

Chapter II-3: The Origins of Dagbon Before Naa Gbewaa

Today we have come to the talk about the starting of Dagbon. As we have been going around to look for this talk, I have told you that I am going to take the talks we have heard, and I am going to join them. And as there are some differences in them, I am also going to separate them. And it is not all the talks that we have heard that I am going to join. As for some of the drummers who have talked and we heard, truly, their talks were not falling well. And so it is not all of them I am going to take and fix inside our talk. When we were starting this work, I showed you a Dagbani proverb: if you try to follow a snake to see its ears, you will be tired. And I have also told you that Dagbamba say that if there is no fear, then what is darkness? These talks about the starting of Dagbon are in darkness, and drummers fear them. A cow that is in the house, no one fears its horns; but a cow that is in the bush, even if it has no horns, they fear it. And so this talk is like that. And so the talk we are taking to talk is a big talk, and we are in darkness. And so I want to teach you the right thing. And I will only tell you what I know, and I won't tell you what I don't know.

I have told you that in the olden days, people were afraid of these talks. Only one-one person could ask at that time. That was the fear we were having, and we didn't learn it. As for the drummers who tell lies on the part of drumming, their side is different from ours. The place they trained us, with our father: he didn't like lies. The drummers who tell lies, as for them, their parents are different, and their mothers are different. We are all bearing the same name: drummers. But we are not the same. As for us, we know about ourselves, but the other drummers, I don't know why they tell lies. Inside our drumming, old drummers talk to us, that what spoils drumming is something that has never happened, and nobody has ever heard it, and you one person will say it. Sometimes there are some talks, and the way we were taught by the old people who have passed, somebody will take what his heart wants, and he will add it to it. Those who talked and mixed the talks, it is left to them. What they feared, and they took another thing to talk, it is written down in books, and now look at it. Don't you see that it is bringing confusion? And the confusion it has brought, do you think it can be repaired? That is why in the olden days, they were saying that you shouldn't take your custom and show it to a different town's person. When the white men came, we Dagbamba fought with them, and they were our enemies. In the olden days, many of the chiefs didn't want drummers to talk to a white man. It is because you wouldn't know how he will go and use that talk, and later it will come back to stand on you. Now, many Dagbamba sitting down, they don't know that these old talks are what is bringing confusion to Dagbon.

What today's small drummers have taken to do their work, as for us, we just say that they will not benefit from it. Some of them are adding talks or telling some kind of stories, and it looks as if they are arguing with the old people's talks. If a child is arguing with old people's talks, there is no benefit. Truly, that kind of argument will not stop up to the end of this world. And asking also will not stop. And so any time they talk to you, and someone brings a book to read what someone has told him, then you have to use your sense, and you will know. It is not all talks you will take to do work. If you haven't heard it before, you will ask if it is following the custom. If you want your work to stand correctly, and you see that the talks will bring an argument, then you have to leave it. The reason why you will leave it is that, you too, you don't want to talk the two talks, and one day somebody will ask you which one of them is true, and then you too, you wouldn't know how to answer. When we were children and learning to beat the drum, and the old people never showed you a talk, and somebody is bringing it, it won't be standing correctly. You can't compare it. The only way to compare it is to step on it. You don't follow it. And you will be holding the custom.

And so to me, there is a limit where you will take this talk and end. As Namon-Naa told you, the talk is there. But even if a drummer knows it, we don't use it to beat the drum. And there is no chief in Dagbon here whose house drummers will sit down, and he will ask them to go and start at this place to beat. And so people have only heard about it, but they don't learn it to do work. And because of the difficulties involved, and because these talks have no use in our work, many drummers do not mind them. It is only some drummers who are holding them. When Namon-Naa's son Adam told you how he was learning these talks little by little, you asked him whether it was because of his position or because of his interest. He said he could answer you in two ways. First, as he is a drummer, it is not good for him not to know the history of Dagbon, because it is the drummers who know the history of Dagbon. Second, even if he were not a drummer, he would have been interested to learn just because he would want to know how Dagbon came about. As he told you that he is not learning all these talks at once, I don't know whether or not he has finished learning them. He is a son of Namon-Naa, and so he is somebody who is fit to be holding them. That is why I have told you that it will be better if the talks we take for our work are the talks of the senior drummers who are holding us.

The way Yendi is now, if you see a drummer and ask who can talk the old talks about the old chiefs, he will tell you to go to Palo-Naa's house. If not there, then how Namon-Naa Issahaku is sitting in Yendi, you will go to see him in his house. And so I think we will stand on the talks of our grandfathers Namon-Naa and Palo-Naa. And I will start with the talk of Namon-Naa, and then I will add the

talk of Palo-Naa. And truly, I think it will be good if we add the talk we had from Nyologu Lun-Naa Issahaku, the mɔylo player. When we talked to him, his talk enters the talk of Namon-Naa at some places and it separates at some places. And Lun-Naa's talk is also following with the talk of Palo-Naa on the part of Zipopora. And so we won't throw it away. As for him, we don't know how he is able to know all these things. He has gone around to learn many things. What he talked, he told you that when you are going to tell somebody, you should say that he Issahaku said it. Somebody like that is better than the one who is afraid to put his name. And so we will take some parts of Lun-Naa's talk and join, and I will separate some of the differences.

I told you that learning drumming is like going to school, and everybody has the school he attends, and where you have gone is our big school hall. As for what they have told you, I don't think we have to add somebody else's talks to it. And so inside drumming, what you are looking for and are getting to know, and they talk to you up to the end, at that time, you don't have to be asking, "What about this and that?" It is not inside drumming. If you are asking too much, you will come to mix it up with lies. And I want to tell you: if a talk is small and it's good, it's better than it will be plenty and it will be useless. As for truth, it is never small. Truth always goes forward, and lies always come back. Truth doesn't finish, but as for lies, they finish. And so if the truth is just a small one, it's a big thing. And so if someone gives you a true talk, and it's short, but you want the talk to go far, do you want him to add lies?

And so how the Dagbamba came about, and how our Dagbon started, that is the talk we are going to talk today. And the reason why people fear this talk, and why it is hidden: it is inside the talk of Namon-Naa and Palo-Naa itself. They showed that when our Dagbamba chieftaincy started, it started as tindanas. Palo-Naa said that the starting of Dagbon was from Tɔhizee and coming to Nimbu, but it was not the starting of our chieftaincy. Tɔhizee was not a chief, but inside him, the chieftaincy came out: it was tindanas before it turned to chieftaincy. And so the tindanas are the mother's house of the chieftaincy. Dagbamba people say that, as for your mother's house, it is your bayyuli house, that is your god's place: it is the mother's side talks that eat a human being. How the chiefs came out of the tindanas, that is the secret they are covering. And so this Tɔhizee and Nimbu and Zipopora, they don't enter into the talk of chieftaincy. As for their talks, to my thinking, it is stories, and stories are different from our drumming. Namon-Naa, Palo-Naa, and Lun-Naa have all shown that these people were there, but we don't take their talks to add to our drumming. Our drumming talks are on the part of our Dagbamba chiefs, and this is what we are holding. This drumming is what our fathers asked to know, and they put it down for us. Have you heard my talk? Our drumming is different from stories.

And truly, the time Nimbu and Zipopora were chiefs is a time of darkness. The talks we hear are different, and even we don't ask. Before the light comes, it is not until the time of Naa Gbewaa. And so what I want to say first are two things. The first one is that the Dagbamba didn't come from Ghana. And the second is this: the people who came with Nimbu were mixed, and Nimbu was holding all of them. The Mossis, the Mamprusis, the Nanumbas were all included with the Dagbamba, and we were all within one area. All these people came with Nimbu. And the time they separated and went to different places: that was from the time of Naa Gbewaa and Naa Shitobu. And that place is somehow better and soft: the talk from Naa Gbewaa and coming up to today. But the time I am talking about, there was no Dagbon. And so we will talk about how Dagbon came out and stood. And then what follows will be the talk of Naa Gbewaa on the part of the chieftaincy.

Let's start with Namonaa's talks. We went and asked, "How did we start?" And Namonaa said that we Dagbamba came from where the sun rises, that is, from the east, at the Hausa land, and the place is called Gbamba. If you hear them call "Gomba," that is the same name they are calling, and those who don't know Gbamba will call it like that. Some outside tribes call us Dagomba. Even inside this Dagbon, around the side of Savelugu and Tamale, our talk is different from the people at Yendi. Something is there, and the way we call it and the way Yendi people call it, sometimes it will be different. When you get up from Yendi and you go to Gushegu, you will see them calling the same thing with different words. And with that, we are all Dagbamba. And so all this is just coming from the tongue: it is all nice. Everybody has what his knowledge is. And so Namonaa said that he has also heard many people saying that we came from this Gbamba. But you know, we cannot ask to know whether it is near any other town or not. I have heard others even say the place is very far, beyond the Hausa land, on the way going toward Mecca, but I think they say that because the Hausas are holding close to the Arabs, and some of us just take it that we are from that side. We only know that we came from the Hausa land, and the name of the town from which we came is Gbamba.

