

## Chapter II-1: *The Forbidden Talks of Drumming*

We have been talking about us drummers and how we do our drumming work, and I have been telling you that the talks of drumming are too much. As I have gathered talks about drumming, I have also been showing you our way of living. And now we are coming to talk about the chiefs and the old talks of Dagbon, and how Dagbon started in the very, very olden days. As I am coming to talk about how Dagbon started, you know, I am feeling something like cold, and my head is getting swollen. Truly, I feel my head to be just like a room. It's just that this is a secret, and I am revealing it. And these talks are going to go to people who are very far away, and it is not because of those people that the talks or the secrets were put down. But now I am coming to realize the importance of what we are doing. And it is not good for us to bring out something that people will find faults inside. That would be a disgrace. And so because of you, and the importance of the work, there is no need for us to hide anything. You know, every time, every day, every moment, a human mind is changing. And so the little bit I have been telling you about these old talks, since the time you first came, at that time I was not sure of myself or of you. But I have seen that you have shown great interest since the time that you first came. You have come many times now. That is why I have taken pains to show you. All my elders have given their blessing to tell you all that I know. And as we have been inside these talks of drumming, I was even thinking that we should talk about these old talks. A leopard does not eat goat meat, but when they are preparing the fire to cook goat meat, and a leopard comes to push the firewood, it will come that the leopard will have the appetite for the goat meat. And that is how it is, and we have come to search for these talks. That is why I want to repair these talks, and we should talk them in a correct way according to our tradition. Our Dagbamba have a proverb that says, "A dog doesn't bite its child and reach the bone." The dog will only hold its child but will not bite. If the dog bites the puppy up to the bone, it shows that the puppy is not the child of the dog. And so all the talk that is between us, I have heard it. I am not going to bite you up to the bone.

How I am going to talk about it, I am going to take the talks, the talks I have heard and the talks we sat together and heard, and I will join them and at the same time separate them. And we are going to begin with the talk about how Yendi started, and it is a big talk and a difficult talk. And we will follow it and repair it and talk about how the chiefs stand in Dagbon here, and the work they do when they are holding a town. And the talk of our drumming is inside it. It is we drummers who know the talk of the chiefs, and it is because of the chiefs that we

drummers beat the Samban' luja. And so the Samban' luja comes to join the chiefs' talks. And so we will come to the Samban' luja and the talks inside it, and we will follow those talks up to the present day.

And so what is there? Our starting is from Tɔhizee and Nimbu, but they didn't eat chieftaincy. That is the talk of how the Dagbamba came to sit in this place. And truly, their talks are not many. As they have written about our starting in the schoolbooks, it is not everything they were told, and so it is not everything they have written. And coming to Naa Gbewaa, we haven't talked much about it, and there are some talks inside it, because it was in Naa Gbewaa's time that we Dagbamba came to become separate from the Mamprusis and the Mossis and the Nanumbas. And as we are separate, we have some relation with the other tribes that are here.

And what is there again? It is Naa Nyaysi and Naa Shitɔbu. To somebody who thinks or somebody who knows, that was the beginning of our Dagbon. During the time of Naa Shitɔbu, the Yaa-Naa was alone, alone with only his children. When he died and his child became the regent, the child will be his chief. Nobody else will come to eat the chieftaincy. And this child will not go to eat a different chieftaincy somewhere. That was why they said they should get up and fight against the tindanas. And Naa Nyaysi got up and went to war and made the land extend, so that the chief's small children would also get chieftaincy to eat. That was how it started. And so it's good this talk has its own place to sit so that it will not mix with the others. As for this one, if you want, you can put it at one place, because that was our starting. If you go and add it to the other ones, you reduce its respect. And so how I see it, the talks of Naa Shitɔbu and Naa Nyaysi, you have to fix them separately on the part of chieftaincy. As for Naa Shitɔbu and Naa Nyaysi, it will be good if you get their own place to fix them, because they beat and cleared Dagbon. They killed these tindanas and the chiefs appeared. And so it is good if their talk has its own section because they started Dagbon, and chieftaincy came and settled Dagbon.

And what is following is the talk of our chieftaincy on the part of the different chiefs in Dagbon and how they eat their chieftaincies. And some of them are elders of the Yaa-Naa. Some of these chieftaincies started during the time of Naa Nyaysi, and it is good if we talk about Naa Nyaysi and show how these towns started, and then we join it to show how these places are standing today inside our Dagbon. And so we will talk about chieftaincy in Dagbon, and how someone comes to eat these chieftaincies and the work the chiefs do. And the talk of chieftaincy will take some days.

This talk of chieftaincy will come to enter the talk of the Samban' luja, because the Samban' luja is inside our chieftaincy talks and the work we

drummers do at the chief's house. And so coming to the Samban' luḡa, I will talk about how we beat the Samban' luḡa at the chief's house. But I want you to know that on the part of these old talks, not the whole Samban' luḡa is in our book, just parts of it that are the important parts. I am not going to talk all the history to you. There are some Samban' luḡa talks that I will take and put inside other talks, and I will not put them inside the talk of the Samban' luḡa. And so on the part of the Samban' luḡa, it is only the important ones that we want.

What are the talks we want? It will be good if we talk about how the Dagbamba fought wars against the Gonjas. From the time of Naa Nyaysi to the time of Naa Darizɛyɛ, if the Dagbamba were fighting against some people, I don't think it was as heavy as the wars we fought against the Gonjas. And the first people who fought the Gonjas were Naa Darizɛyɛ and Naa Luro. Naa Darizɛyɛ went to war, and he died in the war. And Naa Luro collected the chieftaincy and collected the war, and he took it and defeated the Gonjas, and the war cooled down.

And then we should talk something about Naa Zanjina and how he went to the Mamprusi chief and came to eat his chieftaincy. And we should talk about the work Naa Zanjina did, because it was Naa Zanjina who opened the eyes of the Dagbamba. As we are talking about our Dagbamba living, Naa Zanjina's talks are all scattered inside it. Some are inside the talk of Islam, some are inside the talks of funerals, weddings, the Gonjas, the festivals. Inside every talk, Naa Zanjina's work is there. Up to the time of Naa Zanjina, all our Dagbon was in darkness, and that is why we say that Naa Zanjina lit a lantern in Dagbon and opened the eyes of the Dagbamba, and he is the light of the Dagbamba.

