

# *Gada* theory and practices

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## Part one:



This paper was presented at Oromo Study Association (OSA) annual conference at the University of Minnesota, USA, on 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> July 2012 as a contribution to the effort to understand our own culture, norms and tradition.

The paper addresses the question of how the Oromo traditional democratic institution, *Gada* System, interact with the modern Oromo political organization in the process of Oromo struggle against Ethiopian government oppression. It also discusses some ideas of *Gada* political or ideological philosophy and culture of democracy. This article is of interest not only for the Oromos, but also for other Ethiopians who are interested in knowing what *Gada* system really is. The article provides information about the original essence of *Gada* political philosophy and democratic ideas as one of the homegrown democratic cultures in Ethiopia and African as well.

### **Glossary of some Oromo language terms used in this part of Oromo local dialects**

<b><i>Aadaa</i></b>	Culture, tradition and custom practice
<b><i>Abbaa bokkuu</i></b>	Spokesman or spokesperson of <i>Gada</i> or <i>Gada</i> leader
<b><i>Abbaa Duulaa</i></b>	Military commander, a position assumed only in case of outside fright
<b><i>Abbaa Gada</i></b>	A leader of one Oromo <i>Gada</i> term for only eight years period
<b><i>Abbaa seeraa</i></b>	The most senior retired <i>Gada</i> leader who hold a supreme chief judge position until he dies. He serves as a supreme chief Judge after he retired from <i>Gada</i> office. He is considered as a top judicial expert in Oromo Borana <i>Gada</i> system. He is also a memorizer of <i>Gada</i> laws.
<b><i>Adulaa (Adulootaa)</i></b>	Elected senior councillor(s) or <i>Gada</i> leader(s) who work in the highest position for eight years or one <i>Gada</i> term
<b><i>Arboora</i></b>	Senior councillor(s)

<b><i>Baallii</i></b>	A special sceptre, which symbolizes power during a key and secret ceremony of power transfer ritual between outgoing and incoming <i>Gada</i> leader ( <i>Abbaa Gada</i> ). The end of one <i>Gada</i> term is marked by the exchange of symbol of power ( <i>baallii</i> ).
<b><i>Gada</i></b>	Oromo traditional government system based on the principle of power and leadership rotation among five political lines ( <i>gogeessa</i> in Oromo Borana) every eight years period. <i>Gada</i> system can also be referred to a set of political, administrative and power timetable for a maximum of only eight years.
<b><i>Gada Arboora</i></b>	The term or the name given to the first and most senior institution of one of the three institutional pillars of <i>Gada</i> ( <i>Yaa'a Gada Sadeenii</i> ) <i>Gada Sadeenii</i> (the three pillars of <i>Gada</i> ) in Oromo-Borana <i>Gada</i> system that function together as a single body.
<b><i>Gadaamoojii</i></b>	Men in the final grade of <i>Gada</i> cycle (72-80 years old) or the retired class of the society who reached the last grade in the entire <i>Gada</i> cycle. <i>Gadaamoojii</i> means very old in other areas of Oromia region.
<b><i>Garba</i></b>	Term or the name given to one of the junior branches of the three institutional pillars of Borana <i>Gada</i> . <i>Garba</i> consists of 12 selected and highly experienced persons from four different <i>gogeessas</i>
<b><i>Gogeessa</i></b>	The name of Borana political lines. There are five political lines known as <i>gogeessa shaneen</i> in Borana political system but all of the five <i>gogeessas</i> are based on a single and common ideology. The system criss-crosses the two Borana moieties and seventeen clans regardless of geographical and clan boundaries. There are unlimited number of <i>lubas</i>
<b><i>Gooroo Borana</i></b>	Place and institution which means the three Pillars of Borana <i>Gada</i> institution or <i>Yaa'a Gada Sadeenii</i> ( <i>Gada Arboora</i> , <i>Medhicha</i> and <i>Garba</i> institutions), the Five Branches of Borana Spiritual Institutions ( <i>Laduu Qalluu Shaneenii</i> ) and <i>Gada</i> spokesman ( <i>Abbaa Bokkuu</i> ) together with permanent <i>Gada</i> institutional site in Areero district (Dirree) in southern Oromia where the permanent headquarter of <i>Gada</i> institutions and <i>Gada</i> leaders are localized known as <i>Gooroo Borana</i> (a combination of complete <i>Gada</i> institution).
<b><i>Gumii Gaayoo</i></b>	<i>Gumii</i> means people, <i>gaayoo</i> means place, then <i>Gumii Gaayoo</i> means people's assembly meeting at <i>Gaayoo</i> place. <i>Gumii Gaayoo</i> is the highest Borana assembly and decision making body of Borana <i>Gada</i> system in which the general assembly meeting is held every eight years during a peaceful power transfer of <i>Gada</i> through both participatory and representative democracy system in southern Oromia in Ethiopia.
<b><i>Guulaa</i></b>	A person who has decided to withdraw from his political line or <i>gogeessa</i> and join another political line ( <i>gogeessa</i> ) by his own choice.
<b><i>Hayyuu</i></b>	The retired <i>Gada</i> officials or ex- <i>Gada</i> leaders or judicial elder(s) who have rich experiences in judicial knowledge.

