

KAMBI KA MATSHOBANA

<Kambi's evidence as given below is taken from Stuart's transcription of rough notes which he recorded in notebook 18, File 60. Typescript copies of the transcription are to be found in Files 14 and 41 - eds.>

9.4.1903 - <evidence given 8.4.1903>

File 70, pp. 86-8.

Also present: Mtshwayiza, I. Windham

86 Qwabe tribe, history, per Kambi and Mtshwayiza, 8.4.1903; I. Windham present. Mtshwayiza, aet. about 42, is a borough police sergeant. He lives in Eshowe District, and is a son of Mamfongonyana, former chief of the tribe. He is more or less cut off, the main section of the tribe being in Natal, i.e. that portion there lately under Zidumo (deceased). He now claims the chieftainship in Zidumo's place until the latter's children (heir) shall have grown up.

Kambi is aged say 38 or 39, and is a member of the Qwabe tribe at present working as a togt boy in Durban.

Mamfongonyana was a member of the Mdhlenevu regiment.¹

Qwabe was originally the name of a person, just as that of Zulu was, and both were the sons of one man, Malandela. Owing to a quarrel between Zulu and Qwabe, their father caused them to separate. Zulu went further north whilst Qwabe came and settled on the south side of the Mhlatuze river (not merely in Eshowe District).

Before this separation, Kambi (who is principal spokesman) does not know where the people all lived together. It may have been in the White Mfolozi valley. He believes the common *isibongo*, prior to separation, was Lufenulwennja. It is certain this name did at one time apply to the Qwabe people. Owing to living north and so in the direction of or close to the Basutos, the Zulus came to be spoken of as *abeSutu*. This appellation was never used in respect to the Qwabe.

87 During the early part of Tshaka's reign, Pakatwayo was king of the tribe. He died on account of being attacked by Tshaka. It was proposed, says Mtshwayiza, that they should *hold a dance together*, i.e. the Qwabe and Zulu tribes. To do this meant of course that no assegais would be brought. The Qwabe tribe came to the dance altogether unarmed whilst the Zulu people had one and all secretly armed themselves. The end of it was that the Zulus attacked the Qwabes, defeated them, and secured Pakatwayo, who very quickly died from fear.

As regards Pakatwayo's ancestors, they are these, Kambi says:

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He was the son of Kondhlo, son of Mncinci ka Lufuta ka Simamane ka Kuzwayo; then come Sidinane and Mahlomo [Mahlobo, according to Tununu], as to whose order Kambi is not certain.² Nor can Kambi trace the line up to the man Qwabe and so connect with the Zulus.

When Tshaka defeated Pakatwayo, the Qwabe people became subject to the former. Mtshwayiza does not know what *induna* or chief was placed over them, but numbers seem to have left for what is now Natal, being dissatisfied with the government. Pakatwayo's heir was Mamfongonyana (Mtshwayiza's father).³ The latter at a later time became chief over a section of the tribe in Natal. Mamfongonyana's heir was the late Zidumo, living in Lower Tugela Division, and whom I knew.

The main reason why the Qwabe tribe left Zululand is because, when in July 1824 Tshaka was stabbed in the arm and side, it was found he had been stabbed with a Qwabe assegai. This could be seen by the shape of the wood at the end of it, and thereupon Tshaka sent bodies of men out to massacre all members of the tribe. The punitive expedition were told that a characteristic of the people was for them to be always pushing wood further into the fire. Assisted by this and other information, many of the Qwabe people were killed and the majority of the people came south of the Tugela. Many came and lived on a plain known as Kwa Davati near Makanya, not far from Isipingo.

Vubukulwayo was a brother of Pakatwayo's; so also was Godide. Pakatwayo's grave is near where the chief Mkungo now lives in the Eshowe District.⁴ Kambi cannot indicate where graves of former kings were. He is able to recite Pakatwayo's *izibongo* at some length.

Mamfongonyana left Zululand in Mpande's reign. He left because of indignities he had to put up with; he was, for instance, made an *inceku responsible for milking* and had to extend both hands, like an inferior, to receive curds.

88 Mtshwayiza says he does not know much because he was obliged to treat his father with the greatest respect on account of his high rank. He had, for instance, to go behind the hut in which he was, and not before the door of it, and if he entered the hut there was something about the place which was oppressive; one felt one's *mbombo* [forehead? - bridge of nose (Colenso)] get hot.⁵

Kambi and Mtshwayiza are familiar with some of the incidents respecting Nqeto which are recorded by Fynn [see vol. 1, Annals of Natal, pp. 149, 150].

