



Tracing The Memories Of The Ahoms At Charaideo And Adjacent Areas

Joyshree Saikia¹, Prasangsha Bora²

¹ Independent Researcher, Sivasagar, Assam

² Independent Researcher, Jorhat, Assam

Abstract

The Ahoms were an offshoot of the Shan branch of great Tai or Thai family that migrated from the Yunnan province of China in the thirteenth century and ruled Assam for about 600 years that left behind a vibrant history of their own. They build their first capital at Charaideo and since then their successors are living in and around the area. As a result many archaeological remains can be seen standing, holding the glory of the Great Ahom Dynasty. Through this paper an attempt has been made to trace the memories and document the archaeological remains that were left behind.

Keywords- Documentation, Garh, Moidam, Pukhuri, Deohal

1. INTRODUCTION

The Ahom kingdom was a medieval kingdom located in the Brahmaputra valley of Assam, established by its progenitor Sukaphaa (1228-1268 AD) with Charaideo being its first capital city. After leaving his homeland in about 1215 AD, Sukaphaa reached the Brahmaputra valley in 1228 AD and had been moving from place to place till he settled at Charaideo in 1253 AD. Sukaphaa came not as a raiding conqueror but as the head of an agricultural folk in search of land. It appears that he did not encroach upon the lands of the local peasants; rather he opened up new areas for settlement, procuring with shrewd diplomacy what he directly needed for the purpose (S.L Baruah, 1986). He won over the region between Dikhou and Dichang rivers by a policy of peace and conciliation. Those who challenged were ruthlessly killed.

Altogether, 39 kings had ruled in the Ahom Dynasty. The Ahom kings were called 'Swargadeo' meaning Lord of the heavens. This tradition started from the time of Suhungmung, also known as Dihingia Raja (1497-1539 AD). The kings were traditionally named upon coronation with a suffix ending with phaa-meaning heaven, such as Sukaphaa, Suteuphaa, Subinphaa and so on. Later on from the reign of Susengphaa (1603-1641), Vaishnavism was adopted by the royal court as a way of integration with the indigenous people and the kings adopted a second Hindu name upon coronation with the title being Singha/Simha. Thus, Susengphaa is also known as Swargadeo Pratapa Singha.

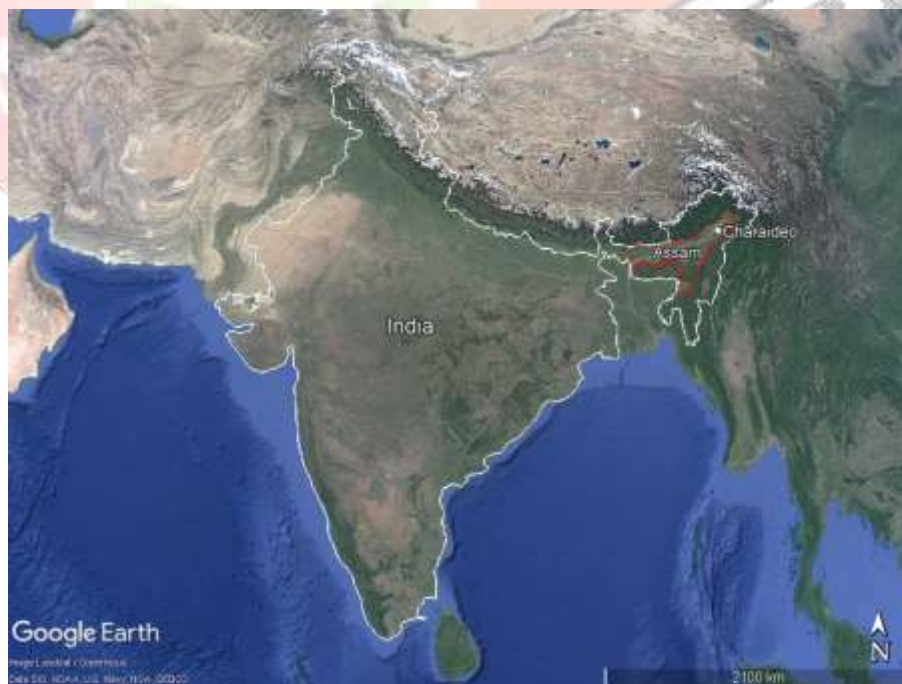
During their nearly 600 years of reign, the Ahoms changed capital five times:

- Charaideo (1253-1397 AD)
- Charagua (1398-1539 AD)
- Gargaon (1539-1695 AD)
- Rongpur (1696-1795 AD)
- Jorhat (1795-1826 AD)

Charaideo served as the first capital of the Ahoms for 144 years. Geographically Charaideo is surrounded by natural water sources, with a major river Disang and tributary rivers- Deroi, Suffry, Daika, and Dijoikona, making the area alluvial and best for cultivation. Likewise, the foothills of Naga hill and Charaideo hill makes the area free from flood, making it a suitable place for growing a habitation. At a later period, Charaideo became the scared burial ground for the kings, queens and nobles of the Ahom dynasty. Numerous royal graveyards and burial vaults (Moidam) of Ahom kings and nobles still exist in Charaideo and its neighbour areas. Present day Charaideo is an administrative district of Assam since 2015.

