


Historical Significance in Nguyen Dinh Chieu’s Thought on Human Life

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INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Submitted: 08-10-2024, Revised: 26-12-2024, Accepted: 03-02-2025 Available Online: 09-07-2025</p> <hr/> <p>Copyright ©2024 by Journal of Judikaltura (s) This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.</p>  <p>Keywords: <i>Nguyen Dinh Chieu, humanity, humanities.</i></p>	<p><i>Nguyen Dinh Chieu is one of the typical thinkers in Vietnam in the second half of the 19th century. His works, not only are immortal pages praising the people's heroic fight against Western invaders from the first time they set foot on Vietnamese territory, but also express a philosophy profound humanity. He is not only a shining example of the indomitable spirit of fighting against foreign invaders, of patriotism and love for the people, but also represents the noble spirit of humanity.</i></p>

INTRODUCTION

Nguyen Dinh Chieu (1822-1888) was one of Vietnam's typical thinkers in the 19th century. His life and career are associated with major events in history and the painful, yet heroic era of the nation. Nguyen Dinh Chieu's philosophy of life is the inheritance and excellent development of the philosophy of life in the traditional cultural thought of the nation in general and the philosophy of life in Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist thought in particular. On the other hand, his system of human philosophy about the position, role, and nature of humans through the concept of morality and humanity; The concept of human morality deeply reflects the socio-economic context of Vietnam in the second half of the 19th century. Thereby, Nguyen Dinh Chieu's human ideology has made important contributions to preserving and promoting national cultural traditions, as well as contributing to orienting good human values in contemporary society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researching Nguyen Dinh Chieu's thoughts on human life, there are many projects and works such as: Complete work of Nguyen Dinh Chieu (including two volumes, Literature Publishing House, 1997) edited by author Ca Van Thinh. This is a rather massive and elaborate work in collecting and meticulously annotating Nguyen Dinh Chieu's works. Comments and assessments on the values and great contributions of Nguyen Dinh Chieu, the pioneer of Southern patriotic literature - “a bright star in the sky of national arts” in modern times.

Dang Thai Mai in the article: Nguyen Dinh Chieu, great patriotic poet of the Vietnamese people, affirms: “Nguyen Dinh Chieu's life is a shining example of resilient working spirit and patriotic

spirit. Despite all the deprivations, hardships, and illnesses, Nguyen Dinh Chieu devoted his whole life to his career of teaching, medicine, and writing” (Dang Thai Mai, page 75). This explains why our people, especially the Southern people of the ancient, love and respect him so much.

Commenting on the person and life of Nguyen Dinh Chieu, author Bui Thanh Ba in the article “Through Ngu Tieu's question (Ngu Tiều y thuật vấn đáp) and answer to learn about Nguyen Dinh Chieu's worldview” (Literature Magazine, Hanoi, No. 1, July - 1963) evaluated: “Nguyen Dinh Chieu is a great patriotic poet of our people. He had a pure soul and was illuminated by a progressive worldview, so the boundary between friend and enemy was clear and clear, decisive in his thoughts. His life is a pure example. His patriotism is as bright as the moon and stars.

Author Nguyen Van Chau, in the article “Nguyen Dinh Chieu's personality of a great cultural figure” (printed in Bong Sen Magazine, No. 47, 2005), deeply looks at the person who represents Vietnamese personality. - Nguyen Dinh Chieu. For him, “from a cultural perspective, Nguyen Dinh Chieu is a Vietnamese person who values morality and humanity, is rich in national identity, loves and hates clearly, praises and criticizes unequivocally. For the sake of people, he was willing to sacrifice himself without regard for fame and profit. For life's sake, he accepted all challenges in the face of poverty and hardship, not afraid of power, not afraid of power”.

In general, the above works and research works have more or less clarified the content of Nguyen Dinh Chieu's life, career and ideology. However, up to now, there has not been any work or project that has done in-depth research on Nguyen Dinh Chieu's thoughts on human life. However, the research results of previous researchers are valuable references for the author to complete this article.

METHODS

Methodology: Based on the dialectical and historical materialism of MarxistLeninist theory, Ho Chi Minh's ideology, combined with the Party's principles and perspectives, as well as the mechanisms, and legal framework of the State.

