CHAPTER - III
Like all other parts of India Assam also used to draw the attention of the Delhi emperors right from the Sultanate period. As many as nine important expeditions can be traced from historical records sent against Assam from the time of Sultan of Ghor to the end of Lodi dynasty. Indeed none of these attempted invasions were successful despite having enlisted several men, money and material. But these military contacts with a remote part of the country linked the Assamese with the rest of India.¹

As very correctly stated by Sir Worsely Haig the rise of Islam is one of the marvels of history. Only a century after the demise of prophet the empire or Islam extended Indus to Atlantic.²

Contract of European nations with the Saracens through the medium of the crusades led to the interchange of Arabic and European culture, and was responsible of the earlier Renaissance which first dispelled the gloom and stupor of the medieval age. This is now where truer than in the conflicts of the eastern frontier of India with the Muhammadans.³

² Reading in the History and Culture of Assam, p. 28
In 1192 Muhammad of Ghur invaded the kingdom of Prithiraj Chouhan, defeated and killed him in the battle of Tarain near Thaneswar. Thereupon the Muhammadans launched large scale attacks on all the Hindu kingdoms of Northern and Eastern India. Qutubuddin Aibak, the general of Muhammad Ghuri followed up the Muslims' success at Tarain. He occupied and annexed the Western part of U.P. including Meerat, Gwalior and Aligarh and extended the Muslim empire up to the border of Kanouj towards the east. In 1914 A.D. Mohammad Ghuri conquered the Kingdom of Konouj by defeating King Jai Chandra, who was a great rival of Prithiraj. Thereafter the eastern sides of India witness the incursions of the Muslim power. In 1202 A.D. Muhammad bin Bhaktiyar Khiliji, also known as Ikhtiyaruddin, another general of Ghuri conquered Bihar and Bengal.4

Assam became a museum of races in the ancient past as it is situated on one of the great migration routes of mankind. For geographical reasons one of the channels of her communication with the rest of India has been through the Brahmaputra, Gangas and land routes. As a result the intercourses through these routes both ethnographic composition and culture of Assam today present a very complicated and composite picture.

The process of racial migration of earlier stages was necessarily slow. But with the dawn of the medieval ages, this type of migration was somewhat replaced by planned military invasions. These new factors thrust themselves too

4 Acharyya, Dr. N.N. A Brief History of Assam, p. 51, 1992.
rapidly upon Assam and created a turmoil introducing different social
dynamics. As a matter of fact this turned Assam history from an almost self
contained complacent existence into one of tremendous transformation in
various directions, Assam witnessed two waves of directions, the Muslim
invasion from the west i.e. Bengal and the Ahom from the east in the beginning
of the thirteenth century.\(^5\)

With the fall of the Palas in the early part of 12th century, the powerful
kingdom of Kamrupa disintegrated. The conquests of “Vaidyadeva” did not
cover the eastern part of Kamrupa where the death of the last king of the Palas
was followed by an emergence of a number of independent or semi-independent
kingdoms or principalities of the feudatory rulers and Mongoloid Chiefs. A
class of officers entrusted with the assessment of revenue of certain areas under
the old administration became powerful land lords and exercised important
political powers. They are called themselves “Bhuyan”s and often behaved as
kings. The western part of the Kingdom retained the name Kamrupa. There, a
line of Kings exercised power till about the middle of the 13th Century, after
which the Bhuyans gradually rose to power. Inspite of the intervention of such
kings as Durlabhanarayan and Indranarayan, the political scene of Kamrupa was
dominated mainly by the Bhuyans.\(^6\)

In the meantime when the Turks occupied Bengal, the Kingdom of
Kamrup extended from Karatoya in West to modern Darrang and Nagaon

\(^5\) Kar, M. Muslim in Assam Politics, pp. 1, 2, 1990.
district in Assam and lay athwart the path of natural expansion of Bengal on the
east and the north. Its fertile riparian tracts, gold, forests with aromatic plants,
elephants and their tusks, the musk-deer, excited the cupidity as well as
fanaticism of its western neighbour. For the rulers of Bengal had imperialistic
and economic gain as of proselytisation. It was also not unlikely that
Qutubuddin Aibak or Ibn Bakhtiyar must have been quite aware of the fact that
kamrup was an important link in China world of commerce.7

3.1. The first Muslim expedition of Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji in 1206 A.D.

Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji, the most able Turkish general of Sultan
Qutubuddin invaded Bihar in A.D. 1195. He advanced to Banga and by a
surprise attack captured Lakhnauti. After forcing the Rai Lakhmanuja to flee
(A.D.1198), he established his seat of government in Lakhnauti after destroying
the old capital of Nudiya. Gradually he brought the surrounding places under his
political domination.8 The grave danger of aggression threatened kamrup once
again after the several invasions of the Palas and the Sena King of Bengal. It
was not before large now that this danger culminated in the incursion led into
the Country by formidable Turkish Army of Muhammad bin Bakhtiyar Khilji
route to Tibet in 1206 A.D.9

The earliest Muslim attempt to enter Assam forcibly was their invasion
of 1205 led by Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji from Bengal as depicted in the

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8 Kalita, B.C. Military Activities in Medieval Assam, p. 50, 1998.
9 Saikia, Dr. Mohini. Assam Muslim Relation and Cultural Significance, p. 36, 1978.
north Guwahati inscription of 1127 Saka era. It is a record that before the first Ahom appearance in 1228, several Muslim invasions had already taken place and affected the district of Kamrup and adjoining territories. Some of the captive mercenaries and others decided to settle in those places.\(^{10}\)

Bakhtiyar collected information about the territory of Tibet in the east and wanted to conquer it. Accordingly he raised an army of 10,000 horses. A preliminary study of the region revealed that the passage to Tibet lay through the tributaries of three races, i.e. Koch, Mech, Tiharu and the kingdom of Kamrup. He converted one of the Mech Chieftains to Muhammadanism, and called him Ali Mech. The latter offered Bakhtiyar to guide him on his advance through the difficult hilly terrain. After crossing the rivers Karatoya (AD 1205) and Teesta, Bakhtiyar came to the bank of a mighty river, Bagmati "thrice as board as the Ganges."\(^{11}\) After marching for ten days along the upper course led by Ali mech they came across a bridge had stood over the water having about twenty arches of Stones. Bakhtiyar posted two officers on the bridge, a Turk and the other Khilji with large force to secure the place till his return. With the remainder of the army he crossed the river and marched ahead. Ali Mech returned after this point.\(^{12}\)

The Raja of Kamrup through his intelligence service tried to persuade Bakhtiyar to withdraw from his attempted from his project. After marching a

\(^{10}\) Kar, M. Muslim in Assam Politics, pp. 2, 1990.
few stages through the defiles and mountains he confronted a horde of
horsemen who looked like Turks or Mangols when Bakhtiyar attacked a fort in
a village. This fight went on from morning till evening. A large number of his
troops were slain and wounded. On questioning the prisoners he came to know
that after a few days march they would be reaching a place with three hundred
and fifty thousand strong men armed with bows. Bakhtiyar, after making an
assessment of the situation, found that his men were tired and exhausted, many
were wounded and slain, and after consultation with his nobles decided to
retreat.  

