

UCLA

UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Women's Voices Women's Songs: Dagbamba Music, Gender, and Culture

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0jd8755m>

Author

Blankenship, Katharine Stuffelbeam

Publication Date

2014

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Women's Voices Women's Songs: Dagbamba Music, Gender, and Culture

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Ethnomusicology

by

Katharine Stuffelbeam Blankenship

2014

© Copyright by
Katharine Stufflebeam Blankenship
2014

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Women's Voices Women's Songs:
Dagbamba Music, Gender, and Culture

by

Katharine Stuffelbeam Blankenship
Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnomusicology
University of California, Los Angeles, 2014
Professor Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje, Chair

Muslim communities in West Africa provide a unique space for conducting research on musical cultures since issues concerning religion, gender, tradition, economics, and family can all intersect in musical performances. In the capital city of Tamale in Ghana's Northern Region, which is part of an area called Dagbon, women of the Dagbamba culture are at the heart of these multiple spaces of intersection. This project investigates how women actively participate in culture and tradition through music, what it means to them, and how knowledge is transmitted through this practice. Through an ethnographic study of the roles women play in Dagbamba musical culture and specific musical genres (such as *tora*), I examine the performance of music in Dagbamba women's lives and culture. I am interested in the different knowledge(s) produced by women through their involvement with music. Additionally, I utilize feminist standpoint theory to highlight women's lived experiences in order to explore this under-documented aspect

of West African culture.

This study considers how music and dance genres function in the negotiation of traditional and contemporary values, as well as how advice and history are passed down through generations of women. I posit that women have a unique, albeit underrepresented, position in Dagbamba culture and society, which is witnessed most dramatically in and around the home, and central markets where women engage in the buying and selling of wares, including everything from food to batteries, soap, spices, cloth, and shoes. Women's agency, knowledge, power, the complexities of their multiple roles in Dagbamba society and the home, and how this is reflected in vocal music and dance genres constitute the central focus of this dissertation.

Four audio and two video examples are included in this dissertation: audio example 1, *Tora* introduction song, “Oh ee yeei,” performed by KaliTora, May 2011; audio example 2, *Tora* song, “Kambaŋ Na,” performed by KaliTora, May 2011; audio example 3, *Tora* song, “M’ma yeei,” performed by KaliTora, May 2011; audio example 4, *Tora yiyi-ra* song, “Lampoo,” performed by KaliTora, May 2011; video example 1, *Tora* dance, performed by KaliTora, Zo Simli Naa Palace, Tamale, May 2011; video example 2, KaliTora singing “Yini To,” Zo Simli Naa Palace, Tamale, May 2011.

The dissertation of Katharine Stuffelbeam Blankenship is approved.

Russell Schuh

Anthony Seeger

Timothy Taylor

Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2014

To my daughter, Ariana,
and to the daughters of Dagbon

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES	ix
TABLE OF PHOTOS	x
TABLE OF AUDIO AND VIDEO EXAMPLES	xii
Glossary of Dagbanli Terms	xiii
Acknowledgements	xv
Vita	xvii
Introduction	1
I. Theory and Methodology	6
II. Project's Relation to Scholarship	13
<i>African Musicology and/or Africanist Ethnomusicology</i>	14
<i>Women and Music in Africa</i>	16
<i>Northern Ghana: Overview of Literature on Dagbon</i>	24
III. Organization	32
Chapter 1: The Northern Region, Dagbon, and Tamale: A Brief History	35
I. Introduction	35
II. The Dagbamba in Dagbon and Tamale	36
IV. Life in Tamale: Farming, Food, and Family	46
V. Conclusion	54
Chapter 2: Women and Music Among the Dagbamba in Tamale	56
I. Introduction	56
II. Women and Gender in Dagbon	62
<i>Marriage and Children</i>	70

<i>Women, Men, and Economic Structure in Dagbon</i>	78
III. Women and Music	82
Chapter 3: Madame Fuseina Wumbei and Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman: Life (Her)Stories	91
I. Introduction	91
II. Mme Fuseina	97
<i>Mme Fuseina Wumbei's Early Life in Tamale</i>	99
<i>Professional and Personal Life: From Accra to Tamale and the TCNC</i>	105
III. Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman	113
<i>Abdul-Rahaman's Educational Timeline: (Dates based on Rosina's knowledge)</i>	114
<i>Musical Life in Dagbon: A Young Woman's Perspective</i>	118
<i>Rosina on Women, Leadership, and Education</i>	121
IV. Concluding Thoughts	123
Chapter 4: Tora Songs from Funerals to the Stage: History, Ethnography, and Analysis	126
Introduction	126
I. Basics of the Tora Dance	128
II. A Tora History Story	132
III. Tora in Tamale (2006-2011)	137
IV. Women's Songs: Tora and Beyond	144
<i>Methodology</i>	145
<i>Song Lyrics</i>	147
<i>Tora Itself</i>	157
V. Concluding thoughts	171

Chapter 5: KaliTora	172
I. Introduction	172
II. KaliTora	174
III. Recording Project, May 2011	178
IV. Conclusion	182
Chapter 6: Concluding Thoughts: Cultural Change and the Future of Dagbamba Traditional Music	184
Future Research	188
Concluding Thoughts	189
Appendix A: Descriptive Timeline Chart of Video Example 1	196
Appendix B: Song Lyrics and English Translations	200
Appendix C: Release Form and Recording Agreement	218
Bibliography	220
Discography	234
Videography	234
Interviews and Personal Communication	234

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Map of Africa with Ghana highlighted	35
Figure 2. Regional map of Ghana	38
Figure 3. District map of Northern Region	38
Figure 4. Illustrations of Alhaji Lunna’s compound, by Kim Stuffelbeam	49-50
Figure 5. Illustrations of Tora dance sequence, by Kim Stuffelbeam	130-31
Figure 6. Chart of song titles and categories	149-50
Figure 7. Excerpt of “O yii yeei” (audio example 1)	152-53
Figure 8. “Daadam yoo”	154
Figure 9. “Daadam yoo” with English translation by Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman	156
Figure 10. “Oh ee yeei”	158
Figure 11. “Oh ee yeei” measures 1-28	159
Figure 12. “Kambaŋ Na,” measures 1-25 (audio example 2)	162
Figure 13. “Kambaŋ Na,” Dagbanli text with English translation	165
Figure 14. “M’Ma yeei” (audio example 3)	165-66
Figure 15. “Bia ŋɔ yee” - <i>ŋun da nyuli (tora)</i>	167
Figure 16. “Lampoo” (audio example 4) - <i>Tora yiyira</i>	168-69
Figure 17. “Kɔbɔ n-yi,” <i>Lua</i>	169
Figure 18. “Naawuni bi mɔŋ sɔ” Dagbanli text and English translation	170
Figure 19. “Yi ni too” (see video example 2)	176
Figure 20. “Di kpe kpe”	178

TABLE OF PHOTOS

Photo 1. Part of Alhaji Lunna’s compound with thatch roof rooms on left, covered water tank center, and storage room behind, 2011	50
Photo 2. Part of Alhaji Lunna’s compound showing metal roofed rooms and second wife, Fuseina, holding youngest son, Abdul-Wahid, on her lap, 2007	51
Photo 3. Alhaji Lunna with his four wives dressed in enskinment regalia from his ascent from “Dolsi-na” to “Lun-na.” From left to right: Amina, Mele/Mary, Alhaji Lunna, Fuseina, Memunatu, 2007	53
Photo 4. Fuseina, Alhaji Lunna’s second wife, preparing a meal, 2007	58
Photo 5. Alhaji Lunna at his farm with son Razak in the background, 2006	59
Photo 6. Fuseina with Abdul-Wahid at Alhaji Lunna’s farm, 2006	60
Photo 7. Alhaji Lunna’s farm, 2006	61
Photo 8. Alhaji Lunna’s family loaded into the back of a large truck on the way back from working at the farm, 2006	61
Photo 9. Fuseina, Alhaji Lunna’s second wife, 2007	62
Photo 10. A neighbor purchasing water standing with Alhaji’s grand-daughter, 2011	65
Photos 11 and 12. Woman dancing at Banvim Lun-na enskinment ceremony, 2011	84
Photo 13. Mme Fuseina, myself, and Ayshetu Katariga in Tamale, 2011	89
Photo 14. Mme Fuseina at Damba Bielkushi in Tamale, 2011	91
Photo 15. Alhaji Abubakari Lunna, Tamale, 2006	95
Photo 16. Amishetu Nagumsi, myself, and Mme Fuseina Wumbei, photo taken by Karl Haas, 2006	96
Photo 17. Mme Fuseina’s parents Zeinabu Tiyumba and Wumbei Nindoo, date and photographer unknown	100
Photo 18. Mme Fuseina in 1969, photo taken by Y.Z. Accra New Town	104
Photos 19 and 20. J.B. Alhassan and Mme Fuseina in 1972, photographer unknown	108
Photo 21. Abdul-Kadiri Alhassan (1976-77), Mme Fuseina’s first child, Sisons Foto House, Tamale 13 April, 1977	109
Photo 22. Mme Fuseina in 1982, photographer unknown	111
Photo 23. Mme Fuseina, April 1986, Black Star Photo-House, Tamale	111

Photo 24. Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman and myself in Rosina's shop in Tamale, 2011	113
Photo 25. Mme Fuseina leading the line of <i>tora</i> dancers, Tamale, 2006	126
Photo 26. Alhaji Lunna and his drummers playing for <i>tora</i> , Tamale, 2006	128
Photo 27. One <i>gunḡon</i> and three <i>luḡa</i>	128
Photo 28. Mme Fuseina, and myself, dancing <i>tora</i> , Tamale, 2006	129
Photo 29. Women dancing <i>tora</i> , Tamale, 2006	129
Photo 30. Mme Fuseina and Ayishetu singing for the <i>tora</i> dancers, Tamale, 2006	132
Photo 31. Amidu, Alhaji Lunna's eldest son, playing lead <i>luḡa</i> , Tamale, 2007	140
Photo 32. Amidu's younger brother Rafik on <i>gunḡon</i> , Tamale, 2007	140
Photo 33. Mme Fuseina and Ayishetu singing songs for women plastering, Tamale, 2011	172
Photo 34. Women plastering, Tamale, 2011	173
Photo 35. KaliTora from left to right: Fuseina Wumbei, Ayishetu Mussa, Amishetu Nagumsi, Zeliatu Mohammad, and Sanatu Mutala, Tamale, 2011	174

TABLE OF AUDIO AND VIDEO EXAMPLES

Audio 1. <i>Tora</i> introduction song, “Oh ee yeei,” performed by KaliTora, May 2011	152-53
Audio 2. <i>Tora</i> song, “Kambaŋ Na,” performed by KaliTora, May 2011	162
Audio 3. <i>Tora</i> song, “M’ma yeei,” performed by KaliTora, May 2011	165-66
Audio 4. <i>Tora yiyi-ra</i> song, “Lampoo,” performed by KaliTora, May 2011	168-69
Video 1. <i>Tora</i> dance, performed by KaliTora, Zo Simli Naa Palace, Tamale, May 2011	132,
	135, 140, 158, and 196-99
Video 2. KaliTora singing “Yini To,” Zo Simli Naa Palace, Tamale, May 2011	176

Glossary of Dagbanli Terms

(alternate spellings in parenthesis)

baamaaya	group dance genre
banku	fermented corn porridge
binɲmaa	men's smock
Dagbamba (Dagomba)	name of cultural group
Dagbon	name of area where Dagbamba live
Dagbanli (Dagbani)	language spoken by Dagbamba
Damba	annual festival, and name of solo dance
doo, dabba/daba (plural)	man/male
gondze	fiddlers
gunɲon, gunɲona (plural)	double-headed bass drum
koko	morning drinkable porridge
kola	nut chewed as a stimulant
kamboɲa, kambonsi (plural)	warriors (sapasini - captain of army)
lua	women's dance genre
luɲa (lunga), lunsi (plural)	drummer (singular), and name of double-headed hourglass tension drum
luɲpaya	female singer or female who ululates
lunsarga	narration, or chanting, of Dagbon's history
machelinima	blacksmiths
na (adv.)	here, hither, ... and bring
naa (na), nanima (plural)	chief, king
naa	response to most greetings,
nakohanima	butchers

paɣa (paga), paɣaba (plural)	woman, wife
sabanluŋa (sabanlunga)	narration, or chanting, of Dagbon's history
silmiŋa, silminsi (plural)	European, white person, non-African
silminsili	English (or European language)
sima/simli	peanut/groundnut
simli	friendship
tora	women's group dance
tuo zaafi, T.Z.	porridge made from corn flour
wanzamanima	barbers
yili yidana	head of household, husband
zo, zonima (plural)	friend

Acknowledgements

I would like to express gratitude to the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music and the Department of Ethnomusicology for the awarding of a fieldwork fellowship without which I would not have been able to conduct research in northern Ghana. In addition, I was awarded several Student Opportunity Fund scholarships that allowed me to present scholarly papers at conferences in the United States, as well as Newfoundland and the United Kingdom. Thanks also to the Department of Education Summer Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS), which allowed me to study Hausa and attend the 2009 Summer Cooperative African Language Institute (SCALI) hosted at Michigan State University. This experience was invaluable as I was able to present research and connect with several Africanist scholars from various disciplines. Thank you, committee members Timothy Taylor, Anthony Seeger, and Russell Schuh, for your support, insight, and expertise. Thank you, Dr. DjeDje, for sticking with me throughout this entire process, and for encouragement and strength as a scholar and mentor. Your endless dedication has kept me motivated through difficult times. Thank you, David Locke, for your sustained support, encouragement, and inspiration. Without you, I would never have danced. Thank you to my colleagues and cohort at UCLA, Rebecca Dirksen, Jennie Gubner, Michael Iyanaga, Shannon McCabe, Andy Pettit, Michael Silvers, and Kathleen Wiens. Thank you, Alhaji Abubakari Lunna Wumbee, Memunatu Wumbee, Fuseina Wumbee, Mele (Mary) Wumbee, Amidu Wumbee, Idrissu Wumbee, Razak Wumbee, Rafik and Zeinab Wumbee, Fatawu Suglokungbo, and the extended network of Alhaji Lunna's family in and around Tamale. Thanks to the late Zo-Simli Naa Susan Herlin for opening up her Tamale home and allowing me to rent a room during my field work. Thanks also to the Zo-Simli Naa Palace community,

especially Hajia Fati Munkaila, Mrs. Mariama Achel, Fatimata Alhassan, “Uncle” John, Alhaji Jehanfo, and Lunna Yakubu Issa. Amina Kamil, thank you for your friendship and companionship while living in Tamale; your warmth and sincerity are deeply felt and appreciated. Thank you, Saaed Dawuni, for being my traveling companion while in Tamale, for helping me with “in the moment” translations, for introducing me to friends and family, and for being a wonderful friend. Thank you, Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman, for your Dagbanli language expertise; I am also grateful for your perspective on women’s songs and explanation on how songs advise young women. Thank you, Fuseina Wumbei, for this project is indebted to your generosity and open heart; I will always cherish the time we have spent together. Thank you, Ayishetu Nagumsi, for your willingness to teach me to sing in Dagbanli and for sharing your amazing melodies. Thanks goes to my family, Julie, Kim, Nathan, Kendra, Anna, Christopher, Sarah, Cheryl, Bruce, Brian, and Viki, who have all in their own way supported this lengthy dissertation research and writing process. Thank you, Joan and Terry Musgrave, for supporting me financially and otherwise, throughout my entire career in higher education; I would never have made it through without you both. Thank you, Mom (Julie), Kendra, Anna, and Sarah, for the invaluable time spent with Ariana that has allowed me time to write. I would never have gotten this far without my husband Kevin. Thank you for your unyielding support, and constant willingness to do whatever needs to be done. My daughter Ariana has brought light and life to my days, added immense challenges, but also rewards and motivation. Thank you, Ariana, for being in the moment and giving me a perspective as a woman and mother that has changed my life and my work. Any and all errors, inconsistencies, or omissions are, of course, entirely my own.

Vita

Education

- 2009 Certificate in Gender Studies, UCLA
- 2007 M.A., Tufts University, Ethnomusicology
- 2004 B.A. Music, Boston University College of Arts and Sciences, *magna cum laude*

Professional Employment

- 2010-2013 Graduate Teaching Fellow, UCLA
- Fall 2012 Publications Coordinator and Curator of Musical Instruments, UCLA
- Summer 2011 Graduate Research Assistant for Dr. Timothy Rice, UCLA
- Summer 2010 Graduate Research Assistant for Dr. Russell Schuh, UCLA
- 2009-10 Graduate Teaching Associate
- 2008 Graduate Teaching Assistant
- 2008-2009 Graduate Research Assistant for Dr. Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje, UCLA

Publications

- 2012 “Performing Advocacy: Women’s Music and Dance in Dagbon, Northern Ghana.” *African Music* 10:154-69
- 2011 “Book Review: *Female Voices from an Ewe Dance-drumming Community in Ghana: Our Music Has Become a Divine Spirit* by James Burns.” *Ethnomusicology Review*, 16. <http://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/journal/volume/16/piece/468>
- 2009 “Review: *Promoting the African Union* by Kassim Mohammed Khamis.” *Ufabamu: A Journal of African Studies* 35(2). <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/8hd0060j>

Presentations

- 2013 “From Africa to the Americas: (West) African Sound Cultures.” April 9th, guest lecture Music History 65, Department of Musicology, UCLA
- 2012 “Our Singing, Ourselves: Advocacy, Ethnography, Relationships, and the Dagbamba of Northern Ghana.” Sponsored by the Association for Feminist Anthropology, presented at the 111th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropology Association, November 16th, San Francisco
- 2012 “Dagbamba Women’s Songs: Music, Experience, and Meaning.” Invited speaker at the World Damba Festival 2012 @ Tufts, September 14th
- 2012 “Popular Music in Western Africa: Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal.” February 8th, guest lecture

Ethno 25, UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology

- 2011 “Performing Advocacy: Women’s Music and Dance in Dagbon, Northern Ghana.” Presented at the 56th annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, November 18th, Philadelphia
- 2011 “Dagbamba Traditional Music in the 21st Century: Women’s Songs and Their Significance in Northern Ghana.” Presented at the annual meeting of the International Council for Traditional Music, July 15th St. John’s Newfoundland, Canada
- 2010 “Women and Activism in the Field: Research, Responsibility and Relationships in a West African Community.” Presented at the 55th annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, November 12th, Los Angeles
- 2009 “Music in Dagbon: An Introduction to Women's Songs.” Invited presentation/workshop at SCALI, July 28th, Michigan State University
- 2009 “African American Music: From Work Songs to Gospel and the Blues.” January 20th and 22nd, invited lectures in Ethno 20A, UCLA Department of Ethnomusicology
- 2008 “Women and Music in Dagbon: Negotiation of Tradition, Gender, and Artistic Expression.” Presented at the 53rd annual meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology, October 26th, Wesleyan University
- 2008 “Women, Music, and Identity: The Role of Traditional Dagbamba Music in an Increasingly Urban Context.” Presented at the African Activist Association Symposium, April 12th, University of California, Los Angeles

Selected Honors and Awards

- 2012 African Libraries Student Paper Prize, African Music Section of the Society for Ethnomusicology
- 2009-2010 Graduate Research Mentorship with Dr. Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje
- 2009 Summer Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship to Attend the Summer Cooperative African Language Institute (SCALI) at Michigan State University, Intermediate Hausa
- 2008 & 2009 Summer Research Mentorship Fellowships
- 2007 Celia and Herma Wise Scholarship, UCLA
- 2004-2006 Music Department Scholarship and Teaching Assistantship, Tufts University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
- 2004 Departmental Honors Award for Outstanding Achievement in Music History and Literature, Boston University, College of Fine Arts

Introduction

It is a cool evening in Tamale, the capital city of Ghana's Northern Region. Walking down a central boulevard I hear the sounds of Dagbamba drumming off in the distance; people are moving all around me, searching for the source of the music. As a large crowd gathers, a dance area is established; the male drummers stand clustered on one side and a line of female dancers is on the other. The dancers wait their turn to skip out into the center, turn and bump their buttocks together, then turn and bump again before retreating to the back of the queue. As the dancers wait, they sing and clap, engaging with the energy of the evening. They are dancing *tora*, a Dagbamba women's group-dance that involves simultaneous drumming, dancing and singing, most often performed during the evening and late into the night in local neighborhoods or as part of activities at holidays, festivals, and local ceremonial occasions.

This dissertation focuses not only on *tora*, but on individual Dagbamba women, their participation in music and the roles they play in Dagbon, home of the Dagbamba people. Several formative events, which brought me to this point, inform this study: (1) my initial encounter with Ghanaian music and Ghana through the Tufts University Kiniwe West African Music and Dance Ensemble led by David Locke; (2) my relationship with the late Alhaji Abubakari Lunna that initiated my work with women's music and teachers Madam (Mme) Fuseina Wumbei and Ayishetu Nagumsi; (3) and the varied experiences that took place during my field research in Dagbon, especially those shared with several Dagbamba women who opened their homes and lives to me, namely, Mme Fuseina, Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman, and Amina Kamil.

David Locke's Kiniwe Ensemble is responsible not only for my introduction to Ghanaian music and dance, but also to ethnomusicology as a discipline. I joined this group in September 2004, somewhat on a whim when registering for courses at the beginning of my first year of graduate school in musicology at Tufts University. I remember going into a rather small classroom full of unfamiliar instruments, mostly drums, and sitting down to begin rehearsal and the initial audition for the group. I was captivated by the rhythmic complexity and the pedagogical method of oral transmission. I was faced with an entirely new music and culture, and after 15 years studying Western music, I was invigorated by the mystifying interlocking grooves and open soulful singing. While continuing to play with the group, I traveled to Ghana during Tufts' spring break in March 2005.¹ This initial student trip opened my eyes to the world of music and dance in an entirely new way. Kiniwe was able to travel to Ghana for the first time due to funds provided by Tufts University. In the past, it was my understanding that other music ensembles in Tufts' music department were able to utilize these travel funds, and in 2005 it was Kiniwe's turn. While at the Dagbe Cultural Institute and Arts Centre, located in Kopeyia near Denu in Ghana's Volta region, we studied Ewe music with the Agbeli brothers, Emmanuel, Nani, and Ruben, along with several other musicians associated with the center.² During our time there, Alhaji Lunna drove from his home in the Northern Region, approximately 400 miles away over difficult roads, bringing family and drums with him. His second wife, Fuseina, as well as his

¹ Locke started Kiniwe at Tufts in 1979 long before he became a tenured faculty member in 1992. Kiniwe has been fortunate to host artists in residence throughout the years fostered by Locke's long-term collaboration with Ghanaian drummers and dancers Godwin Agbeli, Victor Nani Agbeli, Gideon Alorwoyie, and Alhaji Abubakari Lunna. Godwin's son, Nani Agbeli, was leading the ensemble at Tufts (Dor 2014:78-82), until fall 2014 when he took a position as Director of Ghanaian West African Music, Dance and Arts at CalArts (<http://directory.calarts.edu/directory/victor-nani-agbeli>).

² The Dagbe center was founded in 1982 by the late Godwin Agbeli, and is now run primarily by his son Emmanuel Agbeli.

sons, Amidu, Idrissu, and Rafik, came to help teach. The time I spent at the Dagbe Centre, immersed in studying Ewe and Dagbamba music and dance, was intense musically, physically, intellectually, socially, and personally. At the same time, I was intimidated and excited to find a new musical passion that was so alive, dynamic, and rhythmically complicated.

Secondly, after returning from Ghana in 2005, the Kiniwe West African Music and Dance Ensemble was co-led by Locke and Alhaji Lunna who made the trip back with us from Accra to Boston and Tufts University. Lunna and Locke had a long-term working relationship and seemed always ready to find Kiniwe students who were interested in studying Dagbamba music more extensively. While Lunna was in residence at Tufts, I decided to change degree programs from musicology to ethnomusicology and write a masters thesis on women's music in northern Ghana. When I traveled to Ghana in summer of 2006 to conduct field research, Lunna invited me to live with him and his family in their large compound in Lameshegu, a neighborhood in Tamale. He guided my initial work and introduced me to his musical community in and around the city of Tamale. Particularly significant was his choice for my primary song and dance teachers. Each morning I had song lessons with local musicians Madam Fuseina Victoria Wumbei³ and Ayishetu Nagumsi.⁴ In the afternoons I would attend Mme Fuseina's dance rehearsals at the Tamale Center for National Culture (CNC).⁵ The resultant M.A. thesis focused on a small selection of *tora*

³ She is affectionately known simply as "Madame Fuseina" by her students, coworkers, associates, and will be Mme Fuseina hereafter throughout the text.

⁴ Ayishetu, a well known female lead singer (*lunpaya*), was called by several endearing nick-names, including "Ayi," "M'ma-Shetu," "Shetu," and "Amishetu." In many cases, I may refer to her as Amishetu, since Madam Fuseina (Mme Fuseina) would usually call her by that name.

⁵ Mme Fuseina Wumbei was a member of the Arts Council of Ghana's National Folkloric Company until she returned to Tamale to direct the local CNC dance group (see chapter 3 for more on her life's story). Nagumsi is a local vocalist/musician who was widely lauded as one of the most talented female singers in the region. Both of these women have taught at the CNC, but have recently retired, retaining affiliation and a few students, but not full-time teaching positions.

songs and acted as a pilot study for this dissertation project. Wumbei and Nagumsi, along with their associates at the Tamale CNC, have encouraged me to continue researching women's music of the area to produce a more in-depth, culturally and historically grounded study.

Thirdly, my multiple field research trips to Dagbon, totaling over twelve months spent in Tamale from 2006 to 2011, provide the basis and primary source material for this dissertation.⁶ The varied field encounters cannot be summed up here, but I find myself compelled to address some of the intensely personal ones that occurred during my time in Tamale. I do not intend this study to be written in a self absorbed confessional manner, or to become bogged down in an over abundance of self-reflexivity bordering on narcissism, but I want to address how my experiences influenced both my work and relationships in the so called “field.” For this reason, I use an autoethnographic method that consciously privileges personal relationships with individuals, to decolonize the research approach (Mackinlay 2010:97).⁷

This personal history of my encounter as well as my entrance into Ghanaian music and ethnomusicology as a discipline is intended to inform the reader of what is central to this discussion; namely that closeness, the weight of responsibility to friends, teachers, and musicians who have entrusted me with a part of themselves, the uncomfortable intimacy arrived at through a process of unravelling completely in the field, only to find the threads later to begin weaving them together all over again.

⁶ Although previous fieldwork in Ghana conducted in 2006, and the later short pilot research trips in 2007, 2008, and 2009 will inform and enrich my dissertation, the primary research trip, from December 2010 to June 2011, forms the basis for the project.

⁷ This autoethnographic methodology will be discussed further later in the introduction. For more information, see Elizabeth Mackinlay (2010).

Muslim communities in West Africa provide a unique space for conducting research on musical cultures since issues concerning religion, gender, tradition, economics, and family can all intersect in musical performances like the one described at the beginning of this introduction. In Dagbon, women are at the heart of these multiple spaces of intersection. As noted in the foregoing, this project investigates how women actively participate in culture and tradition through music, what it means to them, and how knowledge is transmitted through this practice. Additionally, I explore the potential of using feminist standpoint theory (see Chapter 2) to highlight how women's lived experiences can help to understand an under-documented aspect of West African culture.⁸

This study also considers how music and dance genres function in the negotiation of traditional and contemporary values, as well as how advice and history are passed down through generations of women. I posit that women have a unique, albeit underrepresented, position in Dagbamba culture and society, which is witnessed most dramatically in and around the home, and in the central markets where women engage in the buying and selling of wares including everything from food to batteries, soap, spices, cloth, and shoes.

Therefore, this dissertation investigates several lines of inquiry: How does women's involvement in music affect their social and political position? What kind(s) of knowledge(s) are produced and transmitted by women through their participation in music and dance? Does a woman's age, marital and social status, or religion affect her participation in music? What is unique about the role of female Dagbamba musicians compared to their male counterparts? How

⁸ Standpoint theory argues for a central focus on women's lived experiences as a starting point for research, thus women's "standpoint" or point of view is central to feminist publications that utilize this research paradigm. Although this topic will be discussed further later in the dissertation, see Anderson (2012) and Howell (2011) for an overview of this theory. UCLA Women's Studies and Science Professor Sandra Harding has been a pioneer in this research area; she has countless publications on the topic and has edited a reader, (Harding 2004), that is helpful.

are traditional women's roles and their power expressed through their participation in musical genres such as *tora*? Who are these musicians and what is their role in everyday life? And where do women's voices get heard, and how do they contribute to Dagbamba society as a whole? I am interested in exploring, as other ethnographers have in different regions, “the degree to which songs constitute strategic devices, weapons which can help women have a voice in the community and gain control over their lives” (Joseph 1980:419).

I. Theory and Methodology

Methodologically, my study is grounded in ethnomusicology, musicology, and anthropology in a broader sense. Borrowing methods from anthropology, I have engaged extensively in participant observation, conducted interviews with performers and members of the society, and immersed myself in the culture by participating in daily activities and attending formal and informal musical and social events, including going to the central markets, visiting and meeting with contacts, writing extensive field notes, and taking private Dagbanli language lessons with Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman. In agreement with the ethnomusicological notion of "bi-musicality" (Hood 1960), which argues that in order to comprehend a musical culture one must become musically proficient in that tradition, I have engaged in practical musical training in Dagbamba music and dance. This training has been central to fieldwork and provided an introduction to the Dagbamba music scene. In addition, I have documented my research with audio recordings of interviews, musical events, lessons, meetings as well as video recording of events, dances, and other activities.

Because of my previous experience in taking music and dance lessons, and observing and participating in musical performances, I believe that the autoethnographic method has been crucial to the success of my fieldwork. In this way, I continued to maintain relationships established in previous years, as well as formed new relationships by seeking out musical events not only in Tamale, but also in the surrounding areas in northern Ghana (for example, I attended the annual Damba festival in Yendi; witnessed enskinment ceremonies in Kasuliyilli, Bamvim, and Lamashegu; and observed women's singing groups performing in Gusheigu, Katariga, and Lingbinga). My methodology is largely in agreement with Elizabeth Mackinlay's description of the autoethnographic method, which is an attempt to "decolonize ethnomusicology" by addressing inherently uncomfortable aspects of field research. In her recent article on applied ethnomusicological work with Yanyuwa Aboriginal women in northern Australia, Mackinlay articulates what has largely been my ethnographic approach.

Autoethnographic methods place emphasis on reuniting the personal with the physical, emotional, mental, social and cultural dimensions of everyday life. Relationship becomes central to the research process. This shift in focus towards the personal extends even further and has the potential—if we dare—to open up space for a new decolonised research agenda where words like ethics, justice, compassion, care and love are commonplace, and at the heart of all that we may do as ethnomusicologists. (Mackinlay 2010:97)

This approach dismisses the notion that objectivity should be a primary goal; the point is to allow one's self to attain genuine relationships with particular individuals within a community, which allows for a so-called "decolonisation" of research. What I am trying to get at here is that instead of engaging in an outdated model that might typically include going to the "field" for two weeks, interviewing "research subjects," and gathering as much data as possible to publish a scholarly work that will enhance one's standing and career, my research has been marked by collaboration, and my role as a student of Dagbamba culture rather than an authority figure (DjeDje 2006).

Genuine personal relationships preclude an objective research stance or objective imperative so that “ethics, justice, compassion, care and love are commonplace” (Mackinlay 2010:97). A researcher embarking on this kind of endeavor may question this approach as being too intimate, radical, dangerous, morally questionable, to name just a few of the potential criticisms of this approach. At the same time, this goal of a so-called “decolonised research agenda” promotes compassion, collaboration, engagement, and personal investment in relation to one’s project, the culture, and community.

As a theoretical base, I utilize my training in ethnomusicology and women's studies. Various levels of analysis could prove to be fruitful in a study with such potentially loaded subjects as gender, tradition, and religion. My goal in the following pages is not to further a specific theoretical agenda, but rather to utilize concepts as needed to enrich my discussion of women and music in Dagbon. I am particularly aware of interventions made by African feminism, for example Oyèrónke Oyewù mí, a Yoruba sociologist writing on women and gender in the African context, who states: “It cannot be overstated that in African studies a careful evaluation of the genealogy of concepts and theoretical formulation must be integral to research. Ultimately, in research endeavors, I argue for a cultural, context-dependent interpretation of social reality” (Oyewù mí 1997:xvi). She cautions that commonly “Africa is used merely as a vehicle for articulating Western preoccupations and modes of understanding” (Oyewù mí 2005: xiii). Oyewù mí speaks to my concern when applying Western theoretical concepts in a northern Ghanaian context: “Our concern is twofold: that Africa must be studied on its own terms, and that African knowledge must be a factor in the formulation of social theory” (2005: xix). Standpoint theory privileges individual women’s experiences as a point of departure for research

and in this way honors Oyewùmí's concerns, namely that researchers need to study Africa on its own terms and utilize African knowledge in the formation of social theory (2005: xix). That being said, I was reflexively aware of my positionality as a graduate student from the US, and felt connected with feminist standpoint theory while conducting fieldwork with women in northern Ghana. Tamale (the regional and municipal capital of the north) is situated at a crossroads. It is a site where different ideas of local and global, urban and rural, traditional and modern, north and south, Christian and Muslim, are all crossing, mixing, and coming together. Feminist standpoint theory and reflexive views of positionality in relation to my fieldwork will be explored in the following pages.

I also draw on feminist postcolonial theory broadly as its main focus parallels and informs my project. Pioneering feminist scholar Chandra Talpade Mohanty problematizes and challenges Western notions of so-called "Third World"⁹ women in her writing from the 1980s:

An analysis of "sexual difference" in the form of a cross-culturally singular, monolithic notion of patriarchy or male dominance leads to the construction of a similarly reductive and homogeneous notion of what I call the "Third World difference" - that stable, ahistorical something that apparently oppresses most if not all the women in these countries. And it is in the production of this Third World difference that Western feminisms appropriate and colonize the constitutive complexities that characterize the lives of women in these countries.¹⁰ (Mohanty 1988:63)

This is precisely the cautionary tale that describes the trap I try to avoid in the analysis of my work with women in Dagbon. Integral to my project is articulating the "complexities that

⁹ The use of terms like "Third World" or "Developing" can be problematic because they suspend judgements of marginalization in relation to the USA and countries in Western Europe. The only reason I include these terms in this discussion is because they are referenced in cited works. I find them to be problematic, and I try to avoid them in favor of more descriptive terms that are less negative and political (see Mohanty, Russo, and Torres eds. 1991).

¹⁰ Mohanty's seminal article, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," originally published in 1986, has been reprinted many times, most notably in 1988 as well as in her 2003 anthology *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. See bibliography for full citations.

characterize the lives of women,” which I aim to accomplish through a discussion of their lives in relation to musical culture. Mohanty’s work informed my overall fieldwork approach in Dagbon and while the text was written in 1986 (revised and published in 1988), the author’s points are still valid and important especially when embarking on a study of women, culture, and music internationally.¹¹

In seeming agreement with the autoethnographic method, Reina Lewis and Sarah Mills, in the introduction to *Feminist Postcolonial Theory*, comment on how Western writers tend to position themselves in relation to women in various parts of the world: “Rather than assuming that third-world women can be spoken for and that these practices are simply oppressive, as they seem to many Western feminists, women in other cultures need to be consulted and worked alongside” (2003:9). As in much work on Western feminism, postcolonial feminism is concerned with political activism and engagement in change. The central point of “working alongside” communities of women rather than speaking for, or working for them, is an important one. Identifying the position of the Western intellectual, or Western feminist, and underlying inequalities that may result in imperialist-style relationships lay at the heart of the research methods of feminist postcolonial theorists: “Thus, for many Western feminist postcolonial theorists, it is a question of positioning oneself differently in relation to other women, according them the same degree of agency one would expect for oneself” (Lewis and Mills 2003:9). My aim, then, is to acknowledge the inherent inequalities between myself and the community with whom I worked and to utilize feminist critiques to productively discuss women’s lived

¹¹ See below for further discussion of the literature on women and music in Africa.

experiences. I am not trying to erase my Western identity or background in Western cultural and social theory, but rather problematize the discussion of gender in the Dagbamba context.

With regard to women in Dagbon, the methodology of “working alongside” this community of women and deliberately “positioning oneself differently” resonates with my own inherent sense of moral responsibility. What becomes challenging is implementing this methodology or ideology in the field and producing a written document. Both within postcolonial, and feminist postcolonial theory, the notion of challenging “imperial discourse” and representation/re-presentation seems to be a common goal: “‘postcolonial theory’ involves a conceptual reorientation towards the perspectives of knowledges, as well as needs, developed outside the west” (Young 2003:6). Ethnomusicologist Kofi Agawu echoes this interpretation, stating that one of the “central concerns” of postcolonial theory “is to unmask (or unveil, demystify, ‘lay bare’) the enabling constructs of various knowledge systems” (2003:xvii). Agawu identifies clearly what attracts me to ideas expressed in postcolonial studies: “Writings by [postcolonial] scholars ... clear space for the acknowledgment, indeed celebration, of the incongruities, contradictions, antinomies, and hybridity of postcolonial culture and experience as necessary elements in the adequate theorization of contemporary Africa” (Agawu 2003:xviii). These incongruities and contradictions abound in contemporary life in Tamale and are manifested dramatically in the lived experience of many women. Both Agawu and Young’s articulations of postcolonial theory imply a need for an alternative mode of knowledge production. The postcolonial ideas of working alongside women, embracing alternative forms of knowledge production, and problematizing the specifics of Dagbamba women’s positionality and standpoint are central to my project.

When Sandra Harding discussed her work with feminist standpoint theories and philosophy of science during a lecture at UCLA, I felt that I had finally found a theoretical home base. Harding was the respondent at the Senior Faculty Feminist Lecture “Is Feminism Translatable? Taiwan, Spivak, A-Wu,” by Shu-Mei Shih, presented at Royce Hall on 26 February, 2013. For the first time in my life, I was drawn to a feminist epistemology that theoretically grounded my own research experience. Feminist scholars Dorothy E. Smith, Nancy C.M. Hartsock, Hilary Rose, Sandra Harding, Patricia Hill Collins, Alison Jaggar, and Donna Haraway have all been foundational to the development of standpoint theories as they evolved from feminist critical theory and Marxist feminist approaches.¹² Collectively, these scholars, from various fields in the social sciences, advocate an approach that favors scholarly enquiry at the level of women’s lived experiences: “Starting off research from women's lives will generate less partial and distorted accounts not only of women's lives but also of men's lives and of the whole social order” (Harding 2004:128). They argue that as a population on the margins, or at least not at the center of a top/down view of society and politics, women have an inherently more complete view of society and culture than men: “A fundamental thesis of feminist epistemology is that our location in the world as women makes it possible for us to perceive and understand different aspects of both the world and human activities in ways that challenge the male bias of existing perspectives” (Narayan 2004:213). I completely agree with the assertions and assessments put forth by feminist standpoint theories, and I could not summarize the central tenets more eloquently than Harding does:

¹² See *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies* (2004), edited by Sandra Harding.

The subject/agents of knowledge for feminist standpoint theory are multiple, heterogeneous, and contradictory or incoherent, not unitary, homogeneous, and coherent as they are for empiricist epistemology. Feminist knowledge has started off from women's lives, but it has started off from many different women's lives; there is no typical or essential woman's life from which feminisms start their thought. (Harding 2004:134)

The above addresses precisely what I have experienced in Dagbamba culture, and is in agreement with postcolonial and Africanist feminist critiques I have outlined in the foregoing. Namely, one must look at the diversity of individual women's lives which are "multiple, heterogeneous, and contradictory" (Harding 2004:134), full of "incongruities, contradictions, antinomies, and hybridity" (Agawu 2003:xviii) in order to create a deliberately "context-dependent interpretation of social reality" (Oyewùmí 1997:xvi). These ideas and assertions are not new, radical, or cutting edge, but I hold them close because they resonate so strongly with my experiences in getting to know Dagbamba women as we sing, dance, work, cook, care for children, battle illness, share joy and success, and talk together about life in Ghana's Northern Region.

II. Project's Relation to Scholarship

Broadly, my proposed dissertation project is informed by my coursework and the literature that has inspired me over my years as a graduate student. The following literature review pertains to my current project. This survey is in no way exhaustive, and is more of a starting point to demonstrate the texts that have been influential in the writing of this dissertation. Perhaps the most glaring omission is not including specific sections on anthropology or African Studies. While many texts I have included may fall into these categories, because of my topic and academic experience, I have chosen to focus on works in women's studies and women's

music generally. I will proceed by beginning with a wide lens looking first at the broad historical progression of African musicology (and ethnomusicology), then move to texts on women and music, eventually focusing on literature more directly related to my research in Ghana's Northern Region.

AFRICAN MUSICOLOGY AND/OR AFRICANIST ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

Texts published on African music from the early twentieth century until the 1960s are rather limited with little published by scholars from the African continent. J.H. Kwabena Nketia, Ghana's preeminent African musicologist, examines these developments in some detail in his *Garland Encyclopedia of Music* article, "The Scholarly Study of African Music: A Historical Review" (1997). Nketia discusses a few important African contributors to scholarship on music: namely George Ballanta and Ephraim Amu. These two were different in their approach. Ballanta conducted large studies of songs both in the USA and in West Africa (1926, 1930), whereas Amu was more dedicated to the practical side, spending most of his energy teaching in Ghana (Nketia 1997:19-26). Ballanta, originally from Sierra Leone, initially studied Western music on his own before traveling to the United States in 1922 to study at the Institute of Musical Art; Amu, originally from Ghana, studied Western music in school, became a teacher and later member of the staff at the Presbyterian Training College in Akropong, Ghana (19-23). Other scholars and texts from the continent include Joseph Kyagambiddwa's 1955 study of the Baganda xylophone tradition in Uganda (36), and Seth Cudjoe's 1953 analysis of Ewe drumming (35). Western publications on African music from the 1940s-80s include works by early ethnomusicologists John Blacking (1969, 1973), A. M. Jones (1959, 1964), Alan Merriam (1959, 1964, 1970, 1982),

Hugh Tracey (1948a, 1948b, 1948c, 1949, 1952, 1954, 1957, 1961), and Klaus Wachsmann (1970, 1971). These scholars, and their texts, have been extremely influential in the field of ethnomusicology; their studies on African music focus on various subjects, including cultural groups, complex rhythmic structures, genres of music, and the state of ethnomusicology and research on African music in general. Many of these earlier works are foundational and form a historical grounding for Africanist scholarship.

During the 1970s, the process of decolonization and development were major issues across Africa. This resulted in African musicology moving in various directions all at once. Scholars were not only interested in continuing with the main activities of amassing a larger body of knowledge about music in Africa generally, but also this research inspired performances and new creative compositions, highlighting the centrality of African music itself (Nketia 1997:43). As Nketia explains, several African composers and performers took up these new goals: “composers like Lazarus Kwueme, Akin Euba, and Samuel Akpabot (all of Nigeria), Atta Annan Mensah, . . . Joseph Kyagambiddwa . . . [etc.] all took particular interest in searching for definitions of African idioms, in categorizing creative output, in observing instrumentation, form, and structure in relation to creative process” (1997:44).

As ethnomusicology and African musicology have moved from the 1980s to the twenty-first century, we have seen various trends. In ethnomusicology, many focus on specific theoretical ideas, including Levi-Straussian structuralism (Blacking 1973; Feld 1982), Foucauldian theory (Sugarman 1997; Wong 2004), post-colonialism (Averill 1997), and the study of music and identity (Avorgbedor 1998; Reed 2003). In most cases, the ethnomusicologists who utilize the theoretical ideas employ them to different degrees. For

example, Avorgbedor discusses rural vs. urban identity through his work with Anlo-Ewe performance groups; Averill describes a situation in post-colonial Haiti in which aspects of colonial musical events have been held over into the present; and Blacking attempts to draw connections between structures in music and other aspects of culture. In addition to these and other trends, articles are also being published about how we, as ethnomusicologists, are supposed to situate and identify ourselves, as well as larger discussions and reflections on how we define the field as a whole. Perhaps magnified by its relative small size and because of its close ties to both musicology and anthropology, ethnomusicology has experienced various periods of identity crises whereby scholars question methodology, theoretical approaches, and the overall identity or definition of the field itself. Similarly, African musicology has had different goals and foci over the years. In the late 1990s, Nketia not only called for African musicology to come together and form a more coordinated approach to larger projects, but he encouraged scholars to specialize in musical areas that have yet to be studied (1997:47). While many students and scholars continue to conduct research on the continent, very few collaborative projects have emerged and there remain large areas that have yet to be studied. It is not my goal here to provide an exhaustive review of all literature on African music, but rather to provide a framework reflective of my institutional exposure and research goals.

WOMEN AND MUSIC IN AFRICA

To provide a concise overview, I will begin with a brief historical survey of published works on women and music in Africa, followed by an examination of recently published monographs. In addition to published materials, a number of master's thesis and doctoral

dissertations address women's music in Africa. These graduate studies are significant contributions and while I focus on published works, I also look at a few dissertations and theses from the late 1990s to the present, as they add to the representation of contemporary research on women's music in Africa. Early scholarship in the 1960s and 1970s consisted primarily of articles written about women's or girl's song traditions, initiation, fertility, and birth customs from a specific culture or region.¹³ Ethnomusicologist Lester Monte comments on the historical trajectory of literature on women and music noting that in the 1960s-1970s:

investigations on the roles of women as creative artists have been sparse, but a new awareness has brought this topic to the forefront in recent years A good number of scholars have emphasized the exclusive role of female music-makers in rites of transition, mentioning in some detail a particular group of songs, musical instruments, or dances. (1989:220)

An M.A. thesis by UCLA ethnomusicology graduate student Enoch Aryeequaye Aryee, entitled "Adaawe: A Study of Game Songs of the Ga Women Folk" (1973), is an example of early scholarship on Ghanaian women's music. Relying heavily on Nketia's work and audio recordings of Ga songs, the thesis focuses largely on musical theory with transcriptions and textual analysis. Aryee's close treatment and reading of the Ga language and how it relates to song melody, contour, phrasing and other musical aspects are valuable (1973: 50, 52-54, 67-68). He also writes of the important role women's songs play in the socialization of community members into Ga society, particularly since the songs often deal with various topics, including marriage, love, and sex (67).

In the 1980s, publications increased significantly in number and in scope. Texts focusing on women and the arts, dance, and poetry become more common (Drewal and Drewal 1983;

¹³ See Krige 1968; Bartels 1969; Blacking 1969; Gourlay 1970; Zemp 1970; Carlisle 1975; Johnston 1976 and 1978; Ames and Gourlay 1978; Gunner 1979.

Mack 1986; Franken 1987; Mvula 1987; Hanna 1989), and women's music in Africa began to be approached in a broader and more multifaceted way by several ethnomusicologists (Joseph 1983; DjeDje 1985; Knappert 1986; Jones 1987; Monts 1989; Schmidt 1989). For example, in the article "Women and Music in Sudanic Africa" (1985), DjeDje takes a comparative approach by focusing on five different cultural groups (Taureg, Malinke, Wolof, Hausa, and Dagbamba) (68). In addition to noting that very little work had been published on gender and African music (67), DjeDje systematically introduces the reader to the historical background of each group, their economy, social organization, and music. DjeDje asserts that "Only when women are respected and given equal partnership in religious, economic, social, and political institutions, will they be equal participants in musical culture" (86).

Beginning in the 1980s, studies on women and music in Africa gained popularity to the degree that by the late 1980s and early 1990s, numerous articles, chapters in books, dissertations and even a few monographs had been published.¹⁴ Of the few collections dedicated to African music from this period, *African Musicology: Current Trends Vol. 1*, edited by Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje and William G. Carter (1989), and *African Musicology: Current Trends Vol. 2*, edited by J.C. DjeDje (1992), both include articles on women and music.¹⁵ Volume One includes a section entitled "Music and Gender," which is comprised of two articles about women's music in West Africa: "Vai Women's Roles in Music, Masking, and Ritual Performance" by Lester P. Monts (1989:219-235), and "Womenhood, Work and Song Among the Kpelle of Liberia" by Cynthia E.

