

Nguyen Trai's political philosophy and cultural humanism: Confucian ethics, resistance thought, and nation-building in 15th-century Vietnam

Bui Huy DU*^I
Nguyen Minh TRI**^{II}

^I Mekong University [ROR::](https://ror.org/), Vinh Long, Vietnam

^{II} HUTECH University [ROR::](https://ror.org/), Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Abstract

This article provides an interdisciplinary reinterpretation of Nguyen Trai (1380–1442) as a political philosopher, cultural humanist, and architect of early Lê-era statecraft. By situating his thought within the ideological realignment of post-Ming occupation Vietnam, the study reexamines his conception of *nhân nghĩa* (benevolence and righteousness) as both a moral ideal and a pragmatic framework for governance. Drawing on Confucian humanism, Neo-Confucian moral governance, and Southeast Asian resistance literature, the analysis integrates political theory, textual hermeneutics, and historical-contextual reconstruction to illuminate Nguyen Trai's synthesis of ethical statecraft and cultural identity. The findings demonstrate that his vision of humane governance transcended wartime propaganda to articulate a coherent philosophy of nation-building grounded in justice, popular welfare, and moral legitimacy. By bridging political ethics, cultural resilience, and Confucian reformism, the article contributes to a deeper understanding of Vietnamese intellectual history and highlights Nguyen Trai's enduring relevance to contemporary discussions on leadership, ethics, and human-centered governance.

Keywords: Nguyen Trai; political philosophy; cultural humanism; confucian ethics; nation-building in 15th-century Vietnam.

A filosofia política e o humanismo cultural de Nguyen Trai: ética confucionista, pensamento de resistência e construção da nação no Vietnã do século XV

Resumo

Este artigo oferece uma reinterpretação interdisciplinar de Nguyen Trai (1380–1442) como filósofo político, humanista cultural e arquiteto da arte de governar no início da era Lê. Ao situar seu pensamento dentro do realinhamento ideológico do Vietnã pós-ocupação Ming, o estudo reexamina sua concepção de *nhân nghĩa* (benevolência e retidão) como um ideal moral e uma estrutura pragmática para a governança. Com base no humanismo confucionista, na governança moral neoconfucionista e na literatura de resistência do Sudeste Asiático, a análise integra teoria política, hermenêutica textual e reconstrução histórico-contextual para esclarecer a síntese de Nguyen Trai entre arte de governar ética e identidade cultural. As conclusões demonstram que sua visão de governança humana transcendeu a propaganda de guerra para articular uma

* PhD in Philosophy from University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City. Professor and researcher of Philosophy at Mekong University, Vietnam. E-mail: buihuydu2018@gmail.com. <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9997-114X>

** PhD in Philosophy from University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City. Associate Professor at HUTECH University, Vietnam. Corresponding Author E-mail: nm.tri@hutech.edu.vn. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2535-1766>

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filosofia coerente de construção nacional baseada na justiça, no bem-estar popular e na legitimidade moral. Ao unir ética política, resiliência cultural e reformismo confucionista, o artigo contribui para uma compreensão mais profunda da história intelectual vietnamita e destaca a relevância duradoura de Nguyen Trai para as discussões contemporâneas sobre liderança, ética e governança centrada no ser humano.

Palavras-chave: Nguyen Trai; filosofia política; humanismo cultural; ética confucionista; construção da nação no Vietnã do século XV.

La filosofía política y el humanismo cultural de Nguyen Trai: ética confuciana, pensamiento de resistencia y construcción nacional en el Vietnam del siglo XV

Resumen

Este artículo ofrece una reinterpretación interdisciplinaria de Nguyen Trai (1380-1442) como filósofo político, humanista cultural y arquitecto de la política estatal de principios de la era Lê. Al situar su pensamiento en el contexto del reajuste ideológico de Vietnam tras la ocupación Ming, el estudio reexamina su concepción de *nhân nghĩa* (benevolencia y rectitud) como ideal moral y marco pragmático para la gobernanza. Basándose en el humanismo confuciano, la gobernanza moral neoconfuciana y la literatura de resistencia del sudeste asiático, el análisis integra la teoría política, la hermenéutica textual y la reconstrucción histórico-contextual para esclarecer la síntesis de Nguyen Trai entre el arte de gobernar ético y la identidad cultural. Los resultados demuestran que su visión de la gobernanza humana trascendió la propaganda bélica para articular una filosofía coherente de construcción nacional basada en la justicia, el bienestar popular y la legitimidad moral. Al tender un puente entre la ética política, la resiliencia cultural y el reformismo confuciano, el artículo contribuye a una comprensión más profunda de la historia intelectual vietnamita y destaca la relevancia perdurable de Nguyen Trai en los debates contemporáneos sobre liderazgo, ética y gobernanza centrada en el ser humano.

Palabras clave: Nguyen Trai; filosofía política; humanismo cultural; ética confuciana; construcción nacional en el Vietnam del siglo XV.

La philosophie politique et l'humanisme culturel de Nguyen Trai : éthique confucéenne, pensée de résistance et construction nationale au Vietnam du XVe siècle

Résumé

Cet article propose une réinterprétation interdisciplinaire de Nguyen Trai (1380-1442) en tant que philosophe politique, humaniste culturel et architecte de la politique publique au début de l'ère Lê. En situant sa pensée dans le contexte du réalignement idéologique du Vietnam après l'occupation Ming, cette étude réexamine sa conception du *nhân nghĩa* (bienveillance et justice) à la fois comme idéal moral et cadre pragmatique de gouvernance. S'appuyant sur l'humanisme confucéen, la gouvernance morale néo-confucéenne et la littérature de résistance d'Asie du Sud-Est, l'analyse intègre la théorie politique, l'herméneutique textuelle et la reconstruction historique et contextuelle afin d'éclairer la synthèse de Nguyen Trai entre l'art de gouverner éthique et l'identité culturelle. Les résultats démontrent que sa vision d'une gouvernance humaine transcendait la propagande de guerre pour articular une philosophie cohérente de construction nationale fondée sur la justice, le bien-être populaire et la légitimité morale. En établissant un pont entre l'éthique politique, la résilience culturelle et le réformisme confucéen, l'article contribue à une meilleure compréhension de l'histoire intellectuelle vietnamienne et souligne la pertinence durable de Nguyen Trai dans les discussions contemporaines sur le leadership, l'éthique et la gouvernance centrée sur l'humain.

Mots-clés : Nguyen Trai ; philosophie politique ; humanisme culturel ; éthique confucéenne ; construction nationale au Vietnam au XVe siècle.

