

Chapter II-18: *The Guinea Fowl, Ramadan, and Chimsi Festivals*

After the month of Damba, the months that follow are Gaambanda, Bandacheena, and Kpinibilaa. The fourth month after Damba is Kpini, Guinea Fowl month, and on the twenty-seventh day of Kpini we celebrate the Kpini Festival, or Guinea Fowl Festival. The meaning of this festival is from our Muslim religion, and it was Naa Zanjina who brought it. I have told you that our festivals, and all the important things we do, we got them from Naa Zanjina. When Naa Zanjina went to the Hausa land, these Hausa people showed him things that they themselves do and things that they do not do. Naa Zanjina brought all that he learned to us here, and we are doing it. So it was the Hausas who brought the Islamic religion into Dagbon. It was in the Hausa land that Naa Zanjina learned that our Holy Prophet Muhammad was born, and he learned that it was in the month of Damba. Naa Zanjina could not travel all the way to Mecca, but he learned the Muslim religion from the Hausas who learned it from the Arabs. When Naa Zanjina went to see all this, he came back with maalams, and they talked to us more about the Muslim religion. And this Kpini Festival, we learned it from the maalams, and it has got a story inside it.

The maalams said that during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, he was traveling, and he became very tired, and thirst caught him. And he could not get water to drink. He was looking for water, and he sat down under a tree to rest. There were some guinea fowls on the tree, and these guinea fowls shook their feathers and some small drops of water fell on the Holy Prophet. At that time, if the Holy Prophet Muhammad spoke to an animal, the animal could hear. He asked the guinea fowls where he could get water to drink, and the guinea fowls refused to show him. And there was a pig that was passing; this pig was just crying, and the Holy Prophet Muhammad followed it, and this pig led him to a place to get water to drink. After he drank, he left that place. And you know, this pig that helped the Holy Prophet Muhammad to get water, it showed something like fear of God, and you know that any living thing that shows something like fear of God, Muslims are forbidden to take it. And so Muslims are forbidden to eat pork.

We remember this story to celebrate the Guinea Fowl Festival. How you celebrate it is that you buy a guinea fowl but you don't slaughter it. You will remove all the feathers of the guinea fowl, and then you get a whip and whip it. You whip it and say, "You refused to show our Holy Prophet where to get water to drink," and you will whip the guinea fowl until all the skin is red before you slaughter it. And that will be the Guinea Fowl Festival day. And if you have an

in-law, in that month he has to bring you a guinea fowl and some yams. And in that month, in every house, they have to cook more food than they have been eating, just to share it among the householder's sitting friends and other friends. And so this festival, we also call it the Food Festival. It looks like the Fire Festival on the part of food, because in the Guinea Fowl month, you have nothing to do apart from buying meat and cooking food, and you will be eating in your house and sending food to you friends who normally come and sit with you. And we do that in the Fire Festival too.

On the day of the Guinea Fowl Festival, we drummers will go to the butchers' slaughter house in the morning. If the butchers slaughter animals, we will beat drums, and in this drumming we say that we are inviting people, that the butchers have slaughtered animals and the people should come and buy meat. A person who has no guinea fowl can go to the slaughter house and buy meat. When we go in the morning, our leader will take his hat, the big straw one that our local Daghamba wear. You know, in the early morning like that, the butchers don't have money, so every butcher will cut a piece of meat and put it in the hat. If it is Yendi, after beating the drums at the slaughter house, Namo-Naa will come to his house and share the meat among his elders, and they will take it to their houses. By that time, everybody will take his meat to his house. And in the afternoon, about four o'clock time, we drummers will return to the slaughter house, and we will beat Nakohi-waa, the butcher's dance, until six o'clock. Men dance and women dance, and money is coming out. By that time, no one is giving out meat again.

All this was happening formerly, but now we are no longer doing this dance at the slaughter house. But I was there when we were doing this, and even as I am in Tamale, we were doing it. We stopped a few years ago. The reason why we stopped is this present chieftaincy matter. One paramount chief will be installed, and the Nakohi-Naa who is there at that time will be removed by the paramount chief, and a new one will be installed. And so we drummers have no way to go to the butchers' house to play the drum again. If you the drummer go there, it is for talk about the chieftaincy, which means you want to bring them together so that they will fight. Now the butchers have not got one mouth: they have separate mouths, and all of them want to be chief of different things. That is why we stopped going there. But formerly, we used to go there, and we used to get a lot of money. All the butchers were happy with what we were doing, because we were the people who gave high respect to butchers. And that is the way of the Guinea Fowl Festival. It doesn't have many different dances like the Damba Festival or the Ramadan Festival.

This Kunyiysili is the only drumming we do in the Guinea Fowl Festival, and we also do all the time during the year. The Kunyiysili is what we join together until we come to another festival month. And what is adding to that in the Guinea Fowl Festival month is that we go to the houses of the chief's elders and praise them with the drums, and if someone wants to dance, then he dances. After we go around to the elders' houses, then we go to our houses. As for the chief's elders, or small chieftaincies like Kukuo-Naa or Kpihigi-Naa, if somebody is going to be given such a chieftaincy, and it is near the festival month, they will wait until the festival month before they give the chieftaincy. And so it is like the way some people eat their chieftaincies in the Fire Festival month. During these festival months, everybody is happy, and sometimes you will be seeing a lot of things, but it's not that these festivals have their particular dances. Everybody shows what he wants. If someone wants us to come and beat at five o'clock in the evening, we will go. If he wants us in the night, we will go. This going around to houses, it is the same going around in the Guinea Fowl month or in the Chimsi month. That is how we drummers celebrate the Guinea Fowl Festival. That is all we do in the Guinea Fowl Festival, and that is how it is.

After Kpini, the next month is Noloribilaa, and the one following that is Nolori — the Mouth-tying month. That is how we Dagbamba call it; the Muslims call it Ramadan. It is during the Ramadan month that we Muslims fast, and its talk is plenty. And it seems it doesn't have a straightforward way of talking about it. I will try to find a path that I can go in the talk of this Ramadan and the talk of drummers, and I will try to follow it so that the talks don't turn too much. But as for Ramadan, it is a heavy and big month for us Dagbamba. And the end of the Ramadan month is Konyuri Chuyu, the Water-drinking month.

When the Ramadan moon comes out, every Muslim or every person who believes in God and is praying, whether a man, a woman, a girl, or a boy, he will say, "Today I am making my aim to fast for either twenty-nine days or thirty days, up to the time the moon ends." Then, in the early morning by four o'clock, you will get up and take your food. You can be eating up to five o'clock in the morning, and after five o'clock, there is no way for you to take anything into your mouth again. If day breaks, you don't put anything into your mouth. You are forbidden to eat food or drink water or smoke cigarettes. As you are fasting, you fast with your ears, too. You don't have to listen to bad talks, and you don't have to interrupt in talks that are not your talks. And you cannot abuse anybody. And you cannot have sex; even if you are married, you cannot have sex with your wife during the daytime. And you shouldn't do anything which is not proper for you to do. And by 6:30 o'clock in the evening, you will get cool water and say, "It is

time for me to break the fast with this water.” You say that before you drink. In the evening you can eat and do what you could not do in the day, because you have broken your fast. At night, you can do all these things and nothing will happen to you. And you will wake up early the next morning to fast again. You will be doing this until the moon ends, and when the Ramadan moon ends, it breaks on the twenty-ninth or thirtieth day. The Ramadan moon shows that you will be fasting for like that for twenty-nine or thirty days.

The starting of this fasting was from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and we Dagbamba, as we are Muslims, we heard of it during the time of Naa Zanjina. When Naa Zanjina went to the Hausa land and read the Holy Qu’ran there, he came back to Dagbon with maalams and teachers of Arabic. He brought these people and they settled here, and in Dagbani we called them Laabansi, Arabs, and the place where they settled we called Larabanga. It’s not far from Damongo, in the Gonja land. Their reason for settling there was that there were some other maalams already there, and those maalams had come from the Wangara land. There is a very beautiful mosque there, and the government put a picture of it on the old five-cedi notes. That was where they settled. There is another Larabanga near Yendi, but that one is different from the one I’m talking about. These Arabs started to teach people the Muslim religion and the reading of the Holy Qu’ran. Naa Zanjina was the paramount chief and he was staying at Sabali, and he was praying. And all his friends were maalams, and so we drummers call Naa Zanjina “Maalam,” because in the olden days in Dagbon, the paramount chiefs died without praying. And so these people Naa Zanjina brought were here with us when the Ramadan moon came out. They were fasting, and they told Naa Zanjina that he should tell his people that they should also fast. The reason for the fasting is from the Holy Qu’ran. I am not a maalam, but what I learned from the maalams is that if you fast, God will forgive you for all the bad things you have done. For example, even if you are only walking, you are stepping on ants and other things and killing them, and you know that killing things is not good. The maalams said that in our fasting, God forgives us for all the bad things we did in the year. How it started during the time of Naa Zanjina, some people were able to fast only one day, two days, three days, or four days. Some tried to reach six or ten days, but many of them were dying. And it was there like that until it became wide in Dagbon.

