

Viet Nam Communist Party's awareness of the role and position of culture and human factors in the renovation process

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Abstract: *From the 6th National Congress to the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, it was nearly 40 years of our Party's theoretical renovation on socialism and the path to socialism in Vietnam, in which renewed awareness of the role and position of culture and the human factor is of great importance.*

Key words: *The Communist Party of Vietnam, awareness of culture, human factor, renovation*

1. The awareness development process of the role and position of culture

In 1943, when the country hadn't gained independence, the Party announced the Outline on Vietnamese culture, which presented a system of guiding viewpoints, goals, principles, tasks, etc. of Vietnamese national cultural movement. According to the Outline, culture was identified as one of three fronts (economy, politics, and culture) with the aim of developing a culture that is national, scientific and popular. The birth of the Outline on Vietnamese culture promoted great cultural strength and made an important contribution to the victory of the Vietnamese revolution. It can be said that the Outline is a declaration of the Party's cultural policy, orienting the revolutionary struggle in the cultural field, gathering and encouraging cultural activists to stand on the national front line. For many decades later, culture has been always considered an important front, opening a path for the social revolution.

From the victory of the resistance war against the French and the Americans until Doi Moi (1986), the Party's awareness of the role and position of culture and people continued to be supplemented, demonstrated through a number of resolutions, directives and directions of the Party on building and developing culture and people in the process of revolution development. However, in the Party's documents and speeches of leaders, the concept of culture is often considered from an ideological perspective, not paid enough attention to the concept's nature. Therefore, the culture concept was simplified, we did not see clearly the organic relationship between culture and people and social life. It

simply focused on the connotation of the concept in sensitive areas, especially *literature, art* (referred to as literature) and specific cultural life.

During the innovation, the Communist Party of Viet Nam was persistently affirmed that culture and art were revolutionary, with the mission of directly participating in the struggle, actively contributing to the national liberation and Fatherland safeguarding. However, from the reality of the renovation, the Party realized that the awareness of the culture's role was incomplete and did not fully clarify the role of culture. Thus, it studied and defined the scope and connotation of culture in *broader and more inclusive meaning*.

The cultural innovation in Vietnam really started with Resolution 05 of the Politburo dated November 28, 1987 on *"Innovating and improving the level of governance and management of literature, art and culture, promoting the creativity, bringing literature, art and culture to a new step of development"*, of which it affirms *"Culture is an important part of the ideological and cultural revolution, a strong driving force, at the same time, a major goal in the cause of building socialism"*.

The Resolution of the 4th Plenum of the Party Central Committee (tenure VII, 1993) with the title: *"Some culture and art tasks in the coming years"*, for the first time mentioned the views on the role of culture in Vietnam in a more general and complete vision: *"Culture is the spiritual foundation of society, a driving force for socio-economic development, and at the same time a goal of socialism"*. In particular, the Resolution emphasized the central role and task of culture *"is to contribute to building Vietnamese people in terms of high intelligence, good morality, soul, emotions, lifestyle, noble personality, and good character, with steady bravery on par with the cause of national innovation, quickly catching up with the development trend of the times"*⁽¹⁾.

It was during this period that leader Ho Chi Minh's cultural views⁽²⁾ as well as those in the 1943 Outline on Vietnamese Culture were seen more deeply, laying the foundations for later cultural views and policies.

The 1991 Platform entitled *"Platform for building the country in the transition to socialism"* approved by the 7th Party Congress in June 1991, for the first time identified one of the six fundamental characteristics of socialism of our people which has *an advanced culture, rich in national identity*.

The 8th Congress of the Party (1996) marked a turning point that brought our country to a new stage of development. The Congress decided to promote industrialization and modernization of the country, striving to make our country basically become an industrial country by 2020. The issue of culture associated with development was perceived in new dimensions. Culture was

not only the driving force but also the goal of development. The 8th Congress continued to affirm that *“Culture is the spiritual foundation of society, both a goal and a driving force for socio-economic development”*⁽³⁾.

