FIVE DRUMS: HOW THE GABRA, PASTORALIST IN NORTHERN KENYA, REACT TO THE 1997 ELECTION.

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Abstract:
This paper examines recent social changes in the condition of the Gabra, pastoral people living in the periphery of Kenya, by focusing on the national election of 1997. This paper shows how the Gabra react to the election. Prior to the election, one of the five phratries of the Gabra had seceded and thus the Gabra were divided into two communities. After the election, the Gabra held a whole Gabra meeting (korr dibbeshan, or five drums meeting) to recombine these communities into one. The recombined Gabra, however, is not what it used to be. The experience of participating in an election and engaging in and settling a dispute, the Gabra society was greatly changed. Focusing on the word and deed of those who participated in the national election, I have clarified the social changes of the Gabra, which should be related to the transposition of the Gabra society from “outside” to “inside” of Kenya.

1. INTRODUCTION
Geographically, Kenya can be classified into two regions; the highlands and the lowlands. The highlands, those regions with an altitude of over 900 meters, occupy the southwest part of Kenya. The climate of highlands is mild and these areas receive enough rainfall to sustain agriculture. On the contrary, in the lowlands, which occupy the northern part of Kenya, sun-baked semi-desert conditions extend as far as one can see. Of course, it is highlands where the British colonial government deprived the indigenous people of land and the white planter settled. The lowlands, unsuitable for agriculture and uncomfortable to live, were deemed worthless by the colonial government. The colonial government did not take any economic interest in Northern Kenya, which they recognized just as a buffer zone, keeping hostile powers such as Ethiopia and Italy, at a distance of a few hundred miles away from the White Highlands (Schlee 1989: 44-45).
The modern history of Kenya has occurred in the highlands, whether it is crowned with glory or filled with trouble. Indigenous people who lived in the highlands were massacred when the British launched herself on colonial rule (Kyle 1999:11-12). After establishment of colonial rule, the indigenous population was forced out from their land. On the other hand, they enjoyed the infrastructure such as transport, school, hospital, etc., which were provided by the colonial government. As an example, let us see a passage from Native Affairs Department, which Keith Kyle (1999:16) quoted, arguing, “The Native is everywhere clamoring for education and shows a keenness and intelligence very hopeful for the future. In Kavirondo alone there are now over 600 schools.” This argument was declared in its report for 1920-1. While those indigenous people resist colonial rule, they assimilated all institutions and cultures that colonial rule brought in. Those educated people led the nationalist movement, and at last, Kenya gained independence from the British. After the independence, the Republic of Kenya is managed by the politicians from highlands and most of the development projects have been concentrated in highlands. The highlands are ultimately the political and economic center of Kenya.

On the contrary, the lowlands region has never achieved any place in the political, economic world of Kenya. While the colonial government divided the highlands into no less than six provinces and eagerly developed each, they lumped the lowlands together as one Northern Province and left the area underdeveloped; although it occupied half of the country. For example, there was no trained teacher in the school that the colonial government opened in 1929 at Marsabit, a colonial town in the Northern Frontier District, Northern Province. The teacher was a colonial clerk who taught only one school hour daily [1]. It is not until 1960s that a proper school was begun at Marsabit (Tablino 1999[1980]:6). Such tendencies were not changed even after the independence of Kenya. Those areas that were called the Northern Frontier District in the colonial period, and which are now such as Garissa District, Mandera District in North-Eastern Province; or Moyale District, Marsabit District in Eastern Province, are still underdeveloped and the people still do not receive adequate administrative services, such as education, medical treatment. Even basic necessities like wells are insufficient. Therefore, most of the inhabitants of lowlands, who exist as pastoralists, suffer great losses during droughts. The same is true of transportation facilities. For example, you can see the poor environment of the transportation facilities in lowlands at Isiolo town that stands at the foot of Mt. Kenya. Isiolo was a border town between the Central Province, a highlands area, and the Northern Province, a lowlands area. While the road to highlands from Isiolo is tarmac, the road to lowlands from Isiolo is not paved. As well, while formal transportation, such as
jitney bus or long-distance bus, is available to highlands from Isiolo, there is no formal transportation to lowlands from Isiolo. The lowlands have been neglected from Government of Kenya as well as Colonial Government.

As described above, there is a great difference between highlands and lowlands in terms of the extent of influence by the State, be it the Colonial Kenya or the Republic of Kenya. In the highlands, colonial rule invaded deeply and widely, and the inhabitants were bodily affected. Colonial rule forced the inhabitants to relocate, and went as far as mercilessly killing resisters. Through the mutual interaction with colonial rule, people gathered together to conduct an independence movement. In contrast to the case of the highlands, the lowlands was not influenced by colonial rule. Moreover, they have not been influenced by Republic of Kenya even after independence.

The difference in the extent of the influences by the State has produced greater difference in the attitude to the Republic of Kenya itself on the part of the people. As for inhabitant of the highlands, they recognize that Kenya is the State under which they gained independence from the British. It is obvious that they are Kenyan. However, as for inhabitant of the lowlands, especially those pastoral people on the periphery of the Kenya whom we will consider in this paper, Kenya has been an unaccountable something. While they recognize Kenya as an ethnic group or land located somewhere in the southern land, they do not imagine themselves as Kenyan. They, so to speak, exist outside of the State.

Of course not all of the inhabitants of the lowlands think like that. Those who were educated; who were policeman or soldier or have served in prison, understood what was Kenya or Colonial Kenya. It is, however, only recently that most inhabitants of the lowlands have begun being aware of the Republic of Kenya they live in. That is a process still in full swing.

This paper then, aims to examine the changes of the society on the periphery of a State that is in the process of integration into a Nation. For this purpose, this paper considers the changes in Gabra society. The Gabra are pastoralists who reside in the area from the Marsabit district in Kenya to the Southern Ethiopia. Originally Gabra resided in Ethiopia side. After the borderline between Colonial Kenya and Ethiopia was drawn in 1907, they escaped to Colonial Kenya from Ethiopia, thereby avoiding the heavy tax imposed by Ethiopia and the harassment by the Ethiopian soldiers (Robinson 1985:386). In this way, Gabra migrated to become Kenyan. In recent years, they have been progressively improving in their national consciousness. This may be seen as the result of the following factors: the spread of education, aid from the Nation, reliance on the Kenyan economy through the livestock trading, the presence of government officers such as police or Chief playing an important role in Gabra
usual life, and so on.

An important question concerns the kinds of change that should occur when a society existing outside of the State is integrated into the inside of the Nation State. This paper examines this question by focusing on a Kenyan general election, and in so doing, brilliantly exposes the social changes among the Gabra.

In December 1997, a General Election was held in Kenya, the eighth General Election after gaining independence. The Gabra participated in this election as follows. The election, a contest for political resources, namely the seat of Members of Parliament and Councilor, grew out of the political community called Algana, which is one of the five phratries of the Gabra. Then Algana seceded from the Gabra, and the Gabra were thus divided into two communities. After the election, the Gabra held a whole Gabra meeting (korr dibbe shan, or five drums meeting) to recombine these communities into one. The recombined Gabra, however, is not what it used to be. By participating in an election, gaining the experience of dispute, and finally settling the dispute, the Gabra society was greatly changed.

This paper examines the social changes among the Gabra as follows. In Section 2, we will briefly see the Gabra social life as it relates to our topic, and in Section 3, we will see the sequences of the 1997 election in Gabra. In Section 4, we will consider how Gabra traditions were utilized for getting the vote, and in Section 5, we will analyze the social change in Algana. In Section 6, we will see the sequences of the movement toward recombination of the Gabra, and in Section 7, we analyze the new ideas that came out from the recombination movement. Finally, in Section 8, we will summarize the social changes among Gabra when Nation-State integrate them.

