

E P I L O G U E

VIETNAM WAS BORN

In the second half of the 10th century, Đinh Bộ Lĩnh had materialized for the first time the political independence for the Vietnamese people. It is from this date - 968 - that one can speak of a nation called Vietnam. This nation, from this date, had a territory that needed ten centuries to decide on its borders. It is from this date that this nation had a people that needed more than ten centuries for its formation.¹

The Giao-chỉ² area began to cover 7 departments.³ then 9 departments⁴, under the Hán. In this administrative organization, only three far-south departments concerned the Vietnamese. The Ngô, though precarious in matter of power, had made the first step in cutting Giao-chỉ⁵ into two châu, Giao-châu and Quảng-châu. The name An-nam, once given to Giao-châu under the Ngụy, was sanctioned by the Đường, to designate the three far-south departments, when this dynasty conceded to bestow to it a new form of political arrangement, the Protectorate. It was this An-nam, on which the Nam-chiếu imposed their temporary domination, that Đinh Bộ Lĩnh for the first time erected into a country, called Đại-cồ-việt, or Việt-nam.

1. The formation of the Vietnamese people has been one of the longest in history.

2. Giao-chỉ bộ.

3. In 111 B.C.

4. In 106 B.C.

The formation of the Vietnamese people was more painful. While historians, who wrote about Vietnam history, did not quarrel on the territory of Vietnam, they had never agreed on the origin of the Vietnamese people. Most of them thought that a strong Vietnam should have been built by ethnic elements sprouting from Vietnamese soil. They tried consequently to depict the autochthons in a better light. Sometimes they exaggerated what they found in the documents, sometimes they even distorted the documents to satisfy their view. But the truth of history defiantly popped up its head to show which course to follow.

While many historians intentionally dismiss the fact that the autochthons were repeatedly defeated by Triệu Đà, by Lê Bác Đức, by Mã Viện, and that they had treacherously brought in the Nam-chiêu to dominate over An-nam, the reality was that besides the autochthons, the uprising of Trưng Trắc itself had testified the existence of Chinese colons, who grew in number with the centuries and had ultimately become the Vietnamese people.

In effect, the colons who helped Mã Viện to fight against the Lạc-việt increased in number gradually. Coming from Chinese lands, they populated Giao-chỉ, then Cửu-chân, then Nhật-nam. Generation after generation, they got acclimated, naturalized. There came a time when the descendants of the first comers did not know other native country than where they were born. And there came also a time when even China considered them as kind of half-foreigners, subject

to political, cultural and economic discrimination .

It was these descendants of Chinese colons who grew into the majority of the population, especially after the defeat of Trưng Trắc, that constituted the Vietnamese. They were gradually aware of their common interests, of their identity, and of the possibility, even of the necessity, of being politically independent from China. As the uprising of Trưng Trắc was the last attempt of the autochthons to regain tribal power, the uprising of the colon Lý Bí was the first attempt of the Vietnamese to initiate a new country. Lý Bí failed as Trưng Trắc did, but Trưng Trắc marked an end, while Lý Bí a beginning, which would come into full realization with Đinh Bộ Lĩnh.

Full realization, indeed. At the end of the Đương, Khúc Thừa Dụ was appointed by the emperor to be governor of Tĩnh-hải. When the king of Nam-Hán wanted to annex Tĩnh-hải, Ngô Quyền defeated him completely at the mouth of Bạch-đăng River. Ngô Quyền became independent in regard to Nam-Hán. But Đinh Bộ Lĩnh, after pacifying and unifying his country, proclaimed himself emperor and was recognized as independent ruler by the Tống emperor himself, in 975.

5. When the Ngụy gave to Lữ Hùng the title of An-nam Tướng-quân, this An-nam stood for Giao-châu, and Giao-châu covered the territory of former Giao-chí-bộ.

