

The Story of Naa Zangina

Told By Dolsi-naa Abubakari Lunna on February 5, 2001

Edited by David Locke

DL

It is February 5, 2001. I am following up on the story of Dɔɣu with Dolsi-naa

Abubakari. Larry Graves is also here. Dolsi-naa, a big part of Dɔɣu's story is what

happened when Naa Zangina was chosen to be chief. There seems to have been a lot of

competition before they chose Naa Zangina. His older brothers and Naa Andan' Siyli all

told him, "If you were so clever to become chief, then you should be clever enough to

become a fighter." I don't quite understand how it happened. What happened with the

older brothers? Why didn't the elders choose one of the older brothers?

AL

Naa Zangina's story is very, very long. His story is not a short talk.

When Naa Zangina contested for the Yendi skin, he wasn't yet a chief. He was a young man--a trader. Naa Zangina was a son of Naa Tutuyri. When Naa Tutuyri died--it happened that Naa--it happened that we got another chief--[seems hesitant to continue]

DL

Maybe I should withdraw the question. I don't want you to talk about what you are not supposed to talk about.

AL

No, don't withdraw it. This one won't be short. Because you want how they chose Naa Zangina to be Yaa Naa, I have to make it very nice, but it won't take too long.

When Naa Tutuyri died, Naa Zayli became Yaa Naa. When Naa Zayli died, Naa Gungobli became Yaa Naa. After Naa Gungobli, many of Naa Tutuyri's children announced that they would contest to be Yaa Naa. Among all of them, only Naa Siyli-- Naa Andani Siyli who was the son of Naa Zayli--wasn't already a chief. When talking this story, we drummers also can call him Andani Siyli.

DL

But he was the son of a Yaa Naa?

AL

Yes, he was the son of a Yaa Naa. His father was Naa Zayli, who was Yaa Naa after Naa Tutuyri.

DL

--and before Naa Gungobli?

AL

--before Naa Gungobli.

When Naa Gungobli died, the first son of Naa Tutuyri, Yelizoli-lan' Gumenchieyu, contested for the skin; he came out to say that he wanted to be Yaa Naa. The second son of Naa Tutuyri was Sunson-naa Timani; he wanted to be Yaa Naa. The third son was

Kpogi-lana Binyahin; he wanted to be Yaa Naa. The fourth son was Warvi-lana Munyo; he wanted to be Yaa Naa. The fifth son was Gundawari-lan' Kushiwo; he wanted to be Yaa Naa. And Naa Zayli's son, Andani Siyli, also contested; he wanted to be Yaa Naa.

DL

So, Naa Gungobli's grandsons, the sons of Naa Tutuyri, are inside this story?

AL

Yes! Are they not sons of a Yaa Naa?

DL

So, there are three Yaa Naas, all who have died, and all their sons are trying to become the next Yaa Naa?

AL

Three Yaa Naas--Naa Tutuyri died, Naa Zayli died, and Naa Gungobli died. When Naa Gungobli died, the five children of Naa Tutuyri came out.

DL

--and Zangina making six?

AL

Zangina had not come yet. You say you want to know--[laughs]

DL

I am just asking.

AL

This year you are going to face a proper debt from these, your talks. [laughs] If you want something and I have it, I have to give it to you.

So, when Naa Gungobli died and all these princes came out, the elders of Dagbon--the kingmakers of Dagbon--began going through the matter, looking to see who God would select as our next chief. Among all these people, they couldn't find one person who

would make Dagbon safe if he become Yaa Naa. Then, one day Gushe-naa called for all the kingmakers to come together. They were sitting and said, "Naa Gungobli's funeral is coming close, but we still don't have a head. What should we do?" Some of the elders said, "The children of Naa Tutuyri can't be Yaa Naa. The one among them who should be Yaa Naa is too young. He hasn't even contested for the skin. How can we chose him to be Yaa Naa?" This was what the kingmakers were saying.

Zangina had many people who loved him. One of them was what we call "tekupana," which means a person who cannot keep secrets. This person got up from the meeting. Do you remember that I told you that Zangina was in Sabali with his uncle, Sabali-lana Iya-naa?

DL

Right.