2. SOCIAL LIFE OF THE GABRA

Before examining the social changes of the Gabra that were caused by the election, let us take a general view of the social life of the Gabra. Three points concerning the social background are important.

First, we will survey the difference in the sense of values and the lifestyle among the Gabra. The Gabra reside in the area from Marsabit district in Kenya to Southern Ethiopia. It is the most arid area in the East Africa and usually receives around 150 mm annual rainfalls. Most of the people in this area are nomads who depend on livestock such as camel, goats, sheep and cattle. These nomadic Gabra dress in their traditional style and value the attitude of keeping aada, or tradition. On the other hand, there are people of this area who live in
towns scattered throughout the semi-desert, but located near the big wells or springs. These towns have developed as centers of the livestock trade. In such towns, you can find a church and mosque as well as government agency such as school or police. The town people include storekeepers, traders, and office workers of government agencies or churches. They dress in Western style and think in a “modernized way.” In the 1997 election, those town people (nami thira) introduced the new ideas that caused social changes into the people living in the semi-desert (nami badiya). This is the first background of the affairs of the 1997 election.

Second, surveying the social structure of the Gabra, we can see that Gabra society has a den-droidal structure that is sectionalized from phratry, clan, lineage in order of the level of section. The Gabra society is sectionalized into five phratries (gos); Algana, Gar, Galbo, Odola, Sharbana. Each phratry is sectionalized into 4-14 clans (balbal), and furthermore, each clan is sectionalized into 1-7 lineages (min). Lineages are organized by patrilineal descent groups. However, such a segmental model showing the clan as a subunit of phratry does not show the actualities of the Gabra life. As Schlee (1989:1-2) clarified, there are inter-phratrial clans or even inter-ethnical clans that stand among the ethnic units, such as Gabra, Rendille, Sakuye, Boran, and so on. Therefore, from the perspective of such clans, their representations in different ethnic units are subunits. As we will examine later, the social changes had occurred in this social structural inversion. This is the second background of the affairs of the 1997 election.

Third, let us consider the age system among the Gabra. The Gabra society is also organized by the generation. This system classifies people under some generational classes and puts each class in the appropriate generation grade having its own peculiar role. The generation class and grade are organized by each phratry. In the Algana phratry, there are four generation grades; a) luba; b) gadoom; c) dabela; and d) jarsa mata bufate grade in order of advancement. In these four grades, people in the gadoom and dabela grade play an important role in Gabra social life. The gadoom engages in politics. They say that gadoom has gaas, or the shade of the tree where people can hold a meeting. It means that gadoom has a right and responsibility to solve the problems among the Gabra. As for dabela, they say that dabela has ebu, or benediction. The role of dabela is to pray for peace and order. Thus, Gabra centralizes the political power in gadoom grade and religious power in dabela grade. Every generation class advances up to the next grade every fourteenth year. For example, the generation class that is now playing a political role in the gadoom grade will be advanced to dabela grade after serving out their term. However, in Algana phratry, this advancement was postponed for many years. This is the third background of the affairs of the 1997 election.
3. ELECTION HAS COME UPON THE GABRA

(1) The Penetration of Election into the Gabra

The first topic to consider is how a national event, namely an election, penetrated into the nomadic Gabra, who have not been aware of Nation, as well as the Gabra who had settled in a town.

In Kenya, General Elections for President, Members of Parliament and Civic (Councilor) take place every five years. Kenya has a single-member constituency system comprised originally of 158 constituencies in 1969 for Members of Parliament [2]. Later, these were subdivided into 188 in 1988, then to 210 in 1997 [3]. Until quite recently, the nomadic Gabra did not vote, and it was not until the sixth election in 1988 that most of them began to vote. Before that, only the Gabra who had settled in a town participated in elections. The redistricting of the constituency in 1988 had a dramatic effect on the nomadic Gabra.

With the 1988 redistricting, the Marsabit North constituency was divided into two constituencies, the Saku and the North Horr, as shown in Figure 1, bringing a new political situation. Before redistricting, the settled Gabra could send their candidate to Parliament, unless they were torn by internal strife. In the Marsabit North constituency, the Gabra was

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![Figure 1. The Redistricting of the Constituency in 1988.](image-url)
the majority population, constituting more than half of the electorate, while the Boran, Rendille, Turkana, Burji, Samburu, Somali and Bantu people were the minorities. Thus, as long as Gabra voted together, the Gabra candidate was sure to be elected.

After the redistricting, however, the political situation changed suddenly. In the Saku constituency, of which Marsabit town is the center, the Boran became a majority, thus ensuring the election of their candidate. There was only a slim chance, if any, for the Gabra candidate in the Saku. On the other hand, in the North Horr constituency, the Gabra became a super majority that could send their candidate to a Parliament regardless of any internal strife. The Gabra did not need to unite behind their candidate and stand together against other ethnic groups. Indeed, often more than one Gabra candidate contested a seat in the North Horr constituency.

Without gathering a heavy nomadic Gabra’s vote, no candidate could now win a seat. The Gabra settled in a town began to visit nomadic Gabra to campaign and these nomadic Gabra gradually went to the polls. Therefore, not only the town Gabra, but also the nomadic Gabra now participated in elections.

(2) The result of the election in 1997

In the 1997 election, in North Horr constituency, there were three candidates for Member of Parliament. Two of them, Dr. Bonaiya Adi Galgalo, who was the incumbent Member of Parliament, and Mr. Elema Isako Fila, ran under the Kenya African National Union (KANU). The other candidate, Mr. Wario Uha Ali, ran under the National Development Party of Kenya (NDP). Bonaiya originated from the Gar phratry, Elema from the Algana phratry, and Wario from the Galbo phratry. Both of the candidates who ran under KANU contested the Nomination, and then, Bonaiya, who was nominated by the KANU, contested with Wario for the seat. Finally, Bonaiya was returned to the Member of Parliament from North Horr constituency.

The disputes caused by the election were occurred after the Nomination. The ardent supporters of Elema were Algana, and they began denouncing Algana people who voted for Bonaiya. The ardent supporters appealed to the Algana to vote for Wario in General Election as vengeance against Bonaiya. Moreover, they forced even Algana supporters of Bonaiya vote for Wario. Consequently, it caused serious disputes between those ardent supporters of Elema and Algana supporters of Bonaiya.

As for how the ardent supporter or campaigner of Elema knew who voted for whom, an examination of the voting system is the key to understand this problem. Nomination is an
election carried out by each party to select a nominee from the candidates. In 1997, KANU had more than one candidate, and consequently they were the only party that conducted a Nomination in the North Horr constituency. The choice of voting system was left in each party's hands, and KANU chose the queue system [4]. The queue system, or mlolongo [Swahili], is a system to count voters making a line for a particular candidate. For example, if there are two candidates, such as Mr. A and Ms. B, voters make two lines, one for Mr. A and the other for Ms. B. Then, the presiding officer for the Nomination counts the voters in each line to decide which is the winner. As a matter of course, it is quite obvious to everyone as to who votes for which candidate. That is a drawback of the queue system. Owing to this queue system, the supporter and campaigner of Elema as well as Bonaiya could entirely know who voted for whom.

