

MRUYI KA TIMUNI

11.1.1903, Sunday. 2 Norfolk Villas -
<evidence given 7.1.1903>

File 70, pp. 42-5.

Also present: Ndukwana

<The rough notes on which Stuart based the transcription which we present below are to be found in File 60, nbk. 11, pp. 4-15 - eds.>

42 Tshaka: story regarding his birth, wanderings, and the visit of Senzangakona to Dingiswayo.¹ Mruyi ka Timuni (brother of Chief Ndhlovu) speaks, 7.1.1903.² Ndukwana present.³

I was never *butwa'd*, but am about *the age of the Nokenke*.⁴ I had to go out and work as a boy, and so did not have frequent opportunities of hearing my father speak on old Zulu history. I used to carry his mats.

43 Senzangakona was sent for by Dingiswayo. He went to Dingiswayo in company with my grandfather (Mudhli) and *amakosikazi*.⁵ A hut was set apart for him. In one hut, whilst seated there with Dingiswayo, a large number of young men of Dingiswayo's tribe entered the hut by pre-arrangement. Tshaka also came in, unknown at the time to Senzangakona. *He stood as if there were no place for him; he did this on instructions from the Mtetwa chief* (i.e. according to a preconcerted plan). Tshaka had on horns about his neck and the *iziqu amulets of a man who had killed in battle*; he was, moreover, one of Dingiswayo's heroes. He stood for a moment and looked about for a place to sit down, and before finding one, stood immediately before Senzangakona so that his *shadow fell on Senzangakona*, and as soon as he had done this he sat down. A silence fell upon all in the hut. Dingiswayo asked Senzangakona, *'Do you see your calf here?'* Senzangakona was *silent*, and looked about among the young men. He then pointed at Tshaka. Dingiswayo laughed, and proceeded to sing Tshaka's praises. Senzangakona's wives then one and all moved forward and kissed Tshaka's arm. Tshaka then asked Senzangakona for an assegai. A number of assegais were produced and he was presented with one of them. Again was the young hero praised by the Mtetwa people, after which ordinary conversation took place for some time. Tshaka then withdrew from the hut with *the men*.

Dingiswayo now proposed to Senzangakona that there should be some playing on the following day. To this S. agreed. S. was given a sleeping hut, and to this both he and Mudhli went in to sleep. Mudhli spoke to S., and asked how he could play with so old a man as Dingiswayo. 'You cannot do that. Fall ill at once. Let me engage him

in your stead, being more of his years.' To this proposition S. agreed. A message was sent at once to Dingiswayo - the same night - to say S. was ill but Mudhli would take his place. Next day the Mtetwa came together in large numbers. A *circle* was formed. Dingiswayo went out and played and danced. Mudhli joined him, whilst S. remained indoors, ill. Whilst the dancing was going on, a feather fell from Dingiswayo's head on to the ground. *Izincku* stepped forward immediately to pick it up, as it stood upright on the ground and remained so. D., however, checked them and said the feather was to be left alone. They did so.

44 The dancing proceeded, and after a while came to an end. When the playing was over, the feather was picked up.

On the day following, Senzangakona *took his leave* of Dingiswayo. He did so feeling somewhat uncomfortable; evil forebodings haunted him. Off then S. went. Mudhli too *took his leave*, following S., and to him D. remarked, 'Here is Tshaka. I am bringing him to you.' M. replied, 'How can you expect me to look after and protect Tshaka, seeing I already have his father, Senzangakona, to see to?' D. said to Tshaka, after Mudhli had set off, 'This man Mudhli refuses to have anything to do with you, saying he has to take care of Senzangakona. It is manifest, therefore, he does not care for you. Don't spare him. He is the leading and responsible head of the Zulu tribe. Put him to death or you can never reign.' Tshaka then *went up* and arrived among the Zulu tribe. He summoned to his side numbers of Mudhli's own followers, and they joined him. Mudhli was then *surrounded*, when both Mudhli and Zivalele were put to death.⁶

Mudhli was the son of Nkwelo ka Ndaba ka Punga ka Mageba.⁷ Dingiswayo was the son of Jobe ka Kali.

