

## Chapter I–16: *The Praise-name Dances and the Benefits of Music*

The talk we were talking yesterday, I think we will continue it, and I will tell you more about our dances, and I will call some of the proverbs for you on the part of the chiefs and their names, and you will see.

Yesterday I told you that as we use our drums to call names and praise people, some of the names have become dances. As we have been dancing to these names, in the olden days, they were not doing that. The person having a name in the drumming, he didn't know that people could take it to dance. And the thing that brought the dancing now came from us the drummers. Why is it so? Every day, when it is daybreak, knowledge increases. You the drummer, you will take your knowledge and make it in some way that they can dance it. As you have made it so that they can dance it, then they will dance. This is what brought the dances. It comes from us the drummers. It is our knowledge that makes all the dances. That is how it is.

When I was telling you about these proverbs we beat and use to praise people, I also told you that the praise-name beating is not a dance, and I called some of them that are only names and not dances. As for that one, it comes inside when the drummers are changing their beating for a different dancer. If they are beating it, they only beat it and add it, and they can be singing and responding. And the one they are praising will be nodding his head. It is these names that we call *Taachi*. It is a Hausa word, *taake*, and Dagbamba took it. Formerly, if you went to a gathering and sat down, you will call your name to the drummers, and the drummers will beat it, and you will come out and dance. When you call your name, it's different from the name given to you when you were a baby. During that time, if they called somebody's name as the name his father gave him, they would ask again, "What is his *Taachi* name?" They are asking about the name he gave to drummers. So this is the meaning of *Taachi*. Truly, the calling of names started far back, long ago. If any chief becomes a chief and calls his name, they will use that name to praise him. That is what brought praising. And it is praising that they brought inside the *Taachi*, and so it is not something we beat and add inside the beating of dances.

As for using the praise-names of the chiefs as something they can dance at funeral houses and wedding houses, it is not something that started long ago. Truly, in the olden days, say, from the time of Naa Zanjina, as for the way they were gathering at that time, I don't know. I only know that they were having praise names, but I don't know whether they were dancing the names or they were

not dancing them the way they gather at this time to dance. And nobody talked to me that at that time they were dancing in this way. What my eye has seen, this is what I'm talking. But I can say that the dances they are dancing now, they were not dancing them. They were dancing different dances. I'm talking about the dances people dance individually. As for dances like *Naanigoo* and *Nantoo Nimdi* and *Naybiεyu* and *3im Taai Kurugu* and the others, it is now that we are seeing them, and I don't know anything about them in the olden days.

But *Lua* and *Zuu-waa*, in the olden days, they were there. *Zuu-waa* is *Doyu*. It is we drummers who have made it to be different, because we used our sense to beat it and turn it. If we beat it one by one, slowly, that is what we call *Zuu-waa*. If we want to make it fast, then that is *Doyu*, and that is how it started. It was during *Naa Siyli's* time that they started it. During that time, when they gathered at funeral houses, this was what they danced. It was *Naa Siyli's* first-born's dance; he was *Tonglana Yamusah*. That is why we call it *Zuu-waa*, the first-born's dance. If anybody dies and there is a *Gboɔnlana*, a regent, this is the dance he's going to dance. That is it. As for *Damba*, too, it is an old thing. It was standing in the olden days, and they were dancing it. It has kept long. *Damba* and *Doyu* and *Zuu-waa*: they were there in the olden days, and that was what they were dancing. *Dikala* too: we grew up and met it. It is blacksmiths who dance it, but it doesn't show that it is meant for only blacksmiths. *Nakɔhi-waa*, the butcher's dance, we also grew up and met it. *Gboɔŋ-waa*, the barber's dance, it was there. *Baŋgumaɲa*, I met it. *Baŋgumaɲa* started during the time of *Naa Luro*. As for *Baŋgumaɲa*, any chief who went to war is entitled to *Baŋgumaɲa*. The beating of *Baŋgumaɲa*, that is the understanding inside it. *Baŋgumaɲa* is standing for anyone went to war. This is how *Baŋgumaɲa* stands inside our drumming. *3em*, too, I met it, and I have told you about *3em*. All these, I grew up and met.

And I grew up and we were beating *Taachi*. The *Taachi*, the way we used to do it in the olden days: if your friend has a funeral, and they are going to perform the funeral, at the funeral place, you will hold the *Taachi* there. How *Taachi* was in the olden days, when they are going to make a funeral and you gather, you will find a place and sit. The drummers will be beating, and the people will be coming out, one by one, to dance. Everybody has a name, and anybody who wants any name will call his name. If you want your name in *Dagbani* or *Hausa*, you will call. And you will choose the dance you want, and they will beat it, and you will come out and dance. At that time, too, when they danced *Taachi*, people were giving money to the dancers, just as they do today. But the money was not much, because then there was no money. They were only giving a little. Even during the time of the white money, the cowries, if they were dancing and somebody wanted,

he could gather some cowries and spread it on the head of the fellow dancing. And when money came, if it was the kobo that had a hole inside, then somebody would bring one and press it on the forehead. All that, they were doing it one by one. And it showed that you were coming to enjoy the benefit of the gathering. Don't you see that there are Dagbamba names and there are Hausa names? When we gathered Taachi like that, these two were there: the Hausa Taachi and the Dagbamba Taachi. The names I last told you, many of them are the names of the Taachi. For example, you see *Madadazi*: we still beat it. The other day, didn't you hear them beating *Madadazi* there? That is Taachi. They sing and respond inside. That was what we were beating. We used to gather like that, but as for today, we don't separate Taachi again. We mix all names to beat, and it is also good like that. And so Taachi, it is not a long talk. It is only a talk that is long which you can talk long. The talk that is not long, if you want to talk it long, you will tell lies.

In the olden days, how it was, let's say they organized a *Tɔra* dance. If the drummers went to beat the *Tɔra*, one group of drummers will be beating *Tɔra* for the women, and another group of drummers will organize at another place for the young men who would like to dance the Taachi. And so in the olden days, if they were going to organize something like that in a funeral house, they will dance the *Tɔra* for one week, and the same thing for the Taachi, too: they are going to dance it for one week. The one who died, if it is an old man, let's say his children are people who are respected in the town. If this man gave birth to many children, these children are going to tell their friends to come and dance the Taachi. The children who are men will tell their fellow young men, "We have a funeral in our house, so we want drummers to come and beat." These children's friends in town, all of them will go to their friends's father's funeral to dance the Taachi. Now that their father is dead, that is why many of their fellow young men are coming there to help, and they will all like to dance the Taachi. That was what we were calling Taachi.

And the children of the dead person, if they are women and their father happens to die, they are going to arrange for *Tɔra*. When the daughters arrange for the *Tɔra*, they will tell their brothers that as for them, they have already arranged for their dance. These women will find cola and come and give it to the drummers, that we should come for the *Tɔra*. And the same day we will begin the *Tɔra*, the men will also be dancing the Taachi up to the day they will all finish. As for the women, they were not dancing Taachi. They didn't have any dance inside it. They had a circle, and the men had their circle for the Taachi. The women used to group themselves at one side, and the men too used to be at another side. But if

the women finish their dance, then they will come and stand and look at the men. The time the men are going to dance their Taachi, the women will stop theirs and come and be looking. So this is how they were doing it. The only thing the women were doing was Tɔra. And inside it, they were dancing *Nyayboli*. Do you see the way the women run around and dance Tɔra? At that time, if you finish beating Tɔra, the women will group again. By then you are getting ready to go home, but you have to bring *Kondalia*, and the women will come out and dance. The women used to dance *Kondalia* individually. And when they finish, then they will say that they have to lead the drummers to their houses. It was by force that they should do that: when you come and beat Tɔra and you are going home, the women have to accompany you. And when you are going, it is only *Kondalia* you will take to beat, and they will follow you up to your house. As for *Kondalia*, we grew up and met it, before *Zamanduniya* came. That is how it is.

And how they were dancing in the Taachi, they were calling our Dagbamba names, but they didn't have many dances for it. You see *Kondalia*: it is Hausa, and people used to dance it a lot at that time. According to our asking, *Kondalia* was in the Taachi even before we grew up. But it was Hausa people's own. *Kondalia* was there up to the time *Zamanduniya* also came out. And *Zamanduniya* is Hausa and it also belongs to the Kotokoli people. As for that one, it's somehow a new one. Both of these were in the Taachi dance. That is how it was. As for the Hausas and the Kotokolis, these two tribes, when they see any town, they will go and settle there. In Tamale, don't you see *zongo*? If you go to that area of the town, it's full of Hausa people. Now most of them have married Dagbamba women, and they are giving birth. The Wangara people too used to travel. We used to hear that they travel more in French countries; some of them came to our place, but they were not plenty.

Apart from the Hausas, the Kotokolis also have some talk inside Taachi. We and the Kotokolis, we don't have any relation with them; it is just traveling that has brought us together. I don't know their town. I used to see Kotokoli lunsidrummers at Kumasi, and the way they beat their drums, I saw it. Sometimes their drummers used to mix with us. And when we would go and meet their town's people, then we would keep quiet, and we would join the Kotokolis among us in beating. If we met a Kotokoli townsperson, or somebody who wanted to dance, the Kotokoli drummers would start their town's beating first, before we would also be responding with our drums. But truly, they are *gunḡḡḡ* people. If you look into it, you will see that they have knowledge inside *gunḡḡḡ*. They have lunsidrumming, too, and they can beat their town's beating, but they cannot beat the way we beat. They are very good in drumming, but it is only inside-their-town beating

that they know. If you don't know anything, at least as for your town, you will know it.

And so it is traveling that has made us and the Kotokolis to be close. It came to a time that Kotokoli people came to Dagbon plenty, and they were living in some of the towns. It was the time the government sacked all the foreigners from Ghana that most of the Kotokolis also ran away. You see Tamale: there were many Kotokoli people here. Yendi too was the same. As they came and settled here, they and the Dagbamba: are we one or not? This is the reason why we have something to do with the Kotokolis. How this town was sitting, if there was a gathering or a festival, Kotokoli men and Kotokoli women would come. They had their names that they would call. Or on a festival day, if any Dagbamba drummers walked in the town beating drums, when they came to a Kotokoli house, the Dagbamba drummers would beat Kotokoli names for them. As we beat to them, and they also danced, don't you see that it's also Taachi? And so how we got to know Kotokoli Taachi, it also let some of the Dagbamba children to enjoy the beating of the Kotokoli dance, and call themselves with Kotokoli names.