<b><i>Hayyuu gosa</i></b>	A clan leader. <i>Hayyuu gosa</i> is the leader of his clan, and he is also the representative of his clan during the important meetings such as during the general assembly ( <i>Gumii Gaayyo</i> )
<b><i>Hawaxaa</i></b>	An administrative term given to the sub-branches of each <i>Gada</i> institution. <i>Hawaxaa</i> is a sub-branch of all three <i>Gada</i> institutions that ranks second position in each branch of the three pillars of Borana <i>Gada</i> institution. Just as members of each <i>hawaxaa</i> vary in member in all institutions, members of <i>koonnituu</i> also varies in number.
<b><i>Jaallaba</i></b>	Personal advisor to the <i>hayyuu</i> . <i>Jaallabas</i> are usually appointed personally by <i>hayyuu</i> based on friendship, wisdom, service
<b><i>Jaarrolee</i></b>	Any senior or respected persons in the society
<b><i>Koontomaa</i></b>	The collective term or name for sub-branches of the three pillars of <i>Gada</i> . It can be used as a collective name for <i>koonnoo</i> and <i>hawaxaa</i> the term used in each branches of the three institutions
<b><i>Laduu</i></b>	Bracelet
<b><i>Luba</i></b>	The name given to political membership within <i>gogeessa</i> or political lines or political membership class. There are many kinds of <i>lubas</i> both in the same <i>gogeessa</i> or in different <i>gogeessas</i>
<b><i>Medhicha</i></b>	An institutional name given to one of the <i>Yaa'a Gada Sadeenii</i> (the three pillars of <i>Gada</i> ) of Borana <i>Gada</i> institutions. <i>Medhicha</i> is one of the junior branches of the three pillars of Oromo-Borana <i>Gada</i> institution led by 18 persons.
<b><i>Nagaa</i></b>	Peace, security, stability and love
<b><i>Odaa</i></b>	A sycamore tree considered as Oromo national symbol representing multiple symbols and meaning. It also stands for symbolizing history, myth, tradition, peace, environmental and natural values
<b><i>Qaalluu</i></b>	The hereditary religious, ritual or spiritual leader(s) either as a clan or as an individual which can be inherited through clan kinship system.
<b><i>Qaallitti</i></b>	The wife of the spiritual leader ( <i>Qaalluu</i> )
<b><i>Raaba Doorii(s)</i></b>	Qualified persons or candidate(s) for councillor who are already to take responsibility.
<b><i>Waaqaa</i></b>	God, the greatest thing. Truth, justice, doing right and telling truth considered as equivalent to God
<b><i>Wal-dhabbii</i></b>	Conflict, dispute, disagreement or any psychological disturbances
<b><i>Yaa'a</i></b>	A group of senior leadership who are politically, socially, economically and ideologically moving together in a united form in the orderly way or in one direction harmoniously
<b><i>Yuuba</i></b>	The semi-retired class of the society or between 48 - 72 years old
<b><i>Waraana</i></b>	Defence, war, violence, fighting or any physical violence
<b><i>Waaqeffatta</i></b>	Believer(s) or person(s) who believe in God in Oromo traditional way
<b><i>Wayyuu fiixee</i></b>	The first spiritual leader

