

Chapter I-11: ***The Respect of Drumming and How Drumming Started in Dagbon***

Today I am going to continue the talk about our drumming and the work we drummers do in Dagbon here. Truly, the work of drumming has got a lot of respect in Dagbon. If you are inside drumming, you are somebody who has respect, and somebody who is important. Why do I say that a drummer is a respected person? When our Dagbon was standing, and chieftaincy was there, everybody was afraid of a chief, but a drummer does not fear a chief. When a drummer is going to the chief's house, nobody has to lead him: where the chief is sitting, the drummer will come and sit there. We drummers and the chiefs are one, and all the respect of a chief is a drummer. And to talk all this, as we have started the talks of drumming, I don't know the number of days I will take to talk about all of it. But I will take it and go, and we will see how far. We drummers have got a lot of work in Dagbon here, and our drumming has got a lot of things.

Yesterday I told you that our father who gave birth to us was a drummer, and we also learned how to beat the drum. I am a Dagbana drummer, but I have also come to know many types of drumming and dances from many different tribes. And what I have learned, I have done a lot of work with it. And the work I have done is very, very big. I myself cannot tell you how far and wide I am important, unless someone says it, but anywhere I go as a drummer, I am heavy. It's not that I am a chief of drummers. It is from my learning. A person's weakness is from his town, and a person's heaviness is from his town. And so when I get to any place and I am heavy, it is because I didn't learn the work as a lazy work. Sometimes someone gives birth to a drummer who gets up to learn only useless things, but I learned the work with seriousness. We drummers learn our work with seriousness, and we go to towns. That is how it is.

I was given birth at Voggo and I learned drumming there to the extent I could. From Voggo I went to Nanton and I learned how to beat the drum, and I knew it well. From Nanton I came to Tamale here, and in Tamale I learned drumming to the extent I could. From here I went to the South and I learned how to drum in Kintampo and Kumasi. From Kumasi I went to Accra and I learned how to drum there again. From there I went to Takoradi, and I didn't stay long there, but I learned how to beat the drum there, too. From Takoradi I came back to Dagbon and I came to Tamale and learned drumming. From here I went to Yendi and stayed there. I was in Yendi for about a year and I was still learning how to drum. And now I am in Tamale. And I am still learning more.

Why am I still learning? It is because of what I have just said. A person's weakness is from his town, and a person's heaviness is from his town, too. If they call you a monkey, you should let your tail be long. What does it mean when they say your tail is long? If you are doing some work, you must make sure you know the work. If you don't know the work, and you are doing it, you are only wasting your time. And you will be spoiling the work, too. And so the work I am doing, I am doing it with all seriousness. That is how I understand to do it. And everyday I get more to add to what I already know.

As you are also learning the work of drumming, it is good I tell you the character of the work, too. When someone dies and you go to the funeral house, you talk of death. Where there is a wedding and you go to the wedding house, you talk of weddings. When there is a naming and you go, you talk of birth and children. When there is a fight and you see it, you talk of the fight. And so the work I am doing, I will tell you the nature of the work, too. That is the talk I have brought for you today. If you use somebody's name to call a different fellow, the fellow won't agree. And so to talk about drumming, I will show you its ways. I won't just take what my heart wants and talk, and I won't just talk what your heart wants. Drumming has got a lot of talk in this Dagbon, and to talk of drumming, you can't talk and finish. And so drumming work is very difficult. A person cannot know everything. Everyone knows only to his extent. Any talk on the part of our custom and our tradition in Dagbon here, it is inside drumming. That is why I have been telling you that the work you are holding in your hand is a heavy work.

Inside our drumming, we show that as we are all sitting in Dagbon here, every Dagbana's grandfather was a paramount chief. Why is it so? Let's take it that the Yaa-Naa gave birth to your father, and your father was not able to become the paramount chief or he was not given any small chieftaincy. When your father dies and leaves you, what do you become? You become an orphan. Can you get any chieftaincy? And again, if you are a chief and you give birth to children, it isn't that all of your children will eat the chieftaincy you were eating. And if your father was a chief and you don't get any chieftaincy to eat, and you give birth to children, what have those children become? They have become commoners. And so it isn't all Dagbamba who become chiefs, and it isn't all Dagbamba chiefs who bring forth chiefs. That is how our tradition is and how it moves on the part of chieftaincy. And it is drummers who know more about chieftaincy.

In Dagbon here, when a chief is sitting, or when a patient person is sitting, he wants to hear of his grandfathers from a drummer. When he hears of them, it adds to his respect. And in Dagbon here, and everywhere, a person does not praise

himself: it is someone who will praise you, not you yourself. We drummers beat the drum and praise people, and we praise those who gave birth to them, too. If you are a human being, you will want to hear the talk of your family, and we drummers sing the songs that show a person the people in his family. It adds to his respect, and it adds to all of us, too. Any time you see a drummer in Dagbon here, he knows the talk of people's families. How our drumming is, if I am a drummer, if we are all sitting down and we are all Dagbamba, I will know where you come from. Those of us sitting here with you, do you know where we came from? Do you know my mother's house? Do you know my father? Do you know Kissmal's father? Do you know Kissmal's mother? As Kissmal is sitting here, I know him. As I know him, if I'm going to praise him, I will praise him and he himself will know that I know him. A human being is made of four parts. As I am sitting, I have a father and a mother. My father has got his mother's house and he has his father's house. And my mother has her mother's house and her father's house. They all make four. There is no one who knows all this except us drummers. We will point at someone and say, "This fellow is from this town, and he's so-and-so's grandson, and he's a Dagbana." It is not that the fellow will come up to us and say, "My grandfather was so-and-so." It is we who will know it. It is drummers who can tell someone that your grandfather or your great-grandfather was this or that.

In Dagbon here, when someone grows up and doesn't know the grandfather, we call such a person a slave. If they buy someone and send the fellow away, he doesn't know anything about his grandfathers again. And he will not meet any relative of his again who will tell him, "Your father was so-and-so; your mother was so-and-so; and this and that." And so when you hear a Dagbana abusing someone "*dabli*," or a slave, it is a person who is living but doesn't ask to know about his or her family. If you ask, they will tell you. But if you only know of your father and mother, and you don't ask them to tell you about your forefathers, we call you a slave because you don't know anything about your family. And so even these modern children, we used to abuse them like that. They have been born by people, but they don't know about their grandfathers. It is not that they are actually slaves, but we abuse them that they are slaves. Can't you see that Dagbon is now spoiled? It is spoiled because those who are educated don't want to ask us drummers the talks of Dagbon. Those who are educated don't know, and that is why the educated Dagbamba have spoiled all of Dagbon. If they had asked the drummers, we would have told them. But if we had told them, they wouldn't have heard it, either. Too much eye-opening brings a lot of foolishness, and our educated Dagbamba are too wise. But the real Dagbamba who are in Dagbon here, they don't joke with drummers.

I can even say that the chiefs don't know most of their families. It isn't that they don't know, but some of them know only a few of their relatives. Someone might know about five relatives from the mother's side, and someone might know only ten from the father's side. Somebody might know their names but not know anything about how they were. And there can be a chief: he only knows that he comes from this family, or this door. He only knows the father, and the one who gave birth to his father. That is all. He doesn't know how his great-grandmother was called, and how she too she got that name, and how her brother or uncle was. He doesn't even know their names. It is you the drummer who will tell him, "Such-and-such a person was like this. He gave birth to your grandfather before your grandfather gave birth to your father, before your father too gave birth to you." We drummers know all the great-grandfathers and the grandfathers and grandmothers of chiefs, and the chiefs don't know their great-grandfathers. How will a chief know? His father didn't show him. His father didn't even know it. But as a chief is sitting, I know his grandfathers and great-grandfathers. Maybe he doesn't even know them, but I know them. My great-grandfather told my grandfather, and my grandfather told my father, and my father told me. And so our drumming is like that: it is within the family. We are people who ask. That is how it is. And so if a chief wants to know his family, and know it truly, he has to ask a drummer.

If a Dagbana has sense, he can ask his elders and get to know some of the talks of his family. As Kissmal is sitting down here, if he goes to ask his uncle, that is, his mother's brother, his uncle can tell him all of his mother's father's line to the point he knows. And he can also go to his senior father, that is, his father's brother who is older than his father, and ask who were his relatives on his father's side, and his senior father can show all of them to him. And again, if Kissmal is someone who has sense, he can ask his junior father whether he can tell him something about his father's mother's line, too. If Kissmal's junior father knows something about his father's mother's family, he will call all their names to Kissmal. And Kissmal will go again to his uncle and ask to know more about his mother's mother's line up to the point he knows. If his uncle tells him, Kissmal will keep it in his mind. And then when Kissmal gives birth to children, one day some of the children can come to ask him to tell them about the family and the family lines, and Kissmal will be able to tell it to the children. Someone can know his family like that. But we drummers are more than the other people in Dagbon because we know the name and we also ask of the praise-name which people used to call that person. And we sing it and beat it in our drumming.

And so in Dagbon here, we show a person how his respect is, because it is we drummers who know a person's grandfathers. In our songs we tell a person that this is his or her way. We don't take someone's songs to praise another person, because someone's grandfather is not another man's grandfather. If you are from Gushegu, we praise you with Gushegu songs. If you are from Tolon, we praise you with Tolon songs. If you are from Sunson, we praise you with Sunson songs. If you are from Kumbungu, we praise you with Kumbungu songs. And if you are from Yendi, we praise you with Yendi songs.

There are even some surprises in drumming. Sometimes you will call someone's grandfather's grandfather's name, and the fellow will be surprised. He doesn't know the name, and he doesn't know the praise-name. You will call someone's grandfather's name, and he will not know it. And we will call somebody's father's praise-name, and the fellow will not think that that was his father's name. We will call someone's mother's name and grandmother's name, and the fellow wouldn't think that that was his mother's or grandmother's name. At that time, the fellow will say, "Ah, so that is my starting." And so there are surprises in our drumming. Any person they call a Dagbana, and he says he's a real Dagbana, a drummer knows everything about him. We drummers know more about the Dagbamba than any other person. We know how to praise someone, and we know how to reduce someone's importance.

And so, all the respect of a chief is a drummer. A drummer knows where a chief comes from. It is the drummer who knows the grandfathers and great-grandfathers of the chief. The drummer is the only one who can tell him. And there is no one who knows a chief's great-grandfathers except the drummer. The chief's elders who are following him don't know his great-grandfathers. They only want their food every day. But whatever a chief is going to do, from the time he comes to eat his chieftaincy and in all the walking he walks, there will be a drummer there. We know his respect, and we are the ones who show him his respect. If not that, chieftaincy would have finished.

