

[研究論文]

## Kibarua and Peasant Economy: A Case of Sagara Community of Morogoro, Tanzania

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### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to describe the cultural characteristics of 'kibarua' as a wage laborer from the point of view of the life structure of the peasants and the relationship that exists between the employer of 'kibarua' and the laborer as a 'kibarua' him / herself. The presence of wage labor in peasant societies in Africa has, to a certain degree, been highlighted in previous studies, such as those done by Kasfir (Kasfir, 1986)<sup>1)</sup> and Hanzawa (Hanzawa, 1993). The phenomenon of wage labor, together with the phenomenon of peasant differentiation, has been regarded as some of the contributing factors towards the penetration of capitalism into the African peasantry (Kasfir, 1986).

However, Goran Hyden (Hyden, 1980, 1983, 1986) commented on the uniqueness of African capitalism, from the point of view of the differences between advanced and African (less advanced) societies explained below. Firstly, the peasantry differentiation phenomenon in advanced countries is basically supported by the differentiation of private land holding (Tama, 1994), in the contrast to the communal land holding system found in many societies of Africa. Secondly, the differentiation phenomenon in African peasantry remains at the low level (Yoshida, 1982), even in the most capitalized societies of Africa like Kenya. Thus, Africa capitalism can't be equated with that of capitalism found in advanced countries.

That is, one should not only consider the presence of wage labor and peasant differentiation alone without looking into the cultural attributes. Studies focusing on the life structure and the value system of the peasants have been already carried out in Southeast Asia (for example by C. Geerts)<sup>2)</sup>. However, in African setting and Tanzania in particular, there are very few studies. In order to fill the gap in previous studies, the study which I undertook intended to introduce the kibarua concept of the Sagara people as the wage labor phenomenon in a peasant society, and to examine the social, economic, and cultural signifi-

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cance pertaining to the above discussion, especially in as far as the uniqueness of the African peasantry is concerned.

While the following section covers the general characteristic of the contemporary dynamics of the peasant economy in the Sagara society, I analysed the 'kibarua' phenomenon as a form of wage labor in Sagara peasant society in third section relating with the life structure of the peasant. In the final section, I reexamined the discussion on the uniqueness of the African peasant related to the debate between Goran Hyden and the critics.

The data for this paper were obtained by using the following methods:

- (1) A questionnaire (structured or semi-structured) covering aspects pertaining to the dynamics of the peasant economy of the Nyameni village of Sagaraland.
- (2) Informal interviews and discussion with key informants.
- (3) Observation.
- (4) etc.

Field work was carried out between August and September, 1994. My intensive research in Nyameni was also carried out from the end of August to September in 1994.

## REGIONAL SUBSISTENCE AND CASH ECONOMY

### 1. Description of the Study Area

Morogoro region, in which the Sagara community is found, has a population of 1,222, 237 people, 5 districts and 458 villages. The annual rainfall in this region ranges from 600mm to 1200mm. Kilosa is one of the districts in Morogoro region located at about 50km from Morogoro town center (see in Map 1). While the northern part of Kilosa district is dominated by the Kaguru ethnic group, the southern part is occupied by the Sagara people. The Mkudi and Chogoali rivers divide Sagaraland from Kaguruland to the northeast. Sagaraland is lower and hotter with more rain than Kaguruland.

Given these different ecological conditions, the Kaguru people are found to have many cattle (and mainly indigenous breed) while the Sagara people traditionally keep small animals such as goats. This difference has made them experience different lifestyles. However, despite such difference, both of them are truly agricultural people based on the cultivation of staple food crops like maize, compared to the people surrounding them, namely the Masai and Gogo who live on drier area. Nyameni village, one of the villages of Ulaya division in Kilosa district of Sagaraland, was selected as the site for this study (see Fig. 1). This village is located in the middle of the main road from Mikumi to Kilosa. According to

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the 1988 population census, the population of Ulaya division was 10,107 people and Nyameni village was 2,188.