Research methods: Document research method; Systematization method for documents; Comparative and evaluative method; Analytical and synthetic research method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Ideological values in Nguyen Dinh Chieu's thought on human life

Studying Nguyen Dinh Chieu's works, we see that, in terms of form, there are many parts that are still rudimentary, not yet polished and polished, but in terms of ideology, they contain a profound system of human philosophy. The value of Nguyen Dinh Chieu's human ideology can be summarized in the following basic contents:

Firstly, Nguyen Dinh Chieu's philosophy of life contributes to enriching and deepening the content of the nation's perspective on life in the history of thought.

In Vietnamese history, due to the characteristics of the process of fighting to build and defend the country, when studying people, thinkers were mainly interested in human aspirations and emotions; affirming the role and position of people in social relationships; and pay attention to the idea of human morality; about humanity, etc. Among them, the idea of human morality and humanity are prominent contents of the ideology of humanity in history. However, benevolence in Nguyen Dinh Chieu's thought has many progressive points compared to the views of benevolence of contemporary and previous Confucians. That is, benevolence is conscious, thoughtful, without calculating pros and cons, for the people.

“Don't care about profit, don't be jealous of wealth.

You know, I don't know who to wear,

Professionalism does the right thing, there is no need for more.

Be devoted to righteousness and benevolence” (Poetry by Nguyen Dinh Chieu, page 364)

It can be affirmed that, from after Nguyen Trai to before Nguyen Dinh Chieu, no one has advocated a progressive and consistent humanity like him. Nguyen Dinh Chieu's humanity is like a red thread running through his works, his behavior, and his love for people. This is an important element that constitutes Nguyen Dinh Chieu's philosophy of life. Humanity is associated with patriotism and love for the people. Compassion for the poor, for those who are disadvantaged and weak in a declining feudal society.

Nguyen Dinh Chieu was the first thinker to promote farmers in the movement against French colonial invasion. Farmers in Nguyen Dinh Chieu's works are depicted with the posture of heroes, brave and simple. Under the feudal regime, they had a miserable life, “orphaned to do business, worried about poverty”. They “only know buffalo fields and live in villages. Hoeing, plowing, harrowing, planting, hands are used to doing” (Poetry by Nguyen Dinh Chieu, page 250). As for fighting the enemy, “practicing shields, practicing guns, practicing spears, practicing flags, eyes have never seen” (Poetry by Nguyen Dinh Chieu, page 250). But when the enemy came, they could not sit still and voluntarily and self. They are very aware of their duties and rights. They have to fight to protect “an inch of land, a blade of vegetables, a piece of rice, a piece of clothing”, to protect the sacred sovereignty of the country:

“In addition to the kidney, there is a piece of cloth, so why not carry a bag of gourds; In my hand I hold a bamboo shoot, I just want to buy a knife and hat to knock” (Poetry by Nguyen Dinh Chieu, page 252).

However, they fought very heroically, and achieved many victories in the resistance war against foreign invaders and reactionary forces:

“Apricot fire, beaten with straw, also burned down that religious house; The sword worn with a machete blade also cut off the head of a certain mandarin” (Poetry by Nguyen Dinh Chieu, page 252).

With a spirit of assertiveness and integrity, Nguyen Dinh Chieu's works express heroic concepts about life and death, the spirit of independence and freedom, and the psychology of Vietnamese farmers.

During the people's war against the French at that time, besides the poor farmers, there were also patriotic scholars and intellectuals, living close to the people, standing on the people's side, determined to fight against the enemy. They are representatives of the people, and receive great support and assistance from the people:

“...for the sake of the country we have sent, even if we lose it, we will regret it; Helping life is worth doing, so why bother” (Poems of Nguyen Dinh Chieu, page 265).

Or:

“I feel sorry for the generals, pity the generals, remind the generals, and flock like chickens; angry at the people, angry at evil people, scolding evil people, making a fuss like a fake” (Poetry by Nguyen Dinh Chieu, page 266).

The farmers and their leaders, despite many sacrifices and failures, “have lived a thousand years of brilliance”, and have held up an unshakable example of optimism, faith in justice, faith in into victory:

“If you live to fight the enemy, you will also fight the enemy, your soul will follow and help the army, forever vowing to take revenge;” (Poetry by Nguyen Dinh Chieu, page 254).

Thus, the ideology of progressive humanity, promotion, trust, and reliance on the strength of farmers in the resistance war against foreign invaders is one of the ideological values, and an important contribution of the ideology. Nguyen Dinh Chieu's life in the history of Vietnamese

thought.

Second, Nguyen Dinh Chieu's thought on human life has planted the seeds for a new concept of life's sake.