A primary source which provides the insights of Ahom rule is Buranji. Buranjis are historical chronicles and manuscripts written in the Assamese language during Ahom dynasty in medieval period. The Ahoms initiated the process of history writing in the Brahmaputra valley for the very first time. Various Buranjis mention about the moidams, such as the Changrung Phukonor Buranji, Deodhai Phukonor Buranji and Satsari Buranji.

Significant amount of work have been done on the Ahoms. But there have been very few attempts made to study the material culture of the Ahoms. E. Gait (1905) had written a brief history of Assam from prehistoric period to the British rule. He has very beautifully examined the origin and emergence of the Ahom dynasty, including different events that occurred in the 600 years, from its rise to decline and its socio economic conditions, religion, fine arts and contemporary neighboring kingdoms. Another scholar Tze (1999) mentioned about ancient roads, tanks, stone-wood bridges, moidam and ramparts (page-97-211). The author highlights the Ahom period from an archaeological point of view. It is a very detailed account that includes different kinds of archaeological remains of Assam: documentation and technology. Sharma (2004) mentioned the secular architecture of Ahom dynasty – civil building, ramparts, fortifications, tanks, roads, moidam and others. He has also mentioned about different types of architecture of Assam, belonging not only to the Ahoms but also of Kochari, Koch, Islamic architecture (page 323-32). R. Sahu (2014) has worked on the royal burial ground at Charaideo: Charaideo Moidam Complex. Here the author has mentioned about the architectural layout of the moidams and its related rituals; and has also talked about the previous excavations and its related issues/problems.



Map 1: Charaideo in Assam, India

1.1 Aim

There has been very limited archaeological research work done in the focused area. This research aims to deal with an attempt for overall documentation and study of the archaeological remains of the study area.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The survey methodology includes a village to village survey, which mainly focuses on documenting the archaeological remains of the site. The foundation of the survey is based on the authors' pre-existing knowledge about the area and has tried to document all historically important sites that came across while visiting the already known sites. Google Earth was used to explore the area to locate mounds and ponds. For a structured documentation, natural and historic boundaries are used to frame the study area.

1.3 AREA OF STUDY : The study was done on the northern part of Charaideo district covering the areas from Rajgarh road - Rohdoi road to the west, Sepon – Sunpura road to the north, Sepon – Suffry road - Suffry river to the east and Dhudor Ali – Assam-Nagaland border to the South. For the convenience of documentation, the study area was divided into three parts:

Site 1: area between Deroi river to Disang river

Site 2: area between Disang river to Dhudor Ali

Site 3: area between Dhudor Ali to Assam-Nagaland border



Map 2: Study area and distribution of Archaeological remains

2. DOCUMENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

The following table shows different archaeological remains documented from the study area:-

Table 1: List of archaeological remains

Findings	Site	Total findings
Moidam (Burial mound)	1,2,3	14
Pukhuri (Pond)	1,2,3	16
Deohal (Temple)	1,2,3	5
Garh (Rampart)	2,3	3
Ali (Road)	2,3	2

2.1 MOIDAM

Moidam, the burial mound of the Ahoms bears the example of their technological expertness. The word Moidam is consisted of 'Moi' and 'Dam' which means 'mound of dead'. Outwardly they appear hemispherical in shape. The size of the Moidam differs according to the status and the resources of the person buried. The Ahom kings used to be buried along with their treasures, customary articles-cloths, ornaments, weapons. Even some of their queens, attendants, and slaves were buried alive, though it is believed that Swargadeo Rudra Singha or Sukhrungphaa (1696-1714 AD) had abolished this practice.

A Moidam consists of three major features:

1. A massive underground vault with a dominical super- structure crowned with a small open pavilion known as the Chow-chali (meaning four roofed cottage).
2. The hemispherical earthen mound covering the entire masonry work excluding the chow-chali, often pitched with one or more layers of brick on flat on its surface.
3. An octagonal boundary wall around the base of mound having an arched gateway on its west.

Smaller Moidams didn't contain all of these features. Shihab-ud-din Talish refers that the vaults were made of stout wooden poles and beams and it was probably from the time of Swargadeo Rudra Simha that stones and bricks were used (H.K. Barpujari 2004). Thus we see that mud, brick and wood are used to construct a moidam. There have also been mentions of two ponds or pukhuris associated with the burial practise of moidams, the Ho-dhuwa pukhuri (the tank where the dead body was washed) and Petu-dhuwa pukhuri (the tank where the organs were washed).

