



Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Department of Sociology

THE *BUDA*: BELIEF SYSTEM, MARGINALIZATION, AND TRADITIONAL
HEALING PRACTICES IN CENTRAL TIGRAY

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November, 2012
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Table of Content

	Page
Acknowledgement	i
Table of Content	ii
Abstract.....	v
Chapter one	
Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Problem statement	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study.....	7
1.3.1 General Objective	7
1.3.2 Specific Objectives	7
1.4 Significance of the Study	8
1.5 Organization of the Paper	9
Chapter Two	
Review of Related Literature.....	10
Introduction.....	10
2.1 Overview of the Evil Eye Belief.....	10
2.2 Minority -Majority Relations.....	15
2.3 Origin and Marginalization of Craft Workers (Budás) in Ethiopia	17
2.4 Theoretical Models of Marginalization	24
2.5 An Overview of Traditional Medicine in Ethiopia.....	27

Chapter Three

Research Methods.....	31
3.1 Description of the Study Area	31
3.2 Study Design.....	34
3.3 Selection of Study Sites	34
3.4 Methods of Data Collection.....	36
3.4.1 In-Depth Interview	36
3.4.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	38
3.4.3 Case Study:	39
3.4.4 Field Observation	39
3.4.5 Secondary Sources:	39
3.5 Method of Data Analysis	40
3.6 Ethical Considerations	41
3.7 Limitations of the Study	42

Chapter Four

Data Presentation and Analysis	44
4.1 An Overview of Social Stratification of Tigray Society	45
4.2 The <i>Buda</i> Belief	46
4.2.1 The Roots of the Belief about <i>Buda</i>	46
4.2.2 General Overview of the Belief about <i>Buda</i>	49
4.2.3 Perceived Methods of Attack Applied by the <i>Budas</i>	53
4.2.4 The Presumed Rationale of the <i>Buda</i> to Attack People	55
4.2.5 Methods of Identifying the alleged <i>Budas</i>	56

4.2.6 Myths and Stories about <i>Buda</i> Attack.....	57
4.2.7 The Perception of alleged <i>Budas</i> about the ' <i>Buda</i> ': the Insider's view	59
4.2.8 Introduction of Evil Eye Belief to Ethiopia	64
4.3 Marginalization and Discrimination of <i>Budas</i>	67
4.3.1 Residential Segregation	68
4.3.2 Economic Alienation	69
4.3.3 Religious Avoidance	73
4.3.4 Political Status and Participation.....	76
4.3.5 Social Exclusion	77
4.3.6 Restrictions in Daily Intercourse.....	81
4.3.7 Recent Improvements in the Life of <i>Buda</i> People	83
4.4 Traditional Healing Practices Applied to Combat <i>Buda</i> Attack.....	86
4.4.1 Preventative Practices among Christians	87
4.4.2 Prevention Techniques employed by Muslims	89
4.4.3 Curative Techniques against <i>Buda</i> Attack	91
4.4.4 Curative Methods Applied by Christians to Combat <i>Buda</i> Attack	92
4.4.5 Curative Systems Applied by Muslims.....	98
Chapter Five	
Summary.....	104
References.....	112
Appendix	

ABSTRACT

Research studies have shown that many traditional beliefs have faded out in the face of modernity and science. Yet, Africa is still home of many strange beliefs. There are a lot of traditional beliefs like witchcraft, sorcery that seem to have stood the test of modernity. The belief in the evil eye is one of those beliefs. This study is about evil eye, locally called Buda or Tebib, belief among people of Central Tigray, Ethiopia.

This thesis discusses the current status of the Buda belief and its two major implications: the discrimination and marginalization of the alleged Budas, and the widespread application of traditional healing methods to combat Buda attack. The study employed qualitative research approach. The data is primarily collected using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

The study found that the Buda belief is deep-rooted and widespread in the study area. The society is rigidly divided in to honoured-agriculturalist-Chewas [clean boned] majority and despised-craftworking- non Chewa [impure boned] -Buda minority. The basic rationale behind the rigid and huge prestige gap between the Budas and the Chewas is the belief about evil eye [Buda]. Many misfortunes of life notably illnesses and deaths are believed to be caused by Buda attack. Even though the alleged Budas categorically dismissed these allegations, yet the reaction of the Chewas towards the Budas is a mix of fear and contempt. The study found that beautiful, wealthy, smart, and shy people are thought to be the most vulnerable people to Buda attack. Periods of multiplication and fecundity are believed to be the most dangerous times and hence children and women, notably pregnant women are believed to be most susceptible to attack

This study found that the Buda belief has two big implications; widespread application of traditional healing system and the marginalization of Budas by the mainstream community. In reaction to the evil deeds allegedly caused by Budas, the mainstream society has subjected them to various forms of discrimination and hence the Budas are marginalized people occupying the lowest social status in the societal hierarchy. This marginalization is a result of the protective and revenge measures taken by the Chewas and the coping mechanisms adopted by the Budas.

Another major finding of the study is the heavy reliance of the community on traditional healing methods to combat Buda attack. Making prayers, reciting sacred books, drinking and washing holy water, wearing amulets [kitab], avoiding personal contact with Budas are among the common preventive and curative measures against Buda attack. However, exorcism is by far the most widely used healing method. Furthermore, this research found that even though the healing practices applied by Muslims and Christians are faith-based, they are best characterized by symmetry than contradiction. Yet, the study found some contradiction between the basic principles of the faiths and some of the healing practices.

Key words: Buda, central Tigray, evil eye, traditional beliefs, traditional healing, Chewa, marginalization

Chapter one

Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Belief in the evil eye power, which is thought to date back to Eve and Adam, is one of the most powerful, pervasive and controversial beliefs in human history. It is a belief from which mankind has suffered great fears. Briefly stated the belief is that there are people with extraordinary spiritual and magical power who can cause disease or death simply by staring at others or by using other mystical techniques (Vecchiato 1993). These people which are commonly called evil eyed people are believed to have the power to communicate with the devils and other evil spirits, and can change themselves into hyena and change their victims into pots and donkeys (Reminick 1974; Amsalu 2000). The evil eyed people, which are thought to be found all over the world, are accused of many evil deeds like attacking people and causing illness and death upon people, and even attacking domestic animals and agricultural produces like crops (Reminick 1974; Damtew 2003).

Research findings show that a number of societies like Bedouins of Middle East and the Nuers of south Sudan believed that most, if not all, of diseases and deaths are caused by evil eyed people (Baroja 1964; Reminick 1974; Amsalu 2000). For example Bedouins believed that evil eye 'can bring the man into the grave and the camel into the cooking pot' (Abu-Rabia 2005). Accordingly, different societies have developed their own prevention, diagnosis and healing techniques. Apart from the widespread use of traditional medicine, the belief has resulted in the emergence and spread of hatred and discrimination against the alleged evil eyed people (Reminick 1974; Vecchiato 1993; Damtew 2003). In response to the alleged evil deeds of the evil eyed people, different societies like Amhara and Sidamo of Ethiopia, Bedouins of the Middle East, Nuers of South Sudan etc. have subjected those allegedly evil

eyed people to different forms of segregation, marginalization and even severe punishment (Reminick 1974; Vecchiato 1993; Damtew 2003). Therefore, the alleged evil eyed people are most feared and disguised segment of a society and are marginalized and relegated to the lowest stratum of societal hierarchy.

The belief in evil eye is so powerful and pervasive that it is found in all corners of the globe. It is found throughout the world; from South Africa to Australia, from India to Brazil, from US to Turkey, from Spain to Iran, from Israel to China (Vecchiato 1993). The evil eye is known as *Malaccino* in Italian, *Boser Blick* in German, *movies Oieil* in French, *Ayn* in Arabic, *Malde Ojo* in Latin America, and *Ok Ngan* in Chinese to mention a few (Vecchiato 1993). Presently, the belief is most widespread in sub-Saharan Africa. Even though it has relatively declined in the western world, in Africa "....still it is...spreading panic and death" (Parrinder 1963: 9). Research studies show that belief in magical power in general and evil eye power in particular is widespread in sub-Saharan countries like Sudan, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria and Ethiopia (Amsalu 2000; Pankhurst 2001; Damtew 2003). In ethnic communities like the Nuer of south Sudan, the Amhara of Ethiopia, the Kikiyu of Kenya and the Zulu of South Africa, belief in the evil eye is very widespread.

Like many other sub-Saharan countries, belief in the evil eye complex is pervasive throughout Ethiopia (Reminick 1974; Vecchiato 1993; Amsalu 2000; Finneran 2003). In Ethiopia, the belief in the evil eye power is commonly known as '*Buda*' (Reminick 1974; Finneran 2003). Various scholars have been defining *Buda* in different ways (Amsalu 2000; Finneran 2003). '*Buda*', according to Finneran (2003), is "*the power of the evil eye and the ability to change [by devil powered magic] into a hyena*". Similarly, for Reminick (1974) *Budas* are people with a special gift of glancing at others and attack. The *Buda* represents not only the spirit or the power but also the person who carries or possesses the spirit. In Ethiopia, it is widely believed that *Buda* people have extraordinary eye power and are possessed by

evil spirits that motivates and pushes them to commit many evil deeds out of envy or jealousy.

Like many other societies, Ethiopians associate many life misfortunes particularly health problems with *Buda* attack (Vecchiato 1993). Consequently, the belief about *Buda* has two interlinked consequences on the life of Ethiopians. These are the widespread use of traditional medicine to protect and cure *Buda* attack, and the discrimination and marginalization of the allegedly evil eyed [*Buda*] people by the mainstream society. In Ethiopia craft working is the typical occupation and means of livelihood of the *Budas* that sometimes the term *Buda* and craftwork are used interchangeably (Reminick 1974). As a result, craft work as an occupation and *Buda* as a social group are highly hated and disguised in Ethiopia (Reminick 1974; Pankhurst 2001).

In Tigray, like in many other parts of Ethiopia, the belief in evil eye is very common. The evil eye complex, which is commonly known as *Buda* or *Tebib* is a firmly established belief affecting the interpersonal and intergroup relationship between the *Budas* and non *Budas* in general and the social life of the *Budas* in particular. Furthermore, the belief has a paramount effect on the health seeking and illness behavior of the people. This study aims to assess peoples' perception of *Buda*, the effect of the belief on the life of the *Budas*, and the social relationships between *Buda* and non *Buda* inhabitants of Central Zone of Tigray. It also looks in to the traditional healing practices employed to prevent, diagnose and cure from *Buda* attack.

1.2 Problem statement

Since the belief in the evil eye is pervasive throughout the world a lot of studies have been done so far, mostly by anthropologists and ethnographers and to some degree by sociologists. The evil eye belief of the Basque of Spain (Baroja 1964), Sicily of Italy (Parrinder 1963),

Bedouins of Middle East (Abu-Rabia 2005), Jews of Israel (Arbu-Saad 2002), Iran (Donaldson 1981), and Christian Syrian-Lebanese (Naff 1965) has been studied and documented in detail. However, since belief in the evil eye power, like any other belief, is culture specific and time bounded, it is necessary to study evil eye in relation to the specific socio-cultural context it exists in.

Reminick (1974) is one of the first to undertake an in-depth exploration of the belief in *Buda* among the Amhara of Ethiopia. He described the depth and prevalence of the belief and the role of religion in the healing practices. Like Reminick, Young (1970) made a detailed account of the origin of the *Buda* with greater emphasis on the traditional indigenous healing practices employed by Amharas living in Begmdir. Both Reminick and Young pointed the origin of the *Buda* people to other non Amhara ethnic groups mainly the *Falasha (Bete-Israel)* people which are found around Gondar and Agaw. Vecchiato (1993) also discussed the ideological and interactional aspects of evil eye belief and its function in health maintenance and illness prevention behavior among the Sidama of South Ethiopia. However, we can hardly find research about evil eye belief in Tigray.

In Central Tigray the belief about evil eye, the traditional healing practices, and the social status of the *Budas* are highly and causally interconnected. The widely held belief that evil eyed people are responsible for many of the illnesses and deaths the community encounters have resulted in the widespread use of traditional medicine and the marginalization of the alleged *Budas*. The belief has pushed the community to develop a very complex traditional healing mechanism in order to prevent, diagnose and cure *Buda* caused illnesses. Moreover, due to the belief and hence their alleged evil deeds, the *Budas* in central Tigray are the highly hated, feared and despised segment of the community. They are economically marginalized, socially excluded, and religiously discriminated. They are pushed to the periphery and are not considered as members of the mainstream community and hold lowest social status.

Even though a considerable number of studies dealing with *Buda* and its origin have been done so far, due to various reasons, still there is a big gap in our understanding of *Buda*. The main reason is that most of the literature (Reminick 1974; Amsalu 2000) focus on the myths about the origin of the *Buda* and confine themselves to theological explanations. Some explanations (e.g. works by Finneran 2003; Amsalu 2000) are shallow in their depth of investigation and narrow in their dimensional analysis. Even those relatively deep digging researches by Young (1970) and Reminick (1974) dealt with limited dimensions, specifically the traditional healing practices employed by Orthodox Christian Amharas.

Accordingly, the social world of the *Buda*: their livelihood, social relationships and their networks with the wider community, and the people's perception of *Buda* were overlooked by prior researchers. They mainly focused on the negative attitude of the mainstream society towards craft workers and little attention was given to the actual consequence of the attitude. The various forms of discriminations, stereotypes, social exclusion, and marginalization the *Budas* are facing are not sufficiently investigated. The current status and trend of the *Buda* belief is not clearly known.

Besides, even though most of the studies conducted so far on evil eye were undertaken in northern Ethiopia, they covered only two ethnic groups namely Amhara and Qemant (Vecchiato 1993). Even in northern Ethiopia there are a number of societies that have not yet been studied sufficiently. Tigray, specifically central Tigray, where this study is all about, is almost obscured. Muslims were also overlooked in the previous studies. Therefore, this study enables us to get a clear picture of the northern Ethiopia so far as *Buda* belief is concerned. Thus, this study helps to make comparisons between the Amharas and Tigrayans, the Muslims and Christians thereby we can have a clearer understanding of *Buda* belief in northern Ethiopia in particular and Ethiopia in general.

In addition to that, up to date information is needed about the *Buda* belief for it, like any other belief, changes from time to time. The *Buda*'s social world, like that of any other social group, changes from one generation to the next. It is thought that the life of the *Budas* and the life of the surrounding community in which the *Budas* live is changing. In the last fifty years Ethiopia has undergone fundamental changes in social, economic, and political spheres (Damtew 2003; Dubale 2010). Therefore, given that most of the studies about *Buda* belief were conducted decades ago, it will be logical and necessary to see the present state of the belief and the changes it has undergone in the past. This study came as a response to Vecchiato's call that "*research is needed to [see]to what extent the belief persists in post revolutionary Ethiopia*" (Vecchiato 1993: 1036).

Besides, even though most of the previous studies were focused on Christian highlanders [note that central Tigray is also Christian dominated area with sizeable Muslims], it should be noted that there is no consistent Christian view of *Buda* and that the views or understanding of Christians at different periods and places has varied considerably [see and compare Amsalu (2000), Reminick (1974) and Finneran (2003)]. Hence, it should be noted that the Orthodox Christian Amhara of 1970's may not represent, and is likely to be different from, the Orthodox Christian Tigray of 2012. On top of that, this study has included Muslims, which were overlooked in the previous studies. In addition, the nature of intergroup and interpersonal relationship between the *Budas* and non *Budas* has been overlooked in previous studies.

Lastly, and most importantly, we know, unfortunately, less and little about what the *Budas* themselves believe than is believed about them. The perception of the *Budas* about the evil eye belief is almost undiscovered. It must be admitted that it is easier to find out what is said to have occurred than what really happened. Therefore, besides the perception of the non *Budas* about the *Budas* discussing what *Buda* is from the point of view of the *Budas*

themselves is another mission this research aims to achieve. The fact that some of the literature (Finneran 2003) we have about the *Buda* are accounts written by foreign travelers some of whom have a very shallow understanding of Ethiopia's culture, and history, hints that the 'real' *Buda* may be very different from the *Buda* who appears in the travelers' accounts. Taking into account the gap in the previous studies, this research, which is conducted in Central Zone of Tigray, deals with the people's [both *Budas* and non *Budas*] perception about *Buda*, the marginalization of the *Budas* from the mainstream society, and the traditional healing practices employed to combat *Buda* attack.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study has the following general and specific objectives.

1.3.1 General Objective

The study explores and describes people's perception of *Buda*, the traditional healing practice used to protect and cure *Buda* attack, and the form and extent of marginalization the *Budas* are subjected to and its consequences on their life.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

In dealing with the belief about *Buda*, other issues that have close link with the *Buda* belief will be investigated. In light of this, the study aims to:

- Investigate peoples' (the non *Budas* and the alleged *Budas*) perception of *Buda*
- Investigate the intergroup and interpersonal relationships between the *Budas* and the non *Budas*.
- Analyze the extent and form of marginalization of the *Budas* by the mainstream society
- Examine the traditional healing practices employed by the non *Budas* to deal with health problems that are allegedly caused by *Buda* attack.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study attempts to describe the belief about *Buda* and its negative implications on the life of the community: the marginalization and discrimination of alleged evil eyed people and the widespread use of traditional medicine at the expense of modern medicine. If the belief continues unaddressed it will have immense negative consequence on the inter group relation between the *Budas* and the non *Budas* in general and the social life of the *Budas* in particular. It is also negatively affecting the health seeking behavior of the people. Therefore, this study will contribute in informing the policy makers and academicians to foresee the current status of the belief about *Buda*, and the implication of the belief on the inter group relation between *Budas* and non *Budas*, the discrimination and marginalization of *Budas*, and the widespread application of traditional healing methods. It will help them to understand the roots and effects of the belief so that they can take appropriate measures to bring about behavioral change and integrate the marginalized group into the mainstream society.

Thus, this study provides a useful material to conceptualize the *Buda* belief, and the intergroup relation of the *Budas* with the mainstream society. It is an additional and more sociological contribution on the ethnography of marginalized people in Ethiopia in general and Tigray in particular. Furthermore, it may inspire and help to conduct further and deeper investigation about other traditional beliefs. It can also be used as preliminary information for further research about traditional medicine, traditional beliefs and its implication on the use of modern medicine. Most importantly, this research might be very useful for government and non-governmental organizations in designing and implementing intervention strategies aimed at promoting and improving the living conditions of the victims of traditional beliefs like *Budas* and other minority groups .

1.5 Organization of the Paper

The paper is organized in to five chapters. The first chapter is the introductory part which locates the research problem and describes the aim of the research. This chapter includes contextual background, statement of the problem, research objectives, and significance of the study. Chapter two presents the discussion on related literature and theoretical framework. In this section, some issues like the prevalence of the belief at global and national level, the marginalization of craft workers and the traditional healing methods used to combat *Buda* attack are discussed. The third chapter deals with the methodological application of the study, the reason behind the selection of the methodology and methods of data collection. It also presents a discussion about the socio-economic and demographic features of the study area.

In chapter four, empirical information obtained from the research subjects in the study area is presented, analyzed and discussed. This chapter is categorized into four broad sections. The first section discusses about the social stratification of Tigray society in general and people of central Tigray in particular. The second section discusses the main contents and aspects of the belief about *Buda*. In this section the *Buda* belief, the peoples' perception of *Buda*, the mechanisms of identifying the *Buda* and illness caused by *Buda*, and finally the targets, rationales and *modes operandi* of attack used by the *Buda* are presented and discussed in great detail. Section three presents the form and extent of marginalization and discrimination of *Buda* people by the mainstream society. In section four a detailed discussion of the traditional healing methods employed to combat *Buda* attack have been presented. Finally, the paper ends with summary and conclusion discussed in chapter five.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

In this section, studies both published and unpublished, obtained from various sources like books, reports, magazines, online publications and journals that are relevant to the issue under discussion have been reviewed. This chapter is structured in such a way that it has four sub sections, each of which matches to the objectives of the study. The first subsection is an overview of the evil eye belief. It deals with the nature, origin, coverage, and strength of the belief. The second subsection presents what the literature has to say about majority-minority relationships and the various theoretical models employed to deal with such type of intergroup relationship. Then, the origin and nature of marginalization of craft workers in Ethiopia has been discussed. Lastly, a brief overview of traditional healing in Ethiopia has been presented.

2.1 Overview of the Evil Eye Belief

Though its degree and form vary from society to society, belief in the evil eye complex is present in all corners of the world. Europe, Middle East, Asia, and Africa are familiar with the belief (Parrinder 1963; Baroja 1964; Abu Rabia 2005). Even though Baroja (1964) and Ambrom (1957) argued that the evil eye belief has originated from and is confined to the Mediterranean area, research findings indicate that the belief is universal throughout the world (Parrinder 1963). Like Parrinder, Vecchiato (1993) concluded that even though the belief might have got its start in the Mediterranean area, as Ambrom (1957) argued or ancient Sumer as Dundes (1967) said, various forms of the belief in the evil eye appear round the globe.

The pervasiveness of the belief can be verified by the fact that it is found in all of the five great religions of the world, namely Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, and Buddhism (Baroja 1964; Damtew 2003). For example, in the Catholic Christian Basque of Spain, Baroja indicated, many people were convinced that there are men and women who could change themselves into animals, fly, and do other things which for want of a better name we generally call evil eye. In the Muslim world, it is widely believed that the prophet himself confirmed the evil eye (*ayn*) is *haq* (true) (Sahih Muslim cited in Damtew 2003).

Contrary to the optimism of the 17th century enlightenment thinkers and the 19th century positivists, expansion of education, modern medicine, science, and urbanization seems to have done little as yet to shake the belief (Parrinder 1963). Still many societies strongly believe that accidents, illnesses, and deaths are caused by evil eye. Not only tribal societies but also advanced societies are, to some degree, part to the belief.

Locating when, how, and where the belief about evil eye originated is so difficult. As a result, many explanations have been given about the origin of evil eye. One of the earliest and popular explanations is related to the devil of Christian theology which can be summarized as follows:

Eve had thirty children, and one day God asked Eve to show Him her children. Eve became suspicious and apprehensive and hid fifteen of them from the sight of God. As a result, God seeing her act of disobedience, declared the fifteen children she showed as His chosen children and cursed the fifteen she hid, declaring that they go henceforth into the world as devils and wretched creatures of the earth. He cursed and sent them away with the curse of being agents of devil. These human counterparts of the devil are thought to be the ancestors of the Buda people (Amsalu 2000: 7).

Different scholars have held different views about the alleged power of evil eye and the impacts of the belief. Accordingly, various explanations are given by different scholars. One of these explanations is given by psychiatrists (Messing 1978; Leach 1980) and is more of psychological in content. For some psychiatrists, the belief in the evil eye and the associated

rituals are something like a psychological pathology called 'mass hysteria' (Amsalu 2000). The psychiatrists' notion of mass hysteria seems to be similar to Marx's connotation of religion as '*opium of the people*' (Ritzer 2011: 70). For Marxist theorists like Finneran (2003), the evil eye notion is neither the result of God's curse as some theologians claim nor a psychological pathology as some psychiatrists assert, rather, a deliberate creation of upper class people to maintain their position and to halt upward mobility. It is a system meant for suppressing and downgrading lower class people. Following this, Finneran argued "*It is the social superiors who may create and perpetuate this myth of the evil eye ...as a means of social control ... [by] turning groups of Artisans in to untouchable pariahs*" (Finneran 2003: 4).

Contrary to Marxists, functionalist theorists notably Evans Pritchard (Pritchard cited in Parrinder 1963) came up with a typical functionalist view about the evil eye- circular in its reasoning and focusing on its function. Evans Pritchard argued "*such[evil eye] belief ... played a useful function in the society in giving the witch doctors knowledge of magic, strengthening kinship ties against enemies, enhancing the power of chiefs, and in conflict resolution*" (Pritchard cited in Parrinder 1963: 9). The hub of functionalists' argument is that the evil eye belief was created and persisted because it serves important functions for the society. Like their many other arguments, functionalist theorists failed to explain how it originated, how it expanded, what its dysfunctions are, and most importantly how it changed through time.

Another justification for the creation and spread of the evil eye belief is an economic one. This explanation attributes the roots of the belief to economic specialization and diversification. Scholars like Levine (2000) asserted that craft working and hence craft workers [who are supposed to be the bearers of evil eye] are simply the result of economic

specializations and diversification. However, Levine failed to adequately explain and justify as to why the notion of evil eye is closely associated with craftwork.

Concerning the truth or falseness of the alleged power of the evil eye, it is still debated hotly. Various conflicting explanations have been given about whether the evil eye power is a 'reality' or an 'illusion'. For prophet Mohamed, the power of the evil eye is real. The same is true for many followers of Islam. For others like Pritchard, the alleged power of the evil eye doesn't exist. It is rather an illusion. Evans Pritchard defined it as *'imaginary offence because it is impossible'* (Pritchard cited in Baroja 1964: 14). To him *"an evil eyed person or a witch cannot do what he is supposed to do and has, in fact, no real existence. He performs no rite, utters no spell and possesses no medicine"* (Baroja 1964: 14). Supporting Pritchard, though partially, Margaret Murray argued (Murray cited in Parrinder 1963: 16) *"... the belief in evil eye and witchcraft is a tragic error, a false explanation of ills of life ... that has only led to cruel and baseless oppression in which countless innocent people have suffered"*. So the debate about the alleged power of evil eye is between two extremes, ranging from 'real' to 'an impossible imaginary act'.

