



# Su-Ka-Pha The Founder Of Ahom Kingdom In Assam: A Historical Study

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## Abstract:

Chaolung Sukapha, the first Ahom king in medieval period, was the founder of the Ahom kingdom in Assam. A Tai prince originally from Mong Mao, (which is now included within the Dehong-Dai Singpho Autonomous Prefecture of Yunnan in Peoples Republic of China), the kingdom he established in 1228 existed for nearly six hundred years and in the process unified the various tribal and non-tribal peoples of the region that left a deep impact on the region. 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 states 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 Buragohain and Borgohain 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. In reference to his position in Assam's history the honorific Chaolung is generally associated with his name (Chao: lord; Lung great).

**Keywords:** Ahom Kingdom, Ahom dynasty, Assam, brave, founder, good governance, states.

## 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 states 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 was a broad minded king. He encouraged inter-caste marriages among the different castes through which he could increase the unity and good relation among various ethnic group of people and which is regarded most essential social deed at that time and present too.

**Objectives:**

Chaolung Sukapha, the first Ahom king in medieval period who could able to established the Ahom kingdom in Assam through his great telent. The main objectives of the study are-

- ❖ To find out the establishing methods of Ahom kingdom in Assam,
- ❖ To trace the quality of his administration and
- ❖ To evaluate his conciliatory measures through which he could able to establishing a unified Great Assamese society.

**Methodology:**

The subject matter is related with historical affairs. So, the entire study is conducted by applying historical method.

**Analysis:**

The meaning of the word Sukapha is 'a tiger from heaven'. According to Ahom tradition, Sukaphaa was a descendant of the god Khunlung, who had come down from the heavens and had ruled Mong-Ri-Mong-Ram. During the reign of Suhungmung, which saw the composition of the first Assamese chronicles and increased Hindu influence, Sukaphaa's origin was traced to the union of god Indra (identified with Khunlung) and Syama (a low-caste woman), and he was declared the progenitor of the Indravamsakshatriyas, a lineage created for the Ahoms by the Hindu Brahmins. 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.

The details of Sukaphaa's life and origins before his entry into Assam, available from different chronicles, both Ahom and non-Ahom, are full of contradictions.

According to J.N. Phukan (1992) who has tried to hold up a consistent account, Sukaphaa was born to Chao Chang-Nyeu (alias Phu-Chang-Khang) and Nang- Mong Blak-Kham-Sen in the Tai state of Mong Mao (also called Mao-Lung, with the capital at Kieng Sen), close to present-day Ruili in Yunnan, China. Chao Chang Nyeu was a prince from Mong- Ri Mong-Ram, who had traveled to Mong Mao possibly on an expedition. Mong Mao was then ruled by Chao Tai Pung. Chao Chang Nyeu was later befriended by Pao Meo Pung, the son of the ruler, who gave his sister Blak Kham Sen in marriage. Sukaphaa was born of this union not later than 1189 and was brought up by his maternal grandparents. Pao Meo Pung, who eventually ruled Mong Mao, had no male heir and Sukaphaa, his nephew, was nominated to succeed him. A son born late to Pao Meo Pung's queen ended Sukaphaa's claim to the throne of Mong Mao.

Onother historian 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 origin of country 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 adventure of Assam took place in 1246. Kasinath and Gunabharam does not mention the date of birth of Sukapha but only the date of adventure of Assam as the year 1228. There being no means to confirm their early dates of the Buranjis, no scientific and comprehensive study has been made on the topic.

### **Journey in to Assam:**

Sukapha left Mong Mao in 1215. He was accompanied by three queens, two sons and a daughter; chiefs from five other dependent Mong; members of the priestly class and soldiers a total contingent of 9,000. Some commoners are recorded as having joined this core group on the way. Sukapha had with him 300 horses fitted with saddles and bridles and two elephants. Heavy arms were transported along a different route. Sukapha followed an older known route from Yunnan to Assam that passed through Myitkyina, Mogaung and the upper Irrawaddy river valley. On his way he stopped at various places and crossed the Khamjang River to reach the Nangyang Lake in 1227. Here he subjugated the Nagas very ferociously and established a Mong. He left one Kan-Khrang-Mong there to guard the passage back, and proceeded to cross the Patkai hills at the Pangsau pass and reached Namrup (in the Brahmaputra valley) in December 1228. The journey, from Mong Mao to Namrup thus took Sukapha about thirteen years and the year he reached Namrup is considered as the year the Ahom kingdom was established.

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 Munglinamao 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.

### **Search for a capital:**

Over the next few years, he moved from place to place searching for the right capital, leaving behind his representative at each stage to rule the colonized land. Then he came back down the river and established his rule at Tipam. In 1236 he moved to Mungklang (Abhoipur) and in 1240 down the Brahmaputra to Habung (Dhemaji).

In 1244 he went further down to Ligorigaon (Song-Tak), a few miles from present-day Nazira, and in 1246 to Simaluguri (TunNyeu), a place downstream from the present-day Simaluguri. Sukapha then remained in Demow for six years. Finally in 1253 he built himself his capital city at Charaideo near present Sibsagar town. The capital of the Ahom kingdom changed many times after this, but Charaideo

remained the symbolic center of Ahom rule. With the help of local recruits; he established three large farms for sali rice cultivation, called Engerkhat and Gachilakhat. Barakhowakhat.

In 1268 Sukaphaa died. At the time of his death, his kingdom was bounded by the Brahmaputra River in the west, the Burhidihing River in the north, the Dikhow River in the south and the Naga hills in the east.

### **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. Role of Su-Ka-Pha in Founding Ahom Kingdom in 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 the brave enough and founder king who established strong kingdom in Assam. Due to his dignified quality he could able to establish the Ahom dynasty in India. Politically, Sukapha was a very talented politician. He assimilated some of the Nagas, Moran and Barahi neighbors and later also large sections of the Chutiya and the Kachari tribes. Socially, he was broad minded, 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. Hetook initiatives to constitute a great Assamese society and laid 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.

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