And inside the Samban' luḡa talks, what is there again? Naa Zanjina also fought the Gonjas, and it was Naa Andan' Siyɛli who came out and finished the war. It was Naa Siyɛli who finished the fighting with the Gonjas. The Gonjas were going to defeat us, and from all this area going to Sang, the Gonjas conquered it. It was Naa Siyɛli who stopped them at Sang, and he drove them away. And if we talk Naa Zanjina to our extent, we will join it to the talks of Naa Siyɛli, because there is a lot of talk between the time of Naa Zanjina and Naa Siyɛli.

And what is next is the talk of the Ashantis, and that is from the time of Naa Garba and coming to the time of Naa Ziblim Bandamda. And what is following is Naa Yakuba's talk and coming to Naa Abdulai and Naa Andani, to show how Dagbon was sitting before the white men came, because during the time of Naa Yakuba, there was a lot of fighting, and our Dagbon was not one. Naa Yakuba went to war and killed Naa Simaani Zoli and ate the Yendi chieftaincy. And again, it was during the time of Naa Andani that the white men came, and so from Naa Andani we should follow it up to this present time. And I will talk about how

Ghana came out and how we are holding ourselves, and how Dagbon came to spoil.

These are the important talks from inside our old talks. If we fix it like that, it will be very good. Truly, the chiefs who were there, they all have their talks. It's not that they weren't there. They were there. But to me, I think in my heart that the ones I have counted will be good for our work. There are other parts that enter a little. For example, the talk of Naa Dimani enters into the butchers. But such talks don't need their own sections. And so the Samban' luṅa, and what is important, we will talk it. And it will take some days before we reach our extent.

And I want to tell you today is that if you are a drummer and you want to learn more about some of these old talks, the problems inside are many. And these problems are also there on the part of our talks. It is not a fault, but if you think that something is going to be easy, sometimes you will get inside and see that there are some difficulties, and you will be wondering how you are going to see the end. Truly, inside these old talks, there are some things that are bad, and there are some sacrifices we have to perform before we will talk about these things. And even if we do the sacrifices, we don't talk these talks by heart: there are some particular times or days we will talk. The days we will talk are only Thursdays and Sundays. It is inside drumming like that. We Dagbamba have a proverb that says, "You should fear trouble." Do you know its meaning? If you say you don't fear trouble, then you will see something that you don't want see. And so you should fear trouble. To fear trouble is better than to be in trouble.

Why am I telling you this? You already know that we drummers have some particular types of drumming we beat, and even children know that it is forbidden and that they should not play with that particular type of beating. Whenever they are beating their tin cans, they don't beat that type of beating. And if someone should come out boldly and say, "I want you to be beating such-and-such a forbidden dance for me to be dancing, and I don't care whether it is forbidden or not: you should beat the dance for me," what it will bring is that you will see that person die. Do you remember what I told you about the drumming we drummers beat to cry the funeral? We don't learn it, unless we follow the elders to where they are going to beat it, and it is there we have to learn it. When we went to Karaga for the chief's funeral, when we went to the chief's house early in the morning, we heard it. And the time Alhaji Iddi's father died, you were staying in his house when drummers came there to beat it. If you heard the type of drumming the drummers were beating, that is the drumming we call crying the funeral. As you have been around here for a long time, have you ever heard somebody beating that type of drumming apart from a funeral house? Have you ever heard anybody just beating it outside? No. This is one of the bad or

dangerous types of drumming. And I think that the same thing applies to these talks about the olden days. There are certain songs, you can only hear the song but you cannot talk about it. You may learn it and come to know it, but you won't want to talk about it because you will think that if you talk about it, you will get trouble. And somebody too will want to be asking, and he will reach nothing.

And so the talk we are coming to enter, the talk of how Dagbon started, that is also the way it is. People don't like talking about it. In what we call the Samban' luṇa, the talking inside is too much: everyone can only beat it to his extent. They call it Samban' luṇa because it is beaten outside the house of the chief. It is not something they beat in the market. If you are going to beat the Samban' luṇa, the chief has to make some sacrifices, and if you the drummer knows that the sacrifice is not enough for what you are going to sing or beat in the Samban' luṇa, then you have to keep some of the talks away. How they beat the Samban' luṇa, everything that is inside it is sitting on the chief. The drummer will show the chief that if he sings and beat the talks of such-and-such a chief, this is what the chief should do. There are certain Dagbamba chiefs who have died, and if you want to beat any of these chiefs in the Samban' luṇa, the chief has to get a white calabash and cow's milk, a white cow, a white sheep, a white dove, a white gown, a white hat, and sandals before you can sing their songs. The chief has to gather all this, and they will make the sacrifice before you start. If it is eating this or that: it is going to the chief. They are going to beat it for the chief, and all the things inside it are good for the chief. And the chief wants it. And so it stands that if somebody too is going to talk something like that to you, you have to pay for the things it needs. And again, the drummer who will beat, there are some things he will also do in his house before he will go to beat it, and whatever he has to do, he will say it to the chief. The chief will pay for it. That is how it is. As for Samban' luṇa, everything inside it, the chief is carrying it.

And so in Dagbon here, it is not at every chief's house that they beat the Samban' luṇa. There are some chiefs at whose houses they beat the Samban' luṇa, but as for the small chiefs, if you are going to beat the Samban' luṇa for them, you have to take something like "Ziblim and his brother Andani" to beat for them, because their strength is not up to the beating of the most hidden talks of the Samban' luṇa. And apart from that, if you take the most hidden one and play it to the small chief, if the chief doesn't get big troubles, then you the drummer will get a very big trouble. It's just because a small chief cannot do the sacrifices. There are some chiefs who cannot afford to get a gown for you, or trousers for you, or even get a sheep and a hen for you. And if the chief doesn't do that for you, what will it bring? And if a chief says he cannot find all this, will you sing all the talks? If you beat it and get your trouble, then it is over to you. And so in Dagbon here,

there are certain things, truly, if you ask someone to tell you, he will just tell you that he doesn't know it. He knows it, but he doesn't want to be involved in trouble. That is how it is. Because of the problems inside, that is why we fear it.

