

Title:

A Runaway Wife

Date:

January 3, 1939

Description:

This wronged husband is appealing to the Asantehene because he feels the chief of his ethnic community in Kumasi has been unfair. His petition shows that a foreign trader in Kumasi had direct access to the paramount chief, but would normally take problems to the leader of immigrants from his home area. He also explains the need to remain on good terms with elders of his home area. His wife's actions show how immigration could provide a woman with more personal options than life at home.

Archive:

Asantehene's Archives in Manyia, KUMASI

Transcript:

Kumasi
3rd January 1939

His Worship,
The District Commissioner,
Kumasi.

Your Worship,

I have the honour most respectfully to submit this my humble and urgent complaint before you Sir, for Your Worship's clement assistance in the matter. I went to Mopti (French Soudan) and there I married a woman named Mariama Fulani from her parents in accordance with Mohammedan Rites and the Limamu (Chief Priest) of Mopti being my witness. Her father's name is Braima Fulani and her mother's name is Belemeniyima Fulani. I have married her for good five (5) years now and I brought her into Kumasi with the consent of her parents. Her father gave me strict orders never at any time to leave me said wife here and return there alone otherwise he would hand me to the Commandant to be severely dealt with. She sometime ran away to Accra side and when I sent message to her parents at home, they messaged me back that, if I do not go and search for her, I must not step Mopti again as I would catch trouble. I went round to Accra, Cape Coast and Sekondi and I did not find her until afterwards I heard of her at Nsawam and I went there and brought her back here. When we came here about three (3) days, my wife went to the Fulani Headman Kumasi with 31/- [shillings] to dissolve the marriage and the Fulani Headman sent for me and told me of my wife's desires. I told him the orders given me by her parents, and that I was not well and she should have attended me to recover but since she wants a dissolution of the marriage, he (the

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Fulani Headman) may allow me to take my wife to her parents at home and he asked me to pay 31/- to him as a refund of my wife's dissolution fee and he would not dissolve the marriage here and he would allow us to go to Mopti and dissolve the marriage there. He asked me to pay my wife's lorry fare to Mopti and I agreed to pay, when all of a sudden my wife brought a Policeman from the Police Station to arrest me that, I had taken knife to kill her. This was a concoction between my wife and the Fulani Headman to put such heavy charge on me. At the Police Station I told them that, I was not under such mind and I explained the gist of the matter and I was told to go as the charge was without truth. I was instructed there to carry my attentions to the Fulani Headman to look into the matter for me. When I went to the Fulani Headman, he had changed his tail against me that, he would not assist me by forcing the woman to go to Mopti and he is desiring to dissolve the marriage here in order to put me into great trouble when I go to Mopti. It seems that, the Fulani Headman is wanting my wife to marry a Fulani man here. As such I humbly and respectfully crave your indulgence to assist me Sir, by calling the Fulani Headman Kumasi and advise him to allow me to take my wife to her people and dissolve the marriage there to curtail matters to free myself from their hands.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your obedient Servant
Belali Wangara (his mark)

(xxx) (xxx) (xxx)
(xxx) M. (xxx)
Licence N 14028/38 Pending Renewal
New (xxx) Kumasi
Fee (xxx) w/Copy

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