

Beauty in Diversity

Written by Lwam kahsay

Wednesday, 25 January 2017 03:04 -

The quality of being diverse can be considered as callous and of trouble but it is diversity that makes life interesting. If everything in this planet was alike, life would have been as awkward as perdition. Eritrea, an independent state, is a mother of nine ethnic groups. These are Tigre, Tigrigna, Bilen, Afar, Saho, Hidareb, Nara, Kunama and Rashaida. Every one of them carry their own diverse tradition where they explore a particular quality of how they dress, eat, style their hair, carry out their wedding ceremony and so on. Today, I would like you to have a glimpse of the types of braids in the Tigre ethnic group.

It probably goes without saying that the Tigre people are unique in their cultural practices. They use different types of braiding. Braids are an easy and pleasant way to forget about hairstyling for months, offering the ladies some rest. Braids also protect the hair from harsh environmental factors. Additionally, awesome braids can be a source of beauty and attraction, drawing admiring glances and interest.

In different occasions, as well as stages of life, a variety of braids are practiced in both men and women of this group. Tigre women practice various types of braids related to their age. When a Tigre girl reaches age of 7 or 8 they are braided Giset – where two sides of the hair are plaited with two strands of hair and the rest is sheared. Tetew or Bededo is another style which doesn't have structure, simply braided from front to rear.

Mehaytibel is braided when a girl is matured at the age of 14 or 15 years old. All parts of the hair are braided by separating them into three parts. Two sides of the hair are braided sidelong and the back of the hair is braided in descending fashion. They make the best plaits in order to be selected by young men of the village.

Then comes Shelil, braided during wedding times and after wards. It is almost used by majority of the women who are married and it has different layers and designs. The first layer is known as Gran and the lower layer is known as Cheded. Giset came from the middle of the head to the forehead and Harit is the design that goes to the back of the head.

As the hair style differs so does the types of ornaments worn. Tigre women always braid their hair, they never cease braiding their hair because doing so is considered as a taboo, unless a women is in mourning. During such a period, she doesn't put her ornaments on for a minimum 3 months and maximum 6 months but sharia law allows only 3 months.

Hirora, Chingeat and Tenekil are male styles. They vary in age differences. Halengay or Rahis is the most commonly known and used hair style in Tigre men. The back and two sides of the hair are sheared and the other part is decorated in an afro style. This is a sign of power and

Beauty in Diversity

Written by Lwam kahsay

Wednesday, 25 January 2017 03:04 -

wealth.

Figerit is another type of braiding which is estimated to be inherited from Sudan. This hairstyle is becoming popular these days in the Tigre community. Tigre people residing along the Sudanese border practice this hairstyle. It is obvious that it started with migration of people from one place to another during the medieval times but mostly during the era of the Beja Kingdoms. Nowadays, the Afar people are seen practicing such kind of hair styles just like the north and west of Sudan used to.

Braiding in Africa can be traced back to 3500 BC. But there is evidence that the practice began much earlier.

An East African Sudanese Shanabla woman's side lock is ornamented in the same manner as that of ancient Egyptian 18th dynasty King Tutankhamun's Great Royal Wife Ankhesenamun. The ridges of the barrette overlapped each individual braid of the side lock, the top of which is cornrowed on the scalp in both cases. Also, the facial features and skin tones are very similar. That is a concrete evidence that the region had too much influence to one another.

In Tigre culture there are no financial costs associated with braiding as they plait each other's hair for free. Additionally, a highly talented women is preferred. There is this thing known as Hidalet, which is when a woman wants to get braided and goes to the house of the braider with her friends having food and drinks in order to entertain the braider. However, there is no cash involved at all, which is what makes the braiding culture so interesting.

Braids are practiced in different cultures of the world including Asia, Africa, Europe and the United States. It articulates power, wealth, beauty and diversity of any society. Nowadays in the world, braids are used by many women. Many fashion designers, celebrities and famous artists use braids to show their talents and endowments. Nevertheless, it is all about influence. Despite being difficult to know the exact origins of braiding, it is believed that it was practiced in early civilization and Africans were renowned for it. The legacy continues today in the beautiful tradition of the Tigre people.