

SBS Collection: Tape 10, A229
English Typescript: Bongani Mkhathshwa, notebook 3
Ndwandwa [Zwide History]

Typescribed by: Nokuthula Vilakati for FHYA

Date: 20 May 2023

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- Where the typescriber edits/amends the original text, the edited/amended text appears in grey.
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- Endnotes appear in grey, within square brackets on the last page of the document. They comprise the typescriber's notes regarding typescriber editorial interventions. Endnote numbering is in Roman numerals.

INTERVIEWED AT: SBS, Mbabane
DATE: N/D
[1] INFORMANT: Bongani Mnguni (BM)
[2] INTERVIEWER: Dumisa Dlamini (DD)

We sang when returning from war. All this he really [?]

he had spies and informers because there was no person he [Shaka] feared like us; even today, he is still afraid of us. Let me explain this to you,

Dlamini: he is still afraid of me, as I'm present.

they don't eat [emabele] aphelele⁶⁰

[DD] because of those of Mandlakazi?

[BM] because of those for us, the Ndwandwe! Even today

⁶⁰ abawadli aphelele- they fed insecure, they are never relaxed

they eat [food] and it settles on [their] livers really.

I can say [this] even in their presence. Hhawu!

I have been saying [this] in their presence in Johannesburg

What can I fear? Hhawu habe⁶¹!

[DD] I am listening, Mntfanemnguni, I am listening.

[BM] I fear them only because I respect you [people].

[DD] I am listening, those of Mandlakazi, these are of Mandlakazi.

[BM] Those of Mandlakazi: it's Yanga's umuzi that had been built for SoShangane; it's where ligula stayed; ligula with which Zwide of Yanga washed.

[DD] He says: "Have you heard him?"

[BM] Zwide of Yanga is asking, saying: "Have you heard this libhungwana⁶² of Senzangakhona?" He said.

"I have heard him, you wakomkhulu." This

Zwide ke, I will explain very well, I want to explain

to you shortly this Zwide begot Somabhuku,

he begot Sikhunyana. Here are his two sons,

who are famous ye Dlamini; it's them nje

these.

[DD] This Sikhunyana e-[um], so that I can argue with you very well, we have come to say it's at Sikhunyana.

There is a school, which is called Sikhunyana here in KaNgwane

[BM] No, I don't, I can't enter there

because I don't know that.

[DD] Let us continue.

[BM] those whom I know very well, are Sikhunyana

children which are at Utrecht. There in Natal

there are present event today, it is said they are of Sikhunyana.

⁶¹ habe – an interjection belonging together with hawu or hhawu – see footnote 31

⁶² Libhungwana, derived from libhungu – libhungu – noun a young man, youth. Libhungwane is a comparative term, denoting a younger person than a libhungu, but also conveys the sense of belittling the person (in some contexts)

[DD] enhhe

[BM] [Children of] Somaphunga, I was staying with them
mani⁶³! Even if we can go with you now [if
you say] you want me to show you children of
Mgojana of Somaphunga, I can take you [to them] and
put you there, even today.

[DD] there [or here] in Johannesburg?

[BM] No they are there yonder, they have returned home in Zululand.

[DD] they then returned to Zululand.

[BM] Hhe⁶⁴....hhawu! I can arrive, there and
show you that 'here they are,' I know them;

[DD] Yes.

[BM] Hhawu! habe! It's not that maybe I am
speculating ye-Dlamini; I am not speculating
in this, it is something I [usually] search for and
[get to] know what I am talking about. Don't
talk about something you haven't seen, Mlangeni⁶⁵
because you will tell a lie, don't do that.

[DD] These Nguni all have stubbornness

[BM] Awu no! we don't have stubbornness.

[DD] they don't go back.

[BM] It is caused by this that we are Shunqiselwa⁶⁶
by insingizi⁶⁷, do you know insingizi?

[DD] the bird?

[BM] enhhe, it is said: "You touch us nje, you have
touched inyakanyaka⁶⁸; you have touched
insingizi bird, you have touched inyakanyaka;

⁶³ Mani – possibly the equivalent of 'man!' in 'Hey man!', etc in English

⁶⁴ Hhe – (or hhee) interjection 1. Of amazement 2. of sympathy

⁶⁵ Mlangeni – refers to a member or members on the Dlamini lineage and, sometimes, also to people in general. In the latter case, it is usually meant to be a polite address- name; in the former, to be sinanatelo (see glossary) of the Dlamini

⁶⁶ Shunqiselwa – have smoke made for someone or something to inhale (medicinally)

⁶⁷ insingizi – ground horn-bill.