AL

OK. This man went to Sabali. It was market day. He met Zangina selling salt and kola in the Sabali market. He greeted him and asked for kola. Zangina gave him kola. He asked him for salt and Zangina gave him salt. No, I am sorry. I have to put it the way I was taught. [laughs] First, the man told Zangina, "I have good news for you. What will you give me so that I will tell you that news?" That is what my teachers told me. The man said, "You, Zangina, I have good news for you. What do you have for me before I give you that good news?" Zangina gave him kola and then gave him salt. Those were the things Zangina had. Then, the man said, "Yes. Now I will tell you."

The man began, "Do you know that your father died?" Zangina said, "Yes. I know." The man said, "Then, why haven't you come to Yendi?" Zangina said, "Yes. All of my brothers are looking forward to becoming the Yaa Naa. I am so young. That is why I have stayed here in Sabali." Then, the man told him, "Your brothers want to be Yaa Naa, but none of them can be chief of Dagbon. The soothsayers are not catching them. The soothsayers are looking forward and they see your stone. From among the children of Naa Tutuyri, only you will be Yaa Naa. The soothsayers say that only you, Zangina, can

be Yaa Naa." Zangina said, "So, what can I do? I am so young and all of my older brothers are there." The man said, "Come to Yendi. The elders will show you what to do." So, Zangina went from Sabali to Yendi. He went to the funeral house and greeted the elders.

Zangina found lapielga, which means cowries, real money; in those days our money was cowries. Zangina gave one hundred cowries--we say, "lapielga kɔbiga"--to his senior brother Yelizoli-lana and said, "My senior, I have heard that you are contesting to become Yaa Naa. This is my help. Take it and make an offering to God so that you can be Yaa Naa. If you come to be Yaa Naa, make me Yelizoli-lana so that I can be taking care of the children outside." His senior brother took it with a happy feeling and said, "Thank you, my brother Zangina. May God help you."

Zangina visited the house of his brother Sunson-lana. He gave him the same one hundred cowries and said, "My brother, Sunson-lana, this is my help towards your looking forward to being Yaa Naa. If you become Yaa Naa, you can make me to be somebody.

You can put me on the skin of Sunson." Sunson-lana said, "Thank you, my brother Zangina. May God help you."

From Sunson-naa Timani's house, Zangina went to Gundawari-lana's house. Zangina gave him one hundred cowries, "My brother Gundawari-lana, this is my help. If you become Yaa Naa, can you make it that people will no more call me 'Zangina'? Can you make me to be a chief?" Gundawari-lana said, "Thank you, my younger brother Zangina."

Zangina went to Larigban-lana Zangina's house. He greeted Larigban-lan Zangina and said, "My senior brother, this is one hundred cowries. It is my help. If you become Yaa Naa make me Larigban-dana." The chief of Larigba said, "My brother, my younger Zangina, thank you. May God help you to become somebody one day."

Zangina moved on to Warvi-lana' Munyo's house and gave him one hundred cowries, saying, "My brother, this is my help. If God helps you to become Yaa Naa then make me

Warvi-lana." Warvi-lana took the money. He felt very happy and said, "Thank you, my younger brother. May God help you to be somebody."

Zangina visited Naa Siyli's house. He gave one hundred cowries, "My brother, Andani, I have learned that you want to be Yaa Naa. This is my help. If God helps you, you will be inside the palace and I will be outside taking care of the children." Then, Naa Andani said, "Thank you, my younger brother. May God help you. May God help us all."

Then, Zangina went back to his own house. He had greeted all of his brothers. Now, it was left with the kingmakers.

DL

Did he go to the son of the chief who had just died?

AL

They were not contesting for the paramount chief's title! When he came from Sabali, Zangina went to them first. I told you that he went to funeral house for greetings.

LG

--the funeral house of Naa Gungobli?

AL

Oh, you both are making me take the story backwards! When Zangina came from Sabali, first he went to the funeral house for Naa Gungobli. That is the place where the regent and all the children were. Zangina greeted them before moving to his senior brothers' houses.

So, when Zangina finished with his senior brothers he went to all the kingmakers and greeted them the same way. I am not going to call all of their names. Then, he went to Zohe-naa's house, greeted him, and gave him one hundred cowries. Zohe-naa asked him, "What you have done to me, have you done that to Gushe-naa?" Zangina said, "No." Then, Zohe-naa said, "Then, go and greet him because he is our senior." Zangina went to Gushe-naa, greeted him, gave him one hundred cowries, and went back to his lodging place.