The Ahom kings appointed a special officer known as Changrung Phukon for the construction and maintenance of all the civil works including moidams. Changrung Phukon was one of the nine Phukons of the highest rank. Special officers called as the Moidam Phukon and a guard group known as the Moidamiya were appointed to protect and maintain the moidams. The most authentic and exhaustive records of these mounds are contained in the chronicle Chang-rung Phukonar Buronji.

Table 2: List of Moidams in the study area

Site	Location	Name(according to local people)	Approximate Size(meter)	Remark
1	Akhoiya gaon	Moidam of Moushing Hatibaruah (27.02°09.71"N, 94.50°59.05"E)	26.10*19.27	Said to be the burial of Moushing Hatibaruah, a relative of Ahom King Swargadeo Gadadhar Singh or Supatphaa (1681-96 AD).
		Group of Moidams of Khaoteck Mo'Phukon and others (27.02°09.69"N, 94.51°18.45"E)	39.78*33.73	Said to be the burial of Kaoteck Mo'phukon, a relative of Ahom King Swargadeo Gadadhar Singh. Consists of one large and five small moidams.
	Hatibaruah gaon	Moidam of Doga Phukon (27.02°41.54"N, 94.50°59.65"E)	23.37*21.35	Covered by heavy vegetation.
		Moidam of Tenga Phukon (27.03°08.95"N, 94.51°15.82"E)	18.04*16.33	Protected by local people.
	Nahartali	Group Moidams of Mo'dam Phukon and others (27.03°20.20"N – 94.52°26.13"E)	35.14*29.73 (largest)	Protected by local people. Consists of around 22 smaller and 1 big moidam (Modam phukon moidam) with pit hole indicating vandalism.
2	Pathaligarh	Moidam of Barbaruah (26.59°16.11"N- 94.52°26.13E)	37.35*30.65	Contains a brick vault.
		Group of Mati Moidams (26.59°08.91"N- 94.47°52.84"E)		A group of 4 small mounds covered by heavy vegetation
3	Nimaigarh habi	Moidam of Bandar Borphukon (26.53°27.76"N- 94.49°43.31"E)	20.43*16.89	Said to be the moidam of Bandar Barphukon, from Lanmakhura clan who was a principal supporter of Swargadeo Gadadhar Singha. It is covered with vegetation and partially protected by Bantung Gaon Panchayat under financial year of 2019-20.
	Belengbari	Moidam of Bailung (26.53°57.42"N – 94.49°53.24"E)	46.38*38.49	Burial of a person belonging to the Bailung community, one of the priestly classes of the Ahom dynasty.
		Moidam of Horu-Bailung (26.53°56.94"N- 94.50°08.02"E)	28.02*25.51	Burial of a person belonging to the Bailung community.
	Charaideo Tea estate	Moidam of Kuwari (26.55°06.26"N- 94.51°32.06"E)	Hard to measure	Said to be the moidam of Bor Roja Phuleshwari, wife of Swargadeo Siva Singha or Sutanphaa (1714-1744 AD). She was the first queen of the

				Ahom kingdom to govern the kingdom directly.
	Dolbagan	Dolbagan group of Moidams (26.56'10.83" N-94.51'36.06"E)		Said to be the moidams of the earliest ahom rulers: Sukaphaa, Subinphaa, Sukrangphaa, Sutauphaa.
	Charaideo	Royal Burial group of Moidams (26.56'36.29" N-94.52'35.88"E)		The royal burial complex contains 90 moidams. Declared World Heritage site in 2024.
		Bali Moidam (26.57'00.14"N-94.53.02.94"E)	Hard to measure	Has the possibility of having a brick structure underneath as brick remains can be seen on the surface area.



Map 3: Distribution of Moidams

BARBARUAH MOIDAM: The moidam at Pthaligarh Kuwar Gaon is said to be the moidam of Kirtichandra Barbaruah who was a Prime minister during the rule of the Ahom king Swargadeo Lakshmi Singha or Sunyeophaa (1769-1780 AD). It is not an actual burial. The building of the brick vault was sponsored by the prime minister himself intending to be buried here but after his death he was buried at Bhoju, a town in Charaideo district. What makes it different from the other moidams is that the brick structure is not covered by soil. The inside walls of the brick vault is cover by moss and the outer wall is cover by a big tree. It is said that there is an underground passageway at the vault which leads to Dikhao River. Currently it is protected by Directorate of Archaeology, Assam.

Near Barbaruah moidam, there was also another moidam but it was destroyed by the local people to build a Naamghar (an Assamese traditional prayer hall).



