

Trần Quốc Tuấn: heroism, morality and virtue in national service

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Abstract

This article examines Trần Hưng Đạo (Prince Hưng Đạo Trần Quốc Tuấn) as a significant historical figure in the development of Vietnamese political and military thought during the Trần dynasty. Drawing on historical sources, including the “Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư” and “Hịch tướng sĩ” (Proclamation to the Officers), together with relevant modern scholarship, the study employs an interdisciplinary approach combining history, cultural studies, and political science. The analysis focuses on several aspects of Trần Hưng Đạo’s thought and political practice, particularly the principle of “nurturing the people’s strength,” patriotism, filial responsibility, social and military unity, and the relationship between personal interests and collective interests. The article further examines the historical context in which these ideas emerged and considers their significance for understanding Vietnamese approaches to national defense, political leadership, and social cohesion. Rather than treating Trần Hưng Đạo’s legacy solely as an object of historical commemoration, the study explores how selected elements of his thought have been interpreted and may inform contemporary discussions of national development and defense in Vietnam.

Keywords: Trần Hưng Đạo; Vietnamese political thought; national defense; military thought; political ethics.

Trần Quốc Tuấn: heroísmo, moralidade e virtude a serviço da nação

Resumo

Este artigo examina Trần Hưng Đạo (Príncipe Hưng Đạo Trần Quốc Tuấn) como uma figura histórica significativa no desenvolvimento do pensamento político e militar vietnamita durante a dinastia Trần. Com base em fontes históricas, incluindo o “Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư” e o “Hịch tướng sĩ” (Proclamação aos Oficiais), juntamente com estudos acadêmicos modernos relevantes, o estudo emprega uma abordagem interdisciplinar que combina história, estudos culturais e ciência política. A análise concentra-se em vários aspectos do pensamento e da prática política de Trần Hưng Đạo, particularmente no princípio de “cultivar a força do povo”, no patriotismo, na responsabilidade filial, na unidade social e militar e na relação entre interesses pessoais e coletivos. O artigo examina ainda o contexto histórico em que essas ideias surgiram e considera sua importância para a compreensão das abordagens vietnamitas em relação à defesa nacional, à liderança política e à coesão social. Em vez de tratar o legado de Trần Hưng Đạo exclusivamente como um objeto de comemoração histórica, o estudo explora como elementos selecionados de seu pensamento têm sido interpretados e podem contribuir para as discussões contemporâneas sobre desenvolvimento nacional e defesa no Vietnã.

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Palavras-chave: Trần Hưng Đạo; pensamento político vietnamita; defesa nacional; pensamento militar; ética política.

Trần Quốc Tuấn: heroísmo, moralidad y virtud al servicio de la patria

Resumen

Este artículo examina a Trần Hưng Đạo (el príncipe Hưng Đạo Trần Quốc Tuấn) como una figura histórica significativa en el desarrollo del pensamiento político y militar vietnamita durante la dinastía Trần. Basándose en fuentes históricas, entre ellas el «Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư» y el «Hịch tướng sĩ» (Proclamación a los oficiales), junto con estudios académicos modernos relevantes, el estudio emplea un enfoque interdisciplinar que combina la historia, los estudios culturales y las ciencias políticas. El análisis se centra en varios aspectos del pensamiento y la práctica política de Trần Hưng Đạo, en particular el principio de «fomentar la fortaleza del pueblo», el patriotismo, la responsabilidad filial, la unidad social y militar, y la relación entre los intereses personales y los colectivos. El artículo examina además el contexto histórico en el que surgieron estas ideas y analiza su importancia para comprender los enfoques vietnamitas respecto a la defensa nacional, el liderazgo político y la cohesión social. En lugar de tratar el legado de Trần Hưng Đạo únicamente como un objeto de conmemoración histórica, el estudio explora cómo se han interpretado determinados elementos de su pensamiento y cómo estos pueden influir en los debates contemporáneos sobre el desarrollo y la defensa nacional en Vietnam.

Palabras clave: Trần Hưng Đạo; pensamiento político vietnamita; defensa nacional; pensamiento militar; ética política.

