

### **Chapter III–24: *How a Husband and Wife Separate***

Today we are going to talk about how you have a wife and there is trouble between you, and how you separate. There are many ways to take a wife, and there are many ways to drive her away from your house. And there are many ways for a woman to leave a man's house, because she can easily do that by herself. It all has different ways. If I'm going to get into it, it will take some time, because I have watched a lot about women, and also I have driven some of my wives away. I drove away my first wife Gurumpaya and my second wife Zenabu and my third wife Alima. I drove them away and I had reasons for driving them away, and so I will talk about how I drove each of them away from my house. And so this talk is with me. If you haven't done something before, and you want to talk about it, it will be difficult for you. What you haven't seen, how can you talk about it? Any way you are going to talk about it, you will add something different. But once you've already seen something, to talk about what you've seen is not difficult. What you've seen and you want to talk about, you will be talking its talks and holding it very strongly. Everybody knows to his extent, and I am going to talk about what I know.

When it comes to taking a wife, a man is like a crocodile. As for a crocodile, when a crocodile sees water, whether it knows the water or not, it will enter it. A man is like that on the part of women. When a man is going after a woman, when he sees her and his body is shaking, he doesn't ask, "How are her ways? Are her ways like this or like that?" He doesn't ask like that; he has seen her and his heart wants her.

If you take a wife in this way, whatever happens, you will drive her away. If this woman has already left someone's house, and you don't ask her and you take her, what she was doing in her former husband's house and she left the man, that is the same thing she will do to you, and you will drive her out in the same way. It's just like when you see a horse standing somewhere, and the horse has thrown somebody down and come to stand there. If you don't ask and you come to take the horse, it will also throw you down. And so you should ask before you ride the horse. That is how such a woman is. If you don't ask and you come to take such a woman, she will leave you in the same way she left her former husband. Let's say she used to roam by heart in the town, and she comes and enters your house. If you the husband travel to another town, she may also get her scarf and be roaming. Someone can go out like that and sleep somewhere. If she sleeps somewhere, it shows that she is not your wife. If you are somebody who

has heart, you won't even let her come home again. You will tell her, "Go." That is why I said that if you see a horse standing in the bush, you should ask before you ride the horse. If a man marries a woman with such a way of living, when she's going away, they don't find the fault of the man.

What I have told you about how we Dagbamba marry, it shows that you should follow the parents of the woman before they give the woman to you, just as the woman's parents will follow you the man's family before they give her to you. If you do that, it means you know the heart of the woman's father and the heart of the woman's mother, and that is why you are following the woman. If they give you such a woman, if she comes to your house and she doesn't meet another woman, if she is your only wife, then before you and she leave one another, it will be hard. Why have I said this? You have watched the character of the woman, and you have watched the ways of her people. You were watching even before you went to greet her people. And so if you come to see that you and she are going to separate, then you should know that really there is something inside it.

And so how we and our wives leave each other, it has got its ways, and there is one thing inside it which is very strong in this Dagbon. If you are there with your wife and your wife does not bring forth, it can cause you to leave one another. If you have stayed with her even up to fifteen years, and there is no child, and you have never had another wife before who brought forth, then your wife's friends will talk about her. Her mother will also talk about her. As for her father, he won't interfere. But her friends will take their talks, and they will tell her, "You have been with your husband for fifteen years now and there is no child. Are you still in it? Is he the only man?" And this woman, if her heart does not stand at one place, you will see that her heart will change. She will take her friends' talk and go to tell her mother, "This is what my friends are telling me on the part of my husband." And her mother will say, "What?" And your wife will say, "They say that I have been staying with my husband for fifteen years, and I don't have a child, and I don't have pregnancy. And I'm still there." What will come out from the mother's mouth? The mother will say, "What you are saying makes me surprised. As for me, or as for us, we cannot say anything. We cannot talk about you and your husband, because we have already talked. If we talk, then it will not be sweet. The mouth that is washed, they don't blame it. If you have said something, you don't deny it later. And that is why we cannot talk about you and your husband again, because our mouth is already washed, and if we talked, it won't be sweet again. And so as for this talk, it is you who will know it."

And at that time, you will see that if this woman was staying with her husband with one heart, she will be staying with him with two hearts. And you

will see that she will be thinking about the people she grew up with and who have been bringing forth children. And you will see that there will be small troubles entering between her and her husband. And on the day of their quarrel, the husband will say, “Is it because of cooking food that someone will take a wife? Or is it the everyday fucking? Am I not getting tired? And so I will take someone who can get children for me, and you will also go and find someone who can get children for you.” And you will see that she will run away.

When she runs, she runs to her father’s house. And we Dagbamba, if your wife runs away, you have to chase after her legs, and so the husband’s people will go to the father’s house. If the father is somebody who fears shame, he will bring her back to her husband’s house, and he will tell her, “If you are going to run again, run to your uncle’s house — your mother’s side. Don’t come to my house again. As for me, I fear shame, and so I cannot take you back.” When this woman goes back to her husband’s house, she will not be doing good works for the man. She will always be causing trouble, and she and the man will be fed up with one another. Their noses will be smelling at one another. Trouble will come again, and the man will talk, and she will run to her uncle’s house.

When she goes to her uncle’s house, the husband’s people will not stop going; they will go. And her uncle will say, “It is God who has brought my child home to me. Go home and have your bachelor, and I will also have my daughter. And God will let her get a husband, and God will let your son also get a wife.” Sometimes the husband’s people will go to the uncle’s house three times. And what will come at last? The uncle will say, “Don’t you know? This woman has been in your house for fifteen years. She was there when she was a child. And she’s not a child anymore. And she hasn’t got a pregnancy. Are you following the talk about this again? If you want the amount — the money — you took to find her for your son, I can get the money and give it back to you.” And then if the husband’s people fear shame, they will say, “We do not want the money we took to find her. There is a custom way that if your wife runs away, you have to follow her legs. That is why we came. And if you are coming to ask us whether we want money or not, then we will take our own way. If you say we should go and get our new wife, then God should also let your daughter get a husband.” And at that time, the husband’s people will return to their house.

And some of the husband’s people will say, “Send to tell her housepeople to come and collect her things.” And others will say, “Was it that you didn’t want her that she went away? If you send people like that, her people will say that all along it was you who didn’t want her.” And the wife’s things will be with them. If the wife had her own room, her things will still be in the room; and if she had no

room and she was in the husband's room, her things will still be in the husband's room. Sometimes someone will leave her things for one year. Others leave theirs for two months, others for six months. If it is about six months and the women's housepeople don't hear anything, they will come to the man's house and say, "So-and-so's uncle says we should come and take her things." Then the man's people will say, "It's not wrong. You should get a day and come to collect her things." And you will see that they will come and collect her things, and with us Dagbamba, it shows that the man and the woman have left one another. With us, a man does not separate from his wife and leave her things in his house. If you separate, before they will know that you have separated, it is when her things are collected. Then you have finished separating. Sometimes her people will collect her things, and when it's evening, the woman will go and marry another man. According to our custom, you don't take a woman and leave her things in another man's house. And that is one way we and our wives separate.

In Dagbon here, when the woman leaves her husband, if the children are walking, the man will keep them in his house. If they are small and the woman takes them away, the man will collect them when they can walk. Do you know my children Aliyu and Abdulkadiri? Their mother is not in my house. The time their mother left, they were not yet sensible, and I collected all of them. Now they are grown. And so in Dagbon here, if a woman leaves your house and takes your children to her house, if you leave the children in her house, they will call you a useless person. Even if you don't have the means, your relatives can go behind you and collect the children and send them to their houses. They don't want someone to abuse you, and it will touch them, too. This is what we do in Dagbon here. We don't leave our children with their mothers. If a woman is a good woman, and she brings forth about three children who are all girls, you can take two and leave one for her. But if they are boys, even if they are ten, you won't give even one to her, and none of these children will run to their mother's house. If a boy runs to his mother's house, if he quarrels with one of the children in that house, they will abuse him, "You useless boy. Why are you staying in your mother's house? Can you stay in your father's house?" It is a very big abuse. And so our children don't remain in their mother's house. When you drive away a woman, you collect all your children.

