

## INNOVATIONS

### Tourism Destination in Bahir Dar specially Lake Tana Peninsula and Monasteries for Sustainable Tourism Development in Ethiopia

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#### Abstract

Ethiopia orthodox church very fundamental for Sustainable tourism development in Ethiopia starting from the ancient civilized up to the modern. From the begging of Gondar, Axum, Bahir Dar, Lalibela rocky church, Dessie in the globe very nice-looking sites. In attendance the in close nearness to moment in time are 37 islands that are scattered on the subject of the outside of Lake Tana, out of which a quantity of 20 shelter churches and monasteries of massive chronological and enlightening attentiveness. For the reason that of their isolation they be second-hand to amass art raw materials and devout remains establishment all measurement of the state of affairs. Narga Selassie, Kebran Gabriel, Daga Istifanos, Tana Cherkos Ura Kidane Mehret, Debre Mariyam, Azu Wamariam etc... are some of the monasteries. Lake Tana peninsula the area is vivid with vast amount of historical and cultural attraction monastery. The locality world inheritance sites, including the only natural world heritage site of the country. This research article is of dissimilar going to places of interest growth plans which focus on how much the historic route influences tourism plans in Ethiopia and it is indicated that how the area is important for development of tourism. This research was based on a wide-ranging writing valuation counting various book, article and state credentials which were to recognize the most important tourism properties of the region, the contribute to historic route in the tourism growth plans of the nation and its contribution for the expansion of tourism in the nation state.

**Kew word:** 1. Lake Tana 2. Peninsula 3. Ethiopia 4. Tourism destination 5. Orthodox Church

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#### Introduction

Ethiopian orthodox church especially Monasteries gifted with attractive historical and spiritual inheritance. These Ethiopia Orthodox Church island monasteries of Lake Tana recognized as the immature blossom basket that have possible forth expansion of visiting the attractions in the region (Cheesman 1968).

Sustainable going to places of interest embrace all segments of the sightseeing manufacturing with guiding principle and criterion that seek to reduce ecological impacts and to get enhanced the giving of tourism to sustainable development and ecological conservation. According to World Tourism Organization (WTO), sustainable going to places of interest lead to the administration of properties in such a way that trade and industry, community, ecological and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled. It is in small a tourism activity that meets the needs of present tourist and host regions while defense and agreeable to the eye opportunity (Baker, 2008).

According to UNWTO Barometer (2016), tourism is one of the most flourishing and emerging industry in the world, international tourist arrivals have reached 1.235 million in this year. The statistics had shown that it has been grown by 4% from 2015. The tourist arrivals for developed nation have taken the lion share of the tourism market. The tourist arrivals in Europe, America, Asia and pacific countries recorded 5% growth compared with 2015. The inbound tourist in the Middle East increased by 3% while the data in Africa decreased by 3%, due to the weak results of tourist arrivals of in North Africa. It also contributed US\$7.6 million to the global economy (10.2 % of global GDP) and generated 292 million jobs. Tourism is solitary of the principal and large amount significant industries in the worldwide in circumstances of service formation and production of over seasincome (UNDP, 2011).

Tourism has great contribution to serve as a sources of foreign exchange, creating employment opportunities, promoting micro and small-scale enterprises, , and ensuring sustainable development. The tourist arrivals for developed nation have taken the lion share of the tourism market. The subdivision, which is expected to correspond to 10% of comprehensive GDP and one out of each eleven jobs all-inclusive, is expectable to keep on getting bigger considerably to reach 1.8 billion inter continental tourists in 2030. UNWTO (2015) pointed out international sell to other countries group, tourism rank fourth in 2013, subsequent to fuels, food and to the lead of automotive products (ITC and UNWTO, 2015). The ecological contribution is the chief attraction which are potentials, not the level of overhaul or amenities provided as part of a manufactured goods wrap up, but the physical factor that the tourist to an demanding destination (Worku Melese, 2017).

Heritage tourism is a types of tourism that have present at inheritance ,which can significantly for all historic attraction ,to art work ,to beautiful scenery (Yale, 1998). The word heritage describes the tourism offering, and broadly means any site dealing with inheritance. A more applied definition explains that heritage tourism is “a phenomenon that focuses on the organization of what went earlier than, inheritance, and genuineness to enhance participation and make happy customer motivation by evoking sentimental emotion; its fundamental purpose is to stimulate monetary reimbursement for its an assortment of constituencies such as the museums, momentous houses, festival, heritage hotels and other stakeholders” (Chhabra, 2010). Similar to sustainable tourism and scholastic deliberate continues as to what precisely the definition of inheritance tourism includes.