And so in the olden days, how they dance now, we didn't have that kind of dance. In the olden days, we were having Taachi. We used to go to the Taachi, and we were calling praise-names with both the *gunḡḡḡ* and the drum. And it was only a few funeral houses you would go and see some other dances coming there apart from Taachi and Tɔra. As for Takai, if there was a funeral, then the Takai people had to be called there before they would come and beat Takai. In the olden days, the way they used to beat Takai was if a festival comes, any festival, then they would gather themselves and beat Takai. That one was just for happiness. Anytime there was a festival, and they finished it, it was the *Nachin-Naa*, the chief or elder of the young men — he is also called *Nachim Kpema*, the elder of the young men — he would arrange and the Takai would be beaten. They would send cola to the drummers, that we should come and beat Takai. If they were going to the chief's house, what they wanted was what we the drummers did. As for Takai, this is how they were beating it. If somebody happened to get a funeral, just as the women were calling the drummers to come for the Tɔra, if it was an old man who died, his children who were men, they could find cola and go and greet the drummers to come: “How our father died, we want you to come and beat Takai.” And if they give the cola to the drummers, this is the way Takai has to walk to the funeral house. At that time, it was not as if any time anybody died, they would force themselves to go there and beat Takai. They would only beat Takai if they were called. This is the way I saw it.

As for *Baamaaya*, formerly its name was *Tuubaanƙpilli*, but in the olden days it was not there at all. We grew up before *Tuubaanƙpilli* came. When we were growing up, the real *Baamaaya* was there and we met it. This *Tuubaanƙpilli* they are now calling *Baamaaya*, it wasn't there in the olden days. As the real *Baamaaya* was there, they were not dancing it just by heart, like the way they are dancing *Tuubaanƙpilli* now. In the olden days many of the chiefs didn't like it, and people didn't regard it as anything. The *Baamaaya* I'm talking about, at that time, if you wanted, you could dance it, but they were not dancing it at a funeral house. But today, as for *Tuubaanƙpilli*, if you want, you will take it to the funeral house.

As for *Jera*, if somebody died and he belonged to the *Jera* family, they would bring *Jera* there and dance. That one too, they were not dancing it by heart. Even it isn't all *Dagbamba* towns where we have *Jera*. We have some particular towns where *Jera* is there. And so not all *Dagbamba* know how to dance it. *Jera* is not like *Baamaaya*: anybody can dance *Baamaaya*. But as for *Jera*, if you don't belong to the town it comes from, or you are not from their family, you can't just go and learn it and dance it. So it is not inside all *Dagbon*. *Jera* is like that. As for dances like *Bila*, *Nyindɔyɔ* and *Dimbu*, they are also like that: they are only in some towns. And so they don't go and dance them by heart at a funeral house, unless they are invited. If they are invited, they will come. But if nobody calls them, they won't come. All the dances were there, and those who were in charge of the dances were there. But they wouldn't just bring themselves to a place with their dance unless they were asked to come. And so we were seeing them, but not very often. It depended on the funeral and who wanted them to come and beat.

Formerly, the way they were dancing the *Taachi*, the person we were praising with the *Taachi* name, the same way they get up to dance today, he would come out to dance. It was only that the dances they were dancing were different dances. And our beating was different too. As the *lundaa* was beating and singing, those also beating drums would be responding. That is why I told that you the young drummers today, they won't know how to beat it unless they learn it. They only know the *Dagbamba* names like *Naanigoo* and *Nayɓiɛyɔ* and the rest. So that is the way it is. In the olden days, we were not beating all these *Dagbamba* names inside drumming. In the olden days, if you went to any funeral, you would not see people dancing *Naanigoo* or *Nayɓiɛyɔ*. It was *Doyu* and *Damba* and *Dikala* and the others I called. But you see *Nayɓiɛyɔ*: it has just come as a dance; it was there in the olden days, but it is just that we were not beating it for anybody to dance. It is because of eye-opening: what you were beating formerly and nobody was dancing it, this time they will dance it. That is the way its way is.

Listen well. The beating of these names was there, and how the chiefs call it, it was there. But we didn't take it as something to put inside dancing. It wasn't like that. But the names were there. It is this eye-opening that brought it, and now that everybody wants to dance it. That is how it is. Truly, I can't tell you how many years ago they started to bring these praise-name dances, because we don't write things like that. But what I know is that from Naa Abudu Setan' Kuyli coming to Naa Mahama Kurli's time, and coming to Naa Mahamam Bila, it was coming like that up to this time. This is what I know. During the time of Naa Abudu, the white men were already there in Dagbon. They gave birth to us, and we met the white people here.

You see Nantoo Nimdi. I have no idea what they were dancing during the time of Naa Yakuba, but Nantoo Nimdi is Naa Yakuba's name, and this time, many people dance it. This Nantoo Nimdi that now these young men are dancing, during Naa Yakuba's time, that was his name, but nobody was dancing it. The time I was young, we used to beat Nantoo Nimdi, but we used to beat it for the chiefs who were riding horses, and they would display with the horses when we beat it. But they were not using their feet to dance it on the ground. When I was at Kumasi, women who enjoyed that dance, if they wanted us to beat it for them, they said we should beat the dance of the horse; this Nantoo Nimdi, they called it that it's a horse dance. And so it was from the time of Naa Abudu Setan' Kuyli they started bringing more dances, different-different dances to funeral houses, up to today. Even at that time, it was little by little by little they were bringing them. The time my eye opened, when I was growing up, we were having all these dances. But I knew the dances that were there before. This is how it is.

And so there are many praise-names that we don't beat for dancing. Do you see Naa Kulunku? His name is called *Kulunku, kulunku, layim kɔbga, ku ŋmani paana*. This kulunku is a small insect that is in the grass during the rainy season. It can easily get annoyed, but when you touch it, it will lie quietly for some time. The meaning of the name is: if these insects gather to be a hundred, it will still not be a cricket.

Naa Andani Jɛngbarga, his name is *Yuyimpini bili goo n-tilga tapaya*: the small spiny porcupine does not fear being slapped. Yuyimpini is a spiny porcupine, and so because of its spines it is saved from being slapped. We beat it in the drums, and we beat it for chiefs.

Naa Ziblim Bandamda, we beat *Kuya mini kasalli*, and it's a proverb that says *Kuya mini kasalli ŋmeri tom nanɣbankpeeni, kuya di mali karimbaani, kasalli ku dem nini*. Kuya is a mahogany tree, and it's very strong. This kasalli is milkweed: it's like a small tree, and it can be in the bush or in a house. If you just

take a stick of it and plant it, it will grow. It has got a lot of leaves, and if you break one of the leaves, you will see something like milk coming from the leaf. If you cut it and you let the milk fall in your eye, you will have trouble with your eye. If that milk falls in the eye, that eye will not see again. And so milkweed doesn't play with the eyes; it can make you blind. That is why we say the name, and the name means: *kuya* and *kasalli* are arguing, and *kuya* should not be proud, because *kasalli* will not play with the eyes. That is a name of Naa Ziblim Bandamda, and we beat it inside drumming, and we have been singing it, but we haven't beaten it for people to dance. It has no dance.

These names I have just counted, we have been singing them. They are chiefs' names, and the names of the chiefs are many. As the chiefs have their names, the ones you will beat and there is a dance, they are there. And there are other names, too, when they call it, you only sing it. This *Kuya mini kasalli nmeri tom nangbankpeeni, kuya di mali karimbaani, kasalli ku dem nini*: how are you going to beat it and somebody will dance? The way they showed me drumming, they didn't show me that we should beat it for people to dance. If not that somebody's heart wants it, you won't even beat it. But if you are going to sing and praise Naa Ziblim Bandamda, and you are going to praise his family, it is there. If you want, you will be beating and saying the words. This is the way you will be beating, and you can count all his names. So when you are beating like this, anybody who belongs to Naa Ziblim Bandamda's family, he will know that the beating is for him. The person will be sitting down, you will be beating it, and you will be saying the words, and the person sitting down will be listening. This is way we have been doing it. There is no dance. And you can be beating *Gbiri gbiri gbiri*: *Buyla karo bandamdi ni kpa turi*. It means: "Those who move the *buyla* door will ask for abuses." You will bring it inside. So when you are beating like this, anybody who belongs to Naa Ziblim Bandamda's family, he will know that this *buyla karo* is for him.

As for *Kulunku kulunku layim kobga, ku nmani paana*, we can beat it when someone is riding a horse. As for the riding-of-the-horse beating, it is there, leaving the beating for dancing. As for that one, too, there is no dance. *Yuyimpini*, too, they don't dance it. It is for Naa Andani Jengbarga, but there is no dance for it. I have already told you that there are many names like that, and if they call one of them, you can only beat it or sing it, but nobody can dance it. That is how I know it. But the chiefs who are not far, as for them, we have been dancing their names all the time. Naa Yakuba is Nantoo Nimdi. Naa Andani is Naanigoo. Naa Abilaai is Naybieyu. Naa Alaasani is 3im Taai Kurugu. If you go to watch people dance, these are the ones they dance.



Truly, as for our asking, everybody asks to his extent. Maybe as I have told you the dancing is not there, you will ask somebody and the fellow will tell you that it is there. Maybe at that time you will call me a liar. But as for this talk, since I started learning drumming, up to today I am still asking, but I haven't heard it. As for asking, it doesn't finish. You will die and leave the asking. Everybody asks to his extent. And what you will ask and your teacher will teach you, that is what you will use to do work. If you refuse it, and you run and catch another one, you won't catch that one well. And how you will come back again to what you were holding, you won't have it again. And so don't go and enter into other troubles. If your teacher shows you a small thing, and you see that the small thing is doing something good for you, you should hold it strongly. If somebody asks you, you will talk what your teacher talked to you, and if somebody is going to go beyond that and ask you again, you should only say that this is what your father talked to you. Don't go beyond that to go and talk some other things. If you go beyond it, then you will tell a lie, and at that time it will spoil the work you are holding. And so you don't have to look down upon what your teacher teaches you. And so what my eyes have seen, and what they have taught me, that is what I'm taking to talk to you. And so these young boys who are now learning drumming, sometimes someone will tell them to play something, and the small drummer who has not asked will not know it. Have you seen? That is how it is.

Truly, as we are now sitting in Dagbon here, we have many, many dances, and we drummers are the ones who search for them. And the reason why our dances are many is coming from the sense we take to do our work. The proverbs we beat are many, and the people we praise are many. Every chief has got his name, and even commoners have got names. And the people who dance are also different. Every person has got the dance he can dance, and everybody has got the dance his heart wants. Nobody dances the dance of another person. The people who dance Takai are different from the people who dance Baamaaya. It is not that it is forbidden. It shows that the dance you know, that is the dance you dance. Those who dance Takai, some of them dance Baamaaya. Such a person dances Baamaaya because we all gather to dance, and if his legs are fast to learn, and his eyes don't feel shy, such a person can know many dances. But the one who feels shy, or his legs are not too fast, he cannot know all of them. There is someone who dances Damba, but he cannot dance Naybiɛɣu, and there is someone who can only dance Naybiɛɣu, and there is someone who can dance Damba and dance Naybiɛɣu. Somebody will dance Naanigoo, and it is not that he is the dance's person. Its person like what? Naa Andani's name was Naanigoo, and so the Naanigoo people are from the Andani side. But if somebody's legs are fast when

they beat the dance, then he can dance it. And there will be somebody from the Andani side, and his legs cannot dance it and his body cannot turn. He is like a crocodile: the way a crocodile cannot turn, he is also stiff like that. He will find a different dance to dance, a dance that fits him. There is somebody who is faster than a cat, and he can dance every dance. And that is why our dances are many, and everybody has got the dance he can dance. There are some dances which you will see many people dancing, and it's just because how that dance is, their legs can dance that dance.

