

Basel Mission Archives

"Ramseyer to Basel"

Title: "Ramseyer to Basel"

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Date: Proper date: 20.04.1882

Description: Thanks the Committee for the suggestion that he should make a second visit to Kumasi. Most of the letter is taken up with a comment on the Committee's warning that it appeared that Ramseyer was not altogether welcome in Kumasi on account of his role in the 1869-1874 war. He writes that firstly open unwelcome was rare, both on the streets, and in the Asantehene's council. True in the latter the Bantamahene and Asafo Boakye took the lead in having an answer to his request deferred, but one factor which Ramseyer feels should be born in mind there is that there was anger and anxiety about the length of time which Boakye Tengteng was spending on the coast, and this reply can be seen as a form of retaliation against this. In any case the bulk of the court was very well disposed towards him. He asked his 'dear friend' Owusu Koko what impression the visit had made, and he said that the Asantehene himself had remarked that Ramseyer had nothing to do with the disaster which had fallen on. 'Kumasi people did not want to listen and thus the disaster happened'. Ramseyer also makes the point that hatred of the Asante outside asante colours people's impressions of what is to be expected there - and the rumours which go around the colony about events in Asante. 99% of these are false - a few days previously he had heard a rumour that Asamoah of Agogo having refused to go to Kumasi over some question of the Juaben plunder was forcibly taken there. The rumour came with the name of the man who arrested him. But yesterday two Kwahu merchants brought him greetings from Asamoah. They had just come back from Agogo. Finally, he makes the point that history has made the Asante character different from that of the other peoples on the Coast - they have a certain pride 'in having a Master', and thus are mistrustful and withdrawn towards strangers. But once you get to know them, then confidence develops and things are talked about in a much more free way. To this letter is added a series of opinions about the expedition from Basel Mission officials on the Coast: Müller writing as Akwapim/Akim District Chairman (Präses) is worried about the lack of qualified Gold Coast personnel to undertake the work of a still further extended twi district. Eisenschmid wonders who should accompany Ramseyer, and asks if any of the twi-speaking brothers are ready of their own free will to accompany him - remarking that Ramseyer has asked him to come on the expedition, but that he feels with 9 years unbroken work behind him he has too little strength for the journey. In the Eisenschmid document reporting the choice of David Asante as Ramseyer's companion one of the reasons cited is that he is from the Asante royal family, and his father stayed a long time in Kumasi.

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- Ordering:** Please contact us by email info@bmarchives.org
- Contact details:** Basel Mission Archives/ mission 21, Missionstrasse 21, 4003 Basel, tel. (+41 61 260 2232), fax: (+41 61 260 2268), info@bmarchives.org
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