

Comparison of the Chinese Teacher Education System in China and Malaya (1945–1961)

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Abstract

This paper uses a comparative research method to examine the institutional evolution and practical characteristics of Chinese teacher education in China and Malaya during the period from 1945 to 1961. The study found that: Chinese teacher education in China showed the characteristics of state-led and serving socialist construction, and experienced four stages: post-war recovery, socialist transformation, learning from the Soviet model, and adjustment after the Great Leap Forward; while Chinese teacher education in Malaya developed in the tension between colonial control and the autonomous demands of the Chinese community, and experienced three stages: post-war colonial adjustment, independent transition, and establishment of a unit education system. The two places show significant differences in school system, curriculum structure, and social function: China has formed a hierarchical teacher college system and a dual-track training model for pre-service and post-service, emphasizing the unity of political education and professional knowledge; Malaya has gradually transitioned to a formal teacher college through short-term training courses, focusing on multilingual ability training and cultural identity coordination. The study reveals how the education system serves the dual goals of national construction and cultural inheritance in different political environments, and provides a historical mirror for understanding the development of teacher education in a multicultural context.

1. Introduction

From 1945 to 1961, East Asia was a critical period of profound reconstruction of the political structure and education system. After the end of World War II, China experienced the historical turning point of the Kuomintang-Communist Civil War and the construction of a socialist country, and established a centralized national system and a unified education system; Malaya gradually moved towards independence from British colonial rule, and ethnic politics and national identity construction became the core issues of social development. Against this background, Chinese teacher education in the two places showed a development trajectory that had both commonalities and differences. As a single-ethnic country, China's Chinese teacher education was directly incorporated into the national construction system and became a part of the socialist education system; as a multi-ethnic society, Malaya's Chinese teacher education was difficult to maintain and develop in the tension between official integration policies and ethnic autonomy demands.

Existing research is mostly limited to the review of the educational history of a single country or region, lacking systematic cross-regional comparisons. In particular, in the field of Chinese teacher education, comparative studies between China and Malaya are almost blank. This study focuses on this historical period, and through comparative analysis of the similarities and differences in policy evolution, institutional structure and social functions of Chinese teacher education in the two places, explores the deep impact of different political environments and social backgrounds on the development of teacher education.

2. Historical evolution of the teacher education system (1945–1961)

2.1 The evolution of the policy and system of Chinese language teacher education in China

Between 1945 and 1961, China's Chinese normal education system underwent a profound transformation, which can be divided into four stages: post-war recovery, socialist transformation, learning from the Soviet model, and adjustment and rectification. During the post-war recovery and institutional transition period (1945-1949), the National Government continued to use and revised the "Regulations of Normal Colleges" promulgated in 1938, establishing the basic system that normal colleges should be independently established and could have undergraduate and specialized departments. (Li, 1983) By 1949, just before the founding of New China, 12 independent higher normal colleges were already in existence, 3 normal colleges attached to universities, 610 secondary normal schools, and 321 primary normal schools in the country. At the same time, the liberated areas led by the Communist Party established a new normal education system, such as the Lu Xun Normal School in Yan'an and the First, Second, and Third Normal Schools. In 1942, the Government issued the "Regulations (Draft) of the Provisional Normal Schools in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region", which further strengthened management norms and promoted the development of normal education in the border region. (Song et al., 1998, pp. 119-124, 130)

During the socialist transformation period (1949-1952), in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Ministry of Education quickly took over and transformed the old normal education system. In December 1949, the first National Education Work Conference proposed the principle that "education must serve national construction" (Chronicle of Major Events, 1984, p. 8). In May 1950, the "Provisional Regulations of Beijing Normal University" was promulgated, becoming the first legal document on higher normal education in New China. In August-September 1951, the first National Normal Education Conference established the goal of "striving to train millions of people's teachers", proposed the method of "combining formal normal education with a large amount of short-term training" (Cai & Cao, 2019), and clarified the principle of "establishing at least one normal college in each major administrative region". (Zhang, 2010) In 1952, the Ministry of Education passed the "Provisional Regulations of Normal Schools (Draft)" and the "Regulations on Higher Normal Schools (Draft)", laying the basic pattern of normal education in New China. In the same year, the "Notice on the Continuing Education of Primary and Secondary School Teachers" clearly proposed the establishment of a regular and systematic teacher continuous training system, and initially formed a standardized in-service training system.