Sometimes too you will come and beat many dances for a person, and he will not know how to dance any of them. It is only he himself who will tell you, "Beat this dance for me." He shows you the dance he wants because the dances are many, and you will not know what dance he can dance. When he shows you and you beat that one for him, it will not be difficult for him to dance it. And sometimes if you start beating a certain dance for someone and he doesn't know how to dance it, he won't know how to change to another dance. We will look at how his legs are going and beat: if you are beating and his legs are mixing, at that time you will stop and beat on how his legs are going. If you were beating fast and his legs were going slowly, you the drummer will change and be beating slowly for him to dance. There can be a dance and someone will dance it very fast, and if you don't beat it like that for him, the dance will not go. There will be another dance that wants you to beat it slowly and coolly, and someone will come out and he will dance it like that, and you the ones beating it will be happy. And sometimes someone will come out to dance, and he will not open his mouth to tell you to beat a dance for him. You will change and he will shake his head. Someone can stand like that and you will beat about four dances, and the one that comes next, if that is the dance he can dance, he will dance it. If the dances were not many, he would not be able to do that.

And all of this is not coming from anywhere. It is from us the drummers. It is we who use our sense to beat the dances. There is someone who will call his name and it is a dance, and we will beat it. But there is somebody who will not call a name. He will just come out that you should beat a dance for him. As he is saying that you should beat for him to dance, he doesn't say, "This is the dance I want you to beat." And you the drummer have not asked him the dance he will dance. You will change to a dance, and he will dance it. And any day he comes out to dance, you will beat that dance for him and he will dance it. If one day he comes out to dance, and those who used to beat that type of dance for him are not around, he will just say that they should beat the dance they used to beat for him. If some of you were there when he used to dance, you will say, "Yes, this is the

dance he wants.” Those beating will change to that dance, and you will see that he will dance it. And so that is why I say that it is we the drummers who beat the dances for people. Someone doesn’t say “Beat this dance for me”; he only says he wants a dance. How are you going to know the dance he wants? The dance you beat for him, that dance has become his dance, everyday. If he comes to give birth to children, if his children get up, they will say, “Beat my father’s dance for me.” Even if his child comes out to dance and he doesn’t tell you to beat that dance, you the drummer will say, “Beat the dance that his father used to dance for him to dance.” It has become their family dance: when the father comes out, you beat it for him, and when the children come out, you also beat it for them. It shows that it is their family dance. And there are some dances like that.

Apart from that, there is, “I just want a dance.” The fellow who says that dances every dance. As he says he wants a dance, he doesn’t show you the dance he wants. Any dance you beat for him, he will dance it. Somebody will come out and dance one dance, and he will tell you to beat another one for him. Someone can dance four different dances when he comes out, and it shows that he knows many dances. If someone wants to dance four or six dances, we will not agree to beat all of them for him; it spoils our getting. He dances one dance: they give him money. He dances another: they give him money. But when he is dancing the other dances, the money will not come out. We are beating and we want money, and we don’t beat the dance that dances and there is no money. That is why I told you that the one who dances too much does not see ululation.

But there are some people we beat dances for and we become happy. There is someone who will dance about five dances, and you the drummer will not become tired, and you will not become annoyed. How is that? Just as I have said this, he will change about three dances. When he dances one for about two steps, he will be inside the dance and tell you to change him to another dance, and it is there you will change. You will be playing the new one and some of the other drummers will still be playing the old one because they have not heard him. Before they know, you will be changing to another one. Such a person, if he dances five, you don’t become fed up, because it doesn’t spoil our getting.

We drummers, as these dances are names and as we learn the different dances, we are different on the part of our learning. And it shows that as someone’s family is there, a drummer will only know it to his extent, and some know more than others. And it shows again that we are different on the part of how we learn our old talks about the chiefs and their lines. I have told you that we use sense to call a name. If you are a chief, we will look at you and how you became a chief, what you did before you were able to become a chief, and what

you did when you became a chief. That is why I told you that if you want to know what is behind any chief or any person, you have to learn our old talks. As we learn about the chiefs, every drummer will know some particular chiefs and know them only to his extent. Truly, if you are a drummer, if you don't know the ways of the chiefs, you will only get yourself into tiredness. This is the way of drumming.

And so these dances also show us the old talks that are in Dagbon here, and as it is, it adds to us. How will it not add? If you are a Dagbana and you come to hear something about your tradition and how your grandfathers were living and what they did, is it not something that is going to add to your way of living? Every human being, not only a Dagbana, if you say you are a person, it is good for you to know your tradition. This is why we praise people, and this is how the dances also come about. As your grandfather was there, this is what he did, and this is what he put down for you. This is his name, and this is what he did. And when you come to dance, you will step on it with pride, and you will show that what has been put down for you, you are not taking it to be useless. If you didn't know and we show you, or if you forgot and we remind you, it will be sweet for you.

And truly, having many dances helps us drummers. You will get to a town, and the people of that town will only want one dance. If you don't learn many dances, maybe you won't know the dance they dance. We the drummers of the Dagbamba, if there is a Dagbana — man, woman, child, or old person — there is no dance anyone will come out and tell us to beat, and we will say we don't know it. I have said that we have used our sense to beat many dances, but I can also say that as we learn many dances, our learning is from the ones who dance. If you hear them say that somebody writes a lot, and there is somebody talking to him, then the one talking is the one writing. And so those who are dancing make the dances to be many, because if someone doesn't call a name for you to beat for him to dance, you won't beat it. Maybe you will beat Damba for someone, and the next fellow will come out and say he wants Naanigoo, and he will dance it and tell you to change to Naybiɛɣu. The next one will come out and say he wants Ɔim Taai Kurugu. They are showing you all the dances. You the drummer, as you are beating many of the dances, it is all from them. If you hear that the people in a house have eaten a lot of food, it is the householder who has given them the food. And so those who dance are also the ones who have made the dances to be many in Dagbon. There are some dances, and it will be a long time and we who beat will not beat them. But those of us who beat, we will not beat a dance and we will come to forget about it. Someone will come out and say, "Beat this dance for me,"

and he will remind us. That is the dance he knows, and so that is the dance he dances.

And again, when someone dances, as the drummers sing songs, they sing to praise the one dancing. The singing is different from the way the women ululate when someone is dancing. The ululation is not a song. It adds more salt to the dance, and that is the only thing it shows: the way we take it, it adds life to the dance. But the songs the drummers sing, there is talk inside them. These songs are about the person dancing. Everybody has got his or her praise, and so the songs change. As a person is sitting, he has his family, and that is what the drummers take to sing.

It's not all dances that have singing. But there are some dances that are accompanied by songs. In Damba, there is a song, and it is sung by women. You only sing these songs when the Damba moon comes out, during the month of Damba. And you don't sing these songs in the house of a commoner; you sing them in the house of a chief. It is only the women who sing, and the songs they sing, they don't sing when they dance. They sit at the chief's house and sing and praise the chief, without dancing. The Damba songs are about the chieftaincy, because you cannot sing the Damba songs apart from the chief's house. Damba is for the chiefs, and so the songs must have something to do with chieftaincy. But the songs have no dance. Do you see the Mamprusi dance? It has songs, but we Dagbamba don't sing its songs. But as for the Mamprusi, they sing its songs. But Zamanduniya has a song. Do you see Nakohi-waa? It has no song, but it has the praises of the people dancing. But Naanigoo has many songs. And Naybieyu has songs.

I'll give you an example of the meaning of some of these dances and how drummers sing when they are beating. Do you see Naybieyu? That is the praise of Naa Abilaa. The old talk inside Naybieyu is about Naa Abilaa and how he went to the Bassari land for war. Inside drumming, if we say Naa Abilaa went to Bassari, it is not that he went and occupied the whole place. Drumming talks are difficult, and so listen well. The Bassaris are in Togo, and some of them are in Ghana. There is a town called Bassari in Togo, but all of the Bassari lands, anywhere the Bassari people were living, we group them and call them Bassari. At that time there was no Ghana, no Togo. And on the part of Naa Abilaa's war, the town we call is Nanchemba, and we call Bassari, too. It's all one. When you cross from Dagbon, you are in Bassari. And if you fight one village or one town, you are in Bassari. Whether Naa Abilaa was able to seize twenty villages or ten villages or one village, we only know that he went to Bassari.

For example, if you take war now to enter Dagbon, if you are able to seize about ten villages, we are going to put it in the drum history that you came into Dagbon, and seized Dagbon. And you the drummer, if they ask, you can only say, “I heard that he went and fought Dagbon. But I don’t know whether it was the whole land or not.” At that point, there is no question again. If somebody goes and fights a different tribe, nobody will be able to know how many villages of that land he was able to seize. If he is able to get even a single chief of that land, then we say that he has collected the place. So this is how it is inside our talk. As for Dagbamba, the way they fight their wars, when they go to a land, maybe they will go to about three villages or four villages. If you are going to beat the drum, these are the villages you have to count, and everybody too will know that those villages are within that people’s land. And so these old talks, and the way I am talking to you, if you take it home, you have to be following it very well, because I am talking to you what I know. And if you follow it too much, and a lie comes inside, it’s not good. At times, one thing will happen and some people will take it to be ten times. And so if you know one, and you call that one, there is no argument.

And so we say that Naa Abilaaɪ went to Bassari and fought a war, and many of the people of the town ran away, and some of them stayed and they were fighting Naa Abilaaɪ. And so they were fighting and killing one another, and Naa Abilaaɪ was killing a lot of the Bassaris. And the town where the war was, the name of the chief of that town was Naybiɛyɛ. Naybiɛyɛ means “bad cow.” It’s not a cow like the ones standing in the house; it’s like a bush buffalo, and it is very dangerous. When a cow or a buffalo is wild and is going through the bush, if not a hunter, nobody else can catch it. You cannot just catch it with your empty hand. As for a wild or bush cow, everybody is afraid of it. And this was the name of the Bassari chief: that was his praise. He was a tindana and he was a chief. And Naa Abilaaɪ said he didn’t care if the chief of the Bassaris was a bad cow or not, because he Naa Abilaaɪ was worse than a bad cow. And so we drummers say that he killed the bad cow, and it shows that was the chief of Bassari he had killed. As he had killed him, he had a way to inherit him, and so he came and told the drummers who followed him to the war that they should praise him with the name of the chief he killed. And so as Naa Abilaaɪ had defeated him, he also called himself Bad Cow. And so this Naybiɛyɛ was a man, and they called him Bad Cow because he was killing people, and when Naybiɛyɛ was killed, Naa Abilaaɪ became very happy. It was there that the praise of Naa Abilaaɪ Naybiɛyɛ started.

