

Chapter II–15: *Modern History and the Chieftaincy Crisis*

I have told you that Naa Yakuba gave birth to Naa Abilaai Naybieyu and gave birth to Naa Andani Naanigoo. When Naa Yakuba died, Naa Abilaai ate, and when Naa Abilaai died, Naa Andani ate. When Naa Andani died, Naa Abilaai's son Naa Alaasani ate. It is Naa Alaasani we call Alaasan' Tiparga, and we also call him 3im Taai Kurugu. When Naa Alaasani died, his son Naa Abudu came and ate. He is the one we call Setan' Kuyli. When Naa Abudu died, it was Naa Andani's son Naa Mahaman Kpema, that is, senior Mahama, who ate the chieftaincy. We also call him Naa Mahaman Kurli, or Naa Mahaman Kurugu, or old Mahama. And when Naa Mahaman Kpema died, another one of Naa Alaasani's sons, Naa Mahamam Bila, small Mahama, or young Mahama, came from Mion and ate the chieftaincy. And so Naa Mahamam Bila was Naa Alaasani's son and Naa Abilaai's grandson. When Naa Mahamam Bila died, his first son was Naa Abilabila, small Abilaai, who became Gboɲlana and remained inside the chieftaincy. He is the one we call Naa Abilaai Saɲmari Goɲ, the crescent star, or just Margɲ. It was the time of Naa Abilabila that the chieftaincy talk came into the open. And when Naa Abilabila died, there was confusion everywhere. And Naa Abilabila's son Naa Mahamadu ate, and he is the Yaa-Naa they removed. It was in 1974 that they removed Naa Mahamadu. General Acheampong's government did it. And today, since they removed Naa Mahamadu, our Dagbon is spoiled.

Yesterday I told you that there are many people in Dagbon here who say that if the white man were still holding us, it would be good, and if they were to come back, we would not refuse it. I am not the only one who will say this; all of Ghana's old people talk like that. The time this Ghana was going to come out, I myself don't know, but those whose eyes were open said that the white men were cheating us. The politicians counted the things the white men were taking to their country, and they said that what the white men were taking was for us, and that the white men were not using it to make our country nice. They, our leaders and the politicians, said that to us. They said that because the white men have come to our country, they have come to search for themselves. And so our leaders said that they will fight and be free of the white men, and what the white men were taking to their country, they our leaders would use it to make our country nice. This was how they said it. And so our politicians came and stood, and up to today, we are sitting down. Dagbamba people say "'Had-I-known': it is always last." That is how it is. And Dagbamba people say again: if you are coming and you fall down, don't look at the place you fall; you should look and see what caused you to fall.

If you look at the place you fell, you will not see anything there; but if you look back, you will see what caused you to fall. And all this, it was Nkrumah and the politicians who brought it. They started the talks of independence. If we are now in sweetness, we would say it was they who gave us the sweetness. And if we are in suffering, they gave it to us. The place we have fallen came from them. We didn't know anything. They said they were going to start politics. And truly, when they said that, we accepted it. We knew that the white men were cheating us.

And as we knew that they were cheating us, is that not it? Now we are sitting down. I have already told you that when a person comes to know that people are cheating him, he will not get what he wants again. If you say that the one cheating you should not benefit, then you too will not benefit. And so we were saying that the white men were cheating us. And what of today? They have left it for us. And are we resting? You, John, as you are sitting, if you come to know that we are cheating you, will you benefit from us again? You won't get. If we are cheating you, you shouldn't say we are cheating you; if you had nothing to gain from us, we couldn't cheat you. And so the white men were cheating us, and we came to know that the white men were cheating us. And we don't benefit again. And this is how it is. It was not I who said they were cheating us. I don't know whether they were cheating us or not, but I know that when they were here, their staying here was good. And so I and others, we would prefer their cheating. They were benefiting from us, and we were also benefiting from them.

And what our leaders said in their mouths, they said that we will be holding ourselves and they will make our country good. Those who are our leaders and the government people, they are the people I mean. They have added their bad character — their bad thoughts and bad hearts — to the white man's way of living, and they are not following the white man's way of living, either. They are taking their bad character and taking the white man's way of living to cheat us. If they were holding us how the white men were holding us, it wouldn't be like this for us. When the white men were here, we were getting. And now that we have taken our hearts to enter inside it, do we get? We are suffering. That is how it is.

And what I am saying is this. They said that we are going to follow the white man's way of living, that is, the law: but they are not following it. Here they get cases and they don't judge them. Why is it so? It is our character. Will the white man's law catch somebody, and they won't try the case? The time of the white man, the one who was trying the case, the judge, was a white man; as he was a white man, if you gave him a bribe, he wouldn't take it. The local magistrate was also a white man, and how would you give him a bribe? If you took money like that to the court, they would catch you yourself. What of today? The one

who is sitting in the court is there because of the white man's law. But if you go and give him a bribe, he will collect it. You are right and you give him, he will collect; you are not right and you give him, he will collect. Will he judge the case? The case will be lying down. But the white men were not working like that. That is why I say that they have taken the white man's way of living and added their own bad character and taken it to do their work.

When I talked to you about how they catch the Yaa-Naa in the custom, or in the traditional way, I told you that the white men spoiled Dagbon. It was the white men who tried to write down the custom, and they took it to be law. And I told you that the custom is not something you can stand at one place and hold. Can you remember all that I told you? But educated people have taken their wish to enter it, and they have taken their wish to argue about the custom, and they made their arguments to the government, and they have entered the courts. And the way they have written it down and argued about it, they don't know it, and they don't know the importance of the custom. They have taken it around and around through courts and commissions, and they have mixed everything. Government will say one thing today; tomorrow government will say a different thing again. As we have given it to outsiders, they will get into it and start kicking everything in it outside. And they will tell you that it is not forbidden. Inside Dagbon now, there are even chiefs' children who say that what is forbidden is not there. And so now because of the lies and confusion, nobody can separate it. It is a big headache for the government, and government doesn't know which way to talk about it. Nobody has knowledge about it, and so when they put their hands inside, they just do what they want.

And so our custom has changed, and I can say that it is we who changed it. We have taken it that it is the white man's law, but the time the white men were here, they didn't change our custom. Our customs were standing. As for our chieftaincy, and how we were worrying one another about chieftaincy, the white men said we shouldn't be doing that. And they said that if the Yaa-Naa has made somebody a chief, then the person who is not a chief should respect him. And their staying here also showed that a commoner was there. And they said that a chief could not catch somebody and sell. And if somebody refused to go to the chief's farm, the chief could not catch him and sell. As for that, they changed it. And they said that a chief could not judge a case in front of his house. As for that too, it was spoiled. But if not that, they did not change the eating of the chieftaincy itself. When the white men were here, they did not remove a Yaa-Naa. They removed the Savelugu chief, Savelugu-Naa Pieyu Mahama, and it was that he was against the law, and the law ate him. And the bad he did, he was someone they could even kill. But they said he was a chief, so they shouldn't kill him.

They removed him, and the white men were here and the Yaa-Naa gave him a small chieftaincy, at Tong. And so the white men didn't change our chieftaincy. How we were holding it, that was how it was. And so our customs were standing. They told us that the work we were already doing, we should tell them about the work. And we told them. When there was any suffering on the part of a human being, they would say that it is not good.

And what spoiled Dagbon was the eye-opening. The time the white man was here, they worried us that we should send our children to school. And the Dagbamba were not agreeing. This school, too, it was free. We didn't know school fees. And we didn't know how to buy school clothes for the school children. The white men would buy all their school clothes free; it wasn't that the owner of the child would buy. The school clothes were these white Bolgatanga dresses, and if you saw any school child, he was like that. And they were giving them food free. And it was there, and anyone who finished reading was sent to become a teacher, and those who were studying teaching were wearing Gonja clothes. The white man's government was buying everything for them. But the time the white man first came, we didn't like entering into his work. And so the children the Dagbamba were sending to the schools, they were two types. If not the sister's child, then it was the child of a slave they were sending. We were thinking that there was suffering inside it, and it didn't look as if there would be any benefit in it. And we didn't want the white man's work. And so, the educated people who are now old or who have died, all of them, if they are not Gurunsis, then they are the grandchildren of Gurunsis. But when we followed it and we came to see, the white men were still here and we were catching our own children and sending them to school. And the white men were still with us, and the white man's work was there, and we were struggling for it. We didn't know that it was sweet, and now that we know it is sweet, we are still struggling for it. And so I see that when the white men were here, it was very good for us. And the old Dagbamba too, I can also say that they were right, because the schooling opened our eyes and it brought trouble. It is our bad character that we have added to the white man's education, and taken it and spoiled Dagbon.

And so the time politics came, our school sense was not much, and we didn't have many people who could read. And at first, we didn't have big men in Accra. And I can say that our children who went to school, when their eyes opened, they took it and broke our houses. We have not taken the white man's reading to repair our houses. As for us, we have spoiled ourselves. The time the white men were here, the chief was there, leaving the commoner; and the commoner was there, leaving the chief. Now, everybody is a chief. And so the time politics came, if we had had big men who were not the sons of chiefs, then

Dagbon would have been made well. This is why I am saying that we have spoiled ourselves. What has brought it is those who are from the families of the chiefs. To get strength, someone will say that as his grandfather's line has remained behind, he will let it come forward. Or he will say that his grandfather's door to chieftaincy was dead, and he will make it live again. And this has brought all the trouble. And so, the talk I am talking, it is eye-opening that we have taken to spoil our Dagbon. Too much eye-opening is foolishness. As Dagbon is now, has it spoiled, or is it good? It's spoiled. There is no fear again. It is good that when your eye is open, you take it and repair your house. Or is it that you have a house, and you should come and abuse your house? Our old Dagbamba say that if your armpit is smelling, you should just press and close it. But as for our big men, if their armpits are smelling, they cannot close it. Any Dagbana who is a big man or he can read, when he gets strength, he will spoil his town.

Why have I said this? The Ashantis can remove their chiefs, but since politics came, I have not seen them remove the Asantehene. They have not taken politics to remove the chief. The Frafras have got big men: have you heard of them removing their chief? The Gurunsis have big men: have you heard of them removing the Navrongo chief? The Gonjas have big men: have you seen them removing the Yabonwura? The Nanumbas have big men: have you seen them removing the Bimbila chief? And what of us? We have never seen anyone removing a Yaa-Naa, and now, our eyes have seen it. As for our Dagbamba, they have opened their eyes and spoiled their town. It is the politicians who have done it, and it is we who have taken ourselves to go and give them. Kumasi is the town of the Ashantis. Accra is for the Accra people. Do they know the talk that is in our house? When someone who is not in the house hears something, then it is someone who is in the house who has told him. And if somebody does not know you, and he is going to do a bad thing to you, and it is your houseperson who has come to tell him to do the bad thing, will there be any fear? Will he do bad and fear anything? This is how it is. We did not go to school and take it to repair our houses. We have taken our work and given it to them, and they have spoiled it. And this is why I say that our Dagbamba way of living is not sweet again. And so that is why I have said that our leaders and the government people, they have taken the white man's way of living and added their bad character to it, and they have taken it to spoil Dagbon.