The period of learning from the Soviet model (1953-1957), in 1953, the First National Conference on Higher Normal Education issued the "Instructions on Improving and Developing Higher Normal Education", proposing to vigorously develop higher normal schools in a planned manner. In 1956, the Second National Conference on Higher Normal Education proposed to rely on local forces to develop higher normal education. Except for the three normal universities directly led by the Ministry of Education, the rest of the higher normal colleges were placed under local management. During this period, normal education fully promoted the learning of Soviet experience, and generally referred to the Soviet system in terms of curriculum arrangement, textbook compilation, teaching methods, internship system, etc. In 1956, the "Regulations on Normal Schools" was promulgated, and the basic position of secondary normal education in the pre-service teacher education system was established. During the same period, Beijing Institute of Education was established, followed by a number of regional teacher training schools, and the dual-track system of pre-service and post-service was further improved. (Zhang, 2010).

During the adjustment and development period (1958-1961), the scale of teacher education expanded blindly during the "Great Leap Forward". The number of higher normal colleges increased from 58 in 1957 to 227 in 1960, and the number of secondary normal schools increased from 592 to 1964. This expansion caused a significant deterioration in educational quality. (Li, 1983, p.1503) From 1961, the policy of "adjustment, consolidation, enrichment and improvement" was implemented to reduce the scale and rectify the quality. (Chronicle of Major Events, 1984, p. 306) By 1965, the number of secondary normal schools had been reduced to 394, and the number of higher normal schools had been reduced to 59, basically returning to the level before the Great Leap Forward. (Hu, 2005).

2.2 The evolution of Chinese teacher education policy and system in Malaya

The policy evolution of Chinese teacher education in Malaya showed three distinct stages, reflecting the change in attitude towards Chinese education from the colonial government to the independent government. During the post-war colonial education adjustment period (1945-1956), the colonial government strengthened control over Chinese vernacular schools on the grounds of preventing the infiltration of the Malayan Communist Party. After the implementation of the Emergency Ordinance in 1948, the government began to impose stricter control over Chinese vernacular schools. The Registration of Schools Act (1950) expanded the government's control over school opening, curriculum content, and teacher qualifications. (Yu, 1950) In 1951, the Barnes Report proposed eliminating dialect schools for different ethnic communities, aiming to establish a unified national school system with English and Malay as mediums of instruction, which sparked significant resistance from Chinese and Indian groups. Meanwhile, the Fenn-Wu Report that same year urged the government to officially acknowledge Chinese education within the Malayan educational framework and promoted adopting a shared curriculum over a shared language to foster a Malayan identity (Voon, 2008, p. 620). In the face of the differences between the two reports, the colonial government proposed the Hogen Report in 1952 and enacted the Education Ordinance 1952, encouraging all stream schools to be transformed into national schools and setting language learning requirements and subsidy conditions. (Legislative Council, 1951, pp. 15–19) The Education White Paper 1954 proposed the establishment of "national classes" (English classes) in vernacular schools, but encountered joint resistance from many ethnic groups.

Independence transition period (1957-1960), on the eve of Malaya's independence in 1957, the Alliance government published the Razak Report, which first clarified Malaysia's educational goals and advocated the gradual implementation of the unitary education policy set forth its "ultimate objective" by proposing the integration of children of all ethnic groups into a unified national education system, with Malay designated as the primary language of instruction (Ministry of Education, Federation of Malaya, 1956, chap. 2, sec. 12). The provisions on teachers and teacher training in the report became the main basis for teacher training in Malaysia in the 1960s, including a unified salary system for teachers across the country, qualification requirements for primary school teachers, and training for language specialist teachers. (Mo, 2000, p. 65) In December 1956, the restructuring of Chinese secondary schools sparked controversy. The Ministry of Education sent a request to Chinese secondary schools, asking whether they agreed to change to national secondary schools, which meant that Chinese secondary schools would lose control of the board of directors. At the same time, the government-sponsored junior diploma examinations were all in English, which caused the contradiction that Chinese vernacular schools taught in Chinese but took English exams, triggering student protests.

