

IN THE SPIRIT OF KING SHAKA

King Goodwill talks of the past and the future of Blacks

IN a series of ceremonies recently held to celebrate the founding of the Zulu nation by King Shaka, hundreds of thousands of people converged on venues throughout KwaZulu, Natal and the Transvaal.

In an address in Durban, His Majesty King Goodwill Zwelithini ka Bhekuzulu, King of the Zulus, said they had gathered to rejoice in King Shaka's memory.

As a direct descendent of King Shaka he was deeply aware of the Black brotherhood which made every African in South Africa brother or sister to every other African.

"In our Blackness we should always be aware that the different cultural groups in this country have, since antiquity, shared more in common with each other than they have ever differed with each other," he said.

"Being Zulu, or Pedi, or Shangaan or Tswana or Sotho or Xhosa simply makes us different expressions of the same fundamental Blackness which has drawn us together as people so distinct from other cultural groups."

King Goodwill said that he believed that "somewhere in the great distant past" all their paths were directed towards being in South Africa.

It was "a great march of history directing us one and all to a common destiny..."

Being Zulu was being Black and to all who were Black, every one of the country's illustrious historical figures should be remembered and commemorated.

Every Black, Zulu and non-Zulu was entitled to rejoice in the remembrance of King Shaka.

"In the great future which awaits us we will not only take pride in our own individual cultures but we will also take pride both in others as they rejoice in their cultures and in the things we can share together across cultural differences," he said.

"Culture is not a fence which divides people, culture is a bridge which spans differences between man and man and between woman and woman."

Welcoming White guests to the function King Goodwill said it was in Durban that King Shaka permitted the settlement of Whites and befriended them.

He thought it was remarkable that in the long and sometimes bitter history of South Africa, on no single occasion was Durban ever besieged by Zulu armies.

"There is no history of warfare between Whites in Durban and the great Zulu nation, whose sovereign domains included Durban," he said.

"The Boers put Durban under siege, not Zulus. In the days when King Shaka mustered 20, 40, 60 thousand troops whenever he chose to do so, the expulsion of Whites from Durban would have been a minor matter.

"He welcomed Whites and permitted them to settle around the Bay of Durban. I welcome the Whites who are here today as our fellow South Africans..."

The King continued: "Our Zuluness today is the greatest tribute that we can possibly pay to King Shaka... there is in us the valour, the insight and the statesmanship which has led us to be a bastion of strength in the Black struggle for liberation.

"The events which King Shaka set in motion did not end when he died... I

can tell you that the greatness of our Zulu past lives on into today as we will survive into tomorrow to continue shaping history and to make this sub-continent a place where all will be free."

Zulu South Africans had a precious heritage to carry into the new South Africa for which they were struggling... nothing would persuade them to abandon their heritage and to feel ashamed of their past.

However, there were some bent upon betraying their heritage.

"They are like witches, preying on our humanness, preying on our Zuluness, preying on our stature as people, belittling our past and making us ashamed of our present," he said.

"They can only be described in the language we use when we talk of with disgust about the ugliness of witchcraft..."

"I am referring to those who try to create clashes between Zulu people and our commitment as Black South Africans in the struggle for liberation."

"It is only when witchcraft enters that healthy and brotherly competitiveness turns to betrayal and meanness..."

"Politics should not divide us. We should stand shoulder to shoulder with each other striving after the same things, even if we dispute amongst each other the best way of achieving our ends... we should compete in brotherly love to serve the nation."

Those who hoped to build a future by destroying the past would fail, he said.

Those who venerated the past and carried into the future the great cornerstones of the past to place in the foundations of the future would succeed.



King Goodwill Zwelithini ka Bhekuzulu and Prince M G Buthelezi at the King Shaka's Day celebration in Durban.