

Chapter I-6: *Greetings and Respect in Dagbon*

Today we are going to talk about how we greet each other and give respect to each other in Dagbon here. And truly, the talk of greetings joins to many talks on the part of how we live together. If you want, you can say that this talk of greetings joins to the talk of festivals, because the talk of greetings is white heart, and it is in the festival months again that we all greet one another. And if you want, you can say that the talk of greetings joins to the talk of chieftaincy, because the greeting of chiefs is a big talk in Dagbon here. If you want again, you can say that the talk of greetings joins with how we search for our wives because the talk of greetings is respect.

As for greetings, if you are not sweet with somebody, you won't greet that person, and so greetings are a white heart thing, and greetings are respect. Even if you are quarreling with somebody, if he comes to greet you and he doesn't say that there is a quarrel between you, you yourself should know that there is no quarrel between you again. And so greetings are white heart. And greetings are you give trust to your friend. And greetings are you give respect to your friend. And so greetings are a big thing to us here, and everywhere. And so today we are going to join our talk with the greeting of people and why we Dagbamba like greeting one another so much. We greet one another in the morning, and the afternoon, and the evening. And we greet on festival days. And we greet our family and we greet our friends. And inside the greeting of people, we give gifts and we get gifts. And to us, it is inside greeting that we know that someone is a person.

When it's daybreak, if a man has wives, he will greet all of his wives, "Good morning," and he will see how they slept. There are two ways of greeting. There is someone, when it's daybreak his wives will get up and follow one another, and one by one they will greet the man. And there is another man, when it's daybreak, he will get up and go to each of the wives and greet her. And the man greeting his wives is nicer than the women greeting the man. Why do I say that? If you go to take a person and bring to your house, and you put her inside your house, when it's daybreak it is good for you to see how the person slept. And if she has slept, and she has health, you will see it. If she has caught sickness, you will see. And so if it is the morning, a man will enter the compound and greet his people.

If it is that his mother is in the compound, he will say, "Let me go and see how our senior woman has slept," and he will go to her room and enter. It is his mother's room he will enter first, and he will go and sit next to his mother and say,

“Mother, good morning.” And she will answer. And how we respond to a greeting like good morning, good afternoon, or good evening, we say, “Naa-a.” And so when this man’s mother responds, he will say, “Have you slept?” And she will answer, “Yes. I have slept.” And he will say, “We thank God,” and he will turn and come out. And if his wives are six or only one, he will go around and greet them one by one. He will say, “Good morning,” and the wife will respond. And he will say, “Have you slept?” And she will say, “Yes. I have slept.” And he will say, “We thank God,” and he will go and sit.

And these women too, in the morning they will greet. If a woman gets up, she will greet her husband’s mother, and she will greet her fellow women in the house. If she enters the room, she will go to the post in the middle of the room which supports the roof, and she will catch it and kneel down, and greet, “Good morning.” And she will ask, “Did you sleep?” If it is the husband’s mother or the senior wife, she will kneel down, and if there are many women following the senior wife, they will all come in like that and greet her. But if she is equal in age to her fellow wife, she will only sit down and greet. Someone who she knows is old, or someone she feels shy of, that is the person she will kneel down and greet. But if they are outside, she will only squat and greet. And so, her husband’s mother or her husband’s father, she will kneel down. If it is her husband, she can kneel down to greet. As for her husband’s sister or brother, she will bend and squat down. Any young man and any young woman, and any child, when they greet the person who is older like that, they will squat down when they greet. That is why I told you that greeting and giving respect are the same thing, because when someone greets someone who is the same age, they will greet each other but they will not squat down like that. And so the women too will greet each other in the morning.

And as this man has gone and sat down, if he has children who have grown and gone outside to build their houses and stay there, when it’s daybreak, they will follow one another and come and squat and greet their father. They will say, “Good morning,” and he will respond. And the children will ask their father, “Are we sleeping?” And he will respond, “Yes. We are sleeping.” They cannot ask the father, “Did you sleep?” They can only ask for all of them, “Are we sleeping?” and he will respond. And if it is that there are children inside the house, they will all follow one another and come out and greet their father, one after the other, “Good morning,” and he will respond, “Naa.” And by then, the man has greeted all those he is looking after, and they have finished greeting each other in the house.

