

Motivations, Negotiations, and Animal Individuality: Livestock Exchange of the Turkana in Northwestern Kenya

ITARU OHTA

Center for African Area Studies, Kyoto University

As East African pastoral societies are incorporated into a global order of markets and money, they attract considerable attention as to how their systems of livestock exchange articulate with the new system of commodity exchange. This study describes and analyzes livestock exchanges of the Turkana of northwestern Kenya, and differentiates their exchanges from monetary exchanges. The points discussed are: (1) in most livestock exchanges among the Turkana, an individual asks only in need and takes an animal from the partner with whom he is on good terms, and his "debt" is cleared much later; (2) although a kind of livestock exchange rate is recognized, heated and delicate negotiations finally determine "debt" payment, and each agreement is local, transitory, and non-universal; (3) epistemological examination of Turkana verbs for livestock exchanges reveals specific and definite motivations behind the exchanges; (4) each animal is individually identified, and its singularity supports the uniqueness of each social transaction in which the animal is transferred.

Key words: East Africa, pastoralism, social change, gift, monetary exchange.

1. INTRODUCTION

As the capitalist mode of production expands over the world, the monetary economy infiltrates the "traditional" societies, where gift exchanges were the major channels of important social transactions. It has become one of the most important anthropological themes to inquire how gift exchanges articulate with commodity exchanges. By studying the processes where traditional societies cope with the new system, we can investigate changes and continuities of these societies.

Scholars have made various comparisons between commodity and gift exchanges. Gregory (1982) suggested a theoretical distinction between them, based on his fieldwork in Papua New Guinea. For him, inalienable homogeneous things change hands between reciprocally dependent persons in gift exchanges, while in commodity exchanges, alienable heterogeneous things change hands between reciprocally independent persons. Although his analysis is sometimes criticized as too dualistic, Gregory's heuristic schema makes it possible for us to conceptualize the various real-life exchanges between the two ideal poles.

Appadurai (1986) defined commodity as "things in motion". He argued that we should focus on the "social life of things", and asserted that commodity was not peculiar to industrialized modern societies. His argument has an advantage in that it avoids the

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misleading opposition between gifts and commodities, and the simplistic distinction between use-value and exchange-value. Kopytoff (1986) assumed two ideal poles: a fully commoditized world in which all things were homogeneous and exchangeable, and another world in which all things were in-exchangeable because they were singular and unique. Appadurai and Kopytoff conceived of "commoditization" as a universal phenomenon, and any human society can be placed somewhere in a spectrum stretching between the highest and lowest poles of commoditization.

Bloch and Parry (1989) criticized such arguments that money exerted an intrinsic power to cause universal social changes when monetary economy expanded, automatically reducing social relationships to anonymous and impersonal ones. They pointed out an implicit and widespread tendency of scholars who assume fundamental opposition between an economy with money and without money. This opposition led to the dualism of "traditional" and "modern", precapitalism and capitalism, gift economy and commodity economy, and production for use-value and exchange-value. They indicated that this dualistic assumption concealed the reality that money played various important roles in "traditional" precapitalist economies. In short, what they rejected was the essentialism of money.

It is true that gift and commodity exchanges are somehow continuous, and both types of exchange coexist within a given society. However, it is also true that both types of exchange are ideally distinct, following different sets of rules. Commodity exchanges are characterized by equal values of the exchanged things, and by the simultaneity of the change. In contrast, the equality of things is not explicitly questioned in gift exchanges, and the simultaneity is neglected.

In African pastoral societies, livestock were, and still are, important media of economic and social exchanges. Some scholars argue that livestock function as one of the "primitive money". For example, Schneider (1968) maintained that livestock have such functions of money as "standards of value", "media of exchange", and "stores of value". He argued that the Turu of Tanzania have a system of exchange, in which things are exchanged according to the standardized value, and that this characteristic is widely shared among East African societies.

Then, how do the pastoralists respond to the spread of a monetary economy? It seems that money does not simply replace and occupy the place of livestock. For example, Comaroff and Comaroff (1990) reported that, in such social exchanges as for bridewealth and payment of fines, among the Tswana of South Africa, the amount of payments is expressed by the number of cattle, although they are actually paid with money. Money superficially replaced cattle, but people still distinguish the important transactions from ordinary market exchanges. It is in effect an act to decommoditize money. Hutchinson (1992) presented the same phenomenon. Among the Nuer, people distinguish between the "cattle of girls", which are obtained as bridewealth, and the "cattle of money", which are purchased. People see the latter as a more individualistic property, that is, more commoditized. They also decommoditize money, distinguishing the "money of work" and the "money of cattle", where the latter is preserved for buying cattle, because people who have some rights to the sold cattle keep the rights to the money obtained by its disposal.

Among the Turkana, Broch-Due (1999) reported an interesting story. When a young man with a cash income bought livestock with his money and took them home, his mother neither welcomed the son, nor seemed to be happy. A Turkana mother usually enthusiastically welcomes her sons when they return with livestock that they raided, or begged from somebody else. However, because the mother conceded that the livestock purchased with her son's personal money could not become "family property", she was indifferent. This example shows that some livestock are more commoditized than others, according to the cultural definitions.

So, it is clear that money does not simply replace livestock among these societies. Why? In order to understand this, we should comprehend the cultural matrix into which livestock is woven. In this paper, I will examine how livestock are transferred among the Turkana, and try to show how their ways of livestock transfer are different from our ways of

commodity exchanges.

2. THE TURKANA

About 300,000 Turkana live in northwestern Kenya. Most of them stay in the Turkana District. Average annual rainfall at Lodwar, the centre of the district, is about 200 mm, although Lodwar is located in the most arid part of the area. Because of this dryness, agriculture is not extensively practiced. Most of the people keep five species of livestock, cattle, camels, goats, sheep, and donkeys, and lead a nomadic life depending on the distribution of both water and plants on which livestock feed.

Needless to say, livestock are important as a food source. When the people are blessed with enough rain and many livestock give birth, milk constitutes the major diet (e.g., Coughenour et al. 1985). The meat is consumed when livestock are slaughtered on various occasions, and the blood taken from livestock veins is also eaten.