Summarizing the two extremely opposite views, Margaret Murray said *"...in the interpretation of evil eye, there have been and still are two main schools of thought. One class accepted all the evidence and placed upon it 'the unwarranted construction' that the evil eye's activities were due to supernatural power. The other class, 'taking the evidence on hearsay', comes to 'deny the facts in toto'"* (Murray cited in Parrinder 1963: 103). Moreover, she attempted to mediate the two extreme views and said *"they [evil eyed people] actually performed many of the deeds which were ascribed to them but not by supernatural power"* (Murray cited in Parrinder 1963: 103). Baroja attributed the controversy surrounding the alleged power of evil eye to the *"problem of distinguishing between objective and subjective reality"* (Baroja 1964: 58).

As Murray indicated, the controversy can be taken as part of the hot debate between modernists and postmodernists or positivism and social constructivism on the nature of reality. The debate whether the evil eye power exists or not may remind us what the famous French social thinker by the name Michel Foucault, upon taking LSD [Lyserg Saure Diathylanid: a hallucinogenic drug made from lysergic acid], said: "...the sky has exploded...and the stars are raining down upon me. I know this is not true. But it is the truth" (Foucault cited in Ritzer 2011: 612). The evil eye power seems to be more or less similar. It may not be true but it is truth just like the raining of the stars which was truth for Foucault but not true for his fellows beside him. The evil eye power is a reality for some people (for those who believe in its existence) and is an illusion for the non believers. Like many other social issues it is a subjective reality for subjective people living in a subjectively constructed world.

However, the presence of many societies who believe in the evil eye complex qualifies it for sociological inquiry because the belief has a paramount effect on the social life of both the believers and non believers. One of the obvious results of the belief is the widespread application of traditional medicine (Vecchiato 1993). Another result is marginalization of the allegedly evil eyed people by the mainstream society (Vecchiato 1993; Damtew 2003). The lower socioeconomic status of the evil eyed people may partially be attributed to the belief. Hence, the belief has resulted in minority – majority relationship between the evil eyed people and the mainstream society: the *Budas* as minority and the non *Budas* as majority/dominant group. In fact, not only the belief about evil eye but also, as Levine (2000), Finneran (2003) and other Marxists indicated, the presence of few different people, i.e craft workers, in an overwhelmingly homogenous agrarian society might have been seen, by the peasants, as strange and unwelcome and hence resulted in avoidance of the craft workers.

2.2 Minority -Majority Relations

Akalework (2011) reports that in contemporary societies a growing attempt is being directed to integrate the marginalized and disadvantaged groups of people into the mainstream community by giving due emphasis to economic and social inequality. Akalework is, to be fair, partially right and partially wrong. Because, there is equally sound argument the other way round. Some researches (Barron 1967; Harris 1975; Schaefer 1984; Pankhurst 2001) show that there are a host of marginalized minority groups around the globe and in some societies the degree of marginalization is even increasing. In Ethiopia, for instance, the *Hilancha* of Wolaitta (Akalework 2011), the *Nafura* of Gurage (Nahu 1998) the *Mena*, *Manja* and *Wagoche* of Dawro (Dubale 2010), the *Manja*, *K'emo* and *Fuga* of Kaffa and Hadiya (Pankhurst 2001), and the *Degela* of Konta, the *Tummano* of Kembatta, the *Yirfo* of Yem (Vecchiato 1993) are still highly marginalized. So whether the marginalized are getting integrated or being marginalized and pushed to the edge is very controversial. What is indisputable is that a host of minority and marginalized groups exist throughout the world.

The concept of minority groups is perceived differently by different scholars. As Harris (1975) and Pankhurst (2001: 14) indicated there is no universal definition of minorities that can be applied to the vast spectrum of stratified groups found in contemporary societies. Since every group has got its own unique history, culture and social environment it is very difficult to get an all-encompassing definition (Pankhurst 2001: 17). As a result, minorities have been variously defined depending on the nature of their marginalization, socio-cultural identity, occupation, or biological features (Damtew 2003: 11). Consequently, minorities are designated as "*caste or caste like groups, racial or ethnic minorities*" (Damtew 2003: 11). However, this doesn't mean that minority groups have nothing in common. Indeed, they have a number of common features and that is why they are put into the category of 'minorities'.

One of the shared features of minority groups is their subordinate position (Seymour 1986). Seymour argues minority groups are not necessary numerical minorities. Instead, minority is determined by subordinate or marginal status rather than by numbers (Seymour 1986). Similar to Seymour, Barron (1967) said that what makes a section of society minority is not the size of its population but the subordinate position it occupies in the given social system. Schaefer (1984) also asserted that a social minority need not be a statistical one and being minority group has nothing to do with number but with control of power and resource. He defined minority group as: "... a subordinate group whose members have significantly less control or power over their own lives than the members of a dominant or majority group" Schaefer (1984: 5). However, Schaefer's definition has a serious flaw for it fails to consider/recognize the fact that what he called 'control of power' is relative. For instance, one can safely argue, though the peasantry of developing countries, late Ethiopia, or the working class of Developed countries, late United States of America, has 'less control of power over their own lives' than the dominant/ruling class, the political elites and the capitalists respectively, they are rarely, if ever, designated as minority group.

Some researchers (Barron 1967; Harris 1975; Zenden and Jamesh 1983; Schaefer 1984) agree on five important defining features of a minority group. First, minorities commonly experience discrimination, segregation, persecution etc, at the hands of the dominant group. Secondly, minority groups have cultural or physical marks like skin color or language which are shared by members and distinguish them from the majority. Thirdly, minorities are characterized by consciousness of kind. Fourthly, minority membership is birth ascribed. Fifthly, forced or involuntary in-group marriage (endogamy) is typical to them. In accordance with these features, Williams (1964) expressively defined minority groups as "...any culturally or physically distinctive and self-conscious social aggregates with hereditary membership and high degree of endogamy which are subject to political or economic or

social discrimination by a dominant segment of an enviroing political society" (Williams 1964: 121).

Complying with William's definition of minority groups, Ethiopia, like many other sub-Saharan countries, has a number of minority groups. Craft workers like weavers, ironworkers, blacksmiths, tanners, potters, and people of ex-slave ancestry are one of the most marginalized segments of the Ethiopian society. Yet, *Budas* are the most marginalized and despised people than any other craft working people (Vecchiato 1993). Not only the *Budas*, i.e. the people themselves, but also craft work, i.e. the occupation, which is the typical job of the *Budas*, is considered as despised work by the agrarian majority (Pankhurst 2001: 2).

2.3 Origin and Marginalization of Craft Workers (*Budas*) in Ethiopia

Even though Ethiopia has a host of marginalized groups there is only limited literature about them. Even the limited and scattered literature available is mostly about ethnic minorities found in southern Ethiopia (Damtew 2003: 20). Most of the literature (e.g. Hamer 1970; Vecchiato 1993; Nahu 1998; Dubale 2010; Akalework 2011) focused on southern Ethiopia. This may be due to ethnic and religious diversity found in southern Ethiopia and hence the availability of a number of minority groups compared to other parts of the country. Moreover, many researchers tried to discuss all minority groups in a single basket using a very broad level analysis (Damtew 2003; Dubale 2010). Thus, the literature we have about minorities has a number of limitations. First, it focuses on ethnic minorities and overlooks occupational minority groups like craft workers. Secondly, the tendency to treat all minority groups in a general or broader analytical context overlooks the specificities inherent in each group. Besides, the fact that considerable portion of the available literature is written by foreign travelers who lack in-depth understanding of the culture of Ethiopian society is sometimes leading to erroneous and biased conclusions.

Generally speaking, in Ethiopia craftsmen constitute a ‘despised and feared’ minority group. Categorically, artisans have been understood as despised castes, outcastes, pariah, or occupational castes (Todd 1977; Levine 2000; Damtew 2003). Lewis (1970: 183) concluded that virtually every Ethiopian, Cushitic or Semitic speaking, society contain at least one endogamous minority group of hereditary occupational specialties. Even though it may be premature to conclude that every Ethiopian society contains occupational minority, research findings show the majority does. Amharas, Oromos, Tigrayans, Wolaitta, Sidama are few of the ethnic groups with occupational minority groups inside them (Young 1970; Reminick 1974; Vecchiato 1993; Amsalu 2000; Akalework 2011).

In Ethiopia, socially excluded groups like craft workers are generally referred to by different pejorative terms like *Qetqach*, *Bale ej*, *Faqi*, *Zibie*, *Haguadi*, *Tebib* etc. The term ‘*Buda*’ is one of these derogatory terms used to refer to craft workers in northern and central Ethiopia. Yet, this doesn’t mean that all Craft workers are designated as *Budas* for, though rarely, some non *Budas* engage, for some reason late lack of land, in craftworks notably carpentry. However, due to the negative attitude of the peasant population towards craftwork and the presumed higher concentration of *Budas* in the sector, craftwork is closely associated with evil eye notion. They are considered by the majority as outcasts and people of low status. In this regard Dubale (2010: 20) argued that “... [They] are viewed by the dominant group as persons of low status who practice minimal [less relevant] occupations and possess some mystic powers that can endanger others”. Furthermore, he concluded that most of the socially excluded groups of people are “*occupationally specialized on different craftworks and as a result commonly referred to as ‘occupational castes’, ‘artisans’, or ‘craftsmen’ comprising of weavers, smiths, potters, tanners, wood workers, grinding stone producers, and hunters*” (Dubale 2010: 21).

Identifying the origin and marginalization process of craft workers of Ethiopia is very difficult and controversial. It is difficult because such groups of people have, in most cases, no clear physical or linguistic distinction from the mainstream societies (Pankhurst 2001). Even though Todd (1977) and Levine (2000) claimed that craft workers have distinct physical appearance and psychological makeup and that they are more 'negroid type' than the mainstream society and are similar to 'negro Bantu' in their 'physical and psychic', no conclusive evidence have been presented so far by them or other writers to support the claim.

The origin and process of marginalization of craft workers should be analyzed and understood in relation to its historical and cultural context for every group has got its own unique history, culture, origin, and social environment (Pankhurst 2001; Dubale 2010; Akalework 2011). Since the root causes for the emergence of minority groups in Ethiopia and the nature of their marginalization are diverse, a relativist approach would be more helpful. In support of this, Pankhurst (2001) warns that, in the study of craft workers in Ethiopia the cultural dichotomy between south and north Ethiopia should be taken in to account. Even though handicraftsmen, Pankhurst said, are despised, stigmatized, and ostracized by the dominant majority, there is a prevailing difference in the historical process that led to the formation of stigmatized groups and in the form and degree of their marginalization within southern Ethiopia itself, let alone Ethiopia at large (Pankhurst 2001: 17).

In support of Pankhurst, Damtew (2003) clearly showed the differences in the roots/rationales of marginalization of minority groups by presenting the case of *Woyto* and *Falasha* of northern Ethiopia. While discussing the origin and marginalization of the *Woyto*, Damtew said:

The stigmatized position of the Woyto amidst the Amhara majority is explained by their former hunting way of life and peculiar dietary habits... The Woyto Artisan minority thus has a separate ethnic origin, but changed from an independent egalitarian hunting group to despised artisan minority historically submerged by the Amhara majority (Damtew 2003: 22).

Similarly the 'Falasha', sometimes called *Bete-Israel*, Damtew argued, is a distinct, well integrated, despised, endogamous group of craft workers. He said "*This [Falasha] group is ... ethnic 'Agaw Jews' in origin that was historically excluded from land ownership due to 'political- military defeat'*" (Damtew 2003: 22). Accordingly to Damtew, the *Falasha* were part of the majority until they were forced, as a result of the 'political-military' defeat, to depend on hand crafts as a means of subsistence. The dominant Christian majority imposed this change in the means of subsistence and social status turning the *Falasha* from an independent farming community to a despised craft working minority. So, according to Damtew, the Woyto were marginalized and despised due to their hunting way of life whereas the *Falasha's* marginalization can be attributed to politico-military defeat.

Another hub of debate between scholars is whether the situation of craft workers in Ethiopia can be designated as caste system or not. Some writers, notably Todd (1979) and Levine (2000) argued that the craft workers' relation with the mainstream society is similar to the caste system of India because it involves endogamy, ascribed membership, and occupational specialization which are considered to be the main features of the caste system of India. Opposing Todd and Levine, Pankhurst (1995: 19) said "*...to describe the artisans who have ambiguous status as a caste along the Asian model is too simplistic classification. One must resist the assumption that they (fuga, tanners, and smiths) are castes because they are engaged in these occupations.* Lewis (1970: 185), on the other hand, recommended that the phenomena of occupational caste in Ethiopia must be understood as a distinctive division of labor, a system for the production and distribution of goods and services which demand

special skills and training. However, neither Pankhurst nor Lewis gave a plausible explanation about why, when and how the evil eye notion was linked with craftwork.

The Role of Artisans (craft workers) in the Ethiopian society is frequently misunderstood by many people. Many assume that their role was less relevant and equivalent to their social status in the hierarchy of the society. Some studies (Nahu 1998; Dubale 2010; Akalework 2011) have pointed out that the status and role of artisans is, in fact, ambiguous. This ambiguous position can be considered as the most defining feature of artisans. The ambiguity is that, on the one hand, they are clearly despised and ostracized; on the other hand, they play a vital role to the society (Cerulli 1956; Pankhurst 1995; Nahu 1998). Pankhurst argued that they had benevolent acceptance by the kings and the nobility basically due to the demand of their skill. He said *"the existence of a highly evolved state with a large court and huge armies... constituted another major focus of demand for handicrafts"* (Pankhurst 1995: 101). Similarly, Cerulli (1956) described *"the essential social role and contribution of artisans, not only as crafts men but also as ritual experts in girl's puberty rites, deaths, funerals and other life cycle events"* (Cerulli 1956: 61).

Ironically enough, the social status of craft workers is far below to the essential role they have in the society. This incompatibility between the roles (function) played and the status attached to that particular role may remind the way George Ritzer (2011) expressively criticized structural functionalism by comparing the status of janitors in New York City with the status of advertisement executives in Hollywood. Even though, Ritzer asserted, the role of the janitors i.e. cleaning the city is by far more important for the American society than the advertisings of alcoholic drinks or luxurious cars, the status of janitors is far below to the advertising executives. As opposed to the structural functionalists and in-line to the Marxists claim, that role-played and the status-attached are ill fitted to each other. But why so?

Noticing the incompatibility between the role and status of crafts workers, Karsten (1972) concluded "... *the social status of smiths, often very low, has little to do with the type of work they do*" (Karsten 1972: 17). Furthermore, Karsten added "*a family whose clan had abandoned craftwork years ago, even generations before, might still be considered socially inferior. Similarly ordinary farmers might take up craftwork without affecting their social status*" (Karsten 1972: 17). This indicates that the lower status of craft workers emanates neither from the value of the role they play in the society nor from their occupation or means of livelihood, but from one's lineage/descent and the belief about *Buda*.

Contrary to the origin and history of craft workers, there is little disagreement among researchers about the lower social status and poor living conditions of craft workers. Hallpike (1968) argues that craft workers constitute subordinate social, economic, political, and cultural status in their respective societies and the occupations they practice are often despised and considered as disgraceful. Furthermore, they are characterized by poor living conditions emanating from their restricted access to resources like land and livestock (Hallpike 1968; Todd 1977; Levine 2000).

The 1974 Ethiopian revolution, which is considered a turning point in Ethiopia's history, had paved a new era in the history of minority groups (Vecchiato 1993; Damtew 2003). The revolution and the revolutionaries (*Derg* and other leftist groups) registered a considerable success in eradicating different types of 'harmful traditional practices' and in minimizing various forms of stigmatization and discrimination towards different social groups like artisans, and other minorities. The *Derg* has tried its best, with considerable success, in the form of proclamation and practical measures to eliminate different forms of discrimination, segregation and marginalization (Damtew 2003). Through the highly applauded 1975 land proclamation, it has redistributed land in a manner that assures all Ethiopians, including craft

workers [which were not allowed to possess land], would have equal opportunity and right to possess and use land (Damtew 2003; Dubale 2010).

Though the *Derg* must be praised for that, the tangible results obtained were below the expectations (Vecchiato 1993; Dubale 2010; Nahu 1998; Damtew 2003). Still, there remains a deep seated fear and contempt in the community towards artisans mainly *Buda* people (Vecchiato 1993). The *Hilancha* of Wolaitta (Akalework 2011), the *Yelma Gedam* of Menze (Damtew 2003), the *Manja* of Kaffa and Dawro (Pankhurst 2001) the *Tummano* of Kembatta, the *Yirfo* of Yem (Vecchiato 1993) are highly despised. Its efforts to eliminate the belief and discrimination against craft workers have not received enough public consent to offset the deep rooted beliefs and practices. Instead, it resulted in driving the belief and related practices notably *Buda* hunting underground (Damtew 2003). The belief is so deep, strong and interwoven it to the people's life philosophy. Even though their economic problems, the base, to use Marx's word, was resolved, to the dismay of the socialist *Derg* and Marxism at large, the superstructure i.e. beliefs and traditions never changed considerably and the social status and the overall living condition of the *Budas* have not shown significant improvement. Even in the 21st century, three and half decades after the revolution, craft workers are discriminated, stereotyped, ostracized to the extent that intermarriage, eating, drinking, co-habiting, or any other form of direct contact with 'polluting' people is considered to be contamination and hence people, implicitly or explicitly, try to avoid contact with craft workers (Damtew 2003; Dubale 2010). This can partially be attributed to the reversal or counter movements that took place soon after the revolution. That is, the atrocities and upheavals that followed the revolution added with the efforts of the reactionaries and anti-revolution forces like the remnants of the feudal system might have resulted in mixed feeling of sympathy, regret and resentment on part of many pro-revolution people and then nostalgia of the previous societal order, and hence revived the avoidance of craft workers.

2.4 Theoretical Models of Marginalization

Theoretical models are very helpful in order to grasp the cause and process of marginalization. So far, various models have been developed to explain the origin and the formation of minority groups and process of marginalization. No doubt that a single theory or model can not sufficiently grasp and explain every minority group for every group has its own unique history, culture and social environment. Yet, there are common features shared by many minority groups and hence by implication are considered to be the central elements of marginality. Accordingly, a number of models have been developed to explain the genesis of minority groups.

A. The 'Remnants' Model

According to the Remnants model, marginalized/minority groups are the outcome of the subjugation of the natives by an immigrating dominant group. Minority groups are, Huntigford (1976) and Huberland (1979), both cited in Dubale (2010) and Akalework (2011), asserted that, indigenous people who later become 'subjugated' or 'submerged' by a powerful immigrant population. Focusing on the language and physical features of marginalized groups, the model asserts, minority groups are formed due to the subjugation by a powerful immigrant population (external forces) who occupies the native's original area (Pankhurst 2001; Dubale 2010). As a result of this in-migration, the natives are marginalized. Another version of this model claims that the minority groups might have been brought with the immigrant conquerors (Pankhurst 2001; Dubale 2010). Even though Pankhurst (2001) argued that the model is 'largely discredited', it can be helpful in explaining the role of migration and colonialism in marginalizing indigenous people.

B. The ‘Holistic Specialization’ Model

This model is ecology based evolutionary scheme. For the Holistic specialization model *“ecological niches are the sources of stratification, and hence minority groups, by providing multiple opportunities and different mechanisms of adaptation”* (Dubale 2010: 16). In line to the model, Levine (2000) and Dubale (2010) argued that marginalization is the outcome of environmental or ecological forces and peoples way of adaptation to these forces. The occupation and status of minority groups is not the result of power relations like subjugation, but the result of the environment and the coping or adaptive strategy employed by the people. As its name implies, the model asserts that the patterns, which involve a certain amount of skill and training which are appropriate to a particular habitat or ecological niche, evolved are shared more or less equally by all members of the society (Levine 2000; Dubale 2010).

C. The ‘Internal Specialization’ Model

This model focuses, as its name implies, on internal occupational differentiations and specialization within certain population. The proponents of Internal Specialization model, for instance Lewis (1970) and Ambrom (1989), assert that minority groups are the outcome of internal occupational differentiation and specialization. The process of marginalization is, the model asserts, an internal process taking place in the society as a result of specialization and occupational differentiation. That means, as the society develops occupational specialization and differentiation become mandatory to provide the goods and services needed by the society (Lewis 1970; Ambrom 1989). Accordingly, differentiation and specialization in one society resulted in class division. Levin (2000) and Akalework (2011) also indicated that the model attributes the emergence of ruling elites, minority groups and the hierarchical division of classes to the process of occupational specialization and differentiation taking place within the society. Simply put, according to the model, class hierarchy and occupational difference

is not an externally induced phenomena but the outcome of internal specialization and differentiation in the society.

D. Mixed Genesis Model

The mixed genesis model ignores any single and conclusive model or cause and recommends considering various alternative conceptual frameworks and synthesizing them. It argues that since minority groups are varied in their culture, origin, history, and the social context under which they live, they require multiple analytical models (Vecchiato 1993; Pankhurst 1995). According to the mixed genesis model, every minority group has got its own unique history, social circumstances and, therefore, should be understood in relation to its historical and cultural context (Pankhurst 2001). Not only the history and origin of the minority, but also the arrangement and structure of the envioning society has implication on the nature of marginalization of the group. Not one but many and diverse factors might have caused the emergence and marginalization of minority groups.

According to the Mixed genesis model migration, political changes, social movements, war and military defeat, ecology, occupational specialization, religion and belief systems, famine and other historical forces are some of the possible causes of marginalization and the emergence of minority groups (Damtew 2003). Even though minority groups share common features and are mostly despised and stigmatized by the dominant group, Pankhurst argued, there is a prevailing difference in the historical process that led to the formation of stigmatized groups and in the form and degree of their marginalization (Pankhurst 2001). Scholars like Pankhurst (2001), Vecchiato (1993), Damtew (2003) and Akalework (2011) applied the Mixed genesis model and recommended that its relative approach is better suited to study the diverse minority groups in Ethiopia.

In light of the aforementioned four models about the genesis of minority groups, situating the *Budas* of central Tigray is very important. The mixed genesis model would be more appropriate and helpful in understanding the *Buda* of central Tigray because the model is, as its name indicates, open and flexible enough to be applied to diverse causes of diverse minority groups found round the world. The lesson learnt from the inquiry about the genesis of minority groups was that every group has got its own unique history, culture, origin, and social environment and therefore, needs to be understood in relation to its historical and cultural context (Pankhurst 2001; Dubale 2010; Akalework 2011). Any attempt to come up with one, distinctive, all inclusive, and general model to explain all the diversified groups in a diversified Ethiopia would be a futile exercise.

Therefore, it appears that the relativist approach of mixed genesis model would be more helpful in the Ethiopian context. Even though craftsmen, Pankhurst argued, are despised, stigmatized, and ostracized by the dominant majority, there is a prevailing difference in the historical process that led to the formation of stigmatized groups and in the form and degree of their marginalization (Pankhurst 2001).

2.5 An Overview of Traditional Medicine in Ethiopia

Traditional medicine (also known as indigenous or folk medicine) refers to ways of protecting and restoring health that existed before the arrival of modern medicine (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009; WHO 2002). As the term implies, traditional medicine belongs to the traditions of each country and have been handed down from generation to generation. Historically, until the arrival of modern medicine, traditional medicines have had to meet the needs of the people for many centuries. The World health organization (WHO) defines traditional medicine as *"the health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs incorporating plant, animal and mineral-based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual*

techniques and exercises, applied singularly or in combination to treat, diagnose and prevent illnesses or maintain well-being” (WHO 2002).

Traditional medicine covers a wide variety of therapies and practices which vary from country to country and region to region. Not only the practices and therapies but also the popularity of traditional medicine significantly varies from country to country. In some Asian and African countries, as opposed to western nations which dominantly rely on modern medicine, up to 80% of the population relies on traditional medicine (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009; WHO 2002). Recently, even in developed countries traditional medicine is becoming very popular. Herbal treatments, which are the most popular form of traditional medicine, are highly lucrative in the international marketplace. In 2004, annual revenues from herbal medicine reached 5 billion USD in Western Europe, 14 billion USD in China and 160 million USD in Brazil (WHO 2001; Yared 2011)

However, traditional medicines and practices are risky and can cause harmful and adverse effects. The WHO notes that inappropriate use of traditional medicines or practices can have negative or dangerous effects and that further research is needed to ascertain the efficiency and safety of several of the practices and medicinal plants used in traditional medicine (WHO 2001). One of the major problems associated with traditional medicine is its international diversity. Traditional medicine practices have been adopted in different cultures and regions without the parallel advance of international standards and methods for evaluation. Lack of guiding policy is also another major problem. Many countries have no national policies for traditional medicine (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009). Furthermore, scientific evidence from tests done to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of traditional medicine products and practices is limited. Lastly, the expanding herbal product market could drive over-harvesting of plants and threaten biodiversity (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009). Yet, despite of the risks and dangers

attached to traditional medicine, the majority populations of least developed countries like Ethiopia heavily rely on it. WHO recommends supporting and integrating traditional medicine into national health systems; ensuring the use of safe, effective and quality products and practices; acknowledging traditional medicine as part of primary health care; and ensuring patient safety by upgrading the skills and knowledge of traditional medicine providers as important directions to overcome the limitations inherent in traditional medicine (WHO 2001).