After the Nomination, the disputes between the Elema camp and Bonaiya camp occurred in the following areas and towns: Gus, Marabot, North Horr, El Gade, Balessa, Dukana and Maikona. Except for the Maikona town, Algana is the dominant resident in these areas, and even the dispute in Maikona, both of the persons concerned were Algana. Most of the disputes were triggered by the Elema camp which harassed Algana supporters of Bonaiya. Let us enumerate the disputes. In Gus area, for example, the Elema supporter refused to attend a funeral or wedding of Algana supporter of Bonaiya, and then broke off the promises of marriage and trusting a camel. In North Horr area, an Elema supporter refused to provide an Algana supporter of Bonaiya with a sheep for funeral. Also, they declared eleven Algana supporters of Bonaiya expelled from Algana phratry. In El Gade area, an Elema supporter cast off the bracelet (medichi), which was a proof of amity, just because it was given by an Algana supporter of Bonaiya. One dispute that was occurred in a ceremony of sacrifice in El Gade area was the symbol of the fission of the Gabra society. In this sacrifice, people are supposed to stroke sacrificed goats before slaughtering. Algana supporters of Bonaiya, however, were refused to stroke the sacrificed goats of Elema supporters. This was no mean dispute, because it was occurred in the holy ceremony of sacrifice. The news of this dispute spread in a twinkling all over the Gabra, and people began to feel that the Algana had seceded from the Gabra. The Algana, which had been just a cultural segment, became a cultural-political segment. The Gabra were divided into two communities: the Algana and the Gabra excluding the Algana. The Algana was composed of the supporters of Elema, while the Gabra excluding the Algana included not only other phratries’ people but also Algana people who voted for Bonaiya.
4. THE INSTRUMENTAL USE OF TRADITION

As described above, most of the disputes were triggered by the Elema camp, which harassed Algana supporters of Bonaiya. The ardent supporters of Elema forced Algana supporters of Bonaiya to vote for Wario, or tried to expel those Bonaiya supporters from the Algana phratry. However, the Elema supporters did not necessarily force or expel Bonaiya supporters from the beginning. Especially, the nomadic Gabra did not want to force or expel at the beginning. Being stirred up by the ardent Elema supporters who came from town, they joined the movement expulsion. The ardent Elema supporters made the best use of traditions to stir up the nomadic Gabra who supported Elema.

There are great differences between town Gabra and nomadic Gabra in their sense of values and the lifestyle. The town Gabra dress in Western style, engage in business, and think in a “modernized way,” while nomadic Gabra dress in their traditional style and value the attitude of keeping aada, or tradition. The town Gabra tend to regard nomadic Gabra as “primitive” or “backward.” It strikes me that the ardent supporters of Elema, who came from town, thought that traditional factors were the key to receive support from nomadic Gabra. They adroitly utilized the traditions of Gabra and invented or fabricated new traditions, in the process of stirring up nomadic Gabra who supported Elema.

(1) Utilizing norms

The factor to which the Elema campaigners focused their attention was the traditional war of Gabra. The Gabra have long raided their neighbors, the Rendille, Samburu, Dassanetch, Boran et al, of livestock. Such traditional wars are called dula. The Elema campaigners treated the election as if it was dula. A certain campaigner of Elema censured Algana persons who did not vote for Elema for their “betrayal” as follows:

On the Nomination day, we found that not a few Algana persons voted for Bonaiya. This event astonished us. We could understand that Gar people voted for Bonaiya, because he is a “son” of Gar. But we could not understand why Algana people did not vote for Elema. He is our son, isn’t he? We could not run away from battlefield leaving our injured friend behind. But they forsook our son for another!

The person who runs away from the battlefield leaving his injured friend behind is called halbaku. Gabra regard halbaku as dirty and hate him. They go so far as to apply social sanctions against him, for example, no one will propose marriage to his daughter. By implying
that the election was dula, the Elema campaigners appealed to the minds of nomadic Gabra by casting the Bonaiya voters as fugitives from the battlefield. As for nomadic Gabra, it is a matter of course that those in a battlefield should join forces. Thus they gradually succeeded in persuading nomadic Gabra to expel the Algana persons who voted against Algana from the Algana phratry.

(2) Utilizing the traditional offices

In order to persuade the nomadic Gabra, the Elema campaigners also utilized the traditional officers of the Gabra: the hayu and jarrab. In the gadoom and dabela grades, they have their two hayus; and in gadoom grade, they have many jarrabs who are selected by each clan. Hayus are the central figures of politics and religion, and jarrabs support hayu. The ardent supporters of Elema presented their opinion as if it was the order of the hayu or jarrab. Originally, both hayu and jarrab did not have the power to give orders or to rule over others, though they did have the authority as an arbitrator or impresario for ceremonies. The supporters of Elema, however, treated them as a man of power, and tried to block the argument against their opinion by repeating “That is the order of the hayu. Do you disobey the hayu’s order?” They tried to change the nature of the hayu and jarrab into the office of power.

Secondly, they fabricated a pseudo-jarrab. I found a certain man who was treated as jarrab by Elema supporters in 1997 that had not been in 1995 when I had conducted research about jarrab. As hayu and jarrab are selected only at the transition of a generation grade, and the transition rite had not taken place since 1986, it is obvious that the new “jarrab” is a fabrication. This pseudo-jarrab belonged to the central core of the election campaigner of Elema. He also actively participated in a social exclusion of Algana people who voted for Bonaiya from Algana.

[Case 1]

In September 1997, Mr. Ibrae, who was an Algana, died. The family of the deceased buried him, and later they planned the kabanesa, or cooling ceremony, which is the first step of funeral, just before the General Election day in December. However, the pseudo-jarrab held a meeting and appealed to those in attendance not to participate in the kabanesa of Ibrae for the reason that his sons were ardent supporters of Bonaiya. He added that it was the order from hayu. Thus, the supporters of Elema, including ordinary supporters, did not participate in the kabanesa.
This pseudo-jarrab was social stirrer who was characterized by his eloquence. He tried to expel the Algana person who voted for Bonaiya from Algana through the authority of hayu. However, the attitude that pseudo-jarrab assumed was very different from the real jarrab. Originally, real jarrab aimed at keeping the peace. When they arbitrate a dispute between two persons, they do not aim at deciding who would be a victor and who would be vanquished, but rather at recovering the lost peace by showing a mediation plan to which both of them can assent. To take an example as follows:

[Case 2]

One time, a man who had stolen some goats was caught. Mr. Dofata who was the jarrab in those days, held a meeting to bring him up for hearing. Dofata and the elders delivered judgment that he ought to pay forty goats as compensation. Later, however, Dofata proposed remitting ten goats out of respect for the elders. Again, he proposed remitting ten in consideration of the good shade of the tree (gaas), because without the shade, people would not hold meeting that brought about the peace. Moreover, he proposed remitting ten for karr, or the gate of goat's enclosure sake. As a result of repeated remitting, they forgave the defendant so long as he paid five goats as compensation.

As shown in this case, it is apparent that jarrab would not bankrupt the defendant, although he denounced the defendant and imposed a huge compensation on him. Jarrab made the victim consent by imposing a huge compensation that expressed how ill the defendant was, while he considered the life of defendant. As it shows, the jarrab has to consider not only the victim but also the defendant. That is where he shows his skill. However, the pseudo-jarrab positively incited Algana people to confront the Algana persons who voted for Bonaiya. It seems that the pseudo-jarrab was eager for the confrontation rather than harmony. Being anxious about the situation, one of the real jarrab declared that hayu of Algana never sent such an instruction as the pseudo-jarrab claimed and tried to persuade the people to make up a quarrel. However, the excited people did not listen to him, and the nearer to the voting day of General Election, the more they got into the disputes.

