

## **DAGBON CHIEFTAINCY CRISIS: A SAD SAGA OF ANIMOSITY, VENDETTA, AND DISUNITY...WHAT NEXT?**

My fellow Dagombas, please kindly lend me your ears. My name is Natogmah Issahaku, a Dagomba, and I would like to share with you a proposal which, if we consider, could lead us to a plan that would in turn, bring about a lasting peace and unity to Dagbon. I am presenting this proposal, a blue print, to all Dagombas for consideration because of my concern and love for Dagbon and my yearning for peace and unity in this Great Kingdom of ours. As a Dagomba, I am related to both of the feuding Gates on equal terms, because 'in the long-run,' we are all from the same ancestors and are one large family(tribe).

As it happens, we(Dagombas), whether living right in Dagbon or in the diaspora, have experienced deep pain, humiliation, and sarcasm in the past few years following the gruesome, maniacal, savage acts that took place in Yendi on Wednesday, 27 March, 2002 and culminated in the infamous decapitation of the Ya Naa(Naa), Yakubu Andani II. It is the solemn duty of all Dagombas, from the Abudu Gate, the Andani Gate, and the hoi polloi of Dagbon to prevent a replicate of such a regicide in the future. The events of that evil day marked the climax of several ugly happenings which had marred, and still mar, the Dagbon Traditional Area(DTA) for a good part of the last half century.

Fellow Dagombas, please kindly spare me the effort to belabour the background of the Dagbon Chieftaincy Crisis(DCC), which in fact, has become a virus, thus the Dagbon Virus(DV) infecting generation after generation of Dagombas. Nevertheless, for the sake of the young generation of Dagombas, a brief background follows: the DCC is a feud between the Andani Gate and the Abudu Gate, both always claiming in the past half century to be the rightful Gate to en-skin a Ya Naa, therefore creating constant confusion among Dagombas, since Dagbon cannot have two Ya Naas('Lions') at the same time. The Yani skin is likened to the strength and power of a Lion, and its therefore the symbol of Yani.

Sadly, these two acrimonious families share the same great great great great grandfather, Naa Yakubu I, who ruled the Great Dagomba Kingdom from circa 1824 to 1849, which had up until then, a somewhat uni-linear succession to the Ya Naa Skin(See Appendix 3).

Needless to say, the current DCC as we all know it today, now a household name in Ghana, all started in the years following Ghana's independence when Dagbon traditional(chieftaincy) issues were thrown to national politicians to resolve rather than seeking Dagbon in-house resolution to their differences. Since then, these two rival Gates have engaged in a zero-sum game, mutually-exclusive victory normally given to the feuding Gate that aligned himself with

the ruling government. (*Note: The Dagbon Kingdom is a society with a primogenital tradition; hence it can be described with masculine pronouns*) Realistically, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for political institutions(government) to provide a panacea for this crisis owing to the fact that they are unavoidably partial in their judgement because of political polarization along Gate lines on the one hand, and the complexity of this traditional problem, on the other.

Moreso, the DCC is an internecine problem that can be resolved **only** by us(Dagombas). We have to resolve the crisis ourselves once and for all by taking the initiative towards reconciliation, peace, and unity, with government playing a supplementary role as facilitator by lubricating the wheels of the peace train: creating enabling environment for the process, and providing adequate security, legal, moral, and logistical support for the peace process to achieve its goal. Crying out to government for a resolution in this conflict is analogous to one asking a third party to stop one's teeth from biting one's tongue.

My dear brothers and sisters, I would like to share a little story with you, if I may: On one sunny afternoon in 1970, when I was just an eight-year-old school lad, I accompanied my dad and five elder brothers to one of our farms, and during our lunch break we roasted yams right on the farm and as we were sitting, eating the hot, roasted yams in the shade cast by the shadow of one of the giant dawadawa trees rooted in the middle of the farm, my father looked at me for a while and then smiled, and at the end of the smile he hailed at me, praising my ancestors, and finally, saying "Krachi" (meaning educated fellow in Akan). I smiled back at him and then he asked, "Son, do you know why I enrolled you in school?" I answered in the affirmative, and said, "Because you want me to be educated, get a good job in future to take care of you and mother." At that answer my father had a long proud laugh and at the end of it he said, "Son, you are a clever boy, I like your answer very much. You are right, but not wholly," he continued, in his soft voice, almost whispering into my little, but attentive ears. "Beside taking care of mother and me, the additional purpose of enrolling you in school is for you to be educated and through the education your level of understanding will be elevated so that you can 'open our eyes,' help develop Dagbon, prevent 'nasara'(in Dagbani, 'nasara' broadly means Government/Colonialists/Politicians/The Establishment) from cheating, dividing, disuniting, setting Dagomba against Dagomba, and using us to achieve their political goals. We were very united, loved each other as one tribe in spite of occasional disagreements, but today, that is no more". I had no doubt back then, that my oldman's expectations and aspirations of the good things that educated Dagombas would do for Dagbon, was merely a reflection of the expectations and aspirations of all parents who had enrolled their wards in schools across Dagbon at that time. "Why do you allow 'nasara' to cheat, divide, disunite, set you against your own?" I asked. At that point, I was really intrigued

by all what my oldman was telling us, it was the current event of that time. With a big sigh, “hmm”, he went on, “Son, we(Dagombas) are being treated in such a divisive manner mainly because we are not educated, a result of which is a lack of understanding among Dagombas to determine when and how ‘nasara’(Government/Colonialists/Politicians/The Establishment) is trying to cheat, divide, disunite, set us against each other. Further, the lack of understanding limits our ability to empathize with each other and to resolve our differences by ourselves without selling ourselves out to others. The past ten or so years have been rough for Dagbon and we had sold ourselves to outsiders before in the past, so this is not a new phenomenon.” He carried on, “Dagombas of my generation are not educated, not a single one I have either seen or heard, so you can imagine how vulnerable, weak, helpless we are in the hands of ‘nasara’ (Government/Colonialists/Politicians/The Establishment).” Then he said, “It is a sad, painful state. It is all new to us, because up until this chieftaincy crisis began, we were a very proud, brave, strong, united, loving, sharing, good-willed people, and no one could imagine that people from other tribes would dare divide us”. At this point, my father didn’t want to stop unleashing his frustration, so he kept on, in a quivering voice: “We, Dagombas, are now victims of illiteracy(lack of education). From now on, we have to make education our best friend, and if every father enrolls at least one of his children in school just like I have done, in twenty years’ time, Dagbon will be an educated, understanding, developed Kingdom and ‘nasara’(Government/Colonialists/Politicians/The Establishment) would not be able to cheat, divide, disunite, set Dagomba against Dagomba anymore.” Looking at my elder brothers who were not enrolled, and wouldn’t allow themselves to be enrolled in school a few years earlier under the fee-free compulsory education programme, he said, “I have done my part to ensure an educated Dagbon, for, your littlemost brother(that was me) has been enrolled and he will ‘open your eyes,’ in the future. I need the rest of you to help me out with farming.” Turning once again to me, he lamented, “Son, I hope and pray that at the time you grow and mature into an adult this mess we have today in Dagbon would have been resolved and become history. It is a very terrible, strange phenomenon in our history and it won’t be proper for you, the young generation, to inherit this ordeal, so help us God.” Finally, my father warned my elder brothers and me in a very subdued tone, saying, “You see, I am a folk singer/entertainer, and as such, do not take sides, and neither should any of you, in this chieftaincy conflict because if the Ya Naa from the Abudu Gate invites me to his palace to entertain and hail at him I would do so with great pleasure and honour, and similarly, if the Ya Naa from the Andani Gate invites me to his palace to entertain and hail at him I would do so with an equal amount of pleasure and honour. I do not make enemies; rather I make friends, and all Dagombas are my friends, that is the way it should be. That is the way we have known Dagbon to be until this problem showed up. The

hailing, praises, and the songs I sing are about the bravery of our forefathers, the strength of Dagbon as a great Kingdom, the rich history, proud herittage, the invincible and daring Kings and leaders we had, and no tribe could conquer us especially when we were united, not even the white-man and this reminds me of the Adiboo Dal-la when we vanquished the invading white-man, and the fact is that every Dagomba can trace his/her family roots back to the same ancestors with the roots going through Naa Zangina deep down to even Naa Gbewaa, from whom we share blood relations with our ‘elder brothers,’ the Mamprusis and our ‘younger brothers,’ the Nanumbas, the two tribes we(Dagombas) should never, under any circumstance, in our existence as a Kingdom, pick a fight with, not to talk of us(Dagombas) spilling the blood of our own, because we cannot resolve our differences by ourselves.” Emphasizing on the importance of the family bond Dagombas have with Mamprusis and Nanumbas he revealed, “These three brothers(tribes) always protected, defended, supported each other against their enemies during those wild west days of survival of the fittest. We always took care of each other.” He went further, “God forbid, but if things continue the way they are today, unresolved, I am afraid that in not a distant future Dagbon will crack, disintegrate, and collapse, losing his being and identity as a Kingdom, and we will become weak, vulnerable, and other tribes might take advantage of our problems by attacking us in a campaign to capture Dagbon. When that happens there will be nothing to praise, hail about Dagbon and his proud history, his brave Kings and Chiefs who fought like ‘lions’ to create this strong Kingdom and fought even harder to protect and preserve him for current generations.” On that somber and worrying note, with his eyes visibly soaked in what I thought were tears he was desperately trying hard to hold up from pouring down his face, my oldman said, “Sons, lets go back to work; the break is over,” still holding his unconsumed piece of hot, roasted yam which had turned cold and hard. He joked by saying, “Oh, I forgot I had yam still in my hand. I guess I was so immersed in telling you about our problems and fate that my appetite diminished. Now you know what the worry about Dagbon’s future can do to one; it leaves a bad taste in your mouth and rapes you of appetite. I can’t eat it anymore; it is too cold and hard for your oldman(about 60 years old then). Do you want it, son?”

My oldman, a folks(baamaaya) singer/entertainer(known as baanga in Dagbani), literally speaking, was a human encyclopaedia of Dagbon culture and history. He was naturally talented and blessed with an elephant’s memory and could tell the historic background of any typical Dagomba man from any corner of Dagbon by mere mention of one’s name, village/town’s name, clan’s name, or extented family name. He recited in a reverse-chronology the names of about ten Ya Naas, starting with Naa Mahamadu, Naa Andani, Naa Abdulaibla,...and so on. In fact, I couldn’t cope with all the names as he did so quite eloquently, but I remember he went on, and on, and on, and did hail at each one of them as he recited their names.

Since that sunny afternoon in 1970, when I was only 8 years old, till today, after all those long years, now approaching my mid (40s)forties, I still hear, quite vividly, heavy echoes of the words of wisdom my oldman whispered into my little, but attentive ears. Fortunately, or unfortunately, longevity was not on his side; hence he is no longer with us today to see the kind of Dagbon he so much dreaded to experience. So sometimes I just wonder what he would say, if he were alive today, about his description, back in 1970, of the purpose, importance, expectations of an educated Dagbon Kingdom.

**Analysis of the impact, inter alia, of the DCC on Dagbon and beyond, since 1970, follows:**

1. Thirty-five years on, it is regrettable to say that Dagombas are still suffering from the same DCC because **we are still refusing to behave, think, and act like educated folks**, according to my late father's, or layman's understanding of education and the purpose it was envisaged to serve in Dagbon in those days. In 1970, a respected source puts the breakdown of educated Dagombas at various levels as follows: Dagbon had produced about thirty-five(35) university graduates, just as many teacher training graduates, around four hundred(400) secondary school leavers, and approximately two thousand(2000) middle school leavers. These estimates include those right in Dagbon and in the diaspora. (*I have to admit that these particular figures are not official statistical estimates; rather they are estimates given to me by educated elders who had already matured back in 1970*). In sharp contrast, today, in 2005, the number of Dagbon indigenes with university degrees or equivalent and post-secondary qualifications are probably over ten thousand(10,000), about fifty thousand secondary school leavers. Again, these numbers include Dagombas living right in Dagbon and in the diaspora. (*I have to admit that these particular figures are not official statistical estimates; rather they are estimates based on an educated guess*). One might ask, so what is the point behind this analysis? The point I am attempting to unveil here is the fact that, today, despite the almost exponential growth in the number of "Krachis"(educated fellows) of Dagbon origin, compared to the educational indicators of 1970, our level of functional understanding of Dagbon issues and how they fit into the purpose of education, according to the layman's definition by 1970s standards, has sorrowfully remained virtually unchanged, if not diminished. When I go to bed at night, I ask myself questions such as: why are we(Dagombas) still unable to resolve the chronic chieftaincy crisis we have been living with since time immemorial in spite of all our educational achievements? Is education a friend or a foe to the Dagbon Kingdom? Are we a bunch of educated fools or are we a generation of uncivilized intellectuals? Several decades of education seem to have no progressive impact on our faculty to depart from primitive ways in favour of

modernism. We, the educated Dagombas, should no longer blame the continuous disunity of Dagbon on the uneducated Dagombas, because today, we have enough educated fellows to influence the illiterate folks to navigate Dagbon toward perfect peace and unity. The blame has shifted from them(the illiterate Dagombas) to us(the literate Dagombas) and so has the burden of proof. Back then, in 1970 and earlier, the vastly illiterate Dagbon elders spoke, and the infinitesimal number of literate Dagombas listened and carried out their wishes, but today, in 2005, we, the large number of educated Dagombas speak, and the uneducated Dagombas listen and carry out our wishes.

You may remember in the preceding story above, my oldman stressed that the prime enemy of Dagbon in those days was the lack of many educated Dagombas, and because of that

‘nasara’(Government/Colonialists/Politicians/The Establishment) took advantage of our uneducated status to divide, disunite, cheat, and set Dagomba and Dagomba on collision course. Put in another way, why the hell is education serving a dysfunctional role in Dagbon, always setting us in a crabwise direction instead of promoting progress, peace, and unity? After all, aren’t we all brothers and sisters from the same Naa Sitobu-Naa Nyagse-Naa Zangina ancestry?

Basically, education is supposed to develop our character and mental powers, through the moral, social, and intellectual teachings we receive in order to enable us make positive and developed change in the societies we live in. Thus far, we(Dagombas) are not doing so with the education we receive.

2.Thirty-five years on, a lasting peace and total unity is still an illusive dream in Dagbon, in spite of our academic advancement. Peace and unity is still a far away dream for Dagombas because **we are still grappling with the question of who should be the King of “All Dagombas”** and not just a faction of the Kingdom.

3.Thirty-five years on, **non-cooperation by the feuding factions has stifled and held back needed development initiatives for Dagbon, thus encouraging neglect of the region by national governments vis-a-vis socio-economic policies.** Without peace, security, and cooperation there can not be any meaningful socio-economic development in Dagbon. The Agricultural sector in Dagbon, the lifeline of the DTA, has seen nothing but continuous stagnation and plummeting productivity to the bone, in respect that productive agricultural policies which were put in place by previous governments were dismantled in compliance with the conditions set out by the Bretton Woods institutions; The World Bank/ International Monetary Fund for loans granted to Ghana under the Structural Adjustment Programmes(SAP)/Economic Recovery Programmes(ERP) which were implemented in the 1980s/90s by the Rawlings regime without any alternative policies to mitigate against the impact of the policy vacuum created by the dismantlement. Worse still, with less than 5 per

cent of all new national investments in the industrial/manufacturing sector reaching the northern half of Ghana since the implementation of the SAP/ERP in the 1980s/90s with the attendant inflow of funds and foreign direct investments from abroad, Dagbon has been one of the worst casualties of the fallout emanating from the deliberate, colossal neglect by nineteen years of P(NDC) and so far, four years of NPP governments. In the same period, it has to be mentioned though, that the national power grid was brought to Dagbon and a few roads constructed, both to the credit of the P(NDC) regime, and similarly the construction of the Tamale-Yendi road, which was started and constructed up to half-way, from Tamale to Jimli, by the NDC regime, and completed last year, Jimli to Yendi, by the NPP government, and credit is due to both governments for that piece of good work. My view is that, all those projects on roads, power, and the like are fine; nevertheless, the lifeline of Dagbon, the agriculture sector, should and must never be neglected and/or compromised by any government, because if I am faced with the choice between food and roads, I will choose food anytime and all the time. For that matter, all governments, since the mid 1970s, are guilty as charged, for accelerating deterioration in the agricultural sector in Dagbon. Evidently therefore, the zero-cooperation among Dagombas themselves owing solely to the Dagbon Virus, coupled with over three decades of substantial neglect by national governments have led to mass migration of Dagbon youths, mostly girls, from the Dagbon traditional area to the major cities in the south to render support services in the logistics sector, called 'kaayayo,' and it has to be said that these hardworking girls are often victims of scorn by the very people they service and are sometimes seen as pests by many. We probably have to ask some Sociologists to study and research into the long-term impact of this mass Dagbon-South migration of Dagomba girls on the demographic trends of the tribe and the host cities as they remain victims of sexual abuse and misuse. The fact is that, prior to the dismantlement of the productive agricultural policies, most of the youths in Dagbon were employed in the agricultural sector: crop cultivation, harvesting, after-harvest food processing, and foodstuff trading activities, and none of them wished, back then, to leave their comfortable homes in Dagbon for the hostile streets of Accra and the like.

4. Thirty-five years on, the ugly impact of the DCC still transcends the boundaries of Dagbon. **Other traditional entities sharing the Northern Region with us are still suffering because of our unwillingness to resolve the DCC.** The Mamprusi, Gonja, Nanumba Kingdoms, which are stakeholders in the economic policy planning of the Northern Region at the national level are held to ransom by the DV, hence encumbering progress in their socio-economic development. Dagbon is the sickman of Ghana and whenever he sneezes his virus(DV) out, his innocent and peaceful neighbours catch the cold. I, in my right as a Dagomba, take this opportunity to register, on behalf of All Dagombas

and on my own behalf, our very sincere apology to our neighbours in the Northern Region for hampering their socio-economic progress as a result of our tribal troubles, the DCC/DV. On behalf of my fellow Dagombas I say **sorry** to all of you and share with you the hope and aspiration for a peaceful and progressive Northern Region for you and us.

