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Lekgothoane's praise poetry: an aesthetic discourse

Abstract:

In this article, Shika Kgomedi Lekgothoane's artistic poetic works collected in 'Praises of Animals in Northern Sotho' (Van Warmelo, 1937) are assessed on three parts: a biographical sketch, a text and a reader in order to give a map to negotiate his creative skills. Lekgothoane is a traditional praise poet. His praise poetry falls within the delimitation of nature, which is not associated with leadership as is expected in this type of poetic work. The article proposes that nature as recited by him, enables the reader to understand fully the whole universe including its living things (animals). This indicates that Lekgothoane's environment is the place where cultural and traditional behaviour, customs and humanity are taught. His poems thus evoke a spirit of nationality.

Introduction

This article focuses on three aspects of the praise poetry of the Sepedi poet, Lekgothoane, namely (a) the author (b) a text and two reasons which justify the existence of a text and (c) a reader. It is important to begin with a biographical survey of the author as this will provide a map to negotiate the written works. In such succinct discussion about the author, an attempt is made to determine the poet's motivation and passion for writing in the preferred style and to delve into his personal background, his experience, as that often determines his understanding and language.

The author

A succinct discussion about the author determines his motivation and passion for writing in his preferred style. His personal background or experience determines his understanding and his choice of language. This information therefore allows a deeper understanding of Shika Kgomedi Lekgothoane's praise poems. This discussion delves into his biographical history and authorship and attempts to assess how the two tend to determine the final product of his praise poetry.

It is difficult to determine the birth date of Lekgothoane – he did not know the date himself, as native births in the 1800s were not faithfully recorded. Kgomedi Lekgothoane was born at gaLekgothoane, GaMolepo, in the Polokwane area of the Limpopo Province. M.J. Mangokoane claims that he taught with Shika Kgomedi (Manyame) Lekgothoane for a period of approximately six years. Mangokoane claims that Lekgothoane was probably born around 1882 as he was of the same age as Mangokoane's father. These are the only credible accounts of Lekgothoane's birth that have been found to date.

Lekgothoane's praise name was Manyame, a praise name that he took great pride in – often when referring to him, one would address him by his surname or this praise name. He would recite his own Lekgothoane's clan praises many times (followed by literal translations):

*Ba re ke Manyame 'a ga Lekgothoane;
Ka patla o nyaka go betha Makgowa.
[They call him Manyame the son of Lekgothoane,
With his stick he intends to hit the Whites.]*

Lekgothoane attended primary and secondary education at a village known as gaLekgothoane. He then went on to Lesotho to further his education and obtained a teacher's diploma in 1916. He started teaching in 1917 and with his success in teaching many promotions followed. Lekgothoane did not remain at his home village for very long even though he grew up there. He lived for many years in gaDikgale where he married his wife, Née Dikgale Sekitla, and they were blessed with six children: four boys and two girls. During his teaching career he was the principal of the following schools: gaKgoro-shi, Kranspoort, Messina and Kgabalatsane (Jericho). From 1934 to 1947 he headed Onderstepoort School where his illustrious career came to an abrupt end when he met his death in the year 1947.

According to C.P. Senyatsi and M.J. Mangokoane (per communication), Lekgothoane enjoyed and loved choral music; he was also a choral musician, a choir conductor and a composer and arranger of concerts and choral songs. He was popular in choral music in his area and its vicinity during his time.

