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**The Pride and Social Worthiness of Women in South Omo
Ethiopia**

The Transcriptions of the Intercultural Women's Workshop Held at the South Omo
Research Center
Jinka, Ethiopia October 4th-8th 2002

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**„Kulturelle und sprachliche Kontakte: Prozesse des Wandels in historischen
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**The Pride and Social Worthiness of Women
in South Omo
Ethiopia**

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The Transcriptions of the Intercultural Women's Workshop Held at the
South Omo Research Center



“The Pride and Social Worthiness of Women in South Omo, Ethiopia”

October 4th-8th 2002

Jinka

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Introduction

On October 4th, 2002 women from eight different ethnic groups arrived at the South Omo Research Center in Jinka. Some came with their husbands, some with their children. For four days questions concerning “The Pride and Social Worthiness of Women in South Omo” were discussed. As our aim was to discuss various aspects concerning all life stages of a woman, we invited from each group an elder woman, a young married woman or bride, and an unmarried girl.

The women came from very different regions. Our interest was to hear the differing aspects defining a “good girl”, “a proper bride”, “a proud woman/mother/wife” in the respective groups. If the expectations applied to women within their cultures varied, wouldn't also the source of their self-esteem and pride differ a lot? And how would this be expressed in contact situations in which women from ethnic groups with partially very similar and partially contrasting customs meet? These were the questions we had in mind and they turned out to be even more interestingly answered than we had expected.

Even though many of the women were bilingual there were still four different languages to be translated (Hamar, Ari, Dassanetch, Maale). Therefore we decided to split up into small groups of six to ten people, so that communication would be facilitated. The discussion rounds were set up newly every day, so that each participant had the chance to talk with the women from all ethnic groups.

All events were organized in the context of the Special research Programm (SFB 295) “Kulturelle und sprachliche Kontakte: Prozesse des Wandels in Historischen Spannungsfeldern Nordostafrikas/Westasiens“, of the Johannes Gutenberg-University of Mainz, as part of the Project E2: „Cultural Contact, Respect and Self-Esteem in Southern Ethiopia“, directed by Prof. Ivo Strecker. It was supported by the Institute of Ethiopian Studies (IES) of Addis Ababa University (AAU), the Institute of Ethnology and African Studies of the University of Mainz. The workshop and the exhibition were financed by the SFB 295, Project E2. We especially thank the Sulzmann Foundation, the University of Mainz, and the DAAD who financed the student's trips to Ethiopia.

Day One (6.10.2002)

Bashada, Kara and Arbore:
On the life of girls, brides and women

Participants:

from Bashada: Arti (unmarried girl), Kerri (young married woman), Pitta (elderly woman), Algo (old woman)
from Kara: Galte (unmarried girl), Torgo (married young woman), Shauki (elderly woman)
from Arbore: Baro (married young woman), Lago (bride)

Translators: Susanne Epple, Christina Echi Gabbert

Assistants: Kristin Nawrath, Anne Löffler

Sus.: We decided to continue the discussions in a smaller group. But I would like everybody to join the discussions and feel free to ask questions the way they asked them before. For example, ‘What kind of adornment does the Arbore bride wear?’ If you have seen something you want to know more about, feel free to ask each other. Or if someone has something they want to tell us about, do so. Let us all talk together.
Is there anything else you want to ask the bride from Arbore?

1.1. Arbore: Bride’s jewellery

Arti: We already have asked a lot. We have heard about her jewellery but we have not understood everything. For example, she does not wear many bracelets; not like us in Hamar, who have many. Don’t you wear bracelets in Arbore? Or does she not wear many because she is a bride? Is it a taboo?

Lago: A bride may have many golden bracelets. I just do not wear them. After I have built my house and have become a woman I will take all golden bracelets off and from then on I will wear the *ashawa* – the twisted silver ring around the upper arm.
When I have built my house and have moved to my husband’s house, I will also take off the two rings which I’m now wearing around my ankles. I will wear leather strings instead. These leather strings are made from cow skin. My husband makes them for me. That is what you are given when you become a woman. It is taboo for girls in Arbore to wear golden bracelets. Brides are allowed to wear them. I just forgot to put them on. The girls wear beads around their upper arms instead of the silver rings...

Sus.: So they wear *aschawa*-rings, but as a bride, you take the upper arm bracelets off?

Lago: I wear these two golden rings on each of my upper arms. They are very hard to get.
You can only buy them with cows.

Anne: And you take them off after you have built your house?

Sus.: ...After she has moved in with her husband.

Arti: But where do you live while you are bride? Do you live with your husband, with your father, or with your father-in-law?

Lago: I live with my parents, or with my husband.

Conversation between Lago and Arti.

Lago: I keep these golden rings until I give birth to my first child, then I will give them back to my father's homestead, to my father's family. The necklace with the blue glass beads, which I am wearing is also taken off after I have given birth to my first child. But I keep the necklace and either I give it to my husband or keep it for my children.

1.2. Relationship between the first wife and her co-wives

Sus.: Don't you have a *binyere*? Kerri is the only one here wearing a *binyere*. The *binyere* symbolizes that she is married and that she is the first wife. Second and the third wives do not have a *binyere*.

Galti and Torgo: We do not have *binyeres* in Kara.

Sus.: How do you recognize who is a first and who is a second wife in Arbore?

Lago: You do not see who is a first and who is a second wife.

Sus.: Do they maybe wear different beads?

Echi: No, they all wear the same. You can only recognize who is who by the way the houses are build. The first wife's house is always to the right side and the second wife's house to the left.

Sus.: Is this the same in Bashada?

Kerri laughingly: In Bashada you just build your house wherever you want it.

Echi: That is an interesting topic! Let us continue with that. I would like to know if first and second wives get along and where they live. Do they live together or separately? I would like to ask all of you: Hamar, Kara and Arbore.

Shauki: First and second wife do live close to each other in Kara. Like in Arbore, one house is to the right side- the first wife's- and the second wife's to the left side. They share one common outside space, but each has an individual house and *bara*, a shade shelter. In Kara, we also have *baras*, like the ones you have in Arbore.

The wives take turns cooking and inviting each other over. The one who has cooked first calls the husband and the other wives to come and to eat or drink coffee. We live close to each other, not as in Bashada, where you may live at a distance from one another.

Kerri: In Bashada, if you like each other, if you get along, you build the houses next to each other, or close by. You also take turns in preparing food and taking care of each other's children. If you go somewhere you leave your children with the other wife and everything will be fine. If you do not like each other, you will quarrel. Then you do not give food to the children of the other woman. If you go somewhere, you will leave your children with a neighbour or a relative to take care of rather than leaving them with the second wife. If that is the case, you are best to build your houses at some distance. If the husband treats the women the same, if he beats me today and the other one tomorrow, then we both are scared of him, then we are united. Then everything is good. But if he only beats me and not the other one, then I will get angry and dislike her and we will start fighting.

Alga and Pitta: You say, 'Why does he only beat me?' If he does not beat her too, then I will go back to my father's homestead. I will leave him. It is not good if he only beats one of us.

1.3. Separation from the husband when he does not treat his wives equally

Echi: So does a woman have the option to return to her father's homestead?

Kerri and Pitta: If he only beats me and never beats the other wife, I can go back to my father's place. My father has seen that my husband does not treat me right and that he behaves unfairly. Then I can build a house at my father's homestead and stay there. Also, if my husband only beats the *marima* [second wife] and never beats me, she also can go back to her family's homestead and bear children with another man. It is also important and good if the husband distributes the cattle evenly to his wives. Then each woman owns as many milk cows as the other one, so they do not have any reason to quarrel over the milk, and both can feed their children. If everything is evenly distributed, everything is good. If that is not the case, you are allowed to leave.

Lago: What would happen if that woman died after she had left her husband and returned to her father's place? If she died while at her father's place? Where would she be buried? Who buries her? Will her parents do that? Is she buried at her parents' homestead or at her husbands' home?

Pitta and Kerri: She will be brought back to her husband's homestead because the one who buries her must be her eldest son. It is the eldest son who buries his mother. If the deceased was the second wife, it will be the eldest son of the first-wife who will bury her. He is the one who does all the rituals for her. She must be brought back to her husband's homestead.

Echi: But what happens to her children if a woman leaves? Where do they stay?

Pitta and Alga: If the children are still small, she will take them with her. If they are already grown up, she will say, 'What shall I do with these children?' So she will leave them at their father's place.

Sus.: But won't she be sad about leaving her children behind?

Pitta and Alga: No, because her husband will come and take her back.

Kerri: If a husband does not like his wife and the children then his wife will take the children with her. But if he only likes his children and not his wife he says, 'Leave! And take your vagina with you! I do not need you anymore! Go and find someone else to sleep with!' Then she will leave and leave her children behind.

Echi: How does a husband manage to bring her back, though?

Pitta and Alga: If he decides that he wants his wife to come back, he just tells her to return. He goes there and says, 'My wife shall come back! I only beat her because it is our tradition! What is she doing here for so long? She should come back!' He goes there and takes her back home. She will return. But if he still keeps on beating only one of his wives, and the father's homestead will hear about it, her father will come and say, 'You keep doing bad things!' They will come with *uri* [willing to fight]. They come with *uri* and will beat the husband up if he keeps treating his wife badly.

Echi: In Arbore, if a man has done something wrong, if he has beaten his wife too hard, then normally he would have to pay some honey. Maybe Susanne can ask about what he has to do to get his wife back, so that everybody understands.

Pitta: In Bashada, a man does not have to pay anything to take his wife back. He will say, 'Why should I pay something? I have given enough goats and cows and honey when I married her. I won't pay anything!'

If a man keeps beating his wife too much, he will be beaten too. But he does not have to pay anything.

Lago: In Arbore the two wives of a man live in the same homestead, not in one house, but close by. They get along well.

Sus.: But what would happen if they started to fight with each other?

Lago: If they do fight, then both of them will be beaten by their husband.

Pitta: It is the same as in Bashada. If the women keep fighting with each other, both of them are beaten by their husband!

Discussion between all participants.

Lago: In Arbore, if a woman says that she is beaten more than the other one, then everybody is asked if that is true everybody is asked, all the neighbours. And if it is true that he treats one of them worse than the other, then he is also beaten. But he is not beaten by her relatives. He is beaten by his *anamos*, his own age mates.

Sus.: In Bashada, he is not beaten by his age-mates, but by the homestead of his parents-in-law. How is it in Kara?

Shauki: We also have that in Kara. If a wife runs away from her husband then the husband will send the *koli*, the go-between, and tell her to come back.

Sus.: Does he have to pay anything or give anything to sort the problem out?

Shauki: Yes, he gives a goat to his wife and to the wife's mother. The goats will be slaughtered later on.

Echi: What happens in Arbore if a woman runs away from her husband? What does he have to do for her to come back?

Lago: He will come out of his house and yell, 'My wife has run away! My wife is gone!' The whole village will get together at his house. And he will say: 'My wife has run away! You have to help me bring her back!' And all the men from the village will go to look for her. If she has run to her father's home the men will bring her and her father back to her husband's. All the men of the community get together, and they will ask why she has run away. She will tell them what happened. Her husband will explain why he has beaten her so much. He will tell them what she had done wrong. If it is true that he really treated her badly, the men will turn to her husband. The father of the woman will be there all the time, sitting next to his daughter...

Part not understandable on the tape.

Sus.: Have I understood correctly? If the husband says that she has not prepared coffee for him and not done this and that...that the woman's father will give all these things to his daughter...the things which she said she didn't have and therefore could not make coffee?

Echi: Yes.

Lago: Her father will give her what she needs. But from tomorrow on it has to be her husband who gives her the things she needs. Our women are not allowed to move back to their father's homestead. That is not possible, it is taboo. Even if she really does not want to go back to her husband's, or if she really can't live with her husband, then she goes and lives by herself. Then she belongs to everyone.

Echi and Lago talk to each other.

Echi (*translates what she has discussed with Lago*): They can't really separate. She can go and live somewhere else for a while, but in reality, she will always come back. She can't move back to her father's. She can't really live by herself, either. She will go back eventually.

Lago: She cannot go anywhere. She will come back at some point.

Sus.: In Bashada you cannot divorce either, but there are women who have left their men to live with someone else and bear children with another man. The children will be considered the children of her former husband, but she lives with someone else. Or she lives by herself and has a lover.

Lago: We do not have that in Arbore. Only if the husband has died is a woman permitted to have other men come to her house. Only then is she allowed to become pregnant by another man. But if her husband is still alive, she has to go back.

Sus.: So a widow is allowed to live with another man and have his children? That is the same as in Bashada, but the children are considered to be her husbands'.

1.4. The different status of first and second wives

Tine: I would like to come back to the topic of first and second wives. You were saying that it is important that both women are treated the same. But I would like to ask if there are differences in the kinds of tasks associated with statuses. Are there differences? How do they manifest themselves in their daily lives?

Sus.: I cannot translate this question as it is very abstract, but I will ask them what the differences are between first and second wives. I recall that I heard before. I heard that the second wife is only allowed to pour coffee in her own house after the first wife has poured it for her the first time. The first wife has to pour the coffee for the first time and only then the second wife is allowed to do it as well.

Pitta: If there is a ritual to do, for example, if a *maeshi* [spirit of a deceased ancestor] has made someone sick then it will be the first wife who prepares the tobacco, or the *badda* [sorghum bread] which is given to the *maeshi*. It is the first wife not the second wife. If the husband slaughters a goat for the *maeshi*, he will take the liver and cut a piece for himself and eat it and spit on his breast. Then he gives a piece to his first wife and she does the same, and only then does he give a piece to his second wife. If the first wife is not there, they won't slaughter the goat for the *maeshis*.

If, for example, she has gone to fetch some water and only the second wife is at home, you have to wait for the first wife to come back. If the first wife is not there you cannot do the rituals.

Lago: Is that really true? In Bashada you cannot do any rituals if the first wife is not present? Even, if she is away for some days?

Pitta: No, it is taboo.

Lago: What if the second wife gives birth to a child? Do you not have to slaughter a goat for her? What do you do if the first wife is not there?

Pitta: In that case, there is no problem. What I was talking about concerns only the ritually slaughtered goats.

Lago: Then that is the same as in Arbore.

Shauki: In Kara it is the same.

Sus. asks Pitta and Algo something.

Pitta: If a girl gets married, the future husband will bring goats and honey. First, there will be something, which we call *kerri bula*, the opening of the gate-way. The husband brings a goat and honey to the homestead of his future father-in-law.

Now, my husband already died. If the daughter of my husband's second wife gets married, her future husband will bring a goat. This goat can only be slaughtered if I am there. The son of the second wife will slaughter this goat. They will also take the liver and give some to the grandfather, to the grandmother, and offer some to the deceased father. I will only be given some after they all have taken their share. And only after everybody, the living and the dead, who are senior to the second wife, have been given a piece from the liver, she will be given a piece.

Lago: What kind of ritual is that?

Kerri and Pitta: When a girl gets married.

Lago: Is that the marriage ritual or is that when she actually moves to her husband's house?

Kerri and Pitta: That is when she moves to her husband's homestead.

Discussion between Lago, Pitta and Kerri

Sus. about the discussion: They are comparing the marriage rituals and saying that you always have to give goats and wait until the wife comes and so on.

1.5. Arbore: Marriage and the circumcision of the bride

Lago: All this is much the same as in Arbore. If you raise the *micere* [ritual whipping wand] then someone comes to ask for you. This ritual takes three days, and if you do not like the boy, you can send him back home.

Echi: That is a very long ritual.

Lago: The day the eight goats are given is the day on which we are cut.

Pitta: What do they cut? What is cut? Do they cut your vagina, or what?

Arti: What do they cut? Do they cut the outsides, or where is it cut?

Everybody starts speaking.

Lago: They cut a lot. They cut everything. Today it is cut and tomorrow they build you a house. When you move in with your husband you will suffer. If you sleep with each other you suffer, because you have grown back together again. When your husband wants to sleep with you, you suffer a lot. When everything has healed up you do not suffer as much. But when you become pregnant and give birth to your child they have to cut you with a knife. You cannot give birth by yourself. You have to be cut open.

Baro: Most women are grown back together and have to be cut open again. But some women have healed in a way in which it is still possible to give birth to a child without being cut open.

Lago: After you have had two or three children you will be able to give birth normally.

Discussion between participants.

Sus.: So you are only cut when you become a bride?

Baro: Yes, the girls are not cut. You are cut when you become bride.

Algo: Where do you throw the piece, which has been cut off?

Lago: The place where they do the cutting is the same place on which you will be buried when you die.

Echi: That is in the house of your father. They do it before she leaves her father's house.

Kerri: Who does the cutting? Is it the future husband?

Lago: There are some women who know how to do it.

Echi: In former times, the girls were cut down to the bone. But now they do not cut as much anymore. That is a new development.

Lago: Today they cut less.

Echi: That is very important now. Lago used the word *mangalla*, which means to slaughter. You normally use it in the context of slaughtering a goat. But then she said, 'No, I mean cut...' But that happens often that they say a girl is 'slaughtered'.

Sus.: Do you say to slaughter?

Lago: It means to cut. Today they cut less.

Lago does not answer Susanne's question.

Arti: When you are cut, do you stay inside the house, or can you go outside right after it has been done?

Lago: You stay in the house for two months.

Sus.: So what about the men, don't they suffer also? It must hurt them, too.

Lago: Yes, they also suffer.

Sus.: But why don't the men say that they do not like it and that one should stop the cutting?

Lago: No, they won't say that. It is our tradition.

Baro: It does not always hurt. If the labia does not grow back together, then it does not hurt. But some do have a lot of pain.

They start talking about penises. Kerri laughs.

Sus.: Are the men circumcised?

Lago: Some yes, some no.

Echi: How is it in Bashada? Are the men cut when they are still small?

Kerri: They are cut when they are still small. When they are children, maybe six or ten. The Amhara, they cut their boys when they are babies.

Sus.: How is it in Kara?

Torgo and Shauki: When the boys are small the wound heals better. The women are not cut, that is taboo.

Sus.: In Bashada it is the same. That is taboo, too.

1.6. Boyfriends and husbands

Lago and Baro to the Kara women: Do you have boyfriends before you get married?

Kara: No, we do not.

Lago: I cannot believe that!

Torgo: No, we do not have any. If someone likes us he will send the *koli* [go-between].

Torgo: If someone comes to ask for a girl, he will send two cows. The father will agree to give his daughter.

When it has been decided that I will be given all my girlfriends are with me in the house. My father says: 'Slaughter the goats for the girls!' The girls prepare *badda* [sorghum food]. We all drink coffee, eat and sing together. We call this *gaido* [farewell party for girl who is going to be married]. It is the same as in Bashada.

The girl who will be given to her husband receives many presents: beads, money, bullets and bracelets, too. She will be crying and not eat anything of what is given to her. She sits with her best friend. Her friend also cries. Both cry.

[The next morning] My friend and I will get up and my friends will get up, too. They will bring me to my husband's house, singing along the way. My brothers will bring calabashes. If my husband's house is far away, beforehand my father will have received all the goats, cows and rifles, many, many...

Anne: Does the girl like her future husband? Is it her boyfriend?

Tine: Torgo did not say if the girl likes him. She only said that he likes the girl. That is why he asked for her.

Torgo: At my husband's house, the next morning, my friends who have accompanied me will shave my hair. They give me many beads. They take some *assile* [red ochre] and butter and rub it all over my body. That is when I become a bride. I won't be seen anymore. I will be brought into the house and stay inside for three months, waiting to be given to my husband.

Arti to Lago: In Arbore, during the engagement, do you live with your father or with your father-in-law? As a bride where do you live?

Lago: I live with my father-in-law. Why do you ask me that now? Haven't we been talking about the Kara?

Laughter.

Sus. asking the Kara-women: You said that in Kara you do not have boy friends before marriage. But if you ask the Bashada girls they probably also say they do not have lovers. But I know that some do have relationships before marriage.

Do you, in Kara, marry the one you like? In Bashada you are simply given. It is your parents who decide to whom you are going to be married. How is it in Kara? Do you marry the one you like or someone else?

Torgo: In Kara, a girl cannot be forced into marriage by a man [as it is possible in Bashada]. No one can force you into marriage. No one can rob you in the bush and force you into marriage. A man has to ask the girl's father.

You send someone with a *koli* [a go-between], to ask for the girl. If your father wants to give you to the boy, he allows this marriage. In Bashada, men simply can rob you [without asking for the agreement of the girl's father].

Lago: So do you have boy friends before marriage or not?

Discussion between participants.

Lago: Do married women have lovers?

Torgo: If your husband has died, as a widow, you are allowed to start a new relationship. Being married as long as your husband is alive, you are not allowed to have a love affair. And if you ran away and went back to your father's homestead, your husband

would come to take you back! He won't allow you to go back to your father's. You are not allowed to have a lover if your husband is still alive.

Lago: No one in Kara has love affairs? I can't believe that!

Laughter.

Sus.: And what is that thing you call *hara* in Kara? [term for secret lover which I had heard in Bashada when they talked about Kara youths].

Laughter.

Torgo: Kara girls do not like boys.

Lago: That can't be true! You are just denying it!

Torgo: We are too proud! We Kara girls do not like boys. We go dance with them but then we go back home. We are too proud; we do not like the boys!

Lago: Are there friendships between peers as we have in Arbore? We go and drink milk with our peers. In Arbore you grow up with your best friend, we call it *baamira*. Is there something like that in Kara? I do not mean friendships between boys and girls. I mean two girls or two boys. Do you have that?

Galte: We girls do have that. We share a cowhide. We go long ways together and sleep over together and come back together. But we would not do that with boys. The girls do that, but the boys don't.

Torgo: We do not go with the boys because they would not leave us alone.

Lago: But how do you know that they would not leave you alone if you have not tried it?

Laughter.

Torgo: We have heard of it! We have not tried it!

Laughter.

Lago: But how do you know for sure if you have not tried it? If it has not happened before?

Torgo: I have only heard that you should not do that.

1.7. Secret lovers

Kerri: There are some married women in Bashada who have secret lovers. Married women are not allowed to have lovers. But there are some who do have a love affair even though their husbands are still alive. But we say that having a lover is like having the evil eye. A woman's husband will eventually die because of it. It is really bad if a married woman has a love affair. A good girl, a girl who has already been promised to someone or is married to someone would not sleep with boys. She would say, 'I

have a young husband! I will only sleep with him. I will only give birth to his children!' That is our tradition.

There are also other girls, girls who go with the young men and who sleep with them. Some of them become pregnant. If at least your boyfriend is smart he will help you to get an abortion quickly. If you become pregnant the people will start talking about you: 'Maybe she is pregnant?' But if you are smart, you will abort your child quickly so no one will notice. That is good.

There are some girls who have love affairs while they are young, but when they get married and move to their husband's homestead they say, 'Now it is over! That was our puppy love, now it is over! I live with my husband now. Don't come close anymore! It is over!' Others, however, keep their lover and keep meeting him in the bush. That is how it is in Bashada. Some do it like this, some do it like that. Those who like to meet up with boys have boyfriends, but those who don't like to have lovers simply do not have lovers before they get married.

Sus.: So how is it in Kara? Maybe it is like in Bashada, some do have lovers and some just don't?

Shauki: It is the same as in Kara.

Echi: And in Arbore?

Lago: In Arbore it is the same.

Sus.: It is all the same. In Germany it is the same, too. If you, as a Kara girl, like a particular boy, can you go to your father and tell him you want to marry this boy? Or does he decide that by himself?

Galte: It is the same as in Hamar.

Lago: It is the same as in Arbore, too.

Maale and Ari: Girls' Dress and Jewellery

Participants:

from Maale: Kalamo (young woman), Zeleketch (elderly woman)
from Ari: Galchi (unmarried girl), Mingi (young woman), Gigsho (elderly woman)

Translators: Hanna Getachew, Tsehay

Assistants: Kerstin , Sophia Thubeauville

Most of the time the women were discussing amongst themselves and only the results were translated.

Sophia: Let us continue to talk about material culture. I would like to ask you about jewellery and dresses. We would like to know about the names of each item, their origin, and on which occasions they are worn. Are there certain ages when you make use of different things, and are there special meanings connected to some of them? I suggest that we ask each woman to tell us about the things she is wearing.

Hanna: Maybe Galchi can start talking about bracelets.

2.1. Ari: Girl's jewellery – a reward for hard work

Galchi: The name of these bracelets is *gautsi*. When you are a girl, you are allowed to wear bracelets. Twenty-five on each arm.

Sophia: Who gave you these bracelets? Did your father buy them for you?

Galchi: In Ari, you have work groups. They also exist in Maale. These work parties are called *mol'a*. The girls are hard workers in this *mol'a*. We dig the fields and we cut the grass. We clear the field and so forth. I am a hard working girl so my father rewarded me for my work. The blacksmith makes these bracelets. My father gave them to me as a present so that I am equal to my friends who also have them.

Kerstin: Are the bracelets a sign of wealth?

Galchi: They are an expression of prestige, of status. It was like that in the past and it is the same today. Girls receive bracelets from their fathers as payment for their participation in the *mol'a*. I do not wear them while I am working, so they do not get spoiled. But when I go to a wedding ceremony in another village I will wear them. My husband may also wear my jewellery. This jewellery [big, threaded plastic beads] is called *fringe*. It is also worn when you are a girl. The girls wear them in their hair.

Sophia and Kerstin: Yes, we saw them wear them.

Galchi: A girl may choose herself if she likes to wear them on top of her hair. These beads are called *fringe*: 'the beads of the heart'. They may also be worn crosswise over the chest. I wear these beads now, as a girl, but I can also wear them after I have married. All these things are mine. All this is my jewellery. This white necklace is called *achi*.

Sophia: Where do you get those beads from? Are they also given to you by your father, or does someone else give them to you?

Galchi: I also get them from my father for the hard work I do.

2.2. Ari: How a boyfriend asks a girl to become his wife by giving her a present

Kerstin: Do the girls wear anything they received from their boyfriends or fiancés?

Sophia: Don't you get anything from your friends at the *mol'a*? I know you have boyfriends...

Galchi: Before marriage, my boyfriend works hard at the work parties, too. But he has to pay such a high dowry to my father that he cannot afford to give presents.

Sophia: Oh, so he has to spend all his money for this dowry? Hanna told us that the Maale girls give their jewellery to their boyfriends. Maybe we could ask Galchi if it is the same in Ari?

