

Original Paper

Human Qualities and Development Strategy in Ho Chi Minh's Thought

Tran Thi Ha¹ & Nguyen Tien Sy²

^{1,2} HUTECH University, Viet Nam

Abstract

The Vietnamese people embody the crystallization of national culture, preserving a unique identity that reflects both enduring strengths and historical limitations. This vitality has enabled the nation to maintain distinctiveness amid challenges and transformations. In the current context of comprehensive renewal, developing Vietnamese culture and people is not only a cultural task but also a strategic imperative, requiring balance between modernization and safeguarding tradition while actively engaging in global integration. Central to this process is the human being both the ultimate goal and the driving force of development. Nurturing individuals with intellectual, moral, cultural, and creative qualities is therefore essential for national prosperity and international cooperation. From this perspective, Ho Chi Minh's thought on human development offers enduring guidance. His vision of holistic cultivation emphasizing moral integrity, intellectual growth, independence with solidarity, and adaptability remains highly relevant, providing both theoretical orientation and practical solutions for Vietnam's sustainable development in the global era.

Keywords

Human development strategy, revolutionary ethics, Ho Chi Minh, values

1. Introduction

Within Ho Chi Minh's revolutionary theoretical framework, his reflections on humanity and the cultivation of a new human being occupy a particularly significant place. They not only embody his profound philosophical reasoning but also carry enduring scientific value. Throughout his life, Ho Chi Minh consistently underscored the central role of human beings, regarding them as the nation's most precious resource and the decisive factor determining the success of the revolution. Hence, when promoting the study and application of Ho Chi Minh's thought, ethics, and style, it becomes essential to undertake a systematic and comprehensive exploration of his ideas on human development. Ho Chi Minh's legacy contains a wealth of core values that remain profoundly relevant to the formation and growth of Vietnamese people today. In the midst of historical transformations and the demands of a new revolutionary stage, Vietnamese traditional values have undergone both preservation and change. While

certain long-standing values have been weakened or lost, new elements have emerged. Yet, spiritual values continue to be prioritized above material ones, with social spiritual values often emphasized over individual concerns. At the same time, challenges such as corruption, bureaucracy, abuse of power, bribery, violence, gambling, drug abuse, and prostitution persist, compounded by the subversive activities of hostile forces. Among these, corruption stands out as the most severe and corrosive threat.

Against this backdrop, the present article aims to provide an overview of Ho Chi Minh's thought on human development, highlighting the aspects most essential for inheritance and application in shaping the qualities and moral character of Vietnamese people in today's era.

2. Contents of Ho Chi Minh's Thoughts on Qualities and Strategies for Building People

2.1 The Human Qualities in Ho Chi Minh's Thought

In Ho Chi Minh's legacy, nearly 50 writings and works discuss the issue of ethics. From The Revolutionary Path (Đường Kách mệnh) to his sacred Testament, he consistently emphasized ethics and moral cultivation, considering morality the "root" of a revolutionary.

According to him, "A revolutionary must have revolutionary ethics as a foundation to accomplish glorious revolutionary tasks". He also stressed the need to "clearly distinguish right from wrong, firmly uphold one's stance, be loyal to the nation, and devoted to the people". He declared, "Absolute loyalty to the Party and the people is essential. Apart from the interests of the working class and the laboring people, our Party has no other interests" (Minh, 2011, Vol.11, p. 601).

The qualities of revolutionary ethics in Ho Chi Minh's thought are primarily reflected in the following key aspects:

Loyalty to the nation, devotion to the people. Loyalty and devotion are traditional Vietnamese moral values that President Ho Chi Minh inherited and further developed under new conditions. Loyalty to the nation and devotion to the people are the foremost qualities of revolutionary ethics.

Love for humanity, living with compassion and kindness. Ho Chi Minh regarded love for humanity as the highest ethical virtue. This love defines interpersonal relationships within society. Loving humanity means having faith in people. One must be strict and disciplined with oneself while being tolerant, generous, and supportive of others, even those who have gone astray or made mistakes. True love for humanity helps individuals continuously improve and become better.

