

Imperial Ethiopia's relations with Maoist China

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Introduction

In 1971 Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia told Chairman Mao Zedong of the People's Republic of China:

It has been my long-cherished desire to visit this great land, which has given birth to man's most enduring civilization. I am very happy that this desire has been fulfilled today and I am now able to exchange views with the dedicated leaders of the new China. (cit. by Daddi; 2009: 80)

Haile Selassie's statement was perhaps diplomatic nicety more than anything else for his actions suggested that he was more interested in forging relationship with the United States, which has much shorter history, but was a rising major power, than with China, a heir to "man's most enduring civilization," but an entity which was seemingly in a state of turmoil in much of the modern period. How would we otherwise explain why Haile Selassie, having arrived at Ethiopia's political scene in 1916, had to wait for nearly half a century to fulfill his "desire" of visiting China? There are at least two reasons for Haile Selassie's lack of enthusiasm to visit China before 1971—one is historical and the other

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ideological.

It should be said from the outset that Ethiopia's serious interest in Asia beyond the Middle East dates back only to the 1920s, and the country which captured Ethiopia's attention in [East] Asia was Japan rather than China. Historically, on the one hand, Ethiopia's rulers perceived Japan to be somewhat similar to Ethiopia in its long-reigning dynastic monarchy and in its military victory over a major European power. Haile Selassie also saw himself as the 126th Solomonic ruler, which made it sensible for him to try to forge relationship with Japan's imperial dynasty—the oldest in the world² (Clarke; 2011: 10). It is a matter of historical record, too, that Ethiopia and Japan became victorious, respectively, over Italy in 1896 and over Russia in 1904-05. Japan was also viewed by Ethiopia's rulers as a potential model for Ethiopia's modernization³ (Clarke; 2001: 2; Quirin: 2007). Japan's dramatic and rapid metamorphosis from a feudal society like Ethiopia's into an industrial power by the end of the 19th century attracted Ethiopians (Clarke; 2011: 7). Indeed Ethiopian leaders in the early 20th century saw their country as Tokugawa Japan. The 1931 constitution of Imperial Ethiopia was consciously modeled after the 1889 constitution of Meiji Japan⁵ (Clarke; 2011: 172-173). Further, Emperor Hirohito of Japan was one of the foreign dignitaries who had been invited in 1930 to come to Ethiopia and attend Haile Selassie's coronation as Emperor of Ethiopia⁴. Although Emperor Hirohito did not make history by coming to Ethiopia for the "grand" event⁵ (Clarke; 2011: 35), Emperor Haile Selassie did later become the first African head of state to visit postwar Japan in 1956.

On the other hand, Ethiopia's rulers *perceived* far fewer historical similarities between the ruling institution in China and Ethiopia. China, too, has a long history, of course. But Haile Selassie believed that there was not much which Ethiopia could learn from China in its pursuit of modernization. What loomed large in the eyes of Ethiopia's imperial elite was the fact that China itself was a victim of conquest and domination by other powers and was in a state of turmoil for much of what is generally known as the modern period⁶.

It was ironic, therefore, that when Zhou Enlai visited Eritrea in 1964, he would relate to his host, the Emperor of Ethiopia, about the similarity of the historical experiences of China and Ethiopia. He reminded the Emperor that when Ethiopia was resisting Italian invasion in the 1930s, China was fighting the Japanese in Manchuria. It would be recalled that, back in 1937, Mao Zedong himself had also told his compatriots to learn from Ethiopia's experience of fighting and resisting foreign invaders⁷ (Daddi; 2009: 52) What Mao had not realized or chose to ignore was around the so-called the Manchurian Incident in the autumn of 1931, Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Heruy Wolde Sellase was fraternizing with the Japanese Imperial family, including Emperor Hirohito himself, as well as with Japan's new Prime Minister at the time Inukai Tsyuoshi⁸. It will be also recalled that Japan withdrew from the League of Nations in 1933 when the League denounced its incursion into Manchuria, declaring that Manchuria is part of China.