And again, there is another reason a man will separate from his wife. I have been telling you that when you have only one wife, you don't know what is inside marriage, and I'll tell you more of its talk. Let's say you go to find a woman, and you get her. She will come, and you will be giving birth to children. Some women will give birth to six children; some two; some three. And then you get

another woman to add to her. The time you bring the new wife, let's say that her ways are better than the ways of the one who is already in the house. You will see that the one who has brought forth your children will be doing some bad things to you and your new wife. The good she was doing to you, she won't do it again. The good as small as the thumb of your hand, she will not do it again; she will stop. She will not even do any good to you as small as the tip of your finger. She will be doing you bad things. At that time, you the man, if you want, you can be as patient as anything; you will leave one another. Such a woman, you will separate from her, and the children will be in your house. As for that, we say that she has fought jealousy with another woman and has gone out leaving the children. And for such a woman to get another husband is hard. The one who is going to take her, if he is taking her to add to another woman, she and that woman cannot enter with one another. The only man who can take her is a bachelor who is going to take her and hold her alone. And if a bachelor takes her, then there will be no woman anywhere better than she again. And some women are like that, and they separate from their husbands.

And again, if you take a wife and she comes to meet your wife who is already in your house, if the senior wife is stronger than the one you've brought, whatever happens, the new wife will go away and leave the one who was there before her. Why will she go and leave the senior wife? If you want, you can do her as much good as you want: she will leave. Why? As for our women, when you take a wife and she comes to meet another woman in your house, your new wife becomes like a slave. She will wash all the things of the husband and all the things of the senior wife. When you eat and finish, it is the new woman who will wash everything. Everything in the house, she is supposed to do it, and it is the senior wife who will tell her to do it. Your senior wife will give all the work in the house to the new woman and will not help her. And apart from that, your senior wife will abuse you and your new wife. Everyday, it will be abusing. Even if the new wife is not useless, the senior wife will say, "You have no use, and now you have come to marry my husband. Just to put your vagina down for a man to fuck, it's because of that you have come to marry." Your senior wife will just be abusing your new wife to make her annoyed. Whatever happens, the stranger — your new wife — will say to you, "Sitting in your house will be difficult for me." And if your new wife tries to refuse the work, you will see that she will try to be stronger than the woman who was already there. She will be doing bad things to the other woman. And it will not finish; everyday it will be adding. And such a woman will leave the man. It's not that she doesn't love him. He has gone after her, and she also wanted him. But if she is going to be there, it won't hold. Such

a woman is not a bad woman. The first wife who was already in the house is to blame. It was she who worried the new wife. And so when a new wife comes to your house and leaves like that, we don't find her fault.

As for that, the senior wife is stronger than the husband. He cannot put down a woman apart from her. The senior wife was stronger than the new wife, and maybe the man was not looking after the new wife. That is what let her leave. And so if you take a wife to come and add to an old wife, don't remove your eyes from them. If the old wife is going to worry the new wife, don't agree. If the new wife is going to worry the old wife, don't agree. As for the holding of wives, everybody has got his different way. But the medicine for this is: don't agree. If you allow the new wife to worry the old one, the old one will leave; and if she leaves, it will come to stand that any time you take a new wife, the old one should leave. If you allow the old one to worry the new one, it will stand that you won't bring any new wife again. It is there like that in Dagbon. And so you don't agree. It is good for you the householder to say, "I don't agree with what you are doing. I have searched for all of you and come to put you in the house. And I am not going to choose one of you and refuse the other. And so if you do that, I will drive all of you out." At that time you will see that they will cool themselves. The one who was fighting and thinking that you would drive the other one away and leave her in the house, she will come to know that if she drives the other one away, then she will also go. And so all of them will cool themselves. That is how it is.

And again, you can take a woman and bring her to your house, and she comes to meet her cowife. If there has been no birth in your house, your new wife will come and be giving birth to children. Your wife who was already in the room and has been suffering for you, if she doesn't have good thoughts about God, you will see that little by little she will bring some talk about her new rival and you the husband. She will say, "I am not somebody who will sit down and others will come to meet me, and I will only be looking after children. I will also go and get somebody who will let me get children." Somebody can go out in this way. It's not that she doesn't want her husband, and it's not that her husband doesn't want her. She's not a useless woman; it's only that her sense is not much. She lay down and she thought, and many things came to her mind; and her sense was not much. That is why such a woman can leave her husband, or the man can let her go out. And such a woman, we don't blame her. If God likes her, if it is not long and she marries again, if she's lucky, she will bring forth. And we say that God didn't put it down that she should bring forth with her first husband, and so she had better luck with the other man.

Sometimes too, a new wife will come a meet another woman in the house. The woman in the room is giving birth only to girls; she doesn't give birth to boys. When this new woman comes, the man will knock her — *kpo!* — and he has knocked on the head of a baby boy. When the new wife gives birth to a baby boy, you will see something we have here. If the man is a rich man or a chief, the new woman will not get long life, or that the baby boy will not get long life. It will be between the two of them, either the woman or the baby. As for this place, we have such a thing, and they don't hide it. It is only strength which can be more than it, and I say that because you can be with somebody and not like the person, but because God says you should be with that person, nothing will happen. And that is strength. A wife can come and meet another woman, and the woman who is already in the house will be doing bad things against her. If God has not joined the two women, if God has said they shouldn't sit at one place, she will see that what the senior wife will do will catch her, and it will give her trouble inside that house. She will see that the senior wife is killing her.

The reason why they are fighting is the boys she is giving birth to. If you are a chief, and the wife who was already there is giving birth to girls, and you take another wife and come to bring forth boys, whatever happens, it is a boy who will become your regent. And if you are a rich man and it comes to the sharing of property, the boy will eat two parts and the woman will eat only one. Even if it is today that the boy is born, if they are going to share the property, the boy will take the two parts, and the woman will take one. If the woman wants, she can be more than a hundred years, it is the one part she will take. And if there is a house, the boy is for the house, and the woman will only be in the house. All this can make a woman not like someone who gives birth to boys.

There is some separation inside this talk, and it will be good if you separate it. It's not all women who will do bad to a woman who is giving birth to boys. The woman who has given birth to girls can just say that she is not going to sit down and be giving birth to children who will be eating disgrace. And she too, she doesn't fear shame. I have already told you that this is the name of a woman. She will just say that she will go, and if God likes her, she will also give birth to boys. It is there like that, and a woman can go out from a man's house because of that. If you are a rich man or a chief, it pains her that the new woman has come to be giving birth to boys, and it pains her that she has come first and her children are going to remain behind. A woman can do whatever she wants, but she won't come to sit down on a skin. If a woman is the senior child in a house, and there is a small boy, the boy is going to be in front of her. And so some wives will just get up and leave their husbands because of that. But it also happens and the women will fight.

And when it happens like that, if the senior wife does not go out, the senior wife will kill the new wife, or she will be killing the boys. And there are many ways of killing. Inside rivalry, a woman can say, “You think you can just be giving birth; you will give birth and you will not see again.” Someone can put medicine inside food. You are there with your cowife; can you refuse her food? With us Dagbamba, there is no woman who will refuse the food of another woman. And you know that there are many medicines. There is somebody who will eat medicine like that, and she will become mad and be roaming about. Someone will eat and her stomach will become big. Someone will eat and she will be coughing, and she will cough like that till she dies. There is some food which when it falls inside your mouth, you will not reach daybreak. Women are very bad: they have medicines for all these things. They have more medicines than men, and they have some medicines that we men can never even see. If the woman doesn’t kill her rival, she will kill the boy, or will take medicine and put it in this boy, and the boy will not be a human being again.

