CHAPTER V

THE EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE AHOM GOVERNMENT
(FROM A.D.1603 TO A.D.1696)

Relations with the Jayantiya Rulers

The extension of the Ahom kingdom further west had brought the Ahoms into contact with the Jayantiyas, a hill tribe ruled by their kings from their capital at Jayantipur. The Jayantiya kingdom included both plains and hills, and touched the Kachari kingdom on one side and the plains of Assam on the other. It was Yasamanik (1605-1625),\(^1\) the Jayantiya king, who took the initiative in establishing his relations with the Ahom Government. For this purpose he sent his two envoys named Ruprai and Rupabar\(^2\) to the Ahom king Siu-seng-phā, commonly known as Pratap Singha. The chief object was to take revenge on the Kachari king, who had given him and his predecessor serious cause of displeasure.\(^3\) Being unable to offer any effective resistance, Yasamanik, in order to embroil the Ahoms in his

\(^1\)HA,p.315; ATR,p.108. According to AB(SM), p.41, if was Dhana-manik, Yasamanik's predecessor, who took the initiative to establish relations with the Ahoms.

\(^2\)JB,p.14. According to KB,p.21., the names of the envoys are given as Ruprai and Purai.

\(^3\)Ibid.
hostilities with the Kacharis, appealed to the Ahom king thus, "The Kachari king has been making preparations to destroy us, let Svargamaharaja protect us by giving assistance." Having learnt the Jayantiya kings willingness to submit to him in order to obtain assistance against the Kacharis, Siu-seng-phā thought of utilizing the opportunity. The Ahom envoys, Nirah and Sunabar, sent to the Jayantiya court, were told by Yasamanik that he proposed to offer his daughter to king Siu-seng-phā and requested the Ahom court for sending the customary bridal presents. When the proposal was accepted by the Ahom monarch, Yasamanik proposed that the Jayantiya princess should be taken by the Satgaon-Teteliguri route, a part of which passed through the Kachari territory. The above proposal was made thinking that the Kachari king, who was in bad terms with Yasamanik, would not allow to take the Jayantiya princess to escort her through the Kachari territory, and this would lead the Kacharis to clash with the Ahoms.

As expected by Yasamanik, the Kachari ruler Yasanarayan refused Siu-seng-phā's request to give passage to the Ahom

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4 Ibid.
5 KB, p.21.
7 Ibid.
escorts sent to fetch the Jayantiya princess to the Ahom capital through his territory by the Satgaon-Teteliguri route. Enraged by this challenging attitude of the Kachari king, who had been "established and preserved" by the Ahom kings, a strong Ahom force was sent to Jayantiya frontier through the above mentioned route. The obstructions raised by the Kacharis had been easily overcome by the Ahom army and the Jayantiya princess was brought to the Ahom capital through the Kachari territory in 1606.

Yasamanik further strengthened his alliance with the Ahom monarch by offering another Jayantiya princess to Siu-sheng-phâ who was sent down by the Gobha route. On his part, Yasamanik obtained the grant of a plot of land at Phulaguri with the Kalang as its boundary for the purpose of establishing a market there on condition that the Jayantiyas would supply fish, fuel and other things available at that place to the Barphukan at Kajalimukh. In this way, the Phulaguri market was established and commercial relations between the people of the two kingdoms began.

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8KB, pp. 22-23.
9Ibid.
11JB, p. 17.
12Ibid., p. 18.
Soon after Jaydhvaj Singha’s accession to the Ahom throne, the Jayantiya ruler Yasamattarai sent envoys with letter offering felicitation and at the same time requesting to give back the frontier states of Dimarua, Gobha and Neli, which had been subordinate to him but subsequently became tributary to the Ahom monarch. As they lay close to the passes through which the Jayantiyas used to come down to the plains of Assam, the Jayantiya ruler resented the Ahom domination over these states.

The Jayantiya king’s petition was dismissed on the ground that these provinces had already been merged into the Ahom kingdom and they had been assigned to some frontier chiefs. In the reply of the Ahom king, it was also pointed out that it was not a tradition amongst kings to make friendship by ceding territories. Yasamattarai assumed a challenging posture by arresting and imprisoning an Assam trader named Jayhari, and confiscating his merchandies amounting to about Rs.8000.00 on the ground that he had no permission to travel.

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13 HA, p.127; ATR, p.110.
14 AB(SKD), pp.3-4. In the translation of A-B, pp.146-147, the names are wrongly given as Dumarua, Kuphanali and Kaoban. In the original text, however, the names are found as Dimarua, Gobha and Neli.
15 AB(SKD), p.4.
16 According to AB(SM), p.71 it was Rs.1000.00.
by a particular route.\textsuperscript{17} Although he was released on the request of the Ahom envoys named Nirah and Sunabar, but his articles were retained.

