Xom Kyakyare Khwe: ṭAm Kuri Kx'ûî â

The Khwe of the Okavango Panhandle: The Past Life
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‡ Am Kuri Kx’ûî

The KHWE of the OKAVANGO PANHANDLE:
The Past Life

Part One
in a series of four booklets
of Buga & | Ani Khwe oral testimonies.

Part ONE:
ORIGIN, LAND,
LEADERS & TRADITIONS
of the Bugakhwe people.
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Introduction

This booklet is the first in a series of booklets about the Bugakhwe and ||Anikhwe San people currently living in the Panhandle region of the Okavango in Ngamiland, Botswana. Others know them as Basarwa or Bushmen, and the ||Anikhwe as Banoka or River Bushmen.

In 1996 and 1997, two ||Anikhwe, Jesi Segole and the late Michael Baise, came together and talked about how important it was that our young people as well as outsiders to this area should know the true background of how we lived here before the other people came. They saw that traditional knowledge was disappearing fast, and that our leadership and heritage were ignored by all the new people who moved into the area. Michael then wrote down the information they gathered from relatives and elders about the history of the ||Anikhwe. That is the document upon which the idea for this book is based.

When Kuru Development Trust opened an office in Shakawe, now called TOCaDI, they helped us form our own Trust, called Teemacane (meaning “to stand up”). Then two more interviewers joined Michael. Sefako Chumbo and Kotsi Mmaba started interviewing as many people as they could find who could still give information about the past. Sadly, Michael passed away in November 2001, before seeing the final product of the initiative he had taken. Goitseone ||’Aeka took over from the late Michael Baise.
This booklet, Part One of our History, is based upon the interviews Sefako and Kotsi held with people from Bugakhwe communities living at Kaputura, Ngarange, X'Oakao (Xakau), Sekondomboro, Gurigoa (Gudigwa), Shaikarawe, Tobere, Gani and Mogotho. Michael continued to interview the Anikhwe communities around X'Oakao, Mogotlho, Mohembo, Sekondombo and Haoxa (Xhauga).

These interviews were all conducted in Khwe and Anikhwedam. They were recorded on tape and translated to English by the interviewers themselves. This was because we want other people to also know about our story, and because not many people read and write our own languages yet. The booklets will be translated in Khwedam as part of our own literacy project.

The portraits of most of the people interviewed are included in the booklet, while the map shows the location of places where interviews were conducted as well as many of the places referred to during interviews.

The content of the booklet reflects people's opinions about the various topics discussed. Historical correctness of facts and events presented is not claimed although it must be noted that people's experiences generally reflect what happened to them.

The booklet is produced by the Khwe people (and our representatives) firstly for use by ourselves and our children. But, we hope that others who are interested in our lives will also find it useful.
Editor’s comments:

In this booklet, as much as possible, the original text of the interviews (after translation into English) has been maintained. Necessary edits were made only in order to make the text more understandable, while grammar and spelling were adjusted to improve readability, always attempting to leave intact as much as possible the manner of speaking of the person providing the information during the interview.

Additions by the editors have been kept to a minimum and are mainly aimed at connecting the different sections together. Such editorial additions are printed in italic print.

The booklet therefore attempt to communicate what people have said about their lives by quoting sentences from the various interviews, indicating in most cases the name of the interviewee. Complete sentences as spoken during the interview have been reproduced where possible, although occasionally sentences had to be shortened or repetitions omitted for the sake of clarity. No attempt has been made to reproduce complete interviews.

The spelling of names is according to the Khwe orthography developed by researchers from the University of Cologne and accepted by the Khwe communities of South Africa, Botswana and Namibia in 2001.

A similar oral testimony project in Botswana is also being conducted under auspices of TOCaDI among the Ju’hoansi, WaYei, Hambukushu and Herero peoples of Ngamiland, and in Namibia among the Haiǁom and Naro and Ju’hoansi of Omaheke district, under auspices of WIMSA.

The information in this book is presented in three parts:

Part I Our Origin and Our Land
Part II Our Leadership
Part III Our Traditions.
Did the Khwe people always live in the villages along the Okavango river? If not, where did they come from? We asked many of the older people about their life before they settled in the places which now carry the names we see on the map. Some could not remember so well, but all agreed that the world of the Khwe was very different when they were young. They also all agreed that this is their land and that the other people who live with them today came after them.

Khwe people were living in the bush in the past and the ||Anikhwe people lived along the Okavango river.
Our Origin

“Our great grandparents were from Tsodilo hills.”

Our great grandparents were from Tsodilo hills, says old #Geru Mananyana who was born in 1905, and they lived there using their hunting and gathering skills. They used to hunt kuni (duikers), du (eland) and doa (kudu) and we can see the paintings of those animals on the hills of Tsodilo even today. Our hunting and gathering skills were developed in the area around those hills.

Yiceu Ngavangava who lives at Ngarange agrees that their story started at Tsodilo hills and he says:

I visited the area called Qomqoana and saw the hills called Tsodilo hills and I remember that these were the hills of our San creation and where my forefathers came from. When our forefathers were created in Tsodilo (Uwâwâtco), they started to make the “Craft Marks” on the hills and also divided the people into families. Then they started hunting and gathering of veld-food.
Our Land

“These lands are even names in Khwe language up to the present time.”

Chumbo Maraka begins to talk about land and says:

Today, we do not have lands and "rights", but I know the Khwe are the very people who own these lands which have now been divided between Botswana and Namibia. These lands were used by the Khwe communities before the independence of these countries. These lands were not known to the other groups and are even named in Khwe language up to the present time. We Khwe want to use our lands of the past, which our great grandfathers gave us.

Old #Geru Mananyana adds:

The land that was used by the Khwe communities in the past, was split between the countries Botswana and Namibia. This has divided the Khwe lands with boundary lines that are strange to the Khwe people. For example, the land that lies west of Tobere is known as Bori land, but it is bisected by the boundary line. Other lands are now completely in the Caprivi, for example areas known as Qarati land, Ê Umbeaxk'am land, Utu'oro land, Du+e land, Ca-coro land, Ngyavetai land, Kyaramkwe land Ngyave||gana land and Pitciri land.
There are many lands that were used by the Khwe communities in the past and evidently the ||Anikhwe communities used the river banks as their lands in the past too. I can simply say, he adds, that there is no evidence that the other tribes named lands in the Namibia-Caprivi strip and Botswana-Okavango region in their language. That is why I say that these are the lands of the Khwe people.

Even Maun village was called ‘Kwaxei’ in the past, but today the other tribe has it as their tribal centre and has named it Maun and no-one knows it used to be our place.

Yiceu Ngavangava also talks about life without borders:

I was born in Mahahe in Tanaxu’s village, and sometimes lived in the bush from honey and meat. At that time there was no border. We travelled freely from Botswana to Namibia to collect wild fruits and to hunt animals. We lived in Xamkhwe, Sekandoko, Ngarange, Mahahe, Sekomdomboro, ||X’oakao, Tobere, |Ao-or, |Oava||gana and N+omxa.

Makumbo Mangasha talks about the land of his family:

My people originated from N|âåxom and they stayed for a long time in N|âåxom. There were two tribes of people, Gomayi and ||Anikhwe living in N|âåxom in the past, and N+ûkwa was the chief of the ||Anikhwe and ||Anikhwe was the Chief of the Gomayi.

It was nice in N|âåxom in the past when we were there because we were not suffering like today. We ate food like tculx’om (jackal berry) and tcoyi (African mangosteen) wild fruits. When we killed an animal we gave it to the chief and the chief prayed to the forefathers and then put the meat in front of the villagers for them to eat the meat.
"All the places were called after something that had happened there to the Khwe communities."

Maruta Diyonga, a 60 year old man from Kaputura, explains:

All the places were called after something that had happened there to the Khwe communities. When hunting and gathering in different places, they named the place after something that had happened there to them, often with a "natural feature" as evidence.