During the initial establishment period of the unitary education system (1960-1961), as the political status of UMNO strengthened, the government's policy on Chinese education became increasingly tough. The 1960 Rahman Talib Report accelerated the implementation of the "ultimate objective". When citing the Education Act 1957, it deleted the expression "maintaining and supporting the development of other ethnic languages and cultures", and clearly stated that Malay would become the main medium of instruction in Malaysia's national education system. (Federation of Malaya, 1960) The report primarily enforced the unitary education policy through three key measures: offering free primary education; mandating that only secondary schools using Malay or English as their main languages of instruction could obtain government funding; and stipulating that from 1961 onwards, all public examinations would be conducted exclusively in Malay or English. (Ke, 1999, pp. 72–73) The Act also forced Chinese secondary schools to restructure. Those that did not accept the restructuring could only exist as independent secondary schools and lose government assistance.

2.3 Comparative Policy Analysis

Between 1945 and 1961, China and Malaya showed both similar and different evolution paths in their Chinese teacher education policies. Both governments attached great importance to the role of teacher education in national construction and social reconstruction, but there was a sharp contrast in policy orientation, educational goals and management models.

First, there are significant differences in policy dominance. China adopts a highly centralized state-led model, and teacher education policies are highly synchronized with national strategic goals, emphasizing the overall needs of serving socialist construction; while Malaya is in a multi-game between the colonial government, the independent government and the autonomous forces of ethnic groups. The development of Chinese teacher education has always been difficult between official policy suppression and the self-persistence of the Chinese community, lacking unified and continuous policy support. This difference profoundly reflects the fundamental differences in the formulation and implementation mechanisms of education policies under different political systems.

Secondly, the paths of education system construction are different. Under the guidance of the adjustment of departments and the Soviet model, China quickly established a hierarchical and systematic teacher education network, showing the characteristics of planning and integrity; while Malaya Chinese teacher education mainly relied on temporary mechanisms such as holiday classes and advanced normal classes to supplement teachers. It was not until the late 1950s that it was gradually incorporated into the national teacher training system, and the overall degree of specialization and systematization was relatively lagging behind. This difference reflects the essential difference between the educational resource allocation model under the planned economic system and the colonial-transitional social environment.

Thirdly, there are significant differences in political attributes and cultural function positioning. Chinese teacher education is endowed with distinct functions of political mobilization and ideological indoctrination. Teachers are not only knowledge transmitters, but also disseminators of socialist values and promoters of social transformation. On the other hand, Chinese teacher education in Malaya emphasizes mother tongue education and cultural inheritance, playing the role of cultural guardian and ethnic identity defender in countering the unitary education policy. This difference reveals the multiple attributes of education in different social and political environments.

Chinese teacher education, overall, demonstrates a trajectory of institutional integration shaped by the leadership of the state, emphasizing unity, planning and politics; while Malaya shows the characteristics of autonomy and resistance of ethnic education, reflecting the complexity of implementing educational policies in a multi-ethnic society. This sharp contrast not only provides key clues for understanding the significant differences in the institutional structure and social functions of teacher education in the two places, but also deeply reveals how the education system is given different missions and roles in different political systems and social environments.

3. Comparison of the institutional structure and training practices of teacher education

3.1 Comparison of institutional systems and teacher training paths

China's college system and teacher training have formed a complete hierarchical structure. After 1949, China quickly established a hierarchical teacher education system with secondary normal schools, higher normal colleges and normal universities as the main body. (Wang, 2021, pp. 22-24) In 1952, the "Regulations on Higher Normal Schools (Draft)" and the "Temporary Regulations on Normal Schools (Draft)" clearly stated that higher normal schools recruit high school graduates, with a four-year undergraduate program and a 2-3-year junior college program; secondary normal schools recruit junior high school graduates, with a three-year program; and primary normal schools recruit primary school graduates, with a three-year program (canceled in 1961). The government implemented a policy of planned enrollment, free tuition, and unified allocation, which greatly expanded the supply of teachers. (Lin, 1999, pp. 12-15)

After the adjustment of colleges and departments across the country in 1952, normal colleges were generally set up independently. (Song et al., 1998, p. 119-124) Six key normal colleges such as Beijing Normal University and East China Normal University were responsible for training backbone teachers for middle schools. The number of independent normal colleges increased from 15 to 21, and the number of students in normal colleges increased from 12,000 in 1949 to 31,500 in 1952. (Chen, 1953) At the same time, the number of secondary normal schools increased from 610 to 916, and the number of students increased by 127%. Faced with the shortage of teachers in basic education, the country adopted methods such as normal training crash courses and short-term training courses to quickly supplement teachers. After 1952, China initially established a dual-track system of pre-service education and in-service continuing education: on the one hand, teachers were systematically trained through secondary and higher normal colleges, and on the other hand, the level of in-service teachers was improved through short-term training, correspondence courses, and further studies. (Feng, 2002, pp. 111-114) In 1956, Beijing Institute of Education was established, followed by a number of regional teacher training schools, which further promoted the institutionalization of the teacher continuing education system. The entire teacher education system is based on secondary and primary teacher education and capped by higher teacher education at the undergraduate level. The focus of teacher education is in secondary technical schools.

