The Kacharis were one of the branches of the great Bodo race of Assam from the anthropological point of view, and the present generation regard them as one of the earliest aboriginal tribes of the Brahmaputra Valley of Modern Assam. Different names, however, have been used to identify this tribe residing in different parts of Assam and North Bengal districts of West Bengal. In the present Goalpara district of Assam and the North Bengal district of West Bengal, for instance, they are known even today as Mech; in the Brahmaputra Valley, Bodo or Bodosa; in the North Cachar Hills, Dimasa or Dimacha, whereas in the plains of the modern Cachar with which we are directly concerned here they are known as Barmans. There remains no doubt, therefore, that this tribe inhabits a large part of North-East India.

Their origin, like origins of all other aboriginal races and tribes of India, is indeed obscure. Opinions

1. Allen, B.C., Assam District Gazetteer, (Cachar), 1905, P. 19

* Pemberton made a list of the important tribes of Assam Valley in which he placed the Kacharis in the 15th position in order of his preference. See Pemberton, Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India, 2nd impression, 1966, table: 15.


naturally differ from author to author with regard to their past history. From the anthropological point of view they seem to be of Mongoloid origin. Their original home land might have been either Tibet or the Western border districts of China. Scholars believe it to be somewhere in the region between the rivers Yang-tse-kiang and the Ho-ang-ho of the western China. These Mongolian tribes belonged to the Sino-Tibetan-language-speaking groups and might have entered Assam in massive waves of natural migration during the early part of the first millennium B.C.

Linguistically, the Sino-Tibetan languages have been broadly classified into two major groups (a) Tibeto-Burman, and (b) Siamese-Chinese. The Dimacha Kacharis of North Cachar Hills belong to the Assam-Burmese Group of the Tibeto-Burman linguistic classes. Most of the Mongolian people appear to have migrated to Assam in the early times through the north-eastern and southern land routes that linked up the land


4. Allen, B.C., n.l, P. 19

5. Chatterjee, Dr. S.K.Kirata - Jana - Krti, 2nd ed., Calcutta, 1974, Pp. 22-23. A chart showing the origin of the Kacharîs has been given in Appendix- I.
mass of Assam with Burma. Dr. P.C. Choudhury observes that one of the waves of the Tibeto-Burmans comprising the Aka, Mishmi, Garo, Mikir, Kachari, and others probably came through northern land route.

We have at our disposal some local traditions (current among the Kacharis) which indicate what the name of the country was when the Kacharis first lived in Assam. On the basis of some of these traditions Dr. S.K. Bhuyan has come to the conclusion that the Kacharis first lived in a land called Kamruli (perhaps Kamrupa) where flowed a river (perhaps in Brahmaputra) across a great valley. When they were driven out from there (it is not known by whom) they came to a place called Kundilo (Modern Sadiya). Another author, C.A. Soppitt, observes that the Kacharis originally settled in "the hills and slopes to the north of the Brahmaputra" and from there a part of Kachari emigrants proceeded upto the Mymensingh district of


* At the present day, a prayer is still in use in North Cachar which refers to a huge pipul tree growing near the confluence of the Dilao (Brahmaputra) and the Sagi. There the Kacharis were born and increased greatly in numbers, and thence they travelled till they reached Nilacal, the hill in Kamrup on which the temple of Kamakhya stands. From Gauhati they migrated to Halali, and finally settled in Dimapur. This account of the migration of the Kacharis is to some extent confirmed by Hindu tradition which describes the line of Naraka as being overthrown by foreign invaders, and as being afterwards restored in the person of one of his descendants, Brahmapala.

Gazetteer of India, Assam State, Sibsagar District, 1967, P. 34.