There was some fascination with Ethiopia among Chinese scholars at least in the opening decades of the 20th century. The first book by Chinese scholars about Africa was on Ethiopia. But the first book about East

Asia written by an Ethiopian was on Japan⁹. Authors of that Chinese book pointed out what China and Ethiopia had in common: "...both were ancient civilizations, both had a political organization undergoing a transformation from a feudal to a modern system, both suffered from capitalist invasion and the decline of handicraft industries, and both were victims of imperialism." (Anshan; 2005: 62)

Ethiopia and China were also far apart ideologically, a situation which erected extra-barrier for bilateral relations between the two countries. As it would be elaborated later in the essay, Ethiopia's attitude towards China in the 1960s reflected partly the Western orientation of the Imperial regime. We should bear in mind that Ethiopia had also sent military contingents in 1951 to the Korean War—the only conflict involving direct hostilities between the United States and China. Ethiopia was the only non-NATO member to do so. A case may be made in passing that the reason why Ethiopia sent troops to Korea had at least as much to do with its commitment to the principle of collective security as it had to do with its close friendship with the US. Ethiopia is one of the founding members of the UN in 1945; Ethiopia is also the first and only country whose head of state had addressed the League of Nations (in 1936). But Ethiopia's direct participation in the Korean War alongside the US did not further advance Sino-Ethiopian relations.

The fact that China established diplomatic relations with Egypt first, and not with Ethiopia, was a symptom more than an effect of the cold relationship which prevailed between Communist China and Imperial Ethiopia. It is not hard to understand, however, the logic of why China chose to do so. From China's perspective there were both pull and push

factors. China had specific interest in relations with Egypt for historical reasons. Being itself heir to one of the world's most remarkable civilizations, China sought to launch its African diplomacy by establishing relations with Egypt, another country with a similar heritage. Unlike Emperor Haile Selassie, Gamal Abdel Nasser, the leader of Egypt, was also in Bandung in 1955 where he met with China's Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, laying the foundation for launching bilateral diplomatic relations the following year¹⁰. Haile Selassie was not an admirer of Egypt's Nasser and his ideology, and, in fact, he saw Egyptian rulers as historical adversaries¹¹. The factors which sustained this sense of unfriendliness between Egypt and Ethiopia are too complex to be explored here fully, but suffice it to say that they also include the Nile River, Egypt's positions on Eritrea, on Somalia's territorial claim over Ethiopia and on matters relating to religious minorities in both countries—the Coptic Christians in Egypt and Muslims in Ethiopia¹².

Above all, however, it was the fact that Ethiopia was too close to the United States, as indicated above, which prevented closer Sino-Ethiopian relations during the imperial period. It is in the context of Ethio-American relations, therefore, which we can make better sense of the trajectory of Sino-Ethiopian relations in the period under discussion.

Ethiopia and the US

The attitude of America's leaders and many contemporary Americans toward Emperor Haile Selassie reflected elements of both fascination and deference. The *New York Times* wrote in 1954 that the Ethiopian Emperor was "a man of courage, intelligence and great

humanity.” (Vestal; 2011: 89) The same newspaper carried the full text of the Emperor’s speech to the joint session of the US Congress. (Vestal; 2011: 89) Haile Selassie was named *Time*’s man of the year twice—in 1930 and 1936. American presidents who had known Haile Selassie, too, and many of them had indeed known him or about him, were quite generous in their praise for the African monarch.

At his first state visit to the US in 1954, Dwight Eisenhower described the Emperor as “a defender of freedom and a supporter of progress.” (Vestal; 2011: 53) It was a measure of Haile Selassie’s weight in the eyes of America’s political class that he was the only African leader to be invited to attend the funeral of President John F. Kennedy. In 1963 President Lyndon Johnson told the Emperor that he looked to him for advice and counsel (Vestal; 2011: 134). President Nixon honored the Emperor by inviting him to the US as the first foreign leader to visit the White House after he was elected president¹³.

Based on available evidence the following generalizations can be made about the attitudes of America’s presidents toward Emperor Haile Selassie. Franklin Roosevelt barely knew Emperor Haile Selassie even though the two had met aboard *USS Quincy* off the coast of Egypt in February 1945 when the former was returning from his meeting at Yalta with Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill¹⁴.

Harry Truman ignored Haile Selassie perhaps partly because the relationship between the US and Ethiopia was perceived to be both rudimentary and stable at the time. As the first Cold War president of the US, President Truman’s major concern was also apparently the emerging

challenge from the Soviet Union. Dwight Eisenhower respected Haile Selassie and was appreciative of his decision to send Ethiopian troops to fight alongside Americans in Korea.

