

Chapter I–20: *Funerals*

I told you that the place where you will see many dances is at a funeral house, and today we are going to talk about funerals in Dagbon here. On the part of us Dagbamba, funerals are a very big thing, and they are very strong inside our way of living. And I'm going to take it and talk on the part of the Dagbamba, because the Muslims also have their way of performing the funeral. As for the Muslim way, its talk enters this talk, but they separate again. And so I will show you some parts of the Muslim way and separate it for you. But if it is the Dagbamba one, as for that, it has many parts.

And the talk about funerals is hard, because we are talking about death. Truly, we all know that we will die, but there are some people who don't want to talk about death at all, just because of the sadness. I have some friends, and any time we are together, if I want to talk about death, they don't want to hear about it. They say I should leave it and we will talk about something better. But how the thing is, we will all taste it. And so you should exercise patience.

In Dagbon here, if somebody dies, they have some things they will do before they bury the person. And after they bury him, on the third day, they will do something, and again after seven days. That is what we call the small funeral, *bɔyɔli lɔybu*, "covering the hole." And what will be coming will be the final funeral, and they will perform the final funeral in three months' time, or six months' time, or even a year's time, whenever they know that they have the means to perform it. And the final funeral also has its parts, and they will shave the heads of the funeral children and they will do what we call *buni wuhibu*, "showing the riches."

And all this, if I am going to talk about all of it, I will start by talking about the leader of the funeral and all the steps the leader will take them through before they finish the final funeral. And this talk is on the part of someone who has grown. The full talks of the funeral, and all the things we do to perform the funeral, I am going to be talking it on the part of someone who has grown. For example, on the part of our drumming and the work we do at a funeral, it isn't all funerals we beat the drums for. We don't beat the drums for people who are not old. If it is a chief's child who dies, we beat the drums, but when the child of a commoner or a drummer dies, and the person was not all that grown, we don't drum. And so this talk on funerals is on the part of a man or woman who has grown and given birth to children. And so today we will start and I will talk about how we Dagbamba perform our funerals, and if God agrees, by tomorrow we will finish it.

Truly, the talk of funerals looks like the talk of families. How a human being is, a human being is in four parts. I have my mother's house and my father's house. These two parts separate again, because my mother has her mother's house and father's house, and my father has his mother's house and father's house. And so it becomes four parts. If you want, you can add them and say it is six parts; or if you want, you can say that it is two parts, the mother's house and the father's house.

And I can say that the mother's house is stronger than the father's house. Why do I say that? It is the mother who knows the child more than the man. The woman knows the child's father. If a man and a woman meet, the woman will not know whether the man has given her pregnancy. She will know if she is coming to pass menstruation and it doesn't come, then she will know she is pregnant. It will be worrying her in her stomach, and if it doesn't pain her like sickness, she will know. Going from forty days to two months, she will know for sure. There are some men who know the days when their wives menstruate and there are some who don't. The man who doesn't know will only be climbing on the woman. But the man who knows the days his wife menstruates, if the woman doesn't tell him, he will not know whether it is his pregnancy. And so we Dagbamba know that it is a woman who knows the child's father, but a man cannot know that this is his child. If you think that a child is your child, the woman can say that it is not your child. And so the mother's house is stronger than the father's house. If the mother's house is not there, there is no father's house. As we are sitting, we fear our mother's house more than our father's house. When you are in your mother's stomach, she will be suffering for you, and your father will only be taking his thing in front of him and be roaming. He won't care, but the woman will be taking this big stomach and walking slowly. And when she gives birth, she will hold the child until it grows, and the man will only be putting his hand into his pocket and giving the woman to make food and eat.

And as the mother's house is strong, the father's house is also strong. As we men knock our chests and say "This is my child," we show that a child has a mother's house and has a father's house. If a child has no father's house, and we say "He has no father," such people, we fear them in Dagbon, and we fear to call someone that he has no father. But even if it is the mother's house which is stronger than anything, when someone dies in Dagbon, it is the father's house that performs the funeral. The father's house will take the funeral and finish it, and then they will give it to the mother's house. And every person, if you follow him, he has four parts or six parts, but when his ending comes and he dies, it is these two parts that work for him. In Dagbon here, that is what we know about a human

being. I don't know about somewhere, but that is how our tradition is here. And so this talk of funerals, it is a talk about family, and when you follow it, it comes to show that the father's house is there. And so we will take this talk and go.

In Dagbon here, if a person dies, there is somebody who will be the leader of the funeral, and in Dagbani we call him *kuyili kpema*, "the elder of the funeral house." The elder of the funeral house doesn't come from anywhere: he is the head of the family. If the dead person has a senior brother, the senior brother is going to be the elder of the funeral. And if it is the senior brother who has died, then his junior brother will be the elder of the funeral. This is the sort of person who becomes the elder of the funeral. For anyone who attends the funeral, the elder of the funeral is the one that person is coming to meet. If in-laws attend the funeral, they are coming to see him. If the dead body's children come from other towns to see their dead father, they are coming to meet the elder of the funeral house. Any of the junior children of the dead body who are coming to the funeral are coming to see him. Even after they bury the dead body, the elder of the funeral is the one who will fix the day for the final funeral. He will decide everything about the funeral. Whatever they are going to do about this funeral, they are coming to ask him, and he will separate the problems. If something bad happens at the funeral, they will come to ask him and no one else. For example, as you have been going to this town's funerals, if you happen to go to a village funeral, you will see the sort of drinking they do there. There are some villages around here, if they are performing the final funeral, they will drink from morning till night and then till morning. If you see how these villagers drink, you will think that no one has cooked food there. Sometimes they will get drunk and they will fight and wound each other. If they come to separate them, the first thing anyone will ask is, "Who is the elder of the funeral house?" And it is this elder who is going to stand before the people and answer questions. And so this elder is going to hold everything on the way of the funeral. And truly, there are some things he does even before he arrives at the dead body's house. And so you should have patience and a fresh mind to see how I will go through all of it.

If somebody dies in Dagbon here, sometimes it happens that the one who is going to be the leader is not staying in the same town, and he will have to move from that place and come to be the head of the funeral. If that person is living, say, at Yendi, they will go and bring him before they will bury the dead body. If they bury the dead body before they go and tell him, then he is not the leader. When they call him and he is coming, he will come with money which they will use for the burial, and he will come with some cloth we call *kparbu*. This cloth is woven locally by our weavers. It is white; we don't use red or black. They will

sew the woven strips together to make it very big. If the person who died was an important person, they will use this cloth to bury him. Sometimes they will go and call the leader of the funeral and he will ask, “Do you have cloth?” If they don’t have the cloth, he will bring it himself, or he will bring money to buy it. And sometimes someone who has the means can buy such a cloth and keep it down before he dies. And if it is the senior child of the dead body who goes to call the leader, and the leader asks this question, the senior child will say, “Yes. My father had already got his cloth down before he died.” And at that time, the leader of the funeral will say, “Oh, as for him, he has already buried himself.”

When they bring the elder and he arrives, he has to go into the room and see the dead body. The dead body will be covered with a cloth, and he will remove the cloth from the head and look at the dead body. Then he will cover it and go out again. When he comes out from the room, he has to ask what kind of sickness attacked the fellow. If it was a sickness that attacked the fellow today and getting to tomorrow he died, then the elder will not blame anybody. But if it was a sickness that attacked him for about four days, then he will quarrel with those who came to tell him about the death. Even sometimes someone will be annoyed and will refuse to be the elder of the funeral house. No one can be holding somebody, and sickness will catch that fellow for about four days, and you don’t come to tell the elder about the sickness until after the death of that fellow. Somebody will say this, and everybody will stand at his back. Only those who are now looking after the dead body will not stand at his back. And truly, they will also see their blame, but they will not want others to say they are blamed. Such a thing can let someone refuse to be the elder of the funeral. And if they bring the elder and if he asks this question, and they say, “Oh, it was just yesterday that the sickness attacked him and he died,” at that time he will say, “It is God who made it like that.” No one can argue with God, and he will say, “Even I myself, the elder of the funeral, if God asks of me, I will also die.”

The money that the elder brings, they will use it to buy three sheep. There is one sheep they will slaughter on the day the dead person died. They will use the meat and cook some food we call *solı sayım*. *Solı* is a path or a way, and so *solı sayım* is traveler’s food. They will cook it because when the death came, everybody who is coming to the funeral will come at once and be sitting at the dead body’s house. And those who have run from their towns to attend the funeral, this *solı sayım* is their food. If you are running to a funeral house, you don’t have time to eat unless you arrive there, and when you arrive, that will be your food. All the people who have come will be sitting outside the dead body’s house. Those people to whom they have sent to inform them about the death, and

those people who are the friends and relatives of the dead body, they will all be sitting outside the house waiting until the elder finishes everything. They will sleep there in the nights, and they will eat there for one week. And the women in the house will be cooking afternoons and evenings, and everybody will be eating. As for the food, the bowls are many. They never limit the bowls. They will be making food just like that in case somebody should arrive. And so the food at a funeral house is like that: you will eat until you leave eating, but the food will not finish. And all the visitors and strangers who are arriving, all of them cannot sleep in the dead body's house, and some of them will be staying in other houses in the area, and when it is daybreak, they will come and be sitting at the funeral house.

Apart from that, when somebody dies in Dagbon here, and the dead body is still lying in the room, you will see drummers come and sit outside the funeral house, and the drumming they beat, you will not hear it anywhere in Dagbon unless someone has died. It is not all deaths that drummers beat. Someone who is a chief, even if he is only a chief of a small village, if he dies, we beat. Someone who is a chief's son or daughter, if he dies, we beat. If it is someone who has grown, an old lady or an old man who is not a Muslim, we beat. And so it's not all people we beat drums for. If a chief's son or daughter dies, the town is for the chief, and so the chieftaincy the father was holding shows that the child is an old person, and we beat the drums, but when the child of a commoner or someone like a drummer dies, and the person was not grown, we don't drum. And so those who are there and drummers drum, they are not all people.

The drumming we beat when the dead body is lying in the house is called *Be kumdi la kuli*, "they are crying the funeral." People will come and call drummers and say that they have got a dead body lying in the house, and so the drummers should come. When the drummers come, they don't open their mouths to cry. They use the drum to cry. The drums are standing for their mouths, and that is why they call it *Be kumdi la kuli*. And this drumming too, it is only at a funeral house that you will ever hear it beaten, and it is only drummers who beat it. If you don't know it, you can't beat it. It has got bad things. If you go and the one leading you doesn't know how to beat it, and you make a mistake and mix it, then when you come home, one of you will die. It's not someone special who beats it; it's only the one who knows it. I myself can beat it. If they come and call me, I can go and beat it. And so it is like what I have been telling you about old talks: an old person is not somebody who has lived long or who has a white beard; an old person is one who has heard the talk of the past and is holding it in his pocket. He is an old person because he can talk of the past from what he has heard from others. That is how it is here.

