

Confucian Inheritance in Nguyen Trai's Thought – Its Characteristics And Meaning in Today's Era

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ABSTRACT

Nguyen Trai (1380 – 1442) was a great thinker of Vietnam in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. His thought was formed and developed in the tumultuous historical period of Dai Viet society with the task of defeating the invading Ming invaders, protecting national independence and territorial integrity. Besides, his thought is also the inheritance and fusion of Vietnamese social traditions with the philosophy of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. In which, Confucianism is the theoretical foundation of Nguyen Trai. Nguyen Trai inherited and renewed the theories of traditional Confucianism to suit the social reality at that time, in order to carry out the task of saving the country and the people. Today, the contents of Confucianism inherited and transformed by him still have certain values in the cause of building Vietnam today.

Keywords: Nguyen Trai thought, Confucianism, inheritance, meaning, today

MAKE A PROBLEM

As a form of social consciousness, Nguyen Trai's thought was not only born from the historical and social context of his time, but also inherited previous theories. With the development of Dai Viet society at the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th century, with the need to build a feudal centralized state, Buddhist philosophies increasingly proved to be inconsistent with the needs of social thought. At that time, Confucianism gradually replaced Buddhism and became the foundation of social theory to carry out the urgent tasks that society posed at that time. Therefore, when learning about Nguyen Trai's thought, it is necessary to understand its theoretical foundation which is Confucianism. In this article, the author will analyze and clarify the basic contents that Nguyen Trai inherited and developed in order to carry out the task of saving the country, saving the people, and building a centralized feudal state. From there, the author draws the values of his time and its meaning in the present day.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Confucian philosophical contents are inherited in Nguyen Trai's thought

Confucianism is a political and moral doctrine in China during the Spring and Autumn period, founded by Confucius around the 6th century BC for the purpose of teaching and perfecting people and preserving and maintaining social order. Association, was chosen by Eastern feudal states such as China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam as the philosophy of national governance. Confucian students attach great importance to self-cultivation and moral training, and consider ethical norms as the standard for dealing with people. Confucianism was introduced to Vietnam by the invasion route of the Northern feudal state. As a young learner, Confucian philosophies soon influenced Nguyen Trai's thought. He absorbed and applied the Confucian doctrines of the destiny, the times, the ideas of loyalty, filial piety, humanity and justice, and the ideology of the people in a creative way to serve the purposes of saving the country and the people. As

follows:

First of all, the thought of destiny and time. This is a characteristic category of the Confucian worldview, understood as the law governing the movement of all things. It is used to refer to “the transformation, in the universe that causes all things to grow in a harmonious way; we should not disobey it, fear it, act in accordance with it” (Nguyen Hien Le, 2013, p.246). Nguyen Trai has inherited the Confucian view of destiny to express his worldview. He said that heaven decides the fate of the country, “the country is prosperous or not, the relationship is in heaven” (Institute of History, 2020, p.105), “when we meet or not, we must be in heaven” (Institute of History, 2020, p.112). Nguyen Trai was also influenced by Confucian views on the time and position of Confucianism. According to him, a gentleman must not only fear the orders of heaven but also understand the times, saying, “A good soldier is only in knowing the times. If you have good time, you can lose it, become big, if you lose time, you will become weak, if you stay still you will become dangerous... A good soldier is only in knowing the times” (Institute of History, 2020, p.107).

Next was Nguyen Trai, who inherited the Confucian point of view on loyalty and filial piety. From the point of view of traditional Confucianism, loyalty and filial piety are moral qualities required in a gentleman. In it, loyalty is a servant’s loyalty to the king. The point of view of “death military, unfaithful immortal god” also comes from that. “Hieu” is an emotion, a duty in the parent-child relationship, a child’s love and respect for parents. This view of Confucianism had a profound influence on Nguyen Trai through his family upbringings, taking loyalty and filial piety as the moral foundation for living and fighting for the country for the people, as he once affirmed: “Bui have a filial piety / Grinding is not missing, dyeing is not black” (Institute of History, 2020, p. 349). However, Nguyen Trai has absorbed and liberated the middle and filial religion from the narrow framework of traditional Confucianism. From the point of view of absolute allegiance to a single king, he extended the meaning of this category to allegiance to kings who took care of the country and the people. He is a descendant of the Tran dynasty, but he supported the Ho king to help Le Loi for the common cause of saving the country and the people. Regarding filial piety, Nguyen Trai associated filial piety towards his parents with love for his homeland. He put patriotism above family love, went to find a way to save the country and save the people to wash the country’s shame and avenge his father.

