

**Received:** 14 February, 2026

**Accepted:** 02 June, 2026

**Published:** 30 June, 2026

# Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's Patriotic Thought and Its Significance for Contemporary Vietnam

**Huynh Tuan Linh**

Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam  
linhht@huit.edu.vn

---

**Cite this article:**

Linh, H. T. (2026). Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotic thought and its significance for contemporary Vietnam. *Cultura Científica*, (24), pp. 823–832.

## Abstract

Nguyễn Đình Chiểu (1822-1888), one of the greatest patriots in the history of Vietnam and recognized as a World Cultural Celebrity by UNESCO in 2021, made an indelible contribution to the development of Vietnamese thought and culture due to his patriotic sentiments and steadfastness against foreign invaders. The current paper investigates the philosophical and cultural aspects of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotism on the basis of the theoretical framework of dialectical materialism and historical materialism. Thus, the current study discusses such main aspects of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotic thought as: the development of moral

righteousness and humanity, the role and power of people, profound sympathy towards the common folk, and staunch resistance against foreign invaders in order to defend the country. In view of Vietnam's high level of integration into the world community and ongoing complex processes of globalization, the patriotism of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu is relevant and important both theoretically and practically, contributing to the development of national identity and patriotism of young people.

**Keywords:** Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotic thought, national solidarity, humanness and righteousness, international integration

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Under current conditions of internationalization and integration into the world community, Vietnam is facing many favorable opportunities for development as well as the challenges concerning safeguarding national sovereignty, cultural identity, and domestic potential of the country. In this context, the growing complexity of the current situation worldwide underlines the necessity to inherit and promote traditional ideological values, among which patriotism occupies an outstanding place as a long-established value in the process of nation-building.

According to the history of Vietnamese thoughts, patriotism was considered not only a natural feeling but also a spiritual resource that guided the processes of forming and defending the Vietnamese nation. One of the most prominent representatives of this intellectual trend was Nguyễn Đình Chiểu, who was recognized by UNESCO as World Cultural Celebrity in 2021. Living in the era of the French colonial invasion, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu demonstrated patriotism not only in his literary works but also in other intellectual activities. Besides, his patriotic idea could not be limited to the awareness of resisting aggression because it was closely linked with the value of moral righteousness and humaneness, compassion for the people, confidence in power of masses, and high level of responsibility for the destiny of the nation. Thus, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's thought combined the best traditions of morality and defense of his motherland, giving his idea philosophical significance in Vietnamese culture.

Nowadays, there exist plenty of publications devoted to different aspects of the life and intellectual heritage of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu. Most of the existing research concerns literature of this prominent poet. However, few studies are available about the significance of his patriotic ideas, particularly in the contemporary context of internationalization of Vietnam and enhancement of national cultural identity. Against this background, the present paper aims to consider the philosophical structure of his patriotic thought on the basis of dialectical and historical materialism in order to reveal its theoretical and practical significance in the current situation.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The thought of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu was a subject of interest of numerous scholars in the field of literature, intellectual history, and Vietnamese culture [1]. Existing literature not only emphasizes his distinctive contribution to Vietnamese spirituality of the nineteenth century but also helps to understand the content of his patriotic, humane, and righteous ideas as well as the nature of resistance to aggression and foreign rule of French colonialists. Generally, there are two main directions in literature dedicated to Nguyễn Đình Chiểu: examination of his patriotic thought and consideration of contemporary value and significance of this idea for Vietnamese society.

Thus, there were numerous monographs and articles devoted to studying the contents and nature of patriotism of this poet and writer. One of the representative works is *The Complete Works of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu*, written in two volumes in 1978 [2]. As stated above, this publication includes some of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's best works like *Luc Van Tien*, *Duong Tu – Ha Mau*, *Van te nghĩa sĩ Can Giuoc (Elegy to the Martyrs of Can Giuoc)* as well as a series of poems and articles criticizing the French aggression. Analysis of these works makes it possible to see that the author put at the center of his creation images of noble scholars, working people, and honest persons, which made him reveal ideas of righteousness and humaneness, patriotism, and social responsibility as well as confidence in the power of masses. Thus, for Nguyễn Đình Chiểu, literature was not just artistry but also ideological fight for patriotism among the nation.