That the people did not obey the real jarrab, but obeyed the pseudo-jarrab, is related to the election system, a system which decides who wins or loses, and is thus naturally intimate with conflicts. However, such a conflict is essentially unacceptable in traditional Gabra life. Pierre Crastres (1989 [1974]: 123-124) stated that social life in “society against the state” is a “combat” that precludes any victory. Conversely, if it becomes possible to speak of a “victory,”
this is because it concerns someone unfit, that is outside social life. Thus, the election is a new type of “combat” that was not found in Gabra social life in the past. Most of the people, however, were very aware of the different nature of elections. Therefore they did not obey the real jarrab who regarded the disputes accompanied election as the traditional conflict among the Gabra.

(3) The Invention of New Office

The Elema campaigners also invented a new type of office that is the “Craftsman of the Sacred Drum.” For this invention, they made use of the tradition outlined as follows.

Every phratry builds a special hamlet called a yaa, which is the center of religious and political activities. In this yaa hamlet, they keep three instruments that symbolize the phratry: the dibbe or sacred drum, the magalaat or horn, and the uchum or fire stick. The sacred drum, which the yaa of the Algana hold, is made of metal, while other drums that the yaa of Gar, Galbo, Sharbana, Odola hold, are made of wood. Thus, each phratry except the Algana needs a new sacred drum when they build a new yaa hamlet at the transition of generation grade. Traditionally, they are supposed to ask a certain man of the Boruga clan in Algana to make new sacred drum [5]. They say that the sacred drums made by other persons are soon broken.

The Elema campaigners paid attention to this tradition and invented this craftsman into new special office, namely “Craftsman of the Sacred Drum,” and won him over to their side. They made it known to the people that “Craftsman of the Sacred Drum” is more powerful than hayu, because without the new sacred drum, phratries other than the Algana could not build their new yaa hamlet, and the candidate for hayu consequently could not take office. The man who was now a “Craftsman of the Sacred Drum” attended the meeting held by the Elema supporters and in this way, lent authority to their decision.

Second, the Elema campaigners interpreted this tradition as the seniority of Algana in five phratries. They claimed that Algana, who has a fine sacred drum and is responsible to make new drums for other phratries, is an angaf, or “first-born” of five phratries. The Gabra values seniority highly. For example, the first-born male succeeds their fathers as the head of the family and inherits most of the livestock when the father dies. Younger brothers, who are called manda, live under the supervision of first-born male. Saying that Algana is the angaf of five phratries, the ardent supporters of Elema claimed that people who belongs to other phratries are supposed to obey the opinion of Algana, which means they have to vote for Wario in General Election, because they are manda. The campaign was not necessarily successful, as
most of the people did not accept this claim. However, some people in Algana believed it.

As we saw above, the ardent supporters of Elema tried to manipulate nomadic Gabra using the tradition or culture of the Gabra. They freely picked out an appropriate factor of tradition or culture from the usual social context, and implanted in the new political context. As for the ardent supporters of Elema, the tradition or culture of Gabra was nothing more than instruments for manipulating nomadic Gabra.

They could manipulate nomadic people in some degree as planned. Contrary to its usual appearances, the adapted culture and tradition took nomadic Gabra who supported Elema to the expulsion movement. The nomadic Gabra who supported Elema could not help taking part in the expulsion movement if they wanted to obey their tradition or culture. Laying emphasis on the power of the hayu, the “Craftsman of Sacred Drum” and the yaa hamlet; people began to think of their society not as an acephalous society but a society that had somewhat of an absolute monarch.

5. THE CHANGE OF ALGANA

As we saw above, the ardent supporters of Elema forced the Algana supporters of Bonaiya to vote for Wario in General Election. However, why did the ardent Elema supporters think that even the supporters of Bonaiya should vote for Wario in General Election if they were Algana? It was a vengeance against Bonaiya that enticed the ardent supporters of Elema to vote for Wario in General Election. This is understandable. However, which idea enabled them to think that even the supporters of Bonaiya should vote for Wario? In this section, we will focus on the new idea called “clanism” that enabled them to consider this and examine how new this idea actually is. This new idea is connected with the structural inversion of Gabra society.

(1) Raising “Clanism”

The “clanism” was the word that the supporters of Elema introduced as a way of blaming Bonaiya and Gar people after the Nomination. The “clanism” means sectionalism at the level of phratry. The ardent supporters of Elema insisted that Bonaiya pursued only the interests of the Gar, but not those of the Gabra. They also blamed Gar people for always voting for the candidate whose origin was Gar. The “clanism” on which the ardent supporters of Elema insisted represents unscrupulous support of people belonging to their own phratry for office and promotion. Such “clanism” was accompanied by the ideas that the member of a phratry should all hang together, and support a certain candidate for their future interests.
The blame for the act of Gar people's voting is based on the following: Bonaiya won a seat against Mr. Abdikadir, who came from Algana in the 1988 and 1992 election. Again, Bonaiya defeated Elema, who was the Algana candidate in the 1997 election. Observing the Algana people's voting in these elections, more than a few Algana people voted for Bonaiya while many voted for the Algana candidate. However, observing the Gar's voting, the Elema supporters found that “all” of the Gar people voted for Bonaiya and “no one” voted for the Algana candidate. They insisted that the Algana's voting was the result of pursuing the Gabra’s interests, while the Gar's voting was the result of looking after their own interests. The latter was viewed as “clanism.” These observations were brought by the open voting system that enabled people to know who voted for whom.

The ardent supporters of Elema appealed to those common Algana people to unite to oppose the “clanism” of the Gar people. This means that all Algana should vote for Wario in General Election and defeat Bonaiya who is living up to the “clanism.” While they blamed the Gar people for their “clanism,” they tried to firm up the phratry unity for a full scale contest. They tried change the nature of Algana into the group of the unity and acting together. This idea of firming up phratry unity for a full scale contest and a acting together was rather the nature of “clanism.” Algana were ironically running its course toward “clanism.”

(2) How new the “clanism” is to the Gabra

The idea of firming up phratry unity for a full scale contest, which was introduced by ardent supporters of Elema, is very new to the nomadic Gabra. First of all, the idea of firming up phratry unity was not familiar to the nomadic Gabra, since Gabra did not regard phratry as the unit for sharing of interests. It was rather the clan that was regarded as the unit for sharing of interest. Phratry was regarded as the unit for conducting ritual ceremony or arbitration. Second, the idea, which the members of a certain section like phratry were supposed to obey a group attitude, was also new to the nomadic Gabra. As a matter of course, Gabra occasionally do obey group attitude, as for example, when one of your clan member competes with others, it is usual for you to express that you stand for your clan member. However, not all the clan members stand for him on such an occasion.

[Case 3]

The son of Mr. Guyo [Koyot clan] got engaged to the daughter of Mr. Galgalo [Nolesa clan]. However, Guyo spoke ill of his son’s fiancee behind Galgalo. Hearing what Guyo said, Galgalo got angry, and he appealed to his clan’s member not to marry their daughters
to the sons of Koyot clan. As more than a few members of Nolesa clan whose daughters were engaged to sons of Koyot met his appeal, the engagements of sons of Koyot clan and daughters of Nolesa clan were suspended. However, Mr. Adano, who is a member of Nolesa clan, gave his daughter to son of Mr. Katelo, who is Koyot clan, without hesitation.