Figure 1.1: Front view



Figure 1.2: Back view



Figure 1.3: Inner view



Figure 1.4: roof of the vault

THE ROYAL BURIAL COMPLEX, CHARAIDEO: The Royal burial complex at Charaideo contains 90 moidams, divided into two groups. The group of moidams to the right is protected by the Directorate of State Archaeology, Assam and the ones to the left are protected by the Archaeological survey of India, Guwahati circle. Pathways made of bricks have been laid on the way for the easy movement of people. Almost all the necessary information available on the Ahom moidams is the result of the excavations and studies done on the Royal Burial Complex of Charaideo. Out of the 90 moidams, two of them, moidam no. 2 from the central group and moidam no. 8 from the state group are open to the public for further viewing experience.

Moidam no 2: The excavation of the moidam was carried out for three consecutive seasons. In February 2001, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI, Guwahati Circle) undertook the first season of excavation by then Superintending Archaeologist of Guwahati Circle Syed Jamal Hasan, assisted by D.K Singh and N.K. Sinha of the Excavation Branch III, Patna. In the third season of excavation, the domical roof of the brick built inner structure of the moidam was exposed along with the entrance door. The structure was made of burnt bricks, lime and stone boulders. The entrance was at the western side of the mound with the door to the chamber sealed shut and a tunnel shaped opening. An octagonal wall with eight circles at each corner (each circle was differently designed) can be seen around the mound. The artefacts recovered from the moidam included terracotta mythical animal figurines, remains of 5 skulls, bones, ivory pieces, copper fitted wood, iron hook, pin, cowries, gold pendants. The ceramics were predominantly grey ware and pale reddish to red wares (R. Sahu 2014).

At present the moidam has many renovations and modern constructions attached to it. Brick walls lined the hallway leading into the tomb are modern construction along with a drainage system to prevent landslides and water lodging. The inner chamber is empty and damp.



Figure 1.5: Moidam no 2



Figure 1.6: Vault door of moidam no 2



Figure 1.7: Corner design of octagonal wall of Moidam 2



Figure 1.8: Moidam no 8

Moidam no 8: It was a previously excavated moidam and now opens to public. It is smaller in size than moidam no 2. It contains modern construction of boundary walls and a chao-chali. The inside of the tomb is empty.

2.2 POND (PUKHURI)

Excavations of ponds are an old-age tradition. The Ahoms are credited with excavating huge tanks in and around their capital city. The most intriguing aspect of these ponds, which is still mostly a mystery, is that the water level never changes, whether it is summer or winter. Another notable feature is that most of the tanks excavated by the Ahom rulers still maintain a water level much higher than the topography of the land around them. In local language these tanks are called Pukhuri.

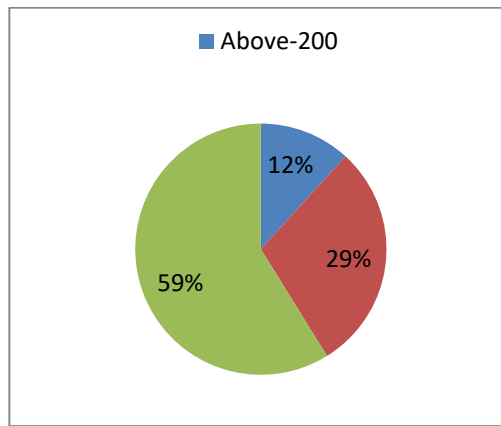
Before excavating a pond, numerous tests and experiments were conducted on the soil to determine its quality, compactness and bearing capability. A layer of Raah or Para was placed on the bed once the excavation was finished. Raah was occasionally substituted with charcoal and stone chips to filter and regulate the flow of spring water. Because they were constructed using such cutting edge science and technology and kept up with all the necessary specifications, the ponds from that era are still filled with water all year round. Some tanks are so huge that they were called sagar or sea. The Joysagar tank is largest among them. Most of the tanks are square in size. The pukhuris of the study area are smaller in size compared to the ones in Joysagar and Sivasagar.

