

## Chapter II–25: *Medicine*

As we have finished the talk of the gods, I will take it and join to the talk about medicine, because they enter one another. As the gods are there, they are doing work, and I can say that the gods are like medicine. What we call medicine [*tim*] is different from the talk of the gods, but if you follow it, you will see that it is the same. A person who has medicine, as he is holding the medicine or owning it, we call him *timlana*. A *timlana* is different from a *tindana*. The *tindana*'s talk is on the part of the god of the town. As for the *tindanas* themselves, some of them have medicine and some do not. Those *tindanas* who have medicine are those who had it before they became *tindanas*. If the *tindana* had medicine before, then he really is someone who has more medicine. Even if you are a *tindana* and you don't have medicine, the god itself to which you are sacrificing, it is a medicine. Why do I say that? It helps human beings. It doesn't help everybody; it helps people like the *tindanas* and those who follow it. What they want and they ask the god for, they will get it. As they get what they want, has it not helped them?

Someone will fall sick and go and ask the god to treat him. Sometimes it happens that someone will fall sick and travel to many, many places to be treated, but he cannot see any type of medicine that will treat him. If he is lucky to come across a god which will finally treat him, then he has to find a chicken to go to sacrifice for the god. And it shows that the god has treated him. And so the god is medicine. There are other people who don't have anything in their hands to give them something to eat everyday. They may go to a god and tell it that they are suffering to get money or any other thing, and the god should help them get what they want. If the god helps them, later on they have to go back to the god: if the god wants a red chicken or a white chicken, they have to buy it and give it to the god. To them, it is really true that the god has helped them. There is someone who will go and ask the god, and the god will not mind him. And if something doesn't mind you, will you mind it? If the god doesn't mind you, you don't have to give it anything, and you don't have to mind it, too.

What I am saying is that a god can refuse someone. A god is not the true God. Even you can ask the true God for something, but He will not give you what you are asking for. I don't think that someone can look at this world and say there is no God, but you know, God does not repair all the problems of people. And it is the same with a god: it cannot repair all the problems of every person. If it were to be repairing all the problems of people, then we would have called it the true

God. A god repairs some problems and leaves some. But it is there. If only you trust it, it is there; if you don't trust it, it is not there. And so if you have trust in it, it will truly work for you, and sometimes it will help you. And so a god itself is medicine, and that is how it is. The way medicine itself works and we know it, it is the same thing, because as for medicine, you know, no one ever sees it. You will only see the signs, but you cannot see the medicine itself unless you see its work. Someone might be sick, and they will give him medicine and he will get health. You can't know whether it is God who treated him or the medicine which treated him. Maybe to him, it was the medicine which treated him.

And so in this Dagbon, we have many types of medicine, and we have people who have medicine and the medicine works for them. And these my eyes have seen. There is a fellow staying in this town; he is called Adambila. He knocked someone, and the one he knocked was someone with medicine. The person with medicine walked away and left him, and Adambila's mouth shifted to be at his cheek. He could not talk. They were holding him, and his mouth was like that. It was after about three days that they knew that it was the person he knocked who had done that to him. There were some people who knew Adambila and also knew the person he knocked, and they searched for that man. They went and met him and they told him about Adambila's mouth. And he said, "I am not the one who did that; I cannot do such a thing." They started begging him, and they begged him until he agreed. And he came and made medicine for Adambila. He slapped Adambila on the buttocks, and Adambila's mouth came and stood at its place. That was all. As for that, our eyes have seen. And again I have heard: someone will knock another person and his hand will swell up to the shoulder. As for that medicine, it's common here; many people have it. There is no doubt about it. You yourself know it: just last year, a friend of yours slapped an old man in this town, and that same day his arm and his leg died. He was like there like that, and he met some elders who took him to beg that old man. That old man refused and said that he had not done it, and they begged him until he gave your friend some medicine. And now he's all right.

And I, Ibrahim, the one sitting down here, I have seen it again. It's not anyone who told me. At that time I was at Voggo. Someone had his wife, and it was the only wife he had, and someone collected this woman from him. The one who collected this woman was called Shembila; he was a brother of the chief of Voggo. This Shembila had three wives. The one whose wife he collected was staying at a village called Vehakuga, and he had a small chieftaincy at a place called Kukuonayili, and he was the Kukuo-Naa. This Kukuo-Naa went to Shembila and told him, "Truly, I am not strong, and I am not the son of a chief, but

if you want to live, give me my wife. And if you don't want to live, hold my wife." And Shembila said, "What is the use of a Dagbana man?" And we were all keeping quiet and watching.

We have something we call *nosuyu*; it is a basket that we put hens in. The Kukuo-Naa sent someone to tell Shembila that he should put a *nosuyu* under his armpit and that he the Kukuo-Naa would also put a *nosuyu* under his armpit. The meaning of what he said is that Shembila should get hens to kill, and the Kukuo-Naa would also kill hens, that is, they would make medicine. Shembila said that the man couldn't do anything. One day the Kukuo-Naa sent somebody to tell Shembila that any day the woman became pregnant, then Shembila himself would also become pregnant. It wasn't two days and Shembila's wife was pregnant, and Shembila was also pregnant. When the wife's stomach became big, Shembila's stomach also became big. And we were watching. When Shembila's wife gave birth, Shembila's stomach was worrying him. After the naming day of the new baby, it wasn't one week when Shembila died. As for this, my eyes saw it. If you want the truth, and you get any person from Voggo and you ask, he will tell you. The Kukuo-Naa told the woman that the medicine had told him to kill three people for her, and he had put down three men for her; and he had removed the hands of the one who had died, and so she should come back. He said, "It is left with two to die, unless you come back to my house." And the woman refused. After Shembila, two other people died before the woman went back to her husband's house. If the woman had gone back to his house, those three people wouldn't have died. As for this, it was the medicine that made it so, and I saw it with my own eyes. It's not that anyone told me. And that is an example of how medicine works.

And so medicine has got a lot of talk. And I think that when someone wants to talk about medicine, he cannot talk about it and finish. The medicines in Dagbon here are many, and there is no end to them. All the medicines have names, and if I mean to show you the names and the work of all medicines, it will be a waste of time: you yourself don't have any work to do with medicine. What Alhaji Adam has given you is medicine, and you know its name and you know its work. And as every medicine has got its name, a person knows the name of the medicine he eats, but the medicine which you have not eaten, you don't know its name. And you yourself, in your country, what is worrying you again? As you have come to this Dagbon here, the only medicine which I think will be good for you is the type Alhaji Adam has given you for your drumming. Apart from that, if you want to learn the ways of the Dagbamba, medicine has no use. But because medicine does a lot of work in Dagbon here, and we hear of it everyday, I will

show you some of them that people have. And medicine is also with drummers, too. As for me, I don't have medicine. I don't want it. What we know about medicine, we only know that we use medicine to kill each other, or someone will use medicine to protect his friend. In Dagbon here, somebody can use medicine to kill his friend, and somebody who likes the dead body can come with a tail and whip the dead body and call his name, and he will wake up again. Only a few people have it in Dagbon here, and the ones who have it most are the chiefs. In Dagbon here, this is what we have. But if they give you such a medicine and you go, I don't think you will have any work to do with it. The place you want to go to, it is the road of that place you will ask. And so if you ask about medicine, I don't think it will have use in your country. In your country, you kill each other with knives or guns, or you take poison to put in food and kill somebody. And here, we don't know about that: we only use medicine to kill each other.

