

Chapter III–27: *Reflections on the History of the Work*

I have been thinking, and I think in my heart that it will be best to finish the talks by talking about you yourself and me myself, how each of us suffered in the work and how we managed to talk all the talks. And again, how I got the talks from my elders, too, because as you've come here for these talks, you have gone around to greet all those who are above me, and you have come to know that they are the ones who are holding me. And I would like to spend some time to talk about how others didn't agree with me at first, and at the same time how you also kept quiet. You didn't say anything, and you just turned to be a deaf person and somebody who doesn't mind anything. You tried to stay with me patiently, and I have brought all these talks in the long time since we started. And now we have come to the end. As for work, if you do some work, you will know the owner of the work. And anybody who wants to know and who is coming to you to learn the work, he will get to know that truly the time you went to learn the work, you also suffered, and this was the way you managed before you got into the work and finished. But if we don't talk about all this, and if some day people want to talk to you about the work you did here, when you want to talk to them about all the difficulties and the ways you passed before you finished the work, they won't believe you. They will say that you got it in an easy way.

So we are going to start with all the problems you faced when you left your home and came to me and started the work. The first time for you to come here was some years ago. I was sitting down. Actually, white people had been coming to see me. They would have a look at things, at my beating of drums, and at how I sew the drums. Often they would only come and have a look and walk away again. Sometimes they would come and say that they want to have a recording of the drumming, or that I should let my people beat a Takai dance for them to see. They were coming in this way. The time I was going to meet you, I was sitting down; I didn't know the exact time but it was around twelve o'clock in the afternoon. I saw a small child calling me that Amadu Jaato is calling me. And I came, and Amadu said, "You should greet this stranger." And I greeted. And Amadu said that the stranger has come to me; the stranger wants the drummers who beat Takai. When my brother Amadu told me this, I asked him whether the stranger wants to buy drums or he just wants to listen to the music of Takai. And they asked you, and you said, no, you want to learn it and you will be beating. And at that point those who were sitting there, you remember, they were very surprised.

And if you can remember, you opened your mouth and said that you are not going to start today and not tomorrow, but you want to go to Ouagadougou and

come back. And I showed you my house in case you came back. And you went there, and actually you came back. When my friends and I saw you coming, we were very surprised, and we were wondering about you. When you had said you would go and come, we thought that you had told us a lie. And we said that now we believe you are serious. When you came, you sat with me and told me that you wanted to get into the work. And by then I thought that I would not charge you, but you said I should charge you. And I looked and saw that our work, we don't do our work without anything. I showed you my charge, and you said that, truly, you could not afford it, and you told me what you could afford. And I agreed for you.

I found my son Alhassan, and added Alhassan Abukari, and added myself, and we were meeting you at the Cultural Center and showing you the beating. When we were showing you, the way you played let me know that truly you would be able to learn to play well, because as for patience, you were having it. When I had taught you for a few days, I told you that I could not be coming all the time because people might be looking for me at home, and that I would leave you to be playing with your friends.

So the two Alhassans were showing you the beating like that, and sometimes, when you closed and were coming home, I would see you walking one after the other, in a separate way. And none of you would tell me what happened. So I asked them, and they said, "The white man became annoyed and refused to play. And he said that if we don't take time, we will all quarrel." Any time I asked them, they would say this; when they turned away, the next minute I would see you coming. And so I did not believe them. How can somebody say "I will quarrel with you" and at the same time be following your back? In three days' time, they would give another complaint. And so I told you, "You should go in the morning and beat, and then in the afternoon you should come and meet me at home, and we will sit at the veranda of the Arabic school and practice. And again, if I am free, I will come and meet you at the Cultural Center, together with the two Alhassans." And I was mixing the lessons in this way.

As time went on, I saw that your hands were becoming used to beating the drum. And the two Alhassans were complaining and telling me about the bad character you were showing them. I just kept my eye on you, but I could not see any bad character or bad habits in you. I would sit down and think that maybe you have some bad habits, but as you want to learn, you just keep your bad habits aside. As for such habits, we don't call them bad habits. When a human being wants to know something or find something, and he just puts his bad habits down to look for what he wants, then it is nothing that people can be against. As I was watching you at that time to see your character, your character only showed that

you want to hold yourself and get what you want, and if you don't get it, you are not happy. Even up to now, I have been observing you in that way: the day you don't get what you really want, your heart is never white, and it will be worrying you so that you will find a way to get it. And that way of living is a good way. There are some people, if you do something to them or if they don't get what they want, they will start abusing you or even beating you. Somebody with that kind of character is a bad person. And if you had been someone like that, you would have said, "I'm not bothered: I will not learn it again. I brought myself; nobody brought me here. So I won't learn. How can I be sitting like this and allow somebody to disturb me?" But I saw you have a good character, and we were teaching you.

