

Responsibility to Set an example for Cadres and Party members according to Ho Chi Minh's Ideology in the Current Period

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Abstract: *The Communist Party with its primary role and prioritized mission has been known as the leader of the working class and the country. As a true Communist party member, one may have the inherent characteristic of being the pioneer. That characteristic, in line with the revolutionary development of the current time, has been requested to be highly self-aware. Based on the analysis of President Ho Chi Minh's views on the responsibility to set an example and the current situation of setting examples among cadres and party members, the author introduces contents and proposes solutions to make setting an example as a culture of the Party so that the Party will forever accompany the country and be worthy of being the pioneering force to lead the entire nation.*

Keywords: *Ho Chi Minh; Party members, set an example; Communist Party of Vietnam.*

For nearly a century, that many generations of officials and party members have set examples, pioneered and made sacrifice plays a very important role, creating the “golden history” of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh once told cadres and party members: “If we set an example and know how to lead, we will definitely be able to do anything, no matter how difficult it is”⁽¹⁾. Following Ho Chi Minh's ideology, the 13th Congress clearly determined: “Setting an example must truly become an important content in the Party's leadership method”⁽²⁾. In the current period, promoting the exemplary role of cadres and party members is an important solution to enhance the Party's power and ruling position in leading people to build a prosperous and happy country.

1. Ho Chi Minh's views on the responsibility of cadres and party members to set examples

“Setting an example” is known as “modeling”, which is to display exemplary behaviors for others to learn and follow. In Eastern culture, setting an example is considered as the best educational method. The leader of the proletariat - V.I.Lenin also said that communists do not have any

privileges, except the right to always be ahead. Imbued with those views of truth, Ho Chi Minh affirmed: “A living example is more valuable than hundreds of agitprop speeches”⁽³⁾. Compared to other educational methods and leadership methods, setting example of cadres and party members has outstanding advantages of being lively and realistic with real people and real things - examples with widespread value, great influence and strong persuasiveness. For that reason, Ho Chi Minh considered “setting an example” an indispensable quality for officials and party members. Promoting the responsibility of cadres and party members to set an example, in the Complete Works of Ho Chi Minh (published in 2011), the phrase “set an example” is mentioned 196 times, the phrase “be an example” 43 times and “exemplary” 415 times. Ho Chi Minh explained the responsibility of cadres and party members to set an example as follows: “In front of the masses, it is not just because we write the word “communist” on our foreheads that we are loved by them. The masses only love people with good character and morality. If we want to guide the people, we must be a model for them to imitate”⁽⁴⁾. He affirmed: You must be righteous first before you can help others; It is unreasonable when you’re not righteous, but want others to be so. He also asked: “Is it okay to ask others to be honest while you are corrupt? Impossible. We must first be diligent and pure before we can ask others to be pure and diligent”⁽⁵⁾. He advised: “To educate the people and make everyone good, cadres and party members must educate and train themselves every day. Ancient people also knew how to cultivate themselves, every evening they reviewed what they had done during the days, using two jars of black beans and white beans to record good and bad deeds. Our Party members and cadres come from the heroic people, we must live to be worthy of the heroic people and Party”⁽⁶⁾.

In order to provide cadres and party members action guidelines, Ho Chi Minh also clearly specified the contents of setting an example. He penned: “How can one be a role model? In general, party members, wherever they are, whatever they do, whatever their status and circumstances, must always:

- Put the interests of the Fatherland and the people first and foremost.
- Try the best to participate in resistance work.
- Be close to the people, love and help them, organize and lead them.
- Maintain revolutionary virtues, which are righteousness and impartiality”⁽⁷⁾.

Cadres and party members need to set an example not only in maintaining Party discipline but also in complying with government laws

and organizations regulations. In addition to “public service ethics”, they must also respect “civic ethics” and be a good member of the family and the clan. They must also encourage all family members to lead a simple lifestyle, living in harmony with those around them. To express the strict demands on the responsibility of setting an example for cadres and party members, Ho Chi Minh gave a specific example: “There are two people, A and B, A is a Party member, B is not. Both of them work in the same agency, with the same achievements, A will receive a smaller reward than B. In case A and B have the same shortcoming, A must be criticized or treated more severely than B”⁽⁸⁾. Just as Ho Chi Minh said, the duty of cadres and party members is to set an example and be a pioneer.

