

## **Chapter I–17: *How a Person Should Dance***

I have been telling you that as we have many dances, it adds to us in our way of living. There are differences in the dances, and truly, no one can know all the talks in Dagbon. As for our dances, we grew up and met them. But they didn't start at one time. I have told you some of the dances we grew up and met. Among all of them, I told you that Ʒem is our first dance. It is for the chiefs: when they want to make a new chief, that is the dance. This is how we also grew up to meet it. And I told you that when we Dagbamba came to this Dagbon, we met people, and they were beating Ʒem and following the tindanas, and we collected it. It started with guŋgɔŋ, the big drum. In those days, there was no luŋa, and so the guŋgɔŋ is senior to us, the drummers. And then the yua, the flute, they were playing these two things to dance. As for Damba, it came during the time we learned about the Holy Prophet Muhammad, because it came with the Muslim religion. Naa Zanjina brought the Muslim religion here, and it was from his travels that he got to know it. And Damba shows the happiness of the day of birth of the Holy Prophet and his naming day. And so Damba came because Naa Zanjina brought it. And this Ʒem I'm talking about was already here long before Naa Zanjina came to be chief. This is how it is. As for Nakɔhi-waa, it was started by butchers. We the drummers started it for them. Tɔra started during the time of Naa Yenzoo. Apart from that, there are other dances we grew up and met. And so every dance is different on the part of its starting. And the dances from other towns, we have people of these towns who are with us in Tamale, and that is why we dance those dances here.

With all the many dances we have, we don't separate the dances into groups. Truly, we have dances that belong to the men and dances that belong to the women. Women dance Tɔra and dance Lua, and it is men who dance Takai. We can group them like that. And there are other ones that either men or women can dance. For example, don't you see that both men and women dance Naybieɣu and Nantoo Nimdi? But we the same drummers beat all of them. It isn't that any particular group has their own drummers. And so we don't separate the dances. Sometimes you will separate something into parts, because if you don't show the details, somebody will take it to mean a different thing. But to us drummers, all the dances are inside our work. All the dances are with us.

As for dancing, there is nothing to prevent dancing apart from when you are not well or when you don't know how to dance. If only you have health and you know how to dance, you will dance. At a wedding house, every dance will be

there. If it is a funeral house, we beat Naybiɛɣu, Nakɔhi-waa, Naanigoo, 3im Taai Kurugu, Damba, and many others, but as far as the funeral is concerned, Damba is the most important dance at a funeral house. How a funeral is, it goes to relate itself to chieftaincy. This is how it is. Apart from weddings and funerals, there are times when people dance on festival days, or someone can just bring cola and call a dance. Some people have been doing that on Ghana's Independence Day. As for festival months, the Fire Festival month has dances. The Damba month has many dances. In the Guinea Fowl month, it is the drummers who go around and drum at houses. In the Water-drinking month, after the fasting during the Mouth-tying month, what we call the month of Ramadan, people will also be dancing.

And I want you to take it in a simple way that our dancing shows that as our Dagbon is living, we are very happy people, living in it. And I want to tell you that where you see people dancing, it means there is no sorrow there. If I want to tell you this, maybe when I tell you, you will ask me a question: what of funeral houses? The time they are burying a dead body in the grave, there is no dancing. But when they have buried the dead body, and by the time they are going to perform the final funeral, some months have passed, and there is dancing. But if somebody has just died, no dance is danced. How can a dead body be lying down and you will be dancing? You don't have any white heart. Truly, sometimes drummers will beat in a house with a dead body. But there is no dancing. In Tamale here, there is a government cemetery, and they go to bury dead bodies there. But in places like the villages, sometimes somebody will die, and they will bury the person in his own house. When they are going to bury somebody like that, drummers will be beating. In the village, if they are going to bury somebody like that, the time they will bring the dead body from the room, if he was somebody who prayed, maalam will be there to say prayers on the dead body, and the drummers will stop beating. After the Muslims say the prayers on the dead body, when they lift the dead body again into the grave, the drummers will start beating again, up to the time they will bury the fellow and finish. Then they will take the funeral, and go outside the house and sit down.

But the ways separate, and if I don't separate it for you, maybe you will come and see it differently in Dagbon. There is somebody: if he dies, if they don't finish burying him, no drum will sound there. If they close the grave, at that time they have finished their talks with the dead body, and then the elders of the funeral will give you the way to beat the drums. That is one way. But how the Tamale cemetery is, drummers don't follow there. Even if the dead body is somebody for whom drums must be beaten at his funeral, they will take him there and finish burying him, and then they will come back to the house before the

drummers will sit down and beat and cry the funeral. That drumming is what we call *Kulunsi*, and there is no dancing. That is all. Those who come to sit at the funeral house for three days or seven days, and anyone who is coming around there, drummers will beat and praise them. And when they are coming to perform the final funeral, we will come back and beat for people to be dancing. Truly, it can happen that after they have buried the dead body, and the drummers have cried the funeral, you will see drummers enter the house and beat Dikala or some dance for the grandchildren or the women. At that time, there is still sorrow, but a grandchild or a woman who wants to dance can dance; it is not forbidden, but it is not a gathering dance. In some places, it can happen like that, but not everybody will do that, and it is not common. That is the way it is.

And so as for the dancing at a funeral house, there are differences, too. In Dagbon here, if somebody is not old and dies, you will not see a single drum there. But when you are very old and you die, it is happiness for us, and we do everything that shows happiness because there is no sorrow. When they are going to perform the funeral, in three months' or six months' time, if it's an old person who died, that day you will see many different kinds of dances. The reason why we are happy about it is that if somebody becomes old, maybe he has given birth to many children, sons and daughters, and some of his children married and gave birth to grandchildren. Sometimes an old person will have about six daughters, and all their husbands will attend the funeral. And so if someone grows old like that and dies, at that point, you will see everybody saying, "This man, really, he was old, and he gave birth to many children. And so he's not dead." As for that one, they have to be happy. That is why, if an old person dies, we are happy and we dance. How it is, he has grown. If your mother gives birth to you, and from the time you were a baby, you grow and grow up to the time you get gray hair, and you get grandchildren, and you die: it's something that not everybody can get. That is what we take to be happy. That is how it is.

And so we don't dance without being happy. It is happiness<sup>1</sup> that brings sweetness to our way of living. If there is no happiness, there will be no dance. And truly, it is happiness that is the dance. As for us, it is only when we are happy that we dance; when we are not happy, we don't dance. If you come to hear that people are dancing, you should know that they are very happy. It is our happiness that is our dance, and it is our dance that shows our happiness. Where there is sorrow,<sup>2</sup> there will never be any dance.