A few days before the funeral of Naa Gungobli, Zohe-naa called for him and said, "Go back to greet Gushe-naa again." This time Zangina gathered one thousand cowries, a large white gown that we call "kparigo," a hat that we call "ziplizi," and sandals that we call "salimata." After greeting the Gushe-naa Zangina gave these things to him. Gushe-naa sat quietly and then said, "OK. Zangina, today your respect for me has shown me that if you become Yaa Naa, you will act the way a Yaa Naa should. But now we must consider your senior brothers. All of them want to be Yaa Naa. If we, the kingmakers, choose you as Yaa Naa, big trouble will come to us. Here is the advice I give to you--go to our brother, the chief of Mampurugu."

DL

--in Nalerigu?

AL

--Nalerigu. "Go to Nalerigu and greet the Mampurugu-lana. After the funeral, I will gather everybody and tell them that unless we greet Mampurugu-lana, we cannot chose our chief. We must go to Nalerigu."

Upon receiving this advice Zangina gathered up the same things he had presented to the Gushe-naa. He found one thousand cowries, a white smock, a hat, the sandals, and he added a cloak that we call "alicheba," the teapot called "jengla" that we use to wash ourselves for prayers. Zangina took these things to Nalerigu and greeted the Mamprussi chief. The Mampurugu chief became happy. He said, "You are not wrong to come here like this. My skin, the skin on which I am sitting, and the skin of Yendi are one skin. If you are lucky and the kingmakers of Dagbon bring the matter of deciding the next Yaa Naa here to me, I will find a way. If God has chosen you, you can be a Yaa Naa. It is God, not me, who will appoint you to be Yaa Naa."

When Zangina was meeting the chief in Mampurugu, the person who sent the news to Zangina in Sabali--in Dagbani we call him "tikumnatinlara," the person who cannot keep secrets--

DL

--the same one?

AL

No, a different person.

DL

Is it a title or is it the person's character?

AL

--his character. You know, so many people cannot keep quiet about things they see or hear. As soon as they know about something, they tell others. If he does something in secret with you, he will sit down with Larry and say, "Oh, Davis and I, we did this and that." You see?

So, that person from Nalerigu came down to Dagbon. He reached Yendi right when the elders had gathered to perform Naa Gungobli's funeral. They all were at the Yaa Naa's palace for what we call "adua," the last sitting. He spoke to Gushe-naa, "You, the children of the paramount chiefs of Dagbon--while you are here performing your father's funeral, Zangina is making politics in Mampurugu. You, the kingmakers of Dagbon--while you are finding the next person to sit on the Yendi skin, Zangina is finding it for himself in Mampurugu."

After this man said that, the Gushe-naa stood up to talk, "Yes, that is true. If Zangina did this, he hasn't done wrong. If Zangina has gone to Mampurugu, he hasn't done wrong. My fathers have told me that many years ago, when the people of Mampurugu couldn't select their chief, they brought the case to the Yaa Naa. Our Yaa Naa sat down with them to help them make their decision. Then, they were able to select their chief. Now we also are facing difficulty in selecting our Yaa Naa. We should go to Mampurugu for help."

Then, all the sons of the dead Yaa Naas said, "How are you people having difficulty?"

The kingmakers replied, "Yes. It can happen that we kingmakers find our work difficult.

We must select only one person to be Yaa Naa. Why should one chief's child be chosen?

Right now, six sons from three chiefs are trying for the Yendi skin, plus the one who has

gone to Mampurugu, making seven. To whom are we going to give it? Only Andani

Siqli is a son of Naa Zayli. If we chose him, Naa Tutuyri's sons will say, 'Why? We are

six, but you kingmakers didn't give the skin to one of us. You gave it to this man, who is

an only son.' We have to take the decision to the Mampurugu-lana. Everybody should

prepare. We will all go to Mampurugu."

So, they started the Mampurugu journey. Do you remember the place where Tugu-lana

Yemusa went and fought his namesake?

DL

Bayli?

AL

Uh huh! A son of a Yaa Naa should never go that place.

DL

I didn't ask that question. [laughs] This talk is long already!