The content of the new concept of life's sake was expressed by Nguyen Dinh Chieu through poetry, orations, and through his own actions. His thoughts on life do not stop at songs of patriotism, love for the people, songs of kindness and humanity, but also express the morality of being human, for the people, for the country. He criticized the formalism and vanity of decadent feudal culture; ideology of profiteering and superstition; the narrow ideology of contemporary religions; against mystical medical theory;... Nguyen Dinh Chieu criticizes Taoism, Christianity, and Buddhism not on the doctrinal aspect, but on the practical aspect of their regressiveism, illusion, and metaphysics, easy to dehydrate, home melts. Regarding Confucianism, he criticized its depravity and loss of roots; Stimulate lust, power and violence. He openly and frankly condemned the white devils; traitors, cowards, conservatives; Those who compete for public benefits, block the flow of humanity. The new concept of humanity that he sowed is a close combination of three characteristics: nation, people and humanity; Demonstrating determination and perseverance to serve the cause of saving the country and people.

Thus, Nguyen Dinh Chieu reviewed the advantages and limitations of traditional Eastern culture. He criticized, inherited, and summarized practical moral lessons. Nguyen Dinh Chieu is the expression of a transforming nation, the conscience of a rising nation, fighting stubbornly against all contemporary political and cultural enemies of the Vietnamese revolution. His thoughts on humanity planted the seeds for a new concept of humanity in Vietnam.

2. About the practical meaning of Nguyen Dinh Chieu's thought on human life

Nguyen Dinh Chieu's thoughts on human life not only have great ideological significance, but also have profound practical meanings. The practical meaning of Nguyen Dinh Chieu's ideology on human life is expressed in the following contents:

Firstly, Nguyen Dinh Chieu's ideology of human life strongly encouraged the patriotic and anti-French colonial movement in the second half of the 19th century and early 20th century in Vietnam.

Nguyen Dinh Chieu's works reflect the heroic fight against foreign invaders of the Southern people, denouncing the crimes of the French invaders. Nguyen Dinh Chieu's attitude to life is always current, and it is not always possible, for everyone, to choose a clear attitude to life of honor and shame. Nguyen Dinh Chieu expressed his love and respect for the martyrs, but also expressed his attitude. His thoughts are the voice of the oppressed and exploited people and praise the people's brave fighting spirit and heroic sacrifice. The images of the people's resistance were vividly described by Nguyen Dinh Chieu, such as the fiery spirit, rushing into the fire and bullets, thousands of people volunteering without waiting for the bells and whistles; stepping on the fence and rushing forward, seeing the enemy as nothing... inspired the people to stand up, regardless of difficulties, and sacrifice to fight against foreign invaders. His works aroused in the people patriotism, love for fellow citizens, the will to hate the enemy, and faith in victory in the future.

Second, Nguyen Dinh Chieu's ideology of human life has entered the hearts of the people, and is the spiritual child of the Southern people.

His works have pervasive power and strong vitality in people's lives. His characters and works have incarnated, transformed into life, spoken the voice of the people, and become the spiritual food of the people.

For example, the story Luc Van Tien, a work has truly become an indispensable spiritual dish for many generations of Vietnamese, especially Southern readers. At one time, the work "Luc Van Tien" had a strong influence on the spiritual life of the people. Along the length of the country, there seems to be no place that does not know this work. From Northern folk songs, Binh Tri

Thien, especially Southern folk songs, rowing boats in Ba Tri, Rach Gia, Can Tho repartee singing, Duc Hoa long-roofed sing, Dong Thap, Cu Chi... are all inspired by this work. Even from the work Luc Van Tien people, it has developed into simple, authentic songs mixed with a bit of lovely humor, along with riddles based on stories.

Not stopping at its impact on a single subject, the work "Luc Van Tien" has penetrated Southern life, affecting every member of society. Legend has it that about sixty or seventy years ago, throughout the Six Provinces of Cochinchina, people often met blind people who lived by speaking poetry. At the Saigon roundabout, in front of the train station to My Tho, on Nam Vang Nguyen Van Kieu wharf, at the beginning of Ba Chieu, Tan Dinh, Dat Ho, Thi Nghe markets,... every time I hear the sound of the lute and poetic voice When Van Tien released it, many passersby seemed to be drawn in. They stopped, stood around the blind artist and spent two or thirty minutes enjoying the six verses, the content of which they had heard countless times.