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1 happiness: suhu pielli (white heart)

2. sorrow: suhu soyimbo (broken heart, spoiled heart)

If there is a town and you don't have people who dance, the town becomes weak. And dancing can make a town strong because it can let people know that in such-and-such a town, there are people who can dance. It makes the town important. If there is a town and there are no dances, it is not a good town. If there is a town and there is no dancing, we don't even call it a town. It means that it is a town that is full of sorrow. If you have sorrow in your heart, you cannot dance. But when you are happy, then there are dances. This is how it is. And those who are watching, even when they are only going to watch the dances, they don't feel lazy again, because they are also happy to come and watch people dancing. If there is a town and there are dances, even small children will say, "Oh, in our town, people used to dance," and they will also take it up when they grow. And so if it is happening like that, you will see that people in other towns will praise that town and say, "Oh, look at this town. As for them, every day they are always dancing." Has it added to the town or not? It has added to it.

The styles of dancing and the drumming, and the different dances we have, they are all adding. To us, the movements of the body add beauty to the dance and beauty to the drumming. It is just like when you want to prepare soup. You can put a bit of salt with fish. You can put salt and pepper. If you want, you can put onions. If you want, you stop. All the ingredients you add, it all helps you the one doing the cooking. And that is how dancing is. Somebody can come out to dance, and he has only one style. Another person will come out, and he will be able to turn himself in three different ways. And when you turn like that, it makes everybody happy. And so dancing: when you are dancing, your dancing shows that you are a person who has patience, and you want the people who are looking at you to know that you are dancing the dance beautifully. That is why whenever people are dancing and you are also coming to snap photos, people like to have their photos taken: they want to see whether their dance is nice. The photo is something like a witness. Even for you, it is a witness. When you get home and say something, you will be asked whether you have a witness. Then you can produce your witness, and everyone will see. And so when you dance and it looks nice, it is not you the dancer who says it. Maybe you will know it, because if you're a human being and you are doing bad works, you know that you are doing bad works, and if you do good, you will know that you do good personally. You are showing yourself, but you don't praise yourself; it is somebody who praises you. We say that salt does not praise itself. Salt does not say that it is sweet; it is others who say that salt is sweet. When you dance beautifully, it shows that your heart is cool and that your heart is lying down. That is the respect of dancing.

And so what I am telling you is that your work shows the sense you have taken to do it. If you are somebody who has some work to do, and your heart is lying down, you will not do the work by heart. If you want to do any work and you let your heart lie down, your work will be good, and anybody who comes to see that work will praise you. If you do any work that is good, people will say that it is a good job you have done. And again, if you do something bad, they may tell you that you have done something bad. If you do your work coolly, it shows that you are patient and you have sense, because if you don't have sense, your heart will never be cool, and you will be too tense. If you are someone who is always annoyed, if there is some work you want to do, you will do it foolishly or uselessly. If you don't have sense, you will not do any work that will look nice. This is how it is. And what I'm saying, it is also inside dancing.

I told you that when I beat a drum, I drum with respect. It is the same thing with dancing. How do you dance with respect? Your dance shows that you have sense, and it shows that you have given respect to yourself. In our Dagbon here, when we say "respect," we say it that you have given yourself respect. It is your dance that will show whether you respect yourself because when you come out to dance, if you don't cool down yourself, and you come out by heart or you dance just any way you want, it shows that you have not given yourself respect. Those watching you will see that you are somebody who has no patience. There are some people, when they are dancing, you will know that they haven't given themselves respect before dancing. And there are others, and you will know that they have given themselves respect. And so to dance with respect: you hold yourself coolly, and you don't laugh too much, but you laugh. And what it means, what is under it, is that somebody who keeps quiet is not a fool, and somebody who talks too much is not a mad person.

That talk is inside dancing. Some people have used it to call their names, and it is inside Taachi, too. And what is under it is just that the way God has created us, he created human beings and gave everyone his own share or his own thing. Somebody can come to sit in the public, and if there is a conversation, he will be quiet. If not that somebody asks him to talk, he wouldn't interrupt. If somebody is sitting down like that, he is not a fool. And there is another person too, the way God created him, if people gather, he will be talking and you will be hearing his voice above everyone. He too, he is not a mad person. That is the way God created him. And the way this talk comes into dancing is that some people laugh a lot when they come out to dance, and others don't laugh too much, and there are other people too who will come and dance from beginning to the end, and you will not see them even laughing or smiling. That is the way God created

every human being, and on the part of dancing, God has given every human being his own share. The way a person comes out to dance, and he's laughing, that is the way God created him: he won't stop dancing his dance; he will dance and be laughing. That is the way it is.

Have you seen? You are sitting at the gathering place, and drummers will come and beat your praises. As they have brought you out in the public, they have shown your respect, and when you stand up to come out and dance, you are showing yourself. If you have given yourself respect, when you dance, sometimes you will look at the ground, and sometimes you will raise your head. When you raise your head, smiling and admiring those who are watching, that also makes the dancing nice. If you always look down, it doesn't make the dance nice. You can be watching when you go to a wedding or a funeral; the dancers don't dance with their heads down. You smile, and you show yourself. If you are shy, then whatever happens, you will put your head down, and it won't make the dance nice. It's nice when you look at everybody. You are happy. You want everybody to see that you are happy and dancing nicely. You will look at them, and they will look at you, and you will get them interested in your dance. And you too, when you look at them and they are also watching you, you just want to make yourself happy so that you will dance nicely. This is how it is. I've been telling you on the part of your drumming that if you want to do any work that concerns a group or people watching, you shouldn't tie your face. The same thing applies to dancing and any work you are doing with people. You should be smiling or laughing, and then you will catch them, and you will get what you want. Do you see cold water? You can take cold water and cook somebody, but if you take hot water to cook somebody, he will run away and leave you. When you are dancing, you should cool your heart, and you should not tie your face. And so this cool heart I am talking about, what is it? A cool heart is happy; truly, it is just happiness. It is happiness that brings all of it.

And so as for dancing, the only advice I can give to someone who wants to dance is to remember that the dance you are dancing, it is your heart that wants that dance; that's why you are dancing it. If it is not your heart's wish, nobody can force his friend to dance a particular dance. And so when your heart wants something, that can make you do the work your heart wants. If your heart doesn't want something, no one can force you to do that work. Even if they force you to do that work, you will never know how to do it, because it is not your heart's wish. But if your heart wants what you are doing, the moment you start it, you will know how to do that work.

To show respect, it all comes from you yourself. I'm going to give you an example. If you are selling something and you are going to the market, you get something to cover the thing you are going to sell. When somebody comes to buy it, you just open it a little. You don't allow the person to see all that is inside what you have taken to cover it. If somebody wants to buy, you will hide and remove some and give it. Then you collect your money and put it in your pocket, and that is all. But if you open it, if that thing had respect, it will not have respect again. And so this showing yourself, on the part of dancing, and what I have told you, it means that you don't have to give your whole self or all your secrets out. You have to show it and also hide part of it.