阮廌的政治哲学与文化人文主义：儒家伦理、抵抗思想与十五世纪越南的建国

摘要

本文对阮廌（1380–1442）进行了跨学科的重新解读，将其视为一位政治哲学家、文化人文主义者以及黎朝早期治国方略的缔造者。通过将他的思想置于明朝统治后越南的意识形态重组背景下，本文重新审视了他关于“仁义”（*nhân nghĩa*）的理念，将其视为一种道德理想和一种务实的治国框架。本文借鉴儒家人文主义、新儒家道德治国理论以及东南亚抵抗运动文献，整合了政治理论、文本诠释学和历史语境重构，以阐明阮廌对伦理

治国与文化认同的融合。研究表明，阮廌的人道治理理念超越了战时宣传，构建了一套以法治、民生福祉和道德合法性为基础的连贯的建国哲学。本文通过融合政治伦理、文化韧性和儒家改革主义，加深了对越南思想史的理解，并凸显了阮廌在当代关于领导力、伦理和以人为本的治理等议题上的持久意义。

关键词：阮廌；政治哲学；人文文化；儒家伦理；15世纪越南的国家建设。

Nguyen Trais politische Philosophie und kultureller Humanismus: Konfuzianische Ethik, Widerstandsdoktrin und Nationenbildung im Vietnam des 15. Jahrhunderts

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Artikel bietet eine interdisziplinäre Neuinterpretation von Nguyen Trai (1380–1442) als politischer Philosoph, kultureller Humanist und Architekt der frühen Staatsführung der Lê-Ära. Indem sein Denken in den Kontext der ideologischen Neuausrichtung Vietnams nach der Besetzung durch die Ming gestellt wird, untersucht die Studie seine Konzeption von *nhân nghĩa* (Güte und Rechtschaffenheit) als moralisches Ideal und pragmatischen Rahmen für die Staatsführung. Unter Rückgriff auf den konfuzianischen Humanismus, die neokonfuzianische moralische Regierungsführung und die südostasiatische Widerstands-Literatur integriert die Analyse politische Theorie, Text-Hermeneutik und historisch-kontextuelle Rekonstruktion, um Nguyen Trais Synthese aus ethischer Staatskunst und kultureller Identität zu beleuchten. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass seine Vision einer humanen Regierungsführung über Kriegspropaganda hinausging und eine kohärente Philosophie des Nation-Building artikulierte, die auf Gerechtigkeit, Volkswohlfahrt und moralischer Legitimität beruhte. Durch die Verbindung von politischer Ethik, kultureller Resilienz und konfuzianischem Reformismus trägt der Artikel zu einem tieferen Verständnis der vietnamesischen Geistesgeschichte bei und hebt Nguyen Trais anhaltende Relevanz für zeitgenössische Diskussionen über Führung, Ethik und menschenzentrierte Regierungsführung hervor.

Schlüsselwörter: Nguyen Trai; Politische Philosophie; Kultureller Humanismus; Konfuzianische Ethik; Nationenbildung im Vietnam des 15. Jahrhunderts.

Introduction

The early fifteenth century marked a decisive turning point in Vietnamese history. Following a decade-long resistance against Ming occupation, the establishment of the Lê dynasty (1428–1789) inaugurated an era of national reconstruction, ideological consolidation, and cultural renewal. Within this historical transformation, Nguyen Trai (1380–1442) emerged as a statesman, strategist, and philosopher whose ideas helped define the moral and political foundations of post-war *Dai Viet*. His life and writings spanning political essays, diplomatic letters, and literary compositions reflect not only the turbulence of an age but also an enduring quest for ethical governance and cultural autonomy.

As a political thinker, Nguyen Trai combined the ideals of Confucian humanism with the pragmatic realities of resistance and reconstruction. His concept of *nhân nghĩa* (benevolence and righteousness) transcended its classical Confucian meaning, evolving into a philosophy of moral legitimacy and popular empowerment. In texts such as *Bình Ngô Đại Cáo* (Proclamation upon the Pacification of the Wu) and *Quân Trung Từ Mệnh Tập* (Letters Written in the Military Headquarters), Nguyen Trai articulated a vision of just rule rooted in compassion, social responsibility, and the welfare of the people. This synthesis positioned him

as both an intellectual reformer and a moral architect of early Vietnamese statecraft. Despite his recognized status as a national hero and “world cultural celebrity” (Vietnam National Museum of History, 2017) scholarship on Nguyen Trai has often been limited to biographical commemoration or literary admiration. Critical gaps remain in understanding the theoretical coherence of his political philosophy and its broader implications for Asian intellectual history. Few studies have systematically examined Nguyen Trai’s integration of Confucian, Neo-Confucian, and indigenous elements within a framework of anti-colonial resistance and ethical governance. Moreover, the ways in which his legacy has been shaped by historical reinterpretation and cultural memory continue to warrant scholarly attention.

Addressing these gaps, this study reinterprets Nguyen Trai’s political philosophy and cultural humanism through an interdisciplinary framework combining political theory, historical-contextual reconstruction, and value philosophy. It argues that Nguyen Trai’s model of *nhân nghĩa* constitutes a distinct Vietnamese contribution to the global discourse on moral leadership and humanistic governance. By situating his ideas within regional intellectual currents and contemporary ethical debates, the article highlights Nguyen Trai’s lasting relevance not only as a historical figure of national liberation but as a thinker whose insights continue to illuminate the principles of justice, virtue, and human dignity in public life.

Literature Review

Scholarship on Nguyen Trai spans a wide spectrum, reflecting his enduring influence on Vietnam’s political history, literary tradition, and philosophical discourse. However, while substantial progress has been made in documenting his life and works, major gaps persist, particularly in comparative, theoretical, and global-contextual analyses.

Historical Context and Its Influence on Nguyen Trai’s Thought. Vietnamese-language sources such as the *Complete Annals of Dai Viet* and *Lam Son Thuc Luc* provide invaluable historical insights into the sociopolitical landscape of the early Lê Dynasty. They shed light on Nguyen Trai’s formative experiences during the resistance against Ming occupation and the consolidation of Dai Viet’s sovereignty. These texts underscore the decisive role of Confucian scholar-officials in shaping postcolonial governance. Yet, they often present Nguyen Trai within a linear nationalist narrative, with limited attention to how concrete historical traumas such as exile, betrayal, and factional court politics shaped his ethical worldview. Notably, his adaptation of the Confucian concept of *nhân nghĩa* (benevolence and righteousness) in response to these political upheavals warrants deeper exploration.