The retreat was disastrous. In the evening when Muhammad Bin
Bakhtiyar learnt from a captive that next morning the local army would be
reinforced by a well trained cavalry force from the city of Karamapattan, he
broke up his camp in the same night and began to retrace his steps. The route in
the rear of the invaders was blocked. But he could not avoid the disaster he
feared. The ragged configuration of the land and the grim resolve of a hostile
people in arms, who evaluated the land and burnt everything, subjected the
retreating rump of the now shattered Muslim army to terrible for lack of food
and fodder for fifteen days. Even after reaching the frontier of the plaint of
Kamrupa, the suffering swelled to the brim, as the Rajah destroyed the bridge
by removing two of its peers, so as to entrap and annihilate the enemy. The
invader sheltering in a temple was besieged by a bamboo palisade. Breaking

\footnote{Raverty, Major H.G. Eng. Trans., Tabaqat-i-Nasiri p.p. 560-564, 1881. also Salam,
Abdul, Eng. Trans. Riys-us-Salatin, p.p. 65. 68.}
through it, he desperately sought to cross the Karatoya and horseback. Most of
his followers were drawn. Bakhtiyar himself crossed the river with a few
hundreds only. Befriended by the Mech Chief he would reach Devkot south of
Dinajpur and then return to Gaur, dying there, grief stricken, in 1206 A.D.¹⁴

Some of Muslim Soldiers were imprisoned and subsequently
rehabilitated, according to their wish, in Kamrup. They were allowed to retain
their religion and customs, a secular gesture by the king and the people. The
Muslim were called Goria (Assamese Muslim presently) since they came from
the country of Gaur i.e Bengal. This furtile expedition of Bakhtiyar marked the
beginning of the settlement of the Muslims in Assam.¹⁵

3.2 The Expedition of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Iwaz-i-Hussain Khalji and Nasiruddin
of Bengal. (1226-28)

There is an element of uncertainty about the next invasion of Kamrupa.
One account says that Sultan Ghiyasuddin Iwaz-i- Hussain Khilji of Gaur or
Bengal (1213-27), a contemporary of Iltutmish Sultan of Delhi (1211-36) who
subdued him in 1225, invaded Kamrupa in 1226-27 and even advanced from
Mymensing side along the Brahmaputra up to Sadiya but was routed and driven
back. This seems untenable as the Brahmaputra valley was then split up into
different units, as known from the Buranjis. Any invader would have to
subjugate these various units to be able to reach Sadiya. This was not possible
during the short campaign which ended abruptly. But numismatic evidence

would suggest that the Sultan came unto Guwahati and Nagaon. This is supported by the Gachtal inscription found at Nagaon, where he was worsted by Prithu or Bartu of Minhaj, the Kamrupa king, with heavy loss. This disprove K.L. Barua's surmise that the show-down occurred near North Guwahati. Thus if Bakhtiyar's invasion touched only a fringe of Kamrupa, Sultan Ghiyasuddin Iwaz first invaded it directly (624/1226-27). But he could not make much progress and had to retreat in haste, as his own capital, Lakhnauti was captured by Nasiruddin Mahmud, eldest son of Sultan Iltumish of Delhi in 1227. The latter defeated, imprisoned and killed him.

After overthrowing Sultan Ghiyasuddin Iwaz, Nasiruddin ruled Bengal as his father's viceroy for sometime. He then sought to annex the neighbouring kingdoms and advanced to Kamrup (1228) through Jalpaiguri. Prithu, its king, erected fortifications for defence but was worsted and killed (1228), Nasir appointed tributary king on the Kamrupa throne.16

3.3 The Expedition of Ikhtiyaruddin Yuzbek Tugril Khan 1257 A.D.

Ikhtiyaruddin Yuzbeck Tugril Khan, a strong and ambitious ruler of Bengal, crossed the river Karatoya, the dividing line between the Muslim territory of Lakhnauti and the country of Kamrup. He advanced from the northern bank of the river Brahmaputra and was advancing through the present district of Goalpara. He did this (in the spring of A.D. 1257) to conquer and annex the resourceful land of Kamrup to his country. The king of Kamrup did

not offer any resistance, neither did his vassals. The Chieftains of Bara Bhuyans stood nowhere as obstacles on the onward march of the Muslim invaders. The king of Kamrup evacuated the capital and took shelter somewhere in the hills. The invaders were jubilant on their easy victory, and celebrated the occasion by erecting a mosque. Though the Sultan was offered an annual tribute by the king’s agent of having coins issued in his name but all his ambitious plans ultimately ended in disaster when the Sultan decided to spend the rainy season in the capital of his newly conquered country.

It was already harvesting time when the people stored their grain and fodder for the rainy season. But the Sultan could not make an assessment about the careful measures to be adopted to meet the coming crucial days. He did not store food grain or fodder. On the other hand, the Kamrup king engaged some merchants who bought the surplus grain in disguise, and exported it to neighbouring places. The king from his concealed position in the jungle was making all preparations to destroy the invaders with the setting of the monsoon. He constructed some dams on the upper flow of the streams to store water for emergency flooding. Steps were taken to cut off the supply of provisions to the Muslims. All the Hindu people were alerted for an attack at the right time to annihilate the enemy.\footnote{Siraj, Minhajuddin. Tabaqat-i-Nasiri, Vol.-I, p.p. 263, 264.}

With the onset of rains which continued incessantly, the Sultan’s army faced a real problem. There was no food or drinking water for the men or even
fodder for the beasts, and the entire area became slushy and muddy. Starvation and disease started taking a heavy toll of human life. In these pitiful conditions the Sultan, with the help of a guide, wanted to return taking a shorter route to his country but it was already too late. The Assamese attacked the invaders from all sides and gave them a crushing defeat. The Sultan, though he fought well, was ultimately wounded, and made captive along with his family and children. On his earnest appeal he was allowed to see his youngest son, and finally with his head on his baby's breast he breathed his last.18

3.4 The Expedition of Mughisuddin Tughral (1268-1281 A.D.)

The Riyaz-us-Salatin records that Sultan Mughisuddin Tughral of Bengal conquered the western part of Assam, that is Kamata.19 In some other account it is related that this ruler of Bengal helped prince Ratna Pha of Tripura to capture power in the territory after having deposed its king Raja Pha.20 It is certainly not to this event that the Riyaz-us-Salatin, refers, because generally the Mohammadan chroniclers used the name of Kamrup to the territory which lay to the east of the river Karataya. Moreover we find that in different places, this chronicles mentions the name Kamrup indicating exclusively the Assam valley, particularly the western part of it. Our supposition is that, Sultan Mughisuddin Tughral of Gauda subjugated some of the Bhuyans of Kamrupa by the end of the reign of Kamata king who had destroyed the invading army of

Ikhtiyaruddin Malik Yuzbak in 1256-57 A.D. But in the hectic day of Tughral’s sufferings and war with the emperor Ghiyasuddin Balban they probably asserted their independence of the Gauda Sultan. Ghiyasuddin Balban is said to have overpowered and killed Tughral in 1281 A.D. and before he returned to Delhi, he placed his son Bughra Khan in charged of the administration of Bengal. It appears that Balban’s attention was concentration more upon the securing of the imperial authority over Bengal, particularly over Sonargaon, and Satgaon then in the expansion of the territory by reconquering the reign of Kamrupa which Mughisuddin had brought under his sway.

Bughra Khan was a peace loving prince and he passed his time more in peace and pleasures than in waging war of conquest. Thus the Bhuyans of Kamrupa, (Kamata) could enjoy a period of peaceful and independent regime in their respective principalities, until prince Durlabhanarayana rose to supremacy in the country and subjugated them.21

3.5 The Expedition of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Bahadur Shah (A.H. 720-21/1320-21)

A number of coins issued in A.H. 721 (1321 A.D.) by Sultan Ghiyasuddin Bahadur Shah, son of Sultan Samsuddin Firuz Shah, have been discovered in the Mymensingh district of East Pakistan (present Bangaldesh) and in Koch Bihar region in North Bengal and also in the Rupaibari area in Nowgaon in the Assam valley. Some of these coins show that they were minted

21 Ibid, p. 62.
at Ghiyaspur in Mymensingh in that very year. This discovery of similar sets of coins issued in the same year by the same Sultan, in three far off places, clearly indicates that they are not merely the hoards of traders. But in the absence of sufficient evidence to show that Sultan Ghiyasuddin exercised his authority over these regions. In the light of some evidences gleaned from different sources we shall, however, presently try to show that Sultan Ghyasuddin Bahadur Shah having led a successful expedition to these regions brought under the sway of his father the local chief ruling there, by A.H. 721 or 1321 A.D.