This was confirmed during landmapping in the area now called NG13. For example the meaning of place-names such as Yikuru and Beye|'ôâ was explained.

About Yikuru, Yiceu Ngavangava says:

Yikuru means the tree which looks like knees. This tree was next to the sipwell, that is how they called the place Yikuru. The sipwell was very important and was not so deep. This was a permanent camp, and also I knew the owner of this place. The name of the owner was Duhoko.
And about Beye|'ôå he explains:

This means that a zebra’s skeleton was in the waterhole. When the people dug this sipwell, they found zebra bones under the ground. It was a permanent camp with a sipwell. The Beye|'ôå sipwell lasted the whole year without drying up.

About a place called Xamtcu||gana, Tanaxu Khôâkx’oxo explains:

In this place there were a lot of lions; it was really popular with the lions. One day, my grandmother was eaten by these lions.

Kabo Kukei adds to this:

If you were fetching water from this sipwell, one of your group had to look after you while you were fetching water, because otherwise the lion might eat you.

During the land mapping in NG 13 Moronga Ntemang also explains about a certain area now called No.4:

The name of the area in Khwedam is Kyeica and the land was used as a pasture. The government changed the name and it is now known as Borehole No. 4. The Kyeica area was traditionally used by the Khwe people. This was during the time of the chief who was called Mananyana by the Batswana. Oava was his Khwe name.
About the names of the waterholes in the area he says:

There are many waterholes and I will tell you of some of
them that are the most important. They are Khuri±goa-o
waterhole, Kuugoa waterhole, ||Ullu waterhole, Xeiskyaoxa
waterhole, N|anlam waterhole, Kyaokhungoro waterhole,
Khutc'imtc'aro waterhole, Am|xé waterhole, Teatcaxa waterhole
and then Xam||gana is where you find the beacon.
These important waterholes were used by chief Kyarekx'oxo
and Thumî.

During a group interview with Moronga Ntemang, Phinias
Kúgoë, Kapinga Morupa and Robert Djami it was agreed as
follows:

In the past we had our own names for our land and we
called the people by the same names. Some of us were called
Kx'oakhwe, and we are called like that because our land was
Kx'oa.

When we came to the river, we called the river ||xom and
we named ourselves ||Xomkhwe (i.e. The Khwe people who live
along the river). Some who live here in Kaputura are called
+Xarakhwe (i.e. People living in the open plain).
This is the land where we find our fruit trees like tcînyâ
(Diospyros chamaethamnus Mildbr), +ûmbe (Kalahari
podberry) and tceu (false mopane tree) and
we called this land +Xara. The people
who lived here, and were eating this
fruit, were called the +XaraKhwe.

And also they said:
We are related to our other
friends who are the ||Anikhwe
people. When we mixed with
them we called them |Hi. |Hi
means the people coming
from the north.

"Bird" by Khweca Murapa
Pathways & Directions

"When you see a path starting from the east and running in a western direction, this path is known as a 'World Path'."

Moronga Ntemang talks about the pathways in the Khwe land areas:

When you see a path starting from the east and running in a western direction, it is known as a "World Path" and in Khwedam: ng’ùdao. Ng’ù means world and dao means path. These paths can be found in the area known as Dom, and Dom means simply drainage line.
There are other paths that you can find in the direction from north to south and these are called !odao, meaning road made by elephants. These paths are made by wildlife. The animals move to places to find water and this was how they made the road (!odao). These two types of pathways of the Khwe people were known as the traditional paths.

And about directions Moronga says:

I know about the directions that were used by our grandparents and they are |am+â (west) and |am+x’oa (east). These are the first and second direction points.

Secondly, I can say that the other two directions are ||garenakyao (north) and ||garena||ôâ (south).

These four directions are the only important ones to the Khwe people and were used by our grandparents in the past. Our grandparents also taught us the four directions according to the sun and the moon. We know that the sun rises in the east and then sets in the west. These were the most important tools for directions used by our grandparents in the past.

The eastern and western direction show us the length of the world and the north and south directions show us the width of the world, and this is how my grandparents taught us. These directions are very important in our lives.
Mobile Life

"The Khwe community was known as mobile, but not nomadic."

Maruta Diyonga from Kaputura says:

We were mobile in the past and were hunters and gatherers. The Khwe lived a mobile life in the past and they were generous to each other and lived peacefully. There was no fighting or pointing a finger at someone and the communities liked to share their ideas and behaved respectfully towards each other in the past. The past life of the Khwe was a great one.

Óâna Djami who comes from Ngarange comments:

When hunters killed a giraffe far away, not near the camp, they had to move to that place where the giraffe was killed. But that did not mean that they had left for good. The purpose was just to eat the meat and use the skin for making clothes, shoes and bags. After these activities they moved back to the original place. The Khwe community was known as mobile, but not nomadic. Nomadic means that people have to leave their place and move for good.

"Giraffe" by Khueea Murupa
Ôâna Djami also explains what happened when the wild food and the animals were far away from the existing camp.

When this did happen in the past then the old men had to search for land that had good resources, e.g. wild food and animals. The men went out alone searching far away from the camp; the other men and women were not allowed to go with them.

After they found a good area, the old men gathered the community together and allowed them to leave the camp and to go to the new place and make a camp there. In the assembly meeting they narrated which land had the good resources. They had collected some wild food, which they showed the community. That is how they demonstrated the food that they had collected when they went in search of better lands.
Loss of Land

"The Government changed the names of the lands"

*Geru Mananyana says:*

It is bad that the governments bisected the Khwe lands by the boundary that separates the two countries (Botswana and Namibia). This is how the Khwe lost the right to use their lands today as they did in the past. I would like the governments of the countries Botswana and Namibia to give land to the Khwe communities as they used to have in the past.

*Moronga Ntemang explains how some of the old names were changed:*

The government drilled boreholes in four areas called Woca, N|garaxa, |Qomca and Kyeica. After drilling the boreholes, the government changed the names and divided the land into numbers because they did not know the lands’ traditional names given by our grandparents.

The government thus changed the name of the land: Woca is now called No 1 and N|garaxa is called No 2, |Qomca is now called No 3 and Kyeica is called No 4.

*Maruta Diyonga explains that:*

When we met with the Mbukushu tribe, we started losing our lands, leadership, health, culture and our traditional life. After we met with the other tribes we stopped moving around in the veld because the government of Botswana stopped the Khwe communities to live as they did in the past.
When the government changed our lives, we lost the generous life we lived in the past, and the government said that they would support us in what we needed. But, today the government is not visible to the Khwe communities at all, which means that we are crying out daily for the government to provide us with our needs, as they are helping the other tribes. They stopped us from moving around but they do not give us the power to improve the Khwe communities’ life like the other tribes.

“They have fenced us in like in a kraal”

Peter Goro from Tobere says:

I am unhappy because the government says that we, the Khwe, should stay or live in one place, but the promises of the government have not been seen. I would like them to give the support that they promised, but nothing happens. They have fenced us in like in a kraal, but these lands were not fenced like this in the past. The land was free for us to hunt and gather and we were happy and good to each other as well as generous and enjoyed a peaceful way of living. It is so difficult for us now, and we are suffering and are hungry because all the good things of the past have disappeared for good.
The other tribes defeated us and took over what we used to have in our life like our land etc. The Khwe community does not know how to fight like the other tribes. I do not know how they got our land and now present it as their land.

"The Khwe community does not know how to fight like the other tribes. I do not know how they got our land and now present it as their land."

I also have much unhappiness about the present life, says #Geru Mananyana. In the present life, it looks as if the Khwe community is under the other tribes and this we do not like, because it means that we are under the representatives of the other tribes. The other tribes and the government fenced these lands and created boundary lines and the Khwe communities are confused by this. The other tribes have already forgotten about the Khwe communities.

"In the present life, it looks as if the Khwe community is under the other tribes and this we do not like."
"Here we are living in the place where our great-grandparents died, but they see us as people who look after their cattle."