Similar ideas can be found in another monograph *Nguyễn Đình Chiểu – A Model of Patriotism and Artistic Commitment* [3]. Its authors also emphasized the significance of righteousness, patriotic and human ideas, and strong social responsibility in the author's writings. In accordance with their opinion, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotism was reflected in his opposition to foreign rule but also in his concern for the fate of the nation, moral righteousness, and national cultural identity.

Another work worth attention is *Nguyễn Đình Chiểu – A Star That Shines More Brightly the More One Observes It* [4]. In this book, Lê Trí Viễn considered Nguyễn Đình Chiểu as a representative of the "poet-warriors," i.e., persons who always kept at the center of their literature works destiny of the nation and its people. By analyzing major publications of the author such as *Luc Van Tien* and *Van te nghĩa sĩ Can Giuoc*, Lê Trí Viễn proved that his patriotic idea was connected with moral righteousness and humaneness, concern for the fate of the nation, and confidence in its power in struggle with invaders.

Similar approach was applied by Nguyễn Văn Hoán in another monograph *Nguyễn Đình Chiểu – A Model of Patriotism* [5]. According to his opinion, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu should be seen as a hero of indomitable patriotism and resistance against French aggression in South Vietnam of the nineteenth century. The author emphasizes the unity of moral principles, humaneness and righteousness, and patriotism of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu and shows that in his literature works, he reflected not only real historical events but also encouraged citizens to resist and to think of their country as of common destiny of the nation.

It is necessary to note that apart from above-mentioned monographs, there are plenty of articles published in different

academic journals, which help to better understand the patriotic thought of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu. For example, “*Nguyễn Đình Chiểu – A Bright Star in the Nation’s Literary Tradition*” [6], by Phạm Văn Đông, proves that Nguyễn Đình Chiểu is a bright star in the history of Vietnamese literature and emphasizes the significance of patriotism in his works. At the same time, Phan Ngọc in his “*The Popular Character of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu*” [7] pays more attention to the popular character and moral depth of his ideology. Other studies, conducted by Trần Thanh Mai [8] identify Nguyễn Đình Chiểu as a representative of Vietnamese Southern patriotism of the nineteenth century. However, as a rule, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu’s patriotism was considered mainly as a literary issue rather than as a philosophical system of thought.

Apart from above-mentioned works, there are studies dedicated to revealing the significance and modern meaning of the author’s patriotic idea for Vietnamese society. For example, Ca Văn Thỉnh in his monograph *Nguyễn Đình Chiểu – A Poet Fighting for a Noble Cause* [9] identifies three key features of the author’s literature – indomitable fighting spirit, firm willpower, and deep patriotism – proving the important role of the poet in promoting patriotism as a constant element of Vietnamese people.

From the point of view of intellectual history, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu was considered by Trần Văn Giàu as a key representative of moral philosophers of the anticolonial movement in the Vietnamese history [10]. Particularly, he emphasized the key role of moral righteousness and humaneness, values of ethic and patriotism in the author’s thought. Also, the research of Huỳnh Lứa, devoted to the anticolonial movement in Vietnam [11], revealed that the writings of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu had a great influence on the spiritual life and movements of patriots of Southern Vietnam.

Additionally, in their studies, Nguyễn Thi Thanh Tuyền [12], Hà Huy Giáp [13], Đặng Văn Tuấn [14], and Ca Văn Thỉnh [15] prove that the ideas of this intellectual philosopher helped to raise patriotism, community spirit, and national cultural identity of Vietnamese people in historical times of struggle against French invaders as well as nowadays in modern conditions of moral education and responsibility.

However, there exist some deficiencies in literature. First, research on Nguyễn Đình Chiểu’s philosophy is rather fragmented, concentrating mostly on specific works and historical contexts. Second, his patriotic idea is mainly interpreted as moral sentiment or literary inspiration but not as a philosophical system of ideas. Finally, the relation between his thoughts and modern problems in Vietnam remains unclear.

Thus, from these gaps of knowledge, the present research will examine the philosophy of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu’s patriotism, which includes the idea of righteousness and humaneness, role of masses in defending the country, compassion for the people, and resistance to aggression.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

The research is carried out within the methodology of dialectical materialism and historical materialism for studying the patriotic thoughts of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu in conjunction with the historical background and the socio-economic conditions of Vietnam during the nineteenth century.