Do you see this drumming you have learned? You shouldn't allow people to get all the knowledge you have got, but you should only release it in bits, and that is what will show that it has respect. If you go home and you want to beat it, you should beat it at a place where you feel that it will have respect. Don't beat it at a place where you feel you will not get any respect. If you do that where it has no respect, people will say, "Oh, look at the drumming he has come to drum. He is drumming like a mad person making noise." But where there is respect and you go to beat it, you will see that people will praise you, and it will let you have their respect. The country you have come from is far, and you have come to learn what you have come to learn. When you get back to your country, you should hold what you learned very well, like a hen egg. If you let it go and the egg breaks, then you have broken it. You have become useless. But if you keep the egg very well, everybody will know that it is a respectable thing. And so it is a human being who will respect himself before the town respects him.

And so on the part of dancing, it is better to dance coolly. The dance you dance until the next morning, you don't shake yourself very hard. If you dance very strongly, you will become tired before daybreak. The music will still be going on, and the drums will beat and go on, and you will not be able to dance again. So you have to dance coolly. And when you are dancing coolly, those who are standing and watching will know that you are dancing with patience, that you have given yourself respect. And it is sweet to the dancer too. He will know that the way he is dancing coolly, people will give him respect. He will have appetite for the dance, and people too will have interest in it. Nobody will compare him to any other thing. Dancing coolly makes the dance more beautiful, and that is what is interesting. And then, in your own eyes, you know it's nice. How we look at it, beauty is on the part of when you have seen something and it makes your heart happy.

Truly, for most of our dances, there is no particular meaning to the movements of the dancing. When you see them dance a particular dance in some way, it is only the way of the dance and how they have learned it from the tradition. It's the way our grandfathers danced it, and we like to do it the same way. We do what they did just because they did it. That is nice. We here feel that it is nice for us to follow the tradition and do it the same as them. That is respect. And there are some ways to show respect when you dance. When you dance with respect, if there are elderly people or a chief or a chief's senior wife there, when you are coming out to start your dance, you can dance in front of that person and lower yourself. This is how you will start and give respect before you start your dance. If an elderly person comes out to give you money, then while you are dancing, you will lower yourself to receive it. That is respect.

Listen well. When someone is dancing, there is nothing that the dancer is supposed to do. But when you are dancing, you have to feel happy. And everyone watching will also feel happy with you. You will all enjoy it. At a wedding house or a funeral house, it is the same thing, it is the same dances we do. The work you grow up to meet, that is the work you also do. When you grow up and meet something, you also go by it. That is respect. You have added to the gathering, and it's nice. Apart from that, we have our Dagbamba cloth. When we want to go someplace to dance, women use our own cloth, our Dagbamba cloth. And the men who will be dancing, too, they will use smocks. You won't see anyone wearing a white man's dress. And it shows that that is our tradition and that's how we started. That's what it means. And that is also respect.

Dancing is: someone knows it, and someone doesn't know it. If you don't know how to dance, no one is going to demean you because of that: you can take anything and go and dance it, and you will finish and sit down. That is all. But if you know dancing, then you won't dance by heart: every dance, you will dance it the right way. If you know dancing and you feel to change your steps, if you know it will follow according to the drumming, you can do it. If you see someone dancing a style like that, you can also take it to dance. But you don't have to be bringing some different style that is not inside the dance. If you want to do it, as you are very good at dancing, you will do it and it will follow the drumming, but sometimes it is not correct on the part of the dance. It's just like drumming: if you mix styles too much, you will come to spoil the drumming. And so you don't often see dancers bringing some styles that are not according to the tradition. I have a story to tell you, that there was a woman who knew how to prepare soup, and any time she prepared the soup, they told her that the soup was very sweet. As this woman was always cooking her food and people were telling her it was very



sweet, she said she would make it sweeter, and she added honey into the soup. Has she spoiled it or not? And so don't cook your soup and then put honey inside it. If you add a style that is not in the traditional way, people will complain that you are doing the wrong thing.

And so it is better to follow the tradition, and what those who came before you have done, you also follow the same thing. Truly, it is the older people who know the dances more than the younger ones. The styles the younger generations do, sometimes they overdo it. And what the children sometimes do, they go to look at films and then they take your white man's songs and dances and Indian songs and dances to come to mix into our music. The way white men's dances sound is different from the sound of our dances. And when these children want to take it and mix into our dancing, do you think it can fit? It won't do. And so many of the young people, if they want to dance and it will be nice, they only dance the styles that someone teaches them and tells them to do. As you go to weddings and funerals, you should watch people dancing. When you go, you will see some people who dance and it is beautiful. You should copy that dance. And as for the work of the eye, you don't ask questions again, because the eye has seen it. If you are watchful, you will see that what I am saying is true. The old people, men and women, they dance more nicely than the young people. They have kept long in the dancing. They know what is under the dances and what the dances should look like. But the young people just hear the drums. The way the older people dance and I'm saying it's nice, I'm not saying that the way they dance has any particular meaning or that the movements have to show what is under the dance. There are dances that started a very long time ago, and they know that these are dances we have been beating from the olden days up to now. And so they understand it more than the young people. They understand the tradition, and how they dance, you can see that, yes, it is true that they follow it and it's nice.

The reason why the older people know how to dance and put their minds on the drums is just because they have been taught by older people, too. If an older person is going to dance a particular dance, when he asked those in front of him, they showed him that, "This dance came because of such-and-such a thing." But as for today's young people, many of them won't have time to sit down with the older ones to ask them anything. You see 3im Taai Kurugu. There are many Dagbamba children, you will ask them "What is *zim*?" they don't know. If it is *chinchansi* you ask of, they don't know it, but it is another name of *jejgbarga*. And so if you don't call "jejgbarga" but you rather call "chinchansi," such a child wouldn't know what is under the dance. The old people asked those who were in front of them, or they saw the way their elders were dancing. They got to know it,

and now they are used to it. For example, somebody who has asked about something and he's going to do that thing, and somebody who has no idea about something and he's going to do it: they don't look the same. If somebody doesn't know the thing, can he listen and see the falling of the drums and respect it? That is why today's children who don't know a dance will just dance it anyhow. That is why, when we are beating, the older people listen to the drums and they dance. This is what is under it. An older person who has asked will know the importance of the dance, and when he is going to dance, he gives it that importance. It is inside dancing like that.

And so experience, or knowledge: these add to every dance to make it nice. It's not good to dance just anyhow. It's better when you dance and know the dance you are dancing. You know, those who are dancing listen to the drumming, and they become used to it. If you don't know it, you will just be dancing to what you will hear. If you continue dancing it, and you have patience, a time will come and you will know it well and how it falls. Even sometimes you will see that a mother will carry her baby on her back and will come out to dance, and the baby too will be dancing on the back and learn to hear the beating.