AL

I am telling you the full story of Naa Zangina--the full story! If you don't take time, I am going to bring Bangumanga into it. [laughs]

They all started on the journey to Mampurugu. Near to Bayli, the Gushe-naa took them on a short cut through the bush. They were passing through a place thick with grass and trees when they came to a stream they had to cross. They didn't know which route was best, so the Gushe-naa came down off his horse. The others said, "Why? N-yaba Gushe-naa, why have you come down?" The Gushe-naa answered, "Yes. I can't find the road forward, but I don't want to go backwards." Gushe-naa took his sword and started cutting the bush to find a road. All the princes had to take direction from him, so the elders and the Yaa Naa sons started swinging their swords, looking for the best way to pass. The

work made people will feel thirst. Many of them drank water from that stream, even the sons of Yendi. But anybody who drinks that water can't be Yaa Naa. All of them drank the water except Naa Zangina, who was not there, and Naa Andani Siyli, who had not gone with them. They crossed that stream and continued on towards Mampurugu.

Near to the Nalerigu, the capital of Mampurugu, there is a town where an elder of Mampurugu lives. His title is Toblan'-kpema. Before you see the Mampurugu-lana, you have to see that man. He is supposed to lead you to the palace. In Yendi, you go to M-ba Duyu before seeing the Yaa Naa.

DL

Jenkuno!

AL

Mmm hmm. The Dagombas failed to stop at Toblan'-kpema's house and kept moving on the road to Nalerigu. The man's wife was coming out of the house and she saw them passing. Upon seeing plenty of people, she ran back into the house. Her husband asked,

"Why has a senior person like you gone out and then run back like this?" She said,

"Look at the Mampurugu road. There are many people. It looks like they are going to

war." When Toblan'-kpema came out to see for himself, he said, "Oh, it is Yoba.

Dagombas are going to Mampurugu." "Yoba" is how Mampurugu people call

Dagombas. "Yoba" means "elders." Toblan'-kpema sent a messenger to order them to

return back. The person went and told the Dagombas, "The Mampurugu Toblan'-kpema

says that I should bring you people back to him. If you are going to Mampurugu, why

have you passed behind his back?" The Dagombas went back.

Toblan'-kpema gave them zimkotuli, water mixed with millet powder. When the

Dagombas had finished drinking the zimkotuli, he asked them, "What is your trouble?

Don't you people know that before you see the Mampurugu-lana, you have to see me?

Why are you passing behind my back?" Then, Gushe-naa told him, "You know, I am too

old and there are so many things in my head. That is why I forgot. My grandson, the

Yaa Naa, died and the children of the dead Yaa Naas, my grandchildren, are so many.

They all want to be the next Yaa Naa. I alone can't select one to be Yaa Naa. That is

why I am taking them to my grandson, Mampurugu-lana. I want him to help me select the next Yaa Naa."

Then, the Mampurugu Toblan'-kpema said, "I hear you. My lord Mampurugu-lana is not at home now. You know, your grandson Mampurugu-lana is fond of alifoli."

DL

Alifoli?

AL

Alifoli is something that you don't work for. Sometimes it is a gift from the heart, but it can also be a custom--something a chief is supposed to receive.

Toblan'-kpema said, "Our chief is always looking for alifoli. A rich chief in Mampurugu has died. The Mampurugu-lana wants to seize the property of that chief, so he has turned that chief to be his uncle [invoking a kinship relationship to enable the right to inherit property]. Mampurugu-lana is planning to go to Nakpanzoo for the funeral so that he can

receive some of the property from the other children of that dead chief. You all will have to sleep here. Before you travel on to Nalerigu, let me go to Nakpanzoo and tell Mampurugu-lana to go back home." They all agreed.

Zangina got the news that the Toblan'-kpema had stopped the Dagomba delegation at his village. When the Mampurugu-lana was preparing to go to Nakpanzoo, Zangina told him, "I have never seen a Mamprussi funeral. I want to go and see it." Zangina joined the Mampurugu-lana's group. In those days, chiefs had power--their orders had to be obeyed. When Mampurugu-lana saw the rich chief's property, he said to himself, "What? The things here are more than I had thought. More food is coming home for me." He called for the regent of the Nakpanzoo chief and said, "Tomorrow, you have to be ready. We must start the funeral and finish it in one day. I need to return to Nalerigu right away. The Dagombas need my help to select the next Yaa Naa. Toblan'-kpema is bringing them to me. I can't be here when they arrive at the palace." The regent of the dead chief, the Nakpanzoo Tendangbon-lana, [land-god priest of Nakpanzoo], said, "We agree to start and finish the funeral tomorrow." The following day, they did the funeral.

