

From French Education to National Contributions, Nguyen Van Huyen's Advocacy for Vietnamese Language Teaching and Educational Method Innovations for Developing the New Education System in Vietnam Post-1945

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Abstract

In Vietnam at the beginning of the 20th century, influenced by both domestic and international historical changes and transformations in Franco-Vietnamese education, many patriotic youths pursued academic studies and scientific research to contribute towards raising the national intellect, strengthening national spirit, and improving public welfare. Whether educated domestically or abroad, these young intellectuals, overcoming significant difficulties, were thoroughly trained by advanced educational systems and thus emerged as a generation of distinguished scholars—the "golden intellectuals" of modern Vietnam. This group significantly influenced modern Vietnamese education, among whom Nguyen Van Huyen notably contributed to establishing the foundations of the country's new educational system after 1945. His efforts amidst severe challenges, such as prolonged wars and national division, provided a solid foundation for the gradual development and strengthening of Vietnam's basic education system.

Keywords: Educational Manager, Outstanding Cultural Figure, Vietnam, Modern Era.

Introduction

Nguyen Van Huyen was born on November 16, 1905, in Hanoi, with ancestral roots in Kim Chung commune, formerly Dan Phuong district, Hoai Duc prefecture, Ha Dong province (currently Hoai Duc district, Hanoi city). Raised in a middle-class official family, Nguyen Van Huyen demonstrated remarkable intelligence and academic excellence from an early age. He received a modern education in Franco-Vietnamese institutions, excelling throughout his education from elementary and secondary levels in Vietnam to his advanced studies abroad in France. Upon returning from France with outstanding academic achievements and scholarly contributions, he dedicated his efforts and intellect to educational development and scientific research, significantly influencing Vietnam's modern education system. Driven by profound patriotism and unwavering dedication to the nation and its people, Huyen notably contributed to Vietnam's revolutionary cause, particularly in establishing the educational foundations of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, now the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. His work laid the groundwork for the development of several modern social science fields, including history, ethnology, folklore, and jurisprudence.

In recognition of his significant contributions to Vietnamese education, the Education Publishing House published the book titled "Nguyen Van Huyen – An Admirable and Noble Example," inspired by former Prime Minister Pham Van Dong. This 364-page volume comprises carefully selected essays and reflections from veteran revolutionaries, scholars, colleagues, students, and future generations who directly or indirectly interacted with Huyen, documenting his life and career amidst Vietnam's revolutionary movements and educational evolution from 1945 to 1975 (Dong, 2007, p. 9). Additional influential works, such as "Nguyen Van Huyen's Educational Career 1955-1975" and "Complete Works of Nguyen Van Huyen," highlight his substantial contributions to the nation's new education system. The publication "Nguyen Van Huyen: Life and Career" compiles articles and images chronicling his leadership in educational development. As an exemplary intellectual shaped by modern European education, particularly

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French, who returned home and joined the Communist Party of Vietnam, Huyen committed himself to national education until his passing. His dedicated efforts brought Vietnamese culture and education to France and broader Europe (Ministry of Education and Training, 2015, pp. 11-12). Huyen embodied the qualities of an intellectual cultivated through Western education, complemented by Vietnam's cultural and educational traditions, refined by historical national and global transformations, thereby substantially contributing intellectually to the establishment, management, and progression of Vietnam's post-1945 educational sector.

Questions:The article focuses on clarifying Nguyen Van Huyen's role in the education system of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam from 1945 to 1975:

- Does the article clearly identify Nguyen Van Huyen's valuable scientific contributions to Vietnamese education?
- Does it demonstrate Nguyen Van Huyen's educational management process in the new educational system?
- What is the intellectual and practical significance of Nguyen Van Huyen's contributions to the Vietnamese revolution from his return home until his death?

