

14.

GFA: This is a preparation song and preparation rhythm to get ready for the war. They are telling *Adewuto*, who is an Ewe war leader, to get ready so that they can go. The song is telling you that as a warrior, if you are going to war, a gun alone cannot do anything. You have to do what? You have to have gunpowder. The gunpowder is what they mean in the words "*adiqi magbe*." When it is war, you know the importance of "*edu*," gunpowder. A gun alone cannot do anything.

DL: I take this to be a proverb.

GFA: It is a proverbial thing. One might think that "*adiqi*," means ant, but that is not what they are talking about. They really mean gunpowder, not the insect that bites you. This is why I say that some of these poems are very deep. To me, I first thought they were talking about "*adiqi* " and I said to my cousin, "Why shouldn't an ant go?" but Mr. Dewornu told me, "No, they are talking about the gunpowder. When a warrior goes to war, how can he go without gunpowder? What is he going to do?"

DL: Even that, I take to be a proverb: If a leader doesn't have his group, what can the leader do?

GFA: Also that could be true. If the leader has a group on the battlefield but is not prepared, what will happen? They can easily be defeated.

DL: I see; you have got to be prepared to do what you are going to do.

GFA: When you go, go with everything you need to take. You may have a gun, but if you don't take the things to go in it, what do you have? An empty gun. The enemy can get you right away.

DL: As I was telling you before, many of my students who enjoy African music are peace-loving people. They find it hard to relate to war songs, so I tell them they can turn the meanings to be relevant to their own life. Like this song; they can understand it to mean whatever you do in life, you must be prepared. Do Ewes also take these songs and put them into a more general picture of life?

GFA: Living life, yes. One song can mean so many things. I just mentioned that to you. At first, I thought they were only talking about ants and I said, "What ant can go to war, when an ant is always on the ground?" That was my personal perspective on this.

"*Tɔkɔ*" means lagoon or river, but ants are always found on the sand. So how can we relate to the words of the song, "The ant didn't want to go to the lagoon"? But the elderly people explained that "*tɔkɔ*" means the war field. The song actually means, "How can a warrior go to war without having gunpowder?" The song is like a self preparation

towards life; that is my way of looking at it. If you go into details about exactly what is here [songs] and what is there [drums], you will understand their similarity, why I put them together. That is why I say it is preparation music. This song talks about travel and before you travel you have to do what? Prepare.