Diligence, thrift, integrity, righteousness, and selflessness. These qualities form the foundation of a new way of life and are central to revolutionary ethics in Ho Chi Minh's moral philosophy. They reflect one's relationship with oneself. According to Ho Chi Minh, diligence, thrift, integrity, and righteousness are the four essential virtues of a person, just as nature has four seasons and the earth has four cardinal directions. Selflessness means placing the interests of the nation and the people above all else, even above one's own life. A revolutionary must be willing to sacrifice personal interests for the Party and always prioritize collective interests over individual gains. For Ho Chi Minh, selflessness is the highest moral principle.

A spirit of pure international solidarity. Ho Chi Minh's ethical perspective on international solidarity is reflected in the following principles: unity with the working people of all nations in the common struggle for human liberation from oppression and exploitation; solidarity among the global proletariat toward a shared goal. "Workers of the world, unite!"; unity with progressive humanity in the pursuit of peace, justice, and social progress. International solidarity is closely linked to patriotism. Genuine patriotism naturally leads to pure internationalism, opposing all forms of chauvinism, selfishness, narrow-mindedness, and ethnic discrimination.

2.2 The Human Development Strategy in Ho Chi Minh's Thought

Ho Chi Minh's ideology and perspectives on human development remained consistent throughout his revolutionary career, deeply humanistic, and of great value to the country's renewal and development in the present era. By studying his various writings and speeches, we can identify several key aspects of his human development strategy:

First, the Objective Necessity of the Human Development Strategy. Starting from the belief that human beings are the most valuable resource and the decisive factor in success or failure, as well as the goal and driving force of the revolution, Ho Chi Minh placed great emphasis on human development. Inheriting the theoretical achievements of Marxism-Leninism on humanity and human development, he affirmed: "To build socialism, we must first develop socialist individuals" (Minh, 2011, Vol. 13. p. 66). Viewing humans as both the goal and the driving force of the revolution and social development was a consistent thought throughout his revolutionary career.

Second, the Requirements and Goals of the Human Development Cause. Ho Chi Minh's view on human development was comprehensive and diverse, adapting to the needs of different revolutionary periods. His strategy balanced traditional and modern values in a dialectical manner. His fundamental goals for human development included: cultivating revolutionary ethics, fostering ambition and self-improvement, and encouraging creativity and determination.

Third, the Tasks of the Human Development Strategy. Implementing a human development strategy is an extremely important yet complex task. To ensure its success in serving the national revolutionary cause, Ho Chi Minh outlined several key tasks: Prioritizing education and training as the foundation of human development; Identifying, assembling, and utilizing talented individuals effectively; Cultivating individuals with revolutionary ethics, loyalty to the nation, and dedication to the people; Developing individuals with a spirit of inquiry, creativity, determination, and a passion for learning and progress; Emphasizing the necessity of nurturing future generations of revolutionaries.

Fourth, Solutions for Human Development. When analyzing solutions for human development in Ho Chi Minh's thought, several key principles emerge: Although multiple approaches exist, education and training remain the most crucial; Goals, methods, and orientations must be tailored to different target groups; A comprehensive approach is required, including daily self-discipline, lifelong learning, and a close connection to revolutionary practice; The cultivation of positive qualities must be accompanied by the courage to resist negative tendencies such as apathy, selfishness, irresponsibility, corruption,

extravagance, and wastefulness.

3. The Value of Ho Chi Minh's Ideology on Human Qualities and the Strategy for Human Development in Building the Vietnamese People today

A review of the 15-volume Ho Chi Minh Complete Works (National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, 2011) reveals that President Ho Chi Minh wrote and spoke extensively about the personality of the Vietnamese people. Specifically, he used the term “personality” 16 times, the phrase “diligence, thrift, integrity, and impartiality” 50 times, the word “ethics” 343 times, “health” 89 times, “patriotism” 830 times, “family” 698 times, “learning” 124 times, “living with purpose” 29 times, “respect for the law” twice, the phrase “serving the nation” 49 times, “self-respect” four times, “solidarity” 2,174 times, and “collective consciousness” twice. These figures illustrate Ho Chi Minh's profound concern for human development and character building.

