

**Chapter III–22:**  
***The Work Women Do in a House and How They Help One Another***

Today we are going to talk about how Dagbamba women live, how they help each other, and their way of life, and how some of them are bad. As I have already told you something about their work on the part of cooking and trading, there are some other types of work in our Dagbon here, and it is our Dagbamba women who do the work and help one another. And this talk falls on the part of the typical Dagbamba, and how we were living in the olden days.

On the part of cooking, in the olden days the women had a lot of work. Today we have grinding machines, but in the olden days our grinding machines were what we call *neli*. It is a flat stone they get and bring, and there is another stone they use to grind, and we call it *nekaŋa*. And this is what Dagbamba were using in the olden days to do their work in the house. If there was a calabash full of millet, one woman would finish grinding it alone. Any woman, on the day your cooking comes, you will take the grinding stone to grind your millet or guinea corn. And in Dagbon, we don't quarrel over a grinding stone: if you don't have one, you can go to your friend's house and grind your millet or guinea corn. After you grind it, that is what you will use to cook the food.

And we have a mortar we call *toli*, and this mortar is the work of women. If they are going to pound the food, they put it inside this mortar. Any food they are going to pound, like *sakoro* — *fufu*, it is inside this mortar. They will take heavy pestles and pound it. And as it is not all houses which have a grinding stone, if this grinding stone is not in the house, and the woman can't get one, when the man fetches the corn or guinea corn and gives it to the woman, she can take it and put inside the mortar and pound it. After she pounds it, she dries it. And then she will get a sieve and sieve it. And this is what women were doing in the house.

And again, in our house-living, it is the men who do the building work, but plastering the walls is the work of women. If the women are going to do this work, they will go and their neighbors' housepeople that tomorrow they have this and that work to do, and they want their help, and say, "On such-and-such a day, come and help me to plaster my house." If they are not many in the house, if there are children, they will send children to greet their neighbors. And the children will be going to the neighboring houses to tell the people. And by that time, these women will tell the husband, "Today I am giving people work to do, and they will be coming. And so I want you to help me on the part of food." If there are yams, the man will give out yams. If there is guinea corn, the man will give out. What

the man gives out, this is what the women will cook. If it is guinea corn and it is well cooked, the women will grind pepper and salt and oil and mix it with the guinea corn. And those people who will be coming from neighboring houses, everybody will bring a bowl, and the time they finish the work, the women will cut the food and put in each of their bowls. And the husband too will fetch the soup and put into each of their bowls. And he will stand and greet them, and say, “God should not allow a human being to be alone.” And so if women are not many in a house and they want to do this plastering work, this is how they will go and greet their neighbors’ housepeople to help them.

If the women are many in the house, if they are going to plaster the walls, they will get big pots like the ones we use to store water, and they will stand them outside. They will go and fetch water, and come and fill all the pots with water. This size of pot in your room here, John, you see that it stands and will reach up to your waist: if the man is going to build four rooms, the women will get about six of this type of pot and fill all with water. By that time, the young men will come outside, and they will dig the ground. After the young men dig the ground, the women will be spreading water on the sand and dirt and the men will be mixing it. We call it *tari*, and it is our local Dagbamba plaster. As for mixing the plaster, the women can do it themselves, but if there is a man, he will do it for them. If they want the plaster to stand well on the wall — I’m talking about the typical Dagbamba — they will go and get something we call *zawurugu* and add it to the sand and dirt. This *zawurugu* is what remains after they beat millet. And they will get cow feces and add it. And there is a type of leaf in the bush we call *beeni*. It is something that is slippery. They will get it and put it in the water, and if they put a handful of this leaf in the pot, you will see that all the water will become thick, and it will catch the wall hard. They will fetch this water and be spreading it on the sand and dirt and mixing it. When they finish mixing the plaster, that is the end of the man’s work. If there are yams, these men will go and bring the yams to the women, and the women will also put the yams in a pot on fire. And the women will be doing their plastering work. Every woman will take a broken calabash and cut some of the plaster in her calabash, and come and stand by the wall. The women will use their hands to take the plaster and spread it on the wall. And so they use their hands as a trowel, and they will be spreading the plaster on the wall in that way until they get to the end of all the walls. And after they finish the plastering, they will come and sit on the yams that were cooking, and eat how they want. If women are many in the house, this is what they do.

If the women finish this work, they will think about putting cement on the floors of the room. And in that work too, they also greet others that they should

come and help beat the gravel. This is the work of women and not of men. If a man goes into it, then it is on the part of food. And if the women greet others to come help them, and they come, the food I have already talked about is the same food they will cook. But those who want to live happily with their neighbors will cook porridge, and everybody will bring her bowl, and they will fetch the porridge and put it in the bowls. And the work they do, we have a stick we call *sampani*: it is bent, and it's flat on the bottom, and it's heavy, and it has a place where someone can hold it. They use this *sampani* to beat the floor plaster down on the floor. And if it is the compound, if any part of the compound is spoiled, or if they build a new house and it has a compound, it is the same way they will beat it. And they will greet people to come and help, and it is the work of women.