In this man’s area, there are people he has been sitting with, and they are older than he. He will take a walking stick and put it on his waist, and go and

greet, “Good morning,” and that fellow will respond. And he will ask again, “How is our coldness in the morning?” and that fellow will respond. And we Dagbamba can ask of many things. He can ask, “How is your house?” And he can ask again of the wife, the children, the mother, the father; and you will see that he can be greeting and asking, and it will be long. And someone can greet like that. And the one he has greeted will also ask him, “Your house: are you sleeping in your house?” And he will say, “Yes. We are sleeping.” If it is that his child has fallen sick, he will say, “Truly, the sleeping is not all that much with us. Yesterday my small child could not sleep.” And the old man will say, “God will give you sleep.” And by then the man will go back to his house, but if he has a friend in another house, and that fellow is older than he, he will also go there, enter that house and greet. If he greets the old man, the old man will ask him, “Are you sleeping?” And he will say, “Yes, but it’s only that your small friend is sick.” And the old man will ask, “Which part of his body?” And he will say, “His stomach.” And the old man will say, “God will make him get health.” And by then the man will come back to his house and sit.

When this man comes and sits, those old people will also get up and come and greet him. If they don’t go to greet him, it’s not good. It’s not good if a small child has health and comes to greet you, and when he has no health, you don’t go to greet him. And so the old men will come and greet him, and they will say, “How is your not sleeping?” He will answer. And they will say, “God will give you good sleep.” And that is how all the old people will come and greet him. And if it is that the child’s sickness is strong, the man will get a child to send to the sick child’s mother’s people, and he will say, “Run and go and tell the people of such-and-such a house or such-and-such town that we don’t have sleep. If you go, you should also greet them and see how they also slept.” If he doesn’t tell them, in our Dagbon here, if some talk comes and it is death, they will see his fault. And if somebody gets pain and people also see his fault, it’s not sweet. And so he will get people and they will go and greet others and tell them what is happening in his house. And so this is how we Dagbamba greet each other every day.

Apart from the every day greetings, we also greet each other on a festival day. If a festival day comes, that is the white heart day for everybody. And so the greetings of the festival day cannot be compared with anything. In the town where you are living, when this festival day comes, the whole town is greeting you. When it is daybreak on the festival day, you and your sitting friends will greet one another two times. You will go and meet your friend, greet him, and go back to your house. And he will also come and meet you and greet you. On the festival day, you will just go to your friend’s house and enter his room and greet

him, “Good morning.” And he will respond, “Naa.” And he will say, “How is our new year?” and you will respond, “Naa.” And he will say, “May God let give us long life up to next year so that we will greet one another. May God bless our dead persons who have died. And may God help us to hold our children so that they can also hold us if they are grown.” On that day, you and your friends will greet and pray prayers for one another.

And inside the greeting on the day of the festival, if you have, say, four children, you can take all of the children and send them so that they will be going and greeting people in other towns. The greeting of the festival day shows that even if you don’t greet a person, you will greet him on the festival day. The festival day greeting has got talk, and people ask one another. There may be somebody, and you and he don’t greet one another, but on the festival day, you will go and greet him. When you greet him, he will say, “If not because of this festival day, he won’t greet me; and as he has greeted me, he won’t greet me again, unless a festival day comes again.” And you will say, “I have not been greeting this fellow, but since it’s a festival day, that is why I am greeting him.” And so we see our good heart on the day of a festival. The greeting of the festival day is the end or the last of all the greetings, because inside it, you greet one another and you beg God for blessings for one another. And if you greet a person and you say prayers for one another, that is the biggest of the greetings.

It is on the festival day too that you give gifts. And the gifts you give, sometimes you will go and greet somebody and give to that fellow you have greeted, and sometimes he will also give you. If you go to greet somebody you have been sitting with, and you have seen how he has slept, and it’s a new year, as you have greeted him like that, his heart will be very, very white. If you and your sitting friends are drink drinkers, you will gather inside the hall with all your friends. And the one you have gone and greeted, if he has the means, he will buy a lot of drink and bring it, and you will be drinking and laughing. And you will say, “Our new year,” and say again, “This year’s festival is very sweet.” And on that day, the gifts you give will not pain you. You can go and give somebody, and you will be sitting there, and someone else will enter and give you. And sometimes you will go to somebody’s house and you will give, and before you reach your house a gift is lying in your house waiting for you, because somebody has also come and not met you, and has given a gift. And so truly, that day is a day of white heart.

And on the day of the festival we eat every sort of food, and it is on that day that food is sweet. If a person has got means, you cannot count his food, and the one who has not got means will also eat to his extent. And on the festival day too, if you have given birth to children who have got patience, and they have been able

to get something in their hands, on that day these children will do good to you the one holding them. And you too will do good to your children. The festival day stands that everyone should do good to one another. You will be sitting down, and someone will go somewhere and bring meat, and say, “I have seen them selling meat, and today is a festival day.” And we will see this and say to one another, “If not on the festival day, this fellow doesn’t buy meat.” On a festival day too, if you have many children, in your house soup-pot, a child who has never eaten enough meat to be satisfied, on that day he will eat meat and be satisfied. Whatever you have, on that day, that will be your gift. That is the day of the white heart.