Intellectual Legacy and Literary Corpus. Canonical collections such as the *Nguyen Trai Complete Collection* (Vietnam, 1976) have systematically documented his output in both Han and Nom script. These works highlight the moral clarity and humanistic vision of texts like *Bình Ngô Đại Cáo* (*Great Proclamation upon the Pacification of the Wu*) and the *Collected Poems in the National Language* (*Quoc am thi tap*). However, most scholarships remain focused on textual cataloguing and rhetorical admiration. Few studies have investigated the structural and philosophical features of his writing in a global context. For example, comparative analysis between *Bình Ngô Đại Cáo* and contemporaneous Ming imperial manifestos could illuminate contrasting rhetorical strategies in asserting political legitimacy, moral authority, and visions of order, revealing Nguyen Trai's unique voice in transregional discourses of governance and liberation.

Political Philosophy and Global Parallels. Works such as *Nguyen Trai – Hero of National Liberation, World Cultural Figure* (Tuong, 2003), and *Nguyen Trai's Thought in the Flow of Vietnamese History* (Vo, 1996) celebrate his ideological leadership, particularly in articulating a moral foundation for governance grounded in Confucian values. Yet these accounts often fall short of engaging with international intellectual traditions. For instance, Nguyen Trai's emphasis on ethics, legitimacy, and benevolent rule parallels certain Neo-Confucian currents in Ming China, yet deviates from them in his pragmatism and grassroots orientation. Western scholars such as Alexander Woodside (1988) have explored these regional continuities and differences, while Liam Kelley (2012) criticizes the nationalist mythologization of Nguyen Trai, calling for a more critical historiographical approach.

Cultural Memory and Posthumous Canonization. Nguyen Trai's legacy has also been shaped by a long process of political rehabilitation and symbolic canonization. Commemorative events such as the 600th anniversary of his birth and works like *Traditional spiritual values of the Vietnamese people* (Giau, 2011) portray him as an embodiment of national virtue and wisdom. However, these celebrations tend to reinforce state-sanctioned narratives without interrogating the mechanisms through which Nguyen Trai was selectively remembered, silenced, or revived in different historical periods. Drawing on Jan Assmann's theory of *cultural memory*, this study views Nguyen Trai's posthumous legacy not as a static inheritance but as an evolving cultural construction shaped by shifts in ideological needs, political legitimacy, and collective identity.

Research Gaps and Directions

This review reveals several critical gaps in current scholarships:

Contextualization: There remains limited analysis of how historical events such as the Ming occupation or court intrigues influenced Nguyen Trai's ethical and strategic thought.

Comparative perspective: The lack of cross-cultural comparison, especially with Ming, Neo-Confucian, and Daoist frameworks, constrains a full appreciation of the universality and distinctiveness of Nguyen Trai's ideas.

Interdisciplinary theory: Concepts such as *cultural memory* and *subaltern historiography* offer valuable tools for reassessing both Nguyen Trai's writings and their political afterlives.

Modern applicability: His insights on moral governance, popular participation, and social responsibility have not been fully explored in contemporary challenges such as ethical leadership, cultural preservation, or nation-building under globalization.

By addressing these gaps, the present study aims to reposition Nguyen Trai as a critical political and cultural thinker whose legacy, while rooted in medieval Vietnam, speaks compellingly to global conversations about justice, memory, and moral statecraft.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that integrates political theory, literary analysis, historical-contextual reconstruction, and value philosophy to interpret Nguyen Trai's multifaceted legacy as both statesman and cultural figure. The analysis draws primarily on Confucian humanism, Neo-Confucian moral governance, and Southeast Asian resistance literature, enabling a comparative understanding of his thought within the intellectual and political currents of 15th-century East and Southeast Asia.

However, existing scholarship often presents Nguyen Trai through a linear nationalist lens, which risks overlooking the layered processes through which his political ideas and cultural legacy have been constructed, transmitted, and reinterpreted. To address this limitation, the framework incorporates Jan Assmann's concept of cultural memory, which views collective remembrance not as a static preservation of the past but as an active, selective reconstruction shaped by contemporary ideological needs, political legitimacy, and identity formation. In this study, the concept of cultural memory is applied to the analysis of Nguyen Trai's *posthumous canonization* and the selective remembrance of his legacy. This allows the article to interrogate how state-sponsored commemorations such as the 600th

anniversary celebrations reinforce certain moral and political ideals while omitting episodes of political suspicion, exile, and the Le Chi Vien tragedy. By tracing the shifts in how Nguyen Trai has been remembered in official historiography, literature, and public rituals, the analysis demonstrates that his image functions as a dynamic cultural construct, continuously adapted to serve evolving ideological narratives.

In addition, the framework engages with Ranajit Guha's subaltern historiography, which emphasizes recovering the agency, perspectives, and experiences of historically marginalized actors excluded from elite-centered narratives. This lens is particularly valuable in the examination of Nguyen Trai's wartime correspondence and *Binh Ngo Dai Cao* (political proclamations), where rhetorical strategies are aimed at mobilizing not only court elites but also rural communities, ethnic minorities, and common soldiers. By foregrounding appeals to shared suffering, justice, and collective responsibility, the study recovers the voices and experiences of subaltern participants embedded within these texts, revealing how Nguyen Trai's vision of *nhân nghĩa* (benevolence and righteousness) resonated across social strata.

Through this synthesis of political philosophy, cultural memory studies, and subaltern historiography, the theoretical framework supports a multidimensional reinterpretation of Nguyen Trai's thought. It moves beyond celebratory or hagiographic accounts to reveal the strategic moral philosophy that underpinned his integration of ethical governance with pragmatic statecraft. This expanded framework not only illuminates Nguyen Trai's historical significance but also underscores the contemporary relevance of his ideas in debates on leadership, ethics, and cultural resilience in Vietnam and beyond.

Methodology

The methodological design of this study is deliberately aligned with the theoretical framework, ensuring that the conceptual foundations are fully operationalized in the research process. By integrating historical-contextual reconstruction, textual hermeneutics, comparative rhetoric, and value philosophy, the study approaches Nguyen Trai's political philosophy and cultural legacy as both products of their time and enduring sources of intellectual relevance.

Historical-contextual reconstruction, guided by Jan Assmann's theory of *cultural memory*, is employed to trace the evolving representations of Nguyen Trai from the early Lê dynasty to the present. This involves a critical juxtaposition of early chronicles (e.g., *Complete Annals of Dai Viet*, *Lam Son Thuc Luc*) with modern commemorative practices and official historiography. Such analysis reveals how political regimes and cultural

institutions have selectively preserved, adapted, or suppressed aspects of his life and thought to meet shifting ideological needs, thereby transforming Nguyen Trai into a dynamic cultural symbol rather than a fixed historical figure.