5. Thirty-five years on, **Dagbon has seen a dilution of his tradition** as homage, allegiance to the Ya Naa is paid only by his sympathizers, not by all Dagombas.

6. Thirty-five years on, **Dagbon is a less strong and even more vulnerable Kingdom in the face of continued disunity and in-fighting, and in recent years, has become the laughing stock in Ghana.** History is a good teacher; but we (Dagombas) seem not to be good learners/pupils. As our history tells us, no tribe, kingdom, empire, or even the white people (colonialists) dared attack the Dagomba Kingdom when we were totally united. In contrast, all attacks on the Dagomba Kingdom by outside forces occurred at the depth of our disunity and in-fighting. For instance, during the last three centuries the Dagomba Kingdom was attacked thrice by outside forces during periods we were conspicuously divided because of the usual Yendi chieftaincy crisis: **1.** During the reign of **Naa Gariba (circa 1700 to 1720)** the Dagomba Kingdom was once again deeply divided owing to the usual fight for the Yani (Ya Naa) skin. A disgruntled Dagomba chief who was unsuccessful with his bid to become Ya Naa invited the Ashantis to take advantage of the divided state of the Kingdom by attacking Naa Gariba and Yendi. Honouring the invitation, **the Ashantis, under Ashantehene Osei Tutu,** attacked Yendi and captured Naa Gariba. As his captors were taking him to Kumasi, some Yanabihi (Royal princes of the Yani skin) led by Nabia (Prince) Nasalan Ziblim, met with the Ashantis at Yeji and successfully negotiated for his release. In return, the Ya Naa, Dagombas for that matter, were to send slaves and cattle to the Ashantehene every year. The annual payment occurred until the last quarter of the nineteenth century when the British took control of Southern Gold Coast (Ghana). **2.** Again, during the brief reign of **Naa Darimani (1899)** following the death of Naa Andani II, the Dagomba Kingdom was once again in disarray due to the usual Yendi chieftaincy crisis which was centred around the hotly disputed enskinment of Naa Darimani who stayed on the throne for only seven weeks and abdicated. In that year, 1899, just weeks after the enskinment of Naa Darimani and at the heels of the Yendi chieftaincy disputes, another disgruntled Dagomba chief went to German Togoland and invited **the Germans** to capitalize on the division of Dagbon and attack Naa Darimani and Yendi (Dagombas for that matter). The Germans honoured the invitation and to revenge for their defeat at the hands of Dagombas in 1896 in the battle of Adiboo under the reign of Naa Andani II (circa 1876 to 1899). The Germans launched a surprise attack on Yendi in 1899 and took our traditional capital, leading to the partition of the Dagomba Kingdom into

German Dagbon and British Dagbon (commonly referred to as Eastern Dagomba and Western Dagomba respectively). Naa Alasani (1899 to 1917) ruled the partitioned Dagomba Kingdom until the fall of German Dagbon to the British in 1914, just as World War I was raging across the world. **3.** As recent as **in 1994**, during the long period of continued division of Dagombas as a result of the usual Yendi chieftaincy crisis: enskinment and deskinment of Naa Mahama IV (1969 to 1974) in 1969 and 1974 respectively, and the subsequent enskinment of Naa Yakubu Andani II (1974 to 2002) in 1974, **the Konkombas** saw the weakness of Dagombas and ventured an attack on us in what was called the ‘guinea fowl’ war, the most prominent of all the clashes between the Konkombas and us. No one ever attempted attacking us during our periods of solid unity and strength. The sooner we learn a lesson out of this pattern the better for us as a Kingdom.

7. Thirty-five years on, to a large extent, **Dagbon’s culture has lost some of its value** as the major, famous cultural festivals such as the annual Bugum (fire festival) and the Damba (dance festival) are observed on different days by supporters of the rival Yani Gates.

8. Thirty-five years on, **age-old inter-Abudu/Andani Gate marriages are still being severed and family structures shattered.** Even today, just as decades ago, some young Dagombas from the opposing Gates who fall in love and want to marry are barred from doing so by their parents/elders and are normally issued with threats of curses and parental disclaim/disownership. These young men and women were not even conceived by their mothers when this DCC started about fifty years ago, but today, they are victims of the virus, the DV. Which of the rival Gates does love and marriage belong to? Love has no colour, religion, tribe, race, creed, and nationality, because love is just love. It knows no boundaries. The older generations should allow the younger ones to foster unity among themselves in a way the older ones failed to, and should stop trying so hard to pass the virus on to the younger ones. What a shame that we still have this phenomenon going on today in Dagbon!

9. Thirty-five years on, **deep, relishable friendships among Dagombas are still being destroyed** by the virus, giving way to mistrust, ill will, and a culture of taciturnity.

10. Thirty-five years on, **Dagbon is still the political football of Ghanaian politics**, normally used by politicians to advance their selfish political ambitions and in the process ferment disunity, bitter hatred among our fold. The question I pose to fellow Dagombas is: should we continue to allow non-Dagombas to befool us? I think we can do far better than that!

11. Thirty-five years on, **our national politics is still being blemished by the DCC as Dagombas do not “freely” elect national leaders they think will best develop Dagbon socio-economically.** Rather they choose leaders they think will either award them victory in the DCC or will sit on the problem and not find an eternal resolution to the crisis. Similarly, highly competent Dagbon intellectuals with burning passion to contribute toward the development of Dagbon, and Ghana for that matter, are sometimes bypassed in favour of less competent opponents at the parliamentary political level because of their alignment with the rival Gate, thus denying the nation some of the best talents in our democratic institutions. Basically, as it stands today, it is apparent that **Politics is Dagbon and Dagbon is Politics.** Over the years, politics has turned out to be the lifeblood of some Dagombas actively involved in the DCC, because their economic, and in some cases, their very lives and continued existence hinge on politics as those in the opposition are being threatened by their rivals in power. Furthermore, national attention and resources are being diverted from critical national issues and projects to deal with our tribal problems.

12. Thirty-five years on, **we are still called derogatory names** such as: the “Primitive People,” the “Barbarians,” the “Bush People,” “Sheep,” and many more, to which we are totally defenceless. My hope is that we can vindicate ourselves and prove to the world that we can change and become civilized, humble, peaceable, united people and put our ominous past behind us.

13. Thirty-five years on, very sorrowfully, **precious Dagomba lives are still being lost** as a result of the DCC/DV in massacres, targeted liquidations, and random killings.

14. Thirty-five years on, **property loss and financial loss are still incurred owing to destruction:** a direct side effect of the Dagbon Virus(DV).

15. Thirty-five years on, the DCC is still raging on as the two Royal Houses are still against each other and more and more mainstream Dagombas are becoming sick and tired of the constant feud between these Gates and the attendant negative consequences on their lives. **The Yani skin is losing his respect, sacredness, strength, pride, and myth** at a fast pace as the problems surrounding this proud Skin are always put in the open for the whole world to laugh about.

Ironically, in pre-educated-British-dominated Dagbon days(the first half of the C20<sup>th</sup>), as our history tells us, Dagombas often resolved their differences by themselves and sometimes contained them without resorting to violence or killing the Ya Naa. Contrarily, with the advent of education in Dagbon(since the

1940s) we suddenly lost our ability to resolve our differences by ourselves and rather commissioned the new and un-traditional culture of running to national governments for executive resolutions which, in most cases, are idiosyncratic, unwarrantable, exclusive, superficial remedies that are unable to stand the test of time, because they merely rob Peter to pay Paul, hence leaving one of the rival Gates feeling dispossessed and therefore preparing the ground for more of what we have seen in the subject period: animosity, disunity, sporadic violence, and even a regicide(an unprecedented event in our existence as a modern traditional entity).

To justify the new and un-traditional culture of redress, some might argue that during the pre-educated Dagbon era, there were deprivations going on between the Royal Gates with one Gate trying to dominate or shut out the other for the Yani skin, but due to the absence of a third, outside power capable of resolving and passing binding judgements on their grievances they simply contained those differences for the sake of peace and unity without resorting to actions that would inflict grievous bodily harm on their own. Worse still, such complaints of the deprived Gate could not be lodged with the incumbent Ya Naa who was the source and cause of the complaint in the first place. And now that we have a third force(national governments with constitutional powers) such Yani skin complaints should be resolved by government and not by us any longer.

My response to Dagombas holding the view that we should hurriedly run to national governments to resolve our traditional differences is that that approach severely impairs and limits our ability to exploit, explore, and invent our own creative solutions which are suitable to our Dagbon traditions and acceptable by all Dagombas with a timeless value. Moreso, falling on national governments for arbitration in the DCC is cheap, childish, hypocritical, and un-intelligent, no matter how this approach is viewed. We(Dagombas) are always looking for an easy way out, if not the easiest way out, in getting rid of this DCC. What we should ask of government is to provide adequate security and a conducive environment for us(Dagombas) to resolve the problem by ourselves in the traditional way.

The maximum role any national government can possibly play in laying this virus to rest is serve as a catalyst, and it is only through our own bootstrap, with government playing a facilitator role, that we can achieve real lasting peace and unity in Dagbon. I am deeply ashamed to admit that the generations of Dagombas who lived before the advent of Western education in Dagbon, their uneducated status notwithstanding, were more intelligent than the educated generations of today. The justification for my admission is that we have never been able to resolve even a single problem that we have been faced with so far, purely due to our inability to vary our behaviour in response to varying situations and requirements, something the uneducated generations before us

mastered so well, as evident by the legacy of a solid, united, peaceful Dagomba Kingdom they left for us. It has to be pointed out that being educated doesn't mean being intelligent, and being educated doesn't mean being wise, because one can be educated to the highest degree and still be unintelligent and unwise. It is just a matter of how the educated fellow is able to use the education gained to practically change his/her behaviour, attitude, perceptions in response to changing situations, occurrences, requirements, problems, and times with the view to effect desirable, positive outcomes in society. As far as the March 2002 Yendi massacres are concerned, it is unfortunate that All Dagombas are victims of that heinous crime and All Dagombas are viewed as the perpetrators, though it was carried out by a handful of thugs.

My fellow Dagombas, this Dagbon Chieftaincy Crisis(DCC) has developed into a full-blown recrudescing virus, the Dagbon Virus(DV) which, if not exterminated, would destroy and deprive us of being a monolithic tribe. The DV, just like any virus, requires a cure, and the antidote to this evil sickness lies in our own hands. I have to confidently declare to All Dagombas that if we think about this blue print I am presenting before you today, and accept, implement its contents, I assure you that we can achieve everlasting peace in our Great Dagomba Kingdom. I want you to know that this Dagomba Virus(DV), as I call it, is not incurable, so the only thing we have to do is try this vaccine I am proposing to you, my brothers and sisters.

Dagbon is now at the crossroads and the time has come when we all, as Dagombas, should pull together and fight this madness called DCC and begin the process of reconciliation, peace, and unity among all Dagombas and for Dagbon. The alarming fact is that, if we allow the status quo to prevail, we face the danger of further chaos with untold consequences that would threaten our very existence as One Tribe with One King and One Identity. We created this problem by ourselves and we have to resolve it by ourselves.

The dark and painful past of Dagbon is not inescapable and the drive to attain peace and unity is not insurmountable, for the mistakes we(Dagombas) have all made are not unforgivable. We should all find a place in our hearts to forgive one another, Abudu Gate, Andani Gate, the hoi polloi of Dagbon, and live as a peaceful, united, loving big family again. We should not forget that, for several centuries, the Dagomba Kingdom was one of the most united, self-loving, and peaceful traditional entities in Africa, and those nostalgic days can be achieved once again, if we lend ourselves to peace. **For the past half century, Dagbon has been plagued with a cycle of animosity, vendetta, and disunity,.. so what next?**

**What next MUST be the quest for peace and unity in Dagbon and for All Dagombas.**

The quest for peace and unity can be expressed, in my view, in a little algebraic expression I learnt in secondary school and wish to apply today in practice to solve a real time problem in the following peace formula:

$$(a + b)^2 + 2 = \text{Peace} + \text{Unity} + \text{Strength} + \text{Prosperity}$$

where a=Andani Gate's effort toward peace, b=Abudu Gate's effort toward peace, a and b are interchangeable to stand for Abudu or Andani Gates, 2=Government's effort toward peace.

Some of you are probably thinking that I am crazy just by taking this simple formula at face value; however it is the practical peace formula for Dagbon's chieftaincy crisis. The above algebraic expression is the dream of all Dagombas and perhaps many others; however, at the moment, the status quo in Dagbon gives us the following equation:

$$(a - b) - 2 = \text{Chaos!} \text{ which can also be expressed as } (b - a) - 2 = \text{chaos!}$$

At one time or the other since the 1950s, at least, one of the Royal Houses: the Andanis and the Abudus have been working against each other in the courts of law and/or physically, thus no cooperation between them. For that matter, they have been putting in negative efforts toward everlasting peace; hence together, they have a negative(-) bond between them. They are in brackets because together they form the Yani skin. These two Royal Houses represent the people of the Dagomba Kingdom in this equation. The negative integer -2, represents the current government's negative efforts in bringing the two(2) sides in the conflict together for peace in Dagbon at the moment, its reasons, I don't know. Therefore, all the combined negative efforts of the Andanis, the Abudus, and the Government give us Chaos in Dagbon, as represented in the chaos formula:  $(a - b) - 2 = \text{Chaos!}$ .

My fellow Dagombas, we can achieve peace and unity by changing all the above negative variables and constant into positive. If and when we (Dagombas: as represented by the Andanis and the Abudus) change our negative positions into positive, and the current government also changes its negative role at the moment into positive efforts; then the chaos equation will change into the desired peace equation, thus:

$$(a + b)^2 + 2 = \text{Peace} + \text{Unity} + \text{Strength} + \text{Prosperity}$$

$$\Rightarrow \text{Expanded: } a^2 + b^2 + 2ab + 2 = \text{Peace} + \text{Unity} + \text{Strength} + \text{Prosperity}$$

where:

$a^2$ =Peace: the outcome of the Andanis positive efforts,

$b^2$ =Unity: the outcome of the Abudus positive efforts(both of these variables:  $a^2$  &  $b^2$  are interchangeable for Abudu and Andani families),

$2ab$ =Strength or Strong Dagomba Kingdom: the extra peace dividend accrued to the Andanis and the Abudus by their combined efforts toward peace in Dagbon, and as we know, unity means strength

$2$ =Prosperity: the outcome of the current government's positive efforts in bringing the two rival Royal Houses to talk peace as a facilitator; thus prosperity in Dagbon as government's socio-economic policies for development in Dagbon will be implemented in an environment of maximum cooperation among Dagombas; as represented by the Andani and Abudu Gates.

The composite outcome of the positive efforts expended by all the three parties: the Andanis, the Abudus, and the government is not only peace and unity in Dagbon, but also, strength and prosperity. This means that if the two Royal Houses work together the benefits that will accrue as a result of their individual efforts will be squared:  $a^2+b^2$ , and with an extra bonus of double their initially invested efforts:  $2ab$  in the peace process. Hence, when the Andanis and the Abudus work together in synergy, and government facilitates their cooperation, the Dagomba Kingdom is bound to achieve a lot more: Peace, Unity, Strength, and Prosperity.

Further, we now know the peace formula, so how can we(Dagombas), with government playing a facilitator role, apply it to achieve the desired outcome: peace, unity, strength, and prosperity?

**Easy, the answer is easy. Change is the answer. What we(Dagombas) have to realize is that we can no longer seek peace in a wait-and-see or reactive manner; instead we have to pursue peace in a proactive way by taking initiatives toward reconciliation, peace and unity and making changes in several facets of our society. The younger generations have to embark on a moral revolution against the older generations by putting moral pressure on them to begin reconciliation and peace talks: the Andanis and the Abudus simply have to talk peace; not hatred. The longer the taciturnity between these two Royal families continues the worse the situation of the Dagomba Kingdom gets. All the negative attitudes of the Abudus, the Andanis, and the government must be transformed into positive ones.**

My ideas for peace and unity in Dagbon come in a proposal, **a golden proposal offering a golden opportunity**(elaborated in subsequent sections), which if

adopted by all Dagombas, could serve as a planning tool in drawing a roadmap for a lasting peace and total unity among all Dagombas: a panacea for the age-old chieftaincy crisis. The proposal is an auto-Dagbon engineered solution to the DCC without government interference, except a role of facilitator. Let's face it, and let it be loud and clear to all Dagombas that, as far as the DCC and the quest for peace is concerned, no government, and I mean no government, has ever and would ever provide real true peace that is acceptable to the whole of Dagbon, because governments only appease us and not be-peace us.

The proposal calls for CHANGE in Dagbon and requires All Dagombas to change in many respects. We have to transform the negative variables and integer in the chaos equation: **(a-b)-2=chao!** into positive to achieve the peace formula:  **$a^2+b^2+2ab+2=$ peace+unity+strength+prosperity**. This change involves **re-structuring and re-organizing our traditional structures, institutions, and our mindset**. Like it or not, the status quo is a long lane that has no turning and I know that we(Dagombas) are not incommutable. Change is often a painful, hard, difficult, and an unpleasant phenomenon which involves sacrifices and concessions from all those striving for it, and it goes without saying that 'no pain, no gain'. Some might even oppose this CHANGE because it is unpalatable and threatens their standings in the Dagbon society or careers, and others might do so because they want to hold on to their dogmatic positions, but I want to assure All Dagombas that this necessary change(modernization) is mutually-beneficial to both the Andanis and the Ahudus as well as All Dagombas.