As for the sheep that the elder of the funeral buys, apart from sheep they will use to cook food, there are two sheep which they will give to the Limam. The Limam is the leader of the Muslims in the town. There is the praying sheep which they will give to the Limam who will lead the people to say prayers on the dead body, and there is the sheep they will give the Limam for the time they are going to bathe the dead body. It is the Limam and his followers who will do that work. Someone will eat the Limam chieftaincy just because he knows how to bathe a dead body and make the sacrifices for the funeral. Apart from the role the Limam plays at the chief's house, that is why people are eating the Limam chieftaincy.

And so the elder of the funeral, after he goes and looks at the dead body, he will come and sit in the hall of the house, and he will get what we call *tuhi pinaata*, that is, thirteen shillings, or one cedi and thirty pesewas. If the dead body is a man, it is one cedi thirty pesewas; if it is a woman, it is one cedi forty pesewas. That is the money for the bathing. And he will get another one cedi thirty pesewas and add it to the praying sheep. Why is it that the man's money is one cedi thirty pesewas, and the woman's is one cedi forty pesewas? In everything, according to our custom and what our grandfathers have put down for us, we take it that women are on the part of four and men are on the part of three. According to our grandfathers, they said that a woman has four bones in her neck and a man has only three bones. That is the reason why women are able to carry heavy loads on their heads. Although a man is stronger than a woman, a woman's neck is stronger; it is only a few men who are able to carry the type of heavy load that a woman can carry. Even a small girl doesn't learn how to carry loads on her head; she just picks things up on it. After seven years, she can carry a bucket of water, but a boy will not be able to carry it. And so according to our forefathers, everything they want to do concerning women has to do with four, and everything they want to do on the part of men has to do with three. Our elderly people said that this is the way God created us, that the woman has four bones and the man has three bones. And this is the end of what I know about it.

And so in Dagbon here, if a woman dies, we cover the grave in four days; if a man dies, three days. Even according to what our fathers told us, in the olden days if you were sitting in your house and someone died someplace, you could know the sort of person who died from the shooting of the guns. It isn't at everybody's funeral that they shoot the guns, but if such a person dies, if it was a woman, they would shoot four times, and if it was a man, they would shoot three times. If you are sitting in your house and you hear the sound of guns, you can count them and tell people the sort of person who died. Not all Dagbamba know something about this, but if you remember it and you hear guns shooting, you will know. Everything of a man is three, and everything of a woman is four.

Today as we are sitting, our money is not money again, and so the thing has increased. On the part of a man, from one cedi thirty pesewas, it went to thirteen cedis, went to thirty-three pounds, and went to a hundred and thirty cedis, and it is still increasing, up to one thousand three hundred cedis. It can happen and they will make it two thousand six hundred cedis, that is, one thousand three hundred pounds. The woman's one also increased like that. And so you should take it that as far as the numbers are concerned, all the numbers must end with four or three, and it is continuing like that. And so you shouldn't be confused if I talk about the tuhi pinaata, the one cedi thirty pesewas, because it is the talk of custom I'm showing you. And so if it is a man who dies, the money for the bathing is one cedi thirty pesewas, and if it is a woman, it is one cedi forty pesewas.

They will get that money, and at that time, they will go and get the kparbu, that is, the cloth, and they will give it to the Limam. And the Limam will divide it into two, and use half to cover the dead body. And the part they put on the dead body we call *kahin̄na*. At that time they will bathe the dead body. This is olden days talk I'm showing you, and it is on the part of typical Dagbamba. Before they bathe the dead body, they have to get water and put it on fire, but they don't make it hot too much. How they heat this water in Dagbon here, they don't use firewood to boil it. They get grass and use it to make the fire. They get a type of pot we call *koduyu* — it's a drinking pot — and they boil the water in it. If the dead body was a man, they will get three stones and put them down, and put the pot on top of the stones, and they will tie the grass into three parts, and three people will be holding the three ties of grass. How the pot is sitting on the stones, one person will be pushing the grass into the fire from one side, and another will put it at the other side, and the other will push it from the third side. What I'm talking is if the dead body is a man. If it's a woman, then everything will be four-four. The stones, the grass, the people, it will be four-four. By that time, you will see the water becoming warm; it's not hot and it's not cold. And they will get a large plain calabash and get other smaller ones. They will use a small calabash to fetch the water into the big calabash, and they will carry it into the dead body's room.

Those who are bathing the dead body, they don't use their hands to spread the water on the dead body: they use a small calabash. And they get a sponge. This sponge is like a grass sponge, but it is made from a type of tree we call *tanyibga*. It is a small tree which they go and dig under to get its roots. These roots are about the size of someone's arm, and they will bring the roots and use a very heavy stick to knock the roots until the roots separate and become soft, and the whole thing will be very white. It's not the day the dead body died that they make this sponge: there are people who sell it. And somebody who is grown and

he is a person, he can also get this sponge and keep it down before he dies. And again, the Dagbamba have our local soap which we make from ashes. We don't use the white man's soap to bathe the dead body. And so they will use the small calabash to spread the water on the dead body and then use the sponge and the soap. They will bathe the dead person's armpits and then his front and penis and then his legs, and they will bathe the whole body before they finish. Then they will get a small cloth and use it as a towel to wipe the dead body clean.

What I have told you about how they boil the water, we grew up and saw our fathers doing the same thing. But it is not there again. That time we were growing up, if somebody died and the person was a man, and you saw how they boiled the water, they would get three stones. And they would put the water in the pot. And they would tie the grass into three. The time they would heat the water and finish, they would go to bathe the dead body. And this sponge and the soap, all of that, we grew up and met it. But this time they don't do it. I don't know about those who are not Muslims, but now, they don't boil water to bathe a dead body. The sponge and the soap, they don't use it. The time our eye opened completely, we stopped seeing these things. In the Muslim religion, it is not there like that, but in the olden days, it was there. This time, because the world is bright, if it is there, then I think only the Dagban' sabli, the black Dagbamba or typical Dagbamba, are still holding it. If it is there, they are those who are holding it. It was there in the olden days, but now they don't boil water and add soap to bathe a dead body.

And so I'm going to separate it for you. The way Muslim people talk about it, they say that if somebody dies, and you take your hand to hold the dead body strongly, if you could hear what the dead body was saying, you wouldn't hold him like that. If they are going to heat water and use soap and sponge to bathe the dead body, are they going to brush his body with the sponge? So according to what I have heard from the Muslims, if somebody dies and you are going to touch the dead body, you don't have to touch it the way that the dead body will feel it. If the dead body could talk, he would talk to you that the way you touch him is bad. So the way that Muslims talk about it, if you follow it closely, nobody will die and you will like to touch him. And so when you are going to bath a dead body, you have to be gentle.

And so in the olden days, because our eyes were not yet open, they were brushing the dead body with the soap and sponge. It was there at that time, but this time, I haven't been seeing it again. At that time, the Muslim religion was a small thing in Dagbon, but now it has spread. But I don't know about the black Dagbamba, but those who didn't know and they were doing it, now that their eye

is opened, they don't do it again. And so if you are going to write it, you should write that in the olden days, this is what we were doing, and now we have stopped it because the knowledge about the Muslim religion is now wide.

If I don't separate it like that, the people we are giving birth to at this time, they don't see the old talks. If you come to say that we bathe dead bodies with soap and sponge, and that we boil water before bathing the dead body, and the children we are giving birth don't see such things, won't they challenge it? That is why I'm telling you that it was there. And so this olden days talk, make sure that it is not missing from inside this book. Let it be there, and you should talk about this present time, too. This is the way I will show you.

How the Muslims bathe a dead body, I have been inside the room when they are bathing a dead body. The maalam who is going to bathe the dead body is called the Yari-Naa. He is an elder of the Limam. The Yari-Naa and his children will come inside, and the dead body's brothers will be fetching the water into the big calabash and giving it to people to carry it inside the room. I myself don't put my hand into the water and bathe, but where they are bathing the dead body, I stand there to look. They don't use sponge and soap at all: they only take the water and put it on the dead body, and they use their hands to clean it. That's all. They have left the sponge. On the part of us the Muslims, this is what I know. And so they use their hand and rub the dead body gently with the water. That is how they bathe a dead body, to dress it. It doesn't want the soap and sponge. That is all. But what I have talked to you was there. And if it is still there, it is with the typical Dagbamba.

If they finish bathing the dead body, at that time they will get a type of mat we Dagbamba call *kaliŋa* and spread it on the floor. The cloth which they have given the maalam, as they have divided it into two, they have taken one part to put on the dead body, that is, the *kahiŋŋa*, and they will spread that part on the mat and then take the dead body and lie it on the mat. The part of the *kparbu* that is remaining, they will divide it again. They will take one part to sew *jenjemi*, our small local trousers, and they use another part to sew *yensichi*, our local jumper. And they will use part of it again to sew a hat which will cover the ears. The face, the eyes, the nose, the mouth: that is what you will see. When they dress the dead body in all that, they will take the rest of the cloth which is remaining, and it will be long enough to cover the whole body up to the neck. And they will tear the edges of the *kahiŋŋa*, and they will wrap the cloth around the dead body from the legs coming up and from the neck coming down, and they will join the two parts at the navel and tie them. And the part where the head is lying, they will take it from the back of the head and bring it up and tie it at the forehead. By then you will not

see any part of the dead body again; it is only the face you will see. The cloth would have easily covered the face, but it is only that they want the face to be free. And by then they have finished everything on the part of the bathing, and they will put the dead body in a box and bring it outside the room. And the maalams will say prayers on the dead body.

By then it will be time to bury the dead body. And the elder of the funeral will get up and say that they should leave the dead body lying down. And he will say, "Everybody who is gathered here, I am begging you very well. As a human being lives, he eats. And how he eats, he is not eating alone. And as he is searching and finding, he is not searching and finding for himself alone. And so I am begging all the public, anyone who has a debt with this dead body should say it here, and anyone who ever borrowed money from him should say it here." Sometimes someone will come out and say, "Yes, I have once borrowed such-and-such an amount from him." And someone will get up and say, "This is the amount he borrowed from me." They will have to pay all the debts before they will go and bury him. Sometimes, the dead body's people will have nothing to pay, and they will leave the dead body lying down and call the owner of the debt and ask him, "Since we don't have the means to pay you, will you allow us to go and bury him so that later on we will find your money and pay you?" If that fellow is a good fellow, he will say that he agrees, and they will take the dead body to the grave.

