

# The epochal significance, content selection, and practical pathways of integrating red stories from the Yan'an period into the daily ideological education of college students

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**Abstract:** As key figures in the daily ideological and political education of college students, counselors should deepen their study of the Party's history, especially the 13 years of the Party's history in Yan'an, under the guidance of the "Big Ideological and Political Course" framework. While enhancing their personal qualities and abilities, counselors should also help students establish the "Four Correct Understandings", effectively telling red stories from the Yan'an period, including revolutionary history, revolutionary heroes, revolutionary spirit, and science, education, and culture. By collaborating with the main channels of ideological and political education, counselors can enhance students' initiative and foster their subjectivity. Through various forms of daily ideological and political education, counselors guide students to consciously inherit and promote the Yan'an Spirit.

**Key words:** Yan'an period; red stories; youth students; ideological management

## 1 The value and significance of college counselors telling the red stories of Yan'an

### 1.1 Helping counselors improve their own qualities and abilities

The promotion of the "Big Ideological and Political Course" in the new era requires the integration of ideological and political education in higher education into the broader historical context, cultivating counselors who are politically strong, deeply compassionate, innovative in thinking, and broad in vision. The *Regulations on the Construction of Counselors Team in General Colleges and Universities* clearly state that the counselors' responsibilities include "ideological and theoretical education and value guidance", and emphasize the need for counselors to have "a broad knowledge base in related disciplines of ideological and political education" and the "ability to conduct ideological and theoretical education" [1]. Counselors need to break through professional barriers, enhance their own political qualities, and improve their own ability to educate in ideological and theoretical matters. The history and the spirit of the Yan'an period are rich with the era-specific implications of Marxism with Chinese characteristics and by telling the stories of Yan'an, counselors can improve their own political literacy and expression skills, which plays a greater role in ideological and political education [2].

### 1.2 Helping college students strengthen correct understanding

Guiding students to "correctly understand the trends of the world and China's development, correctly recognize Chinese characteristics and international comparisons, correctly understand their responsibilities in the current era and

historical missions, and correctly grasp ambitious goals while keeping their feet on the ground", is a key responsibility of college counselors, and it aligns with the "Four Correct Understandings" proposed by General Secretary Xi Jinping at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities [3]. After the victory of the Central Red Army's Long March in 1935, the Party experienced 13 years of hard struggle in Yan'an. When Chairman Mao met with American journalists in Yangjialing, he stated, "All reactionaries are paper tigers", revealing the historical inevitability of the ultimate victory of the Communist Party of China and its people's army [4]. During the Yan'an period, the Party was closely connected with the people, enduring difficult times. Stories such as Mao Zedong sending his son to "Labor University", Zhu De's multiple visits to Nanniwan, and Hao Shucai, who "scared the ox to death", demonstrate the deep bond between the Communist Party of China and the people. By telling these stories, counselors help students understand the historical inevitability of the Communist Party of China leading the revolution and construction, and appreciate the revolutionary spirit of Marxism combined with China's realities.

### 1.3 Helping college students inherit the Yan'an spirit

In the new era, Chinese youth are full of confidence. "Unwaveringly following the Party is the invaluable experience of Chinese youth's century-long struggle, and the red gene is their treasure" [5]. The red stories from the Party's period in Yan'an serve as a concrete representation of the Yan'an Spirit. Examples include the Anti-Japanese Military and Political University youth who "struggled to build schools and dug cave dwellings by themselves", the soldiers and civilians of Nanniwan who "worked with their own hands to ensure ample food and clothing", Zhang Side who believed "serving the people is more important than Mount Tai", Dr. Norman Bethune who embodied "a noble soul", Chairman Mao's story of "the Foolish Old Man, who removed the mountains" that moved the hearts of all Chinese people, and the Yan'an Rectification Movement where "the Yan'an style defeated the Xi'an style", among others. By telling these historical stories, counselors guide students to understand the core elements of the Yan'an Spirit, helping them internalize it as part of their red gene and become inheritors and promoters of the Yan'an Spirit.

## **2 Content selection for college counselors to tell the red stories of Yan'an**

### 2.1 Telling the revolutionary history stories of the Yan'an period

Counselors should recount the significant historical events of the Communist Party of China during its thirteen years in Yan'an, such as the victory of the Red Army's Long March and its arrival in northern Shaanxi, the Wayaobao Conference, the peaceful resolution of the Xi'an Incident, the formation of the Anti-Japanese National United Front, the Great Production Movement, the Rectification Campaign, and more, showcasing the glorious journey of the Communist Party of China leading the Chinese revolution to victory in a harsh and challenging environment. They should also introduce Defense of Yan'an, Battle of Chinghwabian, Battle of Yangmashan, Battle of Panlong, allowing students to understand the courage, determination, and self-sacrifice demonstrated by the people's army led by the Communist Party of China in defending Yan'an and fighting the enemy.

