

The Story of Dɔɣu, Appellation of Tugu-lan' Yemusa

Told by Dolsi-naa Abubakari Lunna on February 1, 2001

Edited by David Locke

DL

It is Thursday, February 1, 2001 and Dolsi-naa Abubakari Lunna is relating another history talk to me. Dolsi-naa, on this trip you have started to teach us music called "Dɔɣu." Today, I am asking you to help us understand the history of this piece--this rhythm.

AL

Dɔɣu is a long, long story. Dɔɣu is an appellation of Tugu-lan' Yemusa. Tugu-lan' Yemusa is the first son of Naa Andan' Siyli. Naa Andan' Siyli is the son of Naa Zayli. The story of the appellation begins with something that happened to Naa Andan' Siyli, whom we also call Naa Siyli. When Naa Zangina died, Naa Siyli took command of Dagbon. Naa Siyli's first son was named Yemusa. After Naa Siyli became Yaa Naa, his first son, Yemusa, became chief of Tugu, which is in the Karaga area. Only the son of a Yaa Naa can become chief of Tugu. Yemusa became the Tugu chief; we lunsɩ call him Tugu-lana Yemusa.

Tugu-lana Yemusa's father was a great warrior. The father fought and killed a lot of Gonjas.

It is Naa Siyli who fought Kumpatia.

DL

I have just been reading in history books that the Gonjas invaded Dagbon. [Ivor Wilks, Asante in the Nineteenth Century.]

AL

Yes, when Naa Zangina became chief. [See Story of Naa Zangina.] Because of this history, many people in Dagbon do not respect our current paramount chief [the late Naa Yakubu]. Bad things happened long ago--worse than what has happened in these modern times--but Dagombas didn't remove heir Yaa Naa. [AL is making comparison to Ghana government's 1974 removal of the late Naa Mohammadu.] In Dagomba tradition, after the kingmakers enskin you as a Yaa Naa, unless your own behavior kills you, you will stay on the skin. We never sack our paramount chief.

Naa Zangina became Yaa Naa after Naa Tutuyri died. When Naa Tutuyri died five of his children contested for the position of Yaa Naa. Among the five, Naa Zangina was the youngest. The first son of Naa Zangina's father, Naa Tutuyri, was Yelizoli-lana, the second

son was Sunson-naa, the third man was Warvi-lana, and the fourth man was Kpogi-lana. At that time, Naa Zangina wasn't a chief. He was just a young man--a trader.

You know, when many people challenge to become next Yaa Naa, soothsayers look to discover whom God has chosen to be our next Yaa Naa. That was a time of war. When the soothsayers looked into the future, they could see that if Naa Zangina became chief there would be war, but that the Dagombas would defeat the enemy. According to soothsayers, if Zangina was made Yaa Naa they could succeed, but if the kingmakers gave the Iyandi skin [Yaa Naa title] to any of the brothers, the Gonjas would take the land back again.

The elders gave the Yaa Naa chieftaincy to Naa Zangina. His elder brothers withdrew from the matters of Dagbon. Then, rumors went to the Gonjas--Now the Dagombas are not one. The Gonjas saw their chance to fight us.

DL

Why weren't the Dagombas unified?

AL

The elder brothers were angry that their younger brother was chosen to be king. They were not alone. They had friends. So, when this war was starting, as I will tell you, these people refused to help Naa Zangina.

Naa Zangina stayed cool. He said, "No matter. As for me, I am going to Sabali [a town in eastern Dagbon]. I am going to pray for peace." At that time, Islam wasn't big in Dagbon. It was Naa Zangina who made it important.

DL

Yes, I was expecting you to bring this inside the story.

AL

When Naa Zangina became Yaa Naa, he called the elders and told them, "During our forefather's time, the chiefs were strong. They had medicine for protection. But I am not strong and I don't have anything that protects me. My uncle is a Muslim. I will go pray with him. I will pray hard that God may help us to kill our enemies and win this war." When the elders heard him say that, they thought to themselves. "That is good. We also don't want to fight." The top people in Dagbon, chiefs like Gushe-naa, Tolon-naa, and Kumbun-naa, followed Naa Zangina to Sabali. From Yendi to Sabali is far. You have to cross a big river.

The Gonjas got the news that all the head people of Dagbon had gone to Sabali. The Gonja leader, Kumpatia, grandson of Kalosidegia--

DL

Ah hah, the one who fought Naa Luro? [See Story of Dikala.]

AL

Kumpatia come out and said, "OK. Now I am going to collect my grandfather's property."

So, he marched an army out of Gonja land into Dagbon. In fact, he started in our Tolon area [major town in western Dagbon].

DL

Tolon is closer to the Gonja area than Yendi, isn't it?

AL

Yes. He went to Lumbunga; because the people were there without their chief, they took their hands from war. Kumpatia took it. He went to my home, Kasuliyili; he took it. He went to Tolon; he took Tolon. Kumpatia went to Sanmarigo, Nyankpala, Buluŋ, and Kumbungu. He went to Gulkpeyu, which now is Tamale; he took it. When Kumpatia reached Tugu, the news of his successes reached the Yaa Naa in Sabali. A messenger went to tell Naa Zangina, "Hey! The Gonjas are collecting your land. Now Tolon is no more, Kasuliyili is no more." The messenger counted all the towns Kumpatia had taken. When Naa Zangina heard this news he said, "Then, let me consult my brothers to see if I can fight."

Wait. I have cut something short in the story. Let me go back to when Naa Zangina went to Sabali.

The very day Naa Zangina arrived in Sabali, Adabraka, the first son of Sabali Iya-naa, died.

Naa Zangina had come with enjoyment--drummers were playing and many chiefs were on their horses--but nobody came out to see them. Not even one child came out. When Naa Zangina reached his lodging house, he stopped the drummers. He came down from his horse and told them, "Please, people, I have realized something. From when we entered Sabali until we reached this house, not one child has come to meet us--not one woman has stood to make kpaliŋga [ululation] or 'wilililili.' Stop the drumming."

