

Basel Mission Archives

"Wilhelm Huppenbauer's Report for the Second Quarter of 1883"

Title: "Wilhelm Huppenbauer's Report for the Second Quarter of 1883"

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Description: There are marginal comments from Mohr who read the report in Basel. Marquart had had to leave Begoro to recuperate in Aburi after severe attacks of fever. They were happy to receive into the community in May 11 people who joined the Catechumenate, mostly young men. They were lead by a young man called Takyi, then followed two of his friends, and then his father and 7 of his sisters between the ages of 2 and 14. The event was connected with the death of Takyi's mother, her husband's only wife, which so troubled the husband that he stopped eating, and seemed likely to die as a result. Takyi went to encourage him, saying the best time to die was when God took you. He was severely tested by the subsequent death of his youngest and most loved daughter whom the heathens claimed the fetish had killed, but remained firm. Such catechumens are to be welcomed, but always with anxiety. Huppenbauer cites a young man who lapsed (Mohr adds in the margin 5 years ago) and took 4 extra wives. He is always saying that he wants to rejoin the community. Clearly Huppenbauer was eventually driven to be rude. He told him he was lying when he said this. If he wanted to become a Christian so much why did he not just do so? The man replied that the devil was too strong. Huppenbauer repeats Mohr's point that games are a drawback - citing card games. In other Akim towns and villages such games stop the ringing of the bell to call people for street preaching, and he suggested to the Begorohene that Begoro was showing itself backward in this respect; the point was taken. They have reopened the school. Huppenbauer identifies the main problem as the parent's lack of understanding of what the results of schooling might be. Huppenbauer cites one case of a girl of Christian parents putting pressure on her parents to be allowed to go to school so as not to be ignorant when she grew up. Concerning the community the Presbyters are called Jakob and Mosa. They take pains in their life and work to set a good example, though the former is rather weak when it comes to settling cases. One of the great problems is the lust for money, even among the Christians. Huppenbauer is obviously impressed by the way that this emerges in their dealings with the missionaries - prices of produce from the Christians are far higher, and the quality lower, than is the case among the heathen. When they expostulated with the congregation, the latter threatened to cut off or reduce their freewill offerings - and when the missionaries pointed out that these belonged to the community, and not to the mission account, it is not clear that they were impressed; why, they wanted to know, was it necessary for them to give themselves money? They also involved in extorting higher rates for carriers when a missionary is sick and needs to be taken to another station. Their attitude is partly an expression of the question (Huppenbauer does not claim to have heard this spoken outright): 'We have left our heathenism and our wives - what are we getting in exchange?' One of the disciplinary problems is

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stopping Christians playing cards - a fine of 1 shilling is set on that by the Christians, and 3d for disobeying the Presbyters. Huppenbauer also cites two cases of unfaithful wives. With Buck the two resident missionaries had a palaver with the chief over: (i) The prohibition over slavery was being rather loosely observed, so they asked him to repeat the prohibition publicly before a large assembly. (ii) They took up the case of Jakob the Presbyter who had been ordered to pull up some afaso yams since they were prohibited by the snail fetish. (iii) They also got reversed the ruling that no pigs and goats were to be kept in the town, although there were problems there because Mohr had allowed that prohibition to be enforced.

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