

Purity and Heterogeneity: Warfare, Ethnic Identity, and Resistance against the State among the Hor of Southwestern Ethiopia

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The war discourse of the Hor, comprised of idioms that provide them with meanings related to waging war, diverges considerably from the Hor's present interethnic relationships with their neighbors. Since the end of the 19th century, the Hor have lived under Ethiopian state rule but have tried to maintain their cultural and political autonomy by constructing and upholding a patriarchal "tradition" (*aada*). This "tradition" includes sets of discourses and rituals, among which the war discourse is one of the most important. This paper analyzes the war discourse and demonstrates how it functions to consolidate the Hor's patriarchal tradition. As interethnic relationships have changed, new idioms have been added, even though the discourse appears authentic and unchanging. While deterioration of the Hor's relationship with the neighboring Borana animated the war discourse in the 1990s, changes to the discourse also reflect challenges to Hor tradition from within.

Key words: discourse, Ethiopia, Hor, tradition, warfare

1. INTRODUCTION

Ethnic warfare in southwestern Ethiopia has interested many anthropologists studying in this region. When the first generation of "modern" anthropologists arrived in southwestern Ethiopia in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, they found the area rife with ethnic conflict. They attributed the conflicts to various motivations, including the desire for cattle and vengeance, the claiming of victims in association with the death of favorite oxen and of trophies proving a man's status in the age hierarchy, and competition for environmental resources (Legesse 1973, Strecker 1976, Fukui and Turton 1977). These motivations, however, presume that the causes of ethnic warfare should be interpreted within the context of the dyadic relationships of the warring ethnic groups.

In contrast, studies of the history and political economy of Ethiopia have looked at warfare from different points of view (Donham and James 1986). According to these studies, state influence has touched even the most peripheral areas since the creation of the modern Ethiopian empire at the end of the 19th century. Thus, such studies have proposed that interethnic warfare be reinterpreted from a wider range of perspectives.

For example, Turton (1994) has suggested that Mursi warfare should be analyzed in relation to state encroachment. According to Turton, the Mursi organize attacks on the neighboring Nyangatom in order to maintain their group identity in the face of encroaching Ethiopian state influence (Turton 1994). Turton's analysis is stimulating, but some questions remain. First, the relationship between warfare and ethnic identity was not described. That is, how does organizing wars against neighbor-

ing groups contribute to the maintenance of ethnic identity in relation to the state? Second, Turton restricted his analysis to recent warfare, since the end of the Derg regime in 1991. However, considering the overwhelming influence of the state during the entire 20th century, the warfare of the previous period must also be analyzed.

During my fieldwork in Hor communities in the 1990s, war with the Borana was a chronic source of tension. Informants often spoke of what war should be for Hor warriors, and many linked the motivation to go to war with the desire to acquire fertility. While it was considered bad to kill some neighboring groups, others were seen as good to kill (Tadesse 1997). The Maale, Omotic agriculturalists who live in the northern mountainous area, and the Kore (Samburu), Nilotic pastoralists who live in Kenya, were said to be mortal enemies of the Hor. In killing an enemy, a Hor man could expect to acquire fertility from the enemy's blood. The killer's cattle would proliferate, his crops would thrive, and his wife would bear many children. The Borana were also considered to have "sweet" blood. In contrast, neighboring groups such as the Hamar, Waata, and Tsamako were believed to have "bitter" blood, and killing them would make the Hor warrior's crops wither and his cattle and wife sterile. Cattle of enemies were also considered to be good to loot, since they were believed to proliferate rapidly once they were brought to Hor lands.

However, "sweet" blooded enemies were also considered good for marriage. Once married to a Hor man, the women of "sweet" blood groups were thought to bear many children. The enemies were also said to consider Hor blood "sweet" for them, so that the Hor and their enemies mutually "wanted each other".

Notably, such talk of war, motivations for war, management of death, its consequences, and the roles attributed to each Hor according to his or her age, gender, and social positions were all prescribed and quite formalistic. I call such beliefs and ideals "war discourse". The idiom set of the war discourse provided people with meanings for war and enabled them to understand it in their cultural context.

Strikingly, during my research, I found that what informants presented as their war ideal apparently contradicted their current state of fighting. For example, I soon found that one "mortal enemy," the Samburu, had retreated into Kenya, 200 km south of the Ethiopian border, more than 100 years ago, and the Hor had seldom encountered them during the 20th century. Meanwhile, the Maale live in the highlands some 70 km north, but the Hor had raided them only a few times during the 20th century. The relationship with the Borana had been good, at least until the 1930s, having deteriorated only relatively recently. The worst enemy that the Hor had confronted were the Hamar, whom they had fought for almost 30 years, even though the Hamar had "bitter" blood.

Considering this state of fighting, their war ideal seemed not only contradictory but also anachronistic. In this paper, I interpret this discrepancy by exploring the political situation of the Hor during the 20th century and demonstrate how the war ideal has been upheld as an ideology that maintains the Hor's ethnic identity under encroaching state rule.

First, I outline the structure of the Hor's war discourse and show how, as part of their "authentic tradition", the war discourse functions as an ideology to uphold patriarchal rule. Second, I describe the historical background of Hor warfare in the context of Ethiopia's political economy. Finally, I discuss how some Hor have adopted strategies that allow for acceptance of heterogeneous outside cultural elements. I suggest that the present war discourse of the Hor can be interpreted as a strategy for consolidating ethnic identity under patriarchal rule and for coping with various influences that are thought to be eroding their authentic tradition.