People sell livestock when they need cash. They buy such foodstuffs as maize flour, sugar, tea leaves, and oil. Cooking pots, clothes, sandals, and beads for ornamentation are also bought. Nowadays, people need cash to pay hospital fees and children's school fees.

Livestock are exchanged with several things. Kid goats and lambs, weaned at seven to eight months, are most frequently used in such exchanges. One goat or sheep of this size can be exchanged with various commodities such as two to three gourds, according to the size, one plain cloth like a bed sheet, one jacket, one spear, three iron axe blades, four lumps of tobacco leaves (dried and hardened into a cylindrical shape of 6–8 cm diameter, about 30 cm in length), which is produced by neighboring peoples, 30–35 litres of sorghum grain, or one large wooden bowl. These exchange rates are relatively fixed, although they are always negotiable.

A Turkana verb for this type of exchange is *aki-giel*. This term is also used in buying and selling, but it stands for neither "to buy" nor "to sell". "To sell" is expressed as *aki-giel-ar*, with a suffix "-ar", which indicates that the verbal action takes place away from the speaker or deictic focus. "To buy" is often used without any suffix, but in order to state the actor's intention clearly, people use *aki-giel-un*, with a suffix "-un", which indicates that the action specified by the verb takes place toward the speaker or deictic focus (e.g., Heine 1980). Therefore, the verb *aki-giel* means both "to buy" and "to sell" or "an action concerned with buying and selling".

The verb is also used with the above two suffixes when people exchange livestock with things, and things with things. For example, when I offer someone a goat and get a spear in exchange, my action can be expressed in two ways: I do *aki-giel-ar* (to do *aki-giel* that way) a goat, or I do *aki-giel-un* (to do *aki-giel* this way) a spear. This verb, however, is not used when people exchange livestock with livestock, which is a totally different action from the exchanges in which a person exchanges livestock with things or with money⁽¹⁾.

3. LIVESTOCK EXCHANGES FOR 'CONSUMPTION'

The Turkana need livestock of particular categories on certain occasions. For example, an ox should be spared in the marriage ceremony. Livestock of a particular coat colour should be slaughtered to treat certain human diseases. People seek out a castrated animal either to slaughter to eat, or because they need cash. When an animal of a particular category is required, people sometimes choose it from their own herd. But in other cases, they visit their kinsmen or friends to ask for the animal, and return another later. That is, two animals are exchanged with some time lag. The first animal from a kinsman or friend will be slaughtered or sold, which I will term "consumed" in this paper. And I will term this exchange "for consumption" for the person who gets the first animal he needed.

Table 1 shows actual cases of this type of exchange, when castrated males of large stock (cattle, camels, and donkeys) were "consumed". Young females of the same species with the consumed animal were frequently paid (24 and 26 cases in cattle and camels, respectively) in return. Among the Turkana, the most common livestock exchanges for

Table 1. What was paid when one castrated large stock was 'consumed' (93 cases)

Payment	What was consumed (cases)		
	Ox	Castrated camel	Castrated donkey
Female calf	24	6	0+
Male calf	1	3(-)	0
Female camel-calf	0+	26	0+
Male camel-calf	13	1	0+
Female donkey-calf	4	1	2
Male donkey-calf	0-	0-	0-
Goats and sheep	4	8	0

Data collected in 1980–1988.

0+: Payment was too large.

0-: Payment was too small.

0: Payment was possible, but did not materialize.

(-): There are three cases in which a male calf was paid for a castrated camel, although the payment was said to be too small.

consumption is between castrated goats or sheep and young nulliparous goats or sheep.

However, it is possible to exchange different species of livestock, and the relative value of livestock emerges in such exchanges. In Table 1, a young non-castrated camel was paid in return for an ox in 13 cases. The reverse cases, in which a non-castrated bullock was paid for a castrated camel, occurred three times. However, this payment is "too small", according to the Turkana. Also if one pays with a camel heifer for an ox, the payment is "too large", and indeed there was no such case. These examples indicate that camels are of higher value than cattle. Only a few donkeys are exchanged in Table 1, but the value of donkeys is lower than that of the cattle. In terms of relative value of large animals, camels are of the highest value, followed by cattle and donkeys⁽²⁾.

Sometimes several castrated goats and sheep are consumed, and one large animal is paid back later. The number of castrated goats and sheep varies according to the category of the large animal that is promised to be paid in return in future. Table 2 shows some "exchange rates" that were narrated to me by the Turkana, and not actual exchange cases⁽³⁾. The same relative value among the large stock is demonstrated, where camels are of the highest value.

However, the relative value among the large stock does not constitute a consistent system as a whole. I found many discrepancies in the statements of the Turkana. For example, when a castrated camel was consumed, the payment was either a young female camel or a heifer (Table 1). Then it seems that camels and cattle are of the same value, which contradicts my deduction above. When the Turkana say that one can pay either a young female cow or donkey for an ox, it seems to indicate that cattle and donkeys are of the same value. But this is contradictory to another statement of theirs that when somebody consumes a castrated donkey, he can pay back with a young female donkey, but nobody

Table 2. How many castrated goats and sheep are obtainable for 'consumption' by promising to pay back one large animal (1994)

Promised payment	Ideal number of obtainable castrated goats and sheep
Female calf	3–4
Male calf	2 + one female kid
Female camel-calf	7–8
Male camel-calf	6–7
Female donkey-calf	3–4
Male donkey-calf	2

pays with a heifer because this payment is too large.

In the actual exchange cases in Table 1, there are some deviations from the “exchange rates”: in three cases, a male calf was paid in exchange for a castrated camel, despite the statement that this payment is “too small”. Eleven goats and sheep should be paid when one consumed another’s ox, according to the Turkana. However, among four such cases (Table 1), eight goats and sheep were paid back in one case, 10 in another, and 11 in two cases. And when one castrated camel is consumed, 11–12 goats and sheep should be paid back. But in actual eight cases in Table 1, seven were paid in two cases, nine in one case, 10 in another, 11 in two cases, and 12 in two other cases. These examples show that considerable deviations from the “exchange rates” occur in actual transactions.