The ways to kill are many, because somebody can die in all, and somebody can die and still be alive. There are some sicknesses which can catch somebody and he will be alive and at the same time not alive, because he doesn’t know anything about himself again. For example, look at a mad person. Do you think he knows something about himself? We call him a dead person; he has a heart and a life, but it is a useless life. Health is everything, and so if we are going to pray, we pray may God give us health. When God creates a human being, the day he makes the person’s life, he sets down that person’s day to die, and if the day has not come, the life will not be gone. But somebody can have be alive and not have health. Without health, you are a dead body. To us Dagbamba, to die is all is better than to die and still be alive. And so a woman who eats food and becomes mad or blind or is coughing, is she healthy? Have they not killed her? Or if the boy becomes a mad person or a fool, can the family be good again? If a madman is in front of a family, will it stand? What of a fool? Will a fool repair the family talks? This is how they fight. I have separated it because it’s not all who do that, because everybody has got his way of living. But if it comes like that, inside such a thing, the new woman who has come to meet the other woman can leave the man’s house.

And so we have that here. Someone can do that to a woman who is bringing forth boys. If she is not doing that to the woman, she will be doing it to the children. She will be following and killing the children. The new wife will give birth, and the other woman will pull the child off. If the children are three or four, the woman who is giving birth to boys will leave the house. It’s not her wish; she



wants her husband, and her husband also wants her. But strength. The strength in the house is more than she. That is why she has gone out. Such a woman, we don't call her a useless woman. It is the woman in the room we call a useless woman; we call her a witch. And that man, if he's going to get another wife to add to her, the only wife he can get will be a woman who comes to give birth to girls.

If it comes like that, if you the man want, you can still hold these women. There are many ways, and it's not difficult. The new woman will come and give birth to a boy, and you can take the child and give him to your relative in another town. You are showing that maybe the other woman will kill this child. But if she hasn't seen him, will she kill him? If the new wife comes to give birth to a baby boy again, she will take the baby boy and go to her house. If the time comes for this woman to come back to your house, you will also send this boy somewhere. And you will leave the woman in her house. As it has come twice, you can leave her because you don't want killing in your house. You don't want her life to remain in your house, because if a man has wives and the women are dying in his house, it's not sweet. Somebody can separate from his wife like that. But if you want, you will drive the old wife away, and you will get another wife to come and add to your house. At that time, your house is repaired. Some people do that. But if you sack the new wife and you are looking for someone again, you won't get. If you want it like that, then you will look at the two of them and know the one you are going to keep.

If you like again, if you are sitting like that, and one wife cooks and the other wife refuses the food, and you are sitting and looking at them, it is going to bring something about death in your house. You are going to tell them, "Anyone who doesn't eat her fellow wife's food, I will drive her away." It is only if the householder is a useless man that the wives can refuse to eat each other's food, because it shows that the wives are controlling him. If the house is hot and you don't tell them like that, they will enter inside it, and they will know what they are going to do to kill one another. But if a man is holding his house with strength, if he tells them like that, no one will do medicine again. As he has told them to eat the food of one another, they will become afraid to use their medicine, because the one knows that if she prepares food today, the next day the other will also cook. And no one can refuse to eat. Our medicine here does not kill at once; it takes time. And so each wife will be afraid to use medicine. And sometimes too, it comes, and the man will know that these women will do bad to one another, and he doesn't trust any of them. He will call them and tell them, "It doesn't matter. No one should eat the food of her fellow wife. If you all want, leave my house. And if you want, we will hold ourselves like that." He will give the cooking

money to the one who is cooking, and the day one of them is cooking, the other one doesn't eat. That is all. He has given money for food for one person, and if the other one wants, she will get money and cook for her and her children to eat. It happens like that, too. Somebody will hold these women like that, and somebody will repair all of it. And so it all comes from the heart of the householder.

But truly, it separates again, because sometimes you will see a woman who is already in the house liking the woman who has come to bring forth boys. When you see that, it shows that the time the woman who has come gives birth to a boy, when the first woman who was there is also going to bring forth, she gives birth to a boy. At that time, people will say to the first woman, "You are lucky, because this woman has come and her luck has come to join you. She has given birth to a boy, and you have also given birth to a boy." If she is a woman who has patience, you will see that she will not quarrel with the new wife again. And such women, they can sit with one another.

But if the women in the house are quarreling, that alone can let a man drive them from his house. Sometimes you, a man, will take women and they are many, say three or four. As they are there in the house, everyday they all have trouble with one another. Everyday it is trouble. You the man will drive away all of them and say that God should give you women who will come and sit with you and you will have a white heart. Why have you driven them out? We Dagbamba men, and I think your people may also have this way, if you are a householder sitting outside, and you hear a sound in the house and it is the women who are shouting and fighting, whatever happens, your heart will spoil. If you are such a man, when women are fighting, all your heart spoils. And we say that your heart is removed. When somebody's heart is removed, you cannot find it again. It is the heart that is a human being, because where your heart points to, that is where you point to. And here is the case: the heart is removed; it has not pointed to any place. Can you find that place? And that is why when a man drives such women away, we Dagbamba say that he has bought his life. If you have women and everyday they come out to fight, it shows that they don't want you and they don't want your life. It is because they don't want you that they shout and fight. And we don't want fighting because fighting brings trouble to your life. And so a man who drives away all these women away has bought his life: he wants to stay alive. If these women go, he will get other wives again, and their way of living will be nicer than the ones he drove away. But if they kill him, they are going to look for men. And he is not there again. If a woman is in her husband's house, and she has got bad talks on the part of her husband, she knows how she is going to kill him and go

and marry somebody. And so if your wives are always quarreling, when you drive them away, it is better than you leave them and they kill you.

And there is some talk about the way of fighting, and it also stands within the talk of medicine. In our Dagbon here, if you see a house, where everyday they are fighting inside, you just keep your eyes pointed at that house: whatever happens, you will one day see the house remain empty. There are some people here who have medicine, and the medicine wants a house where people always fight. In the early morning, there is quarreling; in the afternoon, in the evening, in the night, the only thing for the house is fighting: “*Yeh! yeh! yeh! yeh!*” And the witches who have that medicine will be watching the people in that house and killing them one by one, and the people in the house will not know what is happening. No one will see the medicine except someone who has the medicine, and God. The people in the house will be shouting and fighting, and after the quarrel, you will see that somebody’s head might ache, and she will fall: she is dead. When they go to a soothsayer, the soothsayer will say that it is the quarreling that has killed her. They won’t get the one who is killing them.

And our old people talked a talk that looks like this talk. A woman was there with her granddaughter, and one day the grandmother said, “I want to give you medicine.” And the girl said, “It is no fault.” And the woman said, “If you are going and you see some people who don’t want themselves, catch them and bring them.” One day this girl was walking and she saw two people going into the bush, and she ran to her grandmother and said, “My grandmother! My grandmother! Here are two people who don’t want themselves.” And the woman said, “Where are they?” And the girl said, “There they are going. They are going to the bush.” And the woman said, “*Um-m*. They want themselves. Still go!” In the night the girl went and saw one person sleeping outside, and she went and told her grandmother, “As for this time, I have got my person very well. He doesn’t want himself at all.” And the grandmother said, “What has he done?” And the girl said, “He is just lying outside snoring: *hown, hown, hown*.” And the grandmother said, “Oh, he wants himself. Still go on.” And the girl was going when she heard women fighting in a house. And she went to her grandmother and said, “My grandmother, I have gone and I am now tired. The only thing is I saw people fighting in a house.” And the woman said, “Did they separate them or not?” And the girl said, “They separated them, and they refused.” And the grandmother said, “That’s what the medicine wants.” And she got the medicine and gave it to the granddaughter, and everyday this girl would go to put it on them. And everyday they would quarrel, and the next day, one would die. And the next day the girl would go to take another one again. They would quarrel and knock

one another, and they were dying. And the medicine was standing, and at that time the grandmother said, “Have you seen? As you are catching them, has anybody asked? Are they not saying that it is the quarreling that is killing them?”