On that basis, this paper applies a number of concrete research approaches. The analytical-synthetic method will be used to generalize and analyze the core components of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu’s patriotic thinking, which include ethics and righteousness, people-oriented thinking, the concern about the fate of the poor people, and the determination to resist foreign aggression. The historical-logical approach will be applied to analyze the historical context of Vietnam in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, making clear the emergence and development of patriotic thought due to the French colonial invasion of Vietnam.

Moreover, textual analysis will be conducted for important writings like *Luc Van Tien, Van te nghĩa sĩ Can Giuoc* (Elegy to the Martyrs of Can Giuoc), *Ngu Tieu y thuat van dap*, and *The Complete Works of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu* [2]. In terms of the analysis of contents and discourses in these pieces, the paper emphasizes the profound philosophical nature of his patriotic thought and its humanistic essence. Also, in combination with practical aspects, the application of theoretical knowledge is made to show its relevance to modern times in cultivating patriotism, promoting national solidarity, and consolidating Vietnamese culture.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. PATRIOTIC THOUGHT OF NGUYỄN ĐÌNH CHIỂU

The development of patriotic thought by Nguyễn Đình Chiểu took place under special historical conditions, which was the invasion and colonization by France of Vietnam. Facing such calamities, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu neither retreated to seclusion nor did anything compromising for the sake of personal benefits and comfort. On the contrary, he decided to use literature as a means of struggle to awaken patriotic sentiment, an unshakable desire to resist colonial rule and a spirit of fighting among people. One should note that the concept of patriotic thought elaborated by Nguyễn Đình Chiểu goes far beyond simple patriotic feelings caused by certain historical events. This system of patriotic ideas included close links

between patriotism, righteousness, and morality as well as between people and the whole nation. Thus, patriotism could be interpreted as loyalty to the nation and to people, preservation of one's righteousness, and its actualization in resisting invaders.

If compared with other prominent Vietnamese philosophers and patriots, such as Nguyen Trai, Phan Boi Chau, and Phan Chau Trinh, the patriotic thought of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu appears to share common features and have certain distinctive characteristics. Nguyen Trai paid considerable attention to righteousness and humaneness and linked them with national independence and happiness of people. Phan Boi Chau supported revolutionary activity and a new national consciousness that helped realize the goal of salvation, while Phan Chau Trinh promoted reforms and enlightenment of people. The most outstanding feature of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu was his embodiment of a traditional patriot who attached great importance to traditional moral values. He regarded people as the foundation of the nation and believed in the need for intellectual and scholarly resistance against foreign invaders. It was precisely the harmonious combination of traditional moral principles and resolute anti-colonial spirit that constituted the distinctive character of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotic thought.

#### 4.1.1 Ethical Principles and Humaneness and Righteousness as the Cornerstone of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's Patriotism

In the system of ideas and theories of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu, ethical values and the spirit of humaneness and righteousness play the cornerstone role, forming the worldview of man, society, and patriotism. Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotism was far from a simple outburst of emotions or formal respect towards a political organization. It was rather an ethical category rich with humanistic sense, based on such principles as humaneness, righteousness, and justice. Exactly this ethical dimension was the reason why Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's thoughts about patriotism became profound and philosophically important in the context of Vietnamese philosophy. Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's spirit of humaneness and righteousness was manifested in readiness to resist and fight in the struggle for the homeland and its independence when it came under attack by enemies. Despite his blindness, his patriotism grew rather than diminished, being reflected through his works, inspiring the Vietnamese nation with patriotism and strengthening its unity.

Nguyễn Đình Chiểu developed his patriotism on the basis of heritage of Confucian ethics of humaneness and righteousness [16]. However, it was not the mere reproduction of ancient ethics. Rather, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu made an attempt to nationalize humaneness and righteousness, placing these moral notions into the context of a time of national danger. Thus, humaneness and righteousness stopped playing the role of abstract notions designed to uphold the existing feudal regime and became guiding forces to protect justice, defend the nation, and save its citizens. This idea is illustrated in the following verse: "Wholeheartedly devoted to righteousness without expecting repayment" (Dóc lòng nhân nghĩa há chò tráo òn) [2, Vol. 1, p. 129].