Table 3 shows what kind of large animal was paid in return for consuming several castrated goats and/or sheep. The relative values among the livestock are clearly demonstrated. First, the camel is of the highest value among the large animals, followed by cattle and donkeys, as pointed out already. Second, a female is of higher value than a male of the same species.

However, here again there are many deviations from the ideal “exchange rate” (Table 2). For example, three castrated goats were obtained in exchange for an uncastrated bullock (three cases), and in contrast, a heifer was paid when a person consumed only two castrated goats (two cases). Furthermore, even when a payment was made with an animal of the same category, there was a considerable fluctuation in the number of goats and sheep that were obtained in exchange. A heifer was paid for four castrated goats and/or sheep in one case, and for two castrated goats and/or sheep in two cases.

In short, the following two characteristics may be pointed out about the Turkana livestock exchanges for “consumption”:

- Relative values of livestock animal categories are commonly recognized, which seemingly constitutes the “exchange rate”. However, the “rate” is not a consistent system as a whole, having many discrepancies.
- There are many deviations from the “rate” in actual livestock exchanges.

Table 3. What was paid back after ‘consuming’ castrated goats and sheep (35 cases)

What was consumed (numbers)		Payment (cases)				
		One calf		One camel-calf	One donkey-calf	
Castrated goats and sheep + female kid*		Male	Female	Male	Male	Female
2		15				
2	1	3				
3		3				

3	1		2			
3			2			
2			2			
4			1			

6				2		
5				1		

3					1	
2					1	

3	1					1
3						1

*: Sometimes one female kid, which is not for ‘consumption’, is added to the castrated goats and sheep (six cases). Data collected in 1980–1988.

4. NEGOTIATIONS IN THE LIVESTOCK EXCHANGES FOR 'CONSUMPTION'

The variations in numbers and categories of livestock seen in the exchanges for "consumption" occur because the payments are not made automatically following a fixed "rate" or set of rules. The Turkana always engage in negotiations. The following case vividly shows how payments are settled. Kinship relations of the actors of Case 1 are shown in Fig. 1.

(Case 1)

14 June, 1991. At the homestead of Aruth. Aruth had taken a castrated camel of Etau and speared it for food several months ago. Loker came to ask for the payment as an agent of Etau.

Around 7:00 in the morning before the goats and sheep were taken out to graze, Aruth went to the enclosure and let out kid goats one by one. Four males and five females were selected. Loker was sitting at some distance within the homestead and watching silently. Aruth walked up to Loker, and asked, "How many are they?" Confirming that they were nine, Aruth started to negotiate, saying that he would pay the remaining two kids in future. It seemed that they had agreed on the total payment to be 11. Aruth tried to persuade Loker, saying, "I don't have any more kids, as you see now". "There is one more kid that I decided to pay you, but it is too small. Do you think it is good to take away such a small kid?" Loker did not agree and said, "The castrated camel that you ate is not mine, but Etau's. He will not accept the payment of nine kids. Add one more". Aruth went to his wife and discussed the matter, but she seemed to disagree with Loker. Aruth said to Loker half-jokingly, "If Etau will not accept these nine kids, you can take them and give Etau your own castrated camel instead". Finally after about one hour's discussion, Aruth persuaded Loker to take nine kids. The door of the enclosure was opened and goats and sheep were taken out for grazing.

After about two and a half years, 9 December, 1993, I asked Aruth whether he had paid the remaining two kids. His reply was very interesting: "I will not pay them any more. They (Etau and Loker) should be satisfied with the payment (of nine kids) because when I speared the castrated camel, Etau and his family also ate its meat⁽⁴⁾".

This episode tells us how things are settled among the Turkana. First, Aruth admitted to paying 11 kid goats, but he insisted that he could hand over only nine for the time being, and that he would pay the remaining two kids later. These two goats were a "debt" which he should pay in future. However, time limit was not set for the payment. Furthermore, it was uncertain that he would really pay the debt. In the above case, after two and a half years from the first payment, Aruth said to me that he would not pay the debt any more.

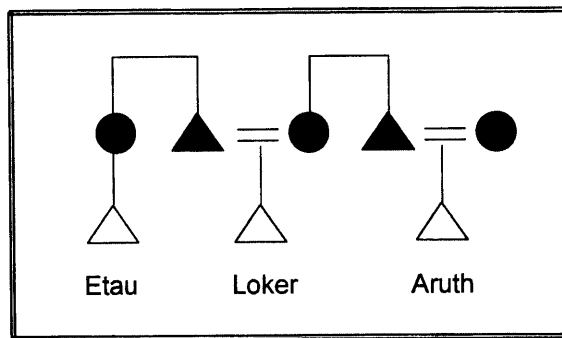


Fig. 1. Kinship relationships of the actors in Case 1
 △: Male, ○: Female, ■: Dead

Among the Turkana, there is no obligation to pay a debt unless one is asked by the creditor. Aruth might have judged that the payment would not be demanded any more, because Etau had not asked for it for a long time. He also might have taken their past social relationships into consideration. However, it was merely his view, and Etau's intention was unknown. This kind of debt sometimes remains unsettled for more than a decade. I know some instances in which the debts were not settled by the persons concerned, but by their sons. Many people have such debts and claims.

There is no public Turkana system to compel people to pay for the debts. When a person wants to recover a debt, all he should do is to bring forward his claim and persuade the person concerned. Then the two parties conduct long and heated negotiations, and general logic does not apply, nor does demanding the payment on past agreement amount to much. It is useless to accuse the exchange partner saying, "You have promised me to pay 11 kids". The counterpart might refuse to pay, citing such a specific reason as "My livestock are almost depleted because of the recent drought". In these negotiations, people cannot rely on standards and/or rules. For us, a rule should be, by definition, universally applicable. For the Turkana, however, a rule is not so absolute as to be followed regardless of time and space. They never discuss generalities, but they always delve into specifics. They confine themselves to the "here and now", so to speak. Among the Turkana, one must assert justifiable grounds and make the exchange partner consent to his own position through face-to-face negotiations (Ohta 1996).

