

OSA Newsletter 5

December 2005

The Oromo Studies Association

Two Decades of Service and Scholarship

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A message from OSA president: Dabbasa Guyyo, a man of knowledge and tradition

I had a distinct opportunity to host Obbo Dabbasa Guyyo in San Diego, California early December, 2006 during his brief visit to the US following his visit to Guatemala for a UN sponsored international conference on indigenous people, where he presented the Gada system to a large international audience. I have heard a lot about the Oromo man of knowledge from Dr. Aneesa Kassam and also from a few of his former students. I have read Asmerom Legese's books to which he is a source, and thought that all about Gada has already been written. So I approached my encounter with skepticism when we took on Gada on December 2, Friday evening: - what new could there be? Since I considered myself quiet knowledgeable about the Oromo calendar, I provoked a brief discussion asking Obbo Dabbasa about "Urjii Dhaha" (Oromo astronomy). After a brief discussion, proof that he knew what he is talking about, he told me that Ayyantus (Oromo astronomers) never talk about the stars at night, and if they do they end it quickly stating "waan qaalluun dubbadhe" (I was meaning to talk about Qaallus). It was then that I realized there is more to it than just deciphering the position and relative movements of the stellar bodies. He later told me "space" in Gada is addressed as one of the five "yayyabaas". So I said "waan Qaalluun dubbadhe" and switched our topic to Gada, specifically how laws (seera, heera, safu, etc) are built into Oromo tradition. But it was midnight soon. Excited about tomorrow, we parted for bed.

The next day I had about 15 guests in my house for an Oromo gathering of the sort. They started arriving around 2 pm. After a long and typical talk about politics and qabso, the time for Obbo Dabbasa came, and he took the floor with delight to teach. He

spoke for over three hours without notes pausing for questions every 30 minutes or so. He was well organized with his thoughts, never repeated himself. He told us that he wouldn't go to details due to lack of time. Many of my friends came with some skepticism about the discussion, the type I had until the earlier day. Gada is too complex to understand, and for those who understand it, it is too complex to keep it in memory. So, not surprisingly, the first 30 minutes were probably understood only by those who already knew a little about Gada. But then Obbo Dabbasa started explaining the day-to-day details of life relative to Gada. And we soon noted that the concept of Gada is much wider than even the contemporary Gada experts fathomed. We were amazed by how the integration of religious aspects, astronomy, the rule of law, etc. to Gada have hitherto remained out of access to the Oromo at large and even from Oromo scholars. The five ancient Oromo yayyabas (proclamations), the concept of argaa dhageetti (eye-witnessed and gathered reports) in passing Oromo oral history, Waaqa Gurraacha and Waqqefata as intimate Oromo religion, etc. were so fascinating that the audience was immobile for the entire duration of the talk which revealed only the tip of the iceberg. The follow-up questions only demonstrated the depth of the topic. The presentation was a superbly organized philosophy of life, exciting enough to capture the real essence – too complex to understand in one lecture. This man of knowledge has an amazing load to share – and it is my pleasure to introduce our next keynote speaker at OSA 2006, Obo Dabbasa Guyyo from Nairobi. Don't miss him in MN.

Nagaan,

Asfaw Beyene, Ph.D

OSA President

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OSA 2006 Annual Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota - Call for Papers, General Information

The 2006 OSA annual conference will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota on July 28 afternoon (tentative), July 29, and July 30 2006 under a general theme of “**OSA: Two Decades of Service and Scholarship.**” There will a number of feature presentations and lectures by keynote speaker and also by respected scholars invited for this occasion. We plan to introduce all or some of the invited feature speakers in the January newsletter.

Submission of Papers

Authors should submit a 300-500 word abstract in **MS Word or WordPerfect** with clearly stated objectives, methods, results and conclusions. The abstract should include complete contact details: mailing address, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address. Acceptance of the full-length paper is subject to peer reviews. The Conference Proceedings will be printed in bound volumes and distributed. The author or co-author is expected to register and present the paper at the conference.

Language

The official language of the conference is English. However, papers are accepted in Oromo if sufficient handouts are available for those who do not understand the Oromo language. The conference organizers may make exceptions for presenting in other languages.

Deadlines

- January 15, 2006, acceptance of abstracts
- February 26, 2006, submission of full-length papers for review
- March 31, 2006, reviews returned to authors
- April 30, 2006, submission of final papers
- April 30, 2006, early registration fee

Deadlines are strictly enforced except for invited speaker(s).

Registration Fees

- Regular members \$20 before April 30
\$30 after April 30
- Non-member \$30 before April 30
\$40 after April 30
- Student member \$15 before April 30
\$20 after April 30
- Student non-member \$20 before April 30
\$25 after April 30

Non-member registration fee can be counted towards membership fee for the first year.

Location and date

The conference will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota on July 28 afternoon (tentative), July 29, and July 30 2006.

Details will be posted at OSA web site soon

Please, refer to the web site <http://www.romostudies.org/> for further information on venues, logistics, and other related information



Instructions for preparation of manuscripts for OSA manuscript

Papers should be sent to OSA President by e-mail (abeyene@rohan.sdsu.edu) as an attached Word or WordPerfect document in camera-ready form.

Deadlines

Please follow the above guidelines. Deadlines are strictly enforced except for invited speaker(s).

Please use the following format, adjusted for DIN/ISO A4 paper with the following settings:

Top margin:	2.5 cm	Distance from edge:	
Bottom margin:	2.5 cm		
Left margin:	2 cm	Header:	1 cm
Right margin:	2 cm	Footer:	2 cm

The text should be in single spacing, single column, justified between the left and right margins of each column. It should be no more than 10 pages unless allowed by the editor on exceptional basis.

