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# Red Cultural Resources and the Cultivation of Patriotic Sentiment in High School History Education: An Analysis of Their Alignment

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**Abstract:** Red culture embodies the epic narrative of the Chinese nation's journey from hardship to glory, carrying within it a profound sense of patriotic sentiment. It constitutes both a precious spiritual legacy of the Chinese people and an indispensable dimension of youth education in the new era. By virtue of its distinctive temporal scope and rich humanistic content, history as a discipline provides fertile ground for cultivating students' patriotism. The high school years represent a critical period in the formation of students' worldviews and value systems, and therefore a particularly important stage for patriotic sentiment education. In recent years, accelerating globalization and the expansion of the information environment have exposed adolescents to a multiplicity of cultural influences, contributing to blurred historical consciousness, a weakened sense of national identity, and a diminished sense of social responsibility among some young people. Against this backdrop the effective integration of red culture into high school history instruction has emerged as a pressing challenge for educators.

**Keywords:** Red cultural resources; high school history; patriotic sentiment; alignment

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## 1. Introduction

Throughout the more than 5,000-year evolution of Chinese civilization, a sense of devotion to both family and nation has always served as the spiritual bond that unites the national spirit, upholds national unity, and drives social progress. Rooted in the fine traditions of Chinese culture and forged through the Chinese people's struggle for survival and great rejuvenation since modern times, it has become a cultural gene etched into the very bloodline of the nation. Since modern times, as the nation suffered humiliation, the people endured hardship, and our civilization was tarnished, countless patriots and visionaries forged a resplendent revolutionary culture through struggle and exploration. This cultural form, guided by revolutionary ideals, driven by the pursuit of national rejuvenation, and aimed at the people's happiness, has elevated the spirit of patriotism from a traditional cultural gene into a spiritual force with modern significance. Today, as the world undergoes unprecedented changes unseen in a century, diverse cultural ideologies intertwine and collide, and information spreads in fragmented form across the internet, some high school students exhibit tendencies such as fragmented historical understanding, utilitarian value orientations, and a weakening sense of national identity. Consequently, history education

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faces new challenges and missions. As a core curriculum for fulfilling the fundamental mission of fostering virtue and nurturing talent, high school history bears the vital functions of preserving historical continuity, shaping moral character, and cultivating a sense of national identity. Integrating red cultural resources organically into history instruction is not only an inevitable choice in response to the demands of the times but also a key measure for deepening curriculum reform and enhancing the quality of education.

Patriotic sentiment is a cultural gene formed over millennia of Chinese civilization, expressing an individual's identification with, sense of belonging to, and feeling of responsibility and mission toward the nation. In the current era, strengthening patriotic sentiment education among young people is essential for cultivating a generation capable of shouldering the responsibility of national rejuvenation. High school history, as a vital vehicle for transmitting civilization and shaping character, aims centrally to guide students in understanding the national situation, strengthening ethnic pride, and deepening their sense of historical responsibility. Red cultural resources — the spiritual wealth created by the Communist Party of China in leading the people through revolution, construction, and reform — embody steadfast ideals and beliefs, deep patriotic feeling, noble moral qualities, and a distinguished revolutionary tradition. These qualities align closely with the goal of cultivating patriotic sentiment in high school history education. This study explores the intrinsic connections and points of convergence between red cultural resources and patriotic sentiment education in high school history, with a view to offering both theoretical reference and practical guidance for improving the educational effectiveness of the discipline and guiding students toward sound values.

## **2. Red Culture as a Resource for Emotional Education in High School**

Red culture, as a distinctive cultural form shaped by the Communist Party of China's leadership throughout the processes of revolution, construction, and reform, contains rich historical memories, value orientations, and spiritual aspirations. It is not merely a central component of Chinese history but also a valuable resource for emotional education and the cultivation of patriotic sentiment among secondary students.

