

*Letter from Dom Bonaventura da Costa Souto Maior to Colonel C.H. van Rietschoten*

“Manupahi, 17 July 1912. To the most honourable and utmost respectable Mr. Pamerenta of Montain (Ruler of the Mountain). With thousands of honours, my lord Allah and Jesus Christ request the Dutch Company to have compassion and offer help to us. It is for this reason that I ask the Dutch Company to help us: because all of us rajas no longer want to be with the Portuguese, because we people from here may also endure but cannot stop these men with curly hair from taking all the land. Recently, these men ignited oil and burned all the land—this we could not stop. If the Company does not help us, then all of we people here will be killed by the Portuguese and this land will certainly become forest. We ask and hope that the Company will offer help to us, people from Manufahi, and we ask my lord in person the question whether the Dutch Company will follow our request or not. We hope my lord can also help a little by passing us a message so that we may know, on the basis of this request, because we subjects (slaves) have already sent letters to the Company several times without response. Until, or not, my lord may offer help and also render us a message so that we may know concerning this request and also we hope and ask the Company may follow suit; then, when this question is agreed upon, we have nothing to pay to the Company, but we have ourselves and children and women who we can offer to the Company, we can offer them as money here. We here, all the rajas of Manufahi, no longer wish to be with the Portuguese, which was also the case in the past. The Dutch Company has the authority, also now, his people want to return under the Dutch flag and when we ask and beg thousands and thousands of times for forgiveness so that my lord does not get angry because we are pitiful and stupid to write you in a stupid and senseless manner without concern for proper speech. And here I send thousands and thousands of well wishes and greetings to my honoured lord. From the subject (slave) who asks and begs to my lord and the Company, from the subject with a strong desire, who is called by the name below, signed, Leotaco, 17 July 1912, Bonaventura da Costa Souto Maior.”