Lekgothoane had a deep passion for the Sepedi culture and its traditional beliefs and lifestyle. Remarking on this, Mangokoane makes claims that before he (Lekgothoane) met his death, he had embarked on the writing of a religious manuscript. This manuscript would have been based on the reverence and respect paid to a God known as *Hobeana* who is always associated with faith as in the traditional Sepedi God of Hope. He had called this manuscript '*Maratetšo a Badimo*' [Showing Love to the Ancestors]. Unfortunately, he was unsuccessful in publishing the manuscript; the main printing presses were all owned and run by missionaries at the time and this work was regarded as being anti-Christ. He was imprisoned because of his insistence on the printing of this manuscript (as a deterrent to other writers). The publication would have been seen as revolutionary and the Christian mission in South Africa. This project was abandoned by the author, hidden in an undisclosed place, as it was banned by the church; however the manuscript remained a burden in the author's heart for many years, with Lekgothoane keeping the hope alive that '*Maratetšo a Badimo*' would be published one day. To this day, the whereabouts of the manuscript is unknown and it is believed to have been destroyed by the then governing power.

S.K. Lekgothoane is one of the best known Sepedi traditional praise poets. It is a well known fact that he was very passionate and well read on the Sepedi culture and beliefs and took great pride in the recitation of the traditional praise poetry.

When alluding to this, Van Warmelo (1937:190) clearly argues that:

The author is a great reciter of *direto* [poems] and has composed many praise poems on various people from time to time. The *direto* reproduced here are not, however, products of his fancy, but ancient praises handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation.

He was the one of the greatest poetic icons ever produced from the Bapedi nation of South Africa and many of his works have been acclaimed by audiences, poets and writers. In 1934 Lekgothoane was asked to recite at a function organized for the visit of the Prince of Wales in Polokwane in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. His presentation was reported by remarkable, a truly unforgettable experience and this prompted great praise from his peers. Dr Moses Josias Madiba – a literary icon in his own right, composed a poem about Lekgothoane's aesthetic work entitled *Kgomedi 'a Lekgothoane* [Kgomedi the son of Lekgothoane] which was also presented at the Prince's welcome function. The poem, *Kgomedi 'a Lekgothoane*, was sent to Lekgothoane's family as a token of condolence and a commemoration of the remarkable artist on his death (Madiba-Leso, 1987:40).

The aforementioned biographical information gives greater insight into the character, beliefs and experiences that shaped the poetic and artistic elements of Lekgot-

hoane. It also alludes to the passion and dedication attributed to the traditional praise poetry of Lekgothoane. The purity of the language and how he employs it in his works communicate his desire to the reader to grasp the message in the poetry and, through it, the reader is galvanised into acting with passion and with tenacious intensity.

Lekgothoane's texts: totems and customs

In essence Lekgothoane praises nature more than the customary traditional leaders and tribes. However, an examination of poems reveals that he does not just praise nature *per se*. He praises the importance of creatures in the lives of people. He focuses on nature in relation to his people's culture and traditions. The creature he recites about determines the importance of the relationship ascribed to people's totemic behaviour. Most of his poems are related to totems, and such poems as 'Noko' [Porcupine], 'Thakadu' [Ant-bear] and 'Tau' [Lion], serve to demonstrate this. His poem titled 'Tau' [Lion] is quoted to ascertain where the issue of totemic feature lies.

Motau moxolo
 Sepopoduma a malekwa
 Mmotlana morapa pitšo
 Phaxa mangana maxolo
 Ke phaxa ya mangana a maxolo e jang bohwa le bya dingwe
 Oa baba oa baba lešokxa tau ya dilepe
 Le mampya le manonyana a thšaba xo mo thlakhuna
 Tau ya mariri a maxolo
 Sepotla ka kodu, maphoofolo a mo tseba
 Thloxo ntswerere
 Letswalo la diphoofolo
 Ledimo ropo rakweleta.
 [A big lion
 That roars afar,
 Poor creature commands gathering
 Like a leopard with big cheek,
 It is like a leopard with big cheek that eats other animals,
 You are bitter, more bitter than danger,
 And dogs and birds will be eaten by him,
 (It is) a lion with big mane,
 The animals know his deep sound
 And its big head,
 The lion is the animals' conscience
 The lion is the king of animals.]