If they finish making the walls and the floor, there is another work. We have something we call *dasandi*; it is the pods of a tree. You know the *doo* tree, that is, the *kpalgu* tree: I have told you how we make *dawadawa* or *kpalgu* to use in cooking. When they remove the yellow seeds from the pods, they will take the pods and put into a pot. Then they will add water and fill it and leave it to stand for three days. The pod shells will cry into the pot, and the whole pot will be filled up. And by that time, the women will come and remove the pods from the pot, and the water that is left we call *ɲam*. They will fetch this water into a large calabash, and they will take a very small calabash and be fetching the water and throwing it against the walls. They can throw this water against the walls for about three days. And as the sun is beating it, you will see that it will catch the wall very strongly. It will look as if they have put cement on the wall, and it will not fear the rain again. And if it is inside the room, they can throw the *kpalgu* water against the wall for about a week, and it will catch the wall; and when the room becomes dry, it will be brownish red. And this is the work typical Dagbamba women do on the part of their houses.

And what I'm saying, if it is the real Dagbamba living in the villages, this is what they do. Or even a *maalam* living in a village, as he is there, he is getting the way we live, and this is what his wife or wives will also do. But if it is we who are sitting in this town, the women's work in plastering the walls and floors of the house is not part of her work. It is with us men now, and we have given it to masons. The town woman will not do it. If you want to tell her to do it, people will see you and her. And so in the town here, plastering is the work of men. And as for how the women make the *kpalgu* water, if someone does not plaster, will she put the *dasandi* inside a pot? And again, here in the town we have the grinding mills, and the women will not be doing the grinding work I have talked about. Even this *neli*, the grinding stone, in this town you can go to about fifty or

a hundred houses, and you won't find one in any of the houses. But in the villages, they still use it.

And now it is coming back to us in the town, and this is what we are all going to be doing now. Our elders talked, and they told us that we shouldn't leave our customs. And they said we would come back to our customs. And now we have taken it. We can't buy cement again: it's not there in the market. And the grinding machines don't have spare parts, and so we are looking for the *neli*, too. And so what our elders talked, it's true, and it's very strong. All our old talks, we are going back to search for them. This is how it is. How it is coming now, if we don't look for our old things, those of us here, the suffering we are eating today will look better than the suffering of those who will be coming. And so we will go into our old talks again. A person gets a good thing to put down for those following. This is how it is.

And again, in our Dagbon here, the weaving of cotton is the work of women. And its work is not a small work. The work of cotton is plenty. There is something we call *guntɔbu*: it's like a small bow, and they use cotton thread in tying it. When they take cotton and put it down on the ground, the woman takes the bow and will be whipping the cotton, and it will be spreading and separating, and will be lying at one place. As the cotton was round, when she whips it, it will be spreading and separating, and it will be falling on one part of the ground. This is what she will do until the seeds are all removed from the cotton. And when she gets a lot of cotton, she will get a reed and be rolling the cotton against the reed and putting aside. The reeds will be collecting the cotton, and she will be putting them down.

When she wants to spin the cotton, she puts it inside a calabash we call *guntarga* — it's a bit flat. There is a white powder she puts and spreads inside the calabash. We call it *kalo*. To prepare it, they burn bones to become white ashes, and if all the bone doesn't burn, then they will grind the ashes to make all of it like a powder. Then they sprinkle a little water on it and mash it into a compact ball and put it in the sun to dry, and it's like the balls of medicine they sell in the market. When she wants to spin the cotton, she takes this ball and will be rubbing the inside of the calabash. There is a stick we call *jeni*, and she will take this stick and spin it inside the calabash. You will see the *jeni* dancing round inside the calabash, and the cotton will be winding around it. As she spins, she will be touching her hand against the *kalo* on the inside of the calabash. Then she will spin the *jeni* and pull the thread up and follow it with her hand, and she will be taking her hand and touching the powder and spreading it on the thread. When she moves her hand up the thread, you will see that more cotton will follow and

wind on the jeni. And I think that the kalo helps her to keep the threads from joining together and mixing, and it will let the threads stand separate. It's just like the way people working in a bank will be touching their fingers to something when they count money. I have not seen anyone spinning and not using this kalo, but I think that some women spin and don't use it. It's just that spinning and using it is better. And if the cotton is plenty, she may spin about six sticks of it. As the women spin cotton, there are two types they spin, and they have names. We have *kambu* and *sobu*. *Kambu* is long and thin, and it is not strong. And *sobu* is thick and stronger than *kambu*. When the weavers want to weave, it is *kambu* that they spread, and it is *sobu* that they put inside the shuttle that they throw. If *sobu* is not there, they cannot weave. And so the women weave two types of thread. This is how it is.

