

Chapter II–13: *The Cola and Slave Trades, Naa Garba and the Ashantis*

After Naa Siyli defeated the Gonjas, when he died, Naa Bimbiɛyu ate the chieftaincy, and when he died, the next chief who came and ate was Naa Garba. Naa Garba was a son of Naa Zanjina. And to talk about Naa Garba is difficult, because Naa Garba's talk enters into many talks. It was during the time of Naa Garba that we Dagbamba came to know the Ashantis. In our Dagbani we call them *Kambonsi*. As I have told you that I am not going to talk all the old talks of Dagbon to you, I am only going to give you important parts of the talks. The talks we have been holding about Naa Luro, Naa Zanjina, and Naa Siyli, they are inside the Samban' luɲa. But what I am going to talk about Naa Garba is not something that is in the Samban' luɲa. Talks about Naa Garba and the Ashantis don't come inside. When they are beating Samban' luɲa, and they come to Naa Garba, they only sing about the way he was given birth, up to the time he got Yendi, and his children. Naa Garba does not have long talks in the Samban' luɲa. And so this talk is just something we learn from older drummers, and it is only a talk they talk. That is all.

And so if I am going to talk to you about Naa Garba, it shows that it is not a straightforward talk. The talks we have with the Ashantis are scattered. I have told you that we got the timpana and Akarima from the Ashantis. And those Dagbamba we call *Kambonsi* also started from the Ashantis. And as it is, it is because of cola that we know the Ashantis, and the talk of cola alone is a very big talk in Dagbon here. When cola started in Dagbon here, if I want, I can say that it was during the time of Naa Garba. And apart from that, the talk of cola comes to enter the talk of slaves. And so Naa Garba's talk separates into many talks. How I am going to talk today, I think that it will be good if I take Naa Garba's talk and start it first by talking to you about cola.

How cola is in Dagbon here, we all grew up to meet it. And we Dagbamba regard cola as a very big thing. Whatever we are going to do, cola will be in front, and so the works of cola in Dagbon here are many. In our everything, there is cola. As for cola, you cannot talk of what it is doing in Dagbon here and reach its end. In our white heart, there is cola; in our spoiled heart, there is cola. Even when our cola is finished, we give money and say, "Take and buy cola." Our everything is cola, and so I will begin with how cola started in Dagbon here and carry it up to how we use cola for namings and weddings and funerals. And all this, it started with the respect of chiefs and the greetings of chiefs.

How cola started, it started from the chiefs, and it came from the Ashanti land to here. During the olden days, the Ashanti chief used to send people to greet the Yaa-Naa with cola. I think that these people used to come every three or four months, and they would always come with two bowls of cola. And so we Dagbamba started with cola in Dagbon here just because of chieftaincy. The chief would hold cola and give it to the common people of the town. And that was his chieftaincy. Up to today, if you go and greet a chief, it is cola he will give you. He will call you forward, and you will go with your two hands to receive the cola. And you will chew the cola at that place before you go back to your seat. When the chief gives you cola, that is when the people will know that the chief trusts you. And that is the cola. It was at the chief's house that cola first entered Dagbon, and the chief knew that it was a good thing, and he knew that to give cola to someone showed that he liked the person. And that was how it was in the chief's house, and cola is now common in Dagbon here, and it is there today and tomorrow.

And so how cola is, it shows that the giving of cola is giving of respect. And it is those who are your elders or those who are holding you to whom you have to give respect. And so I want to give you an example. In our chieftaincy way, as I have told you that someone who greets the chief will get cola from the chief, there are some chiefs who will go to greet the Yaa-Naa but will not get up to receive the cola. It is the Yaa-Naa's messenger, the one we call Naazoo or "the chief's friend," who will get up with the cola and give it to them. The Naazoo will give the cola to anyone the chief calls grandfather or senior father. The chief who will not go to eat another chieftaincy is the one Yaa-Naa calls "grandfather." I have told you that if the Nanton-Naa goes to Yendi to greet the Yaa-Naa, he is a senior brother of the Yaa-Naa, because Nanton-Naa Musa was a senior brother to Naa Garba, and Nanton-Naa Musa was sitting when Naa Garba ate Yendi, and so the Nanton-Naa will not get up to receive the cola. The Yaa-Naa will take the cola and put it into something and give to the Naazoo to take it to where Nanton-Naa is sitting. The Yelizoli chief is a senior brother to the Yaa-Naa, because Naa Zanjina was a junior brother to Yelizolilana Gurumancheyu. When the Yelizolilana goes to the Yaa-Naa, he will sit down and the Naazoo will take the cola to him. Sunson-Naa is a senior brother of the Yaa-Naa. Sunson-Naa Timaani was senior to Naa Zanjina, and he was sitting down when Naa Zanjina ate Yendi. Yaa-Naa will call them as "my grandfather Nanton-Naa," "my grandfather Yelizolilana," "my grandfather Sunson-Naa." The Gundo-Naa doesn't get up and receive cola, because the Gundo-Naa is the Yaa-Naa's aunt. Tolon-Naa doesn't get up and receive cola, because the Yaa-Naa calls the Tolon-Naa his grandfather. The way

Yaa-Naa calls Tolon-Naa, that is the same way he calls Kumbun-Naa. Gushe-Naa is also a grandfather of the Yaa-Naa. Kuyā-Naa too doesn't get up to go and receive cola from the Yaa-Naa. Gukpe-Naa is the same. And apart from them are the people the Yaa-Naa calls his senior father: *Mba kpema*. Karaga-Naa, Savelugu-Naa, Demon-Naa, Kori-Naa: they are "senior father." The Naazoo will take the cola to all of them. All of these are some of the people whom the Yaa-Naa calls senior father or grandfather. All the others, like Mionlana or Vo-Naa, Yaa-Naa calls them "junior father" and they will get up and go to collect cola. I have told you that any other chief who will eat another chieftaincy, or any prince who has not eaten chieftaincy, Yaa-Naa calls them junior father, and they will go in front of the chief and squat down to collect cola. And apart from Gundo-Naa, any woman chief or any princess will go and squat down to collect cola. If you have been listening well to the talks I have been talking, when you see this, you will know what is inside each of their talks. Every one of them has got his talk with the Yaa-Naa. And what I am saying is that as we are giving cola, it has got differences, and these differences all come from someone's standing place and the respect he has. And as you see that cola has entered all these talks, you should know that cola is a big thing to us in Dagbon because as we respect people, then it seems that respect and cola are the same thing.

And so cola came here because of chiefs. And cola too, we regard it because of chiefs. Every chief respects cola. As for us Dagbamba, what the chief gives respect to, we the commoners also respect it. It is just like the way we drummers have respect. The chief respects us, because if you are a chief and there is no drummer, you will not have respect. And so we drummers and cola: we resemble one another. And so our respect is coming from the chief. Today, let's say I am the chief and I respect something. Whether this thing is bad or good, I respect it. If you are a commoner, what will you do? You will also respect it. You will respect it by force. But as for cola, it is not by force that people like it. They like it because it helps someone in what he is doing. In Dagbon here, and even to other people from other towns, if you want something and you take cola to enter it, you will get it. That is how it is.

And so the reason we Dagbamba chew cola is because of respect. Some people chew it because they are always feeling tired; if they chew it, sleep will go out from their eyes and they won't feel to sleep. Others chew it and say it removes bad thoughts from the hearts. Others chew it because they see that it is fine. These are some of the reasons why Dagbamba are chewing cola. But truly, the work of cola is its respect. We use cola to give respect to somebody, and that is why our everything is cola. If a stranger comes to you and you don't give him

cola, it means you don't have any respect for him. You have to give him cola even before you can cook food for him or kill a hen for him.

If you are looking for a woman to marry, it is cola you will give before you give money. If it is a girl in her father's house and you look for her, and they tell you to come and they will give the girl to you, you will buy a hundred pieces of cola. You will add money to the cola and send it to the father of the girl. The money you have used to look for the girl, they will share that money among the family of the girl. Sometimes the money will not reach the whole family, and they will use the cola you sent them to share among those who didn't get money. And everybody will be happy, and everybody will pick one piece of cola and chew it. And they will say you have sent cola to the father of the girl. In our Dagbon here, if you chew cola, it means that a promise has come to stand. And so if you give somebody cola and he doesn't chew it, it shows that he does not agree with you.