How do we fast? The time you are breaking your fast, if you get any type of food, you can eat it. But if you are going to hold your aim of fasting for the full month, then the important food is the food you decide to eat at four o’clock in the morning. That is the time you will have to choose the food which will last in your

stomach and which will also not disturb you. If you don't choose the best type of food to eat, and you eat some useless or bad food, then getting to nine o'clock in the morning, that food you took in the early morning is going to disturb you. Your stomach will be paining you, and you won't be able to sit down. You may be vomiting. Whatever happens, it will come to the point that you have to break your fast, and that will spoil your fast; and if you vomit, it also spoils your fast. And so in eating the early morning food, you have to choose the type of food that will be good for you. That morning food will be your chosen food. In the Ramadan moon, I don't eat the same way I eat in the other months, and it is the same for many people. Everyone has to choose for himself or herself. There is someone who will only take porridge. Somebody will mash fula with fresh milk. Another person will only take sayim. Somebody else will say that rice is the only good food for him to be eating for the fast. Everybody has what his stomach wants. Sometimes someone might not be able to get his chosen food to eat, and he will eat another type of food and then take codeine tablets after eating, and such a person won't get the pains in his stomach or his body in the morning or afternoon.

At the time of breaking the fast, there are also different ways. If you break the fast and you don't eat some chosen type of food, it can sometimes make you spoil the rest of your fasting. Sometimes someone will eat, and the food will not stand in his stomach. That person will be running diarrhea through the daybreak, and there will be nothing in his stomach. He will not be able to fast. And so I'm telling you, as for the eating in the month of Ramadan, you have to choose. That is why they have been telling us, "If you don't have the means, you can't fast." The means like what? The problems of the Ramadan are too many. It is just like holding a newborn baby: you don't know what it wants. Maybe there is someone whose stomach wants only certain expensive foods, and he will have to buy them. If he doesn't have money, what will he do? And again, if you have the means to fast, it shows that you have health. If it happens that you are suffering from a stomach disease or any kind of disease which will not allow you to fast, then you can leave the fast. If you do that, then every day you have to measure an amount of corn, guinea corn, or millet and give it as alms or sacrifice, everyday until the month dies. And it shows that you are also fasting. It is the maalams who say that God says that if you are sick, you don't have to fast. If you force yourself to fast and you die, God will curse you. And if you are fasting, and a bad sickness catches you, you have to stop fasting, and if you recover from the sickness you can pay back the rest of the days. As I am sitting down today, I am paying back the days in last year's Ramadan, because on the eleventh day of the moon I was sick and I stopped at that point.

And women, too, they fast the same way as we men are fasting, but if it happens that a woman has her menstruation, she has to stop at that point and continue after her menstruation. No woman can fast with menstruation, and if the Ramadan moon dies, she can pick any moon in which she decides to pay back the rest of the days. By that time we are free, and she alone is fasting. The women are all doing that, except old ladies who don't see menstruation again. They are all fasting for twenty-nine or thirty days. But truly, some people are able to fast only for three days or ten days or fifteen days, and they stop and leave it. But that fast is not there; it is not accepted. Only the twenty-nine or thirty days is accepted.

I myself sitting, in the evening when I break the fast, the food which will help me stand the fast without any problem is fufu, pounded yams. When I am going to break the fast, the first thing I will take is water. I will drink a little, and then I will go and say the evening prayers, and I will finish the prayers and come and sit down. If they bring the fufu and I eat and finish, by then they will bring porridge and I will eat again, but at times I don't mind the porridge. Getting to the time I will sleep, if I have tea, I will drink. In the Ramadan month, if I don't have the means to get tea, I just forget about it. In the early morning, the food I will take for the fast is porridge. If I get bread, I will take it with the porridge. If I have the means and there is no bread, I will buy maha and eat. As the Ramadan food is expensive, at times I won't buy the maha; if I buy one or two pieces, that will be all. Even if they bring me fufu, I can't eat it in the morning. But I will drink a lot of the porridge. That is what is good for me. The only trouble I have had is for about three or four years now, if I don't take codeine tablets with the porridge, then I will suffer in the afternoon. There were some years when I didn't fast because I didn't know that the codeine could save me from the afternoon suffering. I would have pains in my stomach, and my body would become weak. If I was sitting down, you could see my whole body shaking. That was the time I was giving guinea corn and corn and millet as alms. From the time I began to use the codeine, if I break the fast, I will chew one tablet, and in the early morning I will take two tablets again. This is what I have been doing, and I don't think of any suffering again. If I don't do that, I will become sick, and the sickness can even last two or three months before it will leave me. This is what I experience in the fasting.

There are others who eat heavy food in the morning, and when they break the fast, they eat only light food. Everybody has to find the particular way he or she will be able to fast. There is no general way, but I think that the way many people eat during the Ramadan moon is different from the other moons. For many people too, when they start fasting, from the first day, they will not be suffering

and nothing will disturb them. They will be as they were before. But getting to the fifteenth day and going, they will begin to experience the problems of the fasting. At that time, people are not cool. You don't have to enter into long talks with people. If some talk comes, it can easily become a quarrel. During the Ramadan fast, if you talk too much, you will have stomach pains. In the fasting month, there can be someone you don't have any quarrel with, and you will quarrel with him. It is coming from the difficulty of the fasting. Maybe he will say something which is not wrong, and you will just take it to be a wrong thing to say. And so in the Ramadan month, you don't have to disturb somebody by talking too many things to him, unless he is someone who has got sense. And so if you see someone who is proud, and any time his heart can get up, or someone who does not have much sense, all this way of living will come to mix with the Ramadan. If it were not the Ramadan, people like that would be talking and not having bad talks because they would not be hungry. But you know, hunger can't stay with anything. Whatever you are holding in your heart, if you are hungry, your heart will get up, and the hunger will let your heart throw that thing out. But there are certain people, too, the time they start fasting is the time they suffer, and when they get inside it for about ten to twenty days, they become used to it. They have suffered at the beginning, and by that time they are enjoying it, and they don't experience the hotness. There are some people like that. And so everybody has his way or her way.

In Dagbon in the olden days, there was a custom during the Mouth-tying month. If the moon of Ramadan appears, and a boy had a girlfriend, the girlfriend would bring him fasting food to be eating. Whether he was someone who fasts or who doesn't fast, his girlfriend would be giving him food up to the time the moon will die. And when the moon dies, and the next day the Konyuri Chuyu moon is going to appear, the way the girlfriend was taking care of her boyfriend's eating during the fasting, when the festival day comes, she would prepare a lot of food. She would use meat to make soup, and she would put different foods in different bowls and send it all to him. And then the boy would also find a nice gift for his girlfriend. Sometimes it would come to stand that the two of them would marry. Today as we are sitting, it is still there in the villages, but it is not there as much.

And there is something on the twenty-sixth day of the fasting. On the twenty-sixth day of Ramadan, the month is left with either three or four days to die, and everyone is happy. On that day, if you are a Muslim and you are fasting, you will pray for your dead people, and you will pray for the Holy Prophet Muhammad. On that day, the white heart of the Holy Prophet Muhammad will spread to everybody. Those who are strong, on that day they slaughter sheep, and

they will cook food and share to people. They give to people just because of God. Those who have money, you will be sitting down and someone will come and take ten or twenty cedis and give it to you and say, “Get this in the name of God.” On that day, you can ask maalams to come and pray for you. And in the night, children will go around and enter houses. They go in groups, and in any house, you will see some going in and others coming out. We call it *Tiilaa*, and we all grew up and met it. The children will be singing, *Tiilaa, tiilaa, tiilaa, Naawuni Anabi n-zal’ li; Yaasiru n-zal’ li, tiilaa, tiilaa, tiilaa*, and it means that God’s Holy Prophet started it and it is standing; God started it, and you should give to God. It is on that day that God says every Muslim should give gifts, and the children are singing that if you are giving, you are giving to God, and if you are refusing, you are refusing God. And they will be singing, *Naanzua biela yi beni, nyin’ zaŋ ti mana*: “If there is a little pepper, you may bring it to me”; they will sing and count things, “If there is a little guinea corn, you may bring it to me; if there is money, you may bring it to me.” And so if you want to beg God in your giving, you take your prayers and beg the children. And as the children are going around singing, you will be giving them because of God. And no one will become fed up with them, because the fasting is coming to an end.