It is not easy to be exemplar all the way and all the time. It requires great sacrifice and high self-discipline, so Ho Chi Minh made it clear to cadres and party members: No one is forced to join the Party. Being a volunteer soldier is a matter of voluntariness. If one cannot stand the hardships and discipline of the Party, he should not join the Party or wait until he is older to enter. Even after joining, you can still leave. As a party member, “sufferings first, happiness later” and the responsibility to set an example in all aspects is a matter of fact.

Although the subjects of exemplary practice are all officials and party members, Ho Chi Minh made it clear that leaders and people in charge are the ones who must take the lead in the team of pioneers. Ho Chi Minh often called energetic leaders “core” people. He said, “If the core is developed and strengthened, the Party will develop and strengthen. Without a core, the Party will wither”⁽⁹⁾. He also made it clear that the higher the position, the greater the responsibility to set an example. During the meeting with senior officials, Ho Chi Minh said: “You are all senior officials, all holding important responsibilities. The success or failure largely depends on your morality, attitudes and working practices”⁽¹⁰⁾. Ho Chi Minh also made it clear that high-ranking officials are often people who have made many contributions to the Party and the revolution. And because of that, they must be an example of humility and must not be a victim of credit mania, as the merit belongs to many people, not to one person. Leaders who have the right to mobilize officials must be an example of fairness and integrity in using people; they absolutely must not “bring personal acquaintances into public work” and must also be wise, have “good eyes” for looking at people, respect talented people, then “you will avoid being surrounded by idle people who keep you stay away from good officials”⁽¹¹⁾.

Discussing the responsibility of party members to set an example, Ho Chi Minh came to the conclusion: “Party members - whether their work is big or small, their status is high or low - they must set an example for the masses... In order for the people to listen to their words and follow them, party members, from their words, actions to their way of living, must act in such a way that the people will believe, admire, and love them. That is to make people believe in the Party, obey the Party, love the Party and follow the policies of the Party and the Government. Any party member who is not trusted, admired, and loved by the people is not worthy of being a member of the Vietnam Labor Party”⁽¹²⁾. He also emphasized: Officials set an example not “with words” but “with deeds” because actions say it all. The masses, with their sharpness, always distinguish between the genuine and the fake, the real example and the “hypocritical example”. If cadres, especially leading cadres, do not really set an example but simply exhort, the bigger swords, the more counterproductive.

Ho Chi Minh not only gave profound instructions on setting an example, but he himself was a shining example in every aspect. His absolute prestige among cadres, Vietnamese people and the world also stems from his exemplary behavior in both big and small matters with the spirit of “prioritizing the public good” and making complete sacrifice.

2. Current status, contents and solutions to raise the responsibility of setting an example of cadres and party members in the current period

During the Doi Moi period, the direction and practice of setting an example by cadres and party members in the Party has obtained certain achievements when inheriting Ho Chi Minh’s views. In terms of awareness, the Platform for building the country in the transition period to socialism (supplemented and developed in 2011) emphasized: Setting an example is a key leadership method of the Party. Since then, over the past 10 years, the Party has issued 3 regulations on the setting an example at all levels according to the principle that the higher the position, the more responsibilities they must take in setting an example in all aspects (Regulations No. 101-QD/TW dated June 7, 2012 of the Secretariat on the responsibility of setting an example for officials and party members, especially leaders at all levels; Regulation No. 55-QD/TW dated December 19, 2016 of the Political Bureau on things that need to be done immediately to strengthen the responsibility of setting an example of cadres and party members; Regulation No. 08-QD/TW dated October 25, 2018 of the Central Executive Committee on the responsibility of cadres and party members to set an example among

members, especially members of the Politburo, the Secretariat and the Central Executive Committee...). The 13th Party Congress continued to determine: "Implement synchronously with the Party's regulations on the responsibility of cadres and party members to set an example according to the motto that the higher the position a cadre holds, the more exemplary he should be"⁽¹³⁾. These are very important political and legal foundations for setting an example for current officials and party members. In practice, the implementation of the responsibility of setting an example by cadres and party members has initially had some positive changes. On the whole, officials and party members, especially members of the Politburo and the Secretariat, members of the Central Executive Committee and a number of leading officials at all levels and sectors have exerted efforts to set an example in renewing thinking, preserving qualities, ethics, lifestyle, and fulfilling their assigned duties to "steer" the Vietnamese revolutionary ship in the context of complex, unpredictable domestic and global situations. The historic achievements of the Doi Moi cause are inseparable from the exemplary role of the majority of Party officials and party members in recent times.