7. Bhuyan, S.K., (ed), n.3, P.VII.
the present Bangladesh which is to the south of the Goalpara
district of modern Assam though their headquarters always
remained in Gauhati. Captain Fisher, the first superintendent
of the British Cachar under the Company's rule, holds a similar
view: he thinks that the Kachari tribe gradually curved out a
big empire comprising Assam, Sylhet, Tripura, and Cachar keeping
their original headquarters in Kamrupa, their empire comprising
most of the tracts from Kamrupa down to the sea, which perhaps
meant the Bay of Bengal. Fisher informs us that they were
expelled from Kamrupa by the Rajas of Cooch Behar and that their
empire was also subsequently divided into two parts. The
southern part came under the rule of a prince said to be the
younger son of the king who established the house of Tripura. It
thus indicates that the Tripuris might have been one of the
Kith and Kins of the Kacharis.

Though the origin of the Kachari race is obscure yet
there is no doubt that they came into prominence in different
parts of the north-eastern region, and Kamrup always remained
their headquarters. There exists in the Brahmaputra Valley


9. Fisher, Captain, Memoir of Sylhet, Cachar and the
adjacent districts, J.A.S.B. IX, Part: II, 1840
P.P. 829 - 30. The Tipras of Tripura are said to be
of the same origin like that of the Kacharis. They
were described as a younger branch of the ancient
royal family. After their expulsion from Kamrupa,
they established themselves independently.
certain important place names and river names beginning with the Kachari prefix 'Di' such as (Di) brugarh, (Di) boi, (Di) Phu, (Di) mapur, (Di) marua, (Di) ju, (Di) mu, (Di) garu, (Di) puta, and (Di) bong, (Di) hong, (Di) sang etc., and these indicate their existence on the banks of those rivers in the olden days. In Dimacha-Kachari language 'Di' means water. It is, therefore, reasonable to think that in course of migrations of the Kachari tribe from Kamrup to Upper Assam, a section of them might have preferred to live on the bank of these rivers and not to proceed further with the main group of migrants. Probably, some of them even preferred to settle themselves on the hill tops and might have entered into matrimonial relationship with the local aboriginal tribes. As a result of this fusion different Bodo* groups were born such as the Garos.10 Hence it is quite likely that the Kacharis had settled in both the hills and plains of the Brahmaputra Valley though its full history is yet a subject of further research. The most powerful group among the Kacharis might have curved out a Kingdom for themselves subjugating other aboriginal local races.

To locate the whereabouts of the first Kachari Kingdom we have to depend by and large on a number of Kachari

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* The Bodos of Sylhet claim that their original ancestor was Ghatotkoch like that of the Dimacha of Kacharis, see Chatterjee S.K., n. 5 P. 126

10. Acharyya, N.N., n.8, Pp. 216 - 17.
local traditions. These traditions indicate that there were two branches of the Kacharis one ruling at Sadiya (Chutiyas) and the other in the southern part of Assam with capitals first at Dimapur, then at Maibong and finally at Khaipur. We learn further from their traditions that before the arrival of the Ahoms in Assam in the early part of the thirteenth Century the boundary of the Kachari Kingdom extended beyond the river Disang in the east stretching upto Namchang in the Naga Hills. It is stated in one of the traditions that the earliest known Kachari King, Bisarpatipha, conquered Borhat and Namchang areas and annexed them to his own dominion. This has been confirmed in one of the Ahom Buranji written in the later period. It is stated there that the Ahom leader, Sukapha, after crossing the Patkai hills, met with a stiff resistance from the local Kacharis in the Naga Hills. Dr. S.K.Chaṭṭerje, the author of Kirata-Jana-Krti observes that when the Ahoms came to Assam, one of the two powerful Hinduised Bodo states, which opposed them, belonged to the Chutiyas in the extreme east near Sadiya, and the other belonged to the Kacharis of the Dhansiri Valley. The Kachari buranji further states that the Kingdom of the Sadiya Kacharis was bounded by Sadiya on the east, the river Dikhou on the west, the river Dihing on the north and Kenduguri

12. Ibid, P. 78.
When the Ahoms entered Assam in A.D. 1228 the eastern boundary of the Kachari Kingdom extended up to the river Dikhou and the Western boundary up to the river Kallong. Hence the Kachari Kingdom in the thirteenth century, before the arrival of the Ahoms, included the western part of Sibsagar, the valley of the Dhansiri, the present Nowgang district and the areas which now constitute North Cachar Hills district.