The evening when the new moon breaks and you see the moon, you will know that don’t have to fast again on the next day. Everybody will be happy. The women will be wailing in the house. Children will be playing. And you the one fasting, you will be happy that all the tiredness you have got from fasting, you will not see it again. When the moon comes out, you go to the market and buy either maize or millet or guinea corn, and you come and sit down. You count the people who are behind you, that is, people whom you are feeding. We have something to measure the amount of corn or millet or guinea corn, and you measure it four times for everybody whom you feed in your house. If it happens that a woman gives birth to a child in your house on that very day, you have to include that baby. When you count all you people and measure food for them, you go and give it to a malam as alms or sacrifice. And by that time, your fast is full; it is ended.

The following day after the moon comes out, you go for the Eid’ prayers. At that time, everybody is happy. Maalams are happy. Anyone who fasted is happy. Even those who did not fast, everybody of any type or tribe is happy. And we drummers will be playing on the roads. In these prayers, everybody comes together at one place and prays. Every Muslim who is praying will come, because God said, “I have given you a gift, and you have to greet me. After the fast, you have to come and greet me.” This greeting is to gather around and pray together, and we call it general prayers. As we gather to say the prayers, it usually happens

that some people come to be converted to the Muslim religion, and they will let each one squat down and the maalam will take the Holy Qu'ran and read it over him. And there are some people who are somehow Muslims but they are not Muslims, and they also come to the general prayers. They only pray in the month of Ramadan, but when the month ends, they will not pray again. And such people, we don't call them Muslims or people who pray; we call them Ramadan prayers. They don't put themselves into all the prayers, and their reason for praying in the month of Ramadan is that they know that in that particular month God is forgiving everyone for bad things he has done. But those who only pray in the Ramadan month cannot get the same gift from God that those who always pray get. If you don't respect somebody or worship somebody, and it comes to a time when he is sharing something among people, you cannot get your share. And it is just like the way you John are here with us. You are with us, and we all exchange good talks with one another. If somebody just arrives from America and he hears that you are here with me and doing this work, that fellow can rush at once to me and say that all I have already given you, I should give it to him. Can that person get it? And that is how the fasting and the prayers of Ramadan are standing.

From the time the Ramadan moon comes out and every Muslim begins to fast, we drummers have got a lot of work to do. There are three things. During the fast, we beat every evening at the chief's house. And again, when the Konyuri Chuyu moon comes out and we finish fasting, that night we beat the *Samban' luŋa*. And the next day, when the people come back to their houses after the general prayers, we will be going around to houses and beating for one day or two days or even a week. And so from the beating of the *Samban' luŋa* and going, that is Konyuri Chuyu, the Water-drinking Festival, and some people call it the Eid' Festival or Praying Festival. And its starting also comes from the time of Naa Zanjina.

In the month of Ramadan, when Naa Zanjina was opening the eyes of Dagbon to the Muslim religion, these Arabs got one man to be leading the chief and his people in prayers. People were gathering, and the maalam would come to the chief's house for prayers. And the one who came to lead the prayers was given a chieftaincy which is called Limam. In the Ramadan month, Limam is there to lead the chief in prayers, and when the Ramadan moon dies and the Konyuri Chuyu moon comes out, Limam will lead the chief to the general prayers.

And one day Naa Zanjina said, "It is good if a drummer should be there beating, too." And Namo-Naa said, "As Limam is leading the chief in prayers, we drummers have nothing to give the chief. So it is good if we take our drums to the chief's house and be beating, counting his grandfathers and his fathers and his

children for the chief to hear.” That is why I first told you that in certain months in Dagbon here, the work drummers do is very great. If the Ramadan moon comes out, every night at eight o’clock in the evening we drummers go to the chief’s house and beat the drums. We do this throughout the month, and on the twenty-ninth or thirtieth day, if the new moon comes out, we go to the chief’s house and beat the Samban’ luḡa. As for the Samban’ luḡa, you already know that we don’t play it by heart; if not a festival day, we don’t play it unless a chief is installed.

This beating drums in the Ramadan month at the chief’s house is called *Asam*. There is no dancing in it. This *Asam* we beat is the same as *Gingaani*; *Gingaani* is the beating for the chief to walk gently. Any time the chief is coming out, we play it, or if he sits down outside and is going inside, we play it again. But because it is in the Ramadan month, we call it *Asam*. If it is not in the Ramadan month, we call it *Gingaani*, because to play it and *Gingaani* is the same. The singing is the singing of *Gingaani*, and the beating is also the beating of *Gingaani*. In the Muslim way, *Asam* is a public gathering for prayers, so as *Limam* is going to lead the chief in prayers, he says he is going to pray *Asam*. And the inside of the *Asam* we drummers beat is just to praise the chief because he has been fasting, and it is the fasting which has brought *Asam* to the chief’s house. That is the way of *Asam*. As *Limam* has been going to the chief’s house or sending his child to be leading the chief and his people in prayers, the same thing applies to *Namo-Naa*. In the Ramadan month, in the village or the town, the people who have to praise the chief are the *Limam* and the drummers, and *Akarima* will also come out. We drummers show that we are playing *Asam* for the chief, and this is what we use to greet the chief and respect the chief. We drummers go to the chief’s house every night during the month, but it is not every night the chief comes out, and sometimes we will beat *Asam* four times and the chief will not come out. Whether he comes to sit outside or not, we will just be sitting outside and beating *Asam* for about two hours. And so if the Ramadan moon appears, we drummers will be beating drums at the chief’s house every day after breaking the fast, up to the end of the month.

And there is another beating we beat during the Ramadan month. That is *Bandamda*. We beat *Bandamda* on Thursdays and Sundays, and the other days we beat *Asam*. *Bandamda* too has not got dancing. We beat the drums and one drummer will get up and be singing, praising and counting the past chiefs, say from *Naa Zanjina* or *Naa Garba*. It is something like the Samban’ luḡa because we are talking about the past, but it is not, because the beating is different. Only the singing and the length of the singing make it look like the Samban’ luḡa. As for the Samban’ luḡa, if they sit down, they won’t stop unless day breaks, but on the

Bandamda day we will play till twelve o'clock in the night, or if the one leading the Bandamda knows much, sometimes we will reach one o'clock. Apart from the Ramadan beating of Bandamda for the chiefs, we drummers will beat Bandamda for only two other types of people in this world. We beat Bandamda if they want to catch a woman for a chieftaincy. When she is being made a chief, and when she wants to walk, we beat Bandamda and follow her. And the other one: we beat Bandamda for a tindana. When they catch a tindana, we drummers beat Bandamda for him. And even, it is not all chiefs they beat Bandamda for. As for Bandamda, I grew up and met it being played for these people I have counted for you, and I don't know any work of it again.

So when the Ramadan moon appears, all this is what we drummers have to be playing for the chief throughout until the month ends. This is what I know about it. In the Damba Festival we respect the chief with playing and dancing, and in the Ramadan we also respect the chief with our drumming. It is in this month of Ramadan that every young drummer will learn more beating and singing from his elder in drumming. How do the small drummers learn? As the moon comes out, and they go to the chief's house and play the drum and beat Asam, maybe they will come back around nine or ten o'clock. Every small drummer will go and be squeezing his drumming elder's legs and body, and his elder will be showing him the singing and how to beat the drum. If the small drummer wants the beating alone, the elder will show him the beating before the singing. If the small drummer wants to learn the beating for, say, twenty days, the elder drummer will teach him, and after that he will teach him the singing too. And so this Ramadan month lets the small drummers learn more from those who are holding them on the part of their learning.