John F. Kennedy was intrigued by Haile Selassie. Lyndon Johnson who had known the Emperor since his years in the US congress cared less about him, preoccupied, perhaps, as he was with Vietnam and domestic political issues. Richard Nixon was most favorable in his attitude toward Haile Selassie and that attitude had also perhaps in part to do with the royal reception he was treated to when he visited Ethiopia first as the US vice president and, later, as a private citizen. At a state dinner in honor of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1969, Nixon had said:

I had the great privilege, which some in this room have enjoyed, of visiting his country in 1957. My wife and I were received as royal guests at that time and treated royally. I returned again to his country in 1967, holding no office, having no portfolio whatever. I was received again as a royal guest and treated royally. This is a man with an understanding heart.¹⁵

As far as Haile Selassie's own attitudes toward America's presidents were concerned, it appears that he was respectful to Eisenhower, indifferent to Truman (whom he met possibly only once at the funeral ceremony for John F. Kennedy in November 1963), fond of Kennedy, puzzled by Johnson and disillusioned with Nixon.

It is also important to note that Haile Selassie had two public faces. At home he was master of palace intrigues, mischievous and unforgiving to his political opponents, but deeply committed to the modernization of his

kingdom. Internationally, he was a man who has successfully projected the self-image of seasoned diplomat, dedicated pan-Africanist and champion of black freedom. In the latter sense it can be argued, therefore, that Haile Selassie did pursue “soft power” with great sophistication nearly one hundred years before the concept entered political vocabulary.

Because of the power differentials between Ethiopia, a weak state in the global periphery, and the United States, a rising superpower at the time, such subjective factors had in any case played a role in Haile Selassie’s relations with the United States. That is partly why Haile Selassie’s diplomacy toward Mao’s China could not be seen in separation from these subjective factors including Haile Selassie’s ideology and his perception of Ethiopia’s interests in rapidly changing international environments.

China and Ethiopia: Initial Encounters

It is said that about seven hundred years ago, when the Song Dynasty (960-1276) ruled China (the Middle Kingdom) and led the world in nautical technology, merchandise from China was brought to Ethiopia (Michel and Beuret, 2009: 65). A portion of this historical period in China also coincided with the heyday of the Axumite civilization in Ethiopia, when it participated in the maritime trading system that linked the Roman Empire and India. That was perhaps all there is to it about the extent of relationship between China and Ethiopia in the pre-modern period.

In the modern period, Ethiopia and China encountered one another first

at a battlefield, fighting on opposing sides, during the Korean War (1950-53)¹⁶. Ethiopia was one of more than twenty countries that contributed troops to the US-led UN war effort in Korea¹⁷. But, unfortunately, the Korean War was not the only occasion when China and Ethiopia met at the battlefield. In the early 1960s, China and Ethiopia encountered each other in the Congo, again on opposite side of the conflict. Unlike the Korean War, however, China's intervention in the Congo was less direct¹⁸.

Ethiopia and China also met in Bandung, Indonesia in April 1955. High-level Ethiopian and Chinese delegations met in Bandung during the Africa-Asia conference. Emperor Haile Selassie did not travel to Bandung, as the Conference took place less than a year after the Emperor returned from his first state visit to the US (May-July 1954), the highlights of which included his meeting with President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The Emperor's first visit to North America (including Canada and Mexico) resulted in closer US-Ethiopian relations, with US agreeing to extend to Ethiopia economic and military assistance in return for the utilization of a military communication base in Eritrea. The two countries signed the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement (MDAA) and Defense Installations Agreement (DIA)¹⁹.

In Bandung, China's Premier Zhou Enlai met Endalkachew Mekonen, at the time a high-ranking official at Ethiopia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, discussed bilateral relations and exchanged gifts. It was significant that the gift from the Chinese side was an artifact from the Han Dynasty (206

BC- 220 AD)— regarded as a period of relative peace and prosperity in China's long history.

Another significant encounter between Ethiopia and China occurred took place when Premier Zhou Enlai visited Ethiopia in 1964. But the visit was more than just an encounter since its peculiar features also highlighted Ethiopia's attempt to cope with the fast-changing geo-political realities in the region and around the world.

