

## NDABA

&lt;24.10.1897&gt;

File 74, pp. 8-9.

- 8 (*Lobola*), Tongaland. Per Ndaba. Ndaba lives in Ingwavuma district close to the Pongolo, and three or four miles south of Mtini's Drift.<sup>1</sup> Before the regular *lobola* is paid, a beast called the *imvulamlomo* ('open the mouth') is, at the present day, brought to the girl's father and mother by the lover as a means of inducing them to give their consent to his marrying their daughter.<sup>2</sup> The daughter need not necessarily have given her own consent. In addition to the beast, a sum of f1 is brought at the same time. This is offered in consideration of the trouble that will be caused by the girl having, with her elbows, to keep her prospective baby quiet whilst on her back. The custom is thus called the *imbuwembuwe*, where the word expresses the act of gently beating or shaking the baby with the object of keeping it from crying. The *imbuwembuwe* custom is practised in Ingwavuma district, but it was brought in from Tongaland proper. It is, of course, only the people in the low country in Ingwavuma district who are, or are closely connected with Tongas, who practise the said custom. This applies also to the *imvulamlomo* beast. Some of Sambana's people who live in the low country have attempted to demand the *imvulamlomo*, but
- 9 the people refuse to bring it on the ground that the custom is one peculiar to themselves, or rather one which is not practised by Sambana's people amongst themselves.<sup>3</sup> [I rather fancy some of Sambana's people are Tongas - ascertain.] Ndaba says the first time he ever heard of the *imbuwembuwe* custom in this district was about six years ago.
- Before Hluma's time [for kings of Tongaland see p. 137],<sup>4</sup> Ndaba believes, *lobola* was paid only with beads, which came from Delagoa Bay. Since that time *lobola* was paid with *amageja* (hoes). The number paid was not fixed; it varied from five to ten.
- [See the *ganisela* custom in Ingwavuma district, pp. 36, 37, showing that *lobola* is sometimes paid before a girl becomes marriageable.]<sup>5</sup>

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File 74, p. 36.

- 36 Customs, Tongaland. Per Ndaba, 24.10.1897.
- The *hlobonga* custom is prevalent amongst Tongas. Although called *hlobonga* it has a different sense to that attached to it when employed amongst Zulus. The reason is because, amongst Tongas, the girl is penetrated, but it seems to be a rule for the man to withdraw just before emitting his semen.<sup>6</sup> This custom, presumably on account of

penetration, is practised by the girl with only one man, that is, her lover (*soka*). If pregnancy takes place some fine seems to be paid. An engaged girl is said to have *gana'd* her *soka*, meaning *qoma'd* in Zulu;<sup>7</sup> and on marriage is said to *enda*, same as Zulu. [Zulus use *gana*, *enda*, *geagea* and *cangusa* all for marriage.]

[See an important historical note on Zulu *ukuhlobonga* on pp. 62, 63 of notebook 4.]<sup>8</sup>

[See the dying out of the *imbayi* in Tongaland (change of fashion) - see under 'Clothing', p. 44.]<sup>9</sup>

(Customs), Tongaland. Per Ndaba, 24.10.1897.

(a) Men cut wattles and grass etc., and erect and thatch their huts themselves, without any assistance from the woman. All women do is to *smear the floors*.

(b) Whenever a beast is killed it is *cazululwa'd* or cut up into distinct portions, a portion being given to each hut (like game).

(c) It is the general rule for men to *lay down* and *roll up sleeping mats*, etc.

(d) Where beer is being drunk in a hut, men drinking on one side and women on the other, a woman may leave her side of the hut and go and sit with (if there is space) or before the men, and partake of their beer.

(e) A husband often *gathers* wood.

[The customs marked (a), (b), (c) and (d) are quite different from those of Zulus.]

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File 74, p. 44.

44 Clothing, Tongaland. Per Ndaba, 24.10.1897.

The *imbayi*, which was a covering for the penis about six or seven inches long, made of *softened* skin, sewn together into a kind of bag, is now no longer used in Tongaland. The *imbayi* was held in position by strings tied round the loins. The point of the *imbayi* might be raised by the string either to right or left, or the case could hang straight down. The last man to wear it (as Ndaba believes - he himself saw him with it on) was Mankobola (deceased).<sup>10</sup>

Ndaba accounts for the dying out of the *imbayi* thus. Hluma was required by the Zulus to pay taxes or tribute (*tela*).<sup>11</sup> Tonga messengers had to carry the tribute. These messengers may have been chaffed on account of the *imbayi*, for no *loin cover* (*mutsha*) or anything else was worn, and so induced their own people to adopt the *mutsha*; or, which is more probable, the messengers took a liking to the Zulu *mutshas*, their beauty and easy construction, and thereupon prevailed on their people to take to them.

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File 74, p. 50.