And so those who are used to it, from the time they are children and they come to watch dancing, at least they will know the beat of the *ḡuḡḡḡ*, and so they know when to put this step and that step. When you get the *ḡuḡḡḡ*, you will get the steps right. And when the *ḡuḡḡḡ* is beating and beating and you are dancing, and the *ḡuḡḡḡ* comes to bring some styles, maybe you won't know the styles, but as you know the main style beating, you will continue dancing. And the styles will go inside your body. When the one beating *ḡuḡḡḡ* decides to put a style in to make the drumming nice, he is also beating according to the drums, so you can continue dancing. But if you also know the styles, you can also change so that you can use one foot and change back to both feet. In that case, the *ḡuḡḡḡ* is telling you how to change your steps. If you know the *ḡuḡḡḡ*, and the one beating brings the style that tells you to change, then you can change. If you are truly the one we call a dancer, you can do that. But if you are not a real dancer, you don't know what he's beating, so you just continue dancing to the main beating. At least you have to dance to the beating: it's not that you just dance anything; if your dance does not follow the beating, whatever happens, your dance will not be nice.

Dances that you follow the drummer, those dances are also there. And there are some dances, when you are dancing, the drummer goes into the middle of the dance. And this is apart from dances in which the drummers gather themselves and stand to one side and lead the dancers to dance. When the dancer is dancing

with the drummer inside the circle, the dancer has a way to dance to the drummers and dance back, dancing forward and backward, to the drummers and backward. It is the wish of the dancer, because it is the one who dances who knows how to dance to make the people watch and know that the dance is interesting. I can even say that we drummers show the dance to the dancers. If there is someone who cannot dance, you the drummer can teach the fellow. If the fellow is dancing, and the steps are not moving correctly, then you will be teaching him by moving your legs, and the fellow will follow you and know how to dance.

Truly, in the olden days, we drummers used to stand at one place and beat the drums. But as for Nakohi-waa, we grew up and our eyes opened, and we knew how the drummers were dancing Nakohi-waa. During that time, the way they were dancing Nakohi-waa, the dancer will start chasing you the drummers. If he starts to go back again, then you will follow him with the drums. As for Nakohi-waa, that particular dance, we used to move around like that. Nakohi-waa was like that. But during our time, we were not all that much trying to do such things. As for Nakohi-waa, our dance was there like that. But there were other dances, if the dancer didn't demonstrate like that, then we couldn't force him to do it when he was dancing. Something like Damba, you have to be at one place and be beating, and they will be coming out to dance. The fellow doesn't chase you drummers. You too, you don't chase him. But nowadays, we have taken our sense to show the dance when the dance is beating. This is what we do, and so both the men and the women, this is how many of them learn to dance, from us the drummers.

And again, dancing is watching. Someone who is not a drummer and dances, he only dances. As he only dances, he doesn't know all the talks that are inside the dance. The talks are with us the drummers. You will ask such a person about a particular dance, and he will just take something from his mind wants to tell you. If you ask like that and he takes what his mind will tell you, maybe he will come to tell you lies and you will take it home. There is someone who can dance very well but will not know anything. If it is only our Dagbamba dances, there are even people in Dagbon here who haven't learned our Dagbamba dances, but they know the dances of other towns. But when drummers beat, they will dance. And so dancing is just like the way you learn to read your books. When you learn to a certain stage, they are showing you. From that stage to another stage is when you just learn it, and a time will come when you know it. When they show you and you know it to some extent, then even though they don't teach you again, you will learn it. And so in dancing, if you know dancing, when they also beat another dance, you will know how you will take it and dance. As for dancing, you only need to know two dances very well, and then you can know how to dance the rest of the dances without anybody teaching you.

And so to learn dancing, and how dancing is, you will see somebody and say that the way so-and-so was dancing was very nice. When you see somebody dancing that way, and you feel that the way the person was dancing was very nice, you try to dance that way. This is how many people learn dancing. And we say that the dance this person dances, that is the dance that person has taken. This is how dancing is. As for different ways of dancing, it isn't anybody who teaches anybody. That is why I am always telling you that the seeing of the eye, it is a hundred times better than hearing with the ear. When your eye sees it, and you know that if you also do it, it will be nice, that is all: you will try to do it. As for dancing, it is watching. You will watch dancing to know how to dance and it will be nice. And just the watching alone, it is also nice. There can be somebody and that person hasn't danced even one day, and he will always go around watching people dancing, and nobody will teach him how to dance; and such a person, by watching, a day will come when he will be able to dance. Even the children, some of the children learn dancing, but others just go to watch. The one watching and the one learning, it is the same. And so this is how it is.

When you are at the dancing place, the eye will not be looking at nothing. And on the part of learning or on the part of watching, that is why people look at dances: the eyes must look at something. And so as for the eyes, the eyes are always going to jump. Even a blind man looks: sometimes they will be dancing and a blind man will come and will be sitting there. Does a blind man see anything? No. But if you ask him, he will say, "I have come to watch dancing." And a deaf person also goes to look at dances. If you ask him, he will tell you he went to a dance. It is because of the eyes, and because the fellow is a human being. This is how it is. A human being has always got something to do, and every human being has a use. As you have come here, if you were not a human being, would you come? You couldn't come. In your town, are there no animals? Have you ever seen them coming here? As they are not human beings, have they ever come here? No. So this is how it is. A human being will come to look at dances.

What I have told you, even if you don't know a dance, you can know it. Why do I say that? There is no asking. As for this, it isn't asking; it is the seeing for the eye. When you see something, it is better than your ear hearing it. If you want any type of dance, you can sit down and someone will be dancing, and you will be watching him. And any time you feel like dancing, you can try to dance it that way. But if you have never seen someone dancing, and if there is no one at a particular place dancing for you to see, if you say that they should beat that dance for you, it will not work. And so sense and patience and watching, they are all

there on the part of dancing. Styles that come from sense add to the dancer. The dancer who hears the beating of the drums will know that, “If I turn myself in this way, it is going to fit the sound of the drums.” There are so many types of hearing. There can be a person who doesn’t even understand Dagbani, but as for the beating of the drums, he can know how they will fall. He knows that if he turns himself, it will fit into the drumming. This is how it is. But he won’t add something from outside into the dance. The tradition is what adds more to someone’s dancing. It adds because it shows that you don’t want to throw away your tradition.

And so truly, to dance and bring many styles into your dance, no one can teach you the styles. The styles only come from you, the dancer. You know the styles you will put, or the changes you will make, that will fit into the dance. You have to use your own sense to make changes that will fit into the dance. It is not good for you to make a style that will not match the drumming. It is good, when the drummers will beat and stop, you will also stop even before them, or you stop with them. Sometimes someone will imitate and even spoil the dancing, because he will do it over what he was expected to have done. In a dance like Damba, the styles are not many. But Naanigoo, it can have many styles. Naybieyu has got many styles. Nakohi-waa too has got many styles. Zamanduniya too has got many styles. Even the Mamprusi dance has got styles because everybody has got his steps. The five dances I have just told you, they all have styles, but Damba, if you put many styles into Damba, you will spoil the dance.