The 5th Plenum of the Party Central Committee (tenure VIII) marked a comprehensive innovation of the Party’s awareness of culture through the Resolution on “Building and developing an advanced Vietnamese culture, rich in national identity”. This is a document carrying the Party’s platform on culture in the period of national industrialization, modernization and international integration. Accordingly, advanced culture was identified with 5 main aspects: “patriotism, national independence and socialism, for the people, progressive, advanced in content and form”. At the same time, a culture imbued with national identity is a culture that contains “sustainable values, the quintessence of the Vietnamese ethnic community, cultivated through thousands of years of struggle for national building and protection. It is passionate patriotism, national self-reliance, spirit of solidarity, sense of community that connects individuals - families - villages - Fatherland; compassion, tolerance, respect for love, morality”⁽⁴⁾. The resolution outlines 5 fundamental guiding viewpoints in the process of building and developing Vietnamese culture with a strategic vision:

- Culture is the spiritual foundation of society, both a goal and a driving force for socio-economic development;
- The culture we are building is an advanced culture, richly imbued with national identity;
- The Vietnamese culture is a unified and diverse culture within the community of Vietnamese ethnic groups;
- Building and developing culture is the cause of the entire people led by the Party, in which the intellectuals play an important role;
- Culture is a front; building and developing culture is a long-term revolutionary cause, requiring revolutionary will and careful perseverance.

The Resolution of the 9th Plenum of the Party Central Committee, tenure XII once again affirmed this viewpoint, at the same time, supplemented and highlighted the connotation of “culture is the spiritual foundation of society, the goal and driving force for sustainable development of the country. Culture must be placed on par with economics, politics, and society.”

The platform for country building in the transition to socialism which was supplemented and developed in 2011 affirms: “Building *an advanced Vietnamese culture*, rich in national identity, for comprehensive development, unity in diversity, deeply imbued with the spirit of humanity, democracy, and

progress; make culture closely linked and penetrate deeply into all social life, become a solid spiritual foundation and an important endogenous strength of development”⁽⁵⁾.

On the basis of reality summarizing of culture and the requirements set forth in building national culture in the new context, the Document of the 12th Party Congress defines the direction and tasks: “Building a national culture and the Vietnamese people that develop comprehensively, towards truth - goodness - beauty, imbued with national, humanity, democratic and scientific spirit. Culture truly becomes an important internal force to ensure sustainable development and firmly protect the Fatherland for the goal of *“wealthy people, powerful country, democratic, just and civilized society”*”⁽⁶⁾.

The document of the 13th Party Congress identifies cultural values and the strength of Vietnamese people as important endogenous resources contributing to the nation’s comprehensive strength: “Comprehensively and synchronously developing all aspects of culture field, culture environment, culture life to make them copious, diversified, civilized and healthy; at the same time, absorbing the cultural quintessence of mankind to make culture a truly spiritual foundation, endogenous resource and disruptive driving force for socio-economic development and international integration”⁽⁷⁾. Promoting cultural values and the strength of Vietnamese people is identified as both a key task and a breakthrough of strategic significance to promote rapid and sustainable development of the country in the new era.

To implement the 13th Party’s National Congress’s guiding viewpoint on building and developing culture and the people, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong raised six tasks to revitalize culture and build the Vietnamese culture which is advanced, rich in national identity:

The first task is to arouse more strongly the spirit of patriotism, the will to be self-reliant, the spirit of solidarity, and the desire to develop a prosperous, happy country for the entire people;

The second task is to focus on building the Vietnamese people in the period of renovation, development and integration;

The third task is to comprehensively and synchronously develop cultural fields, cultural environment, and cultural life;

The fourth task is to promote the people’s roles as creative subjects and cultural beneficiaries, in which we promote the pioneering role of intellectuals, artists, and cadres in charge of culture work;

The fifth task is to emphasize the Party and political system building work in terms of culture and ethics. Enhance the Party’s role and leadership capacity;

State governance efficiency; the active participation of the Fatherland Front and socio-political organizations in the cause of cultural development;

The sixth task is to build a digital cultural environment and develop cultural industries and build a healthy cultural market⁽⁸⁾.