And truly, all of us have heard, the time when Dr. Busia was driving other countries' people out of Ghana, the Hausas said that he was driving them away together with the Dagbamba, because all of us started from that place. There are some Hausas who call us their playmates; they call us Dangomba, the offspring of Gomba, in Hausa. And some of our old people also say we have some relationship with them. And so every Dagbamba knows that we are not from Dagbon here, from this place. We hear of this Gbamba, that our starting started there, but we don't know there. That is all. And I have heard some drummers say

again, and I think that it may be true: you know that we Dagbamba call a clan or an extended family line “*daŋ*,” and so we are “Daŋ Gbamba,” and that is why we call ourselves “Dagbamba.” I have heard that. If you hear somebody call us the Yoba people, it is the Mamprusis who call us Yoba people, but that is not our name. Even in the olden days, the Mamprusis were calling our chief Yobtolana, but we say it Yɔɣtolana. It is also from the way their tongue moves. I don’t know the meaning. I think they are saying “*yɔɣu*,” like a deep forest or bush, but I have never asked a Mamprusi to know why they are calling us like that. And so to me, I have not heard that we had any other name apart from Dagbamba. But at that time, long ago we and the Mamprusis, the Mossis, and the Nanumbas: we were all one. And how we all came to separate, it was later, during the time of Naa Gbewaa. And so this time I am talking about, there was no Dagbon, and the Dagbamba were not in Ghana.

Namo-Naa said that when the Dagbamba got up from Gbamba, they were coming in a war way. When they were coming, they came in a group, and they were not many as they are today, but I think that they were somehow many. And the way they were fighting, they were able to defeat people. They rode horses, and they were fighting and killing people. Any town they reached and they saw people, they killed them. That is all. Namon-Naa said they were not sitting at one place; they were fighting and defeating people till they came here. And I think that when they came, maybe it was others who drove them away from Gbamba, and as they were fighting, they were coming and fighting, and they were going about making wars. And as they were fighting, if they went to a place and they fought the people there, they would sit for some time in that place, and then they would be coming again. They weren’t sitting down long at any one place: they were just going around and fighting. You come and meet someone, and you want to sit in that town, and the fellow says you should not sit down. You will fight and drive that fellow away. That is all. As they were fighting, they would fight and sleep in the bush, unless they fought and took a whole town. And the people they defeated and drove away have gone, and we don’t know about them again. That is all. And if they sat in the towns, they didn’t go around to conquer other people again. And they would sit for some time and then be coming again. And if they were fighting at some place and the people there were able to drive them away, then they would be going and still fighting. And they came to pass where the Mossi land is and went into the Guruma land in Burkina Faso, around Fada N’Gourma, and the name of the place was called Bieŋ. And from there they came to Ghana, to Kpuhiga. It’s near to Bawku, and now we call it Pusiga. And it was from Pusiga that they came to where we are now.

When the Dagbamba were coming, there was no Yendi chieftaincy. And Namon-Naa said that when they were coming, they took someone we call Nimbu to

be their leader. It was this Nimbu who started the chieftaincy in Dagbon, but he was not a chief. Truly, there are drummers who will tell you that they have heard of Nimbu and Tɔhizɛe, but their names are not inside our drumming. And so as far as our drumming is concerned, on the part of our chieftaincy, and what I know, their names are not there. As Namo-Naa said that Nimbu started Dagbon, as there was no chieftaincy during his time, how can his name appear inside drumming? I'm talking on the part of our drumming talks: we have heard the name Nimbu, but his name is not inside drumming. There were people before Nimbu, but in our drumming we don't call the one who gave birth to Nimbu. Have you heard? That is why I was telling you that we Muslims call the name Adam as our grandfather, and there were people before Adam, but in our Islamic religion we are only calling the name Adam. The meaning of Nimbu is a person who is wonderful: he is not a human being and he is not a spirit, and that is why we call the name Nimbu. As for Nimbu, they say that he had everything one-one and not two-two: according to Namo-Naa, Nimbu had one eye, one ear, one arm, and so on. As for that, I cannot know; it is what I was told. That was the reason why they were calling him Nimbu. We Dagbamba: any person who has something that is wonderful, we call him Nimbu. And because of the way he was, people feared him, and that was why he was saying things and the things he said were standing. And inside our drumming on the part of Yendi, this is what I know. And so when the Dagbamba came, they came with Nimbu, and Nimbu came from them.

At that time, the tribes that are here in Ghana now, they were not here. Truly, I think that the people here were not many. At that time, too, the towns were not many, and again, if you came to a town and there were more than twenty houses, then it was a big town. That was how it was. Some towns were two houses, and some only one house. Even we still have towns like that in Dagbon here. And at that time in the towns, there were no chiefs. Those who were holding the towns were the tindanas. As we call "tindana," its meaning is "*tɪŋa lana*," land owner or town holder, and it is the tindana who makes sacrifices to the gods of the land. It was the tindanas who were holding the land, and they were like the chiefs of the towns. The time the Dagbamba came, the tindanas were there. They were cutting branches to put round their houses, like small fences at every tindana's house, and they were there. It used to be like that, and it is still there. And any town the Dagbamba came to and they wanted to sit, and the people didn't agree, the Dagbamba killed the tindana of the town and sat there. And sometimes they came and they were staying with the tindanas in the towns.

Truly, the time Namo-Naa talked about this, he didn't call the name of Tɔhizɛe and he didn't call the name of Ɔipopora. He just said that Nimbu was the one who brought the Dagbamba here, and Namo-Naa said that they were sitting at

Yaan' Dabari, that is, Yendi Dabari. It is near Diari; if you pass Gushie, going toward Dipali, you will pass the place they call Yaan' Dabari. That is the ruins of old Yendi. There is a village called Tunaayili; it is near there. Do you know the tua tree? It's a baobab tree. That tree is still there. One time I visited that place, and if you go there, you will see the walls of the ancient houses around there. They use that tree to call the place. The chiefs used to sit under that tree, in the olden days. If you ate that place, you called it Tunaayili. When they were sitting at Yendi Dabari, the tindana's chieftaincy was in a town called Yiwɔyɔ. Today there is a village called Yiwɔyɔ near Savelugu, but where they were sitting was not inside the village. Getting to the river where Gushie-Naa [later Nanton-Naa] Sule is farming, that is where they were. Not long ago there were some people farming rice at that place, and fire came and burned the farm and all their animals, and the people had to leave that place. And some white people also went there and were farming, but the rice would not grow, and they also left. And so Namonaa said that the tindanas were at Yiwɔyɔ when Nimbu came, and the senior tindana Nimbu met was called Sosabli. The people had run away and left the tindana, and the Dagbamba came to kill him. And the tindana said they should not kill him. He said, "If you kill me, as this town is sitting, do you know the ways of the town? And can someone sit in a town without knowing the ways of the town? So don't kill me." And so they all sat with him. This Sosabli, his tindanas were in other towns, too.

According to Namonaa, when the Dagbamba were sitting with Sosabli, his children were there, and he gave his daughter to Nimbu. And Namonaa said that Nimbu took the tindana's daughter and gave birth to Kumtili with her. And it came to the time when Sosabli was going to die, and his children who were there wanted their father's chieftaincy to eat. When Sosabli died, his first-born son said he would take his father's house, and Nimbu did not agree. He said, "Let me eat the chieftaincy. I will eat the chieftaincy, but I will not eat it as a tindana: I am going to eat it as a Dagbamba chief." The first-born son agreed, and Nimbu became the chief. This was when our chieftaincy started, and Nimbu ate it the way Dagbamba eat their chieftaincy at Yendi. And Namonaa said our chieftaincy started at a place called Zon-cheyuni, that is, a broken hall.

And so Namonaa said that the son of Sosabli didn't become a chief, but he and Nimbu were coming together to see one another about the land. When a matter for the tindana came, Nimbu would let them consult the tindana, and then it was Nimbu who would do it, and when they wanted to praise the tindana or give him a gift, the tindana would let them give it to Nimbu. So it was there like that: Nimbu was the chief, and Sosabli's first-born was his tindana, and they were holding the Dagbamba. I have already told you that Nimbu was a terrible person.

As he was, too, he was not very good, and they didn't like him. But they were afraid of him. And the Dagbamba were sitting there. And the tindanas who were in the other towns, they were tindanas, and they did not even come to greet Nimbu. And so the starting of our chieftaincy was like a joke, and it was there like that until it became serious. The Dagbamba were not many. And they were bringing forth, and they were increasing little by little. That was how Namonaa said it was.