We have noted earlier that during this period Sukarangpha of the family of Arimatta ruled in Kamata, and Sukhangpha resigned in the Ahom territory in the eastern part of Assam valley. From Buranjis we learn that a war broke out between these two kings and that it continued for a long time without resulting in the victory for earlier sides. But finally it ended with a sudden peace offer made by the Kamata King. According to this peace negotiation the Kamata king gave his sister, Rajani, in marriage to the Ahom monarch along with the dowry of five places namely, Sherpur, Patildoha, Bahirbund, Eghara Sendur and Kamrup, which lay within his domain. This event seems to have taken place several years before 1332 A.D. when the Ahom King Sukhangpha died and his son, sukhangpha, ascended the throne. This supposition is strengthened by the fact that prince Chau Phlai who was born to Sukhrangpha by the Kamata

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22 Bhattacharyya, S.N. Mughal North-East Frontier Policy, p. 59, 1929.
24 Goswami, H. C. Purani Assam Buranji, p. 65, 1922.
princes, Rajani, attained sufficient age during the region of his half brother Sukhrapangpha, so that the latter appointed him chartering Raja. The territory of Sherpur, Patilidoha and Bahirbund which the Kamata king gave as dowry with Rajani to Ahom monarch Sukhangpha, were within the Mymensingh district obviously, this district certainly formed a part of Kamata during that time. In the present contest it is essential to note that the Kamata King suddenly came forward with a peace offer to the Ahom Monarch, in spite of the fact that his forces never held the Ahoms in awe on any occasion from some other quarter, and we have reasons to believe that this danger was no other than the invasion of Sultan Ghyasuddin.

As some of the coins of Sultan Ghyasuddin discovered in the places mentioned above, show that they were minted at Ghiyaspur in the Mymensingh district in A.H. 721, it appears to be certain that this district which included the territory of Sherpur, Patilidoha and Bahirbund was wrested by Sultan Samsuddin Firuz Shah, the father of Ghyasuddin Bahadur Shah, from the possession of the Kamata king, some time before this date. Sultan Ghyasuddin is said to have succeeded his father by 1322-23 A.D. and he continued to rule the country till 1328 A.D. when he was killed in an encounter with the army of Emperor Mohammad Tughlaque. Considering the power and strength of this Sultan of Gauda, and also the fact that prince Chau Phlai, the son of Queen Rajani, attained sufficient age to become the chartering Raja soon after the death of his

father Sukhangpha in 1332 A.D. We can not possibly think that the Mymensingh area was recovered from the Sultan of Gauda by king Sukaragpha of Kamata after the death of Sultan Ghiyasuddin in 1328 A.D. and that it was only after this, that the chief of Kamata having fought the prolonged war with the Ahoms came forward with peace overture to the Ahom ruler and finally gave away part of the Mymensingh district including Sherpur, Patildoha, Eghrasendur and Bahirbund, as dowry with Rajani to Sukhangpha. We therefore, pressure that this district remained within Kamata till some time before A.H.721 only, when Ghiyasuddin issued his coins from Ghiyaspur. It was probably at the time when Sukarangkha was engaged in prolonged war with the Ahoms, that the Gauda Sultan invaded Mymensingh and this necessitated the Kamata king to sue for peace in a hurry with the Ahom Monarch, Sukhangpha, so that he might be able to defeated the rest of Kamata from the Muslim invaders. By in the meantime, Ghiyasuddin might have sacked not only the district of Mymensingh, but also wrested a part of Koch Bihar within Kamata. The Kamata king however, seems to have been able to defended the main part of the kingdom to the north of the Brahmaputra, through the territories to the south of the river being ill-defended, were invaded by the Musalmans. Thus Sultan Ghiyasuddin found it easy to extend his authority over these portions of the Goalpara and Kamrupa districts, on the south of the Brahmaputra, and also over the part of Nowgaon district which at that time was perhaps, governed by Jongal Balahu a brother of king Sukarangka of Kamata.
That Sultan Ghiyasuddin Bahadur Shah wrested the territory including Mymensingh, Koch Bihar and the south-west part of the Brahmaputra valley upto Nowgaon, from the possession of Kamata King Sukaranghka, can also be reduced from the fact that Kamrup, Bahirbund, Eghara Sendur, Patildoha, Sherpur, which the chief of Kamata gave away to the Ahom King, lay within this territory. It seems that being Sandwiched between the first rising Muslim power of Bengal in the west and the Ahoms on the east and having suffered their almost simultaneous onslaughts, the Kamata king Sukaranghka might have realized that even the very existence of his kingdom was in grave danger. In order to save his position, he therefore, might have tried to cause a conflict between his two adversaries, and with this end in view, he had given only those regions which were lost to Ghiyasuddin, as dowry with the prince Rajani to the Ahom Monarch otherwise we see no reason why he should give only these territories which lay far away from the then Ahom kingdom and contiguous to Muslim Kingdom of Bengal, particularly when he had other territories closer to, It no contiguous to the Ahom domain. From the Kamrup Buranji we learn that Sultan Ghiyasuddin ruled over the Kamrup region for some time and that the seat of his government was on the Ghiyasuddin ruled over the Kamrup region for some time and that the seat of his government was on the Garudachal Mountain in Hajo, on the north bank of Brahmaputra.\textsuperscript{27} The Buranji however, refers to Sultan Ghiyasuddin as the son of Sultan Hussain Shah. But we have so far no evidence to confirm that sultan Hussain Shah had a son bearing this name.

\textsuperscript{27} Bhuyan, S.K. Kamrupar Buranji, p. 4, 1930.
and that he stayed in the Kamrup region. On the contrary, we find that his son Damiyal, who has been identified as Dalal Ghazi of some other Buranjis, was associated with the Sultan’s affairs in Kamrup. We are therefore, inclined to think that it was actually to Ghiyasuddin Bahadur Shah that the Buranji refers to. The Chronicles being compiled at a much latter date its complier might have confounded Sultan Samsuddin of Gauda with Hussain Shah and hence described Ghiyasuddin as the son of the latter.

A tradition concerning the advent of Hazrat Ghiyasuddin Awliya of the “Poa Macca” shrine of Hajo in Assam relates that the saint came to Assam with the conquering army of one Sultan Ghiyasuddin who invaded the country in A.H. 721-22. It also states that with the arrival of the saint at Garigaon, to the west of Guwahati, all the idols of an old temple in the place disappeared. As we have so far no evidence of another Sultan except Ghiyasuddin Bahadur Shah of Gauda to have entered Assam about A.H.721-22, we believe that the story actually refers to the latter. In the light of these facts we can now assert that Sultan Ghiyasuddin Bahadur Shah had actually invaded Kamata (Kamrupa) some time before A.H. 721-22 corresponding to 1321-22 A.D.

During the time of the invasion of Ghiyasuddin, the part of the Brahmaputra valley comprising of Nowgaon district and the southern region of Kamrup and Goalpara district seems to have been ruled by some local chief in Neli, Sonapur, Rani, Luki, Bekeli, Barduarin, Barraja as feudatories of the

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Kamata king Sukranganha the son of Arimatta. Jangal Balahu, another son of Arimatta²⁹ ruled, perhaps as a vassal of his brother over the large territory comprising of the southern part of the Kamrup and the western part of Nowgaon district. It seems that Sultan Ghiyasuddin simply compelled these chiefs, including Jongal Balahu to shift their allegiance to whom from the Kamata king, and did not annex their territory of Bengal as he had done in the case of Mymensingh and Koch Behar. After his death, Bengal passed to the hands of Sultan Fakhruddin who was again succeeded by Ilyas Shah, the predecessor of Sultan Sikandar Shah. During the power reign of these three Sultans, the king of Kamata probably did not dare to bring back those tribal chiefs of the Brahmaputra valley under their authority, although it seems that after the death of Fakhruddin, prince Jongal Balahu was attacked and defeated by the Kacharies, and, therefore he had drowned himself in the Kallang rivers. With the rise of the Kacharies, in Nawgaon, other tribal chiefs might have also asserted their independence in Bengal.

Considering these facts we may perhaps hold that by 1320-21 A.D. Sultan Ghiyasuddin Bahadur Shah, son of Sultan Samsuddin Firuz Shah of Bengal not only invaded and annexed the Koch Behar and Mymensingh regions of the Kamata or Kamrupa kingdom, but also procured allegiance of the local chiefs ruling in the south western part of Brahmaputra valley up to Nawgaon on the east. Thus this entire chunk of territory of Kamata remained under the authority of Ghiyasuddin till his death in 1328 A.D. or ever there after till the end of the

reign of Sultan Fakhruddin. We have therefore, perhaps to reject the contention of K.L. Barua and S.N. Bhattacharyya, that Sultan Ghiyasuddin Bahadur Shah, simply launched a marauding raid to Kamata or Kamrupa.