Trần Quốc Tuấn : héroïsme, moralité et vertu au service de la nation

Résumé

Cet article examine la figure de Trần Hưng Đạo (le prince Hưng Đạo Trần Quốc Tuấn) en tant que personnage historique majeur dans le développement de la pensée politique et militaire vietnamienne sous la dynastie Trần. S'appuyant sur des sources historiques, notamment le « Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư » et le « Hịch tướng sĩ » (Proclamation aux officiers), ainsi que sur des travaux universitaires modernes pertinents, cette étude adopte une approche interdisciplinaire combinant l'histoire, les études culturelles et les sciences politiques. L'analyse se concentre sur plusieurs aspects de la pensée et de la pratique politique de Trần Hưng Đạo, notamment le principe consistant à « cultiver la force du peuple », le patriotisme, la responsabilité filiale, l'unité sociale et militaire, ainsi que la relation entre intérêts personnels et intérêts collectifs. L'article examine en outre le contexte historique dans lequel ces idées ont vu le jour et évalue leur importance pour la compréhension des approches vietnamiennes en matière de défense nationale, de leadership politique et de cohésion sociale. Plutôt que de considérer l'héritage de Trần Hưng Đạo uniquement comme un objet de commémoration historique, cette étude explore la manière dont certains éléments de sa pensée ont été interprétés et peuvent éclairer les débats contemporains sur le développement national et la défense au Vietnam.

Mots-clés : Trần Hưng Đạo ; pensée politique vietnamienne ; défense nationale ; pensée militaire ; éthique politique.

陈国峻：报效国家中的英雄气概、道德与美德

摘要

本文探讨了陈兴道（兴道王陈国峻）作为陈朝时期越南政治与军事思想发展进程中一位重要历史人物的地位。该研究结合历史学、文化研究和政治学等跨学科方法，利用《大越史记全书》和《檄将士文》等历史文献及相关现代学术成果，重点分析了陈兴道的思想与政治实践的若干方面，特别是“养民力”原则、爱国主义、孝道、社会与军事团结，以及个人利益与集体利益之间的关系。文章进一步考察了这些思想产生的历史背景，并探讨了它们对于理解越南在国防、政治领导和社会凝聚力方面的理念与实践所具有的意义。本研究并未将陈兴道的思想遗产仅仅视为历史纪念的对象，而是探讨了其思想中的特定要素如何被解读，以及这些要素如何为越南当代关于国家发展与国防的讨论提供启示。

关键词：陈兴道；越南政治思想；国防；军事思想；政治伦理。

Trần Quốc Tuấn: Heldentum, Moral und Tugend im Dienst der Nation

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Artikel untersucht Trần Hưng Đạo (Prinz Hưng Đạo Trần Quốc Tuấn) als bedeutende historische Figur in der Entwicklung des vietnamesischen politischen und militärischen Denkens während der Trần-Dynastie. Unter Rückgriff auf historische Quellen, darunter das „Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư“ und die „Hịch tướng sĩ“ (Proklamation an die Offiziere), sowie auf relevante moderne Forschungsergebnisse verfolgt die Studie einen interdisziplinären Ansatz, der Geschichte, Kulturwissenschaften und Politikwissenschaft miteinander verbindet. Die Analyse konzentriert sich auf verschiedene Aspekte von Trần Hưng Đạo's Denken und politischer Praxis, insbesondere auf das Prinzip der „Förderung der Stärke des Volkes“, Patriotismus, kindliche Pflicht, soziale und militärische Einheit sowie das Verhältnis zwischen persönlichen und kollektiven Interessen. Der Artikel untersucht ferner den historischen Kontext, in dem diese Ideen entstanden sind, und beleuchtet ihre Bedeutung für das Verständnis der vietnamesischen Ansätze in den Bereichen Landesverteidigung, politische Führung und sozialer Zusammenhalt. Anstatt das Vermächtnis von Trần Hưng Đạo ausschließlich als Gegenstand historischer Gedenkfeiern zu behandeln, untersucht die Studie, wie ausgewählte Elemente seines Denkens interpretiert wurden und wie sie die aktuellen Diskussionen über nationale Entwicklung und Verteidigung in Vietnam beeinflussen können.