In summary, from the reality of nearly 40 -year-innovation, the Communist Party of Vietnam has continuously developed, clarified awareness, and gradually perfected the theoretical system on building and developing culture, including awareness of the position and role of culture in building and developing the country. The process of developing the Party's awareness of cultural roles and positions is shown in the following aspects:

Firstly, in every revolutionary period, building national culture is always identified as a core task, with important significance in the work of building and developing the country and protecting the Fatherland; Placing cultural development in a "synchronous and harmonious relationship with economic growth, progress, and social justice" is affirmed as "a fundamental orientation of the process of building socialism in Vietnam"⁽⁹⁾.

Secondly, the role of culture and building national culture is increasingly understood more deeply and comprehensively, based on the scientific approach to the nature of culture and the relationship between culture, people, and society, as well as based on the summary and selection of theories from the reality of culture development during the process of innovation, building, developing country, and protecting the Fatherland. In particular, the Party's theoretical renovation on the role and position of culture is expressed particularly in the Documents of the 13th Party Congress, in which culture is considered an important endogenous source, a "resource", "soft power" of the country. For the first time in the Party Document, the requirement to awaken and promote cultural values and the strength of the Vietnamese people is identified as a strategic breakthrough of national socio-economic development in the period 2021 - 2030.

Thirdly, to build Vietnamese culture which is advanced and rich in national identity, besides traditional tasks, the Communist Party of Vietnam has recently mentioned new tasks in responsive to the movement and development of the cultural field itself such as: developing cultural industries; building and completing the market for cultural products and services; building culture in economics and politics; building a digital cultural environment, and so on. These are important directions for the development of Vietnamese culture in the new period, and this also suggests a theoretical perspective to a new, comprehensive and profound awareness of

the relationship between culture and the reality of building and developing the country.

2. The process of developing awareness of human factor

It is the traditional viewpoint of Vietnam, President Ho Chi Minh and the Communist Party of Vietnam to place people at the center of the development process. However, in each historical period of the country, the issue of people is viewed, evaluated and expressed differently.

In its 3rd Congress (1960), the Communist Party of Vietnam affirmed that human factor was *the most valuable capital*. The 6th Congress (1986) opened a turning point in awareness of human. Human and comprehensive human development are identified as top goals. At the 7th Congress (1991), the role of people in socio-economic development continued to be affirmed: “Economic development puts people at the center”⁽¹⁰⁾. “The main goal and driving force of development is for the people, by the people, first and foremost the workers. That reflects the unity between the economic goals and social policy – all is for the people”⁽¹¹⁾.

The platform for building the country during the transition period to socialism places importance on education to build a new culture and new people. The 8th Congress (1996) determined: Along with science and technology, education and training is the top national policy to raise people’s knowledge, train human resources, foster talents, and develop human resources to meet the requirements for industrialization and modernization. “Promoting good people, good deeds. Forming a system of values and social standards in accordance with traditions, national identity and the requirements of the times”⁽¹²⁾.

The Resolution of the 5th Plenum of the Party Central Committee (tenure VIII), the Conclusion of the 10th Plenum of the Party Central Committee (tenure IX) emphasize 3 key tasks: continuing to emphasize the building ideology, ethics, lifestyle and cultural life healthy in society; improving the quality and effectiveness of the task of building Vietnamese people according to the 5 virtues identified in Resolution of the 5th Plenum of the Party Central Committee (tenure VIII); Focus on building grassroots cultural life, building a healthy, fine and rich cultural environment.

