

Basel Mission Archives

"Hermann Rottmann to Basel"

Title: "Hermann Rottmann to Basel"

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Description: Report of the initial settlement of Anum by himself, Fetzer, Klaus; with Philip Kwabi as Catechist (at the same time Fetzer put in charge of Dauromadam, where Cat. Adolph Briandt is to be posted as catechist to accompany Daniel Young from Akropong). Two canoe loads sent from Dauromadam to Anum, the first with 26 loads of baggage on about 30th August, the second 12 boxes, the 3 missionaries, 3 servants and Kwabi, on 5th September. The second canoe had a crew of 5. He reports Saturday and Wednesday as the fetish days on which it is not possible to begin a canoe journey. The canoe was mostly guided through the vegetation at the edges of the river, in order to avoid the full force of the downstream current. It was more a question of being pulled upstream as paddled (i.e. by the crew pulling at the branches of trees etc. standing in the water). As a result the journey was accompanied by ants dropping into the boat, and they saw several snakes. There were dangerous moments (presumably when the current threatened to catch them under a tree-branch) - on one occasion one of their servants was thrown into the water. They also saw several snakes in the bush. But they were rewarded for their trials (the worst was that they were unable to open their umbrellas most of the time to protect themselves from the rays of the sun) by the magnificent spectacle of the thickly wooded hills through which they were travelling, and the magnificent river. On the first day they stepped in Senkyi, where they were led to the chief, and old lame man who nevertheless received great respect from the people around him. They preached there. While they were doing this the canoe was being brought up over the Senkyi rapids. They had started out from Duromadam at 10a.m. The canoe reached the river above the Senkyi rapids only at 4 p.m. It gave clear evidence of what a hard struggle the rapids had been - several broken paddles, the canoe strewn with twigs broken off the trees and bushes. Recruiting two more paddlers, they managed to persuade their crew to struggle up to the village is of Timkuku (?) before nightfall. Next morning reached Akwamu at 9 a.m. This town has changed almost out of recognition since Rottmann's first visit - there is hardly a building which is not in ruins, including the palace of the 'king'. Before the Akwamuhene called them, they sat on the stem of a fallen tree before the door. While they sat there the Akwamuhene's Sword-bearer hurried past to call the elders to audience: soon the Elders appeared, accompanied by the stool-bearers. Then they were called to meet the Akwamuhene in a courtyard surrounded on all four sides by open halls. After giving the Akwamuhene and the three eldest of his advisers a passable present, the object of their journey was stated, and they were given a friendly welcome by the chief. He assured them of his protection, and arranged to send a messenger with them to the next village to make his will in the matter known. Before they left they were asked to preach. The elders listened intently, and asked urgently for a teacher for

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themselves since the Wesleyans had withdrawn. 'We promised to pass their invitation on to our brothers and fathers: meantime advising them to build a little house which a teacher could occupy.' They could not reach their destination that day, but slept in a farming hamlet on the left bank. Only at three o'clock on the next day did they land opposite Pese. Before arriving they had preached at a village on the right bank called Mem (?). They unloaded their loads, carrying them from the shore inland to a clearing in the bush, and leaving them in the care of two of their people. Then they walked for two hours to reach Anum. Two of them have sleeping rooms 9' square by 6-7' high: the other a room 6' square. For eating they have room 11'x9', though no table. The day after their arrival there was a large public meeting at which they were greeted, and explained the purpose of their coming. They also said they hoped to purchase land. They have already decided on a hill 10 minutes away from the town and hope to complete negotiations about this in the near future. They are spending most of their time with the learning of the language, and they preach regularly in the three quarters of the town. Kwabi should open a school the Monday following the sending of this report. The plan to visit Awurahai, the market for the Asantes, situated opposite to Dodi. The 'King' (Anum or Bose) has also made them aware of three sizeable Kyerepong villages upstream.

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