

WALKING THE NAGA DAY

JANUARY 10, 2018



A PUBLICATION OF
THE FORUM FOR NAGA RECONCILIATION





WALKING THE NAGA DAY



Collection of
Prayer, Songs & Speeches
made on
Naga Day

Walking the Naga Day
The Forum for Naga Reconciliation

Editor: Aheli Moitra

Proofreader: Renchano Humtsoe

Photographs: Soreishim Mahong, Caisii Mao, Aheli Moitra,
Tshetsholo Naro

Design & Layout: Little Village

Compilation—including selection, placement, and order of texts and images—copyright © 2018 The Forum for Naga Reconciliation; all texts and photographs copyright © 2018 the respective authors and photographers unless otherwise noted. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form whatsoever without the written permission of the copyright owners.

ISBN 978-93-87594-95-1

Heritage Publishing House
Near DABA, Duncan,
Dimapur - 797113
Nagaland : India

CONTENTS

9

Foreword
Aheli Moitra

18

The Naga Day Prayer
Y. Chingang Konyak

20

The Naga Day Declaration

24

Nagas Without Borders
Naga Choir

28

Why Naga Day?
Niketu Iralu

32

Celebrating Our Oneness
Zelhou Keyho

36

Without Borders
Tali Angh

38

Naga Day
Temsula Ao

42

Thoughts On Naga Day: January 10, 2018
Sipong Chingmak Chang

48

Live As One
Alobo Naga And Tetseo Sisters

50

Yes To 'Nagas Without Borders'
L. Adani

54

The Point Of Reconciliation
Athong Makury

56

Ngahong (Forest)
Featherheads

60

The Choice We Have To Make
Kethoser Kevichüsa

64

The Values Of Reconciliation
Aküm Longchari

67

Kepenuopfü Nagamia Kekhrie (God's Love For The Nagas)
Pfüchazhünüo

70

Naga Day - All Of Us Together
P. Ngully

72

Nagas Without Borders: Imagining The Future
Kim Chishi

76

Come, Oh Nagas! Come As One
Nagagenous

78

Outside The Box
L. Athikho Liriite

80

Young Nagas; Responsible Citizenry
Shwisho Lorin

86

Arise Nagas
Eastern Naga Team

90

Calling Home - Naga Day, January 10, 2018
Wati Aier

Reflections Post Naga Day

94

Naga Day 2018: A Crossroads For Nagas As A People
Paul Pimomo

97

Reflections On Naga Day
Xonzo (Sanjay) Barbora

99

From The Heart - Walking The Naga Day
Wati Aier



FOREWORD

When the day came to be, Kohima was resplendent in sunshine. It was January 10, 2018, the first Naga Day. At the Kohima Local Ground, Khuochiezie, music played from the early morning hours. In the surrounding market area, people hummed the tunes as they set up shop. Some planned to go to the ground, some planned to watch from their terraces—everyone had heard this one thing, Nagas from everywhere were coming together.

They were. Some came all the way from Myanmar, travelling through land, water and air for days. Others came from the underdeveloped Naga areas on the Indian side of the international border—from the states of Arunachal Pradesh in the north, Assam to the west, Manipur in the south and the disjointed parts of Nagaland State. Reduced to minorities in these neighboring states, Naga people took considerable risks of intelligence tapping and flaring neighborhood sentiments to make it to Kohima for the first ever Naga Day.

The Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR) had taken great efforts to make this possible.

Naga Day emerged as a sprout at the Shalom Bible Seminary, Zübza, on September 2, 2017. Later, Kohima-based (tribe) unions accepted the idea. It was felt that Nagas need to transcend the reiteration of positions towards understanding Naga values, etching out what is most needed in Naga society today.

The need for Unity and Reconciliation—beyond national groups, among the people—stood out. Can the FNR design a mechanism that will allow Naga people, separated by boundaries of states and hearts, to feel and understand each other's needs?

Responding to the call, as they have since the Forum was given form in 2008, the FNR embarked upon the task of consulting with representatives of the Naga people.

In October 2017, 35 Naga apex organizations met with the FNR in Chümoukedima; in November 2017, 29 such organizations came together at the same place to reiterate the need for a Naga Day.

What would such a day look like?

The Naga Shisha Hoho, whose visions laid basis for Naga Reconciliation, had prophesized that unless Nagas come together, there would be no sovereignty; the first mandate of the Naga people will be the last. While this has often meant the Naga Plebiscite of 1951, the FNR proposed that they go back to the first written document to articulate the Naga dream. The Naga Hills Memorandum to the Simon Commission emerged as the way forward.

On January 10, 1929, 20 visionaries of the Naga Club submitted a memorandum to the Simon Commission—a Statutory Commission constituted of seven British Members of Parliament of the United Kingdom to study constitutional reform in the, then, British-occupied Indian subcontinent. The Naga Hills Memorandum asked the Commission to “safeguard our (Naga) right(s) against all encroachment.”



On January 10, 2018, this hallmark would turn 89 years old.

Empowered by the vision and stand of the Memorandum, it was agreed that Nagas from across borderlands—Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Myanmar and Nagaland—should come together in a celebration of togetherness each year to ignite the fragrance of collating as ONE PEOPLE. Thus came the theme of the first Naga Day: *Nagas Without Borders*.

Given the condition of infrastructure in all Naga areas, it was no easy task to prepare for the Naga Day within a short span. Once everyone had agreed that the day should be observed at the historic Khuochiezie (Kohima Local Ground), to be hosted by the Angami Public Organization, hectic preparations ensued.

The first step was to introduce the concept to the people. Thus, on December 9, 2017, the FNR released a book of essays and poems written by several authors to give body to the concept of Naga Day. *A Journey of Reconciliation and Healing* took over from its predecessor, an FNR initiative, termed the *Journey of Common Hope*. History was to be created in an intentional manner for it to become “the light of the future,” in the words of FNR Convener, Rev. Dr. Wati Aier. Under his leadership, it was important to move away from the “contemptuous culture” of focusing on differences to participate in “a shared humanity of belonging.”

The FNR team—that began with 14 members in 2008 and expanded to 34 members in 2017—commenced the ground work needed for the first Naga Day.

A day before, on January 9, Kohima was ready to chill the bones. The FNR had ensured that the venue was all set for January 10, 2018—chairs, music systems, stalls, water bottles, had been laid out at Khuochiezie and performers practiced for the big day into the night.

The public and private Naga sectors merged to lend a helping hand—equipment came in, publicity went out. Students’ bodies chipped in with

volunteers. Tribe based institutions offered to make food for the Naga Day feast. Some performing artists produced original songs and music for the Day, others reproduced relevant renditions of previous works. Various partnerships helped produce ‘Naga Day’ memory merchandise.

It was evident what the Naga people could achieve in coming together beyond borders of the state, capital, community, church or class, in collective love, solidarity and goodwill. In the glee of the morning sun, each wished the other, “Happy Naga Day!”

For those who were unable to attend, the Day’s proceedings were streamed live through the Internet; the footage of the whole program is available on YouTube.

In a further attempt to bring everyone into the conversation, the FNR decided to publish this book. It is a collection of voices that were heard on the first Naga Day—messages delivered, songs written specifically for the day, photographs and reflections are presented in this book to help us access and recall the voices of solidarity that emerged on the Day.

Words and sounds are a dynamic force. They weave the speaker and listener into building common action, into building community. The Naga brass gongs, muzzle loading guns, drums, flutes, songs and speeches sounded on the Day became a fresh call of hope, particularly for the youth, to win back their agency, lost to years and layers of violence, politicking and bureaucracy. The fulcrum, on which the Naga momentum revolved, one that had gathered the dust of time and memory, lay bare as the speakers/performers and listeners came together as one.

This book will help the reader plug into that conversation—a Reconciliation Process that is a “call to common action” for the Nagas and their neighboring peoples.

The Naga Day program on January 10, 2018, continued for more than five hours. Old men and women took great pains to walk to the ground, a Naga



national flag in hand, as did mothers with children who waved their little blue sky-rainbow-star flags. Young volunteers distributed water and lunch, wrapped in leaf. ‘*Kuknalim*’, victory to the land, rang out. As the Naga people embarked on a journey of healing wounded relationships, hope sprang in ripples—hope that the Naga lands, as well as their neighborhoods, go beyond divide and suspicion, into the realm of peace, unity and reconciliation.

How this can be done—a possibility turned real—was for all to witness on NAGA DAY.

Aheli Moitra

NAGA DAY

A DAY WHERE ALL **NAGAS** COME &
STAND TOGETHER AS **ONE PEOPLE**

ORGANIZED BY **FORUM FOR NAGA RECONCILIATION**
HOSTED BY **ANGAMI PUBLIC ORGANIZATION**

JANUARY 10, 2018 • 10:00 AM
KHUOCHIEZIE (KOHIMA LOCAL GROUND)

- Gathering of People
- Words of Welcome
Angami Public Organization
- Prelude - Nagas Without Borders
Naga Choir
- Prayer
Rev. Y. Chingang Konyak
- Why Naga Day
Ino Niketu Iralu
- Healing of Our Spirit
Naga Choir
- Voices
Dr. Temsula Ao
Ino Kurovi Peseyie
Dr. Chingmak Chang
- Without Borders
Ino Tali Angh
- Celebrating Oneness
Rev. Dr. Zelhou Keyho
- Voices of Young People
Ino Athikho Liriite
Illi Shwisho Lorin
- All of Us
Nagaland Chamber Choir
- Voices
Ino L. Adani
Ino Jawang Sumpa
Dr. P. Ngully
- Kepenuopfü Nagamia Kekhrie
Pfüchazhünuo
- Calling Home
Rev. Dr. Wati Aier
- Kuknalim!
Naga Choir

NAGAS WITHOUT  BORDERS



NAGA COLORS

- Come, Oh Nagas!
Come as One
Count Your Blessings
(Instrumental)
Nagagenous
- **Dr. Kethoser Kevichüsa**
- Jahwannyu e Wao e Teihpu
Tangshimlan
Krista Shüpshi Phangme
Angam Khong
- Blowing in the Wind
Ino Labu Sakhrie
- **Illi Kim Chishi**
- Luiraa
Ngahong
Featherheads
- Nangma bel kanom me
Illi Neikim Hangsing
- **Ino Athong Makury**
- Arise Naga
Eastern Naga Team
- ZERO POINT
Dreamz Unlimited
- Naga Day by Easterine Kire,
In the Beginning by Ningreichon
Tungshang, &
Bordered Differences:
"Envisaging a Naga Path" by
Asangba Tzudir
Inoli Theyiesinuo Keditsu
- Live as One
**Ino Aloba Naga and Tetseo
Sisters**
- **Dr. Aküm Longchari**
- Jesus You are the Answer
Naga Choir
- Prayer
Rev. Fr. G. L. Khing

Narrators:

Dr. Rosemary Dzuwichu
Rev. Dr. Ellen Konyak Jamir

Stage Management:

Illi Vitono Gugu Haralu and Ino Theja Meru

NAGAS WITHOUT BORDERS





Y. Chingang Konyak offers the Naga Day prayer on the morning of January 10, 2018, the first ever Naga Day celebrated in Kohima, Nagaland.