Opposition to the call for CHANGE notwithstanding, the questions I pose to all Dagombas are:

- 1.How long shall we(Dagombas) allow this DCC/DV to continue the division and destruction of our Kingdom that we have all witnessed thus far?
- 2.Do we(Dagombas) have the moral right to pass this ugly virus(DV) on to our innocent posterity?
- 3.Do we(Dagombas) want our children and grandchildren to inherit this disgraceful feud they simply didn't start?
- 4.Who do we(Dagombas) think we are by encumbering our peaceful neighbours in the Northern Region and antagonizing national governments with our DCC?

All Dagombas should ponder over the foregoing questions when they go to bed tonight, but I need answers to these questions first thing tomorrow morning.

Forward-looking Dagombas would agree that we should get rid of the DCC now and for good.

Positive thinking Dagombas would say we should unite and make peace now and not later.

Next question: Now we know we all want peace and unity, but how can we go about trying to unite and live in peace again and put the ugly past behind us once and for all? This has always been the million cedi question for all Dagombas since the fire started burning almost half a century ago.

Fortunately, I have a proposed solution.

## **PROPOSAL FOR A CONCERTED PLAN TOWARD A LASTING PEACE AND UNITY IN DAGBON**

For Dagbon and All Dagombas to achieve a comprehensive, lasting peace and unity that is mutually beneficial to all, Dagbon and All Dagombas must embark on, what I term, **PHYSICAL** and **PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGE**. This dual-dimensional traditional restructuring project requires a step by step approach in implementing it effectively and efficiently to achieve the desired end.

In order to decipher these processes for change, precedence should be given to the adaptation of a holistic approach to the problems facing Dagbon over the usual factional approach, because peace(victory at the courts) for one section(Royal Gate) of Dagbon is wholly insignificant unless the other section(Royal Gate) finds the missing piece(which is peace in the form of victory at the courts) to make Dagbon whole again. All previous efforts toward peace in Dagbon, including those carved by governments, were aimed at appeasing one of the rival Gates at the very expense of the other Gate and to the detriment of achieving real peace in the Kingdom. **Uniquely**, and for the very first time, this proposal offers All Dagombas ideas on how we can arrive at a win-win-win outcome for the Abudu Gate, the Andani Gate, and the Dagomba Kingdom; an outcome that will mean peace for ever.

The two dimensions of change are briefly stated as follows:

- 1.The **PHYSICAL CHANGE** involves a Change and Transfer of Dagbon Traditional Capital(DTC), the seat of the Ya Naa, from the current location, Yendi to a new location in the Tamale metropolis, which is in the Gulkpegu paramountcy. This is a necessary physical change that will form the crux and backbone of our chances for achieving a lasting peace and unity in our great Kingdom. Steps should be taken to inform All Dagombas about this ultimate change of the seat of the Ya Naa. It has to be emphasized that the change and

transfer of our traditional capital from Yendi to Tamale is a matter for Dagombas to decide and not government's business.

2. The **PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGE** requires All Dagombas to change their methods, views, positions, perceptions, ways, actions, attitudes, approaches, and to an extent, traditional beliefs, to fall in line with values of contemporary society. These changes are necessary because it is the only way we can reconnect to each other and rebuild confidence, trust, friendship, and unity that has been lost for a long time now.

My fellow Dagombas, if we embrace and implement this proposed CHANGE, we will enjoy the numerous peace dividends that will accrue, not only for us, but also, for our children and generations yet unborn.

## **PHYSICAL CHANGE**

Some Dagombas might wonder why I am advocating for a relocation of the Dagbon Traditional Capital(DTC) from Yendi to Tamale. The following are compelling reasons, among others, for All Dagombas to think about:

1. Changing the DTC, the seat of the Ya Naa, from Yendi to the Tamale metropolis(Gulkpegu paramountcy) **offers All Dagombas a great opportunity to make a Fresh Start, a Clean Slate** in life as a tribe and to help turn a **New Chapter** in the history of Dagbon, thus closing, forever, the **Old Chapter** on the Dagbon Chieftaincy Crisis and the **Dark Page** on the infamous regicide that claimed the life of Naa Yakubu Andani II on that evil Wednesday, March 27, 2002.

A new Ya Naa's Palace should be constructed, with the support of All Dagombas and by All Dagombas, in an enclave that should be created as the New Yani, within Gulkpegu in close proximity to the institutional security infrastructure. The design and construction of the new Yani, the seat of the Ya Naa, the Palace, should not be a government project; however, financial donation in good faith by government may be accepted, if elders of Dagbon deem it fit. The project should be enthusiastically embraced and developed by supporters of both the Abudu Gate and the Andani Gate as well as others. It should not be the responsibility of any particular Gate to undertake the project; instead it should be an all-inclusive project.

It has to be pointed out that changing the seat of the Ya Naa is not a novel phenomenon in the history of the Dagomba Kingdom. Centuries ago, the Yani was moved from a place, now called Yan-Dabari, which is in the vicinity of Gushie, a farming village situated about 40 kilometers north of Tamale. In retrospect, we all respect the reasons that triggered our forefathers to move the DTC from Yani Dabari, which now remains a collection of abandoned relics of

mud walls, to the present day Yendi. I have to admit that I last visited this Yani Dabari site about thirty-three years ago, so I cannot confirm the state in which those relics are today. My hope is that one day, just one day, we shall realize the importance of that piece of our history and take steps to preserve the site, because it is part of a big puzzle called Dagbon's roots or trail. Critically, today, an equally serious, if not even more serious, reason warrants another move from Yendi to a new spot in Dagbon. The reason for this change is the murder of a Dagomba King, a grave crime against the Kingdom, and such serious acts call for serious measures. That nefarious act was not just against Naa Yakubu Andani II or the Andani family, but it was an act against All Dagombas, regardless of where one sits on the DCC divide: Andani side, Abudu side, or high up on the fence(middle), because All Dagombas are victims as well as perpetrators of this despicable crime, for that's how it feels, and it's simply unconscionable to feel otherwise as a Dagomba. There can **never** be any better reason than this to take such an earth-moving measure(reorganisation), because as far as the Dagomba Kingdom is concerned, nothing compares to the killing of a Ya Naa. Furthermore, there is nothing in our tradition or culture which says we cannot change the seat of the Ya Naa.

2. The **presence of security infrastructure** in the Tamale area makes it a better place to seat our King than in Yendi. What happened in Yendi on March 27, 2002 couldn't have happened had the Palace and seat of our King been situated in the Tamale area. There is a strong presence of police, military, and other security agents in this metropolis which would timely respond to any such eventuality. It would take either a clear Presidential order from Accra or an instant internecine war for another regicide to happen, if the Ya Naa's Palace is located in the Tamale area. On the contrary, leaving the seat of the Ya Naa in Yendi lends the Kingdom to gross insecurity, taking cognizance of the obvious and once a precedent has been set, there is a high probability of reoccurrence, and as we say in Dagbani, Nyiri be mie baayinyeri kpebdali. This time, the regicide was against members of the Andani Gate. Who knows, the next time it might be the Ya Naa from the Abudu Gate who would suffer, if the seat remains in Yendi. Our Ya Naas, irrespective of the Gate they belong to, should be protected and defended by All Dagombas and we should not allow another March 27, 2002 to happen again. In pre-colonial and pre-independence Dagbon days, the Ya Naa had a traditional standing army stationed in and around Yendi which had the responsibility for maintaining his security, but since Ghana gained independence and established a national army controlled by the central government in Accra, and banning the possession of firearms the relevance of the traditional Ya Naa's army has diminished drastically. The idea of government banning traditional armies and declaring the possession of firearms illegal was that government took over the responsibility of providing protection for all Ghanaians, including the Ya Naa and other traditional Kings, but owing to gross security ineptitude the

incumbent government at that time failed the Dagomba Kingdom in March, 2002. The action or inaction by government on March 27, 2002, and the preceding days leaves a lot to be desired, and hypothetically, I wonder if the commander-in-chief of Ghana would have reacted swiftly, as he should have done, or nonchalantly, as displayed in the case of the Ya Naa had reports of gunshots from the Ga Mantse's Palace in Accra reached him? To play the devil's advocate by the same measure, would the ultimate political leader of the nation have reacted promptly, as he ought to have done in accordance with legal and moral law, or indifferently, as exhibited in the case of the Ya Naa had reports of gunshots from the Ashantehene's Palace in Kumasi reached him? Of course, I can never know what might have happened or could have happened in those hypothetical situations because they are unreal and both of these tribes are ahead of us in terms of **understanding**, but what I know for certain is the reality faced by Naa Yakubu Andani II, and the same fate is likely to confront another Ya Naa in the future, because: there is no security for our Kings in Yendi in respect that "the military vehicles there do not function in times of emergency" and Tamale, where reinforcements can be called from, is far away, and telephone lines "freeze" in the hot weather conditions. Contrastingly, there are two large military bases and a large police division with hundreds of vehicles and equipments ready for action in the Tamale area. Maintaining the Ya Naa's seat in Yendi will be at the Kingdom's peril, a risk we mustn't contemplate, if we want to continue existing as a single traditional entity. Significantly, the follow-up question, also hypothetical, is: would The President, a prominent lawyer, have delayed justice for three years had the massacre and regicide occurred in the Ga Mantse's Palace or the Ashantehene's Palace? Again, would first-rate, true and just justice have been assured or a "Mickey Mouse" justice? Question: Is someone practising double standards here? All Dagombas, and Ghanaians for that matter, should understand the dire need for genuine justice to be served in this case, because it is a test case in the history of our criminal justice system and how just our modern democratic institutions and government can be, and Dagombas should contemplate lodging this grave criminal case with international judicial institutions, among others, the International Court of Justice(ICJ), for redress, if government cannot perform its basic duty of assuring **equal and true justice** for all Ghanaians, to which Dagombas are no exception. Fortunately for Ghana, there haven't been any serious criminal events since March 2002, so why hasn't government invested formidable criminal investigation resources to deal with the Yendi massacre and get the job done swiftly? Remaining quiet for such a very long time on a case of this gravity puts the integrity and fairness of the commander-in-chief into question, in spite of the admiration people may have for him.

It is rather quite strange the way the legal professional bodies are relatively silent about this Yendi massacre case, because I could remember the constant expression of abhorrence and convulsion by the legal professional bodies like the

Ghana Bar Association, among others, when the three high court judges and retired army officer were killed in 1982. No matter who the victims are, no matter where the crime scene is, no matter who commits the crime, and no matter the circumstances under which crimes of this scale are committed, the legal professional bodies have the moral duty to help uphold the law of the land by exerting reasonable pressure on government to act expeditiously, justly, and fairly to bring to book the perpetrators of those crimes. A massacre is a massacre, regardless of the circumstances; a massacre during an attack on political leaders in a coup attempt is still a massacre; a massacre during an attack on a royal family is still a massacre; a massacre during an attack on a religious group is still a massacre; a massacre during an attack on demonstrators protesting against government policies is still a massacre; a massacre during an attack on legal professionals or judges is still a massacre; a massacre of Ashantis by any group is still a massacre; a massacre of Ga's by anyone is still a massacre; a massacre of Ewes by others is still a massacre; a massacre of any people by any people is still a massacre. The professional bodies should not forget that Customary and Traditional Law is still part and parcel of the curriculum of Law Degree programmes in our universities and it is also in their best interest to see to the finesse of justice and fairness in a case like the Yendi massacre. I therefore urge members of the Ghana Bar Association, the association of law professors, the association of law students, others in the legal academia, and the like, to remind, on continuous basis, government of its legal duty to see to justice now in the Yendi Massacre II case which occurred on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2002 claiming forty-three(43) precious Dagomba lives, including that of Naa Yakubu Andani II. They should press on and never stop until fair justice is ultimately served in this historic criminal case. To replicate the previous question: Are double standards being applied here by the legal professional bodies thus far?

3. The barbaric acts of “evil Wednesday” render Yendi **untenable** as the seat of the Ya Naa, and there is the dire need for us to put the horrors of that day behind us and prepare to move on with fresh thoughts and conscience as a civilized Kingdom. Such a move is both a **corrective** and a **preventive** measure to guard against a repeat of March 27, 2002 in the future.

4. Crucially, **history has repeated itself and we should prevent it from becoming a pattern.** As our history reveals, during the third decennia of the nineteenth century, circa 1824, the first regicide in Dagbon's history occurred in Yendi, thus REGICIDE I. Nothing was done by our forefathers to prevent another one from ever happening again. We of today can forgive those before us for the lack of preventive measures to forestall the events of March 27, 2002, for they lived in a totally different era with different security infrastructures and no central government controlling the security apparatus. Centuries from now, if

history repeats itself again, and I hope it better not, the predictive question will be: why didn't our predecessors( Dagombas living in the year 2002 and now) do a thing to prevent this from replicating? To pre-empt that futuristic question, we have to reorganize our traditional structures, including the seat of the Ya Naa. We should All remember that we have had two regicides in less than two hundred years; REGICIDE I around 1824, and again, REGICIDE II in 2002, thus twice in Yendi. REGICIDE I occurred during pre-colonial Dagbon days, and REGICIDE II happened during KUFFOUR I. These occurrences are actionable by reorganisation of our traditional structures to avoid REGICIDE III from happening; therefore, we have to relocate Yani from Yendi to Tamale.

5. Barbarically, **the history of Yendi qua Dagbon traditional capital, has the reputation of replicating itself.** September 9, 1969, Ghana, under the watchful eye of Dr. Busia, the political ancestor of the current regime, and under whom the incumbent served in 1969, **Yendi MASSACRE I** took place, thirty-three(33) men, women, and children were slain, and forty(40) others wounded by government security forces. Thirty-three(33) years later, by even a greater measure, during KUFFOUR I, **Yendi MASSACRE II** occurred, the Ya Naa and forty-two(42) others were killed(this includes those who died that day and others later), and many more wounded. I wonder what awaits Dagombas in Yendi during KUFFOUR II. Will there be Yendi MASSACRE III, God forbid, or will there not? Only time will tell; that's what I can say. Question: Is it becoming a **pattern** that anytime the Busia political tradition swears the oath of office there must be a massacre in Yendi?

5.The horrendous acts of that fateful day have left **indelible scars** in the four corners of the Gbewaa(Ya Naa's) Palace, and in Yendi for that matter, which will continue to evoke painful memories that would haunt any sitting Ya Naa, especially from the victimized Gate, and will be a constant reminder of the internal conflicts we had in the past, thus making total reconciliation of Dagbon a more difficult task. Reconstructing the vandalised Gbewaa Palace in Yendi to seat the next Ya Naa is a very bad idea, and demolishing it and rebuilding a new Palace on that spot is even a worse idea. Both ideas can not negate the **psychological scars** left on that spot and the latter idea would attempt to erase a piece of the dark history that we would wish to see standing and preserved as a constant reminder of the kind of acts we are capable of committing against our own if we fail to live in peace. I advocate that the damaged Palace be refurbished and preserved as a piece of our history, thus a monument, nothing more, nothing less.

6.Another reason for relocating from Yendi to Tamale is to take advantage of the **centrally positioned bearing of Tamale** in the Kingdom and the quick accessibility by all districts, paramountcies.

7. Further, in relative terms, Tamale is well **established vis-a-vis transportation network, tele(communication) infrastructure and other utilities**. The seat of the Ya Naa should be located in this kind of environment in order to facilitate his contact with his subjects.

8. The **Northern Regional House of Chiefs' office** buildings are located right in the heart of Tamale and the presence of the Ya Naa's Palace close to it will make his visits to the House easier and he can organize meetings with his chiefs even more frequently to assess progress on whatever projects he is working on.

9. Aside from the above, placing the seat of our King **in Tamale would re-emphasize the city as a strong Dagbon traditional base**, while maintaining his proud status as a hospitable melting pot for people from over a hundred tribes and from all walks of life with different religious backgrounds.

10. Furthermore, the **highest concentration of Dagombas in the DTA can be found in Tamale** and it is only feasible to have our King right among the highest concentration of his subjects.

11. In addition, moving the traditional headquarters **to Tamale would speed up the change(modernization) process** I am asking for in this proposal and would fall in line with locational strategies adopted by other traditional entities long time ago by having their Kings in their biggest cities. For instance, the Kings of the Ga's, Ashantis, Frafras, Kusasis, Walas, Katsinas, Bulsas, Sisalas, Dagatis, Mamprusis, Nanumbas, Gonjas are in their biggest cities: thus Accra, Kumasi, Bolga, Bawku, Wa, Navrongo, Sandema, Tumu, Nandom, Nalerigu(moved from Gambaga), Bimbila, Damongo(recently moved from Yebun) respectively.

12. Sadly and bitterly, **Yendi, our current traditional capital, can be described as the abandoned, neglected, and troubled city of Ghana**. He has been the hardest hit city in Dagbon in the ongoing DCC due to his status as the traditional capital. This city used to be the pride of the Dagomba Kingdom until "Mr." DCC emerged in Dagbon about half a century ago. Some might think it is an exaggeration, if I suggest that Yendi was, at some point back in time, the bigger of its rival city – Tamale. However, today, Tamale can easily "swallow" the present day Yendi three times in his belly. As late as 1975, when I first visited Yendi, in the company of a relative, I saw this Great City to be almost the same size of Tamale, and back then, it had political parity with Tamale, both valued at one parliamentary ticket each by the aristocrats in Accra in 1979. Contrastingly, in 2004, the aristocrats in the national capital valued Tamale at three political tickets while Yendi was valued again at one ticket. Why? Reason is that the city has virtually stopped growing over the years.

