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translated copy

Customs regarding personal names

Personal Names.

K32/27

S. Naba

of Mfatlha Tribe. 1/5.

The name of a child is something of great importance according to the testimony of Mmakwena the old woman of Makgwane 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 Mmamorake Moima at Mfatlha's was given the name of his maternal uncle Manase, but his grandfather Mmankomoto who was already deceased refused that the child should be named Manase, he said the child should be named after him. He then sent illness to Manase. The child became very ill, so ill that the hope of its recovery was given up. Its grandmother Mmamorake then called in Naselesele a Shangaan 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 Manase that makes it ill. Mmankomoto its grandfather wants it named Mmankomoto."

At that very time, they did away with the name of Manase and called the child by the name of its ^{deceased} grandfather, Mmankomoto of Moima.

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 where the spirits are, they would even die. If a child ^{who} is given the name of a deceased person died at birth, the midwives used to say that it did not prosper under the name of the people's family of its people.

In the olden times, according to the testimony of Mma Kwena 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 Lebothwane was given the name of Sešiya by the owner of the name Sešiya himself, an old man of Matlhabe who lives at Monyagole. Ramabele, a man of the Nawa family became interested in the name and Sešiya 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 Sešiya, and a sheep was slaughtered for the child.

Today at Mpattha 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 sun in the yard of the house.

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 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 Mokgatha of Mosetha, 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 duiker, brought this child to us.

When a child is born, the first thing which the midwives do is to ask the parents 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 name of the Matsieng family; Mmamotsusi Matsieng came and made a row about the name of Mfatse at the Kgwebanes. She wanted to know ^{how} what the name of Kgwebane Mfatse ~~came~~ came to the Kgwebanes. The Kgwebanes, who are the children of Mogapi had 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 they ~~had~~ ^{name} the midwives were 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 ~~at~~ home of the child's mother and then names the child. When Foti the wife of Tsiane whose totem was the duiker gave birth to a ^{female} child ^{at the home of} ~~to~~ Dintshi, she was asked to name the child but was unable to do so, then the midwives suggested an old woman by the name of Halerong the wife of Nawa who was married at the Tsianes by Motshusi whose ^{to} 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~~ with current events. Mmatlow the wife of ^{Chief} Kamabele Nawa at Mfathha, gave birth to a son who came after Radipeo. Kamabele said this one is myself Kamabele, but the child did not prosper under that name and it died. Mmatlow gave birth to a son again and this one was named Magagola after its grand father Magagola who was still alive. The child ~~also~~ did not prosper ~~&~~ under that name also and it passed away. Then Mmatlow, the woman whose totem is a crocodile and who is married at Nawa's, at the chief's ~~very~~ place, gave birth to the last born son. This last born son nearly died at birth, fainting and recovering and so on. Then Mmatlow gave the child the name of Kgauzelo ya Modimo (God's mercy). It is given no other name. Even now, the boy's name is Kgauzelo because it was born with difficulty, when nobody cherished any hope.

Sello the son of Mafora, the child of Jim Mafora who lives at Seribayne, 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.

Marumo the brother of Modise at Lebothwane

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 (spears).

~~When~~ Motta-ka-leso, a woman of the Ntladi family, and wife of Mmusshi Nawa was born ^{at the time of} her father's death. Then the women said that her name was Motta-ka-leso.

Other names have a meaning of painful matters, names such as Itthobogeng, Bafedile. A male child of Miriame Maruping was named Bafedile at Mfatlha. It is said that there was a justified reason for the 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 Mogagola, was born by Madi the wife of Mafora who is married to the Nawa family, it was during a war when the Bakgatla of Moseletlha entered Tsiditsane. A man came forth running and said, "The lion is here". Kôbé the younger brother of Ntladi ^{denied} ~~refused~~ and said "It is not a lion but small lion". At that time Madi gave birth to a son, then Mogagola said the child's name was Tau-e-mo.

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