### **Tourist Attractions site of Ethiopia**

Ethiopia, land of origin, the source of the Blue Nile, the home of the Ark of the Covenant and the land of queen Sheba, has ample tourism resources. The country needs to devise sustainable tourism approaches to get benefits from the sector. Therefore, improving the image of Ethiopia in the world and promote the different destinations and tourism products found in the Country plays a pivot role in sustainable tourism development (MOCT, 2015). The ancient Ethiopian monuments throughout Northern Ethiopia form the core of Ethiopia's tourist attractions. In fact, the majority of the tourists flow this itinerary and rightly so. Ethiopia is the only country in Africa South of the Sahara that has ancient historical monuments and Ethiopia's monuments are unique in both their history and their architecture. The most famous tourist attractions of Ethiopia on the historical circuit are: the circular Ethiopian Orthodox Churches on islands in Lake Tana, the Blue Nile Falls, and the castles of Gondar, the Stelae of Axum, the rock hewn churches of Tigray, the ancient temple of Yeha, and the rock hewn churches in Lalibela.

### **Cultural, Historical and Natural tourist site in Lake Tana peninsula and monasteries**

It is understandable with the intention of Ethiopia orthodox church was introduced in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Abbink, 2003). Subsequent this, in the succeeding period frequent churches and monasteries were built in dissimilar part of Ethiopia. It was for the duration of the period of influence of Made Seyon (r.1314 to 1344) that the Christian empire had well-known firm community, taking side and spiritual pressure in to the locality of lake tana. In view of the fact that the 14<sup>th</sup> century the dessert island monasteries of lake Tana have been centers of monastic life acknowledged for their chronological and religion heritage. As solitary of the rising country in Africa, Ethiopia and its visiting the attractions are eye-catching an imperative segment causative an enormous arrangement towards the community, enlightening, and trade and industry advance aspect of the kingdom (MoCT, 2011).

#### **Bahir Dar**

Bahir Dar's proximity to the "Historic Route" of Ethiopia such as Lalibela, Gondar, and Aksum increased the importance of the town to be a tourist center of north western Ethiopia. It is best remembered as a place where over 40 islands with over 21 monasteries are in existence (BOCTPD, 2011). 21 The monasteries were built by the kings of Ethiopia in the medieval period, which later became the most important religious and political hub of the country. Politically, the Lake Tana Island monasteries had played a significant role when the country experienced internal and external crises. The Christian Ethiopian kings used the monasteries as a crucial place for hiding their treasures and as a place of refuge, started from the reign of Amda-Tsiyon (r.1314-1344) until the late 19th century. The Ethiopian kings used the monasteries as a place to pray for the triumph of their military campaigns. It was in these churches and monasteries that the bodies of some medieval Ethiopian kings such as Emperor Dawit I (r.1382-1411), Emperor ZeraYacob (1434-1468), Emperor Susnyos (r.1607-1632), and Emperor Fasildes (r.1632-1687) were obscured. Further, until it was taken by King Ezana (a powerful Aksumite King in the 4th century A.D), to Aksum, is believed that the Ark of the Covenant, was kept in the Island Monasteries of Lake Tana for over 800 years. These ancient historical monasteries and churches also kept wall paintings, church crosses, crowns, and clothes of kings from ages past. Thus, such treasures along with its ancient buildings became a source of attraction for tourists (Amhara tourist guide book, 2006).

#### **Lake Tana**

Lake Tana sometimes called BahireGojjam in ancient clerical literature; it is the largest lake in Ethiopia and sources of Blue Nile. Located in Amhara Region in the north-western Ethiopian Highlands, the lake is approximately 84 kilometers (52 miles) long and 66 kilometers (41 miles) wide, with a maximum depth of 15 meters (49 feet), (Statistical Abstract of Ethiopia, 1967-68) and an elevation of 1,788 meters (5,866 feet). (European Space agency, 2013). Its surface area ranges from 3,000 3,500 square kilometers (1,200 to 1,400 miles), depending on season and rainfall. The lake level has been regulated since the construction of control water where the lake discharges into the Blue Nile. This controls the flow to the Blue Nile Falls (Tis Abbai) and the hydro-power station. In 2015, the Lake Tana region was nominated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve recognizing its national and international nature and climate importance. (Home page of lake Tana biosphere reserve) Lake Tana was formed by volcanic activity, blocking the course of inflowing rivers in the easily Pleistocene epoch, about 5 million years ago (Vijverberg, *etal*, 2009). The lake was much larger than it is today. Seven large permanent rivers feed the lake as well as 40 small seasonal rivers. The main tributaries to the lake are Gilgel Abay, Mequch, Gumara and Rib rivers (Vijverberg, *etal*, 2009).



