

Ho Chi Minh's Thoughts on Promoting Revolutionary Moral Education, Enhancing Party Culture Building

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Abstract: *The Communist Party of Vietnam founded, organized and trained by President Ho Chi Minh has led the Vietnamese people to wage a revolution for independence, unify the country and build socialism. In his speech to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Party establishment in 1960, President Ho Chi Minh emphasized the Party's development and affirmed "Our Party is moral and civilized"⁽¹⁾. This confirms that the great victories of the Vietnamese revolution in terms of national liberation, national reunification and socialism construction (including great achievements of the country's renovation for the past 35 years) are gained from consolidating and building a clean, strong and comprehensive Party on the basis of constantly "promoting moral education"⁽²⁾. It is the foundation for building Party culture, creating endogenous strength for the leadership and ruling capacity of the Communist Party of Vietnam during more than 90 years since its birth.*

Keywords: *revolutionary morality; Party culture; socialism.*

1. Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on the dialectic between revolutionary morality and Party culture

Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on the dialectic relationship between culture and morality; between Party culture and revolutionary morality.

In Ho Chi Minh's thoughts, morality and culture are the two most important contents that determine the full development of one's personality in general and revolutionaries' in particular. Morality plays the core role in the culture, therefore, cultural development must first be built on the basis of morality. Morality in Ho Chi Minh's thoughts is always emphasized as the content that creates humanistic values of the national liberation revolution and the socialist revolution. With the inseparable values between culture and morality, President Ho Chi Minh generalized that the revolutionary Party must "be moral and civilized". This requires cadres and party members - exemplary pioneers - to always cultivate revolutionary morality.

Emphasizing moral qualities in determining the subjective role of revolutionaries, President Ho Chi Minh stated clearly: “To build socialism, there must be people with a great sense of socialist morality”⁽³⁾. Furthermore, emphasizing the importance of moral qualities in determining the performance of political tasks by cadres and party members, President Ho Chi Minh put it: “The country’s affairs should take the organization as the core. The organizations should take officers as the core. Officials should take virtues as the core. Officials must pay attention not to be greedy about beauty, wealth, not to be afraid of hardship or danger”⁽⁴⁾. This is the morality of a human being, the perfection of a person. It is the morality that creates cultural values, guiding us to the victorious liberation and successful socialism building to achieve freedom and happiness for people.

With that great goal, President Ho Chi Minh always considered morality to be the root of all actions. Through the content of Ho Chi Minh’s thoughts on the relationship between morality and culture, it can be seen that he not only left behind a system of ethical views for learning, but also the moral example of his own. He was a model of revolutionary morality practice, as well as the consistency between thoughts and action, the unity between morality and politics, morality and talent, between words and actions, between revolutionary morality and life morality. The moral requirements that President Ho Chi Minh raised for cadres and party members were not only meaningful when he was still alive, but up to now this ideology has become the basic moral standard system of the Vietnamese people. In general, it is important for revolutionaries to maintain the “Determination to fight for the Party and for the revolution”⁽⁵⁾; “loyalty to the country, filiality to the people”; “thriftiness, honesty, righteousness and impartiality”; “Whatever is beneficial to the people, we must do our best. We must avoid anything that harms the people. We must love and respect the people so that they will love us and respect us”⁽⁶⁾, we must “worry before others, rejoice after others”⁽⁷⁾, know how to love people, have pure international empathy. In Ho Chi Minh’s thoughts, culture and morality are always expressed as the most important functions in carrying out the revolutionary cause. He emphasized: “In the great cause of resistance and national construction of our nation, culture plays a very important part”⁽⁸⁾; At the same time, to perform this function, it must be seen that: “Culture as well as politics, economics, beliefs, and morality are all developed freely”⁽⁹⁾. Emphasizing the function of culture in general and the Party’s culture in the cause of national liberation and socialism building,

President Ho Chi Minh generalized a very important proposition: “Culture lights the way for the nation.”

To further emphasize the function of culture, President Ho Chi Minh also clearly pointed out the national, scientific and popular nature of culture, taking that as a condition to ensure the successful implementation of revolutionary goals. He wrote: “To serve the cause of socialist revolution, culture must be socialist in content and nationalistic in form”⁽¹⁰⁾; or “This new culture needs to be scientific and popular in order to comply with the evolutionary trend of modern thoughts. Now our country is independent and the spirit is liberated, we need to have a culture that is consistent with science and the aspirations of the people”⁽¹¹⁾.