Galchi: My boyfriend collects the money to pay the bride price. Only when I come back as a wife does he give me presents.

There is no exchange of gifts between boyfriend and girlfriend. But there is a different form of exchange. When a boy wants to marry a girl, he will ask for her approval. As a sign of her approval, the girl will secretly give him some clothes. Once she has agreed to marry him the boy will send a go-between to the girl's father's house to ask for her. The boy will also send the cloth he received from the girl and give it back to her. This cloth exchange means that the girl has accepted to marry her boyfriend. All boyfriends ask their girlfriends if they want to marry them. If a girl agrees, she secretly the cloth to her boyfriend.

Kerstin: What if another man is interested in her?

Galchi: She has already chosen.

2.3. Ari: Names of different jewellery items

Sophia: Let us now ask for the names of the other jewelry items and then continue with Maale.

Galchi: The beads for the head are called *tinga*. At all ages, at girlhood, as a married woman, and even as an old woman you are allowed to wear them. But it is forbidden to wear them during mourning ceremonies. These Ari women (the other guests) just came from a mourning ceremony, that's why they have taken their head beads off.

Sophia: And what is the name of the belt?

Galchi: These beads have two purposes: I can wear them crosswise on my upper body or I can wear them on my head. They are called *time shekeni*: beads for the waist.

Sophia: And the bracelets made out of beads, are they the same as the necklaces?

Galchi: They are called *tinga*. They are worn as necklace or bracelet.

Sophia: And what do you call the foot rattles?

Hanna: They are called *yicho* in Maale.

Sophia: And in Ari?

Galchi: We call them *yicha*. They are used at dances. The rattles call the people in the village to come dance. They are like whistles for us.

Sophia: The old woman, she doesn't wear any. Is she not allowed to wear them?

Galchi: All of us can wear these foot rattles. When the old woman needs to make a nice group party, she wears the rattles on her feet. She wears them during the *mol'a*, while working. There is also a feast at the *mol'a* after which we dance. First the group works for one household, the next time for another household. When an old woman wants to organize a nice *mol'a*, she puts these rattles onto her legs and makes a nice feast.

2.4. Maale: The meaning of jewellery in the past and present

Kerstin: Maybe Kalamo from Maale can tell us something about her jewellery?

Kalamo: The name of the metal bracelets is *gauwi*. You wear them as a girl, ten on each arm.

Kerstin: You are wearing different kinds, at the beginning and at the end of these other bracelets.

Kalamo: Yes, this one is a leftover from a plastic shoe. We use these plastic pieces for decoration, and we take different colours from old shoes. Potters always make these things.

Kerstin: What is the name for these plastic pieces?

Kalamo: They have no special name. They are simply made out of a shoe and put around the arm like a bracelet. In former times these *gauwi* were presents. Like in Ari, we in Maale work at the *mol'a* for our father. After the harvest has been collected, our father exchanges a goat with a blacksmith for these *gauwis* and gives them to us. But now things have changed. Nowadays we can bring some grain to the market and we get 2 Birr for it. We also buy sorghum and brew beer. After we have brewed the beer, we bring it to the market, sell it and get money. Then we can buy the bracelets or tell the blacksmith to make some for us.

Hanna: So a girl can get bracelets by selling the local beer if she does not get any from her father?

Kalamo: As nowadays there are markets all over Maale, we can make beer or something else and sell it so that we can buy the bracelets ourselves. Only in Gongode Maale, where there is no market, the giving of gifts is still practiced.

The father sells honey or a goat at the market and pays the blacksmith to make the jewellery for his daughter. To know the right size, he measures his daughter's hand with grass, fixes it and brings it to the blacksmith. Before giving the bracelets to his daughter, the father will perform a ritual for the bracelets. Only then will he put them around her arm. That is in Gongode. She receives twenty pieces.

Kerstin: That's in the lowlands of Maale?

Zeleketch: Yes, in Gongode Maale. As the things the father has sold for the bracelets are his belongings, he must perform a ritual before his daughter may put them on. Otherwise it would spoil the girl.

2.5. Returning the jewellery to the father after marriage

Zeleketch: In Maale, when a girl has married and given birth to her first child, she has to return all her jewellery to her father's house.

Sophia: I heard that a girl gives some of her jewelry to her future husband before marriage? Is this jewelry also returned to her father?

Zeleketch: Yes, she has to return all jewelry, beads, bracelets and even the things she has

given to her future husband. She also has to return her marriage dress.

After she has given birth to her first child the only jewellery a woman may wear is the jewellery her husband has bought for her.

Sophia: What does her father do with her dress and all her jewelry? Does he give it to his younger daughters?

Zeleketch: Yes, the belongings of a married daughter will be passed on to his junior ones. If there is no younger daughter, he gives everything to his sons' wives, who will later give it to their daughters.

Kerstin: So it stays in the family.

Zeleketch: Yes, that is why the ritual is performed. The jewelry is bought from the father's own money. Therefore he has to perform a ritual before giving it to his daughter. It circulates around him. When his daughter goes to her husband and gives birth to her first child, she will bring the things back to him.

2.6. Ari: Differences in clothing for girls, brides, women and elderly women

Kerstin: Are there any differences in the clothing of girls, brides and old women?

Mingi: Have you seen this decoration? This nylon cloth we put on when we are girls, when we still live in our father's house. Every girl chooses her own colour.

Kerstin: Is it always green or dark blue?

Mingi: Yes, any colour. Once a girl gets married the colour of her dress depends on the husband's choice. My husband chooses which colour the cloth that I put over my dress shall be. Gigsho, the old Ari woman, told me that she is not wearing such coloured covers anymore.

Sophia: At what age does a woman stop wearing this?

Gigsho: I have become old and stopped giving birth. I also have put my bracelets away. I only put them back on when you called me to this workshop.

Kerstin: And the skirts, the pink and the green ones, who chooses their colours?

Mingi: It is the girl's choice. It may be green, it may be another colour.

2.7. Maale: Different dresses in the life of girls and women

Kerstin: What about the Maale skirts?

Kalamo: When we are small, we wear the *shiro*. It is a small short skirt made out of cotton

strings. On the back we wear a small goat skin.

Zeleketch: You know, there are three different kinds of women's dresses in Maale. When a girl starts to walk it first gets the *shiro*. When she is around twelve years old she will get skirts made from leather. Its name is *buddo*. And then, when you become a bride, you sew a stripe of black goat leather around the edge of your leather skirt.

Sophia: A bride simply sews a stripe of black leather around her skirt?

Hanna: Yes. It shows that she is a bride. It is the most beautiful cloth of all. But nowadays in all areas except Gongode [lowland Maale], and very few other places, leather skirts are not worn anymore. All of them prefer cotton skirts in different colours. Kalamo bought one yesterday in a light blue colour.

Sophia: Is there any difference in the jewellery owned by a girl, a bride, and a woman?

Zeleketch: As a girl one is allowed to wear all bracelets and all necklaces. Only during a mourning ceremony she has to take everything off. After marriage, a woman takes off all her things and returns them to her father. At this time, maybe her husband can't afford to buy any jewellery for her, so then she has none at all.

Kerstin: Can she not give any of her jewellery to her own children?

Hanna: Only from her husband's side.

Kerstin: In our culture, it often happens that the father gives jewellery to his daughter and the daughter transmits it to her daughter, and so on.

2.8. Maale: Brides and marriage

Zeleketch: When a girl marries, even if there is a mourning ceremony going on, even if her own father dies, the bride can attend with her jewellery. She does not have to take it off.

Hanna: Zeleketch told me that in former times the honeymoon took a long time, up to two months. But nowadays it takes only one month or even fifteen days. What about the *gauwi* [metal bracelets]? I always wondered at what point girls give jewellery to their boyfriends. Did you already do this, Kalamo?

(Discussion among participants. Kalamo first denies that she has a boyfriend, but Zeleketch has seen her with a young boy at the market. Finally she confesses to have one.)

Zeleketch: You know there are three kinds of marriage practises in Maale. One is called *gotche ekene*, it is marriage out of love. The boy searches for a girl he likes and the girl

can refuse or agree to marry the boy. The boy visits the girl several nights and pulls her hand. If the girl likes the boy, she will pull his hand back at one night or give him pieces of jewellery as a present.

Kalamo: My boyfriend did it this way. He came already several nights and because I like him, I gave him three or four of my bracelets.

Day Two 7.10.2004

Bashada and Kara: Concepts of being a good girl

Participants:

from Bashada: Arti (unmarried girl), Kerri (young married woman), Pitta (elderly woman),
Algo (elderly woman)
from Kara: Galte (unmarried girl), Torgo (young married woman), Shauki (elderly
woman)

Translator: Susanne Epple

Assistants: Kristin Nawrath, Anne Löffler

Sus.: Today we are once again going to have a discussion with the women from Kara and Bashada. This time we would like to talk about girlhood. I am going to translate everything and please feel free to ask questions.

I would like you to talk about what it means to be a girl, and what it means to be a good girl. What does a girl have to do and what is she not allowed to do?

3.1. Bashada: To be a good girl

Arti: A good girl is a smart girl. If many people get together, she talks a lot, she laughs a lot. She is not shy when many people come to visit. She does not run away if many people come. *Malgimi*, a stupid girl that is a girl who never talks when people come. She does not talk, she just sits there. That is *malgimi*. *Maligimi* that's what we call a stupid girl. That is bad. A bad girl is a stupid girl. A good girl is a smart girl. Like yesterday, if there are many people, a smart girl still talks. She is not afraid of the people, she is not shy. That is a good girl. Some good girls might not talk a lot. But if you are alone with her, just you two, she starts to talk a lot with you. There are some girls who are smart, they just don't talk if there are many people. She knows everything, but she does not talk. She is smart and everything, but she does not talk, she is too shy. If you ask her, 'Why did you not say anything?' Then she says, 'I knew everything, I just did not say anything, but I knew everything!'

Sus.: What do you say as elder women?

Pitta: If a girl never says anything you say that she is stupid or weak. That is how Arti described it. A good girl is quiet if there are many boys, but if she is alone with her girlfriends. She will talk a lot. She talks a lot with her girlfriends. If girls talk to boys and simply fools around with them, it is good, too. They play and laugh together, they whip each other and have fun. That is good.

Anne: What is expected of a girl within the family?

Arti: Maybe I have an older sister who is stupid. I am the younger one who is smart. So people will tell me: ‘You are the smart one! You place the pot on the fire and you cook! Look after the coffee properly and sort everything out which does not belong in there. Make good coffee! Grind the flour well! Grind fine flour for your father and cook well. The stupid one shall not do all this! You are the one who should do the cooking!’

Sus.: The dumb one, the slow one, she won’t cook at all?

Arti: No, she will cook too, but it is the smart one who will be asked to prepare the food for her father and her elder brothers. ‘You make the food! If guests come, get up quickly and lay down the cow hide for them and make coffee!’ You also make coffee for your girlfriends. They shall come to your house and drink coffee and play and eat, laugh and have fun together. And when they leave they shall say, ‘This homestead is good! We have eaten well and we have had a lot of fun!’ They shall like you, your friends, the boys and the girls. If your friends like you, they will talk favorably about your homestead.

Sus.: If you do not work properly, do you spoil the name of your homestead and your family?

Arti: Yes, if I work badly, my father will come and say, “Can’t you do better? You have to work properly!” My mother will say the same and my brother will whip me.

Sus.: Your elder brother will whip you, but your parents won’t?

Arti: Well, maybe they will whip me, too. But my father does not beat me that quickly. My father scolds me, he will yell at me first before he beats me. But actually the person who beats me is my elder brother. If your elder brother always yells at you, you start to fear him. You think that he soon will start being mad at you and whip you, so you go and fetch water, you grind the flour and you store it so that you can start cooking right away when he comes. You cook quickly and he comes and yells at you and you cook quickly and serve him the food. That is good. If you only go to fetch water when he already has come home, or you start to grind when he is already there, he will whip you. If your father sees that you never cook food for your brother and never prepare

coffee, that you do not work quickly, then your father will whip you, too. You cook the food for your brother in the same way his wife will later do it for him. It is the same way you will cook for your husband one day.

3.2. Older daughters do most of the work in the household

Anne: So it is the daughter and not the mother who does most of the cooking?

Arti: I am the one who does the cooking. I prepare the food for my brothers, for my father, for my mother, for everybody. I am the one who does most of the household work. During the day, everybody leaves with the goats and the cows or works in the fields. I am the one who lays down the stone and starts to grind.

Kerri: A mother who has a grown up daughter won't cook at all. When a girl grows up and gets married, her husband says, "Now I will go and take my wife!" Her mother will cry a lot. She will cry because it has been her daughter who did all the work. It was her daughter who served the guests well, who ground the flour. She was the one who kept everything going. The mother will cry. The father will cry. When her daughter leaves to live with her husband, the mother will have to do all the work by herself again. The mother will then grind the flour as if she had never learned how to grind it properly. She will cook as if she just learned how to cook. She has to exert much effort to get everything done the way her daughter managed to before. After a while the mother will tell her grown up son, "My son shall leap over the cattle!" Or if he has leaped over the cattle already she will say, "My son shall bring his wife in so that she can do the work! She shall do the cooking for me." Quickly the mother will try to bring her son's bride to their homestead. Now her son's wife will live with her and do all the work.

3.3. Young married women have to work a lot

At the moment I am the one who does everything. I cook for my children, for my husband, for the guests...I do everything. But when my daughter Mirja grows up and becomes like Arti, then Mirja will do all the work. I won't grind anymore. Mirja will do the cooking and prepare the coffee. She will get up very early in the morning before anybody else and prepare coffee. When the coffee is ready I will serve it to the men and guests. Meanwhile, Mirja will be outside grinding the flour and preparing the meal for the family.

When Mirja grows up, and her wedding day approaches I will be very sad. When she leaves, I will cry a lot. When I start grinding again I will cry while I am grinding. When I cook, I will cry while I am cooking. Mirja's father will cry, too. And when Summa's or Nakwa's [Kerri's sons] are adults, I will say, "His wife shall come and do all this for me!" Or if my husband, Jammo, marries a second wife and she has grown up I will say, "She shall come! I am old now. I cannot work properly anymore!" And I will tell him to bring his second wife so that she can do all the work from now on.

3.4. Who cares for a woman when her daughters have left?

Anne: Does the second wife share the same house as the first wife?

Kerri: During her bridehood the second wife will live with me in my house. Jammo will build a house for her after her bridehood has ended. Then she will live next door. If I am very old and if we get along well, then the second wife will grind the flour and fetch water for me. But if we do not like each other, she won't do anything. Jammo will be with her, I will not.

When my son's wife moves in, my son will tell his bride, yelling at her, to cook for me, his mother. If I am not too old and if I still can do the work by myself, I will grind my own flour. Alga, for example, she might be old, but she still does all the work by herself.

Sus.: Why? Doesn't your daughter grind the flour for you?

Alga: No, daughters do not do that for their mother. After they have left their mother's house to live with their husbands they do not do that for the mother anymore. Later my son's wife does it for me.

Sus. about Alga: Alga's sons have died. Later the wives of the sons of the second wife will cook for her. Now sometimes her daughter's daughter comes and grinds flour for her.

Kerri: That is why we say that it is good to have many children. It is good to give birth to many boys and many girls. If one of the daughters goes off to marry, you still have the younger one helping you. And when the younger one also goes off to marry, your eldest son will bring his wife and she will help you. This way you always have someone to help you. To have only one daughter or one son is bad.

When your only daughter gets married you do not have anyone to help you. Your sons will still bring many friends and you always have guests to serve. If you are alone and have to host all of your son's guests by yourself, you have too much work to do! That is very hard. That is why we like to have many children, because they can help us.

3.5. Lazy girls are spoiled by their mother

Anne: My *bel's* mother, the mother of my girlfriend in Bashada, did all the work by herself. My *bel* did not help her mother, even though she was the same age as Arti. She did not cook.

Sus.: She did not cook at all?

Anne: No, at least I never saw her cook anything. Her mother always did everything.

Kerri and Arti: Some girls are lazy. That is because her mother always does everything. Her mother never tells her daughter or the other girls to do anything. She does everything by herself. We do not know why this woman you are talking about does everything by herself. She should tell her daughter, "I won't work anymore! I have grown big! You should do all the work!" But she does not say anything.

Sus.: Is this smart of her? Is she therefore considered a very hard-working person? Or is it stupid of her not to tell her daughter to help her?

Kerri: Mmmm, I am not sure about that. I do not know. But actually it is bad. If the mother isn't at home and guests come they might just leave again because they know that the daughters do not know how to host them. The daughters won't make any coffee, they won't grind properly. If the son's friends come they will leave if they see that the mother is not there because they also know that the daughters do not know how to make coffee. The mother does not tell her daughter to help her and her elder brothers do not yell at her. That's why she is such a lazy girl. It is good for a mother to have a daughter who helps her.

When guests come, you, as the mother, should sit and serve the coffee, nothing else. It is good if you do not have to jump up all the time. Your daughters should do that for you. When guests come you say, "Bring some water!" If your daughter says, that there is none you say, "Go and fetch some! Hurry up! Our guests have arrived!" You should just sit and serve coffee, that's what you should do if you have daughters.

Tine: Are these girls who do not know how to do all these things properly looked down upon?

Kerri, Pitta, Alga: People say that the mother has done something wrong. When the girl grows up and her mother says, "Why do you not work properly? Look at the neighbor's daughter, she works so much!", the neighbor will tell the mother, "Why do you talk like this now? When your daughter was young you did not tell her how to do things properly, you did not yell at her, you did not tell her to work right! Now she has grown

up. Now it is too late! Now you are telling your daughter to work as hard as mine does! But it is your own fault! Do not bring any name from my family into your business! You are the one who spoiled it!”

3.6. Bashada: Why it is good to be yelled at when you grow up as a girl

Sus.: Do you like being yelled at so that you grow smart?

Arti: Us?

Sus.: You girls.

Arti: I think it is good for my elder brothers to yell at me. It is good if my brothers or my mother yell at me. That is how I learn to work well. If they do not get angry with me I would sit around and decorate my skirt with beads. If there is something to eat and I just eat, if there is not, I don't eat.

It is better if my brother comes and says, “Come!”, or if my mother says, “Your brother will come home soon, hurry up and fetch some water! Grind some flour, hurry up!” Then I will lay the beads aside and do everything she told me real fast. That is good.

3.7. Kara: To be a good girl – the pride of being spoiled

Anne: What does it mean to be a good girl in Kara?

Galte: I do not cook. My mother is there and she does the cooking. I only do the grinding for my mother, but she does all the cooking. She cooks for the guests. My mother is the only one who prepares the coffee. I only grind flour. My mother cooks and makes the coffee. I only grind and give her the flour. I go and fetch the water. As long as mother is alive I won't do anything else. I grind and I fetch the water.

Torgo: As long as your mother is still alive you only fetch water and do the grinding. If you have grinded for a while your mother comes and says, “Come, you must be tired. Go and lie down a bit.” The mother will grind the rest and cook the food. That's how it is in Kara.

Bashada women: Yes, that's how it is in Kara. They are spoiled!

Laughter.

Galte: The mother does not yell at her daughter. That hardly ever happens.

Tine: And who helps the mother when she has grown old? Does she still do everything by herself even when she is old?

Galte: When my mother has grown old I will already be married and I will have left her homestead. Her sons' wives will help her, but I will be gone.

Sus.: Is it taboo for Kara girls to cook?

Galte: The mother says, "My daughter shall not work hard! As long as she still lives with me she shall not work hard. Otherwise she will get tired. She shall work properly when she gets married. My daughter shall save her strength for her husband. As long as she is living with me she shall not work hard." That's how we say it in Kara. That's our *delk'amo* [pamperedness]. We are proud.

Sus.: But do you go out to collect wood?

Galte: No, girls do not go out to collect firewood. Our mothers do that. The wood is too far away. The girls wouldn't manage.

Anne: And in Bashada?

Sus.: The girls go and collect the firewood in Bashada. The girls actually do everything.

3.8. Bashada and Kara: Where is it better to be a girl?– Divergence of opinions

Tine: Is it better to be a girl in Kara or in Bashada?

Susanne to Galte: Do you like it better in Kara?

Galte: I am happy to be Kara and not Bashada!

Arti: I do not like the way they are done in Kara. I would not say that I would like to be Kara. If I were a Kara girl I would just lie around the whole day and my back would start hurting. I am used to work. Now that I haven't worked for two days, because I am in Jinka, I already miss grinding flour, fetching the water, and collecting the firewood. I have gotten used to our tradition and the Kara have gotten used to their traditions. If I were in Kara my back would start to hurt. The Kara girls have gotten used to sitting around, but I couldn't do that.

Galte: I would not like to be in Bashada. I am glad that I am Kara. I am glad to be with my mothers and that things are the way they are. That is my *delk'amo*.

Sus.: I know the meaning of *delk'amo* in Bashada. I always translated it as being spoiled. Is *delk'amo* similar to *poramo*, which is the word for pride in Bashada?

Galte: Yes, it is the same. *Delk'amo* is something good.

Sus.: Is *delk'amo* something good in Bashada?

Arti: No, it is something bad.

Sus.: So you Kara become proud because you are spoiled?

Torgo: Yes, it is our pride to be spoiled.

Sus.: And you Bashada are proud because you work so hard?

Arti: Yes, we are proud, because we work so hard.

3.9. Kara and Bashada: Men have different concepts of good girls

Torgo: For us it is good. In Kara, we sit around and our mother cooks. When our friends come to visit, our mother gives us coffee and food. We eat and then lie down. In the meantime our mother does the grinding. When we wake up we start stringing our beads again.

Sus.: That's like in Germany!

Laughter.

Kerri: If our daughters were as spoiled as the girls in Kara their husbands would beat them later. Their husbands would say that they do not know how to work. He would say, "You do not know how to make coffee! What did you learn when you were young? Did your mother not teach you anything? Did your father not teach you anything? Did your elder brother not teach you anything?" And they will scold me, being her mother. Her father will get a bad reputation. That's why we say that she shall learn everything when she is young. She shall know how to make coffee. She shall know how to cook food. If guests come she shall host them well. "Give them something to eat. Serve them some coffee!" She shall host them well. Then we say she is a smart girl! A girl should become smart at her parent's house.

Arti: If a girl has not learnt how to do all the things she will keep running away from her husband later on. The children of Zili [the woman they talked about before] will run away later. If you tell them to grind they already start running away! 'Give me something to eat!' you say and they already run back home. When they grind they quickly get blisters on their hands because they are so spoiled! Zili's children are like Kara.

3.10. Bashada: Guests watch the girls and choose the busy ones for marriage

Kerri: When a guest comes he looks at the girls. He looks if the girls work properly. If they are not married yet he will say, “Oh, I will marry her! Or my son shall marry her. I will bring the *koli* for my son. I like how this girl works, that is the girl my son shall marry.” Guests look at the girls. That man will bring the *koli* and marry the girl to his son.

If a girl is lazy and just sits around the guest will say, “The food prepared by the girl does not taste good. Her mother is a smart woman, but she has given birth to a lazy and stupid girl!” That’s what guests say.

When that man’s son has leaped over the cattle and says that he wants to marry that lazy girl, his father will tell him, “You may not marry this girl! This girl is lazy. She cannot work. She is bad. I will give you a smart girl.”

That’s how you talk about the smart girls. “The lazy one will leave you later. You will suffer because she will always run away. She will run away until you have married a second wife. You will have to marry a second one and the first one will only bear children.”

That’s our work in Bashada. Our little girls already know how to work and later when they move to their husband’s, they know how to work well. If a girl knows how to work well later she won’t be beaten by her husband. She won’t be scolded. She will know how to host guests herself. She will prepare something to eat and make coffee. Even when her husband is not at home people will still come to her house to drink coffee. Her husband’s age-mates will come even when he is not there. But if they know that their age-mate’s wife is lazy they won’t go to drink coffee in his house. No guests will come. “We won’t go to her house! She is lazy! She does not know how to make good coffee. We won’t go there to drink coffee! But that other man’s wife is a smart woman. She will serve us good coffee. We go to her house to drink!” And to that house many guests will come.

If everybody knows that I am a smart woman, they will come to our homestead even when my husband is away. If I am known to be lazy no one will come. Then guests will only come if my husband is at home, because they know that he will whip me if I do not work properly, if I do not host them well enough. If I am smart, I know how to host guests even without my husband. The ones who have not learnt to work well, they do not work.

That is how it is in Bashada.

3.11. Kara: How the women learn to work well

Sus. to the Kara women: What happens when you get married?

Torgo: When we move to our husband's house we can work very well because we took our rest when we were girls. As girls we did not work hard. We work hard when we move to our husband. Then we will go collect firewood, fetch water, grind and cook and serve our husband. We serve food to our guests and only then do we sit down. Then we grind some more and store the flour. When new guests arrive we open the cowhides. We prepare coffee and cook and distribute the meal. Only when the guests have eaten do we go to sleep.

Sus.: But did you learn all this as girls or does your husband teach you?

Torgo: We learned all this when we were girls. But our mothers said, "Do not work so hard! You will have to work hard enough when you move in with your husband!" She was the one who told us not to work so much.

Sus.: But you never went to collect firewood as girls. How do you know how it is done?

Torgo: We saw how it was done when we were girls while we were sitting around. We saw how our mother came with the wood. We saw all this. When we become women we go with the other women to collect the wood and make the straps and carry it home.

Tine: And the cooking?

Torgo: Sometimes when our mothers were not at home we did the cooking. We did the grinding and the cooking and sometimes we prepared coffee. We have learnt all this. If for once our mother is not there we prepare some food for her and lay it aside. When she comes back we say, "Look mother I have cooked some food!" And our mother distributes the meal. We only grind a little, we only cook a little, we only prepare a little bit of coffee. Seldom do we do this as girls.

3.12. Kara: Freedom ends when a girl marries

Tine: So do you have a lot of freedom as Kara girls? Can you go dancing whenever you want? When we were in Kara there were dances every evening. Is your spare time over when you get married?

Galte: Everything ends with your marriage.

Sus.: Do your men yell at you? Do they whip you?

Galte: Are there men who do not whip their women? He beats us if we do something wrong!

Sus.: It all ends when you become a bride? In Bashada you are beaten. As a bride, you have to serve your husband coffee and he waits a very long time until he accepts it. Is it the same in Kara?

Torgo: It is the same in Kara.

