

NGUYEN KIM (1467-1545). Court official who fought against the Mac Dynasty to restore the later Le Dynasty to power in sixteenth-century Vietnam. A native of Thanh Hoa province, he was related to the Le royal family by marriage and supported their struggle for reinstatement when power was usurped by Mac Dang Dung in 1527. After 1533 he supported Emperor Le Trang Tong, who had declared himself the legitimate ruler of Vietnam while living in exile in Laos. By the early 1540s, supporters of the Le established their court in Thanh Hoa Province, south of the Red River Delta, and continued to fight the Mac, with their capital in Thang Long (present-day Hanoi). In 1545 Nguyen Kim died, allegedly poisoned by the Mac, at the age of 78.

After Nguyen Kim's death, his family continued to support the restoration of the Le Dynasty. A son-in-law, Trinh Kiem, became dominant at the Le court. A son, Nguyen Hoang, feared assassination at the hands of his ambitious brother-in-law and sought appointment as Governor of Thuan Hoa, in the South. The two cooperated to achieve the overthrow of the Mac in 1592, but the split between Trinh Kiem and Nguyen Hoang led in later years to the civil war between the Trinh and Nguyen lords over control of the weak Le Dynasty. (See Later Le Dynasty; Mac Dang Dung; Mac Dynasty; Nguyen Hoang; Trinh Kiem)