As you have looked for the girl and they have given her to you, if they send the girl to your house, you have to get twelve pieces of cola again and give it to those who have brought the girl to your house. Giving the cola to them shows that as they have brought your wife to you, you are happy with them. And you will get twelve pieces of cola and add and tell them that they should give it to the father of the girl. As for that, it has also come to stand in Dagbon here. When they get back, they will be knocking their chests and saying, "Truly, we sent so-and-so's wife to him, and he gave us twelve pieces of cola."

If your wife brings forth a child, you will go and buy cola and share it among your friends. It shows that your wife has brought forth and you are going to give the child a name. On the naming day, maalamas will come to make the naming, and they will sit outside and say prayers. On that day you have to buy cola again, and after the prayers, the maalamas will chew the cola you buy.

Sometimes it can happen that cola alone will get you a wife. It can happen that you will be walking and will come to meet an old man. If you are passing, you will greet the old man, and he will ask you, "My child, haven't you got any cola in your pocket for me?" If there is cola in your pocket, you will tell him that you have some, and you will bring it out and give it to him. If you don't have cola in your pocket but you have a little money there, you will give it to him and say, "Take this for your cola," and when you are giving it to him, you will say, "Here is cola." You don't say, "Get money." At that time, if he doesn't know you, he will ask you, "Where do you come from?" You will tell him, "I am from such-and-such a place." And he will say, "Whose house?" And you will show him the name of your house. Maybe at that time the old man was finding it difficult to get cola, and as you have given him, he will never forget of it. He will chew the cola

and tell you, “If you get back to your house, get a day and visit me.” When you reach your house, you will say, “This old man called me to visit him, and this is the day I will go.” When you go to him, you can buy twenty pieces of cola; you don’t have to add anything again. You will give him the cola and tell him that you have just come to greet him. He will look at the cola and say, “Together with what you have done already?” And you will say, “Yes. Can an old man call you, and you will be going without cola?” At that time, if the old man has daughters or granddaughters who are girls, maybe he might give one of them to you, just because of what you have done for him. And you never used any money to find her. It was cola alone which got you the wife. Giving cola is just the same as giving respect.

Sometimes it will happen like that, and the old man doesn’t have a woman to give you, but he will have some hidden thing like medicine. He can give that medicine to you, just because of the cola. And so cola can get medicine, too. Even now, as we are sitting, if you want to eat medicine, you have to get cola. If you take money to get the medicine, if you give the medicine-man two cedis, he will say that you have given him cola. He will never say to anyone that you have given him money. If you give him twenty cedis, he will say that you have given him twenty cedis to buy cola. He will not say that you have given him twenty cedis because of medicine. He will never say that. And if you go to eat medicine with two thousand cedis, he will not say to anybody that you have given him two thousand cedis. He will say that you have given him to buy cola. After you get the medicine from him, you will get a time to visit him again and give him some money, and he will say that you came and gave him cola again. Even in Dagbon here, if you ask somebody to make something for you or to do something for you, and he does it, he will not tell you, “Your charge is this.” He will rather say, “Your cola is this.” “Your cola is one cedi” or “Your cola is twenty pesewas” or “Your cola is two cedis.” That is how we talk.

And so cola’s work is very great. Cola can get you a wife. Cola can get you medicine. Cola can even get you money. Money like what? Someone will be sitting down without cola in his pocket, and if you happen to give him cola at a time when he needs it, he will do something for you. You know that maalam are chewing cola, and if you give cola like that to a maalam, sometimes he will call you and do something for you, and you will get wealth. Cola can do that. And so cola has work to do when a child is given birth, and it has work to do when someone gets married, and it has work to do at the chief’s house.

And cola has a lot of work to do at a funeral house. If someone should die today, they buy cola and put it outside the dead body’s house. Anybody who

comes to sit down will pick the cola and be chewing. And when we talked about the final funeral, I told you about showing the riches, the *buni wuhibu* day. On the day of the final funeral, anyone who is a husband of a daughter of the dead person, or a husband of a niece, or a granddaughter, or a sister, all of these in-laws, on the funeral performing day each will get a cloth and a type of waistband which is like a scarf, and add twelve pieces of cola and bring it all to perform the funeral. They are showing the riches. There is a special person, the Zoɣyuri-Naa, who will stand before all the people and call all the husbands of the daughters and nieces who came with the cloth and the waistband and the cola. And he will take two cola from each and give all the rest of the cola to those who are attending the funeral. If there are twenty in-laws, that is how he will take two pieces of cola from each. And the elders of the funeral who are sitting down there, on the next day after the funeral, they will call every daughter and niece and tell them, “This is what your husband has brought to perform the funeral.” And these elders will again take twenty pesewas and two pieces of cola from each of the husbands. And in Dagbon here, if a funeral is performed and these elders don’t take the two pieces of cola from a woman, it means that they didn’t like her husband’s performing of the funeral. At that time, the woman herself will not be happy. She will say, “As my husband has come to perform the funeral, they have refused it. And they have refused to take the two pieces of cola.” And that is a bad thing in Dagbon. But if you the husband go to perform your in-law’s funeral with the cloth and everything correctly, and you come back to your house, your wife will also get cola and give you before she will cook for you. And that is the work of cola.

And so cola is very, very important for us in Dagbon here. Everything we do, we do it with cola. And in our everything, cola is coming first before we do it. If a child is given birth or if somebody dies, it is cola. And that is how it is.

When cola started in Dagbon here, I think it was during the time of Naa Garba. The reason why I said “I think” is because I didn’t ask, but I can see that it was during Naa Garba’s time that we Dagbamba and the Ashantis came to know one another. And we and the Ashantis began with quarreling, and later on we became friends. I can say this, but I didn’t ask all of its talks. And I say that if it was during Naa Garba’s time that we got to know cola, I am telling a lie, too. People were traveling from Dagbon here to Kumasi before Naa Garba was born. They were trading, and when they were coming, if not gold, then it was cola they were carrying and bringing. And I think it was cola they were carrying more than gold. As they were passing to the Ashanti land, it was because the Ashantis had cola trees. Who were these people? The Wangaras didn’t have cola; they were passing from Mali side. The Zambarimas didn’t have cola. The Hausas didn’t

have cola. The Mossis didn't have cola. They were all passing here to the Ashanti land. Sometimes they would stay here for some time before they would continue to Kumasi again.

And so, wherever you go and you see cola there, you should know that it is from the Ashanti land. Formerly there was no cola in the Yoruba land. It is now that the Yorubas have taken cola trees from the Ashanti land to grow cola. Truly, there was cola in some places, but there was no place where there was cola more than the Ashanti land. Even today, at Mecca there is cola, and it is those going on the pilgrimage who carry it there. I have seen my friends who are going to Mecca buy large amounts of cola and tie it and carry it there. When they reach Mecca, they sell it for a heavy price. That is what those who are trading with cola have told me. And so wherever cola goes to, it is from the Ashanti land. That is why I am saying that before Naa Garba's time, we knew cola. The Zambarimas, the Wangaras, the Mossis, the Hausas, and some people from the Zambarima side we call Kaalo people: they were all passing here to go to the Ashanti land. The Kaalos and the Zambarimas are just like the way we and the Mamprusis are. But what I am saying it that it was during Naa Garba's time that cola became common in Dagbon here. And so if I say that it was during Naa Garba's time that we Dagbamba came to know cola, it is true. It was coming here before Naa Garba, but it was not plenty.

And so before Naa Garba's time, people were passing and carrying cola to here. And some of them too were Dagbamba, and they also found a way to go and bring it here. At that time, Dagbamba were driving donkeys in the bush. They would take each donkey and would tie two calabashes of shea butter on the back of the donkey. It would take them about two months before they would get to Kumasi. If they reached Kumasi and sold the shea butter, they would use its money to buy cola nuts. When they arrived back in Dagbon here, they didn't take the cola to the chief's house. It was they themselves who had the means to send people to Kumasi to sell the shea butter, and so when they arrived back here, they would take one bowl of cola to the chief, and the rest was for trading. I myself, when my eyes were opening, I saw someone like that who was trading, and when he gave one bowl to the chief, he would give his junior fathers fifty cola nuts, and he would sell all the rest.