3.13. Kara: What it means to be a good girl

Sus.: What sorts of attributes are considered good for a girl in Kara?

Torgo: You do not say that she is a good girl because she works well. If a girl works for two or three days in a row people will start talking. They will say, "What kind of a mother tortures her own daughter so much? The girl should take some rest, later she will be married and she will have to work hard for her husband." A mother should not tell her daughter to work.

Arti laughs.

Torgo: In Kara you do not say that a girl is smart or that she is stupid. We are all the same. We do not say that someone is stupid or smart. We do not do that.

Sus.: In Bashada the men say, "This girl works well. I want to marry her!" What do the men like in Kara?

Laughter.

Torgo: In Kara they like our bodies.

Arti laughs loudly.

Torgo: He won't look at our work. He will like your body or your looks. He thinks that you are pretty. 'This is the one I want to marry!' That is what he says.

Galte: We think it is awful in Bashada. They have to suffer so much! They have to start working when they are still little girls. They have thick callus on their hands. They have a crooked back because they carry so much water. We think this is odd. We sit around and have a good life. We save our strength for our husbands.

Sus.: Do you suffer a lot when you become a woman?

Torgo: No, we know our tradition and we know that we will have to work hard once we become women. We do it then, but actually there is not much work anyhow.

Anne: Would you say that your girlhood is nicer than your womanhood?

Galte: We like to be girls. No, we do not want to become women quickly. If I know that I will get married soon, then I will cry. Girlhood is nice.

Sus. to Arti: What do you say?

Arti: It is the same In Bashada. We also say that we want to stay girls forever. We want to be beautiful. We like to wear our beads and to go to the dances with our girlfriends. We like to wash ourselves with soap. We also cry when we are given to our husbands. It is the same as in Kara.

3.14. Bashada: Why it is good to become a woman

Kerri: When you have become a woman, after you have given birth to a child like this one here, then you notice that it is good to be a woman. “Why did I not become a woman earlier?” That is what you say then. It is so nice when you have children. “Why did I just sit around?” That is what you think with your heart. When you are a girl you think it is awful to marry. But when you have become an *uta* [bride], and you have your first child, you start thinking that being a girl is awful. Then you say, “I should have married earlier. If I had married earlier I could have two children by now! Maybe I should have three children like this other woman. I would have a grown up daughter like her, and my daughter could grind the flour for me.” That is how we think and talk then.

Sus. to the Kara women: Do you also think like this? After you have had your first child, do you also say, “Why did I not become a woman earlier?”

Torgo: Yes, we also say that. I also like having children now.

Kerri: Girls do not think like this. But those who already have children think, “I should have done this earlier!” These girls here just want to be girls. We only like our womanhood because we have children.

Suppose there are two girls walking around, their husbands might come and steal them [in order to take them in as brides]...but the girls run away because they do not want to become brides. Maybe one of them says, “I will stay with this man. I will become a bride and I will bear children.” But the second girl runs away and stays a girl. One day the second girl will also get married and by then the first girl will already have given birth to her first child. Then the second girl will say, “Give me one of your children I would like to hold it! Give me one of your children to help me chase the birds on my field!” And then the other one will reply, “What? You could have your own children by now! Why did you always run away? Tell your vagina that she shall watch your field! She shall do that for you! You were the one who did not give her vagina to her

husband! You did not want to! I gave mine. I have given birth to children, but you did not want to!”

Everybody starts laughing.

Set your vagina down on the border of your field! It shall chase away the birds for you!

Loud laughter.

Sus.: Do you say the same in Kara?

Torgo: We do not talk like this!

Sus.: Why not? Who watches out over your field?

Torgo: Don't the children do that?

Laughter.

Galte: We do not say it that way. If I need a child to watch my field I take my little sister or someone else. You would not say that your vagina should watch your field!

3.15. Changes that occur when a girl becomes a woman

Tine: I would like to know a little bit more about the changes when becoming a woman. For example in Kara, when you get married, you will have to work more, you have to do things you did not have to do as a girl...But, I would also like to know if there is anything in particular you liked to do as a girl which you are not allowed to do anymore now that you are a woman. For example, going to the dances with your friends. What else do you have to give up?

Galte: When you become a woman you do not sit around with your friends anymore. You stay at home and work all day. The only one you talk to is your husband. You do not meet your peers anymore. Your husband would not like that. After you have done all the work, all the cooking and everybody is fed, you just sit at home. Only the girls go out to the dances. Only when tourists come may a woman dance, during the day.

Anne: The women do not go to visit each other during the day?

Galte: If your friends live close you might stop by and your friend will make some coffee for you. But you never stay for long, because you know that your husband would get angry if you stay away for too long.

Tine: But if you have been friends since you were children, don't you try to keep up that friendship even if one of the girls gets married? Maybe you could go fetch water together or try to find something else you can do together or find an opportunity to meet and chat.

Torgo: If you do not live far away from each other you can go and collect wood and fetch water together. Or you make coffee and invite your friend and her husband to come over. My friend also sometimes invites my husband and me.

Sus.: I don't think that you do that in Bashada.

Anne: That couples invite each other over?

Sus.: Do you do that in Bashada?

Kerri: You also go and visit your neighbors together with your husband. In Bashada we usually live far away from our childhood friends. In Kara everything is so close by. There you can go and visit each other even for a short visit. But my friends all live in Hamar, in Banna, in Silbe [region in Bashada], everywhere. I only see them at the market. If you see each other you greet and talk for a while, but then you go about your business again. I visit my neighbors to drink coffee with my husband. We say "Your legs have been cut off once you marry! A woman's legs are cut off, they are too short!" It means that she can't go far. Not the way she used to as a girl.

3.16. Relationship between husband and bride

Sus. to Torgo: I would like to know a bit more about the relationship between men and women. You said earlier that you sit at home and the only person you talk to is your husband. In Hamar, couples do not talk to each other much. As a woman, you do not talk much with your husband. Do you talk to your husbands?

Torgo: While you are a bride you do not talk much. You are shy. You talk once, twice and then you do not say anything anymore. But after you have given birth to one, two or three children, you talk a lot.

Kerri: It is the same in Bashada. While I am a bride I do not dare talk to my husband. I am scared of him. I am shy. After I have given birth to one or two children we get used to each other. Then it is okay. I address him by the name that was given to him by his daughter "*Mirja-imba!*" [Father-of-Mirja]. That is how I call my husband.

When I was a bride he did not talk to me. He just looked at me. He would step out the door and I would follow him and bring him his rifle and his bullet belt. He did not talk to me. I had to know what to do by myself. I handed him his sandals. He took everything and left. Then I sat inside the house. When he came back I was sitting there. I had been sitting there the whole time, waiting for him. When he came I went outside to take his things. I took his rifle. I took off his sandals, but he would step hard on the ground so that I could not pull them off. I had to try hard to take them off. I

brought the rifle into the house. I took some cool water and placed it outside so that he could wash himself with it. Meanwhile I had laid out the cowhide for him. He sat down on it. I put on my cape to pour some coffee and I served him some. First, I placed it next to me so it cooled off. I first checked if it was cool enough before I handed it to him. But he would not take it. He simply sat there and looked around. My arm had nearly fallen off until he finally accepted the coffee.

As a bride you suffer a lot! He drank some. He kept on holding the *sherka* [bowl] even though it was already empty...

Laughter.

...he holds the *sherka* close to his mouth even though there is nothing in it. I have to know that it is empty even though I cannot see it.

Laughter.

Then I take the *sherka* from his mouth and pour some new coffee into it. I hand it to him. I place it next to me again. I serve him some food, but again he won't accept the *sherka*. When finally your butt starts to hurt badly he accepts the meal. After he has eaten, I take some water. He does not say anything. Only his eyes tell me what to do. It's only the eyes that tell you what to do. After he has drunk the coffee he holds out his hands. You have to pour some water over his hands so that he can wash them...and his face and his legs. Then he goes wherever he wants to go. Again I wait for him to come home. I have prepared many sticks, *rigima*, with which he can clean his teeth.

Laughter.

That's how it is in Bashada. After the meal I hand him the tooth sticks. After he has finished he does "PFFF". He spits out little crumbs. I hand him some water so that he can wash out his mouth. He spits it out. He throws the sticks away so that I have to go and pick them up again. I put them back into the house. The next morning I will give him some more. That's how it goes, day after day.

Once my bride time has ended and after I have given birth to a child, I won't take his things anymore when he comes home. I won't give him any *rigima* anymore. Only slowly, and with a lot of effort, do we get used to each other.

That's why the stupid girls run away from their husbands. They are scared. The ones who say they do not want to suffer like this run away. The ones who say that their father has given them do not run away, they stay with their husbands. They will say that they will get used to it, no matter how hard it is. Maybe he has already brought his rifle and his buffalo leather whip when you come to take his things. Then he whips you with the leather. Maybe he steps hard on the ground so that you cannot take off his sandal. You run away but he will come after you and bring you back home.

Laughter.

There is no one who can stop this. When you are a bride no one stops him. You always wait for him outside. If you have something to do inside the house you tell a child to go outside and check if he is coming back. And when your husband arrives the child will come and call, "He is back!" Then you run outside real fast. You go to take his things. You do it quickly. He is all red from *assili* [red butter] because he has fought with you. You give him some water so that he can wash himself. He says, "I am covered with red butter! Scrub it off!" He doesn't really say it but I know that he wants me to do it. That's how it is in Bashada.

I bear all this because my father has already eaten all the honey and the goats and the cows which he received in return for me. That's why I bear all this. Being a bride is really bad. We suffer a lot until we get used to each other. Now we have gotten used to our husbands.

That's how it is in Bashada. We suffer a lot.

Ritual and social aspects in the life of a woman as a bride, wife and elder woman

Participants:

from Bashada: Arti (unmarried girl), Kerri (younger woman), Pitta (elderly woman), Algo (elderly woman)
from Kara: Galte (unmarried girl), Torgo (young woman), Shauki (elderly woman)

Translator: Susanne Epple

Assistants: Tina Brüderlin, Anne Löffler, Kristin Nawrath, Weyneshet Hunegnaw

Sus.: Now let us talk about being a bride in Kara. How does the husband talk to you? Is he kind? Tell me something about the relationship between bride and husband!

4.1. Kara: Relationship between husband and bride

Torgo: When a girl becomes a bride in Kara and her husband goes somewhere, when he returns, the bride will walk towards him and take his things home for him. When he has been somewhere, you walk towards him when he returns. You go with another girl and sit down somewhere on the path, waiting for him to come home. You will take and carry his rifle for him. He has a *micere* [whipping wand]. With the *micere* he whips you. The girl you have brought along with you will tell him to stop whipping you. Then he will stop. Together you return to the homestead.

You are a bride, you are covered with red butter. The bride will not open the cowhide for her husband. His mother will do that for him. When he sits on the cowhide you will hand him his rifle back. The mother already has made coffee. You, the bride, will pour coffee for your husband. His mother has cooked some food and gives it to him. But you have poured the coffee for your husband, and you have placed it in front of him. You wait until it has cooled down. Then you hand him the coffee. You wait a very long time until he finally takes the coffee and drinks it. Even if he still has the *sherka* [bowl] at his lips, you take it from him when it is empty.

When you have poured him his coffee, you also pour the coffee for his age-mate. You also keep his coffee until it has cooled down. When it is cool, you hand it to him. He takes it. That is the way it is in Kara.

Tine: When the bride is waiting for her husband, does he already have the *micere* [whipping wand] with him and start beating her?

Torgo: Yes, but the girl who came along will stop him.

Weyneshet: Who is the girl?

Torgo: She is the husband's younger sister. Even if she is still small you take her with you.

Sus.: You still are a bride then?

Torgo: I am

Sus.: How do you become a bride in Kara?

Conversation between participants

Torgo: When you become a bride in Kara your head is shaved. When your hair grows back they shave more. The hair circle of a married woman is smaller than that of the girls. Then the bride's whole body will be rubbed with butter and *assile* [red ochre].

Sus.: For how long will they do that?

Torgo: Some brides start to work after two months already. Then the bride will be given to her husband. You cook and serve coffee to your husband and to your mother-in-law. To all the children who live in the homestead you give food.

Pitta and Alga: That means that she has already slept with her husband, it is when she starts doing all those things.

Sus.: Does your husband tell you how you are supposed to work, or is it like in Bashada where you just observe and then one day you know how it is done?

Torgo: You already know how it is done. That is the way you do it.

Kara women laugh.

4.2. Kara and Bashada: Why wives are beaten by their husbands

Susanne asks Kerri: In Bashada there are some women who work slowly, saying, "My husband shall beat me!"

Kerri: The lazy ones, they want to be beaten. They are the stupid ones. The smart ones do not want to be beaten. The smart ones are not beaten. The smart ones already have done all the work and they do not get beaten. The dumb ones, the slow ones, who have not prepared the coffee in time for when the husband gets home, will start to prepare the coffee. It isn't until he gets home that they go and fetch water.

Susanne: Is it like this in Kara also?

Torgo: The place where we fetch our water is very close. We fetch the water and make the coffee and cook, and when he arrives, everything is already ready. Then we bring him his cowhide and then everything is good. This is the way you do it if you are smart.

Everybody starts talking.

Kerri: When a woman is always at home, but she lets the fire go out, and she does not go to fetch water, and she does not work properly...and if she just walks over to the neighbors to get some fire when her husband comes home, then the people say: “Where have you been? Why did you let your fire burn out?” And then you answer: “I was at home.” Then the people will start speaking badly about you and they will say: “What kind of a woman are you? Why did let your fire burn out? Why are you like a man, who walks around and lets everything burn out?”

Long monologue.

When her husband has gone far away, for example to Jinka, a smart wife will always keep a pot with a little bit of water on the fire, as her husband might come home anytime. She has already roasted and grinded the coffee shells and stored them in a little calabash. She has already grinded some flour and stored it. And if he has not come back in the evening, she takes the pot from the fire and puts it back on in the morning, because he might come home anytime. She has firewood, water, everything right there. And when he finally comes she can prepare some coffee quickly and make food. Then he will not beat her. But the stupid women, the lazy ones, they do not prepare all this. They will only start doing all this when he already has come and those are the ones who are beaten. That is a good woman.

Sus.: How is it in Kara? Is it the same way or is it different?

Torgo: We do it the same way. When our husband leaves, then we grind the flour and store it. We also lay aside roasted coffee. We gather a lot of wood and hang it in the house. Then we wait in the house. When he comes back we immediately make some coffee on the fireplace and cook some food on the second fireplace. When the coffee is ready, the food is ready as well. And when the people come coffee is already made. All the people will come to welcome him home. They all come and we serve them something to eat. When they have all gone home, when they all have eaten and left again, then you will cook some real good food just for your husband. He is your guest now. And you serve him good food. That is the way we do it in Kara.

Sus.: A smart Bashada woman, is she the same as a smart Kara woman?

Participants discuss and comment.

Susanne translates: The roles of the girls are different, but for the women it is the same.

Women's work is the same in Kara and Bashada.

Tine: Girlhood differs in Kara and Bashada. But womanhood is the same. So what about bridehood?

Torgo: It is all the same. There is no difference.

Pitta and Alga: Bridehood is the same. Everything is the same.

Participants discuss. Parts not translated.

Sus.: Does a bride suffer as much in Kara as she does in Bashada? Does she suffer the same way as the Bashada described it?

Torgo: Yes. But when you have given birth to a child it will be over. From then on you will talk to each other.

4.3. When a woman bears no children

Sus.: So what happens if a woman does not get pregnant?

Torgo: If she is not able to give birth to children one says that *barjo* has made it that way. Her husband will talk nicely to her, he will not be angry at her. He will talk nicely to her and marry a second wife. The first child that the second wife will bear will be given to the first wife. The second child will grow up with the second wife. They will raise the children together.

Tina: This is the way it is done in Hamar, too.

Approval and conversation.

Kerri: In Hamar the first wife will take the child and raise it. She is not able to breastfeed it, but she will raise it. If it is a girl and it grows up, the first wife will be the one who makes the leather skirts for her. And when the girl marries, she will be the mother who receives the honey and the goats from the future husband.

Tina: What happens if a man is not able to procreate? If he has already married several women and still they do not bear children?

Kerri: If a husband cannot procreate you do it secretly in the bush.

Kerri asks the Kara women how it is done in Kara.

Torgo: In Kara it is the same way. You go and meet secretly, often with the brother of your husband. It is the same way as in Bashada. But it has to happen secretly in the bush.

4.4. What it means to be a proud woman

Sus.: Who would you consider a really proud woman? What kind of attributes does she need to have?

Torgo: A proud Kara woman has nice beads and a nice skirt. Some wear bad *aizis* [leather skirts] and they do not have beads and no bracelets. That is bad.

Sus.: And in Bashada?

Kerri: It is the same way. Some do not care about their hair. That is bad. Some do not have nice skirts. Even if they owned cows and butter they still would not do their hair nicely and they still would not care about their *aizis*. Even when there is butter, they do not rub their skirts with it. Their front skirt is stiff and sticks up by itself. When she stands up one can see her vagina!

Laughter.

This is a sign for badness and laziness. This is a woman who is stupid, who is bad. Her husband may be smart, but she is not good, she is stupid. Some smart women have stupid men, someone like Elcha [a mentally retarded, well known man in Bashada]. But these women say: "I will wear a nice skirt. I will do everything right." They care about their hair. So, if I, being such a woman, walk around, people still will like me. If someone comes up to me to do *miska* [demand something], I will give her what she wants. This is what is good about me. And the people will say: "Her husband is dumb, but he married a smart, good woman!" This is how it is in Bashada.

4.5. *Miska* – the right to demand and the duty to share

Sus.: Can you tell us more about the *miska*?

Kerri: A smart woman will always give when people come and ask for something. She always gives. She gives everything she owns.

Torgo: What are you talking about now? About giving your vagina, or what?

Loud laughter.

Kerri: The smart one will always give salt and coffee. If she always gives and tomorrow she will not have anything herself, the others will give her what she needs. "Who is the one who is always willing to give? Who is the one who hosts her guests well? Yesterday she gave me coffee so that I could host my guests. Who is the one who helped me host my guests?" This is how they will talk about her. Some do have coffee, but they will say: "I don't have any."

Then I have to go back. I have not received any coffee. Where am I supposed to get coffee from for my guests? Some say: “Go to her, or to her, I don’t have coffee.”

About some women you know that they will not give you anything. “That is this woman. She does not help you to host your guests! This is the stingy one! Those are the ones who do not help you to host your guests. Even though they do have something, they will tell you that they do not have anything!”

What is good and what is stupid, I do not know. Her meanness is her weakness. This is how it is. Some do have coffee at home and still they go to do *miska*. The woman she is asking may be preparing coffee for herself. She might have placed her *ashka* [earthen pan] onto the fire to roast the coffee shells, and still she will give you a share. Those are the ones we call *paxala*, those are the ones who we consider as being smart.

Sus.: Do you also have the concept of *miska* in Kara?

Torgo: In Kara, when a guest comes to your house, you will also go and look for coffee. I will go to a woman who I know well, and I say: “I have a guest.” And I will be given what I need. Then I make coffee and my guests will drink it and leave.

Tomorrow that woman will come to my house and then I will give her something in return. Then she can make coffee and her guests will drink it and leave.

In Kara it is the same way as in Bashada.

Sus.: Do you also have some misers?

Torgo: Yes, we also have misers. Even though they do have something they do not share.

People will know and not go there if they need something. “The wife of so and so is bad.” That is what people say about her.

“The wife of so and so is good.” There are good women, you know who is good. When I say that I have guests but no coffee, where shall I go? The people tell me to go to that woman who always gives coffee if she has some. Maybe she will give you a whole *sherka* [bowl] which will be enough for two days. Then my guests will drink and leave again. This is how it is done. It is done as it is done in Bashada.

4.6. What a husband expects from his wife

Tina: What would you say is important for a woman concerning her behavior towards her husband?

Arti: The men will say the same. Most important is that a wife is a good host. For example, when the men come back from hunting or dancing they will say: “Let’s go to so and

so's wife. She is smart. She will be able to host us all." They will go to the woman who knows best how to host them well.

Sus.: What else is there a man says about his wife apart from her being a good host?

Tina: I was told that in Hamar a man will follow his wife to the waterhole and beat her there if she has not bought enough tobacco for him. She will be punished and beaten.

Kerri: A smart woman knows that her husband needs tobacco. She will buy lots of tobacco and *durra* [salty stone which is chewed together with the tobacco]. If she goes to the market and the husband stays at home she will also buy some *arake* [schnapps] for him. If her husband does not chew tobacco, the wife does not buy any. If you know that your husband chews, you will definitely buy some tobacco. There is nothing else a woman can do wrong.

Anne: And in Kara?

Torgo: Stupid is the woman who is rich and still does not care about her skirt and her hair. Her skirt is stiff so that one can see her bottom; those are the lazy and stupid women. The husband is smart. He has goats and cows but still she does not wear a nice skirt. She wears her old and stiff skirt. That is a lazy woman, a careless woman.

In Kara we grow tobacco. We do not have any markets in Kara to go to. We store the tobacco and when our husband says, "Bring me some tobacco!", we go and get some out of the sack and hand it to him. What is left over we bring back into the house.

When he asks for more we go get him more.

The kind of tobacco that you can sniff he has to buy on the market in Dimeka [small town in Hamar]. The men buy it and give it to their wives so that they can prepare it for them. The wives will store the grinded tobacco in little containers.

When my husband says, "Give me some tobacco!" I will put it on my hand and give it to him. Once he has sniffed it, I put it back into its container. When my husband has sniffed all of it, he goes to buy new one. That is the way that it is in Kara.

4.7. Taboos for girls and women

Sus.: I would like to know more about the taboos for girls and women. I have heard that only girls are allowed to milk.

Alga: Only girls who have not been promised/ married to anyone yet are allowed to milk. After they have been promised, it is taboo for them.

Sus.: What else is taboo? Are there other taboos for promised girls?

Alga: No. We say that before getting married, a girl is male. That is why she is allowed to milk the cattle.

Galte: In Kara, girls milk the goats. We do not have any cows.

Conversation

Kerri, Pitta and Alga: The girls in Bashada also milk the goats, but no cows and sheep, they are taboo. Girls who already have been promised to someone, both in Kara and in Bashada, are allowed to milk the goats, but they are not allowed to milk the sheep and cows anymore. Sheep and cows are considered to be one, it is forbidden to milk them. These girls are only allowed to milk goats.

Tina: Are there no other taboos for girls?

Conversation.

Susanne translates: Every female is allowed to climb up to the high plateau to chase away the birds on the fields. The unmarried girls are also allowed to climb up the *dore* [sorghum-storage], but not the married ones and not the promised ones.

Conversation.

Pitta and Alga: A married woman is only allowed to take sorghum from the *dore* if a man has taken the first portion before her. Only then is she allowed to take the sorghum. But she is not allowed to climb up.

Sus.: Do you also have *dores* in Kara?

Torgo: We also have *dores* in Kara. In Kara girls are also allowed to climb up there. Women are not allowed to do so. But women are allowed to take sorghum out of it. The husband climbs up and takes the sorghum.

Kerri: So the husband climbs up the sorghum's storage and takes out the sorghum. He has to go first....so we have the same rules!

4.8. Bride rituals and taboos

Tina: Are there any taboos for a bride?

Pitta: When the bride is given to her husband, before she has had her first period, she is not allowed to touch the *doala*.

Tina: But isn't she on the *shala* [storage place] anyhow?

Kerri: Yes, but then she comes down to make the ritual. That is when she is being given to her husband.

Pitta: When the bride has her first period, her mother-in-law will give her a *kachi* [apron] and puts it on her. It is the mother-in-law who does this to her. She does this because

the bride has her period. Then the bride is given to her husband and now they will sleep together.

Tina: I thought that is done after she has had her period twice?

Kerri and Pitta: After three months, when they want to give her to her husband you wait for it and then you give her the *kashi* [apron].

Tina: And meanwhile she is not allowed to sleep with her husband?

Alga: Only then she will be given to her husband.

Tina: How is it done in Kara?

Torgo: In Kara it is the same.

Conversation.

Sus.: Do you also have the *gungulo* [ladle used for scooping coffee] ritual?

Torgo: Yes, we also have it.

Pitta: We all have the *gungulo* ritual. The bride will come to her mother-in-law when she has had her period. The mother-in-law will ritually wash her hands with it.

Sus.: What about the pieces of calabash?

Kerri laughing: Wait! That will come later! Again the next month...

Pitta and Alga: she will come to me again. I will pour water over her hands again. She has brought me some flour. She takes a *kolosho* [piece of a broken calabash] and ash from the fireplace and goes back to the place where we have spilled the water last time. She will stand there and lay the piece with the ash on the ground. The girl and the mother-in-law will step on it with their big toes. Then we spill some water on top of it. Both of us will step upon the piece until it breaks. After that the woman will sleep with her husband. Now she is allowed to become pregnant and bear children. That is all there is.

Anne: Does this piece of calabash symbolize a child?

Pitta: If you do not do this ritual and the woman gets pregnant the child will be *mingi* [ritually impure]. Then you have to throw it away. It will be ritually impure if you have not done this ritual. This is our ritual. This is what we women do.

Sus.: How is it in Kara?

Torgo: We do not have *kolosho*. We only do the ritual with the ladle and the water. We only do it one month, then it is over.

Tina: Is it also the mother-in-law who does that ritual in Kara?

Torgo: The mother-in-law will do that.

Discussion between the women. No translation.

Tina: Are there taboos for pregnant women?

Discussion.

Alga and Kerri: The only taboo is that you are not allowed to touch any *doala* [milk container] when you are on your way to your mother-in-law's to break the *kolosho*. So from the moment you leave your house walking to your mother-in-law's to bring her the flour, until you have gone through the ritual, you are not allowed to touch any *doala* or milk.

Tina: So there are no taboos during the pregnancy?

Sus.: They have said no. There aren't any. They have said, "Why? When you are pregnant you already have done all the rituals. Why should there be another taboo?" As a pregnant woman you may eat everything, you can touch everything. There are no taboos.

Tina: How is it in Kara?

Kara: We do not have that. We do not have any *doalas*.

Tina: *Doala* is the milk container, isn't it?

Sus.: Yes, the one for cow's milk.

