

Addis Ababa University School of Graduate
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Documentary Linguistics and Culture

Documentation of 'Irreecha' ceremony among
Showa Oromo: A comparative study of Horaa
Arsadee and Horaa Bisiil Irreecha ceremony

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Glossary of local Oromo terms

Abba Bokku= father of Bokku i.e. leader of Gadaa in power

Abbaa= father, owner.

Angafa= senior.

Ayyana Abbaa= father's Ayyana.

Ayyana= waaqa's creative activity in any creature, character.

Birra= spring.

Bokku= wooden scepter kept by an abba Gadaa in power.

Bona= winter (dry season in case of Ethiopia)

Buddena= food

Butta= one of the most important Oromo festival. Which each member of a Gadaa group in power celebrated by slaying bull.

Caccu = necklace of beads, cowries and ivory worn by women.

Caffe assembly= meadow assembly (the Oromo parliament)

Callee= necklace.

Coqorsa= special grass.

Cubbu=sin, wrong i.e. not morally right.

Dabboo= large round thick bread.

Daboo= cooperative form.

Darara= blossom, tassel or flower.

Dhugaa= truth.

Dibbee= drum.

Farso= home made beer.

Gabii= home made cotton cloth.

Galma= ritual house.

Guddifacha= adoption.

Guula= a person who participate in Gadaa system more than forty years.

Irreecha= Thanksgiving Day.

Itittu= curd, yogurt.

Jarsumma= system of traditional arbitration.

Kallacha= phallic- like symbol worn on the forehead by men.

Korma= bull usually not castrated.

Macca= western Oromo tribe.

Masqala= finding true cross ceremony day.

Muuda= daub or appointed anoint or ordain.

Nabi= angle.

Nagaa= peace.

Odaa= a kind of tree that resembles sycamore or fig tree.

Qabee= traditional butter container.

Qalluu= ritual expert.

Sandalli= incense.

Seera= law.

Tulama= eastern Showa Oromo tribe.

Waaqa= God.

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Abstract

Irreecha has widely been celebrated by Oromo people for a long period of time. It plays a major role in the social life of the Oromo people. Irreecha is a ritual ceremony in which Oromos worship and praise Waaqa. Moreover, it enables Oromos to be united (strengthen unity), make conciliation among conflicting groups and promote their culture. The Irreecha ceremony selected for this particular study are Irreecha Horaa Arsadee (eastern showa) and Horaa Bisiil (western showa). Many scholarly works have so far been dedicated to the study of the various aspects of Oromo history, culture, belief and folklore. However, these scholars have touched upon the Irreecha ritual only as a passing remark. In other words no detailed study exclusively or broadly dedicated to Irreecha ceremony (ritual) has been carried out with a view to properly documenting it. The current study tries to fill this gap.

The main objective of this thesis is To explore when and why Irreecha celebration; To analyze the process of Irreecha celebration at Horaa Arsadee and Horaa Bisiil; To describe the actual place where and the actual time when Irreecha is performed and to know the social values attached to Irreecha ceremony. In order to carry out this research the following method is used.

The researcher has employed qualitative research method, encompassing interview, participant observation and focus-group discussion. In addition to these, photographs and video shooting have also been taken so as to capture the entire setting and scenery. Based on this method, the findings of the study will be mentioned as follows.

To mention some of the findings of this study: - Irreecha is a ritual ceremony celebrated in the entire Oromo land, there are two major types of Irreecha ceremonies: Irreecha Tullu (Irreecha celebrated on mountain) and Irreecha Malka (Irreecha celebrated on the bank of river), there are variations across Oromo lands regarding the celebration (not uniform) and the ceremony is celebrated by all Oromos regardless of Age, Sex and status.

CHAPTER ONE

General Background

1.1. The Oromo People and the Language

1.1.1 The People

Among the many people living within the borders of present day Ethiopia the Oromo constitute the most numerous (Bartels 1983:13). As several sources indicate and the reality exhibits, Oromia is the biggest region in Ethiopia. According to the 2007 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia, the total population of Oromia National Regional State stands at 27 million. To the best of my knowledge, this makes the Oromo one of the most numerous ethnic groups in the whole of Africa.

The Oromo people constitute various groups which for centuries were composed almost exclusively of groups or confederations of groups. The groups, in their turn, were divided in to sub-groups, the sub-groups in to clans, and the clans in to lineages. Now a days different Oromo groups occupy central, western, eastern and south eastern Ethiopia. Among the major regional groups it is possible to mention the Borana, Guji, Arsi, *Tulama*, Afan Qallo, Macha, Karrayu and Wallo. Bartels (1983)

In his unpublished work titled "Continuity and Change in Oromo Administrative Practices (16th -19th century)" Zelalem (2002:1-2) indicated that the Oromo are the largest Kushitic speaking people in Ethiopia. Beyond their population size and vast territorial distribution, they are known for their rich cultural heritage and complex socio-administrative practices. In the second half of the 16th century, the Oromo seem to have represented a culturally homogenous society. It was believed that during their expansion, all the Oromo used similar system of age classification.

In terms of economic activity, the Oromo are largely mixed farmers. In the highland areas their livelihood is based on crop cultivation and animal husbandry. In lowland areas Pastoralism predominates. The Oromo of west and East *Showa* (the main focus of this study), however, are exclusively agriculturalists with limited degree of animal husbandry.

In terms of religion, Christianity, Islam and traditional belief systems are widely practiced in the study area. Currently, in spite of the fact that Christianity and Islam have gained large followers, historically traditional belief system was said to have been the dominant faith in the area. According to Bartels,

Traditionally, for Oromo divinity is both one and many at the same time. The Supreme Being whom they call 'waaqa' (sky/God) is the creator of all things and the source of all life. Starting with water and rocks going on through the vegetable and animal world to man, waaqa was appointed to every being its own place in a cosmic order. Waaqa's creative and ordering activity manifests itself in all things. It manifests itself in the specific characteristics of man in general, of every species of plants and every species of animals. It is manifested also in the individual Characteristics of every man of each plant and each animal taken singly. In this particularization form waqa's creative activity is called ayana. These ayana may be personalized, feared and at times, invoked but in spite of this appearance of multiplicity, each one is also seen ultimately as a manifestation of the one divinity. This view of the world is expressed in the wealth of rituals. (Bartels 1983:14)

Regarding Islam, the Harar, Baale and Arsii Oromo are strongly Islamized. It also prevails among the *Raya* herdsmen in the north and the Wallo groups. Moreover, Islamized Oromo are to be found among the Machaa group of Oromo occupying the territory around Jimma town. In contrast, Christianity is dominant in the central part of the Oromo land. The *Showa* Oromo are the most Christianized group among the Oromo. Christianity has a strong hold in the western part of the region including Wollega. (Mohammed 1994)

In terms of socio-political organizations, the Oromo were traditionally governed by an egalitarian system called the "Gadaa system." The term Gadaa is very difficult to define precisely. According to Mohammed Hasen, It is a term loosely used for so many varied concepts that it has lost any single meaning. Mohammed writes:

... The etymology gada from Gaddisa (shelter, shade that protects from the heat of the sun). It is used in the three contexts. The first use is in the sense of taking advantage of

the shelter. The second is in the sense of protecting one self with the shelter, taking refuge in it, or in him or using its or his good name for protection. The third is in the sense of giving somebody a shelter, protecting him or them, taking them under one's umbrella. In common speech in the language people say "Gada bal'a" (wide gada) meaning a haven for refugees, a large shelter for all when reduced to the practice of "adaption" by the national assembly and the indisputable protection which the assembly accorded to those it adopted (Mohammed 1994:9-10)

To a speaker of a language, the word Gadaa has very strong resonances of time. For instance, people ask:

Gafa gadaa kami? (During which gadaa?) It has the meaning of an official, Inni gadaa (he is gadaa i.e. an official). The term can be used in the following context: gadaa nagaya (gadaa of the peace, gadaa qufa (gadaa of plenty), Gadaa Lola (gadaa of war), gadaa Kenya (our gadaa), etc. Gadaa is a measurement of time, but according to Anglo mizzi it also has a religious sense. Gadama (sacredness) is associated with circumcision and thereby maturity for political power (Mohammed 1994:10)

The military and political aspect of the Gadaa system as described by Mohammed Hasen has the following features:

The Gadaa system is a system of classes (luba) that succeed each other every eight years in assuming military, economic, political and ritual responsibilities. Each Gadaa class remains in power during a specific term (Gadaa) which begins and ends with a formal power transfer ceremony. Before assuming a position of leadership, the Gadaa class is required to wage war against a community that none of their ancestor had raided. This particular war is known as butta and is waged on schedule every eight years. (Mohammed 1994:11)

1.1.2 The Language

In terms of language, the Oromo are one of the Cushitic-speaking groups of the people living in north east and east Africa. Cushitic speakers have inhabited parts of north-eastern and eastern Africa for as long as recorded history. Within Africa, Oromo is the

language with the 3rd most speakers, after Arabic (if one counts the mutually unintelligible spoken forms of Arabic as a single macro language and assumes the same for the varieties of Oromo), Swahili, and Hausa. In this case, Oromo is the 4th. Not 3rd. Afaan Oromo (Oromo language) is most commonly written with a modified Latin alphabet called Qubee.¹

Afaan Oromo and Qubee are currently utilized by the Ethiopian government's state Radio and TV and news paper. Like most Ethiopian languages, whether Semitic or Omotic, Oromo has a set of ejectives consonants, Oromo has another glottalized phone that is more unusual, an implosive retroflex stop, /d'/ which is "dh" in Oromo orthography.

Oromo has the typical southern Cushitic set of five short and five long vowels letters. The difference in the length is contrastive, for example, lafa 'earth' laafaa 'soft'. Germination is also significant in Oromo. That is, consonant gemination can distinguish words from one another, for example, badaa, meaning 'bad', and baddaa, meaning 'highland'. In the Qubee alphabet, a single "letter" consists either of a single symbol or a diagraph (ch, dh, ny, ph, sh) Germination is not required to mark for the diagraphs, though some writers indicate it by doubling the first symbol Laphee 'heart' (Baye 1986).

According a comparative study conducted in Kenya by Stroomer and Helmut Humbure (1984), three dialects of Oromo language are found in Kenya, six dialects are found in Ethiopia and one dialects found both in Ethiopia and Kenya. These dialects are:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Raya Oromo (Ethiopian) | 6. Arsi Oromo (Ethiopian) |
| 2. Wallo Oromo >> | 7. Borana Oromo (Ethiopia & Kenya) |
| 3. Wallaga Oromo >> | 8. Gabra Oromo (Kenyan) |
| 4. Harar Oromo >> | 9. Orma Oromo (Kenyan) |
| 5. <i>Showa</i> Oromo >> | 10. Waata Oromo (Kenyan) |

¹ Interview with Dirribi Damuse 28 December 2010 in Addis Ababa.

In this thesis, my intention is not to write the history of Oromo. Rather I am particularly concerned with a ritual ceremony, more precisely, a thanks giving ritual known as "*Irreecha*," which is largely connected with the Oromo traditional belief system.

Among the Oromo, *Irreecha* is annually celebrated in different places, at *Horaa Arsadee* (Eastern *Showa* around Bushoftu town) and *Horaa Biisil* (Western *Showa* around Ijajji town), *Horaa Bulluq* (in *Horro Guduru Wallaga*), *Horaa Bultum* (Harar) and *Horaa Garresa (Arsii-Balee)*. Now a days, the one celebrated at *Horaa Arsadee* is becoming a grand celebration attracting millions of local participants and hundreds of tourists every year. More than any attribute of Oromo culture, *Irreecha* is now significantly contributing to the Oromo culture revival. However, less study has been conducted to document as well as describe this important ritual and cultural feature. This thesis, therefore, attempts to fill this gap.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Many scholarly works have so far been dedicated to the study of the various aspects of Oromo history, culture, literature, belief and folklore. Among them, Asmarom Leggesse (1973) focused on 'Borana Oromo; Knutsson (1967) on Machaa group, Dirribi Demissie (2009) on ideology of Oromo, Gammachu (1998) on the problems that arise in the understanding of Oromo culture. However, these scholars have touched upon the *Waqqefanna*, *Qalluu*, *Irreecha*, *Waaka* and *Ayyana* only as a passing remark. In other words, so far no detailed study exclusively or broadly dedicated to *Irreecha* ceremony (ritual) has been carried out with a view to properly documenting it. The current study as indicated above tries to bridge the paucity or practical absence of scholarly works dedicated to the documentation of *Irreecha* ceremony among the various Oromo groups. Its scope, however, is limited to the comparative description and documentation of *Irreecha* ceremonies celebrated at *Horaa Arsadee* in Eastern *Showa* and that of *Horaa Biisil* in western *Showa*. Through this documentation the researcher tries to capture both the most significant and the endangered aspects of *Irreecha* ceremony with a view to preserving it for posterity. In the course of the study, the researcher tries to answer the following research questions:

- How and when did the celebration of *Irreecha* begun?
- What are the social and environmental settings in which *Irreecha* ritual is celebrated?
- What are the phases of *Irreecha* celebration?
- What are the social norms and rules that guide the behavior of participants (actors and audience?)
- What are the social and cultural significances of *Irreecha* ceremony?
- How can we preserve the authenticity of *Irreecha* ceremony in light of contemporary cultural contamination?

1.3 Objective of the study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this thesis is to understand, describe and digitally document the component *Irreecha* ceremony and archive it for use by scholars and paractioners.

1.3.2 Specific objectives:

- To explore when and why *Irreecha* celebration;
- To analyze the process of *Irreecha* celebration at Horaa Arasadee and Horaa Bisill;
- To identify and document the steps used in performing *Irreecha*;
- To know the purpose of performing *Irreecha*;
- To know the social values attached to *Irreecha* ceremony;
- To describe the actual place where and the actual time when *Irreecha* is performed;
- To describe the participant: the audience, the actors, and accompanying elements.
- To identify customary rules and norms that guide social behavior.
- To recommend the ways and strategies of preserving the authenticity of *Irreecha* ceremony in view of its exposure to distortion because of external influences.

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- To describe the participant: the audience, the actors, and accompanying elements.
- To identify customary rules and norms that guide social behavior.
- To recommend the ways and strategies of preserving the authenticity of *Irreecha* ceremony in view of its exposure to distortion because of external influences.

1.4 Methods of the research

There are several methods of data collection in the research. Each method plays a crucial role for gathering information or data in its specific field or area. This research was conducted in two ways: through Library search and field research.

1.4.1 The library search

The library research play an important role to assess what have been done in the field of custom in general and traditional belief system in a particular. Thus, before embarking on field research, I try to carry out an exhaustive and extensive review of related literature.

1.4.2 The field research

This thesis work largely uses qualitative research. As such the data gathering instruments to be used in the course of the study include participant observation, focus group discussion and interview. Besides, some and digital apparatuses such as video and photographic tools are used to capture the entire settings and performances.

1.4.2.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation, which has been described as “the most intimate and morally hazardous” form of social research (Lofland, 1972) that take places in community setting enable the researcher not only to see what is happening, but to act like members of the group.

As Guëst et al (2005) note,

participant observation also use full for gaining and understanding ‘ the physical, social, cultural, and economic contexts in which study participants live; the relation ship among and between people, contexts ideas, norms and event and people behaviors and activities (Guest 2005:25).

Therefore, this data gathering strategy was employed in this study because it assisted me in obtaining the necessary information by direct observation, to look from the outside in and to describe the situations the way I see.

According to Guest et al (2005:16)

...researchers also used data collected through participant observation to improve the design of other methods, such as interviews and focus groups....[they] are invaluable in determining whom to recruit for the study and how best to recruit them. When acting as interviewers or focus group facilitators, researchers are guided by the cultural understanding gained through participant observation, allowed them to discern subtleties within participant responses. Knowing what these culturally specific cues mean allows researcher to ask more appropriate follow-up questions and probes.

I visited *Horaa Arsadee* and *Horaa Bisiil* in September and October respectively. And I stayed for ten days each in both places, before the eve of *Irreecha* celebration and aftermath. For the first time I visited *Horaa Arsadee* in September 2010 before a couple of weeks of the main day of the ceremony and made observation of the preparatory stage. Similarly, I also visited *Horaa Bisiil* many times on the eve and the aftermath of the main celebration day. As I intend to get the data through direct observation and I am the native speaker of the language community, I stayed with the community and observed systematically the situation before the main day, the main day and after the main day of the ceremony. This helped me get acceptance in the community and to study the situation in a natural setting and unaffected way. Being an observer of the ceremony, I tried to have a note of the ceremony observing the events.

1.4.2.2 Interview

I selected informants after concluding my observations and got acquainted with the situation. My interviewees were selected purposively for their knowledge. They were, mainly, youngsters, Abba Gadaas, and scholars, whom I believed to have knowledge on the *Irreecha* ceremony. The number of people interviewed was about 36 and equally distributed in both places.

I was interviewed several people in both places. This method helped me to obtain valid information about *Irreecha* ritual ceremony and the participants of the celebration. In addition, this method enabled me to know the expectations and feelings of informants about the ceremony.

1.4.2.3 Focus group-discussion

Focus-group discussion plays crucial role for such kind of research, to collect data from people who have knowledge of the research area to gather and make discussion. I tried to collect data from different section of society such as: elders, youth and women by rising questions like why water body is preferred for this celebration, the significants of ritual objects and its symbolic meaning using focus group discussion. This method helped me to to cross-cheeck the data collected from different informant. In addition, I used this method for it is important to get many data at the same time and collect data deeply. I used this method before the *Irreecha* ceremony and after the ceremony in both places. The segestion and comment have been considered in the research.

1.4.2.4 Tools

1.4.2.5 Photo and video camera

I recorded the participant of the ceremony using digital video and photo cameras. The different participants of the ceremony are recorded in photo and video. Use this equipment help me to capture movement of the ceremony at all.

1.5 Scope of the study

Irreecha ritual ceremony is celebrated under different five major kinds of Horas, in different parts of Oromia region. Out of the five major Oromo Horaas, the current study is limited to *Horaa Arsadee* and *Horaa Bisiil*, which are located in Eastern *Showa* on the outskirts of Bishoftu town and Western *Showa*, Ijajji town respectively.

1.6 Significant of the study

The project aims at documenting the entire process and the social value of *Irreecha*. This research tries to explain the relevance of *Irreecha* from social, political and economical point of view. Further more, this research has a great contribution for Oromo speech community in general and *Showa* Oromo in particular to archive their culture and traditional belief system for the next generation. The specific outcomes of the project include transcription, annotation and translation of primary data that can be used researchers to conduct further study and analysis on Oromo culture.

The other expected specific outcomes are input for preparation of educational material for the community and the enrichment of the researchers' experience in culture documentation work. This topic play vital role to address the following points: raising the community's awareness on the importance of preserving Oromo culture and creating trained community members on how to collect and preserve cultural primary data.

1.7 Organization of the study

This thesis is organized in to six chapters. Of which, the first three are identified as foundation and the rest as finding anlysis. Obviously, the first chapter is dedicated to general background, while the second chapter is devoted to literature review. In the third chapter an attempt is made to address, description of study area and community. The analysis of research finding began in chapter four. In this chapter documenting the intire process of *Irreecha* of *Horaa Arsadee* and *Horaa Bisiil* is discussed. The fifth chapter is left to deal with the comparative analysis of *Irreecha* ritual in both cases. The thesis is winded up of the sixth chapter through, conclusion and recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Review of Related Works

2.1.1 Literature related to Oromo Belief System

The Oromo history, political organization and culture have been studied from different disciplinary perspectives by many scholars: historians, anthropologists, political scientists, linguist and sociologists. Written accounts about Oromo could generally be categorized under traveler's accounts, academic research works including PhD dissertations, MA/MSc thesis and B.A. essays lodged at the different local university libraries and foreign institutions. Because of the sheer size of this literature, and the focus of this study on a ritual, I decided to touch upon some of the relevant ones available at Addis Ababa University selectively. Among the scholars who touched upon Oromo belief system and associated cultural traits, it is possible to mention Gadaa Melba (1988:19) who indicated that the Oromo people practiced their own religion. According to him, "they believed in one "*Waaqa*," which approximates to the English word God. They never worshipped false gods or carved statues as substitutes."

Gadaa (1988) further wrote that the Oromo *Waaqa* is the only and the same for all. He is the creator of all things, source of all life and every thing. He can able to do any thing. Gadaa goes on to say that, "just before the beginning of the harvest season every year, the Oromo have a prayer ceremony (thanks giving festival) called *Irressa*. It once took place in river meadows where now the Abyssinian Orthodox church takes its holy tabot (tablets) for special yearly festival, the 'Timket'. It takes place near the bank of the river in order to pray to the God.