Do you see Damba? Damba started with chieftaincy. And the chief has no time for styles. When you become a chief, will you have time for styles? That is why the styles of Damba are not many. If not because of a chief, can a commoner start Damba? Now they beat Damba by heart, but in the olden days, they were not beating Damba by heart. If it was not at a funeral house, then they only beat it during the Damba month. But as for these modern days, everything has changed. In the olden days, there were some dances, when you are dancing it or you are the one beating drums, you the drummer, or the fellow who has invited drummers, you will be called to the chief’s house, and they will ask you questions: how is it that as you are you, you have come to invite people to your house to beat drums? And so how it started, nobody will compare himself or take his anything to be above the chief’s. That is the Damba, and in Dagbon here, it started with the chieftaincy.

I am going to tell you something. In the olden days, the way the chiefs would sit down, you the commoner, you would fear. Nowadays, when you see that there is a gathering for people to dance, and drummers are there to beat, those who have come will sit in a circle on chairs. When the people are sitting like that,

you will see that the one beating the lundaa will beat it and go and squat down and call someone before that person will come and dance. In the olden days, there was nothing like that. As for this time, there is life. Now, our living is easy. The commoners don't fear chiefs. Had it not been that, it was only a chief: in the olden days, a lundaa would only go and beat and squat down in front of the chief, and call him out. There was nobody apart from a chief whom a lundaa would go and squat in front of and talk to him before he would come and dance. And it wasn't even all the chiefs. When they gathered and they were sitting down, the big chiefs would sit at one place and the small chiefs at another place. Someone was a chief, but he was not up to a big chief: at that time, you the drummer wouldn't even go to call a small chief like that. Even if you were the child or grandchild of a big chief, you are not eating chieftaincy, so you cannot compare yourself to the chief. What I'm talking to you about the olden days, I saw it myself. It's not that somebody talked and I heard.

This time, the way the drummer will go and squat to call the chief to come and dance, that is the same way he is going to squat and call the commoner to dance. When the commoners do something, it is not an offense to the chief, and the chiefs don't take it as an offense. But formerly, in our time, how could a drummer squat down and call the chief, and squat down the same way to call you the commoner? He couldn't. Even the way we wear clothes, in the olden days, if a chief wore some type of dress, you a commoner, no matter what money you had, you couldn't buy that same type of dress. Are you going to wear the dress and go into the sky, or onto the land? You couldn't wear it. Even if you had money and you bought it, you couldn't wear it. And so if you take your money to buy something and you can't wear it, it's better if you don't even buy it. That is how it is.

And so our olden days' talks are different from this time's talks. That is why I'm telling you that this time, our life is easy for everyone. Even women sit where they are, expecting the drummer to call them. And nowadays, if you are talking about the olden days' talk, people say that at that time we were bush people, and we didn't know anything. That was why we were like that. In the olden days, the old chiefs could easily take an offense with a common person. But today's chiefs, they and the common people are one. And so this time, we say that our living has been repaired, so that the commoner and the chiefs are together. Nobody fears the chief again. This time, whatever you want is what you do. So that is the way it is. Everything has changed, and if I can say that our living has spoiled, I can say again that this time, the living has repaired.

And so on the part of this talk, we drummers don't say our living has spoiled. As I'm sitting down now, I like it so. The way we beat for the commoners, they rush on us, and we rush on them. In the olden days, the life was tight for us, and now it is very sweet for all of us. For example, in Dagbon in the olden days, how we used to beat the Damba in the night up to daybreak, you the small drummer would get only three pennies. You would beat the drum up to daybreak: is it not suffering? But today's drumming, we can get up today and say we are going to beat the drum, and we won't reach three hours of beating drums, and we will have cedis in hundreds or thousands. Will it be sweet or not? And so that is why I'm telling you that what is happening now is sweet for us. The life has changed.

But even as the chiefs and the commoners are now friends, it is at a gathering place that we know one another. I have told you that we drummers will beat praises and show people that they are related to one another. The talk of a drummer will let people know their relationship. And we know how to add to someone's respect, and we know how to diminish someone's respect. If a gathering comes, and you see this one's face and that one's face, you the drummer will know that this one's grandfather was like this and the other one's grandfather was like that. At that place, the two of them will get to know their standing places. Then the one who was showing himself will get to know that the other one is higher than him. Someone will be showing himself, and maybe there is also someone you will praise with Yendi chieftaincy talks, and his family bought the first one's family. There is where the one who was showing himself will get to know that he shouldn't bluff in front of the other one. Maybe he wouldn't know, but you the drummer will tell him. He's nothing. You will separate his grandfather's name, and he will come out and dance. If you the drummer separate it like that, other people who know much about drumming will get to know that, "Oh, we didn't know that this person is such-and-such, and he was showing himself like that. We thought he was somebody, but it was today the drummer talked and we got to know that he's not somebody up to that standard. Today the drummer has talked the truth, and he knows where he belongs to." At that time, they will say that the drummer has opened his anus, and everybody has seen. And what I would like to tell you is that when there is a gathering, and people come out to dance some dance, on the part of praise names, they can choose any dance to dance. But it is left with us the drummers: anyone who will come out at the gathering place to dance a dance, then we can use the drums to tell him that as for the dance he wants to dance, there are people who are supposed to dance that dance, and they are entitled for that dance, and so he should exercise patience and remain back, because the real people are there, in front of him.

If it is somebody who comes from the house of a chief, from his beginning with that chief up to the time of himself as the real person who will come to the gathering, the drummer will praise him and then he will come out to dance: the way he's going to dance, you shouldn't put it that he's showing himself. If truly he comes from the princes, he's coming out to dance and to show the people that he belongs to such-and-such a family. The way the drummer talks to him with the drum, if such a person dances like that, he's not bluffing. That is his family. If the drummers use the drum to praise you and to sing to you, and you come out, you must make sure that what you are going to dance is something similar to your grandfathers and what they were doing. If you don't dance the way the drummers know that particular family, or the way they dance, it won't make the drummers happy. The drummers want to show you that they have respect for your great-grandfathers, and they want to bring the same respect to you, because you are of that family. If you don't dance the way the drummers would like you to dance, it means you don't respect your own house. But if you dance such a dance well and show yourself inside it, it doesn't mean that you are showing yourself. You are doing the true thing the people who died before also did in their time. From the way you will dance, and from people who understand it, other people who don't know about your family will get to know that you are not bluffing but rather you are showing the real thing of your family. Because of that, many people don't just dance by heart. If such a person happens to be sitting down and a drummer starts from his grandfather's name coming, he will just get up, come out, and show that this is the way he believes his grandfather was dancing. And if the drummers start to talk like that with the drums, those watching at the gathering place will be expecting that particular person to get up and come out. When they see that he comes out, then you will see that everybody is happy, and they will say that, "Such-and-such a person has come out to show the family he belongs to." And they will also come out and start putting money on his forehead as he is dancing. And what is under it, it means that he has given respect to his starting, to the starting of his house. He's not bluffing. That is what is inside it.