2. WAR DISCOURSE OF THE HOR

2-1. *The Hor*

The Hor are agro-pastoralists numbering 3,000 who reside along the Weito River in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) of southwestern Ethiopia. They cultivate sor-

ghum along the Weito River and keep cattle and small livestock in the savanna grassland. Members of the northern territorial group call themselves the Arbore, and their territory is divided into two sections: Gandarab and Kulam. The southern territorial group call themselves the Marle and are divided into the sections of Murale and Egude. Their neighbors include the Hamar in the west, the Waata and Borana in the east, and the Tsamako in the north (see map in Fig. 1).

Each territorial section has its own chiefs and age organization. The *k'awot* is the paramount chief, with the power to bless and curse. The *kernet* is a subsidiary chief who intermediates between the *k'awot* and the elders. *Jaldaabs* are the elders appointed from the dominant generation set of the age organization. They support the *k'awot* and *kernet* and preside over their territorial sections.

2-2. Structure of the war discourse

The Hor's war discourse not only differentiates "true enemies", with "sweet blood" and the power of fertility, from others, but also justifies patriarchal rule through the performance of complex rituals concerning the killing of enemies. Such rituals are indispensable parts of a system that consolidates patriarchy by integrating practice, rituals, and historical memories.

The way of killing enemies is prescribed as if it were a ritual. Once a warrior has killed an enemy, his close friend must sever the penis from the dead body. The killer then gives a calf to "buy" the trophy back, puts on a costume that displays his status as a killer, and hangs the trophy from an acacia tree outside his settlement. Then the killer, the friend, and the acacia tree enter into a tabooed relationship called *agas*; those who become *agas* must not hurt one another, nor should their lineage marry with each other.

The fertility of the enemy's blood can then be "bought" by a third person through a ritual called "*mee fak'in*". The third person wanting to become "a killer" proposes to buy the trophy from the killer. He then prepares gourds of honey wine and invites his relatives and friends. At night, the killer and his *agas* come with spears to the purchaser's house, where the purchaser and his friends await. Both groups engage in a mock fight, after which the killer falls down, and a friend of the purchaser takes

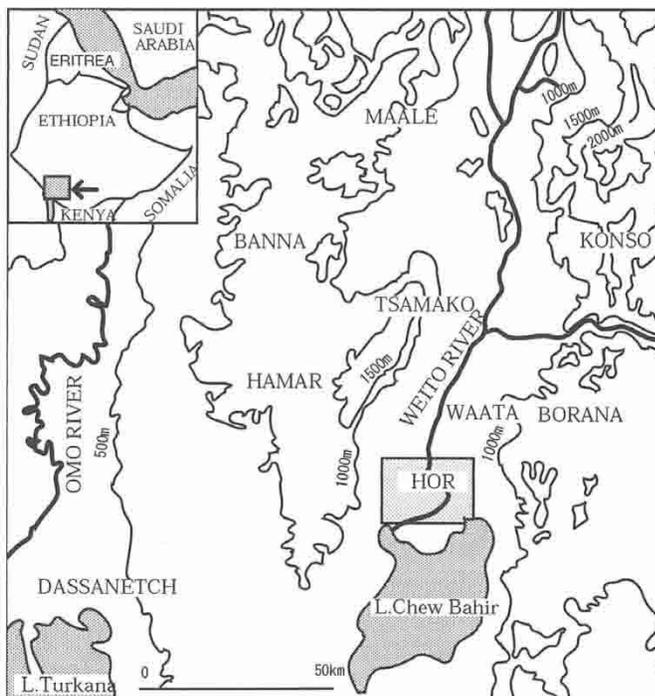


Fig. 1. Map. The Hor and their neighbors

from him a piece of wood symbolizing the severed trophy. The purchaser then gives a calf to the killer, and the purchaser, his friend, and the killer become part of the *agas* relationship.

The Hor believe that the fertility that makes crops, cattle, and children proliferate is obtained through the two routes. One, as discussed above, is from the blood of enemies. The other is to obtain fertility from God (*waak'*) by the mediation of a *k'awot* (paramount chief). The power of the *k'awot*, which is believed to be crucial to the prosperity of Hor lands, is related to the killing of enemies on at least two levels.

First, a *k'awot's* power is directly increased by the blood of enemies. Upon obtaining the title of *k'awot*, that person must become a killer of enemies in order to be a "perfect" *k'awot*. However, since the Hor consider a *k'awot* to be like a woman (i.e., a symbol of peace and fertility), a *k'awot* cannot participate in warfare. To become a killer, the *k'awot* must carry out the *mee fak'in* ritual. Thus, "commoner" warriors need to kill to provide the necessary trophies and increase the power of the *k'awot*.