Mruyi says: I heard the above story from my father, Timuni, who was a member of one of the sections of the Izimpohlo regiments.⁸ I myself never lived in Zululand.

Early history of the Zulu tribe. Mruyi speaks, 7.1.1903.

*The isibongo at the time of our originating was bakwalubolwenja.*⁹ Tshaka *rejected* this name, and substituted that of 'Ndabezita' in its place. We are amaNtungwa, or abeSutu.¹⁰ We *ehla'd ne silulu* ('came down from the north in a large round basket'), and separated from what is now the Qwabe tribe. We came from the north. Qwabe and Zulu were both sons of Malandela. Qwabe came down into what is now Zululand *before* we Zulus did. We followed them. I do not hear that Qwabe and Zulu ever quarrelled with one another, nor do I know what caused our all coming south.

We are abeSutu. In the old days we made use of this expression, '*Ofe Mkozi*', i.e. amaNtungwa used it.¹¹ The name amaNtungwa means 'those from the north'. I do not know what '*Ofe mkozi*' means.

45 Special medicines used by our tribe are *indungulu* and *ikatazo*.¹² We came from the north with a knowledge of these. Both were used for *fevers*. We no longer *doctor* with these in any large degree but the medicines are still used among us.

.... <Praises of Mudhli, with annotations, omitted - eds.>

18.1.1903 - <evidence given 7.1.1903>

File 70, p. 46.

Also present: Ndukwana?

46 According to Mruyi (7.1.1903) the Zulu people are known by these names: abeSutu, abaNguni, amaNtungwa, abakwaZulu.¹³

There is, in support of the second name, an old verse used as a chant or chorus at the *mkosi* feast, to this effect: '*Mnguni, arm yourself and go and seize them*', i.e. cattle. The word mNguni or umNguni is merely the singular of abaNguni.

The people were called abeSutu because they lived *up-country* (*enhla*), i.e. north. We left the abeSutu, who are of different kinds, and by living so long apart from them have become another kind of people.

18.1.1903 - <evidence given 8.1.1903>

File 70, pp. 46-7.

Also present: Ndukwana

Per Mruyi, Ndukwana present, 8.1.1903.

At Dingiswayo's, Tshaka was kept by Ngomane ka Mqombolo of the *Caya people*.¹⁴ Tshaka went up to the Zulu tribe with Ngomane. Senzangakona was invited by Dingiswayo to come and see him, and did not go down merely on the pretext of *courting a wife*. Tshaka's presence at the Mtetwa tribe was well enough known to Senzangakona and his other sons, of whom there was a large number (*a great collection of his brothers*, i.e. Tshaka's). Tshaka was not concealed from his father, but from, or on account of his brothers.

In those days there was *circumcision* before marriage. Mruyi remarks: I do not hear that Tshaka was *born illegitimately* (*zalwa'd esihlahleni*), but at Nobamba, and that Nandi married Senzangakona in a lawful way.¹⁵

Tshaka left with the *Siklebe* kraal, whilst still a boy. It was this incident that drove him off, wandering about the country. He did not go direct to the Mtetwa people. He went to the *Langeni* people, where they killed a beast for him. Whilst in the *Langeni* country, herding cattle with other boys, he killed cattle on his own initiative, *thus bringing accusations upon himself*. The *Langeni* were informed by *Makedama ka Mgabi* about Tshaka's killing a beast without permission.¹⁶

47 Tshaka and Makedama, whilst *herding*, played with stones. Each made an imaginary kraal or kraals, and had herds of imitation cattle. Their bulls fought together and Makedama's killed Tshaka's. This annoyed Tshaka, who exclaimed, 'This sort of thing occurs because I do not belong to the *Langeni*,'; but as a matter of fact he had been borne by a woman of that tribe.¹⁷ Mgabi was, at this time, still living. Tshaka complained of being given *curds* in his hands, in such a quantity that, before he had finished consuming them, they had become quite warm. 'All this', he said, 'tends to show that these people do not regard me as a person of rank, but as an ordinary individual.' He, thereupon, left and went to Mqombolo [Mqomboli - both spellings are right] of the *Mdletsheni* people in the Mtetwa country.