Zhou Enlai's 1964 Visit to Ethiopia

On January 30, 1964, Emperor Haile Selassie welcomed Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai to Ethiopia or, more accurately, to Asmara, Eritrea. This visit was unusual for, among other things, how it came about, how it was conducted, where it took place and who masterminded it.

Ethiopia was not in the initial itinerary of the prime minister's visit when he left Beijing for the 10-country visit of Africa. The visit to Ethiopia was hurriedly arranged as the Chinese premier was already in the middle of his African tour. The original travel plan was to take him to, among other countries, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, but, then, a situation arose which was to prevent him from going to the three countries. A revolution erupted in Zanzibar and the East African army mutinied. In light of these events, Emperor Haile Selassie invited Zhou Enlai to come to Ethiopia. The invitation was quickly accepted.

It is one of the curious features of the visit that Haile Selassie decided to receive Zhou Enlai in Asmara rather than in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. One question which arises is: why Asmara, and not

Addis Ababa?

Coming as the visit does less than two years after Eritrea was absorbed into Ethiopia and became one of the 14 provinces in the country, it seemed, the Emperor sought to send a clear message to China that there was no place for its “subversive activities” in Eritrea. There were then already rumors that China was supporting the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), a newly-formed group which was challenging the Imperial regime militarily. The record, however, shows that China supplied arms to ELF only in 1968 (Lyons; 1978: 10). In any case it is still worthwhile to ponder whether the Emperor invited the Chinese leader in spite of the Eritrean issue or because it²⁰.

Another peculiar feature of the visit was that Premier Zhou Enlai was received at Asmara Airport by Prime Minister Aklilu Habte-Wold. Should the Emperor himself have gone to receive the Chinese leader personally? There are those who thought so anyhow. Ethiopia’s protocol actually required that a visiting foreign leader be met by the Emperor himself at the airport upon his/her arrival²¹.

The fact that Zhou Enlai’s visit came hard on the heels of his announcement of the five principles of Sino-African relations made it even more awkward. This is so because one of these principles asserted: “China supports African and Arab states who realize their unification and unity in any way they choose” (He Wenping; 2007: 35). In letter and spirit, this principle was clearly designed to reflect the claim which was being made by the newly-independent Somalia over the territory Ethiopia calls the Ogaden²². As if these were all not awkward enough, the

Chinese delegation had to fly from Asmara, Eritrea directly to Mogadishu, the capital city of Somalia, where he also met with the commander of Somalia's national Army. It could be also recalled that in just less than a year prior to Zhou Enlai's visit to Somalia, Abdirashid Ali Shermarke, the first Prime Minister of Somalia visited People's Republic of China (Prybla; 964: 1138) .

The analysis thus far seems to suggest that the Emperor invited Premier Zhou Enlai in order to gently remind China that it is not welcome to intervene in the Horn of Africa. Such interpretation, of course, takes the stability of US-Ethiopian relations too much for granted. After his 1963 visit to the US, it was becoming clear to the Emperor that due to satellite technology, the US listening post in Eritrea was going to become less useful, reducing America's interest in Ethiopia. He had also learned first-hand during the visit that the new American President, Lyndon Johnson, was not the friendliest of US presidents toward him²³.

It is reasonable, therefore, to surmise that Haile Selassie decided to extend last-minute invitation to Zhou Enlai as a hedging strategy, given the uncertainties in the air about the future of Ethio-American relations, in order to leave for himself more than one option. This is a more plausible interpretation even if we should also allow for the possibility that the Emperor had made the case to China's Zhou Enlai in relation to Somalia's claim over what Ethiopia regards as its legitimate territory. In any case China's relationship both with the dissident groups in Eritrea and with the newly-independent Somalia deepened in the second half of the 1960s, further inhibiting stronger bilateral relations between Ethiopia and China. But wider geo-political considerations were making it

imperative for Ethiopia to improve its relations with the People's Republic of China.

Ethiopia and China's Admission to the UN

Unlike most of the newly independent nations of Africa, Ethiopia had been changing its positions vis-à-vis "one-China-policy." Ethiopia voted with US until 1958 against the admission of China into the UN, abstained between 1958 and 1960, and began to cast its vote in favor of China's membership after 1960. How do we account for this policy shifts on the part of Ethiopia? At least six factors are relevant.

