

A NOTE ON MARRIAGE AND AFFINAL  
RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE ITESO OF KENYA,  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO  
IVAN KARP'S PROPOSITIONS

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I

This paper was originally intended to be a straightforward translation from Japanese of my 'Note on Marriage and Affinal relationship among the Iteso of Kenya,'<sup>1</sup> which was based on my field work carried out from July, 1977 through January, 1978,<sup>2</sup> and in which I briefly expressed a critical view on Karp's understanding of the Iteso affinal relations stated in his Doctoral Dissertation.<sup>3</sup> Since then, Karp published his monograph, *Fields of Change among the Iteso of Kenya*, a revised version of the Dissertation, and I myself had another opportunity of conducting field work again among the same people from September, 1979 to January, 1980,<sup>4</sup> during the period of which I often discussed with Iteso friends about Karp's interpretations and also tried to obtain more information relevant to the theme. The result did not change my view that Karp had not presented the Iteso affinal relations properly.

The purpose of this paper is therefore to present my assessments of Karp's propositions, at the same time recording some ethnographical facts which Karp did little mention.

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<sup>1</sup> Nagashima, N. 1978 in *Minzokugaku Kenkyū* (The Journal of the Japanese Society of Ethnology), vol. 43, No. 3.

<sup>2</sup> The field work was conducted as a part of the project of East African Studies organized at Hitotsubashi University, which was awarded a Scientific Research Fund by the Japanese Ministry of Education. I should like to express my gratitude to the Kenyan Government and administrators of Busia District for permitting me the research. I am also very grateful to Dr. B. E. Kipkorir, Director, Mr. G. Mathu and other staff of the Institute of African Studies, University of Nairobi, for their kind assistances and advices. My warm thanks are due to all the Iteso friends of mine for their endless helps and patient instructions. We have submitted a report to the Kenyan Government, which includes some of my findings;

Nagashima, N., Abe, T., Matsuzono, M. and Nakabayashi, N. 1979, *An Interim Report of the Project: A Comparative Study of Belief Systems in Western Kenya*, Hitotsubashi University.  
Nagashima, N. 1979a, 'Introduction' to the above Report.

1979b, 'The Belief System among the Iteso' in the Report.

<sup>3</sup> I read the Dissertation at the Institute of African Studies, Nairobi, just before going to the field. I could therefore follow up his findings in the field. Dr. Karp kindly suggested me to discuss the matter with him and I managed to visit him at Indiana University on my way from Kenya. Our differences were not entirely solved by the discussions but all the same I am very grateful to his hospitality and admire his scholarly open-mindedness.

<sup>4</sup> Karp, Ivan, 1978, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London. My second field work in Kenya was a continuation of the previous one, also with a Scientific Research Fund of the Japanese Ministry of Education.

The people who call themselves *Iteso* (*Etesot* for a male and *Atesot* for a female; *Ateso* is their language and *Teso* is their land) are spacially divided into two groups. The Northern Iteso, whose population is more than half a million, live mainly in three Teso Districts and adjacent northern Bukedi District of Uganda, and comprise three dialect groups (*eineresinei*), the Iteso of north-east, the Iseera of north-west and the Ingoratok of south.<sup>5</sup> The Southern Iteso, who appear to have separated in several waves from their northern brothers from the eighteenth century, live on both sides of Uganda-Kenya Borders; Tororo area of eastern Bukedi District of Uganda (about 75,000), and northern Busia and north-western Bungoma Districts of Kenya (about 85,000). The Iteso of Uganda as a whole are the second largest ethnic group in the Republic, but the Iteso of Kenya have been in the position of ethnic minority and suffered from various disadvantages.

The Iteso of Kenya are further divided into the Ikuleu of north and the Ingelechom of south, a division reflecting different migration waves when they came into the areas in the last century. They say that they differ in temperaments also, but more important differences may be their respective cultural milieu at present. The Ingelechom have been influenced by the Khayo, the Samia and other western branches of the Bantu speaking Luyia and also to some extent by the Nilotic Luo, while the Ikuleu have been more influenced by the Bukusu, another large sub-tribe of the Luyia, and the Kalenjin speaking Sabao. Dr. Karp conducted his field work in Amukura area of South Teso Location among the Ingelechom and I worked most of time in North Teso Location among the Ikuleu. Different views between Dr. Karp and myself may to some extent reflect the difference of the areas.

The Southern Iteso are more agrarian than the Northern Iteso are and in Kenya finger millets have been replaced by maize as the main crop. They also grow cottons, sun-flowers and recently tobaccos for cash income. Cattle are still important both economically and socially, but their number appears to have decreased considerably.

There are more than twenty five named clans (*ekitekere*, pl. *itekerin*) dispersed through the land. Most of clans are exogamous, but some large clans are divided into several, not always well defined, exogamous units. A clan, or an exogamous unit, has a set of ritual observances called *etale* (pl. *italia*), which also means rituals of incorporating a wife into her husband's descent group. There are many small agnatic lineages (*ekeki*, pl. *ikekia*; meaning 'door' of a hut) of three to four generations within a clan but they do not form a segmentary system, since the fission of a lineage results in a complete separation. A lineage is not a property unit and its activities are mostly confined to rituals of various kind. The core of such a ritual is one of composite compound families. A compound family of a father and his married sons is not necessarily a residential unit, although they often live in the same area. A married son is expected to set up his own homestead (*ere* pl. *ireria*) and within a polygynous family a wife and her children form a 'house' or matrilineage (*etogo*).

## II

Main ethnographical facts (A-D below) about marriage and affinal relations among the

<sup>5</sup> I conducted field work among the Northern Iteso from August, 1968 to July, 1970, 19 months among the Iteso dialect group and 4 months among the Ingoratok dialect group. My sincere gratitude should go to the then Professor Peter Rigby and Dr. Adam Kuper of Makerere for their considerate supports.

Iteso of Kenya presented by Karp, and what appears to be his interpretations of them (KI, KII & KIII, below) may be summarized as follows;

#### A. Commencement of marriage

- A1 Traditionally, a son had to fight physically and defeat his father before he was allowed to marry. (p. 28)<sup>6</sup>
- KI "For violent conflict to happen within the context of the (father/son) relationship," which is "characteristically distant, reserved and formal," is "unthinkable to most Iteso and I doubt such conflict ever did occur. Rather I think these statements about the required defeat.....are a symbolic expression of a man's reluctance to proceed towards retirement." (p. 28)
- A2 There used to be 'marriage by capture.' (p. 79)
- A3 (Nowadays) a boy seeks permission of the father and brother of a girl for marriage. (p. 107)
- A4 The girl is sent to the household (*ere*) of the boy's father. (p. 107)
- A5 Marriage ceremony is performed by the wives of the men of the boy's lineage (*ekeki*). (p. 107)
- A6 The couple occupy the boy's bachelor hut. (p. 107)
- A7 For the first six months, the wife works under the supervision of her husband's mother while the boy and his wife prepare and cultivate the fields transferred to them by his father. (p. 107)
- A8 After the harvest of first crops, the couple move to a separate household that the husband has built on his own land. (p. 107)
- A9 Ceremonies for the opening of a new hearth are performed and special beer party is held to commemorate the opening of a new home. This usually takes place between six months and a year after the girl came to live with the husband. Her father and brothers exert considerable pressure on the couple to set up a separate household. (p. 107)

#### B. Bridewealth

- B1 Bridewealth is relatively high, being of ten to twenty heads of cattle, cash values of which is between seven and twelve times the average yearly cash income for a family (the mean number of cattle per household is 2.6 and that per capita is 0.7). (p. 79)
- B2 During the initial stage of transition, various demands for bridewealth are made by the girl's father and brothers and if they feel that the young man's father is reluctant to pay, they may bring the girl back to her natal home. The majority of separations occur at this time. (p. 107)
- B3 Bridewealth is never paid in a lump sum and it may take more than twenty years for payments to be completed. (p. 79)
- B4 Bridewealth is returnable under conditions of divorce or desertion by a wife, but if children have been produced a large portion of the bridewealth is retained. (p. 79)

<sup>6</sup> The page number is that of Karp's monograph.