By choosing specific language, Lekgothoane emphasizes the value of totems. Words, such as 'Motau moxolo' [A big lion], 'Sepopoduma a malekwa' [That roars afar], 'Mmotlana morapa pitšo' [Poor creature commands gathering], 'tau ya dilepe' [a lion with big mane], 'Letsoalo la diphoofolo' [The lion is the animals' conscience], clearly show that Lekgothoane does not praise a lion merely as part of nature, but as a leader who shares the same totemic praise name.

Lekgothoane personifies the lion, 'Le mampya le manonyana a thšaba xo mo thlakhuna' [And dogs and birds will be eaten by him]. The word 'mo' in '...mo thlakhuna' [will be eaten by him] indicates personification. That is, it is not it (*tau*) [lion], a thing that puts dogs and birds into its mouth, but he (*motho*) [a person] who does this action. There are further examples of personification in line 6 'Oa baba oa baba...' [You are bitter...] and line 9 '...a mo tseba' [... know his deep sound]. Furthermore, Lekgothoane emphasizes the plural to reveal exaggeration: 'maphoofolo' (animals), 'mampya' [dogs] le 'manonyana' [birds]. Instead of employing the relevant prefix of class *di-*, he applies class prefix *ma-* to show courtesy to the king of the jungle that should be given great respect by all.

Lekgothoane goes further to say:

Tau ya mariri a maxolo
 [(It is) a lion with big mane,]

The fact of the matter is that a (male) lion possesses no short mane, for it has long hairs on its neck. As a result, the lion referred to is not any lion but a specific male. Lekgothoane makes an exception of this lion so that readers should be able to distinguish between his lion the dominant lion, the leader of the pack and other lions and lionesses. Lekgothoane reveals the importance of traditional totem by describing the major roles played by animals, beasts/carnivores and birds in the lives of the local people. This shows how people revere their respective totems. What in essence, is a totem in this context? According to Mojalefa (1995:71), a totem is a wide relationship of people who are not necessarily relatives in law. Mönnig (1988:234) calls this type of relationship 'a fairly loose association of presumed agnatic kin'.

Accordingly, it will be noticed that totem is not directly linked to a kinship or to a genealogical table. The concept 'moeno/moano' [totem] derives from the verb 'ena/ana' [venerate] which denotes great honour to a esteemed person accorded such a privilege. As a result, an animal, carnivore or bird which is considered a totemic bird/creature, it is not taboo to swear one's life by it. An idiomatic expression affords an example:

Ka noko, ke bolela therešo ge ke realo!
 [I swear by porcupine that I tell the truth]

Those who share a totemic animal consider themselves as having the same roots in society. When alluding to this, Mönnig (1988:235) states:

People who have the same totem regard themselves as related agnatically, and as such are expected to render mutual aid and assistance. If two people on a journey find that they have the same totem they will immediately join one another for the rest of the journey and share their resources. If a person arrives destitute among foreign people he will try to establish if there are many groups with the same totem as himself, and will expect and is bound to receive food and shelter from them.

A totem is not a resource for an individual; it is an agnatic totem, kin or tribe's service or assistance which should be rendered mutually. It is related to heroism and courage, for example, in 'Tau' [Lion], Lekgothoane recites: 'Oa baba oa baba lešokxa tau ya dilepe' [You are bitter, more bitter than danger].

The significance of the totem highlights the importance of relationship among those who are linked by an agnatic totem, e.g., 'Babinatlou' [totemic elephants]. If one wants to know the relationship of a person with himself/herself, a question such as: "...which animal/bird do you venerate?" will be raised. A strong relationship is indicated if the two persons venerate similar totemic animals/birds. By using a totem, one can also determine where a person comes from. 'Babinatlou' [totemic elephants] are associated with power and heroism because of the nature of the animal; they are awesome heroes, 'Babinaphiri/-tlhantlhagane' [totemic hyenas/siskin] are related to agreeable phenomenon, such as in the Matlala tribe. Originally, the Matlala venerated siskin when they were still living at GaMatlala in Polokwane in the Limpopo Province. They started venerating a hyena because, to them, it symbolized positive happenings after they had migrated to Sekhukhuneland.