Traditional medicine has a very long history in Ethiopia (Yared 2011). Even though it is impossible to trace its birth, the fact that modern medicine entered in to Ethiopia just in the mid of 18th century (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009) indicates, Ethiopians had to solely rely on traditional medicine for centuries. In Ethiopia, spiritual healing, traditional midwifery, inoculation, massage, hydrotherapy and thermal water, bleeding and cupping, counter-irritation, surgery, dentistry, and bone-setting are among practices of traditional medicine that have been widely practiced ((Alevtina & Zerihun 2009; Yared 2011). Various types of medicines from plants, animals and mineral substances are utilized while practicing the traditional healing system (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009).

Even though modern medicine is becoming more widespread in Ethiopia, still most Ethiopians tend to rely more on traditional medicine (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009). Researches show that in Ethiopia more than 80% of the population depends on traditional medicine for its health needs (Fekadu 2007; Yared 2011). Cultural and religious acceptability of traditional healers and local pharmacopoeias, lack of access to modern health facilities and the low cost of traditional medicine has contributed for the widespread use of traditional medicine (Fekadu 2007; Yared 2011). Assefa (1992) added the 'inadequacy and incompetence' of modern medicine to deal with all type of illnesses as an additional contributing factor to the

popularity of traditional medicine. Assefa (1992) indicated that most psycho-social illnesses in Ethiopia couldn't be treated by modern medicine because they are thought to be caused by supernatural forces, and, as a result, it is believed that they should be dealt by traditional healers and supernatural forces.

Ethiopian traditional medicine is vastly complex and diverse and varies greatly among different ethnic groups. Yet, they share many things in common. For example, most Ethiopians rely on an explanation of disease that draws on both the "mystical" and "natural" causes of an illness (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009). Accordingly, there are two major types of traditional medicine practices in Ethiopia, namely secular or empirical healing and magico-religious healing practices (Pankhurst 1965; Alemayehu 1984; WHO 2001; Belachew 2008; Alevtina & Zerihun 2009). However, in practice, most Ethiopians employ a mix of these two healing methods (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009).

An understanding of the alleged or real source of knowledge of the traditional practitioners is an important issue in the understanding of beliefs and practices of traditional medicine. Generally speaking, there are two major ways of recruiting traditional healers in Ethiopia (Kebede et al 2006; Yared 2011). These are divine selection and apprenticeship. Yet, these two methods are not mutually exclusive. Because *"healers who claimed to have been 'elected' have also passed in the long way of apprenticeship and similarly healers who could be categorized as secular healers substantiate their healing practice by claiming of having supernatural support"* (Yared 2011: 7). Accordingly, since the average Ethiopian's perception of health involves peaceful relations with supernatural world as prerequisite for well-health, many people seek traditional, especially spiritual healers.

Chapter Three

Research Methods

The choice of a methodological approach, qualitative or quantitative, is closely linked to the nature of the research problem. In selecting methodological approach the issue of epistemology comes first. Regarding their epistemological position, on the one hand, positivists claim that we can conduct objective and unbiased observation free from our interpretations and interests. At the other extreme is the constructionists' stand that it is impossible to conduct objective investigation as the image of the external social world is the result of our constructions (Miller and Brewer 2003; Kalof, Dan & Dietz 2008). Yet, it is widely agreed that qualitative approach, which is commonly used by constructionists, is advantageous when the research problem is related to subjective thoughts, feelings, activities, experiences, traditions and beliefs. It enables to get valid information about subjective perceptions, thoughts and experiences of people. This study also focuses on the subjective thoughts and beliefs of people about *Buda*. It aims to uncover how the people make sense of the belief about *Buda* and its implication on their life. Therefore, this research employs a qualitative approach. Below is a detailed discussion of the research method beginning from description of the study area through data collection methods to ethical considerations.

3.1 Description of the Study Area

This study was conducted in Central Zone of the regional state of Tigray. Central Zone is one of the five administrative zones of the national regional state of Tigray. It is the largest of all the zones with 12 *Weredas* (districts). Historically important towns of Ethiopia like Yiha, Axum, Adwa, and monasteries like Debredamo, Abune Gerima, and Tsion Mariam are found in the zone. The Central Zone, referred to as *Maákelay Zoba* in Tigrigna, is bordered on the east by *Misraqawi* (Eastern), on the south by *Debubawi* (Southern), on the west by *Mirabawi* (Western) *zoba* (zone) and in the north by Eritrea. The capital of the zone is the historic town of Axum and is found 1024 km to the north of Addis Ababa.

According to the Central Statistical Agency estimate, Central Zone has an estimated total population of 1,245,824 of which 613,797 are males and 632,027 are females. Nearly 14.2% of its population is urban dweller. With an estimated area of 10,353.50 square kilometers, Central Zone has an estimated population density of 123.96 people per square kilometer. Looking at its ethnic composition, the Zone is predominantly inhabited by ethnic Tigrayans accounting for 99.6% of the population. Out of the remaining 0.4%, 0.11% are Agaw, 0.096% are Amhara, and all other ethnic groups comprise only 0.12%. Tigrinya is spoken as a first language by 99.67% of the inhabitants. The Zone is predominantly inhabited by Orthodox Christians that 1,218,635 (98.41%) of the population is Orthodox Christian, and 25,768 (1.55%) are Muslims. Protestants and Catholics account for less than 0.01% of the total population (CSA 2007).

Concerning education, 47% (54.7% male, 39.5% female) of the population are considered literate. 74% of all eligible children are enrolled in primary school, and 28% in secondary schools (CSA 2007). According to the CSA (2005) report, about 25% of the urban and 5.6% of all houses had access to safe drinking water and about 2.5% of the urban and 6% of the total had toilet facilities. The health coverage of the Zone is low. Nearly 78% of the Zone is exposed to malaria. About 13% of the inhabitants of Central Zone have access to electricity. This Zone has a road density of 29.0 kilometers per 1000 square kilometers. Like most part of Tigray Central Zone is characterized by shortage of arable land and erratic rainfall. The average rural household has 0.8 hectare of land which is significantly lower than the national average of 1.01 hectare per household (CSA 2005).

The climate of the study area ranges from *kola* (lowland) to *Dega* (highland) but 75% of the Zone is *Woinadega* (midland 1500-2500msl). Central Zone has four seasons named 'Qewie' - Spring (from September to November), 'Hagay' - Winter (from December to February),

'*Tsidiya*' - Autumn (from March to May), and '*Kiremti*' - Summer (from June to August). The landscape of the Zone is characterized by rugged topography, mountains and deep gorges. Even though the zone is characterized by scarcity of arable land and shortage of rainfall and hence one of the drought prone areas in Tigray, only 17% of the population is engaged in non-farm activities. About 83% of the inhabitants are farmers. *Taff*, wheat, corn, sorghum, barely, Niger seed, flaxseed and sesame are the main crops. Other agricultural produces include pulses, bean, lentils, onion, and potato. Handicraft (gold smith, weaving, painting and wood sculptures) and trading are another areas of activity observed in the towns of the study area (CSA 2007).

Administrative map of Tigray



3.2 Study Design

In order to meet the objectives outlined in chapter one, the study employed a qualitative approach. The study employed qualitative research methods because it deals with thoughts, beliefs, feelings, activities, and experiences which are difficult to quantify and measure. A cross sectional qualitative study was conducted to collect the necessary information on the research problem. Even though the study is basically cross sectional, a maximum effort was done to substantiate it with retrospective narrations by the informants and discussants about how the issue under discussion looked like in the past and how it changed through time to assume its current shape.

Thus, qualitative research methods were used to collect the necessary information about the people's (both *Budas* and *Chewas*) perception of *Buda*, the belief about alleged power of *Buda*, the impact of the belief on the intergroup and interpersonal relationships between the *Budas* and the *Chewas*, the social exclusion and marginalization the *Budas* are facing as a result of the belief, and the traditional healing practices applied by the community to combat the *Buda*'s attack. Maximum effort was made to collect information about how the people have made sense of their belief and practices about the *Buda*, from their perspectives.

3.3 Selection of Study Sites

The study is conducted in Central Zone of Tigray. Central zone was selected mainly due to the presumed relatively high concentration of alleged *Budas* as compared to other parts of Tigray. Finneran (2003) reported that the myths of Tigray people indicate Axum, the capital of the Zone, and its surrounding as the home place of the alleged *Budas*. The Zone is divided in to twelve administrative *Weredas*. From the twelve *Weredas* (districts) three (namely Adwa, Abiy Adi, and Axum) are towns commonly called, 'town [*Ketema*] *Weredas*' and the remaining nine are 'rural [*Geter*] *Weredas*' with small towns within them.

Considering the scope of the research and the available time and resource, the information was collected from three purposively selected *Weredas*: one town *Wereda* (Axum) and two rural *Weredas*, namely Ahferom and Werieleke. Both town *Weredas* and rural *Weredas* were included purposively in order to see if there is any variation across place of residence so far as the research problem is concerned. From the town *Weredas* found in the Zone, Axum was selected for it is thought to have a relatively higher concentration of *Budas* and is said to be the home town of the *Budas*. Similarly, the two rural *Weredas* (Ahferom and Werieleke) were selected for three reasons. First, it was found to be useful to include rural *Weredas* so as to make comparison with Axum town. And two *Weredas* were selected, not to claim representativeness, but for it was believed to be better to relay, in order to extract as diverse and reliable information as possible, on two than just one *Wereda*. Secondly, they were assumed to be representative of the zone in terms of religious composition of their population. Furthermore, the fact that the researcher was born and grown up and worked in the area is another reason for selecting them. The researcher was born and brought up in Ahferom *Wereda*, and worked for three years in Werieleke *Wereda*. Hence, his familiarity with the area was an added advantage and very helpful in making easy entry, smooth and fruitful communication with the people and thereby getting sufficient and valid information about the issue under investigation.

Finally, from the eighty two *Kebeles* found in these three *Weredas*, nine *Kebeles*, three *Kebeles* from each *Wereda* were selected. These *Kebeles* were selected randomly because there was no presumed difference among the *Kebeles* of the selected *Weredas* so far as the research problem is concerned.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

In order to generate detailed and valid information and to compensate the pitfalls inherent in each research method the study employed a combination of different data collection methods such as in-depth interview, focus group discussion, field observation and case study methods. However, the largest share of the information was gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGD).

3.4.1 In-Depth Interview: In-depth interview is an appropriate research method for collecting detailed and valid information on subjective experiences, perceptions, and thoughts of people (Miller and Brewer 2003). In in-depth interviews the interviewer can get very useful information by letting the interviewee to narrate his/her experiences and thoughts. In this study in-depth interviews with key informants and general informants were held to uncover subjects' experiences and thoughts related to the *Buda* belief, marginalization of the *Budas*, and the traditional healing methods used to combat *Buda* attack.

Before going in to data collection activities the researcher tried to identify the segment of population who are thought to be knowledgeable in the issue under discussion. Accordingly, elderly people, religious leaders, craft workers, and traditional healers were selected as key informants. The key informants were purposively selected by their seniority [wealth of knowledge and experience related to the belief]. In addition to the key informants, in-depth interview was also conducted with general informants (ordinary people) from both *Budas* and *Chewas*. These general informants were important source of information to see the current status of the belief and the changes it has undergone through time.

After the appropriate informants were selected the researcher interviewed them at their homes. On average one interview session took about two hours. The interviews were conducted from January to March 2012. All the interviews conducted with the general

informants and key informants were guided by unstructured questions and checklist. The information was collected by raising open-ended questions in thought provoking way and by making exhaustive discussion in the interviewing process. In the interviews a lot of effort has been exerted to obtain maximum data about the origin and prevalence of the belief, the overall status of the *Budas*, the people's perception of *Buda*, the social relationship between the *Budas* and *Chewas*, the form and extent of exclusion the *Budas* face, the coping mechanisms used by the *Budas* in order to overcome the exclusion, and the traditional healing practices employed to prevent and cure *Buda* attack. The interviews were exhaustive and very open because it was conducted in a permissive setting and the researcher had established a good rapport with the interviewees.

Selection and size of the in-depth interviewees: The size of the in-depth interview informants was not predetermined. Grounded in the principles of theoretical sampling, the researcher engaged in a continued process of interview with the research subjects until the data collected became sufficient to respond to the research objectives. As a result, a total of sixteen key informants of whom five were females were purposively selected and interviewed. Eleven of the sixteen key informants were *Chewas* and the remaining five were alleged *Budas*.

In addition to the sixteen key informants that participated in the in-depth interviews, twenty in-depth interviewees (general informants) were selected from various segments of the population in order to supplement the information obtained from key informants. Of these twenty in-depth interview informants, five were alleged *Budas* and the remaining fifteen were *Chewas*. From the twenty in-depth interview informants, eight were females and the remaining twelve were males. In order to obtain as maximum and as diverse data as possible, the interviewees were selected from diverse social categories on the bases of such social characteristics as gender, educational status, religion, age, and place of residence. Thus, a

total of thirty six interviewees, sixteen key informants (five females and eleven males) and twenty general informants (eight females and twelve males), were interviewed. Of these thirty six interviewees twenty six were *Chewas* and the remaining ten were from the *Budas*. (A detailed profile of the research participants is found in the appendix part).

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD): In this study focus group discussions were employed to complement the information obtained through in-depth interview. Focus group discussions are very useful in order to produce shared thoughts and experiences. Accordingly, FGDs were mainly used to collect group or community level information on the nature of the *Buda* belief, peoples' perception of *Buda* people, and the marginalization of the *Budas*. A series of group discussions with individuals selected from different social groups was held to explore and grasp commonly held thoughts and experiences about the belief and its impacts. Accordingly, a total of forty-eight discussants participated in the six focus group discussion, each group consisting eight participants. These six FGDs [1. Male Farmers 2. rural housewives 3. Urban residents of both sex 4. High school students of both sex 5. Muslims of both sex 6. Christians of both sexes] were held in six *Kebeles*, two *Kebeles* from each *Wereda*. The discussants constituted farmers, house wives, civil servants, traders and students of both sexes. In order to see the effect of religion, separate FGD sessions were held with Christians and with Muslims. However, all the FGDs were conducted with *Chewas* for the *Budas* weren't willing to gather and discuss on the issue. Provided the belief about *Buda* and the negative attitude of the society towards them, they might have considered gathering and discussing about *Buda* by itself tantamount to admitting or recognizing themselves as *Budas*, which is unacceptable and disgraceful to them. Fortunately, they were willing to be interviewed individually and ample information was collected through the in-depth interviews conducted with ten *Budas*.

To avoid the influence of some group members on other participants, members of focus groups were made relatively homogenous on the basis of key characteristics such as age, religion, level of education, socio-economic status, and participants' degree of intimacy to one another. This enabled participants to freely forward their ideas and feelings. In all discussions, effort was made to let ideas come out of group interactions rather than the influence of some members or the moderator. All group discussions were moderated by the researcher using a checklist and were conducted in a suitable setting [in place and time they selected and was accompanied by refreshments served by the researcher] in order to uncover opinions and share ideas and perceptions with the participants.

3.4.3 Case Study: Different cases were also selected and analyzed in order to generate detailed information on individual experiences. This was done with the aim of obtaining detailed data and substantiating the information obtained by other data collection methods. Accordingly, three cases, one about marriage ties between *Budas* and *Chewas* and two about traditional healing practices, have been presented and discussed.

3.4.4 Field Observation: In addition to the aforementioned sources, considerable proportion of supplementary information was obtained from personal observation. The researcher made observations mainly on craft work sites, churches, and residences where traditional healers rendered services. The daily life of the people, the interaction among them were carefully observed, assessed, and recorded. The fact that the researcher is familiar (native) to the area was an added advantage in making useful observation.

3.4.5 Secondary Sources: In addition to the primary data collected by the researcher from the research subjects using qualitative research methods, information obtained from different sources like books, journal articles, online publications, brochures, and magazines were used to complement the first hand information collected by the researcher.

Thus, the lion's share of the information used in this research was generated by the researcher using in-depth interview and focus group discussion and it was supplemented by personal observation, analysis of cases and data obtained from secondary sources. To compensate the weakness inherent in each data collection method, triangulation of data collection methods was applied systematically.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

Since most of the data collected for the purpose of this study is qualitative information generated using qualitative data collection methods, the data was analyzed manually by carefully recording, transcribing, organizing, and summarizing the data in to written form. Since the discussions and interviews were made in the local language, Tigrigna, the information collected was directly translated to English by the researcher. In order not to lose ideas and keep their originality, coherence and flow in-depth interviews were tape-recorded and field notes were taken on daily basis. All kinds of information were analyzed qualitatively, using thematic and comparative approaches, to produce qualitative information.

Both thematic and comparative methods of qualitative data analysis have been employed to analyze the qualitative data obtained using in-depth, focus group discussions, case histories and observation so that it will not lose its originality and logical flow. Thematic analysis was used in such a way that, after extensive readings of the related materials, major categories/themes on which the study will revolve was sketched. The themes were further elaborated on the course of data collection. After the data was collected the themes were revised, and developed. The themes matched with the objectives of the study and with the overall skeleton of the belief: its roots, history, content, coverage, strength, implication and finally the recent changes and future prospects. Then the data gathered from different sources using different techniques was analyzed based on the themes developed. In addition, the

comparative analysis was dealt by comparing and contrasting the information obtained from the informants of the study with the literature which were reviewed for the purpose of the study. Moreover the information given by the informants was compared and cross-checked with each other. The data analysis was accomplished by way of comparisons, for instance alleged *Budas* with the *Chewas*, the key informants with the General informants, the focus group discussants with the interviewees, the elderly informants with the younger ones, the Muslims with the Christians etc. The information obtained from in-depth interviews had to be compared and synchronized with the information collected using FGDs, case histories, and personal observation. Most of the analysis of the data was done simultaneously with data collection. This enabled the researcher to probe into other unrevealed ideas and raise further questions for detailed discussion. The data was further analyzed at the end of every interview and group discussion. The interpretation of the meaning of the information collected was performed with utmost care and attention so that it will not lose its originality and clarity.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Securing informed consent of research participants is among the binding ethical principles guiding the conduct of any research undertaking. To achieve this, the researcher followed the following steps. Firstly, in order to secure permission for undertaking the research, the researcher got letters of cooperation written from Addis Ababa University and the national regional state of Tigray to different concerned bodies and he briefed each regarding the purpose and objectives of the study. Then, a letter of cooperation from administration of the study area, *maekelay* [central] *zoba* [zone], was obtained. Since the researcher has worked for a couple of years in the study area, specifically *Werieleke Wereda*, approaching and obtaining the necessary facilities and permission letter from the zone and *Wereda* administrations was not difficult. Yet, in order to make acquaintances with the general public

and build trust the researcher made frequent site visits including visits to churches, meetings and other gatherings.

After making frequent field visits, the researcher informed research participants about the purpose of the study and showed the letters of cooperation written by the *Zoba Mimihidar* (zone administration). While introducing himself to the research participants, the researcher made to them clear that the study has no any other purpose but for academic end. To avoid the participants presumed fear of potential harm or legal action he assured them that he had no any contact with the government and the information they give will not be handed over to any third party. They were told that the information collected will be used solely for the research and their identity and the information they give will be kept confidential. This made participants drop their guards, feel secure, and willingly participate in the study.

Thus, it has to be noted that all the names used in the analysis and discussion are not the real names of informants. Since the right to privacy of informants needs to be protected, the names are pseudo names given by the researcher. Moreover, some of the interviews, especially the interviews conducted with the alleged *Budas* were not recorded for they were not willing to be recorded.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on the *Buda* belief, the marginalization of *Budas* and the traditional healing methods among people of central Tigray. Due to various reasons this study has a number of limitations. It is limited in its scope and coverage that it is confined to central zone of Tigray. Even though it would have been better had it covered the whole of Tigray, due to time and budget constraints it was confined to only one, but the largest, of the five administrative zones of the regional state. In addition, the study is limited to majority-minority relationship between the *Chewa* (majority) and *Buda* (minority) groups and hence it

doesn't give enough emphasis to minority-minority relationships; the relationship of the *Budas* with other minority social groups, like *Barya* (people of ex-slave ancestry) because it was found too broad to handle. Thus, other minority groups found in the zone were not part of the study. Accordingly, all the information was collected from the *Chewas* and the *Budas*.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter, where empirical information obtained from the research subjects in the study area are presented, analyzed and discussed, is divided, for the purpose of clarity and logical flow, into four broad sections. The first section deals with the social stratification of Tigray society in general and people of Central Tigray in particular. The huge prestige gap between the *Chewa* [pure boned] majority and the *Buda* minority, and the despised position of the *Budas* has been discussed in this section.

The second section discusses the main aspects of the *Buda* belief. It describes the roots of the belief, the controversies surrounding the alleged extraordinary power of the *Buda*, peoples' perception of *Buda*, the mechanisms of identifying the *Buda* person and illnesses caused by *Buda*, and finally the targets, rationales and *modes operandi* of *Buda* attack.

Section three presents the discrimination and marginalization of *Buda* people by the mainstream society. It discusses the coping and revenge measures taken by the majority (the non *Buda*) in response to the alleged evil deeds of the *Budas*, and its impact on the interpersonal relationships between *Budas* and *Chewas* in general and the social life of the *Budas* in particular. The extent and forms (dimensions) of discrimination and marginalization of the *Budas* in social, economic, political, and spiritual spheres of life have been analyzed. Furthermore, the recent decline in the prevalence and strength of the belief and the consequent trends in the integration of *Budas* to the mainstream society have been discussed in detail. In addition, a detailed analysis of the indigenous, mostly faith-based, preventive, diagnosis and curative techniques developed by the society in order to combat *Buda* attack have been presented. Lastly, a comparative analysis of the healing methods of Muslims and Christians has been made and the negative implications of the belief on the use of modern medicine have been discussed.

Note that the way the researcher presented/narrated the findings and the discussions about the belief in *Buda* may resemble/appear as if the existence of the '*Buda*' is confirmed or a proven fact, or as if the researcher believed the '*Buda* power, spirit, *Buda* people or the like', as perceived by the '*Chewa*' informants, exists. It is not. Neither is it confirmed/proven fact nor the researcher believed it exists. It is simply the reflection of the ethnographic style of writing the researcher employed. The researcher preferred, for the purpose of clarity, flow, originality and to uncover the insider's subjective perceptions, to approach and present/narrate the issue from the informants' point of view using their own words. Yet, researcher has made substantial interventions to, when deemed necessary, interpret what is being said.

4.1 An Overview of Social Stratification of Tigray Society

Universally, societies are stratified along various parameters. Income, religion, sex, belief, ethnicity are some of the variables along which societies are stratified (Damtew 2003). Tigray society, like any society, is a stratified society. It is a firmly stratified society with the *Chewas* [pure boned] occupying the highest position and non *Chewas* like *Barya* [people of ex-slave ancestry], *Budas* [evil eyed or craft workers], *Wata* [singer] *Hamyen* or *lalibela* [Agew] in the bottom of the hierarchy (Tigray Tourism 2011). The *Chewas* are the dominant social groups that comprise the majority of the population and enjoy an upper social status in the society. The non *Chewas* on the other hand, are subordinate group in the social strata and have been compelled to experience social exclusion and inequality. They are marginalized minority groups having the lowest social status in the society. Of all the non *Chewas*, the *Budas* are the most despised, hated, feared and marginalized people and occupy the lowest point in the social hierarchy (Tigray Tourism 2011).

The rationale behind the huge status gab between the *Chewas* and the *Budas* of Tigray is the belief about evil eye. The *Budas* are despised and marginalized because it is widely believed

that they are evil eyed people accountable for attacking or 'eating' people and causing illnesses and deaths (Tigray Tourism 2011). Thus, to properly grasp the stratification of Tigray society in general and the status of the *Budas* in particular, it is mandatory to review the belief about *Buda*. The perception of the people of central Tigray about the alleged *Buda* people is essential in order to understand the interpersonal and intergroup relations between the *Chewas* and *Budas*, the consequent marginalization and exclusion of the *Budas*, and the traditional healing practices aimed at combating the *Budas*.

4.2 The *Buda* Belief

4.2.1 The Roots of the Belief about *Buda*

Reminick (1974) indicated that the Amhara peasant's supernatural world includes both Christian and pagan elements. He indicated that although *Tewahdo* [Monophysite] Christianity is the 'legitimate' religion of the Amhara people, the pagan or 'non legitimate' system of belief also play an important role in the everyday routine of the people's social and cultural life. It is not surprising that the supernatural world of the people of Tigray is similar to its Amhara counterpart for the two ethnic groups share similar history, religion, culture, and geography (Reminick 1974; Amsalu 2000; Tigray Tourism 2011).

The supernatural world of Orthodox Christians of Tigray has essentially four separate realms (Reminick 1974; Amsalu 2000; Tigray Tourism 2011). First, there is the dominant Monophysite Christian religion involving the almighty God, the Devil, the virgin Marry, the Saints and Angels in Heaven. Second, there are the *Zar* and the *Adbar* spirits, "protectors" who extract tribute in return for physical and emotional security and who deal out punishments for failure to recognize them through the practice of the appropriate rituals. Third is the belief in the *Buda*, a class of people who exert a deadly power over the descendants of God's 'chosen children'. The fourth category of belief includes the *Zarti* locally called *Weyzerazir*, literally means beautiful ladies, and the *Devils* that prowl the

countryside creating danger to unsuspecting persons who cross their path (Amsalu 2000; Tigray Tourism 2011).