If you have children, you can divide them and they will go to towns and greet people. If you have many wives, on that day you will get one child and tell him to go to your first wife’s house and greet them and see how they slept. And you will send another child to your second wife’s father’s house to see whether your wife’s father and mother slept well, and you will tell him to say, “Today is our festival day. Are we sleeping?” You will send children to all your wives’ families’ houses. And you will give each of the children money to go and greet them with. If you are going to give money, you will give it; or if it is a bundle of yams, you will give to the child to take and give to them; if there is a guinea fowl, you can give. Sometimes someone will not have all this, and he will cut meat and give. It is all the white heart of the festival day.

And as I am telling you that you will catch your child and send him to greet people, it is because on the day of the festival it’s not good for a householder to go to another town or another place. If you are somewhere and the festival comes to meet you, it doesn’t matter, but a householder does not roam on the festival day because his wives and children will all be looking at his face to see how he is going to celebrate the festival. It is he who will give food and meat for them to eat, and so it’s not good for him to travel to any other place on a festival day. That is why he will catch his child and send. I myself, as I am sitting, on a festival day, I will catch Alhassan and send him to go to Savelugu and greet his senior father for me. Or I can catch Yakubu and send him like that, to go and greet them and see how they slept.

And so if the festival greets, and I finish greeting, and I have sent my children, and they have gone and come home, going to three days, my elders will also say, “If a child visits you, you must also visit the child.” And they can send their own children, and the child will come and say, “My father says I should come and greet you our new year. And he said he has seen your messenger who brought your greetings and greeted. And my father said he liked it. And he said that God should give you long life. And God should give you good back. And

God should leave you to be in front. And so my father said that I should greet you very well.” As he has said that God should give you “good back,” it means that God should give you good people to follow you. And as he has said God should leave you in front, he is saying that you will be the family head, and if anybody from the family brings his worrying talk to you, you will solve it for him. Have you seen? As he has said that God should leave you in front, it doesn’t show that it is only an old person who gets this type of greetings.

As I sit in my house and share money among people, there are people who are older than I am, but they have seen that I am somebody who can separate or solve problems. That is why I am doing it. The day before yesterday, if I had not been present, they would have been quarreling. We were fifty-nine people who went out and beat the drums and came back to the house, and that is not counting the old people who were in the house. On that day, the weddings were eight, and we didn’t refuse going to any of them. The one who is calling you to come for the wedding, he has given you cola, and he is calling you to come and play so that he will be happy. If you don’t go, have you spoiled his heart or not? That is why I sat down and thought, and I divided all the drummers to go so that every wedding house would get drummers, and some places they went five in a group and other places they went six, seven, eight, or nine. They went like that, and I had everything correct, and those different groups all brought different amounts of money. All of them, their share of the money was there. This is what you will do, and they will greet you, “May God leave you in the front.” And you will be repairing talks, and not spoiling. That is how it is. And one of the drummers told me that if I travel or if a time comes and I am no more here, they will be quarreling every time, because if I am not there to be solving their problems, it won’t be sweet.

And if my elder who has greeted me is somebody who eats cola or if he takes tobacco, when the messenger is going home, I have the way to buy something and give to the messenger, and say that when he gets home he should give it to my elder. And when this child gets home and he gives it to him, the old man’s heart will be very white, and he will say, “Oh, as for him, he knows about an old man.”

And so this is how our greetings are going. We the people who have come to sit in this town here or in other towns, maybe this town is not our town. It is in the Ghana land that we are all sitting, and it is Dagbon land, too. And so it is our town, too. And as we are sitting like that, in different towns, there are many towns that are our town. If you are sitting like that, if it’s a festival day or it’s not a festival day, truly, you yourself can get up one day and say you will go and greet your elders. When you get there, and you greet them, you will say you have

missed them for long, and you have come to see how they are sleeping. If you have two cedis or three cedis, you will give to your elder and say he should buy fish and put inside soup. And you will say, “God will help you.” And on that day his heart will be very white, and you too, your heart will be very white. And so our greetings are like that, and it is inside the greeting of people that we know our white heart.

And our greetings also show that if you have a friend, you should be greeting your friend. If it is a festival day or it’s not a festival day, you can go and greet your friend, and your friend too can come and greet you. Let’s say you are a town person, and your friend is not in the town, and you say you will go and greet your friend. You will look at the food that your friend eats when he comes to town, and you will buy it and go and give to him. Somebody will eat cola, or tobacco, or bread, or oranges, or bananas: you will buy for him and go. If you want the greeting to be very nice, so that in his whole house their hearts will be white with you, when you are coming from the town you will buy a full calabash of cola, and you will buy, say, tinned fish, and sugar, and oranges, and salt; and you will add all this and take and go. When you reach there and give like that, it is his wives who will see you and greet you, and his wives will be greeting you, and it will be daybreak and they will still be greeting you, and they will be greeting you until you go home.