11.4.1903, Saturday.

File 70, pp. 88-93.

Also present: Mtshwayiza

Per Kambi alias Ntshokobela, and Mtshwayiza. I learn Kambi is of the same age as the Falaza regiment⁶ (i.e. about three or four years older than myself). His father was Matshobana.

.... <Annotated praises of Phakathwayo omitted. All except three lines of these praises appear as lines 2-34 of Phakathwayo's praises published in Cope, *Izibongo*, pp. 143, 145. The order in the latter differs slightly from that given by Kambi - eds.>

90 To this day, Mtshwayiza says, Nomo's⁷ kraal Entoyeni [should it not be Entoyeyeni? - yes] is existing; it was *re-established* by Mamfongonyana, and hut tax for it is paid at Stanger Magistracy, seeing it was under the late chief Zidumo.

The Qwabe tribe had regiments of its own. The only one of Pakatwayo's which Kambi and Mtshwayiza can name is the iziNkonde, which was so large an one that if it began in the course of the morning to enter the kraal the process would continue until sunset. Regiments were enlisted according to age and *incorporated* into the iziNkonde, which then became a huge body of men of different ages.

A characteristic of the Qwabe people is that they *tefula*.

91 My informant Kambi got much of the information he now gives, especially the *izibongo*, from his late uncle Mnyaiza, son of Maganga, who was well-informed and knew the tribal kings' *izibongo*.

Among Pakatwayo's kraals were the following:

eMtandeni - the principal one

eNtoyeyeni

eyiDedeni

eNdhlekezeni (eziNdhlekezeni)

eMteteni - [a section of the Mtandeni, not a separate kraal
- Tununu, 31.5.1903]

eMaganukeni - [Nqeto's kraal]

All these were in land lying south of and adjacent to the Mhlatuze river. The eMaganukeni kraal was *that of Nqeto*.

Pakatwayo wore a *headring*. He died an elderly man but not *very old*. A man at present living near Stanger [under Ntshingumuzi], Ndhlembeni ka Mgqogqoza, can give a good deal of information as regard Qwabe affairs. He belongs to the Qwabe people proper.

In the old days there was a very strong objection to *abatakati*. This being so, the greatest restrictions were placed on people becoming doctors. The Qwabe people paid special attention to the matter, and so controlled the keeping of drugs as to confine them to a few well-known and respectable men. Whenever there was a supposed case of *takataing*, the king would call his *izangoma* together and *have them divine*; i.e. the doctors would be encircled by a large body of men etc.; they would *leap about* inside and, by *bulaing*, proceed to smell out the evil-doers.

The Qwabe people were spoken of by the Zulus and other northern tribes as *those from down-country*.⁸

92 Nqeto. When Tshaka was assassinated, Nqeto sent to Zwide and said, 'Let us attack them (Zulus) whilst they are in a state of confusion.' I, says Kambi, do not know what Zwide's reply was. [Zwide was dead and buried.] Nqeto then went off with a large section of the Qwabe tribe, carrying with him considerable numbers of cattle belonging to the Zulus. Nqeto was a brother of the late Pakatwayo, being, like him, a son of Kondhlo. At this time Mamfongonyana was a boy, living with his uncle Godide,⁹ son of Kondhlo. Among the sons of Kondhlo, the preceding king, were Pakatwayo, Vubukulwayo, Nqeto, Godolozzi and Godide. It is said Tshaka was fond of Nqeto. Godolozzi, Godide and other sons of Kondhlo were killed by Tshaka.

Tshaka on one occasion, when he had slaughtered some cattle, sent *the head of a beast* to Nqeto. This Nqeto took up and dropped in front of Tshaka's hut, refusing to eat meat which ticks ate,

for was he not the son of a king? Tshaka replied, 'He is quite right,' and at once ordered the *rib meat*¹⁰ to be sent to him. The same sort of thing happened when beer was sent. Nqeto would cause his *izi-nceku* to taste it, and if they found it [not?] as good as that previously given, would return the same and remonstrate about being treated in that way. Tshaka would acquiesce and say the son of a king should not be supplied with beer of an acid taste.