And this asking, truly, it is standing on the part of the Muslims. And the typical Dagbamba too, they also ask. As for them, they understand that debt is a bad thing. If someone should die without their hearing anything from the dead body, then they have to find out. The reason why they ask is because maybe the one who died was sick before, and maybe he borrowed money from some people, and he knows about it. Sometimes, if the person who died is somebody sensible, he will call his child or his wife, and inform the person about the money he borrowed. He will tell them that, "Such-and-such a person, I borrowed money from him. But how I am sick now, I don't know whether I will get up or I won't get up. If God brings his power and I die, then such-and-such a person, I borrowed money from him." If it happens that he borrowed money from three people, and he knows it, he can call anybody he trusts and inform him about it, and sometimes some of them talk to their wives. So if he talks like that and he dies, the one he talked to will talk to the rest of the people, "My father, or my husband, when he was sick, he told me that he borrowed something like this." If somebody comes out like that to tell the funeral people, then it is all right. Some people, if they have already talked to the wife or any of the children before they died, then when they finish bathing the dead body, they don't have to ask anybody again.

They don't have to bring the body and ask of the debts. They will just carry him and bury him. But if nobody, whether the wife or the child, says that this is what the father or the husband told him or her before dying, then they have to put the dead body down, and ask.

But if nobody comes out to say something like that, then when they bring the dead body out, they will ask the public. And sometimes some people fear: because the dead body is lying there, they can't just come out to say, "He borrowed something like this from me." Sometimes they will separate it. And they will say, "As the dead body is lying down, if anyone is afraid to talk, then if God permits, we go and bury him and come back home, and anybody who holds his debt should come and talk." They used to talk like that, and they will add, "The one who borrowed from him, we don't care, but the only thing we care about is the one he borrowed from." Truly, there are some people who don't fear God. If they see that a person is dead now, they won't say that they came and borrowed something from him. But somebody who fears God, he will come and say that as for him, he borrowed something from the dead person. "I borrowed something from him like this. And if God agrees and I get, I will pay it to the elder of the family." That is how it is. And by then they will take the dead body to bury.

And you will see that drummers will follow and be beating, and we have some drumming which is only beaten the time they are taking a dead body to the grave side, and you won't hear it at any other place. We call it *Kulunsi*, and it is different from crying the funeral. They look alike because the drummers are using their drums to cry and follow. The difference is a slight change you will put inside the beating. When they are carrying the dead body to go and bury, anybody who understands drums, if he is sitting somewhere, he will get to know that now is the time they are taking the dead body to go and bury. If you meet this drumming, you will also see a dead body being carried to the cemetery. Apart from that, no one beats it, and no one ever hears it beaten, and no one teaches anybody how to beat it. That is how it is. And inside our beating of drums, as they are carrying the dead body, if it is that the going is hard, you can be beating and you will see that the dead body will take you and go quickly.

In Dagbon here, we have some people who dig graves, and we call them *kasiyirba*. The time the elder of the funeral arrived and was sitting in the hall and pulling out the money for the sheep and other things, he also removed another one cedi thirty pesewas and got a chicken to add to it and gave it to these people. The *kasiyirba* did not have anything to do with bathing the dead body. In Dagbon here, the one who bathes a dead body will not also put him in the grave. And so the work of the *kasiyirba* is to dig the grave, to go into the room and bring out the

dead body and take it and put it into the grave. They will be about three people who will stand inside the grave, and another three people will be standing and holding the dead body and will give it to the ones in the grave. And after they have buried the dead body, they will get the one cedi thirty pesewas and the chicken. The chicken shows that they should take it and use it to make medicine, because their work shows that they should use medicine for protection. Such people are the ones we call kasiyirba, and they have a lot of medicine.

And so the kasiyirba will remove the dead body from the box and carry him to the grave, and the people will be following, and we drummers will be beating drums. They will cover the face with a cloth when they carry him, and when they reach the grave side, they will uncover the face again. How they have dug the grave, they have made it deep and long, and then they have dug out one side to open inside the hole, and they will lay the dead body there. By then, the dead body's children are there, and they will bring all the children and drag their heads to look into the grave, and they will say to the children, "You should look at your father. Look at your father in the grave." And every child will say, "Yes, I have seen my father." And they will all come out from the grave. The kasiyirba will get sticks and cover the hole where the dead body is lying, and they will get leaves and cover all the open places in the sticks. And then they will push the dirt inside the grave. At that time, if the grave where the fellow was buried was in the cemetery or in the bush, they will all come back to the house.

Let me add you salt. According to what maalams say, those who are learned, if your eyes are strong and you don't fear anything, they say that you should start visiting sick people. The way you will go and see sick people lying down, then you will look at the people, and maybe you might know one of them. You will say, "Eh! This man was a strong man. Today he is lying down like this." And you will look at your own body and look at the way he looks, and think that he was also strong like the way you are. And now he is lying down. He can't even sit up, unless some people help him to sit up. There are some people, when they are sick, they lie sideways; if nobody comes to turn them, they can't turn themselves. And as for you, your eyes were strong that you don't even fear God, but if you start visiting sick people, how you will come and see them, you will ask yourself. "This man, I knew him before and he wasn't like this. Today he is lying down." If you go home, then you will think twice. If you were somebody who doesn't feel pity for others, the way you will see the sick person, when you go home, you will turn your heart.

That is why, when somebody dies and they are putting him into the grave, it is not only the children they call to come and see. Any time they are going to bury

somebody, all of us, even those who are grown, we stand to look into the grave to see how they are putting the dead body down. And when you are looking, it always comes to your mind that, “This man, every day I was always with him. But today, look at him. They are going to put sand on him.” And it will come into your heart that maybe, by the end of today, or tomorrow, or the next tomorrow, they will come and do to you the same thing they are doing to him now.

But even in the olden days, on the part of the typical Dagbamba, the old people used to put it on only the children, that if they see that, they will fear. In the olden days, when they would bring the children like that, the kasiyirba would hold the child’s head and ask him to look inside and identify the dead body. And the child will look and say, “That is my father.” And they will leave the child: “Go.” Then you will see the child crying when they start to push the sand. All the children, this is how they show them. When they see that, nobody is going to tell them anything: you will see them crying. As for that one, it is God’s talks. In the olden days, they put it that if somebody dies, children should see the way their father is. And today, if you know that you will die, if they go and put your friend into a grave, if you have a good intention in your heart, you will also go and have a look. This looking at the dead body in the grave, it reduces some bad thoughts inside you. If you were somebody having bad thoughts, and you were thinking that you won’t die, or you forgot about death, you will think again. Maybe yesterday you were just sitting with him. And before daybreak, he is dead. Will you stop thinking bad thoughts? That is why everybody looks.

But this looking at the dead body is not by force. I’m talking of the people who are there, those who have come to the funeral house. They won’t wait for the others who are coming. We don’t let a dead body be lying down. As for us, we don’t do such things at all. In Dagbon, if somebody dies at some place, they will inform all the people around, the neighbors. When they inform them, nobody will delay in his house. Within a few minutes you will see that outside the dead body’s house will be full of people, gathered there. And those who will come and help, when they are ready to bury, they will bury right away; they don’t wait for anybody. It is not inside our Dagbon custom that we have to leave a dead body to be lying down and we will call people to come and look at the dead body. As for the burying, they don’t delay. This hour we are sitting down, nobody will die at this hour and they will leave the dead body up to tomorrow. The hour when somebody will die and people will say that, “It is midnight; we should wait until everybody wakes up,” that is maybe from twelve midnight and going. As for that one, you see that the day has gone into another day, and that is the time people will say, “We should wait until the day is clear before we bury.”

And so if somebody dies, they will bury the person the same day. Even if they don't have the kahiṅṅa, and they don't have the money, they will go and buy it on credit, to make sure that they bury the dead body. Inside our Dagbon, when someone dies, if the elder of the funeral house is not already there with his relative, then they will wait for a bit before they will bury the dead body. If the elder is coming, by the time he arrives, they will already be sewing the kahiṅṅa. It won't be long and they will finish, and they will bathe the dead body and dress him. This is the only thing that will let people wait. And when the elder of the funeral arrives, they can bury him. Apart from that, they won't wait for anybody. And so all the things I have told you about, getting the cloth, the bathing, the asking of the debts, they will do all of it and then bury the dead body.

And so everybody, all the friends and relatives and anybody who is coming to do anything there, they will all rush to funeral house. When they are ready to go and bury the person, people have already come there, and the maalams are also already there to say the prayers. That is when they will ask about the money, whether the dead person borrowed from you or you borrowed from him. Then after that, they will bury. And so everybody will be there. Truly, the way they used to come and inform somebody about a funeral, the moment they tell you, that same hour you have to leave your house. You don't have to wait. You will go. Anybody, whatever means you can get, that is what you will take and go. You don't hear of the death of somebody and sleep or eat, or still wait. Nobody is going to wait for you. And so everybody will just rush and come to the funeral house.

If it happens that the elder of the funeral house is far away, then someone who is an elder in the area will stand for the burial. If the messenger goes and finds that there is something with the elder of the funeral house, and he has to go through some things before coming, then they can wait for some small time. But if they come to tell you about a funeral, there is nothing you have to do about delaying on anything. The time they send the messenger to come and tell you, if you say, "Oh, the time you have come is not good for me, and so as for me, the only thing I can tell you is that you should go back and tell them that it is tomorrow before I will come": then by tomorrow, before you will get there, they will have finished. And if you go there the next morning, they will abuse you heavily: "Why is it that your brother is dead, and we sent for you, and then you are saying that you are coming tomorrow?" You can't sit down and choose your own time to go. You can't attempt to do something like that. The one that can prevent you from going is only if you are sick. And even if you're sick, you have to get your mother's child, that is, your relative, and say, "You have to go, because

I am sick. And if you go there, you have to talk what is holding me.” That is how it is. And so all this talk I’m showing you, all of it is happening within some few hours’ time. As for us, our person doesn’t die, and we will put him down and wait for people to come and have a look at the dead body. That is not our custom in Dagbon. Everybody has the customs of his land. And so this is how it is with us here.