And so it was those who were traveling to the Ashanti land who were carrying cola to here. These Wangaras, Mossis, and Hausas, when they were passing from here to Kumasi, some of them were not strong, and some of our chiefs were able to catch them and sell them to the Ashantis. If they were passing in large numbers, no one could catch them. But those who came to pass here, if

they were not many, Dagbamba would catch them and take them to sell. At that time our Dagbamba south was at Salaga. As for Salaga, it is an old town, and I think it is older than our modern-day Yendi. Salaga is not our town; it is for the Gonjas. But the people who are sitting in Salaga are more than the Gonjas. Gurunsi, Zambarimas, Dandawas, Bassaris, Chembas, Konkombas: they all have their sections in Salaga. If not in a war that they were beaten and they ran there, then it is because in the olden days they were sold there. And so Salaga is for the Gonjas, but there are many different people there. That is how it is.

As the Dagbamba were catching people, we would take these people to Salaga, and the Ashantis would give cola and collect the people. And the Ashantis would take them to the South, to Cape Coast, and sell them to the white men. The white men were sitting there, and we heard that some of the blacks in America are from these people. And we also heard that the Ashantis were buying these people and cutting off their heads as a sacrifice for the cola to grow more. And it wasn't only these people: the Ashantis were selling one another. There are some Ashantis we call Bono people, and there are some we call Sefwis, and there are some we call Denkyiras: the Ashantis used to sell them. And so there were many kinds of slaves. And we Dagbamba were also inside the catching of slaves. This was what was happening in Dagbon before Naa Garba's time, and it was happening even after Naa Garba, too. But it was the time of Naa Garba that we also fought the Ashantis.

As for the Ashantis, if the white men had not come out, truly, no one could have defeated the Ashantis. We Dagbamba fought them a little bit, but we were not able to defeat them. And again, it wasn't that they totally defeated us. We couldn't go there, and they also couldn't come here. At their place they have a big forest. If they were shooting arrows or guns, they would shoot and run into the forest. How could you get them? And our land is just open, and it is far from there. They couldn't walk here, and we also couldn't walk there. And so as we fought them, it was not heavy fighting. But I can say that they were stronger than us, because they had guns.

It was the Ashantis who brought the guns our gun-shooters use. Before we knew the gun, we knew the axe, the spear, and the arrow. That was what we knew. Truly, I don't want to tell a lie, and I don't know the chief who was there when they brought the gun, but I think it was a long time ago. I cannot say that it was Naa Garba, but I think that maybe in Naa Zanjina's time, there was a gun. I have even heard Namo-Naa sing a song and say that during the fighting of Naa Luro, the gun-shooters were shooting, and the axe-cutters were cutting, and the arrow-shooters were shooting. As he has called its name, if you want, you can say

that during Naa Luro's time, there was a gun. And if you want, you can say that Namo-Naa was only making his song sweet. What I am saying today is that it was during the time of Naa Garba that we have talks on the part of the Ashantis. And I think in my heart that the time of Naa Garba's quarrel with the Ashantis, at that time the Dagbamba didn't have guns. They were using bows and arrows, and spears. There were no guns at that time.

And so truly, the time our eyes opened and we went to the Ashanti land was during the time of Naa Garba. But as the Ashantis were stronger than us, they used to come here. Their eyes were open. They were coming here and bringing small things and giving to chiefs, and the chiefs were catching people and giving them to the Ashantis. And the Ashantis were taking them away. Have you seen? That is how it is. And what happened was that the Ashantis also caught Naa Garba, and they were taking him away. What I'm telling you, when we grew up, this is what our fathers talked and we heard. We didn't ask what happened, and the Ashantis caught Yaa-Naa and took him. I have heard some people say that Naa Garba was doing some trading with the Ashantis, and with guns, the time they caught him. That could be true, but I haven't asked about it. But somebody can't be just sitting down, and they will just send to catch him, without anything between them. And so I have not asked, but I think the quarrel came from the friendship. Let's say that I tell you I will give you something, and you also say you will give me something. The Ashantis gave us, but we didn't give back our part. And I think that was what made the friendship into a debt. Or let's say again, they said they would give us something, and we would give them a number of slaves, but when they gave us, we didn't give them the slaves they wanted. And so when this quarrel came out, the Ashantis came here.

And the way old drummers talk about it, they say that it was Prempeh, that is, the Asantehene, who shot a gun at Naa Garba. I have not asked to know the name of the Ashanti chief who quarreled with Naa Garba, but we call the Asantehene as Prempeh. I have not asked because we Dagbamba and the Ashantis don't ask to know about one another. What I know is what I am telling you. And when Prempeh shot at Naa Garba, Prempeh said that if they catch him, they shouldn't kill him. They should carry him and bring him, and Prempeh will see the chief himself. They caught him and they were taking him, and the Ashanti chief said they would take him and go unless the Dagbamba paid him a number of people or slaves. And so the quarrel that entered between the Dagbamba and the Ashantis was not a war. It was not that they caught Naa Garba and killed him. If it had been a war, they would have killed him.

And so drummers say that when Prempeh caught Naa Garba and told them to bring Naa Garba and he would see him, they started carrying Naa Garba. If not Ashantis, nobody had strength to catch Yaa-Naa and carry him away. Even at that time, Ashanti people used to fear a Dagbana child. It was not because of anything but medicine. And Yaa-Naa himself. When they caught him and they were taking him away, when they reached a point to bring him down and rest, those who were carrying him would die. And then another group would carry Yaa-Naa. And the way drummers talk about it, they say the Ashantis carried Yaa-Naa, and the next day, fifty of them died. And they carried him the next day, and fifty of them died. They carried him the next day, and fifty of them died. When they carry him, say, from Savelugu to Tamale, those who have carried him will all die. And I told you that at that time, if you got up in Dagbon to go to Kumasi, you would go by walking, and the way they showed it, it was two months. And they were carrying a load. And the load was a human being. The people who carried him would reach a point to rest, and they would die. Another group would collect him, and when they also reached their point, they would die. And they sent a message and told Prempeh, "*Ohene, ye ntumi no,*" that "Chief, we can't carry him. Those who are carrying the Dagbamba chief are dying. He is killing many people." And Prempeh said, "*Asante kotoko: wo kum apem, apem be ba. Se wo hu: gyese me hu Yendi-hene. Wo kum apem, apem be ba.*" That is: "If you kill a thousand, a thousand will come; unless I see the Yendi chief." And so they should carry Naa Garba, because Prempeh wanted to see him. And he said they should go and bring some people we call Simbaha people, that is the Nzima people, and they added themselves to the Ashantis. And any time the fifty people carried him, when they put him down, the fifty people died. And they sent a message to the Ashanti chief. And Prempeh said, "If you kill a thousand, a thousand will carry him. Unless I see the Yendi chief." That is why Ashantis and Dagbamba say that proverb: if you kill one thousand, one thousand will come. They were doing like that up to Kumasi. When they got to Kumasi, the Ashanti chief didn't kill the Yaa-Naa. But those who carried him and died, as for that, they turned it to be a debt on the Dagbamba. This is what the Ashanti chief said, that all those who he lost on the way when they were carrying Yaa-Naa, we have to pay them back.

And so what I learned in my drumming is that it was the catching of Naa Garba that brought the debt. The Ashantis caught Naa Garba, and they were taking him and going, and those who were carrying him were dying. And they allowed Naa Garba to come back, but they put a debt on him, and the debt was slaves. And so the debt that was left behind, it was the catching that brought the debt. And truly, nobody knows the number of people who died or the number of

slaves in the debt. I haven't asked to know the actual number of people they paid the Ashantis back. I have heard some people say one thousand, and others say two thousand or three thousand, and I have even heard five thousand. As for those who are talking about the number of slaves they paid back, what I want to tell you is that if one thing turns to be two, and you don't know where it is standing, you have to use your sense and see how you can say something about it. And so what is going to stand that the Ashantis who were carrying him and were dying, nobody knows their number. It is standing that many of them died. Because of that, the Asantehene was catching Dagbamba to replace them. The Ashanti chief knew the number of people he lost. That was why before he would stop, he was catching people up to the time he would be satisfied that they are up to the number of his people who died. And so you have to take it that it was the Kumasi chief who knew his number of people who got lost. If you write it like that, that is all. People died, and Asantehene knew the number of people who died. So if you let it stand like that, will there be any argument? When the Ashantis were carrying Naa Garba and dying, it was Prempeh himself who counted the people who died.