6. In 792, there was a report to the Đương emperor about the maritime commerce in An-nam. The governor of Lĩnh-nam wanted the emperor to divert this commerce to Quảng-châu. A mandarin by name Lục Chất tried to avert the em-

Of course, the **Tống** emperor did not want to consider his recognition of **Giao-châu** as permanent. Anytime he thought it feasible to reconquer the former Chinese colonies, he would hasten to do so. In 980, at the news of **Đinh Bộ Lĩnh**'s death, he earnestly threw a big army into **Giao-châu**. Chinese troops followed two roads: they came by land through **Lạng-són**, and by sea through **Bạch-dương** River. **Lê Hoàn**, Commander in chief of the army of **Đinh Bộ Lĩnh** and his successor on the throne of **Đại-cồ-việt**, was also ready. After destroying the **Tống**'s fleet in **Bạch-dương**, as **Ngô Quyền** had done to the **Nam Hán** half a century⁸ before, he tore into pieces the **Tống**'s army in **Chi-lãng**. This was the way **Đại-cồ-việt** re-affirmed its willingness to be independent.

And since this victory, this continued to be the way **Đại-cồ-việt**, or **Đại-việt**, behaved with its Giant Neighbor to the North. For, China came back almost periodically, and each time with its biggest army possible. The **Nguyê⁸n** came in the 13th century, the **Minh⁹** in the 15th, and the **Thanh¹⁰** in the 18th. If the circumstances differed more or less from one time to another, the purpose of these coming-back, was invariably the same: Taking **Đại-việt** back to China. And each time, **Đại-việt** victoriously refused to go along.

peror from this discrimination. Tư Tri, book 234, page 1606.

7. **Lê Hoàn** 黎桓; General of **Đinh Tiên-hoàng** and founder of the **Tiên Lê** 前黎 dynasty (981-1009).

China remembered better than the Vietnamese themselves the ten-century-long period of their formation. According to the view of China, Đại-việt was always a Chinese area temporarily detached from China. Each new Chinese imperial dynasty seemed to think it its duty to re-capture the so-called lost territory. The experience of previous defeats did not matter, because it was almost unbelievable that Giant China could not overcome little Đại-việt.

The Mongols, or the Nguyễn, tried twice with all their forces. And what tremendous forces the Nguyễn had! Even so, they were miserably defeated in 1285; and in 1288, when they made their supreme assault, they were literally crushed.¹¹ The Minh, who succeeded the Nguyễn, got a temporary victory. From 1407 to 1417, they governed Đại-việt as unchallenged rulers. During that time, the worst things of the colonial period were put back into practice with more subtlety and more stringency. But in 1418, Lê Lợi¹² emerged as savior, and during ten long years, he fought and chased the Chinese home after smashing victories.¹² The Thanh came in 1789 at the request of a deposed king, Lê Chiêu-thông.¹³ Unfortunately, the Chinese generalissimo, Tôn

8. The Nguyễn 元 or the Mongols became rulers of China from 1260 to 1368.

9. The Minh 明 (1368-1640) was successful at first because irresponsibility of the Vietnamese dynasty of the Hồ.

10. The Thanh 清 or the Manchous governed China from 1640 to 1911.

¹⁴
 Sĩ Nghi, had to flee desperately before Nguyễn Huệ the Vietnamese hero, leaving almost all his army drowned in the Red River.

Facing this recurrence of invasion on the part of China, and these repeated victories on the part of Vietnam, the Vietnamese historians belonging either to the old Chinese school or to the socialist school, had explained the formation of the Vietnamese people in terms of a radical difference in origin with the Chinese people; any similitude that could be found between the Vietnamese and the Chinese ^{construed as} was imposed by the governing nation-China- to the governed one- Vietnam.

But if it were so, one of the strangest phenomena had happened. Why other ethnic groups of Vietnam, such as the Mường, the Mán, the Lolo, the Nùng, the Thái, the Mèo, etc...could keep their customs, their language, their religions, in one word, their way of life, and only the Vietnamese lost theirs? Were they not the majority of the population? Why, globally speaking, the Vietnamese culture was Chinese? the Vietnamese language was Chinese? the Vietnamese religions were Chinese? the Vietnamese education was Chinese? And Chinese also was the drive for

11. The Mongols obviously made all their efforts to take over Đại-việt, but could not.

12. Lê Lợi 黎利: He symbolized the very strength of Vietnam, because he rose up to fight against China not in the name of a dynasty nor of the faithfulness to a dynasty, but in the name of a plain Vietnamese citizen.

southward expansion...