## 2. Subsistence Agriculture in Nyameni

Nyameni village is located near Morogoro town and is very convenient for commercial agriculture production from the point of transportation. There are many plantations along the main road and these have attracted many immigrants who have subsequently intermingled with the indigenous people. Fig.1 shows the distribution of the people according to ethnicity. According to Table 1, 42% of the people interviewed had immigrated from other areas. Among the immigrants are the Goni, Kaguru, Luguru. Generally, Sagaraland is regarded as the most suitable area for cultivation in Tanzania. Most of the immigrants not only come from nearby areas like Ukaguru and Uluguru, but also from faraway areas like Goni and Ugogo. They came to this area in order to look for agricultural field.

In spite of the above favorable condition (that is, availability of arable land), someone living far from the main road faces some transportation difficulties as there is no person in that village with a truck. They are dependent on traders from the urban area and other neighbouring villages to transport their goods to the market. Lack or poor transport system has, among other factors such as low prices for agricultural products (which they cannot control, as they are mainly determined by the world market), discouraged the Sagara people from expanding their agricultural field. An example is the fall of price of cotton which the government had earlier encouraged. In that regard, peasants value and prefer to stick to their subsistence agricultural production.

As a testimony to the above, one immigrant of the Sukuma origin pointed out as follows, "Sagaraland is fertile and people could extend the scale of their agriculture if they want but they don't want to extend the field. Instead of expanding their agricultural field, they accept immigrants generously."

The Sagara type of agriculture is an example of shifting cultivation taking place in the miombo forests of equatorial Africa. Traditionally, it is characterized by the opening up of new fields in the original forest and long-term fallow. However, the land has been seen to decrease year by year, and recently peasants utilize the land that has been exploited (kept under continuous farming) for several years, in some cases for more than 20 years. Thus a new phenomenon of continuous farming is emerging. A recent feature of land use in Sagaraland is the scattered plots from area to area. On average peasants manage 3-4 plots per household.

In Nyameni village, while most peasants have plots in the low lands, as it is more suitable for rice production, some peasants have farm plots on the slopes of the hill under the slash and burn system of agriculture.

Table 2 shows the distribution of the respondents according to farm size. Farm size of the respondents range from 1 to 8 acres. Most of the respondents of 60% have farm sizes ranging from 2 to 3 acres. Large scale peasants managing 8ha are limited to 5%. The main food crops of this area are maize, sorghum, rice, banana and sweet potatoes (Table 3). However, maize is the most popular crop and is taken as the staple food crop. Before maize was promoted by the national government in 1972 under the National Maize Project, the staple food crop of the area was sorghum. With the government policy pertaining to improved maize production, the Sagara people began to produce maize under the monocropping system (through forceful policy), contrary to their mixed cropping system. Overall, subsistence production under mixed cropping system is still popular (see Table 3) among many peasants as they don't like to take risks in case of crop failures due to various factors.

### 3. Cash Economy and Everyday Life

Although peasants stick to subsistence production, they strongly recognize the importance of cash. This is clearly shown by the types of commodities brought into the village and the lifestyles of the people. For example, drinking tea with sugar (and sometimes with milk). Most of the commodities flowing into the village come from the outside world and are basically consumer goods which are not produced inside the village like radios, bicycles, clothes, medicine, batteries, lamps, and many other things. They also include canned food, dried fish, sugar and salt. While they use money to buy commodities mentioned above, peasants still use cash to purchase some of the food stuffs which they need for their daily consumption, especially tomatoes and onions.

Table 4 shows the items for which cash is being utilized by one of the peasants living an ordinary life in Nyameni. The peasant buys salt, sugar, soap, oil, tomatoes, onions, dried fish, and cooking oil. He buys food a little by little on a daily basis. Peasants often purchase tomatoes and onions and other staple foods like cassava, as shown in Table 4. Sometimes, peasants buy soft drinks like soda (Coca-Cola) in order to have a glimpse of urban life within the village.

Under these circumstances, they try to get more money in their everyday life in order

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to maintain the above lifestyle. Among the peasants, some get money by hunting and through keeping livestock. However, hunting activity is decreasing suddenly due to deforestation and shortage of animal. Livestock is limited to small animals like goats related to traditional structure of subsistence without cattle.