# 1) *Gada* System

## 1.1) What is *Gada* System?

According to oral history *Gada* system existed even before 10<sup>th</sup> century but as people were continually moving from each other, they started to live freely without *Gada* system. People refused to be ruled by *Gada* System from 1385 -1457. For 72 years, people lived without *Gada*, but living without law and order made people's life more insecure, dangerous and chaos. There was an extraordinary rise of crime, instability and disorder in the Oromo people's daily life. People were crying for peace, security, leadership, law and order. This condition has forced members of the society to reconsider *Gada* System as the only way out of this condition. After 72 years, few men in the society among them *Gadayoo* Galgalo, Ali Gurracha, Yaayyaa Muunyoo, Raaba Yaayya Fullalle, and *Gadammojjii* Oole Bonayyaa have started to reform *Gada* system. The reform was crucial because there were lapses of rules, order and norms in the pre-existed *Gada*. Ali Gurracha and Yaayyaa Muunyoo were key players in the *Gada* system reform process and helped convince the people to accept the system without any reaction or objection. *Gadayoo* Galgaloo presented the reformed system as a newly established *Gada* system. A well-established *Gada* system we have in the southern Oromia was reformed by those central individual figures. The first Abba *Gada* was *Gadayoo* Galgalo. He is from Dambitu clan and Warra-Gugsa sub-clan. The name of his *Gada* was Fullaasa. His *Gada* office was from 1475-1465 (8 years). According to legends and mythical explanations, the *Gada* system emerged out of Oromo culture and belief system, more precisely out of *Qaalluu* institution to avoid internal conflict and chaos. *Qaalluu* institution has been instrumental in producing a sense of Oromoness.

*Gada* system has been defined in many ways; however, this paper offers the following generic definition of *Gada* system. *Gada* system is the Oromo traditional institution involving political process, economical, cultural, ritual, spiritual, social and administrative system based on holistic ideas of participatory and representative democracy, principles in which power is both vertically and horizontally distributed, balanced, checked, controlled and limited among its three institutional pillars known as *Yaa'a Gada Sadeenii* (*Gada Arboora*, *Medhicha* and *Garba* institutions). Such mechanism of power distribution and limitation is crucial to prevent or to solve conflict, to maintain political, economical, cultural, social and institutional stability. As Legesse (2000) stated, *Gada* is certainly not a single-issue institution. For instance, *Gada* system in Borana-Oromo is headed by three different institutional pillars (one senior and two junior institutions) known as *Arboora*, *Medhicha* and *Garba* institutions.

*Gada* system can be also defined as a holistic system that affects every aspect of Oromo lives. By holistic system, it means that no elements of *Gada* system can exist apart from the system in which it stands for the common values of the people in terms of political, economic, cultural, spiritual, social and administrative processes. *Gada* system is a power timetable because the duration of power in *Gada* system is limited only for eight years period in office for one *Gada* s units, with no second time in office. Indeed, it is unique and complex institution ever founded in African continent.

In the country, like Ethiopia where the history and political culture of the country are characterized by state dominated political system, unequal power, diverse cultures and multifaith community, peoples' traditional values have never been considered as a crucial issues during its political, economical and social transition in the past. Both Oromo and other Ethiopian traditional institutions are developed from their people's traditional belief, history and cultures, but in different contexts characterized by both differences and similarities. Because of the diversity of Ethiopian people most of traditional institutions in Ethiopian are varying in their style of operations, principles and laws. Some institutions are more democratic and others are less democratic depending on the society's culture, history and belief systems. It can be argued that some of them have managed to create stable institutions with a mechanism of conflict prevention and resolution. One example of such traditional democratic institutions in African is the Oromo *Gada* system, which is the topic of this paper. Oromo *Gada* system is one of African's long functioning traditional institutions that has been affecting all aspects of Oromo life (social, political, economic, cultural and ritual lives) for centuries. It integrates different social, political, economic and cultural commitments among the Oromo people. It also maintains Oromo people's identity, culture, unity and egalitarianism.

The *Gada* institution, which is based on the important ideas of peace and democracy attracted the attention of anthropologists such as Bassi 2005, Baxter 1996, Legesse 2000, 1973, Schlee 1998 and others scholars. *Gada* system has also influenced other Oromo neighbors. Several neighbouring peoples such as Sidama, Gabra, Burjii, Saakuyyee, Walayita, Kondso, "Darasa" Gede'o, Nyika, Nabdi, and Maassai have practised *Gada* like systems (Beckingham et.al.1954), but in different ways. Among other things, for example, the Gabra and the Borana have *aadaa* and *seera*- a sacred set of laws governing behaviour and maintaining peace and order in society (Watson 2001).