The Jayantiya ruler, soon after, complained through his envoy, Ramai, that in matter of diplomatic correspondence, he alone received five letters addressed to him by the Ahom king, three ministers and the frontier governor whereas the five letters written by him to the Ahom Government had been received by five persons - the king, three ministers and the frontier governor. He, therefore, proposed that the king should write to the king, ministers to the ministers and governors to governors.\textsuperscript{18} The Ahom Government considered this proposal of the Jayantiya ruler an attempt to throw away his allegiance to the Ahom king. The proposal was refused on the plea that it was a deviation from the existing procedures in the continuance of friendly relations between the two kingdoms.\textsuperscript{19} As a first measure of punishment, the frontier markets with the Jayantiyas were closed and also a number of Jayantiya traders were arrested and kept confined

\textsuperscript{17}JB, pp. 18-19.
\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., p. 19.
\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., p. 20.
at Sala. As a result all communications between the two kingdoms ceased.

When the Jayantiyas faced the severe hardship due to the closer of the frontier markets, Yasamattarai sent two envoys in 1655 to the Barphukan with a request to re-establish the relation with the Ahom Government. The envoys were sent back in company with two Ahom envoys, Khalihai and Komora with a letter from the Barphukan bearing the message that if Yasamattarai sent his envoys in accordance with the existing procedures then only they would be taken to the Ahom capital, Garhgaon. On their arrival, Yasamattarai charged the Ahom envoys for not bringing with them the Jayantiya traders who had been kept confined by the Ahom Government, and drove them away asking them for the release of the Jayantiya traders. Soon the Jayantiya traders were released, and sent back to Jayantiya. This led to the renewal of relations. Yasamattarai despatched envoys with letters by observing all the diplomatic procedures as before, which means

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20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid., pp. 20-21.
24 Ibid.
expressed his profound sorrow at the discomfiture of the Ahoms at the hands of the Mughal. In his letter he sympathised with Jaydhvaj Singha and consoled him by expressing his firm friendship that "Garhgaon, the Ahom capital, and Jayantipur, the Jayantiya capital, are not separate but one" so much so that he felt that as if it was the Mughal conquest of Jayantiya. He was sorry that he did not receive the information in time so as to send his force to his assistance against the Mughals. Similarly, Maniksingh, the Governor of Nortang, subordinate to the Jayantiya Raja also expressed deep regret for not being able to extend any help to the Ahom king at the time of distress.

In spite of claiming a true ally, Jayantiya Raja did not forget to take advantage of the position of discomfiture faced by the Ahom king and was bent on asserting his position of equality to that of the Ahom king. He thus sent a verbal message through his envoy in which he repeated the earlier proposal that the Ahom king should address his letter to the Jayantiya ruler and the Ahom ministers to their Jayantiya counterparts. The Ahom king was greatly enraged by this

28 Ibid., pp.22-23.
29 Ibid.
that the Jayantiya ruler had become a subordinate ally of the Ahoms.

The change of the attitude of Yasamattarai towards the Ahom king after the release of the Jayantiya traders was probably due to the impending advance of the Mughals, who had been preparing for an invasion of the Brahmaputra valley. The Jayantiya embassy sent in 1662 to the Ahom court was captured by the Mughals on its way, but one of the persons accompanying the party who escaped informed this to the Ahom monarch. On learning this Jaydhvaj Singha sent two envoys, the younger brother of Komorakhowa and Dayangiya Bara, with letters to the Jayantiya ruler in which he expressed his great satisfaction for sending envoys during the unfortunate days of the Mughal invasion of his kingdom. He also expressed his regret at the capture of the Jayantiya envoys by the Mughals. In order to avoid the Mughals, it was sent through Nortang route, instead of the usual Gobha route, which was blocked by the Mughals.

In his reply of **Jaistha, Šaka 1585** (May-June, 1663), sent through his envoy Ramai, the Jayantiya Raja Yasamattarai

**25**Ibid., p. 21.

**26**Ibid. Letter from Jaydhvaj Singha to Yasamattarai.

**27**Ibid. Letter to the Nortangiya Raja.
proposal, and said to the envoys thus, "Such a proposal is the violation of the existing diplomatic procedures. Why should he (Jayantiya ruler) make this proposal? This is a violation of the existing friendly relations." But the Prime Minister, who was king's father-in-law, had cleverly twisted the matter in order to avoid an open rupture with the Jayantiyas at that stage. He explained it to the king thus, "Had it been said by the Landha Sultan (Jayantiya ruler) it would have been written in his letter. It might be envoys' own creation." Thus saying the Jayantiya envoys were driven out of the royal court.