**Figure1: Map of Lake Tana**

**Source: Google earth, Lake Tana**

Lake Tana is the largest lake of Ethiopia and located at a distance of 560 km from Addis Ababa. As the outgoing river of the Lake is the Blue Nile, the Lake is considered the origin of the Blue Nile, one of the two main tributaries of the Upper Nile. Known to the ancient Egyptians and Greeks, the lake has a long history of exposure to the ancient world, and from a very early age, it has been one of the hubs of Christianity. Lake Tana has a number of islands, whose number varies depending on the level of the lake. The lake houses more than 20 churches and monasteries, mostly located on little islands. Read more about Lake Tana. A short distance from the city of Bahir Dar, the Blue Nile falls of a 60m high cliff at the Blue Nile Falls (Amhara tourist guide book, 2006). At the indistinguishable time, Lake Tana is also well-known for its monasteries which can be originate in a straight line on its beach, on peninsulas and on the many islands scattered all over the lake.

As to the summit measurement of the greater part traveler appeal of enlightening and chronological tradition goes with the organization of churches and monasteries in the island and peninsulas of Lake Tana. Hence birthrights in Bahir Dar explain reconciliation with the times gone by of these institutions. Lake Tana as a number of islands, whose number varies depending on the level of the lake.



**Figures 2: Visitors to transports in Island of Lake Tana**



**Figures 3: view of Lake Tana and view of Resort hotel on Lake Tana, Bahir Dar**

### Island and Peninsular Monasteries in Lake Tana

It is the 37 islands that make Lake Tana the most breathtaking site. These islands shelter some 21 monasteries surviving remnants of a very old meditative tradition. Most of the monasteries with some exceptions which dated back even to the 14th century AD were established in the medieval period by the monks locally referred as the Seven Stars. The dedicated monastic spiritual life of the monks in these monasteries is an alien world for the visitor.

The monasteries also house myriads of treasures, beautiful mural paintings, icons, parchment manuscripts, scrolls and emperors assets. They have been used as safekeeping places for the religious relics and art treasures during the times of trouble. In the trouble periods, these valuable treasures were transferred to these monasteries from all corners of the country. Even the Ark of the Covenant was once kept temporarily in one of the monasteries Daga Estifanos. Consequently, these monasteries have served as museums for the Ethiopian Orthodox Church arts and emperors assets.



**Figures 4: Papyrus reed boats plying over, Lake Tana**

**Source: Field observation. 2020**

These monasteries are reached by motorboats. But, tankwas papyrus reed boats of ancient design that add extra beauty for Lake Tana are the main forms of transport for the local people and for the monks. They have been used since the Egyptian pyramid age. These reed boats are manufactured on the shores of Lake Tana from papyrus tree.

Despite the fact that every island monastery deserves a visit, the most commonly visiting ones, taking in lake Tana, Bahir Dar as springboard are the following.

1. **Kibran Gabriel (about 9 kilometres):** Kibran Gabriel founded in the 14th century and rebuilt during the reign of Emperor Iyasu /1682-1706/ is the closest monastery to Bahir Dar. The museum of this monastery, which was built during the construction of the Gonderine palaces, displays collections of priceless treasures. Because of religious reasons, this monastery is not indulged for ladies to enter. Abuna Zayohannes who was originally from the Shew provinces call Mareha Beté inwards first in south Gondar in particular in a position called *Robit*, where he originate a combine (Za-Gabriel and his companion Kebra). Kebra Gabriel is the extraordinary single in this look upon (Abbink 2003). Kebra Gabriel is situated It is an island double-dealing of the top of hill which is enclosed by wooded area and has enchanting background, delimited by the lake and surrounded with Entons to the south east and Ura Kidane Mehret to the north.