The drummers stopped. A small boy was standing nearby; we linsi say "bibla," which means "small child." Naa Zangina called this small child and walked with him into his room.

The paramount chief asked the young child, "What has happened in this town?" This child didn't know that Naa Zangina was a big chief. You know, even if a small child knows he is talking to an important chief, he won't fear to say what he knows. [Adults would be more cautious.] The small child told the Yaa Naa, "So, you don't know what has happened? You

haven't heard that the first son of our Sabali Iya-naa Yemusa has died?" Naa Zangina said,

"Oh, I am sorry."

On that particular day, a lot of our Dagomba customs started. On that very day, Naa Zangina

put things into our tradition that we still do today.

Naa Zangina came out of his lodging house and said to the elders, "Let us go to Sabali Iya-

naa's house and see what has happened." They went and learned--true--the first son had died.

Everyone was sitting quiet. According to our teachers and our fathers, when somebody died

during the olden days, we didn't bury the body. We just threw it away. We carried the

person so far into the bush that the smell would not come to the town even if vultures or

hyenas didn't eat the corpse. Sabali Iya-naa Yemusa is the person who started burial in

Dagbon. "Iya naa" means, "tell the chief," "Iyana" was that man's name, but later people

started using it as a chieftaincy title, "Iya-naa."

Naa Zangina said to the elders of Sabali, "The man who has died is a big man's son. We

shouldn't throw his body to the vultures. Get me hoes. Get me a calabash." They brought

him a calabash and they brought hoes. Naa Zangina said, "Give me strong men." They brought strong people; in Dagbon now we call them kasiyiliba, gravediggers. Naa Zangina gave them the calabash and the hoes and said, "Do you people know that I am Yaa Naa?" They say, "Yes." He said, "I want you to dig a hole as deep as your chest. Dig it like you are digging a well." They took his orders and they started the hole.

Then, Naa Zangina went to his room and he brought out a cloth, a white cloth. He gave the cloth to Sabali Iya-naa Yemusa, saying, "Let people go to Adabraka's room and examine him. Take his measurements so that this cloth can be made into an alicheba [a cloak]." People went and did as he ordered. Then, Naa Zangina gave the cloth to the father himself, Sabali Iyanaa. The Iyanaa did the duty of sewing the burial cloth.

Then, Naa Zangina told our grandfather, Namo-naa [the Yaa Naa's chief drummer], "Give me one of your children who plays guṅ-gṅṅ." Namo-naa gave him a guṅ-gṅṅ drummer. Naa Zangina told them to call the young ladies of Sabali. They did it. Naa Zangina said, "Everybody, go get your walking sticks." They went and came back with their walking sticks. Naa Zangina said, "OK. Go around the town. Sing nice songs. Then, we will bury

Adabraka." The young people of the town went round singing. Then, Naa Zangina called the old ladies of Adabraka's family--his aunties. They came and he said to them, "Don't sit quiet. Go into Adabraka's room. Sing for him so that we bury him." They went. Do you see why we say that it is Zangina who made our Dagbon to become wise? He brought burial.

DL

Did he learn it from his Muslim training?

AL

I think it is from his own brain. He didn't ask anybody before saying these things. He just summoned the people and told them what to do. If we lunsu are singing this story in Sambanluna, when we reach this point the vocalist will say, "If not Zangina, which Yaa Naa is buying a grave for burying dead people? It is Zangina. If not Naa Zangina, which Yaa Naa is buying singers to sing for the burial of a dead body? It is Naa Zangina. If not Naa Zangina, which Yaa Naa is buying a cloth for sewing to bury a dead body? It is Zangina."

Then, Naa Zangina asked for millet. They brought millet. Then, he asked for a sheep. They brought the sheep. Naa Zangina said, "Kill the sheep and prepare plenty of food for the people coming from the villages." That food--we call it soloyu or travelers' food--we still do it at funerals. So, the people of Sabali did all these things.

Then, Naa Zangina found thirty-three bags of cowries, pihya ni ata. He went into the mosque and told Sabali Iya-naa, "Uncle, let me tell you why I have come here. When I became Yaa Naa, all of my brothers refused to be under me. Some people of Dagbon have refused to take me as their chief. I was coming to you to ask you to pray hard for me so that my time will be good--so that my time will not have fighting." Then his uncle told him, "Yes, I know. Good things follow bad. I lost my first-born son, but now I see a new son! I will pray for you." Sabali Iya-naa was a full Muslim. He had other Muslim people with him. Iya-naa said, "I am going to do it." Then, he prayed for Dagbon.

We, the drummers, say, "On that the day, Sabali Iya-naa went into the mosque and lit nine lanterns. He 'opened a door' into Dagbon. He 'opened a door' for Hausas and Hausa people started coming to Dagbon; he 'opened a door' for Gurumas and Gurumas started coming to

Dagbon. Gurumas and Hausas came and our Muslims started becoming plenty. He 'opened a door' for Dagombas and Dagombas started praying.

The day Sabali Iya-naa finished these prayers was the day the messengers came to Naa Zangina with news about the Gonja invasion, "You are praying for quiet, but Dagbon is not quiet. They have already taken Dagbon. They are taking Dagbon from you!"

Naa Zangina asked, "Who?" The messengers said, "Kumpatia." Then, the uncle, Sabali Iya-naa, said, "Find me some one who is not afraid. I will stop Kumpatia until you are prepared to fight. Even if you yourself don't want to fight them, I will break their advance. They will stay where they are and not be able to take more land." By then the Gonja army had reached Singa.