Schlüsselwörter: Trần Hưng Đạo; vietnamesisches politisches Denken; Landesverteidigung; militärisches Denken; politische Ethik.

Introduction

Over the course of several millennia of nation-building and national defense, the Vietnamese people have cultivated a rich repertoire of enduring traditional values that constitute a sustainable source of endogenous strength for the country. Among these values, national heroism, moral integrity, patriotism, and a strong commitment to serving the Fatherland and the People represent core and enduring elements that have profoundly shaped the nation's historical trajectory and continue to retain their relevance in the contemporary era. On this historical and cultural foundation, numerous outstanding figures have emerged and left lasting imprints on the development of the Vietnamese nation. Among them, Hưng Đạo Đại vương Trần Quốc Tuấn stands out as one of the most exemplary, distinguished, and influential figures in Vietnamese history.

Trần Hưng Đạo was not only an eminent military commander who, on three occasions, led the army and people of Đại Việt to decisive victories against the formidable Mongol–Yuan forces, but also a thinker and strategist distinguished by his far-sighted vision and exceptional moral integrity. His seminal ideas, including the principle of “nurturing the people's strength to secure deep roots and enduring foundations,” as well as the powerful exhortations articulated in the *Hịch tướng sĩ*, have retained enduring significance as guiding principles for national development. As Trần Quốc Vượng observed, “Trần Hưng Đạo represents the crystallization of the spirit of his era, strategic intellect, cultural consciousness, and the national ethos of Đại Việt” (Trần, 2002, p. 155). More than seven centuries after his death, the values associated with Trần Quốc Tuấn continue to constitute

an important source of inspiration and a significant theoretical and practical foundation for national construction and development, particularly in the context of globalization and international integration.

Against this background, this article examines Trần Hưng Đạo as a paradigmatic embodiment of heroism, moral integrity, virtue, and dedication to national service. It seeks to clarify the theoretical and practical significance of his legacy for promoting sustainable national development and fostering the qualities and capacities required of Vietnamese citizens in the contemporary era.

Research Methods

In conducting this study, the author employed a combination of traditional and modern research methods in the social sciences and humanities, ensuring a comprehensive, objective, and in-depth approach to the subject matter. Specifically:

Historical–logical method: Based on the reconstruction of the historical context of the Trần dynasty, particularly events associated with the resistance wars against the Mongol–Yuan invasions and the political and military activities of Trần Quốc Tuấn, the article analyzes the evolution of his thought, moral principles, and personal character in relation to the internal logic of Đại Việt’s societal development. This approach highlights the dialectical relationship between historical circumstances and the formation and development of Trần Hưng Đạo’s ideology of national service.

Documentary analysis–synthesis method: Drawing upon primary historical sources such as the “Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư” and the “Hịch tướng sĩ”, alongside modern scholarly works on the history, culture, and intellectual life of the Trần period, the study conducts a selective analysis and synthesis of scientific arguments to affirm the role and intellectual legacy of Hưng Đạo Đại vương.

Comparative method: The article compares Trần Quốc Tuấn with several prominent historical figures both within and beyond Vietnam, in order to highlight the distinctiveness of his strategic thinking, moral principles, and personal virtues. Through this comparison, the study identifies the symbolic value and exceptional position he occupies in Vietnamese history and culture.

Theoretical reasoning method: Grounded in the theoretical framework of Marxism–Leninism, Hồ Chí Minh’s thought, and the viewpoints of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the article employs theoretical reasoning to link historical values with practical imperatives,

thereby proposing orientations for applying these values in educating the younger generation in ideals of life, revolutionary ethics, and the spirit of national service.

Interdisciplinary approach: The study integrates knowledge from history, cultural studies, political science, and ethics to provide a systematic analysis. This approach not only enables the identification of Trần Quốc Tuấn's historical role but also offers an interpretation of the contemporary relevance and applicability of his ideological and moral values in the current context of national construction and defense.