- B5 If a wife dies without producing any child, all but one cow of bridewealth are returnable. (p. 79)

#### C. Nature of marriage and affinal relationship

- C1 Marriage establishes the transfer of sexual, procreative and productive rights in women from one lineage to another. (p. 79)
- C2 The transfer is of gradual nature, as symbolized by both the piecemeal transfer of bridewealth and the ceremonies of incorporation (called *italia*) of a woman into her husband's lineage, which take place over a period of ten to twenty or more years. (p. 79)
- C3 A husband is under an obligation, or has a debt, as is represented by the bride-wealth, to the relatives of his wife for allowing him to take the woman. Consequently, he is almost always in the position of fending off the demands of his wife's agnates for bridewealth and is more amenable to other, less onerous ones. (p. 79)
- C4 A man and his wife's mother must not see each other on pain of blindness striking both of them. A man's attitudes to his wife's father is one of extreme respect rather than severe avoidance. In contrast with them, the relationship between a man and his sister's husband's parents is one of relative familiarity. (pp. 79-80)
- C5 Affines of the same generation very often have warm and friendly social relations with each other, characterized by years of mutual reciprocity, continual rounds of visiting and co-operation. During cases of conflict, especially those within lineages, a man turns to his affines for support and advice. (p. 79)
- KII Affinal ties are asymmetric. The wife-giver has *implicit* but *normative* (my emphasis) superiority over the wife-receiver. This superiority is frequently *modified* (my emphasis) by years of reciprocity (see C5 above).
- C6 Out of 200 residential moves recorded in Amukura, those of a man moving under the authority of his wife's brother or father count over 30%, while there is not one single case of an individual moving under the authority of his sister's husband. (p. 80)
- KIII The modification of the hierarchical relationship has *structural* (my emphasis) limitations. The normative superiority of a wife-giver is simply incompatible with the social relations that would be established if a wife-giver moved to an area to become the *follower* (my emphasis) of a wife-receiver. On the other hand, leader-follower relations are reinforced by the norms of kinship when wife-receiver moves to be a follower of his normatively superior wife-giver. (p. 80)

#### D. Rituals

- D1 There are a number of ritual prohibitions associated with each exogamous clan. These prohibitions involve items that may not be eaten and actions that cannot be undertaken. The prohibitions apply only to wives of the men of the clan, and are symbolically associated with the role of women as mothers. These prohibitions are called *etale* (pl. *italia*). (p. 67)

- D2 Marriage ceremony is performed by the wives of the men of the boy's lineage. (A5 above)
- D3 The ceremonies of incorporation of a woman into her husband's lineage take place over a period of ten to twenty years or more. (C2 above)
- D4 A married woman is freed of these prohibitions after a ceremony called *egwasit* ('sprinkling') is performed. This is the final ceremony of incorporation into her husband's clan and may be performed only after the birth of a number of children. (p. 67)

Karp's propositions may be rephrased as follows;

- KP1 The wife-giver is structurally and normatively superior to the wife-receiver, although this superiority is often implicit. (KII & KIII)
- KP2 This superiority is modified by explicit egaritarian and reciprocal relations over a long period, although the modification has its structural limitation. (KII & KIII)

If we examine closely the linkage between the evidence he describes and propositions he uses, there emerges a question as to how he could formulate the latter, because he does not offer us exegetical accounts, a kind of evidence which could have validated his propositions more persuasively, that for the Iteso themselves a wife-giver in general, not merely a wife's parents in particular, indeed superior to the wife-receiver, to the extent that the relationship can be translated into that of the leader-follower.

It is true that a wife receiver remains as a debtor for a long period (B3 & C3), and if the superiority of a wife-giver is derived from its position of a creditor, it means that the 'structure' or 'norms' governing the hierarchical relationship is correlated with the transaction of bridewealth. Then we might assume that once a wife-giver completes the payment of bridewealth, its inferiority should structurally be terminated. If not, the hierarchy is independent of the transaction. We are not, however, informed by Karp of either possibility, nor of any relevant evidence. Here is another missing link between his descriptions and interpretations.

The case of the Iteso dialect group of the Northern Iteso of Uganda may be suggestive for the consideration of this problem.<sup>7</sup> Among them, a wife-giver behaves very dominantly to a wife-taker during the negotiations of bridewealth. (I prefer the term 'wife-taker' to 'wife-receiver,' for the Iteso themselves say that a girl is 'taken.') Once the most of bridewealth is paid, which normally takes place within a year or so after the girl is taken, the wife-taker begins to behave in stylized ways as the superior at *etale* rituals, although in daily social intercourse the relations are reciprocal and (I might say 'normatively') equal. The ritual superiority of the wife-taker terminates at a ritual called *ekonyokoit* ('biting the bone'), which is held after the wife has produced three children and at which she is promoted from the status of a bride-wife (*ateran*) to that of a real wife (*aberu*). After the ritual the relation between a wife-taker and a wife-giver becomes that of complete equality. The affinal relationship among the dialect group varies not only according to time, but also according to fields of activities, transactional, ritual and social. In other words, within the framework of

<sup>7</sup> Nagashima, N. 1972, 'An Outline of the *Etale* System among the Northern Iteso', in *Minzokugaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 36, No. 4.

—, 1976, 'Boiling and Roasting: an account of the two descent based groupings among the Iteso of Uganda,' *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies*, 8-1, Hitotsubashi University, Tokyo.

the total structure of affinal relationship, superiority, equality, or inferiority features one phase or another of the fluctuating relations. It is not, therefore, possible to state generally that either the wife-giver or the wife-taker is superior to the other. If I am forced to choose, the dominant norm underlying the whole dynamics may be the principle of equality between affines, which is materialized after the transitional period of a bride-wife ends. This comparative example may shed some light on the affinal relationship among the Iteso of Kenya.

Another kind of evidence which is not available from Karp's monograph is historical ones, although it aims at 'fields of change.' This is unfortunate, because their marriage and associated customs may have undergone significant changes in accordance with other socio-economic and cultural changes. If we take into consideration, for instance, surrounding Bantu societies among which the wife-giver appears to be normatively superior to the wife-receiver, the Iteso of Kenya may also have been influenced by these neighbours. In the following sections, I shall present my own findings in order to modify Karp's contributions.

### III

It may be useful for describing affinal relations to distinguish individual relations from collective ones. The latter are observable at negotiations for betrothal and bridewealth and at rituals, and the terms 'wife-giver' and 'wife-taker (or receiver)' are applicable to the groups concerned. In this section, I shall mainly be concerned with individual relations.

