

60th KUASS (Kyoto University African Studies Seminar)

Date and Time: January 26, 2017 (Thu) 11:00-13:00

Venue: #318, Inamori Memorial Foundation Building (3rd floor), Kyoto University

Title:

The Situational Livelihoods: Being a Hunter-Gatherer in North-Central Namibia

Speaker: Mr. Charlie Goodwin (University of Cologne)

Abstract:

The border between what constitutes a “hunter-gatherer” and an “agro-pastoralist” is one straddled by the !Xun and Hai||om inhabitants of Ekoka and |Gomais, in North-Central Namibia. In similar and contrasting ways, the economic and cultural forces pulling on the people here have produced a particular blend of subsistence techniques, attitudes and modes of distribution. These deconstruct common-sense stereotypes of “wild” and “domestic” food and resource production, and have produced a picture of interlocking situations in which hunter-gatherers assert their identities in a changing world. Integral to this change is the influence which flows both ways between hunter-gatherers and agro-pastoralists, and the relationships cultivated between communities. Data was compiled on the mechanics of subsistence in these two sites, participant observation of both hunting and gathering techniques in practice and the situations in which techniques are changing to suit close proximity with an agro-pastoralist majority group. This contribution to the ethnographic record of North-Central Namibia also raises questions of the constitution of a meaningful “hunter-gatherer” identity, and support the thesis provided here that hunting and gathering is less a mode of production and resource use and more a collection of responses and attitudes towards the influences upon these two communities.

Co-hosted by:

3rd Colloquium of Natural History of Landscape Formation [financially supported by JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (A)(Overseas Academic Research) "Natural history of landscape formation in contact zone between hunter-gatherers and agro-pastoralists in Africa" (Primary Investigator: Akira Takada).]