

0.1-16

Infancy
Birth.

K32/22

A pregnant woman: The law for a pregnant woman is that:-

1. She should not laugh at deformed persons.
2. She should not get shocked at the sight of ugly things.
3. She should not get excited though offended.
4. She should not remain sulky.
5. She should not look at horrifying animals
6. She should not be astonished at seeing cripples.
7. She should not go over ridges.
8. She should not look into fowl nests.
9. She should not look at pups or kittens before their eyes become opened.
10. She should not drink water standing up, she should sit down. She should not swallow it all but keep some in the mouth and then spit it out.
11. She should not continue to sleep during the day even if she feels drowsy.
12. She should not peep out of the house to see people. If she wants to look at something; she should go out and look at it without peeping. She should not take a sewing needle to sew. She should not carry heavy burdens.

Further, the Batswana say:-

1. A pregnant woman should not eat fish.
2. She should not eat meat which has muscles.
3. She should not eat eggs.
4. She should not eat the meat of a spring hare.
5. She should not eat beestings or the first milk of a goat after it has brought forth its young ones. She should not go to the cattle kraal or to that of small stock. She should not make exclamations of regret or reproach such as "Ao!" "Khoe!" "Ijaa". "Bonang!" (Behold!). Her duty is to cook, to sweep,

to wash clothes and food vessels. She does not hide her condition of pregnancy. She informs only her husband and not other people. She stays at her home till the expiration of a period of seven months, then she goes to the home of her mother if she is to give birth to her first child. She continues to have carnal intercourse with her husband during her pregnancy. When a woman is pregnant, she is treated more carefully than other women. Even if she were not properly treated, she will receive good treatment during the period of her pregnancy. She is not beaten if she does anything wrong, it is maintained that she is not all by herself because of the influence of the child. She is not to be offended either, if the people realise that she is annoyed, they humble themselves. The Batswana, when they call her say: The great woman. The Basotho say: The son of Mokgetshane. She does not eat hard food, she is given nice and soft food. If a pregnant woman wants food which is not usually eaten, it is right that she should be provided with it. Anything that she desires must be given her. A pregnant woman is wonderfully strong, she cannot die easily unless she is bewitched. She does'nt just die. People do not like her actions. She does things intentionally and without taking care whether she is doing wrong. She perceives things which are a mystery to others. If she has dreamt something it is known that it will happen. If a woman conceives the husband should restrain himself from having paramours. He should not go about in the night time. He should also refrain from having arguments with this woman. It is impossible to know whether the pregnant woman carries a male or female child, except only by signs. When a pregnant woman is made to hate men and is caused to like women, that is to say she carrying a male child. When she is caused to like women, that is to say she is carrying

a female child. Yes the doctors do sometimes know, but not all of them. When a woman bears male children or female children only, after the afterbirth has come out it is turned inside out and buried in that condition, she will then give birth to a male child if she had been bringing forth female children in succession. But besides that she cannot give birth to either a son or girl as she wishes. If a woman is pregnant, and she gets frightened on seeing a lion, the child takes after it. If she laughs at cripples, the child takes after a cripple. Sometimes however, she gives birth to a deformed or dumb child purely by accident. She also gives birth to a child whose head is like that of a fish because of the fact that she ate fish when she was pregnant. What is impossible is that if a woman committed adultery with another man, and became pregnant, the child would never take after her husband, never! If a man has carnal intercourse with a woman once only, she becomes pregnant all the same. Many a men deny responsibility. On being questioned as to whether he never had carnal intercourse with the woman, he says, "I had intercourse with her only once." The men then say, "How many times did you think you should in order to impregnate her? There you are my man, your secret dealings have been revealed". Carnal intercourse on one occasion only is sufficient. The dates of carnal intercourse and of giving birth are known, the days are always counted. The time of confinement is known. A pregnant woman drinks medicines to make the child strong and so that delivery would be made easy. She also wears amulets for protection against people who might tie knots to stop delivery. A pregnant woman gets massages to cause the child to lie properly and not to cause its mother to suffer, she bathes.

A bandage is tied round her stomach. The Batswana never make clothes beforehand for the child, they say they are not certain that it will live or it will be still born. They make them after it is born. The place where a woman is to deliver a child is not prepared before she is examined, but medicines are prepared beforehand.

