

26(10)

AT3/7/24

K32/27

NAQA.

XO

0.1-1b
Tr 1b

Kxatha marriage law & customs.

According to the law of long ago, a young man did not just marry anyone, he married the child of his mother's younger sister. It was then said, "the cattle are coming back to the kraal".

When the Mfatha tribe lived at Tselotha, a certain man whose tribal totem was a dikker married the child of his paternal uncle, and the cattle thus went back to the kraal where they originally belonged.

According to botho custom, at Masapela's of the Mfatha tribe, and among the Bakgatla tribe of Mankou, if a person did not marry a woman in his paternal uncle's family, he had to marry his own cousin just as another man did, whose tribal totem was an eland and who was under the chieftainship of Masapela who married his cousin the child of his maternal uncle.

At Mfatha's, a young man was instructed to go and propose marriage to the child of his paternal aunt; it was said that that was the right person to be his wife.

If before marriage, a girl to whom a young man was to be married was seduced by another young man, he ceased to be her lover, but if this young man misconducted himself, when the "magadi" were paid, beast was paid as well for damages.

They do not do that today especially when a girl has been seduced by a young man. They demand a beast and a calf before the "magadi" so that if the young man does not marry the girl, they have nothing to do with him seeing that he has paid a beast for damages. But if the "magadi" have already been paid, even if the girl becomes seduced by him, the young man pays no further damages. According to Sotho custom when he has paid 'magadi' it is finished, the girl's

parents already know that he is the lover of the girl. If after this young man has paid a beast for damages, he again impregnates the girl, he pays nothing further according to Sotho law which is known to all the Basotho.

On the wedding day, you will find the old men and old women singing dance tunes this way, the young men and young girls dancing that way.

Their dance tunes go this way:

stepe stepe a o spere naladi ?

One that is sung by boys and girls is:

"Ga matswale, ga matswale
Ga matswale byalwa bo fedile".

(At my mother-in-law's the beer is finished).

Another one: "Go lelle, go lelle, go lelle, go lelle."

" : Serontafole se tshwana le Sofia
Serontafole se tshwana le Sofia le Sofia.

Another one: "Mmeki kakakaba, ga e sa le mmeki kakakaba ke mmeki matšila."

Another one: "Ko ko ko bulane sengelele."

Another one: (Ngwetsi utlwa matswale, ngwetsi utlwa matswale).
(Laughter-in-law, obey your mother-in-law)

Another one: 'Bo-mme le bo-kera irelang morena kgosi ya lona e ye tla.'

(Mothers and fathers serve the chief your chief is coming).

Another one: Monyadi thuntsha dithole
Monyadi thuntsha dithole
Go — iye, go ledi, go — iyee go ledi
Go ledi go — iyee.

Another one says: (Senaolele, senaolele, senaolele se budule,
Go ledi senaolele senaolele se budule).

Another one says: (Joo — joo rothwane e lebile lapeng
La bo — kgarebe; Joo — joo rothwane e
Lebile lapeng la bo — kgarebe).

These dance tunes are sung by young men and young women, the young women beat large empty tins with their hands, others accompany them by the clapping of their hands.

Those sung by old men and old women. You will hear them saying: (Aphe, aphe o bona ke tshwereng, ka latse jiatla ka morago) (Give me, give me, what do you see me having while I am holding my hands behind my back).

Another one: (Monare wee sekhweng tlhaka le maripa le jelwe ke nare sekhweng goga — goo, goga — gogoo sekhweng)

Another one: (Ramailane ntonolele nose, nose ya ya ntoma ya nnonobetsa).

Another one: (Selo se mo ntlung eso, se matlho matala selo se mo ntlung eso se matlho matala).
(There is something in our home
There is something in our home
It has blue eyes).

Another one: Amatswale wa mo ntlhoi,
ntlhoi — ntlho — ntlhoi — ntlhoi ntlhoi
ntlhoi — ntlhoi ntlhoi — ntlho — ntlhoi.
e kare a ileng byalweng byalweng
byale — byaleng byale byaleng,
byale byaleng byaleng — byaleng,
dintshe tsa o fitlha tlhogo
tlhogo tlho — tlhogo tlhogo tlho — tlhogo
tlhogo tlho — tlhogo tlhogo — tlhogo.
Emang, emang, emang e-emang
emang e — emang ema ema.

Another one says: (Motseng wo re yanga wo reya ka tlhogo ya monyadi, motseng wo re yang woo — woo re ya ka monyadi).

(To that village to which we are going we are going with the bride room's head).

