



প্রতিধ্বনি the Echo

Pratidhwani the Echo

A Peer-Reviewed Indexed International Journal of Humanities & Social Science

Published by: Dept. of Bengali

Karimganj College, Karimganj, Assam, India

Website: <https://www.thecho.in>

ISSN: 2278-5264 (Online)

ISSN: 2321-9319 (Print)

Role of Su-Ka-Pha in Founding Ahom Kingdom in Assam

Ms. Piku Doley

Abstract

Sukapha, the great legend, was the founder of Ahom Kingdom in Assam. He was a brave and courageous dignitary who enlightened every part of his kingdom. His good governance not only influenced the Ahom kingdom but also the other small empires in Assam, then known as Kamrup. To make the Ahom dynasty powerful and permanent he undertook conciliatory measures towards the neighbouring kings. He appointed Katakis and two chief Buragohains and Borgohains which were most essential for the foundation, growth and prosperity of his newly established regime. Through this study, an effort has made to draw the role of Sukapha in founding Ahom dynasty in Assam and to understand his relation with other neighbouring countries in maintaining peace.

Keywords: *Su-Ka-Pha, Ahom Kingdom, Assam.*

Introduction: Su-Ka-Pha was the founder of the Ahom kingdom in the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. Sukapha was that brave and courageous prince and dignitary who enlightened every parts of his kingdom. Sukapha's administration was the torch bearer of good administration in Ahom dynasty. His governance not only influenced on the Ahom Empire but also other small empires of Assam, then known as Kamrup. Sukapha took conciliatory measures to all indigenous people, united them for creating better and prosperous administration in Assam. He maintained good relation with the tribal people. He encouraged inter-caste marriages among the different castes.

Origin of Sukapha: In the beginning of the thirteen century, Upper Burma and Western Yunnan, occupied by the people of the Shans origin, formed a group of petty states. Sukapha was the leader of the body of Shans who laid the foundation of the Ahom kingdom in Assam. The meaning of the word Sukapha is 'a tiger from heaven'.

Sukapha's ancestry, original homeland and the reason of his leaving the homeland are shrouded in mystery. The Chronicles of Ahom are not unanimous on these points.

It is mentioned in the Deodhai Assam Buranji that Sukapha was the son of Pameupung, king of Mungjamungji. His mother was Langramap, the daughter of Thaokhenmung. The same Buranji, basing its statement on earlier texts of the same kind, states that Bakal-Khamdeng was the father of Sukapha, who was born and brought up in his maternal uncle's house in Maolung or Maulung. Sukapha was brought up there as an heir to the throne, as his

maternal uncle, Tyaotyanglau, the king of Maulung, had no child. But subsequently a son, Sukhranpha by name, was born to Tyaotyanglau. As then Sukapha had no hope of successor to the throne, he left for Mungjamungji, the kingdom of his father, Pameupung and from there he undertook his journey to upper Assam.

In Ahom Buranji it is mentioned that Santaipha, Khumkhum and Santaiphun ruled successively in Munlin. Santaiphun had three sons and one daughter. He died, having divided his kingdom among his three sons. Pameoplun, one of them, extended his kingdom as far as Munphagun. Later on, one Sanlantantaipha migrated to Munphagun from Mungkha-Mungja; he was a great warrior and his name soon became a terror to the surrounding Rajas. Pameoplun made a treaty with him and gave his sister in marriage. By her Sanlantantaipha had a son named Sukapha. Pameoplun, who till then was childless, looked upon Sukapha as his successor. Subsequently his wife gave birth to a male child named Sukanpha. As Sukapha had no chance of succeeding his uncle, he went westward accompanied by a large number of followers, and having crossed several ranges of mountains and conquered the Nagas and other hill tribes on his way, he at length reached the plains of upper Assam, where he established a kingdom.

Kasinath says that Pameupung was the king of Maulung. He was childless and on his death, Tyaoaimkhamneng of Mungkhumungjao country became the king. This king was Sukhanpha. Phutyangkhang was the king of Mungmit Kupking country. He had three sons. The eldest Sujatpha became the king of Taip country. The second son Sukhampha became the king of Taipong country. The Youngest Sukapha succeeded to the kingdom of his father. There ensued a battle between Sukhanpha king of Maulung and the king of Junlung country, when Sukhampha asked for aid from Sukapha who refused. Next Sukhanpha invaded the country of Sukapha, who fled to the Mungkang country, and from there he undertook his invasion of upper Assam.

