

MBULO KA MLAHLA

<9.6.1914>

File 63, item 2a, pp. 75-8.

Also present: Mvayisa

75 Mbulo ka Mlahla ka Tobana ka Lutshangwe of the *Mayeza* people. I am of the same age as the Ngobamakosi.¹

My father, Mlahla, was *the incekú who held Tshaka's shield* - i.e. for keeping the sun off him.

76 On one occasion Tshaka found that a man, *a giant of great strength*, living at the top of a mountain with precipices on each side, had succeeded in killing many people. Their assegais had been placed at the gateway and formed a regular heap where they were killed, i.e. at the gateway. Tshaka could not stand his men being killed off in that way, so he offered a reward of ten cows with calves (young), to any of his *izinceku* who would go and kill this rascal. It was agreed he should be supported as much as possible by other *izinceku*.

My father went. He had his shield, and approached the narrow opening, carrying his assegai with the blade held in the under-hand way, as if to thrust from below.² He was stabbed from above in the back, but succeeded in stabbing and killing the rascal.

Tshaka told him to go and *select* his cattle. He did so, and after picking the ten with calves, some five other beasts followed. These the herd-boys attempted to drive back. 'No!' said T., 'leave them alone; they are simply following my hero.' And away they went with my father. This happened in some hill near Swaziland in Zwide's district.³

77 My father was of the Sipezi regiment. He was latterly very stout. My father's eldest sons were of the amaMboza regiment. My father was of the same age as Tshaka. He used to live *in the Langeni country* with T.⁴

Mvayisa says that at (the place of the) Langeni Tshaka was made to *thresh unyaluti millet*, and they gave him a *louse-ridden blanket*, even though he belonged by birth.⁵

The mode of fighting at first was to *build a stone wall (umtangala)*, then from behind this to throw assegais at the enemy, and then hide behind the rude stone fence that had been constructed. Tshaka put an end to this mode of warfare. My father told me of this having been done in the old days .

Mvayisa says that was the way of 'Ngayi', the throwing of assegais

at one another. As they hurled they shouted 'Ya-i-ya!' I heard this from my father.

The fences were only about 12 or 15 inches high. Each man brought one stone to help build the fence.

78 When my father *dressed Tshaka's hair*, he would *make a stroke and then duck down onto his elbow*, then *make a stroke* again, only to duck back, and so on and on, because afraid of him.

Tshaka, finding my father never did any wrong, and no complaint ever being made against him, said '*You will live to drink milk,*' i.e. *you will live to a good age*, i.e. he would go on and on living, and never be put to death.

My father and others of his regiment were *given permission to put on headrings* by T., but he ordered that they were not to *hlobonga with girls*. He then ordered them to cut off their rings. They did so. Later he again told them to *put on headrings* when they were permitted to marry.

The Isipezi regiment was of the same age as the amaWombe.

Notes

¹*Ibutho* formed in 1873 of youths born in the early 1850s.

²On methods of stabbing, cf. *Stuart Archive*, vol. 2, p. 187.

³Zwide, chief of the Ndwandwe in the early nineteenth century, lived in the vicinity of Magudu hill, from which position he expanded his authority along the line of the Phongolo river, and southwards across the Mkhuze.

⁴Shaka is reputed to have lived amongst the Langeni people for a time during his boyhood.

⁵Shaka's mother Nandi was a woman of the Langeni people.