Meanwhile in November, 1663, while the Jayantiya envoy was still in the Ahom capital, Jaydhvaj Singha breathed his last and was succeeded by his cousin brother Siu-pung-möng alias Cakradhvaj Singha in the same month. On the advice of Rukma Buragohain, the new king sent back the Jayantiya envoy accompanied by the Ahom envoys, Komora and Narayan, as usual. In his letter to Yasamattarai of 2 Baisākh, 1586 (April, 1664), Cakradhvaj Singha, after expressing his

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32Ibid.
33Ibid.
34Ibid.
35A-B, p. 186; JB, p. 27.
36JB, p. 27.
initial happiness for the enquiry of his well-being at the
time of distress, he reminded between the two kingdoms and
asked him to continue the observance of the hitherto exis-
ting formalities. He wrote, "One is considered a mitra
(an ally, a friend) if he continued to remain in the same
position as before, then only friendship continues. If one
does not maintain the same position then how could the friend-
ship be maintained? In fact, the letter was a veiled threat
to the Jayantiyas to the effect that they should not try
to undermine the power of the Ahoms because of their defeat
at the hands of the Mughals, and that they should not try
to change the status of the Jayantiya kingdom in its relations
to the Ahom Government. In short, the Jayantiya Raja should
not make any attempt to overthrow the Ahom suzerainty. A
similar letter was addressed to the Governor of Nortang.
The Ahom ministers also wrote to the Jayantiya Raja in the
same manner.

In reply to the letters of the Ahom king and ministers
the Jayantiya Raja professed the continuation of friendly

37 Ibid., pp.27-28. Letter from the Ahom king to the Jayantiya
ruler.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., p.28.
40 Ibid., p.29.
relations between the two kingdoms by reaffirming that both the kingdoms were like one. However, the letter of the Raja of Nortang, who was the brother of Jayantiya king, written to Cakradhvaj Singha did not have designation of two "Sri", which was invariably done in addressing superiors. As the Ahom king was superior in position to both the Jayantiya king and the Raja of Nortang their letters to the former should contain two "Sri". The letter of Raja of Nortang with one "Sri" was, therefore, considered a serious lapse on his part, and was interpreted as a diplomatic indication of assertion of Jayantiya king's independent authority. The Jayantiya envoys had been sent back without giving any royal letters and presents, but only the letters and presents from the ministers handed over to the Jayantiya envoys.

Having received the reply from the Ahom ministers and governor through his envoys, the Jayantiya Raja, instead of admitting his guilt, wrote a letter expressing his veiled dissatisfaction at the unceremonial dismissal of the Jayantiya

41 Ibid. Letter of the Jayantiya ruler of 6 Asvina, Śaka 1586 (September, 1664) to the Ahom king.
42 Ibid., pp. 31-32.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
envoys from the Ahom royal court and also at not sending Ahom envoy with his envoys. He further pointed out that if there had any error or mistake in his letter this should have been stated in the reply or conveyed by the Ahom envoys. Instead the envoys had been treated roughly. Such behaviour, the letter reminded, was not conductive to the continuance of the friendship. Referring to the fault found in the letter addressed by the Raja of Nortang, the Jayantiya ruler also expressed his doubt about the genuineness of the complain. He also pointed out if their (Ahom-Jayantiya) relations were based on firm foundation, no outside influence could destroy it. He concluded his letter by reaffirming that "Jayantiya and Garhgaon are inseparable" and, therefore, the Ahom king should act in that spirit.

In their replies of Saka 1588 (1666), Cakradhvaj Singha and the ministers stated that it was not the Ahom king who broke the existing friendly alliance between two kingdoms, but it was he (the Jayantiya ruler), who was responsible for this, because he did not send his envoys and letters in the usual way. The letters claimed that the Ahom court

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45 Ibid., pp.32-34. Letter from the Jayantiya king to the Ahom Government on 8 Asvina, Saka, 1588 (September, 1666).
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid., p.38.
had been observing formilities without any alteration. "The punishment given to the Raja of Nortang by you near is a sufficient proof of the genuineness of our charge", their reply stated. They requested him to follow the prevailing procedures so that the old alliance continued.\(^{48}\)

Meanwhile the Ahoms reoccupied Lower Assam from the Mughals and drove them out beyond the Manaha river in 1669.\(^{49}\) This success of the Ahom brought a corresponding change in the attitude of the Jayantiya Raja. Instead of trying to assert his independence he was now bent on restoring the old subordinate alliance with the Ahoms. For this purpose he addressed letters to the Ahom king and ministers expressing his desire to offer a princess to the Ahom king.\(^{50}\) This signified his reacceptance of subordinate position. At the same time he expressed his delight at the reoccupation of their lost territory by the Ahoms. He also informed of his readiness to despatch a contingent of soldiers to Assam by the Dimarua route for the Ahom king's assistance and was waiting for instruction.\(^{51}\)

\(^{48}\)Ibid.

\(^{49}\)PAB,p.137; KuB,p.94.

\(^{50}\)JB,pp.35-36.

