

Basel Mission Archives

"Martin to Basel"

Title: "Martin to Basel"

Ref. number: D-01.67.VIII..210

Date: Proper date: 02.09.1897

Description: Reports the proceedings involved in purchasing land from a member of the Botoku tribe. The land had already been chosen, and agreement in principle come to with the owner, a certain woman. On Martin's visit to clinch the deal, however, he met with some opposition from the woman, who felt that her ancestors would plague her if she sold the family land (it is specifically stated that the woman was not a member of the chief's or elders' family). Martin suggested she should move onto the land herself to which she replied 'I am not moving out of my house, and out of my town'. When he asked her if she was saying that she intended to serve the fetishes rather than God, however, she said that no-one knows what will happen tomorrow. He also tried to persuade her to this by holding up the example of her nephew, one Okuru, who had apparently been cured of leprosy since he became a Christian. The Botoku linguist was also encouraging the woman towards the sale, and after 6 hours it was completed for £1, on condition that a small patch was left as family land. He also reports the purchase of a plot of land at Evhudidi - 20 marks was paid to the chief, and 40 marks to four other men. In the marking of the boundaries the chief was taught to use the compass. Martin also transmits an account of the 'awakening' described in Hall's annual report. He had himself experienced something of the impact of the movement - large crowds of hearers and no barracking in the towns of Kagyabi, Ntomda, Wurupong and Tayi (reached, he writes, by bush-path from Wurupong). The journey was an extremely happy experience shared as equals by Martin and Pastor Hall. He then translates a letter from Hall about the large congregations, collapse of resistance from the heathen, presence of chief Kofi (of Ntwumuru, presumably) at services. Large numbers of boys had been enrolled - 4 from each village making the total of pupils in the school 45. The connection with of German punitive actions is stated as far as recruitment of pupils is concerned. Hall reports that first-lieutenant von Massow with 3 officers and 106 soldiers had come to Nkonya because a soldier had been beaten and severely wounded in Ntwumuru (Hall writes the "King's Town") and because the people of Ntomda had not behaved as they should to Graf von Zech on a recent journey to the coast. He threatened to take prisoner the whole body of chiefs of Nkonya unless the men responsible for the beating were produced. Hall says he was the peoples' only hope, but he was on a journey to Botoku on the day in question.

Subject: [Archives catalogue]: Guides / Finding aids: Archives: D - Ghana: D-01 - Incoming correspondence from Ghana up to the outbreak of the First World War: D-01.67 - Ghana 1897: D-01.67.VIII. - Anum

Type: Text

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