And so there are people who get medicine to protect themselves. Your country is not like this place, but truly, I want to tell you that because of this work you are doing, many people are going to hate you just because of this work. How you are, they will change their faces and look at you. I'm not going to follow you home, but if you get home, you will hear what they say and you will see some signs. If you want, you can write us and tell us. It's not because of anything. You have gone to bring a heavy thing which some people before you were not able to get. When they get to know that you have gone to learn something big, and you will benefit from it, they will want put you down. As they don't want you, some of them will give you bad face and others will be talking against you. But if it were to be here, if Dagbon were to be America and America were to be Dagbon, they would have killed you. Your place is somehow better: they won't do any bad thing to you, but here, you wouldn't last till daybreak. And so if you had gone to America to learn this and come back, they would have given you a short life. The time the white men came, some people from Dagbon here went to London and came back, and they didn't last. Some of them died, and some of them are just useless and staying at Accra. Dagbon has been like that from its starting, and it is all just because of jealousy and hatred. That is how it is.

Even as we are staying with you, we have enemies. Some people take it that we are gaining from the work, and they don't like us and they are talking against us. Because of all this, we are begging God. God has said that if you beg Him, He will give you, but God never said that you only have to be sitting down and begging him: you have to be begging him and at the same time fighting for yourself. You have to find something inside yourself so that you will be getting better, and you have to struggle to raise yourself high. I didn't want to talk all this

openly to you because sometimes if you tell somebody that he has to fight for his work, he will think that you are thinking to do something bad to him or that you want to get something from him. And so I am just telling you that you some people are going to hate you because of this work you are doing, unless you struggle. Some people will like you and others will hate you. Only a fool says that everybody should like him or love him. If everybody loves you, what will you do? But if your country were to be Dagbon, those who hate you would try to do some bad thing to you. They just wouldn't want to see you go forward while they remain behind. Because of that, there are many people here who go to eat medicine to protect themselves.

But to me, I don't want medicine. And the reason why I don't want medicine is because I know that I will die. If I eat medicine, I will die; if I don't eat medicine, I will die. It is God Who has made the medicines, and as God made the medicines, He didn't say that all the medicines are bad: some are good and some are not good. The one that is good is the one they use to treat people. If someone is not well, and you treat him and he becomes well, then it's good. If his stomach is paining him, you treat him and he becomes well. If he has a hernia, you treat him and he becomes well. If some food he ate is worrying his stomach, you will give him medicine to clean out all the food and become well. But if you take medicine and make somebody get a bad thing, God doesn't like it. You compare yourself to God by saying that you can also do what God is doing. And you are not God. And so, to make someone get something bad, I don't like it. But to treat someone to get health, as for that medicine, if someone gives it to me, I will receive it. I have heard people saying that God said that if you are in a town and there is no one with medicine in the town, you should leave that town. But a person who says that is not talking of bad medicine. That is how it is. If you have medicine, it makes people give you respect and at the same time fear you. But I myself, if I see someone who has medicine which he takes for doing bad things, then I don't look at him to be anything. But as for the person who has medicine and he helps people, when I see him, I give him respect.

And so we will talk about medicines, because the talk of medicines is inside other talks of Dagbon here. It is with the chiefs, and it is with the typical Dagbamba, and our Dagbamba women, and even with drummers. If I myself don't follow it, many people trust it and it really works for them. It is wonderful to them. You know, if you see something with your eyes, that is better than if someone tells you about it. Someone will have a wife and the wife is not giving birth to children; he will take such a wife to get some medicine and she will give birth to children. He will give a lot of trust to the medicine. And truly, as he has

seen it, then he has to trust that it works for him. If it happens to be your wife, at that time you will also trust that the medicine really works. There are people who believe that medicine can let someone get a child. There are even people who will say that without medicine, no one can get anything. And I can tell you that there are even some people who say plainly that without medicine we cannot live. Now at this present time, there are people who say that. And so medicine is trust, or belief. When Alhaji Adam gave you the medicines for your drumming, all that you told him, he told me, and all that you did for him, he told me all. And so medicine is trust. If you suspect somebody, and he does something for you, it won't work. But where there is trust, medicine can do work. And so the talk of medicines looks like the talk of soothsayers. The soothsayer is different from the person who has medicine. But the one with medicine, we also call him the same name: "When he tells you something and you hear, don't accept it and don't refuse it." If you don't believe it, it won't work for you. But medicine is there in this Dagbon. It is there today and tomorrow. And it is in this Dagbon that you can see the wonders of medicine. If you want to see any medicine and the way it works, you will see it here.

If you follow the talk of medicine, you will see that it is very strong on the part of the typical Dagbamba and their talks. That is why it comes to join the talk of the soothsayers and the gods. All of it, it comes from the way they are looking at the world. Can you remember there was a time you came here and Kissmal was not around? Nobody knew where he had gone. It wasn't two days and we saw him. At that time he said that he was in the Ewe land, and he was sitting with some people, and a weevil was just flying round him in his face. If he chased it, it would just come back to him. There was an old man who told him that somebody was looking for him at home, and he should go home. At first I thought that the old man was a Dagbamba man, but Kissmal said he was an Ewe. In Dagbon here, if a weevil is flying around you like that, the typical Dagbamba say that it shows one of two things: either somebody is looking for you and he is at your place already on the way coming, or your somebody is going to die at home.

The typical Dagbamba are always looking at these types of things, and they are very watchful. For example, if you see a cock standing in front of you and crowing and facing you, if you see it raise up its leg and step on the ground, it is giving you a sign that your somebody is dead. If the cock is facing you and crowing, and it shakes itself, you are going to get some bad talk: either you are going to fall sick or you will get some troubles. If the cock is facing you and crowing, and you are watching it, and it finishes crowing and takes something from the ground to eat, that day you are going to get a heavy gift. Have you seen?

It looks like the talk of the gods. The same was as the typical Dagbamba watch any time the animal of the god comes to town, many of them take it that they also have to be watchful of all these things. On the part of the Muslim religion, God said we don't have to mind it, and we don't have to talk about it. But the typical Dagbamba always take it to be something. It looks like religion because it shows something like belief.

Sometimes you may come out from your house and see a woman coming on the road. Some people take it that if this happens when they are first coming out to go to some place to trade, they will get good luck and sell everything all right. If they are not going to trade, then it shows that they are going to get a gift. Alhaji Adam's first wife is holding that. Any time she is going to the market, if she finishes bathing and dressing and picking up her goods to go out to the market, when she goes out the door of the house, if she sees a man coming toward her, she will go back inside the house and wait for the man to pass before she will come out. A man coming like that has no luck for her. That is what some people are holding. Some people take it that if they have a friend somewhere, and at the same time their things are not going forward, that friend is a bad-luck person, and they will leave that friend. Have you seen something like that? Sometimes you may have a friend, and it's not that your friend is doing anything on the part of your work, but your work will not be going forward. All kinds of things are happening to disturb your work. If you leave that person, you will see that things will change. Or sometimes you will see someone, and anybody who is with that person is getting good luck. It doesn't even show that that person will be having good luck, but only those who are staying close to him or her.

