

3 NAGARA CHAMPA AND THE VIJAYA TURN

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The major event of the middle centuries (9th-15th, more specifically 875-1475 CE) of Nagara Champa was the rise of Vijaya as its capital. This did not take place in the year 1000 CE as is generally believed,¹ but in the 12th and 13th centuries. Both the rise and the fall of Vijaya were occasioned by foreign interventions, the rise via Khmer involvement from the west in the 12th century, the fall in the 15th century by Vietnamese from the north. Both occasions were also linked to international trade and involved indigenous factions. In this essay, I shall endeavor to explain how this 'turn' to Vijaya came about and what its consequences were.

A classical realm disrupted (875-1125 CE)

For a century (c. 875-975 CE) the realms of Indrapura and Yaśodharapura (Angkor) paralleled each other in their beginning and in their development as classical realms. After years of regional separation, north and south, within Champa, the new realm of Indrapura emerged out of new roots in the Thu Bồn river valley. Though the name Champa had first appeared in seventh century Cham and Khmer inscriptions, it was seen as the official name of this land by the Chinese only later in the ninth century. This was the time when the new regime, based on its own divine merits, not descent, established Indrapura as the major political centre of Nagara Champa, overcoming the prior existence of multiple river valley autonomy, especially that of Pāṇḍuraṅga in the far south. As Anne-Valérie Schweyer (2012, p. 115) has written, 'The country of the Chams therefore truly existed from the ninth century on not only a territorial basis but also as a highly developed and specific social entity.' The core of this Nagara Champa lay in the territory stretching from the Thu Bồn valley down to that of the Côn. North of the Thu Bồn and south of the Côn were 'loosely and periodically connected regions of the whole Nagara Champa', which came to be conceived as consisting of 'ten regions'.²

In the same decades when Yaśovarman and the following monarchs were constructing their royal base at Angkor, Jaya Indravarman (r. 875-898 CE), Nagara Champa's first *Mahārājādhirāja*, and his successors built a strong and expanding realm. While for the first time declaring descent from Bhrgu and Uroja, they emphasized their own karmic claim through many prior births. Though Buddhist, in the Esoteric/Mahāyāna beliefs of the age, celebrating Avalokiteśvara, the centuries-old Śaiva cult of Bhadreśvara continued in the religious site of Mý Sơn upriver from Indrapura, with a rich *kośa* bestowed on its *liṅga*. Thus, there appeared a newly integrated Champa belief system, written in Sanskrit or Sanskrit form for Cham drawing elements from trans-regional teachings and producing them in decidedly Cham style. Their temples and sculptures show well-developed forms shared with Javanese and Khmer architecture and art. This regime sent numerous missions to the new Song court and its immediate predecessors in China (951-980 CE) as well as making contact with Java and fighting with the Khmers in the 940s. As it strengthened, it moved strongly to the north, up towards what was becoming the new Vietnamese realm in the Red River valley, implanting its Esoteric Buddhism in this northern territory.³

Then, for the next hundred years (975-1075 CE), this developing realm of Đại Việt disrupted and shattered the growth of Indrapura. Reacting against Nagara Champa's move north, especially its attack into the Red River Delta in 979 CE, the Vietnamese counterattacked and struck the Champa capital three years later. As the *Chronicle of Đại Việt* (BK, 1, 16a) declared, 'Champa was greatly destroyed!' Through the 980s, chaos reigned around the Buddha City (Indrapura) and a renegade Vietnamese briefly led Champa. As Nagara Champa and Đại Việt fought on and off over the territory lying between them into the 1070s, the political organization of Champa that had been developing seems to have crumbled. Posing a constant threat, culminating in the