**Figures 5: View of Kibran Gabriel Island Monastery**

**2. Zegie Peninsula (about 12 kilometres)**

The vast resources of Zegie and its environs are valuable reflections to explain the real pictures of the Peninsula, the people, the socio-economic condition and the cultural landscapes of its vicinities. Zegie Peninsula is rich in numerous natural and cultural tourist attractions. For instance, beautiful mural paintings, icons, parchment manuscripts, scrolls, crosses, crowns and bequests of Emperors are the most impressive items found in Zegie Monasteries.

Nature Based tourism products are spatially distributed in all sites of Zege and coupled with cultural and historical attractions. More than 140 species of woody plants and above 260 species of birds are recorded in Zegie. The dense coffee trees and other natural big trees make the area eye appealing. Besides, view of Lake Tana in Zegie peninsula is quite impressive (Zegiepeninsula Monastic Broacher).



**Figures 6: Lake View in Zegie Peninsula and monasteries in Zegie**



**Figures 6: Zegie Peninsula monasteries ancient wall and ceiling painting**

Zegie is endowed with spiritual and material resources that are able to draw both domestic and international tourists. For instance, churches, Holy Books, crosses and mural paintings are few among the major cultural resources of Zegie (Negashe et al., 2011).



**Figures7: Ancient crosses Pictures of Saints and Angles at Zegie**  
**Source: Field Observation, 2020**

In addition to natural attractions and cultural materials, there are different monasteries in Zegie Peninsula that eye - caking the traveler's .Each monastery has its own features and unique attractions. Some of them are listed below.



**Figures8: Zegie Peninsula promotions**

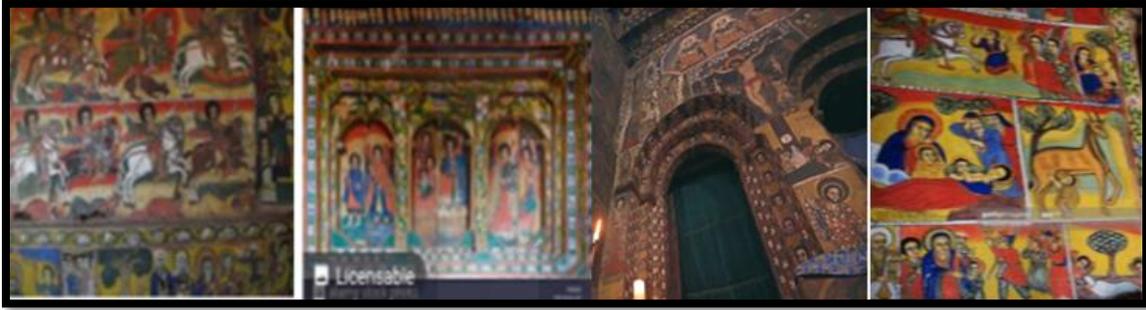
**a. UraKidaneMihiret**

Ura- kidanemeheret is one of the oldest Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Monasteries found in 14th century. It is believed that this monastery was established during the region of AtseAdiamSegedEyasu (1439-1513). Architectural design in Ura-kidanemeheret is circular surrounded by quadrilateral long wooden pillars. Two independent buildings are surrounding the church. One of them is used to store various spiritual items and the other is used for dining houses for monks and priests. There is also a small museum, ZegieSatekela Museum, for visitors to learn about hand-crafted objects and musical instruments (ark of Noah Zegie, Urakidanemeheret document published by the monastery). Within Ura-kidanemeheret, there is a museum containing various items which represent religious, cultural and historical aspects of the community. Some of the items are presented below.



**Figures 9: Items in Zegie museum**

**Source: Field observation, 2020**



**Figures 10: wall and ceiling Paintings in uraKidaneMihiret**

**Source: Filed observation, 2020**

The peninsular monastery of Zegie, uraKidaneMihiret permitting women to enter is the other plebeian adduction of Lake Tana. The church's design is similar to that of *kibranGebriel*. As noted by many visitors, ura has a more decorated building with colorful frescoes depicting scene from biblical lore and the history of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church. The frescoes dating back to the early 17th century are incredible to have been painted by human being (Negashe et al., 2011).



