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Short account of the Kgatla Tribes.  
Bakgatla.

It is Senya, a Mokgatla who relates as follows:-

The Bakgatla are those of (1) Mosetlha. (2) Those of Kgafela. (3) Those of Mmatsau. Senya of Kwantle of Kowe says they themselves are of Mmanaana, and their tribal totem is the Flame of Fire. The Bakgatla are those of Kgafela and are divided into two tribes:- The Mmanaana tribe and the Mosetlha tribe.

When those of Mmanaana broke off from those of Kgafela, they tied up a red and white coloured female calf and they went away leaving it bellowing. When the separation of the Bakgatla of Mmanaana and the Bakgatla of Kgafela took place, the chief of the Bakgatla of Kgafela was Mokopu. The Bakgatla of Mmanaana are the children of Makaba. They separated with those of Kgafela at Sefikile. Senya lives at Dibokoloding, the village of Ramatale. He heard everything from his grandfather Kowe of Kwantle of Mokgatla. They were called the Bakgatla of Mmanaana because they separated with those of Kgafela whose chief was Mokopu of Tshukudu. The chief of the Bakgatla of Mmanaana became Kgatlhe. The Bakgatla are Betswana. It is stated that the chief was Kgatlhe. Seepapitso Mosiga, Hato, Kowe, Kwantle of Kowa Kalaote of Kwantle Mpele, Kalaote (2) Kwantle (2) Pilane and Malete. The son of Seepapitso was Mokopu. He was of the small wife. The child of the great wife was a girl. The girl upheld the chieftainship of the Kgafela tribe. But the tribesmen of Kgafela rejected the chieftainship of a female child and so they went away. Senya's birth place is Kanye. He says the Bakgatla people are a very big nation. They separated and formed many tribes. They came from the direction of the East to settle in the West. They crossed the Limpopo river but those who were the greater section remained on the other side of the river. The greater section of the Bakgatla are those of Mosetlha. They live in the Waterberg district of the Transvaal. They separated with those of Kgafela during the chieftainship of Mosetlha their great chief. The people of Mosetlha are divided

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into the following tribes: (1) The Mosetlha section (2) The Kgafela section (3) The Mmatsau (4) The Motsha section (5) The Mmanaana section. These five tribes are called the Bakgatla and their totem is 'kgabo' (a small tan coloured monkey). The names of the chiefs of Mosetlha if placed in their order are these: Mosetlhe, Sikwane, Tlhabane Mmusi, Sikwane, Thipe Matsapane, Ntšhaope, Diratsagae and Ntšhaope (2). There is no full report about these chiefs except the last ones. Ntšhaope the first became chief of the Bakgatla of Mosetlha a little before the wars of the Matebele of Motselekatse, when Motselekatse entered the country now called Pretoria. Ntšhaope fled to Mmapela's territory and remained there until Motselekatse left that country, and then he returned. Ntšhaope fought with his brother Thipe, he captured him and he was stabbed with an assegai in the same way as an ox is stabbed. He then sang his praises and said: "Young wildebeests, who are you to be speaking at all? If I the old wildebeest is not speaking! Since you were born, who is it who ever begat Mmamongweng?" After him, his son Matsapane became the chief but he died in a very short space of time. The Thipe, the second became chief. He was also a chief for a few years and the chieftainship of Mosetlha never became a mighty one because of the chiefs dying in a short space of time. Those of Kgafela became a strong nation, their totem is 'kgabo'. It is said that at first their totem was the flame of fire, and their praise songs ran thus: "Sedibelo mollo, morula o kgothi kgolo, Bana ba Setafana sa moruleng, sa hudua metsi ya halala". Nevertheless, the 'kgabo' which they honour very much is a little animal which lives in the forest of the river and in the mountain. It is not known what the cause was for their separation. It is sometimes said that they separated because they had disputes over the chieftainship. They separated during the chieftainship of Kgafela the younger son of Mosetlhe. Those who followed Kgafela chose him to be their chief and Kgafela is the first chief of these Bakgatla. Maselelane was a famous

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warrior in wars. When it is spoken of him, it is said: "Motsana molwela ditlhare mosenya kgakathe tsa bangwe."

The son of Kgafela is Tebele. Molefe is Rramothibedi of his monkeys. Pheto was waging war at home, fighting his paternal uncle Makgotso. Mokgotso went to help the Bakwena at Segeng when they fought with the Bangwaketse. When he was in the Bakwena country, he invited Legwale, the Bakwena chief to go and fight against Pheto the son of his elder brother. There was heavy fighting in which Legwale was captured. The Bakgatla spared him, gave him cattle and sent him back to the Bakwena country. Chief Phetoe sang his praises and said:

"I am Ramphojane of the Bakgatla,  
The rhinoceros who is by-passed while standing  
If you don't pass me you cause weeping  
You portend your mothers to have their hair cut."

The chiefs of the Kgafela line did not rule for a long time because they killed each other at home. There were great wars waged by the nations in which they also took part. In these wars many of Pheto's tribesmen were killed and the chieftainship fell into the hands of Pilane, the younger child of Pheto who was not of the chief. Pilane fled from the Matebele and went to the hill of Mmamodimakwena. From there he went to Mmapela in the Bapedi country. Moselekatse sent word that Pilane should return home. But Pilane sent his younger brother Kgotlhamaswe who made himself chief when he got back home. Pilane fought with him. Kgotlhamaswe ceased to pay tribute to his elder brother Pilane, and on the return of Pilane, Pilane fought with him. Moselekatse said that Pilane was wrong in killing his younger brother Kgotlhamaswe. It was then that Pilane went to Mmapela for the second time. When the Matebele had gone further away, Pilane returned home. Then the exalted chief of the Bakgatla sang his praises and said.

"I am Pilane ..... Tau ya mahiri."

The Bakgatla had no chief during the time that Pilane fled to the Bapedi country. They scattered all over the country. Then

Molefe who was the youngest of Pheto's sons made himself a chief. Molefe brought the Bakgatla together and ruled them. On the return of Pilane, he peacefully handed over the chieftainship to him. The Bakgatla multiplied and became strong during Pilane's rule. The Boers came to Rustenburg but they did not give Pilane any trouble. The Boers gave the mountains near Rustenburg the name of Pilansberg. The Matebele of Motselekatse came again and dispersed the Bakgatla, and captured many of them. One of them was Kgamanyane the son of Pilane. Later Motselekatse allowed Kgamanyane to return home. On the death of Pilane, Kgamanyane became chief of the Bakgatla. He ruled for a short period and for fear of being troubled by the Boers, he took the Bakgatla to the Bakwena country. They came to the Bakwena country in consequence of an ancient treaty between the Bakgatla and the Bakwena. It was a result of the assistance they gave the Bakwena during their fight with the Bangwaketsi at Segeng. He did not find perfect place in Setshele because he wanted the Bakgatla to pay tribute to him. After the death of Kgamanyane the chieftainship was taken up by Lentšwe, his son. After the death of his father Lentšwe fought with the Bakwena. After a long time he made peace with Setshele. The Bakgatla tribe has two sections. There are those who are at Morolong in the Transvaal. Today ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ they are ruled by chiefs who are not real chiefs. This is said by Senya, a Mokgatla. He says that the Bakgatla are to be found all over the country today some do not know any longer where they originated.

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