

Basel Mission Archives

"Dilger to Basel - Report of a Journey to Asante-Akim"

Title: "Dilger to Basel - Report of a Journey to Asante-Akim"

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Description: The journey took place about 10 days after his return from Begoro in the new year. He reports that part of his visit which concerned the independent province (of Asante-Akim), not under Asante. An embassy had come to them asking them for a teacher, and saying that 6 children had already been gathered for a school, and a place set aside for a teacher's house. One of the members of this embassy returned in the Company of Dilger, in order to show him the way. They passed through the Kwahu towns of Obo, Akwasino, and Akwaboa, spending the night in the latter. His people were concerned because Dilger had fever, but he took a dose of quinine and sweated out during the night. After two hours the next day, they crossed the Pra. 4 huts stand on its left bank judging by the ruins not long ago there must have been a few more. At 5 p.m. they reached Asuboa after a slow trek. Asuboa is not the capital town, but next to it. He remarks that the people of Asante-Akim are one the average-poor, and some of them are very poor. Asuboa is an example of this - they have poor huts which only offer scanty shelter, there is no source of livelihood, other than growing their own foods; indeed he saw no meat being eaten and sometimes the people have no salt. He spent two nights in Asuboa, and this gave opportunity to talk to the people (converse) till late in the nights. They were impressed with the biblical history which was related to them, and Dilger had the impression that it was a 'real balsam' to them. They also visited Dampong, one hour away, where they were received with friendliness. The women were very interested to see a real white men, the chief dashed them a hen and some eggs, and when the gift of 1 shilling from the fetish priest (a young man) was refused on the ground that they needed no token of his real friendship there, was considerable commotion to find a hen instead. En route from Asuboa to Bombata they passed the tiny village of Asankare, where Dilger felt he had never read so clearly in peoples' faces a train of sufferings. They have broken free from Asante, a fear day and night that they will be surprised by them. They had been met by an emissary of the Bombata chief on their way, who conducted them to the town, the capital of the district. There they were naked to wait under a shady tree until the chief was ready to greet them - they had to wait a long time while other chiefs who came to greet them by degrees were assembled. They made the same offer to him which had already been made by the embassy which had visited Abetifi, and Dilger replied making his position clear. In the evening he had a large body of hearers when he preached. He asked the old fetish priest if he agreed with the invitation and he said that he wanted what was good too, and if he changed his mind the people would not change their minds simply as a result - they would do what they wanted. General information on Bompata offered by Dilger: they were planting no yams out of fear, of Asante attack. They had come from Amantra, and before the town was established in

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Bopmata there was only a hunter's hut called Bombata. The next day they passed through Adomfe. Dilger was impressed by this as a nice town, lying on a small hill, its true size not revealed as one approaches from North or South, as the bulk of it lies along a hill with an East-West axis. This he feels would be a good site for an outstation, preferable to Bompata in that there were no hills suitable for an outstation in Bompata, furthermore as an immigrant settlement, the people of Bompata might one day simply move off to somewhere else. The people of Adomfe on the other hand were living there before Asantehene existed. In Komfa they received a very, friendly welcome, near Guansa they heard there was a large town called Domeabra which they missed visiting through an error. As they were leaving, Guansa 4 ambassadors of the Avantehene arrived there with the mission by cunning or bribes to win one chief away from the others, and again to declare himself under Asante. They hoped to do this by persuading people to destool an existing chief in return for money. Therefore Dilger hurried away rather than be drawn into giving the people of Guansa any advice. They made Kyekyebiase a base from which they visited Peteriensa and Abima. The latter is the village of the king of Asante-Akim. He came into Kyekyebiase to be present at their preaching there. At Kyekyebiase they were joined by the Asante ambassadors. One of Dilger's party went to visit them, but they said to him that their Word was a true one, but they served the King of Asante and wanted none of it. From Kyekyebiase they travelled to Mooso, passing on the way excellent farms bordering a good path. The people of Mooso wanted no preaching. In Nankyi they were received in a very friendly way: on the march his thoughts had been in Basel and he remembered the prayer spoken every Sunday by Pfarrer Miville concerned with the three things creation, resurrection and the coming of the Holy Ghost, so he preached on those three point. From Nankyi they returned to Bombata, and so eventually home. On the last stretch of the march to Abetifi they were called back by a young man who had decided to become a Christian. Finally Dilger transmits to the Committee the Asante-Akim request for a teacher, but says he cannot support it. Such a man would be a palavar-settler primarily, and until Asante-Akim is part of the protectorate and the English are in Kumasi, it would be best not to establish a station there. However, he would like permission to make a twice-yearly visit to Asante-Akim in order to keep in touch with the people.

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