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FERENGE ETHIOPIA

ProjectsAbroad

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The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad Ethiopia

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Editor's Letter

Welcome to the December 2013 Projects Abroad Ethiopia newsletter and Ethiopian team wishes all respected volunteers and staff member – happy Christ mas and New year. This newsletter aims to inform all our volunteers with news and information about the latest happenings in Projects Abroad Ethiopia.

Projects Abroad Ethiopia team is working hard to accommodate summer volunteers –which have great experience in Ethiopia. Thank you all the people who have volunteered with us – we really appreciate all for your valuable time and great help you gave at the different placements. And who decided to choose Ethiopia for volunteering through Projects Abroad.

Enjoy reading this issue and I hope that you will find something that you like. **Thanks to our volunteers who have shared their stories and photos with us.** We encourage everyone to join us in making the newsletter interesting and exciting by sending in your own written articles and pictures of your experiences here with us. Your stories and pictures will help others to understand and learn about Ethiopia. If you have anything you'd like to contribute, suggest, or comment on, please contact: bikesegnhaileleul@projects-abroad.org

Enjoy!!!!
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The Ethnological Museum in a Bird's eye view

By Julia Nolles-Bienfait – Journalism Volunteer

If you are looking for a fast and reliable insight into the cultural and ethnological background of Ethiopia, visiting the Ethnographic Museum of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies is a must, yet asking around the location of this museum appears – surprisingly – to be unknown.

Even using the incorrect name, the Ethnological Museum, and there remains no immediate recognition. You need to ask where the former palace of Emperor Haile-Selassie is, with his famous bedroom, then some people know where to find it: on the campus of the Addis Ababa University, but a student, walking from the university premises, did not know that an interesting museum was located on the campus.

In the 1950's scholars started to collect artifacts from all over the country in co-operation with the former Ethnological Society of the University College of Addis Ababa. This collection is the basis for the Institute of Ethiopian Studies today, as well as for the museum. It is located in one of the former palaces of the late emperor.

The Institute was officially founded by Richard Pankhurst in 1963, and gradually evolved into a fully-fledged research center that facilitated scholars and students to work on ethnological background, to preserve Ethiopia's rich and diverse cultural heritage.

For several centuries Ethiopia has been a crossroads for culture and trade between Africa, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean, and the Institute tries to bring the ethnic diversity under one roof. Keep in mind that Ethiopia hosts more than 80 tribes, which means more than 80 languages, cultures, ways of living and more.

The Institute wants to capture the heritage of the past and present for posterity. It houses an extensive collection of ethnographic objects and related documents, and still remains a part of the Addis Ababa University.

In front of the building is the famous spiral stair case erected by the Italians, and finished by the

late Emperor by putting an Ethiopian lion on a top of the highest step.

The building welcomes all visitors with dignity and grace. In the entrance hall on the ground floor, posters to the left and right show a summary of the history of the Addis Ababa University, and of Ethiopia in the past 80 years.



Following the corridor and turning to the right, you will find the cash desk for the museum. The tariffs for Ethiopians are different from those for non-Ethiopians.

A small staircase, which does not reflect the remainder of the palace, leads to the first floor and ends in a portal, where one of the favorite lions of Haile Selassie is stuffed. Following the corridor you enter the former reception hall, where an outstanding anthropological exhibition will give an overview of the typical traditions of the country, from birth to death. A wide range of topics is shown: childhood, games, rites, food and drinks, nomadism, body culture, traditional medicine, as well as burial customs. Attention is also given to different religions in Ethiopia: Christianity, Islam, Judaism, as well as traditional African beliefs. For each topic, information on posters is illustrated with artifacts and pictures.

After this quick bird's eye journey through ethnological Ethiopia, you will find on the same floor the bedrooms of both the late Empress on the right, and the Emperor on the left. Compared with the pompous bed and other furniture, the Emperor had a rather small desk at his disposal, just fitting near the window. Next you enter a small dressing room complete with gifts for the Emperor,

including miniature cannons and guns, before you find yourself in the Emperor's bathroom. It is surprisingly in a European 1930s style, with a light blue bath, toilet and double washbasin.

The second floor houses an art gallery built-up around two themes. The first is a musicological exhibition, with all kinds of traditional music instruments: drums like the kabaro, flutes (embilta), as well as stringed instruments like the krar and begenna. There should be a chance to listen to the music, but it is not always operational, together with the lighting.

The second has a more religious character, with both Ethiopian Islamic and Orthodox Christian art represented by calligraphy, icons, crosses and other pieces from different periods. An explanation is given for the three different crosses: on top of a staff, as a necklace and as a handheld cross. Also the form varies due to the different timeframes.

Only recently a third, perhaps temporary, exhibition has been arranged, 'A Dutch visit to Ethiopia 1930 – 1931'. This exposition was previously shown at the Tropen Museum in Amsterdam, transported to the Alliance Ethio-Française in Addis and now here in the Ethnographic Museum. It is a report in pictures of the visit of the Dutch delegation Binnert van Harinxmathoe Slooten and Gerrit Brouwer for the coronation of Haile-Selassie. The pictures illustrate the feudal society back then, as well as the pomp and circumstance of the coronation. As seen in the pictures, after the coronation the two gentlemen make an almost colonial journey to the countryside, accompanied by a number of Ethiopians.

