

"Cultivate Virtue and Nurture People": Rethinking the Integration of Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Ideological and Political Courses in Universities

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Abstract

The resolution of the 6th plenary session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China pointed out the need to cultivate people with socialist core values, and the inherent implication of this statement is that fulfilling the fundamental task of education to cultivate virtue and foster people cannot be separated from excellent traditional Chinese culture, which is the spiritual foundation of education rooted in the land of China and the cultural matrix of 'Cultivate Virtue and Nurture People; Ideological and political theory courses are the key courses to fulfill the fundamental task of education to cultivate virtue and foster people, and the realistic carrier of implementing excellent traditional Chinese culture to fulfill the fundamental task of education to cultivate virtue and foster people. This article analyzes the practical, value, and logical aspects of the integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture and ideological and political courses in universities. Combining with the practical problems of integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political courses, it further points out why and how the innovative integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture and ideological and political courses in universities is necessary, possible, and feasible under the new conditions of the era.

Keywords

Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture; Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Universities; Cultivate Virtue and Nurture People.

1. Introduction

At a symposium on ideological and political theory courses in schools, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized that these courses are the key to implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue and promoting excellence in education. Meanwhile, Chinese excellent traditional culture is the spiritual treasure of the Chinese nation and a practical link to implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue and promoting excellence in education. This reality fundamentally requires that the integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture and the ideological and political theory courses (hereinafter referred to as "thought and politics courses") in universities cannot be separated. The resolution of the 6th Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee on the major achievements and historical experience of the Party's century-long struggle further clarified the target principles and path strategies of education work in the future. It emphasizes the need to adhere to educating people with Xi Jinping's new era of socialist ideology with Chinese characteristics, consolidate people's ideals and beliefs with the Party's ideals, values and beliefs, cultivate people with socialist core values, inspire people with the historical mission of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and cultivate and train a large number of successors who can shoulder the responsibilities of the times. The resolution proposes new topics for promoting the integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture into thought and politics courses in universities under new historical conditions. In

order to achieve innovative integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture and thought and politics courses in universities under new historical conditions, it is necessary to answer three questions: why is it necessary to integrate Chinese excellent traditional culture into thought and politics courses from the perspective of the logical reality, why is it possible to integrate Chinese excellent traditional culture into thought and politics courses from the perspective of the value logic, and why is it feasible to integrate Chinese excellent traditional culture into thought and politics courses from the perspective of the practical logic.

2. Literature review

The first question to be answered in integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political courses in universities is the meaning and value of the integration, that is, why the integration is necessary. Relevant research often takes this as the starting point of its logic. On the one hand, some scholars emphasize the significance of the integration in the new era by starting from the importance of both excellent traditional Chinese culture and Chinese higher education to the cause of the Party and the state. On the other hand, starting from the practical value of the integration, it is pointed out that integrating Chinese traditional virtues into ideological and political courses in universities is a need to implement the fundamental task of cultivating people with moral integrity and to foster socialist core values; integrating Chinese humanistic spirit into ideological and political courses in universities is a need to cultivate comprehensive and talented individuals as cultural people; integrating the core ideas of Chinese culture into ideological and political courses in universities is a need to cultivate new generations who are willing to take on the great task of national rejuvenation. The second question to be answered is the theoretical logic of integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political theory courses in universities, that is, how it is possible. On the one hand, ideological and political theory courses in universities have the important mission of inheriting and promoting excellent traditional Chinese culture. Some scholars have pointed out that these courses not only fulfill the important responsibility of providing Marxist theoretical education to college students, but also undertake the important mission of strengthening education in socialist core values. They emphasize that by creating a good environment for practicing socialist core values, strengthening the leading role of teacher education, and innovating the teaching mode of ideological and political courses, socialist core values can be effectively integrated into ideological and political theory courses in universities, and students can be encouraged to internalize and externalize socialist core values. On the other hand, research has focused on the role and mechanisms of cultivating individuals through incorporating excellent traditional Chinese culture into university ideological and political theory courses. Emphasis is placed on exploring the important educational resources within Chinese traditional culture to serve the educational function of university ideological and political theory courses. Scholars have stressed the need to excavate the value of incorporating Chinese traditional culture into university students' ideological and political education, while analyzing the relationship between Chinese traditional culture and socialist core values. It is pointed out that Chinese traditional culture provides a source of thought for "prosperity, democracy, civilization, and harmony", provides value support for "freedom, equality, justice, and the rule of law", and provides nourishment for "patriotism, dedication, integrity, and kindness". Finally, there is the question of how to integrate excellent traditional Chinese culture with the theoretical courses on ideological and political education in universities, that is, the practical path of integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into the ideological and political education of college students, which has been the focus of academic research in recent years. Such research usually focuses on the practical problems that arise when excellent traditional Chinese culture is integrated into ideological and political education in universities. For example, some scholars have pointed out that there is a lack of content and depth in