Asmarom (1973) studied the Borana Oromo Gadaa system and made reference to the *Qalluu* institutions. According to him the *Qalluus* are the higher status men in the system and ritual leaders of the moieties. He explains the role of *Qalluu* as follow: *Qalluu* make a formal judgment in the society for the conflict between clans. Further, He explains that the power of the *Qalluu* in the Oromo of Borana in political and religious activities is too

high. "The *Qalluu* villages are the spiritual centers around which political debate is organized. The principal power of the *Qalluu* lies in his right to elect the political (Gadaa) leader who governs Borana for eight years." This reveals that the traditional belief system of the Borana have contact with politics.

The other point raised by Asmarom (1973) is the activities of the *Qalluu* linking up with the Gadaa system. These are the Muudaa ceremony and the Lallaba ceremony, the Muudaa ceremony performed by the Gadaa class in power to honor the *Qalluu* and the Lallaba ceremony in which *Qalluu* organize, facilitate, and supervise the election of the Gadaa leaders. Further more, He was used to bless the Lallaba or the proclamation of the law by the incoming Gadaa officials once in eight years among the Borana.

Tilahun (1990), gives the concept of *Ayyana* as 'God's creative manifesting itself through His creatures. According to him, he is both the creator and His creation. This depict that *Ayyana* is part of *Waaqa* (God) and at the same time part of *Waaqa*'s creation.

Cloude (1995) also gives the definitions and the concept of interpretation of the super human: *Waaqa* and *ayyana*. *Waaqa* is sky and /or God. As he stated, the traditional divinity is both the same to Knutsson's (1967) definition of *Waaqa* and *ayyana*.

Gammachu (1998), on his part assesses the problems that arise in the understanding of the Oromo culture, particularly in terms of religious practices. He explains the whole and parts of the culture. In addition, He argues that describing the whole without analyzing the part leads to confusion. According to him, *Ayyana* is that, by which and/or through which *Waaqa* (equivalently God) creates everything in the universe. In Every day life, however, *Ayyana* is a sort of spirit which is possessed by the *Qalluu*, and is often associated with evil spirit that the almighty God (*Waaqa* in this context).

De salviae (1901, cited in Qanno, 2008) stated the depth of the faith of the Oromo in *Waaqa*, that he calls the significant belief of the Oromo as follows: "the Oromo are not fetishists. They believe in *Waaqa tokko* (one God), unique universal creator and master." The idea of De Salviae is no more different from others (like Knutsson, Bartels) in concepts.

Almeid (1628) as cited in Gadaa (1988) wrote about Oromo as follows: "the Gallas (Oromo) are neither Christian nor heathens; they have no idols for worship." This clearly support or strengthens De salviae's witness about the fundamental belief of the Oromo long ago.

Bartels (1990) gave the definition and concept of *Waaqa* in a similar way to others (example Gadaa Melba, 1988 and Knutsson, 1967). But he concerned on saying and proverbs to explain the concept.

The other point Bartels discuss is that the non-equivalence of Oromo '*Waaqa*' to the English word 'God' because the Oromo *Waaqa*, as he says, comprises more than the supreme being, creator and ruler of the universe in the western sense. He prefers to define *Waaqa* as divinity, a kind of nature or existence.

The other point raised by Bartels is that the concept of *Ayyana*. Evil *Ayyana* (*Ayyana hamaa*) as He says, is a superhuman being (above man) but not the original *Ayyana* or true *Ayyana*. These are not 'something of *Waaqa*'. But rather seen as moral being acting only in regard to people whom *Waaqa* had withdrawn. The same explanation was giving by Knutsson that *Waaqa* uses evil *Ayyanas* to punish those who break the rules of *dhugaa* meaning truth. According to Bartels conceptually evil *Ayyana* and devil are the same. But latter Muslim and Christians came in to the *Macca*. He presents what an old man of Oromo told him during his interviews: "The Sata came to our country with Christianity. Before, there were no Seet'ana, believe me". Evil *Ayyana* can be related with Seet'ana even if they were basically (in origin) not the same, but the word *Ayyana* is 'something of *Waaqa*' as Bartels stated.

Knutsson (1967) on his part describe distinction between the term *Qalluu* and *Qalliicha* or *Qallitti*. According to him, *Qalluu* always designated the few traditional 'high priest' while *Qalliicha* represents a mainly anti-social or at least anti-traditional, ritual role. He continues to say genealogically, a 'great' *Qalluu* is regarded as the most senior person in his lineage and clan. It is beneath the dignity of a great *Qalluu* to ask his ritual clients for payment while a *Qalliicha* however, is notorious for extracting remuneration by *Qalluus* is what people bring him in the form of gift known as *galehaa*.

Asaffa (1998) on his part explains the Oromo belief system. According to him *Waaqa*, the creator of the Oromo, regulates their existence and functions in a balanced way. Quoting Kassam, Asaffa continues: '*Waaqa* whilst being a monotheistic, God is also the divine principle that controls everything from within...' this was discussed by Asaffa Jalata as image of creation that has significant consequences for the Oromo vision of the universe as a whole.

The other phenomenon in touch with Asaffa (1998), in the Oromo world view, discuss the three Oromo concepts to explain the organization and interconnection of human, spiritual and physical worlds; *ayyana* (spirit), *Uumaa* (nature) and *safuu* (moral order). He adds that through *ayyana*, *Waaqa* created human and physical worlds and through *ayyana* these physical worlds are also interconnected to their creator. Further, through *ayyana* each person's *ayyana Waaqa* creatively acts in the person's life. *Uumaa* includes all things created by *Waaqa*, including *ayyana*. A moral and ethical code that Oromos use to identify bad from good and wrong from right is called *safuu*.

The other point Asaffa (1998) states is the myth, the original *Qalluu* (religious leader) was described from heaven. A *Qalluu* is thought to possess sacred characteristic that enable him to act as intermediary between the people and *Waaqa*.

Bartels (1990) starts the discussions with important terms such as blessing, curses, oath, rituals and some sayings. The first paragraph is about a myth that long-ago, *Waaqa* was laying close to the earth, fertilizing it with his rain (*laafti niiti Waaqati* meaning the earth is *Waaqa*'s wife). It is known that *Waaqa* has a double meaning: one is 'divinity' and the other is sky. Bartels seems to say the physical *Waaqa* (sky) even if mentioned in the myth.

The other phenomenon Bartels (1990) mention is the definition of *Qalluu*: '*Qalluus* are pagan ritual experts who made their appearance on the scene as a reaction to Christianity'. He also needs that 'to enforce their position they adopted certain Christian elements in to their cult'. But he didn't present what Christian elements have been adopted except he gives a reference book of Knutsson (1967)

The other concept Bartels (1990) raise is that a complete idea of what Maaraam is: according to him, 'Maaraam is not *Waaqa*. She doesn't create a child in the women's womb. But, after *Waaqa* has given the child is in the Maaraams hands. According to the belief, Maaraam can ask *Waaqa* what ever she needs and get a positive response. Bartels seems to say next to *Waaqa*, *Maaraam* able to do any thing.

Bartels (1983), "All hills and mountains are to the Matcha place of sacrifice and worship, since they are nearer to the sky, nearer to *Waaqa*" the above view reveal hills and mountains are a place where people practices praying to God. Because of the fact they are close to *Waaqa*.

Mohammed (1994) on his part discuss about the relation ship between *Qalluu* and *Irreecha* by quoting (De Salviac 1905:104) as he says that "... Oromo group that formed part of the confederacy had its own ritual leaders who accompanied them. They were called Irreesaa, the "right hand of the *Qalluu*" and were his emissaries who had the "right exercise their functions from the *Qalluu* who reside at the cradle land of the moiety". He seems to say both *Irreecha* and *Qalluu* are inseparable. They accompanied each other. He adds *Irreecha* represent *Qalluu* and had a right to practice *Qalluu*'s functions.

The Waaqeffannaa Bulletins written in Oromo, 2003. October 05 discuss the process of *Muudaa* ceremony in *Irreecha* ritual ceremony. The people are gathered; leaders of the religion and elders come with *Caaccuu* and *Kallacha* (lance). A *korma*, Bull is brought for sacrifice (to be slaughtered). The *Abba Muudaa*, religious leader starts to anoint inserting *Coqorsa* (special kind of grass indicator of fertility) in a Butter from the forehead of the Bull to its tail three times'. The name of *Abba Muudaa* has been derived from the term *Muudaa* which means 'to anoint'. Here, the Bulletin doesn't describe why *Coqorsa* is preferred for anoint and the ritual objects are brought to the ceremonial place.

Barrisa news paper written in Oromo language discussing about the *Waaqa* as follow: The Oromos express their resentment, sadness, and happiness, directly to their Creator, *Waaqa*. No other superior or inferior power is responsible for Oromos' happiness or sadness apart from their Creator, *Waaqa*. They blame the misfortune and bad-omen they have encountered in their daily activities, which could be resulted as of negligence or

forgetfulness in derailing them away from the main chapters of *Waaqa's* Orders. (Barrisa 7 September 2010)

The other news paper written in Oromo language kallacha Oromia explain about Oromo belief and worshipping places. According to the news paper the Oromo people believe that, they might have committed cubbuu (sin) at one time that could anger the Tolerant *Waaqa*. Then, they honestly pray to *Waaqa* for forgiveness and deliverance by getting together either at the environs of sacred water (Hora), on high mountain (*Tulluu*) or being under the sacred sycamore tree (Odaa), or at the sacred or ritual house (*Galma*) of the Qaalluu.(Kallacha Oromia 27 October 2009).

The reporter news paper written in English explain about the relationship between *Irreecha* and Gadaa as follow: The *Irreecha* celebration marks the Gadaas' rites of passage ceremony. Traditionally the Oromos had five *Gadaa* (grades) or parties. The names of these grades varied from place to place. These grades were commonly called dabalee (ages one to eight), rogge (ages eight to sixteen), follee (ages sixteen to twenty-four), qondaala (ages twenty-four to thirty-two), and dorri (ages thirty-two to forty). The news paper continues, there were rites of passages when males passed from one *Gadaa* to another. These rites of passages were called *Irreecha* or buuta. The political philosophy of the *Gadaa* system was embodied in three main principles: an eight-year term of leaders; a balanced opposition between parties; and power sharing between higher and lower levels. These checks and balances were created to prevent misuse of power, Kene'a Lami chairman of the recently formed Waqa Believers Association told to reporter. (Reporter 17 November 2006)

The other point reporter news paper touch is about the purpose of *Irreecha*. According to the news paper, the purpose of *Irreecha* is to thank Waqa for the beautiful weather and to beseech it to last until the promised crops ripen to sustain life, for children to grow, for the sick to heal, for justice and fraternity to prevail among human beings. Since back in the days, green vegetation, livestock and water mean a lot to the lives and culture of the Oromo and are accorded due respect. (Reporter 17 November 2006)

The Ethiopian herald (news paper) Sunday edition, explains that *Irreecha* is semi-religious festival among the Oromo. Ethiopian herald continues, like ancient Cushitic people the Oromo celebrate two *Irreecha* festivals recently, the Melka *Irreecha* and the Tullu *Irreecha* meaning *Irreecha* celebrated near lake and on the mountains or hill respectively. (Ethiopian Herald October 1999 p: 6). As the Ethiopian Herald explains *Irreecha* is partial-religious ritual among the Oromo. Etymologically the Oromo speech Community celebrates this festival like other Cushitic people. But the news paper not touches up on the social value of *Irreecha* ritual ceremony.

A pamphlet annually printed by the Cultural Bureau of Oromia concerning (*Irressa* or *Irreecha*) is introducing one of the popular rituals Celebration of the Oromo, known as *Irreecha*. It is a thank giving annual celebration taken place at a chosen place. The choosers are *Qalluus* the leader of Oromo religion, known as waqqeffannaa. Waaq- means approximately equivalent to the English word 'God'. It is a short form of *Waaqa*. This celebration, according to the pamphlet, *Irreecha* started in ancient time by the people of Nile valley Cushitic. The top of the mountain is chosen that because during the dry seasons people pray for God giving them rain and the rain giving clouds are collected at the top of the mountains. In September the place of the festival are at the river banks and lakes for that sun light and flowers are found at these places. This time the Oromo give thank to *Waaqa* for the change of the season Ganna or Winter usually taken to be 'dark' to a pleasant month (September) which is sunny and flowery.

Meskerem (1998), on her part gives the definition of *Irreecha* and discuss about the worshipping places. According to her: "*Irreecha* is tied to the land of this region most important to the trees, the mountains and the lakes," she continue discussing about worshipping places of *Irreecha* such as Tree, lake, river and mountains to strengthen her idea she quoted scholars like Eric (1991). Who wrote that ancient Egypt "the Goddess as the tree that confers nourishment on souls, as the sycamore tree or date palm is one of the central figure of Egyptian art." According to him Egyptian believe that the sycamore tree is the major and central figure of their art. Moreover, Meskerem also touch about the Baobab tree which is found in many African countries. As she says that "The Baobab, which is an indigenous tree of the tropic of Capricorn in Africa is believed to have a

spirit.” According to her in different African countries several trees have a spirit. She take an example Nigeria and Zimbabwe, as she stated in both countries Baobabs tree are a center of worshipping which involving fertility spirits. But she did not mention the process of celebrating *Irreecha* ritual ceremony for instance what is going on before the main day of the celebration, the main day and post *Irreecha*.

Dirribi (2009). On his part discussed about *Irreecha* on his book *Ilaalcha Oromo* (the Ideology of Oromo) written in Afaan Oromo. According to him, *Irreecha* means Oromo speech community put grass, flower or leaf at specific area in order to convey or reveal the glory of God, and pray to God by saying “almighty God you able to do every thing, you are the creator of this grass, flower or leaf.” In this book he discuss in detail about *Odaa nabee* (*Irreecha* celebrated around Bushoftu). But Dirribi dis not discuss what makes different *Odaa Nabee* from the other Odaas like *Odaa Bisiil*, *Odaa Bultum*, *Odaa Bulluq* and so forth.

Eshete (2008), raises the point concerning the Oromo religion, as he says that the Oromo are both polygamous and monogamous. The Christians are monogamous whereas, the Muslims and those who hold the traditional religion (*Waaqeffaannaa*) are monogamous and /or polygamous. He adds almost all the educated sections of Muslims and the follower of traditional religion are monogamous. He seems to say the Oromo speech communities are the follower of Christianity, Islam and traditional religion. And which religion is allowed and /or not allow having more than one wife. But, he doesn't explain the belief system of Oromo in detail

2.1.2 Religion, Ritual and Ritual Objects

Annesa (2005), on journal of Oromo studies discuss about ritual. According to him ritual means composed of the following sequences some of which figure in other rituals. It contained symbols and actions common to other rituals and employed a number of media: words (prayers, blessings and invocations) songs, dance and ritual objects. He meant that ritual have its own order and is accompanied by several actions such as: song, dance, and so forth.

Long man dictionary which is edited by Poul (1978) gave the definition of ritual as follow: "one or more ceremonies or customary acts which are often repeated in the same form". He meant that ritual is regularly celebrated occasion of custom.

Ranger and Kimambo (1972), in the book the historical study of African religion gave an explanation of religion and its association with ritual objects they say that: "the psychological boundaries of religion are the most difficult to demarcate. In present day religious systems, the tangible aspect of religion include object of ritual use, in the sense that they are used in religious observance, certain of a symbol, the place of such observances, and object which have been 'ritualized' because of the observances with which they are associated".

The other point discussed by Ranger and Kimambo (1972) is about the meaning of ritual object. As they says that a ritual object is one whose meaning is shared in practice because of a common cultural heritage whereas, sacred symbols function to synthesize a people's ethos and are objects which serve as a vehicles for conceptions. As such a ritual object can be a symbol, and an actual ritual is seen as a culturally patterned symbolic action.

Evans (1956) on his book entitles Nuer religion discusses about the role of God in the society. He says that "...he is conceived of not only as creator but also as guardian of social order who punishes transgressions, which are breaches of interdictions which serve to maintain the social order." (Evas-pritchard 1956:320). He seems to say God is able to do any thing; he can punish those who go beyond the limits of what is morally, socially or legally acceptable.

The other points touched by Evans (1956) on his book entitle Nuer religion the brief definition of religion. According to him religion was discussed and explained in terms of association of ideas, of personification of natural phenomena, of awe, of thrill, of fear, anxiety and frustration, of projection and so forth. He seems to say religion is described in terms of a feeling of great respect mixed with fear and so forth.

Pratt (1920) on his part defines religion as follow: "the serious and social attitude of individual and communities toward the power and powers which they conceived as having ultimate control over their interests and destiny."

Durkheim (1947) religion is " a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden beliefs and practices which unite in to one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them"

To sum up, the above reviews explain about the meaning of religion, the meaning of religious ritual and its association with ritual objects and Oromo traditional belief system in general by different scholars and from different print media. It is known that *Irreecha* is one and Major Oromo ritual ceremony. Now a day *Irreecha* ritual celebration is becoming much known at regional level, national level, even some foreign media transmitted the occasion lively. However, there is no sufficient reference.

2.2 Theoretical framework

Researchers may develop theories from unbiased analysis of verbal interview and review of the most relevant research, which can serve as a frame work for interpreting the new data. Although this study is devoted mainly to the analysis of *Irreecha* ritual ceremony in Oromo among *Showa* community, it is necessary to encapsulate the study in some theoretical, comparative and historical perspective.

The appropriate theory for this study actually is the origin and development theory of religious ritual. Since there are several thoughts by different scholars, I will stick to the Durheim's thought- Ritual is a collective representation.

As I said above there are different thought by different researchers. first let as see Tylor's (1873) and Frazer's (1890) thought , Tylor's study, centered around magic, which he described as 'one of the most pernicious delusions that ever vexed mankind' (Tylor 1973:1 112). Tylor's lasting contribution to the study of social institutions lay in the study of religious ritual. This was by way of development and applications of his concept of 'animism' by which he meant 'belief in spiritual beings'.

Frazer (1890) on his part accepted Tylor's (1873) minimal definition of religious ritual 'the belief in spiritual beings' as a working basis, but went further. He categorized belief systems generally in Magic, Religion, and Science and arranged these in an evolutionary hierarchy in that order. According to him, Magic developed as an attempt by man to do some thing about imponderable forces in his environment. Man in his sober or non sober moments, had come to think that he could do something about the ordinary run of the cosmic order through incantations, shouting, cajoling, thumping, and other gesticulations. When this did not succeeded, man then understands that there must be certain powers behind these natural forces which could not be so easy to manipulate. The movement from magic to religion, therefore, is seen as a fundamental shift of cosmological attitude from arrogance to humility. Then gradually the idea of science is existed. According to him, this new 'scientific out look' took a long time to be accepted. In the view of Frazer, this change depends up on certain other development of in human psyche, culture, and society.

Durkheim (1965) rejects the idea and explanation of Tylor (1873) and Frazer (1890). He accused such earlier theorists of failing to locate the place of religion within where it really is the social structure. Durkheim investigates the mechanism that held society together from different angles throughout his career: the elementary form of religious life he focused on ritual, ultimately arguing that ritual is the fundamental mechanism that holds a society together. Although the aspect of his arguments that rests on his assumption that aboriginal groups are example of ritual in group life. He illustrated how ritual leads to increase interaction, especially focused, intense, and rhythmic interaction.

Durkheim (1965) described how rituals generate immotional arousal, which he referred to as collective effervescence. Collective effervescence is experienced as a heightened awareness of group membership as well as feeling that an out side power full force has sacred significant. This sacred sentimate is attached to the symbol at the center of he group's ritual attention space. Through this association, the ritual symbols are made sacred in the interaction.

The Durkheim's (1965) notion of collective representation thought is central to the sociological interpretation of social phenomena. These collective representations said to have the following features:

1. They are common to or, are shared by member of a given social group;
2. They are transmitted from generation to generation.
3. They impressed them selves up on a society's members and awaken in them sentiment of respect, Fear, adulation and so on, according to the circumstances of any such group aggregation; and
4. Their existence does not depend up on the separate individuals, because these representations have a life of their own.

The choice of this thought over the other is of course not random. It is basically for two reasons. First, since the major aim of this study is to document *Irreecha* ritual ceremony in the case of *Horaa Arsadee* and *Horaa Bisiil*. This thought play pivotal role to interpret the entire process of *Irreecha* ceremony in both places. Second, *Irreecha* as one and major Oromo cultural treasure, different groups of the society are involved in this ritual ceremony. Therefore, the thought help to interpret the significant of the ceremony for the community and the role of each person participate in this ceremony, for instance the role of children, youth (male and female), elders (male and female) and Abba *Gadaas*.