⁶⁸ inyakanyaka – a problematic thing; something that would involve one in trouble (usually for a long time)

you have touched insingizi ye- men, you have touched insingizi, you have touched the bird yeZulu⁶⁹; you say nontshi⁷⁰ nontshi, you have touched inyakanyaka. When you touch us, you touch inyakanyaka.

[DD] Shaka tsebula'd you [people]

[BM] tsebula'd us, he tsebula'd us, but he couldn't make it.

[DD] Shaka tsebula'd you, he tsebula'd you when you got out [with] your umgubho⁷¹.

[BM] enhhe

[DD] When you come back from war, you come with umgubho.

[BM] enhhe.

[DD] He [Shaka] tsebula'd you; he tsebula'd your songs.

[BM] Yes, you see ke all that, he was searching, all this he was searching. He also sent [his] runners, saying: "If you can find for me just one, who can unpluck their hair nje, a hair. "That is why you see the Ndwandwa even if young, grows grey hair on the head: it started there. "Just their hair, it will be alright." Awu, indeed; he never had a hope, he still did not have a hope.

[DD] "Only if I could got a hair".

[BM] Yes, but still he doesn't have a hope.

He says: "Awu, still I can't make it; what is it that we can do?" In the day they were to engage in a fight, it [imphi⁷²] was under my command ye-Dlamini; it was under my command, it was under SoShangane, pure, not anyone acting for him.

⁶⁹ Zulu- literally, the sky. 1. But it is also used to denote heaven. 2. of, in, about or for Zululand.

⁷⁰ nontshi-

⁷¹ umgubho- noun. A certain type of dance, of slow ceremonial dance-song.

⁷² imphi, variant: impi- 1. Regiment, army, military force. 2. Encounter, fight, engagement, battle, war

[DD] When they engaged in a fight?

[BM] Oh yes! Oh yes!

[DD] before we get, let it not get locked [in an fight] as yet, it is still making preparation.

It is still arming; let them not get locked as yet.

What does Shaka do? He nqutsa's⁷³ you, sending runners.

[BM] enhhe, he sent runners.

[DD] Why don't you see them?

[BM] Hhawu when God has turned his back against [someone getting something out [of sight], he does it that way: he makes a mistake nje, such that you no longer see a thing, as to how it goes. Although Jesus himself said "Even if you had many great sins etc.", but it wasn't like that when the day had come. The day had come, I believe in that our day for defeat had come. Not that it was/is what; even today he knows.

[DD] Having ncutsa'd you?

[BM] After ncuthi'ing us, he ncutha'd us ncutha'd

[DD] [until] he was satisfied.

[BM] Yes, he was satisfied, indeed, Dlamini. Awu is when.

[DD] [What about] in your striking, Mnguni...

[BM] listen Nkosi⁷⁴

[DD] I apologize, I sometimes break your tongue⁷⁵.

Has he seen how you strike?

[BM] He knows, hawu!, he knows.

[DD] How do you strike; how do you phaka⁷⁶ it.

[BM] Hhawu! He knows, ha⁷⁷! he knows.

⁷³ nqutsa- variant ncutsa- 1. pluck 2. steal personal items for witchcraft

⁷⁴ Nkosi- see glossary

⁷⁵ tongue- means to interrupt someone while talking

⁷⁶ phaka- 1. serve out (food), dish up. 2. Distribute, allot. 3. Send out an army; commission

⁷⁷ ha!- interjection 1. of pleasurable surprise. 2. of disappointment at missed opportunity.

[DD] I hear that a horn would get out, a
[another] horn would get out and then the
chest would be in the middle.

[BM] Oh yes! he knows! he too, knows for
himself, he knows for himself.

[DD] he has studied it_____.

[BM] Oh yes!, oh yes! This history says Zwide
dressed up fully; it was entered into the cattle
byre and the praise-singer sang [the praises].
He [praise-singer] took him [Zwide] praising
Zwide KoYanga. He was despatching an
impi, he despatched it.

[DD] It [imphi] was despatched by [Zwide] himself.

[BM] Yes, indeed, the impi is despatched by the
king. He despatched it, he despatched it, he despatched it---

[DD] I didn't want to dislodge you from here,
Mnguni, but I would like [to know] that when
the imphi is being despatched, it is despatched
alone, without---

[BM] No, Dlamini! Be a Ngwane, [and] I will
explain to you very well.

[DD] Hhawu

[BM] be a Ngwane.

[DD] I am listening.