And so it is true that how someone receives praises and comes out to dance in the public, that is the time he will show himself. But if he is really from such-and-such a family, then it is true. And so as for that, you shouldn't take it to be bluffing. It is respect. As for this talk, I have been talking to you and leaning it against the wall. It is there for you to see clearly. And so now I am going to break it for you. Shyness and pride: these two things are within a human being. The way that Dagbamba show themselves and don't show themselves, that is how it is. When they dance, that is when people at a gathering get to know who they are.



But it's not everybody. There are people who will dance and not show themselves. Which people are they? If you are a prince, you don't show all: you shouldn't dance in some way that everybody will get to know that you are a prince. If you know that in a time to come you are going to be somebody, you don't have to show yourself much. If it is not yet your turn, you shouldn't come out and prove to everybody that you are like this or that. If you come out to dance, you have to hide yourself a bit.

How do you dance and hide yourself? There is a way that you can hide. There is a limit of your dance. And what is the limit of your dance? As you are a prince, if you come out to dance, you don't call your real name. If not your grandfather's name, then you will call your father's name. If you call your own name, then you are showing people that you are somebody. But you are nobody yet. That is one way you will hide himself. And again, if you come out, on the part of how you move, the way you even dance, you will dance as if you are somebody who doesn't know how to dance. I have told you that when you come out to dance, there is a way you will lower yourself and give respect. If you are a prince, the way you are going to start the dancing, and the way you are going to look at people's faces, that will show that you are a prince. As you take father's name or grandfather's name, you will come out like a commoner and dance as if you are a commoner. The people watching will not know exactly who you are. But the drummers will know about you. If you come out, it is you who will give the drummers the chance to raise you up, but if you don't do give them the chance, they won't do it. They know who you are, and it is not you who is going to open your mouth to say it. And so the drummers will know what to talk for you. And the drummers who didn't know you, they will get to know you. There are some people, when they come out to dance and they are dancing, they talk to the drummers directly, and the way they look at the face of the drummers also shows something. Those watching will be able to know who you are. If you don't reduce your dance to the way commoners dance, then those who are watchful will know you, that you are such-and-such a person and you are showing yourself. This is the way it is. That is what is under it.

But at the point a prince has eaten the chieftaincy, he doesn't fear anything again, and there is a difference in his dance. If a prince has not eaten chieftaincy, there is the way he will show. He wants to eat the chieftaincy, and that is the reason why he is hiding himself. When he has hidden himself for a long time, and he comes to get the place he wants, he doesn't have to hide again. He has got what his heart wants. If he comes out to dance, his heart is white, and he has nothing to fear.

And so the way a commoner dances or the way a prince dances is different from the way a chief dances. Anybody who knows that tomorrow he is not going to be anybody, when he comes out, he can dance and make any rough way inside. He doesn't mind. But the way a chief comes out to dance, the way he is going to step onto the ground to dance, at that time he is a big thing. He is not a common person. The stepping and the way he is going to move his body will show that he is a chief. In Dagbon here, if you watch the way chiefs dance, when a chief is coming out, you will see some people behind him. Some of them will be holding his gown. And he moves as if he doesn't want to move. Sometimes he will dance some way, and then you will see the elders supporting him, as if he is about to fall. But he's not going to fall. It is his intention: he is going to do as if he's falling, because he knows very well that some people will hold him. And is it not because he's a chief now that they are doing all that? That is the way the chiefs move, and it is different from the dancing of the commoners. The chief does not dance with many styles like a commoner.

And the dances that have many styles, like Naanigoo and Naybiɛyɛ, it is the dance that has brought those styles. It is the dance that shows those styles. The drumming of every dance has got its way. It is the drumming of the dance that will show you the steps you take. And the way the drumming falls, that is, the sound of the dance, that is going to show you how you are going to take your steps. It comes from the sound. If it is Tɔra you want, the sound of the Tɔra drumming says that you should jump. And so every dance we beat has its way and has what it shows. This is how it is. It shows you how to move. But it's not the styles that are the main thing. People are looking at the one who is dancing. If he has styles or he doesn't have styles, it won't spoil his dance. The styles are only adding to the dance. When you watch them dance, you should use your sense. When we go to dance, we are happy. If you are somebody who has a very bad heart, if you are very easily annoyed, then maybe you will squeeze your face when you come to the dancing place. But if you are dancing and smiling, the people who stand and watch the dance will say it is very nice, and that is why I'm telling you that dancing shows happiness. And what I am telling you is that a person's style in dancing comes from his way of living, that is, the heart or the character.

In dancing, there can be someone who will dance with strength, and sometimes he will be very happy, and sometimes he will even be so happy that he will cause some harm to himself. But it is all happiness. And how it is, if you are dancing, you can bring any style you want, any time you want. It is only the sound of the drums that you will follow to know your steps. To me, I think it is good to dance coolly. When you are dancing coolly, the people watching you are happy,

and it is also very interesting to you, the one dancing. It is interesting because you have cooled down your heart and yourself. If you are dancing and they start beating the drums faster or higher, you also have to try yourself to move with the drums, to follow the drums. The styles in the dances come from the sense of the one dancing it, and also it is something that adds to you, the dancer. And so the person who is the best dancer, such a person is always inside every dance: he can dance every dance. I am talking about men and talking about women. Whether the dance is interesting or not interesting, as for that person, he will dance it and the dance will look very nice. Those who know dancing, this is how they are. Everybody has got the dance he can dance, that is, the dance his legs can dance. It isn't all the dances that everybody can dance. And there are other people who can dance all dances. Anybody who can dance all dances, when you see him dancing, he makes your body rise because he is a master of all the dances. Sometimes you have been seeing such people.

As the drums are beating, when that dancer comes out, the footsteps will match with the sounds of the drums. When the drums are beating and your steps move with the drums, it shows that you are dancing a respectful dance. And if the drums are beating and your legs are not going according to the drums, we say that it is a fool who is dancing the dance. And so when a person comes out to dance, and the dancer is moving with the beating, sometimes you'll see the drummer also moving with that person. It helps our drumming because as we beat the drums when people are dancing, it makes your body rise, and you will also want to beat the drums in a very interesting way. As the drums are beating, sometimes the one dancing will not be matching the drums, but that fellow will continue dancing until he comes to match the drums. It's not one particular drum you dance to. The dancer follows the steps of the ḡṡḡṡḡ, and he can bring styles according to the drums, but all of them are following the ḡṡḡṡḡ. You don't dance to the luḡa alone. You have no way to separate the sounds; you have to tie them all in while you are dancing.