However, during the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960), the blind expansion led to the uncontrolled number and scale of institutions. By 1960, the number of higher normal colleges increased to 227, and the number of secondary normal schools exceeded 1,900. (Ministry of Education, Planning and Finance Department of the PRC, 1984, pp. 51, 147) The quality of education seriously declined. Starting in 1961, the state implemented the policy of "adjustment, consolidation, enrichment, and improvement", reducing redundant institutions and rectifying the quality of education. By 1965, the number of higher normal colleges was reduced

to 59, and the number of secondary normal schools was reduced to 394, returning to a reasonable scale. (Hu, 2005)

In contrast, the college system and teacher training in Malaya are temporary and non-systematic. After the war, Chinese education in Malaya faced a serious shortage of teachers, especially after the pre-war reliance on imported teachers from China was interrupted, local teacher training became an urgent task. In 1946, the British colonial government launched the first Chinese vernacular schools teacher training program - the Simplified Normal Training Course, setting up courses in Penang, Perak, Selangor and Negeri Sembilan to train grassroots teachers, but it was discontinued after only two sessions due to unsatisfactory results. (United Chinese School Teachers' Association of Malaysia, 1987, p. 802)

Starting from 1948, the government implemented the Vacation Teachers' Training Course and the Weekend Teachers' Training Course, recruiting unqualified in-service teachers, those who passed the junior high school examination or those with equivalent academic qualifications. After completing the course and passing the examination, they can become qualified primary school teachers. In the same year, the Federation of Malaya Chinese Senior Normal was established to provide two years of full-time professional training for junior high school graduates who passed the government's junior high school examination. From 1948 to 1957, the Federation of Malaya Chinese Senior Normal trained a total of 2,233 qualified teachers, greatly alleviating the shortage of teachers. (Cai, 2017, p. 30) In May 1952, the first and only normal college in Malaya that used Chinese as the medium of instruction, Green Lane School, was established in Penang, marking a new level of Chinese teacher education.

After 1956, teacher training was gradually incorporated into the national system. In January 1956, the Language Teacher Training College was established. After completing the two-year course, students in the Chinese group could teach in Chinese junior high schools. In June 1957, the Day Training College was established to provide three-year primary school teacher training with the mother tongue as the medium of instruction and Malay as the second language. However, the number of Chinese group students was always low due to the requirement of mastering three languages. In 1960, the Teacher Training College launched a special training course for university graduates, especially for Nanyang University graduates. In response to the problem of teacher quality, the government also established a Certificate of Education course at the University of Malaya, but because the language of instruction was English, the learning effect of students in the Chinese group was not good, prompting the government to set up a Special Chinese Education Class with Chinese as the medium of instruction. (Cai, 2017, p. 139).

3.2 Comparison of course structure and teaching content

China's curriculum structure and teaching content reflect the influence of the Soviet model and the characteristics of political orientation. In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the professional settings of Chinese normal colleges were adjusted many times. The principle was to establish corresponding departments and subjects according to the teaching needs of primary and secondary schools. The teaching plans of each department emphasized the systematic nature of professional knowledge, mainly compulsory courses, and were highly consistent with the middle school curriculum, but lacked flexibility. (Wang, 2002)

In 1950, the "Provisional Regulations of Beijing Normal University" required that political courses be compulsory courses for all departments, accounting for about 15% of all courses; physical education, educational psychology, pedagogy, logic, teaching materials and teaching methods accounted for 15%; internships accounted for about 15%. (Li, 1983, p.877) In 1951, the National Conference on Curriculum Reform in Colleges and Universities emphasized "implementing appropriate specialization on the basis of systematic theory" (General Office of the Ministry of Higher Education, 1958, pp. 64-65), reducing elective courses and focusing on curriculum systematization. In 1954, the Provisional Teaching Plan of Normal Colleges stipulated that the common compulsory courses include the history of the Chinese revolution, the foundation of Marxism-Leninism, political economy, dialectical materialism and historical materialism, psychology, pedagogy, etc., and the political and ideological education courses have a heavy weight. (Wang, 2002)