¹⁴ Texts of particular interest include: Rörich 1989; Mensah 1990; Kimberlin 1991; Hampton 1992; Anyidoho 1993; Fargion 1993; Hale 1994; Muller 1994; Gunner 1995; Dlamini 1996; Modic 1996; Danielson 1997; Mwai 1998; Aborampah 1999; Muller 1999.

¹⁵ These collections, *festschrifts* presented to J.H. Kwabena Nketia upon their publication, include twenty-four essays on African music; a bibliographic portrait of Nketia and his works (1989:3-29); and an article, "African Musicology: An Assessment of the Field" by J. C. DjeDje and W. G. Carter (1989:39-44) which provides a concise overview of the field and current trends.

Schmidt (1989:237-263). Monts highlights Liberian Vai women's changing roles in musical culture, primarily due to urban migration and Islam (220), and examines the *sande* women's ritual society. The chapter provides an overview of Vai women's roles in musical society by examining song types, training, performance, vocal and instrumental music, and ritual performance (224-233). Equally intriguing is Schmidt's work, which focuses on Kpelle *kuu* work associations and women's secret societies (called *sande*, or *sanen*) (238). Since Kpelle women's songs are central to the two primary topics of the chapter, Schmidt provides the original texts, English translation, and an exegesis of the songs. She also discusses changes that have taken place in the community: "The feminization of agriculture in Upper Bong seems to correlate with the feminization of music, for women are becoming the preeminent preservers of the Kpelle identity expressed through group performance" (259). These two articles work well together because not only do they both include discussion of women's music and cultural change in Liberia, but they also offer concise, chapter length models for effective scholarship on women's music and song in West Africa.

In *African Musicology*, vol. 2, Barbara Hampton's article, "Music and Gender in Ga Society: *Adaawe* Song Poetry" (1992:135-149), utilizes three different women's life stories and experiences, along with an analysis of song poetry to discuss gender and musical culture. Not only is Hampton's approach in studying southeastern Ghanaian Ga women's music directly related to my work with the Dagbamba, the author's research goals and findings also resonate with my experiences. Hampton writes:

Choosing to focus on the women and their songs, the analysis foregrounded individual forms of local life alluding to the cultural system that encompasses them. . . . It also attempted, with Ga women, to open a window into the tensions, conflicts, and contradictions—many unresolved—of the everyday/night lives of ordinary people. (147)

In this way, Hampton argues that Ga women's songs interpret and give meaning to the varied lived experiences of the community (146). Her work is an inspiration and just as relevant today as it was in 1992.

Moving towards the present, articles and chapters dealing with women and music in Africa continue to be an important scholarly medium (Goodman 2002; Hoffman 2002; Henderson 2004; Onyeji 2004; Lawrence 2011b). But perhaps most notable in the 2000s is an increase in theses and dissertations,¹⁶ as well as the publication of several notable monographs (Askew 2002; Chernoff 2003; Mack 2004; Ampene 2005; Burns 2009) and essay collections (Sidikou and Hale 2012; Hale and Sidikou 2014).¹⁷ Not surprisingly, a number of graduate students who have worked on women's music in Africa are from the continent itself, especially institutions in South Africa (Dlamini 1996; Malobola 2001; Pretorius 2001; Rabothata 2005; Thema 2006; Zondi 2008).¹⁸ For example, Thambatshira Tannie Rabothata's dissertation, "Women Abuse as Expressed in Tshivenda Female Songs" (2005), includes an analysis of songs from twenty-two communities. Rabothata, who completed her degree at the University of Limpopo, South Africa, found Tshivenda women were able to gain social support, and send messages to their abusers by singing songs about their emotional and abusive experiences. "It's Just This Animal Called Culture: Regulatory Codes and Resistant Action Among Dagara Female

¹⁶ See Durán 1999; Malobola 2001; Pretorius 2001; Maxwell 2002; Gueye 2004; Morales-Libove 2005; Nhlekisana 2005; Rabothata 2005; Thema 2006; Carter 2007; Rizk 2007; Ciucci 2008; Ozah 2008; Zondi 2008; Lawrence 2011a.

¹⁷ See my forthcoming review of Sidikou and Hale's "Women's Songs from West Africa" (2014) in the upcoming *Ethnomusicology Review* online, <http://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu>. The essay collection includes articles written by linguists, anthropologists, and sociologists, and while the book focuses on women's song traditions, the discussion of music is limited to song text and analysis.

¹⁸ It is very likely that students elsewhere on the continent have produced theses and dissertations on women and music, but those coming from South Africa are more easily accessible via university library systems and online sources. In other words, international online database access is most likely not up to date in many African countries.

Musicians,” by Sidra Meredith Lawrence (2011), who studied ethnomusicology at University of Texas at Austin with Viet Erlmann (and others), writes about the female African body and how it is “a site of regulation and resistance” (2011:vii). Lawrence argues that through song and dance performance, Dagara women not only “redefine the terms of their sexed bodies” (ibid.), they are able to assert themselves and redefine how they are perceived in society. Both of these dissertations demonstrate that song performance provides women with a forum to express themselves about challenging life circumstances. Not surprisingly, both dissertations resonate with my own work in northern Ghana.

Several monographs on West Africa are also closely related to my dissertation: Beverly Mack's work on Nigerian women's music, entitled *Muslim Women Sing: Hausa Popular Song* (2004); Kwasi Ampene's *Female Song Tradition and the Akan of Ghana* (2005); and James Burns' *Female Voices from an Ewe Dance-drumming Community in Ghana* (2009). Mack, who provides us with an invaluable study of women and music in Hausa culture, uses linguistics, poetry, and history rather than musical and ethnographic data. *Muslim Women Sing* is 302 pages, with only 129 pages of actual written prose, while the remaining pages are English translations of Hausa poetry (Mack 2004).¹⁹ Although the text is full of important information about the lives of women in northern Nigeria, it left me wanting more, which may be a strength rather than a weakness. Regardless, *Muslim Women Sing* is an important text that concerns female social dance music in a primarily Muslim West African community.

Female Song Tradition and the Akan of Ghana, another text that relates directly to my

¹⁹ The monograph is divided into two sections: the first section includes six chapters: five chapters, each with profiles of female poets and singers, and the sixth that is entitled “Oral and Written Hausa Poetry.” The second section, entitled “Songs and Poems,” is a collection of transcribed poetry translated into English but without the corresponding Hausa text.

research, both because of its geographical focus and subject matter (Ampene 2005), is of particular importance since it is written by Kwasi Ampene, a scholar from the continent of Africa. Ampene's text consists of six chapters, totaling 214 pages excluding the bibliography and index (250 total).²⁰ This work embraces the goals and motivations of early scholarship in African musicology in that it is primarily focused on musical analysis and documentation. Rather than creating a cultural ethnography concerned with specific voices of individuals, more emphasis is placed on the music and song texts. As Angela Scharfenberger writes in her review of literature on West African women and music, "Ampene's ethnography is rooted in a functionalist approach. He emphasizes the compositional process and the function of this song tradition in Akan cultural practices, such as funerals and political events" (2011:226). While Ampene provides cultural and social context, he does so through such musicological methodologies as analyzing song texts and treating the music as the object of study, rather than the culture and music as a whole. This approach is in line with some Africanist musicologists who present musical analysis as central to their discussion of culture, and thus continue the goals of early Africanist scholarship (see above for information on early Africanist scholarship).

Female Voices from an Ewe Dance-drumming Community in Ghana (2009), the most recent of these monographs, addresses female Ewe musicians who, until Burns' work, had not been the subject of any major study: "I would argue that the silencing of Ewe women musicians is reflective of a larger trend in African studies" (Burns 2009:11) – works that are male-focused and view the world through a male-privileged gaze (ibid.). A product of over ten years of

²⁰ The six chapters are titled as follows: "1 The Akan Song Tradition of Nnwonkoro: A Historical Overview; 2 Motivations for the Creative Process; 3 Compositional Conventions of Nnwonkoro Songs; 4 Models of Form and Style; 5 The Creative Process and Context; 6 Contemporary Issues." Ampene also includes two appendices: one is a list of Nnwonkoro groups from 1998, and the other is a list of band members.

experience with Ewe music and musicians (2009:1), Burns identifies his study as musical anthropology that explores “how the musical community of Dzibordi articulates the life and belief system of a multi-generational group of Ewe women” (2009:2). His tone and presentation reflect his dedication and personal investment in the music and the Ewe community in Dzodze, southeastern Ghana.²¹ The text includes an introduction and four chapters,²² DVD notes, a glossary, list of interviews, references, index, and a DVD (Burns 2009:v). The video, an invaluable resource that brings the text to life, includes interviews with several women and footage of individual and group dancing and singing.²³

While this review only examines a small selection of texts, it highlights a few seminal articles, recent dissertations, and monographs to illustrate the importance of works dedicated to the study of women’s musical culture in Africa. The foregoing also provides a survey of scholarship that has influenced my research – specifically, Hampton and Mack’s work on artist profiles and song text translation, Ampene’s musicological approach, and Burns’ articulation of musical anthropology are instructive. For a theoretically focused overview of much of the literature on women and music in West Africa, Angela Scharfenberger’s recent article in the journal *African Music* provides a invaluable resource (2011:221-246).

²¹ See “Female Voices” (Burns 2009:12-18), the section describing and situating the author’s fieldwork methodology.

²² The chapters are entitled: “Introduction: Our Music Has Become a Divine Spirit; Music and Identity in an African Town”; “1 Daughters of the Drum: The Social Environment of Female Artists in Dzodze”; “2 The Dance Space: Music Associations, Territories and Events”; “3 We are a Community Dance-drumming Group: The Dzibordi *Habobo* of Dzodze”; and “4 Doing it for Everyone to See: The Oral Artistry of Dzibordi in Performance” (Burns 2009:v).

²³ If I were to choose a model for my dissertation, as much as it would apply to a different community and culture, this work would be among the top choices. I particularly appreciate the accompanying DVD that highlights individual women’s voices, providing the viewer/reader with a vivid and powerful picture of life in Ghana.

NORTHERN GHANA: OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE ON DAGBON

Many seasoned travelers, ethnographers, and even some Ghanaians are somewhat mystified upon hearing that I work in Ghana's Northern Region. Ghana is divided into ten regions, with the Northern Region being the largest, spanning about 70,384 square kilometers (about 43,734 square miles), 29.5% of Ghana's total land area, and a population of approximately 1.9 million people (9.6% of Ghana's total population).²⁴ As noted in the foregoing, the regional administrative capital is centrally located in the city of Tamale. The Dagbamba people comprise roughly one third of the region's population and live in Dagbon, which is roughly composed of nine districts: Gushiegu, Karaga, Kumbungu, Mion, Savelugu/Nanton, Sagnarigu, Tamale Metropolitan, Tolon, Yendi Municipal.²⁵ Before 2012, these were simply five districts: Kumbungu/Tolon, Savelugu/Nanton, Tamale, Gushiegu/Karaga, and Yendi (Bierlich 2007:2).

Literature on the region is mostly sociological in nature dealing with education, development, health, history, conflict, politics, and the impact of colonialism,²⁶ with many studies and publications continuously produced by the University of Ghana.²⁷ Although several texts focus on regional politics and history, Martin Staniland's *The Lions of Dagbon* (1975) has been the most detailed and comprehensive historical account of local chieftaincy issues.

²⁴ See Ghana's government web page for general information on Ghana: <http://ghana.gov.gh>. Also see the CIA world factbook webpage: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html>.

²⁵ See Ghana Districts <http://www.ghanadistricts.com/districts/> for more information, including districts in the Northern Region, as well as details on the history of the divisions made throughout the 20th and 21st century.

²⁶ For example see Abu 1994; Ardayfio-Schandorf and Kwafo-Akoto 1990; Arhin 1985; Bekye 1998; Botchway 2004; Der 1998; Ewusi 1987; Grischow 2006; Lentz and Nugent 2000; Mahama 2003; Martinson 2002; Müller 2005; Oppong 1983; Pilaszewicz 2000; Saaka 1978; Skalnik 2002; Staniland 1975; Tamakloe 1931; Tsikata 2001; Yakubu 2005.

²⁷ For example see Ansere 1977; Bening 1990; Oppong 1973, 2000, 2004a, 2004b, 2005.

However, Africanist scholar and historian Wyatt MacGaffey's recent book, *Chiefs, Priests, and Praise-Singers: History, Politics, and Land Ownership in Northern Ghana*, offers an updated, historically grounded, and forward thinking perspective on a complex culture (MacGaffey 2013).²⁸ His nuanced approach is refreshing, and his introduction provides a wonderful survey of extant literature and the history of Dagbon (MacGaffey 2013: Kindle Location 91-249).

MacGaffey's text is based on fieldwork conducted from 1996 to 2012, when he took annual two-month trips to Tamale. The resultant book is based on research, interviews, and assistance from numerous individuals who were particularly helpful, especially since MacGaffey does not speak Dagbanli. Chapter one examines previous studies, histories, published works, and accounts related to Dagbon, which is useful for anyone interested in the region as it provides a concise background and context for the reader. The middle four chapters are the heart of the book and discuss the historical, and current, state of chieftaincy, and the hierarchical structure of society in Dagbon. The sixth chapter, "Chiefs in the National Arena," brings the narrative to contemporary Ghanaian society and examines the role of chiefs, and northern culture in general, within the larger context of Ghana, the country. MacGaffey's book is invaluable to those seeking a contextualized, historically grounded, anthropological examination of the complex nature of chieftaincy in Dagbon.

Other studies on local politics and conflicts include Harold B. Martinson's *Dagbon: Who Killed Ya-Na Andani Yakubu II?* (2002), Ibrahim Mahama's *Ethnic Conflicts in Northern Ghana* (2003), and Abudulai Yakubu's *The Abudu-Andani Crisis of Dagbon* (2005). While these studies

²⁸ The book, available both in print and electronic editions totaling 248 pages, is divided into six chapters: "1. Colonial Anthropology and Historical Reconstruction; 2. Drum Chant and the Political Uses of Tradition; 3. Tindanas and Chiefs: Ethnography; 4. Chiefs and Tindanas: Making *Nam*; 5. Tamale: The Dakpema, the Gulkpe'Na, the Bugulana, and the Law of the Land; 6. Chiefs in the National Arena."

are more limited in scope, they provide valuable contemporary information regarding regional politics that must be understood to contextualize the music culture of the area.

Studies on women in Ghana largely deal with education (Ansere 1977; Bening 1990; Oppong 1973), employment (Ewusi 1987; Oppong 1987), gender (Müller 2005; Oppong 1979, 1983; Oppong et. al 2006; Tsikata 2001), reproduction and family (Abu 1994; Oppong and ISACFR 1978; Oppong 1979, 2000, 2004a, 2004b, 2005; UNICEF 2000). Throughout these works, the information specifically on the Northern Region is varied, but useful nonetheless. Christine Oppong is a prolific scholar and researcher who has written and edited numerous texts relating to women, family, education, policy, health and reproduction, and gender in West Africa, Ghana, and Northern Ghana specifically.²⁹ Many of these texts are informative but limited as they offer little in the way of cultural and social analysis or interpretation; rather, many of the studies primarily provide statistical data. However, the published version of Oppong's M.A. thesis from the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon, entitled *Growing Up in Dagbon*, stands out and includes discussion of the traditional educational systems and social structures among the Dagbamba (1973).³⁰ Although a rather brief account, it is one of the most informative texts about the Dagbamba people with sections on "Becoming a Drummer" and "Becoming a Fiddler" (Oppong 1973). The information regarding Dagbamba women, however brief, deals primarily with domestic roles, kinship, girls domestic education in the home, and low enrollment rates in local schools.

A more recent study by Danish social and medical anthropologist Bernhard Bierlich, *The*

²⁹ See bibliography for full citations of her many contributions.

³⁰ See the "Acknowledgement," "Forward" and "Introduction" sections of *Growing Up in Dagbon* for further explanation from the author and her mentor, J.H. Kwabena Nketia, regarding the logistics and specifics of the study.

Problem of Money: African Agency and Western Medicine in Northern Ghana (2007), offers a rich ethnographic description of Dagbamba society and culture, including many insightful accounts on issues pertaining to gender and kinship.³¹ As a social and medical anthropologist, Bierlich focuses primarily on medicine, local economic practices, and the rural-urban divide. In doing so, gender dynamics become a major theme, which is one reason I found his work particularly relevant.³² While Bierlich's text is focused on Western and traditional medicine in Dagbamba culture, his extended fieldwork experience adds depth that makes the monograph important not only to social and medical anthropologists, but to anyone interested in contemporary Dagbamba culture.

While there are many texts addressing northern Ghana generally, scholarship on Dagbamba music is still quite limited with the bulk of the publications based on fieldwork done in the 1970s during a relatively prolific period of scholarship on the music of Africa. A few of the first works on music were articles by Opong on Dagbamba drumming and fiddling traditions (1968; 1969; 1970). In addition, an article by Sylvia Kinney that appeared in the journal *Ethnomusicology* presents a brief overview of the Dagbamba annual traditional festival Damba (Kinney 1970:258-265).

More significant contributions by renowned ethnomusicologists John Chernoff, Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje, and David Locke have addressed Dagbamba cultural practices such as warrior music (Chernoff 1979), fiddle music (DjeDje 1978, 1982; Chernoff 1991; DjeDje

³¹ Bierlich's book is 228 pages organized into eight chapters: "1 'New' and Enduring Social and Economic Formations; 2 Powers of the Person; 3 Basic Concepts of Health and Illness; 4 Medicines, Modernity and Commoditization; 5 The Herbalist, Medical Pluralism and the Cultural Patterning of Illness; 6 Health, Wealth and Magic; 7 A Woman's Lot: the Practical Realities of Care; 8 The Problem of Money: Money and Medicine."

³² See especially chapters "1 'New' and Enduring Social and Economic Formations," "2 Powers of the Person," and "7 A Women's Lot: the Practical Realities of Care."

2008), drumming (Chernoff 1979, 1985; Locke 1985; Locke and Lunna 1990), and traditional dance (Chernoff 1979; DjeDje 2008; Locke and Lunna 1990). Several recent graduate students have conducted research on Dagbon. Notably, from Tufts University, percussionist and ethnomusicologist Karl Haas has worked extensively on rhythm, meter, and the tradition of Dagbamba warrior music (2008). At Indiana University, Abdulai Salifu investigates praise drumming, proverbs, titles, and poetry (2008). And at the Institute of African Studies at University of Ghana, Legon, Dagbamba drummer Zablong Zakaria Abdallah wrote as a cultural insider about the *lunsi* tradition (2010). However, there has been very little scholarship on vocal traditions (DjeDje 1984), and even less on women's involvement in music (DjeDje 1985). DjeDje's essay, "Women and Music in Sudanic Africa" (1985), is the only source I have found that discusses women and music in Dagbon in any detail.³³

Chernoff's text, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility: Aesthetics and Social Action in African Musical Idioms* (1979), has an eloquent, and authoritative style that is aimed at a wide readership. Instead of an ethnographic monograph about a particular cultural group (i.e. Ampene 2005; Burns 2009), or a selective ethnographic comparative study (i.e. DjeDje 2008), Chernoff's text aims to provide a generalized overview of such broad issues as "Music of Africa," "Style in Africa," and "Values in Africa."³⁴ Chernoff generalizes based primarily on his experience with Ewe and Dagbamba music in Ghana, where he spent several years primarily studying drumming (1979:4-20). While I take issue with the narrative style of utilizing the authorial (or royal) "we" throughout the text, as well as his use of authoritative generalizations about all of African music

³³ See discussion of "Women and Music in Sudanic Africa" above.

³⁴ These are the focus and titles of chapters two, three, and four of *African Rhythm and African Sensibility* (Chernoff 1979).

based on West African drumming traditions, Chernoff includes numerous astute observations from his personal experiences in Ghana. For example, he writes of the challenges of participant-observation research and analysis “... at a certain level too much awareness makes it impossible to act or relate. ... In participant-observation research, one’s relationship to what one studies changes continuously” (Chernoff 1979:20). I relate intimately with many of Chernoff’s descriptions of encountering Dagbamba culture and music, and was inspired by his inclusion of lengthy quotations of his teachers’ own words (i.e. 1979:132-139). His article, “The Drums of Dagbon” (1985:101-127), is also a significant contribution, and includes one of the few descriptions of *tora* in Western scholarship (120-122).

Another drumming focused text, *Drum Damba: Talking Drum Lessons* (Locke and Lunna 1990), begins with an introduction to Dagbamba culture, followed by a transcription and exegesis of a series of drum lessons with Abubakari Lunna. Locke concentrates on Dagbamba drumming, utilizing Western notation to document, analyze, and convey the artistry and complexity of the music. The resultant text is a unique applied and engaged music-centered contribution to the scholarly literature on Dagbon. In *Fiddling in West Africa*, the most recent of these works on music in Dagbon, DjeDje examines the local fiddling tradition comparing it with similar traditions among the Fulbe in Senegambia and Hausa in Nigeria (2008).³⁵ The book is 337 pages, with 72 pages dedicated to Dagbamba culture in her chapter 4, entitled “In Service to the King: Dagbamba Fiddling in Ghana.” The chapter introduces *gondze* fiddling by discussing Dagbamba culture more generally and includes sections on *gondze* performance, history, society, musicians social status, an overview of Dagbamba music (169-87), before focusing on *gondze*

³⁵ DjeDje’s book is divided into four main sections with an introduction and conclusion, an appendix of the one-string fiddle distribution by country, a discography and videography, and index.

fiddlers, their culture, history, performance contexts, social organization, training, dancing, and music (187-241). In addition to these book-length works, DjeDje, Locke, and Chernoff have all published several articles on Dagbamba music that provide valuable studies on particular topics including: patronage (DjeDje 1982), possession songs (DjeDje 1984), the dance genre *takai* (Locke 1985), and a more generalized introduction to Dagbamba music and dance (Chernoff 1985). While all of these studies are valuable and intriguing, they primarily focus on male-dominated instrumental performance.

A number of recordings of Dagbamba music are also of interest. With his teacher Alhaji Ibrahim Abdulai, Chernoff published two albums of Dagbamba drumming – *Master Drummers of Dagbon Volume 1* in 1987 (20 tracks), and *Master Drummers of Dagbon Volume 2* in 1992 (16 tracks) – both released by Rounder Records. The first volume includes two women’s group dance pieces *lua* and *tora*, while the second album is primarily praise drumming and solo dances. David Locke produced two recordings with Abubakari Lunna and two other Dagbamba musicians (Adam Alhassan and Abubakari Alhassan). While one is a recording of praise drumming (2008), another is a companion to the book, *Drum Damba* (1996). Another album relevant to my work with women’s music is Verna Gillis’ *Traditional Women’s Music from Ghana: Ewe, Fanti, Ashanti, Dagomba*, recorded in 1976 and released by Smithsonian Folkways in 1981. It includes three tracks of Dagbamba women’s singing complete with corresponding liner notes written by DjeDje (1981). The recording is a wonderful example of women’s songs from the 1970s that sound very similar to many I have heard in Dagbon. Although I am not familiar with the four songs on this recording, it would be interesting to play them for women in Tamale today.

Two videos are also notable. The *Drums of Dagbon*, produced by John M. Chernoff, was originally released for TV in 1984 as part five of the series *Repercussions: A Celebration of African-American Music. Dagbamba Praise Name Dances*, featuring performances by Abubakari Lunna, Fuseina Victoria Wumbei, and the Agbekor Drum and Dance Society, as well as footage of Lunna discussing Dagbamba music was published in 1990.³⁶

In addition to these texts and recordings, online resources have been increasing in recent years. David Locke along with a few students at Tufts University created an extensive web resource, entitled *Dagbamba Dance Drumming*, that includes everything from multipart recordings of numerous Dagbamba pieces (*tora, takai, damba*, etc.), transcriptions of history stories told by Abubakari Lunna, musical notation, Dagbanli drum language and more.³⁷ In addition to this amazing musical resource, a few local Tamale institutions have an online presence, namely the Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies (www.ticcs.org), the University for Development Studies (www.uds.edu.gh), and the Tamale Ghana: Sister Cities of Louisville organization (www.sclou.org). A few Ghanaian regional sources are also important for keeping abreast of developments in the area, namely [Dagbon.net](http://www.dagbon.net), the Government of Ghana “Northern Region” pages (<http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php/about-ghana/regions/northern>), among others.

³⁶ Also see Discography for several other audio recordings that may be of interest (Gillis 1978; Jawula et. al. 2003; Lunna 1996).

³⁷ See David Locke et. al. “Dagomba Dance Drumming.” <https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/display/DagombaDanceDrumming/Welcome>.

III. Organization

This dissertation is organized in a telescopic manner: It begins with a broad lens looking at the historical and geographic context of the study, moving to Dagbamba women and music more specifically, then finally zooming in on specific performers and the music itself. A few central goals permeate the project as a whole: (1) to provide a descriptive ethnographically based account of Dagbamba women's lived experiences, particularly in relation to music in Tamale, (2) to document women's music and song texts, and (3) to focus on the voices of specific women, privileging specificity over generalization. Consequently, themes throughout the text include: (1) women and music in Dagbon, (2) knowledge(s) produced through Dagbamba song, and (3) Dagbamba women's position (positionality) or standpoint in society.

In Chapter 1, "The Northern Region, Dagbon, and Tamale: A Brief History" I discuss the geographic location of the study to provide an economic and social picture of the area. I also discuss the history of Dagbon, as issues surrounding Islam, the slave trade, colonialism, chieftaincy disputes, and politics in general have been integral to the position and identity of Tamale, Yendi, and the Northern Region as a whole. To situate the Dagbamba as a cultural group in the context of West Africa and Ghana, the history of precolonial Dagbon, the origins of the Dagbamba, and chieftaincy hierarchy, primarily based on oral accounts, Wyatt MacGaffey's 2013 book, *Chiefs, Priests, and Praise-Singers: History, Politics, and Land Ownership in Northern Ghana*, and my personal experience in the region, are discussed at some length here.

Chapter 2, "Women and Music Among the Dagbamba in Tamale," provides an overview of the various contexts in which women are involved in music, including a discussion of festivals, life cycle events, social occasions, government functions, staged cultural or folkloric

performances, and music in private life. I utilize the few sources available (i.e. Beirlich 2007; Chernoff 1979; DjeDje 2008; Lawrence 2011a and 2011b; Locke 1990) in tandem with my fieldwork to fill a void in Africanist ethnomusicology as it relates to women's music in Dagbon.

The focus of Chapter 3, "Madame Fuseina Wumbei and Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman: Life (Her)Stories," is somewhat self evident. This chapter highlights the particular lived experiences of two women: a professional female Dagbamba dancer and musician, and a Dagbanli educator and linguist. The chapter uses quotations from interviews as much as possible to give the reader a sense of the voices and personalities of these women. The discussion follows Mme Fuseina's biographical story from her early education, to her career as a dancer with the Arts Council of Ghana's National Folkloric Dance Company, her time as a teacher at the Tamale Center for National Culture, through her retirement in 2008. The chapter also documents Rosina's life with specific emphasis on education and women in politics. In addition, information is presented on the many struggles and challenges both individuals faced in their personal lives, all the while maintaining a remarkable sense of independence despite many hardships.

Chapter 4, "Tora Songs From Funerals to the Stage: History, Ethnography, and Analysis," examines a women's dance-drumming genre, focusing primarily on a selection of songs. This chapter describes the genre generally and its context within the musical world in Dagbon. I attempt to show the dynamic nature of *tora* by presenting a thick ethnographic description of a few contrasting experiences I have had. I then look closely at a selection of *tora* songs that exemplify the different themes addressed, the knowledge produced by the song texts, as well as the type of musical structures used in women's songs. Throughout the chapter, I include quotations from personal interviews that concern *tora* and women's music in Dagbon.

In Chapter 5, “KaliTora,” I discuss a recording project with the group KaliTora that I worked on during my field research trip in Tamale in 2010-11. Mme Fuseina, who is a member of the group, connected me with KaliTora with the intention of recording a “cassette,” as they say in Ghana. This chapter not only provides a contemporary example of a women’s dance-drumming group in Tamale engaging in *tora* and other song genres, but it looks at the catharsis experienced among the members while singing and dancing together. In addition, it highlights the personal advocacy that has transpired among group members.

Finally Chapter 6, “Concluding Thoughts: Cultural Change and the Future of Dagbamba Traditional Music,” offers thoughts on further research, as well as summarizes the primary findings and critical interventions that the dissertation puts forth. As noted several times in the foregoing, this dissertation focuses on issues related to gender, the social and cultural implications of Dagbamba women performing music, as well as the knowledge produced by women's involvement in music. In this way, my project will contribute to the body of work on Muslim women in West Africa, Dagbamba music generally, and ultimately it will present a more complete picture of musical culture in Dagbon through this deliberately female-focused study.

Chapter 1: The Northern Region, Dagbon, and Tamale: A Brief History



Figure 1. Map of Africa with Ghana highlighted.³⁸

I. Introduction

In 1957, the Gold Coast became independent and Nkrumah renamed it Ghana, after an old African empire that had been located to the north of the present territory. The festivities were exuberant; the joy palpable. (Cooper 2002:68)

It is significant that of the colonized “Black African” countries, Ghana was first to become independent from British colonial rule. On 6 March, 1957, the British Colony of the Gold Coast became independent Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah.³⁹ Ghana has gone through military rule in

³⁸ Wikimedia Commons. 2011. “Ghana in Africa.” [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ghana_in_Africa_\(-mini_map_-rivers\).svg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ghana_in_Africa_(-mini_map_-rivers).svg) (accessed 21 May, 2014).

³⁹ For an overview of Ghana’s history, see Ghana Web’s “History Timeline - Chronology of Important Events.” <<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/history/timeline.php>> (accessed 5 November, 2013).

its early years as a nation state and now has successfully held democratic national elections for several years. Internationally, it is praised as an example of how African countries can govern without the widespread corruption found in other parts of the continent. Politics and history are not my focus here, but a brief overview is helpful to contextualize the climate in the country generally. The current president, John Dramani Mahama, born in Damongo in the West Gonja district in Ghana's Northern Region, became president after the death of John Atta Mills in July 2012. Mahama became Ghana's fourth democratically elected president after a contested race that took place on 7 December, 2012.⁴⁰ From my experience, the democratic process is held by Ghanaians with pride. Most of my younger friends (20s-40s) in the Northern Region were fully aware and active in the political process, registering early for their voter identification cards, and exercising their voting rights during election time. While the democratic process seems quite successful in Ghana, there are still widespread cases of heads of households, or party leaders, rounding up friends and family to essentially force them to vote for their selected candidate, but I digress. Instead of focusing on the current political climate, this chapter is intended to provide an overview of Dagbamba society by contextualizing Dagbamba culture within Ghana.

II. The Dagbamba in Dagbon and Tamale

As I have mentioned before, the Dagbamba (Dagomba) speak Dagbanli (Dagbani, Dagbane), which “belongs to the Mossi or Mole-Dagbe subgroup of the Gur language of the Niger-Congo linguistic family” (DjeDje 2008:176). The Dagbamba live primarily in the area known as Dagbon in the Northern Region of Ghana and share many characteristics with other

⁴⁰ After Mahama had been elected, opposition leaders petitioned the court in an attempt to oust the president. However, after long court proceedings in 2013, the petition was dismissed.

Voltaic and Sudanic cultures (Ibid.). Anthropologist Bernhard Bierlich problematizes the widely accepted assertion that the Dagbamba are a distinct cultural or ethnic group: “We may think of the Dagomba as an ethnic group. At the same time we must not stick to a ‘fixed’ representation of them as a static entity. Globalizing and individualizing pressures are at work, undermining any naive attempt to *exclude everything* outside the strictly bounded locality” (Bierlich 2007:xvi). That being said, this study is located in and around Tamale where the majority of residents identify themselves as Dagbamba, but I would agree with Bierlich’s sentiment that it is counterproductive to think of this distinction as being “strictly bounded” geographically or culturally. For example the Dagbamba do not only live in Dagbon proper but also in the neighboring areas of Mamprugu and Nanung: “the name of these inhabitants of Mamprugu, Dagbon and Nanung is not just a historical fact, but indeed a linguistic cultural reality of our time. The inhabitants of the three sister states do not only speak the same language and possess similar cultures but they still sometimes, if not always, refer to themselves as Dagbamba” (Mahama 2004:3). In fact, while Mamprusis live in Mamprugu, and Nanumbas live in Nanung, most also identify themselves as Dagbambas and are considered “cousins” living in “sister states” and commonly intermarry, as well as travel to Tamale for work and other activities.



Figure 2. Regional map of Ghana.⁴¹

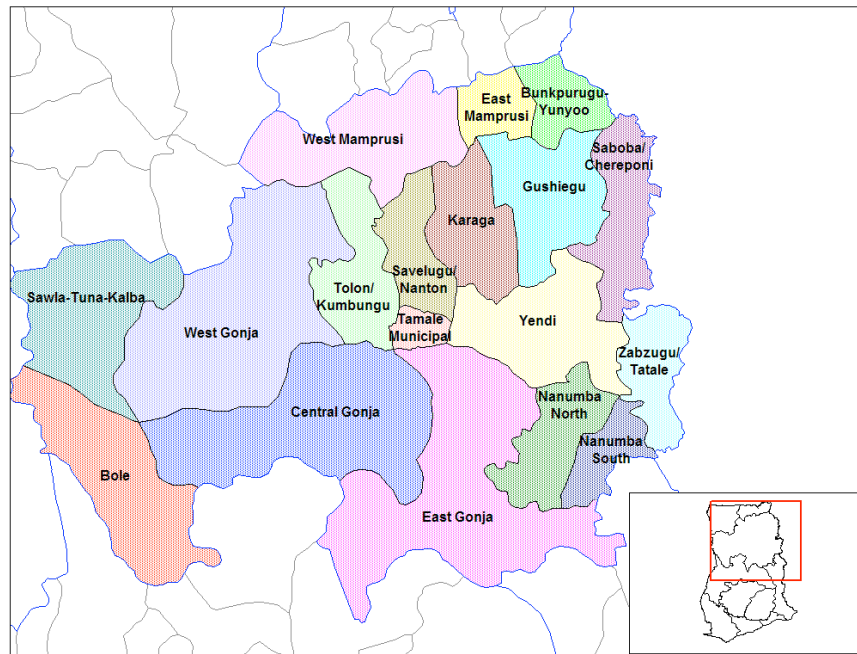


Figure 3. District map of Northern Region.⁴²

⁴¹ Wikimedia Commons. 2006. "Ghana Regions." http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ghana_regions.png (accessed 21 May, 2014).

As noted in the introduction, Tamale is the regional and administrative capital of the Northern Region of Ghana with Yendi to the East serving as the traditional capital of Dagbon and the seat of the Ya Na, the sovereign of Dagbon. Ghana (about the size of Oregon in the USA) is now divided into ten regions. The Northern Region is the largest, spanning about 70,384 square kilometers (29.5% of Ghana's total land area), a population of approximately 1.9 million people (9.6% of Ghana's total population), with more than half of whom identify as Dagbamba.⁴²

According to Ghana's government web page as of 28 June, 2012, the Northern Region is now divided into 26 districts, 6 were added to the 20 previous, but it is difficult to find a current map with the new divisions.⁴³ The Dagbamba population statistics are not precise but, as also noted in the Introduction, there are roughly one million Dagbambas living primarily in Dagbon, which is made up of nine districts: Gushiegu, Karaga, Kumbungu, Mion, Savelugu/Nanton, Sagnarigu, Tamale Metropolitan, Tolon, Yendi Municipal.⁴⁴ Before 2012, there were simply five districts: Kumbungu/Tolon, Savelugu/Nanton, Tamale, Gushiegu/Karaga, and Yendi (Bierlich 2007:2).⁴⁵

Throughout my field research, I lived just outside Tamale in an area called Lamashegu, with Alhaji Abubakari Lunna's family, and later at the Zo Simli Naa Palace adjacent to the Zo

⁴² See Ghana's government web page for general information on Ghana: <http://ghana.gov.gh> Also see the CIA world factbook webpage: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html>.

⁴³ I am unclear why discrepancies exist, but it seems that over time the region (and the country as a whole) has continued to create smaller municipal divisions in an effort to take all the regional cultural divisions into account. Published maps are simply slow to catch up to the current divisions (see Bierlich 2007:2; <http://ghana.gov.gh>).

⁴⁴ See <http://www.ghanadistricts.com/districts/> for more information on all of Ghana's districts, including the Northern Region, as well as details on the history of the divisions made throughout the 20th and 21st century.

⁴⁵ The map shown above divides the region into 18 districts, with Dagbon comprising the six districts of Tolon/ Kumbungu, Savelugu/Nanton, Tamale Municipal, Karaga, Gushiegu, and Yendi. The map is in the public domain and can be found at: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8c/Northern_Ghana_districts.png.

Simli Naa J.S.S. (junior secondary school) girls school.⁴⁶ Although Tamale and the surrounding area was the primary location of my fieldwork, I visited and conducted field research in all districts of Dagbon. Most significantly, as I mentioned in the introduction, I spent part of the annual Damba festival in Yendi, I also visited singers in Gburmani and Lungbunga in western Dagbon, as well as friends who lived in farms in different parts of the region. So while the primary focus is on women's musical life around Tamale, my varied experiences outside of Tamale have provided me with a wider perspective and greater appreciation of Dagbamba culture and society generally.

When traveling from the USA to Ghana, one must typically fly through Europe (although there are some direct flights from New York and Atlanta), and then to Accra, Ghana's capital city on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. Tamale is located approximately 560 kilometers (350 miles) north of Accra, but about 620 kilometers (or 385-400 miles) by road. To reach Tamale from Accra, you can take either a 16-24 hour bus ride that costs roughly 15-20 US dollars, or you may choose to take the daily Antrak Air flight that takes about an hour but costs around 130-150 US dollars. I have experienced both options several times and while it is enjoyable to see the Ghanaian countryside by bus, if you can afford to take the flight, one can avoid potential complications of traveling by bus. Poor road conditions, bus breakdowns, and many other unanticipated problems may arise when taking surface roads. These conditions act to reinforce the misconception that Dagbon, and Tamale specifically, is a remote region away from primary sources of material goods, international information, and global media. While in fact many

⁴⁶ "Zo" in Dagbanli means friend, "simli" friendship, and "Naa" chief or king (see Dagbanli glossary at the beginning of the dissertation). This title was created for the late Dr. Susan Herlin who worked with the Sister Cities of Louisville organization to create a partnership between Tamale and Louisville, Kentucky. Her work with the organization provided scholarships for Ghanaian students to attend school, a program for students from the USA to travel to Tamale, she employed several local staff in Tamale, as well as developed other beneficial programs and services (see Tamale, Ghana: Sister Cities of Louisville, Inc. 2004. <http://www.sclou.org/index.php?id=46>)

Dagbambas live with the contradictory reality of poor sanitation, cell phones and Internet, few economic opportunities, yet access to satellite TV with international sports and news sources.

There is a widely held perception that Tamale is far afield, remote, and a place without access to basic resources. After spending time in Legon at the University of Ghana, I had several conversations with Ghanaians who were taken aback when they learned I would be living in the Northern Region. Many had never been north of Kumasi, and considered the Upper and Northern Regions “the bush,” or somehow beyond the boundaries of normal travel, perhaps an area lacking the modern comforts of the municipal areas around Accra, Cape Coast, and Kumasi. I was always surprised to receive this reaction as I have been visiting the north almost every year since 2006. In a way, the reactions were similar to those I received in Berlin, Germany, when people learned I lived in the former East German town of Dresden. The local and regional perceptions of distance between cities, and cultural norms around what is a comfortable day of travel, influence the locally held prejudices about both Dresden and Tamale. I would argue that many of these perceptions are based on lack of information; thus they are false and quite surprising given the day to day realities of the local communities. For example, Tamale has an Indian restaurant where one can purchase samosas, and a “Jungle Bar” at TICCS (the Tamale Institute for Cross Cultural Studies) where one can order pizza or an American style burger! The city also boasts hotels, public and private swimming pools, Internet cafes, department stores where one can buy TVs and other electronics. Almost everyone has a cell phone - the examples of perceived modernity and access to Western commodities are endless. At the very same time most households do not have running water, let alone the cash on hand to take advantage of the easy access to so called modern or Western goods. The realities of subsistence farming, the harsh

climate coupled with issues around sanitation, lack of education and economic opportunities, and overall material poverty creates an all around difficult living situation for many northern Ghanaians. The many dualities and dissonances present in this cultural milieu, permeate many aspects of life in and around Tamale.

III. History of Dagbon: A Brief Overview

The history of the kingdom of Dagbon was known to European travelers and Hausa scholars in the nineteenth century and to the first British administrators of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. It is memorized and authoritatively recited by the praise-singers of the chiefs, who tell of invaders from the northeast, led by Na Sitobu, founder of the kingdom, and his brothers, who founded the neighboring kingdoms of Mamprugu and Nanun. Sitobu's son Na Nyagse conquered the space that became Dagbon by killing off the Earth priests and replacing them with his own relatives as chiefs. (MacGaffey 2013:Kindle Locations 497-501)

The history of Dagbon, and the Dagbambas, is primarily based on the oral record kept by *lunsi* praise-singers and drummers, as Africanist scholar and historian Wyatt MacGaffey states above. The history of the Dagbamba includes this account of an embattled take over of land by the conquerers who came from elsewhere in the north, perhaps from the northeast that would now be parts of northern Nigeria (MacGaffey 2013:Kindle Locations 381-382). We hear of invaders heroically conquering the native people and imposing their own chiefs along with their own regional and hierarchical structure (MacGaffey 2013). Similar to other origin stories the conquest established a new kingdom. The ancestors of the Dagbamba are said to have been “red hunters”:

The drum history, stories told to the accompaniment of drumming by the praise-singers of chiefs, begins with Tohazie, “the Red Hunter,” a mythical figure resembling the “kings from elsewhere” in the traditions of Central Africa. His great-grandson Gbewaa

migrated into the northeast corner of modern Ghana as the founder of a kingdom that Gbewaa's sons later divided into those of Dagbon, Mamprugu, and Nanun, whose peoples all call themselves Dagbamba. Sitobu is described as the founder of Dagbon, but he left it to his son Na Nyagse to conquer the indigenous people, whose only leaders were tindanas [fetish priests]. In African foundation stories a shadowy immigrant father is often followed by an energetic warrior son who consolidates the polity. (MacGaffey 2013:Kindle Locations 382-388)

I include extended quotations of MacGaffey's recent publication on the Dagbamba not only because of the significance of his work and the clarity of prose, but also due to the nature of the complicated lineage. Excellent and succinct explanations of the history of the Dagbamba are offered in both Djedje's *Fiddling in West Africa* (2008) and Bierlich's *The Problem of Money* (2007).⁴⁷ For a more in-depth insider account, Ibrahim Mahama's *History and Traditions of Dagbon* (2004) is very instructive. Mahama writes: "By Dagomba oral traditions, the ordinary 'Dagbamba' of Mamprugu, Dagbon and Nanung were already occupying the territories they occupy today when Na Gbewa, the great ancestor of the Nayiri (Ruler of Mamprugu), arrived at Pusiga in the Upper East Region of Ghana" (Mahama 2004:3). As I mentioned earlier, the distinction of "Dagbamba" as an ethnic group only residing in Dagbon is not accurate. A more complicated and complete picture of interrelated neighboring communities emerges when we consider that the Dagbamba lived in their current area before they were conquered and divided by Na Gbewa and his sons.

History and family lineage are important in Dagbamba culture and society. The ruling class and hierarchy of chieftaincy tracing back to Na Gbewa are still part of life in Dagbon. In addition to a seemingly endless list of chieftaincy titles, both local and regional, with varying

⁴⁷ For a more recent historical and political account, see Wyatt MacGaffey's *Chiefs, Priests, and Praise-Singers: History, Politics, and Land Ownership in Northern Ghana* (2013) that replaces Martin Staniland's *The Lions of Dagbon* (1975) as the most informative and definitive text on the complex chieftaincy lineage and disputes of the Dagbamba people.

levels of importance and status, titles specific to the classes of *lunsi* (drummers), *gondze* (fiddlers), *kombonsi* (warriors), *nakohanima* (butchers), *machelinima* (blacksmiths), also exist. Each estate or class has its own hierarchy and chieftaincy titles (Mahama 2004:34-47). The traditional leader of Dagbon is the Ya Na who resides in Yendi. MacGaffey explains:

In Dagbon, the office of Ya Na in Yendi was reserved to [sic] the sons of previous kings. To be a candidate, a prince had also to occupy one of the three chieftaincies of Karaga, Savelugu, or Mion, to which in turn a hundred other titles, reserved to descendants of Na Nyagse, ultimately gave access. To be royal was prestigious and offered the possibility of advancement to Yendi, but individual royal titles were often of small importance. (MacGaffey 2013:Kindle Locations 467-470)

Mahama comments on the countless titles or chiefships available in Dagbon: “Considering the fact that every Dagomba has a class and may hold a chiefship or title, which he is proud of, it may be said without fear of contradiction or quibbling that there is no commoner in Dagbon” (2004:48). Continuing, he states: “The provision of chieftainships and titles for every class of the Dagomba society makes chieftaincy a viable institution in Dagbon. Every class sees itself as a part and parcel of the institution of chieftaincy. All classes cherish the institution” (Ibid.). The institution is solidified further by *lunsi* and *gondze* as they recite the lineage of local chiefs at festivals, and even around the market. The individual who has been praised by the *lunsi* or *gondze* will customarily give them a token of his appreciation (usually paid in coins or small dashing of *kola*). During more formal events, *lunsi* will be expected to display their intellectual prowess and recite the *lunsarga* or *sambanlunga* (the narration or chanting of the history and chieftaincy lineage of Dagbon) (Mahama 2004:38). MacGaffey problematizes the discussion of oral history and how politics can play a role in how these stories are recalled and selectively edited:

Princes and their drummers may recite up to sixteen generations of their forebears, but there is evidence that slave and client lineages attach themselves fictitiously to royal lines into which they have married. Genealogy is remembered insofar as it is useful; it represents political claims that have been established in the course of history but may not be historical records. There is in fact no ethnic division in Dagbon and no ruling class, as some scholars have supposed; all are much intermarried. The term *tɔ̃ɔ̃bia*, “child of the soil,” often translated as “aborigine” or “native,” can also describe a royal, who is necessarily a native somewhere. (MacGaffey 2013:Kindle Locations 439-444)

In order to understand these chieftaincy issues within Dagbon’s recent history, I will briefly discuss the Abudu/Andani conflict and the resultant ban on music from 2002 until 2006. The complex and, at times volatile, issues surrounding chieftaincy and succession, came to a fore on 27 March, 2002 when Ya Na Andani Yakubu II was decapitated by the rival royal family, the Abudus, along with about forty others in his court. This was a violent manifestation of a decades long conflict between the rival royal families; Abudu and Andani have been alternating Ya Na’s for generations. After the Abudu king was stripped of his power in the 1970s, the family has been seething, and when Abdulai IV died in 1988 (the father of the current Abudu regent), he was not given the royal funeral at the Yendi Gbewaa Palace. After the 2002 assassination, Ya Na Andani Yakubu II was also not buried in the Gbewaa Palace. Rival cousins from the Andani and Abudu sides claimed succession to the Ya Na skin, and without proper burials for either deceased chiefs, a new Ya Na could not be enskinned. Thus, there was a stalemate. Because *lunsi* drumming is used to show support for chiefs and praise family history, music was in effect exacerbating the conflict. Most individuals in Dagbon identify themselves as supporters of either Abudus or Andanis; individuals or families with close connections in Yendi tend to side with the Andani, and others in the western part of Dagbon who are NPP (New Patriotic Party) supporters commonly side with the Abudus. This division in Dagbon was felt throughout the region and it was decided that music should be banned until the conflict was resolved, since it was only

making tensions worse. In 2006 the ban was lifted and two regents were chosen, one from each rival family: Abdoulaye Yakubu Andani who lives in a newly renovated Gbewaa Palace in Yendi, and Abdulai Mahamadu who resides nearby in a very modest house (see DjeDje 2008, Hirsch 2012, Martinson 2002, Yakubu 2005). Currently, these two regents are proxies and still there is no officially appointed Ya Na. When attending the Damba festival in 2011 in Yendi, drumming, dancing, and all musical festivities had resumed (see discussion in Chapter 2 for more on women's musical role during the ban).