You have to follow the drummers because that is our work, and we know it in the right way. If you are a dancer, you have to follow what the drummers are doing. And at the same time, you will help us get money, because it is through the dancers that drummers get money. And that way is very good, because beating the drums for people to dance is our work, and that is how we are standing in the tradition. The one who does not know how to dance, you will see the drummers dancing and showing that fellow how to take his foot to move with the drumming. And the one who knows how to dance, you will see the drummers also dancing with him. I told you that in the olden days, apart from Nakōhi-waa, we drummers

didn't normally dance with a dancer. But nowadays we take it that it is good for the drummers to dance with you when you are dancing. The dancers like it. It makes the dance lively. You feel happy when they dance with you. They are beating the drums closer to you, and when you're going back, they follow you. When you are moving forward, then will go back, and then they follow you there and there. It makes the dance nice. If they don't follow you like that, you won't feel happy. You won't feel that you are doing much. But when the drummers move in and out with the dancers like that, this is the sweetness of it. When you are dancing and they follow you like that, that is the way it should move. When you are dancing and the drummer is moving his foot like this and that, up and back, is it not nice? Does it not greet you? And so this is how it is. And as for those watching, it is even they who are more happy. If you go to the place where they are dancing, and you are dancing in that way, it is even the those watching who will let you know that the dance is good. We drummers like someone who dances like that. The dancer's movements work to help the drummers to harden their hands, to harden their bones to beat the dance very well. It's just like how we are sitting in this room. As we are sitting in this room, and if you come to sit with us, is it adding to us or is it decreasing us? It adds to us. And so the steps you take to dance and the beat from the drums, it all adds to the beauty of the dance.

As for the movements inside the dances and the changing of dances, it comes from the way you watch, from watching the way the drums beat. If the drummers beat a different dance, you change dances. When you are listening to the drumming, you will know that what they are beating is not the first dance you were dancing. Sometimes you can be dancing a particular dance, and it will look as if it is some other dance, and the way it shows that the dance you are dancing resembles some other dance is coming from the steps, that is, the legs. This is how it is. As for the arms, the different ways of moving the arms come from the dances, because there are some dances that will not swing the arms. There are some dances that you will be waving your arms. There are other dances which are only in the waist; the dance is in the waist. Do you see the Gonjas? As for them, their dance is in the neck. They stretch it like a snake. If a Gonja person is dancing and you want to enjoy the dance, you look at the neck going front and back, and look at the way he's throwing the head. That's the way they dance, and we have their Damba for them. When we the beating Damba, if a Gonja man or Gonja woman comes inside, we beat the real Gonja dance for them, the way they dance. The Kotokolis from Togo, they dance with their legs. All their dance is within their legs. The way they dance, they are somehow bent down a bit, but not

all the way bent. This is how it is. And the steps of the legs, truly, it is we the drummers who lead the dancers in the steps, and they dance it. And how we give them the steps is from the *gunḡon* and the drum. The way we beat, to let the sound of the drum go into the legs, that is how the steps are. And so this is how it is.

And truly, the dance is in the legs. As for the arms, if you want, you can be moving your arms until you stop. It is only some of the dances that show something with the arms. I told you that the movements of the dances don't have meaning, but in *Nakōhi-waa*, the butcher's dance, the particular movements have some meaning. When you come out to dance it, the way we know it, if a dancer comes out to dance *Nakōhi-waa*, he will show how his standing place is inside the butchers. If you are a chief of butchers and your daughter is there, when she comes out to dance the butcher's dance, she will raise the right arm, and people will know that she is the daughter of a butcher. And such a woman, if she marries somebody who is not a butcher and she also gives birth to a child, if that child also comes out to dance the butcher's dance, the child will raise the left arm, and then people will know that she is a woman's daughter in the butchers' line. And if you come to see somebody wanting to dance the butcher's dance, and raising both arms, it means on the mother's side they are butchers, and on the father's side they are butchers. This is how *Nakōhi-waa* is. When you dance and you raise your left arm, it shows that your mother's side is butchers; when you raise your right arm, it shows that your father's side is butchers; and when you raise both arms, that means that both your father's and mother's sides are all butchers.

But I can tell you that some people will dance *Nakōhi-waa* and be raising the arms, and none of their family is butchers: we say that they are dancing it for life, just because they like it. As they are dancing the butcher's dance, they do what the butchers do, and they act how the butchers act. But as they are copying the butcher's dance, many of them don't know that there is something under demonstrating with the arms. As for the movement of the feet, it is difficult for some people to learn it. The movement of the feet goes with the *gunḡon*, and if you are not quick with your feet, then the beating will escape you. If you are fast, you will learn the fast steps, but if you are slow, you will dance it a slow way, and that's all. That is the way of *Nakōhi-waa*. Every dance has its way. The steps in *Naanigoo* are according to what the drums beat, and how the beating is, many people dance it one way, with one style, and it looks nice. The style is simple, and if you are dancing and just turning yourself, it looks nice. But *Nakōhi-waa* is difficult; if your feet are not very quick, you will always be behind the beating.

And so the dances have different ways, and how we drum according to individual dancers is also different. You will come out to dance a particular

dance, and any way you dance it, you may think that what you are dancing is the same as the name of the dance. But some other people learned it in a different way. When they come to dance, they will mix it, and it will look like a different dance or it may look somehow the same. And truly, it is not that every dance has the actual way you should dance it. It comes from how you learn it. If you come out to dance, it is good you watch how the beating of the drums is going, so that when you move your leg, it goes to the way the drumming goes. You come inside and dance your style, the way you have learned it.

Truly, on the part of our tradition, and how we know our tradition, as a man dances, it is also very nice for a woman to dance. It is very proper that our women dance, and that is why they dance. In our Dagbani, for anyone who dances, we say that the person is adding to our way of living. It is good that women should dance with us the men there. The women don't drum; as far as our tradition is concerned, there is nothing like that. It is from our starting. But as we beat our drums, we beat drums for men and women, and the way we beat for men is different than the way we beat for women, because a woman is not strong enough to dance the way a man dances. When a woman comes out, we beat the drums coolly, but when the man comes out, how we beat will be more hot for the man to dance. And so I am going to show you some of the differences and separate them with some examples.

A man and a woman are not the same, and the work of a man and the work of a woman can never be the same. A man dances like a man, and a woman dances like a woman. The differences between a man and a woman are many. The way women talk, and the way men talk, there are differences. And a woman's actions are different from the actions of a man. And a man is stronger than a woman. Our every movement is different from that of women. There is a reason. As men and women are sitting down, when you look at their chests, what do you see? As a woman's chest has breasts, what is on a woman's chest is not on a man's chest. But apart from that one, the breasts, there is another thing that is hidden. The hidden one is with the woman, and so women don't free themselves too much. A woman does not leave herself. What is leaving yourself? I want you to be watching. A woman will not just come and sit down at once. Before she sits down, she will prepare herself and watch herself before sitting down. But as for a man, he doesn't care. If a woman goes outside to urinate, will she piss in the open or will she go and hide herself in a hidden place? She will hide. But as for us men, when we just go out, we piss anywhere. And that alone shows that our way of living and the way of living of woman are different, and it's because the bodies of women are different from the bodies of men.