4.9. Status of elderly women when their children marry

Sus.: Let us talk a bit about older women. In Bashada, you become a woman, you marry, you grow up, your children grow up. Maybe you have first given birth to a girl. When your daughter grows up, she will get married and leave. Or maybe you have first given birth to a son. And when he has grown up he becomes an *ukuli* [initiate] and leaps over the cattle. Then you have become big, haven't you? Let us talk about this. I once heard that after your son has leaped over the cattle the mother takes off her *binyere* [necklace of a married woman, only for first wives].

Pitta and Alga: When the eldest son has leaped over the cattle. From the day on which the eldest son has taken the *boko* [initiate's stick] and become an *ukuli*, on that day you will take off your *binyere*.

Sus.: What happens after she has taken it off?

Kerri: When your daughter marries first you will take off the *binyere* for your daughter. Your son might not have leaped yet [is not initiated]. If a daughter and her mother both wear a *binyere* at the same time, it is said to be bad. When your son leaps [is initiated], you take it off for your son. That is how it is.

If a mother does not take the *binyere* off when her daughter gets married, it may happen that the mother's husband dies. The *binyere* is like *ch'aaki* [evil power]. If the mother says: "I will not take my *binyere* off! My daughter can wear hers, but I will stay with my husband and leave my *binyere* on!", it is bad. It is like an evil power.

Discussion between the women.

Sus.: They have mentioned some examples of women in Bashada who have recently taken their *binyere* off for their daughters or sons.

Kerri: When my daughter marries, I will take it off. If my son leaps first, I also will take it off.

Tina: What do you do with the *binyere* when you have taken it off?

Pitta: You will bury the leather in the cattle kraal, so the dogs won't eat it. The *binyere*'s silver rings you give to the girls and women. They will use it to make their *tirre* [headdress of women whose son has been initiated]. You distribute it to other women. You do not keep it for yourself.

Sus.: Did you make your *tirre* out of a *binyere*?

Alga: No.

Kerri: Your own *tirre* has been given to you by the other women.

Tina: So it takes quite some time to collect all the material for your *tirre*?

Pitta: It is distributed among the girls, but you can also give all material to just one woman.

Sus.: Is there a ritual for taking off your *binyere*?

Pitta: The ritual is that your son leaps over the cattle. There is nothing else.

4.10. Elder women's taboo of bearing children when their own daughter bears children

Sus.: After a woman's son has taken his *boko* [become an initiate] does she still bear children?

Pitta: When my son goes to take in his bride, and when they have their first children, as the mother-in-law, I am still allowed to have children. Only when my own daughter marries and bears children I will stop giving birth.

Sus.: Why is that so?

Alga: If both mother and daughter bear children, then these children will not grow up properly. Maybe the daughter's child will die.

Sus.: Either the child will die or the mother, or maybe the child of your daughter dies. I have heard about a ritual which is done when you stop giving birth to children.

Pitta and Alga: When a woman decides that she does not want to bear children anymore, because her eldest daughter has started to give birth, she will take the right sandal of her eldest son and put it onto her foot. From then on that woman will not give birth to children.

Tina: Even if you keep sleeping with your husband?

All Bashada: He won't come anymore. He will go to his second wife.

Sus.: In Kara you do not wear *binyeres*, how do you do it?

Torgo: When my son takes the *boko* I won't take anything off. These rings are our *binyere*.

These two *zau* [iron rings] on my arm are my *binyere*. Only the first wife has these two rings. The second wife does not have any. You wear them until you are very old.

When your son leaps over the cattle you will not take them off. You give some to the wife of your eldest son, but not these. Yours you keep to yourself. This is how it is.

When your eldest daughter marries, you stop giving birth even if you are still young.

Otherwise, the children of your daughter might die. This is why the mother stops. It is now the daughter's turn to bear children. But we do not do the ritual with the sandal.

Tina: You just stop sleeping with your husband?

Torgo: Yes. From then on he will only go to his second wife.

Tina: If a woman actually did become pregnant, would her grandchild die?

Alga: But she won't get pregnant!

Kerri: When you wear the sandal you can sleep with your husband, but your blood will stop coming. It is over.

Torgo: In Kara we do not wear the sandal. The husband knows and he stops coming.

4.11. Unclean conception, abortion and related rituals

Sus.: In Bashada, if you become pregnant before performing the *gungulo*-ritual, you must abort because the child would be considered *mingi*. Does this concept also exist in Kara?

Torgo: Yes, we also have that.

Sus.: Are there hunting taboos for the men?

Pitta: If a woman is pregnant with an impure child, the husband is not allowed to go hunting. The woman who is pregnant with an impure child goes to the *bajje*. The *bajje* will slaughter a goat and take a piece of the goat's stomach and tie it onto the woman's apron. He then holds the apron and pours the *soko* [the stomach content of the goat] into it. Then he goes to her house and sprinkles the *soko* everywhere: at the waterhole where that woman used to fetch water, in her homestead and the cattle kraal. By doing so, he ritually purifies the homestead.

Tina: Is this done while she still is pregnant, or after she has had an abortion?

Alga: After it has already been taken out.

Tina: If the *gali*-ritual has not been done for the child and the woman becomes pregnant again, do you also have to purify the homestead?

Sus.: You always have to do the *gungulo*-ritual if you want to become pregnant again. Each time you do it.
So the husband may not go hunting. Are there any more taboos? Does the woman who has the unclean conception go out to fetch water?

Kerri: No, she also does not go out to fetch water. The water hole has to be purified, too. Otherwise the water would dry out. It would become impure.

Sus.: Does she dig her fields? Is she allowed to touch the seeds as long as she is impure?

Kerri: All her sorghum has gone bad. She cannot use it as seeds anymore. The people will not come to get seeds from her. This year she will have to use the seeds of other people. Hers have gone bad. She can only eat it. But she cannot buy goats with this sorghum. She also cannot buy cows with it. She can only eat it. The sorghum has been spoiled, one can only eat it. One cannot use it for anything else.

Tina: But I thought it has to be done secretly.

Sus.: No.

Tina: Really? Even, if she is married?

Kerri: Everybody knows about it.

Alga: Not one member of the family goes to an initiation.

Kerri: If they went to an initiation, when the initiate is going to leap over the cattle, the cattle would go crazy. The cows would gore the people. The cows would go wild and then everyone would say: "There is someone who carries an impure child! She has to go, otherwise the *ukuli* cannot leap over the cattle." Once she has left, the cows calm down.

Tina: What would happen if you did not abort such a child?

Pitta: Her mother-in-law knows that she has not done the *gungulo*-ritual.

Sus.: What if she came to the mother-in-law after she had gotten pregnant and asked you to do the ritual real quick, before her stomach became big, before anybody noticed?

Alga: The child would still become *mingi*.

Sus.: Is it the same in Kara?

Torgo: It is the same. If you become pregnant without having performed the ritual, and you secretly do it afterwards, then the child's teeth will grow on the upper jaw first. Then it would be *mingi* and you would have to throw it away.

Alga: It is the same everywhere.

Sus.: Where do you throw the child?

Torgo: We throw them into the river.

Tina: That is how it used to be done in Arbore also.

Conversation and laughter.

Kerri: This is a bad topic!

Sus.: We actually wanted to talk about old women anyway.

Kerri.: You (Susanne) used to worry, “Will Matti’s [Susanne’s son] teeth grow on top?” Now he has eaten the fresh corn and his teeth are well. Now you are happy.

Sus.: I was not scared! We do not have this taboo. I was just scared about what the people here would have said!

Pitta: She does not have this taboo. But she is Bashada and she is right.

Kerri: That is true, people look at the child.

All: Let us talk about something else. This is awful.

Sus.: Yes, it is not a good topic. Well, then let us talk about the old women again and what happens when they do not bear children anymore.

Pitta: Yes, I do not bear children anymore. The wife of my son will give birth to children now.

4.12. The power of women to curse

Sus.: What else is there to say about elderly women?

Alga: We are the ones who do the rituals for our daughters-in-law. The one with the *gungulo* [ladle] and the one with the *kashi* [apron]. What more am I supposed to say?

Sus.: But didn’t you say that the old women have become *donzas* [elders] that they can call *barjo* [call forth fortune and well-being, bless]? Won’t you tell us anything about that?

Kerri: We women, we do not call *barjo*. Only men do that. If, for example, a woman is not able to become pregnant because she has always quarreled with others, then these women will say, “What is the matter with you?” And they will be angry with her.

From then on this woman will not become pregnant anymore. She won’t be able to give birth to children. She will start to think, “Why am I not getting pregnant? Is it because I have quarreled with the other women?”

Then she will prepare coffee and invite all the women of her age. The women will come to her house, also two or three old men will come, old men like Nakwa [Kerri’s father-in-law, about 80 years old], and they call *barjo* [fortune] for her. They will say that she shall have as many children as dogs have puppies!

Laughter

After that she will become pregnant again. This is where *barjo* is called. But the old women won't do that.

4.13. Respect for old women

Tina: Do men listen more to elderly women than to young women? Is a woman allowed to say more when she gets older, or was she already allowed to say whatever she wanted before?

Kerri: You do show more respect towards the older ones. You have respect. "Oh, my mother has become old now! If I yell at an old woman, it is bad. She will curse me!"

Laughter.

You can yell at the young girls. You can yell at the wives of your older brother, but not at your mother. If she still has her husband, they will fight, but they will not beat each other. They only quarrel with each other. He will yell or provoke her and the other way around. They have grown old together. Now they can fight with each other.

Laughter.

Kerri: There is a real old couple in Gunne [the village where Kerri lives in Bashada] and they always provoke and fight each other. But they do not beat each other. They have grown old together. You do not beat each other anymore. He is old, he is not capable of doing so. If we provoke our husbands, they beat us. That is why we are afraid of our husbands. That is all.

Tina: How is it in Kara?

Torgo: In Kara it is the same. You do not refuse to give anything to old people. If they ask you for something, you give it to them. Old women and men provoke each other, but it is like a game, it is not meant seriously. They do not beat each other. They grow old. The young ones are quiet and just observe.

Conversation.

If you quarrel with an elderly woman her son will beat you to death!

Tina: So the sons are the ones who protect her?

Torgo: Her sons and their wives are the ones who take care of her. Her son and his wife cook for her, take care of her, and watch out for her.

4.14. The desire to bear many children

Tine: Is there a difference in the life of a woman depending on how many children she has?
Is it better to have many sons and bad to have many daughters?

Kerri: If a woman has only given birth to daughters, we say it is bad. If a woman has given birth to many sons, we consider it good. It is good to have many sons because they will stay with their mother. Daughters leave the homestead, they leave their mother and father behind when they marry. That is bad. The father will suffer. The mother will suffer. Maybe then the mother has not made anyone into a bride as her son has not married.

Best is to have as many daughters as sons. When the daughters go away, the sons will bring their wives into the homestead. That is how it is. It is best to have as many daughters as sons. It is not bad to have only boys. If you have one daughter, it is enough. Your sons will build their houses around your homestead and people will say: "That is so and so's homestead."

Tine: Is there something you can do if a woman only gives birth to daughters? Can *barjo* be called for her so that she will have a son?

Laughter.

Kerri: Yes, that will be done. Like in Maldo's case, he is the only son. His mother had only girls. So the elders came called *barjo* for her.

Conversation and laughter.

Alga: I am getting tired. I am old. I am done. (Referring to the long discussions).

Laughter.

Tine: Do the elderly women have more power in Kara?

Torgo: You mean if people listen more to old women? In Kara, you listen to what the old ones have to say. You listen to the old women, and you do what they decide and say.

Sus.: Does a husband listen more to his wife when she grows older?

Torgo: Yes. We both listen more to each other.

4.15. Girls' beauty – the pulling out of the lower front teeth

Arti: If my friends have taken their teeth out without me knowing then they will come up to me and tell me. "Who has taken them out for you?" I will ask. "So and so has taken them out." „I will not pull them out!" I will say. "That is too painful!" "Well, then you are not allowed to walk around with me anymore!" She will say and be mad at me.

And I will say, „What am I afraid of? Will I die?” Then I go and get my teeth pulled out, too. Everything that hurts I can bear. And when you actually go there “Shupp!” they are pulled out! Then everything is good. Then I will go to the other girls and yell at them, too. If we have pulled them out we will go and provoke the others and quarrel with them. The small ones will be provoked and yelled at. There are even some adults who go and have them pulled out.

Tina: But why do you do that? With your teeth missing, you won't be able to strip the meat properly from the leather anymore!

Arti: I do not know why. In former times people would not do it. You cannot eat meat anymore. Some girls say that they do not want to have the teeth pulled out. The girls who are very proud will not have them pulled out. If you don't want to, you don't have to. It is not a *gilo* [ritual]. One does not have to have it done.

Kerri: But if you are very, very proud you have them pulled out. Those girls, who are brave and proud, have them pulled out. But there is nothing special to it. It is no ritual. It is only a matter of beauty. Now, at the moment, all the small girls in our village have it done. Little Maega, and Abaretsh [about 11 years old].

My daughter Mirja has also been provoked by her peers. But we told her to have it done next year. I said to my daughter: “Do not do that. You won't be able to eat corn anymore!” I do not want her to have it done. If you pull out your front teeth, the other teeth will fall out, too. All of them will be ruined. That is why I told her not to do it. Maybe she will have it done secretly. If she does it secretly, there is nothing I can do. The girls who want to be pretty do not listen to their mothers. They go ahead and have it done. But if my daughter has her teeth pulled out, I will not be mad at her, there will be no problems. “All my friends have done it! Why don't you let me have it done?” “I just didn't want you to ruin the rest of your teeth! But if you want to do it, then go ahead!”

Tina: Do the Kara keep their lower front teeth?

Galte: We do not provoke each other.

Conversation.

Torgo: In Kara, all girls of one age secretly meet at night and say, “We want to have our teeth pulled now!” And the next morning they all will go and have it done.

Galte: Men do not do it anymore. They used to have it done in former times. In Kara, only the girls will do that. You only start wearing the nail through your lower lip after you have taken out your teeth.

Sus.: At what age do you have it done?

Galte: When you are as old as the small girl who came to me the other day.

Sus.: She was around six or seven, wasn't she? Does she already have her teeth pulled?

Galte: Yes, but you hardly can see it, because her teeth moved closer to each other after that.

We all have it done. There is nobody who says, "I am afraid.", and who does not have it done. We do not provoke each other. We do not fight with each other. We meet secretly and then we have it done the next morning.

Tina: How is the pulling done?

Galte: There are people who are good at it. You go to those who know how to do it.

Tina: Are they men or women?

Sus.: Men and women.

Tina: Both? And in Bashada?

Sus.: The same.

4.16. Scars as sign of beauty and strength

Sus.: What about the scars? How are they made and who scars you?

Galte and Torgo: It is the same. We say, "Tomorrow we all will have our scars cut together!"

And all girls will go together and have their scars cut. You have them done when you are already grown up, though. All will have them done together.

Pitta: We used to do that when we were younger. A lot of people had that done in former times.

Kerri: In Bashada, some will start having their scars cut, but then they become afraid and stop in the midst of it. My mother still has some on her back and shoulders.

Sus.: Some will have them on their shoulders, arms and backs. In Kara, you can also choose where you want them.

Kerri, laughing: You can do the Arbore ritual with me [refers to circumcision]! I will cut your back for you in return! Each one of! Shoulders and back, and I will cut your stomach tomorrow!

Anne: I do not think that they would look good at us!

Laughter.

Kerri, laughing: About the ones who have themselves scared, one says that they are brave and strong. And of the ones who do not have it done, people will say that that person was afraid and weak!

Kerri turns laughingly to Tina: And you will be the first one tomorrow! I will scar you, because you laugh so much!

Laughter.

Tina: Don't you dare do that!

Laughter again.

Tina: I would like to ask about the beating scars. Do they consider them pretty? In Dambaiti they told me that they do not think they are pretty, but that it symbolizes the strength of a woman.

Discussion.

Kerri and Alga: You do not have the beating scars out of beauty, but out of tradition. If a girl does not have any scars from the *ukuli* [initiate] people say, "What? Didn't she let herself be beaten for her brothers? What kind of a girl is that?"

Kerri: It will all be swollen and bloody. Tina, did you not see it in Dambaiti?

Tina: Yes, I did see it.

Discussion.

Sus.: Are the women also beaten by the *maz* [initiate who have already leapt over the cattle but are not yet married yet] in Kara?

Kerri laughing: No! They take their *gungulos* with them and beat the *maz* on their heads with it!

Torgo: In Kara, the *maz* do not beat you. The *donzas* [married men] are the ones who whip you. You are beaten by the *maz*, by for those who have leaped over the cattle. In Kara, all men leap together at night. The *donzas* are the ones who beat you.

Shows a new scar, from the last leap over the cattle in Kara.

My relative has been initiated recently. We were whipped there and the wounds are still fresh.

Kerri: If someone has only a few scars people say that she does not bear the pain for her brothers. She is considered a coward. "She shall go away!"

Galte: If Ariyo [Galte's brother] leaps, I am going to get myself severely whipped for him.

Ari and Dassanetch: What it means to grow old and to live with a co-wife

Participants:

from Ari: Galchi (unmarried girl), Gigsho (married woman), Mingi (young woman)
from Dassanetch: Nyendite (unmarried young girl), Naukwa (married woman), Elele (elderly woman)

Assistants:

Peggy Elfmann, Rainer, Konrad Licht,

Translators:

Weyneshet (German-Amharic), Horra Surra(Dassanetch-Amharic), Tsehay (Ari-Amharic)

Konrad: Let us introduce ourselves to each other, as we have not met in this round before

Mingi: My name is Mingi.

Gigsho: My name is Gigsho.

Elele: My name is Eeneb.

Konrad: Why are these names different to the ones you told us in the opening session?

Elele: Elele is my regular name. My second name is only known at home, but everybody knows that I am called Elele.

Konrad: In Ari do you also have different names?

Mingi: No, Ari only have one name.

Peggy: Does the mother receive another name after she has given birth? Is she named after her son?

Mingi: I am called Murat Engobalti. My child's name is Murat, therefore, I am named after him.

Konrad: Maybe you have some questions you want to ask one another?

5.1. Ari: Who takes care of old women?

Elele: I do not have many questions. We came here to ask and learn. When I become old, my children, or the children of my husband's second wife, or my grandchildren, will take care of me. How is it in Ari? Who takes care of you when you grow old? That's what I would like to ask.

Long period with of non-translated discussion.

Mingi: People will help me. My sister will help me collect firewood. I also help her take care of her children. I also think that it is good for my husband to marry a second wife. If he is still young he can have more children.

Konrad: Do you have questions you want to ask the Dassanetch?

Laughter.

No translation of the question.

5.2. Different hairstyles at different stages in the woman's life

Mingi: When I stop giving birth, I have to shave my hair. I also have to shave my head if my husband dies.

Peggy: Do you have to shave your hair for the rest of your life after your husband dies, or will you have it grow again?

Elele: It grows again. We shave it only once when he dies.

Mingi: Why does the small girl (refers to Nyendite) have her hair shaved?

Elele: In Dassanetch, the small girls have to shave their hair. Later on, they receive beads for their hair. When they grow older, they let their hair grow and tie it back.

Konrad: But why does she not have any beads? Where are her beads?

Elele: She is still too young. She is too small. She already is receiving beads and bracelets. Later on she will also get a long piece of leather that goes all the way down. That is our Dassanetch tradition. She does not have any at the moment, but soon she will receive some.

5.3. Dassanetch: Relationship between first and second wife

Peggy: I would like to ask you if it is generally better to be a first or a second wife?

Elele: It is good to be the first wife. Actually, there is no big difference in being the first or the second wife, but it is still better to be the first wife. If your husband has many wives, I, as the first wife, have the right to say how many cows I want. If we quarrel, I am treated as the senior one.

But in the end, the husband is the one who makes the decisions anyway and says, "I do it this way, or that way..." There is no big difference between the women, but the first wife is still seen as the senior one, the big one. However, she does not have the power to do anything big. It is the husband who makes the decisions. Sometimes there are

women who are very difficult. If the first wife is very difficult, then everything gets difficult. She might say “No! You won’t do that!” But usually that does not happen.

Konrad: Do you quarrel with your husband’s second wife?

Ellele: In Naukwa’s family, for example, they get along well. They do not have problems. I also do not have disputes with the second wife. We take care of each other’s children and share the work. But when the third wife came, we started to have problems. It was as I said before. She demanded many cows and this and that and we started having fights. That happens sometimes. If one of the women is difficult, then you start fighting. That will always be a problem, but otherwise, there is none.

Peggy: So when you had these problems with the third wife, did you all live in one compound together? Did you tell her to leave?

Ellele: She wanted to go back to her father’s place. So they called her father and told him that she is always making trouble and he said, “Do you want to go to another man’s homestead? Do you want to go somewhere else? You should not behave like that! If you keep causing trouble you have to leave!” If there is trouble with one of the wives we call that woman’s father and tell him that she is not behaving properly. He will come and scold her. He will tell her not to be like that.

Mingi: Such a woman listens to her father today. Tomorrow she will cause trouble again!

Laughter.

Konrad: Is it really like this? Is she going to start fighting again tomorrow?

Ellele: Yes, it is true!

5.4. Ari: First and second wife

Konrad: So how is it in Ari? What is the relationship between the wives?

Mingi: My husband does not have a second wife. But if he had one, it would be important for us to get along. Should we get along well, his having another would prove a good thing because she could help with all the work. She can cook while I do something else. We could share the work and it would be easier for both of us. That would be good.

Elele: What you are saying is true. We also like to get along with each other. Helping each other is a good thing. We live together under one roof. We all came from different places to live with this man. We can share the work, and that is good.

Horra: I was in prison once and heard that Ari women cut off the penis of their husband if they go to see other women, is that true?

Loud, loud laughter.

Mingi: That only happens in Leyda-Ari. Something like that can happen, but it does not happen very often. It does not happen in the region where I live. It happens in Leyda-Ari.

Tseyah: So what would you do if you caught your husband with another woman?

Mingi: I would not do much. I do not care. But I do not want him to bring home any disease!

Elele: But what do you do? Is he going to survive even if you cut off his penis? What is he going to do after they cut off his penis? What is he going to do with his wife?

Mingi: I do not know. I have not heard of this. But doesn't a man die if you cut his penis off? Doesn't a woman die if you cut her breasts off? But I am not sure if they really do this.

Konrad: Let's get back to our previous discussion. Do you have any more questions?

Mingi: We only met today. We do not know each other well. How can we ask so many questions?

Laughter.

Elele: That is true. We do not know each other. We feel embarrassed to ask so many questions if we do not know someone well. We never had the opportunity to meet Ari-people before.

Konrad: But wouldn't you like to get to know each other?

Ari: Yes, we would like that.

Konrad: What do you think?

Elele: We would like to get to know each other.

Mingi: We have only met through this workshop. Otherwise we would have never met.

Elele: That is true.

5.5. Ari and Dassanetch: Changes in the life of an old woman

Konrad: I would like to ask one more thing. What changes for you when you grow old in Ari or in Dassanetch? How does being old differ from being young? Are there things you are now allowed to do that were taboo for you before?

Gigsho: My life as a young woman, when I was able to work and do everything, is over. Now I am old and cannot do anything.

Konrad: So do you look back at your youth with grief?

The women laugh.

Gigsho: I am old now. I do not have any strength anymore. It concerns me. I cannot do anything the way I used to.

Konrad: But don't you enjoy leaning back and relaxing and having the others do all the work?

Laughter.

Gigsho: I don't like sitting around. But the others won't let me do anything. I would like to do something, but they do not let me! I don't like sitting around.

Peggy: Aren't there things you were not allowed to do as a girl, but are allowed to do now that you have become an old woman?

Gigsho: It was good when I was a young girl!

Elele: When you become old you should not think about how you were able to do things when you were young. If, now, you said, 'I am going to run like I used to run when I was young!' You can't! I know now that I cannot do this anymore. I might want to cook my own food and do everything by myself and not have my children do everything for me, but I can't. That's why I do not think about the past and how I used to be able to do all these things.

It is different with the men. They are allowed to go wherever they want to go. They can go into the towns, to their friends or somewhere far off. Men can go wherever they want and talk to whomever they want. They take care of the cattle and the goats. None of this is a problem for the men. But I am not allowed to go to town.

Weyneshet: Would Ari men be beaten by their age mates if they dared to cook?

Gigsho: No, our men go and fetch water; they go collect firewood. If, for example, their wife has fallen ill, they will look for someone to help her out. They would not be punished for helping their wife.

Elele: If a woman gives birth she is not able to sustain herself. So her husband goes to look for someone to help her. Maybe his sister, or a neighbor or some other child. No man would go and fetch water. Someone else will come and help her. That's what we do if someone gives birth.

5.6. Is it better to be a man or a woman?

Rainer: We have heard a lot about the role of women in Ari and Dassantech and also how men behave and what they do. But I wonder if there is ever a situation in which the women

think that it would be better to be a man than a woman? Do you think that a man's life is easier than that of a woman?

Mingi: Men's lives are much better! He lives easier. He does not have as many problems as we women do! I would like to be a man.

Gigsho: But why be a man? Men have to work, too. A man has to do men's work and women stay at home. She takes care of the house and there are also things both of them do together. Why do you think that it is better to be a man?

Elele: Faith has made us into women and we can't be men! Faith has given us our share of work and that is what we have to do. We do not want to do the things a man does. We do the work that our faith has given us!

Weyn.:I would like to come back to something that was said earlier. Elele said that a woman shaves her hair when her husband dies. Do the Ari have the same custom?

Gigsho: Yes, we also shave our hair if a relative dies.

Weyn.:Do you in Dassanetch only shave your hair if your husband dies, or is it also done if a relative dies?

Elele: When my husband dies all his relatives will come. They all shave their hair and lay it down onto my husband's grave. We women also cut pieces from our leather skirts and bury them together with the dead. We take off all our jewelry. We won't wear it for a couple of days. After a couple of days a cow is slaughtered for a feast. All the jewelry will be washed in the cow's blood and only then are we allowed to wear it again. To show our grief we take off all our adornment.

Peggy: I would like to ask something about Ari. If a man marries many women and dies, do the women stay together after his death, or are they allowed to leave and live with another man?

Mingi: If the women are still young the husband's brother will take her as his wife. The women stay together. If the women are already old, they stay by themselves. If they are old, they do not want to live with a man.

Peggy: So all the wives go to live with the husband's brother?