And truly, on the part of our custom, it’s not always that they bury a dead body in the cemetery. In the villages, if the dead person was a houseowner and he was staying in his house with his children and grandchildren, then what they usually do is to dig the grave inside the house. They will dig the grave in the compound. As for this Tamale, it is now a European land, and there is the cemetery here. If they see you burying in town, they will catch you. Anybody who will die in Tamale, they have to take him to the cemetery. Savelugu too is like that: if somebody dies, they have to take him to that place. It is only one-one people who will die and they will bury him inside the house. But in the olden days, there was not any cemetery. It is this modern time that they have said that some place should be a cemetery where everybody must be buried. When somebody died, either you buried him outside his house or inside his house, or at his farm, or anywhere. And in the villages today, they still have it like that. Those who die and they bury in the compound, it means the house belongs to him. In the olden days, if you saw somebody being buried in the compound, then everyone would know that he was the houseowner. If you build a house and the house belongs to you, and you are staying inside with your family, even if you are young, if you die, it is inside your compound that they have to bury you. If an old woman in the house should die, then they also have a place to bury a woman in the compound. If a woman dies in the house and they want to bury her in the compound of the house, they mark the grave with four cowries, and if it is a man, three cowries. And so in the olden days, if you entered any house and you saw a grave in the compound, you would know that the real landlord of the house is no more alive. And during that time, somebody could die, and his people will not be all that many. Sometimes they would make the funeral, and the people would run away and leave the house. And that is what we call *dabɔɣu*: a house where the houseowner has died, and there is nobody staying there, and the people have left the house, that is *dabɔɣu*.

As for chiefs, they bury them inside the room. It isn’t all chiefs who will die and they will bury them inside the room. A village chief, if he dies, they have to bury him in the compound. This is why, if you see a chief’s house, the compound is very big, and there are many rooms. If you take this room and you are staying

inside, and you die, they bury you inside. The one who is coming to eat the chieftaincy after your death, he will also take another room. And so that room is going to be just standing like that. Sometimes you will go to some of the chiefs whom they buried in their room, and when you go there, you will see the rooms, and they will start to show you, “This chief, this is the place we buried him, in this room; this chief, this is the room we buried him.” They can show you all the rooms. And so you stay in your room. When you die, they bury you. They will dig inside your room, bury you there, and close the door. That’s all. The next one who will come, he will be following in his new room, too. Nobody will live in that room again. They will take the *karo*, the woven door, and close it. Just because it’s a room, it doesn’t mean that somebody has to be inside. If somebody dies, do they add a live human being to him and bury? No. Then why should they bury a dead person there, and somebody too will go there to sleep? They will get the *karo* and close it. The time someone will die and you come to the funeral, only women will be sleeping inside that room. And they call it *ku ηmanη duu*: funeral calabash room. If they haven’t finished the funeral, then some of the women who come from other places, they will still be sleeping there; after that, then everybody goes away and leaves the room, and the room will be empty like that.

And so there are some people who are buried in the compound. And those they bury in the rooms, they are also there. And so if a person dies, and somebody is coming to take over the house, they can say that he has inherited the dead person’s room, but it doesn’t mean the room the dead person was staying inside or the room where they buried the person. For example, as Nanton Lun-Naa is our elder, he is holding a chieftaincy. If he dies, they can decide to bury him in the room. If the elder of the funeral house goes to perform the funeral, and finishes, it can happen that the elder will remain in the house and be holding the house. And so the position the dead person was holding inside the house, that is the same place the elder is holding. He is now going to be in the house, as the householder or the family head. But it isn’t that he is going to be in the same room. If not such people like chiefs, anyone who will die and he is a houseowner, they will bury him in the compound. But if you are coming to talk about it, or the way people will talk it about it outside, they are going to say, “You have come to perform the funeral of your senior person, and you have remained in his place.” They have given you a name that you have inherited his room. But it doesn’t mean the actual room.

And so if they bury the dead body in the compound, then the remaining sand that will make a heap on the grave, they will remove it and level the place, and then they will plaster the ground the same way as they plaster a compound, and

they will press the three cowries or four cowries into the plaster. As for the bush, if they go to bury in the bush, they will mark the grave, but they don't plaster that one, and they can't use cowries there. But sometimes, there are some people at other places who will come and say they would like to see the grave. And again, if you are using some place to bury, maybe another person will come there to bury somebody, too. And so you have to mark your own with something, so that any time somebody comes, and you bring him there, you can identify your grave. It's just like the way Ashanti people use cement blocks to make their own, and some of them even write names on the graves. You either get big stones and put on it, or you cut a tree branch and plant it on the grave so that it will grow. You will know the type of thing you want to use to mark it. And so if they have buried the dead body in the cemetery or the bush, then they will come back to the house. And if they have buried the dead body in the house, then they will all come out and go into the sitting hall.

At that time the elder of the funeral will get one cedi thirty pesewas, or if the dead body was a woman he will get one cedi forty pesewas, and he will take this money and he will get something we call *pɔŋ*. This *pɔŋ* is like a large flat pan, and they weave it out of grass. The elder will put the money in the *pɔŋ*. And they will call the Limam to come and say prayers for the dead body. When they finish praying, everybody who has come to sit outside the funeral house will get up. They will all come with their ten pesewas, twenty pesewas, forty pesewas, cedis, and so on, and they will put it in the *pɔŋ* and say that this is their burying money. The elder will mention to the hearing of everybody that the money they have brought to make the funeral, he has gathered the funeral of the dead person to be such-and-such an amount. And he has taken his hand to roll over the money, and he removed all the custom. In Dagbon, that is what they do, everybody.

I am talking and separating it, because the amount is not something fixed. Sometimes some people will contribute something, and if it is somebody who has many people in his family, the amount will be much more than that. When they take it all, if it is a man, they will come to leave something ending with three. And if it is any amount, and it is a woman, they will talk everything, and the last number that will be remaining should end with four. And this money is what the elder of the funeral will use to be buying food for all those who have come to be sleeping with him outside the house. And truly, this money, it is the responsibility of the elders, and those who are coming will also contribute. The one who is in charge will know where each share of the money should go. As they have expenses on the part of the custom, and they have paid them, the money that is remaining is for the maalams. Then the maalams who have said the prayers will come forward, and they will collect it.

Apart from that, they will also put some types of food on a *pɔŋ*, some fried foods we call *maha* and *kpaakulo*. These foods are like small balls and they are fried by women. Someone who has the means will get bread. They will put all this on the flat woven pan, the *pɔŋ*, and sometimes there will be about twenty or thirty pans. And they will share this food to children or anyone as a sacrifice or alms. If it is that the elder of the funeral has the means, or if the person who died had a lot of food, then they will use their own means to feed the strangers, and they will keep the burying money for other things. And so when they finish praying and doing all this, they will come and sit, and they will share food. And they will tell everybody to sit down and be patient. As they have buried the dead body, they have some other things to do, and no one will be going back to his house for a week.

Apart from the things they have to do, why do they sit outside the house for a whole week after burying the dead body? This talk is with us Dagbamba, whether the Muslims or any Dagbana. Anyone who dies, and he knows people or he has people, they will be sitting outside his house for a whole week. Those who left their houses or their towns to come to the funeral, they will be lying outside the funeral house. And if people gather like that, to be sitting outside a dead person's house and sleeping there, it always helps to remove the people of the house from their sorrow. If somebody dies and the people will come together and help to bury the dead body, and then after that, everybody goes away again, it will add sadness to the people in the house. That is why if you come, you don't have to go back home. You have to continue staying. When you gather like that, in the night, after eating, when you are sitting together, you will converse. In the night, they will cook food, different-different food, and bring it all out. And the nearby houses around the place will also cook. They too will send many different bowls of different foods because of the strangers who have come for the funeral. They will share the food into groups and everybody will be eating and conversing. And when we finish eating, we will still be talking. And it will take some time. Then you will see that everybody spreads his mat and his pillow, and they will be lying all around the outside of the house. And the children will be lying down beside them. If there is an elderly person lying down outside the house, you will see that the young men in the house will come outside and tell him, "Oh, excuse me. As for you, you are old. If you want, you can go into the room." At that time, the old person will get up with some of the small children, and they will all go into the hall. They will all sleep in the hall. And the young people in the house, as for them, they don't fear cold: they will lie outside. This is how they will be doing it up to the time the funeral is performed. And if you do that, it strengthens both the outside and the house too. So this is how it is.

After they have finished burying the dead body, they are still inside the small funeral. The next thing they have is what we call *Be nindi la daba ata*, that is, the “they are doing three days,” and that one too, they say they are covering the hole. On that day they will say prayers and give alms on the *pɔŋ*, the woven pan, and they will sacrifice a sheep and cook food. This “three days”: for example, if the dead body died on Friday, then on Monday they will perform the third day. If it is on the part of the Muslims, the very day the dead person died, they will take it that day as the first. So if Friday is the first, then Saturday is the second day, and Sunday is three days. This is what the Muslims do. If it is the typical Dagbamba, they don’t count the day the person died; they take the next day to be first, and so they will bring it on Monday. And the next thing is what we call *daba ayopɔin*, “seven days.” And when the seventh day comes, they will do the same thing they did on the third day.

If the dead body was a matured person, on the third day they will get a sheep and slaughter it and get all the meat. If the dead body was a man, they will get three bones from the ribs, and they will get the intestines, and they will take the liver and cut it into three, and they will take the lungs and divide it into three. If the dead body was a woman, they will do all this in fours. And they will take some of the meat from the sheep and use the intestines to tie the meat around the bones, and they will tie the liver and the lungs against the bones. They will tie it three times and finish, and it will be about a bit smaller than someone’s forearm. And they will cut all the rest of the meat and add the tied bones and give all of it to women to cook and prepare food. These women will get three big calabashes with lids, and they will fill the calabashes with food and get the three bones with the meat, liver, and lungs tied round and put them on top of the food. These three calabashes: one of them will go to the *kasiyirba*, those who buried the dead body; one of them will go to the drummers who beat drums when they buried him; and one of them will go to the Limam and his followers. And they will put the rest of the food into bowls and give it to those sitting outside and send it to the other houses in the area where the strangers are staying. They will eat this food and finish.

At that time, the Limam and his followers will say *adua*, that is, prayers. And they will also bring out the *pɔŋ*, and people will be giving money. When the Limam finishes the prayers, he will say to everybody, “Today is the third day. And on the seventh day you should all come again.” That is the seventh day from the day the person died. And so they do the prayers on the third day and the seventh day. If the person died on Friday and they do the three days on Monday, then the following Friday they are going to do the seventh day. The Limam will

tell them the exact day when the seventh day will fall. Everything, the killing of the sheep, the cooking of the food, the prayers, the alms, they will do all of it. They don't add anything and they don't leave anything that they did on the third day. And so these are the prayers they are praying: if they bury the dead body, they will gather at the house and pray. On the third day, they will sit again and say prayers. The seventh day, they sit again and say prayers. And this is how we cover the hole.