(Photo by Aheli Moitra)

OPPOSITE PAGE

The Naga Day program was made available to all participants at the venue alongside a miniature version of the Naga national flag.

(Photo by Tshetsholo Naro)

THE NAGA DAY PRAYER

Y. Chingang Konyak
.....

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we are thankful to you for this great day; for bringing us together in one fellowship in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Grant us now the presence and power of your Holy Spirit, as we consider the needs, both of our Churches and of our Nation, and that both may together offer ourselves willingly for your service.

With great expectations of great things from you, enable us to attempt great things to bring the Nagas together as a faithful Nation, always under your marvelous guidance.

Open our ears that we may be attentive to your voice calling for dedication of our lives to your service, uniting the broken Nagas as one strong Nation.

Bless those separated from us and grant us determination to break down the barriers among us.

In the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us confess our sins that have worked against unity.

Pardon us, O Lord, for our controversies, narrow-mindedness, unfair judgment passed against our fellow citizens, and for our stubborn refusal to see your Spirit in our activities.



For the many times that we have looked at the speck in the eye of our fellow beings rather than at their sincere faith and goodwill.

For all the pride which we have shown to others, and for our lack of understanding towards them.

For all those things in our conduct and examples by which we have obstructed our own witness, and hindered the work of unity among our brothers and sisters.

For our failure to engage in sincere prayer, for those whose understanding of custom and culture is different from our own.

For all undesirable conduct, forgive us, O Lord.

Almighty and Living God, who has gathered your people of all ages and from all places into one 'Naga Day,' forgive us for the painful divisions and wounds which we, your children, have brought into the household of faith. Grant us the grace to overcome our human errors and prejudices that we might walk together in the unity of our one Master.

O Lord, let the Nagas, from now, strive to walk worthy of the calling with which we have been called; with all humility and meekness, with patience, bearing one another in love, careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Eternal God, we come to you in this hour because we need your comfort and strength. Breathe your peace into our hearts, and remove from us all fear of death.

Help us to understand that the Nagas are a chosen people, and redeemed for the light of the world.

In Jesus precious name, I pray, Amen.

NAGA DAY DECLARATION

On this first Naga Day, 10 January, 2018, we affirm and uphold the Naga Hills Memorandum to the Simon Commission on 10 January, 1929, on behalf of the Naga people by the Naga Club, and we celebrate that Nagas are a peoples and a nation without borders.

Nagas are a peoples comprised of many nations (tribes) living in their ancestral lands spread across the present states of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Burma (Myanmar). By coming together in solidarity under the theme '*Nagas Without Borders*,' we demonstrate our collective desire to live as ONE PEOPLE.

At this point in our history we come together to celebrate the journey taken so far and to examine ourselves so that the path to a shared future is undertaken with responsibility, accountability and a sense of belonging with each other.

On this historic Naga Day, we, the people, who have gathered together in one accord, adopt this Declaration.

Naga Reconciliation

1. As Nagas we say 'Sorry' to each other for the hurts we have caused to one another—in words, attitudes and actions—thus provoking the worst in each other and damaging ourselves. We admit our failure for



always demanding others to change, without first realizing the need to change ourselves.

2. Reconciliation is a basic necessity to nurture and defend our right as one people. As individuals and as Naga Nations (tribes), we agree to engage in a process of self examination and to undertake a shared journey to wholeness through love, forgiveness, mutual understanding, compassion and healing so that Naga Reconciliation becomes a reality.
3. To overcome the trust deficit and to strengthen the journey of healing, the Naga National Groups, the State, the Churches, tribe organizations and civil society groups are encouraged to admit their failures and apologize to the people for the wrongs they have committed and to conduct themselves with honor, dignity and responsibility.
4. The journey to wholeness involves 'truth telling' which can be initiated at the public level throughout Naga-Land. Churches across Naga-Land are invited to create safe and non judgmental spaces for stories to be told without any fear whatsoever so that healing will be made possible.

Political Struggle

1. Naga Sovereignty lies with the people and, on the basis of the right to self-determination, to freely determine our political status so that we can fully develop socially, economically, culturally and spiritually as a dignified nation.
2. We impress upon the Government of India to honor its commitment to engage the Naga political rights that stem from the facts of our history with honesty, sincerity and through peaceful means. The Naga political struggle, being one of the oldest running conflicts in the world, must be addressed with openness, political maturity and statesmanship, for bringing about an inclusive, just and lasting resolution without borders. This must be given paramount priority above all other issues and should be reached at the earliest.

3. The Naga National Groups, the Governments of India and Burma (Myanmar) must truthfully engage the Naga political rights with utmost transparency, accountability and respect for peoples' aspirations.
4. In order to build confidence with the people and address collective trauma, the Governments of India and Burma (Myanmar) now need to go beyond militarization. In this spirit, the Government of India should repeal the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, and all other anti-democratic legislations not worthy of a great democratic nation state like India.
5. For rebuilding relationships and peaceful coexistence, we encourage the Governments of India and Burma (Myanmar) to admit to the gross human rights violations and to apologize for their wrong doings to the Naga people.

Nation Building

1. We affirm that every Naga has a role to contribute in the process of nation building.
2. We pledge to work day by day towards recovering values of common good, nurturing indigenous wisdom, cultivating practices of honesty and integrity, dialogue, respect, sharing and giving, so that everyone benefits and lives with dignity today and in the future.
3. We commit ourselves towards intentionally upholding gender justice and creating space for young people to lead us in this 21st century.
4. From this day forward, we commit ourselves to working together and shouldering responsibilities to overcome social, "systematic developmental aggression" and systemic corruption that are destroying the Naga way of life and undermining the ability of our institutions to nurture and fulfill our aspirations.



5. In this time of difficult challenges, Nagas need to be led by women and men who are led by God. We pray that God will provide such leaders who will inspire us to walk in the path of justice and mercy.

Naga Day

1. As part of the Naga Day celebration, we resolve to explore and evolve creative ways of educating and empowering ourselves about our history, our culture, our land, our rights and our responsibilities.
2. On this day we agree to strive towards rapprochement with our neighbors in building better relationships based on mutual trust and respect.
3. We urge all Nagas to celebrate Naga Day on the 10th day of January every year, where ever Nagas may be, in a manner that will deepen our relationships and enrich our understanding of each other as One People.
4. Naga Day belongs to all Nagas and not to any organization.

Kuknalim!

NAGAS WITHOUT BORDERS

Naga Choir

.....

Golden rays of fresh chronicles
Soaring eyes hasten to tell
Bygone labors may still hold
Yield not to crashing slumber

Singing with grand elation
Dancing with jubilation
Fences crumble on orders
Nagas without borders

Gather your broken visages
The Master mends your pages
Minds glow with promises
Let the orchestra arise

Fortitude gushes everywhere
Kneaded upon the great Hope
Crafting a new legacy
For sure is a people born

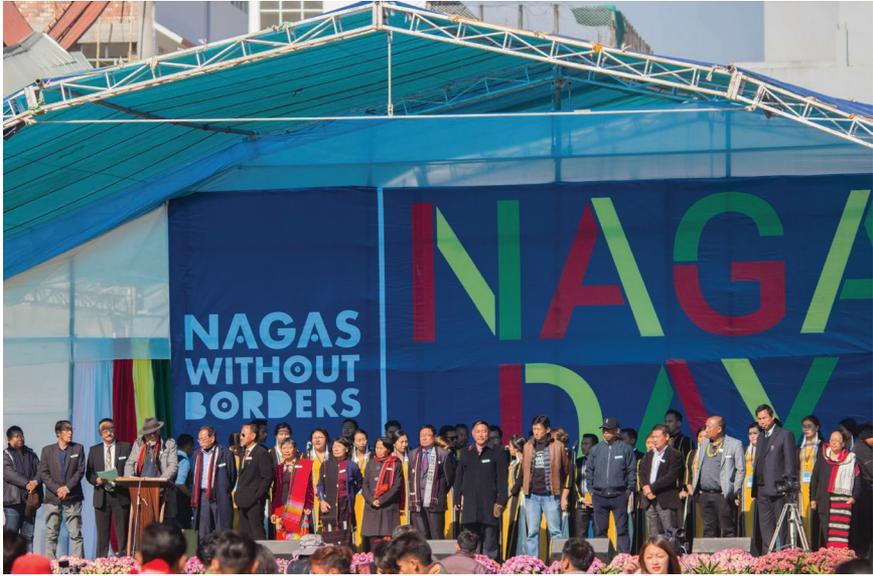
Composed by Khriekethozo Pucho and Petenei Tacü

Written by Rakodu Nukhu



A performer from the band 'Featherheads' sings during Naga Day, 2018.
(Photo by Aheli Moitra)





Visier Sanyü reads out the Naga Day Declaration as members of the Forum for Naga Reconciliation stand on stage on January 10, 2018.
(Photo by Tshetsholo Naro)

OPPOSITE PAGE
A Naga warrior uses the Naga National Flag as part of his headgear on Naga Day, 2018.
(Photo by Aheli Moitra)

WHY NAGA DAY?

Niketü Iralu

.....

The discussions and exchanges in the newspapers and social media on the subject of ‘Naga Day’ have been vigorous and comprehensive. They have brought out the different views and perspectives held by different Nagas, by our regional neighbors and others beyond. As we meet here today, we can say we have a deeper, wider understanding of the subject and one another, which is so important. There is no doubt the honest conversations during the last weeks have reopened doors people had started to shut to one another; the result would have been more distrust.

I am keenly conscious of the undeserved privilege given to me to say something at the start of this program. Yet I would like to propose that this acknowledgement and celebration of what our history has given us should take us in the creative direction I believe God is showing us. And that is, Reconciliation within our society through the healing of our wounded relationships which will enable us to grow properly with mutual goodwill and cooperation lifting us up instead of bringing us down. The Forum for Naga Reconciliation is committed to this all-important task, and it is, of course, the joint responsibility of all Nagas.