Affinal relations between individuals are primarily regulated by norms associated with relationship terms and modified by genealogical distances and other personal factors. Out of twenty seven relationship terms used by the Iteso of Kenya, eleven are exclusively affinal while five primary kin terms are also used for affines as shown in the following table. Karp has given certain norms of conducts between affines (C4 & C5 above), but more comprehensive, though brief, accounts of these terms may be necessary.

#### Ekamuran and Akamuran (pl. Ikamurak)<sup>8</sup>

These are most comprehensive terms for affines and conventional behaviours of this category vary according to the set of relations concerned, as Karp has described (C4 & C5); strong avoidance between a daughter's husband and a wife's mother, weak avoidance between a son's wife and a husband's father, extreme respect to be shown by a daughter's husband towards his wife's father, mild familiarity between a son's wife's brother and a sister's husband's father, and friendly and helpful relations between affines of the same generation. I would confirm that these descriptions are more or less true among the Ikuleu of North Teso Location. I am doubtful of Karp's explanation regarding the causal linkage between the avoidance between a daughter's husband and a wife's mother and the assumed superiority of the wife-giver (p. 102), however. This type of avoidance is wide spread among many African societies and these two phenomena do not seem structurally correlated. Among the Northern Iteso, for example, the avoidance is observed everywhere but the superiority of the wife-giver over the wife-taker lasts for a very short period.

As a mystical side of the relation, Karp refers to 'an ideology of blood' associated with affinity;

<sup>8</sup> Karp spells the word *ekameran*.

TABLE RELATIONSHIP TERMS USED FOR AFFINES

Affinal Terms	G/L	Genealogical Specifications
<i>ekamuran</i>	1	WF(A), WMB(A), BWF(B), BWMB(B), ZHF(C), ZHMB(C)
	0	WB(A), BWB(B), (ms), ZH(C), SWF(D), SWMB(D), DHF(E), DHMB(E).
	-1	SWB(D), DH(E).
<i>akamuran</i>	1	WM(A), WMZ(A), BWM(B), BMWZ(B), ZHM(C), ZHMZ(C).
	0	WZ(A), BWZ(B), SWM(D), DHM(E).
	-1	SWZ(D), DHZ(E).
<i>epatiak</i>	0	SWF(D), DHF(E), WZH(A).
<i>apatiak</i>	0	SWM(D), DHM(E).
<i>kamoru</i>	1	MBW.
<i>okilen</i>	0	H, HBy.
<i>aberu</i>	0	W, eBW.
<i>omui</i>	0	(ws) ZH, HBe.
<i>amui</i>	0	ZHZ, (ms) yBW, WZ, (ws) HZ, BW.
<i>akain</i>	0	(ws) co-W.
<i>ateran</i>	-1	SW, (ms) BSW, (ws) HBSW.

## Kin Terms used for Affines

<i>papaa</i>	2/1	FF, MF.	(ws) HF, HFB.
<i>tataa</i>	2/1	FM, MM.	(ws) HM, HFW, HFWB.
<i>papa</i>	1	F, FB.	FZH, MZH.
<i>okoku</i>	-1	S, BS.	(ms) WBS, WZS (ws) HBS.
<i>akoku</i>	-1	D, BD.	(ms) WBD, WZD (ws) HBD.

Key: F father                      M mother                      B brother                      Z sister  
 H husband                      W wife                      S son                      D daughter  
 e elder                      y younger                      (ms) man speaking                      (ws) woman speaking

G/L generation level

(A) Affines through one's wife.

(B) Affines through one's brother's wife.

(C) Affines through one's sister

(D) Affines through one's son's wife

(E) Affines through one's daughter's husband.

"Iteso say that the blood of affines cannot mix and if one affine does bleed in front of another, especially in the home of the other affine, the act of bleeding is regarded as an abomination (*akicud*; I prefer to translate this word 'witchcraft'). The person who has bled is forced to pay the fine of a ram... If this fine is not paid, the people of the household will become ill and die. The ram is slaughtered to 'cool' the pollution that has occurred... Therefore, affines are defined in terms of ritual categories as people who can pollute each other." (pp. 60-1)

I have also collected corresponding accounts and besides them the following saying; "The blood of affines is heavier, or more serious, than that of brothers." This means that if any physical attack occurs when an affine is staying the first and most important action for the host to take is to protect the affine even at the cost of the host's own brother. This ideology

of blood does not suggest any inequality between affines.

*Epatiak* and *Apatiak* (pl. *Ipatiakatin*)<sup>9</sup>

These terms refer, first, to those whose wives are sisters and second to those whose children are married each other; this second usage is missed by Karp. In view of facts that I never came across with these terms among the Northern Iteso and that the Iteso of Kenya often use words of apparently Bantu origin, *basangi*, or *basakwa*, as equivalent to *ipatiakatin*, this category might have been introduced from the Luyia.

Husbands of sisters are very friendly to each other and their "relationship is one of absolute equality and mild joking" (Karp, p. 81). Equality and friendship is also remarkable in the second type of relationship. When both the wife-taker and the wife-giver sit in a hut for a formal meeting or a ritual, a general rule is that the guest party should not sit on the side where the bed of the female owner of the hut is situated. This is strictly observed by those affines of the same generation of the couple for whom the gathering is held. Sometimes, a sister's son of the host sits between the two parties to mark the division. Parents, especially fathers, of the couple, however, may cross the invisible line and join the other party freely.

*Okilen* and *Aberu*

Primarily, these two terms refer to a married couple of a husband and his wife, but younger brothers (including half, or even classificatory, brothers) of the husband may call the wife as "my wife" and they have a latent right of sexual access to her, although to sleep with one's elder brother's wife is regarded as 'stealing' (it is not an adultery, anyway).

*Omui* and *Amui*

There are two kinds of relations denoted by the two terms. One is hetero sexual *omui-amui* relationship which is prohibited any sexual access, as opposed to *okilen-aberu* relationship. Attitudes required are politeness and distance. The other is *amui-amui* relationship of women, which is, unlike the equivalent male relationship between a wife's brother and a sister's husband, distant and polite, and in some cases even hostile.

*Ateran* (pl. *Aterak*)

Although Karp does not mention this term, it is in my view one of the most important terms in order to understand the nature of marriage and affinal relationship among the Iteso as a whole, or even among other Central Para-Nilotic societies like the Turkana, the Jie and the Karimojong.<sup>10</sup>

The term *ateran* denotes both the permanent relationship between a son's wife and her husband's parents, and a transitional, or liminal, status of a woman as a 'bride-wife' which lasts till the ritual of final incorporation called *egwasit* (see D4 above). Most of *etale* rituals are held for a wife and her children while she is in the status.

It may be necessary here to refer briefly to the life cycle of a woman in terms of status changes. From birth to marriage, a girl is called *apese* and observes some of prohibitions

<sup>9</sup> Karp spells the word *opatiak*.

<sup>10</sup> Gulliver, P. H. 1953, 'Jie Marriage', *African Affairs*, 52.

—, 1955, *The Family Herds*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.



imposed on her mother. By marriage, she becomes *aberu* (wife) of her husband and is imposed prohibitions of the husband's clan, but in terms of status and in relation to her husband's parents, she is an *ateran* (bride-wife). During this period, she is expected to give birth to as many children as possible (at least one) and thus become *toto* (mother). She will be promoted to the status of a real wife (*aberu*) at the ritual of *egwasit*.