And there is something again, and we call it *kubihi pinibu*, "shaving the funeral children." We also say *Kubihi ka be pinda*, "They are shaving the funeral children." We Dagbamba all grew up and met it, and I can say that it is from Naa Zanjina that we got it. Truly, the shaving of the funeral children has two ways. It is there on the part of the small funeral, but what is more common is that they will do the shaving at the time of the final funeral, one week before they will show the riches. That is what we usually see in Dagbon. It is only the chiefs' funerals when they will shave the funeral children when they are closing the hole. They don't shave funeral children twice. But with the commoners of Dagbon, it is the elder of the funeral who is will decide and everybody will know. Nobody will tell the elder of the funeral what to do. As for shaving of the funeral children, if they decide to do it at the small funeral, then the time they are going to make the final funeral, they don't shave again. But if they don't shave the funeral children at the small funeral, then at the final funeral time, they have to shave. And so it is the elder of the funeral who is going to show whether the shaving is put down for the three days or for the final funeral day. It is not common, but when they are closing the grave, if the elder wants, he will shave the children.

The day of *kubihi pinibu*, on that day, all the children of the dead body gather together, and the brothers and sisters of the dead body will also gather, and the nephews and nieces will add themselves and stand on the side of the dead person's children. We will call barbers, and the barbers will shave their heads. As we say "funeral children." all the family, any child who wants can shave. It isn't only the dead person's children they will shave. If the brothers and sisters don't shave, or their children also don't shave, it means that as for them, they have removed themselves from the dead person, that they don't know him. And so inside our custom, the shaving of the head is something that joins the family. When you shave like that, when people see, they will get to know that you are closely related to the one who died.

But it isn't all of them who will agree to shave. It is not by force, but truly, it looks as if it is something by force. If you are not related to somebody and he dies, will you go and shave your head? As we have been going to funeral houses,

have you seen those who are not related to the dead person coming to shave their heads? And so if you want to show to people that you are related to the dead body, then you have to show the people by shaving your hair. If you don't shave your hair, that means you don't know the dead body. But at times there are some people who will refuse to shave, and they are related. Yes. There are some funerals you will go, and they won't shave all of them: some of them will shave and some of them won't shave.

There are some people who will say that they don't want the barbers to shave them, and so they will buy their hair. They will pay money to the barbers to leave their hair for them. As for some people, that is how they are. This time as we are sitting, some people used to cut their hair with styles, especially these children and some of the women, and so if they are supposed to shave, it will worry them. They will give money to the barbers to buy their hair. And so they won't say that they won't shave or that they are not the children of the dead person. They are showing that they are related, because the barbers were going to shave you, and you paid for it. And so there is no fault. If you say they shouldn't shave you, and you won't pay, that is the one which would show that you have removed yourself. And so it is inside old Dagbamba talks that when your somebody dies, you should shave. But at the same time, there are some other ways we can pass to stop the shaving. That is how it is.

On the shaving the funeral children day, all the family children of the dead person will come, and the barbers will shave their heads. When the barbers are shaving them, we drummers have some drumming to be beating. We don't beat it unless at a funeral house. The beating is the same as Yori, but it is different from the Yori of the Yaa-Naa's daughters. They don't sing when they are beating it, and there is no dance. And so the drummers will take Yori and be beating, and all these people will be sitting down. All of the dead body's own children, his junior brother's children, his senior brother's children, and his nephews and nieces, these are the people they will shave. Anyone who called him "father" or "uncle," such a person will come and sit. His brothers and sisters, too, if they want, they will shave. According to our custom, if you have a relative who dies, you will shave your head. And so what we hear and what we know is that when you have someone and he dies, they say that you should shave the bad hair away. In our Dagbon, when your father dies or your mother dies, if you don't shave, it will look as if that person was not your relative, that he was not your true father or true mother or true uncle or true junior father or true brother. But when you shave, everyone will look at you and know that truly you are related to the fellow who died. And that is why we shave. Drummers will beat, and barbers will shave their

heads. It is only the grandchildren who will not be shaved. To us Dagbamba, we say that a grandchild is a playmate. Sometimes if a chief or a big person has died, if he has not given birth to many children, they will take the grandchildren and add them just to show that he had many children. If not that, they won't shave the grandchildren. If the children are many, they won't add the grandchildren. As for great-grandchildren, there is not even any talk about them; they are just something like profit: if you go to buy something, and they give you more than you paid for, that is how great-grandchildren are.

But I can tell you that inside our funerals, these grandchildren also have a part to play. If an elderly person dies and is still lying in the room, and you go into the funeral house, you will see that the grandchildren will be holding sticks and beating the ground. As they are grandchildren, they were the dead person's playmates. And as they used to get small things from their grandfather, now they will no longer get. And as they are beating the ground, they are showing that their grandfather has died and left them, and so they don't know what to do again. And you will see that where they stand is just by the door where the dead body of their grandfather is lying. They will get a calabash and put it in front of them, and you will see people throwing money inside. They will be standing there, and if you come and want to go inside, they will stop you. You have to put money into the calabash before they will allow you to go. And the time they are coming to carry the dead body outside, you will see the grandchildren go and block the door of their grandfather's room. They say they won't allow them to take their grandfather. It is not a fault: it is the custom. They will block the way like that unless the people give them some money, and then they will allow the way for them to take their grandfather. It's very interesting when they are doing it, and it is happiness for the dead body, too. Inside the small funeral, on the third day and seventh day, the grandchildren will also come there and do the same thing they did the day the person died, and people will be giving them money. Even if the grandchildren are not going to be doing all that with the sticks, then those who come to the funeral and who know that these are the grandchildren, they will still be giving them money because it is the custom.

There are some people, the day the person dies, when the drummers come to sit and cry the funeral, then some of them will also go inside the house, and they will beat Dikala. When they are beating Dikala, the grandchildren will be dancing Dikala. As we call them the dead person's playmates, this is inside it. They take it to be a joke. But his real children won't dance it because at that time, they still have a broken heart. And the drummers who are crying the funeral, if they finish, if they are not many, they will go and join the Dikala people in the compound. If

you happen to see that they are not all inside the compound, then some of the drummers will be outside and some other ones will join the drummers in the compound. But it isn't everybody who will die and the drummers will go into the compound and beat Dikala. Only some people will reach the point when they will die and drummers will beat Dikala in the compound. They will beat Dikala, and they can add Doyu and Naanigoo and Naybiεyu and other dances. It is not every funeral they do that, but if they want, they will be dancing. That is how it is. And on both the third day and the seventh day, you will sometimes see drummers going round to the funeral house and the other family houses in the area, and they will be beating drums. Inside the funeral house, drummers can beat; outside the house, they can beat. As drummers go to the funeral house, they will take their drums and praise people, and they will be showing the people to each other like that. But this drumming and praising people, it is not something they do when the dead body is still lying down. As for that time, it's a bitter mouth. When the dead body is lying down, you are all having bitter mouth. And so this is the small funeral, when we close the grave, and this is how our funerals are moving in Dagbon here.

It is on the seventh day that the elder of the funeral house will show the gathering when the final funeral will be performed. It can happen and the Limam will announce to the people. If there is an elder of the chief at the funeral, sometimes the elder of the funeral house will tell that chief's elder, and the chief's elder will talk it or tell Limam. And so you should know that the mouth that the Limam takes to speak at the funeral house, it is the elder of the funeral who gives him the right to speak. Fixing the day of the final funeral is not the work of the Limam, but if the elder talks to Limam, Limam can talk. And so after they finish praying the seventh day prayers, the elder of the funeral will get up and tell the Limam, "I would like to perform the final funeral in six months' time. That is the time I will be prepared to make the final funeral." If the elder wants, he can fix the final funeral for three months' time, four months' time, ten months' time, one year's time. He will know the time when he will make it, and when he tells the Limam, the Limam will speak to the public. And everybody will get to know the time the final funeral is going to come. And at that time, everyone will go back to their houses. Those who have come from other towns and villages will also go home.

If they finish the small funeral, if the dead person's mother was somebody who was grown, they will say that they should take the funeral home to the mother's side. If there is food, they will go to the mother's house side. But if there is no food, they will wait until they have the means, say, when they farm and the crops have grown. When they carry it to the mother's side, they will close the

grave there, too. They will gather the people at the mother's side and tell them that the funeral has come home. And they will take it again as the first day, and they will do the three days and the seven days. They will buy maha for sacrifice. They will get a sheep and slaughter. They will call maalams to come and sit down, and they will make the prayers. In Dagbon here, if they close the grave on the father's side and take it to the mother's side like that, the mother's side people are also going to say that they are going to close the grave, so they will also perform the funeral like that. And sometimes they will combine the three days and the seven days, and they will only do the three days and then they will leave it, and they will wait for the final funeral. The final funeral and the showing of the riches comes on the father's side, and so on the mother's side, they will only be closing the grave.

After the seventh day, the elder of the funeral will also go back to his town and leave the dead body's house. At that time the house has become a house without a householder. When the elder of the funeral is leaving, he will get money and give it to the junior brothers or the elder children of the dead body, that they should be using it to buy food for the widows and orphans in the house to be eating. If that money finishes and the final funeral is not yet performed, he will send them more money. That is what he will continue to do up to the time they finish the final funeral.

As for the final funeral, if there are the means, it is cows they will kill. If the dead person had cows, the elder of the funeral will not have to buy a cow. If there are no cows, he will try to get them. As they have fixed the day for the final funeral, when it is getting to a week before the day, they will take one of the cows and kill it. That is the day they are going to shave the heads of the funeral children. I have told you that they usually perform the small funeral and leave the shaving for the final funeral. And so they will shave the heads before they perform the funeral, and the way I showed it on the part of the small funeral, that is the same way they do it. But if they don't shave the children, they can't show the riches. After shaving all the funeral children, they will get the eldest son, the Gbɔŋlana, of the dead body and bathe him, and they get the eldest daughter, the Pakpɔŋ, and bathe her.

The day they have come together for the shaving, if they finish the shaving, they will sit together to fix the following week for the final funeral. It is two days they will do it: they will do what we call *buni wuhibu*, "showing the riches," and on the following day they do what we call *sara tarbu*, "giving the sacrifice." The maalams don't follow this way: when a malam dies, they have the way they perform his funeral. But we Dagbamba, including those of us who pray, when we

die, we follow the shaving of the heads and we perform the final funeral. The elder of the funeral house will decide and choose the day. They will shave, and if they have the means, then in one week's time then they will show the riches. If they are not prepared, say, on the part of food, if the funeral is very big, they can let it lie down for two weeks before showing the riches. But the one week, when they do that, there is respect inside it. That week, nobody goes away again. Everybody is around the funeral house. During that week, everybody gathers. They will be cooking and feeding the strangers, and you will see many people there. And so if they shave the children on Sunday, then the next Sunday they are going to show the riches, and then on Monday they give the sacrifice. There are some people, too, they will show the riches on Monday, and then on Tuesday they will give their sacrifice. It is there like that. And the one that is strong is that they will show the riches on Thursday, and then on Friday they will finish the funeral. And so if it is that you want to see a funeral in Dagbon, you should consider Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. And this Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday: they take it to perform the funeral of the common people. And then Thursday and Friday is for the big people, say, the chiefs or those who are elders. The Thursday and Friday are the more interesting, and so if it happens that on any of these days, that is, a Thursday and a Friday, there is a big funeral around, you will see that many people will just go to that place to see all of what is happening there. From the time they show the riches on the Sunday, Monday or Thursday, you will see many wonderful things.

