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19-3-1970

INFORMANT: MALOBA MASEKO

AREA: Ngabani

REGIMENT:

INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM: FATHER : REGIMENT MGADLELA

My father's regiment was Mgadlela. He told me that his great grand-father came here hidden in a grass-made grain storage tank, and settled at Luhleko's area. It is here that his great grand-father got his son KHABANGOBE whom he made chief, while he himself moved to settle at NQABANENI, and was buried (after cremation of his body) at the River Ngqamane.

KHABANGOBE had a son MGAZI, during whose reign came the Swazi. The Dlamini were already cousins of the Maseko because of onela-NGWANE (mother of Ngwane) who had married a Maseko. When they arrived we hid them and the King i.e. Sobhuza I, in a cave near Ngabani. On realising they could not return to eShiselweni because of troubles there with the Zulus, they asked their cousins for a place to settle, and they went to NOKWANE area and settled there. There was good understanding between the Dlamini and our people (Masekos) until the Swazi offered a princess⁽¹⁾ to be wife of our chief and therefore our queen. Trouble developed over this act because our elders had designated la-NDZIMANDZE (daughter of Ndzimandze) as our queen because she came from our ~~grandmother's~~ grandmother's family. The Masekos ~~preferred~~ preferred la-Ndzimandze to the Swazi princess as their queen because she was related to our people. Therefore they built a new kraal for the Swazi princess, just to get her away from our royal residence, and to ensure that she did not become ~~our~~ our chief's head wife. In fact this was planned by the Dlamini when they realised they should no longer stay too close to us (being disappointed that their daughter could not become our queen). The Maseko then built a home for the princess where now there is the Agricultural Research Station at Mdtshane, and she was to be in charge of that area for us. Still she kept ~~complaining~~ complaining that she was being badly treated and she must go away. At this time the Swazi King had moved as far as Hhoho and established a royal kraal. He was King there and we had ~~our own~~ our own King here. There ~~were~~ were no troubles because the Maseko were not keen on ruling over other clans, but whenever these arrived we gave them a place to settle and freedom to manage their own affairs.

When the Swazi King got news that his daughter had been denied the position of a queen of the Maseko kingdom he got annoyed and sent an army to fight us. Our king, MGAZI, warned his people of this attack and they in ~~turn~~ turn fled towards Bomvu Ridge while some moved to the Orange Free State. They found the Orange Free State too cold for them and so they moved on to Lesotho and made friends with them, finally settling under MOSHOESHOE? Others moved to the north and became Rhodesians.

The life of our People.

They dug a certain metal out ~~of~~ to the ground in the MTIMANE area and melted this. The men had to keep off from women because if they came near them the metal could not be found as a result. They would offer pitch black goats to the ancestors in order to obtain this metal. They also grew crops on river banks and ~~in~~ vleis, growing mainly soghurms on hill-sides.

(1) LA-NGWANE

MALØBA MASEKO cont.....

Question A

How large was the land under the Maseko?

My father couldn't ~~xxxx~~ explain this to me either, not even the question of how many were the clans who came here and found us.

I must explain that when the Swazi king sent out his army against us some of the Masekos joined them and went to fight their own people. When the Swazi army returned from ousting our kingdom, these rebels (from the Maseko side) asked for protection and a place to settle under the Swazi King. These are the people who form the Maseko population in this area now. They didn't want to follow their ousted fathers, and so did their sons in turn. They settled and built the MBHULENI kraal at NQABANENI. This constituted a source of worry among the Swazi, for they felt that the Maseko were a threat because they (the Maseko) had been ousted from what was their land and were now subjects of the Swazi. So the Swazi moved them to MKHINGOMU area (passed Steinsdorp), where their leader, MPISHIMPISHI, was put in charge of the people who were already there (his own people actually). Mpishimpishi found this area too cold and returned to the Swazi king asking to be allowed to go back to Nqabaveni, his original place. Unfortunately the Swazi King had already given this place to SOZOBOSE. But the Swazi king still allowed Mpishimpishi to go back to Nqabaveni, instructing him to tell Sozobose that he (Mpishimpishi) was coming back at his (Swazi King's) orders. Sozobose had been given our great grandfather's fields, but he received Mpishimpishi and both men lived peacefully in the area.

Then there came the Boers (during king MAHLOROHLA's reign) and our people suddenly realised that the land had been cut up ~~xxxxx~~ into Boer's farms. NDVONGOLO, my grand-father, then went to report this to GWAMILE who was now holding the reins for the dead king. The queen (GWAMILE) was greatly shocked at the fact that the Boers had come in unknown to anybody in this country and had appropriated farms outside her or anybody else's knowledge. More and more reports came in about this sort of land appropriation by the Boers, day in and day out to Queen Gwamile, and from all over the country.

