

INKOSI ALBERT LUTHULI YOUNG  
HISTORIAN AWARD

Name: Moleboheng Maphepha

School: SETJHABASE MAKETSE

Topic: Significant places of worship

KLEIN MODDER RIVER



Rivers carry special significance in almost all religions. And Hinduism is one of those religions where rivers play significantly to their religion. It is important to the extent that rivers like the Ganges, Yamuna, Godavari, Sarasvati, Narmada, Sindhu and Kaveri are considered sacred places in Hinduism.

## RIVERS IN TRADITION

As Africans, tradition has always been a way of life for us. Before the Dutch came to the Dark Continent and the Portuguese introduced Christianity to Africa, we lived our lives traditionally and up until today, on this 21<sup>st</sup> century we still practice tradition and we practice it still with the morals and respect that has always been there for the last centuries.

The use of rivers in tradition is enormous, in my perspective I could say that 80% of all traditional rituals are made on rivers. **Plea for wealth**-when someone or people go on a river with some of their valuable assets like jewellery, money and sometimes they even throw in their cows, sheeps or goats in the river to get wealthy. Second ritual is the **removal of a curse**. If someone has bad luck that could result if the person previously failed to do traditional rituals. Most of the time it could be related to a funeral, birth or pregnancy out of wed-lock. It is believed that if they bathe on the river, all their bad luck would be removed. But a curse can also be defined in another way. As traditional people believe there is witchcraft which can be defined as dark magic used to make other people's lives difficult. So when a person is bewitched, that is considered to be a curse, this curse can result to a person been mentally ill.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> rituals are both focused on traditional healing. The **training of a sangoma** is when a sangoma goes under water to be taught about all aspects of traditional healing. **Initiation of a sangoma** could be considered as a graduation but initiation differs from training. As we all know that not everyone can become a sangoma, you have to be chosen by the dead to become one. To know if you have a calling you have to dream a dream that every healer has dreamed. These dreams seem different but if elaborated and critically looked at they have one similarity which is a River. The 1<sup>st</sup> dream is when you are under water and the 2<sup>nd</sup> dream consists of a snake. A snake in some people's beliefs resembles Ancestry others believe that it resembles evilness and badluck. An apostolic priest says there is the 3<sup>rd</sup> dream that most people don't dream. He says that this dream comes as some kind of direction whereby a person is told to fetch his or her items at a certain river. This statement led o a question that gave me very contradictive replies. The question was: if a person is told in a dream to fetch his/her items does it mean this person will automatically know how to use the medicines and the rest of the things he is given, meaning that he wont have to under go training. Some people said "the person will have to be trained by another sangoma and be initiated on a river now that is where the difference is at. Initiation is when the person goes on a river to declare that he is a sangoma having been trained by another person not on a river. Other people believe that this person will automatically know everything about traditional healing. The real answer to that question will for now remain a mystery.

Another enigmatic part about traditional healing has to be the deaths that occur on rivers. On the Klein modder river there are two most talked about incidents that have made people develop theories on why they died. The first one was about a girl who was found dead on the river bank, her body was missing certain parts of the body and she had no blood. The second one was of the church goers who were going to be baptized on the same river. People said that they just disappeared on the river. One of my interviewees said I quote "we no longer trust this river" close quate. Even though people are at risk, tradition is tradition. People still get baptized on this river

## Significant places of worship

Every land form has its purpose in terms of worship. Landforms like mountains and rivers are essential for common rituals. Every religion has its own place where it can praise who or whatever it believes in but these people don't just choose any place. They have their own reasons why they chose a specific place and how important it is to sustain the longevity of that area that is why places like the church of the Sepulcher situated in Jerusalem and the dome of rock are still existing. But today I am going to base my research on rivers and why they are important in both tradition and religion. I have used the KLEIN MODDER RIVER as the representative of all rivers.

Botshabelo been the second largest township in South Africa, it surely does exhume people with diverse religions and tradition. I have interviewed four people who took their precious time to talk about the importance of rivers in their lives.

There is one key word that I think is important in this topic: the significant places of worship which is worship. What is meant by this word worship? Many people think that God is the only person worshipped but my presentation will definately clarify the meaning of worship and give practical examples of things that are worshipped. The Oxford dictionary explains the word worship as praising a person or thing through dancing, singing, praying and etc. Now basically you can worship what you believe in through practices or rituals, you can pray, sing, dance and even meditate, so you do whatever you can do to show your appreciation. So I wanted to clarify that because there are a few things in my presentation that are being worshipped that exclude God.

The topic say: significant places of worship and I have chosen a significant place of worship to millions of people which is a river.

### **Importance of rivers in religion**

A river is one of the most used places for religious and traditional rituals and some of these rituals specifically require a river like Baptism, no one can ever be baptized on a mountain because there is no water on mountains. Water is very essential in religion and even though we have different religions like Christianity, Buddhism, and Hindusm and Muslim just to name a few, they seem to have a similar reason of why they use water which Purity. For Christians, water is used for removal of sins and to allow a person to commit to God.

In Islam, water is viewed as a life giving; sustaining and also a purifying resourse. Muslims believe that water is a substance from which God created human beings. I quote from the holy Quran (21:30) "we made from water, every living thing is" they believe that water existed way before the formation of earth and heaven. They perceive water as a gift from God.

And for Hindus, they believe that water has a spiritual cleansing power. In Hindusm, there is a ritual that is made called Kumbha Mela and there are two elements which are worshipped during this event which is the sun and the Holy River. They believe that these two elements are essential for human life. This spiritual cleansing of the Ganges River (the largest river in India) happens during this ritual. It is said that during this time the waters of the Ganges river have the ability to cure the dying with just a sip and those who leave a part of themselves on the left bank of the river can attain wealth in the future.

# Personal reflection

## Importance of oral history research

- I've realized that every place whether it is a rural area, village, town or landform, it holds historical significance. It could be a person who lived on that area or a place.
- Oral research gives us perceptions of ordinary people. What did they feel when a certain event happened and what are their own experiences.
- Gives untold stories

## Skills acquired

- **Neutral:** As an interviewer, I had to put my own beliefs aside and concentrate on other people and their beliefs. So I didn't write more about a certain person because our beliefs are the same.
- **Critical thinking:** Being able to determine if a person is exaggerating on what they are saying by doing more research on what they've said so I was able to conclude my findings having referred to different sources.
- **Interpretation:** Ability to understand what has been said by doing thorough research.
- **Paying attention to what is important**
- **Constructing questions suitable for various interviewees:** I had to look at the experience the person has regarding the river. Questions of a traditional healer would be different from those of a priest.
- **Basing everything on evidence and facts:** Making a follow up on what's been done, said and written.

## Attitude and values

- Respecting other people's opinions: Everyone who has a voice that has something valuable to say regardless of whether their poor or uneducated. If it weren't for those people, I wouldn't have had the information I have now regarding to the significance of Klein Modder River.
- Religious and cultural tolerance.
- Understanding the value of religion and tradition in people's lives.

## Contradictive opinions on Klein Modder River in worshipping.

This part of the research focuses on the different opinions on the people I interviewed.

### **Who is the trainer of traditional healers?**

- Spirits of the waters
- Water snake

### **Is a river snake spiritual?**

- No, it is just an ordinary snake living under water
- "I think it is because no one can see it"

### **Are sangomas trained on the Klein Modder River?**

- No, it is too small
- Yes it is, some are trained on this river

### **What are the causes of deaths that occur on the Klein Modder River?**

- Floods by heavy rains
- Water snake is leaving or angry

### **Can a person become a healer without going to the river for training?**

- Yes it has happened to the people like Eliot Ndlovu
- It is impossible

# Objectives

On this research I want to achieve and understand these following things:

- Know rituals made on the Klein Modder River
- Why do people do these rituals on a river rather than on any other type of landform
- Get the historical meaning of its name
- Find a relation of a river snake with worshipping
- Find different opinions on the belief of the existence of the river snake
- Is the river snake a spiritual snake
- Definition of river snake
- What is a reason behind the deaths occurring on Modder river
- Why is the majority of people dying on the river females?
- The importance of training on the river
- Know whether or not people get trained on the river of Botshabelo
- Determine the difference between training and initiation of a traditional healer
- Do people of Botshabelo perceive this river as a significant place of worship
- Contribution of modern lifestyle to deaths on this river
  - Geographical
  - Traditional
  - Spiritual

# Process of doing research

I first had to choose a suitable topic that was on my interest. I wrote letters to my interviewees for appointments and made transport arrangements.

## **Challenges faced during research**

- ❖ Some people didn't turn up so I had to change interviewees
- ❖ Difficulty with finding interviewees
- ❖ Some interviewees failed to give me useful information
- ❖ Others were too precise and didn't wish to elaborate further in what they were saying
- ❖ Some interviewees postponed many times I ended up not interviewing them.
- ❖ The environment which some of the interviews had a lot of noise.
- ❖ The weather was also a problem because sometimes it was raining.