Evidently, by the beginning of the thirteenth century the Kacharis had already established a powerful Kingdom in Assam when it was challenged by the Ahoms belonging to the Shan state of Burma. The history how the Kacharis were gradually dislodged from their original capital and how at last they were forced to come down to the plains of Cachar and established their last capital at Khaspur is closely associated with the Ahom policy of territorial expansion.

Sukapha was the leader of the Ahoms. Though he successfully crossed the Patkai hill range of Assam, smashed all opposition that stood on his way and safely landed in the plains of Assam, yet his advance was courageously resisted by the powerful Kacharis. But Sukapha was prudent enough to avoid direct confrontation with the Kacharis by establishing cordial relationship with them. He established his kingdom without encroaching Kachari territory and for this no friction developed.

14. Bhuyan S.K., (ed), n.3, P. VIII
at the initial stage. This exhibits early superiority of the Kacharis over the Ahoms. However Sukapha's son Suteupha (1268 - 81) reversed his father's policy of appeasement and succeeded in capturing the Kachari territory up to the river Namdang before the end of the thirteenth century. Though this river demarcated their respective territorial jurisdictions since then for about two hundred years, yet their feelings of hostility towards each other remained always deep during this long period.\textsuperscript{17} By the end of the fifteenth century and during the reign of the Ahom King Suhenpha (1488 - 1493) both sides wanted forcible annexation of each other's territory, and both wanted a trial of strength. Situation took a new turn with the appointment of an Ahom general for conducting punitive expeditions against the Kacharis. The Ahom general encamped at Dampuk, and fortifying the area, awaited for further orders from his king. But the Kacharis did not waste time, and by a surprise attack killed the Ahom general. Though losses in man and material were heavy on both sides, the Ahom king soon decided to wage an offensive against the Kacharis and himself wanted to command his army. But considering the superior military strength of the Kacharis the Ahom king at last thought it wise not to involve his person directly in any major wars with them. The Ahoms sued for peace and a treaty was signed. The Ahoms agreed to send one of the Ahom princess to the Kachari Court along with twelve female

\textsuperscript{17} Devi, Laxmi, n. 11, P. 79
slaves and two elephants, and in return the Kacharis agreed to hand over a part of their territory upto Marangi to the Ahoms. The sending of an Ahom princess to the Kachari court naturally emboldened the Kachari King to embark upon a career of aggrandisement. He forcibly penetrated inside the Ahom territory and occupied some portions on the eastern side of the river Dikhou. This act of the Kachari King despite the peace treaty was retaliated by the next Ahom King Supimpha (1493-97) who occupied in turn another portion of the Kachari territory defeating the Kachari force and erected a fort at Namsang to commemorate his victory.

Under King Suhungmung (1497-1539) the Ahoms soon emerged as a great fighting class capable of challenging the Kachari hegemony in the entire neighbourhood of the central Assam. They now demanded from the Kacharis territory upto the Dikhou to have the river as their natural boundary. Accordingly, the Ahom King ordered his general Kancheng Barpatra Gohain to push back the Kacharis to Namdang, and demand further territory from them upto Dergaon and claim

18. Acharyya, N.N., n.8. P.84
20. Acharyya, n.8, P. 219.
Marangi. Its outright refusal by the Kacharis renewed armed confrontations between them. In the first encounters the Kacharis came out victorious but a massive disaster soon disheartened them. This tug-of-war in their trial of strength once again renewed when in 1531 the Ahom King Suhungmung erected a fort at Marangi, and the Kachari King Khunkhara (? - 1531) reacted quickly by despatching a garrison under his brother Detcha to demolish the Ahom outpost. In this tussle Detcha was killed and the Kachari King, Khunkhara, fearing indignities in the Ahom hands left his Kingdom. The victorious Ahoms naturally dictated the future of the Kacharis. They placed on the throne their nominee, Detsung, a relative of Khun-khara, (1531-36) as the next Kachari King. But subsequent defiant attitude of Detsung led the Ahoms to murder him and destroy his beautiful capital city of Dimapur in 1536.

