



## Aethiopia 12 (2009)

International Journal of Ethiopian and  
Eritrean Studies

---

DAVID TURTON, University of Oxford

Personalia

*In memoriam Katsuyoshi Fukui (18 November 1943–26 April 2008)*

Aethiopia 12 (2009), 224–229

ISSN: 1430–1938

---

Published by

Universität Hamburg

Asien Afrika Institut, Abteilung Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik

Hiob Ludolf Zentrum für Äthiopistik

David Turton

**In memoriam Katsuyoshi Fukui  
(18 November 1943–26 April 2008)**

DAVID TURTON, University of Oxford

Professor Katsuyoshi Fukui, who died suddenly last year at the age of 64, was a leading figure in the anthropological study of southern Ethiopia and the main architect of a remarkable growth in Ethiopian studies in Japan since the 1980s. Through his own writing and research, through the contributions of the many younger scholars whom he inspired and encouraged and through his tireless energy in organising international meetings and forging links with scholars from Ethiopia, Europe and America, he put the study of southern Ethiopia and of Northeast Africa firmly on the map of Japanese anthropology.

Like many anthropologists, his initial training was not in anthropology. His undergraduate degree and Ph.D, both from Kyoto University, were in agriculture. He first went to Ethiopia, briefly, in the late 1960s, for ethnobotanical research, and his first major field research was a study of shifting cultivation in western Japan. This led to his first book, *Yakihata no mura*, 'The village of shifting cultivation' (1974). But, even before going to Ethiopia he had spent nearly a year amongst the agro-pastoral Iraqw of Tanzania. Aged only twenty at the time, this was clearly a formative experience. Ten years later, in 1973, he began his study of the agro-pastoral people who were to become the main focus of his subsequent research and writing, the Bodi of the Lower Omo Valley, south-western Ethiopia.

His first academic appointment was to the Research Institute for the Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. On returning from his first visit to the Bodi, he moved to the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku) in Osaka, then recently established under its first Director, Tadao Umasao. In 1993 he became Professor at Kyoto University and remained there until his retirement in 2007.

I first met Katsuyoshi (as I always knew him) when he and his wife, Masako, were beginning their fieldwork amongst the Bodi and my wife and I were living forty kilometres to the south, amongst the culturally and economically very similar Mursi. There was an immediate rapport between us, despite the differences in our cultural and professional backgrounds. This was partly no doubt because we were at roughly the same stages in our lives and careers and partly because we were living in the same 'remote' environment, amongst people who had just emerged from a terrible famine. We probably only met Katsuyoshi and Masako two or three times during that

year, at their base in Bodiland, but when we did, so much could be left unsaid that it seemed as though we had known each other for years.

In 1977 Katsuyoshi organized, at Minpaku, the First Taniguchi Foundation International Symposium, which led to the book *Warfare amongst East African Herders* (ed. Fukui and Turton, 1979). The conference came to be seen as a landmark in a process of growing communication and academic collaboration between Japanese and non-Japanese scholars of Ethiopia and East Africa. Katsuyoshi was the driving force of this process. With a determination and effectiveness that had already earned him the nickname 'Bulldozer', he went on to organize other international conferences, resulting in such books as *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa* (ed. Fukui and Markakis, 1994), *Redefining Nature* (ed. Fukui and Ellen, 1996) and the three volume Proceedings of the 13<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Ethiopia Studies, held in Kyoto in 1997 and published under the title *Ethiopia in Broader Perspective* (ed. Fukui, Kurimoto and Shigeta, 1997).

But his impact on Japanese anthropology did not come only from his drive and determination in fostering international collaboration. It was also based on his many publications, mainly in Japanese, for non-specialist as well as specialist audiences, both on the Bodi and on the comparative study of East African pastoralism. Had he done no more than this his impact would have been considerable. But he did more. Through a series of research projects which he led from the mid-1980s until his retirement, he provided encouragement, guidance and financial support for some of the leading figures working today in Japanese universities on the anthropology of Northeast Africa.

These projects reflected the core interests which had guided his own research from the beginning. They were on agro-pastoralism (1987), on folk models and subsistence systems (1988–90), on ethnic conflict (1992–93), on traditional knowledge and modernization (1995–97), on relations between ethnic minorities and the state (1998–2000), on environmental change and subsistence (2002–04) and on state formation (2005–06). Scholars working today in Japanese universities who were supported by these projects in their early careers include Eisei Kurimoto (Osaka University), Masayoshi Shigeta (Kyoto University), Yukio Miyawaki (Osaka Prefectural University), Hiroshi Matsuda (Kyoto Bunkyo University), Minako Ishihara (Nanzan University), Ren'ya Sato (Kyushu University), Takeshi Fujimoto (University of Human Environments), Gen Tagawa (Hiroshima City University), Ken Masuda (Nagasaki University) and Keiichiro Matsumura (Kyoto University). How many academics would not be proud of such a legacy?