The water tanks were constructed in the Ahom kingdom due to different purposes; some of them were—

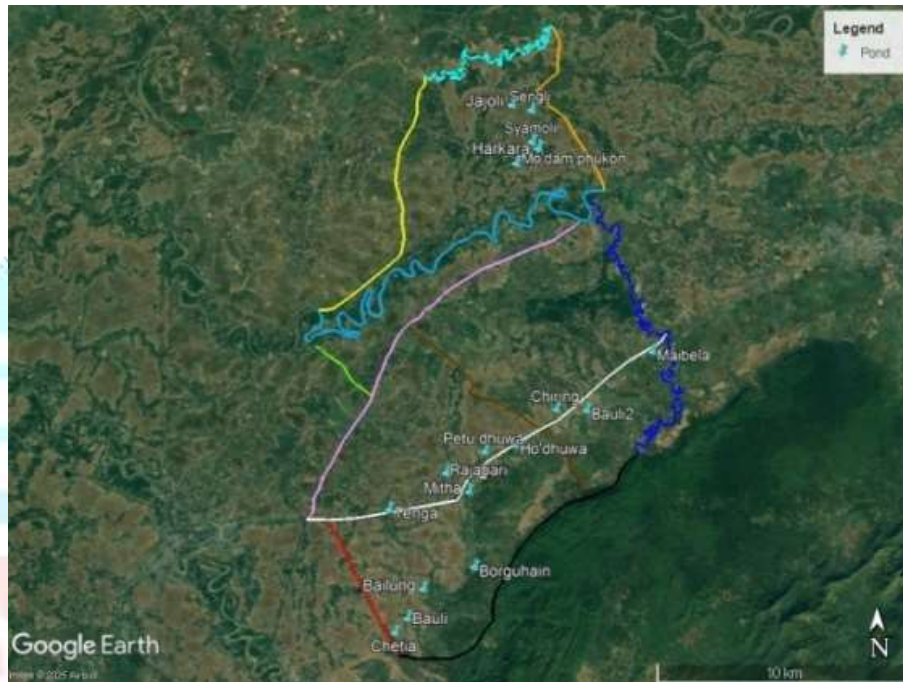
1. To commemorate the memories of kings, queens and princes.
2. To commemorate the memories of the ministers.
3. To commemorate the memories of patriots.
4. To commemorate the heroes who won victory in the wars.
5. To offer drinking water facility to the subjects
6. To wash grams and other articles, used in the worships of the royal families.
7. To wash hoes and ploughs, used in cultivation.
8. To wash dead bodies of kings and queens.
9. To wash royal dresses.
10. For fish farming and gardening.

Table 4: List of Ponds in study area

Site	Location	Name	Size
1	Nahartali	Mo'dam Phukon Pond (27.03'20.81"N - 94.52'32.05"E)	57.75*49.41 m
		Harkara Pond (27.03'35.48"N – 94.52'55.17"E)	91.41*72.07 m
		Syamoli Pond (27.03'42.65"N – 94.52'52.65"E)	62.22*75.98 m
	Doba grant	Sengli Pond (27.04'28.66" N - 94.52'44.16" E)	58.31*54.57 m
		Jajoli Pond (27.04'36.99"N - 94.52'22.00"E)	51.27*38.83 m
2	Rajabari	Rajabari Pond (26.56'13.81"N – 94.50'41.28"E)	90.75*69.75 m
	Charaideo	Petu dhuwa Pond (26.56'53.23"N – 94.51'54.84"E)	90.75*69.75 m
	Nimonagarh	Chiring Pond (26.57'53.37"N – 94.53'24.55"E)	62.97*73.23m
3	Nimaigarh	Chetia Pond (26.53'14.95"N – 94.49'45.37"E)	145.68*120.92m
		Bauli Pond (26.53'14.95"N – 94.49'45.37"E)	94.64*74.52m
	Belengbari	Bailung Pond (26.53.49.92"N – 94.50'.04.64"E)	51.01*54.49m
	Lengibor	Borguhain Pond (26.54'24.68"N – 94.51'15.15"E)	258.02*160.46m
	Tenga pukhuri	Tenga Pond (26.55'35.11"N – 94.49'16.87"E)	128.97*130.94m
	Dolbagan	Mitha Pond (26.55'55.26"N – 94.51.14.77)	181.95*124.68m
	Charaideo	Ho'dhuwa Pond (26.56'57.18"N – 94.52'17.58"E)	203.18*167.54m
	Nimonagarh	Bauli Pond 2 (26.57'40.47"N – 94.54'06.08"E)	104.20*107.41m
	Maibela	Maibela Pond (26.58'56.22"N – 94.55'46.50"E)	116.00*71.42m



Pie chart 1: Percentage of ponds based on their length



Map 4: Distribution of Ponds in study area

A total of 17 ponds are documented from the study area. Out of them, only two ponds are above 200 m in length. One of them is Ho'dhuwa pukhuri and the other is the Borguhain pukhuri, which is also called Lengibor pukhuri. The remaining 15 ponds are small or medium in sizes (50 m to 200 m). Two of the documented ponds are related to the funeral rituals of Ahom royals: Petudhuwa Pond and Ho'dhuwa Pond. During the Ahom dynasty pukhuries or tanks were excavated not only by the royals but also by the court officials. Although there is no evidence, but from the names of the ponds, such as Borguhain Pond, Mo'dam Phukon Pond, Chetia Pond, Bailung Pond, Borguhain Pond, Mo'dam Phukon Pond, Chetia Pond, Bailung Pond, it can be said that they were somehow related to the local officials. In the Ahom kingdom, Chetia, Borgohain, Phukan are titles associated with court officials.