And so to us Dagbamba, somebody who likes quarreling and troubles is somebody who doesn't want himself. And so when you a man have wives and they always quarrel, it shows that they don't want themselves and they don't want you. Drive them away. To us Dagbamba, and even to God, if you have women and they are as many as a hundred, if they all go out from your house in one day, it is better than if a woman dies in your house. If a woman dies in your house, no one knows its pain, except you, and God. You cannot compare it to anything. And so we don't want to have women who will be having trouble with one another. A man drives away such women. A man can drive all of them away at one time. And that is another way we separate from our wives.

And there is another way we separate from our wives. There are some women, they don't want to hear when you the man tell them anything. And there are some women, when you tell them, they hear. You can be with a woman and she is like that: when you tell her something, she will hear it. You will get somebody to add to her, and when you tell her something, she will not hear. And she will take her new way of living and also show it to the one who has just come. If you see that your new wife is holding it, you call her and tell her, “Hold your own way of living. You can take your friend's dance, but don't get the way of living of your friend. So I'm telling you: if you want me to stay with you, hold your way of living.” You have told her. If you now see that she is still holding the way of the first woman, it is jealousy, and so you have another way: you will call your senior wife and say, “If you can leave your way of living so that we will stay, you should leave it. I can't have you alone, and I can't have the bad way of living you are showing to the new woman. Do you want to show her all this so that I will drive her out? Or do you want me to drive you out and she will remain? And so I'm telling you: if you can leave what you are doing so that we'll stay, then stop what you are doing.”

By that time, haven't you complained to both of them? By then, you will take patience and follow them. If your senior wife wants you to stay with her, and she has patience, she will hold what you have told her, and little by little she will leave what she was holding. We call such a woman “sense-jealousy.” She was showing that she doesn't want the stranger, but she has taken some sense to stay with the stranger. When the new one came, the first one was jealous; she refused to do the good work she used to do for you, and she even wanted the new one also to be doing bad work for you. But when you talk to her and she hears, you can

stay with her. But if you talk and she refuses, you will drive her out and leave the new one in your house. And the woman you drive away, you have not driven her away: it is her character which has driven her away. And if you talk and she refuses, and the new woman is also still holding the bad character, you will group them and drive both of them out. And that is another way our women refuse us and we separate from them.

And so jealousy has many ways. Truly, I have told you why we Dagbamba marry many wives. If your wife doesn't want you to take another woman, you will tell her, "I can't have you alone. My father gave birth to many of us. He didn't have one wife, and he didn't give birth to me alone. I can't have you alone to bring forth only one child." To us Dagbamba, even if your wife gives birth to many children, we say that it is one child because the children don't have different mothers. To us, all of them are one child. All of them, the mother's house is one house. But if you have different wives, and each of them gives birth to only one child, then we say that the children are different because each one's mother is different. And so you can't hold one wife alone to bring forth one child. You can take this talk and talk to your wives, and if the jealous woman is someone who hears, she will find the way to stay with her cowife. And if she doesn't hear, she will hold her character, and you will drive her away.

And all this I am talking, if it comes and you drive your wife away, you should hold yourself well. Don't mind her mouth. Already I have told you that women don't fear shame. When you drive your wife away, you will shout at her, and when you drive her out like that, she will go from the house straightforward. She won't come back inside; she will go straight to her parents' house. When she gets there, she will talk some bad things about you to her parents. She won't say what she has done. Such a woman, we say that her mouth is sweet. When we say the mouth is sweet, it means that the woman can talk a lot and tell many wonderful lies about many people; and when she talks, she will talk and say something which is sweet for herself. That is what we mean when we say "a sweet mouth." Maybe she will go and tell her parents that you said that if you see her in your house again, you will kill her. At that time her parents will say, "Then we will not allow you to go back and he will kill you." And since you the husband don't like her, that will be all. She will remain in her parents' house.

And so these are some of the ways we separate from our wives. And apart from all that, it's not that it is always coming from the woman. There are other things, too. Sometimes a woman can leave a man, and it is the man who has caused her to leave him. It comes from some men who have no sense. And some men too don't fear anything. Not fearing trouble and not having sense, we take

both of them to be one thing. Such a man, whatever he does, he doesn't mind. When he has a first wife and he takes another woman to add to her, if the new wife is doing good to him, he will take his everything and give to her. You will see that the senior wife will be annoyed. And what will come out from the mouth of the man? Nothing except, "If you don't want me, go away." Such a man can drive away a woman like that, and she's not a bad woman. It is the man who is bad. Such a man, if he takes another wife again to add to the one who remains, he will collect everything and give it to the new wife again. If the woman who was already there does not remember how the man was treating her first, and if she takes it that the man is not giving her love, then she will also go away. And that is the work of a useless man.

And so when a man and his wife separate, it can come from the man. And its ways too are many. And so what I have been telling you about how somebody has a wife and what things the woman does and the man drives her away from the house, I will join it to show how a woman can refuse a man and go out by herself. As there are some women who are useless, there are also useless men. In this Dagbon here, a woman can just leave her husband's house by herself. A woman can do that, and it is because the man is not giving her what she wants. A woman can have many different ways or reasons for leaving her husband. I will count some of them for you, and you will see.

The first one. Sometimes you will see a man marry a woman, and if the wife is not well or cannot sleep, he doesn't mind. He only knows that the time she is well is the time he will be looking after her or taking care of her. But when she falls sick, he doesn't bother about going around to get whatever treatment she needs. Such a thing can let a woman leave the husband.

And there are some people, too. A man has a wife. The time this man was looking for the woman, that was the time the man always knew the parents of the woman. The moment the man gets the woman to his house, that is all: he would not like to hear anything from the parents again. And if a man is not asking of the woman's parents, the woman can decide to leave the man.

The third one. You know that in this Dagbon here, we perform funerals, and I have told you how we Dagbamba are on the part of our in-laws' funerals. Sometimes there will be a funeral for which you the husband will go with a sheep. And your wife will go with a half-piece of cloth [six yards], and a scarf, and money. Sometimes a man will not bother about all that. If a woman sees that her husband has no appetite for that, she can run away and leave the man's house, because he is showing her that he doesn't want her.

The fourth one. There are some people, too, when they marry a wife, they will not be buying clothes for the woman. That one alone can let a woman leave her husband. She is suffering for you in the house, and you are not doing anything for her good work. Will she stay?

And again, I told you how we Dagbamba live with our wives on the part of going to the market and buying food. Sometimes you will see a man marry a woman, and if the woman is going to the market, the man will sit down and count what she is going to buy in the market and then give her the exact amount. And in our living here, in our customary way, we don't accept that. We know that if a woman goes to the market, she will add her own money. But you the husband, it's not good for you to sit down and count all that she's going to buy and then say that the money you give will be all right. If such a man has a wife, whatever happens, the woman will leave the man. We have that in Dagbon here.