As seen in this example, Gabra do not always act in unison, even at the clan level. There were some clan’s men who sided with Galgalo, while others did not respect his appeal. The important point is that no one condemned Adano for his “betrayal.”

The Gabra indubitably firm up the clan unity rather than phratry unity in order to accomplish the request of a certain clan member, but this clan unity does not mean that all of the clan members are always supposed to cooperate nor clan can restrict its member’s activities. Those who do not follow the request of his clan member are not punished or blamed. As for Gabra, clan is not the group that demands monolithic solidarity of its member, but the human resources from which the person is in real trouble with problem can obtain a cooperator. Thus, we can say that the Gabra do not automatically decide an attitude by following the trend of clan opinion, but rather by considering his personal relation with the person who requests assistance.

However, the phratry unity that the ardent supporters of Elema referred to meant that all of the Algana phratry members were bound to vote for Wario in General Election by reason of belonging to the Algana. They also tried to expel those who opposed them. In this respect, the campaign, which Elema supporters brought after Nomination, strengthened the frame of Algana phratry. They tried to convert the phratry, whose nature had been loose and tolerant toward diversity of opinion, into a watertight category that did not allow diversity of opinion and demanded an unconditional solidarity of its member in order to pursue their interests.

(3) The Severance of the Crosscutting Ties Among Phratries

By turning the nature of phratry into a homogeneous and intolerant, the nature of its boundary had changed. As I briefly explained in Section 2, there was a structural inversion in the Gabra society, which was characterized by the social ties crosscutting the phratries as well as clans and ethnic groups. However the Elema supporters tried to sever such social ties and make the boundary of phratry tight. They did not allow the structural inversion that could be seen in the nature of the Gabra society, and turned into the orderly structural society.

From here, let us examine the structural inversion of the Gabra society. The Elmale clan in Algana, for example, consists of five lineages, called the Qape, Iyeesa, Babo Doyo, Guuto Boi
and Lucho, which were named after the person who established those lineages. They originally came from other ethnic groups. Qape and Iyeesa who were brothers came from Sale clan of Rendille. Babo Doyo came from Boran, and Guuto Boi came from El Molo. Those four lineages, whose founders came from other ethnic groups, thus have double identities: Gabra and other ethnicity. As for Lucho lineage, they do not know from where their founder came. However, they have double identities as well. The oral tradition told us an episode how Lucho became Elmale as follows:

One day, a man of Disa clan of Algana found Lucho in the fields. He tried catching him so that Disa could get a new member, but tried as he might, he could not catch Lucho. So he looked to Elmale clan’s man who happened to be there for assistance. Attracting Lucho by the beautiful cloth, Elmale man caught him when Lucho came near to see the cloth. In this way Lucho became a member of Elmale clan.

Although Lucho was incorporated into the Elmale clan, his descendant adopted the ear-cut-mark that Disa clan put on their livestock as the Lucho lineage's mark. In a sense, Lucho has double feeling of identification to both Disa and Elmale, although their feeling of identification to the Disa is weaker than that to the Elmale. Such a structural inversion provides complicated social ties among the clans, phratries and ethnic groups in this area. Qape people, for example, they have an intimacy with Sale clan of Rendille though they are Gabra. As well, Lucho people have an intimate friendship with Disa people, and sometimes give Disa people livestock. Paying attention to these complicated social ties with a broader view of the structural inversion, we can see another inverse phenomenon, intimate ties which formed by the oral tradition. Take, for example, the case in which a Elmale clan has intimate relationships with Gar phratry based on the oral tradition as follows:

Once upon a time, while walking together an Elmale man and Gar man found a rad (female calf) in the fields. They disputed who should own this rad. Just then, the rad disappeared under the ground. They had lost it. Since then, Gar and Elmale have never disputed anything.

In the 1997 election, Elmale clan was said to have actively voted for Bonaiya. Answering to the question raised herein as to why they supported Bonaiya even though they are Algana, more than a few Elmale men referred to this oral tradition. John Wood (1997: 689-691)
presented the concept of “inside the outside” to explain the complex group dynamics in Northern Kenya. He stated that Gabra identity seems to be constructed upon frequent shifts within the Gabra community itself between social and moral “insides” and “outsides.” The 1997 election spotlighted the Gabra identity that shifted between “insides” and “outsides.” The act of Elmale clan was a good example. Although the Elmale are inside of the Algana, they usually think a great deal of the friendly relationship with Gar. Referring this relationship, Elmale people took sides with the Gar phratry at the election, which is outside of Algana.

The ardent supporters of Elema did not accept such “inside the outside” phenomenon in Algana. They tried to compel Algana supporters of Bonaiya to vote for Wario instead of Bonaiya. After the General Election, they tried to expel those Algana people who voted for Bonaiya, even though they were warned of the outcome. I observed the Elema supporters pursuing the Algana people who voted for Bonaiya at the General Election, saying that they either had to stand together with Algana or stand apart from Algana. They were pressed for an answer as to whether they would be Algana or whether they would be accepted as a social ouster from Algana. To answer that they would be Algana was to follow the Algana line, without considering the relationship with those who were outsiders of Algana. It meant that the new Algana objected to the society that kept “outsides” in their own society, but approved of the society in which “insides” should be “insides.” In this manner, the members of the Algana were strictly examined as to whether they devoted themselves to the Algana and follow the Algana line. The Algana, which had been just a cultural segment, became a cultural-political segment.

6. THE MOVEMENT FOR RECOMBINE THE SPLIT GABRA

As we saw above, the ardent supporters of Elema who came from town tried to turn Algana society by utilizing traditions. However, not all the nomadic Gabra who supported Elema accepted such a new adapted traditions. Some have been made to dance to the tune of the Elema supporters, while others suspected their explanation. Though they did not offer a public counter-argument about such explanation, they saw through their plot. They privately said that those town-Gabra were ignorant in Gabra tradition, and that is why they use tradition for their plot.

Watching the split of Algana after the Nomination, Mr. Manmo who was one of Algana hayus in gadoom grade involved in the action to prevent the Algana from splitting. He came to North Horr town and said that he would prevent the Algana from splitting. He announced that
he would hold a whole Gabra meeting together with other four yaa hamlets, and made an appeal to the public for participation in the meeting. This whole Gabra meeting was named korr dibbeshan, or "Five Drums Meeting," after the sacred drum which symbolize phratry. In this manner, the movement for recombining the split Gabra was launched.

**1) The Antagonism of Two Hayus**

It was Algana supporters of Bonaiya that gave the welcome to the Five Drums Meeting. They suffered harassment from the ardent supporters of Elema after the Nomination. They expected the meeting to solve their problem. On the contrary, Elema supporters, especially the campaigner of Elema, opposed the Five Drums Meeting because they suspected Manmo of supporting Bonaiya. Actually, there were many implications in his surrounding people, although Manmo did not cast his vote. For example, all of the youths who came from Manmo's hamlet voted for Bonaiya. As well, it was the vehicle of Bonaiya's supporter that Manmo took on the way to North Horr. Moreover, all of the vehicles, which Manmo used for sending the message to other phratry's hayus and jarrabs who were scattered in Gabra land, belonged to the ardent supporters of Bonaiya.

The ardent supporters of Elema took precautions against Manmo, and had Isako who was another Algana hayu in dabela grade as a rival leader. Isako declared that he would hold a whole Algana meeting on the very same schedule of Manmo's Five Drums Meeting. In this manner, Five Drums Meeting held in Manmo's hamlet while Algana meeting held in North Horr town on the same days.