What is buni wuhibu, "showing the riches"? The day they show the riches, that day is on the part of the husbands of the dead person's daughters. The way they put it: after shaving the funeral children's hair, they will put it that the buni wuhibu day is coming on the following week, and if the day comes, everybody will gather in the late afternoon. The one who died, if he is up to the standard of his funeral being performed with a cow, the elder of the funeral is going to buy a cow. That is on the side of the elder of the funeral house. The strong work of this buni wuhibu is standing on the in-laws. Anyone who has married a daughter from that house will come and give a cloth, a scarf, a waistband, twelve or twenty-two pieces of cola or even a bowl of cola, a sheep or even a cow, and add money, and just give all this to the elder of the funeral house.

And that is the showing the riches: the in-laws present all this in front of people. This is what all the in-laws bring to the funeral. Whether the dead person was a commoner or a chief, this is what they do, and they do it the same way, because it is a commoner who becomes a chief and a chief who becomes a commoner. And when they are coming to show the riches, there is somebody in

the chief's house who is coming to stand before they will show the riches. We call him Zoꝃyuri-Naa. And he will get up and stand to say that, "Such-and-such a person has brought a cow." And he will add that "The cow, we know he can't just go to anywhere and catch a cow. The cow, he has bought it. And that is the thing he is going to show." From the beginning, the Zoꝃyuri-Naa has mentioned that the elder of the funeral is going to show the riches with a cow. That one aside, there is the Pakpɔŋ, the eldest daughter. The Zoꝃyuri-Naa will get up again and say, "Pakpɔŋ's husband has brought a sheep, and a cloth, and a scarf, and a waistband, and money like this, and cola nuts," and he will add that, "This is what the Pakpɔŋ's husband has given to Pakpɔŋ to make her father's funeral." If the dead person happened to have ten daughters, this is how they will mention everybody's husbands. He will stand up and say, "This is what Zenabu's husband has brought to make her father's funeral" or "This is what Fati's husband has brought to make her father's funeral." If it happens that there is an in-law whose wife is pregnant, as for him, he doesn't add any cloth; he will only bring raw money and come and perform the funeral. And these things they are showing there, it is money they used to buy them. And so how the Zoꝃyuri-Naa will get up and talk like that, people will know that such-and-such a woman's husband has come to perform the funeral of her father. And so this is what they are showing. As for the cloth, the scarf, and the waistband, they will give that to the daughter so that she will remember how her husband came to perform the funeral. And again, it is on the side of chieftaincy, and commoners also do it: the eldest son, the Gbɔŋlana, his mother's side will also bring a sheep. And the Zoꝃyuri-Naa will mention it there, to the hearing of all the people, "The Gbɔŋlana mother's side, they have brought a sheep, that they should use it to make his father's funeral." The Pakpɔŋ, the mother's side will also do like that, and he will say, "Pakpɔŋ's mother's side, they have brought a sheep, so that they should make her father's funeral."

These in-laws too, they will all come with drummers. If anyone has married a daughter of the dead person, he will let drummers follow at his back. If he wants, he will bring a Simpa group, goonjis, a Baamaaya group, a Jera group, or Kambonsis, or Atikatika children. He will take them there. And all this, is it also something or not? That is why we call it buni wuhibu. That is the meaning of it. Buni wuhibu: they show their riches. It is money they use to buy these things, and they brought them there. And it is money they used to bring these dances there. And so when they come, it is announced to the public there, that such-and-such a person, this is what he is using to help his wife to perform his father-in-law's funeral. Have you heard the talk? That is what we call buni wuhibu. *Buni*

is “riches,” but it is not only money they give. It is things. But it is money they used to buy the things. All this, they are going to talk it in public. This is what they call buni. Have they shown it people or not? Has everybody got to know or not? This is what we call buni.

And so the buni wuhibu day, that day you will see many dances. When they show the riches and finish, they will make a small dance at that time up to the time it becomes a bit dark. Everybody will go and eat and rest and return in the night, and they will dance until daybreak. I have already told you that we take funerals to be a big thing in Dagbon, and as you have seen it, you also know. It is at the showing the riches and the final funeral that people spend a lot. If not at that time, you won't see all this. When you go to a funeral and you see many types of dances, and Baamaaya and Simpa and other dances, then you should know that it was on that day they showed the riches. On the day of showing the riches, there is nothing but happiness. Everybody will bring different kinds of dances for people to dance.

If the showing the riches day hasn't come, they won't make any display like this. Truly, we beat drums, but it is not as big as this. The work drummers do on the part of funerals: I have told you that if somebody dies, on the death day, we drummers go to beat, and we say that we are going to “cry the funeral.” And as the people are coming to the funeral house, we will also be there praising them. And I told you that when they are taking the dead body to bury it, there is the beating which we beat. We beat it and follow the dead body to the grave side. On the third day and the seventh day, after they share the sacrifice, we can be going to the funeral house and the houses of the dead body's family and beating dances like Dikala, Doɣu, Naɣbiɛɣu, Naanigoo, Ɔim taai kurugu, Nakɔhi-waa, and all the other kinds of dances. And again, when the final funeral comes, the next one is that we will beat drums the day they shave the funeral children. During that week, too, before they show the riches, you will see that some people will call Takai or Tɔra to be beaten at the funeral house. All this is standing on the part of funerals and the work we drummers do.

But it is the final funeral which is the big one. On the day of showing the riches, you will see many drummers. I told you that we don't do any important work in Dagbon here without drummers. How can they show the riches without beating the drums? They can't do it. In the night, it is not only those people like Simpa children and Baamaaya people or Jera people who will be coming. Goonji people will be there. As for drummers, you can see three or four or even more circles with drummers inside. As the showing the riches is for the in-laws of the dead person, the sons and brothers and the family of the dead person, they don't

have anything to do on the part of showing the riches. On that day they will put on nice smocks and dresses and go around to dance all the different kinds of dances that are being danced at their father's funeral. They will make themselves look very fine, and people who are looking at the dances will get to know, "Yes, the dead person had got children. As for him, he had family." That is what they do. And so on the day of showing the riches, in the night, the whole area of the funeral house will be full of people. All the dead person's friends and relatives will come, and many people will just come to watch. Others come and put up tables to be selling some small things like cigarettes or oranges or anything. And they will be dancing until three or four o'clock in the morning, and the last people to finish will be the Baamaaya people, at dawn.

If they show the riches on Thursday, then the next day is Friday, and that is when they will finish everything. That one is something like the third day and the seventh day. Getting to two o'clock, maalams will come to lead the people in prayers. They pray the adua, the prayers. And the sara tarbu, the giving of sacrifice, looks like the third day and the seventh day after they buried the dead person. They will bring out the pɔŋ and give maha and kpaakulo. And they share the sacrifice among the maalams and all the people who have come to the funeral. When they have shared the sacrifice like that and finished praying, getting to four o'clock, they share the property of the dead body. And that is the end of the final funeral. At that time, no one has to remember about the funeral again. And so the funeral is finished. Everybody is happy. And everyone will go back to his house or his town. That is how we follow the funeral in Dagbon here. And so funerals are a big talk in Dagbon.

Before the time of Naa Zanjina, we Dagbamba were not following the Islamic religion. Before that time, when someone died, they weren't doing all this. They didn't know anything about funerals; they knew that someone was dead, and that was all. The only thing they had was something we call *buli chebu*. This buli chebu was that whenever somebody died, they would bury the fellow, and then in one week's time they would cook certain food. The only thing that they would do when they buried the fellow was to sacrifice a goat. It is still there on the part of some of the typical Dagbamba. And how they make this sacrifice is very surprising. When a typical Dagbamba dies and they go to bury him, they take along a goat. You know, goats are more important to the typical Dagbamba than sheep because almost all the gods in Dagbon eat goats as sacrifice. After they bury the fellow, they cover the grave and put a stone on top. Then somebody will hold the legs of the goat and just swing it in the sky, and then knock the head of the goat on the stone and kill it. Sometimes they can take about ten goats to the grave side and

kill all of them on the grave, just picking them up and knocking them on the ground. We call it *ɲmenyihi*, “knocking out.” After that, they wouldn’t do anything again. If the fellow was a chief, in one week’s time, they would get a new chief again.

When Naa Zanjina became the chief, he brought maalams from the Hausa land. It was the maalams who showed us how to bathe a dead body, get a white cloth and cover it, and take the dead body and bury it. They taught us to give a sheep to those who dig the grave and give another sheep to the maalams who bathed the dead body. They taught us to kill a sheep on the day the fellow dies and is lying in the house, and cook the food we call *solɪ sayim* for those people who are coming from far away, so that when they arrive they will eat this food. After burying the dead body, we give the three cedis or four cedis and sit together, and give the money to maalams to pray to God. And they showed us that after three days and seven days, we should perform the funeral again, and then we should put down the time for the final funeral, whether three months or four months or whenever the relatives of the dead body can get money to perform the final funeral. It was Naa Zanjina who brought maalams and taught us all this. And we have seen that it helps us a lot on the part of our living, and so funerals have got a lot of respect in Dagbon here.

The reason why we are performing funerals and why we take the funeral to be a high thing in Dagbon here is that a funeral makes the family well. How does it make a family well? Let’s say that today, I Ibrahim am in a different town. My parents are in Tamale here, and my junior brothers and senior brothers are here and giving birth to children. None of these children will know me, and I will not know any of them either. If my brother dies and I come to attend the funeral, by that time his children will get to know that I am their junior father. And I will also get to know that these children are my brother’s children. It is this funeral that lets me and the children get to know each other. Otherwise, maybe we wouldn’t have known each other.

And again, sometimes you will be sitting down and a funeral will come, and the funeral may be from your mother’s side. As it is your mother’s side, you may not know that side of your family. Your mother’s family doesn’t know you, and you don’t know them. It is in the performing of this funeral that everybody will get to know each other.