At the end of the funeral, the Nakpanzoo Tandangbon-lana regent gathered many things to present to the chief of Mampurugu. He gathered one hundred fowls, one hundred goats, one hundred sheep, one hundreds cows, and one hundred horses. In those days, if you are rich, if people call you a rich man, you should have slaves. The Nakpanzoo Tandangbon-lana regent added one hundred slaves and presented all this property to the Mampurugu-lana. The Mampurugu-lana accepted the property; he didn't refuse to take it. Then, the Nakpanzoo Tandangbon-lana regent him, "I have forgotten something. The tendana has died and left the fetish. You have to take the gods also. Take the buyli [fetish object] into Mampurugu."

DL

I don't understand this part of the story. What is going on now?

The tendana's family didn't want the fetish gods any more. They gave the Mampurugu-lana all those riches so that he would also agree to take the fetish things. You see?

Zangina was there. He saw what happened. Later, he composed an appellation from this.

The name means to say that people should not put themselves into customs that are not part of their family line.

Then, Mampurugu-lana told the regent, "I will collect all the property, but the buyli will never go with me to Nalerigu." Zangina heard it. They went to the Mampurugu palace.

Then, Toblan'-kpema went back and told Gushe-naa and the others to prepare to move to Mampurugu. They went to the palace. They greeted. After greetings, the spokesman of Mampurugu-lana asked the elders of Dagbon, "What trouble has brought you people here?" Gushe-naa, being the leader, spoke for the group, "Yes. Our king died. We are finding it difficult to select a new king. We have come to our king's brother here in Mampurugu to help us to get a king back home." The Mampurugu-lana, who had been lying down, sat up asked, "Who are those that are contesting for the skin?" Gushe-naa announced their names.

Then, the Mampurugu-lana asked the Dagomba elders, "You, the kingmakers of Dagbon, from among all these people whom do you think will be the best Yaa Naa for your land?"

This is when we linsi say, "The kingmakers' mouths didn't become one." One elder loved this man--another elder loved that man--each kingmaker had the person he wanted to become the next Yaa Naa. The elder who wanted Yelizoli-lana said, "Yelizoli-lana--I think if Yelizoli-lana becomes Yaa Naa it will be good." Another elder stood up and said, "No. I think if Sunson-naa becomes Yaa Naa it will be good." Another stood up and said, "No, I think Gudawari-lana." Another said, "No, I think Warvi-lana." Another said, "No I think Larigba-lana." Another said, "No. I think Zangina." Another said, "No, I think Naa Siyli."

Then, the Mampurugu-lana smiled. He laughed and said, "Yes, what Gushe-naa said is true. You, the Yendi kingmakers, cannot get the proper man to be your Yaa Naa because you are not one. Unity, you don't have unity. Each of you has a different love. All of you, go to your lodging houses. Stay with us until Friday. On Friday, I will ask questions to help you judge the case. We will see who is going to be Yaa Naa.

Then, they all went to their houses. It was the chance for each contestant to do what he could to be chosen. [laughs]

DL

Old time kalabuli [corruption].

AL

Friday came. All the elders of Dagbon came to the Mamprussi chief's sitting place, his sampahi. The Dagomba kingmakers and the sons of the dead Yaa Naas came into the sampahi. All the elders of Nalerigu came into the sampahi. Everybody gathered in the sampahi. When the chief of the Mamprussi came out of his palace, his chief drummer stood up and said, "Our chief has appeared. [Dagbani]." That is the salma of the Mampurugu-lana--his appellation. When he finished the chief's appellation, the drummer said, "Who are the elders of Mampurugu? Wuwolantuviela is one of them. Salanapali is one of them." [laughs]

DL

Are you going to call all their names? [laughs]

AL

OK, I will cut them; I am not singing Sambanluṇa. [laughs] Then, the Mamprussi chief drummer said, "Who are the children who want to be Yaa Naa?" Then, he said, "Yelizoli-lan Gumenchieyu is one of the king's sons, Suson-lana Timani is one of the king's sons, Kpogi-lana Binyahin is one of the king's son, Warvi-lana Munyo is one of the king's sons, Gundawari'-lana Kushiwo is one of the king's sons, Zayli dapal' Andani is one of the king's sons, and Boggu-lan Zangina is one of the king's sons." Then, the chief drummer said, "And who are the kingmakers of Dagbon?" Then, he said, "Gushe-naa is a kingmakers of Dagbon." He counted all the kingmakers.

DL

There are nine of them?