Reason why choosing the topic:

### *Significant places of worship*

*I chose to talk about this topic because of realising how much some places we pass every day can hold special significance in our lives and beliefs. Rivers like the Klein Modder river are very important in the lives of those who are committed to their spirituality, religion and tradition. This river which is easily forgotten, no one knowing its name (out of all the people I interviewed only one person knew the name of the river) it plays an important role in our lives. Most of the rituals made on even larger rivers can still be made on this river, I'm talking about Baptism, Removal of curses, Plea for wealth are made on this river. This river is very important to Botshabelo because if there was no Klein Modder river, people here will have to travel the distance to go to Thaba-nchu, which is the nearest place that has a river, so this means that this river is the only river in Botshabelo. I also chose this topic knowing that many different beliefs will emerge from it as people have had their own various experiences in relation to rivers... some being part of the most scary things rivers can do and others being part of the most amazing things that they have seen rivers do... so this topic was a topic for exploring the minds of people, their thoughts, beliefs, personal experiences, fears towards rivers and their love for the most hated animals... all because of a river. So the Klein Modder river is a very valuable but forgotten yet important place in this township.*



# Essay

# Interview with Mr Nyanzela

## **1. What do you know about this river?**

First question ...I know about people who died on that river while being baptized, they found after two days. There was also a girl who was found dead ,her body was found bloodless and some parts of her body were missing.

## **2. What activities are made on that river?**

It is where people remove a curse or baptize

## **3. What does it mean when it is said that there is a river snake?**

It means there is an existence of a snake that cannot be seen by anyone .some people believe this snake can help them or heal them.

## **4. How do you know when there is a river snake?**

Where there is a snake you will find fishes and hippos.

## **5. Is the river snake spiritual or is it like any normal snake?**

It is spiritual because it can't be seen by anyone.

## **6. What do you think about this river?**

I think it is very dangerous.

## **7. When is it most dangerous?**

Around summer.

## Interview with Ms Tubane

1. How long have you been living in Botshabelo?

**Since 1985**

2. What do you know about the Klein Modder River?

**The Klein Modder River I know it with many different things about it. It is a place for used my Christians for baptism. I also know that it has killed many people, in 1988 on March it killed many people, divers included. It was way too full to the extend that it invaded people's houses on the T section and U section. Their vegetation was damaged.**

3. Do you know the reason behind the name Klein Modder River?

**Honestly speaking I don't know**

4. Do you believe that there is a river snake in the Klein Modder River?

**Yes I do believe there is a river snake in this river because things that happen on it are miraculous**

5. How do the deaths that occur on the river relate to this snake?

**Not all of them die because of the river snake, some die because of drowning**

6. What do you think happened to Tebatso Make?

**It is quite difficult, in my perspective I believe that I think she fell into the river and was covered by sand.**

7. So you don't think it is because of the river snake?

**I think she drowned because she cannot swim**

8. Are people trained on this river?

**I haven't heard of a person anyone who has been baptized on this river.**

9. Rituals made on Klein Modder River, you know?

**Baptism, removal of a curse when someone has been mourning they are bathed on this river.**

10. Why are they made on a river?

**Basotho believe that because the water flows, all of their problems will flow with the water**

11. What are the positive aspects of this river?

**Agriculture and animals drink water there and people also get sand.**

12. Is there any solution to decrease the deaths occurring on this river?

**There should be proper bridges, warning signs and the area should be fenced.**

# Interview with Ms Radimo

## **1. What is the meaning of the name Klein Modder?**

In my understanding, I believe that maybe there was a white woman who fell into the river so I think it means little mothers river.

## **2. What is it that you know about the history of this river?**

I know that this river has caused o many problems in our community starting off with the incident that happened in February 1988 where there were floods, many things were ruined, we lost our stock, vegetation, our homes and some lost their lives. The other tragic incident was that of the church members who were going to get baptized on that river I also remember that there was a woman who died the same way on that river.

## **3. So was the woman ever found?**

Yes. Her body was bloodless and she lost some of her body parts.

## **4. What could be a possible reason of why she die in your understanding?**

I think it be water snake...there is no other reason. The way her body was found implies that she was killed by a water snake.

## **5. Do you think that there is a water snake on this river?**

Yes, I totally believe that.

## **6. Why?**

Like I have said before, people die mysteriously, there are always problems caused by the river even in 1988 when floods occurred the snake was leaving so it caused all those problems. You must remember that when it leaves it causes things like floods and tornados.

## **7. Do you think that the water snake is spiritual or is it like other snakes?**

I think it is spiritual because it can only be seen by sangomas; prophets of which these people have spiritual gifts of seeing things that others cannot.

## **8. In terms of rituals .what are the rituals that can be made on this river?**

Baptizing, plea wealth, cleansing by that I mean removing a curse.

## **9. In 1988, floods occurred in this are, what do you think was the cause?**

I think the river snake was angry or leaving to another place.

## **10. When does the river get dangerous?**

During summer and spring

died. There is a place on a river we call "lengwele" I knew I had to throw a stone in the river at that place but because I was already late I just passed the bridge.

*Which year?*

*I can't remember but i was pregnant with my first born who is now 22 years old*

While on the bridge I could not move but i was able to see the snake especially its eye. Some people found me there it was like i was unconscious. They took me home.

9. Are there any other practises that sangomas make on rivers?

No i haven't seen any other.

10. How can we see if a river has a snake?

It is because of a dream, in a dream you will be told to go to a certain river there you will meet a person, traditionally we don't call a river snake a snake but it is called a person.

11. Is there any difference between river snakes and ancestors?

River snakes are part of ancestry.

12. Has there ever been anyone you heard of who died during initiation?

No I have not, if you go there for initiation regardless of how bad it can be you will never come back dead.

13. What about people who die on rivers?

Many people say a snake has forced a person into a river, it is quite a mystery to me when people say that. I have never seen a person disappearing in the river.

# Interview with Ms Jeje

1. Why is a river so important to traditional healers?

Let me say under prophecy or Christianity, the importance of rivers is baptism and under tradition it is where our gifts are kept.

*What is a gift?*

*At the river a person is initiated and where you get all the things you need like your beads is where your gift lies.*

2. Why do other healers initiate at a river and others don't?

It depends on your family's culture and preference whether they prefer water (river) or they prefer soil.

*So where do these ones that don't initiate on river initiate at?*

*They could while at home. They will be trained by a qualified healer that your ancestors chose for you.*

3. How does one if they have a calling?

You have to get very sick first. There will be increasing clarity that will come in a way of seeing your ancestors holding the traditional healer's beads or herbs and they will tell you that for you to recuperate you have find a certain herb. He/she will give you the name of the herb.

*They don't tell you where you will get it?*

It is a well-known fact that herbs are uprooted from the soil. After using the herbs it is where you'll see many things up to the end you will see beads, when you see them you will also be shown who is giving you the beads and he/she will tell you which side of the family is he/she from. It can happen that this person can be a person who died a long time before your birth. He/she will then ask if you want to get better and if you say yes it means you are accepting traditional healing.

4. Is there an existence of a river snake?

Yes i do believe they exist because i was initiated by one of them.

5. Why isn't everyone able to see it?

When you are not spiritually gifted, you cant see it for example, sometimes we are going to a river for baptism or initiation of a minor. People will see a cow in the middle of a river, then a goat and its not many people who will see it and then see some piece of wood sometimes even see paper money in the river. When the water settles again people will still be singing. Traditional healers will pray for it to move so that the trainee gets in.

6. Is this snake a spiritual snake that can only be seen by initiated people?

It is a spiritual snake.

7. Can these snakes die?

No because they are spiritual

8. Do you believe that Kganyapa exists in Klein Modder River?

I believe that it was once there because I saw it myself while I was visiting my family living in the E section and I had a family member in the U section who

## Interview with Mr Mohleloane

We have questions based on the Klein modder river

1. What is the reason behind the river's name Klein modder?

**In my understanding, for this river to be called Klein Modder maybe in the past..no one was born in Botshabelo so we found this river here. So I think there was a white woman must have died in that river that is why it was called Klein Modder.**

2. What activities are made on that river?

**Things that are done on this river, some people wash a curse on that river. A person will tell you to bring a white chicken so that he could wash you at the river. A river does many things.**

3. In your church, what does a river symbolise?

**In our church, a river symbolises many things, we baptize and we also cure people on the river just like I have said before that sometimes a person can have dirty spirits leading to madness so when you put that person in the river for 7 times, those spirits could end and a river is a place where everyone in church must get baptized for example Jesus christ was baptized by Jordan on a river, the water was at the level of his chest, so that is why we say a river does many things. A river is a healer.**

4. Why do you baptize people on a river?

**er...that is where I explained that a river...to baptize on a river is a tradition in the apostolic churches. In terms of our believes and our understanding a person must be baptized on a river. It is only on a river because baptism proves the death of Jesus christ. Death-a person is buried so on water, it is where a person comes as a new person after being baptized.**

5. Is there a snake in the Klein modder river?

**Yes I could say so because of the places called "koetsa" (Dark, deep places on the edges of a river that make it difficult to get in it). There were people who disappeared for a few days, some of them were people of churches so a snake is on that river, I said most of the time a river snake is called "kganyapa" because when it leaves, there is a dark cloud that follows it, if you look further on that cloud you will see its tail. That is a river snake leaving. And then there are many snakes like Hippos and crocodiles but this river doesn't have crocodiles.**

6. Is a river snake spiritual or is it like any other snakes?

**Yes, a river snake is not spiritual, its just like any other snake but remember I explained that there is a river snake that is spiritual in terms of people and their believes. There is someone who is trained by a snake, he/she will be told that go get your beats on the end of the river so we don't say that all river snakes are spiritual but that snake can only be seen by that person trained by it.**

7. At what time of the year is it mostly dangerous?

**I explained that a river is always dangerous. It can never be understood. The most dangerous time could be on summer because it rains a lot but it is always dangerous. In terms of a river snake, if you normally pass the modder river, if your eyes meet with those of a snake's, it can force you into the river (a person being unconscious about that).**

8. What are your feelings based on the river?

**My feelings based on the river are that a river is very important because it helps us a lot with many things, it cures us, it removes a curse and for traditional healers, they go for training in the river. Cultural things are mostly made on a river so that is why I think it is important. When you live in a place where there is no river, you'll have to pay for transport to find a place with a river because of some certain rituals forcing you to go to a river.**

Thank you sir for your time.