Durkheim (1965) believed that, one of the most functions of ritual ceremonies is the general participation of all members of a community in reaffirming their collective value participations which gives renewed or reinforced social cohesion. Based on this view I tried to touch up on how *Irreecha* ritual ceremony renew the social interaction of Oromo community or/and the role of *Irreecha* ritual ceremony in reinforcing the social cohesion of *Showa* Oromo particularly *Macca* and *Tulama* community

Durkheim also pointed out four primary functions of religions and ritual ceremonies. First, he said they served a disciplinary function, since self-discipline is necessary in society, and a proprietor function, helping people to just to society. Second, he claimed that ritual ceremonies brought people together. Third, ceremonies and rituals have a

revitalizing function; that is, it reminds people of their commonality and the past. Fourth, ritual gives people a good feeling of belonging to society; that is, it helps a group overcome difficulties and strengthens its people.

Another scholars support Durkheim (1965) thought of ritual among them Brown (1952) in his book entitled structure and function in primitive society, explain that ritual is an expression of unity of society and that its function is to 're-create' the society or the social order by reaffirming and strengthening the sentiments on which the social solidarity and therefore, the social order itself depend.

The other point Brown (1952) raise to support Durkheim (1965) is ritual serves to express the unity and solidarity of the group and its individuality and separation from other groups by special relation of the group to its sacra. He meant that ritual is not only expressing the unity of the society. But also re-create the society; identify them selves from the other or identity expression. For the case of my study this view helps me to discuss in detail about whether *Irreecha* ritual ceremony used as identity expression besides strengthening the unity of *Macca* and *Tulama* community.

Generally speaking ritual has significant in keeping a social order of a certain community, in maintaining the social cohesion and equilibrium. In addition, ritual is an intrinsic part of the constitution of the society. I used this view to interpret how *Irreecha* ritual ceremony is part of the real and fundamental nature of the Oromo society.

2.3 Purpose of Documentation

Documentation refers to recording and describing or the state of being documented. Bury (2003:46-47) gave us some common values on what would constitute a good documentary corpus:

1. Diverse- diverse in situation, in participants,
2. Large- more than ever before, the technology is therefore to be arbitrary large.
3. Ongoing- distributed and opportunistic- if continually grows,
4. Transparent- they would be properly annotated,

5. Perceivable- Ethical and portable proper Meta data information should be given about each item of data. It should be archived and handled,
6. Ethical- data ownership should be protected.

Austin (2006:100) on his part advises that documentation should strictly follow the sequence recording/capturing, analysis, archiving and mobilizing. It should consider relevant procedures including the project planning. According to him documentation process for data analysis there are two tools as follow: "general purpose soft ware" for which the user must design the data structure and can write application programs to manipulate the data carry out various task for instance MS Word and Excel and "specific purpose soft ware" which is designed to be used for particular tasks like Tool Box for text and lexicon annotation, Praat for speech analysis and annotation, Elan for audio and video annotation. According to the above recommendation soft wares, technology equipment and other relevant materials have been used to collect analyze the data for the study.

Chapter Three

Description of the Study Area and Community

3.1 The Genealogy and Settlement Pattern of *Tulama- Macca* groups

According to elders and some literary materials, Odaa Walabu was one of the early *Coffee* of Oromo people.² Every eight years, the *Macca-Tulama* groups used to hold their assembly, celebrated Butta ceremony and elected *Gadaa* officials at Odaa Walabu. It was also here that rules and regulations were made and improved and the overall constitutions were amended. Power was transferred every eight years from one Abba *Bokkuu* to another Abba *Bokkuu* by the handing over of the *Bokkuu* (scepter) to the newly elected Abba *Bokkuu* with all responsibilities. In 16th century *Macca-Tulama* groups had developed the custom of coming out for war in an organized manner. They had organized them selves at Haroo Walabu on the basis of *Gadaa* system. It was in this way that the *Macca- Tulama* groups began their movement. At the time this group was predominantly pastoralist. So, it was from Haroo Walabu that the *Macca* and *Tulama* group started the process of movement. The *Gadaa* set under which the first movement was organized was *Gadaa* Melba (1522-30) the first phase of *Macca-Tulama* movement which was continued until 1578. Haroo Walabu was used as a base of movement of the north until 1554. Broadly speaking this phase of movement was done by a small group who avoided conflict with the expanding forces of both Christians and Muslim sultanate. It was done by appointing reconnaissance squad who reported the position of the enemy and the economic importance of the area. The *Macca-Tulama* groups seem to have stopped using Haroo Walabu as a base and founded another center at *Odaa Nabee* in 1554. (Mohammed 1994)

According the elders and some literary works *Macca* and *Tulama* live together for many years under same *Gadaa* site called *Odaa Nabee*. Mohammed says that; before their separation, the *Macca* and *Tulama* had a common *caffee* assembly at Oda Nabee in fatagar. Since the *Macca* and *Tulama* shared common law, as brothers who obey

² Interview with Abba Gadaa Takala Dhinsa October 2010. I interviewed him before and aftermath of the ceremony at Ijajji town. He is Abba Gadaa of Odaa Bisiiil.

common law, they fought in support of one another. Every eight years each groups sent its delegation to *Odaa Nabee* for the *Gadaa* election. The *Gadaa* leaders who were elected at *Odaa Nabee* executed the duties of central *caffee*, settled disputes between the *Macca* and the *Tulama*, marshaled their resources for the common cause, declared war and conclude peace. Mohammed (1990:41-42)

For a long time the two groups live together peacefully because of the common *Caffee* and common *Bokkuu*, which embodied the spirit of unity and served as a living constitution. *Bokkuu* was a wooden scepter which was used as an emblem of authority by the *Gadaa* leader. Nobody except the Abba *Gadaa* carried it. At the end of his tenure of office, the incoming leader it directly from the hand of the out going leader.

Concerning the separation of *Macca* from *Tulama*, there are different views from different scholars. First let us discus about who is *Macca* and *Tulama*. The book entitled the History of Oromo to the 16th Century assert, a man known as 'Horro' is said to have been a founding father of Oromo people. From Horro descendent all the Oromo groups bellow is the family tree of the Oromo society according to the above mentioned book.



due to the conflict between their mothers (co-wives of Rayya) Siree and Akittu respectively.³

Concerning the separation of the two groups there are different views such as: stealing of *Bokkuu*, scarcity of land, expand the territory and search for fertile soil, and better weather condition, the conflict between their Mother and so forth. The reason of separation from different scholars and elders will be discussed bellow:

According to my informant Takala Dhinsa, *Macca* made a short stay at *Qorricha* and then moved to a place comfortable for his family known as *Odaa Bisiil*. A specific place name *Tutte Bisiil (Odaa Bisiil)* is said to have been area of his residence. Abba *Gadaa* Takala Dhinsa continues concerning the separation of *Macca* from *Tulama* is: *Macca* went to the west direction search for the fertile land and good weather condition for his family. Because of the western part of the region is fertile soil he stays there. Through time the *Macca* group established their own *caffee* at *Odaa Bisiil*.

Some elders underline that the conflict of their mothers as main cause for the separation of *Tulama* and *Macca*. That is why the saying of elders goes due to the partisan ship of Sira for *Tulama* and Akitu for *Macca*, children of one father remained separated.

Another point concerning the separation of *Macca* from *Tulama* after long time there became scarcity of land. According to some oral tradition when *Macca* and *Tulama* lived together in the eastern part of the region there were scarcities of land. The '*Macca*' went to western Oromia and settled in a place where *Horaa Bisiil* is celebrated. This is the view of origin of *Odaa Bisiil*. And the *Tulama* stayed at *Odaa Nabee*

Some writers relate the separation of the center of *Macca* and *Tulama* to the stealing *Bokkuu* which was a sign of the power of Abba *Gadaa*. This was however, an explanation based on oral tradition about the stolen *Bokkuu* shows that the stealing was

³ Interview with Abba Gadaa Takala Dhinsa October 2010.

related to 16th century movement of the nomadic (pastoral) Borana group from Madda Wallabu to the north.

Knutsson, on his part says that before *Macca* established his own *caffee* so-called *Odaa Bisiil*, all *Tulama* and *Macca* were said to have had a common *caffee* and *Abba Bokkuu*. The *Macca*, however, conspired and stolen the scepter, *Abba Bokkuu*'s emblem of office. Because of this, war broke out between two groups of groups and led to the creation of independent *Caffee*, one for *Tulama* and one for the *Macca*.

According to Mohammed the separation of *Macca* from *caffee* assembly at *Odaa Nabee* was first precipitated by the formation of the *Afree* confederacy (i.e. the confederacy of the four), composed of the *Hoko*, *Tehalliya*, *Gudru* and *Libaan*. According to him the *Afree* confederacy was formed during the period of the *Robale Gadaa* (1570-1578). During the period of the *Birmajji Gadaa* (1578-1586) the second *Macca* confederacy, the *Saddacha* (i.e. the confederacy of the three), was formed. He continues the *Arfee* spearheaded the *Macca* migration to the south western region. They crossed the *Gudar* River in to *Damot* during the period of the *Robalee Gadaa*. During the *Birmajji Gadaa*, the *Saddacha* also crossed the *Gudar* River and joined with the *Afree* in *Damoot*. According to him by trekking in the footstep of the *Afree*, the *Saddacha* were completing the separation of the *Macca* from the *Tulama*.

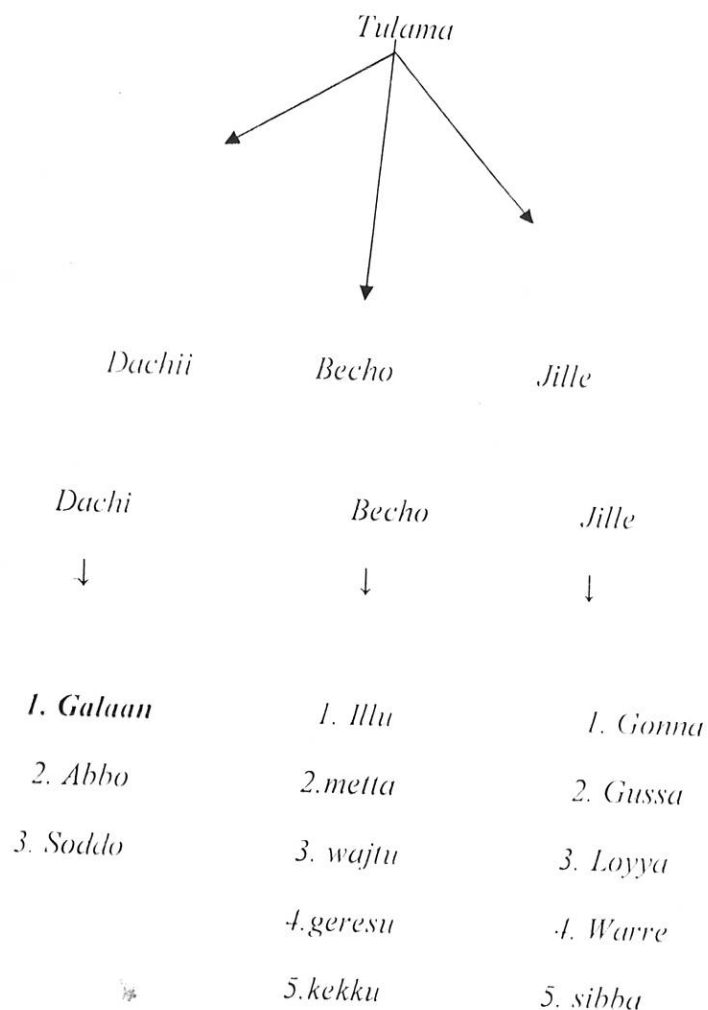
From the above information, it is difficult to know the exact time when the given separation occurred and when the *Macca* established their independent council or *Caffee*. However, based on the above information, it is possible to estimate the reason of the separation of the two groups. In my opinion it is difficult to say scarcity of the land is the reason. Because, the then *Macca* and *Tulama* population hardly posed huge pressure on the existing environment. Since *Macca* and *Tulama* groups had the same confederacy and were ruled by one *Bokkuu* the stealing of the *Bokkuu* or scepter was also far from truth.

To summarize what has been said so far, when *Macca* went to the western direction searching for fertile soil and good weather condition, the area he arrived was comfortable and endowed with fertile soil and covered with green plants and grasses; he stayed for a long time since the distance is too long to have same *Gadaa* site with *Tulama* group, he

established his own *caffee* at *Odaa Bisiil*. From that time onwards the *Macca* group leaves *Odaa Nabee* for *Tulama* group. My informant Takkala Dhinsa on his part says: *Macca* group occupied from west *Showa* to the tip of Wallaga border. Therefore, it is difficult for *Macca* group to involve in *Odaa Nabee Gadaa* site. Because, the *Macca* group is too far from *Tulama* group.

3.1.1 The Genealogy of *Tulama*

According to *Tulama* elders, the groups of *Tulama* are divided in to three main sub-groups known as *Dachi*, *Bachoo* and *Jillee*. Each sub-group is further sub-divided into similar units known as *Mana* and *Balbala* in *Afaan Oromo*. This literally means clan or door respectively. In general the genealogy of *Tulama* group could be presented as follow:



Gaalan

1. *Jidda*
2. *Liban*
3. *Abbu*
4. *Ada'aa (focus of the study)*

Abbo

1. *Gombichu*
2. *Giulalle*
3. *Abori*
4. *Yayya*
5. *Ekku*
5. *Diggalu*
6. *Gamu*

Soddo

1. *Oditu*
2. *Liban*
3. *Tuma'e*

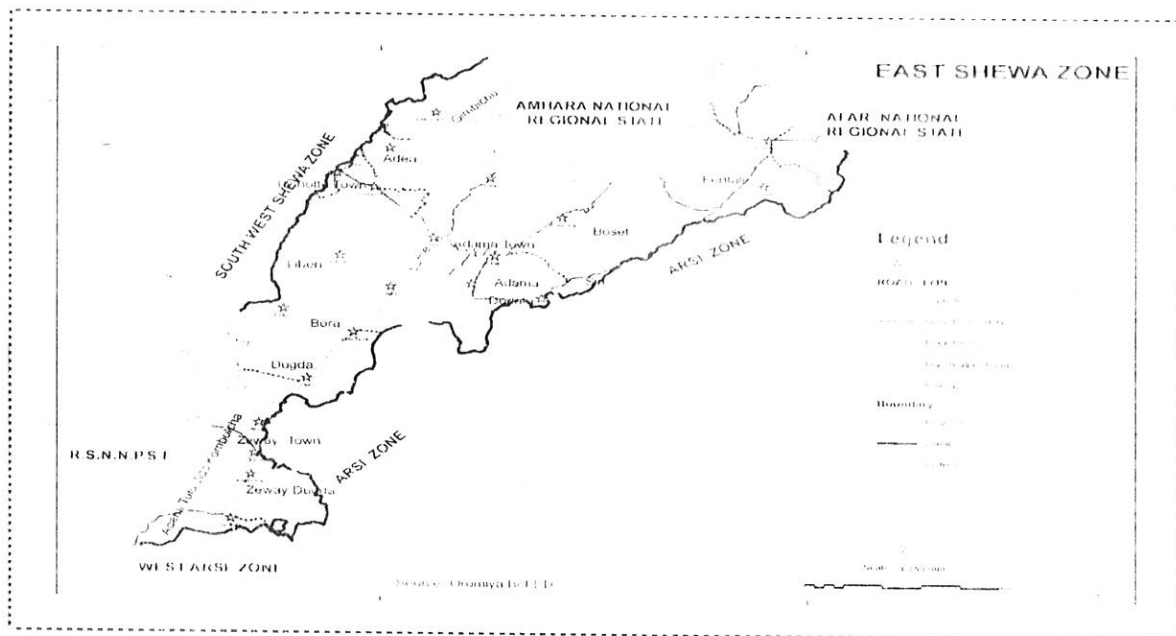
Source: Adapted from the book History of Oromo to Sixteenth Century.

Figure 3.2 the geneology pattern of *Tulama* group.

3.1.2 The Settlement of *Tulama*

The *Tulama* Oromo have settled in vast area of central Ethiopia. They are bounded by: lake Denbel (zeway) in the south; Wallo administrative zone in the north; Kerreyyu groups that settled in Arsi and Fantalle in the southeast and the present day administrative zone of east *Showa* in west. Generally speaking, the settlers of East *Showa* are mainly the

Showa is called Adama which is 100 km far from Addis Ababa. The weather conditions of the zone are mainly wetndega (semi temperate) and Qollaa (hot).



The East *Showa* is overwhelmingly inhabited by *Tulama* Oromos. According to elders, the *Tulama* Oromos were the most numerous compared to *Macca* Oromo who separated from them and started living in this area. The *Tulama* have their own way of living, history and philosophy. Currently, Farming and trade are the two economic sectors in which most of the populations are engaged. The urban dwellers are mostly traders and the rural people are farmers. The cereal crops mainly produced in this zone are wheat and Tef. Lentils are also widely produced in this zone.

The East *Showa* includes mountains, valleys and plain areas. According to the zone office of agriculture, most of the area is covered by black soil. There are also mineral stones called granite in the zone.

This zone is also known for production of flowers. It also has many factories and industries like Leather factory, Textile industry, Metal industry, Bread factory and Flora factory. Moreover, the zone has many tourist attractions and resort centers which many people visit and one of these is *Irreecha* ceremony. There are also different natural lakes, caves and so forth.

Regarding religious composition, Christianity, Islam and traditional belief system are followed. The traditional beliefs are widely adhered to and common in east *Showa* than west *Showa*.

3.1.3.1 Bishoftu

Bishoftu is one of the focuses of the current study. According to my informant Abba *Gaduu* Badhoo Raggasa, the word Bishoftu is believed to have been derived from an event whereby a man, while passing through this place, saw an ugly girl and uttered the word 'maali mucan Bushoftu' meaning ugly girl. This name was changed to Debrezeyit during the reign of Emperor Haile sillasie I and it had been called by this name until it got its original name back after the fall of Derg regime.¹ Bishoftu is located in north western rift valley 47 km far from Addis Abeba. It is a capital city of Ada'aa district. It was established, according to the municipality of the town, in 1934 in half acre land.

According to the information obtained from Bishoftu town manueipality. The town of Bishoftu is located 1920m above sea level and is surrounded by mountains, hills with diversified flora and rivers. It is also an industrial zone. It also has different lakes such as: Bishoftu, Kurrufu, Babbogayya, Kilole, Calalaqa, and Arenguwade. Bushoftu is one of the biggest towns in Oromia region. According to census in 2007 it has 100,144 out of this 47.8 is male and 52.2 is female. The people are widely engaged in factory works and other trade sectors.

3.1.3.2 Odaa Nabee

The word *Odaa Nabee* has been changed over time. Originally, it means 'the angle of *Waaqa* (God)'. If the person is chosen to ask a women for marriage for his relative or for any one, 'Dubara Nabii sitti haa qabu' meaning may God give you the daughter of Nabii, who is the symbol of peace.

¹ Interview with Badhoo Raggasa September 2010 at Bishoftu town.

Oral story is useful in transferring traditional value of a society from generation to generation. Okpewho define myth as "... oral narratives which explain the essence and sequence of ritual performances, there by preserving the memory of these elements for posterity: as such myths are the second to ritual in terms of evolution" (Okpewho 1992: 45)

According to myth, Angle Nabii used to live in a place called Sossotu Warqay. It is now located at the source of Awash River. He had lived in that place before the river began to flow. He worshipped *Waaqa* (God) and gave offerings. Some people who knew him plotted to kill him and when he discovered this, he ran to the east where the Sun rises. However, the people followed him and lastly killed him in a place called Bosetti-garitti. And they buried him in mount Cuqaala. It is since then that Awash River began to flow in the direction of his blood.⁵

3.1.3.3 Hora Arsadee

We now come to Hora Arsadee, a particular lake where *Irreecha* is celebrated. According to the elders, the word Arsadee is derived from a name of a person who long ago governed the present day Bishoftu and its environs. According to the myth, the lake of Hora used to have a gate. Anyone who comes to the lake for drinking the water, for watering cattle and for washing and so on should get in and out through this gate. And also after drinking or washing, it was a must to close the gate. It should not be left open. One day according to the myth, a woman came to the lake to fetch water as usual and she heard her child screaming up the hill. She was shocked and ran away leaving the gate open. And again a man, servant of Arsadee came with his cattle to the lake and saw it open. He was shocked. Immediately, the mountain began shaking and the man and the cattle all died together.⁶

Arsadee, who was the governor of the place, went to an elderly person who was believed to have spirits and asked him about the catastrophe. The elderly man advised him to slaughter Korma (black Bull) near the lake and spills the blood in to the lake. Arsadee did

⁵ Interview with Abba Gadaa Sidaa Badhasoo September 2010 at Bishoftu.

⁶ Interview with Abba Gadaa Badho Raggasa September 2010 at Bishoftu. He told me a myth near Hora Arsadee.

this and this 'anger' stopped. From then onwards black Bulls are sacrificed on the bank lake on annual basis and the lake was called Hora Arsadee, i.e., 'Lake of Arsadee'.

