

## Chapter I-8: *The Debt of the Stomach*

Today there is some advice I am going to give you. I want to ask you a question. Between health and poverty, which is more important than the other? Health is more. If you are not well, can you get what you need? You can't. Sometimes a poor person can become like a mad man because of poverty, but if you have health, you will find the means of getting your living. As you have been entering in my house here, haven't you seen that people are crowded in the house? They are many. As they are very crowded and the children are very many, everyone has got his father and his mother. As I am caring for all these people, it's not because I have got anything; it's just because I have got patience and health to hold them. If I am living but I am sick, I would not be able to care for these people. These people would not have been around me. They would have all ran away and left me because I was not healthy. My wives would also run away because they can't be with me and just be spending money on me. And so health: this is the main thing for every human being.

And I want to tell you again: no one will die somewhere and go to another place to live again. It is health that a human being possesses and uses to travel to any other place he wants. The time you left here first, if you arrived home and a sickness like leprosy had attacked you, you would not have a way to find anything again. If you were not well, could you have come here again? No. And so whenever we want to pray to God, we ask for health, and as for health, anyone can pray to God for it. And so health is more than wealth. If you are not well, you cannot come here. It is health that will give you the chance of coming here, and the benefit your coming here will give you, it is health again that has made it possible.

There are many talks we are praying for in this work. As for the one that is standing as the first one, everybody knows about that, and we have been praying for it. That is health. When a person is given birth, that is the time God puts down that this is a sickness that is going to attack this fellow. And so we are praying: a sickness that will catch us, and one of us will go out, God should not let that sickness come. And sickness too has different types. Truly, poverty is a sickness, and when a person is given birth, God also says whether this fellow is going to be rich or not. But as for poverty-sickness, it is somehow better. The serious sickness is if you are sick in your body. And so may God protect us from body-sickness.

Something that is adding to it and making the second one: which one is that? It is death. Everybody knows he will die. If you know God, you will die; if you don't know Him, you will die. That is what we are afraid of, and we know it. We the people you have included to help you with this work, we don't know whether getting to the evening, all of us will be living or some of us will go. And so we are praying: God should let us have life. We know we will die. But God should let us live and we will get what we are praying for. What separates a brother and sister is death, and I am praying hard to God that all of us, those who are helping me here, and those who are helping you, I'm praying that we should all live long so that I may also be with your fathers and mothers and sisters and those at home, and that they should all be living and you should meet them well. And this is what I am praying for you. You are sitting down at present. I see that it is because of me that you are here. If you are eating, you don't have to eat at one place, and so if God is willing, and you come to stay here, it doesn't matter. But I don't want you to depart because there are worries in your house. And so God should let all of us have life.

And what is following again? It is Satan. We are praying that God should protect us from Satan, and God should protect us from bad talks, because it is bad talk that brings Satan. And as far as my house is concerned, I want you to be happy that you have met good people and they have also been good to you. As we are sitting, Kissmal, Ben, Mustapha, and adding me and yourself: are we not five? Among the five of us here, if there is Satan within us, it will spoil all of us. Maybe one of us can come and tell you, "This man said that he doesn't like the work we are doing." Maybe one of us can come and tell me, or one of us can come and tell the other, "The plan that we have, this man has left these plans and gone to tell John something so that he and John will have one mouth." God should protect us from "They have said." What you have never heard from that person's mouth, but you heard it from somebody, if you take it, you have spoiled our living. And so if we want to have one mouth, we shouldn't follow, "They have said." "They have said": that breaks towns.

As for that, we elders of Dagbon, we know: anything that is going to be good in future, you will see that from the starting, some bad things will be coming inside. So that is why, if you are going to start a work, you will say that may God forbid Satan, or may God protect us against Satan. We used to say that. May God protect us from the real Satan, and may God protect us from a human Satan. As for the true Satan, nobody sees him, but as for a human Satan, we used to see him. Any work that is going to be good for you, when you are doing it, some people will come inside, from different places, and they will tell you this, and this and

this. Don't listen to it. And so we are begging God on this talk, and we are leaving you in front of us. If there is a front, and the front is strong, then the back too, it will be good for it to be strong. And so may God let you stand in front, and may God let us also be behind. And if there is a group, if you are two people coming together, or five people coming together, and you want your friendship to last and be true, then you should search for truth among yourselves so that you will live together with truth. And on the part of our friendship, if you have a friend, then where he is working, God should protect him from bad people in his work place. There is no person who has no enemy, and if they make a person and he has no enemy, then he is not a human being. As for enemies, they are those who do not like you or want you. A person should not think everybody will like him. Some will like you, and others will not like you. And so we are praying to God to give us victory over our enemies. If you have no enemies, then you will not fight for yourself. It is an enemy who will make you to fight for yourself when you want something. At that time, you will take sense and know how to protect yourself. And so God should protect us from a human Satan, and God should give us victory over our enemies.

How our work has come, it is all of us who are doing the work, and not one person. Kissmal is my mother's child,<sup>1</sup> and he is my son, and he has been moving with you all the time, and every day you are together. There is an animal in the bush we call *bambua*, in Dagbani. Do you know the name? It's a duiker, a kind of small antelope. As for that animal, anywhere you find it in the bush, it only lies where there is water. If anybody comes to drink the water and go back, it also gets up and goes and drinks the water and comes back to lie down. That's how Kissmal is. And so anytime that you come to me and you have something to tell me personally, Kissmal has already taken the lead to come and tell me before you. That is the way it is. And as for Ben, Ben has been moving with you since the time you first came and his senior brother Mohammed was your friend here. The first time you came, it was Ben's senior brother Mohammed who was your friend and was walking with you. And when Mohammed went to Accra, it was Ben who brought himself to work with us. Ben and Kissmal are here everyday, and if one of them does not come any day, Mustapha will come. And as Mustapha is now added to us, he is your good friend. As he is very close to you, he gives you advice on the part of how you stay with us, and he gives us advice on how to stay with you. And so I am going to give Mustapha a bad name, and it's a good name, too. It has no equal. The name I am going to give him is, "Mustapha is your mouth." And so I have given him a bad-good name. The mouth can talk

---

1. mother's child: relative

something good or something bad. And that bad-good name, its good is better than its bad. What has brought it, and it has become bad? If we want some talk on the part of you, maybe when we see Mustapha we will tell him, and it is good we tell him. Maybe we will tell Mustapha and he will take it and tell you, and it will not make you sweet, or you won't be happy. And maybe he will tell you, and it will make you happy. And maybe sometimes you will also tell him some talk, and he will tell us and it won't make us sweet or happy. If it comes like that, we are going to say that as Mustapha has come to be with you, he is going to spoil you. And maybe you will also say that as Mustapha has come to be with us, he is going to spoil us. He is going to take his eye-open and come and show us. And so it is a bad-good name we have given him. That is the mouth.