Seven of the ponds are protected. Petu dhuwa pukhuri and Ho'dhuwa pukhuri are protected by the Directorate of State Archaeology, Assam. Jajoli pukhuri, Chiring pukhuri, Bauli pukhuri, Borguhain pukhuri and Mitha pukhuri are protected by local authority.

These ponds are used by the local people for daily-social works, fishing, irrigation, religious and social practises, etc. Maibela pukhuri is used as a source of water supply to the neighbouring area.



Figure 1.9: Petu dhuwa Pukhuri



Figure 1.10: Lengibor pukhuri

2.3 DEOHAL

Deohals are worship places similar to that of temples. They are related to the Tai-Ahom religion, which focuses on ritual oriented ancestor worship. Thus offerings and animal sacrifices to their ancestors are said to have been done here since ancient times. Total 5 deohals are documented from the study area.



Map 5: Distribution of Deohal in the study area

Table5: List of Deohals

Site	Location	Name	Remark
1	Akhoiya gaon	Hatibaruah Deohal (27.02'11.99"N-94.50'48.39"E)	Said to be established by Mo'singh Hatibaruah. Every year Me-dam-me-fi (annual prayer day of the Ahom community) is celebrated here. There is a pond near the deohal whose water is used for religious offerings.
2	Lakwa	Aamllokhi deohal (27.01'44.35"N-94.50'48.39"E)	Largest and well maintained. The first deohal that the Ahoms formed after establishing their capital at Charaideo. Umpha puja, which is one of the major pujas of the Tai Ahom community, is celebrated here at an interval of every 12 years.
3	Dwara gaon	Bantung deohal (26.55'06.18"N – 94.49'22.64"E)	Stone slab was found
	Dolbagan	Langkuri dol (26.55'47.94"N-94.51'40.68"E)	Used to be a temple of a Tai Ahom God 'Langkuri'. Remains of bricks found.
		Charaideo deohal (26.56'00.46"-94.52'34.23"E)	Stone pillars and brick remains found.

BANTUNG DEOHAL: During the exploration, a stone slab was documented at Bantung Deohal which is 140 cm in length, 112 cm in breadth and 15 cm in thickness. It is broken into 2 pieces. According to the local people, the slab broke when some robbers tried to lift and steal the slab. Later the local authority had tried to fix it using cement. Some parts were refilled.



Figure 1.11: Stone slab

All four sides of the slab are decorated with different patterns. Some are broken but most of them are intact.

- Side 1 has two pattern, first half is a flower design with four big petals and the second half is a flower design with eight petals and a diamond design with a flower of four petals
- Side 2 has three layers of decorations, first and the third layer has designs like a lotus petals, while the middle layer has small flower designs.
- The decorations of 3rd and 4th side are similar with the second side.



