

Chapter I–19: *Takai and Tɔra*

Today we're going to talk about Takai and Tɔra. As for Takai and Tɔra, we have all grown up and met them. And our forefathers met them. Takai is a men's dance. And Tɔra is a dance for women. To me, Takai is standing as the Dagbamba dance that is leading in front of all the other dances. Takai is the one that can be danced and everyone will be having white heart on it. It is very popular, and it is danced all throughout Dagbon. That is how we also grew up and met it. To know how to dance Takai is difficult, and you have to learn it. Somebody can be a young man and want to dance it, but he will not be able to dance it. And Tɔra is the same as Takai, because Tɔra and Takai follow one another. I can say that Tɔra is the Takai of women.

In Takai, the dancers will be in a circle, and they will be turning. They will hold sticks or iron rods and be knocking each other's sticks as they turn. How the women dance Tɔra, the dancers will be in a line and will clap their hands and sing, and we drummers will be beating the drums. And two women will run in opposite directions and come back. When they come back and meet, they take their buttocks and knock one another. And the one who is next in the line will come out and take her buttocks and knock with the other one. This is how they will be knocking till they go round.

As I have said that Tɔra is the Takai of women, when you go to watch it, you yourself will know, because the beating is moving in one way. When we beat Tɔra, we take Nyayboli and add, and take *Ijun' Da Nyuli* and add. And we take *Tɔra Yiyra* and add it. And we come to *Kawaan Dibli*, because that is inside, too. And the women who know how to dance it, they dance it. That is why I can say that Tɔra is like Takai, because some of the dances I've counted are in Takai, too. Nyayboli is inside Takai, and *Ijun' Da Nyuli* also is inside Takai. And many of the songs they sing, they can be singing them for Takai or Tɔra. And so Tɔra is the Takai of women.

I'm going to start with Tɔra. As for Tɔra, it is the movements that make the dance nice. The movements going through and out to the open, and the knocking of the buttocks on the beat of the drums: that makes it nice. You are enjoying the drumming, and the beating goes with the knocking of the buttocks. When two women come out to dance, what makes it interesting is that they don't move together: this one goes here and the other one goes the other way; they move in opposite directions and then move toward one another. It adds beauty to the dance.

How the dance of Tɔra is, some people find it difficult to dance it. You cannot just walk and go and knock your buttocks; you go with strength. Because of that, many women find it difficult to dance Tɔra. After dancing Tɔra, some people can't stand up again. Sometimes they will knock a woman down. Or sometimes two women can come together to knock, and one woman will miss the other and the woman will fall down. And so sometimes it gives them wounds. And so as for Tɔra, it is strength; if you joke with Tɔra, you easily get wounded. The dance of Tɔra is that they have to move with strength, because if they cool themselves down, it means they are likely to miss one another, and so it's always strength. They have to come and knock with strength. And it all comes from the way we the drummers beat the drums, and they also knock by listening to the way we beat. As they are running, they know how the drums fall. Before they run and come to meet, by that time, the drummers too will have come to where they will bump together. When they get to one another, you will hear the beat, and they will hit their buttocks. And so as they dance it, they know one another, or they know of the movements of one another, and they always make sure that their buttocks don't miss one another. If they don't know about one another's dance, it means they will wound one another.

This is how Tɔra is, and it is from their learning. And again, somebody can be stand at the side and be watching, and the watching of somebody can be better than the learning of somebody. So this is how Tɔra is. There are some dances like that. I cannot count the number of men who know how to dance Takai, but what I want you to know is that when you see someone who knows how to dance Takai, it is always from learning. They have taught him. But as for Tɔra, it is the children who teach themselves. It is when the dancers are young that they learn it. When the small girls clap their hands and are playing outside, that is how they learn it. When they go and watch older people dancing, when they come home and they gather themselves together, then they start dancing it. They don't have drummers. I told you that our women don't drum: the women's work is only to sing songs and clap the hands. It is when there are no drummers that they can be clapping, and because they are so used to it, even when the drummers are there, they also clap their hands. And it all adds to the music. And so when they are children and they are dancing, they only clap their hands and dance Tɔra. And when the women are dancing Tɔra at some place and the drummers are beating, if a girl knows that she can dance Tɔra, she can go in with them because in Tɔra they don't stop children from dancing.

As for Tɔra, Tɔra is beautiful because it is a dance that has to do with our tradition. If you are going to talk about Dagbon, it is not something you can pass by. I have to tell you that. It is a dance that has come because of women, because

men don't dance Tɔra. And young boys who dance never dance Tɔra. A man cannot dance every dance, and a woman also cannot dance every dance. There are many dances that women dance and men don't dance, and many dances that men dance and women don't dance. Tɔra has come because of women, and when you see them dance it, you will know that truly, Tɔra is only good for women; it's not for men. It isn't all women who dance only women's dances. I know women who dance men's dances. I have a senior sister who dances Takai, and she will wear a smock. She is not my actual sister, but she is one of our sisters inside the family. If she is dancing, unless you see her breasts, you will not know that she is a woman. She dances Takai because she likes it, but she's not a man. But I haven't seen a man dancing Tɔra.

If you are a man and you are as useless as anything, you will not dance Tɔra. As for women, they dance men's dances, but we men don't dance Tɔra because it will not add to us. As for the dance of a woman, are you going to wear a woman's dress? The man who dances a woman's dance is a man who fears nothing. If you a man dances a woman's dance, they can easily call you a woman, and a man will never pray to God to turn himself into a woman. It is only a woman who will pray to turn herself into a man. Sometimes I hear women say, "Oh! Why has God not made me a man?" And her reason for saying that is that sometimes a boy who is younger than her will be able to do something that she cannot do, and she is older. Men do some things that women are not able to do, and that is why sometimes a woman will say that she should have been a man. But we haven't seen a man say he should have been a woman. As we are sitting now, if there are two women, one man will just stand up and beat both of them. But it is very difficult for one man to be able to beat two men at the same time unless he has medicine. And so on the part of this Tɔra, what I'm saying is that if you see a man dancing a woman's dance, it means he hasn't left himself loosely, and he is well-boiled, that is, he has medicine, because it is not his work.

And so Tɔra has come because of women, and how we dance Tɔra, every Dagbana knows that Tɔra is for women. Truly, if a woman says she does not know Tɔra, then we don't count her into Dagbamba, because if a woman does not know any dance, at least she will know Tɔra. Old drummers say that if you go to some place and they cannot dance any dance, you should beat Tɔra for them. And it's true too. You will see that they will come inside. This is how Tɔra is. Now that things are changing, it is not all who know Tɔra. If you don't learn it, you can't know it. If you say you are a woman and you will not learn it, then you will not know it. But formerly every Dagbana woman knew Tɔra, and many of them know it now. Truly, some don't know it now, but to me, I can say that most of them still know it.

As for Takai and Tɔra, we don't dance them unless somebody dies or somebody calls for them, and we Dagbamba don't call Takai and Tɔra for just any type of beating. As for our real Dagbamba beating, we don't beat it for nothing. If it is not a gathering day, like a funeral, or someone has a reason to call us to beat, if not that, we don't sit down and have a dance like Takai or Tɔra unless something happens. It is only white people who call these dances at any time, and they call them because Takai and Tɔra are wonderful. And so to us, we know that Takai is beaten when an old person is dead. If an old woman or an old man dies, we will take Takai and dance it in front of the old person's house. If there is a funeral, or a chief dies, we can dance it. Or again, if we have a white heart, if there is a festival, we can take it and dance. If there is a festival, you will see that someone will be happy, and he will call us to come and beat Takai. If a chief eats chieftaincy, we can take Takai and dance it. And so as for Takai, its talks on the part of our living are plenty, because how we beat Takai, Takai is beaten when you have a white heart, and Takai is beaten when your heart is spoiled.

This Tɔra, it moves in the same way. Somebody calls Tɔra for a wedding or a funeral. If we go to a wedding and we beat and finish, sometimes the women will say we should give them Tɔra. If an old woman dies or an old man dies, we can beat Tɔra. A chief can have a white heart, and he will call Tɔra. Or in festivals, the *Magaazia*, the leader of the women, will call for Tɔra. And again, someone will wed and will let them dance Tɔra. Or someone's daughter will marry, and he will call Tɔra. Someone will not have many daughters, but his sisters' daughters are many, and he can call Tɔra. As for Tɔra, it is like Takai, because it has come for the time of your white heart and it has come for when your heart is spoiled. Someone can die and they will beat Tɔra, but it is not for all people who die, unless someone who is old. A person who has not become old, when he dies or when she dies, they don't knock Tɔra. If a chief dies, even if he is young, as he is a chief, it means that he is somebody who is old, and they will knock Tɔra; the chieftaincy he was eating shows that they should beat it. And so Tɔra, it has not come because of either happiness or heart-spoiling alone.

This is how they dance Tɔra. And truly, we have put Tɔra down that in our tradition, when an elderly person dies, whether it is a woman or a man, when we want to perform the funeral, we shave the heads of the children: the grandchildren of the deceased or the children of the deceased, they all shave their heads. And women will come and ask the drummers to come and beat the Tɔra for them to dance, and we'll beat it for them to dance it in the night. We usually beat Tɔra for four days or seven days. The four days is if the dead body was not a very old person. For a very old person, sometimes we will beat it for a week. When a person dies, we will be saying prayers on the third day and the seventh day. We

call these prayers the “three days” — *daba ata* — and the “seven days” — *daba ayopoin*. When they finish with the three-days prayers, then they will put the seven-days prayers either for the seventh day or for the next coming week. So from the third day, we will beat Tɔra up to the seven days prayers, and when they finish with the prayers, then the Tɔra is finished. It depends on how they put the funeral. If today is Friday and we are to begin the Tɔra, sometimes they will put the next funeral on the coming Friday. Is that not one week? But it isn’t everybody’s funeral that we beat for seven days. Everyone has the extent of his funeral. And so Tɔra has four days and seven days.

