

Basel Mission Archives

"Eisenschmid's Report for the Second Quarter of 1867"

Title: "Eisenschmid's Report for the Second Quarter of 1867"

Ref. number: D-01.19b.VIII.5

Date: Proper date: 09.07.1867

Description: He was absent from Kibi from 16th May to 24th June. In this context he offers some information on the custom for the dead Okyenhene. Human sacrifice took place at night, so that comparatively few cases came to their knowledge. The old law that it was permitted to rob and plunder the property of strangers outside their houses was observed and the farms around Kibi now stand empty and a time of hunger is to be expected. At the time of Eisenschmid's arrival the bulk of the Akims had returned to their homes after the custom, but the chiefs remained since a successor to Ata had not yet been decided. They had united in selecting Asekira, Ata's elder sister, because while she had no sons her younger sister had only young sons - the eldest being only 14. Asekira had, however, asked for time to consider the offer, partly because she feared the curse which she believed had brought about her brother's death, and partly because of her concern about the envy of her sister. The decision would probably be made in the next few days - meantime the fetish priests were being brought in to inform the chiefs of the wishes of the gods. Eisenschmid tells the biography of Asase - on the king's death he and Ado fled to the mission station in fear of their lives. They remained for a time, though they had to be warned that if they did not live peacefully together (they had had one bloody fight between themselves in this time) they would be sent away from the station. He was fetched back by the elders but his fear was like an illness, and on 22nd June he committed suicide having that very morning run to Chr. Asante's house at dawn claiming the Kibi people were after him, though in fact all was silent. Eisenschmid comments that he was not without knowledge of the gospel, having resided in Accra and Cape Coast at a time when his mind was clear enough. But he simply refused to listen - as he had refused to listen to Widmann when he had visited Kibi the previous January and gone to him to urge him to conversion. Eisenschmid also reports the baptism of the 50-60 year old Boamma. His life history Eisenschmid has established only with difficulty. Born in Dukoman towards Akwamu and Egbe, Twi is his mother-tongue. In that country he was a free man, and had a wife and child. Then he fell ill, and went to a farming village to be healed; this was in the vicinity of Asante, or perhaps an Asante vassal state. While he was there war broke out in his home country, and the anti-Dukoman tribe called in Asante, and the outcome was that an Asante chief called Boateng came and defeated his people. At this he decided to give himself over to the Asantes, the more so as his doctor was a slave of Boateng's, and advised him to do this. He met Boateng travelling with two army units, and while he was made to march with the second, which was going slower, and was more suited to him since he was still ill, his wife was made to go with the first. He thus lost his wife for ever, then lived for several years in Asante in Boateng's district, until war broke out between Boateng and the Asantehene, and though

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Boateng was initially victorious he was later forced out of Asante and into Akim by the size of the Asante army. For several years Boateng lived in Kibi actually on the site where the station now is (they had found many traces of this earlier occupation, and Eisenschmid believed Riis had met Boateng in Kibi). Then they moved to Asamang, where soon after Boateng died, and Boamma had fled for his life to Kibi because of the killing of Boateng's slaves at the funeral custom. He came to Kibi and gave himself to the brother of Apiedu, currently an elder in Kibi. Since Boamma was known, Boateng's heir claimed and received damages for his flight - 24 dollars. After his new master's death Apiedwa inherited him. Under Apiedwa he worked and by industry or miserliness managed to earn enough to become a slave-owner himself. At the time of their first arrival in Kibi he had no interest in the missionaries, and first came into contact with them when in 1863 he was badly wounded in a street fight in Kibi. He was pronounced incurable by the native doctors, but Kromer and Eisenschmid managed to staunch the bleeding and dressed his wound several times each day, taking the opportunity to hold religious conversation with him at the same time. From then on he became more and more regular an attender at services, etc. and asked for baptism, though losing his two slaves was serious matter for him, especially as his wife threatened to live with him no longer after he had become a Christian. The situation was partly resolved by his master's taking his healthy slave away (Eisenschmid connects this with the master's anger at Boamma becoming a Christian against his wishes), while the other died. Eisenschmid had meantime let matters take their quiet course, not pressing the man personally, but preaching pointedly about the danger of not having decided, of loving slaves better than God etc. There is a postscript on Ata's heir dd. 14 Jul - Kwasi Panying, the 14 year old son of Ata's second sister is to be enstooled, and advised by his aunt and the elder Piedu.

- 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-01.19b - Ghana 1867: D-01.19b.VIII. - Akim
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