The sixth one. A man will go and bring a woman. The time the man gets the woman, he has a front. They will be there up to the time sickness will catch the man, and his penis will die. You know that if you love a woman and you have no front, her heart will not be white with you. Such a woman will love you, and you will also love the woman, but whatever happens, if you have no front, the woman will leave you. And it comes again that a woman can refuse to come and sleep with the man. You know that here, whenever a woman cooks for the husband to eat, on that night the woman will sleep with the man. If the woman refuses, it's bad. And so on the part of the wife's coming into the room and sleeping with the husband, that thing alone can let the man leave the woman or the woman leave the man.

And the seventh one. Sometimes you will go and bring a wife, and your wife doesn't know your way of living. The time you were finding her, you just put away your heart; you didn't want her to know your true ways. There are some women who don't like shouting, and who don't like abusing. Such a woman, the time you were looking for her, you didn't show her any of this. Sometimes there is a woman you are finding or you love, and she will just be watching your way of living. If you show your bad ways to her, she will never allow you to marry her. There are some women like that. If you don't show your bad ways the time you are finding such a woman, when she comes to your house and you show her your bad ways, she will go back to her house. Sometimes it is beating that will let a woman go away from a house. Sometimes a man will marry a woman, and if this woman goes out of the house and the man comes home and she is not there, when she returns, the husband will beat her and say she went out to have sex and get money. Sometimes it's just that such a woman likes roaming in town and it's not

that she doesn't like her husband. But if the husband is showing her this way, in our custom in Dagbon here, a woman can easily decide to go away from the man's house.

And there is another one. Sometimes it happens that many of you are chasing one woman, and you the one without anything will be going to the woman and telling her lies that you have this and that and you have all of everything. And you know, the sense of a woman is different from that of a man. If she loves you, this woman will think that if she comes to your house, she will get everything from you. She is like a blind person. Or again, a woman is like a horse. When you go to buy a horse, you will just be pulling it to go, and the horse will just follow and won't mind. A woman is like that, because the time you go and tell her the lies that you have this and that, she thinks it is true. But when she follows you to your house and there is nothing like that there, she will go back to her house. As for our women, they never feel shy to do that. That's why Dagbamba say that you take lies to find a woman and you take truth to hold her. And so if it is lies, a woman can go away from her husband's house and it isn't that the man doesn't like her.

The ninth one. A woman can come into a house and meet her cowife friends who were there before her. And this woman will be doing good work in the house. She will be doing good to her husband's brothers. She will be doing good to her cowives' children. She will never think of doing bad to any of them. And the women she met in the house were not doing all this good work, and they will say that the woman who has just arrived thinks she is a good woman. They will stand up with their bad way of living, and they will make one mouth and fall on the woman. They will abuse her all the time. If a woman comes to meet this, she can leave the husband. It isn't that she doesn't like the man or the man doesn't like her. However strong you are, if many people group against you, they will defeat you. And so if this woman leaves the husband's house, it isn't her fault.

And again, sometimes it happens that a man will get up and marry, and the man's mother is still there. If the new wife comes to the house and meets the husband's mother, sometimes the mother will not like the woman. As the mother doesn't like her, she cannot drive her away, but she will not support her. If someone's mother is there like that, she will know what to do to the husband so that he will drive the new wife away. What will she do? He will be hearing some small talks in the house, and it will come to a time when he will be hearing these talks outside the house. His wife will cook food and send it to his mother, and since his mother doesn't like his wife, she will pour out the soup and leave only a little, and she will pretend and tell the wife that she didn't put much soup on the



food and she doesn't want to give her food. If his mother says that and nothing changes, she will find another way again. When the wife cuts the food and sends it to his mother, his mother will not eat; she will give the food to the children and say that the soup is not sweet. As she has said this, is it not now two times? By that time, if the man doesn't take time and talk to his wife, his wife will go and talk to his mother. She will ask his mother, "Don't you want me in this house? If you don't want me here, I will go away and leave you. I don't want people to say that I separated you and your child." Such a woman can go away from her husband's house, and it's not that she doesn't like her husband or her husband doesn't like her. Someone's mother can do that. That is the way of the women here. And it has no end. And this is it: a woman will give birth to a boy, and the child will grow up and marry, but the mother will not like her child's wife and she will do some things to drive away the wife. And it is because of this: if a woman has a child and the child has no wife, whatever the child gets, he will share it with his mother. But since he is now married, he will be sharing whatever he gets with his wife. If the mother knows that what she was formerly getting from her child will no longer be there, she can drive away the woman. And it's like that in Dagbon.

And again, there is another one. In Dagbon here, long, long ago we had our ways. There are people we call Gurunsis, and in Dagbani when we say someone is a Gurunsi, we are not saying that he is someone from the Gurunsi land. If you hear the word "Guruja," it means someone who has been bought as a slave. And these Gurunsis, some of them were the people from the Upper Region, and some of them too are Dagbamba. A Dagbamba could do a bad thing and not pay its debt, and they would sell him. There are some families here, if you look inside the family, you will see that there are people like the Gurunsis in it. And some of the Gurunsis too become big people: if you look at the Yaa-Naa's elders, many of them are Gurunsis. And you know as for tradition, it doesn't finish; a family or a line doesn't have anything to do with change. And so if your grandfather was once bought as a slave, or if it started from the beginning of your line, it will never die; it will still be there in your family. Nowadays, there are no slaves again, but there are still lines of slaves; and those who bought them before, their lines are also there.

Someone can be a slave like that, and he will be looking for a woman. He was once bought sometime ago, and the parents of the woman will not know. Such a woman will arrive in the man's house, and she will be there. The day her husband has a quarrel with his brothers, that is the day the woman will get to know that her husband is from a family of slaves. They will abuse him, and the woman

will go back to her parents' house. She will say, "No. I will go back to my parents. I wouldn't like to give birth to children, and the children's father will be a slave." And her parents will say, "Yes. We have also looked and found that your husband is a slave. And so we cannot say anything. Since it is you who ran away from his house, it is finished. You don't have to go back." And sometimes a woman can leave her husband's house because of that. It still happens here, and there are still people living in this way, today, tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow. Not everybody is like that now, but there are still people who look at such a thing. And it can easily let a woman leave her husband's house.

And again, in our Dagbon here, sometimes a man will find a woman and give her to his son. And God says that if you have a child and the child is up to the age of, say, twenty, you the father should find a woman for the child. Any time the child is grown, you can find a wife for him. If you don't get a woman for your son, and your son commits adultery, all the blame will fall on you the father. And so you can find a woman for your son, but your son may not like the woman. Your son will leave the woman, and the woman will go back to her parents. And you will find another woman for your son. Maybe it will happen that the parents of a girl will give her to you to give to your son. She will go to your son's house, but within some time she will run away. Maybe your son likes the woman, but in this case the woman doesn't like him. And so if a woman is given to a man and she doesn't like him, sometimes she will run away and leave the man alone. And so there are many different reasons or ways for a woman to leave her husband. And what I have counted for you, these are some of them.

As for me, truly, I separated from three of my wives, and I think it will be good if I will also join this talk to talk about me myself and how I drove away those three wives. And so I will tell you how I separated from them and the reasons I had for leaving each of them. I have already told you how I married Gurumpaya. I gave birth to two children with her. When she gave birth to the first child, she went to her mother's house, and she stayed two years and four months in her mother's house before she came back to my house. And when she returned, it wasn't up to two months when she became pregnant again. When she gave birth, she went back to her mother's house again. All the time when she was with her mother, I was going there and giving them money for food. By that time, the army barracks were still in town, and there were many soldiers. As the soldiers have now spoiled Ghana, at that time it wasn't like that. And by then, my wife's mother was cooking *pito*, and these soldiers were going there to drink the *pito*. In the *pito* house, it was my wife who was fetching the *pito* and selling to the soldiers. There was one soldier who always used to come to drink *pito* there, and

when my wife was fetching him the pito, any time he was drinking he would give her ten shillings. In those days, if you gave somebody ten shillings, the person would turn his eyes to be looking at you very well. And that was what my wife was doing. It was left with about four or five months for her to come back to my house, and I heard from people that my wife was having pregnancy.