And so this is how Tɔra is, and it has a lot of respect. In the olden days and up to now, when they want to come and call us, they bring cola and add money. That greeting is just a gift. There is no fixed amount; it depends on the person coming. Some give a hundred cedis, some give forty cedis, some give twenty cedis. Some give two hundred cedis.¹ When the cedi was starting to spoil, it was like that, and it came and some people gave two hundred cedis or four hundred cedis. Not everybody has the same means. Up to now, it has not changed much, because “Come and beat for us” is different from what they will do for you when you finish what you are going to do. When you finish, and the funeral is finished, the funeral children and their friends who came to help them perform the funeral, they will all contribute money with the women, and they will come and give it to us the drummers. And so the amount they add with the cola, that is just a greeting or invitation. Then we go and beat Tɔra for them. They will get a guinea fowl and yams, and welcome us, and we will eat. If you are all in the same town, they will bring the food to your house, the yams and the guinea fowl, and your house people will prepare the food and you will eat. And then the next day they will bring porridge, and you will drink. And in the olden days there was no sugar, but there was honey; they would put the porridge in a pot, and you would drink it. You can get soap and a sponge and then come, and they will bring bathing water for you to bathe, and the bathing of the water shows that as Tɔra has danced and the night dust has entered your body, you should bathe off the dust. And this is what the Tɔra dancers would do to you the drummers for the four days or seven days you beat Tɔra for them. And this is the respect of Tɔra. And so we the drummers have a lot of respect on the part of women and the dancing of Tɔra.

As for the starting of Tɔra, drummers sing about it inside the Samban’ luja, inside Naa Yenzoo’s talks. Tɔra started in Naa Yenzoo’s time, and it was his wives who started it. Naa Yenzoo quarreled with his wives because he liked

1. 1979: 13 cedis per dollar

somebody more than he liked his wives, and that person's name was Jɛŋkuno. Do you know the meaning of *Jɛŋkuno* in Dagbani? It is Cat. This Jɛŋkuno was Naa Yenzoo's friend. Naa Yenzoo had his wives and his elders, and any time Naa Yenzoo wanted to give a gift to any of them, Jɛŋkuno would tell him that he shouldn't give it. And the chief's elders made one mouth, and they said, "We should tell lies on Jɛŋkuno so that the chief will drive him away. How the chief likes him, what Jɛŋkuno tells the chief is what the chief hears. And as it is, we the elders can't get anything from the chief. And the chief's wives also can't get anything." Zɔhi-Naa is one of the Yaa-Naa's elders, and it was Zɔhi-Naa who called Gbanzaliŋ. Gbanzaliŋ the title of the senior wife of the Yaa-Naa. And Zɔhi-Naa told her, "Let's cut lies on Jɛŋkuno so that the chief will refuse him. If not that, Jɛŋkuno will not let us get what we want." And he asked Gbanzaliŋ, "What lie are we going to tell on him?" And she said, "It doesn't matter. I will go and tell each of the chief's wives, and I will push down the door, and all the chief's wives will go out and roam. And anyone who goes out and gets a pregnancy and comes, if the chief should ask, she should say that it is Jɛŋkuno who gave her. If we do that, we will defeat him."

And one of the chief's wives went out, and in two days she was pregnant. And the chief asked, "Who has given you a stomach?" And she said, "It is Jɛŋkuno who gave me." And the chief said, "It doesn't matter. It's no fault." And all the chief's wives were going out, and when any of them got a stomach and the chief asked, she would say that Jɛŋkuno gave her. And it came to most beloved wife of the chief, and they told him that it was Jɛŋkuno who had given her a stomach, and as the chief had been saying it didn't matter, at that time the chief's heart got up, and he said, "If I don't mind Jɛŋkuno, Jɛŋkuno's children will come to finish my family. When any woman get a pregnancy, she says it is Jɛŋkuno who gave her. It will come to show that it is Jɛŋkuno who has given birth to children, and I Yenzoo have not given birth to a child. They have already talked to me about Jɛŋkuno, and I said he is a good person. And so catch him and bring him to me, and I will cut off his head."

On that day, Jɛŋkuno ran away into the bush. And the chief's heart was spoiled, because Jɛŋkuno was his best friend. And the chief's wives, their hearts were white. And Gbanzaliŋ came out and told drummers to come and beat beating, and she called all the chief's wives to come out and they would dance. And Gbanzaliŋ said, "If the chief is going to give a gift, Jɛŋkuno says he shouldn't give. Jɛŋkuno has run away into the bush and left his girlfriend." And the women responded, "Jɛŋkuno has run away into the bush, and he is lost in the bush." The women were clapping their hands, and that was how they were singing, and they were taking their buttocks to knock one another. And the drummers were beating.

That was the day Tɔra started, the day Jɛŋkuno ran away. As Jɛŋkuno had run away, the chief's wives had freed themselves, and it made their hearts white. That was the starting of Tɔra. As Jɛŋkuno had run away, it was only worries that were following the chief, and it made him worry even until he died. How our chiefs are, if you have your best friend, if you want to eat, he must be there, and he will take the food before you. If you want to drink water, he will drink it before you. And so if you are with somebody and you are close like that, and something like this happens, the worry can even kill you. But as for the chief's wives, the day that Jɛŋkuno ran away, the women were happy, and they were singing and dancing, and that was how Tɔra started. This talk, it is through the Samban' luŋa that we heard it. They have been talking it inside Naa Yenzoo, and we've been hearing.

Inside Tɔra beating, what is Tɔra? The Tɔra that has come and we drummers know, there are three dances inside Tɔra: Tɔra Yiɣra, Kawaan Dibli, and Nyayboli. We change the beating of the drum, and the women also change their way of dancing. But it's all Tɔra. And so how I grew up and met it, only those three have a name inside Tɔra. Tɔra Yiɣra is "Tɔra jumping." As for Tɔra Yiɣra, I grew up and met it, and it isn't just a particular dance they dance. It is the beating you will beat and the women will start jumping up. That is all. It started within Tɔra, and it is not a different dance. Tɔra Yiɣra is Tɔra that jumps. That is Tɔra, but the way the women dance, it is only that they jump up. And Kawaan Dibli is: "They have pegged a corn cob." They will be singing and laughing, *Kawaan dibli, ka be zaŋ kpa, ka ye ni yoli be; kawaan dibli, ka be zaŋ kpa!* This is the way the drummers beat. And the women clap their hands and knock their buttocks. It means, "They pegged a corn cob and said it was a penis." And Nyayboli, they will be singing, *Naa sa boon' a k'a zaɣsi, a nyiri gbɪŋgbamba.* It means the chief called his wife and she refused; "Chief called you and you refused. Your flat buttocks!" They used to abuse people like that, and it used to make them laugh and become more excited in the dance. It is inside Nyayboli, and Nyayboli is inside Tɔra and inside Takai. And the Baamaaya people collected Nyayboli from Takai and Tɔra and added it to their beating. And so Takai and Tɔra are the older dances.

And so those are the three that came first: Tɔra Yiɣra, Kawaan Dibli and Nyayboli. That is what I grew up and met. And there are others that have added. Have you seen Ijun' Da Nyuli? It wasn't in Tɔra, but they have added it. It was Tuubaanƙpilli people — those who are dancing Baamaaya nowadays — who started singing that kind of funny song, and the women also liked it, so they took it and added it into their dance. As it has come, it's not up to twenty years. But the three that I have counted, our grandfathers came and met them. This Ijun' Da Nyuli started in the market, and Tuubaanƙpilli people collected it: "The one who

has bought a yam.” They will be singing *ɔ̃jun’ da nyuli ɔ̃jun’ da gbini*: the one who bought the yam, he has also bought the buttocks. It was because of a woman they started beating it. A man bought yams and bought the buttocks as well; it means that he had sex with the woman. Haven’t you seen that sometimes you will be buying something from a woman, and you can start a friendship with her at that place? That is its meaning. When women are going to the market and they enter market trucks, one will say to the other, “The one who bought the yams bought the buttocks.” They are making fun of another woman and laughing. And they took it and added it into Tɔra, and we are beating it. If you are watching, you will know that in Dagbon it is not everyone who knows how to dance ɔ̃jun’ Da Nyuli. The older women, those who are up to fifty years or more, they don’t know it much. But those who are about thirty or forty years old, they know it.

Truly, the women also have their way of singing when we are beating Tɔra, and the songs are plenty. Only the women know the songs. Inside Kawaan Dibli, they will be singing: *Simli biɛ maŋli, Nawulma!* That is another song for the women when we are beating Tɔra for them. Nawulma is just a person’s name. The meaning of *simli biɛ maŋli* is that if you go and befriend a woman, the woman will ask you, “As you have come to befriend me, is it just going to be a friendship or are we going to be together?” She is asking whether you want to stay with her and marry her. That’s what the women used to sing, and they add it into Tɔra. Truly, when they are going to begin the Tɔra, a woman singer will start, and those who are going to respond will be clapping their hands. When we grew up, this is how we saw our elder women singing when they are dancing Tɔra. And the way they sing, it is not inside our drumming. I have never listened to all that they are saying. They will be singing, and I will be beating my drum. But if the women start the singing, if you beat the Tɔra, the time the dance is getting hot, they stop singing. If it comes to the point when you the drummers are tired, and they also are tired, then you will rest a bit, and they will start their singing again. And so if the Tɔra becomes hotter, they don’t think about the singing again; they concentrate on the Tɔra. That is how it is.

Inside Tɔra too, when we start beating, we start it with a different beating, and that is the Hausa Tɔra. We call it the Hausa Tɔra because the Hausas brought it here. Some people call it Tɔra Maɲa, that is, Tɔra itself. The Hausas call theirs the real Tɔra, and we too, we have our real Tɔra. Truly, the talks of Tɔra are many, and you can only know to your extent because Tɔra does not stand at one place. The time I was in Kumasi I used to see Hausa people beating Tɔra. The Hausa drummers used to beat it at wedding houses. It’s different from the way Dagbamba beat Tɔra. Everybody has his town’s talks, and so the Hausa people beat their Tɔra, and Dagbamba too, we beat our Tɔra. And when the Hausas

knock their Tɔra, when we beat Nyayboli or Kawaan Dibli, they don't know it. And so I can say that our Dagbamba Tɔra are three: Tɔra Yiɣra, Kawaan Dibli, and Nyayboli. And our Dagbamba villagers know them more than any other tribe. That is why I am telling you that Tɔra Yiɣra and Kawaan Dibli and Nyayboli, as for the Dagbamba in the villages, that is what they know. They know these three, and many of them also know the Hausa Tɔra.