Textual hermeneutics and comparative rhetoric, informed by Ranajit Guha's *subaltern historiography*, are applied to Nguyen Trai's wartime letters (*Quan Trung tu menh tap*) and political proclamations (*Binh Ngo Dai Cao*). This perspective enables the recovery of subaltern voices peasants, ethnic minorities, and common soldiers embedded in his appeals to unity, justice, and collective sacrifice. By attending to these rhetorical strategies, the analysis moves beyond elite-centered historiography to reveal how Nguyen Trai mobilized diverse social groups, thereby expanding the political community beyond the royal court.

Value philosophy is utilized to examine the normative dimensions of Nguyen Trai's thought, particularly his conception of *nhân nghĩa* (benevolence and righteousness) as both an ethical ideal and a pragmatic principle of governance. This step situates his moral vision within the broader currents of Confucian and Neo-Confucian thought while highlighting his distinctive Vietnamese adaptation, which grounded political legitimacy in the welfare and participation of the people.

Logical-historical analysis serves as the unifying methodological thread, ensuring that textual interpretations are situated within the concrete socio-political realities of 15th-century Dai Viet. Comparative readings of Ming imperial manifestos further illuminate the distinctiveness of Nguyen Trai's discourse on legitimacy, sovereignty, and moral order in the regional context.

By tightly linking theory to method, this study achieves coherence between conceptual orientation and analytical execution. The result is a multidimensional reinterpretation of Nguyen Trai that addresses both the vertical processes of state-led memory construction and the horizontal dynamics of grassroots political agency, offering a richer and more critical account of his enduring significance in Vietnamese and broader Asian intellectual history.

Results and Discussions

Nguyen Trai, a brilliant politician and strategist, was highly regarded by King Le Nhan Tong (1443–1459), who praised his unwavering loyalty and exceptional contributions to the nation. The king remarked, "Nguyen Trai was a loyal figure who assisted Thai To in putting an end to the band of robbers and supported Thai Tong in restoring peace. His literary talents

Nguyen Trai's political philosophy and cultural humanism: Confucian ethics, resistance thought, and nation-building in 15th-century Vietnam and virtues stand unparalleled, even among the most renowned generals of the dynasty" (On the Way [...], 1980, p. 252).

Nguyen Trai was a politician and philosopher

With a lofty national spirit, passionate patriotism, ardent love of the people, deep hatred of the enemy, and a sharp political view, Nguyen Trai and Binh Dinh King Le Loi planned the path, strategies, and tactics of the resistance war against the Ming invaders, forming a very unique system of political views and ideas. He presented Le Loi with a plan to fight the Ming army titled *Binh Ngo Sach*. In it, he "donated a great plan, not talking about fighting the city but skillfully talking about hitting people's hearts, in the end, the people and the country of ten years of our country's religion brought it all back to us" (Quoc [...], 1956, p. 2).

Therefore, he was given the position of Head of the Academy and the position Of minister of the Interior by Le Loi, considering his job at the Security Council (of a king), always by Le Loi's side to draw up political lines, military strategies, draft letters, draft plans, and plan strategies around the important issues of the country's development, building and developing the position and strength of Dai Viet's army and people, to defeat the invading Minh invaders. He advocated on the basis of a people's war, "people who work as ploughmen and servants in four directions gathered together", "soldiers and brothers with one heart like father and son" (Vietnam, 1976, p. 79), with the strategic thought of "use weakness to fight strong", "take a few enemies more", "use great duty to win brutally, use humanity to win against violence" (Vietnam, 1976, p. 79); carry out guerrilla warfare, "use ambush", "surprise attack" (Vietnam, 1976, p.81), isolating the enemy, fighting in small numbers, gradually consuming the enemy's life force, fighting and negotiating to consolidate and develop forces, advance to a total offensive, a total attack with large battles, of the nature and scale of the campaign, such as: "The battle of Bo Tat was like thunder and lightning", "The battle of Tra Lan was like a young bamboo flying with ashes", "The Tay Kinh army was recaptured", "The old land of Dong Do was recovered" (Vietnam, 1976, p. 79)... progressed to complete victory.

Not only with Le Loi outline the lines, strategies, and tactics of the resistance war against the Ming invaders, but Nguyen Trai also did all the communication work with the Minh invaders in Le Loi's name, demonstrating his diplomatic talent, through sixty-nine letters to the enemy generals, in *Quan Trung tu menh tap*. With erudite knowledge, profound political and military thinking, along a rigorous, concise, and sharp argument and explanation, Nguyen Trai wrote letters to the generals of the Ming invaders, such as Phuong Chinh, Thai Phuc, Da

Trung, Luong Nhu Hot, Luong Minh, Hoang Phuc, Lieu Thang, Son Tho, Vuong Thong... with different attitudes and styles, either to denounce them or to accept them.

For those who are “strong and unscrupulous” belligerents such as Phuong Chinh, Ma Ky, Hoang Phuc, and Luong Minh, his letters to them are often condemning, warning, attacking, and luring them into our schemes, with strong words and a very disdainful way of addressing them. Even when writing to Vuong Thong, Nguyen Trai also demanded that “cut off Phuong Chinh and Ma Ky’s heads and hand them over to the military, they will avoid killing the people in the city, heal the wounds of the people in the country, get along well again, and stay in peace forever” (Vietnam, 1976, p. 135) because they “specialize in misbehaving, misguided souls, people harming our people, catching people's grievances, digging graves for people” (Vietnam, 1976, p. 135).

As for the well-educated enemy generals, who played an important role such as General Vuong Thong, Nguyen Trai showed respect, often citing many ancient stories and proverbs to convince them, such as: “An old saying has: “Far water cannot save near fire”. “Even if reinforcements come, it will not be of any use to defeat” (Vietnam, 1976, p. 135).

He also cited many ideas of Confucianism and Taoism such as views on “The way”, “Heaven’s reason”, “Heaven’s will”, “unbiased”, “benevolence, humane”, “righteousness”, “politeness, rite”, “intellectual”, “brave”, “respectful”, “filia”..., especially using extensive knowledge of the Kinh Dich, such as views on “The way”, “unbiased”, “honest”, “circumstance”, “opportunity”, “unfortunate”, “after a storm comes to a calm”, “communication”,... to subdue or oppose the opponent. For example, in a letter to Vuong Thong, Nguyen Trai wrote: “I have seen 384 lots of the Kinh Dich, which is essentially the word “opportunity”. So the gentleman according to the popular times, the meaning of the word “opportunity” is great. The day before going to fight Giao Chi, Chinese generals, and gods obeyed orders to fight the guilty, that was an “opportunity”. Today, the fortunes of heaven and earth are cyclical, going back and forth. When he was ordered to come here to be comfortable, if he knew that according to the letter of Thai Tong, he had established the descendants of the Tran family to restore my country, now is such an “opportunity”. Opportunity! Opportunity! Really should not bear it! Kinh Thu says: “Whoever is before his time and who after his time kills will not be spared” (Vietnam, 1976, p. 131); he also used the word “honest” of Confucianism to point out his insincerity that: “on the outside, he said peace, on the inside, he plotted; Previously, they said that when giving orders, they immediately withdraw their troops, then build fences, build ramparts, build citadels, and dig trenches. Is such a thing honest? Is it a lie?” (Vietnam, 1976, p. 118). And he said calmly to Vuong Thong: “If you don’t listen, you

should arrange your troops to fight in the plains, not stay in the corner and imitate the attitude of the old woman like that!" (Vietnam, 1976, p. 135).