Then, Sabali Iya-naa Yemusa looked through the bible [Koran], found some words, and put them in a talisman. No one knows his secret. Only he knows how he did it. Sabali Iya-naa gave the talisman to one his servants--those we call Naazoo--saying, "Go so close to the Gonja camp that you can hear their talk. Throw this thing down and leave. When you are

return to us, don't look back to see if they are chasing you or not. Don't look back even if they are shouting and calling. Don't fear. They will never catch you. Just don't look back!"

The Naazoo took it and went. Passing Singa towards Salankpang, he heard the music of Gonjas. People were singing and playing benda, anangbo, and dawuli,. Benda is a calabash drum, anangbo is an mbira, and dawuli is a bell.

The Naazoo threw the talisman down and then ran back to Sabali. The place where the talisman landed was where Kumpatia lived until Naa Siyli came and killed him. When Kumpatia reached there, he called all his people together and said, "This place is very nice. A strong person like me should be here. I am going to build my house here." He started building. Some people say Kumpatia punished our women, but we, the lunsu, rather say that he was showing his chieftaincy, his strength. Kumpatia ordered the women to get shea nuts and make plenty of shea oil. He used shea oil together with sand to build his room. Even today, the broken room is still standing.

The Naazoo returned to Sabali and informed Iya-naa Yemusa, "When I met the Gonjas they were not yet in Singa. They were on the move from Salankpang to Singa. I threw down the talisman right there."

Then, Naa Zangina sent a messenger to Yelizoli to tell his near brother, "The Gonjas have captured your land." Yelizol'-lana told the messenger, "Go back and tell Zangina that since he had the sense to collect the paramount chieftaincy from me, he should have power to fight and collect the land. I am not coming." Naa Zangina sent someone to Sunson to tell Sunson-naa Dimani, "The Gonjas have captured your land." Sunson-naa Dimani told the messenger, "Go back and tell Zangina that since he had the sense to become Yaa Naa, he should have sense enough to be able to fight and get back the land. I am not coming." Then, Zangina sent somebody to tell Kpogi-lana Binyahin, "Your brother Naa Zangina has sent me to tell you that Kumpatia is collecting your property." Kpogi-lana Binyahin told the messenger, "Please--I hear--but go back and tell Zangina that he is very wise and very clever. He passed behind our backs to Nalerigu [Mamprussi capital] and became Yaa Naa. Now he should also be strong enough to collect the land. I am not coming." Naa Zangina sent a messenger Warvi to tell Warvilan' Munyo the same thing. Warvi-lana also returned messenger back

with the same words. Finally, Naa Zangina send the same message to Gundawari-lan'

Kushiwo and got the same reply. Naa Zangina asked all five of his father's sons, but none would agree to fight the Gonjas.

Now the story comes to the father of the person for whom we play Dɔ̄yɔ, Naa Andani Siȳli.

Dɔ̄yɔ is the appellation of the son of Naa Andani Siȳli. Naa Siȳli, who also is the son of a

Yaa Naa, had been involved in the contest with Zangina and his brothers. At that time, he

was not a chief; he was just called Andani Siȳli. Like Zangina's brothers, Naa Siȳli had

become vexed when he was not chosen. He said, "I, Andani Siȳli, am stronger than Naa

Zangina. I will show everyone who is who." Naa Siȳli went to a place we call Zulɔ̄yɔ. He

fought for his own land. Lots of people who loved him followed him there. He made

himself something like his own Yaa Naa. He sat on three pillows, his wives shaved their

heads, and he had nine horses just like a Yaa Naa. Nine horses!

When all his brothers refused to help him, Naa Zangina decided to ask Andani Siȳli. He sent

one of his servants, but that Naazoo didn't return. Naa Zangina didn't know what happened.

Did Andani Siȳli kill him? Zangina didn't know. I will tell you. Naa Siȳli was a fetish

person who had plenty of what we call "tim" [medicine]. Whoever saw his face would be unable to talk. As soon as Naa Siyli looked at your face, you no longer could say what you wanted to say. You would change and tell him a different thing. The Naazoo had gone to Andani Siyli's palace. Andani Siyli came out, greeted the Naazoo, and then he shouted, "What happened? What do you want?" Even though he really knew that the servant had come from Naa Zangina, Andani Siyli shouted, "What happened? What do you want?" The Naazoo became afraid and said, "Oh. I have been serving Naa Zangina, but I feel I should be your Naazoo." Naa Siyli said, "OK. Sit down."

After Naa Zangina had waited a long time for the Naazoo to come back, he decided to send the Tolon-naa Dimani. Tolon-naa made ready and went. When he was getting near to Zuloyu--

DL

Is that the name of the town where Andani was staying?

AL

Zulɔyɔ was a big town, but Naa Siyli didn't stay in town. He was in the gbayawuli, a bush forest. So, when Tolon-naa reached Zulɔyɔ Gbayawuli, Naa Siyli heard the Tolon-naa's drummer. Andani called his chief drummer, Wabulanyɔyɔ Gundari, and asked, "N-yaba [my grandfather] who is coming?" Wabulanyɔyɔ Gundari said, "It is your grandfather, Tolon-naa." Then, Andani Siyli went into the palace, prepared himself with medicine, and came out. By then the Tolon-naa was sitting, waiting for him. Naa Siyli came out and shouted at Tolon-naa, "Hey, n-yaba Tolon-naa, why have you come? What are you after? What do you want?" When Tolon-naa looked at Naa Siyli's, face he started shaking. Tolon-naa feared that if he told Naa Siyli, he would kill him, or that something bad would happen. Tolon-naa said, "I remember when we all went to Nalerigu. They appointed Zangina to be Yaa Naa, but I have come to be your Tolon-naa." Naa Siyli said, "OK. Sit down."

Naa Zangina was waiting; he didn't feel happy. His elders told him, "A chief should never sit quiet. A chief should never sit annoyed." Naa Zangina said, "Where is Tolon-naa? He hasn't come back." The elders advised, "Then, you should send Kumbun-naa." Naa Zangina called for the Kumbun-naa [chief of Kumbungu], and asked, "Kumbun-naa can you go and tell my brother Andani, 'The Gonjas have taken our land.'?" Kumbun-naa agreed.

