989. The organizers' plans to publish the proceeding were not realized. It was presented again at a conference on "Hierarchy in Eastern Indonesia" in Leiden, The Netherlands, April 16–20, 1996. The organizers of this conference also intended to publish the proceedings, but likewise were unable to do so. I have revised the essay in light of useful discussions with Stefan Dietrich, some of them held in Larantuka, Flores, in 1995, and in reference to more recent publications of immediate relevance. I have not seen and have not been able to refer to the papers on "Stranger-Kings in Southeast Asia and Elsewhere" held in Jakarta, Indonesia, June 5–7, 2006 (Somers Heidhues 2007).

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