

The Story of Naybieyu, Appellation of Naa Abudu

Told by Abubakari Lunna, March 2 and 6, 2001

Edited by David Locke

[Continued from "The Story of Nantoo Nimdi, Appellation of Naa Yakubu."]

AL

I am going to continue with Naybieyu.

DL

Thank you.

AL

Naa Abudu was the first son of Naa Yakubu. He had the respect of the elders. All the elders knew him. That is why they didn't select anyone else. When Naa Yakubu died, they put him to be the regent.

Bassari Kofi--that was the chief who fought Naa Abudu. You know, we linsi don't know the way the Chemba people call their chiefs but we know their names. When Naa Abudu became regent, the Chemba people who are very close to Yendi--after Yelizoli you are in Togo--said, "Yelizoli-lana is no more. He died. And the Yaa Naa died. We can kill this man's son and take our land back." During the olden days, Naa Tutuyri had taken that land. Naa Tutuyri moved to Yendi from Diari. He fought with the Gonjas. After he came from the Gonja land, he went to Togo land. Yes. Naa Tutuyri took Chemba land.

So, the Chemba people said, "We can claim our property back," and they sent to tell Naa Abudu. Naa Abudu sent to tell Kofi, "I am a bad cow. If I drink your water, you cannot drink it anymore. If I pass through your farm, you can't get anything. Don't attempt. I am more than my great-grandfather." That was what Naa Abudu told them--He is a bad cow. He, Naa Abudu, is a bad cow.

But the people who had grouped together with Kofi said they would come. They were from seven towns, but three of those towns now are in Dagbon so we use those names--Nachemba, Nakunjuri, and Bassari. When some drummers sing, they become carried

away and call the names of so many Chemba towns, but he fought only in three towns.

The leader, Kofi, was from Bassari. When they sent this message to Naa Abudu, he told them, "I am not going to wait for you people to come here. I am going to come to you."

Kofi said, "You can't come. Don't try," but Naa Abudu said, "Yes, I still want your place." So, they prepared for war. Naa Abudu had a lot of helpers. He had strong people.

In Naa Abudu's appellation, we say that on the day he was getting to Nachemba, they sent to tell him, "If you are a bad cow, we have a nice rope. We can tie you and kill you."

Naa Abudu went to Nachemba. He killed the Nachemba leader and they burned Nachemba. Coming to Nakunjuri--the Nakunjuri chief said, "If Nachemba people couldn't get rope, we have rope and we have a gbaa." You know, you kneel--like when you go to my house--I have it for tying my horse's leg--a stake--we call it gbaa. "We have a rope and we have a stake. We can tie you and kill you." Naa Abudu went to Nakunjuri. He entered the town--nobody did anything--they couldn't defeat him. The Dagombas killed the Nakunjuri chief and his people all ran to Bassari.

When he was coming to Bassari, Naa Abudu told his people, "Bassari is looking nice.

People, don't burn the town. Let us take properties from the town. And let me kill the man." They came close to Bassari. Naa Abudu sent to tell Bassari Kofi that he should move out. "I have learned that you are good farmers, a rich people. I don't want to spoil the town the way I spoiled the other towns. If you, Kofi, defeat me you can still have your property. But if I, Naa Abudu, kill you, I will take your property together with your land."

DL

Had Kofi come into Dagbon, making war--spoiling villages?

AL

No. He was making threats. I will give you an example. I am in my house, telling my neighbor, "I will come and kill you--take your house," and the person says, "I won't wait for you to come." So, the person I am talking to--he asks my neighbors, "Do you know what this man is saying? What are you people thinking to do?" and they say, "We are all together." He comes to me. That is why Naa Abudu went to Nachemba and Nakunjuri

before Bassari. He killed so many because those places had a lot of strong people. Then, Naa Abudu said, "We didn't come here to kill all the people. I want to kill Kofi. My people are dying, Kofi's people are dying." He sent to tell Kofi, "Tomorrow morning I am going to meet you. You should prepare." Then, he prepared.

They moved out. They had a barrier on the war field--like goals on a soccer field or like "Braveheart" with the English on one side and the Scots on the other. The Dagombas were sitting together--waiting for daybreak. Day broke--the sun came up--Naa Abudu's people were drumming. Naa Abudu said, "I am going to them. No one else should come." He moved on his horse. According to teachers, he moved alone. Then, there was too much dust--full up--nobody was seeing them. Before his warriors reached that place, Naa Abudu had cut off Kofi's head. He was holding Kofi's head like this [gestures]. When they could see, they saw Kofi's people running as if bees were biting them--running. Naa Abudu's horse was standing, Kofi's horse was on the ground, and Naa Abudu was on top of Kofi. Naa Abudu put his leg like this on Kofi--holding his head in his hand. [Demonstrates standing with leg on dead body holding a severed head

up.] When they saw Naa Abudu holding the head, Kofi's people starting running--
throwing their bows and arrows--running. Some people just put their hands up.

This was the place where he said, "I am a bad cow. I drink the water and spoil it. If I
come to your yam farm, I eat--the rest of the yams--I will smash it. You won't get any. If
I come to your guinea corn room, I will eat and smash it. You won't get anything." Naa
Abudu himself--he was the bad killer who named himself Naybieyu. "If I pass through
your river, I drink and spoil it. If I pass through you guinea corn farm, I eat and spoil it.
If I pass through your yam room, I eat and spoil it." That is why we say, "[Dagbani]
Drink and spoil it. [Dagbani] Eat and spoil it." The drummers were telling Kofi, "This is
your Naybieyu. The Naybieyu you want, he has come. Kill him! Naybieyu, kill him.
Naybieyu is coming, kill him."

DL

Try.

AL

Try, uh huh.

After Naa Abudu fought this war, he came back to Yendi. They performed his father's funeral, Naa Yakubu's funeral. The elders said, "This man--if we are trying to choose a chief, he will be the same like Idantoma. His family is very strong. Let us chose him to be chief." They chose Naa Abudu to be chief.

DL

He did this fight before he was Yaa Naa?

AL

Yes. When Idantoma died, the father made him Gbunbali-naa. When his father, Naa

Yakubu, died Naa Abudu became the Yendi regent. He was the Yaa Naa's regent--

holding the Gbunbaliga title--when he went and fought the war.

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