### **2.1. Red Stories as Compelling Material for Emotional Education**

Red culture is replete with deeply moving accounts of heroism and revolutionary struggle. By recounting events such as the Jinggang Mountain meeting of revolutionary forces, the hardships of the Long March, the nationwide resistance against Japanese aggression, and the nation-building achievements of the early People's Republic, these narratives transmit not only historical knowledge but, more importantly, an indomitable national spirit, a willingness to sacrifice for the nation, and a spirit of collective solidarity. The emotional power of these stories resonates deeply with students, awakening their patriotism and national pride. In classroom practice, teachers can employ contextual and role-based teaching methods to engage students directly in reenacting historical scenarios. By inhabiting the psychological perspectives of historical actors, students develop a more substantive understanding of the emotional and spiritual dimensions of these narratives. This participatory approach not only heightens engagement but enables students to consolidate emotional identification with the values embedded in red culture through direct experience, laying the affective groundwork for a durable patriotic commitment.

### **2.2. Red Spirit as a Catalyst for Emotional Elevation**

Red culture is rooted in the soil of Chinese civilization, drawing nourishment from the nation's finest traditional cultural inheritance. Beginning with the May Fourth Movement and forged through decades of anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle, the red spirit carries a powerful patriotic character. Patriotism is a defining component of the national spirit and the banner under which the Chinese people have rallied to forge ahead<sup>[1]</sup>. The values embedded in red culture — unwavering ideals, diligence, perseverance and a commitment to serving the people — constitute essential content for the emotional education of secondary students. These qualities represent not only a precious legacy of the revolutionary generation but a guiding light for young people's development today. The transmission of the red spirit requires educators

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to employ diverse activities: recitations of revolutionary classics, performances of revolutionary songs and thematic speeches centered on red culture allow students to experience its vitality and significance. Combined with reflection on current affairs and social practice, educators can guide students to consider how the red spirit might be translated into concrete personal and social action — a movement from understanding to commitment that constitutes the essential purpose of red cultural education and a key step in the deepening of students’ patriotic sentiment.

### **3. Red Culture and Value Formation in High School Students**

Red culture as a precious spiritual heritage of the Chinese nation, carries both the heroic deeds and noble spirit of those who gave their lives for national liberation and an abiding set of values centred on patriotism and collective responsibility. For secondary students, it functions simultaneously as historical content and as a formative influence on their developing value systems.

#### **3.1. Patriotic Spirit and the Development of National Identity**

General Secretary Xi Jinping’s report to the Twentieth National Congress of the CPC called explicitly for fully implementing the Party’s educational policy, fulfilling the fundamental task of “fostering virtue and nurturing talent,” and cultivating socialist builders and successors who are well-rounded in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and practical dimensions<sup>[2]</sup>. This guidance has set the direction for secondary education reform. The Senior High School History Curriculum Standards similarly identify “fostering virtue and nurturing talent” as the discipline’s fundamental goal, making the integration of ideological and political education into history teaching an effective pathway toward this aim. Achieving this objective requires educators to engage seriously with the foundational questions of what kind of people should be cultivated, how they should be cultivated, and in whose interest they are being educated, so that ideological-political elements are organically woven throughout the instructional process.

The patriotic spirit is among red culture’s most prominent characteristics. From the initial spark at Jinggang Mountain to the ordeals of the Long March, from the fires of the War of Resistance Against Japan to the triumphant conclusion of the Liberation War, each historical chapter carries testimony to loyalty and love for the nation. Through the study of these events and the individuals who shaped them, students come to appreciate the immense sacrifices made for national independence and the people’s liberation, generating a sense of national identity and pride. In practice, this influence operates through multiple channels: in-class storytelling produces emotional resonance that helps students recognize the bond between personal fate and national destiny; visits to revolutionary sites and memorial halls create experiential encounters with history that deepen the sense of historical responsibility; and films and literature present the revolutionary spirit in vivid, accessible forms that inspire patriotic enthusiasm. Each of these approaches plants the seeds of patriotism, cultivating a profound emotional attachment to the nation and its people.

