

Ho Chi Minh's Philosophy on the Formation of the New Individual

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<p>Abstract: Ho Chi Minh's perspective on the cultivation of the "new man" constitutes a foundational pillar of his ideological framework, embodying a strategic, humanistic, and holistic vision. He regarded human beings as both the driving force and the ultimate objective of revolutionary progress, asserting that the development of a new, progressive individual was a vital precondition for the realization of socialism. Ho Chi Minh placed a strong emphasis on education and the comprehensive formation of moral character, intellect, physical well-being, and aesthetic sensibility. Simultaneously, he underscored the significance of exemplary leadership, self-discipline, and the mobilization of patriotic emulation movements. These philosophical tenets retain enduring relevance, offering valuable direction for human resource development in the context of contemporary integration and reform.</p>	<p>Review Paper</p> <p>*Corresponding Author: <i>Nguyễn Thị Ngọc</i> Vũ Thị Xuân Quyên - Hung Vuong University, Phu Tho Province</p> <p>How to cite this paper: Nguyễn Thị Ngọc (2025). Ho Chi Minh's Philosophy on the Formation of the New Individual. <i>Middle East Res J. Humanities Soc.</i> <i>Sci</i>, 5(4): 112-116.</p> <p>Article History: Submit: 18.06.2025 Accepted: 01.08.2025 Published: 04.08.2025 </p>
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I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the trajectory of Vietnam's revolutionary movement, Ho Chi Minh stood not only as an eminent revolutionary leader and visionary thinker but also as a towering cultural icon of global stature. Among the most distinctive and enduring aspects of his intellectual legacy is his profound, holistic, and humanistic perspective on the cultivation of the "new man." In the context of Vietnam's progressive transition toward socialism, the construction of this new type of human being is not merely an urgent imperative, but also a foundational objective in the broader endeavor of comprehensive national development. In Ho Chi Minh's view, the success of any revolutionary undertaking is fundamentally contingent upon the human factor — it necessitates the formation of individuals endowed with both moral excellence and the requisite intellectual and practical capacities to advance the revolutionary cause.

II. MAIN DISCUSSION

The conceptualization of the "new man," in its broadest interpretation, is deeply interwoven with the processes of economic advancement, social transformation, and the enrichment of cultural and spiritual life. In a narrower sense, however, the construction of this new human archetype is fundamentally anchored in education and training, as the core objective is the comprehensive formation of human personality. Personality, in this context, is understood as

the extent to which an individual's personal values and standards align with the overarching value systems of the family, community, social class, nation, and humanity as a whole.

At its core, the project of human development involves the cultivation of a value framework encompassing ethical integrity, intellectual acumen, physical vitality, technical competence, and emotional and aesthetic sensibility. The goal is to shape individuals endowed with new capacities and qualities, capable of actively contributing to — and thriving within — the dynamic demands of socio-economic modernization.

As one of the preeminent cultural figures of the twentieth century, Ho Chi Minh accorded particular importance to the formation of the new man as both a strategic imperative for the Vietnamese revolutionary cause and as a step toward realizing the ideal of holistic human development. In his ideological framework, education and training are conceived in their most expansive and transformative sense — as a lifelong, multidimensional process designed to cultivate individuals who embody both moral virtue ("red") and professional excellence ("expert").

1. Cultivating Physical Vitality and Public Health

Within Ho Chi Minh's vision of constructing a comprehensively developed "new man," the enhancement of physical vitality and public health

occupies a pivotal role. From the earliest stages of Vietnam's revolutionary process, he recognized health as a strategic foundation for national reconstruction and societal advancement. As he emphatically stated, *"To safeguard democracy, build the nation, and cultivate a new way of life—none of these can succeed without good health."*

Ho Chi Minh conceived of health not merely as the absence of illness but as a holistic equilibrium between physical well-being and mental vigor. In 1946, he articulated this understanding succinctly: *"When the blood circulates properly and the spirit is strong, that is health."* He also highlighted the intrinsic link between individual health and collective national strength. For him, enhancing each citizen's physical capacity was not only a personal responsibility but also a civic and patriotic act. He wrote: *"Every feeble citizen weakens the nation; every healthy citizen strengthens it. Therefore, physical exercise and the cultivation of health are duties incumbent upon every patriot."*