This is the kind of thing some people are holding in Dagbon here, and they are always watching for these signs. To us Muslims, God says we don't have to hold these things in our way of living. It's not because of anything. Sometimes you will hold it one day and it will not work. By that time, you have told a lie. As I have told you about watching the cocks, some cocks will do something like that and it is never true. Sometimes a cock will do it and it is true. If you are taking it to be working always, which is true? That is why I have been telling you that somebody who is not a person, or somebody whose talks are not good, if he tells you something, don't accept it and don't refuse it. Just answer, "Yes." If it happens to work, it's good; if it doesn't work, it's good. That is how it is. And so there are some things which you will consider and hold, and it shows that you are standing on the part of the gods and medicine, apart from the work of God. But to us Muslims, God says that there is nobody who looks like Him. And so this talk is on the part of the typical Dagbamba and what they are holding. And so we will take the talk of the medicines and go.

If you want to get medicine, it is greetings you will greet. Anything you want in this Dagbon, if you want medicine or you want a wife or you want a chieftaincy, if it is that you have to go to somebody to get it, you will start with greetings. You can be greeting an old person with cola or anything, and if it is an old man or an old woman, one day he or she will ask you, “As you have been greeting me, what do you want? You haven’t told me what you want. Say it. Don’t hide it from me. Do you want me to put you into a house? Do you want what is going to protect you? Tell me.” He won’t ask you whether you want medicine, but he will rather call it that it will protect you. At that time you can say it, and if he has some medicine, he will agree. When you go to get it, you will eat it. You can go to someone who has medicine, and he will give it to you inside food to put it inside your body: let’s say, to get this medicine you buy a chicken, and the one giving it will make the medicine and put some inside a soup for you to eat, and he will put some in something for you to hold or wear. At that time the medicine is inside you. When you have got it, we say that you have eaten the medicine.

As there are many different types of medicines, sometimes the one giving you will take part of the medicine and put it inside a talisman; you will take it to a cobbler to sew it, and you can carry it in your pocket or wear it on a string. Sometimes the medicine will be an armband, and there are some medicines which are a waistband. Some medicines are like a tail. And some medicines are just a powder, and you will find something and keep the medicine inside it. Some medicines are in water, and you will bathe with the water, and you will drink some of it. Medicines are there like that.

And again, when people go for medicine, they perform certain sacrifices. It is good when you go for some medicine, and when the year comes to the month when you went for the medicine, it is good you remember it and make some sacrifice to it. That is why I told you that in the *Buyim* month, the typical Dagbamba are making sacrifices to their medicines. You can perform the sacrifice in the *Buyim* month, and it will stand in place of the month you went for the medicine, and you can do that because the *Buyim* month is older than all the other months. You will make the sacrifice, and you will call the medicine’s name. It is the time you get the medicine that the one giving you will show you the real name of the medicine. And what I am telling you is that as we call the types of medicines, it is a name, but every medicine has also got its own types which also have names. And so what I am going to tell you are the general names. I cannot count and show you all the different ones. I don’t even know all of them, because a person knows the names of the medicines he eats, and I don’t eat medicine.



In Dagbon here, as we have many different kinds of medicine, there is one which is very wonderful, and I can't compare it to any other medicine. It is called *liliga*, and its meaning is you "vanish." As I have told you that no one sees medicine unless it works, this *liliga* can be an example. There are some *liliga* which are a tail and some which are like a belt. If this medicine is with you, if you are going to get in an accident in a car, you will just vanish. You don't have to say anything, you will just go. You may not even know that the medicine will take you out from the accident. And again, if I have this medicine and I am sitting next to you in a car which is going to get in an accident, if I touch you when I am leaving, I will take you out from the car, too. In the southern regions of this Ghana, many people who are working in the gold mines or doing some work in holes have got this type of medicine. Some time ago I heard that one of the mine holes broke and covered up, and somebody inside who had this medicine just blew out from the ground. How it works if it is with you, the time you are going to vanish, you don't know whether you are vanishing or not. You vanish just like that, without your knowing, and it looks as if you are dreaming and you have gone somewhere, and nothing happened to you. You can even climb a tree and fall, and the medicine will let you vanish. And so this medicine has also got its types. There is one called *korinliliga* which younger people eat and it works very suddenly, and there is one for elderly people. There is one called *sonliliga* which protects against witches, but if it is not that a witch comes to meet you in the room, you cannot vanish; and so we don't count it and add to the real types of vanishing medicine.

And so this vanishing medicine is a very strong medicine which works wonderful things. If you don't trust it, it is not there, but if you give it trust, it will truly work for you. I saw it myself some time ago. Someone had this *liliga* and he was in a room, and he said we should push down the room on him while he was inside. Some people pushed the room to fall inside — *bip!* The time the room fell, he was out. He was inside the room, and he just vanished. We didn't see him. Later on, we saw him coming from behind us. That is how it is. When he vanishes, he flies, but you cannot see him flying. And he himself doesn't know he's flying. If you have it, if something is going to happen to you, it won't take half a second and you will get to another place. Even if you are going to vanish from here to Kumasi, it just comes at once, and you arrive at where you want. That is why I can't compare the work of vanishing medicine to any other thing, because of all the medicines, it is the most wonderful one I have seen.

According to people who give vanishing medicine to people, when they give it to you, they have to test you inside a room or in the bush. The way it

works, if your heart doesn't jump, you won't vanish; if you are sitting quietly, nothing will happen. But if something just appears unexpectedly by your side so that you become afraid, then your heart will jump. And so if you have vanishing medicine and something happens and your heart jumps, you will vanish from there. For example, if you have vanishing medicine in your body and a bad or dangerous animal in the bush is going to catch you, you cannot vanish at that time. But the time the creature reaches you and is coming to catch you at once, you will vanish. Or if you are on a bicycle or walking on the road and a car is going to knock you, the time when you see that really it's coming to knock you, you will vanish. And so if they give you this medicine and they want to test you, sometimes they will put you inside a room, and they will close the door — *bip!* And you will be out. If they open the door, they won't see you. And when they see that you are not in the room, they will know that the medicine is now standing. Or again, if you go to someone to eat this medicine, and he gives it to you, when he wants to test you, he will take you to the bush. When you get to the bush, he will show you some place, and he will tell you to wait for some time and then walk in that direction. He will go and hide himself just by the path, and the time you come to where he is hiding, he will come out at once. At that time, you will vanish. You won't be around that place. If you are still there, it means that the medicine doesn't like you. Some people go to eat vanishing medicine, and it doesn't like them; and someone will go and eat it, and it will like him. This medicine likes a person who doesn't keep himself neat. If you are always bathing and making your everything clean and neat, the vanishing medicine will not like you. There are certain medicines which don't like that.

