Basel Mission Archives

"Chr. Asiedu's Flight from Anum"

Title: "Chr. Asiedu's Flight from Anum"

Ref. number: D-01.21b.IX..Nachtrag

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Description: The description is at the back of the 1869 Correspondence with no index number. It was translated by Th. Breidenbach, dated Ragaz, 1st July 1870 (The Original was apparently dated Late, 10th March 1870). The text here is a full translation and not an abstract: “I, your son Chr. Asiedu, write down for you here with joy about the hard journey we had to undertake because of the Asantes in Anum. I left Akropong on 22nd April 1868 to go to Anum. At the time when we travelled - just when we arrived in Odumase – Mr. Klaus died. On our journey on from Odumase, not far from Akwamu, we were in great trouble, because our boat almost capsized - but with God's help we quickly got to the shore. At Akwamu the 'king' tried to hinder our journey; he wanted to get us to pay him money. But we begged him, and said that we wanted to get to Anum before we gave him anything. He accepted this, and let us go. From there we reached Pese, and set out to cross the river to Anum territory, but as we reached the Anum camp on the other side, they came to us in a mob on account of a certain Asante man we had with us. They wanted to kill him (although at that time there was no war between the Asantes and the Anums) but they agreed to sell him to us for 80 heads of cowries. When we got to Anum, the Anums and the Akwamus were in the middle of this war they had been carrying on until the Akyem Dompre came to the side of the Anums. (Dompre came in because of an attack made by the Akwamus on Akyems at Dodi), The Anums were then able to destroy many towns of the Akwamus with this assistance, so that the Akwamus called for assistance from the Asantes. Not long after many Asantes came to Awkamu and divided themselves into two groups. The duty of one was to close the road on the Volta to Accra, the other had the task of bringing the Huafo (Ayigbes or Ewes) of the district together as allies of the Asantes and Akwamus. This group (or this group and its allies) went to fight against the Agotimes. This army was commanded by Nantyi. Now the surviving Akwamus and the Asantes made camp with the intention of attacking Anum and Dompre. When the Ayigbes saw this, they were worried and did not want to fight. At the time when the war was still not fully joined, I went with Mr Müller and Mr Schönhuth to the camp to warn them to stop the fighting. When Dompre realised, (later) that the Ayigbes did not want to fight, he suggested that the Anum 'king' should send his women away to a distant place. While this was going on the Dompre and the Anum king sent frequent messengers to the missionaries advising them to retreat to the Bremen mission at Ho, but they always refused, saying that if the Asantes came, they would pay them (i.e. they would soften them with money - Asiedu's insertion). Not long after the Asantes sent an embassy named Bosommoru with the message that instead of fighting, they should settle things peaceably. But Dompre told the Ayigbes that the Asantes realty wanted to get them all together in one place, and then attack. From then on the

frightened Ayigbes gathered in their towns. At this time the Anums had already sent away their women, and there remained only myself, Benjamin Ghana, and the missionaries in Anum. About three days later the women were sent away, the Asantes drove the Anums and Dompre out of their camp. Two days later, on Thursday the 6th of June, I went with Benjamin Ohene to visit Amamfo (the name means 'ruins') the place where the Anums were supposed to be camping. On the way we met the whole Anum army marching to their town. When the king saw us, he told us his idea was to go to the Amfoe king Doh, since the Ayigbes, who had at first decided to be his allies, had all run away. When we heard this we returned straight away and told the missionaries. They were afraid at that news, because the Anums had sworn an oath that they would not fly before they had fought the Asantes in their own town. Mr. Ramseyer said that, under these circumstances, I should go and ask the king for 4 men to carry Mrs Ramseyer to Ho. The king loved the missionaries and gave orders that spies should go along the Ho road to see what conditions were like. It was not long before they came across Asantes who fired at them: one of them fall, another was wounded in the neck, another in the foot. They returned with this message to the King, at the same time as another messenger came with the report that the Asantes had also captured some of the women. At this the king moved quickly from Amamfo, setting out for where the women were. At the same time the missionaries asked us if we would ask the king to give them five people to bring them to Ho. Because there was war between the Anglos and us however, they were afraid the Anglos would not let us through - that is why they wanted to go to Ho (?). When the king left Anum, he left 5 spies behind to watch the town, and see what the Asantes would do. The Asantes came that sane day, not long after, and caught the sheep in the town. At that the spies shot at them, and the Asantes pursued them and came onto our station, but we fled into the bush with the spies until we came to a town called Prama. The Anum king was there. At first he intended to stay the night there, but then scouts came who said that the part of the army which had come through Bekyi was persuing us. So at 4 p.m. we set out again, going on until about midnight, when we arrived at a place called Setei, where we slept. The next day (Friday) we and all the scattered Ewes came together into a town called Abroferem: from there we went to Pefe (Pese?). We decided to build a camp there, but it was not long before Asante messengers came to us to say that we should hand over to them the Ewe king Kwadjo Dei. Dompre had them told he would hold a palaver with them after three days, and if they were still wanting Kwadjo Dei he would hand him over. But if the Asantes threatened us that day, or the next day, then we would know that they had not come about Kwadjo Dei, but to fight. Once the ambassadors had left us we moved again, to Nyeduase. During the flight that day, many old men and women died, and the Anums also threw away many of their loads. On the Saturday, early in the morning, the scouts saw that the Asantes were moving into the town we had abandoned, which showed Dompre that they really did intend to fight. So he prepared a force of 300-400 men to carry out an attack. They fought on the Sunday morning, Dompre beheading 105 Asantea, but they in turn killed 40 of his, and Dompre himself was wounded; so we retreated onto a high mountain called