The above is an attempt to show how ubiquitous and complicated the culture of chieftainships can be in Dagbon. Many different hierarchical structures exist within each class, local land chiefs, regional municipal chiefs in towns such as Savelugu, Mion, Karaga, Tolon, and so on. When disputes among family members arise, succession becomes more complicated. In short, the institution of chiefships in Dagbon remains a significant aspect of local culture, albeit a complex one, and is proudly displayed as such during festivals, government functions, funerals, and important local or regional occasions.

IV. Life in Tamale: Farming, Food, and Family

Tamale occupies a choice location for trade and commerce as it lies at the crossroads between Accra and Kumasi to the south and Bolgatanga and Ouagadougou to the North. Therefore, all international and domestic goods transported from Accra to northern towns and to Burkina Faso or to Yendi, in the east, must travel through Tamale. In this way, Tamale's markets are vital, vibrant, and busy with large and small transactions between traders and merchants. Domestic production for local sale includes food stuffs such as palm oil, bananas, coconuts,

pineapple, mango, tomatoes, peanuts (or groundnuts), rice, yams, corn, millet, and other products. Domestic manufactured goods include “latex foam” mattresses, cloth, local pots and cooking fire stands, among others. Bottling plants for soft drinks (CocaCola) and beers (Star and Club) are also large domestic enterprises with regional distribution points in Tamale. Because of the large volume of trade, and regional road travel, Tamale is a bustling hub of activity. Between the busy markets and the Muslim majority who attend mosques frequently, there is never a dull moment in the city.

In spite of the growing opportunities for employment at restaurants, hotels, banks, petrol (gas) stations, and small shops, economically most Dagbambas are subsistence farmers who must depend on rainfall and suitable weather conditions for the success or failure of their crops. This reliance on farming for the majority of income and food stability underscores family life and annual activities. For example, a “funeral season” takes place in the driest part of the year (usually January through March), after the fall harvest when families save and store substantial quantities of food so they can host large numbers of friends and family during these special occasions. In this way, if an elder of the family passes away in June, the family may wait until the following dry season to perform the official funeral.⁴⁸

Although families are commonly a part of a traditional trade group such as blacksmiths (*machelnima*), barbers (*wanzamanima*), butchers (*nakohanima*), musicians (*lunsi* and *gondze*),⁴⁹ or warriors (*kombonsi*), practically all communities must farm. Many families depend on the

⁴⁸ As must be the case in many cultures, Dagbamba families consider many things when planning funeral proceedings. For example, many people choose a date that will accommodate the largest number of extended family and friends, avoiding large festivals, like Damba, or waiting for a family member to return from abroad, or countless other myriad considerations.

⁴⁹ Ibrahim Mahama writes that the class of *baansi* (eulogists and musicians) includes *lunsi* (the dominant group), *daangbee-lana* (poets), *kikaa* (the trumpeter), *akarima* (the Asante style timpane state ‘talking’ drummer), and *goonje* (state violinists) (2004:35-42).

farming of yams and maize for their staple foods of T.Z. (a corn, millet, or guinea corn flour porridge, pronounced “Tee-Zed,” that stands for *tuo zaafi*), and boiled or pounded yam. T.Z., which is commonly used for most meals, can be fermented (*banku*) and served hot with a sauce or soup. A few cups of locally ground corn flour can make enough T.Z. for a large family of ten or more people. Typically, families eat this type of meal at least once a day in the afternoon and/or evenings. In the mornings, many women make *koko*, a fermented corn or millet porridge that is usually spicy with ginger and cinnamon or nutmeg. Most people eat their *koko* with quite a bit of sugar. Other breakfast options include tea and tea bread, or tea bread with egg, but this is more costly as one would have to buy both tea bags and bread since few households own ovens. In general, sources of protein such as eggs and meat are costly and rather scarce in most households.

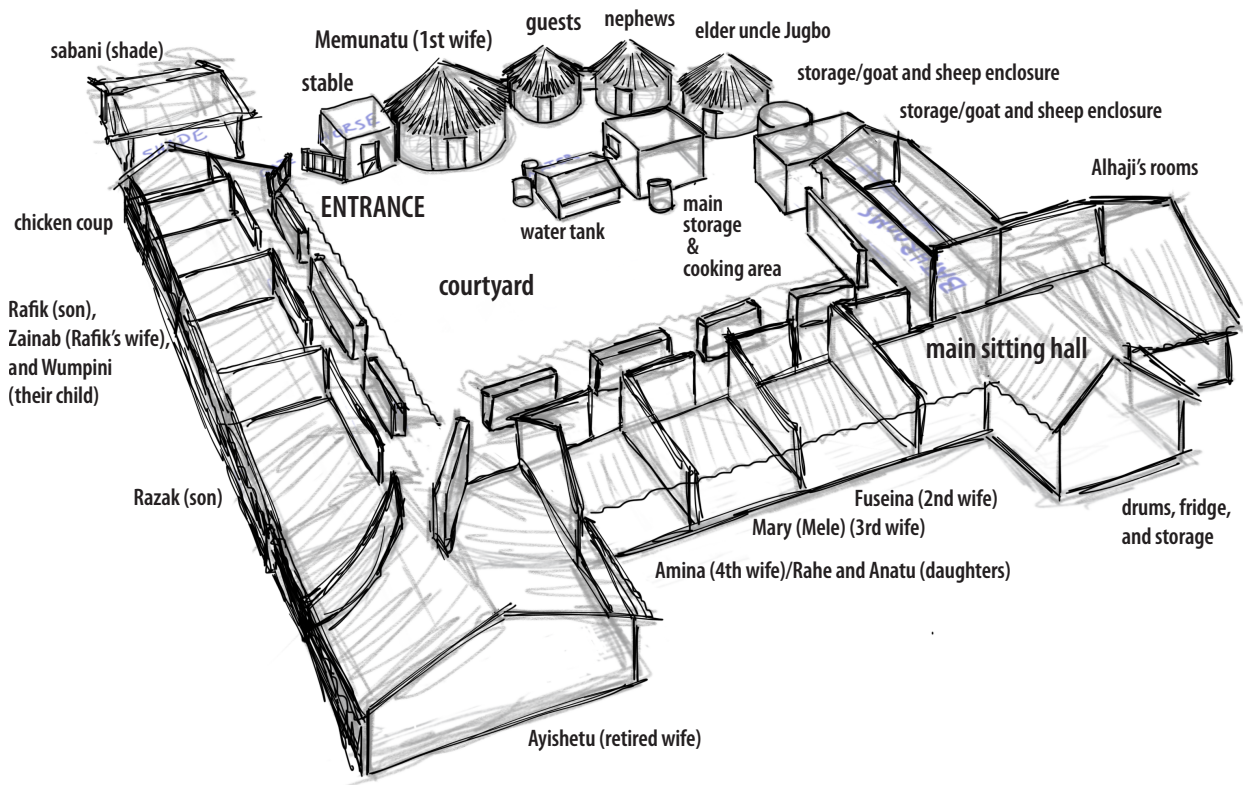
Gender and hierarchy play a large role in household food consumption.⁵⁰ For example, if eggs or meat are available, the male head of the household (*yili yidana*) receives the main portion while other males in succession of age receive any other portions available. A woman (mother *m'ma*, or wife, *paɣa*) receives a portion of protein after every male (from eldest to the youngest) in the household has eaten his fill. Meals are generally served in communal bowls according to age and gender. For example, the adolescent boys eat from one bowl together, the young girls eat together and so on. This cultural norm is the source of many metaphors and proverbs.

According to DjeDje, “Dagbamba society is based on a patrilineal system of kinship. A house-hold is made up of two or more men with their wives and other dependents” (2008:180). Families live together in extended family groups headed by an elder father figure with his wife or

⁵⁰ Gender and women in Dagbon are discussed at length in Chapter 2.

wives, and his sons and their wife/wives. MacGaffey elaborates on Dagbamba kinship structure: "In fact, the basic social unit anywhere in Dagbon is a bilateral descending kindred with a patrilineal bias. The founder is a relatively important grandfather or great-grandfather to whom most members trace descent in the male line, but others are attached through women [...]” (2013:Kindle Locations 559-561). These extended patrilineal groups usually live in circular compound style housing structures, such as Alhaji Lunna’s illustrated below.

Figure 4. Illustrations of Alhaji Lunna’s compound (2006-2008), by Kim Stuffelbeam



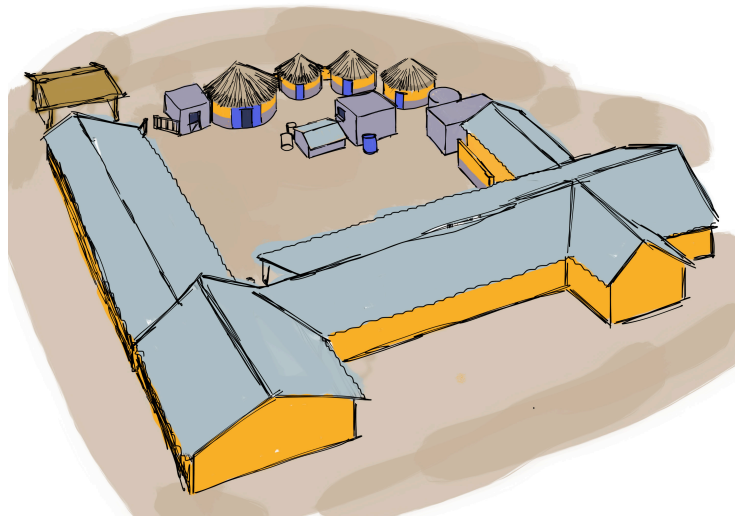


Photo 1. Part of Alhaji Lunna's compound with thatch roof rooms on left, covered water tank center, and storage room behind, 2011.

The head of household typically has his own private bedroom and a sitting hall (functioning like a living-room or parlor). Each wife has a room for herself and her children, and usually a small outdoor porch or covered area for cooking in bad weather or storing belongings or foodstuffs.

When a son reaches young adulthood, if there is space or money to build, he will have his own room in the compound. These compounds are either built in the traditional round style using clay/cement bricks covered with local adobe, topped with a thatch roof (DjeDje 2008:171). In

Photo 2. Part of Alhaji Lunna's compound showing metal roofed rooms and second wife, Fuseina, holding youngest son, Abdul-Wahid, on her lap, 2007.



larger towns or cities like Tamale, families who have extra funds build square rooms with “zinc” (aluminum) sheet metal roofing. There are advantages and drawbacks to both types of building; the ventilation and “natural air con” (air conditioning) of the traditional thatch style house are always praised in hot weather. The metal roofing is much warmer, but takes very little work once installed. Consequently, for many families, the maintenance and upkeep required for the thatch roofing becomes expensive and burdensome. Thus the “zinc” roofing, which is water tight, keeps bugs out, and more permanent, is generally preferred. However, the draw backs to using sheet metal are numerous: it retains heat, it is extremely loud in heavy rain, it can blow off

in high winds, and it is expensive. I have lived with both building styles, and I am aware of the merits and draw backs of both constructions, experiencing spiders and leaks with the thatch, and the heat and noise of “zinc.” It may seem peculiar to entertain such a lengthy explanation of the roofing in Dagbon, but various aspects of Dagbamba culture are manifest in this single aspect of home construction. For example, more urban Tamale locals tend to equate thatch with the “old ways” or “traditional,” and zinc with modernity, wealth, and “progress.” In the rural towns and villages, sheet metal roofs are less common, because thatch is easier to maintain as it is harvested nearby. Men of the household are responsible for maintaining and weaving thatch roofs, which need at least annual rejuvenation and maintenance.

The extended family kinship group is important on many levels, especially when it comes to farming, household maintenance, and social networking. As described in the foregoing, a prominent elder or local chief normally lives in a compound with his wives. For example, when I lived with Alhaji Lunna in Lamashegu, he had a large compound (see an illustration of his home in Figure 4) with his four wives (Memunatu, Fuseina, Mary, and Amina), ex-wife or retired wife (Ayishetu, post-menopause), his disabled brother (Jugbo), two young adult sons (Rafik and Razak), three adolescent nephews (Michael, Fatawu and Saeed), three school aged children (Aliatu, Sadiq, Wahidu), two to four adolescent female helpers (one for each wife, Afee and Nigerau),⁵¹ as well as two unmarried older daughters (Anatu and Rahee) of ex-wives who would come and go, and one elder sister/aunt (also named Ayishetu) who would come to stay occasionally. Around nineteen to twenty-two or more people resided in the compound.

⁵¹ Afee and Nigerau were usually in the home while two other young women would come and go depending on their other family obligations.



Photo 3: Alhaji Lunna (center) with his four wives dressed in enskinment regalia from his ascent from “Dolsi-na” to “Lun-na.” From left to right (newest wife to most senior): Amina, Mele/Mary, Alhaji Lunna, Fuseina, Memunatu, 2007.

For those in the West, it may be surprising that a Dagbamba man with four current wives, would have also divorced several times, or live with a so-called “retired” wife. The number of wives in the compound reflects the high divorce rate in Dagbon. Anthropologist Bierlich gives one possible explanation: “Since marriage prestations are almost nonexistent (only twelve kola nuts and twelve shillings), marriages are not binding. This is taken to explain the existence of the high ratio of divorce” (2007:5). However, Bierlich’s explanation is very unsatisfactory because he does not take into account the modern realities of living in Tamale. Moreover, “twelve kola nuts and twelve shillings” is very outdated; I would also argue that it is unfair to assert that marriages are not binding in Dagbon. From my experience, men are expected to present cloth, shoes, jewelry, and other gifts to their fiance’s family before the marriage can take place. Divorce

then is more a result of unhappiness in the home, and occurs because of any number of factors, not unlike the high rate of divorce in contemporary society worldwide. Yet, perhaps it is a testament to Dagbamba culture that women and men are allowed a way out of unsatisfactory marriage situations without having to go through extreme hassle.

Polygyny, divorce, extended relatives, and other factors account for the complex social structures that exist in Dagbamba families. For example, the immediate family, along with occasional visitors, and ex-wives amount to a community of people living in about ten rooms in Alhaji Lunna's compound, as discussed in the foregoing.⁵² This number of family members also may be due to the relative prominence of the household. Alhaji Lunna could afford to feed and house his adolescent nephews, who came to receive an education and live in Tamale. So many extended relatives and visitors may have lived with Alhaji Lunna's family because he was able to provide a stable and advantageous life style for them. At the same time, the larger extended family can be an asset both socially and economically, as all able members would be expected to help with Alhaji's farming by sowing, planting, and harvesting the crops.

V. Conclusion

The juxtaposition between external perceptions and local realities, and so-called "traditional" lifestyle alongside modern or "Western" influences and opportunities, represents a dualism that exists within Dagbon, resulting in recurring themes in the discussion of Dagbamba society and culture. Southern Ghanaians perceive the north as a remote place that adheres strictly to Islam in contrast to Christian culture in the south. The reality is, of course, more fluid. While a majority of Dagbambas self identify as Muslim, many practice Islam with a kind of spirituality

⁵² The household is always undergoing changes. This particular description and occupancy is based on my extended stay in Alhaji Lunna's home in 2006.

that allows for flexibility and the incorporation of traditional ancestor worship and an open mindedness to other beliefs: “[the] Dagbamba, who are nominal Muslims, have uniquely combined Islam with indigenous cultural practices” (DjeDje 2008:169). MacGaffey writes: “For most people in Dagbon, however—or in Africa generally, as many observers have remarked—paganism is radically unlike Islam or Christianity, and therefore there is no contradiction between being a Muslim or Christian and being at the same time a ‘traditional person,’ a pagan” (2013:Kindle Locations 155-157). No one really knows when the Dagbamba adopted Islam; some locals believe it was as early as the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, but it is likely to be much later. DjeDje explains: “When Islam was finally adopted between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, royalty and commoners continued to practice the indigenous religion that fits into a four-fold classification of supreme being (Naawuni, also spelled Naawine), nature spirits, lesser gods, and ancestral spirits” (DjeDje 2008:181).

Life in Dagbon is often tenuous and family prosperity can be subject to drought and disease in a way not often felt by those living in Europe or North America. Perhaps due in part to the harsh realities of life in the Northern Region, Dagbambas hold each other close. When I lived in Tamale, I had never felt so connected to a social network. Keeping in touch with friends and family is central to Dagbambas. While the young and elderly may die from malaria, and running water and sanitation are a rarity, there is also deeply felt joy, pride, and love, which I believe comes from living in multigenerational communities that are biologically, economically, and socially connected.

Chapter 2: Women and Music Among the Dagbamba in Tamale

I. Introduction

One of the primary goals of this chapter is to provide the reader with a personal and descriptive portrayal of the realities of daily life for a Dagbamba woman as they relate to music. To give a sufficiently broad description of women's involvement in music in Dagbon, I use my field work experiences and other scholarly sources (i.e., Chernoff 1979; Bierlich 2007; DjeDje 2008; Hass 2008). Because exceptions and differing experiences exist in other African societies, this chapter also leans heavily on texts that deal with gender and women in West Africa, namely Yoruba sociologist Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí's compelling text, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses* (1997) and Bernhard Bierlich's *The Problem of Money* (2007), which includes extended discussion of gender and women's roles in Dagbon. I also use Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje's *Fiddling in West Africa* (2008), as it includes a discussion of women's involvement in music and issues surrounding song and song texts, as well as the Africanist literary song anthology, *Women's Voices from West Africa* (2012), edited by Aissata G. Sidikou and Thomas A. Hale.

As noted in the introduction, I find feminist standpoint theory helpful in discussing women and music in Dagbon as it tends to provide a more accurate world view of women's experiences and perceptions (Harding 2004). While I acknowledge assertions made by Oyèwùmí and others who have warned against imposing (or utilizing) Western based theories in African research and scholarship, I argue that, in the case of feminist standpoint theory(/ies), there is sufficient flexibility to allow for beginning the inquiry within the culture. In any case, as a

Westerner myself, it would be naive to think I could erase my own position as a privileged graduate student from the USA, or that I can entirely disregard my background in Western and Marxist ideology. In her article, “Feminist Politics and Epistemology: The Standpoint of Women” (2004), Allison Jaggar describes why standpoint theory (/ies) is advantageous in subverting the dominant world view and producing research that challenges the status quo, the ruling class, and patriarchy. She writes:

The standpoint of the oppressed is not just different from that of the ruling class; it is also epistemologically advantageous. It provides the basis for a view of reality that is more impartial than that of the ruling class and is also more comprehensive. It is more impartial because it comes closer to representing the interests of society as a whole; whereas the standpoint of the ruling class reflects the interest of the totality in that historical period. (Jaggar 2004:57)

While the above quotation is couched in Marxist terms, it can be applied here if we situate women in Dagbon as “the oppressed” in a largely patriarchal, or “ruling class,” society. This placement of women as “oppressed” may be useful as a temporary intellectual exercise to illuminate aspects of their lived experiences, even if one does not truly believe that all Dagbamba women are in fact “oppressed” in this Marxist sense. As Bierlich writes of the Dagbamba: “Much in their social rules seems to show a male perspective, and reflect an ideology of patrilineal descent with dominant male control of knowledge” (Bierlich 2007:xiii). This “dominant male control of knowledge” is perhaps one of the reasons why women’s lives and roles in Dagbamba society have not been discussed more widely in scholarship. “Women’s subordinate status means that, unlike men, women do not have an interest in mystifying reality and so are likely to develop a clearer more trustworthy understanding of the world” (Jaggar 2004:62). This is very strong language, and while I do not believe that Dagbamba men are in the habit of “mystifying reality,” I do believe that women are grounded in the daily realities of life in Dagbon, and their views can

present a different understanding of the world. Thus, Jaggar’s ideas help to provide a platform or justification for highlighting women’s voices and perspectives regarding the social and cultural realities of life in Tamale’s Dagbamba communities, which I will discuss and problematize in the following pages.

As many anthropologists, ethnomusicologists, sociologists, or anyone attempting extended field research have certainly experienced, perspectives and first impressions often change and multiply especially on subsequent visits to the same community. For example, upon first arriving at Abubakari Lunna’s family compound and living with the family for a week or so in June 2006, I was shocked and at times disgusted by how I perceived young women to be treated. In the most blunt terms, it seemed that the women in the house did the majority of the work (i.e., everything to do with food, family, children, cleaning, fetching water, washing clothes, shopping etc.). As Africanist scholars and linguists Aissata Sidikou and Thomas Hale write:

“Across the Sahel, women are widely viewed as working harder than men because they must not only take care of the children, but also participate in a variety of other tasks. They play a central role in agriculture, planting their own gardens and helping in the fields [...]” (2012:81). In order to have a successful family and community, everyone must work together, however the above statement does seem to be the reality for a majority of women in Dagbon.



Photo 4. Fuseina, Alhaji Lunna’s second wife, preparing a meal, 2007.



Photo 5. Alhaji Lunna at his farm with son Razak in the background, 2006.

Let me explain further. During my field research, men in Alhaji's family were primarily responsible for managing and working the large farms. While most of the family lived near Tamale in an area called Lamashegu, the farms were located far afield near smaller villages where Alhaji had procured large areas of land. During the farming season, starting in April or May with clearing and preparing the soil for planting through harvest that begins around August or September, Alhaji's elder sons lived near the farm to avoid the one or two hour commute from Tamale. During planting and harvest, Alhaji transported loads of workers from town to the farm



Photo 6. Fuseina with Abdul-Wahid at Alhaji Lunna's farm, 2006.

to help sow seeds (corn, rice, millet, peanuts, etc.), and later harvest the crops. “Crops cultivated include maize, millet, guinea corn, rice, groundnuts, beans, yams, cassava, pepper, okro [sic] and tomatoes” (Mahama 2004:vi). During these long days of work, young women joined the men, and Alhaji's wives would be in charge of preparing large quantities of *shinkafa de wache* (rice and beans), usually with a hot pepper seasoning added. All workers received a meal during a break, as well as a modest agreed upon sum at the end of the day.⁵³ Usually, several days of community work like this would take place on Alhaji's farm land each

year.

The women in Alhaji's compound did not seem enthusiastic about these work expeditions as they had to prepare for all the cooking on the farm in addition to all the usual work around the house in Lamashegu. I was naive to this hardship as I found these days out on the farm to be novel and exciting! But after spending more time with several of the wives, I understood the cause of the complaints from the women in the family. “Farming is mainly the work of men.

⁵³ When I visited between 2006 and 2008, the amount was about 5 cedis per person per day, about \$3.50 or so US dollars at the time. However, due to the market prices of locally grown food, these 5 cedis are the equivalent of \$20-\$30 worth of food or wares in the US, since one could take a family of five out for dinner, or buy a large quantity of yams or corn flour with this relatively small amount of cash.

Women however play a very important role in the planting and harvesting of all crops. Their role in this connection is said to give encouragement to the practice of polygamy in Dagbon” (Mahama 2004:vi). While men are in charge of coordinating the work on the farm, women help with planting and harvesting. In addition, females are responsible for preparing everything else during these larger farm work days.⁵⁴ So while women participate in a



Photo 7. Alhaji Lunna’s farm, 2006.



Photo 8. Alhaji Lunna’s family loaded into the back of a large truck on the way back from working at the farm, 2006.

variety of work activities throughout the year, the work of men centers upon maintaining the farms, which includes manual labor and organizing workers during farming season. During the months of down time between growing seasons, many men arguably have a more focused work life.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ This includes packing (water, eating bowls, etc.) and preparing the food for the days on the farm, organizing and serving all meals on the farm, taking care of children or arranging for one wife/mother to stay home with them, in addition to their normal daily work.

⁵⁵ These work conditions could be expanded further, but are used here to launch into a wider discussion of gender in Dagbamba society and culture.



Photo 9. Fuseina, Alhaji Lunna's second wife, 2007.

II. Women and Gender in Dagbon

To understand more clearly the gendered roles in Dagbamba society, let us exclude farm work and focus on how social structure in Dagbamba culture impacts women's roles and expression. Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí's critique of the treatment of gender in African studies is relevant here because of her poignant assertion that "Westocentric" gender categories and scholarship persists, even when there is evidence that many cultures have a variety of organizational structures that may be more relevant than biological sex differences (Oyěwùmí

1997:18). Scholarship on women and music in West Africa has increased over the past several decades,⁵⁶ but many of these studies take a universalist approach to gender without questioning Western-derived distinctions of the English terms “man” and “woman.”⁵⁷ Because these gendered labels are culturally and socially defined and have been interrogated at length in feminist scholarship, they have been unconsciously accepted and undefined in scholarship on African women. Female Africans are labeled “African women” in literature and assumed to be a coherent, homogenous group. In the Western context, gender/sex categories of women and men are largely articulated in binary opposition to each other, and can be adopted by Western scholars with little question as to whether or not this opposition exists in a particular African culture (Oyěwùmí 1997). Arguably these generalizing labels “African women” and “African market women,” for example, have the advantage of being mobilized in development or international aid projects, among other things.

These and other issues related to Western gender constructs in scholarship on Africa are the focus of Oyěwùmí’s 1997 text, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. The author interrogates not only gender discourses but the Western theories that underly their dominance, which challenges us to look closely at how we have internalized these ideas and utilize them without question in African contexts. “It should be obvious that it is next to impossible to create an African theoretical space when the ground of discourse has been crowded by the DWEMs – dead, white, European males [...] At the level of intellectual production, we should recognize that theories are not mechanical tools; they affect (some will

⁵⁶ See Scharfenberger (2011) for an overview of the literature on women and music. I also briefly discuss the literature in the introduction.

⁵⁷ Some ethnomusicologists write about women and gender in African contexts and discuss how gender is constructed in the society with which they work rather than unconsciously accepting Western constructs (for example, see Lawrence 2011b, Kisliuk [1998]2001).

say determine) how we think, who we think about, what we think, and who thinks with us” (Oyěwùmí 1997:23-24). While I am not immune to the “DWEM” theoretical basis of “Westocentric” scholarship, as my education has been dominated by “DWEM” texts and ideas, I hesitate to embrace them fully here especially in the context of gender in Dagbon.

Oyěwùmí’s work is instructive as she challenges us to seek out appropriate categories based on local social structures and thought processes. She acknowledges the difficulties of language proficiency that many Africanists lack, chastising what has become status quo as insufficient. In reviewing the scholarship on gender in her own Yoruba culture, she found many scholars applying Western gender constructs unconsciously. Whereas Western writers often used a biologically determined gendered social hierarchy to explain differences in the roles of individuals, Oyěwùmí found seniority, based primarily on relative age between people, to be the most important social category among the Yoruba. She writes: “seniority as the foundation of Yoruba social intercourse is relational and dynamic; unlike gender, it is not focused on the body” (Oyěwùmí 1997:14). Oyěwùmí not only questions why the category of “woman” is employed in many African-based ethnographic studies, she also admonishes the use of “market woman,” for gender, in her opinion, has very little to do with who and why an individual is a trader in a market, even though many traders are in fact biologically women (Oyěwùmí 1997:67).

During fieldwork in Dagbon, despite being aware of feminist arguments like Oyěwùmí’s, I still had my own Western-based reactions to what I felt were patriarchal and largely unequal gender dynamics. At the same time, I was struck by how often Dagbamba women display confidence and strength throughout physically demanding daily work both in their public and

private lives. Dagbamba women of all ages dress in striking color coordinated dresses, head scarves, shoes, and other accessories, when leaving their home to go to the market, visit friends, or attend mosque. Of course, it is also common to see women of all ages wearing more utilitarian clothing (a cloth skirt and T-shirt top, for example) while working, cleaning, taking care of children in the home, and participating in other activities. In contrast to their work attire, on Fridays when attending mosque, many Dagbambas wore some of their best clothes. Many men wore white, or other light colored, long dress shirts with matching loose fitting pants. All the while, they are living in the harsh Tamale climate where a red dust/dirt is ubiquitous and difficult to avoid. Yet, regardless of the occasion and despite the warm dusty climate, Dagbambas publicly present themselves with grace and style.

In and around the home, mothers have a commanding presence, especially at times when their husband is not around and they are the senior family member in charge. Mothers largely run the show, maintain order, make sure children are clean, fed, and off to school or otherwise occupied. The

strength and posture of many Dagbamba women was surprising to me. Young and old women could lift five to ten gallons of water and carry it on their heads with seeming ease and grace. While this may seem like fetishizing, or an inappropriate focus on the physicality of a black



Photo 10. A neighbor purchasing water (left) standing with Alhaji's grand-daughter (right), 2011.

culture from a white participant-observer, I argue that strength, grace, and beauty are culturally fostered and integral to gender expression in Dagbon. At the same time, these aspects may have seemed more important to me because I was constantly having to face my own physical shortcomings, since I was openly made fun of by other women when my lack of practical life skills became apparent. I was eager to help with household chores and learn how to cook, but the co-wives in the compound rightly perceived me to be rather useless and at times I was more of a burden than a helpful hand.

In contrast to many of the strong, motivated, and “put together” women in Dagbon, some of the men I observed in the area of Tamale where I conducted my research seemed to be unemployed or underemployed. For example, there were always a few small groups of young, presumably unmarried men, congregating around the roadside in Lamashegu, chatting, playing games, while their female age mates were cleaning, fetching water, or helping with childcare. Married men were less likely seen among these roadside groups, and were more often occupied with farming duties (weeding, clearing, planting, harvesting, planning, purchasing seed, fixing tractors etc.). Yet, they also seemed to have time to talk with their colleagues and advisors, greet friends, and participate in other leisure activities. Married women were generally busy dealing with the household, selling goods at market, and caring for children. Additionally, adolescent males often participated in Western-style education (i.e., attended Western schools) longer than their female counterparts. Boys often completed high school or vocational school, while girls of the same age did not because they lacked financial or familial support to continue schooling. There are many exceptions to these general observations. Saeed Dawuni, one of Alhaji Lunna’s

nephews who was in his early twenties and one of my good friends, regularly helped around the household with daily tasks, was always active and motivated to work and further his education.

These generalized examples of men and women in Dagbon do set up binary opposites between the sexes, which is perhaps not representative of the lived experiences of families in and around Tamale. I am also aware that many gender disparities continue to create complex problems in Western cultures as well. Therefore, it is not my intention to disparage Dagbamba men, I am simply sharing my observations from working within the community over the years. While discussing gender issues with teachers, friends, and small groups of women while in Dagbon, many women told me that families must work together in order to be successful and healthy; men and women must share duties and children must do their part. In fact, social groupings and categories based simply on biological differences may not be the most instructive when discussing gender in Dagbon. While much social intercourse and behavior observed in Tamale was determined by seniority, age, and status, rather than gender, I would also argue that many aspects of life are organized around a combination of gender, social status, and age. For example, when eating a meal in the home, one shares a bowl with ones age and gender mates (i.e., adolescent boys share a bowl, young girls share a bowl, etc.). Boys are treated differently in the home and can be favored based on their gender alone. For example, I have seen a two-year-old boy receive a portion of chicken for dinner along with his older brothers before any woman in the house, regardless of her age or seniority. Girls of the same age commonly are taken care of by their biological mother; any protein they received was usually purchased and/or prepared by their mother separate from the shared family food, since women and girls are not usually afforded protein through the normal familial channels. During my fieldwork, I witnessed a few

public service campaigns, primarily in the form of informational billboards and posters, bringing awareness to female nutrition, especially for pregnant women. As I write about women here, I realize that a more accurate grouping would be “mothers” or “mother/wives” since a distinction must be made in regard to seniority and married versus unmarried women (which also implies motherhood versus a younger unwed woman without children).⁵⁸ This is all to point out that, as scholars, we must be mindful of how we use social categories like “man” and “woman,” we need to acknowledge that these widely used categories are culturally determined, and we need to be consciously specific in our use of them outside the Western cultural context.

When anthropologist Bernhard Bierlich discusses gender in Dagbamba culture, he points out the familial responsibilities of men and women: “The woman is expected to provide sexual and domestic services, including child-rearing, cooking and housekeeping. The man must provide shelter, food and other means of support” (Bierlich 2007:134). Dagbamba scholar, Ghanaian politician, and lawyer Ibrahim Mahama writes: “Dagomba women are molded by a culture that conditions them from early age to accept the role of obedient wife. The husband usually has the last word on everything” (2004:v). In Dagbon, this primary gender divide dictates much of the daily realities of women and men’s lives. For example, a man is expected to be able to provide a physical home for his wife before he is to be married. Besides the home as a physical structure, on a more daily level, the husband is supposed to provide the staple food for meals, which generally includes corn meal (usually made from their own farmed maize); rice, when available; and yams when in season (also usually grown in their own farms). Men customarily should also give their wives an allowance to make the soup or stew to accompany

⁵⁸ One's situation in life, especially as a female Dagbamba, is largely dictated by marriage and child bearing. See the following for further discussion of family and the importance of children in Dagbamba culture. Also, Sidikou and Hale (2012) discuss this issue in the West African Sahel.

the starchy staple. If they are good husbands, they also provide an annual allowance for cloth to make new clothes.

While many of these cultural norms have been maintained, “Today, the traditional male-female division is no longer clear-cut (if it ever was)” (Bierlich 2007:18). For example, many men have difficulty finding opportunities outside farming to earn any cash income.

Consequently, during the months of scarcity (March, April, May), many wives must provide the ingredients for soup or stew when their husbands do not give them funds. Many women participate in petty trade and sell goods at the markets to have an independent income. In recent years, gendered divisions of labor and social norms are becoming more fluid and breaking down. However, perhaps gender roles in Dagbon have always had a level of complexity and fluidity, as seen in traditional chieftaincy, which displays discrepancies in the assumed patriarchal structure of Dagbamba society: “the right of some Dagomba women to become Tindamba or chiefs indeed makes the role of the Dagomba women [sic] a complex one” (Mahama 2004:vi). The simple fact that women can become chiefs demonstrates that, while patriarchy may exist, women do hold important positions in society and culture. Most important is the fact that in order for a family to function, everyone must work together: “Dagomba men and women are united in their thinking that it is the different roles they play that make Dagbon what it is” (Mahama 2004:v).

One commonality with regard to gender is the overwhelming respect offered females, especially mothers and grandmothers. Even a newborn baby girl will be called “m’ma” (mother), acknowledging her natural ability to bear children. At the same time, some men believe women cannot be trusted, and become soiled and unclean because of their monthly menstrual cycle. These conflicting ideas, which tend to be culturally based and deeply ingrained, do not seem to

cause a problem or cognitive dissonance for Dagbambas. During my fieldwork, I witnessed many Dagbamba struggling with multiple social and marital issues surrounding gender, which helped me to understand these dynamics in a more nuanced way.

Marriage and Children

First, marriage is often viewed as the most important event in a woman's life. Her social status is often seen as ambiguous until she marries and has children. (Sidikou and Hale 2012:9)

It is difficult to overstate the importance of children for women in the Sahel region of West Africa—or, for that matter, anywhere else in the world. (Sidikou and Hale 2012:67)

These two statements resonate strongly with my field work experiences and the research I conducted in Northern Ghana. When I began research in Dagbon as an unmarried woman with no children, I felt that both men and women were confused by my status and were only partially convinced when told I was a university student. Many of my friends and colleagues in Ghana seemed relieved when I returned in 2010 and was married. Of course, this new status led to the question – why we did not have children. I definitely felt that to be perceived as a adult woman, one must be married and have a child or several children. To various degrees, these social pressures are probably felt in most societies, likewise in Dagbon there exists a strong sense of duty and pressure for a woman to become married and have children: “Marriage is regarded as the natural state of life of adults. Life is not a success if one is not married and has no offspring” (Bierlich 2007:10). Elaborating on the issue in the Sahel region of West Africa, Sidikou and Hale write:

Once married and integrated as best she can into the new family, a women's focus shifts to having a child. To fail to have a child is to *fail as a woman and as a wife*. It may lead to pressure by the family for the husband to take a second wife who might be more fertile. If the second wife cannot have a child, then attention may shift to the husband's inability to impregnate his wives. (Sidikou and Hale 2012:67, emphasis added)

The social implications of a childless marriage are deeply felt in Dagbamba society, and presumably in other cultures as well. Dagbamba women of various ages, whether in their twenties, thirties or sixties, all expressed the pressure (as well as the personal desire) to get married and have children: "The Dagomba attach the greatest importance to children. They are the very centre of a woman's existence and represent her chief asset in old age" (Bierlich 2007:146). For women, her children not only bring joy, challenges, and stability to the family, but later in life a woman's primary care comes from any successful and surviving children: "If one child does not succeed, perhaps one or two of the others will, and later they will be able to take care of the parents" (Sidikou and Hale 2012:78). In this way, both father and mother have a valid reason to invest in their children's future success.

In Alhaji's case, even though he led a rather cosmopolitan lifestyle, spoke English, and was exposed over several decades to Western and African women, young and old, in public roles as students, professors, bankers, dancers, and so on, he was still reticent to allow his daughters to attend school past junior secondary school (JSS), since he did not see the direct return on his investment. Because his sons stayed in the household and continued to contribute after marriage, he was willing to pay school fees for as much education they wished to pursue. I recall a conversation between David Locke and Alhaji when the youngest of Alhaji's daughters, Aliatu, wanted to continue attending school past the JSS level. Alhaji was not inclined to pay for her school fees because she would soon be able to get married, and it seemed that Alhaji wanted her

to stay at home to help her mother Memunatu (Alhaji's senior wife) with chores, making food, cleaning, and selling water. In his view, this was a more valuable use of her time since the wealth from her potential job prospects as a SS graduate, or a university graduate, would not return to him but rather to her future husband's family. In this case, I believe Locke urged Alhaji to allow Aliatu to continue her schooling as she was very bright and interested in education. Locke argued that she would not forget her father and mother's family, and she would indeed give back if she were fortunate enough to be successful. The inequality in treatment of sons and daughters in Dagbon is still a problem, although there does seem to be more awareness and willingness to allow girls to attend school. In general, mothers seem to value and care for their sons and daughters equally, while some fathers tend to favor their sons (Bierlich 2007:146). Commonly, this is manifested both monetarily (willingness to pay for school fees, daily allowance, etc.), and with provisions in the household. For example, a father will invite his sons to share meals with him while his daughters remain with their mothers; sons will also be granted their own living space once they reach adolescence and young adulthood when the daughters must stay with their mothers.

As stated in the foregoing, one must be cautious when making generalizations about cultural or social phenomena. In this case, many assertions regarding Dagbambas that appear in the literature are exceptions, which stem from not only the duality that exists in Dagbon, but also economic factors that have become increasingly dominant in Tamale in the twenty-first century. For example, Bierlich discusses the tradition of women returning to their family of origin for a period of time to give birth and raise their new infant (2007:5). While this may still occur, many of my friends in Tamale opted to stay with their husbands, if they were more financially solvent,

or decided to remain in the city instead of returning to a town further afield. I take issue with authors who make generalizations for the whole when the reality of an individual's life (female or male) is much more nuanced and complicated, and not dictated by a cultural or "traditional" norm, but may be the result of problem solving and decision making. In short, Dagbamba women (and their families) have agency to make informed decisions regarding their lives and futures.

For these reasons, I argue that the examination and analysis of the personal experiences of individual women allow for a more realistic depiction of women in Dagbon (Mackinlay 2010). This approach not only provides a grounding for a discussion of women and music, but it also provides a basis for understanding the diverse experiences I have encountered throughout my field research. Women who welcomed me into their homes have dynamic, meaningful, and interesting lives, but these realities do not appear in the rather limited scholarship on women in Dagbon (i.e., Bierlich 2007, DjeDje 2008, Opong various). For example, Bierlich discusses women's lack of power in the public sphere: "Since women have no public power, they invest their personal wealth and other resources elsewhere, in their children. Children are a woman's wealth. She is proud of her children, they give her respect and the more children she has, the more helping hands there are" (Bierlich 2007:147). While this may be true in some cases, in my experience women do have a voice in the public sphere, primarily in the area of music and song performance. And some of these women are indeed powerful in the community, even though they do not have children (see discussion of Madam Fuseina in Chapter 3). Throughout his text, Bierlich remains invested in the concept of women producing their futures through caring for their children, as if this is the only option for them and not a chosen path or an investment from which a mother would draw pleasure. The implication that women are forced to breed and give

birth to as many children as possible to insure their own financial stability is a generalization that is crass and arguable at best, which is why counter examples are needed to problematize an assumed cultural norm (see further discussion in Chapter 2).

There are many ways in which a patriarchal culture allows for women to assert agency, independent from male desires and needs. One manifestation of female independence is the high divorce rate in Dagbon. Although statistics on this issue are not available, virtually every woman I had close contact with had been divorced at least once. While this is partially due to polygamy, which is commonly practiced among the Dagbamba and other Muslim cultures, marriages between one man and one woman do exist, “However, one must take into account the age of husbands: young men are more likely to have only one wife, whereas older men often have two or more wives” (Bierlich 2007:11). When co-wives do not get along, it is common for the newest (most junior) wife to leave the marriage. Or if one wife is obviously causing troubles between the co-wives and/or the husband, she will be the one to leave. During my field research visits, Alhaji had four active/current wives – Memunatu, Fuseina, Mary/Mele, and Amina), each living in their own room within the compound – and one elder wife (Ayishetu) who was technically “retired” from her wifely duties, but she and her son (Razak, in his 20s) were still living in the family compound (see illustration of Alhaji’s compound, Figure 4). On the subject of the social structure of Dagbamba marriages Bierlich states: “Despite ‘recurrent’ structures of inequality, the structure itself acknowledges her independent status when the woman in ‘old age’ (no longer fertile) divorces her husband, withdraws from marriage and returns to live with a brother or son” (Bierlich 2007:17). In this case, although Ayishetu was “retired” from her sexual and physical duties as a wife, she remained in the household. This was partially because of Alhaji’s

relative wealth and ability to provide at least a room for his retired wife, but also because Ayishetu only had one son still living with Alhaji, and she did not have many other relatives who could take her in. This is only one example of the many exceptions to social and cultural norms that have appeared in the literature.

Another aspect of marriage not widely discussed is the structure of polygamous households. Household duties of cleaning, cooking, and taking care of the husband and extended family are commonly divided between co-wives in an organized fashion. In the households I was most intimately associated with, a rotation system existed in which each wife spent one or two days in the husband's bed, which would also be the time when she would be responsible for cleaning the compound, cooking the main meals, and completing other household tasks. So if I were a co-wife among four wives, I would have one or two days on, then three to six days off, and then it would be my turn again. This rotational schedule provides routine and stability in a busy home, but does not account for personal desire, or a woman's emotional or physical needs. However, while arbitrary rotation does not allow a woman to make a decision about her sex life based on her desire or needs, it does give women in large households a great deal of time for themselves. In Alhaji's home, when wives were on their off days, they commonly slept in their own rooms with other women (either friends and family), or co-wives occasionally spent the night sleeping together. Married men and women are customarily not supposed to form friendships with the opposite sex, except when they are related (cousin, brother, sister, etc.). Perhaps because of this somewhat restrictive, but common, cultural norm, men and women form strong same-sex friendships.

Women also spend a great deal of their time and energy caring for their children: “in producing their futures, women and mothers invest their energies in caring for their children” (Bierlich 2007:135). Bierlich’s sentiment is telling. On one hand, it confirms many of my experiences in Dagbon, that is, witnessing the devotion of mothers to their children. On the other hand, the statement seems depressing and fatalistic as if women are trapped in a restrictive motherhood role and their only outlet for love, affection, and productive energy is through their relationship with their children. Although mothers are arguably over worked (as is the case in countless cultures around the world), this vocation is not without its personal rewards. This investment can be both personally fulfilling, as mother and child form close bonds, as well as practical; when women become older, their grown children contribute to their so-called retirement. In polygynous Dagbamba marriages, customarily a wife who has reached menopause will be “retired.” In other words, a wife past the childbearing stage will be freed from the sexual and manual labor duties of their polygamous marriage, and are in essence “divorced” from their husbands even if they remain in the home. In this way, they are allowed more personal time, they can visit friends and family more freely, and they may even leave their married home and return to their family of origin. Instead of her husband, their grown children become financially responsible for their mother’s well being. When this occurs, the husband may take a new wife since the elder wife is no longer fulfilling a role within the husband’s household.

In Dagbon, marriage not only is immensely important to both men and women in securing their status and futures in society, but it is regarded as a necessity to give birth to children. Polygamy has a host of complicated challenges. In the worst cases, these include jealousy among co-wives, accusations of witchcraft/poisoning, and general hostility. However, in the best of

cases, I have heard Dagbamba women praise the polygamous marriage system for offering a strong support network among co-wives. This support gives women independence. As co-wives, they can take turns caring for young children, allowing each the opportunity to go to town, take goods to sell at the market, meet with friends, and share in preparing meals. Two or more co-wives can also alleviate some of the harsh realities of daily life in Dagbon. Most families must buy water, or procure it from a river, dam, or another source every day, or multiple times a day. This strenuous and time consuming task is usually the responsibility of the junior wives and any young female helpers around the house. In order for everyone to be able to cook, bathe, and wash clothes, the water must be gathered early in the day. In the best of circumstances, the husband has funds to order a tank of water for the household. At Alhaji's house, there was a covered holding tank in the center of the compound, and when funds were available, Alhaji arranged for a tank of potable water to be delivered to the home that would usually last two to three weeks. The wives could also sell the water to neighbors and friends. These and other manual labor tasks consume a great deal of women's time. Perhaps the reason some women expressed a preference for polygyny is because of these daily realities of life in Dagbon. To keep a household running on ones own can be difficult. The following section will examine these issues with special focus on economic factors as they relate to gendered divisions of labor.

Women, Men, and Economic Structure in Dagbon

The local economy around Tamale has been rapidly changing over the last few years with increased mobility and a money-based market dependent on wage labor in banks, restaurants, hotels, gas stations, NGOs, and other local businesses. Yet, at the same time, subsistence farming remains the main source of food and nominal income for the majority of families in the area (Mahama 2004:vi). Bierlich discusses some of the changing economic factors in Dagbon and how they impact gender relations:

The existence of money and the market in Dagomba [sic.] have had a strong impact on male-female relationships. Women's more active participation in the cash economy as traders and as buyers and sellers of Western medicines have weakened men's control of the economy, of healing and of women. (2007:163)

I personally observed the result of these changes during my field research. In many Dagbamba households, women were the primary sellers of goods in the market and the only ones in the family with petty cash. Alhaji's family was unique in that his teaching in the USA every year helped the family to have a consistent annual influx of capital that most families could only dream of. Even so, most of this money went back into the farm, either for repairs on their tractor, tipper truck, and van, or to purchase fertilizer and other farming supplies. A great deal of money was also spent on school fees, uniforms, supplies, and daily allowance for his children.

Trade in the market allows women to not only earn petty cash, but also provides a social outlet and offers women a chance to interact with the public at large, and in this way fills a vacuum in the lives of women in Dagbon. Women I spoke to were generally married and had children. When asked how much money they earned on an average day, most women tended to be shy or a little embarrassed when they revealed that the amount was only a few pesewa (10-50

cents in the USA), or on good days a few cedis (maybe 1-3 US dollars). But they quickly pointed out that selling goods was not the main function of their trade. Selling in the market not only justified their time out of the house, it gave them an opportunity to socialize and return home with pocket money for themselves and their children. Many women who traded in small household necessities, like soaps, head scarves, and spices, purchased them from a middle man or woman and packaged them in smaller increments to sell for only a very small profit. In Alhaji's home, he usually invested some of the family funds to buy items in bulk, allowing his wife (or wives) to sell the individual items in the market and keep the money. Rarely were women able to save enough funds for the next purchase of bulk goods. The more profitable sale items tended to be prepared food, homemade snack items, or surplus food from the farm. On this subject Bierlich writes: "Through the gendered division of labour and their contact with the market, women engage their futures as women in a male-oriented society and produce a future based on female agency" (2007:19). Since many women relied on capital from their husband to afford the upfront purchase of goods that would be sold, Bierlich's sentiment may be idealistic. Regardless of the influence a husband or head of household may have, female traders in Tamale control most of the day to day exchanges and prices of goods. "In fact the women dominate the retail trade in Dagbon. A visit to any market in Dagbon reveals that women are the main controllers of market forces" (Mahama 2004:vi).