#### **3.2. Collectivism and the Cultivation of Social Responsibility**

Red culture consistently places collective interests above individual ones, advocating the spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and shared effort. During the revolutionary wars, countless martyrs placed the national cause above personal welfare, exemplifying a profound collectivist ethos. This legacy holds important significance for cultivating students’ social responsibility and capacity for teamwork in the contemporary context. Through engagement with red culture students learn to contribute meaningfully within a collective and come to understand the value of cooperation. Schools can reinforce these lessons through red-themed class meetings, social practice activities, and volunteer service programs, giving students firsthand experience of the power of collective action. Accounts of collective heroism — from the “Five Heroes of Langya Mountain” to Liu Hulan — can stimulate a sense of collective honour, helping students recognize that every individual is an indispensable member of a larger community and bears a corresponding obligation to contribute.

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### **3.3. The Spirit of Perseverance and the Forging of Resilient Character**

The tenacity and courage demonstrated by the revolutionary generation in confronting adversity carry enduring significance for character development. As Jiang Zemin observed in 1993, understanding the nation's long history of civilization and the sufferings endured by its people, learning of the struggles of earlier generations for national independence and prosperity, and appreciating the fine traditions of the nation and the Party are of great importance for strengthening national self-respect, self-confidence, and the spirit of self-reliance, and for reinforcing commitment to patriotism<sup>[3]</sup>.

In contemporary society, material abundance has led some young people toward a passive, comfort-seeking orientation that leaves them ill-prepared to confront difficulty. Red culture's emphasis on hard work and perseverance offers a meaningful corrective. Through accounts of the Long March's punishing conditions and the spirit of self-reliance cultivated in Yan'an, educators can help students recognize that determination and effort are timeless virtues. Experiential programs — simulated "Long March" hikes, labour education activities — allow students to appreciate the value of sustained effort, to cherish their circumstances, and to develop the courage to explore and overcome challenges.

## **4. Red Culture and the Development of Historical Identity**

Every cultural form is a reflection of its time, and red culture, as a distinctive formation of modern Chinese history, carries not only the heroic deeds of the revolutionary generation but also a deeply rooted patriotism and national spirit. For secondary students, red culture extends well beyond what appears on the pages of a history textbook: it is a powerful medium for cultivating historical identity and strengthening national pride.

### **4.1. Red Culture as the Emotional Bond of Historical Identity**

Through its vivid revolutionary character, its orientation toward ordinary people, and its continuing contemporary relevance, red culture serves as an emotional bridge connecting past and present, individual and nation. In high school history education, through storytelling, site visits, and engagement with red-themed media, students gain direct access to the sacrifices and sustained efforts of those who pursued national independence and people's liberation. These concrete historical realities, like sweeping panoramas, enable students to feel the vicissitudes of national fortune and the inseparability of personal destiny from national fate, producing strong emotional resonance and deepening their identification with the nation's history. Visits to the Jinggang Mountain Revolutionary Base, the Yan'an Revolutionary Memorial, and similar sites allow students to experience the historical atmosphere of these sacred places and hear, firsthand, the stories of earlier revolutionaries. This immersive form of learning is far more likely to stir students' sense of connection and awaken patriotic commitment than any written account. The lived encounter with history transforms abstract knowledge into felt understanding, cultivating a sense of historical belonging that is difficult to achieve through conventional instruction alone.

### **4.2. Red Culture as a Force for Shaping Historical Values**

The core competencies of the history discipline represent the concentrated expression of the discipline's educational value: the correct values, essential qualities, and key capabilities that students progressively develop through historical study. These competencies — encompassing a materialist historical perspective, temporal and spatial thinking, historical evidence and reasoning, historical interpretation, and patriotic sentiment<sup>[4]</sup> — require that students not only master historical content but also develop critical thinking, humanistic literacy, and social responsibility. The integration of ideological and political education into history instruction extends this mandate, calling for a gradual and organic infusion of political and ethical guidance into every phase of classroom learning so as to guide students toward sound worldviews and value systems.