And again, if you marry a wife and your wife’s father dies, truly, there is a way for you the husband along with the whole of your family to attend the funeral of your wife’s father. Sometimes you will even add your friends, and all of them will accompany you to attend your in-law’s funeral. If you attend the funeral with

your family and your friends like that, the parents of your wife will get to know that the person they have given their daughter to is not a useless person. They have given their daughter to a good person. And by that time, you the person attending the funeral, the kind of respect they will give you and your friends and family, only God knows it.

And truly, sometimes you will be staying with somebody in a different town, and you will not know that you are related to that person. You will just know him as someone you are staying with in one area and that is why you know him. A funeral will come and it is there you will get to know that truly, that person is someone you are related to.

And so as we are performing funerals in Dagbon here, there are many things in the funeral on the way of the family. If there are many people in a family, it will let a funeral be attended by so many people. And sometimes the family may not be more, but the friends are uncountable. Friends like what? This friendship comes from someone who gives birth to children and the children don't settle at one place. Let's say you are from Savelugu and you give birth to children, and the children have run away from Savelugu to stay in Tamale here. As your child has run away to stay in Tamale here, he has not come to stay uselessly: he has come to stay with many people as friends. Whatever happens, if his father should die at Savelugu and he is going to attend the funeral, his friends are going to raise him up and bring him to the funeral. And truly, in friendship, what we have been seeing is that forty friends or even more will follow him to attend his father's funeral.

If you are going to attend your father's funeral like that, these forty friends who are following you, not all of them are even your real friends. I will give you an example. Let's say you give a gift to somebody, and the one you give the gift to is very happy. You will also go and tell somebody, "I have given such a person a gift," and that person you tell will also be happy. And the one who received the gift from you will also be going around to so many people and telling them, "This is what such-and-such a fellow has given me." All these people will be happy because of the gift you have given that fellow. As they have all heard of it, some of them don't even know you, but if something happens to you, and that fellow is going to come to you, all of these people will want to accompany him to go with you. And so this is how a funeral will come and many people will attend it.

Sometimes the one who died, his family will be many. Some of his children may not want to be making friends with others, but since the family is many, you will see many people at the funeral. And whatever happens, there will be some friends too. I know somebody in Tamale here, Alhaji Ibrahim Kpabia: if you sit

down to count all his children and grandchildren, maybe they will reach about a thousand. He is very old. He has great-grandchildren, and even some of these great-grandchildren are giving birth to children. If you count his houses together with his children's houses, there will be about forty or fifty houses. If somebody who tells stories wants to tell you about this, he will say that the houses are more than a hundred. Such a person, if he should die, even if his children have no friends at all, if you go to see his funeral, you may think that the whole of Tamale is attending the funeral. And truly, as his children are there, they have got friends. As they are there like that and they have friends, if he should die, how do you think the funeral is going to be? The funeral is going to be more than what they can carry. The way that people will be coming to gather at the place, they won't be able to handle them.

And so in Dagbon here, whatever we are doing and the people are many, it is something that helps us. That is why I have been telling you that benefit is in a group. And so we don't joke with funerals. It stands that we perform a funeral and know the family, and we perform a funeral and know the friends. That is why we perform funerals, and those are the reasons why we respect funerals. And it isn't just now that we started performing funerals. It is never just now: we all grew up to meet funerals. In the olden days people were not attending funerals as they do now, but it is only because people are more now. And that is the reason why many, many people are attending funerals more than in the olden days. What we have seen and what we know about the performing of funerals, we have seen that it is good. It is good for us, and it is good for our children.

But truly, sometimes we will perform a funeral and hunger will kill us. Hunger like what? A funeral is performed with food, and the food is not there. And you cannot leave the funeral and not perform it. The little food that you have, you will take it and perform the funeral. There are some people who will do that and will not have food to eat again. And is this bringing trouble or not? There are some funerals which they will perform and this will happen. Truly, there is a lot of food at a funeral because that is how we all want to meet. It is the same thing at a wedding house. And if you don't make a lot of food, it means you are not equal to the work that you are to do, or you are not up to performing the funeral. If a relative of your dies, you have to prepare the food so that you will kill the funeral. When you are prepared, that is when you will perform the funeral. We want to give the dead person a good name, and that is what we have all grown up to meet. And some people are there, and truly, they have no means, and they will only perform the small part of the funeral, and leave it.

But sometimes somebody will perform a funeral and will get a lot of food. Even it is not anything; in this Tamale here, we have been seeing that. Not everybody farms, but someone who is not farming will not say, "Because I am not farming, when anyone in my family dies, I will not perform the funeral." He will have to perform it. And sometimes somebody will die, and his son will have a friend, and that friend has got the means. Either that friend is a farmer or the friend has the means of getting money: he can get corn or guinea corn or yams and give it to his friend. It has been happening that someone will die, and those who are to perform the funeral will not have means to perform it, and they cannot leave it, and so they will have to try to perform it. Even up to the time that the funeral must be performed and they have to get into it, they haven't yet got the means. Other people who pity them will give bags of corn to them. Sometimes they will get about ten bags of corn which are just gifts from people who pity them. They didn't have it, and they are inside the funeral before they get it. Sometimes it may happen that they receive ten bags to make the funeral, and they only eat four bags. What has it brought? And so somebody can perform a funeral and get wealth, and somebody can perform a funeral and get poverty. That is how it is.

And in Dagbon here we have something again. If your friend is performing a funeral and you are sitting down looking at him without helping him, if it comes to your turn and you are also performing a funeral, he will never mind you. Whether you tell him or not, he won't mind you. But the time he is performing his funeral, if you make it your worry, even if your family dies in another town and you go there and he didn't see you, when he asks about you and they say you have gone to perform a funeral, he will chase after you. It's just because you helped him to make his funeral. In Dagbon here, this is what we do. And that is the reason why we spend a lot of money when we are going to attend a funeral.

And we drummers, too, we have a lot of work at a funeral house. As I have told you that we Dagbamba perform funerals and know the family, it is we drummers who show someone his family and they will know each other. If you are going to attend your in-law's funeral, the people at the funeral will have to know that, "Yes, this is the husband of so-and-so's daughter attending his in-law's funeral." Before people will know that you are holding a daughter of the dead person, it is we drummers who will show them. If you are attending your in-law's funeral and you go with drummers following you and beating the drums, and you are spending a lot of money, truly, people will talk about you. They will finish the funeral, and your name and what you did on the funeral day will still be in the mouths of people, and they will be talking of you and giving you respect. But if

you attend your in-law's funeral without spending on drummers, the people at the funeral house will say, "Oh! As for our daughter, we just threw her away." That is how it is.

And so you will meet many different kinds of dances at a funeral house. All the dances are coming from the in-laws of the dead body. It is the husbands of the dead body's daughters who are going to do strong work at the funeral house. When these husbands are going to attend the funeral, they will be coming from different towns and villages. When they are going to attend the funeral, if there is a Simpa group in their town or a Baamaaya group in their town or any other kind of dance, they will tell them, "I am going to my in-law's funeral, and I would like you to follow me and display there." And these people will get up and follow them. If it is that the dead body has got many sons in different towns, and there are many types of dances in those towns, then the leaders of the dance groups will tell these sons, "We will accompany you to perform your father's funeral." We who are beating Takai, we do that all the time. If a funeral comes to someone in the group, then it is a must that we will all follow that person to the funeral. And on the part of friends, if a funeral comes in Dagbon here, maybe someone has got a friend who is dancing Baamaaya, or he has a friend who is leading a Simpa group, and maybe another man's friend is the leader of Jera, or this daughter's husband is leading a Simpa group or a Baamaaya group, and that daughter's husband is a friend to Atikatika children, and maybe someone is dancing in a Jera group. They will all come. Any time they hear that they are going to attend a funeral or if they hear that their friend's father or mother is dead, the whole group will get up and follow that person to the funeral house. Sometimes a funeral house will have three or four Simpa groups; Baamaaya, the same number; and Jera will also be there.

And all this is apart from us drummers, because drummers will also be there beating for people to dance. Sometimes we will have three or four or more circles at the funeral house. One will be for the old men in the family, and another will be for the old women, and sometimes they will mix men and women, too. Apart from that, there are the young men and women and the strangers who have come to attend the funeral. They are all dressed very well, and they are all dancing. Truly, a funeral can look like a wonderful thing, and apart from the family and friends who have come, you will see many people coming to the funeral and none of them knew the dead person; they are just coming to watch.

And so what is bringing all these dances is just friendship. It's not that these dancers just go. Their friends who want them to help perform their relative's funerals will send them cola. And when they receive the cola, they will gather and talk about everything. The one who has the funeral will tell them, "My father has

died, and I want you to help me perform the funeral.” Sometimes these dancers, when they are going to attend the funeral with their dances, they will help their friend by going along with food and everything. They will not be looking for any sleeping place. If they get a place to lay down their drums and their dresses and things, that is all. They will beat their drums up to daybreak. Simpa children will beat drums up till daybreak; they won’t have to find a place to sleep. Some people might come and beat till four or five o’clock in the morning before they go back home. As for Baamaaya people, they always dance until the sun is coming out in the morning, because when they come, they don’t start early. It can be about one o’clock to two o’clock in the morning before they will begin beating their drums and dancing. And that is the way of those who are coming to dance.

As there are many dances like that at a funeral house, it’s not that they have paid them to come. The only time they will pay these dancers to come is if somebody like the Gonjas or the Gurunsis are having a funeral and they want to call some of these dancers to come and beat. Somebody who is not a Dagbana may want to perform his father’s funeral, and he will come and call dancers from Dagbon here, and he will pay them. But as for the Dagbamba, they will give them money, but they will not pay them. It is those people who have come to see the funeral who will look at them, and somebody will come out and do a nice dance, and those watching will give him something. Maybe there is a singer who will be singing, and as he sings and it is sweet, somebody will come out and give the fellow a gift. That is all. That is the only money they will get. From the beginning they haven’t paid them. These dancers have just come to help their friend to perform his father’s funeral. How is he going to pay them? As they are coming to help, the only thing he will do is to get a sheep or a goat and slaughter it just to welcome them with food. Someone might let the women cook rice. This is all he will do for them. He never pays them. Even I have told you that sometimes they will come along with their own food. It is there like that. If they are coming from a far place, their friend will not even pay for the bus or the truck they join to come there; they will pay their own fare because they said they are coming to help him perform his father’s funeral. If he says he wants to pay their fare, they will not agree.