3.6 The Supposed Expedition of Mahammad Shah (1338 A.D.):

It is recorded in the Allamgir Namah that the Delhi Monarch Mohammad Shah, son of Tughlaq Shah, dispatched against Assam in 1338 A.d. (1332 A.D.) an army of 10,000 horses, “but the whole army perished in that land of witchcraft, and not a trace was left of the army.” This is corroborated by a few Assam Buranjis compiled at a much later date. But there are ample reasons for doubting the historicity of this statement. In the account of Isami Barani and Ibn Batutah, who were contemporaries of the Delhi Monarch Mahammad Shah, we find no reference to the latter’s invasion of Assam, although the chroniclers are eloquent about the total annihilation of a large body of a men of the imperial army in the expedition to certain mountains region called Karajal or Qarrachil. According to Barani, the Karajal region laid intervening India and China, and the emperor tried to secure it in order to enter to China through which he hoped to break a route for his projected invasion of Khorasan.

It is said that right from the time of Gustasib, till the invasion of Assam by Mirjumla, the powerful general of the Delhi Monarch Aurangazeb, in 1663 A.D., almost all the Mohammedan conquerors who tried to enter China from India were under the impression that a direct route between these two countries

lay only through Assam. It is perhaps for this, that the author of Alamgir Namah believed that Mahammad Shah had also sent his force to China through the same route and therefore, he believed that Quarrachil region lay in Kamrupa. Col. Yule in fact, hold that Quarrachil is the corruption of the name Kuverachal. Which according to Kamrupa Buranji, is but another name of the Talayia mountain in Kamrupa.

But the presupposition for this contention being Mohammad Shah’s invasion of China, we have possible reasons to doubt its variety. Agha Mahdi Hussain has justly observed that Mohammad Shah never planned to invade China and the Quarrachil expedition was not at all part of such a plan as Barani states. According to him Quarrachil is the corruption of the name Kurachal, which is the ancient name of the Kumaon hills in Northern India. He also holds that Mahammad Shah sent the large army in order to establish a frontier outpost, having ensured his authority over this mountainous region which so long remained a rendezvous of the rebels of the country and on which the Chinese tried to lay their hands. Apart from the convincing evidence which he has furnished from Ibn-Batuta records about the causes of the exchange of embassies between India and China in the period, and the remark about the objective of the Quarrachil expedition. Quite a number of the Assam Buranjis help us to accept Mahdi Hussains contention as quite tenable.

Being chiefly the annuals of the kings of Assam of the Ahom period, very few Assam Buranjis deal with his events of the country before this period. It, therefore, appears to be a bit queer as to how some of these Buranjis,
complied at a much later time, could include the account of Mohammad Shah's invasion, particularly when the majority of them omit even a reference to almost all the earlier Muslim invasions occurring before the region of Suhungmung, who was the first of the Ahom Monarchs to be involved in direct clashes with the Mohammadan powers of India and who flourished between 1497-1539 A.D. It seems that the compliers of these later Buranji, which refer to the invasion of Mohammad Shah, simply reproduce this account from the Alamgirnamah or some other similar authority, because we see no reason why the other Buranjis, which contain the account of the Kamata kingdom in the western Assam and the Ahom territories in the east during the same period, should omit such a great event of the country's history, if it had occurred at all. We learn from these Buranjis that in 1332 A.D. the Ahom prince Sukrangpha succeed his father Sukrangpha, his half brother Chau Phlai, the son against the king, escaped to Kamata, where upon the Kamata king came with his forces to the frontier of the Ahom kingdom, but soon peace was restored and the two kings revived their old friendly relations. The date of Sukhrangpha's accession being 1332 A.D., this event appears to have taken place before 1342 A.D. During which period Muhammad Shah is alleged to have sent his forces against Assam. It is be so, the earlier Buranjis containing the accounts of the Ahom Kamata war and hostility between the two chiefs for the cause of Chau Phlai would not have missed at least a casual reference to this Mohammadan Shah invasion into

Assam. In the light of these facts we may conclude that the invasion of Muhammad Shah in 1338 A.D. (1332 A.D.) is of doubtful historicity.

3.7 The Expedition of Sikandar Shah (758 A.H. / 1357-58 A.D.):

Sikandar Shah Sultan of Bengal, launched an attack on Kamrup about the year 1357 A.D. The offshoot is not precisely known, though it is evident that he conquered the whole or a part of the kingdom, from the fact that he issued coins from his camp in Kamrupa. Arsat Kamrup, other name for Kamrup, by which it was known to the Islamic world were Kamrud and Kanwru. It is learnt from a coin issued in A.H. 759 by Sultan Sikandar of Bengal from his camp in “Chawlistanurf Kamrup” that the country by that time remained under his sway.

The exact date of his invasion is however, not known. There is no reference to this in any of the Muslim chronicles so far available, but we have already noted that after the death of Sultan Fakharuddin, the Kacharies had conquered the territories of his vassal Jongal Balahu in the Nawgaon and Kamrup region. It seems that with the rise of the Kacharies, the local chief who ruled in the southern part of Kamrup and Goalpara district had also asserted their independence from the Gauda Sultan. It was probably with a view to punish these recalcitrant local chiefs, that Sultan Sikandar Shah led an expedition to Kamrupa kingdom, and having subjugated them, issued coins from his victorious camp in some part of the region in A.H. 758 (1357). It however

appears to be extremely doubtful if he could recover the territory of Jongal Balahu from these possession of the Kacharies.

3.8 The Expedition of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Abul Muzaffar Azam Shah (1389 A.D.):

Towards the end of the reign of Sikandar Shah these local chiefs ruling in the South Western part of the Brahmaputra valley might have once again thrown off the yoke of the Bengal Sultan. It therefore, becomes incumbent on the part of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Abul Muzaffar Azam Shah, the successor of Sikandar Shah to lead an expedition to Kamrupa. In this exploit he seems to have extended his suzerainty up to the Rani area, about twenty miles west of the modern town of Guwahati. The basis of this supposition is the discovery of his coins, dated A.H. 802 in Guwahati, and a stone inscription in 1389 A.D. and it states that his territory extended up to that region.

After a couple of years of this event Sultan Azam Shah might have invaded the main land of Kamata, on the north of the Brahmaputra. But he seems to have failed to attain any success in the venture. On the country he had to pay heavy penalty for his reckless bravado, because the Kamata king having secured military assistance from his ally Sudangha of the Ahom kingdom, had not only driven away the invading Musalmans (Bengalis), but also recovered the whole tract of land to the east of Karatoya from their possession. It has already been ascertained that this king of Kamata who was contemporary of the Ahom Monarch Sudangpha (1397-1407 A.D. was Mriganka, the last prince of

the line of Arimatta. Thus with the victory of Mriganka, the Muslim suzerainty over the southwestern part of the Kamarupa kingdom disappeared till it was revised by Sultan Hussain Shah in 1502 A.D.

3.9 The Expedition of Shah Ismail Ghazi (1460 A.D.):

In the reign of Rukumuddin Barbak Shah, Sultan of Bengal 1457-1474, Shah Ismail Ghazi, “a descendant of the family of the prophet,” and born at Mecca, invaded Kamrupa in about 1460, then ruled by one Kameswar. Barbak Shah had previously dispatched several expedition against Assam, which had all met disastrous defeat in the land of witch, and so the generalship fell this time on Ismail, evidently a saint, who had formally defeated Gajapati king of Orissa. Kaneswar, the king of Kamrupa, who was one of the greatest heroes of his time and possessed good military talents offered the invaders a very stubborn resistance. The Raja was ultimately brought to bay by the diplomatic Manoures of the Muhammadan commanders and made his voluntary submission to the latter. The title of “Baralarwaiya” of a great fighter was conferred on the Raja. Sultan Barbak suspected Ismail to have entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with kamrup with the object of setting up an independent kingdom. He was beheaded on January 4, 1474 and his head is buried at the Dargah or Shrine at Kantaduar Rangpur.37

Hussain Shah, the prime minister of Samsuddin Muzaffar Shah, succeeded the latter as Sultan of Gauda in 1493 A.D. In commemoration of his accession to the throne Hussain Shah issued coins in 1493 A.D having described himself as the conqueror of Kamrupa and Kamata. The same epithet was inscribed in another set of his coins issued in 1502 A.D. This shows that this Sultan of Gauda conquered Kamrupa and Kamata when he was the prime minister of Sultan Samsuddin Muzaffar Shah or immediately after his accession, but in any case his conquest must have preceded the issue of those coins. The tradition recorded by Francies Buchanan relates that Hussain Shah conquered Kamata in 1498 A.D. The Buranji records that during the reign of Suhangmung Dihingiya Raja in Assam, Kamata was invaded by Sultan of Gauda. The Kamata king being unable to stand long against the invaders left his son Durlabhendra there and came to the Ahom sovereign Suhungmung for help. This Ahom sovereign ascended the throne in 1497 A.D. Consequently, it appears to be likely that the invasion of Kamata by the Sultan of Gauda occurred in 1498. That is to say, in the early years of the reign of Suhungmung.