And Namonaa said again that the time the Dagbamba were fighting and coming, Nimbu gave birth to a son with a Guruma woman, and that was Naa Gbewaa. And when Naa Gbewaa was a child, he was staying with his mother in the Guruma land. And the Dagbamba came and sat at Yendi Dabari. When Nimbu died, they consulted soothsayers, and the soothsayers said, "The Yaa-Naa is still small and he is not here; he is in another town." And they showed that they should go to the Guruma land and take Naa Gbewaa and bring him home. When they reached the Guruma land, they removed a Guruma man and said he should put the small chief on his shoulder and carry him home. And the one who carried him, they said he had carried the chief, so he was the Tuɣrinam, that is, "carrying the chief." And the Tuɣrinam is an elder of Yendi. So they took Yendi and gave it to Gbewaa, and Yendi became well again. And Namonaa said that Nimbu's other child was Kumtili, the child he gave birth to with Sosabli's daughter, and Kumtili ate the tindana's chieftaincy at Yiwɔɣu. This Yiwɔɣu, we Dagbamba also praise it as Kumtili. And this is what Namonaa talked about.

That is not all that Namonaa talked, but the talk Namonaa gave, he started with Nimbu. What I have just now told you, have you seen it? Namonaa didn't talk about Tɔhizee. On the part of Tɔhizee, Namonaa only told you that Tɔhizee is there. And he didn't talk about Ɔipopora. And so as Savelugu is also your house, we went to Palo-Naa, and you asked about the talks of Tɔhizee and Ɔipopora. And all the sacrifices he told you the talk needed, you did them. It was inside Palo-Naa Issa's house that we heard more of the talks, and the talks reached to Tɔhizee and Ɔipopora and the others. It was Palo-Naa Issa himself who talked. When Palo-Naa talked, Palo Lun-Naa and other elder drummers were there along with him. And as Palo-Naa is old, [future Saakpuli Lun-Naa] Issa Tailor also helped Palo-Naa. This Issa is the son of Savelugu Yiwɔɣu-Naa Karimu, and he is the leader of the young men's drummers in Savelugu. I have told you about him. He and the young drummers have been sitting in the evenings with my brother Mumuni. And as we have taken Namonaa's talks to reach Nimbu and Naa Gbewaa, I think it will be good if we join Palo-Naa's talks here. How Palo-Naa talked about it, that is how we will follow it.

When Palo-Naa made the sacrifice, he called our grandfathers. "Ashayu gave birth to Lunɛɣu. And gave birth to Ɔiɣnaa. Your grandchild Lunɛɣu has

come to ask of your benefit. And the way he wants your benefit, he has come to meet me, so that we should take your benefit to show him. That is why we have taken today, Sunday. And we are in the bush, and we are facing all the problems in the bush. And we have got a cow. Come and collect your cow. Come and collect your goat and your duck. Come and collect your pigeon. Collect your fowl. And give us the way to teach Lunzɛyɛ what we also know, and he will also take it to his home town, and eat the benefit of you, my grandfather Lunzɛyɛ. And eat the benefit of Kosayim. And eat the benefit of Ziɲnaa. And eat the benefit of Wumbie. And eat the benefit of Blemah. Today, Sunday, he has run and entered into us, that we should teach him. And he will also take it to his home town and be searching and be eating from that. There is your food. And there is your blood. My grandfather Darizɛyɛ, that is your goat. I'm giving it to you today, and you should take all the wonderful talks. Your grandchild Lunzɛyɛ has come to ask of your benefit. My grandfather Lunzɛyɛ, your grandchild Lunzɛyɛ has brought me this cow to give to you. He asked me to do it. Otherwise I could not have done it. And so today, if you are in the bush, you should come down. You should come and collect what you are supposed to take. And also do something well for him, and he will also take it back home, and be eating from your benefit. We should slaughter. And give Lunzɛyɛ very good health, and give him knowledge, and he will also take it to his home town and be searching and be eating.”

After making the sacrifice, Palo-Naa said, “You, the red drummer, Lunzɛyɛ, this name you are carrying is the name of our grandfather. As you have come, you have become our mother's child, and as we are sitting down, in all of our family, there will not be any small talk inside chieftaincy and we will hide it from you. In Dagbon here, there is no chief we will take this talk and talk to that chief, even the Yaa-Naa, unless the chief will agree to put down all the things that this talk wants. But as you are our mother's child, and what you have put down, it will do. Yesterday in the night, I saw a sign of it. The chief we are holding, Zipopora, he came and climbed me. And so the talk we are going to talk, that is the end. As for the Samban' luɲa talks, we know that you have learned them. They are following. But the talk we will talk today, there is no Yendi before it. Lunzɛyɛ, you have asked about Nimbu. Nimbu started the chieftaincy. Let me tell you what happened and Nimbu was given birth.”

Then Palo-Naa said: The trouble started in the Guruma land. Tɔhizɛɛ was roaming, and he went to the Guruma land. And he wanted water to wash and drink. And the people of that town said, “For three days, we haven't got water.”

He asked them, “Why?”

And they said, “A wild cow has collected the drinking-water place.” And they wanted to kill the cow, but they couldn't kill it.

And Tɔhizee said they should send him to where the water was. And the people of the town said they couldn't go to the water place. And Tɔhizee told them, "Show me the way to the water place."

And they made one person send him there. When they were getting near to water place, the person stood there and pointed, and said, "Have you seen this tree? When you get to that tree, it is there." And he turned and went home.

And Tɔhizee went alone. He saw the cow. He and God know how he killed the cow.

The chief of the town was a tindana. He was sitting down when Tɔhizee came back with the tail of the cow. And Tɔhizee gave it to the chief of the town, and said, "This is the tail of the cow. And so those who want meat, they can go and cut the meat. And those who want water, they can go and catch the water."

And the people went to the water place. They got there, and truly, the cow was dead and lying down. And they fetched the water and went home. And they cut the meat and went home. And it made the chief of the town very sweet.

And he asked Tɔhizee. And he gathered girls who were matured, twelve of them, and said that Tɔhizee should look among the twelve and take the number of girls he wanted. Tɔhizee was looking and he saw a small girl, and he said "This is the girl I want." The chief gave the girl to Tɔhizee.

And Tɔhizee took the girl and went into the bush. And he was there, he and God alone, in the bush there, until the girl became a matured girl. And Tɔhizee was there, and he was hunting.

And the girl became pregnant, and gave birth. She gave birth to Nimbu. And Nimbu: that is ʒinaani. In Dagbani, ʒinaani means something that you have never seen, or you don't know its way. That is what Dagbamba call ʒinaani. When she gave birth to Nimbu, he had one arm. And one nostril: there were some things like insects or maggots in the nostril. And then the other nostril: phlegm was coming out. And the one eye: there was blood coming out. And the second eye: tears were coming out.

And Tɔhizee told the woman, "There is some water lying there: on no day should you go to fetch that water to drink, even to come and cook. There is some water lying over there: fetch that one and come, and we will drink, and you will be using that one and be cooking."

Then some few days, Tɔhizee went to the bush. The woman went and fetched the water Tɔhizee said she should not fetch. And she came and cooked food, and ate. And she cut Tɔhizee's food and went and put it down and came back. Before Tɔhizee came back from the bush, the woman was dead. And so Tɔhizee's wife died. When Tɔhizee came back, he didn't look for the woman. He just went to where the woman had been putting the food, and he took the food and

ate. He finished eating the food, and he got up and came, and he saw that the woman was dead. And it was not long, and he also died.

And then it was left with only the 3inaani, the child alone. They left the child there, where they were. Nobody was there to look after the child except God. The child was there until it was able to walk, and it got up and was walking. Until a time came, and he was able to take his father's hunting tools, and he took them. And he was hunting. Then he was hunting, and he roamed, and he came to a river, and he remained in the river. That place was near to Yiwoyu.

There was a tindana who wanted some people to farm for him, and he sent the senior daughter, that she should go to the river and fetch water and come to give the people to drink. The name of the woman was Kpasaawulo. And she went to the river and fetched the water, and turned. And the 3inaani told the woman to stop. The woman who came to fetch the water, 3inaani told the woman to take him to the farm.

Then the woman was bringing him, and when she was getting near to the farmers who were working on the farm, she said, "Sit down here. And I will go and tell my father. He is in the farm."

He sat down, and she went and told the father, "When I went to the river side, I saw something. And that something said I should bring him here. And I have brought him. He is sitting over there. So let us go, and you will see him."

And so the father was following her, and they came to 3inaani. 3inaani greeted the father of the girl, and told the tindana, "Take me home."

And the tindana told the daughter, "Carry him home, and when the farmers finish farming, I will also come home."

And the woman carried 3inaani home. And after the farming, the tindana also went home. And they made the woman to be cooking food and giving to 3inaani, until it came to the time the tindana said, "I have given you to 3inaani, as a wife."