As background to this confrontation, there was a conflict between Manmo and Isako about transferring the title of hayu korma, or "stud-bull hayu." The title of hayu korma, which is the peculiar title to hayu in gadoom grade, shows who is the political leader. Normally, after the transition of a generation grade, new dabela grade's hayu transfer the title to new gadoom grade's hayu after twice blessings. First blessing is given when dabela grade's hayu gives korm boku, or "stud-bull dub" and second one is given when dabela grade's hayu slaughters korm balli, or cattle that is called "stud-bull balli." It is not until second blessing that the new gadoom grade's hayu regard as hayu korma.

In Algana phratry, however, the title of hayu korma did not transfer smoothly. Manmo, who was the present gadoom grade's hayu, was blessed only once, although twelve years had passed after he entered gadoom grade, and he only had two years left for his tenure. Isako, who was the present dabela grade's hayu, still postponed slaughtering the korm balli. In this way, the conflict between Isako, who was still pretending hayu korma, and Manmo, who hate
Isako and ran away from yaa hamlet, had emerged. Isako claimed that Manmo was not qualified to hold a meeting, much less a Five Drums Meeting, because Manmo was not hayu karma. Thus, Isako decided to hold another meeting in North H Orr at the same time.

(2) Two Different Meetings

However, merely about thirty people included Isako, the ardent supporters and campaigners of Elema, came to whole Algana meeting. It was held under the gaas, or shade of tree, which stood on the outskirts of North H Orr town. They did not have any topics for discussion and just paid attention to what was going on in the Five Drums Meeting. From beginning to end, they just blamed those people who attended to Five Drums Meeting.

On the other hand, many people, including hayus and holy qallu as well as jarrabs of all phratries, attended the Five Drums Meeting. The total number of men was about 350, averaging 180 people a day. For this unprecedented huge meeting, they collected five ox and 74 goats and sheep. Bonaiya contributed 200 kilogram sugar, 20 kilograms of tea leaves and 10 kilograms of chewing tobacco and provided use of his Land-Rover. A chartered truck ferried passengers to Manmo's hamlet for the meeting, which was 15 kilometers southeast of Balessa town. They constructed a very big domed shade (gaas) under a tree and a cooking place in the field that extend east side of the Manmo's hamlet. They also pitched a very big tent that had been borrowed from an NGO. The total cost for the Five Drums Meeting to 385,000Ksh (around 7,000 US dollars). According to a youth who worked as a cook, 70 kilograms of maize, 600 kilograms of tea leaves, and 10 kilograms of sugar were consumed per day, together with five goats and sheep or an ox.

In the morning hours, people assembled under a tree in their respective phratries and put their ideas together. Then, in the afternoon, all of them gathered in the big domed shade (gaas) to discuss the issues. They discussed not only the issues of election but also other questions at issue in Gabra, for example, the issue of dispute over the ownership of the well. Taking this golden opportunity, they also had a small meeting separately here and there in spare moments and discussed their own problems. For example, some discussed how to counter an epidemic of livestock, while others made arrangements about digging a rainwater dam. After eight days' efforts, the Five Drums Meeting declared the split Gabra recombined.

After the Five Drums Meeting came to an end, people went back home. Hearing the results of the Five Drums Meeting, the whole Algana meeting also declared an amicable settlement. Now the hot political season had passed, the Gabra society has been recombined.
7. CHANGE THE NATURE OF GABRA SOCIETY

The recombined Gabra society, however, was no longer what it had been. In this section, we will clarify the change of the nature of Gabra society, examining the new ideas that were introduced in Five Drums Meeting.

(1) Five Drums Meeting

The character of the Five Drums Meeting was full of tradition. The Five Drums Meeting faithfully translated the ideal of the tradition into action. First, the meeting aimed to arbitrate the disputes and recover the peace. That embodied the tradition and ideal of the Gabra, because what the Gabra regard as important is just keep the peace (nagaa). As I mentioned above, there were some nomadic Gabra who regarded the ardent supporters of Elema as ignorant in Gabra tradition. They recognized this as it was, because they were aware that the Elema supporters tried to stir up the conflict. Conflict is opposed to in the Gabra tradition and ideal. The Gabra tradition and ideal is just eager for the peace.

Second, it was also very important that the Five Drums Meeting was held in the field that was 15 kilometers to the southeast of Balessa town, because Gabra tradition is thought to lodge in the field. For the same reason, Isako also set up Algana meeting on the outskirts of North Horr town, although in this case, choosing the outskirts of the town was expedient, nothing more.

Third, the Five Drums Meeting realized the ideal of Gabra. Representing the ideal of Gabra by words in practice is to gorge oneself, to drink tea or coffee, and to converse with friends without dispute. In the Five Drums Meeting, Manmo slaughtered an ox or some goats and sheep every morning according as proper manners and people ate their fill. The hide of ox was cut into bands that symbolized peace, and people competed with others in getting it. Manmo, as well as other hayus, blessed people in coffee ceremonies every morning. People renewed their relationships with relatives, affines and friends. The attendees of the Five Drums Meeting felt that they were really in the midst of their real tradition and peace. They spoke in high terms of the Five Drums Meeting, saying that it was midaga, or beautiful.

However, we can find the ingenious contrivance behind the magnificent direction of tradition, which tempted nomadic people into the modernization, because the magnificent directions of tradition easily capture people. They found their life worth and respectable living, while they adopted many resolutions in the Five Drums Meeting, thinking that those were based on the authoritative assurance of the tradition. This is in striking contrast to the way that the Elema supporters took. The Elema supporters processed each of traditions, and
extended their new traditions for mobilizing Algana people to politicking. That was an excessively artificial act. The nomadic Gabra felt that those new traditions smacked of make-believe. By contrast, the Five Drums Meeting did not process each of the traditions, but faithfully and magnificently performed each rite according to the best Gabra tradition. That is, so to speak, a magnificent mass read by the Pope in Vatican. The Five Drums Meeting vigorously attracted people. Though the Five Drums Meeting introduced new ideas one after another (as we will see below), the more they were attached to and proud of the meeting, the more they were affected by new ideas. The nature of Gabra society was changed, contrary to its appearance. People believed that the Gabra society was not changed and it was still what it had been. But it was not.

Eric Hobsbawm (1992[1983]: 9-15) presented the concept of “Invention of Tradition.” Inventing the tradition means the act of making use of the old tradition for another purpose in a new situation, or creating the novel new tradition with old traditional materials when the society experiences great changes. The Gabra experienced serious disputes caused by the election. In this situation, the magnificent traditional acts performed in the Five Drums Meeting were a perfect example of “Invention of Tradition,” which showed the Gabra society as if it were everlasting. As for utilizing Gabra tradition, the Five Drums Meeting was superior to that of the Elema supporters.

(2) The New Ideas Introduced by Five Drums Meeting
(a) Dismissal of hayu

The first new idea introduced in the Five Drums Meeting was the idea that they were able to dismiss hayu. Before, no one could dismiss hayu. This idea came out of their trial to solve the conflict between the supporters of Elema and the Algana supporters of Bonaiya. In the meeting, Algana supporters of Bonaiya accused the Elema supporters of causing the disputes. The Five Drums Meeting brought in a verdict of guilty on the acts that the Elema supporters had committed against Algana supporters of Bonaiya. Then, the meeting announced as follows [7]:

(1) The girls promised in marriage, but now rescinded, we do give in marriage.
(2) The participation in the traditional sacrifice that you forbade, we totally authorize.
(3) The traditional sacrifice of our departed elders that you have tried to change should return to be done as it has always been performed since immemorial time.
(4) We, the participants of the Five Drums Meeting have decided and finally unanimously
solved the questions. All the Yaas, the Hayus and the Qallus have approved and blessed. What you had spoiled we have restored.