A special feature of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotism is the tight bond of righteousness and morality with the issue of national justice. From the point of view of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu, only those actions directed towards saving the homeland and its citizens deserved to be called ethical ones. All acts of submission and cooperation with invaders were immoral, regardless of the temporary political situation. It can be seen from this example of his moral choice made in harsh circumstances: "Better to die with honor against the enemy and be glorified before one's ancestors, than to live in submission to the West and suffer humiliation among the invaders" (Thà thạc mà Đàng cầu Địch Khài, ề cùng tòi cùng vinh; Hòn sông mà chiu chù Đàng Tây, ò voi Man Di rắt khò ò) [17, Vol. 2, p. 3]. According to Nguyễn Đình Chiểu, humaneness and righteousness do not mean preservation of life by all means. They imply not only humanism, but also human dignity and honor. Such approach makes it clear that Nguyễn Đình Chiểu has elevated morality into the national ethical standard where independence of the country becomes the precondition for all morality.

From a philosophical point of view, the importance of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu lies in a new interpretation of patriotic thought. In contrast to previous versions, the philosopher has transformed traditional morality into activism and turned humaneness and righteousness into motivating forces of patriotic struggle. In such a way, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotism has become socially and nationally oriented, and moral principles have received the status of a spiritual weapon of struggle against foreigners. Placing morality and humaneness at the basis of patriotism, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu provided an incentive for the spirit of resistance among Vietnamese people. Hence, this philosophy deserves to be acknowledged as having both theoretical and practical value. Not only has it been significant for understanding human moral choices in the nineteenth century, but it also remains topical for today when shaping morality and promoting patriotism among Vietnamese. This means that the patriotic thinking of Ho Chi Minh is rich in both theoretical and practical implications. Morality and benevolence have not only provided guidelines for human activities within the nineteenth-century environment but have also been relevant in the shaping of morality and patriotism in other periods in Vietnam's history.

#### 4.1.2 Man - The Central Subject in Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's Patriotic Idea

One of the most philosophically interesting features of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotism was man being presented as a product of history and as the historic subject having full responsibility for the nation's future. At that time, the Vietnamese

society under feudal ideology was highly developed, however, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's idea was quite revolutionary in that it changed the focus from political power to the role and place of human beings in society.

Throughout the history of Vietnam, humans have occupied the key position and played an important role as the subject of the nation. Not only were they the producers of material wealth, but also the main force struggling against foreign enemies and protecting the country's independence. For Trần Quốc Tuấn, people were the main guarantee of its defense: "Relieving people's burdens in order to reinforce the basis of the nation is the best strategy for protecting the country" (Khoan thuế súc dân để làm kế sâu gốc bền rễ đó là thượng sách để giữ nước) [18, p. 88]. Moreover, according to Nguyễn Trãi, people should be taken into account in all activities concerning the state struggle as they form its foundation. He stated that "The essence of humaneness and righteousness lies in bringing peace to the people; military campaigns are first aimed at eliminating tyranny" (Việc nhân nghĩa cốt ở yên dân; Quân điếu phạt trước lo trừ bạo) [19, p. 79].

Inheriting the ideas above, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu appreciated people not in terms of their social status, family origin, or official title, but in terms of their character traits and capability of acting justly. Indeed, this is shown in all works written by him, for example, "Not to act when one sees righteousness is the conduct of an untrue hero" (Nhớ câu kiến ngãi bất vi; Làm ngưỡn thế ấy cũng phi anh hùng) [2, Vol. 1, p. 49]. In other words, humans are presented as social subjects having their responsibility, consciousness about what is right and wrong, and readiness to act correspondingly. In particular, the author does not develop any idealized or even abstract image of man, rather he pays attention to common people's life and especially peasant life. Praises were dedicated to people "ignorant of weapon and horse," however ready to die for the sake of noble cause. As he writes "Clad only in coarse cloth, with bamboo spears in their hands" (Ngoài cát có một manh áo vái; Trong tay cầm một ngọn tầm vông) [20, p. 251]. Thus, elevating common people to the level of heroic figures in history, the author showed a new humanistic concept in which man's value was not determined by his or her social position, but by his actions and responsibility towards the destiny of the nation. This concept differs from many conservative feudal ones of that time.

Thus, man, being presented as the central subject in Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotic idea, can be viewed as the first attempt to affirm the idea of human subject in history that resembles a modern conception of people being the creators of the history due to practical actions. Being human, we do not have to be completely dependent on our external environment because our consciousness, responsibility, and readiness to act can help us overcome our limitations.