Research Evaluations

Nguyen Van Huyen was born and raised in a middle-class official family of his time, enabling him to study at Franco-Vietnamese schools. In 1923, his family sent him and his brother Nguyen Van Huong to study in France. Before their departure, their mother instructed them to diligently pursue their studies abroad for the benefit of the nation and the welfare of its people: "People are born to learn a useful profession. Each person in their field first contributes to the nation, then benefits the people" (Dong, 2007, pp. 9-10). During his nine years of study and research in France, Nguyen Van Huyen continuously excelled academically. From 1923 to 1931, he completed his full baccalaureate and then obtained Bachelor's degrees in Literature and Law from Sorbonne University in Paris. While completing his doctoral thesis, he taught at the School of Oriental Languages, demonstrating that he had become a profoundly knowledgeable Vietnamese intellectual with deep expertise in Franco-Vietnamese culture and education (Ty, 2007, pp. 47-48)¹. In 1934, he became the first Vietnamese to successfully defend a doctoral thesis in Literature at Sorbonne University, with his main thesis "Boy-girl exchange singing in Vietnam" and the secondary thesis "Introduction to the Study of Stilt Houses in Southeast Asia." Both theses received excellent evaluations and were published in France, gaining recognition among scholars in France, Germany, the Netherlands, and across Europe. The French scholar Przyłuski commended his studies, stating, "Nguyen Van Huyen's valuable monograph addresses the critical question of how cries evolved into songs, with rhythm emerging to enhance language and human thought." Paul Valéry expressed enthusiasm for Huyen's insights on reciprocal singing, symmetry, and balance, praising their universal poetic relevance despite their unfamiliarity in his homeland (Dong, 2007). These theses significantly highlighted Vietnamese cultural heritage, especially through reciprocal singing traditions from Kinh Bac and broader Vietnam. Nguyen Van Huyen's scholarly excellence and his ability to conduct research in French effectively introduced Vietnamese culture to French and international audiences, an achievement unparalleled during his era. His fluency in French and direct exposure to European academic methodologies equipped him with advanced research techniques, which he later applied upon returning to Vietnam, significantly contributing to the modernization and development of the new Vietnamese education system.

Revolutionary activities and educational management

Upon returning to Vietnam in 1935, Nguyen Van Huyen declined an administrative position offered by the French colonial government in Indochina. Instead, he began teaching at Buoi School (now Chu Van An High School, Tay Ho district, Hanoi) in French, incorporating Vietnamese language instruction. In 1938, he joined the movement promoting the Vietnamese alphabet and transitioned to research at the École Française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) as a permanent member. The same year, he helped establish the

Department of Vietnamese Civilization History at Hanoi Law University. By 1941, as a permanent member at EFEO and the Indochinese Scientific Research Council, he continued his cultural studies, publishing extensively in French.

Between 1935 and 1945, Nguyen Van Huyen produced numerous scholarly works on Vietnamese culture and education, notably during his tenure at EFEO (1938-1945). He authored 45 significant studies affirming Vietnamese cultural values in French, including works such as "Les fêtes de Phu Dong" (1938), "Le problème de paysannerie au Tonkin" (1939), and "Les fêtes annamites du Têt ou de l'AnNeuf" (1942). His extensive research highlighted traditional cultural values, bringing Vietnamese culture closer to French and global audiences. Throughout his career, Huyen published over 168 works in French and Vietnamese, laying crucial foundations for subsequent developments in Vietnam's social sciences (Hanh, 2003, pp. 599-610).

During the August Revolution of 1945, Nguyen Van Huyen, alongside prominent intellectuals returning from France such as Nguy Nhu Kon Tum, Nguyen Xien, and Ho Huu Tuong, demanded Emperor Bao Dai's abdication to the provisional revolutionary government and the Vietnamese people. On November 15, 1945, speaking at the opening ceremony of the National University in the presence of President Ho Chi Minh, Huyen emphasized the university's pivotal role in national resilience, territorial recovery, and intellectual liberation.

After the successful August Revolution, Huyen became Director-General of Higher Education and was appointed Minister of Education in November 1946, serving nearly three decades (1946-1975). Despite wartime challenges, he effectively led literacy campaigns, promoted Vietnamese as the instructional language, sustained and expanded educational institutions in the resistance zone of Viet Bac, and consistently encouraged students' educational pursuits under challenging wartime conditions, demonstrating exceptional dedication and professional integrity (Huyen, 2007, p.10).