According to culture and tradition, the Bahlakwana/Marota tribe originally venerated a monkey. They were 'Babinakgabo' [totemic monkeys] when they left Botswana for Bopedi. When they arrived in Sekhukhuneland, however, they were intrigued by a porcupine's quill, and that is how the Bahlakwana started to venerate this animal. Since that day, they have disassociated themselves from the monkey in order to erase their lineage so that no one should know their origins.

As mentioned above, the 'Bakone ba Phokwane' [Nguni tribe from Phokwane] originates from GaMatlala 'a Thaba, an area to the immediate west of Polokwane. They rightfully venerate the siskin because it is their totemic bird. When they broke away from their tribe on the way to Sekhukhuneland, they were frightened by the hyenas along the Oliphant River. As a result, they preferred the hyena to the siskin and adopted it as their totemic animal. Because beauty always outshines boldness,

they did not cease using totemic siskin totally. That is why even today they venerate both the hyena and the siskin as their totemic animal and bird and call themselves 'Baphiring-Ditlhantlhagane' [belonging to hyenas and siskin]. It is alleged that they cannot be divorced from the totemic bird (siskin) because they believe that the siskin symbolizes peace and stability.

Again, it will be noticed that the totem emphasizes people's belief and faith. Mönnig (*ad lib.*) argues:

...the totem does not have great religious importance. It has supernatural qualities which exist and act independently but not actively. One is not allowed to kill the totem, as this would invoke supernatural sanctions, and the Pedi swear on the name of their totem as it is considered that breaking such a promise would result in similar sanctions. But the Pedi do not pray to or sacrifice to the totem, and the totem is not associated with any rituals.

The poem, 'Nkwe' [Leopard], is a relevant example of a poem signifying totemic phenomenon:

Mankwe a Botlokwa
[The leopards of Botlokwa]

A close reading of this metrical line reminds one to think of the leopard not as a carnivore but as a totemic phenomenon. This is revealed when one reads the whole poem. The real issue is the repetition of the noun, 'Botlokwa', more especially when this noun is extended:

...xa bo--mora--Mokotupi 'a Thšaka.
[...at Mokotupi's the son of Thšaka.]

It will also be observed that the poet uses personification to achieve his mandated theme. In this poem, Lekgothoane (1937:194) recites 'Nkwe' in this manner:

Mankwe a Botlokwa
Wa nkwe Bolea
Phaxa' mangana' maxolo
Phala re ja kxomo
O hwile Botlokwa
Botlokwa xa Mmathšhaka Maimane
Botlokwa xa bo-mora-Mokotupi 'a Thšaka

[(They are) the leopards of the Tlokwa
 (Of the leopard staying at Bolea
 The leopard having long jaws
 If there is no antelope we eat a beast.
 He died at Botlokwa
 Where Mmathšaka Maimane stays
 At Mokotupi's the son of Thšaka.]

There are characteristics which indicate that the carnivore symbolizes a person. The poet does not use a plural noun class **di-** for animals, but he employs noun class **ma-** to emphasize multitudes; if animals (leopards) are in great numbers, it is referred to as **mankwe** [leopards in multitude] not **dinkwe** [many leopards]. The poet uses the unusual plural noun class form **ma-** (in **mankwe**) in the place of **di-** (in **dinkwe**) to attract the attention (suspense) of his audience. Usually these types of carnivores are not as numerous as to be labelled '*mankwe*' [leopards in multitude]; therefore this arrangement is unusual. By so doing the poet puts special emphasis on personification. His utterance is now associated with high public regard, because the leopards symbolize human beings. This is also elucidated when Lekgothoane says:

...a Botlokwa
 [...of the Tlokwa]