When her eldest son is married, she becomes *tataa* (grandmother) to the newly married-in wife and acquires the senior status in her husband's descent group. She remains nevertheless as an *apese* (daughter) for her natal descent group for life.

From usages of the five terms above mentioned, *apese*, *ateran*, *aberu*, *toto* and *tataa*, five pairs of categorical oppositions of women, four of which are affinal, are recognizable.

#### *Apese* as an unmarried girl, vs *Aberu* as a married woman

In terms of fertility, a girl is prohibited to materialize it and no *etale* ritual is held for an unmarried mother, excepting those for her child. A wife is condemned, if she fails to give birth to, unless the failure is due to her husband. It is the wife-giver who holds healing rituals for any procreative disorder of a wife and thus is responsible for the potential fertility of the wife. The wife-taker is responsible for impregnating the wife both through sexual intercourses and *etale* rituals, provided the wife is latently fertile. The asymmetry of procreative roles of a husband and a wife is thus reflected in the asymmetric ritual roles of the wife-taker and the wife-giver. A barren woman is less tolerated and is usually more miserable than an unmarried mother is.

#### *Apese* as a married-out woman, vs *Aberu* as a married-in woman

This opposition is most remarkable in rituals. In *etale* rituals, married-in wives play a principal role, while in rituals concerned with death married-out 'daughters' play a dominant role.

#### *Ateran* as a bride-wife, vs *Aberu* as a real wife

This distinction is conceptually and ritually clear but not so much in daily behaviours. The criterion by which a bride-wife is promoted to the status of a real wife is not well defined among the Iteso of Kenya either; among the Northern Iteso, only a wife who has given birth to three children is promoted.

#### *Ateran* as a wife of the junior generation, vs *Tataa* as a wife of the senior generation

The relationship between wives of adjacent generations within a descent group is not only that of 'superior' and 'inferior,' and 'supervisor' and 'supervised,' but also that of the 'impregnator' and the 'impregnated' through the mystical power of *etale*. The *esasi* stick, which is a central symbol of the *etale* system, is said to have a power of prompting pregnancy of a junior wife and is only used by a senior wife. Agnatic continuity of a descent group is thus mystically and ritually sustained by this affinal relationship of married-in wives of a descent group.

#### *Toto* as a wife's mother, vs *Tataa* as a husband's mother

A bride-wife's mother and her husband's mother forms a complementary opposition in *etale* rituals. The mother is responsible for strengthening her daughter's fertility through

blessings, and also for the preparation of various kinds of prescribed gifts to the wife-taker, including the mystical *esasi* stick. The husband's mother is responsible for supervising *etale* rituals at which her son's wife is treated as a novice.

## IV

In order to assess Karp's propositions regarding the present affinal relations, some information of traditional marriage and bridewealth may be of use for providing historical backgrounds of them. The following narratives, which are edited versions of my interviews with Iteso elders, would suffice for the purpose.<sup>11</sup>

### *Betrothal*

Marriage used to be arranged by fathers who were friends while their children were still infant, or even before a girl was born. A cow was given from the boy's father to the girl's father as the token of betrothal. The girl was given a string of beads, which she wore around her waist to show that she was engaged. Such a girl was carefully protected and no body was allowed to make advances to her. The boy would sometimes go and see her from a distance without being noticed by the girl. It was usual that a girl had never seen her future husband until she was taken to his home.

### *Fight between a father and a son*

When a father did not want to use his cattle for the marriage of his son, the son could challenge him demanding the necessary cattle for his marriage. Often, the son's mother was behind the scene urging; "Look my son, you are grown up and strong and fit to marry. But your father is very selfish and wants to marry another woman, thus wasting the cattle that could be used for you. Go and challenge him so that you can prove that you are also a man." For such a challenge, the father might ridicule his son, saying; "You are a coward. If you want to marry, why don't you go and raid the Ipadere (the Bukusu) and get cattle, instead of hiding behind your mother's loinskin like a small child?"

When a father refused such a demand from his son and if the son wanted a showdown, a formal duel was arranged by elders who were to act as witnesses. First, the son was given a small shield with which he had to defend himself from the attack of his father who used a spear. If he succeeded in evading off the finally thrown spear, it was his turn to use the spear and attack his father, who had to defend with the small shield. At such a duel, either of them could seriously be wounded or even killed, but no one should complain of the result. Unless the son was defeated, he was granted the claim.

### *Bridewealth*

Betrothal was followed by discussions about bridewealth (*akituk nuk' emanyit*; 'cattle of

<sup>11</sup> This narrative is mainly based upon an interview with Messrs. Jacob Osele, Enus Imujaro, Celestino Badia and Evans Osiya of Angurai Sub-Location but additional information obtained from other elders are supplemented. The transcription and the initial translation of the tape-recorded interview was made by Mr. Joseph Elauna Elungata, my able research assistant, to whom I am most grateful.

marriage'), which was usually forty to fifty heads of cattle and more than ten heads of goats. A popular way of deciding the bridewealth was like this; both parties gathered at the cattle enclosure of the boy's father and the girl's people chose a strong young man, who threw a spear into the enclosure. All the cattle on the nearside from the point where the spear dropped were claimed as bridewealth by the girl's people. Those cattle with small animals were brought by the boy's people to the girl's home before the girl was taken by capture.

#### *Marriage by capture*

When the boy felt that the time had come to take the girl, he informed his family and paternal cousins of his intention. Scouts were sent to find the strength of the girl's people and the hut where the girl was sleeping. Then, one day very early in the morning, the boy's party consisting of strong young men stealthily approached the girl's homestead, broke into the girl's hut and caught her. Four or five young men carried her running as fast as possible. The girl might raise a high-pitched warning cry and the girl's people would come out to take her back. There was a rule for this fighting that no metal-made weapons should be used. So they fought with wooden clubs and some might be wounded or even killed. The bridegroom had to fight most courageously, rearguarding his retreating party. A hot pursuit might be attempted by the girl's people.

At the homestead of the boy, women of the family gathered, laid a skin at the gate and put on it four kinds of plants, *emuria*, *ekosit*, *akoit* and *ecege*. As soon as the girl carried by young men reached the homestead, she was put on the plants and women made ululating cries. At this moment, the capture was completed and the wife-giver who were on pursuit could do nothing but return. The girl was placated by the women and three days later a ritual called *akigwana ateran* ('blessing the bride') was held.<sup>12</sup>

Mr. Evans Osiya, Assistant Chief of Angurai Sub-Location, told me that he himself joined such a raid for his brother in 1936, and that it was the last incidence he witnessed.

#### *Residence*

After the ritual of 'blessing the bride' was held, parents of the bride-groom left their home and spent at a relative or a friend for six to eight months. During this period, the couple used the hut of the boy's mother and prepared their own homestead and hut nearby. They moved to the new home when the parents came back, who expected the bride to be pregnant.

There may be some exaggerations, or dramatizations, in the narratives, but most statements may be taken as reflecting historical facts. Even the fight between a father and a son, which Karp regards as merely a symbolic expression (KI), appears to have been a well established custom. I was told of this fight by several elders at different occasions, but all of them invariably made a gesture of evading a spear with a shield while they were narrating the story. It may be quite 'unthinkable' for them, if they were told that such a violent conflict 'never did occur' (KI).