Let's say today, there are five of us gathered here. I Ibrahim sitting down, I am one. And you John are here. Those who are inside this work with us, Ben and Kissmal and Mustapha, they are here. Let's say I come and meet John and Kissmal sitting here, and Kissmal says that Ben is not a good person and we should remove him from the work. And John also says I should remove him. The talk you are holding, you have not consulted me. And if I don't ask, I will remove him. But if I am a person who holds truth, I will ask, "What has he done?" And if Kissmal brings his talk and it's not good, and you also bring yours and it's not good, I will leave your talk and Kissmal's talk, and I will bring mine and say, "If people know one another and they are quarreling, you shouldn't let it go outside. As people see all of you moving together, when you quarrel and go out, people will laugh at you." And when I tell you this and you hear, when you finish hearing, you will say, "It's true. We should leave our talk." At least one of you will say, "We should leave it." And by then you will know that what I have said is true because what you were going to do was not nice. Then when I go and see Ben, Ben will ask me, "Have you seen John and Kissmal today?" I will say, "Yes. I saw them." And Ben will say, "For about three days now, my eyes have not seen them." If I am a truth man because I speak truth, and I am a good man, I will say, "Oh, try and go and see them. It's not good when you are staying with someone and you don't see one another for three days. It's not friendship." Then Ben goes to think over what I have told him, and he goes to where Kissmal and John are. As I am a truth man and they have understood what I told them, the time Ben is arriving, you will hear John and Kissmal saying, "Welcome, welcome, welcome." And Ben will also respond. When they greet like that and respond, you will know that my talk has brought friendship among them. And then all of you there, you will take your former way of living and be holding it.

But if it is a bad man and he comes and meets John and Kissmal saying that they should remove Ben, at that time a bad man will say, “Yes. You should remove him. You shouldn’t let him get near you.” All the bad things Ben has never done, the bad man will say it to John and Kissmal, and they will take it. Even if they were not going to remove Ben, what the liar has added will make them remove Ben. And after he has said all his lies and finished, he will go home. He is not searching for anyone; he is searching for Ben. Anywhere Ben is, he will go and search for him. He is going to tell Ben lies. The moment his eyes see Ben, he will say, “Ben, what have you done to John and Kissmal?” And Ben will say, “Oh, I have not done anything. It’s only that for about three days now our eyes have not seen one another.” And the liar will say, “Never get near them again. They are bad people. This is what I have seen them planning to do.” All that John and Kissmal didn’t say, he will say it to Ben. Maybe Ben will believe it, and he will not go to John and Kissmal again. And John and Kissmal will also not come to Ben. A quarrel has finished them. And what has brought it? It is the liar who separated them. When they said the bad talk they were holding in their hearts, it was the liar who came and told Ben.

But there is no one who becomes annoyed and does not cool down. Someone can cause you trouble, and you will be very annoyed, and your heart will tell you, “If I see this fellow, this is what I’m going to do to him.” If you don’t see him, within one or two hours your heart will change again, and when you see him, you won’t have time for your annoyance again. But if a liar comes to you, what he will tell you will make your heart get up even more. Do you see the work of lies? But the way truth works, when you are annoyed, you will cool down, and you will see that you will forget about everything. And so how our talk has come, we are doing it as a group, and as we are in a group, it is very, very good. And so in everything, if a plant doesn’t grow, it will not spread its branches. And so I have put myself as the plant, and you are the branches. And who asked for the planting of the plant? It was you, John. If you didn’t ask, we wouldn’t have come forth. And so God should help, and inside the work, there should be one mouth, and there should be no wrong thing inside it. And we should hold truth among us.

And the talk I am going to add and give you now, it has a twisted way of talking. And so I am going to tell you a story, and to start this story, I have a question for you. When the mouth is sick, who treats it? Do you know? One day mouth fell sick, and they told the head that he should treat the mouth. And the head said he wouldn’t treat mouth. And they asked the head, “Why have you said that you will not treat the mouth?” And the head said, “As mouth is sick and lying in the room, it is better. If I treat him, he will take me outside and sun will be

hitting me, and then I might also fall sick. Or else he will say that he will go to the bush, and when we get to the bush, he will say he wants to carry firewood home, and he will put the firewood on me and I will fall sick. That is why I'm saying I will not treat him." And they said, "It doesn't matter. Eyes will treat mouth." And eyes said he would not treat mouth. And they asked why, and eyes said, "Perhaps when I treat him and we go outside, he will say he wants to make a fire. He'll put some wet sticks on the fire, and there will be smoke. The smoke will enter me, and by then I'll be sick. Or else there will be wind blowing and he will say he will go outside, and dust will enter me. That is why I say I will not treat him." And they said, "All right. Anyway, it is the ears that will treat him." And ears said he would not treat mouth. And they asked why, and ears said, "It is not because of anything between mouth and me that I am saying that. When we go outside, he will take me around and I will hear people saying useless things I don't want to hear. If I'm not strong, I cannot interrupt. And if I interrupt, others will come and knock mouth and make him swell up. And by then has he not got two sicknesses? So I cannot treat mouth." Then they said it is legs that will treat mouth. And legs said, "I cannot treat mouth. If I treat him and he becomes well now, he will say he will go outside, and he will take me and be walking useless walking. And I will be walking around and knocking myself against stones. So I cannot treat him." And they said it doesn't matter because it is stomach that will treat mouth. And the stomach said, "It is true. I will treat him. For about three days now, as he has not eaten, I am empty. The mouth will not get something and refuse the stomach. Anything that enters the mouth will enter the stomach."

What I am telling you is this: I am the mouth and you are the stomach. If I fall sick, you should treat me. If you treat me, I will take something and put it in my mouth. It will enter your stomach. I have been telling you all along that wisdom doesn't finish, and learning doesn't finish. Money finishes. And foolishness also finishes, because when a foolish person dies, that is all. And so I am mouth and you are the stomach. What I have got and I am telling you, if this mouth were not there, I couldn't have been telling you. And if you were not hearing it and putting it in your stomach, you wouldn't have been coming for me to be telling you.

What brought you to Ghana? Did you come to learn Dagbamba drumming or all types of drumming? When you came the first time, did you learn all that you wanted to learn? Why have you come back to Dagbon? I think you learned some things about Ashanti and Ga drumming, and you learned more about Dagbamba and Ewe drumming. Which of them has benefited you more? I think that the Dagbamba part was more, and it was more interesting to you. The reason why I

say that the Dagbamba side is more interesting and that it will help you more is that when you came back to Ghana, you came to this Dagbon. Even apart from drumming, there are many things here in Ghana. How much more the whole world? But you are here with us in our Dagbon. And what are you doing? You say you want to learn the ways of us Dagbamba. Maybe when you have been going home to your country, people have been asking you, “This tribe and that tribe: which is good?” When they ask you that, it isn’t that this tribe is better than that tribe. They are asking you whether you have benefited from going to all these places.

