Chapter VI
CONFLICTS AND SURVIVALS

External conflicts: The Foreign invasions

In the foregoing chapters we have narrated the circum-
cstances leading to the birth of the coercive authority and
now we would deal with the external conflicts contributing
to the more centralisation and monopolisation of political
power in the Ahom state. Warfare has been regarded as the
results of state formation and not usually as a cause of
it. However, in case of the Ahom state, it is fairly discernible
that in its march towards full-fledged statehood,
the external invasions, in one way or the other, had such in
fluence on its course of development. Therefore, in the study
of the Ahom state formation, this particular aspect, however
minimal it might be, has a say.

1 Referring to Service's contention (Elsan R. Service, Origins of the State and Civilization, New York, Norton, 1975, p. 299) that people accept centralised authority because of the utility of such a system in face of outside dangers, Claessen and Skalnik (The Early State, p. 46) remarks that warfare is a complex factor because under certain circum-
cstances, it does not give rise to states; under some others, it does, and under still some others, it follows a capability or result of state formation. In Ahom's case, there is enough room to argue that it gives rise to state and that this warfare factor immensely demonstrates the capability to a reasonable extent, leading to the emergence of the state.
By the middle of the sixteenth century, and especially during the reign of the fourteenth Ahom king, Suhummung Dihingia Raja (1497-1539), the Ahom state took its deep roots with all the characteristics of a state, if not a state in the real sense of the term. It was during his reign that the Ahom state witnessed its first serious clash with the Musalmans in 1532. Since then, the emerging Ahom state had no respite for more than a century and half from the formidable Muslim attacks. This itself suggests the importance of the foreign invasions giving rise to some local specific variations in the formation of the Ahom state. How warfares stimulated the formation of the states has been analysed by Claessen and Skalnik thus:

... The one possible exception is warfare, certainly it too develops rapidly once states appear on the scene. All early states must at regular intervals defend themselves, put down rebellious tributaries, or vanquish...

2 This first Ahom-Muslim clash was with Turbak of Bengal. Some other sources mention the first Ahom-Muslim clash with Husain Shah of Bengal earlier to this date. See Jagadish Narayan Sarkar, "Assam and the Husain Shah" (Before Turbak), in: Lik Phan Tai, The Journal of the Tai Historical & Cultural Society of Assam, Guwahati, Vol. XII, 1986, p. 4f. Sarkar observes that the first Ahom-Muslim clash with medieval Muslim Bengal is confused and problematical. Even its historical city is doubted by many. The confusion is due to the uncertainty in date and chronology. He forcefully argues that Husain Shah's campaign was against the Bhuyans than Assam. Also see, K.L. Barua, Early History of Kamarupa, Lawyers' Book Stall, Guwahati, 2nd edn., 1966, pp. 174-75. For us, this issue is not of much concern. We can fairly use 1532 as the date of first Ahom-Muslim clash.
rival states. Cavalry, cross bows, horseed chariots, gunpowder and a host of other technical devices develop rapidly after the inception of states... Thus as with other forms of technology, warfare is stimulated by statehood. 3

The techno-cultural factor or the technology of the Ahom state was basically this. The use of fire arms 4 by the Ahoms is dated after this first Ahom-Muslim clash of 1532. Further the institutionalisation of the khel system within the nynge system to that one based on division of labour combining both military and civil functions, needless to say, emanated from such external exigencies. Thus coercive conscription was introduced and was uniformly maintained and the largest number of population was within the militia available at a very short notice. Undoubtedly the frequent external aggressions as well as to meet the military requirements within the state warranted such dynamism in the Ahom government. 5

3 Classen & Skalnik, n.l, p.62.
4 Edward Gait, A History of Assam, ... p.94. Also see our FN-25, in chapter III.
Constant warfares did not produce any retarding factors in the growth and stability of the Ahom state. On the contrary, the demonstration of the military capability rather acted as one of the governing variables in the formation of the Ahom state. It goes on to support the synthetic theory of state origins formulated by Adams (see Chapter I) in which it has been shown that the increasing warfares gave rise to war leaders and war captives leading to increased craft production and thereby to the rise of managerial officials and the birth of great aristocratic families within the nobility. Consequently, more stratifications appeared and the unequal access to resources was further cemented, thus, necessitating the existence of a state.