## Interview with Mr. Nthejane

1. What is it that you know about this river?

**In short, this river is a devastation to people's lives of Botshabelo but especially in the U section where I live because in the years of about 1988 and 1989, we experienced heavy rains so that rain caused the river to be overfilled with water. When there as too much water it took people's lives, many lost their jobs, water invaded their homes. People lost their jobs because the water had blocked the area where they passed. On this area there is now a bridge today.**

2. What activities are made on this river?

**Things that happen on the river, we could say they are spiritually based. They relate to spiritual issues because people have different believes. There are apostolic people who baptize on this river, baptizing is when you put a person in the river with his whole body in, it takes about a minute or few seconds and then take him out.**

3. What is meant when it is said that a river has a snake?

**It is when it does things that I have mentioned like it doesn't take a year without someone being killed and the death always has mystery about what happened when that person died. Secondly the corpse does not have certain body parts. Then there are things that are there like canes, these canes imply that there is a water snake. Where there is a snake, water never dries out.**

4. Is a water snake just like any other snake or is it spiritual?

**Yes it is spiritual. it is not the same. Normally snakes like the black mamba can be seen by everyone but this snake is different. Traditional healers are said to carry this snake (spiritually) so its characteristics differ from a normal snake. Sometimes you'll hear people saying when it departs, it leaves a smoke. So its not like the one that eats rats.**

5. At what time of the year is it most dangerous?

**A year has 4 seasons right**

**Yes**

**So the season I think it is most dangerous is on spring. It is when heavy rains occur causing problems but the government helps us when facing issues like that**

Thank you sir for your time



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# Notes

## Questions for Mr. Nyanzela

1. What do you know about this river?
2. What activities are made on that river?
3. What does it mean when it is said that a river has a snake?
4. How do you know when there is a river snake?
5. Is a river snake just like any other snake or is it spiritual?
6. What do you think about this river?
7. At what time of the year is it mostly dangerous?

## Questions for Mrs Tubane.

1. How long have you been living in Botshabelo?
2. What are some interesting things you know about the Klein Modder River?
3. Do you have any clue on why this river was called Klein Modder River?
4. How many people have died on this river since you have lived here?
5. What do you think is a possible reason?
6. How do our cultural beliefs contribute to the killings of these people?
7. What do you think has happened to Tebatso Make?
8. Do you think that Make is still alive?
9. Why this river always kills young people especially females?
10. Which season of the year is this river most dangerous?
11. What are the positive aspects of these rituals?
12. What is a solution to this problem of deaths?

## Questions for Ms Radimo

1. What is the meaning of the name Klein Modder River?
2. What is it that you know about the history of this river?
3. So was the woman ever found?
4. What could be a possible reason of why she died?
5. So you think there is a water snake on this river?
6. Why?
7. Do you think that the water snake is spiritual or ordinary?
8. In terms of rituals, what are rituals made on this river?
9. In 1988, floods occurred in this area, what do you think was the cause?
10. When does this river get dangerous?



# Questions for Ms Jeje

1. Why is a river so important to traditional healers?
2. Why do other healers initiate at a river and others don't?
3. How does one if they have a calling?
4. Is there an existence of a river snake?
5. Why isn't everyone able to see it?
6. Is this snake a spiritual snake that can only be seen by initiated people?
7. Can these snakes die?
8. Do you believe that Kganyapa exists in Klein Modder River?
9. Are there any other practises that sangomas make on rivers?
10. How can we see if a river has a snake?
11. Is there any difference between river snakes and ancestors?
12. Has there ever been anyone you heard of who died during initiation?

## Questions for Mr Mohleloane

1. What is the reason behind the river's name Klein Modder?
2. What activities are made on that river?
3. In your church, what does a river symbolize?
4. Why do you baptize people on a river?
5. Is there a snake in the Klein Modder River?
4. Is a river snake spiritual r is it like any other snakes?
7. At what time of the year is it mostly dangerous?
8. What are your feelings based on the river?

## Questions for Mr. Nthejane

1. What is your name?
3. What is it that you know about the river, its history?
4. What activities are made on that river? Just like sangomas
5. What is meant when it is said that a river has a snake?
6. How do you know when there is a river snake?
7. Is a river snake just like other snakes or is it spiritual?
8. at what time of the year is it most dangerous?

# *QUESTIONS*



1555 SEC H3  
Botshabelo  
9781  
28 MAY 2011

2128 Section H3  
Botshabelo  
9781

Reply for interview

Thank you for considering me as one of your interviewees. I will be available from the second week of June.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping letters that appear to be 'JH' followed by a horizontal line.

MR L NYANZELA  
213 SECTION U  
BOTSHABELO  
9781  
23 APRIL 2010

MS MPHEPHA M  
2128 H3 SECTION  
BOTSHABELO  
9781

Dear Madam

**REPLY ON YOUR INTERVIEW**

I am very pleased that I've been chosen to have an interview on this river. I will be available on the 25<sup>th</sup> of APRIL on Sunday at 15:00

Thank you

MR L NYANZELA

*L Nyanzela*

169 SECTION S  
BOTSHABELO  
9781  
22 NOVEMBER 2010.11.22

Miss. Maphepha  
2128 SECTION H  
BOTSHABELO  
9781


Dear Madam

Re: reply on you interview:

I hereby reply on interview request that based on Kleinmoderiver. And I will be available on the 24<sup>th</sup> Saturday at 15:30

Thank you

Yours truly  
Mrs. C.Tubane



MS RADIMO  
5055 SECTION U  
BOTSHABELO  
9781  
23 APRIL 2010

MS MPHEPHA M  
2128 H3 SECTION  
BOTSHABELO  
9781

Dear Moleboheng

**REPLY ON YOUR INTERVIEW**

I will be available on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April at 17:00 p.m

Thank you

MS RADIMO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Radimo', is written below the typed name.

MR J MOHLELOANE  
1230 SECTION U  
BOTSHABELO  
9781  
23 APRIL 2010

MS MPHEPHA M  
2128 H3 SECTION  
BOTSHABELO  
9781

Dear Madam

**REPLY ON YOUR INTERVIEW**

I am very pleased that I've been chosen to have an interview on this river. I will be available myself on this Saturday at 12:00

Thank you

MR MOHLELOANE



Mr Nthejane  
997 Section U  
Botshabelo  
9781  
23 April 2010

Maphepha Moleboheng  
2128 Section H  
Botshabelo  
9781

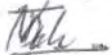
Dear Madam

**Reply on request for interview**

This is to confirm that I accept your request and I will be available for your interview on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2010 at around 14:00 in the afternoon.

Hope you find this in order.

Yours sincerely  
Nthejane



# Letters of reply



# SETJHABA SE MAKETSE

P.O. Box 5020, Botshabelo 9781 • No. 5, Section H • Tel / Fax: 051 - 534 3153

Education - Key to Success

Reference:

Enquiries:

Date:

MS JEJE

## REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW

I have been given a school project to interview religious and cultural people on a topic, significant places of worship. I chose you because you are a traditional healer and you are relatable to the topic. For a reply please call 078 398 8011

Yours truly

M.D Maphepha





# SETJHABA SE MAKETSE

P.O. Box 5020, Botshabelo 9781 • No. 5, Section H • Tel / Fax: 051 - 534 3153

Education - Key to Success

Reference:

Enquiries:

Date:

MRS CA TUBANE  
169 SECTION S  
BOTSHABELO  
9781

Dear Sir

## REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW ON A SCHOOL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

I am writing this letter in request for an Interview with you that is based on the significance of the Klein Modder River in both religion and tradition. Please call me at 0783988011.

YOURS FAITHFULLY

M. MAPHEPHA



# SETJHABA SE MAKETSE

P.O. Box 5020, Botshabelo 9781 • No. 5, Section H • Tel / Fax: 051 - 534 3153

Education - Key to Success

Reference:

Enquiries:

Date:

MR LEFA NYANZELA  
213 SECTION U  
BOTSHABELO  
9781

Dear Sir

## REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW ON A SCHOOL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

I am writing this letter in request having an interview with you that is based on the significance of the Klein Modder River in worshipping. If you think you'll be able to have an interview with me please call me at 0783988011.

YOURS FAITHFULLY

M. MAPHEPHA



# SETJHABA SE MAKETSE

P.O. Box 5020, Botshabelo 9781 • No. 5, Section H • Tel / Fax: 051 - 534 3153

Education - Key to Success

Reference:

Enquiries:

Date:

MR MJ MOHLELOANE  
5055 SECTION U  
BOTSHABELO  
9781

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW ON A SCHOOL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

I am writing this letter in asking if it would be possible to have an interview with you that is based on the significance of Klein Modder River in both Tradition and Religion. For a reply please call me at 0783988011.

YOURS FAITHFULLY

M. MAPHEPHA



# SETJHABA SE MAKETSE

P.O. Box 5020, Botshabelo 9781 • No. 5, Section H • Tel / Fax: 051 - 534 3153

Education - Key to Success

Reference:

Enquiries:

Date:

MR T NTHEJANE  
997 SECTION U  
BOTSHABELO  
9781

Dear Sir

**REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW ON A SCHOOL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

I am writing this letter in request for an Interview with you that is based on the significance of rivers. please call me at 0783988011.