I can even knock my chest and say that if not because of us drummers, there would be no chiefs in Dagbon. Why have I said that? If a chief has no respect, then he is not a chief. And so if someone is made a chief and he has no drummer, he is not a chief. How will they know he's a chief? As he's walking, if there is no drummer following him, people have been walking as he is walking, and they are not chiefs. So how will anyone know him? They won't know. You can sometimes see a chief walking in a town, and no one will know that he is a chief. We sometimes see the son of a chief walking, and no one will know that he is the son of a chief. But if there is a drummer by him, anyone who sees him will know

who he is. And truly, in Dagbon here, if a commoner is walking and there is a drummer following him, they will ask, “Which town’s chief is this?” A slave can even be walking, and if there is a drummer with him, people will ask, “Which town’s chief is that?” And so without a drummer, there is no chieftaincy. “There is a drummer and there is a chief”: that is how our tradition is. And so if you become a chief in Dagbon, and you don’t have a drummer, then you are not yet a chief. Who is going to talk of you? No one. Any chief in our Dagbamba land who does not have drummers in his town, we don’t call him a chief. The chief is not a chief. And so in Dagbon here, if you see a chief, then you will also see a drummer there. If someone is a chief and he’s walking and there is no drummer, no one will know him; but when he’s walking and there’s a drummer following him, they will know. That is how drumming is. Without drumming, there is no chieftaincy in Dagbon. And how it is, a drummer follows a chief, and because of how drumming started and how drumming is, if you want to talk drumming talks, you have to talk of the chiefs. It is in chieftaincy that we drummers have strength, and it is in drumming that a chief has strength.

As we know a person’s grandfathers and great-grandfathers, why is it so? It is because when our grandfathers grew up, they taught their sons, and they also grew up to teach us. That is why I told you that wisdom does not die. If wisdom were dying, we would not have known all this. Why is it that my grandfather is not living but I know what he was doing? It is the wisdom which he was holding: he showed it to his children. If he had not taught others, we wouldn’t have known it. And that is why I was telling you that those who are going to take up our work are our true children, and those who are going to leave our work are not our children. Shall we not teach those who are going to take up our work and show them how to drum? Shall we not teach them our old talks and hidden talks? Won’t we teach them that this man’s grandfather was this, that man’s grandfather was that? We will teach them. Those who are going to drum, they will know it. And those who are not going to drum, we won’t teach them. And so drumming has a lot of learning in it, and it has no end. When someone is trying to tell you something about drumming, he will only get to the extent he knows; he cannot tell you everything. And as you have come here for me to teach you, I will teach you to the extent I can go to. That is how it is. Do you want it this way? If we take it like that, it will be good. What I am telling you, it was my grandfather who taught my father how to beat the drum, and my father also taught me how to beat the drum. And I am telling you all this because I am also showing you how to beat the drum. If you want to learn someone’s work, it is good you know where he came from. You should know how he started and you should know about the work he was doing, the work he was doing with strength and with sadness.

How our drumming started, it started a long time ago. When Dagbon started, long ago, the chief who came and made Dagbon to be Dagbon was called Naa Nyaysi. From that time, up to today, there have been thirty-five chiefs who ate Yendi. And so from that time up to now is far: it will be some hundreds of years. Naa Nyaysi was the son of Naa Shitɔbu, and Naa Shitɔbu was the son of Naa Gbewaa. Why have I said that Naa Nyaysi made Dagbon to be Dagbon? It was Naa Nyaysi who went to war and let Dagbamba sit as chiefs in the towns. Up to the time of Naa Nyaysi, there were no chiefs in Dagbon here. It was only the Yaa-Naa who was there. As there were no chiefs, the people who were holding Dagbon were the tindanas, and these tindanas were the priests of the land, and they made the sacrifices to the gods of this place. It was these tindanas who were here first before chieftaincy started in Dagbon. I can tell you that to talk of how the tindanas started and it came up to the chiefs, people fear it, because the chiefs come from the tindanas: their mothers came from the tindanas' side, and an uncle of one chief is the uncle of all chiefs. The chiefs who were there were not good people; if you talk of them, if not that there is a reason for you to call their names, in the night you can't sleep. And so we don't talk about them. But I can tell you that when Yendi was going to come about, the one who started Dagbon was called Nimbu, and from this Nimbu it came to Naa Gbewaa. Naa Gbewaa gave birth to Naa Shitɔbu, and Naa Shitɔbu gave birth to Naa Nyaysi. And that time is very far. During that time, Yendi was not sitting at the place Yendi is today. The Dagbamba were sitting at a place called Yɔɔyɔ: it is near Diari on the way going toward Dalun and Dipali. And the time Naa Nyaysi was the chief, he was sitting with his chieftaincy at a place called Yiwɔyɔ: it is a small village not far from Savelugu. During the time of Nimbu and coming to Naa Gbewaa and coming to Naa Shitɔbu, as the tindanas were chiefs, Naa Shitɔbu was not like a chief, and he was sitting with his small chieftaincy. And Naa Shitɔbu said, "If I don't kill these people, as I have brought forth a lot of children, a time will come when none of these children will be chiefs." And at that time, Naa Nyaysi was not yet a chief, but it was Naa Nyaysi who went to war, and he killed the tindanas and put the Dagbamba to be chiefs of the towns.

It was Naa Nyaysi who brought forth our grandfather Bizun. Bizun is the grandfather of all Dagbamba drummers. And how our drumming started, it started with sadness. When Naa Nyaysi was Yaa-Naa, he had wives and brought forth a lot of children, including Bizun, and after he gave birth to Bizun, Bizun's mother died. Our grandfather Bizun was given birth, and his mother died. That is why I have said that our drumming started with sadness. If your mother dies and leaves you, is it not sadness? Our grandfather was there, and he was only a little boy

when his mother died, and he became an orphan, and that is the meaning of Bizun. And so we are sad people, and because our starting was sadness, when we are going to do any work, we also start it with sadness, and our sadness is rather bringing happiness to many people.

The talk I'm going to show you now, it was Nanton Lun-Naa Iddrisu who talked and I heard. And I want you to know that you will not be asking people, and they will all have the same tongue. If you want, you can ask all the drummers of Dagbon, we won't have one mouth: everybody is going to talk the way they have taught him in his house hall. What your house hall has taught you, it is not the same house that has taught your friend. And if somebody talks and it is good, you cannot say his is lies. And he also cannot say that yours is lies. That is why many people's talk is difficult. And so if my talk is going to go straight, I will talk to you about what I know. The house of Nanton Lun-Naa and the house of Palo-Naa, they are the two people from the house I come from. And it is good, if you want to eat any property, you eat it from the door of your family. And what they have said, it won't be lies any day. Even Namo-Naa Issahaku himself has told you something like that. When we went to Yendi, he told you that drumming is like if you enter into water. Anywhere you have to swim around is just in front of you; and so everyone and his teacher's house. As Nanton Lun-Naa is sitting down, he is very old, and he is sitting at Nanton and even bluffing with the old talks of the Palo-Naa chieftaincy. If he were not the son of that door, do you think that he would know about it? As for Nanton, Nanton Lun-Naa roamed and he has come to sit there. If it is an old talk of Dagbon, and you ask Nanton Lun-Naa, everything of Dagbon up to Yendi, and you ask him and he tells you that he doesn't know anything about it, then if you even go to Yendi, you won't get somebody who will tell it to you. And so I am going to tell you something. This asking to know something: if you want to ask, you should ask somebody who has also grown inside that thing. If not that, if you go and ask somebody who is not a part of it, or somebody who hasn't grown old inside that thing, he will give you wrong information. Those who don't know will tell you what their heart wants. Even as we drummers beat sing the drum history, the Samban' luja, there are so many talks inside it, sometimes somebody will beat the Samban' luja, and you won't even understand what it is. You will hear it, and you won't know what to say. When someone talks and mixes talks, it's not good; it comes to enter lies. And so you don't have to be asking many people. Namo-Naa, Palo-Naa, and Nanton Lun-Naa Issahaku: those three people, they are our old drummers; they are the stones on which we will stand and talk.

And what Nanton Lun-Naa told me is that our drumming: it started in Guruma. And we don't like talking it in the open, and we don't like many talks coming out of it. In the olden days, before the time of Naa Nyaysi, the Dagbamba were roaming and coming. And when the Dagbamba were coming to this place, they passed through Guruma and sat there, and some Guruma people followed them. And what Nanton Lun-Naa told me: a Guruma man was sitting at Yɔɔyɔ, and this Guruma man was a drummer. And what I heard was that as this Guruma man was staying here, he was a stable man: he was one of those taking care of the chief's horses. He gave birth to a daughter, and he gave the girl to the Yɔɔyɔlana, the chief of Yɔɔyɔ, that is, the Yaa-Naa: Yaa-Naa married the daughter. It was Naa Nyaysi who ate Yendi and married this girl who was born by the Guruma man. And a child was born, one, and that child became Zugulana, the chief of Zugu. And then the woman, the drummer's daughter, gave birth again to a child, and that child is our grandfather Bizun. When our grandfather Bizun was born, the child was not walking, and the woman died and left our grandfather Bizun as a child. And Bizun had life. And this Guruma man took a broken calabash gourd, and a stick, and gave him, because he didn't want the child to be crying. And the child was taking it around and beating it.

After Bizun's mother died, some of the other wives were looking after their children but they didn't look after Bizun. His own mother had died and they didn't mind him, and any time they cooked food in the house, the chief's other wives still living in the house would give food to their children and leave Bizun. And it came to a time when Bizun was growing up, he was taking the broken calabash and beating it in the chief's house. And the small children in the chief's house, as they were not sensible, they were taking it and beating it and giving him food. And they were giving him cowries, and he was putting inside his pocket. And so when Bizun was hungry, he would be beating on the broken calabash with the stick. I think if you have been watching children, you might have been seeing something like that: if they want something, they will start knocking things. Any time they were cooking food in the chief's house, because he didn't have a mother, when they were cutting the food, sometimes they would forget him, and he would beat the drum and they would remember him and give him food.