And so I can tell you that when we are going to begin Tɔra, the first Tɔra we are going to beat came from the Hausas. It's only that the beating is somehow different. Even in our time, formerly, the drummer would start beating the Hausa Tɔra, before the guŋguŋ would also join and collect it. And the women are going to be watching the way the guŋguŋ is falling. And the way you also beat the drum, then they follow that one to knock their buttocks. We will beat this Hausa Tɔra before the women say that we should beat Tɔra Yiɣra for them. Tɔra Yiɣra, that is what the women like best. And so then we change to that one. As for the Tɔra Yiɣra, when we are beating, then the women are excited. That is the time they heat themselves and jump up, and they add that one. And so this Tɔra Yiɣra, the jumping Tɔra, that is in Dagbani, and in my heart, I think that is the first Tɔra. Have you seen Nyayboli? That is from the Dagbamba. Kawaan Dibli is from the Dagbamba. And so it is only that there is one we beat first that we call the Hausa Tɔra. That is what we take to begin, but truly, in some places they don't even beat it because it is not a Dagbamba Tɔra. How our Tɔra starts with those of us here, that is what I'm showing you. And so our Dagbamba Tɔra are three, and the Hausas came and we collected one of theirs and added it. But if it is somewhere, they won't start with it: they will take Kawaan Dibli first before they take Nyayboli and add. And so the Dagbamba had theirs, and the Hausas came and they had one, and we added it. And so for the starting of Tɔra, there are many types of it, because Tɔra does not stand at one fixed point. And so what I am telling you is one of them.

And it shouldn't surprise you. We and the Hausas, our dances look like one another. And I think that it is because when the Dagbamba first came here, we came from the Hausa side, and people say that we and they are one. As we came from that place, that is why people say that. As for family, it doesn't die. If you were once the same family with somebody, whatever happens, when you and that person come to do something, you will resemble one another. And so I think it is like that. Even on the part of the way we dress and how we eat chieftaincy, it seems that our talks have entered one another. The Dagbamba have a dance we call *Lua*. The Hausas also have *Lua*, and they dance *Lua*. The Hausas have their town's songs and they sing them when the *Lua* falls. And we have our town's talks that we take to sing the *Lua* songs. And so the Tɔra the Hausas beat, they

use their town's songs to sing it, and we also take our town's songs to sing our Tɔra. That is how it is: we and the Hausas, our talks have entered and mixed with one another, and they look alike.

And you see the Ashantis: their way is different from how the Dagbamba and the Hausas are. Even as we are near to them, we don't know many Ashanti dances, but there are many Hausa dances we beat. We and the Ashantis, our talks on the part of beating and dancing, they don't enter one another much. We and they have some talk we talk, and they are the same: *bra ye ndi*; "come and let's eat," it is the same with us. On the part of eating, we and the Ashantis talk the same. But the work of the Ashantis on the part of dancing and beating, it does not look like the dancing of the Dagbamba. And so as for the Ashantis, we and they are far. But as for the Hausas, the work of the Dagbamba seems to look like the Hausas.

As for Takai, I haven't heard that the Hausas were beating it, and I haven't seen that they know how to dance Takai. Maybe they also have it, but if so, then it just means that I haven't seen it. But I think that the Dandawa people from Benin know how to beat Takai, and the Mossis also know it but they don't beat it the way we beat. Why I say that the Dandawa people beat it is that we once went to beat Takai, and a Dandawa person came from his town and was able to beat it. As for the Mossis, when they beat Takai, they cannot mix with the Dagbamba and beat Takai. I have seen how the Mossis beat their Takai at Kumasi. There were more than forty people beating it and dancing, and they used *gunḡonḡ*s and drums, and the sticks they used were very long. And if not they themselves, no one can beat it, because they just beat it by heart and they don't follow its way. They beat *gao-gao-gao*, and it doesn't catch. And they don't wear nice dresses; any dress they have is what they use to beat it. They cannot mix with Dagbamba.

And so I can say that Takai came from the Dagbamba. And it is Dagbamba who beat it but only those whose eyes are open. As for the villagers, they cannot beat Takai well. Those we call *Dagban' sabli*, black Dagbamba or typical Dagbamba, those who are in the villages, they cannot dance Takai. Dagbamba whose eyes are open, they are the ones who beat Takai, and that is how our elders say it started. That is what I know about it. I have not heard any story about it. But as for the starting of Tɔra, what I have told you, I have heard it in the Samban' luḡa like that. Our asking has not reached Tɔra, but they used to beat it at Samban' luḡa, and we hear. That is Naa Yenzoo's talks. His time is far. All the story of his friend and his wives, that is how it is. Our old talks come from the Samban' luḡa, but I haven't heard of Takai in the Samban' luḡa.

I am only telling you what I know, and that is why I have told you that we know Takai as something that we beat for happiness and for sadness. Everyone

has grown up to meet Takai. Every Dagbana grows up to meet the Takai beating. And everyone knows that Takai is danced when an old man or an old woman is dead, when they have a funeral; then we beat Takai. I also grew up and met Takai, and I don't know when it started. I don't know if they used to dance it for different things in the olden days, and I don't know if it was only certain people who used to dance it. As for Takai, how I know it, it is not meant for any particular people. Anyone whose heart wants can dance it. Even if a chief himself wants, he can join it to dance. It's just a play. This is how I saw it in the olden days, when I was growing up. And I haven't heard that Takai came from any other place, and I haven't heard any talk about its starting. Maybe somebody will tell you something about Takai, and I will not argue. If somebody wants, he can just tell you that when the Dagbamba state was formed, Takai was there. If I want, I can agree and say that I think it may be so. If I want, I can say that I haven't heard it. But as for me, I will never just give you what your heart wants.

You have been asking me questions about Takai, and I want to tell you that if you want to stay with somebody with truth, don't give him what his heart wants. If you give him what his heart wants, then it means you don't love the person. The person you love: don't tell him lies. How we are together with you now, we are not separate. God has brought us together. This is the time for you to know that as for truth, it is always standing as one. Don't take truth and add lies to it. If you want to show lies inside your talks, don't show that you are the one writing it. Say that you don't know anything about it, and that it is what some people said. Otherwise, it is going to spoil your name. There is another proverb in Dagbani: one yam can spoil fufu. If you peel good yams, and you take one bad yam and peel it and add, if the yams boil and you take the yams and pound fufu, you will see that all the fufu will spoil. The one bad yam among the good yams has spoiled the whole thing. And so you don't have to be running around and following the talks of many people. Some people just talk anything they want. If you are going to be listening to such talks, if you look down on what you are holding, and you think that you want to add such talks to your book, you will spoil it. Have you heard the proverb about the yams? That is why, when I talk to you, I give an example for you to see.

One time you said that someone had told you that as they are dancing Takai and knocking the metal rods as they turn, that formerly they used to dance Takai with long knives and that these metal rods were standing for the knives. To me, since I grew up, I never heard anything like that. In the olden days, they were using sticks, and some people were using iron rods. They used to mix. Some people held sticks; some people held iron rods. And the reason why people like the iron is that the way they are knocking them, some people's sticks used to

break. If your stick breaks, you will have to go and search for another stick again. But if you get the iron, will it break? Will you go and search for another stick again? No. So if you have your iron rod, then every day you will use it. When you finish, you will come and put it in the house. When they call for Takai again, you will just take it in your room and go. And that is what everybody likes. There is nothing behind it. And so don't be following too many people's talks. If you do that, your talk will spoil.

And so as for Takai, the only thing I can tell you is that I grew up and met it. As we are sitting, I am leading the drummers who beat Takai in Tamale here, and my group is the leading Takai group in Ghana. Up to today, I haven't asked anything about the starting of Takai. The way it is, if you grow up and come to meet something that is within the time of a particular chief, then if you want, you can say that the thing started within that particular chief's time. But as for Takai, we grew up and met it, and we were beating it. That is all. We didn't ask how it started or whether it came from some town to Dagbon. I myself, up to now I have not asked to know which town Takai came from. Takai is important inside our drumming, and we have been beating it. But on the part of Takai, we don't ask. Why is it so? The reason why it doesn't matter if you don't ask is because Takai is not any chief's name. It is not any Yaa-Naa's name. Inside our drumming, why we ask: a time will come when somebody will ask you, "This Yaa-Naa, what was his name?" That is why there are some dances in Dagbon that we used to beat and we don't worry ourselves to ask about them. Most of them are not on the way of our old talks, and what worries us are those on the way of our old talks, on the part of chieftaincy. As for our old talks, if you don't ask, maybe one day they will ask you. Even those dances which are inside old talks, everybody only asks to his extent.

And so Takai is an important dance, but the importance of the dance is not that there are old talks inside it. As I am telling you that I haven't heard anything about the starting of Takai, maybe someone else knows it. But I am the leader of the Takai drummers here, and I don't know it. Formerly, Alhaji Adam Mangulana was the Takai leader, but the time he handed it to me was many years ago. I didn't hear Alhaji Adam say anything about the starting of Takai. Amadu Jaato, the Takai dance leader when you first came here, he is now dead. People like him, I don't know how old they are, but some of them were dancing Takai more than thirty and forty years ago. I think some of them may be around sixty or seventy years old or something like that. Some are more than that and some are less. But I haven't heard them talking about the starting of Takai. And so Dagbamba say that if a fish comes out of the water and tells you that a crocodile has one eye, you should believe the fish. And so any time you want to know who started Takai, I

am telling you that if you see a drummer beating Takai, and someone is dancing, there is no talk inside it again. If you just put it that they are beating Takai, nobody will ask you anything. Takai is not something which somebody doesn't talk about and they will say he doesn't know. Somebody can ask you, "Do you know Dagbon? Do you know Takai?" You can say, "Yes, I know Dagbon, and I know Takai. This is how they beat Takai." That is all. It is we who want and we are sitting to talk all these things, and I am breaking it for you. That is how it is.