And what I think is that at least they were more than a thousand who died. After they died, they brought Naa Garba to Prempeh, and Naa Garba said Prempeh shouldn't kill him, and Naa Garba told him that it is better you should ransom me than carry me. And the Prempeh said they would ransom Naa Garba, and he sent and told the Dagbamba, "My people have died, and they have brought your chief. If you want the chief, you have to pay the debt before you collect him." And the Dagbamba said they would pay, and they said they would be catching people to pay the debt. And what I learned in my drumming is that Naa Garba was paying some of the debt of slaves up to the time he died, but he didn't finish paying the debt before he died, and some of the debt remained. The debt kept long, and it was because Dagbamba were searching for people to catch and go and pay. And it wasn't long after Naa Garba died, when the Asantehene sent and asked for slaves, they told him that Naa Garba had died. And the Ashantis were waiting, and some of them came and started catching Dagbamba. And the Asantehene said, "When he died, he had a debt with me. Will you pay or not?" And the Dagbamba sat down and thought, and some said they would not pay, and the Asantehene's messengers went home. And the Asantehene said he would wage a war against the Dagbamba. And the Ashanti chief said that he will come and catch the rest of Dagbamba.

The way we heard it, there was one Savelugu chief who finished paying the debt. They called him Gurifiri. He paid the rest of the debt. Savelugu-Naa Bukari Gurifiri was a son of Naa Andani Jengbarga, and Naa Garba gave birth to Naa

Andani Jɛngbarga. And so Naa Garba was his grandfather, and Naa Garba's grandson was Savelugu-Naa Bukari Gurifiri. At his naming, they gave him the name Bukari, and Gurifiri is another name given to him. And Gurifiri wanted Dagbon to be well, and he said, "How many people are they to finish the debt?" And they told him, and he said he would collect the debt and finish paying it. And Savelugu-Naa Gurifiri sent a messenger to the Asantehene that he would pay the debt, and truly, he paid it and finished it. And so the one who paid the debt of Naa Garba was his grandson Gurifiri. We met the elder people saying all this. And it is inside our drumming. What I heard them sing and praise in the drumming is, "Naa Garba's debt has finished, and it was Gurifiri who finished the debt. The Ashanti land debt has finished. Gurifiri paid it." It is inside our drumming like that. It is not inside Naa Garba's Samban' luɔa. It is when they are praising Gurifiri, they talk inside that Gurifiri finished paying the debt that Naa Garba brought to Dagbon. Gurifiri went and caught slaves and paid the debt. This is what I know. And so I haven't heard that any other chief paid the debt. As for Naa Saa Ziblim and Naa Ziblim Bandamda and Naa Andani Jɛngbarga, I don't know if they paid some of it. And again, we haven't asked to know which chief's time it was when the debt was finished. We have only heard of Gurifiri. As for that, it is inside our drumming.

And so that is what they taught me, that it was Gurifiri who bought the debt of Naa Garba from the Ashanti chief. Gurifiri went to Singa and made sacrifice to the god Naawuni. And he said that the Asantehene had caught their chief Naa Garba, and so God should help him so that they will go pay the debt. And he went to the Gurunsi land, and he had slaves, and some people said there were five thousand of them. And he came and stood at the river and begged Naawuni again, and he said, "As I made a promise to you, I have brought you food," and he slaughtered a white cow and a white sheep to Naawuni. And he came home and sent to Prempeh that he should let people come and collect slaves. And Prempeh sent five people, and they said Gurifiri gave a thousand slaves to them, and they went home, and then Gurifiri added two thousand slaves, and said they should collect them and sell them and feed the people. And that is why Dagbamba say, "The Dagbamba have finished paying their debt, and it was Gurifiri who paid it." Naa Garba couldn't finish paying it before he died, and Gurifiri paid it. That is what I know.

And after that, the Asantehene sent a messenger to come and tell the Dagbamba that they and the Ashantis had become one. And he said, "If you kill a thousand Ashantis, a thousand will come. If you kill a thousand Dagbamba, a thousand will come." And now we take them to be our playmates. We drummers,

if we see an Ashanti man, and he's a real Ashanti, we beat, "Asante kotoko" and we beat again, "Wo kum apem, apem be ba." If you kill a thousand, a thousand will come. When you praise an Ashanti man like that, he will say, "Yes! You know something." And he will say, *Ouey! Ampa!*: "It's true." And we hear this praise in the timpana, and truly, that is the way we Dagbamba drummers also talk on the drum on the part of the Ashantis, "Anua kotoko, Asante kotoko; wo kum apem, apem be ba; Dagbamba, Ashantis; if you kill a thousand, a thousand will come. It is the Akarima who beats it on the timpana, and it is from the time we were fighting. This is what I have heard about them, but you know, the talk of our chiefs doesn't enter one another. And these timpana drums, we had them from the Ashantis. Two of Naa Garba's sons ate Yendi, Naa Ziblim Bandamda and Naa Andani Jengbarga, and it was in their time that the timpana started in Dagbon here. And so it was Naa Garba who put that there for them. And this timpana, as they beat it, they beat it in the Ashanti language. It was not all chiefs who had timpana. It was only a chief who was very strong, because the timpana came from the Ashanti land, and the Ashantis gave us the timpana. Someone who beats the Kambonsi drum for Kambon-waa, the Kambonsi dance, he knows how to beat the timpana. Even the one who beats the dawuli bell for their dance, he can beat the timpana. This is how it is.

And it was from all this that the friendship started between the Dagbamba and the Ashantis. I think that if it had been a war, we and the Ashantis would not have become friends. And even, we are not related, but we have become one. And so we and the Ashantis became friends, with one mouth. But we are not related to them in any way: we don't have the same grandfather with them. But that is how it came about that we and the Ashantis became one. And it was from Naa Garba's time that cola came here plenty. The Dagbamba chiefs used to get cola from the Asantehene, and they were giving him slaves. And so it is because of cola and slaves that we are friends with the Ashantis.

I was taught all this when I was learning to drum. I was telling you that there are certain talks I didn't want to talk about, but now I am bringing some of them. And this is one of them. They are hidden things, and it isn't all who know them, unless those of us who stayed with our grandfathers. You might ask a drummer and he will not know what I am telling you. You might ask him, "The Dagbamba and the Ashantis had a debt. Who paid it?" There are many drummers who will not be able to tell you. As he doesn't know it, it is not because of anything: he was not taught. And it is just that no one learns everything. And so this is one of the drumming talks I'm telling you.

These slaves, it was not one place they got them. They used to get some from this Dagbon and they used to get some from the Gurunsi land. And these people we call Gurunsi, it doesn't show that they are only the real Gurunsi. Any tribe that is in the Upper Region and even getting into Burkina Faso, if they are not Mamprisi or Mossi, those are the people we call Gurunsi. The Gurunsi are different people, and they all have their names. The people at Kanjaga, the Builas, they are Gurunsi. The Lobis are Gurunsi. Sissalas are Gurunsi. Dagarti are Gurunsi. Frafras are Gurunsi. Kusasi are Gurunsi. Kasenas are Gurunsi. We call all of them Gurunsi.

And these slaves we were sending were a mixture of Dagbamba and Gurunsi. When this slaving started, we were not choosing. When someone had strength, let's say like an elder who was with the Yaa-Naa or any big chief in his house, if such a person came out and saw you without a walking stick or a knife with you, you became food. And this is why we Dagbamba walk and carry walking sticks. When you see someone going with a walking stick, you will know what was inside its starting in Dagbon here. And the long knife like a sword, the one we call *takɔbu*; it was from this catch-and-sell that this knife started. If you were walking alone and two people stopped you on the way, if you removed your knife, they would run away. At that time, the eyes of the world were not open, and they would sell any person. The Dagbamba used to sell one another. They used to sell Gurunsi, Wangaras, Zambarimas. They sold all of them.