While the price of food and household items ebbs and flows, the price of fuel in Ghana has the most dramatic impact on the every day lives of Dagbambas. The weekly and sometimes daily changes in fuel prices affects life in many ways, from the price of a single taxi or bus fare, to costs for pineapples and bananas that are transported to the north from southern Ghana. Fuel

prices, shortages, and general access to fuel, power, and water remain at the heart of the household economic struggles in Dagbon. One might think that in a time when almost every adult man and woman has their own cell phone, access to international television broadcasts, and the Internet (usually in small Internet cafes), as well as health and farm insurance, issues surrounding sanitation, water, and power would not be a burden. Unfortunately, most who live in Tamale do not have running water, and while power is widely available, it remains a financial burden for many families. While these hardships are felt by both men and women, women are generally the ones who deal directly with the lack of basic municipal services. For example, as noted in the foregoing, since women are responsible for the household water supply, garbage removal, cleaning the human waste areas, and cooking food (over open coal burning fires), they have the most to gain from any improvement in basic services and sanitation. Yet, it is normally men in positions of power and influence who can make the necessary systemic changes.

While these issues can make the daily life of women seem challenging, Bierlich points out that women's lives in Dagbon are changing: "Women participate actively as traders in the money-based economy, buy pharmaceuticals, and in many places now own their own farms" (Bierlich 2007:18). Because Bierlich's monograph is primarily concerned with a money-based economy and the use of Western medicine versus traditional remedies, his discussion of current Dagbamba gender relations is relevant here:

On the surface women appear unimportant, dependent upon and dominated by men. However, surface impressions belie the reality of women's economic independence and freedom in the realm of family health care. Women have their own discourses or strategies: they grind, pound and cook food, they trade, and provide for their children's health. (Bierlich 2007:146)

I would argue that these underlying realities and freedoms extend beyond the realm of “family health care.” Mothers arguably have control and freedom regarding their children’s education, family food stuffs, as well as factors that can impact the entire family, like when they travel to visit a family member in need or other aspects of their social life. Women spend a great deal of time visiting friends and relatives on their own time without specific input or control from their husbands, especially on their off days or when they are not responsible for the household cooking, cleaning, and servicing of their husband. While many women joke about men being lazy or useless, the reality is that when families work together all can thrive. A successful family and successful marriage are contingent upon all members holding up their end of the economic arrangement typical of large family groupings. As I have noted earlier, the husband is largely responsible for providing staple foods and daily ingredients for stews, sauces, and soups, but when they are unable to provide this level of support, a wife may need to contribute. As Bierlich notes, despite the expectation that a husband should provide food for his family, “wives know, however, that husbands are often not present and do not always have money that they can give them. Men are primarily farmers [...] compared with women, men’s income-earning possibilities are limited” (Bierlich 2007:138).⁵⁹

⁵⁹ To read further comments on economic factors and the role of gender in the local economy, see Bierlich (2007:17, 138, 146, 177).

III. Women and Music

From the outside, women's place appears indeed to be limited to the domestic sphere [...] But the reality is more complex, and one can not grasp the subtleties of gender roles unless one understands the meaning and force of women's views. If public speaking to a mixed audience constitutes an exception to tradition, there is another medium of expression that women employ every day and with great freedom: song. (Sidikou and Hale 2012:1)

The above quote, which addresses the perception that women in West Africa and much of the “global south” are a voiceless, oppressed, domestic, and solely mothering class of people, brings attention to the realities of women's lived experiences. The outsider's view that women living in these communities need to be liberated and “saved” is an tired trope that feminist scholars have struggled with for decades. Women's voices throughout the African continent remind us that they are far from silent.⁶⁰ Although Dagbamba women who practice Islam are commonly veiled outside the home, my observations indicate that their lives cannot be characterized as simply oppressed or their plight described as voiceless and powerless. “African women express their diverse views about marriage in song lyrics that are often quite astonishing to those who see them as voiceless victims” (Sidikou and Hale 2012:2). At the same time, I do not want to minimize the hardships or complex realities of women's lives in a polygynous society, but the focus here is not to paint a grim and oversimplified picture of culture in Dagbon. Consequently, the following will give some generalized characteristics of West African women's involvement in song, with an emphasis on Dagbamba songs that provide an expressive outlet for women to transmit and produce social, cultural, and historically significant knowledge.⁶¹

⁶⁰ This is a theme in almost every essay throughout the collection *Women's Songs from West Africa* (Hale and Sidikou 2014).

⁶¹ Issues around African women's knowledge production, who controls knowledge production and dissemination, and what is a recognized form of knowledge production are discussed at some length in Oyèrónké Oyèwùmí (1997).

Women in Dagbon are involved in music on various levels and in many different situations at public events through dance, song, and hand clapping. In their private lives, women may sing around the home while working or cleaning or taking care of children. In addition, specific songs exist for grinding flour and peppers that were more commonly performed in the past (since most flours and meals are ground in local mills rather than in homes by hand with the large stone block and mortar). Although this music is rarely heard today, these private life examples are for personal pleasure, this is the music children first hear their mothers singing. Several skilled singers noted their mothers as being influential in their early musical development, or indicated that their mothers had beautiful voices and taught them how to sing and dance. Both singers, Ayishetu Nagumsi and Ayishetu Katariga, credit their mothers with teaching them how to sing. Both women have a large repertory of songs about the local history and community that they can use in a performance setting. This skilled and creative singing is valued in Dagbamba culture, some in Dagbon believe this talent to be dangerous since singers have the power to praise chiefs and citizens alike, and expect small monetary “dashing” in return. They have a platform, a public voice, when many do not have the same outlet for public exposure. In discussing the dangers of Katariga learning to sing, Mme Fuseina explained: “During those days, when you are a young girl and you sing and your voice is [... *considered beautiful*].... If you don't sing, how can people kill you? So her mother too was afraid they would kill her, so she was just hiding to teach her small small, gradually until she got it, yes.” From these comments it appears that a beautiful singing voice, just like wealth, can bring envy, ridicule, and scorn; thus training can be a dangerous undertaking.



Photos 11 and 12. Woman dancing at Banvim Lun-na enskinment ceremony, 2011.



In the public sphere, women participate in music making during festivals, weddings, funerals, government functions, special occasions at the chief palaces, and less formal events (i.e., social dances and local occasions). Public events feature women not only in a group, dancing, singing, and hand clapping, but also as female lead singers. The lead singer (*luṅpaḃa*) is not only responsible for singing the lead part of songs, which usually includes artful and skillful use of improvisation in both text and melody, but she also assesses the mood of the event (similar

to a DJ in a dance club) and decides when to move to the next song. Throughout the performance, she also would be sure to stay in sync with the drummers. Since songs are performed to unique and specific rhythms, non-verbal communication is practiced to change smoothly from one movement/rhythm to another. A lead singer (*luɲpaɣa*) works together with the drummers (*lunsi*), but the drummers usually wait until a song or medley ends before they change to a different rhythm or movement in a dance suite. For example, in *tora* or *baamaya*, several different movements or rhythms are played in succession, each with corresponding songs.

It should be noted that this performance style is not unique to Dagbamba song tradition. With evidence that women in ancient Egypt having performed in this manner, some scholars believe this performance tradition has existed among African women across the continent for thousands of years (Sidikou and Hale 2012:2-4). Offering an explanation as to why little attention has been given to the study of songs and other musical and literary forms performed by women, scholars studying African languages state: “From a wider perspective on verbal art that includes both oral and written forms, however, it is clear that women have always had a voice. The problem is that the voice was expressed in song and in languages not understood by those from other parts of Africa or from outside of Africa” (Sidikou and Hale 2012:12). In other words, this verbal and literary art remains highly localized due to language barriers that exist not only between Africans and non-Africans, but also those who reside in relatively small regions within Africa. Dagbanli, spoken primarily by the Dagbamba, is not widely understood outside Ghana’s Northern Region. Thus, the dissemination of Dagbamba songs has remained limited.

Regardless of its lack of marketability or lack of widespread appeal, Dagbamba song remains a vital medium where women's knowledge is expressed and circulated throughout the local culture. "The evidence suggests that song is indeed a privileged medium of expression for women across the Sahel" (Sidikou and Hale 2012:13). As Sidikou and Hale write: "we can no longer ignore what women are saying in their songs. [...] [song is] a ubiquitous verbal form with the oldest heritage and the widest impact in Africa" (2012:13). Thus, regardless of Dagbanli's inherent linguistic obscurity, culturally women's songs in Africa are a significant source of knowledge and provide an aesthetic culture dominated by women. However, in Dagbon, male drummers garner more attention as they are visible, audible, and have been the primary focus of scholarship concerning music of the Dagbamba. There have been some notable exceptions, namely DjeDje's work on fiddling (2008), but the bulk of the scholarship on West African music generally has been preoccupied with men, drumming, and rhythm.⁶²

While Dagbamba drumming and rhythm are fascinating, my primary focus here is women's involvement in music, song, and dance. I am especially interested in song, the meaning of song texts, and what music means to the individuals involved. Sidikou and Hale write:

As a form of discourse, songs can provide or construct models for action and thought in the communities where they are heard. The medium is not limited to professional singers—any woman can sing, and her songs may serve as verbal spaces where taboos can be attacked; thought processes contrasted; feelings expressed, exposed, and filtered; stereotypes emphasized or rejected; and selves constructed or shattered. (2012:7)

The above statement makes several important points. Firstly, songs are a form of discourse that can be influential in many areas of society and culture. Also, the fact that "any woman can sing"

⁶² See countless publications from the 1930s onward: Addo (1932, 1933, 1944); Cudjoe (1953); Nketia (1954, 1963); Akpabot (1972); Chernoff (1979, 1985, 1991, 1997); Locke (1985, 1990, 1996).

and singing can express a large variety of sentiments suggests that everyone can participate and all songs are welcomed, everything from teasing to arranged marriage, praising farming practices to current events. Secondly, songs allow females to make comments on what is occurring in their local communities. Sidikou and Hale explain: “If the singer can be a fierce critic of her society, she can also keep the social fabric together by textualizing and historicizing events; announcing, answering, or accentuating concerns; and exploring the conditions of people in her songs” (2012:7). I have found this to be the case in Dagbon; women’s songs are an important social force in mobilizing the community.

In a lengthy interview with renowned singer Ayishetu Katariga, Mme Fuseina and I discussed women’s songs and Katariga’s role as a lead singer in her local area. We began by discussing her life as a young woman; she never attended school but inherited her skill as a singer from her mother who taught her from a young age. Like many young Dagbamba women, she lived with her aunt, but maintained a close relationship with her mother through frequent visits to her home. As a lead singer during the Abudu/Andani conflict (from 2002 until spring 2006),⁶³ when “there was no drumming,” Katariga used to sing for people to dance. It was during this time that she formed a group of her own that included four male dancers and six women supporting Katariga as lead singer. The group gained local popularity and Katariga was invited by Radio Savannah to sing on a local radio program. Despite her popularity, even after the ban on music was lifted in 2006 and she was able to join forces with Gburmani *lunsi* and perform the

⁶³ See Chapter 1 for a brief explanation of the Abudu/Andani conflict, also see DjeDje 2008 for more information.

popular group dance *takai* and the solo dance *damba*,⁶⁴ Katariga was not able to make much money. It was only when she was sent to Accra and other larger cities around Ghana that she was able to make money with her performing. Otherwise, she was primarily singing for pleasure with her community group.

Over the years Katariga has gained respect as a skilled singer. Unlike the ridicule that many dancers have faced, as a singer Katariga has enjoyed a level of respect in the community. Acknowledging that the focus and attention received from outsiders (including Western scholars) has raised her status as a local musician,⁶⁵ she states: “When I started they used to insult me. It is now that they know the importance of singing and they respect me. So you see that when you came there (to Gburimani), they say ‘hey, now the singing is expensive, you see that Europeans are coming to visit her and to hear the songs!’ So now I have got more respect (*laughing*). More respect, yes” (Katariga 2011: time 23:43).

⁶⁴ *Takai* is a group dance performed with male dancers in a full circle wearing traditional smocks (*binymaa*). The dance includes several movements, or sections, each with different dance steps with some including a hitting of sticks between two dancers much like the bumping in *tora*. *Damba* is a solo dance performed by men and women primarily during the annual Damba festival, but practiced during the year so that people can display their best dancing at the festival. Both dances are accompanied by drummers and *damba* includes a vast repertoire of women’s singing. For a video of the dance, see John M. Chernoff’s “The Drums of Dagbon” Program 5 (1984) that accompanies his article “The Drums of Dagbon,” in *Repercussions: A Celebration of African-American Music*, edited by Geoffrey Haydon and Dennis Marks (London: Century Publishing, 1985). For an example of solo dances see the video *Dagbamba Praise Name Dances*, Lunna et. al. (1990).

⁶⁵ Other ethnomusicologists have discussed this phenomenon in their work (see Djedje 2008 and Hogan 2011).



Photo 13. Mme Fuseina, myself, and Ayshetu Katariga in Tamale, 2011.

Katariga is a woman of strong character and part of her success as a lead singer comes from her creative musicality when singing traditional music. She is always making small changes and creating interesting melodies within existing compositions. In addition to her role in the local community in providing entertainment with her group of singers and dancers, Katariga is a praise singer during festivals. She discussed her role in maintaining the chieftaincy lineage in song during the Damba festival: “They arrange it from the great-grandfather, to the grandfather, to the father [...] the Damba songs, and they praise the chief, and they sing until they reach the recent chief and then he will also give his appellation” (Katariga 2011: time 32:00). Her role as a praise singer is evident at recreational women’s dances when Katariga praises the dancers: “They are just urging them. Praising them. So-so-and-so you are beautiful, you are strong, you are [good] - that is how [one praises dancers], that is praises” (Katariga 2011). In this way a lead singer must know her community in order to improvise in the moment; she praises each individual dancer based on their character and skills, which in turn encourages the women to dance more beautifully and energetically.

Prominent lead singers play an important role in advising women, which is done through their compositions and the performance of new songs or new lyrics to old melodies. When I discussed this issue with Ayishetu Katariga, she spoke in Dagbanli at length about several current events that compelled her to compose songs that warned women about dangers surrounding sex,

prostitution, and rape. Here I would like to quote the interview at length, translated into English by Mme Fuseina Wumbei:

KS: Do you think that any of the songs are actually helping the girls, or teaching them?

Ayishetu Katariga (translated by Mme Fuseina): There is a song, that is what she is explaining. That some song - a girl was not up to age, and they, how do I say it, raped her. And then she became sick, they had to use hot water, and all that. So they took that message and put it into song. To advise the younger ones, so they used to sing it to threaten younger ones so they don't get into it. That one girl too was defiled again, and then another song came out. And they took her to Nalerigu for treatment so they raised another song from that. That you are not yet grown up, and you went in for this thing [sex, prostitution], now they have sent you to Nalerigu. So they shouldn't try doing that [sex, prostitution].

KS: Are they bringing up these songs themselves, she is also writing, creating them?

Ayishetu Katariga (translated by Fuseina Wumbei): Yes, she creates them, she creates them. She creates those songs, just to threaten the younger ones, advise them to not to go in for [sex/prostitution]. If you are still very young don't go in for a man. Because if you go in for a man they will send you to Nalerigu. If you want a cedi, go and search for a cedi, work hard and get it. Don't go in for a man. It's ok.

These two examples of Katariga creating songs on current issues faced by women in her own community show the vitality of Dagbamba women's song as a medium for social discourse.⁶⁶ It is an instance of the public voicing of women's issues directed at a female audience – women's knowledge and opinion being produced to help educate their own community.

The following chapter will take a closer look at individual women and their varied life experiences in Dagbon.

⁶⁶ The discussion of such issues is not uncommon in ethnomusicology; see Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (2008).

Chapter 3: Madame Fuseina Wumbei and Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman: Life (Her)Stories



Photo 14. Mme Fuseina at Damba Bielkushi in Tamale, 2011.

I. Introduction

This chapter focuses on Madame Fuseina Wumbei for a number of reasons. Firstly, due to her life long dedication to music and dance, she is part of a select group of Ghanaian women who are professional musicians or dancers. Secondly, because of her influence, guidance, teaching, and unending support during my time in Tamale, I feel it is important to honor her dedication and commitment to music in Dagbon and, specifically, my project by discussing her contributions at length. And thirdly, by highlighting Mme Fuseina’s life experiences, I provide an example of a modern Dagbamba woman’s life to contrast it with the imaginary Dagbamba (or Northern Region) woman held in the minds of many southern Ghanaians and foreigners alike. To minimize generalization and bolster this third point, I include a second individual, Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman, as an example of a younger woman (in her thirties) as well as one who is a casual participant as opposed to a professional musician. This chapter also provides a case example of Mme Fuseina’s seemingly contradictory life experiences as a cosmopolitan, traditionalist, Islamic, independent, feminine, strong “African” or “Ghanaian women” who has a

specific standpoint that has emerged from her 21st century, post-colonial, modern, urban, global environment. I argue that Mme Fuseina is a cosmopolitan figure who, in various ways, embodies the core tenants that philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah discusses in his influential text on the subject:

So there are two strands that intertwine in the notion of cosmopolitanism. One is the idea that we have obligations to others, obligations that stretch beyond those to whom we are related by the ties of kith and kind, or even the more formal ties of a shared citizenship. The other is that we take seriously the value not just of human life but of particular human lives, which means taking an interest in the practices and beliefs that lend them significance. (2006:xv, also quoted in Appiah 2010: Kindle Locations 137-140)

The broad outlook and independent life that Mme Fuseina has led, which will be discussed in more detail below, exemplifies a kind of cosmopolitanism achieved at least in part by her early exposure to vastly different cultures through relatively wide travel. More importantly, Mme Fuseina is not only one who is grounded and dedicated to her community, she is also keenly aware of the global context in which she lives. This grounding within a global perspective seems congruous with ideas of the cosmopolitan individual.

To focus on an individual musician or artist within a particular cultural group has become commonplace in ethnomusicological writing. Jesse D. Ruskin and Timothy Rice (2012) co-authored a survey of musical ethnography that focuses on individuals. The section, “Studies Concerned with Difference in Culture” (2012:308-310), which describes aspects of social theory that ethnomusicologists often borrow to highlight individual agency, personality, and experience, is particularly useful, for the discussion challenges assumptions of a homogeneous culture in favor of a more realistic approach that acknowledges the reality of a society fractured “along lines of gender, social class, and ethnicity” (2012:308). Thus, their research has aided me in developing my thoughts on how and why I would like to represent Mme Fuseina and Rosina.

Not only does their article highlight historical interventions on the subject (2012:299-301), but they also categorize the surveyed monographs into groups based on how the text deals with the individual. Despite their exhaustive survey of over 100 monographs (2012:301), they do not always reference corresponding monographs for each category. Instead they often use one example to make their point (see 2012:305, 309, 310), but a bibliographic appendix is included of all musical ethnographies surveyed (2012:323-327). Although the many categories they identify are informative and insightful, only a few apply to my research on Dagbamba women. For example, they state that ethnomusicologists write about four different kinds of individuals “(1) innovators in a tradition; (2) key figures who occupy important roles in a musical culture; (3) ordinary or typical individuals; and (4) normally anonymous audience members and others...” (2012:304). I would argue that Mme Fuseina fits into the “key figures” category, while Rosina would be in the last category, “normally anonymous audience members.”

In the Dagbon context, Chernoff (1979), DjeDje (2008), and Locke (1990) have all written about extraordinarily talented Dagbamba musicians, and their monographs rely on these individual’s accounts and expertise. Similarly, Bierlich’s work in Dagbon (2007) includes individuals’ accounts as well as personal observations. Monographs by Kwasi Ampene (2005), James Burns (2009), Virginia Danielson (1997), and Beverly B. Mack (2004) offer examples of writing specifically about African women. Burns, DjeDje, and Mack dedicate entire sections to profiles that present an in-depth description of a musician’s lived experience, including quotations providing the reader with first hand knowledge of the individual. Burns’ video footage of interviews with women musicians/dancers on the accompanying DVD provides an even closer experience for the reader/viewer. In doing so, Burns does not forget to acknowledge the

limitations of highlighting the voice of an extraordinary musician to generalize about the culture: “The danger is that in doing so we are silencing the cumulative cultural discourse for a single voice” (Burns 2009:13). Similarly, by including this extensive treatment of both Mme Fuseina’s and Rosina’s lives, I am in no way attempting to obfuscate the underlying cultural implications. Rather, I use the discussion of the individual to provide an intimate window into Dagbamba women’s culture that we would not otherwise see without this closer examination. While Burns is also aware of the potential limitations of focusing on individuals rather than the “cumulative cultural discourse,” he notes that in the past scholarship on Ewe music has left out female voices entirely:

Given the actual prominence by which women feature in music-making throughout Eweland, their efforts could not have failed to attract attention through mere chance or omission. Yet through the entire corpus of Ewe scholarship we find no interviews with women musicians, no mention of the sexual division of musical roles, and no collaborations with female composers, choreographers or elders. In fact, female musicians have been literally written out of the collective representation of Ewe music to date. (Burns 2009:10-11)

This sentiment could be extended to much of the literature on music in Africa as it largely focuses on male subjects, which does not accurately represent the realities of musical cultures on the continent.⁶⁷ Just as Burns’ intervention offers a welcome contrast to scholarship on African male musicians (often drummers), this dissertation (and chapter) aims to highlight Dagbamba women’s experiences and voices as a point of departure.

As Ruskin and Rice note, ethnomusicologists commonly rely on their own relationships and encounters with extraordinary music and musicians, and more recently also find the need to contend with their own roles in fieldwork (2012:299). This happens in many ways, but usually

⁶⁷ For more contemporary examples, see Sidra Lawrence’s 2011b article, “Sounds of Development? Race, Authenticity, and Tradition Among Dagara Female Musicians in Northwestern Ghana,” and Angela Scharfenberger’s 2011 survey of literature on women’s music in Africa, “West African Women in Music: An Analysis of Scholarship.”

includes a direct connection with a remarkable musician, or a number of “key figures” from the given culture (Ruskin and Rice 2012:304-305). These individuals provide the ethnomusicologist with not only a vested personal interest in the music and culture, but in many cases a personal invitation or introduction into their (the culture bearer’s) musical community or culture.⁶⁸

Therefore, for ethnomusicologists like myself, and presumably others, to focus on the individual is a natural extension of the initial encounter; another step in the process of honoring and paying respect to those individuals who opened their (musical) lives and hearts to an interested outsider. I would argue (in agreement with Ruskin and Rice) that without the accounts from individuals (whether “key figures, innovators, or audience members”), scholars would produce (and experience) far fewer musically and personally worthwhile research projects, presentations, and publications. These individual profiles are meant to enhance our understanding of culture by

extrapolating from the personal, rather than overshadow the discussion of musical culture.



Photo 15. Alhaji Abubakari Lunna, Tamale, 2006.

In my case, without David Locke and the late Alhaji Abubakari Lunna’s initial invitation to stay with his family in Tamale in 2006 (as several other foreign students had previously done), I would have had a vastly different experience (see the introduction, for an explanation of my first contact with Dagbamba music and musicians). As I describe in the forgoing, I was

introduced to dancer, singer, and educator Mme Fuseina,

⁶⁸ For more on this, see Shelemay 1998:201.

and skilled lead singer, Amishetu Nagumsi, during my fieldwork in 2006.

Although my work with Alhaji Lunna, Mme Fuseina, and Amishetu Nagumsi began in 2006, I met Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman much later in January 2011, when searching for a Dagbanli language teacher through the

Tamale Institute for Cross Cultural Studies (TICCS), which is a Catholic organization based in Tamale. Rosina gave me Dagbanli language lessons three to five times per week for about ten weeks. Throughout this time, we developed a friendly rapport with each other and began to discuss women's



Photo 16. Amishetu Nagumsi, myself, and Mme Fuseina Wumbei, photo taken by Karl Haas, 2006.

issues and music. Consequently, highlights about the the lives of Mme Fuseina and Rosina are based primarily on interviews and personal conversations. In an attempt to allow the individuals to speak for themselves, extensive quotations are included. At times, the lengthy quotations may seem awkward, or the local colloquialisms may not conform to English usage in the USA, but they give a much better sense of the individuals themselves than my own paraphrasing or summarizing.

II. Mme Fuseina

Before continuing with Mme Fuseina's life story, I would like to provide a sense of her demeanor, presence, and distinctive character. Mme Fuseina is a petite woman with the slight but strong frame of a former dancer who is now in her mid-sixties, aging gracefully. Her eyes shine and have the warmth and welcoming glint of a mother or grandmother, though at times they also contain a mischievous or knowing wink or twinkle. She has delicate, skillful hands that are quick to correct a dancer, clap a rhythm, or fill in on a drum when a musician does not show up for rehearsal. Mme Fuseina is incredibly giving of her time and talent, is always interested in helping young people, is a warm and loving woman, and an encouraging but brutally honest teacher.

Due to her early professional experience with Ghana's National Folkloric Company housed at the Arts Council,⁶⁹ and her career as an educator with the Tamale Center for National Culture (TCNC), as well as her time traveling abroad, her teaching style and delivery (her pedagogy), has a more Western style than some of her Dagbamba colleagues. For example, she will insist that her foreign students write lyrics down on paper, or repeat a phrase over and over until they grasp the rhythmic relationships between the singing and clapping, rather than allowing a more purely oral transmission to naturally take place over an extended period of time. Even with local students, she will repeat sections and teach in this more pedagogically "Western" way. This willingness to individualize her approach allows for Mme Fuseina's students to excel and feel valued. I have witnessed her teaching song and dance to groups of young Dagbambas

⁶⁹ This group is known as the Arts Council National Dance Company, or the Ghana National Folkloric Company at the Arts Council, but is commonly referred to as "the Folkloric Company." Basically, it is the dance company housed within the government's arts council, not the Ghana National Dance Ensemble, which is hosted at the University of Ghana at Legon and associated with Ghana's Institute of African Studies.

after they have finished school for the day, and have seen their collective demeanor change and lighten as Mme Fuseina captures their interest by being present with each student, giving her attention and care to their learning process. She can be harsh but at the same time she has a playfulness and youth about her that also helps captivate students. While she may be past her performance days, and past her prime as a dancer or singer, she is still able to spark interest in music and dance among young Dagbambas and visitors alike.

Mme Fuseina took me on as a student knowing I was interested in focusing on Dagbamba song and dance. While singing has never been her sole interest or specialty, given decades of traditional and staged performance experience, her knowledge of Dagbamba song is extensive. Mme Fuseina speaks English well, and has international experience teaching and performing, as such she was an interpreter or intermediary for me in many varied situations. On a daily basis throughout my field research, she co-taught my private lessons with her friend and colleague Ayishetu Nagumsi, a respected lead singer in Tamale (introduced above). Ayishetu speaks Dagbanli exclusively, and my Dagbanli is conversational at best. So Mme Fuseina's presence at nearly every song lesson provided me with a greater understanding of each song. She also provided a structure for the lessons and guided Ayishetu's singing at times if she wanted her to repeat something for clarity. This kind of foresight and interjection is part of Mme Fuseina's spunk and youthful persona; during my field research in Tamale this aspect of her personality along with her presence and friendship provided stability and warmth throughout continuous trying experiences.

As our teacher/student relationship developed, Mme Fuseina and I enjoyed an ease of communication that would perhaps be more characteristic of a senior and junior colleague than

an insider/outsider relationship. At times our relationship seemed to cross over into extended family territory as she would invite me to family functions, and include me in personal discussions of health and welfare. Of course, as a student from the USA with relatively high material wealth, I have no delusions of the potential for ulterior financial motives for these kinds of encounters, and I do not rule that possibility out. Suffice it to say that on my side, many of the encounters felt genuine, and at the same time when I felt it was appropriate I did assist Mme Fuseina financially with personal hardships. The multifaceted and at times difficult nature of field research relationships like these can further complicate the process of documentation and objective scholarship. But as I have mentioned earlier (see introduction), my field research utilized what Elizabeth Mackinlay articulated as an autoethnographic method where “relationship becomes central to the research process” (2010:97).⁷⁰ By highlighting Mme Fuseina’s personal experiences and using excerpts of her own words, I hope to move towards this goal of decolonizing ethnomusicological research.

Mme Fuseina Wumbei’s Early Life in Tamale

List of key life events (dates are approximate estimations based on Mme Fuseina’s calculations):

Born 1948 or 1949 in Tamale (this is based on beginning primary school in 1954)

1954-60 – Attended St. Joseph’s Primary School

1960-64 – Attended Bishop’s Middle School

1967-75 or ’76 – in Accra with the Ghana National Folkloric Company, led by Cornelius Kweku (C.K.) Ganyo and female coach Comfort Dekpe

1972 – traveled to Tel Aviv, Israel, with Folkloric Company

⁷⁰ During my field research experience, returning year after year to work with the same community, I have been searching for an explanation or an ally among scholars who has experienced the profound relationships that can form. Reading Mackinlay’s work has provided a grounding for my own field research.

1976-82 – married to Alhaji Alhassan Jay Billa (J.B.) Ibrahim, as his second wife

1983-2008 – Dance Ensemble Director and Choreographer at the Tamale Center for National Culture (TCNC)

1985- present – married to Yao Kubul Yusuf

2008-present – retired, still occasionally advising at TCNC and giving private dance lessons

Wumbei Family Tree

Wumbei Nindoo + (third wife) Zeinabu Tiyumba (deceased)

1st child: Habiba (deceased)

2nd: Sanatu (deceased)

3rd: Mahamood (deceased)

4th: Alhassan (b. 1944-5) + (first wife) Samata (deceased), and + (second wife) Sanatu
(child, Awal Alhassan b.1980) (child, Saala Alhassan, b.1992)

5th: Fuseina (b.1948-9) + Alhassan J.B. Ibrahim (1976-82) + Yao Kubul Yusuf (1985-present)

Mme Fuseina was the youngest child in what many Dagbamba characterized as a “traditional” family. Fuseina Wumbei was born around 1949 in Tamale and lived in her family’s compound in the main central area of town (called “Borilang Fang”). Mme Fuseina’s mother, Zeinabu Tiyumba, was Wumbei Nindoo’s third wife, but by the time Mme Fuseina was born, his first two wives had passed away. Also, by the time she was born, her father was getting older (probably in his 50s or 60s), and had already retired from his primary employment. Mme Fuseina explains: “They were



Photo 17. Mme Fuseina’s parents, Zeinabu Tiyumba and Wumbei Nindoo, date and photographer unknown.

traditional. My mother was Muslim. My mother practiced Muslim [Islam]. But my father is a traditional man. He was a traditional - a *typical* traditional man. Yes” (Wumbei 2011c; emphasis in original interview). I will not unpack or speculate on what she means exactly by the strong emphasis placed on describing her father as a “*typical* traditional man.” But it should be noted that this has local connotations having to do with the complicated relationship between Islam and “traditional” Dagbamba practices. They are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and there are varying degrees of adherence or compliance with both; “... the Dagbamba, who are nominal Muslims, have uniquely combined Islam with indigenous cultural practices” (DjeDje 2008:169), and this fact does not commonly cause conflicts among locals. Despite being a “typical traditional man,” during the colonial era Mme Fuseina’s father was employed by a British family:

My father spoke English because he worked with Dr. B.D. He worked with some whites for house care in those days. So he could speak many languages. My father could speak broken English, he could speak Hausa, he could speak Twi. Many, many languages. He could speak some languages that I didn't even know. Oh, this man! (Wumbei 2011c)⁷¹

The fact that Mme Fuseina’s father had worked for “whites” during the colonial period seemed to indicate an openness to Western education and helped to explain why Wumbei Nindoo had allowed Mme Fuseina to attend school as a young girl.

Mme Fuseina began attending St. Joseph’s Primary in Tamale around 1954. She explains how she calculated her birthdate when she was sent to primary school: “I just took the day I went to school, I was very young. It was this [*holds arms straight above her head*], when this finger [*pointer finger*] touches your ear you are five years. If it doesn't touch, then you are not five

⁷¹ As is typical of many oral accounts, I am simply transcribing names as they are told to me. When possible I try to verify spellings especially of place names. But in this case “Dr. B.D.,” or later “Father Trice,” is the closest spelling I could determine based on Mme Fuseina’s personal account.

years! That was how they used to send us to school” (Wumbei 2011c). Then she went on to Bishop’s Middle School (now referred to as a Junior Secondary School, JSS) where she finished in 1964. When I asked how she was able to attend school through JSS, and if her parents were supportive, she explained that a missionary came to Tamale and sent many children to the Christian and Catholic schools in the area: “School, yes. It was one Reverend Father Trice; he came to our area, and picked us, and sent us to school. Father Trice he was a missionary. ... Oh, he died some years ago, may his soul rest in peace. Father Trice. He was a good man” (Ibid.).

After completing ten years of education (when she was about 15 in 1964), her parents wanted her to pursue a certificate program to become a nurse. Mme Fuseina also applied to a “Women’s Auxiliary Course” that she described as being part of the Ghanaian Army, but her parents would not allow her to join. So she, in turn, also refused to pursue a career in nursing as her parents had wished. During this time she was living at home with her family. She explains in a matter-of-fact tone how she joined the National Folkloric Company in Accra: “So it was in 1967, three years after then [after she finished JSS], a group came from Accra and they advertised that they wanted a Northerner - [a northern dancer]. So I just applied and went for the interview and they employed me” (Wumbei 2011c). During this period of Ghana’s history (about ten years after Ghana’s independence in 1957), there were strong feelings of nationalism: “There is a particular poignancy to the history of Ghana because it was the pioneer. Kwame Nkrumah was more than a political leader; he was a prophet of independence, of anti-imperialism, of Pan-Africanism” (Cooper 2002:161).⁷² There was also an urge to create a Ghanaian identity that emphasized unity but also acknowledged the vast diversity in the country. J.H. Kwabena Nketia,

⁷² See chapter 1 for more information on the history of Ghana and the Northern Region.

in his seminal text, *The Music of Africa*, writes: “The study of African music is at once a study of unity and diversity, and this is what makes it exciting and challenging” (1974:ix). In many African countries, this “unity and diversity” was manifested through the formation of national dance ensembles or national ballet companies that became prominent during the 1960s.⁷³

Throughout the years I have known Mme Fuseina, I have been struck by her head strong independence; she clearly takes pride in being Ghanaian but also distinctly Dagbamba. Perhaps even more than these regional or national inclinations, she is quick to point to her past and her teaching credentials – having danced in Accra for several years as a young woman – and the fact that she currently lives independently from her husband: “I toiled and toiled and toiled before I could get these two rooms, because our salary is meagre. So I had to get a loan. After I paid the loan, before I can get a loan again until I made this” (Wumbei 2011c). To be clear, she built her own home connected to her nephew’s compound in Bilpiela (a neighborhood in Tamale) with the help of bank loans. Although she lives in her home alone, she sees her husband daily, they commonly share a meal or visit family and friends together. This is a modern living situation by any account. She has worked deliberately to create this life as an independent, modern, cosmopolitan African woman.

Despite this comparatively modern life style, Mme Fuseina had a more traditional life in Tamale as a child. During one of our interviews, she spoke of not being able to sleep at night when there was drumming:

When I was very young I liked - especially in the school - I liked drumming and dancing. I was interested. When I heard in the night, funerals somewhere, *tora*. Oh, I can't sleep - I will go there, until the *tora* is finished I won't sleep. So I used to go out, even if they lock

⁷³ For more on the movement of national dance companies in the African context, see Joan D. Frosh (2007), “Movement (R)evolution Africa” <<http://movementrevolutionafrica.com/about.html>> (accessed 20 September, 2013).

the door I will open it and I will go. Go to the *tora* dance, until the *tora* is finished I will not come home. So that is how I learned. (Wumbei 2006a)

This insider's prospective of growing up in a culture where groups of young people gather to drum and dance together make *tora* come to life in a visceral way. The above sounds like the account of a rebellious teenager, which is why I find it particularly powerful.⁷⁴ In the above, Mme Fuseina also acknowledges the learning process as being experiential, rather than lesson based. She reveals that her mother and father were both involved in music in some way, but primarily in farming as many families depend on subsistence farming for their own food supply as well as selling in the market. Here I quote an interview at length in an attempt to capture the urgency and youthful voice Mme Fuseina has when discussing her life. This excerpt is also informative as it presents information about family livelihood, cultural transmission, and the annual Damba festival:

Fuseina Wumbei (FW): My mother's family?

Katie Stuffelbeam (KS): Yeah, were they also farming?

FW: Yes, they were farming.

KS: Was she a dancer or a singer, or did she know any of the -

FW: My mother could sing *a lot*. Her voice was sweet. Melodious voice, but I didn't see her dance. Only my father told us that he was a lead dancer. That he danced before. Yes! Yes!



Photo 18. Mme Fuseina in 1969, photo taken by Y.Z. Accra New Town.

⁷⁴ Hearing first hand the kind of effect *tora* had on a young girl is exciting and powerful. For me, traditional Dagbamba music and dance do not immediately connote a defiant or disobedient atmosphere.

KS: Is it true?

FW: Yes! Even I came - I saw him dance at Damba Festivals. And *Oh*, he used to *dance* at Damba Festivals. [...] He had a friend always at Damba Festivals they buy gorgeous clothes.

KS: Oh, like very nice smocks?

FW: Yes, smocks and they would go to Damba fest. I used to see him dance. I saw him dance. He liked dancing, my father he liked dancing! Maybe he is the one I inherit it from. Yes.

KS: Yes, it runs in your family.

FW: [*laughing*]

KS: So, did you learn any songs from your mother? Did she teach you any songs?

FW: She didn't teach me, but she used to sing.

KS: So you would hear -

FW: Yes. When she is grinding the maize [corn], yes. For *koko*, the local *koko*. When she is grinding, she is singing melodious songs. She would be enjoying it. *Oh*. It used to be *lively*. Yes! But she didn't teach me. As for songs, I learned it myself. I learned it in Accra. Yes. I learned it in Accra. (2011c)

The following section will focus more specifically on Mme Fuseina's artistic career as a dancer and educator, as well as personal details she has shared about her experiences as a Dagbamba woman.

Professional and Personal Life: From Accra to Tamale and the TCNC

As stated in the foregoing, Mme Fuseina is a performer, educator, dancer, and musician in her own right, who began her professional career as a dancer with the Ghana National Folkloric Company in Accra at age of 17 or 18.⁷⁵ It was there that she met Alhaji Lunna who was employed as a musician with the ensemble: "Abubakari [Lunna] 1968. I was in the group one year before they employed him. Yes, 1968. Before the chief of - this man, the chief of Gushegu

⁷⁵ Personal communication.

brought him. ... He [the chief of Gushegu] was a police commissioner so he brought him [Abubakari Lunna] to the center and said they should employ him as a drummer” (Wumbei 2011b). With both being Dagbamba from the Tamale area, Alhaji Lunna and Mme Fuseina became acquainted during the years they were both in Accra. ⁷⁶

Because of the new opportunities that became available in the country, the 1960s and 1970s were an exciting period in Ghana’s history. African historian Frederick Cooper writes of the time after independence in Ghana: “The festivities were exuberant; the joy palpable” (2002:68). When discussing her career as a professional dancer, Mme Fuseina mirrors this sentiment when describing her experiences in Accra in the 70s.

A younger time. Stronger. Right after independence everything was lively. In the group I was one of the best dancers. The dance was big! They taught me and I was performing the whole time. Every evening sending four dancers, I should be among them. I was singing, I was dancing. I was a lead singer in the group, and I was dancing. (Wumbei 2011b)

According to this account, she was an accomplished performer the directors utilized in practically every performance, big or small. Mme Fuseina takes great pride in this fact and credits her prominence, at least partially, to always being a quick study, which was very helpful in this context. She spoke about some of the dances performed during her time in Accra: “So I can do almost, at least, two or one dances from all the regions in Ghana. Dances, traditional dances, I do Ewe dances, Nzema dances, Ashanti, Akan, Volta, Northern, Upper East, Upper West, all” (Wumbei 2006a). This statement not only gives us an idea of the breadth of Mme Fuseina’s knowledge, but it also demonstrates her experience in Accra and the multicultural

⁷⁶ As a side note, it was also in Accra in the 70s that Mme Fuseina met David Locke. Locke met Alhaji Lunna and Mme Fuseina, as well as renowned Ewe musician Godwin Agbeli in Accra during this same period. Similar to other fields, tracing a musical and scholarly lineage becomes a way of not only providing context or placement for the reader, but it also serves as an acknowledgement of respect to teachers, mentors, and elders.

reality of the city and the ensemble. The group often traveled throughout Ghana for performances: “Yeah, we traveled around Ghana, as for the whole Ghana... Cape Coast, Kumasi, Takoradi, Sunyani, Bolga [Bolgatanga]. All over” (Wumbei 2011c). She enthusiastically described touring with the ensemble and proudly spoke of traveling all the way to Tel Aviv, Israel: “My first tour was in Togo, before we went to Tel Aviv” (Ibid.). Her cosmopolitan outlook on the world and the flexible pedagogical techniques she utilizes with students from different backgrounds could arguably be traced to her training in Accra with the Folkloric Company.

Mme Fuseina spent roughly eight or nine years in Accra before returning to Tamale.⁷⁷ In our interviews and personal communication, she gave different reasons for the return. One explanation was that her father fell ill and she felt compelled to return and help with the family (Wumbei 2006a and 2006b). In a subsequent interview she described the event in more detail:

People came [to her parents] and they were talking, they were threatening my [family]. They would say “Oh this girl, she won't come back. She will never come back to Tamale again” [*laughing*]. “She likes the work so much that she can't come back!” They used to threaten my father. But I stayed there for nine years [about 1967-1975]. I stayed in Accra for nine years with the group, before I bolted away without resigning. Without notice. I just bolted. [...] Yes. It was because of the marriage they were calling me, dragging me home. So when I came back, I got married. [...] Maybe, I don't know how they dragged my feet. Maybe spiritually. I don't know. (Wumbei 2011c)

This pressure, or threat to her family, was partly due to the fact that she was a young single Dagbamba woman living and working independently in Accra. Many in Dagbon felt this to be unseemly, or in conflict with how a good “traditional” Dagbamba woman should act. After her

⁷⁷ According to her own account, she spent nine years in Accra, but when adding up the available information, the dates are not entirely clear. Regardless, it seems that she arrived in the late sixties around 1967 and left in the mid 1970s, around 1975 or 1976 (her first child was born in 1976).

arrival in Tamale, she married Alhaji Alhassan J.B. Ibrahim in 1976 who, according to Mme Fuseina, had been waiting for her since she had left for Accra in 1967.



Photos 19 and 20. J.B. Alhassan and Mme Fuseina in 1972, photographer unknown.

In explaining why she married her first husband, she states: “Because he loved me, and I also loved him” (Wumbei 2006a). Of course, it was not always so romantic or easy. Mme Fuseina was Ibrahim’s second wife and they had “marriage problems”; Fuseina “had four children with him, but all of them passed away” (Wumbei 2006a). They were married for seven years before divorcing:

And within those seven years, I had four children. Because of the miscarriages, I had three deliveries. I had four children, two boys, two girls. [...] The first one was one year when he died. That one knew "mama, mama" before he died. The second one, two days. She lived for two days. The third one, she lived for one day, it lived for one day. The fourth one, six months, five to six months in the womb. So they could detect whether it was a boy or girl. My children were boy, girl, girl, boy. (Wumbei 2011b).



Photo 21. Abdul-Kadiri Alhassan (1976-77), Mme Fuseina's first child, Sisons Foto House, Tamale 13 April 1977.

Mme Fuseina's tragic experience in losing all four of her babies is difficult to comprehend, but women in many parts of the world lose babies as infants and through miscarriages, complications, and illnesses.⁷⁸ In Ghana, the infant mortality rate has gone from 76 per 1000 live births in 1990, to 47 per 1000 live births in 2012.⁷⁹ In other words, in the last twenty years Ghana has cut the infant mortality rate almost in half.⁸⁰ Access to healthcare and resources for

women's health generally has been improving, which I have personally observed during my visits over the years. Since the implementation of Ghana's National Health Insurance Scheme

(NHIS), most of the women I encountered had purchased health insurance. So while Mme Fuseina's account is very personal and rather extreme, it illustrates common issues that many (Ghanaian) women have experienced. "Until recently, in many regions of Africa there was a 50 percent chance of a child dying before the age of five from disease. For some women, the loss of children exceeds this rate considerably" (Sidikou and Hale 2012:78). It is not surprising that after the death of their three babies and one late-term miscarriage, Mme Fuseina and Ibrahim's marriage did not survive. Although Mme Fuseina is still scarred by this traumatic experience,

⁷⁸ According to Storck (2012), approximately 15-20% of all pregnancies in the US naturally end in miscarriage. <<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001488.htm>> (accessed 14 May, 2014).

⁷⁹ Statistics have been taken from Unicef <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ghana_statistics.html>, and the CIA World Factbook <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html>> (accessed 20 September, 2013).

⁸⁰ To give some comparison, in the USA in 2000 it was 7 out of 1000, and in 2012 it went down to around 6. This information was found on the following web sites: the CIA World Factbook <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html>>, The World Bank <<http://data.worldbank.org/country/ghana>>, and Unicef <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ghana_statistics.html> (accessed 20 September, 2013).

rather than avoiding the topic or children in general, she has embraced being a foster mother, or aunt, to many young people throughout her life.

In Dagbon, a woman's ability to have children oftentimes determines her worth in society, as discussed in the foregoing. Thus, women unable to bear children are judged harshly by members of her community.⁸¹ Comments by individuals during my field research suggest that when a woman has a child (or children), she has secured her future. Not only a future with her husband, but her financial future generally, since Dagbamba children commonly are responsible for taking care of their mother when she grows old (Bierlich 2007:146).⁸² Other suspicions, worries, or accusations from members of the community can also arise: "In Jola society in Senegal, a woman who has no children, or who has lost her children, is seen as the victim of evil spirits" (Sidikou and Hale 2012:67). On a more basic level, since childbearing and childrearing have traditionally played such a vital role in a Dagomba woman's life, a sadness is also associated with childless women.⁸³ In Mme Fuseina's case, this sadness only reveals itself occasionally, perhaps because she has surrounded herself with young people throughout her career and has mothered a few of her older brother's children, namely, Awal Alhassan (her nephew), and Saala Alhassan (her niece).⁸⁴

⁸¹ On many occasions, I experienced this judgement while studying in Ghana.

⁸² Throughout my field research, this was a refrain I would hear from someone who is an only child, or from the only male child. The young men would be fretting about their financial future, complaining that they would be the only ones responsible for supporting their mother in her old age. Also see Chapter 2 for more discussion of Dagbamba marriage and family.

⁸³ In fact, at times a child will choose a childless co-wife (or co-mother) in the household to be their primary care giver (i.e., "mom" or "m'ma" in Dagbanli), partially because of the sadness or intense desire expressed by the childless wife. This happened in Alhaji Abubakari Lunna's family. His youngest son, Abdul-Wahid born to Mele (or Mary), chose a childless co-wife Fuseina as his m'ma (mother).

⁸⁴ See partial family tree above.

Not long after being divorced in 1982, Mme Fuseina was remarried in 1984 to her current husband, Yao Kubul Yusuf. Also in 1983-84, she was employed by the Center for National Culture in Tamale as a dance instructor and choreographer. She taught at the TCNC for about twenty five years, until her official retirement in 2008. At that time, she passed the group on to another former National Folkloric Company member, Mohammed Ofei Wun-nam, and remained an informal advisor. Ofei and Mme Fuseina have known each other for many years and Ofei had a difficult time with the



Photo 22. Mme Fuseina in 1982, photographer unknown.