Indeed, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's views about the relationship between personal morality and social obligations confirm the above idea. In particular, according to him, self-cultivation is not the aim of our lives, rather it is the means of realizing our duty to the community. That is why he writes "For men, loyalty and filial piety come first; for women, virtue and moral integrity are the standards of self-cultivation" (Trai thối trung hiếu làm đầu; Gái thối tiết hạnh là câu trau mình) [20, p. 32]. The values of loyalty and filial piety are closely linked with our duties and obligations towards the society and nation. The real moral perfection of people can take place only when their roles and responsibility towards the community are acknowledged. Thus, our patriotism should not be blind sacrifice, rather the consequence of social awareness and moral perfection.

As seen above, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's ideas about man made it possible to enrich Vietnamese patriotism. In particular, patriotism was shifted from a purely political concept to the human one. Man, who becomes its main character, is not a beneficiary of some historical achievements, rather its creator due to his or her consciousness and readiness to act practically. Due to this approach, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's conception of patriotism became deeper and richer, including such concepts as morality, humaneness, and righteousness, and patriotism itself was regarded as the highest value.

#### 4.1.3 Deep Love and Compassion towards the People as a Humanistic Value in the Patriotism of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu

The deep love towards the people can be considered as one of the fundamental features of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotism. First of all, in his intellectual system, the Vietnamese people were regarded not only as objects that needed protection but also as the subjects who embodied spiritual, historical, and moral strength of the nation. As a result, the idea of bringing the people happiness and freedom became one of the main directions of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotism.

As one can easily notice from Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's literary works, he often depicted everyday life of the common people and described their difficulties and hardships together with their virtues, such as courage and readiness to make sacrifices for their homeland. Thus, it can be said that his deep love towards the people made his patriotism a humanistic idea, making it more popular among people. As Nguyễn Đình Chiểu states, "Remember those old spirits: toiling in hardship and poverty; unfamiliar with bows and horses, never destined for the battlefield" (Nhớ linh xưa: Cui cút làm ăn, toan lo nghèo khó; Chúa quen cung ngựa, đầu tôi trướng nhung) [20, p. 250]. In other words, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu emphasizes the role of ordinary citizens in the creation of the national history. They were not brave soldiers and could not even go to wars; however, thanks to patriotism and historical circumstances, they became great warriors.

Moreover, it should be stated that Nguyễn Đình Chiểu also showed his deep compassion toward the losses of the people and appreciated the sacrifices that they had made for the sake of their homeland. He admired their courage in

battles and mourned for those people who died fighting for their homeland. Therefore, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotism is characterized by humanity.

In other words, it can be stated that Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's idea of compassion towards the people made his patriotism unique since it united all of the above-described aspects together and formed patriotism directed towards protecting the people as its major target.

For example, Tran Dinh Huóú stated: "Nguyễn Đình Chiểu found in the people not only the sufferings of the nation, but also moral power which created history" [21, p. 428]. Therefore, it can be said that the idea of compassion towards the people became one of the most characteristic features of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotism.

#### 4.1.4 The Firm Stand Against the Alien Invasion as the Key Expression of Patriotism in Nguyễn Đình Chiểu

Against the tragic background of the mid-nineteenth century when Vietnam faced the terrible experience of French colonial intrusion, the spirit of resistance against alien aggression occupies the central place in Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's thought and constitutes the ultimate manifestation of the concept of patriotism. The author made a firm ideological choice in favor of considering invasion to be something immoral and the resistance against it – moral.

Unlike some contemporary philosophers who had to oscillate between "conciliation" and "resistance," Nguyễn Đình Chiểu firmly chose the latter alternative and believed that struggle against alien aggression was the main duty of the Vietnamese. Namely, he wrote: "Even the scholar uses his pen to fight the enemy; such loyalty to the king is already worthy of admiration" (*Đến người thu sinh dùng bút đánh giặc; Báo ơn vua chừ ngàn ấy cũng khá thướng lẫm thay*) [2, Vol. 1, p. 49]. These well-known verses show us clearly the idea of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu who considered literature to be an ideological and spiritual weapon in the fight against foreign invaders and traitors to the nation. Hence, the spirit of resistance against alien aggression was not limited to the war but was also applicable to the sphere of ideology.