I don't want to tell you lies. No one knows the original beat of Takai or how they were beating it. And the reason is that Takai doesn't stand at one place. Do you see the Takai dancers? They have their group, and as they are dancing, they keep on training some dancers after them. If they see that those dancing are getting old, then they train other people, and those dancers train other people if they also get old. You can see some young dancers the old ones are now training: when these young people have finished learning, then the old ones will give up. These young people they are training at present, before they get old up to a middle size, they will not dance the Takai as it was danced before, the original way of the Takai, because they have started adding some different dances and new styles into it. Before they get to the age that people like Amadu Jaato reached, maybe the original beat of the Takai as we beat it will die, and it might be a new one altogether. And by that time, I and the others will not be alive. But they will still call it Takai. And those people who will be watching at that time too, they will think they are dancing the real thing because they also will not know the original beat as before. They will be the same new people as the dancers.

And so to me, if my heart wants, I can say that Takai started during the starting of Dagbon: I can just stand and say that at that time Takai was being beaten, from our starting. But truly, I don't know who started the Takai. We don't ask. No one started Takai; only drummers started Takai. Any time you hear a drummer beating Takai in a particular way, and someone is dancing, then you should just take it that the drummer started the beating. There are no old talks about it, and there is nothing compulsory about it. As I have said that Takai is not standing at one place, have you heard my talk? It means Takai is changing. I told you that it was Alhaji Adam Mangulana who was formerly in charge of the Takai drumming before I took over. If we are drumming now and he comes there, he says that we have changed the beat so much that we have spoiled it. And whatever happens, in the future it will also change. Even in our time it is not the original beat. That is what will keep on happening. To me, I think it is better. The change is better because that is the stage I have come to, and I feel that what we are doing in our drumming at present is good. If the old man says that the time they were drumming, the beat was better at that time, and I do not know what the beat was

then, I will feel that what we are doing now is better. In the future, they also will feel that it is better than what we are doing now. And if I am there, I will say that they are spoiling it. The way I know it will be different.

Truly, it is now that everything is changing. During the olden days, what they were beating was different: they were just beating one way throughout. There were not many styles like today. Now with eye-opening, everything is having more styles in it, and so now we have put many styles in Takai. But during the olden days there were not many styles; they were just beating the main style of Takai throughout. As Takai is now having many styles, I want you to know that many of these styles you can hear are not from anywhere. As for Takai, when you are beating Takai for the dancers, you the one who is beating Takai, you have to beat the drum very well to make the dancers become strong or feel to dance. That is the importance of the styles. When you are beating, you want the beating to go forward. The dancers will feel it. That is what will let the dance be nice.

You have been asking me about the meaning of the drumming in Takai, and today I am going to tell you more details. Inside our drumming, our Dagbani language usually shows us how to make the styles. There are talks inside the drums, and our drum sticks are also many. The drummer who is leading will be beating lundaa, the medium-sized drum, or lumbila, the small drum. The one beating the lundaa, his wrist will be fast, and he will take the way his wrist is fast to beat something. How he is beating the lundaa, he will talk, and those who are dancing, their legs will move correctly. It is plenty inside our dancing. But in Takai, you will see a drummer beating, and people will tell you that it is something in the Dagbani language, but it has no meaning. Why do I say that? There is nothing under it. The drummer only wants the way he will beat and bring styles inside so that the beating will go forward. And so if he is talking something, it's a useless talk. It doesn't show any meaning on the part of the dance or its importance. And so when I say there is no meaning, it shows that there is nothing under it again. The drummer is just bringing some funny things inside or taking his wrist to make the music sweet. And so if you go to a Takai place and you want to know the one who brought the Takai they are beating, then we just say that the drummers are the same people who brought it. It shows that the drummer introduced the talking of the drum, the drummer himself: he brought that particular beating.

You know, they usually bring new styles in the drumming. And so inside the beating of Takai, there can be many styles coming. But truly, on the main style beating of the dance, the drummers are just beating the sound of the dance. If someone tells you that most of drums in Takai are saying speeches, it is lies. Not all the drums talk. If I call the voices of the drums now, maybe you think they are

talking, but they are not; they are not talking. And so to me, I don't think that the drum is talking, but if somebody has told you this style is a speech, then you have to ask that fellow.

Truly, most of our drumming has talks in it that show how the drums are to be beaten. In the beating of Ʒem, every drummer is saying talks. If they are seven drummers, all of them are saying talks. If they are ten, all of them are saying talks. And in Baŋgumaŋa too, any style a drummer brings is saying talks. When we are going to beat Ʒem or Baŋgumaŋa, every drummer says talks, and as for that, it is true. But for Takai: no. Listen well. As for Ʒem, the meaning of the drumming is something that you have to tell the chief. And we only beat Baŋgumaŋa where there are red eyes, because Baŋgumaŋa is talking about war. As for Baŋgumaŋa and Ʒem, these two dances are for when we have to do something concerning death or some serious thing. We can be beating them in a dead body's house. But Takai is not danced when a dead body is still lying in the house. As for Takai, whenever we are beating Takai there will be no dead body lying down. Takai is danced when they are to perform the final funeral. By that time, everyone is somehow happy; it seems to be a happy day. We never dance Takai while a dead body is lying down. But as for Baŋgumaŋa or Ʒem, we can beat them when a dead body is lying down. If a chief dies, we will beat them. In the olden days, if a hunter went to the bush, and a lion caught him, they would tell the people in the house that a lion has caught a hunter in the bush, and then they would rush into the bush and kill this lion. They would be beating Ʒem when they were bringing this lion to the house. They would come to the chief's house with the lion, and they would carry the lion around in front of the chief's house while they were beating Ʒem. And so Ʒem and Baŋgumaŋa are danced in serious matters, and we have some things we are supposed to say with the drums.

I'm going to open your eyes. I told you that we used to get the ways of beating from our language. And the beating of the drums and the movement of the dancers also help us. And so it's not that there is no talking inside Takai beating. I think that sometimes you don't understand me because inside our Dagbani, if I say that some beating has no meaning, it doesn't mean that it is not talking. It means that there is nothing under it. It has no under: *gbini*. Sometimes something can have some talking inside of it, but it doesn't show that the talk is important. That is why I am telling you that Takai doesn't have talks. And so according to my understanding, drummers can take a song or some talk to make a style inside the Takai, and it will follow with the sound of the beating. If not that, maybe someone will just take his own mind to say something and make it a style that will fall nicely with the dance. A drummer can easily do that and add it to the main style he is beating. You know Salifu Kpema: the time he was alive, he used

to beat Yoruba on the drum. The time the Yorubas were here, he would beat a drum to them, greeting them, and they were giving him a lot of money. He wasn't a Yoruba, but he could just hear some things that they would say in the Yoruba language, and he would beat the talks on the drum. If not that, someone can be beating, and the hand will just start to beat something following with the drums. Even if it comes like that, sometimes people may take it and compare it to something in Dagbani. And so that is it.

And so in Takai, many of the styles don't have talking inside. And some of the styles have talking, but it's just a useless talking, like joking. There is nothing under it. They are just making it sweet. Somebody can be talking and it has no meaning: it is also inside drumming. You can be beating with the drum, and there is nothing behind it. That one, we used to call it, "your wrist is sweet." You will know that the way your wrist is sweet, you will use it to beat the drum, and the dance will be sweet. As for the calling of the chief's names, as for that one, there is a meaning. But as for Takai and Tora and such dances, what they beat inside with the wrist, it is only styles they are bringing inside to make the dance sweet. This is the way I know it. And so they will get a style from "my wrist is sweet," and they will add it into their beating, and then somebody will take it and compare it to a talk in Dagbani. That is how it is.

The way you are also learning how to beat, if a time comes and your wrist becomes sweet, you will see it. If you are beating some particular dance, you will think that because of the sweetness of your wrist, you can take it to be something to add into some particular beat, and it will be sweet. At that time, your wrist is very soft. And so when you are beating and your mind tells you something, say, from the way you are beating with your wrist, you will make it and it will go inside nicely, and then you will see that it will be sweet. The styles will follow correctly. And that one, there is no fault. Your wrist is beating the drum, and you'll be inside one style and another style will just come out. Sometimes you won't know where it came from. We just call it the sweetness of the wrist. You will be looking at it and thinking it is good if you put it inside. The next time you are beating, and it's coming like that, you will let it come inside again.

That is it. There is no way you can search through and see that because of this talk, you made this style. If you follow it, you will tell lies. You cannot follow it and search and come to know that: because of this, I did that. Even the way you are beating now, and your wrist is becoming soft, don't you see that sometimes you will make some style inside without even noticing? As for that one, you can't just sit down and say, "It means this." You were only looking for a way to make the beating go forward. It doesn't matter. There is no fault. There are a lot of things, when you are beating the drum, that if they ask you, you can't

explain them. It is your wrist that talks. That is it. Apart from the chief's side, the beating we used to do apart from the chiefs, some of it comes from the head, and some comes from the wrist. That is the way it is. If you talk about it like that, nobody can challenge you.

Truly, apart from the main style beating in Takai, some of the styles are like joking, and so some of them are talking. You see how the lundaa starts beating *Te dan dan dan*. At the starting of Takai, you have to beat *te dan dan dan, te dan dan dan*, and at that time the dancers will be going around. They will go around their circle before you will hear the sound of the sticks. This is how it is. All that is called Takai. In the main Takai style, *Te dan dan dan*, there is not any language inside. When they start, the lundaa is beating *Te dan dan dan, te dan dan dan*. As lundaa is beating like that, many people take it that it is *Takai m-bala, Takai m-bala*: "Takai, that is it." And so it is the name of Takai that the lundaa is calling: "That is Takai; that is Takai." If you beat it like that, everybody knows that it is Takai that is going on there. And to me, some people just take it to compare to that; it isn't that the drum is saying that.

And again, at the starting, as the dancers are going round, you will see that they don't hit their sticks to one another unless they go around and come to the starting point. Then you will see the sticks hitting one another. This is the way we see Takai. And so what I am telling you, that is the way we all grew up and met it. In the olden days, if they were going to form their circle and dance Takai, what they used to do was to choose those who are of the same height for each section. If they select them like that, then the tallest are at one side, and the shortest are at another side. If you start to beat it, then when they turn to the other dancers behind them, they won't miss hitting their sticks. As they have grouped themselves like that, when they also turn back to the other dancers in front, their sticks will match. From the olden days up to now, this is what we have been seeing. That is Takai.