With the revolutionary goal set in a practical context of successfully implementing the resistance war against the US in the South and building socialism in the North, President Ho Chi Minh also pointed out the need to develop a vision of creative consciousness, based on two main premises. Firstly, “We must improve our cultivation of Marxism-Leninism to use the stance, viewpoints, and methods of Marxism-Leninism to summarize the experiences of our Party, correctly analyzing the characteristics of our country. Only then will we be able to gradually understand the laws of development of the Vietnamese revolution, and determine the specific guidelines, mottos, and steps of the socialist revolution appropriate to the country’s situation”⁽¹²⁾. Secondly, “If we want to solve those problems well, if we want to avoid groping, and making mistakes, we must learn from the experiences of our brother countries and apply those experiences creatively”⁽¹³⁾.

Ho Chi Minh’s thoughts on revolutionary morality education against individualism: a condition for building Party culture

Ho Chi Minh’s thoughts on revolutionary morality is a generalization of views on the revolutionary character and morality of cadres and party members, also commonly known as communist morality; socialist morality and proletarian morality. In Ho Chi Minh’s thoughts, the content of improving revolutionary morality always focuses on cultivating and promoting the moral qualities of officials and party members to meet the requirements of revolutionary tasks.

Based on the traditional moral qualities of the nation and based on the requirements for the moral qualities of revolutionaries, according to Ho Chi Minh, revolutionary morality, or communist and proletarian

morality always poses the requirement that: “Cadres and party members must further enhance their sense of responsibility before the Party and the masses, wholeheartedly serving the people. They must love and respect the people, truly respect the people’s right to mastery, absolutely not give orders in the face of a “revolutionary official”, firmly grasp the class’ viewpoint, follow the right path of the masses, sincerely learn from the masses, resolutely rely on, educate and mobilize the masses to carry out all guidelines and policies of the Party and the State. Also, they have to be honest and upright; not hide the ignorance, shortcomings, or mistakes; be humble, close to the masses, not arrogant; really ask for advice, not be subjective; always care about the lives of the masses; be “hard-working and impartial” and have the spirit of “worrying before others, rejoicing after others”⁽¹⁴⁾.

To determine the character and morality of a revolutionary, President Ho Chi Minh clearly stated: “A revolutionary must always be loyal, enthusiastic, and consider the interests of the Party and the nation more precious than his life; always be clear and upright, passionate about collective way of living; always take care of the people, maintain discipline, resolutely fight against “individualism diseases”⁽¹⁵⁾. The character and morality of revolutionaries, according to President Ho Chi Minh’s remark, are the moral basis that defines the character of revolutionaries. He pointed out: “Revolutionaries must have morality. Without morality, no matter how talented they are, they cannot lead the people. The liberation is a great task, if one has no morality, is corrupt and evil, what else can he do?”⁽¹⁶⁾. Thus, “for good party members and cadres who want to become genuine revolutionaries, there is no difficulty at all. That comes entirely from one’s heart. If one is wholeheartedly devoted to the Party, to the Fatherland, and to the people, he will advance to impartiality. If one is diligent and impartial, his shortcomings will become fewer and fewer, five of those good qualities... include benevolence, righteousness, wisdom, courage, integrity”⁽¹⁷⁾.

Affirming revolutionary morality as a criterion for evaluating the revolutionaries, President Ho Chi Minh clearly stated: “Revolutionary cadres must have revolutionary morality. We must maintain revolutionary morality to be a true revolutionary. Revolutionary morality can be summarized as:

Distinguish the right and the wrong clearly. Be persistent with one’s own stance.

Be loyal to the country. Be filial to the people.

Whether things succeed or fail depends mainly on whether cadres are imbued with revolutionary morality or not⁽¹⁸⁾.

The underlying cause of the decline in revolutionary morality, according to President Ho Chi Minh, is that some cadres and party members “forget the arduous struggle, become indifferent to revolutionary work, and distance themselves from the work of revolution, from the masses. Gradually, they lose both their revolutionary character and morality, falling into corruption and turn into sinners against the Party, the Government, and the people”⁽¹⁹⁾. Thus, to raise the morality of revolutionaries, cadres and party members are required to always fight against individualism, carry out criticism and self-criticism, and constantly cultivate revolutionary morality. The basic contents of Ho Chi Minh’s thoughts on revolutionary morality still preserve their value in the training and cultivation of revolutionary morality of cadres and party members in current conditions.