Ho Chi Minh identified two principal strategies for developing physical strength and improving public health:

Enhancing Material Well-Being as a Prerequisite for Physical Development

Ho Chi Minh emphasized that the improvement of material living standards was a decisive factor in promoting public health. Adequate nutrition, housing, and working conditions were, in his view, not only necessary for individual survival but also essential for the physical and moral development of society at large. Recognizing the material foundation of health, he paid close attention to people's dietary regimes and everyday living conditions. In his *Testament*, he advised: *"The Party must formulate sound strategies for developing the economy and culture so as to continuously improve the living conditions of the people."*

His concern went beyond theoretical assertions—it was evidenced by concrete, daily actions. During visits to farmers, workers, soldiers, and students, he routinely inspected meals and living arrangements to assess nutritional adequacy and social welfare, using these insights to inform policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the quality of life across all strata of society.

Promoting Preventive Healthcare, Medical Services, and Physical Training

Alongside material improvements, Ho Chi Minh placed great importance on disease prevention, access to healthcare, and the institutionalization of physical exercise and sport as mechanisms for strengthening national health. He maintained that two fundamental aspects must be addressed: public hygiene and effective, compassionate medical care.

Integral to his philosophy was the view that physical training was not a luxury but a necessity.

Exercise, in his conception, was a powerful and accessible tool for maintaining physical resilience, improving mental clarity, and fostering civic responsibility. Shortly after the country's liberation, he issued a nationwide appeal encouraging all citizens to engage in regular physical activity. He emphasized: *"To maintain health, one must exercise regularly,"* and *"Exercise is essential for preserving and enhancing one's physical condition."*

Advocating for a widespread fitness movement, he stated: *"We should promote a broad-based campaign for physical training throughout the nation,"* and asserted that *"engaging in physical exercise and building health is a patriotic duty."* Importantly, Ho Chi Minh himself served as a living exemplar of this philosophy, often noting: *"I exercise every day."*

2. Cultivating Intellectual Consciousness and the Pursuit of Cognitive Excellence

Intellect and the exercise of intellectual faculties are distinctive attributes inherent solely to humanity. They form the foundational substrate that orchestrates all human cognition, perception, and praxis. The development of human intellect is predominantly predicated upon the collective and individual endeavors to transmit, internalize, and innovate upon the accumulated corpus of theoretical frameworks, empirical knowledge, and experiential insights bequeathed by antecedent generations, coupled with systematic inquiry and synthesis derived from the ongoing dialectical transformation of nature and society. As societal complexity intensifies, the corpus of requisite knowledge expands exponentially; hence, to continuously assimilate, rejuvenate, and elevate one's grasp of the natural sciences, technological innovations, social sciences, and humanities, individuals must attain progressively higher echelons of cultural sophistication and cognitive acuity.

The endeavor to construct socialism and communism is contingent upon the capacity of its actors to judiciously appropriate and operationalize the intellectual capital of humankind. Beyond this, they must possess the creative agency to generate and advance novel knowledge paradigms that resolve emergent practical challenges intrinsic to the dynamic process of societal formation. The Vietnamese project of social reconstruction adheres to this universal principle. Accordingly, from the inception of socialist transformation in the North amidst wartime exigencies, Ho Chi Minh consistently promulgated strategic directives and pragmatic interventions to nurture the intellectual capacities of the nascent "new man." He underscored the imperative of equipping individuals with a robust foundation in the natural sciences, technological proficiency, social sciences, humanities, as well as specialized vocational competencies. This intellectual groundwork constitutes a vital prerequisite for

sustainable national development and the comprehensive cultivation of the new Vietnamese human ideal.

Central to this mission was Ho Chi Minh's unwavering emphasis on the primacy of revolutionary ideals in educational praxis.