Walking by the small museum shop and the lion on the first floor to leave, the feeling is predominantly one of having learned a lot about Ethiopian culture, and the richness of the exhibition prevails.

A comparison with the National Museum is inevitable. Except for the prehistoric exhibition – with Lucy being most important – the remaining material, like the ethnological artifacts, drums, furniture, as well as historical items relating to Ethiopian emperors, like the throne of Haile-Selassie, does not give the same insight into Ethiopia as presented by the Ethnographic Museum.

People in Lalibela – another life in Ethiopia

By Masumi Koizumi – Journalism Volunteer from Japan

Flying to Lalibela from Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa with my friend, I was going to observe that Addis Ababa is not the only representation of Ethiopia in terms of the lifestyle of the indigenous people in particular.

Touching down at Lalibela airport, I felt like we were left alone at the runway – no aircraft were in sight waiting to take off. All the artificial dins seemed to be absorbed by a strip of greenery and a beautiful mountain ridge in the region. Near the exit of the airport, young locals were shouting at tourists to draw their attention to the accommodation they provided.

Walking down the hill with bundles of straw in light clothes, was a small kid. I wondered if he traveled all the way up from the mountain with no bathroom stops or even occasional breaks in his lengthy and exhausting trip. Waiting for us with a beam in the midst of the bumpy road were two young children who then uttered, “Welcome to Lalibela!” in excitement.

Lalibela is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Ethiopia with local people and foreign travelers weaving the geography of Lalibela together. It was not hard to imagine that numerous people in Lalibela are making a living through the tourism business as our local guide, Abie, told us that prices here are comparably high because of its position as a tourist attraction. In fact, we had no choice but to call off a visit to a UNESCO World Heritage site, the eleven churches, which were hewn from the living monolithic rock during the reign of King Lalibela (13th century) due to the dearth of money on hand.

Just in one hour, I noticed two things about the people of Lalibela that struck me as a surprise: fluency in English and hard-working nature. After some ten minutes on foot from Lalibela Hotel, we reached a busy district around our accommodation, which was full with souvenir stores and cafeteria.



When looking around the grocery stands, two young boys, who appeared to be 10, approached us and walked side by side to have a chat with us in English. The chiseled looking boys spoke astonishingly fluent English for their age, pointed at the sight where men and women of a wide range of ages working under the evening sunlight were constructing what they described as “a priest office”, using primitive instruments such as a stick with a cylinder-shaped stone at the end in order to level the ground. They were not the only boys who came up to us. Indeed, everyone who walked past us struck up conversation when we replied hello back to them.

People, mostly boys rambling on the streets, would start off the talk usually by guessing our nationality (I was shocked that a number of people had succeeded in guessing my nationality, Japanese!) or how we had been up to in Lalibela. They would carry on the conversation on their school life, the eleven churches, and so forth. Even children aged three to five knew how to greet people in English and to attract foreign visitors with their innocent charms. Lalibela, as a holy sightseeing site bringing in a great deal of travelers and pilgrims from overseas, must have

enabled locals to communicate well with them.

Walking further down the road which overlooked a village full of mud-thatched houses with a pointed woven-hay hat, we found a woman looking to be in her late forties growling in a muted tone. She was carrying piles of sticks of wood on her back which had pinned her down in the spot. We helped her stand up on her own feet by lifting the bundle of sticks, though they were unexpectedly hefty for us. A passer-by ran up to us and pushed up what was on her back; the sticks made a pop and crackle sound as she squeezed out her last voice to get up. I wondered how she had made her way down the hill with the heavy load on her back.

The people in Lalibela living in a primitive fashion were astonishingly hard-working regardless of their sex or age. On our way to Asheten Mariam Monastery, a 13th century rock-hewn monastery located at an altitude of 3150 meters, the indigenous people with their hands occupied with the construction materials rushed their way up whilst I was struggling not to slip over the slippery hill. An old man carrying a long, thick piece of wood around his neck struck an exquisite balance and readily descended from the mountain. Our guide, Abie, encouraged us that we would be able to walk as fast as the locals after climbing up and down the same route three times. I landed off with the front of my feet as advised. However, my feet started to feel sore after five steps. I certainly needed more time to learn the knack without hurting myself. There was no motorized transportation but mules that could take us to the destination through a rugged and angular path. I was looking at the people overtaking us and fading in the distance.

Although Lalibela is a tranquil countryside monastery which preserves a traditional way of living, it offered us a surprisingly good internet service. I received a phone call from my friend near Asheten Mariam Monastery. There was also a Wi-Fi connection at the hotel where we stayed. It further set apart from the lifestyle of the people in Lalibela.

It was a beautiful rural town which thrives on tourism business and which still retains the traditional lifestyle in which people spend much time and effort on a daily chore.

Follow the following Link



**If you have any comments or suggestion
please contact us –**

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