This woman gave birth to a baby son. He is Yoyu Soybieri. And when Yoyu Soybieri was walking, she gave birth again to a baby son. He is Imergili. When Imergili was walking, she gave birth to another son. And he is Namzisheli.

After she finished giving birth to them, 3inaani found a way and the tindana died. Daybreak, the children of the tindana came to the house. They came in the morning to greet the tindana, and when they came, it was 3inaani who was sitting down. They saw that 3inaani had put on the clothes of the tindana and was sitting down.

And they asked, "Where is the tindana?"

And he said, "I am the tindana today."

It was there until 3inaani also died. And Yɔɔyɔ Sɔɔbieri, his mother was the pakpɔŋ of the tindana, and he collected the tindana chieftaincy. That is the start of Yendi.

When Yɔɔyɔ Sɔɔbieri collected and ate, and he died, his brother Ɔmɛrgili ate the chieftaincy. That is the mother's side, too.

And when Ɔmɛrgili also collected it and ate, and he died, then his brother Namzisheli ate. That was how they were eating. They were all there as tindanas, up to the time of Naa Gbewaa, and he separated it. When we want to praise the Yaa-Naa, we say “Ɔmɛrgili bia, Namzisheli bia”: the son of Ɔmɛrgili, the son of Namzisheli. This name Namzisheli has some talk. It is a praise for chiefs: “chieftaincy doesn't know anything,” It is a proverb and a name. They use it to praise any chief. What is chieftaincy? If you have people, and those who are not good people do something bad, and those who do good are there, then you will take those who are good to add to those who have done bad. And you have not seen anyone's fault: that is Namzisheli. I can say that even in Dagbon here, if a person is fit to be a person, or if you are the head of your house, if you want to follow “they have said,” then you cannot hold the people in your house. You yourself, if you want to follow talks, if we are not living well with you and you follow it, what will it bring? It will go to something bad. And so Namzisheli is a Yaa-Naa's child. But it is not only chiefs. It shows that somebody who is up to a human being, and you have many people, if you want to search and know all their talks, you can't hold anybody. And so your eyes will see something, and you will say that you didn't see it. And your ears too will hear something, and you will say that you didn't hear it. That is Namzisheli: chieftaincy doesn't know anything.

And Yɔɔyɔ Sɔɔbieri also gave birth to Kpɔɔyɔ, and Dagbamba, we call him Kpɔɔyɔnimbu, or Kpɔɔy'nimbu. You know that Dagbamba watch a child, and if they see that the child has come to resemble the grandfather, then they call the grandfather's name to add to the child. That's why they called him Kpɔɔyɔ and added Nimbu. Nimbu is the 3inaani's name. If you are going to call the name, and you only call Nimbu, it means you called 3inaani. And when Namzisheli died, Kpɔɔyɔnimbu ate.

Ɔmɛrgili gave birth to Yɛnuunsi. When Kpɔɔyɔnimbu died, Yɛnuunsi collected the chieftaincy and ate.

And when Yɛnuunsi died, Namzisheli's child Tuhusaa collected the chieftaincy and ate. When it's raining and they give birth to a child, that is what we call Tuhusaa.

Tuhusaa gave birth to Zipopora. Some people call the name as Sipopora. When Tuhusaa died, Zipopora collected the chieftaincy and ate.

Truly, at that time, there was no eye-opening. And as far as we know, the chief who started chieftaincy was Zipopora. He started fighting in Dagbon here, and he went to Guruma, to Biɛɛ, to go and fight there. When he was going to fight the Guruma people, the Guruma-Naa said that he could not fight him. The reason why the chief of Biɛɛ told Zipopora he couldn't fight him was that he knew the relationship between the Gurumas and the Dagbamba. When that Biɛɛ chief was growing up, his elders told him about Tɔhizee, "These Dagbamba. their starting started here. The one who started chieftaincy in Dagbon, his mother came from here. And so the two of us are one" That was why the chief said that Zipopora was not somebody he could fight, and that he wanted them to be friends.

And truly, the chief of Guruma gathered twelve girls. Eleven of the twelve girls were grown. And then he added a young girl. And the chief of Guruma said, "Chief of Dagbon, you have come. I want to sow this my seed between us, and the seed is among the girls I have brought. Look among these twelve girls, and remove the one you want as a wife." And Zipopora went and removed the young girl from the twelve. And the chief of Guruma said, "They have brought so many girls, and you are removing only this small girl?"

And Zipopora said, "Yes. This child I have removed is going to be the daantalga, the supporting pole of a house, between the two of us. And so I want to take the small girl home, and she will give birth to a child. And Dagbon and Guruma will come to have one way." And the name of the child was Sohuyini. And Zipopora brought the girl home, up to the time she became a woman, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Kumtili. And she became pregnant again, and she gave birth to Naa Gbewaa. And so Zipopora's first son, his zuu, was Kumtili, and it was Naa Gbewaa who was after Kumtili. The time she gave birth to Naa Gbewaa, Sohuyini took Naa Gbewaa to the father's land. They were there in the Guruma land when they sent and brought Sohuyini and Naa Gbewaa back to Dagbon. And it wasn't two days, and Zipopora died.

When Zipopora died, Kumtili collected and ate. Kumtili didn't give birth to a child before he died, and when Kumtili died, his younger brother was Naa Gbewaa. And Naa Gbewaa collected the chieftaincy and ate. It was Naa Gbewaa who ate, and when he ate the chieftaincy, it was Naa Gbewaa who divided the chieftaincy from the tindanas, and it is now the family of Naa Gbewaa that is remaining. But then there were tindanas and there were chiefs. And so the talk that Palo-Naa talked, he said that up to that time, there was no Yaa-Naa. When Dagbon started, it was tindanas who were holding Dagbon.

And coming to the talk of Nyologu Lun-Naa Issahaku, the mɔylo singer, he also talked about Zipopora. Lun-Naa didn't talk about Tɔhizee; he only said that

Tɔhizee is not inside our drumming. Lun-Naa also said that the Dagbamba came from the Hausa land or even beyond Hausa land. He said that Nimbu was their leader, and that Nimbu came from Biɛŋ. This Biɛŋ is not in Ghana. Nimbu came from there and sat at Pusiga. He had one eye; he had one arm; he had one leg; he had one nostril. And because he was wonderful, that was the reason why they were calling him Nimbu. And Lun-Naa said that there were no Dagbamba, no Mamprusis. They were all together. Nimbu was for the Dagbamba; he was for the Mamprusis. They passed by the Mossi side, and they killed the tindanas there, and passed where the Mamprusi land is now, and they killed the tindana there. And Lun-Naa Issahaku said that they were sitting at Pusiga, but the Dagbamba land was not one place. If they sat at some place, they would get up again. And others would be sitting. That was how it was, and Namo-Naa also said it was like how we are today. The Dagbamba were not at one place. They sat at different places. They sat at Bagli: it is near Gushegu. They came and sat at Yɔɔyɔ: it is near Diari. And they sat at the place we call Yaan' Dabari.

And so Lun-Naa said that our drumming talks start with Nimbu, and he also called his name as Kpɔyɔnimbu. And Lun-Naa also said these talks are in darkness, and when the light comes in the time of Naa Gbewaa. And Lun-Naa Issahaku said that that Nimbu married the granddaughter of a tindana. Lun-Naa said her name was Shiasabga, and he gave birth to a son named ɔipopora. And as Lun-Naa said that when Nimbu died, it was ɔipopora who became chief.

Nyologu Lun-Naa Issahaku also said we have some talk with the Gurumas. How Palo-Naa said that ɔipopora went to fight the Gurumas, Lun-Naa said that the Dagbamba sat quietly in the Guruma land. Lun-Naa Issahaku said that before the Dagbamba came to Pusiga, ɔipopora was a friend to the Guruma chief, and the Guruma chief gave a daughter to him. Lun-Naa Issahaku called her name as Soyini, and he said that ɔipopora gave birth to Kumtili with her. And Lun-Naa said again that Soyini gave birth again to Naa Gbewaa. And so ɔipopora's children's mother's house was from the Guruma land. When ɔipopora died, Kumtili became chief. And Lun-Naa also sad that Kumtili didn't give birth to a child, and Naa Gbewaa was his junior brother. And Kumtili said, "I have no child. My child is my brother." In our drumming custom, we don't show that a Yaa-Naa has no child. If it happens that he has no child, we can take his brother or his brother's child or his uncle's child, to represent his own children. On the part of our custom, the way Kumtili died and Naa Gbewaa came to take over, on the way of drumming, we don't say that Kumtili had no child; we say that Kumtili's child was Naa Gbewaa. As he was the brother, when Kumtili died, Naa Gbewaa came to take over. And so when Kumtili died, Naa Gbewaa became the chief.