During the olden days, during the time of our great-grandfathers, they were holding their own lands. At that time, there was nothing like government. As for government, it has just started. It was chiefs who were eating Yendi up to Naa Andani and Naa Alaasani. Before that, there was nothing like government. The chiefs were holding their own world. It was after Naa Andani came that we saw

white men here. And the chiefs got to know that a different tribe was coming to add themselves to them. And so it is chieftaincy that is older than government. The chiefs had strength to do what they wanted to do. Commoners could not enter into chiefs' talks. Even rich men could not enter into chieftaincy. At that time, if you had money, you would use it to respect the chief. If you bluffed yourself with your money, the chief could let something collect you and your money, and you would have nowhere to take him to.

The way that government is holding its power, it looks like the way the chiefs were holding their powers. But it not the same. As for the past strength, it was following its road. It doesn't go to any other road. The time we didn't have government here, and Dagbamba chiefs were holding their lands and their people, they were not leaving their towns to go to somebody's town, to go and put their hands inside somebody's talk. But this time's strength, they use it to enter into so many places. In the olden days, nobody entered into the strength of chiefs. The chiefs were the only people doing their strength work. But this time's strength, they can take it to enter into anything.

The government sitting down, they know that they don't have to put their hands into chieftaincy. If the chiefs had one mouth to be doing the work their great-grandfathers were doing, and they looked through it to see that there would be quarreling, then that would be the time they would go to government that government should give us his children — the police — because of the gathering. At that time, if somebody comes to disturb, he will keep quiet. That is the only way government can enter into our talks. But how they putting their hands into chieftaincy, it is coming from the people who eat the chieftaincy. They took the quarrel to the government. It is not because of the removing of chiefs that they formed government. Government has its own work that it has to do. But if you carry your work and go and give it to government to do it, and the chieftaincy of government is only a chieftaincy for food, then you go and add money. That is what government wants.

Here is an example. You go and buy material to sew, and you know that there is a tailor who doesn't know how to sew. And even the type of dress you want, the tailor doesn't know how to sew it. And you give it to him that he should sew it, and you pay the money to him and give him the way. He doesn't know it. He will take scissors and cut it wrong. When he goes to sit on the machine to join it, that is another problem. He cuts it wrong, and he sews it wrong. When he gives it to you, and you won't know how to wear it, what will you say? "Oh, but why did the tailor do this? It doesn't — ." How can you talk again? You want to blame the tailor, but the fault is from you. Already you knew that the tailor couldn't sew the material, and you gave it to him. And so these chiefs, they who

have been holding their powers as chiefs, if they didn't give the chieftaincy to government, the government would not have entered. It is our people who gave it to government, and they gave it together with money. As for government, already it wanted the money. Government doesn't know the talk you are calling him to go and talk. And he collects money and eats. So if he goes inside and mixes everything, and the whole thing spoils, he doesn't care. How we have been suffering with it, pulling it here and there, as for the government, he is sitting down. And what government wants again, if he gets up, he will do it.

And this is the talk I have for today. And what I have talked, I don't think I have to add to it. In our book, we are talking about our Dagbamba custom, and the talk of government, it is not inside the custom. But how it has come to enter our Dagbon, the talk I want to talk, I will say that we should try ourselves, and we shouldn't do what we have been doing again. If we were to try, and we show what has happened, and if it repairs and stands, then we shouldn't try to do that again any day. If we don't try and repair it, then as for those of us here, after we are not there again, Dagbon will not have any respect. As we are alive and sitting down now, it is better. As we know these talks, what of the person who doesn't know? Those who are remaining behind us, our children, they are the ones I am talking about. If you farm your farm and you call a blind man to come and sow it, and he sows it the way he sows it, are you not the one who has gone to bring your own fault? The Dagbamba will come to remain as blind people. They say their eyes are very open, but their eye-opening is blindness. It would be good they repair what they have done to our chieftaincy and show that nobody should do that again. These children who are remaining behind, some of them will come to be soldiers, and some will come to be police, and some will come to be politicians. If they were to take this talk and put it down, it will show that what we have said has come to stand. But how our chieftaincy is standing now, it is not anything apart from the work of that soldier Acheampong. These children who will be entering the soldiers, they should know that these bad works are there.

And chieftaincy too will be there. Our old people told us that a day would come when a chief will come to sit down, and somebody will come and call him and the chief will just answer. And they said that a chief would be going, and nobody would fear him. This is what is coming. Today as we are sitting, chieftaincy has no respect. In the olden days, a chief could sit in his house and send to call somebody, and he would come. Today if a chief calls somebody, the fellow won't come. Even somebody inside the chief's house, he won't come. And this kind of decreasing comes from inside someone's house before it goes outside. Why do I say that? Does an Ashanti know the custom of Dagbon? An Ewe person does not know it. A Gurunsi does not know it. And so it is from inside our

house that people have taken this talk to give to them. Our housepeople sent the talk to them, and they did its work. That is why Dagbamba say that if your enemy should hear about your bad thing, it is your houseperson who has said it. This is what has brought this talk.

If chieftaincy were to stand, and they don't do that again, it would be good. They should repair our chieftaincy and let it stand the way it was standing. And they should show: this line does not enter that line. If this family wants to take its talks and go and give to that family because they have strength, they shouldn't do that. They should say, "True, we have the strength to repair our own house. If you have strength, you repair the troubles of your house." Dagbamba have a proverb: when a dog is going to lie down, it will be going around and around before it lies down. And it shows that a dog has said, "If you are going to repair the world, and it refuses, you should repair your own sleeping place." That is why. If they were to make it stand like that, it would be good. But as for this talk, they will do this and do that and will come not to know where chieftaincy is.

As we are sitting in Dagbon now, everybody is eating chieftaincy. Why do I say that? The chief is no more a chief. A commoner is a chief. A clerk is a chief. As it is, has it got respect? No. When the trouble started, long ago in the olden days, the old people used to put their hands in their pockets. If a child did some talk, they would say, "There is something in this pocket: it will catch you." And the child would keep quiet. Can something that catches people be inside a pocket? But what the old people were saying is better than how they have come to look through the pocket and see that there is nothing in the pocket. And that has spoiled Dagbon. When it was inside the pocket, it was good. And so chieftaincy looks as if it was inside a pocket, because it was hidden, and it had respect, and people were fearing it. They should repair it and let it stand how it was standing, as if it was inside a pocket. But our chieftaincy has come that they have removed it from the pocket. Now, nobody fears it. It is not in the pocket. And if you are selling something, and you don't take something to cover it, will it have respect? It will not have respect. It would be good if they were to repair our chieftaincy, and it will stand in front and stand behind.

And anybody who gets up, he should have fear to enter it, and he should know that it is forbidden. If it is not forbidden, then those they took our chieftaincy talk to, they would still be alive. Those they took the chieftaincy talk to, the government committees of inquiry, are any of them there again? Almost all of them are dead, and they didn't reach the age of dying. They told them that it was forbidden, and they refused. And something that is forbidden, if you do it, it will do something and you won't be there again. And so here it is: will you repair somebody's house and not be alive again? The politicians and those who were our

leaders, those who brought about the committees of inquiry, the old people told them that it was forbidden, but they refused and entered into it. They are no more there. They should have repaired Dagbon, but they exposed Dagbon's chieftaincy to everybody. That is why I am saying that it was inside the pocket, but the committees of inquiry and those who brought the mouth-arguing, they have exposed chieftaincy so that it has come out of the pocket. And that is the meaning of the proverb, "Will you repair somebody's house and not be alive?" And so it is good you repair somebody's house, and you will be there. The talk that has stood in Dagbon here, it is eye-seeing. Every Dagbana's eyes have seen it. And the person who is not a Dagbana, if he has thoughts, his eyes have also seen. If the committees were telling the truth, everybody has seen it. If the committees were telling lies, everybody has seen it. And so it would be good they repair our chieftaincy and let it stand, and nobody will come and enter into it again. This is what I know, and this is what I am adding to our talk.

Have you seen what I am saying? Now listen carefully. In the olden days, the chiefs were eating their chieftaincies in the correct way. But nowadays, the chiefs are not chiefs. How the chiefs are nowadays, we call them "I have not yet collected." And the meaning of "I have not yet collected" chieftaincy is like this: if my friend goes to eat chieftaincy today, and he has been my friend for some time, if I like, I can go to him and make arrangements so that they will collect somebody's chieftaincy and give it to me. But if a chief doesn't die, and they remove him and give his chieftaincy to someone, is it right? Can it cool the heart? If you get you chieftaincy like that, can you stay with that same chief in the same town? If they take meat from the mouth of a lion and give it to a hyena to eat at the same place, do you think the hyena will feel free to eat the meat? The hyena will be afraid. And this is how our nowadays chieftaincy is. Our chiefs today don't respect themselves because they don't eat their chieftaincies in the correct way. And so nobody respects them. Some chiefs are eating chieftaincy today, and the Limam doesn't mind them. Lun-Naa doesn't mind them, Kamo-Naa doesn't mind them, and Salchi Samaali doesn't mind them either. And that is how it is.

I'll give you some examples. I am showing you how our Dagbon is spoiled. You see that Dagbon is divided because there is the Abudu house and the Andani house. We are standing on the side of the Abudu house, and we are supporting Naa Mahamadu; and those who are with the Andani house are supporting Yakubu. And the soldiers removed Mahamadu and put Yakubu as the chief. And as Naa Mahamadu is sitting in Yendi, Yakubu's chieftaincy is not standing, and as there is no chieftaincy in Dagbon, our Dagbon is spoiled. And here is my example. You remember some time ago the Mossi chief came from Upper Volta to Ghana, and he came to this Tamale here. And when the Mossi chief came, Yakubu came

to this town to greet him. Namo-Naa was at Yendi: he refused to come. Yendi Limam was at home: he didn't come because he is not happy with Yakubu. The Yendi Magaazia was at Yendi: she didn't come. Mba Duyu is an important elder of the Yaa-Naa, but he was at Yendi: he didn't come. Yendi Salchi Samaali came, but he wasn't following Yakubu. This Yendi Salchi Samaali is a Mossi man; his father is a Mossi and his mother is a Dagbana. And when he came to greet the Mossi chief, he was only coming by himself. But if you look into it, it would have been right for him to be following Yakubu. And so whether you are standing with the Abudu house or the Andani house, and you look at this, where is the chieftaincy? If a chief comes from Yendi without all these people and he says he is a chief, is there any chieftaincy? And so this is just one example of nowadays chieftaincy. It doesn't resemble the olden days chieftaincy. It is just "I have not yet collected" chieftaincy.

And look again, when your friend Savelugu-Naa Abdulai died, Yakubu could not perform his funeral. Savelugu-Naa Abdulai was not following Yakubu, and when he died, they didn't even send to tell Yakubu, and Yakubu too could not send someone there. That is how it is, and we are divided into two families. When Mahamadu's father Naa Abilabila was the chief, when Andani people died, they never sent to tell him. And so as Yakubu is the chief, Mahamadu's people will not tell him if someone dies. And he cannot do anything about it. When they shaved the heads of Savelugu-Naa Abdulai's children, nobody from Yakubu even appeared there. As Mahamadu was at Yendi, he went for the shaving of the heads. If Yakubu were to say he would send people and they would come and shave the heads, Mahamadu's people would not agree. And if it is talking about numbers, Mahamadu's people are more than Yakubu's people. And so Yakubu had no way to perform the funeral. If he tried to perform it, there would be fighting there. If Mahamadu had been the chief, they would have performed the funeral in six months, but it kept long and they could not perform the funeral. It was only the government that could give word to perform it, and the government forced them to perform the funeral, and now they have finished the funeral. As the government has put its hand, that is why they performed it. And so this is how the spoiling is standing in the land of Dagbon. If it were not for the government, there would be a lot of fighting in Dagbon. And so it is lying down like that, and it is a very big talk. And this is "I have not yet collected" chieftaincy.

