

# Basel Mission Archives

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"Ramseyer to Basel"

**Title:** "Ramseyer to Basel"

**Ref. number:** D-01.49.V..85

**Date:** Proper date: 12.05.1888

**Description:** Report on the acceptance of Kwahu in the English Gold Coast colony. Ramseyer says tout court that in the race of extortion by people coming out of the colony in the days before Kwahu was under British law the missionaries stood by the Kwahu people - implying that they added their authority to attempts to send such people away. The Juaben party of the previous year is cited in this connection, so is the visit of dismissed policemen etc. Different Kwahu chiefs had out themselves under the authority of the Akwapim or Akim king chief as a way out of the problems of this situation. The narrative of the event apparently began with a sudden letter from the DC in Begoro asking the Kwahus to clean the road to Anyinam. Then an Accra man who had been merchant resident in Mpraeso arrived, claiming to be the Governor's embassy. Because he had a hammock and carriers the Kwahu chiefs felt he must have some standing - he invited a Kwahu embassy to visit the coast. Ramseyer wrote to the Governor asking about the man's credentials, and an answer returned quickly that though the Governor had spoken to the man occasionally, he had given him no message for the Kwahu chiefs. Soon after this came the announcement that the Kwahu chiefs should assemble to meet the Begoro DC, Dr Smith (a Sierra Leonian with a medical degree). The Government party stayed on the mission station. The chiefs assembled, including the Obo chief whom Ramseyer did not expect to see, and who had indeed tried to send a substitute, but was prevailed on to come himself. The meeting when it occurred must have numbered 5000 (Ramseyer half describes it and the order of the chiefs) - and Dr Smith and the missionaries and the Christians were called to it when the chiefs were ready to receive them. They sat in half-circle facing the chiefs - the DC and his interpreter behind a table at the centre, the European missionaries on his left, and the catechist and Christians on his right. The proclamation when it was read made no reference to slavery - only to the ending of human sacrifice. After deliberations the chiefs asked if the DC had anything more to say to them about English law. The DC replied that he had no more to say to them. They then asked for several days to think it over. The DC said that this was not possible (The phrase implies that the DC could not stay so long). After another half hour of discussion the chiefs asked Catechists Kwabi and Boateng to go to them and give them their counsel. Ramseyer advised Kwabi to stress that they had themselves asked for protection frequently, and that if it was not concluded today it never would be. After a quarter of an hour the chiefs came back ready to put their marks to the Treaty. (Kwabi later said that when he went to the chiefs only two - one was the chief of Obo - were opposed to the idea of signing straight away. The latter was worried about the fact that he had drunk fetish to acknowledge the authority of the Okyenhene. When he was asked what he thought the position over

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slavery would be Kwabi said that slaves were emancipated in the whole colony, and that law would apply to Kwahu. After the signing of the Treaty and three cheers for Queen Victoria, a thunderstorm scattered the meeting. Another meeting followed on the 7th March (the first meeting was on the 5th). At this the Accra man was put in handcuffs publicly, because he had been trying to extract money from people. The DC then re-iterated his point about human sacrifice. This was in connection with an event of which he had heard in the Obo lands at the foot of the scarp. Ramseyer knew in addition, of the shooting of a man on the Bepong lands which he took to be part of human sacrifices, and the reaction of the Bepong chief to a lecture by Ramseyer on the subject seemed to him to bear out his contention. A number of new seeds were also shown to the gathering, including a new form of cotton. Finally Ramseyer comments that a few slaves have already run away. The text of the contract see No. 69.

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