

O. 1-15

K 32/22

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Bathaping history and other data

Tr. 1b

Bathaping.

The narrative of Mankela the Motlhaping says:

I am a Motlhaping in the true sense, further I belong to the family of Galeshewe the Bathaping chief. My father who was Kolosa together with his father ontshonyane at the battle of Dithakong. I was already big at that time and I saw a lot of things. We, as we were still boys at the time, we ran away with the cattle, we were coming from the Vaal river. While we were driving the cattle along, we heard shots from the guns of the Boers, raining down like the hail upon us, we gave up the cattle and ran away.

When the war scattered abroad after the Boers had captured the property of the Bathaping, we came back to Griqualand.

When we were still young people, we had our laws, the Bathaping also had laws which were never broken by any of the children or the residents of the village. There were many councils at the Vaal River. There were the Bathaping of Maldi and of Tlhōbōlwana. The Barolong of Modimanyane-a-Mogeng and those of Maogō of Tata and their grand-father Gopepanyane.

That time was after the battle of Bra-Galase, it would have been about 1887. We were Xians but we were still abiding by the laws of our fathers.

The kraals were built with poles of bush trees and thorn trees which were bound with ropes made of the inner bark of trees. The work of building houses was done by the women, they invited others who were their neighbours to come and help them.

A house was thatched with grass and stripped off reeds. The thatching was done by women who used to make beer and slaughter big goat which drew out grass seeds.

A village of the Batswana who are the Bathaping was not built without anything being done. A doctor was hired to doctor the foundation of the house. That doctor came with calabashes and horns of animals full of medicines mixed with fat of ravenous beasts. He planted pegs smeared with medicine used as a charm. He would then demand a two horned beast.

A wizard could not come into the village with his witchcraft, because if he did not know that it was protected with charms, he would stand fixed and motionless like a pillar. But if you talked to him, he would be set free.

The Bathaping did not share everything that is eaten with children. When a beast was slaughtered, this was done at the cattle kraal by men only; they skinned it, stamping the skin with pestles. It was prepared for supper it was the meat of the lower bowel and the meat below the anus (amotung) which was to be eaten by old men and old women. They cooked beef steaks at the cattle kraal, they were eaten by men only. Boys ate "metsadiso". Metsadiso is the small stomach and the heart. They cooked them at the cattle kraal, and invited boys from other kraals to come and share it together. The bowel was food for women only. After the men had eaten the beef steaks, they said:

"We rejoice they are not ours fathers, let them die in large numbers, those that belong to the fathers of so and so".
The men of the village said: "We can rejoice they are not ours, it is nice when dead, when alive it is sour".

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