Therefore, although the society declares Orthodox *Tewahdo* as its 'official religion', traditional belief systems and customary practices are tolerated. Accordingly, ordinary people of Tigray attribute many diseases or illnesses to the various sorts of evil and protector spirits. From the tradition point of view, any illness is caused either by the *Buda* (evil eye) or some evil like *Aganiniti* (evil spirits), or guardian spirits such as *Zarti*, *Wuqabe* and *Adbar* (*Debri*). In common with the rest of Tigray, people of the study area believed that most deaths and illnesses were caused by super natural spirits. The informants and focus group discussants of this study disclosed that *Aganiniti*, Devil, and *Buda* are inherently evil spirits whose intention is to harm human beings. On the other hand, *Adbar*, *Zar*, and *Wuqabe* are protective or guardian spirits which are essentially good to human beings unless offended by them. Community, household and individual cults namely *Adbar*, *Wuqabe*, and *Zar* respectively are understood to be protectors for the services of which human beings must pay *Gibri* (tribute). Thus, unlike the evil powers like *Buda* and *Aganiniti*, protective spirit of the community (*Adbar*), protective spirit of the household (*Wuqabe*) and protective spirit of the individual (*Zar*) cause calamities, epidemics or illness only when they are mistreated and offended by the respective community, household or individual. The *Zar*, *Wuqabe*, and *Adbar* are guardian spirits which protect the people in return for appeasement and obedience (Reminick; 1974; Tigray Tourism 2011). Therefore, like the Amharas, people of Central Tigray believed that the *Adbar* protects the community, the *Wuqabe* protects the household and the *Zar* protects the individual person.

As opposed to the guardian spirits the research participants indicated, evil spirits are believed to cause illness and other calamities simply because they are inherently evil. Thus, while the guardian spirits are treated with obedience and appeasement, the evil spirits are dealt with

punishment. Accordingly, informants indicated that if the symptom of the disease is believed to indicate let *Likiefti* [unfortunate encounter with the *Aganints*] which is supposed to be caused by evil spirits especially *Aganints*, then specialists are to drive out the evil spirits. Whereas illnesses supposedly induced by protective spirits, let *nay Geza Tata* [failure to appease and worship the cult of the household], it is to be dealt by healers who have the skill of persuasion and propitiating the spirit. If the signs indicate evil eye (*Buda*) attack, the exorcist commonly called *Buda Alkaki* is to apply his magical power in order to drive out the spirit. Christian People of Central Tigray, in similarity to the rest of Tigray society (Tigray Tourism 2011) and Amhara society (Reminick 1974), try their best to appease the guardian spirits and avoid and punish the evil spirits and the *Budas*.

Like their Christian counterparts, belief in the evil eye is an important part of the folk culture of Muslims of central Tigray. Muslim informants and discussants revealed that the belief in the *Buda* is constantly present in people's lives, alongside beliefs about spirits, *Jimms* (devils) and other demons, and it has big implications on their life. It serves as a crucial mechanism to explain social problems, envy, bad luck and misfortune in the uncertain conditions of life.

Before we get in to a discussion of the *Buda* belief it is necessary to differentiate *Buda* from *Ayini Seb*. Many people get difficulty to differentiate *Buda* from *Ayini Seb* [eye of people]. Nevertheless, the boundary seems clear. According to the interviewees, *Budas* are a separate group of people possessed by evil spirit and naturally determined to attack people by evil gaze or other magical means. *Ayini Seb*, on the other hand, is the power of the eye found in any person (*Chewa* or non *Chewa*). Even though the *Ayini Seb* can cause (due to envy or admiration) harm to people, cattle and grain, it is believed to be less dangerous compared to the damage caused by *Buda's* attack. Moreover, as opposed to the *Budas* who are supposed to attack people intentionally, the *Ayini Seb*, sometimes called *Nay Chewa Ayini*, is unintentional and cause harm without the envier's consciousness.

4.2.2 General Overview of the Belief about *Buda*

The *Budas*, who are also called *Tebib* are people which occupy the lowest ladder in the social hierarchy of the Tigray society for they are believed to be evil eyed people. The term *Buda* or *Tebib* is used to refer both to the evil eyed person (the bearer of the evil eye) and the spirit possessing the person. Majority of the people of Central Tigray believes in the power of *Buda*: the extraordinary evil power of the *Buda* to attack people (Tigray Tourism 2011: 137). The fact that the belief about evil eye is present in both Christianity and Islam, which more than 99.6% of the inhabitants of Central Tigray adhere to, reveals the pervasiveness of the belief.

Budas are, *Chewas* of Central Tigray believe, people with a special gift of glancing at others and attacking them. They are also believed to use magical powers and techniques to attack people. They are thought to be inherently envious and jealous people driven by evil spirit to attack others. *Chewa* key informants indicated that the *Budas* cause many problems to people, domestic animals, crops and other agricultural produces. Gebremeskel. 66, *Chewa* key informant indicated that *Budas* cause diseases like madness, anxiety, emotional instability, hearing impairment, visual impairment, fever, acute abdominal pain, sterility, disorder in menstruation, problems in pregnancy, child birth and breast milk, etc. Young, wealthy, beautiful and outstanding individuals are thought to be the most vulnerable people to *Buda* attack. Not only young, beautiful and rich but also shy people are highly vulnerable to *Buda* attack. In addition, it is widely believed that there are people who are naturally prone to *Buda* attack. Some people are believed to be naturally soft and easier to be pierced [*ziwiga'e*] by a *Buda*. The informants indicated that children and women are highly vulnerable. Individuals who have quarrel or special relation with *Buda* are also thought to be very susceptible to attack. Moreover a person is most vulnerable to attack or in danger of being 'eaten' by the *Buda* when the *Buda* sees fear or anxiety in his potential victim. Therefore,

maintaining one's composure when in the presence of a *Buda* and acting naturally or confidently as if the *Buda* did not matter at all is believed to be very helpful.

In Central Tigray considerable portion of illnesses, deaths and misfortunes are attributed to *Buda* attack. There are different symptoms that indicate the perceived illness is caused by *Buda* attack. For example, among the Amharas Reminick (1974) indicated that typical symptoms of being attacked or eaten by *Buda* are drowsiness, slight yaws, drooping eyelids, listlessness, fatigue, weariness, lack of concentration, restlessness, discomfort, anxiety, cramps, convulsions, headaches, hiccoughs, etc. In addition to the aforementioned symptoms, informants of this study enlisted instant crying, instant and sustained lounging, sudden collapse, acute abdominal pain, fretting, high temper, disagreement with family members as the most indicative symptoms of *Buda* attack.

Even though most people share common view about the main aspects of the belief notably the magical power of the *Budas* and their evil deeds, sometimes they hold different and conflicting ideas on some aspects of the belief. The source of the extraordinary mystical power of the *Buda* is one of these aspects on which the informants held conflicting view. According to some *Chewa* key informants, the ultimate source of the power of the *Buda* is the devil and other evil spirits. These informants indicated that devil gave a certain clan the extraordinary power which will be used for evil deeds against God's 'chosen children'. Thus, all descents of the clan are thought to have possessed *Buda* power. Even though the power is hereditary, the informants indicated, it is also necessary to be substantiated by training. As a result, while some aspect of the power (the evil spirit) is inherited the know-how about attacking people is learned from parents notably the father.

On the contrary, other key informants and in-depth interviewees attributed the source of the power of evil eye to king Solomon of Israel. They base their explanation on the Holy Bible

and other religious myths and argued that the evil eye power is inherited from king Solomon of Israel. Solomon is believed to be, as per the Holy Bible, the wisest man ever lived. He was gifted all the wisdom from God (Amsalu 2000; Damtew 2003; Tigray Tourism 2011). Some of the descendents of Solomon are also believed to have inherited the wisdom of their father and become *Tebib* (wise). However, the informants said, through time they used their wisdom for evil ends and ended up Buda.

Even though whether the ultimate source of the power of the *Buda* is the devil or king Solomon and by implication the Almighty God is very debatable, the people of Central Tigray believed that *Budas* are endowed with extraordinary evil power and are use this power for evil deeds. Most people are fearful of even mentioning the *Buda*, especially at night, because if they are overheard by a *Buda*, the *Buda* will become angry and may 'eat' them or their family members. As a result, *Budas* are highly feared, hated, despised, and marginalized. Gebremeskel, 66 said:

I am scared of them; I firmly believe that they eat people. They can attack, kill or disease me or my family members. Therefore, I always try to avoid contact with them. When contact is unavoidable as much as possible I try to appease them so that they will not attack me or my family. ... Since they eat people they are the most despised and feared ones. They are hated by everyone.

Region wise survey about peoples' perception of craft workers was conducted in 2010 by the Culture and Tourism Agency of the National Regional State of Tigray. The finding of the survey was consistent with Gebremeskel's view. Of the 220 respondents, which were selected from all zones in the regional state, 92% believed in the existence of the alleged mystical power of *Buda* to eat people (Tigray Tourism 2011). They believed that *Buda* people 'eat' and cause illness and death, and expressed their fear of being eaten. From the 57 respondents selected from Central Zone, all but two [one university lecturer and one district official] admitted that they are scared of being attacked by *Buda* and expressed their negative attitude

towards the *Budas*. All of them said that they don't want to establish any type of affinal (marriage) ties with *Buda* people.

Even though the belief about the power of *Buda* is almost universal in the study area, the number of alleged *Buda* people is very low. According to the information obtained from key informants, the proportion of *Budas* considerably varies from village to village. The researcher found that, with the help of key informants, the number of alleged *Buda* people in a village called *Feleg* is about 88 people which accounts for 13% of the total residents of the village. In another village called *Arena*, the number of alleged *Budas* is only 19, which is about 3% of the village. However, this data is not conclusive and guaranteed and hence further quantitative research is needed to get the precise proportion of the alleged *Budas*.

Yet, the alleged higher proportion of *Budas* in Axum town is an important point worth of discussion. Informants and discussants confirmed that they believe Axum has higher number of *Budas* than any place in the study area. Many people of Central Zone consider Axum as the home town of *Budas*. Accordingly, anyone who is known to be from Axum is highly suspected of being *Buda* and seen with contempt and fear. In this regard, a 58 years old female *Chewa* key informant, Askualu of *Feresmay* town, said "if I came to know that somebody is from Axum town or its vicinity, the first thing that comes to my mind is the *Buda* and then follows fear of being eaten. Then, I begin contemplating the possible ways of protecting myself and my family.

Another *Chewa* in-depth interviewee from Axum expressed:

Yes! We [residents of Axum] know very well that Axum is portrayed by other people as the town of Budas. As a result, being a person from Axum is a more than enough condition to raise suspicion. This is a very bad image for Axum and its residents. I feel discomfort because our image is being polluted mistakenly. The number of Budas in Axum is much lower than the assumption of outsiders. Yet, I can't deny I also agree that more Budas are found in Axum than other nearby towns. My point is that it is much lower than the rumors spread outside.

As indicated above, the information obtained from informants and focus group discussants confirms to the widespread allegation of the presence of higher proportion of alleged *Buda* people in Axum than other places in the study area. Moreover it is widely believed that Axum is the origin and center of *Budas* and most *Budas* in Tigray were dispersed from Axum. Some key informants indicated that The *Budas* found in Tigray were brought by the Axumite kings from places outside of the Axumite kingdom. They were brought to serve the kings and the kingdom in making palaces, obelisks, armaments, tools, handicrafts, ornaments and other craft works. Yet, a historical study needs to be carried out to investigate if the alleged *Budas* had, as the *Chewas* allege, a separate and a non Tigrayan origin. Moreover, the presumed linkage between Axum and *Buda* people need to be investigated. In fact, one can argue, the link between Axum and *Budas* is not a strange thing for handcraft workers congregate in cities and big temples and churches where there is high demand for their products, metal ceremonial and ritual objects, such as hand Crosses [*Meskel*], processional Crosses, *Tsenatsil* [*sistrum*], *Mequamiya* [*standing stick*] *Quachil* [spherical jingle], ceremonial cape or crown and other artifacts. Provided that Axum has been the most important city in the region, it may not be surprising that it was the center of craft workers and hence of center of *Budas* who might have moved later to other cities such as Asmara and Addis Ababa. Yet, a historical study is needed to dig out their pre-Axumite place/origin and also to discover if similar links exist with the kingdom centers that succeeded Axum. If such links are not found in centers like Lalibela, Gonder, Mekele, Ankober etc, the association between Axum and *Buda* need to be seen from different perspective. In previous studies, for instance Young (1970), Reminick (1974), Vecchiato (1993), Amsalu (2000) such links were not reported.

4.2.3 Perceived Methods of Attack Applied by the *Budas*

Concerning the *modes operandi* of attack, the *Chewa* key informants indicated, in agreement with the perception of *Rega* (*Chewa*) Amharas (Reminick 1974), that the *Budas* have three

techniques of attack. The simplest method of attack involves giving the evil eye gaze to the victim and then waiting for his death. The second, and perhaps the most common, technique of attack used by the *Buda* is twisting a mystical herb. This method of attack involves the evil eye person finding a victim, twisting the root of a certain unnamed herb, it is unnamed for no one claimed or admitted of knowing it, and forming a loop with this root as if one were tying a knot. The loop is then drawn smaller very slowly, and while this is being done, the victim dies.

Thirdly, *Buda* people can change into hyenas and roam the village at night. It is convenient for a *Buda* to attack (eat) victim in the form of a hyena in order to conceal his human identity (Reminick 1974; Tigray Tourism 20011). The *Buda* changes himself [I say 'himself' because Tigray society addresses the *Buda* in male sex] in to a hyena and then searches for a victim, and on finding one, attacks the unfortunate one. One mechanism of changing into hyena is using the herb (*Ets*) called *Etse Mesewer*. This *Ets* enables the *Buda* to change from one form to another and also to make himself invisible to others. It has to be noted that in central Tigray the *Budas* are highly associated with hyenas and insulted by the non *Budas* as *zibi'e* [hyena].

The *Chewas* perception is that *Buda* people assume the hyena form commonly in three situations. First, the *Buda* are supposed to mysteriously change themselves into hyena in order to exhume human bodies from graves either to eat them or to restore them to life and make them their house servants. Secondly, they are said to assume the hyena form in order to escape from danger in life threatening situations, like in case of attempt of revenge by the non *Budas*. Hyena is believed to be their favorite horse. Thirdly, the *Chewa* people believe, the *Budas* become hyena, especially in times of famine and drought in search of food. The informants indicated that even though the hyena is a naturally fearful animal, it is the most feared animal because of the symbolic attachment to the *Buda's* spirit.

4.2.4 The Presumed Rationale of the *Buda* to Attack People

The *Chewa* informants and discussants indicated that *Budas* attack people for various reasons. First, the *Budas* are believed to be naturally determined to eat people. They are thought to be inherently evil and want to see evil things happen to people. Secondly, they are assumed to be jealous and envious. Thirdly, their need of a house servant is presented as additional cause for attacking people. It is believed that after the attack is effectuated and the person is dead, the victim's corpse is taken from the grave by the *Buda* and transformed to a living person. I.e. after being exhumed, the corpse is taken to the house of the *Buda* where it is brought back to life in order to serve the *Buda*. But the slave is mute and unable to utter a sound. After seven solid years of service the victim is permanently released and leaving the *Buda* without a 'helper' and enforcing him to look for a substitute house servant.

It is widely believed that the *Budas* have two techniques or switches used to transform the house servant from one form to another. One switch is used to turn the servant in to a pot or a donkey when visitors come; and then when the outsiders leave; the other switch transforms the pot or donkey in to a slave/servant again. In this way outside interference is prevented. When the slave is treated cruelly it will shed silent tears, desperately trying to weep. After seven years, it is believed, the body begins to disintegrate, finally turning into ashes.

Related to this, the usual story in the study area is about dead persons being seen alive by someone. However, persons who are reported to have claimed encountering someone dead are not named. Rather, most people refer to 'someone' as having said that he had met a known *Buda* victim fetching firewood or at markets. This 'someone' is reported to have said that the victim disappeared or became invisible [*Tesewiru*] as the person tried to approach and talk to him. The story about "*Deqi Shekona Adgi*" which will be presented latter is a good example to understand how the *Buda* makes the victim his servant.

4.2.5 Methods of identifying the alleged *Budas*

To the people of Central Tigray identifying what they call *Buda* is not easy though not impossible. They have different techniques of identifying *Buda* person. Of all techniques, tracing one's lineage is the common and preferred one. Since being a *Buda* is an ascribed status and hereditary one, a person born to *Buda* parent/s is by default a *Buda*. Therefore, tracing one's descent or lineage is the easiest and 'assured' way of identifying the *Buda*. In rural areas of central Tigray the *Budas* are easily identified for the villagers knew each other. The other technique of identifying the *Buda* is through identifying one's occupation. Since craftworks like goldsmith, black smith, pottery etc are thought to be the jobs of the *Budas*, people engaged in craft working are perceived as *Buda*. Though not warranted, the *Budas* can also be identified by their physical qualities. They may be thinner than usual. They may have an eye deformity or they may tend to look sidewise at people. In central Tigray, people with such physical features are thought to be *Buda* and hence are approached with utmost care and suspicion.

Interestingly enough, beauty is also used as an indicator to identify *Buda*. According to the informants and discussants, being very beautiful is thought to be another feature of *Buda* people. The people believed that individuals born from *Buda*, especially girls are sometimes exceptionally beautiful. All over the study area there is a popular proverb saying that '*Melkegnas Ya Aberegna*' [a beautiful is mysterious]. If a girl is so beautiful and matured but is not yet married, people (those who don't know her lineage) suspect that she must be *Buda*. That is why parents repeatedly warn or caution their sons not to rush to a beautiful lady unless they knew who she is and her background as well.

But the physical qualities discussed above are not, in themselves, sufficient to arouse suspicion. That is why identifying the *Buda* is sometimes difficult and misleading. Tracing lineage and occupation are the two most widely used mechanisms of identifying a *Buda*.

Since tracing one's lineage is easier in rural areas, for the people know each other, identifying *Buda* in a homogenous rural people is much easier than in the heterogeneous urban society. Besides, the different mechanisms of identifying the *Buda* are mutually reinforcing. If, for example, someone is engaged in craftwork, s/he is suspected of being *Buda* and this suspicion is finally verified by tracing his/her lineage.

4.2.6 Myths and Stories about *Buda* Attack

Apart from the responses given by the interviewees and discussants about their perception of *Budas*, rumors and myths are very helpful to grasp the overall picture of the belief about *Buda*. Even though it is difficult to verify them, there are a number of strange rumors and myths about *Buda* that are narrated and known by many people. These rumors show the depth of the belief. For example, in Axum, during night times, it is said that elderly people while going to church or other places communicate or talk with hyenas and ask them to give them a way to pass through. The elderly talk with the hyena because they knew them in daytimes as human beings. It is believed that the *Buda* people are changed into hyenas during night time. It is also said, though the writer couldn't meet one, some people have seen some people (*Budas*) riding a hyena during night times. Rumors like Mr. so and so was seen riding a hyena is common. To the extreme, it is rumored (and widely accepted) that Mr. x (a *Chewa*) and Mr. y (a *Buda*) were going together to somewhere and out of a sudden Mr. y changed himself into hyena and tried to eat Mr. x. But, praise to God, Mr. X ran and escaped. Such stories seem very funny, unrealistic, and unacceptable. However, they are widely shared and accepted by many people of central Tigray.

In this regard, a 43 years old Chewa key informant from Axum shared the following:

Last November, it was widely rumored in the town that one night a lady was going to her relatives in a nearby village. Her brother accompanied her half way and returned. After few minutes she called to her father cell phone and said 'father the hyenas are going to eat me. So do not attempt to search for me. They are about to eat me...' Then the call was interrupted. The next morning her family members went in search of her. The only remaining part of her body her family found was her skull and drops of blood. All her body below her neck was not found. The assumption of her relatives and those who heard the story is that Buda people waited her on her way and then stopped her and then changed themselves into hyena and ate her.

One of the most famous stories about Buda victim in central Tigray is the story of "Deqi Shekona Adgi". Gebremeskel, 66, narrated it as follows:

Once upon a time there was a beautiful girl. Then she was eaten by a Buda and 'died'. Three days after she was buried in a nearby church the Buda who attacked her exhumed the corpse and took it to his home. Then it was transformed or changed into a living person and was made a house servant. When visitors come to his home he, using his magical switch that looks like a stick, transforms her to a pot or a donkey. Mysteriously enough, she, even when she is in the form of a pot or donkey, always cried when she sees her relatives or when she is treated cruelly. One day the donkey went to her former house (where she lived before) and begun weeping. Then, her brothers understood that she is their sister and has become a servant for the Buda in their neighborhood. Then they took a gun and went to the Buda's house and tortured the accused one. They warned him at gun point to immediately release and cure their sister otherwise they should kill him. Then, upon fear of being killed, he agreed to their request and the donkey was gradually, beginning from her head, changing to a girl, exactly their sister. The donkey was assuming the shape of their sister. When half of the change was done her body above her chest was girl's and below was a donkey's. Her brothers were so eager to kill the Buda out of revenge that they killed him when he was about to finish. The only unchanged part of her body was her shekona (hoof). The girl became just the previous girl but with donkey's ankle. She, as normal girl but with donkey's ankle, lived till 93 year old and bore a number of children. Her descendants are commonly called/referred to as 'Deqi Shekona Adgi' (the sons of the woman with donkey's ankle).

The story about Deqi Shekona Adgi and other similar rumors show the main and very strange aspects of the belief about Buda. It depicts the widely held thoughts about the magical power of the Buda to kill people, to transform the victim's corpse into a living servant, to change the servant from one state of being to another back and forth, the harsh treatment of the servant at

the hand of the attacker, and lastly the severe punishment or revenge taken by the victim's relatives on the alleged attacker.

4.2.7 The Perception of alleged *Budas* about the '*Buda*': the Insider's view

In the foregoing subtopics, the perceptions of the *Chewas* about *Budas* have been discussed. However, a perception of the *Chewas* about *Budas* is just one side of the reality. What the alleged *Budas* think about the *Buda* belief and the alleged *Buda* people is equally important aspect of the *Buda* complex. Even though a lot have been said and written about what the *Chewas* believed about the *Budas*, unfortunately little is known about what the *Budas* believe about themselves and their alleged power. It is always easy to get what is said to have happened than to actually dig out what has really occurred. Therefore, assessing the subjective and insider's view of the alleged *Buda* people themselves about the *Buda* is very crucial in understanding the nature of the belief.

Generally, most alleged *Budas* do not believe in the existence of the perceived magical power of *Buda*. They do not believe that they have extra ordinary power as they are accused by the *Chewas*. The majority of *Buda* interviewees categorically rejected all accusation of attacking people and causing illness and death. They believe that they are ordinary human being like their *Chewa* counter parts. Instead, they considered the belief as a traditional harmful practice that resulted from backwardness and miss interpretation of religious myths. Some other *Budas* believe, in agreement with Marxist theorists like Finneran's (2003), the belief has nothing to do with religion. They took it as a belief system intentionally fabricated, built and maintained by the *Chewas*' in order to control resource and to marginalize and subjugate *Budas*.

However, there are also few *Budas* who are convinced that they have extraordinary power in their eye. They believed/admitted that they have a super natural spirit that gave them extraordinary eye power so that they can make people feel ill or attacked when they stare at

them. Of those *Buda* people who believed/claimed to have extraordinary power, some believed that both the power and attack is unintentional and happens unconsciously. They believe that people may be attacked without the knowledge of the attacker.

Gebremeskel narrates the follows story:

Takele and me, being neighbors for longtime, are close to each other. I was preparing for the wedding of my first daughter. For some purpose, which I don't remember now, Takele and I went to my home together from church. My wife was serving us with breakfast. My daughter came to wash our hand. Then I warned Takele 'Hey Takele! Do not stare at my daughter. If you eat (attack) her I swear I will kill you'. Then I laughed. I was intentionally warning him but in a funny (humorous) way. He perfectly understood me and replied 'uhh... Gebremeskel! Come on! We [Buda people] do not eat human beings. People assume that we are always determined to eat human being. It is wrong. We do not eat our fellow human beings. How? Why should we? We are also humans just like you. It is our eye that attacks people. We do not voluntarily and intentionally attack people. But our eye is so powerful that people may feel ill without our knowledge and intention.

Ironically enough, there are also some allegedly *Buda* people who firmly believe or accuse that there are some *Buda* people who have not just 'a powerful eye' causing unintentional and unconsciously attack on others, but also have all the extraordinary magical powers the *Chewas* believed to be inherent in *Buda* person. They shared the perceptions of the *Chewas* and believed that some *Budas* have magical power (spirit) plus learned knowledge about herbs (*Ets*) that enable and force them to attack people, transform themselves and their victims from one state of being to another state of being back and forth. Aregawi's experience, one of the key informants from the *Budas*, is a good example in this case. Aregawi is a 56 years old tailor living in a small town called Nebelet. Aregawi's father is known to be a *Buda* by all the residents of the town. Hence all people born to Aregawi's father including Aregawi are by default *Buda* because being *Buda* it is hereditary ascribed one.

