

Theoretical Logic of Organic Integration of Shenzhen Red Culture into the Teaching of Basic Principles of Marxism in Vocational Undergraduate Programs of Bay Area Characteristics

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Abstract: Shenzhen Red Culture is the result of the organic combination of the basic principles of Marxism and Chinese reality, presented in the form of red stories and practical events during the socialist revolution and construction. Shenzhen Red Culture is intrinsically compatible with the knowledge points of the Basic Principles of Marxism (Principles) course. Shenzhen Red Culture is integrated into the teaching of the vocational undergraduate Principles course with Bay Area characteristics, guiding the value shaping of Bay Area youth and highlighting the school-based characteristics, vocationality, and professionalism of the vocational undergraduate Principles course.

Keywords: Shenzhen Red Culture; Vocational undergraduate; Basic Principles of Marxism; The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area

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1. Introduction

The General Secretary pointed out, “‘Great Civics and Politics Course’ we should make good use of it, and it must be combined with reality”^[1]. As an early demonstration zone for reform and opening up, and one of the leading cities in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Shenzhen forms an economic and cultural radiation circle with cities in the province. Although Shenzhen is a young city, it has red cultural resources dating back to the period of the Land Revolutionary War, and Shenzhen Red Culture includes not only revolutionary culture, but also reform and opening-up culture. At present, there are fewer research results on Shenzhen Red Culture in China, so it is necessary to fully explore the red culture of Shenzhen and apply it to the teaching of Basic Principles of Marxism (hereinafter referred to as “Principles”) in vocational undergraduate degree programs with Bay Area characteristics.

Shenzhen Red Culture contains the artisan spirit of being first, daring to think, daring to do, and striving

for perfection, which is compatible with the vocational elements of vocational undergraduate programs. The reason Shenzhen Red Culture can be integrated into the teaching of Principles is that Shenzhen red cultural resources and some of the ideas in the chapters of Principles are compatible, and Shenzhen Red Culture is intrinsically compatible with the knowledge points of the Principles course. Shenzhen Red Culture is the result of the organic combination of the basic principles of Marxism and Chinese reality, and is presented in the form of red stories and practical events during the period of socialist revolution and construction. It can not only provide evidence for the scientific nature of Marxism, but also rendering power, influence, dissemination, and affinity of the image carrier to resolve the dullness of the modularity of the content of the Principles, and at the same time, the rich and figurative red stories of Shenzhen provide case evidence for the theoretical interpretation of the basic principles of Marxism.

No literature was retrieved on the China National Knowledge Infrastructure regarding the teaching reform of the course “Principles of Vocational Bachelor’s Degree with Bay Area Characteristics.” By searching “Shenzhen Red Culture,” China National Knowledge Infrastructure shows 16 articles (as of June 11, 2025), of which no literature related to it was retrieved. There are four pieces of literature related to the teaching of Civic and Political Studies and Party History Education in colleges and universities: Shenzhen red cultural resources contain rich historiographic value, contemporary value, and teaching innovation value, and it is necessary to integrate them into the teaching of Civic and Political Studies and Party History Education in colleges and universities ^[2-5]. However, existing studies have not examined the integration of Shenzhen Red Culture into the teaching of vocational undergraduate “Principles” class with Bay Area characteristics. Therefore, based on the development of vocational undergraduate courses in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao Bay Area, this paper explores the core issue of how Shenzhen Red Culture can be integrated into the teaching of vocational undergraduate Principles courses with Bay Area characteristics, with the hope of guiding the value shaping of Bay Area youths in the linkage between the campus and the social communication and integration process, and highlighting the school-based characteristics, vocationality, and professionalism of vocational undergraduate Principles courses.

2. Theoretical path of organic integration of Shenzhen Red Culture into the teaching of vocational undergraduate Principles courses in the Bay Area

The fit between Shenzhen Red Culture and the basic principles of Marxism is mainly reflected in its revolutionary practice, the spirit of reform and opening up, and the logic of social development. There are seven chapters in the textbook of the Principles, and in each chapter, Shenzhen red cultural resources can be found as a case bank.