**Figures 11: view of Ura-kidaneMeheretMonastery**

- b. **Azuwa Maryam Monastery:** It was founded in 1307 E.C. during the reign of Emperor Amde Tsewon, which is brightly ornamented by wall paints. Abun Mariam was founder of the monastery. Painting works bearing the image of Saint Mary, Saints, Angels, Apostles and Matrices are painted well inside the church. The works of art were complete by Aleqa Sirak of the Zegie and Aleqa Berhan of the Gonderian the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to this the roof is made up of tiny splinted cow skins, grass a balcony made up cross and ostrich egg. Around the church there are trees ages over 500 years. The church is completed of sludge and sandstone and inexpressive pillars. The church was known in the past as the "*Seil Bet*" which earnings house of paints and pictures for the reason that watercolorist used to copy paints from Azwa to decorate other churches. This round church has a thatched roof which makes it one of the most attractive churches around Lake Tana. It is covered with a thatched roof keeping its resourcefulness. It is rich in poles part types of religious birthright. A number of these are the crown of Adyam Seged Iyasu, Yohannis I, Bakafa, a sword of Bakafa, in surplus of all coat of Itege Mentwab, representation of St. Mary made in the hands of St. Luke, different document, cross, play the drums, and cyst rums etc put in museum. It is one of the most frequently visit sites in the peninsula. The green campus natural loveliness and more proximity to the port with connected forest under growing coffee and citrus fruits and primates, birds, squirrels remarkably draw the appointment diagram of tourists (magazine prepared by Azuwa Maryam monasteries)



Figure 12: view of Azuwa Maryam Monastery



Figure 10: Paintings in Azuwa Maryam Monastery

- c. **DebreSelassie:** AbuneNahom established this monastery in the 14th century. It is located at the top of Zegie Peninsula with huge forest trees suitable for bird and landscape watching. It is also suitable to build watching tower on the long and high branches of trees with wooden ladders. The natural settings are not relatively disturbed as it has no settlement close to this monastery. It is found to the north of the peninsula, on the upper altitude. Trekking the slope from *Urakidanemeheretto* Selassie under the dense forest is impressive and entertaining. The plant and bird species are attractive to visitors leaving unforgettable memories from scenic points.
- d. **Bete Maryam Monastery:** It is found near to *Azewa Mariam* monastery. Visitors could get it after short walk on a path through coffee and lemon trees. Attractive murals are sheltered behind stone columns here.



Figure 13: View of Betere Mariam and orthodox Monk in Monastery  
Source: Field observation, 2020

e. **MehalZegie Georgies:**

This monastery is found very close to Betere Mariam. It was established during 13th century. It has many decorative elements to be visited. The original church was burnt in 2002 E.C due to unknown reasons. Currently, new monastery is being built by keeping its previous features.



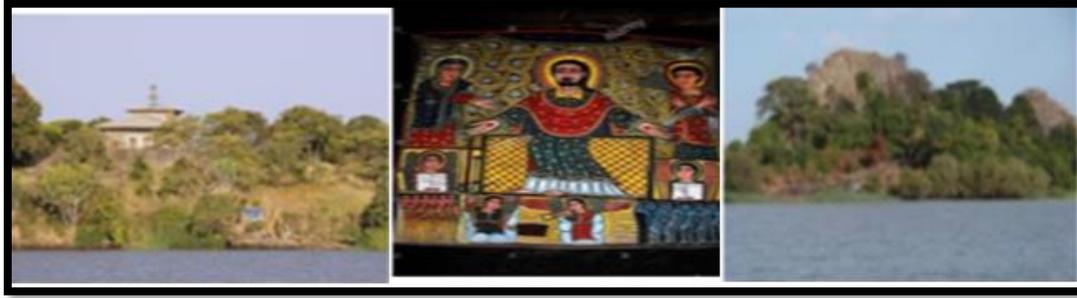
**Figures 14: MehalZegie Georgies**

f. **Yiganda Tekele Haimanot:** is also found in Zegie peninsula about 2km North West of *Ura- Kidane Mehret* and west of Selassie Monastery at highest peak of the peninsula (1994m above sea level). Its construction was begun in the regime of Atse Amde Tsion in the 14<sup>th</sup> and completed in the 17th century in the reign of Iyasu I in 1674 E.C. The founder of the church was *Abune Abraniwos*, from *Begemider*, *Deresgie Mariam Kebele*. He had done a lot for the foundation of the church and finally he died in 1699 E.C. and his dead body was buried in the western part of the holy of the church. The major and unique features of the church were the existence of various traditional heritages like golden cross that weights 24kg donated from *Adyam Segid Iyasu*, other crosses made from gold and silver, crowns and clothes of different kings' umbrellas, manuscripts like *Mesehafa Howe*. Christian pilgrims are coping to the church to attend the festival celebrated in August 24 and May 12 every years of E.C (from church leaders).