Mingi: No. You do not know if your husband's brother is a good man or a bad man, therefore, he is only allowed to take one of the wives. Not all of them.

Peggy: What happens to the other women?

Mingi: If your husband has other male relatives, you can marry one of them; maybe the son of his uncle or the son of his aunt.

Dassanetch, Arbore, Banna and Germany: Names and Name-giving

Participants:

from Hamar and Banna: Duka (married woman), Birinda (elder woman, widow),
Sagonda (elder woman)
from Dassanetch: Naukwa (married woman), Elele (elderly woman), Nyendite (unmarried
young girl)
from Arbore: Lago (bride), Baro (young married woman), Njirro (married
woman)

Translators: Echi Gabbert (Arbore- English), Jean Lydall (Hamar- English), Horra Surra
(Arbore- Hamar- Dassanetch)

Assistants: Tina Bruederlin, Peggy Elfmann, Konrad Licht

6.1. Dassanetch, Arbore, Banna and Germany: Divergent meanings of names

Jean: We should start with introducing ourselves one more time. We have forgotten the names, so we should start over. We all have come from different places: from Hamar, from Marle [Arbore], from Dassanetch, from the foreign lands. Four. Tell us your names again, because we have forgotten them!

Elele: My name is Elele. Elele Auritsh.

Nakwa: My name is Nakwa. Nakwa. My father is Eruget. I am Nakwa Eruget.

Horra: *Eruget* is the name of a well smelling tree. The wood smells nicely. *Eruget* stands for ‘search the sweet smelling tree’.

Konrad: And what does *Auritsh* mean?

Horra: It means camel.

Laughter.

Echi: In Arbore it means ginger.

Horra: And what is your name?

Naukwa: Her name is Nyendite.

Horra: Nyendite means ‘the one who does not like giraffes’.

Laughter.

Echi: So does she really not like giraffes?

Horra: No, it was given to her when she was still small. It is not what she really feels.

Jean: Is that your first name? Or is it your father’s name?

Peggy: I think it is her nickname, isn't it? Doesn't she also have another name? Maybe we should ask one more time.

Nakwa: Yes, She has two names. Ya'banga is her father's name.

Jean: Okay, next one.

Lago: My name is Lago Surra.

Jean: And what does Lago stand for?

Horra explains something in Hamar to Jean.

Tina: So what does it mean?

Echi translates what Horra says: It is the name of a specific color of a cow's fur. It is colored like an ostrich. It is black around the stomach and white at the sides. The cow on which Lago's umbilical cord was put on had this kind of pattern on its fur. She is named after the cow's pattern on which her umbilical cord was laid after it had fallen off. When an umbilical cord falls off it is put on the cow's back.

Horra translates into Hamar. Women start to discuss.

Long period without translation.

Echi about Horra: He is explaining that many names are given after the cow's pattern on which the umbilical cord is put. Maybe Jean could translate what else he has been saying.

Jean: Lago got her name when she was born and her umbilical cord had dried up and fallen off. Then it was taken and four squats of milk were squirted onto the umbilical cord and this was placed on the back of a cow. The cow had the color pattern of an ostrich with a black front and white at the sides. The name of this pattern is Lago.

Tina: So they place this on a real cow?

Echi: Yes, they put it on the cow and then it falls off.

Horra tells something in Arbore.

Echi: What he said, that I should tell you is, that the cup is the lit of a special woven basket that just exists in Arbore. It is called *ante*, in this lit the milk is poured. But the rest you tell.

Jean: Okay, the umbilical cord is not put into the *ante*, which is this milk-container made out of basket. The milk comes from each of the four teats of the cow. From each one a squirt of milk. And then it is put onto the back of the cow.

Tina: And then it just falls off and lies on the ground?

Jean: Yes.

Echi: Then it falls off and it is over...and then a dog comes and eats it.

Horra translates into Dassanetch what has been said and translates back into Hamar what Elele says about it.

Jean: So let me come back to the Marle. When a boy's umbilical cord falls off it is put on the back of a bull. And in the case of a girl it is put on the back of a cow, which is having offspring. And among the Dassanetch...when the umbilical cord falls off it is put into the cleft of the hoof. The front right leg - into the cleft of the hoof of a goat.

Elele: That's our tradition.

Peggy: The right or the left?

Jean: The right front.

Tina: That is very interesting, that they all do different things.

Jean: It is done with a goat, if boy or girl.

Elele: We place it into the goat's hoof, so that the child then will go with the goats; so that the child becomes a goat-herder.

Echi: And does it have to do with the name giving as well or not?

Elele: In Dassanetch the child does not get a name from the goat from which we have placed the cord, but the child maybe given the name from an ox.

Horra talks to the Dassanetch women and gives name examples of the names derived of the color pattern of the cow's fur.

Jean translating what has been said: So they choose different names, the mother and the father. And the family will discuss which name they will give the child. In some cases they say, 'Let's give the child the name of a cow!' And a girl can also be named after a cow, not only the boys. But it is not always done that way, as we know that the one has the name 'camel' and the other one is called 'the sweet smelling tree' and so there are different names, which can be given.

Echi: Now we have Baro...

Baro: My name is Baro, Baro Bulle. I am the daughter of Bulle.

Horra tells something in Hamar.

Jean: In English: the Hamar also have the term *bar*, and *bar*, *barra* or *baro*, ... it means that she was born after many others have been born. It refers to the many who were there before her. She is one of many. And in Hamar they also have that expression. Someone who has got many older brothers can be described as *edi-bar*, 'he is one of many'. The one who came after the many others who have arrived.

Echi: Many people in Arbore are called Baro. If there is a name that has been given to many people - they mostly have two names - she is named Baro Ch'auli, which means she is the White Baro.

Tina: But why is she called White Baro?

Echi: To distinguish her from the others. And because she is not as black as many other Arbore, she is a little lighter.

Peggy: But when people address her do they use both names, or just by one?

Echi: They call her Baro Ch'auli for reference, to know which Baro is meant.

Peggy to Njirro: And what are you called?

Njirro: I am called Njirro Surra. I got the name from a cow. The cow on which my umbilical cord was put on had the color of Surra, it is called Surra in Hamar, it is kind of yellowish beige. A beige colored cow.

Jean: So what is your name?

Laughter.

Echi: It is only a sound. There are two theories, but I just give you one. My name is Echi, because my father made up this name when I was little, just as a joke actually, because he likes playing with sounds and music. And so he just said, 'Oh, she looks like Echi!'

Jean: My name is Jean. My mother and father decided to give their children names which were common.

Laughter.

My mother wanted to call me Rosemary, because I was very rosy when I was little. So she gave me that as my second name.

Laughter.

Echi: So Jean is like Baro. Many are named like that.

Horra: There are also names, which are given later, when special patterns are of people are known. Like these two who are called Bore, which means the red ones, because they are a little bit redder than black, or light.

Jean: So Sago-*inda*!

Sagonda: Gardo. When my mother gave birth to my older sister it was so terrible, that she decided that she never ever wanted to give birth again. But her husband slept with her anyway and she got pregnant again. And when I was born, my mother decided to call me Gardo, which means, when you give up something it is *garra* and when something has been given up it is *garda* or *gardo*. So my name refers to the fact that my mother did not want to become pregnant again, but did.

Laughter.

Jean: Birinda!

Birinda: My name is Bazo. My father's name is Kane. My name was given to me by my *magu* [namesake], my father's older sister, who had the same name. My father's older sister got the name Baz, which is the name of big river or water. The Omo River is referred to as *baz*. My father's older sister was born at Bulkai, which is the area down at the Omo River, where Hamar went to make fields to survive a period of severe draught. She was born there and that is why she was given the name Bazo.

Konrad: Now it is Duka's turn!

Duka: My name is Duka. My name was given to me by my father's grandfather's sister. And she got the name when her mother was pregnant with her. She was digging the fields, planting the seeds in the field. This is called *duka*. That's when she was born and therefore got the name.

Tina: Do I have to explain my name now?

Laughter.

My name is Tina. My parents chose a very simple name, because my mother is Brazilian and my father is German, and they wanted a name that everybody is able to pronounce wherever I would go. I asked my mother for a deeper meaning for Tina and she said that in Brazil the big old bathtubs, which are made out of wood, they are called Tina. But that's all.

Laughter.

Peggy: My name is Peggy. My mother she gave me this name because she liked the sound of it, not because of the meaning. And when I was little bit older I found out that it actually is a nickname or a shortcut for Margaret, which means pearl or bead.

Konrad: My name is Konrad. It is my father who gave me the name; my mother did not like it. She wanted to call me Andreas. But I am happy that my father won. And my name in Dassanetch is Angate. And maybe one of the Dassanetch women wants to explain what that means, as I am not sure myself.

Echi: And Konrad, what does it mean?

Konrad: My father always told me that Konrad was a big spokesman of the Indians, but actually I do not think that it is true. But he always told me that when I was small.

Echi: But Konrad is a very old German name.

Peggy: Yes, it is an old German name.

Konrad: Yes, but he always told me the other story, because I always loved to be a small Indian!

Laughter.

And I still believe it somehow.

Laughter.

Horra about what the Dassanetch have said about the name Angate: Your name is an age-set's name. So you are called like the age-set.

Konrad: Well, but that's difficult. There is a small baby who was named after me, so what is the extent of this age-set?

Horra with the help of Echi: It is very complicated. Let me correct. It is not an age-set, but a marriage class. And there are many marriage classes, *luba*, and small children can

belong to the same marriage class as older people, because they are repeated. We do not know the whole system in Dassanetch, but very old and very young people and middle-aged people can be in the same *luba*. Because of the rules of marriage. It is very complicated.

Jean: Is it connected somehow with the age-sets and marriage...

Horra with help of Echi: They are not totally the same, so it is not a real age-set. But the *luba* are connected with the age-set. Some people belong to another age-set, but to the same marriage set.

Echi: Horra has been working on this topic for years, it is very complicated though!

Horra: I am Horra Surra. Horra means something like 'chased away'. When I was born my father had left, he had gone away, he was out of the home, send away and that's why I got the name 'chased away'. And Surra is not my father's proper name; my father's proper name is Arkolo.

Elele: My name means a large, well-populated village. And I am also called Yirr, which means a large ox.

Konrad: Everything large.

Jean: I was wondering, should we ask if they get other names when they grow up? Different names at different times.

Konrad: I would like to ask her, because I know she has a second name. But people do not use it any more. Why do they not use it? So first we should ask Nyendite what her first name was?

Jean: Okay.

Nakwa and Elele: When we first said, that it means the 'one who does not like giraffes', it was a misunderstanding, because it sounds like the expression, which means 'the large settlement with the thorny bush around it', the name means that all the villages and settlement have been refused. They came to bring coffee for the birth, but the girl wasn't born. It was after refusing this coffee from these villages. The names sound very similar, 'the one who does not like giraffes' and 'the one who does not want the big villages'.

6.2. Banna: Name-giving rituals

Jean talks about the tradition of name giving in Hamar and Sagonda and Duka explain it to Horra in detail.

Duka: In Banna we have the name giving for a child, the *gali*-ritual. Although Hamar and Banna both have the same *gali*-ritual it is different. There are slight differences between Banna and Hamar.

Sagonda: In Banna we wait for four days after the birth of a child. After four days the elders are invited, the neighbors, men and women and members of the family are invited. Someone goes and fetches four branches of the *gali*-bush, the one with the soft, green heart shaped leaves. They resemble cowhides, which are soft and smooth and put down to lay on. Four branches of these leaves are brought. The mother-in-law has put on coffee in the house and she puts two scoops coffee into a coffee-bowl and the *gali*-branches on top. And then an elder sister of the child, who has been born, a senior sister, brings the bowl into the house with the *gali*-leaves and sprinkles coffee on the doorstep and inside the house. She does it four times. Then she gives the bowl to the mother-in-law and the elders and the women are invited into the house to drink coffee. The mother-in-law gives then her *kalshi*, the cowry-belt, and puts it on her right arm. She takes the *tirre*, the cowry-shell headdress, and puts it on her right arm and also a string of beads, of *shekeni*, and gives it to the mother of the child. It is transferred from the right arm to the right arm. The mother of the child puts the headdress on and the belt around her waist and the necklace around her neck. Then the mother-in-law anoints the right breast of the mother of the child and the head of the baby who is suckling and she also does that four times announcing the name of the child. She asks: 'What is the name of the child?' and then she says the name of the child. And then the bowl with the *gali*-leaves and the coffee is given to the elders, the most senior elder first and then all around, and they do the same. Then it is passed on to the women, again the most senior one drinks first and then it is given around. They do the same, anointing the breast of the mother and the head of the child. If it is the first child, a boy, it gets the name of his father's father or his father's older brother. If the first child is a girl she is likely to get the name of her father's older sister or some other senior female in the family. It is also very likely that there is somebody who wants to give his name to the child, independently, the *magu*. So you can have more than one name.

Duka: The rituals in Hamar and Banna are the same but also a bit different. In Hamar a child's *gali*-ritual will be performed when the child is already waking. People wait much longer to give the *gali*-name to a child.

6.3. Dassanetch: Rituals for new-born babies

Naukwa: In Dassanetch a woman gives birth to her child and then waits four days. On the fifth day the elders and the family are invited to the house. Coffee is prepared, and then four bowls are filled with coffee. Then the coffee is spilled inside the house. Four elders simultaneously spill the coffee from the mother to the child and then to the doorway of the house. Then they spill tobacco along the same line, just a little bit is spilled from the bowls. *Durra*, the salt, which we chew with the tobacco, is also spilled along this line. The elders take a mouthful of coffee and spray it into the air and call the name of the child and bless the child.

After this ritual has been done the mother waits. The next day or the day after the next she collects *juniper* leaves, which she grinds into a powder and takes a bowl, which has never been used before; never people have drunk out of it before. It is a new good bowl, she puts water into the bowl and also the powder she puts into the water. That is it.

She puts it down and waits for the cattle to come home. She also has brought the bark of an arcadia tree. The outer bark has been removed, only the inner white bark is taken, which is sweet smelling. All this has been prepared. When she hears the cattle coming she puts her child into her cape, puts on her sandals and takes the bowl with the water, the powder and the bark and then goes after the cattle. Going throughout the settlement she splashes this mixture everywhere. When she gets back to her own place it has all been splashed everywhere. It cleanses the whole place for her child. The whole village and her place have been blessed for her child.

6.4. Arbore: Rituals for newborn children

Tina: Well, now we should ask if they have something like this in Arbore.

Horra talks for a long period in Hamar, telling what the custom is in Arbore and their clans.

Not translated. Conversation between the Arbore and the Hamar.

Horra: If the child is born in the morning it will be hold all day, it will not be put on the ground and it will not be breastfed. For four days it will only get cow-milk. Before this ritual people will come and they prepare this mixture, coffee, goat's dung, incense gum, so they make a mixture. And this, in the evening when everybody has come to the homestead will be given to the child to drink. If the biological father is not the husband of the mother who has given birth and the child will drink this mixture it will die immediately. It will not urinate, it will not go to the toilet, it will just die. Quite immediately.

Baro: When you know that the child is not from your husband you will tell the old woman who is giving the drink to the baby to drink, to pour the drink besides the child's head, secretly. So your child does not die. This is a ritual, which is done in the Olmok clan. After all that has finished and people ask, 'Who is the real father?' It is not so bad if the biological father is from the Olmok clan. Then the baby also would not die. But if it is from another clan...

Echi: The Olmok clan is very powerful. It is the clan, which can curse and it is the clan, which has the ritual leader of Arbore. They want to keep pure. So they do not want fathers of a boy...this is only done if the child is a male...from another clan.

Baro: If the father is from another clan and the child drank the mixture it would die. And after four days they will have the ritual with the umbilical cord, which we have described before. The name giving ceremony with the cow, putting the milk and the umbilical cord in the lit and pouring all on the back of a cow. The name will be given after that. Then the child will also be breastfeed.

Horra: There are different clans...One which has the special power of dealing with thieves. If someone is a thief the people from this clan have the power to send a snake which will go around the thief's neck and looks the suspect in the eye and then the suspect says, 'Yes, yes! It was me! I stole this and that!' It is one of the powers of this clan. They put the poison, which is used for the poison arrows into the mixture for the baby. Even if you have a cut, a small one, on your leg and you would put some of this poison onto it, it would crawl up your blood and you would start shaking and you would die. It comes from a tree which even if the birds would eat its fruit they would fall down and die. It grows especially in Maale. We boil it and then you have the poison. When it is boiling and the steam would get into your eyes, you can also die.

Jean: It is a terrible poison!

Tina: What did this again have to do with the baby?

Echi: It is in the mixtures, which they give the child to drink.

Tina: So the child would die anyhow, even if it is from the husband of his mother!

Horra: No, if it is truly son of his father then he will just piss and it won't die!

If someone from the Garo clan fancies a girl, he can put or have someone put an iron bracelet, a *gau*, around her arm. Maybe she will throw it away again or run away and cry. When she will tell her parents and they will ask who that was and she says that it was someone from the Gado clan, then they will say that they cannot do anything against it and that they will have to give her. 'You have to marry him!' If they won't give her she will go crazy.

Echi: This is all very complicated. Every clan has its special powers. This is just the beginning...

Day Three 8.10.2004

Banna, Bashada, Dassanetch and Ari:

The pride of elderly women

Participants:

from Bashada: Alga, Pitta (elderly woman)
from Banna: Sagonda (elderly woman),
from Dassanetch: Elelle, Naukwa (married woman, elderly woman)
from Ari: Gigsho (elderly woman)

Anthropologists: Jean Lydall and Susanne Epple

Translators: Horra Surra (from Arbore, Dassanetch, Hamar, Amharic),
Tsehay (from Jinka, Ari, Amharic, Hamar)

The session was held in different languages which were all translated into Hamar. Later the session was transcribed word-by-word and subsequently translated into English.

Jean: This is our elderly women's talk. Today we are Dassanetch, Bashada, Banna ... (to Sagonda) are you Bashada or Banna?

Sagonda: I am Banna.

Sus.: And Ari...

Jean: And I am also an elderly woman. We are two, three, four, five women! We all have stopped giving birth.

Horra laughs.

7.1. Ferenji [foreigners] do not like to be addressed as "Old women"

Jean: In Germany we have no ritual. When we bear children we...do not have many rituals. We do not become *donza* [Hamar: elders]. We simply say, "I am young!" That's the way we say it. We do not tell people [that we have stopped giving birth].

Horra: By "Mother-of-whom" should I address you?

Sagonda: Sagonda. Mother-of-Sago.

Horra: Sagonda. Look, it is like that. Maybe you will understand what Theo-inda [mother-of-Theo] has said, “There, in our tradition, when we get old we still pretend to be like young people. We have not finished our youth!”, we say.

Sus.: ...we tell a lie...

Horra: [repeats what Jean has said in his own words] Aaah, telling a lie we say like that. You, as far as we know, when you stop giving birth, you say, “I have become old!” and tell about your age and sit down. When people address you by saying, “*Gecho!* [Hamar: old woman]”, it is good for you. You like it. “Yoooh!”, you answer.

Now, in the *ferenji* [white foreigners] country if you address a woman by saying “Old woman!” it will annoy her. Among the *gal* [Northern Ethiopians] it is the same. It will annoy them. According to their tradition, they do not talk that way. Tradition is something else [means: special]. If someone says something that is not according to the tradition of your father and mother, you will be annoyed.

But you, in Banna, you do not get angry. If someone calls you “Old woman” when you have stopped giving birth, you will like it. The old age, the fatness, it is something that *barjo* [Hamar: fate] gives to you. *Barjo* has given it to you. You accept and like it. In *ferenji*-land we say, “*Barjo* has distributed old age to me!” But again if someone addresses us with “Old woman!” we get angry. That is our ritual/tradition. We do not want to hear that. That is how it was with our grandfather and grandmother.

Sus.: Please translate into Dassanetch.

Horra translates.

Naukwa and Elelle laugh and seem to agree during translation, imitating the indignation of women unwillingly called old.

Sus.: Translate for us what they [the Dassanetch] have said.

Horra: I will translate. I have heard something else! [interested].

7.2. Dassanetch and Ari: The pride of elder women to be addressed as "Old woman"

Naukwa and Ellele [translated and summarized by Horra]

There are a few among us who like that. There are some women. In our tradition, if you call someone “Old person!” the majority of people will like it. But there are some women who are a little crazy. What is that all about? If you say “Old woman!” they will say “What? Who is old?” There are some who say like that. “I still have a lover, you can see there is something small [young] about me! That is why I keep my lover.

So how can you say that I am old?" That will bring about quarrel. There are some women like that. Not all of them.

Among the *ferenji* [foreigner], one should not say, "Old woman!". The same is true among the *gal* [highland-Ethiopians]. In Dassanetch we have our own tradition/ ritual. We call it *wogum*. The people's *wogum* we say, that means tradition.

Sus.: Tsehay should translate.

Tsehay translates into Ari and discusses with Horra (in Amharic).

Gigsho: To me it seems that when the *ferenji* get old, they still want people to call them young. When we in Ari, for our part, stop giving birth, we hold our heads up high and there is no lie we tell. "Now we are old!", we say and we just want to be like that. That is the Ari-way. Wanting to be called young by others is not part of our tradition.

7.3. Banna: Marriage rituals and the role of elder women

Sagonda: Theoimba and Theoinda say, "We do not like oldness/old age. When they give birth long, long, long, long they do not have a ritual. When they marry and give birth to a child that is their ritual.

In Banna, we get married. The man says, "That girl, the daughter-of so and so, I like her. Father, bring the *koli*/ stick for me [be my go-between]!" When it is said like that, the *koli* has been brought [to the father of the girl] and accepted. "He shall bring goats and honey!". Then goats are given, honey is given. When the initiate has leapt over the cattle and become a *maz* he is called, "He should come and rub the butter onto the girl [seal the marriage]!", so he comes. Then she [the bride] pours some sorghum in his mouth [part of the marriage ritual].

Horra: Who is he? The one who liked the girl?

Sagonda: The one who brought the stick for the girl, who came for marriage. Then he feeds the girl again. She feeds him... Before he was a *maz*, wasn't he? Didn't he only drink milk? So now he takes out the *binyere* [string made from the skin of two dikdik-antelopes which the initiate wore around his waist] and fastens it around her neck. The *lado* [headdress of the *maz*] is taken. Then they take it to the tree which is called *giri*. Together they stand behind the *giri*. The girl takes the *lado* from his head and hangs it onto a branch, into the *giri*-tree.

Then there is the man who rubs the butter [to seal the marriage]. He has brought some cow dung. I [the bride] open my hand like that. He [the groom] opens his like that...

Horra: They hold their hands opposite of each other....

Sagonda: He holds his like that, I hold mine, together, and then they are rubbed. Mine and his are rubbed together. Then I do like this, this, this, this, and he does like this [rubbing the hands]. Then, we have married each other.

Then, for a long time, I live in my father's place, he lives in his father's place, and I grow up.

"Now my wife has grown up, maybe I should get hold of her by force!" – "Ah, don't take her in by force. Bring a stick to the father [send a go-between]."

The stick is brought. If she has grown up [the bride's father says], "Bring honey, bring goats! I haven't eaten and wasn't satisfied before!" So the honey is given, then it is drunk. "The father- and the mother-in-law shall come to our homestead!" Then they come. They sit down. Coffee is prepared. This is in the father's homestead [of the bride]. When the coffee is drunk, *parsi* [sorghum beer] is given. Goats are slaughtered. At night they sleep. In the morning: "Get out!" through the gateway, and then...

Horra: They have taken the girl with them....

Sagonda: Aaah, and the father- and the mother-in-law walk behind me [the bride]. And my older sister, the oldest, the *djalepha* [senior most] walks in front of me. "You walk through it and out first, for your younger sister!", they tell her.

Horra: She [the oldest sister] comes out first.

Sagonda: ...Out first. Once my elder sister has gone out, I also go out and then "Psssss! [imitates sound of spraying onto the girl/ blessing] Bodi, bodi, bodi, bodi [richness, abundance] go! Take her with you!" Then she is taken to her husband's homestead. Her head is shaved...They know all this [turns towards Jean and Susanne]...then the mother-in-law...

Sus.: Tell us about the old women! This is the nubility rite, isn't it?

Sagonda: Wait! It is from there on that I get old! Old age. Then for a long time, she gives birth, birth, birth, birth, birth. When she has grown up and is given to her husband, she gives birth, birth, birth, birth. Then, having given birth a long time, there are some who get old after five children. Then there are also some who bear nine children with the help of *barjo*.

Then they get old. When you are old the *gilo* [ritual. Here: menstruation] does not come to you.

7.4. Banna: Rituals performed by old women for their daughters-in-law

Sagonda: The *gilo* does not come to you. “My *gilo* has gotten lost. Now my son has grown up. He has leapt [is initiated], my daughter is married.” „You have become old! Throw your goat-skin onto the wife of your son!” I take the wife of my son. I bring her in. I make her into a bride. I rub her [with red butter], rub, rub, rub for four months. In the fourth month I ask her, “Has your ritual [menstruation] come?” – “It has come!” – “So I [the mother-in-law] will grow up now. I will grow up by the way of my son’s wife!”

Sus.: Eh, they grow up together!

Sagonda: So I take my apron.

Horra: Onto her head?

Sagonda: This is her head (*demonstrates*). One, two, three, four, then I put it onto her [around her neck].

Horra: Now as you have reached the teats of a cow [the number of the teats of a cow].

Sagonda: Reached.

Horra: That was how often you put it onto her? Four times?

Sagonda: Not me, her. Then she stays like that for three or four days. Having put on my apron [the bride], I say: “Later, open the cowhide for you husband! Lie down in his hide and cover yourself with the apron!”

Jean and Sus.: Eeeeh!

Sagonda: Mmmh! With the apron. Now the apron, “I have grown up now!” – “The wife of who has gotten old?” – “She has become old!” – “Her ritual has gotten lost [menstruation stopped]; let her do the rituals now for the children!” Then the wife of my son says, “*Gecho* [old woman]!” – “Yoooooh!” I answer. The children of my son, “Old woman!” – “Yoooh!” I answer. The son of my age mate comes, “Old woman!”, he calls me. So I have become old. I have poured the *gungulo*, for the wife of my son [ritual that has to be performed before a woman may become pregnant]. I have poured the *gungulo*. I have become old. Now my name, the name I had when I was a child has been left behind. Now I am addressed by “Old woman”.