Photo 23. Mme Fuseina, April 1986, Black Star Photo-House, Tamale.

group transitioning from Mme Fuseina's leadership. Due to a number of factors, what was once a rather dynamic performance ensemble that was employed regularly had declined to a few engagements and low enrollment in 2011. Although the group still performed at local functions, members often skipped rehearsals because of various reasons and issues: lack of personnel (sometimes the drummers wouldn't show) and lack of funds (drums, costumes, and other materials were in disrepair, which made it difficult to successfully rehearse pieces). Mme Fuseina would attend rehearsals at times to revive the group, help with a particularly difficult choreography, or visit with friends and colleagues at the

center.

Since her retirement, she has spent more time with her extended family, especially her niece Saala. She also continues to teach but in a more limited capacity as a private instructor primarily for visiting students from abroad. Mme Fuseina has taken her niece Saala in, and helped her to fund her formal education, as well as continue her “traditional” Dagbamba female education around preparing food, taking care of the household, and so on. In this way, Mme Fuseina continues to be an educator, and a vital member of her extended family network.

III. Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman



Photo 24. Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman and myself in Rosina's shop in Tamale, 2011.

Rosina was my Dagbanli teacher in Tamale from January to May 2011. She prefers to be called Rosina rather than Zenabu, since she is a self-identified Christian and “Rosina” is her Christian name. There are several reasons why I find it important to discuss Rosina's story here, including: (1) it fulfills one of my main goals, which is to bring personal, specific voices of Dagbamba women to the forefront; (2) Rosina's life story is filled with perseverance and willful determination – attending school and completing a formal education with little support or help from her family; and (3) she grew up with traditional music and participated in women's dancing, singing, and social dances. Similar to my discussion of Mme Fuseina (see above), I include lengthy quotations instead of paraphrasing or summarizing, to allow Rosina to present her views in her own voice. The reader should be aware that the material may require multiple readings. Also I have preserved the conversational context by not editing the transcribed

interview, consequently there are some restating and stoppages that are awkward in written English.

I find her story complements Mme Fuseina's experiences because in many ways they are both strong women who followed their own paths, largely without support or in defiance of their parents. This point is important to me as there is a perception that Dagbamba women are, or should be, more passive than men or less competitive/less career oriented. In my work with several women in Tamale, I have not found this to be the case. I am struck by how strong, focused, and goal oriented many women are especially when it comes to the well being of their children and their families.

Abdul-Rahaman's Educational Timeline: (Dates based on Rosina's knowledge)

Born 5 August 1980

1989 - started school, Primary at Morgdua in the Tolon-Kumbungu district, P1 (primary 1)

1990 - Aunt Ayishetu sent her away to farm for one year

1991- went to Mashegu Adult Primary School, P4 ('91-92), P5 ('92-93)

1993 - completed Primary School and started JSS 1

1997 - completed JSS

1998 - started Business Secondary School

2000 - completed Business Secondary School, passed exams except for math and economics

2001 - passed mathematics and economics

2002 - entered Tamale Teacher Training College

2005 - completed TTC

2005-2006 - taught one year at the Savelugu Experimental Primary School, also taught catechism at the Catholic Church in Savelugu.

2006 - entered University of Education, Winneba

July 2010 - finished course work at the University of Education

September 2010 - received teaching position in Tamale

October 2010 - officially graduated from University with a degree in Dagbanli

Rosina is a middle child among seven surviving siblings: “So three have passed away. So three plus seven. My mother gave birth to ten. [*laughing*] Can you give birth to how many children?” Surprised by the size of Rosina’s natal family, I exclaimed:

KS: That is serious! Ten children! [...]

RAR: So many! Even the way they practice our natural family planning, the woman will be there nursing the child till three years, or more before she becomes pregnant. So you can imagine the age of my mother now. She is old. She is old. (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a)

After discussing Rosina’s early life, we moved on to her thoughts about women in Dagbon, music, politics and other issues. Our interview was light hearted and felt like an informal talk. Rosina seemed to identify with me as an ally in our mutual love for education and dedication to completing university degree programs. I think this connection lightened the mood of the discussion and created a feeling of mutual respect and appreciation. Throughout her life, education has been a major motivating factor. As a young girl, she was sent to live with her aunt Ayishetu and uncle Fuseini. While she did not start primary school at the usual young age of five or six, she began attending an adult night primary school three times per week. Around 1989, she began at this unusual school because it would not cut into her daily work with her aunt. But her aunt Ayishetu was not supportive and was worried that Rosina would stop doing all her work around the house: “Attending that school would be the last resort, night school because my aunty would not allow me. [...] Then the rest we use it for house work” (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a). Rosina also worked for her aunt during harvest and she had other responsibilities: “Shea butter extraction, ground nut oil extraction, processing rice and other things.”

Rosina was a quick study and was able to quickly complete the first few years of primary school in one year, moving on to P4 and P5, then to JSS (Junior Secondary School - similar to middle school in the USA). She did miss a year of education in 1990, however, due to her aunt

sending her away to work on a distant farm in an attempt to deter her from attending school.

Despite this and other obstacles, Rosina eventually attended a business senior secondary school (similar to high school in the USA, but with a business focus). Throughout this whole time, she was responsible for raising money for school fees; she started a small business crocheting hats, baby clothes, and booties to help make ends meet. While her aunt was not supportive of her educational endeavors, she did find mentors and teachers who were extremely encouraging and helped her with fees, books, and uniforms.

Later when attending SS (Secondary School) and University, her parents would always try to help in any way they could. But at the same time she had a immense pressure from them to get married: “They [her parents] were now putting pressure that I should get married. So from JSS, you can imagine, JSS I didn't marry up to date! [*laughing*] You can imagine the pressure that will still be on me - -get married get married!” (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a). Later we discussed children and family planning at some length.

Rosina emphasized the pressure Dagbamba women are under to have children: “For Dagbon a woman does not marry without a child. I mentioned some instances to you; if you marry without, even if naturally you can not give birth, it's a must on you that you should do it. And if God designed you not to be someone who will give birth, it means you can never have peace in your married home” (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a). As I discussed at some length in the previous chapter, there is a strong societal pressure to marry and have children, and only after one has fulfilled these fundamental life events does one truly become a woman. Young women must be trained to cook and deal with household tasks in preparation to marry, but it is also obviously a great help to their family in the mean time. Rosina explains:

So that is there - for the pressure, or problems confronting ladies, especially young ladies in Dagbon. It is just the marriage. The problem is the marriage. They are not giving any interest about any education - formal education. When a young lady starts growing, the only thing that will worry her parents, or whoever you are growing up with, is how do I train this lady to be a good cook in her husband's house. [*laughing*] How do I train her to become a very good cook! [...] Oh it is too funny. Yes. All that my aunty was telling me. Now that I said that I want to go to school – it means when I am to get married she will not get anything for me to marry. And when a young girl is at the age of marriage and she does not have bowls, other equipment, cooking utensils, and other things, it is a disgrace to her and her family. [...] But that was my aunty's only worry. That is the worry of a Dagomba woman. How does my girl – how do I train her to become a very good cook to be able to take care of her household chores. So that when she joins the husband, people will not insult me that I did not train her well. That is their worry. And they bring utensils and other things, so that is their only problem. For formal education, no. (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a)

Rosina has experienced difficulty with relationships throughout her life. On two different occasions, she had partners she thought were serious about marriage, only to have them leave her for other women. In both cases, they cheated on her with younger women; later she found out and broke off the relationship. Her family has wanted her to marry for years and in 2010 after graduating from University, Rosina met Peter. The couple are both at a similar stage of life and ready to be married. Consequently, Peter has taken the relationship seriously and done the right thing by performed the customary wedding ritual preparations with Rosina's parents. In 2011 they were planning to marry as soon as they could raise the money to have a party for their friends and family (2011b).

When I asked Rosina if she and Peter wanted to have children she said “Wow! I want! Oh I want!” (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a). After discussing the matter more seriously she went on in her light hearted manner:

So I for now, I don't have any choice. [*laughing*] As for now I don't have any choice. So, we continue, we organize a party [a wedding] and we will start preparing for a child, for children. We will start learning how to make children! [*laughing*] [...] If it were the olden

days, I would be thinking of ten plus children so I would exceed my mother! I will overtake my mother. Maybe I would have had a football team, rather 11 or 12! (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a)

In all seriousness, Rosina is excited to have a family, but is very financially conscious and invested in providing an education for her children:

RAR: Some of you are lucky and fortunate. I used to talk to one of my friends. If you happen to be born by literate parents, parents who are already educated, you are fortunate! Very, very fortunate. You have all kinds of -- look you never had a problem with your education like I had.

KS: Your children will be very lucky!

RAR: My children will be very lucky, because I know what I went through. I will give them school - Even if I spend my last pesewa, get something and I will spend. Yes, I will do that. To protect them. (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a)

Musical Life in Dagbon: A Young Woman's Perspective

Like many young local women in Dagbon, Rosina was involved with music and dance from a young age: "When I was growing up in our village - in villages, you know whenever there was a funeral or any important gathering, at least young people, the young people will also have an opportunity to dance. And that was the appropriate dance for the young people, *tora* dance, and the *simpa*" (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a). Rosina expressed her appreciation for local music and dance, but said that when she was struggling with her education, she set music and dance aside to focus on her studies. In our interviews, many of the negative associations Rosina described did not seem to be her own views, but rather she was trying to capture the overall sentiment in Tamale and be sure that I understood the various issues around music making. For example, some Muslim community leaders reproach young people for participating in music. As a Christian, Rosina did not have any of these pressures; she always loved music, and in our interview acknowledged the importance of music and dance in Dagbamba culture. At the same

time, she also described the critique that is expressed by some so called “modernist” or more “urban” Dagbambas who look down on “traditionalist” musicians and those who participate in music and dance: “Something like, you are not wise. You are illiterate. You don't have formal education, that is why you waste your time in this thing.[...] Because of the criticisms, the people are dying off” (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a).

Throughout Rosina’s interview, she expressed a strong theme of “traditional” versus “modern,” with local musicians embodying what modern Dagbambas thought of as old ways, and educated more urban Dagbambas representing a more enlightened mode of thought. Rosina describes one of the reasons many people believe traditional music has stagnated in Dagbon:

I wanted to mention that as one of our hinderance, or those things that makes the traditional music not develop these days is modern music. Yeah. Everybody is interested in modern music. So, for you, when you are basing on the traditional music it means you are so “colo.” The colonial [*laughing*], they will still refer to you as somebody whose eyes are not open! Because you do not sing the modern ones [...] you still think about old things instead of new things. So I say colonial, you are a “colo.” [*laughing*] But those of us who knew what it is about know, we see that, we value that. We still value it. But most people don't seem to. So those things bring down the music. (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a)

In other words, Rosina argues that traditional music is stuck in the past, not changing with the times, not incorporating any new popular musical ideas that are intriguing to young people.

Rosina was then quick to acknowledge that there were in fact some young Dagbamba musicians who were doing the opposite, rather than incorporating popular or modern music into traditional music, there are young popular music artists who have used traditional Dagbamba songs and turned them into pop music:

This time, some of the musicians have taken some steps, they will use the traditional music and modernize it. They will use even this chief's praise, there is this musician from Bimbila, he used that song to name so many chief's names and their appellations. They call him Prince D. I like his songs. Bimbila na'nim gari [*in Dagbanli*], “All the chiefs that

have gone from Bimbila side, so we should remember them.” Then he will mention their names, and mention their appellations. Meanwhile it is modern music. But when you follow it, it will help you to even praise the first chief to the last chief of Bimbila. It is a historical song.⁸⁵ (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a)

The sustainability and relevance of traditional music in contemporary Dagbamba society seems to be a real concern, especially to the younger generation (under 30) in Tamale. Many seem to have widespread interest in so-called “traditional” music making associated with customary occasions and festivals. Dagbamba songs seem to maintain relevance and provide entertainment and enjoyment among women, even among the younger generations. Part of this is due to the subject matter of songs. Rosina explains how some songs are developed:

When somebody is doing something, it's not your place to open your mouth and tell the person [...] they will use it as a song. It is good behavior if the person is living a right life, then they will say it. So it is like the moral aspect in so many songs, many in the *simpa* dance. When you do something, in a village -- when you offend, or when you cause any crime in a village. The biggest crime in the past was when you allowed yourself to be impregnated by a man, as a young girl. Then they will use you as a song [...] So in a village those are the things that they use to advise young people to have an upright life. (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a)

Newly composed songs based on local issues help to maintain the song tradition. At the same time this is why many Muslim community leaders do not approve of local music. Rosina explains: “It's like their problem is that, any music, especially what I was telling you about our [songs]- it's use as a form of advice, use some songs as a form of advice and to criticize for construction, sometimes for destruction [*laughing*]” (2011a). Songs are used to educate and warn, to criticize and praise, to poke fun or joke but also to pass on local wisdom and knowledge:

⁸⁵ While not the focus of my work, these kinds of songs by creative young Dagbamba popular music artists are becoming increasingly common, and would be an interesting topic for further study.

Because of that, during our dances there are a lot of profane sayings. Our songs involved in our things. And because of that, Islam say they forbid music. They will not allow themselves to be involved in sayings, or anything that will bring about that [sexual, or lewd behavior]. So it's part of our - that is one of the problems of the Muslims with the dance. The dance and the singing. And most of them too, they just abandon the tradition totally. They just don't want to hear anything that had to do with tradition. This is what our grandparents used to do. And we still want to do it. They just don't want anything to do with that. So they feel that for you, if you are *simpa* dancer, or *tora* dancer, or if you are doing any of those things, it means you are a sinner. [*laughing*] (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a)

Rosina on Women, Leadership, and Education

In addition to the pressures placed on young women to get married, taking on leadership roles in local and national politics is another issue. This topic was partially spurned by Rosina's experiences in being nominated to serve as her district's local representative. This nomination was not solicited by Rosina. Because she was identified as an educated community leader, someone nominated her without her knowledge. In the end, she turned down the post. The following describes some of the reasons she did not want to serve:

Why do most women not want to stand, or to be leaders? Let me use leadership as an example. Women do not want to be leaders, because we feel that the only leader is a man. For woman, no matter how old or how knowledgable you are, when a small boy comes in, or when there is a gathering. You will have to be quiet for the small boys to be talking. Though they are not up to you in terms of age, in terms of knowledge, book knowledge, and even their own experiences. No matter how knowledgable you are as a woman, you will still need to be quiet for small boys to be talking. So that is a problem for Ghanaian women, especially in Dagbon. So because of that, when I was asked to stand, the reason why I refused was not that I didn't want to stand for my people. But our people, they can do anything to hate you. They can do anything to bring bad - And we are looking at the way I have struggled in my life to get my certificate so that I can work, so I can get something to eat. I don't want to involve myself in anything where somebody could thwart my effort in one minute. That is the reason why we fear to - that is the problem of women. [...] Even if you are going around sharing money with the community, money interests them the most, even if you are sharing it every day with them, they will never become satisfied. No. They will never become satisfied. (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a)

Her comments raise several key obstacles that are culturally based. Namely, regardless of status or age as a woman, any young boy can speak before you and his voice will be heard before your own. Secondly, when an individual is in a public leadership position, they may be subject to ill will and negativity from the community. Lastly, you may also be expected to bring wealth to your community, and in regards to monetary gifts (kola or “dashing”) “they will never become satisfied.”

Rosina goes on to discuss corruption in politics:

So as a politician in Ghana, no matter what you do, people will never become satisfied. Even the president of Ghana. There is never a person who will be the president of Ghana who will become okay with his work. Never. There is no such a person! Not to talk of any leader of Ghana who will be perfect, who will not be a corrupt leader. Though if the person is perfect, if the person's hands are clean, people will still consider him to be a cheat. So I know my heart is pure, and I didn't want to involve myself in anybody's issues. But I am forced to. (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a)

In other words, because she has been identified in her familial area as a leader and educated woman, she has been forced into the spotlight and is worried about perceptions of corruption. Because of these and other struggles throughout her life, Rosina seems resolved to contribute somehow to the betterment of women’s education and positions in social life in Dagbon:

RAR: So now my problem is how to get anything that will involve my fellow women, so that they will see I will be used as a role model. Those of them who didn't want to send their children to school, they will now say, “Oh, have you seen this girl from this house, she is now [educated and a leader]. So I want you also to go to school.” Yes.

KS: To encourage them.

RAR: I am sure somebody will look at me and do something. So that is my issue. That is what I have to say. [...] There are so many strong women, and we are still coming up. I am one of them. I will be one of them. (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a)

IV. Concluding Thoughts

Mme Fuseina's role in my field research experience can not be overstated. She provided a welcomed consistent presence during each of my visits to Tamale. The time we spent together with other women in Mme Fuseina's network of family and friends also helped me connect with many individuals who represented a cross section of the population. Through these connections, I was able to have meaningful interactions with ease, while the informal encounters at musical and cultural events proved more challenging. On a typical week day, for example, Mme Fuseina and I would walk through the central market in Tamale to visit Mme Fuseina's friends who had stalls there. Then we would have lunch either at a small restaurant or a family house near the central mosque. These daily, common place events were extraordinary for me, especially as I experienced a dual identity of being treated simultaneously as a trusted friend (because of my close association with Mme Fuseina), and as a total stranger (as I am a student from the USA with no obvious connection to Ghana or Tamale). Focusing on Mackinlay's articulation of the autoethnographic methodology has helped me through these kinds of field research situations.⁸⁶

In the discussion of Mme Fuseina and Rosina's life experiences, I have attempted to convey some of the complexities and challenges Dagbamba woman face. These stories may not be common or representative of a typical Dagbamba or Northern woman, but for me that is precisely the point. Mme Fuseina and Rosina are strong independent, professional, cosmopolitan women. Mme Fuseina has travelled to Israel, Togo, the USA, and all over Ghana. Rosina struggled to complete her education despite financial and familial hardships, and has become a teacher after being the first in her family to attend University. But at the same time, both of these

⁸⁶ See discussion earlier in the chapter as well as the introduction for more information on Mackinlay's expressed motivation for a decolonized research agenda through use of the autoethnographic method (2010:96-115).

women share in the pain, struggles, and joys of marriage, childbearing, mothering, money management, and cooking that occupy the lives of women around the world and in their own communities. In a sense, Mme Fuseina has led a privileged life since she was able to receive 10 years of formal education and follow her own path as a dancer in Accra and the National Folkloric Company at such a young age. Mme Fuseina continues to lead an independent life; she lives in her own house and visits her husband to share meals together, or to visit family and friends. This situation has its benefits, but it also marks her as a modern women. For some, her lifestyle reinforces the idea that dancers and musicians are promiscuous or somehow deviant from the everyday social norms. Her many professional successes have only been hampered, to some degree, by the tragedies in her personal life. Despite the loss of her children, Mme Fuseina is one of the most joyful and uplifting people I have had the pleasure to know. Her spirit is infectious, it draws people in.

Rosina was extremely generous with her time and knowledge of Dagbamba culture. Her perspective as a women in her early thirties was invaluable and enlightening. I was struck by her resolve to advance the education of girls in the community as well as her desire to be a role model for other women. Looking to the future I am sure Mme Fuseina will continue to guide and inspire young people to study Dagbmaba music and culture, and Rosina will doubtless be a leader in her community and a beacon of light for young women who are struggling to become educated and accomplished.

In various ways, this chapter highlights the contradictions and complexities that are part of the lived experience of women in Dagbon. As I have discussed in earlier chapters, anthropologist Bernhard Bierlich writes somewhat extensively on women in Dagbon and

describes Dagbamba women as maintaining a hidden existence behind men, and at the same time he acknowledges that women engage publicly in a vital market economy. Additionally Bierlich falls into a trap of making unqualified generalizations based on his fieldwork that do not take into account the lived experiences of people like Mme Fuseina and Rosina. This chapter relies heavily on Mme Fuseina and Rosina's words and experiences. Rather than living a hidden existence, these women are active participants in society. Mme Fuseina has participated in women's groups and public performances in Tamale, she has achieved a level of financial independence, and lives in her own home rather than in the house of her current husband. Rosina passionately pursued her education from a young age despite resistance from her own family, and married after completing her university degree. She is accomplished and dedicated to raising awareness around women's issues in the hope that more young women will become educated and attend University. When engaging in an "autoethnographic method" (Mackinlay 2010:97) and focusing on "context-dependent interpretations" (Oyewùmí 1997:xvi), it is almost impossible to make generalizations about women's "'hidden' existence" or "muted" voice. Instead one must acknowledge and celebrate "the incongruities, contradictions, antinomies, and hybridity" (Agawu 2003:xviii), which is part of contemporary African society and the lived experiences of women like Mme Fuseina Wumbei and Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman.

Chapter 4: *Tora* Songs from Funerals to the Stage: History, Ethnography, and Analysis



Photo 25. Mme Fuseina (left) leading the line of *tora* dancers, Tamale, 2006.

Introduction

The original impetus to study *tora*, and women's music generally was not my own; both the late Dagbamba musician, Alhaji Abubakari Lunna, and his longterm collaborator, David Locke, drew my attention to music and dance practiced by Dagbamba women. Because of the nature of my entrance into the Tamale music community, through Alhaji Lunna and my two primary teachers Mme Fuseina⁸⁷ and Amishetu, my field research has been marked by a student teacher dynamic and more collegial or collaborative relationship, rather than the more typical binary diametrically opposed relationships described by field researchers (insider vs. outsider, and self vs. other) in much ethnographic work.

⁸⁷ For more information on Mme Fuseina's life and work, see Chapter 3.

Beginning with my initial trip to Tamale in 2006 and continuing on each subsequent stay, my study of Dagbamba music gravitated towards *tora* songs. This was a result of how Mme Fuseina and Amishetu directed the music lessons and the songs they decided to teach me, but also *tora* was an obvious genre or dance-suite to focus on since it has historically been a women's-only dance form. *Tora* can be, at the same time, lighthearted, youthful, playful, and boisterous, as well as strong, mature, and serious.

The primary goal of this chapter is to show the diverse and multifaceted nature of *tora* as a living and relevant women's music. I attempt to convey my appreciation and fascination with this dance through examining several different aspects of the genre. My aims here include: (1) to discuss *tora* as a women's dance and song genre, (2) to provide an ethnographic description of *tora* as performed and experienced in Tamale, (3) to look at *tora* song lyrics as a source of women's knowledge in Dagbon, and finally, (4) to discuss several songs from other genres to add to an overall understanding of Dagbamba songs. These last two points fulfill the main goal of this dissertation, which is to show how women's songs are a vital source of knowledge within the Dagbamba community. By examining song texts and through ethnographic descriptions of various occasions where women sing together, I hope to show their vitality and meaning. I do not include complete musical notation of the songs due to various reasons, primarily because most women's songs are flexible both in rhythm and pitch and therefore do not lend themselves to literal written representation. I also do not intend for readers to learn a Dagbamba song by reading the notation, rather, I have included excerpts for illustrating specific points. However, extensive rhythmic drumming transcriptions are available online if the reader is interested.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ See David Locke's 2010 "Tora Suite - Dagomba Dance Drumming - Confluence." <https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/display/DagombaDanceDrumming/Tora+Suite>.

Chapter 5 “KaliTora” will focus more specifically on the relationships formed among women through song, and how cathartic experiences can result from the space created by women’s associations with musical groups.

I. Basics of the *Tora* Dance

Before discussing the history and existing research on this topic, I would like to start with a brief description of *tora*. The dance itself is somewhat awkward to describe. For clarity and to aid in the understanding of the rest of the chapter, I will begin with a blueprint or skeletal description of the dance and conclude with a discussion of video example 1 of *tora*. Firstly, the dance area is demarcated by a semi circle, or horse-shoe, of participants; usually women arrange themselves in roughly age and/or height order from youngest and/or shortest, to eldest and/or tallest. The dance is normally accompanied by a small group of *lunsi* (drummers) who stand in a cluster along the outside edge of the circular dance area. There are two types of drums that are used in the ensemble, namely the *luṇa* (an hour-glass, doubled headed, tonal tension drum, played with a curved stick), and the *gunḡonḡ* (a double headed bass drum with a snare, played with a curved stick). The first



Photo 26. Alhaji Lunna (center) and his drummers playing for *tora*, Tamale, 2006.



Photo 27. One *gunḡonḡ* and three *luṇa*.



Photo 28. Mme Fuseina (right), and myself (left), dancing *tora*, Tamale, 2006.



Photo 29. Women dancing *tora*, Tamale, 2006.

woman at the head of the line, or queue, of dancers moves out into the center of the circular horse-shoe area, turns, and dances on her own, waiting one cycle of the underlying drum rhythm. On the second rhythmic cycle, which is marked most distinctly by the *gunḡon* player,⁸⁹

the second dancer moves to the center of the area turns and knocks buttocks with the first dancer. Then a third woman moves in during the third cycle of the drum pattern as the first dancer leaves the center area and returns to the back of the line to wait her turn. The second and third dancers turn and knock buttocks, then the second dancer joins the back of the queue as the third and fourth dancers knocked, and so on in

this revolving pattern. In this way, each dancer knocks buttocks twice in the center before returning to the queue to wait for another turn.

⁸⁹ See the Tufts Dagomba Dance-Drumming wiki for multi-part recordings of *tora* and transcriptions of the different drum parts: <https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/display/DagombaDanceDrumming/Tora+Suite>

Figure 5. *Tora* dance sequence, illustrations by Kim Stuffelbeam





As women wait in line, they also participate in hand clapping and singing. During such occasions, a lead singer, along with a few other women, focus on singing rather than dancing, and stand in a clustered group near the semicircle queue of dancers. The musical accompaniment is typical of other Dagbamba dance forms; the minimum standard or barebones ensemble is one lead *luŋa* with at least one or two answer *lunsi* with one or two *gunḡon* players. In other words, there are usually three to five or more male drummers playing while the women dance, clap, and sing *tora* songs.

To understand this dance more fully, please see Appendix A and video example 1 of the *tora* dancing, singing, drumming, and clapping.⁹⁰



Photo 30. Mme Fuseina and Ayishetu singing for the *tora* dancers, Tamale, 2006.

II. A *Tora* History Story

Discussing the history of *tora* is important to this study for several reasons. To understand the genre and song texts, one must first know the dance's origins. The history story of *tora*, as told by Alhaji Abubakari Lunna, not only connects to the lyrics of some of the songs, but also provides information on when *tora* is played, who dances *tora*, and why. From the early 1970s until Lunna's passing in 2008, David Locke worked with the late Alhaji Lunna in documenting traditional Dagbamba drum and dance music. These two musicians have recorded many history stories, and have made them widely accessible online to countless students and individuals worldwide. Many of their interviews and manuscripts are not yet formally published, but a vast amount of material is now available through a "wiki" page that Locke and others at Tufts University have developed.⁹¹ This web site is a valuable resource and includes Locke's musical analysis of *tora*, which I will discuss further below. Few scholars have written about Dagbamba music, and fewer still mention anything about *tora*. Consequently, the following is based on

⁹⁰ During my field research, I sang and danced *tora* almost every day in a rehearsal or lesson setting. I learned to dance and sing, as well as engage in a more typical participant/observer role with the various manifestations of *tora* dances in and around Tamale.

⁹¹ See David Locke, et.al. 2013. "Dagomba Dance Drumming" <<https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/display/DagombaDanceDrumming/Welcome>>

Locke and Lunna's manuscript of the *tora* history story (see Locke 1989), and my interviews with Fuseina Wumbie and Ayishetu Nagumsi. Alhaji Lunna's explanation that *tora* originated from a woman grieving the death of her son (see history below) is but one of any number of explanations regarding the origins of this dance. Alternative accounts include, but are not limited to, the explanation that *tora* is simply a dance for young women to show off their beauty so that men will be attracted to them, ideally leading to courtship and marriage. This feeds the widely held notion that dancers (male and female) are promiscuous and display their bodies in an unseemly manner to seduce an innocent bystander.

Other explanations of the origin of *tora* seem more nuanced and historically situated. For example, Alexander A. Agordoh, a Ghanaian music educator and African music scholar with degrees from University of Ghana at Legon, discusses *tora* in his book, *Studies in African Music* (2010). Agordoh writes:

Some elders in Dagbon believe that the musical type was brought down from Northern Nigeria by the royal immigrant settlers. Others state that *Tora* evolved from the *Takai* musical type for men [...] The women, not wanting to be left out of the enjoyment, tried to invent their own dance movements to the same instrumental background provided by the men. (2010:131)

As with any oral history, one must acknowledge that there are many possible truths. The following is one such truth told by Alhaji Lunna, a respected drummer and elder in the Tamale musical community.

Locke (1989) begins his interview by asking Lunna very open questions about *tora*: “[. . .] tell me something about Tora. I don't know where it came from, how it started, or why Dagombas perform it” (1). From this line of questioning Lunna tells his story of *tora*: “We usually say Tora is a funeral dance because it started against death. When Dagbon started,

whenever our paramount chief died, his first son became the next chief” (Locke 1989:1). *Tora* began as a funeral dance because of an incident in a chief’s household. The paramount chief in Dagbon is called the Ya Na. At this time in the history of Dagbon, Naa Datorli was the Ya Na. Traditionally, chiefs, elders, and other important figures stay in the palace, or their home, during the day and send other people to the farm, but Naa Datorli was a farmer and decided to go to farm himself. His family network was rather small, he only had his junior brother Shelimbana, and one son named Dasambila. During this time Naa Datorli was “acting badly [. . .] He would kill you for no reason” (Ibid.:10). Because of his poor reputation, Shelimbana was the only man who would work for him, and he did everything; he “was his farmer, he was taking care of his horses, and he was taking care of the house. If Naa Datorli wanted to send a message to any place, it was this man he would send” (Ibid.:10).

At the climax of the story, Shelimbana is coming back from cutting grass for Naa Datorli’s horse, and as he goes to the house to get water to drink, Dasambila teases him saying “You, Shelimbana, you come with grass to give to the horses. They see you. Can't you take the time to give them the grass before you go to the house? You leave the horses and are running into the house to see whether my mother has prepared food for you to eat” (Locke 1989:11). The boy teases Shelimbana by calling him a vulgar name (or “abuse” as they say in Dagbon), referring to someone who eats a lot of food. Like family members in other cultures, Dagbambas respect their elders; in this case a boy teasing his uncle is considered culturally quite inappropriate. Even after Dasambila’s mother Galiban hears what is going on, she does not stop him: Shelimbana is so upset that he wants to discipline the boy, but instead he throws his *kpanga* (or *kpana*, a knife or machete), and “the *kpanga* cracked Dasambila's skull and he fell dead” (Ibid.:13). After Naa

Datorli found that his younger brother Shelimbana had killed his son, he went to the palace and “he came with a spear. When Shelimbana saw him, he tried to run. Naa Datorli threw the spear. He had him; he fell down; Shelimbana died” (Ibid.:15). Once the chief, Naa Datorli, heard the whole story and realized what his son had done to Shelimbana, he took his own spear and killed himself, Alhaji Lunna explains: “So, it became three dead bodies. The child is there, the younger brother is there, and the chief himself is there. There the wife started crying seriously. Galiban's crying--that is the first song of Tora” (Ibid.:16).

The “original” *tora* song then, according to Alhaji Lunna, was not only based on the general story but came directly from Galiban’s crying. Alhaji Lunna goes on to explain how the *tora* dance originated: “People started to take the dead bodies into the palace. Women were holding the child; the mother wanted to see his body; they didn't want her to see the child's face again” (Locke 1989:19). What became the *tora* dance is described in more detail by Mme Fuseina:

If she [Galiban] rushed to see the son, the woman bending down to pick up the corpse would push her with their buttocks. If she ran to see the husband, they pushed her away. If she ran to see the junior husband [brother-in-law], they pushed her back. This is why the dance has knocking together of buttocks. Anytime Galiban would remember the death of these people, she began to cry. The women would gather. She would sing that song out [Oh ee yeei] and then instead of knocking her, they turned their buttocks to knock each other. It became a dance. (Ibid.:19)⁹²

The above account is an abbreviated version of the interview between Locke, Alhaji Lunna, and Mme Fuseina Wumbie. While I have left out details, I believe that this rather brief account provides enough background about the cultural significance of *tora*. To more fully capture the history of Dagbon, a more in depth analysis of the chieftaincy lineage relative to the

⁹² See video example 1 of *tora* described above, KaliTora sings this “original” “Oh ee yeei” song during the dance.

Western calendar would be necessary (see MacGaffey 2013). Yet, the complex history of Dagbamba chieftaincies and lineage is not my focus here.⁹³ As MacGaffey states, we may never know the absolute “truth” of the history of Dagbon, or in this case the historical origin of *tora*. Nevertheless, the underlying premise of the genre is the idea of women supporting each other during a vulnerable time of mourning. The women in the above account protect a widow from seeing her own dead son and husband, which according to Alhaji Lunna, became the main purpose for the bumping buttocks movement of *tora*. Because of this history story, according to Lunna, *tora* became a dance performed at funerals on days between the burial and the main funeral ceremony.

To begin his musical analysis, Locke discusses the importance of *tora*, presumably using information from his work with Lunna and his own experience as a drummer and researcher of Dagbamba music. Locke’s discussion of the significance of the genre is instructive:

Tora started when the kingdom of Dagbon was in its early stages, before most of its social, economic and cultural institutions were formed. Because of its great time depth, drummers accord Tora great respect. As the History Story reveals, the origin of Tora is tragic and deadly. In contemporary Dagbon, Tora is performed during funeral ceremonials that last for several days. In the evenings women from the funeral house dance it as a way to make the event energetic and full of action. While Tora is done with passionate feeling sparked by memory of the deceased, few people know the serious origins of Tora. It is performed with a spirit of play and exuberance. (2010:1)

The above highlights both the historical and cultural significance of the dance music, but also attempts to convey the energy and “vibe” of the dance in modern society. The following section

⁹³ As noted earlier, Wyatt MacGaffey’s recent work on history and politics in Dagbon is an important source for scholars with interest in the area. The goal of the above synopsis is to contextualize *tora* within the history of Dagbon. In addition to MacGaffey (2013), Staniland’s *The Lions of Dagbon* (1975) offers a history of the Ya Na chieftaincy lineage. DjeDje’s 2008 book, *Fiddling in West Africa*, also includes a succinct history of Dagbon. Also, see Chapter 1 of this study for a brief historical overview.

provides more specific ethnographic accounts of *tora* in social recreational contexts as well as in the funeral setting.

III. *Tora* in Tamale (2006-2011)

July 2006: Late in the evening as I walk down the main road that passes from Lamashegu to downtown Tamale, I hear drumming in the distance. My ears guide me further along the well-lit main road then to the right following the small dark paths that run between houses deeper into the neighborhood. The drumming grows louder, and as I keep following the sound, I come out from between the houses to a dirt road running parallel to the main road I had left several minutes ago. I turn left and again find myself following the drumming through the neighborhood until finally I reach the source of the sound. A crowd has begun to gather in an open space between the houses where a young group of *lunsi* (drummers) have begun playing *tora*. I look around the group and see a few women discussing something amongst themselves, gathering and becoming more excited as more young women join the crowd. A few minutes later, a line begins to form as a young woman, probably around twelve or thirteen years old, runs out to the middle of the clearing and turns, pretending to knock buttocks with an invisible partner. Then a second dancer moves to the middle, turns and meets the first young woman by knocking buttocks vigorously, laughing as they nearly miss each other. Luckily, the second girl has another chance as she is met by a third dancer who turns and knocks. As the dance proceeds, the drummers and the crowd begin to form a more defined dance space encircling the vigorous movement and joyful clapping with enthusiastic observation and lively drumming. This evening's social atmosphere is spurred on by the youthful crowd. Looking around, I notice that most people seem

to be under twenty years old, most are teenagers and young adults. I have been studying *tora* in a more controlled context at the Tamale Center for National Culture, and at the homes of my teachers; this spontaneous recreational *tora* dance is exciting and the first time I have witnessed such an event. I am caught up in the energy and enthralled to see so many young Dagbambas enthusiastically participating in a living traditional dance.

In 2011, *tora* took many forms. It was still danced at night during larger funeral proceedings, but it was also danced in neighborhoods around Tamale on a Friday or Saturday night as a social event, or could be one of several dances choreographed for a staged performance. Mme Fuseina discusses how the context for *tora* has changed over time:

So those days it was for funerals. But these days I think it is recreational - we can use it anywhere. And we have changed the style of dance. During those days, okay when you come I will do the old one and then we are now doing the newer steps. [. . .] now it is recreational, you can dance it any time. Whether adoring [outdooing], funeral, wedding, we dance it. (Wumbei 2006a)

As noted above, the dance is currently performed during many occasions; it is not reserved solely for funerals. During the course of my field research in Tamale, I witnessed *tora* being danced in the evening in several different settings: at a local chief's palace, partially lit open spaces in neighborhoods around Tamale, as well as at local staged cultural folkloric performances. The style and manifestation of *tora* was different in each of the venues and contexts. As Mme Fuseina mentioned, perhaps a more traditional style is performed at funerals, while at chief's palaces the style would depend on the experience of the participants (i.e., who is drumming and dancing would set the tone of a given performance). At the folkloric dance troupe performances, there is a

more choreographed, “modern,”⁹⁴ and usually faster tempo *tora* performed for an audience. Also in the staged context, male dancers have been known to wear a cloth and join the women in the performance. While the dance may seem different in these varied contexts, the essence of the dance is arguably the same in all of the manifestations of the dance-drumming form.

In an interview about *tora*, Mme Fuseina describes the different movements, sections, or “rhythms” (as she calls them), that make up the traditional *tora* dance; “[...] it was formally *tora*, *nyoyboli*, *ɲun da nyuli*, *tora yiyira*, just the four rhythms. But now we have added, *zamadunia* - the intro in” that is generally accompanied by the rhythm *ayiko* (Wumbei 2006a). As Mme Fuseina describes, the sections are accompanied by different drum rhythms that are played in succession during a performance of *tora*, similarly to the male group dance *takai*. In fact, several of the common rhythms used for *tora* are also in the *takai* dance suite.⁹⁵ In general, it is only the more formal presentations of *tora* that would include all five movements; for example at a TCNC event, *tora* would be choreographed and a set performance sequence would be rehearsed and decided upon. In contrast, in a funeral setting they would probably skip *ayiko/zamaduniya* entirely, the primary *tora* movement might be played for hours, then the drummers might take a short break then start *ɲun da nyuli* or *nyoyboli*. In other words, unless it is a staged or choreographed performance, *tora*, like *takai* or *baamaaya*, is a spontaneous and fluid genre where the participants determine the sequence of events.

⁹⁴ On many occasions, dancers have told me that when traditional dances are set for stage, they have to be shortened and need to be made more exciting for an audience to watch. Ofei Wun-nam told me of how each dancer would try to come up with a signature move to put inside the dance *baamaaya* to make it more exciting for the audience; the more flashy and physically impressive, the better. Similarly, when *tora* is choreographed for stage, people practice more complex turns and footwork to add their own style to the dance.

⁹⁵ For information on both *takai* and *tora* see David Locke et. al. 2013. “Dagomba Dance Drumming.” <https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/display/DagombaDanceDrumming/Welcome>.

These different rhythms are marked most noticeably by the lead *luna* and *gunḡon* player.

The dancers usually learn to sing and follow the lead *gunḡon* rhythm to be sure to knock



Photo 31 and 32. Amidu, Alhaji Lunna's eldest son, playing lead *luna* with his younger brother Rafik (below) on *gunḡon*, Tamale, 2007.



buttocks at the correct moment in the dance (see video example 1). The *lunsi* (drummers) do not have to play all four, or five rhythms or movements; they may decide to skip one for example. The *lunsi* may read the crowd and play one movement for an extended amount of time, or if one rhythm doesn't seem to be

working, they may cut it short. There is a great deal of flexibility in the spontaneous community spaces. In the more choreographed performances, the sequence is usually rehearsed and decided well before the dance starts.

The drum rhythms also play a role in the performance of *tora*; they follow in the tradition of Dagbamba

group dance rhythms. For our purposes here, it is important to know that specific drum rhythms, or sections, dictate how the dancers dance and what songs they sing. For example, there are specific songs for each of the five different rhythms of *tora*. In every context, the rhythms are

played for different periods of time. For example, in a cultural or folkloric performance, they may play through all five rhythms in succession, along with a choreographed version of the dance with prearranged songs to sing with each section. Fuseina explains:

When it is at funeral we do not dance it for a short period. You will dance, you will sing all the songs, and you will not change the rhythm. When you get tired, when they get tired, they stop and rest. And then you start again with the same *tora*. So the songs are more than the other [different] rhythms. So when you sing a couple of songs, when they get tired and will stop, then when they start again you will change another song. But on our stage here, we dance it for a short period and then we change, that is why we cannot sing all the songs. (Wumbei 2006a)

In other words, in a funeral setting –even if everyone needs a break, when all the desired songs have not been sung– they will start again after a break with the same movement until everyone is satisfied. In a staged setting, a group may only sing a song or two for each of the different rhythmic sections.

In a social setting, the structure is much more relaxed and can last a couple hours or on into the night. It may be as long or as short as the community desires. Usually in a neighborhood, small town, or village setting, the young drummers and dancers will take advantage of their relative freedom earlier in the evening and practice before the older participants come out to dance and drum. During one of our interviews, Mme Fuseina talked about her experience of learning the *tora* as a child:

You know I told you of my story, when I was young - younger, I used to go to *tora* in the night when they are drumming it anywhere I would go. When I just hear the drum-ohhhh. I will go and then before the elder women will start the dancing, you the younger ones will choose your partner and then you will run in and out and will knock, and you are learning it through the rhythm. We learn from our infancy, the *tora*. (Wumbei 2006a)

This kind of community teaching, and general transmission of cultural knowledge is still happening today, although apparently not as frequently, or fully, as it had been in the past. Since

there was a ban on performing Dagbamba music for several years, from 2002 until 2006 during the Abudu/Andani chieftaincy succession conflict, this is one reason for the recent downturn in musical proficiency among young people.⁹⁶ Another reason is the prominence of Islam in Dagbon. Mme Fuseina comments on the conflict between the traditional culture and the Muslim religion:

Yeah, they are now learning it, but some don't know it from their infancy. And then our religion too is beating us down, beating the culture down. That when you are dancing they either will call you a flirt, or they will call you bad names. They say that our religion doesn't allow us, especially women, to be dancing outside, to be singing outside. So they are just beating us down. But we are struggling. We do not want them to be beat us down, especially me. (Wumbei 2006a)

One can hear the passionate defiance in Mme Fuseina's voice as she comments on the state of transmission in Dagbamba culture. As a practitioner and teacher, she has a lot at stake, the thought of *tora* not being passed on to younger generations was obviously upsetting to discuss.⁹⁷

As I mentioned above, I experienced *tora* in several contexts while in Tamale and the surrounding area. I was first taught the dance at daily rehearsals at the Tamale Center for National Culture (TCNC, commonly called simply "the cultural center," or the "center"), beginning with my field research in 2006 and continuing on subsequent visits. These daily meetings of the dance group were led by Mme Fuseina and Mohammed Ofei Wun-nam (until 2008 when Fuseina retired). The group rehearsed and performed a style of choreographed folkloric regional dances based on Mme Fuseina and Ofei's professional experiences dancing with the Ghana National Folkloric Company in Accra. The Tamale group met every afternoon and was hired frequently to perform locally for visiting students, for example, or for meetings at

⁹⁶ See Chapter 2 of this text for more discussion of the effects of the Abudu/Andani conflict.

⁹⁷ See Chapter 3 for more information about Mme Fuseina's career and life.

the Catholic Guest House. They regularly performed for foreign groups who were traveling through Tamale. They also performed for government functions at the Tamale Jubilee Park adjacent to the TCNC.

I found the TCNC group to be very welcoming and the overall experience as a cultural outsider was fulfilling and challenging. While the form of *tora* I learned in 2006 at the cultural center was exciting and has been useful for my continued work on the dance-drumming genre, I found that the form of *tora* that I learned at Tufts University with Lunna and Locke to be surprisingly similar to what was being danced socially around Tamale neighborhoods. This more relaxed version was less choreographed, and typically began with a slower tempo than the staged performances. It also allowed dancers to enter into the line and leave as needed, whereas choreographed performances were more formal, usually more technically demanding, acrobatic, and all at a faster tempo. Mme Fuseina describes that in her youth, it was common to dance *tora* without any drummers at all:

KS: When you were learning *tora* when you were young, was it common? Was it happening every week? Or just at events? Or every day?

FW: Events. Funerals, yes. And sometimes in the night when there was moonlight. When there is moonlight, the girls in the area will come to dance - after we have eaten in the night and washed our bowls. That time you are free. That time we come out, gather ourselves. And then we can sing and clap and do the *tora*. Yes. Singing and clapping and doing the *tora*. Yes. [...] No, no drums. We use (clapping),

KS: You would just clap and sing?

FW: Yes and singing and dancing.

(Wumbei 2011c)

Over the years I have developed a sense of *tora* as a whole, and I am able to discern between different styles and forms of the genre. I have also reflected on Lunna's rationale in

originally choosing my teachers in 2006. He seemed to have strong feelings about the different groups and styles that he witnessed in the area. Lunna expressly wanted me to begin by learning songs from Amishetu to have a strong grounding of the “true” *tora* songs before being exposed to contemporary manifestations and newly composed songs that he deemed less important, or without history. Lunna referred to these newly composed songs with a scorn that seemed to imply that, in his opinion, they were virtually meaningless despite their popularity. He was happy that I was learning to dance from Mme Fuseina, but warned me against the CNC version of things, saying that the “real” *tora* was danced at funerals. At times, Lunna’s fatherly tone and watchful eye seemed overbearing and controlling, but upon successive visits to Tamale after he passed away in 2008, I missed hearing his advice. He would always urge me to practice, asking me to sing new songs for him, and scolding me for not being more confident in my Dagbanli.

In the following section, I will look at several *tora* songs with special focus on the knowledge that is transmitted in the performance of these songs. As I have stated earlier in the dissertation, Dagbamba women’s songs are a vital source of oral knowledge production in a language and musical culture that is based and dependent on oral transmission.

IV. Women’s Songs: *Tora* and Beyond

To begin this section on *tora* songs, it is instructive to outline the four primary goals of the analysis: (1) While I do not find it necessary to include lengthy transcriptions of every song addressed, I do provide transcribed excerpts of selected songs to aid in the discussion of the music itself. I do this for a number of reasons, namely to show their beauty and musical interest,

but also to give the reader a familiarity with the musical form central to this dissertation. (2) By examining the song lyrics, I highlight the variety of topics addressed in song, which demonstrates the song's importance as an expression of women's knowledge in Dagbon. (3) Through a discussion of songs from other genres, we can see commonalities and differences between Dagbamba songs. (4) Finally, and most importantly, this section fulfills one of the requests made by my teachers, Ayishetu and Mme Fuseina; they wanted me to document and disseminate their songs by writing down the lyrics and teaching the songs to my future students. I have included song lyrics and translations at the end of the dissertation in Appendix B for reference and as a first step in fulfilling my teachers' requests.

