

# THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF HO CHI MINH'S THOUGHT ON PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS

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## Abstract:

Ho Chi Minh's thought on physical education and sports is highly respected by the Party, State and people. The process of forming and developing Ho Chi Minh's thought on physical education and sports show his deep concern for the work of physical education and sports for the people and for the country. The revolutionary physical education and sports background was formed and is developing strongly, inevitably with the orientation of Ho Chi Minh's thought on physical education and sports.

**Keywords:** Ho Chi Minh's thought, Physical Education and Sports

Ho Chi Minh's thought was defined as a comprehensive and profound system of views on the basic issues of the Vietnamese revolution. In that comprehensive perspective system, there is a part of his viewpoint of physical education and sports. Part of this viewpoint is Ho Chi Minh's thought about physical education and sports.

The Communist Party of Vietnam affirms Ho Chi Minh's thought on Physical Education and Sports as a reality. Therefore, the Party's directives and resolutions on physical education and sports have thoroughly grasped and developed Ho Chi Minh's thought on physical education and sports to properly orient and guide the work of developing physical education and sports of the country.

Scientists in our country have also affirmed Ho Chi Minh's thought on physical education and sports. At the "*Ho Chi Minh's Thought Scientific Conference on Science and Education*" organized by the Executive Committee of the Party Committee of the Central Department of Science and Education agencies on the occasion of the 11th anniversary of the birth of the great Uncle Ho, all scientists attending the workshop was completely in agreement with the content of the topic "*Ho Chi Minh's Thought on Physical Education and Sports*" by a researcher who was promoted by the Party Executive Committee of the Central Committee of Physical Education and Sports.

The content of the topic "*Ho Chi Minh's Thought on Physical Education and Sports*" has been published into a book of publication and widely propagated among our officials and people, especially among officials, teachers and coaches, athletes, sports students.

## The process of forming Ho Chi Minh's Thought on physical education and sports

In the middle of September 1896, Nguyen Sinh Cung (Ho Chi Minh's name when he was a child) who was only 6 years old, went to Hue with his parents and older brother about 400 kilometers away, the whole family had to walk on bending, bumping paths, up and down steep mountains which was extremely hard and strenuous. Nguyen Sinh Cung was carried on the back by his father, but sometimes he got down to the road and run along. Sinh Cung read the poem he composed for his parents and brother: "*The mountain carries the path / My father carries me on his back / Father works harder than the mountain / His back bends as he walks / The path clings onto the mountain / I practice running along / The road is lazier than me*". It is true that Nguyen Sinh Cung has raised the awareness that people must work hard, walk and run. Sinh Cung understood the meaning of his grandmother when she wished his whole family on their way to Hue: "*Children, walk so that your feet becomes tough and the rocks become soft*".

At the age of 9 in the inner city of Hue, in a class taught by Mr. Nguyen Sinh Huy (Nguyen

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Sinh Cung's father), there were a few well-off girls and family members, taken daily by the servants to the classroom and taken home by carriage even though the road was not far and was convenient, in the middle of break time sit and nap on the table. Seeing that, Sinh Cung wanted to advise them not to go to school by horse carriages, to diligently walk to train the legs, to train the body and mind, to study better. That desire was read by him as follows: "*Fat belly and thin legs / You sleep anywhere you sit / Better walk on your feet / Your legs and muscles will be tough / Your mind and eyes will be clear / You will learn and memorize words better*". Nguyen Sinh Cung himself in the free time often invited friends to walk to suburb area of Hue to the Huong River and nearby places for visiting and sight-seeing. It is a form of feet training, body training of youth. In addition, Sinh Cung also practiced swimming on Huong River in hot summer afternoons. Thus, the awareness and action on health training of Nguyen Sinh Cung were affirmed.

From 1905, after Mr. Nguyen Sinh Huy passed the Junior Doctor examination, Nguyen Sinh Cung was named Nguyen Tat Thanh. At first Nguyen Tat Thanh attended a French - Vietnamese primary school in Vinh - Nghe An and then attended a Dong Ba French - Vietnamese school. After graduating, he passed the entrance exam and studied at Hue National School. Since then Tat Thanh had had a certain maturity step in awareness as well as the thought of approaching social life. Leaving Hue National School, Nguyen Tat Thanh went to Quy Nhon to attend a training course on pedagogy. After finishing, Tat Thanh went to Phan Thiet town, Binh Thuan province to apply for teaching at Duc Thanh Primary School. Nguyen Tat Thanh is assigned by the school's leaders to teach History, Vietnamese second-grade literature (equivalent to today's grade 4) and PE for the whole school. In the first time of teaching PE, teacher Nguyen Tat Thanh reminded students that: "*The greatest fund of mankind is health. Taking time to exercise is preserving the most valuable thing of mankind*". The teachings of teacher Nguyen Tat Thanh thus

were clearly a very correct view on the health values and effects of physical education and sports on human health.

While doing revolutionary activities in foreign countries, Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh), in addition to the profound awareness of politics, society and many other fields, he also absorbed and applied creatively precious values of sports. Expressing that is the content, the opinion in the article "About the story of Xiki" written by him in French, published in the newspaper Le Paria (The Pariah), issue 9 on December 11, 1922, in France. Nguyen Ai Quoc harshly criticized racism in general and in the field of sports in particular. At the same time, Nguyen Ai Quoc also criticized the violence in general, in sports in particular, "*who is against all violence*" even in the sports arena. With deep perspectives, Nguyen Ai Quoc condemned the behavior of racists, who trampled on justice, humiliated justice, and took away the national French boxing championship of Xiki, a black skin boxers. But due to the fierce fighting of the public in the right of France, the Organizing Committee, including racists, had to declare the return of the national French boxing championship to Xiki. Nguyen Ai Quoc highly appreciated Xiki's victory in sports arena and honored the athletic achievements of athletes in general and athletes of colored skin in particular. Afterwards, Nguyen Ai Quoc raised his views: excellent athletic performance in the international arena of athletes, whose value is "*bringing glory to the nation*" and "*encouraging physical fitness beauty for younger generation*" through active practice of physical education and sports.