We were teaching you, and we taught you beyond the extent we were expecting to teach you. Even you yourself, I think that you did not believe that you would get to some point, but you passed it. When you first came, you wrote down the dances you wanted to learn. Any time we practiced, it was those dances we taught you. As time went on, we came to teach you different dances again. And the reason we added you more dances was that your character showed that you could learn more to add to what you wanted. Sometimes someone can go to learn something, and inside his learning, he won't catch anything. It is from the heart. And "go and catch and add" is also from the heart. I saw that your heart was one that could catch, and so we were adding more of the beating.

It came to a time that whenever we were going to beat somewhere, we asked you to accompany us there. The dance we would beat, you would ask its name. If you didn't ask me myself, you would ask any of the others. If they showed you, you would write it down. Sometimes when we were teaching you, if we finished teaching you what you wanted and what we added, I would see you bringing papers out and stretching them, and you would read from your papers. What we had been beating at the place where we went to beat the dance, this was what you caught and wrote down. Our Dagbamba have a proverb which says that a leopard does not eat goat meat, but if you allow him to tend the fire where the goat meat is being cooked, when he comes and pushes the fire where they are cooking goat meat, he will have the appetite to eat it. And so when you were asking us about the dances we played at different places, it showed that you were interested to know the dances. And truly, when we watched you and saw that your heart was always clean and happy for all that you wanted, we agreed with everything you said.

But can you remember? Sometimes you asked the two Alhassans to play something and they refused; they said they wouldn't play it. They said that what you first wanted were the only dances they would play. Sometimes they even told

lies about me when I was not there, that I had told them that they must teach you only what you asked for first. Small Alhassan was telling me that when they showed you something and you asked for more, they said they would only continue with the first one, and you would be becoming annoyed. I took it that it was their fault. And actually I never saw that you were annoyed, but as they told me that you were annoyed, I took it that you were annoyed because of your thing. You have come to learn, and the one teaching you refuses to teach you; however patient you are, you will become annoyed. If you see something, and your teacher says, “I don’t know what you have seen,” it would have been different. But here is the case that the teacher has played the thing and you have seen him do it, and now you want him to play it for you and he won’t do it. In your heart, what will you think? So all this was bringing your annoyance, and I didn’t take it to be anything. When they were telling me of your character, I just took it that it was your way of behavior toward them. They have played the song for you to listen and then refused to play it for you to learn, and it was their fault.

And so I was telling you how to live with them, and that patience gets everything, because I saw that you tried your best. Somebody can come to learn work once, and because of the suffering, he will refuse it. And somebody can learn work once and see the sweetness of it, and then say he has gotten enough. And somebody again will learn work and see its sweetness, and his heart will tell him he should continue learning it. The heart that tells him he should go back and learn it again is a heart that will gain. And so your heart is a heart that has given you a gift. There is some work that you can learn, and you will be fed up with it, but your heart will be telling you to go back and do the work. And the heart that sees the sweetness of the work and the heart that tells someone to learn the work, these two hearts are together with you. It is the heart which thinks, and the tongue will say it; and your heart and tongue have made you gain, and they will be making you gain until your children come to gain, too.

So it was going on, and they were showing you. And the time you were beating, it was only your hand that was worrying you on the part of the beating. And I told you that my brother Alhaji Adam is there, and he has medicine for it, and you should go and see him. And truly, you went. It was not I who took you to my brother; I only told you that my brother has medicine. And when you went to him and he showed you what to do, you did it. All that he showed you to do before he would make it for you, you did it. And he made *ganli* for you. And you yourself, your wrist began singing on the drum.

It wasn’t long and you said you wanted a drum, and when you received a drum for yourself, it wasn’t long again and you said again you wanted a drum. A few days later you said you wanted a *gunḡoḡ*. Truly, at that time I was very

excited that you were very interested in the drumming. If you don't want farming, you won't beg for land. And even when you beg for land, we don't believe that you are going to farm. But when you get a hoe, that is when we know that you are serious about farming. Truly, all the time we were showing you how to beat the drum, we were not sure that you were all that interested in drumming. But when you bought a drum, and you bought another one again, no one had to tell me that you were interested. And then you bought a guṅḡḡḡ. You know that the guṅḡḡḡ is older than the drum, and I have told you that we call it the mother of the drums. If a drum is beaten and guṅḡḡḡ is not there, it is like soup without salt: whatever the amount of meat you put inside, it won't be sweet. So when you bought drums and you bought a guṅḡḡḡ, we knew that you were very, very serious in your work.

And you also took patience, and sense, and foolishness, and fear, and you followed us. Why have I said this? In the whole Dagbon here, people believe that all white people are sensible. If you tell them it is not like that, they will not believe you. Only those people who get to your place can know what is happening there. But we believe that you are very, very sensible. You are a white man, and you come to stay with us black people. And we are showing you what we want. It means that you the white man have taken yourself to be a fool for us. When you came here, you put all your sense away and followed us as if you are a fool. You were just looking at me to see what I would do to you. And you took fear and added it to yourself. You are strong, and you took your strength and put it down to follow us, as if we were people you should fear. At that time, we took it that we were the sensible people, not knowing that you were taking another sense to follow us to see how our life is and how to live with us. And we took what we have and tried to show you bit by bit. And you were following us in it.