For Vietnamese people who still had a little conscience but went the wrong way to follow the enemy, Nguyen Trai affected their emotions, conscience, and honor, pointed out right and wrong, encouraged them to make merit and atone for their sins, with words that were both sincere and strict.

Nguyen Trai is also an enemy campaigner, based on "righteousness and integrity" and the ingenious art of "attacking people's hearts". It was he who personally went to the Tam Giang citadel (Viet Tri) to recruit Ming troops. The general guarding the citadel, Luu Thanh, brought all his troops to the insurgent army. It was also Nguyen Trai who wrote letters to attract Ming troops in Nghe An, Thuan Hoa, Tay Do, and Xuong Giang (Bac Giang). In the Letter of Edict to the generals and soldiers in Xuong Giang citadel, Nguyen Trai wrote: "Speaking of, liking for the living but hating killing, is a benevolent general; Knowing the opportunity, but knowing your strength, being a wise general... If you know how to judge the times of heaven and the people below, you can enjoy infinity and not let the people of a city be killed; You guys can be intellectuals, but I don't lose my reputation as a benevolent general. If you remain ignorant and ignorant, then on the day the city is defeated, the stone will not discriminate, it is not I who do it indiscriminately, but you guys do it yourself. It's really a time of loss, so think carefully, don't regret it later" (Vietnam, 1976, p. 156). These cities are all "not fighting, but the enemy has surrendered." (Vietnam, 1976, p. 14). Therefore, Nguyen Nang Tinh in the preface to the collection of Uc Trai wrote:

Our Vietnam, from Dinh, Le, Ly, Tran, in every generation, must have had talented generals to help us, but it is very rare to find a talented and all-virtue like Sir Uc Trai... If it doesn't mean that the righteous and righteous reason can smash the greedy belly of the Ming kings and mandarins, then maybe we can return to the Ming army to retreat, then maybe we can return the army to the Ming dynasty to surrender, then perhaps we can return it. That hand does not return? Using only the words written in the letter, Sir Uc Trai subdued them, forcing the Ming emperors and officials to make peace with me? (Quoc [...], 1956, p. 7).

Nguyen Trai's brilliance as both a politician and strategist was also evident in his efforts to consolidate and rebuild the country. Central to his philosophy of "repairing the peace, "where he envisioned "helping King Le Thai Tong, under heaven's mandate, to govern the nation" (On the Way [...], 1980, p. 252) was the ideal of establishing lasting peace. He sought to "open the eternal peace" and "wash away the shame of a thousand years" (Vietnam, 1976, p. 82). Nguyen Trai's vision extended to "extinguishing war forever, preserving the country in its entirety, and ensuring lasting security" (Vietnam, 1976, p. 86). His ultimate goal was to create a society where "from the farthest countryside to the most

deserted village, no cries of anger or resentment could be heard” (On the Way [...], 1980, p. 19). Therefore, under the name of Le Thai To and Le Thai Tong, Nguyen Trai wrote many examples, projections, charts outlining how to organize social management, ordered mandarins from high officials, general managers to mandarins in institutes, halls and bureaus to keep public order, to work diligently, to be loyal to the king, to reconcile with the people, to give up profanity, to eliminate embezzlement, to correct laziness, to stop cliques. He also advised the Crown Prince to practice virtue and pointed out how to use talented and talented people in the country to contribute to the cause of national salvation and national construction, based on the spirit of humanity and the idea of taking the people as the root. During the peaceful period, although he still kept the official position of the court, due to the events in the court, especially when Le Thai To died (1433), the successor King Le Thai Tong was still young, all power was in the hands of Le Sat and several high officials, who were greedy for power and jealous, Nguyen Trai did not have the conditions to show off his economic talents, but he still received the commission of royal law, literature, and rituals from the court. Geographical, economic, political, and cultural. He wrote “Reporting for Sages”, “Reflecting on the Magnanimity”, “Reporting on How to Use the Money”, “Referring to the Emperors not to perform ceremonies”, “Prohibition of great ministers, general managers and Mandarins in the Institute, lobby, and bureaucracy of lazy greed”, “Projection on doing “Post-self-training” to admonish the Crown Prince”, “Matching the succession to the throne”. In the “Royal proclamations and ordinances admonishing the talents”, Nguyen Trai wrote: “advising all the greats to work together to save the people, not to hide their talents secretly, causing people to be trapped in misery forever” (Vietnam, 1976, p. 149).

Nguyen Trai is a great culturalist

Nguyen Trai is a great culturalist who has deeply studied many different fields and has a huge amount of knowledge, rich and profound, referring to different issues of nature, society, and people, through his works. Among all the achievements and unique cultural values of Nguyen Trai, the most prominent are his fields of science and literature.

In the field of science, first of all, it is Nguyen Trai’s very rich and unique political, military, and diplomatic knowledge, through his views and thoughts on undertakings, strategies, and tactics in the resistance war against the Ming invaders, as well as on the lines and policies of building and nation-building, economic development, culture, education, perfecting classics, training masterpieces, and reviving the use of sage books, songs, and rituals episode, *Binh Ngo Dai Cao, Phu nui Chi Linh, Luat thu, Giao tu dai te...*

In terms of geography, there are *Du dia chi*, also known as *Dai Viet du dia chi*, *An Nam vu cong*, *Nam Quoc vu cong*, or *Le Trieu cong phap*. With *The Du Dia Chi*, the oldest geographical work in Vietnam, valuable in terms of geography, history, and politics, including 54 items, not organized into chapters, Nguyen Trai presented history, location and geographical features, climate, mountain and river shape, soil, specialties, some traditional crafts and habits of the inhabitants of different regions. In *Du dia chi*, Nguyen Trai wrote: "The Tang ward made palanquins, armor, trays, hammocks, brocade brocades and parasols. Yen Thai Ward makes paper. Thuy Chuong and Nghi Tam wards weave small cloth and silk. Ha, Tan Ward burns limestone. Hang Dao Ward dyes cashews. The Ta Nhat ward makes a fan" (Vietnam, 1976, p. 217).

