

Chapter I-14: *How a Drum is Beaten*

Yesterday I told you that drumming talks are many, and today I'm going to continue. Today I am going to tell you how a drum is sounded and how we are beating different ways in drumming. Drum-beating has got many types. We ourselves, as we are here, there are differences in our knowledge, and we are divided in our way of beating, too. You see how a drummer holds a drum with his left arm. He takes the thumb and hooks it through the strings, and he turns his wrist and the thumb pulls the strings. It is this thumb which speaks on the drum. There is somebody who uses the thumb to press the strings, and another person will use his elbow to press the strings. It is all answering the song in the drum, and drummers follow the sound of the drums when beating. As the left arm is holding the drum in the armpit, there are differences on the part of how a drummer squeezes the drum. Someone will beat and the sound will come from the wrist and how it presses against the drum. Someone will beat and press the drum against the armpit. Someone will beat and use the left arm to hold and press the drum. And someone might use his four fingers to hold the strings and squeeze. Somebody will beat a drum and lower the mouth and not mind how the drum is hanging, and he can beat it. Somebody will beat a drum and be looking at it, and if he doesn't look, he will break it. Somebody will be beating and will never look at the drum. It is all from the learning. There are some people who lower the drum and beat it, and there are some people who raise the drum. If I myself am going to beat, I raise the drum. I cannot lower it: if I lower it, it won't do the work I want. What my heart wants is that I raise the drum and beat. And all this is from the arm. And all these ways of beating a drum, we have seen them. As we are beating the drums, everyone has got his way of beating. But no matter how you hold it, it is your heart that is going to say it and your hand that will collect it and beat. And so all the talk of drumming is in the heart, and knowing how to beat the different types of drumming is all in listening and watching.

What brings the differences in the sound of the drum? It is the right hand that holds the stick and beats, but it is the left arm that brings the differences in the sound. Someone might only use the right hand to drum, and he has only placed the left arm on the drum. You will see him beat and hear only the sound of the beating: *kon-kon-kon*. That fellow doesn't know how to press it or how to loosen it. The sound doesn't change. When you beat a drum, it is good you use your left arm to press it and then loosen it a little bit. We drummers say that a drum is like a woman. When you have a wife, you have to hold her well. When you see that

you have to hold her strongly, you hold her strongly. But if you hold her too strongly, it won't be good. And so that is how drumming is: you press the drum and you loosen it at the same time. If you only hold it and you don't loosen it, it won't work, and you yourself won't enjoy the sound. And so the different ways of beating, when the beating is not the same, it is from the arm that is holding the drum. Someone will be beating, and he just shakes the arm and he doesn't hear the sound of the drum. As he is shaking the arm, the strings will be making a sound like *koyo-koyo*, and it will not be adding to the sound of the drum.

As we are beating the drum, the left wrist is doing the work because the left wrist is doing the talking in the drum. As for the right hand, if it is not quick, even if the left wrist is working, it won't do. And so there are different ways of beating the drum. If you are beating the *gunḡon*, you are raising up your left hand and knocking the *gunḡon*, and is it not the *chahara*, the strings they tie on the *gunḡon*, that are making the beat? I have told you that if your left hand is just sleeping on the *gunḡon*, that is the way the *gunḡon* will sound higher. But if you press your hand on the skin too much, you will only hear the sound, *teb-teb-teb-teb*. Everybody has the way he beats it, but it's not good like that. You should press, but you shouldn't press too much. And so truly, it is the left hand that is doing the work in drumming and in beating *gunḡon*. And so these *lunsi* drums we beat, any drummer who is beating the drum, sometimes if you see the top part of his left wrist, you will see that it is tough, and inside the thumb is dried. Sometimes, if I keep long from beating the drum, when I take it and beat, after beating you will see that part of my left hand will be swollen, and on another part of my hand the skin will peel.

And so it is the left wrist and the left forearm that bring the sound of the drum. If you want to beat the drum and you don't use your wrist and forearm on the strings, it won't do. Drumming is in the wrist. When someone is beating the drum, you should watch and see how the drum is crying. The fingers are also changing with the wrist. As the fingers are shaking, that is how the heart is also shaking. Sometimes people even hum, and the sound will come out. It is the wrist that is working. No matter how sensible you are, if your wrist cannot work, you cannot learn anything on the drum. And so it is good when you press the drum and raise your forearm, and when the drum sounds as if you are going to talk, you take your fingers and change it. At that time, the drum will be talking, and as it is talking, it is your heart that is talking. You talk in your heart, and your arm and fingers will bring it out. If your heart doesn't talk, you cannot beat the drum and make it stand. It is the heart that speaks for the arm, and the arm will know how it works. And so it is the heart which says: beat this; beat this. This is how

drumming is, and as it is, everybody has got his way of beating. And so the beating of drums, no one can know all of it.

I can say that we drummers are in groups, because as we are beating the drums, we beat more than one another. Someone will take a drum and press it and loosen it about five times, and any way he wants the drum to sound, it will sound. Someone can be beating and talking on the drum, and if that fellow calls your name, you will hear it and understand it. The name you have given him to call for you, that is the name he beats, and that is why you have understood him. Someone will be there, and when he beats, you will not hear him saying anything. It is from the way he is pressing it. There is someone, when he wants to talk, his heart will get up very fast. When the heart gets up quickly, the arm too gets up quickly, and the drum will be crying *woyo-woyo* throughout. His drumming won't stand unless he takes his sense to cool his heart down. When the heart cools itself for the arm, the arm also cools, and it will press the drum and release it. That is it: you press the drum and release it, and your forearm goes into the strings, and the strings will work the mouth of the drum. At that time, how you want the drum to cry, it will cry. That is how drumming is.

And again, if it is on the part of the right hand and the beating, the sound of the drum comes from the way the hand moves. If the right hand is rushing, it spoils your way of beating. If the right hand is very slow, it also spoils your beating, unless it is steady. There is someone whose wrist is very stiff: it doesn't move or turn when beating. When you came and started learning to beat drums, your wrist was stiff because you had not started from the time you were very young. There are people here whose wrist is just stiff like that, and we have some medicine to give to such people. That is the type of thing you were given by Alhaji Adam. We call it *zambana*, the cat. If a cat is lying down and something falls in front of it, you will see the cat be very quick to use its hand to catch that thing. When someone with that type of medicine beats a drum, his turning his hand is always very smooth. This medicine follows somebody who has patience. And it isn't all drummers who have it. It moves inside the family. If someone's grandfather ate that type of medicine, when they bring forth a child in that family, the child will be able to drum even if he himself doesn't have the medicine. If you eat it and you give birth to a child, some of the medicine will go into the child. As we are sitting, my son Fatawu is about twelve years old, but any time he takes a drum, he will beat the way we beat; and if he takes a *gungon* and is beating, you will think that a grown man is beating.

But if a drummer's hand is too fast, it can spoil his beating. Why do I say that? He will be rushing forward and leaving the other drummers, and he will be

spoiling the dancing, too. There are some types of dances that need waiting at some points. If your hand is too fast, it means you won't be able to stop at those points, and how will you beat those dances that have waiting and stopping? If you take Damba, for example, there are some types of Damba that are beaten fast and some that are not beaten fast. The one that doesn't need to be rushed, if you bring fast beating into it, you will spoil it. This Takai we beat, when you want to start, you start slowly, and as you go deeper, you start beating a little faster. If you want to beat *Nyayboli*, you start slowly, and when you go a bit further into the drumming, you start beating faster. But when a drummer's hand is too fast, he will always want to be rushing: when you take him to beat the slow beating, you'll see that he spoils the whole thing. And again, there can be a drummer, and all his beating is too fast. He will be rushing: he will beat before the group will beat, so that before your sticks knock the drum, his stick is already on the mouth of the drum. Before he is supposed to beat, he is rushing to go forward. He is not following the way of the beating, and he will be leaving the others behind. This is different from when the beating itself is fast. If it is Takai or *Nyayboli*, the time when the dance is hot, you will see that the beating is also hot; as for that, there is no rushing inside. That is the way of the beating. But when someone is beating fast, and his beating does not follow the other drums, it's not good. When we go to beat and we start, there are some people who beat too fast, and we just collect their sticks. It happens. If you don't stop that fellow, then your drumming spoils. If you don't collect his stick, nobody will enjoy the beating. That is why I say that if you beat and always rush, you spoil the drumming.