The next category that Nguyen Trai inherited from Confucianism is humanity and meaning. Humanity is the root of Confucius’ political and moral doctrine. Humanity is the way to be human, wholehearted to people, “what you don’t want, don’t do it for people” (Nguyen Hien Le, 2003, p.410). Righteousness (righteousness), that is, when you see what is worth doing, do it, without any intention to benefit yourself, “the behavior of a gentleman is not necessarily like this, it is not necessarily like that, if it makes sense, do it” (Nguyen Hien Le, 2003, p.310). Nguyen Trai absorbed, the categories of humanity, the meaning of traditional Confucianism, developed it into the core ideology, rich in humanity in his thought. If the category of human and meaning proposed by Confucius was to build the image of a gentleman in a feudal society, Nguyen Trai skillfully combined those two categories into a category of benevolence. In his patriotic thought, benevolence means the method, the way to save the country and the people, with a specific purpose and object, as he clearly asserts in his work Binh Ngo Dai Cao: “The work of humanity and justice. living in peace” (Institute of History, 2020, p.64).

Next, Nguyen Trai also inherited the Confucian ideology of the people and developed it into a very unique category of his. The people in Confucianism are traditionally the followers, the subjects, the shepherds of the feudal ruling power, the lowly class, who have to work hard to submit to the ruling class. Taking care of the people to have a peaceful life, after all, is just a national policy, maintaining social order and consolidating the power of the ruling class. On the basis of Confucianism’s “people’s” ideology, Nguyen Trai has developed his views of “people are the root”, “respect for the people”, and “people’s relatives” to a new height. The people in Nguyen Trai’s thought are the plowmen, the four men, the most miserable class

in society, but they play a great role in building and defending the country. He considered people like water, able to overturn a boat or push a boat. When he realized the great contribution of the people, instead of talking about “the grace of the king and the wealth of the country”, Nguyen Trai said that “the reward for the favor of the tiller” (Institute of History, 2020, p.375), because “the magnificent scale is due to the hard work of the army and people” (Institute of History, 2020, p.151).

Features of Confucian inheritance in Nguyen Trai’s thought

Thoughts and views of Vietnamese patriotic intellectuals in the feudal era inherited the Eastern three-way philosophies of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. But which part is the foundation, which inherits the content and the method and purpose of the inheritance and its application depend on the problems that the historical-society context poses in combination with the choice. subjectivity of the individual thinker. That makes them unique in their thinking compared to other thinkers of the same time on a certain issue. From that basis, it can be seen that the Confucian inheritance in Nguyen Trai’s thought has the following basic characteristics: ethnicity, practicality and humanity.

The Confucian inheritance in Nguyen Trai’s thought is combined with the traditional values of the national culture, creating the national character of his thought. Nguyen Trai considers himself a Confucian devotee, his thought is heavily influenced by Confucian doctrine, but it is not a stereotypical inheritance, it has passed through the “filter screen” of the national culture. selected and renewed to suit the national cultural traditions and requirements of Dai Viet society in his time. Typically, Nguyen Trai’s thought on loyalty and filial piety, although derived from traditional Confucianism, is not a blind loyalty to only one king, but Nguyen Trai’s loyalty is associated with water and destiny. of the nation. He was a descendant of the Tran dynasty, but when “the Trinh family relied on themselves to be strong and rich, while the people were miserable” (Institute of History, 2020, p. 152), he went out to work as a mandarin for the Ho Dynasty, then went to Le Loi again to participate. They revolted after realizing that “the Ho family used their wisdom to steal the country, and used their wisdom to rape the people’s hearts” (Institute of History, 2020, p.152). Through practical activities of saving the country and saving the people, it can be seen that Nguyen Trai was loyal to the king who knew how to put the national interests first, he developed the idea of ??confucian loyalty to be loyal to the country and the people. He chose Le Loi to support him because he realized that this hero is the embodiment of patriotism, indomitable spirit, determined to sacrifice for national independence and people’s right to life. Nguyen Trai has absorbed the “middle” religion of Confucianism and transformed it into a necessary virtue of patriotic intellectuals, supporting the king to help the country, not just to “cultivate oneself”.

