

Basel Mission Archives

"Buck's First Quarterly Report from Kibi"

Title: "Buck's First Quarterly Report from Kibi"

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Description: The report is partly printed in Heidenbote 1878 pp 49-50. Additional material: He reports other cases arising in Kibi and his relations with the Okyenhene in them. In one session on 12th March he had come excitedly with a large following to Buck - so large that they had had to talk in the courtyard of the mission house. The first case discussed was that of a slave woman who had married a Kibi man, the dowry of course going to the Okyenhene whose slave she was. She had then left the husband, come onto the station complaining of being mishandled, and eventually married a Christian. She had refused to repay the dowry herself, and the ex-husband had therefore applied to the Okyenehene for this. The Okyenehene asked after a long conversation what Buck thought of the case? Buck replied that he was a listener and not a judge but after long pressing by the Okyenhene replied that you cannot give back what you were never given, and whoever it was received the dowry should pay it back this point it was up to the Okyenhene to investigate. At this another case was raised, of a slave who had received 9 dollars from the Okyenhene in times past, was now a Christian and free, and did not want to return the debt on the grounds that he had worked for the Okyenhene for years without payment. When the ex-slave re-iterated this reply the king sprang up in uncontrollable rage, and Buck's efforts to act him to return to his stool and behave like a king (he rushed to the clan and insulted him as well as he knew how) and think of the impression this sort of conduct would make in Accra were all in vain, As it was night and some of the Okyenhene's younger escorts were holding signs of getting excited Buck feared a fight, and asked a bystanding policeman to clear his house (citing to him the 'English rule' 'My home is my castle') which the policeman did. The next day the king sent 2 linguists who excused his absence on the grounds that the Christians troubled him too much, and they then pressed Buck for a decision on the two cases, Buck replied that he would not - it was not his office, and in any case if he did the Okyenhene might later claim Buck had mixed himself up in things it was no right of him to do so. They then replied that the Okyenhene had said that since the two people involved wore Christians he wanted to hear Buck's opinion - he would accept this as a ruling. Buck had this repeated before witnesses, and then gave his opinions: The question of the dowry was one for the English courts, but it would give the English judges a strange impression of his activities, since three months before the Okyenhene had sworn that he knew no-one of the name of the woman involved (the subject under judgement was not this one). Over the debt, Buck felt that this was something which legally should be repaid, but on the other hand, after the Emancipation the man had worked for the Okyenhene for no payment for 2 years, and it was the Okyenehene who had driven him out after he became a Christian. It was not very kingly to take a man's service for two years and

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not once dash him 50 francs. The Okyenhene did in fact accept these judgments - these individuals now have peace, but he is plaguing others. The help given by the Christians over the Okyenhene's debts was, in fact to pay straightforwardly a tax of 1/- per man and 6d per woman which the Okyenhene had levied on the whole of Akim, they were in fact the first to do so. This measure was decided after the Okyenehene had complained that he had debts owed him of £260 (Buck adds Fr. 6,500). An example of difficulties in the rest of Akim is given in the extended beating given to 4 Asiekwa catechumens. The Asiakwa chief was absent, one the excuse was that they had fished in the fetish river near Asiakwa. In fact Mullings had received permission to fish (not trap the fish) and had given a fish to those catechumens. Buck says that with the chief absent the fetish priest could have his way unhindered. In Buck's investigations of what had happened the first question was answered by the 'leader of the young men'. In the end Buck for the Christians to fish in (he had earlier suggested the Asiakwa chief had the option to settle the case himself or alternatively to have it taken to Accra), and though this decision was met by a great uproar by the fetish priest and his supporters Buck has heard of no more trouble in Asiakwa (this judgement took place on March 11th 1878.). In Abomosu he warned the chief that Buck would make him responsible to the Colonial Government for the security of the Christians. In his dealings with the Okyenhene Buck was careful to give every appearance of being uninfluenced by D. Asante - going to palavers with only Deacon Date etc.

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