And so if the right hand is too fast in beating, it is good you make the left hand a bit slow. If the right hand is very fast and the left one too is very fast, you won't get the beating you want. When you are going to beat a drum, it is good you make the left hand slow and the right hand a bit faster. If you beat in that way, then you will get the type of beating you want. But if you don't ask to know all this, you won't know how to beat. You will be beating and the sound will not change. You will hear the song you are beating, but it will have no changing, and it won't be sweet. Someone will be there and be beating the drum until he is old, and no one will have interest in his beating. And there is someone who will beat the drum and put it down, and people will be telling him, "Get up. Get up and beat again." It is because he learned it well.

And so in drumming, on the part of how we beat the drum and learn to beat, everyone has got his hand, and all the hands are different. One man's hand is sweeter than another man's hand. If you see someone's beating to be just like another person's beating, you should know that the reason why their hands are the

same is coming from the person who trained them. How they have learned it, they have come to beat and resemble that person. And so the one who has taught you, you will take that way of beating. Everyone has his father in drumming, that is, the one who showed him or the one he followed to learn.

Truly, you cannot just hold a drum yourself and teach someone. It is only putting a drum in the armpit that can let someone know how to drum. As we have been beating and I am teaching you, you have also been watching. Sometimes you will be beating, and others will know that it is you who is beating. And sometimes when you are drumming, others will not know. And some people will see you beat and can say straightforward that it is such-and-such a fellow who has taught you. Any person I teach, when the fellow is going to beat, the fellow will beat like the way I beat. That is because I will teach him in the correct way. About three days ago I was sitting down sewing a skin, and there was a ḡṡḡṡḡ lying down, and you came and were sitting down beating the ḡṡḡṡḡ. Someone came and said that he had not thought that you were the one beating. He thought it was I who was beating. He said he thought that I had sold a ḡṡḡṡḡ and was beating it to show how it sounded. It is because you are following my steps in everything on the part of this drumming, and that is why you beat and the sound comes out correctly.

But I want you to know that if you are trying to get something and you don't have patience, you can't get what you want. Abdulai the boxer is my brother's son, and it's not that I don't like him, but he is beating a ḡṡḡṡḡ with hard blows, very strongly. And my son Alhassan too, it is not because I have given birth to Alhassan that I am going to give some good talk about him. Alhassan's wrist in beating ḡṡḡṡḡ is more interesting than Abdulai's. I'm not showing that the way Abdulai beats ḡṡḡṡḡ is bad. The way he beats is good. I'm just comparing it, because if you hear the way he beats and the way Alhassan beats, you will hear the difference. Abdulai's beating makes a high sound, because he is strong, and he beats ḡṡḡṡḡ with strength. But I taught Alhassan how to beat the ḡṡḡṡḡ. How Alhassan is beating, if you see the way his hand goes on the ḡṡḡṡḡ, that is how I am also beating. If Alhassan were to have followed my steps, he would have been perfect on the ḡṡḡṡḡ. But a child is a crazy person, and that is why he does not want to take my steps to get to my position in beating the ḡṡḡṡḡ. All the time he used to be crazy, beating by heart. If not because of that, no one should have been able to beat ḡṡḡṡḡ better than Alhassan, because I taught him how to beat, and I know how to beat ḡṡḡṡḡ very well, too. Have you ever seen me beating this drum and then just be moving about, shaking my body and doing all that? Have you ever seen me doing that? Have you ever seen me raising up my hand high and then be knocking? Have you ever seen Alhassan beat ḡṡḡṡḡ too loudly? But

how he beats, is it interesting or not? It is interesting. And my beating of guṅḡḡḡ, is it interesting or not? I know that what I have taught Alhassan, he will get some of it, and even if he can't get all, then he can get a little of it. Whenever Alhassan is going to beat the guṅḡḡḡ, I know that whatever Alhassan is going to beat is the same as I am going to beat. But Alhassan should have been perfect in beating guṅḡḡḡ because I am perfect in it. But he has no patience, and he is not serious. As he is too crazy, he does not want to follow the steps. You should take this example, that as Alhassan has been getting annoyed all the time, if I am going to be the same as Alhassan and if my heart gets annoyed, then I don't take my experience to cool everything down, but I just do what the heart is telling me to do, it would not be good. But people like Alhassan, if their heart gets up, or if they are annoyed, they try to do whatever they want, and this is because they have no experience: that is why I call them crazy people. And Abdulai has patience, and he has been learning more, and he is also learning to beat a drum, so that he can beat both guṅḡḡḡ and drum. And so I'm telling you: patience is everything. If there is patience, the heart will be cool, and the heart will let you gain knowledge.

And so it is good when you teach someone the work you are doing, you show that fellow all the details of the work in a correct way. If you say you will not teach that fellow the type of beating you beat, you are only going to teach the fellow some bad beating. When he goes to beat it very badly, they will ask, "Who has taught this fellow?" He will say, "It is this person who taught me." At that time, has your name not spoiled? And so when I am going to teach anyone how to beat the drum, I teach that fellow very well. I don't want quick-quick. If you want things quick-quick, you will never get anything. That is how drumming is. It is good that when you are going to teach someone, that person should have patience. And you should also have patience, and you will teach the fellow. If you don't have patience and I also don't have patience, no matter how I teach you, you will never learn it. If you say, "Let me teach this person quickly so that I will finish and collect my money," it won't be good. It is like selling a dog. We Dagbamba say that selling a dog is not good. What is its meaning? You have taken a dog to the market to sell, and everybody knows that it is your dog. As it is your dog, you have trained it, and as you are selling it, it shows that you didn't train it well. And so if it is anything, they will ask, "Is that dog not that fellow's dog?" And so it is good when you teach someone some work that people will one day hear of, it is good you teach that fellow very well. That is how teaching the drum is.

That is the reason why, when I am going to teach someone a particular type of drumming, I teach the fellow one thing today, and the next day I teach him

another thing, and the following day I teach him another. If he learns the beating like that, then whatever happens, he will get to know the styles he can put into it. If not that, if you want to be giving him three or four styles in one day, he will not know how to beat. He will not know what you started with; he won't know what is following; and he won't know what is also following. What is he going to beat? You have become tired for nothing, and you have worried yourself for nothing. That is why I take it slowly. If I see that he is improving, I will let him beat what I am beating, and if he is still improving, I will add him another style.

Truly, as you are beating the drum, you have no fault in your beating. What I am teaching you is the same thing that you are doing. But the only problem is that your wrist is not as soft as mine, and that it is because you have grown up. Now your bones are stretched and strong. Your wrist can't be quick all the time. I learned drumming from childhood up to now, and that is why your wrist cannot be like my wrist. But you have no fault inside the way you are beating. It's only that you have grown. You saw how my son Fatawu was beating when he was small: you can beat *gungon* better than Fatawu, but Fatawu's wrist is softer than yours. And so if you want your beating to move forward, I can tell you that if you are walking with somebody, and the person is in front of you, and you are struggling to overtake the person, you can overtake the person if you have more experience and sense. Why do I say that?

There are some styles that you beat well at any time, and there are some styles that you find difficult. The reason why your wrist is not quick to beat all the different styles very fast is that you want to know all of the dances and styles, and as you have looked to beat the first dance or style, you are thinking of another one that you have been learning. You are not thinking of the present one you are beating. That is why your wrist will not be quick. As you are living here, you are not living here for so long. It's coming from the way you want me to teach you. You want to know all the beating. The way I wanted you to learn, if you were to be living here for a long time, then when we start, we would use about three months or four months and we would choose a very particular and difficult drumming or a very particular and important one to teach you. There are three: Takai, Nyayboli and Kondalia. These are the only three you have to be doing throughout all the two or three months. We would teach you how to beat them for two or three months' time so that you would be perfect in them. If you are perfect on these three, then all of the rest, you can do them easily.

I don't know how to read but here is an example. There are some people who can take a class one book and be able to read it. But sometimes if they get to some place and they get a class six book, they can be able to read it. As they know

how to read a class one book, no one will teaching them at that time, and all that happened is because they have come to know reading very well. How we have been watching you as you are learning, if you were to be a person who had been living here for very long, what you would have learned by now would have been in the thousands. What you have been learning now, that should have been your profit. Do you understand that? We would have given you three to learn, then after these three, you would have gained the rest of the dances as your own profit from your experience. You would be beating them at any time, and nobody would teach you the styles or the other things in them. And so how we teach, when we start teaching, we will take, say, these three dances for you to beat for about two months or three months, only these three dances. Then, any time we are to teach you another new one, you will be able to beat it in a week's time or two days' time. As you have stayed in the first three and you are perfect in your drumming, it is not hard when we teach you another new one.