Let there be no misunderstanding about this. I am not arguing that the Turkana are egoistic utilitarians motivated only by profit. For them, such rules as the "exchange rate" and past promises are abstract and external to the issues at hand. When the Turkana make a settlement on any matter, they do not relegate authority to any abstract rules or promise. Also, such social categories as "wife's father-daughter's husband" do not determine specific ways of paying debts. In order to arrive at mutual agreements without seeking bases on absolute standards, it becomes essential for the Turkana to undergo a process of negotiation (Kitamura 1997). And all negotiations are conducted on case-by-case and individual bases.

5. TURKANA TERMS FOR LIVESTOCK EXCHANGES FOR 'CONSUMPTION'

In the Turkana language, there is a unique term for livestock exchanges for "consumption". By examining this term, it becomes understandable what really happens in these exchanges. Fig. 2 shows a simple model of an exchange. Person X in Fig. 2 takes an ox from Y for "consumption", and pays with a heifer later.

It is X, not Y, who initiates this exchange. His action is expressed by a Turkana verb *aki-siec*, which does not stand for "to exchange livestock". If I were to venture a translation, it means "to get some livestock for consumption from somebody, and give back other livestock (later)". We can conjugate *aki-siec* in the same way as the verb "to buy/sell", adding a suffix that signifies the direction of actions. The suffix "-ar" indicates that the verbal action takes place away from the speaker or deictic focus, and the suffix "-un" indicates that the action specified by the verb takes place toward the speaker or deictic focus (e.g., Heine 1980). Then, X in Fig. 2 first does *aki-siec-un* (take [an ox] this way), and

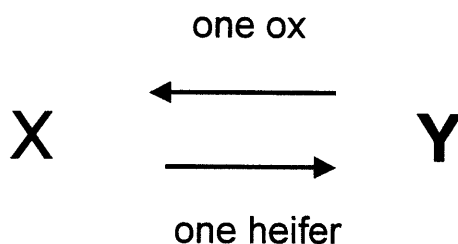


Fig. 2. Livestock exchange for 'consumption'

later does *aki-siec-ar* (give [a heifer] that way). His actions of “to receive” and “to give” in this exchange are expressed by the same verb, although the directions are opposite.

Then in Fig. 2, what does Y do? For him, this is not a livestock exchange for “consumption”, that is, he is not doing *aki-siec*. He also performs the two actions of “to give” and “to receive”. His action of “to give” is expressed by a term *a-inakin*, which is a general term for “to give” or “to let somebody to take (something) away”⁽⁵⁾. Later he receives a heifer, but this action of receiving is not expressed explicitly in Turkana. If Y is asked by somebody, “how did you get this animal?” after receiving the heifer, he would not reply as “I got this by such and such means”, but as “A person did *aki-siec-ar*”.

What is represented in Fig. 2 is not a simple exchange, in that X and Y engage in asymmetric actions. This exchange is “for consumption” from X’s view point. He has a specific and concrete motivation to consummate this exchange, that is, to slaughter the ox in a ritual, or to sell it and buy certain commodities. Because of his particular purpose, he proposes this exchange to Y. On the other hand, Y does not have any direct motivation. He is merely approached by X and gives away one animal on condition that X will pay him back with a heifer in future. He does nothing on his own initiative, and there are no specific terms in Turkana for his actions⁽⁶⁾.

6. LIVESTOCK EXCHANGES ‘TO BOOST THE REPRODUCTIVITY OF THE HERD’

In Fig. 2, the heifer that Y obtains will contribute to the reproductivity of Y’s herd. However, Y has no initiative in realizing the supposed result. He is rather passive in that he merely complies with X’s request for the exchange. If somebody wishes to obtain a female animal for the specific aim of boosting his herd’s reproductivity, what is he/she to do?

To our surprise, there is no way of doing this on one’s initiative among the Turkana. In order to explain this issue, I return to Fig. 2. This is an exchange of an ox and a heifer. It seems possible for Y to ask X for the heifer by offering an ox in exchange. However, if X has no specific motivation to “consume” the ox he will receive from Y, i.e., to slaughter the ox in certain rituals or for food, X will not accept Y’s offer. Can Y get a heifer from X by “promising” X an ox when X needs it? Unfortunately, this promise is not likely to be fulfilled, because when the time comes when X needs a specific ox, Y may not necessarily turn out to be in possession of the ox. So, X does not accept Y’s “promise”. Such being the case, if Y wishes to acquire a female animal to boost the reproductivity of his herd, he should wait for an exchange partner to turn up. The same wait applies when one wishes to acquire reproducing males.

A Turkana man told me that there is one and only way of acquiring a female animal in an exchange, that is, to take a male animal to traders who have shops in towns and propose an exchange, as some of these traders deal with livestock for meat. Since they locally buy mostly castrated livestock to take them to cities to sell, they are always ready to accept male livestock, and give away female ones in exchange, according to the Turkana. His wisdom vividly illustrates how the Turkana always think about livestock exchanges in finite and concrete terms.

There is yet another way of acquiring a female animal through exchanges, although one cannot initiate the exchange. When one is in need of a specific male animal and cannot find any adequate exchange partner, one will go on a journey with a female animal in search of an exchange partner. Likewise, people sometimes take a female animal to towns to sell, when they do not have appropriate male animals. In this area, there are no market places for livestock, except for the district capital⁽⁷⁾. To make a journey with some livestock is the only recourse left for the people to look for unspecified exchange partners. Thus, those men in need of exchange partners will be stopped by a passer-by in need of the category of animal he has, and there will be an exchange on the spot.

In the Turkana language, *aki-lokony* is a specific verb for this act. This verb means “to acquire a (nulliparous) female animal for reproduction by offering a male one in exchange (to those who are travelling with the female) on the spot”. As is shown above,

this verb carries an implication of exchanging livestock “with a rather unfamiliar partner on the spot”. People sometimes explain that this act is done with the traders⁽⁸⁾.