This enabled the Ahoms to establish full command over the entire Dhansiri Valley upto the river Kollong. The Kacharis therefore was forced to migrate and settle down in Maibong on the bank of the river Mahur in the North Cachar Hills. In course of time they built a second capital there as they thought that the place, covered with dense jungles and

24. Ibid, P. 96, Also Allen, BC., N. 1, P. 21.
surrounded on all sides by mountains, was invincible and beyond the reach of the Ahoms. Most of the Ahom buranjis, however, are silent about the early Kachari rule in Maibong. But the Kachari buranji states that the Kacharis lived there for some time without being headed by any King. The Ahom King Suhungmung naturally exploited this helplessness of the Kacharis and acted as the King-maker of the Kacharis by installing Madan Kumar, the son of the murdered Kachari King, Detsung, on the Kachari throne. Under the Ahom umbrella Madan Kumar assumed the name Nirbhoynarayan (1536-59) for he was assured of full Ahom protection. This clearly indicates the overlordship of the Ahom King over the Kacharis from the beginning of the Kachari rule in Maibong. This indicates also how in the second phase of the trial of strength the Kacharis were forced to come under the heels of the Ahoms within three hundred years of Sukapha's reign. It is stated in the Kachari buranji, edited by Dr. S.K. Bhuyan, that the Kachari Kings since then were regarded as Thapita Sanchita by the Ahoms. A stone inscription of the Kachari King Meghanarayan (1566 - 83), one of the successors of Nirbhoynarayan, indicates that he had built the

gateway of Maibong in Saka 1498 (A.D. 1576)\(^2\) It is thus clear that within forty years of the sack of Dimapur city (A.D. 1536), the Kacharis built their new capital city at Maibong.

But the safety of Maibong was threatened soon by the Koches during the reign of Durlabh Narayan (1559 - 66) who succeeded Nirbhoynarayan. The Koches under their king Naranarayan (1540 – 84) and his brother and commander-in-chief, Chilarai, pursued a policy of territorial expansion. Chilarai not only invaded the Ahom territory but also forced the reigning monarch, Sukhampha (1552 - 1603) to acknowledge the koch Suzerainty. Subsequently Chilarai's force arrived in the neighbourhood of Maibong. But offering resistance to such a powerful koch general who could defeat the Ahom King Sukhampha was almost next to impossible on the part of the Kachari King. The Kacharis therefore accepted the Kocha overlordship without a fight.\(^2\) Since then, the Ahom influence in the Kachari court at Maibong gradually declined.

During their hold over the Kachari Kingdom the Koches successfully established their command over the plains of Cachar as well and appointed there Koch Officers to govern the country. Their successors acted as Dewans of the Koch general Chilarai and they subsequently came to be known as Dehans in

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Cachar who even now reasonably claim their pedigree from the Koches.

In the above background it is reasonable to believe that the Ahoms failed to exert any influence on the Kachari Kingdom as long as the Koch influence remained dominant. The process of Koch-Kachari assimilation, naturally, continued during that period. But we have no records as to how long the Koch influence persisted in Maibong. It is most likely that the Koch influence did not decline even after the death of Chilarai in A.D. 1571 during his second Bengal campaigns. Perhaps Koch invasion gave the Kacharlis an opportunity to shake off much-hated Ahom domination over them and encouraged their King to assume the title "Lord of Hidimba" shortly after Chilarai's death. Taking advantage of the Ahom discomfiture in the Koch hands, the Kachari rulers recovered during this period the greater part of Nowgang area from the Ahom control. They also held the North Cachar Hills and extended their influence over the plains of Cachar.

