

Africa NOW #124

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pp. 2-13 **Special Topic: Exploring the current situation in the Sahel region**

The Sahel region, which stretches south of the Sahara Desert, is currently suffering from drought and desertification due to the effects of global climate change, and hunger and food crises are becoming more serious. In recent years, military coups in Mali (August 2020), Burkina Faso (January and September 2022), and Niger (July 2023) have led to the withdrawal of French troops from the three countries. The military governments of the three countries have announced their withdrawal from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (January 28, 2024), who have condemned the coups. In light of this situation, this issue of “Africa NOW” presents a special feature titled ‘Exploring the current situation in the Sahel region,’ focusing on the efforts of people who are working on various problems currently occurring in the Sahel region.

pp. 3-4 **Interview with Oumarou Paul Koalaga: Burkina Faso under the second coup regime/ Solutions will not emerge from military-led governance**

Interview with Oumarou Paul Koalaga of Burkina Faso, head of ‘*Centre Africain de Lutte contre la Radicalisation et l’Extremisme Violent (CALU-REV)*’ (the African Center for Combating Radicalization and Violent Extremism in English). He points out that extremist organizations have a vision of solving the problems of political and economic corruption and dysfunctional governance in the Sahel region through insurgency and violence, building bi-directional relationships and engaging youth. He argues that military-led governance will not solve the problem and that the military government must shift power to a civilian government.

pp. 5-7 **What the deteriorating security situation has brought to our activities. Report from the activity site by Sugakawa Takuya**

Report from an activity site by Sugakawa Takuya from Action for Greening Sahel. Action for Greening Sahel, in cooperation with a local NGO, has been conducting afforestation and greening support activities in the Kongoussi region of Bam Province, Burkina Faso, and has produced steady results. However, the 30 years of afforestation and greening support activities had to be suspended when armed groups attacked villages and displaced large numbers of people. Sugakawa explains what happened and reports that local residents have resumed afforestation activities in autumn 2023.

pp. 8-9 **A good distance between the Sahara and the Sahel by Uchino Komi**

Uchino Komi, who has been involved in agriculture and environmental activities in various countries in West Africa, touches upon her experience with the fascination of the Sahara Desert. She notes that people in the Sahel coexist with the Sahara Desert through trees and that there is a ‘good distance’ between the two. Furthermore, after watching the film “THE GREAT GREEN WALL,” she is hopeful that the people who live there will continue to move the green path between the Sahara and Sahel forward.

pp. 10-13 **The rise and fall of states and cultures in the Sahel region by Yamagata Shigeo**

Yamagata Shigeo (current executive director of AJF), who has spent long periods of time living in various countries including Niger as a previous employee of the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), introduces the history of kingdoms that have risen and fallen in the Sahel region, historically known as Sudan. Referring to the history of the Kingdoms of Ghana, Kanem-Bornu, Mali and Songhai, the Hausa city-states, the Mossi group, the Tuaregs, and the Fulbe Jihadist states, he notes that historically cultivated heritages remain at the root of cultures in the Sahel.

pp. 14-15 **Interview with Sakaguchi Sachiko: Elina’s memories and NPO “Egao-sunsun”**

Interview with Sakaguchi Sachiko, a staff member of an NPO ‘Egao-sunsun,’ which supports children with medical care needs or disabilities and their families. In this interview, Sakaguchi talks about the life of her eldest daughter Elina who was born to a Kenyan husband, and her own activities. Elina had a tracheostomy and wore a ventilator at the age of 10 months due to an incurable disease, but from the age of 4 and a half years, she lived in the community with her family and attended the local public primary school. After Elina’s death at the age of 12, ‘Egao-sunsun’ was established in 2007 by Elina’s family and people in the community who supported her life, to continue activities such as home nursing stations, care stations and after-school day services.

pp. 16-17 **From the Africa I hate, to the Africa I'm proud of** by Lukumwena Minkola Akyi
This is the 17th edition of "African Kids Club's Relay Essay". Lukumwena Minkola Akyi, whose parents are from the Democratic Republic of Congo and was raised as a Kansai person, was the target of 'black bullying' as a child. He grew to hate Africa and has shut Africa out of his life. However, this attitude changed when he married a Japanese wife and had a son with Down syndrome. He became proud of Africa after attending his father's 'AFRIKA meets KANSAI' event, where he saw the cool parts of Africa such as Sapeur, in Congolese culture. Through his own experiences, he says that knowing Africa changes your world-view, and he wants mixed children to be proud of their roots.

pp. 18-21 **Book Review: Mine Yoichi, " Oral history of development cooperation / Beyond the crisis**
by Yoshida Masao
Yoshida Masao's book review of Mine Yoichi, "Oral History of Development Cooperation: Beyond the Crisis" (*"Kaibatsu Kyoryoku no Oraru-Hisutori: Kiki wo Koete"* in Japanese). The reviewer, Yoshida Masao, noted that this is a history book based on 213 interviews on 15 development cooperation projects, that documents the voices of the people involved. Summarizing the contents of the book, he examines how Japanese development cooperation projects were perceived by the people in the target regions and what crises they faced, from the fields of (1) agriculture and fishery, (2) manufacturing, (3) education, (4) health and medicine and (5) human security.

p. 22 **Conflict, climate change, and food insecurity** by Shiratori Kiyoshi
The first installment of "The World Seen Through Food." Africa Japan Forum (AJF) launched a study group on reading FAO materials in 2017 to learn about the global food situation by translating parts of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s report "Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS)." In this series, we present what we have learned from the latest version of GIEWS.
In this presentation, Shiratori explains, based on the GIEWS report, that (1) conflicts in Africa and the Middle East have disrupted agricultural production and created many refugees and internally displaced persons which are the main causes of food insecurity, and (2) droughts and floods affected by climate change have made the food crisis more serious.

p. 23 **In memory of Tateiwa Shinya** by Inaba Masaki, Tamai Takashi
A memorial of Tateiwa Shinya, professor at Ritsumeikan University and former board member of AJF, who passed away on 31 July 2023. Inaba Masaki, AJF's co-chair, states that he first met Tateiwa in the 1990s but developed a connection with him since the 2000s through AJF. Inaba became involved in global health as a staff member of AJF in the 2000s, while Tateiwa became a board member of AJF through the mediation of Saito Ryoichiro, then-executive director of AJF. Tamai Takashi, AJF's co-chair, introduces Tateiwa's contribution to AJF through the activities of the Research Center for Ars Vivendi at Ritsumeikan University, of which Tateiwa was a director. He further states that he admired Tateiwa's work as a researcher.

Back cover **Afterword ('Hitotsu no musubime to shite' in Japanese) and a record of AJF's activities**