

On Life In The Sudan

By Bayyinah Sharrieff

So many of my Black Sisters here in North America fashion their hair in a so-called "Afro style." They think that this shows a proudness to be Black, and shows their identification with Africa.

LIVING AROUND the young Sudanese women in the Republic of the Sudan I saw none of the young girls or women cutting their hair and letting it stand loose on top of their heads. They admired the long hair. They often wore braids or balled their hair at the back of their heads, or upon their heads. Sometimes they wore it loose, but always combed it away from their faces.

While I was there a young Black woman from Detroit, Michigan, came to the Sudan while on tour of Africa. She had made acquaintances with a few Sudanese who had studied in Detroit, Michigan. She had her hair styled in the "Afro" before she left America. She probably did this thinking that she would fit in well in Africa.

She did not have a very comfortable stay there in the Sudan in spite of the continuous efforts made by her hostess. Her hostess

complained to me that this young woman from Detroit (we will call her Mrs. M.) was extremely inconsiderate, and rude. And, that she did not show respect for the habits and customs of the Sudanese people.

Mrs. M. was a graduate of Wayne State University. She had studied about Africa and wanted to see it. She had prepared herself with "Afro" hair style and also had so-called "African print" fabrics made into short dresses.

Mrs. M. found no parties where men and women met and drank alcoholic beverages and danced together and laughed loudly (She even asked her hostess where such places could be found.) Nor did she find the Sudanese in so-called tribal costumes, jumping about dancing.

The Sudanese women have long hair. One of my colleagues said to me, "what is it... a man or a woman," when she saw her head. Mrs. M. looked very much out of place and far from being identified with the Africans of today. She stood in a short dress with no sleeves and with her hair cut to resemble a man's. And, as she walked down the streets of the capital city everyone would turn around to look at her.

In the Sudan no decent woman would go out in the night unescorted by a male member of her family. This Mrs. M. did. She did not respect their hours of quiet in the mid-day when it is extremely hot and the people relax until the heat of the day has passed. The hostess's family was very glad to see her leave.

The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that our Black People cannot and will not be accepted among the others of our own kind in Africa and Asia unless we be Muslims. The above happening I related to you that you might see how far off many of our Black sisters are by thinking that they are identifying themselves with Africa. Had Mrs. M. been a Muslim she would have readily fitted in that society without the problems she encountered. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad teaches us that a truly educated person has a knowledge of self and those other than self.

All praises are due to Allah, Master Fard Muhammad for teaching one here, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad that he may teach us this knowledge of self and of those other than ourselves.