

MAGEZA KA MKONTSHWANA

<Typescript copies of Mageza's evidence are to be found in Files 12 and 25 of the Stuart Collection - eds.>

21.2.1909

File 9, item 9, pp. 1-5.

1 Mageza ka Mkontshwana. Chief: Mjadu ka Sigananda.¹ Mjadu follows *Ndabaringi in age*.² He is an *old man*, of the Ndhluyengwe regiment. He lives at Ntingwe, Eliase's store. I grew up in the vicinity of the Mome.³ I came there from Kwamagwaza,⁴ where I was born. I came before I could *herd cattle*. I am of the Mavalana regiment. I was born about 1888, the year of Ceza.⁵

Cetshwayo once took refuge at Mome, after the Ulundi *battle*.⁶ On arriving he took refuge in a fine set of caves on the immediate right of the waterfall. When nothing was on, no danger, he would go and stay at the *old site* of Sigananda's Ehlweni kraal. From that point to the cave the distance is about a mile, and for three quarters of that distance there was a kind of causeway or enclosed path, made with branches and leaves, high enough for one to walk if slightly bending the neck. One still finds marks of axes in the trees, indicating where this path was. One thing about the path was that it purposely did not lead to the caves; it led to a direction almost opposite to them. It led to the river above the falls where it suddenly stopped, giving the appearance that the person travelling that way intended going right on to the forests beyond, whereas there was a secret path, carefully concealed, leading to the left, back to the right of the waterfall (looking at it from the mouth of the Mome valley) and then to the caves.

2 The caves are large and roomy, a number of them. I have visited same. *Rock rabbits* stay there now. There is an *aura* about the place, because of its having been the king's hiding place. The *izinduna* are said to have lived below the fall, where some small *temporary shelters* were the year before last. The caves have no name. The enclosed pathway is known as *ifuku*.⁷ The reason it was put up was to obviate the king being waylaid. As a matter of fact he might have been waylaid above (at the) Ehlweni site.

.... <Linguistic note omitted - eds.>

There are wild pigs in the Nkandhla near Mome. They go about in twos and threes.

The Mome valley is occupied by natives as before. The old grass

was burnt and then they built. Mpiyondeni lives where Bambata's *impi* halted.⁸ The kraal Captain Stuart's⁹ party pitched tents at is Mpiyondeni's - now re-constructed. There are leopards in the forest - not many. They are at Manzipambana. There are caves at Manzipambana, but they were never used for anything.

There are said to be ghosts at the Mome valley now; they are short, like dwarfs, and cause tears to flow freely, and one cannot walk, just as if one's feet sink as into soft sand by the seashore. Nomaqavela saw the ghosts; he was with Samu at the time. The time was about 7 p.m. They ran away and did not even sleep at their homes that night. There were several ghosts seated on either side of the path, just at the little neck (above Bambata's camp where the artillery came to). These ghosts were singing, but in an inarticulate way, as if their tongues were cut out. Other people declare having seen ghosts in Mome, and even the footprints. Formerly no ghosts were in this valley. I frequently went through at night, after *courting*, but saw nothing. Now I would not go in alone.

Imikovu belonged to *abatakati*.¹⁰ *Abatakati* bring on ghosts. We have not been able to find out who has brought on these particular ones. We expect to find the author of these ghosts.

Nhlomeni ka Sikinizolo about four months ago got lost for three weeks. Two days after this period he was discovered in the bush just behind where Captain Stuart's camp was. He was seated and had had *incisions cut in the skin* all over the body. He could give no account as to how this had come about, although doctors attended to him and cured him. He can speak now. We attribute his experiences to the *imikovu*.

Notes

¹Sigananda, chief of the Cube in the Nkandla division, was a prominent figure in the disturbances of 1906. He died in July of that year.

²Ndabaningi was another son of Siganda.

³A gorge in the Nkandla forest.

⁴An Anglican mission station ten kilometres south-west of present-day Melmoth.

⁵The Mavalana age-group was formed in 1906 of men born in the 1880s. Ceza, a hill some thirty kilometres south-west of present-day Non-goma, was the scene of an engagement between British troops and the forces of Dinuzulu in 1888.

⁶The reference is to Cetshwayo's flight to the Nkandla forest after his defeat by Zibhebhu in 1883.

⁷Literally a tangled mass of grass.

⁸Bambatha kaMancinza, chief of the Zondi people living in the Mpanza valley north-west of Greytown, was an active rebel leader during the disturbances of 1906.

⁹Stuart was an officer in the Natal colonial forces during the disturbances of 1906.

¹⁰The *umkhovu* (pl. *imikhovu*) is the familiar used by an *umthakathi*.