Besides, reality has shown many limitations and shortcomings in this important work. The awareness of the responsibility to set an example of some party committees and heads of agencies and units is not full, profound and comprehensive; Setting an example has not become a regular, practical job, but a formality. Many leaders, including senior leaders, have not fulfilled their responsibility to set an example but have "set a bad example" by experiencing a degradation in political ideology, ethics, lifestyle while others have been trapped in individualism, "group interests", corruption and waste... Another part of officials, with the thought that "Being not corrupt is already good", have not promoted their pioneering role in the struggle against negativity; lived indifferently, lived and let live in order to avoid clashes, "retain votes" and "retain seats". The work of summarizing, praising and rewarding good people, good deeds, and shining examples in some agencies and units is not really based on work results, but on the nomination by the person in charge. The reward recognition has been defaulted to the unit leader or "rotated". Praising the wrong person and deed leads to a situation where many cadres and party members who have just been rewarded or promoted are subject to very severe disciplinary sentences. In general, the poor implementation of the duty to set an example by a large number of officials and party members has become a "resistance"

to the work of building and rectifying the Party, negatively affecting the role of the Party leadership and the confidence of the masses.

Setting an example is an “attribute” of cadres and party members, but the content of setting an example must be linked to the specific tasks of each revolutionary period. At this time, determining the right content to set an example will suggest a direction for organizations and individuals to strive for. In current conditions, the pioneering and exemplary characteristics of cadres and party members must be demonstrated in the following main contents:

First, set an example in being loyal to the Party’s ideals and goals. From then on, cadres and party members must be exemplary and voluntarily comply with the Party’s Platform, guidelines, and policies, and the State’s laws. They must not violate what party members are not allowed to do or State’s laws; resolutely prevent the “policy corruption”, which means building, promulgating, and implementing “policies” that benefit interest groups, agencies, families, and oneself.

Second, set an example and pioneer in political courage, moral qualities and lifestyle. In the context of the international communist movement still facing many difficulties, each cadre and party member must clearly demonstrate their absolute loyalty to the goals of national independence and socialism, steadfastness in Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh’s ideology, in the goal of innovation, resolutely fighting against “peaceful evolution”, “self-evolution” and “self-transformation”. Cadres and party members must be pioneers, set examples, and maintain revolutionary ethics, because that is the “root” of revolutionaries, the factor that determines the success or failure of the revolution and brings the Party’s prestige among the people. In a developing socialist-oriented market economy, cadres and party members must always put the interests of the people and the country above personal interests, preserving the qualities of diligence, frugality, integrity, integrity, and impartiality, not being tempted by material benefits, resolutely fighting against corruption, “group interests” and not letting relatives take advantage of one’s working position for personal gains.

Third, set an example and be a pioneer in constant learning to improve qualifications and work capacity. The working capacity of cadres and party members includes the capacity to build guidelines, thoroughly grasp, concretize and organize the successful implementation of the Party’s guidelines, the State’s laws and policies, localities, agencies and units’ work plans. It is also the ability to mobilize, organize and guide the masses. Those

abilities can only be shaped on the basis of constantly studying theory, summarizing work practices, and consulting the experiences of others to enrich one's own knowledge. In the age of knowledge, the "lifespan" of a qualification is very short, if one is complacent with his existing knowledge, he will inevitably fall behind. Each cadre and party member, to set an example for the people, must constantly study to have enough knowledge to lead the people and contribute to creating the "civilization" of the Party.

Fourth, set an example and pioneer in working style and close relationships with the people. It is not words but qualitative and quantitative work results are a measure of the pioneering and exemplary performance of officials and party members. In current conditions, cadres and party members must have a truly scientific, democratic, practical, creative and effective working style. Since ancient times, the people's trust and support have always been the source of the Party's strength, therefore, cadres and party members must pioneer in being close to the people, respecting the people, loving the people, humbly learning from the people, and strengthening dialogues with the people and promptly resolve their legal and legitimate petitions according to the motto "Whatever is beneficial to the people must be done with all our might, and what is harmful to the people must be avoided as much as possible"⁽¹⁴⁾.

Fifth, set an example in self-criticism and criticism. Since the 4th Plenum of the Party's Central Committee - the 11th Tenure (2011), the Party has identified self-criticism and criticism as a "breakthrough" to build and rectify the Party but 10 years later, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong still assessed: "The principle of self-criticism and criticism has not been well respected"⁽¹⁵⁾. Leaders must have the courage to exercise self-criticism and criticism; avoid only seeing just others' mistakes without seeing theirs; avoid subjective psychology, and misunderstandings when often constantly being flattered and fawned over by subordinates. For ordinary officials, it is necessary to avoid cowardice when one sees the wrong but dare not criticize, or sees the right but dare not defend. On the other hand, it is essential to avoid taking advantage of criticism to "put down" each other or "flatter" superiors. Criticism must come from pure motives, love for comrades, subtleness, and sincerity in the spirit of "criticizing deeds, not people"⁽¹⁶⁾, not criticizing severely. Criticism not only needs to be "accurate but also needs to be tactful" so that the person being criticized will not be hurt, discouraged, or alienated from their superiors.