As you have brought the cola and all the things to greet your friend, on that day in the evening or the night you friend will take you around the whole area where he is sitting, and you will greet people. When you get to the house of every householder, he will let the householder greet you, and the man will ask, “Where is he from?” And your friend will say, “This is my friend who is in that town.” And the man will say, “Oh-h, I have been hearing his name. Is he the one?” And your friend will say, “Yes.” And the man will say, “God should add to your friendship. And God should give you one mouth. And God should prevent you from getting something that will make you quarrel.” If that person is an old person, he will say, “God should let you come to wash your hands upon us.” And it means that because he is old, if God should let him die, you and your friend will be able to bury him, because when Dagbamba bury somebody, after burying, they wash their hands on the grave. And so that is how an old person will also beg God for you and your friend. And sometimes too he will say that they should bring cola, and he will give it to you the stranger. And this is our custom. Sometimes you will send cola and give to somebody, and he will also give you cola. And so in the whole area, your friend will take you to all the houses and greet.

When you have finished greeting, you and your friend will come and sit down in the night. And as you have greeted your friend with sugar, all the

children in the house, their hearts will be as white as the moon. They know that if their father gets porridge for them to drink, he will put sugar inside; or if their father buys fula and milk, he will put sugar inside. And so the children will be happy. And the women, too, as you have given the salt, the tinned fish, and other things to the women, their hearts will also be very, very white. They will have nothing to say, apart from, “Heh! This is a real friend.” It is good when you go to greet a friend, and you know of women. The women will say, “We are the people he has come to greet.” That day they will cook soup for you, and you will eat the soup and remain inside the soup, because the soup will be very, very sweet.

And all the people your friend took you around to and greeted, that day they will say, “This fellow’s friend has come to greet him. We shouldn’t let him see our weak points. And so let us do him good, and he will know that his friend is living with people.” That day, when the butcher kills, they will all buy meat from the butcher. And when it’s night, and you are sitting, they will send a child to bring food to your friend, and the child will say, “My father says I should bring food to you, and you will take and give to your stranger.” And your friend will tell you, “Such-and-such a house we entered, that house has brought this food that I should give to you.” And your friend will get two pesewas or three pesewas and give it to the messenger who has brought the food, and the messenger will say, “God will help you.” And your friend will get up and accompany the messenger a little way and stand on the way and tell him, “If you get home, greet your father very well for me.” And this is how all the houses will bring food to you the stranger. And that night, if you are somebody who eats food or somebody who doesn’t eat food, on that night you will know. If you entered ten houses, it is nothing: they will all send food.

And the next day, in the morning, all those people you greeted will come and greet you. Someone will catch a hen, and kill for you. Somebody will get a guinea fowl, and someone will buy a lot of meat, and someone will let there be fish. And they will cook it well. If you will go home, then it’s up to you and your friend. And you will prepare, and when you are going, you will not go alone. They will accompany you and stand on the way. Sometimes you and your friend will go, and sometimes you will go with two people, or even more. And when they lead you like that, that is the way of friendship and how it goes. And even you yourself, if you are going to greet your friend, it is good you go with others. Sometimes you and another friend will go together to greet your friend. Sometimes you will go with two people. In our Dagbon, if you are going to greet your friend and you go alone, they will blame your way of living. You should go with others, and then the people you greet will also know that you have people at home. And so it is inside greetings that someone will know that his friend has people.

And so if you are going to greet your friend, it is good you go with at least one person. If you want, you take your son. If you want, you take one of your sitting friends from your town. You will say, “My friend, accompany me to this town,” and he will go along with you. If he accompanies you there, the respect they will be giving you, he will see it, and when he comes home, he is going to say it. If it is your son, your child is going to know that you have respect somewhere. And if you want, you will take one of your wives along. Your wife will also say, “Oh, as my husband is sitting down, he is not a useless man. When we went to such-and-such town, the respect they were giving him was very great.” If you go with this woman, the day she is going home, you will see your friend’s wives: one of them will bring one round ball of dawadawa and give it to her and say, “Take this and go and make soup”; another one will measure dry okra, a full bowl; another one can bring out groundnuts and say, “Take this and go and crack and make soup.” This is what your friend’s wives are going to be doing. If he has sisters, that is what they are also going to do. If your friend’s mother is there, that is what she is going to do. And the young men in the house, they will also come out and say, “Here is ten pesewas: you should drink water on the way.” They are doing all that to your wife. And your friend and those he is sitting with in that town, on the day you and your wife are going home, they will also be giving gifts to this woman. They don’t want her to go home and be seeing their fault. Inside it, the woman will like you to be going there every day, and she will know that you are a respectable person. This is how it is.