And so as for Yakubu, the way he is eating his chieftaincy is not in the custom. He didn't eat it the correct way: when the time comes to give the chieftaincy of Savelugu, will he follow the custom? All of Yakubu's chiefs: that is it. "I have not yet collected" chieftaincy. His own chieftaincy is like that. If a plant spoils from the root, then that means the branches too will spoil. Yendi has

spoiled. How much less the whole of Dagbon? And so if you ask, “How do they give the chieftaincy of Savelugu? Karaga, or Mion: how do they give the chieftaincy?” If somebody asks like that, then you also ask him, “How did they give the Yendi chieftaincy?” Is Yendi standing well? How can Karaga sit well? Savelugu, too? And Mion? And if a tree spoils from under its roots, you don’t have to ask of its branches. That is the way it is.

And so when Yakubu sent a chief to Savelugu, when that chief came, he removed the Savelugu elders, and he brought his own elders. And he removed the Savelugu drumming elders. He brought his drummers, and so when anything is supposed to happen, those people are there. They will come to a gathering or they will send their messenger. As they are there like that, Palo-Naa is sitting down. Sampahi-Naa is sitting down. Lun-Naa is sitting down. Yiwɔɣu-Naa is sitting down. That is how it is with Yakubu’s chiefs. They doubled everything: two-two. Palo-Naa, Palo-Naa; Sampahi-Naa, Sampahi-Naa; Lun-Naa, Lun-Naa; Yiwɔɣu-Naa, Yiwɔɣu-Naa. We have two of everything!

He even told my brother Mumuni and those following him that they should not beat drums again. Nobody minded him. One time the Regional Secretary was going to Savelugu, and the chief sent cola to the market youngmen that they should come, and Mumuni’s people are the drummers for the market youngmen. The market youngmen returned the cola to the chief, and they sent a message that he has come to eat chieftaincy but he is not gathering people to be one. And so if their drummers aren’t there, then they don’t want the cola. If he wants to prove that he’s a chief with his own drummers, they the market youngmen will never come to any place if their own drummers aren’t there. And so he should collect his cola back. And so up to today Mumuni’s drummers are beating for people in Savelugu, but they don’t go to the chief’s house. That is how it is standing now. That is “I have not yet collected” chieftaincy.

Even I myself, I am supposed to follow the Gukpe-Naa in Tamale here. When you John first came here and we celebrated the Damba Festival, didn’t you add yourself to us to be beating the drums at the Gukpe-Naa’s house? But this Gukpe-Naa now cannot call me. I have told you how Gukpe-Naa gets his chieftaincy, and the Gukpe-Naa Yakubu sent is not someone who is supposed to eat Gukpeogu. One time when Yakubu came, the Arts Council called us and told us that we should play Damba for the chief to dance. And I told the Arts Council that we are not going to play. And they asked me why I was refusing to play with my people. And I said, “If we start beating the drums, as Abdulai Gondoyo is coming, he will feel an interest to dance, and that is why I will not beat the drum.” And the Arts Council people told me that I could stop my talking, because I had the right to say that. And so the present Gukpe-Naa doesn’t respect himself, and

that is why I don't respect him. If he calls me, I won't come. If he is going to some place, I will not go there because I won't beat my drum for him to dance. How much less to praise him? But sometime ago I wasn't doing that. And there are many people in town here, but this Gukpe-Naa cannot call them. None of them will go to his house.

And so there are many towns where the townspeople and the elders don't want the chiefs that Yakubu sent. Some have refused the chiefs. When Vo-Naa Andani Moro was going to die, he wrote down some paper, and he said that he wants Tolon-Naa to perform it, and his junior father Tribunlana. He counted from other chiefs too, that they should perform his funeral. But he doesn't want Andani side to come and perform his funeral. He wasn't sacking his family, but if they come, they are only to come and sit as family, they should not be consulted on the part of the funeral. Tolon-Naa, Tribunlana, Nantonlana: these people are the ones who are to sit down and see to the funeral. And he said that when he died, Naa Mahamadu's power should perform his funeral. And that is how the funeral elders did. And he said that if they finish the funeral, it is Naa Mahamadu who is going to give out the chieftaincy. He's going to point to the person who should eat the place before Yakubu too will send someone. Whether Yakubu likes him or not, Naa Mahamadu will give it. And so the by-force chief, what profit has he got? They said that if they remove Naa Mahamadu, and they give Yendi to Yakubu, they said Yakubu is the Yaa-Naa. But they don't call him Yaa-Naa: his name is Yakubu. Anyone who is eating Andani house chieftaincies, it is eating him: they will call him by his name up to the time he dies. The chieftaincies Yakubu gave to many people, many of them are staying where they were. They can't go to their towns. There are many towns, if you see that they have given chieftaincy to somebody, and the fellow is able to go to that town, then Naa Mahamadu's hands are inside.

If they force the new chief into the town, the townspeople and elders won't greet him. As they don't greet the chief, then the chief brings new elders, and leaves the other elders there. That is why we have things two-two. Even Namo-Naa: now there are two. As for Namo-Naa, he and Yakubu don't talk. Namo-Naa doesn't greet Yakubu, and he doesn't beat a drum for Yakubu. Here it is: the chief who gave you the chieftaincy, and he died, and the son was made the Gboŋlana, and then the government used force to remove him, and they brought a new person and put him there. The new person is not the one who gave you your chieftaincy. In our custom, if it is not custom that caught Yaa-Naa, then Namo-Naa will not beat a drum for him. Even Yakubu's father Mionlana Andani, Namo-Naa never went to his house, because the custom didn't catch him. When Naa Mahamadu's father died, and they performed the customs, Naa Mahamadu was the

one the custom caught. And the government used force and removed Naa Mahamadu, and put Mionlana Andani there and then put Yakubu there. The way they also put Yakubu in that place, Namo-Naa is looking at it to be the same.

And so when we drummers are talking about custom, we don't add Yakubu inside. Custom didn't catch him and his father, and because of that, nobody talks about their talk. And so Namo-Naa will not follow him. And Yakubu said that if Namo-Naa wouldn't come and greet him, then he also has a drummer he can give Namoyu to, and he took another drummer from Sang and gave Namoyu to him. And so that drummer came from Sang. As for Sang drummers, from the starting, none of them has ever eaten Namoyu. They are not in a line that becomes Namo-Naa. They were only from the line of Mion Lun-Naa. And so the one Yakubu brought and gave Namoyu, it is that Yakubu has removed the real Namo-Naa. If somebody removes you from something and gives it to somebody else, will you go to his house again? That is also why Namo-Naa will not go to Yakubu's house. Any drummer can go to Yakubu's house, but those drummers who are following Namo-Naa won't go. The drummers who are following Yakubu, they have people who are standing at their back. But they are not up to the position of the real Namo-Naa. Namo-Naa's side is from the custom, and as the custom didn't catch Yakubu as Yaa-Naa, Namo-Naa won't go to his house. It's not that Namo-Naa doesn't like Yakubu. It is only that they didn't give him the chieftaincy in the customary way. The government came inside and caught the chief. And how can a stranger catch a child of the land? This is how we are now. This is what spoiled Dagbon.

And so we are all drummers, but if you have belief in the custom, and there is someone they didn't catch in the right way, then you won't go and beat. This is also the way the drummers are at Savelugu. They and Namoyu are the same. What Namoyu doesn't like, they also don't like it. Nanton is the same. Diari and Voggo, the same. And so we drummers like that, what is forbidden to Namoyu is also forbidden to us. That is the way it is. The Namoyu that Yakubu gave now, that drummer cannot go to the original land of Namoyu. It is near Diari, at Yoyu. There is some evidence there, or signs. It is a well. Every drummer who eats the Namoyu chieftaincy, they have to take him to that place. If the custom catches you, and you go there, you will see the well. But if the custom does not catch you, you will not see the well. It is forbidden. And so Yakubu's Namo-Naa cannot go there.

It is the same for Yakubu himself: he will not go to make a sacrifice at Yiwoyu, where Yendi started. I told you that a new Yaa-Naa will go to Yiwoyu to make a sacrifice to Yendi, and if he doesn't do that, he is not a Yaa-Naa. Yakubu won't go there. It is forbidden. He is afraid because the custom didn't

catch him. And as the custom didn't catch him, how can he give Namoyu to someone? And so he brought a different drummer to be Namo-Naa, and now there are two Namo-Naas. Whether a thing is straight or whether it is crooked, it is with Yakubu. As for us, we are just sitting and looking at them. As for their talk, it does not do any work. Anyone Yakubu sends to any place, Yakubu puts him into shame. That is all. And we drummers, we call Yakubu Kuṅkɔna-Naa. Do you know *kuṅkɔna*? Kuṅkɔna are tin cans: when you drink milk and throw away the can, that is what they use to beat and follow him, not drums. Yakubu Kuṅkɔna: Yakubu Empty Tin Cans.

As for the spoiling, it is just going to continue. They can't repair Yendi. You don't have to ask again. The government will never make it well. As for this matter about Dagbon, only God knows where we will end. Nobody: no human being can have any knowledge about it again. There is nothing one can do about it. What can we do? Because of the lies the government followed, now the government doesn't know what to do with itself. The lies they have told have locked them up. This is what is standing now. The government says that if Naa Mahamadu dies, they should perform his funeral as a Yaa-Naa, and if Yakubu dies, they should perform his funeral as a Yaa-Naa. And so we have two Yaa-Naas. Are there two Ga Mantsees in Accra? Are there two Asantehenes? But it is we ourselves — our educated people — who have taken the matter to give it to government. They said their eyes are open. And our old Dagbamba say that too much eye-opening is foolishness. Our educated people gave our chieftaincy talk to government to spoil it, and government too has the power to spoil it.

Let me ask you a question. If they cut off someone's head, and you see the head lying somewhere, and then the body is also lying somewhere, and then somebody is sitting and asking, "I don't know. Is the person dead?" How can the head be cut off and you are asking whether the person is dead or not? Have you ever seen somebody, and they cut off the head and he's not dead? Your leg can be cut off, and you will still be alive. You can have one arm and one eye. But if you hear that somebody's head has been cut off, and you still want to know whether he's dead, then as for that, it's foolishness. All the standing of all Dagbon chieftaincy is at Yendi. And Yendi is spoiled. And so the rest, they also have to spoil.