Under the circumstances it is but natural to think that the Ahoms had little influence and political control over the Kachari Kings during the period from 1562 to 1603 or else mention would have been made in one of the buranjis compiled by them. We do not have any epigraphic or numismatic evidence

29. Acharyya, N.N., n.8, P. 206
before us to substantiate that the Ahoms had any control over the Kachari Kingdom during that period. As a matter of fact, owing to the Ahom defeat at Chilarai's hands and subsequent Koch invasion of the Kachari Kingdom, the Ahoms must have refrained from getting involved in the Kachari affairs for a considerable period. This indifference of the Ahom King must have encouraged the Kachari King Satrudaman otherwise known as Yasonarayan (1583 - 1616) to embark upon a career of aggrandisement. He sent punitive expeditions against Dhanmanik, the neighbouring Jaintia King (1596-1605) for his refusal to allow merchants of the Kachari Kingdom to pass through his Kingdom to carry on trade with Sylhet. The matter got aggravated when Dhanmanik imprisoned Probhakar, the Chief of Dimarua, who happened to be a subordinate Chief of the Kachari King. Being refused, Yasonarayan thereupon routed Jaintiapur and successfully restored his overlordship in the Jaintia Kingdom. Dhanmanik purchased peace by agreeing to hand over two Jaintia princess to the victorious Kachari King and sending Yasomanik, the nephew of the defeated Jaintia King as hostage to the


Kachari Court.\textsuperscript{32} Since then, it is presumed, trade between the Kachari Kingdom and Sylhet must have been channelised through the Jaintia territories as well. Kachari King Yasonarayan on this occasion assumed the title \textit{Asimardan} to commemorate his victory over the Jaintias and also renamed Brahmapur as Khaspur where he kept Yasomanik the Jaintia hostage.\textsuperscript{33} This indicates that by the turn of the sixteenth century and beginning of the Seventeenth century the Kacharis began to establish greater control over the plains of Cachar and even could rename an important place like Khaspur which was still under the Koch Dehans.

After the death of Jaintia King, Kachari King, Yasonarayan, released Yasomanik from captivity and installed him on the vacant throne of his Uncle as a vassal King. This conclusively proves the Kachari King's political hold over the Jaintia Kingdom as well. But Yasomanik (1605 - 1625) at heart did not like Kachari overlordship though its open defiance was next to impossible for him.\textsuperscript{34} He, therefore, hatched up a plan to shake off the Kachari overlordship by a masterstroke of diplomacy. Yasomanik offered his daughter to the Ahom King, Pratap Singh (1603 - 41), on condition that the latter should

\textsuperscript{32} Gait, n.2, P. 252.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid, P. 252.
\textsuperscript{34} Bhuyan, S.K.\textsuperscript{(ed)}, n.3, Pp. 21 - 22. Also Gait, n.2, P. 252.
carry Jaintia princess to his Kingdom through the Kachari territory. His plan was to drag the Kachari King, into a war with the Ahom monarch so that the might of Yasonarayan could be crushed and he could throw off the yoke of hated and burdensome Ahom control. This is another evidence which proves that the Ahoms had no political hold over the Kachari Kingdom till the beginning of the Seventeenth Century as the Ahom King, Pratap Singh, had to inform the Kachari King about his intention to carry the Jaintia princess through the Kachari territory. The Ahom-Kachari trial of strength, once again became inevitable when the Kachari King refused to give a passage through his territory.

Under the command of Sundar Gohair, a powerful Ahom army successfully captured a number of Kachari strongholds and carried the Jaintia princess across the Kachari territory. Ahom king, Pratap Singh, thereupon also ordered a direct assault on the Kachari capital at Maibong. But in the encounter that followed, Ahom general, Sundar Gohain was defeated and slain by the more powerful Kachari general, Bhimbal Konwar. This dampened the spirit of the invading Ahom soldiers who were utterly demoralised and perplexed when Kachari King Yasonarayan

36. Devi, Laxmi. n. 11, P. 86.
presented on a tray the head of the slain Ahom general Sundar Gohain to the Ahom King. Yet Pratap Singh failed to open any offensive against the Kachari King owing to a possible Mughal invasion of his Kingdom. Pratap Singh swallowed the insult and established cordial relationship with the Kachari King conveying the message to the latter that Sundar Gohain had overstepped in his duty while escorting the Jayantia Princess across the Kachari Kingdom. It was at this stage that the Kachari King Yasonarayan, assumed the name Pratap Narayan and perhaps to signalise his victory over the Ahom King Pratap Singh renamed his capital Maibong as Kirtipur.

