ABSTRACT

Language reform is one of the most important and difficult issues confronting China today. The language reform, proposed officially in the early fifties, included three aspects — (i) simplification of the traditional script, (ii) unification of the spoken language by promoting the use of a standard vernacular (putonghue) throughout the country and (iii) popularization of a phonetic spelling system. Among the three aspects, simplification of Chinese Characters is the most significant.

The movement for the simplification of Chinese Characters started only 80 years ago. However, during the early fifties, since the communist take-over of mainland China, the simplification of Chinese Character was promulgated by official decree; people who held different opinions did not dare mention it again. As such, this paper will concentrate mainly on the technical issues, which were published and discussed openly by the Chinese in Mainland China.

On the other hand, however, Taiwan held several free and open debates on the issue of the introduction of simplified characters. Thus, this paper puts emphasis on Taiwan's dispute regarding this issue.
This paper consists of seven Chapters. A brief introduction of
the movement is described in Chapter one. Chapter two elaborates
on the history of the simplification movement. Mr. Luo Jia-Lun
(罗家伦先生), an appointed member of Taiwan's Examination
Board, proposed the introduction of simplified characters for use
in Taiwan. His proposal is discussed in Chapter three. The following
Chapter then looks into the dispute, generated by Luo's proposal,
which occurred in the early 50's in Taiwan.

A discussion of the dispute over the techniques of simplification
of Chinese Characters in China follows in Chapter five. A
tentative review of the impact of the dispute, which occurred in
both China and Taiwan, on Singapore is given in Chapter six.

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