Sixth, set an example in daring to think, to do, to innovate, to take responsibility, to confront difficulties and challenges and to resign. Today,

science and technology develop at an incredible rate; situations change very quickly and constantly pose numerous new problems that need to be addressed. Each cadre and party member must avoid the conservatism and stagnation to constantly innovate thinking and working methods. In Regulation No. 08 - Qđi/TW issued by the Central Executive Committee on October 25, 2018 on the responsibility of setting examples, there is a notable new content: Cadres and party members need to set an example in “proactively resigning when one feels that he no longer has the qualifications, capacity, and reputation to perform the duties.” Resigning when one does not fulfill his responsibilities and duties well, and when one takes political responsibility for mistakes in the field he is in charge is one of the vivid and specific manifestations of integrity, self-esteem and the courage of officials and party members. It is also an honorable exit for those who do not meet the mission requirements. The fact that two Deputy Prime Ministers, Pham Binh Minh and Vu Duc Dam, withdrew from the Politburo and the Central Executive Committee at the extraordinary meeting (December 30, 2022) brought that policy to reality and contributed to building a resignation culture so that being promoted and stepping down become normal in the personnel work with the aim of screening good cadres. However, the decision of whether or not to let officials resign is decided by the competent authority so that no one can use the excuse of resignation to avoid responsibility for the serious consequences left behind.

Seventh, set an example in protecting the Party’s ideological foundation and fighting against wrong and hostile views. Facing attacks by hostile forces against the Party’s ideological foundation and their defaming and exaggerating the shortcomings of leaders and managers, especially high-ranking officials, in order to eliminate the Party’s leadership and change the regime, each cadre and party member must be exemplary in thoroughly grasping and effectively implementing Resolution 35-NQ/TW of the Politburo on strengthening the protection of the Party’s ideological foundation, fighting against wrong and hostile views in the new situation. To do so, they must increase their learning, propaganda and fight against harmful information flows to build and spread scientific trust in communist ideals, the Party and the cause of innovation; “expose” the plots, tricks, and falsehoods in the slanderous allegations of hostile and reactionary forces. They must also be correct in speaking, especially on social networks, avoiding “vague” statements that can be distorted by devious people. Most importantly, each cadre and party member must protect themselves from “self-evolution” and “self-

transformation” at home and in their organization because each of their wrong actions and deeds creates “a crisis” and a “pretext” for hostile forces to increase the sabotage against the Party and the regime.

Just as Ho Chi Minh said, “being a human being” is difficult, but being an exemplary cadre and party member is much more difficult. The 13th Party Congress emphasized the requirement that: “Party members voluntarily set an example to affirm their leadership position, pioneering and exemplary role, spreading and promoting revolutionary movements”⁽¹⁷⁾. To turn the “setting an example” method into a “breakthrough” in the work of building and rectifying the Party and the process of innovating the Party’s leadership method, in addition determining the content of setting an example, it is necessary to implement synchronously the following system of solutions:

Firstly, strengthen propaganda and education to raise awareness of each cadre and party member about their responsibility to set an example.

It is essential to make each cadre and party member understand that “setting an example” currently is not a slogan, a recommendation or a campaign but a mandatory requirement according to the principle: Any cadre or party member does not set an example in all aspects, first of all in completing his or her duties is not worthy of being an officer or Party member. However, in order to make “setting an example” a self-aware action and not a “coloration” or “polishing” of one’s name, the spirit of “self-reflection” and self-correction must be arisen in each cadre and party member. According to Ho Chi Minh’s advice: “The law cannot cure everything. One has to create his own laws to rule himself”⁽¹⁸⁾. General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong also repeatedly emphasized: Honor is the most noble thing. When honor, self-esteem, and integrity are promoted, they will form a “dam” against fame and material temptations so that cadres can retain their dignity and be determined to observe 19 rules stated in the Regulation No. 37-QD/TW dated October 25, 2021 of the Central Executive Committee which spell out what a party member must not do. To practice setting an example, inevitably in every person and organization, there is a fierce struggle between common interests and private interests, between “doing it” and “doing it well”, between following “the beaten path” or a new path that is tough but more effective... The important thing is, awareness must be acute and strong enough to be transformed into correct and consistent actions.