### **Yendi, the Abandoned City!**

The fact is that, since the DCC began about half a century ago, there has been constant insecurity surrounding the city, as evident by the events of March 27, 2002. As a result, a serious percentage of the natives of Yendi, upon acquiring higher education, abandon their beloved city to re-root elsewhere, preferably in Accra, Tamale, Kumasi, and so on. As they make these places their new homes they take their ingenuity, financial assets, and private businesses along, hence depriving the home town of the badly-needed investments and talents. They move away, not because they don't love Yendi, but because of insecurity. As we all know from the happenings of that day in March 2002, no one provides real security in Yendi, else we wouldn't have had the March massacre. No Dagomba ever points at his/her house with the left hand and this saying is truly applicable in this case. No one can blame them for moving away (but who wouldn't do the same?). It is alright and understandable when people move from one place to another for economic reasons such as to look for jobs, establish enterprises; however, it is not alright and not understandable when people in a country move away from one place because of security reasons.

### **Yendi, the Neglected City!**

Annoyingly, all the various governments since independence, till now, have wittingly neglected and kept Yendi out of any development-related policy planning efforts. For the past thousand years, roads linking Yendi to other cities and towns in the Northern Region have not been constructed, except quite recently, the one linking Yendi to Tamale which received attention. All the other roads are still crying out for attention, and so far, in vain. Telecommunication is underdeveloped as no telephone lines were functional during the March 2002 massacre of several dozen people, and up to date, the majority of interested inhabitants of Yendi have to go to Tamale to send email messages to other parts of the world, for those facilities are largely absent in Yendi, thus far.

That isn't all. No substantial development project has been carried out in this capital for the past half century by any government, though they often wasted no time to adopt executive policies that divided the capital, but they always wasted all the time when it came to developing him. Yendi, our capital, compared to other Ghanaian cities of his stature, is the most neglected of all.

For donkey's years, the clock of urban development in Yendi qua Dagbon Traditional capital has not ticked, except the power grid, credit to Mr. Rawlings and the road from Yendi to Tamale, credit to Messrs. Rawlings and Kuffour, so I just wonder how much longer this culture of neglect will continue. My wish is to see this proud city of ours catch up with his counterparts in the country through an accelerated development programme at the national governmental level. A Yendi Municipal Rapid Development Committee should be established to work in synergy with government and other representatives to speed up the development of the city to comparable level. Yendi is part of the agricultural heartland of Dagbon, and Ghana for that matter, so the central government

should revamp the agricultural sector to serve as a base for developing the food-production, food-processing industry, cottage industry. Other roads, except the one connecting Tamale and Yendi which has been constructed, should also be constructed to link Yendi up with other pivotal towns in the region. Further, government, in collaboration with the natives, should develop the commercial infrastructure to augment the flow and capacity of commerce in and through the city. In addition, government should make it a priority to develop the telecommunication network in order to link the city with other parts of the country and to eliminate the deficiencies of March 2002. What is more, government should work with real estate developers to embark on suitable and affordable real-estate development schemes/projects, among others, to reposition the city as an attractive place to live, work, and establish private businesses/enterprises. Above all, government should assure that security is always provided for the city because you can never tell what is going to happen next in Yendi.

### **Yendi, the Troubled City!**

In spite of the unforgivable, deliberate neglect by all governments and the forgivable abandonment by the native intelligentsia, Yendi is determined to remain as the unforgettable and troubled city of Ghana, occasionally crying out loud to the nation for due attention; massacre in 1969 and turbulence in the preceding years, chaos in 1974, and recently another massacre in March 2002, viz the DCC. It has been violence, violence, and even more violence. Today, a day rarely passes by without some form of news about Yendi and the DCC, thus putting the capital in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons. Government should ensure that not even one more soul perishes in Yendi any longer in the name of DCC.

In a nutshell, it is only feasible for us to move the seat of the Ya Naa from Yendi, a city that has stood still for decades now, to Tamale, a city that has been dynamic and vibrant in as much time. This proposal for peace and unity, as noted earlier, is based on modernization; physical and psychological, and part of this process entails promotion of the Yanii skin as an all-inclusive modern, people-oriented, socially-focused responsibility capable of adapting to changing trends in order to meet the challenges of the day. With all due respect to Yendi, it is clear that Tamale provides a better environment for promoting the Yanii Skin than Yendi. Moving our Traditional Capital from Yendi should not mean further abandonment, for a socio-economic development programme should be designed and implemented at both governmental and Dagbon level to uplift Yendi from several years of neglect.

Imperatively, moving our traditional capital from Yendi to Tamale would benefit All Dagombas and it's in the best interest of Dagbon to adopt this proposal. No Dagomba, including members of the rival Gates has anything to

lose if the seat is moved to Tamale, but All Dagombas, including members of both Gates have everything to lose if the seat of our King remains in Yendi.

**Question: What happens to Yendi if and when we move our TC to Tamale?**

The proposal calls for the following:

**1. A new paramountcy should be created for Yendi and a new skin/title named by the next Ya Naa and the elders of Dagbon.** The new paramountcy in Yendi should be the second ranking leadership position in the Dagbon traditional hierarchy, second to only the Ya Naa and should therefore pay homage to the Ya Naa located in Tamale(See Appendix 2). The Committee of Experts on Dagbon Traditional Constitution(stated in subsequent sections) should determine and advise Dagbon on how the line of command of the new skin should flow relative to other paramount skins.

**2. Whoever is presented by members of any of the royal Gates as their heir to the throne, Ya Naa or Yendi chief, should be accepted by All Dagombas without reservations;** however, that candidate must be traditionally qualified and conspicuously linked to the Royal Gate.

**3. A new Palace should be built in Yendi to house the new paramount chief.** Support from All Dagombas is needed for this project.

**4. The current Ya Naa's Palace should be preserved as a traditional monument.** When total peace and unity arrive in the Dagbon Kingdom the preserved Palace could serve as a lodging facility for the Ya Naa whenever he visits Yendi. Other paramount chiefs could also lodge there on their visits. A curator should be put in charge of maintaining and preserving the Palace.

**5. Yendi should be regarded as the 'military base' of the Dagbon Kingdom** and All Dagombas should be ready to fight and defend every inch of land in Dagbon, including Yendi and Eastern Dagbon in the face of any external aggression.

6. To highlight his commitment to strengthen the new Yendi skin, I suggest, for the sake of unity, that **the next Ya Naa declares that Yendi becomes the main venue for the annual Bugum(Fire and Victory) festival** to be celebrated under the observation of the new paramount chief of Yendi and All capable Dagombas may go on an annual pilgrimage to Yendi for the celebrations. All towns and villages shall continue to celebrate fire festival in their localities, but the major event will take place in Yendi. In addition, the Ya Naa, in consultation with the Yendi Paramount Chief and other paramount chiefs, will declare one day for the

whole of Dagbon to celebrate the Bugum festival. The Ya Naa himself, occasionally could go to Yendi for the Bugum festival celebrations as a show of unity and resolve to maintain Yendi as our traditional ‘military base.’ The Dagbon traditional army known as the Kambonse(Musketeers) should continue to be based in their current locations and ready to defend Dagbon at anytime. It is envisaged that if this proposal is accepted and adopted by All Dagombas, a new era of very friendly and cordial relationship will prevail between the future Ya Naas located in Tamale and the future Yendi paramount chiefs and visits will be exchanged between them occasionally.

**7.A 24-hour a day and 365 days a year(24/365) police guard be stationed at the new Yendi paramount chief’s palace.** (Afterall, Dagombas pay tax to the central government and therefore deserve the right of police protection for their Paramount Chief, who is also potentially, the successor to the Ya Naa seated in Tamale, according to this peace proposal, if adopted). Nevertheless, other potential successors to the Yani skin are the Gate skins: Mion, Karaga, Karaga, and Tampion (as proposed in subsequent sections).

**Question: What happens to the Gulkpegu paramountcy if and when we move our TC to Tamale?**

The proposal calls for the following:

**1.Gulkpenaa will continue to have his traditional powers and authority as ruler of Gulkpegu,** which includes the Tamale metropolis, **but will exclude the Yani enclave, the new Palace of the Ya Naa.** The Gulkpenaa will continue, as usual, to report to whoever he does report to in the traditional hierarchy. Specifics and details of the separation of authority and jurisdiction shall be determined by the Committee of Experts on Dagbon Traditional Constitution(stated in subsequent section).

**2.Again, for the sake of unity, the Ya Naa should declare that the main venue for celebrating the annual Damba(Dancing) festival be held in Tamale under his observation.** All Dagombas, who are capable, will make the annual pilgrimage to Tamale to celebrate the Damba festivities. All towns and villages shall continue to celebrate the Damba festival in their paramountcies, but the major event will take place in Tamale. Similarly, the Ya Naa, in consultation with the Yendi Paramount Chief and other paramount chiefs, will declare the days for the whole of Dagbon to celebrate the Damba festival.

**3.A 24/365 police guard be stationed at the new Ya Naa’s Palace in Tamale.** (Afterall, Dagombas pay tax to the central government and therefore deserve the right of police protection for their King, if requested).

Significantly, before we move the traditional capital from Yendi to Tamale, All Dagombas will need to be informed and all the arguments for the strategy explained. It is only when there is a consensus of acceptance by Dagombas to relocate the seat of the Ya Naa to Tamale that we should implement this physical change.

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGE**

The PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGE requires All Dagombas to change their methods, views, positions, perceptions, ways, actions, attitude, traditional beliefs, approaches to fall in line with values of contemporary society and changing times. The essence of the psychological change is to enable us open up to each other, draw closer to each other, build confidence and trust in each other, and ultimately establish true friendship/brotherhood(unity) among us.

### **1. Call for Change of certain Traditional and Customary Beliefs:**

Central to the changes advocated in this proposal is the change of our traditional & customary beliefs. We shouldn't remain slave to our own traditions.

Examples of beliefs we should change include, but not limited to, the following:

- a. The belief that some people might have: that we cannot or should not change the Yani, seat of the Ya Naa, from Yendi to another location in Dagbon.
- b. The belief that some people might have: that we cannot or should not change or increase the number of the Gate skins that ascend to the Yani skin from the current three, thus; Karaga, Savelugu, Mion, to four Gate skins.
- c. The belief that some people might have: that we cannot or should not change the composition and role of the Ya Naa Selection Committees; the traditional four-member, soothsayer kingmakers, and the government-instituted eleven-member team.
- d. The belief that some people might have: that we cannot or should not change the ambiguity and confusion that surrounds the tradition of not having pre-knowledge of who the next Ya Naa will be until the selection day, among others.

To all the foregoing, I assure all concerned Dagombas that we can and should change as many traditions & customs as possible to suit our present-day challenges and problems, for that is the only way we can move forward.

### **2. Call for Change of Attitude:**

As part of the change process, there is the crucial need for All Dagombas to learn how to recognize any wrongdoings against others and express, in very practical terms, sorrow and repentance. The word **SORRY(GAAFARA)** exists

in Dagbani vocabulary but we hardly use it. By saying sorry to a fellow Dagomba, neighbour, friend, stranger, or even an opponent doesn't mean one is weak or defeated; rather it means one is intelligent, civilized, empathetic. To test you on the need for change of attitude I want all Dagombas, especially the men, to answer the following questions:

1.How many of you have ever said to your wives: darling, I am so sorry for what I said or did. I admit that was wrong. I won't repeat that again?

2.How many of you in the Abudu Gate of the DCC have ever said to members of the Andani Gate that you are sorry for the mess caused in the past? And to mirror the question, how many of you in the Andani Gate of the DCC have ever said to members of the Abudu Gate that you are sorry for the mess caused in the past?

The answers to the above questions are obvious. If no apology has been rendered in any one of the foregoing instances then we need to change, if we ever dream of smelling the sweet scent of peace and unity in Dagbon.

Achieving peace and unity in Dagbon will be an uphill task unless we start the process of repentance in recognition of the pain we have caused each other in the past half century. It goes without saying: charity begins at home. We find it hard to say sorry to each other because we fail to say sorry to even our spouses; meanwhile we wrong our spouses and fellow Dagombas every now and then. If we want to achieve peace in Dagbon, then we all have to learn how to be apologetic and repentant when and if we wrong each other. To achieve peace and unity it is very crucial that we all stop trying to live the symbol of Yani, 'lion' and start to live like humble people. It has to be pointed out that all of us can try to live like 'lions' some of the time, and some of us can try to live like lions all of the time, but all of us cannot try to live like 'lions' all of the time, so some of us have to live like 'antelopes.' We have to realize that, today, we are living in modern times and not in those days of survival of the fittest when the strongest 'lion' could usurp the Yani Skin. We just have to learn how to express our sorrow for inconveniencing others.

In my view, I think we should start the reconciliation process by sitting together, face to face, elders of the Abudu Gate and the Andani Gate, look each other in the eye and say: **LOOK, BROTHERS AND SISTERS, WE ARE SO SORRY FOR THE HURT WE INFLICTED ON YOU: IT WAS THE WORK OF THE DEVIL: LETS PUT THE PAST BEHIND US AND MOVE ON AS A UNITED FAMILY.**

The day we could utter the foregoing statement is easily attainable if we can learn how to say the five-letter word: **sorry**. We should not underestimate the power of this word - sorry. Boiling temper can be cooled and enmity turned into friendship by this apologetic word. Saying sorry to someone you have wronged emphasizes your civility and recognition of the pain or inconvenience caused by your action.

Importantly, to develop a genuine friendship among ourselves again we should mean what we say when we say what we mean; thus superficial efforts will be counterproductive.

## **ACCEPTING AN APOLOGY**

On the other hand, we should accept apologies when genuinely expressed to us by those who do us wrong. Dagombas do not have a problem accepting apologies, though those opportunities rarely come, as the five-letter word seems to be a taboo.

By the same token, we should all learn how to express love, affection, and compassion towards each other again. According to elders, love, affection, and compassion towards each other was prevalent in Dagbon until the arrival of this virus. Again, all these values can be instilled into the Dagbon Kingdom if we change our attitude for the sake of peace.

### **3.Call for Change of Methods:**

For the sake of attaining peace and unity in our Kingdom we have to desist from adopting physical methods as a means of resolving issues that otherwise are resolvable non-physically. Restraint, patience, tolerance, and understanding are the bedrock of peace in any society, and ours is no exception. Resorting to violence, as we have done in the past, to settle our differences is not the right method; going forward, instead, we should always adopt diplomatic and dialogic methods to iron out our problems. It is commonplace to hear non-Dagombas in an altercation use the phrase: “let’s settle it the Dagomba way,” meaning let’s resort to a physical fight or violence. I do not think the use of the phrase means intelligence and civility; rather I think it means we (Dagombas) have to change, period! As the rest of Ghana is constantly modernizing and developing, my hope is that Dagbon will move in tandem by embracing the proposed changes. We All have to denounce violence as a manner of getting our way with issues that divide us because we still have a lot to prove to the world that we have changed from what we were in 2002 to what we should be, just like all other Ghanaian tribes: peaceful, tolerant, understanding, forgiving, unselfish.

### **4.Call for Change of Actions:**

There is the need for Dagbon intelligentsia to refrain from the habit of using their political office to take extrajudicial actions that are injurious to fellow

Dagombas on the opposite side of the divide. Political power can be very intoxicative and tempting to use against rivals, but the intoxication doesn't last forever because time is an enemy of political fortune. The change that is necessary here is to use political power to promote peace and development in Dagbon, not advance our sectional agenda of revenge. Political 'weather' changes periodically, and incumbents of today may become opposition tomorrow since Ghana is, more or less, a 50/50 political state, and not one party nation. Back in 1982, who could imagine that, one day, then Ft. Lt. J.J. Rawlings' days will be over, but today, in 2005, we are in a different era under a different leader. So no political condition is permanent, my brothers and sisters, and our actions today may live to haunt us tomorrow. All I am asking of All Dagombas is to exercise maturity, wisdom, make concessions, reconcile, and live in peace and reunite, and not take actions that are going to further drift us apart to live in pieces. I urge victims of the mobocracy going on in Dagbon in recent years not to harbour feelings of revenge when the political tide turns in their favour in future, for we can not right a wrong with another wrong, and two wrongs do not make a right. For the sake of peace in Dagbon we have to let revenge give way to forgiveness and reconciliation. Besides, the older generations should stop brainwashing the younger ones and trying to convince them that the rival Gate in the DCC is the enemy of Dagbon. Rather we have to unteach the young ones about the DCC and try to foster unity among them. While the rest of Ghana uses politics to develop and promote the interests of their various tribes and traditional areas, we(Dagombas) rather still use politics to divide our own. The common denominator among all Dagbon intelligentsia should be the drive to develop Dagbon in congruence with the development of Ghana.

We(Dagombas) have a lot to learn from Ghana, our beloved nation, on how to: forgive others who wronged us in the past, reconcile, and live in peace and prosperity. This is the finest expression of civilization and modernism by our country, Ghana, and this example, we, as Dagombas, can emulate for our own peace and prosperity in Dagbon.

#### **5.Call for Change of Perceptions:**

Critical to achieving peace and unity is the need to erase the perception that the government can resolve the chieftancy crisis by granting our wishes. Dagombas serving in any incumbent government should not perceive they can commit atrocities against their rivals in Dagbon and get away with it. Ghana has come a long way as a democracy and should not allow some elements in government to commit human rights abuses in an effort to serve their selfish DCC-related desires and get off the hook. Such actions, if permitted by government, will not only devalue our democracy at home, but also will tarnish our standing on the world scene as well as place Ghana under the radar screen and watchful eye of Human Rights organizations all over the world. Justice delayed is justice denied,

and equal justice and protection for all Ghanaians should be government's task. Regrettably, government has already lost some moral high ground as a result of atrocities being committed with impunity in Dagbon under its watchful eyes, so the incumbent can no longer criticize the human rights record of the previous government on similar issues with clear conscience. Life in Dagbon today is reminiscent of the early years of the PNDC era when targeted killings and rampant military brutality was the order of the day. We, Dagombas, should rather use our positions to promote the interest and betterment of Dagbon, not destroy our own people and Kingdom.