Sus.: Old woman. They all address you by saying old woman?

Sagonda: “Old woman.” – “Yoooh!”, I reply. I have become old now. *Barjo* shall make me bigger/older. Did you understand?

7.5. Banna: Old women and their relationship with men

Sagonda: If my husband was still alive...now, I am young, or not?

Sus.: Young.

Sagonda: Being young, my son has grown up. My daughter has grown up with the other girls. Now my husband, if he were still alive, we would still sleep on one cowhide. There is no ritual [menstruation]. If I sleep with him there is no child being made. Just like that. Ever since we got married I have called my husband on the hide. We slept together. We slept at each other's sides.

If *barjo* has stopped him [from living]. "Ah! My husband has died. Now I have turned into a man! I do not want a lover!", I say. "Now my children shall care for me. Being a male now I will only make rituals!"

Sus.: If the husband was still alive, if you were young, you would say, "I am a woman!"

Sagonda: "I am a woman!" I say and still sleep with him. But I also do the rituals.

Sus.: If he is dead you say, "I am a man!"?

Sagonda: Mmmh. If he has died I say, "I will not sleep with men!"

Horra: They are age mates, aren't they? Peers. In the past they have grown up together, *barjo* has made them sleep together. Now as her ritual has disappeared, she simply does not give birth. So sleeping together is just their habit.

Sagonda: "Aggs! I am old now! Go and marry another woman!" I would tell my husband.

Sus.: "Leave me alone, don't make me crazy!", you would say.

Sagonda: "Leave it, don't make me crazy. You will marry a young woman. I will do the rituals for the children. Leave me in peace!"

Sus.: There are some women who talk like that.

Sagonda: There are.

Horra: "I had enough of that thing before. It makes me crazy now as I am old."

7.6. Dassanetch: The joy of being a grandmother

Naukwa and Ellele: That kind of talk is true. It exists among all of us! We say, being like this, we seek our own children's children. They are the ones we bring up. They are the ones we play and laugh with as if they were our own children. Then the children our daughter has born when she was a girl, and the boy's...that one we do...and the one she marries afterwards and the children of the one he marries afterwards, we take them, they are like my own. "*Nana-to* [children]!" I say jokingly when they all have come. I sit behind them. That is what makes my heart cool [gives peace to my heart]. That is what makes us feel good. This is how it is among us.

7.7. Dassanetch: Elder women as distributors of food

Sus.: I would like to know something. We have heard about Hamar rituals. Now what are the Ari rituals and the Dassanetch rituals like? Will elderly women who have stopped giving birth do rituals or not? How do people address them? “You have become our ritual person.”, is that how they would address them? What is it that they [the old women] do? Are there rituals they perform? Do they call *barjo*? Will they sit with the men, with the elders, and discuss? Let us hear the Dassanech. Let us hear the Ari.

Naukwa and Ellele answer together (one after the other, in a lively exchange):

In our country there is nothing else. There is, but one thing, that is like a ritual. One thing. What is that? The children, the grand-children, the children of the son and the children of the daughter...If the old man you did marry dies, and you stop giving birth, then you will start to cook for and feed the children of the wife of our oldest married son.

Sus.: Will she only cook food?

Horra: Only food.

Sus.: There is no ritual she will perform?

Horra: There is none. Now when the cows have been milked, the milk will be brought to her. If she still is strong enough, she will walk slowly and milk cattle. When she comes back she will feed the children. The people whose stomach are not full, “Why is it not full?”, she will ask. And she will distribute to him.

She is the mother of distribution. She is in charge for the food distribution.

Sus.: She is.

Horra: “I am the distributor for the people. The one who distributes is me!”

Sus.: The food.

Horra: The milk. That is what she asks, “Who is hungry? What is it that makes you weak?” She always asks, “Why does that one cry? What is it inside? What is it that he does not have?” She asks and makes him sleep.

Horra: In my opinion it is like a kind of management.

Sus.: Management?

Horra: Yes, management of the house, of all the people...She becomes their father.

Jean: Mmmh. [approval].

Horra: Being a manager, she acts in the background. It is like that.

7.8. Bashada: Elder women as distributors of food

Sus. addressing Alga: Is it like that in Bashada, too?

In Bashada, do you, when you are old, become the master of the cattle? Are you the one who distributes the food? Is it like in Galeba [Dassanetch]?

Alga: You are not a man. You have seen our work!

Sus.: The others should hear it, too though. That is why I ask you. Did I only ask for myself?

Alga: Eehh, the food...

Horra asking Alga: Old woman! It is like this: What has been asked...your father's rituals are your tradition, aren't they?

Alga: Tradition.

Horra: So one gets oldwe said. Haven't we said so? Now, when you get old...before you gave birth to children. Before you would get together with your husband. You would herd the cattle, you would dig the fields, make the sorghum ripen. So your work was plenty. Now all this has made you old and tired. Now all this has made you great and old. So will you simply sit down now? Or will you become someone who distributes? In Kara, are there people who have been put to work like that by the shadow? Have you become a ritual person or someone who distributes?

Alga: I do rituals!

Horra: How? What is it? What is your work?

Alga: I distribute!

Horra: Distribute?

Alga: Mmmh, distribute. The children of my daughter, if my daughters have given birth, their children will call me, "*Ako* [grandmother]!", and they are mine.

Horra: Yours.

Alga: The children of my son, they are all mine. I only will sit now. And then, "Do this like this!" and I cook and distribute. "Take it!" If they quarrel with each other I say, "Eehh! Stop quarreling! Eat the food and stop quarreling!", and hold them back. I feed, feed, feed. Then my daughter's children are brought to me. "Mother, take them!", my children say. They bring them and give them to me. They give me all their children and go dig their fields. I stay in the house. I take care of the children.

7.9. Bashada: The role of the grandmother as caretaker of the grandchildren

Alga: Taking care of the children. I hold the children. I feed them. The mother is digging her fields, and when she comes back, I have already finished feeding the children. Then they go with their mother. Then they come back to me. “*Ako! Ako!*”, they say, and they all come back to me again.

Horra: What about the ones who have not married yet? Are they yours, or they the brides’?

Alga: The unmarried ones, they are mine. When they are children, I marry them off and I give them [to their husbands]. I give the females away. The other ones, the boys, stay with me. They walk around, and later they are made to leap [get initiated]. Then I marry them off and give them to their wives. Then I sit down and rest. All these boys think about me. They think, “My mother, the old woman, this thing...”. The women [the wives] say, “Old woman! Do you have this for me?” – “Take it!”, and I give what they need. I stay sitting with the children. I care for the children. I care for them by cooking for them. Milk is brought to me in the *doala* [milk container]. I distribute it to the children and they eat. Sitting. “Old woman! *Gecho!*” I have become old. So what should I be doing now? There is no work I have to do. The fields are dug for me. “The fields of the old woman should be dug, all should come together and dig. Sorghum beer should be brewed!” Once the *parsi* has been brewed, the children say, “The fields of the old woman should be dug!”, and they come. The water is also fetched. “I will not fetch water!” You put the pot on the fire and water is brought. It is a *haila* [work party]. They are the ones who distribute the *parsi*. They are the ones who pour the water. I am just sitting. While I am sitting my field is dug. I am sitting.

Horra: You are sitting. The sorghum is also beaten and brought to you?

Alga: It is brought in.

Horra: When your sorghum has ripened, it is given to the children.

Alga: I will distribute it. I am the one who distributes. Mhmm. I know how to distribute. Having cooked for the children, I know how to do it.

Horra: It is like that in all places. Matsinda [addresses Susanne], it is like that everywhere. It is the women’s management. They are the distributors. It is the same everywhere.

7.10 Bashada, Banna Hamar and Kara: Rituals performed for the son's bride which allow her to have a clean conception

Jean: You also said that you do rituals.

Alga: I do rituals.

Jean: What kind of rituals?

Alga: The rituals which were mentioned by that old woman [points to Sagonda] are the ones I also do. I do them for my children, for the wives of my sons. It is the apron that I put on them. I pour the *gungulo* [ritually pours water out of a coffee ladle over the bride's hands].

I put the apron onto my eldest son's wife. I do the rituals for her. I am the one who gives her to her husband. I make her lay down by his side. The wife of the other one, when the time of rubbing her [with red butter], when the bride hood ends, I throw the apron onto her. Once she has seen her ritual [menstruation], I throw the apron onto her and make them lie together. These are the rituals I do.

So when the first child is born, and they have been brought up a little, her ritual [the sons's wife's menstruation] will come again. Then they call me, "Old woman!". I take the *gungulo* [ladle] and pour the water for her. I pour, pour, pour, pour for her. The next month she will come again. She has ground some flour and brings it. She brings it and comes. Then I know. I take the *gungulo* with the water and I step out of the door. She stretches her hands out and I pour the water with the *gungulo* onto them. Pour, pour, pour. And then...

Sagonda: *Kolosho* [a piece of a broken calabash].

Alga: With the *kolosho*, I take some ashes. I put it down. Then I bend over here. She [the daughter-in-law] is standing there [on the opposite side, the *kolosho* being between them]. We put down the ashes... that is our ritual. From now on she can be a *nasinde* [mother-of-a-child]. Now, lying with her husband, she will bear children. If we do not do the ritual with the *gungulo* and the child would grow up and the mother would get pregnant again, then that child will be bad, it will be *mingi* [ritually impure]. Then it would have to be thrown away.

Horra: Mmmh, that is the Kara way.

Alga: That is our way, the Bashada's! And also the Hamar's. Everybody's! All!

Horra: Aaah

Alga: We throw it away.

Horra: So what you said belongs to the Bashada?

Alga: To the Bashada and to the Hamar. To all!

Horra: Eheh.

Sus.: Otherwise, if the grandmother does not do the ritual for her, she won't bear children.

Horra: She won't get pregnant.

Alga: Mmmh.

7.11. How Sagonda refused to perform the *gungulo* ritual for her son's wife

Sus.: Are there old people like you, who also refuse to do the ritual for the son's wife? Who say, "I won't do the *gungulo* for you!" Are there people who talk like this?

Alga: Why?

Sus.: There are not. Isn't it forbidden...?

Alga: Mmmh.

Horra: If one is a little angry...

Sus.: "Come back tomorrow. Come back after tomorrow...!" Is there no one who talks like this and plays with you?

Alga: Eheh [negation].

Jean addressing Sagonda: Last night we saw it.... [referring to the film '*Duka's Dilemma*' which shows this specific conflict. Sagonda had refused to do the rituals for her son Sago. The film was shown to all workshop participants the previous night].
You left, being angry...

Sus.: You left the ritual and ran away...

Alga laughs.

Horra: Are there people like that?

Jean: "I will play with them!" Didn't you talk like that? Sagonda left the ritual and ran away, angry.

Horra: We have seen it in the film, haven't we?

Alga: Mmmh.

Sus.: Let her tell it.

Sagonda: Those two, Sago and Duka. Sago is my son and Duka is his wife!

I have no husband anymore. I said, "Buy coffee and bring it to me! Buy tobacco and bring it to me! Milk the cows and bring the milk to me! I have become a big [old] person!" – "Ah, ah, you are not an old person. Dig your fields yourself! There is not enough milk for the children. We will not give it to you!", my son said. Eh, eh. That is true. It is true!

When I was sick, Sago drew one Birr out [a ten Ethiopian Birr note], "Go and get an injection!" But when I got to the medical station, the *gal* [Ethiopians] said, „I will only give you the injection when Sago comes with you." "Instead of waiting for Sago, give me medicine instead.", I told them. But to swallow the medicine you have to have eaten food. So I bought bread with the money and ate it.

“Did you have an injection?” my son asked me. I replied, “I did not. The *gal* refused to give it to me!” - „So where is the money I gave you ?”, he asked. “I have finished it off by eating.” Ouuuuuuh!

Sus. and Jean laugh.

Sagonda: Sago yelled, “You have drunk honey wine and *arake* [schnaps]!”

Ouuuuuuh! But I said, “You are not my husband! Why do you look at me like that?”

Alga: Mmmh.

Jean: Eeh, his eyes...

Sagonda: Mhmm, his eyes became red when he asked me.

Alga: “Why do you look at me aggressively?”, she asked.

Sagonda: “Why do you look at me aggressively? Ah, you are not my husband! You are my son. The one I have born!” The next day the *gali*-ritual for Sago's son was to be.

Alga approving: Ah, ah, ah.

Sagonda: I got there. And there I saw, that Tammo [Sago's son], our Tammo, who had the teeth pulled out here, was wearing a *tirre* [women's headdress]. Sago had put it onto his son! That is our *katshi*-ritual! Usually the grandmother puts it on after four days. The grandmother! Then beads will be prepared for him. So Sago had prepared the beads and put them onto Tammo!

Horra: Sago? Before you came?

Alga: Before the *tirre* had been put on!

Sus.: He did not wait for you?

Sagonda: I have not died! I am alive!

Alga: You are the one who should adorn the boy!

Sagonda: The one who adorns the boy is me! I am the grandmother. “Who has put the beads on?”, I asked. “It was Sago.” – “Eehh!”

Horra: That day, really he did something to you!

Sagonda: Mhmm. “Yesterday having talked badly with me, he now does the ritual for his child! Tomorrow when all the elders come I will ask them for a talk.”, that's what I thought.

In the morning, it was me who prepared the coffee. The first elders arrived.

“Who has put the beads on that child?”, they asked – “It was me!” Sago said. “Has he had the apron put on?”, they asked. “I do not know!” – “Ah! Your mother is a stranger? Your father is a stranger? When your mother is here, she shall pour the coffee and beat the *gali*!” they said. But I replied that I will not beat it. *Theo-Indano* [Jean, mother-of-Theo] was present.

Jean: That is true.

Sagonda: I took the skin. I laid down the cloth...

Alga: You threw it down.

Sagonda: “You need to bring her [Sagonda] back! Call her!”, Sago said to one of the elders.

“Bring her back, calling her! There is something in her head [*mete angulin*]!”, he said to me. I was going to my own house. Then someone called me. Didn’t you see it last night [in the film]?”

Horra: I saw it.

Sagonda: I asked, “Has *barjo* ever made the eldest son’s wife [refers to herself] *barjo* get lost?”

Horra: That’s what you said?

Sagonda: That man said so. “Your *djelamo* [seniority] what kind of *djelamo* is it? It makes people suffer. Who will make the rituals for your son’s children if you leave?” – “Ah, the grandfather is there, the grandmother is there!” – “Who is the grandmother?” – “It is Duka!” – “Who is the grandfather?” – “It is Sago!”, that’s what I said.

Alga smiles.

Sagonda: “Return! Come back!”, they said. But I said, “My son has looked at me aggressively [*jala*]. He has adorned the child with beads, the one I should put the apron on!”- “She will die, my mother shall die!” Is that what he said or what has he said? I talked like that. I was angry and I cried.

Alga sympathetically: Hay!

Sagonda: “Come back! Return!” Ah, ah, ah, ah! Listen, Susanne. Let me not talk badly. “How can I leave, letting the child down?”, I said and returned. I entered the house. Then Sago argued, “Leave her to me. She always goes to town. What is there in town for her? Why does she drink honey wine? Why does she drink *arake*? If she stays sitting quietly, we will bring *arake* to her. Honey wine I will buy for her and bring. Me, that is Sago!”

Alga: She is old.

Sagonda: I was angry. “Why should you do so? You should give the *arake* to your wife. Bringing the honey wine, you go over to your wife. My coffee is a different one.” “I will eat tomorrow.”, I thought. But no one came to me. “I will eat the day after tomorrow.” But no one came to me.

Alga: They did not bring.

Sagonda: “Yih! If *barjo* gives me anything, honey wine or *arake*, I will drink it. If *barjo* does not give me anything, I will buy it with my vagina and drink it!”

Alga laughing: Mmhh.

Jean laughs.

Everybody laughs.

Alga: It is like that!

Sagonda: “Ritual is ritual. Let her do the ritual!”, they said. K'alumbe [Sago's brother-in-law] said, “You have done wrong.”

Horra: Did they say so to Sago?

Sagonda: Mmmh. He simply said it. He wanted to calm my heart/feelings. “You, Kairambe [Sago], you have done wrong. The right one is the old woman!” Children and old people are one, aren't they? They were flattering me.

Alga: They flattered you.

Sagonda: So I did the ritual.

Alga: The ritual.

Everybody starts to talk.

Sagonda: I received a *d'abbi* [fine] for the beads I should have put on Tammo.

Alga: They paid her a fine.

Horra: Ah.

Sagonda: That is what old people eat.

Sus.: If you really had left, would there not have been any ritual? No *gali*-ritual?

Sagonda: They would have been struggling. Tomorrow they would have send a go-between to me again.

Alga: It needs to be done by way of a go-between!

Sus.: Is there anyone else who could do the ritual?

Alga expressing indignation: Yiiih!

Sagonda: Why?

Sus.: There wouldn't be a name? Wouldn't there?

Jean: If the grandmother refuses, the child will become impure, won't it?

Sagonda: *Mingi* [ritually impure]!

Alga: Mmmh.

Sagonda: That is if the *gali* is not beaten.

Jean: If she gets pregnant again, the new one would be *mingi*, too.

Sagonda: If the *gali* of a child is not beaten, and she gets pregnant again...

Sus.: It [the baby] is thrown away, isn't it?

Everybody is excited and starts to talk.

Alga: Thrown away.

Jean: So they will really try hard to make you calm down.

Alga laughing and approving: Mmmh.

Jean: He tells you, he does it for you.

Alga: Yes.

Horra: Theo-Inda, I know all that, but...

Sus.: Translate for the others.

Horra: I will translate... What the old woman has said is true. The most important is the tradition! The child would be spoiled, wouldn't it?

All: Mmmh...

Alga: The ritual, the old ritual which needs to be done, Sago has spoiled it.

Horra: He spoiled it.

Jean: That's the ritual, I mean.

Sus.: The fact that they depend so much on Sagonda wasn't that clear to me before. The fact that she is the one who must do it...

Jean: And not only the *gali gilo*...

7.12. Dassanetch: The ritual hair shaving of a child before the next child may be born

Naukwa occasionally interrupted by Elele, further explained by Horra:

We do not have this ritual this old woman has talked about in Dassanetch. Among us, when a child's mother gets pregnant again, there is no story about it. We shave the newborn child's hair. Yesterday it was born by his mother. Now his hair will be shaved. That is our tradition.

Sus.: Whose hair will be shaved?

Horra: The son's of course!

Alga: The son's who has been born!

Horra: At that time, he has grown up a little ...When this is done for him, he is a little person who knows how to speak a little. He knows how to run around the village a little.

Alga: He can walk.

Naukwa: Then his father and his mother will play together and maybe she will become pregnant again. But there is no other ritual.

Alga: There is none.

Horra: In Dassanetch they do not have this throwing away.

Alga: It is like that. They have no gossip.

Naukwa: There is none.

Sus.: There is no concept of ritual impurity?

Elele: There is no impurity.

Sus.: Eeeh. They simply give birth?

Horra referring to what the Dassanetch have said: They simply give birth. The father says, “My son’s hair should be shaved. We will bring him up slowly. Let us come together. Let us meet. There is nothing we have to worry about. When it is said like that, when father and mother meet [have sex], there is no ritual about it. There is no ritual meanwhile. No ritual you have to perform to get pregnant. They only have the shaving of the child’s hair.

Alga: Ah, the shaving of the head.

Naukwa: The shaving of the head that is our *gali*. That is the Dassanetch *gali*.

Sus.: But it is done when he has grown a little?

Alga: It is like that.

Naukwa: It will be done once he has grown a little.

Sus.: If the head is not shaved...

Naukwa: ...no child will be born after that. It will be done [the shaving of the first born], while the new child is still inside the mother. They say, “Go and herd the cattle!”

Sagonda: After the head has been shaved?

Horra: Having shaved the head.

Jean: Who will shave the head?

Naukwa: There is one person who has become his [the child’s] *mogo* [name sake]. He has given his name to the child. Maybe he is in another village, maybe later he will be in this village. It is said, “Today will be your *mogo*’s [the child who received the *mogo*’s name] head shaving, come!” Then *parsi* is brewed. Inside this calabash, the *parsi* will be brewed inside something. Milk has been poured into the milk container. Then his father and mother will go. The child has entered the *mogo*’s homestead. The *parsi* and the milk will be brought. So he [the *mogo*] will know, “Eh, today is my *mogo*’s [the child’s] head shaving. Or have you, bringing *parsi* and milk, gotten up to fetch water?” That’s what they say. These people who have been playing will sleep there today. They have become guests.

Alga: Mmmh.

Naukwa: ...and then the people of this homestead will consume the milk together. And the *parsi* will come together with it. We drink it together. Then the next day we all get up together.

Alga: Mmmh.

Naukwa: We all get up together and come. Having arrived there, we enter the *zele* [homestead]. Then a goat will be brought to the *zele*. A *bu*-goat [castrated goat] will be brought and slaughtered. The oldest woman of the family, she is the *mogole*, that’s

what they call her. On that day, there has been *parsi* left over from the night before, isn't there?

Alga: There is.

Naukwa: There is coffee left over, too. Isn't there?

Alga: There is.

Naukwa: So then the *mogo*, the child's *mogo* has brought a *bu-* goat.

Alga: Ah.

Horra: ...then...

Alga: ...to the father's homestead?

Naukwa: ...to the father's homestead, to the homestead of the child. They arrive there. They sit down. The coffee has been put on the fire. Then the coffee bowls are held. The goat is slaughtered.

Alga: ...slaughtered...

Naukwa: It is slaughtered. One front-leg and one back-leg is for the people of the homestead. One front-leg and one back-leg and that part, which is connected to the upper part of the leg, the *bagadä*, these three parts are for the *mogo*. Returning home...

Alga:returning...

Naukwa: ...coffee is drunk. Then for the people *parsi*...

Alga: ...is given!

Sagonda: ...and the head is shaved!

Naukwa: Then they seek some children from the village. These people are asked to sit down together. The *mogo* and his wife. They will sit down with the people and the *mogo's* wife will shave the head of the child.

Sus.: The child's grandmother has nothing to do?

Naukwa: The grandmother has nothing to do. My child has a *mogo*, hasn't he? He will lead my wife and bring a goat. Then the ritual is done for him...He has slaughtered the goat, hasn't he? The goat's meat has been distributed to him. The meat will not be prepared in this homestead. The rest of the meat will be cooked. It is eaten. The water is drunk. The *parsi* is given. Then the *mogo's* wife will shave the child's head.

"He has become our age-mate!" That's what the small children say, who have come to this home. It is like cutting the ears. They are shaved together.

Sagonda and Alga: Aaaaah! Eeeeh! Have you heard that? That is the ritual of that country!

Sagonda: At that time the mother is pregnant?

Alga: Her belly has collected!

Sus.: The work of the Hamar grandmother's is partly to do rituals. The Galeba are different. They don't have this ritual. Maybe we should ask about Ari woman. Will she perform

rituals for the children of her children? What is the work of an old Ari woman? Will she distribute the food? Will she perform rituals? She shall tell her story!

7.13. Ari: Feeding rituals for newborn babies

Gigsho: We have something similar in Ari. When a child is born, after five months, if it is a boy- if it is a girl, after three months- the father and the mother of the child are called. It is said, “Flour has to be fed. Flour has to be out into the child’s mouth!”

Sus.: Into the baby’s mouth?

Gigsho: Into the baby’s mouth. That is after five months.

Sus.: Is it the father? The mother or the grandfather or the grandmother who feed the child?

Horra: The grandfather and the grandmother.

Sus.: The mother’s mother...or the father’s mother?

Gigsho: The father’s.

Sus.: The baby’s father’s father, and the father’s mother. Is that right?

Horra: Yes..

Sus.: Will they come together?

Gigsho: Yes together. Grandmother and grandfather. “They shall come to us together. Our son is five months old now!” Maybe the daughter’s months have been reached: “Now the time has come to feed her with flour.” It is said, “The sorghum shall be put into her mouth!” And then the elders come together with the old woman and the old man. The names of two old people are said and they, the two chosen people, cook *kumb’ala* [porridge]. This porridge is fed to the child.

Sus.: Is it the man or the woman who feeds first?

Gigsho: The man, of course!

Gigsho: The old one will feed the *kumb’ala*. He will bring the flour on a spoon.

Alga: The grandfather?

Gigsho: The grandfather. He brings the uncooked flour on a spoon. Then he feeds it into the child’s mouth. After this is done the grandmother comes and cooks some *kumb’ala*. Then she brings some *k’olcho* [ensete /false banana]. She brings the leaves of the *k’olcho* plant and hangs it around the child's neck.

Horra: ...Like we do it in Arbore with goat fat.

Sus.: The *k’olcho* leaves are hung around the child’s neck like the fat in Arbore?

Horra: Yes, like we do it with fat.

Gigsho: These leaves are brought. They are cut. They are the same leaves as the ones from which the girl's skirts are made of. These leaves are put around the neck, here and there. That is the child's ritual.

Then coffee is drunk. *Parsi* is brought and drunk as well.

Then the dances will start. Everybody dances. "A new person has joined us! A new person has joined us! We have become more!"

Sagonda: That is the child's *gore* ritual [comparing it with the Banna ritual].

Alga: Mmmh.

Sagonda: It is like his *gore*.

Gigsho: Now that the child's ritual has been performed, he has become a human.

Sus.: So before this has been done, she may not give birth to another child?

Gigsho: She may not.

Sus.: Is it taboo?

Gigsho: Taboo. Before the ritual has been performed for the child, the *zarsi* [community] will not enter. His peers will not play with him. But from this day people will play with him.

Sus.: They did not play with him before?

Gigsho: He is only five months old! A baby. From now on the mother will carry him on her back and walk around. Before, she did not do that.

7.14. Ari, Bashada and Banna: The concept of ritual impurity of children

Sus.: If she becomes pregnant before this ritual is performed, will the child be aborted? Do the Ari have the concept of impure conception? Do they have the concept of *mingi*?

Gigsho: The child would be like *mingi* and they would throw it away.

The wife gives birth; then the child's ritual is performed. Then, if her ritual [menstruation] does return -there is the ritual [menstruation] that comes with the moon, isn't there- if she gets pregnant before it has returned, that is taboo. Then they must throw the child away.

Sus.: The one which is inside her belly?

Gigsho: The one inside. That one is thrown away. If she gets pregnant before her ritual has come back for the first time after the birth...We have women who give birth and then about two years their ritual does not return. It just stays quiet.