YOURS FAITHFULLY

M. MAPHEPHA

# Letters of requests

Name: Lefa John Nyanzela  
Date of birth: 1965 November 02  
Place of birth: Marseilles

Mr Nyanzela is an ordinary resident of U section who knows about the death of people who died on the Klein Modder River.

## Profile of Ms Tubane

Date of birth: 18 February ~~2011~~ 1961

Place of birth: Virginia (near Welkom)

Ms Tubane is currently living in S section in Botshabelo. She was already living in Botshabelo when the floods occurred in 1988. She is still a present commuter who has heard some of the stories that people have talked about in relation to the Klein Modder River.

Name: Mamatlakeng Radimo  
Date of birth: 1953 August 01  
Place of birth: Ladybrand

Ms Radimo is one of the first people to live in the U section and she was present on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 1988. She is a traditionalist who understands the importance of rivers.



# Profile of Ms Jeje

Place of birth: Excelsior

Date of birth: 06 June 1965

Place currently staying: Botshabelo Section H3

Ms Miriam "makamohelo" Jeje is a practicing traditional healer who has had significant encounters with the Klein Modder River. Not only did she see the river snake on that river but she also helps initiate young traditional healers. She is also a Christian who believes in baptism on rivers. She is very suitable for this topic because she understands both the significance of rivers in traditional and religious practices.

Name: Josh Mohleloane

Date of birth: 1956 January 24

Place of birth: Lesotho

Mr Mohleloane is a priest at the apostolic church in the U section. He baptizes people on this river.

Name: Tatolo Nthejane

Date of birth: 1969 February 14

Place of birth: Bultfontein

Mr Nthejane was one of the first democratic counselors from 1995-2006. With 10 years as the counselor of U section, Mr Nthejane knows how this river has affected the people of this sections.

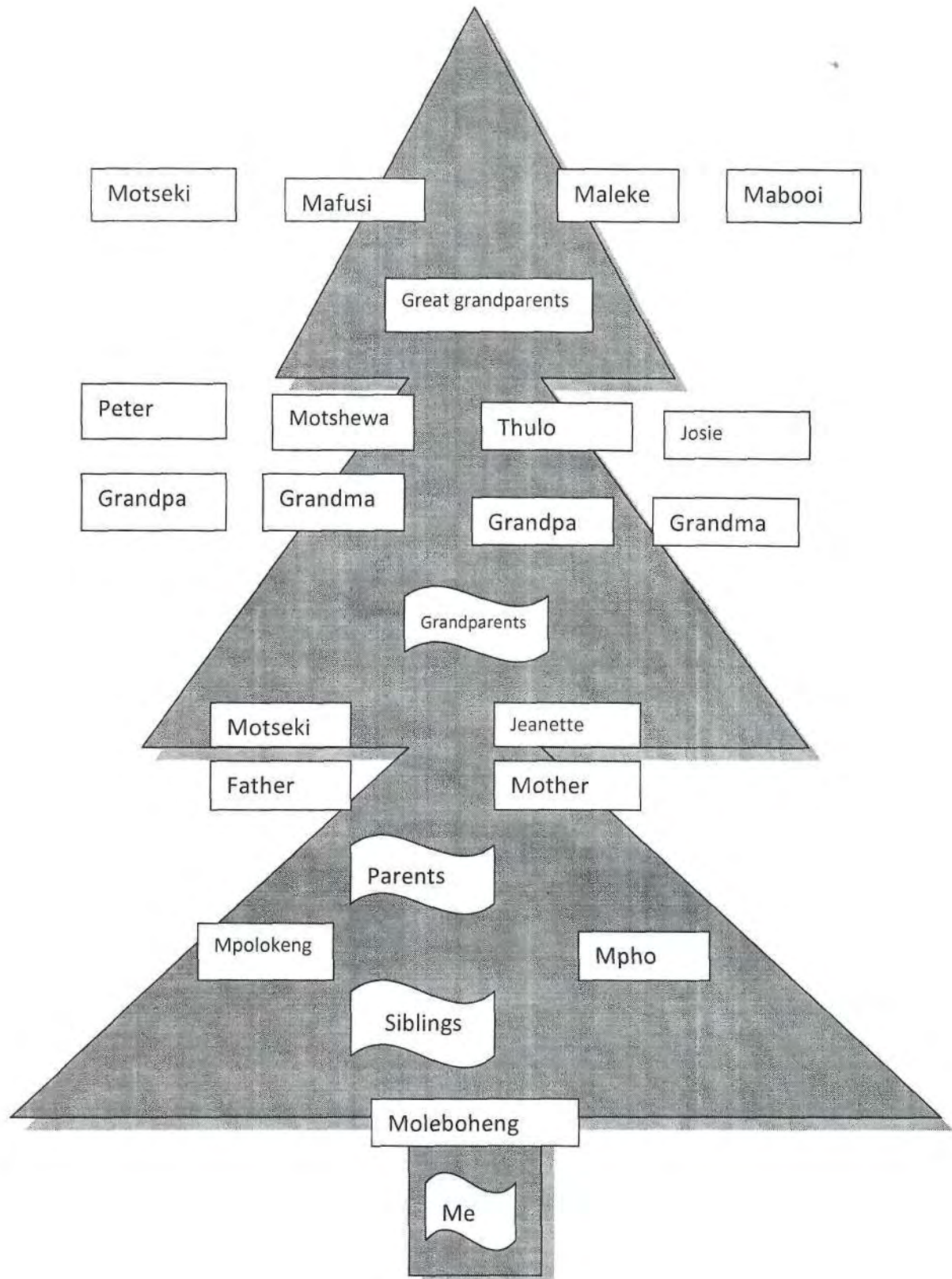
# Background of interviewees

# Profile of researcher

My name is Moleboheng Désirée Maphepha. I was born on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 1994 at J section Botshabelo. The reason why I choose this topic was because of my personal interests in African practices and its history and also interest of différent religions and they way people worship. Another reason that made me interested to this topic was because of my passion for snakes and their ways of living I knew that I had to research about this topic after hearing that some people believe there is an existence of river snakes.

## ***The relevance of family tree to this project***

*The significance of including the family tree is that the information used to construct this tree was acquired through interviewing Oral sources. I had to ask some of my family members to get information of my great-grandparents. This clearly shows the use of oral research in finding this information.*



# Family tree

# Plan of action

1. Introduction of Inkosi Albert Luthuli Young Historian Awards
  - Teacher explained what is oral History
  - What the competition was about
2. Choose suitable topic((Significant places of worship)
  - The reasons I had on why choose this topic
    - I knew that the place I was going to research about was unique
    - It is related to our Heritage as Africans in general
    - Emergence of different beliefs from it which makes researching interesting
3. Finding interviewees
  - I had to talk to many people who helped me find interviewees. In terms of directions.
  - The most important aspect of choosing interviewees was their relevance to the topic.
4. Wrote letters to request interviews
  - Some people replied with acceptance and others did not.
5. Wrote profiles of interviewees
6. Formulated questions for different interviewees
7. Research on spiritual healing from other sources like internet and newspapers.
  - This helped me to get clarity on the topic.
8. Usage of transport
9. Conducted interviews
10. Verification of what interviewees said
  - Interview more people who have the same experience or knowledge. For example if i wanted to verify what an ordinary person said i had to talk to another ordinary person
  - Some of the events my interviewees talked about to verify them I had to look them up on internet and find written sources of those events.
11. Wrote essay to conclude my findings
12. Began to prepare for speech
  - I had to minimize the time for presentation
13. Compiled the portfolio



## **Index**

1. Family tree
2. Profile of researcher
3. Profile of interviewees
4. Letter of request
5. Letters of response
6. Questions for interviews
7. Notes
8. Essay
9. Appendix
10. Bibliography



# SETJHABA SE MAKETSE

P.O. Box 5020, Botshabelo 9781 • No. 5, Section H • Tel / Fax: 051 - 534 3153

Education - Key to Success

Reference:

Enquiries:

Date:

MS RADIMO  
5055 SECTION U  
BOTSHABELO  
9781

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW ON A SCHOOL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

I am writing this letter in asking if it would be possible to have an interview with you. I am researching on the significance of Klein Modder River in both Tradition and Religion. For a reply please call me at 0783988011.

YOURS FAITHFULLY

M. MAPHEPHA

*INKOSI ALBERT LUTHULI YOUNG  
HISTORIAN AWARD*

Name: Moleboheng Maphepha

School: SETJHABASE MAKETSE

Topic: Significant places of worship

KLEIN MODDER RIVER



ordinary people with no special powers but all of us can see Anacondas, we even watch them on TV.

Because of the mystery surrounding them, some people have even considered them as spiritual snakes because they are hardly seen by anyone that is why other people say that if you mistakenly see one of these snakes you will be jinxed your whole life. And just when I thought there is one water snake I am told that there are various water snakes with characters that differ. The **mirror snake**-this snake is said that it always has its mirror on its head all the time and some even say it makes Diamond-like eggs. It is believed that it is situated at the Tikoe lodge in Virginia near Welkom. The second one is called Kganyapa, it is believed to live in Qwa qwa in the free state. Somewhere in Qwa Qwa, there is a place called Mount exhaust where darkness is always surrounding the area day and night. Others say because the snake can't be seen when it comes out of the river/mountain the place becomes misty so that no one can see its face. Most sangomas are named after this snake.