And how miraculous the change in the autochthons to make them able to win over the Chinese time and again through centuries since 968 ? Was it not the trend of self-defense and the zest for rebellion was weakening among the tribes since the defeat of Trưng Trắc in the 1st century ? Were the autochthons, who had called in the Nam-chiều to ravage An-nam, so interested in the fate of An-nam to defend it at any cost ?

Of course, these considerations should not be construed in an anachronical manner. One cannot take Việt-nam of the 20th century and consider it as that of the 10th century. Much change had happened during the 10 centuries of Vietnam existence. Besides its capacity to reject Chinese invasions, Vietnam had expanded itself twice its original size. It had overrun the kingdom of Champa, and the kingdom of Lower Cambodia. These accomplishments and its millenary of independence should have entailed much differentiation with itself both in the way of life and in the racial components. Even so, up to now, Vietnam did not lose any characteristics of a smaller dragon.

13. Lê Chiêu-thông 黎召痛: The last king of the Restoration Period of the Lê dynasty (133-1789). After the total defeat of Tôn Sĩ Nghị, he went to China and died there. In 1804, his corpse was brought back to Vietnam.

14. Tôn Sĩ Nghị 孫士儀: One of the hapless Chinese generals who led the Chinese invasions of Vietnam.

It is not necessary to exaggerate, nor to distort history, to have a normal view on Vietnam. There was no miraculous change in the autochthons. There was no strange phenomenon in the fact that the Vietnamese way of life was similar to that of China. With the existence of the Chinese colons in Giao-chí, in Giao-châu, in An-nam, in Tĩnh-hải, all the questions brought forth above, get proper answers by themselves. It was this existence that most of the Vietnamese historians denied.

The secret of the strength of these colons can be found in the uprising of 1542. Lý Bí, when he stood up, did so not in the name of the colons alone, nor in the name of any single tribe, but in the name of a national cause. The capacity of the Vietnamese to win in Bạch-đăng, in Chi-lãng,¹⁷ in Vạn-kiệp,¹⁸ in Ngọc-hồi,¹⁹ came from the very fact that they were by no means inferior to their invaders in terms of brain ability, of military training knowledge, of strategic skill. Why? Because if their invaders were Chinese, they were also Chinese descendants. And they were favored by the geographical setting of their own country, by their special climate, by their better knowledge of their environment, and by the fact that they had to fight on their own territory,

15. To cite only one example: Up to 1917, all the examinations in Vietnam were conducted in a typical Chinese way. The students had to use Chinese language, had to study Chinese textbooks, and had to use Chinese history in their allusions. That year, the French Protectorate abolished Chinese examinations and installed the French,

In short, Vietnam was originally a portion of Chinese far-south territory. And the Vietnamese people were descendants of Chinese colons. These colons, along with the autochthons who constituted the minority, rose up against China in the 10th century and made the nation of Vietnam. To insist that the Vietnamese were the descendants of the Lạc-việt, for example, is similar to insist that the American people are descendants of, say, the Sioux.

T H E E N D

16. China is usually considered as the Giant Dragon and Vietnam, the Smaller dragon (Title of a History of Vietnam of Joseph Buttinger).

17. Chi-lăng was the arena of victory of Lê Hoàn in 981, of Lê lợi in 1428.

Vạn-kiếp was the place where the Trần troops won over the Nguyễn in 1288.

19. Ngọc-hôi was the place where Nguyễn Huệ destroyed the army of the Thanh in 1789, while Tôn Sĩ Nghị left everything behind to flee away.

APPENDIX

Important dates

- 111 B.C. The Hán took over the kingdom Namviet.
Creation of the Area of Giao-chí or Giao-chí-bộ consisting of 7 departments.
- 8-23 Usurpation of Vương Mãng
- 40 Revolt of Trưng Trắc
- 43 Victory of Mã Viện
- 137 Revolt of Khâu Liên in Tượng-lâm and creation of the Lâm-ấp kingdom.
- 187-226 Sĩ Nhiếp, prefect of Giao-chí
- 210 The name Giao-chí bo was changed into Giao-châu
- 264 Division of Giao-châu into Giao-châu and Quảng-châu
- 413 ĐỖ Tuệ ĐỘ killed Lâm-ấp king Phạm-Hồ Đạt
- 446 Great victory of Đền Hòa Chi over Lâm-ấp.
- 542-548 Uprising of Lý Bí
- 548 Victory of Trần Bá Tiên.
- 602 Revolt of Lý Phật Tử
Surrender of Lý Phật Tử to General Lưu Phưởng
- 605 Victory of Lưu Phưởng in Lâm-ấp.
- 680 Establishment of The Protectorate of An-nam.
- 737 Establishment of the Nam-chiều kingdom.
- 756 Change of Lâm-ấp into Hoàn-vương.
- 803-809 Occupation of Hoàn-vương over Hoan-châu.