I told you that in Takai, children will be singing, *Saysi zani ka niŋ kpem' zuyu, kpai! Dim pa taali*: "Turn and knock an old person on the head, kpai! It doesn't matter." And another way to sing it is, *Saysi zani ka niŋ bii zuyu, kpai! Dim pa taali*: "Turn and knock a young person on the head, kpai! It doesn't matter." We also beat it on the drum and guŋgɔŋ. On the drum, we beat it: *Zan di dan, zan dan dan dan, zan di dan dan*. This is how the lundaa is beating. And the sticks will be knocking like that. And so that style has got a talk, and many people know it like that. As we come together to beat the drums, beating the Takai, and the children are coming closer, if we tell them to get back and they refuse, then you can knock one of them, and it doesn't matter. Then the child will get back. Apart from that, when you spin and turn, then you will use your stick to

knock the stick of the next person behind you. That is why they talk like that, because of the way the sticks are hitting one another. And you see that when they are beating Takai, there are children and there are grown-ups. Sometimes you will watch the children dance Takai, and you will see that they become confused. Then you the child: if you don't know how to dance and by mistake they hit your head, it is over to you. That is *Saysi zani ka niŋ bii zuyu, kpai! Dim pa taali*. You can also beat that style in Kondalia, and it will fit. The *gunḡḡḡ* also beats it in Takai: *kwom kwo kwom, kwom kwa kwom kwom kwom, kwa kwo kwo kwom*. And so people watch and call it like that. But that is not the name of Takai.

And so the way we used to beat Takai, sometimes the *lundaa* used to beat, "If you turn and hit the head of an old person, it is not a fault." It's not that they are supposed to be knocking one another on the head. They are joking. And so as for that talk, they only talk it inside. They have never tried to hit somebody's head before. They just say it like that. It is not anything inside the Takai. It's just a joke. This *saysi zani*: the *gunḡḡḡ* sounds like that when we are beating Takai, and the drum also sounds the same way. They sound, and this is the beginning of the Takai. Then the sticks too will hit: *kpai!* The *gunḡḡḡ* and the drums will be responding the same way, but as for that one, it's just a joke. It is inside the beating that they beat, and people only call it like that. They are not meaning anybody's head. Or did you ever go to watch Takai and they showed you somebody's head, that this is the head that is concerned? But the time we were growing up and we came to our senses, this is the way they were beating, and this is what we were told. And on the part of how we watch the dance, if the song or the drum that beats like that, it follows the way the dancers hit their sticks to one another. And so the way they were beating it when we were young, whether it was the one beating the *lundaa* who brought it inside, or that is the real name of the beating, we didn't know. The way I am talking to you, when we were growing, we grew up and heard our elders saying something like that. This is the way I heard about that beating. That is how it is.

Apart from that, they didn't show us talks inside Takai. There is a style *lundaa* beats: *zan dan dan din, zan dan din*. It's plenty inside Takai. There is no language; it is only a style. This is the way I have asked and the way I know. The main *gunḡḡḡ* style too follows the movement of their legs, and there is no name given to that one. As the rest of the drummers will be responding, *ten den ten den, ten den ten den*, that one also goes with the legs of the dancers. You always watch the movement of the legs, and the dancers have to watch the beating of the *lumbobli*, those drummers who are responding and beating *ten den ten den*, so that their legs will be following the beating. And so there is no name given to that one.

And so this is what I know about it. And so to me, the way I have asked, that is why I say that Takai hasn't got any meaning apart from a funeral or wedding or when a chief is installed. And so the talks inside Takai, you don't have to take them to be anything. We grew up and met Takai, and nobody showed us that this is what the drum is saying inside. It's only that some people will talk, and we hear. If you want to talk about it, you should separate it, that inside the Takai or Tōra, the drummers sometimes used to bring some kind of joking or playing, to make people happy when they are dancing. And the one I showed you that we heard it from older people, on the part of turning and knocking someone on the head, that one follows how someone will look at the dancing. If somebody says that it is an old talk inside Takai, I won't argue. But to me, it doesn't show that Takai has any talks or that this is how Takai started.

As we have been beating Kondalia inside Takai, the first time when you were here and you were learning it, my son Alhassan told you that the meaning of Kondalia was something like: he takes the corn and throws away the husk, that is, he takes some of the corn and throws the rest on the ground like a thief who is running with it. Alhassan told you that the meaning was: he throws the husk on the ground, or he doesn't use it. As he has given that meaning to Kondalia, it is lies. I am not the one who told you that. I will never tell you something and forget about it. Truly, all the talks you told me that Alhassan said to you, I have never heard any of them before. I don't know where he heard them. I have never heard someone saying them. And so if anyone wants to tell you words for these styles of beating inside Takai, he is lying. It is lies because I myself am the one who has been getting styles and bringing all these styles when beating Takai, and as I brought the styles and I did not give them meaning, how can an outside person give them meaning? "This style is called this; that style is called that." It is lies. I am the right person to give them meaning, but I have no name or talk for them. And so the styles that a drummer will take to beat in Takai, they are just a joke, and this talking or joking is only to make the Takai dances nice.

And so Alhassan, if not that he heard it from somewhere, it just shows that somebody can master the sound of the drum and decide which sound could fit. For example, as you have been beating *gunḡḡḡ* or *luḡa* here, any time I can just listen to the sound and then try to compare the sound with some talk in Dagbani. As I have taken the sound to compare to some talk, they are not the same. Here is the Dagbani language, and I have taken the sound to compare it. But I am not the one who beat it. Won't you know it's lies? It can't be correct. That is why I told you that some people are serious to give some talk to Baḡumaḡa: *Man' dan yeli ka nyim' bi lan nya*. It's not correct, but many people believe that that is the talk inside Baḡumaḡa. The one Namo-Naa talked and I showed you, *Bem bo ma be*

pam bo ma je, you have to stand at that place, because Namo-Naa is our oldest drummer. Even if many people listen to the beating of the drum and take it to be the other one, it is not there like that. And so Alhassan was telling lies about Takai. I am not fighting for you not to learn this drumming. Whenever you come to learn this drumming and find something which is difficult for you, you have to ask me. All the steps of drumming, you have to ask me before you can get to the right place. You don't have to ask just anyone. Some people are always telling lies. It is because the styles for these Takai dances are not serious, so someone can just make up these meanings like that. The ones that I have counted, I have heard people saying them. It can happen that a drummer is talking some talks with the beating, but the talks don't have any meaning in Takai on the part of why the Takai has come. And so whatever question you have, you have to ask me. Or if you want, you can ask someone and see what he will talk. And so I am not telling you what my heart wants. What I am telling you is how it is. Some of the styles have meaning and some of them have no meaning.

Any time you ask me something, I will tell you the truth. Listen well. Last you came to me and said that a drummer told you that the lumbobli had some talk, and it was saying *nyu dam ti nyu dam*: drink pito; let's drink pito. You see that the Dagbani follows the sound of the drums. But it is not there like that. If you are going around listening to other people's talks, you will spoil what you are learning from me. Anybody who gives you a different thing, it's a different thing. If you bring it into our talks, it will spoil your work. And so as for such talks, don't follow them. You should follow what I am telling you. Are you looking for the truth or you are looking for lies? You want the truth. Inside our family, our mouth doesn't know how to tell lies. And as for me, my hands are not inside lies. If I am with someone, and I see that the fellow is interested in lies, I will just tell him that he should go his way and befriend his fellow liar.

I'm not saying this because I like myself. Dagbamba used to say that watching is evidence of everything. The way they used to beat the Takai, you have been seeing it. When they are beating Takai, have you ever seen that they come and put pito there, and they are drinking? If you hadn't been to Dagbon, it would have been different, but you have been to Dagbon. Have you even seen that they are beating Takai and they bring drink there and put it down, and they are drinking? If you come to hear someone say, "Come and eat this thing; come and eat this thing; come and eat this thing," it shows that they have put the thing there, and the beating tells you that the thing they are talking about in the drums is just standing there. And so compare what I have told you to the dance. You yourself can use your own eye to see it. You are not a stranger in Dagbon again. You will see whether what I told you is inside or not inside the dance. If we are beating

Takai, the only thing they bring there is water, in a big pan, and they put it there, and that water, it's meant for the dancers, if anybody is thirsty, or the drummers. Then they fetch it and drink. So I'm going to tell you today. What you are holding now, you must hold it with your two hands. Don't go and listen to people's talks and add it to your talks. If you are going to be listening to those kind of talks, it will spoil your work. That is what I have to tell you.

Dagbamba have a proverb which says that they can deceive a blind person about everything except cold. What a blind person cannot see is there, but if it is cold, the blind person will know it. And so they can only deceive you at a place where your eyes cannot see. The one your eyes can see, maybe you have seen it in different ways, but if somebody tells you that there is a different thing, and all the differences you've seen, you haven't come across what the fellow is telling you, what will you think? If you were to have been a different white man who had not been to Dagbon to see how Dagbon dances are, maybe you will be deceived. But I am very sure that you have watched Takai more than a hundred times. I want you to tell me if ever one day you have seen pito being brought to a Takai place, you yourself. And so if somebody talks like that to you, you can be bold to tell him that what he is talking about Takai is not true, because you have watched Takai many times, but you have never seen pito there. How is it that food is not there, and they are calling people to come and eat it? This is the question you can ask.

And so, what I'm telling you is the truth on the part of the dance. What our elders told us, that is what we give to our friends. So don't go and carry useless people's talks into your better talks. As for those who follow useless people, one day, if their anus is open and they are ashamed, you will not be involved. If their talk comes out and your own comes out, you will see that you will receive many people, and you will show them the truth inside the talks I'm giving you. And those who will follow useless people, they will follow them and see the results. Everyone has what he is holding, and it is true, and it will be solving his problems. Dagbamba used to call their proverbs: if you look down upon what you are holding, you will sleep with hunger. This is one of the proverbs of Dagbon. Whatever you are holding, and you are praying to God, that on the part of the one who showed you, you will say, "May God bless you." You should open your two hands and hold it well. If it is a small thing, it will become plenty. And so inside our talk, this is what I know. As for these other people, forget about their talks.

