ABSTRACT

Before the outbreak of the 1911 revolution, the revolutionaries and reformists in Singapore were engaged in an open pen debate in their official newspapers, which were "Chong Shing Yit Pao" (《中兴日报》) and "Union Times" (《南洋总汇新报》) respectively. Studies in this area of research were, however, limited. This academic exercise, therefore, aims to review the debate in Singapore and compare it with an earlier debate in Japan, in the hope of shedding some light on a more controversial issue ---- the reappraisal of revolution and reform.

The findings suggest that the debate in Singapore and Japan were of a similar nature. The topics included the necessity of a racist revolution, the feasibility of a revolution and the sincerity of the Manchus in drawing up a constitution and introducing a parliament. However, the debate in Singapore was more of a reaction to the current political developments in China and contained more hostility and aggression, while the debate in Japan was more of a theoretical nature. Further discussion on the reappraisal of the 1911 revolution suggests that revolution may not necessarily be the best instrument for future nation building.