Aregawi was asked if he believed that the *Budas* have extraordinary power as they are accused by the community. He promptly said:

Definitely they have! [Note that he said 'they' not 'we']. Some are born with and possessed by magical evil spirit. They are also carefully trained about magic and traditional medicines made from Ets (herb) by their parents. As a result they use their power to attack other people. I firmly believe that some, not all, Budas are doing many evil deeds using their power. I hope you have been informed about my brothers. Even my brothers are doing very bad things on me using their Buda power. That is why I am suffering from frequent illness. I spent half of my age bedridden due to the attack of my brothers. They are so evil that they are cruel even to their brother.

According to the information obtained from Aregawi's neighbors, not only Aregawi but also most of his neighbors believed that his brothers who are hostile to him due to disagreements in the inheritance of their late father's property are attacking him. Most of them attributed Aregawi's frequent and sustained illness to his brothers. The neighbors of Aregawi believed that even though Aregawi is born to a *Buda* father and hence a *Buda*, yet he doesn't have the power to attack people. Instead, he is suffering from the attack of his fellow brothers. Tesfahuney, Aregawi's neighbor, expressed his views about Aregawi as follows: "*Aregawi is Buda but he doesn't attack or he does not have the ability (Kihiz Ayikilin). But his brothers did. They always attack him and he is spending his life in bed and is economically impoverished*". The difference between Aregawi and his brothers, takes us in to a very important point in the belief about *Buda*: the division between what I called 'real' and 'nominal' *Buda*. Aregawi's case shows *Budas* are varied in terms of their attacking power. The dominant perception of the people (both *Budas* and non *Budas*) is that from those hereditarily *Buda* people there are real *Buda* like Aregawi's brothers and nominal *Buda* like Aregawi which are just like the *Chewas* except being born to a *Buda* parent/s. Therefore, it can be said, *Budas* are of two types: nominal and real. Another lesson learned from Aregawi's case is that not only *Chewas* but also a nominal or less powerful *Buda* can be

attacked by real and more powerful *Buda*. The difference between the real and nominal *Buda* seems very difficult to justify. However, Gebremeskel indicated,

Apart from being born to a Buda parent/s you need to be trained about magic and shown by your parents or other Buda the specific Ets (herb) which is used to the attack. The knowledge is also transmitted from parents to offsprings. Therefore, your parents have to show you the herb (Ets) that is knot or twisted and tied. You also need to be possessed by the spirit. Otherwise you cannot attack. Eye power and a simple gaze may not be enough. In addition, you must be fully familiarized with the rituals, magic, the Ets and its modus operandi. The real Budas are those who have sufficiently learned all those stuffs. Those who have not acquired this training are just nominal Budas. The extent to which one has mastered this training shows the level of his power. Unfortunately, most of them have all that and are attacking us.

Another reason for the variation in the power of the *Buda* and the difference between real and nominal *Buda* is, informants indicated, the process of hybridization. The one who is born to a *Buda* father and *Buda* mother is thought to be more powerful *Buda* than a *Buda* person born to a *Buda* father and a *Chewa* mother, and yet much more powerful than the one born to a father born from a *Buda* father and *Chewa* mother, and a *Chewa* mother.

Despite of the assumed power difference from one *Buda* to another, most people fear and discriminate all alleged *Budas*. Since it is difficult, if not impossible, to know whether that particular *Buda* has the power to attack or not (whether s/he is nominal *Buda* or real *Buda*), any alleged *Buda* person is seen with contempt and is feared. If they trace someone's lineage and any of his or her ancestor/s is found to be *Buda*, no matter how distant it is and how decent person she/he is, she/he is thought to be *Buda* and hence feared, hated, and discriminated. The label, not the deed, matters most.

Yet, the researcher never met any alleged *Buda* interviewee admitting/claiming of having the alleged *Buda* power and having intentionally used that power to cause illness or death on people. Except Aregawi all of the informants from the alleged *Buda* group, categorically dismissed the accusations related to the magical switches, riding or transforming to hyenas, use of herbs, retrieving dead bodies, eating or killing people etc. They dismissed the accusations of having mystical switches or magic to transform themselves from man to hyena

or vice versa and victims from a dead being (corpse) in to a servant human being and then to pots and donkeys. Except Aregawi all the informants from the *Buda* group dismissed the allegations and the belief as irrational and backward. Even Aregawi, opposed to his neighbors, did not consider himself as *Buda* for he believed that it is the deed not the lineage that matters. Moreover he couldn't explain from where the *Budas* got the power and how (*modus operandi*) and why (rationale) they attack people. This indicates that there is a reasonable ground to suspect that even Aregawi may not believe in *Buda*. He might be pretending and using the belief as a cover ~~to~~ simply to accuse, whilst declaring himself innocent, and attack/revenge his brothers, who are in stiff conflict with him due to the disagreement in the inheritance of their late father's property.

The alleged *Budas* believed that due to backwardness of the community and due to the harmful and irrational belief about the *Buda* power they have suffered from different problems like beating, insulting, gossip, prejudice, discrimination, torture, and killing. They argued that, like Pritchard (cited in Baroja 1964), *Buda*'s attack is an imaginary psychic act. When Welday, a 67 years old key informant from the *Buda* group, was asked to express his view about the alleged power of the *Buda*, he seemed uncomfortable with the question and replied [a little bit aggressively]; "*I am a human being just like you [the interviewer/researcher]. Look at me from my hair to my nail. Did you find anything that is not human? anything different from yours? We are all God's creatures. Equal and only equal. I wonder how and why people get so foolish and irrational enough to accept such a nonsense myth*".

No *Buda* interviewee admitted of intentionally attacking people. What the researcher found was *Chewas* and Aregawi (nominal *Buda*) blaming or accusing other people of being *Buda* and attacking people. There appears a big gap between what is said to have happened and what really occurred. There is a big difference between what the *Chewas* believed about the *Budas* and what the *Budas* believed about themselves. Yet, the *Chewas*' view is by far the

dominant view for they are by far the dominant majority in the society. It is in such instances that social construction theory and its main argument or tenet that reality is a social construct (Ritzer 2011) makes a perfect sense. It is in such instances that one is convinced to accept that reality is subjective. It is in such circumstances that the essence of the famous quote of the prominent French post positivist by the name Michel Foucault 'if truth has history, history is not true' is perfectly correct. Power defines what the truth is. The *Chewas*, the powerful, has defined that *Buda* power is truth. Hence, even though it may not be true, in Central Tigray *Buda* power is a reality or a truth.

4.2.8 Introduction of Evil Eye Belief to Ethiopia

In the foregoing topics we have discussed the origin and the main aspects of the belief. It has been indicated that some informants asserted that both the evil eyed people and the belief about evil eye had their roots outside of Tigrayan and Ethiopian. One of the most controversial issues concerning the *Buda* people and the belief about *Buda* is where it originated and how it entered into Ethiopia. Various explanations have been given by the informants about where the *Buda* came from, when and how they entered into the study area. But the widely shared assumption of the people of central Tigray is that the *Budas* descended from king Solomon of Israel. Basing on the myths found in an ancient book called *Kibrenegest* [glory of the kings] and the Holy Bible and the Holy *Qura'an* some *Chewa* informants linked the origin of *Buda* to King Solomon and his Ethiopian descendants commonly called *Falashas*.

According to the myth, queen Sheba of Ethiopia and her female servant visited king Solomon of Israel. In one night, the King, using his world famous wisdom, deceived and made sexual intercourse with the queen and her chamber maid. Consequently, they both got pregnant from him. The queen bore a child later named and crowned as Minilik I. the servant bore Zagwe.

The point is that, following this myth, it is widely believed that the *Chewas* and the kings with their royal family descended from Minilik I and the *Budas* are thought to have descended from Zagwe. Even though both Minilik I and Zagwe were born to King Solomon, the descendants of Zagwe are seen as *Budas* whereas the descendants of Minilik are royal families or *Chewas* at the minimum. However the informants were unable to justify or to explain why descendants of Zagwe are labeled as *Budas* and the descendants of Minilik as *Chewas*. May be, just maybe, the difference is the fact that Minilik was born to a queen mother and Zagwe was born to a servant mother. Consistent to the myth, the dominant view in the study area is that the descendants of Zagwe, sometimes called *Falashas* or *Bête Israel*, or *Agew* are *Buda* people and all *Budas* in Ethiopia descended from them. In support of this, many researchers including Damtew (2003) concluded that all *Buda* people in Ethiopia descended (originated) from the *Falashas*. However there is no conclusive evidence that confirms the supposed linkage between Zagwe and the notion of *Buda* and sound justification to clarify why the descendants of Zagwe are considered *Budas* while descendants of Minilik I are believed to be *Chewas*.

Though the myth about King Solomon and the *Falashas* is the most widely held view about the origin of the *Budas*, there are also competing explanations. Other informants categorically dismissed the myth as 'untrue' and said the belief came to Ethiopia during the Crusade war. They accused external forces notably Turkey, Egypt and other Muslim nations for 'fabricating and preaching' the *Buda* complex to weaken the then Christian Ethiopia. They saw the *Buda* belief as the result of the sustained efforts of external forces to undermine Ethiopia's prospects of industrialization.

Kahsay, aged 66, a *Chewa* key informant, who seemed to be a determined Marxist and nationalist, asserted:

The belief about evil eye is a fabrication of the invading Turks in the red sea. The Turkish soldiers came to Ethiopia to support Ahmed Gragh [the Imam of the sultanate of Harar] in his fight to topple the Christian emperor and his kingdom and replace it with Islamist dynasty. The Christian highland kingdom of Ethiopia was supported by the Portuguese [Christian] government and the Imam and his sultanate was backed by the Turks [Muslims]. Both external powers were fighting in Ethiopia not only to support the contending powers of Ethiopia but also as part of their power rivalry to maintain their global hegemony in political, commercial and religious spheres. Understanding the contribution of craft working to the development of industry, and being jealous of Ethiopia's development the Muslims [Turks] in collaboration with the Egyptians began an orchestrated effort to demoralize and eliminate craftwork and craft workers. As a result they came up with the evil eye notion and preached, via their missionaries and bishops, the people 'craft workers are evil eyed people of inherently inferior beings than you [the agriculturalists and nobles]. They are those who are causing illness, death, and other calamities on your life and property'. They preached agriculture as the only honorable job. Crippled by the plot of Turks and Egyptians to weaken and demoralize craftwork and craft workers and thereby halt Ethiopia's prospects of industrialization, Christian agriculturalists accepted the preaching and began to hate, despise and marginalize craft workers. The high regard given by Ethiopians to foreigners in general and missionaries in particular have contributed to the rapid acceptance and expansion of the Buda belief.

However, only few people of the study area knew Kahsay's explanation and only fewer people accepted it. Yet, the explanation may be an important clue or input to make a historical research for history confirms a number of ill wills and invasions of the then Egypt and Turkey against Ethiopia. Another version of the story about the origin of the *Budas* is related to the need for huge labor force and craft skill on the part of Axumite kings to run their expanding kingdom. Some key informants indicated that The *Budas* found in Tigray are not ethnic Tigrians and they were brought, as captives of war or as daily laborers, by the Axumite kings from places outside of the Axumite kingdom. They were brought to serve the kings and the kingdom in making palaces, obelisks, armaments, tools, handicrafts, ornaments and other craft works.

To summarize, in central Tigray, the belief about *Buda* is old and pervasive. Irrespective of gender, age, and faith difference, most people of central Tigray strongly believed the existence alleged extraordinary power of *Budas* and their evil deeds. Thus, they lived with a constant fear of being 'eaten' by a *Buda*. Even 'nominal' *Budas* like Aregawi of *Nebelet* town believed that the magical power of *Buda* is 'real' and is given by the evil spirits. Even though the alleged *Budas* categorically dismissed the entire allegation and labeled the belief as 'irrational and backward', it is still a strong and widespread belief that the *Budas* are highly feared, hated, despised, discriminated and marginalized.

4.3 Marginalization and Discrimination of *Budas*

People of central Tigray, like the rest of Tigray, are hierarchically stratified along gender, income, ethnicity, occupation and other parameters. The belief about *Buda* is also one of those parameters based on which people of central Tigray are stratified. The people are categorized in to two: *Chewa* and non *Chewa*.

The *Chewa* are, like the *Rega* of Amhara (Reminick 1974) *Tsiruy Atsimi* [pure boned] people and unblemished by social stigma, ritual pollution, or bodily catastrophes such as leprosy. On the other hand, the non *Chewas* which include *Barya*, *Qomata*, *Hamyen*, *Wata*, and *Buda* are believed to have impure bone in their line of descent. The *Budas* are thought to have inherited, due to their impure bone, the lowest status known to the Tigray and Amhara society (Tigray Tourism 2011; Reminick 1974). In Tigray, a person inherits status through both his mother's and father's line. Thus, since being *Chewa* or *Buda* is a hereditarily ascribed status, it can't be avoided. Rather, it is one's destiny to be born into *Buda* or *Chewa*.

The rationale for the long distance in social prestige between the *Chewas* and the *Budas* is the dominant belief that hereditarily *Buda* are evil eyed people, thus dangerous to interact with. The *Budas* are believed to be by their very nature determined to eat others. Due to this belief the *Budas* are disadvantaged and marginalized by the mainstream society. They suffer from

segregation, political disempowerment, social exclusion, economic inequality, discrimination, torture, killing, stereotype and discouragement from their involvement in different societal events. Historically, one of the apparent discriminatory measures taken by the mainstream society against *Budas* was residential segregation.

4.3.1 Residential Segregation

The *Budas*, until mid 1970's, were highly segregated to the extent that they were forced to live in separate quarters or compounds (Vecchiato 1993; Damtew 2003). Unlike the *Chewas*, where every nuclear family had separate residence quarter, the *Budas*' were forced to adopt extended family structure and lived in a single compound. While every nuclear family of the *Chewas* had separate residence, the *Budas*' extended family had only one living quarter.

Tideg 42, of Agazina village, a key informants from the *Buda* group, said

"We used to live in a single compound found at the extreme periphery of the village. I remember that in our compound there were six households [nuclear family]. My grand parents, all my cousins with their respective families, a total of 25 individuals, used to live in a single compound. Almost every other [Chewa] household has its own separate house. But we were forced to live in single compound for two reasons: first, to defend ourselves from potential attack from the Chewas, second, to escape from the avoidance and stereotype. In fact they [Chewas] don't want us and do not feel comfort to live in close proximity with us".

In addition, the fact that the *Budas* did not have any land to cultivate, for they were not allowed to own land, has contributed for such type of residential segregation. This is because, unlike the *Chewa* farmers, they need not reside adjacent to their farmland. Instead, they resided in a single compound and make living from iron making. Besides, the *Budas* had to live in groups in one compound to defend themselves from revenge attack by the *Chewas*. Moreover, the *Chewas* were not willing to share neighborhood with them or to live in their vicinity. Hence they discouraged and forced the *Budas* to live in segregated manner. Even in towns like Axum until today there are separate neighborhoods which are supposed to be dominated by *Budas* and hence *Chewa* people do not want to reside there. In-depth interview informants of both *Buda* and *Chewa* group from Axum town said that the oldest

neighborhoods of the town namely *Daeroilla*, *Maykeho*, *Adi Kilde*, *Geza Akuay*, and *Haweltti* (a place where the world famous Obelisks are found) are thought to be full of *Budas* and many people do not prefer, in comparison to other parts of the town, to build or rent house there. The informants said that these old neighborhoods are the city sections where cheap rent houses are available because many people, especially those who have children, do not prefer it.

With regard to ghetto like urban enclaves, may be *Kechene* of Addis Ababa is the largest craft workers' quarter (Damtew 2003). It is a common knowledge that, Damtew asserts, many people associate the place name *Kechene* with the notion of evil eye (Damtew 2003: 80). *Daeroilla*, *Haweltti*, *Adi kilte*, *Maykeho* of Axum seems similar with *Kechene* of Addis Ababa. Various studies (Damtew 2003; Dubale 2010; Akalework 2011) reveal that spatial segregation, urban or rural, forced or voluntary, collective or private quarters, reinforce stigmatization of and prejudice against the group.

However, nowadays, residential segregation mainly in rural areas of central Tigray seems to have significantly lowered. Only its legacy remains. Political, social, legal, and economic changes that took place since mid 1970's [the decline of the feudal system] have made apparent residential segregation of any minority group including *Buda* almost impossible. But in Axum town, informants agreed, there is a tacit measure taken by the *Chewas* to escape or avoid residing in the aforementioned neighborhoods.

4.3.2 Economic Alienation

Like the Wolaitta of southern Ethiopia (Akalework 2011), the saying that 'a pot-maker serves her food with broken one' is very popular in central Tigray. The proverb is meant to indicate that craft workers' specialized labor is primarily to serve or satisfy the need of others. Historically, *Buda* people as marginalized minorities had been economically disadvantaged since they were excluded from inheritable land use right (Reminick 1974; Vecchiato 1993;

Pankhurst 2001). They were not allowed to own land. They were assigned land only for residence purpose and on the condition that they should provide craft services to the 'host' society. The relationship was a patron-client type that the community provides them with security and means of subsistence in return for their craft services. The males were engaged in iron making and the females supported the household income by making pottery. Thus, *Budas* as a group were servants of the community among whom they were allowed to settle in. The exchange of craft services for the means of subsistence was said to have been accomplished in different ways. Tesfay, aged 71, a *Chewa* key informant, said

They [Budas] were not allowed to own land because the land belongs to the Deqiabats [founding fathers]. The established view of the time was that the 'Deqiabats' and their descendants [Chewas] are the natives and hence owned the whole land in the village. The Budas and Barayas are not members of our community but incomers that we hosted. As a result, the Baryas lived as servants and the Budas made their living from ironworking.

Gebremeskel, another *Chewa* key informant, expressed the historic economic alienation of the *Budas* as follows;

For centuries the land tenure system was 'Rist' system. In Rist system land is inherited from parents. The Rist system does not allow land to be possessed by outsiders like Budas. The land belongs to those who are native to the land. Therefore the Budas were not allowed to own land.

In this regard, Gebray, a 76 years old *Buda* informant shared his experience as:

I was born in this village, in this house. Even my father was born in this house. However, I was not able to get land until 1976. Till then, my father, my brothers, and I lived in this single compound and we made our living by craftwork. We made agricultural tools for the villagers and in return they gave us grain. Each household of the village is obliged to give us Enqea'a [around 5 kilo gram] Ekli [grain] every year. In return, we are responsible for every villager so far as iron working is concerned. Our main job is to make and sharpen agricultural tools like axe, sickle, plow etc.

As the informants indicated the *Budas* relied on income (grain) they get from ironworking. Iron making (most of them agricultural tools) was the main job of the men and pottery (used for domestic house) was the typical job of the *Buda* women. They were paid in kind.

Informants and discussants indicated that bartering was the common form of exchange between farmers and craft men. Grain was used as a means of payments for the craft services. Until today, grain remains the preferred form of payment. The *Budas* had to collect, mostly during harvest time, *Enqea Ekli* [5 kg grain] from each household in the village. However, most of the time, the farmers delivered the grain to the home of the iron worker. In case, when any farmer fails to give the grain the *Budas* had a full right to deny him their service. Both *Buda* and *Chewa* informants agreed that almost every villager paid the grain on time. The farmers firmly believed that the *Budas* need to be paid for the crucial service they are delivering to the community. Nevertheless, informants admitted, fear of attack and denial of craft services was also additional reason that forced or motivated the farmers to pay on time. Currently, the economic status of the *Budas* has significantly improved. Through time their income has increased massively that nowadays there is no notable difference between the *Chewa* and *Buda* so far as property ownership is concerned. Interestingly, in towns those engaged in craft working, most of them alleged *Budas*, lead a better life than most residents. This study, in agreement with Finneran's (2003), found that in towns notably Axum, where there are considerable number of foreign tourists and hence increased demand for artifacts, craftsmen are by far richer than other residents. Tekle, a 67 years old goldsmith in Axum, confirmed

Most smiths are rich. You know that the price and demand of our products like gold, silver, jewelers, and ornament is increasing rapidly. Frankly speaking our job is one of the most profitable and we lead better life than most of the residents of the town. I was born and lived in a nearby rural village until I was 40. We [my family] did not have land and we lived in poverty. Then I came here and opened a small artifacts shop. Now, after 27 years, I own a jewelry shop, houses, car and other assets worth of 1.4 million birr. My brothers are still in the village. They have land, just like any ordinary villager. Today their life is far better than it used to be some decades ago. Their income is similar to their 'Chewa' counterparts. But it is far below to mine and other goldsmiths in the town. I help them financially and I am planning to bring my nephew to work with me.

The turning point in the economic status of the *Buda* was, most *Buda* and *Chewa* informants agreed, the 1974 revolution. Nationally, the group's historical alienation from land rights, which has been an important source of economic marginalization, has been successfully answered by the much applauded *Derg's* 1975 land proclamation. The proclamation made all land a public property and that every Ethiopian, irrespective of ethnic, religious or occupational difference, would have equal right of possessing land. The *Budas* of central Tigray are thankful to TPLF also for redistributing land on equal basis to all residents of the area. According to the informants and discussants, even though the *Derg* proclaimed the 1975 land proclamation and implemented it in most parts of the country, it was the TPLF, the then guerrilla group who was in control of most of rural areas of central and western Tigray, which redistributed land in most parts of the study area. They thought that the essence and supposed end result of *Derg's* proclamation and the TPLF's redistribution were basically the same and hence, they believe, had the TPLF was not there, the *Derg* would have redistributed the land as it did in other parts of Ethiopia. Generally, the *Budas* are thankful to the 1974 revolution, because they believed that both *Derg* and TPLF are the 'fruits' of the revolution.

Until the land redistribution, economic alienation has played an important role in maintaining and reinforcing socio cultural exclusion and political disempowerment of *Budas*. Land alienation was one of the key factors behind the lowest socioeconomic status of the *Budas*. Since land is the most important asset of rural people, denial of access to land was tantamount to forcing the *Budas* to serfdom. Gebray, 76, a *Buda* key informant, while comparing life before and after the land redistribution, said "*In rural village, leading a family without land is very difficult. Land is the means of livelihood. Before the land distribution we lead very difficult life. It was challenging to feed my six children and wife from the small income I get from iron work. Now my children and I are living a better life than we used to live before the land redistribution*".

Thanks to the 1974 revolution and its outcomes, economic alienation of *Budas* is now a history. Most *Budas* have switched to farming and today the number of rural *Budas* engaged in ironwork has drastically decreased. Even those who still practice iron work have a farm land and hence they consider iron work as, at worst, a supplementary/secondary source of income, or, at best, a good-will role or a favor to the community.

4.3.3 Religious Avoidance

Religious discrimination was one of the most conspicuous forms of institutionalized social exclusion imposed against *Buda*. The local Orthodox Church doesn't appreciate *Buda* people to see or share its secrets since they are suspected impure and accused of worshipping the devils, an accusation the *Budas* categorically dismissed. As a result, a *Buda* may attain church education up to a certain level, but he will never become deacon, let alone priest. A priest informant said "*they [Budas] are not real Orthodox... I see them just as agents of the devil. I believe that they are not pure enough to share the sacred secrets of our church*".

Gebremedhin, 81 years old priest who holds a highly valued honorary title known as *ReiseDebri* [chief of Church] is one of those who strongly oppose the *Budas* from assuming positions in the church. When he was asked to share his view, *Riesedeabri* Gebremdihin replied;

My son! How come an agent of the devil, a traitor to Jesus, an evil spirited person be allowed or be ordained to be a priest! How can he be a religious leader! A gospel preacher! A follower of Jesus! They are the one who denied and betrayed Jesus, our savior! How can they follow and preach his gospel? Who allows them? Of course, they know their identity very well that they do not dare that much. They don't attempt to be a priest...but recently they are infiltrating to the inner of 'our' church. The time is theirs. They are about to climb to our heads [about to be our superiors]. I had lived up to the principles of 'Betekirstianey' [my church] and 'Abotatey' [forefathers] and now I am almost going [dying]. I am sorry for my sons, for you, for the coming generation.

The justification for the objection is the myth about the *Budas* as anti-Jesus and his 'chosen children'. In Tigray, the Christians' culture differentiates craft workers in terms of religious

and social status as deniers of Jesus Christ. *Riesedebri Gebremedhin* presents the main justification of the *Chewas* for discriminating the *Budas*; "*Craft workers collaborated with enemies of Jesus to crucify him. The craft workers used their skills against Christ and they have facilitated both his arrest and crucifixion by providing the tongs to pull him out of a crevice and finally the nail to crucify him with*".

Denial of access to the clergy, which is one of the most important sources of social prestige among people of Tigray, has paramount effect on the life of the *Budas*. They are subjugated to institutionalized discrimination in the realm of religion. In Tigray society, a society which attaches high value to spiritual life, any form of discrimination and avoidance in religious sphere is very painful to the *Buda*. An 83 years old *Buda* informant explains the pains:

It is painful to be denied from worshiping and serving the church. They [Chewas] are hindering not only our life here on earth but also attempting to block our way to heaven. However, faith is not based in rituals and priesthood. It resides in our soul. We worship and salute our holy savior, Jesus Christ and the almighty God! We are not welcomed to be priests. But nobody can stop us from becoming Christians. Hence, like everyone in the village, we are Orthodox Christians. Contrary to that, Riesedebri Gebremedhin argues; "priesthood is a sacred role. Priests are the representatives of Jesus on earth. Therefore priesthood is allowed only to his 'chosen children', not to impure people and agents of the devil".