And so the styles inside Takai don't add anything to it. If they are talking, they are only making jokes, for people to laugh. There is nothing under it. And the ones I have been hearing, as we beat Nyayboli, I have told you that in Nyayboli, they will be beating *Naa sa boon' a k'a zaysi, a nyiri gbɔngbamba; gbamba, gbamba*. The drumming is saying that the chief called his wife, but she

refused. And they will be answering “*A nyiri gbingbamba*,” which means “your flat bottom”: it is an insult. There is another one in Nyayboli: *Zaṅm’ ma bahi ka n chaṅ tɔra ni. Yee m bayu bɔ m-be tɔra ni. Maliyambila kam’ na ka ti chaṅ tɔra ni. Yee m bayu bɔ m-be tɔra ni.* “Let me go to the Tɔra dance.” “I don’t care about Tɔra.” “Small Maliyam, come and we’ll go to the Tɔra dance.” “I don’t care for Tɔra.” The under of it, it shows that drummers were gathered to beat Tɔra, and a girl wanted to dance Tɔra, and a young man came and tried to hold the girl in a room; and the girl cried, “Leave me! I want to go out to dance Tɔra.” And the young man said, “What is Tɔra? I don’t care about Tɔra.” And drummers will be drumming this and then answering, and saying that Small Maliyam wants to dance Tɔra. All this is talking, but it is not saying anything except what will let people laugh. That is the way we beat it, and it also gives those who are going to dance it excitement when they dance. So that is it.

When the lundaa is going to start Kondalia, there is something in Hausa. The way he starts it is: *A bu na sichiṅ zani daadi naa sichiṅ woondo.* The meaning is, “There is something sweet inside a cloth, there is something sweet inside trousers.” There is sweetness inside a woman’s cloth, and the sweetest thing for it is inside a man’s trousers. In Kondalia, this is how the lundaa starts it. And so this one talks about something between a man and a woman. If the drum is beating and talking like that, it gives the dancers excitement, and they dance more. It will heat the dance.

There is another one: *Pan kpil sal’lana su kom kul dam tiṅa.* The vagina that has no hair on it, any woman who has it, if she is bathing, she shouldn’t squat down. That is it. It means that a woman who has no hair on the vagina shouldn’t bend down when bathing because people can easily see her. And another one is: *Zaan kum bemalana puhima ayaa nima.* In Dagbon, what we call *zaan kum bemalana* is somebody who has no weight, and the legs are very thin. So it is “Tall, skinny-legged person: greet your home-town people.” That one too is another part of the same thing. It’s two different things they are talking about, but how lundaa is beating, the sound is the same. This *pan kpil sal’lana*, the women used to sing it inside Tɔra. And when the women are dancing, we drummers also use our drums to beat it inside. If I take a drum and beat it, both of the two styles look alike. The way the drum beats *Pan kpil sal’lana* inside, it looks similar to *zaan kum bemalana*. That is what I know about it.

And so I’m not saying that they have taken one way of beating to compare to different talks. That way too is there, but these two talks I have showed are different. When you hear different styles of drumming, you should know that different styles are not the same. All the ones I have counted, I have heard people saying them. But when any other style comes, it has no meaning on the part of

talking. The other additional beating that other drummers beat so that it will go into the dancers, we just say that such-and-such a drummer's wrist is very good. The way they are dancing it, you the drummer want what you will do and their bodies will become high. If the one beating the lundaa comes to add any additional thing that his heart wants, there is nothing wrong. And it can happen that even the one even beating, he wouldn't know exactly what is going on. He only wants the way he will make it so that the dance will be nice. And so these things are there, but we don't take any of it to worry ourselves. This is the way I grew up and saw Takai. And so you don't have to be standing too much on the talks inside the styles of Takai. If you do that, maybe you will say that this beating means something, or you will say that this is the starting of this particular beating, and it is not true. It is going to spoil your name.

And so in Takai, the main individual drumming styles don't have meanings, but as we are not saying anything, it's not that we beat Takai by heart. Takai is important, and it has a lot of talk in Dagbon. We have a general word for Takai, a general name for the whole drumming. Whenever we are beating, if it is a wedding or a chief's house or a dead body's house, that is the time we will be beating it, and that is the name we have given to it. There is no other name given to any of the ways in the drumming. All the styles of beating are equal, but they are different, and it is one name we give all of them. And so the styles don't have any meaning at all. And Takai too has no meaning apart from what I have showed you. Nyayboli is also the same. If a drummer is drumming, if he wants, he can beat some styles on the drum, and sometimes the styles will be saying something, and sometimes the styles will be coming from a song somewhere, but it doesn't show that what he is saying has any meaning on the part of the Takai dance. The dances only have a general meaning. There are many dances inside Takai, but Takai is carrying the name. We only say, "So-and-so has called Takai. We are going to beat Takai."

As there are many different dances inside Takai, some have been added. It is all one, but they have different beating and different steps. The time I was growing up, when they were beating Takai, they used to beat Nyayboli and they used to beat Kondalia, too. I don't know any meaning inside Kondalia. We grew up and met Kondalia and Nyayboli inside Takai. And do you see *Dibs' ata*? They also used to beat that one. The reason why we call *Dibs' ata* is because when they are dancing, we knock the drums three times, and the dancers also knock the sticks three times; *Dibs' ata* means "three sticks." That is the only meaning. Some people also call it *Tanchili gɔŋ*, that is, a crooked loincloth. *Dibs' ata* and the other two were there with Takai. We grew up and met them. In the villages and the other towns, they don't dance all of the dances that have been added. They

dance Takai, Nyayboli, Kondalia and Dibs' ata. That is four, and they are only ones people know in the villages. Those four dances are the original Takai, and I think that we were dancing them from the very first.

Do you see *Ijun' Da Nyuli*? We put it inside. We the drummers in this Tamale, we decided to put *Ijun' Da Nyuli* into Takai. It is *Ijun' Da Nyuli* that women used to dance as *Tora*, as they are jumping about, knocking their bottoms. It was *Tuubaankpilli* people who were dancing it, and *Tora* people collected it, and we in Tamale collected it into the Takai. I have told you that behind *Ijun' Da Nyuli* is: a woman was going to a farmer to buy yams, and she went to the farmer and she bought the yams, and the farmer bought the bottom of the woman; if the woman buys the yams, then he too will buy the bottom. And again, I also told you that we take it that someone bought the yam in the market and bought the bottom and added. That is *Ijun' Da Nyuli*: the one who buys yams.

Apart from *Ijun' Da Nyuli*, we took *Dam' Duu* and added it. I told you that *Dam' Duu* is a praise for a particular chief, *Tali-Naa Alhassan*. As for *Dam' Duu*, you know, if a mouse is in a room, any time there is a noise in the room, they will say, "Oh! There is that mouse which has been disturbing all the time inside the room." As it is a mouse, they have given a bad name to a mouse; whatever is making noise in a room, or if anything falls inside the room, they say the mouse is making noise. *Dam' Duu: jengbarga deei yu' bieyu* is, "Disturbance in a room; a mouse has got a bad name." We knew that it has steady beating, so we knew that if we included it in the Takai it would be good, because Takai has got steady beating. We didn't change the beating of *Dam' Duu* at all. It was about four or five years after we added *Ijun' Da Nyuli*. Up to now, there are some groups dancing Takai in town, and they cannot dance *Dam' Duu* inside Takai. They don't know how to dance it. We have been practicing it, and that is why we are able to dance it.

Ijum Mali Kpion is another one, and it is also a new dance for Takai. Some people use it as their praise name, but it is not any one person; anyone who likes can use it. The meaning of *Ijum Mali Kpion* is: if a poor man and a rich man have a quarrel, or a poor man and a chief have a quarrel, and they are sent to a police station or any other place for the case to be judged, you know that the people will give the right to the chief, just because he is the chief and the other is a poor man. If a poor man and a rich man have a quarrel, they will give the right to the rich man because he has got money, and the poor man has nothing. So the one who has strength has the right. That is the meaning of *Ijum Mali Kpion*: "The one who has strength."

Whenever we want to put anything into one of the dances, we compare it, asking: if I put this into the dance, will it be nice or not? Then we can decide to

put it inside. Anything we want to put into the dances, we sit together and decide whether it will be moving with the drumming or not. And as I am the leader of the Takai drummers in Tamale here, if not me, no one can decide to put ɲun' Da Nyuli into Takai. I sat with those who are beating now. When we took ɲun' Da Nyuli to put it into Takai, we added some styles to it; we didn't take it straight. I told you that those who are beating Baamaaya now, the time we were calling their dance Tuubaanƙpilli, they had ɲun' Da Nyuli. And I told you that as Nyayboli is also inside Baamaaya now, Baamaaya people took it from us, but Baamaaya people started ɲun' Da Nyuli inside Tuubaanƙpilli. As we have collected it like that, I want you to know that we never came just to imitate someone in the drumming. When we imitate you to beat something, it won't be the same as you have been beating: we will beat it much better than you. Even though we have imitated it from you, soon after that we will beat it better than you. When Baamaaya people are beating and you see them, you won't see even three of these luns drums. In Baamaaya, you will only rather see one luɲa, and then two or three guɲɔɲ. And at the same time, they have bought all these drums from us, so we take it that if you buy something from someone and go to beat it, and you are taking it to do the same work as that person is doing, you can never be the equal of that person. You have bought it from us, so we are always in front. Those who are beating Baamaaya can't beat a drum better than us. Never. It can't be. Do you see Nyayboli? When guɲɔɲ is beating Nyayboli in Baamaaya, it is only: *kwom kwom kwom kwom, kwom kwom kwom kwom, kwom kwom*. They don't have these luns drums to support them, and they don't have many styles.

And so we are the people who put ɲun' Da Nyuli into Takai, those of us beating now. The time we added ɲun' Da Nyuli inside Takai, Alhaji Adam was not among. He left it long ago. As I am teaching you, it is not that I am forcing you to follow me. You can ask others. But if you go and ask, they might tell you a lot of lies, in order to draw you to them. That is what can happen. But if you want to know more than what I can tell you, you have to get inside for yourself. As for me, I grew up and saw Alhaji Adam drumming and I was following him with the guɲɔɲ. Alhaji Adam was beating the luɲa, and I was beating the guɲɔɲ, just as my son Alhassan has been following me now. But I can tell you that there are some people who have children and grandchildren, and they did not see Alhaji Adam drum. And so I have got a lot of experience; if someone who has not seen Alhaji Adam beat a drum wants to tell you something about him, whatever happens, he is going to tell you lies.

