

Basel Mission Archives

"Christaller's Report for the Third Quarter of 1865"

Title: "Christaller's Report for the Third Quarter of 1865"

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Description: His account of the Kukurantumi troubles (he was called there by Kromer in late August) is that there was a meeting of the people inter al. about the passage of the laws which the heathen party resolved on after the fight (mentioned in No. 33 and 21) in order to deter people from becoming Christian. At this the Kukurantumi chief took the side of the Christians to the extent that he refused to force the Christians to drink fetish. He reports that reading and discussing the contents of "Bilder aus der Missionswelt" (except that the subjects were the King of Dahomey's Amazons, the capture of slaves, the wild country of New Zealand) he was surrounded by a large crowd of people, predominantly young men. The second part of the report is mostly concerned with the land case between Asiakwa (involved through its villages Asafo and Nmease) and Kukurantumi. Christaller's material being based on a transcript of evidence provided for him by Jonathan Palmer (his language informant). The primary material seems to be based on attendance of a meeting in late July - it is said to have been first written down on 31st July. An Asafo representative, Afirim, said that their lord was Duodu of Asiakwa. Someone in Asafo had a case with Duodu because his brother, a Fante, had committed a crime and was executed - or someone had a case with Duodu because his brother, a Fante had, been unjustly handled by Duodu, and committed suicide, so that there was a fine of 720 Spanish thalers part of which was laid on the people of Asafo. They then recalled that they possessed some land in Akwapim, and decided to sell it to cover the debt. So they set out for Ahabante. Christaller adds in parenthesis that this was a village in the Akim area, but belonging to Akwapim. The Akwapim people pay the chief of Kukurantumi a tribute for the palm-oil which they make on his land, Nyante, the chief of elder of Ahabante being responsible for this. In Ahabante Nyante said to the Asafo people that he had never heard of the Kukurantumi lands bordering with any others in the area, but he would send to ask the Ampaw (of Kukurantumi) and if the Asiakwa people had land there, then they could sell it. On this Ata Kwaku, Ampaw's nephew and heir, arrived in Ahabante who immediately swore an oath in Ampaw's name that the Kukurantumi lands stretched from Ahabante to Akim. At this the case was taken before Kwadade in Akropong to whom the case was given, since Akropong was nearer to the land in question and thus people could more easily set about deciding where the boundaries were etc. Kwadade sent messengers who looked at the land, and decided that the land near Mampong Bewase belonged to Asafo. And they made a formal statement to this effect, and levied the thanks-fee on the Asafo representatives. The Okyenhene received half of this fee since the Akwapim chief took on the case on his instructions, and is also subordinate to him, and calls him uncle. The Asafo representative then said that their forefathers had owned the land which Ampaw was now trying to retain and made it over

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to Ampaw in former times when the land had little worth. Since Ampaw had been trying to deprive them of the little that remained to them, they laid claim to the whole of the land. Part of this debt which wished to sell the land to pay came from money which Ampaw took from the costs for settling the dispute which created the debt. Kwadada replied that that was nothing to do with him, his part was simply to send messengers to the Okyenhene to tell him what his judgement had been over the ownership of the land. At this point (in the Kibi hearing), Ampaw was asked why he had sent his nephew to swear the oath? Ampaw replied that he had only sent his nephew to look after his interests and swear the oath if it was necessary to prevent the Kukuranumi people selling land which did not belong to them, instead of which he went about things too rashly. Then said the Akim people - the king's elders, 12 from Kibi and 30 from 3 neighbouring places function as the people's representatives. The Akwapim people had to sit on this case and incur expenditure, all because of an ungrounded oath, and the Asafo people had expenses, Ampaw should settle these (Christaller notes in parentheses that they were really wanting to bring Ampaw into debt). At this messengers were sent into Akwapim and came back with the reply that the Akwapims reckoned their costs at 144 dollars - which Ampaw accepted. The elders then told him to give the Asafo people 45 dollars as pacification, and dash them a further 18 dollars a sheep and some rum. Altogether in fact the expenses levied from Ampaw came to 7 pereguan or 252 thaler. This was assembled, but then the Asafo people indicated that if they were to be fully pacified, he must pay them an additional ntansa (=108 thaler) which would bring the payment up to 10 pereguan or 360 thaler or £81. If he were to do this they would go with him to the land and divide a portion of it for him, so that he could make use of it. Ampaw then swore Wukuda and Kwanyako (these two are explained only as being in the first case the day on which an Akim king unnamed suffered a disaster, and the second a place 'in fante' where a much loved king had died of small-pox) that he would not hand the land over to the Asafos - they would have to fight for it. At this, the whole negotiations have broken down, and Ampaw returned to Kukurantumi (After an eight months period in Kibi). Christaller adds that in the manuscript Palmer noted that in Akwapim this kind of conflict would not have taken place, since Kwadade would have claimed to be the owner of the land, and enforced his rights - the Akim king is too weak. He also adds as Palmer's comment that the Kukurantumi people had the reputation in Akim of being avanicious, since a stranger staying there has to collect his own water, plantains etc. to eat, and they are also renowned getting more gold from people than they ought.

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