Among the richest peasants in villages of Sagara society, some of them get money through rental business of machines like maize milling machines, although the number of peasants who own such machines is very limited. Due to the fact that income generating activities are very limited to most Sagara people, they are mainly dependent on wage labor. Wage labor activities are mainly constituted of agricultural work although such things as carrying the luggage (porters), logging (cutting trees), scaring birds, building houses, weeding, breeding goats, building toilets, etc. All these activities grouped together are commonly referred to as "kibarua"<sup>3)</sup>. The analysis of the above phenomenon can help one visualize the feature of peasant economy as a whole in the Sagara community and be able to describe the nature of commerce and cash economy together with their rising trends in the village.

## KIBARUA AND PEASANT ECONOMY IN SAGARA

This section presents the current situation of "Kibarua" utilization, describes the features of kibarua phenomenon among peasants and the relations that exist between the employer of kibarua and the kibarua him/herself.

### 1. Present Situation of Kibarua

#### 1) Utilization of Kibarua

Kibarua generally means the casual and seasonal labor in Kiswahili<sup>4)</sup>. The typical kibarua migrates from region to region or from area to area. In Sagara, although there are also some laborers from outside like Gogo and Goni (as shown in the previous section), most casual laborers (as kibarua) are the Sagara people themselves. This article concerns the Sagara people as kibarua.

As a matter of fact, kibarua is the most convenient way for peasants to get cash in the village. More than half of the able-bodied members in the village are generally employed as Kibarua a few times in a year. Two types of employers namely the plantation estates and the peasants themselves are essentially found in villages.

Among the two plantations in Nyameni, one is the sugar cane plantation (dealing with sugar refinery) owned by the Arabs and the other is a coco-nut tree plantation owned

and managed by the Luguru family. In addition, both of the plantation owners have agricultural fields which are normally planted with such crops as maize and rice. On the plantations, there is usually a regular demand for kibarua work. If peasants want to work as kibarua, they can easily find work.

In such cases, peasants work 2-3 days a week after which they return to their domestic agricultural work. Peasants accepted to work as kibarua receive an advance payment to allow them to meet subsistence expenses such as food. Given the fact that most food items are costly, the kibarua in most cases finds himself with very little income.

On the other hand, another type of employer is the Sagara peasants themselves. With the Sagara community, there is a kind of custom which promotes the use of kibarua workers. This mainly takes place after a person has enough money to hire another peasant. There are minor differences between the rich and the poor in terms of utilization of kibarua. Under normal circumstances, the villager who employs the kibarua has a purpose of extending his/her farm size and to ease the burden (drudgery) of agricultural work. Thus, the utilization of the kibarua in that regard does not only concern or take place among the rich peasants, but also the poor ones. In reality, even the rich peasant in the Sagara community has only little capital to employ the kibarua. Therefore, comparing the two employers mentioned above, the plantation surpasses overwhelmingly the rich peasant in terms of employment power, and peasants usually work as kibarua in plantation estates.

## 2. The Feature of Kibarua Phenomenon among the Peasants

From the above discussion, it may be seen that the life of Sagara peasants has been individually divided within the household without social mutual aids, and each household belonging to the wage labor in the plantations. However, in order to understand the features of the kibarua phenomenon, we need to look at the seasonal fluctuation of the number of wage laborers and the role of employers of Sagara peasants themselves. Changes in kibarua utilization is attributed to factors such as agricultural season. Referring to the agricultural season, as shown in Fig. 2, peasants plant maize in December when the rain season begins and harvest maize at the end of March. Generally speaking, the peasants manage their subsistence life, by selling maize products. From September when the dry season begins, peasants spend much of their money on marriage ceremonies and other. This situation makes the peasants face maize shortages in December, left with no money to allow them to purchase some maize.