Importantly, we should stop perceiving fellow Dagombas on the other side of the DCC as enemies, and start perceiving them as friends fighting together for peace in Dagbon. After all, what is the essence in installing a Ya Naa who is only going to lead a section of the Kingdom. Let us go past that era and begin a new era where the Ya Naa will lead All Dagombas, not just a section of Dagombas.

Notably, perceptions we hold about the feminine gender in Dagbon need to change, if peace, unity, prosperity is to be a realizable dream. Girl-child education should be a priority to the whole of the Dagomba Kingdom and girls should be encouraged to advance to the highest level in education, just like their male counterparts, for the future of our Kingdom depends very significantly on the female gender. Securing the future of Dagbon cannot be achieved unless we adopt an egalitarian approach to girl education because that is the best way they can be empowered to be resourceful in future to cater for their children's education or supplement the resources provided by their husbands. The need for this change in perception about girl-child education is evident by the migration *en masse* of Dagbon female youth to the cities in Southern Ghana to serve as "Kaayayo" labour. If we fail to embrace this perceptual change, more and more of our young girls will follow suit. Practically, mothers in Africa are more enthusiastic about their children's education than fathers. This point is buttressed by the joke: "Give an African mother a thousand dollars and she'll generate more capital from it to see her children through school, and give an African father a thousand dollars and he will marry ten new wives the next day."

The role of women in our society is ever growing, and it will be churlishness if we(Dagombas) were to refuse to see this changing phenomenon and take appropriate action now. We are already playing catch-up to all others in Ghana, vis-a-vis education, and we should not try hard to widen the gap even further. As a Kingdom seeking peace and prosperity, we have to appreciate the central role played by our women in developing the family and making other contributions. It is only when we fully appreciate the female gender in Dagbon that we will realize the urgency of encouraging girl-child education and empowerment. More respect and regard should be accorded them as we all strive for peace; after all, they are our equal partners in life and not our beast of burden. As the search for harmony gathers momentum and a new era of possible

peace, unity, and prosperity in Dagbon is on the horizon, we should not leave the female gender behind, as we have done thus far, for they are the essential half of our being as a strong Kingdom, and therefore deserve education and empowerment just like their male counterparts.

#### **6.Call for Change of Position/View:**

A cross-section of Dagombas hold the view/position that their case in the DCC is right and the other side is wrong. We have to change these views and positions by empathizing with the other side. When this is done we will see both sides to be right in their views and positions and none is actually wrong. Failure to change our views and positions will only lead both sides to end up being wrong all the time, which is not a good recipe for peace. Relevantly, change of one's position/view about the DCC is one of numerous concessions we must make in order to arrive at peace in Dagbon.

#### **7.Call for Change of Approach:**

Up until now, the approach adopted to deal with the DCC has been political polarization of Dagbon, thus members of one Gate aligning themselves with one political party no matter what that party stands for. We have to learn how to separate politics from our traditional issues. In other words, Dagombas should be able to belong to any political party regardless of their position on the DCC. Politics should be used as a tool to bring Dagombas together as one people, not divide us along Gate lines.

The proposed changes: physical and psychological, require careful planning and commitment and would take time to implement and achieve.

If we are enthusiastic about these changes I think we could make strides toward peace and unity in the coming months.

To ensure a speedy process to peace and unity, we have to disseminate the contents of this proposal expeditiously in all parts of Dagbon.

### **THE FACTS AND LOGIC FOR PEACE AND UNITY**

Peace and unity can not come to Dagbon just by chance; they have to come through the making of concessions and repositioning of age-old beliefs, views, stance on the DCC, and developing a fresh level of mutual understanding for the future. I urge All Dagombas not to allow the events of yesteryears to influence the prospects of a great tomorrow for our Kingdom, honour of our past Kings and high regard for our proud history notwithstanding. We should cherish All our dead Kings, regardless of the views we held in the past about the rightfulness of their en-skinment, and say: let bygones be bygones, enough of

the hatred, enough of the violence, enough of the vendetta, enough of the division, all we want is peace and unity for Dagbon now and for ever!  
As a Dagomba, I am qualified by my birth-right as a native of Dagbon to take steps that are aimed at progress for the Kingdom, for I will honour and pay homage to any Ya Naa, either from the Abudu Gate or the Andani Gate, and will regard him as King of Dagbon without any reservations.

**Thus, on behalf of all members of the Abudu Gate; family, supporters, and on my own behalf, I render our most sincere apology to all members of the Andani Gate; family, and supporters for all the mess and pain caused them in the past.**

**Again, on behalf of all members of the Andani Gate; family, supporters, and on my own behalf, I render our most sincere apology to all members of the Abudu Gate; family, and supporters for all the mess and pain caused them in the past.**

**ON THIS NOTE, I CALL UPON THE PROTAGONISTS OF THE ABUDU GATE TO REAFFIRM THEIR RECOGNITION AND ACCEPTANCE POSTHUMOUSLY, OF YA NAA YAKUBU ANDANI II AND YA NAA ANDANI MAHAMA III AS RIGHTFUL YA NAAS OF THE DAGBON KINGDOM.**

**AGAIN, I CALL UPON THE PROTAGONISTS OF THE ANDANI GATE TO REAFFIRM THEIR RECOGNITION AND ACCEPTANCE POSTHUMOUSLY, OF YA NAA MAHAMADU ABDULAI IV AND NAA ABDULAI III AS RIGHTFUL YA NAAS OF THE DAGBON KINGDOM.**

Change, as we know from the preceding section, involves empathizing with each other and forgiving one another. The following contentious facts form the basis of this proposal for peace and unity in Dagbon because they are the facts that have divided us for decades now and they are the same facts that will unite us again, forever:

1. Dagbon has two Royal Gates to the Yani Skin: The Abudu Gate and The Andani Gate.
2. Dagbon can have only one Ya Naa at any given time.
3. The Yani skin must be alternated (rotated) between the two Royal Gates following the natural death of a sitting Ya Naa.
4. Naa Yakubu Andani II was a Ya Naa.
5. Naa Yakubu Andani II was murdered and did not die a natural death (still reposed on traditional terms); hence his rule of Dagbon did not end naturally.
6. Naa Mahamadu Abdulai IV was a Ya Naa.

7. Naa Andani Mahama III was a Ya Naa.
8. Naa Abdulai III was a Ya Naa.
9. Traditionally, All Ya Naas should be buried in the premises of the Ya Naa's Palace.
10. Traditionally, the final funeral rites of All Ya Naas should be performed in the Ya Naa's Palace.
11. Further, Dagbon history reveals that, since the death of Naa Yakubu I, father of Naa Abudu (Abudulai I) and Naa Andani II, in 1849, when the traditional succession to Yani began on rotation basis between the Abudu Gate and the Andani Gate (See Appendix 3), till March 2002, the Abudu Royal House enskinned six (6) Ya Naas who ruled the Dagomba Kingdom for a total of eighty-six (86) years whereas the Andani Royal House enskinned four (4) Ya Naas, and one other who abdicated within hours due to old-age and ill-health, who ruled Dagbon for a total of approximately sixty-one (61) years as follows:

**Abudu Gate:**

Naa Abdulai I (1849 to 1876), thus 27 years  
 Naa Alasani (1899 to 1917), thus 18 years  
 Naa Abdulai II (1920 to 1938), thus 18 years  
 Naa Mahama III (1948 to 1953), thus 5 years  
 Naa Abdulai III (1954 to 1967), thus 13 years  
 Naa Mahama IV (1969 to 1974), thus 5 years

**Andani Gate:**

Naa Andani II (1876 to 1899), thus 23 years  
 Naa Mahama II (1938 to 1948), thus 10 years  
 Naa Andani III (November 22, 1968 to March 14, 1969), thus 0.3 years  
 Naa Yakubu Andani II (1974 to 2002), thus 28 years.

**In total, the Andani Gate ruled for 61 years between the four (4) Kings, while the Abudu Gate ruled for 86 years between the six (6) Kings (See Appendix 3). Some of these dates may be disputed by some, but the key issue that matters here is not the exactness of the dates; rather it is the pattern of the switch-overs (See Appendix 3).**

Based on the above facts, I propose the following:

1. **All Dagombas, including the Abudu and the Andani family should make concessions, stop pointing fingers at each other, accusing, and blaming each other for what happened in the past, and start talking peace today.** Regarding the murder of Naa Yakubu Andani II, we should not point accusing fingers at a particular section of Dagbon. It is the legal and moral

duty of government to present to Dagbon and the whole nation the perpetrators of that primitive act. In the meantime, I propose that we break away from dwelling on our ugly past and begin living afresh as one united family again. All previous and pending litigations, disagreements, fights, and ill-feelings should be put completely behind us and let's start looking forward to a better and brighter future. We simply have to, for the sake of peace and unity of the Kingdom.

2. At any convenient time, **the body of Naa Yakubu Andani II should be interred in the premises of the Ya Naa's Palace in Yendi.** The traditional interment of the Ya Naa is theoretically the responsibility of All Dagombas, but the scheduling of the event is a matter for the elders of the Andani family to decide. Dagbon tradition does not specify when burial of a Ya Naa should take place when death occurs, and similarly, it does not stipulate when the funeral of a Ya Naa should be performed. However, in honour of Naa Yakubu Andani II, and to accord him the maximum respect that he deserves, it is only prudent to suggest, with all respect, that elders of the Andani family plan and prepare grounds for traditional burial ceremony to take place in not a distant future. Such action will definitely propel the effort to bring peace to Dagbon again. Nearly three years to the day the massacre occurred in Yendi; bringing to book, by government, the perpetrators who heinously truncated the life and rule of the Ya Naa and forty-two(42) others seems to be a distant dream. It is incumbent upon the head of government to see to swift justice without hampering efforts by the people of Dagbon to carry out traditional funeral procedures and to begin the process of cultivating trust among their fold again. We have been waiting for justice for far too long now. Justice delayed is justice denied, and it is no secret that justice is wittingly delayed. Worryingly, no value is gained with regard to our tradition by waiting and waiting for political justice to arrive. In my view, we will be serving Naa Yakubu Andani II traditional justice by respecting and honouring him with burial as soon as appropriate. After all, as far as he, Naa Yakubu Andani II is concerned, traditional justice is worthier than the superficial justice that will be imposed upon those calling for it. Swift justice is usually true justice, but deliberately delayed justice is always wrong justice, in respect that why should justice be delayed if true justice is intended? It is possible for the pursuit for justice in the Yendi massacre and the process of a deservedly traditional burial for Naa Yakubu Andani II to happen simultaneously. We should not allow our sacred traditional processes to be dependent on or dictated by national politicians. Shall we(Dagombas) wait for another four years, or probably eight years, for justice to be served by the ruling government before we carry on with our traditional interment of Naa Yakubu Andani II? We should separate political justice(politics) from traditional justice(traditions) and let government prove that there can be

justice for all Ghanaians, regardless of one's tribe, gender, religion, political affiliation, alignment in the DCC, and that the murder of a Dagomba deserves the same justice as the murder of say, a Ga, an Ashante, an Ewe, a Fanti. A true and just government does not regard any individual to be larger than the nation and her laws; hence justice should either be brought to the perpetrators or they should be brought to justice. Nevertheless, government has a big role to play in this all-important traditional occasion of interment. We(Dagombas) expect that not a single life should be lost when the burial takes place, so government should ensure that maximum security is deployed during the event. If it is necessary to deploy a battalion of soldiers in Yendi for the burial ceremony then government should take such steps to ensure there are no security breaches. The colossal ineptness of government to protect those citizens slaughtered on March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2002 should not be exhibited again during the impending interment of the King. Promise under oath by the nation's commander-in-chief to protect and defend all Ghanaians must not, in practice, apply to only a section of the population or political supporters, but also to non-supporters. After all, the incumbent is the President of 100 per cent of Ghanaians and not (50 plus x%) of the electorate. All Dagombas, irrespective of their inclinations to the Royal Gates, should support and/or participate in the burial of Naa Yakubu Andani II. I appeal to members of the Andani Family, despite the pain and grief, to find some grace in their hearts to forgive whoever murdered Naa Yakubu Andani II. This kind of forgiveness is central to the continuity of the Dagomba Kingdom as a single traditional entity. By the same token, I appeal to members of the Abudu Family to withdraw any litigations still pending in the national courts on the DCC and move towards a family settlement with members of the Andani Gate of whatever differences there still might exist.

**3. Two tombs(gravestones) be made for Ya Naa Yakubu Andani**, one in the current Palace in Yendi and another(symbolic transfer and re-burial) in the new Ya Naa's Palace in Tamale(assuming my proposal to relocate Yendi from Yendi to Tamale is accepted), if elders of the Andani Gate see fit. The rationale behind this proposed double tombs(gravestones) is two-fold:

**A. To ensure continuity in the trail and history of Dagbon and the trail of the Andani succession line, and**

**B. Because Naa Yakubu Andani II is the 'bridge' between** the dark history of Dagbon and the bright future of Dagbon, a chaotic Dagbon and a peaceful Dagbon, a divided Dagbon and a united Dagbon, an acrimonious Dagbon and a friendly Dagbon, a shameful Dagbon and a proud Dagbon, a sad Dagbon and a joyous Dagbon, the Old Dagbon and the New Dagbon, and simply, he is the "bridge" between the past and the future, the future full of all the good things we wish for our Kingdom.

- 4. The final funeral rites of Naa Yakubu Andani should be performed in the Ya Naa's Palace in Yendi** not very long after the burial has taken place, given that a long period has elapsed following his murder and the impending interment. For the sake of achieving peace and unity early, the final funeral rites could happen immediately after the burial, or within a year, which is a reasonable grace period between the burial and the final funeral rites ceremonies. However, it is left to the Dagbon Traditional Council and elders of the Andani family to decide the scheduling of the events. All Dagombas should support and/or participate in the final funeral rites of Naa Yakubu Andani, as this will foster unity among us again. The traditions of Dagbon should be respected and maintained as far as final funeral rites of Ya Naas are concerned.
5. For the sake of peace and unity in Dagbon, **it is only objective and fair to suggest that the next Ya Naa be enskinned by the Andani Gate**, since Naa Yakubu Andani II's life and rule was truncated by a regicide (See Appendix 3). Had his rule ended through death by natural causes, then the Abudu Gate would have been the responsible royal family to enskin the next Ya Naa, but that, as we all know, is not the case. Furthermore, since 1849, the Abudu Gate has enskinned six(6) Dagbon Kings and ruled for a total of 86 years whereas the Andani Gate enskinned four(4) Dagbon Kings and ruled for a total of 61 years. The Abudu Gate, for the sake of peace and unity, is urged to understand the need to allow the Andani Gate to enskin the next Ya Naa. It is only through this kind of understanding, patience, tolerance, reasoning, concessions that we (Dagombas) have a chance of building the pillars of peace and unity in our Kingdom again.
- 6. The next Ya Naa should be enskinned in the Ya Naa's Palace in Yendi** as soon as the final funeral rites of Naa Yakubu Andani II have been performed. All Dagombas should support and/or participate in the enskinment of the new Ya Naa, as this will foster unity among us again.
- 7. The next Ya Naa**, who should come from the Andani Gate, once enskinned in the Ya Naa's Palace in Yendi, **should be transferred to the new Ya Naa's Palace in Tamale** (assuming my proposal to relocate Yani from Yendi to Tamale is accepted and implemented). This action will symbolically ensure continuity in the trail of the history of Dagbon and will reflect the new transition for peace and unity we are fighting for now. All subsequent Ya Naas shall be buried in the Tamale Palace. All Dagombas should support and/or participate in the transfer procession of the new Ya Naa. Support and/or Participation by all Dagombas will speed up the peace process.

- 8. All future Ya Naas will continue to be enskinned in Yendi** and then transferred to the new Palace in Tamale. By this, all the sacred traditional and customary rites will be practised and maintained.
- 9. The final funeral rites of Naa Mahamadu Abdulai IV should be performed in the Ya Naa's Palace in Yendi subsequent to the burial, the final funeral rites of Naa Yakubu Andani II and the enskinment of the new Ya Naa.** All Dagombas should support and/or participate in the final funeral rites of Naa Mahamadu Abdulai IV, for that will serve as a show of unity among us again. However, it is up to the Dagbon Traditional Council and elders of the Abudu Gate to decide the scheduling of the events. The traditions of Dagbon should be respected and maintained as far as final funeral rites of Ya Naas are concerned.
- 10. For the sake of peace and unity, I call on the Andani and the Abudu families to come together and jointly plan the burial and final funeral rites of Naa Yakubu Andani II and Naa Mahamadu Abdulai IV.** Firstly, the interment and final funeral rites of Naa Yakubu Andani II should be performed and afterwards that of Naa Mahamadu Abdulai IV. The reason is that the succession process to the Ya Naa skin can only commence after the burial and final funeral rites of Naa Yakubu Andani II are performed. The succession of anyone from the Abudu Gate to the proposed new Yendi skin can only be effected after the final funeral rites of Naa Mahamadu Abdulai IV have been performed. This idea is to foster unity among these two families and among All Dagombas as a whole. The events of March 27, 2002 was a test for us, Dagombas, to assess our collective will to overcome the devil. It was a test to reveal whether we want to continue to live in peace or in chaos. It was a test to ascertain whether we want to continue to hate each other or begin to love each other. It is a test to uncover whether we want to continue to be or not to be. I am optimistic that the declaration of peace in Dagbon, hopefully, before the end of 2005, will lead to the joint-planning project of the burial and final funeral rites of the last two Ya Naas of the Dagomba Kingdom. If we go through the psychological change proposed in the preceding sections of this document, I am sure we can all understand each other and plan these very crucial ceremonies together. After all, the great great great great grandfather of these two Ya Naas, Naa Yakubu I, would wish for this kind of joint treatment for his great great great great grandsons: Naa Yakubu Andani II and Naa Mahamadu Abdulai IV. I am afraid to warn that doing things in a rush without patience can have serious and untold consequences on all Dagombas, and it is better to act with patience and attain peace than act in haste and destroy any prospects of achieving peace. The end goal of Dagbon is to have a Ya Naa who will be respected and honoured by All Dagombas and not just a faction of the tribe.