When I talked to you about how we perform the funeral of a chief, I told you that according to our tradition, a chief does not die. That is how our elders have talked about it. And truly, the chiefs who have passed, they were very bad people. As for them, we have been hearing that they are not in the ground. When they bury them and cover the grave, they don't remain there. They go out. If it is according to our tradition, we have been hearing that when a chief goes out, he goes to a town called Bagli. It is behind Karaga and Gushegu. They used to go there. And at Diari side, at Yɔɔyɔ: they go there, too. And when they go and they live in these other towns, they ask of this place. We have been hearing that. And such people, when you talk of them, what this one did, or the one who made him, he wants the sacrifice you will kill for him to make him happy. When you do it in the correct way, it will show that you have driven him away, and he will not come near you. And if a person does not come near you, can something of his eat you? That is why they search for things and make sacrifices. Inside the Samban' luɔa, that is how it is.

I can tell you that I have seen four drummers who beat the Samban' luɔa and died. They beat more than they were supposed to beat, and the chief was not able to sacrifice for all of it, and it was for that reason that they died. And the drummers too could not get the means to make the sacrifices. And so the dead bodies came and killed them. There was a drummer at Yendi: he was Zɔhi Taha-Naa Abdulai. During the time of Naa Abilabila when they were having the committee of inquiry into our chieftaincy talks, he talked about it. And when he talked about it, he didn't reach one week. He died. I have seen it like that. People had already talked about it and died, and he also said that he would talk about it. And he also died. And so we have seen it. It is not that they talk and we only hear. Somebody can talk a bad talk, and it will come and catch his housepeople and kill them, and it will come and reach him and the people sitting around and hearing it. If they don't do its work correctly, it can do that. And we have seen it like that, too. They have beaten a talk for a chief, and the chief didn't do its work, and the chief died.

And so if you are a drummer, an old talk that people are talking about and you are hearing it, you will never say such a talk yourself. You will just leave it. If somebody is telling you that something is forbidden, but you don't believe him, and he tells you that to break somebody's window and go inside the room is forbidden, and you say you don't believe him, then you should do it and see. If they get you, you will know that breaking somebody's window and entering his

room is not good. That's why our Dagbamba say that if a fish comes out of the water and tells you that a crocodile has one eye, you should believe the fish. If you don't believe it, you should go into the water and see the crocodile for yourself. And so no one is able to see what is forbidden unless he tries to do it.

But you should look. The Samban' luṇa is something that is there for anyone to hear. The meaning of the name Samban' luṇa is "outside drumming." If only you have the interest, you can go and hear it. If you look at the Samban' luṇa, when they beat it, everybody will gather. Children and grown-ups gather. Commoners are there. Chiefs and princes are also there. And so the talks in the Samban' luṇa are there for everyone to hear. If somebody tells you something from the Samban' luṇa, you yourself can go to the Samban' luṇa at the time they are beating it and hear the songs. If you record it, you can write it without any difference in it. And the reason why you can get the Samban' luṇa talks easily is that whatever the drummer will say at the Samban' luṇa, it is the chief who is already going to sacrifice for it, and not you.

What I have been telling you about our drumming and the work we drummers do in Dagbon, that is same thing Namo-Naa has also told you. He said was that as for us the drummers in Dagbon, the only name you can give us is that we are teachers. As for Samban' luṇa, it teaches two things: sense and patience. Through the beating of the drum, and what the drummer will talk, he shows people their family and how a family is. He will let a child get to know that he's related to such-and-such a chief and such-and-such a person in his family. Inside the Samban' luṇa, a drummer shows people what is inside chieftaincy. Truly, as for the Samban' luṇa, it is showing you some sense which you can use to live. If a drummer beats Samban' luṇa, it is old talks he is going to talk. Those who are walking about, some of them will say, "We are going to listen to old talks." Anyone going, this is what he will say: "Let me go and listen to old talks." This is how everybody will talk before they will come and sit down to listen. And if they come too, they will hear it. Maybe inside the Samban' luṇa, someone will hear what he has never heard before. As he has gone to hear it, he won't refuse it. The drummer won't take what the people want to hear. He is going to start with what was happening from the olden days up to today. And the person who has heard it, he will know the difference between what is happening today and in the past, and if he is watchful, he will know that the talk of the olden days and the talk of today are not the same. Someone who has patience to hear what the drummer will talk, he will learn about what his eyes wouldn't see.

Let me add you salt. I have told you that it was during the time of Naa Zanjina that the eyes of Dagbon were opened. That was the time we learned so many things that have benefited us in our lives. At that time, my grandfather was

not born. I was not there at the time. If they didn't put the old talks down to tell me, maybe some of these ways of living would be there, but would I know why we are doing them? It is this: talk and live, talk and live, and put it down for people. That is what has brought everything. Those of us here now, there is nobody whose father was there during Naa Zanjina's time. Our grandfathers talked it, and our fathers heard. And our fathers also kept it and talked for us to hear. And we also go through and know how we can add to it. And so if you say you will refuse old talks, then there wouldn't be anything like development. If you don't know how something started, how can you add to it? And those who will come after you, if you don't leave the old talk down for them, they won't know how to improve it. You give birth to them, and you refuse to show them old talks, that they shouldn't believe them. When they get up, you will see everything of theirs going in a zigzag way. They won't know how to live. As for them, they will turn into bush guinea fowls. That is how they are. Anytime they see a lot of grass anywhere, they will run into the grass. Such people, we call them like that: bush guinea fowls. Their lives don't go further. That is how it is. And so as for me, the way I want is that we should be talking the old talks, and our way of living will be going forward.