You were there like that, and it came to a time when you left us. You said you wanted to visit home, and when you were going home, there wasn't any quarrel between us. And people said you had cheated us. We heard it from people and we said it to you, and you did not receive it. If you have forgotten, we have not forgotten. What we said, you heard it, and you did not follow it. You gave us gifts, and you went home. And it was there like that.

After you went, it wasn't long when my wife died, and I wrote you. You sent me some money for the funeral, and you wrote me that the death of my wife worried you. Those I was sitting with when the letter came, they read it, and they got to know that I was staying with the right person. They said that my friend is not somebody I should release and let go away. You were in your home town, and you spent about three years there. All the time your letters were coming to me. When I was receiving the letters, I knew that the foolish behavior the two Alhassans had been showing you, you didn't consider it to be anything when you got home. You just forgot about it. And I knew that truly you loved the work.

All the time after you left me, many different people, and some I never met before, they were coming to me to tell me that when you take the drumming to your home town, you are going to use the drumming to get a lot of money, and you were cheating me, and so if you came back, I should charge you heavily. But I just took cotton and closed my ears, and I was looking for you on the way coming. And you came back. And again you brought me a gift. And I thought that what people had said to me in your absence, I wouldn't keep it, and I would tell you. I didn't take it to be anything, but I only wanted you to hear it. When I told you about what people were saying, you also told me your idea about it. And I told you that it doesn't matter, that truly, not all people will like a person. It is only a fool who says that everybody should like him. And by that time, I stood very well. Even some of my children, and some of the drummers, and people in my house, they were trying to agree with the outsiders by saying that they would not do the work. And I said, "It doesn't matter. America is very far from Tamale, and somebody has taken me to be somebody and come because of me. So I will not consider money and refuse my friend, because if you die, they don't bury you with money." As you have gone and come back, I knew you were very serious. At the time you came back, Ghana had changed, and I gave you a different charge from the first time. You didn't say anything; you agreed with me. And so I left my son Alhassan, and I called my junior brother Alhassan Abukari again and I called my junior brother Adam Ibrahim. And we came together, and you and I continued our beating of the drum again, and you came to know more than what you knew already.

When you came back, you said you wanted to know more about the work. I told you that there are some things in drumming that are hidden. They are forbidden, and we were afraid to show you, unless you would make a sacrifice to it. And I told you that nobody gets trouble for nothing. I told you this, and that the first thing which was hidden from you was *Bangumaṇa*. I told you that the beating of *Bangumaṇa* is forbidden, unless you kill a sheep for it, and even if they are going to beat it at the chief's house, the chief will kill a sheep. I told you that if you know you can stand the sacrifice, we have a way to teach you. And you said, "It doesn't matter. I will do it." And you went and bought the sheep, and we made the sacrifice and we started beating *Bangumaṇa* for you to learn. And by all this you showed that you were serious. If it were somebody, he might have said that we just want to eat meat, and that tomorrow we will get someone else to buy another sheep and eat again. He would have said, "As for buying a sheep and killing it, let's forget about that." But you agreed to buy the sheep, so what was left for us to do? We showed it to you. Have you seen? You turned yourself to be a fool, and you turned yourself to be somebody who is afraid of us, and you did

what we asked you to do. And it showed that you believed that to kill the sheep is the right thing to do, because Baṅgumaṅa is an important thing for us, and the sacrifice is what we also believe for it. So, if we did not ask you to get the sheep and kill it, and we just showed it to you, we might have been wrong on the part of our tradition. And you believed that it is our tradition, and that is why we have to do it.

And I told you that if you go to your home town and you want to beat Baṅgumaṅa, you should spread the skin of the sheep and sit on it and be beating. The skin would be your witness for the people there, and you should tell them, “Because this dance is important, when I was going to learn it, I had to kill a sheep, and this is the skin of the sheep.” Even if you don’t say it, you can know that when a lion comes out to walk, people with sense will know that a lion is something bad. But those who don’t know, you have to tell them. Our Dagbamba say that the work patience kills does not die with a complete neck. Do you understand its meaning? Anything you have to use patience to get is not something you get cheaply or something you get for nothing. If somebody gets something in a cheap way, he will think that it is nothing. But if he uses patience to get it, he will know that he used patience, and he won’t say that he got it for nothing. No one will use patience to get something and say that he got it for nothing. He knows that if he hadn’t used patience, he would not have got that thing. The time we told you to buy the sheep, it was patience that bought the sheep. It wasn’t money that bought it. By that time, I can’t say that animals were cheap or they were not cheap. But it was the work you wanted. You knew that what you wanted, it showed that you had to buy the sheep. If patience were not there, you would not have agreed. And the work you wanted was forbidden, and you couldn’t get it at once, and so you took patience to get it and you made the sacrifice. And that is why we say, “The work that patience kills does not die without its throat cut.” It looks like the way Muslims will not eat an animal that has not been killed by its throat being cut. It is forbidden for them to eat such an animal. But an animal that has its throat cut is not forbidden for them to eat. And what patience kills is also not forbidden. There is nothing forbidden on the part of the work of patience. What you got from me is not something you got easily, and so if some of your people at home want to say that you got it easily, the skin of the sheep shows that you took patience to lead you in the work. It is through patience that you got it, and if you didn’t have patience, you wouldn’t have got it. And we finished Baṅgumaṅa, and we taught you *Ɔem*, and we told you our forbidden things.