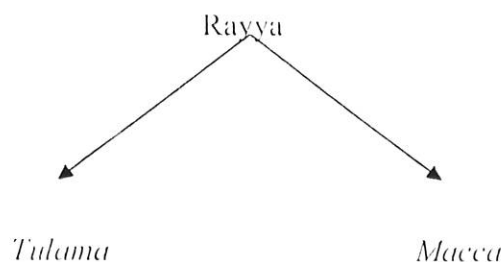
Most sacrifice are made to prevent some danger handing over people for example, on account of some sin, to appease on angry spirit or at birth of twins; or to curtail or to get rid of a misfortune, which has already fallen, as in time of plague or in acute sickness. On all such occasions spirit intervenes or may intervene, for better or more often for worse in the affairs of men and its intervention is always dangerous (Pritchard 1956:198).

The section of *Horaa Arsadee* as an important site of *Irreecha* celebration was, therefore, not accident. It is by and large associated with the above mentioned myth and long-standing tradition. Having said this much about the Eastern *showa* Oromo and their major site for *Irreecha* celebration, i.e., *Horaa Arsadee*, now let me describe the other subject of my study i.e. the *Macca* and their *Gadaa* site together with site of *Irreecha* celebration in western Oromia i.e. *Odaa Bisil*.

3.2 The Genealogy and Settlement Pattern of the *Macca*

3.2.1 The Genealogy of *Macca*

Macca elders count their genealogy back to a founding father named Rayya some Elders say that Rayya has four branches. These are known as *Macca*, *Tulama*, Wallo and Karrayu. Other elders explain that Rayya has only two branches *Macca* and *Tulama*. For this study let take the second one since the focus of my study is concerned on *Macca* and *Tulama*. Bellow is the family tree of the *Macca* Oromo.



1. *libaan*
2. *Dawwi*
3. *Ciiduru*
4. ***Dalle (Dajii)***
5. *Jidda*

Dalle

↓

Abbo

1. *Leqqa*
2. ***Sayyo***
3. *Sibbu*
4. *Tumme*
5. *Limmu*
6. *Abonno*
7. *Danno*

Sayyo

1. *Dulecha*
2. ***Abiyyu***

Abiyu

1. *Hawwu*
2. *Halleko*
3. ***Galaan (focus of the study)***

Source: Adapted from the book History of Oromo to Sixteenth Century.

Figure 3.3 The geneology pattern of *Macca* group

3.2.2 The movement and settlement pattern of *Macca* Oromo

The movement and settlement pattern of *Macca* people was not unique when compared to other groups of Oromo. It is believed that every group of Oromo has made a movement from one place to another before it had settled in present area of settlement. The term *Macca* refers to a wide and large interms of population. The present settlement distribution of this main Oromo group indeed fits very well with the meaning of the tribal name *Macca*. The present day settlement area of the *Macca* group include west *Showa*, south west *Showa*, Jimma, Ilu Abba Bora, east Wallaga, west Wallaga, Wanbara and Gojam administrative Zone.⁷

According to the *Macca* elders, the westward movement of the *Macca* Oromo was not a random movement. The movement was based on the law of the *Gadaa* system. Their movement was undertaken on the basis of rules and regulations of that gave due respect to the right of natural environment and creature living in it. The *Macca* Oromo movement that resulted in a occupying from east and west Oromia region as far as the tip of the west Wallaga.⁸

Concerning settlement of *Macca* Oromo the book titled history of Oromo to sixteenth century explains that: The main factor for the present wide settlement of *Macca* Oromo was the pre 16th century conflict between the Muslim and Christian states. That pushed it and the seat of the *Qalluu* out of northern and central region of Ethiopia and forced its confinement to the mountains region of Balee. The same pressure of Muslim-Christian conflict had similarly displaced the *Tulama* group that shared genealogical descent with the *Macca*. The main groups of *Macca* and *Tulama* have completed the work of reforming the *Gadaa* system at Madda Wallabu and by 16th century they under took a life and death struggle for regaining their old settlement area.

Concerning the socio-political organization, *Gadaa* system was play a vital role in *Macca* community. According to Bartels (1983), the socio-political organization of *Macca* group

⁷ Chindessa Tiyye.

⁸ Takkala Dhinsaa.

was the famous *Gadaa* system, by which the responsibility for the country's well being was successively entrusted to five groups of people, every groups including member of all clans. A son belonged always to his father's *Gadaa* group or *Gadaa* set. Each of these five *Gadaa* sets would rule the country in turn for a period of eight years. Each set chose its own leaders, the most important of whom were: a ritual leader whose position come near to that of a high-priest (his name was Abba *Bokkuu*-holder of the scepter) with his ritual assistants, judges and a war leader.

In *Macca* group *Bokkuu* has a multi purposes emblem which had ritual, political and perhaps also military significance. Ritually, every public prayer was concluded with display of the *Bokkuu*. The *Gadaa* leader kept it in his belt during the assembly meeting and whenever there was disorder he took it out and showed it to the assembly, up on which calm was immediately restored. This shows the awe and reverence in which the *Bokkuu* was held. It was seen not only as the symbol of political power, but also as a "sacred" object as well.

According to Mohammed (1994) Makko Billi played a dramatic role at the time when *Macca* formed their independent *Caffee*. This may explain why his name has been so deeply involved and remembered in the *Macca* Oral tradition. He continue on, *Macca* traditional historian categorically assert that Makko Billi was the great *Macca* leader who played a dynamic role at the time when the *Macca* first formed their own independent central *Caffee* at *Odaa Bisiil*.

According to *Macca* oral tradition, Makko Billi was an able leader, a great law giver and Rajii (prophet) at the same time. As an able leader he succeeded in establishing the famous *Macca Caffee* at *Odaa Bisiil*. As a law giver, he instructed the *Macca* in the 'Gadaa laws'. Some of these laws dealt with the 'art' of settling disputes over land, the importance of performing Butta (the slaughtering of bulls by the members of the new *Gadaa* set) every eight years and the observance of New Year ritual annually. As Rajii Makko Billi spoke to the *Macca* in name of *Waaqa* and instructed them follow 'the way of *Waaqa*'.

According to Mohammed (1994), with their center *Caffee* at *Odaa Bisiil* the *Macca* people lived together under a common *Bokkii* for three decades before the common *Caffee* was divided and replaced by independent *Afree* and *sadacha Caffee* in what are today Wallaga and *Kafaa* province respectively. According to every popular *Macca* tradition, a certain historical figure called Makko Bili played a decisive role at an early stage in the life of the *Macca Caffee* at *Odaa Bisiil* his name still is recalled among the *macca*.

Odaa Bisiil served for many years as a politico-religious center of the *Macca* group. As mentioned above this group divided in to two as a result of the movement. With regard to the division of the *Gadaa* center of *Macca* group in to two, in Oral traditions repeatedly mentioned the name of two individual that are said to have been responsible for the movement. The names of those individuals are *Gna'a Dorro* and *Mogorro Denbaal*. According to the *Macca* elders, *Gna'a Dorro* is a patriot, leader and brave *Macca* Oromo. There are different views concerning the division of *Macca* groups. The first view is *Macca* groups lived over crowded in a narrow area. The second view is *Macca* Oromo need to expand its boundary. The third view and supported by many elders is *Macca* Oromo needed to occupy a regions having good weather condition and comfortable for rearing cattle and so forth. In the course of their movement *Macca* Oromo manifest the tradition of respecting seniority in the settlement. According to the elders, the approval of the settlement was celebrated with the slaughter of the bull.⁹

The *Macca* Oromo movement was undertaken not only by a military power. The *Gadaa* system provides the necessity of undertaking one military expedition by every *Gadaa* class during its eight-year duration of leaderships. Legitimate military expedition is undertaken once in every eight years. Therefore, most of the movements were conducted peacefully.

At this point it should be noted that, when I say the movement of the *Macca* was peaceful. It should not be considered as a movement that was totally free of conflict in different places. For instance, when *Macca* Oromo settled in the present day Wallaga

⁹ Inreivew with Giddo Dorii October 2010 at Ijajji town.

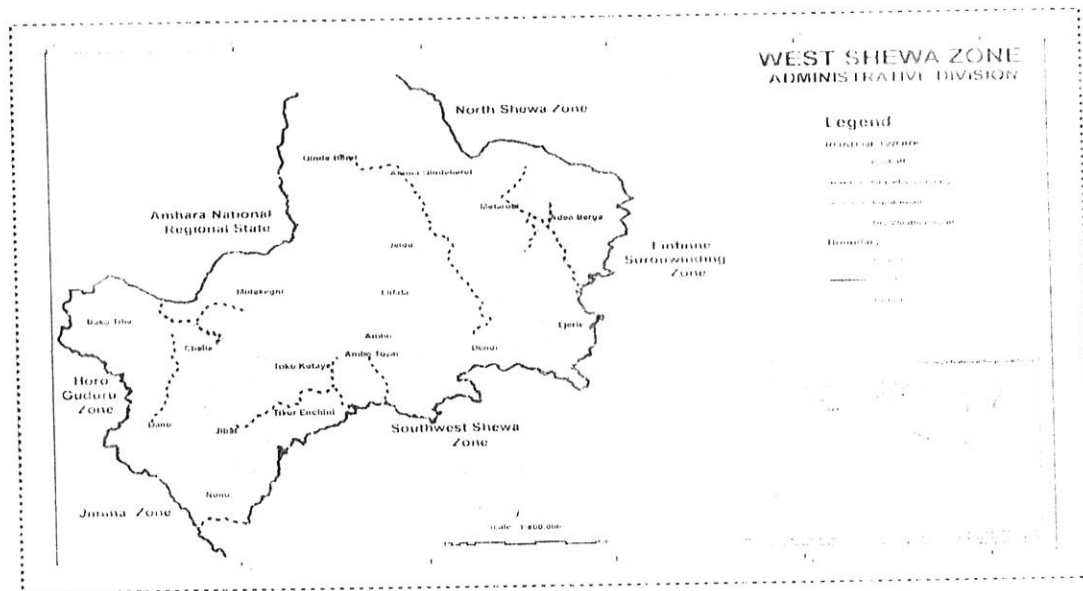
region there were conflict with the Bussase in the former kingdom of *Kafaa* and from the south, and the Ganqo and Ma'o people that occupied the northern part of the region.

Now let me turn my attention to the movement and settlement of south and southwest direction. As I have tried to mention above, in *Macca* genealogy, the eldest group was Libaan, when *Macca* group moved to *Odaa Bisiil* taking the south western and western directions. In the course of west ward movement, the group of Libaan remained in western and south western *Showa* region, i.e., the present day *Waliso, Hammaya, Wancii, Bokkuu C'ittu, Bokkuu Tule, Miggira, Kollu, and Ifata*. According to the elders during the *Macca* Oromo movement toward the new direction, they respected the question of seniority among all groups in their social, cultural and political activities. In addition the children of *Macca* used to have received their governing rules and regulations from the center at *Odaa Bisiil*.

The other genealogy of *Macca* took the southern bank of Abbay river is Jawwi and its family. According to some literary materials Jawwi and his family crossed Abbay, settled around Bure and in areas beyond it as far as *Metekel, Wambara*, up to the boundary of Sudan. Of these branches of *Macca* Oromo, the current study focuses on western *Showa*. Therefore, I restrict my discussion to this particular group of *Macca* Oromo and description of their *Gadaa* site *Odaa Bisiil* and attendant *Irreecha* celebration.

3.2.2.1 West Showa

West *Showa* zone is located in the western Oromia region. It is bounded by East *Wellaga* in the west, *Addis Ababa* in the east, *Jimma* in the south and *Gojam* in the north. West *Showa* is located relatively in central Oromia region. The capital city of this zone is Ambo. This town is 110 km far from *Addis Ababa*. West *Showa* includes 22 Weredas. In terms of weather condition, the zone encompasses *Dega, Qolla* and *weinadega*. Most of the *weredas* in this zone are *Dega* and *weyina dega*.



The overwhelming majorities of the populations in this zone (west *Showa*) are engaged in farming and trade. The rural people mainly are farmers and people in urban areas tend to be merchants. Maize, sorghum, wheat, Teff and so on are some of the cereals that are produced in west *Showa* zone. Fruits and pulses are also immensely produced in the area. The urban people are public servant and traders.

The topography includes plains, valleys and mountains areas. There are also different types of soils such as black soil, loam soil, and clay soil. There is also special kind of stone used to construct houses called Ambo stone (calcium carbonate).

Regarding population composition, west *Showa* zone is largely populated by *Macca* Oromos. As mentioned above, the word *Macca* means 'a vast society or people'. According to elders, *Macca* and *Tulama* Oromos had been together for a long time and later due to various reasons, the *Macca* Oromos occupied the west Oromia and *Tulama* Oromos occupied the east Oromia region. The *Macca* Oromo were divided in to different leader (sub-ethnic heads). For instance, the *Macca* Oromos in Ambo area are known as children of Kuttaye, the *Macca* Oromos in Ijajji are children of Iluu. This zone was formerly known as 'Jibaat and *Macca* awuraja' Jibat means 'big clan' settled in *Macca* Oromo area. The west *Showa* zone has many tourist attractions such as the natural bridge

in Ambo town, the Guder water fall in Guder town and Menilik II palace in Addis Alem town.

Concerning religions, Christianity, Islam and traditional belief system are available in the west *Showa* zone. According to the culture and tourism office of the zone Orthodox Christianity often live in towns and Protestants live in rural area. Concerning the traditional belief system the *Macca* group of west *Showa* has its own concept. According to Mohammed (1994) there are two main concepts in the *Macca* interpretation of human. One is *Waaqa* and the other *ayyana*. The former means sky and/or god. The second has rather the meaning of spirit or special divinity. The essence of their representative's meanings and relationship between them cannot be defined as any simple or definite way. *Waaqa* is the most comprehensive of the two terms. It includes *ayyana*.

3.2.2.1.1 *Ijajji*

Ijajji is located in western *Showa* in Oromia region. The whether condition is Dega and weinadega. According to the information obtained from the Municipality of the town, *Ijajji* was established in 1947 and its name is believed to have come from the word *Ijajji* means 'stop'. According to the oral tradition, the people of the area used to rob the different merchants coming from *Showa* region by saying 'ijajji' means 'stop'. The main economic sector of the area is farming and trade.¹⁰

Ijajji is the capital of Ilu Galaan district. The district is bounded by *Bako Tibbe* in the west, *Cheliyaa* in the east, *Midaa Qegnii* in the north and *Danno* in the south. *Ijajji* is 215 km far from *Addis Ababa*. The landscape is mountains and plains. The town dwellers are usually traders and the cash crop. *Chat* is widely produced; most of the inhabitants of the town are *Muslims*. There are also very few Christians in this town.

3.2.2.1.2 *Odaa Bisiil*

Odaa Bisiil is the *Gadaa* site of *Macca* Oromo. They established their own *Caffee* after separation from the *Tulama* group. According to Mohammed (1994); the new center called *Odaa Bisiil* (or *Tutte Bisiil*) was located between the Gedo, Billo and Gibee Rivers. This location was in an ideal environment.

¹⁰ Interview with Chimdessa Tiyye October 2010 at *Ijajji* town.

endowed with abundant pasturage and adequate water from numerous rivers. In addition, to its fertility, good weather and abundant rainfall. *Odaa Bisiil* was located in strategic position it was surrounded by a number of hills and enveloped in a deep forest. Both of which serve as buffers against sudden enemy attack.

As Mohammed mentioned above, *Odaa Bisiil* is located in western *Showa* in district of Ilu Galaan town of Ijaji. The *Macca* Oromos have celebrated major Religious and social events in this place for a long time. According to Bartels (1983) the *Macca* group recognized their own concept of *Waaqa*; their feeling of dependence on him, their idea about peace among people being a condition for *Waaqa*s blessing.

3.2.2.1.3 *Horaa Bisiil*

Horaa Bisiil served as a place of *Irreecha* celebration for many years by *Macca* group. Around *Horaa Bisiil* there are about six *Horaas* or water sources that were used by local people for rendering services. But *Horaa Bisiil* is selected by *Bisiil Osolee*. According to the elders, the *Macca* group settled in the region establishing its *Gadaa* center at *Odaa Bisiil* has persisted in the area for long years. In addition, the *Macca* group has organized itself in to two confederacies and moved and settled in different other areas. Pre and post separation of *Macca* group, they prayed to their God at *Horaa Bisiil*. The two *Macca* confederacies are known by the name of *Afree* (four) and *Saddacha* (three). As the *Macca* elders mentioned during the movement the *Saddacha Macca* moved to south and southeastern direction. Whereas, *Afree* move to south and south western and occupied the present region of Ilu Abba Bora, Wallaga, Wanbara and Gojjam. At present *Horaa Bisiil* serves as a ritual site for all *Macca* group. It is importance of this site a prime ritual, i.e., *Irreecha* celebration site and the slight difference it has with *Irreecha* celebration at *Horaa Arsadee* that initiated this study. Thus, the next chapter deals with the details of *Irreecha* celebration. ¹¹

¹¹ Takkala Dhinsa

Chapter Four

Documentation of *Irreecha* Ritual

4.1 General Overview of *Irreecha* Celebration among the Oromo.

Among the Oromo ethnic group, *Irreecha* is celebrated in five major different Oromo Horaas found in different parts of Oromia region. These are *Horaa Arsadee*, celebrated by *Tulama* Oromo particularly Eastern Oromia (focus of the study), *Horaa Bisiil*, celebrated by *Machaa* Oromo particularly western Oromo (focus of the study), *Horaa Bultum* celebrated by *Barentu Arfan Qal'oo Harar* Oromo, *Horaa Garresa* celebrated by *Borana* Oromos and *Horaa Robaa* by *Balee* Oromo. Before discussing the process of the ceremony in both cases first let me touch upon the origin of *Irreecha*.

The origin of *Irreecha* has its own historical background. The Oromo fear and respect their *Waaqa* (Creator of every creature). They praise *Waaqa* in happy times and implore in pain times. One of the ceremonies through which they do all these is *Irreecha* ceremony. *Irreecha* is an occasion that the Oromo pray, praise and implore their *Waaqa* (creator). As I mention in chapter two page 20, there is lack of written document to tell the exact time when *Irreecha* started. However, Oromo had their own site of justice which is also called as *Gadaa* site. And they had a site for praying called *Horaa* site. The main reason for the origin of *Irreecha* might be fear of *Waaqa* or God. When they encounter good fortunes, they make *Irreecha* in spring season over year and in autumn season they celebrate *Irreecha* on mountains. They implore *Waaqa* for good things in the ceremony of *Irreecha*. As I have mentioned in chapter three (the story of *Horaa Arsadee* page 35-36) this can be a good example of God-fearing as the origin of *Irreecha*. For instance, at *Horaa Arsadee* people bring fresh flowers, grass and slaughter bull to beg *Waaqa* so that the bad things will not happen.

Irreecha has many phases. It is not a ceremony only celebrated for a day. For its celebration, three phases could be identified. These are: the eve of the ceremony (preparatory phase); the actual day of the ceremony (Performance phase), and post-performance phase. Different preparations are made before the ceremony. Those people who made wove before (a year before) prepare their gifts and others prepare the sacrifices

they bring to the ceremony. On the main day, people from different section of the society celebrate *Irreecha* holding fresh Grass and flower along a river bank or a lake. The period after the celebration of *Irreecha* is a joyful one for it symbolizes a period of fresh harvest when the riped crops such as corn are harvested. Having said this much about the phase of *Irreecha*, now let me touch upon the general definition of *Irreecha* given by different Abba *Gadaas* who came from different sections of Oromia to celebrate *Irreecha* ceremony at Hora Arsadee in September 2010.

Some Elders and fathers relate *Irreecha* with strength, praying, unity, spirituality and so on. It symbolizes praying, according to one of my informants Abba *Gadaa* Sidaa Badhasoo. He argued that, “*Irreecha* is celebrated to thank *Waaqa* (God) who has transferred as from summer (rain season) to spring (sun and hope).” He continues on saying that during spring season, the landscape is covered by *Kelloo* (daisy), a special flower used during this ceremony; the sky is clean so that the prayers reach *Waaqa* (God) easily. According to him, any person who is participating in this ceremony prays for peace, prosperity, love for him/her self and also for all people of the country.¹²

The other informant, Abba *Gadaa* Takala Desisa relates *Irreecha* with unity and spirituality. As he puts all Oromos meet in this ceremony and pray to *Waaqa* together. This reveals or shows strength, unity and spirituality of the practice. He concludes that *Irreecha* ceremony strengthens the unity of the Oromo people.¹³

The other informant Milkessa, relate *Irreecha* with its spiritual significance. According to him, the participants have different sacrifices in their hands and thank *Waaqa* for He has given them every thing for their lives. Also people bring different sacrifices to show their obedience for their creator (*Waaqa*).¹⁴

¹² Interview with Abba *Gadaa* Sidaa Badhasoo September 2010 at Hora Arsadee in the main day of the ceremony.

