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INTERVIEW WITH MR F. G. MSONI

Q: Will you tell us about yourself, your name and when and where were you born.

A: I am Fred Gijunia Msoni and my father's name is Salashama. I was born in 1906 and baptised in 1907, and that is the reason why in official documents I am said to be born in 1907.

Q: It means you were born during the battle of Bambatha.

A: That's very true I was born at the time when my father ~~was~~ and others were arrested because of their activities in the battle of Bambatha.

Q: Where was your father staying at that time.

A: He was staying at ~~Ndweane~~ Maphuphethe next to the ~~of~~ place today known as Ngukhuni along the Umgeni River.

Q: So, how did the Amaphuphethe tribe happen to settle in the Ndweane district.

A: Amaphuphethe migrated from across the Tugela River towards the coast. ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~

(5)

They moved along the Umzengi River until their leader decided that they settle in the land ~~from~~ ^{between} Umzengi ~~to~~ ^{and} as far ~~to~~ Umzinyathu.

During that period the Amaladi tribe were settling the area on the other side of Umzengi River ~~was~~ in the place known today as Ntuzuma. As the Amaladi moved across the Umzengi River towards the place settled by Amaphetha, the Amaphetha had to move further from Matabehute ~~and~~ as far as Kwamampengwane. The boundary as laid by Lord Somerset (Somerset) enters the area known as Faya and Mgeni, the place which was ultimately settled by Amaphetha.

Q. What is the name of the Amaphetha chief who led them from across Yuzela Rvls.

A. It was chief Mycha

Q. Can you list the chiefs that came after Mycha?

A: Well, I can't remember them all as Mycha himself died long before I was born, but I know that there was chief Khamanga who was the son of chief Mycha. Mycha himself was the son of Majiya. Khamanga was followed by Chief Dliwane.

After chief Shwane chief Mphumqwa (the brother to chief Shwane) acted on behalf of chief Bolekhosi, the chief currently on the throne who was very young by then.

Q: Is it true that Amaphethe was a very small tribe in number compared to AmaQadi and that they suffered ill-treatment from latter tribe?

A: That is an undisputable fact. Even today the AmaQadi are a very large tribe. Before we settled here at Maphe Matata there had been a continuous dispute over the ownership of this ~~area~~ area, and as a result the Khumalo and the Amaphethe warriors used to camp here where my home stands today.

As I have said that I moved from Maphe Matata where I used to be an Induna and came to settle at Amatata where I was again made an Induna by the Khumalo people because they believed I had the whole information about the establishment of the mission station which was the work of Bhulushu.

(4)

As the dispute over the ownership of the place was not settled, the Affairs Commission ruled that the disputable place area be given to Ama Radi.

Q: Can you remember when did this happen?

A: About 1947 during the ~~on the~~ death of the chief Mwaba who was acting as a chief on behalf of chief Mandlakoyse. During that time the Amaphutha were under the leadership of chief Mphungwa.

Q: Does it mean that during that time you belonged to Ama Radi tribe?

A: After the struggle over the land was resolved I was then made an Induna under the Amakadi chief. (Though chief Mwaba disfavoured me). I eventually got my Induna rank during the reign of chief Mzonjani, and as a leader of the converts I heard to remain an Ama Radi person.

Q: Can you briefly tell us about your family and your siblings and your education?

A: I started my primary education at Ngubwini

A. P. School, and proceeded to Mngeni Primary and lastly at the mission school just across the Mngeni River where I passed Std 4. Afterwards I started working in Durban.

Q: When were you employed.

A: I was employed as a domestic servant and later got employed at Butterworth Hotel where I served for two years. That was in 1921 during the days of I. C. U. I was also once employed as an attendant in the store run by the Muslim in Durban.

Q: Do you remember the I. C. U. well.

A: Yes I do.

Q: Do you also know Mr. Champion, the late.

A: Yes, I know him very well and I used to pay him a visit at his home.

Q: When you came to Durban were you already married.

A: No I wasn't, I only got married in 1930, and the home of my own family

(6)

was built in 1932 and I decided to quit Durban and start the work of my own.