And so we are standing that if everyone had refused to know what happened in the past, then we wouldn't be able to live the way we live today. You one time told me that there are some people in your home town who say they should leave their old talks behind them, and they shouldn't mind their old talks. At this time, too, there are people who are in Dagbon now, and they say there is no custom. It is there. How much more people who are outside Dagbon? And so we are not all the same. And truly, you can easily find someone who will tell you that he doesn't want old talks because he has no use for them. The one who is interested in the past, if he is walking with the one who doesn't want to know of the past, he will tell him, "I want to go to this old drummer and greet him." The one who is not interested will take a different route and walk on his own. He will tell the other person that he is not interested in old talks. And he will go his way. But the one who wants the old talks, as for him, from the time he comes out from his house, he is going to find the old talks. And so truly, it isn't everybody who wants it.

I will give you an example. Somebody can be selling something in his house, but it is not everybody who wants it. The one who wants it will come and buy, but some people will leave what is in their own house and go to another house to buy. The one in their house is better than what is in the other house, but those who go outside to buy, that is what their heart wants. Or doesn't it happen like that? It happens. That is how the world is. Even the maalams have been telling us that the way human beings are created, it is not everyone's heart that



wants a good way of living. There are some people in this world, their hearts only want lies. And the example the maalamas show us is that you should look at the way you give birth to a child. If you are holding a good way of living, if God doesn't make your child well, the child will tell you that as for him, he will not follow that road. And sometimes you will come from the same stomach with somebody, that is, your mother's child, and you will be following the right way, but he will tell you that he won't follow it. If you were doubting that the person you came from the same stomach with is refusing to follow the right way, then what about your own child? How is it that he also refused it? At that time, you will know that God did not create us so that we should all follow one way.

And what I am saying is that the old talks in the Samban' luṅa are what we have been talking to everybody to know who they are. If you say that old talks do not have any benefit, or that custom hasn't got anything to do with you, then you don't have a grandfather, and you don't have a grandmother, and you don't have a father and a mother. Is there a human being who is living who hasn't got all these people? Is there a human being, and a woman did not give birth to his father, and the father also gave birth to him? And so I am standing at the point that I have a grandfather and grandmother, and if somebody comes to tell me that I don't benefit from old talks, I know that I can call the names of my grandparents. The one who will say that nobody should learn old talks, I can't stand at his back. I don't know how a person can live in this world without old talks.

We the people who are drummers, we want the old talks. Any drummer who tries and learns what he wants, he always sits with the elderly people, and they will talk the old talks and he will listen, because he is interested in it, and he wants to know it. And he wants children who want to ask of the past in order to hold their way of living, and he will be able to tell them. And so it is small drummers who go near to old drummers. And it has use. Inside our Dagbamba drumming, people call a name. We beat it: the one who gets his wish will not follow what people say. Do you understand it? Its meaning is that if something is helping you in your life, and somebody comes to tell you that it is useless, you won't mind the person. If it were to be the old talks of your town, I don't know it. But if it is here, as for us, we drummers are the people who talk about old talks, and we believe that as for our work, it will never go off from our hands.

And so in Dagbon here, a drummer can never say that there is no custom. The way you a drummer will go to the chief's house and sit there, you are going to talk custom from the olden days up to this time that we are sitting. As for us drummers, our talks are different from other human beings in the world. We don't use our talks to compare with somebody's talks. And you are standing in our footprints. The way you are searching for talks, you have asked us. Now you and

we are one, and it is you who has brought it. And what we are standing on, you too have to make sure that you are standing on it. And so I am telling you that if everybody says that there are no old talks, as for us drummers, we cannot say that there are no old talks. And so if you want, I can say that we and you, we are all the same now. And so I am going to tell you that anyone who is coming, and he tells you that there is no custom or old talks, tell him that he is a liar. As we are sitting, there are people who are still looking for old talks, and we the drummers, we still hold the Samban' luḡa up for them. The Samban' luḡa hasn't stopped. It is still there in this world. It will not stop until we and the chiefs all go. And the time there is no chief again, then that is the end of our Dagbamba living. That is how it is.

But these talks we are coming to start today, they are separate. Truly, if you are going to start a talk, you start it from what is under it. You don't cut it to enter the talk from the middle. That is how these talks are. These talks follow the talk of the Yaa-Naa, but they is not inside the Samban' luḡa. And as they are performing sacrifices for the Samban' luḡa, there are some talks they don't beat inside it. As I have told you that we drummers have come from the bone of Naa Nyaȳsi, it was the during time of Naa Nyaȳsi that Dagbon came out and stood. Naa Nyaȳsi's father was Naa Shitɔbu, and it was Naa Shitɔbu who told Naa Nyaȳsi that he should go to war against the tindanas who were holding the towns and villages of Dagbon. And I told you that Naa Nyaȳsi killed the tindanas and put his children to be holding the towns. I can tell you that no drummer ever beats the talks of Naa Nyaȳsi in the Samban' luḡa. Sometimes you might hear someone counting the names of Naa Nyaȳsi's children, but it is only in a song form. As for the talk of Naa Nyaȳsi, no drummer will take it to play the Samban' luḡa. Its forbidden things are too many. Even at the Yaa-Naa's house, you will never see a drummer beat it. It is Yaa-Naa who is sitting at those people's sitting place, and if any chief, it is Yaa-Naa who could beat it, but he doesn't beat it. If somebody tells you that they heard these talks at the Samban' luḡa, he is telling lies.

And what of those who were in front of Naa Nyaȳsi and what they did before Naa Nyaȳsi also came out? Naa Shitɔbu is there. Naa Gbewaa, 3irli and Fɔyɔ, Kumtili, 3ipopora, and going to Nimbu and Tɔhizee: they are there. They all have their talks, and these are the talks we fear. Before Dagbon was Dagbon, these people were there. From Tɔhizee and Nimbu and Naa Gbewaa and up to Naa Shitɔbu and Naa Nyaȳsi: their talks are not inside the Samban' luḡa talks. The chiefs from the very olden days, long ago when Dagbon started, no one beats their talks in the Samban' luḡa. These people don't even have names that we beat. And what I am saying now, you won't see a drummer beating the Samban' luḡa of Naa Shitɔbu, and you won't see a drummer beating Naa Nyaȳsi. As they perform

the sacrifices to beat the talks of Naa Luro, Naa Zanjina, Naa Siyli, and such chiefs, you should know that their time is not far like that of Naa Nyaysi. And so how much more will we fear the talk about the starting of Dagbon?