In terms of history, *Lam Son Thuc Luc*, a historical work chronicling the Lam Son uprising for 10 years, consists of three volumes, compiled by King Le Thai To on Nguyen Trai's orders in 1432. In the title *Lam Son thuc luc*, he wrote: "I think that things come from heaven, people come from ancestors, for example, water and trees must have their roots... Fortunately, God allows people to follow, so the industry is successful. It is the ancestors who cultivated virtue and virtue, so they were like that. I thought about it forever, so I wrote it into a book called *Lam Son thuc luc* to respect the original meaning, and to tell my arduous career to leave behind for posterity" (Vietnam, 1976, p. 43); *Vinh Lang than dao bi*, is an epitaph in Vinh Lang - the mausoleum of King Le Thai To, written by Nguyen Trai in the sixth Thuan Thien year (1433), recording the life and career of Le Thai To:

The king obeyed his father's inheritance, with a respect. Although the time was in great turmoil, the lice became more and more durable, hiding in Lam Son and working as cultivators. Because of his anger at the brutal enemy, he became more and more focused on sports strategy... In the year Mau Tuat (1418) raised an insurgent army stationed on the Lac Thuy river, before and after more than twenty battles, all of them set up ambushes, used flags, avoided spearheads, spared damage, used few enemies to fight against strength..." (Vietnam, 1976, p. 96-97), finally defeated the Ming in six years, but he stayed up late in 1427. "The king stayed up late in 1427. [...] The king who stayed up late and woke up early for six years, the country that was prosperous until now passed away (Vietnam, 1976, p. 96).

On the law and the issue of national administrative organization, Nguyen Trai wrote the works *Luat Thu* and *Du Dia Chi*. In particular, the *Luat thu* (Letter of law) discusses the role of law and especially the law of the country; *Du dia chi* records some items with the place names and the organization of the state's administrative units, such as:

The Le dynasty divided the world into 10 religions. The population of the next generation is five hundred thousand six thousand five hundred. The Ly dynasty divided the world into 24 roads. The number of household offerings is three hundred thirty thousand one hundred nails. The Tran dynasty divided the world into 12 lands. When the officials offered the gold book, the great male and middle male classes had four hundred and ninety thousand nails, and the royal male class had two hundred and ten thousand four thousand three hundred nails. The unified dynasty, divided into 15 regions, included 56 palaces, 187 districts, 54 administrative divisions, 9728 villages, 294 hamlets, 59 wards, 119 beaches, 116 haciendas, 534 caves, 465 psalteria, 58 interested, 74 camps... The number is seventy thousand nine hundred and forty (Vietnam, 1976, p. 213-214).

Through several other works and slides, tables, and examples, Nguyen Trai has also deeply studied economics, canon, music, and education. In the *Giao tu dai te*, he deeply studied the regulations, rituals, and rituals of the court. Nguyen Trai was also the person who summed up the national music to composed the national music, edited the music, designed the instruments of the court band, and was the maker of the stone, an ancient ethnic musical instrument. In particular, he gave a very profound argument about the origin of music:

In times of turmoil, use martial arts, in times of peace, use literature. Nowadays, it's time to set up a music festival. But without roots, it cannot stand; without writing, it cannot circulate. Peace is the root of music, and sound is the text of music. The god who obeyed the edict then appraised the music, not daring to do it wholeheartedly. But education is sketchy, shallow, and afraid that in the law, it is difficult to harmonize. Dare to wish His Majesty to love and feed all people so that in the empty village and hamlet, there is not a sound of anger and resentment. That means keeping the original music (Complete [...], 1959, p. 60-61).

In economic terms, Nguyen Trai raised a very correct view on the role and necessity of money; he considered money to be the lifeblood of society and he called and discussed the rules of using money, saying: "Money is the lifeblood of the people, indispensable... the great ministers, hundreds of mandarins and scholars inside and out, who understand the seasons, all discuss the rules of using money, how to please the people" (Vietnam, 1976, p. 195).

In the field of literature, Nguyen Trai is one of the great writers and poets of the medieval period. He has composed many literary works, including poetry in Chinese and Nom through major literary works, especially political essays and lyrical poems with various genres such as poetry, letters, essays, expressions, and foxes.

In terms of a political essay, it shows the concentration of his political philosophy, especially the *Binh Ngo Sách*, *Quan Trung Tu Menh Tap*, *Binh Ngo Dai Cao*, and several letters, mats, statements, and foxes written under Le Thai To and Le Thai Tong (from 1433 to 1442).

Binh Ngo Sach is a great plan to find a way to fight to defeat the Minh invaders to save the country, which Nguyen Trai has pondered and embraced for many years. Now he has found a worthy owner to dedicate to, that is Le Loi. Unfortunately, the book *Binh Ngo Sach* has been lost for a long time, but according to Le Quy Don, in that work, Nguyen Trai raised

“three strategies to destroy the Ngo invaders”, and according to Nguyen Nang Tinh, which Nguyen Trai mentioned the strategy of “hit people’s hearts”, called “Tam cong”. “Stripping into people’s hearts”, is hitting the enemy's mind, emotions, and will, is hitting the enemy's heart; along with another great plan that Nguyen Trai always advocated (both in the resistance war against the Ming invaders as well as in the future cause of national construction), that is to rely on the people, to bring into full play the strength of solidarity and patriotism of the whole people. This is a great thought, showing the profound vision and correct political and military line of Nguyen Trai, to organize the Lam Son uprising into a people's war, comprehensive and large. Therefore, after the *Lung Nhai Swearing Festival* (1416), the preparations for the uprising were carried out quickly. Lam Son became the gathering place of insurgents, heroic heroes of the four directions, and patriots from all over the world to gather, with one heart to save the country. Those are the people of the villages around Lam Son and the provinces and districts of Thanh Hoa, including lowland and mountainous areas, and ethnic groups. These are excellent and talented children, from many faraway places, overcoming obstacles and difficulties to come to the insurgent army. Among them are Pham Van Xao, Luu Nhan Chu with his father, Luu Trung, and his brother-in-law Pham Cuong from Dai Tu Mountain (Thai Nguyen), Tran Nguyen Han from Son Dong (Vinh Phuc), Nguyen Xi from Thuong Xa (Nghe An). There were also servants of Le Loi, such as Ngo Kinh, and Ngo Tu... All of these patriots were different in ethnicity, social composition, hometown, and life situation, but they all shared the same ideal: they did not share the same sky with the enemy, determined to fight the enemy to save the people and save the country.