The church is also accessible by both land and water situated on hill chains of Ararat. It is an area of scenic beauty from where the Peninsula, Lake Tana, Bahir Dar and its surroundings are clearly visible. The western *Yiganda wetlands* and *Wonjeta lakeshore forests* are spectacular features viewed from scenic spots of Ararat. *Afafe town* on west edge of Zegie accessed by road transport and nearby *Forie Mariam lakeshore church* are recreational sites viewed from *Yiganda scenic points*.

g. **Daga Estifanos Monastery:** It is transported into being in the Daga Islands, inside constituent of Lake Tana. It is positioned on the 1909 m above preserved that is the highest level of the lake and easily seen from any bearing of Lake Tana. The coral reef wrapped in cotton wool with jungle forest. The monastery is established by *Abune Hirut Amlak*, for the duration of the period of reign of Emperor *Yikun Amlak* in the 13th the monastery is different from the other is that in its museum it surrounds the carcass of *Atse Dawit I*, *Atse Zeriyakobe*, *Atse Sesinios* and *Atse Fasildes*. Daga is the other principal magnetism and most visited monastery though it is far from Bahir Dar. This monastery is erected on a steep hilltop and needs to climb up walking through a winding path.

The treasure house found here is different from other monasteries in that it hosts piles of brightly coloured ceremonial cloaks and mummified coffins containing remains of the former Ethiopian Emperors; that is, Emperor *Dawit /Late 14th c/*, Emperor *Zere Yakob (15th c)*, Emperor *Susenyos (early 17th c)* and Emperor *Fasiledes (17th c)*.



**Figures 15: DagaEstifanos Island Monastery and painting, 13th Century**

- h. **TanaKirkos (about 50 kilometre):** Projecting on the eastern shore of LakeTana and on a remarkably beautiful setting, Tanakirkos monastery had been Used as one of the four places of ancient Judaic worship where sacrificial stones are still found. It is in this monastery that the Ark of the Covenant had been kept for 800 years before it was taken to Axum (the ancient Ethiopian capital) in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.The founder of the Ethiopian church music, St. Yared has written hisfirst book of song called”*Degua*“at this monastery. The museum of themonastery has collections of several valuable and unique treasures,which inspire visitors. It is closed to ladies.



**Figures 16: Judaic Sacrificial stone, TanaKirkos Monastery and church servant**

- i. **NargaSilassie (about 37 kilometres)**

Located on the shore of Deq islands, particularly at a small woody semi-island, NargaSilassie monastery is quite different from other Tana monasteries architecturally; that is, it is similar to the palaces of Gonder. NargaSilassie was unusually built by Empress Mintiwab(1730-1755) with domes and turrets of the three gates. It is open for ladies.



**Figures 17: Viewof NargaSilassiemonastery**



**Figures18: Ancient painting in one of the parchment Manuscripts of NargaSilassie**

- j. **DebreMaryiam Island:** This Island is to be found in the southern region of LakeTana about 5 km far from Bahir Dar town. Here the monastery of Debre Mariam is establishment for the duration of the reign of AmadeTsion (1314-1344) by AbuneTadewos.

It was rebuilt by King Tewodros II (1855-1868). In 1688, King Iyasu chose the church as a site of commission gathering which the called to try to end the quarrel of the monks, the religious dignitaries, and the ark bishop Abba Sinoda. The religious incongruity troubled the problems of the natural world of Christ. The church is in possession of one of the oldest manuscripts, the Tetra Gospel which dates from 1360-1380. This document is delightfully illustrated as another of the indistinguishable type which is behind the times from 1640-1660 which is also found here. The latter is an exceptional text of Ethiopian in good health art. in the beginning the church was hut complete of sludge and stone but before 20 years the chanting room and the holy of the church was from top to bottom re-establish with strengthen but the consecrated of consecrated of the house of worship kept its innovative style. The position or the quarter in the region of the church is also called GumareBahir(Hippopotamus' Lake), for the reason that of the continuation of many hippopotamus in the region of the area. It is also called AbayRas (Head of the Nile), to represent that it is entrance of the lake out of which the Blue Nile comes out. This island is one of the unsurpassed attraction sites which can be access either by ship or on bottom from Bahir Dar.