Literature Review

Hưng Đạo Đại vương Trần Quốc Tuấn is among the most eminent historical figures of Vietnam, representing national heroism, moral principles, virtue, and the spirit of service to the nation. From perspectives including history, cultural studies, military science, and folk beliefs, numerous domestic and international studies have paid special attention to his legacy and stature. However, the approach that regards him as a comprehensive ideal model of personality, thought, ethics, and loyalty to the sovereign interlinked with the aspiration for national development remains a research direction that merits further exploration.

In Vietnam, several notable monographs have elucidated Trần Hưng Đạo's thought and life from multiple dimensions. "History of Vietnamese Military Thought in the Trần Period" compiled by the Vietnam Institute of Military History (2010) systematizes his military doctrines, ranging from "nurturing the people's strength" and "keeping troops among the peasants" (ngụ binh ư nông) to the strategic artistry behind three decisive victories over the Mongol invasions. "Worship of Đức Thánh Trần in Vietnam" by Nguyễn Văn Huy (2012) offers an in-depth study of the process by which Tran Hung Dao was deified, highlighting his role within the system of folk beliefs.

At the international level, although there are not yet many independent monographs on Trần Hưng Đạo, several works offer valuable insights. "A History of the Vietnamese" by Keith Weller Taylor (2013) identifies him as the military-political architect of Đại Việt. In "Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800–1830", Victor Lieberman (2003) considers him one of the key factors in ensuring Đại Việt's long-term stability within a volatile Southeast Asian context.

Some Western scholarship, such as Edward Luttwak's "Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace" (2001), George Dutton's "The Tây Sơn Uprising" (2006), and Martin van Creveld's theories on asymmetric warfare, when compared with the military practice of Trần Hưng Đạo, further underscore the scope and sophistication of his strategic thought.

Overall, existing research has laid the groundwork for approaching Trần Hưng Đạo not merely as an exceptional military commander, but as a complete embodiment of national heroism, moral integrity, exemplary leadership, and devotion to national service qualities that are particularly relevant to the task of shaping the modern Vietnamese person in the new era of development.

Research content and discussion

Hưng Đạo Vương Trần Quốc Tuấn – A symbol of Vietnamese national heroism

Trần Quốc Tuấn (1228–1300), son of An Sinh Vương Trần Liễu and nephew of Emperor Trần Thái Tông, was a prominent military leader of the Trần dynasty. Historical sources describe his early intellectual abilities and military aptitude; he studied the military classics of Sun Tzu and Wu Qi and drew lessons from historical campaigns. Known as Grand Prince Hưng Đạo, he played a central role in Vietnam's resistance against the Mongol invasions and became an important figure associated with the spirit of the Trần dynasty (Hào khí Đông A). His military thought and political conduct have subsequently been examined in relation to national defense, leadership, loyalty, and collective interests.

In essence, national heroism is the crystallization of deep patriotism, the readiness to sacrifice one's life for independence and freedom, and the ability to mobilize the collective strength of the entire nation to defeat foreign invaders. Grand Prince Hưng Đạo is a quintessential embodiment of this ideal.

His heroism was manifested through unswerving loyalty to the monarch, ardent patriotism, and noble self-sacrifice – consistently placing the interests of the nation above personal grievances or ambitions, and devoting himself to consolidating the solidarity of the Trần royal clan to elevate the national position to its zenith, capable of crushing formidable enemies. Even when presented with an opportunity to seize the throne after his father's death, he resolutely refused to jeopardize the stability of the court for personal gain. His famous declaration – “I would rather be a criminal to all under Heaven than a criminal to my ancestors” – stands as an enduring testament to his unwavering loyalty and heroic integrity, revered by posterity and enshrined in the annals of history.

He built the Đại Việt army into a highly disciplined and strategically flexible force, always maintaining the initiative. In tactics, he employed guerrilla warfare, feints, attacks on enemy weaknesses, and skillful use of the natural terrain to create surprise offensives.

Moreover, he promoted talented individuals regardless of background, notably Trần Khánh Dư, Yết Kiêu, and Dã Tượng.