The Mughal invasion however equally affected the fortunes of the Kacharis of Maibong and the Ahoms. Circumstances forced the Kachari King to get himself involved in the affairs of Sylhet. Islam Khan (1608 - 13), the Mughal Governor of Dacca, had appointed one Shaikh Kamal, the commander of a Mughal force to conquer Sylhet which was under Bayized Karrani, the Afghan ruler. The Kachari King, Yasonarayan (1583-1616), sensing its ultimate consequence offered his assistance to the Afghan ruler to forestall the Mughal attempt

of attacking his country. Infuriated Shaikh Kamal thereupon planned to invade the Kachari Kingdom. It was in this connection as has been mentioned earlier that Yasonarayan erected two forts, one at Asuritekar (probably near present Haritikar) and the other at Pratapgarh (probably near Patharkandi) to prevent possible advance of the invading Mughal forces to Maibong. Despite gallant defence, the Kacharis failed to keep their hold over the two forts and they came under control of the forces of Shaikh Kamal. Yasonarayan offered peace proposal to the Mughal commander, but before it was considered, the emperor Shah Jahan (1605-27) desired that the campaign against the powerful Kachari King should be continued and Shaikh Kamal should be replaced by a more competent commander. The new commander established a thana in Asuritekar and proceeded towards Maibong. Yasonarayan saved his capital by agreeing to pay huge compensation both in cash and kind.\(^{40}\)

The Kacharis under their capable King yasonarayan saved their capital city both from the Ahom and Mughal invasion. This forced, the Ahom King Pratap Singh to settle up differences with the Kacharis. But in 1616 Yasonarayan died, yet his successors, Naraharayan (1616) and Bhim Narayan (d.1637) followed the same adamant attitude with regard to

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their dealing with the Ahoms. As a gesture of goodwill and friendship, Pratap Singh sent a daughter of an Ahom noble* to the Kachari King Bhim Narayan. But the Ahom's peace move was frustrated owing to a second demand by the Kachari King for handing over Dimarua Raja, a tributary of the Kacharis who had been granted political asylum by the Ahoms, and a third demand, for another Ahom Princess for the Kachari King. On being refused, Bhim Narayan raided an Ahom village Baghargaon, on the bank of the river Dhansiri. As the Kachari raids began to occur very frequently, Pratap Singh, in turn, got Ahom-Kachari frontier inhabited by loyal Ahom subjects so that possibilities of such raids did not go unreported in future.

The Kacharis did not respond to any Ahom peace negotiation so long the Mughal invasion persisted on the Ahom territories. But with the termination of the Ahom-Mughal hostilities by 1639, the Kacharis anticipated an Ahom invasion of their Kingdom and their King Indraballabh (1637-1644) who succeeded Bhim Narayan sent envoys to the Ahom Monarch to normalise strained relationship. But he did not modify the language of his letter which once again offended the taste of the

* His name was Saringia Sandikai, see Bhuyan, S.K. (ed), n. 3, P. 29.
42. Devi, L., n. 11, Pp. 88-89.
Ahom monarch and the latter did not take any interest in the matter. It became crystal clear that the Kacharis were reluctant to acknowledge the Ahom overlordship as they regarded the latter was responsible for the destruction of their first capital city and subsequent misfortunes which beset their life. Indraballabh's successor, Birdarpanarayan (1644-81), a contemporary of the Ahom monarch Nariya Raja (1644-48) therefore remained adamant on the Kachari demand for an Ahom princess. In 1648, even while greeting the new Ahom King Jayadhvaj Singh (1648-1663) at his coronation, the Kachari King did not forget to remind him of the Kachari demand. Jayadhvaj Singh in order to appease the Kacharis asked Birdarpa to send either his brother or son to escort the Ahom princess. But the Kachari King did not send either as they were minors, and the matter was dropped. About fourteen years after when Mirjumla invaded Assam (1662) Jayadhvaj Singh sought for an alliance with the Kacharis and agreed to honour the long standing Kachari demand for an Ahom princess but simultaneously threatened the Kachari King pointing out that he would raid his Kingdom if he disagreed to help him fighting against the Mughal general. This Ahom policy of appeasement backed by threat forced the king to change his mind and come to

