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Peacebuilding from Below: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations toward an Anthropological Study on Peace

Hiroshi ODA

Abstract: Who builds peace? In previous studies, it has been supposed that the main actors of peacebuilding are states, UN organizations or international NGOs. By comparison, local residents or private citizens are mere recipients of outside intervention. Nevertheless “ordinary persons” are recently gaining attention as significant actors in peacebuilding, but the traditional negative models of peace continue to restrict how we can explain their involvement in the peace process. The purpose of this paper is to develop a theoretical framework and methodology to investigate the “hidden peacebuilding” by such non-state actors. The relatively new model of health, “salutogenesis” can broaden peace concepts by pointing to conceptual parallels between “peace” and “health”. Peacebuilding by non-state actors is named here “peacebuilding from below” and its characteristics are clarified using socio-cultural anthropological models. An overview of anthropological study on peace is given. In conclusion, reforms in ethnographic methodology are suggested to better promote anthropological research on peacebuilding from below.

Keywords: peacebuilding, non-state actors, salutogenesis, practice-resource-model, relational peace

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Introduction

The fact that there are so many men still alive in the world shows that it is based not on the force of arms but on *the force of truth or love*. Therefore, the greatest and most unimpeachable evidence of the success of *this force* is to be found in the fact that, in spite of the wars of the world, it still lives on.

Thousands, indeed tens of thousands, depend for their existence on a very active working of *this force*. Little quarrels of millions of families in their daily lives disappear before the exercise of *this force*. Hundreds of nations live in peace. History does not, and cannot, take note of this fact. History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of *the force of love or of the soul*. (Gandhi 1997: 89–90; italics mine)

In his originally 1909 published essay, Mahatma Gandhi pointed out that a force besides war and violence underlies the human world. However, according to Gandhi, this basic force is not easily apparent to human awareness, and cannot be documented in history. This explains how historical documents seem to focus instead on a succession of wars and conflicts, whereas the real world is sustained through a peace promoting force that seems invisible to the sciences and media.

Anthropologist Sponsel also commented on the invisibility and concealment of peace: “Nonviolent and peaceful societies appear to be rare — not because they are, in fact, rare, but because nonviolence and peace are so rarely considered in research, the media, and other arenas” (Sponsel 1994: 18).

For example, a “suicide bombing” in Israel can create sensational headlines worldwide. But a meeting of bereaved families both of Israeli and Palestinians for dialogue and reconciliation is seldom reported in the mass media. The resources spent to enhance the capability — force — of people for building peaceful relationships are miniscule compared with the vast budgets and personnel committed to military or financial solutions.

This imbalanced tendency can be observed in the academic world, too. Anthropologist Montagu wrote: “Innumerable books and articles have been written on war and peace, but the overwhelming majority were written as if by understanding the causes of war we would be better able to perceive what needs to be done in order to secure a peaceful world. Peace is thought of as a condition that can exist only in the absence of aggression. But this is a negative approach that provides analyses of what is wrong, which are then followed by recommendations as to what needs to be done to set such wrongs right” (Montagu 1994: ix).

In this paper, this imbalance — or better to say the neglect — of peace as a positive force will be treated primarily as a problem on the conceptual level. Peace research has failed to produce theoretical frames to treat appropriately, for example, what Gandhi referred to as the *force* of peace. One can only conclude that research has not been focused enough on the peace-generating aspects of human life.

On this premise, the following question will be put in this paper: from what theoretical perspective can such invisible peace become visible? What theoretical and methodological developments in socio-cultural anthropology are necessary in order to contribute to this issue? The purpose of this paper is therefore to prepare a theoretical frame and methodology to enable

anthropological inquiry to elucidate “peacebuilding from below”.

The first chapter examines conceptual parallels between “peace” and “health”. The next chapter introduces a theoretical model of health “salutogenesis” and attempts to connect it to the discussion of new concepts of peacebuilding. The third chapter aims to clarify characteristics of peacebuilding by non-state actors, namely “peacebuilding from below”. The aim of the fourth chapter is to critically review previous anthropological studies on peace. The fifth chapter uses several ethnographic case studies to discuss possible developments in ethnographic methodology to facilitate anthropological research on peacebuilding from below.

1. Conceptual parallels between health and peace

The popular definition of peace as “absence of war”, has led, for example, to UN “peacekeeping” operations as “cease-fire-keeping”. The search for alternative “peacekeeping” processes has been replaced by preoccupation with war.