Accordingly, the *Budas* are not welcome to church related activities and positions. The presence of *Budas* in church prayers and religious ceremonies is systematically, both explicitly and implicitly, discouraged rather than forbidden. They are, directly or indirectly, discouraged from participation in spiritual events, observances, and practices for two reasons. First, they are believed impure and traitors of Jesus. Secondly, since eye contact is believed to be the common means for the *Buda* to 'eat' someone, the *Chewas* discourage interpersonal relationships and maintains social distance against physical contact with members of the *Buda*. As a result, the community tried to discourage the *Budas* from participating in any public gatherings including religious events for the *Budas* can use that opportunity to attack people. The discouragement forces the *Budas* to distance themselves from active involvement

in spiritual activities and events. However, Reisedebri Gebremedhin said, "in *Qebri* [funeral] there is no difference. There is no differential treatment in *Hazen* or *Qebri* and related events". Other than *Qebri* and *Hazen* slight and implicit discouragement of *Budas* is still there.

Excluded from one of the most important socializing agents of society, the group has been partially denied access to the mainstream social and cultural life. However, the discrimination is lenient in worshipping and prayers and relatively strict in assuming spiritual positions like priesthood. However, both the *Buda* and *Chewa* informants and discussants agreed that through time, there is some progress and currently there is only meager discouragement. They regularly participate, just like the *Chewas*, in spiritual activities and rituals and even some, though few, *Budas* are assuming leadership positions in the church. However the progress is not mainly based on the free will or attitudinal change of the *Chewas* towards the *Budas*. Rather it seems to be involuntary or imposed change brought about by the political and legal changes that took place in the past decades.

Ironically, not only traditional [church] education, even modern [formal] schools are not free from discrimination and prejudice. Sometimes, those students who are known to be born to *Buda* parent/s face social avoidance. Even teachers were not free of such negative attitudes.

Mizan, 35, seventh grade biology teacher exposed his own feeling:

Sometimes, I am wondering as to how and why I feel discomfort to deal with my students who are thought to be Buda. I know that Buda belief has no scientific bases and its existence is not verified scientifically. I know the belief is contradictory to the principles of Biology, the subject I teach. Yet, I do not feel at ease with alleged Buda students.

Mizan's attitude shows the extent of discrimination and avoidance against *Budas* by fellow students and teachers. It has been reported that in response to such negative attitudes *Buda* parents have been keeping their children away from school. The constant fear of being accused of 'eating' someone or being insulted is also a powerful reminder to stay out of such

social situations. Thus, both in church and school, students born to *Buda* parent/s are treated differently. Even though there is considerable progress, still the *Budas* seem to be slightly disadvantaged, compared to the *Chewas*, in the realms of religion and education.

Fortunately, as opposed to the Christians, we don't see religious discrimination among Muslims of central Tigray, for it is believed that there is no Muslim *Buda* in the study area. Even though it is rumored that in areas outside of Central Zone, especially Shire, some female Muslims buy the art of the *Buda* and attack people, such cases were not reported to have occurred in the study area. Rather, the Muslims believed that the Christian *Budas* are attacking them. Thus, among Muslims, there is no religious discrimination against *Budas*. It is only found among Christians.

4.3.4 Political Status and Participation

Political disempowerment is another problem the *Budas* are facing. *Budas* are not able to participate in the political activities on equal ground with their *Chewa* counterparts. Their participation is highly circumscribed by the negative attitude of the community towards them. Like any other public gatherings, *Budas* are not welcomed or encouraged to participate and involve in political gatherings and related events. Compared to the *Chewas*, assuming political post is difficult for the *Budas*. Masho's, 32 years old *Buda* from Agamo village, case is a very good example in this regard. Masho states;

In 1998, I was nominated by the party [TPLF] representatives of the kebele to be the chair person of the youth league of the Kebele. Since I was named by the party no one could openly object. But many people were not happy with my nomination. Because they believed I am, being a son of a 'QetQati' [Iron worker], unqualified for the position. They felt discomfort as if they were insulted [zetedeferu]. I knew their feeling but I thought I can cope up and in the long run change this backward and harmful belief. One day I called a meeting of all the youths in the Kebele to discuss on party affairs. In the meeting some people, most of which I had personal quarrel, were gossiping and backbiting me in couples saying how she dare to chair us? Sometimes they see me and laugh, some were showing me gestures about hyena [to imply that I am hyena or Buda]. It was very irritating. Then, I decided to resign from the position. Later on another Chewa was substituted in my place. Though it is slowly improving, still there is some hidden, tacit stereotype and discrimination against us.

Participants of the study revealed that there is implicit discouragement of *Budas* from political roles. Even though, officially or legally, they are free to participate in meetings and assume leadership roles like any other ordinary person, the *Chewas* consider them inferior and are not interested to be chaired by them. They are not willing to accept the legitimacy of their authority. As a result they show different reactions of disapproval against the elected person. The disapproval reaction is so powerful that most *Budas*, anticipating the reaction, do not want to assume political posts and intentionally, but tacitly, distance themselves. One *Buda* informant shared his idea as follows;

I do not want to be a focal person because it allows people to talk about me. Because I know their attitude towards me is all in all negative. I do not want to be gossiped and laughed. So I do not want to assume any sort of leadership position. I do not want even to speak in meeting. I just attend quietly and listen.

The previous discussions show that *Budas* have been and still are, but in lesser degree, discriminated in residence, property ownership, religious involvement, education and political arenas. Unfortunately, the realm of life where the exclusion is most severe and apparent is yet to come. It is social exclusion. In Tigray society, *Budas* are said to be experiencing different forms of exclusion, maltreatment of which social exclusion, specifically avoidance in marriage ties, is the most apparent and severe one.

4.3.5 Social Exclusion

The *Buda* belief have created and regulated the social boundary between the *Chewa* majority and the *Buda* (craft workers) minority in the study society. In most hierarchically stratified societies, endogamy is believed to be one of the most important mechanisms by which social and genetic segregation is maintained. In central Tigray too, *Budas* are not accepted by the *Chewas* as marriage partners. The *Chewa* has to select mate from the fellow *Chewas*. So did the *Budas*. Marrying to a *Buda* is, the *Chewa* informants and discussants indicated, the most disgusting and shameful act for a *Chewa*. In return any attempt on the part of the *Buda* to marry a *Chewa* is considered as an outright offence to the *Chewa's* family.

Gebremeskel, a *Chewa* informant, said;

Look! You [Chewa] cannot marry a Buda. The first criterion of mate selection of a Chewa person is that to identify whether he/she [the potential spouse] is Chewa. You have to trace his/her Tiwilidi [lineage]. If he is not Chewa he/she will not be accepted to marry a Chewa person. Any 'healthy' Chewa will not prefer to get married or let his relative especially sons and daughters marry a Buda person. The Budas also know their status /identity and do not usually ask a person from Chewa family for marriage. If any Buda asks to marry my daughter I will consider it as impudence [Difiret] and lack of respect. I am likely to turn to quarrel with him.

Another female informant from the *Chewas* added;

The first and nonnegotiable principle of marriage for a Chewa person is that s/he should marry only his type, a Chewa one. Otherwise s/he will pollute himself/herself and his/her descendants' pureness, and the reputation of his/her parents. Marriage [Mewsibo] should be between equals or types [Mis Zmesleka]. The Chewa should marry a Chewa, the Buda should marry a Buda and the Barya should marry a Barya. That is what justice and fairness is to me.

For people of central Tigray, Marriage, locally called *Mewsibo*, is not just the association of two individuals, the bride and the groom. Rather it is the association of the respective *Alet* or *Weledegna* (kin groups) or at minimum the *Beteseb* (family) and hence it is the family's and the Kin group's issue. Therefore, it is decided collectively. Every member of the *Alet* [kin group] is highly concerned for his and his *Alet's* reputation. Hence, any *Chewa* will not appreciate or encourage marrying to a *Buda*. If any *Chewa* dare, for whatsoever reason, to marry a person who is not *Chewa* s/he will be despised, hated and excluded by his/her relatives. The reaction is so clear and strong that its consequence is very severe, if not unbearable. Therefore the *Chewas* abide by their relatives' decision and marry 'their type'. I asked one of my informants if he would allow his daughter or son to marry a *Buda* person. His response was straight forward: "I will never ever let my daughter or son to marry a *Buda*! Oh My God! It is humiliating. How can I go to church or other gatherings and stand with my fellows on equal ground. It is a humiliation for me to give my son or daughter to *Buda*, or even to *Barya*".

The following case is a good illustration to grasp the extent to which people exclude *Budas* in mate selection.

Case history: Araya, a 32 years old mechanic, shares what he experienced:

When I was in Axum for about three years studying auto mechanics, I fell in love with a girl from Axum by the name Frehiwot. She was a high school student. I decided to marry her. I later came to know that she is a Buda. I felt very sad. I regretted that I rushed in to a relationship before knowing her back ground. But I loved her very much that I decided to continue with her. We had a very interesting love. After we stayed two years she got pregnant. Then we decided to get married as soon as possible before her pregnancy becomes visible. I took her to my home to introduce her with my family. She was good looking girl that everybody was happy because I am going to have a beautiful woman. Since they were nagging me day and night to get married, they quickly began the preparation for the wedding. Meanwhile, my father sent a person, his young brother, to go to Axum and trace her background [Tiwilidi] and to formally ask and consult her parents about the marriage. Upon his return, my uncle came with a bad news. He told my father that Frehiwot's father is a Buda and hence not fit to marry me. They immediately called off all the preparation for the wedding. My father called me and said 'My son I am very sorry! You cannot marry her. She is not your type. She is a Buda. She has deceived you. You should have known her thoroughly before you get involved in such shameful act...'. I, somehow ashamedly, dared to say 'father! I knew that. But I love her so much. So I have decided to marry her. On top of that she is pregnant. My son is in her womb. So...'. 'What'? He shouted! 'Sidi [stupid]! What an impudent person you are!' 'You wanted to humiliate yourself and me.' And he left me. Then I decided to call off the wedding because it was too costly to get in to irreconcilable quarrel with my family. After a year, I married another girl which I am not in love with. Still we are together. We have one child but our relationship is far from good. Still I have affair with Frehiwot. We frequently meet, have sex and enjoy together. I still love her. One day I may get back to Frehiwot.

The case history presented above is not an exception, but one of the many. Many *Budas* have faced similar problem to what Frehiwot has encountered.

Here is what 35 years old blacksmith experienced:

I fell in love with Asqual, my neighbor. She was calm and beautiful that I love her very much she was also interested in me that we established love relationship. However, her brother warned me to immediately stop my relationship with Asqual. He also severely beat Asqual and ordered her to stop any contact with me. However we loved each other and couldn't stop. We kept on meeting but secretly. But her brother discovered us. Then he, with his friends, tortured and bit me very severely. I was severely beaten that I was not able to walk for weeks. Finally her parents forcefully married Asqual to another guy. The marriage was meant just to breakup our relationship. After a year she gave birth from that guy. Unfortunately, she divorced and now she is living alone.

Kahsa, aged 66, a key informant from the *Buda* group, expressively described the discrimination against *Budas* in mate selection as follows:

They [the Chewa] are not willing to marry with us. We know that. Therefore, we marry 'our types'. Since our number is few our choice is limited. Sometimes we marry a Barya. Sometimes we got to go faraway villages in search of a mate. That is why if a Chewa person selected a mate from a far village he will be commented as 'why do you go that far like a Buda'. If a woman (a bride) is married to a person from a distant place, she will be insulted as 'it is because you are Buda that you traveled long distance to get married. Because in your village no one is willing to marry you'.... For any girl to get married to a man from her village is a great pride.

Informants revealed that when a *Buda* person is highly in love with a *Chewa* girl and if her parents or are not willing to give their daughter to him, or if the girl is not willing to marry him, he mostly resort to abduction. Besides, if the couples are highly in love and if they knew that their parents, mostly the *Chewa*'s parents, will oppose their marriage they may decide to immigrate to distant town and live together.

However, there are exceptional cases where *Budas* and *Chewas* are married and living together. Even though they are few in number, there are some 'lucky' *Budas* who are married to a *Chewa* and led successful life. Some *Chewas* willfully married a *Buda* person and have successfully stood their relatives' opposition. One *Chewa* informant who married to a *Buda* girl expressed his experience as follows: "At first everybody [my relatives] excluded me. I was isolated. However, I decide to live with her. Now we have three beautiful kids. I have a happy family. Even my parents' attitude is changing. They have good relation with my wife. They regret what they did before. In the future, I hope such type of harmful backward beliefs will totally disappear."

However, such types of success stories are rare in the study area. Under normal circumstance, few, if any, *Chewas* are willing to marry *Buda* person. Only few *Chewas*, most of them due to some compelling circumstances like pre-marriage pregnancy, have married *Budas*. Even these few people have encountered some pressure and disapproval from their relatives. As a

result some have regretted their decision and divorced while some others are still struggling hard to save their marriage and family.

To wrap up, selecting a mate, deciding who to marry, with whom you are going to live the rest of your life, is one of the most important decisions in life. In central Tigray, while selecting a mate, the *Buda* is the least preferred. One of the most important criteria in selecting mate is avoiding the *Buda*. Even the 'slaves', let alone *Chewas*, are not willing to marry a *Buda*. *Chewas* try to avoid marriage with *Buda*. Today, mate selection represents the realm of life where exclusion of the *Buda* is most apparent and painful.

Endogamy, on the part of the *Chewa* majority, is a mixed reaction of contempt and fear against the *Buda* people. For the *Buda* minority it is an important categorical barrier against integration to mainstream society. Harris (1975: 23) argued "*where endogamy prevails, either by choice of the minority or by imposition of the majority, a pluralistic condition may endure for centuries or even millennia*". In central Tigray endogamy, as a means of segregation and social exclusion against *Budas*, have endured for millennia and seems to endure for a considerable period of time.

4.3.6 Restrictions in Daily Intercourse

The *Chewa* people of central Tigray are differential in the formation of neighborhood relationship, social ties and networks. Intergroup and interpersonal intercourses are discriminatory against *Budas*. Even the seemingly free and loose association of friendship is not free from exclusion and discrimination. The interpersonal relationships between *Budas* and *Chewas* are mostly artificial and vulnerable. Their relations are in status quo, being neither overly peaceful nor overly combative. They mix with each other easily, as in court, in the shops, and in market places without repercussions, as long as their social relations are on a superficial basis.

The Chewas do not want to get closely associated with them. A Buda informant shared:

Sometime before, I had a friend whom I trusted very much. As close friends, I thought, we were loyal to each other. But finally my assumption was proved wrong. One day as we two sat in a tea room, one of his friends joined us. After sometime he wanted to know about our relation, and asked my friend: 'you two seem so close, is he your kin'? My friend was so angry and humiliated that he was not even able to respond: he simply asked his friend 'what do you mean? How could he be my relative'? I was shocked and felt ashamed. I wished he could have told his friend that we were not relatives but simply friends. That would have been enough. Rather, my friend betrayed me to protect his pride. We know they despise us, they never give us their hearts.

What Asefach and her seven years old kid experienced is a good illustration to see the degree of the effect of the belief on the interpersonal life of Buda people. Asefach narrates:

One day my 7 years old son come to me and asked me 'Mama Buda Malet Entay Malet Eyu [Mom! What is Buda]?' I was shocked! I wanted to know how he heard about Buda. Why he become too eager to know it? I asked him why he asked me. He replied 'when I was coming from school, Tesfay [his neighbor and class mate] and I quarreled while playing soccer and he insulted me 'Wediza Buda' [son of a Buda] and everyone who heard that laughed at me. Please! tell me what Buda is?' I was heartbroken! I cursed myself! I even cursed the day I get married with Teklebrahan [my husband and my son's father]. There was a lot of pressure and objection on me from my relatives and neighbors not to marry him, because he is a 'Buda'. But since I loved Teklebrahan very much I was determined to marry him and face any consequence. I thought that through time the belief and gossip will fade and my kids and I will live peacefully like any ordinary person. I was wrong! Let alone to fade out, the problem has even reached my son! He is being insulted 'Wedi Buda'. And this may cause psychological problem and possibly a dangerous feeling of revenge on my child. Now I am thinking that my decision to marry Teklebrahan was wrong. He was not the right type of person, or though he is a fellow human being, the time and place we are in, has made him wrong choice.

However, though few, there is also some peaceful enduring friendships between Chewas and Budas. One Buda student expressed his relationship with his friends as follows

I have many friends from this village. We play soccer together, we go school together, and we hung up together. We are very close and intimate friends. We respect each other. Nobody has ever shown me any sign of disapproval. We are educated youth. Our personality and behavior matters most. We are not part to such type of backward belief. We know that we are equal. All people are equal. The belief about Buda does not work. It is an illusion of backward and illiterate people. So it does not have any effect in our friendship. I am pretty comfortable with them.

The reality is, however, the majority of Chewas tend, at least seem to prefer, to avoid interpersonal intercourses with Buda people. The Chewas justify maintenance of social

distance as of necessity in order to prevent *Buda* attack and to avoid 'pollution' or 'contamination' with 'impure-boned people'. Even though the current political atmosphere has made apparent discrimination and harassment of *Budas* or other minority group almost impossible and very dangerous, there is still a tacit avoidance of *Budas*. The slow attitudinal change seems to be half voluntary and half imposed. Though, in principle, most *Chewas* of the study area seem to prefer to live, had it been possible, in *Buda* free society, time has made it clear that change is too powerful to resist and that peaceful coexistence is the only option. And, people of central Tigray are with considerable success, exercising it and are on their way to full integration.

4.3.7 Recent Improvements in the Life of *Buda* People

The worst days of the allegedly *Buda* people of central Tigray seems to have passed. Their identity and their main occupation (craft working) seem to be getting respect and dignity as time goes on. The economic status of the *Budas* has significantly improved and the belief in the evil eye power has slightly decreased. Several factors have contributed to these developments. Of all, discussants and informants agreed, the 1974 revolution receives the highest credit. Life for minority groups, be it ethnic, occupational, religious minority, has significantly improved beginning from the eve of the 1974 Ethiopian revolution.

The revolution was more of socialist in nature and attempted to transfer Ethiopia from feudo-capitalist state to a socialist (*Hibretesebawit*) Ethiopia (Vecchiato 1993). The *Derg*, and other most active political groups of the time were radical Marxists (Vecchiato 1993). So the preaching of the day, in line with socialist doctrine, was that people are born equal. Traditional beliefs like magic, sorcery, evil eye (*Buda*) were labeled as harmful beliefs imposed by imperialists and higher class people to maintain their position. The overall socialist atmosphere of the time has contributed for the weakening of the traditional harmful

practices and beliefs like evil eye. As a result, the research participants revealed that the then minority groups were the prime proponents and supporters of the revolution.

More than the propaganda of the socialists, however, it is the fall of feudalism and the abolition of land lord-tenant relationship and the subsequent land redistribution that had a major impact on the socio economic life of the *Budas*. This is because *Budas* have been allocated land in the same manner with the *Chewas*. The land redistribution has dismantled the root of exploitation and marginalization of the *Budas*; alienation from land right. As a result of the redistribution of land they began a new way of life as agriculturalists. The *Buda* informants indicated that the revolution, through its propaganda and land redistribution, changed the *Budas* from land less crafts people to land holding agriculturalists with additional craft working skill. Consequently, their status begun to rise and they began to be treated on equal ground with their fellows.

One *Buda* informant explained the contribution of the 1974 revolution and the socialist political groups of the time as follows: "*it is the revolution which brought as back to life as human beings. Life before the revolution was a misery.*"

In addition to land redistribution, expansion of science and education has also contributed a lot. Modern education and modern medicine are expanding at a faster rate. Modern education is inculcating the youth about the biochemistry of human body and the cause of diseases. Modern medicine is providing the society with remedies to most of the health problems which were once believed to be caused by supernatural powers and evil spirits like *Buda*. Therefore, they have begun resorting to modern medicine. The number of people who believe that the alleged power of the *Buda* really exists and *Buda* can cause illness or death is decreasing slowly. Though it needs to be substantiated and verified by quantitative research, this study found that strength and pervasiveness of the belief was found to be higher in the

illiterate segments of the population notably housewives and elderly people. The information collected from the research participants indicates that the belief in the evil eye is decreasing among the youth and educated segment of the society.

Beside the expansion of education and modern medicine, high rate of urbanization and consequent heterogeneity of residents has also made tracing one's lineage very difficult and hence identifying the *Buda* difficult and misleading. We are witnessing a growing heterogeneity and anonymity of urban dwellers in central Tigray. The social relation of urban residents is generally less intimate that little attention is paid to screen out every one's background. Urban residents are, as compared to rural people, anonymous/strangers to each other. That is why the belief about *Buda* and the subsequent exclusion of *Budas* was found to be much lower in urban centers than rural areas. In the FGDs it has been clearly observed that urban residents are lenient than their rural counterparts. With regard to urban anonymity and its impact on the belief one youth informant from Axum said:

I have many friends. Most of them are immigrants from other surrounding Weredas. I do not know and of course I do not care whether they are Buda or not. What matters for me is their behavior and personality not their family background or their Tiwilidi (lineage). In fact I do not believe in the presence of what is called Buda. I don't think that there is such extraordinary power that enables to change someone in to hyena and to human being or vice versa, to kill people by staring at them or by twisting a herb, to retrieve corpse and transform it to living organism etc. As to me the belief about Buda is nonsense. I don't accept the Chewa-Buda dictum. For me all people are equal.

The above example indicates that change is taking place and the trend and direction is positive. Even people from Axum who were once considered by default as *Buda* due to the higher proportion of *Budas* in the town are now, at least, not openly insulted, harassed and despised. This is because the town has become too large and heterogeneous that it is difficult to identify who is *Buda* and who is not.

To sum up, socio-political changes following the 1974 revolution most notably the fall of the feudal system with its lord-tenant relationship, and its replacement with the socialist political

setup and subsequent 1974 land proclamation, added with the hegemony of Marxist-Leninist ideology in the propaganda sphere has improved the status of the *Budas*. Moreover, participants of the study indicated, the expansion of modern education, science, technology, modern medicine, rapid urbanization and heterogeneity of dwellers and continuous movement of people has decreased the plausibility and acceptance of the belief about *Buda*.

Yet, this doesn't mean that the belief about *Buda* is all dead. Indeed, the belief is present and the *Budas* are discriminated and excluded in different spheres of social life. Rather, it is to mean that the extent and form of exclusion the *Budas* are subjected to, and the strength of the belief has decreased compared to pre-revolution Tigray. The life of the *Budas* seems to have changed from the worst to worse. Still, as compared to the *Chewas*, the *Budas* remain politically, socially, spiritually, culturally marginalized and discriminated. Their role, status, and participation in different spheres of life, though improving, lag behind the *Chewas*. Yet, one can safely conclude, they are living in much better, more tolerant, more respectful Central Tigray compared to the pre-revolution Tigray. The rate of decline of the beliefs seems to be much higher in urban than rural areas. Accordingly, the degree of social exclusion is much lesser in towns. Most research participants agreed that even though the trend is positive and progressing, still life, mainly social life is by far very difficult for the *Budas* than other social groups. Currently, *Mewsibo* (marriage) and religion remain to be the two spheres of life where the *Budas* are suffering from apparent and painful exclusion and discrimination.

4.4 Traditional Healing Practices Applied to Combat *Buda* Attack

In Central Tigray, like the rest of Tigray, the issue of health is seen holistically and not separated into physical health and mental health. Spiritual wellbeing is also an important aspect of health. Health is seen as a 'gift of God' or 'the will of God' and many people, both

Muslim and Christians, generally believe that their Almighty God helps keep them healthy. These perceptions are based on the belief that supernatural forces are involved in causing disease as well as in their treatment. For instance, while the devil is considered to be the cause of a number of illnesses, God is believed to provide the healing. Both Christian and Islamic teachings encourage their followers to seek treatment when they fall sick. Accordingly, people of central Tigray have developed different treatment options. In case of illness they resort, contextually, to modern medicine and traditional medicine. Generally speaking, if they recognize an illness as having purely natural causes, most of the time they apply modern medicine. When supernatural causes are suspected, they prefer traditional healing practices. Informants indicated that illnesses supposedly caused by supernatural forces are combated by the use of traditional medicine, such as invocations, exorcism, holy water, prayers, charms and amulets.

In central Tigray the traditional healing system applied by Christians and Muslims is very similar. Though there is a slight difference, most healing practices applied by the Christians are also used by the Muslims. The best example of this similarity is the staunch belief on super natural powers in causation and healing of illnesses. They both use religion as a basis for their healing practices. Particularly in towns, where there is a conglomeration of many religious groups, one can see the interchanging and blending of belief and healing systems among these population groups. Yet, there is some difference in their healing system and hence they will be discussed separately.