**Mohokare river** in Lesotho, this snake is very dangerous that there is even a warning sign of it when you get near the river and there are many stories about this snake like the one of it crossing the roads at 3:00am every morning and no one ever drives at that road on 3:00am. So here, ladies and gentlemen, it is said to be the river that tests the strength of traditional healers. Where the weak one's will fade with the waters of the Mohokare river but then again some people say the whole thing of spiritual snakes is just an exaggeration. They say that these snakes are just normal snakes that live under water. And yes, some will call them "urbanized society" but ladies and gentlemen, we should also look at the fact that these people are basing their beliefs on what they have never seen, what they've only heard from stories or their grandparents. So my critical question will be, do these people believe on what could probably not be existing or on a myth?

The **Klein modder river** not only having positive aspects about it like any other river world wide, it has also brought catastrophe to residents of U section, this river which has two meanings of its name...some believing to be called "Little woman's river" or "Small mud river" in the year 1988 22nd February was the year that put this river on the local newspapers. There could only be two explanations of why the catastrophe emerged, geographical and traditional. Some say that it was because of heavy rains that occurred days before the tragedy. The former councilor of U section says that the blame was to be put on the Apartheid regime, he says that no land-survey was made to determine if the place was suitable people to live on it. In addition, he says that there was no infrastructure to decrease the harmfulness of the river for example there were no bridges built to cease the water from moving to people's places. During this disaster that can be described as floods, people lost their animals, vegetation, homes were damaged, lives were lost and some even lost their jobs because the water blocked the roads. All this mentioned above could fall under geographical factors but people like Ms Radimo would disagree with this, they believe that it had to do with the water snake leaving or it being angry. She says that when the snake leaves the river, it causes a lot of damage to the area near it.

This research contains many things, things that will never be seen, that will never reach a consensus because as I am standing in front of you today I can't say a water snake is spiritual because some one else will say "no its not" a tradition healer will say "its spiritual but not magical, we can see and touch it" and the other one will say "a water snake is a myth" so I can never conclude on that because tradition and religion is all about believes, values, morals and rituals. That is why we have Hindus, Jews, Christians, Rastafarians, Buddhists and Muslims because their beliefs are different.

# Questions For Mr. Mthyan

1. What is the name of the river and the reason behind it?

2. What do you know about the river? (History)

3. What activities are made on the river, and why?

4. What does it mean when a river has a snake?

5. How do you know when there is a snake in that river?

6. Does this river have a snake? Why do you say so?

7. Is a river snake just like other snakes, or is it special/spiritual? If it is spiritual, how does it come?

8. What do you think about this river?

9. At what time of the year does it get dangerous? <sup>during</sup> <sup>spring season.</sup>  
Before the interview

Name: Tatolo Mthyan

Date of birth: 1969-02-14

Place: " " : Belfontein District.

Address: 2997 U sec.

Occupations: <sup>one of</sup> The first ~~councilor~~ democratic ~~local councilor~~ local councilor = From 1995-2006

# Questions (b.) Apostolic person.

Klein Moderator

1. What is the reason behind the river's name?
- \* What activities are made on the river
2. ~~What~~ does it mean to have a river in your community?
3. For people in your ~~community~~ church, what does ~~it mean~~ does a river symbolise?
4. Why do people get baptized in the river?
5. Why do you choose a river instead of a mountain or other landmarks?
6. Is there a ~~river~~ snake in the river and what is it called?
7. Is a river snake a spirit or is it just like any other snake?
8. What are the things that make it different from a normal snake?
- \* At what time of the year does this river turn to be dangerous?
9. What are your feelings based on this river?

Name:

Date Of birth:

Place " " :

Address

# Questions (b.) Apostolic person.

Klein Modder

1. What is the reason behind the river's name?
- \* What activities are made on the river?
2. What does it mean to have a river in your community?
3. For people in your community, church, what does ~~it mean~~ does a river symbolise?
4. Why do people get baptized in the river?
5. Why do you choose a river instead of a mountain or other landmarks?
6. Is there a ~~river~~ snake in the river and what is it called?
7. Is a river snake a spirit or is it just like any other snake?
8. What are the things that make it different from a normal snake?
- \* At what time of the year does this river turn to be dangerous?
9. What are your feelings based on the river?

Name:

Date Of Birth:

Place " " :  
Address:

from ~~are~~

I interviewed ~~they say~~ because of the outbreak of ~~people who die~~ found dead on the river, ~~they say~~ they say people found dead on that river here. Interesting signs of how they died. They say that a child who was found dead on that river, had no blood, <sup>there were</sup> some missing parts of her body, this varies a lot from a person who has drowned.

There are different reasons of why they believe there is a river snake.

1. Mysterious deaths

2. Hippas

\* They believe that where there are Hippas and Crocodiles, there is a river snake.

3. Dark, deep places surrounding the river.

Relation of River Snake and 'Worshipping'

Basically <sup>a</sup> traditional healer can now be trained when there is no river snake ~~meaning that river snake~~ it is said that if a healer was trained by a snake, he/she is one of the best traditional healers.

~~Contributes~~ Positive Contribution of LMR

Apart from traditional and cultural activities the river has a Sewage runoff - and  
In terms of tradition  
\* Baptizing  
\* Removing of a curse



we can now describe as Floods, People lost their animals and Vegetation, homes were damaged and many people died, and some lost their jobs. All of what is mentioned above could fall under Geographical factors but others <sup>people</sup> would disagree with people like Mr. Montano and Ms. Ravino would disagree with this, they believe that it had to do with the river snake, either leaving or angry. Ms. Ravino <sup>says</sup> believes that when a snake leaves a river, it causes a lot of catastrophe, to be area near the river.

## Klein Modder <sup>river</sup> Relation to Worship.

Worshipping means ~~to~~ the way of showing respect to what you believe in by singing dancing etc. Klein Modder river people Klein Modder river continues a lot to cultural things. Apostolic people use a river for baptizing, they believe that a person must be baptized on a river not anywhere else but this baptism on the Klein Modder river has become a rite to Apostolic church goes. A few years ago, people who were going to get baptized disappeared in the river and ~~here~~ were only found a few days after (Alive) ~~here~~ people were lucky. Most people say that it rarely happens merely a person disappears in the river and comes out alive. What makes these people believe that there is a river snake in Klein Modder, and how does a snake relate to worshipping? From the perceptions of most of the

# History.

Klein Modder River situated in Botswana is a smaller river of the famous river ~~known~~ <sup>called</sup> Modder River. The Modder river ~~flows~~ <sup>is</sup> between Tlokweng Cape and Free State. ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> Modder river was where the war between the Boers and the British people happened known as the Boers of Modder River. That happened in 28 Nov 1899 & (retire) the surrounded town of Kinschips Klein Modder river was a river that brought a lot of grief to <sup>people's</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>settlers</sup> who lived in the U section. In ~~1988~~ <sup>1988</sup> February 25<sup>th</sup> was the day that ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> Klein Modder river into <sup>local</sup> newspapers. ~~Some~~ <sup>They</sup> say it was the river source could only be two reasons of why the catastrophe emerged. One it had been geographical reasons or tradition and religious beliefs. Some say that it was the river source and others say it was because of the heavy rains that occurred days before the tragedy. Based on the former ~~conclusion~~ <sup>conclusion</sup> of U section, he says that ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~first~~ <sup>first</sup> ~~problem~~ <sup>problem</sup> was to be put on the Apartheid regime, he says that no law-suits were made to investigate whether the area was suitable for people to live or not. Secondly, ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> ~~said~~ <sup>asserted</sup> in an assertion that there was no infrastructure to decrease the ~~harmfulness~~ <sup>harmfulness</sup> of the river, ~~there~~ <sup>there</sup> were no bridges to cease the water from moving to where people were living. During this disaster



28/12/28 <sup>H?</sup> Bothasubet

# Klein Modder River

The Modder River is a relatively small river which drains an area of  $7620 \text{ km}^2$  in the central region of the FS province SA. and has a mean annual runoff of  $464 \text{ t } 106 \text{ m}^3$ . Bothasubet is a city developed in the ~~catchment~~ catchment area of the river and sewage is released into the Klein Modder River. This study determined seasonal and spatial patterns in the system as well as confirmed hypothesis that Bothasubet's treated sewage outflow has an effect on the quality of the river. It was determined that the Modder River and Klein Modder River follow distinctive seasonal patterns in terms of algal growth and physical factors.

## Between Boer and British

turn - [infanaworld.com](http://infanaworld.com)

Modder - Battle of Modder  
 was an engagement in the Boer war, fought at Modder River, on 28 Nov 1899. A British Column under Lord Methuen, that was attempting to relieve the besieged town of Kimberley, forced Boers under General Piet Cronje to retreat. Magersfontein, but suffered heavy casualties. Amvelai

~~people with diverse religions with more than~~  
~~people in Botswana, it does certain~~  
examine people with diverse religions and  
traditions. I have interviewed 4 people  
who live around the area who have taken  
their precious time just for me to talk  
about the Christian model of

Structure of Presentation

① History

② Beliefs (Various)

③ Activities / Rituals

④

Key words

# Significant Places of

Maximum (30 Minutes)

## Worship

- \* Map of Place,
- \* Importance of a place for worshipping.
- \* Beliefs on that place
- \* Reasons why it was chosen
- \* History of the place
- \* Activities made on that certain place

## River of U sections.

## Plan, Qaba River

Every landscape has its purpose in terms of worship. Landforms like Mountains and Rivers are essential for common religious rituals. <sup>Every</sup> Most religious group has its own place where it can praise who/whatever it believes in. But these people don't just choose any place, they have their own reasons why they chose that specific region and that is what my investigation is based on, how and how important it is to sustain/keep that place the longevity of that place which is why places like <sup>around the world</sup> are still existing but today I am going to base my Research & Presentation on our own significant place In Botswana, the ~~River of~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~U section.~~ <sup>the</sup> Botswana is an going to Botswana been the second largest township after South ~~Botswana~~

② What I know is that this river played a detrimental role in the sections community. In the year 1980 mostly in I say this because there was a heavy rains in that year. Some people lost their lives during that time and there was a huge invasion in that place. At that time was a great poverty. Because there was no much development, people had no house and electricity. People lost their animals and their savings also.