As cited above, Montagu said accurately that the majority of literature on peace treats war, “as if by understanding the causes of war we would be better able to perceive what needs to be done in order to secure a peaceful world.” Peace researcher Johan Galtung expanded the definition of peace. He introduced the concept “structural violence” and defined “absence of structural violence” as “positive peace” (Galtung 1969).¹

“Peace” further resembles “health” in that negative definitions which have gained currency in both cases. Health tends to be defined as “absence of disease” and health study is regarded as the study of disease or causes of disease. Peace and health are considered as given, normal states on the one hand, so that war and disease are seen negatively, as disturbances of the normal state. At a metaphorical level, peace and health can thus be used interchangeably just like as war and disease (see Sontag 1978). Galtung indicated this conceptual parallel between peace and health: “Peace studies are so similar to health studies. The word-pairs ‘health/disease’ from health studies and ‘peace/violence’ from peace studies can be seen as specifications of these more general labels” (Galtung 1996: 1).

Given the conceptual parallel between peace and health, it is expected that through the examination of a theory based on positive definitions of health we can obtain clues to developing a theoretical framework for positive peace.

2. The salutogenic approach and new conceptions of peace

The salutogenic model is one of the most influential theoretical models in health study. A Greco-Roman neologism, “salutogenesis”² means the origins of health. It was developed by the sociologist Antonovsky (1979, 1987). His starting point was the observation that the outcome of

1 Definitions such as “A as absence of B” should logically imply a negative definition, even though Galtung equated in this early article “absence of structural violence” with “social justice”. Recently he wrote that he would formulate today “positive peace” otherwise (Galtung 2003: 118).

2 The concept salutogenesis derives from the Latin *salus* (health) and the Greek *gēnesis* (origin).

health can not only be explained by risk factors. He told an anecdote about how he came up with such a new conception of health (Antonovsky 1987: xi). In 1970, he was conducting analysis of data in a study of adaptation to climacterium of women in different ethnic groups in Israel. One of these groups consisted of women from central Europe who were aged 16 to 25 in 1939. He had asked them a yes-no question about having been in a concentration camp. Then he compared the emotional health ratings of a group of concentration camp survivors to those of a control group. 51% of the control group women were in good emotional health, compared with 29% of the survivors. Antonovsky then focused not only on the pathogenetic, destructive effect of concentration camp experience on the survivors, but also on “what it means that 29% of a group of concentration camp survivors were judged to be in reasonable mental health”. He wrote that “the physical health data tell the same story” and related further: “To have gone through the most unimaginable horror of the camp, followed by years of being a displaced person, and then to have reestablished one’s life in a country which witnessed three wars . . . and still be in reasonable health. This, for me, was the dramatic experience which consciously set me on the road to formulating what I came to call the salutogenic model.”

To put it plainly, the pathogenetic orientation on which modern biological medicine is based, seeks to explain why people get sick. On the other hand, a salutogenic orientation poses a different question: why do people move toward the healthy state.

The essentials of the salutogenic model, relevant to the discussion here, could be summarized as follows: a majority of the population of any modern industrial society is in morbid condition (*disease as normal state*) and risk factors (or stressors) are omnipresent in the human life (*ubiquity of risk factors*). Yet many people, even in such pathological situations, do well and manage to maintain their well-being. Health and disease are not clearly separate categories, but rather represent a continuity (*not dichotomy, but continuum*). On “the health ease/dis-ease continuum”, each person is continually changing his or her location (*dynamics of health*). The factors that facilitate the movement toward the health pole have two dimensions: First, resources for effective coping with risk factors, and secondly, capacity of the actors. Antonovsky named the former “generalized resistance resources” (*resource-oriented perspective*) and the latter, “tension management”, i.e., the praxis of coping with tension caused by stressors. He conceptualized the key element of successful tension management as the “sense of coherence”³. Thus, in the salutogenic model, “ordinary people” play a central role for health (*people as actors of salutogenesis*). From Antonovsky’s point of view, health is defined as a high orderliness of life. The capacity of actors can generate such orderliness from chaotic experiences by utilizing a variety of resources (*health as orderliness*). How can we apply this theoretical model of health to peace studies, and develop a new concept of peace?