It was inside the learning of Baṅgumaṅa and *Ɔem* that we came to know the work we have been doing now. When we started it, we just started it a little, and it

was like a joke. And it wasn't long and you said you would go home, and we said goodbye to you. And you didn't forget us; you came back again. The time you came, your beating of drum was not much. By that time, too, I thought that you had become good in it. I watched you and I thought that even if you don't beat a drum for ten years and you happen to see some people beating drums, you can just hold a drum and beat it the way you beat. And so I believed that you know it. You were following it only a little, and you said you wanted to add important talks to the beating. What were the talks? It was our living in Dagbon here, and our tradition. And you said that it is I alone who will talk to you about all that.

Truly, when you came and said that I should talk to you about our way of living, my heart was spoiled. The talk you have never talked, when somebody says you should talk it to him, you don't know whether you know it or you don't know it: your heart will spoil. Even if you know it, your heart will spoil. And I was afraid to come and take lies and talk to you. And I didn't know if I could talk and it will benefit somebody. And I was thinking too that I could talk and it will benefit somebody. A weak person does not know he is a weak person, until the day he chases a tortoise and does not catch it. That is the day he will know he is weak. And the day I was going to start these talks, I was thinking that I was a weak person, and I came to chase the tortoise and I caught it. And I even caught those that are more than tortoises.

When I came to you, I came with truth. And I talked the truth so that you would hear it and know that it's the truth. If you take it and ask somebody, whatever happens, even if he doesn't like me, if the fellow is going to say anything, he will say, "It's true." What makes it so? Before I come to you, when it's night, the thoughts I think are very, very many. The talk tomorrow I will take and talk, it will go to a country I don't know. So it is good if I take truth and talk it, because truth is not a stranger. It is lies that is a stranger. If I take truth and talk, when it goes to someplace I don't know, it will not be a stranger. Wherever truth is, it will get a place to enter. If the truth wants, it can be as big as this town, but it can enter this room. If it is as big as this town, if they bring it, it will enter here, because it is true. As for lies, if you put it just outside, it cannot enter here. And that is why I brought truth and talked. The one who knows me, it will be sweet for him, and the one who does not know me, it will be sweet for him too. If it were lies I were telling you, you yourself would not have followed it. It would not have gone far, and even my talk would not have entered here and stayed. Lies are like urine: when it starts it goes far, but it comes to finish in front of you. And so it is not lies I have talked to you. And again, lies have no birth, and lies have no family house. But truth has got a family house, and when it gives birth, it brings forth plenty. That is why when I came I told you that truth does not finish,

but lies finish. These are the thoughts I was thinking before I came here every day.

The time we were starting this work, that was when I knew I could talk and it would do. If it were something that would not do, I would have known it. And it started from you before it came to me. You showed me how we are going to start it and it will be good. And it was in the starting that I knew it was something that could grow, and even become more than that. Dagbamba say that it is in the testes that you will know that a hernia is starting. When a hernia starts and it is not yet big, you will know that when it's going to grow, it will be more than that. And so how the work started, we knew that it was going to become big. And our work: God made it that it does not forbid any soup, and it does not forbid any type of food, and it does not fear work. That is how our talks are. And so it was the time that I was starting this work that I knew that it will do. And all of it comes from you, because it started from you first before it came to me.

And when we were starting, again, many people wanted to spoil us — me and you. They wanted to spoil the work. They said I should not take the talks of this place to show to you, and that I should not take truth and talk to you. And they said I was selling our tradition. Even where we used to beat the drums, that is what they used to tell me. They told me that if you take this work to your town, as you have come and given me small money, if you take it home, it is a big talk in your country. And they said that because of these talks, you and your family and those behind you will all benefit from the talks. And so I should put it down that you should pay this amount or that amount before I will talk again, and I should tell you that if you won't pay, you should get somebody else. And others also came to me to tell me. Even Ashantis used to say it. One time when you were at home, an Ashanti man came and bought a drum, and it happened that that day I was holding a picture you sent me of your town. And at your town, there are some rivers, and the town is in the middle of the rivers. And the Ashanti man looked at it, and he said he knows your town. And he said that because of what you have come to do here, you are a big man at your town, and that when you came back, I shouldn't put my eyes on you.

The old people did not say this; it was the young ones who joined this talk to the talk that they had talked before. What they said, I heard it, and I hid it in my heart. My father told me, "The person who is not a person, what he says, you shouldn't accept and you shouldn't refuse. You will hear it. But don't take it and do work." And the talks they were talking, I didn't tell anyone. The person God has made, and the person God likes, when somebody wants to spoil him, it is difficult. Many people wanted to spoil us, but as God has made me, I didn't hear what they said. If you want to live with somebody, you shouldn't be hearing talks. And so we were doing the work.