Secondly, legislate and specify regulations on the responsibilities of cadres and party members to set an example.

If we only call, educate, and persuade cadres and party members to practice setting an example without accompanied sanctions, the effectiveness will not be high because the self-awareness and value system pursued by each cadre and party member is different. Then, it is necessary to “legislate” the regulations on setting an example so that those who fail to practice setting an example well not only violate the “Party’s principles” but also violate the “State’s laws” and thus eliminate themselves from the Party. On the other hand, it is necessary to compile regulations on the responsibility of setting an example for officials and party members and create consistency and unity in those documents because there are currently many overlapped regulations which are difficult to remember and implement. Currently, the social structure of cadres and party members is very diverse: there are working party members and retired party members; there are party members holding management positions and ordinary party members; they operate in very different areas and fields. Therefore, contents about setting examples need to be more specific and closer to reality so that cadres and party members can easily implement them, and supervision by the party organization and the people over exemplary deeds of cadres, party members will take place more smoothly and effectively.

Thirdly, promote the modelling role of the leader in carrying out the responsibility of setting an example according to the principle of “top people first, grassroot people later”.

Setting an example is a tool and an attribute of leadership. The higher the leadership position, the greater the influence of the holder within the Party and among the people. Therefore, key officials at all levels, especially high-ranking officials (Politburo members, Secretariat members and Central Committee members) must be pioneers among pioneers. Subordinates always “look” at the example of their superiors to take actions. This diffusion takes place in the political system and in society. On the contrary, if the top is unrighteous, the bottom is chaotic. The more unrighteous the top is, the more chaotic the bottom becomes. Leaders are political activists, so they must be righteous before ruling, not ruling with ignorant and unjust power. If they do not have enough qualities to match their duties, “their virtues are not worthy of their clothes”, then no matter how high their “reputation” is, it is just a “vanity” and the risk of “losing their reputation” can incur at any time. Starting with the position and influence of the leader, the Documents of the 13th National Congress of the Party emphasized the principle “the higher the position, the more exemplary”⁽¹⁹⁾ and required: Leaders at all

levels must be truly exemplary, match their words with actions, uphold the sense of responsibility, and put the interests of the nation and the people first and foremost”⁽²⁰⁾. This is a “breakthrough” solution for Party building work, innovating the Party’s current leadership method.

Fourthly, enhance the role of party cells and grassroots party committees in organizing and supervising the implementation of exemplary responsibilities of each cadre and party member.

As an organization that directly manages party members, the party cell is the organization that knows best how each of its party members sets an example. However, reality shows that very few major violations are discovered through regular Party activities at grassroots Party cells and organizations. This is a sign of the decline in the combat strength of the organization. To promote the responsibility of setting an example, it is necessary to use the cell as the “focal point” for officers to register and commit to setting an example in accordance with their positions and assigned tasks. The year-end summary and evaluation must be based on “highly quantified” commitment results. In evaluating the implementation of the responsibility to set an example at the cell, it is vital to overcome the phenomenon of being easy on others to earn favorable treatments or letting everybody win.

Fifthly, promote the inspection and supervision of the Party and Government, of the people and the press on the responsibility of setting an example of cadres and party members.

Inspection and supervision is one leading method of the Party; If the inspection work is not done well, the actual implementation will easily fall into the situation of leaving the work unfinished or having a flash in the pan or even not starting the implementation. The 13th Congress determined: “Pay close attention to inspection and supervision within the Party combined with promoting the supervisory role of elected bodies, the Fatherland Front, the press and the people over cadres and the Party members who implement regulations on setting an example”⁽²¹⁾. It should be noted that this is not inspection and supervision in general but inspection and supervision in the field of setting an example. The example of a party member must be shown in three main aspects: in thoughts, actions and enjoyment according to the motto: enjoyment must be lower than the extent of contribution and “when contributing, one must look up, when enjoying, one must look down.”

It can be said that setting an example is the shortest way to win people’s hearts and inspire the masses, leading by setting examples is the most effective way to lead. Therefore, it is necessary to turn “setting an example” into a

spirit of volunteerism and self-awareness, a core quality of each cadre and party member and into the leadership and ruling culture of the Communist Party of Vietnam. The practice of setting an example inevitably requires courage, sacrifice, and high determination, but it not only contributes to enhancing the Party's ruling leadership culture but also helps each cadre and party member find the true meaning and value of life as history has proven: "Unrighteous people perish/ For thousands of years, only heroes and their reputation remains"⁽²²⁾./.

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