To develop the Vietnamese people in the era of industrialization, modernization, and international integration, it is essential to inherit Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on human qualities while supplementing them with new values that address the country's current needs. These include aspects that did not exist during his time but are now crucial for Vietnam's advancement. Based on this, we propose several key values that should be upheld in building the Vietnamese people today:

First, Healthy Individuals. President Ho Chi Minh placed great importance on health, emphasizing that: “Safeguarding democracy, building the nation, and creating a new way of life all require good health to succeed”; “If each citizen is weak, the entire nation is weak; if each citizen is strong, the entire nation is strong”; “A strong people make a prosperous country”; “Exercising and maintaining good health is a duty of every patriotic citizen”. (Minh, 2011, Vol. 4, p. 241) Thus, physical well-being is the foremost value that Vietnamese individuals should strive for, a principle repeatedly affirmed by Ho Chi Minh.

Second, Patriotic Individuals. Patriotism is a recurring theme in Ho Chi Minh's speeches and writings. He affirmed: “Patriotism is a precious tradition of our people, a virtue that we must preserve and develop”. He urged all officials, soldiers, Party members, and citizens regardless of social status to embody patriotism. Ho Chi Minh stated: “Our people have a deep and passionate love for their country. This is our invaluable tradition”; “We have to bring this hidden treasure to the surface and ensure that everyone actively expresses their patriotism” (Minh, 2011, Vol. 7, p. 38). He further declared: “Nothing is more precious to humanity than the nation”. (Minh, 2011, Vol. 9, p. 487)

Third, Individuals with Exemplary Families. Ho Chi Minh emphasized the importance of family, stating that: “Many families together form a society. Good families make a good society, and a good society strengthens families”. He affirmed that the family is the nucleus of society and that a nation with strong, exemplary families will undoubtedly achieve freedom and independence (Minh, 2011, Vol. 9, p. 487). The value of family has always held a significant place in Vietnamese consciousness, both in the past and today. Recognizing the essential role of family in individual and societal development, Ho Chi Minh personally guided the drafting of the Constitution and later the Marriage and Family Law. His emphasis

on family underscores its fundamental importance in shaping the character of the Vietnamese people.

Fourth, Individuals with a Passion for Learning. President Ho Chi Minh affirmed that the Vietnamese people are a nation that values education. The spirit of lifelong learning and the pursuit of knowledge has been evident throughout Vietnam's history of nation-building and defense. In many of his speeches and writings on youth and children, he consistently emphasized the importance of a strong desire for learning: "Young people must have a passion for progress, a thirst for knowledge, and a commitment to lifelong learning. They must study culture, politics, and professional skills" (Minh, 2011, Vol. 5, p. 464); "They must deeply absorb revolutionary ethics, firmly oppose individualism, and continuously strive to improve their knowledge and skills". (Minh, 2011, Vol. 12, p. 678). Thus, the value of continuous learning plays a crucial role in Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on human development, the training of officials, and the education of youth the future revolutionary generations.

Fifth, Individuals with a Sense of Purpose in Life. A purposeful life is a central theme in Ho Chi Minh's philosophy of educating and fostering the younger generations. He frequently reminded people, especially the youth, of the importance of having clear goals and aspirations. For a person to truly fulfill their potential, they must have a sense of purpose, determination, and ideals. Ho Chi Minh repeatedly emphasized this point to young people, Party members, and the general public. He placed great importance on educating the youth about life's purpose and instilling revolutionary ideals: "We must never forget our noble ideal to dedicate our entire lives to ensuring the complete independence of our country and the ultimate victory of socialism in Vietnam". (Minh, 2011, Vol. 15, p. 467).