When a woman spins cotton, she will send it to the market to sell, and she will use the money to buy salt, pepper, fish, and other things that will help her in the house on the part of cooking. Sometimes, too, if a woman has this cotton, she will send it to a weaver's house, and the weaver will make it into strips, and the women will take it and put it down. As she is keeping the cotton down, in Dagbon here, when a Dagbana dies, whether a man or a woman, they will take this cotton cloth and wrap the dead body. And so it is this cotton they use to bury people. Formerly, all this was what we knew to be the work of women. From long ago up to now, women in Dagbon had a lot of work inside the house.

And so the way women live in this Dagbon, we know that all the work inside the house is done by the women. And how they live with one another, they help each other. If there are many women in your house, every day is their happiness. And what I have seen about how they help one another, they help one another inside the house and they help one another outside. And other women also help them. There are some who fetch water and give to one another. And there are others who help one another on the part of cooking. And it is all help.

As we have been holding this talk about how a man will marry many women, I have told you that you can't take your way of life to compare it to ours. And so this talk I am giving you is on the part of somebody having many wives. The woman who marries a man alone, she doesn't want to mix with any other woman again. There are some women, if you have wife, and you are searching for a woman and she gets to know that you already have a wife, she won't agree. As for her, she wants to be only one in the house. That is her life. As for such women, it is only one-one of them, not all of them. As the women are different, when they are many in the house, some of them don't like it. But some of them — many of them — also like to marry men who have already wives in the house.

They take it that if anything happens in the house, they will get help from the other wives to do everything that they need. And that is how it is.

If they gather like that in a house, the way they trade, some of them will group together and trade. The next day, this one will be in charge of making something and they will help one another. You see how Dagbamba woman sell the shea butter? This shea butter, when they are going to make it, if they are up to four, all of them will gather, and they can make it easily. The next day, if another woman is going to prepare hers, and they will group again to do it for her. If they are four, and if all of them are not doing the same trading the other one has, they can group to help her.

And so on the part of how women live and how they help their fellow friends, if it is daybreak, too, a woman can get a bad thing. Maybe at one woman's parents' house, there is some bad thing there, and it is that somebody has died. let's say, her mother dies or her father dies. When they come to tell this woman about the dead person, she will go alone to the funeral house. If this woman is going, the women with whom she is living in the house will also get up and follow her footsteps. All of them will take their veils and put on their heads and group together to go to the funeral. If she is friendly with many women in her area, about twenty or forty women can also just get up and follow her footsteps. They go because they are free with her. If it is in a different town, they will board transport and go for the funeral. And if they are coming to perform the final funeral again, they will group and go together again. Grouping together like that helps them. But as for the one who is alone with her husband, if something happens in her house, the man holding her will ask his sister to add herself to his wife and go, or you daughter or your son. It is because your wife is alone. That is the way. And so many women like it that they are many in the house because they know that if something happens, they have people to help them.

And the way they help one another on the part of funerals, they also help one another on the part of weddings. Let's say a woman's daughter is going to marry. When they are going to wed her daughter, no one can count the things she buys for her. And the women who are in her house, too, someone can come out with a scarf, someone can bring a water-drinking bowl, someone can come with a veil, someone who can afford will come out with a cloth, someone with no means will come out with at least a small amount of cedis. And they will say, "This is what we are bringing in to help you to wed your daughter." If this child comes to bring forth, on the day of the naming, her fellow friends will also be coming out with many things, and they will be helping her on the part of all her work in the house. And this is how women help one another in a house and help one another outside, and others outside help them. And this is how it is.

And a woman will be there, and her way is that when it's daybreak, she will gather all her friends and tell them what will be good for them to do so that one day they will not be ashamed. Not to be ashamed in which way? They can gather, and they will be giving some small money so that when one of them is in trouble, they can give that money to that woman. They can contribute about forty or sixty cedis, and they will be putting it down. If there is an naming with one of them, they can get the money they put down and give it to that woman. If it is a funeral, they can give the money to the one who has to perform the funeral. Or when a festival is coming, the women in that group can come together and buy a type of cloth which will be the same for all of them, and they will sew it and use it for all of them in that group to wear the same cloth on the festival day. Our Dagbamba women have been doing that because of a festival. When Damba is coming, they can do that. Or if it is a funeral, they can do that too. The women who have one mouth with their fellow friends, they are the ones who do that.

And I can tell you today that what women were holding on the part of helping one another, now it has become more than that. My new wife is in two groups, and she pays a lot of cedis every month to each group. There are forty women in one company, and they give two hundred cedis a month each, and there are twenty in the other one, and they give a hundred cedis a month each. [1981] That is what they are doing. And my wife even says that on her part, the amounts are small. There are some places in Dagbon where it's even more than that. It comes from the means. As we are sitting, we are all more than one another, and the women too are like that. Some get more than others, but they all contribute the same. What they get inside their getting, that is where they are going to show that one gets more than the other. What they give to the groups is the same, but as they are many, the group will help them more than any one person.