### 2.2 Telling the stories of revolutionary heroes from the Yan'an period

Telling the stories of Mao Zedong's theoretical innovations and practical activities during the Yan'an period, such as the creation of On Practice and On Contradiction, leading the Rectification Movement, and commanding the Anti-Japanese War, showcases Mao Zedong's great thought and outstanding leadership abilities. Introducing the contributions of the leaders such as Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Liu Shaoqi, and Ren Bishi during the Yan'an period helps students appreciate their noble qualities and great demeanor. For example, telling the story of Zhang Side's sacrifice for the people allows students to understand how the young communist fighter overcame numerous difficulties during the Long March, maintained his faith, and ultimately sacrificed his life to save others. This story helps students grasp the historical connection between the

Long March Spirit and the Yan'an spirit.

### 2.3 Telling the stories of revolutionary spirit from the Yan'an period

The red stories from the Yan'an period demonstrate the revolutionary ideals and value pursuits of the communists, embodying the revolutionary spirit of the Communist Party of China. The Yan'an Spirit includes a firm political direction, the route of emancipating the mind, the goal of wholeheartedly serving the people, and the entrepreneurial spirit of self-reliance. By telling stories such as the large-scale production movement in Nanniwan and Zhang Side's dedication to serving the people, counselors help students understand the historical value and practical significance of the Yan'an Spirit. Counselors explore the intrinsic connection between the Yan'an Spirit and the Socialist Core Values, guiding students to incorporate these principles into their daily practice of fostering patriotism, professionalism, and integrity.

### 2.4 Telling the stories of science, education, and culture from the Yan'an period

University students should understand the development trajectory of the Party's cultural and educational undertakings. By telling stories of the lives and studies of young students in Yan'an and the Party's policies on art and culture, counselors help students gain insight into the development of the arts. Analyzing classic works such as *The White-Haired Girl* and *Yellow River Cantata* helps cultivate students' aesthetic tastes. Discussing the contributions of institutions like the Anti-Japanese Military and Political University and the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts enhances students' understanding of education. Through multiple perspectives on red stories, counselors help students establish firm ideals and beliefs.

## **3 Practical pathways for college counselors to tell the red stories of Yan'an**

### 3.1 Collaborative efforts in educating and enhancing the effectiveness of education through mainstream channels

College counselors play a key role in passing on the red stories of Yan'an. These red stories carry rich revolutionary history and are an important resource for ideological and political education. Counselors should cooperate with subject teachers, parents, and social organizations to promote the spread of red culture and foster students' all-round development. For example, counselors can collaborate with history teachers to offer lectures on Yan'an culture or work with art teachers to create red-themed works. By collaborating with parents, counselors can build an educational mechanism to strengthen ideological and political education. Moreover, working with social forces can expand the pathways for spreading red stories, deepen the cultural education impact, and create more practical opportunities.

### 3.2 Educating through action: deep integration with the practical work of counselors

Counselors should deeply integrate the red stories of Yan'an into their daily work. Through a multidimensional approach, counselors can incorporate red culture into education, social practice, and classroom teaching to ensure the effectiveness of ideological and political education. Counselors can use class meetings, thematic education, and one-on-one talks to design special topics on Yan'an red stories based on students' characteristics, explaining the historical and spiritual significance of the revolution, such as visiting revolutionary sites in Yan'an, can inspire students' inner motivation. In classroom teaching, counselors should use Yan'an red stories as an essential educational resource to help students understand the practical significance of revolutionary spirit.

### 3.3 Enhancing the abilities: achieving the unity of leadership and initiative

To effectively tell the red stories of Yan'an, counselors must enhance their own abilities and achieve a balance between guidance and student agency. First, counselors need to strengthen their ideological and political theory skills, ensuring a solid theoretical foundation. They should deeply understand Marxist theory, the history of Yan'an, and the Yan'an Spirit to support their teaching. Second, counselors should improve their innovative teaching abilities by shifting their teaching concepts, emphasizing diversity and interactivity. By using multimedia technologies such as PPTs, short videos, and animations, counselors can vividly present the red stories of Yan'an, enhancing students' emotional resonance

and sense of identification with the content.

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### **Conflicts of interest**

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