At the moment, there are styles that you don't know. Before you can learn those styles, it means that you have to be very perfect in the dances. And as for those styles, it is not anyone who will teach you those styles. It is that the styles come from you, yourself. After you know how to beat all the dances, you can add the styles to suit the type of dance you beat. A person who brings more styles has more experience than the one who doesn't bring styles. Truly, we have a proverb which says that you cannot stand up and weave. Before you weave, you have to sit down. When you go to the weavers, don't you see that they sit down and throw their thread? And so when someone is just learning, it shows that he is standing up to weave, and it means that he hasn't got experience. But if he learns for some time, the styles will teach themselves. There is no teaching. And so if you start learning and it's small, within some time it will increase.

Someone will start learning something, and it won't look as if anybody is going to teach him again. He will learn two dances and become perfect in them, and maybe they won't teach him any other dance. What someone will learn in a month, if he were to continue learning for another month, and they would teach him a different thing, are they going to start teaching him what he was already taught in the first month? They will not teach him what he was taught in the first month because he already knows it. What you already know, you won't fear it again. Somebody can take one day to achieve more than the achievement of somebody in four days. Someone can learn drumming in a very quick way, and truly, those types of drumming that he knows how to beat, he can beat them well. But there are others too which he won't know how to drum, and it isn't any fault. And the only reason is just because he hasn't kept long at it. And so as for this

learning, we pray to God for long life and good health. What he learns and adds to what he already knows and is in his hand, he won't be a stranger to it. And so learning is from the heart. You have to want the thing you are doing. If you are drumming, you have to want the drumming; if you are dancing, you must like what you are dancing.

And so the beating of drums is: you learn, and you listen to other drummers, and you get their way of beating, too. If you see a drummer somewhere, and you know that you can beat the way he is beating, maybe his beating is nicer than yours: you will try to get his way of beating. Even if you know that you don't want to leave your way, you can still get his and add it to yours. Maybe his beating is not more than yours, but it is only one particular style or way of beating that you haven't heard before. You know that yours is good for you, and you also know that if you collect his too, it will also be good for you. And so you get it and add to yours. That is how you learn drumming with many styles.

Truly, if you start by learning *guṅḡoṅ*, it can help you learn the drum. It doesn't matter all that much what you start with. If you take the *guṅḡoṅ*: what the *guṅḡoṅ* can beat, the drum can also beat it. But I can say that if you want to learn the different ways in drumming, and you are following drummers to places, it is good you join those who are following and beating the drum, and you will listen well. Those who are grouped and they are answering, we call them the *lumbōbli*.¹ Then you should listen either to the one beating the *guṅḡoṅ* or you should listen to the one beating the lead drum. But if you try to listen to both of them, you will become confused. If you put your ear here and put your ear there, and you want to get hold of the two things together, then you will become confused. And so if you just go and enter into the *lumbōbli*, it will worry you. But if you have somebody teaching you, then it is good you go and add yourself to the *lumbōbli*, and there you will be seeing how to join yourself to the others in the beating of the drums. When I started with you, I started with you alone, up to the time you started joining me at drumming places, and you entered the *lumbōbli*. When you were beating with me, and I was teaching you different dances, then when you went and added yourself with many drummers, any beating they would bring to beat, by that time you had already learned it with me. You knew the way you could come inside and join them, and nobody would realize that you were new inside. And so if your teacher starts showing you a particular dance beating before you go to mix with the *lumbōbli*, then any time everybody stops drumming, and the lead drum starts beating something and he comes to turn the beating for the others to

1. *bōbli*: a group, herd, or mass; also, a continuous track, as of an animal or bicycle

respond, you will also know how to respond because you have been taught already. You will say, “Yes, this is what my father or my teacher taught me.” If you go and mix in a group like that, within a short time, you won’t be a stranger among them again. And so once you know to the extent of joining the lumbɔbli, it is very good for you in your learning, because you can be listening to all the different ways of beating.

But if you don’t know, it will worry you. You don’t know, and those who are beating, they already know it. As for them, if you come and join them in anything, or you mix yourself with them, when they are beating, how do you join them? Then you will be alone and be beating something alone. You don’t know about any talk. Those who have gathered to beat, they can be many, but as for them, they know it. That is why they are beating it together. If you come and stand there, when they beat and turn it back for a response, then you will be standing. You don’t know how to respond.

That’s why I’m showing you that you have to begin with what they have taught you. When you begin with that, and you want to learn styles to add, then you join the lumbɔbli. That is where you can get what you want easily. When you mix with the group, it looks as if they are reminding you about the styles you have been learning, and they will add new ones to you again in addition to what you have been taught. And so you will eat the benefit of the group. At that time, when you are in the lumbɔbli, you can listen better. You will hear the styles. Even the children, we teach them before the children get into the lumbɔbli. We start the children little by little before we allow them to be joining the lumbɔbli, so when the drummer turns some beating to them, they will know how to respond. That is what will benefit them.

And so when you want to beat the drum and you start it, it looks as if you are joking; when you do it, it looks as if the drumming is a weak thing. You will beat some beating for three or four days, and when you have beaten it that way, you will know where it will go and fall. The next day you will add another style, and what you have got, you will take it to its end. When you take it to its end, you will know how sweet it is. And so I want to tell you that even if we are talking these talks, we don’t have to be missing your practicing or not beating for some time, and I also want to be beating with you when you practice. How our living is between you and me, it is now: “Get my child” and “Get my work.” That is how you and I are now. Whatever you say, if I know I can do it, I have to do it. And I can say that what is good is not something that you have to do more. Sometimes you will do something a little, and it will be very good. If you know it and you do it a little, that is better than if you don’t know it and you do it a lot. I think there is

knowledge with both of us, and if I come to practice with you for one hour or two hours, it will be good. There are many types of beating, and there are many ways of beating a drum. And it will be good if you learn them and know the differences.

In drumming, when someone is beating a drum very nicely and you are standing by him, the sweetness of the drum will let you know. You will give that drum to another person to beat the same type of drumming, and there will be differences. It is from the wrist and the fingers. If someone doesn't know how to drum, the moment he takes a drum and begins to beat it, you will know. The hands are not working well, and it is the sound of the drum that will let you know. And so if someone is a very good drummer, if he sees someone putting a drum in his armpit, he will know whether that fellow knows how to beat. If someone doesn't know how to beat, when he takes the drum, it won't sound. You will only be hearing *kau-kau-kau*, and it can't change. Maybe he will be pressing the drum very hard and not releasing the strings. The sound of the drum will not be nice: it will just go *kan-kan-kan-kan*, and it will not sound the way you want it. Someone who doesn't know how to beat will sound like that.

Because of that, if you are teaching somebody, you should also get a very good drum and give it to the fellow to be using. As I am telling you that drumming has many ways, some of it is coming from the drum itself. Truly, a drum that sounds well can show someone how to beat. When you take your hand and just touch it, and when you press your arm and release it, the drum starts doing the work you want it to do. This new drum that is sitting here, if you don't know drumming and you are going to beat this drum, it won't work. No matter how you beat, it won't work. Why it is so? All the strings are hard, and you will think that if you press it, it will tear. It has not yet reached the way we want it. For someone who learns the drum and does not know its talk, his drumming is just like trying to beat this drum. As for someone who knows how to beat, if he takes a drum that doesn't sound well, maybe people who know him will say, "This man is a good drummer; it's only that his drum cannot sound." If you know how to drum, sometimes you can take a drum like this, and you will release it and beat it *po-po-po-po*, and then press it and make it cry *kin-kin-kin*, and at that time, it will do the work you want to do with it. But someone who doesn't know well, he will take a drum like that and just beat it and let it cry, and it can't change. How will he hear the sound of the drum? It is good, if you are beating a drum, you press it and release it, and you listen to the sound of the drum. Don't press it too hard, and don't release it to be too low, either. That is what makes the sound to be nice. And so if a drum is crying well, when you beat it, you will hear the sound, and you will get the way of beating.

There are many, many ways of beating a drum, and the ways of drumming are very difficult. If I myself am going to teach someone how to drum, as I am teaching you, I can teach you one dance and use the drum in different ways, and you will not even know that I am showing you only one particular dance. Another person will come to teach you the same dance, and you may think that what I was teaching you the first time is different from the one he is teaching you, not knowing that both of them are the same dance: it is only the way of beating that is different. And so how we are beating the drums, we have so many different types of drumming, and the differences come from the hands of those who are beating.