This chieftaincy talk, the Andani and Abudu talk, it started before the white men came, and the time the white men left, that was the time it spoiled. If you don't know, you will think that the Abudu family and the Andani family are different, but they are the same family. And so Naa Mahamadu Abilaai, his grandfathers' house is Karaga, at the Kari-Naa's house. His grandfathers were from Tampion, and they went and ate Karaga, and went and ate Yendi. And his

grandfather was Naa Abilaai Naybieyu, and he left his father's house. And Naa Alaasani's junior father was Naa Andani Naanigoo, and Naa Alaasani left his house, and he went and cut trees and removed the roots, and he built a house. And that was just when the white people had collected Dagbon. At that time, the Germans were in Dagbon. His grandfather Naa Alaasani ate Karaga and ate Yendi. And his grandfather Naa Alaasani was in the house until he died in the house. And Naa Alaasani's first son Naa Abudu Setan' Kuyli, he was the regent, and he remained inside the chieftaincy, that is, he became the Yaa-Naa. And he was there until he died in the house. And Naa Mahamadu's grandfather Naa Mahamam Bila ate Yendi, and he was there until he died. And his father Naa Abilabila ate Yendi, and he was in the house until he died. And when he died, Naa Mahamadu was his father's regent. And he ate Yendi, but he didn't die in the chieftaincy. The soldiers' government removed him, and he is still in life. When the soldiers removed Naa Mahamadu, they took Naa Mahaman Kpema's grandson Yakubu and they put him as the Yaa-Naa. And our Dagbon spoiled.

Naa Abilaai and Naa Andani were given birth by different mothers, and they didn't like one another. But they had the same father. Naa Andani's mother died when he was young, and it was Naa Abilaai's mother who took care of him. In Dagbon here, I can tell you that children of one father, when they have the same mother, they don't do bad to one another, but children of one father and different mothers do a lot of bad to one another. Naa Andani gave birth to more children than Naa Abilaai, and Naa Andani told Naa Abilaai that the bush is plenty, and so Naa Abilaai shouldn't play with fire. And Naa Abilaai told Naa Andani that he would come to be rotten. Naa Abilaai was telling Naa Andani that as Naa Andani has sucked Naa Abilaai's mother's breasts, any bad thing Naa Andani did to Naa Abilaai would return to Naa Andani again. Inside the family, if you take bad and put it inside, it is waiting for you. And it's not waiting for you alone: it's waiting for you and all your people. As you are a stranger, haven't you seen it for yourself? Naa Andani gave birth to many children, but those who ate chieftaincy are not many. And Naa Abilaai's children were not many, but they were better. In Dagbon here, if you see a family that has collected a door and is holding it, it means that they don't have bad inside the family. And the bad is what is following Naa Andani's line.

But even as Naa Abilaai and Naa Andani didn't like each other, as our Dagbon was sitting, it was not spoiled. When Naa Yakuba gave birth to his children and died, Naa Abilaai was older, and he became the chief. And when Naa Abilaai died, Naa Andani was his brother from a different mother, and he became the chief. And when Naa Andani died, one of Naa Abilaai's children became the chief. That was Naa Alaasani, and when he died, it was one of Naa Alaasani's

sons, Naa Abudu, who became the chief again. When he died, one of Naa Andani's sons called Naa Mahaman Kpema became the chief. And when he died, another of Naa Alaasani's sons, Naa Mahamam Bila, became the chief. It was one family, and it was all moving on the way of tradition. When Naa Mahamam Bila died, his son Naa Abilabila became the chief. During Naa Abilabila's time, when Naa Abilabila was eating, if he entered a lorry and was coming here, they used to meet him on the way at Vitin. Old chiefs, new chiefs, or commoners, those who were riding motors and those who were riding horses: they would all meet him on the way at Vitin. When Naa Abilabila died and Naa Mahamadu ate, at that time Dagbon spoiled, and now the Yaa-Naa hasn't got respect again. Even during Naa Abilabila's time, they used to give the Yaa-Naa respect. The Yaa-Naa had respect, and it was heavy. But now the Yaa-Naa has no respect again because we are divided into two. This is how it is.

And I think that the spoiling, the time the gathering was not gathering, it was in Naa Mahamam Bila's time. That was when Dagbon spoiled. Why do I say that the spoiling started in Naa Mahamam Bila's time? That was when the refusing started. This refusing, we don't like talking its talks. If you talk, Andani house people will say you don't like them. But it hasn't come like that. When Naa Mahamam Bila was eating, it was Naa Mahaman Kpema's son Andani who was eating Mion, and he was Naa Andani's grandson. Up to the time of Naa Mahamam Bila, according to our custom, every Mionlana is the Yaa-Naa's housechild. Whether the Yaa-Naa gave birth to him or didn't give birth to him, he is the Yaa-Naa's son. The Mionlana comes to visit the Yaa-Naa in the night; he visits him in the morning. But Mionlana Andani didn't come one day to greet him. And Mionlana Andani didn't give respect to Naa Mahamam Bila even one day. But if we want to talk this talk, don't they say that we don't like the Andani house people? Yendi too hasn't come like that. You don't greet somebody, but he is your old person, and he is your father. If he isn't there, you are the one who is supposed to eat the chieftaincy. But you haven't given respect to the chieftaincy. If he is not there, can you eat? And as Mionlana Andani was not respecting Naa Mahaman Bila, when Naa Mahaman Bila died, they said that Mionlana Andani shouldn't see the grave. And if you don't see the grave and you don't perform the funeral, will you eat chieftaincy? That is where the refusing started, and the Andani house people started it. This is how it is.

Listen well. I have talked to you about chieftaincy and how it moves. As a person is sitting down, everybody has what he has in his own house. If your brother is somebody senior, and this your mother's child is eating chieftaincy, or if you are senior and you are eating chieftaincy, then the one following you knows that where you are seated, if it happens that you die, he is coming to sit there. And

the chieftaincy that you are eating, or where you are sitting, he knows that he belongs to that house side, too. If sleeplessness catches you in the night, or in the afternoon, before anybody outside will hear of it to come to you, he is already there. Everybody will come and meet him there. And now something has happened to you. Let's say someone is coming to arrest you or make a quarrel with you. But the one following your back, the next one following you, he refused that he doesn't care what they do to you. And some of your mother's children are miles away from you, and they have been able to travel all the way to you, to see how your matter is going. But this close one who is next to you on the part of sitting your place, he never asks how the matter is going. Even when you are sick, he doesn't mind to come. And so the day they will announce that you are dead, and this your mother's child will hear and start coming to the funeral, what does he want there? And now, the things that you died and left behind, is that what he's coming to collect or what? What is his mission of coming? If you had children, and your children have grown up, will they agree? No. And so that is it.

Let me give you an example. If you are teaching somebody, and he is not catching it, then you can take an example to give to that person. I told you that the Mionlana is Yaa-Naa's housechild. Inside custom, every Friday, he has to show himself at the chief's house. Every Friday he will go and find out whether his father slept well. And inside custom, in Yaa-Naa's house, Mionlana is supposed to be the one in charge of the horse. Every Friday, the Mionlana will let the children cut grass and carry a lot of grass, and he will be there in charge of them. And those who will be carrying guinea fowls and yams will be following, and he will be looking at them. When Naa Mahaman Kpema was eating Mion, he was doing that for the Yaa-Naa. And when Naa Mahaman Kpema was eating the chieftaincy, Naa Mahamam Bila was eating Mion, and he was also doing that. When Naa Mahamam Bila came from Mion, and when he arrived and Naa Mahaman Kpema was sitting down, if the children didn't start cutting the grass for the horse, he would never go directly to greet the Yaa-Naa. Unless they untied the grass and started cutting it before he would go and start greeting Naa Mahaman Kpema. Every Friday, this is what he did. What I'm telling you now, I heard it from the Yendi drummers. Mionlana Andani saw Naa Mahamam Bila doing this for his father, but when his father died, and Naa Mahamam Bila ate, Mionlana Andani refused to do it for him, even though he had been doing it for Naa Mahaman Kpema. And Yendi people were seeing it. And when Naa Mahamam Bila died, his brothers had seen the way Mionlana Andani had been treating their father. Are they going to take Mion to remove the Gbonlana and allow Mionlana Andani come to sit at their father's place? The respect Mionlana Andani's own father was giving the Yaa-Naa, when it came to his turn, he refused even to greet

him. But now he wants the chieftaincy. When Naa Mahaman Kpema was the chief, Naa Mahamam Bila was bowing down and respecting him, Naa Mahaman Kpema, who was Mionlana Andani's own father. But when Naa Mahamam Bila ate, Mionlana Andani refused even to greet him. And so they refused Mionlana Andani that he should not perform the funeral of Naa Mahamam Bila.

Inside our custom, we take it that if you are seriously sick, and information gets to your brother that you are sick, and he says that he doesn't care whatever happens to you. And your children stay by you and help you during your sickness, but it happens that you die. If your brother comes to collect your property and your children stand against him, your children have the right. Is that not it? And so this is what brought the confusion. You are my right-hand man. In the morning you are supposed to greet me; in the evening you are supposed to greet me. And you don't do it. You stay on your own. You know that tomorrow, if you hear that I have died, you are the person that are going to search for to come and sit at my place. And now you hear that I am dead, and you say you are coming to see my grave and perform my funeral, in order to get my place to sit. There is no way. That is why they stopped Mionlana Andani. As we are sitting, all Dagbon knows it, but they wouldn't want to go back and say that he wasn't giving respect to the Yaa-Naa and that is what they stopped him. They knew that, from the beginning, he showed that Naa Mahamam Bila was not his family: he is not related. If the chief has trouble, if he sleeps or he doesn't sleep, you Mionlana don't care. Why is it that now that the Yaa-Naa is dead, and you are coming to perform the funeral? That was why they stopped him. And so it was Mionlana Andani who spoiled it.

This talk I have just talked, it is not that only a few people will talk it. Nobody will agree to talk it to you. But the whole Dagbon knows it. Someone will see the truth and refuse it, and will take you into the bush, and take you and be going around. He won't know how he is going to talk it. And how I have talked it, if somebody comes to hear it and calls me to sit down, I will tell him that I have talked it. And if he says that I am telling lies, I will ask him to show me how it happened, and ask him whether Mionlana Andani was greeting Naa Mahamam Bila, and ask him whether he didn't do that. Will somebody not greet somebody? Will somebody not respect somebody? Has the Yendi way of living come like that? And so Mionlana Andani spoiled it. And when somebody spoils something and comes to want the repairing of it, if he is going to repair it, it is difficult. This is where the refusing comes from, and this is how I know it.

And so when Naa Mahamam Bila died, they refused Mionlana Andani, and they gave Yendi to Naa Abilabila. That was when it came into the open. The Andani people have got a lot of educated people, and they took it to argue in the

courts, and they tried to remove Naa Abilabila. And this Mionlana Andani we are talking about, it was he and his followers who said they didn't like Naa Abilabila, and they said that Naa Abilabila had cheated them, and they brought a lot of talks against Naa Abilabila. This is what they did, and they came to spoil more. If you want to cause trouble, you should go out of your house and cause trouble, because if you go outside and cause trouble and come home, your housepeople will support you. But if you cause trouble in your house and you go outside, no one will support you. If you come back to the house, where are you going to enter? You should do good in your house. If you don't do good in your house, then how are you going to do good outside?