A nother one: (Amawana wa lela sewediwana wa lela thee motlhaleng wa basetsana thee).

But this tune came from Amangato long long ago.

All these songs are still sung by the members of the fatlha tribe during weddings, they know them and even the Bakgatla of Amakau sing some of them during weddings.

Now when a bride and bridegroom are sitting down and are given instructions, one person throws kaffir corn over them. The husband is given instructions and the wife is given instructions to obey her husband, to cook food for him and to do his washing. The husband will be told, "You are a man today, you will discuss your matters with other men; look after your wife, hew firewood for her, and plough gardens for her. If you are tired of this woman, do not kill her but bring her back to us".

Now the friends of the bride and bridegroom will give them gifts in fowls, money and crockery.

After the wedding the husband will learn to build his house alone. According to law the mother-in-law should respect the house of her daughter-in-law until such time as the daughter-in-law shall have had a child born to her.

According to the custom of long ago, men established friendship, one man said to the other, "Your child will be married by mine". These two men then came to an agreement. The next day the young man's father sent some people to go and knock at the door, they being accompanied by the eldest of this man.

When they arrived at the girl's home they said, "Help us to find our little dog." The father of the girl then called the maternal uncles of the girl to inform them.

WGM

The girl's people would then drive them angrily away, saying, "Go away we have not seen any little dog here, we have no little dog here".

Now those who had been sent to propose marriage will return to their home to tell the young man's father that they were unable to find the little dog. He will say "Go right there and look for it."

After a little while those who had gone before go again to pursue their search. On their arrival, they repeat the same words. The girl's people drive them away again if they like. They go back again to tell the young man's father that they cannot find the girl. He will answer and say, "It is at that very place, look for the little dog".

Not long after that, they go again. On the third occasion perhaps the girl's people do not send them angrily away. The girl's father now says "I am not the only adult person. Go away and I shall in the meantime call the girl's people together".

Now the father of the girl calls her maternal uncles together and they all discuss the matter. If they all agree, an old woman is called, she is given tobacco to grind and when she has done that, she puts the snuff into a snuff box. She must be an old woman who knows how to grind it very well. Then when the snuff has been prepared a person is sent to take it to the home of the young man, a man or a young man is sent with this snuff box to go and ask for the 'lobola' cattle. When the snuff box is brought to the young man's home, his relatives are called together to come and open it. They are his maternal uncles.

His maternal uncle will offer a beast for the opening of the snuff box. After it has been opened, they snuff it and after a while the 'magadi' for the bride are driven to her parents' home. Perhaps eight head of cattle. According to the custom of the olden times, eight men must drive them along.

If the cattle are five then five men must drive them along.

This statement is confirmed by Sekati whose tribal totem is a beast and one who saw this with his own eyes. These men will drive the cattle for the 'magadi' to the home of the girl.

A young man whose totem was a beast, offered nine heads of cattle when he was marrying a girl whose tribal totem was also a beast here at De Hoop. The Molapisi people whose tribal totem was a crocodile, said, "No, let them bring another one. The young man whose tribal totem was a beast went to fetch another one to make ten, an even number. According to custom if a person had driven out cattle in that way, he was said to have taken out the 'magadi' in the right way.

The people of Makau and the Ndebele tribe of Masebe offered a snuff box in this manner when they asked a woman for marriage. When the Bakgatla tribe of Makau lived at Marula and at Alhatlhane, they also did the same thing. Here also, when a young man of the Matšila sought marriage with a girl of the Molapisi people, tobacco was ground into snuff in a similar way. When the cattle of the one whose tribal totem arrived at the village of Molapisi, it was still early in the morning; whistles were blown and there were shouts of joy. Beer had been made at the home of the girl's parents as well as at the home of the young man's parents. When these ten 'magadi' cattle arrived, one was slaughtered and eaten.

Long long ago, when the Mfatlha tribe was at Moseka and the Matšila were at Ntsosole where they were separated by the Bopetla bolla — koma mountain, during the chieftainship of Bobosi I the son of Nawa, at the village of Matšila, when the headman was Setsomelo, they did not rear cattle, they got cattle which came from Mmapela. They paid their 'magadi' with hoes of the olden times which were known as 'ditshadibe'.

An old woman Amaphatsana of the Matšila whose tribal totem was a crocodile and who was married to the Mfathla people assures us that when they lived at Mosoka, she was married to Kaperi of the Matšilas her 'magadi' being three hoes which were bound with the skins of koodoos.