Yesterday you were there when we were beating Takai, and you were watching how they beat the *gungon* and how they beat the drums, too. I started the beating of Takai on the drum, and Adambila — Small Adam — came and received me. And so I want to you to think and know: my beating and Adam's beating, if you want to compare them, which is good? I followed old people to learn to drum, and as I followed them like that, I can't praise myself, but I haven't seen anyone beating Takai better than me. And the time I was singing, and how I learned it, I didn't see anyone singing better than me. I'm not boasting. I am truly somebody who can beat the drum, and all those who beat the drums with me, they know that I can beat the drum. And as my way of beating is better than Adam's, I am not blaming him. He is still young, and he beats Takai like a small boy. And the reason why sometimes we put him in front when we beat Takai is that there are some points when the Takai has to be hot, and his wrist is fast to beat like that. The others cannot beat that type of beating. If I am not beating, say if I am sitting down, or if he receives the drumming from me, he can beat and make the Takai hot so that it will go high, and it will be nice.

And so I'm not blaming him. His beating is all right; it's good. He is the one next to me in the Takai drumming. It's only that if you compare his beating of Takai to the way I beat, and you are someone who knows drumming, you will see that his beating is one-sided. The way he beats a drum is the way he learned it. As he has been beating the drum, they have not shown him how to beat many types of drumming. Apart from that, he doesn't know anywhere. Adam is always at one place; he hasn't gone to any other town by himself to learn something, and he hasn't asked anybody how to beat Takai. It is only in this town that he has been beating it. Adam only travels if we carry him to any place we are going. And so if you carry someone to someplace, and someone else goes to another place by himself to learn, there will be a difference between them. "I have come to learn" is different from "I have come and heard something." "I have suffered to get something" is different from "I have come, I have not suffered, and I have got it."

When you suffer and get something, you hold it very well. But when you don't suffer and you get it, you will just hold it any way. Whether it gets missing or it's not missing, whether it's nice for you or it's not nice for you: have you suffered to get it?

And so Adam has not learned the talks of the drum. If you are a drummer and you take a drum, you have to beat it and praise your forefathers before you start. But Adam doesn't know that. He doesn't know what we call "Ziblim and Andani," the beating of the chiefs. Someone like that, we don't call him a real drummer; drummers like that beat by heart because they don't know the meaning of the drumming, and so they are beating for nothing. I told you that in our drumming, some people beat the drum very hard. If Adam wants to press the drum, he presses it very hard. If he presses the drum very hard, the sound of the drum reduces. And Adam's wrist in the beating is just giving one sound, and the drum doesn't sound very well again. "My wrist is fast": that is why he beating. It is only at some points that we want it to go like that, and so he can beat for the Takai at those points. And if it is time for the beating to become a bit cool, when Adam beats the drum, he still beats it very fast, and he changes too much, and it's not sweet again.

But truly, I'm not finding his fault. That is what he has seen, and that is how he learned it. If he himself sees this talk, he knows that that is the way he beats, and that is the way he was taught. If he decides to throw it away and take the cool way of beating, maybe he wouldn't be able to do it. We used to say, "You are not at the back, and you are not at the front too. You are at the center." What they show you is what you do. Everybody has the way he has followed to learn how to beat. If I talk about the way he beats, it doesn't show that I am saying that his beating is not fine. I'm not showing that. I'm only comparing his beating of Takai to the way I beat it. He beats it very fast compared to the way I myself beat it. It's only someone who knows drumming who will know the differences. But the way he beats is all right. If it were not all right, we would not have allowed him to be beating. Maybe a time to come, he will change his way of beating a bit.

But sometimes we will be beating and a drummer will not be beating correctly. If you are an elder to somebody like that, and he's beating the drum, you can point it out to him that this is not the way to beat the drum. Because he is under you, there is a way you can tell him that. But if he is not under you, you cannot tell him. And all the other drummers who are together and they are following you, none of them can say something like that. But you the one he is under, if he's beating and he's not beating well, you can easily tell him, "The way you are beating, there are many faults inside." If you are the leader and you are

beating, and somebody beats like that, it will make your beating not to be nice, so you have the way to tell him.

But there are some people who are very proud: someone like that, he sees that he is doing the wrong thing, and he sees those who are doing the right thing, but because he is already used to what he is doing now, he will say that he won't change the way he is, and so he will beat like that. And there are some people who are not proud. Such a person, if he is under you, you can show him, "You see how that other man is beating; look at that one and beat." If you tell him that, he wouldn't be annoyed. Sometimes when they show somebody who is proud something like that, he will get annoyed and walk away. It depends on the child you talk to and how he will listen. There are some children, if you talk to them like that, they won't agree with you, and they also won't go away, but they will rather beat the way they have been beating. Every day, if you tell him, he will be beating the way he has been beating. He won't follow the one who is beating it nicely. And we just say his eyes are hard: he is proud.

And so some drummers beat better than others, and some don't know how to beat well. There is nothing wrong with saying it. As you have been watching the way some of the young people are learning Takai at the Arts Council and in the schools, you can easily know that it is not the correct way. They are not from the drumming, and the Arts Council has one drummer to teach these children how to beat. He is the only one teaching them there, and he is also young, and he doesn't know drumming very well. If you don't know something well, how can you teach someone? Someone who has experience can even sit and be teaching hundreds of people, and if they want to teach the young people or the students, they should get someone to teach them correctly. But the schools don't want to pay correctly, and so they can't get the right person to teach the students. When you came here the second time in 1975, I myself was asked to go to the Bagabaga Government Training College to be teaching the students for three hours, and they said they were going to give me three cedis.¹ I refused, and the big man there was very surprised about why I refused, and I told him that how I am always sitting outside here, I would get more profit than I would get at that place to teach them for three hours. It wasn't a lie, because at about that same time, if I went to a funeral house to beat the drum, I could come back with seventeen or twenty cedis or more than that. And so I refused, and I said again it doesn't matter, and I would give my son Alhassan to them. And the big man said, "If Alhassan is to be replacing you, then he is to be given two cedis for two hours." And I said, "It is all right; you can take Alhassan." Alhassan went there for four days and he ran

1. three cedis: about \$1.25 in 1975, more than a laborer's wages for a day

away from the work. The man came here several times. They were coming here to pick Alhassan with the car, and he would run away from them. There was no profit in it.

And so at this point, I can say that if someone wants to give me children to teach in this Dagbon, and they are from that kind of place, I will not do it. Take this as an example. As you are from the States, if you bring your children for me to teach them, I will do it, because the reason why you brought them from that far place to here is that they are already doing well in the drumming, and you want them to get more experience in the drumming. If not that, you won't bring a child from that far place. So I will do it. But in this Northern Region, if you bring your child to me, I will not do it. They are the same children I was asked to go and teach at the Bagabaga College, and I refused. They are not serious.

This Takai I am talking about, the young people usually beat it by heart; they are not careful when they are beating. We just say that they beat carelessly and it has no purpose.¹ We also say their beating is useless, or nothing.² The beating has no meaning. The young people don't follow the steps of the old people or those who have experience. When the students are beating Takai, before the old men would come to bring another style, the young man is already on top of it. That causes their beating to be useless. They don't beat at the same speed as the dancers. And when the students beat fast, the ones dancing dance fast, too. The young men take big steps and dance with force, and they will be shaking their bodies and throwing the smocks when they dance.

But the old men beat quietly, and they turn smoothly. They are the right people. The old men who are dancing are more flexible because that is how they learned it. Maybe when these young people grow, they will reduce their speed, but it will still continue. How they beat! Oi! It's a lazy beating. But the old men have got patience and sense to do everything in the right way, and they dance according to the tradition, and it is very respectful and beautiful. As for the dancing of those who are grown, every time, the dancing is better than the young ones. But truly, it is standing on the part of those who are of the same age as you. We drummers who beat the drums for the people who dance, if we are beating for these young children, they don't have interest in us. But when we are beating for our fellow old men, they know that we are beating the right thing. So this is how it is. But what I telling you now, it's not just that I am an older person and I don't like the young people's way of dancing. Truly, they don't know it. The way the younger ones and the older ones dance Takai, don't you see the difference?