And I want you to know that what we have asked and all this that I am talking to you, no drummer will want to talk about it, and no drummer will want to

show anyone. You will take it and ask many people, and they will tell you they have never heard of it. And truly, they have never heard of it. Who has told them? They don't beat this talk at the Samban' luṅa, and no one opens his mouth to sing it in the public. Where will they hear of it? In our drumming, we don't call their names. Nimbu has no name that we call. Kumtili has no name that we call. Even coming to Nimbu's child Naa Gbewaa, and Naa Gbewaa's child Naa Shitɔbu, and Naa Shitɔbu's child Naa Nyaysi, we don't have names for them that we call. And so it is a big talk our elders have shown to you. Do you remember when you asked Namo-Naa why is it that drummers beat Samban' luṅa but they don't beat these talks. He told you that they don't beat it because it's a bad talk. And he told you a proverb that someone will not love somebody more than himself. The reason why your grandfather said that is only because someone may want to ask and know it, but it is useless with drummers. That is why drummers don't force those talks. Drummers know what they will come and sit down and play at the chief's house up to daybreak. Something that you will learn and come out and display in front of people, and something that you will learn but you can't bring it out to the people to see: which one would you like better? You the drummer who learned it and you know it, the chief himself will not allow you to play it because he is afraid. We learn this drumming because of the chiefs. But the chief himself didn't want it. There is no chief in Dagbon who would want that Samban' luṅa. Even the Yaa-Naa himself doesn't want it. That is why drummers don't force themselves on it.

And I want you to think deeply about this talk. Why is it that they don't beat it openly for people to hear? I also think that drummers fear these talks because when the Yendi chieftaincy started, the Yaa-Naa was sitting in the chieftaincy as a tindana. And the way the chieftaincy started, it was not strong. In our Dagbon today, the chiefs are separate from the tindanas, and the son of a chief does not become a tindana, and a son of a tindana does not become a chief. But when you look at this talk, it shows that their mothers were the daughters of tindanas, and so inside of it was something like the tindana and the chiefs coming out from one place. The tindanas were there for the land, and they were holding the ones we call typical Dagbamba or black Dagbamba. And so for a drummer to sit down and take a drum to give out all these stories, how everything started on the part of the chiefs and the tindanas, they fear it. Namo-Naa said that when someone becomes the chief of Yendi, that fellow will come to the drummers for them to talk about it, and it is Namo-Naa himself who will talk it to the new Yaa-Naa. They will give Namo-Naa a white cow, a white sheep, a white dove, a gown, and a red hat, and some sandals we call salimata. This is what they will give him before he will talk all this, and they will go and make a sacrifice at Yiwoɣu. And

they will go there with drummers from the house of Palo-Naa, because it is Palo house that knows how Dagbon came about. It is at Yiwɔɣu they go to sacrifice to Yendi, because that was where it started. If someone becomes the Yaa-Naa and he does not go to make the sacrifice at Yiwɔɣu, then he is not a Yaa-Naa. And it is still standing to this day, and the tindana there is a big tindana. Kumtili came from the bone of Nimbu, and Namonaa said that Kumtili did not eat Yendi: because of his mother, he had a way to eat the tindana chieftaincy, and he ate Yiwɔɣu, and his children ate Yiwɔɣu, and his grandchildren are eating it. And so a drummer will not agree to show this talk. It was shyness, and knowing: that was what made Namonaa and Palo-Naa to show this talk. The way they know you, they feel shy to hide it. That is why they talked about this talk. Even I myself had never heard it, until it came from their mouths.

And so the sense inside it, you should look well. As for the tindanas, the way it catches them, it is from the mother's house. It doesn't catch a man's child; it catches a man's daughter's child. But if a Yaa-Naa's child mother's should come from a tindana's place, the child wouldn't leave the father's side to go and eat the mother's side again. If the tindana's tail catches a chief or a chief's child, they will bring him the tail. He will collect the tail, and if he is sitting in a chieftaincy, he will put it under the skins, and be sitting. And it looks like something we have inside our drumming. We have talked about it. If a drummer's daughter gives birth to children, one of the children has to because a drummer, or at least hang a drum. If not that, they will be seeing problems. And so the drumming can catch the child of a drummer's daughter. There are some chiefs who married drummers's daughters and gave birth to children, if the mother's side drumming catches such a chief, he will go and collect it: they will sew the drum for him, and he will come and hang it inside his room, and he will be eating the chieftaincy.

Even if his mother happens to be Palo-Naa's daughter, or Loyambalbo's daughter, or Namonaa's daughter, and he is eating something like Savelugu or Karaga or Mion, if his mother's side chieftaincy comes, he wouldn't leave his chieftaincy to go and eat the drumming chieftaincy. And so in Dagbon, it is that a Yaa-Naa's chieftaincy, if it catches you, whether your mother's side is from drummers or tindanas, you don't have to leave it and go and eat the mother's side one. And it is not only a Yaa-Naa's child. Many of the chiefs in Dagbon are drummers's daughter's children, and some of them too are butchers' daughters' children, and other people are there who from the barbers. If his mother's side is worrying him, and he has searched through soothsaying, he will take his old thing. If he is a butcher's daughter's son, they will give him the butcher's knife, and he will come and put in his things in the house. And if he's a barber, and it is

worrying him, he will go and they will give him the blade; he will come and put it inside his things. And he will be eating his chieftaincy. It is inside our Dagbamba living like that. That is how it is.

And look again at the sacrifice at Yiwɔyɔ. The mother's house is there. They won't leave the father's house to go and eat the mother's house. The Dagbamba people stopped it, but as they have left the mother's house, they have to go and make the sacrifice. If tindana's daughter's son eats a chieftaincy, there is no fault, but they are showing that they have left the mother's house side. Why is it that if something is worrying you from the mother's side, for example, like the tail, you will collect it and come and put it down? And so if this sacrifice also comes, they have to go and do it. And they fear it. That is why I have told you that it is the mother's side talks that eat a human being. It is very strong in Dagbon. Dagbamba say that between a mother and father, the mother's talk is stronger than the father's.

On the part of these talks, how we have been searching for them, people are saying that they fear the talks, and they are calling the names of many animals for sacrifice. Who are they giving the sacrifice to? All these things they are gathering and slaughtering, they are not making a sacrifice to God, but they are rather making this sacrifice to the tindanas. The way they slaughter the animals, and how they will use the blood, you don't have to look at it as the way a Muslim uses an animal to sacrifice to God. It is tindana's work. They are calling the names of these dead chiefs, because they came from the tindanas. And so the talk is hard, unless you know it. That is why drummers are afraid. They know what is inside, and they are trying to close it. The chieftaincy came out of the tindanas. Any sacrifice they are doing, that is a tindana's sacrifice. Even now, Dagbamba chiefs, it is only one-one of them who is trying to pray. But they don't pray, because they are tindanas. Now that there is eye-opening small-small, and some of them pray, but they still do their tindana work. Those who refuse it are those who are able to go to Mecca. But as for the others, they won't pray. In the olden days, because of the way chieftaincy was, their only belief was that when they die, they bury them, their gods that have something to do with them, and they roam. And people say that they are at Bagli.

It was Palo-Naa who told you that everything, when it's going to happen, it starts in a small way, and then, as it goes, it becomes broad. And that time, Dagbon was not wide. And so the talk about Tɔhizee or those chiefs from a long time ago, or in Tɔhizee's time, the chieftaincy was not strong. Their time was something like pitiful. There was no world. There were no clothes; they were wearing skins. Dagbon was not wide. In that time, you will walk from Savelugu to Tamale, and you won't see a town in between them. And so if someone has

written down many things about them, you don't have to put too much trust in it. But truly, the way we learned it, it was that they seized the tindana chieftaincy and they were eating it. And it was that only someone from the mother's side who should eat it. They used strength and seized it, and they were not keeping long. If you seize it like that, and you eat it, you won't keep long: you will die. That was how they were eating it up to the point of Naa Gbewaa. And when he collected it, he turned it to chieftaincy. And he took the tindanaship to be eating from the mother's side, that is, for his uncles. When he gave it to the uncles and they were eating it, at that time, he kept long, and he gave birth to many children.

I told you that when Naa Gbewaa was small, he was staying with his mother's house in the Guruma land, at Biɛŋ. And there are many stories about how Naa Gbewaa came, and what happened to him when he was young and he came from the hands of his mother, but I'm going to cut it short and just give you a small talk about him. Some people say that during the chieftaincy of Ɖipopora, Ɖipopora became sick, and they sent to the Busanga land and called soothsayers, and the soothsayers said that a skin's child was in the bush, and so they should look for him. And they sent for Naa Gbewaa, and Tuyrinam carried him. Others say that it was his mother's house that sent a strong messenger to carry him and his father's house would see him. And what we hear about Naa Gbewaa, when he was young, he was very handsome. And when he was sleeping in the room, the princesses in the chief's house used to enter the room and try to sleep with him. He would be sleeping in the night, and he would wake up and see a woman lying by him, and he would run and lie in the sitting hall, and he was sleeping under the feet of the chief's horse. And the women followed him there, and he would run outside and see a dark place and was sleeping there. And they said they should build a shed for him to sleep outside the chief's house, and they said they would leave him there and he would grow up. And behind every Yaa-Naa's house, there is a shed even up to this day. And any time he was entering the chief's house to get water, if he entered any room, women would follow him and try to sleep with him. And they said they should put a pot in the hall, and it would be his drinking water. And Naa Gbewaa grew up like that, and he didn't enter into the chief's compound.