During the "Great Leap Forward", the teaching plan emphasized political and social activities, and labor courses accounted for a large proportion. Normal colleges in various places criticized psychology and education, canceled or reformed these courses, ignored the particularity of the teaching profession, and affected the cultivation of teachers' professional qualities. In 1961, the Ministry of Education implemented the policy of "adjustment, consolidation, enrichment, and improvement". Political courses for liberal arts accounted for 18% of the total hours, and science courses accounted for 11%; liberal arts courses accounted for 60% and science courses accounted for 70%; education courses accounted for only 5-6%. (Li, 1983, p.1315)

In contrast, the curriculum structure and teaching content in Malaya have undergone significant adjustments, mainly reflected in the localization of teaching content and the emphasis on multilingual education. In 1949, the Federal Legislative Council decided that all government-run and government-subsidized schools

would implement a three-semester system and add Malay and English courses. (Zheng, 2001, p. 115) The Chinese teacher training curriculum covers the basics of Chinese, English, arithmetic, history and geography, art, music, and professional training in educational principles, psychology, teaching methods, etc., emphasizing the combination of theory and practice. (Cai, 2017, p. 21)

The teaching content gradually reflected the "Malaysianization" orientation, reducing the content of Chinese history and geography, and increasing the proportion of local history, geography and social knowledge to adapt to the identity policy promoted by the colonial government. In particular, there was basically no content related to Chinese consciousness in the civic education subject. "(Sin Chew Daily," 1952) In 1956, the Razak Report required all streams of schools to adopt a unified curriculum, emphasizing the status of Malay as the national language, and making the teaching and learning of Malay a condition for government assistance. (Ministry of Education, Federation of Malaya, 1956, chap. 3, secs. 17-18)

It also stipulated that Malay and English were compulsory courses and established a unified examination system, including the sixth grade selection examination for primary schools, the Lower Certificate of Education (LCE) and the Federation of Malaya Certificate (FMC).

3.3 Comparison of Teacher Functions and Career Development Paths

China's teacher functions and career development paths reflect strong political attributes. In the early days of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese government focused on the social and political characterization of teachers and carried out teacher team transformation. The "Summary of National Education Work in 1950" and the "Report on the National Education Work Guidelines and Tasks in 1951" clearly pointed out that education must "serve national construction and schools must open doors for workers and peasants." As the direct undertaker of education, the primary function of teachers is to spread socialist ideology and promote social transformation and national ideological unity. According to statistics, more than 500,000 primary and secondary school teachers participated in political studies in 1950, and ideological and political education continued. (Long, 2019)

In 1951, China formulated a new policy on teacher education, emphasizing the training of new teachers who serve national construction. The four basic policies of "rectification, unification, rectification, and consolidation" require normal schools to train teachers who are both professional and politically conscious. (Report of the Ministry of Education of the Central People's Government, 1951, pp. 102-106) In terms of career development, teachers need to continuously improve their political awareness and teaching level, and participate in national projects such as social movements, rural transformation, and worker-peasant education. The government strengthens teacher in-service training through short-term training courses, winter and summer lectures, and cadre training. Teachers also need to actively participate in social practice work such as rural literacy, social propaganda, and political movements, such as serving as patriotic propagandists and mobilizers in the War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea.

In contrast, the functions and career development paths of teachers in Malaya show the characteristics of cultural guardians and rights defenders. Between 1945 and 1961, Chinese teachers in Malaya not only undertook basic education work, but also served as guardians of cultural identity and advocates of educational rights. In the early post-war period, the primary responsibility of teachers was to teach Chinese, Chinese culture and Chinese history, and to teach English and Malay to adapt to a multilingual environment. Faced with the single national education policy implemented by the colonial government, Chinese teachers gradually became active participants in cultural movements. This was particularly evident in the 1950s. In response to policies that were unfavorable to mother tongue education, Chinese teachers actively participated in protests, rallies, petitions and policy negotiations under the Jiao Zong (established in 1952) and Dong Zong (established in 1954), becoming an important force in Chinese education. Teachers impart knowledge in the classroom and play an organizing and mobilizing role in social movements, reflecting the dual role of teachers as community leaders and cultural defenders.