We have to live in the modern world of understanding and tolerance and not in the primitive world of zero-understanding and intolerance, because that will get us nowhere as a tribe.

11. **The Abudu Gate should be responsible for presenting an heir to the new Yendi Paramount Skin.** The new Yendi Paramount Chief from the Abudu Gate shall be settled in the new Yendi Paramount Chief's Palace. For the sake of peace and unity, **the next Ya Naa should lead the enskinment of the new Yendi Paramount Chief.** All Dagombas, irrespective of their inclination to the Royal Gates, should support and/or participate in the enskinment of the new Yendi Paramount Chief, for that will show our unity and commitment to peace in Dagbon again. The new Yendi Skin shall pay homage to the Ya Naa located in Tamale.
12. **At the next opportunity for a Ya Naa, after the next Ya Naa from the Andani Gate to be seated in Tamale, the first in line and heir to the Yani Skin from the Abudu Gate should be enskinned as Ya Naa and seated in Tamale, and the Andani Gate should be responsible for enskinning a successor to the Yendi Skin.** The Committee of Experts on Dagbon Traditional Constitution (stated in subsequent sections) should advise the people of Dagbon on the best modalities to adopt to make the process fair, balanced and to preserve the integrity of our tradition.
13. **At any point in time, the Ya Naa seated in Tamale and the Yendi Paramount Chief should come from different Royal Gates: the Andani and the Abudu (See Appendix 2).**
14. **A symbolic transfer and re-burial of Naa Mahamadu Abdulai's body from the Ya Naa's Palace in Yendi to the new Ya Naa's Palace in Tamale should take place, if members and family of the Abudu Gate deem it fit.** That, in my view, will ensure the continuity of the trail of the Abudu line as well as complete the continuity of the history of the Dagbon Kingdom. This will also enforce the momentum toward peace and unity and assert Tamale as the rightful seat for both Royal Gates. Tamale, just like Yendi, belongs to All Dagombas, and Ya Naas from both Royal Gates seated in Tamale should be accorded maximum respect, homage, and support. All Dagombas, without regard to their alignment to the royal Gates, should feel free, secure, and comfortable to live in any cottage, village, town, city of Dagbon. Hence we should erase the notion of certain cities, towns, villages, cottages being strongholds of any one of the Royal Gates and see the whole of Dagbon as one big stronghold of whoever is our Ya Naa. Because Dagbon is not a political entity; rather he is a traditional entity.

- 15. The Dagbon traditional constitution should be updated to include a provision that stipulates unequivocally that, in future, if evidence shows that members or supporters or affiliates of any of the Royal Gates are directly or indirectly linked to the machination and killing of a reigning Ya Naa seated in Tamale or a reigning Yendi Paramount Chief seated in Yendi, that royal Gate linked to the crime shall forfeit three consecutive turns in enskinning a Ya Naa.** In other words, the victimized Royal Gate shall deserve the traditional legal right to install the subsequent three Ya Naas thenceforth. The same traditional law shall apply to all other paramount (divisional) chief, sub-divisional chief, and sub-chief skins throughout Dagbon. Such a provision will serve as a deterrent for any potential act of murder against any future Ya Naa or other Chiefs of Dagbon. That apart, there will be a host of changes and new issues in Dagbon which will require new traditional laws, and all the new traditional laws will need to be incorporated in the traditional constitution. Copies of the updated Dagbon traditional constitution should be presented to the appropriate national institutions such as the supreme court, the national house of chiefs, ministries of justice/attorney general's office/interior, et cetera, for future reference.
- 16. In the long-run, we should advise ourselves on the culture of promoting regents directly to the skins of their deceased fathers. In the short-term, the Abudu Gate and the Andani Gate should be given one last chance each, if need be, to enskin a regent to either Yani or the new Yendi skin.** Thenceforth, Dagbon Traditional constitution should be amended to outlaw the practice of enskinning regents to Yani and the new Yendi skins. **Such law should include a stipulation that any regent who presents himself as candidate to immediately succeed his deceased father, the Ya Naa or the Yendi Paramount Chief, should be disqualified and so should all his children, as such presentation will be an attempt to sow seeds of confusion in Dagbon.** The practice of enskinning regents, as we all know, tends to shut out other legitimate heirs to the Yani skin and render their line of succession extinct, hence causing chaos, confusion, and disunity among us. Further, the idea of Progressive Gate Skins: Mion, Karaga, Savelugu, and Tampion (assuming Tampion is promoted to Gate skin status as proposed in the next section) is to offer regents or their occupants some invaluable traditional leadership experience and calibre before they ascend to the Yani skin to rule the Kingdom. Such vital experience should be appreciated because we are a homogeneous people with heterogeneous minds, which makes Dagbon a complex and onerous entity to rule. Candidates with vast, high profile traditional rule experience via the advancement gate skins are the ones that can optimally converge all the different minds to make Dagbon a strong, peaceful, united Kingdom. In addition, the practical application of the progressive gate skins to Yani and the new Yendi Paramount Skins will

ensure equity, balance, and continuity that the enskinment of regents deprives. I have to argue that knowing in advance, the person going to succeed an incumbent Ya Naa is rather more assuring, securing, and feasible for the Dagomba Kingdom than the ambiguous system we have in place at the moment. If we clearly pre-define in our traditional constitution that the Yendi Chief will always be the successor to the Yani skin located in Tamale, I think that pre-definition will make the people of Dagbon more confident of the future than wondering who is going to be the next Ya Naa and where he is going to come from. In my view, and I mean this with all due respect for our traditions and customs, the notion that our tradition does not allow the successor to the Yani skin to be known until the selection day is out of place and time today. That notion blurs the future as we are unable to prepare backup leaders ready to take on the mantle of traditional rulership, aside from the confusion it always creates for us. The Committee of Experts on Dagbon Traditional Constitution should design a workable framework of modalities that will assure a secure, fair, balanced, unambiguous process of succession to the Yani and the new Yendi Skins via the progressive Gate skins.

**17. One New Gate Skin should be established or created to ascend to Yani and/or Yendi skins.** This means that the Dagbon Constitution on succession through the Gate Skins has to be ammended to accommodate this new change. One of the divisional chieftainships in Western Dagbon should be promoted to Gate Skin status to ascend to the Yendi and Yani skins. For instance, **Tampion** or any one of the chieftainships in Western Dagbon(See Appendix 2). The reasons for this proposal are:

- I. To create a **balance between the two Royal Houses in the number of Gate Skins** leading up to Yani and the new Yendi skin, thus two Gate Skins each, say Karaga, Savelugu, Mion, and Tampion(assuming Tampion is promoted). See Appendix 2 to understand the balance.
- II. To ensure a **balance of power in the top brass of Dagbon traditional hierarchy**, thus the Yani(seated in Tamale area), the new Yendi chieftainship, Karaga, Savelugu, Mion, and Tampion(assuming Tampion is promoted to the Gate Skin status I am advocating for here), meaning we will have six(6) top Skins and going forward, Abudu Royal House will occupy three of the six top skins and Andani Royal House will occupy three(3) of the six top skins. One Royal House occupying two Gate skins and the other occupying only one Gate skin creates a traditional disequilibrium(See Appendix 2 to understand the balance).
- III. **To offer regents and princes more opportunities to advance to Yani and the new Yendi skins.** Each Royal House will have at least, two members of his family occupying Gate Skins ready to ascend to Yani or Yendi.

- IV. **To assure continuity and to limit risks of one Royal House falling out from the rotational succession system.** Longevity, as we all know, is not our decision, as we are all mortal, and having only one member of any of the Royal Houses occupying an advancement Gate skin is dangerous, not only to that Royal House, but also, to the Dagomba Kingdom as a whole(See Appendix 1 to understand the risks).
- V. **To offer invaluable, high profile traditional rule experience for more regents and princes** occupying Gate skin chieftainships. They will be trained and prepared with the necessary leadership experience to better rule the Kingdom in future, hence assuring Dagbon of capable potential Ya Naas.
- VI. The balance of power derived from this new Gate skin **will increase fairness and equity** in the succession structure among the two Royal Houses(See Appendix 2 to understand the distribution).
- VII. **To exhibit our creativity at finding our own solutions to our problem** of imbalances in the succession structures. With all respect and thanks to Nayiri(Mamprusi King), the three(3) Gate skins we have today (Mion, Karaga, Savelugu as shown in Appendix 1) was a decision made for us by Nayiri in circa 1648(Naa Zangina was selected) when our fore-fathers at that time went to Nayiri to select a Ya Naa for them because they couldn't do so by themselves. At that time, however, we did not have the two rotational Royal Houses that we do today, so the three(3) Gate skins recommended by Nayiri was a good and workable number. The recommendation of Nayiri to use Mion, Karaga, and Savelugu as Gate skins to progress to Yani was incorporated into our Dagbon traditional constitution and became a tradition for over three hundred and fifty(350) years. Nonetheless, now, it's high time we put on our thinking cap and begin thinking "outside the box" instead of hanging on to a tradition which has become practically unworkable for our current needs, as we have done for the past half century(50 years) since the DCC began. I am sure that, Nayiri being so wise, as always, would have recommended a fourth Gate skin for us had they suspected a split in the succession among two Royal Houses. Having said that, by establishing a new Gate skin in addition to the traditional three, will simply mean that we are establishing our own system through our own initiative, building on what the Nayiri recommended for us, and correcting the flaws that exist with the current succession structures, viz the Gate skins. No one should say we cannot change a tradition, because, of course, we can change it to suit our current needs. So we can add a new Gate skin to the existing three. When we do that now and implement it, it will become a tradition in, say fifty, hundred, two hundred years' time(See Appendices 1 & 2 for background).
- VIII. **To ensure a balance of power between Western and Eastern Dagbon at the top brass of Dagbon traditional hierarchy:** Yendi, Karaga, Mion

chieftainships in Eastern Dagbon, and Savelugu, Tampion (assuming Tampion is promoted) chieftainships, and Yani (relocated in Tamale area) in Western Dagbon.

- IX. **To accommodate the extra pressure that will be created by the new Dagbon Constitutional amendment that will ban regents from direct enskinment to Yani and the new Yendi chieftainship skin**, as proposed in subsequent section. Because of the urgent need to abolish the direct enskinment of regents to succeed their deceased fathers seated in Yani and the new Yendi skin, the establishment of the new Gate skin, Tampion (if promoted), will offer us a good opportunity to implement this abolition soon and successfully, without a backlog. As we all know, apart from the three (3) Gate skins; Karaga, Savelugu, and Mion regents hitherto have been allowed to be enskinned to Yani. Well, that is not good for Dagbon in terms of leadership as well as our tradition. I have explained reasons for abolishing this practice in subsequent section.

18. **If proposal # 17 is accepted and implemented**, then at any point in time, **not more than two (2) of the following Gate skins to Yani should be occupied by members of the Royal Gate to which the reigning Ya Naa belongs: Yendi, Mion, Savelugu, Karaga, and Tampion.** The rationale behind this is to ensure continuity of the lines of succession in both Royal Houses, maintain a balance of traditional power between the Abudu and Andani Gates, uphold Dagbon's sacred traditions, foster unity and peace in the Kingdom. The Mion, Savelugu, and Karaga Skins, which are progressive skins and potential heirs to the Yani Skin, are being practically rendered dead-end skins at the moment owing to the enskinment of regents to succeed their deceased fathers. This practice does not serve the best interest of Dagbon's tradition. We have to streamline the traditional procedures to accord equal opportunities to all these progressive skins to end up at the Yani Skin. The Committee of Experts on Dagbon Traditional Constitution (stated in subsequent section) should review and recommend on how these skins as well as the new Yendi Skin and the proposed new Tampion gate skin could be reorganized to ensure fairness, balance, and progressive continuity to lead up to the Yani Skin. Probably, a pre-defined rotational mechanism has to be put in place to assure equity of chances for all legitimate heirs to the Yani skin, viz Mion, Karaga, Savelugu, Tampion, and Yendi. In my opinion, **the Yendi skin should be considered as the Preferred and Senior Gate Skin to automatically ascend the skin of Yani (See Appendix 2)**, though the other gate skins are still qualified to advance to the Yani skins. This proposed system of succession to the Yani skins, with Yendi serving as a preferred, senior Gate skin, will also make the Yendi skin a "checkpoint" that will prevent the potential creation of a third Gate skin in the future. If this proposal is accepted and adopted, the tasks of the new Ya Naa Selection

Committee will change dramatically. They will only be performing a formality by endorsing the one and only candidate for the Yani skin, who is also the occupant of the new Yendi skin, **if the new Yendi skin is regarded as the Preferred Gate skin to Yani.** For ascension to the new Yendi skin, the Selection Committee will assist the Ya Naa to select one of two candidates from the same Royal House who are occupants of two of the four Gate skins(Karaga, Savelugu, Mion, and Tampion), to ascend to the Yendi skin. As stated in proposal #13, at any point in time, the Yani skin and the Yendi skin must be occupied by members of different Royal Houses, which means that only Gate skin chiefs belonging to the Royal House other than that of the incumbent Ya Naa will be eligible for selection to ascend to the Yendi chief skin. In cases where two members of the same Royal House are eligible for the Yendi skin, the selection of one of them may even be made internally within the Royal House family. In that case, confusion and chaos will be eliminated completely at the Yendi skin ascending to Yani skin level, as well as at the Gate skins ascending to Yendi skin level; thus Mion, Karaga, Savelugu, and Tampion, ascending to Yendi. Succession disagreements might shift downwards to the Gate skin level: Mion, Savelugu, Karaga, and Tampion. Those disagreements will be limited to two candidates from the same Royal House. As we know, at the present time, differences at that level are normally resolved amicably within the Royal Houses. Yet, to avoid confusion at the same Royal House level, pre-defined criteria could be designed to ease the selection of the Gate skin chief to ascend to the Yendi skin. For instance, **selection of the candidate could be based on seniority(positive experience) in terms of years of rule as Gate skin chief, or performance-based in terms of ability to unite subjects, ability to oversee development in the paramountcy depending on certain pre-established key performance indicators, ability to demonstrate good leadership qualities, and so on.** This mechanism will ensure fairness and integrity of the advancement process. For this new succession mechanism to function properly, at any point in time, three of the top six skins in the Dagbon traditional hierarchy should be occupied by each Royal Gate, Yani, Yendi, Mion, Savelugu, Karaga, and Tampion. In that case, the permutation of these top six(6) Dagbon ruling skins should be even and constant as follows: 3:3, 3:3, 3:3, 3:3,..... in that pattern, with Yani(relocated in Tamale ) and the new Yendi skin being occupied by members of different Royal Houses: Andani and Abudu(See Appendix 2 to understand permutation).

19. For proposal # 16 to operate properly and to ensure continuity, I advise that **regents of Yani should be given high profile chieftainships to rule in order to acquire the high profile traditional rule experience and preparation necessary to rule the Dagomba Kingdom.** Other high profile princes(Yanabihi) immediately following the regents should also be given

high level chieftanships to rule. In that way, each Royal House will have enough backups to assure continuity of their line of succession and to avoid the creation of a third Royal House.

20. For the sake of peace and unity in Dagbon, **the next Ya Naa and subsequent Ya Naas shall select and enskin the rightful heirs to the other paramount (divisional) skins, regardless of their affiliations to the Abudu Gate or the Andani Gate.** There should always be a balance in the composition of the paramount chiefs with regard to the two Royal Gates. Such balance will concretize and strengthen Dagbon unity and peace.
21. For the sake of peace and unity, **the people of Dagbon should accept and respect, without reservations, any person presented as the heir to the Yani Skin or the new Yendi Paramount Chief Skin by the family and members of any of the Royal Gates,** be he able-bodied or invalid. Having said that, the person presented as heir should be conspicuously and directly linked to the skin.
22. Going forward, for the sake of peace, **the culture of de-skinning Chiefs should be desisted.** This practice breeds disunity and bitterness. The new Traditional Ya Naa Selection Committee should ensure that the rightful heir is enskinned in the first place. We should adopt attrition (attrition in this sense means: allowing reigning occupants of skins to continue ruling until their natural death and thereafter the appropriate chief enskinned) if necessary, as a method of effecting change of skin occupants in order to ensure a balance in the composition of chiefs vis-a-vis the Royal Gates.
23. For the sake of continuous peace, and to break away from the controversial past, I advocate for All **previously created Ya Naa Selection Committees to be abrogated and a brand new Ya Naa Selection Committee established.** The role of the new committee will be totally different from those in the past. A 15-member Selection Committee should be a viable institution. This high number, 15, will reflect a better representation of all parts of Dagbon in the selection process and the big jump in the population of the Kingdom. Further, the new system will possibly eliminate the effect of influence and favouritism in the selection process, as was normally the case with the previous selection committees, because it is more difficult for a larger group (15) to be influenced than a small group (4 or 11). The larger group will also make the process more democratic. After all, what happens in Yani directly affects every household in Dagbon. Importantly, not more than 8 members should come from the East-West divide of Dagbon. To maintain the sacredness of the customary Ya Naa selection process, the new Ya Naa and/or Yendi skin Selection Committee should comprise All the traditional

four-man selection committee members(Kingmakers);Gagbin-Dana, Zohe-Naa, Kuga Naa, and Tuguri Nam, All seven Divisional Chiefs included in the previous Ya Naa selection committee; Sunson Naa, Kumbun Naa, Yelzoli Lana, Gushie Naa, Nanton Naa, Gulkpe Naa, Tolon Naa, and four new members, to be chosen by the elders of Dagbon and the Committee of Experts on Dagbon Traditional Constitution. All Dagombas should recognize, validate, respect, and sign up to such new traditional institution. If my proposal to move the traditional capital from Yendi to Tamale is accepted and implemented, the establishment of a new Yendi skin is accepted and implemented and regarded as the **preferred Gate skin** to ascend to Yani(relocated in Tamale), and the **creation of a new Gate skin(Tampion)** is accepted and implemented, then, the tasks of the Ya Naa Selection Committee will change drastically. They will carry out the formality of endorsing the new Ya Naa, the new Yendi chief, and probably help the Ya Naa to select the Gate skin chiefs: Karaga, Savelugu, Mion, and Tampion(assuming Tampion is promoted to Gate skin status). **The usual fight and frustration seen during the selection of a new Ya Naa will become history, if these proposals are accepted and implemented.** The name of the Selection Committee could be changed to **the Ya Naa and Gate Skin Chiefs Selection and Evaluation Committee**. In that case, they will not only “select” chiefs, but they will also be involved in evaluating the performance of each of the Gate skin chiefs: Karaga, Savelugu, Mion, and Tampion(assuming Tampion is promoted to Gate skin status) to determine the better candidate, out of two from one of the Royal Houses occupying two of the Gate skins, to recommend to the Ya Naa for selection to ascend to the **new preferred Yendi skin** on their way to Yani. The performance evaluation of the Gate skin occupants shall be based on certain criteria, to be established by the Ya Naa and Gate Skin Chiefs Selection and Evaluation Committee. Nonetheless, the evaluation criteria or key performance indicators shall include the ability of Gate skin occupants to unite, lead, develop their subjects and chieftainships. Such an exercise will produce good potential Ya Naas for the Kingdom. Evaluation reports should be submitted to the Ya Naa on annual basis. Besides, it is only feasible to select someone whose performance record you have evaluated before and know his capabilities. The myth and sacredness of our traditions, vis-a-vis the skins, will not be compromised by this evaluation exercise, so people shouldn't think so. In my view, we should not have Kings and Chiefs just for the sake of having them, but having them should be worthwhile, and the worthwhileness for having them should be based on what they can do for Dagbon and not only on what Dagbon can do for them.

