

Basel Mission Archives

"Mohr to Basel: Report on a journey to Akim Kotoku"

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Ref. number: D-01.35.V..79

Date: Proper date: 15.05.1882

Description: In describing the background to his journey, he offers two reasons for the outbreak of the war in 1860 - (1) that the Gyadam people were working a new goldfield and would not give Atta of Kibi his customary 1/3 takings. (2) Agyeman refused to let Atta marry one of his woman. Begoro was at the head of the Akira forces in that war - Atta gave the Begorohene money to fight for him. Since Agyeman there have been two Akim Kotoku chiefs - Kwabena Fua and Atta Fua. Süss visited them once in their new home. 4 of the 8 Gyadam christians went to school in Akropong after the war. Present population of Akim Kotoku: Mohr calculates at 20,000, with 2 towns of the first rank, Oda and Akim Swedru. To the North-West the territory of Akira Kotoku stretches out 4 days journey to the neighbourhood of Obogu. First day - Kibi to Dompem, a farming village, on the West side of the Akim hills, Mohr describes himself as very weak, having to rest 40, 60, and 80 minutes out of Kibi. Second day - Dompem-Apiraman (4 hours). Half way between these two villages is Abohema, deserted when he was there, but occupied by the Akropong and Tekyiman when they come to dig for gold in the quiet seasons for agriculture. Third day - Apiraman to Kade. He decided not to go by the direct route Apiraman-Akanten-Osenaase-Omansi in order to see more places. On this day passed a deserted Topreman, then a newly settled village of the same name, then Boadua. Here a road leads south via Akwatia to Osenaase, where it branches to Asamankese or Omansu. This was a bad day's journey - 4 times crossing the Mmo river, once the Suboan, and once the Berem between Adankorno and Kade. Fourth day - Sunday 5th Feb - rest day at Kade. His plans to take a service were interrupted by the yam festival, held very late everywhere in Akim that year. There was great commotion even when he tried to preach. Fifth day, Kade-Wankyi. Sixth day - Wankyi, Denkyerat-ko-so, Kasawere, Oda. In Wankyi he remarks that people are interested in the gospel, but in this remote part of Akims there is still much house slavery. No-one is there helping slaves to go to law, or to escape. And in any case where could the stranger slaves go since they do not speak twi? And where should they go if they want to become Christians? Even if the masters were persuaded to free Christian slaves, unless there were a teacher or catechist present that probably would not happen. They crossed the Berem at Denkyera-ko-so a partly submerged tree trunk. Mohr contrasts the quiet and dignified welcome in Oda with that in Kumasi. Atta Fua said he did not mind his people becoming Christian, but as for him - no. Mohr gathered that Kotoku sees very few white men - then only DCs and other officers en route for Kibi. Mohr remarks that the ways in Kotoku are notably clean, due to the occasional presence of English officers. In Oda is an old town, with the houses very close together, and a new town. The chief's house is in the middle of the latter. The main street of the new town is 3 minutes long - it takes 5 minutes to cross the old town. These two big

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towns reminded him of Kpandu and Amfoi. Atta Fua wanted to know if he had brought with him any fine silk handkerchiefs, like those Süß had to sell, and made a formal request for a teacher. Seventh or eighth day. Oda-Swedru-Akyease. In Swedru the chief is Kofi Ahenkora older than Atta Fua, and there is some opposition between them. 20 years ago Silas and Kofi Ahenkora had agreed on the place for a mission station. The chief's house was a two storey building, furnished with English easy chairs, and there was an album of photos of the English royal family given to the chief by Captain Butler. Although the town is not so big as Begoro there were several other 2 storey buildings with grass roofs - fante carpenters and builders are employed in this district. (Mohr comments rather bitterly on Captain Butler having written a book after such a short stay, and having had to work through an interpreter. According to him Captain Butler's revolver seems to have bulked large in the Kotoku history of his stay.) He preached on Mark 1.15 and was much questioned about Christianity, especially about the regulations as to what Christians may or may not do. He spent the night at Akyease. Kotoku's oil produce goes through Akyease to 'Akyemfo or Saltpond'. The villages under Akyease are Osoroase and Kokobesi; near the former is Kotoku Anyinam. None of these are notable, but Anammease is a large place. Next day, Akyease-Omanso. Great receptivity to preaching, great dissatisfaction with foreign fetish priests. In reply for a request for more information he referred the questioner to the 10 Commandments. Near Omanso is a Mmosea-so, and 13 hours away Batabi, same size as Omanso. Next day, Omanso-(after ½ hour)-Asubea (1 hour) Asantema (new place) Akoreso, where he stayed the night in a two storey house built by someone long in Fante. Next day going 'home' - first passed through an unnamed settlement 'where oil is made', and after 13 hours to Asamankese, the farthest outstation of Kibis where he received news of his daughter's death; hence back as rapidly as possible. General Comments include the point that in Kotoku there is excellent clay, why not a tile industry? Using a river like the Densu they could easily supply the Accra and Akwapim market for roofing and undercut shinglew and iron. There are similar clay deposits at Dwenase and Tafo (Akim Tafo).

- 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-01.35 - Ghana 1882: D-01.35.V. - Begoro
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