The chief of Kumbungu traveled with a big battalion of sub-chiefs and warriors. In Sambanluḡa we count them all—Bulḡyu-lana, Yaḡliyua, Kumbun' Gunga-lana Damba, and others. Drummers played as they went. When they were close to Naa Siḡli, he heard the drums and called his chief drummer, "N-yaba who is coming?" The drummer told him, "I hear the praise drumming of your grandfather Kumbun-naa, together with Bulḡyu-lana, Yaḡliyua, and Kumbun' Gunga-lana Damba." So, before they came to his place, Naa Siḡli already had gone to his room, prepared, and come back to sit and wait for them. When they came Naa Siḡli shouted to Kumbun-naa, "N-yaba Kumbun-naa, why have you come? What do you want?" As soon as Kumbun-naa looked Naa Siḡli in the face, he couldn't tell him the real reason. He could only say the same thing as Tolon-naa, "I have come to be your Kumbun-naa." Then, Naa Siḡli said, "Good. Here is your place to sit."

Zangina waited, sitting quiet. The elders said, "Chief never sits quiet." He said, "I should sit quiet. Where is my Kumbun-naa?" The elders said, "You can send Nanton-naa." When Naa Zangina asked, Nanton-naa agreed to go. He also went with his battalion--with the chief warrior of Nanton, Ziyambanalaḡchi. Andani Siḡli heard the drumming and asked his chief

drummer, "N-yaba who is coming? I hear drumming." The drummer said, "They are coming, Nanton-naa and his Ziyam-lana are coming." Naa Siyli went to his room and when Nanton-naa reached his place he shouted at him, "N-yaba Nanton-naa, why? What do you want?" Nanton-naa also became afraid. He could only tell him, "The day we went to Mampurugu, the elders of Dagbon and Mampurugu chose Zangina to be Yaa Naa. That is why I have come to be your Nanton-naa." Naa Siyli commanded, "There is your place."

Naa Zangina waited quietly; the elders said, "Chief never sit quiet;" and he said, "Where is my Nanton-naa?" The elders suggested, "Send Diari-lana." Diari-lan' Bukali is the one for whom we play Suligu as his appellation. Naa Zangina asked, "N-yaba Diari-lana, can you go and tell my brother Andani that the Gonjas have taken our lands? Tell him to come back so that we can plan what to do." Diari-lana Suligu said, "Yes. I will go."

There was a Muslim man with Naa Zangina--Puunasamli. Because of this matter I am telling you about, he became Savelugu-naa. At that time, the Savelugu-naa had died and since they hadn't yet performed the funeral, there was no Savelugu-naa. Diari-lana said, "I will go, but I

am going with Puunasamli, your Muslim. Zangina asked, "Why?" Diari-lana said, "I know why." Then, Diari-lana Bukali stood up and said, "N-yaba Puunasamli, let's go." They left.

When they got close to Naa Siyli's place, Diari-lana told his drummers, "Don't play for me alone. Use the Savelugu title and play for Puunasamli." So, the lunsu played the appellation of Diari-lana and said on their drums, "Somebody was not there, but you took his property and are playing with it. When he comes home, you will know that he is stronger than you."

Then, the drummers said, "Somebody who does you good, you can't pay him once. You have to pay for so many years." And they added another praise, "I am Yuu-naa [praise name for Savelugu]. People who have been good to me are always in my heart." Then, Diari-lana told Puunasamli, "When we go to Naa Siyli, stand at his left. I am going to stand at his right. Anything I say, say the same thing." Diari-lana also was a Muslim.

Then, Andani Siyli called his drummer and said, "Ah! I hear drumming, but whose appellations are those?" His drummer said, "I am also wondering. I know one; it is for Diari-lana Suligu Bukali. But the other one, Yuu-naa. Savelugu-naa has died, but we have

never heard of his funeral yet. [The next Savelugu-naa would be enskinned at the funeral.]

They say, 'Puunasamli.' I don't know that person."

When Diari-lana Bukali and his party reached the place, they refused to come down from their horses. Naa Siyli came out, but they stayed on their horses. Diari-lana was to the right of the entrance to the palace and Puunasamli was to the left. When Naa Siyli started to shout, Diari-lana shouted back at him, "Hey you, Andani, your shouting is nothing. Your pride is nothing." Puunasamli also said, "You, Andani, your shouting is nothing. Your pride is nothing." Diari-lana told him, "You are very proud and you are very strong, but Gonjas have taken your grandparent's land." Savelugu-naa Puunasamli said the same thing. Diari-lana told him, "If you are a man like me, lets go to Chil'sang. On the day we reach Chil'sang to fight the Gonjas, if you don't see me at your right front, cut off my head from my body." Puunasamli also said, "If you are a man like me, Puunasamli, lets go to Chil'sang. If we reach Chil'Sang and Kumpatia comes out to fight, if you don't see me at your left front, cut my head from my body."

Then, all the people looked at Naa Siyli. He became quiet. He went back into the house. He dressed in his war gear. When he tried to come out, Naa Siyli couldn't pass through the entry. In our tradition, if you dress for war and can't fit through the entrance, then you have to break down the wall. You must never pass through a second entrance. So, his warriors broke through the kuni [connecting wall in a compound of round rooms] near the sampahi [outside sitting place]. Naa Siyli came out. Right away, his chief drummer composed a praise rhythm for him, "My love has appeared. My lord is bigger than sunga [huge pot]." If you build a cooking room, you have to put that pot inside the kitchen room before you roof it. The pot can't fit through the entrance. The drummer was saying that Andani had turned into that huge pot.