Based on the salutogenic perspective, I would like to provisionally define peace as a dynamic

3 “The sense of coherence is a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that (1) the stimuli deriving from one’s internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable, and explicable; (2) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by these stimuli; and (3) these demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement.” (Antonovsky 1987: 19)

process in which multiple actors practice to make relationships with others fair and amicable by utilizing various resources. Contrary to the dichotomic, static, negative view of peace as signifying “no war”, I regard peace as an ever-changing, dynamic, nonequilibrium process. Peace can be generated by human endeavor even in the midst of war or conflict⁴. Recently, Galtung proposed a unique view that peace is “capacity” to manage conflict nonviolently (Galtung 2003).

The relational perspective (cf. McNamee and Gergen 1998) is the core of the definition of peace presented above. Peace is a form of relating to social, political, ethnic, national, religious or historical others.

Antonovsky’s model lacks, however, this motif of *relationality to others*, which seems me indispensable to a theory of peace. Antonovsky was aware of it himself. Therefore he remarked in a lecture delivered in Germany that: “The strong sense of coherence and good health of Nazis, religious fundamentalists, patriarchistic men, colonialists, aristocratic or capitalistic oppressors, can be obtained only at the expense of their victims. A salutogenic orientation makes no proposal for a morally good life. It can only make understanding of health and illness easier” (Antonovsky 1993: 14).

From the relational perspective, peace is a mode of relationality to others on the various levels. *Relational peace* is not restricted to the international or inter-state relationship. State authority plays just one part. As in the model of Lederach (1997), social, cultural, religious and economic activities of non-state, local or civil society actors can substantively contribute to the process of relational peace. Reconciliation is a kind of peacebuilding-practice to restore the relationship with others. Lederach (1997) formulated that reconciliation is “relationship building”.

This position based on the above-mentioned definition of peace can be termed “paxgenesis”. According to this theoretical orientation, the following questions, for example, should be pursued:

What is a positive condition of peace?

Why could societies which have once been in a hostile relationship achieve reconciliation?

How do people generate peace?

What resources are utilized for this goal?

3. Peacebuilding from below

For further examination of the new conception of peace presented above, the concept of “peacebuilding” will be taken up in this chapter. Peacebuilding signifies the creation of a socio-political structure which is able to prevent the outbreak of conflict/relapse into conflict and to perpetuate peace (Shinoda 2002: 33). This definition is based on a positive view of peace and is already popular in the field of peace practice and study.

Originally, Johan Galtung (1976) coined this concept in contrast to terms such as “peacekeeping” and “peacemaking”. Galtung defined it with relation to “structure of peace”. He limited his scope to inter-state relationships. The former UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali then

4 “If violence and predation are to be found in what are considered zones of peace, so it is possible to find islands of civility in nearly all the war zones.” (Kaldor 2006: 117)

popularized this word through “An Agenda for Peace” (1992). The aim of this well known report was to make clear the functions of UN organizations for conflict resolution in the post-cold war era. Peacebuilding in his terminology is temporally limited to the “post-conflict” phase and defined as “action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict” (paragraph 21).

I have already discussed how — in contrast to peacekeeping or peacemaking, which are based on negative definitions — peacebuilding refers to a positive and practice-oriented view of peace. What is it still lacking is an examination of the actors in peacebuilding.

Referring to the new conception of peace presented in the previous chapter, peacebuilding is undertaken not only by state authorities and UN organizations which are located outside of the society in question, but also by actual members of the society. In the latter case, peacebuilding is regarded as a practice that non-state, civil society actors conduct utilizing relevant resources. Because of state- and UN-centered perspectives on conventional peace studies, the substantial role of civil society actors, especially local residents and private citizens, has been long neglected and they have been viewed as mere recipients of external aid. A shift of focus from state-centric views is therefore necessary.

Within the ideology of the modern nation-state, only government has sovereignty over war and peacemaking. Conventional peace studies and practices have tended to uncritically adhere to the state-centric ideology. Ordinary people are excluded and disqualified from peace-related responsibilities. However, from a constructionist perspective, the state is a secondary constructed institution and an appendage to the primary world of people.

In recent years, however, a new trend has appeared in the discourse on peace and other closely related areas of security and development: a shift from state security to human security. Besides the concept of “human security” by the United Nations Development Programme, the theory of “endogenous development” proposed by Kazuko Tsurumi is a pioneering case (Tsurumi and Kawata 1989), in which indigenous people are regarded not as passive objects of development aid, but rather as active agent of development from within. This view by Tsurumi has in common with the Canadian concept of peacebuilding and the latest definition of peace by Galtung: they define peace as a human capacity inherent within the society concerned.