And so, when you go to greet your friend, all the good he will do for you, it is all inside friendship. And so, inside friendship is greeting. When you have a friend, it is good he knows your house and you also know his house. In Dagbon here, if your friend from another town comes to greet you, it is good you go to greet him. And he himself will tell you to come and greet him. If he doesn’t tell you to come, you won’t go. Maybe the day you are going to his house, that is the day his food is finishing. As it is, have you put him into shame or not? Truly, if you want to go and greet him, you can tell him, “On such-and-such a day, I will come and greet you.” If you don’t tell him like that, you can go, and it is not a fault. But sometimes you can go to somebody like that and it won’t be sweet, and sometimes you will go to somebody like that and it will be sweet to him. There are differences inside it. There is somebody who doesn’t get, and he comes to greet you to get what he wants and go home. You will not be going to his house. And a time will come and you will go to him, and you won’t sleep there. You will say, “Oh, I have just come to greet you and see your health.” That is all, and then you turn and go home. At that time, he will know that as he has been coming to you and collecting and going, it is sweet to you. And at that time, you will see his

head stand up, and his friendship to you is now a very high thing to him. If you go to him again, even if he doesn't have anything, he will do as if he has got. If he has no hens, he will kill a guinea fowl; if he has no guinea fowl, maybe he has pigeons; if he has no pigeons, he will go outside to find.

But if your friend is there, and he has, and you also have, there is a way if he comes to greet you, his debt has caught you that you should also go and greet him. If you don't go, he won't come again. And so you will send somebody. You won't send a child: if you see his townsperson, or if your townsperson is going there, you will tell him that if he goes, he should greet your friend, "Tell so-and-so that on such-and-such a day, he should look for me. If I have health, I will come and greet him, but if he doesn't see me, it is no fault. If I get a day, I will come." If you have not been able to get somebody to send to your friend, you will say, "Oh, this fellow has come and greeted me. Let me also go and greet him." You can go. On that day, if he is a good person, he is going to kill a guinea fowl for you and take you and roam his town and say, "Oh, that friend I used to go and greet: here he is." On that day everybody will bring you food. Some will buy butchers' meat; others will cook fish; some will slaughter pigeons. Some can give red cola. If it were the olden days, some will say, "Here is three pesewas" or "get this ten pesewas". Sometimes before you get back to your friend's house, the money is very big. Behind that, they will bring all this food and come and give to you. But they didn't know you. It's just that as he has taken you and you are going around, he is showing, "This is my friend in such a town." The next day in the morning, your friend will let them cut butchers' meat and make food for you. If he wants, he will tell you to lie down for two days before you go home. The day you are going home, if you are somebody who doesn't farm, and he farms, if you have a child and your child accompanies you there, you will just be sitting down, and your friend will find yams and put them inside a sack and say, "Let your child carry this for you to go and give to your wives." If he has no yams, he will get guinea corn or corn and put it in a tin and tell you, "Take it and go and give to your wives."

As I am sitting in this town, that is what they do to me if I go to Nanton. If I go to Lungbunga, that is what they do. Any town where I have friends, if I go there, they can be giving bowls of guinea corn, and I will gather it and it will come to make a full bag; I will carry yams, and they will be plenty. The greetings can do that. If I am going, as they are in the village farming and I am in the town, I can carry a hoe. Sometimes I will buy about four hoes and go and greet them. When I greet them and they also come to greet me in the evening, I say, "Get this. This is what I have brought for you." That is what he likes more than anything, because every day that is what he is going to be taking to go and farm. This is how it is.

But if you have a friend who greets you, and you don't greet him, in Dagbon here it will look as if you don't like him. Even you, John, as you are sitting here, it is good to us that you have come and greeted us, because we know that if you didn't like us, you wouldn't come here. And it would be good that we also come to greet you in your town. At that time your people there would see us. Whether we are equal to people or we are not equal to people, they will have seen it. And that is why Dagbamba have a proverb that says, "Come and greet me is better than I will be talking about you." The meaning of the proverb is that if your friend is coming to your town, it is good you also go to his town. When you go to your friend's town, it means that you yourself have greeted; and how friendship is, it means that you and your friend have greeted yourselves. But "Go and talk of me" shows that you are not there, and that is why someone should talk for you. If you are in your town and you want to talk about your friend, it is better they see him than you talk about him. Those you have talked to about him, have they seen him? If you are telling lies, do they know? If he is a good person, do they know? Eye-seeing and ear-hearing, which is better? He should come and they will see him. That is better than you will be talking about him. And so "Come and greet me is better than I go and talk about you." That is how it is. And so, as you greet us, if we also greet you, we will see how your people are. And every day when we sit down, even if we are here, we will look at them. And it will be just like when you sit down in your town sometimes and your heart is just pointed at us. And this is the way of friendship among the Dagbamba.