I have already told you that if a woman gives birth and the child is still sucking the mother's breast, if that woman gets pregnancy, it can kill the child. In Dagbon here, if it happens like that, you don't have to say that you don't want your wife again. If you want your wife and your child, you can let them bring your wife back to your house, and the child will remain with the grandmother. But if you want your wife and you don't want your child, you will let the wife and the child all come back to your house. If she comes back to your house and comes to give birth to the child of those who have given her pregnancy, if you sleep with her, your child will die. It has got its medicine, but it is good luck if it works. This is how it is. And so when they told me that my wife had pregnancy, it showed that the soldier who was giving the ten shillings to her had stepped behind the back of the newborn child.

When it comes like that, if you want them to send your wife back to you again, the only thing you do is to send people from your house and go and beg your wife's housepeople. And I sent people, and when they went, my wife's mother told them that my wife would be coming. And with us Dagbamba, when you send like that, if seven days pass and your wife is not yet back in your house, you have to send again. And Gurumpaya didn't come, and I sent people again. They went and met the mother, and the mother said, "You don't dig a hole for your dog, and the dog will sit down." It's a thick proverb. You know, if you take a dog to the bush and you see an animal, maybe the dog will just be running around and will not see the animal; you have to show the animal to the dog before the dog will run after it. But if you are digging a hole and the dog sees you digging, the dog will know that you are digging the hole to get something out of it; if something should run out of the hole, no one will have to knock the dog and tell it to run after whatever is running away. And so the meaning of what my wife's mother said is that sometimes you may want to speak to somebody but you don't have a straightforward chance, and so you will speak to somebody else to give the talk to tell the person. And if the one you want to talk to is near, the one you are speaking to can just call that person to come nearer and hear the talk himself. And so my wife's mother gave this proverb and said, "It's better I call her to sit and listen to what you will say; that will be better than if you talk to me and I also talk to her." And they called my wife.

When she came, her mother said to her, “Your husband last sent people here so that we should bring you to his house, but you didn’t say anything. And now here are the people again: they’ve come to ask for you. And so I myself have no talk to talk. It is only you who will have to talk.” And then my wife said that how things were, she would never return to my house. And the people I sent asked my wife, “Why are you refusing to come back to your husband’s house?” And at that time, what came out from the mouth of my wife’s mother was, “You have no way to ask that question. Why should you look and see a woman sitting like that and you will be asking her?” And then those people I sent also asked, “How hasn’t it got a way? Is she not our wife?” And the mother said, “I agree: she is your wife. But how she eats, do you know it?” And one of them said, “Yes, we know where she eats, because some of us used to come here to give her money. And so we know where she eats.” And so the mother said, “All right, I agree: you know how she eats. But here is the case now: you just look at how she is sitting.” And at that time, those whom I sent came back and told me.

The next morning I got somebody to add to me, and we went and greeted at the house of my wife’s mother. There were people in the compound, and I told my wife’s mother that we should go into a room. She called another old lady to follow her, and we all went into the room and greeted. And I told her, “Yesterday I sent some people to come and ask for my wife, and they returned to me with a message. That is why I have come myself to hear it.” What came out from the mouth of my wife’s mother was that what those people told me is the same thing she is going to tell me. And I said, “If something like that happens to your wife, it is necessary for you the husband to know the one who has done that to your wife.” And the mother told me, “I have nothing to say about that. If only you can force your wife or slaughter your wife to tell you the one who did that, then it is with you to do so.” And I replied, “I am not going to force my wife, and I’m not going to slaughter her. But I will know the one who made her pregnant.”

At that time, the chiefs had their court. Even up to the time you first came, the chief’s court was standing in Tamale here, but now it is not there again. And so I went to the chief’s court and brought a case against my in-law. I myself went to the court, and I have already told you something about the chief’s court. When you go, the chief will gather his elders and form the court, and there is a clerk you will talk to, and the chief will also talk to the clerk. The government had its court and the chiefs also had their courts, and it was mixed. As for that time, there were some differences from the way I have shown you the chiefs judged cases in the olden days. A long time ago, when the chiefs had their courts, they weren’t locking people in rooms, but when the locking came, if the chief’s court said they

should lock somebody, they would take the fellow to the government room. It was there like that. At that time, too, the chief's courts weren't killing people, because the chiefs were not judging murder cases. The chiefs were judging cases that were on the side of our Dagbamba custom. And when I went to bring this case, I went to the chief's court.

The first thing the court asked me was the reason why I was suing my in-law. The reason the court people asked me this question was that in our Dagbon here, during the time when the chiefs were ruling the court, if you have married a woman and given birth to children, you have no right to sue your in-laws in the court. We only sue our in-laws to get back the money we spent to find the woman. If you already have children with the woman and you sue your in-laws to pay you back the money, it shows you are disgracing the children. And you know that, truly, I know the ways of Dagbon, and again I am someone who prays and who knows the ways of Islam. What I'm showing you is an old talk in Islam. In the time of the Prophet Muhammad, if we are sitting together and we do bad to one another, we cannot send one another to court. Maybe the court will show that they should kill one of us or bring a heavy charge against one of us. Who has said they should kill or bring this charge? Is it not the one who brought the case? And in our Dagbamba courts, too, if you sue somebody and the case is judged that the person should be killed or put into debt, if this person is your in-law, and you have given birth with the daughter, then it will be a bad thing. Maybe the court will put your in-law into debt, and they will sell the fellow or sell the children. I have already told you how they do that. If the children you have given birth to are inside your in-law's family, it shows that you have sold your own children. That is why someone will fear to send his in-laws to court. You have no way to sell your children like that. If you send somebody to court, whether it is your in-law or somebody you sit with, if the court does some bad talk to him, then you have brought it. At that time, you and the person will now have trust in one another again.

And so when they asked me why I wanted to sue my in-law, I said, "Truly, she gave her daughter to me, and I married her daughter, and my wife has now given birth to two children. After the second birth she went back to my in-law's house. Now I want my wife back and she has pregnancy, and I want to know the one who made her pregnant." And they wrote all this down and sent it to my in-law. And the court told her that on the day they would judge the case, she should come, and she should bring her daughter Gurumpaya, the wife of Ibrahim.

On the court day, she came with my wife, and a soldier. And the court had not asked the soldier to come as someone who has committed adultery. The

soldier used his strength to come, that he was accompanying them to attend the court. In the court, they asked the mother of my wife, “Do you know this man Ibrahim?” And she said, “Yes, I know him.” And the court told her that it was I who brought this case to the court. And the court told her that she gave her daughter to me and that I have given birth to two children with the daughter. And now I want my wife back and she refused to give me my wife. And my wife has pregnancy and she refused to tell me the one who has made her pregnant. The mother said, “Yes, I did give my daughter to him. It is because he doesn’t feed her well that somebody else made her pregnant.” At that time, the court said to the old lady, “What you are saying is not proper talk. Was it your daughter who spoiled herself, or was it you the mother who spoiled her?” And then the mother said, “Well, I don’t know what is between my daughter and her husband, but I think it is because he is not feeding her.” And the court said, “But what you are saying, it seems you know something about all of this, and so we want to know the person who made her pregnant.” And the mother said, “I don’t know who made her pregnant. A snake will not lie down for you to compare its length with the length of a stick. And so here is the woman: you should call her and ask her.”

