

MAHASHAHASHA KA PAKADE

8.5.1910, Sunday.

File 58, nbk. 18, pp. 22-6.

- 22 Mahashahasha ka Pakade ka Mandhlesilo ka Nyanda ka Lubangu of the eLangeni people. I am a sergeant in the Natal Police, and an induna at the Central Gaol, Pietermaritzburg. I am of the same age as the Imbokodwebomvu,¹ but was never *butwa'd*.

Mhlongo, our former tribal king, used to plant *plantains* (*ukova*), *sugar cane* (*umoba*), potatoes and other things, but after his death the people discontinued doing this.² I do not know where he learnt this. I have never been able to ascertain. Mhlongo lived where Harry Osborn has his farm on the Umhlatuze. Mhlongo must have lived before Senzangakona and Dingiswayo, and therefore could not have learnt from Dingiswayo how to cultivate these things.

- 23 One day Tshaka called all the Langeni people together to a certain *euphorbia* tree at some hill. Finding that they were not all assembled, he sent and directed that even the very old men should come. They came, believing that he had it in mind to make them presents of cattle, as his mother was a member of their tribe. When as many as possible had congregated, he proceeded to call to mind the way in which they had *brought him up* when a boy; how they had given him a *small black beast* with horns as indicated,



- saying he was to eat that; how they used to send him out herding cattle and, during his absence, dig a *hole*, and on his getting back say, '*There's a bird in that hole over there, my child; go and take it out*', (and how) he then put his hand in to find nothing but faeces buried there; how they would ask, '*Do you know what a porcupine's egg looks like?*', and on his saying, 'No', they would say, 'There it is; take it out,' and when he attempted to do so he would find nothing but *excrement* there; how they would pour *curds* in such quantities into his hands for him to eat that it would run down both
- 24 arms to the elbows and become quite hot as he ate. In fact they had treated him just like a dog. He then said that on account of all this, of their ill-treatment of him, he would have them put to death, and forthwith, on (his) giving the order, all were massacred on the spot.

He was afterwards very sorry for what he had done, and directed

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all the orphans to be carried off to the Mtetwa district³ (for that was where he himself had grown up), where, he said, the country was a pleasant one to live in and where they would get nice *curds* for their children. They were there accordingly accommodated with land. But one day it so happened that a lion began to roar near their cattle. These all ran into the temporary kraal. The men of the place then came to the *temporary shelters* and began singing various *cere-*
monial songs. After this the lion went to the back of the kraal and there began roaring. It was in the daytime. The singing was done in honour of the lion, for according to tribal belief the lion was their *chief*. When the lion roared at the back of the kraal the cattle went out of the kraal and moved off, and the women, in the meantime having packed up all their belongings, moved off after the cattle, carrying their bundles and leading their children. These in turn were followed by the men, and at the rear came the lion. On and on they went till
25 sunset, the men in the rear, paying no attention to the lion, for, it being their *chief*, they had nothing to fear. It was in fact their tribal *chief*. At sunset the lion moved ahead of the cattle and turned them back, and they grouped themselves together. The lion then pounced on a beast and killed it, but it did not eat it; it left the animal to be devoured by the people.

This procedure went on day by day till the party reached their old tribal lands at the Mhlatuze.⁴ Their arrival, and the circumstances under which they had returned, were reported to Tshaka, who *selected cattle to be taken to praise the chief*, i.e. *praise* the lion that had appeared, so that they should be killed for the *ancestral spirits and in praise*. Many cattle were so killed. The lion, when the people reached their destination, for the first time killed and ate one of the cattle. Tshaka said, '*Woh! They have been fetched by their chief. I thought I was sending them to a good place, but he does not want them to leave their old lands.*' He then allowed them to live on their old lands and to this day they are still there.

26 My idea is that the *lion* is believed to be our *chief's ancestral spirit*, though I have never heard of any chief of ours having been a *lion*.

.... <Praises of Mbengi omitted - eds.>

Mahashahaha says Sikwata ka Mandhlesilo, now living under Chief Mfungelwa,⁵ is very well up in the affairs of the Langeni tribe. He usually *praises the chiefs* when a *girl dances*. He will see his son and arrange for him to come down. Mhlahlo ka Mandhlesilo is also well informed.

Notes

¹The imBokodwebomvu age-grade was formed by Dinuzulu in 1886 of men born in the early 1860s.

²According to Bryant's genealogy of the Langeni chiefly line, Mhlongo ruled in about the third quarter of the eighteenth century. See *Olden Times*, p. 126.

³I.e. the territory south of the lower reaches of the White Mfolozi.

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⁴Bryant, Olden Times, p. 125, gives the Langeni as having occupied 'the hill-country about emTinemide, overlooking the middle Mhlatuze river, on its northern side'.

⁵Chief of the Ntuli people in the Eshowe district.