Methodology

This chapter utilizes Western musical notation, transcriptions of song lyrics that have been translated into English, as well as ethnographic experiences to discuss, document, and convey the beauty and significance of Dagbamba women's songs. Utilizing Western musical transcription and notation is somewhat problematic. While Western notation and the resultant analysis arguably have minimal use or relevance, especially in a culture that does not have a long local written tradition, I utilize musical transcription as a descriptive device. In most cases, I only include short excerpts and refer the reader to the audio recordings that accompany the text. The transcriptions are indented to be a visual aid mostly to represent the melodic and rhythmic components of Dagbamba songs. As in other ethnographic texts on Ghanaian music, such as those by Kwasi Ampene (2005) and James Burns (2009), I find notation descriptively useful as it provides a common language between many musicians and academics. At the same time,

Western-based musical notation can be a major turn off for some readers. It can exclude most readers from the discussion since many musicians and non-musicians are not well versed in this notation system. Also, in my experience, the tempo, rhythmic placement of the underlying clap pattern, and even the pitch centers of Dagbamba women's songs can shift and change throughout a performance. These shifts and discrepancies have been acknowledged elsewhere in African music scholarship and prove difficult to notate. However, since Africanist musical anthropologists, musicologists, theorists, composers, and ethnomusicologists have been using this kind of notation for generations, many of the Dagbamba women I worked with wanted (or expected) me to notate their music. They wanted to use the written song lyrics as a tool for teaching in an increasingly literate culture. Mme Fuseina also hoped that by writing these songs down on paper, they could be more widely disseminated and appreciated cross-culturally. In the future, I may pursue creating a song book that would include more lengthy musical transcriptions with the song lyrics, but for the purpose of this study I focus on the song lyrics and only include excerpts of musical transcriptions to accompany the audio files. In this way, I feel that I have followed through with the most important aspect of my music teacher's request in documenting the song lyrics, but I have not falsely (or simplistically) represented the music by rendering the songs statically in full Western musical transcriptions. I hope that this compromise will be satisfactory, especially since the audio recordings are arguably the most important and accurate documentation available.

Song Lyrics

In her book, *Fiddling in West Africa* (2008), DjeDje writes: “Among the Dagbamba, song texts are important because they help in socializing and controlling the behavior of individuals in society” (214). While her primary focus in Dagbon was on *gondze* fiddlers, her observation is relevant across musical styles. I was thrilled to read her analysis of the importance of song because it underscored my own observations and experiences. Importantly, DjeDje goes on to point out that “Although song texts are essential, an irony exists in that most Dagbamba do not understand the literal meaning of the lyrics” (2008:215). This is yet another example of the multifaceted and contradictory nature of reality in Dagbon. Song lyrics simultaneously provide an important source of knowledge, social and cultural advice, and direction. Yet at the same time, many Dagbamba do not understand the meaning of said songs. I would argue that the issue has become more pronounced among the youngest generations due to the Abudu/Andani crisis. The years following the ban on music imposed because of the crises, which was lifted in the spring of 2006, revealed that many young people had had less exposure to traditional Dagbamba music and knew little about the various dances and songs commonly performed throughout the year. These young people had missed several years of oral transmission due to this ban on traditional music. In fact, during some of my song and dance lessons with Ayishetu and Mme Fuseina, young women in the household and from neighboring compounds would be curious and want to dance *tora* or practice singing a song or two. When I had the experience of singing *tora* songs at a funeral in the evening dancing session, I asked the lead singer if she knew a particular song Ayishetu had taught me. But the young woman was unfamiliar with the song and was surprised that I knew how to sing in Dagbanli.

Although *tora* (as a woman's social dance genre) and *tora* songs are the focus of this chapter, for the sake of comparison, I also discuss songs associated with other female dance genres -- namely, *lua*, another women's social group dance; *baamaaya*, historically a men's group rain dance; and *damba*, a solo dance enjoyed by all during the annual Damba festival. I have decided to include twenty songs that represent a diverse collection from four different genres. These twenty selections were translated into English by my Dagbanli language instructor, Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman. I transcribed the song lyrics in Dagbanli and began the translation on my own, then worked with Rosina in an attempt to provide a more accurate literal English translation. While it may seem arbitrary to include these twenty pieces since I have learned thirty to forty songs, there is a basis for my decision. Twelve of the selection represent the core group that Mme Fuseina and Ayishetu taught me. The remaining eight are a selection of songs from three other genres, thus showing the diversity of women's songs in Dagbon.

In order to discuss the meaning of the songs, I have created a chart to identify the primary subjects discussed in each selection (see Figure 6). Similar to *gondze* music, women's songs can be organized into several categories. As DjeDje states, "Songs performed by *gondze* musicians can be placed into three categories: historical, praise, and recreation" (DjeDje 2008:214-15). Women's songs also fall into these categories, but in most cases occupy more than one category (see chart below). I have included the category in parenthesis after the name of the genre. So, for example, "Daadam yoo" is a *tora* intro (i.e., introduction) song sung primarily for recreation, and is accompanied with the *ayiko* drum rhythm.⁹⁸ After the title, genre, and category, I have

⁹⁸ For multi-part recordings of *ayiko*, *tora*, *damba*, *baamaaya* and many other pieces of the Dagbamba repertoire, see David Locke. 2010. "Tora Suite - Dagomba Dance Drumming - Confluence." <https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/display/DagombaDanceDrumming/Tora+Suite>.

included three columns (physical, social, and cultural) that parse out different subjects addressed in each song.

Figure 6. Chart of song titles and categories.

	Song Title	Genre (category)	Physical	Social	Cultural
1	Daadam yoo	<i>tora</i> intro - <i>ayiko</i> (recreation)			metaphor, morals, proverbs
2	Oh ee yeei	<i>tora</i> intro - <i>ayiko</i> (recreation)		kinship, gender	
3	Oh ee yeei	<i>tora</i> (historical/ praise/recreation)		dance, drumming, drum history, praise	morals, metaphor, proverb
4	Kambaŋ naa	<i>tora</i> (historical/ praise/recreation)	food	farming, praise	metaphor
5	M'ma yeei	<i>tora</i> (recreation)	animals	kinship, gender, sex	metaphor
6	Yi ni to	<i>tora</i> (recreation)		dance, drumming	morals
7	Zara	<i>tora</i> (praise/ recreation)	food, money	praise	metaphor
8	Bia ŋɔ yee	<i>tora -ŋun da nyuli</i> (recreation)	beads	kinship, gender, sex	
9	Naawolima	<i>tora -nyayiboli</i> (recreation)	money	kinship, gender, sex, marriage, friendship	morals
10	Lampoo	<i>tora yiyi-ra</i> (recreation)	money, taxes, water	farming, beauty	metaphor
11	Tamale Mina	<i>tora yiyi-ra</i> (recreation)	money	gender	metaphor

	Song Title	Genre (category)	Physical	Social	Cultural
12	Zara je	<i>tora yiyi-ra</i> (recreation)	food, animals		metaphor
13	A din biɛ	<i>baamaaya</i> (recreation)		beauty	metaphor, morals
14	Di kpe kpe ka yi kpe	<i>baamaaya</i> (recreation)		gender	morals
15	Din viela...	<i>baamaaya</i> (recreation)		beauty, kinship	morals, metaphor
16	Naawuni Bi...	<i>baamaaya</i> (recreation)		witchcraft/ wizardry/ undermining	God, morals, metaphor
17	Kɔbɔ n-yi	<i>lua</i> (recreation)	money	colonization	morals, metaphor
18	Balim naa yeei	<i>damba</i> (historical/ praise)	animals, water,	history, praise, kinship	morals, metaphor
19	Baŋ ka zuyusaa	<i>damba</i> (historical/ praise)	beads, kola, animals	kinship, history, praise	morals, metaphor
20	Naa noo gari	<i>damba</i> (historical/ praise)	animals, water,	kinship, history, praise, gender,	God, morals, metaphor

The chart identifies the main subjects or themes mentioned in each of the twenty songs (also see song texts and English translations in Appendix B). Songs one through twelve are all part of the *tora* dance suite,⁹⁹ they are all recreational. I have categorized two songs as “historical/praise/recreation” (“Oh ee yeei” and “Kambaŋ naa”) because they address historical subjects (chiefs and important historical figures); they are praise songs and at the same time are included in a recreational dance-drum genre. “Zara” is categorized as “praise/recreation” because

⁹⁹ Locke uses the term “dance suite” on the Tufts “Dagomba Dance-Drumming” wiki page. Also, the term “genre” has been used. “Dance suite” is appropriate as it points to the fact that *tora* is typically performed with several different movements and rhythms in succession. “Genre” also works in some contexts as it refers to the entire group of *tora* songs and rhythms as a whole.

the song praises “Zara” for her skillful cooking. *Tora* songs are diverse in their subject matter; many refer to physical materials reflecting local norms for food, animals, water, and money. Four *tora* songs address kinship, six relate to gender or sex, and ten out of twelve utilize metaphors or proverbs to convey meaning. The *lua* and *baamaaya* songs utilize metaphors to teach a moral lesson. Lastly, the three *damba* songs are true praise songs that highlight the depth of a lead singer’s cultural knowledge. These songs are more lengthy and improvisatory and address a variety of subjects. The following discusses specific songs in more detail.

To begin, I would like to give a few examples of songs that Mme Fuseina used as “*tora* intro” songs that she (and others) used to move dancers into the dance area in the more formal representation of the genre at the CNC.¹⁰⁰ The two songs I will discuss here are “Oh yii yeei,” and “Daadam yoo.” Both selections have the same function within the dance, but they are very different in character and form. “Oh yii yeei” has an improvisatory lead vocal part that praises and talks generally about the dancers and singers at a given event, with a repeating call-and-response form with the chorus answering the lead singer’s calls. In contrast, “Daadam yoo” exemplifies more of an antiphonal form, and is sung in its entirety by the lead singer, followed by the chorus also singing the entire song. Unlike “Oh yii yeei,” there is little lyrical variation in “Daadam yoo”; rather, the improvisation appears in the melody by adding minor embellishments and harmonies. I also have witnessed a whole group singing this song together with no differentiation between lead singer and chorus.

Here, “Oh yii yeei” is transcribed in a 12/8 meter simply for clarity (not because Dagbamba singers and musicians think of the song in 12/8). The accompanying drumming heard

¹⁰⁰ This information has come from my field experience observing *tora*, working with Mme Fuseina, and from interviews with local musicians and dancers.

on the example is not notated. But if the reader is interested in extensive *tora* drumming, transcriptions they are openly available online.¹⁰¹ With a skilled lead singer, like Ayishetu Nagumsi heard in this recording, this piece can have a highly improvisatory lead section, but it also is performed by simply repeating the answer, or chorus phrase. If you continue to listen to example 1 beyond the first thirteen seconds notated below, you will hear more improvisatory singing followed by the same response phrase in the chorus. This song has a kind of pentatonic sound, notated here as G-A-C-D-E.

Figure 7. Excerpt of “O yii yeei,” measures 1-16, 0:00-0:13 of audio example 1

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a 'lead' staff and a 'chorus' staff. The time signature is 12/8. The lyrics are written below the notes.

System 1 (Measures 1-4):
 Lead: O yii yeei— o yii yeei o yii yeei, o yaa yii yeei, m'ma Ma-gi gbaai ma
 Chorus: (rests)

System 2 (Measures 5-8):
 Lead: yeei o,
 Chorus: O yii yeei, o yii yeei o yii

System 3 (Measures 9-12):
 Lead: (rests)
 Chorus: yeei, o yaa yii yeei, m'ma Za - ra gbaai ma yeei o,

¹⁰¹ See David Locke’s “Tora Suite - Dagomba Dance Drumming - Confluence.” <https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/display/DagombaDanceDrumming/Tora+Suite> (2010). You will also find more musical analysis on this website.

lead	O yii yeei, o yii yeei, o yii yeei, o yaai yeei	(vocables, without literal meaning)
	M' ma Magi gbaai ma yeei o	My mother Magi hold me
chorus	O yi yeei, o yi yeei, o yi yeei, o yaai yeei	
	M' ma Zara gbaai ma yeei o	My mother Zara hold me

Figure 7 shows the main phrase starting in the lead voice, then in measure five the chorus begins to repeat the same phrase. The first beat of every measure is emphasized, or at least punctuated, by the “yeei” of “o yii yeei,” and the “yeei” of “ma Magi/Zara gbaai ma yeei o.” The use of these types of vocables, or nonsense syllables, like “o yii yeei” is very common. The accented or elongated notes landing on one, creates a general pull toward a four feel pattern with an accent on the first beat of every measure.¹⁰² The steady beat and repetitive nature of this song seem to provide a processional quality, an appropriate introduction or starting point to launch the rest of the dance. I have included the song here because it introduces various characteristics common to many Dagbamba songs. For example, the call-and-response structure is ubiquitous in Dagbamba women’s songs, vocables are common, and percussive or rhythmic vocal lines are often heard.

Another *tora* intro piece, “Daadam yoo,” differs from “Ooh yi yeei,” since the song leaves little room for a lead singer to improvise with the lyrics. Rather, a lead singer repeats the lyrics exactly and finds creative outlet in slightly modifying the melody. “Daadam yoo” is sung in its entirety either by the leader, or the whole group, after which the whole song is repeated as desired. “Daadam yoo” has a minor sound that I have notated here using the pitches G-A-B flat-

¹⁰² In most cases, it can feel arbitrary, or false in this context, to utilize Western time signatures. In many cases, the tempo and rhythm seem more flexible and changing than Western notation allows. It is also an oral tradition that in many ways resists the confines of pinning down exact durations of each note. It is important to note that while these songs are notated here, the reality of performance can produce more fluid and flexible manifestations of the songs.

C-D- (E flat) –F. We never hear the E flat, so it is rather implied; we also never hear an ascending (raised) leading tone resolving to the tonic. These characteristics make the song sound modal, and the melody moves mostly in step-wise motion down the scale. It also has a kind of lilting quality to it, in part because of short-long figure (eighth note to quarter note), that is found frequently in the melody. A lead singer like Ayishetu may add more embellishments, usually by adding higher neighbor grace-note like figures or harmonizing with the chorus on the “bi mi” in measure 6 (also see Figure 9, line C02).

Figure 8. “Daadam yoo,” measures 1-8

♩. = 112

clap

Voice

Daa-dam yoo_____ daa-dam yoo,_____

4

clap

Voice

— Daa-dam yoo ya yeei. daa-dam yoo_____ daa-dam bi-mi o yen niŋ

In Figure 8, the beginning of the song with the clap phrase is established before the voice comes in on measure two. “Daadam yoo” has a three-beat clap phrase. The steady clapping in this song is somewhat straight-forward and easy enough for a newcomer to handle; however, in other *tora* songs the clap rhythms can be more complex. Individuals may play and improvise with different divisions and manifestations of the underlying rhythmic structure of a given song. This underlying circular timeline structure provided by clapping, grounds *tora* songs

rhythmically independent from the drumming. They fit with the clapping and drumming, but the clapped timeline allows singers to practice or sing/dance independently without the need for always having drummers. Other genres of Dagbamba music do not have this kind of anchoring underlying timeline,¹⁰³ except perhaps the *kombonsi* (warrior) music which includes several iron bells that play various steady rhythmic patterns. The *kombonsi* tradition, however, is highly influenced by the Asante of the south and includes several Asante drums in their ensemble.¹⁰⁴ The vocal line has some rhythmic ambiguity, or at least rhythmic flexibility that is not shown in this transcription. Although I have notated “Daadam yoo,” in measure two, as two dotted eighth notes, these could have been notated as a duplet, or even an eighth note to a quarter note. To put it more simply, the dotted quarter notes that permeate this piece are more flexible than the Western notation allows. As I stated earlier, these transcriptions should be regarded as a descriptive tool and are not meant to be prescriptive.

In measure three and five, there is another example of the limitations of my transcriptions. I have chosen to represent a kind of sliding down into a lower pitch by way of an upper neighbor by using simply an eighth note before the longer held note. While it may be possible to represent this vocal, or improvisational, technique more accurately, I have chosen this deliberately because of its clarity and because it can act as a place holder to represent the idea of a sliding, lilting upper note resolving to the lower main note below. In most cases, these transcriptions are a basic outline of a given song; in general, most Dagbamba songs allow the singer freedom to improvise and develop melodies in the moment, according to her own style

¹⁰³ See Locke 2010 for a discussion of the timeline in *tora*.

¹⁰⁴ Ethnomusicologist and percussionist Karl Haas has conducted extensive research on the *kombonsi* in Dagbon. For more information on this musical tradition and instrumentation, see his 2008 article “Kambon-waa: The Music of the Dagbamba Warrior Tradition and the Individual Negotiation of Metric Orientation.”

and ideals. While this improvisatory style is a general rule throughout *tora* songs, this song has a more formal structure. Instead of the repetitive verse-relieve call-and-response construction with an improvised lead part, this song has an antiphonal ||: AABBC :|| form where the second A and B sections have some added melodic interest instead of simply singing the very same figure again. Unlike most *tora* songs, in “Daadam yoo” the lyrics do not change from one repetition to the next.

Figure 9. “Daadam yoo” with English translation by Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman¹⁰⁵

lead 1	Daadam yoo daadam yoo, Daadam yoo ya yeei, Dadaam yoo	Human yoo (human being, person, individual etc.)
lead 2	Daadam bi mi o n-yen niŋ shem, ka be bol’ o nira	A person does not know what to do to be appreciated by people
lead 2	Daadam bi mi o n-yen niŋ shem, ka be bol’ o nira	A person does not know what to do to be appreciated by people
lead 3	Be ti yen bol’ o nira, daba ayi ka o bel’ o gballi ni	Before they are appreciated as a good person, they will be dead
		(in two days time he will be in his grave)
chorus	Daadam yoo daadam yoo, Daadam yoo ya yeei, Dadaam yoo	
	Daadam bi mi o n-yen niŋ shem, ka be bol’ o nira	(Entire song repeated)
	Daadam bi mi o n-yen niŋ shem, ka be bol’ o nira	
	Be ti yen bol’ o nira, daba ayi ka o bel’ o gballi ni	

The lyrics of “Daadam yoo” touch on the futility of life’s endeavors. When discussing this song in lessons, Amishetu and Mme Fuseina would laugh and explain that a good person

¹⁰⁵ All of the English translations of Dagbani song lyrics have been done by Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman. I have worked on translations with Joseph Ziblim, Mme Fuseina Wumbi, and Saaid Sunglokongbo, but Rosina’s work with Dagbanli linguistics has been extensive. She holds a master’s degree in Dagbanli and teaching and grew up in Dagbamba musical culture. In this way, her translations and expertise have been invaluable.

must do the right thing without expecting everyone to praise them. There is no point in doing good if it is only praise we desire; one must do the right thing without needing acknowledgement or praise. We can not expect everyone to notice all the good we do in our lives, it is only when a good person passes away that we truly appreciate them in their absence. The lyrics impart a sense of Dagbamba morality, and provides guidance to young people who have not yet gained wisdom from their elders. This is one example of a woman's song that takes on larger aspects of the human condition. At some level, we are self-serving and are more inclined to do good in the world if it is acknowledged and praised. This song conveys the idea that we all must act for the greater good without requiring or expecting any payoff in our life time.

***Tora* Itself**

As I have noted before, there are several different sections or rhythms within a single performance of *tora*, rather like movements in a Western symphony or concerto. But unlike a symphony, the *lunsi* (drummers) can choose to play each of the five sections in succession from beginning to end (*zamanduniya/ayiko* through *tora yiyira*). If the dancers and singers are enthusiastic or energetic during a particular movement, the *lunsi* might continue to play that rhythm for an extended period, or they may skip one of the rhythms all together. There is a great deal of flexibility and spontaneity with the performance of *tora* in recreational and funeral contexts. However, regardless of who is dancing or drumming, the main *tora* rhythm is played every time a group dances *tora*. This primary rhythm, simply referred to as "*tora*," is the most crucial and fundamental rhythm of the genre. Consequently, I have decided to discuss a number of songs based on their prominence in the genre, on the significance of their lyrics, and because

they were emphasized when Ayishetu and Mme Fuseina taught them to me. I have included five songs from this rhythm and I will begin with the “original” *tora* song, “Oh ee yeei” (heard on video example 1). Again this song has a pentatonic sound, notated here as G-A-B-D-E (see Figure 11). The tonal center again is G as I have notated all of the songs around G simply for ease of transcription and analysis. This song is significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, the complexity in rhythmic relationships makes the song musically interesting, and Lunna cited this song as originating from the cry of the mother Galiban when she heard of her son’s death.¹⁰⁶ This crying, rendered as the vocables “Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei,” provides the foundational phrases of the song. Below is a translation of several lines of song lyrics.¹⁰⁷

Figure 10. “Oh ee yeei” (a rendition of this song is heard on video example 1)

Lead 1	Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei, Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei	(vocables, no literal meaning)
chorus	Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei, Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei	
lead 2	Namɔyu Bizuŋ bia yeei,	Namɔyu, Bizuŋ’s son yeei,
lead 2	Niŋm’bini n-niŋ wariba yeei	Drum for the dancers to dance
lead 2	Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei,	(You drum-play for the dancers)
chorus	Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei, Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei	
lead 3	Sampahi nachim’bia yeei,	Sampahi royal prince,
lead 3	Niŋm’bini n-niŋ wariba yeei	Drum for the dancers to dance
lead 3	Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei	(do the thing for the dancers)
chorus	Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei, Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei	

Below is the beginning of “Oh ee yeei,” which starts with the main chorus part that returns repeatedly throughout the song.

¹⁰⁶ See *tora* history story in the foregoing.

¹⁰⁷ See Appendix B for a transcription of song lyrics and translations of the twenty songs discussed here.

Figure 11. “Oh ee yeei,” measures 1-28

hand clap

lead

chorus

8

h.c.

1.

ch.

15

h.c.

1.

ch.

22

h.c.

1.

ch.

Oh ee yeei, ya-ai ee yeei, Oh ee yeei, ya-a-ai ee yeei, Oh ee yeei, Na-moyu, Bi-zuŋ bia yeei, Niŋm' bini nniŋ wari-ba ee yeei ya-a-ai ee yeei, yeei, Oh ee yeei ya-a-ai ee yeei, Oh ee yeei, ya-ai.

The clap rhythm, which is the constant throughout this set of *tora* songs, acts as the rhythmic timeline and provides a circular underlying rhythmic pattern to anchor the song and dance. In Locke’s musical analysis of *tora* on the Tufts “Dagomba Dance-Drumming” wiki, he

writes of the “time line” phenomenon that is common in southern Ghanaian music (e.g., Akan, Ewe, and Ga) but rather uncommon in Dagbamba music (2010:3). Locke goes on to say that since the clap has an off beat feel with two strokes hitting on the third “time points” within the beats (thus “off-beat” rather than hitting on the first partial), during performance one can perceive the beat as flipping or turning around so that these off-beat hits sound like they are in fact on the beat (2010:4). In Figure 11, I have bracketed the clapping pattern to reflect the way I was taught. My teachers “felt” the clap, beginning with the two off beat hits and ending with a longer hit on the beat. While the rhythm used to repeat the clapping part seems rather clear, the complexity comes when the chorus part is added. In practice, the timing of this song has a tendency to move, shift, speed up, and slow down throughout a given performance. Because singers emphasize or deemphasize entrances or attacks, the song’s inherent rhythmic relationships are intensified. For example, in measure six the vocal line enters on the third partial of the second beat of the measure, anticipating the final third hit of the clap rhythm. This entrance is an example of a place where singers will either attack the entrance to emphasize the relationship between the clap and the voice, or they will simply sing the entrance with no particular added emphasis. While the lead vocal part may seem to be the most interesting, or creative, the repeated chorus part provides a constant familiar melody that singers are then able to vary because it is familiar and repeated throughout the song. The structure of “Oh ee yeei” is typical of *tora* songs: a verse, chorus, or call-and-response ABAB repeated. It could also be described as an AABACAD, since the lead part changes but is always followed by the answer section.

According to Lunna, “Oh ee yeei” dates back to the very beginning of *tora*; thus, it is one of the most important *tora* songs. The vocables, “oh ee yeei, yaai ee yeei,” represent the woman’s wailing after the death of her loved ones. This phrase is repeated throughout the song and provides the foundation for the rest of the song to build on. Even the lead parts usually end with a phrase of “oh ee yeei, yaai ee yeei” before it returns to the chorus (see Figure 11, mm. 22-26). While this was not the very first song I learned, it was important to Lunna that I learn this song properly. He would ask me to sing “Oh ee yeei” for him periodically as a way to gauge my proficiency.¹⁰⁸ Lunna’s influence on my study of *tora* was lasting throughout my field research. Lunna’s historical awareness and sense of purpose for his own tradition and art form were truly a powerful force to witness.

The next song I will discuss is called “Kambaŋ Na”; it follows “Oh ee yeei” nicely as it has rhythmic similarities and challenges (audio example 2). “Kambaŋ Na” also has historical significance in Dagbon as it praises a chief named Kambaŋ for his skills in farming.¹⁰⁹ This song, like “Oh ee yeei,” is based on a pentatonic scale and the melody has a major modal feel. I have notated it below as close to the actual pitches heard in audio example 2 as I could, although again, I have not included the drumming parts. You will hear (and see below) the long-form clapping pattern that singers enjoy playing during *tora*.

¹⁰⁸ “Oh ee yeei” proved to be one of the most challenging songs for me to learn. I believe it has to do with the complex rhythmic interplay between the clap rhythm and the vocal part. While I felt awkward and extremely challenged, my teachers performed these rhythmic relationships with ease.

¹⁰⁹ See song texts and translation in Appendix B for reference.

Figure 12. “Kambanj Na,” measures 1-25 (audio example 2, 0:00-0:16)

hand clap

lead

chorus

Kam-banj naa yeel, naa yeel, zoi shi - ri naa yeel

8

h.c.

l.

c.

naa yeel, Na yeel,

Ka - na mbo - li mma Paa - ni yeel, Ka - zang nung la ti -

14

h.c.

l.

c.

chem.puu - ni Ka - zang nung la ti - chem.puu - ni

Na yeel,

20

h.c.

l.

c.

Ti cham puu - ni nti yahi jan - si,

Na yeel, Na yeel,

In Figure 12, we see the main chorus part, which resolves to a B-flat by the end of measure 9. The dominant-like note, in this case the F, also has a strong pull throughout this song. While Dagbamba music does not share to Western musical conventions, one can still hear tonal centers and patterns throughout many of these songs.

The first line in “Kambaŋ Na” (see Figure 12, audio example 2) shows a descending melodic line that establishes the sound and tonality of the entire song. This is the song’s main phrase that a lead singer would use to begin (on the audio track we hear the chorus singing this main phrase), since it identifies the song for the whole group, and to anyone around the group who would like to sing along. The beginning of the phrase starts on the second hit of the clap rhythm, the third partial of the first beat (see Figure 12, measure 2). Here we have a three against two beat feel, with three quarter notes in 6/8 meter that would typically be duple rather than triple. I believe many listeners would hear the relationship between the underlying two beats to a measure, the clap rhythm, all contrasted with the “Kambaŋ naa” phrase which feels like a triplet. Three in a two beat feel, or two against three (2:3), is a common phenomenon in Dagbamba music. When looking for these kinds of rhythmic relationships, they appear in several different manifestations and can be notated in various ways (i.e., as a triplet in a duple meter, or duplet in a triple meter).

Going back to the lead part in “Kambaŋ Na,” we see this rhythmic idea taking place again in the lead voice in measures 9-12 above. After each lead part, the chorus comes in with a short, and rather encouraging, “Na yeei” (see Figure 12, measures 16, 20 and 24 above). These lead parts also have strings of duplets, which inherently creates a kind of pulling of the rhythmic pattern. While I have attempted to show an accurate transcription of these songs, I am aware of

their shortcomings. The dotted eighth note figures used in this section are close to being correct, but in actual performance there is elasticity in the timing of these notes. Every singer uses her own artistry and rhythmic sense to embellish the song in her own way.¹¹⁰

These lead phrases notated above (measures 17-24) form a pair, the first ending on the mediant in measure 18, then the second resolving to the tonic in measure 23. We see this same pairing in subsequent lead parts as well. While they may not be performed in this exact sequence, my analysis indicates that singers commonly alternate between ending the phrase on the mediant, before resolving to the tonic regardless of the text or melodic variation they sang. Ending on the mediant, then, can be seen as a kind of suspenseful cliffhanger; the singers know the leader will follow with another lead verse before returning to the main chorus part again. Conversely, once the tonic is reached at the end of the lead phrase, this can be a signal to the singers that the leader is coming back to home base, and they should all get ready to sing the extended chorus part again.

¹¹⁰ The transcriptions included here are intended as a descriptive blue print of each song, a sketch to aid in the understanding of the songs.

Figure 13. “Kambaŋ Na,” Dagbanli text with English translation

main	Kambaŋ naa yeei, naa yeei,	Kambaŋ chief,
	zooi shiri naa yeei, naa yeei	Chief of plentiful honey
lead 1	Kana m-boli m ma Paani yeei	Come call my mother, the chief's second wife
chorus	Naa yeei	chief yeei
lead 2	Kazaŋ ning la ti cham puuni	Sew and bless the seeds when we go to the farm
chorus	Naa yeei	chief yeei
lead 3	Kazaŋ ning la ti cham puuni	Sew and bless the seeds when we go to the farm
chorus	Naa yeei	chief yeei
lead 4	Ti cham' puuni n-ti yahi jansi	Let's go to farm and sack the monkeys
chorus	Naa yeei	chief yeei

“Kambaŋ Na” was a favorite among several of my friends due to the lively playful nature of the call-and-response between the lead and chorus. The song praises a chief for his skillful farming, kindness, and wisdom. “Kambaŋ Na” always produced joyful and boisterous singing among women. Another favorite is “M’ma yee, m’ma,” a song about a young girl who is complaining to her mother (listen to audio example 3). Although “M’ma yee, m’ma” playfully addresses one aspect of becoming a woman and young wife, it differs from the previous three songs. The leader and chorus sing essentially the same melody, back and forth between each other; the lead singer begins with a phrase, then the chorus sings the same phrase back to her, and so on.

Figure 14. “M’Ma yeei” (audio example 3, 0:00-0:32)

Lead 1	Anyaa yi yeei, yaa yeei, anyaa yi yeei, yaa yeei	(vocables, no meaning)
chorus	Anyaa yi yeei, yaa yeei, anyaa yi yeei, yaa yeei	
lead 2	An yaa yi yeei, yaa yeei, Binsheɣu yen gbaai ma yeei, m ma yeei	A beast (something) is going to catch me, oh mother

lead	M ma yeei, m ma, (Mme Fuseina alone)	(My) mother, mother,
chorus	Binsheɣu yen gbaai ma yeei, m ma yeei	A beast (something) is going to catch me, oh mother
lead 3	M ma yeei, m ma,	(My) mother, mother,
lead 3	Bin din ka naba yen gbaai ma yoo, m ma yeei	Something with no legs is going to catch me, mother
chorus	M ma yeei, m ma,	(My) mother, mother,
chorus	Binsheɣu yen gbaai ma yeei, m ma yeei	A beast (something) is going to catch me, oh mother

“M’ma yeei, m’ma” has many musical characteristics typical of Dagbamba songs, namely a rhythmic three against two (3:2) feel, anticipatory rhythmic off beat phrases, and call-and-response. Although highly repetitive, “M’ma yee” still provides a creative outlet for the lead singer as she can embellish the verse with ornaments or rhythmic improvisations, while the chorus answers with the more traditional melodic material. The embellishment of the original idea, or melody, is a common way of showing ones personal style as a singer and performer. I witnessed this improvisatory feature, which seems to be an inherent character of the musical genre, frequently in my lessons with Ayishetu and Mme Fuseina. They both had different styles and ways of embellishing, or asserting their artistic creativity, when they were singing the lead. Even in the chorus parts, a singer can express her musical creativity; nothing has to be exactly in unison, for unison is not the ultimate goal.¹¹¹ During my lessons, I found myself trying to replicate my teachers’ intonation and style exactly, attempting to sing the chorus parts with Fuseina, for example, in perfect unison. While this may have helped me learn the songs correctly, I was not finding my own voice, or adding any musical interest to each song. At first, this was an

¹¹¹ This is in contrast, or opposition with, most symphonic Western choral ensembles where the goal is to blend in with each other, no voice becoming more prominent than the other. Coming from this European classical choral tradition myself, the concept of a certain amount of melodic freedom was shocking at first. I found it difficult to break away from my Western training as a singer.

unconscious result of my previous musical training, and later I realized that it was one of my limitations as an “outsider.” The appropriate use of rhythmic, melodic, and lyrical improvisation takes years of practice and sensitivity to the deep Dagbamba socio-cultural milieu, complex belief systems, and praise traditions. Without the improvisatory skills of a true lead singer, the method of imitation and repetition provides a vocalist with at least an outline or basic knowledge of each song.

Another good example of the subtle improvisation can be found in the song “Bia ɲɔ yee,” which is also part of the *tora* dance suite performed with the drum rhythm *ɲun da nyuli*, a rhythm also played in the men’s *takai* dance suite. “Bia ɲɔ yee” combines call-and-response found in most Dagbamba women’s songs, with the structure of a song like “Daadam yoo” that repeats in its entirety. The leader sings the song while the chorus interjects a short phrase, “kasi ka langa,” vocables that imitate the sound of beads swaying and shaking around a woman’s waist, but with no literal meaning in Dagbanli.

Figure 15. “Bia ɲɔ yee” - *ɲun da nyuli (tora)*

Lead 3	M ma dala yeri n-soli ma	My mother bought beads for me to wear
chorus 1	Kasi ka langa (or)	(vocables, no meaning)
chorus 2	Kasi ka yelinga (C1 or C2)	(no meaning)
Lead 4	Ka n chana ka n shee damda	And when I am walking with my waist shaking
chorus 1	Kasi ka langa (or) C2 Kasi ka yelinga	(vocables, no meaning)
lead 5	Ka dagorinaa nya ma n-kumda (jigira)	The chief bachelor saw me and was crying
lead 5	A lee nya ma kumda	You are crying for what
lead 5	Nyini n-da n-soli ma bee	Are you the one who bought the beads for me

“Bia ɲɔ yee” is about a young woman whose mother bought her beautiful beads to wear around her waist, as was common before the colonial period. It is sung from a first person perspective, and admonishes a male admirer by saying he has no right to praise the young woman’s beauty; it was her mother who bought her the beautiful beads, not the young man. This is a teasing song about courtship, but it also reflects the mother-daughter bond and the loyalty felt in this foundational relationship.

In contrast is “Lampoo,” a *tora yiyira*¹¹² song that complains of the uselessness of taxes (listen to audio example 4). *Tora yiyira* is typically the last movement in the *tora* suite. This high energy movement requires dancers to jump in the air and while doing so cross and un-cross their feet and legs. Hence, the name *tora yiyi-ra*, which translates to jumping or flying *tora*. The more skilled and athletic the dancers, the higher they will jump and the more effortless the leg crossing will appear. This movement is not always performed or played by drummers in a recreational or funeral setting.

Figure 16. “Lampoo” (audio example 4, 0:00-0:32) - *Tora yiyira*

lead 1	Lampoo deriba, a ni deema	
chorus	Deema, eei Lampoo yeei deema	Collect (take), taxes (tax receipt) collect
2 & 3	unclear lyrics (0:06-0:11)	
lead 4	A yi wari kola kola, a ni deei lampoo	If you dance beautifully, you will still be taxed
chorus	Deema, eei Lampoo yeei deema	Collect (take), taxes (tax receipt) collect
lead 5	A yi wari zungazunga, a ni deei lampoo	If you dance well, you will still be taxed
chorus	Deema, eei Lampoo yeei deema	Collect (take), taxes (tax receipt) collect

¹¹² *Yiyi-ra* is a Dagbanli verb that means to jump, to fly, to dive.

lead 6	A yii yaaa, yeei, ni deema	ahhh, you collect
chorus	Deema, eei Lampoo yeei deema	Collect (take), taxes (tax receipt) collect

The lyrics for “Lampoo” show the exacerbation Dagbambas express about government taxation. It is also a teasing or joking song, which asks, what is the point of taxes? When taxes are collected, all they receive is a receipt, nothing more. A receipt does not fetch water, it does not make food for your family. And it doesn’t matter how beautiful you are, or how well you dance, you will always be taxed. While this song does not relate to gender or women’s issues, it does highlight a cultural phenomenon in Dagbon. Namely, that there is a great deal of skepticism about government policies. In addition to their suspicion of corruption, many Dagbamba do not trust or understand the government’s handling of financial resources. While Ghana has one of the largest power plants in the region (on Lake Volta), the Northern Region has frequent rolling brown-outs, power shortages, and black-outs. Power is costly, and yet Ghana sells power to neighboring countries. These kinds of issues play into the poignancy and reception of songs like “Lampoo.”

While *tora* songs have been my focus, I would like to briefly discuss several songs from genres other than *tora*. For example, another women’s dance genre called *lua* is not widely danced any more, but some of the songs are sung among women at gatherings. One such song is called “Kɔbɔ n-yi,” which describes the history of currency in Dagbon.

Figure 17. “Kɔbɔ n-yi,” *Lua*

L02	Kɔbɔ n-yi, daʒeɣu kɔbɔ n-yi ka ti zaa nyɛ yɛm	The introduction of currency by Germans made everyone wise
-----	---	--

Mme Fuseina explained that they used to trade in cowry shells and beads before the Germans supposedly introduced currency into the region. The song implies that with the introduction of currency, the Dagbamba were made wise to the ways of the world.

A prevalent theme in Dagbamba proverbs, and one could argue Dagbamba life, is the belief in secret plots against one another through supernatural or mystical forces that lead to or result in misfortune, sickness, or even death! After a particularly challenging day in Tamale in August 2008, Alhaji Lunna and I were sitting outside his home in Lameshegu when he told me that more people wanted him dead than alive. I was shocked and then thought he was speaking metaphorically and not serious. He explained further that when someone has fortune, whether through gaining chieftaincy status, material wealth, inheritance, or some other means, people become suspicious and jealous. Because they wish you harm, one must protect oneself from these bad people and evil forces. He then motioned to the protective talismans he wore. The following *baamaaya* song warns against such beliefs and practices.

Figure 18. “Naawuni bi mɔŋ sɔ” Dagbanli text and English translation

L	Naawuni bi mɔŋ sɔ	God does not deny anyone
	Zamba n-zooi ti dunia ni	but back-stabbing (or undermining) is very
		common in this world

V. Concluding thoughts

Many songs that women sing during dances like *tora*, *lua*, or *baamaaya*, carry deep cultural meaning in their lyrics. Whether it is something as simple as references to the old days when women wore beautiful beads as jewelry and ornaments on the outside of their clothing, or something dark such as the mention of *zamba*, which translates to “secret injury; undermining of character,” most songs impart rich knowledge about life in Dagbon. By performing songs their mother’s taught them, and by composing new songs, variations, and improvisations, women are participating in disseminating and producing knowledge through song.

It is my hope that by focusing on *tora* songs, and the genre itself, this chapter provides a window into aspects of Dagbamba music that have previously been overlooked by scholars. The diverse performance contexts, variety of songs, history and meaning of *tora* all give it depth that offers much for an ethnomusicologist to explore.

Chapter 5: KaliTora

I. Introduction

While working with Ayishetu and Mme Fuseina in a private lesson setting, discussions of the current state of music in Dagbon commonly came up and both women talked of their own performance experiences. I was eager to hear Ayishetu and Mme Fuseina perform together, but due to Ayishetu's rather advanced age and her husband's frail health, Ayishetu was rarely performing. Mme Fuseina had also retired, in 2008, from her role as a dance instructor and choreographer for the folkloric ensemble at the Tamale Center for National Culture. Consequently, my primary experiences hearing women performing around Tamale were in spontaneous recreational performances, at funerals, and during the Damba festivities that took place in February 2011. The Damba festival offered many occasions to witness women rehearsing Damba songs together in preparation for the main festival days when they sang together at night.



Photo 33. Mme Fuseina (left) and Ayishetu (center) singing songs for women plastering, Tamale, 2011.

Another fortuitous occasion took place in February, 2011; Mme Fuseina's nephew needed to plaster his compound and wanted to have it done in the traditional way. This involved all women of his family as well as other local friends, combining their efforts to pound the local clay with water, gravel, and sand. After it was pounded completely smooth, they applied

a thin layer of cement mixed with water and local soil. This entire process took most of the day and was accompanied by work songs led by Ayishetu Nagumsi. I was excited to be able to join in and witness the power of being rhythmically in sync while completing a physically challenging task. It was also a joyful experience to sing with a large group of women. But I was excited to have more opportunities to experience women singing *tora* songs.



Photo 34. Women plastering, Tamale, 2011.

After discussing this with Mme Fuseina and Ayishetu, they came up with an idea. We would record a “cassette” of women singing Dagbamba songs. Because both women are regarded as community leaders in women’s musical activities, especially among those associated with the TCNC (Tamale Center for National Culture), they were accustomed to organizing performances. When asked to perform for various occasions, local government functions, or visiting students, Mme Fuseina and Ayishetu would round up women to sing and dance. In this way, Mme Fuseina began a loosely associated women’s group they have named “KaliTora.” *Kali* in Dagbanli means “custom” or “inherited tradition”; Mme Fuseina explained that the name identifies the group as being committed to performing *tora*, and other music of historical significance. The group’s primary function is to perform when called upon by the TCNC or other community members who may require a performance. KaliTora then is not a musical association common among other cultural groups in Ghana. For example, James Burns writes of Ewe women’s music associations that also function as micro-loan groups since they offer assistance to

due-paying members in need of help with a funeral or family hardship (Burns 2009). Rather KaliTora functions on an as-needed basis, and splits the proceeds from any performance among members after refreshments and transportation have been paid. Despite their rather informal organization, Mme Fuseina was easily able to contact her singers, dancers, and drummers who were all eager to work on a recording project.

II. KaliTora



Photo 35. KaliTora from left to right: Fuseina Wumbei, Ayishetu Mussa, Amishetu Nagumsi, Zeliatu Mohammad, and Sanatu Mutala, Tamale, 2011.

Mme Fuseina Wumbei formed KaliTora as a small performance group for women who have been associated with the TCNC, where she was a dance instructor and choreographer for

over 25 years. As noted in Chapter 3, Mme Fuseina, who is now in her 60s, began her dancing career at age 17 when she left her home town of Tamale to join the Ghana National Dance Ensemble in Accra. After rising to be one of four top dancers in the group, Mme Fuseina left after only 7 years, and returned to Tamale. She has led a rather modern life for a women of her age, having married twice, and producing no biological children of her own, Mme Fuseina has been independent and successful as a dancer and instructor.¹¹³ She has formed and been a part of various dance groups and women's organizations over the years and remains active in the community, with groups like KaliTora, even after her official retirement from the Tamale Center for National Culture.

The KaliTora group (see Photo 35) is made up of five women who teach and facilitate ten to fifteen additional young women for larger performances. The lead singer is Amishetu Nagumsi, shown here in the center of the group. The chorus is made up of four women –Sanatu Mutala, Fuseina Wumbei, Ayishetu Mussa, and Zeliatu Mohammad. The KaliTora group asked me to make audio and video recordings for their promotional and personal use. We had two main recording sessions on May 14 and 21, 2011. During rehearsal and preparation for the recordings, I witnessed these five women making time in their complicated and busy lives to sing and dance together. This time created space for socializing and relaxing in a rather private all-female setting that had little external pressure. After knowing each other for years, their time together also offered a kind of catharsis, when venting about their husbands, jobs, or financial difficulties, reminiscing about the past, or discussing each other's children were common.

¹¹³ See Chapter 3 for a more in-depth discussion of Mme Fuseina's life.

Figure 19. “Yi ni too” (see video example 2, 0:08-0:30)

Lead	Yi ni too, yin tomiya yeei,	You yes, if you will dance you dance
	yi yaa ku too yin cheliya	If you will not dance, then stop
	sana bi kamita barimaana	A stranger doesn't turn away beggars
chorus	Yi ni too, yin tomiya yeei,	You yes, if you will dance you dance
	yi yaa ku too yin cheliya	If you will not dance, then stop
	sana bi kamita barimaana	A stranger doesn't turn away beggars
repeats again		

When singing “Yini to,” for example, and most other songs, the members of KaliTora become engaged and their faces brighten (see video example 2). “Yini to” is about inviting a stranger, or beggar, to join in the dance. An ethos of inclusion and self determination is expressed in this song. Mme Fuseina told me many times, you can not be sad and dance, you can not sing and feel bad; when you sing or dance, you must feel happy! Although Amishetu is classically sleep deprived and literally falls asleep during a lesson if she is not actively participating, she immediately becomes animated and joyous when singing. Additionally, while working on “Yini to” during our recording sessions, conversations started sprouting up about “the old days” when dancing and singing brought disparate communities together and resolved conflicts.

Describing the Dzigbordi performance group in a southern Ghanaian Ewe town, James Burns writes of a similar phenomenon: “Within this context, we will find that singing songs is an important way in which women demonstrate and renew their beliefs. Music associations build alliances between women, based upon common descent, beliefs and interests” (Burns 2009:1). While KaliTora is not the same type of musical association as the Dzigbordi group, through participation in KaliTora, these women have formed alliances and a sense of solidarity when faced with personal problems. For example, Mme Fuseina regularly takes a senior position in

group discussions and advocates on behalf of other group members. She helped Ayishetu Mussa with procuring her job as a secretary at the Tamale Center for National Culture; she often negotiates allowances for performances to include transportation costs, and accompanies her friends to important meetings or family gatherings when they need her support. In this way, the relationships formed through the KaliTora music and dance group provide a context outside of extended family networks for solidarity and advocacy among the members.

Musical performance often has transformative power of bringing participants vividly into the present moment, creating space where past baggage is forgotten and musical connections, alliances, and advocacy naturally emerge among members. The topics and content of song texts can also play a role in this cathartic experience. The more current or pertinent topics usually lead to heated discussions as singers commonly use contemporary issues and events as inspiration for writing new songs or song lyrics. For example, one prominent lead singer, Amishetu Katariga, described a rape that happened in her community, and how she then wrote a song warning young women to listen to their mothers and not stand by the roadside at night.¹¹⁴ Mme Fuseina similarly recounted an experience when she was on tour with the Tamale Center for National Culture dance troupe and the men and women were not getting along; the group came up with a new teasing song (see Figure 20) that alternately blamed men and then women for all of life's problems.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ See Chapter 2 on women and music in Dagbon for more on Ayishetu Katariga.

¹¹⁵ Note: I have obtained permission from Diane Thram and the *African Music* journal to include a section from my article.

Later, at a private dance lesson with Mme Fuseina and Ofei Wun-nam while we were dancing *baamaaya*, we all sang “Di kpe kpe,” the very song Mme Fuseina told us had been composed during a performance trip.

Figure 20. “Di kpe kpe”

L01	Di kpe kpe ka yi kpe	What happened there is left there
L01	Di kpe kpe ka yi kpe	What happened there is left there
L01	Dabba nangban yoya	All that happened is a result of men’s problems
L02	Di kpe kpe ka yi kpe	What happened there is left there
L02	Di kpe kpe ka yi kpe	What happened there is left there
L02	Dabba Payiba nangban yoya	All that happened is a result of women’s problems

As Ofei and Mme Fuseina taught us the song, they laughed and reminisced about their time performing together and the trouble the group experienced. Just as the song describes, both Ofei and Mme Fuseina blamed each other and their respective gender groups for all of the problems that arose during the road trip. This is yet another example of how songs bring people together and allow catharsis to take place.

III. Recording Project, May 2011

Mme Fuseina instigated the idea of a recording project for a number of reasons, but perhaps primarily because I had the portable recording equipment needed to create basic audio and video recordings. She wanted to make a “cassette” (a CD) so members could have a recording of the songs and a product that could be used as promotional materials for the group. As I do not have extensive professional recording or production experience beyond my

experiences as an ethnomusicologist in the so-called “field,” I served as a recording tech, while Mme Fuseina organized all of the details and made the musical decisions with the group. The arrangements for the recording project were as follows: we planned to have two primary sessions to be held at the Zo-Simli Naa palace in Lamashegu, on successive Saturdays, May 14 and May 21, 2011; we aimed to focus on the women’s singing and would record with and without the *tora* dancing to have cleaner recordings without so much movement; there would have to be a “main” performance of *tora* to create a video of the dance with a complete ensemble of drummers, singers, and dancers. Again, this recording was not for my research or dissertation, but rather for KaliTora’s members to have recordings of their own work. The final product could potentially be used for self promotion, as a demo CD to show family and friends, and for their own personal archive. In Mme Fuseina’s case, it seemed important for her to simply have a current, high quality CD and DVD of her singing and dancing.