Fuseini Alhassan Jebli, Salifu Kpema the singer, Alhassan Abukari the son of Lun-Zoo-Naa, Abdulai Seidu the boxer and Adambila Iddi: these were the important people who were beating when we did it. We sat down and discussed it,

and then afterwards, we practiced and we got it before we started with it. During the time we were practicing, some knew how to drum and others didn't know. And those of us who knew continued teaching them until they became perfect. In the evenings, we would beat the drums and stop, and then talk, and then take the drums and beat again. It took about twenty days. This was around 1966. The Arts Council was not even formed at that time: it was known as the Cultural Centre. The government used to call this Tamale Takai group since the colonial days. Even before Nkrumah came to power, the white government used to call them to Accra and they would beat Takai. This Takai group is not included among the groups the Arts Council has organized. At that time, we were only beating Takai with the original four dances: Takai, Nyayboli, Dibs' ata, and Kondalia. And the reason why we added ɔ̃un' Da Nyuli was just that we knew it would be good if we beat ɔ̃un' Da Nyuli inside the Takai dance. It was a Tɔ̃ra dance, but the Tɔ̃ra people got it from the Tuubaɔ̃kpilli people, so it went from Tuubaɔ̃kpilli into Tɔ̃ra before we took it for Takai. We didn't call the dancers to ask them how they could dance it. The time we started practicing it, you wouldn't see a dancer there. We didn't call them at all. They just heard us beating it, and then they started practicing. They didn't say anything. Now they are perfect in that particular dance.

And so in the olden days, if you were beating Takai, you would beat Takai and finish, and then take Nyayboli, Dibs' ata, Kondalia. Those three would be adding, and that was all. After that, it was finished. Now if you are going to count what you beat inside Takai, they will be up to five or six or seven. We want the beating to be interesting, and we want it to last. Dam' Duu and ɔ̃un' Da Nyuli and ɔ̃un Mali Kpion: all are inside Takai now. Formerly they were not inside, and so we have added to the Takai. And now that we have added like that, is it not nice? It is nice. And so there is no fault.

The dances are all equal in Takai, but there are differences. How we beat them, Takai is somehow slow, Nyayboli is beaten fast, Dibs' ata is slow, and Kondalia is also somewhat fast. As we take each dance one after the other, getting to the end of each dance, the dancing will be faster, and then you come to the next one and cool yourself before you also bring it up. That is how we beat it. And truly, to dance Takai is difficult. Dancers fear Takai because it makes them tired. The drummers too usually are afraid of Takai. You can't get a chance to rest and breathe well when you are beating Takai, and that is why we don't beat it for long hours. If you are beating Takai, within thirty minutes, you can't breathe well. You will be tired. Many drummers can't beat the Takai drumming up to thirty minutes time. I can say that half of all the drummers here don't know how to beat Takai. You will ask someone to beat Takai, and he will just tell you, "I don't

know how to beat Takai.” Beating Takai is hard work. The reason is that as the dancers are going around and around, you the drummer also follow them around and around with your drum. How can you breathe to your satisfaction? But if you don’t follow the dancers, the Takai will not be sweet. Those who are dancing, they don’t rest, and they don’t breathe to their satisfaction, and for you who beat the drum, following them, it is the same thing. So that is how it is.

On the part of our dances, I can say that Takai is harder than Baamaaya. As for Baamaaya dancers, most of them dance up to daybreak. You can’t dance Takai like that. If you beat Takai for long, it won’t be more than two hours. If you see that they beat it up to three hours, that means they started the thing from the morning. If you are going to beat it like that, everybody will get tired, and they cannot do anything again. And so Takai and Baamaaya are not equal. It’s not that Baamaaya dancers don’t get tired. But as for them, their tiredness is different from Takai tiredness. Do you see how the Takai dancers spin themselves? Somebody can easily feel dizzy. If you are going to be spinning around and around, and somebody is just passing one way and shaking his waist, can the two of you be equal? That is why there is more tiredness inside Takai than Baamaaya.

The drumming, too, you see them also running around and around. If they don’t follow the dancers, running around and chasing them with the drums, the young men won’t get the strength to dance. The way you have been watching Takai, have you been seeing the drummers standing at one place? No. That is the reason why they get tired. You beat and go round, and you get tired. If I’m sitting on a chair, and I’m beating a drum, I don’t get tired. Do you think I will get tired? But if the drum is in my armpit, and I’m beating, and I am also running around, that will bring the tiredness. At times, there are some people, after beating Takai, they can’t eat. They have to rest very well. And so because of the tiredness, you don’t have to beat Takai or dance Takai for a long time. Apart from that, among our Dagbamba dances, Nakohi-waa is also hard work. Bangumaṇa is also hard work. These are also adding to Takai, on the part of the tiredness. And so many drummers are afraid of these dances, to be beating them for a long time.

But to me, I think that the Takai is the most difficult of all the drumming. Nyayboli is very difficult because it is so fast, and the styles need very hurried beating: if you don’t hurry, the styles will just get missing from your head. And as Nyayboli is always somewhat fast, I can say that all of the Takai dances, you take them one by one, slow and then gradually a bit fast. Truly, Nyayboli does not want to be beaten coolly. You have to start it coolly, and getting to the middle, you take it high. By that time, those who are dancing will show you that you should take it high. They don’t show it with the mouth; you have to watch their legs. That will show you that you should keep on bringing it up. The beating of

Kondalia is also very hard. Kondalia is quick, and the styles too are also fast, and they are many. For one who knows, the styles are many; for one who doesn't know, they are few. Someone who does not know some styles of Kondalia, he might be thinking that there are only a few styles. You might find somebody beating Kondalia straightforward, and he has no styles to put inside. He doesn't know the styles at all. I myself, I have not counted the styles I know, because I am always adding more styles. But I can say that I will usually bring in six or seven styles when I am beating Kondalia. I don't count them. And so I am not counting my styles: otherwise, I might be having ten today, and tomorrow, others will be showing me another one making eleven. For someone who knows the styles of Kondalia, they are many.

And as the styles of Takai are many, there are differences in our beating. For example, in Tamale or Savelugu, there are differences. Those who are living in the towns and those living in the villages have different styles in beating the Takai. For example, if you are having some trousers, someone may have also have trousers in Savelugu with same material, but when you see him you will find that his trousers are sewn differently compared to yours, but you are both having the same material. And on the part of drumming, those who are living in they town beat much better than those who are living in the villages. And it is only because the town drummers know more styles on it. Some of the additional styles have come because dances like Dam' Duu and Ijun' Da Nyuli are inside Takai now. That is one point. But even if it is Takai itself, what they beat to dance Takai in the villages is only this: *zan dan din din, zan dan din din, zan dan din din*. Those playing in the village do not have styles more than that. But those living in the town, they always know much better than those living in the villages because they have more experience in it.

It is not that all Dagbamba drummers know how to beat Takai: they must learn it, and some of them learn it and some of them do not. That is why they have special groups for those who are to dance Takai and dance it very nicely, without any confusion in it. Those who are beating Takai here are the right people because they went and learned it very well. And those of us in Tamale here are the best group among all the Dagbamba. Why is it so? We have been practicing all the time, and we have been dancing throughout all the nine regions in Ghana. Any time the government wants people to come and beat the Takai dance in any of the regions, we know it better than the other people, and any time we beat, we are chosen as the best.

Let me give you an example into details so that you will show how the Takai dance is happening. Takai is still beaten in funerals and for white heart. If you are marrying, and you know you can call us, it doesn't matter: you can call us

to come and beat Takai, if only you are willing to call us. Anybody at all can call us. We are after money, so anybody can call us to come and beat. But we don't beat it by heart. If the elder of the funeral wants, after the three days, he can call the Takai. But we don't beat it because "Somebody died here and it is three days; we have to go and beat Takai." And so as for the Takai dance, we have all grown up and met it like that. There is no asking again. We have all grown up to meet Takai. And what we know is that if someone is dead, the time they are going to make the funeral, it is Takai that they will dance in the evening. After general prayers on a festival day, too, sometimes they will organize a Takai dance for young people to dance. If a chief eats chieftaincy and he has got his elders, the elders may decide to call the Takai people to come and dance for one week. That is what we call Takai. That is how the beating of Takai is. If somebody is wedding, and he knows that he can call Takai people to dance for him in the wedding, then he can send them cola and some amount of money, and they will come and dance Takai.

Formerly, if someone wanted to call Takai, he would send a bowl of cola and add one pound, that is, two cedis. If someone sends the cola to me as a greeting, I will also share the cola and send it to the dancers and the other drummers to inform them. When the cedi spoiled, the money on top went to twenty cedis and two hundred cedis and up. But the amount of money for the greeting is not large, and we don't worry ourselves about it. After the beating, again, the one who has called us will give us money. Someone who has the means will give us money to his extent, and someone who does not have can give to his extent.¹ And he will say that the dancers should take it and buy soap and wash their smocks. And if we beat Takai, during the dance some people used to come out and give us gifts. Those who are at the gathering used to come in and give money, and some days we will beat and get money, and that amount is not included in the amount we will be given for the beating.

Apart from that, if we finish the Takai, then we will beat some dances for the people at the gathering to be dancing individually. Even in the olden days, they used to dance dances after the Takai, but now that we have many different ways of beating, the thing has come more. And if they don't want the praising, then we will beat only Takai for them. When we finish the Takai, and the dancers sit down, then it is almost getting to time for us to finish. Everyone is in hurry to go home and pray the evening prayers. And so the praises are not by force, but if it happens that we will be praising them, then money will also be adding when

1. 1975: 60-80 cedis, or about 20 to 40 dollars; the price remained relatively consistent in dollar terms.

they are dancing. All this money will be adding. When we come back with the money, those dancers who have the same age will take the same amount. Those who are behind them, following them, they have the amount they are going to take if they reach their share, and those who are behind again too, they will also take something. Let's say just take it as an example and say that a person calls us to beat and he has given twenty cedis to us: we will share it so that the drummers will take ten cedis and the dancers will take ten cedis. The reason why the dancers receive their share is that as they wear their smocks to the dance, some of them sweat, and the smocks always get dirty. They have to take money which they all share, and the amount each of them gets, he will take it to somebody who will wash the smock and then iron it for him.