And I can say that some drummers sing that they were fighting and killing one another in the war until Naa Abilaaɪ’s people were able to capture Naybiɛyɛ and cut off his head, and then they brought it to Naa Abilaaɪ and said, “We have

killed Naybiɛɣu and we have brought his head, to give to you.” And some people sing it that it was Naa Abilaai himself who cut off the head of the Bassari chief with a cutlass, and he asked to know the Bassari chief’s name, and they told him it was “Nahu Bimbiɛɣu,” that is, Cow Bad Thing. Some drummers sing it like that. It doesn’t matter. If you go to war, and you go with your warriors, and they are in front of the war. If they kill anybody and bring the head to you, it that you the one who took them to war, it is you who killed the person. Any one of the warriors who will kill the one you are looking for, when they bring the head, they are coming to put it in front of you. So you gave them the work.

How the beating of Naybiɛɣu is, the beating is *Naybiɛɣu maa m-bala*: “Naybiɛɣu that is it.” The one beating the lundaa, he will be beating and turn his beating to call the response, and the rest of the drums will respond: *Naybiɛɣu maa m-bala, Naybiɛɣu maa m-bala*. And the one beating lundaa will respond the same way, with the rest of the drums. When the lundaa is going to turn it to the others, sometimes you will hear the lundaa beat, *Tiɲma, tiɲma, Nahu Bimbiɛɣu; tiɲma, tiɲma, Nahu Bimbiɛɣu*. It means “We cut off Nahu Bimbiɛɣu.” Somebody too can turn it as: *Doo be nyɛ tɔ, dapala, kumahin, Nahu Bimbiɛɣu*. That is Mionlana Sumaani’s name. He was Naa Abilaai’s brother. When they are praising Naybiɛɣu, they can put his name inside, that they were born together. The praise is, “A man hasn’t got his fellow man, and he’s boasting,” and this “kumahin” is the praise for a cow. That is the meaning. Anybody beating the lundaa, if he wants this way too, he can turn it like that, and the other drummers will respond *Naybiɛɣu maa m-bala: gbir gbir gbir gbiri, gbir gbir gbir gbiri, gbir gbir gbir gbiri, gbir!* So the thing is not standing at one place to say that this is the only one you have to beat before the other drummers will respond. If you want to follow it, that it should be one way, then you will come and tell lies.

And as the drum beats *Nahu Bimbiɛɣu* — cow bad thing — when we call it, we change it to *Naybiɛɣu*. In Dagbani, nobody would say *Nahu Bimbiɛɣu*; you change the “nahu” and say it “Nay’ Bimbiɛɣu.” In Dagbani, we call a cow “*nahu*”; and *bim* is “thing”; and “*biɛɣu*” can mean “bad” or “ugly,” but it is not that the cow is ugly or that its skin is dirty. *Nay’ biɛɣu* is a bad cow, a cow that is very wild, and it can catch people with the horns. If you come to say, “*Nahu Bimbiɛɣu*,” as for us, we take it to be the same. If you make it “*Nay’ biɛɣu*,” it means “bad cow.” Do you follow me? That is *Nay’ biɛɣu*. But it will be good if you also put *Nahu Bimbiɛɣu* down, so that somebody will know that this is how it is, because when the lundaa is going to turn it for the other drummers, the lundaa will beat it as *Nahu Bimbiɛɣu*. If you break it into two parts like that, then somebody can understand. All this is our Dagbani talking and how we beat the

drum. But don't you see that when they are going to dance the dance, they say they are going to dance Naybiɛyɛ dance? They don't say they are going to dance Nahu Bimbiɛyɛ dance. That is Naybiɛyɛ. And if you also write Nahu Bimbiɛyɛ there, nobody will ask you why, because that is how the lundaa will turn it to the other drums. It doesn't matter. This is the way I can explain it to you.

And so when Naa Abilaaɪ killed the Bassari chief, Naybiɛyɛ, he called himself that name to be praised with the drums. And truly, the dance is important in reminding us about our old talks. As the drum is beating, they are also singing. When drummers sing the song, they sing about this talk of Naa Abilaaɪ:

“Yakuba's first-born Abudu. Bassari people's medicine to stand. Nanchemba, their medicines to stand. Chenonima: their medicine to stand. He is the Naybiɛyɛ. When Bassari people heard about the chief, and they said they should take lead to the river side, before they reached the river side, and Naybiɛyɛ came and drank, and spoiled the water. When the chief got to Bassari, and those who had yams at their farms here, they said they should take lead to their farms, before they reached their farms, and Naybiɛyɛ came and took the yams and spoiled the rest. Diari woman's child Naybiɛyɛ. Kambaŋ woman's child Naybiɛyɛ.”

Have you heard? They sing that when Naa Abilaaɪ went to Bassari, he went and met Bad Cow, the tindana of Bassari, and the Bassari tindana took a hen and was going to sacrifice to the god of the land. But Naa Abilaaɪ went to the god before him. And they'll sing again that Bad Cow took a hen and was going to the god, but Naa Abilaaɪ went to the god before him. And they sing again that Bad Cow took a calabash and was going to the river side, and Naa Abilaaɪ was there before him. And they sing again that Naa Abilaaɪ went and drove away Naybiɛyɛ. And when they sing that Naa Abilaaɪ went into the water and spoiled the water, they will sing again that he stirred it up and made it muddy, and sing again that he killed Bad Cow and stirred up the water. And they will sing that Naa Abilaaɪ should dance Naybiɛyɛ. This is what we sing.

Have you heard? If you are stronger than somebody, and he is going to eat something, and you don't want him to eat that thing, you will prevent him from eating that thing. When Naa Abilaaɪ stirred up the water, Bad Cow couldn't drink it. It was not good for Bad Cow again. And again, when they sing that Naa Abilaaɪ stirred up the water and made it muddy, it shows that he was stronger than his enemies, and he was able to prevent them from getting the chieftaincy, and they were not able to defeat him. And that is what is under the Naybiɛyɛ we have been drumming for people to dance. This is the talk of Naybiɛyɛ the drummer will be singing, praising the chief and singing about how he went to Bassari and the people he killed. He will be beating one by one like that, and also using his mouth to be singing.



And he will sing again and come to join it with praise names: “Yakuba’s first-son Abudu. He is the one Naybiɛɣu. The truth has got a place to sit, and the liar hasn’t got a place to sit. The *banlari* grass, that is what makes calabash bowls. And the kapok trees will be falling gold. A poor man’s child has stepped on gold. And those who ask are more than hundred. And the stepping place of the lion will gather more than hundred, it will not let a hippopotamus fall. The food storage bin is carrying foodstuffs on top again. The mouth that is nice will gather people. Stars gather up to hundred, it will not look like a moon.” All this adds into Naybiɛɣu when we are beating. And so this is an example. All that is within the praising of Naa Abilaai. And that is the way of the singing.

The time the drummer is singing, when you hear any of the drummers beating, they are only responding one-one, knocking the drum with a single beat. And then the drummer is going to use the drum to turn it to the drummers, and they will know that, now the song has cut, and so they will change and respond with their drums: “Yes, that is Naybiɛɣu.” And the drummer will take it and go, and be singing and beating, and the others will be responding with the one beat. And when the drummer beating the lundaa finishes some part, he can beat it and turn it again. Then they will respond: Naybiɛɣu maa m-bala. And when he is singing, and if he wants he will be calling the names of the chiefs — who gave birth to whom, who gave birth to whom. Up to this time. And he will turn it again to the other drummers, and they will respond.

And so the singing is not only one way. Listen well. How the singing is coming and adding, if you say you are going to follow all of it, you will follow it and leave it. The way we started from the time Naa Abilaai went to Bassari, and how it is coming, and drummers sing, they sing and add. And lundaa too beats and adds. And if you are going to be counting all of it, one, one, one, you will be tired. You can’t count it. That is how it is. If you are going to follow each talk, it is every drummer and his knowledge. You will use knowledge to sing Naybiɛɣu. If the drummer is somebody who has a lot of knowledge, he is going to use his knowledge to sing. And if he’s somebody who beats lundaa, it is his knowledge he’s going to use. That is how it is. If you are going to follow all, you will come and tell lies inside your talk. The way a drummer is singing now, the same drummer, he can change it again. And the one he will sing for you to catch first, then he will change again, and you will hear it. And so the way I have talked about Naa Abilaai and the Bassari, that is the way it started. The way something started, you have come to the end before you can add something. And so the first one I have talked is the one which will eat all the rest that have been added to it. Nobody again will one day say that you don’t know it. That is how our thing is.

And again, when they are beating *Naybiɛyɔ*, there will be somebody dancing. When the drummer is singing, you will see that the dancer is dancing slowly. And when the drummer returns it to the rest of the drummers, you will see the *gungɔns* and the *lunsi* all respond, and then there are some changes that the one dancing will also try. And so sometimes you will see the singer coming to tell the one dancing, “Dance, dance, *Naybiɛyɔ* dance.” That is how it is. It has no end. That is how they dance it. Everybody takes the one he can do. For example, if somebody is dancing *Naybiɛyɔ* and he is not from the family of *Naa Abilaai Naybiɛyɔ*, you have to take the story behind *Naybiɛyɔ* and sing it, and then you also bring that person’s song, from his family-side, and add it and be singing for him. And so it is there like that, because he’s dancing the *Naybiɛyɔ*. And so they mix it. It is not that you the drummer will sing anything your heart wants. You will sing some on the part of *Naa Abilaai*, and then the one dancing, you have to know which family he comes from, and you should take a song from that family and sing it, and mix it with *Naybiɛyɔ* for him. And the person dancing, he will know that you know his family, too. And so if you are going to dance a particular dance that does not belong to your family, it is singing on your family’s side that will be more inside the beating, more than the beating itself’s song. That is how it is.