③ Because of poor infrastructure also contributed because if we had bridges those animals would not have been lost.

Because of this river people lost their jobs because of the rains and poor infrastructure. Other problems emerged because of the apartheid government's policies. Categorically speaking

- The planning of that place was not done according to the land surveying, without checking the harmfulness of the place

- The town planning was not proper, the infrastructural were not met things like toilets taps and bridges.

- And subsequent to that this river continued

The previous apartheid government played the role of giving food and clothes to the victims

# Notes

Notes from each interview.

While interviewing your respondents you will be noting important things they are saying in responding to your questions. These should be reflected in your Portfolio.

You are going to use these notes to develop your transcript.

This item should also appear on the Index.



## Letters to interviewees

Your interest is not on Klein Mottdu river as a river but you are more interested in what happens to it and other rivers.

Your letters to possible respondents should indicate that your interest in the river is ~~not~~ on it as a natural phenomenon but you are interested in it as a significant place of worship.

Maybe, if time allows:

- ① The Educator should help you type these letters.
- ② Have these letters on school letterhead.

The item immediately following these letters should be responses by interviewees.

- keep records of their replies in the Portfolio

Letter head

2128 Section H3  
Botshabelo  
9781  
19 april 2010

Ms Radimo  
5055 Section U  
Bothabelo  
9781

Request for interview on a school oral history project  
I am writing this letter to ask if it will be possible to have an interview with you. I am researching on the significance of the Klein modder river in both religion and tradition.

Yours faithfully  
Maphepha



# Letterhead

2128 Section H3  
Botshabelo  
9781  
19 april 2010

Mr MJ Mehleloane  
1230 SECTION U  
9781

Request for interview on a school oral history project

I am writing this letter in asking if it would be possible to have an interview with you that is based on the significance of Klein Modder River in both tradition and religion. For a reply please call me at 078 398 8011.

Yours faithfully  
Maphepha

Request letters should have school letterhead

# Process of doing this research

## ~~Final thoughts on Oral history~~

### ~~Process of doing research~~

I first had to choose a suitable topic that was in my interest. I chose to talk about the significance of rivers. Then I was supposed to interview four people who had a relation to the topic. Transport arrangements were done and I also wrote letters to them for the arrangements of the dates, some didn't turn up so I had to change my interviewees meaning that I had to re-visit the area for the interviews. I to libraries for more information as some of my interviewees failed to give me useful information.

### ~~Challenges I faced when doing this project~~ on his project

I faced many problems when doing this research; firstly my school doesn't have internet access so I had to use my money to have access to the internet through my mobile. Secondly, I had to buy a tape recorder which later failed to work so I had to return it then I bought a Nokia cell phone which had a lot of space for recording but the problem was that it didn't come with a USB cord for transferring the pictures to the computer. Some how ended up buying another phone because I couldn't transfer the pictures to the computer. Another problem came when my computer caught a virus so I had to use a computer from school which was some how time consuming because I couldn't type at home with enough time.

### Skills acquired from this research

I now know how to interview a person; I am able to be attentive to what a person says. I am also able to write notes and I am now able to be critical when judging instead of being biased. This skill I accumulated when listening to other people's beliefs.

### Attitude and Values

The most important thing I have learnt is religious tolerance and also respect of other people's beliefs. I now view rivers in a different way, it is not the place known to produce floods but also essential to human-kind. I also understand the importance of oral history. The information that is accumulated when doing oral history.

Some of my interviewees were too straight forward. They didn't give me enough answers on the KMR. Some wanted to remain anonymous so I couldn't add their names to my interviewees. Transport was another problem because some of my interviewees were not at their homes I had to return again. Others turned me down so had to find other people to interview. The weather was also a problem because some days of interviews was raining, making it hard to record the interviews.

2128 botshabelo

9781

14 April 2010

Mr Iefa Mgonca

213 U section

9781

Dear sir

Request for interview on a School Oral History Project

I am writing this letter to ask if it will be possible for you to have an interview with you on the 24<sup>th</sup> of April. My name is Macboteng Maphepa and the reason why I am asking you is to find more ~~information~~ about the Klein Modder river. If you think you will be able to have the interview on the date I have mentioned, you can call 078 398 5011 for a reply.

Yours faithfully

Maphepa

Signed

Reflected: river as a place of worship

## Presentation ±20 (develop cue cards)

- explain how you went about your Project: explain all stages as in your index ✓
- Present your Findings on the places of worship you researched on. ✓
  - \* Which are these places.
  - \* Why do people value them in the manner that they do.
  - \* different aspects/problems they take to the river
  - \* rituals they perform at the river ✓
- Challenges you came across in the process of the project.
- What have you learned / Personal Reflection.
  - \* Skills acquired ✓
  - \* how did the project change you
    - ① Attitudes
    - ② Values
- \* Let your Educator go through your transcript and make corrections, keep both in your Portfolio.

My name is Malesheng Desiree Maphepa. I am doing Human and social science's subjects. I was born on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 1994 (I love animals especially snakes which is one of reasons I chose to do research on rivers.)

the reason above is understandable but it is not convincing?

Maybe your reasons should made reference to the following

1. You got Fascinated by people pilgrimaging to rivers to find answers to their problems so much that you felt you wanted to find out about this practice.

2. As an African child you detest the fact that African Knowledge Systems are often looked down upon and you wanted to help profile the pilgrimage to rivers as one of the African Practices

3. You heard of miraculous things attached to this practice so much that you wanted to help others understand this

You can think of other reasons

## Interview Questions

include these Questions and they should be differentiated according to the different interviewees i.e. a different set of Questions for each interviewee.

You will want to Find out different things from your interviewees and your questions will not be the same.



## Interview Questions

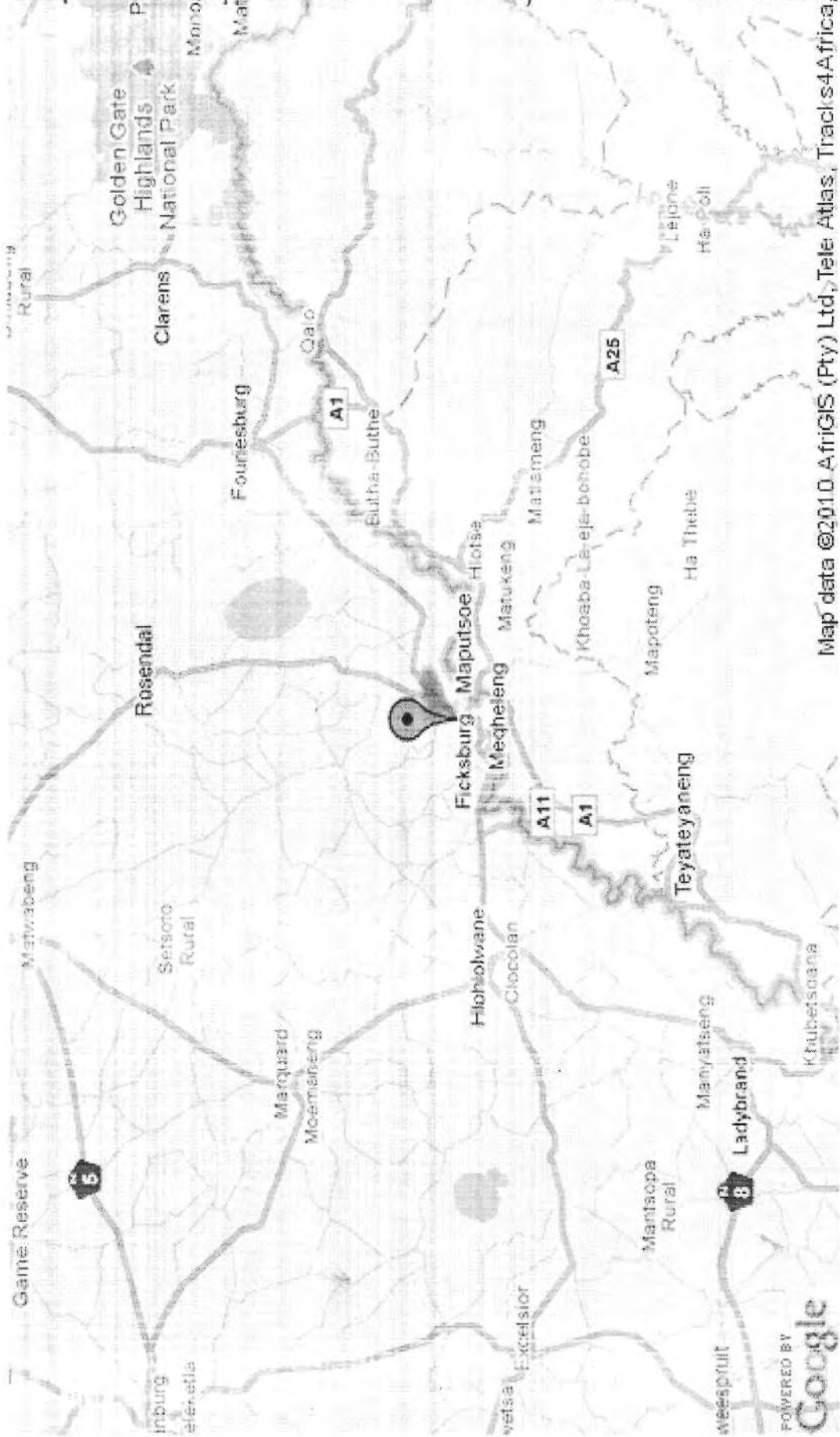
include these Questions and they should be differentiated according to the different interviewees i.e. a different set of Questions for each interviewee.