It is noteworthy that, for the person who acquires a male animal by this exchange, the exchange is “for consumption”. His act is expressed by the verb *aki-siec*. He is X in Fig. 2. His social relationship with the exchange partners varies in accordance with the timing of his payment, i.e., whether he completes the payment then and there, or he can defer the payment. Partners who do not know him well will not accept deferred payment. Those who accept it are his relatives or friends who have a long experience of a closer acquaintance with him. In short, livestock exchanges with deferred payments are carried out as a mutual assistance based on trust. However, the Turkana do not have specific terms for this. What receives much attention of the people is the immediate motivation and/or purpose of the actor. In this regard, the timing of his payment is not relevant. This explains why the same verb *aki-siec* applies to two different types of exchange, that is, with deferred payment and with on-the-spot payment.

Generally speaking, things can be exchanged when the needs of two persons concerned coincide. For example, when barter exchange is realized, two persons present are in need of what each has. Livestock exchanges “to boost the reproductivity of the herd” occur in this situation among the Turkana. However, this type of exchange does not happen frequently, and only once in the 93 cases of large stock exchanges shown in Table 1. In need of a specific livestock, most of the Turkana visit close relatives and/or friends, and ask for an exchange with deferred payment, or for a free gift.

7. SPECIFIC MOTIVATIONS IN LIVESTOCK EXCHANGES

From the epistemological examinations of Turkana terms for livestock exchanges, it becomes clear that they have specific words for the exchanges, and that these words have a close association with the actors’ specific motivations. When they engage in exchanges on their own initiative, they have concrete and definite purposes to achieve. In a sense, it is a truism. However, how the purpose is fulfilled is not familiar to us.

(Case 2)

A Turkana man came to me with a female sheep. He wanted to sell it to me in order to buy medicine for livestock diseases. We started to talk about its price. He said, “The medicine costs 250 shillings, and I sell the sheep at 300 shillings”. “No, you can buy the medicine for 200 shillings. I pay only that amount”, I retorted. A man of the homestead in which I lived assisted me saying, “I bought it at 175 shillings a few days ago at the district capital, but we were overcharged because Ohta was with us. It should be cheaper than that”. We continued the discussion like this for a while, and the seller of the sheep said, “OK, add some amount to 200 shillings for me to buy tea leaves and sugar”, and we agreed at the price of 230 shillings.

It was not easy for me to get accustomed to this kind of negotiation. To me, only the market price of the concerned animal should be the precondition for the negotiation. There is no other basis to decide its price. However, in the above case, the central issue was not the market price of the animal, but that of the medicine. The “yardstick” was at the opposite end: the price of the sheep was based on “what he wanted to buy with the money”.

Needless to say, the Turkana can cite the market price of animals. One of the reasons why our price negotiation for the sheep above proceeded based on the market price of the medicine was that the seller of the sheep was my old acquaintance. In a sense, he visited me in order not to sell the sheep, but to ask me for assistance to solve a problem he had. When my friends came to sell livestock to me, similar price negotiations took place by and large. People tried to persuade me saying, “I should buy maize flour. The family members of your friend are hungry. Then, buy this animal at such and such a price”. Then, aware of the market price, I sometimes paid more than that.

Some readers of the above account may think that in these negotiations, the local people duped me because I was an outsider. However, the next case clearly shows that more is involved and realized in these negotiations.

(Case 3)

One day, I visited one of my Turkana friend and was given a he-goat. When I came back home, another friend, X, asked me to sell it to him. Each Turkana man has "his own colour", and form a particular relationship with castrated animals of their own colour, making songs for the animal, and reforming its horns into specific shapes. The he-goat I obtained had a coat of X's colour. At that time, X was employed by another Japanese researcher, and had enough money to buy the goat. Because he asked me eagerly, I sold it to him after negotiating the price.

X was delighted. When he composed a song for the goat, he inserted into the lyrics a passage that the goat was given to him by Ohta. He also told people again and again that I gave the animal to him.

The phenomenon that men develop a special relationship with castrated animals is widely seen among East African pastoral societies, and is generally termed as "identification". The details of the custom are different from people to people, but it is commonly held that such animals perform an important function as a medium of men's self-expression. The motif of Case 3 is that X obtained such an important animal. In one sense, I only sold a goat after a negotiation, considering its market price. People also understood that the goat was not "given" but "sold" to him. However, for the Turkana, the market value of the goat was not the key point. What was important for them was that "a specific value" was created, and it was certain that I surely contributed to its creation.

8. 'INDIVIDUALITY' OF LIVESTOCK

The "specific value" of possessing a certain castrated animal will be discussed further. There is plenty of anthropological literature on East African pastoral societies dealing with such "identification". Choosing a specific ox, a man reshapes its horns, adorns it with bells and/or collars, brand a pattern on its body, etc. He composes songs dedicated to the animals full of metaphorical and expressive phrases. In Turkana, such songs are referred to by the same term as oxen (*emong*, pl. *ngimongin*). At night when people gather or dance, each man takes turn singing his own songs. The audience, both men and women, are all familiar with the songs. The solo parts alternate with chorus parts. The owner of the song, who proudly sings the solo, is supported by the people around him, who intersperse it with chorus parts clapping hands. This indicates that "identification" is a device to express and establish oneself, and at the same time suggests that this process does not materialize in the absence of others' support.

The Turkana have a specific term, *aki-dwar*, for this kind of "identification" with castrated animals. The chosen animal is not left to die naturally of old age. When it becomes old, it is given to one of the "best friends" of the owner, and speared at the friend's homestead. On the very day, family members of the owner gather and dance at the homestead, and are given various gifts. The skull of the speared animal is hung on a certain near-by tree branch, which will always stir people's memory in future.

These castrated animals of "identification" are comparable to another "self" of their owners. It is difficult to discuss what "self" is for the Turkana. However, it is unmistakable that these animals are conceived as irreplaceable beings by the Turkana, as are the humans themselves. I call this special characteristic the "individuality" of livestock (Ohta 1986a).

A Turkana knows each and every animal he or she owns. Moreover, the Turkana have such detailed knowledge of the animals of neighboring families as to their origin, history of coming into the herd, and ultimate ownership. They have a rich vocabulary to refer to such attributes of livestock as coat colours, age-sex categories, and horn shapes, and they make full use of such vocabulary to identify and refer to a specific individual animal. It is

quite easy for them to reach a mutual understanding of any animal under discussion in absentia. People, however, do not identify an animal by a list of distinctive features. In other words, they do not rely on systematic classification, which, for example, is useful in identifying a plant specimen with a botanical manual. The Turkana identify animals at a glance, as we identify humans.