This beating we beat at the chief's house, when it started, Namo-Naa and his followers were going, and Namo-Naa was beating every day. It was like that for some years before Namo-Naa came to divide the month with the other drum chiefs so that they would also go and be beating at the chief's house. And nowadays in all the villages and towns, the chief drummers do as Namo-Naa did, and they divide the days with the other small drum chiefs. As they divide it, they show that some of them are bigger than the others. The ones who come first to open the ground of drumming will take more than the ones who are behind them. If my chieftaincy is older than yours or bigger than yours, I have to take more days than you. It's not that there is any talk. It shows that one is following the other.

If it is Yendi, if the Ramadan moon comes out, on the first day Namo-Naa will go to the Yaa-Naa's house. He will go and beat for ten days. Maybe he himself will beat for only two days, and he will leave the other eight days for his

brother or his child. When you and I last went to Yendi, Adam, the one who met us, he is the one doing this for Namo-Naa. After that, Sampahi-Naa will play for ten days. Sampahi-Naa himself too will play for two days and he will hand it to his brothers. After the ten days, he will give it to Namoyu-Lun-Naa, and he will beat for five days. Namoyu-Yiwoyu-Naa will beat for four days. It remains one day, and Namoyu-Wulana is the last of the drum chiefs of Namoyu: he will play on that day. If the moon comes out on the last day, Namoyu-Wulana will go and find out matters from Namo-Naa, because on the day the new moon comes out and the fast is ended, they will no longer be beating Asam and Bandamda; they will beat the Samban' luṇa.

I told you that at Yendi, there are many drum chiefs. All the elders of the Yaa-Naa have got their drumming chiefs. Mba Duyu is there, and he has got Duyu-Lun-Naa, Duyu-Sampahi-Naa, Duyu-Taha-Naa, and Duyu-Yiwoyu-Naa. These are the drum chiefs of Mba Duyu. Kuṣa-naa, Balo-Naa, Kumlana, Kpihigi-Naa, Zohi-Naa, Mba Malle, Mba Buṇa, Zalankolana: they have all got their drum chiefs, and Namo-Naa is holding all of them. And so all of these chiefs of drummers are in Yendi, and how they divide the days, it just shows that one is bigger than the other, and so the work is bigger, too. And in the other towns, they divide the days differently and the drum chiefs have different names. But as they have different names, it doesn't matter. And so the names of the drumming chiefs, and how big they are, and coming to how they divide the days, it is from how their village or their chieftaincy started. As they have different names and they have those they follow, they all have their standing places. But I want to tell you that in Yendi during the Ramadan month, it's not that they go to beat at their chief's house: they will all gather at the Yaa-Naa's house. They can't be staying at their chiefs' houses and playing. In Yendi, it's not there like that. When they finish eating, they will dress with those who will be following them, and they will go to their chiefs' houses and accompany these chiefs to sit at the Yaa-Naa's house, and when they finish they will take their chiefs home again before they also go home.

And so as they are dividing the days, they don't all beat. And it doesn't matter. If some of them don't get to beat, they don't have anything to say. Even if those who are the big chiefs take something and don't leave anything for the smaller ones, there is no talk. If they are beating and a smaller chief doesn't get to take part, he won't complain. As they are beating, they are bringing everything to their chief drummer; they don't beat and take something to their own houses. And so they don't have anything on their own. If they don't beat, it doesn't matter. Namo-Naa could have played all the days if he wanted, but he just doesn't want them to be there without taking part in it, and so he gives the other days to the rest

of them. And those who are far back may not get to beat this beating, but they will only be following their leader and answering with their drums. If you happen to be the last one and you don't get your day, that is all. You will go back to the one who handed it to you. It doesn't matter.

As I have said you that the drum chiefs are bigger than one another, and their work is different, let me show you. I'm adding you salt. If it is Nanton and they are going to beat a funeral, Maachendi has got the Friday for himself. And Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday are also days for Maachendi. As for the Nanton Lun-Naa, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday are the days for him. But Nanton Lun-Naa has more days than Maachendi. Why have I said so? They perform funerals on Sundays, Mondays, and Thursdays. And in Dagbon here, they don't perform funerals on Wednesdays or Saturdays. This is how they perform funerals. And so think in your heart and know that Maachendi has only got two days: Thursday and Friday. And so the names of the drumming chiefs, and the work they do, and coming to how they divide the days, it comes from how the village started. That is why people like Namo-Naa and the others chiefs under him play different days, and some play eight, five, or two times at the chief's house. As I am adding you more talk about the drumming chieftaincies in Dagbon here, I will cut some of them for you to see how they follow it in the Ramadan month.

If it is Savelugu, the drum chiefs are eight. How the chieftaincies were standing in the olden days, Palo-Naa will beat the drum for seven days; Lun-Naa will beat for six days; Sampahi-Naa will beat for six days. The three of them have beaten for nineteen days, and then Dolsi-Naa will beat for three days, Taha-Naa for three days, Yiwɔɣu-Naa for two days, Dobihi-Naa for two days. And it remains one day and Palo-Wulana is the last child of all of them, and he will go and beat. If the new moon appears, and they are going to beat the Samban' luŋa, he will have to go to Palo-Naa and find out more.

If it is Nanton, Maachendi is the leader of the drummers, Lun-Naa is the second leader, and Sampahi-Naa is following. If it is Nanton and they are to beat the drum after breaking the fast, Maachendi will play for seven days, and Lun-Naa will play for seven days. By then Sampahi-Naa will play for four days. After Sampahi-Naa, Taha-Naa will play for three days; Dolsi-Naa will play for three days; Yiwɔɣu-Naa will play for three days; and Dobihi-Naa will play for two days. These people, they are all drum chiefs, and Maachendi-Wulana is the last child of all of them, and he will play for one day. If the moon appears on that day, he will find out more from Maachendi. This is the way of the Nanton drummers.

At Voggo, the drum chiefs are five, and Zule-Naa is the leader. If the moon comes out and stands in the Ramadan month, Zule-Naa will play for eight days;

Lun-Naa will beat for eight days; Sampahi-Naa will beat for six days; Taha-Naa beats four days; Yiwɔɣu-Naa too will beat for four days; and that will be all. If the moon appears on the last day, Yiwɔɣu-Naa will find out all matters from the chief drummer.

At Kumbungu, Lun-Naa will beat the drum for ten days, Sampahi-Naa for ten days, Taha-Naa for five days, and Yiwɔɣu-Naa for either four or five days.

If it is Mion, the leader of the drummers is called Zabgu. Lun-Naa is following; Sampahi-Naa is there; Taha-Naa is there. They are only four; they have no Yiwɔɣu-Naa. Zabgu will beat for ten days, Lun-Naa too ten days, Sampahi-Naa for five days, and Taha-Naa for either four or five days.

At Karaga the drum chiefs are six. Loɣambalbo is the leader, and he will beat for six days. Lun-Naa will beat for six days; Sampahi-Naa for five days; Taha-Naa for five days; Yiwɔɣu-Naa for four days; and Dobihi-Naa for four days. If the moon breaks, the last one will go to see Loɣambalbo to find out what will happen.

At Gushegu, Darikuɣu-Naa is the leader of the drummers. They don't have Lun-Naa; they only know of Darikuɣu-Naa, Sampahi-Naa, Taha-Naa, and Yiwɔɣu-Naa. That is all. Darikuɣu-Naa will beat for ten days, Sampahi-Naa for ten days, Taha-Naa for five days, and Yiwɔɣu-Naa for either four or five days.

Have you seen enough? Every place has got its own drummers and way of dividing the Ramadan month. I don't think I have to be continuing and adding more. They all have their standing places. That is how it is. In every town or village, the drummers will be beating drums at the chief's house and praising the chief, up to the day the Konyuri Chuyu moon appears, and they will be following the way their town's drumming chieftaincy is. And when the Ramadan month ends and the Konyuri Chuyu month begins, that is the day we will begin to celebrate the Water-Drinking Festival, or Praying Festival.