The highest decision-making body of the *Gada* system is general assembly known as *Gumii Gaayoo* in Oromo-Borana. This assembly was held every eight years. According to Legesse (2000), there are documented lists of sixty-nine *Gada* term leaders up to now (see Appendix 3). If we multiply the number of *Gada* leaders by eight (the term length), we see that the *Gada* system of peaceful power handover goes back to 14<sup>th</sup> century (see Appendix 3). The unique political system of *Gada* is that it employs both representative and participatory democratic principles. “All members of the community can and in same case should participate either directly or through their representative. This right-obligation of participating makes it possible to arrive at decisions binding on the whole community, making the *Gumii Gaayoo* a federal assembly particularly adapted to the resolution of interclan problems and to the formulation of laws (Bassi 2005:255).

The foundation and the concept of *Gada* system are the same for the whole Oromo people; although, the names or terms of the administrative and political lines varies dialectically or by local meaning in different Oromo areas, as a result of continuous shaping and reshaping activities as the system encountered different circumstances. The system is made up of three different institutional pillars (*Arboora*, *Medhicha* and *Garba*) as used in Borana, but these terms can vary within Oromo society. In Borana system, the five political lines (*gogeessa shaneenii*) succeed each other every eight years through the principle of power rotation among these five political lines and its political membership class known as *luba*.

These five political lines are established at different time, they have different *lalaba* (proclamations) when they take over a non-repeatable *Gada* office in every eight years. These five *gogeessa shaneenii* are constantly moving allowing a single and common ideological principle of *Gada* system while political class (*luba*) are moving continuously depending on their seniority and memberships sequence within their own political line. This means *gogeessa* is constant while there can be different *lubas* within the same *gogeessa*, for example, because of senior-junior *gogeessa* order or depending on time when the person is born and who held the *Gada* office at that time. *Luba* can be identified by referring to different individual *Gada* leader. There is also such differentiation within the same family, clan and moiety.

The category of one's senior or junior political classes (*lubas*) can be determined by many conditions. For instance, at what fathers' age a man was born, and whether or not one's *luba* was in power. The five political lines (*gogeessa shaneen*) are persistent, constantly cyclical while *luba* are (unfolding and non-repeatable). Even within the same political line, there could be many different *lubas*. These constant five political lines (*gogeessas*) and infinitive political class (*luba*) cross-cut all Oromo-Borana patrilineal clans in which the five *Qaalluu* branches are also

symbolically included with no political, administrative and military role. However, the defence institution (*waranaa*) is also excluded in case of internal conflict but included in case of outside fright. The Oromo traditional defence institution is led by war commander (*Abbaa Duulaa*).

Power in *Gada* system is fixed vertically as anti-hierarchical power monopolization, horizontally as anti-extension of power duration. It is a system of political administration in which the term of office is limited to a maximum of only eight years (see Fig.6 and 7) through institutional approach in which power, responsibility and decision making process is shared among *Yaa'a Gada Sadeenii* and *gogeessa shaneenii*. *Gada* system is by itself an anti-hierarchical and contains many strategies that, at least seemingly, are designed to prevent power monopoly (Dahl 2001:113). The system never allows power to be held by few persons or all power concentration in the hands of few individuals or single institution and in the hands of one clan or at particular geographical location or place. The complex way of its political power distribution and its time limitation system prevent or minimize conflicts over power and other interests. Oromo have created a whole complex of institutional arrangements to prevent concentration of power (Legesse 2000).

*Gada* is also a traditional institutional framework that serves as a system of conflict prevention by maintaining and ensuring its principles of egalitarianism, equality, security, identity and unity in which these common ideologies are inherited in Oromo democratic culture, normative values, social behavior and belief system. *Gada* system serves as a school of knowledge for the Oromo people. For instance, when the Borana men talk of their knowledge position and knowhow of *Gada* system, they say that they have completed the *Gada* laws and rules. *Gada* institution, itself, is maintained by the conflict prevention system and resolution mechanisms such as through check and balancing system among its three institutional pillars (*Gada Arboora*, *Medhicha* and *Garba*) and its five different political lines (*gogeessas*) in its administration and political system. Another mechanism through which *Gada* maintains itself is through reform. During the peaceful power transfer, in every eight years, one of the general assembly lawmakers' works is to reform law by trashing the unnecessary one. The Borana spend much of their time reviewing their culture (*aadaa*), with the deliberate intention to modify their customs and, if necessary, introduce new laws (Legesse (1973:8 in Bassi 2005).

One of the most important *Gada* institutional self maintenance mechanisms is the formal midterm assembly usually held in the middle (4<sup>th</sup> year) of one *Gada* term. This assembly is considered as assembly of criticism and its aim is to check power and find formal criticism of leadership in case of misusing power, resource utilization, corruption and failure to look after

the weakest part of the population. Oromo-Boranas hold this midterm *Gada* assembly to evaluate their leadership. If necessary they rebuke the administration of *Abbaa Gada* (*Gada* leader).