About six months ago, when my wife was going to wed her daughter, what her friends gave her, if it is not I who is saying it but somebody is saying it, you will say that it's a lie: her friends gave her six big boxes and said that she should receive it give it to her daughter. And after the expenses for these boxes, the money that was left was 20,700 cedis, and they gave it to her to pay for her expenses. The groups just came and gave her all this. Apart from that, women who are not in her company were just coming to her because her daughter was going to be wedded, and anyone who comes will say, "Get twenty cedis" or "Get a hundred cedis" or "Get fifty cedis." She received twelve half-pieces of cloth, but as for the veils and the scarves, I don't know their number.

I can tell you that in Tamale here, women have got a lot of expenses. Two weeks from Sunday, if God gives us health, we will go and see what they are

going to do. One woman in their company is going to wed, and all the forty women in the group are going to sew new dresses. As some of them are more than one another on the part of what they can afford, maybe fifteen or twenty of them will wear one type of cloth, and those who are left will wear another type of cloth. Some of them have already sewn their dresses, and yesterday my wife has gone to Accra to buy more cloth. The type she is going to buy is one cloth and its top — Yoruba style — and each cloth she is going to buy is seven hundred cedis. When she comes, they will sew those, too. When the day comes, your eyes will see. You will snap photos until you become fed up.

But I want you to know that as for our Dagbamba women, their sense is not like a man's sense. There are some women, the way they live is to help others. And there are some women, they take their sense to get for themselves. Such a woman, if she is in a man's house, it is that she wants the man to get for herself. And the one who helps her house is better than the one whose sense is just to get things from her husband. Today as we are sitting, on the part of women now, every woman wants to come out and people will say that she has got. And so how they live, they bluff one another. There can be a woman in the house, and she has no time to bluff. But as there are many women in the house, there will be some who like to bluff. And those who bluff, they bluff to show themselves on those who don't bluff. One can say, "I've got this; you haven't got this." On the part of their clothes, and their necklaces, and all their things, they bluff one another.

Because of that, there is no woman who will collect her fellow friend's cloth and wear it today and tomorrow. If it is that something is happening and a woman hasn't got, she can beg and wear her fellow friend's cloth. But if she should beg and wear today and beg and wear tomorrow, there will be trouble inside it. This begging and wearing will open her anus; she is showing her secrets. If she hasn't got, no one will know; but if she is begging, she is showing that she hasn't got. And as all her anus is with her friends, they will be abusing her. There can be a woman who hasn't got, and she will not open her anus and show to somebody; and there will be a woman too who hasn't got, and she will be opening her anus for her fellow friends to see. And it is in all their bluffing that we get to know that one woman is better than another woman. We can know from the woman whether she is staying in the house because of her husband or whether she's staying just because she's staying.

And so in our Dagbon, we have good women and bad women, and they are with us. There can be a woman who is always thinking that she will just be getting so that her friends will come to her and she will be giving out to them. When another woman wants to complain about anything, this woman will tell her

not to complain, and she will just be there to help her fellow friends. We see it with men and we see it with women. If such a woman has got plenty, she gives anyone who comes to her. She doesn't want to hear anyone complain. If somebody comes to her to talk and complain, she will just say, "Here it is. Take it and go." If something is worrying somebody too much, before that person says the thing that is worrying her, she will just give it. If somebody comes to borrow, if the person pays or doesn't pay, she doesn't mind. She only wants to remove her friends from trouble. She is doing good, and she is doing it alone, and her talk resembles the good work of those who do it in a group. And there are women like that in Dagbon here, many of them. And this is what I've seen about how our Dagbamba women help one another.

And the women I've talked of who are bad, there are many types of them. The woman who doesn't want her husband but she just wants to be in a house, that is a bad woman. The woman who only wants to bluff her fellow friends, that is a bad woman. There can be a woman who doesn't want sex with her husband; she is a bad woman. There are some women who go out and borrow money, and they make their husbands pay for it. There are some women who will just sit inside the house and their only work will be cooking, and there are some too whose only work will be that when it's daybreak, they will take their legs and go around the town. There are some women, their only work is when it's daybreak, they will go out and be entering into the matters of people. Such a woman will take some talk from her house and go outside and tell somebody. As for such a woman, she can cause trouble between families in a town, and we say that such a woman is not a wife. And there can be a woman, when it's daybreak, she will take her leg and go out and be going around looking for men. Somebody will just wave the hand at her, and she will go and enter the room. Do you know what will happen? I will not tell you. Take your sense and know what will happen.

And such women, some of us have them. And some Dagbamba don't have them, because they and their wives hear the mouth of one another. And so if you have a wife, you will know whether or not this woman is a bad woman. If you are quarreling with her, before you talk once, she will talk two times. We say of such a woman that her eyes are not satisfied with her husband. It is good when a woman hears what her husband talks, but if a woman talks many talks before her husband talks once, it means that she has no trust in her husband. You should think in your heart: her husband has talked and she has not heard; do you think that her fellow women can talk and she will hear? And so what we see on the part of women who are bad, it is that they are there for themselves, and we see it from their living in the house with their fellow friends and with their husbands. And

what I have been talking about is how a good woman will be thinking good things for the whole house, and she will be doing good works for her husband and for her fellow friends she is living with in the house. And that is how they help each other and they help us the men too.