To illustrate this process we would discuss in brief the reigns of two illustrious monarchs amongst several others; the reigns of Subhumming alias Dhingia Raja and of Sukonpha alias Pratap Singha alias Burha Raja. Both had long and eventful reigns. Both witnessed successful warfares, withstood tremendous pressures.

We have earlier mentioned of the settlements of the royal houses in different places as territorial governors, as a measure of reconciliations within royal houses. We have also mentioned about the creation of the two new offices of the frontier governors in the Sadiyakhowa and Marangikhowa.
Gohains plus the third member in the council of ministers in the Barpatragohain. The last named office was definitely a breakaway from the erstwhile gentle constitution of the Ahoms, even though it was not without protest from the earlier two ministers. On the whole, the reign of Suhumung as observed by P. Gogoi,

... his glorious achievements in eliminating the powers of the two rival kingdoms, those of the Chatiyas and of the Kacharis, and in repulsing the dreaded Muslim invasions with complete success are to be credited with laying the real foundation of the Ahom kingdom in Assam. He was the greatest conqueror among the Ahom monarchs. He also reorganised the social structure on the basis of clans and crafts ...

so the Muslim invasions were successfully repulsed; the kingdom of Kamata was liberated from them. Warfanes thus stimulated the formation of the Ahom state, substantiating a view so held by Khazanov and Service. (see Chapter 7)

Obviously, the creation of these new offices was due to the increasing workloads as the result of increasing warfanes and all these offices were held by war leaders. The process thus led to the increase of at least three great aristocratic families in the kin based lineage ruling groups. The net outcome of all these was more centralisation

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and monopolisation of political power paving the way for more of coercive authority.

The emerging Ahom state was not only witnessing the territorial expansions but all on a sudden, it also the doubling of the number of population which now needed a state. The factors were mounting while the process was slow one. Incidentally, though Kamarupa-Kamata came within the purview of the Ahom sovereignty, it was not attempted to bring under direct control and had to wait for another century when the office of the Barphukan had to be created during the reign of Susenpha Pratap Singha, for the purpose.

The political efflorescence which had struck its roots during the reign of Susumung received further impetus during the reign of Susenpha Pratap Singha, out of the prolonged and repeated warfares with the Mughals, the most formidable opponent of the time. From youth to adulthood, from elaboration to sophistication, betraying the signs of tribalism, the emergence of the Ahom state was almost complete for all practical purpose. As Gogoi has succinctly put it:

King Hao-Hseng-Hpa's experiences from his wars with the Mughals dictated the necessity of certain elaborative and fundamental reforms in the entire administrative system. He created two very important posts, those
of the Bar-Phukan and Bar-Barua, the first being essen-
tially a functionary in charge of the defence of Lower
Assam and of diplomatic relations with foreign coun-
tries of the west and the second being a functionary
at the head of the secretariat and the judiciary immedi-
cately under the king. A census of the population was
taken and where this had not been done already the peo-
ple were grouped into clans with officers appointed
over them. The common free population, which was regiment-
ated for civil and military purposes, was neatly divided
into brigades of one thousand men or got palks each
commanded by a Hazarika and a gradation of other subor-
dinate officers. Under the Hazarika were for instance,
the Saikias and Baras. A Saikia, as the term denotes,
commands one hundred and a Bara commands twenty men
(palks) respectively. In addition there were Neogas,
Phukans and Rajkhowas who held more important positions.
The office of the Bar-Barua was exclusively civil and judicial
functionary to aid and advise the monarch at the capi-
tal in the general administration. This became necessary
due to the frequent and sometimes continuous absence of all
other functionaries from the headquarters for being constant-
ly engaged in the wars. Both the offices of the Barphukan