¹³ Interview with Takkala Desisa September 2010 at Bishoftu town

¹⁴ Interview with milkessaa September at Bishoftu.

Mekuria Badhane supports Sidaa Badhaso's opinion and understood *Irreecha* as spiritual ceremony. He observes that "Oromo came to the Horaa (lake) to praise God holding fresh grass called coqorsa (indicator of fertility) or to thank *Waaqa*".¹⁵

Bekele Sarbessa on his part argues that "*Irreecha* is celebrated without any religious difference where people with different religious background come to the Horaa (lake) or river and thank *Waaqa* (God). In general, though it is celebrated in different times in different places, *Irreecha* is more of ritual and cultural where the people pray and thank their God (*Waaqa*)."¹⁶

Based on the above ideas given by the elders, *Irreecha* is a ritual ceremony in which Oromo people thank, pray and implore *Waaqa*. In addition, in this ceremony, all people with regardless of age, sex and status pray by holding fresh grass called coqorsa and *kelloo* (daisy). They put grass, flower or leaf at specific area in order to elevate the glory of God. This ritual ceremony has its own significance in strengthening the unity of Oromo community. Generally speaking, *Irreecha* is a thanksgiving ceremony dedicated to *Waaqa*.

4.2 Celebration of *Irreecha* among Eastern Showa Oromo: The case of Horaa Arsadee

In this section, the basic features of the *Irreecha* ceremony celebrated among the Eastern Showa Oromo will be discussed. But, before describing about the participants of the ceremony, first let me discuss about when, where and how *Irreecha* ceremony is celebrated among Eastern Showa. In the case of Tulama Oromo, *Irreecha* is celebrated at Horaa Arsadee (Lake Arsadee). This ritual ceremony is celebrated in the mid of September. According to my informant, Abba Gadaa Agaa Xanxano, during this time mountains and meadows are covered by flowers and crops whose color are attractive and plentiful to the farmers and pastoralists herald the month of hope and prosperity. It is thanksgiving month for their *Waaqa*.¹⁷

¹⁵ Interview with Makurai Badhane September 2010 at Horaa Arsadee in the main day of the ceremony.

¹⁶ Interview with Bekele Sarbessa September 2010 at Horaa Arsadee on the main day of the ceremony.

¹⁷ Interview with Abba Gadaa Agaa Xaanxano September 2010 at Bishoftu.

The other *Abbaa Gadaa* Badhoo Raggasa from *Odaa Nabee* partially supported the above idea. He says “*Irreecha* at Hooraa Arsadee takes place immediately after the end of Mesqel festival of Christian believers, who celebrate the founding of the true cross on which Jesus Christ was said to have been crucified, i.e., when the darkness of rainy season with its foggy days passes and leaves place for bright season. Moreover, it is celebrated at the river bank to thank God that has taken the dark rainy days and brought bright days. *Irreecha* celebration is often considered as the beginning of new years, time of harvest and so on.”¹⁸

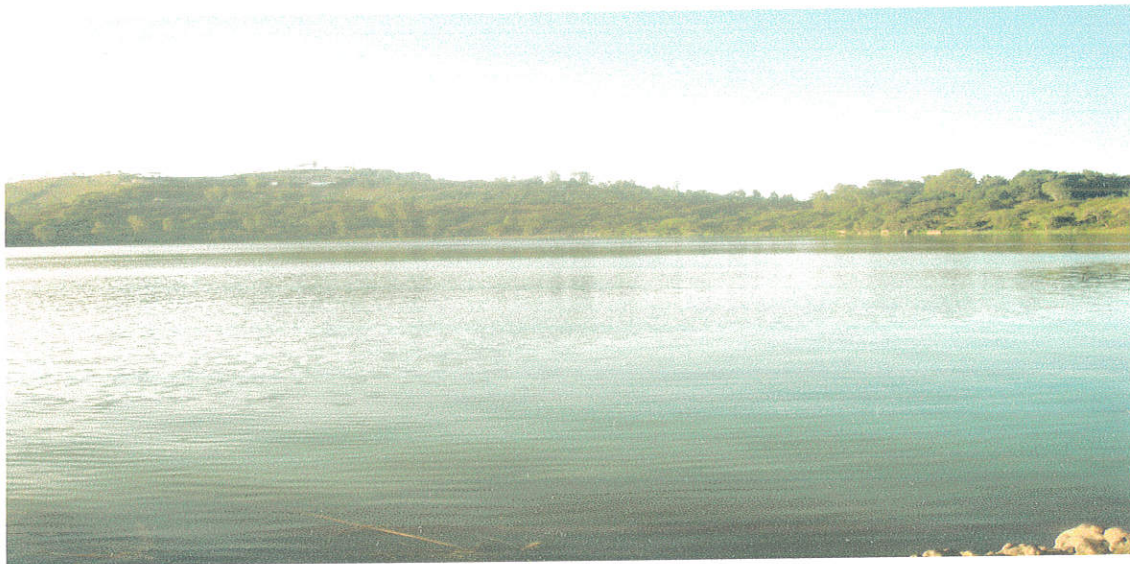


Figure 4. 1. View of Hooraa Arsadee

Information obtained from a brochure prepared by Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau regarding *Irreecha* 2010 ceremony indicates that there are two types of *Irreecha*: mountain *Irreecha* (*Irreecha Tullu*) that is performed at the top of the mountains and *Irreecha Malka* (*Irreecha* performed along the river bank). The celebration of *Irreecha Tullu* (mountain *Irreecha*) is held at the beginning of the spring season usually a sunny season in this area, when both men and cattle suffer from drought (shortage of water and grass). So, it is a time when Oromo living in the vicinity are gathered to pray and to their *Waaqa* (creator) to give them rain.

¹⁸ Badhoo Raggasa

4.2.1 *Irreecha* on Tullu Yerer

Tullu Yerer (mount Yerer) is located to the north East of Bishoftu town. This mountain is the highest compared to other mountains in the area. *Tulama* Oromo celebrate *Irreecha* on top of this mountain mainly to ask Waqaa/God to bring the rain and end a prolonged dry season. According to my informant, Sidaa Badhasoo, the objective of celebrating *Irreecha* on the top of a mountain is to pray and implore to *Waaqa* to end a dry season.

According to *Tulama* Elders the *Irreecha* celebration on mount Yerer is performed at the beginning of the spring season usually in the month of March. For *Tulama* Oromo performing *Irreecha* on Tullu Yerer has its own reason: when both men and cattle suffer from drought (shortage of water and grass). When rain is not coming on the right time, the *Tulama* Oromo go up to a mountain and celebrate *Irreecha* imploring creator to send rain and take the bad days away. This is done in both *Irreecha* site.

Now let us draw our attention to the way *Irreecha* actually is celebrated including the participants of the ceremony. In the case of *Horaa Arsadee*, on the day of celebration, the participants of the ceremony come to the celebration site holding coqorsa (grass) and *Kelloo* (daisy). *Irreecha* and Coqorsa are inseparable. The Elders (Abba *Gadaa*) agree about this matter. In case of *Horaa Arsadee* holding coqorsa has its own meaning. The Abba *Gadaa* of *Odaa Nabee* Legesa Nagawo says coqorsa is a special or a unique kind of grass. It is the best of all grasses. It is thick. It grows side ward. It is drought resistant or out lives even a drought season. Its green color symbolizes reproduction and fertility.¹⁹

Dirribi demuse on his part argues that people hold this grass to pray to *Waaqa* (God) as Christians have Bible and Moslems hold Quran to pray to God.²⁰ In general, elders agree that coqorsa is a special grass with examples of healthy, unity and strength.

Besides Coqorsa, the participants of *Horaa Arsadee Irreecha* ceremony hold *kelloo* (daisy). Daisy (*kelloo*) is also common in *Irreecha* ceremony. According to Bekele Sarbessa the Oromo believe that '*kelloo*' shows the coming of new year. They hold

¹⁹ Interview with Legese Nagawoo September 2010 at Bishoftu town in the main day of the ceremony.

²⁰ Dirribi Demuse.

'kelloo' with coqorsa and go to the ceremony for they show the beginning of light, hope and the crop is ready.²¹ This is common in both *Odaa Nabee* and *Odaa Bisiil*.



Figure 4. 2 Abba Gadaas on the way to participate in the ceremony holding Coqorsa (grass) and Kelloo (daisy).

The other point in the case of *Horaa Arsadee* is that Elders come to the celebration site wearing traditional clothes of their own culture. They put a small pieces of cape made of red and black wore for different example. This originated from *Borana Oromo*. They believe that the forehead is the part of body that distinguishes one person from the other. So it has to have something to put on it. Elders bless people saying *Simbo Simbira, Adda fi Addunyaa siif haa kennu*, meaning “have a good looking front as a bird and get acceptance, respect or prestige”.²² This indicates honor, respect that is why they put thin scarf on their forehead.

They also wear *Gaabi* (home made cotton cloth) and short trousers with special embroydery decoration at its edge. Elders also have a stick called *Bokkuu*, which shows

²¹ Bekele Sarbessa.

²² Abba Gadaa Takala Dhinsa.

authority (only rulers and those who have ruled have it). They also pierce their left ears and have an ear ring in it.



Figure 4. 3 An elder participant pierced his left ears and have an earring in it.

According to my informant, Giddo Dorii, women on their part wear special kind of dress with a decoration at the edge of it. They also wear special necklace called *caaccuu*, which is made of beads. Some of them hold a thin wooden stick called *ulumayi*. Besides, there is a special stick called *Siiqqee* held by women for special puposes. Wearing beads is common among women with the spirit of *Qalluu*. The colors of the beads are various; black, white, and red. The red is an example of prosperity, the black one symbolizes the creator and the white shows honor.²³ These symbols are common in both places (*Horaa Arsadee* and *Horaa Bisill*)

²³ Interview with Giddoo Dorii October 2010 at Ijajji town.



Figure 4. 4. *Women on their way to Irreecha holding siiqqee stick and wearing neck laces called caaccuu (Huraa Arsadee).*

Moreover, as I have tried to mention above, in the case of *Huraa Arsadee* all the participant of the ceremony ought to be involved in the activities like praying and thanks giving to their *Waaqa*. To sum up, each and every participant of the ceremony come to the lake and immerse a grass into water then touch their faces and say it to creator *yaa Waaqa nu ebbisi; nagadhaan wagga dhufuf nu ga'ii*, meaning “Oh God bless us! May you help us reach the next celebration in good health! In this way they express good wishes and go back home”.

Before concluding celebration of *Irreecha* at *Huraa Arsadee* let us touch upon the sacrifices. Here at *Huraa Arsadee*, different sacrifices are presented near the lake or *Huraa Arsadee*. This sacrifice has its own meaning or has symbolic meaning for the community. The aim and symbolic meaning of sacrifice will be discussed bellow.

4.2.2 Sacrifice and its meaning in the case of *Horaa Arsadee*

Sacrifice is offering to God or a god especially of an animal by killing it in a ceremony. Sacrifice has a special place in many African cultures and religions. Pritchard asserts the following point concerning sacrifice in his book entitled "Religion of Nuer people":

The sacrifices are performed in situation of danger arising from the invitation of spirit in human affairs, often thought of as being brought about by some fault. In such sacrifices, ideas of propitiation and expiation are prominent. They centre, however, in the general idea of substitution of life of ox for life of man. (Pritchard, 1956:272).

This study focuses on *Horaa Arsadee* and *Horaa Bisiil*. As mention in chapter three, sacrifice grows from its own legend page 35 and 44 respectively. There are differences concerning sacrifice in both cases. In the case of *Horaa Arsadee* black Oxen are slaughtered. Oxen to be sacrificed should not plough or have ploughed. An Ox should plough for it could be interpreted as wrong doing against God. Other sacrifices include food items such as: Dabbo (bread), Qoori (butter spread burley grain), Itittu (yogurt), Faffato (minced food) and Butter. Moreover, there is also a tradition of giving traditional drinks, such as: Daadhi (honey mead), Araqee (local beverage alcohol) and Farso (local Beer). Perfumes are also sacrifices presented for *Waaqa* at this ceremony.²¹

²¹Interview with Adde Dirribe Tullu September 2010 in Bishoftu town.



Figure 4.5 the Elder participant pouring the honey mead in the lake as sacrifice.

The message is that giving what they have for God and establishing good relations with *Waaqa* (God). While discussing about sacrifice, I asked my informant the symbolic meaning of sacrifice and its use. According to my informant, Dorsis Dhuguma, the primary purpose of sacrifice and its main function is to confirm, to establish, or to add strength to, a change in social status maiden with wife, boy with man, living man with spirit or a new relationship between social groups. He adds that *Irreecha* ritual ceremony is incomplete or ineffective without sacrifices.²⁵ In relation to this, it would be plausible to quote Pritchard who wrote the following:

We are often told in accounts of African people that their sacrifices are concerned with weather, rain, fertility of the soil, seed time, fructification, harvest, and fishing and hunting (Pritchard 1956:199)

²⁵ Interview with Dorsis Dhuguma September 2010 at Bishoftu town. He was from Gidda kiramu to celebrate *Irreecha*.

The other informant Lagasa Diksisa explains sacrifice by relating it with unity. According to him, people eat these sacrifices together; this has its own significance in unifying the people live in different places, in strengthening unity and relationship.²⁶ We see the ideas of scholars on importance of sacrifice in religious ritual Brown (1952). According to him, sacrifice play pivotal role in strengthening unity in maintaining the social cohesion, and equilibrium of a certain community.

Now the first question to be asked is to whom sacrifices are made. In the case of *Horaa Arsadee* any individual can sacrifice on some occasions to a spirit of *Ayyana Abba* meaning spirit of father, when it is thought to have brought about sickness in a man or if it is feared that it may do so. According to my informant Laggasa Diksisa these spirits may be regarded as representations of *Waaqa* (God).

After sacrifices are presented for *Waaqa* the participant of the ceremony sit under the *Odaa* to drink coffee and eat other sacrifices prepared by *Qallitti*.



Figure 4.6 Women making Coffee under the Odaa tree.

²⁶ Interview with Laggasa Diksisa September 2010 in Bishoftu town

To sum up, as I have tried to mention above, in the case of *Horaa Arsadee* all participant of the ceremony first, come to the celebration site holding coqorsa and *kelloo*. Then immerse the fresh grass and daisy in the water and sprinkle to their face. After that, pry to *Waaqa* and sit under Odaa tree eats for sacrifices presented by Qallitti. Finally take bless from Abba Gaddas and go back to home. Now let me turn my attention to the other focus of the study i.e. *Horaa Bisiil*

4.3 *Irreecha* Ceremony among West *Showa* Oromo: The case of *Horaa Bisiil*

Before describing the participant of *Irreecha* ceremony first let me discuss about when, where and how *Irreecha* ceremony is celebrated the case of *Horaa Bisiil*. According to My informant Abba *Gadaa* Takala Dhinsa, *Irreecha Malka* (*Irreecha* along the river bank) is takes place immediately after the end of rainy season. It is celebrated in Birra meaning when the darkness of rainy season with its foggy days passes and leaves place for bright season. Such ritual ceremony is accomplished not only the bank of the river, but also around the lakes and its vicinities.²⁷

In the case of *Maacca* Oromo, *Irreecha* is celebrated in Hora Bisiil at the end of October. According to my informant, Abba *Gadaa* Takala Dhinsa, this is because: the crop is yet in process in September. They consider it as hopeless in this stage. As raaba fi Ijolle hin abdatanii meaning "leaf and child could be changed in sudden". But in October the crop will be bloomed and ready for food. According to my informant Abba *Gadaa* Takala Dhinsa this time is the time when relatives, families and clans cut apart by rivers and flood are able to meet.²⁸

The main objective of the celebration takes place in river and on mountain is to thank, pray, implore and beg *Waaqa* (God). This is common for many communities of the world for instance Shona of Rhodesia prays to God like this:

"Great Spirit, piling up the rocks like mountains, sewing the sky like cloth, calling forth the branching trees, you bring out the shoots so that they stand erect. You fill the earth

²⁷ Takkala Dhinsa

²⁸ Takkala Dhinsa.

with mankind, the dust rises on high. O lord, wonderful one, you live in the midst of the sheltering rocks, you give rain to men. You are on high with the spirit of the great. You raise the grass-covered hills above the earth and you create the rivers. Gracious one” (Parrinder 1969:67).

4.3.1 *Irreecha* on Tullu Nitii

As I have tried to mention above, when rain is not coming on the right time, the people go up to a mountain and celebrate *Irreecha* imploring creator to send rain. In the case of *Horaa Bisiil*, mount Tullu Nitii is selected for this celebration. This mountain is found in Ilu Gelan district five kilometer far from Ijajjii town. It is believed that since mountain is higher that the creator would hear prayers fast.

The abba *Gadaa* of Odaaa Bisiil Takkala Dhinsa argues that when any problem encounters the community of *Macca* Oromo goes to Tullu Nitii and cry to *Waaqa*. According to him after the *Macca* Oromo pray to *Waaqa* on Tullu Nitii mean mount Nitii every thing becomes to its good manner. He continue pray to *Waaqa* on mountain does not mean that worship in mountain.²⁹

Praying on mountain is practice in many African countries for instance sacrifices are presented for creator when the rain is not come at the right time this is true for Gikuyu community. “You who make mountains tremble and river flood: we offer you this sacrifice so that you may bring us rain. People and children are crying: sheep, goats and cattle are crying. We beseech you to accept this sacrifice and bring us prosperity”

(Parrinder 1969:67-68)

Now let me touch upon the participant of the ceremony. In the case of *Horaa Bisiil* the participant of the ceremony come to the place of celebration holding *Coqorsa* and *Kelloo* like *Horaa Arsadee*. According to my informant holding *Coqorsa* has its own meaning. The Abba *Gadaa* of *Odaa Bisiil* says that this grass is given from *Waaqa* to the people.

²⁹ Takkala Dhinsa.

The cattle got fatter if they eat this grass, a people who has this grass during *Irreecha* ceremony also become rich.³⁰

First the participant gathered under the Odaa tree. Under this tree the elders bless the participant of the ceremony. According to my informant for the community of *Macca* Oromo, Odaa has its own symbolic meaning. As he says Odaa and *Irreecha* are inseparable. Odaa is believed among *Macca* Oromo people to be a place of reconciliation, power transfer, jury (trial). Similarly, The Odaa tree is a place where thieves are cursed and believed to vanish then after.



Figure4.7 Participants of the ceremony under the shade of Odaa tree.

After Abba *Gadaas* and elders gather in the Odaa bless the young, Children and go to a house called 'Galma' (ritual house) chatting 'Mareo' 'Mareo' and take women back to the Odaa tree and bless them. In the case of *Hora* *Bisiil* the first to bless the people are *Iluu* and their children. And lastly the *Galaan* bless. Now the name of the district is known in *Iluu Galaan*, means *Iluu* is the son of *Galaan*. In both cases children bless first.

³⁰ Takkala Dhinsa.

Then all the participant of the ceremony goes to the *Horaa Bisil* singing different songs. Again Abba *Gadaas* bless the participant when they arrive near Hora Bisil. In addition Abba *Gadaas* sprinkle water to the participant by using fresh grass, daisy, and Hywhisk. And pray their *Waaqa* near this Horaa or lake. According to my informant Takala Dhinsaa congregates do not prostrate Horaa or lake or water. Because, water by itself is the creature of *Waaqa* so they pray Him through his creature i.e., water.³¹ However, some writers conclude that Oromo worship Hora or Water; for instance, Aleqaa Tayyee claims that:

...በገላኔ፡ ወንዙ፡ መጥተው፡ ሆር፡ ወላቦ፡ በሚባል፡ አገር፡ ገቡ። ወላቦ፡ ምናተኛ፡ በሞና፡ የሚያርግትና፡ የሚሻገራት፡ ትንሿ፡ ከሬ፡ ባህር፡ አላት። ኦሮሞዎች፡ አባታችንና፡ ፍጥረታችን፡ ከዚህ፡ ወላቦ፡ ይለሉ። ስለዚህም፡ ኡማን፡ ወላቦ፡ ባቱ፡ ይለሉ። ይህም፡ ከወላቦ፡ ወሃ፡ ወይም፡ ባህር፡ ፍጥረት፡ ወላቦ፡ ማለት፡ ነው። ስለዚህ፡ [ኦሮሞች]፡ ለወሃ፡ ይሰግዳሉ። ...ኦሮሞ፡ ሁሉ፡ ከዚያ፡ ለወሃዶቹ፡ ይሰግዳሉ።

English version

... they come along the Galane [sic] river and entered a region called Horwilabo. Hor walabo has a small lake which a swimmer [can] swim through and across. "our ancestry and our creation sprang from here," say the [Oromo]. Therefore, they say "Umaan walabo bate" this means creation originated at the walabo water or lake. Therefore the [Oromo] worship water. All the [Oromo] worship the water there.