And so I think that what you have learned here is helping you or benefiting you. Maybe you think it is more interesting when compared to the other ones. I think that there is nobody who will do some work if he thinks that the work will not benefit him. And if it is learning, sometimes you can learn much about something and it will not benefit you; and sometimes too you can get a little of something, and it will help you a lot. You have come to Ghana because you want something, and you have come to me. And what you want, you are getting it. And what is worrying me, at least what I am getting from you is not bad. And truly, we have all come together, and as we have all come together, we are praying that we are all going to benefit from it.

Maybe in your country, people know that Ibrahim the drummer is doing well because he has been teaching you a lot of things. But in Ghana here, some of the Dagbamba think that I have rather been doing bad because I am showing you the way of living of the Dagbamba. I don’t mind. Whatever be the case, you are my friend. Whatever you give me, if you give me half a pesewa, a pesewa, two-and-a-half or five pesewas, it’s good. But if someone comes to ask how much you give me, I will just tell the fellow that he shouldn’t ask me that. People ask me, “You are always wasting your time with this white man. What has he been giving you?” And any time they ask me that, I say, “Oh, he is giving me, and it doesn’t concern you. You are eating in your house, and I am also eating in my house. And so you will do better to be quiet.” As I last showed you the meaning of “People are asking of you,” you should know that many people know about the work you are doing, and they know that it is not a small work. And so you should know that any time a plane lands at the airport, there are many eyes just watching to know that John Chernoff is arriving. When you arrive, a message just comes to Tamale that you are in Accra. Don’t you remember the last time you came? You hadn’t written us of the day you were going to come, and Kissmal wrote you a letter that he had information from somebody that you are in Accra, and that we wanted to know when you are coming here, that we are ready to do the work you want. Was it not surprising to you?

Any time you come here and you leave, people come to tell me that the research you are doing here is very important and that if you get to the States, you are going to get a lot of money from it. Three or four weeks ago, someone from Kumasi came here and said he was a trader between here and the States. He came and bought a hundred drums, and he took them to the States and came back. He said he knows you. He was asking to find out where you were learning this drumming, and he couldn't find out, but someone was able to tell him that it might be in this Tamale that you learned it. He came to me and asked me, and I said, "I know many white men, and I don't know which one you are talking about." Then he described you very well, and I said I know you. And he said that if you come again, I should charge you heavily.

There are even people among my own housepeople who have been listening to what outside people say about the way I am working with you, and they have been saying that I am a fool. And I know very well that I am not a fool. The reason why I say that is because I know that friendship is better than money. If you are here and you come to ask me of some matter, and I say I will charge you heavily, you can say you will pay or you can say you will leave the friendship. If you leave the friendship, it means the money is just useless: no one can make good use of such money. But because you are my friend, you see that we are moving together very nicely. You always give me gifts, and any time I ask you to get me something, you get it. What you are giving me is not money, but is it not money that you use to buy it? And at the same time, if I am charging you, you don't take it to be anything and you continue to give me anything I want. Anyone who has got sense will never say, "If someone comes to ask me something or to work with me, I have to charge him heavily." It might be that when someone comes to you, friendship is going to begin between you and that person. But if you show yourself to be difficult, and your friend runs away, then you are going to be living alone. And so it's better a person should be patient. That is why I don't consider what people have been telling me. I work and follow what I know. And I know that money finishes, but knowledge doesn't finish, and friendship too does not finish. Those who are telling me that I should charge you heavily, if I had rushed to charge you like that, maybe we wouldn't be staying together as we are staying now. That is why I don't listen to such talk.

As I have said that poverty is a sickness, it is not a sickness that will kill a person. We Dagbamba, we say that money is everything, and we say again that money is something that is dirty. We say that because if you die, they don't bury you with money. It is people who will bury you. And so a Dagbana will not look at money and refuse his friend. There may be something you want from a



Dagbana, and you will take money and fill a room, and he will look at the money and refuse you. In some families, if you want to go and find a girl there, and it is money you are taking to show yourself, they won't agree. They will say that if they take their child and give you, it will show that they have exchanged their child for money. And the reason why they say that is because of some rich people. There are some rich people who take their money to search for a girl, and if the child comes to do a bad thing, they will abuse the girl that they have bought her: "I gave your father money. That is why I have you. If I had not given your father money, I wouldn't have got you." And in Dagbon here, we say that she stands as a slave. This is why some people don't want to give their children to rich people. When the rich man is going to abuse the relatives of the girl, in our Dagbani we say that he will not abuse them and cut leaves to put on top. It means he will abuse them and won't hide anything; he will open their anus and leave them naked, with nothing to cover any part of them. That is the meaning of: somebody will abuse you and not cut leaves to put on you. This example, it is not all rich people who do that, and it is not all people with children who say that. But that is how it is. We Dagbamba don't take money to be a high thing.

But truly, if you don't have money, you are a weak person. If you don't have money, you cannot buy clothes. As we search for women, if you don't have money and you want to marry, it will worry you. The farming we are farming, if you don't have money, you cannot farm. If you don't have money, you cannot buy a horse. On the part of buying things, if there is no money, you will see something that your heart will want very much, and if there is no money, can you buy it? You can't. But if there is money, you will get what your heart wants. And to me, I can even say that I have seen that money can be life. Somebody can be sick, and if there is money, he will take it and they will treat him. Maybe the sickness was going to kill him. If not that, if the sickness was not going to kill him, maybe it would worry him. Maybe the sickness will start today and it will worry him for about two months; if there is money, he will be treating himself, and he will not be worried for the months it will take. But if there is no money, ah! It will worry him very much.

And so truly, money has got a lot of talk, and it's good and it's bad. If you don't have it, you are a weak person. But if you have money and God does not look at you well, and you don't know how to hold the money, you will lose respect. And so, is it not two? If you get it, you are a strong person; but if you have it and God does not wish you well, you are a weak person. How money is, if you are sitting at one place and you have money, the money roams. It goes and pulls good things and comes to give you, and it searches for bad things and comes

to give you. If you have money and somebody is selling his things, say, he is selling a cow, he is going to say, "I'm going to sell it to this fellow." You didn't go to tell him that you wanted the thing. It is your money that is going around. If he brings his cow and you buy, it is your money that has given you. And if it is somebody who is standing and wants money to borrow, he will say, "I will go to such a fellow and he will lend me money." If he comes and you don't lend him the money, what have you become? You have become his enemy. And so money, it gets friends and it gets enemies. This is how money is. And so money can bring confusion between even a brother and sister; and again, money can bring friendship, and money can break friendship at any time. But in all the talks of money between you and me, nothing has broken the relationship between you and me. And so God bless you and me that there is no confusion between us. It is a wonderful thing to stay with a stranger without confusion between you and the stranger.