Alga: It keeps quiet.

Sus.: We do have that, too. As long as you are breast feeding it might not come back.

Gigsho: When you breast feed it stays away. So while she is breast feeding and her ritual has not come and she gets pregnant again.

Alga: How?

Sus.: Do the people ask, "How has she become pregnant?" Is that taboo?

Gigsho: Yes. They will ask, "How has she become pregnant?". That is impure.

Sagonda: It is like that everywhere. "The ritual has not come to me, has not come to me...!" the women say.

Susanne: Before the ritual does not come back you do not do the *gungulo* [ladle ritual].

Alga and Sagonda: That is taboo!

Sagonda: "The ritual has not come to me. It has not come!", you say. But her husband says, „Ah, her ritual has not come yet, what may happen? If we sleep together, it is without consequence!", he says.

But then suddenly the ritual comes down from up there.

Susanne: It comes.

Sagonda: That is in one night! Then the husband comes.

Alga: Mmmh, secretly he comes.

Sagonda: They have met on the way [the blood and the sperm].

Alga: They have met.

Sagonda: As they [the sperm] has met it [the blood] did not come down.

Alga: Mmmh, it did not come down.

Sagonda: It returned on the way. It left like a *maeshi* [spirit of a deceased ancestor].

Horra: It has left.

Alga: It is the *maeshi* that had been preventing it before.

Sagonda: Now that it has left for a long time, "The ritual has not been coming to me in the near past. So what is making my blood get lost? My belly is simply growing! Ah, ah! I have not seen the *gilo* [menstruation] with me. Did it meet [with the sperm] when my husband and I were sleeping together?"

Alga: "Has it met when we slept together?"

Sagonda: Mmmh. Did they meet on the way? Now what is growing in the inside is *mingi* [impure]. It is very, very, very *mingi*.

Alga: It is bad!

Sagonda: That is very, very, very *mingi*. That concept exists in all places. She [Gigsho from Ari] has said it truly!

Sus.: Don't the Dassanetch have that, too?

Horra: The Dassanetch do not have that. The Marle [Arbore] do not have that.

Susanne: The Marle do not have that?

Horra: The Marle do not have that.

Sagonda: The Ari, the Ari are humans. That is what is called human. Leave the Galeba. Leave the Kara. Leave the Marle. The Galeba, the Galeba have come out of the Marle country. Then they entered the Galeba country. The Kara, they are Bashada. The real Kara are Bashada. They have come from Bashada and went down [to the Omo]. They leap over the cattle like we do. Their *maz* [initiates] do not eat sorghum.

Sus.: They do not eat sorghum.

Sagonda: The Bume and Mogudji, they have come from down there over here. The Galeba have come out from Marle country. Now we have a *bitta* [ritual leader]. The Bashada *bitta* has come from Marle. Bonko [the *bitta*], he is said to be Bashada, but his fathers, the father of his family, comes from Marle. That Bashada, came from down there, went over Kadya, Angude, long they went, Simbale, Ari... He came out there from Ari.

Horra: From Ari he left.

Sagonda: From Ari they have been spilled down there. But the place where they originally came from is Ari. Do you understand?

Horra: I understood.

Sagonda: So in Hamar, if you get pregnant without having seen the *gilo* [menstruation] you need to throw that child away? Do the Galeba [Dassanetch] throw away children?

Alga: No, they do not.

Sagonda: Do the Kara throw away ritually impure children?

Alga: All of us who leap over the cattle, we are one.

Sagonda: The Bume [Nyangatom] also do not throw away children.

Alga: The Mursi also do not have that.

Sagonda: The Mogudji do not throw away children. The Mursi do not throw away their children.

Alga: All of these simply let their children grow up. Even children if the children are born by girls! They have no taboo!

Sagonda: That's true. Even girls' children! We, the Ari and the Hamar, in Simbale, Kadya, Angude [different regions in Hamar]...These are all Ari. Also over that way...

Alga: They all throw these children away...

Sagonda: That way, and down there, down, down, down.

Sus.: That is true.

Sagonda: There is only one thing missing: they do not beat the *gali* for their children.

Sus.: The Ari do not beat it..

Sagonda: The Ari do not have that. They also do not pour the *gungulo* [ladle]. They do not have that. They also do not leap over the cattle [to initiate the boys]...

Sus.: Those rituals do not exist. Those rituals have been invented new.

Sagonda: We have, going down [meaning geographically] there, started to do them.

All are laughing.

Sus.: You invented it yourself. Entering the country of cattle you started the rituals.

Alga: We leap over the cattle.

7.15. Arbore: Hair shaving ritual for newborn children

Horra: Let me tell you something about Arbore.

What we have been talking about before, about the shaving of the child's hair...we have something like that in Marle [Arbore].

If a child is born the child is to be rubbed with butter. They come together and coffee is put on the fire. Maybe the mother is pregnant again at that time...If she is pregnant she is still young. She and her husband have slept together. The child's ritual has been finished, hasn't it? The child inside the mother's belly will make the stomach grow from which the other child still drinks the milk. When the baby inside has become so big that it becomes visible, it will spoil the belly of the other child.

Sagonda: After two or three months one can tell it if there is a child inside.

Horra: Yes, then the head of the born child will be shaved. "The mother shall stop her child from drinking at her breast now! It shall grow up by the milk of our cows now!"

Alga approving: Mmmh.

Horra: "It shall grow up!", they say. From then on it will only consume cow's milk. Then the mother's belly will not come down.

Alga: It won't come down.

Horra: It will be perfect. That is why the child is chased away from its mother's breast.

Alga: The breast has been spoiled. The child shall leave the breast and grow.

Horra: That is what they say and come together. Then the elders of the lineage come together. A family is big, isn't it?

Sagonda: It is big.

Horra: So the clan comes together. The elders come. The senior most mother who is at the head of that family...

Sagonda: Someone like me...

Horra: One like you...

Sagonda: Yes, the wife of the senior most male.

Horra: You are our grandmother. We have many grandmothers in the village. Our father's and grandfather's wives. There are many females, aren't there? Our grandmothers. Our grandfathers are there.

Sagonda: Are you talking about the child's grandmother?

Horra: That one is there! Our fathers are there. Now when my child has been born, the senior most son of all the fathers' homesteads is sought. The *djalpeha* [eldest son, Hamar term] of all. Now our grandfather's children exist, don't they? Our grandfathers all have given birth to children, haven't they? So amongst all of these grandfathers' children I look for the senior most one, the *djalaab* [eldest of an age-set, Arbore term]. The one who opens the gateway. He comes. He sits down. His wife also comes and makes coffee. Having come to my house she makes coffee. That one and my wife, the mother of the child, they both are there. Then the senior most woman [his wife] comes and sits down and makes coffee. She serves the coffee to the people. The people drink the coffee. They get hold of a goat. Then they slaughter and cut it. When it has been cut, there is one tradition when the elders come. The fat is taken. The fat is taken and then put into a milk container...

Alga: Of a cow's milk container?

Horra: Yes, inside a cow-milk-container. If it has been put inside a milk container the coffee is drunk. Then milk is milked into the container. The fat and the milk are together. From then on the life of the born child shall be fat. Whenever it drinks this milk everything will be fat. It shall be butter.

Alga: "Let him collect something!"

Horra: "Let him collect something!" Then the child's head will be shaved. It is sitting. Then the milk which has been milked before will be poured into a small bowl.

Jean: Who will shave the hair?

Horra: I will tell you! So this milk has been poured into a little bowl. Then some water is poured into it as well. Then the milk...

Sagonda and Alga: Water is mixed with the milk?

Horra: Wash, wash, wash, wash. They wash the child very clean. Then someone from the community, a *tsangaza* [possible marriage partner from the opposite moiety, Horra uses the Hamar term] is sought.

Sagonda: *Tsangaza*.

Horra: A *tsangaza* is sought. He is called. And coffee is served to him. "Today you shave the head of this child for us. Become an elder today!", they say. "Old woman, shave the

head of this child. Become the head shaver today!” So the old woman comes and sits down on a seat. The grandmother has also come.

Sagonda: Does that elder take a blade?

Horra: Yes, a blade. He spits on it and then...

Sagonda: He spits...?

Horra: He spits, he does “Tsh tsh.”. Four times. Then another young person is called. I am the eye one...

Alga: Eyes, you see?

Horra: Now the young one shaves, shaves. “Kash kash kash kash”, and then the grandmother who was holding the eyes gets up. The mother has come. The senior mother has prepared coffee before. She has come.

Alga: Aah, has come...

Horra: The child has been held. The whipping wands have been brought for him. Now the mother...The other one has come. His father has left. After the father, another one has been sought. “That one, you shall give some of your small stock. Give us one of the stock you have collected!” Now he has gotten hold of a sheep which has not given birth yet. A small sheep which still drinks at his mother.

Sagonda: A kid?

Horra: Yes, a kid. The one who holds the sheep also holds the whipping wand. He is the first. And the bride who is holding the child comes next. Then, “That person shall go and herd the cattle from now on!”

Then you close the gateway of the cattle kraal and come down from there. Now your family has come. “Is the cattle well?”, they ask. “They have come in from the herding!”

Alga: Aah, it is about well-being [*nagaya*]!

Horra: “They are well!”. Having said that they say, “He has herded the cattle. Today, having herded the cattle, he shall come in!” “Pss pss pss.”, they bless. “How are you, the one who has herded the cattle? Are you well? How are the animals? Is everything well?” He [the baby-boy] does not know that he is talked about. The other one is his mouth. The one who does that is his mouth.

Sagonda and Alga: Mmmh, we have understood that.

Horra: “Are the cows well?”, they ask. – “They are well!” The child has not heard that. He is being carried inside something, isn't he? The other one has become his mouth saying, “Is that so?” - “It is so! The cattle is well.”

Then that one comes back and enters the house. Honey wine has been brewed. The elders sit down. They are also given tobacco. Then the tobacco is stored away again.

The people have been rubbed with butter. His whipping wands are also rubbed with butter. There is honey wine there, isn't there?

Sagonda whispering: Isn't there?

Horra: "Go and call the *kawot* [ritual leader]!" The whipping wands have been put down.

Then the wands are given to him. "Let the small one go and herd the cattle with it!"

Before the people have not seen that the wands are not simply handed over. Now the wands have been given. Having done this ritual honey wine will be drunk and *barjo* [good-fortune] is called! At the gateway *waq* [well-being] will be called. Then the people will leave.

If a child dies before this ritual has been finished, there is nor ritual for him, there will be no animals slaughtered for him [at the funeral].

Sagonda astonished: Ah!

Horra: If no animal has been slaughtered for him then, no other rituals will be done for him.

Sagonda: It will be left behind.

Horra: Yes, left behind. Someone for whom this ritual has not been performed, without having herded the cattle, without having said, "He has herded the cattle!", without having seen that, someone who dies without all this is said that he has returned to the belly.

Alga: He has returned.

Sagonda: Mmmh!

Horra: He has returned to die.

Sagonda: "He has returned and entered his mother's belly. Let her bear again for us!"

Alga approving: Mmmh.

Horra: If a child dies and the ritual has been done for him, then the people will make a song, a ritual about him, mentioning his cattle. Animals will be slaughtered for him.

Everything will be done for him. Having died coming up, taking him to the outside, he will be visible.

Sagonda: If he dies. Is that his ritual?

Alga: Aaah, eheh.

Horra: If he is a big person. He has everything.

Alga: Ay.

Horra: People will not refuse anything to him. If that has not been done for him there is nothing for him. "He has returned to the inside!" That is how it is. The mother won't cry so much...

Sagonda: She shall stop crying.

Horra: She shall stop crying. Why should she cry so much?

Jean: Is that for a male child?

Horra: For male and female children.

Jean: Female children do have that, too?

Horra: Yes. This ritual is for all. Without shaving the head, it is our taboo. In that case it won't have any ritual tomorrow!

Jean: Male and female, all?

Horra: All.

Sagonda: That is something important for them!

Alga: Ah.

Sagonda: What we have just heard is there *gali*-ritual.

Alga: It is so!

Jean: What about the thing with the teeth. You say, "Stab the grandfather!"

Sagonda: That is a new born child. Having been born he starts to walk, walk, walk, walk. The child has eaten *tisha* [fresh maize– implies that front teeth have come out] and then the next sibling is born...

Horra: There is something I have forgotten to tell. That child will start to sit, won't he? So the father will be called. "Who is the one who has become an elder? How did he become an elder?", it is asked. "The cow of that and that color, he has grown up by the way of that calf! Let *barjo* fill him up [bring him plenty of everything]!" On that very day he will collect cattle. The fathers, the family, will give him cattle. Some give goats, others give sheep, other give cows. These animals that have been given to him all become his own. Now he has collected cattle.

Alga: Look that!

Horra: Today he has seen animals.

Sagonda: That is the Galeba [Dassanetch]?

Horra: No, the Marle [Arbore]!

Sagonda: Marle.

Horra: On that day his mother's brother will give him something. His father will give him something. The grandfather will give him something, too.

If he dies, there has been cattle given to him. Cattle will be there. "He will go together with some of the cattle.", that is how it is said. Being small he is the owner of cattle, isn't he?

Sagonda: That is their *gore*. It has become like the child's *gore*-ritual. In Hamar the mother would now say, "Give me some animals during the *gore*-ritual. Let the child collect with this!" That is why you are given cattle. The father gives you a cow. "I have given you that goat!". That one, "I have given you a cow!" Like that it is

collected. That is what we call *kami* [collecting]. That is the child's *gore*-ritual. That is something good to talk about....

Everyone laughs.

Horra: Look, these rituals belong to all places...Our *moor* [stomach fat], we call it *moor*. The child's *moor*, we say. [Horra talks about the previously described Arbore ritual.]

Sagonda: *Morro*. It has been put inside the milk container, hasn't it?

Horra: It has been put inside.

Sagonda: Milk has been poured on top of it...

Alga: It has been poured...

Horra: Then it has been taken out and put around the mother's neck. "The child's head shall be shaved by that one! The wife of the *djelapha*, she shall come over here and pour coffee!" An elder, having grown old, pulls the hair. Someone old like me shall bless the head! The child shall see with my eyes!" On the day when the head is shaved they say, "Become as big as I am! Become as I am!"

Alga: Like that of course!

Sagonda: "You are an elder!", they have said.

Alga: Mmmh, of course it is like this that they call *barjo* [bless].

Sagonda: It is their *gore*-ritual!

Alga: Their *gore*-ritual!

Sagonda: They [the Arbore] bring an old person. They come as if they were going to bind the *gore*.

Alga: Like that!

Sagonda: Like the senior most wife, she is brewing coffee.

Alga: It is all one, all the same!

Horra: Now, look, everyone's tongue has come together.

Sagonda: All have come together. There is no difference to us. There is none!

Jean: Being different it is still similar.

Sagonda: We have been looking for difference, but we have come together. Then again we part from each other...

Alga: Turn away.

Bashada: The pride of elderly widows

Participants:

from Bashada: Alga (elderly woman) and Kerri (young woman)

Anthropologist:

Susanne Epple

This conversation was held in between two sessions. As Susanne Epple needed to clear some questions on widowhood in Bashada she decided to have an extra interview on this topic only with the Bashada-women. As this interview adds well to what has been discussed during the previous sessions it was included into the documentation. The session was held in Bashada-language and later transcribed and translated word-by-word.

Sus.: Now we have asked you about the rituals of an elderly woman and the work she does, haven't we? I want to ask one more thing. There is something I have heard about widows before. It seemed like gossip but it might be true. In the past, N. and K. have been quarreling with each other, haven't they? And then she left him, didn't she?

Alga: Mmmh.

Sus.: Then some people started gossiping about her, "Having lived with him, she has become too proud, now that her son's son is living with her."

8.1. The pride of elderly widows who have a son or grandson with them

Sus.: "An elderly woman, if she has a big son or grandson living with her, she becomes proud/ arrogant. Before she lived with her new partner. There was no husband. Now she is an old woman. Before she was staying with her lover. Now that her son has grown up, he is the one who ploughs the field for her. He is the one who cares for her. An old woman will then become proud and leave her partner and go away.

Kerri: That is a widow?

Sus.: A widow. Do you say it that way or was that simply K.'s gossip? Do people talk like that?

Kerri: "An old woman. She was a widow for a long time. As she was a widow for so long, she lived very close to someone. She stayed with him for a long time and then her

child grew up, the one she gave birth to. The child grows and when he has grown up she will give him [her partner] up and leave.”

Sus.: Do people say it that way ? Do all widows act like this?

Alga and Kerri: Mmmh.

Sus.: Eeeh.

Kerri: They will say, “I will not suffer here anymore, my son shall plough the fields for me now!”

Alga: “My son has grown up. Now I only will cook for my son. He will plough the fields for me. I have become a male now! I will not do anything. I have become big/ old. I will sit now...”

Sus.: But if her husband would still be alive, she wouldn't leave him and go away, or would she?

Alga: She does not go.

Sus.: But that man [a widow's lover] has been her partner before, too. He cared for her. He ploughed the field for her. He was the one who raised her children, wasn't he?

Alga: Yes.

Kerri: He!

Sus.: Will she really leave him?

Kerri and Alga: She will leave him!

Sus.: Leave.

Kerri: She has become too proud. She is proud.

Sus.: Do all women act like that?

Kerri: Like that!

Alga: They do! Mmmh, all widows do that.

Kerri: When he whips her [she says], “Do not whip me anymore! Stop scolding me! What is it with me now?”

Alga: “Don't touch me! Stop scolding me! What is it with me now? I have left you now! I have become old! Go back to your wife!”

Sus.: Eeeeh. “Go back to your wife!”, she says and chases him away?

Alga: Chases away.

Kerri: She chases him away. She does not really chase him away. “Stop coming to me!”

Alga: “Stop coming! Stop coming to my house! Go back to your wife!”

Kerri: That's what she says. She has put down her hand/ arm.

Alga: Put down her arm.

Sus.: Put down her arm?

Alga: “I plough my own field. The sorghum will ripen. My son had grown up!”

Sus.: She will not work anymore?

Kerri: She will not suffer anymore.

Alga: “I will cook for him. I will put up the pot for my son. I will grind the stone for my son. I do not want a man anymore. Go! Go to your wife!”

Sus.: Eeh. Is that good? Is it good or bad?

Alga: Good.

8.2. Young widows search for new partners; old widows should stay alone

Sus.: There is one more thing I want to talk about. An old woman, a woman who has stopped giving birth, once she becomes a widow, when she stops giving birth and her husband dies, will she still have a lover?

Alga: She will not. “I will not bear any children anymore. What shall I do with a man?”

Sus.: Doesn’t she say, “I do not want to live alone.”?

Alga: No. “I will stay alone...”, that’s what she says.

Kerri: If she is young she will have a lover.

Alga: Simply to [be able to] give birth.

Sus.: Does she say, “I want to give birth!”?

Alga: ...She says and gets married. Becoming a man’s lover, she will bear his children.

Sus.: ...And then, if she has a lover after she stopped giving birth, will people gossip about her?

Alga: Aaaah [reluctance].

Kerri: What? Having become old what...

Alga: Having stopped giving birth...

Kerri: She has become old, she does not bear children anymore...

Alga: There is no blood...

Kerri: At that time she will have given birth to many children. There will be one who ploughs the fields for her.

8.3. The story of K. and N. - a widow and her partner

Sus.: But K., she became N.’s lover after she had stopped giving birth. I heard that N. had asked for her again and again. “Live with me. Prepare coffee for me...!”, he asked her.

Alga: Mmmh, he said that and asked for her. In the past when her husband had died, she left her children. She became like a *sharmutsha* [amh.: prostitute, in Bashada: someone

who changes partners a lot], and stayed with this one, left, stayed with that one..., left, stayed with the next one...She did it like that for a long time. Then she came to live with N. She has been living like that until N. came and made her his partner. Then she ate N.'s arm. She has eaten all of N.'s. Simply eaten. Eating his hand, now that she has become satisfied...

Kerri: ...She left him and went away again.

Alga: ...She left him.

Kerri: Now she says, "I will move back to N's!"

Sus.: That's what she said.

Alga: She said so.

Kerri: Then she said, "A house shall be built up there in his homestead!"

Alga: Up there her hand has been used up. And she said, "Now as I have become tired, I will return to him!"

Kerri: Only sickness brought her back.

Sus.: Is she sick?

Alga: When she became sick she asked herself, "Is it N. who cursed me? Was it N. or who is angry with me? I will return to him!", she finally said. We have heard it by gossip. But she has not returned to him. Not yet.

Sus.: So where is she now?

Kerri: Up there, in Ullawa. Where you [Susanne] went to once when the buffalo's meat was cut.

Alga: Mmmh, she has moved over there. Moving away from here. Dying [being exhausted] she went to live there with B. [her daughter].

Sus.: She went to live there. B. has returned.

Alga: ...Having ploughed the fields...

Sus.: I have seen B. once.

Alga: Ehh, having returned has she built a house?

Sus.: Her roof will be stabbed [built] soon. The sorghum beer has been prepared already.

Alga: Eehh!!

8.4. Old people are like children

Sus.: Sagonda said so before, and I have also heard people say it about N. Do people really say it like that? Do you seriously say it that way? "Old people and children are the same."

Sagonda said it like this, “When Sago scolded me and I left refusing to perform the ritual, then he came to me and by talking sweetly to me he brought me back. Children and old people are the same. The heart of old people and the heart of children is the same!” Didn’t she tell it that way?

Alga.: It is the same.

Sus.: That saying, “Children and old people are the same.”, does it mean, that an old person has become a child, as he has ceased to know anything?

Alga: He will get angry for small reasons.

Kerri: He gets angry for small reasons.

Sus.: He gets angry for no reason.

Kerri: Mmmh.

Alga: Getting angry, he scolds.

Sus.: Old people get angry without reason?

Kerri: Mmmh.

Alga.: Mmmh, having become old he has turned into a child. His heart has turned into a child’s heart.

Sus.: Eeeh.

Kerri: Mmmmh, a child. Haven’t you seen how Matti was crying before?

Alga: The same way he gets angry...

Kerri: Is it because of the fields that he was ploughing? Your [host-] father N. does not plough the fields anymore, does he?

Sus.: He does not plough.

Kerri: He thinks, “I do not plough the fields. Now that I am sitting and eating, will these children shout at me? What is that?” He thinks like that and gets angry.

The other day your father N. ran away to town when B. [his son] was shouting at him. “I will stay here!”, N. said and became like a child. Like that.

Alga: “Stop saying things about me! Don’t say anything about me!”

Kerri: “Stop saying things about me!”

Alga: ...He said and got angry. Then they went and struggled, begged him [N.], and finally brought him back.

Kerri: Brought him back and took him into the house. That was only yesterday [recently].

Sus.: Did B., his son, really shout at him?

Kerri: He did not shout. It was only when B. went to plough the fields that N. complained, “Will you leave me behind when you go to plough the fields? Do you only plough fields? I have been lying down in the homestead and you only go to the fields, fields, fields!”

Alga: “You disappear with your wives! Leaving me behind!”, N. complained.

Kerri: “Leaving me behind in the homestead, go! Your fields, what kind of fields are they?”

When he said so B. said, “My father! Isn’t it by ploughing the fields that we eat?”

“Ay! Don’t call me your father!” he said to B.. “Do not say father to me! You, I have given you up a long time ago! Stop saying father!”, N. said. B. replied, “If I do not call you ‘my father’ who will say ‘father’ to you?”. “Yih! Stop calling me father!”, N. said and took his things. Then he left and ran away. “I have died now! You can bury me!”, that’s how he was talking.

Up there in Shanko [Hamar-Region], where N.'s namesake lives, the one who blessed him by saying, “Psss [calling *barjo*].” Just like Matti [Susanne's son] was blessed the other day. In the same way he gave his blessing to [the baby] N.. “I have died now. Now you are the one called N. I have left and gotten lost now!”, he [N.'s namesake] said. When N. left people got angry with him. J. [N.'s son] and others scolded him and took him back from the market down here. Having come back he stayed quiet and sat. Having become a child, his heart has become meager.

Alga: Meager.

Sus.: If it is meager, that means it is like a child.

Alga: Like a child.

Sus.: If it is fat, he is clever.

Kerri: That is clever.

Alga: If it is fat, it does not become angry soon. It does not get angry quickly. When it is meager it gets angry for no reason.

Kerri: Gets angry.

Alga: Mmmh. If you just say something little it gets angry. “Why do you say so? Why do you talk like that?”, he says, and gets angry.

Sus.: Gets angry.

Kerri: He has become a child.

Alga: Having become old, he has become a child. “Why do you talk like that in the homestead? The old man has become like a child! He is like a small child! He is not the same as he used to be! Stop talking about family’s matters!” That’s what is said and then they stop.

8.5. The old people's power to curse

Kerri: If only something little is said he [the old one] will get angry. He will simply curse the children!

Sus.: He will curse.

Alga: He will curse for no reason, scolding. Mmmh. That is why we say that one should stay quiet...

Sus.: That is the old people. If someone is very old it is like that. Is it not very much the men who become like that? We say that women become more clever!

Alga und Kerri: They become clever.

Sus.: The ones who become much like children are our men...

Alga: Men are bad. Mmmh. Getting old and becoming like children men are bad!

Sus.: If old people scold, it is like talking tongue [cursing] isn't it?

Alga: It is bad. They talk tongue.

Sus.: Either they scold you in their hearts, or they do it with their mouth, then it is like talking tongue.

Kerri: If he scolds you a lot, you do not say anything in return. You leave it and go away.

Sus.: Go away.

Alga: Go.

Sus.: "He shall not curse me!", you say.

Kerri: "He shall not curse me!", you say. Looking at each other, looking at each other while he is scolding you is bad.

Sus.: If he scolds you while he is watching you it is bad. If he is alone it is somewhat good.

Kerri: If he scolds over there, if he scolds being far away, it is good. Otherwise if he talks tongue in his place, it is bad.

Then, let it be honey, you bring it to him at night, so that he can bless you.

Sus.: You make peace with him.

Alga: Make peace.

Kerri: Make peace.

These are old people, it is bad. Now, we, the young people, if it is only us, like B., or like J., if they argue with each other, there is nothing bad about it. They quarrel with each other and then later they talk to each other again. If N. is angry, people come and bring him a goat. Otherwise they bring him honey to make peace with him.

Sus.: Peace.