- 856 Hoàn-vương was changed into Chiêm-thành
- 863-866 Domination of the Nam-chiều over An-nam
- 866 Victory of Cao Biền
- 905 Khúc Thừa Dụ was appointed governor of
Tĩnh-hải with the title Đổng-bình-
chưởng-sự.
- 907 Khúc Hạo succeeded to his father Khúc Thừa
Dụ
- 911 Khúc Thừa Mỹ succeeded to Khúc Hạo.
- 923 Khúc Thừa Mỹ surrendered to the Nam-Hán
Dương Đình Nghệ chased the Nam-Hán out
- 937 Kiều Công Tiễn assassinated Dương Đình Nghệ.
- 938 Ngô Quyền killed Kiều Công Tiễn
- 939 Ngô Quyền's victory over the Nam-Hán at
Bạch-dăng River.
- 944 Ngô Quyền died.
Usurpation of Dương Tam Kha.
- 950 Ngô Xương Văn took back the throne of the
Ngô
- 954 Ngô Xương Ngập died
- 965 Ngô Xương Văn died
- 966-968 Caotic period of the Sứ-quân.
- 968 Victory of Đinh Bộ Lĩnh
Establishment of Đại-cồ-việt.

APPENDIX II

CHRONOLOGICAL CORRESPONDENCE

Tân thủy-hoàng	1	246 B.C.
秦 始皇	37	210
Tân Nhị thế	1	209
秦 二世	3	207
Hán Cao-tô	1	206
漢 高祖	12	195
Hán Huê đế	1	194
漢 惠帝	7	188
Hán Cao-hậu	1	187
漢 高后	8	180
Hán Thái-tông	1	179
漢 太宗	16	164
Hậu	1	163
後	7	159
Hán Cảnh-đế	1	156
漢 景帝	7	150
Trung	1	149
中	6	144
Hậu	1	143
後	3	141
Hán Thế-tông: Kiên-nguyên	1	140
漢 世宗: 建元	6	135
Nguyên-quang	1	134
元光	6	129
Nguyên-sơ	1	128
元朔	6	123
Nguyên-phủ	1	122
元狩	6	117
Nguyên-hàng	1	116
元鼎	6	111
Nguyên-phong	1	110
元封	6	105
Thái-sơ	1	104
太初	4	101
Thiên-han	1	100
天漢	4	97
Thái-thủy	1	96
太始	4	93
Chính-hóa	1	92
征和	4	89
Hậu-nguyên	1	88
後元	2	87

Hán Chiêu-đế:	Thủy-nguyên	1	86
漢 昭 帝	始 元	6	81
	Nguyên-phượng	1	80
	元 鳳	6	78
	Nguyên-bình	1	74
	元 平		
Hán Trung-tông:	Bản-thủy	1	73
漢 中 宗	本 始	4	70
	Đĩa-tiết	1-4	69-66
	Nguyên-khang	1	65
	元 康	4	62
	Thần-tước	1	61
	神 爵	4	58
	Ngũ-phương	1	57
	五 鳳	2	54
	Cam-lộ	1	53
	甘 露	4	50
	Hán-long	1	49
	黃 龍		
Hán Nguyên-đế:	Sơ nguyên	1	48
漢 元 帝	初 元	5	44
	Vinh-quang	11	43
	永 光	5	39
	Kiên-triều	1	38
	建 昭	5	34
	Khoan-ninh	1	33
	竟 寧		
Hán Thành-đế:	Kiên-thủy	1	32
漢 成 帝	建 始	4	29
	Hà-bình	1	28
	河 平	4	25
	Dương-sóc	1	24
	陽 朔	4	24
	Bàng-biạ	1	20
	朋 嘉	4	17
	Vinh-thủy	1	16
	永 始	4	13
	Nguyên-Điên	1	12
	元 延	4	9
	An-hòa	1	8
	安 和	2	7
	Kiên-bình	1	6
	建 平	4	3
	Nguyên-thọ	1	2
	元 壽	2	1
Hán Bình-đế:	Nguyên-thủy	1	1 A.D.
漢 平 帝	元 始	5	5
Vương Mãng	Cự-nhiếp	1	6
王 莽	居 攝	2	7
	Sơ-thủy	1	8
	Thủy-Kiến-quốc	1	9
	始 建 國	5	13