Sixth, Individuals Who Respect the Rule of Law. Ho Chi Minh's philosophy on the rule of law is based on absolute respect for legal principles and strict enforcement of laws. His commitment to the rule of law is reflected in two key aspects: first, his efforts to build a legal framework for the nation; and second, his adherence to legal principles in his actions and conduct. He believed that, ultimately, legal matters like all other social issues are about how one lives and conducts oneself as a person. Respecting the law was one of the fundamental expectations Ho Chi Minh had for every Vietnamese citizen.

Seventh, Individuals Who Uphold "Goodness". Ho Chi Minh once wrote: "On this earth, there are millions of people. However, they can be classified into two types: the *GOOD* and the *EVIL*. Similarly, within society, there are countless tasks, but they can be divided into two categories: *RIGHTEOUS* and *UNRIGHTEOUS*. Those who engage in *RIGHTEOUS* work are *GOOD* people. Those who engage in *UNRIGHTEOUS* work are *EVIL* people" (Minh, 2011, Vol. 6, p. 129).

Ho Chi Minh's perspective on classifying people based on morality was not meant for exclusion but rather to promote compassion, solidarity, and mutual support. He believed that those who are exploited and those who follow the path of righteousness, regardless of race or language, could consider each other as brothers and unite in solidarity. His vision was one of universal harmony, striving for a world of great unity.

Eighth, Individuals Who Combine Virtue and Talent, with Virtue as the Foundation. Ho Chi Minh believed that: "Ethics means sharing hardships, ensuring financial transparency, providing skillful

leadership, and enforcing strict discipline. Rewards and punishments must be fair” (Minh, 2011, Vol. 3, p. 565). A person with revolutionary ethics should: “Prioritize the organization when serving the nation. Within the organization, officials must be the backbone. And for an official, ethics must be the foundation. An official must avoid indulgence, greed, and fear of hardship or danger” (Minh, 2011, Vol. 5, p. 256). He emphasized that “ethics is the root of a revolutionary person”. In Ho Chi Minh’s view, talent refers to accumulated knowledge, professional expertise, and the ability to make meaningful contributions to society. However, he strongly believed that ethics must serve as the foundation: “A person with talent but without virtue is like a skilled financial expert who embezzles such a person not only fails to benefit society but harms it. Conversely, a virtuous person without talent is like a Buddha harmless, but also incapable of contributing to humanity” (Minh, 2011, Vol. 11, p. 399).

Thus, in Ho Chi Minh’s ideology, building a strong and virtuous society requires individuals who possess both ethics and talent, with virtue always serving as the guiding principle.

Ninth, Individuals Who Are Loyal to the Nation and Possess a Pure International Spirit. Loyalty and filial piety are traditional virtues of the Vietnamese people, which President Ho Chi Minh inherited and further developed under new conditions.

Being loyal to the nation and devoted to the people are the foremost qualities of revolutionary ethics. Ho Chi Minh’s thoughts on this subject reflect his views on the relationship and obligations of individuals toward their community and country.

His perspective on international solidarity is rooted in a pure and selfless moral foundation, emphasizing unity among the working class worldwide to achieve the common goal of liberating humanity from oppression and exploitation. This includes solidarity among the proletariat across all nations, workers of the world, unite!” as well as solidarity with progressive humanity in the pursuit of peace, justice, and social progress. In Ho Chi Minh’s ideology, international solidarity is inseparable from patriotism. True patriotism leads to a pure and selfless internationalism, opposing all forms of chauvinism, selfishness, narrow-mindedness, and racial discrimination.

Tenth, Individuals Who Love Their Fellow Human Beings and Live with Compassion. Ho Chi Minh’s ethical philosophy on love for humanity originates from the traditional values of benevolence and righteousness in Vietnamese culture, combined with humanism and communist humanitarianism. He regarded love for people as the highest virtue. This love is expressed in interpersonal relationships within society. To truly love people, one must have faith in them. One should be strict and disciplined with oneself but tolerant, generous, and uplifting toward others even those who have gone astray or made mistakes. Loving people means helping them improve and become better individuals.