The poet employs '*...a Botlokwa*' to qualify the leopard as if it is not the same as the usual one. The question is: 'Why does the poet qualify this leopard?' The answer is related to its importance and significance. It is as if it is no longer simply a well known carnivore. '*Botlokwa*' shows a place of settlement of the Batlokwa nation. Lekgothoane recites:

Mankwe a Botlokwa
 [The leopards of the Tlokwa]

The metrical line above suggests that the poet's subject is people' not leopards' dwelling known as Botlokwa. He reiterates this by stating:

Wa nkwe Bolea
O hwile Botlokwa
 [Of the leopard staying at Bolea
 He died at Botlokwa]

The words '*wa*' and '*o*' denote that the poet has anthropomorphized the leopards. The poet cannot refer to the carnivore by employing the possessive concord '*wa*' and the subjectival concord '*o*'. The proper grammatical possessive and subjectival concords for '*wa*' and '*o*' should have been '*ya*' and '*sa*' respectively if he were to refer to the carnivore.

The poet repeats '*Botlokwa*' to indicate emphasis for the Botlokwa settlement. This means that it is not an unknown settlement, but the known (Botlokwa) settlement. Hence, it is not the leopards of a certain environment, but of Botlokwa. Therefore the significance of this repetition technique in this text unravels the connection between people (Batlokwa) and their totemic animal (leopard).

What is of significance is that Lekgothoane's praise poetry is related to the broader concept of culture and tradition, and not nature *per se*. This reveals that Lekgothoane does not praise a carnivore but instead he recites a poem about a leopard linked to the totem. In the following metrical lines he praises:

Phala re ja kxomo
 [If there is no antelope we eat a beast]

In the above metrical line, the word '*re*' [we] denotes a thing that eats the beast. That thing is a person not a carnivore (leopard). A carnivore cannot speak, and it will never speak like a person. Therefore Lekgothoane's utterance highlights and characterises personification in the development of the growth and honour of the culture and tradition of the Batlokwa tribe in the form of veneration. In support to this, Lekgothoane recites:

O hwile Botlokwa
 [He died at Botlokwa]

The last two metrical lines praise a hero. The praise is all about the place where Batlokwa tribe resides. The poet does not depict the carnivore's habitat. This implies that Lekgothoane does not praise a natural leopard; he glorifies the Tlokwas of Botlokwa who venerate the leopard. He reveals their totem, culture and tradition, origin or history by employing their totem symbolically.

Lekgothoane juxtaposes a leopard and a settlement (Botlokwa). This issue of the leopard and Botlokwa is not used by chance because the leopard is the totemic carnivore for the Tlokwas. This is shown in the following metrical line:

Wa nkwe a Bolea
 [Of the leopard staying at Bolea]

The concept, 'Bolea' is a praise name which is never given to a carnivore but to a person. When Ramokgopa's (1980:32) character praises 'Bolea/Molea', he says:

*O sepele gabotse Molea; o sepele gabotse Mmadira tša
Molopeng; sepela gabotse kakumi-a-masole.*
[Farewell Molea, farewell Mmadira of Molopeng,
Farewell the leader of the soldiers.]

Bolea is used as a name. This person, (Motlokwa), has deliberately been given this name with purpose. In African culture and tradition, a name is considered a supporting pillar of the life of a person (child). As a result, the name is essentially significant in the life of people.¹

Concerning totems and customs, Lekgothoane compares nature (totems) and people (Batlokwa) by praising the leopard. The poet portrays the leopard: as both nature (carnivore) and totem (*Babinankwe* – Batlokwa) [totemic people – the Tlokwas]. The manner in which he praises nature is nuanced because it signifies people.