Firstly, the shift represented a pre-emptive diplomacy in recognition of the impending independence of scores of African countries that would change the equation at the UN on the issue of China's membership. If China was supporting liberation movements in every part of Africa, as it indeed was, it was not hard to predict the future position of the soon-to-be independent African countries on this issue²⁴. Emperor Haile Selassie did not want to be the odd man out in Africa.

With the the spirit of Bandung still in the air, secondly, Ethiopia also sought to position itself favorably to be able to play a greater role in the pan-Africanist movement. Given the contested nature of parts of its territories (Eritrea and Ogaden), much was at stake for Ethiopia.

The fact that Sino-Soviet split has come into being by 1960 was the third factor which motivated Ethiopia to support China's entry into the UN system. Ethiopia could now afford to be pro-China without being pro-Moscow. Fourthly, Ethiopia sought to view Taiwan as the renegade

province of China in the hope that China, too, would reciprocate in kind by viewing the contested territories of Eritrea and the Ogaden as an integral part of Ethiopia. But this was not to be the case subsequently as China continued to support the Eritrean dissidents for some time.

Fifthly, in the early 1960s Haile Selassie was already less inclined to follow the US uncritically as he was doing in the early 1950s. He did, of course, visit the US in 1963, just a few months after he orchestrated the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa. The Emperor used the visit to plead for more economic and military assistance and expressed his concerns about reduced attention he was getting from Washington. He even told US officials that if he was not going to receive adequate military assistance, he would be forced to turn to the East²⁵.

With Eritrea now officially part of Ethiopia, finally, the Ethiopian Emperor might have also figured that he could seek further assistance from other sources to consolidate and legitimize his gains and that, for this purpose, the US was less indispensable in the 1960s than it was in the 1950s. Did the Emperor also feel less than pleased when the US offered to help Egypt build the Aswan dam in the late 1950s? That possibility, too, cannot be ruled out. But, above all, the Ethiopian monarch was beginning to realize that it is no good strategy for a variety of reasons to rely only on one superpower.

Ethiopia, United States and China

Ethiopia upgraded its diplomatic relations with the United States to ambassadorial level in 1949—the same year People's Republic of China

(PRC) was established. In the 1950s and 1960s Ethiopia was very close indeed to the US. In 1953, a year after Eritrea was “federated” with Ethiopia, US and Ethiopia signed a 25-year agreement which included the utilization of defense installation in Eritrea—the Kagnew Base. Ten years later, Emperor Haile Selassie annexed Eritrea completely, with the tacit approval of the US, and “re-unite” it with Ethiopia. In fact, the US approval was more than tacit. As early as in 1959 President Eisenhower was saying: “I would hate to see the Red Sea bottled up on both ends by people who might not necessarily be or remain our friends” (Vestal; 2011: 96).

China and Ethiopia established diplomatic relations in December 1970. The conditions were favorable on both sides for this diplomatic rapprochement to take place. In the aftermath of its disastrous experiments with the Great Leap Forward (1958-60) and the Cultural Revolution (1965-67), China was reassessing its diplomacy in Africa and other regions. The Sino-Soviet split was also well in place.

With the assumption of political power by a pro-Moscow group in Somalia in 1969 and in the face of the growing internal and external challenges to his regime, Haile Selassie, too, was carefully re-considering Ethiopia’s relations with the West. The Emperor was already attempting to establish linkages with other large external powers, including the Soviet Union. It was, therefore, the convergence of interests of China and Ethiopia which set the stage for improved bilateral relations between the two countries.

In July 1971, President Nixon sent his Vice President (Spiro Agnew) to

Ethiopia to inform the Emperor in advance that the US was going to recognize Peoples Republic of China²⁶. Only three months later, Haile Selassie was in Beijing, visiting China. President Nixon also visited China in February 1972.

Upon his arrival in Beijing in October 1971, Haile Selassie was received by Premier Zhou Enlai. Later, the Ethiopian Emperor held talks with Chairman Mao and visited Shanghai and Guangzhou. It is important to note that throughout Haile Selassie's visit to China, Beijing described Sino-Ethiopian relations in the broader context of what it called the struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism and racial discrimination. The Ethiopian Emperor returned from Beijing with 200 million RMB—the largest single loan agreement at the time between China and an African country after the Tanzania –Zambia Railway project.

