

0.1-1b

K32/27 S. Naqa. 1/5

ser 559 (35)

Custom regarding personal names of Person's Names. Mfathla Tribe.

Tr 1b

The name of a child is something of great importance according to the testimony of Makwane the old woman of Makwane whose totem is the duiker. In the olden times the naming of a child was not done indiscriminately. When a male child was born it was given its grandfather's name. Take Bohosi II for an example. He was given the name of his grandfather Bohosi I. He was named Bohosi when Bohosi I was already dead and he prospered under this name. It is asserted that if a child is named after a deceased person who does not want his name to be given to the child, the people who are still alive will notice by this child becoming ill that it does not prosper under that name. The grandchild of Mmanorake Moina at Mfathla's was given the name of his maternal uncle Mansere, but his grandfather Mmankomoto who was already deceased refused that the child should be named Mansere, he said the child should be named after him. He then sent illness to Mansere. The child became very ill, so ill that the hope of its recovery was given up. Its grandmother Mmanorake then called in Maseesole a Shing'an doctor, and said to him, "tell me what is wrong with the child". The doctor took divining bones and threw them on the floor and said, "The child has no disease. It is the name of Mansere that makes it ill. Mmankomoto its grandfather wants it named Mmankomoto". At that very time, they did away with the name of Mansere and called the child by the name of its deceased grandfather, Mmankomoto of Moina. For three days they called the child by the name of Mmankomoto, then the child got up, raised its head and recovered from its illness. / if the name of a deceased person is forced upon a child against the will of the deceased person there the spirits are, they would

2

fer 559

even die. If a child who is given the name of a deceased person died at birth, the miwives used to say that it did not prosper under the name of the family of its people. In the olden times, according to the testimony of Mmakwena, the old woman of Makgwane, when a child was named after its grandfather or maternal uncle, beer was brewed and the child's namesake slaughtered a sheep for it, and people ate the meat and drank beer and dancing took place. The owner of the name praised his name at the time he named the child. It is said that if the owner of the name is still alive and one of his family gives a child his name without getting his permission to do so, the owner of the name has the power to make a case against him for using his name. He has the power to demand a beast as payment from those who named the child after him.

The son of Ramabele whose totem is the duiker and who lives at Lebotlwane was given the name of Seŋiya by the owner of the name Seŋiya himself, an old man of Matlhabe who lives at Monyagolé. Ramabele, a man of the Nawa family became interested in the name and Seŋiya ordered him to bring the child to him when it was grown up, and he would have something slaughtered for it. Ramabele did so and took the child to Seŋiya, and a sheep was slaughtered for the child.

Today at Mfatlha when a person is given a name, no beer is made for him, a goat or a sheep is slaughtered for him. Beer is made for a child when it is taken for the first time after birth, out of the house to see the light of the in the yard of the house.

3

Children are named in many ways. If a person enters the 'lapa' of another person at the time when a child is born, the visitor is told about the child's birth. The visitor will then say, "That child is nobody else than

ser 559

myself". The child is then given the name of the visitor. The same thing happened with Jona Tsiane. When he was on a visit to Matamong near Lebothwane, on arrival at the house of a Mokeatla of Mofetlha, a male child was born. The child's parents there and then named the child Tsiane. They said that the man of the Tsiane family, whose totem is a quiker, brought this child to us.

When a child is born, the first thing which the midwives do is to ask the name of the child from its mother, if the mother does not know, the midwives will look for the name of one of the child's relatives or from the mother's relatives. A child cannot be named indiscriminately, the name must be of his people or from one of his people.

Mfatse is the wife of Kgwebane. Now when she was born by Kgwebane, she was named Mfatse the of the Matsieng family; Mmamotseusi Matsieng came and made a row about the name of Mfatse at the Kgwebaner. She wanted to know how the name of Mfatse came to the Kgwebaner. The Kgwebaner, who are the children of Mogapi has not a word to say.

Molekeng the daughter of Nawa was named after her grandmother who is the mother of Mfatse; the mother of Kgwebane that is to say Molekeng was the mother of Mogapi Kgwebane. According to Motshusi of Tsiane, when the midwives had difficulty in naming a child, they used to go to the men to ask for a name. The men will discuss the matter and find a name at the home of the wife or husband/or at the home of the child's mother and then name the child. When Foti the wife of Tsiane whose totem was the quiker gave birth to a female child at the home of Lintshi, she was asked to name the child but was unable to do so, then the midwives suggested an old woman by the

M.

name of Salerong the wife of Nawa who was married at the  
Taisane by Motshuri whose totem was the duiker. She  
said that that was the grandmother of the child and she  
was Matlang. The child was then given the name of Matlang.  
The child prospered under this name and it grew.

Other names are given to children in accordance with  
current events. Mmatlou the wife of chief Ramabele Nawa  
at Mfatlha, gave birth to a son who came after Radibeo.  
Ramabele said this one is myself Ramabele, but the child  
did not prosper under that name and it died. Mmatlou  
gave birth to a son again and this one was named after  
its grandfather Magagola who was still alive. The child  
did not prosper under that name also and it passed away.  
Then Mmatlou, the woman whose totem is a crocodile and who  
is married at Nawa's, at the chief's place, gave birth to  
the last born son. This last born son nearly died at  
birth, fainting and recovering and so on. The Mmatlou  
gave the child the name of Kgaugelo ya Modimo (God's mercy).  
it is given no other name. Even now, the boy's name is  
Kgaugelo because it was born with difficulty, when nobody  
cherished any hope.

Sello the son of Mafora, the child of Jim Mafora who  
lives at Leribane, was born at the time of weeping after  
the death of his grandfather. That is why he was named  
Sello.

When Thabo the son of Titose Nawa whose totem is the  
duiker, was born, there was a wedding and the people were  
rejoicing, then his mother said his name was Thabo.

5 Marumo the brother of Modise at Lebotlwane/says that  
when he was born it was during a war at Seleka's. They  
were fighting with Kgama. That is why he was named  
Marumo (appears).

5 conf

Motla-ka-leso, a woman of the Ntlati family, and wife of Mmushi Nawa was born at the time of her father's death. Then the women said that her name was Motla-ka-leso.

Other names have a meaning of painful matter, names such as Ithhobogeng, Bafedile. A male child of Miriame Maruping was named Bafedile at Mfatlha. It is said that there was a justified reason for giving it this name. When the boy was born, its father and its brothers and grandmothers and its grandfather were dead, then Miriame a woman whose totem is the duiker gave him the name of Bafedile.

Today at Mfatlha children are often named after European doctors. If a European doctor helped a woman at the birth of a child, the child is named after that doctor.

When Tau the younger brother of Nawa whose totem is a duiker, and who is the child of chief Mogaola, was born by Madi the wife of Mafora who is married to the Nawa family, it was during a war when the Bakgatla of Mofatlha entered Tsidileane. A man came forth running and said, "The lion is here". Kôbê the younger brother of Ntlati denied and said "It is not a lion but small lion". At that time Madi gave birth to a son, then Mogaola said the child's name was Tau-e-mo.

END S. 559.