And the time the Andani people brought the case, they had those who were standing behind them. And they said that nobody eats Yendi with one eye, and they showed that Naa Abilabila had a cut toe, and that Yendi doesn't eat like that. And our Dagbamba law cut the case, because inside Dagbon, the one who started Yendi, nobody knew how he was. And so Yendi: its talk is too big. We know it, but nobody talks about it. This Zipopora and Nimbu I told you about, the talk inside it is plenty, and drummers don't talk it. And this was what they took to defeat Mionlana Andani. And they asked him, did he know the starting of Naa Gbewaa. And he said that he didn't know him. And these very old talks were something he should have known, but he didn't know. You know, if you don't know something and you are telling lies, and you meet someone who knows, he is going to push you down. That is what they took. And they said, "That is why you have said so." And they said that if he had known Naa Gbewaa, he wouldn't have said that Naa Abilabila had one eye and one toe. And this was what happened, and Naa Abilabila won the case.

And so the time politics came, some of the chiefs were putting their hands into government talks. And the politicians also wanted to help the chiefs so that they the politicians would get more power in their towns. During the time of Naa Abilabila, Dr. Busia and Kwame Nkrumah were the party politicians. And all the chiefs and Naa Abilabila were supporting Dr. Busia. When Nkrumah won the election and Busia left, then all the chiefs were standing that they were going to be following the Islam party. And the Andani people were joining Nkrumah's party, the Convention People's Party, the C.P.P. And so Kwame Nkrumah's people didn't like Naa Abilabila, and they were finding some ways to remove him. And when Nkrumah's ministers and the Andani people tried to make Nkrumah remove Naa Abilabila, Nkrumah refused. What Nkrumah said was that he is standing on custom, and so custom does not remove custom. And those who sent this matter to the ministers told a lie about the Dagbamba chiefs, and the lie said that some time ago they were removing chiefs. And the ministers told Nkrumah that they

can remove a paramount chief. And Nkrumah kept quiet, and he sent a messenger to the Mamprusi land and asked the Mamprusi chief, and the Mamprusi chief said he has never heard of it, and said, “The Dagbamba don’t remove their chiefs.” And Nkrumah asked the Gonja chief, and the Gonja chief said, “No, the Dagbamba never remove paramount chiefs. As for that, we remove our chiefs, but we have never seen a Dagbamba removing his chief.” And he asked the Bimbila chief, and the Bimbila chief said, “No.” And he sent to the Ashantis and asked, and the Ashantis said, “As for us, we remove our chiefs, but since we got up, we have never heard that they have removed a Yaa-Naa.” And he sent a messenger to Ouagadougou and asked the Mossi chief, and the Mossi chief said, “No.” And he asked the British who were ruling over us here, and the British said that since they met us Dagbamba, they never heard that we removed a Yaa-Naa. The British even told Nkrumah that when they first came here, the chief of Yendi was Naa Abudu Setan’ Kuyli, and he fell sick very, very seriously. His arm and leg died, and the British said they should remove him. And they told the British that since the Yendi started, they never removed a Yaa-Naa. And what the British said was true. The time the white men were still here, they refused to remove Naa Abudu.

And so to me, on the part of the spoiling, I don’t find the fault of the white men. I can say that the white man’s way of living and the Dagbamba way of living can enter into one another, and it will help Dagbon. Truly, if the white men were to be here, it would help. They were hearing the truth. When I say they were hearing the truth, it doesn’t show that they never talked about the Yendi matter before. Naa Abudu’s arm and leg were dead, and he was not talking talks. And the white people said, “As his arm and leg are dead, and he cannot talk talks, he is hearing, and if they want to do anything, Duyu will do it.” Mba Duyu Sheni, he was doing Naa Abudu’s things. He was the right hand of Naa Abudu. And the white people came to say, “It is good they get a Yaa-Naa to sit down, and he will be talking talks and judging cases.” And the Dagbamba chiefs said that they had never seen anyone remove a chief. At that time, Naa Mahaman Kpema was eating Mion, and he was even Naa Andani’s son, and he said to remove a Yaa-Naa is forbidden. In Dagbon when they tell you that something is forbidden, you have to fear it: you don’t see it with your eyes, but you only see the result. It is now that Andani people have said that to remove a Yaa-Naa is not forbidden, and they removed Naa Mahamadu. And what is happening now? During the time of Naa Abudu, even Naa Mahaman Kpema said that he had never seen it. Since they got up, they have never heard it. How much more coming to see it? And they said that if they did that, it would show that they have removed the Yaa-Naa. And a Yaa-Naa does not sit down and they will eat his chieftaincy. Inside our Dagbon, there is no way like that. And the white men said that it was good. And they said

they didn't know and they were going to do it, but those who knew said it. And did it stand or not? It stood. And as it stood, was Dagbon repaired or was it spoiled? It was repaired. And that is why I say that when the white people were here, they were hearing the truth, and they were following the talk of the town's children, and it was better.

And so the British told Nkrumah that according to Dagbamba custom, they never heard of that Dagbamba could remove a chief. And when Nkrumah heard all this, he kept quiet, and he also decided to make politics. At that time the Tolon-Naa Yakubu was the light of Dagbon, and he was with the Islam party. He didn't like Nkrumah, but Nkrumah liked him. And so Nkrumah made some politics to catch the Tolon-Naa into his party, and he showed that if the Tolon-Naa doesn't enter into the C.P.P., then they would remove Naa Abilabila. And Tolon-Naa left the Islam party and joined the C.P.P., and he became the Speaker when they were meeting in their gathering room. And the chiefs also followed the Tolon-Naa into the C.P.P. And so I believe that Kwame Nkrumah was not making his intention to remove Naa Abilabila, but he was only making politics to catch the Tolon-Naa into the C.P.P. If you say that Nkrumah wanted to remove the chief, here is the case: he didn't do it. And so to me, I see that Kwame Nkrumah asked, and he knew our custom. We Dagbamba don't remove our chief. The Gonja people can remove their chief and put another one. The Ashantis can remove their chief. But the Mamprusi chief, the Bimbila chief, the Mossi chief, and the Dagbamba chief, no one has ever heard that they removed any of them. And so government didn't remove Naa Abilabila.

But the lie the Andani people added again to our Dagbamba chieftaincy talks is to say that Yendi has two doors. Truly, it was Naa Yakuba who gave birth to Naa Abilaa and Naa Andani. And now they have said that Yendi is Abudu house and Andani house, and the two doors will be changing one after the other? And the Andani people said that the Abudu housepeople were cheating them. Dagbamba say a proverb: if somebody is not sleeping, and you come to wake him up, you will try to wake him and get tired. He is not sleeping, and he knows that you are waking him. and he won't wake up. That is the Andani people. It is not everyone's hearts that want truth. If somebody doesn't want the truth, and you tell him the truth, he won't listen to you. Whatever you do to pull him to where the truth is, he will never agree. And so even if you bring this example of Naa Luro, they will still argue with you. But as for their talk, if you follow it, you will see that it is not inside custom. All that I have talked to you, from Naa Nyaysi's time, have you seen that the doors to Yendi are two? No. That is why I have said that the educated Dagbamba who have read, they are the ones who told the lie. They have broken Dagbon. They have showed that there is an Abudu house and an

Andani house, that they are two houses that eat Yendi. And you take the names and look. Is it there that if this one dies, it is that one who eats, and if that one dies, this one's door eats? Have you seen it like that? It is not there like that. Naa Zolgu's children and grandchildren ate Yendi six times. And haven't you seen Naa Luro and his children and grandchildren eat Yendi six times? We have seen it. If it were two doors, would it do that? It would not do that.

When Naa Abilaai and his family collected the chieftaincy, and the Andani people were shouting, in the olden days, when other families used to eat the chieftaincy, why was it that people were not talking or shouting at that time? If you know the old talks of Dagbon, you have heard drummers talking that truly, there were chiefs whose many sons ate the chieftaincy. Naa Zulandi: his three children ate Yendi following one another. When Naa Zulandi was not there, his regent Nayaɔɔɔ became regent and remained inside the chieftaincy. When he was not there, the one who was following him was Naa Daturli, and Naa Daturli ate it. When he died, the one who was following him was Naa Briguyomda, and he ate. And Naa Daturli gave birth to Naa Zolgu. And when he died, his first-born Zunzoŋ became the chief. And when he died, the one who was following him, Niŋmitooni, he ate. And when he died, his brother Naa Dimani ate. And when he died, his brother Naa Yenzoo ate. And when he died, Zunzoŋ's son Dariɛɛɛ ate. And when he died, Zolgu's son Luro ate. And so Naa Zolgu's five children ate. They ate four times, followed by a grandchild, and then Naa Luro was the fifth child of Naa Zolgu to eat Yendi. When Naa Luro died, he had his mother's children in other towns, and they were matured. Naa Luro's regent was Tutuyri, and he remained inside the chieftaincy. When he died, his brother who was following him was Naa Zayli. When he died, the brother following was Naa Zokuli. And when he died, the one following was Naa Gungobli. And he died before Naa Tutuyri's son Naa Zanjina came and ate, and then Naa Zayli's son Naa Siyli ate. Four of Naa Luro's children ate, follow by Naa Zanjina, and all these chiefs, from Naa Zolgu to Naa Zanjina, all of them are one family. And their family is the Yaa-Naa's family who has been eating up to today. And so wasn't it one man's children who ate like that? Were a different person's children among them? And have you seen? Did they fight? And why is it that this one has come, and it is fighting that is fighting? And so if you want again, you can look only at Naa Zolgu and his sons, and coming to reach Naa Luro and his sons. It was Naa Zolgu who gave birth to Naa Luro, and from Naa Zolgu's children to the end of Naa Luro's children, they were up to about ten. And as they ate Yendi like that, were others not behind them? Did they mind? And why is it that those who said that Yendi is two doors didn't see that one, and they are coming to see this one?

And I want you to take from Naa Shitɔbu and come up to Naa Yakuba's end, where they have shown that there are two doors, and if somebody tells you

that, you should tell the person to show you the two doors. You should put it like that. And the reason why I say this: if there were two doors, there is a near one which would have been two doors. Naa Ziblim Bandamda and his junior brother Naa Andani Jengbarga: are they not near? And Naa Ziblim's door: has it not died? And hasn't Naa Ziblim got sons and grandsons? Were they not there? And so why is it that Naa Andani Jengbarga came to collect it and hold it? And so those who are saying that in Dagbon there are two doors to Yendi, they are liars. If an educated Dagbana says he knows our Dagbamba customs, he doesn't know. I can say that. He knows what he knows, but he cannot know what a drummer knows. I who have showed you am saying that. What they have taken to show that there is an Abudu house and an Andani house: that has spoiled Dagbon. Yendi is not like that. It is one door. That is how it is.

And so the way they put it that the Abudu side is there and the Andani side is there, that is not the way it is. When Naa Yakuba gave birth to children, if you want to count them, you will get them up to fifty. Was it Naa Abilaa and Naa Andani who were his only children? And so how they say Abudu house and Andani house, what of the rest of Naa Yakuba's children? Their doors are closed. As for them, the people they gave birth to, you can't find anybody on their side again on the part of Yendi. And wasn't their grandfather Naa Yakuba? And now they have come to fix it that Abudu house and Andani house alone should be eating Yendi. As for us, if a drummer or anyone talks like that to us, this is what we use to push him down. And so Yendi, it didn't start that one should eat and give to another. It is a Yaa-Naa's children who will eat Yendi, but sometimes a Yaa-Naa will eat, and none of his children will eat. And sometimes a Yaa-Naa will die, and about four of his children will eat and follow his back. That is the way Yendi started. And so the lies they have been telling that they should be eating and giving to one another: then the rest of the children, have they eaten? And where are they now? And are they not still in this world? And so as for that talk, it's a lie. As for those who talk like that, it is standing that they don't know. Or if a drummer talked it, he is not a drummer. The way we know Yendi, it isn't all Yaa-Naa's children who eat Yendi. Not all the children the chief will give birth to have good luck. It comes from God. And those that God loves, they are those who the soothsayers and elders will catch when their father dies. And so this talk about changing the chieftaincy between two doors, it is not inside Yendi.

