

BOOK REVIEW: *DUUDHAA* [CUSTOM]

Author: *Mammo Gada*; **Language Used:** *Afaan Oromo*; **Year of publication:** 2016; **Pages:** 274; **Publisher:** MYBT Printing Press; **Category:** Ethnography; **Book Condition:** Third Edition; **Price:** 95 Ethiopian Birr (3.52 USD)

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ABSTRACT

THIS BOOK REVIEWED EMPHASIZES ON OROMO BELIEF SYSTEM, NORMS, CULTURE AND CUSTOM. THE TITLE OF BOOK IS "DUUDHAA" (MEANING 'CUSTOM'). THE BOOK DEALS WITH THE CONCEPTS OF WAAQEFFANNA (OROMO INDIGENOUS RELIGIOUS), MAMMO GADA, WAAQAA (GOD), IRREECHAA (THANK GIVING RITUAL) AS WELL AS CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES OF THE OROMO COMMUNITY FROM EMIC PERSPECTIVE. IN DOING SO, MAMMO GADA, THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK REVIEWED, UTILIZED EXPLORATORY RESEARCH DESIGN WHERE PERSONAL OBSERVATION, LIFE EXPERIENCE AND INTERVIEW WERE USED TO COLLECT PRIMARY DATA THROUGH WHICH HE ASSESSES THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES OF 'DUUDHAA' OROMO (OROMO CUSTOM). DESPITE MAMMO HAS MADE A PARAMOUNT CONTRIBUTION IN UNCOVERING OROMO CUSTOMARY WISDOM, HIS BOOK FAILED TO ADDRESS THE ROLE OF OROMO'S INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM FOR ECOLOGICAL PRESERVATION AND SENSITIVENESS IN DETAILS.

KEYWORDS: DUUDHAA, IRREECHA, OROMOO, WAAQEFFANNA, WAAQA

INTRODUCTION

This book review is on Mammo Gada's work entitled '*Duudha*', written in Afaan Oromo, published in 2016. The book addresses a number of socio-cultural, politics and religious issues like *waaqeffannaa* (Oromo indigenous religion), *Qaalluu* (Oromo religious expert), *Ayyaana* (spirit), *Irreechaa* (Thanksgiving ritual), *Dhugaa* (Truth) *Gaa'ela* (Marriage Custom of the Oromo, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia).

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Theoretically, Mammo Gada has used three theories the book. The first theory is historical reconstruction, which highly explain and narrating ideas from historical perspective. The theory is employed to state out the history and origin of ‘*Duudhaa*’ Oromo (Pp 80-85) through which he reconstruct the history and identity of Oromo with particular emphasis on Oromo custom. Besides, he utilized this theory to claim negative interpretations and understanding of some Oromo and non- Oromo peoples about Oromo custom (Pp 86-89). Functionalism is other theory which is being used by the author to elaborate the function and significance of Oromo custom (Pp 49-55). Mammo, also, tried to magnify benefits that the Oromo societies can acquire from enthusiastic of those customs and the risk of losing it side by side (Pp 49-55). The third is theory is a comparative theory used in comparing the relationships between different points to trace the knowledge systems, and to contrast Oromo custom with western (Christian and Islam religion) and other religions broadly (Pp90).

To this end, onpage 15, the author indicate that many non-Oromo’s have negative attitude and they believe asOromo peoples thank and worship creatures ‘*Tulluu* (Mountain)’*Odaa* (Sycamore tree)’ ,’*Malkaa* (river) and the like rather than creator (*Waaqaa*). But the writer tried to correct such like distortion by saying that the Oromo basically Oromo not give thanks for creator rather they worship and give thanks for God (*waaqa*). According to these people, Oromo go to *Tulluu* (Mountain), *Malkaa* (River bass) and *Odaa*(a sycamore utilized to perform ritual; symbol of presence of *Waaqaa*) centers to worship and pray them; their *Uumaa* (Creator) is abstract or no have unique manifestation (Pp 70-74). But, as the author correctly noted that these sites are not Oromo *Waaqaa* (God) (Pp 86-89); and that is they sacrifice various things for their God according to *Seera waaqeffanna* (Rule of Oromo indigenous religion) (Pp 9-12). The Oromogo to such ritual site to pray and thank their ‘*uumaa*’ or *waaqa* (Creator) using like *Coqorsa* (ever green grass; which used as the symbol of fertility and peace), *Tulluu* (Mountain), *Malkaa* (River), *Hora* (salty mineral water) , *caffee* (Swamp), *Siidaa* (monument), *Korm266-269aa* (Bull),*Dhibaa* (Libation),*Caaccuu* (It is a ritual material and symbol of blessing),*Kallacha* (A ritual object from prepared Iron) and other creations which given to them from their *waaqaa* (God) (Pp253-257).For these reason Oromo said that “*uumaman uumaa kadhanna*”(Meaning that praying *Waaqaa* by his creations) (Pp30); and on the cover page of the book reviewed, the author stated that “*waaqa nu uumetti ni amanna; ayyaana dirree fi lamaan namaa ni kadhanna*” (We belief in *Waaqaa* and praying to give us his *ayyaanaa* (spirit). The author’s is on this issue seems to be complementary with Soorii (2008) & BATO (2007) on Oromo customary and indigenous wisdom.