4.4.1 Preventative Practices among Christians

Christian people of the study area have a complex traditional medicine which includes several elements of disease prevention. In the past, the spread of diseases such as smallpox was prevented by deserting places where the epidemics occurred (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009). Sweeping or covering floors with particular plants is another traditionally practiced disease

preventive measure. Other methods of disease prevention include isolating people with contagious diseases, prohibition or controlling movement of people to inflected places or individuals, and taking children away from the affected areas (Alevtina & Zerihun 2009; Yared 2011).

Since *Buda* attack is believed to be one of the most serious health problems confronting the people of central Tigray they have developed different preventive methods. Wearing *kitab* [amulets containing a written spiritual script] is one of these methods. Informants indicated that *kitab*s are worn by most people, especially children and women, for the purpose of protecting an individual from attack by *Buda* and other evil spirits. The *kitab* is made by a *Debtera*, a clergyman who usually looks upon mental disorders as possession by evil spirits.

Making prayer is, the research participants indicated, another prevention mechanism against *Buda* attack. Besides prayers, victory and thanksgiving songs are sung emphasizing that Christ and the accompanying angels, saints, and virgin marry are victorious over all kinds of evil spirits. The prayers and the songs focus on rebuking of the evil spirits. It is widely held belief that making prayers help a lot in protecting the praying people from *Buda* attack.

In addition to making prayer and wearing *kitab*, cultural rituals and sacrifices are commonly employed. Costumes such as arm rings, hair styles and eye make-up (*mascara* or *kool*) are also supposed to protect people from attack by evil spirits including *Buda*. Apart from carrying amulets and using invocations, the young people will have their whole or half head shave tonsured. The custom of shaving the heads of children, leaving only a tuft of hair over the former fontanel of the boys and a ring of hair around the heads of the girls is believed to provide protection against attack by an envious *Buda* and *Ayniseb*.

Addressing a child in the gender opposite to the child's actual sex is also said to be helpful in protecting the child from *Buda*. It is believed to be helpful in warding off the attention of the

Buda. As a result, some key informants revealed, some parents give masculine proper name to their daughters and feminine name to their sons. They also dress them opposite to their actual sex. Such dressing and hair shaving customs are also aimed at minimizing the attractiveness of the child for good looking people are thought to be most vulnerable. Another precaution taken by the people against the possibility of attack is to be silent and guarded so that s/he will not attract the attention of the *Buda* and consequently its evil gaze. Avoiding any form of contact or encounters with *Buda* people is considered to be helpful.

4.4.2 Prevention Techniques employed by Muslims

Like Christianity, Islam encourages Muslims to seek treatment when they feel ill. Muslims encourage seeking treatment, because they believe that *Allaah* did not send down a sickness but has sent down a medication. Accordingly, informants indicated, there is nothing wrong with taking precautions against the *Buda* attack before it happens, and this does not contradict the idea of *Tawakkul* [putting one's trust in *Allaah*]. In fact, Muslim key Informants said, it is *Tawakkul*, because *Tawakkul* means putting one's trust in *Allaah* whilst also implementing the means that have been permitted or enjoined by him. In terms of treatment options, Muslim patients resort, in accordance with the presumed cause of the illness, to modern medicine or traditional medicine.

In dealing with *Buda* attack, Muslims employ both preventive and curative methods. But most of their traditional healing methods are faith based and spiritual healing is by far the most popular healing method. Research participants revealed that Muslims use different preventive mechanisms such as tying amulets and charms on the body, taking vows, visiting the *Mesjid*, and carefully following rules of behavior, religion and hygiene. It also includes recitation of verses of the holly *Qur'aan* and specific Prophetic supplications. Reciting

Qur'aan is commonly used for it is believed of having great effect in removing (the effects of) *Buda* attack.

In addition, the drinking and showering of a holy water called *Zamzam*, which is obtained from the well in the Holy Mosque, located in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, is also widely practiced by many Muslims to protect themselves from *Buda* attack and other evil spirits. Another defense mechanism against *Buda* attack is uttering *Ma Sha Allaah* [That which *Allaah* wills! There is no power but with *Allaah*]. Provided that *Budas* attack people mainly because they are envious, attributing interesting things to *Allaah* is believed to prevent *Buda* attack. Therefore, when Muslims like something or are attracted to something, let to a beautiful baby, most Muslims say '*Ma sha Allaah*'. In addition, wearing *Hijab* [the Islamic practice of dressing modesty in clothing that covers most of the body but eyes, for she must look], is recommended for females to protect themselves from *Buda* attack and *Ayniseb*. Hajji Kemal, a 55 years old key informant from Edaga Arbi town, said:

Whoever sees something that he likes, and says, 'Ma sha Allaah laa quwwata illa Billaah' [That which Allaah wills! There is no power but with Allaah], the evil eye will not affect him. Dressing Hijab is also helpful in protecting females from attack by way of covering the beauty of the woman.

Another popular, yet controversial, preventive mechanism is wearing amulets. Even though some key informants said that it is forbidden by the *Sunnah* [a Spiritual book based on Mohammed's words and deeds which serves as the basic source of Islamic law], the use of amulets is still common among Muslims of central Tigray. Some research participants indicated that there is a clear contradiction between the principles of Islam and the actual practice of the Muslims of central Tigray so far as wearing amulets is concerned. As per the doctrines of Islam, some informants and discussants admitted, wearing amulets and seashells is forbidden. It is considered as disobedience to the will of *Allaah* and hence *Allaah* will not protect the person. Accordingly, anyone who wears an amulet is guilty of *shirks* [violation of

Islamic principles]. An elderly Muslim informant said "...wearing amulets is, as per the doctrine of Islam, shirk and hence unacceptable. ...Mohammed (peace be upon him) has said 'Whoever wears an amulet, may Allaah not fulfill his need and not protect him.'" However, in practice, many Muslims, including religious leaders, practice it to protect their children and women from evil eye attack. One informant said;

Yes! I hear some Muslims, mostly visitors, saying that wearing amulet is contradictory to Islam. I am not sure about that. I do not know whether it is an Islamic practice or cultural ritual. ... What I know is that many Muslim children, including my three, wear amulets because the danger of Buda attack is ever present.

Accordingly, some Muslims, especially women and children, wear amulet and seashells to protect themselves from *Buda* attack. For instance, in a village called *Mayagam*, the researcher witnessed many Muslim kids wearing amulets. Among the Christians too, some informants indicated, wearing *kitab* is contradictory to the principles of the church. Yet wearing *Kitab* is very common in the study area, especially among the Christians.

Nevertheless, the most important means of warding off the danger of *Buda* attack before it happens is seeking protection through making *Du'aa'* [reciting prayers] and seeking refuge in almighty *Allaah*. In this regard a participant of FGD said "...they [*Buda*] cannot harm anyone except by *Allaah's* leave. We [Muslims] should seek refuge in *Allaah*". The aforementioned techniques of prevention especially wearing *Hijab*, tying amulet, making *Dua'a* are targeted not only at *Buda* but also at protecting *Ayni Seb* or simply *Ayn*. However, since *Ayni Seb* is relatively less dangerous and hence less feared than *Buda* attack, they are mainly meant to prevent *Buda* attack.

4.4.3 Curative Techniques against *Buda* Attack

Although it is highly stressed that prevention is better than cure, it is not always successful. Thus, when the prevention techniques fail, different curative mechanisms are put in place.

Despite of the considerable efforts made to prevent *Buda*'s attack, many people, especially women and children, are thought to be 'eaten' by *Budas*. Accordingly, the community employs a wide range of curative mechanisms to counter the attack.

Illnesses are not haphazardly attributed to *Buda* attack. Before taking any curative measure the people try its best to pinpoint the cause of the illness. Wasting sickness, domestic accidents, infertility, mental deficiency, deafness, mutism, blindness and plain bad luck have been variously reported by the informants and discussants as indicative symptoms of being eaten by a *Buda*. However, biting own lips, instant laughing and crying, sudden collapse, loosing of consciousness, sudden and acute abdominal pain, sudden behavioral change like lack of respect and open insulting of parents and elderly people, emotional instability are thought to be the guaranteed and typical symptoms of being attacked by a *Buda*. Apart from the symptoms, the situation under which the patient is in also gives very important clue to identify the cause of the illness. Meal times, illness, and pregnancy are thought to be the most important times for *Buda* attack. Especially, periods associated with fecundity and multiplication is believed to be so dangerous. That is why pregnant woman is thought to be most vulnerable and hence she is guarded and kept at home. Therefore, if the person is believed to be vulnerable (let beautiful or rich) and the situation is thought to be conducive for *Buda* attack (let pregnancy), and if s/he shows some of the aforementioned symptoms then the illness is attributed to *Buda* attack and hence they resort to curative measures.

4.4.4 Curative Methods Applied by Christians to Combat *Buda* Attack

Christian people of central Tigray have developed many avenues to heal illnesses caused by *Buda* attack. The in-depth interviewees and key informants especially traditional healers enlisted a number of curative techniques employed in healing patients allegedly attacked by a *Buda*. Based on the nature and overall process of healing, notably the materials used, the

type of healers involved, and the rituals practiced, the healing methods can be categorized in to five.

1. **The *Debtera* and his *Digam*:** Since central Tigray is overwhelmingly (98.4%) Orthodox Christian area (CSA 2007), we find a greater reliance upon the power of the church and its clergy so far as treating patients is concerned. Particularly the *Debtera* plays a crucial role in healing illnesses. *Debteras* are priests who have lost their ordination because they are no longer ritually pure, or individuals who have chosen not to enter the priesthood (Reminick 1974). They are itinerant figures who make a living apart from ecclesiastical activities by providing traditional medicine, charms, amulets and magic designed to ward off satanic creatures. The Christian informants indicated that the *Debteras* are renowned for their special prayer which is known as *Digam*. The *Debtera* performs the *Digam* on behalf of clients. When a case of the *Buda* caused illness is reported the *Debtera* will offer prayers and make *Kitab* [amulet] to counteract *Buda* attack. The *Debtera* performs a quite intricate and complex set of anti-magic invocations, prayers and exorcisms to cure the afflicted.

Briefly stated the process of the healing practice goes as follows. When the symptoms of the illness indicate an attack by a *Buda*, the victim/patient is taken to a *Debtera* [but most of the time the *Debtera* is brought to the home of the patient]. Then, for a modest fee or sometimes for free, he performs a rite over holy water and invocation locally called *Digam*. The rite over the holy water and the prayer are performed by pronouncing words in the ancient language of Geez, a liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. After the invocation is over the patient drinks the holy water locally called *May Digam*. Soon the patient recovers. Beside the *May Digam*, informants said, the *Debtera* may also find the diagnostic answer in his magic book and applies it to cure the patient.

2. **The Wizard [*Bale Wuqabe*] or [*Tenquali*]:** Another rarely used alternative healing method practiced in central Tigray is to bring the patient to a wizard [*ba'al wuqabe*] or *Tenquali*, one who has got wizardly powers gained through agents of the devil, to communicate with and drive out the evil spirits possessing the victim. The Wizard or *Tenquali* is thought to have, using different witchcraft techniques, the magical ability to identify the attacker and cure the patient. According to the informants, the process goes as follows: the victim or his/her relative or both will go to the *Tenquali's* house, mostly in the morning, and simply stand in the gate and wait for a permission of entrance. When they are allowed to enter, they will get in and seat calmly. They need not explain their cause and why they came for the *Tenquali* [*being a witch or wizard*] had already known their cause.

They simply wait until he speaks to them. Then the *Tenquali* goes in to trance, seeking possession by spirits who reveal the attacker and the appropriate cure for the illness, and then begins to speak. They have to carefully listen to his words. He tells them what he claims to have been revealed to him by the spirits. He tells them the problem they have, why they visited him, who the attacker is, why, when and how he attacked the victim etc... and finally orders the cure. They can respond to or talk with the *Tenquali* only upon his/her request, for instance if they are enquired to give information or when they are asked to confirm or reflect on what he is telling them.

3. ***Buda Milkak* or *Milifilaf* [exorcism]:** the third method of healing, which is the most frequently applied method of all, requires no special herbalist or clergyman but an elderly person and animal dung fire. This type of exorcism [*Buda Milkak*] sometimes called *Milifilaf* or *Mietan* does not involve the use of specialists outside of an elder member of the family or neighbors who knows the procedures and whose age gives him a bit better judgment. So, this elder person can perform the role of *Buda Alekaki* [exorcist]. If the symptoms signal that s/he has been attacked by the *Buda*, relatives will first tie the victim's left thumb with string. Then

the victim will be made to breathe the smoke from the dung fire. After taking in dung smoke, the victim gains the power to speak in the spirit and voice of his attacker. The victim begins recounting the chain of event that led to the confrontation and the attack. Then the exorcist asks the possessed victim what form of compensation should be given to counter act the attack. The victim, speaking in the voice of the attacker, demands some filthy matter such as ashes, a dead rat, or animal's especially hen's excrement. Even if it doesn't demand it is mandatory to force him consume one of those things.

It is said that the *Buda* victim eats these very dirty and inedible things without any sign of dislike in the same manner as ordinary food is eaten by ordinary person. The victim eats this and soon cries "I've left him! I've left my victim!" or something of this order. Then the family knows that the *Buda* has left the body, and the stricken person may now recover. This curing technique involves active vocal participation of the exorcist and the attacker who speaks via the victim. If the victim cannot speak, it is believed, he will surely die. Compared to other healing methods, exorcising through the smoke of dung fire is the most common for it is believed to be the easiest and most effective method. The following case history illustrates the overall process of exorcism

Case history: Girmay, kebele Hinzat of Wereda Werieleke, narrated the following case history:

My father is a priest and is usually called for help if any problem related to Buda is created in the neighborhood. Once a time our neighbor, Almaz, 21, was struck by Buda and my father was called by her parents to help them in curing Almaz. Then he picked up a Miran or Mechagna [rope or thread made from animal skin] and went to the victim's house. I followed him because I wanted to know what they are going to do. Then he put the Miran on the gate of their house and entered to the house. There Almaz was shouting, insulting people, and crying. Out of a sudden, she stopped crying and began laughing so loudly. She constantly attempted to escape and run from the house. Four guys were holding her tightly but she fought so hard and was about to escape. Surprisingly she was so powerful, [this power or strength is assumed to be the power of the Buda or believed that she is empowered by the Buda], and challenged them and they called for more help. Then other two guys were called and joined the four guys and hold her hands and legs tightly. Then my father asked the parents to get out any metal in the house. Then he ordered them to bring a string or rope, fire, hair of a donkey, some leaves and tire. Since her parents knew the healing system and the necessary materials they had already prepared and made ready all the material my father asked them to bring. He tightly tied Almaz's left thumb using a string. Then he put those materials to the fire and it began to create a smoke with powerful but unpleasant smell or bad odor. Then Almaz was pushed towards the smoke and was forced to smell or breathe it. She was forced to

such suffering because it is believed that she is under full control of the Buda and hence it is considered as if the Buda, not Almaz, is suffering via the victim. They consider as if they are dealing directly with the Buda. The purpose of the smelling is to force the Buda confess and reveal himself [remember that the Buda is treated in male sex] and why he attacked her and ultimately expel him from the victim. Then my father began talking with the Buda and asked him 'who are you? Speak up! Who are you? Why you caught her?' But he did not speak anything rather 'he', [I said he because now we are talking about the Buda not Almaz because it is the Buda and his spirit that has controlled and replaced Almaz and her humane spirit], was laughing and struggling hard to escape. Then my father burnt him in his face using a hot iron and asked him again 'who are you?' This time since he has suffered a lot from the bad smell coming from the smoke and the burning he began confessing. The Buda began speaking [it is Almaz's speech considered as if the Buda is speaking]. He revealed himself. He said 'I am Gebrehiwot...I caught her [Almaz] because her mother is always against me and she has insulted me many times...'. We all knew Gebrehiwot. He was our neighbor and in fact he has repeated quarrel with Almaz's mother. Then my father ordered him to leave her and to swear or promise (oath) not to inflict or struck her again. He immediately complied and said 'I will leave her. I will never strike her again. I swear I will not. Please release me now. I am suffering. I am burned-out. I will not repeat it. Please.'. Immediately Almaz said 'uff!' showing that she has got relief, she has got rid of the Buda. She lost all that power that challenged the four guys and become weak but normal. She began to talk normally and asked us to rest her in the bed. Then she was untied, taken to the bed to sleep. After around 10 minutes she woke up. She was tired but normal. She remembered nothing about what was going on. She was cured.

Similar to the case history presented above, a 43 years old man from Ahferom Wereda, said;

Exorcising through the smoke of dung fire is most common in our culture. If a person is recognized as being attacked by Buda, the relatives tie the victim's left thumb with string. Then the patient will be made to breathe the smoke of dung fire that enables him or her to speak in the name of his attacker. The attacker asks for compensation and leaves shouting that he has left when he gets it. In such a way the family is able to exorcise the Buda and the patient recovers.

4. Spitting on, or touching the victim and eating food: Unlike the previous case of exorcism, there is also a form of exorcising that needs the presence of the attacker. This method of diagnosis and counter-action involves the Buda in a more direct way. For instance when the victim begins to bite his lip and to act strangely, or if s/he appears to go into a daze and begin to jump and shout, a relative must try to get the victim to utter the name of his attacker. Then, if they recognized who the attacker is, they call both the attacker [Buda] and the patient to one place and ask them to spit saliva on glowing axes, sickle, knife, blade or any other metal. Soon after the victim will get relief and be cured. If neither of these tactics is successful, or if they couldn't identify the attacker, they have other indication. I. e if the victim begins crying suddenly, it is a sign that the attacker is in close proximity and that the

relatives must scout the area and seize the *Buda* person they come across. If the suspect is found, he is brought to the bed side of the victim, by gunpoint if needed. Then the *Buda* is made to spit on, or touch the victim or eat some food in the victim's house. The victim recovers soon after the *Buda* ate food or spited on, or touched him/her. Sometimes, in seeking out the attacker a very hot fire is made in the hearth and a piece of metal is put into the flames and heated until glowing. The hot metal is applied to the patient's face, making a small pattern of burns. As the wounds heal, it is believed, the scars will be transferred on to the face of the attacker in the same place and with the same pattern. The family must then seek out the guilty party, the person who is found to have scares of same pattern and compel, voluntarily or involuntarily, the *Buda* to release the victim.

5. Tselot [prayer] and Tsebel [Holy water]: Making prayers and the use of holy water is also another important healing method used by many people of central Tigray. Samuel's, 26 years old sister was attacked by a *Buda* who claimed to have loved her. He frequently asked her, but unsuccessfully, to be his girl friend or fiancée. Then he went on to formally request her parents to marry her. Her parents were upset by his request for he was not 'her type' [*Mewasibta*] and immediately turned down his request. Then the person 'ate' her. Samuel describes in his own words what happened then after.

Case history, Samuel

My sister was taken to S t. Michel's Tsebel (holy water) and she attended the Tsebel for Seleste Shewate [three sevens or three weeks]. During these three weeks my sister tried a lot of time to run or escape from the Tsebel and run away but we were alert and she did not succeed. Then one morning one Qeshi [priest] made a lot of prayers and readings of religious books and then approached my sister with Tsebel [holy water] and the Meskel [cross]. Then he put the cross in her forehead and began to spray the holy water powerfully in to her face and uttered 'in the name of holy trinity get out! In the name of the wholly savior get out!' He continued ordering the evil spirit or the Buda spirit in the name of the holly divine sprits. Then the Buda began confessing and admitted to get out of the victim. He assured that he has left her and the Qeshi [priest] made some prayers and blessings to my sister. By this time my sister became normal and after two days we went back to our home.

As shown in the cases discussed above the diagnosis and healing methods require some sort of exorcism. Exorcism is widely practiced and traditionally accepted norm to get rid of evil spirits including *Buda*. In the exorcism process the struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of the spiritual forces or evil spirits possessing the patient. In these complex traditions, we can see the operation of evil spirits, both as possessor and exorcist. One kind of evil spirit affects the exorcisms of less powerful spirits. The evil spirits demonize people and enable them to hurt others and other spirits drive out the evil spirits and the victim recovers.

4.4.5 Curative Systems Applied by Muslims

Since they share many cultural elements in common there is no marked difference in the traditional healing methods of the Christians and the Muslims. Most of the healing practices used by the Christians are also used by the Muslims. However, there is a slight difference in their spiritual (faith based) healing methods for they differ in religion. Some of the Islam specific or faith based healing methods used by Muslims of central Tigray include: reciting *Ruqyah*, pouring water on the victim, taking *Zamzam* or *Tsebel*, and making *Dua'a*.

Reciting *Ruqyah* is one of the most common healing methods used by Muslims of central Tigray. *Ruqyah* is a section found in the holy *Qura'an* and is recited in order to protect or cure the patient suffering from any type of illness including *Buda* attack. Some informants indicated that Prophet Mohamed have said performing *Ruqyah* protects people from any harm including envious eye and the Prophet had performed *Ruqyah*, in the name of *Allaah*, for his people. Accordingly, Muslim informants and discussants indicated, reciting *Qur'aan* and more specifically performing *Ruqyah* is widely used to cure the victim.

Asking the alleged attacker to wash the victim is also believed to effect cure. That is, if the person who attacked him is known, he may be asked to pour/spray water on the victim. Shiek Berihi, a 76 years old Muslim key informant from Axum, said "as the Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded... once the attacker is identified by using different methods he is made to wash the victim. The attacker should pour water over the one who has been afflicted. ”

The washing of the victim/patient by the attacker appears symmetrical to the Christians method of *Buda* spitting of saliva in to the face of the patient. Of course, this is not the only symmetry in the healing methods of the two religious groups. Apart from this, reciting holy *Quraan*, drinking *Zemzem*, *Dua'a* [prayers] is symmetrical with reciting the *Metsihaf Qidus* [Holy Bible], drinking *Tsebel*, and *Tselot* respectively.

Surprisingly enough, Muslims consult *Debteras* and go to *Tsebel* to get rid of evil spirits like *Buda*. The two famous *Tsebels* in central Tigray which are used by both Christians and Muslims are *Endabahadera* of Temben and *May Shigurto* of Adwa. *Endabahadera* is a Christian *Tsebel* found near a church. The researcher found many Christians and Muslims attending in the *Tsebel*. Fatima was one of them. Fatima, a 43 years old Muslim housewife from Enticho town, said:

It has been two months since I come here. I came here because many people including my mother were cured here. It is very popular and mysterious Tsebel. I had acute pain in my stomach. I don't know the cause of my illness but I was getting thinner and weaker. I came with the help of my brother because I was too weak to walk by myself. I drink and shower the Tsebel three times a day. For the first two weeks there was no progress. But through time I am getting better. Now I feel good. I am almost cured. This is a miracle. It is miracle of the Tsebel of Endabahadera. I strongly believe in the power of Tsebel. So do most Muslims of Tigray. I am Muslim but I do not think attending Tsebel contradicts Islam. I believe that it is through Allaah's permission that I came here and got cured. Tsebel is nothing but holy water.

Another important point related to traditional healing employed by Muslims is the apparent objection of exorcists. According to Islam, the informants and discussants said, any practitioner of magic is a person who uses the *Shayaateen* (devils). Such a person is a *Kaafir* [unbeliever or betrayer], because he worships both *Allaah* and the *Shaytaan* (devil). As a

result. from spiritual point of view, a *Buda* is not a Muslim but a *Kaafir*. In fact, Muslims of central Tigray believed that there was no Muslim *Buda* in the study area. Even the exorcist whose healing technique is thought to be based on magic is by definition a *Kaafir*. Shiek Mohammed, A religious leader from *Neblet*, said “they [Witches, Budas and exorcists] followed what the *Shayaateen* (devils) gave out in the lifetime of *Sulaymaan* (Solomon).”

When we compare the traditional healing mechanisms, both preventive and curative, used by Muslims and Christians we can learn many important lessons. For example, even though the evil eye belief in central Tigray seems to have its roots in religion, some aspects of the belief notably the healing system used to combat evil eye attack exhibits both symmetry and deviation from the principles of the official religion. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church condemns every kind of spirit outside the realm of its teaching as Satanic. The church does not officially recognize the *Zar* spirits. As a result they are grossly condemned as *Aganinti* (Satanic) and hence liable to be exorcised in the church. Furthermore, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church does not recognize traditional healing other than its own which involves exorcism with *Tsebel* (holy water) and prayer.

Like Christianity, Islam clearly condemns any form of exorcism and magic except prayer [*Du'a*], *Zemzem*, *Ruqiyah* and reciting the holy *Qur'aan*. Like their Christian counterparts most Muslims applied a number of preventive and curative methods that are supposed to be contrary to the official religion they claim to adhere. Similar to Christians, the Muslims' curative methods used to treat patients supposedly suffering from *Buda* attack are not purely spiritual but a hybrid of religion and tradition. As a result, some of the tradition-based healing practices are against the principles of the official religion they claim to follow. Moreover, since both Christians and Muslims of central Tigray share more or less common culture, history, tradition, and social circumstances, they applied similar and sometimes identical

healing method. Even the slight difference in the religion based /spiritual/ healing system is best characterized by symmetry than contradiction.