\[\textbf{8}\]bid,p.382. Gogoi specifically notes that this organiza-
tional pattern was not new. It existed much earlier in the
Tai kingdom of Men-Chao whose legacy and heritage the Ahoma
had with them. We have also stated that the Pyke system had
its roots in Southeast Asian heritage to which the Ahoma
belonged. Therefore, it is interesting to note here that the
limitations referred to by us (see Chapter I) in formulat-
ing a general theory of state formation in case of the
Ahoma visibly manifest here, because of their earlier politi-
cal experience of state craft what they lacked were a
sufficient number of population and a bounded territory.
Once these were acquired, a chain of reactions of other
changes began to appear leading ultimately to the same end
whatever might have been the beginning.
and Barbarua were of equal status, became very important in
the council like the other three Great Gohains which altogether
were better known as Patra Mantri. Both these two
offices stirred the destiny of the Ahom state in later
times. Thus two more great aristocratic families came into
existences. Now under the changed conditions, the gentile
council was of no use. Political power and influence, as
well as the authority structure now got widely diffused
with the incoming of the new great aristocratic families.9
With further extension of powers and privileges to the
emerging bureaucracy, the state now arose firstly to hold on
to the unequal access to the resources and secondly to
reconcile the social antagonisms arising out of the contra-
dictions generated under the new forces of development.
Coercion, which was so long covert, with the appearance of the
state now, it became overt with the use of monopolised force.
The rise of the state completed the grand bureaucratic
structure which essentially was:

The bureaucracy, the entire society was formally orgran-
ised on the premise that it existed to serve the king,
the source of all authority. Yet to a great extent, the
bureaucracy served itself, and there were other forms of

9 The Barbaruaship of Deka and Kirti Chandra is a case
in point. The tragic end of Prime Minister Atan Buragohain
marks the political fetishism of such dimension of diffusi-
on of power. The Buranjis invariably mention such examples.
On the whole, particularly under weak rulers, it was difficult
to say as to who actually wielded power, the Buragohain, the
Barbaru or the Barphukan.
authority in the system than the legitimate power of the monarch. In appearance, too, the bureaucratic system was one grand monolithic structure linked by a comprehensive chain of command; in practice it was a loose collection of enclaves, some of them sometimes knit together in an adhoc fashion. 10

The events and episodes of the Ahom history largely speak of such characteristics of the Ahom bureaucratic structure. Under strong monarchs, the system so built up, had no serious problems. But under weak rulers sometimes it wrought havoc as we shall see in our discussions on internal dissensions and conflicts. Any way, the political power and influence remained diffused more or less up to the end of the Ahom rule and that is why perhaps, Wade has so perceptively described its artificial but novel characteristics. 11

The elaborations and the sophistications so reached in the state system speaks of the emergence of the state in a full-fledged manner. Basically it remained the same up to the end of the state. But the system still remained artificial, designed partially to meet the external situations. But the


11 John Peter Wade, An Account of Assam, Ed. Benudhar Sarma, First Impression, Published by R. Sarma, Madhupur T.E., P.O. Sisi, 1800, p. iii. Wade observes, "The civil constitution of the kingdom partly monarchical, partly aristocratical, exhibits a system highly artificial, regular and novel; however defective in other respects. It seems difficult to add or improve upon the observations made by Wade."
external factors alone cannot lead to statehood. Therefore, for a better understanding of the whole process in a co-related perspective, we may look into some of the internal factors of contradictions, conflicts and dissensions of some wider dimensions in the wake of the intrusion of the Brahmanical influence and the progress of the neo-Vaishnavite movement which greatly effected the very foundations of the Tai-based Ahom society. Sometimes, the Ahom state withstood some of these external and internal crises miraculously. Therefore, the system which sustained the critical survivals has to be sought for imaginatively.

Conflicts and Contradictions

The sources of internal conflicts and contradictions are determined by varying conditions. With the progress of the human society and civilisation, these have become the inseparable, ubiquitous and coterminous elements in any social formation. The most common causes range from holding the reins of political power to that of greed and avarice by maintaining the unequal access to the sources of production. As Claessen and Skalnik suggest: 12

... unequal access to resources is therefore an unalterable and inevitable accompaniment of mankind's adaptation to food production specially agriculture.

12 Claessen & Skalnik, n.1, p.52.
The Ahom state too, in all its manifestations since its birth as mungdunshunkham, witnessed such common phenomena. The extant Buranjie and some earlier works have already highlighted such aspects almost exhaustively. On our part, we shall confine ourselves to its role and relevancy as the possible governing factors and variables in the formation of the Ahom state.

