

TOPIC : DEVELOPMENT OF ZIMBABWEAN SOCIETIES

SUBTOPIC : NGUNI MIGRATIONS - THE ZULU STATE

OBJECTIVES

BY THE END OF THE SUB-TOPIC, LEARNERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

- ✓ Trace the formation of the Zulu state.
- ✓ Outline Tshaka's military reforms.
- ✓ Describe the Zulu political, social and economic organisation.
- ✓ Explain the decline of the Zulu state.

Origins of the State

- The Zulu state was a small group, which Tshaka formed at the beginning of 19th century.
- The name Zulu originated from the ancestors of the Zulu clan "the Zulu kaNtombela" which meant heaven or Rain.
- The Zulu state was a small chiefdom under the control of the Mthethwa



Location of the Zulu Kingdom

The rise of Tshaka

- The death of Dingiswayo opened a way for the political ascendancy of Dingiswayo's regimental Tshaka of the Zulu.
- Tshaka was born in 1787 to the Zulu Chief Senzangakhona and Nandi.
- He was an illegitimate son and he grew up among the Langeni tribe.
- Tshaka had a difficult upbringing and he worked mostly as a herd boy.
- At the age of 20, he joined one of Dingiswayo's regiments.
- He was a brave soldier and he quickly rose through the ranks to become the commander of his regiment.



Portrait of Tshaka

- After Senzangakhona's death, Tshaka became the chief of the Zulu chiefdom with the help of Dingiswayo, after killing his half-brother Sigujana.
- It was after the crowning of Tshaka that the Zulu became an independent chiefdom.

- After taking full control of the Zulu chiefdom Tshaka implemented his ideas as he was now in full command of the Zulu and he refined his army systems.
- He would fight together with the Mthethwa army.
- For reasons known to Tshaka, he did not send his regiment to help Dingiswayo fight the Ndwandwe.
- The Ndwandwe killed Dingiswayo in an ambush and Tshaka became both the Zulu and the Mthethwa chief.
- Tshaka defeated the Ndwandwe and the Ngwane in 1817 to become the most important ruler between the Pongola and Tugela River.
- Many Nguni tribes became part of Tshaka's Zulu kingdom.

Factors leading to the rise of the Zulu state

- Some of the reasons that led to the rise of the Zulu state are:
 - (1) The rise of ambitious leaders like Dingiswayo and Zwide.
 - (2) After the defeat of Dingiswayo by Zwide, Tshaka soon defeated Zwide. This victory resulted in the rise of the Zulu kingdom.
 - (3) The death of Senzangakhona and his half-brother Sigujana enabled Tshaka to rise to power.
 - (4) Military genius and good governance.
 - (5) The incorporation of youths into the army strengthened the Zulu state.
 - (6) Tshaka was a courageous and an innovative fighter.
 - (7) The Mfecane also influence the rise of an ambitious leader Tshaka.
 - (8) His ability to develop new fighting techniques.

Tshaka's military reforms

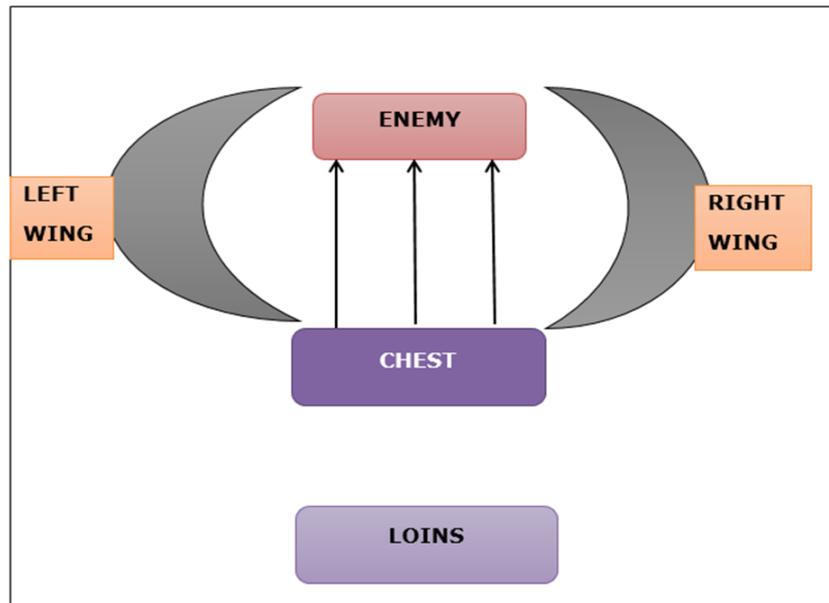
- During his reign, Tshaka introduced several military changes some of which he had learnt from Dingiswayo.
- From being a weak and small tribe, the Zulu state became a powerful state in the 19th century due to the military reforms introduced by Tshaka.