(Aleqaa Tayyee Gebre Mariam 1987:62)

The above statement made by Aleqaa Tayyee Gebre Mariam consists of three main defects or error. The first is the terminology that he used to describe the people of Oromo. Since numerous scholars have said a lot of this (derogatory term to refer the people) let me pass to the second main problem of the statement. The second is that he misinterpreted the sentence ኡማን ወላቦ ባቱ። /umaan walaabu bate/ as 'a creature came (originated) from Walabu'. However, he seems to have been unaware that the word ኡማን /Umaan/ means 'the one who create' i.e. God. ኡማ /Umaa/ means 'creator' not 'creature'. Finally, the writer went as far as concluding that Oromos prostrate for a created thing i.e., water which led him to a big mistake.

³¹ Takala Dhinsa.

The Oromo celebrate a ceremony of *Irreecha* near to water (a sign of freshness) between the month of September-October. They pray and prostrate for the one who created that water and every creature. They implore and praise only *Waaqa* (the greatest *Waaqa*) who created the water not they worship water which is created by *Waaqa*.

After they come back different activities takes place under this Odaa. Some of the activities are: Children present a show, they present a poem in the Odaa tree. The children are given priority here. There is a prayer under the tree for people with different problems. There is one example in the case of *Horaa Bisil* that a woman brought a pregnant Cow and told the elders that the cow couldn't give a birth though the time of birth had passed and requested for prayer. The elders prayed to *Waaqa* to let the Cow give birth and gently hit with fresh grass. After some time the Cow gave birth under this tree.

After I have seen the Cow give a birth under this Odaa tree I asked for elders is *Irreecha* ritual or cultural ceremony? Elders have different views on the *Irreecha* is ritual or cultural ceremony. The Abba *Gadaa* of *Odaa Bisil* Kumala Dandana argues that *Irreecha* is cultural for many people with diversified religious background attend it.³² The other Abba *Gadaa* from *Odaa Bisil* Takala Dhinsa insists it is a ritual for prayers, sacrifices and other ritual things are seen.

The other Abba *Gadaa* argues that *Irreecha* is both ritual and cultural ceremony. For instance Abba *Gadaa* Badhoo Raggasa puts what people doing here especially sacrifices, praying, blessing, cursing and so forth are indicators of rituality. Similarly, other movement such as: songs, poem, dance, Horse riders, way of transferring authority and so forth are reveal culturally.³³ Generally speaking I interviewed around eleven Abba *Gadaas* concerning *Irreecha* is ritual or cultural festival; most of them agreed up on *Irreecha* is both cultural and ritual ceremony. Before concluding this issue let me touch up on scholars view concerning culture, ritual and ritual object like tree.

³² Interview with Kumala Dandana October 2010 in ijajji town. He is the former Abba Gadda of Odaa Bisil.

³³ Abba Gadaa Badhoo Raggasa.

Here is some ideas give by scholars about trees, ritual and culture: "The cult of big tree survives even today especially in woodless regions. It is bound with cults of the dead, sacred fire and of course fertility. There were and are under the trees traditional ceremonies, trials, needing protections extra ordinary forces". (Lvova 1994:832)

Parrinder (1969) on his part asserts ritual as follow: "ritual may be performed on specific occasions, or at the discretion of individuals or communities. It may be performed by a single individual, by a group, or by the entire community: in arbitrary places, or in places especially reserved for it: either in public, in private, or before specific people. A ritual may be restricted to a certain subset of the community, and may enable or underscore the passage between religious or social states."

On the other hand Assimeng (1989). Discusses about the features of ritual. According to him the features involved special gestures and words, recitation of fixed texts, performance of special worship, sacraments, music, song, dances processions, manipulation of certain objects, use of special dresses, and consumption of special food and drink. According to him ritual includes animal sacrifices and the like.

Tylor (1865). Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving

The above views of tree, ritual and culture given by different elite and things happened in *Irreecha* ceremony are almost supporting each other. For instance ritual leader of *Irreecha* says we pray to *Wuaqa* under this tree, it is honored and respected tree. The Lvova's concept mentioned above is also support this opinion. In addition, some Elders for instance Badhooo Raggasa says that this ceremony accompanied by different activities or features like dance, music and so forth. So the above idea mentioned by Assimeng (1989) is similar with elder view. Regarding culture elders opinion partially agree with Tylo's definition of culture Therefore, I believe that *Irreecha* is ritual and cultural ceremony.

Before the participants of the ceremony leave the Odaa tree I asked for my informant Takkala Dhinsa, why Odaa is preferable. According to him Odaa is the most honored tree among Oromo of *Macca* people. It is an example of good health, wealth, good deeds. The shadow of Odaa tree is higher than any other tree. It is the biggest tree. He adds, It is an example of strength, prosper and peace. The Odaa tree is believed to be fertile forever.³⁴

The other Abba *Gadaa* Badhoo Raggasa said the Odaa tree produces a drop of water even during dry time for it is a sign of riches and fertility. The strength connection between Odaa and *Irreecha* can see in its name itself. We can say *Odaa Nabee*, *Odaa Bisiil*, Odaa Bultum, Odaa Garreessa and Odaa Robaa. This show how important Odaa tree is.³⁵ One of my informant Abba *Gadaa* Bulbula Dadhii say the vines of Odaa tree are numerous and this is an example of the high number of Oromo people, origin of Oromo is also here and so forth.³⁶ Like *Horaa Arsadee Irreecha* celebration, in the case of *Horaa Bisiil* different sacrifices are presented in the ceremony and have its own meaning.

4.3.2 Sacrifice and its meaning in the case *Horaa Bisiil*

“Sacrifice may be a simple presentation of nuts, such as Kola, placed in front of a small shrine or on an alter, or a libation of water or alcohol poured out on the ground. It may be done daily, or at fixed intervals or occasionally” (Parrinder 1969:72)

Unlike *Horaa Arsadee* no color preferences in the case of *Horaa Bisiil*. But, like *Horaa Arsadee* Oxen to be sacrificed should not plough or have ploughed. Other sacrifices like foods such as: Dabbo (bread), Qoori (grain spread butter), Itittu (yogurt), Faffato (minced food) and Butter are also common in the case of *Horaa Bisiil*. Moreover, sacrifice like: traditional drinks are also common in the case of *Horaa Bisiil*. Sacrifice has a symbolic meaning such as: against misfortune, sickness, barrenness, quarrels, drought and any disruption of normal life.

³⁴ Takkala Dhinsa.

³⁵ Badhoo Raggasa.

³⁶ Interview with Bulbula Dadhii October 2010 in Ijajji town.

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³⁴ Takkala Dhinsa.

³⁵ Badhoo Raggasa.

³⁶ Interview with Bulbula Dadhii October 2010 in Ijajji town.



Figure 4.9 Qalluu holder Women pouring the Araqee in the lake as sacrifice.

The above picture shows the women pouring Araqee in the lake. Pouring alcohol has its own symbolic meaning; according to my informant Giddo Dorii the power of alcohol (Araqee) is stronger than water and it is thought to be surpassed only by blood. In addition, my informant says to make smooth relation ship with *Waaqa* (God).³⁷

Generally, *Irreecha* is one of the major traditional Oromo ritual ceremonies occurs annually with color and great splendor at the end of the rainy season. In Oromo tradition the river banks, mountains tops and lakes shores to give thanks to the almighty *Waaqa*. A number of people are gathered at a common location, a cheerful group of young people take the lead by enthusiastically singing traditional songs and hymns in turns. Then the elders' and ritual leaders take over to wrap up the sacred aspects of *Irreecha* celebration with praise, prayers, and blessings. *Irreecha* celebration in Oromo community indicates the end of the dark-rainy season and the beginning of a blossom harvest season of Birraa.

³⁷ Giddo Dorii.

Chapter Five

Comparative Analysis of *Irreecha* Celebration among Eastern and Western *Showa Oromo*

This chapter is mainly concerned with two issues. The first one is the comparative analysis of *Irreecha* ceremony at *Horaa Arsadee* and *Horaa Bisiil* or among Eastern and Western *Showa*. The second issue is the social role of *Irreecha* for *Macca* and *Tulama* Oromo. Before I directly go to the comparative analysis of the ceremony let me describe about the role of social rules and praying in *Macca* and *Tulama* community. In *Macca* and *Tulama* it is believed that every one whether human beings or animals ought to respect the law or social rules. For instance, if a wild animal, which moves here and there naturally at night, is found in the day time and is killed, no one is to blame because the animal it self broke the law. In all prayers the *Macca* and *Tulama* Oromo turn hands and the face to the sky and says "here I am and let you come please; let your coming bring all the good things for the country. *Waaqa* (God) the creator of all creatures, kind and clement black God, evaluator God, magnanimous as the rain, one God with hundred names, God of the nine Boranas."³⁸ These prayers take place in most cases at the site of *Irreecha* celebration. Now let me turn my attention to the comparative analysis.

I have tried to compare *Irreecha* ceremony in both places in terms of site selection, in terms of time and role played by each participant in *Irreecha* celebration. In terms of site selection, in both areas lakes (water body) are selected (*Horaa Arsadee* in the case of *Tulama* Oromo and *Horaa Bisiil* in the case of *Macca* Oromo). According to Elders, water is a sign of fertility, freshness and wealth. For example Elders, while blessing the people says, *jiidha siin dhowwatiin* meaning 'may (He) gives you fertility, wet or riches'. The other reason for the selection of the water body is that since *Waaqa* created the water and if implored by his own creation, he would listen the prayers soon. This is common in both sites.

³⁸ Takkaala Dhinsaa.

In terms of time: *Irreecha* at *Horaa Arsadee* is celebrated in September. According to Elders of the area, this time was selected because of the good looking of the time. It is a period when rain stops, the area is covered by flower (*kelloo*) and the sun comes out and the end of summer. This shows hope and prospect. This is why, September is selected for *Irreecha* celebration. On the other hand, October is selected for celebrating *Irreecha* at *Horaa Bisiiil*. According to Takala Dhinsa one of my informants, crop in the area ripens in October and they believe that unlike in Eastern *Showa* crop is immature or fresh in September. Moreover, there is no cloud and rain in October, only clear sky and hope prevails during this time.

There are two different views concerning for how long *Irreecha* is celebrated. Some people, particularly in Bishoftu area, assert that the ceremony of *Irreecha* is celebrated for consecutive five weeks. In contrast, people in *Ijajjiii* (West Showa Zone Ilu Gelaan District) claim that *Irreecha* lasts only for three weeks. For this particular study I prefer to take three to five weeks. Below, I will try to describe the sequences and procedural patterns according to which *Irreecha* ceremony is celebrated at both *Horaa Arsadee* and *Horaa Bisiiil*. For the sake of analysis, I divided the *Irreecha* celebration into three phases, namely the eve of *Irreecha*, the main day of *Irreecha* celebration and aftermath.

5.1 Participants and Their Performances on the Eve of *Irreecha* Celebration

In this ceremony, all segment of Oromo society participate. For *Tulama* and *Mawca* groups, *Irreecha* is ritual ceremonies in which Oromo worship *Waaqa*. This ceremony is a thanksgiving ceremony to *Waaqa* (Supreme Being or Creator) for the end of the rainy season and the dawning of birra (Spring). So, there is no sex or age limitation in celebrating *Irreecha*. Children, women, youngsters, girls, elders and *Abba Gadaas* are involved in this ritual ceremony. There are a lot of preparations done before the coming of the main celebration day. Below, I will try to describe the role played by all participants before on the eve of the celebration.

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5.1.1 The role played by Women

Different groups of the society take part in the preparations, for the celebration of the main day. However, the main participants are women. Among others, the main actors at this stage are Qallu holder Women or the Qallitti who prepare different things that are presented on the ceremony. They prepare different traditional drinks such as Farso (local beer), Araqee (local beverage alcohol), Borde (local beer) and so forth. These kinds of preparations are almost common in both places. The other thing that women do in both places is going to the big tree where the celebration takes place having different gifts like Butter and Incense (sandeli). They find any opening in the tree and put the Butter in it and smoke the incense (sandeli). They sing a kind of ritual song until the spirit of Qallitti possesses them and communicate with the *Waaqa* (God). The Women who do not have *Qalluu* spirit come to the celebration place with grass and immerse it in the lake and sprinkle to their face and stay away.



Figure 5.1 The *Qallitti* pray under the *Odaa* tree on the eve of *Irreecha*.

5.1.2 The role played by Children

Children are also important participants of these ceremonies in both *Irreecha* sites. They make different performances: sing traditional songs and perform traditional dances. However, there are some differences in the songs of children in the two places. For instance, in *Horaa Arsadee* children say ‘marewo.... marewo... Odaa guddaa marewo’ meaning ‘he surrounds the sacred sycamore tree’. They say it in the form of chanting mareo mareo....



Figure 5.2 Children singing mareo....mareo.... on the eve of Irreecha.

In contrast, in *Horaa Bisiil*, children are grouped in different clusters and sing. They usually say song similar to Wallaga songs and traditional music. They say Ishoo...Obbokoo ‘good deed my lord, good deed my father’. These kinds of gratifying songs are usually extended to creator (God). The other difference is that children who sing different traditional songs and dances of on the eve at *Horaa Bisiil* receive blessing from the elders (ritual leaders) at the end of the ceremony. However, elders (ritual leader) in *Horaa Arsadee* are not actively involved in the eve of the ceremony.

5.1.3 The role played by elder Girls

The other participants in this ceremony are elder girls. Elder girls at *Horaa Bisiil* come to the celebration site with their mothers or grand mothers. In case a mother has *Qalluu* spirit, when their mothers or guardians (female) sing and try to get into the mood of the spirit, the elder girls make a coffee and smoke the fumes around the Odaa (sycamore tree) and they get the mothers (women) who are singing and violently moving their heads in

front of the Odaa and smell it. In contrast, the little girls make a group and begin playing different traditional songs. The elder girls make a coffee in front of the Odaa tree in which mothers pray and sing for they have to learn how to pray and the mother can pass it down to their daughters.



Figure 5.3 a Elder girl come to the celebration site (Hawwine and her mother Tadelech).

The spirit which resides in the women is called *Qalluu*. It is believed to be a bridge between *Waaqa* (God) and human beings. The elder girls have a great role in the *Irreecha* ceremony, for they are believed to inherit the *Qalluu* spirit when their mothers die and have to keep worshipping even after their mothers death.

The little girls who sing traditional songs in groups are also expected to inherit the activities of the elder girls when they grow up and actively participate in the ceremony. the elder girl who serves the *Qalluu* spirit is believed to get blessing from the spirit to be rich, enlightened to get a good husband, blessed children and so on. Due to this girls usually get in to competition so as to get the opportunity of serving the *Qalluu* spirit. Finally, they receive blessings from Abba Gaada express good wishes to each other and go away.

In the case of *Horaa Arsadee* elder girls do not actively participate in the ceremony. The Women similar to the case of *Horaa Bisiil* pray in front of the Odaa (sycamore tree). But, elder girls show lesser interest to serve the spirit of *Qalluu* unlike elder girl in *Horaa Bisiil*. They only come to the lake wearing different traditional clothes, cut grasses and splash the holy water from the lake to their faces and stay away.

5.1.4 The role played by little Girls

The active participants in the eve ceremony of *Horaa Arsadee* are little girls. They do most of the activities to serve the *Qalluu* spirit like elder girls of *Horaa Bisiil*. They make coffee, smoke the fumes around the tree and decorate the surrounding with grasses and so on.

In the ceremony of *Irreecha*, it is believed that only virgin girls are allowed to serve the *Qalluu* spirit. Because, it is believed that *Qalluu* is a 'blessed' spiritual leader of the people. The blessed relics of the *Qalluu* spirit could only be used by virgin girls. If they are touched by girls who are not virgin, it is believed that the 'blessed' materials will be cursed. In both places (ceremonies), girls have a great role in the ceremonies. If *Dubari holu qabdu* meaning unclear girls who have (made sexual intercourse) touch the 'blessed' relics of the *Qalluu* spirit, it is believed that they could be ill or be killed by the anger of the spirit. Finally, the elder girls who have been dancing and singing and also the little girls who have been serving the spirit go to the lake and immerse a grass in to Water and touch their faces and say it to creator 'let us be reach for the next time in good health', 'bless us' and they express their good wishes and go to home.

5.1.5 The role played by Elders

One of the major participants of *Irreecha* ceremony are the elders. They actively participate in this ceremony in both places. The elders in *Horaa Arsadee* prepare *korma* meaning Bulls to be slanted for the ceremony and welcome ritual leaders (Abba *Gadaa*) who come from different corner of the country. Besides preparing sacrifice for the ceremony elders as one part of the society go to lake and pray the *Waaqa*. The elder who do these kinds of activities are not Abba *Gadaa*. The same is true in *Horaa Bisiil*.

According to my elder informant, Motumma Cimdessa *Irreecha* is a crucial tradition of the Oromo people and a base for *Gadaa*. He continues, *Irreecha* is an expression of Oromo philosophy of the world, miracle of the creator and mystery of life of generations.



Figure 5.4 Elders pray under the Odaa tree at the eve of the ceremony.

5.1.6 The role played by Abba *Gadaa*

Abba *Gadaa* is believed to have a great place both in *Horaa Bisiil* and *Horaa Arsadee*. The blessing and cursing of Abba *Gadaa* are believed to be effective in the society. They are considered as great ritual leader and main actors in the ceremony. Abba *Gadaa* only shows up either in the eve or on the main day of *Irreecha* ceremony unlike other participants of the ceremony. In *Horaa Bisiil* some of the Abba *Gadaas* come to the place at the eve of *Irreecha* ceremony. Where as, in *Horaa Arsadee*, Abba *Gadaa* come to the ceremony on the main ceremony only. According to Sidaa Badhaso, Abba *Gadaa* comes to the ceremony having a Grass, Chira (flywhisk), and wearing beautiful traditional clothes. If it is power transfer, the recipients of the authority make psychological

preparation to administer for the next eight years.³⁹ This is done on the day before the eve and the eve itself.

In the case of *Horaa Bisil*, Abba *Gadaa* come in the eve night surrounded by youngsters and blesses the people by sprinkling Water on them. Abba *Gadaas* transfer a message and advice the community to love and respect their culture and keep or transfer this unique indigenous Oromo ritual ceremony for the coming generation. At the end, they go back home surrounded by youngsters. This is not observed at the *Horaa Arsadee*.

5.2 The main day of *Irreecha*

5.2.1 The role played by Women

On the main day of *Irreecha* ritual ceremony, in both places women begin to take what they have been preparing to the Odaa (sycamore tree). They are colorfully dressed and have *Siiqqee* (thin women stick) on their hand. Especially *Qalluu* holder Women or the *Qallitti* in most cases hold Butter in *Qaabe* (traditional Butter container) one hand and fresh Grass on other hand and go to the celebration site.

The women who have the spirit do not take a food at all, till the praying is done and the spirit communicates the people with *Waaqa* (God) through these Women. another point concerning the women who have the *Qaallu* spirit is that they start giving the sacrifices in different directions. They throw the Bread, the Grains in different directions and also splash the *Farsoo* (local beer), *Itittu* (yogurt), and *Araqee* (traditional destiled alcohol) in different directions. In addition *Qalluu* holder women or *Qallitti* sprinkle perfume to the other participant of the ceremony.

³⁹ Sidaa Badhso.



Figure 5.5 Qalluu holder Women spraying perfume onto other participant of the ceremony.

The participants are not allowed to take any thing from the sacrifice food and drink before the Qaallu spirits do this praying. The women who have a Qaallu spirit sprinkle a perfume around the lake where the praying is done and smell to the participants of the ceremony.



Figure 5.6 Qalulu holder woman sacrifice perfume near the Hora (lake)

The women who have Qaallu spirit are considered as the main actors for the activities under the Odaa tree. The women hold Umbrella colored with green, yellow and red, their clothes are very attractive. They hold a special kind of Grass called Coqorsa meaning Grass indicator of fertility and *Siiqee* (thin women stick) and go around the Odaa tree. They sing for the spirit and being in the mood of it, moving violently by it and put the

Butter on the tree. The other women who do not have a *Qalluu* spirit, holding their grass, immerse in the lake and sprinkle to their face then take blesses from Elders finally, go back home.



Figure 5.7 Qalluu Women singing and wandering the Odaa tree.

The other important thing on this day is that it is usually believed that new women who have not had spirit of Qaallu might get it if their mother had spirits and die having handed down to them. Women who get new spirit of Qaallu are identified to be shouting too much, mooring their heads violently here and there and so forth. All these activities of Women who have Qaallu spirit are common both in *Horaa Bisiil* and *Hora Arsadee*.

