

Lawsuits of Lin Sung-shou of Banqiao against His Mother and Lawyer Ichiro Hatoyama during 1918-1921

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ABSTRACT

This paper discussed the 1918 lawsuit filed by Lin Sung-shou of Banqiao against his mother. First, the reason why Lin hired Ichiro Hatoyama from Japan to represent him in this lawsuit was examined. Then how the dispute between Lin and his mother was resolved was analyzed. Finally, why Hatoyama and Lin ended up turning against each other was explored. It was found that the Government-General of Taiwan was not pleased with the dispute between Lin and his mother. Thanks to the mediation by Kojuro Nakagawa, the then vice chairman of Bank of Taiwan, the dispute was eventually resolved. However, Lin failed to pay Hatoyama the legal fee he promised in due course. Hatoyama thus sued Lin and won all three court instances.

In the then social leading class, the Lin family was the most iconic and highly valued by the colonial government, their family dispute aroused much concern from the top authorities. Although the lawsuit involved custody of property, which was relatively simple compared with fierce fight for property distribution, the concern shown by the authority was indicative of political interference in family affairs. The analysis shed light not only on the intricate relationships in the Lin family, but also on the political maneuvers of the Government-General of Taiwan. Nakagawa's mediation was involved in the successive lawsuits, signifying attention and intervention from the top authorities. In-depth examination of these legal disputes of the Lin family offered a better understanding of the judicial history of the social leading class in the Taiwanese society.

Keywords: Lin Ben-yuan, Lin Sung-shou, Ichiro Hatoyama, Hiroshi Shimomura, Kojuro Nakagawa