In tandem with augmenting political consciousness and revolutionary zeal, he accorded paramount importance to the dissemination of cultural literacy, scientific and technical expertise, social scientific inquiry, humanistic understanding, and vocational skills, thereby fostering the holistic intellectual development of the new individual. He asserted: *"Upon a solid foundation of political education and ideological guidance, we must endeavor to elevate cultural and professional excellence, aspiring in the foreseeable future to attain the zenith of scientific and technological advancement."*

3. Enhancing Aesthetic Capacity and Education

To cultivate and elevate the aesthetic sensibility and capacity of the new human being, Ho Chi Minh emphasized the imperative of addressing several fundamental issues:

First, Establishing a Correct Aesthetic Orientation

Aesthetic orientation is inherently intertwined with the political and moral ideals of society. The political and ethical ideals of the Vietnamese people in the new era embody profound humanitarian values: *"to build a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic, and prosperous Vietnam; to contribute meaningfully to the global revolutionary cause."* These ideals encompass virtues such as *"thrift, integrity, righteousness, impartiality, and selflessness,"* and the unwavering commitment of *"wholehearted service to the people and the nation."* These guiding ideals shape the aesthetic perspective of the new human being and orient all cultural and artistic endeavors in Vietnam.

Ho Chi Minh consistently affirmed that the aesthetic orientation of the people and the revolutionary art must be *"national, scientific, and popular"*; that the content of socialism and the national character would *"increasingly flourish and strengthen"*; and that art must *"serve the nation and the people,"* deeply rooting itself in the life of the people while expressing their heroic and resolute spirit. Through such a correct aesthetic orientation, the concepts of beauty, goodness, truth, nobility, and heroism are elevated, thereby enhancing the aesthetic standards and creative capacity in forging new social relations imbued with humanitarian values and producing artistic works of profound value serving the masses.

Second, Fostering Aesthetic Knowledge and Raising Aesthetic Standards

Ho Chi Minh advocated for the cultivation and elevation of aesthetic appreciation not through abstract,

esoteric concepts or jargon-laden theoretical discourse, but through accessible, concrete analysis and critical appraisal. He emphasized helping people recognize the beauty and value in national cultural traditions and the finest achievements of global civilization. He wrote: *"Proverbs, verses, and folk songs are brilliant creations of the masses. These works are exquisite and succinct — they are precious gems."* He further remarked, *"Our Vietnamese language is very rich, and we must enrich it further,"* and stressed the importance of storytelling rooted in popular tradition, often complemented by clear and beautiful illustrations, to facilitate public understanding and appreciation.

Third, Encouraging and Enabling Individuals to Pursue the Good, the Beautiful, and the Noble, While Uncompromisingly Combating Ugliness, Backwardness, Reactionary, And Inhumane Tendencies

For Ho Chi Minh, the construction of a sound aesthetic orientation and the continual enhancement of aesthetic knowledge aimed to direct the consciousness and conduct of the new human toward what is virtuous, beautiful, and just. Simultaneously, it was necessary to resolutely oppose all forms of vice, decadence, superstition, base actions, and anti-cultural behaviors detrimental to the interests of the people. Through this ongoing struggle to uphold truth, goodness, and beauty against falsity, ugliness, and cultural degradation, new social relations—marked by high aesthetic and humanitarian value—could be established between individuals and between the individual and the community within the socialist society.

The development and refinement of the aesthetic capacity of the new human being was a matter of great concern to Ho Chi Minh. Through his sound principles, visionary orientations, and proactive measures, he made a monumental contribution to the construction of the new Vietnamese human. The correct and appropriate aesthetic orientations, together with rich knowledge of beauty, truth, virtue, and nobility, endowed the Vietnamese new man with a precise understanding of what is beautiful, right, wrong, noble, and base. From this foundation, they strove toward the highest values of truth, goodness, and beauty—contributing significantly to the perfection of personal character and positively impacting the new society.

4. Education and Cultivation of Revolutionary Morality

The cultivation and advancement of morality represent an indispensable and objective imperative intrinsic to every society. This domain holds profound significance not only within the social fabric but also within the moral constitution of each individual. Morality epitomizes the deepest embodiment of humanitarianism, humaneness, and human dignity inherent in every society and individual. Historical evidence incontrovertibly illustrates that when

individuals are illuminated by progressive moral ideals—when their comprehension of virtue and vice, conscience, honor, responsibility, and duty is elevated—their conduct increasingly aligns with advancing the collective welfare of the community, thereby serving as a catalyst for societal advancement. Hence, from antiquity to the present, social strata, nations, leaders, and revolutionaries across epochs have consistently prioritized moral education and ethical cultivation, steering members of society toward constructive and socially beneficial endeavors.

