

Part 6: Building a Nation

King Ngwane III
(reigned: ±1745-1780)

- Father: King Dlamini III (King Hlubi)
- Queen Mother: LaYaka (clan: Ndwandwe / Nxumalo)
- *iNcwalas danced: Can only find reference to the 1st iNcwala.*
- *Regiment: Cannot find any references*

±1745 He became King Ngwane III in 1745.

He was the first Dlamini to rule on Swazi soil, and is therefore considered the first modern Swazi King.

He ended the trek of the Nkhosi-Dlamini clan that had been started from the Delagoa Bay Settlements by his father when he settled south of the Pongola River.

This land had been home to nomadic San/Bushmen, who were later expelled or absorbed by various Nguni-, Sotho- and Thonga-speaking clans.

The Nkhosi-Dlamini clan established the Swazi nation by either peacefully or forcefully absorbing these above clans.

His people lived in relative peace with their southern neighbours, the Ndwandwe, but had to abandon the settlements south of the Pongola River, and move to safety on the northern side of the Pongola because of repetitive raids.

This new settlement marks the founding of modern Swaziland.

±1750 The new, more secure settlement was in the Mhlosheni hills in the Shiselweni region.

He ruled from Zombodze Village (near Nhlangano, in southern Swaziland).

His name remains a synonym for the nation and its people, kaNgwane.

Note of special interest when doing National Tours that the Apartheid Era Homeland of the Swazi people living in South Africa was located bordering on the northern side of Swaziland towards Malelane and Komatipoort. It was known as kaNgwane.

It is of great significance in Swazi tradition, that the first iNcwala celebrated on Swazi territory was held at Zombodze.

1780 He is buried at Mbilaneni. (Burial ground of the Swazi Kings).

LaYaka Ndwandwe
(reigned: 1780)

- Queen Mother of King Ngwane III
- Indlovukazi ±1745-1780
- Clan: Ndwandwe/Nxumalo

1780 Queen Regent of Swaziland briefly in 1780

- after the death of Ngwane III;
- until Ndungunye became king.

King Ndungunye
(also spelt Ndvungunye)
(also known as King
Mavuso II / King Zikodze)
(reigned 1780-1810)

- Father: King Ngwane III
- Queen Mother: Lomvula Mndzebele
- *iNcwalas danced: Cannot find any references*
- *Regiment: Cannot find any references*

1780 He became King while very young, and had an uneventful kingship with a period of modest growth.

Settled near the Mhlosheni hills in the Shiselweni region.

1780-
±1810/1815 Accords were worked out with both the southern neighbors, the Ndwandwe and the Mtetwa.

His reign is overshadowed by the memory of his father, and the remarkable kingship of his son Sobhuza I.

King Ndungunye was married to both Lojiba Simelane and Somnjalose Simelane that bore his child, the future King Sobhuza I. Lojiba was the senior of the two sisters.

±1810/1815 He died while still very young when he was struck by lightning.
1810 seems to be the more strongly supported date in various literary sources

Lomvula Mndzebele
(reigned: ±1810)

- Queen Mother (Indlovukazi) of King Ndungunye
- Clan: Mndzebele

±1810/1815 Queen Regent of Swaziland briefly in ±1810 (for one year)
1810 seems to be the more strongly supported date in various literary sources

- after the death of Ndungunye;
- until Sobhuza I became king.

King Sobhuza I
(King Ngwane IV)
(Somhlolo)
(reigned: ±1810-1839)

- Father: King Ndungunye
- *Biological Mother: Somnjalose (clan: Simelane)*
- Queen Mother: Lojiba Simelane
- *iNcwalas danced: ±30 (near Shiselweni, later near Ezulwini)*
- *Regiment: Umlondolozzi (Guardian)*

±1795 Sobhuza I was born ±1795.
(This date is often quoted as 1780)

±1810/1815 He became King in 1810.

The date seems to be disputed in some literary sources, but it seems pretty conclusive that 1810 is correct.

He is a greatly revered king, and is considered the “Founder of the Swazi Nation”. The national stadium is known as Somhlolo Stadium in his memory. The Swazis celebrate their Independence Day (Somhlolo Day) on September the 6th.

His biological mother Somnjalose Simelane was the co-wife of King Ndungunye, and the younger sister and *inhlanti* to her elder sister Lojiba Simelane (a senior wife).

Lojiba had no male children, therefore Sobhuza, as the son of her sister and co-wife, was considered her

classificatory son under Ngwane succession principles. Lojiba his aunt became Indlovukazi (Queen Mother) by law.

The vision King Sobhuza I was known as Somhlolo – the Wonder, or the Father of Mysteries, because his father had died when struck by lightning, and also because of his prophetic vision.

Sobhuza I had a vision shortly before his death, that related to the arrival of the missionaries (The Vision of Somhlolo):

- he foresaw the arrival of fair-skinned people with hair like the tails of cattle;
- he saw that they brought two things with them, a scroll or book, and a round piece of metal or disk.