Scholarly assessments of Professor Dr. Nguyen Van Huyen

Throughout his academic studies and scholarly research in France, and subsequently upon his return to Vietnam to work in the education sector, Professor Nguyen Van Huyen contributed significantly to social science research, leaving behind substantial theoretical and practical value that influenced intellectual circles in urban areas across Vietnam at that time. Conducting research on Vietnamese culture in French, he produced over 45 scholarly works, partly intended to deepen the understanding among French and European researchers regarding the material and spiritual cultural values of the Vietnamese people and Southeast Asia as a whole. His numerous renowned studies helped affirm the unique religious identity of Vietnamese people, notably expressed through worship practices dedicated to patron saints such as Phu Dong, Tan Vien, and Chu Dong Tu. From his doctoral dissertation to later published studies, Professor Nguyen Van Huyen focused primarily on folk literature, traditional festivals, national architecture, historical geography, and social stratification in rural communities. Scholars who have engaged with his writings consistently admire his rigorous scholarly methods and exemplary academic writing style. Yet, even more distinctive are his philosophical insights into Vietnamese life and culture. For instance, through his depiction of the Phu Dong festival, he concluded that loyalty, filial piety, harmony, and opposition represent defining characteristics within the spiritual life of the Vietnamese people. A generalized conclusion drawn from all his research highlights the resilience and vitality of Vietnam's ethnic groups through their creative labor, emphasizing the importance of "self-creating their own lives," and firmly rejecting mechanical imitation of external models (Huyen, N.V, 1944, p. 131).

According to Professor Vu Ngoc Khanh, Professor Dr. Nguyen Van Huyen significantly contributed to Vietnamese cultural research while working at Viễn Đông Bác cổ, continuously publishing his monographic studies. His research spanned numerous fields, with primary emphasis on ethnology and cultural studies. He demonstrated particular interest in examining festivals, customs, and the rural worship practices of ancient Vietnam. He also paid close attention to the life of peasants from a sociological perspective, as well as the broader concept of "Vietnamese civilization." His studies extended beyond the majority Kinh ethnicity, encompassing various other ethnic minorities, and reached beyond Vietnam into the broader

Southeast Asian region. In every work, he consistently exhibited a meticulous and objective scholarly approach, marked by detailed investigative writing. His conclusions always emerged clearly from empirical research rather than relying on preconceived theoretical frameworks subsequently illustrated through selective interpretations, as was practiced by some scholars (Khanh, V.N., 2007, p.209).

Through the study "Nguyen Van Huyen and the Vietnamese Cultural Space in the Northern Delta," Professor Tran Quoc Vuong assessed Nguyen Van Huyen, whom the organizing committee of the scientific conference recognized as one of the first great modern humanistic scholars of the early twentieth century. He was considered "great" because, during his roughly 15-year scientific research career, he produced an extensive volume of works covering numerous fields such as history, ethnology, and folklore. In the field of folklore alone, his perspective (le point de vue) ranged extensively from traditional stilt houses to the history of a village, from Vietnamese kinship structures to patron saints, from performances of Ai Lao - Tung choac dances in the Giong festival to folk melodies exchanged between young men and women, from beliefs in Water Deities to indigenous Daoist practices, from the Mother Lieu worship to popular folk religions. He was also "great" because he progressed from meticulous and precise descriptions of individual cultural-humanistic events to broader scholarly syntheses concerning folk song genres, ethnic origins, and Vietnamese civilization (Vuong, T.Q., 2007, p. 209).

Professor Phan Huy Le evaluated Professor Dr. Nguyen Van Huyen as follows: "In the transformative period of modern history, Nguyen Van Huyen, together with several patriotic scholars of the same generation, played a vital role and made historically significant contributions. Trained scientifically and exposed to achievements of progressive Western scholarship, he applied those accomplishments—particularly contemporary methodologies from progressive schools—to the study of national history and culture. His research demonstrated creative applications of modern methodologies, especially in ethnology and sociology, deeply rooted in patriotic sentiment and profound national consciousness. Utilizing ancient historical texts alongside extensive field surveys, he collected abundant and diverse sources among the populace, such as inscriptions, genealogies, legends, folk narratives, language, customs, traditions, and various aspects of daily life. Through meticulous validation, analysis, and processing of these sources, he produced scholarly works characterized by modern scholarship, originality, credibility, and persuasive power. In Nguyen Van Huyen's work, research themes, scope, and modern methodologies were always anchored and developed upon the foundations of outstanding character, intellectual excellence, deep patriotism, sincere love for the people, and unwavering national confidence. These traits formed the foundation of his academic achievements and inevitably guided him towards revolution as a natural result of personal development intersecting with the demands of his era, nation, and contemporaries" (Le, P.H., 2007, p. 239).

Professor and Academician Pham Minh Hac, former Minister of Education, remarked on Professor Dr. Nguyen Van Huyen: "Throughout his lifetime dedicated to national scholarship and education, Nguyen Van Huyen laid foundational groundwork for Vietnam's cultural studies discipline. As early as 1944, he introduced readers, particularly Western audiences, to the distinctively Vietnamese cultural development, epitomized by his publication of a substantial 280-page book titled 'Vietnamese Civilization.' This civilization, based upon the uniquely structured society of 'Family – Village – State,' has created an invaluable spiritual strength. Today, it has become a widely acknowledged principle and starting point for discussions and affirmations about Vietnamese culture, society, and people" (Hac, P.M., 2007).

