

Reviving Aspects of Ateetee: An Arsi Oromo Women's Musical Ritual to Empower Women to Protect Their Human Rights and Participate in Society's Social and

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Reviving Aspects of Ateetee: An A Women's Musical Ritual to Empo to Protect Their Human Rights a in Society's Social and Religious I

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Abstract

In the Arsi Oromo society, prior to the introduction of organized religion, women had been part of a traditional musical institution called ateetee. It is organized and performed for the purposes of empowering and protecting their interests and the well-being of the community. For instance, if a husband violates her well-being, she can gather in front of the man's house, confront him to admit his wrongdoing, and seek forgiveness. Women also play a great role in bringing peace among warring clans in a non-threatening way, simply by holding the ateetee staff and singing their ateetee songs. In recent years, however, there has been a growing opposition from mosque leaders. Christians have not fully embraced and do not realize the implication of cultural identity loss for themselves and their children of Jesus. Although Ethiopia's constitution recognizes the importance of traditional and institutions in conflict management and resolution among ethnic groups, the current autocratic government is destroying Oromo culture by imposing its political agenda to organize to support their political agenda. Hence, this dissertation explores the importance of revitalizing aspects of the ateetee institution. The main research question: How can Arsi women today be empowered to protect their human rights and participate in society's social and religious life? This ethnographic study dealing with primary sources and exploring the ateetee culture. Section one explores the development of Christianity among the traditional Arsi Oromo people of Oromia, Ethiopia. It specifically examines the Abyssinian king and priests' colonial approaches that forced them to embrace Islam, which in its early period served as an escape route from the oppression of imposing its religious values on the Arsi Oromo culture. Section two discusses and offers solutions to empower women's leadership and their rights through the ateetee institution. Section three explores ways to empower Arsi Oromo Christian mothers to participate in ateetee rituals and empower women in society. It also explores contextualization of the ateetee institution and understanding and narrowing the social and cultural gap between traditional and Christian Arsi Oromo people. This dissertation also includes the ateetee artifact that contains video of ateetee rituals and interviews with women from three regions of Oromia State: Arsi Nagele, Kofale, and Kokosale.

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