As for me, since I was born up to this time, I have never seen any drummer beating Samban' luṇa and mentioning the name Tṓhizee. Old drummers, the way they beat Samban' luṇa, and we are inside the drumming, sometimes somebody will beat and mention one chief's name or somebody's name. And you the drummer listening, if you have interest in it, when you get home, you will find time to go and ask that old drummer. "Yesterday the name you called, I want you to teach me something about him." And because you have come to ask him, he will teach you. But I have never heard a Samban' luṇa, and they mentioned Tṓhizee. I have heard people to say the name, Tṓhizee: "Red Hunter." They talk and I hear. I have never heard "Red Chief." I have never heard of any chief they called that name. It is good if a drummer calls somebody's name, and you ask, "Who is that person," and the drummer can tell you how the person came by that name. He is a chief: how did he manage to eat chieftaincy? You will ask that one, too. But they are calling a name, and you just hear the name, and if he ate chieftaincy or he didn't eat: you don't know. When he ate the chieftaincy, and what work was he doing: you don't know. And so if I only hear someone's name like that, I won't take it to work. And so I can tell you that these talks have no use inside our drumming. If you are searching for knowledge, you will want to take it outside. But the talk of Tṓhizee and the others, it doesn't come out. It is never beaten in the market. It is never inside Naybiɛyɛ drumming. It is never Naanigoo. It is not Takai. It is not even inside the Samban' luṇa. Nobody will ever just ask somebody to talk about it. That is why many drummers don't mind it and don't have the appetite to learn it. If an educated person comes to read our work, and comes to say that if the talks of Tṓhizee and the others are not inside, then the work won't be good, then I won't agree. Their talks are not inside our Yendi chieftaincy talks.

And so to me, I also see that if this kind of story or talk is not in our work, it cannot spoil the work. It is not a small talk. Truly, a talk can be small or short, but its forbidden talks are big. A scorpion is small, but on the part of pain, a scorpion's bite is up to the bite of a snake. Maybe a scorpion has never stung you, but you have been hearing. That is how Tṓhizee is. They fear him. But those who don't know anything about drumming, those who are not drummers, they will just talk it and leave it and be going their going. If such a person comes to meet a bad talk, he will not know that the talk he talked brought the trouble. Whatever happens, if he himself does not get a bad thing, someone he is holding will get a bad thing. This is how it is, and drummers fear it. And so Tṓhizee's talk is not

plenty: it is small. It is not something that is important on the part of our chieftaincy. But to get a drummer to come and talk to you about Tōhizee is difficult.

And truly, it can even happen that someone can make all the sacrifices and performances, and bad things will happen. Look at what Namo-Naa himself told us about the time he talked to the committee of inquiry into the Yendi chieftaincy [the Ollennu committee]. Namo-Naa knew everything that was inside the talk and all the necessary performances. When he went to Accra and talked the old talks, Namo-Naa himself ran his hands over the animals and counted the old talks before he let them slaughter, and the blood ran to where it wanted to go. Namo-Naa's son Adamzee had accompanied him to Accra, with Yendi Sampahi-Naa, and they were only sitting down and listening. That night, Namo-Naa's son had a headache, and they took him to Korle Bu Hospital. And Namo-Naa said that coming to another night, the big people attacked him. His wife Fatima had also accompanied him, and she was lying down, and she asked, "My grandfather, what is wrong?" And he said, "Oi! The big people have come to me." And Namo-Naa said that since that time, his eyes never closed again. At that time, Abukari Kasuliyili was in Accra at the Arts Council, and they were staying with him. Namo-Naa sent Abukari to the market to buy a calabash and some things, and Namo-Naa also went to find some types of animals. Abukari had been staying in Accra for some time, and he knew the town, and Namo-Naa had Abukari take him to a place where they could perform the custom in secret. In the midnight they went there, and Namo-Naa removed his dress, and he performed the sacrifice. Namo-Naa told us that that one, if you perform it, you don't eat it. You have to mention all the talks that you want to talk, and then dig on the way and bury it, and the big things will come and collect it. And so Namo-Naa performed it that night. And with all that, nothing. It didn't leave him. And he finished and went home. The day he had talked about the beginning of Yendi, he had cattle at Zugu, and the head of all the cattle was an old cow: it was pregnant, and it died with the pregnancy. And when he came home, his horse died. And then the woman he took to Accra, she also died. And so Namo-Naa sent his son to Monkaha-Naa for medicine. Monkaha-Naa is the elder of the *kasiyirba* in Yendi; he buries the Yaa-Naa. And Namo-Naa's son said that the way Namo-Naa had gone to talk about the beginning of Yendi, this is the way he had returned home and what had been happening to him, and so Monkaha-Naa should try to help. And Monkaha-Naa also got medicine and gave it to Namo-Naa, and every night, Namo-Naa has to do all the necessary things about it, before he goes to lie down. This is what Namo-Naa told us when we went to Yendi to greet him and talk about the starting of Yendi.

And Namo-Naa said that Tɔhizee is our starting, and coming down to Nimbu. That is the beginning of Dagbon. It was the Tɔhizee who started Dagbon, but it was not the starting of the Yendi chieftaincy. It was tindanas up to the time it turned to chieftaincy. And so truly, I cannot stand to say that the talk of Tɔhizee and the others is of no importance. What I am saying it that inside beating a drum, I don't beat it. Not at all. And nobody ever taught me that I should beat it in the drumming, and nobody ever asked me to beat it, and nobody every showed me its importance. If you want to know if these talks are important or not important, it will come from the way Palo-Naa or Namɔyu or Nanton Lun-Naa will talk about it. They are the only people who can talk about it and it will stand. And so I am not saying that Tɔhizee is not there. Our Dagbamba have a proverb: something that comes, its peels are lying on the way. Another proverb that resembles that one is: when they harvest groundnuts, anywhere you are walking, you will see groundnut shells. Its meaning is that if you are eating and going, the peels or the shells will be on the road. And so if something were not there, you wouldn't see the peels. And something that is not there: its name will not be there. And so if Tɔhizee were not there, his name would not appear. Do you remember what Namo-Naa told you when you asked him if these talks are important? He told you simply that that is our starting, and we don't throw it away. And so Namo-Naa said that we can't forget to be holding those talks. And Namo-Naa told you that the old talks of Dagbon, there are those who said they won't follow them, but they are following them somehow. And truly, as for a tribe, or a family, how can a family run away? If there is nobody, another person is coming. If a big tree dies, a small tree will come out. And it is only because it is an old person who gives birth to a young person. And it is because they don't just give birth to an old person. That is how it is. That is the way of Dagbon. That is what Namo-Naa said to you. And so as for the old talks of Dagbon, they are there, and there are some drummers who are holding them.