89 years ago

The question ‘Why Naga Day’ takes us back to what happened on this day 89 years ago. In 1929, on the 10th of January, in Kohima, the historic Naga Memorandum was submitted to the British Parliamentary Commission from



London headed by Sir John Simon. The points made by the 20 members of the Naga Club who signed the submission are well known to all Nagas. I do not need to elaborate them here.

As we all know, the clear, straightforward stand taken in the Naga Memorandum to the Simon Commission established the political position of the Naga people long before the British, whose superior might defeated them, left their Empire in South Asia in 1947. The modern Naga journey that started with the declaration in 1929 brings to mind an African folk saying: *“He who wakes you up in the middle of the night to go on a long journey, you will thank him only after you have travelled a very long distance with him.”*

Today, on Naga Day, we are looking back and assessing the distance we have covered and what we have achieved. Many today may not be thankful to our pioneers who, in 1929, woke their people up to go on the long journey. Because for today’s generation, the journey has taken them to where we are and what we are today – stagnant, corruption ridden, without a satisfying purpose of life, and paralyzed, therefore unmanageably destructive, if we are to be honest.

At this baffling time we must not make our situation worse by denial of the facts and truth, our failures and shortcomings that have produced resentment, desire for revenge and poverty of spirit. Or, by becoming irresponsible, greedy, opportunistic exploiters of our people’s bewildering crisis for personal gratification, disregarding the terrible consequences for society.

Take society forward

The time has come to reject the errors of hate, fear and selfishness of the past and take our society forward together. This will come down to a few points.

1. Because of the price the Nagas have paid to defend and build on the political position they articulated in the Memorandum to the Simon

Commission, Naga Nationality has become a reality. It is not a small thing. Today we must appreciate and thank one another, and God, for what we have achieved, ending our blaming and condemnations for what has not been achieved yet. This thoughtless mutual blaming has damaged our relationships so badly.

2. Being human, we all make mistakes of all kinds and easily come short of the perfection and glory of God. Therefore, instead of putting each other down through criticism we should learn to inspire and raise each other to do what is right, needed and best for the common good. We inspire others the moment we point out precisely the places where we, not others, have been or are wrong! Remember “Walk in the light as He is in the light The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sins?” Others are surprised by our simple truthfulness. It gives them hope. They mutter to themselves, “Damn it, if this rascal can be honest, I too can!” I believe this is one of God’s elegant ways of building His Kingdom on earth as it must be in Heaven. There’s no other project on earth more exciting, demanding and satisfying than building The Kingdom right here and now, the just society on earth. Everyone building it His way is a VIP! The Kingdom up there, He will take care. By making others great, no one becomes smaller.
3. To create an environment where our society can grow and develop as it should, we need people—leaders and led—who want nothing for themselves. God is able to use such people to build trust, hope and unity.

I believe all this is do-able and on this very special day, let us make a start and faithfully keep it up for the sake of our society and for the coming generations.

Our homeland is, most strategically and perilously, placed at the meeting point of nations, races, religions, cultures and ancient civilizations. It is also one of the areas on the globe still quite green with rare bio-diversity hot spots. We are surrounded by complicated and explosive problems that threaten to destabilize the entire continent.



If the impacts of the challenges from outside are not to overwhelm us, but make us grow stronger as we should, we urgently need to reach out to one another and restore the health and spirit of our society, whatever the cost may be to our pride, prejudices, fears and selfishness. These enemies are not worth our protection.

These are compelling reasons for us to come together and celebrate Naga Day as we are doing today.

CELEBRATING OUR ONENESS

Zelhou Keyho

.....

I bring greetings to all the Nagas gathered here today in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and on behalf of the Nagaland Baptist Church Council and Nagaland Joint Christian Forum.

Nagas make a big family and we take pride in this. Our bigness transcends the demarcation of border lines. But, often times, we try to relate to each other based on directions and demarcations. This creates mental divides and deeply hurts those who are pointed at and referred to. This attitude must die in us for true brotherhood to emerge across borders.

Nagas were once known to be people of pride. We take pride in our oneness amidst our diversities, in culture, in tradition and in practice. In this we see beauty and oneness and call ourselves Nagas; Nagas by blood and Nagas in spirit, we say. The Nagas in the east, Nagas in the west, Nagas in the north and Nagas in the south, all united as a family.

Over the years, in our struggles and in our strife, we seem to have become selfish trying to build and emerge in our smaller world, fencing ourselves from our common brotherhood. We seem to work harder to box ourselves from the rest of our brothers and sisters rather than to extend our hands to lift up the weak and the suffering who cry for understanding and recognition.

THE GATHERING TODAY MUST KILL THIS SPIRIT; ONLY THEN TRUE CELEBRATION WILL EMERGE IN FULL BLOOM!



I want to pose a question before us: why do we call ourselves Nagas? Nagas are spread across international boundaries. We think of our brothers and sisters in Myanmar, our brothers and sisters in Arunachal Pradesh, our brothers and sisters in Manipur, our brothers and sisters in Assam and our Naga brothers and sisters in Nagaland. What binds us together and why do we call ourselves Nagas? This question needs an answer as we are gathered here today to celebrate our oneness. We must begin to discover the commonness in us to call ourselves Nagas rather than try to demarcate ourselves by regions and directions.

Part of the song sung by our children today goes, *“Fair mountains and valleys rich with God’s resources, Green fields full and fruitful, Gift to us to muster, Our heritage so rich, let this forever be ours.”* But what do we have now? This is the question we must ask.

Another line goes, *“Undimmed by fears and tears, Join hands through broken lines.”* There are many broken lines and we must extend our hands to one another and join hands so as to find healing and to make the broken lines disappear.

Nagas have become experts in narrating our history and our past but have become weak in finding the strength to live out our blissful past of oneness. The divide in our mind has become bigger and larger than the arbitrary boundaries, the physical and geographical divides.

Nagas must mentally implant **NAGAS WITHOUT BORDERS** by uprooting the false notion that one is better than the other. **ONLY THEN NAGAS WITHOUT BORDERS WILL EMERGE IN VICTORY.**

Three things are **NECESSARY** in our celebration:

1. Create a positive history for tomorrow by going back to the past glory of oneness and come out strong by asserting that unity is a must for true celebration of oneness to take place in our mind and in the way we look at each other.

2. We must begin to think positive. Positive thinking is possible only when we learn to respect each other. Unclothe the spirit of superiority and false intellectualism, and clothe ourselves with humility and respect, which we need towards each other to build a better future for the generations to come. One day our children will not blame us for not doing enough, but honor us for living out what we believe is true.

3. Nagas must take the journey of finding the true and living God as much as we try to find ourselves. If we truly believe that God is the creator of the heavens and the earth, the same is the God of the Nagas. The God of the Bible is the God of love and justice, and the God of forgiveness as well. And only in this we can be drawn together as one. The Nagas must learn to love our neighbors and do unto them what you would wish them to do unto you. Nagas must no longer blaspheme God. If we do not honor God, Nagas will perish as fools, calling upon God without finding HIM. We will find each other and learn to respect each other only when we find the true and living God.

Celebrating our oneness should not become a one day celebration. It must transcend the divided border lines so that we can say in unison, "WE ARE NAGAS WITHOUT BORDERS." As we return home with the setting of the sun to our regions, villages, towns and homes, may a new day dawn upon us with the spirit of *Nagas Without Borders*. In God there is no east, no west, no south, no north; all are one and united in Christ. May this dawn upon us today.

Thank you and God bless you all!

For me to live is Christ...





An elderly woman prays for peace and unity in and around the Naga nation at Khuochiezie (Kohima Local Ground) on January 10, 2018.
(Photo by Soreishim Mahong)

WITHOUT BORDERS

Tali Angh

.....

Why romanticize the heaviness and brokenness of our past?
Looking up to the sky, are we wondering
where do we go from here and now?
One by one we come to the altar of the Merciful One
We're arriving home now
Hope is rising up and we're waking up to see a new day
We've found where we belong

I see a Nation rising from a hope
And it's without borders
I hear the sound, sound like the rain
It's a song of redemption
We stand without borders, without borders



Once again I hear from the city streets the
laughter of the old and young
I see the warriors rising up and breaking
down these old walls of fear with love
One by one we come to the altar of the Merciful One
We're arriving home now
Hope is rising up and we're waking up to see a new day
We've found where we belong

We're the sons and daughters of the Almighty One
We're the royals singing the freedom song
Love will find a way
Love will fight for us
Love won't fail

We stand without borders, without borders.

Written and composed by Tali Angh for Naga Day, 2018.

NAGA DAY

Temsula Ao

.....

I extend my sincere greetings to my fellow Nagas who are gathered here to express their solidarity with the urgent need of our people to retrospect and reconstruct our society. If we look into our hearts, we will obviously see remnants of old wounds, grudges and the most destructive of all human emotions: the craze for revenge. Many of us may be trying to reconstruct a new identity without first renouncing such encumbrances. But such efforts will be futile, like trying to construct a new house without first getting rid of the debris of the old one. I am using this mundane metaphor because we Nagas are essentially builders of homes and entire villages and you will understand what I am trying to say. A new house should result in a better, bigger one where the dimensions are enhanced and the materials used are of superior quality. And, most important of all, the new house should be able to withstand and survive all aggression on it, be it human or otherwise. Such a result can be achieved only when we get rid of the old and decaying stuff of the old house and rely on genuine and long-lasting materials for the new one.

I congratulate the members of the Forum for Naga Reconciliation who have been working relentlessly to bring about such a makeover of our old selves towards a collective identity as Nagas. And this will be possible only when we understand the intrinsic meaning of the most important word in the vocabulary of the Forum: **Reconciliation**. This word carries with it the wisdom of the ages where great men and women resolved to forego their pride and ego if their ‘sacrifices’ brought about peace and harmony for the



entire people. This was achieved only when the 'yielding' was done with 'forgiveness' for all, humility and renouncing all 'resentments' about the past.

Today, we stand on a new threshold where such acts of brave self-sacrifice are demanded by the times from our 'Leaders' as well as the masses. If we look at world history, the first name that comes to mind is South Africa and their leader, Nelson Mandela. The process of reconciliation was not easy, but eventually they were able to reconcile old rivalries and hatred; together the natives and the white rulers have built a viable nation. I believe that we Nagas can also build such a nation, because we are already 'one' people, if we renounce violence as a weapon of intimidation and recognize that conflict only results in more conflict, and blocks the approach to any kind of understanding and reconciliation.

My humble appeal to all like-minded Nagas on this Day is:

Let us shed our individualistic tribal isolationism and devote our efforts towards formulating a flexible, inclusive and common identity as a people. Such an attitude will help us develop a new adaptability derived from a rational introspection of our tumultuous past. Let the gore and glories of the past lie buried in history, and let us retain only what is good and viable for NOW. Then, and only then, true reconciliation will happen and we will be able to survive in the new milieu without compromising our moral values or losing our identity as a people.