Phinias Kūgoē says:

Khwe people's villages are being called cattle posts, over and over again, but we are not looking after Botswana cattle in this village. Here we are living in the place where our great-grandparents died, but they see us as people who look after their cattle, and then they call us the community of the cattle post. We ourselves know that we are living in the place where our great-grandparents died.

We are not feeling good, we, the Khwe community living in Botswana. We live here, but there is no nice feeling we have about living here, although Botswana is our country of origin.
Part II: OUR LEADERS

The Khwe people of today are represented through the existing government structures, which came into place after the independence of Botswana in 1966. These represent the many different groups of people now sharing the same land and the same villages with the Khwe people.

In Botswana, representation starts with the kgotla, which is the traditional place of justice. This kgotla, and the chiefs that are elected among all the tribes to represent them, are now present in all communities and there is also a headman in each village. The tribal police serve the kgotla, the place where all the important decisions for all groups in an area are taken.

But, in the past, the Khwe people had their own chiefs and their own ways of representation, which was different from how it is organized today. Many of the interviewees told us how they valued their old systems of representation, how they miss the old ways and the way they elected their chiefs in the past. They feel that they are not really represented by the chiefs and the kgotla of today, since the other groups are more powerful and often do not respect the Khwe chiefs and the Khwe people.
Leadership & Rules in the Past

"The old men were known as the directors of the community."

Ôâna Djami talks about the wise old men of the past:

Wise and brave hunters were known as ||’axa (chief). In the Khwe communities the older men were authorities on conduct and rights. The older men were the teachers. They would sing traditional songs of yeu|i-dancing or |ana-dancing while they were teaching the younger men their skills. So the older men were good examples of teachers in the olden days in the Khwe community.

Mashika Maraka explains about some rules enforced by the elders:

The old men were known as the “Directors” of the community. They were there to oversee the rules. Let me give you the example of the killing of a doa (kudu). If I had killed a kudu, my older sisters had to divide the meat into equal pieces. If my wife’s parents were there or even another man’s wife’s parents, you had to share the meat between your wife’s parents and the other family.

But today, I find that the young boys eat kudu leg marrow and about this I am very surprised. The front kudu leg marrow was to be eaten only by the older men or the elders. Elders had to be “cured” by the traditional doctor before they can eat it, even if they were already old.
The traditional doctor also had to decide when someone was to be allowed to eat the head of a buffalo, warthog or giraffe; otherwise they could get leg disease.

The animal's head was eaten by the older men together with the young hunters at tēē|ī|ga. Tēē|ī|ga was the men's assembly place. In the past also dīnī (honey beer) was not allowed to be drunk by young people. This type of beer was very nice to drink: it tasted like wine. The dīnī-caca is prepared in this way: you have to prepare the honey comb and the ingredients you find in the wax which is yellow or brown in colour and mix it with water and it can take one day to ferment in order to drink the next day.

Ôâna Djami mentions some other important rules:

In the hot season we dug a well so that we could quench our thirst. The water from the well first had to be tasted by the elders before the others were allowed to drink it.

And he adds:

In the past we made a fire differently from today. In the present we use matches, but not in the past. The elders would have chosen a man who would set the fire. This man who was to set the traditional fire was wise and could set the fire quickly. Before making the fire, the elders had to call on their ||gâwââ (spirits of the ancestors) according to their traditional belief. This is still so today. This is called Bën|gūu.
Chumbo Maraka says about the role of the chief:

In the past, there were chiefs who solved problems among the community. Khwe traditional chiefs ruled the lands that were named in the Khwe language by their great grandparents. In the past, the older men were the Directors of the communities. They taught us how to be respectful towards each other and how to lead a generous and peaceful life. The elders allowed communities to share food in the different areas, for example if a hunter of Kaputura had killed an animal, they shared the meat with the whole community as far as Tobere. This kind of sharing meant that we lived generously and peacefully in the past.

Here in Kaputura village, I’m the Khwe chief of the traditional chiefdom of the past. My father lived here in Kaputura land before the independence of Botswana. I have been ruling here in Kaputura for many years now, but am not paid by the government.

"Khwe traditional chiefs ruled the lands, which were named in the Khwe language by their great grandparents."

Peter Goro talks about headmen and policemen:

During the time of our great grandparents our headperson or headman used to wear clothes made of animal skins just like the other people. At that time our headman was very good and took care of us and we took care of him. There was also a policeman for the headman. This policeman protected the headman and also sent reports, and took revenge (delivered punishment) on the people or communities.

We were also taught to respect our elders and to take care of our children and to be generous. These were our lessons during the old days.

In the past anything that we gained from our hunt, we first shared with the elder or headperson (ǁ’axa) because we were generous towards each other. We were very respectable and shared our lives.
Only the very skilled people became headmen, and the other skilled hunters became the supporters (policemen) of the headman. When he died, the son inherited the position as his father had taught him. We gave our headperson gifts of leather, dini (honey), meat and wild fruit.

This person was well cared for by the community. All the different communities in the surrounding areas reported to him. He was also a wise and generous person who did not talk too much, but observed the communities' life. But today we do not have respect for each other.

Geru Mananyana says more about respect:

In the past the young people, sons, daughters and adult people were not allowed to use improper words when talking to a person. Improper speech was not heard very often. For example, you would not hear people saying to older people, like you hear today: "Your eyes are as big as an owl at night" or "Your father sleeps with a female donkey". In the present life, the young use improper words more often and openly, and the older people, because the other tribes brought these words.

In the past the Khwe respected each other and they used proper words, but today our children are learning improper words at school, because they go to school with children of the other tribes. The other tribes do not see what they are doing to the Khwe communities. Therefore we want our mobile lifestyle of the past back.
And about beer drinking he says:

Traditional beer was made from fruits called naxani (mobola plum) or \(qom\) (Manketti fruit). These were made into beer that tasted like wine. Only the older men were allowed to drink this beer, but the young people were not allowed to drink this kind of beer in the past life of the Khwe.

There was also beer made from honey, tcinde, dini and tc'ipa (three types of honeybeer), and this kind of beer was the same as the beer made from wild fruits. It tasted like wine and it was very nice. The young people were also not allowed to drink it. This is how we lived in the past.

Moronga Ntemang agrees with this and says:

When we had our own leaders in the past, we lived a generous and peaceful life, and we enjoyed our own leadership in our Khwe community.

Oava, the Khwe chief, was the one whom the other groups found in his own land with his own Khwe people. In the beginning of his reign there were no other tribes in this land, but as the years passed the conflicts started, when the other tribes came and found him in his own land with his people.
He also talks about ‘human rights’ meaning rules of life:

In the past our lives were organized by rules that we all agreed to, they were like our human rights. One of our rules was that the leaders did not allow any girl going into her puberty to gather veldfood. The puberty period was respected.

When the puberty period was finished the old women gave the woman a prepared medicine to rub on trees before collecting berries. When she was fetching water she was given some medicine drops to drop in the water before she could fetch water from the pan.

If the girl did not use the medicine and went to scoop the water then the waterhole would not hold water like before. And if she collected fruits, the trees would not bear fruits any longer.

All girls who went into puberty were first kept alone. The woman is not condemned, but she was staying apart and everyone respected her. The reason for these rules and for the young girl to be kept apart in the traditional house was that the blood coming from the female organs was respected and had the power to spoil everything in the area.
When after the puberty period the girl had completed her days, the old women made a celebration for her. The reason for the celebration was to respect her because she has passed her first puberty period. Now she was recommended for marriage and she was healed by the medicine called |xodove.

Today in the puberty stage the parents do not recognize this old tradition of the puberty stage, and therefore our land now does not have veldfood as there was in the past.

And he continues to say:

The most important rule that our leadership used in the past was the rule to take care of the environment that was important to our survival. Now, today, the land has gone and there is not as much honey as we used to eat, because we do not respect the rules.
"The most important rule, which our leadership used in the past, was the taking care of the environment that was important to our survival."

