On the Value and Realization Path of Integrating the Great Founding Spirit of the Party into Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: Due to the profound connotation of the great founding spirit of the Communist Party of China, integrating such great spirit into the ideological and political education in colleges and universities meets the needs of colleges and universities to carry out the important mission of moral education, improve the ability to educate people and promote students’ comprehensive quality. Therefore, based on the understanding of the profound connotation of the great founding spirit of the Party, colleges and universities should adhere to the principles of applying theory into practice, combining online and offline channels, integrating time and space, and implementing classroom decoding approach — incorporating the great founding spirit of Party into the first classroom, cultural education — integrating the spirit of great Party building into campus culture, and practice — integrating the spirit into practice and teaching, online education — integrating the great founding spirit of the Party into the goal of “four in one” of online ideological and political education, to fulfill the important mission of educating people for the Party and the country.

1. The Connotation of the Great Founding Spirit of the Party

The great founding spirit of the Party, put forward by General Secretary Xi Jinping at the Congress celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China on July 1, 2021, means upholding truth and ideals, staying true to our Party’s original aspiration and founding mission, fighting bravely without fear of sacrifice, and remaining loyal to the Party and faithful to the people. At the same time, Xi Jinping also emphasized that “Chinese youth are the backbone of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation”. Therefore, how to well cultivate and educate college students is an important concern facing universities and all sectors of society.

General Secretary Xi Jinping has summed up the connotation of the great founding spirit of the Party in 32 words in his “July 1” speech, which contains four levels of content and has a distinct internal logic. The four levels are progressive and interlinked to fully demonstrate the breadth and depth of the connotation of the great founding spirit.

1.1 “Upholding truth and ideals” is the banner of the great founding spirit of the Party.

“Upholding truth and ideals” is the banner and guidance of the great founding spirit of the Party, which reveals the root of the belief pursuit and all work of the Communist Party of China. Since its founding, the Communist Party of China has firmly believed in the truth of Marxism and regarded the pursuit of the lofty ideal of communism as the goal of the Party and the country. “Adhering to the ideological line of proceeding from reality and seeking truth from facts” fully demonstrates the belief pursuit and strong ideological leadership of the Communist Party of China.” Upholding the truth” means adhering to the truth of Marxism. The fundamental reason why the Communist Party of China can lead the Chinese people to victory lies in adhering to Marxism as the guiding theory and adhering to dialectical materialism and historical materialism. “Upholding the ideals” means to regard the lofty ideal of communism as the goal of struggle, which is the banner for all Party members to strive for a hundred years, and also the guide to march into the next hundred years.

1.2 “Staying true to the Party’s original aspiration and founding mission” is the practical requirement of the great founding spirit of the Party.

“Staying true to the Party’s original aspiration and founding mission” points out the goal of the Communist Party of China, revealing the beneficiaries and directions of the struggle. Adhering to the leadership of the Communist Party of China and establishing the belief in communism is an important issue that has been proved by history and practice. As the Communist Party of China is a mission-oriented political party, “never forgetting the
original aspirations and remembering the mission” is the historical responsibility of the Communist Party of China, a political declaration and a declaration of the times. The original aspiration points out the direction of struggle for the Communist Party of China, which is the basic requirement of all practices. The Communist Party of China upholds the guiding ideology of Marxism on which all the Party members’ outlooks on the world, life, and values are based, and all the members take fighting for communism for life as their grand mission and important responsibility. Taking on the mission shows the historical initiative spirit of the Communist Party of China, which is the common value pursuit and goal of all Communists. “Staying true to our Party’s original aspiration and founding mission” is not only abstract guidance but also the common practical pursuit of all Communists.

1.3 “Fighting bravely without fear of sacrifice” is the distinctive character of the great founding spirit of the Party