When Gbewaa became the chief, he had many wives, and he gave birth to many children. Some people say that his children were eighteen, and some say they were more than that. And it was because of these many children that we Dagbamba came to separate from the Mamprusis and the Mossis and the other tribes, that is, to let the Dagbamba stay alone, the Mossis stay alone, and the Mamprusis to stay alone. And what I am saying is that Naa Gbewaa was for all of them: he was for the Dagbamba, the Mossis, the Mamprusis, the Nanumbas, all of

them. I am not going to count the names of Naa Gbewaa's wives, but as for his children, apart from Ɔirli and Fɔɔyɔ and Naa Shitɔbu, Naa Gbewaa gave birth to Subee Kpɛma, that is senior Subee, and Subee Bila, small Subee, and he gave birth to Beemoni, Buyyilgu, Yenyoo, Baatanga, Ɔmantambu, and Tohigu. And he gave birth to two daughters. The older daughter was Pakpɔɔ Kachayɔ; you will some people also call her name as Fatyayɔ. Her sister was Yaantuuri.

Naa Gbewaa's first-born was Ɔirli, but Naa Gbewaa had his beloved son called Fɔɔyɔ. And truly, Fɔɔyɔ was following Ɔirli but he was more than Ɔirli, and Ɔirli and his brothers saw that if Gbewaa died, Fɔɔyɔ would eat the chieftaincy. It was even from Naa Gbewaa's mouth that they heard it. At that time Naa Gbewaa was old, and he was blind, and he called Fɔɔyɔ's mother to say that if he died, Fɔɔyɔ should eat the chieftaincy. But it was Ɔirli's mother who had entered the room, and he had not seen that she was the one, and she went and told Ɔirli. And Ɔirli and his brothers said they should kill their junior brother. They dug a deep hole, and they put skins on top and covered it. The way Palo-Naa told it to you, Ɔirli told Fɔɔyɔ, "Our father is now weak, and we don't consult one another. And so let's go aside, and talk on the part of how our father will one day die and we will hold one another." And Ɔirli said Fɔɔyɔ should sit on the skins, and Fɔɔyɔ said, "I cannot sit on the skins when you are standing, because you are my senior brother." And Ɔirli said, "Ah! If we enter into our father's room, you are always the one who sits near our father. And so as we have come here, I have given the seniority to you. Sit down and let's talk." And Ɔirli and his brothers sat around the skin. Then Fɔɔyɔ sat down on the skin and fell inside the hole. And Ɔirli made his brothers to collect the hot pito, and they poured it on him in the hole. And he cried until he died. And they threw large stones into the hole on top of him. And they covered him and killed him like that.

After Fɔɔyɔ was dead, they didn't know how to bring his death to the open. They said that as Naa Gbewaa's beloved son was dead, they could not go and tell Naa Gbewaa. And they looked, and they got the horn we call luy' nyini, and the gunɔɔɔɔ, and the flute we call yua. The yua was blowing and calling Ɔirli ku Fɔɔyɔ; Ɔirli ku Fɔɔyɔ: "Ɔirli killed Fɔɔyɔ." And the gunɔɔɔɔ was beating and exclaiming, "Oueh! Oueh!" And the luy' nyini was blowing and saying, Yu-u-u, yu-u-u. And as they were playing, it came to fall into the ear of Naa Gbewaa. When Naa Gbewaa heard the sound of the gunɔɔɔɔ, the flute and the horn, that was how he learned that Fɔɔyɔ was dead. He began to struggle, and he struggled and struggled until he sank into the ground. The place where he sank into the ground is where his grave is, at Pusiga.

I have told you that when the Dagbamba came here, they were mixed with other tribes. It was the time of Naa Gbewaa that they separated. And so the time I

am talking about, the Dagbamba, the Mossis, the Mamprusi, the Nanumbas: they were all in a group. And again, when the Dagbamba were coming and they fought and defeated people, they collected some of the people and others too followed them. And the places they went, they were getting women and giving birth to children, and the children were also following them. And so they were increasing. After the death of Foyu and Naa Gbewaa, Naa Gbewaa's children began to quarrel among themselves, and they came to fight. And Zirli was strong, and the children scattered. And Zirli drove some of his brothers away. The places they went and sat down, people were there but they didn't know chieftaincy. And those children of Naa Gbewaa went and sat down, and they showed them chieftaincy, and they started chieftaincies there. Zirli fought Tohigu and drove Tohigu away, and Tohigu went and sat where the Mamprusi are today. And Imantambu left and went and sat where the Nanumbas are today. And some of them left and followed Tohigu to the Mamprusi land, and he was the chief of the Mamprusi. And some followed Imantambu to Bimbila, and he was the chief of the Nanumbas. He was called Yeltabli gari kpani, that "it is better they throw spears at you than they tell lies about you." Salagalana Kayilkuna was one of his brothers who followed him. And Naa Gbewaa had a daughter called Yaantuuri. She was a princess, and she roamed and went to the Mossi land, and she married a prince and gave birth to the Mossis.

And so from among Naa Gbewaa's children, two of them ate Yendi. Naa Zirli ate Yendi, and there are some people who also say that Naa Zirli didn't eat Yendi. Naa Zirli killed his brother Foyu before he ate Yendi, but he didn't last long before he died. We have heard that Zirli became mad. He told a tindana woman to sacrifice to the god for him, and she refused and he killed her and became mad. He wasn't treated, and he died in the madness. And Zirli didn't keep long in the chieftaincy, and he didn't give birth to any children. He drove all his brothers away, and he died alone in the chieftaincy. When he died, it was Naa Shitobu who ate the chieftaincy. And because of the bad talk of Naa Zirli, there are some people who don't count him inside Yendi, and they only say that Naa Gbewaa died, and Naa Shitobu came and ate.

And so when Zipopora gave birth to Naa Gbewaa, it was Naa Gbewaa who got up and married many women and gave birth to many children, and then the children of the Yaa-Naas became many. Zipopora's first son, his zuu, was Kumtili, and it was Naa Gbewaa who was after Kumtili. Kumtili didn't give birth to a child. It was Naa Gbewaa who collected and gave birth to children. And how Palo-Naa told you the reason Naa Gbewaa lived long, it was that he separated the chieftaincy from the tindanas. How the Dagbamba were collecting the chieftaincies of the tindanas, and they were not sleeping, Naa Gbewaa left the

tindanas to be living. And he showed that he would take the repairing of the gods and give it to the elders, and then he would eat the chieftaincy. Any talk that came, and it was on the part of repairing the land, then what the land ate or wanted to eat, he would look for it and give it to the elders, and they would repair the land. And as Naa Gbewaa did that, everybody saw that he kept long. And so the tindanas and the chiefs started talking together. If they are going to make some sacrifice to the buyli, the chief will gather the things and give it to the tindana, and the tindana will go and make the sacrifice. When Naa Gbewaa did it like that, coming up to today, it is his family that is holding the whole of Dagbon. When Naa Gbewaa was not there, it was 3irli who became the chief, but when 3irli collected, he didn't keep long. When he died, at that time, the chieftaincy had woken up. Naa Shitɔbu collected the chieftaincy, and his first-born was Naa Nyaysi. And Naa Nyaysi collected the chieftaincy, and he woke up and went to war and killed the tindanas and put his followers as chiefs. The talk of Naa Nyaysi is a big talk, and so I think that tomorrow I will tell you more about Naa Shitɔbu and Naa Nyaysi, and how our Dagbon came out. And so drummers, on the part of these old talks on the starting of Dagbon, they are the ones who know Naa Gbewaa's father. If not that, most Dagbamba only know Naa Gbewaa, and if you ask them to count the chiefs of Yendi, they will start with Naa Gbewaa.