Power, in *Gada* system, is transferred peacefully from one *gogeessa* to the next successor *gogeessa* every eight years in the form of rotating presidency, not among age-grades or agecycle. Power rotates among these five *gogeessas* (see Table 2) for the details of power rotation among five *gogeessas*). *Gada* leader, who serve for only one *Gada* term, are administratively elected. This administration cycle among five *gogeessas* means that power returns back to every *gogeessa* after every forty years (i.e 5years X 8 years =40 years).

*Gada* Political system is a highly centralized political processe, ‘ideological superstructure’, strongly centralized leaderships and political authority in the form of procedural harmony through assemblies in which all decisions are made. In some aspects, *Gada* political system is similar to the modern states, unlike simple traditional state societies in Africa. For example, Bassi (2005) stated that the centralization of the ideological superstructure and aversion to use of organized force within the community explain the characteristics of [Oromo]-Borana leadership, which in some aspects are similar to those of leadership in [modern] state societies. Bassi explained *Gada* political system and its institutional leadership as it is specifically political and is legitimized in the Yaa’a centers through a specialized formative process. What makes *Gada* political system different than the modern day state political system is that consensus is always used as ‘a judicial instruments within the community’ and as an alternative to organized physical force. It is this factor, according to Bassi, that makes *Gada* political system different from state systems. Moreover, Bassi explained that, in Oromo- Borana, *Gada* political system didn’t use physical force within the community. This makes *Gada* system in Oromo-Borana different from that of other stateless societies, where the different segments can legitimately confront one another in armed conflict (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1940 in Bassi 2005:271).

## **1.2) Is *Gada* System an Age-Grading (Cycle) System?**

The Difference between Age-grading and the *Gada* System in Borana

In many Oromo studies, *Gada* system was simply described sometimes as an ‘age-grade system’ sometimes as an ‘age set’, sometimes as ‘*luba*’ (member of *gogeessas*), other times as



'age- cycle' and sometimes as a 'generation set.' However, such interpretations did not give a clear understanding of the difference between age-grades/set/class and *Gada* system, nor is it analyzed correctly, as it is used in the *Gada* institution. For example, Baxter (1978:169-170) explained by saying that "*Gada* has its origins in an age organization, but I do not intend to speculate on how or why it originated: we just cannot know". To start with, there are no rules and regulations within the *Gada* system which formally (orally) state that only a specific age group (40-48 years) can be eligible for the admittance to either *Gada* assemblies or the *Gada* office. *Gada* is a social, political and power timetable of an administrative course through which only men enter into power and retirement, which is defined and controlled by the *Gada* assembly (*Gumii Gaayoo* in Borana). Whereas, age-grading system is an individual life timetable or life span that both men and women pass through different stages, rights and obligations from birth to death. It is a social and biological timetable of life course from birth to entry into marriage, political retirement up to *jaarrumma* (very old). Misinterpretations of *Gada* system, by some outsiders and those who do not like the Oromo culture, simply as purely "age-grading" or "age cycle system" have created confusion among students of Oromo culture and history concerning what *Gada* system is. From an emic point of view, I would argue that *Gada* system is not an age-system, but it is a political system. To deal with, first age-sets, in the *Gada* system, have neither power relations nor defence functions for power in the *Gada* system rotates and men usually fight together with members of their community irrespective of their age.

The second, *Gada* law respects individual political rights to resign from his political party (*gogeessa*) and join another *gogeessa*. The term is known as *guula*. *Guula* means a person who shifted his political membership or line without any external force but only by his own decision.

The concept of *guula* (a person who dropped out from his political line) is commonly known not only in Borana *Gada* system, but also in all classical Oromo *Gada* systems. A person may shift his political line but cannot shift his or her age. If it is the age-set or age-grade, according to Bassi (2005), Baxter (1996) and others, which cycles every forty years, it would not have been possible to change one's biologically determined age sets as in contrast to *Gogeessas* (the political lines) of the *Gada* system. *Gogeessa* is socially constructed political system determined by the *Gada* laws while age is biologically determined by birth. From this point of view, it is wrong to argue that *Gada* system is simply a system of 'age-grade or cycle'. For example, the Borana *Gada* institution, have eleven age-set or age-grade system and five rotating *gogeessa* or political system. It may seem that both are consistent and overlapping to some