Recognizing no doubt the importance of creating institutional structures to support this growing community of scholars, Katsuyoshi founded, in 1992,

the Japan Association for Nilo-Ethiopian Studies (JANES) which, among other things, publishes the English language *Journal of Nilo-Ethiopian Studies*. My wife and I were present at the 2008 annual meeting of the Association. It was held at Hirosaki, just as the magnificent cherry blossom was on the point of falling. As we talked to the participants, especially the younger generation of teachers and students, it was clear that we were witnessing a huge tribute to the life's work of Katsuyoshi. I was reminded of an Amhara proverb which I had recently learnt from an Ethiopian friend of mine: 'However fast the river flows, always remember the source'. Japan, it seemed, had now become a leading international centre for the anthropological study of Northeast Africa and for African studies in general. No river has only one source, but Katsuyoshi is surely one of the main sources of this one, a river which now seemed to be flowing so fast and strong.

He died in April 2008 and is survived by his wife, Masako, their children Michiko and Takahiro and two grandchildren.

#### List of Selected Publications

- 1988 "The Religions and Kinship Ideology of Military Expansion among the Bodi (Mela)", in: TADESSE BEYENE (ed.), *Proceedings of the VIII<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa.
- 1991 *Ninshikito Bunka: Iroto Moyono Minzokushi* (Cognition and Culture: Ethnography of Colour and Pattern), Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press (in Japanese).  
"From the Land of Northeast Africa: Possibilities of the Folk Knowledge", *Kikan-minzokugaku* (Ethnology Quarterly) 58: 6–15 (in Japanese).
- 1992 "The Utilization and Symbolism of Milk among the Surmic Societies: Cattle Pastoralists in Ethiopia and Southern Sudan", in: ISHIGE, N. – H. WANI (eds.), *Chichiriyono Minzokushi* (Ethnography of Milk Utilization), Tokyo: Chuohoki-shuppan, pp. 87–106 (in Japanese).  
"Ethnicities Always Generate and Transform", in: *Kokkato Minzoku: Hitobitowa Naze Arasounoka* (State and Ethnicity: Why Do People Conflict?), Tokyo: Gakushu-kenkyusha, pp. 10–19 (in Japanese).  
"Possibilities of the Folk Knowledge Reconsidered: Strategy of Survival in Cognition of Ecology and Diversified Selection", *Kikan-minzokugaku* (Ethnology Quarterly) 60: 30–35 (in Japanese).
- 1993 "Classification of the Names of Root Crops in Ethiopia and Their Historical Implications", in: SASAKI, K. (ed.), *Nokono Gijutsuto*

- Bunka* (Agricultural Technologies and Cultures), Tokyo: Shueisha, pp. 187–284 (in Japanese).
- “Development and Refugee”, in: KAWADA, J. (ed.), *Afurika-ron* (On Africa) (revised edition), Tokyo: Nihon-hoso-shuppan-kyokai, pp. 209–229 (in Japanese).
- “African Agriculturalists and Pastoralists”, in: KAWADA, J. (ed.), *Afurika-ron* (On Africa) (revised edition), Tokyo: Nihon-hoso-shuppan-kyokai, pp. 165–184 (in Japanese).
- “Conflict as Leveling Mechanism: A Case from the Livestock Pillage among the Narim in Southern Sudan”, *Shakaijinruigaku-nenpo* (Annual Report of Social Anthropology) 19: 1–38 (in Japanese).
- 1994 “Conflict and Ethnic Interaction; The Mela & Their Neighbours”, in: FUKUI, KATSUYOSHI – JOHN MARKAKIS (eds.), *Ethnicity & Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, London: James Currey, pp. 33–47.
- “Ethnic Conflicts and the Transformation of Ethnic Interactions of the Mela-Me'en and Their Neighbors”, in: POSNANSKY, MERRICK (ed.) *Proceedings: Japanese/American Workshop for Cooperation in Africa*, Held at the University of California, Los Angeles, September 18–21, 1992, the Centres for Global Partnership of the Japan Foundation (Tokyo – New York) and the James S. Coleman African Studies Center (UCLA), pp. 111–130.
- “Why do People Prefer Diversified Selection?: Cattle Coat-Color and Sorghum Variation”, *Nettai-kenkyu* (Tropics) 2(3): 51–70 (in Japanese).
- “Kinship and Marriage among the Dizi”, *Abstracts of the Third Annual Meeting of Japanese Association for Nilo-Ethiopian Studies* at Showa Women's University (in Japanese).
- With JOHN MARKAKIS (eds.), *Ethnicity & Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, London: James Currey.
- 1994- (ed.), *Chikyuni Ikiru* (Living on the Earth), 5 vols. (chief editor), Tokyo: Yuzankaku (in Japanese)
- 1995 *Namaeno Arukeoraji* (The Archaeology of Names), Tokyo: Kinokuniya-shoten.
- 1996 “Coevolution between Humans and Domesticates: The Cultural Selection of Animal Coat-Colour Diversity among the Bodi”, in: ELLEN, ROY – KATSUYOSHI FUKUI (eds.), *Redefining Nature: Ecology, Culture and Domestication (Explorations in Anthropology)*, Oxford – Washington D.C.: Berg Publishers, pp. 319–386.