In 1996, the Canadian government started the Canadian Peacebuilding Initiative and set forth a unique definition of peacebuilding. The goal was to enhance the indigenous capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence and saw this as central to any future peacebuilding initiative (Chapin and Foster 2001: 16).

The United Nations also underlined in the so-called “Brahimi Report” the role of local actors in peacebuilding: “Effective peacebuilding requires active engagement with the local parties, and that engagement should be multidimensional in nature” (Brahimi 2000: paragraph 37).

John Paul Lederach (1997) developed a conceptual model based on the view that people possess a potentiality for peace. He proposed a pyramid model of an affected population, consisting of three categories: top level (key political and military leaders with high visibility), middle range (leaders respected in sectors such as education, business, agriculture, health, religion, NGOs or ethnic groups), and the grassroots (leaders of local communities, indigenous NGOs or

local health officials). In this model the significance of the middle-range approaches to peace is systematically formulated. Lederach's framework, in which a great deal of attention is paid to indigenous resources, shows a substantial shift from state-centric to multi-track approaches to peacebuilding.

“Second track diplomacy” (or track two or citizens' diplomacy) is relevant to the concept of peacebuilding from below. It is defined by Davis and Kaufman (2002: 2) as “the bringing together of professionals, opinion leaders or other currently or potentially influential individuals from communities in conflict, without official representative status, to work together to understand better the dynamics underlying the conflict and how its transformation from violence (or potential violence) to a collaborative process of peacebuilding and sustainable development might be promoted.”

Dan Bar-On who has been involved in the peacebuilding in the Middle East formulates the relationship between two approaches of peace: “One can look at bottom-up peacebuilding processes of resolving ethnic conflicts as *sufficient* processes that complement *necessary*, top-down processes” (Bar-On 2002: 110).

I would like to call the peacebuilding by the middle-range and grassroots members of affected society “*peacebuilding from below*”. Peacebuilding from below may be broadly defined as practice by non-state actors utilizing various resources, to create amicable relationships with national, ethnic, racial, religious or political others and to build a social structure which is able to promote a sustainable peace. The word “non-state actors” means in this context neither transnational corporations nor big international NGOs, but local, grassroots members of the affected society or civil society actors.

This type of peacebuilding is invisible. The parallel between health and peace have also drawn comment: Levin and Idler termed health care practice in the folk and popular sectors a “hidden health care system” (Levin and Idler 1981). Nevertheless little attention has been paid to such “hidden” peace practice at the non-governmental level. As Sponsel notes, “Nonviolent and peaceful societies appear to be rare — not because they are, in fact, rare, but because nonviolence and peace are so rarely considered in research, the media, and other arenas.” (Sponsel 1994: 18). How can we therefore make this invisible peacebuilding visible?

An empirical study on peacebuilding from below has not yet been systematically conducted. This is a vacuum in the area of peace research. However in the literature we can find some pointers to the possibility of empirical research.

Kosuge (2005) compared the post-war reconciliation between Japan and Britain with that between Japan and China. As a result, she indicated that intense activity by private citizens was one important factor that had made a difference in the progress of reconciliation in each case. Kaldor indicated the potential for peacebuilding of indigenous people: “In all the new wars there are local people and places who struggle against the politics of exclusivism — the Hutus and Tutsis who called themselves Hutsis and tried to defend their localities against genocide” (2006: 11).

Several authors pay attention to the post-war peacebuilding in Germany by civil society actors (Ackermann 1994; Asmuss et al. 2005; Gardner Feldman 1999, 2006). For example

Ackermann wrote: “It is crucial to note that reconciliation was carried out at first through numerous informal contacts that French and German politicians and private citizens deliberately sought in the immediate postwar years. Reconciliation, then, initially took on the character of track two diplomacy” (Ackermann 1994: 238).

4. Anthropology of peace

A dominant discipline of peace research has been Politics, especially International Relations. In this field of science, the state has been regarded as an elemental and self-evident unit of analysis. War and peace are observed in terms of inter-state relations. However, the state is a rather specific form of human organization. Socio-cultural anthropology has primarily studied non-state social forms (e.g., Clastres 1974). Therefore it might be expected that the anthropological approach has an advantage in studying peacebuilding by non-state actors. In the following section, I will review in brief previous studies related to peace in the area of socio-cultural anthropology.