extent, particularly at sixth age-set or age grade but age-grades and *Gada* system are not totally interdependent. Moreover, Oromo-Borana did not view age-system as their main political system or institution, which is divided into eleven age-grades (see Table 3). Rather they view the three pillars of *Gada* which is divided into five *gogeessas* (see Table 2) and the rotating political and administration system in which men with different age (senior or junior) can participate in every *Gada* term through *Garba* institution (see Fig.4). Unlike age-set and gradings, *Gada* system is based on the conceptual unity of the whole society consisting different sets, grades, generations, political lines, etc. Age-grades are expressed in normative expectation, privileges, rewards, and are usually defined by norms and institution that constitute a base for appropriate behaviors, roles and life timetable, not institutional, administration, political and power timetable. Furthermore, ‘age-set or grade system’ stands only for a group social status (Dyson-Hudson 1966), not for the whole society, while *Gada* system is for all aspects of the society’s ritual lives. From this point of view, it would be pointless to describe *Gada* system as ‘age set’ and ‘age grade’.

Age-sets/grades are naturally determined, it goes through both natural, and social process in which, it involves unfolding process once it is completed, but *Gada* system is an infinitive recycling system. From this point of view, it is wrong to argue that *Gada* system is a system of ‘age-grade system. Age grades are constantly changing their positions in relation to the whole system” (Evan-Pritchard 1970:290).

Borana age-sets have neither power nor defence functions for men usually fight together with members of their Borana community irrespective of their age. There is neither political nor defence leadership in Borana age-sets only the *Gada* leader(*Abba Gada*) commands a war commander(*Abbaa Duula*) only in case of defensive war and external threat. Rather than political, defence and administration, age-set/grade play a significant role in determining a social behaviour of the same age-grade or peer group as discussed in this paper.

Table 3. The eleven age-grades and the social role of each grade in Oromo *Gada* system

No.agegrade	Years	Title of agegrades	Social Roles
1	1-8	Dabbaallee	Boys and girls are equally treated
2	8-16	Gammee didiqoo	Looking after calves & horse

3	16-24	Gamsee guguddoo	Guardians of the family herds	
4	24-32	Kuusa	Military tactic or duty	
5	32-40	Raabaa doorii	Fatherhood and family duties	
6	40-48	<i>Gada</i>	Politically active	
7	48-56	Yuuba I	Advise & solving disputes/conflict	Mediation & conflict solving service
8	56-64	Yuuba II	Advise & solving disputes/conflict	
9	64-72	Yuuba III	Advise& solving disputes/conflict	
10	72-80	<i>Gadaamjoojii</i>	Praying and working for Peace	
11	80-	Jaarsa	Final retirement	

Based on the above arguments and evidences, men of the same age group within *Gada* system can join one of the five political lines. They do so, either by changing their *gogeessa* and joining one of the other four senior or junior *gogeessas* moving back or forth but not only by moving along their age-grade and generation-set definitely. Two men of different age (senior or junior) can participate in every *Gada* term through *Garba* institution (see Fig.4).

Furthermore, ‘age-set stands only for a group social status, not for the whole society, but *Gada* system stands for all aspects of the society’s socio-political, economic and cultural life. From this point of view, it would be pointless to describe ‘age set’ and ‘age grade’ as society wide (Turton 1978:104). The same argument is also applicable in terms of ‘generation-set’ because, like the age-set and grading system, it is not a ‘society wide’. However, it is clear that they are part of conceptual entity that could co-exist with a society helping to promote the integration of separated territorial and ethnic sections. This serves as conflict prevention system rather than representing the whole society’s institution.

In general, instead of interpreting *gada* system and its setting as political, administration and power timetable across the five political institutions, clan and moiety system of social organization and ages, *Gada* system is understood as the form of ‘age-grading or cycle’

structure. In most studies, the misrepresentation of Oromo culture and institution as purely ‘agegrading cycle’ has created confusion and then contributed to the underestimation of the political and institutional credibility, multidimensional and holistic concepts of *Gada* system.

Concerning the interrelation of age-grading (cycle) and *Gada* system, this paper is not denying the interdependence of age-sets and *Gada* political system. Offering age-grade system as one aspect of *Gada* systems, the paper argues that age-grades or cycles have frequently been proposed or accepted wrongly as the only common institutional knowledge of *Gada* system without empirical evidence of either their own social roles or *Gada* system’s meaning. However, Elders suggested that as socially recognized division of life course, age-grade [set] is restricted to institutional domains. Age-grades are expressed in normative expectation, privileges, rewards, and are usually defined by norms and institution that constitute a base for appropriate behaviour, roles and life timetable, not institutional, administration and political power timetable.

