

# *University Moral Education Guided by Deng Xiaoping's Theory of Education*

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**Abstract**—Deng Xiaoping's theory of education, part of Deng Xiaoping Theory, is also the important guiding ideology of the current educational reform and development in China. This paper is intended to explore the significance of its guiding the current university moral education from the perspective of educational goal, educational core, and means of education and construction of teaching staff.

**Keywords**—Deng Xiaoping's theory of education; universities; moral education

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the growing trend of globalization and the development of Internet, the university students are subject to the influences of factors in various fields, for example, politics, economy, culture, social trend of thought, etc. The more notable is the fact that some Western countries permeate their mind in terms of ideology and culture, which leads to collisions between various ideologies, giving rise to some disturbing negative phenomena. The moral education in universities is faced with severe challenges. Therefore, it's imperative to conduct moral education throughout classroom education by improving the pertinence and effectiveness of university moral education. On one hand, Deng Xiaoping's theory of education, a scientific system, contains abundant thought of moral education, offering us powerful foundation in theory and enlightenments in practice. Moreover, Deng Xiaoping's theory of education, part of the socialist theory with Chinese characteristics, shows a historical insight into the school education in the market economy. It's of great significance of strategic guidance for the cultivation of more qualified talents devoted to the construction of modernization. Only when we grasp the profound connotations of Deng Xiaoping's thought of moral education and apply it to the practice of university moral education can university moral education achieve breakthrough and innovations.

## II. CONNOTATIONS OF DENG XIAOPING'S THEORY OF EDUCATION

Deng Xiaoping's theory of education, part of Deng Xiaoping Theory, is broad and profound with rich connotations, guiding the current educational reform and development in China. This paper mainly explores the moral education so as to contributing to the effectiveness of university moral education.

### A. Goal of moral education

Deng Xiaoping clearly points out that the all-round development of morality, intelligence and physique should serve as the standard of talent cultivation. In 1980 he made it more clear by pointing out that great efforts should be made to encourage our youth to become man of ideals, morality, knowledge and strength. [1](P369) In 1985 he stressed further the goal of education, that is, "to educate all Chinese people to have revolutionary ideals, sound morals, good education and a strong sense of discipline" [2](P110). The "Four Haves", viewed as the basic quality a new socialist citizen should have, includes both the ideological and ethical standards and the cultural and scientific qualities, which form a unified whole. Deng Xiaoping pointed out many times that in the "Four Haves" "what is stressed is to have ideals", "the particularly important is to have ideals and a strong sense of discipline, so we should constantly educate our Chinese people, especially the youth, to have ideals", "in China, such a big country, what can we resort to get united and organized? Nothing else but ideal and discipline. We'll become powerful when organized. Without ideal and discipline would we fall into the state of disunity like in old China. How can we make our revolution a success? How can we make our socialist construction a success?" [2](P153) It's required that ideal education, part of moral education, should be enhanced. Ideal is our spiritual pillar. To have all Chinese people have ideals can ensure ideologically the success of building socialism with Chinese characteristics.

### B. Core of moral education

With the growing trend of globalization and the deepening of reform and opening-up, the young students are subject to various and complicated social ideologies and cultural diversifications. Some Western countries are stepping up efforts to permeate our young people, especially the young students, culturally and ideologically, which gives rise to collisions of various ideologies in their mind, posing great challenges to the university moral education. The all-round development of morality, intelligence and physique with moral education at top is the concentrated expression of Deng Xiaoping's thought on moral education. The key to "moral education at top" is to put the correct direction of politics first, just as Deng Xiaoping said, "There is no doubt that the school should always put the correct direction of politics first."

[2](P157) In the education of ideology and politics it's essential to arm the students with the basic concepts of Marxism, raising their level of thoughts and theories. Faced with complicated social phenomena and thoughts, the students should be led to be good at thinking, improve their ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood and gradually from correct beliefs and morals. Moreover, Deng Xiaoping attaches great importance to the combination of the education of ideology and politics and that of science and culture, just as he said, "This doesn't mean that many class hours are spent in the education of ideology and politics. Students' putting firm and correct direction of politics first does not reject their learning science and culture. On the contrary, the students of higher political awareness would learn science and culture for our revolution more consciously and diligently." [2](P158)

### *C. Construction of teaching staff*

Deng Xiaoping places the teacher in the key position, arguing that the prosperity of education, which determines the prosperity of a nation, counts on the teachers, just as he said, "we should promote the teachers' political and social status. Not only should the students respect the teachers, but also the whole society should respect the teachers. We advocate that the students respect the teachers, and that the teachers should cherish the students. This is a revolutionary comrade-like relationship, featuring the mutual influence on and mutual promotion of each other, between the teachers who cherish the students, and students who respect the teachers." [2](P160) As to the problems in the development of education in our country, Deng Xiaoping pointed out that the educational expenditure should be greatly increased so as to develop the education.