Human is the center, the goal of development. During development, it is required to enhance the position of humans and care for humans in a comprehensive way.

The 9th Party Congress in 2001 stressed “All cultural activities aim at building Vietnamese people to develop comprehensively in terms of politics, ideology, intelligence, morality, physical health, creativity, sense of community,

compassion, tolerance, respect for sentiment, cultural lifestyle, harmonious relations in the family, community and society. Culture becomes motivation of people's personality, self-perfection, inheritance of national revolutionary tradition, and promoting patriotism, self-reliance to build and defend the Fatherland"⁽¹³⁾. "Caring for people, protecting people's legitimate rights and interests; respect and implement international treaties on human rights that Viet Nam joined or signed"⁽¹⁴⁾. The 9th Party Congress included the HDI index in the document when requiring measures to significantly improve the HDI index⁽¹⁵⁾.

People are the most valuable capital, human development is both the driving force and the goal of the revolution and the cause of national innovation; attaching the issue of human factors with the spirit of humanity creates conditions for people to develop comprehensively, to live in a fair and compassionate society, with healthy social relationships. People and their development are placed at the center of socio-economic strategies, this helps expand opportunities and improve conditions for human development. That is the viewpoint of the Party and State withdrawn from practical experience after 20 years of national innovation⁽¹⁶⁾.

The 10th Congress continued to develop the ideology of placing people at the center of the development process. It emphasized the building and perfecting of Vietnamese people personality values in the period of industrialization and modernization. It focused on three areas: Building a cultural environment; Building lifestyle and cultural life; Promoting people's voluntariness, self-management and mastery. At the Congress, factors affecting human development such as economic life, education, health care... were stated more specifically than before.

In the context of Vietnam's joining the WTO, with the rapid development of the scientific and technological revolution, the Party is aware of the intellectuals' role as an important resource that creates the strength of the country. In the Resolution of the 7th Congress of the Party Central Committee, tenure X (2008), it raised the focus issue on building a contingent of intellectuals in the period of promoting national industrialization and modernization.

Through summarizing 15 years of implementing the Resolution of the 5th Plenum of the Party Central Committee, tenure VIII (1988) and the Platform (Supplemented and developed in 2011), the Communist Party of Vietnam issued Resolution No. 33-NQ/TW of the Party Central Committee, tenure XI: "Building and developing culture and the Vietnamese people to meet the requirements of sustainable development of the country". The Party's

new theoretical awareness clearly expressed in this Resolution is to *closely attach cultural development to the task of comprehensive human development towards sustainable development of the country*. Culture, people and sustainable development must be closely bound in a dialectical relationship, influencing and supporting each other. The common goal is: “Building a comprehensively developed Vietnamese culture and people, towards truth - goodness - beauty, imbued with national, humane, democratic and scientific spirit. Culture truly becomes the solid spiritual foundation of society, an important internal strength to ensure sustainable development and firmly protect the Fatherland for the goal of wealthy people, powerful country, democracy, fair and civilized society”⁽¹⁷⁾.

The leading solution to realize the goal of cultural and human development set out by the Party is: *“Improving the cultural and human value standards of Vietnam, creating the environment and conditions for people to develop personality, morality, intelligence, creativity, physical, spiritual health, social responsibility, civic duty, sense of compliance with the law; promote the spirit of patriotism, national pride, conscience, and responsibility for oneself, the family, community, society and country”*⁽¹⁸⁾.

Building the comprehensive development of the Vietnamese people is identified as the top key task which clearly states: *“Caring for building the comprehensive development of the Vietnamese people, focus on fostering the spirit of patriotism, national pride, ethics, lifestyle and personality. Creating a strong change in awareness and respect for the law, all Vietnamese people have a deep understanding, pride, and honor of national history and culture”*⁽¹⁹⁾.

