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History of the Levana Customs.

Knowledge. Our ancestors say that the sun is the eye of God which was placed by Him when he created the earth and heaven. He planted it at a position in which it would give light to His people at daytime. There is a chariot with white horses and a driver, and they are for the purpose of drawing it from the East to the West. When the sun sets, it is when it has gone into the third sea where there is a glass heaven. In the night time it passes underneath the earth so that it may rise again in the morning. When the sun is very hot, it is said that it is when its carriage has come down near the earth. It is said that the sun is a man because it gives much more light than the moon.

The moon. The Batswana say: The moon was made by God to become the light at night so that the people may see where they are going. It is the small sun and it is a woman because it is the small light. When it is new moon, it is said that it is seen by the baboons. When the sun has become eclipsed, it is a sign of something that will happen. Otherwise they say that it is a sign of the death of a chief. If the moon has become eclipsed, it means war or a fearful death.

Stars. Stars are small planets which are peopled and where agricultural operations are taking place. It is said that they are people who refused to come to live on this earth. Like the moon, it is said that this planet, the star, was a person who was disobedient, who collected firewood and brayed skins on a Sunday. God then took him up to go and bray skins there so that he may be given no time to rest. When there was an eclipse of the moon, people accumulated their food to a very great extent because there was this suspicion that war or famine would come upon the people by surprise and find them without food. When it is new moon, and it is in such a position as to have its horns or points facing upwards, it is said that it means that there will be no rain. If it is in a slightly slanting position, it is said that it is pregnant of disease. If it is very much on

one side, it is said that it pours out rain. If it is in a slanting position, it is said that it pours out disease. The days of the months are known and are even counted so that the months of winter, autumn, spring, summer, may be known, as well as the time for ploughing, weeding, for eating the first fruits for harvesting, for castrating bulls, for apportioning goods of deceased persons and for burning veld grass.

According to the Bathaping tribe, it is a taboo for women and girls to go to the cattle kraal when it is new moon. Girls should not play outside when it is new moon also. Children again should not gaze at the moon when it is full moon and is white, because they will urinate in the house. The stars have names which the Betsosana have given them. There is a star which appears when the sun sets. It is called the evening star 'Kopa-dilalelo' (Mars). It is a large star which appears at sunset in summer. 'Mmanake' (Venus) is one of the well-known stars. It appears when the streaks of colour and light show at dawn, in the month of June. Its appearance means the burning of a sprout which is still green, which was not burned up by the 'Selemela' (Pleiades). The star burns up anything which is green when it comes. The 'Selemela' is a mid-winter star. 'Selemela' is a group of stars on the northern side. 'Selemela' appears when the summer sets in. It disappears in winter. When it sets, the plants become singed. 'Dikolobe' (The Three Sisters). They are three stars which follow each other. They are called 'Dikolobe' (pigs) because they follow each other in a line like pigs. They are in the north side like 'Selemela'.

'Molaoasouimo' (The Milky Way). It indicates the movement of the times. Mphatlhalele (Venus as morning star). This is a large star which appears at dawn.

'Dipabi' are yellow animals which lie on the South. In winter they cross each other, the one coming to settle where the other one was. The big one is a sign of winter and the other

is a sign of summer. The stars which shoot in the night time are a sign of the death of a chief. It is when the small ones find that the big ones are out that they get afraid to light and then they burn themselves up again. A star which is unknown when it appears, is a sign of sound health or great famine.

Thunder. It is said that it is the wings of the birds of heaven when they are flying and playing. Lightning comes from the sea which has hot water. 'Serogabalopo' is a sign of rain, when it is to fall and when it is to stop. 'Sedumedi' (meteor) is the tottering of the foundation of the earth. Rain it is said, is water from the sea. What draws water so that it rains is the clouds of the rain which falls. Rain is the clouds and it is God who makes it to rain. People cause rain to fall by praying for it and there are also (rainmakers, witchdoctors) who make rain. They cause it to fall. If a widower marries a widow in summer, that causes the rain to vanish. If an estate is apportioned in summer, rain won't fall. If a house is demolished in summer, rain will not fall. When widowers commit adultery, it will not rain. The Betswana say that bushes should not be drawn when it begins to rain. You must not go to milk cows when it is raining. The Betswana say that the earth was created by God and the sea is the termination of the earth. The mountains they say, is where the earth was raised. The rivers it is said were made by God who caused the waters to flow into the sea, and caused the fish to live in them. Where the lakes came into existence it is said, is where depressions occurred so that the animals might get water to drink. In the same way, rain-water pools were also made by God. The fountains they say, are the eye of the earth where water is near and it broke through to above the surface and it flowed. The largest river in my country is Val river (Noka e Tshetlha). There is a fountain at Rabotshe and one at Phokoje.

Fire. It has its origin from the spirits who lived in the

caves. It is not well known who the maker of it was. It is kindled by means of the wood of the 'mokurubana' tree and 'kono' or the sawdust of the 'mokurubana'. Fire was kindled by the process of rubbing. Fire is made everywhere and there is no place where it is regarded with dread. Fire is not taken out of the house at night and it is not taken into the house at night. There is wood which is never used for fire e.g. 'morobe' bush, 'thibadimolekane', 'motlopi', and 'modiboloka'. It is not right to allow milk to drop on to the fire, a person too should not blow his nose on to the fire. If fire is made of wood, the wood cannot be taken to strengthen another burning fire without having them first spit upon. One may not jump over the fire, and it cannot be put out with water by a person who was not born in when it was raining. There is fire which is kindled by the ordinary persons. Another fire is that of the spirit which cannot be seen, which nevertheless burns a person. When boys sit at the fire, they sit on their haunches, the bigger ones fall on their knees. The men sit on stools. Girls sit with folded legs and bigger ones stretch their legs. Women sit on skin mats with their legs folded or with their legs stretched.

Smoke. Smoke is water which dried up on the wood or in the intensity of the fire. Anything that comes in contact with water, and that which water enters into it, originates from the water. A goat is water because its hair grows on the goat, and because its flesh is water. If you burn it, it emits smoke because water produces smoke when it feels fire. Smoke is the steam of the water when it feels the fire. Iron does not emit smoke because it has no water. Stone does not emit smoke because it is not water. If you hammer a stone, sparks are thrown off because it is dry. That is a sign that fire is made of stone.