It's not all days of a funeral when we will beat Takai. They have to do some customs before we beat the Takai. I told you that they used to shave the hair of the funeral children because of the death. After they have done that, sometimes we can beat Takai. If they are going to shave the hair of the children and grandchildren, then the day before, in the evening, they will send the cola nuts to me to call the Takai people to dance, or they will send them to other people. There are other drummers who beat Takai. Even today there was a funeral and they shaved the heads, and tomorrow, Takai is to take place, but I don't know yet whether we will beat or some other people. We are still waiting for the greeting of the cola and the one pound.

And so as we have been going to funeral houses to beat drums, it is not every funeral house where we beat Takai. If they are going to do what we call "showing the riches," then around four o'clock in the afternoon, when drummers go to a funeral house, we can beat all of the dances. If we are going to beat Takai, after they finish dancing the Takai, we can also beat any of the other dances for people to dance. We add them to follow the Takai beating. But when there is a funeral, if they do not send the cola to tell us to beat Takai, we won't beat Takai, and we will only beat the other dances. There are no customs like all this for the wedding. The only thing is that they come to call the drummers to go and beat for the women and the men and the old men and old women to dance. If someone has the means, he can also call Takai.

The reason why you don't see Takai all the time is that among all the dances, Takai is an important dance because of the knowledge inside it. And so we do not have to be beating it unless we have an important thing to do. Sometimes we may reach some months and we will not beat Takai, and it is just because they don't call us to beat Takai. If they don't ask us to beat Takai, how can we go out and be beating Takai when what must happen before we beat Takai is not happening. If it is the general prayers in a festival month, it is two times

during one year. And if it is to be in the wedding, somebody may wed but he has no money to call a Takai dance. And again, somebody's father may die, but he has no money to call a Takai dance, and somebody's mother too can be dead, and he has no money to call Takai. And we can't go and be beating at somebody's house for free. And again, Takai itself is a type of dance that no one can dance alone or without a full group. There is no time that we would be beating all the dances and someone will just come out and say, "Beat Takai for me to dance." As for the Takai, they can be dancing it, and after the Takai, somebody can say I want Naanigoo or Naybiëyu or anything, and we can beat it for the fellow to dance. But if Takai has not been organized, and they are beating any other different dance, they can't be coming out and saying, "I want you to beat Takai for me to dance."

And so for example, if it is a funeral, if we are to beat Takai, it will be the day after they shave the heads. Whenever there is a new chief, if we are to beat Takai every day for a week, we will beat all the days throughout the one week. We drummers go to the chief's house or funeral house to start by about four o'clock or four-thirty, and we will let some of the young drummers and the children to be beating. By then, most of those who dance the Takai have not yet come. Some of them are government workers. Some of them are traders. Someone may be living at Sabonjida, someone may be living at Tishigu, someone will be sitting in the market. And so when we go to the funeral house or chief's house to start beating, then the fellow sitting in the market will remember when he hears the sound of the drums; he will say, "Oh-h! Yes, I remember. They have given me cola to come and dance Takai." Then he will gather his dress for the dance and come. Another one who is at another place too will hear the sound, and he will go home quickly to dress, and he will come to dance Takai. If two people come, then they will wait for the others to come. Three people cannot dance Takai. Four people can't dance it. We will keep on beating until we get up to ten people. If they reach the ten people, we can start beating before the others will also come. Sometimes we will get about thirty people, sometimes forty, sometimes twenty, and sometimes fifteen people.

To me, fifteen people can dance best, or twenty people can dance it best. And it is coming from how they learn it. If they are too many, the dance will spoil. It is not nice. As for the lunsu drummers, about six or seven drummers usually beat. There are two guṅṅoṅs in the Takai dance. One should be standing in front and the other behind. And I the one who is beating the lundaa or lumbila, I will hold the drum and stand beside the one who is holding the guṅṅoṅ in front. And the other drummers who are holding lunsu should stand behind the one who is holding the guṅṅoṅ that is at the back, and so maybe three or five drummers will

be there like that. And if there is someone who can also beat the luṅa and lead, that drummer can receive the beating from me. And so sometimes two drums will beat and three drums will beat the track of the beating behind. But if you go to some place where there are not many drums, if you get two guṅḡḡḡḡḡḡ and then two or three drums, it can be all right for the Takai dancers.

All the drummers are inside the circle of the dancers, and we follow them around as they dance. We are not to stand at one place. Takai should not be beaten while you are standing in one place. It is the kind of dance that those beating should be following the dancers so that their bodies will be getting strong. Sometimes you can be following them around, around, and around, and you will reach somebody, and the sound of the drum will beat him so that he will be dancing, and you will follow him and beat the drum, and the sound will go through him, and then he will be happy and be dancing very well.

Sometimes when we go, we beat Takai about one hour, but sometimes it won't reach an hour. If the people come in time, we will beat for one hour or for forty-five or fifty-five minutes. Sometimes six o'clock will come and there is still sun, but as most of us are people who pray, we will close to go home and pray. But usually we continue beating up to six o'clock. That was how we were also doing it in the olden days, from four o'clock until about six. When we go and start, we start with the Takai beat itself; sometimes we can continue beating Takai up to the end. And sometimes too we can change to beat about three different kinds of dances or two, and then the sun has set. It doesn't matter.

And so we don't change the dances quickly. But nowadays, for example, if the government or someone who is educated calls us to beat at some official gathering at the police park, as the heads of states or commissioners and big people have been coming to this Northern Region, they will call many groups. The reason why the government people call us to come and dance if somebody comes to Dagbon is because they want to see our traditional dance. We too, we like it, because if you get a stranger in your home town, it's good you dance your home-town dance for the stranger to see. If the stranger goes back to his home town, he will also tell them that the place he visited, this is the way they dance there: "The time I visited such-and-such a town, they brought such-and-such a dance and danced for me to see." This is the way I know it to be. If it comes like that, they only want a quick one, and it can happen that we will take about five minutes or ten minutes to dance the whole dance of the Takai. When we go to the police park, the secretary will come to the microphone and announce for all the people to hear that this group of dancers is coming out for five minutes and the next group of dancers is coming out for five minutes. Sometimes we will go to some place like that, and they will give us five minutes, and they want all the

dances to be danced. We can beat them all in five minutes time. So we have to beat all of the music hard so that people will hear it, and the dancers will dance it well, and then the next group will come out.

We have learned both ways of dancing Takai: we have learned to beat it slowly, and we have learned to beat it hard if they have given us five minutes for the whole dance. We can beat the dance fast like that. And we can beat the slow dance coolly. I prefer the cool one because it is good for one dance to be danced for some time before we change to another dance. When we start with Takai, we can beat it alone for about ten or twenty minutes before we change to another one. That way it will be very nice. It is good for the people who watch. You beat only one dance for people to see how far you can beat it. Some people can learn the fast way and it is fine, some people can also learn the slow way and it is fine. If we want to beat the other dances after Takai, and it is to be a quick one, we beat Nyayboli, and after Nyayboli, we beat Dibs' ata, and after Dibs' ata, Ijun' Da Nyuli, and after Ijun' Da Nyuli, we beat Kondalia and by then the time is up. Sometimes if the government calls us to beat Takai, we do not even beat Ijun' Da Nyuli. As it is a fresh dance, not everyone knows how to dance it. That is why we don't want to bring it into the government dance, so that it will spoil our dance. What we will beat is Takai, Nyayboli, Dibs' ata and Kondalia. We usually end it with Kondalia. These four dances are the only dances we grew up to meet, and this is how they follow one another. As for Dam' Duu, not everyone knows how to dance it, and we usually beat it when we have enough time to beat it. It kept long and Dam' Duu was not danced for any dance that was called by the government; if we are going to beat it at the chief's house or a funeral gathering, the time when Dam' Duu is out, then it is getting to the closing. After Dam' Duu, that is the end. And again, we do not always beat Ijum Mali Kpion when we are beating Takai. We have included it in Takai but we don't always give it to the dancers.

If you want to see the best Takai, you yourself can call the Takai dancers. It will cost money, because you know that if you want to call them, you have to give something before they can come and dance. As for you, they would not charge you high. You have been seeing Takai all the time, and you have seen how the young boys add themselves to the old ones, but if you want, you should call a Takai dance which should be danced only by the old men, not the young ones, so that the old men will dance for you to see how they are going to dance. The younger ones should not be included. Why do I say you should only call the old men, and not the young ones? I have been telling you that young people are crazy. In this Dagbon if they show you a crazy person and tell you to go and get a crazy person and bring him, if you can't get a crazy person, then you have to get a young

person to stand for the crazy person. The young people don't hear what people say: that is why I call them crazy people. But as for an old man, he has got sense to do everything in the right way. The older people know how to dance Takai more than the children. The children only spread their smocks and spin themselves. And so only the old ones are those to dance for you. Then you can watch very well how they are going to dance the Takai properly, and how the old men will come out into the open to begin the dance. And it would be good to include woman, old women for the Tɔra dance, and you would watch how they would make their lines and come out to dance the Tɔra. It would be very interesting. As for the old women who truly know how to dance Tɔra, too, if someone wants to call them for Tɔra, for a funeral or anywhere at all, that person has to come and see me with cola. If not that, the women will not go. And so everything from the women is in my hands. If you see the old people dance, you will know that Takai is truly Takai in Tamale here and not anywhere else. The Takai you have been witnessing in the villages and other towns all the time is never the same as the Takai in Tamale. And when you see how the older dancers dance perfectly without any confusion, you will know that truly, Takai and Tɔra are beautiful and important dances in Dagbon here.

And so I will go home, and think, and tomorrow I will come and tell you more about it. And I think it will be good if I curve the talks to show you the way we take these dances to enter gatherings. As I have told you how we use our drums to praise people and beat many dances, and as I have said that we have a lot of benefit in it, if you want to see all of this, if not the Damba Festival, then it is at a funeral house that you will see all these dances. And so tomorrow, if God agrees and I come, I will tell you how we Dagbamba perform funerals and why we take funerals to be a high thing. And I will show you how we Dagbamba take our beating to add to the funeral gathering, and how it helps us on the part of the funeral. And again, it is very good to show that if our chief dies, this is what we do before the next one comes, and how we perform the funeral and the next chief who is coming will come, and how they shave the hair of the Regent. It is very important and necessary to be inside the book to show how we bury a chief and follow the funeral to get the new chief.