And so, how we have our friends and what we do to our friends, it has got a lot of talk, and greetings can bring talk. And not greeting people, it can also bring talk. If you say you won't greet people, then they will not count people and include you among them. They will say, "Oh, don't you see his way of living? Every time he is going, he just ties his face. He doesn't want people." It shows that you are selfish or greedy. Maybe you have something and you don't want your fellow person to get it. I say that because to be greeting people is like giving a gift. When you give a gift, your hand will stretch and be open. And when a person does not give a gift, the hand will be closed. And as the hand is closed, can it receive something? But when the hand opens to give, it will also get again. And truly, it is inside greetings that we give gifts and we get gifts too. You will greet somebody, and he will give you, say, trousers, or a smock, or sandals, or a hat, or a gown. And a child will get up and know the greeting of old people, and it will give him a good name. If a young boy is passing and you say, "Oh, this boy is a very good boy," it shows that you are a witness, and your good witness will give him a good name. Sometimes that good name can give him a gift. Maybe he will be wanting something, and the old people will say, "This is the child who has

been coming and greeting us”; and a woman may fall inside a family, and an old person will catch the girl and give to that boy, just because of the greetings. In Dagbon here, if somebody greets you, it is sweeter than somebody counts money and gives you. And so greetings do not end. And greeting and giving respect to one another is very sweet.

And so it is good that a person greets people. It is good when a person greets you and you also greet him. And it is even good when you are there with a person and he doesn't greet you but you greet him. If you say you won't greet him because he has not greeted you, then you and that fellow, which of you is a person? When your friend does bad to you, you should not also do bad to him. We have another proverb that says if your friend farts on you, and you say you will also fart on him, if you don't take time, you will shit on yourself.

And so you yourself will watch greetings and you will see people. It is inside greetings that we know good people. And it is inside greetings that we know bad people. If someone is going, and he ties his face and does not greet, it is not good. And even if someone greets you, if he does not loosen his face, then your greetings have not stood with one another. You will say, “Why are you greeting me and you are tying your face like that? If you don't want to greet me, won't you leave it?” And again, someone will greet you and be laughing, and there is selfishness inside his stomach. Someone can greet you and be laughing, and it doesn't show that he likes you. Your friend can see you and be laughing, “Fine, fine,” and there is selfishness inside his stomach. And so Dagbamba say, “‘How is the market?’ is not friendship.” That is how it is. And so inside greetings, if a person greets you, and you are someone who watches, you can know if he has greeted you with a white heart; and if his greeting is not the greeting of a white heart, you can know it, too. And so, our greetings have got many talks, and this is how it is, and there are many differences inside it.

And what I know about it, as we are sitting in this world, or in Dagbon here, everybody has his respect. And so the greetings to chiefs are different from the greetings to commoners. On Mondays and Fridays, we greet with our chiefs with cola, and you know that cola is respect. And the greetings you will give to a money person or an old person are also different. And I have told you that in our Dagbon, anyone who greets will sit down to greet. Even on the part of our custom, and even anyone who is older than you, in this Dagbon here, you will lower yourself down to greet him. And there are different types of people in Dagbon you will greet and give respect.

Do you see a money man? As for the greetings of a money man, they are different from the greetings of a chief or a friend. If there is a money man in a town, it doesn't show that he has to go to the chief's house to greet on Fridays or

Mondays. Whatever day he wants, he can just go to the chief's house. And the chief likes it, because whenever the money man goes and greets the chief, it is money which will come out of him and go to the chief. The amount of money the money man will give to the chief to give to his wives to prepare food is very, very big. And so the chief too will greet the money man. But the chief doesn't go to the money man's house in the daytime. If he does that, the people of the town will not respect him. They will talk about him in groups and say, "Our chief is always in the money man's house," and it will reduce the chief's respect. But the chief goes to greet the money man just in case something happens to him on the part of money, so that he can call the money man to do it for him. And if the chief does not respect and greet the money man, he will not get money from him. And so this money man is helping the chief, and the chief is afraid of the money man. And the money man too is afraid of the chief, because when a money man is in a town, it is the chief whose hand is on top of him. And so in a town with a money man and a chief, they are both fearing one another. And this is the reason why the money man greets the chief and the chief greets the money man.