Other factors are considered when the poem, 'Kolobe' [Pig], is analyzed. Experience shows that 'kolobe' represents the totem of the Modjadji or Mamabolo people. Mention has been made above that there are carnivores and animals which are examples of the totems. Lekgothoane wrote other poems on the subject of carnivores, animals and birds which are connected by the totems to people. Below is an examination of the way in which he praises the animals (*kolobe*) [a pig] which in nature symbolizes culture and tradition. He recites his verse about pig in this way:

*Byatladi bya Malatši a mma-ka-xapa khulwana
Kolobe ke ledimo ea ja.*
[It is Byatladi of Malatši who steals cattle
A pig is the cannibal]

A pig is no longer a small animal providing delicious meat. Within this poem, it exhibits a combination of qualities that give pleasure to the senses, especially the eye and mouth, or to the moral sense, or the intellect.

The poem 'Tšhwene' [Baboon] is recited as follows:

*Mmantaxane 'a lewa...
Tšhwene ya pholo.
E hwile mothlatsweng...
Morwa maroto moinolo...*

[Mmantaxane of cave...
A large male baboon
It died on the *Chryophyllum Magalismontanum*...
The son of a hero...]

In this poem, the poet praises 'Batšhweng' (Bahananwa) [totemic baboons (Bahananwa)] in the line:

Mmantaxane 'a lewa...
[Mmantaxane of cave...]

In the above metrical line, a baboon is also totemic. As a result, the metrical line talks about the carnivore, a baboon which should be honoured and venerated. This eulogy can be traced far back in the history and origin of culture and tradition, and can accordingly be considered as a distinct component in the classification of culture and tradition. For that reason 'roto' [a big male baboon] is an honorific or veneration concept. Lekgothoane's environment is the place where cultural and traditional behaviour and customs and humanity are taught. This shows that Lekgothoane does not only recite familiar nature, but praises things (animals, carnivores, birds, etc) that symbolize people. He thus teaches his audience about the truth in life.

Furthermore, Lekgothoane portrays 'roto' [a big male baboon] and 'mmadibekwana' [a big female baboon] in his poem. These words display his vast experience in life. When a person is called 'roto' [a big male baboon] it means that he is a grown up man with much experience in work of this kind. The same applies when a person is called 'mmadibekwana' [a big female baboon]; it means that a woman is responsible, accountable and experienced. This is confirmed by the following saying:

Rotwana, madulo a roto a tšwa makgwakgwa.
[A small male baboon! a big male baboon's buttocks are rough]

and
Tšhwengatšana o matepe, ge o bitšwa ke boroto o a gana.
[A small female baboon is juggling, and when called by the big
male baboons, she refuses]

When a baboon is portrayed, it is not praised as if it is the carnivore or animal of the jungle. The praise focuses on the teaching of morals. That is, a baboon changes to an important icon (sacred person), which drives people's good morals in life.

All these animals, carnivores and birds recited by Lekgothoane do not bring out all the totems. A good example will be taken from the poem titled 'Mpšhe' [Ostrich]. The ostrich is an important bird because in Sepedi it is related to eulogy, for example in the proverb:

Mpšhe e tima mello ka diphofa.
[Ostrich extinguishes fires by its wings]

What is learnt from this saying is that the emphasis is not on the bird (ostrich) but on the didactic purpose of this utterance. Importantly all these things (carnivores, animals, birds) are praised because of their significance in the life of a Mopedi. In this way nature is transformed into the culture and tradition of a person.

Conclusion

I am concluding by summarizing Lekgothoane's praise poems with the aim of portraying their significance in the life of a traditional person. Lekgothoane is a traditional praise poet. His praise poetry falls within the delimitation of nature. This means that it is natural traditional praise poetry. His poetry is not associated with leadership such as the poetry of Phala and Ramaila.

It could be argued that Lekgothoane is a natural poet because he praises nature. A spirit of nationality prevails in his poems. If he does not recite carnivores associated with totemic people, then he praises natural things which are important to the life of a person. Thus the nature he recites portrays people's culture and tradition. His poems reflect the totems of the Bapedi. These totems reveal a people's culture and tradition in the form of nature (living animals that he praises).

