

Don Lorenzo Diaz Vieira Godinho of Larantuka, Flores, became Raja on 14 September 1887 and was deposed on 1 July 1904. During his reign he was the hope of the local Jesuit mission and often the despair of colonial civil authorities. In the end, as the Dutch leached power from the rajas, Lorenzo's reign marked the end of any pretence of independent power.

# Raja Lorenzo II

## A Catholic kingdom in the Dutch East Indies

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Purchased from the Portuguese in 1859, the small kingdom of Larantuka was one of the very few Catholic realms in the Dutch East Indies. Spread across the islands of Flores, Solor, Adonara and Lembata, it was interspersed irregularly with the holdings of five smaller Muslim kingdoms. Before the Dutch took over, the Rajas of Larantuka regarded themselves as independent monarchs with a tributary relationship to the Portuguese Crown. They were surprised and appalled to be sold.

In contact with Catholicism since the 16th century, the kingdom's Christian minority was guaranteed freedom of conscience by treaty between The Netherlands and Portugal. Dutch Catholic priests were sent to the Christian population in 1860, and within two years the Jesuit Order assumed responsibility. The dealings of the Order's members with successive Rajas of Larantuka often placed them in conflict with civil authorities, particularly regarding the religious practices of those who were not Catholic and the rajas' obligations to them.

### The Rajas' line

The royal house of Larantuka claimed descent from the union of a man from the famous south Timor kingdom of Wehale Waiwiku and a woman of mythical origin in the nearby extinct Ili Mandiri volcano (Dietrich 1995). The family were Catholic and spoke a Malay dialect but maintained important customary ties with those they more or less governed, the Lamaholot-speaking peoples whom the Dutch priests usually referred to as the 'mountain people'. Rajas played a central role in their ritual system, including maintaining traditional temples. That system was not Catholic and was thus fiercely opposed by the priests, who were much more purist than their Portuguese predecessors.

For nearly half a century, the title of raja passed consecutively among three brothers. The first, André II, was, like his father Lorenzo I, an opium addict. He left governing to his brothers Don Gaspar, 'a very dangerous subject', and Don Dominggo Ilé (referred to in letters as Mingo), 'a great ranter, but like the Raja himself [he] is enslaved to opium', both of whom, according to the first Dutch priest Jan Sanders, were responsible for several murders. Another brother, Don Quino (Kinu), was said to be the leader of a band of pirates (Laan 1962-1968: 8, 11; Steenbrink 2003: 300). All of the brothers had multiple wives, and Kinu was even married to a Muslim woman (Laan 1962-1968: 19).

André died on Easter Day 1861 and was replaced by Don Gaspar. Locals linked André's death with his efforts to rebuild the traditional temple in Lokea (the centre of Larantuka), which the mountain people wanted but which Sanders opposed because he deemed it a 'house of the devil'. He was shocked to discover that the chief instigator pushing André to rebuild the temple was his brother Mingo, whom Sanders described as a blackguard without equal (Laan 1962-1968: 25, 101). He also said of Mingo that his brother Gaspar called him a *tukang tidur* (expert at sleeping) and liked to slumber half the day. He was, however, fluent in Malay, spoke some of the local language, was pacific and got along with Europeans (Laan 1962-1968: 101).

Their brother Kinu, a mere village head, was heavy, muscular, broad-chested, covered with hair – a 'rough Hercules figure with a Nero head'. 'The Raja Gaspar called this brother *tukang mabuk* [expert at drunkenness]...Another brother seems to have called him a *kuda putih*, a white horse, which people here use for someone who lays treacherous snares and disturbs the peace in the family'. Once, when his half-brother Dominggo (Ence) (not to be confused with Don Mingo above) accompanied Sanders to Konga, Kinu broke into Dominggo's house, fleeing in the face of his family's screams. Dice was one of his favourite pleasures, and he was in no hurry to convert to Christianity (Franssen Report 5, Laan 1962-1968: 101-102). Such was the father of the future Raja Lorenzo II.

Gaspar was brought up by Roman Catholic priests in Dili, Timor, and was therefore 'more intellectually developed than the other rajas' (Humme 1874, Heynen 1876a: 46-47). Heynen (1876a: 15) praised his acumen and memory. Nevertheless, the missionaries were disappointed in Rajas André and Gaspar, both of whom seemed imperfect Christians, too given to supporting heathens. The missionaries had several clashes with them over attempts to rebuild native temples. They placed their hopes instead on Lorenzo, whose father Kinu died at an early, unknown date. Lorenzo was born in July 1859 and baptised ten years later (Laan 1962-1968: 376). He seems to have been educated personally by the first Jesuit priest Gregorius Metz. Lorenzo could understand spoken Dutch and write Malay. Furthermore, he was a more committed Christian and evidently more pliable.

### Premature hopes

Expectations ran high for the missionaries after Gaspar died of dysentery at the age of 57 on 24 January 1877, when Lorenzo was only 17 (Laan 1962-1968: 375-376, Ecoma Verstege 1877a). Resident Ch. M. G. A. M. Ecoma Verstege commented at the time, 'according to the general feeling this death cannot be regarded as a loss...he alienated himself from subjects, while he was treated with a sort of disdain by his fellow rulers and neighbours'. Father Metz showed no sign of regret either.