I do not find that former kings killed off children borne out of wedlock by their sweethearts, and therefore see no reason why (as my

brother Ndhlovu urges) Tshaka was concealed, though I do not deny there may have been something in the story.

Senzangakona has a large offspring.

Nandi was looked on as a foreigner. She had come from a distance, and it is a custom for a girl who comes a long way to take precedence, on her marriage, over the other wives of her husband, especially if she is the daughter of another *chief*, and even if there are already wives and children at the kraal she enters.

I think Tshaka ran away at the time the well-known Siklebe kraal *separated off*. The *chief's wives muttered* and grumbled; they became very jealous, and a rumour sprang up that Tshaka was to be put to death. It was such a rumour, possibly without any good foundation at all, which led to Tshaka's running away. There is a definite statement to the effect that Tshaka was born at his mother's home.

Mudhli was killed whilst Timuni was still 'on the back'.¹⁸ Timuni was *cared for* by Ntanta, a person belonging to our people and of the Zulu tribe.

Senzangakona's kraals were Nobamba, Siklebe, and others which Mruyi cannot call to mind.

Notes

¹Senzangakhona kaJama, Zulu chief in the early decades of the nineteenth century, was Shaka's father. Dingiswayo kaJobe was Mthethwa chief in the early nineteenth century.

²The informant's father, Timuni, and his brother, Ndlovu kaTimuni, were chiefs of a collateral branch of the Zulu chiefly line: cf. the genealogy given by Mangati kaGodide in Stuart Archive, vol. 2, p. 210. Ndlovu was another of Stuart's informants: his section of the Zulu lived in Mapumulo division.

³Ndukwana was another of Stuart's informants.

⁴The Nokenke *ibutho* was formed in the mid-1860s of youths born in the 1840s.

⁵Mudli kaNkwelo had served as regent during the minority of Senzangakhona, and continued thereafter to exercise considerable influence over the affairs of the Zulu chiefdom.

⁶Zivalele (Zivalele) is sometimes given as Senzangakhona's brother, but other sources give him as the latter's uncle or cousin: see Bryant, Olden Times, p. 39; Stuart Archive, vol. 1, pp. 181, 355, vol. 2, p. 210. Zivalele's heirs formed the eGazini branch of the Zulu royal house.

⁷Ndaba, Phunga and Mageba were ancestral Zulu chiefs.

⁸The izimPohlo *ibutho* was formed by Senzangakhona, but had new sections added to it by Shaka during his reign.

⁹The word Lubololwenja literally means dog's penis. Cf. Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 13, 221-2, 369-70; Stuart Archive, vol. 1, pp. 174, 202, vol. 2, pp. 12, 254, vol. 3, p. 146; Fuze, Black People, p. 43.

¹⁰For discussion of the term Ntungwa see Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 7 ff, 232 ff; Marks, 'The traditions of the Natal "Nguni"', in Thompson, ed., African Societies, ch. 6; Marks and Atmore, 'The problem of the Nguni', in Dalby, ed., Language and History in Africa, pp. 120-32; Stuart Archive, vols. 1, 2 and 3, indexes.

¹¹Cf. Stuart Archive, vol. 1, p. 176, vol. 2, pp. 45, 97, vol. 3, p. 263.

- ¹²Bryant, Dictionary, pp. 123, 297 gives *indungulu* and *ikhatazo* as species of plants whose roots were believed to have certain prophylactic properties.
- ¹³For discussion of the term Nguni see the references cited in note 10 above, and Hedges, 'Trade and Politics', pp. 254-7.
- ¹⁴Bryant gives Ngomane kaMqombolo as of the emDletsheni people: see Olden Times, p. 64. Caya was an *isithakazelo* of the emDletsheni.
- ¹⁵Nobamba was Senzangakona's principal *umuzi*. Nandi of the Langeni people was Shaka's mother.
- ¹⁶Makhedama's father was chief of the Langeni. His name is variously given as Mgabhi and Mbengi: see Bryant, Olden Times, pp. 125-6.
- ¹⁷Most sources give Shaka's mother, Nandi, as a woman of the Langeni chiefly house.
- ¹⁸I.e. an infant, still unable to walk.