As the prime minister of Sultan Samsuddin Muzaffar Shah, Hussain Shah might have led a successful punitive expedition against the recalcitrant Nilambara and the Bhuyans of Kamrup reign. Nilambara being unable to stand against Hussain Shah, probably sued for peace having offered his allegiance to
the Sultan of Gauda. The Assam Buranji records that the Sultan of Gauda gave a princess of his own from in marriage to Nilambara in compliance with the letters request. It appears from the account of the Buranji that this Sultan of Gauda was a contemporary of Suhungmung. Obviously this Sultan was no other than Hussain Shah. The Buranji and the tradition alike relates that it was for this Kamata queen of the family of the Gauda Sultan that a prolonged war broke out between the two countries.

Giving the account of the cause of this war, the Buranji and the tradition relate that this princess Garama took keen interest in the study of literature while living the Harem of Kamata, A young Brahmin was appointed to help her in studies. But very soon an amorous affair developed between Garama and the Brahmin youngman. When the king became aware of this disgusting affair, he banished the queen from the palace. The youngman was also captured and killed while he was attempting to enter the harem by a secret path and for his deplorable conduct his innocent father was unjustly treated with the rudest and most inhuman savagery by making his partake, off course without his knowledge, of the cooked flesh of his son. When the old Brahmin became aware of the content of his horrid repast, he vowed revenge and escaping from Kamata in the guise of a penitent man to do his penances, he approached Sultan Hussain Shah and with the sad and sickening stories of his plight and the suffering of the queen, moved the Sultan so much so that the latter immediately sent his general Turbak with a large army to punish Nilambara and rescue the queen from her penitentiary. According to one tradition the war thus started
continued for twelve years, when at last the Muslim general had captured Nilambara by treachery in 1498. But Nilambara, as the tradition goes on to tell us, contrived to escape from imprisonment soon and remained concealed thereafter.\textsuperscript{40}

Though Hussain Shah captured and imprisoned Nilambara, he does not seem to have been able to conquer the whole of the latter’s territory because the son and the grandson of Nilambara continued to rule the country in succession till the middle of the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{41} It will not, therefore, perhaps be erroneous to hold that after the capture of Nilambara in 1498, the greater Muhammadan invaders might have conquered the greater part of Kamata. But the remaining part of the country, that is the capital and some of its contiguous areas, were defended by princess Durlabhendra, the son of Nilambara. Apart of the territory which the Kamata king lost to the Muslims actually belonged to the Ahoms According to the peace treaty concluded in the early 14th century between the Ahom king Sukhangpha and the Kamata king Sukarangkha.

After his memorable escape, Nilambara might have returned and joined his son, Durlabhendra, in defence of the remaining part of his kingdom. The very presence of the redoubtable Nilambara, necessiated Tirbak’s staying again in Kamata to be defend the conquered a part of the kingdom from any possible attacked by the former. In order to give a positive check to such an eventuality, the Muhammadan general seems to have strewn an elaborate entrenchment all

\textsuperscript{40} Bhuyan, S.K. Kamrupar Buranji, p. 123, 1930.
\textsuperscript{41} Bhuyan, S.K. Assam Buranji, p. 45, 1945.
round the city of Kamatapur. The remains of the ramparts and bastion raised by the Muslim invaders in the place, as seen by Francis Buchanan justify this supposition. But Nilambara, having possibly realized his precarious position against such massive military build up by the Muhammadan around his capital, might have left his son in charge of the defence and gone to the Ahom sovereign, Suhungmung for assistance. During this time Suhungmung engrossed in his wars with Kacharies and other local chiefs, failed to give any effective assistance to the Kamata kings. This might have necessiated Nilambaras stay in the Ahom kingdom for a sufficiently long time. It was perhaps due to his long absence from Kamata, that the tradition relates about him as to have remained concealed after his escape from the captivity of the Musalmans.

Since Nilambara did not return from the Ahom kingdom within the expected time his son Durlabhendra, being in the midst adverse circumstances, might have made overtures of peace of Turbak, probably at the cost of his claims over the ceded territories. Turbak also, being convinced of the absence of the queen in the capital and passage of Nilambara to the Ahom territory the Bhuyanships in the region of present Kamrupa and Goalpara, might have realized the futility of continuing the war any more in Kamata. Moreover, he might have also apprehended the possibilities of a renewed alliance between Nilambara and the Bhuyans against him. Because of the fast growing Ahom power to the east of these Bhuyanships and the previous instance of such alliance by Nilamara, his apprehensions increased ever more. The Sagacious
general therefore immediately accepted the peace offer. Thus being able to withdraw a considerable part of his forces from the Kamata war from he sacked the Bhuyans and then decided to the enter the Kacharies Kingdom in the quest of the queen. Thus the whole reign from the east of Kamata up to Dikrang again fell under the sway of the sultan of Gauda. After the annexation of this territory a colony of Afghan warrior settled there. They disposed the Hindu Zamindars and took over the civil and military administration in the region.\textsuperscript{42} Hussain Shah adopted this measure probably to do away with those treacherous Bhuyans or the local chief.

After permanently conquering the region of Kamrupa, Turbak seems to have planned to attack the Kachari territory where the queen was known to have taken shelter. According to the Buranji's, he sent his force in the quest of the queen and also perhaps of Nilambara to Kajali and Dimapur area in the Brahmaputra valley.\textsuperscript{43} It is also stated therein that Turbaks failure to rescue the princess and to keep Nilambara in his custody and his peace treaty with the prince ruling in Kamata after the long stay in the country raised suspicious in the mind of Hussain Shah about his fidelity. The Sultan therefore sent her penitentiary even at the cost of renewed war. The new commanders accordingly marched to Kamata and demanded of the king on pain of war to surrender the banished queen. But soon they also became convinced of the queens going

\textsuperscript{42} Salam, Abdul, Eng. Trans. Riyaz-us-Salatin, p. 123.
\textsuperscript{43} Sarkar, J.N. History of Bengal, p. 146, 1948.
away to the Kachari Raja, and therefore, moved eastward to attacked the latter's territories.

