

Border-crossing, Ideology, and Activities of Lawyer Furuya Sadao

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ABSTRACT

This paper traces the trajectories and activities of Furuya Sadao, a Japanese lawyer, in Imperial Japan and Colonial Taiwan. It also analyzes his roles in socio-political movements in Colonial Taiwan, and the conflicts which he encountered after border-crossing.

Born in 1889 to a farmer family in Yamanashi, Furuya had participated in peasant movements during his studies at the Law School of Meiji University. After obtaining his lawyer license in 1920, he became committed to the legal defense activities for labor and peasant movements. Furuya was also one of the founders of Japan Lawyers Association for Freedom (JLAF), and had been regarded as a human rights lawyer, while participating in political activities and joining the Labor-Farmer Party. He went to Seoul in Colonial Korea as a defender lawyer of the Korean Communist Party Incident in 1927. At the end of the same year, the Labor-Farmer Party dispatched Furuya to Colonial Taiwan as a consultant to Taiwan Peasants' Union. Therefore, he and his family moved to Taiwan. In Taiwan, social movements flourished in the second half of the 1920s. Furuya served as a lawyer for many labor or peasant cases and also some political ones between 1927 and 1934. In these cases, Furuya introduced strategies and techniques which had been used in Japan. His opinions and behaviors certainly brought enlightenment to Taiwan society. However, social movements became overheated and gradually lost mass support. In the Juno Incident of 1935, Furuya, on the one hand, advocated the independence of lawyers in the investigation of the Incident, while, on the other hand, supported the supremacy of state power. His dual and dubious stand revealed limitations and changes of his ideology. During the Second World War, Furuya was completely transformed from a human rights lawyer to one who upheld the state power.

This paper analyzes the many and varied roles of Furuya before WWII. His efforts for supporting peasant and social movements in colonies merited recognition.

Nevertheless, his resistance to state power was after all within the establishment. Owing to such weakness of his ideology, he could not escape from it being trapped in the imperial system during the war.

Keywords: Border-crossing, Furuya Sadao, Japanese Lawyer in Colonial Taiwan, Peasant Movements in Taiwan, Japan Lawyers Association for Freedom