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Tswana Songs

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An Account of the Native People.

Songs of Triumph, Songs and Concerts.

Tswana songs do not have very many words, their music is just humming: HO-HE-HE-HIA, and the women do the trilling, the men and young men play on instruments of reeds and quills of wild turkey. Their instruments are: 'kunka' or bora (bow). 'Bora' is a musical instrument made of wood and sinwe. It is like a bow. It is played by means of a splinter, the bow being placed in the mouth. The 'kunka' is played by Bapedi native doctors. Other musical instruments are horns, the whirr-whirr and 'kgamparuru' and they also play the drum made of ox skin. The horns were played by men, they made a great sound and it was very sweet indeed. 'Se-
(bull-roarer)
buruburu' (the whirr-whirr) is a riem which is fastened onto some woods and reeds are strung in the riem. The riem is beaten with a small stick and this makes a great sound like a whirr-whirr. The bull-roarer has its players who are good at playing it. The 'kunka' is played by doctors and others hum and say: Ho-he-he-hia. The instrument known as 'sekgamoururu' is played together with the bull-roarer and they render a nice melody and the men and women sing to the accompaniment of the melody of the instruments. These musical instruments originated with the Batswana of the olden days. They were not borrowed from other people. The ox horns are played by young men at the boys' ceremony of circumcision. These instruments are played at the feasts and functions, the young girls sing with the women, the young men hook the girls by the arms and they dance. They did not however know how to sing the words to alternately but they knew how to play because they played for the wedding dance known as 'setapa' with the knees and

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another known as 'seharantlhatlha'. There were no people who were learning to play these things, but they were taught those men who held initiation ceremonies. There were no people who visited each other to discuss the playing. There were no leaders in the playing of these instruments. There were men who taught boys in the circumcision school to play the 'kganoururu' and the 'kunku' and the bull-roarer. There were no people who went about playing for reward.

Songs: These are the songs which are sung: 'Setapa', 'koretere', 'seharangtlhatlha' and 'sakhoe'. Koretere is sung by men and women hooking each other by the arms. The 'setapa' of the Bakgatla is also sung by men and women hooking each other by the arms. Seharangtlhatlha is sung by young men, young girls and children. Sakhoe is sung by boys. These songs are sung at weddings and at other games. The 'setapa' of the Bakgatla is sung at the initiation ceremonies of the boys and of the girls.

The songs or songs of triumph of the Betwana are these:

Ra di noa ka khudu ea ga Motsemme

Ga e na tshoba

Re mo jele ngoana, ba mo rathotse diegeege

Barathudi ba bonoa ke magoka goka

Ra di noa ka khudu ea ga Motsemme means; we have eaten and drunk and we have had enough.

Ga e na tshoba means: We did not know where to take the food.

Re mo jele ngoana means: We have enjoyed the feast of our child.

Ba mo rathotse diegeege means: They had prepared plenty food for him, the people enjoyed it and ate to their satisfaction.

Barathodi ba bonoa ka magoka goka, it means: Those who eat gifts are seen by carrying out all the duties at the wedding feast. This song is sung at a wedding feast by women. Another one goes like this:

Thamalala mosha, bolelela tukgoi
 O re sadikho e o tshoere! O tshoaretsoe eng?
 O tshoaretsoe sepehele, a nole khadi.

This one has no meaning at all.

The song which the women sing when they are ploughing goes like this:

Thimo telele basadi
 A re namiseng, tema megoma
 Ea basetsana ba tsela ea kgothu.
 Kgomo tona e tuludi koa kgosing.
 Others join in and say:
 Hi-ha-he-he-ho, tema telele dinkgo dia bela, basadi
 gagamatsang dikhiba mathekeng.

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