45 Devi, L, n.11, Pp. 92-93.
terms with the Ahom monarch. Jayadhvaj Singh's successor, Chakradhvaj Singh (1663-69) went a step further. He demanded immediate extradition of Marangikhowa Gohain who had meanwhile taken shelter in the Kachari Kingdom during Mirjumla's Assam Invasion to avoid punishment for his dereliction of duties. From the time of Jayadhvaj Singh (1648-1663) to the accession of Gadadhar Singh (1681), the Ahoms mostly remained busy defending their own territories from the Mughals and so they did not follow any aggressive policy except holding out apparent threat towards the Kacharis. But when Gadadhar Singh (1681-1696) finally expelled the Mughals from Assam, the Kachari King, Biradarpa reasonably realised what awaited him. He promptly came forward of his own accord to sort out all differences between them. Biradarpa's successor Garuradhvaj (1681-95) also tried to normalise relations by sending an envoy but his diplomatic language once again offended the Ahom King. But this time the Kachari ambassador was told that while addressing the Ahom King his king should use the appropriate terminology. But administrative confusion in the Ahom Kingdom once again favoured the Kacharis to ignore the Ahom stand with regard to diplomatic language.

47. Devi, L., n.11, P. 94.
The circumstances therefore favoured the Kacharis to play an independent role. The Kachari King, Tamradhvaj Narayan (1695-1708) did not hesitate to address the Ahom monarch Rudra Singh (1696 - 1714) as an independent King without using the terminology demanded by the earlier Ahom monarchs. Moreover he demanded of the Ahoms the restoration of the Kachari territories upto Mohong. But Rudra Singh initially received the Kachari envoys with full diplomatic courtesy but soon called their King, his servant and expelled the envoys in a disgraceful way.

In December 1706, the angry Ahom King despatched two expeditions, one under Pani Dihingia Deka Barua through the Dhansiri route, and the other under Pani Phukan through the Kapili route to bring Tamradhvaj to book. On the other hand, Tamradhvaj sought to strengthen his position by making matrimonial alliance with the Koches. A trial of strength once again became inevitable between the Kacharis and the Ahoms over the question of one another's status. In the encounters the

52. Bhuyan, S.K.(ed), Tungkhungia Buranji, (Assamese), 2nd ed, 1964, In the Tungkhungia Buranji, the name of the Kachari King who demanded the restoration of the territory upto Mohong was Jai Singh. Pp. 31-32.
Ahoms defeated the Kacharis at Lathee, Amlakhi and Tarang and finally reached Maibong, the capital of Tamradhvaj. A large booty fell in the Ahom hands including a cannon and seven hundred guns. Meanwhile, the second contingent of the Ahom army also arrived there crushing the Kachari resistance at each stage and subjugating a number of Kachari villages which fell on their way. The presence of the two contingents of the Ahom army at Maibong and failure of Kachari resistance to the invading Ahom Army, unnerved the Kachari King, Tamradhvaj. He had no other alternative than to traverse the passes of the Barail hill ranges and following several mountain corridors, he arrived successfully on the flat land of Cachar to hide himself in Bikrampur. Apprehending an Ahom attempt to seize him at any moment, Tamradhvaj made an earnest appeal to Ram Singh, the king of Jayantia (1697 - 1708), to help him drive out the Ahoms and recover his capital. But meanwhile Tamradhvaj learnt that a

56. Devi, L, N.11, P. 97. It is said that one of the predecessors of Tamradhvaj (probably Birdarpa Narayan) obtained the plain area of Kachar from the Tripura King by marrying his daughter. Nath, R.M. n.54, p. 74.