Our waterholes are all dry and we can only remember some of the veld-food we used to eat in the past such as tceu (false mopane) and kyara plants (peeling-bark ochna).

Yiceu Ngavangava says about the rules of the past:

At the time when they used to dance the different traditional dances, there were many traditional chiefs in the communities with many traditional rules, like the rule about children not being allowed to drink beer.

He continues to say:

The old men did also not allow the young people to eat tortoise meat because you know that a tortoise moves very slowly and that means that if the young people were to eat this meat they would become lazy and slow in hunting or gathering of traditional plants. The young people were also not allowed to eat giraffe meat, I mean the head and so forth, and this is how they lived in the past.
If a young man was lazy and slow in his actions or activities such as hunting with bow and arrow, then this kind of man will not be able to marry, because he would not be able to rescue his family from danger and meet their needs in life. If a young man is already married and becomes lazy or slow in his actions, he will be made to divorce by the parents of his wife, because he does not help the family with any of their needs.

“In the past, there were many chiefs living with us.”

Ôâna Djami also talks about the rules of the past: In the past, there were many chiefs living with us. Every chief used to live with his own community. Their law was that if they killed an animal, it had to be in their own place or land that did not belong to other people. It was the law of the chiefs that his community should only hunt in the land that belonged to him.

Today, living with the other people, our life is not nice. The reason is that we are living here and are using water that belongs to somebody else. Here is no tap for the water pipe. We fetch water from the yard of the Mbukushu. There is no water tap here in the yard of the Khwe, and we are not feeling good about the situation. This is because our Khwe chiefs are not recognized and in our villages there are no clinics or government services like the other villages have.
Chiefs of the Past

"Qara|'om is the first Khwe forefather."

by Kayane Nokaya

Moronga Ntemang mentions the names of the Khwe chiefs of the past:

In this area and so many other areas there were leaders. One of them was Kuvucan who lived in |Garokhwe,|Ao|gui (Xaugwi) and nearby Kaputura location. After the death of Kuvucan, chief Mananyana took over and after him his nephew, called ||Gava||gava, who lived in Kaputura. Mananyana’s Khwe name was Oava, and this is true. Most of the Khwe from Kaputura used to live in Delta pan (Djoca), which is now across the Namibian border and also at a place called Dove which is on the Namibian side.
Marupa Kapinga, who's Khwe name is Thamkyare ||'Uiti|gêvê was born in 1910 and remembers a lot about the chiefs of the past. He provides a list of what he calls the whole Khwe communities' elder chiefs.

This is the list (from past to present):

Mukhanga was the chief of ||xom territory. His wife was called Pikeyare and he lived in Djoca. His son was Oava, also called Mananyana. Oava was buried in Goxa.

Mukhanga was the first elder chief of the whole Khwe community. He was the only one who ruled the Khwe community in his own land. His death was not peaceful. The Mbukushu tribe in Kaputura land killed him. Djînyâ was headman. He lived in |Ao-orô.

Simbangoye lived at Mûtc’iku.

Thuboro lived in |Guîça. He was the old man who lit Mukhanga’s smoking pipe.

Xoku Thambo was the man of ||xom territory. He was a warrior and he was married to Mukhanga’s daughter. His younger brother was |Nîceu.

|Udao, the chief of Dom territory lived in N+omxa, Tovere, |Ao-orô, Ngyave||gana and Bwabwata. He sold Khwe people to the Batawana. He also sold Khwe people to Liwanika, the chief of the Lozi. The most part of |Udao’s territory is in West - Caprivi. |Udao’s uncle was called Kyarekx’oxo.
The following story happened in Udao’s territory:

One day Mbarokhwe hunted young eland in Udao’s territory. He hunted in Udao’s territory without any permission to hunt in Udao’s territory. That day Udao’s men found he had killed a young eland next to a pan. When they met the one who killed the young eland they said: You are now hunting in our territory. The men began to approach him and stabbed him right on his back with a spear and killed him for death. Mbarokhwe was a good hunter. The name of the pan is still Mbarokhwe pan today.

Simanyana ‘Ae. The Khwedam name of Simanyana is Kyeikx’oxo.

Mico lived in Ganduca and Djoca. He was one of the respected old men.

His son was Tc’anca (meaning: drinking water). He also lived in Ganduca and Djoca.

Gava: His father was Beexava. He lived in Kaputura and he was the chief of Kaputura.

Simanga Mukhanga. His son was Bocoava Mukhanga and his uncle was Gava. He drowned in the river at Mohembo east.

Gokodom lived in Bagani. His father was Û[u. He was a respected old man.

Tcitingu: His real name was Miningu. He lived in Mûc’iku. He was also one of the respected old men.

Ngoeya (Sakahu)ro: his father was Gyai’ônâ and he lived in Dove.

He was one of the respected old men.

"Baobob" by Wedie K’uni’tu

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Tceeve ||Arocan lived in Mahahe. His son was Ôâna. He was also a respected old man. The place Mahahe is found in Botswana, just next to Ngarange.

Ndumba Matende lived at Ngôëngyao in Buma in Angola and later moved to Mûtc'iku and became the chief.

Kafuro Dohuro: His Khwe name is Mbanda (warthog in English). He also lived in Mûtc'iku. He was an informant to the University of Cologne Researchers like Oswin Köhler.

Teipando Ng’ûgyeri also lived in Mûtc'iku. He was a respected old man. Mбукушу people burnt him in the big fire. They burnt him when he got drunk from the tobacco given by the Mбукушу men. He was a strong man and he was the one who rescued his family. The place Mûtc’iku is found in Namibia.

*And he also mentions the present Khwe chiefs of today in Botswana and Namibia:*

The Khwe communities started to divide into different lands when ||Gava||gava’s elder sons separated the communities and settled in different lands.

Some of the Khwe communities moved to Tobere, Kaputra, Gurigoa and Shaikarawe, until they penetrated the Caprivi strip and the western and eastern territories of Namibia.

*"Water lily" by Wede Kx’uni zu*
Kaputura, the main land: Chief Dakamo Chumbo ||Gava||gava
Tobere: Chief Kyâgoè Cânadaotâ
Shaikarawe: Chief Masika Mbwenga
Gurigoa: Chief Tcima Biro
Namibia, Mûto’iku, the main land: Chief Kipi George, the root chief of the entire Caprivi Strip (west & east).
Namibia, Bagani: headman Paulus Mangonga
Namibia, Omega: headman Dindeku Madjumu
Namibia, Tce-to: headman Abraham Boko & John Muyatwa
Namibia, Tcu:â: headman Shakoi William
Namibia, Ndongo: chief Kx’aokho.

by Touwa Khâko’oxo
Lack of Representation

"We do not have Khwe chiefs (representatives) in the kgotla."

Morupa Kapinga, Robert Djami, Moronga Ntemang, Kaptein Morupa, Maruta Diyonga, Phinias Kûgoë in a group interview talk about Khwe chiefs:

Till 1966, Queen Elizabeth was still ruling the country of Botswana. Then came the year of independence, and the Khwe community was found in the bush. At that time the Batswana chased and caught the Khwe community by horse, and brought them here.

We do not have Khwe chiefs (representatives) in the Kgotla and we do not like to be under chief Tawana. When we tell them, they respond to say: "Vote for the Khwe Communities councillor". But, where are we going to vote? And, when we have voted for our Khwe councillor, who will take care of the person we have voted for? The Batswana will not agree to this vote. They will ask "What Standard did he/she complete?".
Moronga Ntemang says:

When our leaders were still leading our community, the other tribes started to erase our leaders and replace them with their own. What I mean is that they came here causing conflicts and they killed our leaders. And that is how they replaced our leadership. This is how our leadership was erased by oppression. The other tribes did not know about Khwe laws and thus our land has been changed from what it was in the past. The Khwe people now follow the other tribe’s customs: e.g. children are loved by old men of 45 years, and after love they become engaged and marry the young girls of about 15 years old.