Of a night the more important men would assemble about the king *at the upper end of the cattle kraal*. One would be directed to call Nqeto. He would then shout out in a loud voice, '*Here, Nqeto!*'¹¹ (This was the mode in which men were called.) Nqeto would proceed to the place where the king was sitting and, not having answered to his name, would inquire who it was who had called out to him in so unseemly a fashion - this in Tshaka's presence. Tshaka would then say chaffingly that he was no longer the son of a king, and therefore he must expect to have his name shouted out as was done in the case of all others. Nqeto would then turn and leave, when a person would be sent after him to turn him back, addressing him, as he did so, as if indeed he were the son of a reigning monarch. Nqeto would then return and take his seat among the party.

If the king called anyone else but Nqeto, they would come running up, even if they were the sons of late kings. One only would dare to respond to the summons by walking; that was Nqeto. All other men too would accept whatever food the king gave, *beast heads* or anything else. Nqeto, as has been shown, acted differently.

Among other important men of the tribe was Batintile, son of a former king Mncinci. He was a brother of Kondhlo. The man Ntshingumuzi, now in charge of the late Zidumo's section of the tribe, is a son of Mkwetu, who was the son of the Batintile in question.

93 In former times the tribe used to *dress* differently to what members of it do now. *People wore their loin covers low on the buttocks. We wore loin covers of twisted tassels of black sheepskin. In former times people would need hooked sticks with which to hitch them up.* Men carried about with them two wooden small hooks, one in either hand, and with these from time to time lifted up the side of the *loin cover* if it pressed too closely against the upper hind portion of the leg, and so again on the other side. There appear to have been strings affixed alongside of the *loin cover*, of which the hooks or prongs were intended to take hold, and these hooks were made of *thorned mimosa* wood.

Then there was a *numuza*¹² custom which would be practised when men had assembled *in company*. A pot of *curdled milk* would be put in the midst, provided with one spoon only. The principal man would take the spoon, put it into the pot and take onto the spoon a quantity of the food, consume that one spoonful, and then pass the spoon on to the person next on his right, who in his turn would act similarly, and so on to the end, when the last man would cover the pot and lay the spoon on top.

Beer made of *upoko*¹³ would be brought in sometimes, and would be passed from one to the other in small vessel. Each would take a short drink and, when all had partaken thereof, would proceed to *discuss affairs*.

Another *numuza* custom was that when one of the men present

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wanted to leave, he would get up and ask to be accompanied home. All would then get up and go along with him in the direction of his home. They would go some 600 or 700 yards and then return to the kraal, and the man they had been accompanying, and who had said he was going home, would go back with them! Another two or three would speak of going home and ask to be accompanied. This would be done, and the party would be joined by the man who had already been accompanied as if going home. All, having again gone some little way, would again return, and such process would go on into the night when, seeing it was night, the whole party would decide to remain the whole night. A beast would then be killed by the *ummumzana* as food for his guests.

The Qwabe lived on both sides of the Tugela. Makuta was probably a contemporary of Pakatwayo, and was chief over a portion of the people.¹⁴ Mtambo (living), son of Makuta, has a following among the Makanya, and pays taxes in the Umlazi court.

Notes

¹Formed c.1843; age-group born c.1823.

²Bryant (*Olden Times*, p. 186) gives a slightly different genealogy for the Qwabe chiefly line. Tununu was another of Stuart's informants.

³For Bryant's account of the succession dispute that followed the death of Phakathwayo, see *Olden Times*, pp. 199-200. He makes no mention of Mamfongonyana as being Phakathwayo's heir.

⁴Mkungo, son of Mpande by Monase ka Mntungwa of the Nxumalo, was another of Stuart's informants. He lived on the Ngoye hills south of the Mhlatuze.

⁵*Umbombo* means the ridge of the nose.

⁶Formed c.1877-8; age-group born c.1856-60.

⁷Nomo was a brother of Phakathwayo.

⁸A *ba se zansi* in the original.

⁹Bryant (*Olden Times*, p. 186) gives Godide as Mamfongonyana's father.

¹⁰The *insonyama*, or meat covering a beast's ribs, was 'specially prized as the perquisite of the head of the kraal'. (Doke and Vilakazi, *Dictionary*, p. 600.)

¹¹'*Nangu Nqeto bo*' in the original.

¹²The verb *ukunumusa* means to lead a comfortable life, to live a life of pleasure and prosperity.

¹³A species of millet.

¹⁴Bryant (*Olden Times*, p. 187) gives Makuta (Makhutha) as the chief who, after the accession of Dingane, established himself just to the south of present-day Durban with most of the Makhanya section of the Qwabe.