AL

Eleven. When I am singing the story of Naa Zangina in Sambanluṇa and come to this place, even drummers will give me money. If I sing and my supporters answer me, I can

make the talk very sweet. My answer drummers say, "bii, bii, bii," as I give the appellations of all the chiefs. People like it! OK, where am I?

So, the Mamprussi chief drummer counted all of the kingmakers. He had finished his work and he sat down. Then, the Dagombas greeted the Mamprussi elders. After the greetings, the palaver matter had come again.

Mampurugu-lana said, "Yes. Today is Friday. I am here. Before you trust a son--before you know that a son can become great--you have to hear him speak. You have to know him." The chief said this in a proverb. Let me say it in Dagbani, "[Dagbani]." This means, "The tongue is the steps of your stomach," or "Your tongue is the path I can take to know your character." Mampurugu-lana continued, "I want to hear everybody's tongue. I want each of you to give me a proverb."

Then, Toblan'-kpema Jilgabamba, the M-ba Duyu of Mamprussi, interrupted the elders of Dagbon. He stood up to speak, "Naba, I am seeking permission to say something." The chief said, "You are welcome to talk." He said, "Yes. Before children give proverbs,

elders have to start. Elders have to show them the way to put a proverb. Junior should take the example from senior. I have a reason for saying this. When the Dagomba delegation came into Mampurugu, they slept in my town while I came to inform you in Nakpanzoo. I have heard that the Yaa Naa children are prepared to give me something, but Gushe-naa hasn't given it to me yet. I will put a proverb to him. Let him give me a proverb in reply. When he is able to respond to me, then the sons will know how to use proverbs. Let Gushe-naa and me exchange proverbs before the sons give you theirs."

The Mampurugu-lana said, "You can continue." Then, Toblan'-kpema Jilgabamba said, "[Dagbani]." The proverb is about birds we call "nombobugo." They group together in big flocks. If your millet or your guinea corn grows very early in the bush, birds will come in great numbers and will spoil your farm. That is the meaning.

Gushe-naa couldn't quickly compose an appellation to answer Toblan'-kpema Jilgabamba. He just left the sampahi. Gushe-naa led the Dagomba elders out. He went to his lodging place and sat quietly, thinking. His warimachima, the child who cares for his horse, came from the bush with grass for the horse to eat. He put the grass down. That child was not a member of the Gushe-naa's family. The boy was the son of a friend.

The child saw that his master's face didn't look happy and said, "Oh, my grandfather, I see from your face that you are crying. Why? Today is the day you are to select our Yaa Naa, but you are here at home, crying." The elders of the Gushe-naa shouted at him, "A small boy never says such things. Don't ask when you are not allowed." But the Gushe-naa told the elders, "No. Although I am here with you, no one thought to ask me what brought me back so early. My grandson, we went to the Mamprussi chief's palace. The Mampurugu-lana said that each Yendi child should name himself so he can know their character. The Toblan'-kpema put a name against me. He said that he is '[Dagbani]'. I had no reply. That is why I am so worried."

Then, the boy said, "Oh, my grandfather, really you are too old. Your memory has left you. Go back to the palace house and say that you are "[Dagbani]." Go back and tell him." Kɔrɛŋga is another kind of bird [partridge]. During planting time, when you put your seeds in the ground, the kɔrɛŋga will follow your legs and pick all. If you are not lucky, not even one will grow. The boy told Gushe-naa "Go and tell the Toblan'-kpema that you are that bird. You follow farmers when they plant seeds. If you take all the seeds, nothing grows, so what can nombongo take?" Gushe-naa felt happy.

Then, Gushe-naa ordered his elders, "Kill this child. If you don't kill him, when we go back to Dagbon, he will tell people that he gave me the sense to reply to Toblan'-kpema." They took the child into the bush. They prepared to cut off his head. Then, the child said, "I have something to say. After you kill me, go and tell my grandfather Gushe-naa, 'If you kill me, tomorrow you will beg grass for your horse.' And tell my grandfather it is my mouth that killed me." The elders killed the boy, but Gushe-naa gave this proverb as a name for the boy's father.

The Dagomba delegation went back to palace of the Mampurugu-lana. Gushe-naa spoke this proverb name, this title. Mampurugu-lana felt happy and said, "If custom allowed for you to be Yaa Naa, I would make you chief. But you are an elder." Then he said to the contestants for the Yendi skin, "Children of chiefs who want to be Yaa Naa, bring your names. Stand up and give me your titles."