When a female animal gives birth and is milked for the first time, its milker gives it a proper name, which is called out at the time of milking. For livestock of other categories, "name" is established among family members through the process of repeatedly referring to animals. For example, a goat with a white coat will be called "White", as another white goat may be called "Long horn", etc. That is, although the Turkana do not intentionally give proper names to livestock other than parous females, descriptive ways of referring to individual animals turn into proper names (Ohta 1986a).

All livestock are recognized individually. Of the East African pastoral societies, there are many reports that people do not "count" the livestock. "To count" the livestock, or to express them in "figures", is to abstract the animals' individuality and reduce them to replaceable equivalents. People's attitude not to count animals shows that they do not regard the livestock herd as an assembly of anonymous beings. All the livestock, including castrated males with which people bond with a special "identification", have an "individuality".

In returning to the topic of exchange, when livestock of irreplaceable individuality are exchanged, the exchange itself becomes unique. Suppose that X takes an ox from Y, and promises to pay with a heifer in future. This is the exchange in Fig. 2. Then, before X pays back the debt (a heifer), let us assume that Y needs an ox and gets it from X. In such a situation, X's debt will not be settled. X continues to owe Y a heifer for consuming "that" specific ox, and Y also owes X an animal for consuming "this" ox.

In this manner, each livestock exchange is uniquely remembered, and its uniqueness is sustained by livestock "individuality". The state of affairs is the same in case of gifts. It is surprising that people keep long memories of livestock transactions, which they recall and mention from time to time.

(Case 4)

In September 1980, the family head of Naagira decided to send him to primary school. Naagira was a boy of about ten years old at that time, and had been working as a livestock herder, but the family lost their herd to a severe drought. As Naagira needed a school uniform, Longole, Naagira's classificatory paternal cross-cousin, covered its cost by selling his he-goat.

Thirteen years later in 1993, I asked Naagira, "Long ago, Longole sold a he-goat of such and such coat colour. Do you know what he bought with the money?" I asked this question abruptly, when we were not talking about primary schools, nor Longole buying something for Naagira. My question must have been an unexpected one. Naagira, however, immediately replied, "It was my uniform", flashing his white teeth in a grin.

(Case 5)

The family I stayed with had a visitor. He was the husband of the family head's mother's sister's daughter. He usually lived far away, and it was my first time to see him, although I knew him by name. The head of the family introduced him to me, saying, "I think you know my cow of such and such colour. This is the man who gave it to me". The cow was given to the mother of the family head, when the visitor married her niece.

As clearly indicated in these cases, people have a detailed knowledge about individual livestock that are transferred, and talk about social relationships and past events through these transactions. Livestock, transferred in exchanges, or as gifts, are not anonymous entities, but singular individuals with particular attributes. Each animal, with its singularity, is akin to the ornamental knot giving character and depth to interwoven social relationships and personal histories.

9. CONCLUSION

I will conclude by pointing out four distinctions about the Turkana's livestock exchanges, in comparison with our commodity exchanges that are mediated by money: (1) the exchange rate and value equivalence of exchanged things; (2) the specificity of desire in the exchange; (3) the social relationship of the persons involved in the exchange; and (4) livestock "individuality" and commoditization.

9.1 Exchange rate and value equivalence of things exchanged

The Turkana recognize a kind of "exchange rate" of livestock. The rates represent certain relative values of livestock of various categories, and the rates provide the minimal and basic standard for livestock exchanges. However, these rates do not constitute an integrated system of exchange, as they often are inconsistent. Moreover, the Turkana do not automatically follow these rates. They always conduct arduous direct negotiations when they exchange livestock.

In our world of commodity exchanges, we accept axiomatically that the value of things is measured by money, which can be supposedly exchanged with anything at any time. We feel it self-evident that all the commodities have a price that indicates their value, and that the money functions as a scale to measure the value of things, expressed numerically as price. However, this is an illusion in a sense that values are incomparable. For example, it is senseless to state that a pair of trousers priced at 10,000 yen is "of ten times the value" of a beefsteak priced at 1000 yen. As such an equation is absurd, it is wholly impossible to compare the two values. Karatani (1990) stated that the value of things expressed by their prices in the commodity world was fictitious in reality, and that what really existed was mere transitive differences among use-values of things. The values of things are arbitrary, in that it is essentially impossible to compare them. We have no rational bases to compare (= to equate) these values.

Then, how does it become possible to exchange things whose values are incomparable? One apparent solution is to designate prices to things, and we have come to feel that prices stand for the inherent value of things. However, a commodity does not have any inherent comparable value. It may have a price, but not because it originally has a proper value. Only when money came into operation did commodities acquire prices (= values). Money, therefore, conceals the mechanism of equating things that are principally incomparable.

The exchange of things that we cannot equate becomes possible by institutionalizing an exchange rate. Rules and institutions make invisible the fact that the values of things are arbitrary. Persons concerned may follow rules accepting supreme authority, or observe exchange rates as custom. With rules or institutions, it becomes possible for the persons concerned to be convinced that the two exchanged things are of equal value. Without this conviction, exchanges cannot be consummated.

However, the Turkana do not rely on rules and institutions external to the immediate independent negotiations. The claims and obligations of the two counterparts are not predetermined automatically by such abstract rules as the kinship categories they belong to. If the value of things is "qualitative" and irreducible to "quantities", it is irrational to compare and equate values of exchanged things. So, the Turkana always conduct face-to-face negotiations to arrive at an agreement. In order to equate (= to exchange) livestock that are not equatable, an arduous negotiation is essential and indispensable.

Also, the worked-out agreement is effective only "here and now" among the Turkana. That is, all agreements are specific to the context, and they are not of universal validity. The Turkana constantly engage in negotiations to pursue and reach independent solutions.

9.2 Specificity of desire in the exchange

The epistemological examination of the Turkana terms for livestock exchange reveals that the Turkana always have specific motives when they conduct exchanges. Livestock exchange for "consumption" is conducted by the one who has a definite purpose to

“consume” an animal. His act is designated by the same term, whether he pays for the animal on the spot or later.