When I returned from military service in 1947-49 (my father had died) I found there were lots of disputes, our people being told to move out of this area by the Whites, for they claimed they marked out this area by a beacon and it was theirs. The Whites produced fake evidence to prove this viz. a booklet containing names of Africans who, they claimed, sold the land to them. Unfortunately, on examination by our people, it was positively confirmed that no such Africans ever existed among our people, either as chiefs or indunas or anything like it; they are unknown and this fact proves beyond doubt that these Whites stole our land and wrote down names of non-existent men from whom they bought it.

Question B.

The Maseko people are otherwise called MANGQAMANE; are there other clan names that also form a part of these?

The others are the NDZIMANDZE, SIBANYONI, LIKOTTEHWAKO, MALAZA, MPHEPHA, NCONGWANE, SOKO, and many more.

MALOBA MASEKO.....cont.

Question C.

When the Swazi arrived did the regiments of the people they found fall under him automatically?

Not before the clash between them and the people they found. Before there was any quarrel ~~xxxx~~ our regiments would go out to fight for the Swazi at the request of the Swazi, but would not be commanded or doctored by them. Our king sent our regiments to help the Swazi because they were our cousins. They would go out in their own direction to the battle-field and return alone again, unmixed with Swazi regiments. The Swazi were weaker than our regiments, such that our men actually suffered the most because the Swazi often gave them men~~x~~ to fight on the more fierce side of a battle.

Question D.

How did King Sobhuza become cousin of the MANGQAMANE?

Because when the Swazi came to eShiselweni they found the SIMELANES there. A Simelane girl married and gave birth to SobhuzaI. This girl was SOMNHALOSE. The father of this girl was SIMELANE(first name), and SIMELANE, MASEKO, MTHSIMKHULU and GHULE were brothers and sons of one and the same father,

Question E.

How far apart were the Simelane and Masekos?

They were quite independent of one another and each group had their own area. It is SIMELANE(first name) who suggested that the Swazi king should be taken and hidden at Nqabanemi~~xxxxxxx~~ because there are many caves there.

Question F.

When doctoring ~~the~~ for the war took place were the Simelane regiments put together with the Swazi and doctored as one big army?

I would imagine separately, because the Simelane regarded themselves as a kingdom in their area (ko-Ntshingila) and wouldn't be doctored with regiments of another King.

Question G.~~xxxx~~

Who settled disputes among the Simelanes after the downfall of their kingdom, or did they report these directly to the Swazi king?

After this downfall they went to the Swazi King to pay their allegiance to him and to declare themselves his subjects.
(answer not complete)

Question H

Did the Maseko and Nkambule ever quarrel after both came under Swazi rule?

There were good relations between them originally, but recently i.e. during my own father's time they quarrelled because the Nkambules claimed all the land occupied by both clans. This is still the feeling today and this dispute has never been settled, unforgotten as it is. This matter makes me(or us) feel that the Nkambules could be the people who might have encouraged the whites to steal our land by telling them that all the land

MALOKA MASEKOcont.

(including ours) was theirs (Simelanes) because the King first brought them to it (before the whites came).(1)

Question I

Where did Sobhuza go from NOKWANE?

I think Lobamba (where the royal kraal is now) but I am not sure.

Question J

What do you know about MAGWEGWE and the battles fought by the Swazi?

I wouldn't know about these; perhaps the Dlamini's could tell you.

Question K

Who was the Swazi King who brought about the down-fall of the kingdom of MGAZI(Maseko)?

It was Somhlolo because he sent out his army saying it must go and oust Mgazi because he was ill-treating his sister.

Question L

The Magagulas and the Masekos, did these people have conflicts, or did they live peacefully together? Were they related?

I know they respected each other very much. I'm not sure whether the Magagulas found the Maseko and asked for a place to settle from them.

Question M

Tell us about their Kings(Masekos)

I must start from MGAZI, and name them towards the earlier ones, i.e. MGAZI, KHABANGOBE, MAPHANGA and still more others before these. I know the graves of those three: Mgazi's one is at Mpuluzi River (up-stream), Khabangome's body was cremated in the Lasibhongo River at Velezizweni, and Maphanga's body was cremated at Mphathsa, in a forest there. In fact the ashes of all of them are in caves among rocks at Mphathsa in LUHLEKO's area. The reason for cremating the bodies and storing the ashes in calabashes is so that the people may be able to take these ashes with them when migrating to other places and not have to leave them behind.

Question N

Where did the Maseko come from and when did they come?

They came from the northern highlands and were originally NDEBELE, from whom they split and became Basuto.

Question O

Were there any quarrels at any time between MSWATI and the MASEKO?

None because they latter were subjects of the Swazi at this time, and had to pay allegiance to Mswati.

Question P

During LUDONGA's time what role did the Masekos play?

None because they were under the Swazi at this time. They could have only paid allegiance to him had he not died before he was made King.

- (1) The 3 men quoted by the whites as the africans from whom they bought the land were Simelanes, hence the suspicion that the Nkambules might have been involved in the Boers theft of land.