Inside dancing, the dancers dance according to how their bodies are. You know, it's good for a dancer to keep his body loose for the dancing. You leave yourself loose: that makes it more beautiful. At that time, when you want to dance, you will dance it to the satisfaction of everybody. And in our watching, the men dance forward and back; they don't move side to side. They move side to side, but not as often as the women, and they don't move the leg side to side. But the women mostly move side to side. A man is strong, and the men dance more boldly, but a woman's body can move faster than a man's because a woman's body is loose. A man dances boldly with more strength, and a woman dances by moving herself here and there, left and right. When a woman comes out to dance, truly, as her body is loose, she does not free herself or hold herself loosely too much. According to the maalams, it is a man's rib that they used to make a woman, and so they say that a man is more than a woman. And truly, if you are watchful, you will see that there are some women who feel shy on the part of their dancing. There are some people, when they are dancing, and they see people or they look at somebody, they feel shy. And this shyness, you will see it more on the part of women at the dancing place, and to me, I think it is because of how their bodies are, and hiding.

The styles that men do, women cannot do those styles. As the dress of a woman is different, a man never dresses like a woman, and the dress alone will let you know that the dance of a woman is quite different from the dance of a man. How a woman dresses and a man dresses, can they move the body in the same way? Do you see how a man wears a smock to dance? When a man dances, he turns right and turns left to show the smock and the beauty of the cloth. But a woman's dress is not like that; it is already showing. And so a man dances with strength to be turning and showing himself, and a woman has a different way to dance and show herself. She will find a very beautiful cloth that suits her very well, and you will see her looking very beautiful when she comes out to dance. And how a man also dresses to dance is very nice: turning this way and that way and showing the smock looks nice. And again, the styles women do are quite different from the styles of the men because the way a man takes his hands is not the same as the way a woman takes her hands. And so the women who have given respect to themselves, they show it by their steps; when a woman first wants to come out, the steps she takes will show that respect, and everybody will know it.

And so there are some dances men can dance, and women cannot dance those dances. Let me give you an example. When women go to a well, they group themselves and go together. But if a man goes to a well, he doesn't go with other men; he just goes. This is how the dancing of a man is; and as for the dancing of

the woman, it is just like when someone is going to a well and she goes together with other women. The way we men let ourselves go, the women cannot leave themselves like that. It is the same with the styles of dancing. A man's dance is quite different from a woman's dance. If you come to see a woman who dances and it looks like the dance of a man, we say that she is a woman-man, because such a person does not feel shy. And so the dances, too, some of them are better for women and some are better for men, and it's from the way of the dance. Do you see Zamanduniya? Zamanduniya is not our dance. We have taken it from another town to dance it. Zamanduniya is mostly danced by women. Women will dance it and be shaking the hips and the waist, and they like it. Men dance it, but it's not very common for men to dance it, truly. Even I can't tell you much about how a man should be dancing it. But the way men dance Naybiɛyɔ, it's nice, and the way women dance it is also nice. When the men dance it, they wear smocks, and they have to turn to the left and turn around to the right, showing the smock. That's what makes it nice on the part of the men. When a woman dances Naybiɛyɔ and Naanigoo, it is good she moves her feet in and out. That makes the dance nice on the part of the women. In most of our dances, the movement of the feet is like that. If the feet move in and out, that always makes the dance look nice.

In some dances, you will see the women opening their arms and turning them sideways. In Damba they do this. But when they're dancing the other dances, they move the arms in and out. It follows the dance and how we have learned it. In Naybiɛyɔ and Naanigoo, the women move their arms in and out, but in Damba, they open their arms out. When they're dancing the other dances, they move their arms in and out, out and in, but each arm turns out in Damba, using the right out and the left out. In Nakɔhi-waa, how the movements of the body are, it shows that it is a dance for butchers. It shows that you are cutting the meat this way, cutting the meat that way. The dance shows that you are cutting the meat, cutting it this way, cutting it this way. When a woman dances Nakɔhi-waa, she will be moving the feet sideways. As she is going to the side, it is because when you are cutting, you don't have to move forward. She has to follow the foot movements to the right and to the left, side to side, and so she has to dance it out, out. When she dances it forward, it looks like a man dancing. In Nakɔhi-waa, when you throw your body from side to side, as it's a butcher's dance, it shows that you are cutting. And the head too will be moving from side to side. Truly, we grew up and saw our elders dancing like that, and we haven't asked them the reason they move the head this way and that, left and right. We didn't ask; we just learned it like that from them. It looks nice. When you dance like that, it shows



that you are enjoying the music. You will know if you are dancing, that when you begin to move your head this way, it shows that you feel the dancing, and you feel happy and you're enjoying the drumming.

In Damba, it is the dance steps that make Damba beautiful, how the feet move forward and backward, and you will be making it go around, turning, and then you force and go back. That makes it look nice. And the movement of the head to the right and left, showing yourself and feeling happy, that also makes the dance beautiful. How you throw your arm according to how your head moves, there and there: that makes it nice. And then you dance with the drumming, on the beating, always with the *gungon*. That is what we have learned from the elders, and the way you move your head, that is also what we have learned from the elders, and we haven't asked them the reason they move the head this way and that, left and right. We just learned it like that, and it's nice. Anyone can see from how we do it that when you begin to move your head this way, it shows that you feel the music and you feel happy. And it can also show that you enjoy the music by doing that. When you are dancing, you have to show that you are enjoying the music.

Do you see the Mamprusi dance? It is not a dance of Dagbamba; we have taken it from the Mamprusi, and we are dancing it. The way you twist your waist in the Mamprusi dance, and then display by jumping round, that is mostly done by men. They tie metal shakers to their arms and ankles and dance it. But women also do it. It's not the same as Baamaaya, but the dress resembles the dress for Baamaaya. And the Mamprusi dance, what makes it nice is the strength you take to dance it. If you dance it in a lazy way, it doesn't look nice at all, but when you dance it with life, smiling and jumping, then you get it the correct way.

And all this is inside dancing. These are just some examples I'm giving you. Every dance is different. Someone who can dance very well enjoys all dances. And as everyone has the dance he wants, that is why you see many different dances at a wedding house or funeral house. It is nice, and it is beautiful on the part of the person who has called us to come and beat. It is the one who calls us who shows that it is beautiful, and that is why he has called different types of musicians. Someone will call both *goonjis* and drummers to a wedding or a funeral, because the dancing of the *goonjis* and drummers is beautiful to the eyes of the one who called it. There are some places where someone is marrying, and the *goonji* players will not go because no one has sent them cola. And there are some places where the *goonji* people will be invited but drummers will not be called. And so when somebody has a wedding, if he feels that he can call the drummers and the *goonji* people at the same time because that is what is nice to

him, he will call all of us if he has the means. It is nice because the dancers will have different types of dances to dance. And so when we go to a wedding house like that, and the people are not many, sometimes only one group will go inside the compound to beat for the women to dance, and the other group will be outside praising the elders. If we praise somebody and he wants to dance, he will tell us and we will beat for him to dance. And so it sometimes happens that we and the goonjis will separate ourselves like that. And we and the goonji people will all get money. And everyone at the wedding house will be happy, too. And this is why we like dancing and how it adds to us.

And so this talk I have talked, it is still following the way of our talks. And tomorrow, I will tell you about some of the dances that are danced in groups.