And we Dagbamba have another medicine which is called *vua*. You will make it and call somebody to come to you. This *vua* is a horn of a duiker, the one we call *kparbua*; it's a bush animal, and we put the medicine inside the horn. If it happens that you want somebody and he is far away, you get the horn, call the name, and blow it. The time you blow the horn, it will seem to him that somebody is calling him at his home town. He will just be wanting to see you, and his whole heart will say that if he doesn't see you by today or tomorrow, he cannot sleep. He will just pack his things and come straight to you. Sometimes if somebody travels far and no one hears any news of him, they can use this *vua* to call him home. It sometimes happens that you use the *vua* to call somebody, and he will be walking and coming to you, and he will come to a river and not know the river to be a river: he will just walk into it and he will die. As he is coming to you, his whole heart is with you, and so he will never mind what is on the way, and he will never think that the river can kill him. Or maybe he will come to cross a road and just

walk onto it, and a car will knock and kill him. His eyes will be open, looking at everything, but his eyes are not working. It is the heart which sleeps before the eyes. You know, sometimes you will lie down and close your eyes, but you will not close your heart; your heart will be awake, and you will be hearing things around you. The same thing happens with the calling medicine: when you call somebody, his eyes will be open, but his heart will be with you. His eyes are just looking and not working because his heart is thinking of you and the place where you are. And so vua, truly, its works are very strong.

If a hunter has got the calling medicine, any time he goes hunting, he will kill something. He will never miss killing something unless he doesn't blow the horn. The calling works on anything. Whenever he is in the bush and he wants to kill animals, he will just bring the medicine out and blow it, and all the animals will be running to where he is. He will kill the number he wants. Even if you are in the house and you are a hunter, you can blow it before you go out and go to the bush. As soon as you get to the bush, you will be meeting all kinds of animals and killing them.

Some of our Dagbamba drummers have also got the calling medicine so that they will get more money than the others. The only problem is that if you use the medicine to get money, the money will not last. And the reason is that those people who are giving you money are not willing; they will just give you the money because the medicine is working on them, forcing them to give you money. You know, if a person is not willing to give you something and he gives you, the thing will not last. Formerly we had one of our brothers who had got this calling medicine, a very strong one, and he was using it to get money. He is now a blind man, but formerly he used to go to beat drums. If he and his people came to beat drums where we were playing, truly, we were beating better than his people. He himself didn't know how to sing, and his people too didn't know how to play. Any time we were beating the drums and he came, the next moment we would see all the people leaving us and running to his place. He was using the medicine to call all the people, and they were going there even though they were not willing to go there.

And so as for the calling medicine, you can use it to make something happen which you were not thinking would happen. Sometimes you may love a woman or a girl, but her way of living is higher than yours. This woman will not even dream that one day you can stand to say that you love her. You can use the medicine to meet her and even have sex with her, and she will be surprised. What the calling medicine hates is problems from women or girls. Let's say you love a woman and you talk to her, and she says, "As for you, you are a useless person.

What time will I ever stay with you? What time will you ever sex me?” In a case like that, if you want the medicine to work very truly, it will act now-now. The medicine will call her to come to you, and she will just come and enter your room as if she has been coming there always. If you sex her, after the sex she will say, “*Oi!* How did you manage to bring me inside here? I am very surprised to see myself in your room. Truly, I don’t know how I came here.” That is the work of the calling medicine. But people only use it to sex women by heart because if you use it to marry a woman, she will not last in your house. She will go away and leave you very early, because the medicine is a medicine. And so the work of calling medicine is wonderful. Even if you love a woman and she is far away, say in Kumasi, you can call her to come to you.

And again, the typical Dagbamba have a kind of medicine which we call *kabrɛ*. It ties people. To get this *kabrɛ*, we get about two or three pieces of wood and get some strings to tie the wood together. If you have *kabrɛ* and somebody does some bad thing to you, if you want to punish him, you tie it. You untie it, and then you tie it and call the fellow’s name. Sometimes they will tie somebody and he will not reach daybreak; he will die. Even if you are with somebody here and he does a bad thing to you and runs to a far place like Kumasi, you can sit here and tie the fellow. You call his name, tie him, and you put it down and get a heavy stone to put on it: he will be in Kumasi and he won’t be able to do anything; he will just be lying down and he cannot get up.

There are many types of *kabrɛ*, and they all have their names, and they all have the work they do. They are not the same. There are some types of *kabrɛ* they use to tie bush animals. Even dogs, cows, or any animal, you can tie them. The maalams have a type of *kabrɛ* we call *ankarɛ*. You can use the maalam’s type to tie anything because you call the names of God and use it. If somebody wants to do some bad thing to you, you can use this *kabrɛ* and tie him. If it is that many of you are gathered to search for something, you can call the names of those who are there and tie *kabrɛ*; the time of going will come, and they will not be able to get up and go. We have all these types of *kabrɛ*. Have you seen? And then there is the *kabrɛ* that ties and kills people. As for that one, we hear that they get the ribs of human beings and add to do its work. I haven’t seen such *kabrɛ*, but I hear that it is very strong. Sometimes they will tie a *kabrɛ* and press it, and blood will come out. The one I have seen, they take pepper and smear on it, and then they get something that is like pepper we call *kanaafiri* — we use it on food, too — and they chew it and spit on the *kabrɛ*. If they use it on any person, he will sit down and his body will be paining him. And so the types of *kabrɛ* are not one: they all have the way they tie them. To me sitting, I look at *kabrɛ* and see that it is bad. It

brings troubles. But let's say we are all fighting to get something, and someone says I shouldn't get it. He ties me with kabre to put me in the house lying down, and he goes and gets it. To him, it's good. And so kabre is not good except for the person who uses it, but he has done bad to somebody to get for himself. That is how it is.

Apart from that, the people who usually tie people with kabre and they even put stones on top are special people like the regents. When a chief dies, the *Gboɲlana* will be sitting when they perform his father's funeral, and he doesn't want trouble to come to the funeral. If the *Gboɲlana* knows when they are going to perform the funeral, he will go to soothsayers and ask what will happen on the funeral day. Sometimes they will tell him that if he doesn't get the tying medicine and tie it, there will be fighting and trouble when the funeral gathering comes. And so the *Gboɲlana* will make tying medicine and call the names and tie the people who may be coming to disturb, and he will put it down, and he will get a heavy stone to put on it. And when the people come to the gathering, they will be quiet. Nothing will happen at that place, and no one will cause another to fight.

