

DATE : 20.5.70

INFORMANTS: (1) MSEBENZI GAMA
REGIMENT : NDLOZINI
HEARD FROM: HIS FATHER, ~~XXXX~~ SINABANTU
(2) MFSHLO ?
REGIMENT : LONDOLAZI
HEARD FROM : SINABANTU
(3) JIBA GAMA :
REGIMENT: LONDOLOZI
HEARD FROM: SINABANTU

AREA : DLANGENI

We came from kaMlambo in Somhlolo's reign, and have been here through the reign of Mswati, Ludvonga, Mbandzeni, Mahlokohla, up to the present Sobhuza's time. We came here chasing a red antelope.

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We came here under the leadership of one Gama. He was chasing this red antelope, day and night. When he wanted to sleep he touched it with a wand. Eventually he arrived in Swaziland at Ntondozi. He then killed the antelope, flayed and dressed it and hung up the carcass on a tree. At this time along came a woman, LaManyangaza Magagula, collecting firewood. Gama fell in love with her.

One day there came a war scout, Mfundza, from the Ngwane. He found Gama in the forest and asked ~~him~~ what he and his men were doing there and where they were from. They said that they were Sotho from Mlambo, and that they came chasing an antelope. The scout went back to report to the king about his meeting with the Basuto. Then they were brought to the king for questioning in case they knew anything about war doctoring. At the end of their conversation the king took Gamam to his side and vowed that from then on he was his brother, because he found out that Gama could doctor him and protect him from attacks by his enemies, using the same charms as the one which made the animals lie down at his command. Otherwise Gama knew nothing about war doctoring.

Soon there was a war against the Sotho. The king asked the Gama people to prove ~~their~~ the power of their medicines in that very war. Gama then made a medicine which he stirred until it produced a foam. The foam was upright and could point to the direction of the enemy forces. The forces were summoned and sent in the ~~x~~ direction that the foam had indicated. They held the medicine foam in their ~~aka~~ calabashes, and used it like a compass. They went on and on until they came to a place where there was a large force of Sotho. The foam suddenly ebbed and Gama interpreted this as meaning that the enemy ahead was strong and could not be penetrated by their forces. So Gama suggested that they return home and they all agreed. Mswati thanked Gama, the new 'medicine man' and vowed that he should be his brother from that day on. He was given a place to settle. From then until this day the Gama Sotho have lived in this country and remained high in the king's esteem.

After Somhlolo died Nsukumbiti Gama was assigned to the spot where he ~~wax~~ died ~~buried~~, under a rock at Dlangeni. The Gama had to protect the spot against veld fires. He was instructed to wear oxtail ~~skirt~~ ^{dress} when carrying out duties at the spot. He had to preserve the spot where Somhlolo died although he was not buried there, but his body transported to Mbilaneni near Mhlotsheni in the south, near to the ruins of Shiselweni royal village.

After the death of Mswati Ludonga was the rightful heir, but he died and he was buried at Dlangeni, at the spot where Somhlolo's corpse had rested for a year or so. There was confusion in the land after his death, but at last they chose Mbandzeni as his successor. When Mbandzeni died he too was buried at Dlangeni

GAMA cont....

During the days of Mahlokhola the chief was Dinabantu, the son of Zulangangeni. After his death Nolabefihlwako his son took over - he has recently died.

Our main duties are to guard the kings' burial place. This we have honestly done since the days our ancestors arrived in pursuit of a red antelope.

QUESTION A

Do you know where Gama came from with the animal he was driving?

z He came from Mlambo Sotho near the lakes. Until recently those Mlambo people were under Mashibini their king who used to come to the ncwala ceremony, and their rulers were installed here.

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