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Bafokeng history - Rustenburg.
A History of the Bafokeng origin.

Dr. M.J. van Warmelo, Government Ethnologist,

Sir,

I request you to put in the history of the origin of the Bafokeng in your collection of the history of the olden times of the Bafokeng. According to our custom, the custom of the Africans, the history, customs, wars and all the events in the country, are told us by our fathers. They were told then by their fathers great grand fathers at the kgotla of the tribe. I still remember the stories that we were told by our fathers of two regiments the Maloma kgomo and the Matsaakgang. They used to tell us that we the Bafokeng tribe originated from Egypt. We were taken out from there by chief Tsukulu and we came to make our home at the place known as the Sahara Desert, the waterless country. He died there. After chief Tsukulu, Nape became our chief and we came down to South Africa, this side of the Malike river, on the East at the mountain of Nape which is named after him. We found the Barolong and the Wilibili-a-tlaga. They were on the west of us. We found the Barolong being under chief Morolong. They seemed to come from the central part of the country of South Africa at Nyassa. In those olden times of chief Tsukulu, the Missionaries put it to about the time of our Lord Jesus Christ, at the beginning of the 1939 years.

After that Mutle became the chief and after Mutle came chiefs Sekete I, II and III. After that came chiefs Liale I and II. During the chieftainship of Liale II, the Bahurutse sent an order to the effect that the Bafokeng should bring a tribute of bulls as proof that the Bafokeng were under the government of the Bahurutse. The Bafokeng objected to this and stated that they were greater than the Bahurutse. The Bahurutse sent forth an army to fight for greatness, claiming that they were entitled to eat the first fruits first. fierce x battle was fought in which the Bahurutse were conquered.

The question of eating the first fruits first came to an end. The Bafokeng ate the first fruits on their own without any interference. But the Bahurutshe continued to be the first to eat the first fruits as far as other tribes were concerned, and not as far as the Bafokeng were concerned. After that Ramoroa I II & III became chiefs in succession. After Ramoroa III, Sekete of Ramoroa III became chief. He was Sekete IV come down the generation of the Seketes. This chief, Sekete IV became the most powerful chief of all the chiefs who ruled before him. His spear was too heavy for all the tribes and smaller tribes that were in his vicinity. The lions were roaring and had him surrounded. He conquered the Bapo, Bamatau, Batlokwa and the Bakgatla and he became the greatest of chiefs whom no one could molest. After the chief of chiefs Sekete of Ramoroa III, Theethe of the great chief Sekete IV became chief. Theethe also assimilated his father. His spear was too powerful for all the tribes, great and small, in his neighbourhood. During the rule of this great chief, his brothers, Nameng and Noge, attacked him with their regiments whilst they were at an initiation ceremony. They drove him out of his kraal and he went to ask for assistance in Bopeliland, from chief Sekoati of Thulare. Sekoati came with all the chiefs from Bopeliland. When they arrived, they broke up the Bafokeng, made them captives and took them to Bopeliland. This is where this proverb originated which says: "Fire kindle quickly, the Bapeli have arrived". After the Mapeli war, Noge made himself a chief by force and a great rebellion broke out on account of Noge and Nameng. Whilst the Bafokeng were thus fighting with each other, they were attacked by the Matebele of Moselekatsi of Machosane from the flank and by surprise and Moselekatsi drove the regiments of Nameng and Noge far away and Nameng was killed. Noge crossed the Vaal river and he and his followers reached Thaba Ntsho. When Noge was running away he met his elder brother Tautona Theethe Monageng this side of the Vaal river. Noge killed him. After that the chief became Mokgatle of Tautona Theethe. Chief Mokgatle went to ask the assistance of the Boers at the R Vaal river. The Bafokeng and the Boers

rooted up the Matebels of chief Moselekatsi from the Bafokeng. Chief Moselekatsi fled to Bolaoane in Rhodesia. Chief Mokgatlé collected the Bafokeng wherever they had fled. He became a great chief over large and small tribes that were near him. After that Tumagole the son of Mokgatlé became chief. After that the chief became August Molatlegi Mokgatlé of chief Dumagole. Again during the chieftainship of A.M. Mokgatlé, there was another separation amongst the Bafokeng. Mr. David Mokgatlé of chief Makgatlé rebelled. The great chief A.M. Mokgatlé drove him away from home together with his followers. They crossed the Kgetleng river. Today the chief of the Bafokeng is James Mamotshane of chief August Molatlegi Mokgatlé. They speak Sekwena. They live at Bochuana near the Yphana mountains, at the Moromogolo mountain, above the Lirepotsane hill, this side of the Malikoe and Kgetleng rivers, in the Rustenburg district.

The large villages of the Bafokeng are:

- 1 Phokeng
- 2 Luka up to Chaneng
- 3 Maralleng at Kannana
- 4 Tlalagali at Kgaphamali.

The population of Phokeng is about 14,000 men only.

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