Red culture carries rich historical values — collectivism, selfless dedication, a spirit of sustained effort — which function as cornerstones in the construction of students' historical perspectives and life orientations. Integrating red culture into history teaching helps students form a correct historical outlook: one that understands and accepts that individual

striving should serve the larger cause of national and social development, and that recognizes the indivisibility of personal and national fate. Through study of the Long March, the War of Resistance, and the Liberation War, students come to appreciate the power of collective solidarity and an indomitable spirit — qualities that sustained national independence in an earlier era and remain indispensable spiritual resources for national development and rejuvenation today.

Secondary students, still at a formative stage of psychological development, possess a significant degree of malleability in terms of values and outlook<sup>[5]</sup>. Educators bear a responsibility to integrate the cultivation of patriotic sentiment into the educational process, helping students develop sound values through engagement with the nation's history. The positive historical examples abundant in red cultural resources enable students, guided by their teachers, to develop a deep understanding of the nation's growth and progress, forming genuine love for and commitment to their country. Transmitting values such as national unity, the defence of sovereignty, and the pursuit of national rejuvenation through the medium of red culture is, in essence, the foundational purpose of history education<sup>[6]</sup>.

## 5. Conclusion

As we embark on a new journey toward high-quality educational development in the new era, the exploration, preservation, and revitalization of revolutionary cultural resources have become an integral part of the strategy to build a culturally strong nation. As the primary arena for shaping students' character and nurturing their spirit, high school history education must proactively shoulder the mission of our times: to pass on the revolutionary legacy and deepen students' sense of patriotism. Educators must adhere to the principle of upholding tradition while innovating, transforming revolutionary sites, artifacts, deeds, and the revolutionary spirit into tangible, learnable, and actionable teaching resources. They should promote the deep integration of classroom instruction with field studies, online dissemination with offline experiences, and the transmission of knowledge with the guidance of values, ensuring that revolutionary culture truly takes root in the hearts of young people and that a sense of patriotism becomes the most distinctive spiritual foundation for high school students. Against the backdrop of digital transformation in education, we can also leverage new technologies and methods—such as virtual reality, digital museums, and micro-courses on evolutionary history—to break through the constraints of time and space, enrich teaching formats, and enhance the appeal, impact, and reach of revolutionary culture. Only by bringing red culture to life in history classrooms and establishing it firmly in students' hearts can we continuously strengthen the foundation of ideals and convictions among young people, constantly bolster their spirit, backbone, and confidence as Chinese citizens, and cultivate generation after generation of capable and mission-driven leaders to build a modern socialist country in all respects and realize the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The foregoing analysis demonstrates that red cultural resources and high school history education share a profound internal alignment in their shared goal of cultivating in students a deep patriotic sentiment, an alignment that carries both significant contemporary relevance and lasting educational value. Red culture's rich spiritual heritage and vivid emotional content provide uniquely compelling material for emotional education at the high school stage; through authentic and moving historical narratives, it engages students' inner worlds and kindles genuine patriotic enthusiasm and national pride. The core values it embodies — patriotism, collectivism, and perseverance — offer clear and constructive guidance during the critical period of students' value formation, helping them develop a solid sense of national identity, a conscious social responsibility, and the resilience to face adversity. More broadly, red culture functions as a powerful bridge between historical memory and the present, playing an irreplaceable role in deepening students' recognition of and identification with national history, and guiding the development of a dialectical, well-grounded historical perspective.

The systematic and creative integration of red cultural resources into high school history instruction is therefore not only an effective approach to fulfilling the fundamental educational task of “fostering virtue and nurturing talent” and achieving the objectives of curriculum-based ideological and political education, but also an intrinsic requirement for

deepening history curriculum reform, comprehensively enhancing students' core disciplinary competencies, and cultivating new-era builders and inheritors who combine historical vision with a deep-rooted patriotic commitment. Going forward, educators should continue to explore pathways for the deep integration of red cultural resources with high school history teaching — in terms of content selection, instructional methodology, and course design — so that the educational value and spiritual energy embedded in red culture may be more fully and effectively realized, ultimately contributing the enduring and substantial role that history education should play in cultivating those capable of shouldering the great responsibility of national rejuvenation.

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## Disclosure statement

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