How we are fighting in Dagbon now, it is because of nothing but chieftaincy. And this fighting is inside the bone of chieftaincy, because the chiefs started like that. And the old talks of chieftaincy are bad talks and ugly talks, and there are many people who don't know them. And you should know that there are black people who suffer to hear these talks, but they have never been able to hear them. Many times the black people in Ghana here made arguments about the talks of our Dagbon. Any time they want to get an answer that is true, they say they should come to meet us drummers, but if they want to pull us to talk about some of the very old talks, the talks of Naa Gbewaa and how Dagbon started, or any time we are talking about something, and we come to reach Naa Gbewaa's talks, we just stop there. And as for that, some of them go around to ask, and they don't get

the truth. And when the white men came out in Dagbon here, when they called a drummer, the drummer would say, "I will not take the truth and show to the red-anus man." We Dagbamba didn't want even to meet with a white man. We Dagbamba and your people, we fought one another. When the white men were coming to sit here, we fought with them, and they killed many Dagbamba. In the olden days, it was fear they were fearing when they talked these talks. And so there is some confusion on the part of the secrets of our chieftaincy and how our drumming is moving. They took old age and talked, and what they were using to talk, they didn't say it all, and it brought some misunderstanding, because the white men didn't know all the talk that was inside it.

And so in Dagbon here, if we say that something is forbidden, then it is true that it is forbidden. I have told you that these chiefs we talk about, they are bad people. They are not people who die and remain in the ground. They are roaming. And we fear to talk about them. If I say I am going to talk of something, and I talk, I shouldn't let it come and harm all of us. And so there are certain things, when you want to do them, you have to think twice before you do them. This is how it is. Inside anything good, there is some bad. And inside something bad, there is some good. And so bad and good, they follow one another. And it is good that we have started our work, and we are doing it. I am only telling you that there are some heavy and some dangerous talks we have taken to talk inside our work, and if we are going to be following the tradition, there are many sacrifices. That is our custom on the part of the things I have been telling you.

And so may God help us all. What we are looking for on the part of our old talks, in our Dagbon here, it is a big thing. As for knowing what you are looking for, there are some drummers who know it, but those who know it are not plenty. And to talk about it is difficult. What comes to eat the life of people is not only one single thing. And so anybody who knows it, and he comes to say something about it, he is always afraid. As for all of us, we are all human beings, and of course we fear. There is fear within us. We don't want any trouble, and we hope that with the sacrifice, everybody will be free. But it can happen that you will give the story, and your luck is strong, and if you yourself don't die, you will see that something bad will happen to you. That is why people fear it. And that is why we the Dagbamba drummers don't know much about it. But as for knowing it, there are some few people who know it in Dagbon here.

And so the talks I am talking about, we have been seeing some of them. It's not that we have heard them. Even the white people who have come here to do the same work you are doing, we know all of them. The one you have been talking about, we know him as Yakubuzee, Red Yakubu [Harold A. Blair]. During the time he was in Dagbon, it was the time of Naa Abudu, and we were

young boys, but my brother Mumuni was a bit grown. When Yakubuzee was coming to hear the Samban' luṅa, he used to come with the money that had a hole inside it. He would be going around giving us young boys this money, and so we enjoyed his coming all the time. As for him, he didn't stay in his house. He was trying to learn Dagbani very well. He used to walk around with women and children, and he would come to sit with Dagbamba, and they would be having conversation in Dagbani. It wasn't drummers he was following all the time. If he met any Dagbana, and that person talked about something, Yakubuzee would write it down. And he was learning the names of trees in Dagbon. He was a government man, and he was doing a lot of work, and so he wasn't using all his time for these old talks. The time you were first telling me about this Yakubuzee and his stories in the book, I can tell you that this Yakubuzee, it's not that I have heard his name: Mumuni and I saw him with our eyes. He was a very tall man. They were two white men: there was Yakubuzee, and there was another very tall one we called Doobedaani, "a man is in the market." Any time this Doobedaani called drummers to come and beat the drum, and the flute was inside, the one blowing the flute would be blowing it, "Doobedaani woṛa kpam, Doobedaani woṛa kpam," that is Doobedaani, very tall. And so how they were moving, if Yakubuzee came to this village and moved away tomorrow, then the day after tomorrow Doobedaani would also come. They were following each other, going around the villages. This was how they were traveling around the whole of Dagbon. And so Yakubuzee, we knew him. The time he was here, I think it didn't reach the time of Naa Mahama Kpema, and Yakubuzee went back home. I think that. And after he went back, I didn't see him again, and I don't think he came back to Dagbon here. Whether he came back to Ghana and stayed in Accra or at some place, I don't know. If he came back to Dagbon, I don't think he was roaming in Dagbon the way he was formerly. If he had been roaming like that, I would have heard of him again.

And I can tell you that when Yakubuzee was in Dagbon, he didn't throw himself away. He prepared himself very well before he was asking these talks. He didn't show that he was a white man. Truly, he got inside and prepared his body very well. He entered into black Dagbamba, and he entered into maalam, and he prepared himself before he got into the work. He knew the talks of Dagbon. He entered into old drummers, and he got to know what is inside drumming, and drummers, too, who they are, and what is inside chieftaincy. Yakubuzee had a white tail. He put it on his wrist. When he was in Dagbon, any time he was walking about, you would see the tail. And when he was going anywhere, the tail was there. Have you ever seen a white man putting a white tail to his wrist before? If you see it, then it would be in this modern time. But the

time we were still young, Yakubuzee was very serious about this white tail. And so what is inside Dagbon, he knew that if you go to do anything like this work, that this is the person they are going to beat, and if you ask what is forbidden, it can eat you. Yakubuzee knew all of this, and so as for Yakubuzee, inside Dagbon, he didn't throw himself away. He wasn't just walking around like a leaf. How he was, and because of the tail he carried, I am sure he put medicine inside his body before he came into the talks. If somebody does not bring out a talk to tell you, you can never know what is inside his stomach. And so truly, Yakubuzee wasn't just asking for nothing.

