

## **Aissata Nagomse**

**Ethnic group:** Dagomba

**Language (dialect):** Dagbanli

**Country:** Ghana

**Recording date:** August 25, 2015

**Recording location:** Soighajile, Northern Region, Ghana

**Total Recording time:** 18:13

**Technician:** Brian Nowak

### **Group members:**

Aissata Nagomse - lead vocals

Maimounata Issiakou - head back-up vocals

Soumaya Zabelum - back-up vocals

Balkisa Soulemana - back-up vocals

Issama Abadallah - back-up vocals

### **Track names -- duration**

1) Damba na Damba -- 2:11

2) & 3) Tora-lua and Tora - 4:13

4) Damba Toone - 2:36

5) Damba Biel Kusse - 3:40

6) Amaama - 3:14

7) Aissata Nagomse - Dagbanli - interview - 2:19

### **Group introduction:**

Aissata Nagomse is an elder griot and singer for the main chief in Tamale. She lives just outside of town, in almost a distantly connected, village-like suburb. Close enough to perform major functions at the large palace and at all major cultural events in town, her presence in these settings defines her place as an authority on Dagomba women's songs.

Aissata is a true archive of a variety of genres within the Dagomba female music tradition. She understands royal court responsibilities, social ceremonies, and everyday songs about daily chores, or songs for fun with a group of girls or women. At home, in a casual setting, with a good friend that she likes to sing with, the women join with several younger girls from the neighborhood.

### **Recording context:**

Recorded at home, in the casual setting of her porch, just near the edge of town, Aissata schools some young women from the neighborhood with a friend as they perform a collection of women's songs. These songs are only excerpts. They are usually performed in

large groups, when they may continue for extended lengths of time with one song transition into the next without disruption. They include dancing in the middle of the circle when sung for fun at gatherings.

Aissata is always warmed up and she pulls the girls along with her lead vocals ready to go for hours. She feels strongly about continuing these traditions and wanted to incorporate the element of the neighborhood girls singing together on the porch to portray the casual feel of the songs and the idea of always pulling up the next generation to learn from a master's high standards. The lyrics, clapping patterns, pitch, tempo and ululating at the right time are the focus of Aissata's expert reminders, that may just be a gesture or a glance.

***Notes on Language Use:***

Aissata's repertoire includes praise singing, chief's court music, and music that women sing while farming, doing housework, celebrating, or relaxing. Her strong, rich voice calls from a deep tradition of skill and lifelong commitment to music and the chief's palace. Her simple approach and experience with royal and other formal ceremonies and celebrations identifies a multi-functional, professional with a varied repertoire to accompany a wide range of social settings and lyrical styles.