Second, there is an ambiguous association of the "chief" with the enemy. The Hor believe that the power of *k'awots* is not only benevolent but also dangerous. A *k'awot's* curse is thought to be a fatal weapon against enemies, but if it is directed against other Hor, the result is disastrous. Thus the *k'awot's* power is held within the framework of rituals, where it can be properly guided through the support of the elders of the age organization. A well-known story of the first *k'awot*, told in Gandarab, illustrates the ambiguity of his power and the process of its domestication. The story relates that the first *k'awot* was a stranger who had magical power and usurped the position of the indigenous chief. The *k'awot* and his relatives then started to monopolize valuables such as ivories, women, and flood plain lands, which were essential to the life of the Hor. The indigenous chief and his relatives stood up against this tyranny, killed the *k'awot's* kinsmen, and remade the position of *k'awot* to become that of a ritual expert. Thereafter, the *k'awot* and his clansmen were excluded from the office of the elders who distribute flood plain lands.

Thus, the war discourse forms an important part of the total ideology on which the patriarchal rule of the Hor is founded. Men are considered to be essential for the prosperity of the Hor. Men are the warriors who bring the fertility of the enemy's blood and also the trophies that are needed by the *k'awot* to become "perfect". Finally, men are the elders who domesticate the power of the *k'awot* and lead it properly.

The war discourse also plays an important part in the drawing of ethnic boundaries, through the rituals of *mee fak'in* and marriage, and in distinguishing "us" from "them". Marriage is contracted among the exogamous clans within the Hor, as well as with some other neighboring ethnic groups such as the Borana and Dassanetch. The elders often mention the similarity of marriage and killing enemies, since both involve the transfer of calves, the (ritual) death of the object of exchange (killed enemy and circumcised girl), and the formation of tabooed relationships after the rituals. The lineages that contract a marriage enter into a relationship called *sod*. Thereafter, they are prohibited from hurting each other or marrying each other for three generations. Their blood becomes "sweet with each other" and they "want each other". These rituals seem to prescribe men as the subjects of exchange. More importantly, by describing enemies as a mirror image of their immediate neighbors, these rituals appear to distinguish the in-groups who share and exchange the essential resources from the out-groups who should be excluded from sharing in this area where interethnic, cross-cutting ties abound.

Although the Hor's well-organized social structure and ritual complex associated with the war discourse seem to have retained their "traditional" forms for hundreds of years, the Hor ethnic group was actually formed about 120 years ago. Since that time, colonial and state powers have encroached on the Hor. The fluidity of 19th century society and marginalization by colonial and state powers in the 20th century are the common characteristics in this area of Ethiopia.

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3-1. Wars and state rule

3-1-1. The 19th century

In the 19th century, various ethnic groups rose and fell in the Turkana Basin. These groups had interethnic cross-cutting ties and resorted to those ties in cases of environmental and social crisis such as drought, famine, and warfare. Immigration was frequent, with immigrants becoming assimilated by their hosts, although sometimes immigrants also influenced the cultural and social institutions of their hosts (Schlee 1989, Sobania 1980, 1988, 1991). One such group was the Hor, whose members formed as an ethnic entity sharing a common culture and social institutions through immigration and assimilation.

The Arbore, the northern territorial group, were agriculturalists with small livestock who had settled along the Weito River. Prior to this, they were probably pastoralists living to the north of Turkana Lake and moving to the Weito area at the beginning of the 19th century. The chieftainship of the Arbore seems to have been established by Borana immigrants in the mid-19th century. The Arbore accepted many Borana immigrants up until the end of the 19th century, and the Borana chiefs (*k'allu*) and Arbore *k'awot* had strong ties until the mid-20th century. The Arbore and Hamar were on good terms during the second half of the 19th century, and some Hamars shared the Weito flood plain with the Arbore.⁽¹⁾ The Marle, the southern territorial group of the Hor, settled in their present territory in the mid 1880s, when severe famine ravaged this area (von Höhnel 1968: 187, Sobania 1980: 145–152). Before that time, they were itinerant pastoralists who migrated seasonally from south of Lake Chew Bahir to Kuraz on the western side of the Omo river. Before they settled, the Arbore and Marle are said to have fought with each other when they met.⁽²⁾

Interethnic relationships changed with political and environmental changes in this area. The Arbore tell of fighting with the Muz, who attacked them from the south, before settlement of the Marle.⁽³⁾ The Marle remember that they fought with the Waldai from the south. But both of those groups later left the area.⁽⁴⁾ At the mid-19th century, the Samburu moved northward seeking pastures and settled in the area between Lake Chew Bahir and Turkana, where they fought with the Arbore. Although they were initially on good terms with the Marle, those groups also occasionally fought. In the 1880s a severe rinderpest outbreak and invasion by the Turukana drove the Samburu back to the south (Sobania 1980: 97–100). The Arbore remember that a *k'awot* of Kulam, who had been injured by the Samburu, cursed them, creating a big lake between the Arbore and the Samburu. Then the Samburu disappeared.⁽⁵⁾

Somali caravans reached the area in the 19th century. The Arbore acted as mediators in the ivory trade between Somali merchants and indigenous inhabitants around Lake Turkana (Vanutelli and Citerni, 1899: 355). The accumulation of property brought by the ivory trade is said to have led to the Arbore's chieftainship becoming hereditary.⁽⁶⁾

3-1-2. Amhara invasion and Neftennya rule

The expansion of the Ethiopian Empire at the end of the 19th century altered the political situation of this area. In 1897, the army of Fitewrari Habte-Giorgis invaded the Weito valley from the Konsoland and attacked the Hor. The Hor dispersed and lived in exile among the Dassanetch, Tsamako, and Waata.⁽⁷⁾ The "settler-northerners" (*neftennya*) constructed fortified settlements in the conquered highlands and ruled the surrounding area. This conquered area was annexed to the Ethiopian empire, and a border was drawn between Ethiopia and British colonial Kenya. Southwestern Ethiopia was divided into three districts, with administrative offices located in Maji, Bako, and Gardulla.