After returning home to directly lead the Vietnamese Revolution, in May 1941, Nguyen Ai Quoc - Ho Chi Minh wrote the "*Viet Minh Program*", outlining the policies to carry out when independence was regained for the nation. In that program, he advocated: "*Encouraging and assisting the national physical education to make the nation stronger and stronger*" and "*Children are specially cared for by the Government in terms of physical fitness and intellectuality*". These guidelines expressed the



**View of Bac Ninh Sports University in the early days (photo by: upes1)**

views of him on physical education and sports for the people.

After the successful August Revolution in 1945, in the letter to students nationwide on the first day of the new regime's establishment, President Ho Chi Minh raised his view on a comprehensive education to train and develop the abilities that exist in the potential form of the younger generation, including the physical ability. For it to become a reality, the younger generation needs comprehensive education and training at school levels. That comprehensive education was concretized by President Ho Chi Minh in his letter to students in schools on October 24, 1955, including aspects of virtue, intellect, physical fitness and aesthetics. In the view of comprehensive education of young generations of students, President Ho Chi Minh attaches importance to all these aspects.

March 27, 1946 in the National Salvation newspaper published *"Health and Exercise"* by President Ho Chi Minh. In this article, President Ho Chi Minh mentioned many insightful views on human health and sports for the people. These are perspectives such as: *"Preserving democracy, building a country, creating new life, and everything that needs health to succeed"*, *"every weak person makes the whole*

*country weak, every healthy person make the whole country strong"*. *"Therefore exercising and fostering health is the duty of every patriot"*. These points of view converge on the thought of *"Strong people means prosperous nation"*.

Thus, from the youth's consciousness and viewpoints to the views in the article *"about the Xiki story"*, in the *"Viet Minh Program"*, especially in the article *"Health and Exercise"* is a collection of views on sports. That is the process of forming the Ho Chi Minh Thought on Physical Education and Sports.

#### **The process of developing Ho Chi Minh's thought on physical education and sports**

In the People's Newspaper Issue 603, on October 27, 1955, the article published by President Ho Chi Minh titled *"Sports and Physical Education"*, he appreciated the former Soviet Union's health training and sports movement. In this article, President Ho Chi Minh raised a number of points of view, including the most profound ones: *"Under democracy, Sports and Physical Education must become a common activity of the masses. If people have good health, all jobs will be done well"*. This view of President Ho Chi Minh is the development of the views in his article *"Health and physical education"*, that is, the

development of the Ho Chi Minh Thought on physical education and sports.

By the end of March 1960, President Ho Chi Minh wrote a letter to the Physical Education and Sports Staff Conference of the North. In the letter, he mentioned important points such as: *"If you want to produce well, work and study well, you need health. If you want to stay healthy, you should regularly exercise. So we should develop the movement of physical education and sports for everyone"*. This complex view continued to develop the Ho Chi Minh Thought on physical education and sports.

In a letter from President Ho Chi Minh congratulating the Physical Education and Sports Meeting of the emerging forces in Asia (Games 07 the new Emerging Forces, abbreviated as GANEFO), he stated his view: *"This is a great meeting for the emerging forces in Asia to make it visible to the whole world about their rich capabilities in the field of sports"*. This view of his motivated, encouraged the diversity and the development of high performance Sports of emerging countries in Asia, including Vietnam. The *"rich ability"* of high performance sports is the development of many types, many national and modern sports. He once said: What is good of the people, we have to inherit, what is good of the world, we need to absorb. The rich development of national sports and modern sports is a point of view that developed Ho Chi Minh Thought on physical education and sports with profound value in theory and practice.

After the closing of the GANEFO conference, the Vietnamese sports delegation returned home to the Presidential Palace in Hanoi to report to Uncle Ho and Prime Minister Pham Van Dong about the successful performance of Vietnamese athletes. President Ho Chi Minh, after praising the performance of all the athletes, taught that: *"Fighting the American invaders was so hard and difficult but our army and people with high determination still won. Be determined to achieve higher. In order to do so, we must unite, help each other to train, and try hard to deserve to be an athlete of the heroic nation of Vietnam"*. This complex

view continued to develop the Ho Chi Minh Thought on physical education and sports in general and high performance sports in particular. Especially, he said: *"One must spend a lot of effort to be an athlete of the heroic nation of Vietnam"*. It has deep meanings to the high performance sports of our country and for Vietnamese athletes.

Perspectives that has the value of developing Ho Chi Minh's thought on physical education and sports are not only expressed in articles and letters written about Uncle Ho's sports and physical exercises, but also expressed through visits and talks with officials, people in localities, visits and talks with officers and soldiers in armed forces units, visits and talks with officials, teachers, students, pupils in schools, mentionings of sports, and they are also presented in some of his articles about other fields related to sports. That is to say, there are many more views of President Ho Chi Minh that enrich his ideas about public sports, school sports, armed force sports and high performance sports.

The formation and development of Ho Chi Minh's thought on physical education and sports as mentioned above shows that the richness and profoundness of his system of viewpoints on physical education and sports. Ho Chi Minh's thought on physical education and sports is a valuable asset of the development of Vietnam's physical education and sports background for the people and for the country.

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