Q: What type of work was it.

A: It was the delivery project as there were no motor-cars ~~at~~ ⁱⁿ those days. I owned a cart which was ~~pushed~~ pulled by the donkeys and I delivered people's goods right round the Ndawane area. It was however my father in law Thomas Duzila who conducted the whole work who was then the head of the converted people in Amatata whom I succeeded as a leader.

Q: What was the name of that Church.

A: It is the very same church we are having today and its name is Africa.

Q: Can you remember when was this Church house built?

A: I can't but it was erected during the days of the missionaries who ~~had~~ ^{were} not interested in it as it was said to be Madhane's efforts.

(7)

Q: Were you part and parcel of the American Board.

A: Yes.

Q: Can you remember any white missionaries of those days.

A: No, what I know is that the Missionaries were stationed at Inanda and it is they who sent Madihane to preach Gospel at Umata.

Q: When did Madihane assume his responsibility as a Priest at Matata.

A: Well I can't remember because he passed away while I was very young. He was followed in the priesthood by his son Bandyana whom I served under as a Deacon. Madihane's chief deacon was Thomas Duzila.

Q: Can you tell us more about Madihane.

A: He was a highly respected person. Chief Bhulushi sacked two Priests who had been sent to this place by the Missionaries but when Madihane came he was very much impressed. This might be because he had known that

⑧

Madhane had been an Induma to Chief Mghani before he was converted to Christianity. Bhulushi was also married to Chief Mghani's daughter and that makes good relationship.

Q: What was the name of Mghani's daughter that got married to Bhulushi.

A: It was Nomasento who was Mghani's first born (eldest among the girls).

Q: During Chief Bhulushi's reign how was the educational ~~degree~~ standard among the society members of Amatata.

A: People ~~were~~ ^{were} totally not interested in education they embarked on tradition practices like the fightings that occupied most of the male lot.

Q: What actually sparked these fights.

A: Usually people used to quarrel in the weddings. At one stage there was a wedding in the Kwabe kraal and the sons of Bhulushi attended. After a while, while Bhulushi was just sitting in his kraal's yard, saw his sons coming running back home. He then met them halfway and ordered them to go back and fight.

(9)

On their return to the battle field he joined them and it was when he murdered a person from the rival group ^{whose} name was Kudla lele.

Q: When did this incident take place.

A: It was about 1907 as the story was related to me by my father in law born of Shangase tribe.

Q: How was the relationship between the Shangase and Amaphethe groups.

A: There were no clashes between the two. The only marked battle was between the AmaLadi and Shangase ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ 1892.

Q: How did your father make his living.

A: He was working as a domestic servant for the Nanda Police Station ^{Master}.

Q: During your father's days were tribal people ^{concerned} to go and get employment in towns.

A: Yes they were. My father once worked in Johannesburg.

Q: Mr Msoni can you tell us your "izibongo"

A: There is only one person who will be able to tell my "izibongo" to you. Perhaps I can arrange so that when you come back you are able to meet him.

Q: Is it possible for him to give us Maduhane's "izibongo" too.

A: I may rather refer you to Chief Mqhane for Maduhane's "izibongo".

The "izibongo" that I can ~~remember~~ remember
 is Thomas Dingula's who was known as:-

Nzima emnyama ka Nomatijela
 Amshayi wensimbi hungah phumywa
 usuyingayenza usungayi nganduka.
 Wsimangokhanda emadodeni.

Q: Presently what are you doing for a living?

A: I was taught how to inject the cattle to prevent them from the diseases. My duty is to inject cattle on every Fridays in different dipping tanks.

Q: You must have ^{noticed} a number of changes as from your childhood up to today

A: Looking back I can see a great difference between the life we used to live and the the present one. The only trouble around here is that there are very few ^{for} males that is because of employment in the towns and cities.

But those who are around have eagerness to progress as they are dedicated to all types of farming.

There is however a lot of young folk who which is wasted in the ~~stums~~ slums because ~~they are~~ ^{they are} lazy of laziness to work their fields.