I have always been telling you that you should make yourself a fool. And what is under it is this: if you want something, what do you do? You ask for it. If you ask and they tell you that you have to do such-and-such a thing before you get what you want, what will you do? You will try to do that thing. And so: what you want in this world is what ends your wealth. You want something from someone and he tells you, "I want this." If you have got it, what will you do? You will give it to him. That is why Dagbamba say, "What you want, that finishes your wealth." And so if you want to get something from someone, and you know you will get it from that fellow, then what that fellow is suffering to get or what he needs, if you have the way to help him, then you should help him. You shouldn't say you are too wise and you won't help the fellow. If you say you won't do it, and if the one who has been helping you is also hearing blame from outside people, you will see that he will lose the appetite for the work he is doing with you. And so I believe that the one you love is the one you spend your wealth on.

And this talk is strong inside the work we are doing. To us Dagbamba, we take it that friendship is more than money. Friendship, or love: it has more benefit than money, and it lasts. How we are staying together up to this time: that is one of the benefits that is adding to the work, so that one will not forget about his fellow friend. And so if you are going to do work, and you want to get the benefit of the work, don't let your heart be red on money. The one who is coming to work with you, he will be watching you, and you too you will be watching him. If he gets to know that you have love for him, it is better. You don't have to put your eyes to money. The only thing you will be fighting for is for him to know the work very well. How your heart is on him on the part of his knowledge, if God

helps you and you show him the work properly, then after that, whatever he takes his hand to get hold and give to you, whether it is small, it will benefit you. But if you are going to teach him, and you teach him that it is only money, then the time you will collect the money, it won't do anything for you.

And so all of us, may God let us all of us benefit from the work, because if you do some work, and the work hasn't got any use, or any benefit, then it is a useless work. If a work is good, and it has got benefit inside it, as for that, nobody shows an example of the work again. But it separates, because some work can be nice, and someone will do it and it will have no benefit for that fellow. And what is under this talk is that: if a work is nice and they have given it to you, if you the one receiving that work are not somebody good, then you won't benefit from the work. And so I'm telling you that there might be some work that can benefit many people, but somebody who has not got luck will come and put his hand inside to do that work, and he won't benefit from it. But somebody who enters work, and he is a good-luck person,<sup>1</sup> his work will be good. The person who has good luck, if he's coming to enter into work, he doesn't want to take one day to eat and satisfy from the work. He would like to be eating it little by little. For example,<sup>2</sup> if they give you porridge water to drink, you don't have to take your finger to stir it. Why is it that they will give you something like that and you will be in a hurry, and you will stir it? Maybe you want to know what is under the water just now, or you want the part that is under to be stirred up into the water, so that you will drink it and be satisfied. But as the porridge water is for you, you should be patient and be drinking little by little. If the water is plenty and you're drinking it like that, you will come to what is under. And so I am telling you that anyone who wants to eat one day and be satisfied, you should always know that after some time, that person is going to be very hungry again. And it also stands that after some time, he will have nobody following after him. You only want to eat today, but those who will be following at your back shouldn't eat.

And so on the part of this work, and comparing it to this example, if you are drinking from it bit by bit, whatever happens, you will get to know its under<sup>3</sup> very well. And up to the time you are no more there, after your death, those who are following you will still be drinking that water. Or again, taking you as the water, if it comes to the time that I am no more here, those who are following me and those who are my elders, I believe that they will also be drinking you as water. If I wanted to be in a hurry to stir the water, I would have drunk you all, and I would not still be getting your benefit. That is why we are patient. That is why if a work

---

1. zuyu suj: good head

2. example: resemblance; it looks like

3. its under: its meaning, that is, what is under it

is nice, even if you can't use it to benefit, but if you are doing the work, you will just make it nice. As the work is nice, it has its benefit, and we don't take it that we are going to eat all in one day and be satisfied. That is it.

Why have I told you that somebody who eats today and gets satisfied doesn't think of his back?<sup>1</sup> Maybe those you were working with before were in a hurry to see what was inside you. When they saw you and they were working with you, they were in a hurry towards you for certain things, so that they will eat you once and get certain things. If we had been like that, we wouldn't be sitting down here today to continue the work. And so the work that will benefit you, if you are going to enter into it, you will only pray to God, "The work I'm going to do, may God give me the benefit of it, and I will do it with good health." If you pray like this and enter into the work, and you do the work with health, God will give you the benefit of it. Even if you yourself don't get the benefit and you die, then those following your back, that is, your children, and those who are at your front, that is, your senior people, they will see the benefit. And so the work that has benefit, or profit, it doesn't just mean that you will get money from it. How you are doing this work now, maybe you will do it and you won't see the benefit, and you will die, and then your back, your children or your grandchildren, they will eat it. And truly, as we are sitting, this our work is nice, and we are eating its benefit. It is the truth I'm telling you. God tells us that we should always look for the truth. As for the one who speaks the truth, he doesn't sleep with hunger. It is God who feeds him. If you hold truth, if you go anywhere, God will feed you. But anyone who will tell a lie to feed his stomach, tomorrow he will sleep without food. The one who will eat one day and satisfy, tomorrow he will have no one behind him, no children and grandchildren. And the one who speaks the truth will be eating, and it will come to the time that he won't be there, and the truth he was holding will be feeding his people. That is where I am standing. That is how it is.

Truly, the way I am talking to you about the benefit of the work, what makes a work nice and beneficial is not money. It is not big money that gives benefit. If you do work, you can benefit from it by having a good name. As for that benefit, it shows that your name won't die in the world. This is what I am stepping on to tell you that if you are going to benefit, what is small and you will talk about it and people will hear about you, later on they will come to hear about your children and your parents. So this is what I am stepping on, and not money. If you look at it, you will see that everything has its way and the way it moves. And if you are doing work and it goes forward, if you exercise patience and it goes forward a bit, when another time the benefits are more, then there is nothing

---

1. his back: those who are following him; his descendants

wrong. But if it is only today, and today is your first day and you want to sit there today and eat and be satisfied, then you are not thinking of its end. Anything that you want to begin, you shouldn't begin it with bigness: don't just get up and say, "I'm a big man today." Everything has its end, and to us Dagbamba, it is standing that if you are going to begin something, you start it by looking down upon yourself. Then you come forward a bit. The time you reach the middle, at that point, you will see all that is inside, and if you show that you are big, then you can show that you are big without having fears. That is why we Dagbamba, sometimes we used to say, "As I'm sitting down today, how I was going to begin my work, I started it without anything better, but now I've seen benefit or profit inside it. What I want is what I do." That is the end of it.