It was Namonaa himself who told you that Yakubuzee was at Yendi for some time. They put him there and they made him the District Commissioner there. Namonaa told you that when Yakubuzee was in Dagbon, the custom that he learned on the part of Dagbon came from the house of Namoyu. At that time, Namonaa Issahaku was not small, and his father was Namonaa Mahama. Namonaa Issahaku said that he himself was there the time they talked to Yakubuzee. And so the talk this Namonaa's father knew, he also knew it. And Namonaa told you that at that time, Gukpe-Naa Iddi Kpema was eating at Duyu. And he called his father, Namonaa Mahama, and told him that he should talk the beginning of Yendi. Namonaa Mahama, Gukpe-Naa Iddi, and Yakubuzee: they talked about the beginning of Yendi. And truly, when we talked to Nyologu Lun-Naa Issahaku, the moylo singer, he told us that Zohi Sampahi-Naa Sheni was also involved in the talks. This Sheni is now dead, but Lun-Naa said he met him a little before he died in Yendi, and he was a brother to Namonaa. And Zohi Sampahi-Naa Sheni said that Namonaa Mahama told him to talk some parts to the white men. It is inside drumming like that, and it's not a fault. And Namonaa Issahaku said that when his father finished one talk, Yakubuzee would pull a sheep there, and they would slaughter it. Yakubuzee did everything on the part of the sacrifices. Namonaa Mahama took three months to finish the talks. And Yakubuzee gave Namonaa Mahama a very large cow, and Namonaa Issahaku said the cow was so big he couldn't talk much about it. Apart from the that, the sheep and the chickens they killed on that day were many. And Yakubuzee took money and added it and gave it to Namonaa Mahama. And Namonaa Issahaku said that when his father brought the cow to the house, he added what he was supposed to add to the cow, and he performed the custom.

It was because the history they talked was a very old thing, and our old talks are very strong. And with all the sacrifices they performed, they were not outside of trouble. When Namonaa Mahama talked and finished, Namonaa Issahaku's mother was the Paani: she died. And his mother Wumbiepaya also died. And Mapaykpema also died. Four of Namonaa Mahama's wives died. And his horse



died. And so the talk came and attacked them like that. And Yakubuzee also saw the trouble, and Namo-Naa said that it was because of this talk they talked to Yakubuzee. How you have said Yakubuzee was a hunter, as for that, it is true. We heard that he went to the bush to hunt, and he killed one of our family at Sunson. It was Sunson Lun-Naa he killed. The time they started the talks, one day Yakubuzee said he would be going to the bush. And Namo-Naa's father told him that he shouldn't go to the bush. Yakubuzee said that he was just going to run to the bush and come back. That was when he shot the man. His intention was not to shoot the man, but that was what happened. How it happened, Sunson Lun-Naa went to the farm, and he was bending down in the farm collecting yams. And Yakubuzee also was in the bush hunting and following a deer. The time Yakubuzee was ready to shoot the deer, he shot it, and the bullet went through the deer and went and caught Sunson Lun-Naa at the farm, and killed him. Some people said it was a guinea fowl on a tree, and Yakubuzee shot at the guinea fowl, and the bullet went and hit Sunson Lun-Naa. Those who heard it around Yendi side, they talked. And the way they have talked about it, Yakubuzee got to know that the bullet did something bad. And he passed there and saw Sunson Lun-Naa. And then he went and reported himself. We heard it like that. And so I believe that what Namo-Naa talked to Yakubuzee was true.

One time again there was a man from Britain [David Tait] who was taking the same work you do, and they came to talk to him about these old talks we are looking for. And they told him that he should get all the animals for the sacrifice, and he agreed with that and gave them money, and he had some of the talks. I don't know the one who talked to him. And he was still going to continue, and he traveled to Accra, and a lorry crashed and he died. That was his end: they didn't hear anything from him again. And what you have read to me on the part of what they talked to him, it's not correct because they have left some parts out. We haven't gone deep into it, but what you have started, I have seen that there are mistakes inside it.

After him, there was a German woman [Brigitta Benzing] who also came and did this work. There was one of my senior brothers living in Savelugu. He is now dead. He was called Yakubu Mumuni, and he was a drummer, but he was not a singer. He was the first son of the Palo-Naa who last died: he was Palo-Naa Mumuni's son. He was the same person who talked to the German woman. As for him, he was inside my family, but we were different because he was in the Andani house. But he didn't prevent me from asking him any talk. One time when I went to Savelugu with Kissmal, we went and met him lying in the room, and he talked about Yiwɔɔyɔ, and Kissmal wrote it down. And our talks have come to show again that the woman came to our senior brother, Yakub' Palo, and

she also collected some old talks. He was not old like Nanton Lun-Naa or Alhaji Adam. He was about the age of my brother Mumuni, and I can say that he and my brother Mumuni could be playing lottery on the part of age. But he was an old person's son. It was some years ago that he talked to this German woman, and since the time he talked, he was lying down in the room, and he could not walk again, and he was there like that until he died. How you have shown me those talks, it looks as if the woman's talks have gone deep. And so the way I see it, on the part of Yakubuzee's talks, there is truth inside Namo-Naa. And on the part of my brother Yakub' Palo, how he talked to that woman, that one too, it is inside our house. Because this Palo-Naa Issa who is eating, he was next to Yakub' Palo. And so that door, if you want those old talks, you can say it. And so these are two things. But you have to know how to take it, because the talk started in the hands of Yakubuzee.