Truly speaking this type of soil we are having here needs one to be willing to work harder and harder, ~~and~~ it is very poor in nature and need to be looked after and nourished time and again.

The agricultural ^{officers} ~~workers~~ keep on giving us tips on how to conquer the soil. They also give the handwork lectures to the females.

Others have grown gum trees which is sold and that means ~~business~~ ^{business} a great deal of improvement.

(12)

There is also a health clinic which gives services free of charge. Today you find that elderly people are subject to the pension schemes which never existed before.

I can say ~~now~~ that we are looking forward to green pastures.

Mr Msoni was thanked for his contributions and was asked to lend his photograph to the interviewers which he did with pleasure.

(13)

On the third visit at Msoni's house there were other people who were called to witness the story as Mr Msoni reviewed it to us.

These people included: -

Mrs Faith Maditshu

Mrs Busiswe Khumalo and

Mr Elphas Mzimela (born in 1904)

They are the people who give the additional information. The women both contributed towards the ~~in~~ with the information regarding the role ~~of~~ played by the women in the congregation whereas Mr Mzimela gave us Mr Msoni's ~~ytongze~~

F. G. MSONI'S IZIBONGO READS AS FOLLOWS:

Mbala lisonto elingaphelanga
Koze kubhubh' umhlaba lingapheli
Uhlamvan' bhula umlilo
Obaswe Amadoda amabili.

Ubaswa ushabane leno khuzwayo
Ushabane savutha kabi
Savutha umhlamvan' sayikhupha ngemusa
jadla abase Ngobhozini Abefundisi
Ngoba nabo abanga lisonto.

Umkhokho wefusi oziye ngazo zombili
Uhlaba uzwana zibaleke
Engumthanda ngoba esemi lapho endaweni
Ka Madibane.

Uzizima Kasilashana
Uzizima ngibane
Uzizima abalike ashuye impi yakhe
Indlovu enenze abayihlaba beyikhozelela

Uhlamvana bhul' umlilo
Obaswe Amadoda amabili
Oshis' zikhova zase Matidlana
Kwaye kwasha nezashowe
Kwaphuma umNgobo ezizima
Waye eLokishini eyozuna mellela
yShaba abuyiselwe eManda

Kwaye kwasha nyikhova zase Khusani
 zasha kwaze kwaphuma eMasogoyile
 Naye wathi uyabula kwangabuleka
 Kwaze kwayophwa eMszini
 Lapho ibantane khona yamshaya phansi
 eMabudeni kaKhuqwayo kolu dumsayo

Kwasha izikhetha
 zise nase Panda
 Lamshaya phansi eMhlonzo eThafama

Prominent women to be remembered because
 of their activities in the congregation include
 Mrs Dube who was the women's leader
 Mrs Maphumulo, and Mrs Khumato, as
 well as the wives of the different priests
 who used to serve under this mission.

They used to encourage people to be united
 in prayer. Mrs Roseline Dube once played
 the role of the main lady in the church
 during the sad days when the priest
 was widowed during the 1970's.

Mrs Alia Khumato will also be remembered
 for the role she played in the congregation.
 She was the organiser. She used to encourage
 people to look after the church house.

Women are having their prayer organisation
 in this area

The mission house which was built in 1960 has recently been stripped off by the intruders.

The part on the women's activities was given by Mrs Busiswe Khumalo and Mrs Faith Madletshe.

The uniform worn by the "Umanyano" is totally different from that used by the American band.

The Headquarters of the congregation is at Inanda.

The Priests they followed Khandeyana are as follows:-

- ① Rev M. W. MAYUNDA
- ② " Z. A. KHULUSE
- ③ " J. D. GUMEDE
- ④ " E. J. PHOHLWANA.
- ⑤ " O. J. MGOBHOLI
- ⑥ " I. N. DUBE
- ⑦ ZONDI
- ⑧ SHANGE
- ⑨ M. DLAMINI
- ⑩ HADEBE.

The first women to enlist in the church were:-
Ellen Duzila, Alice Khumalo and Nondiso Gumbi.