Mme Fuseina and the four other singers, Ayishetu Mussa, Amishetu Nagumsi, Zeliatu Mohammad, and Sanatu Mutala, made all of the necessary arrangements and notified their community of dancers and drummers. I was excited to witness these women working together to produce something of their own. During meetings prior to the two days of recording, they discussed previous attempts at producing a cassette of their songs. According to Mme Fuseina, Ayishetu Mussa, and Ayisheu Nagumsi, years ago they were approached by a young Dagbamba man who was very enthusiastic about their singing and wanted to record a cassette for them to distribute locally. The young man had a small recording studio of sorts in Tamale and invited the women to come sing. They worked tirelessly over a few days, recording multiple takes and following the young man’s coaching and advice. According to KaliTora, the young man never

followed through with the spoken agreement. The women never heard the cassette, never received any money for their efforts, never saw an end product, and did not hear from the young man again. Apparently, such incidents were not uncommon in Dagbon. Lead singer Amishetu Katariga said that she had heard her voice on a speaker at a stall in the market where cassettes were sold. She surmised that it must have been a bootleg recording from one of the radio shows she had done in the past. Making copies, or bootlegs, of previously recorded material without appropriate permissions seems to be rampant around Tamale.¹¹⁶

Because of these experiences, Mme Fuseina wanted members of the group to create a formal transaction agreement that addressed the use of the recording. We drew up a recording contract in anticipation of future music distribution. Mme Fuseina and the KaliTora group were interested in selling their tracks and making their music more widely available online. Because of this possibility, we developed a contract on the spot that would allow me to act on their behalf. This was not professionally done, we did not consult a music lawyer, but it was written to simply serve the needs of those involved at the moment. I have included a copy of the release form and contract in Appendix B for the reader's reference. While I have yet to make any online arrangements to sell and distribute the KaliTora CD, we sold several copies at the Tufts World Damba Festival in September 2012 totaling \$100 US, which was promptly taken to Mme Fuseina and the KaliTora group by Hajia Fati Munkaila who attended the festival.¹¹⁷ After additional editing of the liner notes, information about the CD can be placed on various web sites

¹¹⁶ Piracy is common throughout the world, especially with the rise of Internet access and multiple platforms available for consuming music. Ethnomusicologists have written extensively on intellectual property, piracy, and copyright issues (see Brown 1998; Goodman 2002; Seeger 1992, 1996, 2011, 2012; Stobart 2010; Zuckerman 2004).

¹¹⁷ Hajia Fati Munkaila is a trusted friend, and worked for the late Zo Simli Naa (Susan Herlan) in Tamale.

for world music, such as CDbaby.com where digital and hard copies of CDs are sold, allowing artists a larger profit margin than iTunes or Amazon.

Regardless of the potential, or lack of potential, for future digital sales of traditional Dagbamba songs by KaliTora, the project in itself was fulfilling. During the two days of recording, there was a great deal of excitement and anticipation among group members. We began recording the singers with drum accompaniment on May 14, in the morning, outside the Zo-Simli Naa palace. The conditions were adequate, and we recorded video and audio of the five singers with Ayishetu Nagumsi leading the songs. They performed beautifully and sang medleys of songs in succession. As I described above, singing together provides space and time to visit with each other, discuss common issues regarding family and friends, and enjoy each other's company. The act of singing together not only helps to maintain the relationships between the women involved, but it deepens their bond. In addition to remembering events from childhood, times passed, and humorous topics that spark conversation, the songs can stimulate lively social intercourse among participants. In this way, the catharsis of singing and releasing physical energy through singing and dancing strengthens relationships, and promotes group solidarity and advocacy among members. The female dominated *tora* also creates alliances between young women, and serves as an outlet for women to share in this joyous and boisterous song and dance genre. While the group affiliation among the women is not a continuous or strictly organized one, there have been countless examples of members advocating on each other's behalf because of their long-term association.

On the musical side, a major highlight of the entire experience, beyond witnessing the group solidarity, advocacy, and personal connections between women, was the full performance

of *tora*. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the drummers, dancers, and singers were all very excited to display their talent and positive energy; with women dressed in traditional Dagbamba cloth, everyone took pride in their appearance and performance. Secondly, because *tora* is typically performed at night (either during funerals or recreationally), it is rare to capture clear video footage of the drumming, dancing, and singing taking place together. Luckily, both on the 14 and 21, May 2011, the conditions were ideal and we were able to create high definition video recordings of the entire dance. The project itself was a satisfying culmination of the years of work I have done with Mme Fuseina and Ayishetu.

IV. Conclusion

The accounts related here about the group KaliTora demonstrate the transformative possibility that occurs when space is produced by music and dance. It is natural for issues about life events to be raised among members of KaliTora when emotions are heightened through music and dance, whether in rehearsal or performance settings. The challenges that many women in Tamale face, both in domestic and economic realms (e.g., financial instability, education for children, and extended family obligations), place numerous pressures on their daily lives. Participation in the KaliTora group may provide some economic relief, but more importantly it creates a space where women can openly voice their concerns and advocate for one another with the same strength and joy expressed in their music and dance. The alliances and advocacy that forms through association with KaliTora has lasting effects on the everyday lives of the women.

Working collaboratively on a project that held real value for each individual who participated proved to be one of the most fulfilling field work experiences I have had. The audio

and visual recordings produced during the two sessions in May 2011 are some of the highest quality I have had the privilege of recording while in Ghana. I am proud of the work I did with the members of KaliTora and hope that through our collaborative efforts, their music and dance will reach a larger audience in the future.

Chapter 6: Concluding Thoughts: Cultural Change and the Future of Dagbamba Traditional Music

Attending a funeral, festival, or special occasion in Dagbon where drumming, dancing, and singing are taking place is one of the most spectacular occurrences I have had the privilege to experience. As an outsider, with conversational Dagbanli language skills, my knowledge is obviously limited in various respects. Regardless, witnessing the sheer power of music in bringing families and communities together for a common celebration is a true pleasure. Dagbamba of all ages attend events and display their artistry through drumming, dancing, singing, clapping, dashing “kola” (giving money to dancers, *lunsi*, and *gondze*), eating communal meals, and other activities. When attending one of these vibrant events, it is difficult to imagine how such a vital tradition could be at risk. Over the years discussing the transmission and dissemination of Dagbamba music, I have come to appreciate the complexity of society and culture in Dagbon that allows for a tradition to be at the same time threatened and yet vibrant.

When discussing women’s songs and the future of so called “traditional music” in Dagbon, Mme Fuseina maintains that the little time given to learning traditional music and an increased interest in Western music threatens to undermine the transmission process:

KS: What about the singing, because women --

FW: Women sing, praise singing. As for praise singing they don't -- the chiefs like it. It is tradition. So that one - they still do it. That one doesn't change.

KS: Yeah.

FW: It has not changed.

KS: And people are still learning it? Someone like Amishetu, it seems like if there was a young girl then she could learn plenty from her.

FW: She could learn plenty from her [Amishetu], but the children they don't like. They don't want. Look at Saala [Mme Fuseina's niece], she is in this room with me and she can't dance *tora*! [laughing] Saala is with Madame and you can't dance! You should have been able to dance *tora*. You should dance all the dances. So -- but we don't have time to teach them, or they do not have time to learn. [laughing].

KS: But there is still - some people are still doing it, like on a Friday or a Saturday night. Is it?

FW: Maybe it's a group, some kind of association. But these days they like the Western music more than the traditional. The Western music, they say that is good, but the tradition is not good. Look at that! How can you leave tradition and go and learn somebody else's tradition? At least learn yours and learn that other one too, in addition. (Wumbei 2011c)

As a woman who has dedicated her life's work to teaching young people to dance and sing, Mme Fuseina is invested in the continuation of Dagbamba musical arts as she knows them. She is also particularly aware of how young people's lives are constantly changing, pointing out that even her own niece, who lives with her, does not know how to dance *tora*! This seems like a travesty, but is also understandable since Saala has continued her Western education and has many responsibilities competing for her time. We continued to discuss the changes taking place in Dagbon:

KS: So, since you were teaching, do you see anything change? Do you want to talk about anything? You have so much experience.

FW: They have changed some of their -- The drummers are putting in more lively this thing [rhythms], to make the rhythm sound good. The dancers too sometimes exaggerate some styles just to attract the audience. So things have changed.

KS: And what do you think about young people? Are they interested in learning?

FW: They are not interested, only a few are. Because they say it's not good. The Islam is condemning dancing. But I don't know - but the traditional dancing I don't think it is condemned. But still, still people think that you shouldn't be a dancer. Especially a woman. Women shouldn't be dancing when you are married. [laughing] We are in trouble. (Wumbei 2011c)

Mme Fuseina clearly identifies the prevalence of Islam in Dagbon as one of the contributing factors to a decreased interest in dancing. She also mentions the changes taking place in the music and dance itself. For example, at a lesson with Mme Fuseina's nephew, Awal Alhassan, he was teaching us *baamaaya* and gave us some new steps and variations that I had never encountered. Mme Fuseina saw these changes and embellishments not as a personal artistic expression, or a necessary change to maintain relevance in a modern society, but rather as blasphemous or a negative shift.¹¹⁸

Rosina Abdul-Rahaman identifies the Abudu/Andani conflict as one of the primary factors that has had a negative effect on traditional drumming and dancing:

KS: So why do you think things have changed? It seems like people are not doing as much music. Or it's at funerals and festivals, but it's not as much in the evening when people gather.

Rosina Abdul-Rahaman: Things have changed. I would say for Dagbon. It was this chieftaincy issue that added to the other issues. For some time there was even a ban on music.

KS: It was four years, they banned all music.

RAR: All sort of music, all sort of entertainment. You will never hear any *gunḡon* beating or any *simpa* dance anywhere, unless maybe radio. Even on radios some they even ban music. Especially the royal *gondze*, and other things -- the *lunsi*. You will never hear anyone playing those things. And for I will say, that one [the ban] was a contributing factor up to date. And another thing is that it's like there is a little bit of education, the formal education. Those [educated] people have now realized that those things [music/dance] that we waste our time mostly. They don't help us. They look at them to be, let me say, remote. Or when you are dancing *simpa* dance they see you as still a kid. Something like, you are not wise. You are illiterate. You don't have formal education, that is why you waste your time in this thing. (Abdul-Rahaman 2011a)

So, beyond the ban on music from 2002 until 2006, Rosina identifies Western education as having a negative impact on local perceptions of traditional music. She maintains that those who

¹¹⁸ This is a common issue of concern among elder Dagbamba traditional musicians (see DjeDje 2008:6, 219).

have received formal education are more likely to regard Dagbamba traditional music as being a waste of time, and they tend to judge those who participate in traditional music as “illiterate” and without “formal education.”¹¹⁹

After learning of the concerns and issues impacting the present day transmission and vitality of traditional Dagbamba music, I wanted to discuss these topics further. During a social visit, I raised some of these issues with Amina Kamil through a translator, Saeed Dawuni, who translated our conversation from English to Dagbanli, and Dagbanli to English.

KS: Does Amina think that music in Dagbon has changed since she was young?

Amina Kamil (Saeed Dawuni translating): There is change.

KS: What kind of things have changed?

AK/SD: She says that when she was young -- when there was drumming, or dancing -- during that time dancing was different from this time. Now she can see that most people don't have an interest in dancing. So that is why she says there have been changes. [In the past] there were more people dancing. We have so many types of dancing, *simpa*, *tora*, *damba*, [etc.] But now it's not normal to do it [dance]. Even if you see it now, it will be maybe one by one, very small.

KS: Why does she think that has changed?

AK/SD: She says the change - she thinks it is not good. Because when they were doing it growing up, it's normal to bring peace and unity. To bring everyone together. It was bringing people together. But as it is not normal to dance now, most people separate from each other. So everybody just act in his place. “I won't go to this guy anymore because we are not practicing anything together anymore.” So it has brought a bad effect.

KS: Does she think people are busier now? Or is it something else?

AK/SD: She said people have just chosen to refuse to dance. Not a lot of people are busy, they just decided to ignore it. (Kamil 2011)

Earlier in our discussion, Amina discussed her husband's devotion to Islam and his disdain for singing. Even when music was shown on TV, he would make Amina turn it off. She explained

¹¹⁹ See Chapter 3 for more from Rosina's interviews.

that it was not his choice, but Islam that made him not participate in music. Thus, even though Amina is a gifted singer, and is now happily married with two children, she no longer participates in singing or dancing.

Future Research

Throughout this work and during my field work in Tamale, I have identified several avenues for further research. (1) Women's role in the annual Damba festival is one area that demands further work. The all-night women's singing is an incredible manifestation of Dagbamba women's culture, strength, artistry, and musicality, and one that I hope to experience again; excerpts of song lyrics and translations are included in Chapter 5, as well as in Appendix B. (2) Further research into work songs and women's communal labor is an area that has not been studied. (3) Focusing on recently composed women's songs could provide insight into contemporary issues on gender and society. It would also be interesting to investigate how these songs are composed –do they borrow melodies, what are the musical influences, etc. (4) Along this vein, various contemporary Dagbamba popular artists use traditional women's songs to create new pop music. They commonly borrow the traditional melody and lyrics, but use a pop music ensemble of guitars, bass, and drums, and re-imagine the piece in an entirely new musical style.

Partially due to Tamale being the unofficial NGO capital of Ghana, there is a large expat presence and an increasing number of graduate students from Europe and the USA conducting research in the area. I anticipate that in the next several years, many intriguing studies will be published based on this influx of researchers into Tamale and the surrounding area.

Concluding Thoughts

This dissertation has focused on individual women's experiences in music and dance in Dagbon. After establishing the historical and cultural context, I discussed gender and the life experiences of Dagbamba women in Tamale highlighting individual voices particularly by dedicating a chapter entirely to Mme Fuseina Wumbei and Rosina Abdul-Rahaman. With *tora* as a primary focus, I have attempted to provide an array of examples that highlight the diversity of topics presented in women's songs including: marriage, fear, love, sex, motherhood, food, praise, and community, among others. The above accounts have demonstrated some of the knowledge that is passed on, expressed, and produced in the context of song and dance in Dagbon. Songs can be a source of spontaneous expression for women to voice concerns in the public setting of a community event.

Central to this dissertation are several interconnected questions that inspired the writing of the foregoing chapters. Firstly, how does women's involvement in music affect their social and political position? And conversely, how does a woman's age, marital and social status, or religion affect her participation in music? Age and marital status greatly affect Dagbamba women's social and political position in Dagbon, and consequently her participation in music. My research indicates young, unmarried women can participate freely in musical activities when time allows without adverse social or political consequences. However, because many young, unmarried women in and around Tamale tend to be busy with tasks around the home or attending to their studies in an attempt to attain higher levels of education, most have little time for recreational activities such as singing and dancing. Nonetheless, the performance of *tora*, *damba*,

and other genres persist, and in more rural areas or during funerals or festivals, young people participate and enjoy displaying their individual dancing and singing styles.

Once a Dagbamba woman is married, especially if she is married to a devout Muslim man, her participation in recreational music and dance is increasingly perceived to be indiscreet or improper. Mme Fuseina and Amishetu, among others, have discussed this topic and expressed their displeasure with the fact that in recent years, local Muslim leaders have discouraged Dagbambas from participating in musical activities. This has not stopped everyone, and the flexibility of many Dagbamba's adherence to Islam allows for some married women to enjoy participating in music without negative social or political consequences. Even when religious concerns are dismissed, many among the wider population around Tamale often expressed their uncertainty about participating in traditional music, and worried about its future and relevance in modern day culture. Mme Fuseina told me repeatedly over the years that throughout her adult life, members of her community perceived her to be socially and sexually deviant because she is a professional dancer and musician.¹²⁰ At the very same time, praise singers and skilled dancers are revered during such annual events as the Damba festival. Women are also encouraged and expected to participate in music and dance during government functions, funerals, enskinment ceremonies, and other community events. In short, this remains a multifaceted and complex issue that in my experience only deters the most devout Muslim women. Most Dagbambas, including practicing Muslims, enjoy participating in traditional music and are proud to continue this important part of their cultural heritage.

¹²⁰ In fact, this negative perception is not uncommon. While discussing this issue after presenting my research both at an Society for Ethnomusicology meeting in 2011, and at the American Anthropology Association conference in 2012, other scholars indicated that female dancers and singers are widely perceived to be socially deviant. In some cases, women are ostracized and criticized for their participation in music and dance, at times being accused of being prostitutes or "loose women."

What is unique about the role of female Dagbamba musicians compared to their male counterparts? And how are traditional women's roles and their power expressed through their participation in musical genres such as *tora*? My research findings indicate that gendered roles are prominent in Dagbamba musical performance. The most obvious is the fact that women are customarily forbidden to play drums, and men are not allowed to dance in all-female dance genres such as *tora* and *lua*. Thus, women's roles in music include: solo lead singer, chorus singer, dancer, and support rhythm or timeline clapper, or in the case of *gondze* music, rattle player. In addition to men serving as *lunsi* (drummers) and *gondze* (fiddlers), they can also dance in solo dance genres such as *damba* or male group dances such as *takai* and *baamaaya*. Although traditional musical roles appear fixed, some flexibility does exist. For example, it is not uncommon for Mme Fuseina to play a drum during dance troupe rehearsals at the Tamale Center for National Culture, and I saw young women cross-dressing and dancing in the male group-dance *takai* at an enskinment ceremony in Banvim. One of my male dance teachers Ofei Wunnam also dressed as a woman on several occasions and danced *tora* in performances and rehearsals (as seen in video example 1). At the TCNC (Tamale Center for National Culture), members of the dance troupe did not adhere to the gendered roles of various dance genres; rather, they were taught all of the dances from each genre regardless of traditional gender roles.¹²¹ When I acquired my training in *tora* there, for example, all of the young men and women learned to dance and sing the different *tora* songs and dance movements.

Unlike *lunsi* (drummers) and *gondze* (fiddlers) whose performance roles at traditional events are set, such is not the case with women. Thus, one of the main differences between men

¹²¹ When there are both male and female parts in a particular dance, they may stick to the traditional roles, unless there are not enough men or women, in which case anyone may fill in on any part. In other words, there are gender-specific dances and dance parts, but in my experience Dagbamba musicians and dancers are flexible.

and women's roles in music is that the latter is variable. A woman at a community event or funeral may dance *tora* in a large group. Then when she needs a break, she might join the chorus of singers and clap to provide a rhythmic timeline for the dancers. In this way, women enjoy a level of flexibility in their participation in musical events. In contrast, men who are *lunsi* or *gondze* musicians must be formally invited or asked to perform at a particular occasion. If they attend an event as an individual and not as a member of their professional performance group, they may join in the solo or group dancing. At larger festivals or occasions, a drummer (*luṅa*) or fiddler may also have a chance to display his solo dancing prowess, but in many cases, he is occupied with his group for hours at a time simply performing on the drum or fiddle for the entirety of the event. Another marked contrast between the roles is that a casual female dancer or singer may join in the festivities at any time and leave when she wishes. She will not be paid, because she is not considered a professional. *Lunsi* and *gondze* musicians, on the other hand, are commonly remunerated for their efforts and engaged until the event comes to a close.

Experienced female lead singers (*lun-paya*) are an exception, and can be hired or asked to sing at a particular event similar to *lunsi* and *gondze* musicians. These lead singers are respected as knowledgeable culture bearers and historians, and generally are regarded as professional singers even though they participate in other economic activities in their daily lives.

While participating in *tora*, women are in the spotlight. Momentarily, when they are the center of attention, they gain a certain amount of power. In such instances the *lun-paya* (lead singer) can make social or cultural critiques or statements during her singing. Although this power and heightened visibility and audibility are contextual and temporary, singers at that moment perform a crucial role in raising community awareness about women's issues. When

large groups of people congregate to witness the spectacle of *tora* performances, they can participate if they so desire. Unlike solo dancing, however, onlookers do not approach *tora* performers and place coins or paper money on their foreheads (i.e., “dash” them) as a sign of appreciation, support, loyalty, or approval. Rather, money is given to the *lunsi* for their efforts or, occasionally, to the *lun-paya* (lead singer).

So, where do these women’s voices get heard, how do they contribute to Dagbamba society as a whole, and what kind(s) of knowledge(s) are produced and transmitted by women through their participation in music and dance? As described in the foregoing, women participate in singing in a variety of contexts, including annual Damba festivals, lifecycle events (e.g., weddings, funerals, outdoorings and naming ceremonies), communal labor, and social gatherings. In many cases, these events provide a visible platform for women to voice their opinions about issues affecting community and society. Many songs deal with concerns regarding marriage, gender, cultural norms, and other topics. It is during these community events and occasions that women’s voices are heard loud and clear, and through song that women continue to pass on integral cultural knowledge.

Singers and dancers like Ayishetu Nagumsi, Ayishetu Katariga, and Mme Fuseina provide examples of women who have dedicated their lives to traditional Dagbamba music and performance. They are all self-described professionals, which draws attention to the fact that few female musicians can provide for themselves solely through their performance careers. Like practically all professional musicians in Dagbon, male and female, each of these women has had to consistently supplement her income by participating in other work, usually in trade and/or contributing to the family farm. Ayishetu Nagumsi and Ayishetu Katariga’s roles in being

renowned *lun-paya* are important parts of their identities as women. They stand apart from their communities and are seen as leaders and women who hold knowledge and power. Because many are invited or hired to play a central role with chiefs or kings during important events, much of the perceived power comes from their ability to travel, earn money, and prestige. Their knowledge and power also come with jealousy, judgment, fear, and disapproval from some who think musicians are mischievous, sexually deviant, or have acquired their musical skill through unseemly means.

Finally, to what extent are songs, and song performance, utilized by Dagbamba women to have a voice in the community and gain control over their lives in a largely patriarchal society? Although this question was often raised during my field research, I did not observe women using song performance intentionally for these reasons. Yet, I believe that singing together helped women to build strength and provide catharsis for themselves, which in turn generates self-confidence and pride. As Mme Fuseina and Alhaji Lunna always told me, “No one can take away your knowledge.” In other words, when you internalize something, or learn something of value or importance, no one can take that from you - knowledge is power. This sentiment was a reoccurring theme throughout my lessons.

During my time with KaliTora, I often witnessed this internalized knowledge and the power it provided women. The women who participate in KaliTora find solidarity and companionship through their participation in the group. In this way, it is not only the singing that produces a communal atmosphere, but through the music itself these women are able to take time out of their daily lives to sit and discuss their varied struggles and experiences. Throughout this dissertation, I have shown that Dagbamba women participate in music on many different levels.

They may be a professional, like Mme Fuseina Wumbei and Ayishetu Nagumsi, or simply have enjoyed music since childhood, like Rosina Abdul-Rahaman and Amina Kamil. Women may casually participate in clapping or singing at an event, or practice *damba* diligently for the annual Damba festival. They might stand on the sidelines, or display their dancing and singing prowess long into the night.

In much of this discussion, I have also highlighted the individual voice, specifically by dedicating an entire chapter to two women and their ideas, their lives, and their own voices. Using a female-focused study, my project adds to the body of work on Muslim women in West Africa, Dagbamba music generally, and ultimately presents a different picture of women's musical culture in Dagbon. Focusing on individual voices underlines a theme in postcolonial literature, namely drawing attention to the duality inherent in Tamale life that is full of "incongruities, contradictions, antinomies, and hybridity of postcolonial culture and experience" (Agawu 2003:xviii). As postcolonial and Africanist feminists have argued, giving attention to individual women's voices also challenges the prevalent Euro-centric reification of the "voice" as monolithic and universalizing. These voices, presented through interviews and songs, are heterogeneous and contradictory. Dagbamba women struggle daily to provide food, education, and stability for their families. They have strength and power despite their limited access to capital, public policy, or government. Women's songs thus provide a public and private outlet, as well as a cathartic avenue for expression and transmission of women's knowledge.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Descriptive Timeline Chart of Video Example 1

The video clip is one minute and forty-nine seconds long showing a group performing *tora*, and can be viewed while utilizing the descriptive timeline chart below. It begins with lead singer (*luṅpaya*) Ayishetu Nagumsi singing a foundational *tora* song called “Oh ee yeei” (discussed in detail below), then the clapping begins while the dancers sing in response and wait in line before beginning the dance. You will hear Ayishetu singing the lead part with different variations throughout the example, and after each of the leader’s calls, the chorus responds with the same answer phrase of vocables: “Oh ee yeei yaa ee yeei, oh ee yeei yaa ee yeei.” The lead *luṅa* (drummer, who is also playing a *luṅa* drum) starts at 0:51, along with the three response drummers on one *luṅa* and two *guṅgona* beginning at 0:53. The first dancer begins at 1:06, with the first bump at 1:12. Each dancer can add her own footwork, turns, and embellishments (see 1:26-1:27), but must knock buttocks at the right moment in the drumming and clap cycle (see the video at 1:12; 1:15; 1:18). The dance proceeds quickly in a cyclical manner until the end of the clip. *Tora* is fast and energetic and can be difficult to follow for those unfamiliar with the dance. Consequently, below is a descriptive timeline of the video example. The first column indicates the time, the second includes information on the singing and when the drummers begin, while the final column indicates when each dancer begins and when the knocking or bumping takes place.¹²²

¹²² Rather than list each dancer’s name in the chart below, for visual clarity I have indicated in parenthesis the color of the dress each woman is wearing. This may be awkward, but it is an attempt to offer the reader a reference for each woman entering the dance area.

Time:	Singing and Drumming	Dancing
0:00-0:08	Ayishetu Nagumsi begins to sing the lead part of “Oh ee yeei”	
0:04	Group begins to establish clapped timeline	
0:08-0:15	group/chorus sings response phrase while continuing the timeline clap	
0:14-0:21	Ayishetu Nagumsi sings lead (2nd call)	
0:20-0:27	group/chorus sings response phrase while continuing the timeline clap	
0:27-0:36	Ayishetu Nagumsi sings lead (3rd call)	
0:29-0:32	Mme Fuseina Wumbei is heard ululating	
0:35-0:41	group/chorus sings response phrase while continuing the timeline clap	
0:41-0:50	Ayishetu Nagumsi sings lead (4th call)	
0:49-0:55	group/chorus sings response phrase while continuing the timeline clap	
0:51	lead luna begins to play <i>tora</i> , and continues to end of clip	
0:53	answer luna and two gungons begin to play <i>tora</i> , continuing to end of clip	
0:55-1:03	Ayishetu Nagumsi sings lead call (5th call)	
1:04-1:10	group/chorus sings response phrase while continuing the timeline clap	
1:06		1st dancer begins alone (purple/peach)
1:09		2nd dancer begins (blue/white)
1:10-1:17	Ayishetu Nagumsi sings lead call (6th call)	
1:11		3rd dancer begins (peach)
1:12		1st and 2nd dancer bump
1:14		4th dancer begins (green - male dancer Ofei Wunnam dressed in drag)
1:15		2nd and 3rd dancer bump
1:16		5th dancer begins (blue stripes)
1:17-1:18		3rd and 4th dancers bump

Time:	Singing and Drumming	Dancing
1:18-1:23	group/chorus sings response phrase while continuing the timeline clap	
1:18		6th dancer begins (green stripes)
1:20		4th and 5th dancers bump
1:22		7th dancer begins (purple stripes)
1:23		5th and 6th dancers bump
1:24-1:29	Ayishetu Nagumsi sings lead call (7th call)	
1:24		8th dancer begins (dark purple/blue)
1:25		6th and 7th dancers bump
1:26		9th dancer begins (light green/cream)
1:27		7th and 8th dancers bump
1:29-1:34	group/chorus sings response phrase while continuing the timeline clap	
1:29		1st dancer begins again (purple/peach)
1:30		8th and 9th dancers bump
1:31		2nd dancer begins again (blue/white)
1:32		9th and 1st dancers bump
1:33		3rd dancer begins again (peach)
1:35-1:41	Ayishetu Nagumsi sings lead call (8th call)	
1:35		1st and 2nd dancers bump
1:36		4th dancer begins (green - male dancer Ofei Wunnam dressed in drag)
1:36-1:38		2nd and 3rd dancers bump (missing each other, and off the beat slightly)
1:37		5th dancer begins (blue stripes)
1:39		3rd and 4th dancers bump
1:40		6th dancer begins (green stripes)
1:41		7th dancer begins (purple stripes)
1:42-1:47	group/chorus sings response phrase while continuing the timeline clap	

Time:	Singing and Drumming	Dancing
1:42		4th and 5th dancers bump
1:44		5th and 6th dancers bump
1:45		8th dancer begins (dark purple/blue)
1:46		6th and 7th dancers bump
1:46		9th dancer begins (light green/cream)
1:49		7th and 8th dancers bump

Appendix B: Song Lyrics and English Translations

Dagbanli to English Translation by Rosina Zenabu Abdul-Rahaman

Note:

- (1) Each song is numbered only for reference. The songs are organized alphabetically within each style/rhythm/genre. The first title is the name of the song, followed by the name of the genre. For example “Daadam yoo” is the name of a intro song for the genre *tora*.
- (2) “L” stands for lead singer. “C” stands for chorus, or group of singers.
- (3) The lines of the verses are numbered (01, 02, 03 etc.). I have attempted to give each musical phrase or melodic line a separate line in the table. However, when there are multiple lines in a single verse, they are not individually numbered. In other words, a single verse that is four lines of lyrics will all be numbered “L02.”
- (4) When songs have a repeating response that is performed by the chorus or a group of singers, I simply mark this repeating line as “c.”
- (5) I have included notes on performance, tags noting subject matter covered in the lyrics, and some songs even include a brief glossary of terms.
- (6) Lastly, after the translations, I provide a brief exegesis of each song, except for two Damba songs that are lengthy praise songs (see songs 18 and 20).

1. Daadam yoo - *Tora* Intro

L01	Daadam yoo daadam yoo, Daadam yoo ya yeei, Dadaam yoo	Human yoo (human being, person, individual etc.)
L02	Daadam bi mi o n-yen niḡ shem, ka be bol’ o nira	A person does not know what to do to be appreciated by people
L02	Daadam bi mi o n-yen niḡ shem, ka be bol’ o nira	A person does not know what to do to be appreciated by people

L03	Be ti yen bol' o nira, daba ayi ka o bel' o gballi ni	Before they are appreciated as a good person, they will be dead
		(in two days time he will be in his grave)
C01	Daadam yoo daadam yoo, Daadam yoo ya yeei, Dadaam yoo	
C02	Daadam bi mi o n-yen niñ shem, ka be bol' o nira	
C02	Daadam bi mi o n-yen niñ shem, ka be bol' o nira	
C03	Be ti yen bol' o nira, daba ayi ka o bel' o gballi ni	
		Performance: Antiphonal
		Tags: <i>Tora</i> intro, morals, metaphor, advice
	Exegesis - Do unto others as you would have them do to you. Or, it is futile to do good for others if you are only looking for social approval. No one will notice until it is too late, so you must act morally without the need for recognition.	

2. Oh ee yeei - *Tora* Intro

L01	Ooh yi yeei, ooh yi yeei, ooh yi yeei, ooh yaai yeei	
L02	M' ma Zara gbaami ma yeei ooh	My mother Zara hold me
C01	Ooh yi yeei, ooh yi yeei, ooh yi yeei, ooh yaai yeei	
C02	M' ma Zara gbaami ma yeei ooh	My mother Zara hold me
		Performance: Responsorial
		Tags: <i>Tora</i> intro song, mother, women, intimacy
	Exegesis - A song of longing for one's mother.	

3. Oh ee yeei - *Tora*

L01	Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei, Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei	(vocables, no literal meaning)
C	Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei, Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei	
L02	Namoyu Bizun bia yeei,	Namoyu, Bizun's son yeei,

L02	Niŋm'bini n-niŋ wariba yeei	Drum for the dancers to dance
L02	Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei,	(You drum-play for the dancers)
C	Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei, Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei	
L03	Sampahi nachim'bia yeei,	Sampahi royal prince,
L03	Niŋm'bini n-niŋ wariba yeei	Drum for the dancers to dance
L03	Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei	(do the thing for the dancers)
C	Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei, Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei	
L04	Sampahi nachim'bia yeei,	Sampahi royal prince,
L04	Niŋm'bini n-niŋ wariba yeei	Drum for the dancers to dance
L04	Daŋ Nayili ku n-daŋ ʒia	Being the first person at the chief's palace, but the last to sit down
L04	Ijuni n-yuri a yeei, baangi yeei	He is the singer who loves you the best
C	Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei, Oh ee yeei yaai ee yeei	
	Glossary-	
	Namoyu -	Son of Bizuŋ
	Bizuŋ -	First drummer, father of drumming in Dagbon, father of Namoyu
	Sampahi -	A chieftaincy title of the lunsɪ family
	Nachima -	Royal prince
	Nayili -	Chief's palace
	baanga(gi) -	singer
	wariba -	dancers
		Performance: Responsorial
		Tags: <i>Tora</i> , history, drumming, dancing,
	Exegesis - Some claim this to be one of the first <i>tora</i> songs based on historical events. The text itself discusses the <i>lunsɪ</i> lineage, calling them to drum for the dance, and praises the <i>lunsɪ</i> for being intimate/close with the chiefs or kings.	

4. Kambaŋ Naa - *Tora*

L01	Kambaŋ naa yeei, naa yeei,	Kambaŋ chief,
L01	zooi shiri naa yeei, naa yeei	Chief of plentiful honey
C01	Kambaŋ naa yeei, naa yeei,	(A very interesting and lovely chief)

C01	zooi shiri naa yeei, naa yeei	Chief of plentiful honey
L02	Kambaŋ naa yeei	Kambaŋ chief,
C	Naa yeei	chief yeei
L03	Kana m-boli m ma Paani yeei	Come call my mother, the chief's second wife
C	Naa yeei	chief yeei
L04	Ti cham' puuni n-ti yahi jansi	Let's go to farm and sack the monkeys
C	Naa yeei	chief yeei
L05	Bɛ zaŋla kariwana biri loo	They have sewn maize (corn) on only a part of the land
C	Naa yeei	chief yeei
L06	Bɛ zaŋla sinkpula biri loo	They have sewn bambara beans on only part of the land
C	Naa yeei	chief yeei
L07	Ka zaŋla simpee biri loo	And again sewn Simpee on only a part of the land
C	Naa yeei	chief yeei
L08	Ka pa ni Kambaŋ naa yeei, naa yeei	If not Kambaŋ-Naa,
L08	zooi shiri naa yeei, naa yeei	Who could be such a wonderful chief?
C01	Kambaŋ naa yeei, naa yeei,	Kambaŋ chief, chief of plentiful honey
C01	zooi shiri naa yeei, naa yeei	(A very interesting and lovely chief)
	Glossary	
	Kambaŋ-Naa	Chief's name and appellation for a town called Diare
	shiri	honey
	Paani	Title for a chief's second wife
	Jaŋa (jansi)	monkey(s)
		Performance: Responsorial with variations. Above is a transcribed example of a typical performance sequence.
		Tags: <i>Tora</i> , praise, individual, chief, food, farming, animals, mothers
	Exegesis - This praise song discusses farming strategies, and allows the lead singer to improvise adding names of crops or favorable farming practices to advise participants.	

5. M Ma Yeei - Tora

L01	M ma yeei, m ma,	(My) mother, mother,
L01	Binsheyu yen gbaai ma yeei, m ma yeei	A beast (something) is going to catch me, oh mother
C01	M ma yeei, m ma,	(My) mother, mother,
C01	Binsheyu yen gbaai ma yeei, m ma yeei	A beast (something) is going to catch me, oh mother
L02	Anyaa yi yeei, yaa yeei, anyaa yi yeei, yaa yeei	
C02	Anyaa yi yeei, yaa yeei, anyaa yi yeei, yaa yeei	
L03	M ma yeei, m ma,	Mother,
L03	o ka naba yen gbaai ma yeei, m ma yeei	Something with no legs is going to catch me, mother
C03	M ma yeei, m ma,	Mother,
C03	o ka naba yen gbaai ma yeei, m ma yeei	Something with no legs is going to catch me, mother
L04	M ma yeei, m ma,	Mother,
L04	Bin' din ka naba yen gbaai ma yeei, m ma yeei	Something with no legs is going to catch me, mother
C04	M ma yeei, m ma,	Mother,
C04	Bin' din ka naba yen gbaai ma yeei, m ma yeei	Something with no legs is going to catch me, mother
		Performance: Responsorial
		Tags: <i>Tora</i> , gender, sex, mothers, animals, metaphor
	Exegesis - From the perspective of a young bride or young woman, this song begs the mother for help and expresses fear about a first sexual experience. The song includes various descriptions or allusions to male genitalia. While this can be a serious topic, in general this is a joking and light-hearted song.	

6. Yi ni to - Tora

L01	Yi ni too, yin tomiya yeei,	You yes, if you will dance you dance
L02	yi yaa ku too yin cheliya	If you will not dance, then stop
L02b	sana bi kamita barimaana	A stranger doesn't turn away beggars
C01	Yi ni too, yin tomiya yeei,	You yes, if you will dance you dance
C02	yi yaa ku too yin cheliya	If you will not dance, then stop
C02b	sana bi kamita barimaana	A stranger doesn't turn away beggars
		Performance: Antiphonal
		Tags: <i>Tora</i> , moral, dance, metaphor
	Exegesis - “You are welcome,” “ <i>a maraaba</i> ” (in Dagbanli). You are welcome to join in the dancing, do as you wish, but we will not turn you away because you are unknown to us.	

7. Zara - Tora

L01	Zara yeei, yeei, noo bia Zara	Zara yeei, yeei, fowl's child (chick) Zara
C	Zara yeei, yeei, noo bia Zara	Zara yeei, yeei, fowl's child (chick) Zara
L02	Noo bia zara, no' yini bia zara	Fowl's child Zara, one fowl's child Zara
C	Zara yeei, yeei, noo bia Zara	Zara yeei, yeei, fowl's child Zara
L03a	Zara tōri fula ka di viela	Zara knows how to pound fula nicely
L03b	deemi gu'chee ka to fula	You collect this piece of kola and pound it nicely for me
C	Zara yeei, yeei, noo bia Zara	Zara yeei, yeei, fowl's child Zara
	Glossary	
	tōri (or) tōra	pounding
	fula	a local food prepared from millet flour
	viela	beautiful, nice
	deemi or deema	collect or receive
	guli	kola nut
	chee	half (a piece)

	to	to pound
		Performance: Responsorial
		Tags: <i>Tora</i> , individual, praise, food
	Exegesis - Even very young girls/women can know the ways of the world and pull their own weight.	

8. Bia ḡɔ yee - ḡun da nyuli (*Tora*)

L01	Bia ḡɔ yee yaa yeei	This child (a daughter)
C01	Kasi ka langa (or)	(vocables, no meaning)
C02	Kasi ka yelinga (C1 or C2)	(no meaning)
L02	Bia ḡɔ yee yaa yeei	This child (a daughter)
C01	Kasi ka langa (or)	(vocables, no meaning)
C02	Kasi ka yelinga (C1 or C2)	(no meaning)
L03	M ma dala yeri n-soli ma	My mother bought beads for me to wear
C01	Kasi ka langa (or)	(vocables, no meaning)
C02	Kasi ka yelinga (C1 or C2)	(no meaning)
L04	Ka n chana ka n shee damda	And when I am walking with my waist shaking
C01	Kasi ka langa (or)	(vocables, no meaning)
C02	Kasi ka yelinga (C1 or C2)	(no meaning)
L05	Ka dagorinaa nya ma n-kumda (jigira)	The chief bachelor saw me and was crying
L05	A lee nya ma kumda	You are crying for what
L05	Nyini n-da n-soli ma bee	Are you the one who bought the beads for me
C01	Kasi ka langa (or)	(vocables, no meaning)
C02	Kasi ka yelinga (C1 or C2)	(no meaning)
		Performance: Entire song sung as written above. Responsorial.
		Tags: <i>ḡun da nyuli</i> , kinship, sex, gender

	Exegesis - Men should leave beautiful women alone unless they have proven themselves as worthy. Sung from the perspective of a young woman walking on the roadside. In other words, you are not the one who has supported me and kept me safe for years, you have no right to be flirtatious or to harass me.	
--	---	--

9. Naawolima - *Nyayiboli (Tora)*

L01	Naawolima Saymiya Naawolima	Naawolima, respond to Naawolima
C01	Simili pala duḡ yeei, Naawolima	Friendship is not eternity yeei, Naawolima
C02	Oohoo yii yeei Naawolima	
L02	M beli Naawolima	My sister Naawolima (sibling)
	(C01 or C02 after every line)	
L03	Naawolima, m beli Naawolima	Naawolima, my sister Naawoilima
L04	M mam n-nyε Naawolima	My lover Naawolima
L05	M borila Naawolima	I want (or love) Naawolima
L06	Naawolima, Mmapira Naawolima	Naawolima, my aunt Naawolima (mother's junior sister)
L07	Kobishii pishi ka, ka be layiri Naawolima	It is not only 180 cedis they have used to propose to Naawolima
		Performance: Responsorial
		Tags: <i>Nyayiboli</i> , family, friendship, morals, money, sex, marriage
	Exegesis - If you love a woman, do not simply lust after her. You must make the appropriate customary offerings to her family.	

10. Lampoo - *Tora yiyira*

L01	Lampoo deeriba ni yi deema	Tax collectors, you should collect
C	Deema, eei Lampoo yeei deema	Collect (take), taxes (tax receipt) collect
L02	A yi wari kola kola, a ni deei lampoo	If you dance beautifully, you will still be taxed

C	Deema, eei Lampoo yeei deema	Collect (take), taxes (tax receipt) collect
L03	A yi be kola kola, a ni deei lampoo	If you are beautiful (or nice), you will still be taxed
C	Deema, eei Lampoo yeei deema	Collect (take), taxes (tax receipt) collect
L04	Lampoo ku chaŋ kuliga ka be deeri o	A tax receipt will not go for water, yet people receive it
C	Deema, eei Lampoo yeei deema	Collect (take), taxes (tax receipt) collect
L05	Lampoo ku chaŋ puuni, ka be deeri o	A tax receipt does not farm, but they still receive it
C	Deema, eei Lampoo yeei deema	Collect (take), taxes (tax receipt) collect
L06	Lampoo ku niŋ sheli, ka be deeri o	Tax receipt will not do anything, but they still receive it
		Performance: Responsorial
		Tags: <i>Tora yiyira</i> , money, dance, beauty, farming, water, metaphor
		Note: Translation pronouns and specific usage might be a inaccurate here.
	Exegesis - Futility. Taxation is useless, it does nothing for the everyday person, and yet we must all pay taxes for everything.	

11. Tamale Mina - *Tora yiyira*

L01	Tamale Mina, Mina yeei kobɔ deera	Tamale Mina, Mina money receiver (lover)
C	Tamale Mina, Mina yeei kobɔ deera	Tamale Mina, Mina money receiver (lover)
L02	Mina loo loo yeei,	Mina welcome,
L02	Mina paana kobɔ deera	Money receiver (lover) Mina has come
C	Tamale Mina, Mina yeei kobɔ deera	Tamale Mina, Mina money receiver (lover)
L03	Zayisi kɔbiga ka deei pia,	Refuse a hundred and take ten,
L03	Mina yeei (paana) kɔbo deera	Mina has arrived money lover
C	Tamale Mina, Mina yeei kobɔ deera	Tamale Mina, Mina money receiver (lover)
L04	A tab' zaa deerila pɔŋa pɔŋa,	Your colleagues all receive more,
L04	Ka nyin' ti deerila kobo	and you rather receive less
C	Tamale Mina, Mina yeei kobɔ deera	Tamale Mina, Mina money receiver (lover)
L05	Mina paana yee, Mina loolo kobo deera	Mina has arrived, Mina is welcome money lover
C	Tamale Mina, Mina yeei kobɔ deera	Tamale Mina, Mina money receiver (lover)

		Performance: Responsorial
		Tags: <i>Tora</i> , women/gender, individual, warning, money, teasing, metaphor
	Exegesis - Do not be a cheap woman, do not be a prostitute, stand up for yourself.	

12. Zara Jε - *Tora yiyira*

L01	Zara jε ka yεm boo	Zara does not like and says what?
C	N jε nayibila	I don't like baby cows -veal
L02	Koko Zara jε ka yεm boo	Zara does not like koko and says what?
C	N jε nayibila	I don't like baby cows -veal
L03	N jε mori yeei ηubimiya	I don't like grass, you people should eat
C	N jε nayibila	I don't like baby cows -veal
L04	Sheli kani yeei yi ηubimiya	Nothing is there, you can continue to eat
C	N jε nayibila	I don't like baby cows -veal
L05	Ya yi ηubimiya nayibila nimdi	I say you should eat your veal (calfs meat)
C	N jε nayibila	I don't like baby cows -veal
L06	Ya yi ηubimiya sheli kani	I say you should eat, there is nothing
C	N jε nayibila	I don't like baby cows -veal
L07	Yeei ηubimiya sheli daa kani	I say you should eat, nothing was there.
		Performance: Responsorial
		Tags: <i>Tora</i> , individual, food, animals, complaining, meat, metaphor
	Exegesis - No matter what you may try to do, some people will always complain and be inconsolable.	

13. A Din Bie - *Baamaaya*

L01	A din bie	Your bad or ugly traits
L01	A din bie a yiηa	Your bad or ugly traits are from your own home

L02	A din bie bela a yiṅa,	Your bad or ugly traits are from your own home
L02	a din viela bela a yiṅa	And your good or beautiful traits are also from your home
		Performance: Antiphonal
		Tags: <i>Baamaaya</i> , morals, metaphor, warning, beauty
	Exegesis - Self-awareness, reflexivity, and ownership. We all are products of our own environments.	

14. Di Kpe Kpe Ka Yi Kpe - *Baamaaya*

L01	Di kpe kpe ka yi kpe	What happened there is left there
L01	Di kpe kpe ka yi kpe	What happened there is left there
L01	Dabba nangban yoya	All that happened is a result of men's problems
L02	Di kpe kpe ka yi kpe	What happened there is left there
L02	Di kpe kpe ka yi kpe	What happened there is left there
L02	Dabba Payiba nangban yoya	All that happened is a result of women's problems
		Performance: Antiphonal
		Tags: <i>Baamaaya</i> , gender, moral
	Exegesis - Alternately blaming either gender for all of the problems in the world, regardless of the particular circumstances.	

15. Din Viela Nyayisi - *Baamaaya*

Din viela nyayisa dahima n-kani yeei	It is nice to have beautiful things, but difficult to acquire them
Din viela nyayisa dahima n-kani yeei	It is nice to have beautiful things, but difficult to acquire them
M piriba, m beli,	My aunt, my sibling,

din viela nyayisa dahima n-kani yeei	it is sweet to have beautiful things, but difficult to acquire them.
	Performance: Antiphonal, entire song repeated
	Tags: <i>Baamaaya</i> , morals, metaphor, beauty, wealth, family
Exegesis - There is little point in striving for wealth, even when you have money it is difficult to keep it for yourself. In Dagbamba culture, when you have something beautiful or expensive, people will be jealous and wish ill towards you.	

16. Naawuni Bi Mɔŋ sɔ - *Baamaaya*

L	Naawuni bi mɔŋ sɔ	God does not deny anyone
	Zamba n-zooi ti dunia ni	but back-stabbing (or undermining) is very
		common in this world (witchcraft or secret bad juju)
C	Naawuni bi mɔŋ sɔ	God does not deny anyone
	Zamba n-zooi ti dunia ni	but back-stabbing (or undermining) is very
		common in this world (implying witchcraft or wizardry)
		Performance: Antiphonal
		Tags: <i>Baamaaya</i> , god, morals, warning
	Exegesis - Do not despair, God will not abandon you even if your friends and the community have turned against you.	