2.1. The great changes in Shenzhen’s development, interpreting materialism and dialectics

Shenzhen Red Culture includes both Shenzhen revolutionary culture and Shenzhen reform and opening up culture. Shenzhen, as the frontier of reform and opening up, has bred a rich culture of reform and opening up. Revolutionary cultural heritage site of Dongjiang Column Command, reform and opening up the “first shot” of Shekou Industrial Zone, Lotus Hill Deng Xiaoping statue as a cultural symbol, reflecting the “defying the enemy, indomitable” spirit of struggle, “time is money, efficiency is life” spirit of reform, and the innovation spirit of “dare to be the first in the world” as important qualities of Shenzhen’s reform and opening up culture. The former sites of the Dongjiang Column Command, etc., which are material existences and witnesses of history, have witnessed the struggle of the revolutionary forefathers on this piece of land. Shekou Industrial

Zone, as a “testing ground” for reform and opening up, is based on the practice of material production, through land reclamation, the introduction of foreign investment, and other specific actions, through the introduction of foreign investment, the implementation of distribution according to labor, restructuring of the relations of production, and the release of productive forces; Lianhua Mountain Park, where the statue of Deng Xiaoping stands majestically in honor of Deng Xiaoping, pioneer of reform and opening up to the world, has put together the Deng Xiaoping Group, which is one of the special economic zones in Shenzhen. Shenzhen, as one of the special economic zones, Deng Xiaoping’s southern talk emphasized that “development is the hard way.” These coincide with the first principle of materiality in the first chapter of the Principles.

Dialectical materialism holds that the unity of the world lies in materiality, that matter determines consciousness, and at the same time recognizes the dynamic reaction of consciousness to matter, and that things are universally connected and eternally developing; that the law of the unity of opposites is the fundamental law of the development of things. In the process of reforming Shekou, they were faced with the contradiction between planned economy and market economy, and the conflict between efficiency and fairness, which were gradually formed through practice, demonstrating the principle of dialectic law that the unity of opposites of contradictions promotes the development of society.

2.2. The road to truth in Shenzhen’s “experimental field” and the interpretation of practical materialism

Shenzhen Red Culture was nurtured in revolutionary practice. The practice of anti-Japanese struggle by the Guangdong People’s Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Army (the predecessor of the Dongjiang Column) in the Shenzhen area gave rise to the understanding of the revolution and the thinking about the destiny of the country. These understandings further guided the subsequent revolutionary practices and promoted the development of red culture. Currently, young students have a deeper perceptual understanding of Shenzhen’s red culture through visiting red culture memorial halls, sites, and other practical activities, on the basis of which, after thinking and research, they rise to rational understanding, which in turn will lead to better protection and inheritance of the red culture, and to carry out more related practical activities.

Reform and opening up culture in Shenzhen’s red culture and innovative development practices in Qianhai Cooperation Zone. Qianhai has developed from a mudflat into an international financial center. Qianhai has continuously made trial and error and summed up experience in system innovation (e.g. cross-border financial and rule of law reforms), and ultimately formed the “Qianhai Model,” which can be popularized, and which verifies that “practice is the only criterion for testing the truth.”

According to practical materialism, the view of practice is the primary view of Marxism. Practice is the source, driving force, and test of cognition. Understanding comes from practice, and the process of understanding is a dialectical development from perceptual understanding to rational understanding, and then from rational understanding to practice. Through the pilot cross-border finance, rule of law innovation, and other policies, Qianhai FTZ “crosses the river by groping the stones” practice exploration, local practice to verify the feasibility of theory, in line with the Marxist epistemology of “practice-knowledge-practice again.”

2.3. The power of Shenzhen’s pioneering cows, testifying to historical materialism

Shenzhen Red Culture in the revolutionary period of the Dongjiang Column resistance history is a high-quality red resource. On December 12, 1942, the Guangdong People’s Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Army Dongjiang Column was formally established, to the end of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, the Dongjiang Column developed to more than 11,000 people, relying on the masses to establish

bases in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, guerrilla warfare, reflecting the “people are the main body of social history!” This embodies the idea of “the people are the main body of social history” and shows that class struggle drives the change of social form. The Dongjiang Column North Evacuation Memorial Park in Kwai Chung Street, Longgang District, records the history of the masses covering the transfer of troops, confirming that “the mass line is the lifeblood of the Party.” The red case resources of the Dongjiang Column’s resistance not only illustrate the role of the people in history, but also reflect the reflection of social consciousness on social existence, reflecting the social contradictions and revolutionary needs of the Shenzhen area at that time. During the revolutionary period, advanced red cultural ideas inspired the people to join the revolution and promoted social change.