* On hearing the success of the Ahoms in Maibong, Rudra Singh ordered his army to pursue the Kachari King Tamradhvaj. The army at first was reluctant as most of soldiers including Barbarua fell ill. But heavy pressure from Rudra Singh compelled them to change their stand. Accordingly, Pani Phukan marched up to Sampani while on the other hand, Barbarua, who was ill, retreated but died on the way to Demera. At last in March, 1707, Rudra Singh abandoned his plan. Pani Phukan constructed a fort at Demera before leaving Maibong which afterwards were withdrawn when sickness and mortality increased among the troops. Gait, E.A., n. 2, P. 174 Also Bhuyan, S.K.(ed), n.3, Pp. 110-11.
return march of the Ahom soldiers from Maibong was already ordered by Rudra Singh and hence he considered assistance of the Jayantia King unnecessary and informed the King accordingly. Inspite of this Ram Singh though a tributary of the Kachari King came to Cachar and suddenly overpowered Tamradhvaj while the latter was hiding in Bikrampur (Khaspur) and removed him to Jaintiapur as a prisoner. Receiving a message from Tamradhvaj through a bairagi,* and realising the submissive tone of Tamradhvaj, Rudra Singh ordered his army to invade Jaintia Kingdom and to present before him both the Kings. Accordingly, the Ahom army rescued Tamradhvaj, and made Ram Singh a prisoner and presented both of them before the Ahom King Rudra Singh at a specially arranged Durbar at Biswanath. The Kachari buranji states further that Tamradhvaj acknowledged the Ahom supremacy and agreed to cede territory upto the Jamuna River. He agreed further to give two elephants, two horses, forty men and two Baruas to Rudra Singh. Rudra Singh, thereupon, acknowledged Tamradhvaj as the Raja of the Kacharis and allowed him to return to his Country (Maibong) with valuable presents.

57. Allen, B.C., n.1, (Cachar) P. 22

* It was the contemporary practice to appoint bairagis for spying.

58. Gait, E.A., n.2, P. 255, Also see, Devi, L., n.11

59. Bhuyan, S.K., (edited) n.3, P. 148. Also Bhuyan,
The Ahom buranji is silent about the history of the Ahom Kachari relation from Tamradhvaj to the shifting of their capital to Khaspur. But it is stated in the Kachari buranji that after the defeat of the Kachari King, Tamradhvaj, in the hands of Rudra Singh, the Kacharıs shifted their capital to Khaspur. But circumstantial evidence as reflected in the above early background indicates that probably this was not a fact. Tamradhvaj had taken temporary shelter at Bikrampur (Khaspur) when the Ahoms sacked Maibong. After the departure of the Ahom army from Maibong, Rudra Singh reinstated him to his throne when he acknowledged the Ahom overlordship, and hence there was no strong reason which might have forced the king to get his capital transferred. An inscription found in Maibong on a rock-cut temple indicate that the next King of Maibong was Harischandra Narayan (1730-36) who assumed the name Lord of Hidimba. Two copper plate inscriptions further indicate that he was succeeded by Kirtichandra Narayan (1736-55) who appointed one Maniram Laskar* of Barkhola as his Ujir

60. Bhuyan, S.K., (edited) n.3, P. XIV.
61. Gait, E.A., n.2, P. 256, also see, Choudhury, A.C., n.54, P. 102

* The descendants of the Laskar family is still residing at Barkhola in Cachar district.
(Minister) This might create an impression that perhaps Barkhola, a part of plain Cachar, might have come under direct Kachari rule and capital might have been transferred to Khaspur. There is strong reason to believe that it was not a fact. It appears that the Kacharis must have transferred the capital to Khaspur during the reign of the King who succeeded Kirtichandra (d.1755). The question is who was this King? Records mention one 'Sandhikari' as the King of the Kacharis in 1765 and he was a contemporary of the Ahom monarch Rajeswar singh (1751 - 69). The question arises as to the identity of this 'Sandhikari'. An attempt will be made in the next chapter to answer all relevant questions why and when and during whose reign the capital was finally transferred to Khaspur.

62. Choudhury, A.C., n.54, P. 102. The copy of the manuscript of the two sanads is given in the appendix. No. 2