In terms of career development, teachers mainly obtain qualifications through various short-term teacher training courses and advanced teacher training courses. After the establishment of Qingcaoxiang Teacher Training College in 1952, it provided more systematic professional training. After the establishment of the Daytime Teacher Training College in 1957, Chinese teacher training was gradually incorporated into government management, but due to language requirements and political inclinations, training development was still subject to multiple restrictions. In terms of treatment, after 1952, the government improved the status of Chinese vernacular schools teachers through a new salary system, but with strict administrative control. (Lüyi, 1997, p. 66) Before 1956, the salary system was strictly regulated, and there were differences in salaries for teachers with different qualifications and different sources. After the implementation of the unified salary system in 1961, some teachers entered the government civil service system and enjoyed better benefits, but it also increased the dependence of Chinese education on government policies.

4. Social functions of teacher education

4.1 Comparison between national construction and education popularization functions

In the historical tasks of nation-building and popularizing education, Chinese teacher education in both China and Malaya played an important role, but their functional positioning and implementation paths showed significant differences.

In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the orientation of teacher education was to serve the popularization of culture and economic construction. The long-term war destroyed the education system. By 1956, the national illiteracy rate was as high as 78%, and a large number of teachers were urgently needed to fight against illiteracy and build basic education. (He, 1998) The First National Education Work Conference clearly stated that "education must serve national construction, and schools must open doors for workers and peasants", and established "the correct combination of popularization and improvement, with popularization as the main approach for a considerable period of time" as the guiding principle. (Chronicle of Major Events, 1984, p. 8) In 1951, it was further proposed that the national enrollment rate of school-age children would reach 80% by 1957. Chinese teacher education played a fundamental role in this process, rapidly expanding the grassroots teaching staff.

In contrast, although Chinese teacher education in Malaya was marginalized in the country's overall education system, it played an important role in maintaining the operation of the education system and promoting community revitalization within the Chinese community. In the early post-war period, the Chinese community relied on spontaneous fundraising to rebuild schools, and various Chinese teacher training classes were quickly established to cope with the shortage of teachers. Although official policies tended to favor the national school model, the Chinese education system maintained basic operations through self-organized teacher training and community support, becoming an important platform for the Chinese community to self-organize and rebuild its cultural space, and to some extent facilitated the spread of education and the social reorganization of the ethnic group.

4.2 Cultural inheritance and identity construction

In the new era of China, teacher education is clearly positioned as a channel for the dissemination of socialist ideology. The Ministry of Education's documents emphasize that teachers must master Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. Normal colleges generally offer political theory courses, which occupy a significant proportion of class hours. Through political studies, rural labor, literacy and teaching, normal students internalize the socialist national identity and closely link their personal destiny with the destiny of the country. Chinese teacher education in Malaya shows the interweaving characteristics of cultural identity maintenance and local identity. Under the background of a single national education policy, Chinese teachers and normal school students have become the backbone of maintaining mother tongue education and ethnic culture. The curriculum retains Chinese language, Chinese culture and Chinese history content, while adding local elements of Malaya, seeking a balance between ethnic characteristics and national requirements. Organizations such as Jiao Zong and Dong Zong have strengthened the status of Chinese education as a support for cultural identity through political mobilization and social initiatives.

4.3 Social Change and Community Engagement

China: Educational mobilization and social transformation. After 1949, Chinese teacher education was deeply involved in the country's social transformation. As policy implementers, teachers played a key role in rural literacy, land reform and political movements. A large number of normal school graduates and primary and secondary school teachers were mobilized to participate in rural literacy and actively spread socialist ideas. Normal colleges systematically arranged social practice. The 1952 "Teaching Plan of Normal Colleges" required each department to arrange no less than 12 weeks of educational internships, including teaching internships, internships, and social labor practice. Normal school students went deep into rural primary schools and farmland labor sites to impart knowledge and publicize national policies. The teacher group also played a role in various political movements, such as organizing students to participate in patriotic propaganda and fundraising activities to resist the US and aid Korea. Normal education shapes teachers into part of the national social project and fully participates in promoting social transformation.

