Twitter Thread by Olaudah Equiano®



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How do you guys feel about a little bit of history this Monday evening?

Oh, today's Tuesday. I seem to be slower than the times. Is it because of my addiction to history? ■
Let's journey to South Africa. The Zulu Country with the setting in mid 18th century.

Mkabayi Kajama The Zulu Princess

Shaka Zulu was a great warrior and king of the Zulu in South Africa. His story has fascinated historians, who have tried to figure out the aspects that drove him to be the conqueror he is known today.

It is well known that he died in 1828 at the hands of his brothers, but what many do not know is the role of Princess Mkabayi Kajama in his death. The rebel Zulu princess would work to ensure Shaka become king, and then plot to have him killed.

One of the most powerful women in history, Mkabayi was cursed from birth. She and her twin sister, Mmama, were supposed to have been killed at birth, as superstition stated that twins were bad luck.

Their father, King Jama, however, spared their lives to the disapproval of the Zulu people.
Growing up, the sisters, particularly Mkabayi who was more iron-willed, were blamed for every misfortune that befell the people and the royal family.

They were even blamed for the death of their mother, who breathed her last before she could even give the dynasty an heir.
A stronger Mkabayi, realizing that the Zulu people were still demanding an heir, secretly found a new wife for her father, King Jama, and not too long after,

the two had a son, Senzangakhona (meaning well-doer). The king chose this name to acknowledge the role his daughter had played in finding an heir. Gradually, Mkabayi came to be loved by the Zulu people, but her relationship with them turned sour when upon the death of her father

King Jama, she ascended the throne since her brother Senzangakhona was too young to rule.
She became a female regent, unheard of among the Zulu people.

She would soon be described as a “bloodthirsty despot,” but she did not budge as she did what she thought was necessary to continue the Zulu dynasty and its traditions. When her brother Senzangakhona came of age, she stepped down for him but Senzangakhona soon got an unmarried...

woman pregnant.
While many thought this was scandalous, Mkabayi thought underwise. She encouraged the girl — known as Nandi — to flee the community. After some months, Nandi gave birth to a boy, Shaka, who would after 20 years succeed his father Senzangakhona as king with...

the help of Mkabayi, his aunt.
Shaka became an unrivaled leader of the Zulu. His brief reign saw the expansion of the region, in which small chiefdoms would surrender to his rule or forcibly destroyed and conquered.

Some of the things Shaka is remembered for include the introduction of a new weapon called the ikilwa; enhancing the mobility of the army; incorporating the youth-both boys and girls- into the army; and involving women in leading the community in his absence.

He was also remembered for some brutal acts like putting to death the women who got pregnant by him and killing people who wronged him by the nod of his death. The king loved his mother, Nandi, so much that when she died of dysentery in 1827, he randomly killed 7000 people at her

funeral because they were not showing adequate remorse. He had also stated that in the year of mourning, no crops should be planted and no milk should be used. He even ordered the execution of couples who would get pregnant in that year.

As the cruelties increased, more people wavered in their loyalty to the king. It was no surprise that he was killed by his half-brothers Dingane and Mhlangana with the help of his aunt, Mkabaya. Mkabaya, who preferred Dingane on the throne, later murdered Mhlangana.

Throughout Mkabaya’s lifetime, she never married as she was more into gaining political influence. This she did, helping kings ascend to the throne and deposing others. She later died a lonely woman during the reign of Mpande.

Though she is remembered by some for having “nurtured” the Zulu monarchy, others do condemn her for her role in getting rid of Shaka, one of the most powerful kings the world has ever known.

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