Do you know the meaning of *Nantoo Nimdi*? *Naa Yakuba* is *Nantoo Nimdi*. *Nimdi* is meat, and so *Nantoo Nimdi* is “nantoo meat.” *Nantoo* is anthrax, and *Dagbamba* take it to compare to a living thing. Old *Dagbamba* say that *nantoo* is a creature that flies and spreads its wings and drops its poison. And so this *nantoo* is a very dangerous thing, and if it touches somebody, that fellow will die. Anything that *nantoo* touches cannot be touched. If *nantoo* kills an animal, the meat will spoil. When *nantoo* kills a cow or a goat, if you eat the meat, you will die. It has turned to *Nantoo Nimdi*. And to the typical *Dagbamba*, they say that *nantoo* is a flying thing. It is like a poisonous small insect; when it is flying and anything from it falls onto a tree, the tree will dry up. That one *nantoo* can kill hundreds of people in one day. And our old *Dagbamba* say that witches have control over them. And so if *nantoo* touches somebody, the fellow will die, or if someone eats something that has touched *nantoo*, he will die. It was *Naa Yakuba* himself who called his name *Nantoo Nimdi*, that he is *nantoo* meat, and people have tried and tried but they have not been able to kill him. And so his name shows that when he is somewhere, no one can get near him.

When we play *Nantoo Nimdi*, we are talking about *Naa Yakuba*. Meat that is not good, you cannot eat it. As it is a proverb, there is something under it. Its meaning is that if people are fighting for something, and the chief collects it from

these people, no one can ask the chief for it again. The thing has turned to nantoo, and no one will collect again. It has become a bad thing. Even if the chief gives it to you, you will not take it. If the chief says, “Oh, take it,” you will say, “Chief, I can’t collect something from you.” Whether the chief is happy or not happy, whether he has done something to it so that it will do bad to you, you don’t know. So if nantoo catches something, you are afraid because of its bad name. And chiefs: everyone is afraid of a chief. The chief is a nantoo: whatever he steps on, nobody can take it. How much more the Yaa-Naa? That is the meaning of the name. Naa Yakuba was called Nantoo Nimdi, and we play it at gatherings, at weddings and funerals and in the Damba Festival. And there is sense inside it.

When drummers beat it, the drum is saying, *Nantoo nimdi, kayli sundi*: “Nantoo meat, vultures are disturbed.” And how we used to sing the song, we used to sing his praise-names and add. For example: His grandfather Naa Yakuba. Nantoo wants to kill, and vultures are disturbed. The medicines are plenty. Nantoo wants to kill and the medicines are plenty. The child of the lion is still young, and however small or young it is, it will never chew grass. Unless meat. The life that is very short, it can’t share anything. If life were something that could be shared, it would have been given to the first-born Abudu, in addition to his brother Andani. Termites tried to chop iron. The termites want to eat something that they will eat, and if the fowl eats it, it will die. And the fowl too will go and eat what will not let him die, after eating the termites. The *tizzo* plant will not stand on the ground; it will always hang on the tree. A bag that you hold quietly will not tear. A person by himself does not mind poverty. These are names of Naa Yakuba. That is how we beat it. And so this is how we count it. You will count them inside, and be singing and beating. And so the names in the song can give some ways of beating, and it will all be adding. As for the singing of Naa Yakuba, he didn’t go to any place to fight a war, and if somebody hasn’t gone to war, we will be singing only the praise names in the drumming. So this is the way we sing it. I can tell you that Naa Yakuba has got some talks, but we don’t sing them in the drum history, and we don’t add them into our singing. We only bring his praise names. The stories of Naa Yakuba are only talks.

When Naa Yakuba died, the child who came and ate was Naa Abilaai. He is Naybiεyu. I told you the meaning of Naybiεyu. When Naa Abilaai Naybiεyu died, it was Naa Andani Naanigoo who became the chief. Do you know the meaning of Naanigoo? “*Naani*” means that you have agreed or promised, and “*goo*” is thorns. Naa Andani went to the Gurunsi land and fought a war against the Zambarima people. At that time, some Zambarimas had come from Niger and were in the Gurunsi land. When Naa Andani was going, he took some people to

follow him to the war, and there were some among them who were his enemies. And he didn't know that there were some people who didn't like him. He trusted them. And when they went and the war started, some of his people went and were helping the enemies. And Naa Andani came to know what his people were doing to him. But when Naa Andani fought the war, he was able to defeat his enemies. And he came and gathered all the people who had followed him to the war, and he told them that there was a naani, a promise, with them. And he said, "I have trusted you; that is why I carried you to the war, not knowing that some of you were my enemies. It was inside the war that I got to know that I have enemies. But now I have returned, and I know. I was trusting, and you became thorns and were pricking my feet." That is where Naanigoo started. That is the meaning of Naanigoo. Naani: that is a promise given in trust. And goo: that is a thorn. He had become the naani, the promise, and they had become the goo, the thorns, and they were pricking his feet.

And so this talk of Naa Andani, we drummers put it in the drumming and we beat it. Even the time Naa Andani himself called it, he didn't know that it would be a dance. He just opened his mouth and said it. If you trust anybody very much, he will be the same person who will later kill you. That is Naanigoo. As for him, that's how he called it. And now it has become a dance. And the way we sing, we will be singing, "I do good to you, then you become a thorn and you prick me. Only your friend can kill you. I have trusted, and now that person is killing me." And we add and call the names of the towns in the Gurunsi land where Naa Andani passed through and fought: "The day of Sechi, Naanigoo. Kunchimahimbaliya, Naanigoo. Fombee, Naanigoo. Wakambaliya, Naanigoo." We drummers add all this inside the song. We don't add any other thing. We don't call any other names. This is the way we sing and beat it.

And so the meaning of Naanigoo is that if you are living with a friend or with somebody, and you do good things to that fellow, it can be that the fellow wants your downfall. Let's say that we are friends, and I believe you and you also believe me. And according to your way, you show me that you believe me, but outside to people, you show me that you don't believe me. Whatever happens, if you want to poison me, you can get the poison and come to the house where you are living with me; if I am eating food or any other thing, you can just give me the food together with the poison, and the poison will kill me. This is why they say "naanigoo." I believe you, and you don't believe me: that is the meaning of the Naanigoo they have been drumming.

And so when we beat Naanigoo for people to dance, as for that, Naanigoo means that you have agreed on something, let's say, on the part of your family, or

you are living with your friend or living with somebody. And that friendship is your promise or your trust. You are doing good to your friend, and you come to see your friend is digging behind you to bring about your downfall. You will see that your promise is going to eat you, and it will be a bad thing for you. Naa Andani called the name Naanigoo because of the promise he has agreed, and he has done good inside it, and now the promise has become a thorn to prick him and break in his foot, and he cannot remove it. And Naanigoo shows that as the thorn of the promise will go inside and prick him, he won't mind it. That is the sense that is inside it, and that is Naa Andani's name, and many people dance to it.

And there is *3im Taai Kurugu*. Many people like to dance it. When Naa Andani died, Naa Alaasani became the chief, and he is *3im Taai Kurugu*. This *3im Taai Kurugu* means "blood touches iron." Or any meat, or even fish, the way it smells, you can call it like that. When we beat it, you will hear them beating, "3im taai kurugu, kurugu, kurugu," and the leader will beat "ka jɛŋgbarsi wɔlinjɛ," and the other drummers and the gũŋgũŋs will answer again "3im taai kurugu, kurugu, kurugu." *Jɛŋgbarsi* are mice, and *wɔlinjɛ* means that you are trying to reach something but you cannot. If you like, you will say "3im taai kurugu, ka chinchansi wɔlinjɛ." These *chinchansi* are mice, but those who don't know Dagbani cannot call that name. Not all Dagbamba know that name for mice; they only call it by *jɛŋgbarsi*. If you want, you can go to Accra and even ask drummers there, and not all of them can tell you the meaning of *chinchansi*. And so Naa Alaasani's name means "Blood has touched iron; mice cannot do anything to it." And we beat it like that.

And the song is: if mice struggle with iron, their teeth will break. And we call again: What God has put down, if they don't want, it will happen; and if they want, it will happen. This one and *3im Taai Kurugu*, they are one. Naa Alaasani's mother's children didn't like him, and God made him the Yaa-Naa. They want him, he is the one eating Yendi. They don't want him, he is the one eating Yendi. So that is the meaning of it. They used to beat it. The one beating lundaa will beat "The thing God has put down," and the other drummers will respond, "It will happen." That is how it is. And they sing it, too. We don't add any thing again, unless of course we want to count his fathers and add. So if you are singing "What God has put down, it will happen," then if you see people riding horses, they will be displaying with the horses. As for *3im Taai Kurugu*, when they beat it, people dance. Women and young men dance it. This is how it is.

Why did Naa Alaasani call himself *3im Taai Kurugu*? When Naa Alaasani was the Yaa-Naa, he didn't go for a war. It was only his brother who went for a war: his brother Savelugu-Naa Mahami took him and went to war, and they were

fighting the Zambarimas. And Savelugu-Naa Mahami died in the war. And I have also told you that my mother's father Sulemana also followed Savelugu-Naa Mahami to the war and died there. And Naa Alaasani came back. And when Naa Alaasani came back, Naa Andani was eating Yendi. When Naa Andani died, Naa Alaasani became the Yaa-Naa of the Dagbamba. And the reason why Naa Alaasani called 3im Taai Kurugu was that when he came back from the war, many of his family and relatives also wanted to become chief, and they didn't get it. And as they were not able to eat the chieftaincy, they would try to do bad to him in some way, and he Naa Alaasani did not care what his relatives could do to him because anything they could do would not harm him. And that was why he called himself 3im Taai Kurugu. As many people didn't like him, and they wanted to kill him, he named himself 3im Taai Kurugu, that if you put the smell of meat against an iron rod, if rats or mice get the smell, they will come and attack that iron rod and try to eat it, thinking that it's meat; but is an iron rod. And so he is somebody that nobody can kill in Dagbon. And we will be beating, "3im taai kurugu; ka jɛngbarsi wɔlinjɛ": when blood touches an iron rod, if a rat or a mouse wants to eat, no matter how it is, it cannot get the blood from the piece of iron, and it cannot do anything to the iron. And so he was the iron rod, and his relatives were the rats, and no matter what they did, they could not eat his chieftaincy, and they couldn't do anything to him. And so he was blood touches iron. That is the meaning of 3im taai kurugu, ka jɛngbarsi wɔlinjɛ. Naa Alaasani is 3im Taai Kurugu.