And so Bizun took the broken calabash and was going around to his brothers and sisters and begging food to eat. When he got to any other child of the other mothers, he would just be beating the broken calabash and be begging for food, and some of them would insult him, that he is Bizun, a child alone, that his mother has died, that he is an orphan. They were not calling him to come and eat with them. They would say, "His mother is not there; don't call him to eat." And

any time he wanted to drink water, the women were also saying the same thing, “His mother is dead.” And if they said that, he would take up the broken calabash and be jumping about, and he would talk about what happened and what came to his heart, and they would laugh and give him food to eat and water to drink. That was how the some of them were insulting him. And by then, too, some of his other small brothers and sisters, if they had some food, they would give him a little bit of it, and that was what he was eating. And some of the chief’s wives, too, they were holding him up to the time he grew up and became a person. And some of Dagbon’s chieftaincy children were greeting him, that their father’s wife had left an orphan, and “We cannot leave the child, and it will be good for us to coming to greet our father, and be looking to the child.” And it came to a time when the Guruma man made a small drum we call *gingayinyɔɔyu* for his grandson. He took two gourds, and he cut the sides and joined the gourds together, and he went to where they were killing animals and got some part of the skin and used it to cover the open part of the gourds. And that type of drum, any small child who is going to learn to beat a drum, they start him with that one. How they join it together, you will see that the center goes inside just as how this present drum we beat is. That is what our grandfather used as a drum, and we call it *gingayinyɔɔyu*. And so the Guruma man sewed the *gingayinyɔɔyu* and gave him. And Bizun was beating.

And so when Bizun was a child growing up, he used to go to the chief’s house and beat, and the chief’s housechildren would collect the drum and be beating, and be giving the child food and money. It was wonderful to them. And some of them were following Bizun. And Naa Nyayɔsi liked the child, and he became interested in what the boy was doing, and he said, “”Oi! Is that what my child is doing? Ah! If I could get someone, I would give my child to him so that he will show him how to beat the drum.” And Bizun was given to the Guruma man, and already, that was the Guruma man’s work. And the Guruma man was teaching Bizun how to beat the drum. This Guruma man who made the drum also knew what was inside the chieftaincy. And Bizun’s fathers were those chiefs. And so the Guruma man was the same person who was showing Bizun the drumming and showing him, “Your grandparents were this.” This is what they have told me. And so our drumming, to the extent I know, it comes from the Guruma people. What I’m telling you now, it was Nanton Lun-Naa who told me. When our grandfather Bizun was there, this was how it was. He was using the gourd drum to be drumming. By then the other children in his father’s house who didn’t like him would come and say, “Oh, the beggar is now a drummer,” and because of his drumming they came to like him. And he said he didn’t want chieftaincy, but he would be beating and repairing family and friendship. And when he grew up, he was beating the drum like that.

And so I want you to know that if you see somebody having a lot of sense, it is because of worries that he got his sense. If your mother dies and leaves you, is it not worries that will be following you? They will follow you. And so it is sadness which has given us sense. When Bizun's mother died, he took patience, and he took sense, and he was drumming. He was there until he became strong. And we drummers, that is why they call our starting Bizun.

When Naa Nyaysi was not there again, and Naa Zulandi ate, this was what Bizun was doing. When Bizun got sense, when his father died and the brother sat on the skins and ate the Yendi chieftaincy, it was not the child of his mother. It was Naa Nyaysi's first-born, Zulandi, who was senior, and he ate Yendi. And Bizun's mother's child was the chief of Zugu. And any day, Bizun and his followers would pass the Yaa-Naa and go to his brother, Zugulana. The name of the Zugu chief was *Bim bie ka wuni*: it is there like God. And the Zugulana seized dance. And as they were beating the drum, the people of Zangbalin said, "It-is-there-like-God has become a dancing chief: *Waa-Naa*." And the people of Kumbungu were also saying the same thing: *Bim bie ka wuni* has become a *Waa-Naa*. They were all talking about the Zugu chief; and that is why they praise the chief of Zugu as Dancing Chief. And that is his name again.

And Bizun was beating the drums like that, and one day he was passing, and they told Yaa-Naa, and Yaa-Naa said they should call him. And Yaa-Naa said, "Why? Why do you go like that? This going you are going: is it because one woman has given birth to you and *Bim bie ka wuni*? How is it that I am senior, and I don't have a dance, and the chief of Zugu has a dance? I don't have a dance to dance, and I am senior. You come and pass, and go to Zugu to dance. And so as you have been going like that, don't go again. As for today, since your father is not there, then your mother and your father are left with me. As our father is not there, all of you are sucking my breast. All of you are sucking me, and so don't go again." And Yaa-Naa told elders to give him chieftaincy. And they asked "Which chieftaincy?" And he said, "The chieftaincies I have, all of them are sucking me. So catch him that chieftaincy." That is the meaning of *Namoyu*: all of you are sucking my breast. It showed that the senior brother was the one who was going to care for all of them. And they caught *Namoyu* chieftaincy for Bizun.

I'm going to open your eyes. As their father was not there, Bizun was passing the Yaa-Naa to go to his mother's son, his senior brother, Zugulana. And what Naa Zulandi said, as their father was not there, he has now become the senior brother for all of them. And so as their brother has eaten the Yendi chieftaincy, they should take him as their senior brother, and it will repair the family. It was the Yaa-Naa who told our grandfather Bizun, and he caught him and sat down, and

he said that they should give Bizun chieftaincy, that “You are sucking my breast”: that is the Namoyu, sucking my breast. And this is the starting. That is the talk Nanton Lun-Naa is telling you. And so how chieftaincy is going, it is something like stories or proverbs. It is all proverbs. That is how we started it, and this is how it is. Have you seen how Nanton Lun-Naa talked about the Zugu chief? Because of our grandfather Bizun, that is why the chief of Zugu also behaves like a Yaa-Naa. They call Zugulana the Waa-Naa, dancing chief. That is the praise, or story, of Zugu. And so what they taught Bizun, he also got up and he added his own sense to what he was taught. And what was the knowledge of the drummers? Somebody has come to call his name. Another person comes to call his name. And then it becomes plenty. And that is our drumming. And all this is what we take to beat the Samban’ luṇa, and it is that the drummer should take sense and go and talk, and talk it to early morning.

And when they caught chieftaincy for Bizun, they caught him the way they catch a Yaa-Naa. Yaa-Naa said, “I will let the people send you to Katin’ duu. And if you enter there, you will also become a chief, and you will also be like Yaa-Naa.” This Katin’ duu, that is the room where Yaa-Naa is made a chief. And they sent Bizun into the Katin’ duu, and that is why every Namo-Naa too has to enter Katin’ duu. And Bizun: they caught him with two hands. They catch a Yaa-Naa with two hands: that is how they catch Namoyu, too. Every chieftaincy, they catch it with one hand. Only Namoyu and the Yendi chieftaincy, they catch two hands. And they put down three pillows, and they put him on the three pillows. And every Namo-Naa sits down with three pillows. And there is a type of dress we call *alichebba*, like a gown, and they put it on him. And so that is its way. And as Yaa-Naa gave him chieftaincy, and gave him three pillows, and the dress, the chief of Zugu came and saw our grandfather and was annoyed. And he said, “Why have you given him chieftaincy like this? What he is wearing, and what he is lying on, I am senior to him, and I don’t have it.” And Yaa-Naa said, “Truly, for all of you, I am your father’s senior, and you the chief of Zugu, you are next to me. And what I have taken to give to Bizun, I agree that the chief of Zugu should not come to the Yaa-Naa’s house to collect cola. They should take the cola from the Yaa-Naa’s house and go and give it to the chief of Zugu.” And so the chief of Zugu doesn’t go to the Yaa-Naa’s house to collect cola. And the chief of Zugu also wears the *alichebba*. It is because of our grandfather Bizun. Because of what the mother’s child did, that is why the Yaa-Naa made it easy for the chief of Zugu also to dress like that. And all this is what Nanton Lun-Naa said. Have you caught it well? That is the reason why.

This is how our drumming started. That's why they say that a drummer is a Yaa-Naa's son. It is from the Guruma land that it came and sat at Yɔɔyɔ. Old people talk and say, "If they ask where is the Gurumaland drummer, they will say he is sitting in the bush, Yɔɔyɔ." The bush: that is yɔɔyɔ in Dagbani, and that is how we call the place. If you eat Namɔyɔ, and your eyes haven't seen Yɔɔyɔ, you are not yet a Namo-Naa. You will pass Diari before you get to that place: it is close to Namɔyɔ. There are signs there. There is a well. If the custom catches you as Namo-Naa, and you go there, you will see the well. And so it is from Bizun that Namɔyɔ started. As for that Namɔyɔ, the place is still there, but nobody is there again. I haven't gone there myself, but I have been hearing, and I know it's there. You will pass Diari before you get there. If you go, you will see the broken walls, but there are no people again.

And so it wasn't long after Naa Nyaysi died, his children who ate chieftaincy were eating, and Bizun was left just to be drumming. And it came to the time when Bizun also ate Namɔyɔ, and he was drumming. And as he was drumming, it was sweet. And so how Bizun was, chiefs liked him, women liked him, young men liked him, and children liked him. If we did not have good character, do you think people would have liked us? It is our sadness that has made us people with good character. Through his drumming, Bizun came to have many wives and he brought forth a lot of children. And his children too had appetite for the drumming, and he found gourds to make drums for his children. Even up to today, it is still there like that: if you want to train a child to beat a drum, you will start him with a gourd drum. And so Bizun sewed gourds for some of his children, and he made a bigger one for himself. And any of his children who married and gave birth to boys, these boys all ran back to their grandfather because of the drumming. That is how we drummers started. Have you seen? I am telling you some big secrets. I am telling you the secrets of the drummers. Anywhere you go, before you will find someone who will tell you this, you will find it difficult. That is how it is.

Let me add salt for you. The one the old people call you after, Lunzɛyɔ, he was the first-born child of Bizun. It was Namo-Naa's mouth that talked and I heard. Lunzɛyɔ didn't eat Namɔyɔ, but he is our grandfather. We say Bizun's child Lunzɛyɔ; that is how we praise him. As you are sitting now, Lunzɛyɔ was born in the same skin as you. He was colored like you. He was born in the same color like you. The meaning of Lunzɛyɔ is "red drummer," and it also looks like Darizɛyɔ, "red person." You see Palo-Naa Darizɛyɔ? He was also like that. Our elders, those who are very old drummers, those who know about Lunzɛyɔ, when they see you they say that you are very interested in this drumming. You are

colored, and you are interested in drumming too, and that is why they are calling you our grandfather Lunzɛyɛ. As they are calling you Lunzɛyɛ, the old people are showing that you have inherited him, and that is why I am telling you more about him. Any time you hear them call somebody Lunzɛyɛ, that is the child of Lunzɛyɛ. Whether he is black or he is red, that is how they call him. You know, when we celebrate the Fire Festival, you will see children collecting money and things from their grandfathers: if you go to Savelugu on the Fire Festival Day, they will pull you well; all of them are going to follow you to collect money from you, because you have inherited our grandfather Lunzɛyɛ.