David Turton

“God’s Rain, Spirits’ Water: A Case from Africa”, in: FUKUI, KATSUYOSHI (ed.), *Mizuno Genfukei* (Original Scenes of Water), Tokyo: TOTO-shuppan, pp. 155–180 (in Japanese).

“Conflict as a Leveling Mechanism: Analysis of Cattle Composition and Raiding among the Narim in Southern Sudan”, *Nilo-Ethiopian Studies* 3–4: 1–23.

(ed.), *Mizuno Genfukei* (Original Scenes of Water), Tokyo: TOTO-shuppan (in Japanese)

with ELLEN, ROY (eds.), *Redefining Nature: Ecology, Culture and Domestication (Explorations in Anthropology)*, Oxford – Washington D.C.: Berg Publishers.

- 1997 New Perspectives to Human-Environment Studies, in: FUKUI, KATSUYOSHI et al. (eds.), *Iwanami-Kouza Cultural Anthropology: Ethnography of the Environment*, Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, pp. 1–10 (in Japanese).

“The Ritual of Putting the Butter in the Forehead: Kinship and Marriage among the Dizi”, *The Review of Area Studies* 6 (in Japanese).

with KURIMOTO EISEI & MASAYOSHI SHIGETA (eds.), *Ethiopia in Broader Perspective: Papers of the 13<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Volumes 1–3, Kyoto: Shokado Book Sellers.

- 1999 “Humans as Organism Creating a Cultured and Civilized Environment”, in: OKADA, T. et al. (eds.), *Iwanami-Kouza Science/Technology and Humans: Homo sapiens as Organism*, Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, pp. 163–209 (in Japanese).

*NHK-kouza The World of Color and Pattern in East Africa: Affluent Creativity in a Non-literate Society*, Tokyo: NHK Publishing (in Japanese).

“Ethnosystem in Omo-Nile Basins”, *Kikan-Minzokugaku* (Quarterly Ethnology) 90: 28–50 (in Japanese).

with AKASAKA MASARU & OHTSUKA KAZUO, *History of the World 24: Ethnic Groups and Societies in Africa*, Tokyo: Chuokoron-sha (in Japanese).

with PEI-YUN YU (eds.), *New Perspective to Human Oriented Ecosystem*, Kyoto University: Center for Ecological Research (in Japanese).

with HIDEJI HARUNARI (eds.), *What is War for Humans 1: Evolution of the War and the Formation of the State*, Tokyo: Toyo-shorin (in Japanese).

Personalia

- 2000 *Global environmental Series 31. How Humans Have Directed to the Diversity: Culture Creating Varieties in Domesticated Animals and Plants*, Global Environment Forum-Kansai (in Japanese).  
“Flexible Network in a Nomadic Society”, in: FUKUI, KATSUYOSHI (ed.), *Human and Environment 8: Neighborhood as Environment*, Kyoto: Shouwado, pp. 118–166 (in Japanese).
- 2001 “Socio-Political Characteristics of Pastoral Nomadism: Flexibility among the Bodi (Mela-Me'en) in Southwest Ethiopia”, *Nilo-Ethiopian Studies* 7: 1–21.  
“Enmity/Alliance Relations between Various Ethnic Groups in Southern Border of Ethiopia”, *Papers of the International Symposium on Conflicts in Africa and a Culture of Peace and Coexistence*, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The Japan Institute of International Affairs, pp. 76–79.
- 2002 “Attacking and Raiding against Mountain Agricultural Peoples by Nomadic Peoples: From the Repeated Conflicts in Southwestern Ethiopia, in: HUIKI, H. – T. UDAGAWA (eds.), *What is War for Humans 4: Trails of Attack & Defense*, Tokyo: Toyo-shorin, pp. 210–242 (in Japanese).