“When our leaders were still leading our community, the main groups started to erase our leaders and replace them with their own.”

Maruta Diyonga also says:

The other tribes were secretly dangerous towards the Khwe, and they used to plan how to kill a person, by poisoning food, water or beer. They would kill the known ones like leaders or headman until every adult, one by one, had been killed, because they thought that if they could kill the adults skillfully then the tribe would not have a leader, headman or chair, and the position could be given to one of their people. Some adults were tied with a leather rope and then put in a big fire and others were just murdered or killed with very strong tobacco. This was to make them dizzy and fall into the fire and burn until the bones were not visible on the fireplace. This was the time when the Khwe communities’ life faded and they became few. Now no one can rescue us.
"The Khwe are the most invisible alive nation in the world today"

So the Khwe are still suffering today and are the most invisible alive nation in the world today. We, the Khwe community have lost our land, the ruling of it, leadership, generous life, culture and traditional healing systems, traditional doctors, which was our whole lifestyle. Now our lives are dependent on the other tribes. We have nobody to rescue us from the bad life we are having.

Our lives at present are bad because the Khwe are under-developed, and down like "roots", and no one can "uproot" the solution to the Khwe problems today.

The other tribes have their chiefs, parliament, councillors and lawyers so why can the Khwe not have their own representation? Because we do not have representation, the government does not provide us with projects at all and refuses to make boreholes for us and everything is wrong with the Khwe nation. We are last, the last ones in a bad life, not like the other tribes here in Botswana.
Peter Goro explains further:

The changes in this present time occurred when our headman died. Then separation between the people occurred and relationships between the communities of the Khwe were broken.

The present headman’s law is the cause of us not understanding life as it is today, because we, the Khwe, are not represented and do not have an elder or headman to support us. The present headman has to represent both the Khwe and the Hambukushu tribes. Today’s life is not enough for us.

“The government should enable us to have a Khwe tribal chief to improve our society as the other tribes do.”

He also says:

I think it would be very helpful to our young children in schools if they were taught by Khwe teachers in their own language so that they can understand their grandparents’ historical lifestyle, and how the historical leaders and chiefs looked after the land, the communities and even the animals in the bush. Today’s schooling is just about reading and writing and not about the history of the Khwe people and not about how to hunt and gather.

Because the youth attend school very far from our village, they have adapted to the other tribes’ behaviour in the schools and have also learnt their culture and their language as well as their lifestyle. They do not understand their own parents’ past and this has destroyed our lifestyle.
The government should enable us to have a Khwe tribal chief to improve our society as the other tribes do. If we had a member of parliament for the Khwe, he would act with the government to support the needs of the Khwe tribe. I think we need assistants like councillors, parliament officers, teachers, lawyers, shopkeepers, headmasters, head teachers, nurses and doctors to work with the Khwe people. This is the only key to the future for our tribe in the government.

Now the Khwe people are crying with the problems facing them and this present life is not good for them, because they do not have their own chiefs to represent them and solve their problems like the other tribes do.
People of other tribes used to say that the Khwe are owned by them, because we have no Khwe chief like they do. They say that in the olden days their fathers tamed the Khwe communities like cattle.

What also surprises me is that the government said that some villages would only belong to the Khwe, but now we find that Hambukushu become chiefs there. We know that there are Mbutkushu chiefs in |Ao|gui, ||X’oakao, Sekondomboro, ||Úxa||’ui, Ngarange, Mogotho, Beyeca and other villages, but the Government gave some villages to the Khwe community only. Today we find other tribes also living there, taking our land and voting their chief to rule over us on our lands.

We are tired of living with the other tribes, because they represent us in government. Because they think that we are not well educated, they share what they receive for us amongst themselves and we receive nothing. We want to also do things for ourselves like the other tribes do.
He explains further:
The other tribes refuse to supply us with water, because we are only Khwe people.
We also need school development in our villages, like in Tobere, and the Khwe language needs to be taught to both tribes. Because then we could all read and write the Khwe language today. We would like the other tribes to learn our language at school, which may stop them doing the things they are doing to us today. It is not fair that we have to learn their language, but they do not learn ours. We can speak their languages very fluently and they don't want to learn our language because they say that they cannot speak the language of the slaves.

We are living on Khwe land and therefore all of them should also learn the Khwe language. The only languages that should be taught are English, Setswana and Khwe. This will allow our new generation to live in peace in the future. We are very unhappy that our language is not taught at school. We would like our language to be made known at schools, then we would understand the present life better as well as one another, and then the new generations of the tribes will have a better life. This is the only way to make our present life better.

#Geru Mananyana agrees and says:
The Khwe communities are presently suffering from hunger and have no jobs, no good water supply and there has been no representation of the Khwe communities of the dry Khwe lands at present as councillors, in parliament, in the House of Chiefs in the country of Botswana since Independence. This is why the Khwe people do not enjoy the present way of life.

"Baobab" by Wede Ke'uni tu
Today the government of Botswana denies the Khwe communities chiefdom, land, wildlife and natural resources. In the past, the Khwe communities used their own chiefdom and rules about control of the earth, the land and environmental survival.

The other tribes and the government fenced these lands of the past with boundaries and the Khwe communities are now confused because these were all part of the life of our tribe. I myself do not understand about the chiefdom used by the other tribes and I do not agree with the other tribes’ chiefdom. I am the son of chief Mananyana Mukhanga of the Khwe communities, one of the elder chiefs in Botswana’s entire Okavango region before the other tribes met with us in our own lands before the independence of Botswana.

“After the independence of the country we did not have any leadership in the cabinet or even the House of Chiefs and thus we have lost our Khwe or San history.”

*Moronga Ntemang also agrees and says:*

We are not being recognized and read about by people anymore, because after the independence of the country we did not have any leadership in the cabinet or even the House of Chiefs and thus we have lost our Khwe or San history. After the independence of the country of Botswana, there was no Khwe representative who could write the Khwe history and therefore the other groups used their history to gain from the independence of Botswana.

I would like the history of the Khwe to be recorded and that we should have representatives in parliament and councillors and lawyers.
*And Chumbo Maraka says:*

We are tired of waiting for the government to help us with our needs for many years now. We want to use our Lands, Rights, Chiefdom, Wildlife and Natural Resources that our great grandfathers gave to us.

There is one thing that I miss, and which makes me unhappy and that is that we should be allowed to speak for ourselves just as the other groups do today. I repeat that I would like the government to give us a way to speak for ourselves. This is what makes me unhappy, and I sleep with this unhappiness and think about it all day.

*Ôâna Djami adds:*

We are feeling bad about the situation, because here we do not have our chief to sign for us. It is bad because we do not have a Khwe chief.

Kaputura now has water, but it took many years, because the other group signed papers that prevented the Khwe community to have water. The Tobere community also asked for a water pipe and the other tribes said that Tobere does not belong to the Khwe and it is not gazetted.

We, the Khwe, do not have a land-board, and we do not have a government, so we are living here in a bad situation.
"The reason that our needs are not passed on to the government is because we do not have our own Khwe representatives."

Yiceu Ngavangava says:

I am adding on to what Ôâna Djami has narrated. We would like to vote for a chief, and call his name, like the other groups are doing today. We also need to have our Khwe chief to represent us, and we need to have our land board, and chairperson.

The chiefs of the other tribes do not pass our cry to the government, to help us with our needs. When they hear about our needs, they pass it to their own community.

I know that the food people are given is not only for the other community to eat. We also need to eat food like they do, and for that reason our hearts are feeling pain.