“Fighting bravely without fear of sacrifice” is the will and quality engraved in the blood of all Party members and the distinct character of the Communist Party of China. The history of the Party in the past one hundred years is a proud history filled with struggles. In the oath of joining the Party, Party members have expressed the magnificent declaration of being “ready to sacrifice everything for the Party and the people at any time”. “Fighting bravely without fear of sacrifice” epitomizes the Communist Party’s great dedication to the safety of the people. Marx had a great belief in “working for all mankind” in middle school, which supported him to devote his life to the liberation of all mankind regardless of personal gains and losses. In the ideal of seeking happiness for the people and rejuvenation for the nation, the Communist Party of China has gone through hardships, explored truth, feared no sacrifice, bravely and resolutely, and has carved out a thorny road of struggle, leading the Chinese people to achieve the goal of standing up and becoming strong. Today, the spirit of the Chinese Communists who are not afraid of sacrifice is more manifested in their courage to move forward in the face of difficulties and sacrifice their interests for the interests of the country and the collective. Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic in 2020, Party members from everywhere have taken the initiative to stand up. On the front line of fighting the epidemic, Chinese Communists are fearless, protecting the people’s lives and ensuring their safety. “Brave struggle” embodies the strong will of the Chinese Communists, since the struggle is the key to remaining invincible in the history of the Party for a hundred years. Over the past hundred years, it is in the great struggle that the Communist Party of China has been constantly developing and has tempered its unswerving fighting spirit and courage to fight with the sword.

1.4 “Remaining loyal to the Party and faithful to the people” is the value orientation of the great founding spirit of the Party

“Remaining loyal to the Party and faithful to the people” shows the distinct principle of the Party and its position of striving all for the people. In order to carry forward the great founding spirit of the Party in the new era, Party members should first maintain a high degree of consistency with the Party Central Committee in political beliefs, positions, principles, and directions, and adhere to the common ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics. and the “two defining” (define Comrade Xi Jinping’s core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole and the guiding role of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.), uphold Comrade Xi Jinping’s core position on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole, uphold the Central Committee’s authority and its centralized, unified leadership, and strengthen the consciousness of the need to maintain political integrity, think in big-picture terms, follow the leadership core, and keep in alignment with the central Party leadership, and always maintain the leading role of Party organizations in politics, organization, and ideology. From the noble quality of not taking a needle or thread from the masses during the revolutionary period to the principle of “people first” in the fight against the epidemic, the Communist Party of China has been relieving the people’s worries for a hundred years, adhering to the people’s position, promoting the realization of efficiency and fairness, and all its work aims at seeking happiness for the people.

2. The basic logic and value of integrating the great founding spirit of the Party into the ideological and political education in colleges and universities

To integrate the great founding spirit of the Party into ideological and political education in colleges and universities, it is important to carry out all-round and top-level design to realize the whole process of educating people in time and the full coverage of educating people in space. “Such knowledge promotes students’ action and practice while practice enhances their understanding of knowledge to train them to become new youths of the times with patriotism, social responsibility, innovation, and practical ability.”[4]

2.1 The basic logic of integrating the great founding spirit of the party into ideological and political education in colleges and universities

From the perspective of connotation, to integrate the great founding spirit of the Party into ideological and political education in colleges and universities, it is important to solve the problems of what to integrate and how to integrate, that is, the reasonable connotation of the great
founding spirit of the Party corresponds to the theory and practice of ideological and political education in colleges and universities.

2.1.1 Unity of “upholding truth and Ideals” and “Ideal and Belief Education” for College Students

The essence of strengthening the “ideal and belief education” of college students is to educate them to “believe in Marxism and talk about Marxism”, which means to adhere to the belief of Marxism, to establish the lofty ideal of communism and the common ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics. To guide contemporary youths to actively participate in the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, and to be a new person of the times who is responsible for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, Xi Jinping pointed out: “Youth in the new era should uphold correct ideals and beliefs, not only to establish, but also to bear in their hearts, and strive for them all their lives.”[5] Therefore, “ideal and belief education” is consistent and unified with the connotation of “upholding truth and ideals” of the great founding spirit of the Party, and to educate college students to adhere to ideals and beliefs is to educate them to adhere to truth and ideals.

2.1.2 The unity of “staying true to the Party’s original aspiration and founding mission” and the education of college students’ outlook on life

The Communist Party of China is a mission-oriented political party. “Staying true to our Party’s original aspiration and founding mission” is the historical responsibility of the Communist Party of China, a political declaration and a declaration of the times. Staying true to the Party’s original aspiration and founding mission shows the historical initiative spirit of the Communist Party of China, and is the declaration of a common era, value pursuit, and struggle goal of all Communists. “College students should establish a noble outlook on life, being optimistic, brave, confident, and self-reliant, and always regard serving the people and contributing to society as their value goals.”[6] Therefore, college students should take dedication to society as their pursuit of life value, which coincides with the original aspiration of the Communist Party of China. Ideological and political education in colleges and universities should focus on cultivating the dedication of college students. When they contribute their labor and wisdom to the country, society, and others, and always serve the people wholeheartedly, they can fulfill their life values, have a correct outlook on life and values, and become qualified successors in the new era.