The overall pattern of interethnic war changed as national and district boundaries divided the area. In the southwestern periphery, the Dassanetch, supported by *neftennyas* from Maji, spearheaded raids on Kenyan pastoralists. In the south, northern settlers called Tigre transgressed the border to hunt elephants and loot local inhabitants (Hickey 1984: 164–170). Within Ethiopia, pastoralists crossed the district boundaries and raided neighboring pastoralists under the influence of other *neftennyas*. The

Hamar, who had once dispersed and lived among the Dassanetch, returned to their territory, which was part of Bako, and started to raid the Borana, who had settled in Gardulla (Strecker 1997).

In the Weito valley, the *neftennyas* of Gardulla hunted elephants, depleting their population (Harrison 1901). The Hor returned to the area in the mid-1920s and started to pay tributes (*k'alat*) to the administration in Gardulla.⁽⁸⁾ During this period, the Hor did not wage war on other groups.

3-1-3. Italian rule

Italian rule, which began in 1937, changed the situation once again. The Hor recall that the Italian invasion was preceded by a raid by the Borana, who had already been under Italian rule. The Italians and Ethiopians then fought in Gandarab. Settlements were burned to the ground, and the Hor dispersed again. After driving Ethiopians from the area, the Italians constructed a base camp in Gandarab and started to organize an infantry corps called the *banda*. Local inhabitants, mainly from the Borana but also some Hor, were recruited as *banda* soldiers. The *banda* marched to the west, which was still under Ethiopian rule. Both the Hor and Hamar recall atrocities committed by the *banda* against the Hamar inhabitants, including stealing cattle, raping women, and killing and castrating men.⁽⁹⁾

In the early 1940s, when the Ethiopian insurrections started to gain force, the pattern of war and raids changed according to the political divide between Ethiopia and Italy. Ethiopian guerrillas attacked pastoralists allied with the Italians. The Hor waged a raid against the Borana, who were at that time under the rule of Ethiopian guerrillas. This was the first time that the Hor had waged war against the Borana, and it was done under the aegis of the Italians. However, as the political situation swayed toward favoring Ethiopia, the Hor switched to the Ethiopian side.⁽¹⁰⁾

3-1-4. Haile Selassie regime

The retreat of the Italians created a political vacuum in southwestern Ethiopia, allowing an opportunity for retaliation by a number of settlers against local inhabitants who had sided with the Italians. Some pastoralists also participated in the retaliation, which involved looting cattle (Strecker 1979). The Hor tried to take advantage of this situation and sent a raiding party against the Maale.⁽¹¹⁾

However, in the highlands, turmoil rapidly subsided after the assignment of local governors to the area. The southwestern highlands became a center of cash crop production, including coffee and spice production, and became integrated into the burgeoning Ethiopian capitalist economy. In contrast, the lowland pastoral areas lacked such economic incentives for northern settlers. Many pastoralists had guns obtained from the Italians, government control was slack, and old grudges had accumulated. These factors led to war among pastoralists in Ethiopia, as well as cross-border raids, mostly by the Hamar, against Kenyan pastoralists.

The warfare between the Hor and Hamar began with a Hamar attack in the early 1940s. A cycle of vengeance then continued for more than thirty years, interrupted by only short truces (Strecker 1976; Ayalew 1997). The Hamar sometimes forced the Hor out of their settlements, forcing them into Waata territory on the eastern side of the Weito River. The war also claimed the lives of three successive *k'awots*. Finally, in 1974, the Hor and Hamar concluded a cease-fire agreement administered by the local governor of Gemu-Gofa province.⁽¹²⁾

3-1-5. The Derg regime and after

During the Derg regime, local government attempts to halt ethnic warfare were successful among the Hor. Although the Hor and Hamar committed several murders against each other, these incidents did not develop into war.⁽¹³⁾ However, by the end of the Derg regime, the relationship between the Hor and Borana had deteriorated due to livestock theft and injuries committed by young people on both sides. After the fall of the Derg regime, the Borana organized a raiding party of more than 500 men. However, the Hor had heard of the raid and successfully drove back the Borana, claiming as many as 100 Borana casualties on the battlefield. Many of the dead were said to have been ex-Derg soldiers who had returned from the Eritrean northern front. A peace ceremony took place in 1993 in

Gandarab, but inhabitants of the Borana territorial sections, which had provided most of the men for the raiding party, refused to enter into the peace agreement. Some retaliatory assaults continued, and the Hor twice raided cattle camps in these sections. In 2003 the Hor and Borana finally concluded the peace treaty, with arbitration by Farm Africa.

The pattern and frequency of interethnic wars in southwestern Ethiopia have changed with changes in the political situation of the Ethiopian state. The severing of longstanding ties among pastoralists along the national borders, caused by the Ethiopian conquest and British colonial rule, led to innumerable cross-border raids by Ethiopian pastoralists against Kenyan pastoralists. Within Ethiopia, the land became divided into districts and ruled by settlers, who attained independent political power; under these divisions, transgressing raids occurred between neighboring groups of pastoralists. The Italian invasion and subsequent Ethiopian resistance brought conflict among the groups allied on different sides. Pastoralists accumulated guns by fighting as agents of the state and colonial powers. As the economic situation changed under the rule of Haile Selassie, the importance of pastoralists as agents of the settlers diminished. State rule weakened in the lowlands, and warfare erupted among the pastoralists.