Therefore, self-criticism and constructive criticism must be carried out sincerely, helping one another correct shortcomings and develop strengths to ensure continuous progress. True love for people requires the courage to take action and strive for their liberation.

Eleventh, Individuals Who Are Diligent, Thrifty, Honest, and Righteous, with a Selfless Spirit. According to Ho Chi Minh, diligence, thrift, honesty, and righteousness are the four essential virtues of an individual

just as the sky has four seasons and the earth has four cardinal directions. These qualities form the foundation of a new way of life and are central to revolutionary ethics. They also define an individual's relationship with themselves. In his view, selflessness is the highest form of morality. For military personnel, given the unique demands of their duties, Ho Chi Minh emphasized that, beyond the general revolutionary ethics expected of all Party members and officials, they must also cultivate five key qualities: "Wisdom, Faithfulness, Humanity, Bravery, and Integrity" (Minh, 2011, Vol. 5, p. 259).

Twelfth, Individuals with Self-Respect. President Ho Chi Minh placed great importance on self-respect, considering it an essential trait for every individual. He wrote: "Everyone has self-respect and self-confidence. A person without self-respect or self-confidence is useless"; "Leaders must respect the self-respect and self-confidence of their comrades" (Minh, 2011, Vol. 5, p. 322).

Self-respect is a source of strength and an extraordinary driving force, empowering the Vietnamese people to fight resolutely for independence and protect their cultural values.

Thirteenth, Individuals Who Emphasize Solidarity and Collective Consciousness. Ho Chi Minh stated, "Unity creates strength", and emphasized: "Unity, unity, great unity. Success, success, great success!" (Minh, 2011, Vol. 13, p. 455). His ideology on solidarity focuses on fostering national unity and building a strong and inclusive society. National unity is a fundamental goal and a top priority of the revolution. It must be reflected in all Party policies and state laws at every stage of revolutionary development. According to Ho Chi Minh, genuine unity must be sincere, deep-rooted, and supportive, enabling collective progress. It requires strong cooperation among political parties, social organizations, and intellectuals within the Vietnam Fatherland Front. Through long-term collaboration and mutual support, all groups can advance together.

4. Conclusion

Ho Chi Minh's ideology has illuminated the path for our people's struggle for victory and stands as a tremendous spiritual asset to our Party and nation. His humanistic philosophy serves as the most comprehensive methodological foundation for the study of humanity. His unwavering belief that humans are the decisive factor in revolutionary success permeates his entire career and legacy. However, the core values of the Vietnamese people are undergoing significant transformations in the context of a market economy and international integration, presenting new challenges for the development and cultivation of the modern Vietnamese individual. This necessitates an urgent effort to research and establish a contemporary Vietnamese value system.

Nevertheless, the process of developing and fostering the Vietnamese individual today faces numerous challenges. These include the degradation of ideology, ethics, and lifestyle among a considerable number of officials and Party members, including high-ranking leaders within the Party and State, as well as among youth and the working class. Corruption, nepotism, and power-seeking behaviors are becoming increasingly complex and sophisticated, seriously undermining the Party's credibility and the integrity of public institutions. Additionally, there is a growing disconnection between generational cultural values

and norms, along with the rise of many negative habits and behaviors. Therefore, the orientation for building and developing the Vietnamese individual must closely follow the Party's guidelines on cultural and human development to meet the demands of sustainable national growth. At the same time, it is essential to study and inherit Ho Chi Minh's ideological values on humanity. To effectively apply Ho Chi Minh's ideological legacy in shaping the Vietnamese individual today, we believe it is necessary to rigorously implement the Party's directives on human development in alignment with sustainable national progress. Additionally, there must be a profound understanding of Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on humanity and the cultivation of Vietnamese character.

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