And so the benefit of this work, truly, we don't know where it's going to be. How our talk is, if God agrees and we finish it, and it becomes a book, I believe that some people will be interested in it, but not everybody. I think that there will be more people who will be interested in it. But on the part of selling, the only thing I can tell you is that somebody who writes something in the market, and you the one writing something about tradition or custom,<sup>1</sup> you can't compare your work to his. For example, in the market, when day breaks, somebody is selling kooshe and somebody is selling cola, and the two of you will go to the market. One of you will sell more than the other at the market, up to the time the market will finish. Maybe you bought your goods thinking that you would go and sell and get profit, but when you got to the market, it happened that nobody bought from you. At that time, when you come home and sit, you have lost. That is how the market is.

And what of tradition, or custom? Custom is never the same as trading or selling. If you have something that is on the part of selling, and something that is on the part of old talks, you can't compare the two. As for tradition, every day there are people who will come out looking for it; not one day, and not the same day, they will come and see it. It is not within only us the Dagbamba. We know that everywhere, there is custom. I know that in your country, you have your custom there. And so what you are holding, you should hold it. If you think that you are going to make money out of it, then you will only be patient and see what God is going to do to you, and whether it is small or it is big. I have been telling you that something that is small and great can be better than something that is big and useless. So that is it. So you should make your heart to rest. You should do this work with white heart, and don't rush.

---

1. kali: tradition, custom

And the white heart I am also showing you, on the part of Dagbamba, I have a swearing inside the work. As you are doing the work, you can also swear inside, that, “This work, it was my father Alhaji who showed me. Unless it wasn’t my father Alhaji who showed me the work, then the work should go forward.” That is how we say it in Dagbani. That is how you swear. If it is not work that is good, or if it is lies, or if it wasn’t your father Alhaji who showed you that work, then the work should not go forward. That is how it is. You can swear like that. In our custom, we say that every learning has got its father. The way you will go and learn from somebody, and somebody too will come to you and ask you, then you have to show what you have learned to that person. As you have taught that person, if he will also go to work with what you have taught him and he will get food to eat from it, then he has got benefit. And you the one who has showed him, you too have got benefit. And so your work has benefit. But if you are holding it and you don’t show anybody, and you die with it, then there is no benefit inside. So that is one of the benefits I’m talking about. This work I am doing, if you do work the way I am doing it and I am getting the benefit, and if you take it and show anybody, and that person gets benefit from it, that is its way. That was why my father showed me. And so you shouldn’t wonder that in ten years or a hundred years, what you are doing, they will ask and get to know you. Truly, the benefit will come to you, and if you are not there, your children or grandchildren will eat its benefit. So that is why I want to tell you and you will know: put your heart down. That is the talk I have for you. And so God should give all of us the benefit of our work.

How our friendship is now, and the work we are doing, there are people trying to spoil us. If they are going to talk, they will talk about the benefit we are eating from one another, and they will come to talk about money. And as our work is nice, if we are doing it with white heart and confidence,<sup>1</sup> it will protect us from anyone who wants to spoil us in that way. We are not going to let our work be useless. But even up to today, what can spoil us is always there. Those who want to spoil the work are there. As they are there, I also know the way of living I am holding. If I wanted to hear hearsay, I wouldn’t be here. That is where I am also standing. And so it is good if I separate this talk on the part of money and the benefits we are eating inside this work. How I am adding this talk, I am showing you about the way of your work of the book and how you yourself are, and coming to add the sense of Dagbamba. And so the way of your work, there are differences inside. If you are going to learn something, that is the time you have to be patient and be taking things bit by bit. That is how learning moves. But if you are going

---

1. *suhu piɛni*: strong heart; confidence

to help someone on the part of money or giving, as for that one, it also has its way. If I show you the way that you should be looking at us, and we will be looking at you, I want you to know that the talk I am telling you is not a worrying talk. I am only advising you on the part of yourself and all of us here. Old Dagbamba say that you should never think of releasing something from your hand to fall on the ground. I don't think I have to explain that proverb to you.

I have told you that a Dagbana will not follow money and refuse his friend, but truly, we have seen in our living that what increases friendship is, "Get this from me." That is what increases friendship, and that is also what increases family. Even on the part of a person and his mother, that is what increases the way they stay together. And so in our living, and as we sit together with our friends, it comes to resemble a debt. And even in our Dagbani, we say, "Friendship brings debt." When you become very close to someone, it looks as if it is some sort of debt. But it is not a debt that you pay. In the olden days there was chief of Savelugu whose name was *Savelugu-Naa Puusamli*, and the meaning of Puusamli is: the debt that is inside the stomach, you can't pay it. What is between you and your friend, or between you and your mother's child, if you call it a debt, it will look as if it is something you can pay, but you can't pay it. It will be with you, and you will pay and pay and pay, always paying the debt, and will not be able to finish paying it. The meaning of this name, every Dagbamba knows something about it. There are some kinds of debt you cannot pay. And so as Dagbamba say that friendship brings debt, friendship is a debt that you cannot pay. And that is why they say that proverb. If someone is not holding your debt and you want to pay him as if he had your debt, you cannot pay all of it, unless he has a true debt on you. I say "you cannot pay all" because you cannot pay him and satisfy all his needs. If you want to pay him that type of debt, you will only do to your extent. You will do what you can do, and probably the person will need something more than that. But if you have done what you can do, whatever happens it will be good for him. And so I am not telling you that you should be trying to give us everything we need, or trying to solve all our problems. I am talking on the part of friendship and giving, and I am going to tell you what we don't want.

And what don't we want? There is an animal we call *ᵿᵿᵿᵿ*; it is like a weasel.<sup>1</sup> God forbids us that animal. When this animal is going to search for food and eat, it goes to sacrifice to a god of the land,<sup>2</sup> and it prays that the god should stand at its back and it will go and get food. If the god stands at its back, and it goes and gets a hen, instead of sharing with the god, it will take the hen and put it

---

1. mongoose

2. buyli: a local shrine; a god

on its head, and spread the feathers to cover its face. Then it will tell the god that it hasn't seen him and so it has nothing to give the god, and the god too shouldn't look at his face again. Then the ɲɔɣu will take the food and go and eat it. As for the ɲɔɣu, that is the way it lives. We used to say its name on human beings, too. There are human beings like that. You will help them: when they get something better, they won't want to give you, and they will hide themselves from you to eat the thing. And so may God protect us from that. May God protect us from: one of us will get, and he will tell us he doesn't know about anybody again. And so may God protect us from a human ɲɔɣu. This is what we are praying and begging God to protect us.