And the children Bizun gave birth to, and in the line of Bizun, Bizun gave birth to us the drummers of Dagbon. Bizun is every drummer's grandfather. As Namo-Naa is our grandfather, that is Bizun's child. As this Namo-Naa is sitting now, we can call him Bizun zuu,¹ and call Lelbaa zuu, and say Banchiri zuu, and say Ashayu zuu. It doesn't matter. Namo-Naa Bizun, in Namo-Naa's house, we also call him Namo-Naa Darbu. And Namo-Naa Bizun gave birth to our grandfather Namo-Naa Lelbaa and our grandfather Namo-Naa Banchiri and our grandfather Namo-Naa Ashayu. Namo-Naa Ashayu gave birth to our grandfathers who were at Savelugu, so Ashayu's line is all the drummers from Savelugu and Yendi. Ashayu's side is the place where we begin our line in the Palo: we are Savelugu Palo-Naa house. Namo-Naa Ashayu gave birth to Palo-Naa Darizɛyɛ and Palo-Naa Kosayim and those they also gave birth to, and they gave birth to my father Abdulai, and he gave birth to me. That is how my drumming started. And what I have told you, even if I don't teach you anything, what I have told you is worth it. We drummers started a long time ago. And our drumming is an old thing. The time Dagbon was starting, that was the time drumming also started.

But I want to tell you, in Palo-Naa's house and Namo-Naa's house, I haven't heard the talk of the Guruma man inside the talks of Bizun. As it is, it doesn't spoil this talk. What Nanton Lun-Naa talked and I heard: this Guruma man was inside the drumming, and he was there with Naa Nyaysi. And there are some drummers you will ask, and they will also tell you like that. That is why I have told you that everybody has what he has learned in drumming, and I don't want you to be confused. Our drumming is like that. And so I want you to know that the talk I have talked today is a very old talk. And inside our talk is darkness. As it is dark, we have to take care with it. If we want to follow it until we see it, we will follow it to our elders. And our elders too, inside their talk is darkness.

¹zuu: eldest son

That is how their elders showed it to them, too. Someone who follows it and comes to know it, he will not even want to be saying it, because the elders too have not been saying it. It is because the way I am with you, I don't fear and I am saying it. I have told you that there are some talks a drummer will not agree to talk. And now we have come to become one, and we can take our secrets and tell one another. If not that, you will find it hard before someone will talk this talk to you. Some people will see eating and talk what their heart wants, and it will be lies. If they have talked for somebody to write, and he has written, that fellow will also say it is true. As we are sitting, they have taken the talks of Dagbon and mixed them, and we drummers don't agree. Even when we open our mouths and say it is not true, people who have read what somebody has written will say we are telling lies. And they don't know it. And so this is how it is. Our talk is dark, and we are standing in darkness. And so I want you to know that a snake: if you want to follow a snake until you see its ears, you will be very tired. That is how it is.

And so we drummers: our grandfather Bizuj was the child of Naa Nyaysi. Bizuj was the real child of Naa Nyaysi. And it's because of the drumming that we follow the chiefs, but we are all equal. As we are following them, it has closed the secret of the family. And as we follow them, has it not made their chieftaincy good? That is why they, the chiefs, also praise us.

And so the time of Naa Nyaysi, that was when our drumming started, with Bizuj. And at that time, in Dagbon here, there were drummers, but they were not many. Up to the time of Naa Nyaysi, as there were drummers, the drummers were beating and following the tindanas. Before Naa Nyaysi came out, the tindanas were holding the towns, and so they were the chiefs here. The drummers who were following the tindanas were not beating the type of drums we beat now, and what they had, and we are still playing them, were the *gunḡḡḡ* and the *yua* — the flute — and the *luy' nyini* — the horn. And so these things are very, very old.

I one time asked my grandfather Namo-Naa about it, and he told me that truly, the *gunḡḡḡ* and the *luy' nyini* are senior to the *yua*. And he said that according to our custom, we drummers are senior to the flute. But what I also saw was when I was a young boy growing up and I was staying in Nanton at the house of Nanton Lun-Naa, and what I also heard from Nanton Lun-Naa is that the flute is senior. The time I was with Nanton Lun-Naa and he was showing me how to beat the drum, there was someone who was the tindana at Ziong before he died, and when he died, we went to beat drums. And when we went there, nothing beat except the *gunḡḡḡ* and *yua*. They finished beating before we also used our drums to beat. And I asked Nanton Lun-Naa, "Why is it that when a person from that house dies, it is the *gunḡḡḡ* and *yua* which beat before we beat?" And he said,

“Truly, they are senior to us. When the tindanas were holding the towns, it was *gunḡḡḡ* and *yua* they had.” He himself said this to me. And so what Namo-Naa said, that the *gunḡḡḡ* and *luy’ nyini* were there before the *yua*, and adding what Nanton Lun-Naa said, that our tradition started with the *gunḡḡḡ* and *yua*, this was what I heard. And so what I was told, that is what I am telling you. As there are differences, then you should just take it that everyone has got his own wisdom. And so when Namo-Naa said that drummers are senior to the *yua*, that is taking it on the part of how the Dagbamba conquered the tindanas. It shows that the drum is the elder, but it’s not that the *yua* wasn’t there before the drum. That is how I understand it. And I think that as the *luy’ nyini* and the *yua* are old, and they were there before Bizun and before our type of drums. And the *gunḡḡḡ* is senior to all of them. We don’t hide it.

This *luy’ nyini* is a horn. It is also called *luy’ yilgu*. It is the same thing, and the only difference is from the different ways of Dagbani. *Luy’ yilgu* was how we were calling it at this side of Dagbon; at Yendi side, they call it *luy’ nyini*, and we also call it like that now. As we are sitting in Dagbon today, the Kambonsi, the soldiers of the chiefs, they blow horns, but their horns are not like the *luy’ nyini*. The Kambonsi horn is from an animal that is like a sheep, but bigger, and the horns are large and wide. We call it *gbeyu*, waterbuck. As for the *luy’ nyini*, it is at the Gushe-Naa’s house, the house of the chief of Gushegu. That is where we know it to be; I haven’t heard that it is at any other place. If it at any other place, then it is that I don’t know. But it can leave Gushegu. If there is a funeral, Gushe-Naa can take it and go there. When they are going to blow it, they hide themselves and blow it. And then they will hide it again. As I have told you that the chiefs come from the tindanas on their mothers’ side, all this is on the side of the tindanas. And they only have the *luy’ nyini* at Gushegu. There is no other chief who is supposed to be hearing *luy’ nyini* at his place. The horn you saw when we went to the funeral of the Karaga chief is for the Hausa people, and we call it *alijeeta*. It’s not inside our custom, and I don’t know about it. There was one chief of Karaga, Abukari, and a Hausa traveler settled at Karaga and was blowing it for him. And when Kari-Naa Abukari died, his son was Kari-Naa Ziblim, and they were blowing it for him. Any time he went to some place, you would hear somebody behind him blowing it. But it is not for us Dagbamba, and so I cannot say much about it. But when we arrived, I also heard that those from Gushegu who were to come with the *luy’ nyini* were around, but I didn’t see them. Anything that you ask me, and I have seen it and I know it, I will tell you. I never saw it. If they brought it there, it wasn’t for the Karaga chief. They brought it from Gushegu, and it was because the Karaga chief was dead and they were

coming for the funeral; and so the one blowing luy' nyini was there because of the Gushe-Naa and not the Karaga-Naa. If somebody like the Karaga chief dies and they come from Gushegu, they will blow it, but they won't blow it for him when he is alive. And so I only know that unless something serious is happening, or they are going to do some traditional thing, that is when they blow it. When Nanton-Naa Alaasani died, Gushe-Naa came there, but when he came, I didn't see them blowing the thing and following him. Whether they had a special time to blow it, I don't know. He was at Nanton on the funeral day, but I didn't see luy' nyini following behind him and blowing. That is why I have told that they say when they are doing something serious, they just hide at some place and blow it, and after that, they will continue with the custom.

As for the yua, it is the small flute, and from the olden days and up to now, we are still blowing this yua for our dances. And if you see them come to dance Baamaaya or Jera, this yua will be there. It is only now that some people have taken the white man's type of flute to play, but I think that anywhere you go in this Northern Region and even in the Upper Region, you can see them blowing some type of the yua. It's an old thing. And so you should know that the yua and the luy' nyini were there first with the gunḡḡḡ. And if it is according to our custom, the gunḡḡḡ is senior to all of them. And so these were what they were beating as their drums in those days. Truly, our drumming shows that at the time of Naa Gbewaa, one of his sons was killed, and they were beating some drumming. That is all. If someone wants to tell you more details about that particular drumming they were beating that day, or if someone should tell you that that drum is still there at Yendi or some other place, you should use your sense. That time is very far. If someone tells you something like that, you should not have trust in it. Don't think that he is going to tell you the truth.

And so in the olden days, when the tindanas were the chiefs here, and there were no lunsidrummers, it was gunḡḡḡ that was there. Gunḡḡḡ was the starting. And what I know about it, we drummers have a name for the one who holds the gunḡḡḡ. We call him *Bataandana*. That is the name we call the one who started the gunḡḡḡ. We have a song we sing: "Bataandana, beat and we will dance. And we will dance for the chief of Yɔɔyɔ, human being." If you hear such a song, you have to know that it is very old. Haven't I just told you that when the Dagbamba came here, they were sitting at Yɔɔyɔ? And so I can say that the gunḡḡḡ is the mother of the drum. And so the bataandana people were beating and following the tindanas.

I have even seen their drums at Savelugu. I told you that when I was growing up and staying at Nanton with Nanton Lun-Naa, he told me that the

gunḡḡḡ is senior to all of us. One time we went to beat the Damba Festival at the house of the Savelugu chief, and bataandana people came and were beating some very, very big gunḡḡḡs there. And I asked Nanton Lun-Naa, and he said, “Truly, they are our elders.”