Besides the middle religion, Nguyen Trai inherited the filial piety of Confucianism and he attached filial piety to his parents with love for his homeland and country. When Nguyen Trai’s father was arrested to China, he followed and took care of him. After listening to his father, returning to find a way to wash the country’s humiliation and avenge his father, as his father taught, that is great filial piety. Thus, Nguyen Trai has developed and liberated Confucian filial piety from the family level to filial piety to the people, homeland and country. He has put the responsibility to the country, to the people above the responsibility to the family, making it progressive and deeply nationalistic.

Besides the national character, the Confucian inheritance in Nguyen Trai’s thought is also progressive. That makes Nguyen Trai’s thought have outstanding value in both theory and practice in his time. That is reflected in his thought about the people. From practical observations, Nguyen Trai’s scientifically and deeply aware of the role of the people in the history of the nation’s development. The people are the ones who cultivate the land, create material wealth to maintain the existence and development of society, and the people are also the source of additional forces for the insurgent army in the fight against foreign invaders to protect the country. Since then, he affirmed that the prosperity of the nation, the nation is in the people, as he said: “when the boat is turned over, the people are clear like water” (Institute of History, 2020, p.222).

Since then, he believes that the position of the people's hearts is the decisive factor for the prosperity of the nation, how to "above the heart of heaven, under the satisfaction of the people's hope, the nation will be stable for a long time" (Institute of History, 2020, p.156). It can be seen that Nguyen Trai's views on the people and the role of the people have improved compared to traditional Confucian thought. Although inheriting the Confucian point of view "the people are precious" of Confucianism, Nguyen Trai has developed that view to a new level of awareness: the people are the subject of production and also the subject of history.

Besides, the inheritance of Confucianism in Nguyen Trai's thought also has a profound humanity. This is not Nguyen Trai inheriting the humanity of Confucianism but inheriting the humanistic Confucian point of view in Nguyen Trai's thought. Humanity is the love and respect for people, upholding the role of people and the desire to bring people a happy and prosperous life. Nguyen Trai studied Confucianism and practiced Confucianism, not mainly in cultivating oneself, to become a righteous man like a "white-faced scholar". He chose Confucianism as his ideological foundation because its philosophies helped him find the way to save the country and the people. Humanity in Confucianism was built by him into the way of people's peace, and to preserve the country's peace. Confucian filial piety was creatively and progressively applied by him, freedom and happiness of the people were the purpose and motivation for Nguyen Trai to find Nguyen Trai a king who knew how to fight for national independence. interests of the people. From the blind loyalty that was very typical of the loyalists in the feudal period, Nguyen Trai renewed it, turning it into loyalty to the Fatherland, to the people. The filial piety of traditional Confucianism was also expanded and developed by Nguyen Trai. He put the responsibility for the river above the duty of being a son as his father told him to, so that was great filial piety.

The humanity in Nguyen Trai's thought when inheriting Confucianism is also reflected in the order of priority he gives to the best. If traditional Confucianism thinks that what is best is to offer to the king, Nguyen Trai's for the people as he said: "Amber serves the spirit to see, / It's still to help this people" (Institute of History, 2020, p.397). Nguyen Trai admits that he is always "because the people worry before the stomach". He wished he had King Ngu Thuan's lute to play the Nam Phong lute in order to bring a full and prosperous life to the people (the legend says that a favorable south wind can make people more wealthy), as he writes: "Perhaps Ngu plays the lute for an hour, / People are rich enough to ask for directions" (Institute of History, 2020, p.383). It can be said that Nguyen Trai's a thinker with a progressive and deeply humanist thought in the feudal era of Vietnam.