On the other hand, Women believe that they would get good chance on this celebration. Especially, barren Women immerse their breasts in the Water for they believe it would fertile their womb. For instance, one of my informants, Addee Dirribe Dhaba, told me that she did not have any child for nine years after she got married. But, four years ago she came to *Horaa Arsadee* and immersed her Breast in the lake where praying is done and prayed that *Waaqa* (creator) would give her a child. After a year she gave birth to a child and now the boy is three years old. Addee Dirribe said that she had given birth to

other two children after this and her riches is increasing.⁴⁰ She believes that this is the blessing of *Waaqa* (God). On figure 16 Adde Dirribe wandering is the Odaa tree with her child to the left of a Woman holding an Umbrella. Although, the above example is taken from *Horaa Arsadee*, this tradition is common in *Horaa Bisiil* too.

The activities of Women are the same in both places. But, sacrifices presented to the spirit such as, the Butter, the Bread, and the Liquor and so forth are covered by curtail all around in the case of *Horaa Bisiil*. They believe that they are trying to hide the secrets. In the case of *Horaa Arsadee* the sacrifices are left open in front of the Odaa (sycamore tree) and the people leave. In general, on this day, women (mothers) wish good for their people, children, country and every thing.

5.2.2 The role played by the Children

Children bellow 15 (fifteen) years in general have great role in this ceremony. Children whose mothers do not have *Qalluu* spirit go to the Hora and sprinkle water to their face by using fresh grass and daisy. On the other hand those whose mother has *Qalluu* spirit show respect for their parents on this day by carrying the sacrifices prepared for the *Qaallu* spirit. They have to take a great care not to take a food prepared for sacrifice for it is believed that unless the Women with *Qaallu* spirit throw the sacrifice to the spirit, it is impossible to eat for them. If in case they do eat, they could suffer from different sicknesses like diarrhea, headache and even death may follow. As part of the community they immerse the fresh grass and daisy in the lake and sprinkle to their face.

⁴⁰ Interview with Dirribe Dhabaa September 2010 at Bishoftu town.



Figure 5.8 little Girls immerse grass in the lake and sprinkle water to their face.

The other thing children do in this ceremony is, making groups like on the eve and play different traditional songs and dances till the praying is finished and eating get started. Having eaten and received blessing from the fathers and elders, children take different materials that they have brought to the celebration place. They don't leave any thing there. They take holy water from the lake for they believe it is good when they get ill and so on. These things are common in both *Horaa Arsadee* and *Horaa Bisiil*.

5.2.3 The role played by the Youngsters

Youngsters who are generally above 15 (fifteen) years are also active participants of this ceremony. They come to the celebration place getting dressed of colorful traditional clothes such as shoes made from hides, trousers made from cotton and also scarf clothes made from cotton.



Figure 5.9 Youngsters come from different area to attend the ceremony.

They have the special kind of Grass called *Coqorsa* and flower called *Kelloo* (daisy) on one hand, and special stick called *Bokkuu*.⁴¹ They come singing in group the song of *Gadaa* year. Like this, *hayyee hoo Gadaa Birmaji qufaa hoo* meaning the *Gadaa Birmaji* is indicator of satisfaction. According to my informant, Caala Fayyisa, *Irreecha* give them strength. According to him, youngsters say that “*Irreechi irree Koo ti*” meaning *Irreecha* is my strengthening.⁴²

⁴¹ Special kind stick (scepter). Indicator of authority most of the time Abba Gadaas hold it.

⁴² Interview with Caala Fayyisa October 2010 at Ijajji town.



Figure 5.10 Youngsters singing

Youngsters are advised by elders for it is believed that they will inherit and serve *Waaqa*. They get recognition from elders and begin to be involved in different activities. According to Caala Fayyisa, in *Huraa Bisiil*, a Youngster starts to involve in different activities done by his *Gadaa* father such as traditional court (juries), reconciliation and so on.⁴³ This is also observed in *Huraa Arsadee*. In general, having finished the praying and blessing, they go back to their homes following their fathers playing traditional songs. This is common in both places.

5.2.4 The role played by elder girls

It is well-known that girls have great role in domestic chores and works in Ethiopia. This is particularly true in Oromia region. Girls take responsibility of their House and help parents in a great deal. I try to discuss below the role of elder Girls on the main day of *Irreecha* ritual ceremony in both places.

⁴³ Caala Fayyisa

In the case of *Horaa Bisiil* elder girls play pivotal role in the celebration of *Irreecha*. They come to the celebration place getting dressed of different colorful clothes of different Oromo groups. For instance, if the decent of a girl is from Harar Oromo, she will look dressed of Harar traditional clothes and so forth. An elder girl is too busy especially if her mother has a *Qalluu* spirit. In the case of *Horaa Bisiil*, Young girls help their Mothers (Qaallu holders) by presenting the incense, the food and the drink sacrifices in front of the Odaa (sycamore tree). It is also believed that if a young girl is Orphan or got her mother died, the Qaallu spirit passes down to her from her mother.

On the main day of the ceremony, these young girls come to the celebration place chanting different songs that signify the greatness of *Waaqa* (creator or God) for they believe he has given them the land, the sky, the river and so on. Any young girl in *Horaa Bisiil* is expected to serve her mother (spirit holder) in the Odaa. She has to make coffee and present the sacrifices to the Qaallu spirit which is believed to reside in her Mother.



Figure 5.11 Young girl put the grass in the lake the case of Horaa Arsadee.

Unlike in the case of *Horaa Bisiil*, in *Horaa Arsadee*, young girls are not active participants of the *Irreecha* ceremony. They don't usually serve their mothers praying in the mood of the spirit under the Odaa tree. Rather, little girls under 15 fifteen years are seen actively involving in this ceremony. They present different food and drink sacrifices such as *Faffato* (minced injera), *Caccabsa* (a piece of Bread mixed with butter), *Qori* (roasted surgom mixed with butter), bread, mead, Farsoo (local beer) and Ititto (yogurt) to the Qaallu spirit which is believed to be residing in their mother or grand mothers. Where as, in *Horaa Bisiil* little girls are chant and sing about the ceremony for they are not old enough to serve the spirit. This is the difference in the two celebration sites.

5.2.5 The role played by Elders

Elders have great roles in the Ethiopia community. They are highly represented or respected section of the society. They are involved in different social issues such as reconciliation, marriage deals and many other tasks. The place of elders in *Irreecha* ceremony is also decisive. They prepare Oxen to be slanted as sacrifices for the *Waaqa* (God) on the main day. They welcome different Abba *Gadaas* coming from different areas and so forth. This is common in both *Horaa Arsadee* and *Horaa Bisiil*. They slaughter the Bull and splash the blood under the Odaa tree. They do the cooking and fumes and smokes are believed to extend to the *Waaqa* (God) or creator. This practice exists in both places. The striking difference in the color of the Bulls slanted in the two places important to note..

On the main day of the ceremony elders come to lake holding fresh grass, daisy and traditional stick. As one part of the society, elders pray, thank and pray *Waaqa* by immersing *Coqorsa* and *Kelloo* in the lake and sprinkle to their face.



Figure 5.12 Elders holding grass, flower and wearing traditional cloth on the way to the lake.

As I have tried to mention above in the case of *Horaa Arsadee* the bull to slant is always *Korma Gurracha*, meaning black bull. The reason is that believe the first person who is believed to have presented the sacrifice in this place (*Bishoftu*) at *Horaa* slanted a black Bull. According to my informant, *Abba Gadaa* Takala Badhaso, the first person is Arsade. Since then, the area is called *Horaa-Arsadee*. This has become an example for that. The place of the praying is named *Horaa Arsade*' (Lake of Arsade).⁴⁴

Generally speaking, in the case of *Horaa Bisiil*, the color of the bull slanted could be any. In both cases, the elders bring fresh Grass *Coqorsa*⁴⁵ (indicator of fertility), *Kelloo*⁴⁶ (Flowers) and so forth. Having got the blessings of *Abba Gadaas*, they go back to their homes. All these sections of the society, however, are only active participants of the

⁴⁴ Interview with Takkala Badhasoo September 2010 at Bishoftu town.

⁴⁵ Coqorsa is a kind of grass. It is indicator if fertility in the case of *Irreecha* ceremony.

⁴⁶ *Kelloo* is a daisy. It is indicator of hope and New Year.

ceremony not main actors. The main actors of the *Irreecha* ceremony will be discussed as follow.

5.2.6 The role played by Abba *Gadaa*

Abbaa Gadaas are the most respected and honored traditional leader of the Oromo people. They act as lawgivers, judges, and leaders. They are thought to bless or curse what they believe to be good or evil in the society respectively. They are also the main actors in the *Irreecha* ceremony. They are dressed traditional clothes holding flywhisk (Chira) and special stick called *Bokkuu* (indicator of authority) and attend the ceremony and they are given honored places in the ceremony.

Abba Gadaas come to the celebration site surrounded by youngsters and children and may be other people. They chant a song '*Hoo... Gale Abban sera dhufe*', meaning 'come father of law' 'come father of law'. They are considered as a very honored like bridegroom in both places. In *Huraa Bisiil*, they chant special song if incase the time is a year of power transfer to new *Abba Gadaa*. For instance, this year, Birmaji *Abba Gadaa* transfers his power to Robale. The power giver (the *Abba Gadaa* who has been administering and leaving now) says: Hoo Darara (take flower or honey), Hoo Qoori (take a roasted grain mixed with Butter), Hoo Caccabsa (take a piece of bread mixed with Butter), Hoo Itittu (take a yogurt). The recipient of the power (the new *Abba Gadaa*) says: Mee Darara (give me the flower or honey), Mee Qoori (give me the roasted grain mixed with Butter), Mee Caccabsa (give me a piece of bread mixed with Butter) and Mee Itittuu (give me yogurt). Then they shake each others hands and notify the official democratic power transfer to the new *Abba Gadaas* for the next 8 (eight) years in front of the people. This is in the case of *Huraa Bisiil*.

In the case of *Huraa Arsadee*, the power transfer is similar with *Huraa Bisiil*. First the *Abba Gadaa* nominates the new *Abba Gadaa* and give the authority in front of the people. After these ceremonies, they bless the people and express good wishes to the people and the country and then, curse any evil thing. They believe that the God is able to punish those who go beyond his limits of what is morally, socially or legally acceptable.

Evans-pritchard (1969) asserts that God is conceived of not only as a creator of but also as a guardian of social order who punished transgressions, which are breaches of interdictions which serve to maintain the social order.



Figure 5.13 Abba Gadaa Agaa Xanxano blessing participant of the ceremony holding his Bokkuu (special kind of stick indicator of authority).

Finally, the Abba *Gadaas* go back home. When they go back home, they are surrounded by the Youngsters, Elders, Children and so forth. They also chant a song like this:

Biyya ambayyoo yaa raaba 'it is your land children'

Biyya ambayyoo 'it is your land'

Gadaa gatte yaraba 'you left *Gadaa* the children'

Biyya ambayyoo 'it is your land'

Gadaa gaatte nagafate yaa raba 'Don't ask me you are the one who lost *Gadaa*'

Biyya ambayyoo 'it is your land'

The main content of the above song is 'Children you left *Gadaa*' this is common in both *Horaa Bisiil* and *Horaa Arsadee*. This is to encourage children to be eager for their culture and to preserve it for the future. Generally, Abba *Gadaas* are the most honored members of the Oromo people. The traditional democratic power transfer is done by them. Any decision given by Abba *Gadaa* is highly respected and acceptable.

5.3. After *Irreecha* Ritual Celebration

Some common features are observed in both places (*Horaa Arsadee* and *Horaa Bisiil*). After the ceremony of *Irreecha*, especially for one week, people who come from far places may attend the ceremony, the *Irreecha* ritual ceremony continues for the whole week.

An informant at *Horaa Arsadee*, Abba *Gadaa* Agaa Xanxano said if the ceremony was held on mountain it would last for two or more weeks so as to implore *Waaqa*, holding fresh Grass, to send a rain because it is a bad time. "All hills and mountains are the places of sacrifice and praying, since they are nearer to the sky, nearer to *Waaqa*". (Bartels 1983:66)

5.3.1 The role played by Elder Women, Men and Children

In both *Horaa Bisiil* and *Horaa Arsadee* one of the common things after the ritual ceremony is a women or girl who received the spirit of *Qaalluu* from her Mother or grand Mother is recommended to pray the whole week. Children between (9-15 years) play traditional songs wondering villages holding a special kind of wild flower called *Kelloo* (daisy). Elder Men pray in this week for their crop and Children. Women also do praying. They do this pray especially for their cattle to be multiplied. They do a special ceremony.

This is called 'Atetee'. They put a Kind of string known as *caaccuu* in their neck for this pray. It is done only by women.

5.3.2 The role played by Young Male and Female

This week is unique for the young males. They pray *Waaqa* even after the main day. They believe that after *Irreecha* within a couple of weeks *Waaqa* answers their prayers soon. As one informant, Chaala Feyyisa said, '*Waaqa* is near' so that he would answer prayers soon. This is common both in *Huraa Arsadee* and *Huraa Bisiil* though the number is lesser in the case of *Huraa Bisiil*. This week's pray is mainly attended by people who couldn't arrive at the ceremony of the main day such as people with disabilities, who live far areas and so forth. The number of young girls after the ceremony of *Irreecha* is less. This is common in both cases. Now let us turn our attention to the social role of *Irreecha* ritual ceremony.

5.4 The Social Roles of *Irreecha*

Irreecha has an important role in reconciliation, unifying the Oromo people and promoting their culture, custom, belief and so on. In addition *Irreecha* play a pivotal role in social inclusion and social exclusion, meaning those who do good things will be appreciated and get acceptance in the society and who do bad are blamed and cursed.

5.4.1 The role of *Irreecha* in reconciliation

As I have discussed at the beginning of this chapter the main actor in this ceremony is the Abba *Gadaa* who has a role in reconciling the people in conflict. The elders act as judges between two conflicting parties and can pass decisions including paying of reparations by the offender to the victim. Any one who refuses this is discriminated from the social matters. In case if some one refuses the Abba *Gadaa*'s decree, Abba *Gadaa* talk to the participant of *Irreecha* ceremony. No one help this person during emergencies like accident, death, social problems and so forth. Marriage could also be impossible for this person. These thing force any one to accept the decisions of Abba *Gadaa* without any hesitation.

*Guula*⁴⁹ can make any kind of decision on *Irreecha* ceremony. One of the tasks of *Guula* is Guddifacha (adopting) or giving children for adoption for those who don't have parents or have poor parents. The person who takes the adopted child makes an Oath to take care of the child. This has a significant role in strengthening the relationship and unity among the community. Any adopter who breaks this Oath is discriminated from the society like thieves and sorcerers. In case if the adopter breaks his oath, *Guula* talk to the community in the *Irreecha* day and the adopter is cursed.

The *Macca* and Tualama Oromo believe that the *Irreecha* celebration day is the time when *Waaqa* come down and blesses the people. Participant of the *Irreecha* ritual ceremony believe they belong to the same clan (group). This by itself has a significant role in strengthening the unity of the society (Oromo people). They say '*nuti qomoo tokoo*' meaning we are same clan, '*nuuti sanyii tokko*' meaning we are same ethnic, '*nuti lammii tokko*' meaning we are same lineage and so forth. This is sufficient to conclude that, *Irreecha* is a social institution.

5.4.3 The role of *Irreecha* in promoting and exchanging culture

In the ceremony of *Irreecha*, Oromos coming from different regions of the country are available. These people coming from different regions have their own dressing style, custom, food and different unique features. This ceremony becomes a good opportunity to way of exchange their cultures, traditions and customs. It also gives them opportunity to promote their own cultures. In this case, it is possible to conclude that culture is symbolic communication. Some of its symbols, include group's skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives. The meanings of the symbols are learned and deliberately perpetuated in a society through its institutions.

In the ceremony, horse riding takes place around the Odaa Tree 8 (eight) times to indicate that *Gadaa* power transfer comes every eight year. *Irreecha* makes the people to feel responsible to keep culture for it is an asset of the community. Here, there is a communication between culture and society i.e., the *Macca* and *Tulama* Oromo

⁴⁹ *Guula* is person who participates in *Gadaa* system for more than forty years.

Abba *Gadaa*⁴⁸ curses thieves, sorcerers and their children, cattle of thieves and sorcerers, the land not to give (offer) yield of crop. The thieves are also discriminated from social issues such as borrowing (Liqii); communal works (daboo) and so on. A thief will be advised first before the *Irreecha* day and if he/she refuses, will be revealed on the *Irreecha* day and be cursed. The Abba *Gadaa* curse thieves by saying:

- Kan dhashite siif hin guddatin* 'let your sons and daughter not grow up'
Kan hortee siif hin buliin 'let what you have should not be last long'
Kan argate dara haa ta'u 'let what you have should be fruitless or valueless'
Alaa manni ishee gubii haa ta'u 'let disagreement govern you'
Alaa manni ishee daaraa haa ta'u 'let your deeds be fruitless'
Dubbate hin agesifatin 'let your words be ash'

To sum up, the one who did good things is blessed and gets acceptance and recognition in the public. Two conflicting parties (persons) reconcile before they go to the ceremony. No one can celebrate *Irreecha* without reconciling with the person who he did (has done) wrong thing. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that *Irreecha* is a good peace institution.

5.4.2 The role of *Irreecha* in unity

Irreecha is also important in strengthening the unity of the society. For instance, in *Horaa Bisiil*, Elders were collecting money for building of cultural center in the area. This helps the people to strengthen unity, preserving culture and tradition.

Raddcliff-brown (1952) in his book entitled *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, explain that ritual is an expression of unity of society and that its function is to 're-create' the society or the social order by reaffirming and strengthening the sentiments on which the social solidarity and therefore, the social order itself depend.

⁴⁸ Abba *Gadaa* is father of *Gadaa* or traditional leader or ritual leader.

*Guula*⁴⁷ also reconciles two people who are in conflict. For instance, if one person kills from other family or relative, the *Guula* brings a sheep and slain it and the two persons shake hands to each other through the hole in the belly of the sheep and they are blessed. They are advised not to think of revenge at all. They make oath by saying:

<i>Walitti haloo hin banu</i>	‘we can’t revenge each other’
<i>Nuuti si’achi fira</i>	‘from onwards we are relative’
<i>Nutii si’aachi tokko</i>	‘from onwards we are one or same’
<i>Yoo walitti haloo yanne</i>	‘in case if we revenge’
<i>Kan dhalate nuf hin guddatin</i>	‘let our son and daughter not grow up’
<i>Kan guddate nuf hin gahin</i>	‘let the grown one’s be not succesful’
<i>Kan horree nuf hin buliin</i>	‘let what we collected will not be blessed ’

In case if the two persons revenge each other the *Guula* talk to the community on *Irreecha* day and then they are discriminated from the society like thieves and sorcerers.

The other point regarding the role of *Irreecha* is, if two persons have still conflicts and attend the *Irreecha* ceremony, it is believed that their prayers will not be heard and this will also affect the prayers of other innocent people. Therefore, it is a must to avoid conflicts before attending the *Irreecha* ceremony. Elders are also forced to reconcile conflicting persons or groups. If two persons come to the *Irreecha* ceremony with their conflict, elders could be blamed. So, elders reconcile conflicting persons before *Irreecha* celebration. It is assumed that elders have the responsiblity of reconciling conflicting people or group.

⁴⁷ *Guula* is Person who participates in Gadaa system for more than forty years.

Therefore, it is possible to say that Culture is communication and communication is culture.

It is highly forbidden to hold sharp materials in this ceremony. Elders say that '*wanti qaara qabu hammenya, warana, loola akkasumas nageya boressu dha*', meaning sharp materials show (indicate) warfare and conflicts and since *Irreecha* is a place where people pray and thank to creator every one should avoid sharp things. They believe that participate in *Irreecha* ritual ceremony with sharp material is considered as doing wrong. Therefore, rituals can have a more basic social function in expressing, fixing and reinforcing the shared values and beliefs of the society.

To sum up, there are different views on the time and places of *Irreecha* celebration. In *Horaa Arsadee*, the *Irreecha* is celebrated only during new years. In contrast, in *Horaa Bisiil*, the crop should also be bloomed and ready. The ceremony on mountain is celebrated for special case for instance, during absence of rain and 'anger' and dry season. The main aim of celebration of *Irreecha* in both cases is to, thank and pray God. However, there is no religion called *Irreecha* rather; it is the stage to pray God (creator).