Inheriting Vietnam's venerable tradition of ethical reverence, assimilating the quintessence of global moral wisdom, and grounded in the concrete realities of the Vietnamese revolutionary struggle, Ho Chi Minh placed paramount importance on the nurturing and inculcation of a new moral paradigm—the revolutionary ethics—aimed at fostering the Vietnamese populace.

According to Ho Chi Minh, revolutionary morality embodies *“a novel and exalted ethical standard, transcending personal aggrandizement, dedicated instead to the paramount interests of the Party, the nation, and humanity as a whole.”* He emphatically maintained that: *“Regardless of one's role or occupation, ceaseless cultivation of revolutionary ethics is imperative”;* and *“There is no greater honor or fulfillment than to assiduously nurture revolutionary ethics in order to contribute meaningfully to the socialist revolution and the emancipation of humankind.”*

To elevate the nascent generation's grasp of revolutionary ethics, Ho Chi Minh underscored the necessity of a profound comprehension of the pivotal role morality occupies within the character and praxis of revolutionaries. Situated within Vietnam's specific historical and socio-political milieu, he persistently asserted that morality constitutes the *“fundamental root”* and *“bedrock”* of the revolutionary individual, predicated on the premise that:

“The revolutionary endeavor to dismantle the archaic social order and construct a new society is a majestic and honorable undertaking; yet, it entails formidable, protracted, and multifaceted struggles. Only those endowed with robust vigor can bear such burdens and endure the arduous journey; revolutionaries must therefore anchor themselves in revolutionary morality as their foundational cornerstone to realize this noble mission.”

“Just as rivers derive their vitality from their sources—without which they dry up—and trees rely on roots—without which they wither—so too must revolutionaries be grounded in morality. Absent this ethical foundation, regardless of one's talent, leadership of the people is unattainable. Since the liberation of

the nation and humanity constitutes a monumental undertaking, those devoid of morality and foundational principles, corrupted or degenerate, cannot accomplish such a formidable task.”

The moral virtues Ho Chi Minh advocated were nuanced according to the target constituency and strategically emphasized in accordance with the exigencies of each revolutionary phase. Ultimately, he distilled the quintessential ethical virtues for the modern Vietnamese person as unwavering patriotism, devotion to the populace, humanitarian compassion, frugality, integrity, justice, impartiality, selflessness, and an unblemished spirit of international solidarity.

Ho Chi Minh's conceptualization of building the “new human” forms a cornerstone of his ideological corpus, embodying a strategic, holistic, and profoundly humanitarian vision. Through a seamless synthesis of theory and praxis, tradition and modernity, he established a robust foundation for human development within the emerging socialist society. In the present era, the inheritance, enhancement, and innovative application of these doctrines remain pivotal for cultivating high-caliber human resources and propelling sustainable national development.

Within the contemporary context of accelerated renovation and global integration, Ho Chi Minh's insights on human development retain extraordinary relevance. The imperatives concerning morality, intellect, physical robustness, aesthetic sensibility, and actionable competence are more exigent than ever. Notably, the fostering of revolutionary ideals, enhancement of integrative capabilities, and preservation of national cultural identity must be foregrounded in the education and training of the younger generations.

III. CONCLUSION

Ho Chi Minh's perspective on building the new human being carries profound theoretical and practical significance. It serves as a guiding principle for the cause of education, training, and human development during the period of socialist revolution. According to him, the new human must not only possess knowledge but also uphold moral values, noble ideals, and a spirit of living for the community and the nation. Ho Chi Minh particularly emphasized the role of education, labor, and the cultivation of revolutionary ethics in shaping the character of the new human.

In the current context, applying his thought to the task of building and developing a high-quality workforce to meet the demands of integration and national development is an urgent mission. His ideology is not only a valuable legacy but also a driving force that encourages each individual to constantly improve themselves, thereby contributing to the construction of a progressive, civilized, and compassionate society.

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