From the above records of Buranjis, it appears that Sukapha was a prince by birth and his country of origin was Maulung in upper Burma. He was the leader of the body of Shans who laid the foundation of the Ahom kingdom in Assam is a fact established, not only by the unanimous testimony of the Buranjis, but also by universal and well-remembered tradition. There is less certainty as to the precise state from which he came, but there seems no reason to discredit the statement of the Buranjis to the efforts that it was Maulung. There is no doubt that the original home of the Ahoms was somewhere in the ancient kingdom of Pong. They are genuine Shans, both in their physical type and in their tribal language and written character. The monument of the Ahoms across the Patkai was by no means an isolated one. At different times the Khamtis, the Phakials, the Aitonias, the Shan tribes who have moved along the same route from the cradle of their race.

Like his ancestry, his original homeland, and reason behind in leaving his homeland, Sukapha's date of birth and the date of his adventure to Assam are also shrouded in mystery.

Though Sukapha was a prince from a Shan kingdom the chronicles of the Shans contain no reference to the above facts. It is mentioned in the Deodhai Assam Buranji that Sukapha was born in 1211 and invaded Assam in 1228. Haliram says that the date of birth of Sukapha was the year 1195, and his invasion of Assam took place in 1246. Kasinath and Gunabhiram does not mention the date of birth of Sukapha but only the date of invasion of Assam as the year 1228. There being no means to confirm there early dates of the Buranjis, no scientific and comprehensive study has been made on the topic.

Adventures to Assam: It is said that Sukapha left Maulung about the year 1215, from his homeland with a following of eight nobles, nine thousand infantry, three thousand cavalry and two elephants. For thirteen years, he wandered about the hilly country of the Patkai, making occasional raids on Naga villages and in 1228 he arrived at Khamjang the north-eastern border of upper Assam. From the course of his expedition, it can be mentioned here

that Sukapha followed the land route from China to India through Yunnan, Upper Burma and Assam.

Sukapha crossed the Khamjang River in rafts and reached to the Nongnyang Lake. Some Nagas attempted to resist his advance, but he defeated all of them. The great victory against the powerful Nagas of the region created such widespread terror that the other Nagas of the neighbourhood hastened to make their submission. Leaving one of his nobles to rule the conquered country, Sukapha preceded Dangkaorang, Khamhangpung and Namrup. He bridged Sessa River and ascended the Dihing, but finding the place unsuitable he retraced his steps and proceeding downstream reached Tipam and stayed there up to 1230. Finding the country to be over flooded by the water of the Dihing River he preceded to downstream. In 1234, he reached Abhoypur and stopped there for five years until 1238. As that country was highly populated, he did not remain there long and proceeded down the river Tilao and arrived in the Habung country where he lived up to 1241. While there, the Ahoms lived by cultivation. But this place was liable to inundation and heavy flood necessitated another move. Therefore Sukapha continued his journey down the Brahmaputra till he reached mouth of the Dikhau. Then he advanced upstream and arrived at a valley called Jakunpak. From there he ascended the river and got to Silpani where he remained for some time. In 1243, Sukapha appointed Mungring-mungching as the Governor of the valley and himself proceeded to Simaluguri. Considering that place to be thickly populated and apprehending some rebellion from the local peoples. Sukapha left Simaluguri for Timan and stopped there. Staying there for the next six years, he left that country and reached Timak in 1249. Next he made a settlement at Munglinao and stayed there the whole year 1250. In 1251, Sukapha took some of his followers and went to Charaideo on a small hill and constructed a town there. We should believe that Sukapha selected Charaideo as suitable for his royal city and palace, owing to the fact that it was above the level of the plain land and was situated just adjacent to a small hill, which had importance from the strategic point of view.