People in attendance at Khuochiezie (Kohima Local Ground) on January 10, 2018, Naga Day.
(Photo by Soreishim Mahong)

OPPOSITE PAGE
A Konyak women's band, Angam Khong, performed two songs for Naga Day, 2018.
(Photo by Soreishim Mahong)

THOUGHTS ON NAGA DAY: JANUARY 10, 2018

Sipong Chingmak Chang

Couple of years back, I hiked deep into the heart of the Naga self administered areas of Burma (Myanmar). What struck me were the remoteness of the place and the alienation of an entire people from change that was taking globally. In one of the villages, where I camped for the night, I heard the early morning cry of a young girl; it sounded like she was in agonizing pain. I could not help but go to where the noise came from. As I walked into the tiny hut, I saw an elderly man by the side of the fire, working on the forehead of a girl—a tattoo marking her clan. This episode was in 2014. Today we mark Naga Day, an event commemorating the day the Naga Club presented its ‘infamous letter’ (for some) to the Simon Commission, exactly 89 years ago, asserting our right to be a nation. Ironically, we Nagas live in different time zones today, wherein some still live in the tattoo era. In rural Nagaland, many of the poor cannot differentiate a Rs. 100 note from a Rs. 10 note. Yet, what is noteworthy is the far sightedness of the Naga Club members, who, in 1929, decided to assert our right to live as ONE people.

I am sure there are some here today representing the intelligence community; and yet, dear friends, you will agree with me that to assert your right as a people is no crime; it is, in fact, a democratic value. We learned this from India’s own nonviolent movement of *Satyagraha*. Nagas were in the forefront and, at the same time, in dialogue with the great Mahatma. Nagas learned, alongside Indians, to stand for the right to self-determination. To celebrate that event, of wanting to be your ‘true self,’ should not be a matter of concern but be acknowledged as reality. Our forefathers were alongside



Indian soldiers in Europe, the two World Wars and this shared history of a journey to self-determination, to be freed from British rule, should not be ignored or discounted. To me this is the uniqueness of the Naga story and we are glad India has agreed to acknowledge this.

Today the world is struggling with a totalitarian attitude which is gradually leading to polarization of society. Sometimes it is scary because all minorities make up only 30% of India's total population and to harp on politics of majoritarianism can be very disheartening for those of us who see India as a concept of humanism in practice. Brahminism is on the rise and this idea might kill the idea of India, which is akin to Naga culture of inclusion and amity.

The same is true for us Nagas. So long as we equate our security to our tribal identities, I see no progress and no change at all. India was one of the richest civilizations but historians have pointed out that because of racism and the caste system, India could not fast track economic growth. But Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, though a Brahmin and despite having absolute power to dictate terms, chose to speak of an inclusive, all-embracing, pluralistic and multi-cultural India. He had the mammoth task to build and design a political institution, which was equal and which gave free access to all.

I therefore dream, for my children, of a Naga nation where there is no hidden pan tribal agenda. How I wish an Ao, an Angami and a Tangkhul are invited to the Sumi Hoho meeting, a Yimchunger speaks at the Chang Tribal Hoho and vice versa. The Naga Club was very particular to mention 'all Nagas' and even wrote about those not within the British administration (Eastern Nagaland areas) and the idea of One Naga. Further, if you look at the signatories you will observe that it was inclusive and plurality was regarded.

What confuses me today is that 70 years after India's nationhood was achieved, there is an attempt to usher uniformity of a particular culture to be applied to all. Lately, a shopkeeper from India, who spoke to me only in Chang for the past 20 years, decided to speak to me in Hindi. I jokingly told

him, “*Apunibi Naga laka pani, aro Naga laka hawa khai ase toe Nagamese tae kobi na.*” You consume the Naga water and Naga air, why don’t you speak in Nagamese? (given our many Naga languages, I feel we will never have a common Naga language). Sadly, I am experiencing a disconnect between us; it is also reflective of an attitude of ‘I am this’ and ‘you ought to be me.’

All tribes, especially the major tribes, should refrain from the temptation to pursue this attitude of domination. We should celebrate differences and respect even the least member amongst us as equals. In this I want to warn all that any form of racism and domination are abnormalities of Lucifer.

A couple of years ago, I met an old lady in the train and I thought she was Mizo. I asked her where she was from and she said, “*Moi toe Naga Kuki ase toe.*” I am Naga Kuki. She was 67, so I feel she was not trying to be fashionable; she probably believed herself to be one. Inclusion, equal and just participation should be our goal. I am dreaming of a day when Naga women will be included in the village citizen’s forum.

Paul puts it beautifully in Galatians 3:28 where he writes, for those in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slaves nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ. Or shall we say, “For since ye are all one in Christ and therefore ye are a genuine Naga?”

Then, the idea that I will have all other tribes conform to my tribe should be dealt with within every Naga leader visualizing change. Change can happen only if we decide to accept the otherness in the other person.

Lastly, in Christmas 2017, I was with an elderly family member for dinner and her husband, an American, told me something which should shame us all. He said, “Nagas are generally very good for the first 3 days!”

What does it mean to be a Naga then?

In 2015, in a remote Naga village, a pastor was found dead in the forest



under the load of a 7-foot long log of timber; he died of exhaustion and hunger. He was a father to 7 children and his salary was barely Rs. 500. To sustain his family, he had to work even in the early hours of the day. The nature and circumstance of his death was not only shocking but extremely shameful.

Friends, the kind of corruption we have and the ratio of wealth distribution is so disproportionate that it is beyond redemption. This is a consequence of the collective sin of greed, which we all have to bear, and the consequence of this apathy is what we will have to swallow before God and humanity.

Being Naga and imbibing the values of 'Naganess' have to become issues for a thoughtful debate. Being Naga should not become a synonym for indiscipline, corruption, easy going or non-collaborative attitudes. The word Naga should connect to words such as honest, beautiful, hard working and values centered on comradeship, as it was for our fore parents. To protect the interest of the old, the traveler and the poor were paramount to them. I am told that in Japan, the first 9 years of schooling is primarily focused on Japanese cultural value systems. The degree of a bow depends on the age of the person. Any person more than 80 would get a 90 degree bow of respect; these values are still being taught in today's Japan.

Nogales in Arizona USA and Nogales in Sanora Mexico are two sides of the same town. Just a small fence runs through this town to mark the North as belonging to the USA and the South to Mexico. People of Nogales belong to the same race, same culture and speak the same language. However, people in North Nogales have access to good roads, everyone owns a vehicle, average annual income is USD 30,000, teenagers go to college and people have health insurance. The people in South Nogales earn less than USD 3,000 a year, crime and drug use is high and people still use donkey-pulled carts. They are the same people and yet the stark reality is that these two nations were built on different political institutions and value systems. In the South, there is tribal hegemony, control by gangs, and tokenism is the guiding principle of politics and governance. People are not judged by their abilities but by connections and tribal affiliations, also true of us Nagas. In today's fast

WALKING THE NAGA DAY

changing world and even within the North East states, are we Nagas the ones living in South Nogales?

Naga Club did their part in 1929. What is the legacy that we are going to leave behind for the future?





Konyak warriors start off the Naga Day program with brass gongs and ceremonial shooting of muzzle loading guns.
(Photo by Aheli Moitra)

LIVE AS ONE

Alobo Naga and Tetseo Sisters

Every day you hear something's wrong
There's so much anguished pain, no hope to move on
Hear the children crying out to you
Reach out with love and give them hope

It's for you and me to keep their dreams alive
Walking hand in hand until we reach our goals
Many souls have been broken
So it's time to lend a helping hand
May the peace of God bring unity and love
And let us live as one
Let's live as one

We are making history today
As we stand on our feet
We won't let anyone break us down
In reaching our destiny
A place to call our own
Joining our hands today
As we begin to live as one



I see hope now, as we stand here today
Let's leave aside all our differences and march ahead
'Cos we've waited too long to see this day
Let's Forgive each other
And live as one

It's for you and me to keep our dreams alive
Walking hand in hand until we reach our goals
Many souls have been broken
So it's time to lend a helping hand
May the peace of God bring unity and love
And let us live as one

Written and composed by Alobo Naga

YES TO 'NAGAS WITHOUT BORDERS'

L. Adani

.....

On the January 10, 1929, leaders of the Naga Club, representing the Naga people, though not equipped with skills of statecraft or knowledge of international relations or colonialism of that time, and armed only with visionary minds, submitted a prophetic memorandum to the Simon Commission demanding that when the British left India, the Nagas should be left “alone to determine ourselves as in ancient times.”

They conceived of a Naga-Land at a time in history when there was no such place on the map of the world. They did not want reforms which were foreign and wanted to live their own ways of life, which they cherished: where customary laws held together the people and their land, and taxes were not paid on “the land of our birth.” They admitted at the time that “we have no unity among us” and that “our education is poor” with hardly two or three graduates; with no one able to represent Nagas in any council of a province.

Much for the worse has happened since then. The British left India and Burma (Myanmar) but we were not left alone. Today, the land of our birth has been placed in different countries and states, and under different administrations, rules and systems. At the time, our people admittedly could not organize UNITY because of connectivity and language barriers. Unity still poses, and in much more critical dimensions, as the debilitating concern. Distance of the minds and hearts have widened over the years even though physical barriers have been negotiated to manageable levels and education has spread in our land, with more than enough qualified to represent our



people. The once independent and isolated Nagas, over the years of struggle for their historical and political rights, have been labeled as ethnocentric and as exclusivists by others.

Today, 89 years later, Nagas have converged here from across the spread of our ancestral domain at the call of the Forum for Naga Reconciliation to celebrate our “oneness” and to affirm to be, henceforth, “Nagas without borders.” Nagas have responded to the call but we have also come with our respective shawls; with our narrow, biased, tribal, regional perspectives—of the south, north, east and west, of them and us. We have also come with distrusts and hurts, perceived and real, which are deeply entrenched. The way forward from this seemingly impossible situation is, therefore, to commit ourselves today to the higher and bigger possibility in the collective so that we are not swayed to confusion and disillusionment by immediate emotions and sentiments of here and there, us and them. Let tribes and regions not be the cause of division, but let us allow our enlightened spirit to find our collective belongingness in the many tribes and regions that we are.

In the spirit of oneness and being “Nagas across borders,” let us find the higher ground on which Nagas must firmly and proudly position ourselves to withstand fissiparous elements and enervating influences that jeopardize Naga nationhood. The spirit of oneness, which envisions you, me and all of us as belonging to one socio-cultural and political entity, lays the foundation of the Nagas as a people with a common hope and a common future.