Anthropological study related to peace can be tentatively classified in 3 categories:

(1) War and conflict study

Since Mead (1940) and Malinowski (1941), war has been a classical topic in anthropology (Ferguson 1984; Fried, Harris and Murphy 1968; Haas 2004; Schmidt and Schröder 2001 and so on). The argument about war by Kurimoto (1999) is of particular importance also for peace studies. He points out the creative and constructive aspect of war and the mutually complementary relationship between war and peace studies.

(2) Peace and “Culture-and-Personality”

“Patterns of Culture” by Benedict (1934) is considered a pioneering work of anthropological peace research. Benedict classified, for example, Pueblo Indians as “Apollonian”, i.e., rational and prone to peaceful behavior. Margaret Mead postulated that war is not a biological necessity, but a social invention. Therefore it is possible to build more peaceful social institutions (Mead 1940).

(3) Study on “peaceful societies”

Recently there have been remarkable developments in the study of “peaceful societies” (Gregor 1996; Howell and Willis 1989; Kemp and Fry 2004; Montagu 1978; Sponsel and Gregor 1994). Under this concept several ethnographic case studies have been conducted on ethnic or religious groups such as the Semai, the Hopi, the Mehinaku or the Amish which are regarded as “peaceful”. The studies examined what culture has contributed to the peacefulness of each group.

On the basis of this brief review, we may summarize the actual state of anthropological study on peace as follows. In the area of anthropology, considerably less attention has been paid to peace and its relevant concepts (e.g., reconciliation, non-violence, conflict resolution and

peacebuilding) than to war, conflict and violence. Anthropology has tended to lean towards the negative definition of peace. In particular, the concept of peacebuilding has scarcely been treated in anthropology so far. There is no systematically established field of anthropological peacebuilding studies. Moreover, there is no example of anthropological study on peacebuilding from below in a contemporary setting.

What is the cause of this vacuum in the area of anthropological study on peace? One possible cause is the still persisting structural functionalistic view of society. This is one reason why relatively isolated and small-scale societies, like the Semai of Malaysia, the Buid of the Philippines or the Amish in the United States, have always been selected as subjects of ethnographic investigation in this area of study. In this way, anthropological study on “peaceful societies” has focused on processes internal to small-scale societies. On the other hand, study on *relational peace*, namely peace not within a closed society but between plural societies remains undeveloped.

Secondly, previous anthropological study on peace has adopted a dichotomic view on peace and violence. According to this view, peace is regarded static state that is sharply distinguished from the state of violence or war. “Peaceful societies” are virtually an essentialistic model of society that maintains static peace. In this perspective, interest in peacebuilding after war or armed conflict is excluded *a priori*.

Ethnographic methodology is still considered to be the hallmark of anthropology. The underdevelopment of peacebuilding study in anthropology is — at least partly — due to the underdevelopment of ethnographic methodology adequate to peacebuilding study. Therefore it is necessary to develop ethnographic approaches, in order to actualize the anthropological potential for study on non-state aspects of peace.

5. Ethnography of peacebuilding from below

Ethnography exemplifies a qualitative research strategy, which has constituted the core of anthropological research methodology. The purpose of this chapter is to re-examine ethnographic methodology so that the empirical study on peacebuilding from below, i.e., hidden peacebuilding systems, in the area of anthropology will be systematically conducted in future.

As critically reviewed in the previous chapter, the potential of anthropology for peace study has not been fully developed. One of its causes may be a mismatch between conventional ethnographical methodology and the characteristics of peacebuilding from below.

Characteristics of peacebuilding from below are as follows:

- Relationality to others: restoration of relationship with others
- Historical context: relations to memory and history of war, armed conflict or colonial rule
- Social practice

Nowadays ethnographic methodology is used in various disciplines and there are different understandings about what ethnography is. But we can extract its common features. In interdisciplinary handbooks, ethnography is characterized for example as follows: “a commitment to the first-hand experience and exploration of a particular social or cultural setting on the basis of

(though not exclusively by) participant observation” (Atkinson et al. 2001: 4). Here the moment of *participation* is emphasized. Besides, I would add as important features of ethnography: *contextualizing, emic approach* (including *sensitivity to the vernacular concepts*), *pluralistic and relativistic worldview, reflexivity* as well as *bottom-up theory building*. Through these attitudes and strategies that comprise the ethnography, we can obtain a theoretical knowledge that is relevant to the concrete human life world and actual situations.