The reform and opening up culture in Shenzhen’s red culture is embodied in the reform history of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone. The magnificent transformation of Shenzhen from a small fishing village in the border town to a global metropolis is a typical case of the adaptation of production relations to the development of productive forces. After Deng Xiaoping established Shenzhen as a special economic zone in 1980, the establishment of the Shekou Industrial Zone broke the constraints of the planned economy through land auctions, shareholding reforms, and other institutional innovations, and the promotion of the exploration of the socialist market economy, which unleashed the productive forces and verified the law of “the reaction of production relations to the productive forces”. Shenzhen’s governance model of “small government, big society” reflects the need for the superstructure to adapt to the development of the economic base. The “pioneering spirit” of reform and opening up, breaking the shackles of the planned economy, embodies the contradictory movement of the productive forces and the relations of production, the economic base, and the superstructure.

2.4. Exploration of socialist market economy in Shenzhen, deepening Marx’s theory of surplus value

Marxist political economy dissects the commodity economy and the law of value, the nature of the capitalist economic system, and the characteristics of the capitalist superstructure. Marx’s theory of surplus value reveals the essence of capital exploitation. The reform and opening up culture of Shenzhen’s red culture is reflected in the reform of labor relations during Shenzhen’s early industrialization. 1980s Shenzhen’s Shekou Industrial Zone took the lead in implementing the labor contract system, breaking the “iron rice bowl,” which embodied the employment relationship between capital and labor, and also through the construction of trade unions and the piloting of labor laws, such as the promulgation of the “Regulations on the Labor and Employment of the Special Economic Zones of Guangdong Province,” to restrict capital’s exploitation of labor and to limit capital’s exploitation. The promulgation of the Regulations on Labor Laws in the Special Economic Zone of Guangdong Province to limit the uncontrolled expansion of capital demonstrated the critical application of the law of surplus value under the socialist system.

Shenzhen Red Culture is inextricably linked to the history of the development of various areas in Shenzhen, including the history of the development of Chung Ying Street. The history of the development of Chung Ying Street in Shenzhen reveals the contrast between the colonial and socialist economies. During the British period, Shatoujiao Street in Yantian District practiced the monopoly of opium and the drudgery trade, reflecting the bloody nature of the primitive accumulation of capital. In contrast, after the establishment of New China, from taking the road of industrialization and development, developing collective economy, to Deng Xiaoping’s establishment of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone and the implementation of

socialist market economy, Shenzhen's level of scientific and technological innovation, level of economic development, and high-quality development of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao Greater Bay Area have attracted the world's attention. The historical transformation of Chung Ying Street and the difference in development between the north and the south confirm the superiority of the socialist system.

2.5. “The Story of Spring” in Shenzhen, interpreting the essence of socialism

Shenzhen as the frontier of reform and opening up, the construction of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone (China World Trade Center, Ruzi Ox sculpture) is the material carrier of the red culture formed in Shenzhen in the practice of reform and opening up, and the construction of the Qianhai Advanced Demonstration Zone of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics elaborates on the historical process of socialism in the past 500 years. The ideas in Chapter 6 of the Principles course are compatible with each other and can be organically integrated.

The red culture of Shenzhen was born in the practice of Shenzhen's revolution and reform era. The “one-story building in three days” of the China World Trade Center embodies the advantages of socialism in concentrating its strengths to do great things, and the GDP of Shenzhen of 3,680,187,000,000 yuan in 2024 fully confirms the law of socialist development. The upgrading of Shenzhen from a special economic zone to an advanced demonstration zone of socialism with Chinese characteristics, encompassing economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological changes across the board, reflects the superiority of the socialist system and is a vivid realization of the Marxist revolutionary concept of “comprehensive social progress.”

Scientific socialism holds that the replacement of capitalism by socialism is an inevitable trend in history. Shenzhen Red Culture is part of the development of socialism in China, and it has witnessed the spread and practice of socialist ideas in the Shenzhen area. From the early revolutionary activities to the socialist construction period, the people of Shenzhen, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), have actively explored the road suitable for local development, reflecting the process of following the basic principles of scientific socialism and continuously exploring the laws of socialist development in practice, such as the rapid development of Shenzhen after the reform and opening up of the country, which is an embodiment of the superiority of the socialist system and the fruit of exploring the laws of socialist development.