This nature encourages him to write with utmost skill and diligence. This nature is a symbol of life. It is a symbol of promise. Nature is living and non-living animals. The significance of living and non-living animals by means of poetry alludes to the life of Mopedi which is visible through totems and customs.

It can, therefore, be said beyond doubt that Lekgothoane is a successful traditional praise poet in Sepedi. His praise poetry can be summed up by issues related to totems and poetry. Thus, his poems present a cosmic viewpoint through their didactic purpose.

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1) Usually a child, generally a daughter-in-law, lives according to the name given to him/her. In Sepedi culture and tradition, a clan's name is not hurriedly given to a child. A certain period lapses before such a name is given. Thereafter a day is set for the naming of the child/children. People present on that occasion are the aunts and parents. During the ceremony, a goat is slaughtered to establish communication between the ancestors and the parent's child/children.

In some clans, children are given names immediately after birth. During the ceremony children will be given names. All names given to children derive from the clan of the particular family. A goat, sheep or even a cow may be slaughtered in honour of the function. There are also some people who believe that if a woman has given birth to a certain number of children, she may be given the honour of giving names from her relatives to one or two of her children.

According to traditional practice every son of the family is given his name by his father's sister or vice versa. This means that the first son's name comes directly from his eldest aunt. Names to be given to his children derive from his father and mother's genealogy. For example, the first son's name derives from his grandfather, while the first daughter's name comes from her mother's father. Children born between the first and the last born are given other names of the father's clan. The name of the son of the last born is given by his last born sister. Such names are given directly from their parent's names. Thus, the names of the first born and the last born come directly from their parents only.

Naming the children after their aunts differs from clan to clan. In some clans, it is the first born sister who gives the names to all the members of the clan. She starts giving the names to the sons of the first born son, and thereafter the names will be given to the children of the son born between the first and the last, and lastly the names will be given to the children of the last born. Usually the ceremony of raising the names of the dead is celebrated before a child attends circumcision school, or after he has been graduated from circumcision, or immediately after a baby is born, or any day chosen for this celebration by the clan.

It may happen sometimes that the sons of the father born between the first and the last born raise the names of the dead parents. This is a result of when in the families of the first and the last born who bore no children or males who can raise the names of the dead. If this happens by default, then the relevant families will be requested to raise the names of the dead.

The names of the heads of the families are raised by the children who gave birth with amniotic membrane (which covers the foetus) slightly damaged or undamaged. Traditionally, when a baby is born in this fashion, the only person to remove the amniotic membrane is the aunt. The event is similar to the one when a baby is born with a folded fist. If this is the case, the right fist is a symbol of wealth. If he had folded the left fist, it then is a sign of traditional laws. The only person allowed to attend to this type of event is the aunt. The child who comes into the world by birth in this fashion qualifies to raise the name of the head of the family.

Nevertheless, there are also certain problems around the naming of children. If a child has been given an incorrect name, it is believed that he/she will suffer from different diseases, such as crying continuously or he/she will become an invalid. If this is observed, a renaming ceremony where a goat or sheep is slaughtered will be organized such that the child is given his/her proper name. During this ceremony, the aunt says the following to the concerned child:

Go tlogela lehono ke wena, mohlala, Bolea, ga e sa le wena, mohlala, Thuhu, ka pudi (goba ka kgomo) ye.

[From today your name, for example, will be Bolea. You are no longer, for example, called Thuhu. I swear by this goat (or cow).

From that day, it is believed, the child will recover from the dreaded disease.

When a daughter-in-law has been married, however with a child out of wedlock, and her parents/clan pay tribute by acknowledging to pay damages in the form of a cow, then that child qualifies to raise the names of the dead clan of the in-laws of his/her mother. If there is no tribute paid to the damage then such a child will only raise the names of the dead of his/her mother's family.