When Naa Alaasani died, it was Naa Abudu who ate the Yendi chieftaincy. Naa Abudu is called *Niri ŋum bi niŋ zamba ku chirgi bieri*, and it means if you do not do bad, you will not come to meet bad. This "zamba" means that you are doing bad to somebody, or you are doing something secretly to spoil somebody's name, or you remove a person from something so that you will get a way to get it. And so if you do not do that kind of thing to somebody, you won't come across somebody who will do that to you. That is a name of Naa Abudu. Naa Abudu called that name because he was small and he became a chief. He was Naa Alaasani's first-born son. At first he was the chief at Gbungbaliga, and from there he went to Mion, and when his father died, he became the Regent. And it was trouble before he became chief. When Naa Abudu was the chief, he didn't go for any war, but the time he was going to be made a chief, there was a war among some of the chiefs of Dagbon. The time Naa Alaasani was the chief, the Dagbamba used to make their own chiefs, but when Naa Abudu came, it was the time of the white men, and Dagbon was divided. It was the British people who were in Tamale here, and the Germans were at Yendi. And the chief of Karaga at

that time was Kari-Naa Abukari, and this Kari-Naa Abukari was on the side of the Germans. And we show that Kari-Naa Abukari poisoned Naa Alaasani and killed him, and he said that he would not agree for Naa Abudu become Yaa-Naa. And Naa Abudu brought the talk to the British in Tamale here, and the British gave the chieftaincy to Naa Abudu. And so it was the time of Naa Abudu that the British collected Yendi and the whole Dagbon, and so Naa Abudu was made a chief by the white men. His junior fathers were there and he ate the chieftaincy, and those who were doing him bad were doing him bad, and he became chief. That is why he called that name.

And Naa Abudu is called again *Setaŋ' kuyli, bilim kuŋma*, that is, a stone that will roll and not break. I have not taught you how to play *Setaŋ' Kuyli*. *Kuyli* is a stone, and this *setaŋ' kuyli* is a type of stone that doesn't break: in the olden days, blacksmiths used to use it as an anvil, and that is how we also call the type of hard stone they put into mortar guns. That was Naa Abudu. And he said he was *Setaŋ' Kuyli*, and he will roll and will not break. This name was also the name of Naa Zanjina, and so he was somebody who inherited Naa Zanjina, and he resembled Naa Zanjina and took that name. The way he became chief was the same way Naa Zanjina became chief, because Naa Zanjina's brothers and junior fathers were sitting down when he came and ate the chieftaincy. And so when Naa Abudu became Yaa-Naa, he called himself *Setaŋ' Kuyli*: no matter how you twist him or what you do to him, you could not break him into two.

As for *Setaŋ' Kuyli*, it is only a horse which dances it. Truly, anyone who wants, you can beat it for him to dance. But usually we used to beat it for somebody sitting on a horse. Then he will take the horse and be displaying. How we drummers used to beat when people are walking and going, we used to call it *sochendi*: "walking on the way." The *sochendi* for the riding of the horses, that is *wɔrbar' sochendi*. Haven't you ever seen people riding horses and drummers are walking behind them beating? If it is the Damba Festival, the beating you are taking to the chief's house, when the chief is walking, that one is Damba *sochendi*. And so *Setaŋ' Kuyli*, that is how it is.

*Setaŋ' Kuyli* too doesn't have songs: if you are beating *Setaŋ' Kuyli*, you take the praise-names of Naa Abudu and sing the song. You will praise his father Naa Alaasani: He gave birth to his first-son Abudu. *Setaŋ' Kuyli* doesn't mind rolling. A foolish man says it will happen; it is never something that will happen. A hypocrite will gather hundreds, it is the will of the owner of the talk. And this is how you will be singing and the *lundaa* will be beating. And all these, they are the names.

When Naa Abudu was not there again, Naa Mahama Kpema came and became chief, and he said *Bε yoli yelgu ka sheli kani*. I have told you its meaning, that others are late in talking for something and it is no longer there. And so they are regretting, and there is nothing they can do again. That is Bε Yoli Yelgu. Have you seen? This is the way of living of the chiefs. As they are calling the names like that, they are calling the names against one another. Maybe the time Naa Mahama Kpema wanted to become chief, others wanted the chieftaincy and they didn't want him to get it, but they are late: as he is the chief, they cannot do anything to him again. There is nothing again. This is how it is.

When he died, Naa Mahamam Bila came and ate Yendi, and he said, *3iri layim kɔbga, yelmanli n-gari*: “Lies can gather to be a hundred, but truth is more than all of them.” Truth is more than a hundred lies. That one is also a sochendi dance, not something people dance at a gathering.

When Naa Mahamam Bila died, another Naa Abudu came, the one we call Naa Abilabila, and the name he called was *Sanmari gɔŋ ku zani tiŋa*: “The star does not stand on the ground.” Whatever happens, a star will be up, and his name shows that a Yaa-Naa's son will never be useless. And so it means that he will not stay without being in chieftaincy. It shows that he is the son of a Yaa-Naa, but some people also said that he was small. And truly, he was short, and he didn't look like a chief. And they thought he would not get Yendi, but he became the Yaa-Naa. And so he said that they should know that the son of a Yaa-Naa will not become useless. This is how his name came, and that is its meaning. And that name, it is inside dancing; some people dance it. And how we sing it: “His father is Naa Mahamam Bila. Lies gather to be a hundred, but one truth is more than all. His first son is Abilabila. This star will never sit on the ground. And Naa Abilabila sat on the skin and remained in the chieftaincy. And called himself the star will not sit on the ground. The dry trees will bear leaves and those who break firewood cannot get some. His first son Naa Abilabila sat on the skin and remained. The star will not sit on the ground.” This is an example of how we sing it. This is how we add the rest of it.

When Naa Abilabila was not there, his son Naa Mahamadu came, and he also said *Kulnoli din viela ni layim nyurba*: “The river where water is good will gather water-drinkers.” If it is not nice, people will not go there to drink. It shows that the chief who has got a good character, or the person who has got good character, he is the one who gets people on his side. Another name for Naa Mahamadu is: the one who hasn't done any bad will not meet any bad on his way. That is a name for Naa Abudu, too. Have you seen? They inherit from their fathers and grandfathers, and so he can take his grandfather's name to be his name.



Even his father's name, he can use it, and it doesn't matter. So it is there like that. As for *Kulnoli*, that one is danced in Dagbon, plenty.

And so all these are names they have called for themselves, and some of them are dances, and some of them are not dances but just names we sing from our mouth and beat in the drums. And some we beat and follow those walking with horses. And we will call the names to people. And so from Naa Yakuba and coming, these are the names of the Yaa-Naas. But I have said that it is not only Yaa-Naas who have names. All the chiefs have names, and even commoners have names. And some of these names are there and people dance them. The Savelugu chief, the Nanton chief, the Tolon chief, they all have their names.

The Tolon chief who was last sitting, Tolon-Naa Yakubu Alhassan, his father was the chief of Tali; he was Tali-Naa Alhassan, and he was called *Dam' duu: jɛŋgbarga deei yu' bieyu*. "Duu" is a room, and "Dam' duu" means stirring or disturbance in a room, and I told you that *jɛŋgbarga* is how we call a mouse or a rat. And so the meaning of Dam' Duu is, "Noise in a room: a mouse gets a bad name." If you are sitting outside your room, and the door is ajar, if anything drops down in the room, maybe from your table or the ceiling, the only thing you will say is that a mouse is pushing down the things; but maybe it can be a thief, and it is not a mouse. Have you seen what is under it? Sometimes it is not a mouse; maybe somebody is doing bad, and if you hear of it and ask him, he will blame it on something. And so a mouse receives a bad name.

We have a story about this. As you know that mice can steal things in the room, if they cook meat and put it down in a room, sometimes a child will come and take the meat. If he doesn't want his people to know, he may take some of the meat and put it near the hole of the mouse. We have a story that one day people put meat in a bowl and covered it with a lid so that the mouse could not get into it. When a child entered the room to take the meat, he picked up the lid and it fell on the floor and made a noise. The people in the compound rushed into the room and asked him, and he said, "It is a mouse." And the people said, "Oh, you stupid boy! How can a mouse remove this lid? All the time, if a *pesewa* is missing, we have been saying that there is a mouse in the house. But now you are caught. You are the one who said it is a mouse, and so you are the one who has been taking all those missing things." Have you seen? If somebody wants to collect something, he will find a way to take it, and if something happens, he will say that he is not the one who did it. That is the meaning of Dam' Duu: a mouse gets a bad name, but there is a thief also in the house. That is Tali-Naa Alhassan's name, and he was the father of Tolon-Naa Yakubu who just died. And you have been seeing us beating Dam' Duu any time, because people like it and they tell us to play it for

them to dance. And when we beat it like that, the only singing we add is the name of the chief, or his father's name, their praise names. And Tolon-Naa Yakubu Alhassan Tali, he is *Ninsal' yelgu kɔbga, Naawuni yelgu zaɣ' yini gari li*: "The talk of a hundred people, one word of God is more than it." That is his name, and people dance it. And I have told you his name again is *Yem yayi ninyino malbu*: wisdom is more than one person can hold.

When you first came here, your friend the Savelugu chief who died, Savelugu-Naa Abdulai, his father was Savelugu-Naa Mahamadu, and his grandfather was Savelugu-Naa Yakuba. Savelugu-Naa Yakuba's name is *Ŋum Biɛ N-kpaŋ*, and it's a proverb that says *Ŋum biɛ n-kpaŋ, o jɛ n' o kpee kpaŋ*. The meaning is that someone who was sick and recovered does not want someone who is also sick to be cured. And we have another way of beating it and the drum is saying *Ŋum biɛ n-kpaŋ, ŋuna n-yeri ni tima naaya*: the person who has recovered from sickness is the one who says the medicine is finished. That is the meaning of *Ŋum Biɛ N-kpaŋ*, and it is the name of Savelugu-Naa Yakuba. Somebody who gets something doesn't want his friend to get it. And it's true, too. For example, it isn't the one who was already rich but the one who was poor before he got money, he is the one who doesn't want to see his fellow poor person get money. I think you have seen that way of living with some people. And the proverb is also talking about chieftaincy. If a chief is sitting, he doesn't want to die so that the one who will eat his chieftaincy will come. The one who is well doesn't want his friend to be well. And so that name, many people like to dance it.

