

# Basel Mission Archives

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"Tschopp's Report on a Journey with the Scholars to Peteko in late March 1889"

**Title:** "Tschopp's Report on a Journey with the Scholars to Peteko in late March 1889"

**Ref. number:** D-01.51.V..83

**Date:** Proper date: 14.05.1889

**Description:** Without further remark Tschopp reports meeting two Mohammedans when he was en route for Peteko. The plant used to stun the fish in the Afram is carried there 'in loads' when it is needed. In Pepease there had been a fire which had destroyed the roofs of more than 60 houses at the end of 1888 - the roofs had been replaced, and the houses are now marked out by their blackened beams. The interior of the house of the Pepease chief is described in some detail - on the wall behind the chief hung a fine piece of cloth and also horse's tails. Beside him was a protective fetish - a piece of wood standing in the ground and on it cowries and magical material. Before him, in a corner stood the 'usual' Nyamedua (Tschopp think that it was believed that God lived in the Nyamedua, or at any rate came to live there at specific times). In the pot on the tree fork were one or two plants 'which are held to be holy': into the pot on feast days goes the head feet intestines and blood of a white hen. On the tree was hung a 1 1/2 metre length of strong chain, with a padlock - by means of this chain God is said to give the chief gold. (Tschopp says he took the opportunity offered by this fetish to tell them about his beliefs - this was somewhat unexpected he felt, but as usual, he was listened to very attentively.) The Pepease market is described - on sale were Shea Butter, salt, eggs, fish, plantains, pot, powder, lead, and the fibres from pineapple or palm leaves used for making string and nets. Nearby stood a fence with hanging on it a bundle like a horse's tail of fibres from plantain stars. And by the fence stood a man with his forehead bound with a piece of cloth, and purple-red feather bound to it at each temple. The feathers and the bundle of fibres were signs of mourning, and that the man had lost his wife or one of his wives. At the Afram side of Pepease was the 'usual' Dente mound, newly painted and roofed. On the expedition Tschopp was eating the local food, but had also bread and Swiss cheese, and was drinking cocoa. In Abenase he found some women spinning cotton - and 4 men with Kola nut loads. Tschopp gives the cost of a 50 lb load in Kwahu 7-8 Francs; in Salaga 36-40 francs. The nuts grow in Kwahu, but much more in Asante Akim. They bought provisions in the hamlet Kotoso, since Tschopp had heard that there were none to be bought in Peteko (There is a description of the Afram plains, including the point that the Grass is burnt every year). Noticing Buruku Tschopp says several towns serve him. Some of the schoolboys collected the cowries scattered by another (unnamed) fetish - a whitened ant-hill at the side of the path. Fish traps in the Afram. The scholars were travelling with shoes and socks. Tschopp describes them as singing part of the way. The Afram shrine is described as being near Peteko. In Peteko a hen could be bought for 90 cents, and a big piece of buffalo flesh (dried) which would serve the whole party till for two meals cost 2 francs 50. Travelling back from Peteko to Tafo, at approximately 15 minutes before

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they arrived in Tafo they passed 22 round earth mounds and from there on the way was cleaned - the Tafo women do this in honour of their fetish Buruku. In Tafo he mentions two white-painted shrines for Buruku and a Dente mound. The chief is friendly but rarely comes to street preaching; it was difficult to collect a congregation for street preaching and only some of those were attentive. In the evening a heavy storm interrupted the ceremonies following the death of someone that afternoon. In an attempt to drive it away people were running around waving their hands at the cloud and shrieking. He estimates 1,200 inhabitants in Tafo. From Tafo they went to Nteso where they had almost the whole village as congregation (they arrived during a palaver) - at the entrance to the village was a leap of plants held to be sacred, ashes, etc. all devoted to driving away illness. In Asakraka he describes an Odom revered as fetish saying this was one of several seen on the journey, and another Dente shrine which he re-emphasises is to be found in every village. They had a large attentive congregation - Tschopp finding he enjoyed preaching to them. En route for Abetifi they passed through Amama, an Abetifi farming village, and near Abetifi Tschopp saw a large cow, which he remarks was the first he had seen for 2 years.

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