And so these people, we look at them and say that as they are doing all that, they are paying each other’s debts, because they will all come together to attend your father’s funeral, and maybe tomorrow someone’s father will die, and they will all come together to help that fellow, too. And so how we Dagbamba look at our friends and do favors for our friends, sometimes your friend will do something small for you, and when you are going to reply to him, you have to do something

big for him. This is the way of living of the Dagbamba and that is why we Dagbamba are doing all this. If you are going to perform your father's funeral and your friend comes to help you with three groups of dancers, the time his father dies and you are going there, you will go with more than that. It is the sweetness of friendship. You will just be thinking about how he helped you, and you will also do your best to help him perform his father's funeral. And when you go with him as his friend to perform the funeral in a strong way like that, his respect will be more at the funeral house. As it is, is it going to increase the friendship or decrease the friendship? Whatever happens, it will add to you and add to him, too. And so your friends, on the part of your performing a funeral, that is the time you will see them spending a lot for you to help you. In fact, how they will come together and help, you yourself will be surprised. And those people who are talking about you and saying that as you have strong friends, you are not walking uselessly, you will also know that truly, it is true.

And so from the first, I have been telling you that inside our talks, we will talk about drumming and come to talk about our Dagbamba way of living. And as these talks are entering one another, the strong talk inside all our talks is respect. And so the talk of funerals is one of them. As for that one, in Dagbani, we call it: let's help one another. If you are somebody who doesn't lend anything to anybody, then nobody will be coming to pay you back. That is the reason why we take the funeral to be a big thing in Dagbon: when your friend gets a problem and you go to help him, then as for that one, it looks as if you are holding his debt. Tomorrow, if the same trouble comes to you, the way you went and did to him is the same way he will come and do to you, and maybe, he will even add to it. The fellow will say that, "When my father died, you brought such-and-such a dance to the funeral, and again, you helped on the part of food." Or "My mother died, and you were able to help by bringing different dances, and you helped again by helping me to get food. So tomorrow, if your father dies, or your mother dies, then I too, it is standing that I have to go and do what you came and did for me." It always happens. In Dagbon here, as for that, it always happens that when he comes, then he will do more than what you did for him before. And it will be sweet for you his friend. Even if he cannot do up to the extent you did for him, then the way he has taken his legs to walk to the funeral place, it will sweeten you. And so as for that, in Dagbani we give it the name: we help one another. If you don't help somebody, somebody too will not help you.

And on the part of the in-laws, in Dagbon, anytime you are giving your daughter to a man, you will tell the man that as you are giving your daughter to him, you want that when you die, he should try and perform the funeral very well.

The very day you will be handing over that daughter to the man, you will talk to the man like that, and that: “I want, if the time comes and I die, I want outside my house to be hot.” That day the father will talk like that to the one he is giving his daughter to. And if it happens that the father dies, then he has talked to all the husbands already. They will all try to do strong work. So that is how it is. Inside Dagbon, before you will take somebody’s daughter, there are times when you have to be giving him respect. And when he dies, that is some of the respect you will add to finish it. And it will be white heart. And if you are a man, if you come like that to perform the funeral of your in-law, it adds respect to your wife. And you, too, it gives you respect. So this is what we do.

Sometimes you will follow your friend to perform his in-law’s or his family’s funeral and you will get a very heavy gift there. And there is no gift that is more than they will give you a wife. The one who is the elder of the funeral house, as he is the leader of the funeral, maybe he will say, “Oh! Look at how our son has come with his friends to make this funeral. We have to get something for some of his friends.” They will bring a woman out of the family and give her to you, just because of the respect of the funeral and the friendship. If you get such a gift, what has brought it? Is it not the funeral? And so as for me, as far as I know, if there were to be no funerals, then there would be no family. Because of the performing of the funeral, that is why the family is standing. And the performing of the funeral is also the thing that strengthens our friendship with people. And as I have told you that friendship brings family, this is one example of it. And so a funeral is a very big thing in Dagbon here.

And so if somebody dies and his funeral is attended by many people, people will talk about the funeral and say that the family is a respectable family. If the dead person has many children, people will say, “Oh, as this man has given birth to so many children, they are standing well and they have a lot of respect. Truly, if not because of his children, how could his funeral be like this?” And they will say again, “Oh! As for these children, they have respect for their father. Don’t you see how they have performed the funeral?”

And sometimes someone will die and his funeral will be well performed by other people, and all the many people who respect him and who attend the funeral are there just because of the dead person himself and not because of his children. For example, as I am sitting down, I attend other people’s funerals, but my children do not. My children don’t know the number of people I know. And these people whose funerals I have been attending, they don’t know my children. If it happens that I die, all these people will attend my funeral. They will come just because of respect. And they will come just because of shame. And the shame is

that, “When so-and-so was alive, he used to attend so many people’s funerals, but why is it that he has died and no one has come to attend his funeral?” All the people and all the families that I have been attending funerals with, other people will abuse them. This is how it is also moving. And so someone will die and his funeral will be attended by many people, and it is just that all those people respect him. That is how it is.

And so we Dagbamba don’t joke with the performing of funerals. Even inside the family, we have some talk. Let’s say we are all brothers, and we also have our brother who is staying in Accra or Takoradi or some town in the South. If our father dies, we will send and tell our brother in the South. If he is well, and he doesn’t come, we will just keep quiet. And in some time, it can happen that one of our junior fathers dies. And we send and tell him again, and he doesn’t come again. If he himself should die, none of us will attend his funeral. Even if he has many children or he has all the money that he needs, we will not go. When our father died, we told him and he didn’t come; and when our junior father died, we told him and he didn’t come. Nobody will go to his funeral. If we go, we will die. Why is it that we will die? In Dagbon here, we say that a dead person doesn’t die at once: a person who dies still has some questions he can ask. And if you attend your brother’s funeral in the South, your dead father will ask you, “So you are someone who likes family and you are attending his funeral? Why is it that I am the one who gave birth to all of you, and when I died, he didn’t come to my funeral?” If the father asks such a question to someone who attends such a funeral, by daybreak the fellow will die. It’s not that your dead father will come to you himself to tell you this, but you’re going to see him through your sleeping: you will have a dream about your father and he will be asking you these questions. And if you meet your dead father asking you such questions, truly, you will die. If you say you don’t believe it and you will attend your brother’s funeral, you will see that it is true. In Dagbon here, we have that, and that is why we don’t attend some funerals.

As for a funeral, even if your parent is in Europe or America and he dies, if you have the means, you have to attend the funeral. It is a must. And so if somebody dies, and they inform any person in the family who is living in a different town, and he refuses to come, and then another person dies, and they inform him and he refuses to come, as for him, when his time comes and he dies, his funeral is going to be useless. Nobody will go. If you say you don’t fear anything, and you go to that funeral, the dead bodies won’t allow you. As for that, there is nothing like begging. Even if he doesn’t come, but he sends somebody, everybody in the family will know that he is still within the family. When he sends

a messenger, the messenger will tell the funeral why that person has not been able to come. But he hasn't come, and he hasn't sent any messenger. He has refused two times, and if the third one happens, there is no need to inform him. He has already declared himself out of the family.

And there is one type of funeral we also fear and respect. What is that funeral? Somebody who grows up and never gives birth to children, whether a man or a woman, if he or she should die, all the family will come together to attend the funeral. If they don't do that, it will be bad for them. If they don't perform the funeral, the dead body has a way to ask them, "Is it because I have not given birth to a child that you don't perform my funeral?" By then, you will see that many people in the family are just dying. And so somebody in a family who never gave birth to a child, when he dies, sometimes his funeral is performed more highly than someone who gave birth to children. If they do that, the dead body will be in the grave and will be cooled. And those of you who performed the funeral, your bodies will also be cool. Cool like what? You won't think again that the dead person will ever do bad to you.

And so up to today, as everything has changed, the talk of funerals has not changed. We still want to hold the family well, and if there were no funerals, there would not be family. That is how funerals are inside our Dagbamba way of living. And this talk is within God, too. Learned Muslim people used to tell us that if we are making a funeral, and the whole family gathers like that, it's very good, because we have come to join together to perform the funeral. And according to our learning, God says that any gathering that will gather and will bring family together, that gathering is very good. And God also says that if the family joins, it is very good. And so this our gathering at a funeral is very good for us, we the human beings here, and it is good to God too. If you happen to come across somebody who tells you that the performance of funerals is not there, then he is somebody who doesn't want the family joining. And to us, somebody who doesn't want family joining is the one we call a bad-luck person. If you are a good-luck person, and you go to be with a bad-luck person, then you will also carry some of his problem. And so funerals are a big talk in Dagbon, and all of us, whether commoners or chiefs, we don't joke with them.

And that is how we perform funerals in Dagbon here, and the funerals we have been performing, sometimes a commoner's funeral will be more than a chief's. The only part in which a chief's funeral will be higher than a commoner's funeral is the time the Yaa-Naa sends a messenger to attend the funeral. In Dagbon here, we respect where the chief sends his messenger. Even if something is a useless thing, if we find that the Yaa-Naa's messenger is there, we respect it.

They will say, “Oh, do you see Yaa-Naa’s messenger attending?” Even if it is a commoner’s funeral and it is not anything big, if the Yaa-Naa’s messenger is there, people will take it to be very high. But there can be many people at a commoner’s funeral, and if the Yaa-Naa’s messenger is not there, we will just take it to be a commoner’s funeral. And so the only difference is whether the Yaa-Naa’s messenger is there or not there. Any funeral where you will see that Yaa-Naa sends a messenger there, everybody will get to know that when that fellow was alive, he was having something to do with Yaa-Naa, and so everybody should hold the funeral with two hands to raise it up. Sometimes other chiefs will send their messengers to attend funerals, but if the Yaa-Naa doesn’t send his messenger, people won’t take it to be high. Someone will say, “Such-and-such a chief sent his messenger to the funeral.” And you will see people asking, “Was that fellow the Yaa-Naa’s messenger or which chief’s messenger?” And he will answer, “He is never a Yaa-Naa’s messenger; he just walked his useless walk to come.” That is how people will talk about it. And so it is coming from the chiefs a person knew before his death. Anybody who will come as a messenger from a chief, people will talk about it. But when these chiefs send their messengers or they are also there, and Yaa-Naa also sends his messenger, you will see people talking everywhere, “Yaa-Naa’s messenger is there. Such-and-such chief’s messenger is there. So-and-so chief’s messenger is there.” And so we Dagbamba, we also have this on the part of how we perform funerals. We have talked about funerals on the part of commoners, and it is a big talk, but where the chief’s hand is inside, it will be something more than that.

And so as I have talked about it, we haven’t caught all of it. And the talk I have given you, you can find many Dagbamba who can talk, but they can’t talk this talk to you. Even if you talk it to the hearing of many Dagbamba, they will be surprised, because they don’t know all the talks inside the performing of funerals. And there is still more. And I think that we will stop here, and tomorrow I will come and talk about how the maalams perform funerals, because there are some things that are different, and we will come and join it to talk about the funerals of chiefs, because the funerals of chiefs are wonderful.