The Turkana cannot subjectively initiate an exchange to acquire female or reproducing male animals to enlarge the herd through reproduction. Even if a man needs a female animal and has exchangeable male animals, males are only acceptable to an exchange partner in need to “consume” them. On the other hand, the man who gives away a castrated male to an exchange partner will receive a female animal as promised at any time.

In the world of monetary exchanges, money is acceptable to anybody at any time. In this sense, female animals for the Turkana bear a resemblance to money. However, it is impossible to initiate an exchange to acquire female animals. If a person wants to obtain a female animal in exchange for a male, he should wait for somebody to come to ask for the male. The very desire to accumulate female animals seems to be curbed here.

It is generally assumed that East African pastoralists try to multiply their livestock herds as much as possible. We, living in the world of commodities, try to save money in order to prepare for the future. There is a seeming resemblance between these two. When I was living with the Turkana, I assumed that it was one of the possible measures for multiplying the livestock number to keep more females in one’s herd. Thus, I asked some Turkana men, “When somebody ‘consumes’ your ox and promises to pay back 11 young goats, it seems better for you to request more females than males. Will you do so? Or, will your exchange partner try to pay back with more males than females in order to keep them for himself?”

Turkana men replied, “No, we need males as well as females in our life”. One of them added, spontaneously, “When we receive several goats as one’s share of bridewealth payment, we like to have balanced numbers of both sexes. When it is not balanced, we can complain and amend the payments”.

From the above statements, I assumed the following equations:

(1) One young male goat = one young (nulliparous) female goat.

However, when one castrated goat is “consumed”, a young nulliparous female is paid in exchange. Then,

(2) One castrated goat = one nulliparous female goat.

However,

(3) One castrated goat \neq one young male goat.

This is because the former is clearly of higher value. I showed these three equations to the above-mentioned Turkana man and asked about the seeming inconsistency. After considering for a while, he replied, “Even one young male goat can be exchanged with a nulliparous female, when it grows up”.

To begin with, it is irrelevant to think about the value of goats using abstract equations, ignoring actual situations of livestock exchange. I assumed, “To keep more females will lead to herd reproductivity, and even if one does not keep the males, he will be able to get castrated males through exchanges whenever it is necessary”. This is, after all, our way of thinking of saving money. It is familiar for us to think, “In future, a time will come when I will need money to buy something. I don’t know when I will desire it, nor what I will need. I should save money for the time being, and I will be able to purchase anything whenever it becomes necessary”. Here, our desire has no relevance to specific and definite necessities. We are living with pervasive infinite desires.

Turkana men also want to maintain as large a herd of livestock as possible. However, they don’t have the idea of accumulating unlimited wealth, because it has no connection to the finite purposes to be realized. Moreover, for the Turkana, it is not always indispensable to keep female animals (for us to save money), because it is possible to acquire what they may want (castrated males) by promising to pay the debt in future.

In the statement of the above-mentioned Turkana man, a sense of time is manifested, which is different from ours. It takes time to grow a young male animal and castrate it to be large enough to exchange with females. However, the Turkana leave such time out of consideration. Iwai (1993) has argued that there was no objective basis to establish the

value of money, and that money is accepted customarily because we anticipate that the money will be continually used infinitely, as it has been used in the past. He suggested that our practice of utilizing money might be related to our sense of time (Iwai 1993). Whereas we inevitably hedge our plans with the notion of infinite time, the Turkana firmly anchor themselves to the present.

As I stated, a Turkana does not receive castrated animals that he/she is not in need to “consume”. However, custom may drastically change when people begin to measure livestock values in terms of market price. Among the Samburu, neighboring the Turkana and depending on livestock, livestock is more commoditized (Konaka 1997). In 1999 and 2000, I visited a weekly livestock market at Suguta Marmar, which was opened in 1991. Most of the buyers at this market come from outside of the Samburu lands with lorries to take the livestock to large cities for meat. The local Samburu also buy a few livestock, and one of their purposes of purchasing livestock is to reproduce animals in their herds. However, some Samburu buy livestock just to sell it again at the market to earn a small profit margin. What they are doing is “livestock-rolling”, akin to the “land-rolling” that took place in the booming 1980s economy in Japan. The Samburu engage in a quite different activity from the Turkana, who sell livestock to fulfill a finite need.

9.3 Social relationship of the persons involved in livestock exchange

The person who is approached for livestock exchange for somebody’s “consumption” (Y in Fig. 2) does not have direct motivations to do so. But he gives away a castrated animal, trusting the promise of future payment. Moreover, even when somebody promises to pay back a female animal, he can pay with a male animal instead when he does not have a suitable female. So, the action of Y in Fig. 2 possesses the characteristic of “assisting the other” who is in need of a specific animal.

Thus, this exchange is different from barter. However, it is not a “generous gift”, because the payment is predetermined, and the debtor does not pay without it being demanded. The payment is always accompanied by hard bargaining. The Turkana have a term for “debt” (*amica*). This word, however, does not carry any nuance of the “shadow of indebtedness”, which compels us to make a return gift. Although many things are begged for and given away daily among the Turkana, they behave as if “the shadow” does not exist (Ohta 1986b), and the word (*amica*) is not literally a “general debt” in this sense. The word always refers to a specific debt of livestock that the Turkana incur through actual transactions⁽⁹⁾. Although livestock exchange for “consumption” bears the characteristic of “assisting the other”, the debt is totally settled with the payment.

Another type of livestock exchange, *aki-lokony*, is settled on the spot, as is barter. This type of exchange is infrequent, but it is important to note that the Turkana do practise such rather anonymous livestock exchange.

9.4 Livestock individuality and commoditization

Each transaction of livestock is unique, in that a debt generated in a specific livestock exchange should be paid back within itself, that is, two debts cannot cancel out each other. This uniqueness is established and supported by the “individuality” of livestock. Because livestock are singularly identified and remembered, they can act as the medium to express social relationships and histories.