The missionaries felt that Lorenzo, despite his youth, should now become raja. None of the other brothers had produced a male heir and, so far as the mission was concerned, Lorenzo was the only legitimate successor. According to Father Metz, 'On the whole island there is no one better to be found...if he overcomes the difficulties, then things here will take another direction' (Laan 1962-1968: 375). The *provicaris* Josef Lijnen wrote to Bishop Claessens, 'it is to be hoped that the new raja is a man who understands that he must support the work of the ministers instead of breaking away through a heathenish way of life. Should Metz try to get influence over him? I hope so!' (Laan 1962-1968: 375).

Metz did gain influence over him, but things did not turn out as expected. Civil Commissioner E. F. Kleian sent word that the local heads wished to pass over Lorenzo, who was too young to take over the government, which had fallen into decay owing to Gaspar's indolence. Instead, they appointed Gaspar's half-brother Dominggo (Ecoma Verstege 1877b). A shocked Father Metz wrote the Bishop that things, 'definitely against my desires', had taken a completely different course. Metz objected to the fact, as he saw it, that Dominggo was a bastard of Lorenzo I. He had confidentially told two Christians who had the right to vote for raja that they should know the difference between legitimate and illegitimate children (Laan 1962-1968: 396). Later he faced charges of having interfered in government matters, made by Civil Commissioner Kleian to the Resident. 'He did this to besmirch Lorenzo and to get me out of the way', Metz complained. His efforts were in vain, for Dominggo was elected raja. Metz was indignant, 'because now a precedent has been established that there is no difference between a legitimate and an illegitimate child...The new raja sees this himself and now has told me quietly that he accepted the staff, but does not want to hold it longer than is necessary and that he will surrender it to Lorenzo as soon as he is married and comes of age' (Laan 1962-1968: 376).

Metz later wrote hopefully that, 'Our new monarch shows more industry than his predecessor and is according to his own declaration animated with goodwill; I also hope to be convinced of that. If he keeps his word not to reign after Lorenzo reaches his majority, then I am satisfied, otherwise not easily' (Laan 1962-1968: 383). Thus Raja Dominggo began his tenure not only without Metz's full support, but with a degree of his resentment. Metz had an even lower opinion of Civil Commissioner Kleian. 'The new Raja is certainly better than the departed; in my judgement he would be [even] better if we ever had the luck to be freed of Kleian...The Raja is not yet sufficiently self-reliant and dances too much after his [Kleian's] pipes' (Laan 1962-1968: 383).

### A raja in waiting

Metz compensated for his disappointment by appointing Lorenzo schoolmaster in his fledgling school, teaching the children reading, writing and arithmetic, singing, and increasing the number of students. 'His affable character and determination make him very suited for it; the children like him very much' (Laan 1962-1968: 371, Laan 1962-1968: 384).

Lorenzo was drawn into a controversy when the hamlet of Lewerang, 'out of fear of the mountain people, and perhaps also out of superstition [and] encouraged by the weakness of the Raja', wanted to erect its temple again. When Metz told Raja Dominggo, he called on the village head and forbade it, but the villagers did not stop, even when Metz himself went there. Dominggo forbade it a second and even a third time, to no effect. Finally, Metz sent Lorenzo to Dominggo, who in turn sent him to Lewerang with the demand that they stop. But he failed, and half an hour later they continued building. Dominggo sent Lorenzo back to take away a drum – which the Raja had perhaps supplied to the temple – and found the mission-educated Doctor Jawa Migel Lobato beating it despite his being repeatedly forbidden to do so (Laan 1962-1968: 401). This episode's outcome is unknown but exemplifies missionary attempts to use Lorenzo to suppress local ritual.

Lorenzo was also drawn into conflicts with traditionalists living in villages behind the Ili Mandiri volcano. Lewoloba's village head threatened Lorenzo's life, plainly because he was seen as the priests' agent, but was murdered before he could follow through (Laan 1962-1968: 451). These events took a serious turn and eventually shook the government's confidence in Raja Dominggo, whom Resident Samuel Roos, in 1882, threatened to depose and replace with the now 23-year-old but as yet unmarried Lorenzo (Laan 507, Roos 1882). Unable to find a suitable wife, Lorenzo sought the mission's assistance. After various false starts, he married in time to replace Dominggo when he died in 1887 (Laan 1962-1968: 663-664).

