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"Mohr to Begoro"

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Ref. number: D-01.31.XIV..161

Date: Proper date: 28.10.1879

Description: Concerning the out-station at Anyinam and the first baptisms there. A fairly big town, made bigger recently by the settlement of Juaben people around it. Judging by the head tax which Atta decided to raise last year, the number of inhabitants must be 1500. Hundreds of Kwahu people pass through Anyinam en route for the coast. The inhabitants partly earn their living by selling provisions to these people, although they also dig gold, and that is their chief business. Their gold fields are not as rich as those of Osino and Samang, but they are sufficient to provide for the needs of the town. (He also describes the Berem crossing - Mrs Lodholz was held up there for 4 days in July en route for Abetifi - also, hemmed in as the town is by hills, it is rather hot). Before the Kotoku people were driven away from Gyadam, the Anyinam people lived on a pretty hill the other side of the Berem. After the war they were commanded to come to this side by the distrustful Kibi king, and forced to pay heavily because like Kwabeng, in that war, although they did not fight on the side of Agyeman, neither did they join the Kibi king. Since then Anyinam has enjoyed a special - if not pleasant - care from the king in Kibi. During the Asante war the Anyinam people had a secret collaboration with the Kwahu people, for they were selling them salt. Thereon the Kibi king called the whole town to Kibi - the elders however demurred on the grounds that too few of them would be allowed to return, and paid instead a large sum of money. The King in Kibi in the last three years has received no less than 2000 dollars from this one town, and since they seldom or never have ready cash, they have had to pawn large numbers of for 4-8 £ sterling each. Even now the town is full of lackeys from Kibi whose duty it is to get the money for the king's oath, and the poor people are bitter about the bloodsucker of Kibi. Mohr draws a contrast between the religions position in Begoro and Anyinam. In Begoro there are 30 fetishes - in Anyinam only one, Tano. Many foods are forbidden to the Begoro people including the flesh of certain antelopes and certain monkeys, and they are forbidden from keeping either pigs, goats, or dogs. In Anyinam there are no agricultural or eating prohibitions. The Begoro people even bring in fetish priests from other places to prophesy. The heathen often say the Begoro people love the words of the fetishes too much. The Juabens in Anyinam have certain prohibitions, but make an exception when they are hungry. There is no prohibition on fishing in the Berem in Anyinam as there is in neighbouring Osino. Despite this comparative freedom (from the institutions of fetishism), the first Christians have had a hard battle. Their constant travelling to and from Fankyeneko displeased the people of Anyinam and they tried to dissuade them from becoming Christians by threatening to fine them on this account although catechist Obeng was able to persuade the chief against this, and Mohr himself arriving two days later warned him that if the king mishandled peaceful townsmen in this way he

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would seek for them protection from the government in Accra. The grounds of the heathen worry was the thought that these conversions were an unnecessary and unseemly break with the traditions handed down, and that it would necessarily follow that in its anger the fetish would visit the town with deaths. Was not this town as populous as others; why then was it necessarily to go elsewhere? Thus the Christians were still subject to taunts when they learned to read, or when on Sunday they started to wear European style clothes. Nevertheless many people wanted to become Christians to escape from the clutches of the avaricious heathen. Indeed many people believe that from the moment of being accepted, into the Christian community one is protected against the king's paths, against expenditure in spirit-drinking, and adultery fines. The baptisms were celebrated in the open street in Anyinam, and to each one Mohr said the Pauline formula about baptism leading to the development of a new person. The single marriage was blessed in the chapel at Begoro. Baptismal candidate biographies: Jacob Pong, Maria Pong; He is about 35, they have been married one year. He was penitent about his previous lewd life, which had led him into many debts. He was the only surviving of the eleven children born to his mother - an aged but still vigorous lady. Two of her children had been executed in Gyadam, the rest taken from her by illness. She complained of the debts which her foolish son had incurred and which she had paid off out of the results of her own work. Little is said about the wife except that she was the more intelligent of the two, and seemed to be the leader. Joseph Tenkorang; had previously worked as a collector of money for the Kibi king. His business was to handle cases where money was owing, if necessary calling on force to gain his ends. He gives the impression of being a kindly and honourable man, and it was on account of this that he gave up his duties, which involved bringing so many people into poverty. He was now in trouble with the King in Kibi for resisting his inducements to return there, and for that reason dare not go to Kibi. He has given up one of his wives, and is happy, (in baptism) to have escaped the vengeance of the lion of Kibi. Johannes Kani; a big stocky man, previously the bomma drummer. He said that previously he had with his drum forced many people into debts, or else out of the town, and during the festivals he drummed in praise of the town's gods. He decided to become a Christian because he got too drunk at the festivals. His child Frida was also baptised; she had been despaired of by the fetish priests, but Mohr hopes she may in time mend. Jonathan Aperaku; in his youth was pawned away to someone living in Gyadam. At the outbreak of the war between Gyadam and Kibi he like the other non-Gyadam pawns was put in the block's a hostages (there were 15 of them). 6 were executed after the first battle, and the rest when it was decided to remove from Gyadam, except that his master pleaded for his life, and so he was spared. He then went on the trek to Nsuayeem. It was only 5 years later that he was able to return to Anyinam. He is now about 45. In conclusion Mohr notes that some of the early opposition to the conversions may have come from the fact that two of the converts had an important place in the rituals of the Anyinan fetish. Not only was Johannes Kani an important drummer, Jacob Pong was the 'carrier' of the fetish Tano when it went with the chiefly stools of Anyinam on their journey to the river to be

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washed, and was itself washed by the priest.

- Subject:** [Archives catalogue]: Guides / Finding aids: Archives: D - Ghana: D-01 - Incoming correspondence from Ghana up to the outbreak of the First World War: D-01.31 - Ghana 1879: D-01.31.XIV. - Begoro
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