The first hundred years of Mungdunshunkham was the period of a conspicuously slow and silent growth of the Ahom power. Their settlements in Upper Assam promised perfect economic security through intensive and extensive wet rice agriculture and husbandry. With the roots of southeast Asian heritage, the Ahom polity did not allow to gather sufficient moss to pass into instant statehood. By the mid-14th century, the Ahom state

13 The works referred to here are of Gait, p.4, Bhuyan, p.5 and P. Gogoi, p.7. Particularly, Gait's chapterisation: 'The Period of the Muhammadan Wars' and 'The Climacteric of Ahom Rule': throws light to our thematic study in a correlated perspective of the internal and external factor variables. Similarly, Bhuyan has also made a stimulating analysis on the life and works of Anan Buragohain, who happened to be the Prime Minister for long nineteen years, served under eight Ahom kings, witnessed and withstood the period of crisis following the dreaded Mughal invasions from Mirjumla's occupation of Gargaon, the Ahom capital, to the victorious battle of Sagraighat, and the period of weak rulers(1670-1681). we have been heavily drawing upon such works for our purpose. *should be seventeen years.

14 Amalendu Guha, p.6, p.22.
extended up to Saring in the Dikhow valley at the expense of the Kachari. There were visible signs of material prosperity and in the growth of political power.\footnote{Gait, n.4, p.80.} This must have drawn the attention of the local politics as the subsequent clashes with the Chutiya, Kachari, Bhuyan and Koch powers would prove.

The first signs of internal dissensions appeared when prince Chao Pu Lai and the Bargohain Ta Phi Khun, conspired against the reigning fifth monarch Sukhrangpha (1332-1364). There were also three interregnums totaling a period of eighteen years with two regicides in between. No doubt, these were significant developments foretelling the growing internal and external crises, as well. Earlier, we have stated that it was somewhat mythical in withstanding the three interregnums when the nobles held the reins of power in the name of a symbolic king in the vacant throne. (see chapter II) These nobles were no other than the war leaders who held Mungdunshunkham as their joint conquest. They were the organizers of wars and agriculture. It was still possible to rule with the gentile constitution because the organs of the state were yet to develop and the Tai legacy was still
lingering on in a composition of muong linked feudal like organisation. The regicide of Sutipha (1364-1376) clearly indicated the incoming conflicts with the neighbouring Chutiya power, while the regicide of Taokhamthi (1380-1389) confirmed the growing antagonisms arising out of political power and pelf. Thus the course of development could not have been peaceful but violent.

The last interregnum was a long one of nine years. 16 The accession of the eighth monarch Sudangpha alias Bamuni Konwar (1398-1407) was in a novel way 17 after this interregnum. Perhaps, the nobles could no longer carry further the interregnum and hence, it became imperative to fill up the vacant throne. Of course, they continued to reject the claim of Prince Chao pu Lai, which resulted in further conflicts with the Nara and Kamata kingdoms.

In the wake of such developments, the interregnums paved the way for the nobility to rise in power and authority, taking a turn towards an oligarchic form. In the

16 Amalendu Guha, n.6, p.22, observes, 'All these details of the socio-political reality suggest, on the one hand, that people could long manage without a king or an important noble, because authority was widely diffused; and on the other, the contradictions and tensions were also mounting by then within the embryonic Tai-Ahom polity'.

17 See Chapter VII, FN-12.
absence of the sovereign, the sovereignty of the gentile state passed into their hands since the fortunes of kingship now much depended upon the approval, concurrence and proclamation by the council of ministers. 18

Perhaps, this was the beginning of the power of the council of ministers to play its role as king makers which apparently sought to strike a balance of power between the sovereign and the nobility. Inspite of its artificiality, this particular constitutional provision was more or less, in operation throughout the Ahom rule. Of course, at the same time, its apparent weaknesses produced serious internal crisis of immense magnitude as it happened during the period of weak rulers (1670-1681).

The fifteenth century marks further growth of the Ahom power particularly during the long and peaceful reign of Susanpha (1439-1488). 19 But the internal conflicts did not

18 It appears to be so in letter but in spirit, it is difficult to say, because sometimes and most often the dethronement, particularly of weak kings took place at the individual machinations of a single minister or noble. See Gait, n.4, p.233, on this issue.