And let me open your eyes. They said again that it is four people who can become Yaa-Naa: the chiefs of Karaga, Savelugu, and Mion, and adding the Gboɲlana. And they said that it was Mamprugulana who put it down like that when Naa Zanjina ate. And as for those four, I have told you that it has now come down like that. But the custom doesn't show that those three towns have the right

to move to Yendi. How we know it, it is a Yaa-Naa's child who eats. I have seen two chiefs who were eating Savelugu before eating Yendi: Naa Andani Jengbarga and Naa Andani Naanigoo. Those two people, they are Yaa-Naa's children. Naa Andani Jengbarga: that is Naa Garba's son. Naa Andani Naanigoo: that's Naa Yakuba's son. They are Yaa-Naa's children, and they ate their father's place. But if you happen to be a grandson and you eat Savelugu, then that is your last place. You cannot go and eat Yendi. If you are a grandson and you are eating Karaga, and you are not the real son of Yaa-Naa, you cannot eat Yendi. If you are a grandson and you are eating Mion, and you are not the real child of Yaa-Naa, you cannot eat Yendi. As for the rest of the chieftaincies, if you are a child of Mionlana, they can give you any chieftaincy you want, but as for Yendi, you can never get there. And so what I'm telling you is that since the starting of Yendi, if they come to tell you that somebody's father didn't eat Yendi, and he ate Yendi, it has never happened before. Maybe it has come now, but it has never happened before. What custom shows is that if these three chiefs are Yaa-Naa's children, they can search for Yendi, but if they are not the children, they cannot look for it. If the Gboɲlana sits on the gboɲ and remains there, he will remain. If Mionlana is supposed to eat it, he will eat, and the Gboɲlana will go to Mion. If Savelugu is a Yaa-Naa's child, and it comes to him, he will eat, and then they will send the Gboɲlana to Savelugu. And Karagalana, if he is a Yaa-Naa's child and the custom catches him, he will come and eat, and the Gboɲlana will go to Karaga. This is how it is standing. And what it shows is that if you are a Yaa-Naa's child from those towns, you can search for it. But a grandchild cannot eat Yendi. And what I want you to know is that if you are a child of a Yaa-Naa, and they make a small house and put you there, you are the chief of that house. If the thing comes to you, you can eat. But to say that Mamprugulana put it down, did Naa Zanjina come from Savelugu to eat Yendi? He didn't eat Karaga, and he didn't eat Mion. In Naa Zanjina's Samban' luja, when we sing about how they went to Mamprusi to decide who would eat Yendi, we show that Naa Zanjina wasn't eating any chieftaincy. And again, I have told you that Naa Siyli was only a prince, and they gave him Singa because he was in a war. Naa Gungobli was eating Yamolkaraga when the soothsayers caught him for Yendi. Naa Garba came from Tampion to Yendi. Naa Saa came from Kpatinga to eat Yendi. And so these are some of the lies they are following. There are many talks that people talk, and when you see it, you should throw it far away.

And so the government left Naa Abilabila, but because of the lie that Yendi has two doors, the government said that if Naa Abilabila dies, Mionlana Andani should eat. Have you seen that a Yaa-Naa will be sitting, and they will know who the next Yaa-Naa coming will be? It's not there. And government is also the one

choosing. Then after Nkrumah was overthrown, the government was changing and changing, and it changed what it said about this matter, up to the time Naa Abilabila died. When I talked to you about the Yaa-Naa and the Yendi elders, I told you how they catch a Yaa-Naa. The soothsayers do their work first, and the Yendi elders also search and get to know the one who should be the next Yaa-Naa. And Gushe-Naa will leave Gushegu and come and sleep at Malizheri, and the Yendi elders will meet him there. And Gushe-Naa will enter Yendi on the Thursday of the funeral, and he will go around the chief's house, and he will take grass from the roof, and send it to the new Yaa-Naa. When the finish the prayers, in the night-time, Gukpe-Naa will wear a skin and cover himself. And he will let the chief wear a skin, and Gukpe-Naa will take the new Yaa-Naa to a room in the chief's house, the katin' duu. And the way they show it, if Gukpe-Naa takes the chief and enters the katin' duu, there are different chieftaincy things held by individual people, and everybody will bring what he is holding and put it inside the katin' duu. And what the new chief is supposed to collect, they will give it to him. And drummers will be outside beating Samban' luja. And at that time they know that they have caught the Yaa-Naa.

And when Naa Abilabila died, Mionlana Andani tried to eat the chieftaincy again, and the elders refused him again. When Naa Mahamadu's father Naa Abilabila died, the custom caught Naa Mahamadu. And so Gushe-Naa came and gave the grass to Naa Mahamadu. And Naa Mahamadu collected the grass from Gushe-Naa. In the night, Gukpe-Naa came and he was taking Naa Mahamadu into katin' duu. And Naa Mahamadu and Gukpe-Naa were wearing the skins, and Naa Mahamadu was on the way going to the katin' duu with Gukpe-Naa, and the government blocked his way. They were ready to enter the katin' duu, and so everyone knew that the custom didn't catch Mionlana Andani. And the government people said they will take Andani by force in the katin' duu. The government used armed force, police and soldiers, and the government people went around and collected the chieftaincy things and took Mionlana Andani into the katin' duu, and they said he is the Yaa-Naa. And so the government tried to force to make Mionlana Andani the chief, and they put Mionlana Andani as Yaa-Naa. And Mionlana Andani didn't last long, only a few months. Mionlana Andani died. And Naa Abilabila's regent Naa Mahamadu ate Yendi. And Naa Andani's line became dead on the part of Yendi. When Mionlana Andani died, as the elders had already caught Naa Mahamadu, it was finished. They don't catch the Yaa-Naa two times, and so they don't have to go and do it all again.

When Naa Mahamadu went into the chieftaincy, the Andani family also went under again, and they joined the government again. When Acheampong took power, he listened only to Andani people. He didn't want to hear anything about

the Abudu house. And the door opened for the Andani people. It was the soldiers who came into power in 1972, and they removed our chief. That was in 1974. You know that these soldiers like bribes. And they don't like the common people either. The soldiers spoiled themselves, and they spoiled our way of living too. The politicians knew bribery, too, but the soldiers knew force. If you didn't like someone, you could just go to a soldier and bribe him, and he would do the work of punishing that fellow. And we too, we know bribery. Even if it's according to the custom, since the time of Naa Zanjina, we have been buying chieftaincy. But the time the soldiers took power, they knew bribery and they knew force too; and so they took force and removed Naa Mahamadu. And they took Mionlana Andani's zuu Yakubu and put him into the chieftaincy. And we have never seen anyone do that. And so we who are following the Abudu house, we don't call Yakubu a chief: we call him the "force chief."

And so Acheampong called Naa Mahamadu to Accra, and he said they should guard him in Accra, and he should not come to Dagbon. They held him for about eight months, and during that time when Naa Mahamadu was not in the town, the Andani people performed Mionlana Andani's funeral. And so for them, the chieftaincy had fallen. Mionlana's Andani's zuu Yakubu was there, and when they finished, they gave the chieftaincy to him. Before Yakubu was made the chief, the soldiers went around and collected all the chieftaincy things from the elders who were holding them. I have told you the people who group and catch the Yaa-Naa; from the time of Naa Bimbieyu, the things they give the new Yaa-Naa have not been at one place. "Collect this and go and put it down. On that day, you will bring it." And the soldiers collected the chieftaincy things to put on Yakubu. What they did and installed Yakubu, nobody knows.

. That is why this Yakubu, nobody wants to go and lie by him or go to greet him because of the way and manner he ate the chieftaincy. When they made Yakubu the chief, all the elders and those who choose the Yaa-Naa were removed from their chieftaincies. When I told you how they make the Yaa-Naa, I told you about this talk. All the people who are elders of Yendi, and they are holding all the chieftaincy things, they already came first and did the custom for Naa Mahamadu. And the one they gave the things, they didn't finish it because the government used force to block him to give it to Mionlana Andani. And so when the government called them to come back for Yakubu, they said they wouldn't come back. They said that what they do for the chieftaincy, the custom doesn't say they should do the thing twice. And Mahamadu was still sitting. And the government said they should come back and do a different one in addition. And so Gushe-Naa refused, that he wasn't coming. Gukpe-Naa too said he wouldn't come. They said that the customs is something they don't play with. Gushe-Naa

told them that as for him, he caught Naa Mahamadu. He will never catch him twice. Anyone who is doing the custom to somebody, and it doesn't hold, he will remove his hand. If they call him to do the same thing again, he cannot do it. If he does the custom and it doesn't hold, then that is all. And so as for them, they are elders of Yendi, and Yendi doesn't catch two times. And so if Mahamadu is not a chief, then they too have to refuse their chieftaincies. It's not that they removed them. They said if they come home, and they ask them to go back and perform the custom again, to catch another one, the custom won't leave them. That means they will die. And so this is what brought it. We don't catch a chief two times. And so when Yakubu came, he said, "Gushe-Naa should go. Gukpe-Naa too is not his chief. Yelizolilana is not his chief. Kuya-Naa is not his chief." All these people, he replaced them. Then Yakubu brought his own people, the ones he liked, and he put them inside those chieftaincies. And when Yakubu came, he removed the chieftaincies that Naa Mahamadu had given to people, and he put his own people. At the present time, such chiefs who are eating chieftaincy, if they ask people to come out and help do some work, no one will mind them. If they ask farmers to come and farm for them, they won't get them. If animals like monkeys or baboons come to attack the crops in the farm, and such a chief asks the Kamo-Naa and his followers to kill them with guns, no one will mind him. And so if a chief cannot say a word to a commoner, is there chieftaincy? There is no chieftaincy. And this is how our chieftaincy is here. And as for us drummers, the time they will say that there is no chieftaincy again, that is the time that we too will say that we have no work to do again.

Why is it so? All this is from the government, the politicians and the soldiers. They do what they want with the tradition, but they don't know it. Our nowadays chiefs eat this sort of chieftaincy because they have entered politics and joined the political party groups. But when politics started, it was not like that. The chiefs had no appetite for the politicians, and there was nothing like the way our chieftaincy has spoiled today. At that time, even if you were a head of state or any other big politician, you would only come to visit the chief, and that was all. The chieftaincy wasn't spoiled. And so the ones who spoiled our chieftaincy more were the armed forces. When General Acheampong and his people got strength, it wasn't long and they spoiled our chieftaincy. And now we are divided. Since we grew up, we never heard that they removed a Yaa-Naa. But this is what the armed forces and politicians have done. And if they remove somebody and give you chieftaincy, when you come to power like that, you will also remove the people you don't like. Already you didn't eat the chieftaincy according to its way. The custom doesn't catch you, but you eat it. The custom didn't catch your father, and you are eating chieftaincy. You don't know the way of chieftaincy, and you don't

eat it according to the custom, but rather you let them remove someone and eat his chieftaincy while he is still in his life. The people of the town will not follow you. And this is why Dagbon is now spoiled. And this is how we are now. And before our Dagbon will be made well, we don't know what will happen. And so it was these soldiers who spoiled Dagbon. I have told you that in Dagbon here, from the olden days up to the present time, it was a useless person who would go to join the armed forces. And we are still standing on that.