Thus, together with clarifying the connotation of revolutionary morality, President Ho Chi Minh “pointed out” the most dangerous and direct enemy that degrades revolutionary morality, the individualism. “Individualism is a major obstacle to building socialism. Therefore, the victory of socialism cannot be separated from the victory of the struggle to eliminate individualism... individualism is a fierce enemy of socialism. Revolutionaries must destroy it”⁽²⁰⁾. In other words, “If you want to build socialism, there must be socialists. ... To become a socialist, one must have socialist ideology and oppose individualism”⁽²¹⁾.

Regarding the harmful effects of individualism, President Ho Chi Minh compared it to one of the three most dangerous enemies of the revolution, of which “the first enemy is capitalism and imperialism; the second enemy is backward habits and traditions; And the third enemy is individualism and petty-bourgeois ideology that still lurks within each of us, just waiting for an opportunity to spring up”⁽²²⁾.

In addition, President Ho Chi Minh also clearly pointed out the consequences that individualism has with its various manifestations. He emphasized: “Because of individualism, one is afraid of hardships and difficulties, thus falls into corruption, waste, and extravagance. He is greedy about fame, benefits, and power. He is arrogant, despising the collective, the masses, being dominant and autocratic. He is out of touch with the masses, unaligned with reality, and bureaucratic. He does not have the will to improve

himself, refuses to study and make progress”⁽²³⁾. Furthermore, “individualism also leads to a loss of solidarity, lack of organization, discipline, poor sense of responsibility, failure to comply with the Party’s and State’s guidelines and policies, harming the interests of the Party and the State as well as benefits of the revolution and the people. In short, *individualism* generates many mistakes”⁽²⁴⁾.

A basic characteristic of individualism pointed out by Ho Chi Minh is that: “Individualism is contrary to collectivism. Individualism gives birth to other false ideas.”⁽²⁵⁾ “*Individualism...* is the mother of all bad habits such as laziness, indolence, arrogance, fussiness, timidity, wastefulness, and embezzlement. It is a ferocious enemy of revolutionary morality and socialism”⁽²⁶⁾.

Regarding the origin of individualism, according to President Ho Chi Minh, it is the “evil remains” of the old society in terms of ideology, of which “the worst and most dangerous remains of the old society is individualism”. Individualism is contrary to revolutionary morality. If it remains in us, even only a little, it will wait for an opportunity to spring up, to obscure revolutionary morality, to prevent us from fighting wholeheartedly for the revolutionary cause”⁽²⁷⁾.

However, inheriting the Marxist-Leninist perspective on the relationship between the individual and society, and from the practice of building socialism in Vietnam, President Ho Chi Minh also noted that, The fight against individualism is not about “trampling on personal interests”, but must see that “...only in a socialist regime will each person have the conditions to improve their own lives, develop their personalities and strengths”⁽²⁸⁾. At the same time, he also emphasized the unity between self-interests and public and said that, “self-interests are included in public interests, and are a part of the collective interests.” Only when the public interests are guaranteed will the self-interests have the conditions to be satisfied”⁽²⁹⁾. Based on the requirement that communists must always improve their revolutionary morality to combat individualism, President Ho Chi Minh proposed a principle: “If self-interests conflict with public interests, revolutionary morality requires self-interests to submit to public interests”⁽³⁰⁾.

To radically combat individualism, President Ho Chi Minh set out the following conditions: “If we want to wash away the evil traces of the old society and practice revolutionary morality, we must try our best to study,

practice, self-reform to progress forever. If we do not try to progress, we will regress and become backward”⁽³¹⁾. Therefore, socialism is certain to win, individualism is certain to be destroyed.

Deeply grasping Ho Chi Minh’s thoughts on building Party culture on the basis of constantly educating revolutionary morality and fighting individualism, up to now in the Vietnam’s revolutionary cause and the fight against individualism, revolutionary morality has always been emphatically promoted. It has been seen as the content directly related to the Party’s destiny and decisive to the success of the revolutionary cause in the transition period of socialism. Hence the problem fighting against individualism is an important, fundamental, long-term, and urgent task of the entire Party, people, and army.