When we are playing all these different dances for the people who like them, we play this one, too: *Zambalana tɔŋ bari gbaag' o bia*; a wicked man's trap has caught his own child. This dance also has some talk. *Zambalana Tɔŋ* is the name of Kari-Naa Abukari. I have just told you that the time the Germans and the British were coming to Dagbon, the time Naa Abudu became Yaa-Naa, Kari-Naa Abukari was on the side of the Germans. Truly, this Kari-Naa Abukari was not a good person. He killed Naa Alaasani. It was poison that he put into pito and gave Naa Alaasani to drink. But even before he was able to kill Naa Alaasani, he was trying to kill him many times. The meaning of this *Zambalana Tɔŋ* is that during the time of Naa Alaasani, Kari-Naa Abukari wanted Yendi, and Naa Alaasani was not dying early. Kari-Naa Abukari bought a gown and put medicine in it and gave it to Naa Alaasani. Kari-Naa Abukari wanted Naa Alaasani to wear it and die so that he would eat Yendi. And Naa Alaasani collected the gown and took it and put it in a box in his house. At that time, Kari-Naa Abukari's child was eating Sang, and he was Sanglana Mahama. When it comes to the Damba Festival day, the chiefs of the smaller villages go to greet the chiefs who are over them, and

the chief of Sang goes to Yendi and dances Damba at Yendi. And in Dagbon here, if a chief's son comes to your village or town to celebrate the Damba, you will give him some gift when he comes out to the open and dances. Sanglana Mahama came out, and his dance was very sweet, and Naa Alaasani was very happy; and the Yaa-Naa sent somebody to go into his room and bring that gown from the box. If it is following the way of our custom, the Yaa-Naa calls the Sanglana his junior father, and Naa Alaasani said he would give the gown to his junior father the Sanglana. He put the gown on the neck of the child. When it was daybreak, as the Damba had gathered people, those who were from Karaga went back and told the chief, "Yesterday Sanglana Mahama went to Yendi and danced, and it made the Yaa-Naa sweet, and he gave him a gown." And Kari-Naa Abukari asked, "What type of gown?" And they said, "A red gown." And the chief said, "*Kaai-i!* Small Mahama is finished!" It wasn't ten days when sickness caught Sanglana Mahama, and he died. It was then that Kari-Naa Abukari said that his name was Zambalana Tɔŋ, a wicked man's trap. How the drumming is, it is very nice, and many people like to dance it.

We play *Nayiy' Naa zaŋ bundan' bini ŋ-ŋmalgi sɔŋ bundan' dooshee*: a chief thief has taken a rich man's thing and turned around to put it at the rich man's sleeping place. It is a name for Diarilana Mahama. It shows that if you take something that doesn't fit you, if you put it on, it still won't fit you, so you will put it back again. It is another chieftaincy talk. If something is not for you and you come to collect it, they will tell you that it is for somebody. Whatever happens, if you try for it, you will put it down and leave it. If chieftaincy falls and you are the one for the chieftaincy, if someone comes and wants that chieftaincy, if he has money or he is strong, whatever happens, he won't get it; he will just do and do and the chieftaincy will come and lie at your feet. This dance has two ways. The other way we beat it is *Nayiy' Naa bɔri yonyom, bundana bi gbihi ti gari kpuyi*: the chief thief is in a hurry, but the owner of the thing is not yet asleep. So how can the thief take it? You see? If you are sitting down and you are not sleeping, if a thief comes to take your something in front of you, will you allow? That is the meaning. And it is also on the part of chieftaincy, and it shows that if you want to eat a chieftaincy and the chief is not yet dead, can you beat and kill the chief? There is no way for you to get it. And people dance it.

And apart from that, a commoner can call a name and it will become a dance. *Salinsaa bili kɔbga, o yen yiyimi*: that is the name of a commoner; it's not the name of a chief. *Salinsaa* is an ant, and the name says, "An ant grows feathers, it is going to fly." And so when a Dagbana man gets money, whatever happens, he is going to become a big person, and that is why they say that name, and we

beat it and people dance it. I don't know the one who called it, but it is there, and Tamale people like it. They have been beating it.

We play *Ninsala m-biɛ, Naawuni bi biɛ*. It is not for any chief. It is the commoners who brought it. And any common person can use it. It means "A human being is bad; God is not bad." In Dagbon here, people in the house can make medicine against you. If you are a hunter or a farmer and you go to the bush and a lion catches you, it doesn't mean that God has allowed the lion to kill you. If a snake bites you, maybe your fellow human being did something against you, and so it is from the bone of a human being. That is why we say that it is human being who is bad, but God is not bad. We play Ninsala M-Biɛ in Damba, and we play it at wedding houses and funeral houses, too. And people dance it. Many people like it, and they ask us to play it, because if you understand the drum language, and you think deeply, you will know that yes, it is a human being who is bad, but God is not bad. So you should be afraid of a human being because a human being is dangerous, but God is not dangerous. That is why many people like Ninsala M-Biɛ, and it is a good dance for them.

And apart from that, it is not only Dagbamba who have names. The Bimbila chief, the one who has just died, he is called *Gbingbiŋ' turi babli bincheralana, babli pa-bili*. This gbingbiŋ is a type of chicken that has grown and does not have long feathers; its feathers are just short ones, and it will not grow any feathers again up to the time it will die. And babli is type of young chicken that does not have all its feathers until it is grown. And so the name says that when a grown chicken without feathers abuses a chick that it is badly covered, the young chick will someday grow feathers. The meaning is that a big man is abusing a small man, but in two days, the small man can become a big man. Another example is a rich man abusing a poor man that the poor man has nothing; it can happen that soon the poor man will be better than the rich man. That is how it is, and that is the name of the Bimbila chief. Babli will grow feathers.

If I want to show you the chiefs whose names we take to dance, they are many, and they are all dances that Dagbamba dance at funerals, at weddings, or any place where there is a gathering and the gathering comes to meet playing and dancing. And truly, the place where you will see all of them is the Damba Festival. Truly, I can say that the dance which is first in Dagbon is Damba, and it has got a lot of talk. Damba is the name of the festival we celebrate in the Damba month, and Damba too is also the name of a dance. As for the dance of Damba, you can dance it at any time. But if you are a Dagbana and you talk about Damba, then it is a festival time in Dagbon. The Damba Festival is our big dance, because every dance, we dance it in the Damba Festival. I can say that we got Damba from

the Holy Prophet Muhammad, because we heard that the Holy Prophet was born in the month of Damba, and so it is inside the Muslim religion that we know Damba. The one who brought the plays of Damba into Dagbon was Naa Zanjina. He brought the Damba. He went to many places, even as far as the Hausa land, and he brought the Islamic religion to Dagbon. All the chiefs who were there before Naa Zanjina, none of them knew Damba. But they knew dances: their playing was 3em. But Naa Zanjina opened our eyes, and it was he who brought Damba.

Damba has come that if the Damba moon appears, if Damba is going to be danced, we go and start beating Damba at the chief's house. We cannot beat it at somebody's house. On the eleventh day of the month, that is the day they gave birth to our leader, the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Getting to the seventeenth day, they gave him his name. This is how we have seen it and we are taking it to dance Damba. Our Damba is the from the first day of the Damba month up to the eighteenth day. On the first day, we start it, and we beat dances at the chief's house. When we reach the eleventh day, we call it Somo Damba, and if the chief wants, he will come out to dance, and if he doesn't want, he will be in the room. But as for his elders and his children, they will dance it. Getting to the seventeenth day, that is the Naa Damba, the Chief's Damba. That is for the chief himself.

And on the eighteenth day we have the Damba Bielikulsi, that is, accompanying the Damba home. On that day, the Damba finishes. On that day, too, everybody's heart is white. It's like when the white people say Christmas. That is how our Damba is. When you reach a Damba, it's a new year, and we say to each other, "You have got a new life," and we greet each other, "Your new life." This is how Damba is.

On that day, you will see wonders in Dagbon. On that day, you will know whether Dagbon is Dagbon, or Dagbon is not Dagbon, because you are going to see wonders, wonders that are many. You will see how people dress, how they dress with foolishness and how they dress with sense. There is beauty inside it, and there is ugliness, too. There is good inside it, and there is doing of bad things, too. As for the Damba day, unless you are there to see it before you will know what is Damba.

When the Damba day comes, all our people, even if they are at Kumasi or Accra, they will all come home and dance Damba. All the roads are full of people, and they all come holding the food they are going to eat for two days. On every road, you will see young girls, young boys, old men, old women, all of them coming to dance Damba. Damba is our leading dance, and every twelve months we dance it. How our dances go, there can be a dance, and some difficult asking

will come, and you cannot play that dance. But as for Damba, nothing comes to prevent us from beating it. Even when children play, they dance Damba. If they gather and they are boys, they can make one of them a chief, and they can bring Damba. They will be saying the beating with their mouths and they will dance.

And so Damba is a big thing in Dagbon, and it is something on the part of our chiefs. As this Tamale is sitting, when Damba day comes, it is three chiefs who dance Damba in this town. They dance at the Gulkpe-Naa's house; they dance at the Dakpema's house; they dance at the Choggo-Naa's house. Choggo-Naa is the Gulkpe-Naa's elder's son, and so when the Choggo-Naa dances it a little at his house, he comes to dance the rest at the Gulkpe-Naa's house.

As for chieftaincy, on that day, when you see a chief, or you see a big person, if you were staying with him, you won't know him. Because of his dress, you won't know him. And his heart is very white. And so Damba is our biggest talk. It's not that if it doesn't reach the Damba moon, you shouldn't beat the Damba dance. We beat it any time. But the Damba Festival is our big talk. On the part of chieftaincy, this is what makes our Dagbon go forward, and it also makes our chieftaincy to become strong. If a chief is in his town and there are no drummers, when it comes to Damba day, he will get up from his town and go to a town where there is Damba. If a chief is in his town and the people are not plenty, when Damba day comes, he will take his people and go and add to a town where there are many people. And they will dance the Damba. And so Damba is a big thing in Dagbon.

All the dances I have talked about, the dances that are the names of chiefs and the dances that are proverbs, we dance them in the Damba Festival. Everybody has his dancing and the dance he likes. On the Damba Festival day, all these dances, we play them for the townspeople and the villagers and the chief's elders and all those who come. Whether you are a commoner or a chief or a prince, on that day you will dance. Someone will come out and say he wants to dance Damba, and we will beat it. And you know that there are many different dances apart from Damba, and another person will want a different dance. If anyone comes out and says, "Beat this for me," we will beat it. Everybody is dancing, and the drummers are happy and the dancers are also happy. As I have been showing you some of the dances in Dagbon, I will add to them and show you some of the other dances we beat on the Damba day. It's not only on the Damba day that people dance them, because they dance them at any time. But it is in the Damba Festival that you will see more dances. And so I will add you some, and I will tell you the drum language and what the lundaa is saying. These dances are also like other dances: they are praise-names of people, and they are proverbs.

All the dances I have counted today, we will play them. Naanigoo, Naybieyu, 3im Taai Kurugu, Nantoo Nimdi, Be Yoli Yelgu: they are all there. Zuu-waa is there. And we play Ijum Biε N-Kpaη in the Damba Festival. Nayiy' Naa Saη Bundan' Bini is there. Dam' Duu is also danced in the Damba Festival, and many people also like it any time.

Someone will come out and ask for *Gbungbil' Leri*, and we beat it for him. Gbungbil' leri means the place where the leopards sleep, you will find a bone there. Do you see? Where the leopard is living, no one can go. That is the name of Naa Andani Naanigoo's first-born son, Tugulana Iddi. It is how we talk to the chiefs, because where the chief is, a common person cannot reach there. And again, you will only get what the chief has eaten and left.