May this convergence dissolve the borders of imagination within us and, gaining strength from within us as a collective, enable us to open up and reach out to our neighbors with the message of higher and bigger human possibilities together.

May the observation of ‘Naga Day’ cement and consolidate the organic bonding of the Naga people.

Kuknalim! *Yes Yes Yes* to ‘Nagas Without Borders.’
Kuknalim!





An elder prays as the Naga choir is seen on stage after 'Kuknalim' - Victory to the Land - on Naga Day, January 10, 2018. (Photo by Caisii Mao)

OPPOSITE PAGE
The Tetseo Sisters perform as part of Naga Day celebrations. (Photo by Aheli Moitra)

THE POINT OF RECONCILIATION

Athong Makury

.....

Dear fellow Nagas from across the Naga inhabited areas,

I bring you greetings from the east in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and I pray for God's blessings upon all the Nagas wherever we may live.

I, on behalf of the Eastern Nagas, the Council of Naga Affairs and myself, am deeply thankful to God for giving me this privilege to speak on this historic day for the Naga people. God has set time for everything and every being in this universe. May we take this event, Naga Day, as a promise from above, designed by God, our Maker. The Bible says God made the covenant with humankind that we might live in accordance with His law and decree. When humans failed to live up to His law, the promise was broken. Yet He remained faithful and kind towards His creation by providing the means of getting His children to be home. The promise was His Son, and no other way is found to be home. Because it is God's promise designed by Himself and no one on earth can deter or thwart in fulfilling His covenant.

In our history, our ancestors and elders were so wise that they began our movement with God, with His promise that we shall be a free nation under His guidance. Our pioneers made a solemn pledge with God and, upon it, God pronounced His promise. It is also learned that the prevailing chaos and turmoil are because we have deviated from His design and failed to make His promise Our pledge. Humans change but God never! If we truly



long for the national reconciliation designed by the Creator Himself for Nagas, it will happen only when we realize the original pledge we solemnly made with God.

As promised Children, we have faced a lot of temptations when we look back along the way from which we have come so far. We have been lured away, leaving the true path for a short time relief because we humanly thought God's promise was too far to reach. Had we not begun with God, it would be a waste of time for us to look upon His promise and keep the pledge. But we began with Him, and we need to return to Him with the pledge we made. As long as we deviate from the firstborn pledge, we will never find true reconciliation.

As we look for genuine reconciliation, I would like to appeal to all the concerned stakeholders to look back and realize how the foundation was made. I believe, with strong faith, that by the moment we return to our firstborn pledge based on our historical and political rights, we will find true reconciliation favored by both God and men.

KUKNALIM!

NGAHONG (FOREST)

Featherheads

.....

(In Tangkhul Naga)

Oh ram khayaowa bing
Mathukha khuilo
Rəkachang chirkhui
Khaksuikha khuilo
Oh hey oh hey

Shongkhār khangacheiya ram
Theishing machikha thingnā rəhā Ngahongna khuithuihao
Theishing machila ngahongli mayao vālo

Oh ram khayaowa bing
Mei katum sanglo
Si-kachāng rā-ura
Lumkhuilu pheipāng
Oh hey oh hey

Shongkhār khangacheiya ram
Theishing machikha thingnā rəhā Ngahongna khuithuihao
Theishing machila ngahongli mayao vālo



Pəkhəngapā ātam chi rā-ura
Thuima thuklu kaphung naobing
Marəŋ kahai atam chi nganai haira
Khokha salu iram naobing

Oh hey...Oh hey...

(In English)

Oh travelers rest well
Quench your thirst
Take a deep breath
Oh hey oh hey

It's a world of changing routes
If you aren't sure of your destination
The plants and forest will consume you
If you aren't sure, do not head to the forest

Oh travelers, keep the fire burning
Winter has come
Keep your body warm
Oh hey oh hey

It's a world of changing routes
If you aren't sure of your destination
The plants and forest will consume you
If you aren't sure, do not head to the forest

Time of destruction has come
Wake up, people of the hills and mountains
The prophecy is near
Get united my fellow tribesmen

Oh hey... Oh hey...

Written and composed by Augustine Shimray

Labu Sakhrie performs 'Blowing in the Wind' on the Naga Day stage. (Photo by Soreishim Mahong)



THE CHOICE WE HAVE TO MAKE

Kethoser Kevichüsa

It is said that there are three kinds of people in any society. This threefold distinction has been made by notable sociologists and public intellectuals.¹ But this distinction was first identified and stated by the founders and supporters of democracy in ancient Greece – the civilisation that in many ways gave us the modern civilised world.

For Greek people, the first kind of people in a society are the *idiots*. For the Greeks, the idiot (Gk. *idiōtēs*) did not mean the person who is mentally deficient. Rather, the idiot is the private, self-centred, and selfish person. The idiot has no public philosophy, knowledge, character, virtues, or skills that are required to live in a civilised society. He is the person who is only after his individual interest and personal gain. The idiot puts his private pleasures before public affairs, and his personal treasures before the collective welfare. The idiot, for the Greeks, is just a slightly upgraded barbarian.

The second kind of people are the *tribes people* (“Tribes people” here does not simply mean the fact of people belonging to certain tribes; it means, rather, the tribal and tribalistic mentality). Tribes people are those people who cannot think beyond their tribe or their parochial group. Their duty and responsibility is primarily, only, and ultimately towards their tribe or group. Their “god” is their tribe and their religion is tribalism. Tribes people see the world and

¹ See, in particular, John Courtney Murray, S.J., “The Return to Tribalism,” in *Bridging the Sacred and the Secular: Selected Writings of John Courtney Murray*, ed. J. Leon Hooper, S.J. (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1994); Os Guinness, “Tribespeople, Idiots, or Citizens?,” in *The American Hour* (New York: The Free Press, 1993).

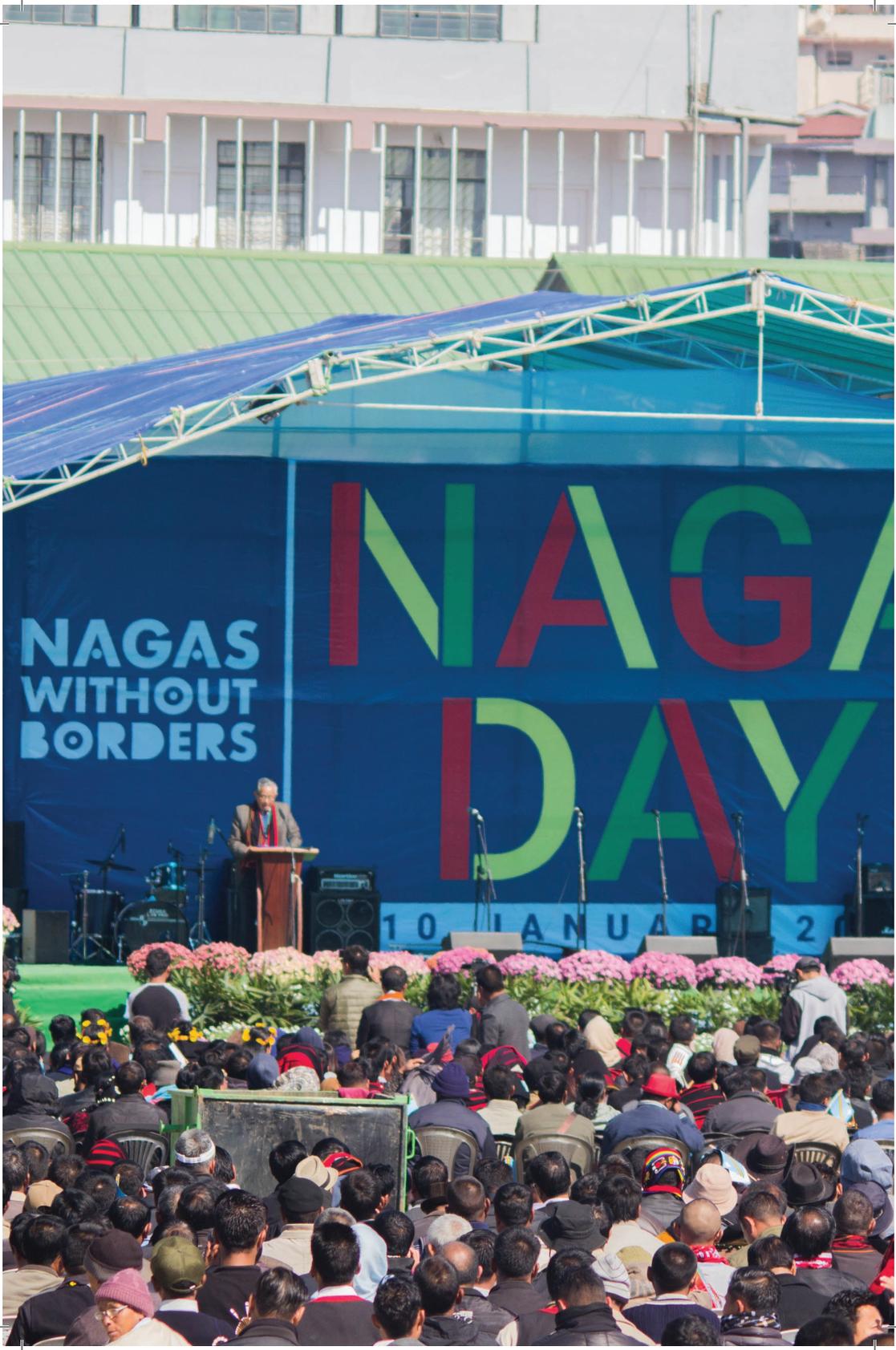


respond to situations only in terms of their tribal or group allegiances. They are suspicious and fearful of anything that is different from or alien to them or themselves. They usually deal with different people and difficult situations with intimidation, force and violence. Tribes people are essentially a war-making people, and the ideal person for them is “the warrior.”