And again, in Dagbon here we have many different medicines which will let you get money. We call such medicine *lukuri*, and the typical Dagbamba have it and maalam have it, but people don't often go for this kind of medicine. Their reason is that sometimes you will go to eat the medicine for money, and as soon as you get the money, you will die and leave it. And another reason is that if you get the money, the money will not last. If you die, the money will also die. It will go off, and your children or parents will not be able to hold it. Many people take it that they don't want to get money and die, and the money will also die and leave their parents like that. It is not all the medicines which do that. There is one we call *lukuri sabli*, black *lukuri*. They say that if you are going to eat it, they will take some kind of sticks and make a fire, and get a black hen and let it go; the black hen will run and enter the fire. And it shows that the person who gets this medicine will get the money, and he also knows that when he comes to die, he will enter fire. A typical Dagbamba doesn't mind to eat it, and God shows that a Muslim doesn't want it, but there are Muslims here who have it. There is another one, you will get the money but you won't give birth to children. There is one you will drink and get a hernia. Medicine for money also has its types. There is one, if a maalam makes it for you, even if you don't get money and you die, your children will get the money in place of you. You can eat the maalam's one before you marry and get a wife, and you may not get the money up till the time you die; but if your wife gives birth to children, if you die and leave them, the children will get the money.

And so we have many different kinds of medicines for money, but the people who eat such medicine die and leave the money. If God doesn't create you to be a money man, and you go to force yourself to be a money man, whatever happens, you will not see the sweetness of the money: you will die and leave it. And so many people grow up and they never mind to eat the medicine to get money. And truly, those of us who pray, we pray to God that we want to get money. And if you are someone who prays, you can go to a maalam to ask for money, and what the maalam will give you or show you, you will take the prayer beads and be pulling them and calling some verses from the Holy Qu'ran and saying some other things. If you do that, God will help you get some money. Even if you pull the beads like that for some time and you don't get money, at least your anus will not be open from that time until you die. God will be giving you what you want everyday, but only you won't get it plenty. There is medicine like that, and you will not be a money man and you will not be a poor man. But somebody will be pulling the beads and be getting more, more, and more money. In this case, we say that God was making His aim to give the fellow, and the fellow also asked for it again, and that is why he got more. And it is just like if you are beautiful, and you bathe and put powders and cream on your body: you will look even more beautiful. And so that is how it is. But if God doesn't create you to be a money person, you can eat all the medicines of this Dagbon and you will never get money.

And again, there is a medicine people eat, and it will let someone die three times before he dies all in all. Someone will travel to Kumasi and die. Someone might die in that way, and no one will send home to tell his housepeople that he is dead. Such a fellow will come home and will be a human being. When he goes somewhere and he dies and no one knows him, he can come to his home and be a true human being. But if they send and tell his housepeople, "Such-and-such a fellow is dead," when he goes out, he will go to a place like the Gurunsi land. We call such a fellow *kpinyi*, that is, "die and go out." I have heard that in the olden days, they were using this medicine in the wars, and if someone went to the war and was killed, he could use it to come back home. It worked like that unless they cut off his head, and then he couldn't go out again. That was the reason why they used to cut off each other's heads in the olden days' fighting. And not a war, someone with the medicine can die and go to another place. If he is far from home, he can go home; and if he is at home, he can go to a different place. Someone can die and go to a place like Ouagadougou. I heard of a Dagbana man called Sabaanaa; he was a brother to the Savelugu chief. A truck knocked him and killed him in a section of this town here, at Sakasaka, and they took him and

buried him. I think it was three days and he went out from the grave. When he died and went out, I heard he was at Ouagadougou. Some people saw him there. Those who saw him were in Ouagadougou, and they were Dagbamba and they didn't know he had died. He saw them and greeted them and talked to them, and he thought they had come from home. He told them they should greet his housepeople. I have heard that that fellow is at Ouagadougou, and that is medicine working.

Such medicine, some see it and others hear of it. I have seen it. What I saw was a Gurunsi man who had that medicine. At the time I was about fifteen or sixteen years old, and by then my eyes were open. He came and died at Voggo, and they dug his grave. His mother's children told Voggo people that they were not truly his mother's children, but they were all from the same town, and they had come to search for money. When they dug the grave, they dug it like a well, and the Gurunsis said the grave should be as deep as a well. We Dagbamba don't dig in that way; we dig long holes. The Gurunsis said that as they were going to bury their fellow person, they should cut sticks from a *gaa* tree and put the sticks on the grave. When they put the sticks, they left part of it, and what they left, a human being could pass through it. Then they cut leaves and came and put them on that part. They took the dead body inside and made him sit down, and they put the leaves over him, and then they pushed the dirt and sand into the grave. When they did that, the next day we came there, and the grave was broken. Where he had pressed on the ground to come out, we saw the marks of his hands there. The Gurunsis said he had gone home, and so they were not going to inform home. And they said that, "Any time we go to our home and he knows that we are coming, he will leave that place and go to another place. Because if we see him, he will not be a true person again." And so Gurunsis have that medicine too, but as for them, I think it is their custom, because we Dagbamba think that every Gurunsi dies and goes out. We call Gurunsis who die and go out *kogbe*. But for us Dagbamba, we have to eat its medicine before that will happen.

And so there are many, many types of medicines in Dagbon here, because it is not one kind of medicine alone which can save a person. I have told you about vanishing medicine. I have seen a passenger car falling over, and there were many people in it. As it fell, some of them vanished, but there were others who didn't vanish; the accident was very serious, but they didn't get any wounds. There is another medicine we call *payali*, that is, to be lost from sight. Somebody can have this medicine and stand with you and even talk to you, and you will not see him. I have seen hunters who have this invisible medicine, and they go to the bush with guns. If they go to shoot at bush cows, sometimes a bush cow will run at a hunter;

sometimes he will be killed by the bush cow, and sometimes he will be standing and the cow will not see him. That is why we Dagbamba call that medicine to be lost from sight.

There are some medicines which will let the hunter jump away. And there are some medicines which will let the hunter shout the cow down. Someone can shout “*Kai!*” and the bush cow will fall down. If you are riding a bicycle, someone who has this medicine can shout and you will fall down and be wounded. Someone can be walking and suddenly see a car coming to knock him, and he will shout and the car’s tire will burst. As for the shouting medicine, we call it *tahinga*. It is an armband made of iron. There is a black one called *tahin sabinli*, black shouting, and there is one with white and black we call *tahim pielli*, white shouting. The black shouting can shout and kill someone, and as for the white one, it only shouts for something to fall down. And it is the medicine that makes it so. Truly, there are many types of medicine, and every medicine has also got its types. The jumping medicine too has got many types. Some are tails, and they put bells on it like the bells we put on a horse’s neck; and we call it *bulimbuylinga*. Some are only the tail and some are the tail with the bells. And someone can also eat the jumping medicine with a lock, and he will join it to the tail. We call the medicine *mankubia*, that is, a lock’s child, or a key. They lock it, and when anything is going to happen, if the lock opens, he will jump. If it doesn’t open, he will die. And we have medicine like that, too. And I have seen again, someone will have medicine, and they will take a stick and hit his head, and the stick will break into pieces. We call it *doli tim*, stick medicine. The people with this medicine are many. And I have also seen people who have a medicine called *sutili*. Someone having *sutili* can be sitting down, and they will raise a knife to cut him and it will not cut, and they will push the knife at him and it will not enter. As for that, we have been seeing it.