17. Kɔbɔ n-yi - *Lua*

L01	Kɔbɔ n-yi, ashee kɔbɔ n-yi ka ti zaa nyɛ yɛm	Not known it was the introduction of currency that made all of us wise
C	Kɔbɔ n-yi, ashee kɔbɔ n-yi ka ti zaa nyɛ yɛm	(Before we only knew cowry shells, the German introduced money and made everyone wise)

L02	Kɔbɔ n-yi, daʒeyu kɔbɔ n-yi ka ti zaa nye yem	The introduction of currency by Germans made everyone wise
C		
L03	Kɔbɔ n-yi, ashee kɔbɔ n-yi ka gutula nye yem	The introduction of currency has made the ungrateful person wise
C		
		Performance: Responsorial
		Tags: <i>Lua</i> , money, morals, Germans, colonization
	Exegesis - Because of colonization, we are now aware of the dangers and benefits of money.	

18. Balim Naa Yeei - *Damba*

L01	Balim naa yeei,	Praise the chief
L01	Balimiya naa yeei	You all should praise the chief
C	Balim naa yeei,	Praise the chief
	Balimiya naa yeei	You all should praise the chief
L02	Payanaa zuu yeei, be balindila naa wula	The regent of a female chief, how do they praise a chief
L03	Salaa naa zuu yeei, be balindila naa wula	The son of the late chief of Salaa, how do they praise a chief
L04	Naa balima bierila zuyu n-tabili shee	To praise a chief is not easy, it affects head and waist
L05	Ka mani yi balim nam n ni deei sheli	If I praise the chief therefore, I will get something out of it
L06	Ka tiligi mia n-tiligi Yoyu bandi	If I do that, I will be free from the royal trap
C	Balim naa yeei,	Praise the chief
	Balimiya naa yeei	You all should praise the chief
L07	Kambaŋ naa zuu yeei, be balindila naa wula	The son of the late chief of Diare, how do they praise a chief
L08	Karikari zuu yeei, be balindila naa wula	The son of the late chief of Karikari, how do...
L09	Ka ʒi o balimbu	Do not make a mistake when praising him
C	Balim naa yeei,	Praise the chief
	Balimiya naa yeei	You all should praise the chief

L10	Yoꝝu bi Sɔyiri bieri zuu yeei, be balindila naa wula	The son of the late overseer who knows everything in the forest, how do they praise...
L11	Yoꝝu yili zira yeei, be balindila naa wula	The one who carries every home in the forest,
L12	Savelugu yiŋ Bukari ziri yeei, be balindila naa wula	The son of the late Savelugu chief called Bukari, how do they praise the chief
L13	Yiŋ' Ablai zira, be balindila naa wula	The son of the late Yiŋa chief Ablai, how do...
L14	Baŋa Yiŋ Mahama ziri yeei,	The son of the late chief Mahama of Baŋa,
L15	N-tiligi mia n-tiligi Yoꝝu bandi	How do I do that in order to be free from the royal trap
C	Balim naa yeei,	Praise the chief
	Balimiya naa yeei	You all should praise the chief
L16	Anialana nyela ŋuni, Zambalana zuu yeei	Who is the man of patience, I am asking you the son of wizard or hypocrite
L17	Yoꝝu bi Sɔyiri bierilana yeei, be balindila naa wula	The man who knows (or sees) everything in the forest, how do they praise the chief
L09	Ka zi o balimbu	Do not make a mistake when praising him
C	Balim naa yeei,	Praise the chief
	Balimiya naa yeei	You all should praise the chief
L18	Yoꝝu ni sɔyi bierilana yeei, be balindila naa wula	The man who can not see everything in the forest
L19	M bi niŋ zamba ku chirigi bierilana zuu, be balindila naa wula	The son of the lover of everyone, how do they praise the chief
L20	Ku gori yooi, bierilana naa wula gomda zuu	The son of the chief named Gomda whose way was blocked, how do they praise the chief
C	Balim naa yeei,	Praise the chief
	Balimiya naa yeei	You all should praise the chief
L21	Salaa kuɣulana yeei, be balindila naa wula	Salaa chief warrior, how do they praise the ...
L22	ŋme maŋa kuɣulana, be balindila naa wula	The man who used to fight himself, how do ...
L23	Ku gari loꝝu ku zo gbuɣinli kuɣuloꝝu yeei, be balindila naa wula	The man (chief) who does not fear even lions, how do they praise the chief
L24	Gbuɣindaa zuu yeei, be balindila naa wula	The male lion's regent, how do they praise...
C	Balim naa yeei,	Praise the chief
	Balimiya naa yeei	You all should praise the chief

L25	A niŋla galim yiŋa kuyulana yeei, be balindila naa wula	The chief warrior who taboos home, how do they praise the chief
L26	Salandi kuyulana yeei, be balindila naa wula	Salandi chief warrior, how do they praise the chief
L27	Kum niela kun siyi sayi banigu Dariɛyɛu bia yeei	The son of Dariɛyɛu who does not grind nor go for water
L28	Be balindila naa wula gbuɣindaa zuu	How do they praise the chief, the son of the male lion
L29	Be balindila naa wula Gomda zuu	How do they praise the chief, you the son of Gomda
C	Balim naa yeei,	Praise the chief
	Balimiya naa yeei	You all should praise the chief
		Performance: Responsorial
		Tags: <i>Damba</i> , history, metaphor, behavior

19. Baŋ ka zuɣusaa - *Damba*

L01	Baŋ' ka zuɣusaa	A bangle is not found in the sky
L01	Baŋ' ka zuɣusaa jebɔbigu bori bo baŋni yeei	A bangle is not found in the sky, what does a flea want with a bangle
C01	Baŋ' ka zuɣusaa	A bangle is not found in the sky
C01	Baŋ' ka zuɣusaa jebɔbigu bori bo baŋni yeei	A bangle is not found in the sky, what does a flea want with a bangle
L02	ŋum bi niŋ zamba ku chirigi biɛrilana zuu m-bala	The man who will never cause the downfall of another will never
		meet a bad situation. That is the son of a chief who loved everyone
		during his lifetime
L02	Zambalana ŋubila guligu ka o nyina kpalim o pulini yeei	A wizard has eaten a piece of <i>kola</i> and swallowed his teeth alongside
C01	Baŋ' ka zuɣusaa	A bangle is not found in the sky
C01	Baŋ' ka zuɣusaa jebɔbigu bori bo baŋni yeei	A bangle is not found in the sky, what does a flea want with a bangle

L03	Vogu-Naa Kalim zuu yeei, jebobigu bori bo	The late chief of Vogu named Kalim, what does a flea (or lice) want
	Zakpalisi Yakubu zuu, jebobigu bori bo	The late chief of Zakpalisi named Yakubu, what does a flea want
	Zakpalisi Yirisu, jebobigu bori bo ban ni yeei	The late chief of Zakpalisi named Yirisu, what does a flea want in a bangle
C01		
L04	Dikpuŋ yiŋa Adana zuu m-bala	That is the regent for the late Dikpuŋ chief named Adana
	Diko yiŋa Sayibu zuu m-bala	That is the regent for the late Diko chief named Sayibu
	Jebobigu bori bo ban ni yeei	what does a flea want in the bangle
C01		
L05	Tampion Sulemana zuu yeei, jebobigu bori bo	You the son of late Tampion chief called Sulemana, what does a flea..
	Tampion naa Asani zuu	You the son of Tampion chief named Asani
	Ku bali loyu ku to nachimba zuu	He was the man of peace who never fought with arrows
	Jebobigu bori bo ban ni yeei	what does a flea want in the bangle
C01		
L06	Gundoyu Budaali zuu yeei, jebobigu bori bo	The son of the late Gundoyu Chief named Budaali, what does a flea...
	Gundow' naa Samata kpena zuu Samata bila zuu	The regent of the late chief of
	Ku gbani loyu ku to gbuŋinli zuu yeei,	The chief who never feared even lions
	M man bori bo ban ni yeei	What does my lover want in the bangle
		Performance: Responsorial
		Tags: <i>Damba</i> , praise, history, metaphor
	Exegesis - A praise song about karma, beware of being greedy, bad things happen to those who act only for their own well being.	

20. Naa Noo Gari (Na ni o gari) - *Damba*

L01	Naa ni o gari,	The chief wants to pass
	Gbewaa ni o gari,	Gbewaa says he wants to pass
	O garimi bee o di gari	Should he be allowed to pass
C	Naa ni o gari,	The chief wants to pass
	Gbewaa ni o gari,	Gbewaa says he wants to pass
	O garimi bee o di gari	Should he be allowed to pass
L02	Ya ṅun bi niṅ zamba ku chirigi bierilana zuu yeei	I am talking about the lover of peace who will never meet trouble in his lifetime
L03	O bali loṅu maa kun ku gbuṅinli zuu yeei	The regent of a man who sets traps, but will never kill a lion
C	Naa ni o gari,	The chief wants to pass
	Gbewaa ni o gari,	Gbewaa says he wants to pass
	O garimi bee o di gari	Should he be allowed to pass
L04	Ni binniema layim kɔbiga di ku doṅi binṅiliginli zuu yeei	Hundreds of animals can never give birth to a royal regent
L05	Zambalana dirila guli n-ṅubi ka o nyina kpalim o puuni yeei,	Saboteur (ungrateful person) bit a piece of kola and swallowed it along with his teeth
L06	M mam garimi bee gbuṅinkaa zuu	Should my lover pass the regent of a male lion
L07	Kpatua yiṅ Daali zuu yeei	The son of Daali who was the chief of Kpatua
L08	Kpatua yiṅ Budaali zuu yeei	The son of Budaali who was the chief of Kpatua
L09	Ka mani yi balim m maam m bi deei sheli	How can I praise my lover without any reward
C	Naa ni o gari,	The chief wants to pass
	Gbewaa ni o gari,	Gbewaa says he wants to pass
	O garimi bee o di gari	Should he be allowed to pass
L10	Yoo daa kuna kumda yoṅu yoṅu ka yina zaṅ banli yeei	Yoo came crying about the forest and went into the wilderness and never returned

L11	M maam garina bee Tolon zuu	Should my lover be allowed to pass here, the son of Tolon
L12	Vogu naa Kalim zuu yee, m maam garim bee	The son of the chief of Vogu called Kalim, should my lover be allowed
L13	Savelugu Yiŋ Yaakubu zuu, a yaanima zooya pam	Yakubu the son of Savelugu Yiŋa, your ancestors are so many
L14	Ti yen ŋmaala ti tariga	We can not mention them all
C	Naa ni o gari,	The chief wants to pass
	Gbewaa ni o gari,	Gbewaa says he wants to pass
	O garimi bee o di gari	Should he be allowed to pass
L15	Manima deeya m-morisi yeligu	Mothers fear to say them all
L16	Gbuyindaa payiba yeei, deemiya biela	The wives of the male lion should help them a little
L17	M baŋsi yeligu ka bieyu neei	They should do the praises before daybreak
C	Naa ni o gari,	The chief wants to pass
	Gbewaa ni o gari,	Gbewaa says he wants to pass
	O garimi bee o di gari	Should he be allowed to pass
		Performance: Responsorial
		Tags: <i>Damba</i> , praise, metaphor, history, animals, intimacy,

Appendix C: Release Form and Recording Agreement

Participant Release Form

Project name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher: _____

Name of Participant

(s): _____

Participant contact information:

By signing the form below, you give your permission for any tapes and/or photographs made during this project to be used by researchers and the public for educational purposes including publications, exhibitions, World Wide Web, and presentations.

By giving your permission, you do not give up any copyright or performance rights that you may hold. The photographs, recordings and/or videos may not be used for profit without my express written permission.

I agree to the uses of these materials described above, except for any restrictions, noted below.

Name (please print): _____

Signature/Thumb Print:

Date: _____

Researcher's signature: _____

Date: _____

Restriction description:

Recording Agreement

This contract executed and effective on the 21st of May 2011, between Katharine Stuffelbeam Blankenship (Stuffelbeam) and the Artists listed here

(Artists): _____

Term: The above listed artists agree to continue this contract for a period of ____ years.

Recording: The Master Recording will be made from the recording sessions that took place on 14 May 2011 and 21 May 2011.

Production of Recording and Terms of Agreement: Stuffelbeam agrees to produce a master recording consisting of songs performed and selected by the Artists listed above.

Stuffelbeam and the Artists will be jointly responsible for all decisions regarding the artistic content of the resulting Recording.

The title of the Recording shall be chosen by agreement between Stuffelbeam and the Artists.

Upon timely completion of producing the Recording, the Artists shall assign Stuffelbeam all rights, title, and interest in and to

a) the Artist's performance of the Songs contained in the Recording and

b) the title of the Recording

for distribution and commercial exploitation in the United States and the rest of the World, including the World Wide Web.

Costs:

Stuffelbeam will be responsible to incur any costs in order to produce the Recording.

Royalties/Profit:

Stuffelbeam will receive any royalties and or licensing fees as a result of this contract. Any and all compensation received by Stuffelbeam will first satisfy costs incurred and paid by Stuffelbeam to produce the Recording. After costs have been recouped, 100% of the remainder of such Royalties will be distributed to the Artists. The Royalties due the Artists will be delivered to the Artists within 30 days of when Stuffelbeam received them.

Stuffelbeam will act in good faith in the interest of the Artists.

The Artists retain ownership of the Master Recording and are only assigning rights to Stuffelbeam for the terms of this contract.

Stuffelbeam and the Artists Agree to Above Terms

Stuffelbeam Signature: _____

Artists Signatures/Thumb

Prints: _____

Bibliography

- Abdallah, Zablong Zakariah. 2010. *The Lunsi (Drummers) of Dagbon: Tradition and Change*, edited by David Locke. *Research Review Supplement*, volume 21. Accra: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.
- Aborampah, Osei-Mensah. 1999. "Women's Roles in the Mourning Rituals of the Akan of Ghana." *Ethnology* 38(3):257-271. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3773817> (accessed 24 February, 2010).
- Abu, Katharine. 1994. "Family Planning and Welfare in Northern Ghana." In *Gender, Work and Population in Sub-Saharan Africa*, edited by Aderanti Adepoju and Christine Oppong, 191-208. Published on behalf of International Labour Office, Geneva. London; Portsmouth, N.H.: James Currey; Heinemann.
- Addo, E. R. 1932, 1933, 1934. "Native Drumming." *Gold Coast Teachers' Journal* 4(2):49, 4(3):131, 5(1):39.
- Africa Bibliography. 2014. "African Women." <http://www.africabib.org/women.htm>
- Agawu, V. Kofi. 2003. *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions*. New York: Routledge.
- Agbeli, Victor Nani. CalArts Faculty/Staff Directory: Faculty, African Music and Dance. <http://directory.calarts.edu/directory/victor-nani-agbeli>
- Agordoh, A.A. 2010 (1994). *Studies in African Music (Revised Edition)*. Accra, Ghana: Hanns Publication.
- Akpabot, Samuel. 1972. "Theories on African Rhythm." *African Arts* 6(1):59-62, 88.
- Ames, David W., and Ken A. Gourlay. 1978. "Kimkim: A Women's Musical Pot." *African Arts* 11(2):56-64, 96.
- Ampene, Kwasi. 2005. *Female Song Tradition and the Akan of Ghana: The Creative Process in Nnwonkoro*. Hampshire UK: Ashgate Press.
- Anderson, Elizabeth. 2012. "Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2012/entries/feminism-epistemology/>
- Ansere, J. K. 1977. "Education for Development (a Case Study of Northern Ghana): Theme for the Northern Easter School Held on 13th-19th April, 1977 at the Women's Training College, Tamale." Legon, Ghana: Institute of Adult Education, University of Ghana.
- Anyidoho, Akosua. 1993. "Gender and Language Use: The Case of Two Akan Verbal Art Forms." PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin.

- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 2006. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- . 2006 [2010]. *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers (Issues of Our Time)*. W. W. Norton & Company. Kindle Edition.
- Ardayfio-Schandorf, Elizabeth, Kate O. Kwafo-Akoto, and United Nations Population Fund. 1990. *Women in Ghana: An Annotated Bibliography*. Accra, Ghana: Woeli Publication Services.
- Arhin, Kwame. 1985. *Traditional Rule in Ghana: Past and Present*. Accra, Ghana: Sedco Publishing.
- Aryee, Enoch Aryeequaye. 1973. "Adaawe: A Study of Game Songs of the Ga Women Folk." MA thesis, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Askew, Kelly Michelle. 2002. *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Averill, Gage. 1997. *A Day for the Hunter, A Day for the Prey: Popular Music and Power in Haiti*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Avorgbedor, Daniel. 1998. "Rural-Urban Interchange: The Anlo-Ewe." In *Africa: The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* edited by Ruth M. Stone, 389-99. New York and London: Garland.
- Ballanta, Nicholas George Julius. 1926. "Gathering Folk Tunes in the African Country." *Musical America* 44(23): 3-11.
- . 1931-1932 [1930]. "Music of the African Races." *Negro Year Book* 1931-1932:441-444.
- Bartels, Lambert. 1969. "Birth Customs and Birth Songs of the Macha Galla." *Ethnology* 8(4): 406-422.
- Bekye, Paul K. 1998. *Peasant Development: The Case of Northern Ghana*. Tamale, Ghana: acco, Leuven.
- Bening, R. Bagulo. 1990. *A History of Education in Northern Ghana, 1907-1976*. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.
- Bierlich, Bernhard M. 2007. *The Problem of Money: African Agency and Western Medicine in Northern Ghana*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Blacking, John. 1969. "Songs, Dances, Mimes and Symbolism of Venda Girls' Initiation Schools. Part 3: Domba." *African Studies* 28(3):149-199.
- . 1973. *How Musical is Man?* Seattle and London: University of Washington Press.

- Botchway, Karl Q. 2004. *Understanding "Development" Interventions in Northern Ghana: The Need to Consider Political and Social Forces Necessary for Transformation*, Studies in African Economic and Social Development v. 25. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Bowell, T. 2011. "Feminist Standpoint Theory," *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: A Peer Reviewed Academic Resource*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/fem-stan/>
- Brown, Michael F. 1998. "Can Culture be Copyrighted?" *Current Anthropology* 19(2):193-222.
- Burns, James. 2009. *Female Voices from an Ewe Dance-drumming Community in Ghana: Our Music Has Become a Divine Spirit*. SOAS Musicology Series. Hampshire, UK: Ashgate Press.
- Carlisle, Roxane Connick. 1975. "Women Singers in Darfur, Sudan Republic." *The Black Perspective in Music* 3(3):253-268.
- Carter, Katherine Leigh. 2007. "Batuku Dance and Creole Language: Cape Verdean Women Respond to Economic Globalization." PhD diss., Debreceni Orvostudományi Egyetem, Hungary. <http://www.proquest.com> (accessed 3 June, 2009).
- Chernoff, John Miller. 1979. *African Rhythm and African Sensibility: Aesthetics and Social Action in African Musical Idioms*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- . 1985. "The Drums of Dagbon." In *Repercussions: A Celebration of African-American Music*, edited by Geoffrey Haydon and Dennis Marks, 101-127. London: Century Publishing.
- . 1991. "The Rhythmic Medium in African Music." *New Literary History* 22(4):1093-1102.
- . 1997. "Music and Historical Consciousness Among the Dagbamba of Ghana." In *Enchanting Powers: Music in the World's Religions*, edited by Lawrence E. Sullivan. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- . 2003. *Hustling is Not Stealing; Stories of an African Bar Girl*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- CIA World Factbook. 2014. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gh.html> (accessed 20 September, 2013).
- Ciucci, Alessandra Maria. 2008. "Poems of Honor, Voices of Shame: The 'Aita and the Moroccan Shikhat." PhD diss., City University of New York. <http://www.proquest.com> (accessed 3 June, 2009).
- Cooper, Frederick. 2002. *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present (New Approaches to African History)*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Cudjoe, Seth. 1953. "The Techniques of Ewe Drumming and the Social Importance of Music in Africa." *Phylon* 3:280-291.
- Dagbon.net. 2014. "Home for News, History, Customs, and Information about Dagbon and Northern Ghana." <http://www.dagbon.net>
- Danielson, Virginia. 1997. *The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Der, Benedict G. 1998. *The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana*. Accra: Woeli Publishing Services.
- DjeDje, Jacqueline Cogdell. 1978. "The One String Fiddle in West Africa: A Comparison of Hausa and Dagomba Traditions." PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles.
- . 1982. "The Concept of Patronage: An Examination of Hausa and Dagomba One String Fiddle Music." *Journal of African Studies* 9(3):116-127.
- . 1984. "Song Type and Performance Style in Hausa and Dagomba Possession (Bori) Music." *The Black Perspective in Music* 12(2):166-82.
- . 1985. "Women and Music in Sudanic Africa." In *More Than Drumming: Essays on African and Afro-Latin American Music and Musicians*, edited by Irene V. Jackson, 67-89. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- , and William G. Carter. 1989. "African Musicology: An Assessment of the Field." In *African Musicology: Current Trends Vol. I*, edited by Jacqueline C. DjeDje and William G. Carter, 39-44. Los Angeles and Atlanta: UCLA African Studies Center and African Arts Magazine, Crossroads Press/African Studies Association.
- , and William G. Carter, eds. 1989. *African Musicology: Current Trends Vol. I*. Los Angeles and Atlanta: UCLA African Studies Center and African Arts Magazine, Crossroads Press/African Studies Association.
- , ed. 1992. *African Musicology: Current Trends Vol. 2*. Los Angeles and Atlanta: UCLA African Studies Center and African Arts Magazine, Crossroads Press/African Studies Association.
- . 2006. "Scholarly Authority." *Pacific Review of Ethnomusicology* 11. <http://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/journal/volume/11/piece/509> (accessed 6 May, 2014).
- . 2008. *Fiddling in West Africa: Touching the Spirit in Fulbe, Hausa, and Dagbamba Cultures*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Dlamini, S. R. 1996. "Voicing Their Perceptions: A Review of Swazi Women Folk Songs." MA thesis, University of Pretoria, South Africa.

- Dor, George Worlasi Kwasi. 2014. *West African Drumming and Dance in North American Universities: An Ethnomusicological Perspective*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi.
- Drewal, Henry John, and Margaret Thompson Drewal. 1983. *Gelebe: Art and Female Power Among the Yoruba*. Bloomington, IN; Indiana University Press.
- Durán, Lucy. 1999. "Stars and Songbirds: Mande Female Singers in Urban Music, Mali 1980-99." PhD diss., University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, GB.
- Ewusi, Kodwo. 1987. *Modernization and Employment of Women in Ghana*. Ghana: Adwinsa Publications.
- Fargion, Janet Topp. 1993. "The Role of Women in Taarab in Zanzibar: An Historical Examination of a Process of 'Africanisation.'" *The World of Music* 35(2):109-125.
- Feld, Steven. 1982. *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Franken, Marjorie A. 1987. "Women's Dances on the Swahili Coast." *UCLA Journal of Dance Ethnology* 11:30-38.
- Frosh, Joan D. 2007. "Movement (R)evolution Africa." <http://movementrevolutionafrica.com/about.html> (accessed 20 September, 2013).
- Ghana Districts. 2006 "Ghana Districts: A Repository of All Districts in the Republic of Ghana." <http://www.ghanadistricts.com/districts> (accessed 5 November, 2013).
- Ghana Web. "History Timeline - Chronology of Important Events." <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/history/timeline.php> (accessed 5 November, 2013).
- Goodman, Jane E. 2002. "'Stealing our Heritage?': Women's Folksongs, Copyright Law, and the Public Domain in Algeria." *Africa Today* 49(1):85-97.
- Gourlay, Ken A. 1970. "Trees and Anthills: Songs of Karimojong Women's Groups." *African Music* 4(4):114-21.
- Government of Ghana. 2014 "Ghana Homepage: Government of Ghana Official Portal." <http://ghana.gov.gh> (accessed 5 November, 2013).
- . 2014. "Northern Region." <http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php/about-ghana/regions/northern> (accessed 5 November 2013).
- Grischow, Jeff D. 2006. *Shaping Tradition: Civil Society, Community and Development in Colonial Northern Ghana, 1899-1957*, African Social Studies Series. Leiden, NL; Boston, MA: Brill.

- Gueye, Marame. 2004. "Wolof Wedding Songs: Women Negotiating Voice and Space Through Verbal Art." PhD diss., State University of New York at Binghamton. <http://www.proquest.com> (accessed 3 June, 2009).
- Gunner, Liz. 1979. "Songs of Innocence and Experience: Women as Composers and Performers of (*izibongo*) Zulu Praise Poetry." *Research in African Literatures* 10.
- . 1995. "Clashes of Interest: Gender, Status and Power in Zulu Praise Poetry." In *Power, Marginality and African Oral Literature*, edited by G. Furniss and L. Gunner, 185-96. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Haas, Karl. 2008. "Kambon-waa: The Music of the Dagbamba Warrior Tradition and the Individual Negotiation of Metric Orientation." *The Pacific Review of Ethnomusicology* 13. <http://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/journal/volume/13/piece/496> (accessed 7 August, 2013).
- Hale, Thomas A. 1994. "Griottes: Female Voices from West Africa." *Research in African Literatures* 25(3):71-91.
- Hale, Thomas A., and Aissata G. Sidikou, eds. 2014. *Women's Songs from West Africa*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Hampton, Barbara L. 1992. "Music and Gender in Ga Society: Adaawe Song Poetry." In *African Musicology: Current Trends, Volume II*, edited by Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje, 135-149. Los Angeles and Atlanta: UCLA African Studies Center and African Arts Magazine, Crossroads Press/African Studies Association.
- Hanna, Judith Lynne. 1989. "African Dance Frame by Frame: Revelation of Sex Roles through Distinctive Feature Analysis and Comments on Field Research, Film, and Notation." *Journal of Black Studies* 19(4):422-441.
- Harding, Sandra, ed. 2004. *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*. New York: Routledge.
- . 2013. "Is Feminism Translatable? Taiwan, Spivak, A-Wu." Senior Faculty Feminist Lecture presented by Shu-Mei Shih, UCLA Royce Hall, February 26.
- Henderson, Clara. 2004. "Women as Religious and Political Praise Singers within African Institutions: The Case of the CCAP Blantyre Synod and Political Parties in Malawi." *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 8:22-40.
- Hirsch, Afua. 2012. "Ghana's Rival Dagbon Royals Risk Pulling the Country Apart." *The Guardian* 5, July. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jul/05/ghana-royal-rivalry-threatens-violence> (accessed 26 February, 2014).
- Hoffman, Katherine E. 2002. "Generational Change in Berber Women's Song of the Anti-Atlas Mountains, Morocco." *Ethnomusicology* 46(3):510-540.

- Hogan, Brian. 2011. "Enemy Music: Blind Birifor Xylophonists of Northwest Ghana." PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles.
- Hood, Mantle. 1960. "The Challenge of 'Bi-Musicality.'" *Ethnomusicology* 4(2):55-59.
- Jaggar, Alison M. 2004. "Feminist Politics and Epistemology: The Standpoint of Women." In *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, edited by Sandra Harding, 55-66. New York: Routledge.
- Johnston, Thomas F. 1976. "Secret Rites of the Tsonga Girls' Initiation (Khomba)." *Papers in Anthropology* 17(1):14-36.
- . 1978. "Conflict Resolution in Tsonga Co-wifely Jealousy Songs." *Africana Marburgensia* 11(2):15-26.
- Jones, Arthur M. 1959. *Studies in African Music*. London: Oxford University Press.
- . 1964. *Africa and Indonesia: The Evidence of the Xylophone and Other Musical and Cultural Factors*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Jones, L. JaFran. 1987. "A Sociohistorical Perspective on Tunisian Women as Professional Musicians." In *Women and Music in Cross-Cultural Perspective*, edited by Ellen Koskoff, 69-83. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Joseph, Terri Brint. 1980. "Poetry as a Strategy of Power: The Case of Riffian Berber Women." *Signs* 5(3):418-34.
- Joseph, Rosemary. 1983. "Zulu Women's Music." *African Music* 6(3):53-89.
- Kimberlin, Cynthia Tse. 1991. "What Am I To Be?: Female, Male, Neuter, Invisible . . . Gender Roles and Ethnomusicological Field Work in Africa." *The World of Music* 33(2):14-34.
- Kinney, Sylvia. 1970. "Drummers in Dagbon: The Role of the Drummer in the Damba Festival." *Ethnomusicology* 14(2):258-65. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/849800>
- Kisliuk, Michelle. [1998]2001. *Seize the Dance: BaAka Musical Life and the Ethnography of Performance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Knappert, Jan. 1986. "Songs of Swahili Women." *Afrika und Übersee* 69(1):101-137.
- Krige, Eileen Jensen. 1968. "Girls' Puberty Songs and Their Relation to Fertility, Health, Morality and Religion Among the Zulu." *Africa* 38(2):173-198.
- Kyambiddwa, Joseph. 1955. *African Music from the Source of the Nile*. London: Atlantik Press.
- Lawrence, Sidra Meredith. 2011a. "It's Just This Animal Called Culture: Regulatory Codes and Resistant Action Among Dagara Female Musicians." PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin. <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/ETD-UT-2011-08-4251/LAWRENCE-DISSERTATION.pdf>.

- . 2011b. “Sounds of Development? Race, Authenticity, and Tradition Among Dagara Female Musicians in Northwestern Ghana.” *African Music* 9(1):206-220.
- Lentz, Carola, and Paul Nugent, eds. 2000. *Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limits of Invention*. Wiltshire, UK: Antony Rowe Ltd.
- Lewis, Reina, and Sara Mills, eds. 2003. *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Locke, David. 1985. “The Rhythm of Takai.” *Percussive Notes* 23(4):51-54.
- , ed. 1989. “The Story of Tora” Told by Dolsi-naa Abubakari Lunna May 26 and June 3. <https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/display/DagombaDanceDrumming/Tora+Suite>
- , featuring Abubakari Lunna. 1990. *Drum Damba: Talking Drum Lessons*. Crown Point, IN: White Cliffs Media.
- . 1996. “Africa/Ewe, Mande, Dagbamba, Shona, BaAka.” In *Worlds of Music: An Introduction to the Music of the World's Peoples*, edited by Jeff Todd Titon: 71-143. New York: Schirmer Books.
- . 2002. *Tora*. Unpublished manuscript.
- . 2010. “DDD Music Analysis, Group Dances, *Tora*.” <https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/display/DagombaDanceDrumming/Tora+Suite>.
- . 2010. “Tora Suite - Dagomba Dance Drumming - Confluence.” <https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/display/DagombaDanceDrumming/Tora+Suite>.
- Locke, David, et. al. 2013. “Dagomba Dance Drumming.” <https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/display/DagombaDanceDrumming/Welcome>.
- Mack, Beverly. 1986. “Songs from Silence: Hausa Women's Poetry.” In *Ngambika: Studies of Women in African Literature*, edited by Carole Boyce Davies and Anne Adams Graves, 181-190. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
- . 2004. *Muslim Women Sing; Hausa Popular Song*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.
- MacGaffey, Wyatt. 2013. *Chiefs, Priests, and Praise-Singers: History, Politics, and Land Ownership in Northern Ghana*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press. Kindle Edition.
- Mackinlay, Elizabeth. 2010. “Big Women from Burrulula: An Approach to Advocacy and Applied Ethnomusicology with the Yanyuwa Aboriginal Community in the Northern Territory, Australia.” In *Applied Ethnomusicology: Historical and Contemporary Approaches*, edited by Klisala Harrison, Elizabeth Mackinlay, and Svanibor Pettan, 96-115. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

- Mahama, Ibrahim. 2003. *Ethnic Conflicts in Northern Ghana*. Tamale, Ghana: Cyber Systems.
- . 2004. *History and Traditions of Dagbon*. Tamale, Ghana: Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) Printing Press.
- Malobola, Johanna Nurse. 2001. "Performance and Structure of Southern Ndebele Female Folk Songs: Experiences of Womanhood." MA thesis, University of Pretoria, South Africa.
- Martinson, Harold B. 2002. *Dagbon: Who killed Ya-Na Andani Yakubu II (1974-2002)? The Historical Antecedents of the Yendi Skin Affairs*. Accra, Ghana: Sundel Services.
- Maxwell, Heather. 2002. "Destiny's Divas: Wassalou Singing, Music Ideologies, and the Politics of Performance in Bamako, Mali." Ph.D diss., Indiana University.
- Mensah, P. Sowah. 1990. "The Place of Women in African Music." MA thesis, University of Minnesota.
- Merriam, Alan P. 1959. "Characteristics of African Music." *Journal of International Folk Music Council* 11:13-19.
- . 1964. *The Anthropology of Music*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press.
- . 1970. *African Music on LP*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press.
- . 1982. *African Music in Perspective*. New York: Garland.
- Modic, Elizabeth Kate. 1996. "Song, Performance, and Power: The Ben Ka Di Women's Association in Bamako, Mali." PhD diss., Indiana University.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1988 [1986]. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Feminist Review* 30:61-88.
- . 2003. *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres, eds. 1991. *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Monts, Lester P. 1989. "Vai Women's Roles in Music, Masking, and Ritual Performance." In *African Musicology: Current Trends Vol. I*, edited by Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje and William G. Carter, 219-235. Los Angeles and Atlanta: UCLA African Studies Center and African Arts Magazine, Crossroads Press/African Studies Association.
- Morales-Libove, Jessica. 2005. "Dancing a Fine Line: Gender, Sexuality and Morality at Women's Tours in Dakar, Senegal." PhD diss., Rutgers University.
- Muller, Carol Ann. 1994. "Nazarite Song, Dance, and Dreams: The Sacralization of Time, Space, and the Female Body in South Africa." PhD diss., New York University.

- . 1999. *Rituals of Fertility and the Sacrifice of Desire: Nazarite Women's Performance in South Africa*. Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Müller, Christine. 2005. *Local Knowledge and Gender in Ghana*. Bielefeld, Germany: Transcript.
- Mvula, Enoch Selestine Timpunza. 1987. "Women's Oral Poetry as a Social Strategy in Malawi." PhD diss., Indiana University.
- Mwai, Wangari, and Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa. 1998. *Song as a Protest Tool for the Women in the Swahili Speaking Muslim Community: A Case Study of Two Interior Settlements in Kisumu Municipality*. Gender Issues Research Report Series. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa.
- Narayan, Uma. 2004. "The Project of Feminist Epistemology: Perspectives from a Nonwestern Feminist." In *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader: Intellectual and Political Controversies*, edited by Sandra Harding, 213-224. New York: Routledge.
- Nhlekišana, Rosaleen Oabona Brankie. 2005. "Wedding Songs in Botswana: A Reflection of the Dynamics of Marriage, Gender Relations and Familial Conflicts." PhD diss., Indiana University.
- Nketia, J. H. Kwabena. 1954. "The Role of the Drummer in Akan Society." *African Music* 1(1): 34-43.
- . 1963. *Drumming in Akan Communities of Ghana*. Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson.
- . 1974. *The Music of Africa*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
- . 1997. "The Scholarly Study of African Music: A Historical Review." In *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 1: Africa*, edited by Ruth M. Stone, 13-73. New York: Routledge. <http://glnl.alexanderstreet.com/View/326967> (accessed 8 April, 2009).
- Onyeji, Christian. 2004. "Igbo Rural Women in Africa as Creative Personalities: Musical Processing of Socio-economic Solidarity." *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa* 1:84-101.
- Opong, Christine. 1968. "A Note on a Dagomba Chief's Drummer," *Research Review* 4(2): 63-65.
- . 1969. "A Preliminary Account of the Role and Recruitment of Drummers in Dagbon." *Research Review* 6(1):38-51.
- . 1970. "A note on Dagomba Fiddlers." *Research Review* 6(2):27-33.
- . 1973. *Growing up in Dagbon*. Tema: Ghana Pub. Corp.

- . 1979. "Family Structure and Women's Reproductive and Productive Role Some Conceptual and Methodological Issues." Geneva: International Labour Office, [Microfiche].
- . 1983. *Female and Male in West Africa*. London; Boston: Allen & Unwin.
- , ed. 1987. *Sex Roles, Population, and Development in West Africa: Policy-Related Studies on Work and Demographic Issues*. Portsmouth, N.H.; London: Heinemann; J. Currey.
- . 2000. "Smiling Infants or Crying Babies: Taking Reproduction Labour and Material Strain into Account [sic] in Sustainable Development Frameworks, Policies, and Plans," Occasional Research Paper Series 2000 paper 4. Legon, Ghana: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.
- . 2004a. "Children in Crisis: Family Care Under Review," *Research Review*, Supplement. Legon, Ghana: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.
- . 2004b. "Gendered Family Strategies and Responsibilities of Grandparents in Sub-Saharan Africa," Occasional Research Paper Series 2004. Legon, Ghana: University of Ghana.
- . 2005. "Conjugal Resources, Power, Decision Making and Domestic Labour: Some Historical and Recent Evidence of Modernity from Ghanaian Families," Occasional Research Paper Series 2005 paper no. 7. Legon, Ghana: Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.
- Oppong, Christine, Yaa P. A. Oppong, and Irene K. Odotei. 2006. *Sex and Gender in an Era of AIDS: Ghana at the Turn of the Millennium*. Legon, Accra, Ghana: Sub-Saharan Publishers.
- Oppong, Christine, and International Sociological Association. Committee on Family Research. 1978. *Marriage, Fertility, and Parenthood in West Africa*, Changing African Family Project monograph series 4. Canberra, Australia: Dept. of Demography, Australian National University.
- Oyewùmí, Oyèrónke. 1997. *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- ed. 2005. *African Gender Studies: A Reader*. Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ozah, Marie Agatha. 2008. "Égwú Àmàlà: Women in Traditional Performing Arts in Ogbaruland." PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh. <http://www.proquest.com> (accessed 3 June, 2009).
- Pilaszewicz, Stanislaw. 2000. "History of the Dagomba People." In *Hausa Prose Writings in Ajami by Alhaji Umaru From A. Mischlich/ H. Sölken's Collection*, edited by Stanislaw Pilaszewicz: 205-241. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag GmbH.

- Pretorius, Liezille. 2001. "The Participation of Women in Rap Music: An Exploratory Study of the Role of Gender Discrimination." M.A. thesis, University of the Western Cape, South Africa.
- Rabothata, Thambatshira Tannie. 2005. "Women Abuse as Expressed in Tshivenda Female Songs." PhD diss., University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus), South Africa.
- Reed, Daniel. 2003. *Dan Ge Performance: Masks and Music in Contemporary Cote d'Ivoire*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Rizk, Mohamed El-Mohammady. 2007. "Women in Taarab: The Performing Art in East Africa." PhD diss., Universität, Frankfurt am Main.
- Rörich, Mary. 1989. "Shebeens, Slumyards and Sophiatown. Black Women, Music and Cultural Change in Urban South Africa c1920-1960." *The World of Music* 31(1):78-104.
- Ruskin, Jesse D., and Timothy Rice. 2012. "The Individual in Musical Ethnography." *Ethnomusicology* 56(2):299-327.
- Saaka, Yakubu. 1978. *Local Government and Political Change in Northern Ghana*. Washington: University Press of America.
- Salifu, Abdulai. 2008. "Names that Prick: Royal Praise Names in Dagbon, Northern Ghana." PhD diss., Indiana University. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/250837273?accountid=14512>.
- Scharfenberger, Angela. 2011. "West African Women in Music: An Analysis of Scholarship." *African Music* 9(1):221-246.
- Schmidt, Cynthia. 1989. "Womanhood, Work and Song Among the Kpelle of Liberia." In *African Musicology: Current Trends Vol. I*, edited by Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje and William G. Carter, 237-263. Los Angeles and Atlanta: UCLA African Studies Center and African Arts Magazine, Crossroads Press/African Studies Association.
- Seeger, Anthony. 1992. "Ethnomusicology and Music Law." *Ethnomusicology* 36(3):345-360.
- . 1996. "Ethnomusicologists, Archives, Professional Organizations, and the Shifting Ethics of Intellectual Property." *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 28:87-105.
- . 2011. "Folk Heritage Collections in Crisis: Intellectual Property and Audiovisual Archives and Collections," The American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/fhcc/propertykey.html> (accessed 22 May, 2014).
- . 2012. "Who Owns Music and Why You Should Care (University of California Television)." UCLA Faculty Research Lecture, 2 February. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5tSsQls1d8A> (accessed 21 May, 2014).

- Shelemay, Kay Kaufman. 1998. *Let Jasmine Rain Down: Song and Remembrance among Syrian Jews*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sidikou, Aissata G., and Thomas A. Hale, eds. 2012. *Women's Voices from West Africa: An Anthology of Songs from the Sahel*. Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Skalnik, Peter. 2002. "The State and Local Ethnopolitical Identities: The Case of Community Conflicts in Northern Ghana." *Nouveaux Mondes* 10:141-166.
- Staniland, Martin. 1975. *The Lions of Dagbon: Political Change in Northern Ghana*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stobart, Henry. 2010. "Rampant Reproduction and Digital Democracy: Shifting Landscapes of Music Production and 'Piracy' in Bolivia." *Ethnomusicology Forum* 19(1):27-56.
- Storck, Susan. 2012. "Miscarriage: MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia" <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001488.htm> (accessed 14 May, 2014).
- Sugarman, Jane C. 1997. *Engendering Song: Singing and Subjectivity at Prespa Albanian Weddings*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tamakloe, Emmanuel Forster. 1931. *A Brief History of the Dagbamba People*. Accra: Government Printing Office.
- Tamale, Ghana: Sister Cities of Louisville, Inc. 2004. <http://www.sclou.org/index.php?id=46>
- Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies. 2009. <http://www.ticcs.org>
- Thema, Kgaladi Malthews. 2006. "Sekgapa: A Culture-based Study of a Musical Tradition of BaPedi Women of Mailula, Mmamabolo District, Limpopo Province, South Africa." MM thesis, University of Cape Town, South Africa.
- Tracey, Hugh Travers. 1929. "Some Observations on Native Music of Southern Rhodesia." *Native Affairs Department Annual* 7:96-103.
- . 1948a. *Chopi Musicians, Their Music, Poetry and Instruments*. London: Oxford University Press.
- . 1948b. *Ngoma, An Introduction to Music for Southern Africans*. Cape Town: Longmans.
- . 1948c. *Zulu Paradox*. Johannesburg: Silver Leaf Books.
- . 1949. "A Study of Native Music in Rhodesia." *Native Affairs Department Annual* 26:27-28.
- . 1952. *African Dances of the Witwatersrand Gold Mine*. Johannesburg: African Music Society.
- . 1954. "The State of Folk Music in Bantu Africa." *African Music* 1(1):8-11.

- . 1957. “Recording in the Lost Valley (Zambesi).” *African Music* 1(4):45-47.
- . 1961. “Music of South Africa.” *Music Journal* 19:76-77.
- Tsikata, Dzodzi, ed. 2001. *Gender Training in Ghana: Politics, Issues and Tools*. Accra, Ghana: Woeli Publishing Services.
- Turino, Thomas. 2008. *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- UNICEF. 2000. “Situation Analysis of Children and Women in Ghana.” Accra, Ghana: UNICEF.
- UNICEF. 2013. “At A Glance: Ghana – Statistics.” http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ghana_statistics.html (accessed 20 September, 2013).
- University for Development Studies. 2014. <http://www.uds.edu.gh/index.html>
- Wachsmann, Klaus. 1970. “Ethnomusicology in Africa.” In *African Experience*, edited by John N. Paden and Edward W. Soja, 128-151. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press.
- , ed. 1971. *Essays on Music and History in Africa*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press.
- Wikimedia Commons. 2006. “Northern Ghana Districts.” http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Northern_Ghana_districts.png (accessed 20 September, 2013).
- . 2011. “Ghana in Africa.” [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ghana_in_Africa_\(-mini_map_-rivers\).svg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ghana_in_Africa_(-mini_map_-rivers).svg) (accessed 21 May, 2014).
- . 2006. “Ghana Regions.” http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ghana_regions.png (accessed 21 May, 2014).
- Wong, Deborah. 2004. *Speak It Louder: Asian Americans Making Music*. New York: Routledge.
- The World Bank. 2014. “Ghana: Data.” <http://data.worldbank.org/country/ghana> (accessed 20 September, 2013).
- Yakubu, Abudulai. 2005. *The Abudu-Andani Crisis of Dagbon: A Historical and Legal Perspective of the Yendi Skin Affairs*. Accra: MPC Limited.
- Young, Robert. 2003. *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zemp, Hugo. 1970. “Tambours de femme en Cote d'Ivoire.” *Objets et Mondes* 10(2):99-118.
- Zondi, Nompumelelo Bernadette. 2008. “Bahlabellelani: Why Do They Sing?: Gender and Power in Contemporary Women's Songs.” PhD diss., University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa.
- Zuckerman, Ethan. 2004. “Turmeric, Pygmies and Piracy.” <http://www.ethanzuckerman.com/>

blog/2004/11/23/turmeric-pygmyes-and-piracy/ (accessed 22 May, 2014).

Discography

- Abdulai, Alhaji Ibrahim, and John Miller Chernoff. 1987 [1992]. *Master Drummers of Dagbon Volume 1*. Cambridge, Mass: Rounder.
- Abdulai, Alhaji Ibrahim, and John Miller Chernoff. 1990 [1992]. *Master Drummers of Dagbon Volume 2: Drumming from Northern Ghana*. Cambridge, Mass: Rounder.
- Alhassan, Adam, Abubakari Alhassan, Abubakari Lunna, and David Locke. 2008. *Drumming for Dagomba Chiefs Tamale, Ghana 1985*. Makanda, Ill: EarthCDs Partners.
- Gillis, Verna, and Various Artists. 1978. *Music of the Dagomba from Ghana*. Folkways Records FW04324/FE 4324.
- Gillis, Verna, and Various Artists. 1981. *Traditional Women's Music from Ghana: Ewe, Fanti, Ashanti, and Dagomba*. Folkways Records FW04257/FE4257.
- Jawula, Inusah Hamidu, Shani Baba, Tijani, Fatawu Karimu, Issahaku Hamidu, Alhassan Fuseini, and Vijay Rakhra. 2003. *Dagbamba Masters: Traditional Drumming from the Northern Region of Ghana, West Africa*. Vijay Rekhra Productions
- Lunna, Abubakari. 1996. *Drum Damba: Music of the Damba Festival of the Dagbamba people (Ghana)*. Gilsum, N.H.: White Cliffs Media.

Videography

- Corke, Penny, and Dennis Marks. 1984. *Repercussions: A Celebration of African-American Music*. Program 5, "The Drums of Dagbon." Chicago, Ill: Home Vision.
- Lunna, Abubakari, Victoria Pagnaa Wumbei, and Agbekor Drum and Dance Society. 1990. *Dagbamba Praise Name Dances*. Crown Point, IN: White Cliffs Media Co.

Interviews and Personal Communication

- Abdul-Rahaman, Rosina Zenabu. 2011a. Personal interview with the author, May 25.
- . 2011b. Personal communication with the author, February-June.
- Abdulai, Iddrissu (Samphe-Naa Belugu). 2011. Personal interview with the author, February 15.
- Andani, Korloyogu Bundaalii. 2011. Personal interview with the author, February 15.
- Dawuni, Alhassan. 2011. Personal interview with the author, May 2.

- Issah, Yakubu (Zoo-Simli Naa Lunna). 2011a. Personal interview with the author, January 17.
- . 2011b. Personal interview with the author, January 19.
- . 2011c. Personal interview with the author, January 31.
- . 2011d. Personal interview with the author, February 7.
- Kamil, Amina. 2011. Personal interview with the author, May 15.
- Katariga, Amishetu. 2011. Personal interview with the author, February 28.
- Lunna, Alhaji Abubakari. 2006. Personal communication with the author, June-August.
- . 2007. Personal communication with the author, January.
- . 2008. Personal communication with the author, August.
- Nagumsi, Ayishetu. 2006. Personal communication with the author, June-August.
- . 2008. Personal communication with the author, August.
- . 2011. Personal communication with the author, January-June.
- Wumbei, Fuseina. 2006a. Personal interview with the author, July 5.
- . 2006b. Personal communication with the author, June-August.
- . 2007. Personal communication with the author, January.
- . 2008. Personal communication with the author, August.
- . 2009. Personal communication with the author, March.
- . 2011a. Personal communication with the author, January-June.
- . 2011b. Personal interview with the author, April 9.
- . 2011c. Personal interview with the author, April 19.