excellent traditional Chinese culture and that classroom teaching methods have become rigid during the process of integrating it with ideological and political education in universities. They emphasize that it is necessary to strengthen ideological construction, enrich teaching methods, improve the quality of education, improve the educational environment and infrastructure, and establish a sound guarantee system to promote the better integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political education in universities. Some scholars also emphasize that the integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture into the ideological and political education of college students mainly faces the dilemma of inadequate connection, insufficient effort, unstable online platforms, and poor effectiveness. They point out that innovation in promoting the reform and innovation of ideological and political education curriculum, building a new model of educating students with excellent traditional Chinese culture, implementing the project of inheriting and developing excellent traditional Chinese culture, and creating a new system of "Internet + ideological and political education" should be the path to innovatively integrate excellent traditional Chinese culture into the ideological and political education of college students. Overall, the trend shows that excellent traditional Chinese culture has gradually shifted from being a knowledge content of ideological and political courses in universities to becoming an internal driving force for educating students in ideological and political courses. The former focuses more on inheriting and promoting excellent traditional Chinese culture, while the latter goes further on the basis of promoting excellent traditional Chinese culture to explore the rich educational elements contained in it. However, it cannot be denied that the integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture into ideological and political courses in universities cannot meet the practical conditions of integration simply because of its practical needs. Two completely different and different things cannot achieve truly effective integration. The premise of integration is that the subject of the integration has non-exclusivity and contains common elements at the essential level. Therefore, in this process, it is necessary to answer the common internal value logic of excellent traditional Chinese culture and ideological and political courses in universities, that is, to indicate the possibility of the premise of their integration. This is often ignored or subjectively assumed in current research, and it is also the main question that this article tries to answer.

3. Necessity: The Realistic Logic of Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Ideological and Political Courses in Universities.

Chinese excellent traditional culture is the spiritual lifeline of the Chinese nation and the source of its strong spiritual power. Since its establishment, the Communist Party of China has taken the initiative to shoulder the important mission of achieving national independence and prosperity. As the ruling party, it must also inevitably undertake the historical responsibility of inheriting and promoting the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core has attached great importance to the inheritance and development of Chinese excellent traditional culture. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out in his report to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China that we should promote the creative transformation and innovative development of Chinese excellent traditional culture. In his speech at the ceremony celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping put forward an important statement emphasizing the importance of integrating the basic principles of Marxism with China's specific realities and combining them with Chinese excellent traditional culture. On the other hand, General Secretary Xi Jinping has always attached great importance to talent development and consistently prioritized education in the strategic position of socialist modernization construction. He emphasized the need to cultivate a new generation of people who can shoulder

great responsibilities in the era. In the Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Major Achievements and Historical Experience of the Party's Hundred Years of Struggle passed at the Sixth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee, it was emphasized that the development of the Party and the people's cause requires generations of Chinese Communists to continue to strive, and it is necessary to ensure a succession of capable people and place talent development on a new strategic level. The university ideological and political course is not only the main battleground for Marxist theoretical education of college students in the new era but also an important platform for inheriting and carrying forward the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation. The integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture and the university ideological and political course is a necessary requirement of reality.

Building cultural confidence and nurturing national spirit. Excellent traditional Chinese culture is the foundation of Chinese cultural confidence and the cradle of national spirit. The innovative integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture and ideological and political education in universities is a necessary requirement for building cultural confidence and inheriting and nurturing national spirit. General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized at the symposium on philosophy and social sciences work: "To be firm in our confidence in the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, in our theoretical confidence and in our system confidence ultimately requires us to be firm in our cultural confidence. Cultural confidence is a more fundamental, deeper and more lasting force." This not only reflects the prominent position and foundational role of cultural confidence in the "Four Confidences", but also highlights the importance of inheriting and promoting Chinese excellent traditional culture and strengthening education on it. National spirit is the spiritual force that binds together all ethnic groups in our country. In the thousands of years of vicissitudes, the Chinese nation has created a brilliant Chinese excellent traditional culture, from which has nurtured a great national spirit. Chinese excellent traditional culture is an important source of the national spirit nurtured by the Chinese nation. Establishing cultural confidence and cultivating national spirit cannot be separated from Chinese excellent traditional culture. The ideological and political theory course is a key course for implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, and it is a carrier of the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education in practice. We should inherit and promote Chinese excellent traditional culture in the integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture and the ideological and political theory course in colleges and universities, firmly establish cultural confidence, and cultivate a new era of national spirit.