### *D. Methods and means of education*

Deng Xiaoping stressed, "The rapid development of modern economy and technique requires that the quality and benefits of education should be greatly increased, and that innovations should be made in the content and methods of the combination between education and productive labor." [2](P161) Marx held that the combination between education and production "is not only a method to promote the social production, but also the only method to cultivate all-round man" [2](P161). We should correct the past education of infusing theory and enhance the moral practice, stressing the combination between theory and practice. Deng Xiaoping stressed consistently the importance of political stability and unity to China's reform and opening-up and the construction of "Four modernizations". Deng Xiaoping stressed the students should be educated the importance of stability and unity, which is and will be of great importance now and for a very long time. He said, "China should not be in a hubbub. Only under the circumstances of stability and unity can we find a way out in our construction. All that opposes and hinders us from taking the socialist road should be excluded. All the factors that lead to China's chaos or turbulence should be eliminated. This lesson should be made to be known to our people, especially the young students." [2](P162) we should pay much attention to the political stability and unity, which will be of crucial importance to our double one-hundred-year goals.

## III. UNIVERSITY MORAL EDUCATION GUIDED BY DENG XIAOPING'S THEORY OF EDUCATION

Deng Xiaoping's thought of moral education, based on the views of comprehensive social education and moral education, explores moral education systematically in terms of status, objectives, content, methods, management, evaluation, etc., the new development of the systemized Marxist theory of moral education, providing theoretically the scientific guidelines for constructing the theoretical system of moral education and strengthening the effectiveness of moral education in the new period. Starting from the goal of constructing the socialist with Chinese characteristics, Deng Xiaoping breaks the fixed thinking pattern developing the opening thought of moral education, which means, on one hand, moral education is not confined to school education but is broadened with the involvement of all social forces and, on the other hand, moral education is carried out abroad cultivating trans-century talents to serve for socialist modernizations. Deng Xiaoping's thought of moral education is no longer confined to school education but features the close connection with social education, that is, socialized school moral education. The opening moral education proposed by Deng Xiaoping stresses that moral education should be conducted not only in society but also abroad. He points out that in the process of talent cultivation we should, in favor of the growth of talents, learn from all the excellent cultural achievements, of course including those concerning values, ideology and the like, which requires that our moral education should move abroad in connection with the world. Therefore, in the university moral education we should learn and use critically the advanced ideas and methods of other Western countries for reference with critical analysis and identification guided by Marxism.

Deng Xiaoping thought of moral education stresses in particular the importance of the cultivation of ideals and beliefs. History shows that ideals and beliefs are essential in every age and society. But beliefs include different levels and types, developing from the low level to the high level and from non-rationality to rationality. With the progress of social practice and science and technology, various unscientific beliefs are bound to be replaced gradually by the rational knowledge about the objective world. The emergence of Marxism reveals profoundly the principle of the development of human society. Communism is taken as the ultimate goal human endeavor, thereby a scientific qualitative leap of human beliefs from blindness. In our today's cause of constructing socialism with Chinese characteristics, we should not only harbor the ambitious goal of communism but also fulfill down to earth the tasks of the current stage. Only in this way can our reform and opening-up and the great cause of modernization be led to success. Likewise, the aim of our university education is to cultivate the constructors and successors of socialism, which couldn't be realized without the ideal education of communism. Thus, it will be totally wrong to waver, deny or profane the communist beliefs. Since the reform and opening-up, there appear some problems concerning the young students' doubt about socialism, yearnings for the Western life, displacement of values, and so forth. All of these problems are usually caused by the loss of ideals and beliefs, which deserves our

close attention. On the other hand, it illustrates the extreme importance of enhancing the education of ideals and beliefs.

Moral education should be integrated with strict management. Deng Xiaoping points out that we should not launch movements among the young students but educate them with guidance. [3](P204) In other words, our moral education should be characterized by positive education and guidance by disseminating and infusing revolutionary and scientific ideas and theories. But it will be sufficient without the integration between positive education and strict management, as Deng Xiaoping said that the employment of some dictatorial means, mainly those of discipline and laws, should not be excluded, and that strict means should be employed as to those who damage seriously the revolutionary order and disciplines without any sign of repentance despite repeated education to reeducate them so as not to let them, a tiny minority, further do harm to schools and society. [4](P106) Only with the integration between positive education and strict management can the moral education be effectively conducted so as to achieve the respected goal.