And the time these people were trying to spoil us, by that time, the old people were telling me, “Look at how he has come from far, and he says, ‘You!’ If you think that it is good to talk to him, you should do it.” The maalam you were always seeing sitting with me, Alhaji Shahadu, every day he was coming to me, and he would tell me that how you and I are friends, it is wonderful, and he believed that if you are in your town, when it’s daybreak, if you don’t think of me once, you will think of me twice. And he told me to be patient, that patience is everything. This was what he was always telling me, and it makes me sit with you too. And as for my brothers Alhaji Adam, Sheni, and Mumuni, every day I’m with them on the part of patience. If it is not they who give me patience, then you wouldn’t be seeing them. And you have seen their work. If not patience, then patience. Wherever you are and they see you, they come to you. If somebody does not want you, he won’t come and greet you. You should know that they like you, or you wouldn’t have been seeing their faces. Has it ever happened that they will see you somewhere and they won’t come to you? They have been giving me good talks on the work, so that we will do the work well. As for Sheni, whenever he sees me, he talks of you; he says, “*Oi!* His work looks like somebody they have showed how to do work.” The gift you gave him last week, he’s still talking about it. If he didn’t want you, he wouldn’t have allowed his son Mahamadu to come and teach you how to beat the *gunḡon*. Sheni wanted the work very, very much. As for the old people, they want you, and they want the work you have done; that is why they say this about you. Nanton Lun-Naa, Lun-Zoo-Naa, Savelugu Palo-Naa, Loyambalbo, Namo-Naa, all of them, it is their white heart. All of them are happy about the work. And they have been praying that the work we have been doing, if it is small, God should make it big, and we should all be benefiting from one another. This is what the old people tell me, and they are the ones who are holding me. And so the people in my house, and the outsiders, and the useless people just walking about, when they talked, I just looked at you.

It was at the time that we were getting into the talks that I was sitting down and you went and did some big work and brought it to me. The work you did made my friends, my brothers, my sisters, and my enemies happy. The work you did for me is a big work on the part of Dagbamba who hear of it. It shows that if God agrees and you are patient, you will get what your heart wants. And if you get what your heart wants, you will also do some work that is big. And all the people who are in Dagbon here, they all see it. And what was the work? You said that I should go to Mecca. And we Dagbamba, any one of us who does “*Allahu Akubaru*” wants to go to Mecca. And you did that for me, and I got to know that, truly, you want to benefit from the work. And you didn’t believe that you’ve done anything to me, but I think that, from God, you will benefit and I will also benefit.

Because there is no work that is more than what you did. No one will forget it. Your grandchildren will remember it, and they will say, “Our grandfather went to Dagbon, and he learned the ways of the Dagbamba. And when he went and learned it, his friend who showed him the work, our grandfather tried and sent him to Mecca to pray. And the fellow who showed our grandfather the work, maybe he was also a great person.” And my children and those following me, and my grandchildren, and all my family, there is no one who will forget it. And they are going to remember that it was you who wanted it. My grandchildren will say, “We got up and our father said, ‘Our grandfather had a friend who came from America, and our grandfather showed him sense till he sent him to Mecca.’” So it is a big work. And there is no forgetting of it. The talk you cannot forget, to us it is a big talk. But “Forget of it”: that is not a big talk. The work you have done, anyone who wants, it will make his heart white; and the one who doesn’t want, it will make his heart white. It is a big work, and the work we have done has brought all this, and we have seen it. It is not a talk we will take and hide. And as it has brought good, it is good we say it. And it is patience which has brought it.

And on the part of the money you were giving me, the first and second times you came, when you opened the way for me to go to Mecca, my mouth became dead. The time I was showing you drumming, I was getting some money from you, but the work you did showed that we didn’t have to charge you again. We knew that by the wish of God, if you get, we will also get. If we knew that if you gained from the work, we wouldn’t also gain, we wouldn’t have minded you. And it was not you who told us that if you get, we will also get. It was your work that showed it. And it wasn’t that I asked you. I was just sitting down and you came to tell me that you will pay for my flying in the sky to go and see the grave of our Prophet. Our Dagbamba say that if a useless person does not know how to give, he knows how to give back. And I told you to forget about paying me again. It is just like if somebody should teach you the Holy Qur’an, do you think you can pay him back? It is only God Who will pay him. And so the time you sent me to Mecca, it showed that what you want from the work we were doing, God should let you get something that will benefit you. And I will also sit down with my family and we will benefit. And the year that you opened the way for me to go to Mecca, God didn’t agree for me to go there. And we held patience. And truly, the work you wanted on the part of our tradition and our way of living, I was giving it to you. I was showing you the talks of our living and our tradition, and it came to the time when you said that you were not going to remain long in Tamale again, that you were going to go back to your hometown for some time. And you went home, and you came back again, and we were doing the work. And we entered the problems of Mecca again, and you were going around and talking to our big

people here on the part of my going. And it came to a time when you went home again, and the time you were at home, by the will of God, I also went to Mecca and came back. And so sometimes you will suffer to get something but you won't get it at that time, and you will be patient and you will get it later. And you also came back again, and we have been doing the work. And every day, it is patience.