1. yiriŋ: by heart; without purpose

2. yoliyoli: useless; nothing

The difference between the young ones and the older ones is this: the older people use their feet when they are dancing. And you the drummer, when you are beating the drum for an older person and he's dancing, you also watch his feet so that you will know how to beat your drum. The movement of his feet, that is the same way your drum stick will follow.

But today's children, they always want to show themselves. When you are beating the dance for them to dance, they want to come there and boast with their smocks. And others too come there to boast with the medicines they have eaten, by raising their smocks for people to see the talismans and everything they are wearing. In Dagbon here, you have been seeing the way these young children dance. He is strong, and he has got a beautiful smock, and he wants to spread it for people to see. Sometimes you will see the young ones spread their smocks, and you can even see their stomachs and the waist bands they put on. Have you ever seen an old man spread his smock the whole way like that? No. And so that is another difference between the old people and the young ones. In the olden days, we were not dancing like that. As for today's children, that is what they want in life. That is the way they are. Every dance, they dance it like that. If it is Naybieyu or Nantoo Nimdi or the praise-name dancing, or if it is Takai, it's the same thing. And today's small-small drummers, that is the same way they also beat for their fellow small dancers. They don't ask, and they don't follow us to learn. That is why everything of theirs is fast-fast: they rush. As for us, we were not beating a drum like that. Every type of beating, we were beating it the way they were showing us. That is how it is.

Why do we learn the different ways of beating? As we are beating, every way of beating has got its dance, and every dance has got its name. There are some dances we will beat somewhere, and no one can dance them. Sometimes it comes from someone's leg: maybe the fellow wants you to beat it fast, and those beating haven't learned how to beat it fast. If a drummer hasn't learned the fast way of beating it, he will always beat it slowly. The one who starts fast can beat what the dancer's heart wants. And someone will come out to dance, and when the drummers beat the dance they are going to beat for him, he will say he cannot dance it in that way. They will change the drummer who is in front, and whatever happens, the dancer will also change his dance.

And so there are also some differences in drumming that come from the people who dance. Our drumming has different dances, and it is only someone who is inside drumming who will know all the differences. If a villager comes to dance, how we are going to beat will be different. If it is a woman, the dance is different; if it is a man, it is also different. If a village woman comes out to dance

Damba, how we will beat it is different from what we beat for a woman who is from the town. If a woman is from the town, you have to beat Damba very well for her, but if you beat it in a changing way for the village woman, she will not know how to dance it in a changing way. And these differences, if you don't learn them, you cannot know how to beat. It's not that they put us down and teach us: this is how to beat for villagers; this is how to beat for town people. It is the movement of the village people and the town people that a drummer uses to know how to beat for them, and so it is in the way of the dance. If a village drummer comes to town, he has to forget about his village beating and follow the town people's beating. If he brings his village beating to the town, no one will look at him.

As we beat the drums and people dance, the men of the town have got their way of dancing which is quite different from the dance of the villagers. The men's dance is different, and the women's dance is also different. As the village dancing is different, the village drummers' way of beating is also different. When you see a villager coming to know the way of dancing of this town's people, if it is not that his village's drummer is in this town, then he has kept long in this town. If his village drummer has just come from his village and is with you in the town, and this villager is going to come out to dance, it is his village drummer who will know the way his leg will go. The village drummer will let you stop, and he will change to the way he has been beating for him at home, and at that time the dance will be sweet. At that time, those of you who have been beating in the town will stop and look at the village drummer. It's sweet: you look at him; it's not sweet: you look at him. If it is not sweet, it's sweet for the villager, and that is why he is dancing. Sometimes a town man will go to a village and cannot dance, and you will hear him blaming the village drummers that they cannot beat. It is only that his town's drummer is not there. And so everyone knows what he knows.

Do you know the reason why we drummers in the town know how to beat more than the villagers? It is just that they are always hanging their drums and going to the farm. In the villages, there are not many weddings and not many namings and not many funerals. There is no Damba in the villages, and there are no festivals. All of these things are in the towns. And so every day we are beating the drums. If you don't know something and you continue doing it every day, whatever happens, you will come to know it. A person who can do a type of work very well, if he doesn't do it every day, it will come to a time when he cannot do it again. And so drumming doesn't want you to be missing it. The time I stopped beating the *gunḡon* is now about twenty years. The way I was beating it then, today I cannot beat it like that. It's not that I am not strong again. I was not

beating with strength: I was beating with knowledge. But since I left it, even with all my knowledge, I don't think I can beat it as before because I have forgotten some of the knowledge I had. And so beating a drum wants today and tomorrow.

As it is, there are many types of beating, and you should be watching these things I am telling you today. If you have been watching, when someone is dancing slowly and a drummer is beating a lot of styles, it doesn't match. But I can tell you that most of the time if you are with us and you see that the dance is not nice, it is coming from the one dancing. He doesn't know how to dance. We are always beating, and we beat for all types of dancers, and we know all the different ways of drumming, but the dancer is only coming out alone to dance his dance. And so we know more about it. What I am telling you is that there will even be someone who doesn't know how to dance, and if it is a gathering, whatever happens, he will come out and dance. When he is dancing, we will take it and follow him slowly according to the way of his dancing: he will change his leg and leave us again. At that time we will leave his talk for him: he will be dancing his dance, and we will beat our beating. When he finishes dancing, he will go, and someone who knows how to dance will come in. As for someone who knows how to dance, whether you know how to beat or you don't know how to beat, he will dance the dance the way you are beating. He will dance it, and it will match. And so to know that someone is dancing nicely, you have to watch the feet and listen to how the beat is going. A good dancer will dance according to the drumming.

And so our drumming has many ways. The one who has learned to beat lundaa¹ while the other drummers will be responding, you will see differences in the way he beats and changes. And these differences again are coming from the particular type of dance he is beating. When we are beating alone and there are no dancers and I keep on changing the beat, that means I am talking with the drum. Maybe there will be a dancer there, but when a dancer comes just to see and not to dance at any particular time when I am drumming, then he knows what I am doing. That dancer knows what I am saying with the drum. If not that, then the changes and styles are coming according to the dances. For example, we have some beating that is one main style throughout: that is one-way beating, the one they take to start the dance, with no styles and no changes. In that one they don't change at all: it is steady music. There are some dances that have some small changes, but we are beating one way throughout, like 3em. Sometimes too, when the beating is changing with different styles, you will see that it is curving and going around. If an old man is beating, it will be steady and then it changes

1. medium-sized drum

accordingly. But when the young people beat that type of dance, sometimes the beating might not be clean; or if the young people beat steady beating, and if they change, they don't know how to change smoothly. But the old men beat and change styles and curve the dance smoothly. Steady changing beating is the feeling of the drummer sometimes, that is, what the particular one drumming, what he feels. As he is drumming, and people are dancing, he studies their feet, how they take their feet for the dance and the movement of the body and their feet. He will drum according to how they take their steps.

And so if you are beating a drum, and you want your beating to be interesting on the part of changing, you have to use your sense. You don't have to be changing by heart. I'm going to separate it for you. You can look at a gathering, say a funeral house or a wedding house: the dances they dance are different from a dance like Takai or Baamaaya. If it is something like Naybiɛyu or Naanigoo, a dancer will come out and dance individually inside the circle. He will dance one dance, and then he will stop and dance a different dance again. If you are going to beat drums for a dancer to dance, maybe you have been meeting him at some places before. You know that he usually dances three dances when he comes out, and you know the particular dances he wants. You will start with the first one he has been dancing. When we are beating for him and he's dancing, he will be dancing, dancing, and at one point you will see that he will stand. When he stands, at that point, he doesn't have to talk to us the drummers: we will bring the next dance. If it is three dances he will dance, this is the way he will do and we will play all the three dances for him. And there are some people too, they dance only one, and when they come out, it is only one dance we beat. And so everybody has the number of dances he dances. That is the way it is.

As for that type of beating, someone can be beating the drum too much and mixing or changing the dances. And when someone changes dances too much, its talk is also not sweet. If you the drummer change dances on top of one another, and the dancer has not yet finished dancing, why is it that you are changing to another one? If the dancer doesn't show any sign that you should change, and you change it, it's not good. You have spoiled his dance. It is not sweet, and our eyes don't lie on it. There is somebody who will come out, and he has got about three dances: he has got Damba, he has 3im Taai Kurugu, he has Nantoo Nimdi. When he comes out, you will beat all of them before he goes back to sit down. But if someone has only 3im Taai Kurugu and he is dancing it, and he has no other dance on top of it, if you change to another one, you have spoiled it. He has not told you to change, and so why have you changed it?