Infant betrothal and marriage by capture are ethnographically interesting, but more important facts in relation to our theme are also given in the narratives. First, the number

<sup>12</sup> This is what Karp calls the marriage ceremony (A5).

of cattle as bridewealth was far greater than it is today. According to elders, however, the decrease had started early in this century. Second, bridewealth used to be paid at once very shortly after, or even before, a girl was taken to her husband's place, and therefore a wife-taker was not in the position of a debtor to its wife-giver. Iteso elders say that until the end of the second world war bridewealth cattle were paid almost at once within a short period after the girl came to live with the husband. My findings support this statement; most of men over sixty years old (or appear to be so) say that they paid all or most of bride-wealth just after the marriage, while men of fifties or below have not yet finished the payment. For examples, Mr. T. Akwara married in 1947 and soon paid the bridewealth of ten heads of cattle and three heads of goats but no cash, while Mr. Oudo married in 1955, but he was still in debt of three heads of cattle and five heads of goats in 1977, when the ritual of *egwasit* was held for his wife and children.

This radical change in bridewealth payments is generally attributed to soldiers who returned from the war with a lot of money. They introduced not only money as a part of bridewealth, but also the system of the gradual payment, partly because they could not obtain enough cattle in short notice and partly because they were well informed of other peoples' customs among whom the payment was gradual. If Karp has induced his proposition that a wife-giver is structurally superior from the fact that a wife-receiver is a debtor, then the very structure must be of very recent origin. I shall describe in the following section present marriage and bridewealth negotiations.

## V

A present marriage begins with the co-habitation (*akiboi nenipe*) of a couple, often without a formal permission of the girl's father. At this time, it is not certain if they continue the relation and, unless the girl becomes pregnant, a separation may occur without much troubles. Marriageability of the couple may also be checked by elders. The range of marriage prohibitions is wide. Outside an exogamous unit, any known kin is prohibited even if the genealogical tie is untraceable. Overlapping to this is another rule that once a marriage is made between two lineages, another marriage between the two groups is prohibited for three descending generations (Karp, p. 65). Affines through one's wife and one's sisters are also prohibited and therefore no sororal marriage is possible. Karp says that two sisters often marry into the same lineage (p. 81), but affines through wives of half brothers and of paternal cousins are in my knowledge usually avoided, though not strictly prohibited.

When it becomes certain that the couple is on good terms to each other, two different series of collective activities are set in motion. One is a series of transactional meetings, general accounts of which will be given below.<sup>13</sup> The other is a series of *etale* rituals, for which I am preparing another paper.

There are four kinds of named transactional meetings of the wife-giver and the wife-taker, *apesai nuk'akirar* ('Money of Agreement'), *asuti* (Seeing 'the Cattle of Marriage'), *akituk nuk'emanyit* (Bringing 'the Cattle of Marriage') and *ajon nuka ekitoi* ('Beer of the Tree'). The order of the first two meetings can be reversed.

<sup>13</sup> Karp does not refer to any of these meetings.

*Apesai nuk' Akirar* (Meeting for 'the Money of Agreement')

The girl's father writes a letter to the boy's father, stating that he wants to discuss the marriage and the amount of money of agreement. On the appointed day, men of the wife-taker, including some maternal kinsmen, friends and a local leader (*lokalipo*; an unpaid administrative co-ordinator elected by the local people), visit the wife-giver and they are led to sit on chairs under a big tree within, or near by, the homestead. Both sides usually choose three representatives for negotiations. The representatives of the wife-giver make their first move by presenting a sheet of paper in which their demands are written. Those of the wife-taker examine the demands and would start very low in offer so that the initial difference may seem almost impossible to be bridged; three to six thousands Shillings demanded by the giver, and two to four hundreds Shillings offered by the taker (one Kenya Shilling is about 15 US Cents). Compromise, or coming to meet in the middle, is the basic principle of any negotiation, but the actual process is lengthy and an agreement may not easily be reached.

The standard of the amount of money of agreement is said to be corresponding to the level of education of the girl; up to 1,000 Shillings for an uneducated girl, about 2,000 for a primary school leaver, up to 5,000 for a girl with higher education, and more than 5,000 for one who has obtained a job. The nature of the money of agreement may thus be regarded as a compensation for the cost of having brought up the girl, rather than that for rights in her to be transferred. This money is counted as a kind of bridewealth, in that it is returnable upon divorce. There are many 'additional' gifts claimed by the giver, either in cash or in the form of chickens. (By 'additional' I mean gifts not included in bridewealth.) One of additional gifts which is particularly discussed at this meeting is called *apesai nuk'epri* ('money of the central pole'). This is a gift to the girl's mother and amounts up to 400 Shillings.<sup>14</sup>

As the negotiation goes on and the gap has reasonably been narrowed down, the wife-taker's people are invited into a hut and offered beer, called *ajon nuk'apesai* ('beer of the money'). The negotiation may last till the midnight, or over the night, not because the compromise is impossible, but because there is beer and also they enjoy the tug of war. If they stay overnight, the wife-taker must be careful not to be inside the hut when the first crow of a cock is heard; if this happens, they are to be fined a goat. So they rush out of the hut after the midnight and spend sometime in the bush.

During the negotiation, the wife-taker do not behave as if they are inferior. A hawk of the taker may thus say, "If you demand so much, and it is obvious that we cannot meet it, you have got to waste your money again," implying that if the negotiation fails the wife-giver has got to arrange another meeting and spend money for beer. In order to illustrate the atmosphere of such negotiations, extracted conversations held at such a meeting are given below (T stands for a wife-taker and G for a wife-giver);<sup>15</sup>

(Among the givers before the negotiation)

G1 "We should demand 2,600 Shillings for a start. The lowest should be 2,000."

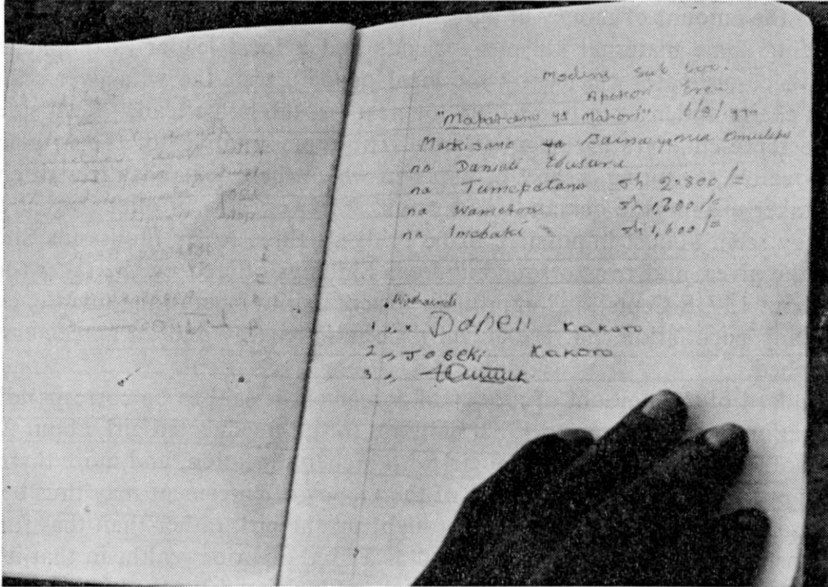
G2 "How should we go if they become very tough?"