Although with the capture of Nilambara in 1498 A.D. the greater part of Kamata passed to Hussain Shah, his final annexation of the Bhuyanship of Kamrupa up to Hajo occurred only about the year 1502 A.D., when he issued coins again as the conqueror of Kamrupa and Kamata. This suggests that Nilambara must have left Ahom kingdom by the end of 1500 A.D. But nevertheless, the war of Turbak in Kamata did not end immediately after the departure of Nilambara, for the Ahom kingdom, because his son Durlabhendra, as we have already seen must for peace with Turbak. This supposition appears to be justified when we consider that according to tradition, the war continued for twelve years. In the evidence of the Sylhet inscription this war ended before 1512 A.D. we are therefore left with little doubt by that this war began around 1498 A.D. and that peace treaty between Durlabhendra and Turbak was concluded by 1506-07. Consequently Hussain Shah's expedition to Kamata headed by Mit malik and Rukn Khan (Khung-Khang) must have occurred after this date. This is confirmed by the fact that it was only after this treaty that the Sultan sent Mit Malik and Rukn Khan, over the head of Turbak, to rescue the banished queen from her penitentiary in Kamata. The two generals marched against the Kachari Raja only after they had stayed for some time in Kamata. Accordingly the first battle of Rukn Khan with the Ahoms must have occurred by 1508 A.D. This presupposes that their last disastrous war with Suhungmung took place sometime about 1509-10 A.D.
3.11 The Expedition of Mit Malik and Rukn Khan:

After his initial reverse at the hand of the Ahomi Rukn Khan the great Uzir, must have joined the company of Mit Malik, because we find him to have marched a new with Mit Malik at the head of a large army of 1,000 horses and 1,00,000 infantry against Suhungmung, as soon as the news of the latter's espousal of the Kamata queen reached their camp. They are said to have advanced with all their forces as far as Marangi in the Golaghat subdivision where a severe battle ensued immediately after they made their first assult on the Ahom fort there. In the combat Mit Malik was seriously hurt with a sword by Shenglung, the Ahom commander in the fort. He fell down from his horse and broke his legs. The Ahom attained a deceive victory in the battle and they chased the invaders beyond Khagarijan in the present day Nawgaon district. The discomfort army of the Muhammadans then returned to Gauda. All these account of the last fight of Mit Malik and Rukn Khan with the Ahoms prove the inaccuracy of Dr. A.B.M. Habibullahs contention that being unable to withstand the Muslim forces led by the Baara Wazir, the Ahom king withdraw to the hills and allowed the plains to be occupied till the appearence of the raining season. When the Ahoms descended from the hills and surrounded the Muslim army and cut them down to the last man.

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44 Goswami, H.C. Purani Assam Buranji, p. 57, 1922.
45 Barua, G.C. Ahom Buranji, p. 67, 1930.
46 Sarkar, J.N. History of Bengal, p. 147, 1948.
The final disaster of Mit Malik and Rukn Khan, however did not in any way, affect Hussain Shah authority over the Kamrupa reign. The Ahoms did not pursue their victory beyond Khagarijan. The reason for this was probably the presence of Turbak with a large army in Hajo. Suhungmung, being perhaps very much pre-occupied with the task of consolidating his authority over the newly acquired territories of the Kacharies, Chutiyas and the Bhuyans of Darrang reign, did not dare to open another prolonged and costly war by attacking Turbak, who had already converted the Hajo area into a strong base having posted there a large number of Afghan warriors and civilians. The Ahom king therefore, immediately called back his victorious generals who reached Khagarijan in the pursuit of the Muhammadan fugitives. The Hajo region, consequently, must have remained under the sway of the Sultan ever after the disaster of his forces. It continued to remain a part of his kingdom to his death, because we learn from the Buranjis that Turbak continued to stay there till the close of the third decade of the sixteenth century when he has involved in a prolonged war with the Ahoms who defeated and killed him.

From the facts furnished above, it is clear that the account of the Riyaz-us-Salatin, stating that the king of Kamrupa had destroyed the son of Hussain Shah along with a great number of his army immediately after they had conquered the country, does not appear to be correct. We therefore assert that this Persian chronicle, in this regard had wrong reproduced the account of Malik Yuzbeks disasters which it had not at all referred to in its right place.
3.12 The Expedition of Turbak in 1523 A.D.

A Muhammadan commander of Gaur named Turbak invaded Assam in 1523. After the expulsion of the invading hordes of Rukn and Mit Malik, Suhungmung turned his attention to the perfection of measures for consolidation of his authority over the newly acquired territory of Chutiyas Bhuyans and Kacharies and also for speedy augmentation of the countries defence potentialities to clear his of the danger that was lurking in the Kamrup reign by the presence of Turbak in Hajo with a large force. One of the chronicles incorporated in the Satsari Assam Buranji, states that Suhungmung attained completely victory over the Kacharies on the Seventeenth year of his reign. If this account of the Buranjis can be relied upon the date of the accession being 1497 A.D., his conquest of the Kacharies must have occurred in 1504 A.D. In the light of Hussain Shahs sylhet inscription this date appears to be quite tenable, because it was during his war with the Kacharis that Rukn Khan made the first inroad to the Ahom territories. The same chronicle further records that after seven years of this event Suhungmung destroyed Turbak after a prolonged war lasting three years. Consequently, the destruction of Turbak must have taken place by 1522-23 A.D. and, therefore the war with Turbak ensured in 1518 A.D., that is to say, in the last year of the region of Hussain Shah in Gauda. Accordingly, this was the last venture of the latter to subjugate the eastern Assam valley. But he did not live to see the disastrous end.

The war of Turbak with the Ahoms was undoubtedly a natural outcome of the continued border conflicts and clashes which were complicated by their
mutual distrust originating from their massive military build-ups on either side of the frontier. The Assam Buranji state that after the conquest of the Kacharies, the Chutiyas and the Bhuyans, the thought of putting an end to Turbak began to torment the Ahom Monarch, confirms that he was making efforts to liberate Kamrup region from the Muhammadan domination. To this he had initiated by Turbak who made an inroad on the Ahom domain with a large force and made first assault on the Ahom fort in Temani. The Ahom sovereign Suhungmung, also being prepared for the eventuality, immediately sent troops under the commanders of prince Suklengmung and several other mettlesome generals to reinforce his army garrisoned in the fort.\textsuperscript{47} The war immediately reged into full fury as soon as the prince fell upon the invaders, and it continued for there rears, with reverse and success on both sides until at last the Ahoms attained a decisive victory over the Muhammadans in a final engagement near the river Bharali. Turbak was killed in the combat. It is said that in this battle, Mula Gabharu, the widow of the Ahom commander Pashengmung who was killed in an earlier engagement, took the field and attained Martyrdom.\textsuperscript{48}

After the fall of Turbak, the Ahoms followed up their victory by liberating the entire western reign of the ancient Kamrupa from Hajo on the east of Golaghat in the west. In the latter place the Muhammadan made a strenuous but vain effort to arrest further progress of victory.\textsuperscript{49} The Ahom then carried their arms as far as the bank of the river Karatoya, where they erected a temple.

\textsuperscript{47} Baruah, G.C. Ahom Buranji, p. 68, 1930.
\textsuperscript{48} Bhuyan, S.K. Assam Buranji, p. 21, 1945.
\textsuperscript{49} Bhuyan, S.K. Satsari Assam Buranji, p. 69, 1957.
and issued an inscription in their king, the Assamese generals then placed the chief of Kamata as the protected king of the Ahoms over territories. Since the war of Suhungmung with Turbak ended about 1523-24 A.D. this later event seems to have taken some time in between 1524-25 A.D.

With the destruction of Turbak, although the hope for permanent region of the Pathan powers in Assam had disappeared altogether, the Muhammadan colony settled earlier in Hajo region still survived and it increased the Muslim population there to a considerable extent. It is interesting to note here that after this event, when the relations of Assam with the Pathan power of India came to its end, a new phase of its relation with the mighty Mughals loomed large on its political firmament.

3.13 The Expedition of Kalapahar:

Kalapahar, the commander of Sulaima-i-Karani, sultan of Bengal, invaded Assam in the middle of the sixteenth century. This redoubtable Brahmin renegade and iconoclast general of Sultan Karani are known also as the Pora Sultan in Assam. He appears to have moved upstream by the Brahmaputra,\textsuperscript{50} avoiding possible impediment to his campaign set forth by enemies ensconced in their hide out. This is evident from the fact that the traces of his acts of in iconoclasm are found only on the Hindu shrines situated on the bank of the Brahmaputra in Assam. He however, could not stay long in the country as he had to return hurriedly from this campaign at the cell of the Sultan

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{50} Gait, E.A. A History of Assam, p. 54, 1906.}
to proceed quell to rebellion in Orissa. Nevertheless, this did not affect the Sultan’s possession of the large part of the territory wrested out of the Koch kingdom.