You will want to Find out different things from your interviewees and your questions will not be the same.

v

# Corrections

Map showing where Ficksburg is situated



Map data ©2010 Afrigis (Pty) Ltd, Tele Atlas, Tracks4Africa

# Traditional beliefs behind the Ficksburg Tornado

Please note that I am only using this information for verification of what Traditionalist

Ms Ralimo and Priest Mr Mohleloane said about the damage that a river snake can cause when it departs. Sometimes it leaves great damage

to the areas near it. These can be floods or other Mother Nature disasters like Tornadoes. This explanation was given patterning to the floods that

occurred in 1988\89 February in U section that is situated near Klein Modder River.



**Caledon**

River commonly known in black community as Mohokare River.

This is the river that is near

Ficksburg.

# Traditional beliefs behind the Ficksburg Tornado

Please note that I am only using this information for verification of what Traditionalist

Ms Ralimo and Priest Mr Mohleloane said about the damage that a river snake can cause when it departs. Sometimes it leaves great damage

to the areas near it. These can be floods or other Mother Nature disasters like Tornadoes. This explanation was given patterning to the floods that

occurred in 1988\89 February in U section that is situated near Klein Modder River.



**Caledon**

River commonly known in black community as Mohokare River.

This is the river that is near

Ficksburg.

**Traditional healers believe that the killing of people and dumping their bodies in the Klein Modder river is disturbing the spiritual powers it holds and it is been contaminated.**

05 April 2011

[www.publiceyenews.com](http://www.publiceyenews.com)

“Another dead body of 27 year old man is found in the Modder river in Botshabelo after a shepherd notified the police about the naked body in a river.

Mpho Matlosa was reported missing on Friday April 1. Police helicopter was used to look for a man but with no success. The same day the shepherd noticed a body of naked man in a river but police could not find it.”

04 April 2011

[www.ofmnews.co.za](http://www.ofmnews.co.za)

“Unknown body of a naked woman found at Klein Modder River in Botshabelo. Woman was raped and then strangled to death and thrown into the river”



# RIVER GIVES UP GIRL AT LAST!

Coins to appease the kganyapa!



## Tebatso's body found 3km away!

By MATSEKO RAMOTEKOA

A SANGOMA said if people threw enough silver coins into the river ... the missing young girl would be brought back alive by kganyapa - the great river snake.

So the people did throw dozens of R2 and R5 coins into the dark waters of the Klein Modder River in Botshabelo near Bloemfontein.

But the sangoma was wrong ... Tebatso Make (11) was not found alive



Little Tebatso



Tebatso's grieving mum, Mamodieh! Make.

Photo by Baleseng Mosotho

Daily Sun, 19 November.

by kganyapa.

Instead, her decomposing body was pulled out of the river last Friday afternoon - three kilometres away from where she disappeared almost a month ago.

Many spiritualists also agreed that Tebatso was still alive and was being kept safe so she could be turned into an inyan-nga.

They were just waiting for the big come-back after rituals in the river ...

Even experienced cop divers and their sniffer dog could not find Tebatso ...

Residents of Botshabelo also tried to help, making it their job to visit the river every day.

But in the end, said constable Consolation Mokoale, boys at an initiation school near the river noticed a terrible smell and saw many flies ...

They found little Tebatso's body there ... trapped by reeds next to the river and mud.

These articles are about the incident that occurred last year of a girl child who died on the Klein Modder River. The first article is before the child was found and the second article is after the girl was found.

# Coins to appease the kganyapa!

DAILY SUN FRIDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2010



Inyangas praying at the side next to a river where Tebatso Make fell in and disappeared.  
Photo by Kabelo Thabanelo

By MATSEKO RAMOTEKOA  
THEY'VE been searching for nine days for Tebatso Make (11), who disappeared from the banks of a rain-swollen river.  
Many people fear the little girl has drowned.  
Others say she's been taken by *kganyapa*, the giant river snake!  
Yesterday, hundreds of people from Botshabelo, near Bloemfontein in the Free State, joined inyangas, prophets, church people, the ANC Women's League and initiates from circumcision schools to hold a ceremony to appease the creature...  
Tebatso was on her way from school when she crossed a bridge over the Klein Modder river not far from her home...

The prophets, inyangas and sangomas claim the young girl is being kept safe by the great river snake, which wants to turn her into an inyanga!  
So they pleaded with people to stop gathering at the river as they are irritating the *kganyapa*...  
The traditional healers threw R1 and R5 coins into the river yesterday as a peace offering.  
Only silver coins were welcomed as it is believed that these will tame the heart of the snake.  
White candles were also thrown into the water.  
■ Meanwhile, police divers arrived at the river again and went ahead with their search.  
But young Tebatso is still missing.



This article explains what one of my interviewees Mr Mohleloane said when explaining how do people know when they are spiritually gifted. This article explains dreams and how they can be related to ancestry. I used it to verify what was said by him.

### THE DREAM:

A WOMAN dreamed she was in a house in a rural village where her father grew up.

She was in the company of her four siblings, including one who is now deceased. She saw herself playing with them in a place where firewood was stored. Then she saw some silver coins there. She picked them up but a medium-sized, multi-coloured snake emerged! It had black, red, yellow and green stripes. Everyone ran for their lives... the snake chased the dreamer.

When it got hold of her it rolled itself like a belt around her waist - with its head looking forward in a position to strike at anything that interfered or got in the way!

### THE MEANING:

THIS is a dream that calls upon the dreamer to stop delaying and heed her calling.

It means she is being chosen to be an heiress of all the ancestors from her father's family.

Her ancestors are also guarding against any harm that may be caused to her.

She also has a hidden gift to help heal other people - and she needs to explore it in order to appease the ancestral spirits that have chosen her.