While state and colonial rule had clear influences, pastoralists did not react to those situations uniformly. Rather, as the broader political situation influenced local politics, interests in war became diversified within groups, creating even more intricate conflicts of interest among generations, territorial sections, clans, and political leaders and leading to more complex patterns of war.

3-2. Mediators and war

3-2-1. Wakene: the first Hor mediator

After the Ethiopian conquest, the Hor political situation underwent a drastic change. The power of *k'awots* diminished as mediators became the most powerful figures. After the Hor returned to the Weito valley in the mid-1920s, the Ethiopian empire assigned a Hor man named Wakene to serve under the local administrator (*shoomi / ch'ik'a shum*), who ruled the area on behalf of the government. Wakene had been taken from the area during the conquest and brought up among Ethiopians. As the only Hor man who could speak Amharic, Wakene wielded enormous power over all the Hor. He resided in Gandarab, which became the political center of the Hor. His closest associates were the Olmok, the chieftain clan of Gandarab, who gave him their daughters and became his affines.⁽¹⁴⁾

3-2-2. Arkulo Baje: the first mediator from the Chieftain clan

The next powerful mediator was Arkulo Baje, a brother in law of Wakene who belonged to the Olmok. Arkulo Baje worked under Wakene and developed administrative skills. When the Italians invaded the south, he is said to have sent a message asking them to come to the Hor and eliminate the Ethiopians. Under Italian rule, he accumulated guns and dominated the Hor. He organized a militia called the *logorato*, recruiting members from his clan and his affines in Gandarab. When the Ethiopian guerrillas regained strength, he immediately changed sides and survived the subsequent era. Arkulo's power was founded on symbolic as well as physical violence. He was always guarded by his men, who would execute his orders by threatening people with guns. Arkulo eagerly imitated the colonial powers. He wore Western clothes and lived in a large house during the Italian rule (Ricci 1950: 8). He then imitated the behavior of the Ethiopians during the Haile Selassie regime. Since Arkulo had shifted the burden of colonial exploitation to the three other territorial sections, the residents of those sections resented him. Although Arkulo managed to suppress those revolts, the disparity between Gandarab and the other sections seems to have influenced the initial stage of fighting with the Hamar, as will be shown below.⁽¹⁵⁾

3-2-3. Sura Gino 1: a fierce war leader

Arkulo's rule continued through the 1940s, but by the mid-1950s, a new mediator had begun to distinguish himself from Arkulo's circle. His name was Sura Gino, and he was known as a fierce war leader.

Sura Gino was born into the Riis clan, one of the early clans to settle Gandarab, but was rumored to be a son of Wakene. He worked under Arkulo, and his abilities were soon recognized by the Italians. During the Italian rule, he plundered the Borana several times and looted many cattle. These raids were unusual for the Hor at that time. First, the Hor had never before raided the Borana, with whom they had close relationships through kinship ties and connections between the Hor *k'awots* and Borana *k'allu*. Second, the raids were conducted mainly by uninitiated young men belonging to the Sura's generation set. According to Hor tradition, the uninitiated are prohibited from participating in warfare. Third, these raids took place under the aegis of the Italians, but without the approval of the elders and *k'awot*. These anomalies, together with the declining power of the *k'awots*, caused concern among the Hor about the deterioration of their tradition. After the Italians retreated, Sura led a raiding party against the Maale. Although the elders of Gandarab, fearing persecution by the *neftennyas* who ruled the Maale, prohibited such activity, Sura plundered the Maale twice.

3-2-4. Berinas: the Hamar mediator waging war against the Hor

Meanwhile, war broke out between the Hamar and Hor. The Hamar made the initial raid, led by an outstanding Hamar mediator called Berinas. Berinas had grown up north of Lake Turkana, where the Hamar had fled at the end of the 1890s after the Ethiopian conquest. After the Hamar returned to their territory, ruled by the Bako *neftennyas*, Berinas started to distinguish himself as a political leader who could negotiate with the Ethiopians. Both the Ethiopians and the Hamar recognized him as a capable mediator. Berinas could see through the rivalries between the Ethiopians who ruled the neighboring districts, and he often led looting raids against the Borana in Gardulla to retrieve cattle the Hamar had lost during their exile.

During the Italian rule, the Hamar suffered atrocities committed by the *banda* infantry, and Berinas is said to have developed grudges against those who participated in those atrocities. Despite opposition from the Hamar in Asile, the territory neighboring the Hor that had been cooperating with them in livestock herding and cultivation, Berinas instigated war and attacked Gandarab.⁽¹⁶⁾

This attack failed because Gandarab residents had sufficient guns to repel Berinas' troops, but war continued. Arkulo attempted a cease fire, but the Marle, led by another mediator, Gino Baje, resisted his efforts. The Marle had a close relationship with the Dassanetch, who were at the time mortal enemies of the Hamar. Together, the Marle and Dassanetch continued to loot Hamar cattle camps. Arkulo captured Gino and put him in prison in Chench, the administrative center of the province, but Gino did not surrender. As war continued, Gandarab also gradually became involved.