2. Contents of the 13th Congress’s viewpoints on building Party culture by promoting revolutionary moral education

Some orientation contents for building Party culture ahead of the 13th Congress

During more than 35 years of renewal, continuing the task of building a clean and strong Party and political system, the Communist Party of Vietnam has constantly promoted the achievements and values obtained during the process of building Party culture and always identified this as a content of Party building work, the core of which is constantly strengthening revolutionary moral education. Recognizing the importance of Party culture, during the renewal period, the Communist Party of Vietnam persistently emphasized building Party culture as an important content not only for Party building work, but also the core for building Vietnamese culture. The Resolution of the 5th Plenum of the Party Central Committee (8th tenure) on building and developing an advanced Vietnamese culture imbued with national identity affirmed that to build and develop culture in society, first of all, it is necessary to “build culture within the Party, within the state apparatus... Moral culture and a healthy lifestyle must be demonstrated first of all in all party, state, mass organizations, and in officials and civil servants. country, in each party member”⁽³²⁾. Thus, the essence of building Party culture is both identified as the focus of Party building work and also as the focus of building and developing Vietnamese culture, in which the emphasis is on building a team of officials and party members with the moral qualities of revolutionaries, who must always wholeheartedly shoulder the responsibility of building and developing the country.

In that spirit, the Resolution of the 9th Plenum of the Party Central Committee (11th tenure) on building and developing Vietnamese culture and people to meet the requirements of sustainable development of the country, once again emphasized the need to: “Focus on building culture within the Party, state agencies and unions; consider this an important factor to build a clean and strong political system”⁽³³⁾. Consistent with the above viewpoint, the 12th National Congress continued to affirm to: “Build culture in economics and politics. Pay attention to building Party culture in state agencies and unions, considering this an important factor in building a clean and strong political system”⁽³⁴⁾. Thus, the building culture in the leadership and management of party organizations, state agencies, and in the political system continues to be emphasized by the 13th Congress as the content of “building and implementing cultural standards in leadership and management”⁽³⁵⁾. Regarding the contents on building Party culture of the Congresses, from the renewal to present, the Communist Party of Vietnam has continuously emphasized the need to change the working practices and style of the Party’s leading agencies; build a scientific, collective, democratic working style, being close to the people, respectful of the people, for the people, closely aligned with the reality, matching words with actions; build and properly implement regulations to promote exemplary role in training the moral qualities, lifestyle, behavior, and working practices of cadres and party members, especially leaders and heads of agencies and units.

The vision and development orientation of the Communist Party of Vietnam were specifically stated in the Documents of the 13th National Congress, with the additional content of “building a clean and comprehensively strong Party and political system”⁽³⁶⁾, the content of building the current Party culture is also included. Mentioning the spirit of previous Congresses on building Party culture, the Document of the 13th Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam continues to pose requirements to “research, supplement, and perfect the revolutionary moral values in the spirit of “Our Party is moral and civilized” to suit new conditions and the nation’s fine cultural traditions; build ethical standards as a basis for cadres and party members to adjust their behaviors in daily work; promote revolutionary moral education, making each cadre and party member well acknowledge their duties and responsibilities, always steadfast in the face of difficulties and challenges, and not be tempted by material things, money, or fame; raise awareness of cultivating, training and practicing revolutionary morality; strengthen the

fight against anti-moral and unethical views and behaviors; encourage and praise moral examples, creating a profound influence in the Party and in society”⁽³⁷⁾. It can be seen that these are guiding viewpoints for the work of building Party culture, always associated with the content of promoting revolutionary moral education.

The main contents on promoting revolutionary moral education to enhance Party culture in the spirit of the 13th Congress

As shown above, the content of building Party culture of the Communist Party of Vietnam is always associated with “Promoting revolutionary moral education”. As for the Party building work on promoting morality which has always been promoted by the Central Committee and party committees and organizations at all levels, up to now, the awareness and actions of cadres and party members, especially those of party members holding leadership and management positions, have undergone positive changes. Such positive results were obtained thanks to various attempts: right from the beginning of the term, the 12th Party Central Committee issued Resolution No. 04-NQ/TW, dated 30 October 2016 on enhancing the building and rectification of the Party; identifying 27 manifestations of degradation in political ideology, ethics and lifestyle, internal “self-evolution” and “self-transformation”... Next, the Politburo issued Regulation No. 55-QD/TW (December 2016) on things to do immediately to strengthen the role of party cadres and members, and promptly correct working styles, lavish lifestyle and wastefulness, which cause outrage in society, and set an example by practicing a civilized, simple, and frugal lifestyle. In particular, the Central Executive Committee issued “Regulation No. 08-QDi/TW on Cadres and party members’ responsibility to set an example, first and foremost members of the Politburo, members of the Party Central Committee Secretariat, members of the Party Central Committee” (October 2018), clearly stating 8 contents that members of the Politburo, members of the Secretariat, and members of the Central Committee must set examples, 8 contents that they must be strictly against; at the same time, it requires officials holding higher positions to be exemplary. Party committees, party organizations, agencies and units at all levels direct the development and promulgation of regulations on ethical standards of officials and party members in accordance with the functions, tasks and specific characteristics of the industries and agencies, units, as a basis for cadres and party members to cultivate, train, and strive in their work and activities.