The promotion of the quality of ideology and morals relies not only on the self-restraint but on the school moral education. To begin with, moral education should be viewed as the core of teaching. In the new historical period, the university moral education should focus on the university students' education of having ideals, morals, knowledge and sense of discipline and the core values, which is the basic task and main content of university education. However, in the teaching practice, moral education is not given enough attention to in the teaching of every subject. Quite many teachers hold that it's the job of teachers of ideology and politics or of instructors'', and that the task of the teachers of professional courses is to teach the knowledge without any need of moral education. It will lead to inconsistency in the students' moral education, making them think that moral education is only conducted in the classes of politics and ideology, which will give rise to the lack of joint efforts in the students' moral education, and thereby the unsatisfactory or even negative effect. The school, a place of imparting knowledge and educating people, should put the cultivation of people first. Every teacher should set a good example and view moral education as the core of their teaching. Secondly, the teachers' status and treatment should be improved. Compared with the construction of facilities and the expansion of campus, due attention is not given to moral education, or teachers' status and treatment, which is not in favor of their initiative. Moreover, counselors can't be count on either because they, due to other administrative work to deal with, cannot devote themselves to moral education. Owing to the teachers' work intensity and great devotions, their status and treatment should be greatly improved so as to make their achievements get confirmed. Thirdly, teachers' professional quality should be strengthened. To strengthen the teachers' professional quality is to improve the teaching quality. Only by strengthening constantly the teacher's professional quality can they set a good example for the students in the following ways: 1) permeation of image. Different from other teachers, moral educators can influence directly the students by means of good examples they set in or after class, or even in daily life. Only by setting a good example of integrity can the teachers win the

students' trust and respect; 2) permeation of character. Being the model for students, the teachers' every action will influence them. Therefore, the teachers' character and charisma are crucial. The teachers should encourage healthy trends and strengthen self-restraint, and permeate the students' daily life; 3) permeation of emotion. The relation between teachers and students should be that of equality just like friends, which requires that the teachers should communicate with their students sincerely instead of classifying them into varied grades and ranks. The teachers should pay attention to the young students' ideology, life and emotion by having emotional communications with students and becoming their scholarly mentor and beneficial friends so as to achieve better effect of moral education. Besides, an important part of moral education is to strengthen the students' social practice, which is an important approach to raise the moral standard. Moreover, relevant experience is required in the job-hunting. Therefore, students should be encouraged to walk out of campus to enter the society. The students' social practice should be, in combination with college features, students' aspirations, etc., well-designed so as to improve their capacity of applying their knowledge and specialty to the solution of practical problems, and meanwhile raise their moral standard, strengthen the effectiveness of moral education and accumulate relevant experience for their future jobs. In job hunting students often find themselves in the difficult position owing to the lack of work experience. The solution lies in the long-term professional social practice. In this way, social practice becomes a virtuous cycle motivating more students to participate actively in the social practice. Given this, it's necessary to improve the mode of teaching. In the background of the current moral education, the modern IT means should be made the best use of to establish websites and webpages for moral education, and meanwhile update them by leaning the latest experience in moral education at home and abroad so as to let students get moral education online and improve the effectiveness. The content of moral education should be associated with students' life, centering on their focused concern or doubts with the right instructions for the existing problems. In-class teaching should give full play to students' initiative and creativity by establishing conditions, atmosphere and situations closely related with their life to encourage their participation. Thus, in-class teaching features not only rich content but easiness. Students can learn something and improve themselves in the constant exploration with happiness. The moral educators, due to their teaching being oriented to different majors, face the challenges that they should learn of the characteristics of varied majors as well as students, and of the basic knowledge of those majors so as to combine better with their teaching. Meanwhile, they can digest the knowledge of those majors and introduce it into the whole process of the moral education, strengthening the persuasion and influence, and thereby the attractiveness of moral education.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

To sum up, in the new historic period, the university moral education has a long way to go. It's required that we should deepen our study of and grasp the essence of Deng Xiaoping's theory of education, get the whole picture of contemporary college students' ideology, emotions and daily life, explore

further the reform and upgrade of methods and means of university moral education, cultivate university students' lofty ideals and scientific beliefs, guide them to use Deng Xiaoping's theory of education to instruct their own study and practice and become, with the close integration between personal pursuit and the need of the country and the society, talents contributing to social development.

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