And I am going to add salt to this talk. What I have said before, have you seen it? There are some differences inside this talk, and there are some things that look alike. Namo-Naa and Lun-Naa Issahaku didn't talk about Tɔhizee or talk about the one who gave birth to Nimbu. It was Palo-Naa Issa who talked about Tɔhizee and said that Tɔhizee gave birth to Nimbu. Palo-Naa and Lun-Naa Issahaku talked about 3ipopora, but Namo-Naa didn't call his name. Lun-Naa showed that Nimbu gave birth to 3ipopora, but the talk Palo-Naa talked, he showed some generations between Nimbu and 3ipopora. And again, Namo-Naa said that Nimbu gave birth to Kumtili and gave birth to Gbewaa, but Palo-Naa and Lun-Naa Issahaku said that 3ipopora gave birth to Kumtili and Gbewaa. And Namo-Naa said that Kumtili didn't eat the chieftaincy of Yendi; he said that Kumtili was eating as the tindana when they brought Naa Gbewaa from the Guruma land. And the talk Palo-Naa and Lun-Naa Issahaku talked, they showed that 3ipopora gave birth to Kumtili and Naa Gbewaa, and it was Kumtili who was eating the chieftaincy when they brought Naa Gbewaa from the Guruma land. And again, there are differences on the part of the names of the mothers and the towns where they were sitting. I am not trying to confuse you. But I think that it will be good if I say something about these differences and tell you something about how you can understand the way our drumming is moving.

These talks we talk, we learn them from our fathers, and we were not there at that time. Even our fathers were not there. And no one was writing. That is

why I told you that tradition is: “I got up, and my father said this.” And so we only learn it that “My father said that at such a time, this thing happened.” Our old Dagbamba say that the meat you meet inside your father’s kitchen is what you eat. Its meaning is that when you get up and your eyes open, what your father tells you and your grandfather tells you is what you have to take to work. And so everything or every problem or any other thing has got its way in Dagbon here. It is not good for someone to come and sit down and just tell lies. But what someone talks, if some of it is not the same as someone else’s talk, does it show that the person was completely telling lies? It doesn’t show that. Every drummer in his house, if you go to meet him, he has the extent of how he can sing. I have told you that drumming is just like a classroom. Every one has the extent he is going to catch what is happening in the classroom. Each and every one of us has the extent of his knowledge. And so those who talk, it is not that they don’t know. They know, but it is the way they know it. If it is their fathers or whatever drummers who showed them, they can show you the ones who taught them. They are showing that they learned the talk inside their father’s house. The talk we heard at Palo-Naa’s house, that is what they taught them. And our grandfather Namo-Naa, what he said, that was what he was also learned in his house. Palo-Naa will not say that what Namo-Naa is saying is not true, and even Palo-Naa will not force himself on his own talk, because none of us was there to see. It is somebody who has taken the talk to tell somebody. And that somebody has also taken it to tell somebody. And it is coming down until you also come out, and they take it and tell you. And so if somebody comes to ask you, where they have taught you to stand, that is where you also stop. And so everybody learns at his own place, and because of that, everyone has the extent of his knowledge.

And so can we take all these things to be the same? As for this knowledge on the part of our drumming, it is just like that. If someone is able to do well, he will know more than his friends. Truly, what caused these different ways of the tradition is what I am talking to you. If you are at Yendi, and someone is staying there, you will get to know much about the tradition of Yendi, more than someone over here at Tamale. And whatever happens, you the one at Tamale will know much about this side and the chiefs here. And if you are at Kumbungu or Tolon or Nanton, and it is the talk of that place, you will also know it better. And here, if our Savelugu chief gives birth to a child, and the child is not yet grown and he dies, only we the drummers here will get to know that child. The Yendi drummers won’t know, or they won’t know his praise-name. They will only know the children of the Savelugu chief who are eating chieftaincy, and not the dead ones. And this is also one of the things that causes the differences or the different ways. That is why drummers go around to different towns to learn, and they go to sit

with drummers who are learned. It is good that you hear about something, and you go to that place and ask of it. You will go to see the place, and you will meet the old people of the town, and they will show you. If it is the grave of Naa Darizɛyɛ or the grave of Naa Zanjina, if it is at some place, you can go there to see it. And drummers do this, and the extent that they can learn, they will learn it. That is how it is. Every drummer has the extent he has learned. And so as we drummers are sitting in different towns, that is another thing that brings these differences and separates our talks.

And our way is: knowledge is more than one another. And I think you white people, on the part of those who are learned, you have it too. Everyone's talking can never be the same. There are some people who didn't ask into details, and they will talk to their extent. Those who know Naa Gbewaa alone, they are there. Naa Gbewaa is the one everybody knows. And those who have asked to know more, they are also there, and at the same time, their ways are different. Our drumming is like the way you grow up. As you are in Tamale here, there are some towns near to this place, and you have heard the names of those towns but you have not been there. And so what I'm telling you looks like the way of our drumming. Everybody learns drumming to the place or the extent he reaches. And so our drumming is too much. It is like somebody going to university here in Ghana, somebody going to America, somebody going to England, somebody going to Saudi Arabia, somebody going to Pakistan. Maybe they are all going to learn one thing, but there will be differences. That is how learned people are, and I think that even at your place, it is the same. Truly, I think in my heart that the learned people at your place, if you ask them to talk about a talk, there will be some differences. Is it not so? And so in Dagbon here, you don't have to be misunderstanding people. You only have to take everything into your thinking. If somebody tells you some talk or story about Dagbon, you just keep it. If you find out something from another fellow, you keep that one, too. At times you will come to see that one is a deep history and the other is a shallow history.

How these old talks of chieftaincy are, you have to go and ask people and know to your extent. But I have told you that this talk we have talked today, as you now know it, it has no profit to you. If you want, you ask anybody, and nobody will talk this talk and it will become one. You can ask all the drummers of Dagbon. You won't get somebody who will talk it and it will stand straight. And so the extent we have asked, we should stop there. If you want to be asking everybody, there will be arguments. A book will be standing, and what is written down in the book, people are arguing about it. And so what about people who haven't written a book, and they are talking from their heads? Chieftaincy started hundreds of years ago. If you want, you can ask the whole Dagbon about this talk,

and they won't say it to stand at one place. If you argue with what our fathers and brothers are telling you, they also will tell you the same thing. And so let your heart stand at one place. And this one will be good for you.

I have been telling you that you need patience to learn the talks of drumming, and Palo-Naa told you the same thing. Palo-Naa told you that the talks are many, and as for us, we don't know paper. He said that we don't write these talks the way you write them. All of it is inside our heads. That is why you have to follow it with patience. Palo-Naa told you that the way we are sitting, what you know, sometimes it won't come to your head. As for us, the way we are: sometimes you will be sitting down now, and what you will make up your mind to talk about, you will talk and talk, and then when you come to another point, the thing will escape you. And you will go and be sitting and thinking. If you relax on it, then the things will start coming back again. And the next time you are coming to sit again, you will know exactly what to talk about. Even you yourself, the mixing of talks can come from you. As you have found a way to be here, and what you have already learned and written, it can happen that you will be doubting yourself. As you are somebody who writes, you will ask about a talk, and the one you asked will show you. Then you will write everything down. And then another person also talks to you. By that time you have gathered so many things. And they talk to you something you haven't asked. And you write it. You are suspecting it, and at the same time writing it. So which one are you going to take and do work? If you have time again, you will go back, and you will bring out the one you have written about and you are doubting, and you will be taking it out and be asking. Does it not happen? And the way it is, it isn't just the way you and I are sitting down now that you will get to know long talks. Palo-Naa also told you that. These talks we learn, you will catch some of them one by one. And some talks, if we are learning them, it will take us one year, and we still haven't caught all of it. And so if we struggle like that to catch a talk into our head, if somebody wants to come and pull you to some place different, you will refuse it.

In the Muslim religion, there is writing, and it is talking about God's work. Don't they argue with it? We sit with maalam. A maalam will hold a book, and read it, and he will come to reach a place, and he will say that there are such-and-such maalam who have said this and that and this. And at another place, another group of maalam have said this and that and this. Sometimes you will sit with a maalam, and he will count things like that. It is the book he has put down, and he is talking all this. And that maalam, what he is saying, he will say he is not arguing with it. And then he will say what he also wants to say. The time of the Holy Prophet, many people were copying or writing what the Holy Prophet was doing. Everybody was saying what he or she has seen. And in the book, what he

or she saw is not one. And the one who is saying what he has seen or he has not seen, you cannot say, “You are telling lies.” There is a sign of it, and people are saying it. And so look at the time the chieftaincy of Dagbon started. I think if you compare it to the time of the Holy Prophet, it’s not long. And we the drummers, there isn’t anybody who is holding writing. And the chiefs also didn’t write down anything. It’s from our head that we are holding and talking this. And so how can all of us say something and it will become one?

Inside the talk of drumming, there are some people who are drummers, but they aren’t singers. At times, someone will be very knowledgeable, but he will find it difficult to sing or talk in the public. He has learned the talks, but he hasn’t learned how to talk in public. You can sit with such a person, and he has never talked some things before. And somebody who is a singer, or somebody who talks, he has different ways he will pass before he comes to reach the extent of his talk. Even when they sing the Samban’ luṅa, every drummer has the way he will pass from this section or this chief to the talk of another chief. Someone will talk and curve the talks, and someone will talk and jump some parts, and someone will come and add some styles to his talk to make it nice. It’s just like the way we beat the drums. Someone will beat a drum straightforward, and someone will be beating and changing, and someone will beat a dance and mix another dance inside it.