And the court called my wife and asked her if she knew me, and she said yes. And they asked what she was to me, and she said I was her husband. And they asked her whether I was the one who gave her the pregnancy she had, and she said, no. And the court asked, “What happened?” My wife said, “It is because soldiers have been coming to our house to buy pito and drink. Any time they come, this soldier gives my mother ten shillings and also gives me ten shillings. And my mother said that because the soldier is giving us ten shillings, ten shillings, it is better I should leave my husband and marry the soldier.” And the court asked her, “Did your mother really say this?” And she said yes. And they asked her if she still wanted me, and she said yes. And then they asked her, “Can you find the soldier now?” And she said, “Yes.” And they asked, “What is the name of the soldier?” And she said, “Alhassan.” And they asked her whether he is at the barracks or in the court. And she said, “He accompanied us; maybe he is in the court.” And they asked her if she could find him, and she said yes. At this time, the court said, “There is no need to call the soldier because no one has brought a case against the soldier.” And the court told me that I only brought a case against the mother and not the soldier, but there was also a way for me to bring a case on the soldier. And so I added the soldier also. And they set another day.

On that court day the soldier and my wife’s family all came. And the court asked the soldier if he knew this woman Gurumpaya. And the soldier said yes.

And they asked, “How do you know her?” And the soldier said, “I have been going to her house to have drink. And I one time asked the mother about her daughter, and the mother said, ‘If you like her, you can see her.’ And I have been seeing the woman all along, but I never knew she had a husband.” And they asked the soldier, “Has she got a child or not?” And he said that he has been seeing her with a child. And the court said, “You didn’t know that Gurumpaya had a husband: where did she get the child? You are a liar.” As it was, had he caught himself or he hadn’t caught himself? And they said they were going to charge him twice because he himself had shown that the woman had a husband because there was a child in her hands. And then the court looked again and saw that it was the mother who brought all the trouble, and they said they were going to make it one charge because if the mother had not told the soldier to go and see Gurumpaya, the soldier wouldn’t have looked for her. If he had shown that he hadn’t seen Gurumpaya with the child to know that she had a husband, he wouldn’t even have had any charge. The whole charge would have come to stand on the part of the mother. And how they had charged him, he agreed that he had done bad.

And by then, the court let him pay sixty cedis, and the court divided the money and took thirty cedis and gave me thirty cedis. The court told me I should use the thirty cedis to buy food for the child. And they asked my wife whether she still wanted me, and she said yes. Then the court repaired the case in this way: because my wife wanted me, she should be with me during the pregnancy until she gave birth; and if I wanted I could give the child to the soldier or if I didn’t want, I could keep the child and the soldier couldn’t do anything. And you know, in Dagbon here, we don’t stand in the court and say we don’t want a woman anymore; if we say that it means we have disgraced the court. Why do I say that? The court has supported me and shown that truly, my talk was correct. And it also showed that the fault did not come from Gurumpaya herself but from Gurumpaya’s mother. Gurumpaya didn’t say that she didn’t want me, and she didn’t say any bad talk about me. And so it showed that Gurumpaya’s mother was removing her from my house. That was why I didn’t want to tell the court that I didn’t want her. You know, sometimes you won’t want something but you will say you want it. Apart from that, it is not only in this modern time that a soldier has strength. The time of this case, the soldiers had strength, and it could happen a chief would call a soldier to court and the soldier wouldn’t mind him. And the chief couldn’t catch him, either. And so the case showed that we were able to send a soldier to a court, and it showed that the court had strength, and it showed that the chief also had strength because it was the chief’s court. As the chief had collected Gurumpaya from the soldier and given her to me, when the chief asked

me whether I wanted her, I didn't want to disgrace the chief, and I also said I wanted her. If I had refused the chief, would I have disgraced the chief or not? This was how it was. But I didn't take Gurumpaya back again.

And so my wife and her mother went home. The next day I sent some people with the thirty cedis that they should give it for the two children to be buying porridge and drinking, and that as for my wife, from today onwards we will leave one another. And so this is how I separated from my first wife. And later on I collected the children she gave birth to in my house. I have the two children with me, but I didn't take the soldier's child. We don't accept such children. We call them bastards. If you bring such a child and mix the child with your family, it's not good.

This is what has spoiled Dagbon now, because that is the sort of children who are now getting chieftaincy and who are spoiling Dagbon. Why is it so? It can happen a man will give his daughter to someone, and even this girl can still be in her father's house, and another person will come and sex her and give her pregnancy. If the father collects her back and refuses to give her to the one who gave her the stomach, and the girl also says that she will refuse the one her father gave her to first, the father has a way to swear and give this girl to the Yaa-Naa, or to any chief. I have already told you that a chief can get a wife in this way. When this girl goes to the chief's house, she is already pregnant, and if she gives birth to a child, whatever happens, they will not take the child to give the man who sexed the girl. He cannot even come out and say that it's his child. And the chief also knows that it is not his child. Such children, we call them *mɔyli dibem*, "the river is full." It's like if there is a small pond by the side of a river. When the river is flooded, it will come and fill the small pond, and they won't call the small pond by its name again; they call it by the name of the river. And so they don't call the child somebody's child; they will call the child a chief's child. Such a child, if they take a chieftaincy and give him, he spoils the chieftaincy. Such children are many inside chieftaincy, from the olden days and even up till now. Truly, I don't want to talk about this, because it is still here as we are sitting, and it is something that will come out some day. If I talk its talk, it will come to show that I don't like somebody. And you too shouldn't follow it too much. A snake has got ears, but if you want to see the ears of a snake, you will become tired. And so let's leave it that I didn't take the soldier's child into my house to mix with my family. And that was how I separated from Gurumpaya.

The next one, Zenabu, gave birth to only one child, a girl, and she was pregnant about three months. At that time I had four wives. The senior wife I have now, Fati, was there. And I had another wife whom you might have known;



she was Fatawu's mother, Marta, the one who died. And Alimatu the mother of Aliyu was also there. And with Zenabu, it was four wives. At that time, Zenabu swore to God that she did not want to see Fati in the house. Whenever they would sit for just a little time, they would quarrel. If I went out just as I come here, when I returned home, I would see them fighting. Everyday my heart spoiled; everyday I had a broken heart. I didn't know what to do with Zenabu. One day they quarreled — it was the very day Naa Abilabila died — and that day I told Zenabu that I didn't want her anymore. I just ran into her room, collecting all her things and throwing them outside. And I told her that I didn't want her to step into the compound again. If she should step into the compound and walk out safely, then her father is more than my father. And so from that day we left one another. That day, she was not happy. When she left, she went to her parents' house, and the pregnancy spoiled. That was the end of our love. And the one child she had, that girl is now with me. And that was how I left my second wife.

The third wife I left was Alimatu, the mother of Aliyu. She loved me very much, but she was as jealous as Zenabu. I have told you that there are many ways of jealousy. Zenabu was like a dog: she was always barking about what she didn't like or didn't want. But Alima was worse than Zenabu. There are some people who are like human cats. If a woman is like that, her way is very bad. No one knows her, and she doesn't show herself in public, but there is wickedness in her stomach. Alima was like that. In our living here, if you have many wives and if something happens in the house of the parents of one of them, they all group together and go to that woman's parents' house. And it shows that all your wives have only one mouth. How Alima was, if something happened in any of my wives' houses, Alima would not go, but the others would group and go. And again, if something happened in Alima's parents' house, she would not tell anybody: she alone would go.

And what let me leave her was that her uncle was sick. He was admitted to the hospital, and the sickness became so bad that no one knew what would happen. And you know how we respect our in-laws in Dagbon here: by that time I should have gone to greet Alima's uncle in the hospital, but I did not even know about the sickness. Alima's mother told her that if she comes to the house she should tell me, but Alima never told me. She didn't tell me because if she did, I would tell my other wives and they would all go to the hospital and greet her uncle. It was one day, going to evening time, when Alima's mother came to my house and told her that her uncle's sickness was now very, very hard, and so she should come out and they would go to the hospital. At that time I was sitting outside, and Alima and her mother came out from the house walking very strongly.