Quan Trung tu Menh Tap is a book of letters written by Nguyen Trai on behalf of Le Thai To to the Ming generals, from 1423 to 1427. “The strength of more than ten thousand troops” of the “letters in the military” is the synergy of erudite knowledge, a sharp level of political, military, and diplomatic thinking, with the spirit of patriotism and great love for the people. With a combination of tough and flexible attitude, at times tough and soft, at the same time persuading and subduing and subduing the enemy, *Quan Trung tu Menh tap* the command set became a strong and sharp attack directly against the enemy's will to invade, vividly showing the nature of a people's, all people, and comprehensive war of our nation, contributing to the glorious victory of the resistance war against the Ming invaders of the Dai Viet army and people, making: “Take part in the government Phuong Chinh, Ma Ky was granted five hundred ships, but his soul was lost in the sea. Divisional commander Vuong Thong, who took part in the government Ma Anh, was granted several thousand horses, and returned home, but his chest was pounding and his legs were shaking” (Vietnam, 1976, p. 81)

Binh Ngo Dai Cao is a work written after our army won the battle at Chi Lang, destroyed and disintegrated 150,000 enemy reinforcements, killed enemy general Lieu Thang at Ma Yen mound in Dinh Mui year (1427), forcing Vuong Thong to make peace and accept to withdraw his troops. This is a great work on Vietnamese literature and thought in the Middle Ages, considered “eloquent literature to save the ancient heavens” aims to summarize the whole process and great achievements of our people’s extremely arduous but glorious resistance war against the Ming invaders, proving that Nguyen Trai had a profound knowledge of history, culture, politics and military... is the second declaration of independence of our nation, after the poem “*Nam Quoc son ha*” by Ly Thuong Kiet, affirming the sovereignty of the nation and nation, through a long and brilliant historical and cultural tradition; mountains, rivers, and boundaries; mighty dynasties in one direction, comparable to the Northern dynasties; customs and practices with their own identity; the heroes, the owners of the independent, unified, and self-reliant Dai Viet nation, man of outstanding talent and sense of purpose of any era also always have, expressing the national pride of Nguyen Trai.

Moreover, Nguyen Trai’s concept of *nhan nghia* (benevolence and righteousness) departs from orthodox Confucian formulations and aligns more closely with a pragmatic, people-centered approach. While Confucian orthodoxy often emphasized hierarchy, loyalty, and ritual order, Nguyen Trai framed *nhân nghĩa* as a strategy for mass mobilization and moral legitimation in wartime. This perspective invites fruitful comparison with Wang Yangming’s *liangzhi* (innate moral knowledge) in Ming Neo-Confucianism. Both thinkers emphasized the moral capacity of the individual, yet diverged in their application: whereas Wang Yangming focused on the cultivation of the sage-self through introspection and the unity of knowledge and action, Nguyen Trai stressed collective ethical action rooted in the people’s welfare, framed through his *people-as-root* doctrine. His political texts and letters suggest that moral legitimacy derives not solely from inner virtue but from aligning statecraft with the needs and voice of the people significant Vietnamese adaptation of Confucian values under colonial and postcolonial pressures.

Regarding poetry, there is *Uc Trai Tap*, which is a collection of poems in Chinese characters by Nguyen Trai, including 105 poems, including the famous *Con Son, ca*; The work of *Quoc am Thi Tap*, is a collection of poems in Nom by Nguyen Trai, consisting of 254 poems, divided into four sections: *Vo de* (192 lessons), *Hoa Moc mon* (34 lessons), *Cam thu mon* (7 lessons). This is the oldest collection of Vietnamese Nom poetry remaining to this day. With this collection of poems, Nguyen Trai became one of the founders of Vietnamese Nom literature; the work *Chi Linh Son Phu*, a post written in Chinese characters,

records the event that Lam Son insurgent army withdrew to Chi Linh mountain for the third time in 1422; The work "*Bang Ho di su luc*", a Chinese text written by Nguyen Trai in 1428, tells about the life and career of Tran Nguyen Dan: "A lifetime of fame and fortune, people have. Two filial dynasties, the world does not. Enough to know is an extraordinary person" (Translation Committee, 1971, p. 407).

The philosophical tone of Nguyen Trai's later poetry, particularly in *Quoc Am Thi Tap*, reflects not only ethical contemplation but also profound disillusionment with political betrayal. Following the Le Chi Vien incident in 1429, where he was falsely imprisoned, and especially after Le Thai Tong died in 1442 an event entangled with court intrigue Nguyen Trai's writings adopt a quieter, more introspective voice. His verses speak of retreat, solitude, and resignation, as seen in frequent motifs of mountains, wind, and stillness: metaphors for detachment from worldly fame and courtly corruption. This can be interpreted as a philosophical reorientation, a shift from activist statecraft toward inner cultivation and moral survival in a chaotic political order. Analyzing this transformation through the lens of cultural trauma and memory deepens our understanding of Nguyen Trai not just as a historical victim, but as a thinker processing systemic injustice through poetic reflection.

In addition, Nguyen Trai also wrote several other works, such as *Ngoc Duong Di Cao*, "From Binh Ngo Dai Cao through his letters to the invaders, to poems in Chinese and Nom... Nguyen Trai's magical pen left us with works of many genres and all reached the pinnacle of art, both beautiful and extraordinary" (On the Way [...], 1980, p. 15).

Nguyen Trai is a great thinker

Nguyen Trai's worldview and philosophy of life are profoundly reflected throughout his major works. His understanding of the cosmos, nature, and the divine is articulated through a series of concepts such as "universe," "nature," "heaven's orders," "heaven's reason," "heaven's heart," "heaven's will," and "heaven's destiny". He also contemplated the cyclical movement and transformation of the natural world, often speaking of the forces governing the universe. For instance, he wrote, "Heaven governs the universe" (Uc [...], 1972, p. 533) and "After a storm comes calm in Heaven and Earth; the sun and moon darken but then return to the light" (Uc [...], 1972, p. 323). Nguyen Trai's views on morality and ethics are equally influential, as he explored human virtues and principles with categories such as "ethical," "loyal," "filial," "benevolent," "righteousness", "politeness," "intelligence," "courage," "man's heart," "harmony," "industriousness," "honesty," and even "kindness to animals." His concept of "benevolence and righteousness" stood apart from traditional

Confucian ideals, rooted in his belief that “benevolence lies in the well-being of the people; an army to save the nation must first eliminate violence” (Vietnam, 1976, p. 77). This humane perspective elevated the welfare of the people as central to governance and nation-building.

