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"Johannes Müller's Report on the Journey in Nkonya and Buem (Part 3)"

Title: "Johannes Müller's Report on the Journey in Nkonya and Buem (Part 3)"

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Description: Part 1 and Part 2 of the report are in the numbers 41 and 42. In Botoku the fetish in the house where they slept was a shrub, beneath which stood a bowl of water. One of the Müller's companions asked someone living in the house why he did not cut it down - the reply was that he was not the owner of the house. A 25 year old man is described as the owner - the house a compound with 4 small huts. Therefore he had not the right. Botoku has few people, though it has villages around which belong to it. The people were taken into captivity in Kumasi, many of the men have taken the opportunity to escape. Müller cites one sent to fetch salt from Cape Coast who took the opportunity that journey offered to escape. The women and children are still by and large in Asante. Müller thinks their religiosity is probably connected with the 1869 disaster. They are trying to insure against its re-occurrence. In the Tusuta villages they met few people because here, as elsewhere, everybody was busy planting. Those they did meet were not very interested in their message and claimed that they had no freedom to do anything about it - if the chief and elders became Christians, they would do. Anvoi he estimates at less than 1000 inhabitants, though 10 villages were named as belonging to the town. There is a weekly market in Anvoi. The tour they made from Anvoi on January 13th he says was through the Tauro district. Müller's picture is of acute anxiety giving way rapidly to welcome and interest when they made it clear that they were missionaries. The pottery he describes as being carried on without tools - the people bring the clay from quite a distance and make the pots in their houses. He remarks that in the Tauro area the people understood little Twi, but in Siaove they understood Twi well. They also wanted a teacher. In Kpando they stayed in the best house in the town - it belonged to the chief's brother. When they arrived the market had not started. They were pressed to send a teacher not by the chief but by his brother, and by the Mohammedan chief who had made the same request three years earlier. There were 500-600 people at the Kpando market - though there were no booths, the people brought their own stools and set out their wares in the containers in which they had come. Currency need was cowries and English money. To the list of articles on sale given by Hall (see No. 43), Müller adds only tools - hoes, cutlasses, axes, knives. 10-12 villages belong to Kpando. In connection with Ntwumuru Müller remarks that Nkonya people have changed from their old six-day-week - their rest-days all fall on the same day of the 7 day week, and the same is true of the markets at Anvoi and Kpando. In Ntwumuru the rest day was a Saturday. Müller remarks how energetically the people were working at their planting although they appeared so poor. Their reception was very boisterous in Ntwumuru. Hall was frequently interrupted by the noise. He was surprised to be able to buy oranges there. In Ntwumuru Hall had a night conversation with several people about a certain notable Mohammedan who

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had been murdered because of his quarrelsomeness, others that the cause was the Krakye's lust for gold. Müller himself comments that he does not rely on the reports of murders in Buem and Nkonya, though a woman told them about a thicket which the robbers used as cover - and he repeats the remark that 5 men are sacrificed annually to the fetish Sia in Wurupon. Several men visited them repeatedly in Ntwumuru -one of them spoke the wish that a school should be opened in Ntwumuru. Müller evidently understood this as school in the real sense, because he says, they intended to send their children to it. Other young men wanted to be taught English, and indeed gave Hall no peace until he had taught them some English words. The Ntwumuru chief said that they were now English subjects, and showed Müller the treaty concluded with Commandant Williams. The text showed, however, that the treaty was not binding, and only said that if the Nkonya people had not gone back on the idea by the end of one year they would be numbered in the English Colony. The people and the chief showed little real desire for the gospel. Müller repeats Hall's material on the state of criminal law in Nkonya and reckons they actually saw Sia's death drums at the entrance to Wurupon. Discussing the two Buem Christians they met Müller says they were both baptised at Apirede, the man being a carpenter by trade. In Konso they came across an old woman who had been accused of killing through witchcraft, and was fleeing from having to take the Odum ordeal. The 'palaver' in Tewa was concluded each day with the dividing up of meat among the men at the meeting. Müller's comment on Tewa as a whole was that the people had no ear for the gospel this time - among those present at street preaching was a young fetish priest called Amangnya who listened quietly but went away before they had left the village. The owner of the house with the only European style door in Worawora is described as a young man. He was an acquaintance of George Kwasi, the Kpalime Christian who was carrying a load for Müller and acting as their guide. In Kugya he remarks at the end of the repeated sermon was that they wanted to find water. Müller was interested to see that the hut where they had slept three years ago, then new and not yet inhabited, was no broken down and uninhabitable. In Gyasekan Hall went so far as to advise them to give up the-carrying of the dead and the Odum drink, saying that these were no longer done in Akwapim and there was peace there now. He was heard without an uproar. In Borada it was the missionaries who suggested that they should take a couple of boys to Akropong to learn to read. The chief agreed, the boys were selected, but then the fetish priests intervened, and the plan had to be dropped. Müller had stressed the usefulness of having one of your own people who could read and write letters. Hall's sermon was based on Luke 18.31. One of Hall's points was that the fetish priests lived in the same poverty and suffered the same illnesses as everyone else 'The Son of God was come to open the eyes of the blind, to help them in every respect out of their poverty, and to open their eyes so that they could see the kingdom of God.' The linguist's question stressed the help they believed they received from fetishes in time of illness, and also the disciplinary function they believed the fetishes performed. The fetishes have power over life and death. The missionaries answer to this was apparently to point out that although the Christians have thrown their fetishes away they still die -at

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this remark the whole assembly broke out into a storm of laughter. The chief welcomed the fact that they had heard the Word of God as it is believed in Akwapim and Europe. He also remarked that in their land things changed - before they had worn clothes made from the bark of trees, now they wore cotton clothes. They felt most welcome in Borada. Müller judges the people are for the gospel - in Gyasekan the chief offered them carriers, and in Borada boys went with them carrying their luggage for part of the way to the next place. The Ho outstation called Jerusalem was by the village of Tschokpoe. The interior of an Anvoi house is described in some detail. The walls decorated with strings of beads and amulets. The grass roof came down to within 3' of the ground, so that the entrance was half-hidden, and you had to bend low to get inside. There was no table, chair, or window-shutter - they are nowhere to be found in this region. The furniture consisted of earthenware pots, mats, and one or two half-moon shaped seats about 1' high. A loom stood in the house and a small hearth on which were placed amulets. The children in the slave-party which they saw were aged 12+15 according to Müller. He considers people become more friendly and welcoming as one went inland. The occasion for this comment was the warm welcome they received from the Mohammedan chief in Kpando, but he makes the generalisation that in Crepe they were hardly ever presented with palm wine: in Nkonya this was more frequent: and almost the rule in Buem. Currency: Only in some very remote towns in Buem were the people not prepared to accept English money. Otherwise that and cowries were circulating side by side. Rice he found growing all round Buem and Nkonya, and the rice stores which Hall uses as an aid to describe the smelting ovens at Aprafo seem to have been a common feature of the villages in these areas. In Worawora Müller saw a woman winnowing rice by dropping it so that the wind carried away the husks and writes that he has seen exactly the same method in use in Württemberg. He is puzzled by the poverty of the Nkonya-Buem people - at least as judged by their clothes. They have cotton and looms - why do they not wear clothes more often? Although it is clear that he feels nakedness is morally a bad thing, he was particularly troubled by the spectacle of children in Worawora naked, yet shivering with cold in the morning air.

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