Figure 1.12: Design of Side 2, 3, 4

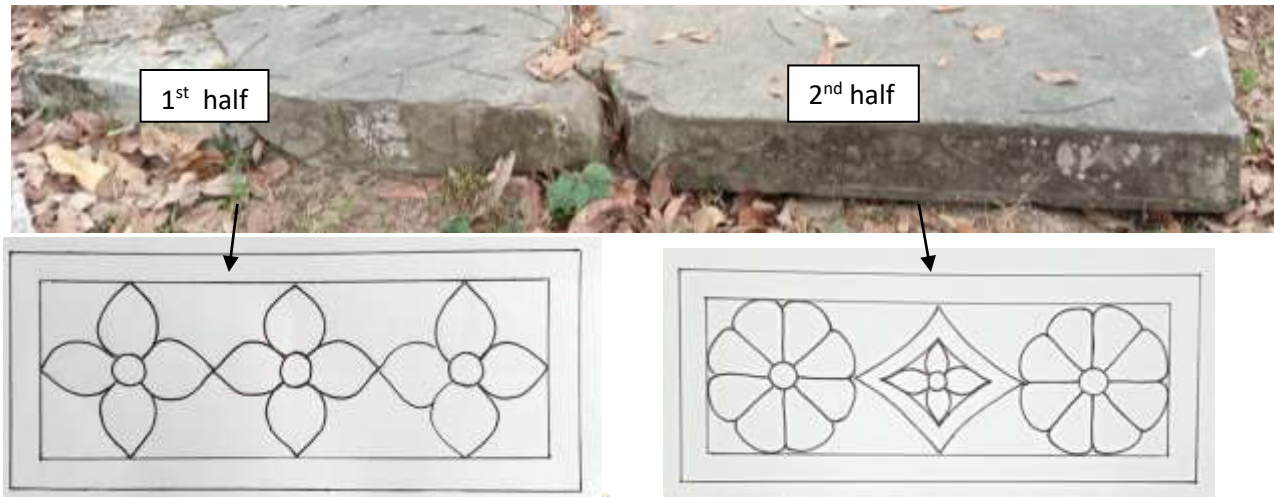


Figure 1.13: Design of Side 1

CHARAIDEO DEOHAL: Charaideo Deohal is located on the top of a hillock in Dolbagan, near Langkuri Dol. A narrow road leads from the bottom to the top of the hill. There are three pillars standing on the brick platform and four base parts of the pillars. The pillars are not round (Figure 1.16): it has 12 faces and the height measured at 2.20 m (approximate). The diameter of a pillar base is 17 cm. It is said by the local people that earlier this place belonged to the Barahi people, after which they gifted this place to the Ahoms. The Deohal is still active as a scared place of the Ahom community.



Figure 1.14: Pillars



Figure 1.15: Pillar base



Figure 1.16



Figure 1.17: Brick remains

2.4 GARH (RAMPARTS) & ALI (ROAD)

The construction of numerous Garhs (ramparts) during the Ahom period was scientifically and technically developed. There are six kinds of Garhs, such as garh made of soil, stone brick, sand, bamboo peg or wood and banana stern, which were used to protect and defend the country from enemy's aggression. The construction deftness of each type of garh was a peculiar network of the kingdom.

At present times, all ramparts are being used as roads (Ali in Assamese language) except Rajabari garh.

Table 6: List of Road (Ali) and Ramparts (Garh)

Site	Name
2	Rajgarh
2, 3	Nimona garh
2	Rajabari garh
	Pathali garh
3	Dhudor Ali
3	Rohdoi Ali



Map 6: Ancient Ramparts and Roads (Ali)

RAJGARH (ALI): Rajgarh was constructed comprising vast areas of Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh and Sivasagar districts by Swargadeo Pratap Singha under the supervision of court official Mumai Tamuli Borbaruah. In different parts of Assam this rampart is called by different names. The garh situated at the southern part is called Ladoi garh and the Kutuha garh. The rampart situated at Majuli is called Meragarh and in Lakhimpur it is called Rajgarh. The lower part of the garh was constructed with stone and the upper part with bricks. In the study area the garh starts from Garmur Chariali to the south bank of river Disang, the length is almost 17 km.

PATHALI-GARH (ALI): In Assamese language ‘Pathli’ means horizontal. The rampart was built near Rajgarh.

NIMONAGARH (ALI): The Nimana garh was constructed by Swargadeo Khura Roja or Sukhampha (1553-1603 AD). It starts from south of the Rajgarh near Lakua upto the Naga foothills, crossing Dhudor Ali. At present time it is used as a road from the Nimonagarh Chariali to Nagaland.

RAJABARI GARH: The Rajabari garh is located around 4.5 km east of Rajgarh. The shape of the rampart is rectangular. The entire surface is made of earth: wide and is walk-able. Around 70% of the rampart is destroyed due to manmade and natural causes i.e. digging and erosion of soil caused by rain. Some parts of the rampart are intact and wide up to 14 m. No surface findings could be seen. There is a pond called Rajabari pukhuri inside the garh. Today, the rampart surrounds a large amount of agricultural field, houses and roads have been constructed.



Figure 1.18: Rajabari Garh

DHUDOR ALI: Swargadeo Gadadhar Singha or Supaatphaa (1681-1696) constructed an important road known as the Dhudor Ali from Kamargaon in Golaghat district to Joypur in Dibrugarh district. The length of the road is 288 km, connecting places such as Kamargaon, Golaghat, Kamarbondha, Mariani, Titabor, Nakachari Deberapara in the district of Jorhat; Simaluguri, Nazira, Gargaon, Namti, Sonari in Sivasagar District; and Namrup, Naharkatia, Joypur in Dibrugarh district. It was said to be made by the Dhuds (idle man), as such the name.

ROHDOI ALI: The Puhari Rahdoi was one of the Puharis (female peddler) who saved Swargadeo Gadadhar Singha's life during his concealed period. To commemorate her memory, the king constructed a road named Rohdoi Ali which started from Dhudor Ali at Darika Silar Saku via Rajgorh to Lahdoi gorh. A general pond was also dug which was known as Rohdoi Pukhuri.

