

Basel Mission Archives

"Ramseyer's Report of a Journey in the Anum District"

Title: "Ramseyer's Report of a Journey in the Anum District"

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Description: He describes the Anyinam Terry in some detail, a real piece of 'African technology' (he clearly means this in a complimentary sense, offering the Twi 'abibifio nyansa'). It is a raft 8' square whose main timbers are three stout forked branches. While one arm lies in the water and thus carries the sticks which make up the platform, the others stand up at an angle of 45°, the cable, made of creepers, runs behind these arms, and so the ferryman needs no very great strength to get to the other side. (Ramseyer says he does this 'with the help of the current') First day from Begoro - only four hours through rain along hunters' paths (they had a guide and needed him) - spending half the day and the night in two wallless shelters. Second day the Akrum River had to be crossed on submerged tree trunk whose position was indicated by a creeper stretching across the river - at the lowest point of the crossing the fast-flowing river was up to Ramseyer's breast (the journey was being undertaken in the second half of May). They spent the night in the friendly hamlet Asesewa. Third day to Gyakiti (the Akwamu part of the trek is not noted in detail); Ramseyer meditating on the plunder of the Anum station attributes the appearance of doors and windows and mattresses in this area to that event. Fourth day to Anum crossing the Volta at Pese apparently with no difficulty about the supply of a canoe. Three day stay in Anum. Eighth day - Boso Kpalime, a Tonko village where Ramseyer met individuals he had known in the days of his Kumasi captivity - these were a people who had accepted the Asante overlordship only to find that part of them were sold into slavery to the west. In the troubles of the last few years many had been able to return to their home. They were forced to make a detour to the south of the Abo, since the river was too high to be crossed other than by boat. They slept in an unnamed village on the south side of the Abo Volta Confluence, much troubled by mosquitos. Ninth day - a three hour journey on the Volta in a canoe 20' long and 4' wide - they spent the night at Botoku. Tenth day - Tutunya, a smallish place, but the centre of a number of other nearby villages. No member of the community is from Tutunya itself, and the school is very small. Here he met his old Kumasi nurse, Abena (see the article 'From our advanced posts on the River Volta' in Heidenbote 1893 p. 91). One aspect of this meeting not printed in Heidenbote- is the fact that on her elbows and knees this lady was wearing protective materials put there by the family of her late husband (died two months before). Ramseyer cut these off with his pocket knife, called the family to him and pointed out that it was God who had saved Abena from the Asantes and she should trust in him. Kpando did not make a good impression - many of the people there for trade have no good reputation and he considers that a place where there are coastal people and people from the interior makes for 'hard ground'. The only Christian he met was an Anum carpenter. The same day they reached Ntwumuru where Ramseyer obviously feels the work is being well done,

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though because of the language problem there were pupils in the school who could not answer him a word. Eleventh day to Konsu via Wurupon, where they had a friendly conversation with the chief fetish priest. Ramseyer pressed him on the point that he does not shake hands with people. Kwame Akura at Konsu has few inhabitants but 'every day' is full of travellers going north or south so that it is often difficult to find a lodging, There were two groups of Mohammedans there the same night as Ramseyer, one with 3 nice horses. Twelfth day to Worawora, passing Akaa, the first town in Buem, and the best built, Among Clerk's Anum workmen are none who have worked on building before, especially no mason. Clerk he heard preaching that Christianity involved throwing off fear and indeed the Buem people live in a constant state of fear of poisoning, and fear to be seen slaughtering a chicken in case a neighbour sees them and concludes therefore that they have money. The Kwahus used to be like that but now though few Christians many laugh at their old fears. There is one flat-roofed house in Worawora, it belongs to the fetish priest. Thirteenth and fourteenth day in Worawora. Clerk reported that, were it not for slavery, more people would be becoming Christians. Boys were coming forward to school very slowly. Fifteenth day - to Gyasekan, where they preached against the Kwahu Dukoman war (Ramseyer reckoned Gyasekan took the lead in this). (He also remarks that Clerk was able to save some Kwahu Dukomanehe from death). Seventeenth day in Ntwumuru again (via Kwame Akura). The rest of the journey through Bremen territory to the east of the Basel Krepe stations. It includes the information that in a battle in the 1869-74 war around the hill called Gemmi the defenders killed several Asantes including a prince by rolling stone blocks down the hillside.

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