As for the bataandana gunḡḡḡ, how they make it, the gunḡḡḡ itself is large and long, and sometimes it can reach from here to where you are; if it is standing, it can reach to your chest. The two mouths are equal, and they sew both mouths. The mouths are the same as the gunḡḡḡ we are beating, but when they are going to put the goat skin on the one side, they put the skin and the tail of the goat will be hanging there. When they sew it, there are some stones they use that are like chalk. One is red and the other is black, and there are holes in them. They will put small strings at the mouths of the gunḡḡḡ and attach them so they won't be hanging on the ground. And the way they use the stones is that they dress the skins by making designs on the skins, so there are two colors on it. They will tie a rope from one end of the drum to the other, and the one beating it will put the rope on his shoulder and raise the drum up between his legs and hold it with his legs. He does not wear the type of clothes we wear. In the olden days, there was something like a triangle a man would tie and cover his front. The one beating will wear that and take a cloth and tie around his waist. If it is at the Damba place you are beating, he will come and stand in the middle of the drummers, and he will take two sticks and beat. He only beats it with two sticks. When the drummers start the Damba, it is his gunḡḡḡ that will add and the beating will be hot. And he will take the gunḡḡḡ and be going round. This is how the bataandana gunḡḡḡ is.

But they are not there again. The gunḡḡḡ you are learning to beat, that type was brought by the Hausas. It was Nanton Lun-Naa who told me that they are those we copied to sew our gunḡḡḡ, and we use it to beat now. They brought that one, but the drum the Hausas beat at their chief's house is an open-mouthed drum. And if I want, I can also say we copied the bataandana gunḡḡḡ. And so the bataandana people had their gunḡḡḡs, very big ones, and when the Damba Festival was coming, they would come and beat at the Savelugu chief's house. And bataandana people also beat at the Yaa-Naa's house at Yendi, too. They were there, and the Yaa-Naa's drummers were also there. But the bataandana people are not at Savelugu again, and I don't think they are Yendi again. It is only Tolon: I think the bataandana is still at Tolon area, and they beat it sometimes, and it has its chief. But I haven't seen it there.

As for the wooden luḡa, the drum we are beating now, we all grew up and we met it. I don't know the time they started carving these drums from trees. During the time of Bizun, it was a gourd which they cut and joined together and

put skin to cover it. Even today, when a child is going to learn how to drum, the type of drum we give him is also like that, but it is different, too. This time, we use tin cans to make them. But when I was a child, how it was, the child would be beating the *gingayinyoyu* up to the time he would get the wooden drum. I can tell you that my eyes started opening and those children who were older than me were beating the gourd drums. At that time, even to carve a drum wasn't common. It was only a few towns where they were carving drums, and if you would see a drummer with a carved drum, the drummer would be grown. And when a small drummer was growing up, if you were holding the child, you would go to such towns and tell the one who carved the drum, "I have a small child, so I want you to make a little one for him." He would carve it for you, and you would bring it for your son. At that time, your son would put the gourd drum down. If you gave birth to a child again, and the child started growing, then he would come to take the one his brother left down. That was how it was. The one they will give a small child, they sew it in a different way from the big drums we have. That is the only different type of drum I have seen, and they only sew it for small children.

And so I can tell you that the *luja* that they carve is an old thing here, but I don't know when it came. If somebody is able to know it, I don't know it. It was when they started carving drums that they stopped using the gourd drums, apart from giving them to children, and the time they stopped making the gourd drums is far, far, far back. Nobody even remembers about it. As for the carved drum, some people have said that it was the Guruma man who showed his grandson Bizun how to carve a drum. And others talked and I have heard that Bizun was beating the gourd drum, and it came to a time when Bizun used his sense to know that if they use a tree, it can also make a drum, and he made a drum like the drum we also beat. At Namo-Naa's house, when we went there, they showed us an old drum, a carved one. It was very, very old, and they said it was the drum of Bizun. As for that, I can't say. But what I am standing on is the talk I learned from Nanton Lun-Naa. As for him, I asked, and what he told me is what I will tell you, and you can take it on that point and not jump to any other side again. And what I heard from Nanton Lun-Naa is that the carved *luja*, the drum, it was the Gurumas and the Hausas who brought it, and we saw it and collected it. As for the *luja*, don't you see that the Hausas and the Gurumas, their way of sewing the drum is the same? We sew ours in a different way. And so it was from the Guruma and Hausa people that we learned how to make our type of carved drum. And we Dagbamba collected it and changed it and sewed it our way. It was a long time ago. As for that, I think it may be true.

And as I have said that the guṅḡḡ is older than the drum, I can say again that the guṅḡḡ is a child because we defeated it in a war. The guṅḡḡ and the yua and the luy' nyini are senior to us, and we know that they are senior to us, but we have not given their eldership to them. We drummers are more than the guṅḡḡ and the yua and the luy' nyini. It's not because of anything. When we were here with the tindanas, we fought them and drove them away. And those tindanas who remained, we killed them and collected their lands. The tindanas are still here, but we defeated them in a war. If you defeat someone in a war, will he be your equal? No. It was Naa Nyaysi who fought the guṅḡḡ and the yua, and he collected them, and we drummers were given birth by Naa Nyaysi. Can the guṅḡḡ and the yua be equal to Naa Nyaysi's children? That is why, whenever we are at someplace, we beat the drum before the guṅḡḡ will sound. Unless some particular times, the guṅḡḡ is never beaten before the drum; it is the drum that starts and the guṅḡḡ follows. His people are no more there. Whose name is he going to beat? We Dagbamba say, "A Gurunsi man knows the one who buys him." If someone buys you and you come, is it not the one who buys you whom you know? When that person is not there, whom do you know again? If someone defeats you in a war and brings you, you will keep quiet and watch the one who has brought you, and he will show you what he wants and what he doesn't want.

And so today I am telling you, and you should know it: our old thing is the guṅḡḡ, and the guṅḡḡ is also called bataandana. It is the guṅḡḡ which started before the drum. The guṅḡḡ and the yua, the flute, and the luy' nyini, or luy' yilgu, the horn: they were here before the drum came. In the olden days when the tindanas were chiefs here, and we drummers were not here, at that time, when they wanted to sacrifice to the gods, it was the guṅḡḡ and the yua they used to play when they went to perform the sacrifice. And so the tindanas don't have lunsidrummers. Formerly the tindanas were chiefs, and the chiefs and the tindanas have some talks, but drummers don't follow the tindanas. We follow the chiefs. As I say that the chiefs and the tindanas have some talks, the tindanas are for the land. The town where the chief is staying, every year the tindana will show the chief what the land wants, and if the land wants a cow or a sheep, the chief will give it to the tindana and the tindana will go and sacrifice it to the gods of the land. Sometimes with some of the tindanas, when they are going to perform certain sacrifices, they beat drums, but in other times, they don't beat any drum. And so we drummers and the tindanas don't have any talks between us. In the olden days, in Naa Gbewaa's time, the Yaa-Naa's children were not chiefs. As his children didn't become chiefs, he was only gathering with the tindana to hold the land. And the children of the Yaa-Naa knew that if the tindanas were going to be

gathering with the chiefs, they would not grow up to become chiefs, so they killed all the tindanas of the Dagbamba towns that were held by the tindanas. But in the olden days the tindanas had something to do with the *gunḡḡḡ* and the flute and the horn.

And the drumming they were drumming and following the tindanas: they were beating a dance we call *Ʒem*. As they were beating *Ʒem*, they beat *Ʒem* when the tindanas performed the sacrifice or became the chiefs, and it was the flute and the horn and the *gunḡḡḡ* that were beating it. And so this *Ʒem* they were beating, that is our first drumming. As for *Ʒem*, I have asked Namo-Naa about it, and he told me, and how I know it is what I'm going to tell you. As everything has changed, it is still there today. You will go to a town and beat many different dances, and the people will not know how to dance any of them. They only know *Ʒem*. And as this Tamale is sitting, there is no town where the people can dance *Ʒem* more than the people of this town. The people of this town are all from the tindanas. That is how it is. *Ʒem* was the dance of the tindanas, and it was when they were going to sacrifice to the gods that they would beat it. And again, the time someone is made a tindana, they will beat *Ʒem* and follow him. If a tindana dies, it is this same *Ʒem* they will beat. And it is the *gunḡḡḡ* that started *Ʒem*. This is what I have heard. And the yua too started *Ʒem*. Even today, there are some things that show all this. Today, when they are going to make the sacrifice, if there are no drummers in the town, they will take *gunḡḡḡ* and the flute and they will be there. If a tindana dies and there are no drummers, they will take *gunḡḡḡ* and beat *Ʒem*, and the flute will be blowing. If there are drummers, the drummers will add themselves and beat; and if the drummers are not there, it is *gunḡḡḡ* and flute alone that they will beat. And so *Ʒem* started with the tindanas.

The time the Dagbamba collected the chieftaincy here, they also collected *Ʒem*. If somebody has a dance and he is dancing it, and you come and drive the fellow away, and you collect the place he was, and you are sitting there, then everything he was doing when he was there, it is good for you to take it and wear. And so the chiefs, *Ʒem* now is for them. But they don't stop beating it for the tindanas. The time the chiefs will wear their chieftaincy gowns, they will beat *Ʒem* for them, and if they are going to give chieftaincy to anybody, they have to beat *Ʒem* for him. Then people will know that he has taken chieftaincy. And so they beat *Ʒem* for tindanas, and they beat it for chiefs. If not for the tindanas, then the only time anyone will beat *Ʒem* is for the chiefs. When someone becomes a chief, we will beat *Ʒem*. It is *Ʒem* we will beat first before we beat any dance. And so truly, *Ʒem* is the first dance of the Dagbamba dances.

Ʒem is used when we install any new Yaa-Naa as the paramount chief of the Dagbamba. When a Yaa-Naa is installed, Ʒem is the first one of the dances that they will begin with. The Yaa-Naa receives many things — a gown, a hat, sandals, a walking stick — and there are particular elders who give him these things. It does not take ten minutes to put the gown on him; giving the hat and the walking stick does not take ten minutes. But Ʒem shows chieftaincy, and when our Dagbamba tradition was started, they started it with chieftaincy. This is why it happened that Ʒem became the first drumming. When Ʒem is going to be started, they start it with only the guṅṅoṅ and not the drum, because when Ʒem started, it was only guṅṅoṅ that was there. And so when they are installing a Yaa-Naa and giving him all the things of his chieftaincy, Ʒem is beaten, and after that they start praising the chief by calling the praises of his forefathers. It has become a custom that any new Yaa-Naa they are going to install, they have to beat Ʒem, and also it has come down to all chiefs, so that they will beat Ʒem for any new chief who is going to be installed. And as Ʒem was beaten when the first Yaa-Naa was installed, Ʒem was also beaten when he died, and so it has also become a custom that when any chief dies they will beat Ʒem. Any chief, whether the Yaa-Naa or the Namo-Naa, or the Savelugu-Naa or the Gukpe-Naa, or any woman chief like the Gundo-Naa or the Kpatu-Naa, or any village chief, it is Ʒem they beat first. Every chieftaincy in Dagbon, if they want to give it to somebody, they have to beat Ʒem first. I am telling you that. And when any chief dies, it is the same Ʒem they will beat. If your heart is happy, it is Ʒem; if your heart is not happy, it is Ʒem.