3-2-5. Sura Gino 2: from a war leader to the peace maker

In the 1950s, Sura rose to power as a new mediator, replacing the aged Arkulo. As Sura began inter-mediations, he quickly realized the needs of administrators and transformed himself from a fierce war leader to a capable peacemaker. He energetically traveled to the administrative towns and mobilized a police force to interfere in the Hor and Hamar warfare. Sura's peacemaking was well received in the Hor territorial sections, with the exception of Gandarab, where Sura was not accepted. The Olmok hated him because he appeared to usurp the position of the *ch'ik'a shum* (local administrator), which they had monopolized. The elders feared him since he seemed to surpass the power of *k'awot*. Young men disliked him because he constantly interfered in their plans to retaliate against enemies. Thus, men of Gandarab continued to raid the Hamar, despite Sura's efforts. By the mid-1970s, however, the Hor and Hamar entered into a truce agreement; as recalled by the Hor, the truce was finally reached because both sides had become exhausted by the long period of war. Sura and Aike, who was the son of Berinas and a mediator for the Hamar, arranged an agreement under the administration of the provincial officer. The cease-fire ceremony was performed according to tradition, recognizing both sides as having concluded the treaty by their own will.⁽¹⁷⁾

3-2-6. Hora Sura: the mediator during the Derg regime

In the mid-1970s, the influence of the Ethiopian revolution spread to southwestern Ethiopia. Among

the Hor, Hora Sura, the son of Sura Gino, succeeded to the position of mediator. He had worked as a translator for the cadres dispatched to the Hor from the local government and later became a cadre member. He began to organize a farmers' association to which he appointed his age mates and friends as officers. He also established a school and mandated attendance by local children. As part of the farmers' association, Hora organized a militia, sending some of his age mates to the military training camp in Gamo. Hora was eager to modernize the Hor and did not hesitate to eliminate whoever opposed him. For example, after his women's education program fell through due to the resistance of *k'awots* and elders, who considered the school a threat to the Hor tradition, he arrested the *k'awots*, put them in prison, and gathered up and burned their regalia. Hora attempted to keep the peace by directly interfering with interethnic conflicts, arresting "criminals," and sending them to prison. The elders disapproved of these measures. The Hamar, Hor, and Waata secretly concluded a treaty prescribing that murderers be handed over to the relatives of their victims for execution.⁽¹⁸⁾

In 1991 the Derg regime collapsed, and the new government recruited young men as officials. While most of these men had been educated by Hora, they soon became opposed to him. In the political vacuum of the transition, a large armed force of Borana raided the Marle, who repelled them. A peace ceremony was held in 1993 under the leadership of Hora, who arranged it in cooperation with anthropologists, a non-governmental organization, and local inhabitants. However, the truce was not effective because some Borana sections refused to agree to the cease-fire treaty. Around the same time, a large private cotton plantation was developed in the upstream part of the Weito River; the irrigation water diverted for the cotton, affected the flood regime downstream. The Tsamako, whose pastures had suffered due to the altered river flow, rose up but were brutally subdued by the government. Most Hor say that their lives worsened during these ten years. Livestock herds developed disease, harvests decreased, and rain and flooding became irregular. Above all, those in power pursued personal profit by this "eating" of their own people.

4. AUTHENTICITY AND HETEROGENEITY

4-1. Historical changes in the war discourse

As the political situation changed, the war discourse changed accordingly. It is difficult to reconstruct historical changes in the war discourse due to the lack of written historical documents on Hor culture. Thus, I present only a tentative sketch of changes based on oral histories and written documents dealing with interethnic relationships in this area.

At the end of the 19th century, the Hor appeared to already believe that an enemy's blood would bring fertility. The Samburu, one of the Hor's mortal enemies according to the war discourse, lived south of the Chew Bahir, and the Hor fought with them. In the latter half of the 19th century, waves of immigrants impacted Hor communities. Many Borana came into the northern territorial group, the Arbore, and lived with them (Smith 1969: 262). The Marle, having lost most of their livestock to rinderpest virus and drought, also settled to the south of the Arbore (von Hönel 1968: 187). Such a situation probably created the need to demarcate in-group from out-group members. However, the idioms concerning *k'awots* may not have been included in the discourse, since the power and supremacy of the *k'awot* was still under construction in this period. The *k'awot* lineage seems to have been brought in with Borana immigrants in the mid-19th century, and most people must have still remembered clearly when and how the *k'awot* came to the Hor. The story of the first Gandarab *k'awot* must not have been established yet (Miyawaki, 2006a, 2006b).

After the Ethiopian conquest, the Hor lived in exile for almost 30 years. Considering this long dispersion and exile, the present complex of patriarchal ideology, which is called the "tradition" (*aada*), seems to have been reconstructed after they returned to their territory in the 1920s.⁽¹⁹⁾ The full-fledged idioms of the war discourse had probably been developed at least by the start of the Italian rule in 1936, as confirmed by some informants who had grown up at that time.⁽²⁰⁾ In that period, the young generation started to raid the Borana, even though most Hor did not approve of those raids.

The war discourse seems to have functioned as a device to convert the Borana from people who were good to marry into those who were good to kill.