This similarity and symmetry of the healing methods used by Muslims and Christians is not an exception but a manifestation of the overall similarity of the living style of the two religious groups. It shows the power of cultural diffusion and tradition. It also indicates the closeness, acquaintance, and harmonized coexistence of Muslims and Christians. Haji kemal, expressively said:

We [Christians and Muslims] share common history, tradition, and culture. The way we lead our life and the way we attribute and handle the challenges and misfortunes of life are almost identical. We are brothers and sisters. Though we follow different faiths, it has minimal impact on our inter group social intercourse. The religious difference is nominal. In practice it is difficult to differentiate Muslims and Christians for their way of life is so similar and they are closely acquainted to each other. I can say that we are half Muslim-half Christian. This is in fact a peculiar feature of our society. So never get surprised when you see similarity in our traditional healing practices for we share common perception about the causation of illness and its treatment. Never get surprised when you get Muslims in Christian Tsebel or in the Debtera house. Never get surprised when you get Christians taking medicine from a Muslim Fuqra. Never get surprised when my neighbor Christian comes to rescue my child, by exorcism and prayer, who is suffering from Buda attack. Never get surprised that my trusted friend is a Christian. I do not think that I am contradicting my religion. Instead I firmly believe that I am exercising one of the crucial principles of Islam, the religion of peace, by peacefully coexisting with my fellow Christians.

No one can agree more than this. That elderly person seems to have sufficiently justified why the healing practices used by the two religious groups are best characterized by similarity and symmetry.

Note that the aforementioned traditional preventive and curative techniques directed at *Buda* are not always successful. The *nay Buda Meklakeli* [anti evil eye] and *Nay Buda Medhanits* [*Buda* medicine] is not sufficient and a lot of people supposed to be eaten by *Buda* have dead. Moreover, it has to be noted that it is not rarely that biological diseases are wrongly attributed to *Buda*. A couple of years ago, Asfaw, now a university instructor, got sick due to malaria. However, his parents suspected that he is eaten by a *Buda*. Then a *Debtera* was called to

perform exorcism to drive out the *Buda*. However there was no improvement. Latter, as per the pressure of his friends, class mates and teachers he was taken to a nearby health center. Then the physician told them that he was suffering from powerful malaria and was on the verge of death. Thanks to the effort of the physicians he survived. (Surprisingly, Asfaw told me that he strongly believes in the power of the *Buda* and has broken up a relationship with his girl friend from Axum because he was, in the mean while, informed that she is *Buda*).

Research participants indicated that it is totally forbidden to apply modern medicine in treating an illness supposedly caused by *Buda* attack. Informants of this study indicated that many, though quantitative study is needed to get the accurate percentage or number, people, both Christians and Muslims, of central Tigray firmly believed that modern medicine like tablets, surgeries, injections etc don't help but can only worsen the illness. Therefore, if the illness is believed to be caused by a *Buda*, no one dares to go or to take the patient to health center or hospital. An in-depth interviewee, said:

If a person is eaten by a Buda s/he should never be taken to modern medicine. The Buda spirit is antagonistic to modern medicine and hence will immediately punish the victim by killing him. Especially syringe injection is devastating. If a Buda victim is taken to hospital and given syringe injection, you have to be sure that s/he will die immediately. To my knowledge almost all Buda victims who have been mistakenly admitted to modern medicine have died. So applying modern medicine is not an option in treating Buda induced illness. Modern medicine cannot prevent or heal such type of illness that are caused by supernatural spirits. Of course everyone knows that.

Concerning the effect of *Buda* belief in the people's attitude towards modern medicine,

Solomon, a health officer and manager of a health center in Werieleke *Wereda*, explained

According to the people's perception about Buda, Buda attack can only be treated by traditional and spiritual method. It is widely believed that if a Buda victim took a modern medicine, especially in the form of syringe injection, s/he will immediately die. As a result, if the illness is attributed to Buda attack, the patient will never be taken to hospital. Instead they apply traditional medicine. Due to this reason many people suffering from bodily or natural diseases are being kept at home. There are a lot of diseases where the symptoms are similar to the supposed symptoms of what they call Buda attack. After all there is no Buda.

The information collected from nurses working in the health center indicated that so many people suffering from different biological diseases are kept at home and treated traditionally and spiritually, most of the time unsuccessfully. Even though there is gradual change, the belief is so strong and deep rooted and the people are so rigid to ignore the tradition and hence the rate of progress is slow. Even though the small and slow attitudinal changes among the youth and educated segments of the population that can partially be attributed to expansion of education, modern medicine, urbanization should be acknowledged and appreciated, it should not be exaggerated. The fact on the ground is that the majority of the population of the study area is illiterate peasants and hence the belief is still widespread and the rate of progress is slow and unsatisfactory.

Chapter Five

Summary

Peoples' life and their relationships with each other are affected by many factors. Belief system is one of those factors that have a paramount effect on peoples' life. Belief in the evil eye complex is one of the beliefs which shapes many peoples' social life and their health seeking behavior. Researches indicate that even though evil eye belief is present in all parts of the world, it is most widespread in sub Saharan Africa. Ethiopia is one of the countries where belief in the evil eye complex, commonly called *Buda*, is pervasive. This study aimed at discussing the *Buda* belief and its implication on the life of the people of central Tigray. It discussed the *Buda* and its two important implications: the widespread use of traditional healing methods, and the marginalization of the alleged *Budas*.

Tigray society is rigidly divided into *Chewas* [Pure boned people] who occupy the highest social position and the non *Chewas* [Impure boned people] which include *Barya*[slave], *Buda*[evil eyed], *Hamyen* [lalibela], *Wata* [Singer], and *Qomata* [Leper] who occupy the bottom one. Among the non *Chewas*, the *Budas* are the most despised, hated, feared and marginalized people and they occupy the lowest position/status in the community. The belief on *Buda* is the main, though not the only, reason behind the rigid boundary between the honored-agriculturalist-*Chewa* majority and the despised-craft working-*Buda* minority. It is the central ideology behind the lowest status and prestige of the *Budas* in central Tigray.

The belief about *Buda* is very old in its history, pervasive in its coverage, and far-reaching in its implication. *Budas* are believed to be naturally evil and envious people. They are thought to have been empowered by evil spirits and determined to 'eat' or attack people. The *Budas* are believed to have supernatural power and conceived of using evil spirits against other people. The *Buda* is said to cause many problems on people, domestic animals, crops and other agricultural products. *Budas* are thought to cause many illnesses and deaths using

different mystical techniques. The techniques of attack require the magical use of gaze, herbs and animals notably hyena. They are thought to have a special gift of glancing at others and attacking. It is widely believed that *Budas* cause illnesses like madness, anxiety, mutism, visual impairment, impotence, sterility, disorder in menstruation, problems in pregnancy and child birth, deficient breast milk, etc. Young, wealthy, beautiful, shy, and brilliant individuals are thought to be the most vulnerable to *Buda* attack. People who have quarrel or special relation with *Buda* are also thought to be very susceptible to attack. A person is highly likely to be 'eaten' by a *Buda* when the *Buda* sees fear, worry, or anxiety in his potential victim. In addition, there are people who are easily pierced by evil eye [*Biayni Seb Ziwigai*].

For the people of central Tigray, identifying the allegedly *Buda* person is not too difficult. It is not too difficult because the area is predominantly rural and every villager knows each other very much. Since being *Buda* is a hereditarily ascribed quality, it is not difficult to identify *Buda* people just by tracing their lineage. Occupation is also used to identify the *Buda*. Historically, for various reasons, craft working was exclusively engaged by *Buda* people. Accordingly, by common sense craft work people (artisans) are believed to be *Budas*. In addition to lineage and occupation, *Budas* can be identified by their presumed peculiar physical features.

Various points have been forwarded by the *Chewas* as the main reasons of the *Budas* to attack other people. Feeling of jealousy or envy and the need for domestic servant added with the inherently evil nature (being agents of devil) of the *Budas* is considered to be the main rationale behind the *Budas*' determined pulse to attack or 'eat' people.

The study found that the *Chewas* believed the *Budas* have different methods of attack. One method of attack is, the *Buda* person finding a victim, twisting the root of a certain plant or herb and forming a loop with this root until the victim dies. The second, probably the most

common, method of attack involves giving the evil eye gaze to the victim and then waiting for his death. Thirdly, the *Buda* people can change themselves, with the help of a mystical herb, in to hyenas and roam the village at night and 'eat' people. As to the destiny of dead person allegedly eaten by *Buda*, it is believed that the attacker would mysteriously reincarnate the victim by taking the dead body out of grave. After reincarnated the victim is said to be subjected to hard labor for seven solid years, after which the soul is formally released and the body disintegrates. *Buda* attack is the most feared sickness in the society not only as a deadly disease but as an expected burden/slavery/ after death.

People of central Tigray have developed different preventive and curative techniques of combating the *Buda*. These include making prayers, using holy water [*Tsebel* among the Christians and *Zamzam* among the Muslims], reciting spiritual scriptures like the *Qura'an* and the Holy Bible, visiting the tombs of saints, wearing *Kitabs*, etc. Cultural rituals like shaving half head, wearing *Hijaab*, avoiding physical encounter with *Budas* etc are also some of the preventive measures taken by the people. Traditional medicines locally called *Nay Buda Mekelakeli* and *Nay Buda Medhanit* [medicine against *Buda*], and traditional healers like *Debteras*, *Tenquali* and other exorcists play a crucial role in the healing process. This research found that of all the traditional healing methods *Buda Milkak* /exorcism/ is the most commonly used curative measure while wearing *Kitab* and making prayer are the most popular preventive techniques.

In central Tigray, exorcism as traditional method of dealing with *Buda* attack has had a far-reaching consequence upon the life of *Budas*. Apart from healing the victims it has a big implication in the life of the *Budas* in general and the relationship between the *Chewas* and *Budas* in particular. It is a cultural practice by which the bearer of the evil eye or *Buda* is said to be identified and the spirit driven out. It is a process through which name of the suspect is

revealed and hence could result in physical torture and killing of the suspects. It is known that each town or village with *Buda* population usually singles out some individuals to identify them as most dangerous *Buda*. These are so categorized when different victims repeatedly mention their names in the exorcism process. Once identified such person as *Wana Belaietti* [chief eaters], they are always in fear of physical torture, humiliation and even being killed.

Even though it is known that the *Budas* are despised social category, whether these people were originally part of the majority or migrants who live as 'guests' among the 'host' society needs further studies. However, from the majority's point of view '*Buda*' people were not ethnically part of Tigray society. The dominant belief is that *Budas* were different in creation and origin and have non Tigrayan origin. Apart from their separate origin and their alleged evil deeds, the myth about their being cursed as traitors and betrayers of Jesus Christ has highly contributed to their marginalized and despised position. Regarding the peoples' perception of craft workers in general and *Budas* in particular, they are mystified to appear secretive, magical, envious, and evil.

However, the *Budas* view themselves as ordinary human beings. *Budas* reject the dominant view of categorical difference between themselves and the *Chewa* people. Rather they consider themselves ethnically, religiously, and socially part of Tigray society. They seem to believe that group boundaries maintained by the dominant group were artificially created against them. In practice, however, they seem to have developed, though loose, a sort of group belongingness that might have been reinforced by the feeling of rejection by the mainstream society. Yet, most of the alleged *Budas* declare the beliefs, myths and stories maintained against them as false and ill will that resulted from backwardness and illiteracy of the society. However, contrary to their will and claim, the *Budas* are despised, hated, discriminated, stereotyped, excluded and marginalized.

The majority group avoids or tries to avoid, implicitly and explicitly, physical contact with the *Buda* people. Accordingly, the belief system is regulating the category based relationship for the threat of *Buda* attack is ever present possibility. Therefore, the *Chewas* claim it is logical and practical that they were not accepted as part of the majority nor were they allowed to participate in mainstream social life. Social interaction has been restricted, in terms of mixed marriage, friendship, neighborhood ties, residential integration etc. The *Chewa* people reject friendship bonds with *Budas* since they believe that evil eye bearers may eat them. Thus, in whatever form, social attachment with *Buda* people has been avoided as much as possible.

This study found that intermarriage is the most restricted social tie between members of the *Buda* and *Chewa* categories. Two forces seem to have been in action against cross marriage: fear of *Buda* attack and huge gap in social status. Keeping the pureness of one's descent by means of avoiding marriage ties with such 'contaminating' people is highly emphasized. Moreover, hereditary craft persons are not welcome at social events, personal and public ceremonies. The *Budas* are not welcomed in the formation of social ties, friendship, *Aliginet* [God father / mother bond], *Tub mitbab* [sucking from the breast], *Mewsibo* [affinal tie] etc. Apparently, they may not need all these as individuals for they know that they may not be accepted by the *Chewas* and hence *Budas* are forced to exclude themselves from such type of intergroup relationships.

Furthermore, members of the *Buda* people are not welcomed or encouraged to assume political position in administrative institutions. Since, in central Tigray, access to political power highly depends on social status determined by birth, *Budas* who occupy the lowest status are politically disempowered. Even though the 1974 revolution contributed a lot in upgrading the political role and participation of the *Budas* and other minorities, yet it remains far behind the *Chewas*'. They encounter many obstacles. Assuming political offices and other

related leadership positions is very difficult for them. Though fear of legal repercussion has halted the open opposition of the *Chewa's* against the *Budas*, there is still implicit discouragement that pushes the *Budas* to withdraw themselves from leadership roles.

Religiously, the Christian *Budas* are also excluded from free spiritual involvement and participation. Like other social events and gatherings, they are not welcomed in prayers and other religious ceremonies. They are not allowed to assume position in the hierarchy of the church. Irrespective of the religious knowledge they have, *Budas* are not encouraged to be priests for they are believed to be impure and traitors of Jesus Christ. Even though one's position in the political and church apparatus are the two very important sources of prestige, *Budas* have been highly excluded from both spheres. However, unlike Christians, there is no religious discrimination of *Budas* among Muslims, for the Muslim community of the study area believed there was no *Buda* Muslim.

In terms of economy, the 1974 land reform established equality regarding access to land. The land reform has significantly improved the economic life of *Budas* and there is no significant difference in the income of the *Budas* and the non *Budas*. As a result of the redistribution of land, most *Budas* have abandoned their former means of livelihood. Consequently, the number of crafter workers has considerably decreased in rural areas. Yet, the *Budas* are viewed in such a way that they are branded with various sorts of foul languages and constitute the lower social stratum. The inferior status of *Budas* could be attributed to historical and social constructionist underpinnings that were designed to maintain manipulative relationship in the whole society.

To sum up, the socio-cultural and religious aspects have been the most persuasive means of ensuring exclusion of *Budas* by the *Chewas*. It is found that some of the restrictions like marriage are still as defiantly established as they were a couple of decades ago. Their

marginalization is justified and supported by folktales, myths, proverbs and songs. Derogatory, pejorative terms and phrases that express contempt and hatred are common in the vocabulary of prejudice against this class of people. Various pejorative terms like *Buda*, *Tebib*, *Haguadi*, *ketkati*, hyena, potter, are commonly used to refer to *Buda* people. Even though their economic situation has significantly risen, social prestige and respect seems to be very far from the reach of the *Budas*. All in all, the *Budas* have been, and still are but to a lesser degree, spatially segregated, economically disadvantaged, politically disempowered, socially excluded and culturally subordinated.

Yet, certain improvements, as compared to the past, have been materialized in the lives of *Budas*. The expansions of modern education, modern medicine and the legal and political reforms have contributed their part to the recent decline of the belief and consequent improvement in the socio-cultural status of the *Budas*. Especially in the towns, growing urbanization and increased movement of people and hence anonymity and heterogeneity of urban dwellers added with decreased religiosity of urban people, as compared to rural people, has slightly weakened the belief. The political and legal reforms has also changed in favor the alleged *Budas* and other marginalized groups that outright and overt discrimination has been outlawed. As a result, the *Budas* of central Tigray are leading by far better life than they used to lead half a century back. The belief is fading out gradually and the alleged *Budas* are getting, though slowly, integrated into the mainstream society. Thanks to the land reform, the *Budas* have changed from craft workers to land owning farmers with additional craft skills.

As craft worker-farmers the traditional interdependence with the dominant group has changed from craft service-subsistence exchange to commodity exchange relationship. Unlike in the past, craft workers come to the market as independent commodity producers and with better bargaining power. This despised occupational group is abandoning craftwork and is losing one of its important distinctive features that separate it from the farming majority. Thus, in

terms of economic behavior the craft working community seems to be in a process of 'melting' into the majority peasantry. In urban areas, due to the growing expansion of micro and small scale enterprises like ironworking, garage, wood work etc, the traditional craft work is being absorbed rapidly.

Whether economic independence and the change in occupational status from craftwork to farming could totally remove the group boundary to the extent of total integration remains speculative until further research is done. This study has shown that craftwork was the most defining occupational mark of the *Budas*. Moreover, economic alienation, notably land alienation was also a contributing factor, though only secondary to the belief, for the *Budas'* lower socio economic status. Thus, the actual impact of the recent occupational change in the integration of *Budas* needs to be studied in depth. However, it is possible to conclude, based on the findings of this study, the role of craftwork as an important mark of difference is diminishing. So if they continue to abandon the profession, one source of stigma is going to be eliminated leading to better degree of integration of craft workers to the mainstream society. In fact, the *Budas* of contemporary central Tigray, if not honored, are not as despised and hated as they used to be few decades back. Even though it seems to take considerable period of time, the recent changes are promising that the future of this despised and marginalized group looks bright.

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Interview Guide and Focus group discussion checklist

I. Interview Guide for *Chewa* key informants

Section One

Demographic Information of informants

1. Name (fictitious) -----
2. Sex -----
3. Age -----
4. Family size -----
5. Religion -----
6. Marital status -----
7. Educational Status -----
8. Occupation -----

Section two

Origin of the *Buda*, the *Buda* belief, and community's perception of *Buda*

- What life looks like in the community
- Historical origin of the belief and the *Buda* people: where, how, when, why it emerged
- Who are *Budas* and how they are identified: peculiar characteristics of *Budas*
- The depth(strength) and magnitude of the belief
- The Community's perception about the *Buda*: attitude towards *Budas*
- Trend of the belief and attitude towards *Budas*: past, present, and future prospects
- The factors that contributed for the spread and pervasiveness of the belief
- The alleged extraordinary powers of the *Buda*: how it is acquired and transmitted
- The evil deeds that are allegedly caused by the *Buda*

Section three

The social life of the *Budas*: extent and form of discrimination and marginalization

- The nature of social relationship between *Budas*(minority) and non *Budas*(majority)
- The *Budas* involvement in different social events and organizations
- Community's reaction towards their involvement
- Extent and form of marginalization and exclusion against the *Budas*: the trend of exclusion from past to present and its future prospects
- The status of the *Budas* in the community
- The derogatory terms used to refer to *Buda* people
- Areas of life where the discrimination and exclusion is very high and apparent
- The *Budas* participation in spiritual activities and affinal (marriage) ties
- The community's marriage(mate selection) system Vis a Vis the *Budas*
- Rationales behind the exclusion and marginalization of the *Budas*
- The effect of exclusion and discrimination on the life of the *Budas* and on the life of the *Chewas*
- The coping mechanisms adopted by *Budas* to overcome the effects of exclusion

Section four

Traditional healing practices employed to deal with *Buda* caused illnesses

- List the problems allegedly caused by the *Buda*: especially health problems
- The target, rationale and *Mounds opprundi* of *Buda*'s attack: Why the *Budas* attack people?
How and when they do it?
- Who are the most vulnerable to be attacked by *Buda*? Why they are vulnerable
- Informant symptoms of being attacked(diseased) by *Buda*
- The materials, procedures, rituals, and personnel involved in the healing practice
- *Buda* induced illness vis a vis modern medicine

II. Guideline for In-depth interview with *Chewa* general informants

Section One: Demographic Information of in-depth interview informants

1. Name (fictitious) -----
2. Sex -----
3. Age -----
4. Family size -----
5. Religion -----
6. Marital status -----
7. Educational Status -----
8. Occupation -----

Section two: *Buda* belief, inter group and interpersonal relationship between *Budas* and *Chewas*, and exclusion of *Budas*

- How life seems to appear in your village?
- How do you see the relationship of different social groups (*Chewas*, non *Chewas* etc) in your neighborhood?
- What is your perception of *Buda*? Do you believe in *Buda*?
- How do you see the implication of the *Buda* belief on your way of life?
- Do you think the *Buda* have extraordinary power and ability to attack people?
- Do you think that the *Budas* have the power to cause the problems they are accused of?
- How, where, why, and when did the *Buda* emerge?
- How do you identify the *Buda*? Do they have peculiar features? If yes, please discuss

- Would you explain some of the evil deeds of *Budas*?
- Whom do you think are the most vulnerable to be attacked by *Buda*?
- Do you have friends from the *Budas*?
- How do people (family or relatives) from the dominant group say as a result of the relationship?
- How do you perceive the attitude of the non *Budas* towards the *Budas*?
- What is the outlook of people in your neighborhood about the *Budas*?
- What do you think is the impact of the belief on the life and social relationships between *Budas* and non *Budas*?
- To what extent do you think the *Budas* are stigmatized and marginalized?
- What are the possible reasons for their marginalization?
- What are the areas of life where the marginalization is high and most apparent?
- Would you please discuss some of the derogatory terms used to refer *Buda* people?
- How do you think these offensive terms affect their social relationship?
- What would you suggest to improve the attitude of the *Chewas* towards the *Budas*?

III. Interview guide for In-depth interview (general and key informants) with *Budas* (minority group)

Section One: Demographic Information of *Buda* in-depth interview informants

1. Name (fictitious) -----
2. Sex -----
3. Age -----
4. Family size -----
5. Religion -----
6. Marital status -----
7. Educational Status -----
8. Occupation -----

Section two

Buda* belief, inter group and interpersonal relationship between *Budas* and *Chewas*, and exclusion of *Budas

- How is life going in your village?
- How do you make a living?
- How do you explain family relationships inside and with surrounding neighborhood?
- What is your perception of *Buda*?
- Would you explain people's belief about the *Buda*?
- Do you think the *Buda* have extraordinary power peculiar to them?
- Do you think that the *Budas* have the power to cause the problems they are accused of?
- How do you see the implication of the belief on your way of life?

- What do you think is the impact of the belief on the life and social relationships between *Budas* and *Chewas*?
- Do you have friends from the dominant/*Chewa*/ group?
- How do you explain your relation with them?
- How do people react to your relation with the *Chewas*?
- Do you have *Edir, Ekub, Mahiber* and the like with the *Chewas*?
- How do you see the outlook of members of these institutions towards you?
- Do you participate in funerals, weddings, and other social events with those dominant groups? If yes how do you get their reaction to your participation?
- To what extent do you consider that you are in activities that your friends from other groups are engaged in?
- How do you explain your status in relation to the existing stratification in your community?
- Do you think that you experience stigma and discrimination as a result of your identity/by being *Buda*?
- Would you explain the extent and form of the stigma and discrimination?
- Would you explain please, in which areas of life is the stigma and discrimination very high and apparent?
- What are the factors that contribute for the low status and prestige of *Budas* in the community?
- How do you explain the marriage system of *Budas* in comparison to other social groups?
- Do you see any distinct traditional religion and ritual of the *Budas* as distinct from other groups?
- What should be done to increase participation in social activities and improve the status of *Budas* in the society?

IV. Focus group discussion checklist

Focus group discussion with *Chewas* (majority group)

Section One: Demographic Information of discussants

1. Name (fictitious) -----
2. Sex -----
3. Age -----
3. Family size -----
4. Religion -----
5. Marital status -----
6. Educational Status -----
7. Occupation -----

Section two: peoples' perception of *Budas* and their marginalization

- The Community's perception about *Buda*
- The depth and magnitude of the belief
- The evil deeds the *Budas* are accused of doing
- The social relationship between *Budas* and *Chewas*
- The *Budas*' social network with the different social groups
- *Budas* involvement in social events and institutions
- The form and extent of marginalization and discrimination the *Budas* face: trend of exclusion from past to present and its future prospect
- The areas of life where the exclusion is very high: mate selection and spiritual life
- The impact of the exclusion on the life of the *Buda*
- The coping mechanisms adopted by *Budas* to overcome the exclusion
- Curative and protective measures/ healing practices employed to challenge the *Buda*
- Recommendations to improve the participation and status of *Budas* in the community

Profile of interviewees

	Male	Female	Total	<i>Buda</i>	<i>Chewa</i>	Total
Key informants	11	5	16	5	11	16
General informants	12	8	20	5	15	20
Total	23	13	36	10	26	36

List of Key informants

No	Name	Age	Sex
1	Gebremeskel	66	M
2	Asqualu	58	F
3	Aregawi	56	M
4	Wolday	67	M
5	Kahsay	66	M
6	Tideg	42	F
7	Tesfay	71	M
8	Gebray	66	M
9	Tekle	67	M
10	Gebre-medhin	81	M
11	Hailu	93	M
12	Measho	32	F
13	Kahsa	60	F
14	Assefach	47	F
15	Kemal	55	M
16	Berihu	76	M

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, it has not been presented in any form in any other universities and that all sources the materials used in this thesis have been dully acknowledged.

Declared by:



26 Nov. 2012

Mulugeta Birhane

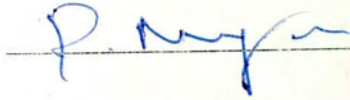
Signature

Date

Signature Date

The candidate

Confirmed by:



12-11-12

P. Murugan (PHD)

Signature

Date

Advisor