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CELEBRATIONS

IRREECHAA

Irreechaa is the largest and most important celebration for any Oromo, and the Karrayyuu don't celebrate it with any less pizzaz.



The Karrayyuu party of Gadaa elders and youth walk a path that leads to the sacred Lake Nogoba to give thanks



A Karrayyu party of Gadaa elders and young men march on with Lake Nogoba (Basaka) in the background

ATEETEE

For the Karrayyu, religious ceremonies, referred to as *ayyaana*, are a huge part of their culture, and no religious ceremony is more important than *Ateetee*. A celebration of female divinity, the Karrayyu believe *Ateetee* to be the *angafaa* (elder) of all religious ceremonies. Oromo women practice *Ateetee* as a way of strengthening the relationship between themselves and *Waaqa* (God). There is no fixed time set for the performance of the *Ateetee* ritual, but whenever a disruption happens in the community, the women are entreated to gather around a sacred *Qiltu* tree and perform the ritual.

This goes to reinforce the belief among many Karrayyu that women can be intermediary figures between *Waaqa* and men. The women here are seen as innocents and peacemakers, and as such, there is a belief that *Waaqa* listens to women and responds immediately. The prayers of women are used to counteract unwelcome natural occurrences, like droughts and diseases, as well as man-made crises, such as war. Because of this, women take a leading role in *Waaqeffannaa* rituals and are seated on the right side of men, indicating the great respect they are afforded and their *angafummaa* (seniority). Heera plays a great role in this too, as everything is set forth in it.



QARRE CEREMONY

The Gadaa system has numerous ceremonies accompanied by incredible cultural and traditional practices depicted through dressing styles, songs, ceremonies attached to food preparation, and more. Qarre is one such Gadaa event that the Karrayyuu observe.

As relating to the aforementioned Gadaa grades, the Qarre ceremony is celebrated to mark the beginning of a new *Rubo* grade. Qarre is a groundbreaking ceremony of many procedures that marks the structural transition of *Caasaa (Follee)* to *Rubo*. The first day, *Rubo* grade members take a gift of a young calf from the *Abbaa Bokku* (Father of the sceptre)

and slaughter it. This gift is called “*korma wal gahi*” in Afaan Oromo, or ‘calf for meeting’.

They then go to each house based on their family age, take more calves, and slaughter them at the members’ grouped family houses. The new *Rubo* eats the veal of the calf with milk and butter. This activity may continue for two months in the entire community, and for the next six months, the *Rubo* members do not shave off their hair.



The Karrayyuu march, united in their practice of the age-old democratic system of governance - Gadaa



Women of the Karrayyuu look stunning in their outfits which incorporate colors that are unique to their people such as the light purple of their capes