However, the implementation has seen various limitations in the work of educating officials and party members on revolutionary morality. The “Report of the 12th Party Central Committee on summarizing the work of Party building and implementing the Party Charter” (Report) at the 13th Congress (January 2021), frankly pointed out that currently: “A portion of cadres and party members have inconsiderable political courage, degraded political ideology, and are still skeptical and ambiguous about the Party’s goals and ideals as well as the path to socialism in our country; a few cadres are confused with wavering ideology and low confidence; in particular, some deny Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh’s thoughts and the Party’s renewal guidelines”⁽³⁸⁾. Specifying the cause of this situation, the Report also emphasizes that the above weaknesses are attributed to the fact that “the management, education, and training of party members have not been given due attention; the review and screening of party members is not regular and indecisive. The pioneering, exemplary and moral qualities of a portion of party members have declined; the number of party members who have abandoned party activities and membership tends to increase”⁽³⁹⁾. Thus, to overcome the above limitations to ensure the “building of a clean and comprehensively strong party and political system”, the Report has focused on a number of important contents, including:

First, focus on building the Party on morality. Specifically, resolutely and persistently implement the Resolution No. 04-NQ/TW on enhancing the building and rectification of the Party with strong, drastic, and synchronous solutions to prevent and repel the deterioration of political ideology, morality, lifestyle, manifestations of “self-evolution” and “self-transformation” internally. Research, supplement, and perfect revolutionary ethical standards in accordance with new conditions and good cultural traditions of the nation to serve as a basis for cadres and party members to self-cultivate, train, and adjust behaviors in daily work. Promote revolutionary moral education, making each cadre and party member clearly see their duties and responsibilities, always be steadfast in the face of difficulties and challenges and not be tempted by material things, money, or fame; effectively fight all manifestations of individualism, bureaucracy, opportunism, partiality, factionalism, and internal disunity. Raise awareness of cultivating and practicing revolutionary morality all life long, regularly “self-reflect”, “self-correct” and enhance the honor and self-esteem of party members. Timely praise good examples of morality and

lifestyle; strongly fight against deviant manifestations and strictly morality and lifestyle violations.

Second, focus on building a team of officials at all levels, especially at the strategic level and leaders. In particular, focus on building a team of officials at all levels, especially at the strategic level, with sufficient qualities, capacity and prestige, on par with their tasks, ensuring a continuous and steady transition between generations of officials. Enhance the political courage, intelligence, example setting, and spirit of service mindset of cadres and party members, especially of key leaders and heads of all levels. Appreciate the assessment of quality, efficiency, and actual products according to assigned responsibilities and tasks and promote the responsibilities of the leaders. Focus on reasonable structure, early detecting, training and fostering young officials, women and people of ethnic groups at all levels, especially at the grassroots level. Maintain discipline in performing public duties; encourage and protect officials and party members who dare to think, dare to speak, dare to do, dare to take responsibility, dare to face difficulties and challenges, and act decisively for the common good.

Third, further tighten the close relationship between the Party and the people, relying on the people to build the Party. It emphasizes creating strong changes in the awareness and actions of party committees at all levels and the political system regarding mass mobilization work. Strengthen innovation and improve the efficiency of mass mobilization work of party and state agencies and the entire political system; promote the role of the people participating in building the Party, building a clean and strong government and political system in the new situation. Continue to build a team of officials who truly “respect the people, be close to the people, believe in the people, understand the people, learn from the people, rely on the people and are responsible to the people”; well implement the emulation movement “Smart public mobilization”. Strengthen coordination and implementation of regulations on mass mobilization work of the political system; perfect the mechanism and improve the effectiveness of coordination between the government, agencies and organizations with the Fatherland Front and socio-political organizations at all levels.

In summary, building Party culture is always identified as a central task of Party building work, associated with all 5 contents of Party building work on politics, ideology, morality, and organization and cadres, in which the core comes is building the Party on morality. Continue to inherit and

creatively apply Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on Party building in general and Party culture in particular according to the spirit of the 13th Congress, which emphasizes strengthening revolutionary morality education into real life in the coming time. This will be a condition to firmly ensure the improvement of building Party culture, one of the core contents of "building a pure, strong and comprehensive Party and the political system", meeting the requirements during the country leadership to successfully build socialism in Vietnam and further contribute to the socialist revolution of the world./.

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