However, the meeting did not criticize nor put the responsibility on each of the Elema supporters. They did not counsel the supporters of Elema to accomplish the marriage, trusting the camel, and so on. Far from that, they said that each supporter of Elema who caused dispute was not responsible. On behalf of them, it was said that Isako alone was to blame for all the disputes. The Gabra usually try to arbitrate the dispute, hearing the details from everyone who was concerned. However, the Five Drums Meeting could not hear the detail from the Elema supporters who caused the disputes, because all of them attended the Algana meeting held by Isako. That is why the Five Drums Meeting asserted that Isako alone was to blame. Hayu is a father to people, and the children must obey the father’s opinion. Therefore, they said that all of the crimes of which the supporters of Elema were guilty ultimately belonged to Isako, because the fault of which child is guilty should belong to the parents. Thus, the meeting concluded that it was Isako who refused to attend a funeral or wedding, broke off the promises of marriage or trusting a camel, refused to provide a sheep for funeral, cast off the bracelet, and refused to stroke the sacrificed goat.

Then, the Five Drums Meeting decided that they would dismiss Isako from his hayu office and exile him from Gabra. Manmo was now considered as hayu korma by all Gabra. The disputes caused an unexpected result. The Five Drums Meeting recombined the Gabra society, while they solved the traditional disorder about the title of hayu korma in Algana phratry by taking this opportunity.

If hayu acts against people’s wishes, they can dismiss hayu. This is the new idea. As the social background of coming up with such a new idea, there might be an influence of the modern Kenyan political system. Most of those who asserted the acceptability of the dismissal of hayu were came from in and around Marsabit. They were rather familiar with the Kenyan state politics, which often changed the Ministers. They reinterpreted Gabra traditional office modeling after Kenyan political system. The nature of hayu turned to be a “democratic” representative from an absolute monarch, which showed by the Elema campaigner.

(b) The Ideology of “Whole Gabra Interest”

Second, they introduced the new idea of a “Whole Gabra Interest.” This idea came out of all their trials to stop “clanism” in future. The Galbo phratry people who came from around Marsabit led this discussion. Though Mr. Wario, who is Galbo, came forward as NDP
candidate, most Galbo people did not vote for him, but voted for Bonaiya. They explained the reason of their unfriendly voting act for their phratry's man as follows. They emphasized that they did not follow the “clanism” but rather “Whole Gabra Interest.” They argued that “clanism” could bring only small benefit and only for one phratry, while they insisted on how profitable a strong representative would be for the whole Gabra. Actually, Bonaiya was such a powerful representative as to be catapulted to the Minister of Foreign Affairs after the 1997 General Election. The Five Drums Meeting agreed for this idea, and decided to mind their act so as not to seek after phratry's profit.

We can interpret this new idea “Whole Gabra Interest” in two different ways. One interpretation is that each individual freely acts, considering the “Whole Gabra Interest,” and the other is that people should unanimously act, considering the “Whole Gabra Interest.” The latter was more dominant in the Five Drums Meeting. The explanation of Galbo people about their voting act is typical of the latter interpretation. They unanimously voted for Bonaiya, considering the “Whole Gabra Interest.” We are now able to see that the “Whole Gabra Interest” was nothing but a new variety of “clanism.” It merely shifted the framework of unity from phratry to the ethnic group Gabra.

In the meeting, everyone praised the idea “Whole Gabra Interest,” and proposed some ideas based on the “Whole Gabra Interest.” Let us examine the direction that the “new clanism,” which appeals to the public for unity in ethnic level, will take Gabra society. In the Five Drums Meeting, many administrators of Kenya, such as Chiefs, could be seen. On the last day of the meeting, in their capacity as Gabra elders, these Chiefs proposed some plans for important issues such as education, security, squatters, and forest conservation, with which Gabra are confronted. The plan for security issue is as follows:

The robbers from Ethiopia, those are mostly Boran, pass through the Gabra land with the help of food and water from friendly Gabra, and they raid on Rendille, Somali, Burji and Turkana. Those damaged people make a raid on Gabra as a retaliation. If we consider the “Whole Gabra Interest,” Gabra should not help them. Far from that, Gabra had better force them to return to Ethiopia before they raid other ethnic group. For this purpose, establishing the five-member security committee in each location, let us report Boran who comes from Ethiopia with weapons to the police.

The Gus location, where I have been conducting my field research, stands on the southern edge of the Gabra land. That is one of the areas where those damaged enemies often come to
retaliate. Thus, people from Gus location gave their wholehearted support to the Chiefs’ plan, and appealed to other area’s Gabra not to help Boran who comes from Ethiopia with weapons. The plan passed unanimously, and people from Gus location contentedly went back home. However, they suddenly recognized what the “Whole Gabra Interest” meant, after they arrived at home. When they arrived, there was a Boran who came from Ethiopia in Gus location. They faced a problem whether to report this Boran, who had illegal gun, to the police or not. Those who attended the Five Drums Meeting insisted on the duty for reporting the case to the police in the cause of “Whole Gabra Interest,” while those who were intimate with Boran opposed. People whose family member put livestock to grazing in Ethiopia under the protection of Boran also opposed to report, because they were afraid that if they reported and arrested this Boran, Boran in Ethiopia might report the Gabra pastors who also had illegal guns to their police.

The word “Whole Gabra Interest,” which sounds so comfortable, means to sever the various ties between Gabra and Boran. It tried to cut off the social ties that were based on the inter-ethnic clans, relatives and affines. Also it tried to cut off the cooperative tie on livestock management. To strengthen the contour of ethnic Gabra, to sever the ties with other society, and to homogenize the political awareness, that was what “Whole Gabra Interest” really meant.

(c) Strengthen the Borderline

Overlapping with security issue, the Chiefs proposed a new plan about squatters in the Hurri Hill area. Hurri Hill is a hill country comparatively blessed with rainfall abutting on the borderline. It is one of the important areas for grazing. The Chiefs claimed that the Boran people came from Ethiopia and became squatters in this area. As they cultivate a field, the grazing field became reduced. Thus, the Chiefs appealed to send them back to Ethiopia and recover the field. Also, they claimed that people should watch Boran people who came from Ethiopia. It is obvious that they wanted to strengthen the borderline between Kenya and Ethiopia. Showing the potential confrontation about the scarce field, they effectively tried to strengthen the borderline.

(d) Consistency with the Kenyan Judicial System

In the Five Drums Meeting, they discussed another issue of the ownership of a well, which had been contested on a point of law over the period of eight years. In this discussion, the Five Drums Meeting adjusted their arbitrative function to Kenyan judicial system.

Let us examine this conflict briefly. The event happened in the Dukana area between a man of Gar phratry and a man of Gabra Migo [8]. The former is the latter’s father in law. The
conflict was brought by the Gar man who insisted the ownership of the well which the Gabra Migo man dug. The clan member of the Gar man supported him. First, the elders around Dukana area discussed this issue and judged that the owner should be the Gabra Migo man. However, the dissatisfied Gar man took his case to the court of law at Marsabit. The court judged again in favor of Gabra Migo man. Then, the Gar man thrice took this issue to the Five Drums Meeting.

The Five Drums Meeting, however, handled this issue carefully. Hearing both sides and considering the way the affair developed, they decided that Gabra should not take his/her case to Gabra traditional court such as yaa hamlet after the judgment which was delivered by the Kenya judiciary authorities. Then, they dismissed the case of Gar’s man.