2.1.3 Unity of “fighting bravely without fear of sacrifice” and core values education of college students

College students should establish their political position, no matter what they do, they can always stand in the position of the people, struggling with the people, advancing with the motherland, overcoming difficulties, and marching forward bravely, which is consistent with the connotation of “fighting bravely without fear of sacrifice” of the great founding spirit of the Party, that is, to cultivate their spirit of struggle. “Fighting bravely without fear of sacrifice” is the will and quality engraved in the blood of all Party members and the distinct character of the people of the Communist Party of China. Ideological and political education should strengthen the core values education of college students, guide them to be diligent, moral, discerning, and honest, deeply understand the connotation of core values, and follow the socialist core values in every word and deed.

2.1.4 Unity of “remaining loyal to the Party and faithful to the people” and the Feelings of Nationalism Education

Higher vocational colleges, as an important base for cultivating craftsmen in China, adhere to the principle of moral education in the training objectives for college students and focus on cultivating students’ patriotism and craftsmanship based on imparting professional skills, to fulfill the fundamental task of educating people for the Party and the country. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the patriotism education of college students in higher vocational colleges, carry forward the spirit of China, and enable them to be the new force of reform and innovation in the new era. To strengthen patriotism education, the oath of “remaining loyal to the Party and never betraying the Party” can be a start, which fully elaborates the glorious achievements and sincere heart of the Communist Party of China, and can guide college students to cultivate patriotism in thought, practice, and action.

2.2 The value of integrating the great founding spirit of the Party into ideological and political education in colleges and universities

The integration of the great founding spirit of the Party into ideological and political education in colleges and universities is not only conducive to the implementation of the goal of moral education, but also to the improvement of teaching quality, the cultivation of college students’ feelings of home and country, and the all-round improvement of college students’ comprehensive quality.

2.2.1 Beneficial for colleges and universities to implement the goal of moral education.

To cultivate students’ feelings of home and country, guide them to strengthen their historical self-confidence, and educate them about the Party and the country, colleges, and universities can inherit the great founding spirit of the Party. This is conducive to the implementation of the fundamental task of moral education, strengthening the learning of the histories of the Party, New China, the reform and opening-up, and socialist development of higher vocational students, guiding them to consciously listen to the Party’s words and follow the Party, educating
them to firm their ideals and beliefs, cultivating their spirit of struggle and their feelings of home and country, and striving to become successors of the new era. During his visit to Renmin University on the eve of the May 4th Youth Day, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: “To carry out the task of cultivating people by virtue, colleges, and universities must answer the fundamental questions of for whom to train people, what people to train and how to train people.”[7] Therefore, integrating the great founding spirit of the Party into the ideological and political education in colleges and universities is not only the requirement of realizing the goal of educations but also the important mission and responsibility of the times for colleges and universities to strive to create the style of moral education.

2.2.2 Conducive to enriching the ideological and political teaching content and improving the effectiveness of education.

“Integrating the great founding spirit of the Party into ideological and political courses, daily moral education and practical courses improves the flexibility and effectiveness of ideological and political education for college students.”[8] Colleges and universities should combine the new situation, do a good job of top-level design, and formulate the overall plan of ideological and political work, which is the theoretical basis of such education in colleges and universities in the new era. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen the role in the cultural education of the great founding spirit of the Party in the process of student management, so as to enrich and personalize the content of ideological and political education. Through exploration and research, it is significant to integrate the great founding spirit of the Party into the ideological and political education in colleges and universities, which enriches teaching resources and strengthens the construction of all-round education ideological and political education in courses collaborative education mechanisms. During the period of school study, students not only pay attention to the study of professional knowledge and ability but also focus on moral education, which is conducive to a healthy body and mind and achieves the goal of educating people for the Party and the country.

2.2.3 Conducive to cultivating the craftsman spirit of students in higher vocational colleges and encouraging them to be the strugglers of the times.