On the day that the moon appears, they will beat the Samban' luɗa outside the chief's house. If the moon comes out, if it is Yendi, the Yaa-Naa himself will send a messenger to go and tell Namu-Naa, "Have you heard? The moon has come out." And the last of the drum chiefs who was to beat on that day, Namɔɣu-Wulana, he will not play again. Although at daybreak it was standing that he was supposed to play that night, if the moon comes out, he has to go and see Namu-Naa about the Samban' luɗa. The drummers won't beat Asam again. They will go straight to the Samban' luɗa, and Namu-Naa will choose the drummer who will beat it. If it is any town, the last drummer will go and see his leader to find out. If it is Savelugu, Palo-Naa is the chief and he will choose who will play. In Nanton, Maachendi will choose who will play. And so in Yendi, Namu-Naa will return the

messenger to the chief to say that after eating, a drummer will come and sweep outside the chief's house. If Namo-Naa wants, he can choose Namoyu-Wulana or any small drummer to go and sweep, and the messenger will tell the chief. And so the small drummer will be the one to sweep outside the chief's house and pound the vegetables for the soup, and that is how they start the Samban' luja. Sweeping outside and pounding the soup are not the Samban' luja; they look like the Samban' luja, and that is all. Sometimes this small drummer is someone who is the last of the drum chiefs, say, Palo-Wulana at Savelugu or Maachendi-Wulana at Nanton, but as the moon has come out, he does not have a way to play Asam again. So they will let him sweep the outside of the chief's house for the Samban' luja.

If Namo-Naa is having an appetite to play the drum himself, he will let the small drummer pound the soup before he comes to beat. But if they don't see the moon which is following the Ramadan month, they will not play the Samban' luja. If the moon comes out, if Namo-Naa wants, he will play, and if his heart doesn't want, he will give it to Namoyu-Wulana or some other drummer to play. And that night, they will beat the Samban' luja at the chief's house.

If the Konyuri Chuyu moon comes out and they beat the Samban' luja, the next day is the general prayers, and that day we will celebrate the Praying Festival. On the general prayers' day, early in the morning, Namo-Naa will prepare and go to the Yaa-Naa's house. And the other drum chiefs who are following Namo-Naa will take the younger drummers and the small drummers and follow Namo-Naa. When the drumming elders reach the chief's house, they will be sitting outside beating the drums. They will praise anyone who is passing by: whether a prince or a princess or an ordinary person, they will praise that fellow with the drum. By ten o'clock, the Yaa-Naa himself will get ready and come out, and all his elders will gather around the chief's house. How the chief dresses, that is the same way Namo-Naa will dress. The chief will dress and put on a very big turban, and Namo-Naa too will put on the same thing. When the chief comes out, he will sit down, and Namo-Naa will sit by him with a drum, praising him. And the rest will be answering. I last told you that Namo-Naa has a drum which is covered with a leopard skin and which is called *gbingbara luja*. And on this day, that is the drum he uses.

When the chief gets up and climbs his horse to go to the prayers, Namo-Naa too will climb his horse, and the drum will still be in his armpit. And the rest of the drummers will follow behind. All the chief's wives and housepeople and elders will go to the place where they will pray, and they will be carrying a big umbrella over the chief and spinning it around. They will use the same type of

umbrella for Namon-Naa, too. And all the drummers will be beating and following them to the praying place. That day is the happiest day. The chief is happy, drummers are happy, and the followers are also happy. By that time, Namon-Naa will be singing with a very strong voice. He will run with his horse to cross the chief and then ride back with his strong voice praising the chief. He starts from the great-grandfathers of the chief, and by then you will see that the chief will be very proud, and he will also run with the horse. And those who are beating the lundaa will be kneeling down and getting up. And they will do this up to the place they will pray. And the Limam will get up and lead them and all the other people in the general prayers.

After the prayers, Namon-Naa will get up again. Namon-Naa will climb his horse first before the chief. Then he will put his drum in his armpit again. He sits on his horse beating the drum, and the chief will get up and climb his horse. They will let the chief be in front and they will be following him, and Namon-Naa will be at his side. And Namon-Naa will go forward and come back again. He goes to the front to praise the chief and comes back to the drummers. They continue beating like this up to the chief's house, and when they get there, they stand coolly, and the chief will come down from his horse. When the chief comes down from the horse, the drummers beat Gingaani, and I have told you that this Gingaani is only for when a chief is coming out of his house or coming from someplace to sit down. They will be beating and Namon-Naa will be singing, and the chief will walk gently and sit down.

When the chief sits down, anyone who has followed them to the chief's house can come and say he wants any dance. Someone can say he wants Naanigoo and he will come out and dance, and the drummers will beat it. Another will come out and say he wants Naybieyu, and they will beat it. Someone will want 3im Taai Kurugu, and they will beat. Someone will want Nantoo Nimdi, and they will beat. Any dance that you like, the drummers will beat it for you. And the people will be giving out money. This is the day for the drummers to be happy, and the chief and his elders to be happy, and the rest of the people who have just come to see what is happening there. On that day, the chief's wives will cook more food with a lot of meat, and the drummers will eat and be satisfied. And so after satisfying yourself, what is left to do? It is left with playing. After eating, they will start beating the drums again, and the people will continue dancing. They will be drumming and dancing up to about four o'clock time, and the chief will get up; the drummers will beat Gingaani for him and he will walk into the compound. When he gets inside, he will give Namon-Naa four pounds and say that he should go to his house and remove his dress.

Namo-Naa will remove his drum from his armpit, tie it, and call a little boy to carry it to his house. Then he will climb his horse, and Namoyu-Lun-Naa will follow Namo-Naa with the drummers and they will be beating. They will be beating Zoligu, the praises of Namo-Naa. I told you that if Namo-Naa is walking or riding, this Zoligu is what they beat for him; and if they beat it for another person, then that person must be a drummer and possess a chieftaincy, and he died and they are going to bury him. Namo-Naa will be riding his horse, and he will be eating the world. When I say he is eating the world, it means that he is showing himself that he is also in his chieftaincy, and it shows that in his drumming, the drumming itself is also something. And so nothing is worrying him in this world; he is eating himself in this world. The drummers will be beating Zoligu and following Namo-Naa to his house, and Namo-Naa will come down from his horse, and they will continue beating Zoligu until he sits down. After he sits down, he will remove one pound from his pocket and give it to Namoyu-Lun-Naa that he should go to his house and remove his dress. That is the respect of drummers in Dagbon.

After the Praying Festival, on the following day, Namo-Naa and the drummers will also take their drums and go to the chief's house. People who are from faraway villages and nearby villages will come to greet the chief the new year. The drummers will be praising them with the drum, and the people will be giving out money. As they are gathering around from other villages, if they are many, then another dance has come again. The drummers will be beating drums up till twelve o'clock noon, and by then, everyone will go back to his village. And on that day, they don't beat the drums and follow Namo-Naa to his house again. Namo-Naa will only walk with them to his house, and they will share the money that they have got.

How I have talked about it, I have talked about it on the part of Yendi, and in any of the big towns, it is the same. The chief of drummers will lead the chief to the general prayers, and after the prayers, they will go back to the chief's house. And they will divide themselves, and other drummers too will be going around and entering houses. Formerly in this Tamale, when I came to this town, we would start beating the drums after the prayers, and we would beat for seven days. Nowadays we are only beating for three days or two days. In places like Savelugu or Kumbungu, they will also take two or three days. But smaller places like Diari or Kasuliyili or Voggo, they only beat on the prayers day. In Yendi, after they lead the chief home, Namo-Naa will also be sending drummers around to houses. Every chief of drummers in every town has got his drummers for that. They go around to houses and enter, and they beat drums for people to dance. They enter

every house, and they greet the new year. If you are someone who eats chieftaincy, or you are a money person, or a big man, or a big woman, or even a maalam, we will enter your house with our drums. If it is a maalam's house, he will give money and say, "May God bless you, so that in the next year, you will get, and you will have life, and you will come and beat for me again." We enter every house and greet our new year, and we will praise people with our drums, and money will be coming out. As we are coming out of houses, we will praise people at the roadsides, and everyone will give money. Whether you are a Dagbana or not a Dagbana, everybody is happy. And small children will also dress up and go around and enter houses and greet their festival greetings, and anyone they greet will give them money. And if we are going to beat on the following day, we will start it in the morning, and getting to twelve o'clock we will come home and eat, and we will say the afternoon prayer and the next prayer, and by three-thirty we will go around again before we come home around six o'clock in the evening. And that is how we Dagbamba fast during the month of Ramadan, and that is how we celebrate the Water-Drinking Festival.

