

Introducing Obang Metho



I met Obango Metho once here in Columbus, Ohio, about 15 years ago. He was invited to give a speech about the New Ethiopia Project he had just initiated. While waiting for people to come to the meeting hall, I had the pleasure of talking to him. I was introduced to him by a young man, an activist then. Obang and myself started chatting and I told him that I had spent time in Gambella, studying plants. He was excited and wanted to know more about it. I told him that it was my first trip to Gambella and the year was 1981, mentioned about the manager of the Ethiopian Hotel in Gambella, an Anuak, who, when transferred to Addis Ababa, did not like to stay there for long, and other topics. So, he knew that I know from which part of Ethiopia he is, but he soon added that many Ethiopians that he met in New York do not know about his birthplace. At one time, he told me, that he would give people choices, in the form of a multiple-choice question, to tell him where he is from. He put the multiple-choice question as such:

1. Uganda
2. Kenya
3. Sudan
4. Ethiopia
5. None of the above

Guess what many people choose, he said. No. 5. But he was not surprised because many Ethiopians know only about their immediate surroundings. Many Ethiopians do not travel far from where they were born. So, part of the reason for establishing the New Ethiopia Project is to create awareness about the multitude of nationalities in Ethiopia, he said.

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