3. DISCUSSION

During the exploration 42 archaeological remains were documented. The isolated moidams, not belonging to the Royal burial complex of Charaideo, are mostly covered with heavy vegetation which makes it difficult to climb and measure (Figure 1.19). The moidam tradition is still in practice at some areas. The people at Patchaku region belong to ‘Deodhai’ Ahom community (one of the priestly class of Ahom) and they still follow the burial tradition of moidam. In the Lakuwa region there are many families that have surname ‘Rajkuwar’ (prince) and ‘Rajkumari’ (princess) and they are believed to be the descendents of the Ahom royals. The documented pukhuries are mostly used by local people for their daily works such as for drinking, irrigation, washing and other activities.

During the reigns of Swargadeo Rudra Singha (1696-1714 AD) and Swargadeo Siva Singha (1714-1744 AD), capital Rangpur became the major centre of Hinduism in upper Assam with the construction of Dol (temple) of Brahmin deities like Siva, Vishnu and Durga. However Charaideo continued to be a centre of

Tai Ahom religion and tradition. Major religious centre of Tai Ahom religion – Aamlokhi deohal, Langkuri dol, and Charaideo deohal continued to be the worship place of Tai Ahom deities and ancestors of Ahom royals till this date.

Material culture evidence like pottery, brick deposits are found in the Dolbagan area. The inhabitants of that area often discover potsherds, brick remains and other archaeological remains like gold, silver, copper, objects which indicates a continuous and very thick habitation in that area.

The condition of the archaeological remains is not good. The two main factors leading to the destruction of the archaeological remains of the study area are natural causes and human actions. Natural causes include earthquakes and erosion of soil caused mainly due to heavy rainfall during the monsoon seasons. Except the Charaideo moidam complex, other modiams are earthen moidams, thereby being the most affected ones during heavy rainfall when the rain continues to wash off the soil layer by layer. This affects the size of the moidam and if this continues for a long time, the moidams will be flattened in no time and will be unavailable to be identified. Another natural cause is the high level of humidity of North-east India. Due to high humidity, the exposed parts especially the brick walls of moidams get covered by fungus (Figure 1.20) and heavy vegetations which cause serious damage to moidams.

Humans are the main threat for archaeological remains. It is due to the lack of awareness, education and proper knowledge about our history. Vandalization of moidams has been continuing since British times. Both British and local people dug the moidams in order to rob the treasure buried there and it has caused irreparable damage to the moidams. In the study area most of the moidams are located in the middle of the paddy field or near settlement areas. Most of them are often dug by local people. At some sites, the local people have built houses and religious institutions like naamghar on the top of the moidams (Figure 1.21, 1.22).



Figure 1.19: Moidam of Moushing Hatibaruah



Figure 1.20: Moidam of Barbaruah



Figure 1.21: Construction of Naamghar on top of a Moidam (Pathaligarh)



Figure 1.22: House near moidam (Nahartali)

4. CONCLUSION

In this research we have tried document almost all the archaeological remains that are within our knowledge. However, the research in this area still has to go long way and hope that future archaeological research will yield much more data and contextual information and bring new light towards the protection and conservation of these archaeological remains.

REFERENCES

- E. Gait, "A History of Assam", Bina Library, Guwahati, 1905
- N. Goswami, "The Systems of Digging Ponds by the Ahom, the Greater Tai Tribe in the North-East India", International Journal of Management(Volume 11), 2020
- H.K. Barpujari, "The comprehensive History of Assam (Vol-III)", Publication board, Assam, 2004
- H. Barbaruah, "Ahomor Din", Publication Board of Assam , Guwahati,1981
- P.P. Joglekar, "Research Methodology: For Archaeology Students", Gayatri Sahitya, Pune, 2014.
- C.R. Kothari, "Research Methodology, Methods & Techniques", New Age International (P) Limited, New Delhi, 1985.
- U. Mahanta, "Water Culture of the Ahoms: With Special Reference to the Sivasagar District" , 2017
- P.L. Drewett, "Field archaeology: An Introduction", UCL Press, London, 1999.
- P. Sarma, " Architecture, in The comprehensive History of Assam (Vol-III)(H.K Barpujari Ed.)", Publication board, Assam, 2004, 315-350
- S.L. Baruah, "A Comprehensive History of Assam", Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 1986.
- R. Sahu, "The Excavated Moidam: Towards an Archaeological Interpretation in 50 years after Daojali- Hading : Emerging perspectives", in Archaeology of North-East India(Tiatoshi Jamir and Manjil Hazarika Ed), Research India Press, New Delhi, 2021,283- 291.
- R. Sahu, "Memory, Power and Sacredness: Exploring the mortuary space of Charaideo", in Prehistory and Archaeology of Northeast India: Recent trends and Future Prospect (Milan Kumar Chauley and Manjil Hazarika Ed.), Research India Press, New Delhi, 2014,309-322
- C. L.Tze, "Architecture of the Tai-Ahom Period" ,Krantikaal Prakashan, Nagao, 1999