		Thiên-phượng	1	14
		天 鳳	6	19
		Địa-hoàng	1	20
		地 皇	3	22
Hán	Hoài-dương-vương:	Cánh-thủy	1	23
漢	淮陽王	更始	2	24
Hán	Thế tổ	Kiên-võ	1	25
漢	世祖	建武	31	55
		Trung-Nguyên	1	56
		中元	2	57
Hán	Hiên-tông	Vĩnh-bình	1	58
漢	顯宗	永平	18	75
Hán	Uyên-tông:	Kiên-sơ	1	76
漢	元宗	建初	8	83
		Nguyên-hòa	1	84
		元和	3	86
		Chương-hòa	1	87
		章和	2	88
Hán	Hòa-đế	Vĩnh-nguyên	1	89
漢	和帝	永元	16	104
		Vĩnh-hung	1	105
		永興		
Hán	Dương-đế	Diên-bình	1	106
漢	陽帝	延平		
Hán	An-đế	Vĩnh-sơ	1	107
漢	安帝	永初	7	113
		Nguyên-sơ	1	114
		元初	6	119
		Vĩnh-ninh	1	120
		Kiên-quang	1	121
		Diên-quang	1	122
		延光	4	125
Hán	Thuận-đế	Vĩnh-kiên	1	126
漢	順帝	永建	6	131
		Dương-gia	1	132
		陽嘉	4	135
		Vĩnh-hòa	1	136
		永和	6	141
		Hán-an	1	142
		漢安	2	143
		Kiên-khang	1	144
		建康		
Hán	Trung-đế	Vĩnh-gia	1	145
漢	中帝	永嘉		
Hán	Tân-đế	Bản-sơ	1	146
漢	愍帝	本初		
Hán	Hàng-đế	Kiên-hòa	1	147
漢	桓帝	建和	3	149

	Hoà-bình	1	150
	Nguyên-gia	1	151
	元 嘉	2	152
	Vinh-hưng	1	153
	永 興	2	154
	Vinh-tho	1	155
	永 寧	3	157
	Diên-hi	1	158
	延 嘉	9	166
	Vinh-Khang	1	167
	永 康		
Hán Linh-đế :	Kiên-ninh	1	168
漢 靈 帝	建 寧	4	171
	Hí-bình	1	172
	熹 平	6	177
	Quang-hòa	1	178
	光 和	6	183
	Trung-bình	1	184
	中 平	6	189
	Bình-sổ	1	190
Hán Hiên-đế	平 初	4	193
漢 獻 帝	Hưng-bình	1	194
	興 平	2	195
	Kiến-an	1	196
	建 安	24	219
	Hoàng-sổ	1	220
Nguy Cao-tổ	黃 初	7	226
魏 高 祖	Thái-hòa	1	227
	太 和	6	232
Nguy Liệt-tổ	Thanh-long	1	233
魏 烈 祖	青 龍	4	236
	Cánh-sổ	1	237
	景 初	3	239
	Nguy Chiêu-lăng-công: Chính-thủy	1	240
魏 邵 陵 公	正 始	9	248
	Gia-bình	1	249
	嘉 平	5	253
	Nguy Cao-quý Hương-công		
魏 高 貴 鄉	Chính-nguyên	1	254
	正 元	2	255
	Cam-lô	1	256
	甘 露	4	259
	Nguy Nguyên-đế		
魏 元 帝	Cánh-nguyên	1	260
	景 元	4	263
	Hàm-hi	1	264
	咸 熙		
Tân Thế-tổ	Tân-thủy	1	265
晉 世 祖	泰 如	10	274