The chiefs went back to Sabali. Diari-lan' Suligu told Naa Zangina, "We have brought your brother to you." Andani Siyli sat on his horse and challenged Naa Zangina, "You have been sending for me. Why?" Naa Zangina replied to him, "Yes. I have the right to call you.

Don't forget when we went to Mampurugu. You called out your appellations and I called out mine and then the Mampurugu chief told you, 'Throw away two of your names, but keep the other two. Pick up Zangina's sandals. When Zangina is dead, you will be Yaa Naa.' Don't

forget that today I am Yaa Naa. Even if Gonjas manage to conquer all of Dagbon, no one will ever call me Zangina any more. They always will remember me as Naa Zangina. But you! Are you Naa Siyli yet? The Gonjas are capturing your property, not mine." Andani said, "I see. Yes. I agree."

Then, Naa Zangina said, "I will make sacrifices for your victory. I am going to prepare for your war to take back the Dagomba lands. If you return and I am no more, you will become Yaa Naa." Naa Siyli came down from his horse and sat down. This point in the story, if I give all the details of the warriors' preparation, we won't finish it today! [laughs] A lot of people come into the story here, but I will cut it short. Then, Naa Zangina made sacrifices for all his strong fighters. Naa Zangina called on them, "People who love me, if you want me to have a name--if you don't want to see the Gonjas kill me--come fight for me." He blessed so many people. When Naa Zangina finished, he gave Andani permission to go.

Then, Andani said, "I will take your warriors. But I will not go directly to Singa. If I do that, I will spoil many things in Dagbon. I will use your blessed fighters and move towards Komba. When the army is tired, I will turn back towards Singa and kill Kumpatia."

DL

Explain this to me. Why not go straight to battle with the Gonjas?

AL

He didn't want to go directly to Kumpatia because if he quickly killed Kumpatia, he and his warriors would still like to fight more. They would want more loot--more killing--but wouldn't get people to fight. Maybe they would start spoiling villages in Dagbon. Also, he wanted to make war on some other people so that when Kumpatia heard of it, he would know that a strong man was coming fight him.

So, Naa Siyli told Naa Zangina, "I am not going to start the war in Dagbon. I am going to start in Komba." You know, we call Konkombas "Komba" [neighboring ethnic group to east of Dagbon]. The town he started was Kabire. Then, he went to Nakunjuri; he killed Nakunjuri chief and all the strong people. Then, he went to Bachemba, a town for the Kotokoli and Chemba people. He killed the chief and so many people. He went to Bassa; he killed many people. After all these battles, he said, "Warriors of my brother Zangina, now I trust you. As for my own warriors, I already trusted them. We are ready. Let's go to Singa."

Naa Siyli's army turned back towards Dagbon. There is a town close to Boggu that we call "Naloba." On the afternoon they reached Naloba--that very afternoon--Naa Zangina died. Because of this war, Naa Zangina sacrificed so much. He even sacrificed his own first son and first daughter. I don't mean that he killed them. No. He offered them as servants to be helping people far away. We call it "saraka" [sacrifice].

Servants of Naa Zangina met Naa Siyli at Naloba and said, "Your father--come and see your father." Naa Siyli said, "Why." They said, "We can't tell you. Come and see for yourself." He went to Sabali and saw Naa Zangina's dead body. Naa Siyli called for elders to bury him. They buried Naa Zangina.

Naa Siyli asked the elders, "Where is my brother's first son, Zujengli? They said, "To help in the war, Naa Zangina gave him to some people as a sacrifice." Naa Siyli asked, "Where is my brother's first daughter, Kachayu?" They answered, "Her father also offered her to people to help in the war." Naa Siyli asked, "How much can I pay to get them back?" The elders said, "Pihya ni ata, thirty-three." Naa Siyli sent the necessary things to Niami to pay

for Zujengli and his sister, Kachayu. Naa Siyli brought them back to Dagbon. He asked the elders to put them as the regents of Naa Zangina. They did it. Then, Naa Siyli went back to his warriors at Naloba.

On the day Naa Siyli went back to the village, he sent a messenger to Kumpatia. He went and told the Gonja chief warrior, "Naa Siyli says, 'I hear that you are farming very well in Chelisaɣu. Every year you farm and harvest plenty of guinea corn. I don't have a place to stay and farm. If this year's harvest is good, send me some guinea corn to give to my horse named Yelabibiɣu. After you have stored food for your family, if you still have more guinea corn, send it to me. I will give it to my horse named "Things-Are-Coming-Tomorrow."

DL

That is the horse's name?

AL

That is the horse's name--"A lot of worries are coming towards you tomorrow."

Then, Kumpatia sat down and took a deep breath. He told the messenger to go back to Naa Siyli and say, "I have heard your message, but why didn't you send the message before? There is plenty of food in my storehouse, but my surplus will go to my own horse, Bisolsisheri Zɔɣu. I will give it to my horse named 'I-Never-Refuse-Anything-That-Happens-To-Me-Today.' [laughs] The messenger returned with the message for Naa Siyli.

Some of our drum teachers say that the custom of early morning drumming at the chief's palace started on that day, but those drummers have not gone into the history properly. Some even say that Sambanluṅa started on that day. No! On that day, Friday morning drumming and Monday morning drumming started. This is what my teachers told me. When the messenger returned, Naa Andani Siyli called his drummer and told him, "N-yaba. You know, tomorrow is going to be a great day for me. I don't want to oversleep. I don't want to leave for Chelisɔɣu when small children can see me. I want to go to Chelisɔɣu before the small children are awake." So, Wobilanyɔɣu, Naa Siyli's drummer, told his children, "Tomorrow let us go to chief house very early. We will wake before daybreak. When we see the morning star, we will go to the palace." In Dagbon, the elders know when daybreak is

near by watching for a star. As soon as they see it, they know that the sun will come out.

