

Young Researcher International Training Program (ITP)

On-site Education of Practical Languages for Area Studies
2011 Academic Year Report

-Hamer district, South Omo Research Center, Ethiopia: 15July2011-28November 2011-

Year of Enrollment: 2010

Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies

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The contribution of ITP program to my research in Hamer district

It was for the second time that I went for field research in Hamer district, South Omo Zone of Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Regional State. This particular research trip was funded by ITP program. While in the field, I have stayed with a native Hamer host family. The village, named Wenyark Lika is about 45 minutes to 1 hour walk from Turmi town along the Turmi Dimeka road.

Staying in the village granted me the opportunity of understanding a better understanding of the whole day activity of the Hamer and helped me gain social trust through an increased intimacy with the Hamer people. The social encounters I had every day in the village with children, teenagers and adults has improved my language and communication skills.



Plate: Kanki, Jegi, I and Kuri at my host family house in the village (From Left to right)

My field Research

The study was conducted in Southern Nations, Nationalities and People`s Region, South Omo Zone among the Hamer. The Hamer people are Omotic language speaking pastoral society.

According to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia population Census Commission 2008 report, the Hamer is numbered 59,160 from a total population of 577,673 in South Omo Zone. Hamer district is bordered by Ari, Benna-Tsemay, Mursi, Dassenetch and Nyangatom ethnic groups. Among the Hamer, in the district are Arbore and Kara. They are very famous for their symbolic rite of transition ceremony where men leap over cattle.



Plate: Hamer boy performing the rite of transition

My research focus was on livestock grazing and water mobility as well as grazing land enclosures in the district.

The ITP fund gave me the opportunity to spend time to improve my previous level of the Hamer language ability. My vocabulary and listening skill in particular improved much. I did not suffer from problems of understanding peoples talk and this was a good experience enabling me collect much information regarding my academic research with little effort. Up on return from the field in Japan, I had the opportunity to make an oral presentation about Hamer-Himba relations that opened a way to share my observation to a wider academic group. The symposium has given me the benefit of meeting researchers working in a similar topic facilitating the exchange of ideas and knowledge circulation with young researchers conducting fieldwork elsewhere.