Fully aware of the decisive role of the people in defending the nation, Trần Hưng Đạo consistently upheld the policy of “nurturing the people’s strength as a plan for deep roots and firm foundations”. The strength of the populace had to be cultivated and maintained over time, in both peace and war, through various economic, cultural, ideological, and political measures.

In the 13th century, Đại Việt faced unprecedented challenges, confronting three invasions by the mighty Mongol-Yuan Empire, whose “heavenly armies” had subjugated vast territories across the world. In this context, the Trần dynasty displayed remarkable resilience, unity, and determination to win – and at the forefront stood Grand Prince Hưng Đạo Trần Quốc Tuấn.

As the supreme commander (Quốc công tiết chế) – the highest military authority after the emperor – he personally led the Đại Việt army to resounding victories in the three wars against the Mongol-Yuan invasions in 1258, 1285, and 1288. Triumphs at Chương Dương, Hàm Tử, and Bạch Đằng were not only glorious milestones in Vietnam’s military history but also powerful affirmations of the indomitable heroism of a small nation unwilling to bow to any aggressor.

The resistance wars against the Mongol-Yuan under his command marked a brilliant pinnacle in the art of people’s warfare during Vietnam’s feudal era. For the first time, a war of national defense was waged on a truly nationwide and comprehensive scale, with an interconnected system of defenses uniting the royal army, regional forces, and village militias, enabling both wide-ranging and flexible offensive and defensive operations.

The architect and master strategist of this distinctive mode of warfare was none other than Grand Prince Hưng Đạo – a commander of strategic vision who unified the military and civilian population into a cohesive force in a people’s war. Under his leadership, Vietnamese military art advanced to a new stage: fighting not only with strength and decisiveness, but also with endurance, with the people’s strength as the foundation and a nationwide defense as the source of power. This established both a theoretical and practical precedent for Vietnamese military strategy in subsequent resistance wars.

In the second war against the Mongol-Yuan (1285), when national survival hung by a thread and the invaders had seized many key territories – including the capital Thăng Long and the royal seat Thiên Trường – some nobles and officials wavered, proposing surrender. Trần Quốc Tuấn, however, remained steadfast in his faith in victory and in the justice of the cause. His celebrated response to Emperor Trần Nhân Tông – “If Your Majesty wishes to

surrender, first behead me” (Nguyễn, 2008, p. 23) – continues to resonate as an immortal declaration of loyalty, patriotism, and indomitable resolve.

Trần Quốc Tuấn – A Model of Heroism, Moral Virtue, and Devotion to National Service

Beyond his role as one of the most illustrious generals in Vietnamese history, Hưng Đạo Đại vương Trần Quốc Tuấn stands as an exemplary model of morality and virtue, profoundly embodying the humanistic and humanitarian values of Vietnam’s cultural tradition. His thoughts, actions, and personal character transcended the boundaries of a military leader, becoming a living symbol of loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, and selflessness the noble ethical standards of Eastern philosophy.

Trần Quốc Tuấn distinguished himself not only through his exceptional military command but also through his humane treatment of his soldiers, which earned him both respect and affection. The Complete Annals of Đại Việt records that, during times when his troops were ill, he personally tended to them nursing them, massaging their limbs, and administering medicine to them as members of his own family. Such acts, though seemingly small, reflected the virtue of a leader who lived for his people and subordinates, drawing his power from winning their hearts. This exemplified the principle of rule by virtue so highly esteemed by enlightened rulers and virtuous ministers of the East. His troops, deeply moved, were willing to lay down their lives for him. Historical accounts note: “The soldiers were so touched that each was ready to die for him”. He once pardoned General Trần Khánh Dư after a serious offense, provided that the man could reform and continue to serve the country effectively.