Relation with the nearby kingdoms and tribal people: Sukapha sent a series of campaigns to the neighbouring countries which were ruled at that time by the Chutias, the Morans, the Borahis, the Nagas, the Kacharis and the most powerful kingdom of the region, Kamrup. After having conquered the countries of the Chutias, the Kacharis and the Kamata king, Sukapha allowed them to remain as they were in the past on condition of offering tribute. The Borahi king Badancha and the Moran king Thakumtha acknowledged the supremacy of the Ahom king and regularly supplied him thenceforward with the various products of the jungles, elephants, dye, honey and mats, Sukapha wisely adopted facilitatory measures towards those people and by treating them as equals and encouraging intermarriage, he united them into one nation.

Practically Sukapha conquered the whole of upper Assam the tract south-west of the Chutias and the east of the Kacharis to the Patkai Range at the border of upper Burma and founded his capital Charaideo, in the modern district of Sibsagar. He had also conquered all the countries on the way from upper Burma to the eastern border of upper Assam and appointed his nobles to rule over those regions. He made friendship with his brother rulers in his ancestral home in upper Burma, and sent those presents of gold & silver.

As a nation builder or a good administrator: Sukapha adopted facilitatory measures towards the indigenous peoples of Assam by showing respect to their sentiments and culture. He was reasonable to all people. He did not fight against the people who acknowledged his supremacy. Sukapha was not a raider, like many other invaders of India. Pillage and loot were unknown to his military career. It was never found his intention to plunder but to rule. From that expedition we know that he was a brave nation builder. He placed one of his nobles to administer each of the conquered countries on his way to Assam.

According to the necessity of the situation, he could be cruel or kind. To deal with the hostile Nagas of the Patkai, Sukapha became so cruel that they never dared rebellion a second time, not to speak of during his life time. It should be noted here that Sukapha assimilated with all the conquered people and considered the newly founded regime as his own land.

To make the Ahom kingdom powerful and permanent he undertook conciliatory steps towards the neighbouring kings, on condition of tribute. He appointed Katakis in the vassal kingdom to maintain good relation which was most essential for the foundation, growth & prosperity of his newly established regime. Sukapha appointed two chiefs, Buragohain and Borgohain as his assistants, who exercised enormous power in all the affairs of the state, next to the king.

Conclusion: From the above discussion it can be concluded that Sukapha was that brave and enterprising prince who established strong kingdom in Assam. With the help of his leadership quality he created the Ahom dynasty in India. He adopted conciliatory measures to unite all the indigenous people, treated all of them as equal and encouraging intermarriage between the Ahoms and other tribes. Through which we know that how much he was broad minded in nature. He was a great emperor and leader of men. He founded petty state with a strong foundation for his successors who were destined to rule Assam for about six hundred years. Sukapha's liberal attitude towards irrespective of caste and creed unified the people of Assam to be called as an Assamese race. Sukapha was not only a good administrator or a nation builder at that time but at present also his personality, his leadership quality influences the administration. At present the administration of this region realizes his deeds and tries to follow his ideology.

References:

- Acharyya, N.N, the History of Medieval Assam, OMSONS Publication
Barua G.C. Ahom Buranji, Calcutta, 1930.
Barua H. K. Assam Buranji, Calcutta, 1906.
Barua Gunabhiram, Assam Buranji, Calcutta, 1876.
Barua K. L. Early History of Kamarupa, Shillong, 1933.
Bhattacharyya M.N. Adi Charitra, Dibrugarh, 1927.
Dutta S.K. Assam Buranji, Gauhati, 1938.
Gait, Sir Edward, a History of Assam, Surjeet Publications Delhi, India-07 (2006)
Gogoi, Jahnabi, Agarian System of Medieval Assam, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company (2002).
Gohain, Dr. B.K, Origin of the Tai and Chao Lung Sukapha A Historical Perspective OMSONS Publication, New Delhi (1999).
Goswami H. C. Purani Assam Buranji, Gauhati, 1922.
Ibid. Deodhai Assam Buranji, Ibid.
Pathak, N & Pathak, G, History of Assam, Kiran Prakashan, Dhemaji (Assam), 2012)
Sarma, S.N, A Socio-Economic & Cultural History of Medieval Assam (1200-1800 AD) Arunoday Press, Ghy-3 (1989)
Sarmah, Probhat, Change & Continuity among the Tai Khamyang of Assam, Priyam Publications, Digboi, Assam (2001)
[http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?Title=Sukapha & oldid=593248151](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?Title=Sukapha&oldid=593248151)