And so all the work in the house is for the women, and really, it is work they are working. I last told you that if I want, I can say that our Dagbamba women work harder than us the men. And what I have said about how women help one another with their work, when they are many in the house, you will see that their hearts are white with the work. The women like the work they are doing in the house. They like it, and that is why they stay in the house and do the work. If they didn't like the work, they wouldn't come to sit with their husbands. You can't catch a live bee and put it into a hole; it will come out. Those women who don't want to stay in a house, don't you see them walking on the street? If you bring such a woman into your house, even if you let her lie in a room, and you tell her not to be doing anything, and you will just be fetching cool water from a refrigerator and be pouring it on her, she will run away from the house. She will run away because she doesn't want it. And so those who stay in the house, fetch the water, wash the clothes, prepare the food, sweep the compound, bathe the children, and do all sorts of things, they like it. Even if it worries the women, they like it. The work you like is the work that worries you. That is how it is. If you want a certain work among many works, and they give you that work, if the work is too much, you can't say anything because it is you who wanted that work. If it worries you, you like it. That is why it worries you; if you didn't want it, it wouldn't worry you.

And if we men say that we don't know what they get from the work, they themselves know what they get from it. There is no one who will be doing something when there is no benefit from it. When someone with sense is doing work, he knows what he is getting from it and that it is making him well. Someone will have sense, and be doing some work, and a fool will come and look at the work and say that even he the fool would not agree to do this type of work. But if someone with sense is doing some work, it is because his heart wants the work. That is why he's doing it. If not because of what you want, no one will see your foolishness. That is how it is. And so we see that the women like the work they are doing, because truly, no one can cheat a woman. A woman has got a lot of sense, and it is a broad sense, and the sense of a woman is too much to let somebody carry her to his house and just be cheating her. Or don't you see this?

From the day they give birth to a woman up to the time she grows up and comes to sit in a man's house, if you watch, you will see that women have got a

very wide sense. There is no forgetting within a woman's sense. From the time your wife was a little girl and you were chasing her, up to the time you marry her, up to the time you bring forth about twenty children and both you and the woman are very old, you shouldn't think that the woman has forgotten anything of the past. From the time you were chasing her to bring her to your house, she will still be remembering everything you have ever done to her. Women never forget about that. If you have not watched them, you won't know this. And so I'm telling you that sometime you will be having a talk with a woman, and you will think that you are deceiving her or that you are getting a way of talking that will let you overcome her; she will be picking the important talks which you are bringing out, and she will keep them down in her mind. The day she will have a quarrel with you, she will open them all back to you. She will ask you some questions, and you are the actual person who ever said those very questions to her. And you will not be able to answer those questions. Someone who has no sense cannot ask such questions.

And so we take it that women are very sensible, and their sense is a very big sense, but it is just that God has just given them to us the men to hold them and have control over them. We have all grown up and met it. It is you the man who brings a woman to your house and puts her into her work, and it is God Who gives you the woman. And so these women who are working in the house, what they are getting in their work, they have it. And so they like the work. And it is God Who put them into that work. As you are sitting down now, didn't it ever happen to you? Sometimes you will say you are going to do something, and it happens that you change to a different thing. And how it happens to you, it isn't that you yourself have changed your mind, but it is God's work. Haven't you ever pulled something out and said you would give it to a certain person, but you gave it to a different person. The one was there for whom you first bought the thing, but you changed and gave it to a different person. That is how God wants it to be. It is God Who will let you give it to the second person. And it isn't that you have refused the person you first thought of; it is God Who refused to give it to him. And so if you have ever seen this happen to you, you will know that if God says you should do a certain work, you have to work it. And so our Dagbamba women, we bring them to our houses, and they have a lot of work that they do. But if they didn't want the work, they wouldn't stay in the house. And if the work worries them, it is because they want it. They know what they are getting from it, and it worries them because they want it.

And so we men don't know what the women get from the heavy work they do in the house, but the women know. And what we take to know what is inside a

woman's heart is that we look at their work. It's not that they don't talk. All the talks about women come from them, because it is they who tell us. But a woman will not talk about house talks in Dagbon. And so you can take it that insofar as you cannot know what is inside a woman's heart, you just have to take her work and look at it. As for this talk I will talk today, a woman will not talk it. I want you to know that if a commoner sits in his house and gets the truth, if he goes to the chief's house, the chief will not take the truth and give to him. And so if a woman wants, her truth can be as big as anything, or her good works can be more than anything, it is her husband who is going to see it and say it to his friends. And so we men have a way to talk this talk about women. But a woman has no way to talk about a man's talks. This is how it is. You won't see yourself, but somebody will see you. And truly, if you come to this Dagbon and ask a woman about how women are living with men, she will say, "Go and ask a man. A woman cannot know the house talks, only the man." And in Dagbon here, even if you ask a woman about house matters and how women live together, the woman will even say, "Go and ask the men. They are for me; I'm not for myself."