Not merely a brilliant battlefield commander, Trần Quốc Tuấn was also a strategic thinker, a man of culture, and one of Vietnam’s greatest military theorists, leaving behind seminal works such as *Binh thư yếu lược* (“Summary of Military Tactics”), *Vạn Kiếp tông bí truyền thư* (“Vạn Kiếp Military Secrets”), and *Hịch tướng sĩ*

The Proclamation to the Officers is not only a stirring call to arms but also a profound statement of military ethics. In it, Trần Quốc Tuấn emphasized responsibility and loyalty, articulating the duties of a general and of a citizen toward the nation and the people. With passionate prose, rigorous reasoning, and a progression from personal bonds to loyalty, from individual honor to national destiny, the work persuaded through reason and inspired through emotion. His moral vision integrated Confucian values (loyalty, filial piety, righteousness) with Buddhist compassion (benevolence, selflessness), while remaining deeply rooted in Vietnamese tradition: patriotism as the highest duty of the junzi (gentleman).

Trần Hưng Đạo's virtue was also evident in his magnanimity, humility, and consistent prioritization of righteousness and the people's welfare. He embodied the Confucian ideal of "being concerned before others' concerns, rejoicing after others' joys". Before his passing, he left counsel to King Trần Anh Tông that reflected both farsighted strategy and the benevolence of a sage: "Nurturing the people's strength, allowing their roots to grow deep and firm, is the highest strategy for preserving the country in the long term". This was not only a principle of governance but also an ethical wisdom: to cherish and care for the people, thus building enduring stability upon the foundation of popular trust. In this brief statement, he set forth a standard of political morality ruling not merely by the sword, but by winning the hearts of the people.

From his conduct within his clan to his management of the army, from his proclamations in wartime to his final instructions before death, Hưng Đạo Đại vương Trần Quốc Tuấn stands as a vivid and profound embodiment of an exemplary model of morality and virtue in Vietnam's history. He bequeathed not only immortal military victories but also enduring humanistic values that continue to illuminate the path of ethical and political life in the modern era.

Values and Contemporary Lessons from the Example of Trần Quốc Tuấn

The thought and example of Hưng Đạo Đại Vương retain their full relevance in the present era. In the context of global integration, competition, and volatility, the spirit of service to the Fatherland, the moral principles, and the virtues he embodied constitute an important ethical and political foundation for building and safeguarding the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed the necessity to: "educate patriotism, national pride, national self-respect, the traditions and history of the nation, and a sense of social responsibility among all strata of the people, especially the younger generation" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 136).

Hưng Đạo Đại Vương is a distinguished symbol of Vietnamese national heroism, a form of heroism inseparably linked to patriotism and selfless sacrifice for national independence, freedom, and sovereignty. His heroism was not reckless daring, but rather a synthesis of steadfast courage, intellectual acumen, historical responsibility, and benevolence.

In the current situation where the nation firmly safeguards its independence and sovereignty in a peaceful environment, yet faces latent challenges, the lesson from Trần Quốc Tuấn serves as a reminder of the necessity for vigilance, decisiveness, and unwavering resolve in defending national interests under all circumstances. Absolute loyalty

to the Party, to the Fatherland, and to the people's willingness to fight and sacrifice to protect the people, the homeland, and the country is one of the core values of the culture of revolutionary ethics. Such loyalty is manifested through a profound awareness of the Party's goals and ideals, coupled with the determination to strive ceaselessly to realize those ideals, regarding them as the very purpose and guiding principle of one's life.

A cadre or Party member possessing this quality will remain steadfast in political stance, maintain absolute trust in the Party's leadership, devote their utmost efforts to serving the Fatherland and the people, show solidarity and compassion toward comrades, and uphold a strong sense of community responsibility always placing the interests of the nation, the Party, and the people above personal gain in all situations and duties. In contemporary times, heroism no longer solely means wielding a sword in battle, but also daring to innovate, to take the lead, and to sacrifice personal interests for the common good.

From renouncing personal vengeance and refusing to contest the throne to maintaining humility in court affairs, Trần Quốc Tuấn emerges as a vivid moral exemplar. He was loyal to the nation and filial to his father, yet was willing to place the greater national cause above all private concerns, embodying the spirit of *vì quốc vong thân* ("sacrificing oneself for the country") and "upholding righteousness above all". His patriotism was inseparable from his compassion for people, especially his soldiers. His personal care for the sick and injured among them reflected a humanitarian spirit, compassion, self-sacrifice, and profound loyalty. In conduct, he was magnanimous, prudent, attentive to the common good, and capable of restraint qualities that together constitute the moral stature of a great statesman.