Educational Management Career

Upon returning to Vietnam, Professor Dr. Nguyen Van Huyen actively participated in patriotic movements initiated by various organizations and the people against French colonialism in Indochina. In 1938, he took part in the Vietnamese Alphabet Promotion Association (Hội truyền bá chữ Quốc ngữ), indirectly led by the Indochinese Communist Party, aiming to promote literacy among Vietnamese people. In 1946, equipped with extensive knowledge of Asian and European cultures, he was appointed by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's government as a delegation member to attend the preparatory conference in Dalat. He subsequently traveled to France as part of the Vietnamese diplomatic delegation to the Fontainebleau

Conference. Leading this delegation was President Ho Chi Minh, who was then an honored guest of the French government. Representing the Vietnamese diplomatic delegation was Pham Van Dong, who negotiated with the French government delegation led by Max André. Negotiations lasted from July 6, 1946, to September 4, 1946, focusing on peaceful and independent solutions for Vietnam and Indochina. Nguyen Van Huyen, along with Ta Quang Buu, Hoang Minh Giam, and other delegation members, actively engaged French parliamentarians and Communist Party members to emphasize the Vietnamese people's peace-loving spirit (Chronological History of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Vol. 3, 2008, pp. 103-105). During his leadership in education, Professor Dr. Nguyen Van Huyen consistently expanded international educational cooperation and exchanges with various socialist bloc countries and other nations worldwide, including the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, China, among others (File No. 4367, document No. 102101).

Over nearly three decades (1946–1975) as Minister of Education, Professor Dr. Nguyen Van Huyen, together with educational staff, significantly advanced education under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam, establishing a national education system aimed at the masses. His tenure achieved remarkable results, notably eliminating illiteracy among 95% of the population and establishing an extensive school network across northern Vietnam. He developed a relatively comprehensive education system that successfully trained young Vietnamese into responsible citizens and competent cadres, significantly contributing to national liberation, reunification, and socialist construction in the North. Professor Huyen's legacy remains closely tied to Vietnam's national, democratic, and socialist education. His life and career hold a deserving position in the history of modern Vietnamese education (File No. 4367, National Archives Center III, document No. 102101).

Nguyen Van Huyen's Policy on Teaching Vietnamese in the New Vietnamese Educational Context

The importance of Vietnamese language in education: Vietnamese, as a national language, is not merely a medium for everyday communication but also serves as a means of preserving and promoting cultural heritage. Nguyen Van Huyen clearly recognized the special role of the Vietnamese language in educating citizens, shaping personality, and fostering critical thinking among younger generations. Prior to educational reforms, many remote regions of Vietnam still used diverse ethnic languages, leading to fragmentation in accessing knowledge. Language thus became a crucial element in social unification, enabling connection among community members. For Nguyen Van Huyen, Vietnamese was not only a communication tool but also the primary medium through which knowledge was imparted and the youth were educated. He realized that without a unified instructional language, the educational system could not achieve balanced and sustainable development. Therefore, he consistently prioritized the teaching and learning of Vietnamese in schools, aiming to build a cohesive, modern, and accessible education system for all social strata.

Developing a Vietnamese-language curriculum focused on preservation and development: A critical aspect of Nguyen Van Huyen's educational policy was the preservation and promotion of the Vietnamese language as an indispensable component of national cultural identity. He argued that if the Vietnamese language, one of the foundational elements of national culture, were not preserved, the nation risked losing the connection between its past and present. The Vietnamese language, in his view, was not merely a medium of information transfer but also contained profound cultural, historical, and traditional values. Huyen was conscious of external influences on Vietnamese—particularly French during the colonial period and English during modernization. Hence, he emphasized preserving the purity of the Vietnamese language and advocated for an educational system enabling students to master Vietnamese and access global knowledge and culture through it.

Nguyen Van Huyen was also the first to propose a modern Vietnamese-language curriculum that integrated grammar, vocabulary, and practical communication skills. At the time, Vietnamese grammar and vocabulary were not fully standardized, making early education in Vietnamese language crucial to developing proficiency from primary school onwards. Furthermore, he advocated comprehensive teaching methods that included listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Students were encouraged to express thoughts

and emotions coherently and accurately in Vietnamese, thus enhancing their communication skills and cognitive development.