And so, when it's daybreak, it is my white heart that I bring to you, and it is the work of white heart we've done to one another. And as I was showing you our living and our tradition, I was coming with my white heart. If you get a stranger and he comes to meet you and he says, "I want you to teach me this," you should think much inside your heart, and you should make your heart white. And you should take the white heart and be teaching it to him. What you know, you will teach him. And what you don't know, you will be asking people, and add to it. It is because you don't want shyness to come inside the work. But the coming I was coming, it was shyness. Dagbamba have some talk, that it is shyness which is a human being. And so you should let shyness be inside your eyes. And so shyness, and the way a human being lives, it is because of this I come here. If a stranger comes to meet you, and he comes from far to get something, you the one from the town, if you want, you can be as heavy as anything, you should leave your heaviness and put it down, and you should decrease yourself and come. If you are a weak person, you should still be a weak person and come, because you don't know what he has seen and he has come to you. If you say you are a drummer, there are drummers who are more than you. If you beat *timpana*, or *Baamaaya*, or *Jera*, or *Simpa*, there are people who beat more than you. But if someone asks you for a way, and you show him, it is nothing bad. And I took my sense and my foolishness, and I was talking to you. And I took my white heart, and I was coming to you.

And I was coming because you are from far away. And coming because we did not know one another and we came to know one another. And coming because you are a white man and I am a black man, and you have taken me as a friend. And coming again because you are somebody who is heavy in your town, and you have come here to lower yourself and follow me. And coming so that you too will catch the talk you want from me, and it will be good for all of us. But I didn't come because of money. If I were coming because of money, then every day I would have been following you with money talks. We know that if a soup will be sweet, then there must be salt inside, and when any work is done, and even where there is death, money will enter inside it. But it is not money which does all the work. We Dagbamba want respect, and respect is more than money. And so I didn't come because I want to gain. I came so that all of us will gain.

And I was coming because I want my town to increase. My town to increase in what way? As I come, many people see the two of us. As they see,

they say to the whole town, and they hear it too: “This fellow, look at where he comes from. And this man Ibrahim the drummer is free with him. And if that man bluffs, he does not take his bluffing to move with Ibrahim the drummer. And he is heavy, but he has not taken his heaviness to move with Ibrahim the drummer. And so Ibrahim the drummer is doing well. And as the white man does not take his heaviness to move with Ibrahim the drummer, he is also doing well. And if the white man should go, he will praise our town. He is somebody who will go and the name of our town will increase.” And this is what many people say, and this is why I come here. And I come again so that all of us, our families and our backs, will increase. Whatever happens, no one will forget of the other. And even our backs, whether they see one another or they don’t see one another, they will not forget one another. Whatever happens, somebody will come and remember, “My grandfather did this.” It is because of this that I was coming, so that all of us will gain.

And so truly, it is the work of white heart we’ve done to one another. And as you’ve done the work with me, you’ve done the work with many. When I come and talk, I don’t talk by myself. I talk with many people. Why do I say that? Even if you watch inside this book, it is not I alone who has been saying the talks. When I grew up, my father took care of me, and I was not all that sensible when my father died. But what he talked, I caught a little of it; and what I have given to you, if you look at each place, you will see some of his talk. When I left my father, I went to stay with Nanton Lun-Naa. He talked to me, and his talk is included. When I left Nanton Lun-Naa, I came to Tamale, and what I heard in Tamale I have given to you. And I traveled to Kintampo and sat there. From Kintampo I went to Kumasi, and I went to Accra, Takoradi, and Aboso, and all that I saw there and all the knowledge and the sense that I gained from these places, I have given it to you. And I came to stay with my family at home. When I talk here and go home, when people are sitting somewhere and talking, I watch, and think, and I will remove some of their talks which will be good if I join to my own talks. And if I go to any town, and they are saying some talks, I will put my ear there. And I will be removing talks like that to add to ours. If only the truth is there. And my family, their talks are there, and my friends, and those I hear from, I can take it and talk to you. And so it is not only my own sense that I take to talk. As for the talk in my heart, maybe that one is not enough. If I don’t hear from people, I can’t talk as I talk. And so I have collected the talks from many people to come and talk. If I hear the truth, and it comes to enter my heart, it can give birth to many talks. But if it were lies, it would not reach daybreak. And so it is not lies I have talked to you. And truly, as my heart came and I talked these talks, it doesn’t look as if I talked it. You should know that it is the heart that stands for something, and it is the mouth that is talking.