And a money man has also got people who will always be greeting him. If you are a commoner or a poor person and you are going to greet a money man, even if your heart is dirty when you leave your house, and you are going, before you get to the money man's house, you will just see that you will be laughing, and your teeth will be out. Why are you laughing? You will be smiling and laughing because you want the money man to see your teeth, that your heart is white with him, and then maybe he will give you something. And so whenever a commoner or a poor person is going to greet a money man, whether his heart is white or not white, when he reaches there you will see him smiling and laughing.

And so the money man always has people who come to greet him because of his money. People who are traveling to make trade, people who have appetite for many things, and others who are his friends, they will all be coming to greet the money person. And in every money man's house, in the compound where he is sitting, they usually spread mats, and people will come and greet the money person and then go and sit on the mats. And when you go and greet the money person in his house, you will squat down and greet. And if it is that you are walking and you meet a money man on the way, if this money man is older than you, you will give him his respect by squatting down to greet him. But if you know that this money man is not older than you, you will greet him, but you won't squat down.

And as for a money person, sometimes it happens that only those from outside will be coming to greet him, and the people from his family will not be going to greet him. Sometimes they do not have appetite in his money, and so

they don't have to be going to him all the time. And sometimes too his family doesn't give him respect, and it is only his friends who will be coming to greet him. And there can be a money man, and sometimes the money man's family will come to greet him and he will say they are worrying him, and he can let his family eat shame like that. But when it is his friends, he will feel shy to say that. And so money people take their friends to show themselves to others; they don't use their family. Whenever you see that the family is respecting a money man, it shows that he is holding them in his hand. If not the people that the money person is holding, then people from the family of the money man don't like greeting him unless he himself has called them to come. As they don't respect him, it shows that he has been disgracing them. To us Dagbamba, if a money person doesn't want to help people, we say that his money is not money; it is useless. I have told you that you should give a gift inside your house before you give outside. And so if you are a money person, and your relative comes to stay with you, by all means he will want you to be giving out money to him just like that. Someone will like it, and when people are coming to him to collect from him, that is what makes him happy. And someone will not like it. And maybe the money man wouldn't like it, because it can show again that the money man's relatives don't like him because he has money. And so a money person, if his relatives want to stay peacefully with him, he can stay with them. And they will be greeting him. And so the respect given to a money man is different from the respect given to a chief.

And as for an old person in Dagbon here, his respect is also different. The respect of an old person is different from the respect of a money man or a chief. How we give an old person respect, everybody respects him. How God has blessed him, to live from his childhood up to the age he is, you are also praying to be old like him. Only a few people will see their white hair or their grey hair before they die. You will see somebody: his hair is all white, while formerly it was black. And you are struggling to reach that. And so if you don't respect anybody, you will respect an old person. We respect old person just because they are old and they have white hair; they have seen things which have passed, and we the children haven't seen them. Even the chief respects an old person, because the chiefs too used to pray that God will bless them so that they will become old. And so old age, it gives respect, and the respect of an old person is different.

And how we greet old person, you have been seeing it. Everywhere, wherever you see an old man, you can just squat down and greet him, whether you know him or not, just because of old age. You also want to last long on earth as he has lasted. Sometimes you will see an old man, and he will look very handsome and nice, and you will think in your heart that your heart will be white if you last in the world to reach that age. Even sometimes it happens that you will

see an old man, and just how he looks will be very sweet to you, and you will want to greet him. You will squat down and be greeting him, and he will not even know that he is the one you are greeting. He will not see you, and someone will come to tell him, “Someone is greeting you here.” And then, if he turns to see you squatting down greeting him, he will say, “Oh! I am sorry. My grandson, I am sorry. Get up.” It is just because of old age that you have greeted him without meeting him yet. And so, the respect for old people is just the squatting down and greeting and giving them their respect.

And so you can be respecting an old man you don’t know. Respecting him how? Sometimes you will be respecting him by giving him what he wants. If they kill a cow, you can go to buy the meat and just send it to the old man. Or you can buy cola and give to him: that is what the old people like a lot. Or you will see a nice hat: you can buy it and give it to an old man. If it is the wide woven hat that protects from the sun, you can buy it and give it to an old man. And so this is how you can be respecting an old man. In Dagbon here, we call an old man “everybody’s old man.” Whether you know him or you don’t know him, he is your old person. Even if you don’t know him and you see him somewhere walking, you would like to be like him some day. And so if you think of becoming somebody like him, it shows that he is your elder person. You want to be like him. And so an old man is everybody’s old man. And that is how it is.