Furthermore, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu also manifested the spirit of anti-colonialism in his idea that death with a worthy goal was more valuable than a humiliating life. According to the poet, there was nothing worse than to continue living while compromising one's honor for the sake of survival. Namely, he said that "Better to die and preserve heroic integrity than to live in submission to the West" (*Thà thác mà đặng câu địch khái; Hón còn mà chịu chầu đầu Tây*) [17, Vol. 2, p. 3]. Philosophically speaking, this idea implies the absolute hierarchical order of values according to which national independence and justice are considered more important than individual existence. This notion shows us how Nguyễn Đình Chiểu transformed the ideas of Confucianism from loyalty to the monarch towards the loyalty to righteousness and from defending the royal court to defending the whole country.

Remarkably, unlike some extremists who tend to associate the spirit of resistance with violence, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu considered it to be always combined with humanism and sympathy for people. He considered resistance to be necessary because it had to be done for saving the peaceful lives of ordinary people. Accordingly, the personages who attracted his admiration the most were not the generals or governors but plain peasants who took arms to resist invaders: "With only coarse cloth upon their backs, without waiting for proper weapons and equipment; holding merely bamboo spears in their hands, they cared little for swords or armor" (*Ngoài cát có một manh áo vái, nào đoi mang bao tấu bầu ngòi; trong tay cầm một ngọn tầm vong, chừ nài sấm dao tu, nón gõ*) [19, tr. 251]. As Tran Van Giao points out [10], it was the unity of resistance against alien invaders and sincere concern about people that made Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotism special because it was based on specific sentiments and feelings that each person felt in case of suffering from foreign invasion.

Also, it should be mentioned that Nguyễn Đình Chiểu manifested his anti-colonialism in his severe criticism of all those who submitted to or cooperated with the enemies. From the philosophical point of view, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu condemned such people as morally corrupt because their deeds damaged the nation's values and spiritual culture. Thus, we see clearly the philosopher's idea of the relation between the individual and the community according to which individuals have value only within the context of connection with the interests of the whole nation. Namely, as Phan Ngoc states [7], the thinker developed the concept of Confucian morality as a moral of resistance with the highest criterion of human beings' worthiness being their attitude towards national independence.

Thus, it may be confidently asserted that the unity of moral awareness, patriotism, and practical activity constituted the essence of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's spirit of resistance against alien aggression. It was thanks to this unity that his patriotic thought could rise above the limits of the historical period and serve as an inexhaustible source of spiritual strength in fighting for Vietnam's independence.

## 4.2. THE RELEVANCE OF THE PATRIOTISM THEORY BY NGUYỄN ĐÌNH CHIỂU FOR CONTEMPORARY VIETNAM

Nguyễn Đình Chiểu is recognized as one of the most prominent patriotic thinkers in the Vietnamese history, who left behind a unique philosophical heritage related to the problem of patriotism and the invincible desire to protect the nation's independence. In conditions of Vietnam's modern renewal process, its growing international integration, and

the appearance of traditional and non-traditional challenges, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotism remains relevant and has a certain guidance meaning for contemporary Vietnam.

*First*, the patriotism theory of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu makes it possible to further enrich Vietnam's patriotic traditions, culture, and philosophy. According to him, patriotism is not only a natural feeling based on the people's love for their motherland but a whole system of views supported by moral principles, humaneness, righteousness, loyalty to the nation, and responsibility for its fate. Thus, the affirmation of patriotism as a criterion of social morality introduced the elements of humanism, democracy, and progressivism into the Vietnamese tradition of patriotism, and helped overcome the simplification of patriotism as emotional reaction to some specific events or a temporary state of affairs.

*Second*, the patriotism concept of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu is extremely important as a means of stimulating and cultivating patriotism in contemporary Vietnamese youth. With his focus on the role of individuals, particularly common people in social life, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu proved that patriotism is not a prerogative of any social class or stratum but the responsibility of each person. Thus, in conditions of Vietnam's integration into the world community and global culture, and thus the formation of new life values in young people, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotism theory helps shape their approach to life, cultivate their ideals, and instill responsibility to the nation. Furthermore, according to Tran Pham Binh Thuan, "Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotic thought, besides expressing the spirit of patriotism, also helps young people understand more clearly about their role in the development of the country and prepares them for international integration confidently, resiliently, and responsibly" [22, p. 158].