We can see that, although the work "Luc Van Tien" does not come from a sophisticated, sophisticated poetics, it is built in simple language, rich in people's character and human images. The objects are lively, so the work has a strong attraction. Thanks to that, the work comes to life and contributes to fostering the national soul and orienting good human values in people's lives.

Thus, the work "Luc Van Tien" in particular and the system of Nguyen Dinh Chieu's works in general not only reflect the socio-economic context of Vietnam in the second half of the 19th century, but also generalize, summarizing good human philosophies in the national cultural tradition. The ideological value of his works has become an indispensable spiritual food for the people, especially the people of the Southern region. The penetration of Nguyen Dinh Chieu's works into the cultural life of Southern folk culture is evidence affirming the value of his ideology to the spiritual life of the Southern people in particular, and the Vietnamese people in general. Nguyen Dinh Chieu's life was a series of misfortunes, with many major events such as: marriage annulment, mother's death, blindness, foreign invaders ravaging the country,... However, he turned his misfortunes into a sharp weapon, directly attacking traitors, dishonest. His energy, talent, virtue, and ideology are always a shining example for contemporary people and future generations to follow.

Third, Nguyen Dinh Chieu's ideology on human life makes an important contribution to orienting good human values in the current socio-economic context of Vietnam.

Vietnam is in a period of accelerating industrialization, modernization, and international integration, with a general economic model of developing a "socialist-oriented market economy with many forms of ownership, many economic sectors, business forms and distribution forms" (Documents of the 11th National Congress, page 73). The socialist-oriented market economy in our country is a multi-sector commodity economy, operating according to the market mechanism under the management of the State with the goal of rich people, strong country, and democratic society, fairness, civilization. The purpose of a socialist-oriented market economy is to develop productive forces and economic development to build the material and technical basis of socialism and improve people's lives. The impact of the market economy not only plays a decisive role in liberating production capacity and improving social labor productivity, but also actively contributes to promoting Vietnamese people to innovate their awareness and ways of living. Live in a modern and civilized way. Democratic consciousness, personal role, and self-awareness will have conditions and opportunities to develop. The process of creating and disseminating cultural values will attract large participation from all walks of life. Besides, under the impact of the market economy, there has been a trend of worshipping foreign countries, disregarding national cultural values, and following a pragmatic, selfish lifestyle; trample on family relationships, teacher-student relationships, comrades, and colleagues; Drugs, prostitution and other social evils increase; corruption, wasteful spending of state money, debauchery, bureaucracy, power, harassment of the people, status manipulation, sectarianism, factionalism, disunity, dissemination,... At the fourth conference, the 11th Central Executive Committee commented that in addition to the majority of cadres and party members, they are conscious of training and

improving their political qualities, ethical lifestyle, and are conscious of serving the people and being trusted by the people, there is still “a large number of cadres and party members, including party members holding leadership and management positions, including a number of senior and incompetent cadres, regression in political ideology, ethics and lifestyle with different manifestations of fading ideals, falling into selfish individualism, pragmatic opportunism, chasing after fame, fortune, and status, local, corrupt, wasteful, arbitrary, unprincipled,...” (Fourth Conference, Central Executive Committee term XI, page 22). All the typical manifestations of selfish individualism that exist among some cadres, party members and other members of society in our country today are truly obstacles in the process of reform, promote industrialization and modernization of the country. Among many solutions to prevent the deterioration of morality and lifestyle, our Party and State emphasize the solution of “valuing ideal education, educating on revolutionary historical traditions, ethical lifestyle,... awareness of social responsibility” (Documents of the 11th National Congress, page 216).

In that context, the basic contents of Nguyen Dinh Chieu's human ideology such as the concept of human morality; the concept of morality and benevolence; heroic, resilient, and indomitable fighting spirit; noble patriotism; Reflecting the lasting values of the nation's cultural traditions, if done well in propaganda and education, it will make an important contribution to orienting the correct concept of life and lifestyle in our country today.

CONCLUSION

Nguyen Dinh Chieu's thoughts on human life have profound ideological and practical value. In which, humanity is the starting point, and the basis of Nguyen Dinh Chieu's ideology on human life. His thoughts not only expressed his patriotism, love for the people, and belief in the strength of the people, especially farmers, but those thoughts also sowed the seeds for a new culture for the people, contributing to greatly contributed to encouraging the people's spirit. His works are precious spiritual dishes of the Vietnamese people in general, and the people of the Southern region in particular. On the other hand, the content of his positive human philosophy makes an important contribution to orienting good human values in the current socio-economic context in Vietnam.

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