The time the soldiers released Naa Mahamadu from Accra, and he came to Tamale, my brother Mumuni also met him in Tamale. He went with three other drummers and greeted the chief. And Naa Mahamadu told them that what has happened is just the will of God, and they shouldn't worry. And he said that we should take insult, and turn it to pomade and put on our body. And that we should take beating, and turn it to pomade and put on our body. And we should exercise patience to see what God is going to do. And Mumuni said that at that time, everybody was looking at his face. They were thinking that when they got to see him, looking to his face, that he would look pitiful. But he was so large. And he said, as for him, all that is happening, he has given it to God. As for him, when he goes to sleep, his heart doesn't worry him. And so the patience God has given to him, that patience, even learned persons wanted it. As for him, his heart doesn't get up.

That is why Dagbon is cool. Had it not been for Naa Mahamadu himself, by now, in the whole of Dagbon, people would have died like hell. Had it not been the patience he was holding, if he had given the wish of his people to them, what would have happened, truly, you wouldn't see Dagbon today. In Yendi, leaving aside the Dagbamba themselves, all the Konkombas in Yendi would have come out with their bows and arrows and killed all the Andani people. But he stopped them. He always advised the public that anyone who loves him should not go to do anything. If he would hear anything that somebody is getting up to fight a war, then he would send a messenger that he doesn't want such things. And so many, many, many people are giving Naa Mahamadu the respect of Yaa-Naa, that they don't know that Yakubu is even existing. Maybe somebody will say that I am telling you what my heart wants. But if you see Naa Mahamadu, and you see the way Yakubu is sitting, you will know who has respect more than the other. That is how it is.

Truly, people loved Naa Mahamadu. If you would see him, you would know that he is somebody. If he was sitting down, he would look at the ground, but when he would raise up his head, and your eye would get to his eye, you will turn your head away. Anywhere he went, people would rush to see him. When he goes to someplace and people don't take time, grown-ups could kill children by

stepping on them. My brother Mumuni saw Naa Mahamadu one time in Kumasi, and the place he was staying, he was leaving Kumasi for the North. Ashanti people were passing and they gathered, and when he came out, the Ashanti women were looking, and they said, “Yes! Ampa! It’s true. This man is fit to be the Yaa-Naa.” In all of Ghana, in Ashanti or in Accra, you will see people who are not Dagbamba and they support Naa Mahamadu. They don’t know him, but they have only seen his photograph, and they like it. Wherever Naa Mahamadu was traveling, people would gather to see him, and they would block the road. How Naa Mahamadu is, the Hausa people have a proverb: if you see an elephant, nobody is going to tell you that it is an elephant standing there. Of all the creatures in the bush, there is nothing like an elephant.

As we are sitting, Naa Mahamadu is still in his life, and he is at Yendi. And truly, I can tell you that there are old people who say that it would have been better if they had killed Naa Mahamadu. That is one way that can make Dagbon come together. We know it. Someone can take strength in a traditional way, with Dagbamba, and wage a war to remove Naa Mahamadu. In the beginning of Dagbon, it was there like that. Didn’t I tell you that Naa Yakuba fought a war? Naa Simaani Zoli was eating Yendi, and Naa Yakuba was eating Mion. And Naa Yakuba came from Mion to Yendi, and he shot Naa Simaani Zoli with a gun. And Naa Yakuba ate Yendi, and it finished. There was nothing again. When we started the chieftaincy talks, we showed the wars they were fighting. And when they killed their fellow chief, they would send people who would sit down and perform the funeral. And the chief they happened to kill, even that chief’s children wouldn’t refuse the Yaa-Naa. They would go to the one who killed their father and search for chieftaincy. And he wouldn’t say that he won’t give them. As for such quarreling or war, after it has happened, it would go away. They would tie their dresses together, and they would be working together. Nobody would come from a different place to separate them.

And so if they had shot and killed Mahamadu, and eaten the chieftaincy, it wouldn’t have mattered. But to follow some other way and remove him and let him sit down, and to put somebody where he was sitting, we don’t know it in Dagbon. It will not make Dagbon have one mouth. People will sit down who are not concerned to talk about chieftaincy matters and remove him: that one is not there. Old people say to remove like that is forbidden, and the old people’s talk is there in our hearts. If Yendi is not standing well, then Mamprusi, Nanumba, Gonja, Wala, and even Ashanti will not sit well. Their chieftaincy is hanging. Removing the Yaa-Naa is different from his brothers or his junior fathers used strength to fight their mother’s child and sack him. If it comes like that, when their mother’s child dies in the war, the same people who fought the war will come

together and bury him, and it will finish. But government told Naa Mahamadu that he is not a chief, and he is sitting down with peace, and now government cannot just come and kill him. When Naa Mahamam Bila died, if Mionlana Andani had eaten Yendi, it wouldn't have mattered. But Naa Abilabila ate Yendi, and when he died, his regent was Mahamadu, and Naa Mahamadu became the chief for five years. And they came and removed him, and they have put Yakubu there. It will never do. If Yakubu prepares himself and goes to shoot and kill Mahamadu, we will only cry, but to remove Mahamadu and let him sit down, it will never make Dagbon well.

If you see someone sacking another like that, he is waiting to go and eat what is there, and the time is not going, and that is why he will go and sack him and also sit there. That is why they kill one another to eat. But we believe that nobody ever killed another to go and sit, and he will be honest. When he kills somebody like that and eats, as time goes on, his bad things will be going up. So that is how it is. That is the same thing in the talk of Yendi. That is what is happening in Dagbon. When chiefs were for themselves, and government wasn't there, at that time, there was nobody who would be able to spoil chieftaincy. At that time, nobody at all. That is why I have told you that in the olden days, when they fight war and kill one another, after that they will repair. Nobody could enter into their talks. But when the Europeans came, they came and joined with Dagbamba, up to the time they sacked the white men. And they showed us that it was because of the cheating, that is why they sacked all the white people. But since they sacked the white people, we haven't seen any Ghanaian man who does the work of the white people. When the white people were here, they weren't removing chiefs. And it is not anything that spoiled Ghana: the removal of chiefs. If you are holding something and somebody comes to collect it, and gives it to another person and leaves you like that: it means that person likes the other person more than you. And the one who will collect the thing, it will also create trouble between the two of you. And so those who have said the old talks are not there have cut Dagbon into two. This is what brought it.

I have told you that the time this case was there, that was the time Nkrumah was going to agree that they should remove Naa Abilabila. And he started asking. He sent round, and people went to Bimbila and asked, went to Ouagadougou and asked, went to the Mamprusis and asked, went to the Ashantis and asked, went to the Gonjas and asked. Apart from that, Nkrumah went around whole Dagbon, and he asked the people who know our culture, "Have you ever seen them removing a Yaa-Naa?" He made people come to Dagbon here and enter villages, and they asked tindanas and asked old people, and they all said that it was forbidden. And they said they have never seen it.. And that was why Nkrumah did not let them

remove Naa Abilabila. And he said that if they have never removed a Yaa-Naa, then he will not remove Naa Abilabila. And as Nkrumah had patience, didn't he leave him? As he asked and he did that, it was repaired. Was it good or it was not good? And so it is not anything that has entered Dagbon: it is inside our Ghana government. Because when we want to say the one who spoiled Dagbon: Acheampong. He spoiled Dagbon, because he spoiled our Dagbon chieftaincy. That is how it is. Before Acheampong, they were quarreling, but they didn't remove anyone. Or did they remove any chief? Did you hear that a chief was removed? But as for Acheampong, he was a soldier, and as for a soldier's government, it is by force that we like it. They do what their hearts want. And so the soldiers spoiled our custom. This is how it is.

And so those who took our Dagbamba chieftaincy and removed Naa Mahamadu, and they took Mionlana Andani's son Yakubu and made him the chief, they spoiled Dagbon. It was not Naa Mahamadu alone they removed; they removed many chiefs. The Gushe-Naa, the Gukpe-Naa, and many chiefs and many elders were removed. And our Dagbon will not be repaired. How is it going to be repaired? A Dagbana does not want to repair his own house. How will Dagbon be made good again? A Dagbana wants to break his house and go and repair somebody's house. As we are sitting in Dagbon here, are the educated people from anywhere more educated than Dagbon's educated people? Is their sense more? Are their eyes more open? But our Dagbamba educated people won't take their sense or their eye-opening to repair their house. Only drink, only women: that is what they know. Will it repair a town? All the bad that Yakubu's people have done, Mahamadu's people have written it in a book, but they cannot do anything about it.

And so in Dagbon here, as it has spoiled, the repairing of it is difficult. And how it could be repaired: if they were to get some talk and put it inside a book and put it in every school, and they would show every child in Dagbon who is going to read that he should try to repair Dagbon. And they will say, "This is how the old people lived, and this is how some others came and spoiled it, and those who also came repaired it and it was better. If it is a man, he should try and read it, and there will be sense to repair Dagbon. A woman: she should try and read it, and there will be sense to repair Dagbon. And as for those who want to spoil it, those who are still getting up should look into this book and repair Dagbon. The repairing of it is not anywhere. If you read, and you go and they talk some talk, it is good that you too should think in your heart and get some talk that will make the way of living good and add to it. And stop drinking: drinking has spoiled Dagbon. And stop showing yourselves: that is spoiling Dagbon. And give respect to old people, and give respect to chiefs: it will repair Dagbon. And you

should let your stomach pain for your town: it can repair Dagbon.” If this talk were to stand, and they would print books, and every child who gets up and goes to school sees that book, it can repair Dagbon. But if it is that we gather and shout “Awo-wo-wo-wo!”: that won’t repair Dagbon. As for that, it is politics. And this is what I see that we can do and Dagbon will be repaired.

As for the Abudu house and Andani house talk, if you ask anybody in this Dagbon, he is just going to talk what his heart wants. If he is in the Andani house, he is going to talk what his heart wants to you. If he is in the Abudu house, he is going to talk what his heart wants. Why I say what his heart wants: if this Abudu house person talks the truth, and it is that he is not talking against anybody, but he is taking the truth, if an Andani house person sees it, he will say, “You are telling lies.” Why have I said that? I can say that since the time of Naa Andani, if not Naa Mahaman Kpema, no person from the Andani line has sat on the skins and remained in the chieftaincy. But as for the Abudu family, I can count many of them. When Naa Alaasani died, his son Naa Abudu ate Yendi, and during that time, Naa Andani’s children, one of them was this Savelugu-Naa Bukali who was blind, and those remaining were only eating small chieftaincies. When Naa Abudu died, Naa Mahaman Kpema ate, and he was a son of Naa Andani. And when he died, Naa Alaasani’s child Naa Mahamam Bila came and ate, and he also died. And Naa Mahamam Bila’s first son Naa Abilabila also received it and ate. And when he died, Naa Mahamadu came and ate. And so Naa Andani’s line is not strong on the part of Yendi. And if somebody has never done anything, and it is on the way of our Dagbamba chieftaincy, he won’t be able to do it and it will be correct. And so we say that if you are not in something, you shouldn’t go into it to find fault; you should leave it and forget of it. And apart from that, if they say something is forbidden, and somebody refuses and does it, that person won’t get luck in Dagbon.

