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"Martin's Report on a Journey in the Area between the Abo and Konsu Rivers (Nkonya and Crepe)"

**Title:** "Martin's Report on a Journey in the Area between the Abo and Konsu Rivers (Nkonya and Crepe)"

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**Description:** The journeys took place in April-May and June-July. Remarks that Tongo must have been a big town before the Asantes took its population - who thought they were allies of the Asantes - off to Kumasi. On the old site of Tongo is only a farm and three or four poor huts. There is a new Tongo, but still not very populous. In Botoku itself he finds the people already know a lot of the Christian teachings. Their response to his preaching was that without a teacher they cannot go forward - whereon Martin asked them why they were not sending their children to the school in Vakpo. He contrasts his reception in the two Botoku villages Akokome (good) and Adadentam (indifferent if not hostile). In the latter he has seen a man making figurines which he claimed would protect their farms. Sirikpo and its subject village Dota - they were well received, and the linguist in Sirikpo repeated the point that they had wanted a teacher and not received one. Martin repeated his point about the availability of Vakpo. Martin writes about Vakpo. The town seemed unwilling to accept the German flag, and Okyere, the teacher, had actually been threatened secretly in words and in act-by the rich man of the village Dabanka Kwame, to whom Martin reckons the local chief was in debt. Kwame had said that if the Germans came to Vakpo it would be Okyere's fault. The opposition was not deep-rooted or confident - a later piece of information Martin gives is that the Vakpo people heard that the Germans were fighting the Tafis (Avatimes) and sent his army to help them. From the missionaries' point of view the key event was a palaver which happened on evening in the mission house, gearing that Dabanka Kwame had threatened teacher Okyere. Martin demanded that he visit him the same evening. A large group arrived, including the chief, and started to talk Ewe. Martin broke into this repeatedly and said that he was going to speak only to Dabanka Kwame, the others could stay if they liked but he would not attend to them at all. He then found Dabanka Kwame guilty that on the grounds that he had offered Okyere a pacification of a sheep, because there were witnesses to his preparations to ambush Okyere, and because Dabanka Kwame had come to the meeting with such a large number and they had tried diversionary tactics (Dabanka Kwame had himself said that this was because he was afraid.) Nevertheless Martin said they would trouble no more about the business they were Christians and believed in peace, though this was on the condition that no-one was in -future deterred from going to school or services (an elderly female attached to the chief's household had wanted to become a Christian but had suffered from the chief's interference). This condition to be enforced by Okyere's reporting such events to Anum and the missionaries taking them up with the German officials at Agome. Furthermore the German government itself had given the missionaries

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permission to open schools, so they no longer needed to work with the permission of the chiefs. Martin reckoned the Vakpo villages were all more or less closed to listening to their religious message or to their explanations about the value of schools; only in Bohome did he have a large crowd of attentive hearers. In the latter the Ramseyer's old nurse was a member of the congregation, but she stands very much to one side, and only comes to preaching when a European is present. She claims she has taken off her amulets and is coming, but it is a very slow process. Martin's description of the Christians in Bume is fuller than, any other so far. The heads of the Christian families are called Joseph, Daniel, Isaac, William and Johannes. At Huvhe, on Martin's first visit there, there was difficulty because of a case between the chief of the Bume villages and a baptismal candidate, but otherwise he was always well-received in the non-Christian Bume villages. As indeed in the whole of Amfoi, and in this respect he names especially Wuromahai and Afobu. In Sofievhe (Okyerefo) the people said they would become Christians (After Martin had preached on their being slaves to sin and in need of redemption) - of course he realised after the excitement that they would lack the power to break away, fearing to be the first. In Kpando the congregation is going forward steadily, and Christians hurry to move onto the mission station after they have joined the church. The Kpando chief actually came to the station to greet Martin which he remarks is a great change from the time of his first visits in 1891 when he and Hall went to see him on the case of a woman who had been mishandled by him and put in the block. In the villages around Kpando also there was a significant response in Asiavhe when Martin asked who would serve the true God 10 men and youths stood up, and later a young woman told him she had been attending the services in Kpando regularly. In Gagya, (where there was at least one catechumen) a thirty year old man told them he wanted to go to school - serving the fetishes was an empty exercise - so he would go to Kpando to have his name written down. They were also pressed very strongly to preach in the village of Aban (Abau?) when they did not want to because of the heat. And in another Kpando village Martin met a husband and wife who were going to announce themselves as catechumens, and after talking to the wife Martin writes that he could see she was yet another example of the way the heathen world drives people into the arms of the mission. In Nkonya they had few hearers at Ntwumuru, Kagyabi and Tayi. From Tayi they went by a secret way (cut by the Nkonys when they thought the Germans were going to attack them) to Wurupon (The people of Tepo were later by no means pleased that a European had found their secret way). In Wurupon they preached to the largest assembly Martin had ever seen in Africa. There were more than two catechumens in Wurupon - two had only recently announced themselves, coming to Hall in Ntwumuru to be taken on as catechumens, and allowing him to cut off their amulets. In Ntwumuru they had two slaves as converts one called Bntoa was already free, the other was his wife, still a slave of an Ntwumuru man. She was called Akua Mmorowa, and could speak no Twi and little Nkonya having been in the district for less than a year. Martin advised her through her husband's interpreting to work hard, and to attend the daily worship - which Martin was pleased to find later that she had been doing. Her master on finding that she