19 Gait, n.4, p.85.
cease. Its growing intensity is revealed in the assassination of the twelfth Ahom king Suhempa (1488-1493) by a man of the Hkun Tai family. 20

The mounting social contradictions remained somewhat subdued for the next century and three quarters in the wake of the Muslim invasions. We have also narrated as to how the pressing needs of the time led to the breakaway of the gentle constitution during the reigns of Suhumpha Dibhi, Cangia Raja and Sushengpha Pratap Singha, leading to the extension of the council of ministers and the bureaucracy giving rise to more contradictions of immense complexities. Moreover, the growing Hindu influence leading to a birth of a class of religious preceptors with much social prestige and influence added new dimensions to the stratification issues.

The serious internal crisis took place during the period of weak and inefficient rulers (1670-1681) threatening the very stability of the state. Gait records, 'in the short space of eleven years, there had been no less than seven kings, not one of whom died a natural death'. The main characters centering round this, were the Prime Minister Atan Buragohain, Debera Barbarua and Laluk Barphukan, Debera

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20 Gait, n.4, p.85; Gogoi, n.7, p.287. The episode relates to the theft of paddy belonging to the king by a petty officer who was punished for the same. The officer in retaliation avenged his punishment by assassinating the king. The episode, though appears small, indicates the mounting social tensions of the time.
Barbara, initially a revolutionary against the religious whims of King Syatpha alias Udayaditya (1669-1673), later turned himself into a self power seeker and proved himself to be the most ruthless, cruel and cunning court intriguer. Atan Buragohain too, was not an exception under the circumstances. Laluk Barphukan, on the other hand, sold Guwahati to the Mughals in order to usurp the throne for himself. In any way, we would refrain from the exhaustive narratives. Suffice it to say that it was the terrible internecine warfare in which all the above three personalities lost their lives most pathetically. It was a fierce fratricidal civil strife revealing the weaknesses in the transformed Ahom civil constitution by the diffusion of powers in the hands of the nobles. It proved beyond doubt that only under strong and efficient monarchs, the changed system did work. In other words, a sort of monarchical despotism was the state in this context, as demonstrated by the illustrious reigns of several despotic monarchs.

\[21\] For details of the happenings and events of this period, see Gait, n. 4, pp. 160-170; Gogoi, n. 7, pp. 482-496.

\[22\] We may refer here to the royal absolutisms of Suhamung Dihingia Raja, Shyshengpha Pratap Singha, Shyshengpha Chakra-odhaj Singh, Supatpha Gadadhar Singha and Sukhrungpha Murda Singha. All of them were charismatic rulers with benevolent despotism in their veins and some critical survivals owe much to them.
However, the stability of the state is a relative matter. Because, in all early states, such occurrences of civil strifes leading to weakening or splitting of the state are not unusual and not uncommon. Because, 'statehood does not insure internal peace. What it does is to override previous instability by a new form of organisation that does not include break-up as part of its political process'.

In the subsequent history of the Ahoms, of course, we do not find the evolution of any new form of organisation to arrest the instabilities. However, it appears that the system had its own merit with all its imperfections which sustained the Ahom rule for quite a long period. To quote David Scott:

In the present state of society in Assam, the ancient constitution would not admit of much improvement. That it is fully adequate to insure good government it would be to much to affirm, but if means were taken to raise the character and qualifications of the nobility by an improved system of education, it can scarcely be doubted that with all its imperfections this system would prove greatly superior to the simple despotism of Cooch Behar, ...

The success or failure of the system, more or less, and relatively, much depended upon the character of the nobility. That it was at least better than what was in the neighboring states is difficult to deny.

23 Claessen & Skalnik, n. 1, p. 60.
The Ahom state now reached a saturated point. The dreaded Mughal menace was no longer there. The internecine civil strife was over. Political stability and a settled government set in with the accession of strong and efficient kings like Supatpha Gadadhar Singha (1681-1696) and his son Sukhrungpha Rudra Singha (1696-1714). Relatively, the period from 1681 to 1769 was one of peace and prosperity in which the Ahom state fully manifested.