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The needs of the peasants for the kibarua fluctuate, depending on the income levels and purposes for which that income is to be utilized. For instance around April and May, peasants concentrate on domestic work and don't want to work as kibarua, but around December when money and food supply is short, the needs of the peasants for kibarua increase at once. That is, once peasants have money and could meet most of their needs, they don't see any reason to work as kibarua except to concentrate on domestic work. According to an interview with the manager of the Arab plantation, the management understands the change in peasants' needs of kibarua in any given period in Nyameni village and they don't have to respond to the needs of peasants for mutual relationships.

In that regard, the management of the plantation sticks to its production plan. However, in such cases the management may make special arrangements for the number of peasants to be employed by reducing the wage. On the other hand, employment provided by peasants has some flexibility and can be extended according to the peasants' needs of kibarua around December without reducing the wage like plantation manager. The number of kibarua employed by peasants fluctuates according to the increase in the number of kibarua in the village depending on the agricultural season.

At this preliminary stage of my study, we can't conclude what the origin of seasonal kibarua relation among peasants might have been. But according to the interview with old peasants, the origin of this can be traced back to the old days and is related with the tradition of Sagara society before the introduction of cash economy. When one considers the socio-economic meaning of kibarua, it is important to take note of the characteristic features of kibarua among the peasants and the relationship between landowner and kibarua in the plantation.

Among the peasants, the poor peasants as kibarua have a right to work as kibarua (or look for wage labor) during times of difficulties while rich peasants have an obligation to give poor peasants work. This kind of moral economy plays a key role of maintaining the relationship between the kibarua and the employer as discussed in detail in the following section.

### 3. The Relations between the Employer and Kibarua among the Peasants

What about the concrete relationship between the villager kibarua employer and kibarua? In Nyameni village the relations that exist between the employer and kibarua are not in terms of ownership of means of production like those found with landowners in advanced

countries. As shown in previous sections, most of the peasants in the village have 2-4 acres. Therefore, from that point, there is no clear social stratification that exists among peasants within the Sagara community. The peasant (as kibarua) is also self-employed as kibarua is generally considered as a part-timer to enable his / her needs which couldn't be met due to shortage of cash income. The utilization (or employment) of kibarua is not something meant for only special people as many peasants hope to do so whenever possible. The peasant who works as kibarua can employ the kibarua if he / she gets enough money from some other source of income. The employer, on the other hand, is very much limited by the number of peasants to employ, although the kibarua is regularly utilized. The generating process of the above relationship is as follows. There is no constant relationship between the kibarua employer and kibarua. The relationship is established year by year. That is, even if the peasant performs the kibarua work every year, he initiates the relationship with the employer very selectively, depending on the circumstances that exist in any given year.

It should be clearly understood that it is the kibarua who looks for a wage labor and not the employer of kibarua who seeks wage laborers. That is, it is not the task of employer to look for a kibarua. This phenomenon is based on the fact that some peasants who are regarded as rich by their fellow peasants cannot refuse employing someone as kibarua whenever such need arises. That is, such rich persons hold a special status in their community on which they cannot deny. The general tendency of the kibarua phenomenon as pointed out above can be best described in the following way.

Firstly, peasants recognize that the kibarua work as the means to avoid a crisis or difficulty like starvation. It is not uncommon to find people in Nyameni suffering from starvation due to unfavorable weather and outbreak of pests or insects. Under such circumstances, peasants think of kibarua as the only best alternative to get them out of that problem. According to the interview with the peasants of Nyameni, 22 persons out of 25 responded that they depend on kibarua work during the time of food shortages.

On the other hand, these ideas reflect the peasants' belief that someone has to help by employing them as kibarua, whenever they encounter such difficulties. The above argument can be related with the mode of employment and preparation of the production plans in the plantations and the manner in which peasants critically perceive the role of plantations within their village. One of the major reasons which made the peasants accept the plantations in their village without any charge is that they expect the plantation to perform the same role as performed by rich peasants in the village.



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On the contrary, the manager of the plantation does not behave in the same way as rich peasants (and especially during times of difficulties or disaster). Thus, although most of the peasants in the village work as kibarua more in the plantation than in the fields of rich peasants, they regard the rich peasant as more helpful than the manager of the plantation. This situation could further be highlighted by examining the characteristics of a person (rich peasant) who employs kibarua in the village. In order to do so, the lives of three inhabitants of Nyameni who use kibarua, out of 38 persons interviewed had to be examined.