As we are sitting, there is no sickness disturbing us. It is only poverty that worries all of us, and it comes to include you. Truly, you have been giving me things all the time, but as I have been watching you, I see that you are not someone who knows how to get money. As you have been giving me, anything you give, we don't call it money. We call it something. Money is not something, but if somebody takes money and buys tea and gives it to you, it's something. If he gives you a dress, that is money he has used to buy it. But you don't have to open your mouth to say that he should give you money. He can give you whatever he gives, but we don't call it money. As you have been giving me things, it is not that I can tell you what I want. I want you to know that with us Dagbamba, if you have a friend, and your friend tells you to be asking him for things, you don't always have to be asking him, "Give me this; give me that." If you are asking him like that, maybe you will put him into shame. I don't know what you are holding in your heart, but inside our giving in Dagbon here, we give to our extent, but sometimes someone would like to give a certain type of gift, and he will not have the means to give that gift. That is another reason why they say friendship brings debt.

And so if you have a friend and you want to stay together with your friend, it isn't that you must know all that your friend wants and then you will do it. As for that one, it is only if you have the means. If you know what your friend wants and you have the means to do it for him, you can do it. And if you have the means and you don't do it, then it shows that you are not with that fellow on the part of friendship. But if you say you will do what your friend wants, and you don't have the means, you cannot do it. If you don't have the means and you say you will do it, what will happen? You will do it and you will not finish it, and you will see that you and your friend will come to feel shy toward one another. What you said you would do is not finished, and as you were not able to finish it, you will feel shy, and people will laugh at you. Those who don't like you will say, "As this



fellow says he likes that man, has he been able to finish the work for him? Has he done it? They are liars.” But if you have the means and you are going to do it, people will say, “Keep quiet and watch,” and others will say, “He will do it. If he hadn’t the means, he wouldn’t have attempted doing it.” After you have finished, those who said you couldn’t finish it, they will be ashamed and they will feel shy. Those who said you could do it will be happy. And those who are feeling shy will come to the side of those who are happy and will say, “It’s true. Those people said they could do it.” And it will bring a lot of things. And so when you come together to do something on the part of giving like that, you must know that you can do it, and you will do it too. And you will see that your friendship will stand.

As for friendship, and how we know about friendship, you and your friend don’t become friends because of money. Whether he has or he has not, you will stay with one another. Whether he gives you or he doesn’t give you, you will be together. As for friendship, there is no accounting in friendship. Here is an example. Just yesterday you broke my drum. When you came and showed it to me, I didn’t tell you anything, but you gave me money and told me to fix it. Did I tell you to give me money to repair it? I didn’t say that. And as you gave it to me, I told you to forget about it. If I should collect money from you like that, to us Dagbamba, it would show that I don’t trust you. If your own drum should break, I have a way to tell you to bring money so that I will sew a new drumhead for you. Or if I want, I can repair it and say that you should forget about paying. And again, if it is my own drum that broke, if I was playing it for you, I have a way to ask you, “John, give me money so that I will sew my drum.” But if you have taken the thing and it got spoiled, and you come to give me something to get and replace what you have spoiled, if it is that I have no means to repair it, I can collect what you give me. But if I myself have the means to repair it, I cannot collect anything from you; I will ask you to forget about it. As for us, we don’t spoil each other’s thing and pay for it. The one who spoils your thing and pays you back just looks as if he is somebody you don’t know. If you let him do such a thing, we will say that how you are living with that man in friendship, and he spoiled your thing and paid you for it, if it happened to be somebody you didn’t know, then you would be taking the fellow to the chief’s house. This is how it is.

Truly, there are some talks between friends, and money talks will be inside. In Dagbon here, they say, “Friendship or brotherhood does not collect medicine for free.” If you go to get medicine, they will collect something from you. They don’t give medicine for free. In Dagbani we say that if somebody is going to give you medicine, you don’t just collect it, even if there is friendship inside. There is no charge, but you have to put something under the medicine. You give

something in exchange because you want the benefit of what you are collecting, so that if it comes to you, it will work properly for you. And so what you are giving, you are giving because of you yourself. So anything you get and put down, the person who gave you the medicine will take it. He is not going to charge you, but you will have to know what to put under your collecting the medicine. Even your own father, if he's going to give you medicine, he won't tell you, "Pay this." He will give it to you, but you yourself know that you don't have to collect medicine without giving something. If I go and eat medicine, then I will pay. And when I finish paying, then I will be holding the medicine. If my mother's child or my friend comes to me, I can give that medicine to him. But the medicine man who gave me the medicine didn't tell me that there is a difference between my mother's child and someone who comes for the medicine. Whether he knew me or he didn't know me, he collected something from me, but he didn't say that I should collect such-and-such an amount before making it for somebody. And so even if your mother's child comes to you for medicine, there is a way for you to collect something from him. The respect you gave to the medicine man is the same as the respect your friend has also been giving you. Every day, your friend gives you respect, and he was respecting you up to the time you became friends. Anything he wants, if you happen to have it, you can give it to your friend. But as for medicine, you have to collect something from him. You will just say, "The medicine man who gave the medicine to me told me that any time I give it to somebody else, I should collect something." Do you see the *Ganli* medicine that Alhaji Adam gave you? If you go home and your mother's child comes to you and asks for it, you have the way to collect something from him. You don't have to say that because he is your mother's child, you don't have to collect something from him. If you do that, it means that you will spoil the medicine. You don't have to give it out free. If you give medicine to somebody without having the fellow put something down, then the medicine won't work. You have just deceived him. As for medicine, it doesn't enter into friendship talk, it doesn't enter into father talk, it doesn't enter into mother' talk. That is how it is. As for medicine, if your friend should come and ask for that medicine, you have to ask something from him. And so this one is different from the way of friendship, because medicine is a different matter. And so what I am talking is on the part of friendship. It's not on the part of medicine.

And so I am not making a charge for you to pay. Didn't I just tell you that a Dagbana will not look at money and refuse his friend? As for money, money finishes. That is why our elders have a proverb which says, "What an old person has sat down and seen, if a child gets up, the child cannot see it." And so I am

telling you that wisdom does not finish. Wisdom has no end. When they are drumming, one of the names they drum for me is “Money finishes, but wisdom does not finish.” That is one of my names. Why have I said that money finishes but wisdom does not finish? The first time you came, you were giving me money, but I don’t know where the money is again. Even if I had used the money to buy some material to sew, I think that by now the material would have worn out. But the wisdom you got from me is still in you. Am I telling lies? No. The wisdom you got is still there, and it is increasing, too. We know that it is money someone uses to get wisdom, but if wisdom were not more than money, no one would use money to get wisdom. And truly, you can use wisdom to get money, but in our Dagbani, we say that if you have money and you don’t have wisdom, the money will run away and leave you. It is there like that in Dagbani. Wisdom is senior, so the money will go. And so wisdom is more than money. And that is my name when they are beating the drum.