The reason that our needs are not passed on to the government is because we do not have our own Khwe representatives. The other chiefs only benefit their own people.
Part III: OUR TRADITIONAL LIFE

by Kayana Nokaya

In the Khwe communities today people complain a lot about hunger. Our old people are given food by the government, and we mostly eat mealie meal and relish, which we make from leaves and vegetables we can find. But many of us now live together therefore we cannot find enough for all of us. Sometimes we add fish or goat meat if we have it, but mostly we eat porridge and drink black tea or coffee. Our small children are given supplementary food by the clinics if we can get there and if we know the procedures to register them and sometimes we can buy or get beans to cook with our porridge. In summer time when there is good rain we can plant some mahangu or mealies and beans, but it does not work every year. This is the same for the Bugakhwe and the ||Anikhwe, although the food we ate in the past was different, according to the places we lived in. Nowadays wild food is not easy to get. But it was not always like this. Our old people remember times of abundance of food when we were still hunting and gathering.
“We lived from hunting and gathering and these two ways of life mentioned were the most important part of our lives in the past used by our grandparents.”

*Therenga Dirawe says:*

In the past we lived by hunting and gathering tceu (false mopane). Our elders taught us how to gather wild fruits.

*Moronga Ntemang explains that most gathering was done by the women:*

Women were known to be gathering food in the past. When they wanted to gather wild food, they used to take a |oë (stick) with them for digging up the wild food and after collecting it they would cook the food. This is what they did while their husbands were hunting wild animals. The kinds of foods gathered were monkey orange, tc'inyá (*Diospyros chamaethamnus* Mildbr), |gom (manketti tree) and others were kyara (peeling-bark ochna), tceu (false mopane) and ce (grewia).
Peter Goro says the men also helped in gathering:

The gathering was often done by the women, but the men just helped them climbing trees to pick and bring the ripe fruit down to the ground, so that it could be collected easily. The men could help the women with the gathering, but the women could not help the men with hunting. This was the key to our life in the past.

Ôâna Djami agrees on this point:

In the past the women did the gathering. They gathered wild food such as fruits and roots. They used to gather with their bags known as kho-]êma (leather bags). These bags were made from eland skin, mainly the skin of a young or baby eland.

In the camp, women used to gather fruits like monkey orange. There were two types of monkey orange: ±qoeya and |x’oana.

Naxani (mobola plum) fruits were of the dried fruit type and were used to make traditional beer. It tasted similar to the sugar of today. There were some other types of fruit known as tceu (false mopane). Its colour was red and it was used for body lotion and to clean the body when you bathed.
Naxani fruit, tceu fruit, du-|om (false brandy bush) fruit, llqani fruit (Kalahari sand raisin) and tc’oere (false wild medlar) fruit were known as dried fruits which were used by the Khwe communities everywhere. Of these dried fruits, some tasted like sugar and some not, for example naxani, |qom, llqani and tc’oere fruit were sweet to taste, but tceu fruits were not sweet to taste. These food types gave us a balanced diet.

*And #Geru Mananyana says:*
If the men failed in the hunt, then the women might have collected wild fruit and that meant that there would be something to eat at the camp.

*#Ogoè Tendere says about veld-foods:*
In the past we lived from ||qani wild fruits, vegetables and python. Today we are no longer using or eating any of these foods, because of the government.

*Monnye Kgaranga mentions some other important veld foods:*
In the past we lived by using knives, spears and doroxo (three-pronged stick). These were our tools used for cooking, and we used nets or fishnets. Even now some people are still using fishnets. We, the ladies, gathered “do” (makhungara or water lily) and koa (tshwii, or water lily), while the men used to hunt animals. (A doroxo is a short stick used in cooking to stir things. At the stirring end there are two small pieces of stick pushed through holes in the handle at right angles to each other, thus forming a cross, and the stick is twizzled between the hands.)
We lived mainly depending on vegetables: tcuk’om, tcindjere (bird plum), ||’uwa, koa, do and also fish. We ate tcuk’om, tceuyi, koa, do and fish. When koa was cooked, it was mixed with fish, and even do was mixed with fish.

*Moronga Ntemang mentions more veldfoods:*

There were so many plant resources that we gathered in the past, and here are the names of the plant food that we gathered. They are for example tceu (false mopane), and this food was used as a mixture for any type of food. Tceu was used to mix with edible leaves, and its colour is red like the tomato sauce of today. Tceu was also used in mixing with meat and mealie meal porridge. In the past we used to eat tceu with animal skin.

There was also another type of food gathered called |qom (manketti tree). |qom was eaten with animal meat and animal skin cooked together, and these two types of plant resources were very important to the Khwe people in the past. And even the animal is not fat enough you can add Tceu or |qom and taste of the meat will be palatable/nice. In the past we were not like the tribes we were like the whites, we made oil from kyara tree and boiled it purified like the whites do. These foods were very nice to be eaten.
There was also another type of food and its name was tûmbe (Kalahari potberry). Tûmbe was the best food type, because if you gathered it in this year, it would last for two years. This is how long you would be able to keep and eat it. This food tasted sweet.

There were also other plant resources that we gathered in the past, and one was kyara (peeling-bark ochna). Kyara produced cooking oil for us in the past. After the food was gathered the Khwe people used to stamp the kyara and water, while boiling, and when they stamped this mixture, they used to sing its songs. This was done by the older women only. The oil that they produced could be as much as 20 litres within two days.

There was also another plant that we used to gather in the past, and its name was naxani (mobola plum). Naxani was also important to the Khwe people and it was very nice and sweet tasting. Naxani was baked like groundnuts. These nuts were known as cu (nut). The outer part of the nut is edible and the inner part is called kuu and this is also edible. When we had baked the nuts, we stamped the nuts of kuu, and these nuts were like our traditional chocolate which was nice to eat. When we finished stamping the nuts, we rolled it in the size of one’s arm and we could store it for future use. It was dried in the sun to harden, and then could be eaten at any time. When the nut was dried in the sun, then we could break pieces off with an axe to boil it to become soft to eat. This is the food that gave us fat on our bodies in the past. When you see a Khwe person and he looks very fat, then you know it is this food that provided the fat.
Atco Tendere also talks about the food they gathered:
We used to hunt tortoise and monitor lizard and snakes called xunixuni. We were also gathering |qani food and |qom food, and these were the foods that we were surviving on in the past. The present life today is not quite as nice.

He also remembers where the food could be found:
The Kuruxom area has naxani food and tceu, and tûmbe food and ce. And these are the names of other places where we could get plenty of veldfood in the past, they are |Uxa, and Tcâtcâxa.
This present life I do not understand very well. The places where we used to gather veldfood are no longer like it used to be in the past. Today this veldfood has died out; it is not like before. We still want to gather these veldfoods, but the border fence has stopped our gathering of veldfood.

"Tortoise" by Wde Kx'uni tu
He also explains about oil:

We got oil from kyara (peeling-bark ochna). The kyara fruits were gathered and brought to the camp. These fruits were put in a hole. The fruits were cooked in clay pots and we stirred them and the oil came out and formed a layer on the liquid. After that, we filtered the oil from the liquid and as we filtered the oil from the liquid, we then cooked the oil alone in the clay pots. We cooked the oil till it boiled and when it stopped boiling we knew that the oil was ready.

Maruta Diyonga says:

We Khwe made our traditional beer from honey that was separated from the bees' wax. The honey was called thovo in the Khwe language and dini-caca was beer from honey. There were different ways of making the beer and it was very strong. The Khwe youth were not allowed to drink it, only adult men and a few Khwe ladies were allowed to drink this type of beer in the past; it was like wine. Beer was also made from the tree fruits called x'aro (buffalo thorn) and qom. First they were boiled, then covered and allowed to cool without filtration. This type of beer became very strong soon, and very soon was drinkable, like wine. These were some Khwe traditional beers made in the past when we lived generously and in peace.
Hunting

“When hunting we thought of what our grandparents had taught us”

by Peter Goro

Peter Goro begins to explain about the hunting skills of the past:

In the past when hunting wildlife we said that everything we found was good enough to eat, even animals killed by lions were considered as part of your hunt. Hunting skills were used and practiced and trained before your real life actually began. When hunting we thought of what our grandparents had taught us. There were also ways of story telling which helped and taught us how to attack a lion, when it had killed another animal like a ||xuu (warthog).
"I was hunting but I did not destroy my wildlife. I took care of my animals every day, because they would reproduce for me and my family and we knew that we would have food for the future."