Villager / Peasant A : Peasant A is characterized by the following. He is the chairman (Mwenyekiti) of the village and 47 years old, married to two wives with 10 children and manages a 8ha farm and his income is 4-5 times higher than that of the average villager. In addition, he keeps 15 goats as social wealth which are used as bride price.

Villager / Peasant B : Peasant B is 52 years old. He is the secretary (Kative) of the village and he manages 2 ha and his income is average and he also keeps 15 goats. If it is necessary to get emergency money, he can sell these goats.

Villager / Peasant C : Peasant C is a middle-aged person, married to two wives and manages a 3ha farm. In addition, he works as a carpenter and accrues fairly good money from that work.

Overall, the person who employs a kibarua is relatively a rich person in the village. In that regard, there seems to exist a difference between the rich and the poor, and also this difference becomes big depending on cash flow. However, we can't equate this stratification with the relations that exist between the landowner and the tenants<sup>5)</sup> even though the differences amongst peasants might not be visible to outsiders. That is, they are implicit within their communities.

The persons who employ kibarua wear the image of the rich person as sharing person like Sahlins<sup>6)</sup> insisted in the discussion on "primitive exchange". Sahlins' idea is best expressed by the following observations made in Nyameni village : that kind of person may be elected into an office of the village without any kind of payment (e.g salary) and may be willing to assist people (in terms of money, although little) without expecting anything back from them.

In addition, he is expected to spend more money than others during formal occasions. The above tendency of the rich person could be related to the situation that exists in a

given extended family. In a given family, the rich person has to take care of the dependents found in that family. Poor families in the village regard rich persons as people who would take care of them by providing kibarua employment.

At the same time, we can see that the peasant who used to employ the kibarua is often the one who bears dependents like children without parents in his family in Sagara community. In fact, among 38 person who were interviewed in Nyameni, it is strictly limited to peasant B and peasant C to bear dependants, overlapping the persons who employ the kibarua.

From the above discussion, we can say that kibarua phenomenon is not the generating process of capitalism but the process of distributing cash within the Nyameni village of Sagara society. That is, it cannot be equated with wage labor phenomenon as experienced in advanced countries and other areas of third world countries.

## CONCLUSION

At this point, I would like to examine the socio-economic meaning of Kibarua in Sagara society in connection with previous studies, and especially referring to the debate of African peasantry as expressed by Goran Hyden and Kasfir. In Sagara community, as described earlier, one can recognize the similar situation of capitalism penetration as described by Kasfir (1986:345). Kasfir asserts that "Peasants are not self-sufficient when they regard salt and sugar essential for their diet, school fees essential for their children, clothing they cannot make essential for themselves."

According to Kasfir, the existence of wage labor as kibarua in the village is located as a symbol of the penetration of capitalism and the differentiation phenomenon between the rich and the poor. As mentioned before, time and again, the relations that exist between kibarua and the employer cannot be considered in the same manner like that of the advanced countries, like Europe and Japan, in which the existence of wage labor accelerate the differentiation within the society, by which the rich people keep on accumulating wealth so as to generate a kind of capitalistic farmer in the village.

The kibarua phenomenon in the case of Sagara peasants is first generated among the peasants in the village from the point of view of an employee and not of the employer. This appears to be a kind of a moral economy as it exists in south-east Asia, from the sense that a poor person has a right to get employed or look for work, and the rich person has an obligation to provide a source of employment.

On the other hand, when one compares this study with the Southeast Asian case study

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in which there exists stratification between landowner and tenant, no big difference can be recognized among Sagara peasants. In addition, the kibarua-employer relation is not a constant one as mentioned earlier. Thus, in Sagara society, the employee as kibarua seems to have more power than that of the peasants in south-east Asia. But we can't identify the relative position of Sagara society among other African societies. However, at present, it is not possible due to lack of such studies which analyse the internal structures of the differentiation phenomenon. Maybe the following points that suggest the universality of the above phenomenon in African society might shed some light.