Every woman will say that, and I have seen it. At one time I was working for the local council, and I was following the health inspector. If we entered a house, if we didn't see a man, we would ask the women to tell us the number of people in the house. Every woman would say she doesn't know the number because she doesn't know the people in the house. And we would say, "All right, it doesn't matter. Count your fellow women." And she would tell us that she doesn't know. She would say that only the man knows. And it was because we had patience: if we didn't have patience, we would have been quarreling with them. We would enter many houses, and all the men had gone to farm, and only the women were there. Whatever you asked the women, they wouldn't show you. Truly, if some women in some towns have got some talks they will talk, in Dagbon the women hear the mouth of the husband. And so the talk I am talking and giving to you, in Dagbon it is we men who can talk it; a woman has no way to talk it. This is how it is.

And if you show this talk to a woman, she will agree that it is correct. If not, then she is not a Dagbana woman. You will ask her, "Has a Dagbana woman got a say in her house without her husband?" Even if a different woman who comes from another town to ask the woman or her fellow woman in the house, and the husband is not there, and she is able to talk without the husband, she will say that she cannot talk unless the husband is there. And so you can take it and you can write it in the book that truly, where you have gone to learn, in that place the women still hear the mouths of their husbands. And so how I am going to talk

about the women here, there are many talks inside my talking. And as I am talking about the women here, some of my talks will go and touch the talks of women from other towns. This is how it is.

And so this talk is not only with Dagbamba: it's with all women. But women are not one. And so as I have talked of their good works and am coming to talk of their bad works, it is only some women I am talking about. Don't you think that some people's wives are in the market? And some people, their wives climb and enter trucks? And some people, their wives go round and carry things on their head and sell? And some people, their wives sit in front of the house and sell? There can be someone who does not allow his wife to go outside, and he's not a maalam, but it is worries that worry him. He doesn't want his wife to go out and somebody will come to search for her to befriend her. But how it comes, you and your wife will sit down and choose the type of trading she wants. And another woman can control her husband, and she will choose the trading she wants. Apart from that, a woman will be sitting down, and a man will go out and work and come and bring everything to the woman. A man will go and work the white man's work and get his pay and come home and give the money to the woman sitting down. It is his white heart. There are some men too, the women control them and collect the money. What a person wants, this is what kills him or takes his things. If you love your wife, you will take everything and give her. And so it isn't that everybody's way is the same in Dagbon here. And it isn't that we are just taking the women and holding them. That is why I told you that you can't take a live bee and put it into a tree trunk or a hole. This is not its way, and if you don't understand the talk I am going to talk, then it will be that hearing has not heard. If you write what I say, and hearing has heard, it won't worry your town's women.

And so if you ask and I talk to you, you should look and see the one that will follow your town's one, and if it will be good on your part and make you gain, then you should follow it. And if I talk to you and you know that if you take it to your town, it won't be good, then you can leave it. You can say, "I will take this one and come and join this one to do my work." And if you want, don't leave anything out. Have you ever seen me talking only one talk to you? When I talk, I talk something and add to it. And so you can sit down and ask the question that will bring all the talks, and I will talk one way and come and add another way. And if I talk to you like that, it will be good. And so when I talk some talk and you know that it will spoil your work, you have to tell me and I will hear. And it will come to show that you have asked me a question. If I have also got an answer, I will answer you. And if I don't have an answer, and you tell me, "If I

take this and do that, this is what will happen,” and I will think in my heart, and I will answer you. When I come and I talk, maybe sense will come to my heart. But sometimes someone will open the mouth and be talking talks, and he will be talking foolishness and talking sense, and it will all be entering one another. That is how it is. And so you should hear what I am telling you and know that this talk is not one talk, and I am separating it for you.

And so again, as I have said that in Dagbon here, a woman hears the voice of her husband, truly, the women in a house sometimes gather and talk on certain things they want to get. When they gather and make one mouth and come, we let them do what they want. You will have your housewomen, and you will go out and come back. Your wives will gather and come into your room, and your children’s wives will add themselves, and they will say, “This our house, we have come to meet what you have taken to give us to hold. But this is what we are also going to take and tell you, and it will be good for all of us. ‘You fall and I will fall’: that is what makes the playing of dogs to be good.” Have you heard the proverb they have given? When dogs are playing, don’t you ever stand and watch them? One will ride on the other one, and the other one will fall down, and then it will also get up and ride on the first one, and the first one will also fall. That is making the playing sweet. A dog will not play with its friend and only one of them will be falling down. Even if it is a big dog and a small dog, you will see that the big dog will put the small dog down, and then the small dog will get up and put the big dog down. Haven’t you seen it? That is how it is. And so if the women come and say, “Fall and fall makes the playing of dogs good,” then at that time, you will agree to what they are saying. Someone can talk and say, “How we are in our house here and we are working, and you the man are bringing your talks on the part of our work, our work even wants to be more than that.” And if you watch and come and see their work, and it is something that is going to help you the man and the women, you will let them be doing that work. And so “Fall and fall repairs the playing of dogs.” The women have their talks like that, and we hear their talks. And they also hear our talks. We don’t stand that the women should always be hearing our talks. This is how it is.