Consolidate national cultural security and resist erroneous ideological trends. On July 1, 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping signed Presidential Decree No. 29 and promulgated the "National Security Law of the People's Republic of China," which stipulates in Chapter 2, Article 23 that the state adheres to the direction of socialist advanced culture, inherits and carries forward the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation, fosters and practices the core socialist values, prevents and resists the influence of bad culture, masters the dominant position in the ideological field, and enhances the overall cultural strength and competitiveness. This raises national cultural security to a new height and highlights the important role of cultural security in ideological security. At present, China is facing unprecedented changes in the world and the overall strategy of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Opportunities and challenges coexist, and the international community is becoming increasingly complex and changeable. The globalization of information promotes cultural exchanges and mutual learning among countries, while at the same time causing various erroneous ideological trends to spread. Universities are an important battlefield for national cultural security and ideological security. Universities should take the initiative to play the role of a barrier of Chinese excellent traditional culture, resist various erroneous ideological trends, and use the "fire eyes" of the university's ideological and political course to identify and reveal the nature and harm of

various erroneous ideological trends, firmly consolidate national cultural security and safeguard ideological security.

4. Possibility: The Value Logic of Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into College Ideological and Political Education

The integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture into ideological and political courses in universities is not only a practical necessity, but also a shared value pursuit of Chinese excellent traditional culture and university ideological and political education at their essence. The two are dialectically united as a whole and achieve their own development towards a higher level through the process of mutual integration and innovation.

4.1. Inheriting and promoting the excellent traditional Chinese culture through university ideological and political courses.

Excellent traditional Chinese culture has the need to achieve its own inheritance and development, requiring it to combine China's specific realities and new era features while achieving intergenerational transmission. It actively integrates new elements to achieve its own creative transformation, and this process must be accomplished through certain subjects, approaches, and real carriers. Excellent traditional Chinese culture was formed and nurtured by the Chinese nation over more than 5000 years of history, with the creators being outstanding Chinese figures throughout history, and the inheritors and developers being outstanding Chinese figures in contemporary life. General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized at the National Education Conference that "teachers are the engineers of the human soul, the inheritors of human civilization, carrying the important responsibility of spreading knowledge, spreading ideas, and spreading truth, shaping souls, shaping lives, and shaping new people." . This statement embodies the important role of teachers as the main subject in inheriting and promoting excellent traditional Chinese culture, while young college students, as the targets of dissemination and shaping, and the future successors of the Party and the state, are also important subjects in inheriting and developing excellent traditional Chinese culture. Education is an important way to inherit and develop excellent traditional Chinese culture, and in the historical process of inheriting excellent traditional Chinese culture, education has played an important role. The famous thinker and educator of the Northern Song Dynasty, Zhang Zai's "Recorded Conversations at Hengqu" widely spread the four sentences of Hengqu, "Establish a heart for heaven and earth, establish a destiny for the people, carry on the unbroken teachings of the sages of the past, and bring peace to all future generations", expressing not only personal lofty aspirations, but also the important significance of education in "carrying on the unbroken teachings of the sages of the past". In the new era, the significance and role of education are more prominent. Its fundamental task is to cultivate virtue and nurture people, but it is also an important way to inherit and promote excellent traditional Chinese culture. University ideological and political courses are an important carrier for inheriting and promoting excellent traditional Chinese culture, and it is a practical platform that combines the main subjects of inheritance and the means of realization. Excellent traditional Chinese culture is taught in university ideological and political theory courses, reflecting the initial integration of excellent traditional Chinese culture and university ideological and political courses.

4.2. Cultivating virtuous individuals under the driving force of Chinese traditional culture.

As a key course for implementing the goal of moral education, the university ideological and political education course must consider how to effectively carry out the goal of moral education at different stages. On the one hand, universities should focus on innovative teaching methods and practices, while on the other hand, they should also strive to explore and develop