### Appendix 3. *Gada* Chronology and the lists of name of *Gada* leaders

*Gada* Chronology and the lists of name of *Gada* leaders

<b>NR.</b>	<b>Names of <i>Gada</i> leaders</b>	<b>Their clan or sub-clan belongings</b>	<b>Each <i>Gada</i> name (Moggaasa <i>Gadaa</i>)</b>	<b>Years and terms in Office for 8 years period</b>
70	Guyo Goba Bule	Digalu Eemaji	Fulasa	2010-2017
69	Liiban Jaldeessa Liiban	GalaantuuBeerrituu	Moggisa	2001-2009
68	Boruu Madha Galmaa	Noonnituu-Ammooyyee	Sabbaaqa	1993-2001
67	Boruu Guyyoo Boruu	GalaantuuBeerrituu	Liibaasa	1985-1993
66	Jiloo Aagaa Adii	Digaluu-Tiittii	Daraara	1977-1985
65	Gobbaa Bulee Dabbasaa	Digaluu-Eemmajii	Mardiida	1969-1977
64	Jaldeessa Liiban Guyyoo	GalaantuuBeerrituu	Fullaasa	1961-1969
63	Madha Galmaa Toree	Noonnituu-Ammooyyee	Maakula	1953-1961
62	Guyyoo Boruu Galmaa	GalaantuuBeerrituu	Moggisa	1945-1953

61	Aagaa Adi Dooyyoo, died and replaced by Taadhotee Adii Dooyyoo	Digaluu-Tiittii	Sabbaaqa	1937-1945
60	Bulee Dabbasaa Bulee	Digaluu-Eemmajii	Libaasa	1929-1937

59	Areeroo Geedoo Liiban	Dambituu-Warra Gussaa	Daraara	1921-1929
58	Boruu Diida Bittaataa daied and replaced by Liiban Kusee Liiban	Noonnituu- Ammooyyee Digaluu-Daaddoo	Mardiida	1913-1921
57	Boruu Galma Dooyoo	GalaantuuBeerrituu	Fulllaasa	1905-1913
56	Adii Doyyoo Jiloo	Digaluu-Tiittii	Maakula	1897-1905
55	Liiban Jaldeessa Guyyoo	Qaracabduu- Buuyyaamaa	Moggisa	1889-1897
54	Guyyoo Boruu Ungulee	GalaantuuBeerrituu	Sabbaaqa	1881-1889
53	Diida Bittaataa Maammoo	Noonnituu- Ammooyyee	Libaasa	1873-1881
52	Haroo Adii Liiban	Digaluu-Tiittii	Daraara	1865-1873
51	Dooyyoo Jiloo Nyeecoo died and replaced by Nuuraa Shunkaa Dhaddachaa	Digaluu-Tiittii Warra-Jiddaa Annaa	Mardiida	1857-1865
50	Jaldeessa Guyyoo Dabbasaa	QaracabduuBuuyyamaa	Fullaasa	1849-1857
49	Liiban Jiloo Adhaawaa	Dambituu-Warra Gussaa	Maakula	1841-1849
48	Madha Boruu Madhaa	Noonnituu- Ammooyyee	Moggisaa	1833-1841
47	Dooyyoo Madheera Liiban died and replaced by Socorre Annaa Borbor	GalaantuuBeerrituu Maxxarrii-Meettaa	Sabbaaqa	1825-1833
46	Jiloo Nyeencoo Soraa	Digaluu-Tiittii	Libaasa	1817-1825
45	Saaqqoo Dhaddacha Gaamaduu	Maccituu- Jaawwituu	Daraara	1809-1817
44	Ungulee Halakee Sadee	GalaantuuBeerrituu	Mardiida	1801-1809

43	Boruu Madha Boruu	Noonnituu- Ammooyyee	Fullaasa	1793-1801
42	Waayyuu Raallee Canaa	Dambituu-Warra Gussaa	Maakula	1785-1793
41	Liiban Waata Nafur	Digaluu-Walaajjii	Moggisa	1777-1785
40	Soraa Guyyoo Balqaa died and replaced by Bulee Dhaddacha Róobale	Galaantuu- Beerrituu  Digaluu-Eemmajii	Sabbaaqa	1769-1777
39	Soraa Diidoo Qarsaa died and replaced by	Galaantuu – Lukkuu	Libaasa	1761-1779