And again, there is someone who holds one dance, and as for that one dance, someone will beat it and not change, and someone can make many styles inside. Let's take it that you are coming to beat Naanigoo. It is one dance. Someone will beat Naanigoo one way without changing, and it is good for him. He is beating, one dance, one way, and if it were not good for him, he would not beat like that. There is someone who is beating and changing his way of beating to be bringing styles, and it is good for him like that. Whether or not he puts some styles inside Naanigoo, everyone will know it as one dance. If he changes to Nantoo Nimdi, we will say he has changed the dance. This is how it is. And so this type of changing: it is that the particular dance a dancer will be dancing, he will change to a different dance altogether, on the part of the dance. And we the drummers too, as we are beating a particular dance for somebody to dance, then we also change the way of our beating the drum to a different dance. This is the way the dances are changing. And so this first type of changing I'm talking about, it shows that somebody is dancing and changes to a different dance again. It is different from: somebody is beating and changes to a different style of beating inside that one dance. If you are beating a drum for somebody to dance, and the dancer wants another dance, he will tell you the drummer, "Take me to this dance." Inside our Dagbani, that is changing the dance.

The one who changes dances on top of one another, we say that he spoils dances. If no one tells you to change, and the one you are beating the dance for has not gone back to sit down, and he has not told you to change, then you have spoiled the dance. But if you see that someone is beating and changing by heart, sometimes it can come from the one who is dancing. Someone will come out to dance and will want to dance about four dances. There is nothing wrong about it except on the part of us drummers, because as the one person is there dancing, we won't get much money. At first when he came out, they gave him money, and if he dances the second, they will give him; but when his dancing keeps long, no one will come and give him again. And so we say, "The one who dances too much does not see praise."¹ Do you remember the wedding we went to last Sunday? Didn't you see that woman who danced seven dances? Seven dances one after the other! Someone like that, if we like, we can call her way of living bad. It is good for a dancer to dance about two dances, and not to be changing dances one on top of the other. And there are some drummers, when somebody is dancing, they will change the dance. If it comes like that, it's not good, and the fault is from the drummer.

1. *Wawari biɛyulana bi nyari kpalinga*: the one who dances too much does not see ululation.

Apart from that, there are some dances, and you will see the drummers changing their way of beating inside that dance. These styles we beat, in our Dagbani we call them an increase or an addition.¹ Whenever somebody does something which is a style, then he has added to the thing. In drumming or anything or at any place, you can make an addition. We use this word “increase” in different ways. It is a big word which can have many meanings. If you have take money and send a child to buy five cigarettes, and the child comes back with six, he has increased one. You sent for five, but the child came with six, so what he brought is above the amount you have given him. How you are going to move when you change your drumming, and you bring a style: that is increase. It stands for the first style, and it stands for second, third, and fourth ones. You use it for one style or you use it for many. And apart from that, you can use it for the town type of beating as compared to the village beating, because in the villages they don’t have many styles in beating. And so as the crying of the drums is different, it is from sound of the drum and how it changes. There is somebody who will just be beating, and he doesn’t change. And there is somebody who is beating and changing styles, and we say that as he is changing, he is curving the dance. But the one who is only beating one way and not changing is not adding anything, and it is because he doesn’t know what he can change and beat, so that it will add to what he is beating. When you beat some type of beating and you add some styles into it, that means you have increased the drumming; you have added something to it. You have added something inside the beating, to keep up the beating. And so this type of changing means some style you have added to the music.

Let me add you salt. Apart from that, we have another word for styles which shows, say, that you are walking and showing yourself, that you are walking with pride, and you’re fine.² In Dagbon it can mean styles in dancing. You can style your dance to add more beauty to the dance. And so to bring styles in beating is a different thing altogether, because it means to add something to the way of your beating. And bringing styles inside your dance can mean that you are showing yourself and dancing with styles, and we can use this word for all kinds of dances. You can use it for anything, even drumming. It also means you are making styles. For example, one time you were drumming and you were making some actions as if you were also dancing, shaking your body and your head. You were styling your drumming; you were making styles, but it wasn’t that you were adding different ways inside your beating. For example, some people, when they are dancing Nantoo Nimdi, at times you will see them stop and be facing the drummers, making their eyes move in some ways. That is what they do. Then

1. *mpahiya*: from *pahi*, to add to

2. *golsigu*: from *golse*, to strut

they will rush to the drummers, look at them like that, and then stand in one place, and start turning the head up and down. When they dance like that, they are styling the dance. They are dancing and they want to beautify their dance.

Making such styles doesn't mean that you will be beating the drum and jumping about or beating with force. Somebody can learn drumming and use strength in beating the drum, and someone too can beat without using strength in beating the drum. In order to have a powerful drumming you have to be beating the drum very well: hard. Powerful drumming needs hard beating. Any time we make the drumming to be beaten very hard or to be beaten strongly, that time is a serious time: everyone who is looking at the dance knows that this is a time for a strong beating of the drum. Do you understand? When you see me beating a drum very hard, it is the right time for me to beat the drum very hard. When the music becomes exciting, then you have to be changing and adding styles to your drumming to bring the music up. At that time, you will also see that the one beating gungonj will also become excited and get more ideas about his styles, and he will also be changing, too. You will be making the music strong to beat through to the dancers. And the dancers will also respond and be making styles.

But someone who has learned how to beat only with strength, he cannot beat coolly.¹ Any time we are to beat slowly or coolly, he cannot beat. But the one who learned how to beat coolly and also beat with strength, he can come back to the slow one at any time. Sometimes when we are beating, there will be someone who has learned how to beat only with force, and when we are beating hard and then come to beat coolly, we just hold the hand of the one who knows only force, so that he should not beat again, and we can reduce it. That is all. If not that, he will spoil the whole thing. So we hold his hand. Someone can be strong, and he has got big arms, but such a person cannot beat the drum hard like me. It shows that the person is not a learned person. He has not learned drumming as I have learned, and that is why he can't beat it hard.

But it all comes from the way the dance is moving. This beating and changing styles inside a dance, whether a drummer is beating the drum coolly or with strength, if the sound is coming nicely, we say that the music is following the way. That is why I am telling you that the old drummers beat better than the young ones. They have sense. On the part of changing, an old man does not become confused. Any time he is beating a style, you will be hearing the beating very clearly. Everything is clean, and there is no dirt in his beating. He knows how to change and the changes will be smooth and follow the drumming and the dancing. He takes his time when beating. The slowness and the experience make

1. *baalim*; *zam*: softly, coolly

the difference between the young men and the old men, and these make every dance to be very nice. For example if we are beating slowly and you come out to dance with very fast dancing, it can't be nice: you can't follow the drums.

And so those beating the same style one way don't know how to drum, and those changing styles are the better ones. If you see the village drumming and the town drumming, it is the village people who beat one way and don't change, and it is the village way of beating that people won't like. The beating doesn't change. But those in towns they have more styles, so they can beat and keep on changing the beat to make the music more lively or interesting. If it is the students beating drums at the Arts Council, they cannot beat the steady changing way. No one has shown them, and if you don't know something, can you change? They beat by heart, just beating any way. But old men who are drummers, their beating is following the way of the dance. They change it, but they don't change too fast. The changes are clear. And so those who beat one thing are there, and those who beat by heart are there, and those who change and curve the dance are there. Those who beat and curve the dance, their beating is better.

When small boys are working, and there are no old men in their midst, they don't do the work well. The drummers who are small boys, they just beat anyhow, by heart. I told you that when your heart gets up, and you are beating, your arm will also get up, and the sound of the drum will not be clear. And so it's better you beat coolly. That is what we want on the part of our drumming and dancing. If a big talk comes to meet you, say, if you get trouble, if you go and look at beating, sometimes your heart will cool. That is the way we want it. It's good if you beat coolly. And all this is inside the talk of how we beat our drums.

Do you see Takai? Cool dancing and cool beating are best for Takai. We say the dance should be slow. Do you see how a chief walks? He walks slowly and coolly. I'm not talking about cool in the way that water or the weather can be cool; that is different. Do you see how this fan here is running now? I can tell you to make it cool, to make it turn slowly. And so the way we bring our styles in the drumming and dancing, we don't rush or do it fast. We do it coolly because we have got experience. And the dancers who have got experience, they also don't want fast. They want everything to be stepping with the drums.