The following (classic) elements of ethnography seem not to be suitable for study on peacebuilding from below:

- Functionalistic view of society: according to the tradition of the anthropological functionalism, a society under study is regarded as a closed system and as a coherent whole. This has proved to be an obstacle to analysing communication and exchange between a society and the outside world, namely relationality to others and the broader system within which the society under study is embedded. As examined above, the “peaceful society” approach is a typical application of this anthropological functionalism.
- Ahistorical approach: ethnography frequently ignores or excludes historical, “diachronic” contexts. As a result, the object of investigation has been represented as if unchanged through time. A “culture” becomes essentialized. Fabian criticized this static view using the term “denial of coevalness” (Fabian 1983).

Then, what new elements are required for ethnographic methodology that are more appropriate to understanding peacebuilding from below? In what follows, this question will be discussed with some case studies from Germany.

Case study 1: Action Reconciliation Service for Peace

The German peace and volunteer organization, Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (*Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste*), was founded in 1958 through an appeal by Lothar Kreyssig who had been an attorney and belonged to a Christian resistance during the Nazi regime:

We Germans began the Second World War and more than others guilty for causing immeasurable suffering. . . . Above all, we do not yet today have peace because there has been so little reconciliation. . . . As a sign we plead that the other nations, who suffered because of us, will allow us with our hands and with our means to do something good. A village, a settlement, a church, a hospital, or what else can be used for charitable purposes to achieve as a sign of reconciliation.⁵

In this appeal three salient points of this initiative are expressed.

- Connection to historical context: this organization is based on the idea that historical memory (especially war crimes and suffering under the Nazi regime) should continuously influence the contemporary and prospective socio-political situations.

⁵ http://www.asf-ev.de/en/about_us/history_of_arsp/appeal/

- **Relational peace:** as of 1958, there was no armed conflict within German territory. Therefore, in the sense of negative peace, Kreyszig could say “we have today peace”. But to the contrary, he said “we do not yet today have peace”. He obviously considered peace as amicable relationship to others. Reconciliation should take the central role in this regard.
- **Practice-orientedness:** in order to achieve a reconciliation and peace with others, according to Kreyszig, concrete practice should be conducted. This practice should be regarded as “a sign of reconciliation”.

Case Study 2: Europahaus Aurich

The activities of the “Action Reconciliation Service for Peace” have a transnational nature: for example, German volunteers work at the International Youth Meeting Center in Auschwitz, Poland. Another initiative for reconciliation, Europahaus Aurich which was founded in 1956 as a local education center, is also characterized by transnationality, albeit of another kind. This institution, in its early stages, focused on German-Dutch relationships because of the geographical specificity of the city: Aurich is located in the cross-border region, the Ems Dollart Region, between the two countries. So, in the case of Europahaus Aurich, the feature of the transnational region-building comes to the fore.

Case study 3: Church asylum in Germany

In medieval Europe, the Christian church possessed the right to grant asylum. The offender or debtor could escape the hand of pursuit by running into a church to seek sanctuary. The secular power was not able to violate this church asylum. However, during the process of national centralization, the modern state has abolished asylum in church and appropriated to itself the power to grant asylum (see Oda 2006).

In 1983, a church community in Berlin accepted three Palestinian families. The Berlin authorities had issued a deportation order to forcefully repatriate them to Lebanon or Jordan. In order to protect these families from deportation, the church community allowed them to stay in a parish hall. In the meantime, the pastor of this parish negotiated with the city authorities, and succeeded in legalizing the stay of the Palestinians. This is the first case of church asylum (*Kirchenasyl*) in contemporary Germany (Ökumenische Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Asyl in der Kirche 2004: 12–17). It is notable that the police did not break into a parish hall. The secular authorities would not arrest fugitives in a site sacred to a Christian church. This case of Berlin thus seems to closely resemble the church asylum that existed in medieval times. This “post-modern” church asylum did not end there, but rather it expanded throughout Germany. In the period 1983 to 2000, a total of 395 cases were recorded by the Ecumenical Committee on Church Asylum (Sträter 2003).

This “revival of church asylum” was nonetheless an improvisation. Originally the pastor had no idea to protect the Palestinian asylum seekers on the site of his church. When these were threatened with deportation, he and the supporter group of refugees came up with the idea to use the church as a shelter.