Conclusion

We have demonstrated in this essay that Sino-Ethiopian relations in the Imperial period took place in the shadow of the changing vagaries of Ethio-American relations. In other words, changes in the US-Ethiopian relations had affected the trajectory of Sino-Ethiopian relations. We have also shown that in Asia beyond the Middle East Japan was the country which captured the interest of Ethiopia during the imperial period. Unlike Chinese and Japanese leaders, however, a few American presidents who had known Haile Selassie or about him were also somehow intrigued by the Ethiopian monarch. What President John F. Kennedy said about Haile Selassie was shared to different degrees by America's presidents at least from Dwight Eisenhower to Richard

Nixon. President Kennedy said:

“There is no comparable figure in the world today who held high responsibilities in the 1930s, who occupied and held the attention and the imagination of really almost all free countries in the mid 1930s, and still could, in the summer of 1963, in his own capital dominate the affairs of his continent...” (cit. by Vestal; 2009: 138)

Could we attribute JFK’s special fascination with Emperor Haile Selassie, at least in part, to the monarch’s political longevity? This is a defensible proposition for, after all, JFK was not even born when Haile Selassie emerged as a ruler in the Ethiopian political scene in 1916.

Chairman Mao and Emperor Haile Selassie belonged to the same generation of leaders. Both octogenarians left the world scene also at about the same time. Even though Haile Selassie died (in 1975) one year before Mao died (in 1976), the former was a year older (83) than the latter (82). The relationship between Ethiopia and China remained in its stagnant state for about twenty more years after Mao and Haile Selassie passed away, until a new era of bilateral relationship began in 1995, owing to the convergence of interests of the political classes in the two countries.

Endnotes

¹ (Clarke; 2011: 10) writes Emperor Hirohito was the 124th monarch of Jimmu Dynasty in Japan.

² Japan achieved victory over China in the 1894-95 Sino-Japanese War; Ethiopian forces defeated Italy at the Battle of Adwa in 1896. Indeed, after a

visit to Japan in 1932, just one year after Japan seized Manchuria, an Ethiopian scholar likened Japan and Ethiopia to the two eyes which had lived for long in mutual ignorance of one another and claimed his own experience in Japan was a mirror which enabled one eye to see the other (Clarke; 2001: 2, Quirin; 2007). Incidentally, it was the same British Major (later General) Orde Wingate who had helped Haile Selassie in 'liberating' Ethiopia from Italian occupation in 1941 who also led the British war effort in Burma against the Japanese. (Clarke; 2011: 7).

³ (Clarke; 2011: 172-173). In addition, it is said that one of the most useful sources of the history of Ethio-Japanese relations was a book written by the then Ethiopia's Foreign Minister Heruy Wolde Selasse titled *Great Japan* (1934), which was subsequently translated from Amharic into Japanese with the title of *Dai Nihon*. See (Clarke; 2011: xvi).

⁴ The official title of Emperor Haile Selassie is: Instrument and Power of the Trinity, Elect of God, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and King of Kings of Ethiopia. (HIM Haile Selassie 1976: 172, Vestal; 2011: 48) describes Haile Selassie's title as "Elect of God, King of Kings, Conquering Lion of Judah, Branch of the Tree of Solomon, and Implement of the Trinity."

⁵ Instead it was Japan's Ambassador to Turkey, Yoshida Isaburo, who represented Japan at the coronation ceremony of Emperor Haile Selassie. (Clarke; 2011: 35).

⁶ It can be argued that Ethiopia resembled 18th century China more than 19th century Japan. Both China and Ethiopia were rather slow in responding to the forces of modernization when they came into contact with Europe in a major way for the first time. On the other hand, Japan's response was both instantaneous and fundamentally positive.

⁷ (Daddi; 2009: 52). On the other hand, Japan was reluctant to oppose Italy's invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 precisely because it saw the invasion as justifiable

as Japan's incursion was into Manchuria. Indeed there were those in Japan's political class who had suggested that in invading Ethiopia, Italy was mimicking what Japan had done in Manchuria. See (Clarke; 2011: 149-150).

