

I am a woman...

“I am a woman. I do not like war. However, I would rather die rather than accepting your deal.”

“If it is your wish, start the war next week. Nobody is afraid. We will see when you turn into action. Don't ever think that we are not willing to sacrifice our comfort and die for our country.

Giving ones life for the country is an honorable death. I do not want to keep you here; it is getting dark; I am sure you have a lot of things to do to put your threats into action



In 1889, she was crowned Empress Taytu, following the coronation of her husband, Menelik II as Emperor of Ethiopia. Empress Taytu was more educated than most of contemporary men and women alike. As the saying goes, behind every successful leader, there is a strong and supportive woman and partner. Empress Taytu was one such a woman. She was a supporter of her husband’s mission and vision and always at his side to support and render her honest opinion to the Emperor. Empress Taytu has played very important roles in the Battle of Adwa, In the 1895-1896 war with Italy, the empress galvanized the nation, brought her own fighters, 3,000 plus strong and joined other leaders from the various parts of the empire. Needless to say, Ethiopia defeated Italy and defended herself and became the only African nation to ever defeat a strong European power. This defeat not only caused the down fall of the then Italian government, but also became the early symbol of freedom for the colonized and oppressed people everywhere as well as hope and pride to people of color around the world. S.E.E.D saluted Empress Taytu for her determination and struggle to defend Ethiopia, for being a role model to woman everywhere and for promoting and advancing the interests of Ethiopia of the time and for all her positive attributes.

Taytu is acknowledged to have wielded considerable political power as the wife of Menelik, both before and after they were crowned Emperor and Empress in 1889. She led the conservative faction at court that resisted the modernists and progressives who wanted to develop Ethiopia along western lines and bring modernity to the country. Deeply suspicious of European intentions towards Ethiopia, she was a key player in the conflict over the Treaty of Wuchale with Italy, in which the Italian version made Ethiopia an Italian protectorate, while the Amharic version did not do so. The Empress held a hard line against the Italians, and when talks eventually broke down, and Italy invaded the Empire from its Eritrean colony, she marched north with the Emperor and the Imperial Army, commanding a force of cannoneers at the historic Battle of Adwa which resulted in a humiliating defeat for Italy in March, 1896.

From Summra Akale, 7th grader, Loganville, GA

Resources: <http://www.ethioseed.org/index.cfm?views=honored&year=2005>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taytu_Betul