*Third*, the patriotic thoughts of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu contribute to enhancing the great national unity of the Vietnamese people in conditions of international integration. In putting forward the thesis that people are the subject of history and that the preservation of their lives, dignity, and interests is the main aim of patriotism, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu developed the concept of love for the nation that was based on love for the people. He believed that people were the main subjects of the nation and were essential for processes of national defense and development. The idea has a particularly important significance nowadays when unity among all Vietnamese nationals becomes the primary precondition of Vietnam's sustainable development and defense of its independence and sovereignty amidst a difficult international situation.

*Fourth*, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotism concept can make a valuable contribution to the formation of political resilience in young people and consequently to the firm protection of the country. The determination with which Nguyễn Đình Chiểu resisted foreign invasion, his irreconcilable attitude towards evil and injustice, and his willingness "to sacrifice and not give in" are the values that are extremely helpful in shaping political courage, independence, self-reliance, and readiness to defend the nation. Nowadays, when the issue of the nation's defense involves not only its military aspects but also other aspects such as culture and ideology, the patriotism theory by Nguyễn Đình Chiểu can be a source of inspiration and strength for the protection and development of Vietnam.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotic thought constitutes an important component of nineteenth-century Vietnamese intellectual history, reflecting a close integration of moral principles, humaneness and righteousness, the role of human beings and the people, and the resolute spirit of resistance against foreign aggression. In the context of national invasion, Nguyễn Đình Chiểu transformed traditional moral values into a spiritual strength of the nation, affirming that patriotism was not merely a natural sentiment but also a moral standard and a form of social responsibility. Through the methodological approach of dialectical and historical materialism, this article has clarified the core dimensions of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's patriotic thought while demonstrating its organic relationship with the destiny of the nation and the lives of the people. His thought possesses not only historical value but also important contemporary significance for Vietnam today, contributing to the cultivation of patriotism, the strengthening of national unity, and the development of political resilience among younger generations in contemporary Vietnam.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Phan, N. *Vietnamese Culture: A New Approach*. Culture and Information Publishing House, 2005. Verification URL: <https://www.zbook.vn/ebook/luan-an-nghe-thuat-trung-bay-tai-cac-trien-lam-thuong-mai-vietnam-motor-show-tu-nam-2012-den-nam-2017-54864/>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [2] Ca, V. T., Nguyen, S. L., and Nguyen, T. G., editors. *The Complete Works of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu*. Vol. 1, University and Professional Education Publishing House, 1980. <https://chuaxaloi.vn/thong-tin/giao-su-ca-van-tinh/2769.html>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [3] Institute of Literature. *Nguyễn Đình Chiểu: A Model of Patriotism and Artistic Labor*. Social Sciences Publishing House, 1973. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002592326>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [4] Le, T. V. *Nguyễn Đình Chiểu: A Star That Shines More Brightly the More One Observes It*. Education Publishing