Tân Huệ-đế	Hàm-ninh	1	275
晉惠帝	咸寧	5	279
	Thái-khang	1	280
	太康	10	289
	Vĩnh-hy	1	290
	Nguyên-khang	1	291
	元康	9	299
	Vĩnh-khang	1	300
	Vĩnh-thinh	1	301
	Thái-an	1	302
	安	2	303
	Vĩnh-hung	1	304
	永興	2	305
	Quang-hi	1	306
	光熙	1	307
	Vĩnh-gia	6	312
	永嘉	1	307
Tân Nhông-đế	Kiến-hung	4	313
晉懷帝	建興	1	316
	Kiến-võ	1	317
	Thái-hung	1	318
	太興	4	321
	Vĩnh-xuong	1	322
	永昌	1	323
	Thái-ninh	3	325
	太寧	1	323
	Hàm-hòa	1	326
	咸和	9	334
	Hàm-khang	1	335
	咸康	8	342
Tân Tiâu-tông	Kiến-nguyên	2	343
晉肅宗	建元	1	344
	Vĩnh-hòa	1	345
	永和	12	356
	Thang-binh	1	357
	升平	5	361
	Long-hòa	1	362
	Hưng-ninh	1	363
	興寧	3	365
Tân Ai-đế	Thái-hòa	1	366
晉哀帝	太和	5	370
	Hàm-an	1	371
	咸安	2	372
Tân Hải-tây-công	Ninh-khang	1	373
晉海西公	烈宗	3	375

	Thái-nguyên	1	376
	太元	21	396
Tân An-đế	Long-an	1	397
晉安帝	隆安	5	401
	Nguyên-hưng	1	402
	元興	3	404
	Nghĩa-hy	1	405
	義熙	14	418
Tân Cung-đế	Nguyên-hy	1	419
晉恭帝	元熙		
Tông Cao-tổ	Vĩnh-sơ	1	420
宋高祖	永初	3	422
Tông Thái-tổ	Nguyên-gia	1	423
宋太祖	元嘉	30	453
Tông Thế-tổ	Hiếu-kiến	1	454
宋世祖	孝建	3	456
	Đại-minh	1	457
	大明	8	464
Tông Thái-tông	Thái-thủy	1	465
宋太宗	泰始	7	471
	Thái-đư	1	472
	泰豫		
Tông Thường-ngô-vương	Nguyên-huy	1	473
宋蒼梧王	元徽	4	476
Tông Hiến-đế	Thăng-minh	1	477
宋顯帝	昇明	2	478
Tê Thái-tổ	Kiến-nguyên	1	479
齊太祖	建元	4	482
Tê Thế-tổ	Vĩnh-minh	1	483
齊世祖	永明	11	493
Tê Cao-tông	Kiến-võ	1	494
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	永泰		499
Tê Đông-hôn-hậu	Vĩnh-nguyên	1	499
齊東昏侯	永元	2	500
Tê Hòa-đế	Trung-hưng	1	501
齊和帝	中興		
Lương Cao-tổ	Thiên-giám	1	502
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	Đại-dồng	1	535
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	Trung-Đại-dồng	1	546
	Thái-thanh	1	547
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	Trinh-minh	1	587
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	顯 慶	5	660
	Long-sức	1	661
	龍 朔	3	663
	Lân-đức	1	664
	麟 德	2	665
	Can-phong	1	666
	乾 封	2	667
	Hiên-chương	1	668
	總 章	4	673
	Thượng-nguyên	1	674
	上 元	2	675
	Nghi-phương	1	676
	儀 鳳	3	678
	Châu-lô	1	679
	Vĩnh-long	1	680
	Khai-huy	1	681
	Vĩnh-hào	1	682
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	Cửu-thị	1	700
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	長 安	4	704
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Đường Trung-tông	Cảnh-long	1	707
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	Thiên-báu	1	742
	天 寶	14	755

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		至 德	2	757
		Can-nguyên	1	758
		乾 元	2	759
		Thượng-nguyên	1	760
		上 元	2	761
		Báu-ứng	1	762
		寶 應		
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		承 泰		
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		貞 元	20	804
		Vĩnh-trình	1	805
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		元 和	15	820
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		寶 曆	2	826
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		太 和	9	835
		Khai-thành	1	836
		開 成	5	840
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	Cảnh-phúc	1	892
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	Càn-phúc	1	894
	乾 福	4	897
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Kiên-long
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Can-đức
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