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was becoming a Christian had tried to sell her in Alavanyo, but a Christian had seen her there, helped her to get back to the mission station in Ntwumuru, and then faced the threats of the deprived master with the counter-threat that he would be reported to the German colonial regime. In Alavanyo they were well received - in Evhudidi they found a case in process over a young man who had been to Misahohoe and received a letter stating he was a free man in view of the recent Togo Government regulations concerning slavery. The case was settled by Hall (according to Martin that is) who was able to inform the chief and people over the terms of the new laws, and thus frustrate the ex-master from claiming and getting compensation. The thief there, pressed strongly for a teacher for his own people - Martin promised that he would get one, though could not forecast when. Zogbedsi, however, is in contact with the Catholic mission in Lome. Martin lists the Nkonya baptismal candidates as 5 from Wurupon, 5 from Alavnayo and 3 from Ntwumuru, though none of the latter are natives of that place, which, indeed, seeks to be 'dead'. In the four Atawronu villages they were asked for a teacher - though in Agbesia there was a lot of argument when they were preaching. Davigba and Beme are two of the most beautiful villages that Martin had seen on the Gold Coast. He has visited the Tweme villages Atigbota, Avigome, Gyangena, Komfa. The people are Ewes, but both sexes understand Twi. In Atigbota they were very pleased to have a European staying with them at last. In the last named they found a whole village drunk after a funeral custom. The Akhatei villages are no more than hamlets except for Beme. Owisutra he reckons at 11 villages - there is a demand for teachers there too. Every time he asked why the people of the area spoke such good Twi they told him that they learned it as prisoners of war in Kumasi. In the report is some indication of the content of Martin's preaching. In one case (the village on the site of old Tongo) he was offered a text by lady who offered her daughter in marriage to him - his approach to her was two pronged, talking firstly about his 'family' in the mission house at Anum, people who loved him because he loved them, and secondly to describe the relation between himself and his wife - including a stress on their common purse out of which she can take money for new clothes whenever she wants. In Tongo itself there were interruptions and arguments - he never troubles to preach in a place where that happens - the people are not serious and consistent. In one of the Sohahi villages he was given his text by a man who told him that it was the shade-tree under which they were sitting who had brought the people back from their Asante captivity. In Adadaentam (Botoku) he had straightforwardly told the man who had said that the figure that he was carving would protect crops that he was a lyer. In Sirikpo he used the people's interest in his European possessions to preach about the European's conviction that they could not take their possessions with them after death. In Wurupon he persisted many times with the question (to the priest of Sia) whether or not he was happy, and evidently he was in some places at least preaching to the evangelical question, and asking those who wanted to serve the true God to stand up.

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