Nyampong. The Asantes pitched camp on the actual site of the battle; Dompre moved forward again and pitched camp at a town called Tavi (the writer has added in parentheses 'Xafe'), and assembled part of the Ewes to his assistance. From this time on, mAsantes were being captured each day and brought to Dompre: he simply had their heads out off as if they were hens. The Asantes, however, had 40,000 guns, we only 4,000: and it was therefore too difficult for Dompre to meet them on the plain, so he fought his way back to a town called Gbadsame, up on the mountain, the mountain itself being called Avatume (Avatime?). The Asantes advanced, and pitched camp under the mountain. At this stage there was a great famine - many peeple died, and some were even forced to sell their own children. The fight went on with great bitterness: part of his army were using firearms, another fought by throwing stones. At this time, too, Dompre's wounded foot began to swell up, but he went to battle in a palanquin and thus directed his army, and captured from the Asantes these trophies: 2 kings' swords, 2 golden crowns, l palanquin, l pistol, l throne, and many loads. The Asantes retreated to Owusutra. At this stage many Ewes had run away from the Asantes, but they ordered them to return, and also forced many more Ewes to help than before, namely all the inhabitants of Nyampong: the Akomes, the Afyerases, the Kyegyes, and part of the Avatime, among whom we were. These all allied themselves to the Asantes, ringed us around, and after 7 months fought their way up onto the mountain. A two days' battle took place (on a Wednesday and Thursday), after which they drove us away, and we took the Nkonya route until we found ourselves in a town not far from Nkonya, which was called Koliom. At this town a king from the Pantoh district (Kpandu) came to us and offered Dompre his help. His name was Dagadu. So Dompre pitched camp in this town. After three days the Asantes came to us, but then passed us by and went directly towards Pantoh and the Volta. So we also moved, and pitched camp at Nonkom. The king from Kpandu pitched his camp at a river called Aboh in order to intercept the Asantes, and fought them for a week till Dompre advised him he should allow them to go through to Kpandu, since there was much foodstuff to be obtained there, they would be pleased at this, and stay there for some time. They themselves should wait for its help from Accra, since they had heard that this was coming. The Kpandu king disengaged himself, and with Dompre went to Alavanyo, but the Asantes crossed the river, and pitched camp at a place called Gyigbe, a Kpandu town. Dompre refrained from giving battle at this time, but the Kpandu king assembled his whole army, and a force from Nkonya, and pitched a camp over against the Asantes at Praprawusi. The Kpandu women were partly in Nkonya, partly in Pekyipong. These people also began to capture Asantes and send them to Dompre. At this time people came to us from the east; people called them Woraworafo and Boefo. These had fought the Asantes nine times in nine months, and had anihilated the army of the first (earlier) Asante general, Owusukoko and looted their possessions. Owusukoko had committed suicide. A new army was sent, under another general, which captured many of them, the rest fleeing to Dompre, and allying themselves with him. But at this time, too, the Asantes who had been helping the Anglos came up, and strengthened the forces of their brothers. At this time the Asantehene, Osei, sent a message to his general Adu Bofo,

that if he could not capture Dompre, he should never return to Kumasi. But as things were, both the Asantes and Dompre were tired, and neither could prevail over the other. Dompre wanted to see an end to the fighting, however, and sent us to the English governor, with the message that he wanted help from the Accras soon, and that would end the war. There was a great Anglo army on our way, and we had to travel through the bush for 8 days before reaching Accra. I gave the Governor's answer to the messengers, and then returned to my own town. What I know is that if the Accras do go the war will soon be over. If they don't then one fine day this whole Gold Coast will belong to the Asantes, for they have the firm intention to fight us, until they have won a decisive victory, or until we have beaten them. On this account it is necessary for the Governor, and all the kings to take steps to finish this war soon. That is the history of my journey. The brothers, who are still there, will be able to tell the end of the story if God is favourable to them, and they are able to return."

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