But even the time when Yakubuzee was in Dagbon, Yakubuzee was not the only one who searched for these talks. There are many people who have written down things about Dagbon. And those who have written about Dagbon, I am not saying that they are only standing on the work of Yakubuzee. But truly, if you look at the books that are written for the children to be reading in school, and what they have written about the starting of Dagbon, we drummers take it that the talks are mixed. There are things inside that drummers won't talk about. And again, sometimes the children will just be calling something on the part of the Yaa-Naa, and it is a very big talk, but the children don't regard it and they call it any way they want. Some drummers say that how the schoolchildren are calling it uselessly, the children are showing that it is useless to talk to them about that thing. That is the reason why many drummers don't want to talk to the people who write the schoolbooks. I don't know who wrote the schoolbooks for the children, and so I don't know what talks they took, or whether they took some other talks and added them, or they changed some things. What I am saying is that as we are sitting today, I don't know, but I think that many of them are not there again today, but their talks are doing work today.

According to what you have read to me from the books about Dagbon, some of it is true, but not all of it is inside our drumming talks. Many of those books are following one another's talks, and the talks are now standing like that. As for what Yakubuzee learned, I don't think he was the only one who was writing about these talks. The government published the book that Yakubuzee wrote after the conference the British had with the chiefs of Dagbon [1930] during the time of Naa Abudu, and so that one was there a long time ago. They didn't beat these talks of Tōhizee and the others at that conference: what you have read and told me is that they beat Naa Zanjina's Samban' luṇa. It was Yakubuzee who later added

the stories to his book. And according to what Yakubuzee wrote to you, Yakubuzee also said he had a lot of respect for one of the clerks from the South [Emmanuel F. Tamakloe] who had kept long in Dagbon and who also learned and wrote about these talks. And so to me, there is some confusion about his talks. Truly, I think that Yakubuzee talked to different people about these talks. When you wrote to Yakubuzee, he told you about his friendship with Gukpe-Naa Iddi when Gukpe-Naa was Mba Duyu. And Namonaa Issahaku also told you that Gukpe-Naa was involved in the talks his father gave Yakubuzee. And so that one is there. But Yakubuzee also told you that he had many of his stories from a Hausa maalam in Yendi, Maalam Halidu, and Yakubuzee said he was standing on that maalam's talks. I was thinking that it was Namonaa Mahama who taught him everything, but he mentioned a maalam's name inside. As for us, we only knew that the way he was at Yendi, it was Namoyu who would tell him. As for a maalam, you only ask him about God's talks, but you don't ask a maalam about chieftaincy. Yakubuzee said the maalam learned the old talks from a Namonaa who was dead, but he did not say which Namonaa. If this maalam learned something about it and taught Yakubuzee, and Namonaa also taught him, did he hold Namonaa's talk or the maalam's talk? Can you know this? And again, Yakubuzee told you he consulted with the clerk from the South. And Yakubuzee said he also had talks from some of his Dagbamba friends, and stories from hunters. Any time he was hunting or on trek, he said he talked with hunters and with many people. He wrote and told you all that. And so as for Yakubuzee, it was not only drummers he was moving with. He was a hunter, and he was moving with the hunters and the typical Dagbamba. And so according to what you have read to me from what Yakubuzee wrote, I believe that Yakubuzee took some of these hunters' stories and mixed them inside. I am not arguing with Yakubuzee, but I don't know the way he joined all these talks together in his book. As for him, he didn't come to sit with drummers, to learn drumming. The way you have followed drummers and asked and got to know about custom, he didn't get inside like that. And so you have to be looking at what you are finding out. On the part of the talks I am talking to you, I am only talking on the part of our Dagbamba drumming, because there are some things from the books you have said that are not inside our drumming.

As you have come and mixed yourself with drummers, you are following the right way, because no one knows the ways of drumming more than a drummer. Why do I say this? There are many towns and many drummers, and no one knows all the talks of drumming. You can't just sit with one drummer and learn drumming. Drumming has no end, and so if you are going to learn drumming, you will learn it from many people. If a drummer cannot teach you well, then at least

he will teach you a small part and follow the correct way. And you will go to another drummer and learn something small again. But those who were talking these talks, I think that not all of them were drummers. If it was the chiefs who were talking to the white men, the chiefs don't know anything about the tradition. If it was the chiefs' elders, they may know some part, but not all. If not that, if it was maalam who talked, the maalam have just come here, and so how can they know our old talks? If it is something on the part of our old talks, a maalam can easily talk and change it. If not that, it was the *Dagban' doo*, the typical Dagbamba, and in our talks to come I am going to show you that these typical Dagbamba are different from the real Dagbamba: can they know the talks of our Dagbamba chieftaincy? You already know that in Dagbon here there are many people who are not drummers, and they have their stories, too. These hunters and others are not real Dagbamba; they're typical Dagbamba. And so the typical Dagbamba don't know the talks of chieftaincy. It is drummers who know, and nobody can know the talks of Dagbon more than a drummer. A chief will not know how to praise a drummer, but a drummer will praise a chief. A drummer does not call his name for a chief to praise him, but a chief will tell a drummer, "Call a name for me." The chief doesn't know the name he is going to call. But a drummer will know how to call a name that will show the chief his standing place inside our tradition. And so, we drummers and the chiefs, we are all from the same line, but a chief is not the equal of a drummer on the part of knowledge.

And so it is drummers who know the tradition, and every drummer has the extent of his knowledge. If they were drummers who talked, then it was fear that entered their talks. And again, some people have sense, and they sit near drummers. And there are some people too, they hear what their fathers and grandfathers say. When you want to know about tradition, you will have to ask about old talks, and it is the old people who know them. Tradition is not from anything. It is just from, "My father said this, and my grandfather said this." And if it comes to a time that I am not there, and you are not there, there will be people who pick up our talks later. That is all. But you cannot just sit down and hear a talk. Someone will tell you something, and your ears will hear it, but you will not understand what that fellow is saying. And so what I am going to take and talk to you, it is not all Dagbamba who know it. This is drumming talks I am talking to you, and it is not one day or two days that we are talking. I told you that it is proverbs we drummers take to do work, and you can hear a proverb and not know what its meaning is. And what I am saying it that you have to be inside the drumming before you will understand what is underneath the talks a drummer will talk. If not that, you won't know the meaning of the talks. And so these talks, on the part of talking them and on the part of hearing them, there is sense-work inside it. Have you heard my talk?