In modern society, where individuals are easily swayed by the pursuit of fame, wealth, and material gain, his moral example, living for the greater good and for the community, remains a vital reminder of the necessity to preserve and revive traditional ethical standards. This resonates with President Hồ Chí Minh's emphasis on promoting traditional values in modern society: "Our era is an era of civilization, an era of revolution; all affairs must rely on the collective strength of society; the individual can no longer stand apart, but must integrate into the collective, into society" (Hồ, 2011, p. 244).

For cadres and Party members, Trần Quốc Tuấn serves as a model of steadfast political character, revolutionary ethics, and resilience in the face of all challenges. In the present context, every cadre and Party member must uphold the spirit of "loyal to the nation, filial to the people" (*trung với nước, hiếu với dân*) and resist individualism and parochialism.

At the level of governance and leadership, his moral example emphasizes the importance of public service ethics, integrity, closeness to the people, and working for the people, consistent

with Hồ Chí Minh's principle that "leadership means being a servant of the people". This is also the foundation for building a corps of officials at all levels who possess both competence and virtue, with public service ethics closely tied to the culture of public authority.

The principle of "nurturing the people's strength" (khoan thư sức dân) retains its timeless relevance. In building a socialist rule-of-law state and developing a socialist-oriented market economy, placing the people at the center is the modern equivalent of the ancient strategy of "deep roots and firm foundations". The spirit of solidarity and mobilization of the people's strength that characterized Trần Quốc Tuấn's leadership remains a source of strength for Vietnam to overcome challenges, safeguard sovereignty, and ensure sustainable development.

For the younger generation, Trần Quốc Tuấn stands as a symbol of aspiration, perseverance, and ardent patriotism; he serves as a role model, reminding them to align their personal goals with the ideals of serving the community and the nation, while avoiding indifference toward the country's destiny particularly in pivotal areas such as innovation, technology, and non-traditional security. Consequently, "it is essential to create an environment where young people can actively participate in fields like digital transformation, the green economy, and national cultural projects, while encouraging their deep engagement in the process of international integration. Through this, young people can not only assimilate humanity's finest achievements but also share Vietnam's distinctive cultural values with the world" (To, 2025).

Conclusion

Trần Hưng Đạo stands as one of the most resplendent symbols in the history and culture of Vietnam. More than seven centuries have passed, yet his image endures illuminating not only as an outstanding general of the Trần dynasty, but also as a comprehensive exemplar of heroism, moral integrity, virtue, and national service. From his military talent and strategic vision to his moral character, patriotism, and sense of responsibility for the nation's destiny, Trần Quốc Tuấn has left an enduring spiritual legacy that transcends the confines of a historical figure, becoming a sustainable source of values for the country's development.

His major ideological contributions, most notably the principle of "lightening the people's burdens to ensure deep roots and firm foundations" reflect not only a political vision far ahead of his time, but also provide a foundation for the contemporary conception of building a rule-of-law state grounded in the people. This principle represents the fusion of

traditional humanism with the demands of modern governance. In the context of globalization, international integration, and the rapid transformation of the world order, inheriting and applying the ideological values, moral principles, and spirit of service exemplified by Trần Hưng Đạo is an objective and urgent necessity for the cause of nation-building and defense. This is not merely a matter of historical pride, but also a source of ideological inspiration to awaken the aspiration for a prosperous and powerful Vietnam fostering political stability, a humane society, and a state truly “of the people, by the people, and for the people”. In this light, continued in-depth research into the life, thought, and achievements of Trần Hưng Đạo should be situated within the dialectical relationship between tradition and modernity, between national identity and the imperatives of international integration. Studying and promoting the noble values of Trần Quốc Tuấn is, in essence, a meaningful contribution to realizing the aspiration for sustainable national development, successful integration, and the preservation of independence and sovereignty in the new era.

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