And I called Alima's mother, "My mother, what happened and you and my wife are walking very fast like that?" And the mother said, "I am holding your fault in my hand. Didn't Alima tell you that her uncle is very, very seriously sick?" And I said, "She is the one standing with you. Ask her." And she asked her, and Alima didn't say anything. And I said, "Did you hear? As you have seen it yourself, it is better than if somebody had seen it and come to tell you. Anyway, there are other things which are more than that." And they left, but before they got to the hospital, the uncle died. In Dagbon here, if somebody dies and you are supposed to know of the fellow's sickness before his death, you don't take anyone's fault. It could happen that when the person was sick, no one was having the thoughts to think of many people and tell them. But at least they might tell some people and not tell others.

When Alima and her mother came back from the hospital, Alima came into the house and started collecting her things to take to the funeral house, but she never told anyone that her uncle had died. It was I who heard it. I went to pray the evening prayers, and somebody in the mosque told me, "Maalam Ibrahim is now dead." When I returned home, I went into the compound and told my other wives that Alima's uncle had died, and that the next day they would bury him. And I went, and all my wives went. There was no one left in the house. My wives and all the people in my house grouped and went to the funeral house. When they went Alima didn't look at them as if they were human beings. And they sat at the funeral house, and they went and buried the dead body and came back and said the prayers. And by then everyone dispersed. And you know, the next day after the burial, this woman, this wife, at least she should come back to her husband's house to greet her cowives who have taken their time to attend the funeral. But Alima didn't do that. It was midnight when she came into the house and collected all the things she thought she would be needing in the funeral house. And so because he was a Muslim, after one week they performed the funeral. And within four days after the funeral, all the women who have been staying at the funeral house will return to their husbands' houses. And Alima came, and when she came, I just kept quiet and was looking at her. And it came to a time when she forgot about everything.

One day I wanted to go to the farm and I asked her to do some work, and she refused. When she refused the work, it reminded me of what she had been doing to me in the past. But I didn't talk anything bad to her. I didn't beat her, and I didn't say anything. I sat outside and I called somebody who could write, and I gave him money to go and buy some paper. When he came back, we sat, and I told him to write: "Alima and I have given birth to five children. Two of them

died: Mahamadu and Fatima died. The ones who are left are Abdulkadiri and Aliyu and Abibata. These three children, may God bless them for me. And may God let them help me and their mother, all of us. But as for me, Ibrahim, today I am separating from Alima, and I am separating from her tomorrow as well. As we are separating today, it is that I don't want her in my house anymore, and she is not my wife anymore. But if it happens that she wants to do something with my help, I can help. Because if you've given birth to children with a woman, it shows that you have become family; whatever happens, you are now family. But I don't want Alima in my house again. And so I am sending this letter to the parents of Alima. I want them to come now to my house and collect her things. But I don't want any of the parents to ask me anything. They should ask Alima herself: she will tell them what she did." When I wrote this letter, Alima was inside the house. She didn't know that I wrote such a letter, and she didn't know that what she had done to me was something I would take to be like that. And I sent someone to give the letter to Alima's junior father, and he received it. And then I went to the farm.

When Alima's junior father read the letter to his housepeople, he said, "How can a man want to leave his wife and the wife will still be in his house? It is surprising." And they called Alima and said, "This is the letter your husband has brought to us." And Alima has a brother who is educated, and he also read the letter. And the same talks I had talked inside the letter were what he read to them. And by that time, Alima put her hands on her head and started crying. And truly, two days later when I returned from the farm, somebody told me that how she was crying, it was as if a fire had caught the house. And they asked her, "What bad have you done to him?" And she said she hadn't done anything bad to me. And they said, "Well, all right. Since he has said we should come to his house immediately to collect your things away, there is no need for us to wait for him to return from the farm to ask him." And they came the next day and were collecting her things. At that time there was Fati and Fatawu's mother in the house, and they were surprised about the thing and wondering why I was driving Alima away from my house. She didn't have any quarrel with any of the women in the house, and when she had quarreled with me, I hadn't talked anything bad to her. All the women in the house were very, very surprised. And Alima's people collected all her things and took them away. Many people were asking me the reason why I drove her away, and they were wondering. They thought I didn't like her, but it wasn't that. And I never said anything.

If a man drives away a woman, whatever happens, in one year or two years, she will marry again. But Alima lasted for three years, sitting in the house of her

father. That house is just near my house, and during those three years I didn't even want to see her. And what truly showed her wickedness to everybody was the time Fatawu's mother was sick and was lying in the hospital. When Alima had gone to her father's house, she took away the girl she had given birth to and left two children with me, Abdulkadiri and Aliyu. And it was Fatawu's mother and Fati who were in my house, and they were cooking for these two children, and bathing them, and buying things for them. And in our living, if you are with your cowives in a house and you have children, if it happens that you are not lucky and your husband drives you away, you must know that those other women are taking care of your children. If you have quarreled with your husband, you didn't quarrel with your cowives: you have to be greeting them because they are now taking care of your children. But Alima was not greeting them, and she never went to the hospital to greet Fatawu's mother. In our whole area, there was no woman who didn't go to the hospital to greet Fatawu's mother when she was lying there, but Alima never went. The time Fatawu's mother was in the hospital, if you went there during day time and you saw the number of women there, you would be surprised. Even all the women in Alima's house went, but Alima refused to go. She never stepped a single step to go.

The day Fatawu's mother died, every woman in the area was in the compound of my house, and all of Alima's housepeople were there, too. Alima didn't come, and she didn't attend the funeral. It was at that time that Alima's housepeople and all those people who thought I didn't like Alima got to know the reasons why I drove her away. And I asked some of the women who had been asking me about Alima, "If you drive away your wife and one of her cowives dies, does she attend the funeral or what?" And they said, "Yes. The woman can attend the funeral. Even if you have a wife and she never gave birth to a single child in your house, if you leave her and she marries a different man, if something happens in your house, she can come and greet. If the woman has sense, she can sit down and think, 'Formerly I was a wife to this man, and now this has happened in his house. At least I must go and greet them.' A woman can do that, and how much more if you've given birth to children and you went away and left them, and you know that these are the people taking care of your children. And so as she has refused to attend the funeral, all of us know the reason why you drove her away." And I told them, "When you have eye sickness, you don't have to tell anyone." Do you understand? Eye sickness is not stomach pains and it's not a disease inside the body. If something happens in your eyes, your eyes will be red, and everybody will see it; and if you are blind, everybody will see it. And so if somebody does something bad, and you see it because you are with the person,

you may say something against him; by then, others who have not seen it will be finding your fault or talking against you until it comes to a time that everybody sees it. And at that time when everybody sees it, nobody is going to talk and show the other that this is what so-and-so has done. And so eye sickness, everyone will see it himself. You just imagine: Alima's children were in the funeral house and she refused to enter, while people I didn't even know were coming. And that was how everyone got to know that it was her fault and not my fault.

And so as for me, if I am with somebody and he is doing bad things to me, I always receive those bad things from the person. And I will be putting them down together. If it comes to a point, I will say, "No. I don't want this." That is all. If I am with somebody and the person does something bad to me, if I ask him about the thing, it means that our friendship is going to last. It is because I want him and me to stay together that I will ask him. And this is how I left my wives. And for other people, too, how they leave their wives is sometimes different. But as for this talk I have talked today, I think I have finished with how we Dagbamba separate from our wives. And as I have been telling you how we live with our wives, it seems there is more to the talk about men and women. And so tomorrow I will tell you what happens when a Dagbana dies and leaves a widow, because in our custom in Dagbon here, it is a big talk and a serious talk.