Knowledge promotes action while practice enhances knowledge. It is important to train students to become new youth of the times with patriotism, social responsibility, innovative spirit, and practical ability. Higher vocational colleges encourage students to carry forward with the spirit through the education of the great founding spirit of the Party and realize the all-sided improvement of students’ knowledge, emotion, will, faith, and action. This strengthens the patriotic education of college students in higher vocational colleges, enabling them to carry forward the spirit of China and be the new force of reform and innovation in the new era. The oath of “remaining loyal to the Party and never betray the Party”, fully expounds the glorious achievements and sincere heart of the Chinese Communists, and educates college students to be loyal to the Communist Party, the motherland, and the people, and to be loyal patriots and devotees in the new era. Therefore, it is not only an inevitable requirement for colleges and universities to integrate the great founding spirit of the Party into ideological and political education but also a need for colleges and universities to guide the development of students.

3. Practical approach of integrating the great founding spirit of the Party into ideological and political education in colleges and universities

To achieve the goal of moral education is to implement ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges, which means adhering to the principles of the unity of theory and practice, the integration of online and offline channels, the integration of time and space, and the concept of all-round education, with the ultimate goal of educating people for the Party and the country.

3.1 Integrate the great founding spirit of the Party into the First Classroom through classrooms

3.1.1 Stress the content design of ideological and political courses and improve teaching methods

“In the ideological and political course, attention should be paid to the integrity and coordination of teaching design.” [9] Ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges include four courses, namely, introduction to Mao Zedong Thought and the theoretical system of Socialism with Chinese characteristics, Xi Jinping’s socialist ideology with Chinese characteristics in the new era, ideological morality and rule of law, and situation and policy. Schools should take the overall control, integrate the great founding spirit of the Party into all ideological and political courses, and stress the primary and the secondary contradictions in the courses. In ideological and political teaching, teaching methods must be reformed, which means making full use of new media, adopting situational teaching, interactive teaching, case teaching, and peer influence according to the course content, and integrating the great founding spirit of the Party into all ideological and political courses in colleges and universities.

3.1.2 Explore the ideological and political elements of professional courses and implement the educational objectives

Combined with the characteristics of various specialties in higher vocational colleges, they could dig deep into the great founding spirit of the Party in various professional courses, to improve the effectiveness of ideological and political courses, and implement the goal of educating
people. During college days, students can not only pay attention to the study of professional knowledge and ability but also focus on moral education, which is conducive to a healthy body and mind and helps to achieve the goal of educating people for the Party and the country. Therefore, professional teachers should deeply study and understand the meaning of the great founding spirit of the Party, and actively explore how to integrate the great spirit into the curriculum, so as to leverage the role of ideological and political courses and cultivate college students’ sense of struggle and craftsmanship.

3.2 Integrate the great founding spirit of the Party into campus culture through cultural education

3.2.1 Improve the timeliness of ideological and political education based on campus activities

To strengthen the timeliness of the integration of the great founding spirit of the Party into the ideological and political education of college students, colleges and universities should take campus activities as the basis, carry out knowledge contests of party history, red stage plays, and story contests of telling party history. In the preparation for the competition, college students could deeply learn the knowledge of Party history, deepen their understanding of the significance of Party history, and fully practice the great founding spirit of the Party in their life and work after the competition, thus guiding their practice with the knowledge of Party history and spiritual beliefs they have learned, fully carry forward the spirit of struggle, and strive for excellence in their study and life.

3.2.2 Rely on the campus environment to let the ideological and political education felt by the students

When building campus culture, colleges and universities can construct a red cultural wall to strengthen the education of Party history and school history. In 2022, Dalian Vocational and Technical College made every effort to build the History Museum of Dalian Vocational and Technical College”. Since the opening of the History Museum, not only teachers and students have been deeply influenced by the red culture, but also many foreign learning and research groups have been attracted. Through the construction of the campus culture wall, the ideological and political education of college students is not only conducted in the classroom but also is extended to all aspects of students’ life. To build the campus culture, propaganda boards for the study of Party history can be established, so that they could exert a subtle influence on students to enable them to deeply understand the great achievements of the Communist Party of China in theory and practice, and consciously listen to and follow the Party.