**Figures 19: view of Debre Maryiam Island**

- k. **EntosEyesus Monastery:** This Island is situated in the southern part of Lake Tana and tothe Northwest of Bahir Dar. It is easily reach only by cruiser. At this point, there is EntosEyesus monastery built by AbuneZeYohannis for the duration of the time in authority of AmadeTsion in the 14th. It is positioned near to KibranGebriel and sheltered with impenetrable forest. In this monastery, there is antediluvian construction that is hypothetical to be second-hand for prison, flora and fauna (bird), cross total from silver and wood, ancient books and clothing made from hide. It is best put for surveillance memento during manufacture.



**Figure 20: view of EntosEyesus Monastery**

1. **KristosSemera Church:** The church is established in the KristosSemera peninsula positioned at the eastern shore of Lake Tana. The genuine church of KirstosSemera was theoretically institute in the late 14th century during the reign of EmperiorDawit (1380-1412).



**Figures 21: Orthodox Church celebration at KristosSemera Peninsula**

m. **RemaMedhanealem Monastery:** The monastery was established by *Abune Nob* throughout the time in power of Emperor Yishaq (1414-1429). It was also reconstruct by Susenyos in the 17 century.

**Precautions to visit the monasteries**

- ✓ Entrance fee is charged per head in every monastery.
- ✓ Encamping is not allowed without the permission of tourism office officials. This is for the safety of the relics and tourists.
- ✓ The visiting hour of the monasteries is limited (7Am- 5Pm).
- ✓ Smoking cigarettes or pipes in church courtyards and getting in to the churches without taking off hats, caps and shoes is absolutely prohibited. It is blasphemous.
- ✓ Intending to buy manuscripts, hand and processional crosses, books and scrolls is forbidden though the temptation of few untrustworthy local people for sale is manifested.

n. **The TissIsat Falls/the Blue Nile Falls:** Blue Nile, the Grand River in Africa is one of the natural wonders of Ethiopia especially for its breathtaking falls. Tis Abay town, 35 Kilometres South East of Bahir Dar has been drawing the attention of tourists from different corners of the world. That is why thousands of visitors are seen streaming to this most spectacular scene.

The Blue Nile Falls locally known as "TisIsat" or "Smoke of Fire" that the water stretched on 400 metres wide surface and plunging dramatically 45 meters deep creates drizzly plethora that in turn produces brilliant rainbows across the gorges of the river. The misty deluges drive the onlookers up to kilometers away. The curtains of the spray enthrall any visitor and will not ever vanish from memory. Specially, a morning visit rewards tourists with the astounding rainbows.

Environ of these falls is endowed with marvelous landscapes, natural forests and multi colouredbirds (ANRS, 2006)



**Figuers 22:over all view of The Blue Nile Falls/TissIsat Falls/in different season**

### **Traditional Church School**

Traditional church schools after introduction Christianity in to Ethiopia in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, Traditional church schools have been opened in many area of the county. Children have begun to attend the church school. Hence, the Ethiopia Orthodox church earliest to beginning education in Ethiopia. The institution that became the dominant center of education consequently has acted today as a guardian and a preserver of the traditional Ethiopian culture. The system of education and living style of the students in the small huts are amazing. This situation at the current time famous Traditional church schools to learn Geez languages. The language currently extinct only known around Orthodox Church, but ancient time the national language Ethiopia during former of Emperors.

In the heydays of the institution; that is, when the church had a dominant power over the state, the school used to have dual purposes; that is to say, teaching children to serve the church and the government in clerical works.

However, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> c with the introduction of the modern school, its importance in the governmental affairs declined after having contributed much for the development of modern education.

The contents of the curriculum this traditional church school is organized logically and can be put under five stages. To complete the lessons of each stage, certain years are required. The range of school years at every stage may vary depending upon the learner's intelligence.

The first stage is 'Nibab Bet' which is intended to teach the child to read religious books. After he becomes able to read, the child get spromotion to the second stage- 'Zema Bet' which includes teaching ritual singing, dancing and drumming. What comes next is 'kidase Bet' or 'Akuakuam' where altar priests are trained. The fourth one is 'Quene Bet' in which poetry is taught. The last stage where astronomy and the interpretation of the Old and New Testaments along with other sacred books are taught is 'Metsihaf Bet'. One who is interested to complete learning or these stages all courses requires at least thirty-five years.