And again, it shows that Kissmal and Ben and Mustapha and I have all come together — four people, and we are talking to you. Sometimes I will say a talk, and it does not look as if it falls well; Ben and Kissmal and Mustapha can repair it. And so we are many people talking to you. But it looks as if I, Ibrahim the drummer, I am the leader of it. It is good that everything you do, you have a leader. And there are children, too, and Kissmal and Ben and Mustapha are the children of the talks. And you, John, you brought the talks, because you searched for the talks. If somebody does not search for talk, no one will talk. And so you are the one who is holding the talks in your hands. When I think and come here, no matter how I think of it in the house, I ask you how we are going to start it, and what your heart wants. You take what your heart wants, and talk to me, and when it comes to cross what I slept and thought of, it has become one. So it is you who is getting these talks for me, because what you say will come to look like my talk. It is good when you are coming to talk, the one holding the talk will start it, and you too will join it. It is good when somebody holds a rope. Before you unroll the rope, he is holding it. And you know its joining places and its weak points. And he will be pulling. As he is pulling, he is also seeing it, and he knows whether it is strong or it is not strong. But the one who has woven the thread, he is the one who knows how long it is. And that is how our talk is, the two of us.

And we were there until the time that God brought his power, and sickness came and attacked you. You were in Accra, and I got a telegram that you were in the hospital. I couldn't even eat food that night. I was very, very sad, and I started praying hard for your health. Whoever was my mother's child, or my father's child, or my friend, I told all of them, and we were all praying to God. And I was sitting down one day and I saw Kissmal coming to me. I had just finished the prayers, and I was pulling the beads, and he came to tell me that you are recovering and have gone back home. And we were on our mats with our beads, and we were all praying for you. And all this was from the love. I was still thinking of you, and you, too, you didn't forget us, and you came back. When you arrived you said that you unluckily fell sick and went home and you came back, and you said you wanted to continue the work and finish it. And the talks I talked, you wrote all of them, and you have come four times again, and you were reading them to me. And if it was anything, or there was any question inside the talks, we sat together and discussed how we would catch it and repair it. And we have tried, and I have seen that all the talks we talked are now standing well.

And truly, you have now caught what you want. Everything that is inside drumming, we taught you. Our Dagbamba say that if you greet the one who loves you, you should also greet the one who gives you. The one who loves you may want to give you something, but he has nothing; but the one who gives you has

got. And we have what you wanted, and we have given it to you. And it is because you asked. And so I was sleeping, and you have awakened me from sleep, and now I am awake. If a rabbit is sleeping in its place and you wake it up, whether you kill it or someone else kills it, you are the person who killed it. And I long ago told you that in these modern times, if a rabbit should wake up, it is a modern times dog that will catch it. And you came and said you will learn our tradition and our way of living. And I took my sense and my foolishness, and I showed you all. And you are taking your sense to make it well. And if you take these talks and go anywhere, I don't think anyone will find your fault. And those who are going to blame me will not be many. And so our talks have nothing on the part of blame. Truly, all people cannot like a person. Only a fool believes that everybody will like him. If somebody sees and listens, and he doesn't want the talks, he will say that I have told you lies. And the one who doesn't want again will say that I am a fool. But the one who wants will say that I am sensible. And the one who wants will say again that, truly, it is somebody with patience who has talked to you, because someone without patience cannot talk these talks.

And what you've got from us, you've got it. And the knowledge that you want from me, if you didn't finish knowing it, it isn't because you are weak. And again, it isn't that I don't know. It's just that knowledge, you can't know all knowledge. You can read a book and finish reading it. But we can't read knowledge and finish it. And so I think in my heart, what you have got is not bad. And the work you have got from us, I am sure and I believe, white people will come from their white land and look for this work, but it will be very difficult for them. Are white people not coming from Tamale here? Have they done this before? But if somebody has sense, and you want to teach him more sense, it's not difficult: the moment you open your mouth and say, "Aa," he will get it. And that is why you are having what you have now.

And so the work we have done, may God let you and us benefit from it. And the great work you have done for me, it showed that you want to benefit from the work, and I and my back, we cannot pay you for it, and we cannot even greet you very well for it. And what we Dagbamba know about friendship, if you are living with your friend and he gives you something, you don't have to say, "God bless you; may God bless you." Everyday he will be giving you, and how are you going to continue to say "God bless you; God bless you"? The only thing for you to do is to say it in your heart and say it to your housepeople and to your friends outside, and these people will be thanking your friend. And so don't give a gift and sit and be watching the one you gave to thank you very well for it. He will only be sitting down, and other people will be thanking you for him. And they will say, "Oh-h, it's very good. This fellow and that fellow, they solve each

other's problems a lot. It's not a useless friendship." And the work you've done for me, how am I myself going to thank you? What we Dagbamba know about friendship, and to me, everyday, everywhere, if I'm going or I'm sitting or I'm lying down, I will only think of my friend and pray to God that God will give my friend success in all that he wants, because I know that if God gives him, he will also turn and give me. And this is what we know about friendship.