- House, 2002. Verification URL: <https://www.studocu.vn/vn/document/dai-hoc-su-pham-thanh-pho-ho-chi-minh/van-hoc-trung-dai/52051-article-text-156075-1-10-202011-13/114746832>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [5] Institute of Literature. *Nguyễn Đình Chiểu: A Model of Patriotism and Artistic Labor*. Social Sciences Publishing House, 1973. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002592326>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [6] Pham, V. D. "Nguyễn Đình Chiểu: A Bright Star in the National Literary Tradition." *Journal of Literature*, July 1963. Verification URL: <https://thptthuthiem.hcm.edu.vn/to-van/ngu-van-12-nguyen-dinh-chieu-ngoi-sao-sang-trong-van-nghe-cua-dan-toc-phsn-thi/ctmb/36031/405377>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [7] Phan, N. "The Popular Character of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu." *Journal of Literature*, no. 4, 1982, pp. 14–22. Verification URL: <https://www.zbook.vn/ebook/nguyen-cuu-su-tiep-nhan-sang-tac-cua-nguyen-dinh-chieu-44371/>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [8] Tran, T. M. "Nguyễn Đình Chiểu: The Leading Banner of Patriotic Literature in the Modern Period." 1963. *Several Issues Concerning the Life and Poetry and Prose of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu*, Science Publishing House, 1964, pp. 73–98. Verification URL: <https://www.zbook.vn/ebook/nguyen-cuu-su-tiep-nhan-sang-tac-cua-nguyen-dinh-chieu-44371/>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [9] Ca, V. T. *Nguyễn Đình Chiểu: A Poet Fighting for a Noble Cause*. Manuscript supplied by the author's family, n.d. Verification URL: <https://chuaxaloi.vn/thong-tin/giao-su-ca-van-thinh/2769.html>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [10] Tran, V. G. *The Development of Vietnamese Thought from the Nineteenth Century to the August Revolution*. Vol. 1, National Political Publishing House, 1993. Verification URL: <https://ukhjs.vn/thong-tin-bai-bao/438c924a-7550-42d5-a0d9-ec323112c0f0>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [11] Huynh, L. *Contributions to the Study of Southern Vietnam in the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries*. Social Sciences Publishing House, 2000. <https://thuvien.hcmussh.edu.vn/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=41041>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [12] Nguyen, T. T. *The Humanistic Thought of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu*. Master's thesis, Hanoi National University of Education, 2018. <https://opac.hnue.edu.vn/Detail.aspx?f=ddc&id=108239&pIdx=1&v=320.509597&v=t=list>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [13] Ha, H. G. "Nguyễn Đình Chiểu: A Great Patriotic Poet against Foreign Invasion, a Radiant Soul of Benevolence and Righteousness, and a Steadfast and Unyielding Example." *Journal of Literature*, no. 4, 1972. <https://nguyendinhchieu.vn/ndc.nsf/chi-tiet-nghien-cuu/nguyen-dinh-chieu-nha-tho-yeu-nuoc-lon-chong-xam-lang.html>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [14] Dang, V. T. "Nguyễn Đình Chiểu and Cultural Influences in the Social Life of Southern Vietnam." *Ho Chi Minh City Journal of Social Sciences*, no. 7 (287), 2022, pp. 29–37. <https://vjol.info.vn/khxx/article/view/69360>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [15] Ca, V. T. "The Indomitable Tradition of Southern Vietnam and Vietnam in Relation to Nguyễn Đình Chiểu's Spirit of Struggle." *Journal of Literature*, no. 4, 1972, pp. 31–48. <https://libol.hnue.edu.vn/Detail.aspx?f=taogia&id=22868&v=Ca%2C+V%25u0103n+Th%25u1ec9nh>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [16] Tran, D. H. *Confucianism and Vietnamese Literature in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Periods*. Education Publishing House, 1998. Verification URL: <https://vnu.edu.vn/bo-mon-van-hoc-trung-dai-viet-nam-post2417.html>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [17] Ca, V. T., Nguyen, S. L., and Nguyen, T. G., editors. *The Complete Works of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu*. Vol. 2, University and Professional Education Publishing House, 1982. <https://chuaxaloi.vn/thong-tin/giao-su-ca-van-tinh/2769.html>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [18] Ngo, S. L., and the Historians of the Le Dynasty. *The Complete Annals of Dai Viet*. Vol. 1, translated by C. H. Giu, edited by D. D. Anh, Social Sciences Publishing House, 1967. <https://minhkhai.com.vn/store2/index.aspx?isbn=1107020002263&q=view>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [19] Institute of History. *The Complete Works of Nguyen Trai*. Social Sciences Publishing House, 1976. <https://thuvientrongten.net/PrintedBook/ShowInfo?id=21456>. Accessed 20 May 2026.

- [20] Nguyen, D. C. *Poetry and Prose of Nguyễn Đình Chiểu*. Liberation Literature Publishing House, 1976. Verification URL: <https://hcmussh.edu.vn/tin-tuc/nguyen-dinh-chieu-tu-nam-bo-ra-toan-quoc-va-the-gioi>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [21] Tran, D. H. *Lectures on Eastern Thought*. Edited from lecture notes by Lai Nguyen An, Vietnam National University, Hanoi Publishing House, 2001. <https://ussh.vnu.edu.vn/vi/news/nhan-vat-su-kien/pho-giao-su-tan-dinh-huou-nguoi-den-hien-dai-tu-truyen-thong-12232.html>. Accessed 20 May 2026.
- [22] Huynh, T. L. "Phan Boi Chau's Patriotic Thought and Revolutionary Activities in the Early Twentieth Century and Their Significance in Vietnam Today." *Aufklärung: Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2024, pp. 149–160. <https://doi.org/10.18012/arf.v11i3.72590>. Accessed 20 May 2026.