The exigency of such a situation necessitated Narayana to come to terms with the Ahoms. With this end in view he planned to release Ahom hostage whom he had brought earlier. He therefore devised a game of chess with one of the hostages, having stacked their release in the event of his losing the game. Finally, he accepted the defeat as premeditated and set the Ahom hostage free in accordance with the vow. This event synchronized with change in the political situation in Gauda, which then faced a threat of invasion from the Mughal conqueror from Delhi Sultan Sulaiman Karrani, therefore became anxious for the conclusion of a good understanding with Naranarayana. In order to give immediately effect to this and Naranarayana know his real motive, the Sultan seems to have adopted a means similarity that of the Koch king in the case of Ahom hostages. He in his turn sought the help of his mother, who with a show of her motherly affections to Chilarai brought about his immediate release. After his release Chilarai is said to have remained in Gauda for some time with a political motive.

During his stay in Gauda, Chilarai said to have sent a secret message to his brother Naranarayana to invade Gauda while he was there. Naranarayana accordingly marched with a large force and entered Gauda. Chilarai now played

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a foul game. He immediately approached the Sultan, whom he convened by saying that his brother had marched to Gauda to take him back as he did not return home for a long time after the Sultan had released him. In this way, Chilarai secured the latter's permission to march with his at the head of a large army against the invading Koch king. In the battle which immediately followed Chilarai, treacherously sided with his brother Naranarayan and having wielding his forces against the Sultan, defeated him. But soon a peace treaty was concluded between the two kings. Accordingly to this treaty the Sultan retained his independent authority over the Bengal and the Koch king perhaps secured the possession of the “Parganas of Bahirband, Bhitarbad, Gayabari, Sherpur and Daskania.” In all probability this event must have taken place during the early months of the reign of the Sultan Daud Karrani who was overthrown and killed by the invading forces of Akbar the Great Mughal in 1575 A.D.

The disappearance of Sultan Daud Karrani from the political scene of Bengal opened the gate for the onslaught torrents of the Mughal suzerainty to break into the country and by 1578 A.D. the whole of Bengal had fallen under its way, the impact of this changing situation in the country was also powerfully felt in Koch Behar. Its sovereign Naranarayana, at that time, had strained relations with the fast rising Ahom power in the eastern Assam Valley. He therefore, prudently acted in order to establish friendship with Akbar, whose supremacy had already driven the Afghan power of Bengal into the Shade.
3.14 The Expedition of Mukarram Khan in 1616 A.D.

In 1616 A.D. Mukkarram Khan, the general of the newly acquired territory Koch Hajo, is said to have brought 10000 to 12000 well equipped paiks of foot soldiers under several Muhammadan nobles to settle there in order to ensure the imperial hat permanently over the region. Thus for the second time, after a century of the conquest of Hussain Shah, the Koch Hajo region fell under Muhammadan power. Once again Muslim soldiers settled there, and increased the country's Muslim population.

For the deplorable act of inviting foreigners to destroy his nephew, Lakshminarayana also had to pay the penalty soon after. Adversity fell on him appointment of Quasim Khan as the new Mughal governor of Bengal. This arrogant governor had ignored the fielding of Lakshminarayana to the emperor and in 1513-14 put him in detention. The latter remained in this condition till 1517. During this period his son Vimarayan ruled the country as a vassal of the Mughals. Though afterwards Lakshminarayan was released and reinstated in his own territory by the order of Emperor Jahangir, he could not rule over it as his services were soon requisitioned to guide Sheikh Kamal who was placed in-charge of the administration of the Kamrup region after Mukkarram Khan. Lakshminarayan, therefore had to remain with this Mughal ruler in Kamrup or Koch Hajo, till his death in 1627 A.D. Eventually Vimarayana continued to rule the country till 1633 A.D., when he was succeeded by his son, Prannanarayana, whose reign ended in 1666 A.D.
3.15 The Expedition of Islam Khan Mushhedy:

During the reign of Shah Jahan, Islam Khan Mushhedy governor of Bengal dispatched in 1636. Sheikh Mahibuddin brother of Abdus Salam, the Fauzadar of Koch Hajo, with a large army to intercept the activities of Satrajit, thanedar Pandu who had joined Darrang Raja Balinarayan. The invaders met with a crushing rebuff and a fresh reinforcement was dispatched from Jahangirnagar under Allah Yar Khan. Satrajit was captured, taken to Dacca and executed. After a protected contest the invaders cleared Koch Hajo of the Assamese, and the boundaries of Assam and Bengal were fixed in 1639 in the treaty terms drawn up by Alahhyar Khan and Momai-Tamuli Barbarua, the commander of Ahom army of Pratapsingha in 1638-39 A.D. According to this treaty the river Barnadi on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, and the Asur Ali near Gauhati on the south, because the boundary of Ahom and Mongol territories. For the next twenty six years it remained unaltered. Thus after this treaty, Kamrup including the modern city of Gauhati, remained in the undisputed possession of the Mughals. The administrative system which they introduced there survived all changes of the subsequent period.52 The parties sealed the conclusion of the peace by the establishment of trade and commercial intercourse between them.53

Although the whole period of about twenty six years, which followed this treaty outwardly appeared to be one of peace and rest, in reality it was not

53 Bhattacharyya, S.N. Mughal North-East Frontier Policy, p. 9, 1929.
so in fact, it was a period of prolonged diplomatic war of charges and countercharged between two powers.

3.16 The Expedition of Mir Jhumla

Mir Jhumla was appointed governor of Bengali in June 1660 by fireman, of the Emperor. He was also commissioned to conquer Assam and Arracan after the settlement of the affairs in Bengal to punish the lawless Zamindars of the province who had caused injury and molestation to the Muslims. With the end of the war of succession a strong forward policy was adopted by Aurangzeb to assert his influence in the north east as well as in north west under the able leadership on Assam and Koch Bihar was a part of this imperialistic design contemporary European travelers have portrayed Mir Jumla's Assam expedition as a clever device on the part of the Emperor Aurangazeb to keep his general, of whom he was afraid, usefully employed in the dreadful country of Assam. Bernier who travelled in Mughal India during the period from 1656-1668 A.D says, "After subjugation of Bengal Emir Jhumla (Mir Jhumla) sent an eunuch to Aurangazeb with a letter, supplicating the king to permit his family to repair to Bengal under the eunuch's care. The war is happily at an end; (he said, and as I am infolded and broken down by age you will not and surely cannot refuse me the consolation of passing the remainder of my days with my wife and children. But Aurangazeb penetrated at once into the design of this expert politician, he knew that if his son Mahmet Emir Khan, were permitted to visit Bengal)."

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Before proceeding to Assam Mir Jhumla wanted to conquer Koch Behar and punish Raja Prannanarayan who had declared independence causing cruelties to the Muhammadan subjects. Simultaneously he sent two envoys Lalbeg and Hariram to the Phukan of Assam at their frontier outposts of Hatishala and Baritala protesting against the occupation of Mughal territory and also demanding withdrawal of Ahom forces. The Ahom officers dispatched the envoys along with the message to the Bar Phukan at Gauhati through the nobles stationed at their base camp at Pancharatna. The Bar Phukan in turn sent the envoys to the Swargadeo with his comments. After eight days the king sent a reply to Mir Jhumla through Sanatan Kakati, who accompanied the Mughal envoys.\textsuperscript{55}

Prior of this, news reached Gargaon that the Mughals were preparing for the invasion of Assam. Apparently the Ahom king was frightened as he had in the meantime, came to know about the devastating power of Mir Jhumla. He therefore, did not like to moment and wanted to restore the friendly relations. With the end in views, he replied that he had seized Kamrupa to guard it from the Kochs and offered to restore it to the Mughal and that he had no conflict with the Mughal what so-ever. This gesture of Jayadhaj Singha was nothing but a clever ruse to gain time to hand over Kamrup on the plea that it was conquered from the Koches (Bardewannia) and hence Koch Behar should be conquered before Gauhati could be taken.\textsuperscript{56}

\textsuperscript{55} Bhuyan, S.K. Kamrupar Buranji, p. 60, 1930.
\textsuperscript{56} Kam, M. Muslim in Assam Politics, p.p. 3,4, 1990.
Mir Jhumla was not pleased with the reply of the Ahom king he prepared the war. Rashid Khan was accordingly deputed to take delivery of Kamrup from the Ahom. But disloyalty of a vassal like Prannanarayan could not be pardoned. Another force was dispatched under Raja Sujan Sing to conquer Koch Behar and punish its king.