50 Crimes, Tongaland. Per Ndaba, 24.10.1897.

Adultery, i.e. *ukumbuyeza*, was quite recently, and may still be, a very common occurrence in the country. It was prevalent a short time ago in Ingwavuma district. It is looked upon as a species of theft, for which crime four head of cattle have to be paid as a fine. Three

of these go to the woman's husband, whilst the other head goes to the chief's messenger who took the matter before the authorities who imposed the fine.<sup>12</sup> The messenger's beast is usually killed at the injured husband's kraal, and the husband is made a present of some of the meat.

Chief Mtshelékwana, who controls the Tongas living in Ingwavuma district, proposed to meet the crime by adjudging the guilty man to pay one beast, whilst the woman should also pay one beast, this to be furnished by her father.<sup>13</sup>

24.10.1897

File 74, p. 64.

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Contact with civilised races. Tongaland, per Ndaba, 24.10.1897.

People place more confidence in one another than formerly. This is seen when ferrying people across rivers, where a deposit of the fee, or failing that, something in excess of the fee before crossing, is no longer demanded, but a man's word is taken that he will pay after being crossed. Ndaba considers this due to British rule.

The following are some of the principal goods of European manufacture in use by Tongas: money, axes, hoes, saws, augers, nails (for house construction), blankets, *amahiya* in place of the Zulu leathern skirt (*isidwaba*),<sup>14</sup> black shawls, rice and sugar.

Fathers do not commit (*bopela*) girls to men as was the practice formerly.<sup>15</sup> In Ingwavuma district the custom of giving children in marriage (*ganiselang*) is common, but girls have already begun to seek the protection of the British courts of justice.

[What effect is produced on the native mind by white people marrying natives, or rather keeping them as concubines? Find out.]

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File 74, p. 127.

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Ndaba's aim [24.10.1897] is to marry wife no. 3 now, then marry no. 4 and if possible a fifth one. His real object is to increase the size and importance of his kraal. He also desires to see his sons grow up and set up kraals of their own. He wishes to have plenty of property and food so that people may talk of a beast having been killed one day, and on another of there having been a beer drink at his kraal, and so on. [These aims have reference to my proposed questions on pp. 74-80 in notebook no. 4.]<sup>16</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Stuart was resident magistrate at Ingwavuma from 1895 to 1897.

<sup>2</sup>According to Mahungane and Nkomuza (*Stuart Archive*, vol. 2, p. 145), the *imvulamLomo* '...is food that is given by a young man to his future father-in-law when he goes to enquire how much *lobola* he will have to pay for the daughter. The food may be in the form of a beast or £1 (cash) or a large flask or demijohn of gin (*isobe*) which costs about £1'. Cf. the information on Tsonga *ilobolo* customs in Junod, *Life of a South African Tribe*, vol. 1, pp. 107-9 and 275-9.

- <sup>3</sup>Sambana(e) kaNhlongaluvalo was chief of the Nyawo in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His people lived east of the Lubombo range and north of the Phongolo river. A photograph of Sambana is reproduced in Lugg, Historic Natal and Zululand, p. 167.
- <sup>4</sup>The reference is to a list of Tsonga kings given by the informants Mahungane and Nkomuza. See Stuart Archive, vol. 2, p. 153.
- <sup>5</sup>The verb *ukuganisele* means to give a daughter in marriage. Stuart is here referring to evidence given by Mtshodo which appears elsewhere in this volume.
- <sup>6</sup>Cf. the information on Tsonga premarital sexual customs given by Junod, Life of a South African Tribe, vol. 1, pp. 97-8.
- <sup>7</sup>In Zulu, the verbs *ukugana* and *ukuqoma* mean, respectively, to marry and to choose a lover.
- <sup>8</sup>We have been unable to trace this reference. 'Notebook No. 4' appears to be missing from the Stuart Collection.
- <sup>9</sup>The *imbayi* is a penis-cover. Stuart is here referring to evidence given by Ndaba, and recorded under the heading 'Clothing'. See below.
- <sup>10</sup>According to Junod, Life of a South African Tribe, vol. 1, p. 516, the last *imbayi* was seen in 1895 or 1896. We have not been able to identify Mankobola.
- <sup>11</sup>Hluma kaMakhasane was heir to the Mabhudu chiefdom in the first half of the nineteenth century, but predeceased his father. (See Stuart Archive, vol. 2, pp. 152 and 153; Bryant, Olden Times, p. 306.)
- <sup>12</sup>Cf. Junod, Life of a South African Tribe, vol. 1, pp. 196-8.
- <sup>13</sup>Mshelekwana kaGamula was chief of the Mathenjwa (Nyiseni) people living to the east of the Lubombo range in the vicinity of the uSuthu river.
- <sup>14</sup>We have been unable to establish the meaning of *amahiya*.
- <sup>15</sup>The literal meaning of the verb *ukubophele* is to tie, bind, inspan, harness. According to Junod, Life of a South African Tribe, vol. 1, p. 102, '...a father very seldom obliges his daughter to accept a husband whom she dislikes, except in the case of debt'.
- <sup>16</sup>We have been unable to trace this reference. See note 8 above.