As for the Gurunsi themselves, in those days it was only hunger that was killing them. In Dagbon we were farming, but the Gurunsi didn't have food. If you took just a medium-sized pot and filled it with millet or guinea corn and took it to the Gurunsi land and gave it to a householder, you could get about four slaves and bring them here. Let's say you go to Navrongo and you are sending millet or guinea corn there. We had no sacks then. Weavers used to weave something like pillow cases to put the food inside and carry it there. People were carrying food to the Gurunsi land like that. If they reached there, any house they reached, when it was night, householders would be coming to them saying, "Last night we slept hungry. Will you give us guinea corn and I will give you slaves?" Even the Gurunsi themselves, because of eating to be satisfied, they could follow someone here. And those who came to Dagbon like that, they are many. Those who we brought and sold, and they remained here, today they are many. Those people who came would be farming for the one who bought them. They would never go home again. We have got such people in Dagbon here. They have all become Dagbamba. In this Dagbon, any time you hear someone say that such-and-such a person is a Gurunsi, then it means that he is from the line of slaves. And those

who didn't remain here, we sent them to Salaga. At that time, Salaga was the end of our Dagbon land; it was our Kumasi. That was where we used to send the slaves and the Ashantis used to come, and we sold the slaves to them.

And again, in Dagbon, when someone wanted to become a chief, if he came to buy his chieftaincy and he had no money, they would put down a debt for him. If he had guinea corn, he could send some of his housechildren to take the guinea corn to the Gurunsi land and exchange it for slaves. He will bring the slaves and pay the debt of his chieftaincy. And again, when someone wanted to become a chief, if his children were there, or his nephews or his brothers or his grandchildren were there, if he wanted he could remove them and give them to a rich man, "Get these my children, and they will be in your farm farming for you. And give me such-and-such an amount, and I will go and pay my debt. Any time I get money, I will bring the money and collect back my children." Someone could give two or three children like that, and he would not finish paying before he died. After his death, if no one was able to pay his debt, those children would remain with the rich man. And such people, we call them Gurunsis, because they have become slaves. That is how our Dagbamba custom is. It wasn't that we were selling only Gurunsis or we were choosing people. You see the Yaa-Naa: his chieftaincy is not a small thing. You see many big chiefs in Dagbon here. If someone wanted such a chieftaincy, it was not a small thing. And so selling your housechildren to get chieftaincy, it was just common.

And again, do you see this Tamale? This town's people were not going to anywhere. They could not even move a mile. In this town they were following the gods of the land and the tindanas. Do you know Lamashegu? Do you know Sagnerigu? Do you know Banvim? These towns are just near here, and it was the Yaa-Naa's children who were chiefs over them. If someone from this town went to a place like Lamashegu, the Lamashegu chief would just catch him and sell such a fellow, and no one could tell him anything. If that fellow went to Banvim, the Banvim chief would catch him and sell him. If he went to Sagnerigu, he was caught and sold. During that time, when women went, they were sold. When children went, they were sold. No one was talking for them. A woman would go to cut firewood or fetch water, and she would never come back. And no one could ask. If it was a child who went for water or firewood, he never came back. People were selling them till they were fed up. And the elders of this town came and got knives and said the women should stop. And the elders were going for water. That is why in Tamale here, women don't cut firewood; it is the men who cut firewood. And what brought it was the time they were not allowing the women to go to the bush for the firewood because the chiefs around here were catching

them. And that is what I got to know through my drumming. That is how it is. And that is what I know about it.

But as I am sitting, I have seen some talk, and I think in my heart that the talk looks like the time they were catching slaves to sell. What is the talk? It was the time the white men were catching soldiers to fight their war against Hitler. I was not in Dagbon here when they were catching the soldiers. I was at Kintampo. They were catching soldiers from here to Kintampo. I told you that I left Kintampo and came to Tamale before I married my wife, and later I left for Kumasi, and I returned back to Tamale again. And so the time they were catching the soldiers, I was at Kintampo, but I was also coming back to Dagbon sometimes. When we were traveling like that, we didn't just go somewhere to stay as if we wanted to stay there. If we wanted to stay at some place for three years, we didn't stay there for all the three years without returning back home during the three years. You know, Dagbamba people don't like the idea of sitting down permanently in somebody's land. And so at that time I was in Kintampo and I was also coming here. And my brother Mumuni was at Voggo when a message came to the chief that they were coming to catch soldiers, that somebody would be going around counting the number of houses and writing the number of young men in each house. And Mumuni ran to Bibiani, and from there to Sekondi and Takoradi to join the railway work. He was there with other Dagbamba people, and they were hearing that the way the army people were catching people in the villages was serious. And so I have been told a lot about how the army was catching the people to enroll them as soldiers. I was not in Tamale or in Dagbon when they were catching the soldiers, but if you are a Dagbana and you leave Dagbon for some place, when you return home, they will tell you whatever happened during your absence.

At that time there was a war, but I don't know the kind of war it was. They were calling the name Hitler, but I didn't know what type of man he was. As it was not something on the part of the Dagbamba, I didn't mind anything about that. And what happened was that first, the army people came to call the chiefs to assemble, and they told them they wanted to enroll soldiers. And they told them to come to Tamale here and to bring along all their village people. And they said they should not leave a single person in their villages. And the chiefs came, and it was only the small children they didn't bring. All the chiefs assembled in Tamale, and the army people took them to a very large field, and they let each chief stand with his village people, and they came and looked at them. There was someone who was going about and looking at the people and taking some of them. It was by force. If they caught twenty or forty people from one village, and there was

another village nearby that was the same, they would also take about twenty or forty people from that village. Truly, they caught some people and left their wives and children, and they took them to become soldiers.

You know, at that time, we Dagbamba didn't look at soldiers to be anything. If not because of Acheampong and the soldiers who have been ruling Ghana, we don't regard soldiers, and we don't give them respect. In our custom, we Dagbamba take it that it is a useless person who goes to join the army, someone who has nothing to do. We take it that if a Dagbana man is interested in the army, it means he doesn't want farming. People will say he's a useless person: he refused to farm for his father, and he has gone to join army. If not because they used force to catch the Dagbamba and put them in the army, you wouldn't have seen any Dagbana saying that he is going to join the army. And as for something to do with the while man, Dagbamba people didn't want it. At that time, the Dagbamba were afraid of going into the army. The soldiers were getting more money than, say, someone who was a railroad worker was getting at that time. And it was the Gurunsis who were joining the army just to get food to satisfy their stomachs. But we Dagbamba were having enough food to eat, and we didn't mind the army. And so when they were catching the Dagbamba to be soldiers, the Dagbamba were running away from the army. That is how it is.

Do you see the Yapei road? At that time it was not a road: it was a path leading from Tamale to Kintampo, and people used to walk on their feet from Tamale to Kintampo. At that time our eyes were also open, and they didn't catch us into the army. The soldiers they were catching, they camped them in a certain place, and the soldiers would come to us and give us, say, ten pesewas, and tell us that they will come in the night, and we will show them the correct path so that they will run away. And we were showing them the correct path.

Those white men who were catching the soldiers were very, very, very wicked. Do you see the prison yard near the police station here? They were keeping some of them there just to prevent them from running away. Some people were saved by their medicine, and they were able to vanish. At that time, there were some big rooms at the old barracks without windows, where the windows were like louvers. They put all of the ones they caught inside those rooms and locked them. At Kintampo too, it was like that. When it was daybreak, they would come and let them out like sheep and take them into the field. On a very hot day, they used to bring them out on the field, and they would be dancing. It was by force. They were taking them to do some hard work, and so they had to punish them in the sun to get used to it. You would see them sweating and learning the dance. Whether you know how to dance the army dance or not, they

would whip you, and you would be dancing their army dance. Truly, it was a very bad time. And they took them to the war, and some died, and some were able to survive. My uncle died in the army; he was called Iddi. He was my true uncle, and he was forced to join the army, and he was taken to the war. And all this is why we don't like soldiers or the army.