Next morning, they waited. When Wobilanyɔyɔ saw biɛɲmariga, the daystar, he called to his children, "Let us go to our chief's house. Day is breaking." The lunsɪ went outside the palace and beat their drums to say, "Hey my love, Andani, your strong day is out. Your happiness day has come. Your bad day is up." Then, Naa Siyɪli came out. The warrior started off to Chelisɔyɔ.

When they reached Chelisaɲ, they surrounded the village. They killed all of Kumpatia warriors and smashed all their houses. Kumpatia came out and got on his horse. The way the bows-and-arrows, the spears, and the guns were coming towards him, he knew he would not survive. He jumped down from his horse and ran to the room built with shea oil. Kumpatia was in that room.

Then, Naa Siyɪli came forward and gave orders to Kambon-naa Kpema, the chief warrior of the Yaa Naa, "I want you to use your gun mouths to break this room." They started—"paa paa paa." They shot all their bullets; they finished their gunpowder. Then, Naa Siyɪli ordered Kumbun-naa, "I want you to use your bows and arrows and break this room. Let me see this

bastard so that I can cut off his head." Kumbun-naa and his warriors used up their arrows.

Then, Naa Siyli ordered Diari-lana, "N-yaba Diari-lana, use your spears to break this room."

Diari-lana spoke to Tolon-naa, "N-yaba Tolon-lana, our warriors are the spear carriers. Let's

use our spears." They started throwing spears. The spears of our chief, Tolon-lan Bibieyu

Ne Zan Dɔ̃yu, and the spear of Diari-lana stuck in the wall of the shea oil house. Then,

Tolon-lana and Diari-lana rode their horses forward to take their spears from the wall. They

went together. They broke down the wall.

Kumpatia came out to see what had happened. His enemies had broken into his entrance

hall. Then, Tolon-naa and Diari-lana moved back. Kumpatia come out again. He tried to

run. Naa Siyli threw his spear and killed Kumpatia. Naa Siyli had finally killed the great

enemy of Dagbon.

Naa Siyli had gone to war and he had killed Kumpatia. Then, Naa Siyli returned back to

Dagbon. Naa Zangina had died; the Yaa Naa was no more. They performed the funeral of

the late Yaa Naa. Naa Siyli became the next Yaa Naa. He stayed as our king for a long,

long time.

It had happened that on the very day he had gone to Chilisoyu to fight Kumpatia, Naa Siyli's first son was born. Naa Siyli gave Sabali Iya-naa's name for him, Yemusa. When announcing the boy's name, Naa Siyli said, "You, Yemusa, you put me into this trouble. Today, my child is born. The child's name is Yemusa." Doyu is his appellation.

Naa Siyli's child Yemusa became something like a spoiled child. Yemusa always was telling people, "My father is strong." Listen to the proverb he took as his appellation--Don't remove a log from fire because of smoke and put a different log; every firewood has smoke. Don't divorce a wife because of jealousy and marry another; every wife is jealous. Do you know what these proverbs mean? Be prepared for anything that may happen to you. When he became a man, Yemusa started using this proverb as his praise name. Then, it came to the time Yemusa's father, Naa Siyli, died. Yemusa became the regent. Then, Naa Jengli, the chief we linsi call Naa Bimbiyu, became Yaa Naa. When Naa Jengli became Yaa Naa, Yemusa became the chief of Tugu. He was Tugu-lana Yemusa.

You know, we have a saying in Dagbani, "Every town has a wise man. Every town has a troublesome man." It happened that the chief of Bayli died. The Bayli-naa regent also was named Yemusa. On the funeral day for the late Bayli-naa, the drummers brought the regent out to the public. The chief drummer told him, "I compare you to Naa Siyli's regent, Yemusa. Take the same name--Don't change firewood because of smoke; don't change a wife because of jealousy. Prepare and be like Naa Siyli's regent, Yemusa." Yemusa, the regent of the Bayli-naa felt so happy, so proud.

The news reached Tugu. Tugu-lana Yemusa got annoyed. He said, "I took this appellation because my father was very, very strong. Now somebody compares himself to me. Is he challenging me? I didn't take this appellation for myself alone. It covers my whole family. Let me consult my brothers." Tugu-lana Yemusa sent a messenger to call his brother Nayina, chief of Beshieyu. Beshieyu-lana Nayina came. Tugu-lana Yemusa told him, "Look, Beshieyu lana, the regent of Bayli-naa has compared himself to me. He has taken my appellation." Beshieyu lana said, "Let's fight him." Then, Tugu-lana Yemusa called for his brother, Singa-lana Sheni. Singa-lana came. Tugu-lana Yemusa told tell him, "The Bayli-

naa regent is comparing himself to me." Singa-lana Sheni said, "Let's fight him and kill him." Then, Tugu-lana Yemusa sent for Naa Saa.

At that time, Naa Saa was called Nabiziblim. Tugu-lana Yemusa sent for Nabiziblim.

Nabiziblim said, "My brother, are you people preparing to go Bayli? Don't you know that Bayli is a town that we sons of a Yaa Naa should never enter. If you people insist on going to Bayli, I will remove myself from the children of Naa Siyli. I will become nephew of Naa Zangina. As you know, my mother is Gundo-lan' Nakulpa, daughter of Naa Zangina. If you are going to Bayli, please, it is you people who have removed me from among the sons of my father. I will join my uncle's children. I won't go."

Tugu-lana Yemusa and his brothers prepared. They went to Bayli and made camp. Tugu-lana Yemusa sent his first son to the Bayli regent to tell him, "The appellation you are using-leave it. Forget that name. Change your appellation." Then, Bayli naa regent asked the messenger, "Why? Go back and tell Tugu-lana this, 'Your father bore you as his first son, but my father also bore me as his first son. Your father gave you a name, Yemusa, but my father also gave me a name, Yemusa. You chose a proverb for your appellation, but I also

chose a proverb as my name. I am using it. Don't say that I should change it. I will use it."