G3 "The compromise should be at 1,800 as the lowest."

<sup>14</sup> Among the Northern Iteso, the additional gift given to the wife's mother is called 'money of breast.'

<sup>15</sup> This was recorded at Angurai Sub-Location in December, 1977.

## PLATE 1. A DOCUMENT OF "MONEY OF AGREEMENT"



(It reads as follows;)

Moding Sub-Location

Apokori Area

"Agreement of Bridewealth" 6/8/1977

Agreement between Mr. Omulepu and Mr. Ebusuru

We agreed at Shillings 2,800/=

They already paid 1,200/=

Remaining 1,600/=

Signators

The documents is written in Kiswahili and Mr. T. Komma, a postgraduate student of Hitotsubashi University, kindly translated it for me.

(Negotiation)

T "Our affines, we would like to greet you. We have taken your daughter. Today, it is the beginning of marriage and we have come to see you."

G "Today, it is the beginning of troubles. Were this in olden days, a fight would have broken out."

G "We demand 3,500 Shillings as written in the paper."

T "We are prepared for paying 200 Shillings. The water between us is too deep to cross."

G "If you say so, we would reduce it to 2,500 Shillings. You pay what you have today. The total amount and the balance will be written in a paper with signatures of both of us."

- .....
- T "Well, we add 50 Shillings, making the total 250 Shillings."
- G "It is good that you are making efforts to compromise. We would also reduce another 100, making the total 2,400."
- T "Then, we will offer you 300 Shillings as the total."
- .....
- G (the girl's father) "You may not be able to see the inside of my heart, but it is burning with anger. You said that you had come today to establish a new relationship, but in fact you have come to destroy it."
- T "You must understand that we cannot pay what we do not have."
- .....
- G "A girl is not a cow. We should not talk as if they are one and the same thing and as if we are buying and selling it."
- T "Let's discuss the matter peacefully."
- G "We say 1,500 Shillings. This is the last word."
- T "We propose 500 as a compromise."
- G "You are very stubborn. Let's take the middle and make it 1,000 only. This is really the final line."
- T "We want to be good affines to each other, don't we? For that purpose, please make it a little lower. We suggest 600 Shillings as final."

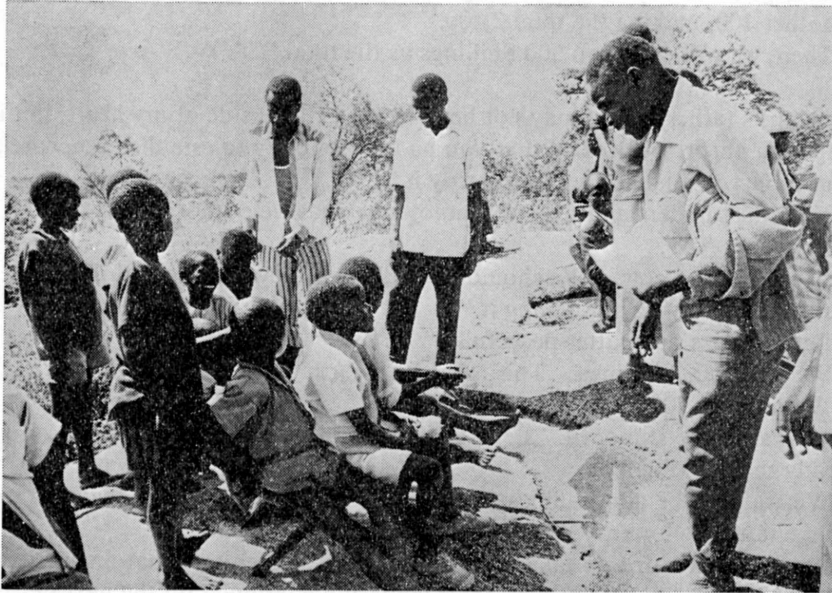
Up to this point, it had already taken four hours. I was then told that an agreement would soon be reached. As a matter of fact, the negotiation continued till the next morning, when it was finally agreed that the total amount should be 800 Shillings, much lower one than the wife-giver had expected. The wife-taker paid 300 Shillings on the spot and the balance of 500 Shillings became a debt. These agreement and transactions were written with signatures in a paper. In this case, the girl started to live with the husband in April, 1977, and this meeting was held in December of the same year. She was educated up to the standard seven of a primary school and the amount of money agreed was lower than a standard amount.

The strategy of a wife-taker in this negotiation is to limit the discussion to the amount to be paid at once, while that of a wife-giver is just opposit; they try hard to come to an agreement of the total amount, ignoring how much their opponent can pay on the day. It often happens that the total amount is not agreed and only the initial payment is made.

#### *Asuti* (Seeing 'the Cattle of Marriage')

The girl's father writes a letter in good time to the boy's father, informing the date of their visit. On the day, men of the wife-giver, including small boys, some maternal kin of the girl, friends and a local leader (*lokalipo*), visit the wife-taker and are led to sit on chairs under a tree. Their representatives first hand over a paper in which their demands are written to the representatives of the wife-taker, who are not supposed to sit together with the visitors. The demands consist of the total number of cattle and that of goats as the bridewealth, an amount of money called 'friends of the cattle' which 'accompany' the cattle, and additional gifts of money and chickens which are to be given to each of those who have come. Standard demands are 15 to 25 heads of cattle, 6 to 12 heads of goats and 200 to 400 Shillings as an 'accompanying' money. The amount of additional gifts demanded depends upon the number

PLATE 2. MEN OF THE WIFE-TAKER ARE GIVING CHICKENS TO CHILDREN OF THE WIFE-GIVER AT *ASUTI*



of visitors among whom there are many male children, but it often exceeds 400 Shillings.

The family of the wife-taker make their best efforts to mobilize their lineage members for the help of money and chickens. Their strategy in the negotiation is to limit the discussion to the number of cattle and goats to be initially paid. They often succeed in it and the decision of the total number may be postponed to another occasion.

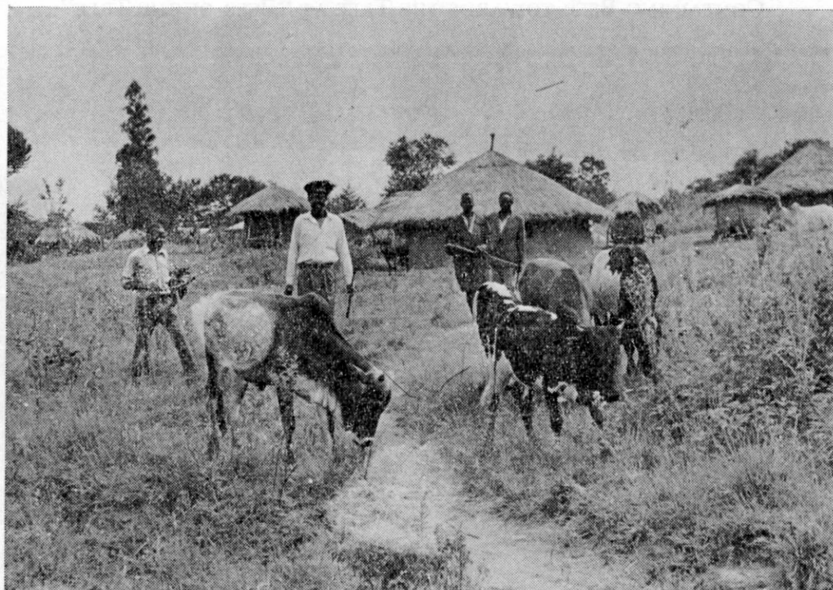
The wife-giver are shown cattle and goats which are promised as the initial payment. Then, the representatives of the wife-taker begin distribution of additional gifts according to the list handed over by the wife-giver. Since they reduce the amount to less than half of each claim, heated arguments occur between the representatives of the wife-taker and members of the wife-giver.