A significant contribution by Nguyen Van Huyen was officially incorporating Vietnamese into curricula from elementary to university levels. This facilitated students' better engagement with their mother tongue, providing a robust foundation for learning other subjects. He also stressed the importance of literature as a primary medium for intellectual development, viewing language not just as a means of communication but as an essential tool for creative and scholarly works. Consequently, he promoted the integration of literature and folklore into curricula, aiming to cultivate students' creativity, aesthetic appreciation, and cultural awareness. His scholarly research exemplified his stature as an eminent social scientist in Vietnamese education post-1945.

An essential aspect of his approach was encouraging students to read and analyze works by Vietnamese authors, thereby deepening their understanding of national history, culture, and humanistic values. This enhanced linguistic capabilities and nurtured moral values and patriotism through literary study. He also encouraged student engagement in creative and linguistic research activities, fostering analytical thinking and cultural understanding. An overarching goal of Nguyen Van Huyen's policy was to ensure Vietnamese literacy programs, especially for eradicating illiteracy and standardizing the Vietnamese script, became uniformly accessible nationwide. He understood that without a coherent educational framework, language education effectiveness would be limited, exacerbating social disparities. Thus, he implemented policies to position Vietnamese as the official language at all educational levels, ensuring equitable access to education across ethnic and regional lines, thus fostering national unity and equitable regional development.

His language education policy left profound imprints on Vietnamese education. Teaching Vietnamese not only enhanced students' communication skills but also increased their cultural awareness. In contemporary contexts of integration and development, his educational philosophies continue to hold significant relevance for safeguarding and promoting the Vietnamese language. With deep insights and visionary perspectives, Nguyen Van Huyen contributed profoundly to establishing a modern, comprehensive educational system, significantly influencing language and cultural awareness among younger generations and laying the groundwork for future educational advancements in Vietnam.

Nguyen Van Huyen's Thoughts on Innovating Teaching Methodologies

Respect for students' natural developmental processes: A fundamental principle of Nguyen Van Huyen's educational thought was respecting the natural development of each student. Recognizing that students have diverse learning styles, he opposed imposing rigid educational frameworks. Education, he believed, should stimulate and naturally nurture students' potential rather than enforce predetermined knowledge sets. Instead of rigid knowledge transfer, teachers should foster open, explorative learning environments, enabling students to freely discover knowledge, develop critical thinking, and choose suitable learning methods.

This implies designing teaching approaches that encourage students to think independently, innovate, and solve problems autonomously. Traditionally, students were often passive recipients of knowledge, rarely engaging in discovery-based learning. Nguyen Van Huyen argued that modern education must stimulate independent thinking and creativity among learners.

Promoting active and proactive learning methods: Nguyen Van Huyen advocated for active and proactive learning methods where students actively participated in learning processes rather than passively absorbing information from teachers. He emphasized education beyond rote memorization or repetitive learning, advocating instead for participatory, creative activities like group discussions, case studies, and project-based learning. He insisted that education must relate closely to real life, urging teachers to incorporate practical examples that facilitate students' comprehension of academic content. Active classrooms encourage students' curiosity, passion for learning, and confidence in problem-solving.

Connecting education with practical life: Nguyen Van Huyen stressed the necessity of linking education directly to practical contexts. He recognized students' need to appreciate real-world applications of their academic knowledge to grasp its genuine value. Consequently, he supported integrating real-life problems into lessons, encouraging students to critically address social, economic, and cultural issues using classroom knowledge. Outdoor and practical learning activities helped students visually grasp and apply concepts, enhancing their understanding, life skills, and social competencies.

Strengthening moral and character education: Besides emphasizing academic proficiency, Nguyen Van Huyen prioritized character and moral development. He envisioned a holistic education system promoting ethical values and character alongside intellectual growth. Lessons on patriotism, honesty, responsibility, and community awareness featured prominently in his teaching approach. His methodology aimed to nurture moral integrity, equipping students to responsibly engage with societal challenges.

Innovative assessment and evaluation methods: Nguyen Van Huyen advocated reforming assessment practices, recognizing traditional exams alone could not adequately measure holistic student development. He recommended varied assessment forms beyond theoretical tests, including practical exercises, group discussions, presentations, and research projects. These diverse, open assessments allowed students to demonstrate creativity, independent thought, and problem-solving abilities, fostering an inclusive, comprehensive learning environment.