Another dance is *Jergu Dari Salima*: a fool buys gold. That is the name of Gushe-Naa Bukari. His time was long ago. *Jergu dari salima, o dari la yendana bini* means that when a foolish person buys gold, he is buying it for a person who has sense.

We play *Doyim Malbo*: repair a family. If a family is going to spoil, and they are going to repair it, we beat Doyim Malbo for that, and we also beat it for people to dance. It is a name of Savelugu-Naa Abukari Kantampara.

We play *Tibaη Taba*: we know one another. That is Savelugu-Naa Mahami, the one who went to the Zambarima war. And people have been dancing it.

We play *Baη nira yelgu: man' ku baη nira ka nira lam baη ma*. It is a name of Kari-Naa Alhassan. The meaning of Baη Nira Yelgu is, "I will not know a person and allow him to know me again." His time is a long time ago.

And there is another one we play: *Naawun' bor duniya malgu, ka ninsal' deei duniya malgu*. Your friend Nanton-Naa Sule, the one who has come from Gushee to eat Nanton, that is his name. *Naawuni* means God, and *ninsala* means a human being, and so it means that God wants to make the world well, but human beings don't want Him to make it well.

We play *Ijun ka yiηa bini nya maana, wuntizora m-mali*. Ijun Ka Yiηa is Vo-Naa Imoro's name: if you keep something in your house and you are not there, if the thing is going to spoil, someone who fears God will keep it well for you. We play it in the Damba.

Gushe-Naa Bawa's name is there: *Zamba koη yani ka nuη zoori zoi*. The meaning is that if you are somebody who will prosper, and your enemies are trying to prevent you from getting what you are after, but the one who will prosper will prosper.

Nanton-Naa Alaasani, the one who just died, his name is there. *Malimi So*: do someone good. We say if you do somebody good, somebody will do you good; if you do somebody bad, somebody will do you bad.

There is *Kurugu Kpaa*. It is a praise-name for one of the Dakpemas, Dakpema Sunna. The proverb is termites cannot overcome an iron spike. And so they will struggle with it, and they will leave it. So this one looks similar to 3im Taai Kurugu.

Another one is *Kookali*. It is a name for one of the Banvim chiefs: Banvimlana Mahama. The meaning is that if a problem comes to you, you have to use your knowledge to solve it.

*Pohim 3eri* is there. *Pohim 3eri yuyu; churi di mali karimbaani*: wind is blowing clay pots; calabashes should not be proud. It is a name for one of the Savelugu chiefs, Savelugu-Naa Ziblim. He was a son of Naa Andani Jengbarga.

Have you seen? There are many dances. I cannot count all the dances of Dagbon. They are many. These dances, we play them all in the Damba Festival, but it comes from those who come out to dance. Someone will come out and say, “I want this dance,” and we have to play it for him. They have no meaning inside the Damba Festival itself, and they have nothing to do on the part of what the chiefs are doing in the Damba Festival. You can see people dance them at any time. I am just saying that it is in the Damba Festival that you will see them more. And so all these are Dagbamba dances, and I cannot count all of them and finish today.

Apart from that, sometimes there are strangers from other tribes, and they come out and say you should beat a dance for them to dance. If we don’t hear their dance, we can’t beat it. But we Dagbamba drummers have heard their dances and we can beat them. I can even say that on the part of the dances from the other tribes, we have taken all and come and added them to our Dagbamba dances, and it has come to look as if they are Dagbamba dances. Somebody who is a Dagbana will come out and leave all the Dagbamba dances and tell you to beat some other tribe’s dance for him. That’s the dance he wants. The Yorubas are in Lagos, and Dagbon is far from Lagos, but the Yorubas used to be here, and we have seen their dance. Someone who is a Dagbana can come out and say we should beat the Yoruba dance for him to dance. Someone will say we should beat a Kotokoli dance for him, or a Mamprusi dance, or a Gurunsi dance, or a Konkomba dance. They ask for all these dances, and they are not from those tribes. If not that, someone will say we should beat Gonja Damba, the type of Damba the Gonjas dance, and he’s not a Gonja. All this has made our dances to be many.



As we are the people who beat, we know the dances they want, and as I have been looking, the only dances I don't see Dagbamba dancing are the Wangara dance and the Mossi dance. As for the Wangara dance, many Dagbamba don't know how to dance it because the beating is difficult. When they hear the beat, they don't know how they will dance it. And as for the Mossi dance, if you see a Dagbana dancing it, then maybe the mother or the father is a Mossi. Apart from that, when the Mossis dance, they take a scarf and tie it round the waist, and they will be shaking and be crying some cry. They used to dance in a group, but you can dance it as one person. A Dagbana will look at the Mossi dance and say that the dancing does not fall nicely, and so it will not add to him. When a Dagbana is dancing it, it doesn't look nice because you cannot wear a smock and dance it. A man has to wear a gown to dance it. If a woman is wearing a cloth, it can also look nice. And so I think in my heart that a Dagbana doesn't want to come out and take a thing to tie the waist and be shaking the body. A person dances a dance when people will say that the dance is nice for the one dancing it. But all the other dances of the tribes, Dagbamba dance them. And as for the beating of the Mossi dance and the Wangara dance, if a Dagbana does not dance them, we can still beat them, because there are people from those towns here. Today, if I want, I can go and beat a drum in Ouagadougou. And if it is the Wangara dance, if I get up, I can enter Bobo-Dioulasso. Dagbamba don't dance their dances, but those Mossis and Wangaras who are with us, when they tell us their dance, we beat it for them.

What has brought it? They are staying with us here, and we are living with them. If not those drummers who have entered other towns, then, there are many drummers who don't know some of these dances. Those drummers who come from Tolon, Savelugu, Nanton, Karaga, or Yendi, the number of dances they know how to beat is not up to our dances in Tamale here. As we are living with many different people, we have collected their dances to add to ours. But for example, if you are going to go to Karaga and remove the people who come from different towns, they will not be many. What of this town Tamale? Can we remove them? If we remove the people of this town who are strangers, then it is rather this town's people who will not be many. Everybody comes and brings his dance, and when somebody comes from another town to stay in this Tamale, whatever happens, his town's dance is with him. It will even worry him, because he won't know how he will get drummers to beat for him to dance. He will bring that dance out.

I have seen it: there is a Kotokoli man in this town; he is called Mahama and his work is at the butcher's side. It is not Zamanduniya alone that is a

Kotokoli dance; the Kotokolis have many dances. He came out and said we should beat a Kotokoli dance for him. At that time I was beating the *ḡḡḡḡ*, and the one with the drum knew the dance but I didn't know how to beat it with the *ḡḡḡḡ*. It was the Kotokoli man himself who took the *ḡḡḡḡ* from me and showed me how to beat it, and then I took the *ḡḡḡḡ* from him and we beat for him to dance. Here is the case: has he not brought his town's dance to add to us? We too will collect it and add. As our dances are many, it is the people who dance that make our Dagbamba dances to be many. This is how it is.

As the dances are there like that, it helps us in our hearts. If there is a town where there is no dancing, then the town is not a town: it is a town of sorrows. But where there are dances, there is happiness. Truly, there are many types of worries. There is a person, and his somebody dies. If his somebody dies, his heart will be spoiled. If they are able to beat some dances that people will dance, his heart will come to the dance. As his heart was spoiled, he will collect his spoiled heart and throw it away, and his heart will become white. This alone is something that makes our hearts white. And again, you are sitting down, and poverty is having you. As you are poor, you will sit down and you will be thinking. If they bring a dance, if you are not a useless person, your heart will come to the dance, and it will not be until they finish the dance that the worry about your poverty will come to you again.

And so when somebody is sitting down and worries have him, it is in his heart, and it is his heart's worries. He is thinking. There is sickness that catches a person, and there is the sickness of the heart. The sickness of the heart is hard. When it comes to somebody, it is that he will be sitting down but his heart will not resting. It is worrying him. If they dance, he can collect all the worried heart and throw it away. And somebody will be sitting down and nothing is worrying him, and if he was happy, his happiness will increase. Truly, it is inside playing and dancing that laughter laughs. Somebody can come out to dance, and all his dance speaks laughter, and the time people laugh, it is from the dance that the laughter comes. Somebody will come out to dance and his dancing will be watching. Watching like what? As he is dancing, you will say that if you watch him, maybe you too will be able to dance like that, and as it is interesting like that, your eyes will be watching him. If you have some worry and you are looking at all this, your worry will become a bit smaller.

The funeral we went to yesterday, they are maalams there. There are some maalams, when their person dies, the drum will not cry there. Nothing will cry, and no dance will dance. That is the way they live: it is only worry that will be adding to them always. But there are some maalams who are by the side of the

chiefs, and as for them, when their person dies, it is dancing. They will collect their maalam's way and put it aside and enter into the dance. It will make everybody happy. Yesterday where we went, those maalam's there are not on the side of chieftaincy, but it wasn't like a maalam's funeral. There was a certain maalam there, if you give him papers, he can get up and write the whole Holy Qu'ran. That is his work. But yesterday he danced. No one had ever seen his dance, and it made everybody surprised. But just two days ago, his brother died. The dance he has danced, the worry will leave him. This morning when everyone came, they were saying, "Yesterday Maalam Issa danced! Maalam Issa danced!" Everybody was happy. Even someone who didn't see him dance was happy, not to talk of the one who saw him dance. This is why we like dancing.

And so this is how we dance. I myself, I see that the dances are something that makes us happy. And the dances are something that add to us. That is why we take the dances and put them down for those behind us, our children. Inside dancing, we don't hide ourselves. And those of us who are drumming, the playing and the dancing that we do will not hide us. Somebody will come not to be there, and they will forget of him. But I can see that the dances and playing we do, if somebody is well inside it, they will never forget his name. And I think again, and I've seen, if somebody has these dances and that is his work, when he is not there, his name will not be lost. Whatever they do, they will remember him. When they are playing and he is not there, whatever happens, they will say, "If this fellow were here, our beating would have been very interesting." And that is sweet. His name is not lost. If they are not playing, and they are sitting down quietly, somebody will say, "If that fellow were here, as we are sitting down now, we would have been playing." And so to me, the playing and the dancing add to us. They don't hide us. No matter how you hide, you are there. And if you are not there, it looks as if you are there. And so I see that the dances are good for us Dagbamba. And the dances are good for us drummers. We drummers sing the songs that let people know how to live with one another, and there will be respect, and there will be laughter, and there will be peace, and there will be happiness. And where these things are, it is good for everybody. And so our dancing helps us in our living. Our dances add to us, and we are putting them down for our children, and the dances will add to them and help them, too. This is how it is. And I think I will stop here, and tomorrow we will continue, and I will tell you more about the dances of our Dagbon and how we dance them.