### A change of purpose

Lorenzo made it known that things would be different under his reign. For example, he altered inauguration ceremonies to make them less 'heathen' and more Christian, and punished laxness in religious observations, imposing a one guilder fine on those who missed mass. A month after inauguration he put 20 people in stocks for practicing traditional rituals or superstition (Laan 1962-1968: 686-687). By doing so he was storing up trouble for himself and the priests with the colonial authorities, who thought that freedom of religion guaranteed in the treaty with the Portuguese extended to those the missionaries called 'heathens'. He forbade anyone to make an alliance with any ruler without his permission. In case of war, no one could have anything to do with the Raja's enemies, except to help to restore peace. No one could be judge in his own affairs, not even those in leadership positions. Disputing parties were not permitted to resort to an ordeal in which they or their delegates attempted to outlast each other under water to see who was right. Every subject was required to work. Whoever did not work for ten consecutive days was condemned to forced labour. The alternative to paying a guilder for missing mass or for working on Sunday was five days of forced labour. Anyone caught drunk was arrested. No one could become a debt slave. No children or servants could be sold. Leaders and dignitaries always had to be decently dressed; since all those they ruled over also wanted to pass as being distinguished, this regulation resulted in no one going about half-naked anymore (Laan 1962-1968: 687-688).

In 1888 Lorenzo made a serious political misstep in a matter from which he might have held himself aloof, when he allowed himself to be drawn into a dispute between the Muslim Rajas of Lamahala and Adonara. This led Resident G. G. de Villeneuve to threaten to depose him (Laan 1962-1968: 728; for details, see Dietrich 1989: 66-67). In 1889 de Villeneuve wrote unfavourable reports about priests on Flores, which Bishop Claessens rebutted with a long defence. On a visit in April the Resident, accompanied by Kleian, asked Lorenzo why he was forcing people to attend mass under threat of a penalty and why he had not rebuilt the temple in Lokea. Lorenzo answered that he had rebuilt the temple, replacing a small roofless



Figure 1: Crown Prince Lorenzo aged 12, drawing from a photograph taken in Surabaya, ca. 1871 (Heynen 1876b: 64-65).

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building with a much larger building and a meeting house, where 100 mountain people could overnight. Furthermore, he claimed, the mountain people were more satisfied with the new buildings. However, when the Resident said that the Raja must officiate in making sacrifices in the heathen manner – which to the dismay of the priests his predecessors willingly did – Lorenzo refused (Laan 1962-1968: 780).

De Villeneuve retired and his successor W. C. Hoogkamer smoothed things over. The Raja was permitted to continue to levy fines for failing to attend mass and for marriage outside the church, and he did not have to erect a temple (the building Lorenzo claimed he had erected actually might not have counted in local eyes as a temple). Nevertheless, Hoogkamer also told the priests that Lorenzo should think more about his obligations to the Dutch and less about his rights. 'He is not an independent ruler' (Laan 1962-1968: 813-818).

#### Lorenzo's fall

Lorenzo began to show traits not just of independence, but waywardness. Complaints were made in 1894 that his agents were attempting to extract taxes in territory belonging to the Raja of Sikka (Laan 1962-1968: 969-971). In that year, too, Lorenzo led an army of 500 to Maumere (Steenbrink 2003: 146-147). The same charges were then repeated four years later (Laan 1962-1968: 1033). He executed a relative whose supporters had attacked him, further displeasing the government (Barnes 2005: 9, Laan 1962-1968: 1036-1041). Father Frencken charged that Lorenzo had repeatedly committed adultery, brought false charges against his subjects, exiled some and imposed exorbitant fines on others who moreover were innocent. Many fled to safety with the priests. The people and then the priests began to think that Lorenzo had gone crazy (Laan 1962-1968: 1065-1071, Steenbrink 2003: 93). Next he tried to get some of the heads of mountain villages to take the refugees from the priests by force, where they were formally on government land. Resident J. Vijzelaar asked Frencken to submit a report of the charges against Lorenzo, which Frencken did. It soon caused Lorenzo much damage (Laan 1962-1968: 1079-1087, Verbaal 21 April 1906. No. 55).

Disputes in Sikka continued, and in September 1902 Lorenzo intervened with 1,000 troops (Koloniaal Verslag 1903: 103-104, Laan 1962-1968: 1123-1130). Meanwhile, difficulties were developing on Adonara, in particular a war in east Adonara in which the civil authorities thought Lorenzo was deeply implicated (Barnes 2005). They responded by deposing and exiling him to Java in 1904, where he died November 1910.

Historically, Lorenzo's reign was the last time a raja of Larantuka could try to claim any degree of independent sovereignty. His fall marked the beginning of a move toward a 20th century form of bureaucratic administration shaped by a militarily and financially much more powerful Dutch East Indies in which those local rajas who remained in office increasingly served only as figureheads. In the Flores region, the process was completed in 1960, when the national authorities eliminated the last remnants of the 'feudal' power structure that the Republic inherited from the Dutch, by abolishing the office of raja. Summing up the consequences of the fall of Lorenzo II, Steenbrink writes, 'With the deposition of Lorenzo II in 1904 the dream of a Catholic kingdom came to an end' (Steenbrink 2003: 99). In contrast to the kingdom, however, Catholicism flourished in the 20th century, and its leaders frequently found it easier to cooperate with civil authorities than their predecessors had in the 19th century (Steenbrink 2007: 81). Many of the underlying cultural and religious issues remain current, however, in the 21st century.

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