An apparent contradiction in the war discourse and actual warfare emerged as the Hor began to fight the Hamar after the Italian retreat. The Hamar had been regarded as bad to kill, and the Hor did not have formal measures to praise warriors who killed Hamar. But as warfare continued, the elders declared that the "killer's song" (*meerat*) could be sung for killers of Hamar; previously, this song had been permitted only for the killers of "true" enemies. Following this, the custom of earning a "killer name" was introduced from the Dassanetch, after originating among the Nyangatom and spreading among the neighboring groups as warfare in the area intensified.⁽²¹⁾ Although Hamar blood had never been considered "sweet", young Hor men considered Hamar killers to be praiseworthy and craved their own fame as killers.⁽²²⁾ Hamar cattle were also desired and taken through looting. One of the elders who emphasized the fertility power of "true" enemies insisted that the same power could be obtained by Hamar cattle; he backed up his statement by claiming that cattle looted from the Hamar proliferated in his kraal. However, this new ritual was not integrated into the former war discourse.

The "traditional" war discourse was again activated when the relationship between the Hor and Borana deteriorated in the 1990s. Those who killed a Borana smeared the enemy's blood on their body and cut genital from the enemy's body. Although some killers were eager to perform *mee fak'in* with these trophies, many elders were skeptical that *mee fak'in* could be performed with Borana blood. The elders noted that *mee fak'in* had never been performed with the blood of the Borana, and that if it were performed the Hor and Borana would become mortal enemies. They often cited historical memories to remind their group members that the Hor and Borana were once the same people. The elders thus tried to restore the relationship with the Borana by resorting to the war discourse, and its function of demarcating in-group from out-group, in an effort to keep the in-group from splitting.

4-2. Authenticity and heterogeneity at the turn of the century

If the function of the war discourse is to elaborate meanings when waging war with other people, it is difficult to understand why it is constituted from idioms that "expired" long ago. For example, the Samburu moved south nearly 100 years ago, and the Hor have not fought with the Maale for nearly 60 years. Although it was the hostile relationship with the Borana that animated the war discourse in the 1990s, it is necessary to investigate the social background through which this anachronistic war discourse was constructed as authentic among the Hor.

The Hor believe in the authenticity and antiquity of the war discourse. Authenticity is confirmed for them by the incorporation of cultural elements in the tradition, such as the story of the first *k'awot*. Such elements are believed to have existed "before" the Ethiopian conquest. The same authenticity may also function for the enemies who had left the area before the Ethiopian conquest. This mechanism appears to fit their intent, effectively connecting their tradition to the period of their independence, and offering a contrast with the present state of subordination. Observing the traditional ways, therefore, means maintaining their independence under the state rule.

During the 20th century, the Ethiopian state exploited the Hor, ruling them through mediators. The elders attempted to put the mediators under their control. Upon assignment, each new mediator had to be first blessed by the elders and then approved by the administrators of the district. However, strong mediators often surpassed these powers and took over control of the Hor. In such situations, the elders could only attempt to restrict the power of the mediators by separating the domain of state rule (*big*) from the domain of tradition (*aada*). The mediators dealt with the administrative functions of the state, such as tax collection, while the elders dealt with the administration of local affairs such as distributing flood plain lands, regulating marriage, and approving interethnic warfare.

However, as time passed, state rule began to encroach even on the realm of tradition. Outside influences included the direct intervention in interethnic conflicts and the education program for women planned during the Derg regime, which the elders fiercely resisted, fearing it would destroy the Hor's marriage system.

In addition, some of the Hor adopted the lifestyles that were eroding their tradition. For example, in the 1960s, a possession cult called *ayana* was introduced from the Borana to the Hor. This cult immediately spread, with the number of followers multiplying despite oppression by the Derg government. An interesting feature of this cult is that it enthusiastically adopted cultural traits of both the Ethiopians and the foreigners, traits that had been regarded as immoral from the traditionalist point of view. Most of the possessing spirits came from the world of the Ethiopians and foreigners. The séance ritual mimicked the Ethiopian coffee ceremony, and divination was paid for by merchandise such as spirits (*alakè*), soap, clothes, and cash, only recently introduced from the outside. Religious communions organized by followers, most of whom were women, often involved séances, during which followers could act freely under the pretext of religious activity. These activities seem to have resisted, at least obliquely, the patriarchal rule under which women's freedom was restricted.

Some of the Hor also attempted to utilize recent interethnic ties to increase their political power. A *k'awot* of Kuile, named Dale Armar, entered into a Konso organization called the *funno* (Tadesse 2002). In the early 1970s, some Konso started to settle around the police station near Gandarab. Because the *k'awot* of Kuile is considered the chief of the Tsamako as well as a strong *k'awot* of the Hor, the Konso approached him. Dale and his followers promised to provide them with flood plain land and attempted to profit from this relationship. However, since Dale was not one of the elders responsible for distributing flood plain land, a quarrel broke out between Dale and the *k'awot* of Gandarab who was responsible for the flood plain. Each cursed the other. The *k'awot* of Gandarab died, and a rumor rapidly spread that Dale's curse caused his death. In the 1990s, Dale was approached by the cotton plantation manager and agreed to alienate part of the Tsamako territory. The agreement brought strong criticism by some Tsamako and Hor.