But at the same time, the undercurrents of growing social tensions owing to the emergence of private property through the showering upon of benifices from war gains and the land grants to both the temporal and spiritual nobles; the appearance of feudal-tribal contradictions under the new civilising processes were also to be seen. The far-reaching impact of the Hindu/aryanisation process burst open during this period. However, we have been discussing these issues of higher magnitude and wider dimensions in the next chapter, while at the same time, taking note of the fact that no society can remain master over its system for a long time, and so were the Ahoms who were now at the cross road to a real test of statehood. Meanwhile, to have more focus on the external variable factors we may look into the relations of the Ahom state with its surrounding neighbour states.
Towards a Galactic State Structure

The Northeast of India is the home of colourful tribal states. It was so in the past as it is present. The process of formation of these states took a start onward the thirteenth century with the advent of the Ahoms. During the period between 13th to 16th century, some of these state-like formations emerged into statehood, some others were absorbed by powerful ones, and still some others, particularly in the hilly regions, continued to linger between inchoacy and typicality in their social formations.

It is significant to note that there was a marked difference in the population of the hills and the plains not only in respect of the stage of civilisation that they had had, but also in terms of the levels of socio-cultural and politico-economic developments. The hills had the kind of geographical isolation where any outside contact was a matter of conjuncture; whereas against this background, the plains enfolded a vast panorama in a cross-cultural canvas. The hills remained hanged on to their primordial clanish society, with illiteracy and a subsistence economy in the absence of a viable ecology to generate surplus productions. On the other hand, the plains gave birth to a strong
centralised state of the Ahoms, which brought all the outlying hill states into its political orbit in course of time.

It is in such a context, that we tread on some grounds of a Galactic state structure of the Ahoms on its way to a mature statehood. All the rudimentary state formations in the plains viz., the Chutiyas, the Morans, the Borahis, the Bhuyans, the Koches and including the plain Kacharis, got winded into the Ahom state structure. In case of the hills, viz., the Jayantias, the Dimasa/Kacharis, the Khyrim, the Tripuri and the Manipuri states continued their embryonic polity towards further elaboration and sophistication till the British take over of the entire Northeast. In the process, the Ahom state took a turn towards galactic formation, it being in the centre and the other outlying states at its periphery. Thus we find a ring of states which were allowed to exist in their own characteristic way and which acknowledged the overall Ahom supremacy and sovereignty in the entire Northeast.

The hill tribe chieftainships, viz., the Singpho, the Naga, the Khami, the Adi, Aka and the Dflas, as far as we can judge from the available sources were in a lower form.
of tribal civilisation. The population of these hill tribes was very small and concentrated only in the habitat of the area. The division of labour was just the simple outgrowth of nature. In the polity, the inter-tribal feuds were being replaced by war-raids on the plain areas. When came in contact with the Ahoms, they were forced to accept the overlordship and to pay annual tributes.

The other hill states which acknowledged the overlordship and nominal sovereignty of the Ahoms were the states of Jayantias, Khyrim, Dimasa/Kachari, Tripuri and Manipuri. On the whole, these states were in an early class society stage with the closeness to a developing class type society and with different levels of socio-economic developments. Their relations with the Ahoms were relatively friendly. Of these, the Jayantia and the Dimasa/Kachari states paid annual tributes to the Ahom kings acknowledging the overlordship and the vassalage. In this connection, mention may be made of the term 'thapita aanchita' (established and preserved) which determined their relationship with the Ahoms.

An elaborate protocol was maintained whenever the Katakis (ambassadors) of these states were sent to Ahom
king’s court. They were first to report at the Rasa, Jagi choklis or at Guwahati to the concerned high officials. After obtaining due permission through such officials, the Katakis were allowed to see the Ahom monarch at the capital. Moreover, the kings of these states had to write five letters one each to the king, the three great Gohains and to the Barbarua. At least, in the case of the Jayantias and the Kacharis, the chronicles record such instances. Therefore, the term ‘thapita sanchita’ suggests more of ‘vassalage’ than that of simple ‘protectorate’ in the general sense of the term.


26 The term ‘thapita sanchita’, according to the Ahoms, denotes vassalage. But the Kachari king used it semantically with the interpretation that since he is thapita sanchita, the Ahom king should offer a girl to him to which the Ahom king reacted sharply. See P. Gogoi, n. 7, p. 388.

Amalendu Guha says that this is the precise term to mean the kind of vassalage in the context of the ‘obligation to supply a fixed contingent of soldiers to the Ahom king’. See his, Neo-Vaishnavism to Insurgency: etc., Calcutta, 1984, p. 15.