(e) Consideration for Human Rights

Moreover, they discussed human rights issue among the Gabra. The Galbo people who came from Marsabit area tried to change a certain Gabra custom that had been condemned by Catholic Mission, utilizing the “Whole Gabra Interest” as rhetoric. That is the custom of expelling the pregnant girl from Gabra society. In Gabra, a pregnant girl, together with the man who made her pregnant, are called chabana. They are regarded as dirty and prohibited from any ritual ceremony. What is worse, the pregnant girl is literally expelled from Gabra society. Those expelled girls are obliged to live in poverty, or marry into another ethnic group such as the Rendille. For relief’s sake, the Catholic Mission in Marsabit built a women’s house to give them protection. The Galbo people tried to do away with this custom. They said that those Rendille children whose mother was Gabra chabana girl would raid on Gabra after they grew up, therefore expelling chabana girl from Gabra and to marry off into Rendille was against the “Whole Gabra Interest.” Regrettably, this plan was carried to the next occasion, because the attendees of the meeting did not want to talk more such an odious topic as chabana. Although this plan was not approved, it was new attempt to relativize and intentionally alter their own culture.

Up to this point, we have seen that the new ideas or plans which were taken up in the Five Drums Meeting in essence proposed a new model of the society. Specifically, (a) it has a traditional and “democratic” representative, and (b) people in this society act solidarily in the cause of whole society interest. (c) This society stands in the State of Kenya and protects the borderline. (d) It carefully adjusts the arbitrative function to Kenyan judicial system, and (e) even tries to alter the customs that are inappropriate in terms of abstract ideals such as human
rights. We may say that these new ideas are good indication of the Gabra’s new disposition from outside to inside of the State.

8. From Outside to Inside of the State

As Takuzo Isobe (1998:140) claimed, people can obtain the autonomy against the smaller society, if they stand for larger society. Put another way, people can do away with the local traditional norms which belongs to smaller society, if they obtain universal norms that is peculiar to the modern society characterized by its mobility in social relationship or class, heterogeneousness and larger social sphere. That is “to connect individuals with larger social sphere, getting rid of the middle sphere (Isobe 1998:139).” In the 1997 election, the ardent supporters of Elema tried to change the Gabra society to the society that had solid political attitude in phratry level with an absolute monarch. On the other hand, the Five Drums Meeting proposed a new model of the society that had solid political attitude in ethnic group level with a traditional and “democratic” representative. The meeting tried to put the society in the State of Kenya and strengthen the borderline. Moreover, they adjusted this society to Kenyan national institutions, and even tried to alter those customs inappropriate in terms of human rights. According as Isobe (1998), these trials which demanded social changes could be regarded as the evidence that the ardent supporters of Elema or some leaders of the Five Drums Meeting had obtained the autonomy against the traditional norms of the Gabra. Because it is not until standing for larger social sphere that people could handle the norms that belonged to the smaller social sphere. Although both of them emphasized the Gabra tradition, the real norms on which they are based are derived from larger social sphere. They did not stand in the middle sphere, or Gabra society, which occupied the space between individuals and State. In this sense, we may say that they are not Gabra, but Kenyan, or the moderns who wear a mask of Gabra.

It is inevitable that the new ideas derived from larger social sphere will permeate through the Gabra. However, for this moment, it is not yet completed, and each Gabra’s attitude for these new ideas is not in concert. For example, although the ardent supporters of Elema demanded nomadic Algana people solidarity and to obey the man of power, there were some people who were skeptical about campaigner’s words, while others supported Elema and actively participated in the expulsion of Algana supporters of Bonaiya. As well, although the Five Drums Meeting strengthened the borderline in the cause of “Whole Gabra Interest,” many Gabra still feel an affinity for Boran who come across the borderline. However, many ideas
that have been taken for granted will be doubted. For example, people may not suddenly report
the Boran who comes across the border to the police, but they may begin to have a question
regarding the nature of right or wrong in stretching out a helping hand to the Boran. In the
case of the Gus location, which we saw above, people finally approved of arresting the Boran
pastor who came from Ethiopia with a gun. The former common sense consciousness of helping
Boran is no longer used now. As well, the inter-phratrial relationship may not suddenly
disappear, but people may begin to hesitate in asking for help from other phratries. For
example, 1988 election had already showed signs of the dispute between Algana and Gar.
Being affected by this dispute, some Algana pastor took their livestock to further wells on
behalf of using the nearer Gar’s well in 1990. The former common sense that people can use
any well if they ask for permission is no longer used now. Now, people are supposed to select
their deeds in consideration of both the former notions of common sense and the new norms.

The new ideas derived from larger social sphere will be realized through such a daily
practice. At last, it will drive the Gabra society into the another society which consist of the
people who only belongs to single category such as phratry or ethnic group. Motoji Matsuda
(1999:106) called such a society a “homogeneous ethnicity.” That is the ruling device of the
modernity; which selects a certain segment from the various segments of people, and encloses
people with selected segments, and rules them as a homogeneous existence. That is the real
influence by which the Gabra were affected. The Gabra who have been neglected and left
underdeveloped now desire enough infrastructure, such as education, medical treatment, a
depth-bored well, veterinary support, a livestock market, adequate road transportation, and so
on. In order to break the status quo, they may try to win such minimum assistance from the
Kenyan government, making their presence felt in the parliament as well as a Kenyan.
However, in return for that, Gabra people should be enclosed within a homogeneous single
category.

At present, Gabra people are enclosed within the homogeneous category called Gabra; they
seem to grope for becoming a Gabra as Kenyan. The government of Kenya approves of the
ethnic traditional justice, unless it is against Kenyan law. Grooping for the consistency with the
Kenyan judicial system, Gabra positively limited their arbitrative function. This evidence
shows the will of Gabra to become a good Kenyans. However, it may be difficult for Kenya to
come up to their expectations, because the government hardly provides the public services. We
could not look aside from the future of Gabra, if they are disappointed at the Kenya.
Notes:
[2] This shows the number of the constituencies for Members of Parliament. As for Councilor, each constituency for Members of Parliament is divided into several constituencies. There are ten constituencies for Councilor in North Horr constituency for Members of Parliament in 1997.
[4] In the 1998 election, the queue system replaced the secret ballot at the Nomination stage. However, the queue system had harmful effects, for example, the openness of queue voting enabled candidates and their agents to intimidate voters at the polling station. Reflecting on the past conduct, the choice of voting system was left in each party's hands in the 1997 election. KANU announced that sub-branch could conduct their Nominations through the secret ballot method as long as they bear the cost. On the other hand, the non government party Ford-Kenya opted for the electoral college system (Daily Nation. November 27. 1997).
[5] Schlee (1989: 200-201) showed the two different oral traditions that told the origin of Algana sacred drum. One claims that the Algana sacred drum was cut from the drum of Karayu of Boran. Another version claim that Arbore, which people was just one with Boran at that time, gave Algana sacred drum to Boruga clan. I guess that the second story may lead other phratries people to ask a certain man of the Boruga clan to make new sacred drum for them.
[6] Every phratry except for Algana have an another sacred office, called qallu, which is the hereditary office.
[8] There are two groups who call themselves “Gabra” along the Kenya-Ethiopia border area. One group, which is focused on in this paper, is called “Malbe” by the other group, and the other group, which lives mainly in the Ethiopia side, is called “Migo” by “Malbe.”

Reference:


**Primary Sources:**

Daily Nation. (November 27. 1997)

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