The kind of relationality to others observed in contemporary church asylum is transnational hospitality. It is very different from another kind of relationality, i.e., reconciliation. What is

interesting about the origin of this type of church asylum is the improvised utilization of resources. The site of the church was used as a resource for protection. Furthermore, the “tradition” of church asylum was revived from medieval times and this historical memory was utilized as a resource to provide historical context and meaning.

What elements can be extracted from these preliminary case studies and added to the renovation of ethnography? The following three points may be relevant to this purpose.

(1) Relational approach

In the cases, the relational aspect of society is especially prominent. Two forms of relationality to others have been observed, namely reconciliation and hospitality. If we rely only on the functionalistic view of a society as a closed system, we cannot grasp this process. Society or community is an open system, which has constant contact with the “outside” world and the “others”. Such contact, exchange and traffic are an essential constituent element in a social group. This relational view of society is not a new one in socio-cultural anthropology. For example, discussions about reciprocity can be traced back to Malinowski (1922) and Mauss (1923–24) and have become classical topics of anthropology. For the theoretical foundation of relation-oriented ethnography, the philosophical discussions about “others” by Lévinas (1961) and Derrida (e.g., Derrida and Dufourmantelle 1997) should be indispensable.

(2) Historically contextualizing

The cases of peacebuilding from below are related to the historical context in two ways: first, the practice of peacebuilding is embedded in each historical context. Secondly, one of the major purposes of peacebuilding-practice is to deal with the negative influences of historical memory regarding the present and future. In order to take such history-making into account, each case of peacebuilding should be historically contextualized.

(3) Practice-resource-model

Peacebuilding from below is not merely a concept, but concrete practice. Volunteer works of “Action Reconciliation”, educational activities at the “Europahaus” and protection of refugees through church asylum, can all be characterized as very active practices. Therefore theories of practice by Bourdieu (1977), de Certeau (1984) and Lave and Wenger (1991) are highly relevant to the ethnographic study of peacebuilding from below.

In actual life situations, various resources are often (re)discovered and utilized as initial improvisations. The concept of resource was introduced by Antonovsky into health studies, as reviewed earlier: actors utilize resources to manage stressors and to maintain health. In the case of peacebuilding, actors utilize resources to manage conflicts and to facilitate relational peace.

I would like to call the theoretical framework of a practice and resource oriented approach of ethnography as the *practice-resource-model*. This model for example asks the following questions:

How do people treat conflict in actual life situations?

What resources are utilized for this practice?

The practice-resource-oriented ethnography can contribute to discover peace resources embedded in the local context.

The practice-resource-model is based on the particular temporality, namely “actuality” (Kimura 1994). Actuality is used to indicate the situation which is currently in progress. In such “actual situations”, the utilization of various social resources take place to promote peacebuilding. The ethnographer participates in such actual situations with the practitioners (cf. “coevalness” in Fabian 1983). It is necessary to see what is “at state” (Kleinman and Kleinman 1995) for the practitioners in the situation in order to understand why they do so.

Conclusion

Peacebuilding is not just a recent development in peace studies or UN strategies. It is rather a usual practice in human societies. Peacebuilding is not restricted within Africa, Middle East or Southeast Asia in the post-cold war era. It has been continuously practiced in other areas including Europe and East Asia. In fact, authors point out the necessity of peacebuilding especially between Japan and other East Asian countries, and emphasize the role of civil society actors (Gardner Feldman 2006; Ishida 2002). Peacebuilding from below is a very actual task in and around Japan.

The concept of “peacebuilding from below” proposed in this paper is a theoretical perspective to make invisible peacebuilding visible. Such invisible peacebuilding is taking place in local communities, everyday lives, virtual spaces and even in war- and conflict-torn regions. This raises a further, practical, question: how can results of such study be utilized to empower and develop non-state peacebuilding in other areas. This question should be pursued in connection with the concept of “civil society” (Kaldor 2003).

One possible key word for discussing the relevance and applicability of ethnographic study on peacebuilding from below may be *imagination*. Ethnography is a methodology to describe subjects in terms of their detailed and complex everyday context. Ethnography is thus able to activate the imagination of audiences to put themselves in the context of others. Ethnography works on the imagination of people. Results of ethnography of peacebuilding from below may provide us with another kind of imaginary world: “seeds of peace” on the ground, ready to germinate, if conditions become favorable, and fully actualize their innate potential.

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