However, not all the animals are “accurately” remembered. For example, when I asked a Turkana man about the history of his cattle, he told me, “That heifer came in as a bridewealth of such and such a woman”. Although she was married long ago, the heifer was too young. I asked him again, and he explained that the heifer was exchanged for an ox, whose mother came in as a bridewealth of the woman. Although he knew the details, he omitted the heifer–ox exchange from his first explanation, and talked only about the original event (bridewealth payment), erasing the “individuality” of the ox.

Such explanations are common among the Turkana. Not all the animals are remembered, nor are their stories passed down equally and mechanically. In constructing “realities” of social relationships and narrating personal histories, people manipulate and

make full use of livestock “individuality”, replacing one animal with another.

It is possible to remove livestock “individuality”. Broch-Due (1999), who studied the Turkana, commented on the livestock market in Lodwar as follows: When livestock is transferred at the market, its individuality is somehow erased and it becomes anonymous and alienable. Some of the Turkana who have cash income and are able to buy livestock at the market, especially young people, are eager to utilize the market. Purchased animals become more personalized properties, and the buyer can utilize them more exclusively (Broch-Due 1999).

Livestock individuality, which is qualitative, can be erased and reduced to something quantitative. At the livestock market among the Samburu, I came across strange scenes. In order to confirm the fatness of livestock, buyers from outside the Samburu land not only touched and slapped them, but they also lifted goats and sheep in their arms to measure their weight. It surprised me that the Samburu sellers of livestock tolerated such behaviour among the buyers. And I was much more surprised when I saw the local Samburu buyers do exactly the same as the outsiders.

For the Samburu, livestock have been, and still are, the most important medium for constructing social relationships. They surely recognize livestock individuality as the Turkana do. Whether an animal is fat or not is an important issue even for the Turkana. However, they do not measure the weight by holding animals in the arms. Measuring the weight of livestock reduces their values and attributes to, and measure them by, a single standard expressed in figures. That is, livestock individuality is taken away when they are commoditized.

NOTES

- (1) The Turkana have a verb, *aki-luny*, which can be translated generally as “to exchange”. This term is applied in the situations when two persons “exchange chairs to sit”, or “exchange shirts to wear”, etc. In some contexts, this term is also applicable to thing–thing exchanges, thing–livestock exchanges and livestock–livestock exchanges.
- (2) Livestock prices fluctuate for various reasons. In northwestern Turkana, where I conducted an intensive survey, there is no livestock market. Traders who have shops in local towns buy cattle individually, and take them to large cities where they will be slaughtered for meat. Camels are locally slaughtered but infrequently sold. However, mostly Somali refugees who live in the UNHCR camp at Kakuma began to buy camels recently. The Turkana said that the largest castrated camel or ox cost 14,000–20,000 and 8000–9000 Kenyan shillings, respectively, in September 1998.
- (3) Data on actual livestock exchanges (Tables 1 and 3) were obtained during the period of 1980–1988. Data for Table 2, which shows the Turkana’s ideas on “exchange rates”, were collected in 1994. The exchange rates seem to have changed in the course of time, with the value of goats and sheep declining in relation to large animals. According to old men, “Long ago, before we were born, when one consumed only one castrated goat/sheep, one paid one calf. During our childhood, when one promised to pay one calf, one could get two castrated goat/sheep.”
- (4) A detailed ethnographical explanation might be useful here. Aruth said verbatim, “Etau and Loker took the right foreleg, which should be given to their mother”. Among the Turkana when a large animal is slaughtered in a homestead, some meat parts should be distributed to the members of other homesteads formally and informally, and the right foreleg should be formally given to a woman who was married out to another family. In Case 1, the right foreleg of the camel was given to Loker’s mother to consume in Loker’s homestead. The Turkana have a patrilineal descent system, and because Etau’s mother gave birth to Etau before she got married, Etau is, socially, Loker’s father’s brother.
- (5) In the Turkana language, there are specific terms for giving away an animal free without demanding a payment when one is begged for the animal. One of them is *a-pukin*, which means “to give away an animal for ‘consumption’ free”. The other is *a-mekin*, which means “to give away an animal for herd reproduction (not for selling or slaughtering) free”. These two terms

are not used in livestock exchanges.

- (6) When Y is asked, "How did you get this heifer?" Y would reply, "X did *aki-siec-akin* [X did *aki-siec* for me]", or "My ox did *aki-siec-ar-ere*". In any case, the Turkana do not use sentences whose subject is "Y" in this situation.

However, some young educated Turkana who are living in large cities use the term *aki-siec* in the same sense as the English verb "to exchange". For them, the Turkana term is decontextualized, and it is applicable not only to X's action but also to Y's. The same generalization is also made for a Turkana verb, *aki-lokony*, which I shall describe later.

Johnson (1990: 135) mentioned only the term *aki-lokony* among the Turkana vocabulary for livestock exchanges. Barrett (1990: 42, 83) listed "to barter, to commute, to exchange" as English equivalents for the Turkana term *aki-syec* (*aki-siec*, in this paper), and "to falsify, to exchange, to metamorphose, to shuffle, to convert" for the Turkana term *aki-lokony*.

- (7) At the district capital, Lodwar, an open space enclosed with a fence is designated as a livestock market. The market is not regular, and anybody can use it any day. Although such facilities are established in several other towns, they are seldom utilized.
- (8) In Turkana, *aki-bar* means "to be (to become) rich (in livestock)". The Turkana term for livestock, *ebarasit* (pl. *ngibaren*), has the same stem, and can be translated as "property". In order to enlarge one's herd through reproduction, reproducing males, as well as females, are indispensable, and an act of acquiring reproducing males through exchange is designated by the term *aki-lokony*, as in the case of females. It is also impossible to acquire reproducing males subjectively through exchanges.
- (9) When an unmarried girl gives birth, the supposed biological father of the baby should pay with some livestock to the patrilineal kinsmen of the girl. This payment, when it is not accomplished, is also called *amica*. This debt is *amica na ngitunga* (debt of people), whereas debt generated by livestock exchanges is *amica na ngibaren* (debt of livestock). In Turkana, there is a verb to clear a debt, *aki-tac*, which can be translated as "to pay". There is another verb to annul a debt, *a-jalakin*, which is also used, for example, when one demands payment of bridewealth. The term implies "to give up one's rights", or "to release [what one is holding]".

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