Miscarriage: We have stated that a pregnant woman should not do hard work. It is to avoid miscarriage. She should not be beaten as that too could cause miscarriage. She should not drink strong purgatives as that also causes miscarriage. These are very important conditions which should be observed. If a man causes a pregnant woman to do hard work and she miscarries, he is made to pay a beast. If a pregnant woman miscarries through failure to observe these conditions and goes about in cold water deliberately disobeying these conditions, she is driven away and taken to her mother's home. It is said that she has a bad habit. Her people beat her and open both her ears. Sometimes miscarriage comes through her being bewitched by enemies so that she may not bear children. The Batswana say that a child begins to be a living being when its mother is in her fourth month. When a woman commits abortion by the use of medicines, that is said to be a taboo. The medicine for causing a miscarriage is 'kgapumpu'. This act is not made known to the people. The aborted matter is buried at the ash heap by women in the night so as not to be seen by men and children.

Childbirth: A woman gives birth in her own hut where no one else enters. She delivers the child on a mat or a skin mat. Strangers do not enter where a lying-in woman is. A reed is stuck in the thatched roof of the hut of a lying-in woman. People are informed that so and so has a child. When a woman is lying-in, she stays with her mother only.

The husbands people should not be there because her mother, if it is her first child, would then be giving her instructions. Her husband at that time, would be far away from her. The person who helps at childbirth is a one who is known to have knowledge in midwifery. If she delays in giving birth, she is given 'kgapumpu' to drink. If a woman has difficulty at childbirth, the cause is that during her pregnancy, she was in the habit of peeping into the nests of hens, drinking water in a standing position, and not spitting it out, being offended, scolded, sleeping all the time, peeping out of the hut without going out and having been bewitched. When such difficulties arise and medicines are used, God is also remembered and prayers are said. If a woman dies before delivery, nothing can be done to help the child to live. If the woman dies after the child is born, it is bathed and having been given 'letsoetlane' to drink is wiped to dry. After the child is born, the navel is measured to the knee and it is cut by its mother, the woman's mother then folds it and binds it on the stomach. The afterbirth is buried. Because of the people always quarreling, it is rubbed with earth until it vanishes and that earth is thrown away.

Twins: Twins are human beings. They draw out the heart in sympathy because they cause great hardship. Twins are treated in the same way as other children. The children who are cripples are loved just like those who are fit because people are never cast away. If a woman bears many cripples, it is when she is married by her cousin or the child of her paternal uncle or the child of her younger mother's sister. Children of one blood affinity may not marry each other.

After Childbirth:

After the wife has given birth, she is confined to bed for five days without getting up. In the third month, she goes out of her hut but she does not mix with all the people. A month after getting out she then mixes with the people. Strictly speaking, a lying-in woman sees her husband three month after childbirth. The husband does not look at the child to make sure that it is his unless he has a suspicion. If there is suspicion, the husband's mother will be the first to see or the child will be judged if it does not resemble the husband's people by its features. The laws which are well known are: That strangers may not handle an infant child if they know that they are not straight. She may not take a journey with the child unless she has made incisions on it. She should not go with it without giving it medicine in powder for protecting it against tracks so that it may not be sick. If the child's mother comes from a distant place, she should milk herself on to the navel before allowing it to suck because the milk is warm. People should not offend her, that would cause the child to suck bad milk. The child should drink the mother's milk only. When it has completed six months, it should drink milk. When a woman has a child who is still sucking from her breast, she should restrain herself from having anything to do with men and lasciviousness. The child is doctored with medicines. It is doctored by being given a small bag containing charms to wear as protection against convulsions and spoors so that it should not be shaded by other children or people who have bad medicines. The danger which is encountered by an infant and its mother is pains in her breasts. The child suffers from convulsions, another danger is to cross trails and to be affected by ailments. When a child is taken out of the house for the first time, a feast is made.

Infants.