Next, Nguyen Trai developed the idea of humanity, meaning from the abstract and rigid category of Confucian scholars in the "white face" style to become closer and more practical. From being just the qualities needed to cultivate the body of a gentleman, Nguyen Trai has transformed and renewed it into a way to save the country and save the people. Humanity in Nguyen Trai's thought is associated with the country and the people, as he asserted: "The core of humanity is to live in peace" (Institute of History, 2020, p.64), "benevolence will keep the country peaceful" (Institute of History, 2020, p.231).

The value and meaning of Confucian inheritance in Nguyen Trai's thought

Although it has been more than 600 years, the values of Confucianism were selectively inherited and renewed by Nguyen Trai, which brought great values ??in his time and also profound meanings for with today.

In terms of values, the inheritance, selection and creative application of the basic philosophies of Confucianism helped Nguyen Trai build a worldview, scientific and progressive outlook on life, helping him find the way to save the country, saving the people properly, solving the crisis of the way to save the country at the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th century. That was to defeat the invading Ming invaders to fully protect the national independence and territorial integrity of Dai Viet. In particular,

his deep and scientific awareness of the role of the people helped him build methods and forces to fight against the Ming invaders, developing the Lam Son movement into a nationwide people's war. That inheritance also helped Nguyen Trai develop a strategy to support King Le to build a strong and prosperous feudal state in the early Le dynasty. The creative inheritance of Confucian thought combined with traditional values of national culture in Nguyen Trai's thought also complements and enriches theories about the nation, nation, people, etc... in the historical flow of Vietnamese thought.

In terms of historical significance, the contents that Nguyen Trai inherited and renewed from Confucianism not only brought value in the Nguyen Trai era but also had a profound meaning in today's era. The inheritance of Confucian philosophies combined with traditional national cultural values in Nguyen Trai's thought creates a foundation for the development of ideas about loyalty to the Fatherland, to the people, and about promoting the role the people's mastery in national construction and defense. Specifically, Nguyen Trai's loyalty to any king who could bring prosperity to the nation turned into loyalty to the Fatherland among all classes of people. Or Nguyen Trai's humanitarian spirit on the basis of renewing Confucianism has become the policy of the Communist Party of Vietnam in social leadership as well as in foreign policy, which is the development of humanitarianism, love people, respect and preserve world peace. Besides, the ideology of the people and the power of the people in Nguyen Trai's thought on the basis of the "people" point of view of Confucianism has been developed by our Party into a democratic view in this day and age. From the point of view of the subjects of Confucianism, Nguyen Trai has renewed and developed it into a citizen's point of view. That is, in terms of ideology, Nguyen Trai put the people's position as the master of society, the historical subject. That view is built by the Communist Party of Vietnam in the current context of socialist democracy. That was confirmed in the Document of the 11th Party Congress as follows:

"Improving capacity and creating a mechanism for the people to fully exercise their mastery, especially direct democracy, to strongly promote all creative abilities and ensure a high consensus in society, creating a driving force for development country" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2011, p.100).

CONCLUSION

In this article, the author has analyzed and clarified the inheritance of the basic contents that Nguyen Trai's thought inherited from Confucianism and the creative application of those philosophies to his career, that is the content about loyalty, filial piety, humanity, about the people. But the inheritance of these contents is not homogeneous but is combined with the traditional values of the national culture, creating a prominent feature in Nguyen Trai's thought. In addition, the inheritance of traditional Confucian content in Nguyen Trai's thought was also progressive due to the change and renewal of those contents to suit the actual situation of Dai Viet society at that time. hour. In addition, this inheritance aims to save the country and save the people, creating a deep humanity in Nguyen Trai's thought. This innovative and progressive inheritance not only solves contemporary problems but also has great historical significance in the present day. The contents of Nguyen Trai's thought on the basis of Confucianism are the theoretical basis for our Party to successfully build and defend the socialist Fatherland.

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