Some Dagbamba have another medicine called *chilo*. There are many kinds of *chilo*, and not all *chilo* is medicine. You have been seeing *chilo*: it is a powder people put in the eyes. They carry it in a small thing, and then they take a small piece of iron or a nail and put it in the powder and use it to line just inside the eyes. The *chilo* which is common is just to make the eyes look nice and to clean the eyes. But as for the *chilo* which is medicine, when you put it in your eyes, wherever there is a bad person, you can see that bad person. Even if you are in your house and you put it in your eyes, you will know where bad people are. I have heard them say that when they are going to eat the medicine, they use the eyes of a dog, a cat and a hyena. These are some of the things they use to make this medicine. As we are sitting, if you get a dog and you remove the white matter



from the eyes of the dog and put it in your eyes, you will see something which you have never seen. I cannot say if it is lies, but if you want to know whether to trust it or not to trust it, you have to get some white matter from the eye of a dog and put it in your eyes. Someone who says it is lies should do it and see what he will see. What I know is that a dog can be here and see certain things far away which we human beings cannot see. A cat, too, when it is in a room, it sees everything that is happening outside. And people say that in the night, when a hyena comes out from its sleeping place, it sees all animals. If they put animals in a room anywhere, the hyena knows the type of animals and where they are. What is in the eyes is seeing all this. These three animals can see very well, and that is why people remove their eyes to add to the medicine. They put the eyes down to dry, and then they grind them to powder when they make the medicine. When they put the medicine in their eyes, they see bad people.

There are some people we call *bukpahinima*. A *bukpaha* is a wizard. These bukpanhinima: their ways are like witches but they are not witches. They are men. The bukpahinima are witch-catchers, and they protect people. If someone does bad to a wizard, the wizard can also do something bad to him, but it is not that they just catch people and kill them the way witches do. They don't kill like that. They use this medicine to go round in the night, and as witches have been roaming during the night, the wizards see them and knock them with *lebihi*, that is, the sticks we use to make hoes. As they are knocking the witches, it is not that they knock them just for nothing: they knock them because the witches have been catching children and eating. A witch can put the hand inside the stomach of somebody and remove the intestines and put cotton inside, and nobody will know. The person will be there for a week or five days and come to die. And nobody will know except the witch. But if a witch does work and somebody knows it, then that fellow is a bukpaha. This is how it is, and the bukpahinima are catching witches. Sometimes the wizard will catch a witch, and she will say he should leave her, and she will give him something. If he stops her and puts a debt on her, she will say, "I will take such-and-such a thing and pay." Some pay with our local woven cloth, and others pay with money. Sometimes the witch cannot pay, and he will tell her, "Today I have seen you, Tomorrow if I see you like that, you will not be there again: you will be dead." If he tells her that, the witch will stop what she was doing. This is how it is. And so some people also chilo in their eyes and use it to see bad people. They can go out in the night from this Tamale and go to a place like Yendi, and they will come back that very night. If one of them sits here, he can see what is going to happen in Yendi, and sometimes if an old woman who is a witch wants to catch someone at Yendi, the witch-catcher will go and free the

person. And people say they also have small drums. They have small things like Milo tins, the one that is half a kilo, and they use them to sew small drums. And people say that when the witch-catchers want to go out in the night, they beat these drums and they gather. People see the drums, but they don't hear the sound. But those who are witch-catchers hear the sound of the drums, and that is what they use to beat and roam. When they gather, they will separate, sometimes in fives or in twos or as they like, and some will go to Yendi and others will go to other towns. They go like that.

As I have said that the witch-catchers have their own drums, if it is seeing, I have seen their drums with my own eyes. I have seen such a drum in the room of someone who had medicine. It was woven, and it was like a small *gungoŋ*. We have something we call *nuyso*; it's a blue-black powder which is a kind of dye. It's like indigo but it's not real indigo. There are some leaves which people boil, and when it sits, the dark part will be at the bottom: they pour the water and let it stand to dry, and they cut it and sell. Before the white men came, that was our local dye, and weavers and women who spun thread were using it, and they still use it. It was this dye which that man used to smear on the mouth of the small drum. And he had a very small stick which he used to beat it, and he had put it on top of the drum. I have seen it; it is not anyone who has told me. When I saw it, I knew that as many people have been saying the witch-catchers beat small drums, it is true. If not that, why was the small drum hanging in that man's room? And if not the *lebihi*, it is the small drumstick they use to knock the bad people and the witches. The stick they knock someone with can kill, but they don't just knock and kill someone at the spot. As they kill people, they kill with medicine. It's not that they kill and everybody will know that they have killed a person. Sometimes they will knock someone, and he will reach three days before he will die.

When the witch-catchers gather and go out, they smear *chilo* in their eyes and see bad things, and they kill bad people. They don't kill only old women. Sometimes if they don't like someone, they can kill such a person. And they don't kill in the afternoon; they kill in the night. As it is, when they go to a town, it's not everybody who will see them in the town. It's just like if you are staying with a bad person, say, an old woman who is eating people: maybe you won't know. And I want to tell you that when we say an old woman, it is not only an old woman who is a witch. Any woman who has medicine, we call her an old woman, and again we call her a witch. And so what I'm telling you is that someone can be sitting on his fellow person, sitting in a bad way: a person with *chilo* medicine can put it in his eyes and enter a place like the Tamale market and see such a person like that. He will shout at such a woman and she will leave that fellow. Other old

women turn themselves into leopards and will be in the market, and no one sees them. It is only the person with medicine who sees them. When someone puts chilo in his eyes and enters the market, he sees them. When the wizard enters the market, sometimes he will see a bad person, and he will eye that person.

Sometimes the bad person will tell the witch-catcher not to let people know who he is. Sometimes the bukpaha will sit with that person in the market and be talking, and no one will know; it is only the medicines that are talking. Someone who has such medicine and goes to knock people with the medicine stick in the night, we call him bukpaha, a witch catcher. Drummers have also got their bukpahinima, because there are some drummers who also go out and knock people with a stick that is medicine. And they are separate from the real people we call bukpahinima, the ones I have been talking about. That is how it is.