When a child is taken out of the house for the first time (when its mother is taken out) it is shown to the mother maternal uncle, he examines its external organs of generation. It now begins to laugh and if it is a boy, he says, "I will eat big pieces of meat, my sister's child is going to the cattlefold". If it is a girl, he says, "Let the cattle come into the yard of the house, they should not refuse to enter the cattlefold of my sister's child. When the child has completed three months, it is then that it is taken out of the house and shown the full moon and a doleful ditty is sung thus, "Koor — koor-r-r-r! There is the moon. It is then said it is in the second month after confinement. Its name is proclaimed by its grandmothers and grandfathers. Its mother takes it and if it is already big, she carries it on the back with a skin (thari). This skin for carrying infants on the back is made of a spring-buck skin, it is brayed by the maternal uncle of its mother who sews it and makes it into a carrying skin. The child is properly looked after by being bathed, being fed from the breast, being medicines to drink and by rubbing. If its mother has no milk, it is given cow milk. When the child is still young, he is given beads to wear round the neck. Incisions are made on the crown of its head so that it should not be affected by the ailments of other children. When her mother sets out on a journey, she smears it with medicines for protection so that it should not be affected when crossing the tracks of bad people. When a child has a stiff back, it is supported so that it should sit properly. When it has grown to the stage of crawling, something is made for it to enable it to walk. Bigger children are made to acquaint themselves with it so as to play with it. Dangerous sicknesses children are: Convulsions, diarrhoea, 'motanyego' (swelling of veins of stomach and head) whooping cough, spours and feverishness, chest trouble, weak

eye, teething, constipation, and "mmutloane" ().

The medicine for curing convulsions is the female. Syringe tree, and a red and white aloe. The medicine for diarrhoea is "potadikgaganeng" 'mothati' and 'loetsane' (the orchid *Eulophia foliosa*). The medicine for spours is the syringe tree. The medicine for whooping cough and swelling of veins is the thistle and the kiesieblaar and a species of creeping plant. For feverishness and constipation is 'letsoetlane'. For chest trouble is the 'kalamus' and 'phale' and 'serokolo' (herb used as a purgative and for whooping cough). For weak eyes is 'seletsane'. For teething is beads only. For 'mautloane' is the skin of a hedgehog and the urine of a rock-rabbit. When a child's front top teeth are coming out it is said that it is teething or the front top teeth are coming out. When children are teething, they are given medicines to purge the stomach. A woman allows the child of her sister to suck from her breast when its mother is dead or has no milk in her breast. The first child is named after its ancestors, it is said that it should not be sworn at by anybody because it is named after an ancestor or departed spirits. One who swears at the child will pay for the white bones for digging them up. When a child comes out of the house for the first time after its birth a great feast is made for it. We have stated that a child is named after its ancestors. Its name is given by its grandmother or grandfather. Sometimes it is named Pule, because it was born while it was raining. Sometimes he is given the name the man of the rain or Germany if it was born during the German war etc. A discussion takes place however and the name is to be given is decided upon, and the name which they all like is agreed upon. Another name is a pet name like: Radijo, Maboijane, Madinkoane and Amosesane. The parents of the Batswana children are fond of pampering their favourite children. They give them names which are not

theirs and sometimes they forget to give them their real names and they become known by pet names. Sometimes they say a child is Kuli because it looks like a Coolie. Chaina because it looks like a China. But there is never any evidence of that. The name of a child never changes, not till it dies. It is however given names of origin when it is grown up. If it is according to the proper order and according to Tswana custom of giving their children names, there is a great variation. The parents give their children favourite names of honour. Like another child, it is Sekukuni. When they pet the child they say: The Sekukuni (stalker) of his mother, he tread on his heels as he stalked listening to the footsteps of spies.

Creeping forward

Looking on all sides

Without seeing

Being startled by plants where they stood

Yet he had seen from whence they came

And where they were going

And he made a report to the men.

People of the same age-group give one another names such as these: "Monkanaaka" (my mate) 'mophato' (of the same age), oa thaka le molekane oa me (My chum of the same age) male or female. At war or hunting expedition men of the same age address one another thus: Men, men of the same age group, chums. Acquaintances say, my friend, and if it is a stranger they say: My fellow man, woman stranger or Man stranger etc. A man gives his wife a name and he says: Mother of cattle, mother of the boy, or my wife or my fellow woman. A man gives other husbands' wives and says: Masepentle, Mamokime or any other name he may give.

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