Irreecha play a significant role in reconciliation, unifying the people of Oromo and promoting their culture, custom and so on. *Irreecha* is a widely known ritual holy day among the Oromo of *Macca* and *Tulama*. It is attended by every one without discrimination of age, sex, status and so on. Its ritual nature makes it special in the society. Although there are some differences between the two cases, things are more of ritual and cultural. They believe they present things to *Waaqa* from the plenty of things that he has given them. They believe they receive message from the creator, they put Butter on the Odaa for pray, splash perfumes slain cattle and splash the blood on the Odaa and a lot of other things. These examples show *Irreecha* is ritual ceremony. On the other hand, other activities take place in the ceremony like dancing, singing, horse riding as are indicators of culture. Hence we can conclude that *Irreecha* is a typical ritual and cultural ceremony. The *Macca* and *Tulama* Oromo believe that *Waaqa* is a creator of every thing, punishes the wrong doers and rewards the faithful.

CHAPTER SIX

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

Man has developed his own culture, way of life, philosophy, belief in his early tenure, which makes him different from animals. Africa can be identified with peculiar culture, dozens of original traditions, ways of life, custom and so forth. To state some of African countries Nigeria, Ethiopia and Sudan can be mentioned as mult -cultural and multi-lingual countries.

In the past, The Oromo people had enjoyed almost a homogenous culture and shared a common language, history and descent. They once had a common political, legal institution and so on. As I have mention in previous chapters, though the exact time when *Gadaa* institution started among the Oromo is not known, written sources indicate that during the 16th century Borana and Barrentu practiced such egalitarian socio-political system administering their society. *Gadaa* system governs the life of Oromo society from the time of birth to death. Moreover, the *Gadaa* system guided religious, social, political and economic life of the Oromo. It was the constitution of the society through which the Oromo administered, defended their territory, maintained and developed their economy.

The general assembly for election, religious ceremony or for other purposes was held in *Caffee* under the shade of Odaa “sycamore tree” which was traditionally believed to be the most “respected” and the most “sacred” tree whose shade was believed as a source of tranquility. Shade of the Odaa was both the central “office of government” where the *Gadaa* assembly met and a sacred place for ritual practice. Thus, the sacrifices offered by the in coming *Gadaa* classes during initiation were performed under the Odaa tree.

The Oromo under the *Gadaa* system considered the big tree, river and mountains as “holly areas “ and these were centers of praying and ritual practices. Beside, being the “center of the government” *Odaa Nabee* and *Odaa Bisiil* were place of sacred rituals

practices where the *Gadaa* classes assembled and offered performed sacrifices every eight years. Thus there was a butta ceremony every eight years with ritual practice and praying. People considered *Waaqa* as omnipotent and sustainer and usually expressed by prayers for material welfare. People believed that through prayers, offerings and sacrifices, they would get ways of contact with *Waaqa*. The offered sacrifices in times for peace, prosperity and health of the society. Thanks were given by prayers of Butta ceremony for what *Waaqa* gave them after the last *Gadaa* (seven years) and for *Waaqa*'s helped them to attend Butta ceremonies. In broader terms, the *Gadaa* system was an egalitarian socio-political organization by which the Oromo used to govern themselves and the system which kept the homogeneity of Oromo culture.

Macca and *Tulama* groups are the major Oromo groups which lived together for a long period of time. The two groups have indeed established politico-religious centered at *Odaa Nabee*⁵⁰ where they stayed to gether for several years. The *Macca* group left *Odaa Nabee* for the *Tulama* and made an advanced to south western direction and established a new tribal politico-religious center at *Odaa Bisiil*.⁵¹ The center of *Odaa Bisiil* is also known by other names such as; *Tutte Bisiil*, *Kobbi Bisiil*, *Buddo Bisiil*, *Caffee Bisiil* and *Hora Bisiil*. But it is widely referred to as *Odaa Bisiil*. The term *Bisiil* means a comfortable area endowed with fertile soil and covered with green plants and grasses. However, the name *Odaa Bisiil* is said to have been derived from the name of an individual Oromo known as *Bisiil Osoole*. This individual was a popular and respected person among his fellow kins men and lived at the place where the *Gadaa* center of *Macca* group is founded. The center was thus named after that Oromo individual who is said to have been living and developing as an early center of settlement. Literally, *Odaa* means a sycamore tree where as *Odaa Bisiil* means that sycamore tree grown up on the land owned by *Bisiil*. At present *Odaa Bisiil*, is found in western *Showa Zone* *Ilu Galaan District* in a farmer's village called *Titaa Maru* five kilo meter from *Ijajji town*. It is bounded by *Billo Boshe* of *Wallaga zone* found beyond *Gibe River* in the west. *Limmu Qarsa* of *Jimma zone* in south west and *sire sillase* of *Illu district* in north. The area is comfortable for settlement and rearing cattle.

⁵⁰ *Odaa Nabee* is a *Gadaa* site of *Tulama Oromo*.

⁵¹ *Odaa Bisiil* is a *Gadaa* site of *Macca Oromo*.

Now let turn our attention to *Tulama* group. The *Tulama* occupy, eastern *Showa* Zone of Oromia region. They lived for centuries in eastern *Showa*. They use *Odaa Nabee* as *Gadaa* site and *Horaa Arsadee*⁵² as *Irreecha* site. The word *Arsadee* is derived from a name of a person who governed the present day Bishoftu. He was the first person who sacrifice black bull near Hora (lake) to stop 'anger'. From then onwards black Bulls are sacrificed in the lake annually and the lake was called Hora *Arsadee* 'Lake of *Arsadee*'.

Concerning the separation of *Macca* from *Tulama*, there are different views. The question of distance was one and the major factor that caused the departure of *Macca* from *Tulama* groups. *Odaa Bisiil*, the new center of *Macca* is estimated to be 262 km west of *Odaa Nabee*. This might have caused the *Macca* groups to establish their own site as long as they could not attend the government office of *Odaa Nabee* owing to the distance. The *Macca* group who initially made *Odaa Bisiil* a *Gadaa* center was the *Afree*. The other *Macca* group *Saddacha* was said to have arrived at *Odaa Bisiil* late completing the departure of *Macca* from *Tulama*. *Odaa Bisiil* was a nucleus for the movement to required direction.

Makko Bilii was a man who instructed the *Macca* to follow *Gadaa* laws to perform rituals annually, slaughter Butta every eight years and also ordered them to follow "the way of *Waaqa*". According to elders, Makko Bilii's law consists of 65 articles on the basis of which *Macca* groups were administered and which were by no means different from *Gadaa* traditional laws. It was because of the problem of distance from *Odaa Nabee* that Makko Bilii made laws and confirmed it on the bases of *Gadaa* rules and regulations. to be followed by *Macca* groups

Whether the Oromos confront problems or pursue happiness, it is only *Waaqa* who is to be praised, and to whom displeasures and/or resentments are directly expressed at the right time and at the right place. One of the right times is the Oromo season of *Birraa*; and one of the right places is at the bank of Oromo sacred water (*Horaa*).

⁵² *Horaa Arsadee* is a lake or a place where *Tulama* Oromo are praying *Waaqa*. Or *Irreecha* site.

Both *Macca*⁵³ and *Tulama*⁵⁴ groups conducted *Irreecha* in different paces. It usually takes place at two major areas: *Irreecha Tullu* (*Irreecha* that is performed on the top of a mountain) and *Irreecha Malka* (*Irreecha* that is performed along the river bank). Performing *Irreecha* ritual ceremony on mountains and near rivers does not reveal believing in those natural phenomena.

Irreecha is a spectacular show of cultural, historical and natural beautification in their full glory at the height of the season. *Irreecha* celebration in Oromo society indicates the end of the dark-rainy season and the beginning of a blossom harvest season of Birraa. It is in Oromo tradition to gather at the river banks, mountains tops and lakes shores to give thanks to the almighty *Waaqa* for all the blessings throughout past years and ask for Araaraa (Reconciliation), Nagaa (Peace) and etc. for the coming year.

Irreecha ceremony has a pivotal role in strengthening the unity of the people, promoting and exchanging cultures among the society, forcing elders to keep peace in the community. In addition, *Irreecha* makes a person ruled by social laws (customery laws) for any problem and conflict. Social rules have big role in solving them. Therefore, social rules are confirmed in the *Irreecha* stage among *Macca* and *Tulama* of Oromo.

There are some similarity and difference between *Irreecha* celebrated among *Macca* at *Horaa Bisiil* and *Tulama* that of celebrated at *Horaa Arsadee*. The main difference in the two *Irreecha* places, in the number of people who participate in the ceremony. In *Horaa Arsadee* the number of people who attend the ceremony can be counted in millions. Where as, only few people attend the *Horaa Bisiil* ceremony. Elders say that all *Macca* Oromos used to celebrate *Irreecha* in *Horaa Bisiil* in the past. But through time this has became very weak and the number of people celebrating *Irreecha* at *Horaa Bisiil* has constantly dwindled.

The length of time or celebration is another point of difference between the two *Irreecha* places. At *Horaa Arsadee* *Irreecha* is celebrated for five consecutive weeks but at *Horaa Bisiil* only for three weeks. The participation of girls in the *Irreecha* ceremony is another

⁵³ *Macca* is one Oromo tribe live to the south and south western part of Oromia.

⁵⁴ *Tulama* is one of the Oromo tribe live to the eastern part of Oromia.

difference between *Horaa Bisiil* and *Horaa Arsadee*. Young Girls are very active and eager in the case of *Horaa Bisiil* to serve the *Qalluu*. This however is weak in the case of *Horaa Arsadee*.

When we come to the common features of *Irreecha* in the two places, in both places (*Horaa Aarsadee* and *Horaa Bisiil*) every one (from children to elders) is a participant in the *Irreecha* ceremony. This ceremony is not left for a particular group such as children, youth, or Elders. It is equally celebrated by every section of the society. Any participant begs God for the well being of not only him/her self but also for other people as well as every creature in the world.

On the ritual ceremony of *Irreecha*, following the blessing and praying of a ritual leader, people pray to and ask *Waaqa* what they wished to get though the content varied. However, the prayer were usually aimed at prosperity i.e., to have many cattle, health and to get a child. For instance, a sterile woman usually asks to get children. This is common in both cases. These are some of similarities and differences in *Irreecha* ceremony of both places.

For many *Macca* and *Tulama* Oromo, *Irreecha* is a special day of prayer, thanksgivings and so forth. In addition, it is a ritual that has been transferred from generation to generation. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the *Irreecha* ritual ceremony is celebrated in different parts of Oromia regions. The *Irreecha* celebrated in *Horaa Arsadee* and *Horaa Bisiil*, with the exceptions of some differences, are similar in many aspects. The main aim of the ceremony of *Irreecha* in both places is to pray and thank *Waaqa*. But now days, the *Irreecha* ceremony at *Horaa Arsadee* has become an annual festival of splended size where people different religion and age group gather not only to pray and give thanks to almighty *Waaqa*, but also to express their cultural solidarity and relax.

As mentioned in chapters one, the objective of this study is, to document the *Irreecha* and pass it down to the next generation. As many scholars agreed a given culture should be documented not only when it is endangered or on the verge of extinction, it should also be documented as it is in normal state for it could well be influenced by other cultures

and by Globalization. In a globalizing world, the traditional materials, costumes and so on could be influenced and the culture could lose its original flavor. It is therefore, important to document *Irreecha* as it is in normal state or to capture its authentic features before it is blurred because of mixing and blending. Now, Let me pass to the things that I have observed when I was in the field and think should be improved.

6.2 Recommendations

In Hora Arsade when compare with the participant of the ceremony there is no security. This will have negative effect in the tourism attraction of the ceremony. If this thing continues foreign and domestic tourist will not come to the ceremony and this will hurt the tourism sector in general. The other thing is that the Music concert which is held on that day near Hora Arsade contradicts with the objective of the ceremony. The *Irreecha* ceremony is primarily ritual in which the people communicate with God. Therefore, Music concert is incomparable with the objective (ritual) of the *Irreecha* ceremony. Therefore, all concerned bodies have responsibility to correct this.

The other thing I would like to recommend is that it is necessary to avoid reflection of different political views in the *Irreecha* ceremony for *Irreecha* is primarily a ritual ceremony. And a political figure or authority of the state should not make a speech in the ceremony for only Abba *Gadaas* are responsible to lead the ceremony. This is common problems in both places. The other thing I would like to recommend is the administration of Bishoftu town should arrange an exhibition about the ceremony and collect income from the exhibition. This would help in construction of different infrastructures. Because, the number of people visiting the area are numerous. The income that could be injected to the economy is not the least.

The traditional costume should also be kept well. In recent time different modifications have been observed. This through time may result in the total extinction of the original tradition. As many scholars agreed Culture is not inert to change, but hasty modification through intervention would violete comulativeness of culture, knowledge, experience, beliefs and values. For a culture to endure, it has to be left free to a normal process of

development. Attempt to modify and manipulate it at need would distort its original essence.

Generally speaking, the ceremony of *Irreecha* held in *Horaa Bisiil* and *Horaa Bisiil* has a great role in promoting the culture, belief system, tradition, and history of *Macca* and *Tulama* Oromos. Though this ritual ceremony has its own origin, it has come down to this generation and this generation has a responsibility of keeping it and passing it to the next generation. It is assumed that any ritual ceremony is important for the society and should be kept. *Irreecha* means literary thanks giving to the *Waaqa* or the creator of the universe through cultural practices. *Irreecha* ceremony contains in its ritual, cultural and philosophical world views which admire the miraculous spiritual powers of *Waaqa* and co-jointly relates the living secret of generation. The ever greenness and productivity of plants, the generation of life and the replacement of the old by the new, death and resurrection of fruits is likened and related to the wisdom of *Waaqa*.

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Appendix I



Figure 2 Men and Women pray under the Odaa tree.



Figure 1 Women praying under the Odaa



Figure 4 Abba Gadaas on the way to participate the ceremony.



Figure 3 Qullaa Women singing and honoring the Odaa tree.



Figure 5 Participant of the ceremony.



Figure 6 Young participant of the ceremony.



Figure 7 Participant blessed near the lake by elders.



Figure 8 the Elder participant pouring the mead in the lake



Figure 10 The Elder participant immerse his Chira (flywhisk) in to the lake.

Figure 9 The Elder participant sprinkling the water by using flywhisk (Chira) to the participant of the ceremony.

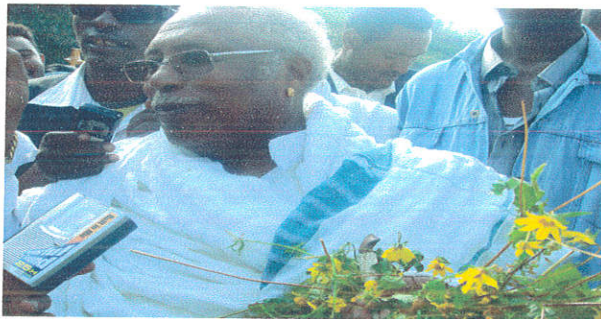


Figure 11 Elder participant pierce his left ears and have a ring



*Figure 12 Ladies making
Coffee under the Odaa tree.*



*Figure 13 Youngsters participating
on the ceremony.*



*Figure 14 Young Girl immerse
the Grass in the Lake.*



*Figure 15 Qalluu holder Ladies
sprinkles a perfume around the lake.*



Figure 16 Qalluu holder Ladies pouring the Alraqee in the Lake.

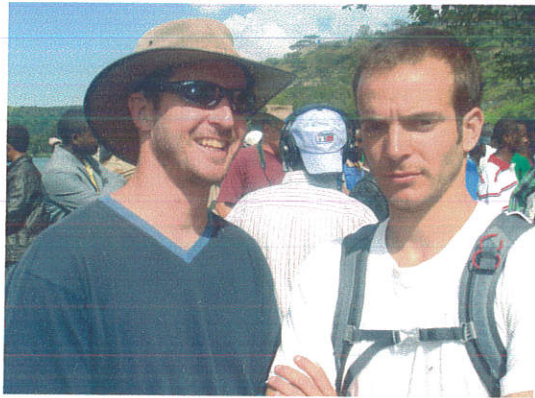


Figure 18 Youngsters singing.

Figure 17 Foreign visitors.



*Figure 20 Elders holding Grass, Flower
and wear traditional cloth.*

*Figure 19 Ladies on the way holding
Siiqqee back from the ceremony.*



*Figure 22 Abba Gadaa Aгаа Xanxano blessing participant of the ceremony holding his
Bokkuu (special kind of stick indicator of authority).*



Figure 24 my informant Bekele Sarbessa

sprinkle water to the participant of the ceremony using his Chiraa.

Figure 23 my informant Badho Raggasa and Gammchu Dadhii.



Figure 26 youngsters come from different area to attend the ceremony.

Figure 25 participants of the ceremony eat sacrifices after praying has gone under the Odaa tree.



Figure 26 Qalluu holder Women sacrifice Perfume near the Hora (lake)



Figure 27 little Girls immerse the Grass in the lake and sprinkle water to their face.



FIGURE 28 *Qalluu holder Women sprinkle perfume to other participant of the ceremony.*

Appendix II

Name	Age	Place of interview	Date of interview
Abba gadaa Agaa Xaanxano (Guula)	82	<i>Odaa Nabeel/</i> Bushoftu/	03/09/2010
Abba Gadaa Badhoo Raggasa	78	<i>Odaa Nabeel/</i> Bushoftu/	03/09/2010
Abba Gadaa Dorsis Dhuguma (Guula)	86	<i>Odaa Nabeel/</i> Bushoftu/	03/09/2010
Abba Gadaa Gammachu Dadhii	72	<i>Odaa Nabeel/</i> Bushoftu/	28/11/2010
Abba Gadaa Lagasa Diksisa	70	<i>Odaa Nabeel/</i> Bushoftu/	03/09/2010
Abba Gadaa siida Badhaso (Guula)	86	<i>Odaa Nabeel/</i> Bushoftu/	03/09/2010
Abba Gadaa Takalaa Dhinsaa	70	<i>Odaa Bisiil/Ijajjiil/</i>	07/11/2010
Ayyelech Liul seged	46	<i>Odaa Nabeel/</i> Bushoftu/	03/09/2010
Baqaala Ararsaa	67	<i>Odaa Bisiil/Ijajjiil/</i>	28/11/2010
Bekalaa Sarbessa	79	<i>Odaa Nabeel/</i> Bushoftu/	03/09/2010
Bulbulaa Dadhii	62	<i>Odaa Nabeel/</i> Bushoftu/	03/09/2010
Caala fayyisa	24	<i>Odaa Bisiil/Ijajjiil/</i>	14/09/2010
Cimdassaa Tiyyee	79	<i>Odaa Bisiil/Ijajjiil/</i>	14/09/2010
Dirribe raggasa	58	<i>Odaa Nabeel/</i> Bushoftu/	03/09/2010
Dirribi Damuse	62	Addis abeba	03/12/2010

Galatoo Tarfasa	60	<i>Odaa Nabee/ Bushoftu/</i>	04/12/2010
Gashaaw Gobanti	23	<i>Odaa Bisiil/Ijajjii/</i>	12/01/2011
Giddoo Doori	80	<i>Odaa Bisiil/Ijajjii/</i>	14/09/2010
Hawwii Tammirat	20	<i>Odaa Nabee/ Bushoftu/</i>	03/09/2010
Ijjigu Xiyyaa	68	<i>Odaa Bisiil/Ijajjii/</i>	28/11/2010
Leggasa Nagawo	72	<i>Odaa Nabee/ Bushoftu/</i>	03/09/2010
Makuriyaa Badhanee	79	<i>Odaa Nabee/ Bushoftu/</i>	03/09/2010
Milkessa Galalcha	77	<i>Odaa Nabee/ Bushoftu/</i>	03/09/2010
Mitiku Wabsoo (Guula)	88	<i>Odaa Nabee/ Bushoftu/</i>	03/09/2010
Mottuuma Cimdesa	30	<i>Odaa Bisiil/Ijajjii/</i>	12/01/2011
Qixxaata Tiyye	80	<i>Odaa Bisiil/Ijajjii/</i>	28/11/2010
Takalaa Cimdesa	25	<i>Odaa Bisiil/Ijajjii/</i>	12/01/2011
Tariku Ebbaa	23	<i>Odaa Bisiil/Ijajjii/</i>	14/09/2010
Tesfayee Mammuye	27	<i>Odaa Bisiil/Ijajjii/</i>	12/01/2011
Tsige Taddasa	38	<i>Odaa Nabee/ Bushoftu/</i>	03/09/2010
Wandimu Bekuma	23	<i>Odaa Bisiil/Ijajjii/</i>	14/09/2010
Warqinaa gissilla	20	<i>Odaa Bisiil/Ijajjii/</i>	14/09/2010

Declaration

I, the undersigned declare that this thesis is my original work. It has not been presented for a degree in any university and all sources of materials for this thesis have been acknowledged.

Name Samuel Leykun

Signature 

Place A.A.U

Date of submission. 15-04-2011

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

Name _____

Signature _____

Place _____