Fonts

please use:

- 11 or 12 pt Times New Roman for text
- 14 pt, capital, bold for the title
- 12 pt, bold for sub-titles
- 10 pt, bold for Authors and affiliations
- 9 pt, footnotes

The paper title, author information, abstract and keywords should not extend below 18 cm from the top of the page.

Nomenclature, if needed, is the first part of the main body of the paper. Latin letters are followed by Greek symbols in alphabetical order.

Tables, Figures, and Equations: Table captions are written on top of the table, numbered successively. Figure captions are written below the figure also numbered successively. Reference in the text is made as, e.g., Fig. 1. Mathematical equations are written with Equation Editor or Mathtype with symbols defined in the nomenclature. Equations are numbered successively with the numbers right-aligned.

Dimensions should be SI units

References: References in the text are indicated by a number in square brackets.

All publications cited in the text should be in a list of references at the end of the text, numbered in the order they are mentioned in the text. Use the following sample formats as a guideline:

A book is referenced as:

- [1] Alabula D. *Oral Stories as a Blend of Social History and Identity: the case of Oromumma*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1988.

A chapter in a book is referenced as:

- [2] Abbas G. *Developments in Oromo Political Philosophy*. In: Gamada G. H., ed., *The Genesis of Gada based Anthropology*. John Wiley, 1999, p. 100-105.

An article in a journal is referenced as:

- [3] Gobana D. *Gudata's Triumphant Contributions to Oromo Traditional Medicine*. *J. of Oromo Studies* 1998 (1):9-19.

An article in conference proceedings is referenced as:

- [4] Hassan M.A., *Some Observations of the Recent Increase in Oromo Literary Output*. In *Proceedings of African Studies Association, Washington DC, November 13-15, 2005, Vol. 1, p. 493-501*.

A report is referenced as:

- [5] Jalata A. *A Contribution to the Theory of Oromo Theology*. UCLA Report No. 62-36, Los Angeles, CA., USA, 1992.

Material found on the internet is referenced as:

- [6] *OSAWARE – An Educational Tool for learning about the Oromo*. 1st ed. www.oromostudies.org, accessed November 15, 2005.

Ad hoc committee updates

Dr. Bahiru Gamatchu, Scholarship project

Dr. Bahiru Dhuguma, Fund-raising project

Dr. Guluma Gameda, By-law project

Dr. Misgana, Membership project

Dr. Getahun Benti, External activities

Dr. Asafa Jalata, Unity project

Adde Qabanne, OSA Review

Dr. Asfaw, OSA in Oromia

Reports from all the above committees will be included in the next newsletter



Voluntary projects:

Dr. Guluma Gameda, JOS fund project

Adde Qabanne, Oromo Information Center project

Dr. Gudata Hinika, Oromo Medical Association project

Dr. Gobana Huluqa, collecting papers for OSA Proceeding

Reports from these teams will also be included in the next newsletter. In the meantime, please send your manuscripts of 2005 OSA annual conference to Dr.

Gobana Huluqa, hulukgo@auburn.edu as soon as possible. We prefer Microsoft Word. Please make sure you include the version and name of the software you used and provide your email, telephone, and mailing addresses.



Views and Opinions

Dear OSA President and OSA members,
I suggest the creation of an "Emergency Response Committee" to counteract any press releases and/or proposals that OSA finds endanger the Oromo people and their country. This creation of this committee would also be in line with the suggestion made Prof. Assefa Jalata in his 2006 OSA presentation in DC. I understand that OSA is not a political organization. For example, I think Congressman Smith's bill is unfair to us Oromos because it conceals the real problem of the empire. This can be presented by OSA in a non-political manner.
Moa Apagodu, NJ



Dear Dr. Asfaw:

As the only organization of Oromo scholars, OSA needs to follow and analyze the impact of the May 1995 elections in Ethiopia on the Oromo people. This should be addressed from an Oromo scholar's point of view that can dissect the ideas and policies of all the participants, hidden or expressed. What does the elections means for the Oromos and what can we learn from them? This can be done leaving the Oromo factional politics out of it. I think it will be a valuable service to our cause. It could be a topic at the coming OSA conference.

Nagayaan jiraadhu!
Ahmed Hussein



Hello,

Membership growth:

1. Consider organizing along professional lines such as, economics and finance, medicine or health sciences, engineering, law etc. Some professionals who are not members currently might consider joining and also diversifying issues and presentations.
2. Business meeting could be held before the end of the program, for example the first night of the meeting days to increase attendance of members.

Ditanaa



Please email your views and opinions to OSA president:

abeyene@rohan.sdsu.edu

for inclusion in this section of the newsletter. Texts may be edited for space and format consistency.



Note: Thank you to all who so generously contributed to **OSA fundraising project**. Because of your support, we are close to achieving 50% of our target. We hope we will receive more from those who have not committed yet.

Donations and membership dues:

Those who want to pay OSA dues, join as new members, or want to donate to OSA, please send your pledge to:



OSA

P. O. Box 7508

Silver Spring, MD 20907

Note that all contributions are tax deductible.



 *On behalf of myself and OSA Ex. C., I would like to extend season's greetings and best wishes for successful scholarly and happy New Year to all members and friends of OSA* 



Please, visit our web site:

<http://www.romostudies.org>

for further information on conference venues, logistics, and other related information.