But not so for the Greeks. For the Greeks, there was a third kind of people. These people, or this person, was the ideal type. This person was *the citizen*. (Again, by “citizen,” we do not mean one’s legal or political status; rather, we mean the idea and the ideal of citizenship.) The citizen is the one who recognises that one is a member of a commonwealth, and thus seeks the common good. The citizen appreciates the knowledge and skills that underlie public life and that make a civilised society. The citizen has a mind-set that goes beyond individual interests, and a magnanimity that transcends tribal allegiances. The citizen knows not only one’s rights *in* society, but also one’s responsibilities *to* society. The citizen can also fight for his or her rights and interests, but always with an awareness and respect for the rights and interests of others, even the smallest of minorities, the most different of neighbours, and the worst of enemies. Citizens can also settle their differences with civility. And it is citizens that make and make up a civilised society – one that truly approximates what the word “society” essentially means and implies: *friendliness* and *friendship*.²

This was the threefold distinction in the ancient Greek world. This is the choice that any individual has to make in any given society. This is also the stark choice that faces us Naga people today. And we – each and every one of us – have to decide. Will we, in our attitudes and actions, be *idiots*? Will we be *tribes people*? Or, will we be *citizens*? On this historic Naga Day, I would want to make my choice and take my stand. I hope that you will too. I also hope that you and I will make the right choice. And it is in that hope that I want to address you, ladies and gentlemen, as – *my fellow Naga citizens*.

2 “The term ‘society’ came from the Latin word *societas*, which in turn was derived from the noun *socius* (‘comrade, friend, ally’; adjectival form *socialis*) used to describe a bond or interaction between parties that are friendly, or at least civil.”(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Society#Etymology_and_usage.)



NAGAS
WITHOUT
BORDERS

NAGAS
DAY

10 JANUARY 2019



Naga elder, Niketu Iralu, explains the relevance of Naga Day.
(Photo by Tshetsholo Naro)

TOP
A Naga Day Souvenir Stall made memory merchandise available—this included Naga Day wrist bands, tee shirts, bags and books.
(Photo by Aheli Moitra)

THE VALUES OF RECONCILIATION

Aküm Longchari

.....

Naga Day is a day to celebrate:

Who we are as a Peoples and a Nations;

A time to consolidate our commonness, embrace our differences and rise above them.

Naga Day provides us with the opportunity to examine ourselves as a people;

To explore visionary imagination;

And, above all, Naga Day is a Call to Common Action.

In essence, Naga Day is calling us to be a Shining Light in the Darkness of our growing Despair.

In these trying times, to be a Light in the Darkness means to Recover, Relearn and Nurture Naga values and ethos so that they may light the path forward into the future.

Nagas need to recover the values of truth. There are two kinds of truth: One that hides and shields, the other that reveals and liberates. And many a times we find ourselves holding both of them based on our need of the moment, and, sometimes, based on our convenience. This has only complicated the



question of truth. Can we agree that we will only hold the truth which reveals, liberates and shines!

Nagas need to practice values of grace and compassion. Mercy has become blind in the Naga context. We can open the eyes of Mercy to see the truth in our lives.

Nagas need to uphold the values of justice, which are Right Relationship and Right Livelihood. Not self-righteousness that leads to revenge and justifications. Revenge is not justice. We need to uphold justice that represents respect, accountability and responsibility for each other.

Nagas need to embrace Peace – by living in freedom, justice, harmony, wholeness that restores, stimulates and is life-giving. Not negative peace, which is seen primarily as an absence of war.

The place where Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace meet is called Reconciliation. All of these values help to restore our wholeness as a people. When they come together, the place is called reconciliation. Reconciliation is the call to Common Action.

Here in our Naga context we are living at a time when Trust is Suppressed, Mercy has been Blinded, Justice has been Kidnapped and Peace, in the real sense, does not exist. The question is whether we Nagas have the courage and the determination to Stand with Truth, Open the Eyes of Mercy, Liberate Justice and Enable Peace to exist. To create the space for Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace to meet together is the call to Common Action.

Reconciliation is action oriented. It means much more than forgiveness. Reconciliation is a revolution and implies a new way of life; and with it comes a new Naga Consciousness. Reconciliation changes existing power relations, it breaks down the status quo and gives birth to a new system of relationships. This requires a revolution in our thinking, mindset and in our action. It is THE Light in the darkness of despair; it is a way out of our learned helplessness.

When a nation is reconciled it is the people who will determine the destiny of the land. But, so long as a nation remains divided, the lands will continue to determine the destiny of the people. Today, on this Naga Day as we gather under the theme *Nagas Without Borders*, we need to question ourselves whether the land will determine the fate of the Naga people, or whether we, the people, will determine the destiny of our land. In this, the question of Naga Reconciliation is critical.

Naga Day invites us to commit to these values of Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace. The wholeness of Naga identity will become distinct through bringing to life these values which can determine the pathway to our future.

Dear Nagas, to become the Light in this darkness of despair, we need to realize that we cannot wait for tomorrow because we cannot borrow the future of our children. The light in us needs to be lit today so that we become the difference.



KEPENUOPFÜ NAGAMIA KEKHRIE GOD'S LOVE FOR THE NAGAS

Pfüchazhünuo
.....

(In Tenyidie)

Kepenuopfü Nagamia kekhrie
Medosüro Mhapete ki zha
Niethu peso Kijü Kevira
Welie hudi Sonuo rüna chü
Khidunhie we U Krütsanuoko
Noupuo Chüdi Nagamia Rügüo
Keshülanu Siekelhoumia bu
Vilakesa Lhou rünuo thienyü

(In English)

God's love for the Nagas
Upon contemplation is far greater than all
Over the bountiful Eastern highlands
We prevailed together to make our villages
In the yesteryears, our forefathers,
With one heart, forfended the Nagas
And so, may the future generation abide
In renewed goodness and contentment

Lyrics by Vilazonuo Rutsa

Translation by Neipukhrieno P Vadeo and Vemuriyü Vadeo





Naga theatre group, Dreamz Unlimited, perform their original play titled 'Zero Point' at the Naga Day, 2018.
(Photo by Aheli Moitra)

OPPOSITE PAGE

Naga men in traditional paraphernalia watch the Naga Day program at the Kohima Local Ground on January 10, 2018.
(Photo by Aheli Moitra)

NAGA DAY ALL OF US TOGETHER

P. Ngully

.....

As we are gathered here today with our Heads Held High, let us remember our common past while being mindful of our common interest to propel us into a common future.

In doing so, let us understand that “we do not become good by trying to be good, but by finding the goodness that is already within us, and allowing the goodness to emerge” (*Eckhart Tolle - A new earth*). Only through such a genuine effort can we bring forth a Fresh Breath of air that can be shared among ourselves, our neighbors and the rest of humanity.

But our world today is “broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls,” where we are unable to find the “clear stream of reasons” that has “lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habits.” (*Rabindranath Tagore - Gitanjali*).

And sadly, we are caught up in incessant conflicts more often than not, fuelled by Fear, Greed and Desire for Power. We remain wounded and fearful of a future filled with Anxieties, Uncertainties and Vulnerabilities. No wonder, we appear to be passing through “times that test a man’s soul.” (*Sir Thomas Paine*).

From where we are, we need to earnestly seek and open our minds to the World of ever Widening Thoughts and Actions. For which, we must begin, as in the ancient days, by renewing and rebuilding our relationship through



Face to Face encounters; where we can, at times, Disagree strongly but still remain Friends. We will then understand that people not like us are actually people just like us. In fact, accepting people not like us can make us Grow and every time we hold out a hand of friendship to somebody not like us, we heal one of the fractures of our Wounded World.

But we can only do that and welcome a stranger when we have a Strong Identity. And our identity can be strong only when we understand who we are, where we come from and what are the values and ideals with which we live. This is possible only by narrating and understanding our story, reading and studying our history. For, if our identity is weak, we will feel threatened. Our identity should be strong enough to welcome a stranger to share our stories, to share our lives, to share our aspirations and dreams.

The Jewish people scattered all over the world for 2000 years but never lost their identity. Every year, on the Passover Feast, they relate and narrate their stories while eating unleavened breads with bitter herbs to remind them of the bitter days of slavery.

To do that, it is important that we take collective responsibility to move from the ‘World of Me’ to ‘All of Us Together’ whereby discovering our ancient beliefs of wisdom and truth—that we are strong when we care for the weak, we are rich when we care for the poor and we are invulnerable when we care for the vulnerable. Only then we will realize that the only one that can save us from ourselves is We, the People.

We will surely then be prepared to face the future NOT ALONE but TOGETHER. We then hope to transcend sublimely to what Jesus Christ has taught us “Love your Enemy” (Matthew 5:14).

Only then we can claim our Rightful Place through the Healing of our Spirit as a Nation among Nations.

KUKNALIM

NAGAS WITHOUT BORDERS: IMAGINING THE FUTURE

Kim Chishi

As an individual and as somebody from the present generation of Nagas, I feel very incompetent to talk about the Naga people cutting across political and geographical boundaries – ‘Nagas Without Borders.’ However, since it is accompanied by the phrase “imagining the future,” I would like to put across my imagination on my understanding of things and what I would like to envisage about the possible future of the Naga people who will inherit the legacy of our ancestors who lived without any colonial borders, although the relevance and comparison of the past and the future will be miles apart.

For a young mind in today’s situation, it is very difficult to even imagine that Nagas can live without borders when we come across the various turn of events in the present Naga context and the things we hear every day, be it in the kitchens or on the streets. The endless differing opinions, the anger/hatred towards one another, the tendency to let each other down, or the lust for self-benefit are some of the present day affairs.

Perhaps, these are also the sign of our times; that the days of the older generations are coming to pass, without meaning any disrespect. It is the daring resolution of our elder pioneers that made us who we are; they chose what they believed to be the right, natural and honorable course for the Nagas. But as the Bible says, “...and all things shall become new.” The struggle of our people is the child of our ancestral land and its history, both of which are important to us as they define who we are.



It is in this perspective that I would like to imagine the future: where Nagas will live together without any territorial demarcations, political or geographical, where my people will own a democratic space to come together to speak without fear of their pains, joys and insecurities, where my tribe and your tribe will become a thing of the past, where my people will be encouraged and empowered to participate in decision making processes that affect their lives and their future, and where Nagas will start to live with all eyes on the eastern fronts, with gateways connected to the Chindwin River and our towns and cities sprawling on the green pastures and lush hills and valleys of the once upon a time, which were called the eastern Naga areas.

I imagine this future for my generation, if that could be possible. Or even if that is not possible for my generation, I would still like to imagine this “Naga Future” for the next generations to follow.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my thoughts and dreams on this occasion of the Naga Day, January 10, 2018.





The Nagaland Chamber Choir performs 'All of Us' on Naga Day.
(Photo by Soreishim Mahong)

OPPOSITE PAGE
Young volunteers serve tea to participants at the first Naga Day.
(Photo by Aheli Moitra)

COME, OH NAGAS! COME AS ONE

Nagagenous

.....