The Muculele tribe of Mfathla paid 'magadi' with the hoes known as 'ditshadibe' in the olden times. Amaphatsana Matšila who died near Delabela (Warabaths) even showed me this kind of hoe (setshadibe) with which the 'magadi' were paid in the olden times.

The custom of the ancient times is still followed by the Bakgatla of Matšila. The 'magadi' cattle arrived very early in the morning at the home of the daughter-in-law and the people struck the ground with their feet (a sign of joy). The old men whose tribal totem was a beast stamped the ground with their feet when the cattle of one whose tribal totem was a beast arrived at the village of Molapisi at Dilokong (De Hoop) very early in the morning. After some time, according to the custom of the olden times, the young man's father called a friend of his child and sent him to go and fetch the daughter-in-law home. He would say to him and to those accompanying him, "Go and fetch the water calabash, the wife is old enough now".

According to ancient custom among the Basotho tribes here in the Transvaal, a wife was selected while she was still in the skin won on the back by her mother for carrying her. She was selected by the parents of the boy who betrothed her by paying the 'magadi'. If this child happened to die before marriage, the 'magadi' were returned. As the cattle had previously been received by the girl's parents, to-day they have come to fetch the wife. Those who have come to fetch her will sit outside on their arrival and there will be shouts of joy and people will go to meet them and carry their baggage for them.

WGM

When those who have come to fetch the daughter-in-law enter the house, a mat is spread out for them and they sit on it. Now a beast is slaughtered and the meat covering the ribs belongs to the father-in-law of the bride, when they go away, they take it along with them. Porridge will be cooked for those who have come to fetch the bride and it is served whilst they are sitting on the mat. The one who brings the food will walk on her knees to give them the food. When she has placed it in front of them, she will break the porridge lump and eat a piece from the top, she will also, take some of the meat and eat it. The intermediary and the friend of the bridegroom and those accompanying him will all eat. According to the law of the Ndebele tribe of Laka Masebe and of the Bakgatla tribe of Mankau, the same thing was done. The next day porridge will be cooked and made into lumps with which the bride is to take with her, beer will also be made and drunk with the young man's people.

When the bride went to the young man's parents' home, according to the custom of old, she was accompanied by women and young women. If in the course of their journey, she happened to come to a water course and the bride stood still, those who had fetched her or the friend who was sent to fetch her, had to take out a shilling or more, then the bride would proceed.

The bride will reach home, the party bringing with it the meat covering the ribs that belongs to the father-in-law of the bride, the father will then call the bridegroom. When he comes along, he points the wife out to him; he is also satisfied with her. In this matter he was not allowed to argue with his father. The husband will now live with his wife. At a certain time the wife will return to the home of her parents. On her coming back again she will come carrying a pot of beer.

266

When an intermediary has gone to fetch a bride, after the mat was folded and after meals, the bride came forth wearing a dress studded with beads. She then smeared the intermediary with fat all over his body while he was seated. After the smearing, she would then be given instructions such as "Obey your husband". They also told the intermediary that, "If he is tired of this woman, he should not kill her but bring her back to us". The women and young girls now begin to take the bride home.

If a man married two or three wives, he first paid 'magadi' completely for the first one, he married her thereafter and bore children with her. Then he married the second one. The second wife knew that the first wife was her senior and that it was her duty to respect her. After a time he could marry the third one. The third wife also knew that she was the last of all the others in the kraal of her husband. The one whom they were compelled to obey was the first wife who was in fact their mother.

If they are the wives of a chief, the first two are the mothers of chiefs in the kraal. If it was the first wife of the chief, on her arrival at the chiefs' place, the following morning fire will be fetched at the chief's place by all the people because she is the wife who is going to beget a chief. According to the custom of the olden times, on her arrival, all the fires are extinguished.

One chief in Selaka's area married a wife of the Bakwena tribe of Matsipi, she was his first wife who was to beget a chief, but this, wife of the Bakwena tribe did not bear children. The chief then inspanned a mule wagon and took her to the home of her parents.

According to Sotho custom if a woman does not bear children, she went to marry another woman at the home of her parents so that she could come and bear children for her. Her husband did not object because they first discussed the matter and came to an agreement.

WOM

When this woman who is married by the chief's wife arrives at home, beer is made and consumed. She is given her house. All the goods of the husband will belong to the children of the woman who is married by the wife. A matter like this once happened among the people Musakau according to the testimony of a woman of the Matšilae whose tribal totem was a beast.

When a woman did not bear children, she was not driven away. This woman was allowed to go and marry another woman at her peoples' home. She paid nothing for marrying her, she took the child of her mother or of her paternal uncle if she did not have a sister.

END S 266