

## 12. Relational Networks and Peace-Making in East African Pastoral Societies (South Omo) Toru Sagawa (Kyoto University)

Sagawa conducted research on inter-group relations among agro-pastoral peoples in the border region of Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan. Since pre-colonial times, this area has been the location of frequent low-intensity conflicts resulting from raiding livestock and killing members of the “enemy” groups. Since the 1980s, there has been an increase in the level of violence due to the proliferation of automatic rifles. Governments have made few appropriate interventions to mitigate the escalation of hostilities. Rather, policies have often had negative impacts on inter-group relations in this region. However, inter-group relations have not completely deteriorated. Pastoral peoples have voluntarily sought to restore amicable relations. Sagawa highlights that “African Potentials” for restoring peace and reconciliation in this region are threefold: 1) individual networking that crosses group boundaries, 2) respect for the relationality cherished by the local individuals, and 3) relational resilience.

When external intervention is used in attempts to restore peace in this region, Sagawa argues, it is based on an argument that conflicts should be resolved utilizing “African Potentials,” such as “elders as customary authorities” and the “cultural practice of rituals”. However, non-elder community members become frustrated because they feel excluded from the peace-making process. They also become suspicious of elders colluding with external actors. As for peace rituals, what is crucial for the people is that they gather and participate in the ritual, spend several days together, and discuss a possible solution, even if it may not come about easily. However, external interventions conduct peace rituals in a somewhat abbreviated form, because they regard the enactment of the ritual itself as the goal of interventions.