24. **The first-in-line and heir to the Yendi Skin or the occupants of two of the four Advancement Gate Skins belonging to the Royal House other than**

**that of the newly-enskinned Ya Naa shall be made traditionally responsible for escorting and accompanying the newly-enskinned Ya Naa to the Tamale Palace.** The safe and smooth transfer of the newly-enskinned Ya Naa from Yendi to Tamale shall be the traditional legal task of the **first-in-line and heir to the Yendi Skin or the occupants of two of the four Advancement Gate Skins.** Any dubious machination made against the newly-enskinned Ya Naa shall result in the forfeiture of All traditional legal rights of the **first-in-line and heir to the Yendi Skin or the occupants of two of the four Advancement Gate Skins** to succeed the Ya Naa or ascend to the Yani skin and likewise shall all his children. This cooperative gesture is to promote peace and unity among All Dagombas and to establish genuine working relationship between the Ya Naa and the Gate Skin occupants (top traditional leaders of Dagbon). Nevertheless, **the military and the police should always form part of the escort team during All such transfers.**

**25. All pending litigations on the Yani Skin succession by both Andani and Abudu Gates should be retracted as a sign of commitment to see a lasting peace and unity in Dagbon again.** The fact is that, for real peace and unity to be achieved in Dagbon there is need for maximum cooperation between the Andanis and the Abudus. As we all know, we cannot talk of maximum cooperation and reconciliation between these two factions while they are fighting each other in the Appeal/High/Supreme Courts, because none of the Royal Gates can eat his cake and have it. This action should be taken immediately for the sake of the Dagomba Kingdom. If both of these two Royal Gates refuse to take this action toward peace and unity then the questions I would ask are: Are they fighting to be Ya Naa for their own selfish end or for the larger end of the Dagbon Kingdom? And why would any of them want to be enskinned as Ya Naa of only their supporters and not of All Dagombas?

**26. To re-iterate, the proposal calls for the design and construction of two new palaces:**

- **A new Ya Naa's Palace in Tamale, Gulkpegu**
- **A new Palace in Yendi for the new Yendi paramountcy.** These two palaces should be funded and constructed by Dagombas themselves. It is not the responsibility of any government to build the palaces because the building of traditional palaces is not a political project. However, if government offers financial help toward the construction of the palaces elders may accept the offer, if they see fit. The two palaces should not be built by any particular Royal House. The design of the Palaces should have Dagbon architectural features with modern flair. All the rooms should be roofed with modern ceramic roofings or corrugated iron sheets except the main sitting or living hall (zhong titali) which should be roofed with thatch, for traditional and

customary purposes. This roofing is necessary to prevent easy burn down by arson in the future.

The vandalized Ya Naa's Palace in Yendi should be properly restored and placed under the care of a curator and shall be preserved as an historical landmark and could serve as a lodging facility for visiting Dagbon Chiefs to the Yendi Paramount Chief. It is envisaged that with peace and unity reigning in the new Dagbon Kingdom, a cosy relationship will be cultivated between the Paramount Chief of Yendi and the other paramount chiefs in Dagbon which will encourage exchange of visits on traditional occasions and for other purposes.

**27.A Plan of Action** for achieving peace and unity should be established.

Efforts toward peace require process planning and control, if our goal is to be achieved. The planning process will involve, among others, the setting up of committees to take on certain tasks and roles in the peace process, the setting of targets, the setting of time frames within which those targets should be realized, and a mechanism to control and monitor the flow of the process. Against this backdrop, the following committees should be formed, to start with:

**a. Working Group of Wise Fellows:**

A Working Group should be formed to set up committees. Such a group shall be composed of people neutral to the DCC. This group shall select members of the Reconciliation Committee and the Peace Process Monitoring Committee

**b. Reconciliation Committee:**

A committee of elders should be set up to try and bring leaders of the Abudu Gate and the Andani Gate to the table for talks of reconciliation and unity. The committee should convince elders of the Abudu and Andani Gates to recognize and accept All the facts contained in this proposal as well as others that may be generated by the people of Dagbon. Both of these Royal Houses have to burn their boats to reconciliation and peace.

The need for reciprocity of goodwill and mutual respect towards each other is central to the reconciliation process; hence, both Royal Houses should explicitly, unequivocally express their sincere apology to each other and their unwavering commitment to the peace effort. The blaming game should be avoided by members of both Gates and the focus should be on reconciliation.

**c. Peace Process Monitoring Committee**

A committee of elders shall be formed, charged with the duty to ensure that activities and tasks pertaining to the peace process are adhered to by the participants of the reconciliation and peace process, thus members of the two Gates. In addition, this committee shall see to it that the process remains on course as well as coordinate the roles played by the various groups and c'ttes. This group of monitors must consist of neutral, respectable personalities or

their representatives. For instance, The Kings of the Mamprusis, Gonjas, Nanumbas, the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan or his envoy, et cetera.

**28. Committee of Experts on Dagbon Traditional Constitution:** Shall be established and charged with the task of incorporating any new traditional laws that may be enacted. They shall also define the roles of the new Yendi Paramount Chief and his relations to the Ya Naa and other paramount chiefs as well as take care of all other legal matters pertaining to the change.

**29. Committee for the Modernization and Promotion of the Yani Skin:** A committee should be created and given the responsibility for: Repositioning and potentiating the Yani Skin as a strong, subjects-oriented, attractive ruler acting as a uniter of Dagbon and shall get more involved in socio-economic issues in Dagbon such as education, health, agricultural practices, cultural, social cohesion, and so on. Projects on girl-child education, HIV/AIDS, bush burning, tree-planting, food production and preservation, promotion of Dagbon cultural events, civility, hospitality, to mention a few, are some of the issues our future Ya Naas could work on, in synergy with the appropriate government organisations and the Dagbon society. By performing these tasks, the committee will see to the establishment of cordial relationships between the Ya Naa and the other Chiefs of Dagbon and beyond.

**30. Declaration of Peace and Unity: An End of the traditional “Cold War.”**  
It is envisioned that reconciliation talks could commence as soon as possible, after a working group is established, and the talks could lead to the realization of reconciliation and an historic joint declaration, in public, of peace and unity issued by elders of the two Royal Gates before the end of the year, 2005. Such a declaration will signify the end of our woes and a new dawn of harmony and oneness. When that milestone is achieved, the Abudu and the Andani families can comfortably plan together the burial and final funeral rites of Naa Yakubu Andani II and Naa Mahamadu Abdulai IV, as proposed in a previous section. Their enskinments in 1969 and 1974 were made amidst acrimony and disagreements and their rule plagued with apathy towards the Yani skin, and now that they are both no more, we should re-unite their surviving families and perform their final funeral rites in a cooperative manner. This will rekindle the family love, cooperation, and understanding that existed among this Naa Yakubu I (circa 1824 to 1849) family up until the mid twentieth century when confusion set in within their ranks.

**31. Declaration of Dagbon Peace Day:** Subsequently, on **March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006**, the elders of Dagbon, a team consisting of elders from both the Abudu Gate and the Andani Gate, shall declare publicly the beginning of a brand new

brotherly relation between All Dagombas, and **March 27<sup>th</sup> declared as Dagbon Peace Day**. The rationale behind this proposal is to view this date as a watershed in the history of Dagbon's internal relations and to turn that unfortunate tragedy into a unifying factor among All Dagombas, and not a dividing factor. Hence, annually, on March 27<sup>th</sup>, All Dagombas will come together to pay respects to All our past Kings and Chiefs and remind ourselves of the difficult times we had in the past, and use that as a guide for the future. The regrettable murder of Naa Yakubu Andani II should be seen by All Dagombas as the lowest, darkest point in the history of Dagbon on the one hand, and as the threshold of a brighter, stronger future Dagbon, on the other. When the declaration happens, that day, March 27<sup>th</sup>, shall be regarded, felt, and celebrated like the rebirth of the Dagomba Kingdom. It is the nostalgic day that I, just like my contemporaries of Dagbon origin and many others, have never lived before, because we were born into a divided Dagbon Kingdom. That day, when it comes, will even be more ecstatic than what Ghanaians experienced on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 1957, because of our unique, strong, rich culture and tradition. That day, when it arrives, will be a day full of nothing but zhem, tora, baamaaya, takai, naabeggu, gonje, jera, luah, dumbu, nyindoggu, and more waa(drumming and dancing). That day, I can say with optimism, is not far away, for, it is right on the horizon, just waiting for us(Dagombas) to say yes, we want a better future full of light, hope, and joy, as opposed to, a past full of darkness, desperation, and sorrow. That day, when it dawns, will be a day all(Ghanaians) shall witness with admiration, for, the best side of a unified Dagbon never seen before, will shine so brightly that his ugly side that has always been seen, will be eclipsed and erased completely in just one day. The arrival of that day, 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2006 will set in motion events such as plans to enskin the next Ya Naa and subsequently the new Paramount Chief of Yendi.

### **32.Think-tanks:**

Separate groups of experts in the form of Think-tanks shall be formed to plan the process of change(modernization), as part of the process for peace and unity. They shall generate further ideas on how to achieve peace and serve as helpdesk for Dagombas to file in ideas, questions, et cetera. Such group shall consist of Dagombas with genuine drive to achieve peace. The efforts of the Think-tanks shall be very vital to the Dagbon peace project.

### **31.Dagbon Youth Movement for Peace and Unity:**

The role of our youth will be critical in this quest for peace. They shall inform, educate, and convince the masses of Dagbon on the peace process.

An Association of Dagbon Youth Movement for Peace & Unity shall be formed to disseminate information on the facets of the peace process: physical and

psychological change(modernization). Such youth movements shall be all-inclusive and shall promote trust and friendship among Dagbon youth. Crucially, they shall speak to the people of Dagbon in organized peaceful forums at community, village, zonal levels, and so on. Necessarily, the younger generations shall put reasonable moral pressure on the older generations to talk peace and bring peace to Dagbon. Besides, they shall gather more ideas on how to fine-tune the peace process. In addition, the youths shall organize peaceful non-violence marches in various locations in Dagbon and across the country to demonstrate their resolve for peace and unity in Dagbon. No pins, no blades shall be carried to peace marches. Such marches shall aim at calling elders of the feuding Royal Gates to initiate peace and reconciliation talks and government to start playing its role as facilitator to make the process a realizable dream. Possibly, the first of such marches shall be organized on March 27, 2005 to take place in several locations in the country. The call for peace and unity in Dagbon shall be so loud that, the peace process, once set off, will become irreversible, and that will mark a positive transition for Dagbon.

### **32. Religious Leaders:**

Religious leaders in Dagbon and in Dagomba communities across the country shall play a pivotal role by speaking to their congregations and organizing meetings on values such as repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, friendship, love for others, and the importance of peace in human society. They shall also lead prayers for peace among Dagombas.

### **33. National Government:**

The government shall have a what to do, and, what not to do list:

**The what not to do list shall include, among others, the following:**

- Government should not try to force a resolution or influence a partial resolution.
- No partiality in tackling any outstanding criminal issues.
- Government should not delay justice any further, because justice delayed is justice denied.
- Government should not try to sabotage the peace process for political reasons.

**The what to do list shall include, inter alia, the following:**

- Government shall serve only as a facilitator in the peace process.
- Government should change its negative attitude:  $-2 = \text{government's negative role at the moment resulting in the chaos equation: } (a-b)-2 = \text{chaos! This negative effort should be turned into positive initiatives toward peace in Dagbon; thus } +2 = \text{government's positive and active role in providing justice in the Yendi massacre case and bringing the Andanis and the Abudus to talk peace which will give rise to the desired peace equation: } (a+b)^2 + 2 = \text{peace+unity+strength+prosperity.}$

- Government shall create enabling environment for the peace process to flourish by providing security, justice, financial & logistical support necessary to lubricate the wheels of the peace train.
- Government should permit and encourage Dagombas and their friends-in-solidarity to embark on peaceful, non-violent peace marches in any location in the country.
- Government should spend political capital to encourage its Dagomba friends to smoke the peace-pipe with their counterparts in the DCC.
- Government should view the call for peace and justice in Dagbon as a natural cause and not anti-government, for, I, just like many others, am not anti any government, be it the present or the previous.

Food for thought for the incumbent is that, if government plays the role of a catalyst well in the peace process, it stands a good chance of winning over many hearts in the Dagbon Traditional Area(DTA).

My personal view is that government has everything to gain in the Dagbon Traditional Area, if it can successfully facilitate the achievement of a lasting peace in Dagbon, and has everything to lose in the DTA if it fails to.

### **34.Political Organisations:**

Political organisations could play a positive role as Catalysts by encouraging their friends in Dagbon to get involved in peace talks with their opponents in the DCC. For instance, His Excellency, President J.A. Kuffour(NPP), His Excellency, Former President J.J. Rawlings/Mr. A. Mills(NDC), and Mr. E. Delle(CPP) could use their political clout to precipitate the initiation of dialogue between elders of the Abudu Gate and the Andani Gate. Some leaders might try to protect their political careers or standing in society by trying to derail or stall the peace train. Well, such negative efforts will not be welcome. Only positive, constructive ideas and contributions shall be admitted by the people of Dagbon. At this point we should no longer allow politics/parties to divide us as a tribe because we are Dagombas first, before we are politicians. Let's remember that we can tergiversate as politicians but we can not repudiate our tribe as Dagombas. Politics come and go, parties live and die(sometimes fall into coma), but Dagbon will live forever as a Kingdom.

### **35.Stakeholders in the Northern Region:**

We should accept expert advice and assistance from our brothers in the Northern Region, for they want to see peace in Dagbon just as much as we do. The Mamprusis, Gonjas, Nanumbas in particular, have always been helpful to us and we could use their wisdom if they would serve on our reconciliation and monitoring committees.

### **36.The Ghanaian Public:**

As an indigene of Dagbon, I am qualified to speak for All Dagombas in the following particular respect: On behalf of All Dagombas and on my own behalf, I apologize to All Ghanaians for the embarrassment caused by the shameful, barbaric acts which took place in Yendi on March 27, 2002 resulting in the regicide of Naa Yakubu Andani II. It is rather unfortunate that this internal tribal crisis has found its way into the humble lives of ordinary and civilized citizens of our great nation. We appeal to you to bear with us while we resolve this nasty issue, this time, once and for all. This time around, we are determined to make this age-old crisis history, and it is going to happen soon through our own efforts toward peace and unity.

Against this background, I wish to stress that the general population of Ghana can help us in many different ways to achieve peace.

**Religious Leaders & Communities** can hold sermons and prayers for peace in Dagbon. They can also join in peaceful, non-violent marches for peace and justice.

**Businessmen(women)** who are capable, can help the cause by printing inscriptions(**WORDS ONLY, NOT PHOTOS**) on **white** T-Shirts for sale at reasonable and affordable prices, with powerful and peaceful statements as:

GHANAIANS AGAINST INJUSTICE!  
JUSTICE NOW FOR DAGBON!  
PEACE NOW IN DAGBON!  
ANDANI & ABUDU TALK PEACE NOW!  
JUSTICE DELAYED IS JUSTICE DENIED!  
A MASSACRE IS A MASSACRE!  
ABUDU & ANDANI SMOKE PEACE-PIPE NOW!  
3 YEARS AND NO JUSTICE! WHY?  
ANDANI & ABUDU, GIVE PEACE A CHANCE!  
WHEN WILL JUSTICE COME?  
DEMANDING JUSTICE IS NOT ANTI-GOV'T!  
MASSACRE IN NORTH=MASSACRE IN SOUTH!  
JUSTICE IS A RIGHT, NOT A PRIVILEGE!  
PREVENT MASSACRE III NOW!  
GOV'T, TALK TO ANDANIS & ABUDUS NOW!  
GOV'T, STOP BLOCKING PEACE IN DAGBON!  
END INJUSTICE NOW!  
GIVE JUSTICE A CHANCE!  
IMPLEMENT THE PEACE FORMULA!

