

# Basel Mission Archives

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"Report from Eisenschmid about his Journey to Abetifi (Akem and Okrau)"

**Title:** "Report from Eisenschmid about his Journey to Abetifi (Akem and Okrau)"

**Ref. number:** D-01.30.XII..125

**Date:** Proper date: 28.02.1878

**Description:** A part of the report is printed in Heidenbote 1878 p 51 (The bulk of the unprinted material is concerned with Eisenschmid's impressions on a return to Kibi).. In discussing Begoro he says that he had visited the station several times before, the last time for three weeks on account of trying to get information about Ramseyer and Kuhne during their captivity. It was also visited repeatedly by catechists before the proposal was made to found a station there, and the Begoro people were familiar with the work of the missionaries in Kibi. This is (he implies) a contrast with the situation in Abetifi, and helps to explain the different rates at which it has proved possible to build up the Christian community in the two towns. Reporting on the position of the station at Abetifi, Eisenschmid says that Catechist Sakyi had been a cause of anxiety - he was heavily in debt, and had turned to trading, and his marriage status was not clear. But the missionaries on the station are more satisfied with him now. In Kibi there were some christian wives who had been servant-girls in his household. They had gone their own way for a time, and then returned to the church. Equally there were men (including one elder) who had been schoolboys or servants, who had left the community for a time, and then returned. He also recognised many people whom he had known before when they were heathens. Citing as especially noteworthy the case of Aboagye (Boakye). He first met Aboagye when visiting his paralysed brother Noa Asante. The latter had learned to read, and busied himself in his days of sickness in reading the bible, and died as a Christian. Aboagye meanwhile was a king's drummer - at the same time he was not at peace since he learned to read from his brother land then spent much time reading the bible and other books available to him. Whenever Eisenschmid urged him to become a Christian he would reply that he was simply a drummer of the king's. However he now had a thorn in his heart, and he must have battled over his religion for ten years. However, after such a long time, his conversion was the more decided, and he was baptised in 1877. You can see his happiness in becoming a Christian in his face and that although he was deprived of all his possessions. When the Okyenhene accused him of a debt of 5 Pereguan (36 dollars) and through false witnesses he was convicted of this before the English courts in Accra. Not that the Okyenhene profited much from this act - the sums were too small to help him much, and such an oppressive act has harmed him in the estimation of his people. Eisenschmid had already heard people talking in these terms on his journey, before he arrived in Kibi. His wife has given up the status of princess, which has done her as much good as it would a European princess. The Kibi Christians seemed to him to have healthy and happy grasp of their religion, something indeed, which followed from the battles and persecutions which they had experienced. They are deeply devoted to the Lord and to each other. He wonders if this description is too

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rosy - but that is how they seemed to him that Sunday, though they are not free of the problems of the other Christian communities. At street preaching most of the Kibi people held aloof out of fear of the Okyenhene. The heathen listeners were mostly foreigners. Eisenschmid exchanged only formal greetings with the Okyenhene. He outlines his position as one of increasing weakness - he has somewhat estranged his people with his colossal lying in Accra, and he has weakened himself by incurring so many debts in that case. The emancipation of the slaves has nowhere had so great an impact as in Akim. Large numbers made use of the emancipation, and everything has helped the spread of Christianity. On the one side there is the king with his anger and accusations. On the other one of his richest elders concluded that opposition was of little use, and when he discovered that freed Christian servants served more industriously than they had as heathen slaves he allowed every slave of his to become Christ if he wanted. If the Okyenhene had acted in this way he would not now be so weak. Kukurantumi - the 6 Christian houses of 1874 are now 17, and he is convinced after his visit that in them, an orderly and happy regime of life and work is carried on. Ampaw is 'as always' friendly disposed - but his fetish priest has forbidden him to go to services on the station.

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