

Simultaneously, the trading realms of Java (Majapahit) and Champa (Vijaya) thrived. On this basis, Nagara Champa, centred on Vijaya, rose to the peak of its power. Unfortunately, through this century Nagara Champa ceased its monumental and inscriptional efforts (concentrating on trade and diplomacy?), so little internal evidence exists for this period. Sometime during the 1360s there arose a new powerful ruler of Nagara Champa, called by the Vietnamese Chế Bồng Nga (perhaps with the posthumous title of Śivakarūṇa). On his foundation of Vijaya's 140 year old monarchy (and Śimhapura's in the century before that?) with its ritual, joined to the trade and its prosperity, Chế Bồng Nga pushed Vijaya's might outward, up into the highlands and against the weakening regimes of Angkor on the south and Đại Việt to the north. In 1371 CE, he attacked and occupied the faction-ridden capital of Đại Việt, Thăng Long, plundering it (as the Vietnamese had done for the capital of Nagara Champa before). For nearly two decades, the Champa king continued these attacks on the Red River valley, bringing Đại Việt to the point of destruction.<sup>11</sup>

### Competition and defeat (1375-1475 CE)

The 1370s and 1380s saw Nagara Champa dominating its neighbors in a series of attacks. This ended in 1390 CE as Chế Bồng Nga's latest strike against Đại Việt met the new firepower of the Vietnamese (adapted from the new Ming dynasty, 1368-1644 CE, in China). This firepower killed the Vijaya monarch, and Nagara Champa's power crumbled. As its armies collapsed and fell back, the top general seized the throne as Jaya Śimhavarman (r. 1390-1400 CE) (reflecting a Śimhapura link?), chasing two of Chế Bồng Nga's sons to take refuge with the Việts. Dealing with the new regime of the powerful minister and later king of Đại Việt, Hồ Quý Ly, as well as with the Ming dynasty, the new ruler of Nagara Champa gradually rebuilt his regime. While the lack of new temples and inscriptions through the fourteenth century has suggested decline and ultimate extinction for Nagara Champa and its realm, Vijaya continued strongly on its trans-regional trade foundation (witness the Zheng He expeditions' visits there). Economically prosperous, though not as mighty politically, this land remained on firm grounds into the fifteenth century.<sup>12</sup>

By the beginning of this century, the new regime in Vijaya had established itself. Virabhadravarmān (r. 1400-41 CE), son of Jaya Śimhavarman, the general who had succeeded Chế Bồng Nga (Śivakarūṇa), came to the throne of Nagara Champa and ruled for almost four decades as a descendant of Bhr̥gu. Initially beset by attacks from the new Hồ court, then by the invading Ming armies that conquered the Hồ, Virabhadravarmān, 'maintain[ing] our land's territory' (C. 45), consolidated Vijaya's control in the Cồn and Đà Rằng valleys as well as in the highlands at the sources of the two streams. It would seem that in doing so Virabhadravarmān (and his father?) resurrected the temple building and composition of inscriptions missing for almost a century. By 1415 CE, he had brought Nagara Champa back together and 'acceded to the kingdom' (C. 43). Having regained the Thu Bồn valley and established his Śaiva cult (with inscriptions on the backs of sculpture), as 'the one king' and 'protector', he developed his presence in the highland valleys (using Việts refugees from the Ming) and proceeded to push south into the Mekong delta, 'succeeding to create again' Nagara Champa (C. 1). In 1421 CE, he finally held his *abhiṣeka*, declaring his land born again (C. 214), and through the 1420s the kingdom thrived. In the highlands, the king settled 'Laos, Việts, Khmers, Siamese, Javanese, and Bengalis' (C. 43), indicating the variety of peoples present in Champa. Commerce and manufacture (especially in ceramics) increased as Champa's society and economy prospered.<sup>13</sup>

Initially, the new Đại Việt court of the Lê dynasty (1428-1527 CE) had good relations with Vijaya and Virabhadravarmān, but after the death of the founder, Lê Lợi (r. 1428-1433 CE), relations reverted to tension and increasing Việts interference in the affairs of Nagara Champa. Part of this was the old political tension of centuries past, part was cultural as Đại Việt became more Confucian, and part was perhaps economic with both lands striving for commercial gains in the new trans-regional trade of Melaka. Also, after Virabhadravarmān, factionalism grew in Vijaya and its throne changed hands. This occurred at a time, the 1460s, when a new, young, and dynamic king, Lê Thánh-tông (r. 1460-1497 CE), was transforming the realm of Đại Việt in administrative, military, and ideological terms. Much more efficient in their resource and manpower control, while also stressing Confucian morality, the Vietnamese court