

Basel Mission Archives

"Dilger's Report of a Journey through Obogu Konogo to Agogo"

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Description: The first stop on the journey was Akwasiho at the foot of the scarp near Obo - where the chief offered to board Dilger and Kwabi in his owe house, but Dilger refused on the grounds that it was a hospital for lepers. Shortly before they entered Praso the next day they met men carrying a corpse in a basket (back to his home town presumably) and in Praso they met two women who had tended the dead man. These at first were afraid to stay in Praso because of a fear of the dead man's ghost, and also because they feared that if the missionary party fished in the Pra the fetish would kill them. However Dilger and his companions seem to have argued them out of this idea quite easily. They were involved in. preparing food for them. Dilger's party made a sort of bridge for themselves over the Pra. Next day to Asuboa (a theme common to these days is that it was raining, and Dilger arrived at night well ahead of the carriers and to avoid sitting in his wet clothes had to borrow a cloth either from the catechist or from the locals until his dry clothes arrived). At Asuboa they received a welcome from many people in the form of gifts of feed. Dilger preached on the text 'I am the way' and used the metaphor of the bad paths which he had had to walk along en route to Asuboa. In Bompata a friendly welcome, 'even' from the fetish priest. In reply to Dilger's questions about the stationing of a catechist, the chief replied that when a teacher arrived they would build him a house provided the other towns took their part; and if they moved to Amantra they would take him with them. (It is not clear whether the latter point emerged spontaneously or in reply to a question of Dilger). Dilger writes that he feels they should certainly not choose Bompeta for a mission station. They had intended to travel via Wankyi to Joaso but were visited by three Kwahus who had been trying to get a relative of theirs released from the block in Adompe. This man had been on a journey, and when he did not return a search was instituted by his family which led to his being found in the block in this town. Dilger consented to intervene, on the condition that the 3 Kwahus stayed outside the town. Inside Adompe he found an enraged populace; it is not clear what hold he had over them but the man was released next day. It partly seems a matter of his posing: he writes about trying to make the man responsible for the imprisonment fearful, and after an initial investigation he left the palavar to his catechist and carriers and walked around the town quietly smoking. It also seems however, that the townspeople were shocked that because of this panyarrying he refused to preach there. He also had the advantage that one of his carriers recognised the man who had had the Kwahu imprisoned as someone who had stolen something from him when they were both travelling in Fante. Part of the settlement was that Dilger promised to try to ensure that the Kwahu who was in debt with the Adompe man involved did in fact pay the debt. (During an interval in these affairs he preached in Kurofa) Next day via Wankyi to Joaso (presumably - spelt Guaso here). This

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is three villages in fact, one of them on the Obogu road; one of theta on the Konongo road. They spent the night in the former, where the chief remarked that when the missionaries had a station in Asante Akim, everyone would be free to believe what he wanted. Dilger remarked in return that they would not force people to become Christians, and that history showed that thousands of people who felt as he felt found that they were persuaded by God without their own will acting - God himself had converted them. Next day they went to Obogu where, discussing the question of a Basel Mission station, the chief said that he would have nothing to do with co-operation with Asante Akim. The catechist from Kibi could come and preach in his town. Next day to Konongo, where they did not receive a warm welcome, and the king seeks to have acted more ceremoniously and more formally towards them. The following day they visited 3 of the 25 Odumase villages (one of them being the residence of the Odumase chief), and then on to Patriensa (the only mention of Asante so far is the statement that Konongo was the frontier town and the king took some of his ceremonial from what he must have seen in Kumasi). Patriensa used to be built on three hills - now they have gathered together into a very pretty village on one hill. The following day again they travelled via Obima and Kyekyebiase to Dwiransa. There is some new material on Kumawu - he tried collecting stories as the significance of the name, and heard the story about the Kum tree which died; also that when Kumase was built Kumawu was the model, but thereafter had to change its name; also that when God was distributing people in the forest with axes the man he put down in Kumawu broke his axe, and so the town is really called 'the broken axe' (Kuma-abu). They marched from Kumawu to Agogo in one days passing only small hamlets, and hunter's houses. In the second part of the march apparently most of the inhabitants of such settlements turned out not to be able to speak twi, being 'donkos'. In Agogo they had to wait a long time to meet the Agogohene - he was making fetish. Dilger remarks on meeting his fine silk cloth, and much gold on the fingers. Dilger here preached in English, Kwabi translating into Twi (He adds that when he is tired and has a catechist with him who is familiar with English and Twi, he prefers to preach in English as it is less demanding to do so.). The Agogohene appears to have asked him to preach on one of the texts which he had used in Kumawu. Returning from Agogo they marched direct to Abene taking five hours the first days after which they had to sleep in the forest, and 10 hours the next. He was, he remarks, glad to be back in his homeland.

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