That is also his view on education, such as: “The wise teach the righteous... Therefore, the workers should be the teachers because they are educated”, “Intelligence and know-how” (Vietnam, 1976, p. 159). Especially Nguyen Trai’s very progressive view of the people. He affirmed that the people are the creators of material wealth for society: “Usually thinking of the grandeur and magnificence is the hard work of the army and the people” (Vietnam, 1976, p.196); and the people are also the main force that determines the destiny of the nation, the rise and fall of the country: “The people are the country, the nation is the boat..., but carrying the boat and capsizing the boat are also the people” (Vietnam, 1976, p.445), “Eat the bounty to repay the favor of the tiller” (Vietnam, 1976, p. 303).

And, that is also Nguyen Trai’s views on politics - society through his conceptions of circumstance, turn of events, about the nation and nation, and his strategic vision of the country’s long-term security and peace, expressing the spirit of dialectical thinking and materialistic view of history, with great pride and national pride; soul, will, great ambition; His personality, quality, and morality are noble, but the core is his humane spirit and patriotism. Just as Nguyen Nang Tinh wrote:

[...] The teacher’s education was acquired and derived from his family, but his literature was sophisticated, profound, broad, righteous, tough, and self-trained and developed by him. The Teacher doesn’t intentionally refine literature, but once the words are revealed, they are bright, beautiful, and abundant; nothing can be hidden. Just look at the proclamations and orders written in the military ranks, and the discussions discussed in the court, every word is full of moral and human meaning. Those words can all be taught lessons for the present and handed down forever (Quoc [...], 1956, p.154).

Besides the contributions of great value in theory and practice throughout his life, career, and thoughts of Nguyen Trai, due to the regulation of historical conditions, he also has certain limitations. In terms of worldview, in the process of explaining various realist issues, Nguyen Trai still has more or less influence of idealistic thought, through his views on heaven, on “Heaven’s orders”, fate, and destiny, expressed in expression form and some contents of these views. Regarding his outlook on life, Nguyen Trai always dreamed of a society of “a king like a saint, a gentle servant” and in the days of “the king was like Nghieu Thuan, the people were like Nghieu Thuan” (Vietnam, 1976, p. 420), but with the very complicated reality and social contradictions of the early Le period, those wishes could hardly be fully realized.

In the royal court, which used to be “generals and soldiers with a heart like father and son”, now for money, position, and power, public servants and princesses such as Le Sat,

Le Van, Le Ngan, Thi Anh, and incompetent people like Nguyen Thuc Hue, Le Canh Xuoc, along with petty eunuchs like Luong Dang, Dinh Thang... living a depraved life, trying to plunder and exploit people; always disparaging, suspicious, jealous, harming each other. In addition to society, after a long period of peace and prosperity, society also gradually fell into chaos, and the people were miserable and hungry. For the sake of his family, his descendants, Le Loi suspected, murdered even those of great prestige, merit, and virtue, such as Tran Nguyen Han and Pham Van Xao in the year of the Rooster in 1429. Even Nguyen Trai was once suspected by Le Thai, arrested, and imprisoned (the second Thuan Thien year, ie, 1429). The tragic end of Nguyen Trai himself and his family, with the famous Le Chi Vien case in history, also stemmed from one of those reasons. It is these things that make Nguyen Trai's views on life and life sometimes peaceful, even pessimistic, and cynical. In *Quoc am Thi Tap*, Nguyen Trai often talks a lot about the state of affairs. Which shows a personality, a spirit, and a noble lifestyle, regardless of fame and fortune, but behind that also hides a peaceful attitude, mixed with a bit of boredom and indignation. Therefore, he used a lot of words like "seclude oneself and lead a leisurely life", "feel smug", "rest assured", "live in peace", "leisured", and "stroll about leisurely" (Vietnam, 1976, p. 421). It was also due to the institutional nature of history that Nguyen Trai could not do otherwise.

Contemporary Relevance and Implications

Studying Nguyen Trai's life, ideas, and legacy is not merely a retrospective endeavor; it bears profound relevance to contemporary Vietnam. His central philosophy of "taking the people as the root" (dân vi bản) continues to inform Vietnam's political discourse, particularly in the state's current commitment to anti-corruption efforts, administrative reform, and building a rule-of-law socialist state. Nguyen Trai's meritocratic vision, ethical governance, and call for moral leadership resonate strongly with present-day campaigns to restore public trust and reinforce accountability within the state apparatus.

Moreover, Nguyen Trai's enduring influence as a symbol of Vietnamese nationalism and cultural identity provides intellectual and emotional resources for national self-assertion in the age of globalization. His articulation of Vietnamese sovereignty through texts like *Binh Ngo dai cao* not only affirmed the independence of Dai Viet but continues to inspire contemporary patriotic consciousness and cultural pride. As Taylor (2013) suggests, Nguyen Trai's writings helped shape a distinct Vietnamese historical imagination, rooted in resilience, moral clarity, and a deeply humanistic worldview. In the realm of culture and education, Nguyen Trai's dual contributions in Han and Nom literature serve as a foundation

for modern discussions on language preservation and identity formation. His integration of Confucian, Taoist, and indigenous thought traditions reflects a dynamic model of intellectual hybridity and cultural synthesis that remains valuable in Vietnam's current efforts to modernize without losing cultural distinctiveness.

Promoting Nguyen Trai's legacy on a global stage can thus serve a dual purpose: enriching international understandings of Vietnamese civilization while providing a model of ethical, human-centered leadership applicable beyond the Vietnamese context. As Vietnam deepens its international integration, Nguyen Trai's legacy offers not only historical pride but also a blueprint for combining national sovereignty, cultural vitality, and universal human values.

Conclusion

Exploring Nguyen Trai's life, career, and intellectual legacy as a politician, strategist, cultural figure, and profound thinker not only deepens our understanding of his exceptional talents and virtues but also offers enduring historical lessons for contemporary society. His unwavering commitment to justice, benevolence, and the well-being of the people serves as a timeless model of ethical leadership and civic responsibility. Nguyen Trai's thought remains profoundly relevant today. His emphasis on merit-based governance and moral integrity resonates strongly with Vietnam's ongoing efforts to combat corruption and promote transparency. His belief that "the people are the root of the nation" offers a philosophical foundation for inclusive, citizen-centered policymaking in the present day. Moreover, his contributions to governance, diplomacy, literature, and education highlight values of wisdom, perseverance, and ethical statecraft principles that transcend historical boundaries. His legacy not only shapes national consciousness but also enriches the broader discourse on humanistic governance in Asia and beyond. Preserving Nguyen Trai's memory within Vietnam is necessary but not sufficient. We must actively promote his legacy on the global stage. By introducing his philosophical and political ideas to the world, we demonstrate the depth of Vietnamese intellectual history and contribute meaningfully to global conversations on justice, peace, and human dignity. Nguyen Trai's life and vision deserve a rightful place in the shared heritage of humanity.

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