I want to show you an example and you will hear. Today, the way we are beating the timpana in Dagbon, some time ago there were no timpana in Dagbon. We got the timpana from the Ashantis, but now we take the timpana to be ours. If you ask some Dagbana somewhere, maybe he will tell you that it is we Dagbamba who started the timpana. And others will tell you that the timpana started in the time of Naa Ziblim Bandamda. Sometimes when we are beating the Samban’ luṅa of Naa Luro, drummers will sing and say that the one beating timpana was beating. And during Naa Luro’s time, there were no timpana, but the drummers have called the name of the timpana during his time. But we don’t refuse it. If we refuse it, it means that we are going to bring confusion. When they say that the timpana were there during the time of Naa Luro, it shows that they are making that time to be fine. And so if we refuse it, what are we trying to bring? If it comes like that, what has it brought? It will bring confusion. Confusion like what? This group will say that these people are showing themselves to be too knowledgeable and these people are showing themselves to be too weak in the drumming. And so everyone has the extent of his knowledge, and everyone has the way he is going to talk. And as there are many drummers, we just put everything about them to be very, very interesting or good.

And so as these small differences are there, it is still one talk. It’s not that Namo-Naa doesn’t know. Truly, if you hear my grandfather Namo-Naa sing the

Samban' luja, when you catch it, you wouldn't want to listen to any other drummer again. And so you should use your sense and look at Namon-Naa's talk. Namon-Naa didn't say that Zipopora was not there. The way he passed inside to talk this talk, if he jumped some parts, it was that he was following some points. And as Namon-Naa jumped over Zipopora, it is not a fault. He was looking at the talk he was talking. You can't take his talk and say that Zipopora was not there. What Namon-Naa talked, he showed that in the olden days, the tindanas were different, and the tindana's daughter became the wife of the chief, and the chief's son was the grandson of a tindana. And so now we are all one. And I have also heard some drummers say that we came and met the tindanas, and the tindanas also came out from our chieftaincy, and our chieftaincy also started from the tindanas. And what I want you to know is that now the son of a chief does not become a tindana, and the tindanas are Dagbamba. But I think that the tindanas were different from us in the olden days, but at that time, people didn't know that these people were this tribe and those people were that tribe. It was the tindanas who were there for the land, and they all used to fear one another. It was not until the time of Naa Nyaysi that the chiefs got up and fought the tindanas. And so what I was telling you is true, because now the tindanas and the Dagbamba are one.

And so this talk I am talking today, I am showing you the differences because I want you to see how our drumming is moving. Let me give you a deep and hidden example, and it is something inside our chieftaincy. As I'm going to talk about it, there is someone who will say that I am revealing the secrets of our chieftaincy. I'm not talking about the olden days alone; this talk is with us today and tomorrow. I can tell you that with us drummers, sometimes there can be a chief who doesn't bring forth children, or gives birth to only one child. But if you are a drummer and you get up to say that he had no children, then you are not a drummer. There are even Yaa-Naas who didn't give birth to children, but we drummers cannot say that they have not given birth to children. If you are a drummer and you say that, you have demeaned the chieftaincy. In Dagbon here, if someone does not give birth to children and he dies, we can take the son of his sister to be his son. If not that, he can take his brother or his brother's child or his uncle's child to be his son. We have that here. And so when you hear them say that so-and-so was the son of a person, you have to know that it doesn't show that he actually was given birth by that person. Even I have told you that in my family line, Namon-Naa Ashayu gave birth to Palo-Naa Kosayim, but it doesn't show that Ashayu was the father of Kosayim; there were many generations between Ashayu and Kosayim, and so when we call somebody's grandfather to be his father, we are taking it to be the same thing. That is why if Namon-Naa said that Nimbu gave

birth to Naa Gbewaa, it can show that Naa Gbewaa was the grandchild of Nimbu. It is only that Namo-Naa was following the way of his talk, to reach the point he wanted.

And so you should you shouldn't be confused. When we call somebody a child of somebody, Dagbamba will say, "You are joining the family." If you want to praise somebody, and you want to call the children of Naa Gbewaa, you can even call Naa Gbewaa's grandfathers as his sons. If you want, you can say that Yɔɔyɔ Sɔyɔbieri was a son of Naa Gbewaa. And then you say, "Ŋmergili was Naa Gbewaa's son; Namzisheli: Naa Gbewaa's son; Yenuunsi, Naa Gbewaa bia; Tuhusaa, Naa Gbewaa bia; Ɔipopora, Naa Gbewaa bia; Kumtili, Naa Gbewaa bia. You can all it like that up until the people eating today. So if you want to sing, you can say all this. You can say, "Mamprugulana Tohigu, Naa Gbewaa bia; Bimbilalan' Ŋmantambu, Naa Gbewaa bia." If you are coming to add the chiefs who eat here, you can call all their names as a Yaa-Naa's son. If you want, you call Naa Gbewaa, because Naa Gbewaa was the first. Even as Naa Mahamadu is there, if you want, you can take all the past chiefs in the olden days to say that this chief or that chief is his father. It is also inside drumming like that.

And this talk I have talked just now about the ways of our drumming, it is a very big talk. It is not a small talk. There is nobody who would like to talk it as I have talked it to you. If somebody hears this, he will say that I am revealing the secrets of our chieftaincy. Because you have asked me, and between you and me there is nothing to be hidden away from you, that is why I am telling you. This is why I am explaining it to you. I don't want you to be misunderstanding people. It is not something which is very large or long: it is a short talk, but it is a very heavy talk. And so this talk is a heavy talk. If you want, you can say that this talk alone is more than the talk of Tɔhizɛe and Nimbu and Ɔipopora and Kumtili. On the part of our chieftaincy and how our drumming is moving, this is how it is.

And again, the talk we talked today is a big talk. But it is a bad talk, and a dangerous talk. This Ɔinaani, Nimbu, they fear even to say his name, but he is standing as someone who started chieftaincy in this Dagbon. And because of the way he was, when somebody is a Yaa-Naa and he has one eye, they cannot remove him from the chieftaincy because of that. If a Yaa-Naa's arm and leg should die, they have no way to remove him because of that. It was just some years ago that they tried to remove Naa Abila Bila. Did they remove him? It was a drummer who talked about Nimbu, and he said that there was no way to remove the Yaa-Naa, because the one who started Yendi was like that. And so a Dagbamba chief, if he becomes blind, you cannot remove him. Naa Abila Bila's arm and leg died, and they used to carry him. But they were looking at Nimbu, and they couldn't remove him. And the one who talked it said that he would talk it so that they wouldn't spoil the tradition.

I can say that it is we the drummers who have tried to know about how we started before we came to be the way we are today. I told you that we don't beat these talks in our drumming, and many drummers don't learn them. They know that the talks are there, but they don't know them into details. And truly, many Dagbamba don't know that there was someone who started Yendi apart from Naa Gbewaa. That is how it is. There are some people, even if you ask them about the food they eat, they cannot tell you exactly what it is. They only see that they cook and bring it and they eat. They don't know where the food comes from. And so it is not everything that a Dagbana knows, unless someone who asks. And so I think that if anybody gets sense, he gets it from somewhere, and he takes it to his hometown, or he will be in his hometown and the sense will come from some place and reach him. I think that this is how it is. But we drummers know that there was someone who gave birth to Naa Gbewaa. That's why I told you that no one knows the ways of drumming more than a drummer. Because you are a drummer and we have become one, that is why I am telling you. I know that as you don't know, that is why you have come to ask. And if I show you well, if you take it home, it will be good for us.

And so what I teach you, I teach you the right thing. It's not what my heart wants that I will take to talk. What we are showing you, if you go to some other place, maybe you will not get this kind of talk. But I cannot talk lies to you. When our father was alive, he used to tell us that if you deceive somebody and the person dies, you will carry a bad name. Our father said that the one you deceived will follow you. And so we don't want to tell lies. As for me, when you ask me something and I say, "I don't know," then it is true that I don't know. And when I know something, I will tell you I know it. And that is how it is. If somebody doesn't know something and he is going to do it, he is just going to do it with I-don't-know doing. And so these talks about Tɔhizee and Nimbu and Zipopora, I didn't want to talk and enter into lies. That is why we have gone around to ask. As our elders are there, and the way they know you, they also take it that you are someone they should show the talks. And if you go to any drummer and tell him about this talk, he will say "Truly, it is true." And if he doesn't say it's true, it's not that he doesn't like the talk; it is that he himself doesn't know it.

And so tomorrow we will continue the talk of how Dagbon came out. We will talk about the different people we met when we came here, and our relationship to them. And I will tell you more about Naa Shitɔbu and Naa Nyaysi and how Naa Nyaysi went to war against the tindanas.