And I am also not saying that you should solve all our problems for us. But what I am telling you is that if you are two people and you come together, if you cannot do all that your friend wants, then at least you should know what the other fellow does not want. If you don’t know that, you cannot stay with him. What he does not want, when you come to do it, you are showing that you want it. If he says that he does not want, and you also show that you want it, then which of you is holding the truth? No one. There will be quarreling, and you both will become useless people. And so when two people are going to stay together and last, each one should take patience and know what the other does not like. If I am with you, maybe I know what you don’t want, and you also know what I don’t want. You won’t do it to me, and I also won’t do it to you. And will we quarrel? We won’t quarrel. Let me give you an example. Let’s say that what you don’t want is to be sleeping and someone will come and wake you. If I know that, I won’t come and wake you when you are sleeping. No matter how nicely I am staying with you, I will never wake you when you are sleeping, because I know that you don’t want it. If I am with you and I come and see you sleeping, and I wake you, I already know that it is something you don’t like and I still do it. Will we live together in this way and it will be sweet? No. And so if I come to you and you are sleeping, I won’t worry you. I will wait. Any time you wake up, we will go and do what we were going to do. You will not find my fault. I will also not find your fault. That is how it is. Will we quarrel? No. There won’t be any quarrel. That is how friendship is.

And so you, John, how we are following you, we are not taking a bad heart to follow you. If you are holding us in a bad way, we cannot know, but we have

given trust to you. But as for us, we are not following you with bad hearts. We are following you so that your problems will be solved and you will get what you need in the right way. And you too, as you are looking at us, it is good that you should try to solve our problems for us. There is nothing wrong with that. If it were that what we are doing for you, you are coming here to deceive us, and your situation was better, then it would be over to you. Or if you were going to find a new person to replace us, or you were going to a new place to learn what we are teaching you, it could not be same as how we are teaching you. How we are now, as for all of us here, we all know the secrets of one another. And so if a man should grow a tail, his wife will know of it; and if the wife also grows a tail, the husband will know it. And truly, our friendship has now come to the point that I believe you, and all of us here have trust in you.

I have been telling you that as for a sensible person, if you tell him something which is of benefit to him, he will just catch it at once. Even if a talk is small but it's very good, and you talk it, it will spread everywhere. A Dagbamba proverb says that someone who has patience will hear the voice of a bedbug. A bedbug doesn't cry, so how can you have patience and hear the voice of a bedbug? It is because you have sense. And so something can be small, but the one with sense will know what is inside it. I believe that as you have been giving us, it is your white heart and your sense that have showed you that you should be giving us. In the village where I farm, all the people think that what you have been doing for me is very good, and so they don't have any way to pay you back except to pray for you every Friday. You don't even know them, but they are praying for you. And God also says that if you do good to somebody, He God will give you in this world and in the next world. And so if you do us something good, it is good for the people of Dagbon here who are our friends and family, and I think it will also be good to you and your people in America.

Truly, on the part of your giving, if they put something down for one person to carry, and you go to pick that thing and start to carry it, people will be praising you, "You are carrying it; you are carrying it." But if you allow someone to help you before you get to the end, it looks as if there is not as much respect in it: if one person has the means to do something, it is better than two people have the means to do it. As you have come here, you have come alone, and we are looking at you as one person. But we know that when you are in your town, you are not alone: you have people in your country who are looking at you and the work you have come to do here. If some Americans should come to Dagbon and hear that you alone came from America and you were able to do good to some of the Dagbamba, whether it was big or small, they will see that it gives a very high

respect to all of America. It is sweet for all the Dagbamba to give respect to all Americans and to know that the Americans are good people. And so what I am saying is that you should know that if someone is fighting for you here, you should also be fighting for him in your country. You should be looking at us, and you should tell your big people to be looking at us. They should look at us who are sitting with you, and they should look at us Dagbamba and how we are living with you, and even come to look at Ghana and Africa. They should see our work and see our way of living, and they will know that we Dagbamba, and coming to talk of black people, we have respect on the part of living with people. If they do something good for us, and we come to benefit, it will be better.

And so the advice I have for you today, and I am adding to what I have talked, is that as we are sitting down in this modern Ghana, two cedis is money, but it is not money again. Right now, as we are sitting down, we don't know what our Ghana money is again. If you get up and say that you are going to Accra, twenty bags of money will not do anything for you. If you put it in your pocket, before daybreak you will finish it. Even two hundred bags of money, at times it is not money. But if you look at it, it's money. If someone gives it to you in the right way, it will do something for you. What is the right way? If he gives it to you at once, you yourself will know what you can use it to buy and put down, and it will be all right for you. Even if you are taking some and throwing it in gutters, at least some will be left. But if he doesn't give you in the way he should give, if he gives you a drop today, you will take it and eat; tomorrow he gives you another drop, you will take it and eat. Every day it will be finishing. That is not the right way to give. Even if he wants, he can give you two hundred bags of money, but if he doesn't give it in the right way, it won't do anything for you, and it won't do anything for him. But if he gives you in the right way, what can you do and there won't be anything remaining? And if somebody happens to give you fifty bags of money, it will do some work for you. And what of the person who is going to give you a hundred bags of money? And so what I am telling you, if you are staying with somebody and he happens to give you something like that, at least you can use it to buy something and put it down, and one day you may say, "This is what I have." If he leaves you for more than a year and he is not coming, you will be eating from what he gave you the last time. You will be eating, waiting up to the time he will come again. That is why Dagbamba say that if someone is riding on an elephant, his legs won't touch the ground. It means that if you are staying with someone who is strong, you won't fear anything, and nothing will be worrying you. The one who has the means to help someone, and he gives like that, it will truly help the fellow. That is better than "Get this small thing, and tomorrow come

again.” And if you know the extent of your giving, then you will gather it and give it at one time.

I haven't seen, but I have heard that the Christian fathers who are white people and they are here, they have many ways of giving. They give alms to the person they know is poor. And what we also heard is that if they want to give a gift, they don't give a small gift. They gather the gift and make it big, and they give it to one person. One of them will take the gift and go and leave it on the way, or one of them will take it into the middle of the bush and throw it. I have heard that, but I haven't seen it. And not me alone; some other people too heard and said it. And as the gift is there, somebody will come and meet it. If he takes it, it will help him for a long time. And this is the talk I have heard, and even if it is not there like that, it shows some sense. And it shows again that the sense of how to give has not come only because of the Islamic religion or because of our Dagbamba way of living.