Kerri: Many things will be brought to him, to calm him down. It is bad.

8.6. Is it better to be a man or a woman?

Sus.: There is one more thing I want to ask.

Now we have talked a lot about women. About your work, about your husbands, about being a bride and hard times. Everything. So you, you [Kerri] are young, you [Alga] are old. If you start thinking, being a woman, “Ah, if I were a man it would be better. Why am I not a man?” Do you talk that way or do you say, “I am happy to be a woman!” ?

Alga: It was *barjo* who has made me a woman yesterday. Thinking, “Why was I not made a man?”, what does it do to me? I was made a woman. Being a woman I have become old. I got old. Thinking about being a man what shall I do?

Sus.: But if you had been a man...

Kerri: If your husband makes your life hard, “Ah, why have I been made a woman so that I have to suffer so much now?” When your husband makes you suffer you might think like that.

Alga: Then we say so.

Kerri: In your heart you say so.

Sus.: That is about the husband.

Kerri and Alga: Yes, when he makes your life hard.

Sus.: So what is good about being a woman? What is good about being a man? If the husband makes you suffer it is bad, but what is good about a woman?

Kerri: What is good about being a woman? Is there anything good about being a woman? Digging the field you eat, there is nothing else you know. The fields, the grinding and the food you cook, that is it. You do not make beehives and climb up the trees...

Sus.: Would you say, “I want to climb a tree!”? Would you say, “I want to empty beehives!”? Would you say so in your heart? Or do you not say so?

Kerri: I would... ‘Well, Mali [Alga's daughter, her only living child] has married now, hasn't she?

Sus.: She went.

Kerri: In her heart, Mali went off to marry, and now there is no big child with my grandmother Alga. She doesn't have a big son, does she?

Sus.: She doesn't.

Kerri: “If I were a boy, I would be ploughing my mother's fields, I would make beehives for her and make her sit down [stop working].”

Sus.: That's what I would think and care about my mother.

Kerri: “I made my mother sit down.”, that's what I would say.

Alga: But as a girl you say, “Now what shall I do? I have married off and left for that man’s home.”

Kerri: “Now I have gone off to marry, what shall I do? My mother is suffering now, she has no big child.”

Alga: She has no son.

Kerri: “Why was I born a woman? Why was I not born a boy?”

Alga: “All my father’s sons have died. Why have I not survived being a man?”

Kerri: “Survived!”, she says, and thinks in her heart.

Alga: Your heart thinks like that.

Kerri: It thinks. There is nothing else you think.

Alga: There is nothing.

Sus.: You do not think. You do not say, “Ah, a man is not whipped! A man does not suffer as much as I do!”?

Kerri: “A man does not suffer!” Some woman’s husbands are very bad.

Alga: Being bad...

Kerri: Being bad he whips you a lot. Whips you a lot. Whips you a lot. Then people say, “Ayyyyyah! That one has not married well. Her husband whips a lot.” And that woman thinks, “I wish I didn’t have a husband like that! Having married one like that... what can I do? What is it that made me like that? It was my *barjo* that sent me that man!”

Alga: ...You say so, but there is nothing you can say.

Kerri: ...You say...

Sus.: ...And keep quiet.

Kerri and Alga: You keep quiet. You pull yourself together. That is what we say.

Kerri: Now there is nothing else.

Before you were made a woman. You were not asked outside, “Shall I be a man or a woman?” You did not know before. You have turned out to be a man. You have turned out to be a woman. It is *barjo* that makes you. We only speak about the work.

It is like that. Do you have something like that in your country?

Sus.: In our country we do not have many rules now. Being a woman I may work like a man.

Kerri: Really?

Sus.: Being a man I say, “I do not like hard work. I will stay in the house and cook!” If you say so, you cook. We do not have strong rules or taboos.

But, if you asked me I would say, that I like being a woman because I can bear children. A man does not give birth. To me, when I give birth it is good. The child grows in your inside. Where would a man see that? Work, in our country he can see everything. Behaving like a woman. But the thing about the inside, will he see that?

Kerri: He does not see.

Sus.: We give birth you suffer, but it is good. You suffer, but it is a good suffering. Having suffered something good will come out. You do not suffer the same as when you are being whipped. You suffer for something good. In my opinion that is good.

Kerri.: Mmmh.

Sus.: If I had been a man I would not see that.

Kerri: You would not see.

Sus.: Having seen that I like it. I am a woman and I like it. I give birth to children. Only this is good.

Kerri: For that it is good.

Sus.: There are not many other differences.

Kerri: We do not have many other differences. We do it like that, too. We give birth to a child. You hold it and then it is good. There are some women who do not give birth. It is *barjo* who stops it. If she does not give birth for a long time it is bad for her and also for you. You ask, “Why does she not give birth? Why does she not bear at least one child?”

Alga: Why is she not at least given one?

All women give birth. All my age-mates give birth. “Is it *barjo* that makes me stay behind? Why have I been made like that?”, you ask yourself and start to think like that. Then she says to her husband, “Go and marry a woman! Why do you sit here?! Marry! There is nothing I can do for you! Shall I stay with you for nothing?”

Kerri: “Why should we just look at each others bodies?”

Alga.: “Ploughing the field, making the sorghum ripen, eating, the two of us, you and me, what shall we do? Marry!” So the husband marries another wife, and that one starts to give birth once she has moved in. These children will all be hers [of the first wife].

Sus.: All hers.

Alga: The child drinks at the breast, drinks, drinks and then when it stops [the first wife] takes him. “You go and give birth!”, that’s what is said to the second wife. The next time she has given birth to a child, again it drinks at her breast. When it stops, “Dab!” it is taken [by the first wife].

Sus.: ...Taken.

Alga: “Go and give birth!”, they say to the second wife. To the older wife, the one who was stopped from giving birth by *barjo*, they say, “The small wife’s children, let her give birth, you [the first wife] you bring them up!”

Kerri sings for her baby.

Sus.: Eheh, that was all.

**Kara, Bashada, Arbore, Ari, Maale and in the land of the
foreigners:
Differing concepts of being a girl**

Participants:

from Bashada: Arti (unmarried girl), Kerri (married young woman)
from Kara: Galte (unmarried girl), Torgo (married young woman)
from Arbore: Lago (bride), Baro (married young woman)
from Ari: Galchi (unmarried girl) Kalamo (young married woman)

Assistants: Sophia Thubeuville, Tine Nawrath, Tina Bruederlin, Anne Loeffler

Translators: Susanne Epple, Echi Gabbert

9.1. How to find a husband in the land of the *ferenji*

Arti: So, what about the *ferenji* [foreigner] marriage? How do you marry in your country?
Like Echi, for example, when she goes to marry, many years from now, how will she
goes to marry?

Susanne: Oh, she has been married a long time ago!

Laughter.

Arti: So, what about these girls [to the students]? Do they have a go-between who asks for
them or will they talk to the man and decide themselves? Or how do you marry?

Tine: Should we now explain how we marry?

Sus.: Yes, of course!

Tine: Well, we do not have any go-between. We just decide by ourselves. If I like a boy and
a boy likes me, the boy might ask me if I want to marry him or I might ask the boy if
he wants to marry me.

9.2. What work do *ferenji*-girls do and where do they get their jewellery from?

Arti: In the home of your father what do you do there? What do you work?

Laughter.

Tine: I do not live in my father's house anymore. I live by myself. Some girls who are my
age live with friends. When I lived with my family I just helped out in the house a
little bit. I mainly helped my mother in the household. But just a little bit.

Arti: The shoes you have and the clothes you have and all the things you have, did you buy
them yourself or did your father buy them for you? Who gave you all these things?

Laughter.

Sus.: Now she is asking just as we have asked before!

Laughter.

Tine: Well, I go to university. But besides the university I go to work and I earn money. My parents also give me some money. So, some things I can afford and for other things I use my parent's money.

Arti: But if someday you say, "Oh, I'm going to see my father or I am going to see my elder brother or my sister." If you go to their house and you say, "Please give me this or give me that." Will they give it to you? Or will they not give it to you?

Sophia: In our culture, we don't really ask for things. So we do not go to our parents and say, "I want to have this and that."

Echi: Sometimes you just go to see them and eat with them. But you do not go to ask for things.

Sus.: Your father might ask you, "Do you need some money? Do you have any problems?" But you do not ask for it.

Arti: But do you ask for things from your friends, from your age mates? Do you say, "Oh, this is very nice! Can you give me this or that?" Do you ask for things from your age mates?

Sophia: No. But we make presents for birthdays and special occasions. We give things to our friends and family on special occasions...

Echi: When we like somebody we watch them and we know what they like. The same goes for my father. He will watch me and know what I need. It is more about watching other people and seeing what they need and giving them a present rather than going and asking for it.

9.3. What does a *ferenji*-father get when his daughter gets marries?

Arti: When you marry and you go to live with your husband, will anything be given to your father? Will there be honey and goats and cows? What is given to you?

Laughter.

Lago: They do not have goats! What shall they give?

Loud laughter.

Or do they give money? They do not have goats!

Tine: When you marry it is your own decision to get married and nobody will pay for it. But the father of the bride usually pays for the wedding.

Sus.: And everybody brings presents...

Tine: And everybody brings presents for the couple.

Laughter.

Lago: So, your father does not get anything when his daughter goes to marry?

Loud laughter.

Lago: Your mother has suffered a lot to give birth to you! But as the mother has suffered a lot, why should she just...

Arti: She carried you around. What is that? She carried you around and she suffered and gave birth to you and she can eat nothing when you leave?

Tina: But she is happy that you found somebody who will take care of you. And she will be proud and happy that you found somebody good.

Arti: What is that? You are like wild creatures in the bush! You are animals!

Loud Laughter.

9.4. Ferenji are like animals

Lago: You are like animals because you just marry without any reason and you go away and you do not leave anything behind. Just like animals!

Sus.: You think we are like animals because nobody pays for you. But we say, we marry because we like each other. And you are not married, you are sold to someone! So you like to be sold?

Tina: Would you not do without all the cows and the honey if you were allowed to marry the one you love?

Lago: We like that you marry the one you like.

Arti: In this point you are better than us. So in this point you are prouder than we are. But only in this point! We are prouder and better than you in the question of honey and goats and cattle. But in the question of money, you again are better.

Lago: We are sold even if we do not like it. They do not look at you. You cry. Your father just sells you. There is no going back. He wants to have the cattle and the goats. Maybe, you do not like the man. That is bad! You like someone else and you have to live with him that is not good.

Laughter.

Lago to Galte: But you are a woman !

Galti: No! I am a girl! How can she say I am a woman? I am a girl! Look at my skirt! Have you ever seen a Kara before?

Torgo: I am a woman! She is a girl [about Galte].

Arti: I am a girl.

Everybody asks everybody else if they are girls or women.

Torgo: I am a woman. I am married.

Loud laughter.

Torgo: She is girl.

Arti: But her [about Torgo] breasts are very small!

Laughter.

Torgo: I have four children!

Everybody laughs and starts talking for a while.

9.5. Arbore: Female Circumcision

They start talking about circumcision in Arbore.

Kerri: Bride! Is the cutting bad? Would it be good to abandon that tradition?

Lago: No. You have to do it. When you are a girl you want to have it done because it is your tradition and your grandmother and your mother and everybody has it. And if somebody says, "Oh no! You will not be circumcised!", they all would be very unhappy and ask, "Why? What have I done wrong?". And they will run away. "Am I Hamar? Or why don't they do it for me?". And they will run away.

Kerri: Why don't you get a *marphi*, an injection, and get circumcised without pain?

Lago: We do not have injections.

Kerri: And if a doctor came, would the people send him away?

Lago: No, they would not.

Lago describes how the circumcision is done.

Arti: Are you not afraid? Does it not hurt?

Lago: Some scream. Some cry.

She describes further how it is done. No translation of discussion.

Everybody speaks.

Kara, Bashada, Arbore, Ari and Maale:

Girls' jewellery and adornment and the division of labour

Participants:

from Bashada: Arti (unmarried girl), Kerri (married young woman)
from Kara: Galte (unmarried girl), Torgo (married young woman)
from Arbore: Lago (bride), Baro (married young woman)
from Maale: Kalamo, Zeleketch,
from Ari: Galchi (unmarried girl), Gigsho Bulsi (married woman), Mingi (married woman)

Translators: Susanne Epple, Christine Echi Gabbert, Hannah Getachew

Assistants: Sophia Thubauville, Tine Nawrath, Tina Bruederlin, Anne Loeffler, Kerstin,

10.1. Kara: Dress and jewellery

Tine: I would like to hear about the jewelry Galte is wearing? Is it a typical jewelry for girls? Who gave these things to her and when does she wear it? We would like to hear about all that and also we want to know the names of the objects.

Galti: This little cape is called *kebe*, in Hamar they call it *kaashi*.

Anne: What are those small things made of, which are sown to it?

Weynshet: Those are the hoofs from little goats.

Galti: *Tsonsha*.

Tina: The bracelets you are wearing, are they girls' bracelets or do you keep them as a woman? Torgo is wearing the same kind and she is married already...

Galti: The cape and the belt are a girl's adornments.

Tina: And the bracelets are also worn by women?

Galti: Yes.

Tine: And where do you get the *kebe* from?

Galti: My skirts are made from antelope leather, from those with the curved horns and the striped fur. Its not from cowhide, it is from a Kudu-antelope.

Tine: Who gave you the skin?

Galti: A friend.

Weynshet: And who gave you the beads and the cowry-shells?

Galti: My brother gave them to me. You may also get them from a relative who bought them on the market.

Sophia: Do you receive them for a special reason? In Ari, for example, the girls receive them as gifts when they have worked at work parties or when they have worked hard somewhere else. Do you get them without any special reason?

Galti: I ask someone to buy me some.

Tina: When are they given to you?

Galti: I got them when I was small. That was a long time ago.

Anne: And the kid's hoofs? Did you also get them as a present?

Galti: When a kid dies I simply take the hoofs. The kids are not slaughtered for that, I collect the hooves when one dies.

Tine: The *kalshi*, the belly belt and the other cowry-shell belt, do you only wear them when you are a girl? Do you take them off when you are promised to a man or when you actually go to him? And who would receive them then?

Galti: The belts are given to the little sister of my husband when I move to his house.

Weynshet: Who gave you the head-beads?

Galti: I received them from relatives; from my brothers or from friends.

Tine: How old are you when you get your piercing done?

Galti: I got the piercing when I had pulled out my lower front teeth. Before you have your teeth pulled out you do not wear the nail.

Tine: Will take it out again?

Galti: Most married women do not wear the nail anymore. But they still have the hole through their lower lip.

Torgo: I used to wear the nail as a girl, but now, as a woman, I have stopped. You are allowed to wear the nail as a woman, though.

Tina: Galti told us yesterday that the girls pull their teeth in groups. They meet secretly and get them pulled.

10.2. Bashada: Dress and jewellery

Anne: Maybe Arti can tell us something about the typical Bashada girl's dress. How do you call the skirt you are wearing? Where do you get the leather from to make it?

Arti: I got my first skirt when I was a small girl. My mother made it for me.

Tina: The women's leather capes are cut differently than the girls' capes; the animal's head points into a different direction.

Weynshet: But Arti is actually wearing a women's cape, it should be different.

Anne: So the girls' wear them in a way that the skin's head points down to the ground?

Tina: Yes.

Arti: My father gives me honey, which I sell at the market. From that money I buy myself the beads. My brothers buy me my bracelets, these ones, the *gaus*.

Anne: And this fur you are wearing around your ankles, what kind of animal is that? Does it have a specific name?

Arti: *Yayu*.

Discussion about what kind of animal this could be.

Anne: *Yayu*? What kind of animal is that?

Arti: It eats men and goats!

Tina: Does it have long teeth?

Arti: Yes!

Tina: I think it is a hog.

Arti: It has very big teeth and it eats men and cows!

Anne: Where did you get this fur from?

Arti: My father hunted it. It lives in the bush.

Anne: So it lives in Bashada and your father hunted it and gave you its fur as a present?

Arti: Yes. My father said it was good and that I could use it to tie it around my ankles.

Tina: Choke's daughters had this ankle decoration from monkey fur. Men sometimes tie fur around their legs when they have hunted an animal. Choke's daughters had it from black and white monkey fur.

Weynshet: And who makes your hair?

Arti: My friends, or my brother's friends. I invite them and prepare food, then they do my hair.

Tina: Do you have pierced ears?

Arti: Yes, look!

Tina: Do little girls get their ears pierced too?

Arti: Yes, they do. You get your first one when you are still small and later on you add more, maybe two, maybe three.

Tina: You also have a piercing in your lower lip...

Arti: Yes, I also have one there. In former times in Bashada we did not get our lower lips pierced but nowadays we do that. We can do whatever we like and think is pretty. In former times the girls would also only wear one ear piercing, but now the girls are starting to wear more, just like the men do. But I only have one.

Tina: Did you also wear a nail through your lower lip?

Arti: No, never. I stabbed my lip with a thorn, but then I did not like it anymore, so that I never wore anything in it. It healed very well, but I didn't like it.

Tina: Do you like it on the Kara girls?

Arti: Yes, I think it is pretty.

Anne: Who does your hair, Galti?

Galti: Torgo does it. She is my sister.

Tine: Is she your real sister?

Galti: She is my uncle's daughter.

Arti: This leather strip, which I wear around my upper arm, is called *nokole*. It is used during the dances to playfully hit the boys. The boys make them for us girls.

Tine: So if someone likes you he makes you this strip?

Arti: Yes.

Anne: Do you also have *nokoles* in Kara?

Galti: Yes.

Weynshet: Who makes them for you?

Galti: It is given to me during the dances.

Tine: I would like to ask which of the objects we talked about is the most important, the most precious one for you.

Arti: If I would not have any beads and no bracelets, if my hair would not look pretty, then I would think that I am nothing. I would think that I do not have anything, that I am smaller than the others.

Tina: But what is the most important thing?

Arti: Everything is very important. If I would not have any adornments I would look like dark wood.

Tina: And which thing would you never, never give away?

Laughter.

Arti: I would never give my *gaus* [bracelets] away. My brothers gave them to me and they would get very mad at me if I came home without them. My brothers and my father would beat me! I am allowed to give away my beads, because I have bought them from my own money.

10.3. Giving away everything as a bride

Anne: Maybe we should start talking about the women now? I would like to know more about the women's dress and adornments. What do you wear when you become a bride?

Torgo: When I came to my husband's house, his sisters took everything from me. My jewelry, my head-beads, my cowry-shell belt, my skirt and my cape....

Tine: Your bracelets, too?

Torgo: No, not the bracelets and not my necklaces.

Tina: So you were forced to give everything away?

Torgo: Yes.

Tine: Isn't it true that these earrings which you are wearing right now are only worn by women? Is there anything else, which is only worn by women?

Torgo: When I marry I start to wear these upper arm bracelets.

Tine: Does your husband give them to you?

Torgo: Yes, he gives them to me.

Tine: Do you receive them when you are promised or when you move to his place?

Torgo: I get them when I move to his place. He gives them to me. They do not have any special meaning; I just wear them because they are very pretty.

Anne: Are they very precious? The Arbore have told us before that their upper arm bracelets cost a cow.

Torgo: These ones are traded in for goats. One goat for one bracelet.

Anne: Is there anything about your dress?

Torgo: I had to take off all my girl's clothes when I moved to my husband's. I only kept my bracelets and my white beads.

Sophia: Does your husband buy you jewelry after you got married, or do you still receive things from other people?

Torgo: The mother of my husband made me this skirt.

10.4. It is good to be girl for as long as possible

Arti: If you do not work hard no one will marry you. Maybe the husband of your elder sister will marry you, but no one else. If you work very hard, then you will be married quickly. So the good thing in Bashada is, that when you get married, you do not start to live with your husband immediately. You stay at your parent's house for some more years. And during these years you are still free to go dance and you are free and you are a real girl.

When you have grown up your husband might kidnap you in the bush and take you to his house. Maybe you run away again and then he kidnaps you again. Then you run away again. If you do not want to become a woman yet you run away.

If your father does not give you to your husband for a long time you can also decide, 'Ah, I do not want to be a girl anymore!' You go by yourself to live with your husband. Or maybe your father decides and says, 'She is big now, she will go with her

husband!'. Then you will have a big fiest. All your friends come, it is called *gaido*.

After this you leave and got to live with your husband.

So the good thing is that we do not go to live with our husbands after we have been married. In Arbore, as far as I understood, you get married and then you immediately go and live with your husband, your girlhood is finished from that day on.

Anne: Baro wanted to say something.

Baro: So in Bashada you go to live with your husbands when you are very old. We in Arbore go when we are still young!

Laughter.

For us it is good to go when we are still young.

Arti: But we are the same age! Maybe I will go to my husband next year, you already have gone there! I will be a girl for one more year! It is much better!

Loud laughter.

10.5. Arbore and Ari: Girls' work–diverengence between agriculturalists and pastoralists

Baro: The reason why people do not shout at us when we are girls is that we should be free as girls and not work too much. Once we are married we have to work all the time. As long as we are girls our mothers work, just as we will work when we get married. That's why no one should shout at us, nobody should object when we do not want to work. As girls we are meant to have the freedom to do what we want to do. That is what is so good about being a girl.

If we sometimes do not want to work, we do not want to! And no one should shout, because our mother is there. We know what our work is, but we can also say what we want to do ourselves.

Lago to the Ari girls: Don't you go to fetch wood and don't you get water and don't you herd the cattle?

Galchi: No, we do not herd the cattle.

Susanne: Is it taboo?

Galchi: The boys do not let us to herd cattle.

Susanne: So what happens if your father has no sons and only girls?

Galchi: If I have no brothers, my father will bring my cousin.

Lago: So why do you drink the milk if you to not herd the cattle?

Laughter.

Lago: As a girl it is good to herd the cattle for your father, you become proud. You drink the milk and you become proud. You drink the milk and herd the cattle together with all your age-mates and friends, that is good. What is good about having the boys herd the cattle and not the girls?

Laughter.

Galchi: But we do all the work in the house, everything for our mother and our father, that's our pride.

Lago: The boys herd the cattle when they go to the cattle camps, but most of the cattle which are tended close to the house are herded by the girls.

A girl who tends cattle, tends cattle, tends cattle very much makes her father very proud. He will say, 'She is like a boy. She can tend all my cattle.' A girl will do that until she marries. Her father says, 'I have a girl who is as strong as a boy!'

If the father does not have any grown up sons, the cattle will be sent to far places with other boys, but his daughters will herd the cattle that are close to the house. Our father will be very proud. All Arbore-girls can do this by their own.

Galchi: But if you have brothers, why do you need to herd the cattle?

Lago: It is our tradition.

Laughter.

Lago: First of all, one work, we girls do not do is to plough the fields. The men go to plough the fields and make the fence of the cattle-kraal. The men plough the fields with the digging-stick. We women plant the seeds and harvest.

Echi: It is very hard work to plough the fields with digging-sticks.

Baro: The girls tend the cattle and bring the cattle to the water-holes. But the water-hole itself and the digging of the fields is done by the men. The hard work is done by the boys and our brothers. And we tend the cattle. That's what our brothers do.

Arti: In Bashada it is the same. The men make the water holes and we herd the cattle and bring them to the water holes.

Lago: It is not that we tend the cattle all the time! We do what we want to do! We can tend cattle for as long as we want to. If we want to tend cattle, we tend cattle. If we want to sleep, we sleep.

Laughter.

Lago: Why don't you listen! We do not work all day! We work when we want!

Laughter.

Arti: We understood what you said! Let's talk about something else now!

Laughter.

Arti: Let's hear what the Maale-girls have to say! Do they herd cattle?

Hannah: I think she is too shy to talk.

Discussion, everybody starts talking.

Echi: Hannah, do the girls in Maale tend cattle?

Hannah: Yes, they do.

Susanne: The girls and the women?

Hannah: Yes.

Susanne: I heard that they do not enter the cattle-kraal, is that right?

Hannah: Yes.

Susanne: But they may touch the cows?

Hannah: Yes. They tend the cattle, the goats also.

Everybody starts talking.

Susanne: So the men and the boys...?

Arti: As long as I am not married I am not like a real female, I am like a boy. So why can't you milk the cows in Maale? And if you can't milk the cows, may you drink the milk?

Hannah: Yes, she can drink the milk. Her brothers milk the cows.

Lago: What is bad about milking the cows?

Hannah: The cow may die.

Discussion between Lago and Arti, which is not translated.

Lago: So in Hamar the married women do not herd the cattle. In Arbore, the married women from a specific clan may herd. The Olmok-clan only milk the cattle then.

Torgo: In Kara we do not have any cows...

Lago: What?

Torgo: We only have goats.

Lago: Where do you get your butter from?

Torgo: In Kara, we do not have cows, but we do have goats. We get our butter from the goats and sheep. Mainly from the goats. We do not really have many sheep. But we have a lot of water in Kara, we do not have to dig for it. We just bend down and drink from the water.

Participants and Guests of the Workshop:

From Bashada:



Arti,
unmarried girl



Kerri,
married woman



Pitta,
elderly woman



Alga,
elderly woman

From Banna:



Duka,
married woman,



Sagonda,
elderly widow, Duka's mother-in-law

From Hamar:



Birinda,
elderly woman, widow

From Kara:



Galte,
Unmarried girl



Torgo,
married woman



Shauki,
elderly woman

From Arbore:



Lago,
Bride



Baro,
married woman



Nyro,
married woman

From Dassanetch:



Yendite,
unmarried girl



Naukwa,
married woman,
Yendite's mother



Elele,
elderly woman

From Maale:



Kalamo,
unmarried girl



Dansa,
married woman



Zelketch,
elderly woman

From Ari:



Galchi,
unmarried girl



Mingi,
married woman



Gigsho,
elderly woman

Anthropologists and Assistant:



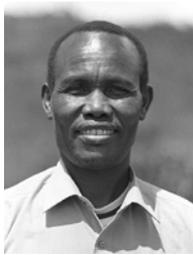
Jean Lydall,
Anthropologist,
Great Britain



Susanne Epple,
Anthropologist,
Germany



Christina Echi Gabbert,
Anthropologist,
Germany



Horra Surra,
Assistant,
Ethiopia

Students:



From left to right:
Anne Löffler, Kristin Nawrath, Tina Brüderlin, Konrad Licht, Peggy Elfmann, Sophia
Thubauville, Kerstin Wientzek