And so it is not that we don’t like them. It is the Yaa-Naa who gave birth to them. The truth is not with them, and that is how it is. It is the Yendi elders who catch somebody in Yendi, and Gushe-Naa is the senior elder. Nobody caught Mionlana Andani for Yendi. If Gushe-Naa doesn’t remove the grass and give to the one they have caught, then the chieftaincy is not there. And this grass, if they remove it and give it to a Frafra person, then he is the chief. It is Gushe-Naa who catches the Yendi chief, and he didn’t remove the grass for him. According to our custom, Mionlana Andani didn’t eat the Yendi chieftaincy in the correct way. If he had eaten, we would have minded him. But this grass was not with him. And so I can say that it was strength they used to put Mionlana Andani there in Yendi, because they didn’t remove the grass for him. And so the strength he took and entered, Yendi doesn’t enter like that. And it was this that brought about the

quarreling. If you want, you can get an Andani man, if he wants to tell you the truth, and ask him whether they removed the grass for Mionlana Andani the time they were going to perform Naa Abilabila's funeral. And if somebody doesn't get the grass, can he eat Yendi? On the way of our custom, it's not there. And the time they removed Naa Mahamadu and made Yakubu the chief, Gushe-Naa didn't agree, and that time they even removed Gushe-Naa too. And so the Abudu housepeople are not cheating the Andani housepeople. They are not cheating them. This is how the chieftaincy has come.

It is truth I have talked to you. I am not saying that you should take it and make a book. That is why I have told you that if somebody doesn't like you and you do some good work, he will say it's not good. The good work you have done is a bad work to him. And if somebody likes you and you do any work, it makes his heart white. And so if you take it and make a book, the Andani people are going to be talking. Who wants people to blame his house? But if it is on the way of truth, and it is not that they are going to buy the truth, then inside Yendi, the Andani people are not there again. Yendi doesn't eat like that. Naa Kulunku: he was a Yaa-Naa and he gave birth to children, and the children were there, and others came to eat Yendi and nobody minded. As Naa Kulunku's children did not eat Yendi, it doesn't matter, and it is not a fault. There are many Yaa-Naas whose lines are dead on the part of Yendi. Naa Siyli fought and saved Dagbon, and is Naa Siyli's line there again? And so the Andani people have spoiled our way of living when they came to say that they had cheated them. Nobody has cheated them. It's politics which has come. And money is sweet to everybody. And they are not following truth. Nobody has cheated them. And so what you are asking me, maybe people have asked you. I am not the only drummer. But if you want the truth and you meet Namo-Naa, he is also going to tell you the truth. And so the Abudu house has not cheated the Andani house. The Andani people have taken it to go and mix inside bad people. And that is what has come to spoil it. It wouldn't have spoiled like that. If a Yaa-Naa's son doesn't eat Yendi, is he not there? They are plenty. And Yaa-Naa will give birth to his son, and another Yaa-Naa's children will eat and leave that Yaa-Naa's child. Naa Zanjina left his senior brothers and ate Yendi. And so those children of the Yaa-Naa who don't eat chieftaincy will be sitting down. It is not a fault. And these people have come today to say that they are going to cheat them. In Yendi, there is no way like that.

And so truly, in our Dagbon, as we were sitting in the olden days, we didn't fear anything. The white man collected us and went home, and Nkrumah collected us, and we didn't fear anything. We didn't know that government had any character or habit to show a person and fear would catch him. And truly, when we were going to see it and when it was going to start, we started seeing it in the time

of Kotoka and Afrifa. They sacked Nkrumah. And truly, when they sacked Nkrumah, if a person was doing good, he was doing bad. And this Kotoka and Afrifa, when they sacked Nkrumah, they didn't take their hands to enter inside the chieftaincy. They seized power and said that Nkrumah had not followed the law. And when they collected Ghana, they didn't keep long before they gave it to Busia. And then that useless man, Acheampong, he came and collected. And when Ghana was going to spoil, and it was the soldiers who were going to spoil it, Acheampong spoiled it.

This talk about the soldiers, it is not inside our custom. It won't give you sense, and it would add anything to you. But I am only going to talk about it because of the difference between what is happening today and in the past. As for a soldier in Dagbon, we Dagbamba say that it is a useless person who goes to enter the army. The person who has nothing to do what he will do, he is the one who enters the army. And truly, it is true. And long time ago, when the white people were here, and they were fighting a war, they used to worry our forefathers, and they used to catch soldiers. And those who became soldiers in the time of the white man, they are different. We know that it was force that ate them. And leaving those who went and entered it, as we knew that it was useless people who went to enter it, they finished entering it. And those who came and are entering it now, at this time when there is no fighting or war, the army is cheap. If not that, the time we were sitting, and the white men were catching people for their war, the army was a bad thing. When it was daybreak, some soldiers would come out and remove their dress and throw it away and enter the bush because the white men were going to take them to the fighting. Such soldiers at that time, they used to give people respect. And they knew that they would come to leave that work. The time the white people were here, and they were looking after the army, you would never see any soldier man in town.

And it was there like that when Kotoka came and collected it. When they collected it, truly, they were not worrying people like Acheampong. But when Acheampong collected the government, he entered into our Ghana chieftaincy talks. And I am talking of all Ghana, not our Dagbon alone: he removed many chiefs. And he did not give the government back to civilians. He stood. And he spoiled all of Ghana. Everything that is in Ghana, Acheampong spoiled it. Why have I said this? Acheampong said that there was nothing that was forbidden. If the tradition catches some people, Acheampong will come and remove them and say that it is not forbidden. And it was there until it came to our Dagbon, and he spoiled our Dagbon.

Before Acheampong came, we knew our threepence-eating and we knew our sixpence-eating, and it was enough for us. Acheampong made our money

useless. Any person who was there, if you were there and you knew the money you had, when Acheampong came, you didn't know the way of your money. He came and Ghanaians learned stealing and corruption, and if it was there small, it became big. Everything is selling now. In Ghana our women were having their position where they stood. And the soldiers collected Ghana, and today, our women don't stand like that. It is these soldiers who started the corruption, because they have strength. If a store person or a market person is going to sell something, it is these soldiers who will come and stand and say that they want the thing. And it is by force that she will sell to them at controlled price. And the soldier will also take it and go and sell it at a high price to other women, and the women will also take it to sell at that high price to people. If she is in the market, they will come and collect the things again, and as it is, will she do trading again? And so the soldiers fell on the women, and they spoiled the markets. They blocked all the roads. And all that remained in the markets came into the hands of the soldiers, and the soldiers collected it and sold it to their friends or their wives, and the soldiers' people turned around and sold the things to people at high prices. This is why I say they have spoiled our women in Ghana. There was no trading in Ghana again.

The soldiers say they want to repair Ghana. But if you look at them, they are not doing their work correctly. There is no work in Ghana that they will do; they are only sitting down. They are sitting because of their strength. You say that if you come to get power, you will know what you will do. And so inside our sense, this is what we know. Someone will tell lies today that the other one is doing this, and when he sacks him, the next day, he too will be doing the same thing. At that point they are all the same. Dagbamba people say, "A monkey is a monkey." That is the chieftaincy of the soldiers. Nobody is better than the other. They are all monkeys. When they see a farm, they destroy it. And so when Rawlings came, inside everybody's talk, what is it? That is the talk of the small soldiers. The small soldiers left the barracks. They were looking at Acheampong and the others, and their time had come. You say that if you come to get power, you will know what you will do. And so inside our sense, this is what we know. And the small soldiers also collected the money, all the money and all the things that people were selling. There was no law again. And we could not do anything.

If not that, truly, we would cancel Ghana's soldiers. Soldiers don't have any benefit for us, because they are people who spoil. As for them, anything they are doing, if you tell them "Let's stop it," it is not there. But "Let's spoil it": as for that one, they will join it. And so soldiers, truly, their government is because of strength. It is we whom the soldiers will take from to do for themselves. We cannot say we don't want their government, because if we say that, they have more

strength than us. If it is not that, every soldiers' government is force. And so those of us who pray, we are begging God, that God will not have soldiers. We will not refuse if Ghana does not have soldiers because there is no fighting in Ghana. If every towns' soldiers are spoiled, they are not spoiled more than Ghana's soldiers. Ghana's soldiers are thieves. Ghana's soldiers have stolen more than anyone. Anybody who says that it is not them is telling lies. This is how we are sitting in these modern times. As for the soldiers' times, that is our times. We are holding ourselves, and there is fear. We have no strength, and everywhere, there is fear. Where is the law again? The soldiers have spoiled themselves and spoiled the civilians; they have spoiled everything to the end. There is no talk in it again.

And truly, the way Ghana is spoiled, if Ghana is going to repair, it will be difficult, and it will be many years. There are some things that are smaller than this whole situation, and they will even take longer before you can see the end of them. I have told you that old Dagbamba say that you should not blame the times of your generation. It is an old talk. You can blame the times, but you cannot blame too much because you are also inside. And so you have to be begging God, that in this generation, or in these times, as such-and-such a thing is happening, God should reduce it for you. It is God who blessed you and you are alive inside your times. The way God has let some people die, have they seen it? And so the way you are inside, if you are blaming, you should leave your talk. What is there in your times, and your strength cannot push it down, if you continue saying it's bad, then you are finding troubles for yourself. That is why old people say that if the times are bad, and you are inside those times, you don't have to be blaming it. Whether to pity the current generation or whether talk about it, it is within your heart. And so these are our generation's problems. Our great-grandfathers who passed, they too they had what was worrying them. And now we have come to meet our own. And that is our generation, or our times. That is why old people say that when the times come like that, and you are facing problems, then you only have to pray to God. That is its medicine. This is what old people say. The suffering of this time, and all that has been happening in this generation, we haven't seen it before. And what you haven't seen, and you see it, by all means, you will sit down and cry. And so we are only praying to God that God should reduce it for us. And you will be begging God, and the talks of the times will be some days' remembering talks. So that is why I am putting it like that. And so may God put it well for us.

And Dagbamba also used to say that if some talks have strength more than you, you too have to get some more patience than it. If some talks like this appear, then it looks as if you have come to a river, and the river is full. How you see it, it

is moving with strength. If you were planning to cross the river, and you see the way the water is, you know that if you play with it, it will take you away. And so you have to go back home. It wouldn't take one month, and when you come back there, you will see dust. There is no water there again. But the first time, if you say you are proud, and you know how to swim, and you get inside, the water will eat you. And another time some people will come and cross it easily. And so Dagbamba say that strength is like water. If the strength of something comes and you don't take sense, and you want to joke with it, it will eat you. And within two days, nobody will see that strength again. That is why we have been saying that any time something comes and the matter is stronger than you, then you too you have to have more patience than it. As for strength, nothing can defeat it, apart from patience and the will of God. If there is good health and long life, one day you will sit down and remember and talk. This is what I can add to this talk.