Our Dagbamba chiefs have also got medicine to go out in the night and catch people. A chief can roam and meet wizards, and if the wizard is roaming to do bad, the chief will catch him. Sometimes the chief will drive the man from the town. But it is not common, because it is only a few men who roam in the night. As the chief roams in the night, he meets witches. It can happen like that, and these women will gather their mouths and fall on the chief. If the chief is a useless chief, they will defeat him; but if he is not useless, he will defeat all of them. When it is daybreak, he will call all of them and drive them from the town. The Nanton-Naa who just died, you cannot count the women he has removed from the town. Even if you ask his enemy, the fellow will say it is true. One time he roamed in the night and met women, and there was a young girl with pregnancy among them. The house of that girl was just near where Nanton Lun-Naa's house is. When the chief met the women, all the elder women ran away, and he came and caught the young girl and knocked her buttocks. When it was daybreak, he called all his elders and told them to go to such-and-such houses and call such-and-such women. There were four of them, and he told them, "The way I saw yesterday, this town is not for me and for you. I won't stay with you again." That day those women left the town. And the chief said again, "In that area, getting from today till tomorrow, a young girl will have a miscarriage. I am not going to call her name, but you should put your eyes there. Yesterday I would have killed her, but because there is a child with her, I didn't want to kill her. But she is not going to give birth to that child alive. She will leave that child." The next day, that woman had a miscarriage, and her husband refused her. She was called Fati. And so a chief roams to fight for the town. If he meets a man who roams, and it is that the man is in the town killing people, the chief can drive such a man from the town. But if the man is fighting for the town, it is not a talk. A wizard does not

kill uselessly, unless there is demeaning inside it. The chief and these bukpahinima, they are all fighting for the town. But a woman does not eat medicine and help the town. A witch spoils the town because she kills young boys and kills young girls. If a wizard or a chief meets such an old woman, he can shout at her and free the child. And they will drive such a woman from the town.

As they are doing all this, it is not something that comes out in the open. These medicines that I am talking about, they don't want people who show themselves with the medicine. Medicine doesn't like boasting. We have a proverb that says, "If you have the medicine that says no one should knock you, you should sit down coolly." If you have such a medicine, if you go out and find trouble, they will beat you and the medicine will not work. If you take your mouth and you are showing yourself and entering into other people's quarrels, they will beat you and leave you lying on the ground. But if you are sitting in your house and somebody comes to knock you, that fellow will die. If you hold your mouth and you don't boast, somebody who knocks you is not going to last two minutes. That is how it is. This knife medicine too, if you go to some town and you want to do its work, or you are trying to bring yourself out and show yourself that you are someone who has medicine, the medicine can spoil. Even someone can spoil it. The time you are going to cut yourself, someone who has more medicine than you will just stand there and say you should cut a stick. When you cut, the knife will cut you. And so that one too, you don't have to show yourself with it.

And so medicine does not like boasting or showing. I have already told you that even the person who has medicine doesn't see it. Whether it is with him or it is not with him, he doesn't know unless trouble comes and it removes him from the trouble. The time the medicine helps him or protects him is the time he will know that the medicine is there. Somebody will think that he has eaten the medicine well and it is with him, and something will come to worry him and the medicine will not be there. As the vanishing medicine is there, someone can eat it and get into an accident, and when he vanishes, he will vanish in pieces and get wounds like that. It's not because of anything. It comes from two things. The first one is the hen he killed when he ate the medicine. Maybe when he slaughtered the hen and removed the feathers, there were some scratches on the skin or some of the skin peeled off: when he goes to vanish, he will get some small wounds before he vanishes. If he broke the bones of the hen, his bones will also break before he vanishes. It can come like that. If not that, there are some kinds of dirt the medicine doesn't want: if he has sex with a woman and he doesn't bathe after and he enters the car, even if the vanishing medicine is there, the car will throw him down and he will die and not vanish. And it doesn't like

boasting, “I have got liliga; I have got liliga. As for me, if a car puts me down, I will go. *Kai!*” A car will put you down and nothing will happen; you will lie on the ground. And so medicine doesn’t like boasting or showing. You have seen it; you are telling lies.

And so medicine has got hiding. A witch will never even let you know that she has medicine. Your wife can even have medicine and you will not know it. It is only a few husbands who know that their wives have medicine. He will never know unless he also has it. As the road is outside, can somebody walk there and you will see that person’s footprints? You cannot know, but somebody who is a bad person can know. It is only a bad person who can know a witch. A witch does not use a hen to make medicine. A witch can take a rag to make a hen to kill, and no one will know. It is a man who will come openly and use a hen to make medicine. And so as for a man, if he has a lot of medicine, they don’t hide from calling him someone with medicine, because a man’s medicine does not show that he is a witch. A man with medicine will do some work, and you will know that he has got medicine. But what we know is that he will not call the name of the medicine. The medicine you’ve eaten, that is the one you know its name. And the medicine that you have not eaten, you don’t know its name. It is not good for you to have medicine and be showing its name. The medicine your father has, even if your friend eats it from your own father, your friend will not show you the name. According to our custom in Dagbon here, there is nothing like that. Medicine has no name in Dagbon here. It is there, but no one will take the name of his medicine and show another. Medicine does not show itself like that. If you have medicine, the only person you will show the name is the person you are going to give it to. That is why I say medicine is hiding. If you like, ask somebody who has medicine. That is how it is.

Some people with a lot of medicine have a small round calabash we call *pipyu*: it has a lid, and they rub it and make it smooth. When they eat medicine, they put it inside the calabash. Sometimes when the owner of the calabash goes out, the calabash will go out before him, but you cannot see it. The calabash will be running around, and he roams with it. And sometimes someone will have it, and when he is going to die, the calabash will come openly into the compound and start running around. It is a sign of the medicine, and it is showing that the medicine is there. On that day, the fellow will know that he is going to die. The medicine does that. It’s not every medicine that shows a sign like that. Bad medicines show themselves like that.

And again, medicine doesn’t like fear. There was a maalam at Ziong called Alhaji Amadu. He is dead now. When he was there, a mad man came out and

took a cutlass, and in the whole town, nobody could meet him. *Oi!* Anybody who tried to bluff and stand in his way, the mad man would come at him, and the fellow would see him and run away. At that time this Alhaji Amadu was in his room, and the people were calling, “Alhaji! Alhaji! The mad man is stronger than us. The mad man is coming!” Alhaji came out from his room, and the mad man was standing near the road, and Alhaji was going there. The people were crying, “*Yoo-o, yoo-o*, he will kill Alhaji! *Oh-h!*” Alhaji was getting near the mad man, and the mad man was also coming. And Alhaji just pointed his hand that the man should give him the cutlass, and the mad man came and knelt down in front of him and gave him the cutlass. It was there they caught the mad man, and they beat him until they almost killed him. And because of that, Alhaji was going to get trouble, because in these modern days, they don’t beat a person like that. This Alhaji Amadu was a very heavy maalam, and the talk they brought against him became nothing. Nothing happened to him. A big maalam like that can have some talks from the Holy Qu’ran which he will eat and put inside his mouth, and any bad talk coming or happening will just pass by him. If they are killing people at some place and you have this medicine and go there, no one will mind you. There is another one, and if people are coming to beat you, you will let them return and beat one another till they become tired. All of these medicines are there with the maalam. And so as for medicine, it has no end.