3.2.3 Take the campus culture as the foundation and integrate the great founding spirit of the Party into the construction of class atmosphere and style of study

It is important to strengthen the construction of class atmosphere and style of study and promote education in all respects. Higher vocational colleges pay attention to cultivating students’ craftsman spirit and enabling them to seek excellence, pursue innovation, and strive for the new era. It is important to cultivate a rigorous style of study, which stresses hard-working and willingness to contribute. When the class atmosphere is built, patriotic education can be strengthened to prompt action with knowledge and practice with knowledge. By doing this, students can be trained to become new youth with patriotism, responsibility, dedication, and practical ability in the new era. Higher vocational colleges encourage students to carry forward the great spirit through the education of the great founding spirit of the Party to realize the full-scale improvement of students’ knowledge, emotion, will, faith, and action.

3.3 Integrate the great founding spirit of the Party into practice teaching through practice education

3.3.1 Leverage the educational advantages of red cultural resources in the ideological and political courses

In the ideological and political courses, it is necessary to leverage the red culture resources, which could guide students to learn historical stories and enhance their confidence in history. “Regional red culture resources are important to practice bases for ideological and political education of college students” [10], so these resources can be fully used to play the role of education by organizing students to visit and study. In practice, college students realize the greatness of historical figures and deeply grasp the connotation of the great founding spirit of the Party of “not fearing sacrifice”, which could promote action with knowledge, cultivate their sense of responsibility and dedication, and constantly improve their ability to practice. In doing so, the ideological and political education theory stay alive in students’ heart and become popular among them.

3.3.2 Lead college students to the grass-roots level through social practice

On the one hand, higher vocational colleges should highlight the educational role of practical teaching in “integrating industry and education”, make full use of the advantages of integration of industry and education, and integrate the great founding spirit of the Party building into practical teaching. This requires schools to give full play to their own advantages, organize students to practice in enterprises regularly during their stay in school, allow students to feel the culture of enterprises, and combine theoretical learning in the classroom with practice in enterprises, thus deepening the understanding of the
theoretical study. On the other hand, students could be encouraged to participate in summer social practice, and go to the grass-roots level, experiencing warmth and greatness, thus cultivating their sense of responsibility.

3.4 Integrate the great founding spirit of the Party into the ideological and political network through online education

3.4.1 Improve the we-media platforms to enhance the ability of online education

It is necessary to improve the we-media platforms through the construction of public WeChat accounts, Weibo (a Chinese Twitter-like online networking tool), Bilibili (a popular video streaming platform), Tiktok, Kuaishou (China’s first short video platform) and other platforms, where columns can be added to promote the great founding spirit of the Party building and explain the connotation of the great spirit to college students in the forms of both pictures and texts. With the help of the construction of we-media platforms, it is possible to achieve all-round and whole-process education, so colleges and universities should make full use of these platforms adored by college students to educate them. The construction of the educational system of “big ideological and political courses” can improve the flexibility and effectiveness of the ideological and political course, strengthen the educational role of professional courses and the focus on practical teaching, and promote the healthy growth of students across the board.

3.4.2 Innovate the way to carry out the online red topics to make the great founding spirit of the Party imprint in the college student’s heart

It is necessary to innovate the way of developing the online red classroom, with new methods, contents, and forms to allow the great founding spirit of the Party to imprint in the college students’ hearts. When the great founding spirit of the Party is integrated into online ideological and political education, equal attention should be paid to improving the coverage of online ideological and political education on various platforms, innovative forms, and methods of presenting educational content. When the great founding spirit of the Party is spread, more short videos and fewer words could be used to carry out education in a way that college students like, so as to enhance the educational ability of online ideological and political education and improve the quality of college students in an all-round way.

The classroom teaching, campus culture, social practice, online ideological and political education, and other aspects could integrate the great founding spirit into the ideological and political education in colleges and universities. This can achieve the goal of moral education, improve the flexibility and effectiveness of the ideological and political course, strengthen the educational role of professional teaching and the focus of practical teaching, and promote the healthy growth of students in an all-round way. The integration of the great founding spirit of the Party into ideological and political education in colleges and universities is conducive to implementing the fundamental task of moral education, improving the quality and level of education in colleges and universities, and cultivating new youth and qualified socialist successors with all-round development of morality, intelligence, physical fitness, beauty, and labor, so as to make ideological and political work closer to students, life and reality, and ultimately provide new ideas for the development of ideological and political education in colleges and universities. To provide theoretical and practical guidance for follow-up research and practice, new methods will be found based on this study and in future practice, so it is possible to reach timely and temporary conclusions, obtain feedback, share experience, and prompt implementation.

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