The above inscriptions are very peaceful, very powerful methods of sending a strong message to both the rival factions in the Dagbon Chieftaincy Crisis and the government to initiate talks for peace in Dagbon. We should remember that government's role in this process is extremely imperative.

**The General Public** can help by patronizing the T-Shirts(merchandise) as well as voicing out for peace and justice. White T-Shirts are recommended because the action is for peace through very peaceful means, and the colour white is the symbol of peace. These T-Shirts should be worn during peaceful, non-violent peace marches as well as on other peaceful occasions. All Ghanaians, regardless of party alignment, should patronize these merchandise.

In addition, the General Public can help by asking the government for justice in the Yendi massacre case, which is a key ingredient for peace in Dagbon, just as we asked for justice in the brutal massacre of the innocent three high court judges and the retired army officer. The General Public can help by asking the government for justice just as we asked for justice in the gruesome massacre of the innocent youths during the “Kume Preku” marches. The General Public can help by asking the government for justice just as we will ask for justice in any massacre. The General Public can help by asking the government for justice just because we all deserve justice, for, **yesterday it was Mr. X** who fell victim of injustice, **today, its Mr. Y** who is the victim of injustice, **tomorrow, YOU** might be the victim of injustice! **And seeking justice is neither a crime nor troublemaking.** It is merely a demand for what should have been served in the first place, but denied thus far.

The general public, in solidarity with Dagombas and Religious Leaders, among others, can organize peaceful, non-violent marches to The President’s Office and to the Offices of his representatives at regional level, to demand justice for Dagbon and to demand that the Abudus and the Andanis begin talks of reconciliation now! All such marches should be very peaceful, non-violent, non-political, non-Gate aligned, and with goodwill.

**Peace and Justice loving people and legal professional bodies** can assist in this process by appealing to the head of state to act now to ensure that justice is served in the Yendi Massacre II case, which is important for reconciliation, peace, and unity among the people of Dagbon.

**Justice loving Parliamentarians** should develop renewed interest in the Yendi Massacre II case and urge The President to come out with explanations on the following:

- I. Whether or not The President was informed about the shootings at the Ya Naa’s Palace in Yendi two days preceding the March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2002 maassacre? I am afraid that he might not have been informed about the shootings and he is taking blame or fire for not have acted promptly to prevent the massacre.
- II. If The President’s answer is no, he wasn’t informed of the shootings in the days leading up to the massacre, then the question to ask is why not?
- III. If reports of the shootings didn’t actually reach The President before the massacre, then the question that should be asked is how do the Standard Operating Procedures(SOPs), if at all they actually exist, work in The

- President's office, who reports to whom, and what issue is considered worthy or important for The President to know?
- IV. Who was responsible for informing The President about matters of national concern like the shootings at the Ya Naa's Palace?
  - V. The person responsible for reporting to The President should answer why he or she failed to report to the President.
  - VI. If The President says he was, in fact, informed about the shootings prior to the massacre, then the question to put to The President is why didn't he wake up from sleep and act like he should have?
  - VII. Another question to ask, especially now, is why hasn't The President provided answers to the question of who carried out the perpetration at the Ya Naa's Palace on that evil day, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2002?
  - VIII. When does The President promise to provide answers to the one billion cedi question of who killed the Ya Naa in the YENDI MASSACRE II case during KUFFOUR I?
  - IX. Should Dagombas, and Ghanaians for that matter, expect a YENDI MASSACRE III in KUFFOUR II? If yes, WHEN?

**Parliament should not forget that it is in their best interest to assure integrity and consistency in the application of the laws of the land and the proper functioning of the legislative, judiciary, and executive arms of government.** The above questions should therefore be asked each and every day until justice is served. That justice is one of the most important ingredients to peace in Dagbon. So why this blockade to peace? Is it an intentional ploy to withhold the move of Dagbon toward reconciliation, peace and unity? Members of Parliament should not discriminately refuse to constantly press the President to take action to assure the service of justice **now** in the Yendi Massacri II case. One of the functions of our parliamentarians is to uphold the constitution, apart from passing those laws. After all, what is the essence of Parliament passing laws if the same Parliament doesn't find it necessary or imperative to uphold and defend those laws? Another function of the legislative branch is to keep the executive branch in constant check. Why is it that Parliament is not constantly asking the President for answers on the most important criminal case in the history of the nation? Even a deaf-dumb-blind person with the lowest intelligence quotient can tell that what happened at the Ya Naa's Palace was not an act of war, because who is stupid enough to think that the Ya Naa would declare war using his own Palace as the battle ground? Or had the battle ground shifted from somewhere far from the Palace and ended at the Palace? Trying to throw sand in peoples' eyes must be done craftily, and not amateurishly, as certain sources purported or reported.

It must be said that unhelpful contributions and comments are discouraged from the public because we do not have much time left to waste on non-value adding efforts toward our peace initiatives.

**In conclusion**, my fellow Dagombas, the time has come for us to lay down our swords, bury the hatchet, and smoke the peace-pipe, for the status quo will not yield any winner for Dagbon as a Kingdom, except that we will become even more divided and probably fragmented into several sections(Gates), not just the two Gates as we know today. If we continue on this present path of intransigence, disunity, and belligerence, we will become a very weak Kingdom, unable to face any challenge from an outside force. We should not wait until that happens before we scramble to look for peace and unity. This DCC has a systemic impact on the Kingdom and we need to take urgent action today in order to save our Kingdom from extinction tomorrow. I know peace cannot be achieved overnight, given the age of the problem; nevertheless, we can start now by bridging our differences with understanding and reconciliation. Government cannot resolve this ongoing crisis for us; rather it can help us resolve it by ourselves. Peace and unity is achievable in Dagbon if we embrace the proposed physical and psychological changes(traditional “restructuring” and “reorganisation”). We should do so for the sake of the innocent generations yet unborn, if at all we do not want to do it for ourselves. We should rid ourselves of selfishness and think, for once, of the future generations of Dagombas and the Kingdom that has thousands of years still to live, a life span that dwarfs our individual lives; hence we should stop messing the Kingdom up. We should think about the legacy we want to bequeath our posterity: a united, peaceful, and monolithic Dagbon Kingdom or a disunited, acrimonious, and fragmented Dagbon Kingdom? The choice is clearly ours, my fellow Dagombas! It is a choice between either living in the past or living in the future! It is a choice between either living as victims of our own devices or living as a humble tribe! It is a choice between either living as perpetrators or living as a civil society! It is a choice between either living in peace as one strong tribe or living in pieces as insignificant others! It is a choice between either us(Dagombas) killing the virus(Dagbon Virus) or we allowing the virus to kill us. If troubled people from **different tribes** and with **different languages**, the Tutsis and the Hutus of Rwanda, could resolve their troubled past through **understanding** and now live in perfect peace, why can't we(Dagombas) find perfect peace? If troubled people from **different races** and with **different languages**, the Blacks and the Whites of South Africa, could resolve their troubled past through **understanding** and now live in perfect peace, why can't we(Dagombas) find perfect peace? Question: Is it because we are from the **same tribe** and with the **same language** that we cannot find perfect peace now through understanding? I do not understand why we cannot have understanding to find perfect peace now. Do you? Enough of the animosity! Enough of the vendetta! Enough of the disunity! Enough of the violence! Enough of the bloodshed! Enough of the tears! Enough is enough! We want peace and unity in Dagbon! We want peace and unity for All Dagombas! And we want it now! Let's All put the past behind

us and live in peace as brothers and sisters! Long live the Dagomba Kingdom, long live All Dagombas! God bless us All! Amen!

***Special Note:***

*Fellow Dagombas, I invite all of you to think carefully and deeply about this proposal and then make your contributions to it. We need to generate more constructive ideas and come out with a plan of action that will lead us to our final destination: PEACE and UNITY. Our options for achieving peace in Dagbon are very limited, especially now. Aside from this proposal, what other options are open to us? Share with me your thoughts about this proposal. Please criticisms should be accompanied with alternative proposals aimed at bringing peace and unity to Dagbon; a condition we all are yearning for in the Kingdom. I have to make one thing plain for everyone, I'm neither a politician nor a Dagbon chieftaincy activist, and never will. All I'm interested in is justice, peace, unity, and prosperity for All Dagombas. No one should doubt this, because I mean what I say when I say what I mean. Therefore, I'm neither against any party/government(past and present) nor any of the two Royal Gates in the Dagbon Chieftaincy Crisis.*

*To read the complete proposal and for all the details contained in this document, please visit the following website:*

**[WWW.QUESTFORPEACEINDAGBON.COM](http://WWW.QUESTFORPEACEINDAGBON.COM)**

*You can send in your constructive ideas toward peace and unity in Dagbon to:*

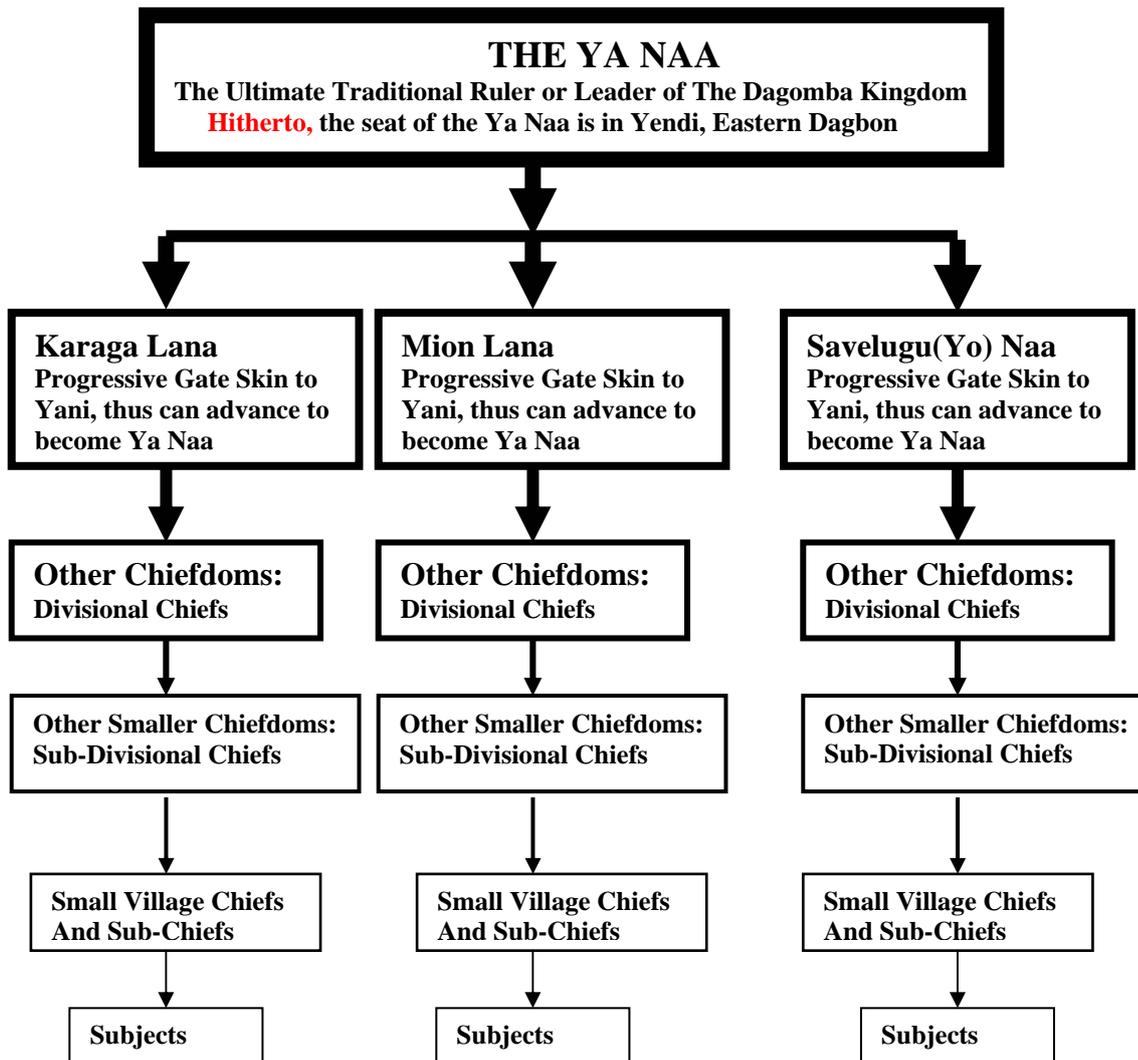
**[Dagbonpeace@hotmail.com](mailto:Dagbonpeace@hotmail.com)      or      [info@questforpeaceindagbon.com](mailto:info@questforpeaceindagbon.com)**

Thank you all and God bless you!

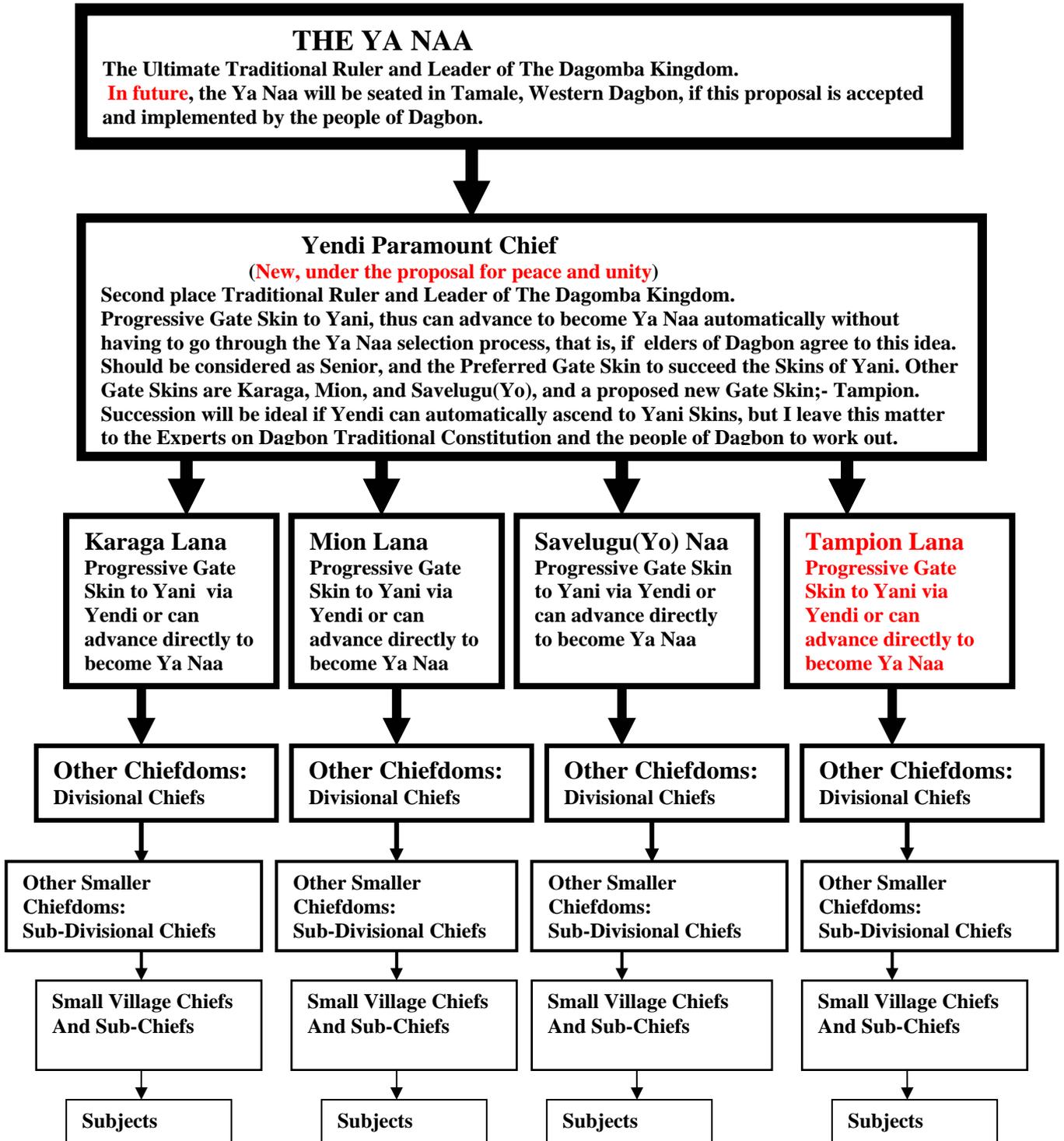
**Natogmah Issahaku**

*Hails from Tamale*

**Appendix 1:  
DAGBON TRADITIONAL HIERARCHY  
(As it stands today, 2005)**



**APPENDIX 2:  
DAGBON TRADITIONAL HIERARCHY  
(Futuristic: according to this Proposal for Peace and Unity)**



**APPENDIX 3: The Origin of the Dagbon Chieftaincy Crisis(DCC):**

**THE ORIGIN OF THE DAGBON CHIEFTAINCY CRISIS (DCC)**  
**NAA YAKUBU I (1824 TO 1849). HE RULED DAGBON FOR 25 YEARS**  
 Up until his rule, Dagbon had a uni-linear line of succession to the Yani Skins. He was the father of **Naa Abdulai(Abudu) I** and **Naa Andani II**, the creators of the two Yani Gates. They had different mothers. Upon the death of Naa Yakubu I, **Naa Abdulai I**, from the **Abudu Gate**, and senior of the two brothers, succeeded and ascended the Yani Skins. This is the cradle of the two Gates that we have today in Dagbon. The succession was defined to rotate or alternate between the two Gates one turn after the other, however, somewhere along the line. someone messed it up, giving birth to the DCC, what I call a virus.