And again, if it is on the part of a young wife, maybe she is very young, or she has her senior cowives in the house, and maybe she is not even sleeping in her own room: someone like that will feel shy to just come out straightforward and talk. Someone like that, sometimes you will see such a women grinding on the grinding stone and singing a song to make her complaint. In the whole Dagbon here, when the women were grinding on the grinding stone, they used to sing. And truly, all the songs are proverbs. It can happen like that, and on the part of a

woman and her cowife, she will be grinding and singing the proverb songs. As for that, it has no end. And even now as we are sitting, as the grinding stone is not there again, they still give proverbs to each other like that. As it is that it is songs she is singing and saying the talk that is with her. And sometimes they will be singing and come to abuse one another inside it. I have already told you about proverbs, and we have taken it to say that someone who cuts proverbs is somebody who wants trouble. And so we say it like that. And it is on the part of the women that we say it, because they bring it. And if someone comes to say this about our Dagbamba living, I cannot argue with it. Our women know the way they are going to say the talk that is with them, and we will be hearing it. And sometimes there is sense inside it, and sometimes there is trouble following it.

And so a woman is a good person and a woman is a bad person. A woman is like the tongue, and again, a woman is like the heart. Why do I say that? If someone tells you to get meat, very nice meat, and then to get bad meat, you should get the heart. I'm talking about the meat that a woman resembles. This heart: it is the heart that spoils, and it will bring some bad talk and give it to the tongue; it is this heart which is white, and takes a good talk and gives it to the tongue. And so bad meat: that is the heart; good meat: that is the heart. And again, bad meat: that is the tongue; good meat: that is the tongue. That is how a woman's way of living is. And you know that sense and sense, there are different types of sense. God has given us men some sense, and our sense is different from their sense.

This is why I have told you that women don't forget. You will talk with your wife, and after the talking, you will forget the talks you had with her. But from the time you were searching for her to take to your house, and you were talking to her, she doesn't forget any of it. Whether she is educated or not, she won't forget any of it. And if there were no sense, forgetting would forget. But if a woman gives birth to a hundred children, even if she is not educated and not a maalam to be able to write, she knows the day you slept with her and she didn't pass menses and became pregnant. The woman knows it, and can show all the days from her mouth. If her children are twenty, she knows the months and days on which she gave birth to them. If these children are many, and they grow up to twenty-five or thirty or forty years each, if this woman is still there, you can come and ask her, and she will show you the days and years she gave birth to the children. If you want to know your birthday in Dagbon here, you should go and ask your mother. If your mother is there, she will show you the time. This is how it is.

And I want you to know that if you hear them come to say that “This person doesn’t forget,” then you should know that the person has got sense, and he is a bad person. This is how it is. Somebody like that is holding things inside the stomach. He is holding bad talks and waiting for a bad thing. He wants something bad to happen so that he will take what is in his stomach and ask you, and be free. And so a woman, as she does not forget, she is waiting for the bad thing to come, and that is why her sense is bad. She doesn’t hold her sense with a white heart. She is holding it with suspicion. Somebody who holds everything like that is waiting for a bad thing. And when that bad thing comes, she will use that sense to do bad.

And so even if the sense of a woman wants, it can fill a room, but it is a man who is for her, and it is God Who has brought it. If not that, a woman has more sense than a man, much more. It’s not that men are more sensible than women. If you just walk outside for a minute, you will see a lot of useless men. But in Dagbon here, a woman has got bad sense, a dangerous sense that can do bad, sense that can kill a person. A woman has that, but a man doesn’t have that kind of sense.

And what shows that their sense is bad is when they kill their husbands. A woman’s heart can get up, and she will do some bad thing and kill her husband. I’m talking about people here. As for a man, when his heart gets up, if it is not that he has become a mad person, then he won’t kill his wife. They are deceiving you: a man won’t do that here. Truly, if a man enters madness, there are some men who can kill like that. But a woman who has not entered madness, if you do some talk to her on the part of her fellow women, she has a way to be able to kill you. I’m talking about one type of woman, not all women. If you are doing some good thing to the other woman and leaving her, she can kill you for that. It’s not difficult; it’s common. If a woman doesn’t like you again, and she is with you, and she sees another woman, if she is more than you and she wants to leave your house and cannot go out, she will find a way to put medicine in food for you to eat. You will not be there again, and she will go and find another man to marry. It is there like that. But a man won’t do that. And so women have bad sense. They have a sense that can let them do bad, but a man’s sense doesn’t do bad.