The first time you came, I didn't know much about Ʒem. I knew about many dances, but I didn't know the hidden talks about that dance. It was before you came back the second time that I went to Yendi to ask Namo-Naa about it so that I could tell you correctly, and I wrote to you and told you about what I was doing. And again, I went to ask him the meaning of *Bangumaṇa*, and *Bangumaṇa* is another big talk on the part of us Dagbamba. As Namo-Naa is sitting, all drummers are grandchildren of Namo-Naa, and we are the same family. And so if you want to know my relationship to Namo-Naa, simple and short, he is my brother. I knew him when he was not a chief. When I went to him, I knew the beating of these dances but not the meanings. I went to Namo-Naa's house in the night. I was not sleeping in his house, so after eating the night food, I would go to his house and greet him, and when everyone was asleep, he would be teaching me the meaning of the drumming. As for these dances, Ʒem and *Bangumaṇa*, every drummer can beat them, but not all of them know the meaning. Some know the meanings, and others don't know. But when it is time to beat them, they can beat

them all right. That was the only reason why I went there, and I was there for four days. I sent a smock and some small money to give to Namo-Naa, and I bought many commodities, tea and some other things for Namo-Naa, and again, as he has three wives, when I was going, I bought some fish and some salt because around Yendi they don't have a big river, so I bought the fish and salt to give to the wives. I stayed for four days, and Namo-Naa talked to me about 3em and Bangumaja. As I went to Yendi to Namo-Naa to learn much about these two types of drumming, the way Namo-Naa taught me is not the way we are talking now. And we are sitting here, we are just going through the talks throughout and joining them. Namo-Naa was teaching me as if I had bought one talk; he relied on that talk throughout the whole day, and the next day he would bring another talk. He didn't bring all the talks on the same day. And so the way Namo-Naa talked to me, he was giving me different talks and talking them one by one. You should not take it that I went there for four days to learn, and I have used two days or one day to teach you all of it. How Namo-Naa is, he is a chief: you can't just force him to do something, and you cannot say, "This is the purpose that has brought me to you Namo-Naa." He told me some talks that I could have from him for myself, and he was giving me much advice. After he would give me this advice, I could ask the question I had come for.

And what Namo-Naa showed me is that in 3em, both the drum and the gunḡon are crying the same thing, *Ḥun tum ka di biε, din gul' o bia*: the one who does bad, it is waiting for his child. And so if you do something bad, it comes back to you. And the supporting drums say *din gul' o seni*: it is with you. And all the talking in 3em is in the drumming; there is no singing. And how the dance is, you take your hand and touch your head and say, *Ḥun tum ka di biε*, "he who does bad," and take the other hand by your chest and say, *Ḥun gbili tibli*, that is, "he is the one who will listen with his ear" to what people say about the bad thing. As for 3em, the chief does not dance: his children, his wives and his elders all dance 3em, but the chief does not dance it. But as it is, they are talking about chieftaincy. That is 3em, and that is how they dance it. And so the beating of 3em is "He who does bad, it is waiting for his children." If there are no drummers and there is someone who can beat gunḡon, they will use gunḡon and flute to beat it. And so 3em is the starting of our drumming, and that is what we beat to follow chiefs. That was how 3em was beaten in the olden days, and we are still beating it like that.

And so 3em was the drumming they were drumming when the Dagbamba came, and it was gunḡon that was beating. That was what they had. They were not drumming the way we drum today. It was the tindanas who had 3em. During

their time, there were no lunsidrummers. As gunḡon was there, if something happened, it was the gunḡon they would bring out and beat. If villages were close to one another, if something bad happened, say, bad animals were catching people, the gunḡon would beat. If the sound reached a nearby village, they would say, “The bad sound of the gunḡon has sounded.” The other villages would come and see. And if the tindana died, it was 3em they would beat, with the yua. If they caught a tindana for the chieftaincy, it was 3em again. All that was there. But as it was only gunḡon that was there, they didn’t call names for gunḡon to beat. No one was calling names. As our chiefs have names which we beat to praise them, and as all the different types of drumming we beat have all got their names, we don’t beat names for the people who were there during that time. And even we don’t sing about them, and we don’t talk about them. Their talks are bad talks, and dangerous talks. Today I have told you about some of those who brought the Dagbamba here long ago, and we came and sat here. But as they were there, we don’t beat the drum and call their names. Nimbu has no name which we know and beat. Naa Gbewaa has no name which we beat. Naa Shitobu has no name which we beat. They have no names that we drummers beat. As the chiefs were not many, our eyes were only open to 3em. 3em is our oldest beating. This is what I know.

What I have told you about 3em, if you had not met me but you had met a different person, he might have told you lies. If you go back and you are writing your book or you write the talk he told you, it will not be true. What I am telling you, we don’t like giving it out, and we don’t even like to talk about it. What I have told you about Bizun alone, if it were somebody, maybe he would have called the name Bizun, but he would not have given you the whole talk of Bizun. That person would have just told you that Bizun is a name given to our grandfather. He would not have given you anything apart from the fact that Bizun was the grandfather of us drummers, and that is all. Would you have any question to ask again? This is a thick and deep talk that I have given you, and that is why I last told you that somebody will just sit with you and can tell you a talk in five minutes which is more than a one-hour talk. What I have just told you about Bizun, if I were to be outside and somebody was passing by to hear me telling you this talk, maybe that person would have gone to the chief’s house and reported me. What I have told you, if you take it to Accra and you get a Dagbana drummer and show him this talk, the drummer will just look at the whole talk and then start to insult the one who taught you this. And again, if you like, what I have told you about 3em, when you reach Accra, you can call any Dagbana drummer there and show him this talk I have told you. Don’t mention my name that I am the one who

has showed you this: just tell him that you were taught about 3em, and you will see what he is going to tell you. He will say that we are selling our sense and our secrets.

And so, during the time of Naa Nyaysi, there were drummers, but they were not many, and they were not staying in towns. When Naa Nyaysi gave birth to Bizun, and Bizun was there beating, the drummers were staying at a place near to where Diari is today, and it wasn't far from Yiwɔɔyɔ. They were there with their followers, and as the tindanas were chiefs, if anything happened, they would call the drummers. That was how they were sitting, and it was near Diari. We call that place Kambaŋ' Dunoli, Diari door-mouth, and the praise-name of the Diari chief is Kambaŋa. If anything happened, they would go and call them. But they were not many. The tindanas too were not many. And it was there like that until Naa Nyaysi was given birth and came to give birth to Bizun. And truly, that time is far, and if I want to talk more about the drummers at that time, I cannot go further. Those drummers, we are different from them. We are from the Namɔɔyɔ house. We are Namɔɔyɔ's children. Our starting is inside chieftaincy. And those people, we don't know their grandfathers. And so I can only talk to my extent. In Palo-Naa's house, they said that they were the ones who taught Bizun how to beat the drum. And it was in Nanton that I heard that they are the line of the Guruma man who brought drumming to Dagbon here. That is what I know about it. And so the extent I reached, that is where you can also stop. Or if you know that you will get somebody who can explain it, then you can try to find out. That is how it is.

And truly, we know that there were drummers before the time of Naa Nyaysi and Bizun, and they were following the tindanas. And it is from Nanton Lun-Naa and Palo-Naa and Namo-Naa that I got what I am telling you. But now everything is following our Dagbamba chieftaincy. And Bizun was the son of a Dagbamba chief. Naa Nyaysi gave birth to Bizun, and Bizun was drumming. And he took what they taught him, and he added his own sense to be changing the beating to suit himself. And so Bizun is the name given to one particular person, and that person is the grandfather of all drummers, all Dagbamba drummers. As for that talk, there is no argument inside it. And so how we drummers came about, Naa Nyaysi is our grandfather. And Bizun is our grandfather. And Ashayɔ is our grandfather. As I have been telling you that we and the chiefs are one, have you seen it? We all have the same grandfather, Naa Nyaysi. Bizun was the son of Naa Nyaysi, and Bizun is the grandfather of the drummers, and this is how he came to be in front of all the drummers. The chief of all the drummers in Dagbon, Namo-Naa, is the grandson of Bizun, and so we and the chiefs are one family, because we have the same grandfather. Because of that, no matter how useless a Yaa-

Naa's child is, we drummers will praise him. He has no use, but he is a Yaa-Naa's son, and we praise him. And any chief or any prince, when he sees a drummer, he calls the drummer, "my grandfather." That is how it is with us drummers and the chiefs. It is not because of anything but because we have all come from Naa Nyaysi.

And again, it is also because we drummers know old talks, we are called "my grandfather." And even it is not chiefs alone: any Dagbana calls a drummer "my grandfather." What makes it so? If I am going to talk to you about our old talks, you might ask, "You were not there. How did you get to know all this?" And I can tell you that an old person does not die. In Dagbon here, when a child gets up, he asks his father, "What was your father's name? What was your father's father's name? What work was he doing?" If a child is clever, you will show him and he will know it. The child was not there during their time, but when this child becomes an old person, and you the old person who taught him is not there, the child will still know it. And so we drummers came from the bone of Naa Nyaysi, and our grandfather Bizun used to talk to the sons and grandsons of Naa Nyaysi, and he talked to his uncles and his brothers, and they were showing him more about how their fathers and grandfathers used to live. And so in Dagbon here, whether a drummer is young or old, he is an old person to us. And so I want you to know that in Dagbon here, someone who hears is an old person. What I am telling you today, if you hear it well, if you go to tell it to another Dagbana, he might not know it, or he might know it but not in the way you know it. Maybe what you will tell him will open his eyes, and at that time you will become an old person to him. As we are sitting down, the talk I have told you today, my children don't know it. And if those children give birth to children, it will continue like that. It is you who is going to put it down for them. This work is going to show them the place they belong to. That is how the work of an old person is. And Dagbamba have their talks, and they say that a seed will bear fruit, and everybody will eat from it.