Tshaka's Reforms

- Tshaka introduced the standing army where men were conscripted to form a standing army of 40 000 soldiers organised in age regiments.
- Tshaka permitted the soldiers to marry at the age of 40 after proving themselves in the battlefields.

Cow horn formation



Structure of cow horn format

- Tshaka also introduced the bull/ cow horn formation by which they attacked the enemy from both sides without any chance of escaping.
- This strategy was a three-part attack system from which seasoned warriors formed the chest of the horn at the front pinning the enemy into a position.
- Younger regiments/warriors made the horns and surrounded the enemy attacking from both sides.
- Additional warriors formed the lions standing behind the chest and protected against any additional war.

The regimental system

- Tshaka incorporated survivors into his system by placing men into regiments according to their ages.
- They had their peculiar military regalia for a specific regiment.
- Young boys made baggage carriers in the army.
- Tshaka made sure that his soldiers well fed with meat.
- He placed Military indunas to be in charge of the Regimental Towns.

- Soldiers stayed away from the villages, in barracks, this made them focus on fighting.
- Soldiers went to war barefooted for greater speed.
- They made use of surprise attacks especially at night without any warning.
- No soldier was supposed to come back from battle with wounds at his back. The punishment was death.

Weapons introduced by Tshaka

- One very important weapon that he introduced was the assegai and a big-head knobkerrie.
- The assegai was a short stabbing spear, which had several advantages over the long one.
- It was a hand-to-hand combat in battle or a throwing spear.
- The assegai was easy to carry and to use; it allowed the warriors to kill the enemy easily.



Tshaka's assegai

- He also introduced the long shield that covered the whole body of a warrior and the shields protected the soldiers from the weapons of the enemy.
- These shields could be placed together to make protective walls.



Zulu shield

- He also employed the policy called scorched earth-policy (SEP).
- It was through the Scorched Earth Policy Tshaka's soldiers destroyed everything along the way in order to starve the enemy.
- Soldiers wore distinctive head dressing.
- He gave rewards to warriors who fought fiercely in order to boost their morale.
- He also introduced total warfare whereby he would destroy the existing rules.
- Using these reforms, he was able to defeat many kingdoms many of which ran away looking for new lands far away.



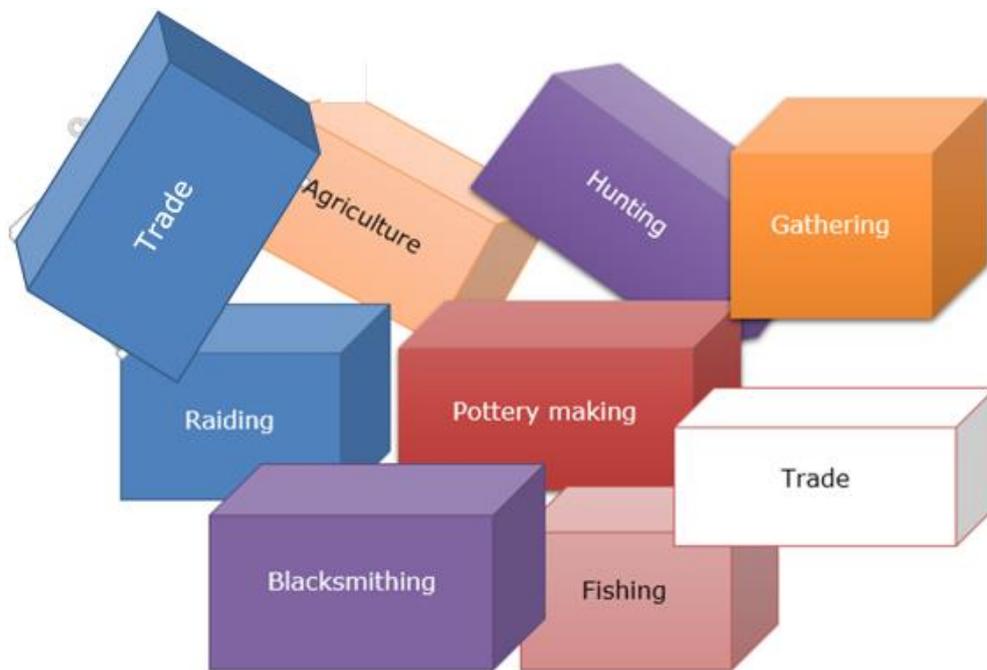
Zulu army (Amabutho)