Our old Dagbamba talked, and they told us that a woman and her husband were there, and the man came from outside and brought an egg. And the man told the woman, “Get this egg and put it down: it is my life.” And the woman asked her husband, “Where should I put it so that it will not break?” And the man said, “I cannot know. You will know where you will put it.” And the woman said, “I am going to put it inside a bag, and then put it in another bag, and put it inside a

pot.” And the man said, “All right.” And she put it in the pot, and it was there, it was there, it was there. The day the man and the woman quarreled, the woman told the man, “You be careful. Can you eyes enter me? Your life is in my hand. If you doing what you are doing, I will go into the room and come out, and you will see.” Have you heard? The woman went into the room and removed the pot and removed the bags and removed the egg, and she came out and said, “Is this not your life? Hum!” And she threw the egg on the ground. A person who loves somebody, can that person do this? And the man said, “Is that all? I have deceived you. I want to look and see whether you want me or you don’t want me. And now I have known you.” And the old people have talked this, and I heard it.

And what let our old people talk this is that they have watched and seen. If not that the old people have said that a woman’s sense is a bad sense, if you yourself want to watch a woman, then you should come from outside and tell her, “Get this thing and hide it for me. Don’t let rain beat it. Hide it.” The day you are going to quarrel with this woman, if it doesn’t rain, the woman will say that she will take water and sprinkle on what you gave to her, so that she will do that and you will die. Some women have that. And so a woman’s sense, it’s a complete sense. It is sense, but it hasn’t gone far, because it is a sense that can do bad to her fellow person. This is how it is.

Apart from that, on the part of the real Dagbamba, there is some talk. Today, let’s say I get money and I bring it and say, “Collect this money and put it down. This is all my money.” If it is finished, the woman will know. We don’t let a woman know like that. If you are a poor person, you will not let her know the extent of your poverty; if you are a rich person, you won’t let her know the extent of your money. A woman can be in her husband’s house and say, “As for my husband, he doesn’t want me to know whether he is a rich man or a poor man. Every day he is crying poverty. He has never got money.” That is good. It’s not good for you to show all your talks to her. And so if you are living with your wife like that, she fears you or respects you. You say you are a poor man, but you are eating money. Which standing are you standing? If you have that, women fear you very much. But if you say, “I don’t have; I don’t have; this woman is feeding me”: it makes a man weak. This is how it is.

And so you should watch a woman to know her sense. If you want, you can be very free with your wife, and the talk you have with your wife, your wife will not have it even with her mother, and you the man will not talk to even your mother. But you the man should not take all your anus and show it to your wife. When a man takes all his secrets to show to a woman, we call him a useless man. And we call him a dead person. If you are with a woman and you love her very

much, you will take all your sense and give it all to her, and she will just show you a little of hers. And you will show her all your secrets, and she will only show you a small part of her secrets. That is all. When you come to quarrel with her, you will see. She will show you all the sense you were showing her, and she will bring out all of it and tell you. But a woman will never show all her secrets.

Have you ever seen a woman calling a man to come and sex her, opening her mouth and saying, "Come and sex me." I don't know about your place, but in our Dagbon, you can't see it. And I'm sure, if there are some women at your place who can say that, I would be surprised if they are plenty; I'm sure it will only be a few of them, and it is just because the world is spoiled that they are doing that. As for Dagbon here, a woman will show you a sign that she wants you, but she won't call you to come and sex her. Even if she is lying on the floor, she won't open her mouth and say, "Come and sex me." But she wants it more than you. And so to us, we know that it is a man who looks for a woman, and a woman doesn't look for a man. But they like sex more than us because it is sweet to them more than to us. That is one secret they have. You can be lying with a woman, and you should watch her and see: you will say, "Um-m, um-m-m," as if you are sleeping. She will take her toes and be touching you. She is telling you to sex her, but she hasn't opened her mouth to say you should sex her, even if she wants it very much. A man can tell a woman that he wants to sex her, but a woman won't say that. And so a woman, her secret is stronger than ours. And we look at this and know that a woman's sense is a dangerous sense.

And so to us the men, in Dagbon here, even if you have a wife, you cannot know all her sense. As for women, they have so many different ways, and so the talks of women are many. No one can know all the talks about women; you will only know to your extent. If you say you are going to talk about it, you will only talk on the part you know, and you will finish talking and leave the talk on the way going. And so today I have talked about the hard work women do inside the house, and how they stay together with their fellow friends. As I have talked about the good they do to one another, if I'm going to follow it, I will talk about the bad which women do to one another and to the husband too. I have told you how our Dagbamba women bluff one another, and it is jealousy. And what brings about the quarrels in the house is the penis. And so tomorrow I will continue the talk about our Dagbamba women, and I will join it to talk about how a man and a woman have sex and love each other, and how sometimes it brings trouble between them, and I will talk about the way a man who has many wives lives with them on the part of how he sleeps with them, and how there is jealousy and how women do bad to one another. And all this is a long talk, and so I will leave it for tomorrow.