⁸ These events transpired in December 1931. See (Clarke; 2011: 42-44).

⁹ See (Clarke; 2011: xvi), (LI Anshan; 2005: 62).

¹⁰ The other African states which participated in the Bandung Conference were Sudan, Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya, and the Gold Coast (Ghana).

¹¹ See (Habte Selassie; 2007: 185).

¹² On the historical dimension of the tensions between the two countries see Trimmingham (1976: 70-71); on the issue of the Nile River to which Ethiopia contributes 86% of the waters while utilizing only 1% see (Tafesse; 2001: 67-83).

¹³ In fact Emperor Haile Selassie held the record as the only foreign leader for the largest number of state visits to the United States in the twentieth century. The record was broken by Queen Elizabeth in 2003 when she was invited by President George W. Bush for her seventh state visit to the United States.

¹⁴ Haile Selassie was reportedly invited by Roosevelt to visit US but the visit never took place because Roosevelt passed away only months after the Yalta conference. In any case Ethiopia issued in 1947 a commutative stamp with a photo of the 1945 meeting of Emperor Haile Selassie and President Roosevelt. See (Vestal; 2011: 37).

¹⁵ Cited by American Presidency Project. 1999. "Toasts of the President and Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia." Online: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu>. Accessed: 8 May 2012.

¹⁶ About 300,000 Chinese troops were killed in the war, including Mao's own son.

¹⁷ Ethiopia was also the only country whose troops were not captured by the “enemy” side despite their being part in more than two hundred battles. When the President of South Korea Lee Myung-bak visited Ethiopia in July 2011 he made sure to mention this fact. See “Korea President calls Ethiopia soldiers ‘bravest among the brave’.” See [<http://www.jimmatimes.com>] (Accessed 10 April 2012). Another relevant issue in relation to the visit by the South Korean President came to Ethiopia was that he also announced that, as a small token of gratitude, the Korean government was creating a scholarship fund for the children of the Ethiopian veterans of the Korean War. What the Korean President did not perhaps realize was that the implementation of his plan is likely to face serious challenges because the Ethiopian veterans of the Korean War belonged to the wrong “wrong ethnic group” in the eyes of the incumbent government. A 1959 book by S. L. A. Marshall, *Pork Chop Hill*, partially documents the bravery of Ethiopian troops and a movie by the same name was also produced.

¹⁸ “What happened in the Congo in 1960 was US and Britain lined up on the side of pro-Western Congolese leaders and sought to use the UN peacekeeping mission to oppose the “radical,” nationalist prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, in order to prevent the spread of Soviet communism...” With regard to the Congo crisis, China was on the same page with the Soviet Union. See (Adebajo; 2011: 67-102).

¹⁹ See (Vestal; 2011: 44).

²⁰ What is more, when China was amid its own Cultural Revolution, Isayas Afewerki, the former leader of the Eritrean People’s Liberation Front and the current leader of Eritrea, too, was receiving military training in China. See (Pool; 2001).

²¹ Ten years prior to Zhou Enlai’s visit to Asmara, Emperor Haile Selassie went to the US for a state visit where he was less than pleased, as he indicated later,

when he was received by Vice President Richard Nixon rather than President Dwight Eisenhower. See (Vestal; 2011: 49).

²² Somalia's official position was "...Ethiopian-Somali differences over the occupied territories should be settled by peaceful means...the problem had to be settled, one way or another." See (Shire; 2011: 36). Siad Barre, the leader of Somalia from 1960 to 1991, had also said "...our people [in parts of our country occupied by foreign powers] should be allowed peaceful self-determination to gain their freedom..." Siad Barre, speaking in 1975. See (Shire; 2011: 2).

²³ See (Vestal; 2011: 139).

²⁴ Even so Chinese leaders were not prepared to take anything for granted, however, as Prime Minister Zhou Enlai set out for a visit of 10 African countries in 1963-64. It will be recalled that the Organization of African Unity (OAU) was created in 1963. By 1963 the number of African states which recognized Taiwan was larger (19) than those which recognized mainland China. Today only 3 countries out of 53 recognize Taiwan, the remaining 50 states recognize China.

²⁵ See (Vestal; 2011: 140).

²⁶ The other African country to be so informed was Morocco. See (Vestal; 2011: 178).

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