What can Tugu-lana do to me?"

The messenger went back and told this to Tugu-lana Yemusa. He said, "OK. His 'Yemusa' doesn't have a special meaning, but mine does. I was born on the day my father went into battle with Kumpatia. He was ready to die on the day I was born. I must do what my father has done." Tugu-lana and his battalion rode into Bayli. They captured Bayli -yuu Yemusa.

They didn't kill the Bayli regent. Tugu-lana ordered him to be tied. They tied his hands and legs. Tugu-lana asked, "Will you leave the appellation and change names." The Bayli-naa Yuu refused. Tugu-lana used a knife and gave him marks. He asked again, "Leave the appellation. Change your title." Bayli-yuu refused. Tugu-lana gave him more marks on all his body. He asked again, and again the regent refused. Tugu-lana asked his brothers to put pepper into the cuts and then asked the regent, "Change your title. I won't kill you if you leave my appellation." All this time, drummers were playing. The lead luṅa was playing the appellations of Naa Siyli and Tugu-lana's brothers and the other drummers were saying, "cheli yuli taḃi yuli," which means, "leave the title, change the title."

Then, Yemusa, the regent of the Bayli-naa, told him, "Because of this small thing you are asking me to leave appellation for you? I am going to die with it." They cut off his head.

When Tugu-lana killed the regent, the lead drummer beat, "Ku kum o, ku kum o. Ku kum o ku kum o." [Kill him.] The many drummers answered, "Ku o de yuli, o ku o de yuli." [He killed him because of a name.] Sometimes I say that the drum language is, "cheli yuli tayi yuli," but the proper language is "o ku o de yuli," "den din dan dede."

So, this is why we play Doyu. Later, linsi started playing Doyu as a general title for all regents because it is regents who started it. But at first, Doyu was for Tugu-lana Yemusa.

Are you OK? Listen to this tape and any place where you don't understand, let me know. I will add more. To tell you the history of Doyu and just say, "Tugu-lana Yemusa killed the regent of the Bayli-naa," would mean that I did not know the full story. I had to start from long ago and tell you what had come before he was born--what happened so that his father became chief. Do you remember that you asked me to prepare myself for these long stories?

I went and told my father, "I am going to the white man's land. They can ask me about

anything. I will talk, but when I come home, I will do your custom." These are the things a drummer like me must do.

DL

Thank you for this story.

Can you tell me some more about what happened when Naa Siyli died?

AL

That means that I need to talk about Naa Bimbiɛyu and Tugu-lana Yemusa. At this time Naa Bimbiɛyu was called Boggu-lana, which is not an important title in the Dagomba chieftaincy.

Naa Bimbiɛyu was the regent of Naa Zangina. Zangina was Yaa Naa before Siyli, so we call

Naa Bimbiɛyu "gbaɲlan'kuro," the old regent. Tugu-lana Yemusa was the regent of Zaa

Siyli, who became Yaa Naa after Naa Zangina, so we call him the "gbaɲlan'palo," the new

regent. This story is about these two regents.

I questioned all of my teachers about this story. I first questioned my father, Lun-naa Wumbee. What my father told me, M-ba Ngolba said the same. I went to Namona Isahaku. Actually, he was Zohe Lun-naa at the time and was just called Isahaku Namowo. He was my teaching-father when he became Zohe Lun-naa; then I left Dagbon to live in the South. I questioned him on this case. He told me that what my father told me was the truth. I also questioned my brother, Fuseni Namowo. He said the same thing. What these teachers told me is what I am going to tell you now.

Naa Siyli's funeral finished on a Friday morning. The kingmakers never "catch" the next Yaa Naa in the morning time. Morning is when the new chief appears for the public; then, we send him back into the palace. They catch the chosen one and put him into the room we call "Katini" in the nighttime. During the olden days, upon the death of a Yaa Naa both regents, the former regent and the present regent, wear the same clothes. Even if the former regent is a chief, he must come to Yendi and stay in the palace room we call "Yilibla" until the funeral is finished. The present regent stays in a house we call "Yilikpani." It is facing the Yaa Naa's palace. In our custom, the old regent must go every morning to greet the

elderly ladies in the kumanduu, the funeral room. After that, the present regent also goes to greet them.

When Naa Siyli died, Boggu-lana--who became Naa Bimbiɛyu--returned to Yendi for his duties in the funeral. In the mornings, Boggu-lana went to the funeral room for greetings.

The women elders there, Gundo-naa, Kpatu-naa, and Yima-naa, were all his playmates.

Gundo-naa was Naa Zangina's sister; his aunt, Kpatu-naa, was Naa Zangina's junior mother--

his grandmother; and Yima-naa was his uncle's daughter. In Dagbon, these people can joke

with their grandson. When he went for greetings, Kpatu-naa would say, "As for this our

husband, he is too ugly. He is too ugly. [He was disfigured.] Can he be Yaa Naa one day?"

Then, Yima-naa would add, "If they give the custom to this man [do the enskinment rituals],

how is he going to sit? [He was crippled.]" Gundo-naa would say, "Maybe if the tradition

catches him [soothsayers chose him], he will look good [the Yaa Naa clothes will transform

his appearance]. Custom is custom." Everyday, they teased him like that. Do you see how

playmates are?

The last day of the funeral came. Boggu-lana went early to greet. When the ladies played with him, he said, "Everyday you abuse me, saying I am too ugly. The chief's things are with you [the female elders are guardians of the regalia in the room.] Put them on me and see how I would look if one day the kingmakers chose me to be Yaa Naa. Will I look good or not? Go ahead. Daybreak has not come yet."

