



Postcards

# EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE I HIS BURIAL AND THE RASTAFARIANS IN SHASHAMANE, ETHIOPIA

A two-part Documentary  
2019



Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology  
Halle (Saale), Germany  
Department 'Integration and Conflict'  
Director: Günther Schlee

## **Research Film Project: Emperor Haile Selassie I. His Burial and the Rastafarians in Shashamane, Ethiopia. A two-part Documentary.**

The main topic of the two-part documentary is the burial of Emperor Haile Selassie I (1892 – 1975) of Ethiopia. The burial took place in Addis Ababa on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2000. A few Rastafarians attended parts of the ceremony. They worship Emperor Haile Selassie I as God and Messiah. Some Rastafarians are living in Shashamane, Ethiopia on the land grant given to the “Black People of the World” by Emperor Haile Selassie for their support during the Italian occupation (1935–1941). The first part of the documentary accompanies and comments on the burial in the year 2000. The second part points out the perspectives of the Rastafarians about the ‘death’ and ‘burial’ of Haile Selassie through interviews with Rastafarians in Shashamane, Ethiopia, representatives of the Association of the Patriots and the Haile Selassie Memorial Association and two family members of Haile Selassie (interviews: 2012, 2013, 2017, 2018, 2019).

### **Part I: The Burial of Emperor Haile Selassie I.**

By Verena Böll, Georg Haneke and Günther Schlee.  
Germany, 2018. 45 min.

### **Part II: Emperor Haile Selassie I and his ‘Burial’ – Perspectives of the Rastafarians in Shashamane, Ethiopia.**

By Verena Böll, Ambaye Ogato and Robert Dobsław.  
Germany, 2019. 49 min.

### **Contact**

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<https://www.eth.mpg.de/cms/en/media/haile-selassie-film-project>

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The biography of Emperor Haile Selassie I as artwork in the hut of a Rastafarian. In the middle of the picture is the photo of Haile Selassie as child, still bearing the name Tafari, left and right protected by angels. Above is a shining star, the rays reaching the surroundings of Ejersa Goro (Harar), the birthplace of Haile Selassie.

Text/Photo: Verena Böll, Shashamane/Ethiopia, 2018

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LIBRARY



The Emperor Haile Selassie I Memorial Association (EHSIMA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia collects the written and visual material about Haile Selassie. Together with the family and the association of the patriots it organized the burial of Haile Selassie in the year 2000.

Text/Photo: Verena Böll, Shashamane/Ethiopia, 2019

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The Rastafarians, who venerate Emperor Haile Selassie I as God and Messiah, deny his death on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August 1975. The documentary about the burial ceremony started a vivid exchange among the Rastafarians Ras Kawintseb, Jaden and Alemtsega.

Text: Verena Böll

Photo: Ambaye Ogato, Shashamane/Ethiopia, 2018

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The titles of Emperor Haile Selassie I encircle a lion, holding a sceptre with the Ethiopian flag: Haile Selassie I, King of Kings of Ethiopia, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah (in Amharic). This artwork by the artist Wubshet reflects the synergy of the Ethiopian monarchic history and the Rastafarians' belief in the Emperor as God and Messiah.

Text: Verena Böll

Photo: Ambaye Ogato, Shashamane/Ethiopia, 2018

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The belief system of the Rastafarians, who venerate Haile Selassie I as God and Messiah, refers to biblical figures as well. Jesus Christ is transformed into a *Black Christ*. On this wall-painting he wears dreadlocks, the halo is in the colours green, gold, red and three doves enclose his body. The Rastafarians Sandrine and Alex promote this artwork in their Zion Train Lodge.

Text: Verena Böll

Photo: Ambaye Ogato, Shashamane/Ethiopia, 2018

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Sister Linda, Mama Joan and Ato Zewde G/Negus (right to left) in the restaurant *Bolt House*, run by the Rastafarian Che Peter Lee. Watching the rough draft of the second documentary, they discuss statements about the divinity of Emperor Haile Selassie I given by other Rastafarians.

Text/Photo: Verena Böll, Shashamane/Ethiopia, 2019

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Sitting at their table in the Zion Train Lodge the Rastafarians Sandrine, Alex and their son are watching the rough draft of the second part of the documentary. Their reactions and comments were included in the final version. The Rastafarians appreciate to participate in the making of the documentary.

Text: Verena Böll

Photo: Ambaye Ogato, Shashamane/Ethiopia, 2019

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Ras Kabinda (second from left) and Ras Fwè Jah Jah (second from right) are sitting in their living room, together with other Rastafarians. They are amused about the dancing of Ras Fwè Jah Jah in the second part of the documentary.

Text: Verena Böll

Photo: Ambaye Ogato, Shashamane/Ethiopia, 2019

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Two Rastafarians, Sister Berenice and Jonathan Dyer, are watching the second part of the documentary in the Yawenta Children Centre, a day-care centre with school for children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. Jonathan told the story of his father Noel Dyer.

Text/Photo: Verena Böll, Shashamane/Ethiopia, 2019

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Ras Iron Gad, Sister Ijahnya Christian and Elder Zion Gad (from left to right) comment on the raw cut of the second part of the documentary. They are from the Twelve Tribes of Israel and the Nyabinghi Tabernacle Centre. Spontaneously they sang a song for the film team, which was incorporated into the final version.

Text/Photo: Verena Böll, Shashamane/Ethiopia, 2019

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Ras Kawintseb, a Rastafarian musician is well-known for his bare feet. The Rastafarians are living a sustainable way of life, using natural materials of the area and cultivating their garden with nutritional food. Living in Ethiopia means living in the promised land, which requires a mindful approach towards nature.

Text/Photo: Verena Böll, Shashamane/Ethiopia, 2019

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The Rastafarian Genet translated for her husband Jahuponus the questions of the film team from Amharic and English into Japanese. After returning from Japan to Ethiopia they have been living with their daughter in Shashamane, cultivating vegetables and herbs.

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Photo: Ambaye Ogato, Shashamane/Ethiopia, 2018

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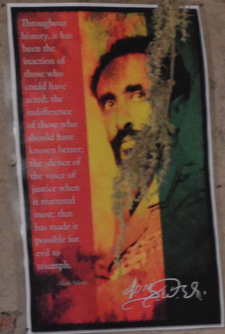
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AFRICA

MUST

UNITE



The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), today known as African Union (AU), established on May 25, 1963 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was co-founded by Emperor Haile Selassie I to strengthen the African continent. The Rastafarians support this policy of African unity, as this graffiti in the mud hut of Ras Gyone shows.

Text: Verena Böll

Photo: Ambaye Ogato, Shashamane/Ethiopia, 2018

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Two musicians, Ras Kawintseb and Jaden, are composing a new song for the international gathering of Rastafarians in Shashamane in November 2018. Since 1948 Rastafarian have been repatriating to Ethiopia to live on the land granted by Emperor Haile Selassie I to the “Black People of the World”.

Text/Photo: Verena Böll, Shashamane/Ethiopia, 2018

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Emperor Haile Selassie I granted land in Shashamane to the patriots of Ethiopia who fought the Italian occupying forces (1935–1941). The administrator of the *Association of the Patriots* Ato Zewde G/Negus takes care of the St. Kidanemehret Church located on this land grant. He encourages researchers to save the history of the patriots in Shashamane from oblivion.

Text: Verena Böll

Photo: Ambaye Ogato, Shashamane/Ethiopia, 2018

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