Visitors are then invited into huts and entertained with beer and food, but when first offered a pot of beer, the wife-giver would refuse to drink, demanding an amount of money for lifting the lid of the pot. Ten to thirty Shillings may be paid for it.

I briefly describe one of *asuti* meetings I witnessed here (Case No. 5 in the list below). In this case, the girl moved to the boy's home in August, 1977, and the meeting of 'money of agreement' was not yet held. It was therefore the first formal meeting between the two groups concerned, and the visiting wife-giver made the claims for both cattle and money at the same time at this meeting. In the opening address, the girl's brother told the wife-taker that they had suffered from two kinds of losses, the work his sister used to have done and the joy she used to have brought to his family. He also stressed that his sister, or their 'cow', was stolen and that a compensation must be made for the cow and these losses in the form of bridewealth.



## PLATE 3. BRINGING THE CATTLE OF MARRIAGE



The negotiation started with the demands by the wife-giver of 18 heads of cattle, 13 heads of goats and 400 Shillings as an accompanying money, but the money of agreement was dropped from the demand on the understanding that it would be discussed at another occasion. In the end, 4 heads of cattle and 3 heads of goats were shown and 100 Shillings was promised. The wife-taker eventually succeeded in postponing the decision of the total number of cattle and goats also, but they hinted that they would show their 'sincerity' by adding a few heads of cattle at the time they bring the 'cattle of marriage' to the wife-giver. The total amount of 720 Shilling as additional gifts to visitors was demanded and about half of it was paid to 22 persons, together with 10 chickens given to children.

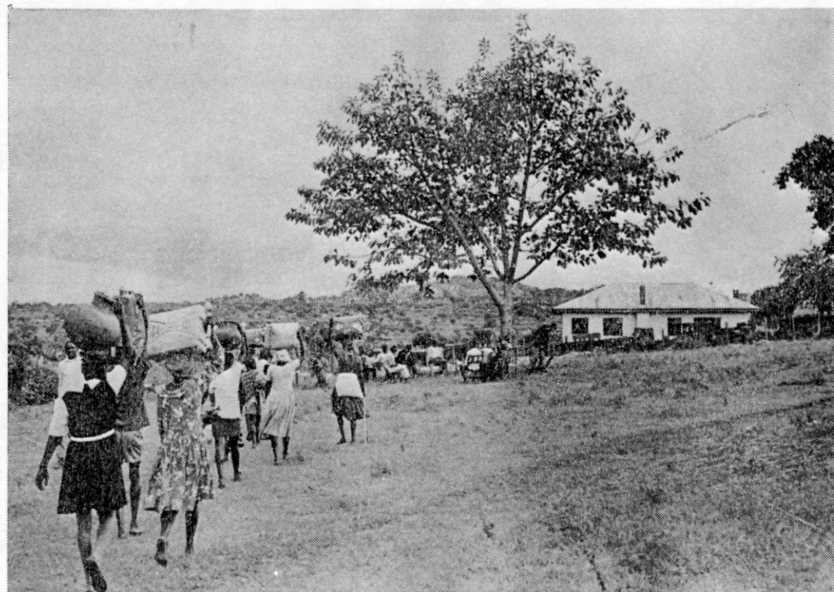
Apart from these transactions, there was a useful statement made by the wife's brother in his concluding speech; "*Ikamurak eraiti ejena yaani, ekinacane arauni oni ibore ipe.*" (Being affines is being related, and this brotherhood means that we are one and the same thing.) That is, affines are like brothers. Although this statement was made at the most appropriate occasion to demonstrate that the wife-giver is structurally and normatively superior to the wife-taker, what was expressed was the very antithesis to the proposition.

*Akituk nuk'Emanyit* (Bringing 'the Cattle of Marriage')

The wife-taker inform the wife-giver that they are ready to hand over the cattle of marriage and the latter fix the date. At departure, the father of the bridegroom throws a mixture of cow dung and Kikuyu grass (*emuria*) at the cattle and goats to be taken. A young boy is chosen for chasing the herd and men of the wife-taker follow it. On arrival, the cattle are first made to pass the gate of the wife-giver's homestead and this action is called 'to open the house,' meaning the first step to establish the affinal relationship.

Visitors sit under the tree as before and the wife-giver inspect the cattle to confirm that

PLATE 4. WOMEN OF THE WIFE-GIVER ARE CARRYING POTS AND JERRY CANS CONTAINING BEER TOWARDS THE TREE AT "BEER OF THE TREE"



they are the same ones that were shown to them at the *asuti* meeting. It is usual that the wife-taker bring more cattle than they promised to demonstrate their sincerity. When satisfied with the cattle, the host invites visitors into huts and first offers a pot of beer. Later, a sheep or a goat is slaughtered and cooked for the visitors. After the meal, the wife-taker declares that they will treat their affines exactly in the same way as they are treated on the day, when their affines visit them next time. This also shows 'normative' reciprocity between affines.

#### *Ajon nuka Ekitoi* ('Beer of the Tree')

Women of the wife-giver brew a quantity of beer, cook food and visit the wife-taker on an appointed day. Many children of both sexes accompany them but men are few in number. They bring pots of beer under the tree where previous negotiations had been held, and hand them over to women of the wife-taker. This visit is, in theory, the first visit of the wife-giver's women to see their 'daughter.' In practice today, however, it may be preceded by some of *etale* rituals which also feature formal visits of the wife-giver's women, because nowadays this visit of 'beer of the tree' is made after several years from the commencement of cohabitation.

In two occasions I attended, 8 pots of beer in one case, and 24 pots and jelly cans of beer in the other were given to the wife-takers. In the latter case, people of the wife-taker could drink for five days running. Demands for additional gifts are also made by visitors, amounting 10 to 40 Shillings for a woman and 5 to 15 Shillings or a chicken for a child. This visit is also called 'women's *asuti*' because of these additional gifts. The Iteso say that *ekitoi*

(‘beer of the tree’) is much tougher than *asuti* (seeing the ‘cattle of marriage’), for women tend to be more stubborn and not easily be persuaded to accept a much reduced amount of gift than they claimed. From what I have seen myself, I would support the statement as nothing but true.

After additional gifts are given, visitors are entertained with beer but no food is served, while the wife-taker enjoy the food brought by the wife-giver. This shows that this visit is an occasion for making counter gifts by the wife-giver, in return for the bridewealth, with beer and food prepared by women.

