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BRIDEWEALTH NEGOTIATIONS AMONG THE TURKANA IN NORTHWESTERN KENYA – PREFACE

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PREFACE

The Turkana live in the dry areas of northwestern Kenya and lead a pastoral way of life. They transfer enormous amounts of livestock as bridewealth, the most among that recorded for any pastoral peoples in Africa. Bridewealth is always determined through lengthy negotiations between the families of the groom and bride, and the number of animals given in bridewealth sometimes exceeds two-thirds of the property of the groom's family.

This volume consists of three parts. Part 1 describes marriage and bridewealth negotiations among the Turkana, providing basic information on kinship structure, livestock ownership, the process of arranging marriages, and bridewealth amounts. Part 1 also describes an actual case of bridewealth negotiations that took place on September 6–7, 1998, which details how people behaved in face-to-face negotiations and the process of obtaining mutual agreements on numbers of bridewealth animals.

Part 2 is a transcription of the bridewealth negotiations mentioned above in both English and Turkana. This transcription shows how people conducted the difficult and heated negotiations, often with impassioned rhetoric.

Part 3 is a DVD documentary of the above-mentioned negotiations and subsequent wedding rituals. Conversations are in the Turkana language. However, readers may refer to the complete transcription in Part 2.

At the time the video documentary was filmed, I worked for the Open University of Japan. Goichi Nozaki, then Director of the University, provided all necessary assistance. Nobuhiko Hosaka, Seiji Inoue, Ichiro Yokoyama, and Chiaki Iwakawa of IOS Filming Company also extended valuable aid. Gabriel Ekalale, John Elim Kaatho, Boniface Korobe, and Epat Longole helped me to make transcriptions from video recordings.

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