He advised the Swazi nation to choose Umculu (the book) rather than Indilinga (the money) in the encounter with the white men.

This also explains why the University of Swaziland emblem is inscribed Umculu sisekelo sesive ('education is a national asset/ foundation').

Early 1800's When he ascended to power he faced several great challenges:

- The Shiselweni settlements were not as safe from raids as had been anticipated, with first the Ndwandwe, and then the Zulu posing a threat from south of the Pongola.

- Several Nguni groups penetrated west of the Lubombo ranges, setting up clans and chiefdoms within the central core of lands claimed by the Ngwane. Before establishing primacy over the territory, the Ngwane needed to either assimilate peacefully, or forcefully subdue these groups.
- Sotho clans moving south along the escarpment separating Swaziland from the highveld interior. Their customs differed from those of the Nguni, and by assimilation, these customs would have an influence in shaping the Swazi culture we know today.

Tension with neighbours: The reign of Sobhuza I marked a crucial phase in the history of Swaziland.

±1800-1820 (Ndwandwe / Nxumalo) As he began his reign, KaNgwane was a realm centered in territory along the Pongola River to the south of modern Swaziland, whose northern reaches encompassed today's southern Swaziland.

±1820-1879 (Zulu) KaNgwane was ruled by kings of the Dlamini clan, who had earlier ruled an area in and around the Lubombo Mountains to the east.

Under Sobhuza's grandfather, Ngwane III, ±1750, the Dlamini kings conquered and established the country Sobhuza inherited, incorporating more than a dozen smaller chiefdoms led by chiefs from other clans.

The risk of conquest by the more powerful Ndwandwe and Zulu kingdoms to the south, prompted Sobhuza I to move the main royal centre north.

With a small band of followers, he travelled north until they passed through the Ezulwini Valley and halted near the Mdzimba Hills.

The former royal centres in Shiselweni became outposts.

He settled in the Lobamba area within the Ezulwini Valley in central Swaziland. This became the social and political centre of the Swazi people, and from here, Sobhuza I welded together the clans and chiefdoms that today form the nucleus of the Swazi nation.

He conquered the neighbouring chiefdoms and kingdoms characterised by the Sotho tribes (Emakhandzambili) such as the Magagula, Maseko and Simelane, until his kingdom became comparable in scope and power to those of the Zulu, the Maroti, or the Pedi.

Eventually his rule extended as far as Lydenburg to the north, Carolina to the west, the Pongola River to the south and the Lubombo Mountains to the east.

Diplomacy and the use of arranged marriages were used to create strategic alliances with neighbouring states.

Sobhuza I reinforced the defences of the kingdom through a rewards system that encouraged allegiance.

He married one of Zwide's daughters (Thandile Ndwandwe) and it is claimed that he sent two of his daughters as wives to Shaka (Zulu) in order to establish a peaceful co-existence with his powerful neighbours.

±1819 The Ndwandwe were defeated in battle by the Zulu, leading to a stronger Northern expansion of the Zulu territories under the leadership of King Shaka.

1820's – 40's This period saw the use of regiments in warfare more often, as the whole southern African region underwent radical state building fuelled by the reign of King Shaka (Zulu) and the devastating effects of the Mfecane Wars, drought and famine.

Sobhuza I managed to avoid the worst of the Zulu invasion through his strategic use of diplomacy and arranged marriages.

±1836/1839 *The date is disputed in various literary sources, but 1836 seems to be the more strongly supported date.* Dingane, Shaka's half brother and conspirator in his assassination, tried to subjugate the Shiselweni country. At the Battles of Lubuya, the Swazi warriors defeated the invading Zulu army by adopting their military strategy. Not long afterwards, King Sobhuza I passed away, and was buried at the Royal burial site at Mbilaneni.

1840's onwards

- *The Boers and British appeared from the 1840s onwards.*
- *Avoiding conflict with the whites was a major policy taken as a result of King Sobhuza I's "dream" warning him to do so.*
- *At times the Swazi aided either the British, or the Boers, or both to overcome other black ethnic groups.*

Lojiba Simelane <i>(reigned: ±1839-1846)</i>		Queen Mother (Indlovukazi) of King Sobhuza I Clan: Simelane
<i>These dates: 1836/1839 and 1840/1846 are disputed in various literary sources, but 1839 and 1846 seem to be the more strongly supported date.</i>	±1836/1839 <i>The date is disputed in various literary sources, but 1839 seems to be the more strongly supported date.</i>	Lojiba Simelane becomes the Queen Regent to the son of her younger sister (Somnjalose Simelane).
	±1840/1846 <i>The date is disputed in various literary sources, but 1839 seems to be the more strongly supported date.</i>	Lojiba Simelane becomes the Queen Mother to her sister's son upon his ascension to the throne.
	±1839–1846	Queen Regent of Swaziland <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • after the death of King Sobhuza I • until Mswati II became king.