Rachid Khan advanced unopposed to Rangamati at the western part of Kamrup on his approach the Ahoms abandoned Dhubri. Rachid Khan had to half there before advancing further against the well equiponed Ahoms. Raja Sultan sing also could not advance beyond Ek Duar, a fortified gateway leading into Koch Behar in view of enemy’s superior strength. As reinforcement was necessary Mir Jhumla decided to march in person against Koch Behar first.

On the night of 1st November 1661 the victory accompanied by Dilir Khan started from Khizrpur with a strong army of 12,000 horses, 30,000 foot soldiers and vast flotilla of war boats numbering at least 323. Most of the naval officers and sailors were Portuguese with some English and Dutch sailor too. After entering Koch Behar, Mir Jhumla ordered Sayed Mohammad Sadiq to destroy all the Hindu temples and to erect Mosques in their stead. The general himself with a battle axe broke the image of Lord Krishna.

Meanwhile the Assamese troops having abandoned Hatishala and Baritola encamped at Jagighopa. Baduli Phukan now became the Neog Phukan and commander-in-chief. A strong fort was also erected on the confluence of the Manas and Brahmaputra. The fort was about two miles in circumference with
strong and thick walls which were mounted with guns. According to some accounts 5000 soldiers assisted by 320 war boats guarded the fort. The fort Pancharatna on the opposite bank of the river Brahmaputra was also strengthened. Phul Barua Phukan and Lakhan Phukan defended the fort. Raja Sasur Bar Phukan and Pikchai chetia remained in charge of the forts of Pandu and Saraighat. The Bar Gohain was put in command of the garrison at the Samdhara fort. The south bank opposite to Samdhara was guarded by the Bor Gohain, Bor Patra Gohain, Namanial Raja Sahur, Bar chetia, Charming Raja Rup Sandikoi and many other high nobles with Ghora Konwar Phukan as supreme commander.

Mir Jhumla advanced triumphantly along the north bank and half way to Samdhara he crossed the Brahmaputra to the south bank. Meanwhile Raja Sahur, who had been dismissed from his post of Bar Phukan became revengeful and in cooperation with one Bhotai Deka of Nawgaon showed to the enemy the path through Diju River leading to the plains a central Assam.

Ghora Konwar Phukan, who was in command of the south bank of this utter distress requested the Bar Gohain at Samdhara to sent some of his troops to reinforce the southern army. But the Bor Gohain, still apprehending danger to his own post refused to send his troops.

The advance of the enemy continued unabated and at this time a Muslim Naval force reached Pottakolong near the Diju River, and attacked the Ahom force. After a stubborn resistance for six days the Ahoms fled to Sala Lacham
Hati Barua, who in command of the fort at Patta Kolong fell fighting but his gallantly caused amusement of the Mughal. (late February 1662). A large number of elephants, horses and ammunitions were seized by the invaders.

Mir Jhumla placed his own garrison at Samdhara under Kishan Singh and then marched on to Kalibor. After three days stay at kaliabor, the general appointed Sayid Nasuruddin as the fouzdar of Kaliabor. From Kaliabor the Mughal army continued their march towards Gargaon. At this point the country along the bank of the river was very hilly and Mir Jhumla had to lead his troops along a mere level route, which lay at some distant Island. The fleet thus became isolated and the Ahoms, seeing their opportunity attacked it with seven or eight hundred ships on the night of 3, marched fierce fighting took place near Kaliabor; but the Mughals gained a signal victory annihilating the enemy's nany power. Though the Assamese made it to attack the Portuguese Sailors, the latter fell upon them with such impetuously that after a few hours of fighting, the Assamese were vanquished and about three hundred ships were seized. This was the first great disaster the Ahom naval had ever suffered in this history and decided the fate of Assam in her struggle against Mir Jhumla.

The victorious march then continued to Salagarh. But the Mughals had to fight hard many places in order to clear their way to Gargaon. At Salagarh a few miles above Kaliabor, some Ahom officers appeared with latter's from Jayadhwaj Singha asking for peace. The peace overture was rejected by Mir Jhumla suspected the peace move to be a dilatory tactic to gain time for
effective resistance. The Ahom officers along with their families evacuated to Sala at the approach of Mir Jhulma.

Meanwhile the commander of the north bank after evacuating Samdhara was retreating eastward with his whole army. He also asked the inhabitants to leave their villages with whatever they could carry and destroy the rest of their properties leaving nothing to the Muhammadans in the event of their attempt to follow him. However the Mughals were not interested with the north bank and Mir Jhulma persisted with his determination to advance towards Gargaon, the capital of the country. King Jayadhwaja Singha vacated the capital just after the fall of the Chamdhara fort and retired to the hills near the Naga hills. There he concentrated his men and the loyal general and arranged for a renewed attack on the invaders.

With the fall of Garhgaon on the 17th March 1652, though the whole of the plain territory of Assam passed into the possession of Mir Jhulma, he could not subjugate its people or capture their king; and as a consequence, he had soon to endure untold miseries. The proud and freedom loving people of Assam could not bear the sight of their held in revenge on any of the previous occasions. The arrogance displayed by the invaders, and still more, their act of dishonourary the dead king by ripping open the graves for hidden treasures,\(^57\) served as incentive to the Assamese and their king to rise with grim determination for reprisals.


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When monsoon burst out with its full fury inundating the entire plains, the different garrisons and outposts of the imperial army fell in a state of natural, siege, due to the impeded movement of the land forces as well as the dislocation of communication and supply. Taking advantage of this the Assamese under the command of the loyal officers, launched incessant guerilla operation against the invaders. The local Assamese people with their act of wanton murder of the isolated groups of soldiers and their act of torture inflicted on the captives taken away in the surprise night attacks became the source of veritable terror and suffering to the imperial army. The supply of provisions being cut off, they were driven to the state virtual starvation in their isolated out-post. The add to all this misery, a pestilence brake out in the Mughal camp and carried of a large number of their men. Thus very soon all sorts of misfortunes visited upon the imperial forces and brought them to a great strait. Mir Jhumla, therefore withdraw all his men from different outposts and garrisons to his enclosures in Garhgaon. But their too, they were hemmed in by the Assamese on all sides. The problem of holding on or retreating became equally difficult for them. This condition continued till the close of the rainy season. When the flood subsided and the land and route became clear of water. Mir Jhumla planned an attack. But their long suffering and also for the fast deteriorating conditions of his health, he was compelled to prepare for an early return from the country. In the meantime, the Ahom king made peaceful overtures to him. The Nawab immediately accepted it, although by a false of inexhaustible strength as if he had compelled the Ahom king to stood low and
subject himself to the treaty in humiliating terms. According to this treaty the Ahom accepted the vassalage of the Mughal emperor and agreed to pay heavy annual tributes, besides the exorbitant war indemnity. Soon after the conclusion of peace (January 23, 1663 A.D.) Mir Jhumla gave order for a return march to the intense joy of all in his train.\(^58\) This treaty is known in history as the Treaty of Ghiladharighat. According to this; the Ahoms ceded Kamrup and Darrang to the Mughals.

After prolonged negotiations both the parties agreed to make a peace by shining a treaty, but due to illness of Mir Jhumla, the final part of the treaty was negotiated by Diler Khan on the modality suggested by Khawja Bhor Mal. Illness forced the Nawab to listen to the proposals of peace. Bhor Mal was again employed to confer with the Phukans, and finally some conditions were agreed upon.\(^59\)

Apart from his qualities of generalship Mir Jhumla used never-failing diplomacy in corroding the resistance and the mental fortitude of his adversaries. If he established reputation had a great propaganda value in generating a feeling of consternation and inferiority complex among the Assamese, he must long have used the baits of Mughal gold or posts in Assam in luring the Assamese, high and low, to his side and in eliciting from them secret information. If Baduli, Manthir and others agreed to serve as his stooges, Mir Jumla must have prepared the ground from before studiously. The

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\(^{59}\) Kalita, B.C. Military Activities in Medieval Assam, p. 92, 1988.
bargaining that the Mir carried on at the end for peace clearly indicates his tricks of diplomacy which left Jayadhwaj and his Dangarias no alternative but to swell the terms from mere offer of gold or cash successively till finalization.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{60} Barpujari, H.K. The Comprehensive History of Assam, p. 196, 2003.