And as we and the chiefs are the same family, what shows that we are a family? It is the old talks that we have within us that makes us a family, and the old talks are the talks of our grandfathers. We are one, and it is because we are one that we don't abuse a chief's child. As I have told you that any time you see a chief in Dagbon here, you will see a drummer with him, this is the old talk that is inside it. Because of that, a chief has no way to ask a drummer, "Who are you?" If a chief asks you a drummer, "Who are you?", then you will also ask him, "Who are you, too?" You know the chief more than the chief knows himself. But if you have two people in a family asking each other, "Who are you? Who are you?":

have they not demeaned themselves? When you ask your mother's child, "Who are you?": then what of you? And so there is no difference between a drummer and a chief. They are one.

If Namɔ-Naa and Yaa-Naa quarrel, it is a very big talk in Dagbon. They all have to come and beg the other. It will be right for the Yaa-Naa to get a white cow, and white sheep, and a white gown, and give all of it to Namɔ-Naa. Why is it so? If he doesn't do that, Namɔ-Naa will say that it is because his grandmother died and left him, that is why the Yaa-Naa is treating him like that. If Namɔ-Naa says that, his talk will not leave the Yaa-Naa. When the Yaa-Naa is sleeping in the night, bad things will be coming to him, and if he doesn't do something good to Namɔ-Naa, the Yaa-Naa will even die. What is under it? It is just because one man gave birth to us the drummers and the chiefs. And it is just because of the death of our grandmother that brought our sadness. As for that, it is from God; if God wants something, it will happen. That is why our grandmother died, and our grandfather was alone. That is why, in his work, he became a drummer. The time he became a drummer, when he turned to the drumming side, he knew what was inside drumming. And inside chieftaincy, too, he was going to show the rest of his mother's children what is inside chieftaincy, because the rest of his mother's children wouldn't know what is inside chieftaincy. That is the reason why Yaa-Naa is afraid of Namɔyu.

If something comes to turn Namɔyu to a different way, our grandfather Namɔyu is going to swear on all the chieftaincy skins of the old people, that "the way you the chief has talked to me," and he will say, "Unless of course, you and I, we are not one from the beginning." If Namɔ-Naa wants, he will start and be mentioning the dead chiefs' names and swearing on them. If he is going to say it in front of the chief, if he calls the name of one chief, Yaa-Naa will tell the elders to tell his grandfather that he should exercise patience. He knows that Namɔyu is going to talk about some bad thing, and if he calls the name of an old chief there, Yaa-Naa will get trouble. That is why Yaa-Naa will agree that he has done an offense, and he is going to bring out what is necessary and say that they should collect it and give it to his grandfather. He can take a white cow and a white sheep and a white fowl, and he will get a very fine white gown. He wants something that he will do, and Namɔyu's heart will cool down. And at that time, Namɔyu will send people to go and tell him that he has agreed and that his heart has cooled down. This is the way it is, and it is not only Yaa-Naa. Any prince who wants to go forward, he doesn't have to ask a drummer, "Who are you?" If he asks a drummer like that, then he will not do anything better again. And the one who has eaten chieftaincy and he asks the drummers like that, then the position he has

reached and the chieftaincy he is eating, he will remain there; he will never go forward. This is how it is.

Because of that, we drummers have got a lot of strength with the Yaa-Naas, and the Yaa-Naas have got a lot of strength with us. That is why I told you that when we beat, we start with *Namɔy' yili mal' kpion kpam!*: Namɔy's house has strength, plenty. There has never been a drummer who will take a drum and say that Yaa-Naa's house has got strength. You won't say that Karaga chief's house, there is strength. And you won't say Nanton chief's house, there is strength. And you won't say that Savelugu chief's house, there is strength. It is: *Namɔy' yili mal' kpion kpam!* And because of this, all the chiefs fear us. If you take your drum outside now and you want to use the drum for anything, the first thing you will beat is *Namɔy' yili mal' kpion kpam!* After you praise your grandfather, then you can use the drum to say what you want. But you won't come out and say that Yaa-Naa's house has strength. There has never been a drummer who started like that. And there is no chief who can ask you, "Why do you begin your drumming like that?" That is our pride. And so it is good, whenever you come out with your drum, the first thing is, "My grandfather's house: there is strength."

And I can even say that we are stronger than the Yaa-Naas. In the olden days, when the Dagbamba truly had their town and the white men were not around, we drummers didn't know how to farm. It was the chiefs who were to give the drummers meat, corn, millet, and everything. And so during the olden days, drummers were not farming. It was the chiefs who used to feed us. The chiefs used to give us food every day. What the chief ate was what we also ate. We are all one: that was why he was giving us. And we knew where he came from.

It is the white men who came and things changed, and now the chiefs cannot do what they want. In the olden days, even if you were a chief's son and you roamed from your town to another town, they would catch you and sell you to the Ashantis. During those days, when the Dagbamba caught a Gurunsi or a Mamprusi, they were selling him as a slave to the Ashantis. If a Dagbana's eyes were open, he could go to around Bolgatanga and buy slaves, and then take them to Salaga and sell them to the Ashantis. And any time a slave was sold to them, if the Ashantis didn't sacrifice him to their cola trees, they would sell the slave to the Fantis to sell to the white men. And the white men were tying such people and putting them in ships and sending them away. And people like that are the Negroes at your place now. One time I went to Cape Coast for some playing at the Arts Council. The people of Cape Coast are Fantis, and they took us into a hole, and they showed us the hole and said, "This is where we used to put the slaves

who were sold to us by your people.” There were some irons nailed to the wall. There were many holes, and the holes extended to the sea, and the slaves were living in the holes. One of the holes was as large as this room, and the irons were nailed around it. That was where they were keeping the people they were going to send away, and this is why the Fantis told us that the Negroes are our people. And I can tell you that the chiefs sometimes even sold their own children, but there was no day when a drummer would become a slave, and we have never heard that someone sold a drummer. Whatever happens, if a bad talk comes to a drummer, as they used to catch people to the chief’s house, they cannot catch a drummer.

And so how we drummers are, we have got a lot of strength in the chief’s house. If we have a matter in the chief’s house, we don’t have to go to the Wulana, the chief’s deputy, to ask the Wulana to go and tell the chief about it. We go straight to the chief. In our custom, anyone who is going to enter the chief’s house needs someone to send him in. If you want chieftaincy from the chief, you have to meet an elder who will lead you to the chief. If you’ve done something bad and you are going to beg the chief, it is an elder who will take you there. Even if the chief gives birth to a child and dies and leaves the child, that child cannot knock his chest and say he is a chief’s child and then go and enter the chief’s house. And so even the chief’s own child does not enter the chief’s house by himself. He will have to go to the Wulana or another elder. But a drummer has no day when he will go and beg someone to take him to the chief’s house. That is how drumming is. If you see a drummer going to the chief’s house and he gets someone to add to himself before he enters, then he is not a drummer. A drummer enters the chief’s house by himself.

Truly, respect is more than anything, and drumming has got a lot of respect. Where you cannot go, drumming will let you go there. Where a drummer goes, a butcher cannot go there, a soothsayer cannot go there, a blacksmith or a barber cannot go there. If they call the chiefs to come to the House of Chiefs, they will drive away anyone who has no right to enter there. But we drummers always go inside. The reason why we drummers enter is that a chief is installed because of a drummer. Why have I said that? I have told you that it is a drummer who will show that somebody is a chief. And I can say again that if they install a chief, it is because of drummers. If someone wants a chieftaincy, he will start to greet the other chiefs and the elders to inform them about his looking for that chieftaincy. If they have decided to give him the chieftaincy, he has to send for drummers. He will inform the drummers, “I have been looking for chieftaincy, and now I have got it. On the coming Friday, I am going to wear the chieftaincy gown.” And the one who is going to eat this chieftaincy, he also has to inform the Kamo-Naa, so

that Kamo-Naa and his followers will also come with their guns. If the day breaks, when the drummers go to the chief's house, they will go and bring him to wear the gown. When they are going to put the gown on the man, somebody is there to say that, "The chief has given such-and-such a village to such-and-such a man," and everybody will hear. When he wears the gown, it is the drummers who will beat 3em, and people will know that now he's a chief. I told you that 3em is oldest of the drumming. They will be beating 3em, and the guns will shoot, *kpa*! If drummers are not there, who will know that he's a chief? Nobody will know. I don't know about where there are no drummers, but in Dagbon here, if a drummer is not there, nobody can eat chieftaincy, and where there are no drummers, you should also know that at that place, there is no chieftaincy there. That is how it is.

And I can tell you that before someone will get chieftaincy, he has to be greeting drummers up to the time he gets the chieftaincy. He himself knows that he's looking for a chieftaincy, and so he must be greeting the chiefs and the elders. But if there is not one mouth between him and the drummers, then it will be hard for him when the time comes for him to eat the chieftaincy. He has to be on good terms with the drummers until he gets the chieftaincy. In the olden days, there was something we drummers used to hold. If we don't agree with the chief, nobody will praise him. If any drummer who is from a different town comes to our town, or if that chief goes to any town where there are drummers, those drummers from different towns also won't praise him. That is how it was. Even if a prince marries a drummer's daughter, and we don't agree with that prince, no drummer will praise him. That alone will let the prince break the marriage between him and the woman. In the olden days, if you are on bad terms with even a single drummer, then you have to get ready: any drummer in Dagbon, you are quarreling with him. It is inside our drumming. That is why they say that all drummers are one. That is how it was in the olden days, but now it has spoiled. As we are many, some people will be at a place, and they wouldn't know that we are quarreling with such-and-such a chief. But if we are quarreling with you, and you know that you are looking for chieftaincy in the town where we are sitting, it's better you repair the quarreling with us before the time comes. If not, the day they will give you the gown, we won't come there. And so if you know in advance, you have to send elders to come and beg us. And at that time, we will say that "Now, this man has come to his sense. If not that, if they give him this chieftaincy, we will disgrace him." It is drummers who will give someone respect, and it is drummers who will reduce someone's importance. This is the way it is. As everything has changed, that has not changed.

And what I'm telling you, that the chiefs have their strength because of drummers, a chief will also agree with it; he can't say anything about it. The reason why a chief can't say anything is that if a chief wants his living to be high, it is drummers he is going to find. If he hasn't got us drummers, then his living can never be high. If a chief is coming, we are the ones who show that he is a chief. That is our strength. If you don't respect us, we will stay in our houses, and you can't catch us. You are not the only one we follow to praise. We can easily say that to be with you and praise you is just suffering. If we go to praise our young men, what we will get, maybe a chief cannot get it for us. And so if a chief doesn't want us, as for us, we also don't care. But he also can't catch us. And so we are a fearful thing to a chief. That is our strength.