Also see Guha, n. 6, p. 32, for the concept of vassalage. He uses the term to mean ‘feudal tenures’ and the setting up of the kind of vassalage necessitated after the conquests. J.B. Bhattacharjee, without referring to the term thapita sanchita, speaks of the animosity and frontier clashes in the Ahom-Kachari relationships till British take over. See his, State Formation in Pre-Colonial Tribal Northeast: A case study of the Dima Hashe state, etc., 1984, p. 97.

The term ‘thapita sanchita’ is, thus, significant in the Ahom-Kachari relationship.
The other important vassal states were Darrang, Beltola, Rani, etc., to mention some of the prominent ones amongst others. They accepted the overlordship and sovereignty of the Ahom rulers and the term 'sevaka' or 'seva' (absolute allegiance/subordination or service) determined their relationship with the Ahom monarch. They were internally free, of course, subject to the submission to the Barphukan in their internal conflicts for arbitration or decision, and were required to supply a regular contingent of forces from time to time and had to pay annual tributes.

For the supervision and control of all these outlying states, the Ahoms maintained a number of chokies and frontier posts under a class of officers known as Chakial Gohains and Dattalia Gohains respectively. They were

27 The other such states were Luki, Dimora, Neli, Gubha, Na-dur, Dhubranda, etc., totalling about twenty eight in numbers. These were but petty chieftainships or petty duchies like that of the west. Some of them were also known as Raja Prashik (petty Rajas) when elevated to such a status. The terms 'Satralia' and 'Panchralia' were also applied to some of them but the precise meaning of these terms are not clear. See S.K. Bhuyan, n.25, p.240.

28 Guba, n.6, p.32, places the two terms, 'chapita sanchita' and 'seva-sevaka' on the same level with identical meaning based on 'feudal tenures' of vassalage. But it appears that the two terms differ also in meaning since 'chapita sanchita' seems to be ambivalent in Ahom-Kachari relationship.

29 The Chakial Gohains were known as Rahial, Jagial, Kajali Mukhia Gohains and there were atleast ten such officers. Similarly, the Dattalia Gohains were Sadiyakhowa, Marangikhowa and Saial Gohains. All these offices were after place names of the chokies and frontier posts. See for details, Hiteswar Barba, Ahom Min Publication Board, Guwahati, 1981, pp.534-535 & 543-545.
mostly the relatives of the great Gohains. Such officers were the key to the galactic structure because they were alone and greatly responsible for executing and exacting the sovereign’s wishes from these rings of states.

The territorial concept of **Mungdunshunkham** was no longer tenable after Guwahati becoming the most important sub-capital of the Ahom state. The post of Barphukan which was created exclusively for the purpose of administering Lower Assam areas, now assumed special significance in as much as the Ahoms now considered it more important from the point of strategic defence rather than of productions and the surpluses. Further Guwahati first provided the base for external trade and commerce in addition to being the sole outlet of contact with the rest of India. In matters of agricultural surplus, the yield was not as high as it was in Upper Assam. The revenue was collected both in terms of cash and kind largely after the Mughal systems.

Guwahati and Rangpur became the two poles of the Ahom government bridging lower and upper Assam. Yet a thin distance marks the difference between the two seats of power. The office of the Barphukan, with all the viceregal powers, became an office of the colonial variant, as the subsequent history of Assam would suggest.
On the whole, the traditional concept of Ahom kingship and also according to some Ahom proverbial usages, the fullness of the Ahom sovereignty is incomplete without some friendly and dependent vassal states. It is said to be somewhat like a crown without jewels. The essence of the pattern of a galactic state emanates from such formulations which indicate the distinct dimensions in the formation of the Ahom state. Any way, and be that as it may, this completes the picture of centralised Ahom feudalism since all such officers, for the galactic purpose, were appointed solely from the great aristocratic families, who had absolute oath of allegiance to the sovereign—a process that counterbalanced the power at the top bureaucratic crust.

The reign of Sukhrungpha Rudra Singha (1696–1714), witnessed the final efflorescence of the galactic formation of the Ahom state when all these states and tribes were united for a common cause against Mughal Bengal. The politico-geographical concept of the Northeast was rooted in such a galactic formation of the Ahom state where all the peoples of the hills and the plains came under a common flag. This largely determined the relative peace in the Northeast region amongst the different, colourful groups of ethnic populations.