the content of the course. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that "Chinese traditional culture is extensive and profound. Learning and mastering its various philosophical essences is beneficial for establishing a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values." During the 13th collective study of the 18th Central Political Bureau, General Secretary Xi Jinping further proposed the values of Chinese excellent traditional culture in the current era, including benevolence, emphasizing the people, upholding integrity, valuing justice, promoting harmony, and pursuing the great unity. Benevolence is the core strength of Chinese excellent traditional culture, which is embodied in the Confucian concept of benevolence, as well as the moral cultivation of ren, yi, li, zhi, and xin, and the life realm of "self-cultivation, family harmony, state governance, and world peace." People-oriented is the value pursuit of Chinese culture, such as the earliest thought of "water can carry a boat and overturn it" in Xunzi's "Wang Zhi", and Mencius's view that "the people are the most important, followed by the society, and the king is the light." Integrity is the code of conduct in Chinese culture, and is the basic moral ethics that young university students should possess in the new era. Justice is the ethical principle of Chinese culture and the value pursuit of young university students in the new era. Harmony is the unique quality of Chinese culture, and the great unity is the social ideal of Chinese culture. Moreover, Chinese excellent traditional culture has rich ideological connotations, and its essence is reflected in the philosophy of "unity of man and nature," the spirit of perseverance and self-improvement, the harmonious thought of "unity in diversity," the people-oriented thinking of "putting the people first," and the noble pursuit of "striving for the best." Chinese excellent traditional culture covers all aspects from individual to society, from humanity to nature. University ideological and political education should fully explore the elements in Chinese culture that promote the growth and development of young college students, in order to better serve the goal of cultivating moral and talented individuals. Chinese excellent traditional culture transforms from the content of knowledge transmission to the internal driving force of character education, achieving the deep integration of both in the process.

5. Feasibility - The Practical Logic of Integrating Chinese Excellent Traditional Culture into College Ideological and Political Education

The innovative integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture into college ideological and political education, and the actual effect of cultivating virtue and educating people ultimately need to be implemented through specific practical methods, which is a process from theory to practice. It is necessary to establish a sound curriculum development system for college ideological and political education, enrich and improve the teaching materials, and strengthen the construction of the faculty team, in order to help Chinese excellent traditional culture enter the classroom, enter the textbooks, enter the minds of students, and ultimately transform into conscious actions of the educated in daily life, achieving the transformation from mechanical combination to organic integration of the two.

5.1. Excellent traditional Chinese culture should be integrated into the ideological and political education curriculum system of universities.

Universities should establish a sound curriculum system for ideological and political education, especially by integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into the curriculum development plan for ideological and political education. In the process of integration, the scientific, systematic, and comprehensive nature of the curriculum should be emphasized. Scientificity refers to the need for the curriculum design of ideological and political education in universities to reflect the underlying logic between excellent traditional Chinese culture and the curriculum development goals. This can be achieved by conducting extensive research and organizing collective curriculum preparation meetings among teachers and students in universities to clarify what to teach, who to teach, and how to teach.

Systematicity means that the curriculum system for ideological and political education in universities should be a complete and logically structured system. It should not only focus on the early stages of course instruction but also optimize the assessment system in the later stages in a reasonable manner. Theoretical assessment should be equally important as practical assessment, and the assessment approach should not be simply a one-time event or based solely on written papers. In addition, when integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into the curriculum of ideological and political education in universities, comprehensiveness should be emphasized. It is important to grasp the core and essence of traditional Chinese culture while considering the overall system, and to combine key points and comprehensive analysis in the methodological approach, rather than neglecting one aspect while focusing on the other.

The content of excellent traditional Chinese culture is rich and complete in itself, and there are often intricate connections between different ideas and concepts. Therefore, to truly comprehend the essence of traditional Chinese culture, a comprehensive understanding is required, taking into account the differences as well as the connections. When inheriting and promoting traditional Chinese culture, a comprehensive approach should be emphasized, and the key points should be grasped in the process of using traditional Chinese culture to educate students. In addition, scholars have suggested that universities should construct a comprehensive, diverse, hierarchical, and mutually supportive curriculum system for ideological and political education, in which the study of excellent traditional Chinese culture is integrated and aligned with the ideological and political education of college students.

5.2. Excellent traditional Chinese culture should be integrated into the teaching materials of ideological and political courses in universities.

Integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into the teaching materials of ideological and political courses in universities provides a basic guideline for what should be taught in these courses. It serves as a medium for combining traditional Chinese culture with ideological and political courses in universities. A good textbook can guide students to learn automatically like a good teacher. General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized at the opening ceremonies of the 11th National Congress of the Chinese Literary Federation and the 10th National Congress of the Chinese Writers Association that we should establish a grand view of history and the era, grasp the historical process and the trend of the times, and reflect the thousand-year changes of the Chinese nation... General Secretary Xi Jinping's speech also provides new guidelines for the compilation of teaching materials for ideological and political theory courses in universities. On the one hand, the teaching materials should objectively reflect the historical context of excellent traditional Chinese culture with a grand view of history, thus helping young students to enhance their understanding of their country's history and strengthen their identification and confidence in excellent traditional Chinese culture. On the other hand, the teaching materials should accurately grasp the era characteristics of both domestic and international contexts with a grand view of the era. Excellent traditional Chinese culture is not only a rich cultural treasure formed in history but also provides spiritual guidance for us to stand firm in today's world and move forward. Therefore, excellent traditional Chinese culture requires keeping pace with the times and continuously incorporating new elements to achieve development through inheritance. Finally, the content, language style, and discourse system of the teaching materials should fully consider the actual situations of teachers and young students while ensuring quality. It is particularly important to cater to students' reading interests and comprehension abilities. Excellent traditional Chinese culture is not just a set of lifeless beliefs and dogmas, nor is history just a simple accumulation of historical figures and events. Vivid and exciting historical stories should be used to reflect the essence and core of excellent traditional Chinese culture, thus stimulating students' interest in independent learning and inspiring them to comprehend the true meaning of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