And I have been thinking that it will be good if I tell you more about the festival of the Ramadan month on the part of how we greet each other, and I will tell you how we drummers travel to different towns to celebrate the Ramadan month. And then I will join it to talk about the Chimsi month and the last of the festivals. In Dagbon here, every drummer has the village or town where he will go for the Praying Festival. If you have a friend at another village, you can decide to go there and beat the drum and have the Praying Festival there. If you decide to go to your friend who is at a different village, then those people at that village will know that the person they are living with is a very good person. Whenever a drummer comes to beat in your house, it means you have respect: that is why he comes to beat the drum. And so where a drummer is, there is always respect. If a drummer is not in our living together in Dagbon here, then our prosperity will not go far. Any work that people want to do in Dagbon, there must be the hand of a drummer inside it. If our hand is not there, then the thing is not an important thing. If living is not good and we are there, I think it will be good. If something is sweet or not sweet and we are there, drumming will make it sweet. Somebody will be reluctant to go somewhere, but as soon as he hears that drummers are included, he will be happy to go and see the playing. If somebody knows us and we go to meet him, he will like us. And if somebody doesn't know us, and we play the drums and come and meet him, he will also like us. And so we drummers, to us, we say that as we are drummers, we thank God, because of the respect that God gave to drumming and so many people like it. And it is inside our greetings that we thank God for our lives.

Anybody who grows up in Dagbon here will get to know that drumming is important work. I think there are many people in Dagbon who would like to be drummers, but as they are not born into the drums, they cannot be drummers. The respect of drumming is what lets these people want to be drummers. Somebody will be proud with his respect at some place, but when he goes to somewhere, he will not have his respect again. But we drummers, everywhere we go in this Dagbon, we have respect. And the months we drummers show our respect are many. As we are talking about our festivals, you should know that as we have many festivals, the respect of drumming does not finish. Even if we go to the South, we have respect. And truly, if not in the Damba Festival, then it is in the Ramadan month that the respect of drumming and the work drummers do is very great. And it is in the Ramadan month that we even travel, because of our respect. As I have been talking to you about the respect of drumming, I want to tell you an example so that you will also see how it is. And this is the talk I want to bring and join to our talks, and you will know more about how people give respect to drummers.

A few years ago, we were in the Ramadan fast, and it was left with six days for the Ramadan month to die. I was sitting down and somebody brought a telegram for me. It was from the Akosombo Dagbamba chief, and I asked somebody to read it to me. It said, "I am sending this telegram to the drummer Ibrahim. I want you to send me drummers to come and play for me in this Ramadan month." And the telegram said that if I want to come myself, I can come, and if I cannot come, I should get five or six drummers to come. That evening I went to a section of Tamale called Dohinayili, around the hospital area, and I called somebody named Abukari. My reason was that I had never gone to Akosombo, and I had only been hearing the name of Akosombo, but this Abukari had been going there to buy cloth for trading. And Abukari asked me, "Is it well you are calling me by this time?" And I said, "Yes, I received a telegram from the Akosombo Dagbamba chief that I should get drummers to come to Akosombo and play for him." And he said, "The time I was in Akosombo to buy cloths, I heard people talking of that, but I did not know the day they would call us." Then I said, "The goodness of a person lets him get a gift."

I called Natɔɣma Naparo, and Fuseini Alhassan the gunɔɔn beater, and we were now four. And I called my brother Sumaani; he was also a good drummer. And I added my son Alhassan, and we were six. The next day I was sitting in the house, around two o'clock, and someone gave me a red piece of paper that I should take it to the post office. I went to the post office and I received money, thirty pounds, and it was said we should use it as our lorry charge. [60 cedis: in

that year the official bank rate was US\$1.00=1.55 cedis and the unofficial black market rate was US\$1.00=2.60-2.80 cedis.] At that time, the bus from here to Kumasi charged one pound for each person, and from Kumasi to Koforidua was one cedi fifty pesewas, and from Koforidua to Akosombo was fifty pesewas. So it all gathered to two pounds. And so the five pounds each of us received, they said we should remove some of it to give to our wives before we leave.

That very evening, we started our journey. You know, if we are going to travel somewhere, we carry spare drums. Someone will carry two drums, but I myself always carry three drums. If someone does not have an extra drum, he will sew extra mouths and carry them so that if the skin breaks, he can just sit down, remove it, and fix the other one. But to do that too is a waste of time, and so we usually carry the drums. And sometimes too if we are to travel to someplace for four days or six days or ten days, the ones calling us might not inform us in time, and we won't get a chance to sew more mouths. That day I carried the three drums that I have. When we travel, too, we sit down in the lorry and hold the drums; we don't give them to the driver to pack on top of the lorry. A drum doesn't want disturbance. And so if we are going someplace and we don't allow them to pack the drums, it sometimes lets us not get a lorry. If the government calls us, or if the one who calls us sends a lorry, then we hold all our drums with us. But sometimes if we are traveling, we allow them to put the *gunḡḡḡḡ*s on top, and we tell them to cover the drums well, because if the rain falls it will spoil everything. That night, after eating, we reached the station, and we found a bus, and we joined the bus. When we reached Kumasi, it was two o'clock in the night. We slept in Kumasi till daybreak. At six o'clock we took another bus and reached Koforidua at eleven o'clock. We joined another bus at Koforidua and reached Akosombo at one-thirty in the afternoon.

Many people came to meet us at the lorry station. When we tried to carry our loads, they carried all of it for us. They said they would take us to a certain house where we would sleep, and the house they took us to was built like the government low-cost bungalows. All Akosombo is this kind of houses. There was a water pipe and a toilet. By that time the moon was left with three days, and in the evening when we were to break our fast, when we saw the food they had brought, we were afraid. Every type of food was there. Nothing gave us that food except drumming. Even if a chief were to go there, he would not get that sort of food. And the Akosombo Dagbamba chief, as he called us and we came too, he was happy to give us all that food.

The following day, they took us to greet people. When we went around to greet people, we were not holding drums, but we got a lot of money. I can't

remember the amount of money we got. Any time we arrived at some house, they showed us to the householder that the Dagbamba chief asked that we be brought to greet, that we are his drummers from Tamale. Every house we went, the householder would give two cedis, three cedis, four cedis, that they should collect it and make food for us. And when we got back to our sleeping house, they gave us the whole amount of the money.

The next day was the twenty-ninth day of the month, and we were looking in the sky to see the moon. We didn't see the moon. And so the next day was the thirtieth. That day the Dagbamba chief himself came to see us, and he asked, "As you have come, is there anyone among you who knows how to beat the Samban' luṅa?" And we answered, "Yes, there is somebody." And he asked whether it was I or another fellow, and I said, "My younger brother is there." And he asked, "Where is he?" And I said, "He is the one, Natɔyɛma." And he said, "That is what I want. I am not a proper chief, but as I am in Akosombo here, I am a chief of the Dagbamba in Akosombo. So I don't want you to beat a full Samban' luṅa for me from beginning to end; you can beat a very small one for me." And I asked him, "How do you want us to play?" And he said, "I only want you to be praising my grandfathers." And I said, "As for that, it is good."

Getting to the evening, the chief sent and bought a big white sheep. It was very, very big. In the night we came and sat outside his house, and we started to beat the Samban' luṅa. We beat it for about two hours and they brought the white sheep and gave it to us, along with a white gown and twenty pounds. And I received it, and I let them tie the sheep. In our drumming, sometimes we kill the sheep at the chief's house, and sometimes we bring the sheep to our house and kill it. If you carry the sheep to your house and kill it, you have to send the leg to the chief's house. That night, we played the drums until after four o'clock, and the chief said, "Everyone should go to his house and rest and pray." And when we got to our sleeping house, I alone had more than sixty cedis.

The next day we went and prayed, and after praying we took our drums to the chief's house and started beating. The money we got there, only God knows the amount. We played the drums up till night time. And the next day following, they took us to greet the Akosombo manager. His bungalow was on a high rocky stone. When we went to greet the manager, he gave us a carton of beer and a carton of Coca-cola and six pounds, and he said that he was happy. And we returned to our house, and the Dagbamba chief asked us if we drink. And by then Natɔyɛma alone was a drinker, and I said, "The rest of us don't drink beer, but if we get Coca-cola, we can drink it." They gave Natɔyɛma two bottles of beer and they took the rest to share it among the other people who drink. And they gave us the Coca-cola and the six pounds.