And so I can even say that the catching of soldiers was somehow like the catching of the slaves. The time they were catching the soldiers, it could happen that you are an old man, and you have given birth to only two children, and they would come to catch the two children away and leave you alone. And all this caused a lot of bad things in Dagbon. Truly, people died just like that, and they were not up to the age of dying. It was just because the army people came to catch their children away and leave them alone, and there was nobody to help them in their farms or in anything. Sometimes a young man or a boy would be living with his wife and his grandmother in a house, and they would come to catch him away and leave the wife and grandmother. Who is going to take care of the wife and the grandmother? When they were catching them, they didn't allow their wives to follow. They were only taking them to the barracks and beating them to dance. By the time they were becoming good at the dancing, that was the time they allowed some of their wives to come and see them at the barracks. Some of the wives were thinking that they will not see their husbands again, and their hearts broke and they died. And the grandmothers too, it was the same thing.

And I can say again that as for the catching of slaves, it cannot be compared to that. It was just that if you don't want yourself or your don't guard yourself, and you just leave yourself by heart, they would catch you. If the Ashanti chief sent to the Dagbamba chief for slaves, they would get those who have left themselves useless. If not that, when the Ashanti chief sent his messenger, you would get some bowls of millet or corn and also send some people to the Gurunsi land. At that time, if you went with just a small amount of millet and gave it to an old Frafra man, he would not mind to give you one of his sons, and you would bring him here. But they were never giving their daughters. A Frafra would never give you his daughter, but he could give you his sons easily. And the reason is that a Gurunsi man's son is useless to him, but as for a daughter, if a man is searching for a wife, he can bring about four cows and give them to the father of the girl. If the father wants, he can take the cows and sell them and gain again. What of a boy? The boy is not going to bring something like that. That was why the Gurunsis were selling their boys. But the catching of soldiers was like the way fire catches a house. It was terrible, and I think it was worse than the slavery here, and at the same time, it somehow looks like the time they were catching slaves.

As for the time the Dagbamba were catching slaves, it was during that time that the Kamo-Naa and the Kambonsi started. I have told you that the Kamo-Naa is the leader of the Kambonsi, and the Kambonsi are those who shoot the guns. In our Dagbani, we call an Ashanti person “Kambɔŋa,” and “Kambonsi” means “Ashantis.” And so as for the Kamo-Naa and his elders, it shows that it was the Ashantis who brought all of them. In Dagbani we call them *sapashinnima*, soldiers, and they are also called Kambonsi. But the ones we called the Kambonsi were not Ashantis. They were Dagbamba, and some of them were Konkombas. As they wear kente cloth and sit on chairs, they have seen the way the Ashantis dress. And the work the Ashantis do, that is the work they also do. And there is nothing that separates them apart from their language.

Their way of dancing, too, they took it from the Ashantis. In Dagbon here, we didn't know of dances of strength, apart from the Kambonsi dances. We had dances, but we didn't have strength dances. And it was the Kambonsi who had dances of strength. So if you had a child, he could go and enter the Kambonsi and be dancing. He could go to the Kambonsi and dance this strong dance. And a girl would see him and follow him. And he would take her and give birth to children. If not that, nobody is interested in their dance. If a chief dies, that is the only place they can come and dance. And what I also know they do is that if today is Damba, early in the morning, they will come and greet at the chief's house, and after greeting, they will dance their dance and go. But any time they make a durbar of chiefs or ministers, or somebody is coming to Dagbon, as for the Kambonsi, they don't call them to dance. The way they jump up and start kicking, and then they come and land on the ground, and they use the leg to kick the sand around: have you ever seen any dance we dance like that? And so the way they used to gather for cultural dances, they don't normally invite them. This is why the Kambonsi are not inside cultural programs on the part of our dances, because their dances are very strong. The time the white people came, they called all dances, and they were dancing. And when the Kambonsi came out, one came out and jumped and turned around, and at that time the white people said they should stop because their dance was not nice. A white man does not want you to come out to dance and shake yourself too much, and be jumping. And the Kambonsi jump like that. They are warriors. And this is why the white people didn't put them inside programs. I don't know if now they put them inside programs. And so the Kambonsi, their dance is not plenty with us. When the white people saw it, they would say they should be careful, or they will break their legs.

And so truly, how we call them Kambonsi, it shows that their guns and everything came from the Ashanti land. As the Ashantis brought all this, the

leader of the Kambonsi took it and copied it, then we gave him this name that he is an Ashanti. You know that a Dagbana can easily get a name: on the part of the Ashantis coming here and selling something, if they sell a gun to somebody, Dagbamba can take the name of the person who sold the gun and call the person who bought it. This is how it is. Or if it was the chief who bought the gun and gave it to somebody, they will take the name of the person from whom he bought the gun to call him the Kamo-Naa. He is going to watch the chief. If some fighting comes, he and his followers are going to watch the chief. And so they are soldiers. In Dagbani, as we call them “sapashinnima,” this “sapashini” is also from the Ashanti. It is “asafohene”: that is how the Ashantis call the chief of soldiers. And the Dagbamba didn’t know the way to call it, and when they called “asafohene,” they called it “sapashini.” And they became the soldiers for the chiefs because they could fight and they used guns.

Let me add you salt. Long ago, when the Kambonsi were not there, I will show you those who used to fight the fighting of the Yaa-Naa. I have told you already that Tolon-Naa and Kumbun-Naa came into their fighting positions during the time of Naa Nyaysi. The Yendi which was at Yaan’ dabari, it was Naa Nyaysi who was there with his father Naa Shitobu. And Naa Nyaysi was the first-born of Naa Shitobu, and he wanted to go to war. And he told his junior father Kuya-Naa, and Kuya-Naa told Naa Nyaysi’s father that Naa Nyaysi wanted to go to war. And his father said, “Who are you to go to war?” And Kuya-Naa said, “As your eyes have not trusted Naa Nyaysi, I will follow him, and I will be in front of him. When we are going and we come across a bad stone, I will remove it. And when we come to a bad root, I will remove it.”

And they went to war, and Kuya-Naa was in front of Naa Nyaysi. And they went and reached Zandua, and the Zandu-Naa was the Yaa-Naa’s Wulana in those days. And the Zandu-Naa said, “I cannot sit with the father of my house, and his son will be going out and I will follow him. If I follow his son, and somebody comes to fight our father in the house, who will free him?” And he removed his son and said he should follow Naa Nyaysi and go. And this Zandu-Naa, his son is the Tolon-Naa. And so it all came from Yaan’ dabari. Zandu-Naa is the Yaa-Naa’s Wulana, and he couldn’t follow, and so he made his son to get up and follow Naa Nyaysi and go. And this is how Naa Nyaysi’s Wulana was the Tolon-Naa. And this is why the Tolon-Naa is also the Wulana of the Yaa-Naa. But it was the Zandu-Naa who was the Wulana. He is senior to the Tolon-Naa, and you know it. And as the Tolon-Naa is also the Yaa-Naa’s Wulana, when there is fighting, the Tolon-Naa has no use apart from fighting for the Yaa-Naa.

The Wulana is a senior elder to a chief in every town. If a town has a Wulana, the Wulana is in front of any elder who wants to go to the chief's house. If the chief is not there, the Wulana is in charge. If they have not yet seated the Gbɔŋlana, it is the Wulana who holds the town. If it is daybreak, he will go outside the chief's house and sit down. If there is any talk, the Wulana is the one who will hear it. That is how Tolon-Naa is. And Kumbun-Naa is next to Tolon-Naa. Tolon-Naa is the Wulana, and Kumbun-Naa is the Kpanalana. Kumbun-Naa is the holder of the spear and the quiver. If war came, when there were no guns, there were spears, bow and arrow, and adze. Tolon-Naa can gather all of these to go to war. And so Tolon-Naa and Kumbun-Naa are the ones who fight for the Yaa-Naa. Apart from them, there are others who fight the fight of the Yaa-Naa. Sakpie-Naa, Sampie-Naa, Langolana, Nyensung-Naa, Tuwuo-Naa, Sagulilana: these were the Yaa-Naa's soldiers; they used to fight for him long ago. It is inside drumming. When the time came, the warriors were at these places. Langɔyu is on the way near to Karaga. And Nyensung is on the way from Karaga going to Gushegu. And Tuwuo is from Gushegu coming to Yendi. Sampie is near Kpatinga. And Saguli is between Galiwe and Sakpie. Before the Kambonsi, all these people were fighting for the Yaa-Naa, and Tolon-Naa and Kumbun-Naa were the leaders of the Yaa-Naa's warriors. The way they were at that time, if the chief was going to war, whether you are a chief or you are not a chief, if you are matured, you will follow and go. You are living because of the chief, and you will go. And I have been hearing the names of the towns I called that they were there like that.