The way you have been seeing those who dance Takai, you have been seeing the way they come and stand. And the way you the drummer are going to start, you will start it coolly. Starting from the point where they will start coming out to form their circle, they have to go around up to the time they reach the point where they started. Then you the drummer will be beating coolly, and you will see how they are dancing it. If the dancers don't come to the place where they started,

you won't see any changes in the beating. And so when they start and they are moving, the beating that you have started beating, you will continue with that beating, until the dancers reach the point where they also started, and then you will change to another beat. Don't you see that at first, when they start at one point and they are moving, nobody knocks the iron rods or the sticks with the other? But when the first man comes to the point where they started, you will see him turn to the one at his back, and at that time you will see the smocks turning. At that time, you the drummer, you will change. This is the way the changes come inside.

At that time, you are still inside Takai. You are not changing to any different dance. You the first drummer who started the Takai beating, when the dancers reach the point where they started, you will raise up the sound of the drum, and it will become a bit louder. You will see that the smocks start to spread. Then the other drummers will respond. You are still inside the Takai. Then you will see the one beating the *gungon* will also raise his beating higher. Then the *lundaa* too will follow. *Te-dan-dan-dan, te-din-dan-dan, te-dan-dan-dan, te-din-dan-kpa!*: the iron sticks will knock. This is how it will go, and when it becomes hot, you will hear all this inside the beating. And you will hear the noise of the iron: *kpa!* You will be seeing the smocks also spreading. That is the reason why we are bringing the changes gradually. That is the way our changes are. We want to put the beating down very clearly. When the one leading the dancers comes around to the starting point, the time the first stick will hit — *kpa!* — at that time, the drummers will watch the knocking of the sticks. When they hear *kpa!*, there is a drum that will follow that sound, too. And the other drummers are all beating Takai, and following the dance. But the young people, when they start the Takai like this, you will see that the first boy will start, and he won't reach any point, and he will start changing and bringing styles. That's why I say they rush. And the young people's drumming is also like that. We the older people in the drumming, we don't enjoy it at all. The old people change, but they don't rush the changes.

And truly, on the part of knowing the styles and how they move from one to the other, that is experience. Any time you decide to bring a style into any of the dances, you just have to get a style which can be moving and following with the same sound. If you get a style which is not moving with the sound, you will spoil the beating. If you want drum styles or *gungon* styles or any type of drumming, it has to move with the styles of the dance, and it must be moving with the dance. And so if they are dancing Takai, and it is the older people, you can be watching one particular man who is good at the dancing, and there will also be one particular drummer who really watches that man and how he will be taking his

feet: when he lifts his feet and moves his body, then the drummer will beat according to the beat of the movement of the body and the feet, and you will see very clearly how it comes together and how it changes, according to the dance. If the dancer starts moving his feet and his body, and they drum according to his movement, immediately that he stops, you will see that the one drumming the beat with him will also stop. Then you will see that it is his dance movements that bring the changes of the drumming.

There are many different styles of dancers and we watch all of them. We have individual dancers and they have individual ways of dancing, and we know how to beat with each man, and he will also dance according to our beating. Anyone who sees this will know how we change according to each individual dancer. They dance Takai in a circle, and we drummers will be moving from dancer to dancer inside the circle, and so when we come to a particular dancer, we drum according to his dancing. Another man will come, and we will drum according to his movements, and you can see how individually we beat and follow their movements. It is the movement of the feet and the body that tells you how to change your beat. If it is one of the dances like Naybiɛɣu or Nantoo Nimdi, and they are dancing it individually, then as soon as the dancer comes into the center of the dance circle, if we already know him, then the drummers will give him his beat. As they have been beating for him all the time, they know the type of his dance, and so they beat according to his feet and the movement of his body, and then they get him.

But when a new dancer come out to dance, and you don't know his dance, you will keep on changing the beat until you see the type of beat that he is well fitted to, and then you beat that beat for him, and he continues dancing. I am going to give you an example. Sometimes you might meet a woman outside, and you will want to have sex with her. You might not think she has some styles within her, but when you get into her, you see that she will give some movement; whatever happens, you will respond to her. Then you'll see you will get an adding together of movements. It is the same thing with drumming. And again, if you bring a woman and she is not experienced, if you get into her and she does not give any movement, sometimes you will try to move her to see whether you can get her to move. And if she does not, that means you will do it coolly with her just as she is lying. So that again is the same thing with drumming. As soon as a dancer comes out to dance, you give him different styles. If it is a new dancer, you will change until you can give him what will fit with his main way of dancing, and then you will continue with that beat. And so what I am telling you, this is how people in Dagbon talk about drumming, and not how somebody from outside will talk about it.

And so this is how drumming is and how we bring the changes in beating. We move with the dancers and follow them to curve the beating, and the best beating is a steady changing dance. And the styles will also follow the sound of the drum and how you are beating it inside the dance. You yourself, as you are beating, what you should have in mind if you are going to change to another style in the drumming is that, you have to lower your drumming down before you bring your style up. If you don't make up your mind and cool your drum before you bring your style, you will spoil the whole thing. The one you are beating, you will spoil it; and the next style too that you are getting to, you will spoil that one also. If you want to do a style and you want to change to a different one, and you are still beating fast, with high beating, you will spoil the first one and the next one you are getting to. You will spoil the whole thing. What you should do to change to another style is what I have just said: you should be cool. That is it. You have to be slow before you get to the next style. Otherwise if you are just beating by heart or very fast, you will spoil everything. You can't change into the new one in a better way. And so whenever you are beating the style you have used for the first time, from the beginning to the end of your beating, or from the beginning to any time you want to change and move to another style, you have to listen to the styles you have made already as compared to the next style you are getting to. They should resemble one another. Compare them and see how you are going to pick an easy way into the next one.

I will give an example. As you are learning, from the time you are going to begin, maybe you will begin for about three seconds or five seconds, and you have got the first style which is resembling the next one which you have to get to as your second style. You have the first style you have made, and the second style too resembles the first one, and by the time you want to get to the second style, you have to be beating the first style you have done which resembles the second one. Come to it slowly and then get the second style easily. Your new style should always come from the one you are beating. You are curving the dance. If you are beating the second style and you want to change to a third style, you have to get back to the first style. The style you are going to make should come from the one you are beating, and you should take your time before you introduce new styles. You shouldn't be introducing them fast. When someone has more experience with the beating and knows all the styles well, he can just change at the third place and turn to the fourth one. It doesn't matter. But someone who does not know better has to go back to the first before he can get to the fourth one easily. If he cannot change to the fourth one from the third one, then he has to go back to the first one and then come up to the fourth one. You have to be getting

back to curve to the style on top again. It's good if you always come back to the first style. That will make everything to be clear.

As you have been beating here, sometimes you become confused. Do you know the reason why you become confused? Sometimes you want to bring some style, and at that time you become confused. As you decide to bring a style at the moment you are beating, and you don't know the kind of style you are going to bring, by all means you will be confused. But any time, if you decide to bring a style into it, you should get the one which is following the same sound of the drum, the one which can be sounding the same as the one you are beating or the beating of the dance, and then it can be following without any confusion inside. But to get an outside style, it won't do. As for the style you are going to bring, you have to get the style which can be following with the whole dance, not just the drum itself.

Truly, sometimes when we are beating Takai, I used to beat the sound which can be sounding like the Gonja Damba. I beat it for Takai while it is not for Takai. And when I am beating the Gonja dance, I can also pick styles from our Dagbamba side to the Gonja side, and all will be following correctly. For example, when we dance Takai, it is not Takai alone we dance. The dances change and follow one another. Takai is first, and then we beat Nyayboli, Dibs' ata, and Kondalia. But as for Kondalia and Takai, we can mix them. Takai and Kondalia resemble one another, and sometimes somebody can beat one and mix styles from the other. Sometimes I used to say that when you yourself are beating $g\underset{\cdot}{u}ng\underset{\cdot}{o}ng$ for the Kondalia dance, it sounds like Takai, and when you are beating $g\underset{\cdot}{u}ng\underset{\cdot}{o}ng$ in Takai, sometimes you beat and it will sound like Kondalia. As for this talk, the Takai dancers regard Kondalia and Takai as the same, but they don't want Kondalia to be beaten first and Takai will just be inside it. Takai is the first dance and they like it better than Kondalia. Wherever we go to beat Takai, Takai is the first dance. And so I'm talking on the part of the styles you can bring. You can be beating Takai and you will bring a style from Kondalia and then come back to Takai, but you won't start Takai and then jump into Kondalia and beat throughout. When we finish one dance, then we can bring another dance.