	Dhaddacha Odaa Morowwaa	Galaantuu- Beerrituu		
38	Madha Boruu Daadoy	Noonituu- Ammooyyee	Daraara	1753-1761
37	Guyyoo Geedoo Walee	Sirayyuu-Koollaa	Mardiida	1785-1753
36	Halakee Doyyoo Harreellee	Galaantuu-Lukkuu	Fullaasa	1737-1745
35	Dhaddacha Róobale Guyyoo	Digaluu-Eemmajii	Maakula	1729-1737
34	Soraa Dhaddachaa Iluu Maleekkkoo	Warra Jiddaa- Annaa Didiqqoo	Moggisa	1721-1729
33	Walee Waaccuu Roqaa	Digaluu-Udumtuu	Sabbaqa	1713-1721
32	Jaarsoo Hiddoo Yaayyaa	Siraayyuu-Koollaa	Libaasa	1705-1713
31	<b>Daawwee Gobbuu Yaayyaa</b>	QaracbduuBuuyyama	Daraara	1697-1705
30	Gobbaa Allaa Nuuraa	Digaluu-Nuurtuu	Mardiida	1689-1697
29	Morowwaa Abbayii Aasaa	GalaantuuBeerrituu	Fullaasa	1681-1689
28	Wayyuu Urdu Malleellee	Maxxarrii-Meettaa	Maakula	1673-1681
27	Aallee Kuraa Yaayyaa	Digaluu-Tiittii	Moggisa	1665-1673
26	Abbayyii Baabboo Orroo	Dambituu-Obituu	Sabbaaqa	1657-1665
25	Aabbuu Lakuu Mormaa	QarcabduuDheebituu	Libaasa	1649-1657
24	Acuu Abbiyyuu	Bachituu-Saqoota	Daraara	1641-1649

23	Hindhaalee Dooyyoo Boroo	Galaantuu-Lukkuu	Mardiida	1633-1641
22	Baabboo Sibuu Beerree	GalaantuuBeerrituu	Fullaasa	1625-1633
21	Baabboo Orroo Dullachaa	Dambituu-Obituu	Maakula	1617-1625
20	Urgumeessa Igguu	Digaluu-Eemmajii	Moggisa	1609-1617
19	Baacoo Nadhoo	Bachituu-Saqoota	Sabbaaqa	1601-1609
18	Dooyyoo Boroo Lukkuu	Galaantuu-Lukkuu	Libaasa	1593-1601
17	Yaayyaa Oolee Bonayyaa	Digaluu-Tiitillee	Daraara	1585-1693
16	Orroo Dullacha Yaayyaa	Dambituu-Obituu	Mardiida	1577-1585
15	Bididhoqqee Rasoo Booroo	Karrayyuu-Warra Kula Kormee	Fullaasa	1569-1577
14	Abbayyii Horoo	Digaluu-Daaddoo	Maakula	1561-1569
13	Boruu Lukkuu Jaarsoo	Galaantuu-Lukkuu	Moggisa	1553-1561
12	Ososa Tiitillee Dullachaa	Sirraayyuu-Kollaa	Sabbaaqa	1545-1553
11	Dagalee Yaayyaa	Dambituu-Obituu	Libaasa	1537-1545
10	Aagaa Raagee Kalee	Digaluu-Eemmajjii	Daraara	1529-1537
9	Borbor Dawwaa Borbor	Dambituu-Warra Gussaa	Mardiida	1521-1529
8	Lukkoo Jaarsoo Baabboo	Galaantuu-Lukkuu	Fullaasa	1513-1521
7	Tiitillee Dullachaa	Sirayyuu-Koollaa	Maakula	1505-1513
6	Areeroo Boruu Bakkalchaa	Dambituu-Obituu	Moggisa	1497-1505
5	Diida Nam-dur	Digaluu-Eemmajjii	Sabbaaqa	1489-1497
4	Dawwaa Borbor	Dambituu-Warra Gussaa	Libaasa	1481-1489
3	Jaarsoo Baabboo	Galaantuu-Lukkuu	Daraara	1473-1481
2	Yaayyaa Fulleelle Yaayyaaa	GalaantuuBeerrituu	Mardiida	1465-1473
1	<b>Gadayoo Galgalo</b>	Dambituu-Warra Gussaa	Fullaasa	1457-1465

Sources: Leggesse (2000) and Liiban Jaatanii's oral and personal notes (2005)

## Part two:

### 1.3) Gada institution and Political process.

Will come soon

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