The fundamental contents to build and develop comprehensive people is mentioned fully, synchronously and comprehensively in terms of physical strength, intelligence, ethics, lifestyle and aesthetics to suit and adapt to the needs of society. requirements for developing a socialist-oriented market economy and international integration. At the same time, this Resolution also emphasizes “Fighting, criticizing, and repelling bad things, evil, vileness, backwardness, and opposing wrong, negative views and behaviors that negatively affect the culture building, corrupt people. Solutions are needed to overcome the limitations of Vietnamese people”⁽²⁰⁾.

The 12th Party Congress (2016) continued to supplement and develop the perspective of human construction and development. The Congress emphasized: “Building the comprehensive development of the Vietnamese people must become the goal of the development strategy”⁽²¹⁾. The Congress also emphasized: “Creating an environment and conditions to develop

personality, morality, intelligence and creative capacity, physical, spiritual, social responsibility, civic duty, and sense of law compliance”⁽²²⁾.

Conclusion No. 76 of the Politburo, tenure XII (2020) on continuing to implement the Resolution No.33-NQ/TW of the Party Central Committee, tenure XI on building and developing Vietnamese culture, people to meet the requirement of sustainable country’s development, highlighted the task of focusing on building fully-developed Vietnamese people. It called for urgent completion of building the cultural value standards and Vietnamese people standard in the period of industrialization, modernization and international integration. Cultural and educational activities should aim at the development of people.

The 13th Congress laid a milestone, a very important step, a premise for the next terms to implement the strategic goals of national development to 2030, with a vision to 2045. The issue of comprehensive human development is identified by the Party as a key task to: “Stir up the spirit and determination to develop a prosperous and happy country, a lasting powerful nation; promote cultural values and the strength of Vietnamese people in the cause of building and protecting the Fatherland”⁽²³⁾.

The 13th Congress emphasized the need to strongly stir up the spirit of patriotism, pride, self-reliance, compassion, solidarity, social consensus and aspirations for country development of the entire nation; emphasizing the building of mechanisms and policies to promote the *spirit of dedication to the country of all people*. The Communist Party of Vietnam affirms: “*Maximize the people’s factor; People are the center, the subject, and the main resource for the goal of development. Building the Vietnamese people for comprehensive development; traditional values and modern values are in close binding and harmony*”⁽²⁴⁾.

Regarding the national development orientation for the 2021 - 2030 period, the 13th Party Congress identified one of 12 orientations to be focused: “*Comprehensive human development and building an advanced Vietnamese culture richly imbued with national identity, so that the Vietnamese culture and people truly become an endogenous strength, a driving force for national development and national defense. To build, develop, create the most favorable environment and social conditions to arouse patriotism, national pride, confidence, and aspirations to develop a prosperous and happy country; the talent, intelligence, and qualities of Vietnamese people are the focus, goal, and driving force for the country’s development*”⁽²⁵⁾.

In conclusion, through the Congresses, the Party’s awareness of people and people’s development has profoundly changed. From merely focusing on

economic development but accidentally “*ignoring human factor*”, especially the individual; equating economic growth as the development; or see human only as tools of development, Vietnam has agreed and absorbed UNDP’s viewpoint “Human beings hold the central position of socio-economic development”; The true wealth of a country is its people”⁽²⁶⁾. This shows that Vietnam has kept pace with the most progressive concepts of the era regarding human issues, human resources and human factors. The rigid and childish ways of treating people are basically gone. The meaning of development is noticed and emphasized in the capacity to serve people, for human happiness. “The main goal and driving force of development is for the people, by the people”⁽²⁷⁾.