In the first section of the book, the author has also contributea very important ideas to reconstruct Original and indigenous Oromo customs by strengthen *Gadaa* system (The holistic socio-political wealth) (Pp 53). Besides, he argued that *Eebba*(Blessing), *Dhugaa* (Truth), *Ayyaana* (Spirit), *Ayyaanaa fi Amantii* (Spirit and belief), *Amantii alagaa*(western religion) elaborate under the category of producers, rules and norms one by one (Pp 90-93). And, he has also discussed the socio-cultural issues; indigenous conflict resolution *Jaarsummaa* (Negotiation) (Pp165); and its significances, and gender issue and *waaqeffanna* were also the concern of this author (Pp211). Accordingly, *Eebbaa* (Blessing) is religious ceremony that practiced to get wealth before engaging particular ritual events (Pp 38). However, blessing is necessarily not limited to precondition of ritual engagement rather it will extended to closing events at the same time. It has also the sense of traced back to past, examining and catch-up the future life in the power of hope.

On other hand, the concept ‘*safuu*’ (*Norm*) has a great value in Oromo world view. *Safuu* (Norm) is the hardy sick which used as spiritual bridge between creation and creator (Pp93-96). Thus, they belief that, if the on failed to respect *safuu* (Norm) he/she will be segregated andexcluded from social as well as cursed and taken off grace and reputation in front of *Waaqaa* (God)(Pp95).

In addition, he tries to discuss the history of Oromo peoples in classifying into three phases/periods (Pp260-262). These are the history before colonized, history during colonized and after colonization by Abyssinians. Accordingly, he argued that Oromo loses his identity and custom, and enforced to worship western religions (Pp 70-93), and replaced their indigenous religion with Orthodox Tewodo Church as well as indeed they did aimed at ‘De-Oromonization’ in all means; gadaa system was superseded and its elements were limited to specific rituals only and reserved to government purposes(Lambert,(1983), (BATO, 2007); (Balaambaras,2003), despite a large number of Oromo’s scarified their lives to preserve and save indigenous custom (Pp I).

Although Mammo’s work is priceless in exploring the customary wisdom of the Oromo, as an author his presence in the text is not such clear. But, he just used terms and phrases like ‘*keenya*’ (We), *Ani* (I) which is somewhat a good evidence to know his positionality. Above all, regarding to field work, he was not stay in field for long period of times as ethnographer which he admitted in the book. To this end, he states that “*Balinaan fagaadhee hin deemne, hayyootaa fi jaarsota OromooTuulamaan gaafadhe*” in his script (Pp5). This indicates that the author has not spent his time in field work during data collection. Furthermore, Mammo failed to delimit the scope of his study geographically; rather he wrote the overall Oromo custom as general evidences since there is subjectivity and variation of custom even among Oromos’ of different geography(Daaniyaa,2006), Dirribii,(2009), Firaa’ol,(2012)Hayiluu, (1997) and Lambert,(1983).

Besides, the organizational format of this book is not as such attractive and trying error is also here there. For instance, the table of content has no coherence and clear categories; the page numbering is also has not flow the current format; the classification and title and sub-titles are not up to the standard as well as there is no citation and references acknowledgement in the book.

CONCLUSION

The book is partially ethnographic; one of the most excellent books explores the Oromo’s religion, its uniqueness, its pillars and other Oromo social and culturalissues and would serve as a reference book in higher education especially in the fields like Oromo Folklore and cultural studies; that is why it is read with great pleasure.

Declaration of conflict of Interests

The reviewer declares that there is no conflict of interest and all sources and materials used in this book review have been properly acknowledged.

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