And so inside our drumming, we are respected people with the chiefs. Where there is "Nobody can enter," a drummer will enter there. They can never drive drummers away. They look at us and chiefs as the same. But a soothsayer cannot enter. A butcher cannot follow a chief where he is going. And I don't know the heart of the white people, but I think in my heart that if many white people are sitting together and driving away the people who are passing by them, if they saw us coming with our drums under our armpits, I don't think they would drive us away. At least some of them would say, "Oh, don't drive them away. Let them beat and we will hear." And others will say, "Oh, their drums are very nice. Let's see the drums." If someone hates you in everything and he sees you carrying a drum, he will like you. As his hate is hot, when he sees you carrying a drum, he will just cool down at once, and he will be happy. What I'm telling you is true. This our old thing, the drum, if you put it under your armpit and go to some place, if there is no way to pass through, and you come and stand and the drum is under your armpit, the people will say they should give the drummer the way to pass. Where no person can pass through and enter, you can pass there, just because of the drum under your armpit. And so what we are holding is an old thing. What I'm telling you, if you are really a drummer, don't think that you will ever go to some place and be somebody who will go back again. And you will never go to some place and hunger will kill you. Anywhere you will go, you will get something to eat because you are carrying a drum. If I take my drum and go outside now, I will bring food to the house, and we will all eat. But if you are not a drummer, and you go out, nobody will know you. You can't tell anyone, "I am the son of such-and-such town's chief." And so this old thing we are carrying, it is a heavy thing for us. And as you are holding it, it is true for you, too.

You John, I want you to look at yourself and you will see. There are many white people coming to Tamale here, but they don't know you very well as the

Tamale people know you. It is just because of drumming that so many people know you here. Some people have never seen you, but they know you. How do they know you? They have been hearing your name. Someone will say, “Oh, a white man has come to learn drumming.” And you should look at this: there are other white people in Tamale here. Some of them are working at the water works, and others are doing engineering work, and others are doing agricultural work. But nobody has ever said, “A white man has come here to work with a machine.” Even today as I was coming to your house, I passed through the market and somebody asked me where I was going, and I said, “I am going to my white man’s house.” And he asked me, “Your white man or your white drummer?” Why should that happen? It is because of the drumming. You are in Tamale learning drumming, but your drumming has let your name go to all parts of Dagbon, even to places you yourself don’t know. If a day comes and you go to those places, they already know you there. Or does it not happen? It happens. But there are white men who have been here since before you arrived, and they are here doing work, but their names have not reached even Lamashegu. And so to us, your work is heavier than the other work white men are doing in Ghana here. It is because of the drumming. If you had come to learn any other type of work or to do some machinery work, no one would go anywhere and talk about it. But as it is, if you get up from the room and walk from here to the town, before you even reach the town, the people will be pointing at you, “Look! There is the white-man drummer! There is the white-man drummer!” Children, women, men, they will all be greeting you. You can’t even count them. That is the respect of drumming. You should watch just one thing. If you are passing within this lane to this house, you will see all the small children calling you, “John, John.” It is because you brought yourself to us. That is respect. That is why everyone knows you, and you see that they are all giving you respect. You know there are many white people in town here, and no one even cares to know their name. Do you know that? You are getting back your respect. But I can’t know one thing: maybe as you have been going out, you have been meeting some friends who have been telling you, “Those people you are staying with are not good people; they are bad,” and all types of things that I can’t know. But as I haven’t seen anything like that from you, I know that you have respect, and we also give you back respect.

As I am sitting in Dagbon and I am a drummer, I have a lot of respect, but my respect is not coming because of how I am able to beat the drum. Truly, I can beat the drum very well, and when I was beating *gunḡḡon*, I was beating very well, and when I was singing, I was a very good singer. But my respect is not because I know how to drum; it is an exchange of respect. I have given people respect, and

they are also giving it back. The respect is not because I know how to drum. You can watch and know that if you don't give respect to yourself, people will not give respect to you. And that is why I considered respect before I decided to teach you. I was giving respect to myself. An example of that type of respect is this: let's say that you are very good in drumming, and because you are very good, someone may come to you. If someone comes to you, and you start disgracing him, or you talk roughly to him and you insult him, all this means you are not going to have respect from him. And it is true that you should not have the respect. So you have to give respect before you will get respect. And that is why I have been telling you that as for us drummers, our everything is respect. In Dagbon here, we show a person how his respect is, because it is we drummers who know a person's grandfathers. We beat the praises of people and give them respect, and that is why we also have a lot of respect in Dagbon here.

And so to learn this drumming, you should learn it in a good way. If you want to learn drumming and you take a bad heart to learn it, you won't get any benefit from it. You have to let your heart be white on everybody. Anybody who knows you, let your heart be white on him. Anyone who does not want you to know it or who does not understand you, let your heart be white on him. As I am in Tamale here, everyone — a man, a child, a woman, or a girl — when they see me, they call me “Mba Luja, Mba Luja.” It means “My Father Drummer.” Why do they call me that? If anyone wants to do anything on the part of drumming — whether a man or a woman — that fellow has to come to me. Anyone who wants to say something about any drummer has to come to me. Why do they come to me? It is because I am holding truth, and when I learned the drumming, there was truth inside my learning. And many people are bigger than I am in this drumming, but I have more respect than them. And it is not only in Tamale alone that I have respect. Anywhere I go, I have respect. And it is because I have truth within myself that I have this respect.

And so drumming is a wonderful thing. In any gathering in Dagbon here, everybody wants a drummer to see him. An ordinary person, a prince, or a princess, they will all be looking at the drummer. A person wants the drummer to see him because he wants the drummer to know that he is there and he is doing something. And when the drummer sees him, the drummer will praise that person and bring him out before others. And so if a gathering is gathered, and a drummer sees someone and doesn't say anything about that person, then you should know that that person is really nothing. If a chief is boasting with his chieftaincy and a drummer is not following him, then that chief is not a chief. If we drummers say you are nothing, you are nothing. You can say you are something, but if a

drummer says you are nothing, then you are really nothing. Why is it that you can say you have respect but when we drummers don't respect you, you won't have your respect? It is because the respect of drumming is so great. The respect of drummers and the respect of chiefs are the same, and even our respect is more than the chiefs, because without us, a chief will not have respect. And so the respect of drumming cannot be compared to anything.

And if you want to know that the respect of drumming has no end, you the drummer will have to give yourself respect with this beating of your drum. It is you who will respect yourself before others will also respect you. And if you take your white heart and give respect to others, your respect will extend. That is why I have been telling you that I cannot explain all the respect of drumming to you. You also have to see it yourself. And so as you want to learn drumming, and you learn it from someone who respects drumming and who has also had its respect, then truly you will get the best way of drumming. If you are from any tribe or country and you take it back there, you will also have some respect from it. Even if you are small, they will respect you. And so it is good you learn drumming from someone who respects it and who knows much about it. Drumming is a big thing. There is a lot to learn in our drumming, and no one can learn all of it. Anyone who wants to learn drumming will only learn it to his extent. What you don't know today, tomorrow you will know some of it. And the talk about drumming also has no end, and you can only talk to your extent. And so what I have for you, as I am talking it, you should keep patient and be learning. Maybe as you are learning, you haven't yet seen the benefit of your learning. You will have to hold patience and keep on learning it, and you won't see its benefits unless you also learn it to know more about what is inside it. And as you are suffering to learn it, you haven't seen its benefits yet. You should keep patient. In our drumming, if you are beating with the elders, and you are not serious to learn it more, sometimes they will use a stick to knock your head, and blood will come out. If you are not patient, you will say you will run away. If you run away from learning it, you have cheated yourself. And so drumming is patience. And I am also telling you: patience. Patience will let you learn more. If we were not patient, we wouldn't have learned it to the extent we have learned. And as they give you respect because of your drumming, you should continue with your patience, and you will see that the respect you will get is even more than what you are getting.

And so our work is not a work that will die. If our grandfathers had not been there, that would have been all. But our grandfathers were there, and this drumming started with our grandfathers. If they had thrown it away and let it fall on the ground, that would have been all. But they have given this drumming to us.

As they are not here again, we are still holding the work they were doing and the sense that they had. In this world, every person will die, but wisdom will not die. And so the work we have learned from our grandfathers, we are holding it well, and we are teaching our children. That is why they say that a learned person does not die. That is how we drummers are. Every drummer has his line in the drumming, and the line of the drummers does not die. That is how our drumming tradition started. All the sense that our grandfathers had is not something that is written down. It is we drummers who have tried, and we have taken patience, and we have sat with our elders and heard their mouths, and we have learned our old talks and remembered them in our hearts.

And so when we start drumming the Samban' luja at the chief's house, if it is the Tiŋ' kurli I told you about, the old talks we beat at the chief's house before we start, we will beat some talk. If you want, you can use your mouth to sing, or you can also use the drum to sing it. Anybody who understands the drum will hear it. If he hears, he will know that these are the praises you have for God before you start anything that you want to do with the drum. You will beat Namɔy' yili mal' kpion kpam, and you will add, "If God permits, and the Holy Prophet agrees," and you will start the drum. If you are going to praise somebody and you don't bring this, but you rather beat a different thing, your drumming won't stand. You will do this before you will take Dakoli n-nye bia and join, and you will put Tiŋ' kurli inside, and then anything that will follow can follow. And so when we start, we show that God starts everything, and so we also praise God when we start. And we will count our grandfathers. And we will say, "If God permits and the Holy Prophet agrees, He will give us good sleep to sleep. And may God let the wall be nice, and our elders will sit down and will lean against the wall, and we the children will thank God for that." If we are going to start drumming, we beat this talk when we start. Have you seen? It is inside drumming. And it's just because if an old person is not there, children will not know tomorrow's talk. That is why we say Tiŋ' kurli. The old people will be there teaching the small children tomorrow's talk. If we are talking about an old thing, during the time of those very old people, were we there? It is these old people who talked and we also heard, and now we are also talking about it. If they were not there, we wouldn't know it. That is why we also pray that God may leave the good walls. If an elderly person leans against a wall, you will come and squat in front of him, and you will tell him, "This talk, I don't know anything about it. That is why I've come to find out from you." Then he will say, "Oh, this is how the talk is." And what you didn't know, you too you will put it inside your head. But if that the old man dies, then whom are you going to ask? So it is inside drumming. If there is

not an old drummer, a small drummer will not know anything. This is how it is. And that is why we thank God for an old person. And we show that we are drumming because we are a part of it, and the drum too is a part of us. And so drumming has got a lot of respect in this Dagbon here. And I think I will stop here, and tomorrow I will continue with the talk about drumming.