Mampurugu-lana said, "Yelizoli-lana, you are first son of Naa Tutuyri. Stand up and give me your title." Yelizoli-lana stood up and said, "Chilibie ni zam korti. (I am a bad

chisel that can spoil any iron.)" Mampurugu lana said, "If you are a chisel that can break all iron weapons, who will be safe? You would kill even me, Mampurugu-lana. How much more the Dagomba people who must live under you? Your title is not good, so you can't be Yaa Naa."

Then, Sunson-lana stood up and said two proverbs, "I am Shayu ni bua zoluŋ zolum ku n pihi. (In the rainy season, goats suffer, but they don't die.) I am Balinkpeɣu sɔŋ ni doni bobli. (If bedbugs enter your mattress, you still must lie on it.)" Mampurugu-lana said, "If you are saying that the rainy season makes you unhappy, then you are saying that you are not strong. If you are not strong, you can't be Yaa Naa. You also say that you are a mattress with bedbugs that people cannot lie on. If you cannot help others, you can't be Yaa Naa."

Mampurugu-lana said, "Kpogi-lana Binyahin, the third son of Naa Tutuɣri, stand up and give me your title." Kpogi-lana stood up and said, "My name is Momoli ni nahi mɔri. (If the thatching does not start well, the roof surely will leak.)" Mampurugu-lana said,

"Your name means that you can't take care of people. You cannot hold Dagbon. You can't be Yaa Naa."

Mampurugu-lana said, "Warvi-lana Munyo, the fourth son of Naa Tutuɣri, stand up and give me your title." Warvi lana, stood up and said, "My name is Buyim o palli ni tahi mɔɣu.' (A bush fire, finishes all the grass.). Mampurugu-lana said, "Then, if I give the Yendi skin to you, all Dagombas will be finished. I won't have any brothers. You can't be Yaa Naa"

Mampurugu-lana said, "Gundawari-lana Kushiwo, the fifth son of Naa Tutuɣri, stand up and give me your title." The Gundawari-lana stood up and said, "I am Tankora lo piyu zo yɔɣuri. (Old shea nut trees have many holes.) Mampurugu-lana asked Gundawari-lana directly, "Do you know the meaning of your appellation?" Gundawari-lana said, "No." Mampurugu-lana said, "We, the elders and I, want to die; that is why we are asking you to become Yaa Naa." [laughter]

Only Naa Siyli and Naa Zangina were left. Then, Naa Siyli became hot. You know, according to what people say, that man was very strong.

DL

I could see that from the story of Dɔ̃yɔ, which you told us the other day.

AL

Naa Siyli stood up and said, "Baa jɛ ɲuni ye karimbani bindi, o la va li karimbani va bo.

(The dog who proudly shits, will proudly gather it.)" [laughter] Naa Siyli sat down

again. Mampurugu-lana said, "Oh, my son, I feel that you are angry. This is not the

place to become annoyed. I want you to think of yourself. That name--I will not explain

its meaning. Bring another name, one that can make you Yaa naa. This one will just not

do."

Then, Andani Siyli stood up again and gave three proverbs, "I am Nan galli mumli ku

baɲ naani. (No one knows what is in the egg.) I am Zawuli barli ni lami noobihi. (A

good chicken coop will have many chicks.) I am Saafi suɲ ni lami korti. (A good

blacksmith's household will gather much iron.)" Upon hearing Andani Siyli's names, the women of Mampurugu cried, "Awulilili," but Mampurugu-lana quickly said, "You people cannot proclaim him as Yaa Naa before we hear Zangina's names. Wait. Andani, do you hear the women praising you? Your three names are very good. Sit down. Let me hear from Zangina before I say whether you can be Yaa Naa."

Mampurugu-lana asked Zangina to stand up. When he stood up, Zangina seemed to be crying. He didn't want to appear bold or even that he wanted to be Yaa Naa. He was still trying to dodge the jealousy of his senior brothers. Zangina raised his hand and said, "My father, I am too young to stand and compose a name in the presence of you and my brothers. I am still cutting grass for my elders' horses, I am still carrying water for my mothers." Then, Mampurugu-lana said, "Today you are too young? The smock I am wearing today, who brought it to me? The hat I am wearing today, who brought it? The sandals I am wearing today, who brought it? The cloak on my back, who brought it? The kettle in front of me, who brought it? The one who has done all this cannot stand before me and say, 'I am too young.' Please! Give me your names."