First, the differentiation phenomenon in African societies is not very clear as compared to that of Asia as a whole. For example, in Asia it is possible to find landless peasants while it is difficult to find a person without land. Second, there has already been opinions that suggest the existence of a strong moral economy in African societies, even in areas where capitalist orientations are on the advanced stage like Kenya. For example, Hanzawa (Hanzawa, 1993) who studied the commercialization of agriculture in Kenya has pointed out the above things as follows,

" Has the utilization of wage labor force in the section of small scale farmer been appeared after perfect utilization of domestic labor?.....Does the farmer who gets high income specially produce employment chance for the farmer who get low income?"

Hanzawa expects in his article that the economy of affection or customary economy functions up to now, even in areas where capitalist orientations are on the advanced stage like Kenya.

If it is so, we can say that the case study of Sagara brings the common characteristic of the African peasantry to relief, not being a special case, developing in the background of wage labor. That is to say, possession of cash is the most necessary thing for their common good. Under these processes, the modernization of "economy of affection" is attained. In order to make these phenomenon more clear, we need to examine the relation between domestic labor power and the kibarua in the level of agricultural production and the relation between employer of kibarua and the person who bears the burden of supporting his family. These subjects have to be tackled at a later date.

## References

- 1) Debate on the African Peasantry developed in the journal of "Development and Change" concerning the concept of "Uncaptured Peasant" or "Economy of Affection proposed by Goran Hyden. In the above debate, Kasfir pointed out the existence of the wage labor phenomenon as the index of capitalization linking with the World System into the present society in Africa. According to the criticisms offered by Kasfir, Hyden's theme hasn't developed through the analysis of the peasant economy at the micro level.
- 2) The point under discussion developed in the debate on the moral economy between Popkin and Scott.
- 3) Kibarua means wage labor and a wage laborer.
- 4) Sagara people has an original language, Kisagara, but in the present day most of Sagara speak Kiswahili in the daily life.
- 5) Juhani Koponen pointed out the tendency that African peasants develop their accumulation in the human relationship, not land nor capital. We can recognize the above feature of the peasant behaviour in the kibarua relations in Sagara community.
- 6) Sahlins describe the image of the rich man in the primitive society as generous people in the discussion on primitive exchange.

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Table 1 Ethnicity of Inhabitants in Sagara Community  
- in the case of 38 persons in Nyameni

民族名	人数	割合
Sagara	22 persons	(58%)
Goni	6	(16%)
Kaguru	3	(8%)
Uruguru	2	(5%)
Nyakyusa	1	(3%)
Gika	1	(3%)
Gigua	1	(3%)
Others	2	(5%)

Table 2 Scale of Land Management Area  
in Sagara Community

経営面積	人数	割合
1.0acre	2 persons	(5%)
1.5	2	(5%)
2.0	14	(37%)
2.5	2	(5%)
3.0	7	(18%)
	5	(13%)
5.0	4	(13%)
6.0		
7.0		
8.0	2	(5%)

Table 3 Combination of Crops and Frequency in Sagara

Combination of Crop	Frequency
Maize + kidney bean + cassava	R
Maize + kidney bean + banana	R
Maize + kidney bean	CC
Maize + cassava	C
Maize + rice	C
Maize + banana	R
Maize + sorghum	C
Maize + cow pea	R
Maize + sesame	C
Maize + finger millet	CC
Maize	C
Sweet potato	C
Cotton	R
Rice	CC
Tomato	C

CC:very common

C:common

R:rare

Table 4 Daily Trend of Cash Utilization

Item/day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Salt	100	100	100	100	50	50	50		
Sugar	400	100	100	100		100	200	200	
Soap	270					70			
Oil	100	60	15	15		45			
Tomato	20	30	20	20	50	30	30	50	50
Onion			30	30				20	20
Kidney bean								100	
Dried fish								150	
Cassava									200
Food oil	100	50	50	50		50	100	50	50
Coconut tree	100	60			50	40		50	
Tea		50							
Tobacco		150	60	60					60
Soda							150		

monetary unit = Tanzania shilling

by Hussein Hassan