I can even say that all the medicines that the typical Dagbamba have, the maalam also have all of them. In the Holy Qu’ran, every kind of medicine is there. There is nothing that God has not put inside the Holy Qu’ran. God has put everything inside it. Shouting medicine is there, vanishing medicine is there, invisible medicine is there, knife medicine is there, love medicine is there. All these medicines are there. That is why I told you that it is God who made the medicines, and God shows that a town without medicine is not a good place to sit. It’s just that God doesn’t want people to say they are the ones who make the medicines. There is medicine, and God knows it, but He doesn’t say that someone with medicine should take himself to compare to God. It is God who gives the medicines, and whatever medicines the typical Dagbamba have are also with the maalam. The maalam are Dagbamba, but the reason why I say theirs are different is because the maalam are learned in the Arabic way and their medicines work differently. As for the maalam’s medicine, it will take time before it will work. But the typical Dagbamba’s medicine works very fast. We call it black medicine, and it is like burning dry grass: the moment you put fire, the grass will burn quickly. We call the maalam’s medicine white medicine, and it looks as if fire is burning wet grass: it won’t burn quickly; it is just burning little by little, but

it will continue burning until it will all burn off. Or it is like burning the chaff of the rice: the fire is burning under, and you won't see it, but it is burning. That is how the maalam's medicine is. And so I can't see any type of Dagbamba medicine which the maalam don't have.

I last told you that the time the British were here, they removed a certain Savelugu-Naa. There was a maalam's hand inside it. The Savelugu-Naa the British removed was called Mahama Pieyu. What I have heard, they say that a certain maalam did him some wrong, and he called the maalam. He abused the maalam and told him that he would smear chilo in his eyes, and they said that he took chilo, and he ground pepper and put it inside the *chiltoŋ*. And he removed some to smear it on the eyes of the maalam, and they stopped him. And the maalam said, "If you had smeared the pepper in my eyes, it would have been better than what you said. And so you have smeared the chilo on my eyes. And as for you, that is your end. You will not go forward again. And you cannot smear chilo on any person's eyes again."

This is what I have heard, and they said that it did not keep long and this Savelugu-Naa slaughtered a pregnant woman. Some said that. There is a belief that if you give a animal's liver to a pregnant woman, if she eats it, when she comes to give birth, the child will be holding the liver in its hand. And they said he gave a liver to a pregnant woman to eat, and she ate it, and he said he wanted to see if it was true that the child would be holding the liver, and they said he slaughtered the woman and cut open her stomach. This is what they say. And the British arrested him. The British sent some people, and they came and caught him. He walked from Savelugu to Tamale here. And they gathered the chief's children, and they removed all his things and let people see him like that, naked. And they took him and put him in prison. He was carrying feces till the end of the years they let him remain in the prison, and they said he wouldn't eat chieftaincy again, and they removed him from Savelugu. And he too, he was strong, and he put down strength, and they gave him Tong. This is what I have heard.

And it was the work of the maalam. That was why it happened like that. If you do something bad to a maalam, a maalam can do his work. A maalam can be pulling his beads one by one, calling the name of God or some words from the Holy Qu'ran. And these words are the words God says you should call if something is worrying you and you want to harm it. Such words are the words the maalam will be calling while they are pulling the beads. And so the maalam also have their medicine, and they can just do it and throw it on somebody, and the fellow will die. That is how it is. We black people, we all fear a maalam. A chief fears a maalam, A rich person fears a maalam. How much again to talk of

commoners? A maalam is not somebody you can play with. He can let somebody go backwards, or he can let somebody go high. He will let everybody hear of you, and it is God Who has made it so. And so a maalam can pray and do work. And every medicine that the typical Dagbamba have, the maalam also have it. This is how it is.

The maalam's medicines are in two ways. There is one we call *walga*. The maalam will write on a slate and wash the words and gather the water. What they use to write is something we call *tadabo*, and that is the ink they use for the *walga*, and it has many types. They can cook sugar until it turns black, and they will add water and write with the sugar water. They put an empty tin on fire, and then they drop some cubes of sugar, about ten or fifteen, and it will burn. When they add the water, that is all. It looks just like coffee. During the *Ramadan* month, you will see small children carrying some in a little pan and selling: they put ginger and pepper inside, like ginger beer, and people drink it. And so maalam do the same thing with the sugar so that it will change color. They burn it and pour it inside bottle to make the sugar ink. If they want, they can take guinea corn or rice to cook *tadabo*. There is a tree in the bush we call *nyaringa*, and they can take the seeds to cook it. And there are some leaves they use, too. All of them, they burn them until they smell and become black. When sugar was not there, they had many ways to cook it. When the maalam writes and washes, he will give you some of the water to drink, and you will take some of it and put it into the water you bathe with. There is another one we call *sabli*; it is a talisman. The maalam will write some words on paper and fold it and tie it with a white string, and you will give it to a cobbler to sew. Any time you are going out, you can put it in your pocket.

Maalam have also got many medicines to make people like you. We call it *muhimba*, and it has also got its types. If you have such medicine and you go out, people will just be looking at you and liking you. If you are going to meet a chief whom you don't know, he will like you. Women will be running after you. Children too will like you and follow you. There will not be any day when you are looking for something and you won't get it. If you want a maalam to make it, he will pray and make it plenty and give to you. Sometimes the maalam will ask you to let the cobbler sew it with the skin of a cat, or a fish, or a monkey, or a white skin of a sheep or goat: the cobbler will sew it like that. They have many different ones, and if you go to ask a maalam, he will know which one to give you to be helping you throughout your life. There are even some which are only words a maalam will give you to be saying, and people will be liking you. And as for the love medicine, *be yum' ma*, the maalam have got the very strongest one, and you



can let them give it to you, but it is only that you will have some small expenses before they give it.

If you want to go to a maalam for medicine, your way of greeting will be different from how you greet a typical Dagbana who has medicine. In our way of living, you will give the maalam cola, that is, money, and say, “Take this cola and buy kerosene.” As you have told him to buy kerosene, it is kerosene which he will use for his lantern. When he sits in the night, he will read and he will beg God. When the maalam begs God, God will feel shy of him. And so you find some money and give it for kerosene, and the money will be more than for the kerosene. You will give him like that, and when you say he should take it for kerosene, he will know what is inside it. Even if you don’t tell him that you are coming to give him some work, he will know that you are bringing some work to him.

And there are even some medicines which maalam have for drummers. If you are beating drums and the drum is not sounding well, there are certain maalam you can go and ask for medicine. The one the maalam have for beating drums is written on paper. When they write it and give it to you, you remove the head from your drum and put the paper inside the wood; then you lace the drum and cover it again. When you do that, whenever you beat the drum, everybody will like your beating. And so it is not only the chiefs and the typical Dagbamba who have medicine. The maalam also have it.

And so a wizard is someone with medicine. And a person who catches bad people is someone with medicine. And a person who frees people is someone with medicine. And a person who treats sickness is someone with medicine. And all that I’ve told you is inside the talk of medicine, and there is still more, because medicines are many, and they do a lot of work in Dagbon here. Some are good and some are bad. Somebody will eat medicine from his friend and will not like the medicine he has eaten: everybody has got the type of medicine he wants. What I have shown you are some of them. I have shown you the strong ones and the important ones, and tomorrow, if day breaks, I will talk again. The talk of medicines enters into many talks in Dagbon here. I myself don’t have medicine; I don’t have trust in it. But if I am going to take the talks of this Dagbon and show to you, then it is good that you know something about medicines and the work that medicine does. And how I have talked about it today, I think it will do. And I think we will stop here and tomorrow I will tell you about some of the medicines drummers have.