The next day we went to the chief and said that we would like to go back to Tamale, that we want to farewell him. And the chief said, "I have to see my people again before you leave, because we all sat together and talked when I was going to call you." And so we said we would like to leave for Tamale in the morning, but he said we should wait for evening before he will farewell us. That evening when we got to the chief's house, we saw every Dagbana in Akosombo, whether young or old, gathering around. And the people of Akosombo said, "Though drummers from Accra used to come to Akosombo and play, they never played like you who came from Tamale." And the Dagbamba chief said, "Yes, I heard a lot about them, and that was why I sent to call them from Tamale." And our respect there was very great. When the people who met us there were going to disperse, they called us and gave us a hundred cedis, that we should take it and drink water on the way home. And we said we thank God for that. And the chief said, "As you are leaving for your home, any time I want you, whether in the evening or the morning, you should try and let me see you." Every child, woman, and man in Akosombo, they all liked us, and they liked us because of our drumming. And that is the respect of drummers in Dagbon in the month of Ramadan. And that is how the Ramadan is, and we Dagbamba fast, and we celebrate the Praying Festival when the Konyuri Chuyū moon comes out.

As I have told you that Dagbon has spoiled, and how we no longer play for the butchers during the Guinea Fowl Festival, it is also inside the Ramadan. And what I have told you about Akosombo, this present chieftaincy affair has also entered it. Because what is here in Tamale is also there in Akosombo: the Abudu family and the Andani family. The next festival after Ramadan is Chimsi, and the Dagbamba in Akosombo all came together with one mouth and called us to come for the festival. But we heard from people that one woman was arguing with the other Dagbamba at Akosombo that we are the Abudu family's drummers, and so the Dagbamba chief should give her the chance to call the Andani drummers to play. And the chief said, "If I allow you to do this, then I will be going behind the back of my friends." And the woman said, "They will not hear." And the chief said, "But they are all living in the same town." And the woman replied again, "But I will not allow them to hear it." And the chief said, "All right. I like all of you here, so if you want to do that, then call them."

And so one day we were sitting in the house and we heard that the Dakpema's drummers were called to go to Akosombo. And the one leading them came to greet me. He asked, "I last heard that you have been to Akosombo." And I said, "Yes." And he said, "The reason why I am asking you is that they have also called my group to go there." And he asked me again, "The time you went to play

there, did you have any argument or fight with them?” And I said, “No.” And he said, “Now they have changed and called me, are they not going to make us quarrel?” And I said, “It doesn’t matter. If two wives are in a house, and one cooks and the husband eats, it is good for the other wife to cook. I think it is because of that they called you people, too.” And he said, “All right. It doesn’t matter. I will go and see.”

The Akosombo people didn’t give them any lorry fare; they used their own money to go. And when they arrived, all the things that the people did for us, they didn’t do any of it for them. I was in Tamale here when the people from Akosombo came to tell me that the Dakpema’s drummers did not play as we had played. By then shyness caught the woman. All the Dagbamba in Akosombo along with other northern tribes abused the woman, and even those belonging to the Andani family abused her, too. After that, the Akosombo Dagbamba chief wrote a letter to me to tell me that this was what happened in Akosombo with him and his people, and so I should be patient and I shouldn’t be annoyed, because if you are a chief, you are holding people, both good people and bad people. And he said that I shouldn’t think that he didn’t want to call me, and if any time he calls me, I shouldn’t say that I won’t come because he called the Andani family drummers. And when the Dakpema’s drummers arrived in Tamale, their leader came and asked me, “Is Akosombo a bad town like that?” And he asked me why I didn’t tell him when he first came to see me. And I said, “Is it a bad town?” And I said that if I had told him Akosombo was a good town, he wouldn’t have believed, and if I had told him it was a bad town, he wouldn’t have believed. And so it is better as he has gone and seen everything for himself. And I think it was because their beating is not sweet. As you John are a drummer, sometimes you don’t follow us to beat but you will be watching and taking photos: you have watched our group and their group as well, and you know that our beating is not the same. Anywhere we have gone to beat, if they also go there, the people there will not like their beating.

And to follow it, we went to Akosombo again. There was a big wedding at Akosombo, and they sent a letter to me again. And I grouped my people. Only Alhassan did not go, so we were five. Some of them said I should reply to them that they should send the letter to the Dakpema’s drummers. And I said we shouldn’t do that, and that whatever we have to talk, we should talk it at Akosombo. And the person who was going to make the wedding wrote me again that we shouldn’t think of anything; we should look at him and come. And I asked my group, “How is it now?” And they said, “We must go.” Then we carried ourselves to them, and when we played in the wedding, the money we got was

very, very much. We played from morning to evening, and everybody was happy. After resting, they said we should go along with the new wife to Accra, and the following day we made another dance at Lagos Town in Accra, and we got even more money. The next day we went back to Akosombo to farewell the father of the married woman. It was a Wednesday, and when we reached Akosombo and dropped down from the lorry, one man came to tell us that they have removed our Yaa-Naa Mahamadu. And we became tired. That night they cooked very good food for us, but we didn't know that it was food. We didn't feel for anything, and we just started packing our things. The father of the married woman was also following the Abudu family, and he was not happy. He gave us thirty pounds and said that though at this time we are all sad, we should not be annoyed. And since we arrived in Tamale from Akosombo, it kept long before anyone ever sent a letter that we should go there again. Not because of anything; just because of our broken heart we all had there, we didn't want to go there again, and they too, I think they didn't want to remember their broken heart, because all Akosombo liked us for our drumming.

And I can say again that the people in Akosombo spoiled their way of living. They can't call the Dakpema's drummers, and it came to a time when they called us again and we refused to go. It was just a few months ago that the Akosombo chief himself came and sat where I have been teaching you to beat the drum, and we talked for two hours on the part of our refusing. And I said, "If somebody is eating with two hands, if sickness catches the two hands, what is that fellow going to do?" And he said, "Truly, when a person holds people, they search for bad things for him; it is my people who searched for this trouble for me." He said that it was the Andani woman who brought all the talks, and he himself is an Andani person, but he doesn't mind it because he has seen all of it to be one. He had told them that, and they refused and stood at one place. And so he told me, "If someone wants respect, he should take us, because we give respect. When you came before, there was no fault with what we did for you." And I told him, "If you want it to be repaired, you should go home and see those people you are living with, and we will search for our old people. If you buy a Gurunsi sheep and you are bringing it and it runs away, when it runs away it says that if it doesn't know forward, it knows how to run backwards. And so we have all become Gurunsi sheep. And he should come back and search for us." And he said that I had spoken the truth. And he said that that was why he had come to sit and talk, because if he had written a letter I would have refused. And I think that if they were to ask us again, we would go. And this again shows how Dagbon is now spoiled.

As I have talked about the work of drummers in the festival months, I think that you can see the kind of respect we get. How I have talked at length about the Ramadan month and the Praying Festival or Water-Drinking Festival, I want you to know that a dance which dances till daybreak always moves slowly. You don't have to dance it with strength. If you dance it with strength, daybreak will come and you won't be able to do anything again. And now we are coming to the last festival before the Buyim month comes again. After Konyuri Chuyu, the next month is Chimsibilaa. The one following Chimsibilaa is Chimsi, and we celebrate the Chimsi Festival, and those who are going to Mecca will be at Mecca. And so after Ramadan, the next month with a festival is Chimsi, and we also beat the Samban' luja during the Chimsi month. And after Chimsi, the next one is the Fire Festival month, and if we get to the Fire Festival, then it has come around again.

About the month of Chimsi, what we have learned in the Islamic religion is that whenever we fast in the Ramadan month, all the gifts that God will give you will come in the month of Chimsi. It was on the tenth day in the month of Chimsi that our Holy Prophet climbed the mountain which is called Arafat and heard the voice of God, and all that he asked for was given to him by God. And so that is the day for every Muslim to beg God, and it is a happy day for every Muslim. And to celebrate it, on that day we kill animals and pray to God. And God will answer the prayers.