*Maruta Diyonga says more about father and son:*

The father showed the son the wildlife and the footprints of the animals down on their hunt. We also showed our sons the different snakes, their colour and size and the poisonous ones that were very dangerous. This was our traditional school for training skills.

*Moyo Tcinde says about learning the skills of hunting:*

I was taught by my father. When he went hunting I used to go with him, so I could see how he followed the prints of an animal with dogs while he was with me. That is when I saw and learned how to follow the footprints of an animal. We used sticks when there was much grass to remove the grass and then we were able to see the animal prints. If it was a big animal like a giraffe we could see it on the broken grass.

*Peter Goro explains how hunting was part of the life of the past:*

I am just a person who lived a happy life in the past with gathering of fruits and hunting. I was hunting but I did not destroy my wildlife in the past. I took care of my animals everyday, because they would reproduce for me and my family and we knew that we would have food for the future or the next generation.

In the past I used bow and arrows for hunting, and this way was very good, because the animals did not run away far from where the hunters stayed, like they do now since using guns and horses.
When I killed an animal I ate all the parts and used the skin for clothes and also for eating. Only the bones remained. This was our life from the time of our great grandparents.

_Chumbo Maraka adds to this:_

In the olden days, the Khwe community were known as hunters and gatherers. They used to hunt wildlife and gather up wild food, for example they collected dini (honey), tcinde (another type of honey) and gathered some wild fruits like ǂûmbe, kyara, |x’oana, wild oranges, ce fruit, tc’inyâ and such kind of food.

In the past we did not use guns to kill animals. Gunshot sounds chases the animals away from us. But in the past, the Khwe people hunted with bows and arrows, because this was the best method of killing animals and was known as the "silent killing" of animals, and the other animals did not even know that people were killing them.

*Traditional weapons*
The animals that we used to kill in the past were doa (kudu) and du (eland) and others, and in the group of animals the older ones were being killed not the young ones. This was how we controlled and grazed our animals in the past.

"Eland" by Oana Djami

"Wildlife animals were known as the Khwe farm."

Geru Mananyana says:
There were many ways that we used to graze our animals. Wildlife animals were known as the Khwe farm. What I am saying is that we did not use to kill many animals, only one at a time. This is how we controlled the animals.

The skill we used most to kill the animals was "trapping". It was the best way because we only killed one at a time and the other animals did not even know when one of them had been killed.
Moronga Ntemang adds to this:

When the hunters had tracked and killed an animal, its meat had to be divided up for the families because we were generous at that time.

If the animal did not die nearby, the hunter would go back to the camp, and would not be allowed to eat the food cooked in the camp until the following day. He was only allowed to drink water and smoke pipe, which would mean that the hunter did not know whether the animal was dead or not, and this was part of the beliefs of the Khwe Community.

Then on the following day the hunter had to collect his family (men and women) to follow the animal that he had shot the previous day. They had to carry its meat, and after skinning it some men used to carry the meat on their shoulders and the women carried the meat on their heads.

Maruta Diyonga talks about lions:

During the hunt, you may find a lion that had killed an animal called ||xuu (warthog) and even though you were alone on your hunt, you would start to attack the lion trying to get it away from the warthog. This was the time to be brave and drive the lion away from its meat, so that you can take it to the camp. Before the meat from the hunt could be eaten the elder men had to eat first, then the meat was shared for the family to eat.
Mashika Maraka says:
If after hunting the man was not able to come home, he stayed at the meeting place called têêl||ga (men's meeting place) until he got water for drinking. When the hunter had killed a big animal the hunter had to sleep on the earth to show that he had killed a big animal. While the hunter slept like this, the other men would meet him at têêl||ga, and then he would greet the other men and start telling his hunting story or experiences that he had during his hunt.

Ôâna Djami talks about hunting camps:
Guni hunting and gathering is whereby the Khwe community hunted a long way from the old camp and stayed away several days in the new camp and then went back to the old camp. During this hunt the whole community left the old camp.

by Chumbo Maraka
We moved to camp at a waterhole that had good plant food and started preparing the trapping ropes. After preparing these ropes for trapping, we used to prepare some fences across the spoor (paths) of the animals. In the animal spoor, we made small gates where the fence crossed the animal path, and then we put up the traps in the gates, and that would be the time to eat meat.

"It is not good if you do not respect your own culture"

Tanaxu Khôâkx'oxo mentions respect:

Everything was cheap for us, not like today. If you were hunting you could find animals anywhere because we respected the law of hunting in the bush. Today none of us would be lucky even if we could still hunt, because today's people do not respect our tradition or our culture as in the past. It is not good if you do not respect your own culture, but you respect other people's cultures. Even for God it is not good, and if you lose respect for the culture God has given you, God will no longer give you what you want in life.

"If you lose respect for the culture God has given you, God will no longer give you what you want in life."
Water

“Water from the tree hollow known as yica was the Khwe community’s storage place of water in the past.”

A khuru (calabash)

Mashika Maraka talks about cool water:

In the hot season, we used to track animals. In this season, we collected water in containers we had with us while we were tracking. The containers were called khuru (calabash). These khuru containers cooled the water like frozen water. This water enabled the hunter to cool his body and to reduce the tiredness of his body muscles. When you drink this water, your body will function strong.

When we started tracking, we placed a khuru container in a hole and covered it with sand under a big shaded tree like a tceu tree or |qom (manketti) tree. These containers were placed in an eastern direction every time. After killing this animal, then you remembered the place where you had placed the water container, and then you came back to it.
Ôâna Djami also talks of traditional water:

Water from the tree hollow known as yica, was the Khwe storage place of water in the past. This was rain water. Even today they use this system. Grass was used to suck water from the tree hollow into the mouth of a person when drinking. This grass was known as ǂami and formed a tube.

That was the good life of the Khwe community in the past. We lived generously and in peace, but the past life has disappeared into the present way of life that we are living today.
Fire & Burning the Veld

“When the winter season came, we started burning veld fires. We controlled the fire so that it did not burn a long way into the veld and killed our veld food.”

|Atko and Tcserica talk about fire in the past:

We did not know the modern fire. We got fire from these trees: n|gao (mukwa) and |qom (manketti) were used for setting fire in the past. And some other trees that we were using to get fire from were naxani and ||goro (Kalahari potberry).

This was how we lived in the past and it was like that. This time was our peaceful time. Those times we did not know anything about what happens today. The life that is happening today has changed our traditional way of life of the past.

Yiceu Ngavangava says about the traditional burning of the veld:

When the winter season came, we started burning veld fires. We did this because we controlled the fire so that it did not burn a long way into the veld and killed our veld food.
Nowadays veld fires are burnt in the hot season when the area has become very dry, and this type of veld fire is the one that kills our veld food today. The edible plants and flowers are no longer to be found today.

This month was called |X'avak'x'am -- Yes, it was the one (June). When the grass became dry, it was the time when we burned veld fires in the past --- when the grass was still a bit fresh. It was like that. Before the veld fire burnt, we harvested ǂami grass (grass which is like a straw, used for huts and mats) while the grass was still fresh.

*Kebigile Kelebetse* says also:

In the past we burnt the veld so that we could see the animals' footprints on the clear ground when we were hunting or gathering. And we could see some other wild fruits on the ground. In the dense bush you cannot see properly.
The Traditional House

*Ogoë Tendere explains:*

In the past we made mats to make our huts with and our blankets were made of animal skins. There were no other kinds of huts in the past other than mats and animal skins for clothing and blankets.

*Ogoë Tendere*

“When we wanted to go and stay somewhere else, we used to take our house with us because it was removable.”