These four kinds of formal meetings between the wife-giver and the wife-taker are all related to transactions of bridewealth and additional gifts. In order to illustrate the time span in which they take place, several cases are given below (‘married’ means the commencement of co-habitation of a couple);

Case 1,	Married	May, 1977.		
	Money of Agreement,	October, 1977.	Agreed	1,000 Shillings
			Paid	500 Shillings
			Debt	500 Shillings
Case 2,	Married,	November, 1975.		
	Seeing the Cattle	March, 1976,	Shown	4 h/o cattle
				2 h/o goats
	Money of Agreement,	January, 1977,	Agreed	1,000 Shillings
			Paid	600 Shillings
			Debt	400 Shillings
	Bringing the cattle,	November, 1977,	Paid	6 h/o cattle
				2 h/o goats
				100 Shillings
	The total number of cattle and goats undecided.			
Case 3,	Married,	April, 1974.		
	Money of Agreement,	March, 1975,	Total	undecided
			Paid	400 Shillings.
	Seeing the cattle,	May, 1976,	Shown	6 h/o cattle
				2 h/o goats
	Bringing the cattle,	November, 1977,	Paid	5 h/o cattle
				1 h/o goat
	The remaining one head of cattle and one goat were soon brought after the visit. The total number undecided.			
Case 4,	Married,	August, 1977.		
	Seeing the cattle,	December, 1977,	Shown	4 h/o cattle
				3 h/o goats
			promised	3 h/o goats
			promised	100 Shillings.
	The total number of cattle was undecided.			
Case 5,	Married,	September, 1976.		

Money of Agreement, March, 1977,	Total	undecided
	Paid	400 Shillings
Seeing the cattle, November, 1977,	Shown	2 h/o cattle
		3 h/o goats

The total amount of money of agreement was decided.

Total	1,000 Shillings
Paid	400 Shillings
Debt	600 Shillings

The total number of cattle was undecided.

Case 6,

Married, 1971.

During the period of six years, three meetings were held and the following amount was paid;

Paid	5 h/o cattle
	2 h/o goats
	300 Shillings

Beer of the Tree, November, 1977.

It is known from these examples that it takes two to three years for the first handing over of the cattle to be made. The visit of 'beer of the tree' marks the end of the first round of the bridewealth negotiations and payments, and the length of period between the beginning of co-habitation and the 'beer of the tree' may be more than five years. After that, remaining bridewealth both in cattle and goats and money will gradually and less formally be paid over more than ten years. It should be noted that the series of these four meetings above described appears to be based upon an assumption that bridewealth be paid at once within a short period of time after the girl is taken, as indicated by the nature of the visit of 'beer of the tree.' The prolongation of the payment must have caused the prolongation of the time span in which these four meeting are held.

## VI

I have shown in the previous section that there have occurred a significant change in the process of bridewealth transactions, from the traditional full payment within a short period to modern prolonged and piecemeal payments over a period of more than twenty years. Karp describes only the modern aspects and, moreover, seems to regard them as traditional and lasting customs.

Historical processes of how the basic change had actually taken place are yet to be established, but factors which may have brought about it can be inferred. First, the number of cattle as bridewealth remained relatively high in spite of the general decrease of cattle population in the area. Second, the introduction of money as a separate bridewealth and the lack of easy sources to obtain cash income made the short term payment of bridewealth more difficult. Third, influences of Bantu societies among which bridewealth may be paid gradually took their effects through increasing inter-ethnic marriages and through the positive adoption of the idea by the Iteso. There may be other factors involved, but we need further researches for this problem.

We can observe today what appear to be new tendencies concomitant with the basic change in bridewealth payment. First, demands for additional gifts by the wife-giver at the formal meetings are very high in terms of the amount of cash required. Second, manners of wife-takers can be rude towards wife-takers in daily social intercourses due to the remaining claims in bridewealth. Third, demands from wife-givers, especially from a wife's brother, for financial helps of school fees and other expenses are considerable. This often causes serious conflicts between brothers, since money and cattle which formerly should have been kept or accumulated for younger brothers to marry may be spent up by an elder brother to meet the demands from his affines.

Any systematic adaptation, or adjustment, to these changes does not seem to have been achieved. Uncertainty and confusions are spreading as to how to demand, or meet, the outstanding claim of bridewealth after the initial payment is made. Even it is not clear how to decide the total number of cattle and the total amount of money, if they are not decided at the formal meetings. As Karp points out, many of conflicts brought to courts or official gatherings of Location Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs are concerned with bridewealth payments.

Karp's findings that out of 200 residential movements in Amukura, those of a man moving to his wife-giver's area count over thirty per cent (C6 above) is very interesting and needs consideration. Unfortunately, I did not get numerically comparable data to his in North Teso Location, with only thirty cases of residential movements. Even from these small number of examples, a difference in regional tendencies might be suggested, however. The move of a wife-taker to the area of the wife-giver is not so remarkable, while there are three cases in which a wife-giver moved to an area under the assistance of its wife-taker, a movement which Karp did not find in Amukura. In short, there is no recognizable difference in residential movements between the wife-giver and the wife-taker in the area.

These residential movements are facts of behaviours and in order to explain them analytically, we first of all need facts of indigenous ideas, or how the people themselves explain them. When I asked some Iteso about the general tendency of residential movements in terms of affinal relations, they invariably told me that it was unwise to live closely to any affine, whether he was a wife's brother or a sister's husband, and that formerly such a movement could never occur anyway and was rare at present. The reason given was that such a movement would naturally result in relative weakness of the mover in terms of the number of people as against that of the affine, and if any conflict occurred the mover was put into a disadvantageous position. According to this reasoning, the inferiority of the mover is the result of the movement, not the cause of it. This is diametrically opposed to Karp's proposition (KIII), according to which the inferiority of a mover is the cause of the movement. Even allowing regional differences, I am inclined to think that Karp's cases need to be further examined in the light of the discrepancy between indigenous explanations and those of an anthropologist. I may summarize general statements made by Iteso elders with regard to an ideal relationship between affines as follows;

“We should be equal to each other and help each other. We don't like to be bossed by any affine simply because he is an affine.”

This reciprocity and equality is dramatically expressed in twins rituals, which always feature mutual visits between the wife-taker and the wife-giver. At the end of the first ritual held at the wife-giver, a representative of the wife-taker declares that they would treat their

affines at the next ritual to be held at theirs exactly in the same ways as they are treated on the day, using the same kind and size of an animal for sacrifice, offering the same quantity of beer and food and showing the same degree of hostility.

I have so far examined various aspects of affinal relations among the Iteso of Kenya, with special reference to Ivan Karp's propositions about them. Some more detailed ethnographical, social and historical materials may be necessary to test my arguments, but my present conclusions are as follows;

A marriage is an exchange of a girl with bridewealth, comprising cattle and goats and cash, between two compound families, or lineages. The equilibrium of this transaction is achieved when the wife-taker has completed the payment of bridewealth on the one hand, and the wife has produced children on the other. The mystical relationship between them is asymmetric and complementary, because of culturally differentiated ritual roles between the wife-taker as the impregnator and the wife-giver as the supporter of the impregnated. In daily social intercourses, dominant norms are equality and reciprocity. This equality, however, is *modified* by the superior position of the wife-giver as the creditor, which is brought about by the prolongation of bridewealth payments in modern times. This does not mean that the wife-giver is *structurally* superior, because the total structure of marriage and affinal relationship is so composed as to achieve the ideal equilibrium and equality between the two groups concerned.