[BM] be a Ngwane, that is why I have chosen you.

[DD] Yes

[BM] Enhhe. He then, Mlangeni, when the
imbongi⁷⁸ bonga'd, the imbongi bonga'd,
the impi was [by then] being sprayed [with
ritual medicine], the impi was being prepared.

⁷⁸ imbongi- the official one of whose tasks is to say or sing the praises of a king or chief.
bonga- to say or sing praises

[DD] The impi was sprayed [with the medicine]

[BM] enhhe, the impi was being made ready by

Nkandla-these Lwandle [people] are old in

this thing which they do ye-Dlamini, it's

not for today. These are the Mkhathshwa [people]

[DD] they are old.

[BM] Yes.

[DD] They are old.

[BM] yes, they are old in [this] thing.

[DD] I am listening.

[BM] They are really the owners of the ligula

They were administering it for us, they know even today.

[DD] The imphi is sprayed, sprayed by what

[BM] It sprayed, sprayed by izintelezi⁷⁹ for them

for impi, the insingizi---

[DD] Where are they found [the tintseleti]?

[BM] I don't know, because we are going, even

when I ask these Shanganes for us, they

dodge me, and I end up not getting

this properly, but it---

[DD] As you, too, are dodging me nje, mntfane-

Mnguni [they both burst into a laughter]

[BM] Hhawu [laughing]

[DD] No, it is okay.

[BM] Now ke, I mean that, it [impi] is

sprayed [with medicine], sprayed, sprayed.

This history says that after the impi was

sprayed, Zwide of Langa himself, felt that it [impi]

was okay [by then].

[DD] He felt [this] while he was inside the cattle byre

⁷⁹ izintelezi, singular intelezi, variant intseleti: herbs, usually in water, used to spray a home, person, army etc. in order to strengthen or protect these, against evil.

[BM] Yes He [Zwide] was in the cattle byre.

[DD] You feel your skin shrinking.

[BM] He then went to sit on a grass ring or coil. He is now mourning for it [imphi]

[DD] a grass ring?

[BM] yes, we sit on a grass ring, we.

[DD] What was the grass ring composed of?

[BM] No Dlamini, let us pass; you must respect custom.

[DD] wo, kulungile,

[BM] Let us respect customs ye Dlamini.

[DD] I am listening.

[BM] enhhe, he sits on a grass ring. He went to sleep on black cow's hide for him. He get out with his younger brother; he got out with SoShangane, by [helping] flowering imizi of men. The hero which got out ngenhla kwemuzi, without having reported to his father, Langa. He got out with him [SoShangane]. He then went there. This history says---

[DD] From where was it [imphi] despatched?

[BM] It was despatched from KaNduna [place] this name is said to be KaNduna; even today you go and look for this place.

[DD] Yes

[BM] enhhe, go and ask for it, if you don't know it go and ask for it, they will tell you

[DD] then it got out

[BM] then it began [and] that is where I say I will win it even if you can take it---, even if you can give this place to them, give it to them if you don't negotiate, but we, too, will put up our case, and see if we can't win it.

Then they, which is where I really blame them;
That is why nje I say a...wuu⁸⁰, whatever
Is said, I say “awuuu”, whatever is said, I
say “awuu”. Then [they] burnt food for us⁸¹, they
burnt the food.

[DD] they never met

[BM] No! They retreated, they retreated backwards
[and] burnt, they took cattle and killed them,
and did everything [bad], did everything, did every
thing. They did this for days, burning
our food.

[DD] So they never delivered blows on each
other [the timphi], face to face.

[BM] Yes, myself, if we held each other, men
to men, [if] we really met and really beat
each other and he defeated me, I would be
saluting them myself.

[DD] A⁸² _____ they beat you by tactic

[BM] Yes, myself I---

[DD] they beat you by tactic, they beat you
by tactic.

[BM] but it is the spear, it is the spear of cowards,
It's the spear of cowards.

[DD] it is this [thing] which is called buqili⁸³

⁸⁰ a...wuu- interject (penultimate stress, 1. prolonged final syllable) of disbelief. I don't believe you! 2. I don't respect that, I don't feel (you, he, them, it) deserved this: you for the informant's ancestors- the Ndwandwe.

⁸¹ 'food for us'- here seems to refer to the crops, grain, etc., not for people who include the informant, but for the informant's ancestors- the Ndwandwe.

⁸² A- expressing realization of something or a revelation of it: the equivalent of “Oh, I see.”

⁸³buqili, variant bucili- 1. cleverness, shrewdness
2. deceit, trickery, cunningness