And so if you want, when you write it, you can put it in this way: the work we have done should benefit all of us. And you too will say that the one you have collected this work from, you cannot pay him back. He didn't ask you to pay any amount, and so only God can pay him. And so how friendship is, our work should benefit all of us. It's not that if it benefits you, you can pay me, or if it benefits me, I can pay you. All we say is that it should benefit all of us. And so if we are going to be important someday because of what we are doing now to each other, and if we want all of us to benefit, we should let blood come out. If we are getting to finish this work, it would be good to remove blood, that is, we should make a sacrifice. It's not by force, but in Dagbon here, we take it that if we do something that is good, and we believe it, and we are coming to finish it, we finish it by removing blood. It will stand that this is how we have held our work and finished it. We have talked about heavy, heavy talks, and that is why I am saying that we should remove blood. Here is the case: we have talked a lot, and talked about many different things, and we have come to add what we have talked about old typical Dagbamba and come to add many things. It isn't that we want meat to eat. If we wanted meat, we could just go and buy fried meat and eat it. But if we remove blood, and you go home, then what we have done will be something that you will be stepping on with pride, that you've gone to do this work, and this is how you concluded the work, by removing blood.

In the old days, if somebody brought talks like these and came to the end of the talks, they removed blood and it stood that the blood was for the talks they had talked. What we talked about Naa Darizɛyɛ to Naa Luro, that one alone would have let us remove blood. And coming down to Naa Siyɛli, that one too is there. And what of Naa Gbewaa and Naa Nyaysi? As for Nimbu and Zipopora, people don't even want to say their names without removing blood. All these talks, we have removed blood to talk them, and now we have come to the end, and it is good we remove blood again. If a chief called me to come and talk these kind of talks to him, however useless or weak the chief was, if I talked and finished, he would have removed blood and said, "This is the conclusion," and he would have given me a gown.

If you go to look for something that you think will be very hard to get, and you go and you are lucky to get it in an easy way, it's better for you to give it

respect before you go. But if you just take it as if it's something without value, then it won't have value to you. If you are going to dry something in the sun, and it is something that everybody likes, if you don't sit down to watch it and you don't get something to protect it from people crossing over it, then it is going to be useless. That is why I am telling you this. If I am shy and I don't tell you, or if I take it that I love you so much that I don't want to let you do anything, or if I take it that I don't want to tell you something and you will be annoyed, then maybe you won't do it. You will finish and go like that, and you didn't know. It's not good if you don't know something and I know it, but I don't tell you. Such a thing, this sacrifice, if you have the time to do it, it's good; and it also doesn't matter if you don't have time and you say, "All right, I don't have time, and so here are the things. You do it. I have to go." It's all good. And so it's over to you. I have talked to you, and if you want to listen or you don't want to listen, it's over to you.

And so this is how it is. Every work you want to do, you should do it in the right way. This sacrifice, this coming out of blood, it is between you and me, and it shows that we want to benefit from our friendship and from the work we have done. And truly, what you have done for me, it is not because of me that you are doing it. And all the people you have done good to, they are not the people you are doing for. You are doing to reserve down for yourself the work that you have done. And so I am telling you: one dies because of his own thing, and one survives because of his own thing. So may God let you and us benefit from the work.

And you yourself have no way to thank us, and you have no debt with us. And you have no goodbye for us, unless just going. There is no day for you to say "goodbye." You have come to eat, and now you are satisfied to the extent you want. You will be hungry again, and you will come back. You can only say, "I am satisfied. I will go home and come back." This is where we and you stand. We Dagbamba say that the red dove does not say goodbye to the guinea corn chaff. Do you understand? When they sieve millet to guinea corn by throwing it in the air, the red dove will come and eat there. Whether it sees anyone there, or it doesn't see anyone there, it will come and eat. And when it is going back to its place, it doesn't say goodbye to anyone. It will just fly and go. And so we say that red dove doesn't say goodbye to the guinea corn chaff. If it says goodbye, tomorrow it will come and eat again. Whenever it has the appetite to come, it will come. And so it is the same thing with our friendship, and this is what I have seen it to mean. And so in our Dagbani, and how we take it to use it in proverbs, this is how our friendship is.

And the only talk I have to add is that if you eat the medicine that says that no one should knock you, you have to sit down quietly. If you use the medicine to

enter into people's matters, then one day children will beat you and the medicine will not mind. And so the work we have done, hold it with your two hands. Don't hold it loosely. Never let what you hold in your hands to be lying on the ground. If you are trading and you want to sell something, and what you are selling is good or bad, then if it is small, when you take it to the market, you should put it in a beautiful tin and cover it. If somebody comes to say he wants it, then you just open the tin a little way for him to see inside. Whether it's a nice thing inside or a bad thing inside, you don't have to open it wide. You just open it a little, and he will say, "Open it all the way and I will see." And you will tell him, "Oh? Am I not opening it?" He will put his hand inside and take some and go. And so the talk we have talked and we have all collected in our hands, when you get home, you should try your best. If you get home, don't take it and spread it roughly in America as if you didn't struggle or suffer to get it. Get a beautiful tin and cover it.