I will show you the way old drummers talk about their fighting. When you go to the Samban' luŋa, you will hear a drummer singing that such-and-such a person this weapon or that weapon to kill somebody. As you have been asking me about these differences in the old talks, I have been telling you that it is not a fault, that the drummer will find his way inside the old talks, and these differences are not anything. If somebody dies in the war, that is all. It doesn't matter if they took a spear or cutlass and killed him. When they were going to war, they would carry bow and arrow. And spear, they would carry it. And there is an axe. And takɔbu, this long knife we use to cut sticks: some people carry it as a sword or cutlass. And then it came to the time when there was a gun. The time when they were going to war, anything that somebody will think will cause trouble there, he will take it and carry it there. And what the old people talked and we heard, those who were riding horses used to hold spears, and axes. Someone will be sitting on the horse with the spear. They would be at one side, and those they are going to fight are at the other side. And the olden days war, the horse riders would take the

lead first. When they would go first like that, they would use the axe and the spears. The way they talk about it, sometimes the horse rider will use the axe to cut off somebody's head. After cutting the person's head, he will turn the horse and run back to his townspeople. And the way he is coming back to them, those they are fighting with, if they have gun shooters there, and they will shoot him, then he will fall down. And the way they also showed it, there was another way, and they will shoot him with the gun and it won't catch him. He will come to his town people and stand.

In the olden days, those shooting the guns were standing at one place. And those shooting the bow and arrows, they were standing at one place. But the one with the spear, and using the axe, too, they always sit on horses, and they go inside to their enemies. It is old people who talked and we heard. At that time, we were not there. The old people said that they would go in groups. They didn't all move at once. The groups would follow one another. When their number was going down, then another side would go and join the fighting. This is what old people told us, that they will be fighting like that, and the chief will be standing and looking. The chief, or if it is the Yaa-Naa, is not inside the fighting. He doesn't enter the war. The chief is not a Wulana, and it is good for only a Wulana to take part in the fighting. And if they are able to defeat those people they are fighting, then they will say that it remains the chief of those people. Then they will go and kill him. The chief is in the center, what we call *dantini*. From the time the Kambonsi started, the chief is in the center with the Kamo-Naa, and those who sleep in the chief's house hall, they are also there protecting the chief. The chief will be standing at one place, and the other people will be fighting, like Tolon-Naa and Kumbun-Naa, and the warizohinima, those who are riding horses, would be following them. If Tolon-Naa and Kumbun-Naa have fallen, if it comes to the time that the chief has to enter the war, then those people who are protecting him have to take the lead. If you come to hear that *dantini* has fallen, it means that the ones who are protecting the chief have been defeated. The chief was standing there, and he took his chest and was pushing his people to come out, and their enemies were able to defeat those who were protecting him. If the chief doesn't run away, those other people will rush on him, and they will kill him.

And if they are able to defeat the people they are fighting, then when they reach the enemy chief, it is those horse riders who will kill him. I told you that the horse riders are using two things, the axe and the spear. Apart from that, we have been hearing that some of these people had medicine. There were some people who will go to that war, and anything that is made with iron could not kill him. There were some people that the bullet of the gun could not go inside him. Old

people said that in the olden days, whatever medicine the chief eats to protect himself, he would give it to all the warriors of a town. They will also eat medicine because when the war comes, they are going to be in the front of the chief. And so he always shares things like that with them. And another way again was when the time comes like that, the chief will gather maalamas; and they will be sitting in the hall, making medicine by writing on a board and washing it, and people would be drinking it and bathing with it. The way they talked about it, any iron you would use on them in the war wouldn't harm them. Sometimes they would start doing things like that for one year before they would go to war. And again, they would give them another medicine to eat that would stop them from running: when they eat that one, any time they see war coming, they will want to enter the war, and fear won't catch them so that they would run away. This is how the chiefs were giving them the medicine to eat. If he doesn't do that to them, if they go to the war, and someone falls and they see, they will all run away. The way they talked about the olden days war, if you saw a dead person who was killed and he was lying down, if you were not somebody who was strong, you would not continue the war. If you saw how they would butcher a human being down, your weapon would fall from your hand, and you would never forget. As for life, it is not something for a joke. And so they had to eat medicines that would sit on their heart. If someone goes to war like that, and they are killing, no matter what, he will go inside to kill.

And so the way they talked about it, that time's war was hard. The chiefs had many medicines to protect them. And so if the chief was like that, and they came near to the chief, the old people said that if the horse riders try with their two things and they are not able to kill him, then they will carry big stones to throw on him. That's how they will do up to the time they kill him. The old people said that in the olden days such things were happening. And so if you hear that somebody died in the war of Dagbon, then the first thing you have to think about is the spear or the cutlass, and then the axe. If not those things, then stones or any other thing. And so how they talk about it, if you the drummer talk like that, everybody will know that the horse riders were the ones who were killing. And anyone who falls in a war, if a drummer takes anything that is concerned with the war to say that it was that thing that killed him, it is not a fault. That is how it is.

And so the time the Kambonsi came about in Dagbon here, it was not in the olden days. Their starting is inside the talk of the Ashantis and it is inside the talk of the catching of slaves. And so as for the starting of the Kambonsi, they started from the time of Naa Garba. The time I told you about the chief's court, I told you that we have different types of slaves. When Dagbamba say "*dabli*," or slave,

when they hold a knife to somebody, and they want to cut him, and he stands and doesn't move, and they catch him and tie him, he is a slave. If they went to the Gurunsi land and bought somebody, he is a slave. And somebody they are selling and buying, he is a slave. And that was how they had the slaves and they added them to those they had caught. And again, Dagbamba say "*bilaa*," and these *bilahi* are those like somebody whose grandmother ate somebody. Say, if your grandmother ate somebody, that is, killed somebody with medicine, and they charge her and she doesn't have money to pay, and they take you to replace the charge, then Dagbamba say *sɔy'nyaana*, a witch's grandchild. You are "*bilaa*." Or if you did something bad and you didn't have money, they could take you and give you to the chief: such a fellow is "*bilaa*." If your family was able to pay the debt, they could come and collect you back. These *bilaa* were something like money: that was what we were using to pay our debts. If no one would pay and collect you, they will send you to the chief's house. All of these names are standing inside *dabtali*: slavery. And so, truly, there is no difference among them. The one they catch, and the one they buy, and the one they take to pay a debt: they are all inside slavery. Even anything you buy that is alive, and it is under your control, even a goat, is your *dabli*. In the olden days, it wasn't only Gurunsi. Even a Dagbana, if they catch you and sell you, you are a slave. There were some people in the olden days, when they put them there to pay a debt, they stayed there up to the time they died. Nobody was able to go and pay back the money. If you died like that, the person you are staying with had to bury you. And before your own family would make your funeral, they had to come and pay for the grave before they could take your funeral and go to your hometown. When they perform it like that, then at that time you are free. You are no longer a slave.

