Basel Mission Archives

"Clerk's report of a Visit to Krakye"

Title: "Clerk's report of a Visit to Krakye"

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Description: He stayed in Kete, not Krakye. He preached a formal sermons to the chiefs and people transmitting to them the whole salvation history from the creation to redemption in Jesus, and how the kingdom of God had come to Europe and from Europe to Accra and thus to Buem. Now he wanted to know whether the in Krakye were prepared to receive this message, and as a particular test he offered the Krakyehene the invitation to send two boys with him to school in Worawora. The sermon was delivered before the chief and people, no mention of the priest of Dente. The chief's reply on both points was to postpone a decision for a short while. He held a service in Kete, but not street preaching. The market was quite un-interruptable. The market swarmed with merchents all trying to attract everyone's attention, and most understood no Twi. Kete has grown since the recent war so damaged Salaga's trade. He saw daily cattle, cloth, and foodstuffs for sale. Slaves are also sold, but not publicly. He came across one slave dying on the side of the road, and saw that he was fed, He writes that the usual Mohammedan practice was to dash a slave his redemption price once he becomes seriously ill. While waiting for the Krakyehene's answer he spent a day in Tareeo, and another in Tworeso, both villages under the chief priest of Dente. In the former the chief was very unwilling to have Clerk preach publicly, though unable to stop him. In both villages after. Clerk's sermon, which posed the question whether the people were ready to have the mission settled among them, the chiefs said that what the elders in Krakye would do, they too would do. Clerk then had another interview with the chief, asking why no answer had been received to his questions. The chief's first reaction was to ask if he came from the German officials in Adele. He then said that he could send no boys to school (It is only at this stage apparently that Clerk met the fetish priest, the chief sending to him to greet him after postponing giving an answer on the question of mission settlement again). Soon after Clerk went to see the chief again in the company of an Ada merchant called Kuwona, the latter teems to have spoken more forcibly than Clerk had to the chief. The German/English question came under discussion again, the Krakye chief saying that he proposed to send a tusk of ivory to the Governor in Accra with the message that he would rather serve the English. He also protested that if boys went to Clerk's school they would be taught to believe in only one God and would no longer respect him. Clerk denied this, instancing that he himself had taken his hat off in the king's presence, and bowed to him. Kuwona stressed the usefulness of education too and they extracted the promise that a boy would be sent later. 'The chief promised an answer the day after the next. The next day Clerk preached in Kantankofore and Krakye. On the same day interviewed again by Clerk the king made a face at repeated requests for a statement about whether he would welcome missionaries or not, and said 'Who'does not like people? I would even

welcome them if monkeys were people'. He admitted that this answer was from himself alone. The official answer next day was 'If you have nothing to do with the Germans, you can come (and settle) - who drives strangers away? As for us, we serve the English and when you come, don't plague us, and don't create disturbances.' En route back to Buem Clerk preached in places like Brewaniase, Kwaku, Bonkra, Abodowo, Patwu, Hyentae, Makokwae. He had many attentive hearers in all, and in all the people replied to his question about accepting the mission that they were not independent, and would do what the Krakye elders did. In a concluding general report Clerk writes that the Krakyes understand Twi well, He only visited the biggest villages, of which Tareeso is the biggest. Apart from those visited there are many others on both sides of the Volta. The inhabitants of such villages are in part slaves. The fetish priest's village had just received an increase of 40 slaves offered by one Kwabina Panyin who had just fled for sanctuary to Dente from Abeotu. The Krakyes almost never travel – they are farmers. Lepers mix freely with the people there is one village which even has a leper as chief. As with all the tribes in this area the division of the land between the English and the Germans has created great bitterness, and even in Buem it makes no good impression when German missionaries visit him. 'It makes one sad when after preaching in a village the first question is 'are you German or English?' As for sending mission agents to settle in Krakye, Clerk has heard that the German government is going to build in Krakye, and it would be best to wait till that has been completed, since there would of course be enmity between the elders of Krakye who gain some income from their contact with Dente. He also offers the final suggestion that since in fact Krakye is a town for the elders only, and the there is a large population it is widely spread out around the district, there might be something to be said for settling at Tareeso rather than Krakye when the time comes. There is a subscript from Rösler to the effect that it is not the mission's fault that the local people look so suspiciously on the German colonial government. The real fault is the wrong-headed and untactful way in which German Officials in Kpando set about collecting customs duties in Kpando in 1889/1890. 'We must therefore hold ourselves neutral and in no way carry on political activities.'

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