Malaya: Community self-organization and educational struggle. Different from the Chinese model, Chinese teacher education in Malaya embodies the characteristics of ethnic self-help and community mobilization. Under the background of the colonial government's implementation of a single national education policy, Chinese teachers became the backbone of maintaining mother tongue education and cultural autonomy. In the early

post-war period, the Chinese community spontaneously raised funds to rebuild schools. Local Chinese groups, alumni associations, and village organizations assisted in merging school buildings and repairing facilities. For example, the Muar Chinese School and Hua Nan Girls' School were merged into the "Chinese Hua Nan School" to solve the problem of resource shortage. (Cai, 2017, p. 19)

Faced with unfavorable policies, Chinese teachers and communities showed a high degree of organization. After the release of the Barnes Report in 1951, Chinese groups in various places took quick action and organized at least six interstate representative conferences within two months to express their protest. Jiao Zong, founded on December 25, 1952, aimed to "improve Chinese vernacular schools education, promote Chinese culture, and jointly seek the welfare of teachers". ("Sin Chew Daily," 1951) Dong Zong and Jiao Zong, founded on August 22, 1954, jointly safeguarded the rights and interests of Chinese education and opposed unfavorable laws. In 1953, the Malaysian Chinese Association established the "MCA Chinese Education Central Committee" to provide political channels for Chinese education. Under the negotiation of Chinese education leader Lim Lian Geok with the Minister of Education, the Alliance government did not include the "ultimate goal of education" in the Education Act 1957. The Act proposed that "Malay should become the national language, while maintaining and supporting the development of the languages and cultures of other ethnic groups in the country", thus gaining a certain living space for Chinese education.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Research findings

The comparative examination of Chinese teacher education in China and Malaya (1945–1961) underscores both structural and functional similarities and differences across institutional organization, curriculum content, and social dynamics.

First, in terms of institutional structure, after the founding of the People's Republic of China, China quickly established a unified teacher education system led by the state, training primary, junior high and high school teachers in different levels, forming a complete system combining pre-service education and post-service training. Malaya's Chinese teacher education developed under the dual tension of colonial control and ethnic autonomy. Although it was gradually formalized, it always faced the problem of insufficient institutional resources and political restrictions.

Secondly, with respect to curriculum structure, Chinese teacher education integrated features of the Soviet model, which stressed the equal importance of political-ideological education and professional knowledge. The curriculum was mainly based on compulsory courses, emphasizing systematicity and standardization. Malaya's Chinese teacher education gradually integrated localization requirements. On the basis of adhering to Chinese education, it strengthened the learning of Malay and English to adapt to the multilingual environment and official policies, showing strong adaptability and cultural coordination efforts.

Thirdly, in terms of social functions, Chinese teacher education has become an important tool for national construction and social transformation. Teachers are not only knowledge disseminators, but also political mobilizers and promoters of social change. Chinese teacher education in Malaya has assumed the dual roles of maintaining cultural identity and fighting for educational rights in a pluralistic society, reflecting the strong will of ethnic cultural self-protection and social participation.

Overall, the differences in the development of teacher education in the two places not only reflect the differences in their respective political systems and national goals, but also reveal how teacher education has become an important force in national construction or ethnic struggle under specific historical conditions.

5.2 Historical Enlightenment and Contemporary Reflection

The study of Chinese teacher education experiences in China and Malaysia provides key insights into how education intersects with political, cultural, and social transformations.

First, teacher education is inseparable from the national political environment. Whether it is China coordinating teacher education with the will of the state, or the Chinese community in Malaya spontaneously organizing the Chinese language teacher system, it shows that teacher training has never been a simple professional matter, but is deeply rooted in national identity, political power and social structure. This reminds us that any reform of teacher education today must fully consider its political and social background.

Secondly, the focus of educational functions varies with the social environment. Chinese teacher education emphasizes the rapid training of teachers with both political loyalty and professional ability to serve socialist construction; while Malayan Chinese education emphasizes cultural inheritance and rights protection. Teachers are not only educators, but also cultural guardians and promoters of social movements. Teacher education in contemporary pluralistic societies should seek a dynamic balance between national unity and cultural diversity.

Finally, there is a complex interaction between education and cultural identity. China promotes the construction of national identity by unifying the teacher training system, while Malaya resists assimilation

pressure by maintaining mother tongue teacher education. This shows that in today's world where globalization and local cultural revival are intertwined, teacher education should not only align with the evolving needs of economic and technological development, but also shoulder the important responsibility of protecting cultural diversity and promoting social inclusion. The historical comparison of Chinese teacher education in China and Malaysia not only enriches the perspective of comparative education research, but also provides a profound historical mirror for contemporary education policy makers: the design of the education system must respect social diversity and achieve organic coordination between national construction and cultural identity.

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Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the paper.

Author Contribution

study conception and design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, draft manuscript preparation: An Li. *The author reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript. The author confirms sole responsibility for the following: study conception and design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation.*

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