# Newspaper Articles

MPAII 1346

MALIKA 48

LOWE MALIKA 512  
• Lower Malika

LIKATLONG 25

PLATRANT 497

SEPANI

ALPHA 489

Likhatlong

MOEDERSGIFT 51

BOURDILLON 1877

VALLE 1006

MAMENO 16

UITKYK 435

Vadersgift 1438

WUK 1016

OMLOOP 1005

BESEMKOP 1808

VADERSGIFT 250

GH'S POST/276

DIEFFONTEIN 1865

PAARDENKOP 799

RAMALITSE 22

KARNDRIJF 2642

Paardekop 1471.3

Paardenkop 26

WELTEVREDEN 109

BOSPLAAT 2207

Bosplaas

MOROKKO'S VLUJST 1259

PALMIETPONTJIN 67

STVELD 1240

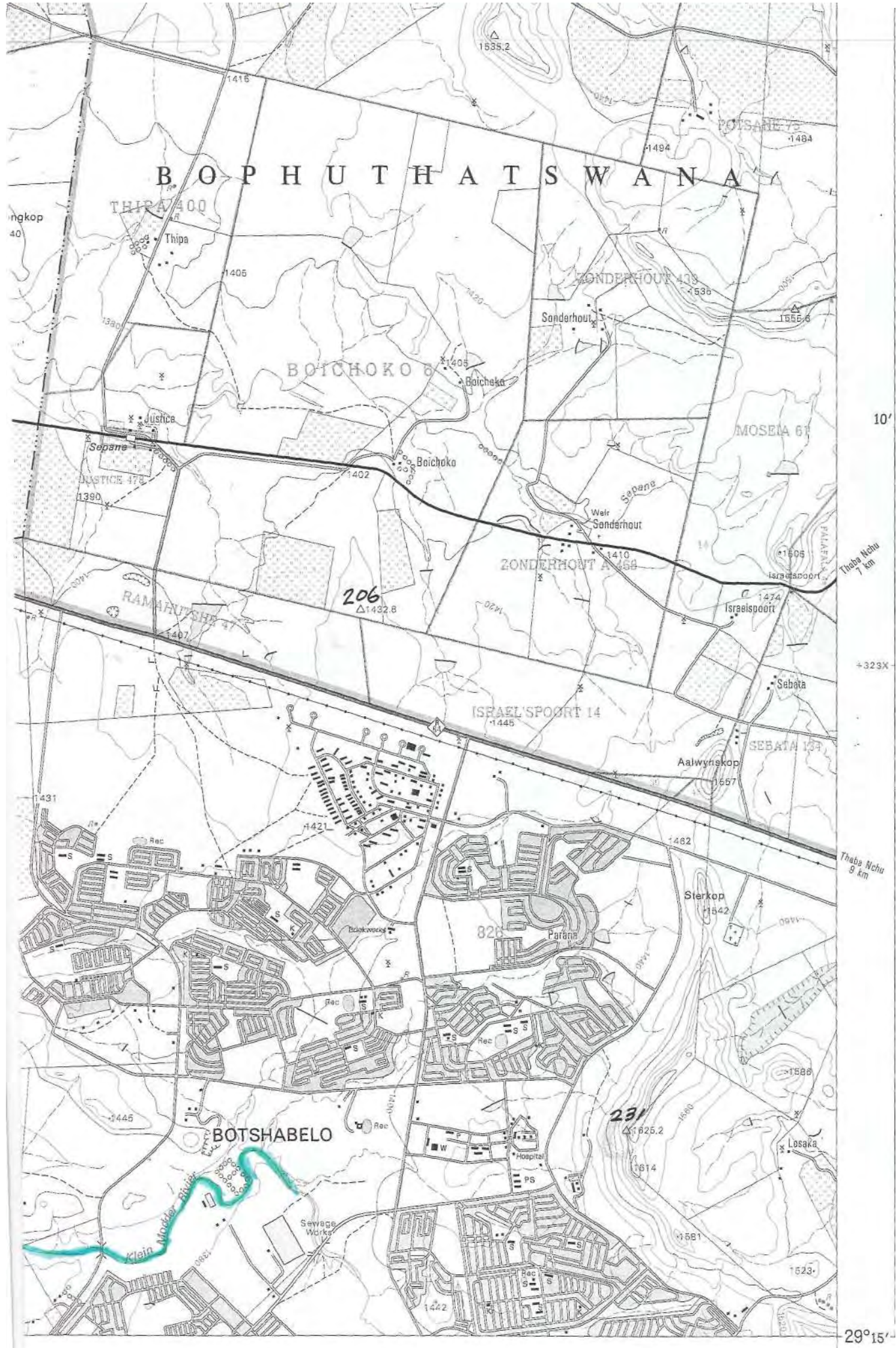
MOROKKO'S VLUJST 2235

RUSTDAM 983

Opasstap  
40 km

vlt

This map is used to show where the Klein Modder River is situated.



10'

26°45'





# PICTURES OF THE KLEIN MODDER RIVER



Moleboheng at Klein Modder river

MS Miriam Jeje did not want to be taken pictures because of understandable reasons.





CHONISWA TUMBANE



Ms Radimo



Myancela

## INTERVIEWEES



Clr TB Nthejane (Speaker)



Mohleloane

# Pictures of interviewees



Grandmother

# FAMILY MEMBERS



My Sister



Mother

Pictures of  
family  
members

# Appendix

## Index

1. Pictures of family members
2. Pictures of interviewees
3. Pictures of Klein Modder River
4. Map of Botshabelo
5. Newspaper articles
6. Corrections from tutor
7. Notes



# APPENDIX

The most important thing I have learnt from this project has to be the value of religion and tradition in people's lives. I have learnt religious tolerance as I did a lot of research on other religions. I have also learnt more about rivers as a Geography learner I'm taught that they cause floods after heavy rain but it is factual that they do more good than bad.

No place holds mysteries, myths, stories, Gods, Creatures and dreams like a river. It is a definite significant place of worship.

The most important thing I have learnt from this project has to be the value of religion and tradition in people's lives. I have learnt religious tolerance as I did a lot of research on other religions. I have also learnt more about rivers as a Geography learner I'm taught that they cause floods after heavy rain but it is factual that they do more good than bad.

No place holds mysteries, myths, stories, Gods, Creatures and dreams like a river. It is a definite significant place of worship.

“it is a must, Jesus was baptized on a river so should we” this was said by MR Mohleloane, an apostolic priest. This practice sets African churches apart from other churches like the Roman Catholic Church where people are baptized in a church not a river.

It's very important to know if you have a calling or not because people believe that these deaths might be a result of ignorance or not been aware. Other reasons are:

- Person shares spirit with an initiate, who has spent time under water
- Looking straight into the eyes of a water snake
- This reason is mostly said by the elderly, they say when you have psychic power you are more at risk.

The spirits of the waters, the people believed to live on river especially on the waterfalls and the Living water are the things that make rivers unique from any other landform.

### **SNAKES RELATION TO WORSHIPPING**

#### Snakes in religion

In religion snakes have been described as regenerative power, God of good, The Devil, a sun god, a God of death.

Snakes have definitely been associated with water especially the myths about the primordial ocean being formed of a huge snake in Ahi vitra in early Indian myth. It is believed that rivers had snake Gods, that is why in Hindu, snakes are perceived as Gods. One of those snake gods was called Untekhi, Which is described as the fear some water spirit of the Missouri river which is situated in the USA. This clearly shows how snakes play an important role in the belief system of many people.

I am sure that you've heard me mention the water snake which plays a vital part in African spirituality. The water snake mythology if I may say goes back to the hunter-gatherers and khoi khoi people's days. As we know now that the san people are famous for their Rock art, they painted a large snake in their rock art. We all know that these people's art on rocks has become a reality for example, Colonisation, the dominance of white people in Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Can we say that this snake is real because for now it is categorized under Mythological snakes. The san people's paintings resulted to be relality, can this creature also be real.

A water snake is described as a colorful and shape shifting snake so it can catch people. They say it kills by stabbing its victim with its tongue, it removes a person's brains by inserting the tongue into the victim's nose and sucks out a person's blood, and this is what happened to the victims who died on the Klein Modder River. Water snake also seduces women and takes them underwater for copulation. This statement made me ask myself, how can a snake have sexual intercourse with a human being, ladies and gentlemen this world is full of mysteries. This can also be a reason why the majority of victims who die on the rivers are women.

#### Snakes in tradition

I am going to clarify my case on how does a snake relate to worshipping. You have heard me say that Water snake plays a vital part in African spirituality especially in traditional healing that is why Mr. Mohleloane says that a healer can never be trained where there is no water snake. Snakes like the Nerodic sipedon and Anacondas are said to be water snakes but a water snake is said to be a southern African snake. These snakes are found in South America and they don't even have the characteristics of a water snake. A water snake is said to be an invisible snake to

ordinary people with no special powers but all of us can see Anacondas, we even watch them on TV.

Because of the mystery surrounding them, some people have even considered them as spiritual snakes because they are hardly seen by anyone that is why other people say that if you mistakenly see one of these snakes you will be jinxed your whole life. And just when I thought there is one water snake I am told that there are various water snakes with characters that differ. The **mirror snake**-this snake is said that it always has its mirror on its head all the time and some even say it makes Diamond-like eggs. It is believed that it is situated at the Tikoe lodge in Virginia near Welkom. The second one is called Kganyapa, it is believed to live in Qwa qwa in the free state. Somewhere in Qwa Qwa, there is a place called Mount exhaust where darkness is always surrounding the area day and night. Others say because the snake can't be seen when it comes out of the river/mountain the place becomes misty so that no one can see its face. Most sangomas are named after this snake.

**Mohokare river** in Lesotho, this snake is very dangerous that there is even a warning sign of it when you get near the river and there are many stories about this snake like the one of it crossing the roads at 3:00am every morning and no one ever drives at that road on 3:00am. So here, ladies and gentlemen, it is said to be the river that tests the strength of traditional healers. Where the weak one's will fade with the waters of the Mohokare river but then again some people say the whole thing of spiritual snakes is just an exaggeration. They say that these snakes are just normal snakes that live under water. And yes, some will call them "urbanized society" but ladies and gentlemen, we should also look at the fact that these people are basing their beliefs on what they have never seen, what they've only heard from stories or their grandparents. So my critical question will be, do these people believe on what could probably not be existing or on a myth?

The **Klein modder river** not only having positive aspects about it like any other river world wide, it has also brought catastrophe to residents of U section, this river which has two meanings of its name...some believing to be called "Little woman's river" or "Small mud river" in the year 1988 22nd February was the year that put this river on the local newspapers. There could only be two explanations of why the catastrophe emerged, geographical and traditional. Some say that it was because of heavy rains that occurred days before the tragedy. The former councilor of U section says that the blame was to be put on the Apartheid regime, he says that no land-survey was made to determine if the place was suitable people to live on it. In addition, he says that there was no infrastructure to decrease the harmfulness of the river for example there were no bridges built to cease the water from moving to people's places. During this disaster that can be described as floods, people lost their animals, vegetation, homes were damaged, lives were lost and some even lost their jobs because the water blocked the roads. All this mentioned above could fall under geographical factors but people like Ms Radimo would disagree with this, they believe that it had to do with the water snake leaving or it being angry. She says that when the snake leaves the river, it causes a lot of damage to the area near it.

This research contains many things, things that will never be seen, that will never reach a consensus because as I am standing in front of you today I can't say a water snake is spiritual because some one else will say "no its not" a tradition healer will say "its spiritual but not magical, we can see and touch it" and the other one will say "a water snake is a myth" so I can never conclude on that because tradition and religion is all about believes, values, morals and rituals. That is why we have Hindus, Jews, Christians, Rastafarians, Buddhists and Muslims because their beliefs are different.

He became the chief whip in the year 2000 in the mother district. Became a speaker of the local government. He was also the advisor of the Mayor's <sup>and</sup> Chairperson of finance of IDP. ~~\_\_\_\_\_~~

- I → Integrated
- D → Development
- P → Planning

Transcripts

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[WWW.PUBLICEYENEWS.COM](http://WWW.PUBLICEYENEWS.COM)

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18 September 2010

Title: Spirits of the waters

Daily Sun

26 August 2010

Title: Dream world

19 November 2010

Title: Coins to appease the Kganyapa

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