And again, you see how we beat the Yoruba dance or Zamanduniya: we will be adding names inside the beating. If you are going to bring different proverbs or names inside the beating, it is because they will fit inside the dance and add to the beating, but maybe their beating doesn't resemble one another. That one is somehow different from how I have been talking about curving the dance. And so if you are going to beat a different style that doesn't sound like the way you have been beating, it's good you cool your beating a bit. You slow down

to get to the style you are going to take, and then it will be clear. And the other drummers will also hear very well what you are now changing to, and they can respond. As for that changing, this is the way it is. In that case, you cool down so that the sound will come clearly. When you are beating and you want to change it very well, you have to change it the way it will be clear inside the dance and be falling the way it should be, with the sound of the drums. The changes should be very clear. If I am beating and I want to beat something like names inside it, I will cool the beating down a bit, so that when I bring the name inside, you will see that everything is clear. The sound will come out clearly, and people can hear it.

As I have experience to beat all these styles, when I am beating, I can change to another style at any time from the beginning, but I don't beat a drum and change by heart. Many times you will see me beating one style straightforward for some few minutes. If I am beating Takai and beating *dan din dan din dan din*, I can make it long, and it's not that I am thinking ahead to the next style, but rather I want it like that. That is why I just continue beating *dan din dan din*. I can beat with many styles coming one on top of the other, but I want it that steady way because it can also be very sweet. I can change at any time, but I will be listening to the style I'm beating, and as it is nice, I will continue beating it. And people also like my drumming, and it is because I am beating with respect. Why do I say I beat the drum with respect? I don't beat roughly. Sometimes when you know something too much, you can add rough-doing inside. I don't do that. That is what I am saying. People respect me because I beat with respect. You yourself have watched, and as you have followed other people out for drumming and you have also seen me drumming, what have you seen from the two? The respect I get because of my drumming, it is according to how I drum.

And how you are beating the drum, it is the same. When you first came and you started beating, people were laughing at you. If you come to learn something new, you will see that you make some mistakes and people will laugh. Some people will laugh because they might think that you don't know how to drum, and other people also laugh because they are just thinking that you are not a Dagbana and you are learning how to drum Dagbamba music, and they were happy about that. Then they started to see that you were getting up with the drumming, and according to the way you learned it, your drumming was nice, and now many people respect your drumming. Sometimes, if you join the drummers to go and beat, people will be giving us more money. If you join us in beating the drums, the people who dance and that people who look, they might think that you will make mistakes inside the drumming and get things confused, but you always beat correctly. And again, you are a stranger. Maybe they were thinking that it is not

possible for white man to with Dagbamba drummers and beat, but it is possible for you. So at that time, everybody's heart will be white. The way you will be beating without making mistake, we the drummers will be proud of you. And the people at the gathering place will also be happy, and whatever money they have, they want to bring it out and give it.

And so on the part of your beating a drum, when you are beating correctly and the sound is coming clearly, that is what we want. And on the part of bringing styles, you have to respect yourself and use your experience to beat. When you are to start, you have to start it slowly. When you get inside small, then you can start beating hard. By then you will think for yourself. The time you are starting, you start very low, and getting into the middle you take it higher. By then you will remember some other styles, and at the same time you can beat backwards again without any confusion. And so what I am telling you is on the part of knowledge or experience. You shouldn't force your drumming when you are not sure of yourself. If you don't know something and you try to do it, whatever happens, it will be difficult for you. According to my experience, I have been watching you all the time now. Sometimes you will be beating some drumming that you are only just learning, and you are not beating hard and the drumming also is not fast, but your arm will be tired. Sometimes you will be beating a dance like Nyayboli, and it is very fast and the styles you are bring will also be many, but I see that you are not becoming tired. It's because you know Nyayboli very well. But don't you see that Nyayboli is very fast; that is how I understand the dance. This is why I am telling you that you have to be patient to learn drumming. The time you know the styles very well, that is the time that you will be able to beat all of them without becoming tired. Sometimes you can beat slowly but you make mistakes, and the reason is that you are not sure of yourself on the part of what you are beating and what styles you are going to bring.

And so whenever you get into one particular dance to beat, then you should rely on that particular dance. Don't be thinking to the next one, the next style or the next dance. Thinking about the next one brings all the confusion. You are thinking, "Oh, as I am beating this, I know how to beat it, and I also know how to beat this other beating, so what do I also know and I will beat it?" You should stop thinking of this, and you should just rely on the style you are beating. Then every confusion will be out of you. You will see that the one you are beating will sound like something that you know, and you will change into the new one easily. But you shouldn't be thinking of what you know with the idea that you are going to bring one of them. You have to be listening to the sound of the drumming and the dance. You should beat for some few minutes before you bring some changes.

You will let the beating stand at its place for some time before you bring out a new style.

If you beat like that, at that time you can choose a style and then bring it. But to start and bring a new style at one moment is not good; you will spoil the whole dance. Sometimes if you want to change styles, you have to go on for some few minutes before you change styles. You can't just start at this moment and then change to another style again. It's not good. Nobody will hear it. The beating won't be clear. If you beat for some few minutes, you will just be thinking for yourself: I want to bring this style inside, will it be good for this dance? Or I want to bring this one here. If you know the beating very well, you will know how the styles follow one another, and to bring a new style is not difficult.

I have told you that we drummers, when we want to start our drumming, we sing that the prince of one town is a slave in another town. And we sing again that God takes somebody who has a big house and puts him in a small house. And so when you leave your town, if you were a very bad child from your town, you should have in mind that the town you are going to, there are other children there who are more bad than you. And if you are a very good person, you must again know that the town you are going to, there are people who are better than you in character, and you will be equal to some people in character, and some people will be worse than you in character. And so when you go to a place to learn anything, if you have sense, you should be patient. If you are easily annoyed, you have to put it all down. You have to be patient. You have to be patient because you want to achieve something, and if you are patient, to collect something and put it into your mouth is not a problem. And so whatever you have in your town, when you are leaving your town, you have to leave what you have there and pretend as if you don't know anything. You only know what you want. And you go to another town; they will look at you like a fool. And you will know in your heart what you want, and if you have patience, in the name of God, you will get what you want. This is some advice I am giving to you.

I have told you that on the part of learning drumming, we pray for long life and good health. In this world, sickness and death are the bad things against a person. Someone can live for many years but he is not well: maybe some sickness has been attacking him all the time. But whenever a person has patience, and he has life, and he is not sick, whatever he wants in this world, he will get it. He will get what he wants. And so health and patience are also everything. If you have these two, you will gain something which you were not expecting to gain. He who is watchful of these two ideas, he will be observing what is happening around him. Only someone who has no experience will gain something and say he has gained nothing. But one who is not watchful of these things will not achieve anything.

Let me give you an example. Yesterday I was telling you how we make our drums, and I told you about how we prepare the strings to lace the drum. If someone is going to use new strings, he will be pulling them against something to clean them and make them flexible. Someone without patience will be pulling the string against a chair, and either the string will break or the string will cut into the chair. And so if there is no patience, someone cannot do the work I was telling you about. That one alone, there is talk inside it, and it is the talk of patience. And so drumming, and to become learned at beating a drum, how much more is it? As you have come, you have come here in darkness, and it is only a small part of our sense that you can take home. And so patience is stronger than anything. If anybody achieves anything, whether the thing is big or small, it is because of patience.

In Dagbon, we have a proverb which says that if we send the child of the bat to go and bring a shea nut from the shea tree, and it goes and keeps long, it is better than to send a child of a bat to bring the shea nut and it only stays away a very short time without bringing any fruit. If you go somewhere to learn, when you get back to your country, if you have not learned anything, then there is no talk again. But if you have been able to learn something, people will say, "Oh! This fellow has gone and come back, and look at what he has already learned." If you go home and they say this, then any time you feel like coming back here, you are going to come without difficulty. And that time, you yourself will be very happy.

As you have come, I have been seeing your character. I have seen it to the extent I have seen it. And you are somebody who actually learned what you wanted to get, and even maybe what you wanted to know, you have got more than what you have come for. It is because you have patience, and it is patience that overcomes everything. If a person is not able to solve a problem, it means the fellow has no patience. And so this is my elderly advice I am giving to you. And so I can say that you have patience with you because how you came, it looks as if you turned yourself into a fool. And we know what you want. You are not a fool: your eyes cannot be as open as they are and you are a fool. What you want is what you want. And so God should help you to get what you want.