Tshaka's political reforms

- Tshaka introduced several political reforms that continued to work in Zululand even after his death.
- The King had the supreme political authority.
- He allocated land, distributed cattle and presided over all religious ceremonies done at a National level.
- Tshaka was a military dictator who was harsh and could kill for minor offences.
- The king ruled with the assistance of Izinduna and he appointed commoners as generals.
- He imposed strong discipline and appointed female relatives as spies on the indunas.
- Tshaka became friends with the British to acquire guns.
- Towns inherited names after the regiment stationed there.
- Outlying states paid tribute to the king.
- This led to the growth of the Zulu state into a very powerful kingdom feared even by the whites.

- All the people were encouraged to adopt the Zulu language and customs. This unified the state.
- Traditional magic instilled discipline and morale on the army before going to war.

Economic reforms under Tshaka



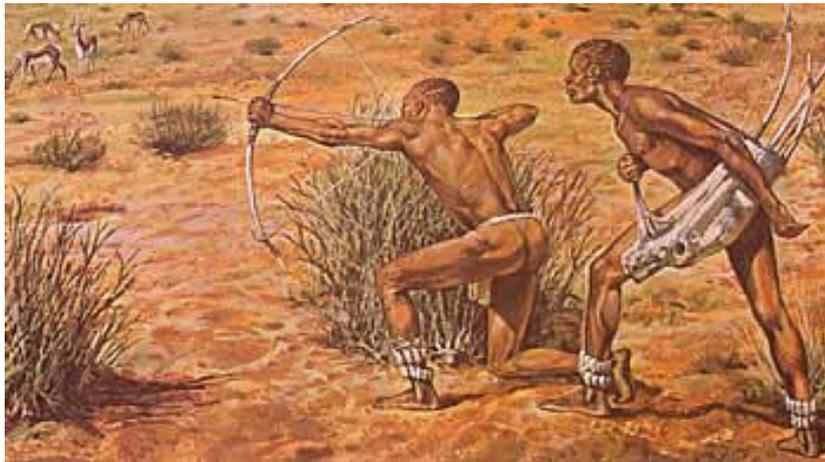
Economic Activities

(a) Agriculture

- The development of the military system under Tshaka caused major economic changes.
- In the Zulu state cattle were a backbone of the state
- Cattle were a symbol of power and wealth.
- They used cattle to pay lobola, fines, meat provision and tribute.
- Every Zulu homestead (Umuzi) had its own plot of land and a place to store grains and had access to dairy products from milk cows given by King.
- Every homestead in the Zulu state provided labour for the king's army, for herding the royal cattle, cultivating and harvesting the king's crop.

- Youth concentrated at the royal barracks resulted in a massive transfer of economic potential to a centralised state.
- Even though the king owned most of the herds, his chief and Indunas all shared in the pride roused by the magnificence of the royal herd as well as the pride of belonging to the unparalleled military power of Zulu.
- The use of iron technology led to the introduction of maize from America by the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay.
- Crops grown fed soldiers stationed at various regimental towns.
- All active members of the Zulu state provided labour for agricultural production.
- Women were mainly involved in crop cultivation.
- The main crops grown were millet and maize.

(b) Hunting



Men hunting

- Men mostly practised hunting.
- Hunting supplemented economic activities such as trade and tribute because it provided items for these economic activities.

(c) Raiding

- The Zulu state was a raiding state and raiding helped to raise the state revenue.

- It was a way of demonstrating the military strength of the Zulu.
- The Zulu took over cattle from the raided states and incorporated youths into the army.
- The cattle raided increased their national herd, which strengthened their economy.