And truly, it would have been human beings we used for the sacrifice. I say that because according to the teachings of our maalams, during the time of one of our prophets called Prophet Ibrahim, the Prophet Ibrahim was suffering to get an animal to sacrifice to God for this Chimsi month. And the sacrifice can be even ten or fifteen animals, and he could not get one of any kind of animal, and so he said nothing and he was just sitting down, talking to himself. Then his son got up and said, "My father, since you have not got an animal, I think you can use me to perform the sacrifice." And Prophet Ibrahim agreed that it was necessary, and he tied the eyes of his son and took the knife to slaughter him. The moment he put the knife on the neck of his son, God sent an angel to give a sheep to the Prophet Ibrahim to replace the son. And so God liked us, because if it had been this child the Prophet Ibrahim used for the sacrifice, up till now we would have been killing human beings, and there would have been no talk to repair it. But God liked us, and this sheep came. And now every Muslim has to be using animals to sacrifice to God, and the sheep is the best animal for the sacrifice, because from the beginning, it was a sheep which the Prophet Ibrahim used.

According to the teachings of the maalams, if you die and go to the next world, there is a very sweet place where every Muslim will go, and when you are

going, you will ride on the type of animal you have been killing in the month of Chimsi. If you cannot get a male sheep, you can get a female sheep, and if you cannot get a female sheep, you can get a goat for the sacrifice. The one who has a cow will slaughter it on that day. And anyone who slaughters a sheep, he will share the meat among people, and if he wants, he will hang the skin to dry, and he can be using it when he is praying. And this is what we learned from our Muslim teachers. For every Muslim, the Chimsi month is a happy month. Some people can slaughter ten or fifteen or twenty sheep, and if you like, you can buy other sheep for your friends to slaughter. And you will get a gift from God.

It is in the month of Chimsi that those who are going to make the pilgrimage to Mecca will go. As I myself have gone to Mecca and come back, it is not today that I want to tell you about it in detail, but I just want to tell you a little bit about it now, because it is also something that is happening in the Chimsi month. They go to Mecca to pray, and they go to visit the places where the Holy Prophet Muhammad was praying. They go to see his grave, and the mosque. They go to Medina, and Safa and Marwah, and Arafat. And there are many small-small things, and if you do all of them, then you are truly Alhaji. And to solve all the problems there is difficult. There are some places you have to go with money before those guarding the place will let you inside and show all the secrets to you. And those who go and come back, they say that if you go there, there are strong people and weak people, but if they reach Mecca, sometimes it happens that some of the strong people become weak and the weak people become strong. And the people there are many, and they have come from every country, even from America, and so if you go there and get lost, it will take some time before you see your friends again. And some people get lost, and we don't see them again. Unless the next world. And so you and the people you are with, you always hold each other's hands. And when you go to pray at the mosque, there is something like a room there called the Kaaba: I think that when they were going to start the world, this was the room they brought. You and all the people will run around the room seven times. And if you make a mistake and fall down, however strong you are, those running will step on you and kill you, and it is just because the people are too many. This is not a lie; even if you ask white people, they will tell you that it is true. And again, if you go and you are short of money, to get food will be difficult, because in Mecca they don't lend money to any person, and that alone will allow people to go hungry and die. And so to go to Mecca is a sad journey. And at the same time it is a happy journey. It is only the promise of God that if you are going to die at Mecca, then you will die there.

And when you go and come back, all your friends and relatives are happy to meet you again. If a person should go far away and come back, you have to be happy. I haven't seen drummers beating drums the time the pilgrims are going to Mecca. If somebody is going from here to Mecca, his people will lead him to the airport. If he is leaving from Accra, maybe about six of his people will lead him to the airport there before he flies with the airplane. These people who are leading their person to the airport, they have nothing to make them happy unless the time their person is coming back. When he comes back, they will take their white hearts to meet him at the airport again. And sometimes we drummers will go to meet the pilgrims at the airport, and we will beat drums at the airport when they arrive. In Dagbon here we have not been doing that much, but in the Southern regions, they have been playing drums all the time whenever their people are arriving. When I was in Kumasi, there was someone coming from Mecca, and his people asked us drummers to go and meet him at the airport, and we were beating drums at the airport when he arrived. The women took white pieces of cloth and tied them around their heads, and the men did the same thing, and it was all because they were very, very happy. And what we also have in Dagbon here is that the children who are attending Arabic school will beat drums to welcome the people who are coming from Mecca. The relatives of those people will all dress in the same clothes, even if they are twenty people. And the children and the wives of that person will all be happy to go and meet their father or friend or mother. In Dagbon here, we have that.

And so the month of Chimsi is for prayers. But truly, the festival we celebrate has nothing to do with those who go to Mecca. It's just that every Muslim is praying in that month, and they are only going to Mecca to pray there. Those of us here, we don't have anything to do apart from the prayers and the sacrifice, so we take it to be a festival day for us. On the tenth day of the Chimsi month, every Muslim is praying, and we also come out for general prayers. We drummers don't have anything to do until the day before the prayers. On that day in the night we go to the chief's house and sit and beat the Samban' luṅa. Sometimes the leader of the drummers will start around ten o'clock time in the night. The one who trusts his drumming will start it from nine o'clock. He is showing that he knows much in drumming, because before he will finish it will be around four or five o'clock in the morning, and he is showing that what he can do with his knowledge is not something that is small. And the chief will give him a gown and add money. And the chief will also get a cow or a sheep and slaughter it before they start, and on that very day they will cook food with the meat, and the drummers will eat. Every person will get his food, and those eating will eat, and

others who don't want don't eat. This is what comes at the Samban' luṅa place, and to beat the Samban' luṅa is in our way of living in the Chimsi month.

In the morning of the tenth day, from eight o'clock to nine o'clock, you will see every Muslim coming out from his house to go to the general prayers. We drummers will also go to the chief's house and lead the chief to the prayers. And after the prayers, we all go back to our houses and slaughter animals, and we share the meat among people. On that day when we are sharing the meat, all the drummers will go out from their houses with their drums. We go to houses and we play for people to dance, and we praise people, and every house we go, they will cut some meat for us. By one o'clock we come back and we pray, and by three o'clock we pray again. By four o'clock we drummers come together and go out again. And you will see every person dressing in fine clothes. Whether you are a man or a woman, you will dress. And the small children too, they dress them, and these children go around and greet you, "*Barika da salla.*" It is Hausa language, and it says, "Thanks to the prayers." And so its meaning is that these small children are coming to greet you just because of the festival and the gift of God. And you reach into your pocket and give them one pesewa or two-and-a-half pesewas or any amount you like. As you give them, it is a prayer to God. And in that month, God will receive any prayer you make. Someone who prays prayers or someone who doesn't pray, if he gives a gift, God will collect it. And this giving will prevent bad things. If it is sickness that is coming to catch him, God will prevent it. If some bad talk was coming to get him, God will prevent it. Giving of gifts has not come because of Islam; the giving of gifts and the blessings are for everyone. If you are anyone and you are there, you will give the children, because it is a happy month, and you are also happy. And we drummers will be going around to houses, and by six o'clock we are in our own houses again. And if someone is very happy, he can call us, "Oh, you can come to my house in the night and play *Naybieyu* or *Naanigoo* or any other dance for me to dance." And we will go. We will be going with our drums to houses for one week's time. And this going around to houses is the same as the way we go around in the other festival months. And that is how the Chimsi month is, and this is how I know it.

And after Chimsi is the *Buyim* month. And what is it? It has come around again. And so we drummers, this is how we follow the months. And the work we do is there, and it is still more. And it is still increasing. And this is what I know about it. And so I think I have finished the talk about festivals. I have told you that talks come to meet one another. This talk of festivals joins to many talks I have talked. It joins to the talks of drumming, and it is inside the talks of chieftaincy. It joins the talks I have talked about greetings and sending

messengers, because greetings and sending messengers are very strong in our Dagbamba way of living, and it is inside of our festivals that Dagbamba greet one another.

And truly, what I have talked is correct. As I myself have looked at this talk, there is no mistake. And it looks as if the talks I've talked, I have collected them from some people to come and talk. Why do I say that? How I have talked it, if we take it and pass anywhere, nobody will blame you or find your fault. Truly, I know that all people will not like a person, but those who are going to find my fault will not be many. And so how I have talked, it has nothing on the part of blaming. It is the mouth that talks, and it is the heart that is for something. And so as my heart came and I talked these talks, it doesn't look as if I talked it. And I think that if you take me to stand and talk it again, if I am going to talk it, I will talk it and some of it will be short.

And so as we have talked about the Guinea Fowl and the Praying Festival and the Chimsi Festival today, and finished, I think that I will go home, and tomorrow if God agrees, I will come and talk again.