2.6. The Shenzhen proposal for Chinese-style modernization, pointing to the epochal coordinates of the lofty ideals of communism

Revolutionary forces such as the Dongjiang Column fought for the establishment of a fair and just society, and this aspiration and pursuit coincided with the lofty ideals of communism. In the revolutionary era, the forefathers struggled to realize national independence and people's liberation, and to establish a society without exploitation and oppression, which was the concrete embodiment of the communist ideal at that time. The red culture of Shenzhen contains the aspirations and pursuits of the revolutionary forefathers for a better future, and the values of fairness, justice, and people's happiness. Nowadays, Shenzhen is advancing in the construction of socialist modernization, and moving towards the realization of the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, which is also striving towards the lofty ideals of communism, and closely combining the lofty ideals of communism with the common ideals of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

According to scientific socialism, “in place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, there will be a union in which the free development of each individual is the condition of the

free development of all” (*Germanic ideology*), and Marx looked forward to a new communist society in the future, stating that the realization of communism is the inevitable trend of historical development. The red culture of Shenzhen combines the qualities of “breaking down the old” and “establishing the new,” demanding the overthrow of oppression, emancipation of the mind, and emphasizing institutional and technological innovation, which is in line with the complete connotation of the social revolution. It also embodies the spirit of unity and cooperation of the proletariat throughout the world in order to build a union of free people. “Proletarians of the world unite” (*The Communist Manifesto*), the Dongjiang Column rescued allied forces and international friends, among which the rescue of American pilot Lieutenant Kerr is the most legendary, demonstrating the spirit of proletarian internationalism. Shenzhen’s contemporary practice of “Belt and Road” hub construction: Shenzhen’s Shekou Port, the China-European Union (CEU) shuttle train, and other practices of global connectivity embody Marx’s theory of “world history,” that is, the development of productive forces will inevitably break the geographical limitations and promote the construction of a community of destiny for mankind.

3. The contemporary value of the Principles course of vocational undergraduate courses in Shenzhen Red Culture fusion Bay Area characteristics

Shenzhen Red Culture is organically integrated into the teaching of the vocational undergraduate “Principles” course with Bay Area characteristics, which has an important value of the times.

3.1. Improving the theoretical and practical teaching effects of the vocational undergraduate Principles course

The organic combination of Shenzhen Red Culture and the teaching of the vocational undergraduate Principles course is conducive to the enrichment of the content and innovation of the teaching form of the vocational undergraduate Civics course. Shenzhen red story is a vivid reality material, integrated into the Principles course from the content and form of the resource library, helps to improve the vocational undergraduate Principles course of theoretical teaching and practical teaching effectiveness. It helps to build a new pattern of “research, performance, appreciation, and lecture” with multi-departmental collaboration, multi-resource integration, multi-form development, and multi-platform promotion, and to utilize the combination of “online + offline” to promote the construction of the school’s systematic education project.

3.2. Creating a special vocational undergraduate Civics and Political Science course in Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao

Relying on the results of the construction of Shenzhen Red Base, promote the effective integration of the red culture of Shenzhen SAR into the Principles course, and strive to create a “red + theory + practice” high-quality course, and promote the construction of the Shenzhen Red Brand Creation Project. It helps to demonstrate and lead and radiate other universities to explore the red cultural resources of Shenzhen to be integrated into the Principles course and continuously deepen the reform and development of the course; it helps to create a teaching text material with prominent elements of ideology and politics, manifesting the value of the times, and obvious effect of educating people, and helps to promote the construction of the Shenzhen Red Gene Inheritance Project.

3.3. Helping to promote the inheritance of the red gene and the cultivation of a sense of family and national identity among young people in the Bay Area

Based on the fundamental task of promoting moral education, based on the excavation, collation, and dissemination of Shenzhen red cultural resources, endowed with contemporary characteristics and value connotations, organically integrated into the teaching system of the “Principles” course, and helped to create a “red + theory + practice” ideological classroom. Reform the assessment system of the Principles course, strengthen the students’ ability to improve and value shaping with the OBE concept, so that the new era of college students in Shenzhen red cultural cultivation can inherit red genes, continue the red bloodline, and cultivate a sense of family and country.

4. Conclusion

Shenzhen Red Culture includes the advanced culture formed in Shenzhen during the period of revolution and reform and opening-up, which is intrinsically compatible with the teaching of the vocational undergraduate course “Basic Principles of Marxism” with Bay Area characteristics and can be organically integrated. It is highly necessary to effectively integrate Shenzhen Red Culture into the teaching of the Bay Area vocational undergraduate “Principles” course to create a Bay Area characteristic vocational undergraduate Civics and Politics gold course.

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Disclosure statement

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