5.3. Building a high-quality team of ideological and political course teachers in universities.

The purpose and fundamental task of integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into the ideological and political courses of universities is to cultivate moral integrity and train talent. Ultimately, it depends on people to achieve this task. Therefore, it is necessary to build a high-quality team of ideological and political course teachers to integrate excellent traditional Chinese culture into the classroom. Teachers have always borne a sacred mission as engineers of the human soul and inheritors of human civilization. Ideological and political theory courses are critical courses for cultivating moral integrity and training talent, and the role of ideological and political course teachers is particularly prominent. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, General Secretary Xi Jinping has attached great importance to the construction of a team of teaching personnel. In 2014, he proposed four criteria for a good teacher during a discussion with representatives of teachers and students from Beijing Normal University. They are: having ideals and beliefs, having moral integrity, having solid knowledge, and having a compassionate heart. At the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Universities in 2016, General Secretary Xi Jinping further pointed out that "we must strengthen the construction of teachers' ethics and style, adhere to the unity of teaching and educating people, adhere to the unity of words and deeds, adhere to the unity of inquiring and caring about society, and adhere to the unity of academic freedom and academic norms, guiding teachers to cultivate themselves with virtue, cultivate students with virtue, and teach with virtue". General Secretary Xi Jinping's series of important speeches have provided fundamental guidance for the construction of the new era's teacher talent team. The core of how to build a high-quality talent team of university ideological and political instructors lies in establishing a sound system for cultivating teachers. First of all, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of teachers' professional ethics and teaching style. General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized that those who pass on knowledge must first be knowledgeable and trustworthy. Teachers must uphold good moral integrity, steadfast ideals and beliefs, and love the great motherland in order to play a leading role as examples. Universities must strengthen training on Chinese excellent traditional culture for ideological and political instructors, guide them to establish correct views on the Party's history, the grand history, nationalities, the state, and culture, and enhance their confidence and awareness. Secondly, it is important to attach importance to improving the professional theoretical knowledge level of ideological and political instructors, as Marx pointed out, "The environment is changed by people, and educators themselves must also be educated." University ideological and political education teachers must first adhere to the principle that educators must first be educated, constantly solidify their own professional theoretical knowledge, particularly in terms of the theoretical foundation of Chinese history and culture, Chinese excellent traditional culture, and the basic principles of Marxism. At the same time, attention should be paid to improving the teaching skills of teachers. It is not only important for teachers to understand themselves, but it is also crucial that students can understand what is being taught. A teacher is someone who imparts knowledge and clears doubts, and solid knowledge is the foundation for imparting knowledge and clearing doubts, while good professional teaching skills are the guarantee for imparting knowledge and clearing doubts. Teachers should strive to improve their own teaching skills and make their classrooms lively, so that they can truly become excellent "soul engineers" and qualified "civilization inheritors".

6. Summary

In short, the continued innovative integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture and ideological and political theory courses in colleges and universities is an inevitable requirement

of the times. It has significant implications for inheriting and promoting Chinese excellent traditional culture, consolidating national cultural security, safeguarding ideological security, strengthening cultural confidence, implementing the strategy of building an educationally strong and talent-strong country, and ensuring the successors of the party and state. To promote the innovative integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture and ideological and political theory courses, it is necessary to accurately grasp the common intrinsic value needs of both sides, and use this as a point of integration to achieve their respective development in the process of innovative integration. We should focus on the fundamental task of educating and cultivating people in education and realize the multi-dimensional and multi-level integration of Chinese excellent traditional culture into ideological and political theory courses in colleges and universities. By exploring the educational power of Chinese excellent traditional culture and the role of ideological and political theory courses in colleges and universities, we can enhance the educators' ability and create a realistic carrier for ideological and political theory courses in colleges and universities that have both theoretical depth and ideological thickness and emotional warmth.

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