To most Hor, these activities, together with those of the mediators and the educated young men assigned to the administrative office in the 1990s, presented clear evidence of the degeneration of their tradition. The Hor regarded this situation as the realization of a prophecy foreseen by a diviner before the Ethiopian conquest. According to the prophecy, children of the Hor will lose their tradition and will start to kill each other. Only a final war that will ravage the entire world can redeem this moral degeneration and enable the Hor to restart their life (Miyawaki 2006a; 2006b). Those who were excluded from the power struggle and still followed the system of domination by the elders thus needed to show themselves what their tradition was, how it operated, and their roles within it.

5. CONCLUSION

The full-fledged war discourse of the Hor that exists today was constructed after the Ethiopian conquest. Although people often refer to this discourse as a motive for waging war, it is misleading to regard the war discourse as the direct cause of interethnic warfare. As discussed above, wars have erupted in this area from complex interactions between multiple factors, of which state and colonial rule have been among the most influential. In fact, the important function of war discourse, in this instance, is to consolidate patriarchal rule among the Hor, together with other rituals and discourses that constitute the "tradition". The authenticity of the tradition has been maintained by incorporating cultural elements, and the tradition has been used to resist state rule. However, challenges to the authenticity of the tradition have continually come from within, as indigenous Hor leaders have wielded power through the support of the Ethiopian state. Furthermore, as state and colonial rule have altered interethnic relationships among pastoralists, by exerting influence on their local politics, this war discourse has failed to make the situation intelligible. War with the Hamar, for instance, compelled the Hor to introduce new rituals that would give meaning to waging war with a new enemy, one that had been categorized as "the bad to kill". These rituals were not a part of the former war discourse. The revival of the "traditional" war discourse in the 1990s was ignited by antagonism against the Borana, who had been converted to being "good to kill", due to their structural position within the discourse.

It is, however, important to note that even war with an enemy such as the Hamar may have contributed to the survival of the discourse. That is, warfare with the Hamar spurred the idea that Hor tradition was deteriorating, because fighting the Hamar apparently contradicted the discourse. This, in turn, caused the Hor to consider their present state of subordination to the state. The sense of deteriorating “tradition”, together with strategies employed by the various Hor groups to utilize outside power, has made Hor elders, in particular, aware of the need to protect the “tradition” from infiltration by foreign cultures. As part of the “tradition”, the war discourse has thus been maintained as a tool for resisting state rule and the encroachment of foreign influences.

NOTES

- (1) Interviews with Buro Orro, Egude, 2000. See also des Avancher (1859) and Cavendish (1898).
- (2) Interviews with Buro Orro; Murale Kernet, Murale, 2000; Argore Arshal, Murale, 2000; Hukka Arkulo, Kulam, 2000.
- (3) Interviews with Sura Gino, Gandarab, 2000; Biiyo Shunmole, Kuram, 2000.
- (4) Interview with Buro Orro.
- (5) Interview with Wati Karayu, Gandarab, 1998.
- (6) Interview with Galcha Arsirba, Gandarab, 2000.
- (7) Interviews with Wati Karayu; Sura Gino; Buro Orro; Argore Arshal; Elema Dadi, Gandarab, 2000; Jarsa Gino, Egude, 2000.
- (8) Interviews with Buro Orro, Sura Gino.
- (9) Interviews with Sura Gino; Buro Orro; Elema Dadi; Jarsa Gino; Argore Arshal.
- (10) Interviews with Wati Karayu, Sura Gino; Biiyo Shunmole; Hando Adama, Egude, 2000.
- (11) Interviews with Wati Karayu; Elema Dadi; Hando Adama.
- (12) Interviews with Sura Gino, Biiyo Shunmole; Argore Arshal; Buro Orro; Elema Dadi; Argore Arattu; Hando Adama; Hukka Arkulo; Baje Arkulo, Gandarab, 2000.
- (13) Interviews with Elema Dadi; Biiyo Shunmole; Argore Arattu; Argore Arshal; Buro Orro; Hando Adama; Hora Sura, Gandarab, 2002; Argore Argido, Kulam, 2000.
- (14) Interviews with Wati Karayu; Sura Gino; Elema Dadi; Hando Adama; Hukka Arkulo, Kulam, 2000; Koranke Gino, Gandarab, 2000.
- (15) Interviews with Sura Gino; Baje Arkulo; Biiyo Shunmole; Argore Argido; Hukka Arkulo; Jarsa Gino; Buro Orro; Argore Arattu; Hando Adama; Elema Dadi.
- (16) Interviews with Weino Kerle and others, Asile, Hamar, 2002. see also Strecker 1997.
- (17) Interviews with Sura Gino; Biiyo Shunmole; Argore Argido; Jarsa Gino; Buro Orro; Hando Adama; Elema Dadi; Sura Gino & Asafa Gino, Gandarab, 2002.
- (18) Interviews with Hora Sura; Elema Dadi, 2002; Bala Arnilo, 2002, Murale.
- (19) For a reconstruction of the Hor tradition, see Miyawaki, 2006a.
- (20) Interview with Sura Gino.
- (21) Interviews with Elema Dadi, 2000; Biiyo Shunmole. See also Strecker (1976).
- (22) Young men who have killed big game or an enemy are praised by young women; those who have not yet killed are insulted as undeserving of marriage. This insult is called *koora*, and young men are said to wage war to remove the disgrace attached to them by such insults (Gabbert, with Gino, 2007).

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