Each course is offered by differently specialized church scholars best known as Merigetats. One Merigeta may be specialized with one or two of the courses. The graduates of the institutions are *Deacons, Priests, Merigetats, Bishops and Ark Bishops*.

The medium of instruction in all levels of the courses is Geeze language. In times when the church had a prominent power in the government, Geeze was the Lingua Francua of Ethiopia. Because of this, almost all the orthodox Tewahido religious books today are found written in Geeze, which still remains dominant to be the church language.

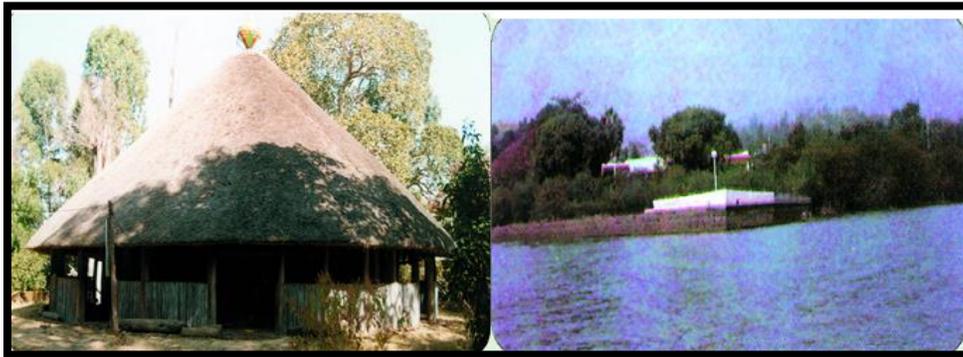
As the chief objective of the school is to produce dedicated religious leaders, the school life is full of devotion. The student lives "migrated" away from his parents in a small hut built around the church or the Merigeta'shouse. He gets his sustenance by begging piece of injera(a special kind of bread baked out of Teff) and corn from the nearby laity. Moreover, he moves from place to place in search of the Merigetias accorded with the course he is going to attend.

The students are locally called **YekoloTemari** (student feeding fried corn) for they usually eat fried corn. Most of the churches in the region have such schools. In BahirDar, KidaneMihret church school can be a glimpse about church school life.



**Figure23: Traditional Schools at Bahir Dar KidaneMihret Church**

**Gorgora:** It is located at 64 kilometers from Gonder and about 95 kilometers from Bahir Dar, on the northern shore of Lake Tana, Gorgora is a town of affinity; that is, the most rewarding site especially for birdwatchers. This is one of the many medieval towns of Ethiopia that served as anemperorcapital. The most inspiring visiting site is the nearby ancient round Church DebreSina Maryam, built in 1334, which is remarkably adorned with the very old murals. It is also possible to visit ruins of Susneyos palace, the island churches and monasteries such as Birgida Mariam and Man Inde Aba MedihaneAlem and the likes.



**Figure 24: view of DebreSina Mariam Church, Gorgora, 14<sup>th</sup> Century Gorgora Port**

### Conclusion

Ethiopia Orthodox Church has more than ever monasteries talented with good-looking chronological saintly inheritance. These Ethiopian Orthodox Church isolated monasteries of Lake Tana are as immature blossom baskets that have possible for the expansion of visiting the attractions in the region (Cheesman 1968).

Thought Christianity was bringing into Ethiopia in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, still comprehension in Gojjam and Lake Tana area postponed in anticipation of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This was outstanding to the information that goes at the back intimately the growth of the Christianity state. Its historical and religious heritage it ages have survived down to the present day as only one of its kind in her place from the medieval period. The evaluation point in the direction of that the holistic press forward has preferential the approbation and good quality care of aquatic biodiversity preservation in Lake Tana monastery which put up good chance for visiting the attractions expansion. The cultural, chronological and tradition attractions have greater potentials for tourism industry if they are promoted properly. These could in addition tourism potential with the landscape of the area, around the lake and large different caves which located within a Monastery. The area is not any home of aquatic plant, animal contain variety of species including birds and mammals and also the source of traditional church school. The community directly/indirectly benefit from the tourism creates employment opportunity to local tour guides, small shops and handicraft selling for tourist.

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