Tanaxu Khôâkx’oxo talks about grass huts:

We used only *ami* grass that was used for a house. When the rains came we did not get wet, and when you awoke in the morning you would see Oh! it had rained during the night! When we wanted to go and stay somewhere else, we used to take our house with us because it was removable.
Those who lived in the bush did not use Setswana houses like today; they used their traditional huts that were removable. Now there is no grass for making our traditional huts and because of the rain the grass does not grow up to the needed size. Even the elephants are too many and then they eat up the grass. The cattle also eat the grass. When we moved from one place to another we removed our huts, the women took the blankets and some other property and then we went where there was plenty of water and food.

|Atco also says:|

We did not build this type of hut in the past. We used to live in Gyaragyara. Our hut was made of tcere poles, and ‡ami grass mats and ‡ami grass and this was how we lived and built our traditional huts. When the rains came, we got into these huts and no raindrops would penetrate these huts.
Therenga Dirawa says:

We lived in a traditional hut and sometimes if there was no rain we did not make huts and just stayed without huts. Then if it rained we could make huts. Our huts were made of ami and gyaragyara (cyperus papyrus from the pans). They taught us how to make huts by taking small branches and putting them together. Then you put special grass on top of the branches. When you have finished making a hut, even the rain will not come in to make you wet, and you can even make a fire and cook your food in the hut, as you like.

Nyando You says about the old days:

During that time, the women would be harvesting grass for thatching, which was called mokamakama, and it was also used for spreading on the ground. Some of the other men would be chopping down sticks for the roof, and making a sort of bed on which the women could put the grass to protect it from pests. The grass was divided into bundles after being combed. After everything was completed, like the harvesting and the making of the wooden bed for the grass that was collected, then they could start building the house. These houses were built in such a way, that the small sticks were crossed tightly with the idea that not even a drop of rain water could find its way through it. That was their traditional way of building their houses.
"We made djoara as a kraal for the lions not to get inside our huts and eat us."

Tanaxu Khôâkx’oxo talks about lions around the home:

We were afraid of the lions, if you did not have djoara, the lion could come and eat you during the night while you were asleep. The djoara was our fence made with big strong poles so that the lion could not get in and catch someone during the night.

When we were in a new village we made a djoara and after finishing it, we also made huts inside the djoara. If the lion came at night it would just walk around the djoara. If you made the poles too short the lion could jump over and catch you, so this is how we tried to protect ourselves.

by Peter Goro
Therenga Dirawa also also talks of djoara:

We made djoara as a kraal for the lions not to get inside our huts and eat us. Djoara was made of strong poles that were very close to each other. The holes were very deep so that the lion could not get inside our djoara.

Then if the lion came at night where we were, it would just walk around the djoara. And if we moved to another place we closed our djoara, then we could go. When we arrived where we wanted to go we made another djoara. When coming back to your old place you would find our djoara still there. The hyena ate one man when the djoara was not closed.

by Khweca Murapa
Traditional Clothes

"Ogoë Tendere talks about the clothes of the past:
We wore animal skins. After a kudu or duiker had been killed, the skin would be softened and clothes would be made of it.

“We used the skins of the animals that we killed and made clothes for both men and women.”

Mnmye Kg lantern of ||X’oakao also says:
We used the skins of the animals that we killed and made clothes for both men and women. The ||ANI used animals like djo and leetswei (lechwe), while the Bugakhwe used the skins of duikers, kudu and other animals for making their clothes. We used animal skins for clothes for the women to wear. They were given a big piece of skin to put in front of them, which was decorated with jewellery. And our children used to be carried about in animal skins. At that time there were no white men; the first white man came to N|amacere and his name was Smith. By that time we started buying blankets."
Ogoë Tendere talks about washing the clothes:

They were washed with \textit{|qom} (\textit{mangetti} tree) fat, and \textit{kyeu} (short trousers made of animal skins) was also washed with \textit{|qom} fat.

Ôâna Djami describes the making of clothes:

In the old days there were some activities done by the Khwe communities, for example making sewing threads from animals. We got our sewing threads from the backbone of the \textit{wanda} (springhare) and made it from the long sinews that were white in colour. This then was the sewing thread for making leather clothes of the Khwe community. Threads made from \textit{wanda} were similar to artificial threads made for sewing today.

When the hunters killed a springhare, the old men had to call the young gentlemen to teach them how to separate the threads and make threads to use for sewing clothes. The older men taught the young ones how to sew leather clothes and then the old men also judged their skill and taught them how to make the different sizes. So the old men were the teachers of the young men in the olden days. They taught the young men how to sew leather blankets, clothes, bags and leather shoes. These were called \textit{||avo} (shoes), \textit{kyeu} and \textit{ku} are both men's clothes in Khwe language and all these clothes were made from animal skin.
Nyando Yeu explains about the softening of the skins:

The skins were made soft by applying animal fat, and then putting it in the sun so that the fat could seep into the skin. After that, the skin was softened by hand. The skin was supported by small sticks on the ground, so that it could dry while it was being stretched. Then when the skin was completely dry, the hair was removed so the skin was not hairy. The roots of the tcere (silver terminalia) tree were used to change the colour of the skin by rubbing it into the skin.

Thereafter the skin could be cut into various shapes, and blankets and clothes could be made out of it as well the piece of leather that we used to support a child against the mother’s back (o-iá or avago). This work was only done by the men.

_A baby in an avago (o-iá)_
Ôâna Djami about women's clothes:
The women also used to wear leather clothes. Their leather
clothes were known as kyeu and there was powder that the
women used after wearing this leather clothing. This women's
lotion or powder was not used by the men. There were also
some trees that were used for making lotions and powders
known as the |garo-nguyi (weeping wattle) and n|gao (mukwa)
trees in Khwe language. This lotion or powder had an odd
smell, but a nice smell, not bad. They were made from
dead wood or dead trees (n|gao and |garo-nguyi trees).
This was made into powder by stamping in mortars.
After the powdering process they used to mix the
powder with animal fats.

Tanaxu Khôåkx'oxo talks about traditional
shoes:
We used ngyave (giraffe) skin to make
boots. There were old people who knew
how to make shoes with animal skins.
The shoes were not worn when it was
raining because the shoes would be
bad. When the sun was shining you
could hunt with your shoes on, but
not in the rainy season. Even
thorns could not injure you, and
you could just run in the bush.

Ôâna Djami agrees:
In the past the community
used to make traditional shoes
from giraffe leather. This type
of shoes was made in all sizes
from adults to young children.
There were some other animal
skins that the community used
to make shoes with as well,
namely du (eland), |ao (buffalo)
and also the n|gu (gemsbok).

by Chumbo Maraka
Missing Traditional Life

"In the olden days we had animal folk tales, and these were our lessons in those times."

Peter Goro talks about tales:
In the olden days we had animal folk tales, and these were our lessons in those times. These tales were narrated by our grandparents, parents and elder people, and included animal songs, bird songs and they were a lesson of life, and our leisure time. It was done in the evening when it got dark and the lesson was to teach us the way of life for the future generation. Today life is difficult to live in.

Chumbo Maraka says about good old traditional life:
In the olden days, there was good rainfall and a good view of wild life and natural features, and at that time the Khwe communities used the shelter of traditional huts. The people enjoyed their past life, because there was nothing that they suffered from such as diseases like HIV/AIDS today, hunger and poverty problems. In the past they used to eat plenty of food types that protected the Khwe community against the diseases of the present life. They ate a good balanced diet with food types like dini (honey), which is known as the traditional sugar of the Khwe, unlike the sugar of today.

The Khwe community does not know what to do about the present life and would like to encourage the government to allow us our tradition and culture. We also do not know why the government has stopped our language.
"What I miss most about the old days is the traditional dancing of the Khwe communities."

Ôâna Djami says he misses the dancing:

What I miss most about the old days is the traditional dancing of the Khwe communities. There were two types of traditional dancing: yeu|i and |ana dancing. These traditional dances were different. |Ana was danced standing and yeu|i was danced sitting down.

When dancing these traditional dances, they used some powders for healing people. This powder was made from the n|gao tree. The colour of the n|gao powder was red even today. This powder was made from n|gao dead wood stamped in a mortar. This tree was known as God's tree.