UNDP’s viewpoint on human development has been absorbed and the human development index (HDI) has also been included in the 8th Congress documents as a goal to be achieved. Considering the HDI as a measure of development achievements and one of the foundations for building strategies, plans and policies for socio-economic development is a progress step that has been recognized by domestic and foreign public opinion. Human development goes along with expanding democracy, improving people’s opportunities to choose and enjoy the benefits of development. “Live a long, healthy and creative life” is considered the goal of development. Economic growth, along with all other growth, shares the common goal of human development - expanding opportunities to choose, improving capacity to choose; enhancing people’s participation and empowerment; ensuring equality in access to opportunities and fairness in sharing development achievements within a generation and between generations, ensuring human security; “all socio-economic activities must be all for people, for happiness and the copious, free, and comprehensive development of people”.

The Party’s views on human and human development have been widely communicated and disseminated in society; has been concretized in socio-economic development strategies, plans, and policies, and widely implemented at all levels, sectors, and localities. The unique feature of Vietnam’s human development approach is its socialization policy, encouraging widespread participation of businesses and people, to ensure sustainability.

In short, after nearly 40 years of renovation - Doi Moi, the Communist Party of Vietnam has continuously summarized reality, developed theory, and raised awareness of culture, the role and position of culture and the human factor in society and in the process of building and developing the country. The role and position of culture and human factors are not only considered from a broad perspective, through the manifestations and direct

interactions between culture, people, society and living conditions, material and spiritual elements of current society, but also seen from the normative relationships with the nation, country, regime, and especially the normative issues of individual, of specific culture. The development of theoretical awareness of culture and people is the foundation for the Communist Party of Vietnam to affirm the great and important role and position of culture with its broad meanings, strengthening the mission of culture is to lead and orient development, as President Ho Chi Minh Thought on culture: “*Culture must light up the way for the nation.*” This is the basis for the Communist Party of Vietnam to propose, organize and implement a consistent socio-cultural policy system for people, with people as the center, bringing about fundamental, important and comprehensive improvements in the cultural life and people’s life, creating a sustainable and fully safe society for people. In turn, achievements in cultural and human development are the basis for great, historic achievements in innovation, construction and development of the country./.

(1) The Communist Party of Viet Nam (1993), *Resolution of the 4th Plenum of the 7th Party Central Committee on culture and arts*. http://dangcongsan.vn/cpv/Modules/News/NewsDetail.aspx?co_id=30656&cn_id=91227

(2) “For survival as well as for the purpose of life, humans create and invent language, writing, ethics, law, science, religion, literature, art, tools for daily activities including clothing, food, shelter and methods of use. All of these creations and inventions are culture. Culture is the synthesis of all modes of living along with their expressions that humans have produced to adapt to the needs of life and the requirements of survival”, Ho Chi Minh (2011), *Complete Works*, Vol.3, National Political Publishing House, Ha Noi, p. 458.

(3) Communist Party of Vietnam (1996), *Documents of the 8th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p.110.

(4) Communist Party of Vietnam (1998), *Resolution of the 5th Conference of the 8th Central Committee*, National Political Publishing House, p. 56.

(5) Communist Party of Vietnam (2011), *Documents of the 11th National Congress*, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 76.

(6) Communist Party of Vietnam (2016), *Documents of the 12th National Congress*, Party Central Office, Hanoi, p. 126.

(7), (23), (24), (25) Communist Party of Vietnam (2021), *Documents of the 13th National Congress*, Vol.1, National Truth Political Publishing House, Hanoi, pp. 47, 46 - 47, 49, 115 - 116.

(8) See: Nguyen Phu Trong, Speech at the National Cultural Conference held on November 24, 2021; Book: *Some theoretical and practical issues about socialism and the path to socialism in Vietnam*, National Publishing House of Truth, Hanoi, 2022, pp. 170 - 172.

(9) Nguyen Phu Trong (2022), *Some theoretical and practical issues about socialism and the path to socialism in Vietnam*, National Truth Political Publishing House, Hanoi, p. 27.

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(26) See: UNDP. Human Development Report 1990. p. 13.

(27) Communist Party of Vietnam (1991), *Strategy for socio-economic stability and development 1991-2000*, Truth Publishing House. p. 8.