

Basel Mission Archives

"Ramseyer to Basel"

Title: "Ramseyer to Basel"

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Description: Report on the purchase of land in Nkwatia and Obo. The Nkwatia land purchase went through smoothly in the end - the key stratagem on the part of the missionaries seems to have been to send Kwabi to a meeting of all the Kwahu chiefs and ask them the meaning of their promise at the beginning of Basel Mission work in Kwahu that they could settle where they liked. The first reply was a request to make an exception of the meeting place of the chiefs. The missionaries responded by replying that they were commanded to preach everywhere including Nkwatia. Eventually a new site was agreed on, and bought at 18 Thaler. Ayiripe, Ramseyer thinks was a relative of the Okyenhene, which helps to explain the hostility he showed at the time of the Akim persecutions. In Obo Ramseyer had to visit the town 6 times before the settling of the mission land was really in hand. The piece of land which had long ago been bought belonged to Afari, the chief of Akwasiho (and one of the mild complication at this stage was that this man was in Krakye at the time of the further development of the purchase). Four years ago they had effectively been driven off the land by the threats of the chief of Tweneduruase and his people, who claimed it was too near the chief's fetish 'Sasabi' - a piece of rock lying nearby. The chief of Pepease whose subordinate the Tweneduruase chief was could not persuade him to change his mind and indeed was angrily driven away when he tried to intervene, and the Kwahuhene told the missionaries there was nothing he could do. Ramseyer remarks, that all would have been easy had they been in the Protectorate. This year when they installed Catechist Mensah the chief of Tweneduruase welcomed him, but said that his people stood firm on the idea that the mission land was too close to Sasabi. The missionaries then said that as men of peace they would be interested to know how far away from Sasabi they would have to be to satisfy the Tweneduruase people. And they found that they would only lose the use of 1/8 of the land. At this point they ran into complications from the Obo side. Firstly the Obo chief claimed that the man who sold the land had not been the proper owner - instead an absent under-chief of his was the man from whom the land ought to have been bought. Secondly in Ramseyer's absence after this was cleared up (by a compromise consisting of the Obo chief's dropping this scruple, and the mission promising to buy some land from him to extend the station), the Obo people inserted in the purchase agreement a prohibition against the taboo plants and animals on the mission land. The mission seems to have won a clear victory over this as wells (How, is not too clear unless one assumes that the Obo chief quite badly wanted a mission presence, because Ramseyer's only resource on both occasions except his wrath against being messed around was that when he threatened to withdraw the catechist if the points were not satisfactorily cleared up he achieved fairly quick results). The chiefs' names were Darefo in Tweneduruase, Afari from Akwasiho, and

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Asiama in Obo.

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