(d) Tribute

- Tshaka received tribute from Delagoa Bay in form of spearheads.
- Sub chiefs paid tribute to the king.
- Tribute was a way of showing respect to the king.
- Animal hides, ivory, minerals, and labour were forms of tribute paid by local people.
- Tribute payment reduced chances of rebellion in the state.
- The Amabutho enforced the payment of tribute from vassals.

(e) Pottery making

- They made pottery that they used for their social activities.
- They also used products from pottery for both external and internal trade.
- Mostly pottery making was done by women.

(f) Trade

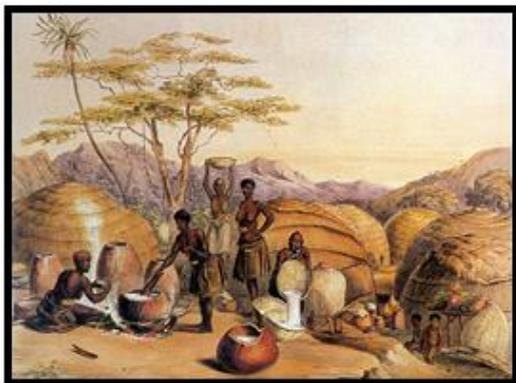
- The Zulu state practised both internal and external trade.
- They got items they could not manufacture in the Zulu state such as guns and clothes.
- The King had a monopoly over long distance trade to the east coast.
- After the defeat of the Ndwandwe, Tshaka took control of the ivory trade to Delagoa Bay.
- He developed trade links with the English traders at the port Natal (modern day Durban).
- The long distance trade was in form of ivory with the Tsonga and Portuguese.

Social activities

Social Organization

- Traditional rituals played a significant role in uniting the diverse people and communities that made up the Zulu state.
- The King participated in the first fruits of harvest ceremony (Inxwala) and often led to traditional ritual dances.
- The Inkhata was also practiced annually as a symbol of unity of the state
- This involved weaving grass into a ring encased in python skin by each of the subordinate kings and territorial chiefs (Izinduna).
- The Zulu people believed in God/uNkulunkulu who resided above in the sky.
- There was division of labour of labour women cultivated the land, looked after children and household chores while men were herding cattle and fought in battles.

Women doing household chores



Men herding cattle



Zulu State social activities

The death of Nandi Tshaka's mother

- The death of Tshaka's mother gives part of the information concerning the character of Tshaka.

- Tshaka's mother died in 1827 and he declared a twelve months mourning period.
- He also gave the following conditions:
 - (1) Cultivation of crops was to be suspended.
 - (2) No use of milk for twelve months.
 - (3) Men abstained from sexual intercourse.
 - (4) Any woman found pregnant during this period were murdered.
- The Zulu state indunas collected a large number of cattle and brought them to Tshaka to persuade him to lighten the distress of his people after three months.
- As a result, Tshaka lifted the first two prohibitions but the rest remained in force.
- To end mourning period, he sent warriors to raid Soshangane in order to honour his mother.
- Almost the entire Zulu Amabutho marched out of the Zulu land to the north leaving Tshaka without adequate bodyguards.

Problems faced by Tshaka

- During his reign, Tshaka faced a number of challenges as the Zulu king.
- Raiding was one of the major economic activities of the Zulu state as it increased the population and strengthened the Zulu state.
- Tshaka created many enemies for the Zulu state through continuous raids.
- Tshaka faced opposition from his relatives such as Dingane who assassinated Tshaka after he suspected him of killing his mother.
- Tshaka also faced continuous threats from the Boers and the British who wanted to take over the Zulu kingdom.
- The rebellions he faced in 1822, which is the breakaway of Mzilikazi.

- The shortage of land that led to clashes and military confrontations between the Europeans and the Zulu warriors.

The decline of the Zulu state

- The rulers who ruled after Tshaka's death failed to keep the Zulu nation intact.
- The coming of the Dutch destroyed what remained of the Zulu State at the battle of Blood River.
- Divisions among the Zulu led to the collapse of Zulu nation.
- Dingane and his brother Mpande fought over the Zulu throne thus leading to the Portuguese interference in favour of Mpande.
- Succession disputes affected the Zulu nation and led to civil wars.
- The coming of the British led to the ultimate collapse of the Zulu nation.