Then, Zangina said, "I am Nyɔɔyɔ yelima ni di bobiri. (A broad chest can wear any clothing.) I am Bilieri sɔɔyɔ talsi dooya di kul gbaɲ zolgu. (No one can know which twin proceeded the other at birth.) I am Salasala komzora ni pe kulga. (Every stream flows to the river.) I am Suli ban ni wobila zolgu balisim balisi m biɛ kum. (Hawk sees elephant placenta, but sits on tree and sleeps in hunger.) I am A korli satankorli bilim kul ma. (I am stone and my enemy cannot break me.) I am Naa biɛyɔ mali kuli kul zam buyli. (A bad chief performed a funeral, but refused the fetish). I am Naa paɣa tahiyilibia, nyɔɔyɔ yelima ni di bobiri. (Son of a wife of the chief of Tahiyili, a broad chest can wear any clothing.)" He spoke six names before praising his mother and repeating the first name again.

Then, Mampurugu-lana said, "Oh Zangina, you make such a speech and still say that you are small boy! You say that you have a big chest, a big heart, which means you can hold anything. You say that the Mamprussi and Dagomba are twins and that if you become Yaa Naa, we still will be twins. You are water running towards a river for people to drink. You say you are an elephant placenta, which means your enemies cannot defeat

you. But you talked about me. You say that when I performed my uncle's funeral, I took all the property, but refused the custom. Why? [laughs] Why did you abuse me?"

Mampurugu-lana said, "Your names are better than Andani. My son, Andani, Zangina beat you today, but be patient. Both of you can be Yaa Naa, but one must be first. Zangina should become Yaa Naa. Andani, take Zangina's sandals. If you are still alive when Zangina dies, then you will become Yaa Naa.

When Mampurugu-lana said that, the senior brother, Yelizoli-lana, stood up and spoke in anger, "My Yelizoli is bigger than Yendi. Any son of a Yaa Naa who becomes chief of Yelizoli should be proud of that position. No Yelizoli-lana should contest for the Yendi skin. Henceforth, a Yelizoli-lana will never become a Yaa Naa." True! Up until now, no son of a Yaa Naa who has become Yelizoli-lana has moved on to sit on the skins of Yendi.

DL

It became a custom?

AL

He cursed the skin. The Sunson-naa cursed his skin, too. He also stood to say, "I am proud enough to sit on the skins of Sunson. When I die, no son of a Yaa Naa who becomes Sunson-naa should contest for Yendi. If he tries, he won't get it." All the children of Naa Tutuyri cursed their skins like that. Naa Siyli also was vexed. He had nearly become Yaa Naa, but Zangina was picked. Naa Siyli said, "OK, listen. I can also find my own place to live as a king." Then, he and his own group left. From Mampurugu, Andani Siyli didn't go back to Yendi. He went into the bush near to Zulɔɣu. He ordered his people to clear the bush. He built his own town where he could live like a Yaa Naa. He stayed there, away from the affairs of Dagbon.

So, the Dagombas returned to Dagbon and prepared to make Zangina king. You know, they "catch" the next Yaa Naa on Friday night, put him into the room we call "Katini," and bring him out on Saturday. Then, they send him to the part of Yendi we call "Zohe" where he stays for one week. On the following Friday, they shave his head in Zohe and

bring him to the king's palace in Yendi. Then, he is fully the new Yaa Naa. They did all this for Zangina.

When Naa Zangina finally was sitting as Yaa Naa, he told the kingmakers, "I do not want you to go home to your towns. I have a journey to make. I ask for your help. I am taking my chieftaincy back to Sabali. I will give it to Sabali Iya-naa Yemusa. We will pray that Dagombas may be removed from war." That is where he went. Naa Zangina went to live in Sabali.

Then, a person who cannot keep secrets went into the Gonja land. He told Kumpatia, "Now we have a new chief. All the brothers have refused to respect him. He also is no longer in Yendi. He has crossed the river and is in Sabali." Kumpatia said, "OK. Now I will go into Dagbon to take back the land the Dagombas captured from us when Naa Luro defeated Kalosidegia." Then, Kumpatia started the war.

Now you know why all the elders were with Naa Zangina in Sabali and why, when Naa Zangina send messengers to his senior brothers, each one said, "You were clever enough to become Yaa Naa. Be clever enough to take back our land back."

I think you get it. I am going to break here.

END