And so these people, these *bilahi*, they used to sleep in the chief's hall. They were Dagbamba. It was these slaves I was talking about, that is, those who were remaining and were sleeping in the chief's hall. They are the ones who became the *Kambonsi*. I am going to separate it for you, and I will ask you one question. If government is sleeping, who is looking after him? It is soldiers. Any time a government is sleeping, don't you see the people who are sitting outside and watching the house? That is a similar thing to the chiefs of Dagbon. When I told you how a chief's house is, or a palace, there is a large entrance room. That is the chief's sitting hall, the *zɔŋ*. From the hall, there is another way to pass and enter the compound of the chief's house. During that time, any chief who was living in the chief's house had people who would sleep in the sitting hall, and there were also people who were watching over them. And when the chief was sleeping, there were those who were lying outside the house. Those who sleep in

the chief's house hall, they are those they call "chief's house hall-sleepers": *Naayili zombieraba*. And "those who sleep in the chief's hall," they are those who follow the chief. If the chief wants to go to any place, and it is a war place, they will follow him there. And so in the olden days, every chief had his own people who would fight war for him. And so that thing was there, up to the time the real Kambonsi came to Dagbon. That is how it was. And those he was holding like that, to fight for him, they were standing at the same place as Kambonsi. In the olden days, before the Kambonsi, somebody who put a gun under his shoulder was not called a Kambona. The way chief used to sleep in his room, there were those who would sleep outside the house and inside the hall. If anything bad was coming, those who sleep outside the compound and in the hall would see it first, and they would show the chief. They were the ones there in the place of the Kambonsi. It was like that inside every chief's house, up to the time of Naa Garba.

And it is standing that it was Naa Garba who brought the relationship between the Ashantis and Dagbon, and we were friends with the Ashantis. Anybody who asks, that is what he hears. Naa Garba knew them, and he was trading with them. And something inside it caused the quarrel. If you don't know somebody, there will not be any quarrelling between you and that person. Has anyone heard that apart from Naa Garba, the Ashantis came and caught another chief again? No. You know, it is just common in this world that you can be with somebody, and one time you will have a serious quarrel, and then after that, your relationship will tighten up again, and it will become something good. I have told you that we drummers will see an Ashanti and beat, *Asante kotoko, Anua kotoko; wo kum apem, apem be ba*: Ashantis, Dagbamba; you will kill a thousand, a thousand will come. A real Ashanti will know what you are saying on the drum. And so when Savelugu-Naa Gurifiri paid the debt and settled the quarrel between them, then the friendship continued again. And I think that even before the quarrel came about, the Ashantis were coming here to help us on the part of guns. The Dagbamba were trading slaves and getting guns from the Ashantis. And if Dagbamba wanted gunpowder, it was Ashantis who prepared it and brought it to Dagbon. I think how they were trading, the Dagbamba were having guns and gunpowder. And the gunpowder the Ashantis were bringing was stronger than the one Dagbamba people were making. We used to hear that a chiefs would catch some slaves and take them to Ashanti people, and exchange them for gunpowder to bring here. And so truly, the guns came from the Ashantis to Dagbon. And if you say something like that, some people won't agree. It is not inside your town that you can sit to see everything. If you go to somebody's town and see something there, and you bring it to your town, it will become your town's thing.

And so the olden days, those who were sleeping outside the chief's house and inside the hall, they were the people who were guarding the chief. And when Naa Garba made friendship with the Ashantis, and they came and brought guns to Dagbon, it was some of those who were sleeping outside and in the hall who followed the Ashanti people to learn gun shooting. Already they were the chief's guards, and so that was why they put them inside to follow the Ashantis. And how old people talked about it, when Naa Garba had a debt with the Ashanti chief and the Ashantis captured Naa Garba, and the Dagbamba were paying the debt little by little. And they said the Asantehene was sending people to come and ask of Naa Garba's debt, up to the time his grandson Savelugu-Naa Gurifiri paid it. I have heard some drummers say that the Ashantis sent five people to be collecting the slaves, but truly, I don't know the actual number of Ashantis who came. When they came, they were at the chief's palace. And those who were sleeping in the chief's hall, they were also watching the Ashantis who had been sent, and they took their ways. As for them, already they were there like that up to the time the real Ashantis came. Apart from that, there were some people, like Nachin-Naa and Jahinfo, in the chief's house who were watching over the people sleeping in the hall, and they copied the Ashantis, too, and added themselves to the Kambonsi. And when the Ashantis had gone back, those who used to lie in the chief's hall, they got up and they were copying the Ashantis. They would say, "I am this" or "I am that." They were copying what the Ashantis were doing, the Ashantis who came to collect the slaves. When you see the Kambonsi, they sit on stools and they wear kente cloth, like Ashantis. And they give Ashanti names to their children, like Kojo and Kofi.

And so when the Ashantis were going home, what they had been saying and doing, these people copied it. And they grouped themselves, and they were giving themselves Ashanti names, but they use our Dagbani to call the Ashanti language. The Ashanti chief, they praise him by saying, "Twe ko anim," and that is what Dagbamba call Jenkoni: he is in front. That is the Kamo-Naa: they praise him as Jenkon-hene. The one following next is "Ekyiri," that is, "the one behind," and that is what Dagbamba call Achiri. He is after the Ashanti chief. Those who are following those two, every town has its way, and so it depends on where they are. How their eyes are open, they keep on extending their number. In some places, if you want to count the Kambonsi chieftaincy, it is more than ten. And there are some places, too, you won't reach that number. They are not inside drumming. We don't beat and praise them. Those Kambonsi chiefs who follow Kamo-Naa and Achiri, I will show you the names of some of them. "Those who are left, the one who catches them," or "Kyefoo"; he is called Chirifo. The one who followed

that he should count the slaves, and see whether they are up to number, that is “Wɔmmo ɛdu,” or “they have reached”; Dagbamba call him Adu. “Take these people and go,” that is “Fa wɔmmo nko,” and that is what Dagbamba call Mankoa. That is how their names were called. Their names are many. I cannot count all of them. Some of the others are Chamfo, Takoro, Jahinfo, Awusi, Sanchi, Damankun, Kumahi. Nachin-Naa is inside, too.

These first Kambonsi, they were the people Prempeh sent to collect the slaves. And when they went home, those who used to sleep in the chief’s hall and they didn’t go anywhere, they were all following what the Ashantis were doing. And the way old drummers talk about it, the slaves who were remaining, Gurifiri removed three slaves and gave them to Zɔhi-Naa. And he removed three slaves and gave them to Balo-Naa. And he got three slaves and gave them to Kumlana. And he got three slaves and gave them to Mba Buɲa. He got three slaves and gave them to Monkoha-Naa. This was how he shared the slaves to those people. When the Kambonsi started, they were not many, and they have come to be many, and as the chiefs follow what the Yaa-Naa is doing, now every chief has got his Kamo-Naa. And this is how the Kambonsi started, and it started in Naa Garba’s time, and it is not far. It is only sixteen Yaa-Naas since Naa Garba’s time, so it is not long. As for the Kambonsi, their talks are not many.

And so this is what I have for you on the part of Naa Garba and the Ashantis. It was slaves we were sending to the Ashantis, and they were giving us cola. Apart from that, and up to the time when we were no longer sending slaves, it was shea butter we were carrying. When Savelugu-Naa Gurifiri finished paying the debt, it came to be that if you were rich and you had your money, you would get about five or six donkeys and go to the South to buy things and come and trade. It was shea butter they were putting on the donkeys to take to the Ashantis. We were using shea butter for many things, and even today we are using it. We used it for cooking oil, and we used it for our lamps. And the Ashantis, too, they were using shea butter as pomade on their skins. Even up till now, some Ashantis prefer smearing shea butter to any other pomade. Ashanti women who wear cloth, and especially princesses, they use shea butter as a body cream. How they use it, there is a type of small pepper which we call *naanzunyuuinsi*. It’s green and a bit long, and it has a nice scent. They grind it and add it to the shea butter and put it on fire. If they have a clay dish, they melt it in that. The scent will spread inside the oil, and the scent will be like this lavender they sell in the market. The Ashantis take it and smear on their bodies. And so those who had money were taking the shea butter and selling it to them, and they were buying cola and putting it on the donkeys to come home and sell it. This is what they were doing till cola became plenty in Dagbon here.

And it came to the time the Ashantis were growing cocoa, and someone would go with his wives to the Ashanti land. The women would be going to the Ashantis' cocoa farms to help them carry cocoa, and they would get money from that work. And they would add that money to buy more cola and add. And when they were doing this, they were making a good profit. That was how they were going and buying it and coming until cars and trucks came to Ghana here. And it is now the trucks that bring cola plenty, and cola is now common in Dagbon here. And so we and the Ashantis, we are friends. It is inside our friendship that we came to know many things. And the starting of our friendship was from the time of Naa Garba.