Wolo, Wolo, Zülo, Zülo

Come, Oh Nagas! Come as One
Let us love one another

Come, Oh Nagas! Come as One
Let us join hands together

Come, Oh Nagas! Come as One
Let us reason together

Come, Oh Nagas! Come as One
Let us all walk together

Come, Oh Nagas! Come as One
Oh United, we will stand

Come, Oh Nagas! Come as One
Oh Divided, we will fall

Bless us today,
Lord! Our God

Come, Oh Nagas! Come as One

Written and composed by Hojevi Kappo





Participants enjoy the Naga Day feast prepared by several tribe based unions for Naga Day, 2018.
(Photo by Aheli Moitra)

OUTSIDE THE BOX

L. Athikho Liriite

.....

A very good morning ladies and gentlemen. Praise God for this beautiful day born to us as ‘Naga Day,’ a revolutionary step initiated under the aegis of the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR). I salute the Forum and the program organizers for enabling us to be here today.

Naga Day makes us think generously outside the box of colonial frontier. We, Nagas, are a society of the same feather; *Nagas Without Borders* is our fundamental and inherent right. It is a Journey of Common Hope for the Nagas to become one.

The creation of Nagaland State on December 1, 1963, was the culmination of the process initiated by the Naga People’s Convention (NPC) as part of the 16-points agreement with the Government of India. I strongly believe this was our first achievement as a common goal. Nagas are scattered in different places because of artificial political boundaries.

I extend my firm belief that Nagaland Nagas, by virtue of being a fully Naga inhabited state, must play a central role in establishing our common dream as a big brother with a big heart to accommodate and achieve our goal as one. We, the civil society, have to demonstrate political wisdom and statesmanship to the part of ‘Nagas as One.’ I honestly request our national workers to develop the true spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation in the greater interest of the Nagas. I believe compromise will lead to unity, which will lead to achieving our common goal.



I, as a young man, want to challenge and invite all our political groups, leaders of civil organizations, church leaders, Hohos and concerned citizens to develop a broader concept of inclusive accommodation on the principles of justice, mutual respect, acceptance, equality and non-violence, breaking artificial barriers and borders to achieve our common dreams as one people.

It is my dream that Nagas will be one sooner or later. Long live FNR; God bless Naga Day!

Kuknalim

YOUNG NAGAS RESPONSIBLE CITIZENRY

Shwisho Lorin

Today is a special day for us all. As a Naga youth, it is an honor for me to share some thoughts from a youth's perspective about Nagaland and what we hope, and dream, for the future. My generation comes from a different time—we have never lived through the past of the Naga struggle for sovereignty or experienced it in the same manner as our elders and foreparents. We can only honor it and try to understand and learn about it from what we have heard, and what we read today.

What I do know is that the point where we have reached today has not been easy. 89 years have passed since January 10, 1929. Many sacrifices have been made. Despite that, when I look at the condition of Nagaland around me—the lack of basic infrastructure for the common person, the division and disunity, the suspicion, the distrust, the selfish greed and blurred future vision—it sometimes hurts to know that the present is, perhaps, no better than the past. And I begin to wonder what we, as youths, can do to help make things better. Today, I am standing here as one of the voices that wants to spread awareness, create hope and voice out. I feel blessed that today, in some small way, I can do that.

As the Forum for Naga Reconciliation has accurately stated, Nagas need Reconciliation. I put forth a few questions to our Naga brothers and sisters today. Can we stop thinking along tribal lines? Can we put aside our individual differences and personal agendas and work towards the common welfare of all? Can we, then, see better roads, better infrastructure and



more opportunities for economic self sufficiency and not be despondent, or beggars, for a piece of the pie? By this, I mean can we promote dignity of labor and professionalism in the quality of our workmanship, whether it is in the private or public sector and, in this way, be accountable as responsible citizens should be?

I would like to humbly say that the younger generation is ready to be the change we want to see. We are learning and we are watching, and we are ready to help Nagaland progress and develop. Our education system has trained us thus far. Yet, I believe, we need to strengthen it further. Education being the tool for change, I envision that we need to revamp it to a system that will focus on making a student a good and responsible citizen. A Naga born this year will be graduating by 2035. The system we make now will decide the future of Nagaland 17 years from now.

My vision for tomorrow is a space where our people can bravely stand up for what is right; the space to act freely and fairly without obstruction. Though the government is necessary for the welfare of the people, a responsible and accountable citizen makes a good society complete. Our state is rich in resources and minerals. We have enough resources to export and to be self-sufficient. However, we need machines. We need industries that will transform our raw materials into finished goods. This will provide employment to thousands of our educated unemployed youths. We need factories that will process domestic and agricultural raw materials. The welfare of the state also depends on its workforce. More the number of working people, better the economy.

Today, here we are—the Young generation of Nagas—a generation that will carry the legacy of the self-determination that was assured years back. My vision for Nagaland is to see a state built by leaders and people jointly working for the betterment of our state. I long to see a state with God fearing people, not money loving people. No more load shedding but love sharing, no more corruption but contribution, no more factionalism but nationalism, no more quantity but quality education, no more sitting but doing, no more hate but love.

I dream of a day when we can focus on positive action and constructive criticism, rather than discouragement for who they are or what they do; a day when the people of Nagaland will shed all forms of pessimism and negativity and focus on optimism and positivity.

A day the people of Nagaland will wake up to the call of dignity and honor of one person, one vote and choose a leader not of financial strength and muscle power, but of value and capability.

On this day, January 10, 2018, let us all come together as one and stand up for what is right, fight the evils that dwell within us, let us all treat all people and jobs with equity, and when many years have passed and we look back, we can proudly say to our children, and I quote, "*When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow we gave our today.*"

Kuknalim!



Theyiesinuo Kreditsu reads poems and essays from the Naga Day book produced and released by the Forum for Naga Reconciliation on December 9, 2017, highlighting the core of Naga Day.
(Photo by Aheli Moitra)



Volunteers distribute lunch, wrapped in leaf, to all who came to be part of Naga Day, 2018, in Kohima.
(Photo by Aheli Moitra)

OPPOSITE PAGE
Neikim Hangsing performs 'Nangma bel kanom me' as part of the first Naga Day celebrations.
(Photo by Aheli Moitra)

OUT
DERS



ARISE NAGAS

Eastern Naga Team

.....

(In Nagamese)

Ishor hi dishe, Naga khan ke matee
Dushman para tokara koree dishe
Ishor morom ase, Naga manu khan ke
Nation bona bi koi kena

Arise Nagas
Yeah! Come on arise!
United as one
Arise Nagas
Let's unite and build our Naga Nation

Naga manu khan ke, divide kuree dishe
Dushman para sukoo julee kena
Ahibee Naga khan, mon ekta hobee
Ekta Naga, ekta nation ase

Naga matee toh, othai dibo karne
Public hobee, shipayi hobee
Tayaree koree lobe, neyor neyor hatiar
Agee phale jabo, ahibee

For the healing, forgiveness and building of our Naga Nation



Arise Nagas
Yeah! Come on arise!
United as one
Arise Nagas
Let's unite and build our Naga Nation

(In English)

God has given land to the Nagas
The enemies have divided the land
For God so loved the Naga people
That he gave land to build a nation on

Arise Nagas
Yeah! Come on arise!
United as one
Arise Nagas
Let's unite and build our Naga Nation

The Nagas have scattered away
The enemies envied our rich inheritance
Come on, Nagas! Let us unite as one
For we belong to one Nation

To fortify our Naga land
Be it countrymen or patriots
Be ready with your shields and arms
And together let us march forward

For the healing, forgiveness and building of our Naga Nation

Arise Nagas
Yeah! Come on arise!
United as one
Arise Nagas
Let's unite and build our Naga Nation

Composed by J. Meatu Meyak

Sung by Joseph Kannon and John Muniak

Translated by Ajo Joseph Rhakho



People leave for home after celebrating Naga Day on Wednesday, January 10, 2018. (Photo by Tshetsholo Naro)

CALLING HOME

NAGA DAY, JANUARY 10, 2018

Wati Aier

.....

Naga history is a colorful landscape with its roots reaching far beyond and long before the discovery of modern civilization. As such, the history of happenings is a being. The soul of Naga history is alive!

Naga Day is a testament that Nagas have victoriously emerged from the storms of our past. Tragedies have taught us to be better and fit people. After all these trials, it is wonderful to be here today. Survival is humbling. To the Nagas, this is like a great piece of art that has been handed to us. Indeed, it is a unique kaleidoscope of socio-cultural art: a collective and constructive art created by the brushes of many painters—young and old, women and men, friends and neighbors.

Naga Day is reaffirming the past—those seemingly tiny acts of courage by our mothers and fathers, and the daring resolves for their love of the Naga people, whose imaginations allow us today to reap priceless historical benefits. History is replete with small beginnings that changed the world in unimaginable ways.

Naga Day is here to say that any victory gained before we have been consolidated into a culture of belonging is not, in fact, a victory, but a failure! We have heard the cries of our own, who far from home called us in the deepest night, and today we come home, today we realize that scattering without a sense of belonging is only a way to diminish ourselves. Naga Day consolidates a culture of belonging and this will continue to spread



influences that Nagas are without borders. Naga Day is creating a new vocabulary for a socio-cultural change and social ecology. Naga Day does not belong to the Forum for Naga Reconciliation. This spirit of the Nagas belongs to all.

Naga Day also symbolizes that Nagas are not how we are portrayed by anthropologists, whose forte is understood as “Premier Colonial Science” (Paul T. Zeleza, African Historian). Nagas have been ascribed with attributes of “backwardness” and “Primitiveness” under “Tribal” codes. Today, Nagas want to make a resolute shift from the myth of a timeless and unchanging past towards a right to dignity and an unsealed identity that is not at the expense of others. A right to dignity is not exclusive to Nagas. It is an aspiration sanctioned by creation itself. Now, we begin to smoothen our rough and tough terrains through the process of comprehensive consciousness. In this sense, Naga Day is a paradigm shift from our perpetual mindset of clinging on and looking backwards. We are strengthening our sense of belonging and identity, and we reinforce our confidence in who we are as individuals, and as a people.

Today, we want to look upon our young people. We want to empower you to contribute your assets and treasures hidden under the rubric of cultural preservation. In this, we must change our outlook and mindsets. Naga Day takes the first step of exorcising the worship of the past that has enslaved us in the present. We must now begin to pave ways for our young people. We must begin to pave ways for our young hearts and minds to hold the future of our land.





