



without any reservation. It is all the more incumbent upon our brothers from other States not to dishonour this good will shown by spitting on the hands that stretched out to them in brotherhood. The Nagas of Nagaland are who we are because of the 16 Points Agreement no matter how much one may want to demean it. This is our reality. We have both the negative and the positive aspects in good measure as is the case with all communities anywhere else around the globe. It is much too late to be dissecting what might have been but together focus on what can be. Anyway the 16 Points Agreement is not the issue of contention at this time but NTC is, so let's get a move on.

Mr. Gwangphun may not necessarily agree with me but this is a point of view I have maintained from the beginning. It is not a question of Nagas of Nagaland not caring or bothering about the other brothers in other states. It is simply a matter of the present realities that we all need to pragmatically adhere to. The Tribes in other States are entitled their democratic rights from the State they belong as much as we are in ours. Claiming whatever is theirs from the area they belong and at the same time expect equal rights and privileges within another territory does not sound like a fair deal to me. Being open minded and helpful to our brothers elsewhere is an entirely different matter which the Nagas of Nagaland have in abundance. It does become a different issue altogether when equal rights and privileges are also claimed by others within our fold. It would be selfish to safely stow away your bowl of rice and put your hand in another's plate. Beyond this perspective however, the issue of Tribal integration is one of the fundamental agenda of the present conflict with India under the overall claim for sovereignty. That is the common aspiration that ties us together, needing a common Pan Naga platform. The manner in which this was achieved however, is the area of my questioning. Way before the present Naga Hoho transformed into its distorted Pan Naga posture, the Tribal Hohos

had been formed with its apex body called the Naga Hoho, which represented the Nagas of Nagaland exclusively. This was the starting point. The mistake lies in the dubious conversion of this body into a Pan Naga forum instead of creating an appropriate identity of its own to define this broader/wider representation of Naga Tribes from everywhere else. With the ENPO walkout the Nagas of Nagaland became an absolute minority in our own backyard thus losing a platform to address our own kitchen issues. For quite some time the need to have a forum to address the most pressing issues of the common man was felt by many, since the present Naga Hoho reduced itself to a spineless lapdog of the Govt. and the factions. They lost credibility in the eyes of the people to the extent of losing their tail, unable to even satisfy their natural urge to tuck it between their legs. NTC therefore emerged as a by-product of this sentiment to fill up the vacuum. Our 'brothers beyond' must understand that every community has its own localised problems that needs to be taken care of and it is best solved through an apex forum of our own, which we do not have. Why should it provoke or hurt the sentiment of anyone when we try to help ourselves where no one else will? Most of all, The Nagas of Nagaland does not require the blessings or permission of the present obsolete Naga Hoho to set up any organization that we feel we need to deal with our internal problems. In fact it would be more of an insult to receive it. They won't touch the crippling issues that a common man is burdened with and won't allow anyone else to deal with it. The audacity of their outlook is truly disgusting. The other 'brothers beyond' must exercise their intellect to sensitively realize that the ripple effect of a strong Nagaland would be to their advantage when the chips are down. Throwing garbage into our backyard can only destroy our common environment and should be avoided. The point of contention is this. It has been my considered opinion that the Naga Hoho in its present form is a misnomer. Since it encompasses all the Nagas living in different

States it should rather have been christened as "Pan Naga Federation" or a "Pan Naga Hoho" or any other name but Naga Hoho should have been left alone as a pure apex institution of the Nagas of Nagaland as it originally was and ought to have been. It is perhaps too much to ask but the present Naga Hoho should deliberate on this and redeem their image. It is still not too late. The need for a Pan Naga organization is in no way being understated. It should exist but by a different name that fits and describes the conglomerated union of Tribes from all over. Define the common objectives and purpose of such a forum to avoid fumbling into territory they do not belong. The present scenario is downright unacceptable and insulting to have a Pan Naga organization in the guise of Naga Hoho dictating terms to the Nagas of Nagaland in our internal affairs. Based on this, it was also a sincere suggestion that instead of creating more platforms for confusion, confrontation and ego trips, which would become a natural outcome, the NTC should first explore the possibility as a "conscience platform" for reclaiming the Naga Hoho for the Nagas of Nagaland through brainstorming with all the Tribal Hohos inclusive of the ENPO. Naga Hoho exists by virtue of all the Tribal Hoho's affiliation without which its very existence will evaporate into thin air. This is the strength the Tribal Hohos have which NTC should have cultivated. I had attended the launching function of the NTC on the 12th Oct 2013 and I could see that my kind of opinion was much too late for them to consider it seriously. They had travelled much too far ahead with their preparation, for a possible slow-down. Yet, for a greater purpose I only wished they had paused for a moment of cool contemplation instead of being in such a tearing hurry. According to the information circulated in this meeting, a whole lot of consultation had taken place with 'various organizations' and 'concerned citizens' before arriving at this conclusion. It may be so, mostly on an individual or sectoral basis but perhaps not on the scale of recognized forum



an action even if the individual may be prepared to ignore such a dictate. Thereafter, the conflict of identity will generate a conflict of purpose. What then? It would have perhaps been less contentious and more preferable to keep the door opened by encouraging the Tribal Hohos to actively participate in the NTC while also allowing individual direct membership. But would this also imply that NTC will have one central platform without its District/grass root branches? The need of the hour is to have a strong organization which has its tentacles way down to the village level for a realistic feedback on any given issue. I have often harped about a second plebiscite on key issues such as "one tax for one Naga National Government" etc. A vibrant organization could enact such a referendum that could impact our future but I guess this is all in the realm of a dream.

NTC needs to honourably and maturely chart out its future course of responsibility and action. Above all it should keep all its doors and windows opened to allow fresh air to filter the thinking process. The first ripple of differences has begun to appear between the NTC and other NGOs from an unfiltered statement of NTC. Good or bad, every individual or an organization has a pride without exception and rather sensitive about it too. This should implicitly be given due consideration. Mr. Gwangphun is right. There will never be an organization on this planet which would be capable of addressing each and every problem of mankind and solving them. Neither can NTC. It is more to do with selectively picking up critical issues that the masses suffer from and need attention. This too is subjected to an individual or an organization's perception of criticality which others may not necessarily agree. Lofty proclamations will also have to be followed by lofty deeds. As an organization it should either temper it down or live up to it. The challenges ahead won't be easy but that is what NTC has opted to face. Take the case of our present Naga society: it is in the ICU afflicted by a malignant cancer of excessive corruption and

taxation in both the major fronts: Govt. of Nagaland and the underground factions, needing an urgent surgery. The scenario is as dangerous as having to face an oncoming tsunami. ACAUT has initiated a small but significant step to generate this awareness about our terminal ailment braving the torment and threats thus far. Their efforts are limited to Dimapur and needs to spread their wings in all the other dormant Districts. However they need a parental body to shelter under and be guided to ensure future activities have the desired impact. I harbour no doubts in my mind that with a sustained effort something positive will emerge from this. Does NTC have it in them to firstly pick up this yoke and provide a parental directives and guidance to the ACAUT? Does it have the capability to set up its infrastructure in all the Districts and at the same time adopt ACAUT to enable them to go forth with more courage and matured coverage? Without doubt this is 'top of the shelfe' burning issue that every breathing Naga is yearning for it to end. This would be the litmus test. Consider it or reject it. After all this is also just a point of view.

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