The playmates said, "Let's put them see. Ugly man, ugly man." The aunt got up from her sitting place and went to the box where the chief's things were kept. She took out the chief's smock. Bimbiɛyu put it on his body. She took out the chief's hat. Bimbiɛyu put it on his head. She took out the Yaa Naa's sandals. Bimbiɛyu put them on his feet. The walking stick of our Yaa Naas was there. Bimbiɛyu went and picked it up. He stood at the room's entrance and walked inside the room like a chief.

Then, the aunt became very happy, but the grandmother said, "Even after he put on all these things, he is still looking ugly. He doesn't look nice." Another woman who was not his playmate started to ululate and cry out the Yaa Naa's praises, "Wulilili," and the women all started to laugh. Then, Bimbiɛyu said, "Aunt." She said, "Yes." "Let me go to where the

chief sits for you to see." She said, "Oh, you can go." He moved there. Just as he turned to sit, he noticed that all the women were no longer more watching him and then the Boggu-lana ran out. Bimbiɛyu ran outside wearing the Yaa Naa's things!

Boggu-lana came outside when the akarima was started to play the morning calls. The children of the Namo-naa were sitting there, beating the morning greetings. Because he was dressed as the chief, when the lunyi saw him, they started playing the chief's walking music. Akarima also started playing as if a Yaa Naa was present. Bimbiɛyu came out and sat. The drummers kept playing. Then, the elders said, "Why? Who has brought the regent outside at this early time of day? Drummers are playing and they don't stop?" They rushed to the place and said, "Bimbiɛyu has dressed like a Yaa Naa!"

Then, the palace elders called for the kingmakers to come. You know, during a Yaa Naa's funeral, the Gushe-naa never stays inside Yendi; he never sleeps in the same town as the Yaa Naa. The elders sent a messenger to Mazeri to tell Gushe-naa what happened. Gushe-naa came. After he was told what had happened, he said, "OK. For me, I am not worried. Where is the new regent, Tugu-lan' Yemusa." You see, the Gushe-naa didn't want Dagbon to get

trouble from this. "If the new regent agrees for Boggu-lana to become Yaa Naa, this will not be a palaver. But if he does not agree, he will have to kill all of these people. New elders will be needed for him to become Yaa Naa. As soon as these things go to a person, no one else can be Yaa Naa."

They sent people to the Yilikpani to bring Tugu-lana Yemusa. The messengers just stood looking at him. They couldn't talk. Yemusa didn't come out. He was annoyed and serious.

DL

He had thought that he would become Yaa Naa?

AL

Yes. The messengers didn't know what to say. They could only wait for him to do something. Tugu-lana Yemusa came out and saw Bimbiëyu sitting like a Yaa Naa--holding the walking stick of the Yaa Naa. When he saw Yemusa, Bimbiëyu said, "Even if you kill me, I die on the skin of Yendi--I die with the Yaa Naa's skin. If I stay alive, I stay with Yendi skin."

Immediately when Bimbiëyu said this, Tugu-lana Yemusa reached his hand up and took the regent hat from his head. He gave the regent walking stick to his servant. Walking with bare hands, he refused to sit where the regent is supposed to sit. He went and sat at the place for the children of the Yaa Naa. No one had told him what had happened. He just went and sat there [indicating his acceptance of subservience to Bimbiëyu]. Nobody told him what had happened;, he hadn't asked them anything.

Then, the Namonaa said, "Siŷli dapa! Yemusa cheli yuli taŷi yuli." [laughs] My third teacher, Namonaa Isahaku, told me that when the Namonaa said this Tugu-lana Yemusa nodded his head and smiled. He left the "annoyed face" and gave a "smiling face." Tugu-lana Yemusa stood up and said, "N-yaba, stop. Elders of Yaa Naa, how did this happen?" Gushe-naa said, "I don't know. I was not here. Ask Ko-naa." Ko-naa said, "I don't know. I don't stay in town. Ask Zohe-naa." Zohe-naa said, "I don't know. I was not in funeral room. Ask the women who watch over the Yaa Naa's things." Then, they called for the women. They came.

Gundo-naa said, "Yes, I did it. Kpatu-naa and Yiwo-naa made me do it. Everyday they have been abusing my son, calling him 'Ugly man, ugly man.' Forgive me."

DL

Bimbiɛyɛ was the son of Gundo-naa?

AL

Bimbiɛyɛ was Gundo-naa's brother's son; you would say "aunt."

Gundo-naa said, "This morning Boggu-lana confused me, saying, 'Mother, hear how these people are teasing me! You just sit doing nothing. Put the Yaa Naa's things on me and see if I look good.' Then, my mind went away from me. I put the things on him. He said, 'Let me go and sit where the chief sits for you to see if I will look nice.' We all agreed. When he went there, suddenly he ran outside. How could we old ladies stop him?"

Then, Tugu-lana said, "Do you people want to be able to say that I, Yemusa, have spoiled Dagbon? Do you people want me to break the customs of Dagbon? I will not go against our

forefather's tradition. Boggu-lana was sitting as a regent. He moved. Today, he became Yaa Naa. Tomorrow, maybe I will also be Yaa Naa. I have nothing to say." Tugu-lana Yemusa moved back to Yilikpani. He didn't take the regent hat. He wrapped a towel on his head to show that he was regent no longer.

DL

About what Namo-naa said to Tugu-lana Yemusa--

AL

Namo-naa told him the meaning of his appellation, "Don't remove a log because of smoke.

All smoke is one. Every stick smokes."

DL

So, Namo-naa used his own proverb and reminded him of the meaning?

AL

--reminded him of the meaning--

DL

--telling him, "Now think of your name."

AL

"A new day has come. Don't remove a stick because of smoke." Then, Yemusa laughed and stood up.

DL

The way I understand Namonaa's message is--If you think you have a quarrel now with Bimbiyu and challenge him, another trouble will also come.

AL

Ah hah. Then, Tugulana Yemusa said, "I am not going to break the customs of Dagbon."

I think you are now OK with the meaning of Doyu.

END