

Basel Mission Archives

"Report for the Kibi Station in the Year 1862 (written by Strömberg)"

Title: "Report for the Kibi Station in the Year 1862 (written by Strömberg)"

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Description: Politically a peaceful year, though there is still conflict between Atta and Agyeman over the land on which the latter is settling. The report transmits some material on the history of Akim told to Strömberg by Apietu, a grey-haired elder of Kibi. He lives a succession of 9 Asante and 12 Akim kings, with reigns varying between 10 and 40 years. Strömberg therefore puts the beginning of the history in the middle of the 16th century. In the reign of Opoku Ware there was fighting between the Akims and Asantes, at first in the region of the Asante towns of Aperaso, Apemaning, and Benne. The Akims were put to flight, their capital destroyed and the land made subject to Asante. (Measuring the decrease in size of Kibi since those days the elder commented that it was now smaller than the daughter town of a daughter town, meaning Akropong in Akwapim, founded from Akropong Akim.) The tribute due in Asante each year was gold dust and slaves (except that they were being sent there all the year). The demand for slaves is the reason for the small population of Akira compared with smaller areas of larger population like Akropong. The blow which the earlier Akim had to suffer came, also from Akwamu. The Akwamus had driven a wedge through the Akim land towards the sea, hoping to split off Akim territory. The Akwamu possessions stretched along the Densu to the Accra plantations. The Akwapims suffered much from them too. When the Akwamus were driven out of Akim with Accra help, the Kyerepons called the Akims to their assistance and a leading family of Akim Akropong, whose head was Owusu Akim, moved there helped to drive out the Akwamus, and settled there as the reigning family. Strömberg also repeats the point that the mission is set up on land where once there was an Asante village under an elder who had fled from Asante but according to him the elder himself journeyed back to Asante. Describing the Christian village, Strömberg says that living in it area Catechist Joseph Ofei, the 3 Kibi Christians, and thevstranger Christians mostly Accra people working on the mission buildings. (The mission buildings were not yet finished). Kukurantumi had been visited 6 times. Discussing the heathen, Strömberg writes that they are prepared for the gospel by the humility they were taught by their long subjection to Asante, and the small population which has resulted. They are also disillusioned with the fetishes. Strömberg gives as an instance of this that in the festival which took place in Kibi at the beginning of the year (1863) the decision had been taken to destroy some, not all - of the amulets (Strömberg adds a marginal note that this was because of fear of the amulets involved). As far as Christianity is concerned the people are still not sure of what it involves but on the whole well-disposed enough often to send children to the school - though equally opposition to this is one sign that Christianity will have to face opposition when its full force is seen, for the elders who oppose school argue that the Europeans will take their children from them for good. The Okyenhene is

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favourable to the school - he was once as a hostage or pawn in Jamestown. There are also, influencing the people towards giving them a good reception, the considerations that the government may not look kindly on Akim if the missionaries are not well received, the pride at being on good terms with a missionary, and the hope for presents. They are also struggling against the assumption on the part of the local people that they intend to set up a state within a state - withdrawing people from their normal allegiance. This is what Strömberg offers as the explanation for the opposition one of the servants - a Kibi youth had met with when he announced that he was going to become a Christian. The king could not stop him from working for the mission because he was a free man, but he took away his gun. In Kibi itself there are three catechumens - the youth mentioned above, an old lady and a Kwahu man who at the time of writing was visiting his homeland. In Kukurantumi three boys and two youths are in the catechumenate. The father of one of the latter has asked for baptism on the grounds that his past life was not good so he wants to be a Christian - though Strömberg is not sure if that has the ethical character it appears to possess. Strömberg notes in passing that there are far more fetishes in Kukurantumi than in Kibi. Among the Christians, an Akropong man in Kukurantumi has had to be excluded after recent baptism for drunkenness and quarrelling in public in Akropong, and one man could not be re-admitted because of insufficient penitence. In Kukurantumi the three young Christians behave satisfactorily though they are still children, showing their Christianity only by the fact that they pray and attend services - they are sunpoted to pray for the conversion of their relatives. Jacobo Koagyman gives them most satisfaction - the elder of Kibi. Schools - the Kukurantumi school has 33 children on its rolls, but only 10 attend regularly. In Xibi there are 15 on the books, of whom 12 are regular. In the Census attached at the end of the report the total of the Kibi community is given at 13, with 2 communicants, and 3 catechumens In Kukurantumi the figures are 12. 2 and 5.

- 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-01.13b - Ghana 1862: D-01.13b.X. - Kjebi
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