

Basel Mission Archives

"Mohr's Report to Basel"

Title: "Mohr's Report to Basel"

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Description: Small pox had broken out in Kukurantumi and Osu. As a result laws were passed in Begoro: - All dogs were to be driven out of the town - For 40 days no-one was to go on trek so as to avoid having the small pox brought back into the town. - No drums were to be beaten in order not accidentally to call the small pox. - No fufu was to be pounded after sundown. The most serious impact on the missionaries was that all their traffic with the outside world had to be by means of non-Begoro people, a situation aggravated by the fact that before everyone had gone out after snails for a week. The Begoro chief did not as Ata had requested, announce that peace had been arranged between the two sides. And when cases were brought before him by the Christians, he did not accept them. For example the priest Otobo in Asamanmma had forced a catechumen from Osino to kiss the fetish, and it had taken some pressure to get the Begoro chief to take this up. When there were complaints that the Christians living in Begoro town had not sent their dogs away as requested, Mohr told the king he should deal with such people according to his law, and sometime later the law was issued that Christians should live outside the town. Mohr reports a lively building programme in progress on mission land, though says he will say no more about it until all Christians had settled on mission land - this had never happened in 8 years. They have 10 young people as catechumen, some married. He is trying to ensure that that most difficult thing, grasping the elements of reading, has been completed before they are baptised. On a visit to Kibi in early May he found few Christians present. Those who have no craft are all in the forests collecting rubber. A command has recently come from the Governor via the Okyenhene to stop cutting down trees to gather rubber; but Mohr has heard several people say that no-one follows them into the forest. The 38 pupils at the community school in Begoro have shrunk to 10-12 again. Mohr has had several conversations with Ata in the course of the half-year, and has wondered at his friendliness. But he is still as sly as a fox. The Asuum elders who went to Accra for their case deliberately went via Kibi and met the Okyenhene. Sometime later Imm. Boakye received a letter from the Governor which ran: 'His Excellency regrets that he should have cause to be conveyed to you the information, that he is not ignorant of the nature of the relations between yourself and the King, and I am to impress upon you as you reside in the territory over which the King resides as Head Chief, the necessity of adopting such a course of action as will enable you to live on terms of amicable relationship with him and his people. I am to add that his excellency is not prepared to support the carrying out of proceedings on your part having for their object the bringing about of a disturbance of the peaceful relations between the King and his people or yourself.' The fetish priest involved had declared that his fetish would aid him in stepping the 'Word of God' getting into Asuum. The latest information is that the elders of

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Asuum have declared their willingness to take the case before the Okyenhene. Since Mohr was last in Kibi in 1882 it has gone down a long way. There are probably more Christians than heathen, and he estimates the population at 700 (360 in the community). If the Christians left the town there would be little left other than the Residence. It would, of course, be better if the Christians were all on mission land - especially for the children who would thus not have 'custom' all the time before their eyes. The report ends with a complaint about the way though you can hear people praising the missionaries for risking their lives in Akim, the chorus of Akwpaime people working in Akem is almost unanimous, of dislike and wish to return home.

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