Reforming teacher training methods: To implement these teaching innovations, Nguyen Van Huyen underscored the necessity of comprehensive and continuous teacher training. Modern educational methods required well-prepared, skilled teachers. He promoted enhancing teacher training, advocating professional development courses, teaching-experience exchanges, and modern pedagogical applications. Teachers needed creativity and flexibility to adapt teaching strategies to students' diverse learning needs, particularly in Vietnam's challenging wartime conditions. His ideas not only reformed Vietnamese education during challenging times but also laid foundational frameworks influencing subsequent educational reforms.

Thus, Nguyen Van Huyen's philosophies on proactive, creative, and practical teaching methods continue to remain influential, marking a turning point toward a modern, quality, and comprehensive educational system in Vietnam.

In recognition of the great contributions of Professor Dr. Nguyen Van Huyen, the Party and State of Vietnam have awarded him many noble awards, including the Ho Chi Minh Prize and the First Class Independence Medal. In 2000, he was posthumously awarded the Ho Chi Minh Prize for Social Sciences by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. To honor him, in the capital Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Tuyen Quang province, a street was named after him. The Vietnam Museum of Ethnology was located on Nguyen Van Huyen Street, a primary school was located in his hometown of Hoai Duc district - his hometown, and a boarding school in the capital Hanoi was named Nguyen Van Huyen School. These actions demonstrate the affection of the people, the Party and the State of Vietnam for him, recognizing the great contributions of a great scientist and a great personality (File 290, Document No. 190794 HC, page No. 190 of the Official Dispatch).

A special thing is that Mr. and Mrs. Vi Kim Ngoc got married and had 4 children, who later became outstanding intellectuals of the country such as: daughter Nu Hanh is a Railway engineer; Bich Ha is an Associate Professor, PhD in Chemistry; Nu Hieu is a Colonel, Associate Professor, PhD, Distinguished Physician, former Deputy Director of the 108 Central Military Hospital; son Nguyen Van Huy is an Associate Professor, PhD in Ethnology, and has been the Director of the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology for many years. The material and spiritual values that Associate Professor, PhD Nguyen Van Huyen left for the homeland during the difficult historical period and the prolonged war, were built by his children into the Nguyen Van Huyen Museum to preserve the values that his prestigious family created during the heroic period of the country... (Huy, N.V, April 2022).

CONCLUSION

Professor Dr. Nguyen Van Huyen was a prominent Western-educated intellectual in the first half of the 20th century who, upon returning to Vietnam, made substantial intellectual contributions to the general development of the Vietnamese revolution, particularly in the education sector. He successfully applied modern scientific methodologies acquired from France and Europe to his social science research, utilizing the French language to produce works deeply reflective of Vietnam's cultural heritage, national history, and civilization. His publications in French notably helped audiences in France and Europe better comprehend the historical and cultural identity of Vietnam (then Annam). Significantly, as a Western-educated intellectual returning from France, he led Vietnam's education sector for nearly three decades, cultivating the growth of education under extremely challenging circumstances.

Nguyen Van Huyen laid the foundational stone for studies in culture, civilization, and historical sciences within the newly established Vietnam. He served as the longest-tenured Minister of Education since the founding of the National Ministry of Education, now known as the Ministry of Education and Training, with a record nearly one-third of a century (1946-1975). His considerable contributions have been recognized by the Party, the State, the educational sector, and particularly generations of colleagues, Vietnamese students who studied in France, and numerous students whom he directly taught, mentored, and guided. Collectively, these individuals continued his legacy, enriching Vietnam's fields of culture, history, ethnology, and education at large throughout those decades.

As educators and researchers of subsequent generations working within the education sector—particularly at Vietnam National University, Hanoi—we continuously find inspiration in Professor Dr. Nguyen Van Huyen's exemplary legacy. His dedication reminds both current and future scholars, educators, students, and researchers of the importance of persistent learning and scientific research to acquire global knowledge for national service and educational advancement, especially within the contemporary context of intense international integration and globalization. Together with other prominent intellectuals of his era—such as Nguyen Manh Tuong, Nguyen Xien, Hoang Xuan Han, Le Van Thiem, and Nguy Nhu Kon Tum—Nguyen Van Huyen's legacy endures as an exemplary role model within Vietnam's education sector and beyond. These intellectuals, educated in France and Europe, returned to serve their country amidst the most challenging circumstances, contributing profoundly to the emergence of a new Vietnam, laying critical foundations for sustainable national development today and into the future.

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