REFLECTIONS POST NAGA DAY

NAGA DAY 2018: A CROSSROADS FOR NAGAS AS A PEOPLE

Paul Pimomo

As far as vision statements go, ‘Naga Day Declaration, Kohima, 10 January, 2018,’ crafted by the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR), has deep significance on at least two levels. It is a timely reminder to twenty-first century Nagas that they have an enviable political heritage of standing up for freedom and human rights, going back to the Naga Memorandum to the Simon Commission in 1929, a document that marked the Naga people’s official entry into modern history. The reminder is timely because too many Nagas today are too distracted by the puppetry of power, privilege, wealth, and personal fame swirling around us to recognize the value of our proud heritage or to even realize that the 1929 Memorandum could not have happened except for the long tradition of self-respect and collective well-being inculcated in our people by the Naga community culture.

The second level of significance has to do with the Declaration’s substantive visionary message. It rests on and advances the legacy of the Simon Commission Memorandum. It is the twenty-first century version of the earlier statement. The two belong together. The same spirit, the same values, only broader in vision and better articulated in 2018.

The Naga Day Declaration also adds a new dimension to the self-perception of Nagas in the twenty-first century. For the hundreds of Nagas like me living oceans and thousands of miles away from the homeland, not because we feel estranged from it and our people but because the circumstances of our lives made it necessary for us to leave and look elsewhere for professional



growth and for our personal evolution as human beings, the statement's global sensibility and humanity make us proud to be Naga anywhere in the world.

The reports on the Internet of the first Naga Day celebration in Kohima, January 10, show it was a real success. I really missed being there in person. And I am sure, like many Nagas, both in attendance and far away, I was left thinking to myself: So what now, what next? Nagas declared Independence Day without independence in 1947; Nagas in 2018, divided by state and national boundaries and by ideological walls, have now declared a Naga Day Without Borders. No doubt both occasions and sentiments speak admirably and loudly to the indomitable Naga spirit of freedom and community. We cannot fault ourselves for this; we must live with faith and in hope. But we know, too, that people cannot live on aspirations alone.

Nagas are evolving as a people along a certain path, whether or not we realize, and it is clear at the present time that leadership among the Nagas comes in two forms: individuals and organizations like FNR who are generating positive public energy and aspiration for inclusion and the common good of all; and groups and institutions which directly work against that goal on a daily operational basis, despite what they say and profess to the contrary. Fact is, and we are tired of hearing it, the daily realities of life are in the hands of the second group of leaders who have turned public institutions and government into commercial party and family business. This has made life a constant struggle in the villages and for the average hardworking families in our towns. Unbridled corruption has led to frustration, anger, and hopelessness, even cynicism toward government and public life.

The response to this situation from the two groups of leaders has been predictable but telling. The visionary group of leaders like FNR feels the need to come up with proportionately elevated forms of idealism to cool down the public's temper. We cannot, of course, blame these leaders for their labor of love. The Naga Day is wonderful in vision and for morale, for now. But there will come a time when the public will have no use for lofty aspirational statements and declarations from anywhere.

The response from the other group of leaders has been stunningly indifferent for too long. These people are some of the smartest among the Nagas, so they know what is going on and have become experts in working the corrupt system to their advantage on the excuse that it is the system not they who are personally responsible for what is going on. But we know, and they know, that their position is only partly true. The system is corrupt, yes, but they are each responsible for what is going on. They run the system after all. Good thing is, some of them realize this, and in their best moments feel guilty about their role, and are ready to help clean the system if they could, since in any case they have already set their families on a secure material foundation for generations to come.

The history of ailing democratic societies that recovered tells us that this is the kind of time and place for the public to come in. Nagas are traditionally a democratic society with a vibrant public but whose effectiveness has, in recent times, been rendered minimal by the powers-that-be. It is necessary to regain the public's effectiveness. The people led by visionary leaders like FNR and others must create a peaceful but sustained movement for cleaning up the corrupt system. There will be stern opposition, but the movement should create an environment to gain the hearts and minds of the leaders from the other side who are willing to change and help start a more fair and just society for the future, starting now.

In short, given the situation we are in at the present time, the first Naga Day 2018 is a defining moment, a crossroads, for the evolutionary direction of the Nagas as a people. Nagas will either survive, and thrive, which requires ACTION for change on the ground – in government and civil service, Naga national politics, Church, and of hearts and minds. Or Nagas will go our individual ways, each on our own, with or without borders, and the sensitive among us will nostalgically tell our children and grandchildren of the once brave and caring people they descended from.

I think the overwhelming majority of Nagas everywhere will vote for the first option. And for starters, I am deeply grateful to the signatories of the Memorandum to the Simon Commission in 1929 and to FNR for the Naga Day Declaration in 2018.



REFLECTIONS ON NAGA DAY

Xonzoi (Sanjay) Barbora

The Irish poet and Nobel laureate, Seamus Heaney, had a moment of reflection in his acceptance speech that will resonate with the organizers of Naga Day 2018. He credited poetry for allowing him to make the transition from his difficult but intimate childhood, to an increasingly violent collective life as an adult. Perhaps the dialogue and debates that were held on Naga Day have the potential to function in a similar manner for a generation of Nagas.

A former student of mine texted me at the end of the day, saying how ‘woke’ she was by the event. It surprised me, because she – like others of her generation – had a healthy indifference for the past and about notions of propriety. For many like her, growing up after the ceasefire of 1997, the brutality of wars fought for preserving self-determination and human dignity were not as striking as the pressing needs of the present, with the insecurities of work and a tentative future to think about. It is a condition that has made an entire generation aware about things that have to do with personal growth and with very little to spare to the collective. So, her enthusiasm was both an occasion for reflection and concern.

For an event that allowed Nagas of various generations, political persuasions and classes to come together, I was surprised by the lack of reporting about it in the media outside. There were a scant few lines about it in Assam, while media in mainland India missed the event altogether. I might even hazard a guess that the opening and closing acts of the Hornbill Festival demand

better coverage. After all, they adhere to the idea that there is something exotic and exciting happening in the far hills of Kohima. This is a narrative that suits everyone who is keen to ensure that the trickle of apathetic tourists turn up each year, without necessarily upsetting an order of life that has now settled in: bureaucrats in their planning offices, rich corporates forever on everyone's minds and as sponsors, villagers willing themselves to become spectacles for a week and for an audience of consumers who drive up to Kohima in search of the extraordinary.

There is little doubt that the Naga Day was an opportunity for contemplation, not just for Naga people, but also for a wider region that continues to ask questions about justice, autonomy and peace. However, its format is something that lends itself to indifference, even as it has the capacity to cause someone like my former student to take note of the issues that are being raised. A big event in Kohima, coming as it does barely a month after that mothership of mega-events in the region called the Hornbill Festival, may be something that the organizers can think about. If Seamus Heaney invoked the ordinariness of poetry for allowing him to make the transition, can one think about dialogue being its equivalent for the Naga Day? This, in turn, might require the organizers to move away from Kohima and allow Naga people in other places – Mon, Chui, Langdang – to offer a wider spectrum of views and experiences that they can share. After all, this might be the only way we can hold on to our dreams of justice and not allow it to be subsumed by the crassness of reality. It would be a worthy way to address the individual voices within the collective.



FROM THE HEART WALKING THE NAGA DAY

Our hope for Naga Day was for shared humanity and solidarity, even in the midst of stormy weather. Engagement in the Naga world requires us to imagine those predictably unpredictable storms that are inevitable during extraordinary times. These storms, however, do not define the times. The times are defined by transformative moments and small measures that are ignited by seemingly small acts.

The professionals managing the stage and sound system, the event management crew led by Theja Meru, the young volunteers from the Naga Students' Federation, the Kohima Village Youth Organization and the Angami Youth Organization willingly made substantive sacrifices for the success of Naga Day. Nagaland Contractors' and Suppliers' Union supplied those in attendance with bottled water. The Public Health Engineering Department and the Kohima Police Department oversaw sanitation, traffic and security. The Music Task Force, Department of Information and Public Relations, Kohima Municipal Council and the Power Department took charge of their share of goodwill towards Naga Day. The Naga Mothers' Association and their volunteers beautified the stage. Groups charged only half the cost of the equipment for the event, and a young entrepreneur's words summed up the spirit of the day: "For the sake of our nation, I will donate what I have." FNR is humbled and our heartfelt gratitude goes unreserved.

Yes, lunch was cooked by seven bodies defying harsh winter chills for the love of the Nagas. These were contributions from their respective pocket books.

The Dreamz Unlimited, Naga choir members, musicians, and singers—a number of who are notable professionals with legitimate fees, performed for free. Dozens of speakers, readers, choreographers and cultural troupes further contributed to Naga Day, in the process, displaying collective love and sacrifice for the Nagas.

The free-will financial contribution from individuals, churches and “tribal” bodies allowed the Naga Day to happen with ease. Nagas, young and old, reached out to us and to each other with excitement and hope. The Angami Public Organization’s magnanimity towards the FNR and the Naga Day spoke of APO’s farsightedness beyond the here and now. What an honor we felt to be under APO as our host. N Pezie!

To all, thank you. Your kindness of what it means to be a Naga has undoubtedly helped deliver the Nagas to the extraordinary moment in our history.

Naga Day has announced that Nagas are without borders and that we are part of Naga history. Naga Day has made it clear that our history is one of common belonging and does not belong to individual groups or destinies. Naga Day is not in the past, but it is alive and walking. Walking becomes a speech and, in this sense, walking the Naga Day is a cultural speech, a speech of the people.

With another lesson learned, I along with my colleagues in the FNR will move on. On that day, January 10, 2018, there was a great Naga potential, where everyone converged around the idea of each other’s “relative rightness.” If Naga ecology can muster such energy around the idea of common belonging, can one fathom the resultant outcome? No matter how one tries to project, a person or an organization turned inwards is never going to be healthy, not only for society but, more so, for itself. We cannot simply let others heal our psychic hurts and pains.

In a small measure, the Naga Day will walk and make efforts to heal the communal wounds by healing our own individual wounds first. The



primordial spirit of healing and belonging without borders will form the basis for the Nagas in this age if we are to survive and thrive as peoples with our neighbors. I implore all to think seriously about this before dismissing it.

The act of “not being together” lies not in drumming up personal constituents to shy away, but in self-negation from the common belonging. Was the “Declaration” adopted and sanctioned by the congregation on the Naga Day a deterrence to the larger interest of the Nagas and our neighbors?

Finally, let us exorcise the culture of highlighting differences and flocking only with birds of the same feather. Let us try to emphasize shared humanity and belonging instead.

God’s Shalom,

Wati Aier
Convener
FNR

NAGAS
WITHOUT
ORDERS





Members of the Forum for Naga Reconciliation, and others, who helped organize the Naga Day, 2018, seen here with the Naga Choir.
(Photo by Aheli Moitra)



**NAGAS
WITHOUT
BORDERS**