In Dagbon here, we have that way of giving gifts. Let's say that I haven't got, and Kissmal hasn't got, if you have a gift and it cannot reach the two of us, and you take it and give to one of us, it is better. You know that it will not reach the two of us, and if you give it and say that it is for the two of us, then that is not giving of gifts. And if you say it will not reach the two of us, and you leave us and take it and give to someone somewhere, then it is not a gift. If you get and you are going to give a gift to some people, and the gift doesn't reach them, then take it and give to one person. God will give you again. And the wish that was in your heart, you will give to the other. And that is giving of gifts. In my heart I would like you to do something for us that will make people say, “Oh, these people, truly, their friendship is truly friendship.” And so a gift, it is good if it is something that people can see, and it will stand for the friendship. If that wish is also in your heart, it will be good. And if there are no means, then it is not a fault. To us Dagbamba, the giving of gifts follows how someone gets something.

Truly, the talks about giving have many ways, because there is someone who gets, and God says he shouldn't give: whatever he has, he won't give you, and he won't give your friend and it will reach you. And there will be somebody who doesn't get, and he will be giving gifts more than somebody who has money. But inside our watching, the one who gives a gift is the one who is able to get, and that is why he gives. Somebody may want to give gifts, but he hasn't got the means. When God lets him get the means, then he will be giving. And so a gift follows the thing you get. As for the giving of gifts, it follows a strong heart and the way a person gets. There will be somebody too, and his heart is strong on the part of giving. What he gets today, he will finish it today, because he knows that

God will give him again. And the one who gives gifts and his giving shows that he is a good person, he gives inside his house, and he gives outside. He is the one God has put down to be giving gifts, and Dagbamba say, “The gift has satisfied the house before it came outside.” Somebody who gives his family before he comes outside to give again, he is the true gift-giver.

And what I know, and I’m telling you: when you give a gift, you haven’t done it for only the one you give; you have done it for yourself. That is why we say that someone who gives gifts is someone who has sense. What is the sense? Let’s take it that maybe there is someone who doesn’t pray, and he buys me a praying mat. Every time I pray, even if I’m not seeing that fellow, I am talking of this gift. If I pray and I don’t pray for him, at least God will collect my prayers and give to him. It shows in the Islamic religion that if you buy a praying mat for somebody and he is using it to pray, what he will gain from the prayers, God will divide it in two and give half to you the one who has bought it for that fellow, even if you are not someone who prays. And if someone buys me a kettle for ablutions, I will take it home and put it by my door. As for a praying mat, it is something I can keep in the room, and if I want, I can spread it and be sitting on it. But as for the kettle, I can’t do that. It will be sitting by the door outside, and it isn’t I alone who will be performing ablution with it. Everyone who is passing and needs a kettle to wash before praying, he will take it and say, “Oh! Truly, the one who has done this has done a great work.” And so someone can give you something like this and you don’t have to thank him. And so don’t give a gift and then be watching the person you gave the gift to be thanking you very well for that. The one you gave will only be sitting down, and other people will thank you for him. Sometimes somebody will give something like this, and he will just come and put it by the door and then go away. If the fellow comes out and finds it, he will take it and know that someone has given him alms. He doesn’t have to say “Thank God.” Whether he likes it or not, God has seen the goodness of the one who gave the gift. That is how it is. And so if somebody does the work of God to you, you don’t have to greet the fellow very much. God will greet the fellow very much for you.

And so truly, to us, a gift is even more than alms. A gift can look like alms, but as for alms, they have told someone to give alms. The one who gives gifts has asked his heart and given it. And the one he has given will go and tell somebody, “So-and-so has given me this.” It will make that fellow happy. And it will make the one who has been given happy. As for a gift, it always extends: it adds to our living together with people. Let’s say that as I’m sitting down, I have a gown, and there is somebody who hasn’t got it. If I have the means, I will give to him. As I

have given him, he will know that I like him, and he will know that as he hasn't got, that was why I have given him. Has it not added to our living together? This is how we give. And God wants that. The one who has given, the gift will protect him from many talks, in this world and up to heaven. And so a gift has not come because of only one person. This is how it is.

And so in Dagbon, how we get and give to one another, this is how it is. If you say you have, and you don't give gifts, then your having is not having. No one will count you and add you into people who do good. If you are staying with your mother's child, and he has, and he has not been giving people, nobody will get to know that he has anything. Even on the part of his friends, nobody will know that he has got anything. As for his getting, even if his room is filled with money, we don't say, "He has." That kind of getting, we don't call it getting. And so giving: that is what we want; and giving of gifts, even it is God Who likes it more. If you are someone who doesn't pray, when you give a gift, God likes it, and God will take the good and give you in this world. It's not all Dagbamba who pray, and those who don't pray, some of them have more than those who pray. And those who don't pray, they give gifts — plenty. Even when someone does not pray and he gives a gift, if he gives it because of God, God will take it and pay him, and his eyes will see. If only he is someone who watches, he will see, but the one who doesn't watch will not see. And so giving of gifts, it's good on the part of the one who gives and the one he gives to, and it is good on the part of God, too. If you want to give a gift, and you are giving it because of God, whatever happens, you will get it again. If you don't get the money itself, maybe there was some bad thing that was going to happen to you, but when you give the gift, it will stop the bad thing. And so when you give a gift, you don't give for nothing. You give for yourself. This is how it is.

And so I am also telling you: if you do something and it's good, it's yours; if you do something and it's bad, it's yours. I am not just talking talks to you; I am telling you the truth. I am talking to you about our Dagbamba living. And it is also inside the way we are holding our drumming. Our drumming has got a lot of benefits. And so this work we are doing: don't let this work become useless. As we are looking at you, you should also be looking at us, when you are here and when you are with your people at home. If you don't take time, you can lose something from your hand, and it will only come from you. I am telling you the truth. As for any animal that flies, if it doesn't respect its wings, or if it demeans its wings, then children will roast it and eat. And so don't think of releasing something that is in your hands. What I am telling you now, I don't want you to ask me anything about it again. You yourself know its meaning; you are not a



small boy. And so this is an old person's talk I am telling you. It's not a person whose hair is gray who is the elder. Eldership is in the heart. And so it is an old person's talk I am telling you, but I am not telling you because I am old. My drumming name is: "Lies are sweet; truth is like a thorn." That is how my name is called. One who talks truth all the time, they don't like him. That is how my name is. And so God should give all of us the benefit of our work.