And after that, we Dagbamba also give respect to the maalam and the Limam. The Limam is the leader of the Muslims in the town. All the people in every town respect a maalam or a Limam the way they respect the chief himself. Not every town has a Limam, but if there is no Limam in a certain town, maybe there might be a maalam. And so if somebody respects the Limam, he will also respect a maalam. The chief respects the Limam, giving him all his respect and giving him gifts. The Kambonsis, the chief’s soldiers, they also respect the Limam. The money man also respects the Limam. And everyone down to the typical Dagbamba who farm, they all respect the Limam. And they all have their ways which let them give respect to the Limam.

These typical Dagbamba who farm, they don’t pray prayers, but if it is time for sowing, they will come to the Limam or the maalam and say that he should beg God for them so that when they go to sow their crops, the crops will grow well and they will get food to eat. When they are going to the Limam, they will carry yams and hens and sometimes money to greet the Limam, and they will tell him that he should help them on the part of their farming. This Limam or maalam will sit down with our local type of pen, and he will take our local ink and write something on a board, and he will use water and wash it all into a bowl for them to take to their farms and pour it on the ground. Sometimes he will tell them to use

the water and put it on the seeds they are going to sow. Sometimes he will write it on paper and fold it and tie it to be a talisman, and they will take it and bury it in the farm. Sometimes they will do this and they will harvest a lot of crops. And if they get more crops like that, then the next year the respect of the Limam is going to increase.

And a money man will also always be sending people to be greeting the Limam and be giving him his respect, and sometimes the money man himself will go to greet the Limam. When he goes, it's not because of anything; the money man knows that money finishes. Or again, somebody can just borrow money and not pay it back, and a maalam has a way to protect somebody from this. If somebody is coming to the money man with the idea of borrowing money and not paying it back, the maalam has some medicine which he will give the money man, and the fellow coming to borrow the money will not get success. And so the money man respects the maalam so that no one will come and cheat him.

And the Kamo-Naa is the leader of the Kambonsis in a town. The Kamo-Naa respects the maalam because sometimes the Kamo-Naa's children or followers will be going to the bush to hunt, and a maalam can help them so that if they shoot at the animals, they will not miss. Or again, the Kamo-Naa will want a medicine we call *gbɔyino* — it's a bullet-proof smock — which can protect him, it is the Limam or the maalam who will tie the talismans to put on the war dress. If the Kamo-Naa is not respecting the maalam or the Limam, if he is looking for this medicine, he will not get it.

And the respect of the Limam is even more, because the chief also respects the Limam. He respects the Limam because he wants his town to be cool. If not that, it can happen that in the town, every day the people will be quarreling, and no one will be sweet to the other. And the Limam has got a way to cool everything in the town, and he will tie it and give it to the chief, and the chief will dig in the ground and bury it. Or the Limam can let his children read the Holy Qur'an for the town to be cool. And this is why the chief respects the Limam. And so the Limam or a maalam has got a lot of respect, and the people will be greeting and giving that respect.

And again, the Namo-Naa or the Lun-Naa of any town also gets his respect. The Lun-Naa is the chief of the drummers, and I told you that Namo-Naa is the chief of all the drummers in Dagbon. The common people are respecting him, and the princes are respecting him, and the chief too is respecting him. They are all respecting him just because at some time their days will come up. The prince respects the Lun-Naa just in case something comes and he wants the Lun-Naa's help. Maybe the prince would like to visit a chief, and he can't go just like that: he has to get a drummer to follow him. And where will he get a drummer? Or

maybe a money man wants to do something, and he wants music to be there. For anything that people will be happy with, he has to call a drummer to come. Or maybe there is a sad time with the common people, and it is heart-asking, and they want their hearts to be white: you know that playing music can make people have white heart, and so they have to call the drummers. And these are the reasons why all these people are respecting the chief of the drummers, and they will be greeting him and giving him his respect.

And so, as we are sitting in this Dagbon here, everyone gets his respect on the part of what you might be looking for from him and how you want him to be. And so, whenever one person is respecting another, you should know that maybe he wants something from that person, or maybe he wants that person to help him in some matter. Maybe you are at your house, just talking bad talks or having bad thoughts about a money man. But what I have said is that whenever you are going to greet this money man, the time you reach his house, you will begin to smile, and your teeth will be out. Your smile shows that you just want the money man. Maybe you are coming with a worrying talk and you want him to help you. And when you go away, you will just forget about him. And so we don't respect people for nothing. If you are respecting somebody, it means you have a reason or a purpose for respecting him. And so, if you see someone greeting another, and he is not his family, and he is not his friend either, but he is greeting him and giving him respect, you should know that there is something behind it. And so our greetings are different, and everybody's respect has where it stands. And so, "I want something from this fellow, and that is why I am greeting him and respecting him"; that is different from the greetings in a family and the greetings of friends, and different from the greetings of a festival day. And so we Dagbamba and the way we greet, it has got a lot of talk.