\(^{51}\)Ibid.
In their reply to the Jayantiya Raja of Pausa, Saka 1590 (December 1668), the Ahom king and the ministers reaffirmed their friendly relations between the two countries and reminded the Jayantiya ruler that the offering his nice would be accepted only if he had no daughter (because the Jayantiya Raja had a daughter). Regarding the despatch of soldiers to assist the Ahom army against the Mughals by the Dimarua route the letter stated that he (Jayantiya ruler) should not fix any route for sending the troops. They would be brought by any route as would be convenient for the Ahoms. 52

The Ahoms could understand the intention of the Jayantiya king in sending the force by the Dimarua route because this territory was formerly a vassal state of the Jayantiya Raja and passage of the Jayantiya army through it would help to reassert Jayantiya claims over Dimarua.

In the meantime there was a change of rulers in both the kingdoms. In 1669, Siu-nyat-phā alias Udayaditya Singha ascended the Ahom throne after the death of Cakradhvaj Singha 53 and in the same year Yasamattarai was succeeded by his son Mansingh, who, after ruling for six months, was deposed by

52Ibid.
his relative, Pratapsingh. Pratapsingh, while receiving the Ahom embassy revived the old claim of Jayantiya over Dimarua and sent back the Ahom envoys accompanied with Jayantiya envoy, Sudha. But soon he was killed by his son-in-law, Lakshmisingh, who became the king of Jayantiya.

On learning this Jayantiya envoy was sent back with some presents without any Ahom envoys to his kingdom to bring letters from the new ruler Lakshmisingh in his first letter, sent through envoy Ramai, of Saka 1593 (1671) to the Ahom king and his ministers, reiterated his alliance with the Ahom Government and expressed his willingness to maintain this relation. In his verbal message he proposed to give a princess in marriage, but demanded the return of Dimarua. But the claim was refused on the ground that Dimarua was acquired by the Ahoms after defeating the Mughals, not from the Jayantiyas. However, soon after the Jayantiya envoy died while he was in the Ahom capital. In continuation of existing relation the Ahom king and the ministers sent their two envoys, Baluram and

54 JB, p.40.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., pp.41-42.
58 Ibid., p.42.
59 Ibid.
Jaykrishna, with letter and presents for confirming their alliance.\textsuperscript{60} In the verbal message the Ahom envoys asked for the Jayantiya princess for the Ahom king. In the meantime, while the Ahom envoys were in the Jayantiya capital, Udayaditya Singha died and was succeeded by his brother Ramdhvaj Singha (1673-1675)\textsuperscript{61}, Lakshmisingh refused to offer the princess to the new Ahom king.\textsuperscript{62} The Ahom envoys in the Jayantiya capital unsuccessfully insisted on accepting the bridal presents in the name of the new king Ramadhvaj Singha. Lakshmisingh, however, did not agree and reiterated his claim over Dimarua and sent his envoy, Subuddhirai, with the Ahom envoys.\textsuperscript{63} The Ahom Government refused to accept the demand of Jayantiyas stating that the Ahom acquired Dimarua along with Darrang and Beltola after defeating the Mughals. Jayantiyas, therefore, had no claim over Dimarua.\textsuperscript{64} The Ahom Government threatened the closer of frontier markets but on the plea of Jayantiya envoys the Ahoms agreed to keep open the market for sometime and also sent letter to the Jayantiya king by the ministers without sending Ahom envoys.\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., pp.43-44.
\textsuperscript{61} A-B., p.229; JB, p.44.
\textsuperscript{62} JB, p.45.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., pp.46-47.
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., p.48.
On receiving the threat, the Jayantiya Raja changed his attitude and sent envoys with letters but expressing his regret at not sending Ahom envoys to his court. He also explained the reason for not accepting the bridal presents and also the reason for his demand of Dimarua. He wrote, "You know that Dimarua formerly belonged to us. It was occupied by the enemy. When it was recovered by our friend (i.e. the Ahoms), we had asked for Dimarua. There is, therefore, no reason on your part to get offended." The Buragohain in his letter to the Jayantiya Raja firmly refuted the claim and told Jayantiya Raja not to raise this question any more. Thereafter there was no more demand of Jayantiyas over Dimarua, but the usual correspondences continued.

After the accession of Siu-pāt-phā alias Gadadhār Singha in 1681, there was a change of Jayantiya policy towards the Ahoms. It was due to his vigorous measures taken against the Mughals to restore the occupied territories and also for the firm steps he took for strengthening the western border. The Jayantiyas now became anxious for continuing their subordinate alliance with the Ahom Government. With this end of

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66 Ibid., pp.48-49. Letter of Jayantiya ruler to the Ahom king.
67 Ibid., pp.48-51.
68 Ibid., pp.52-53.
view the Jayantiya ruler sent several envoys with letters to the Barphukan at Gauhati professing his friendship with the Ahom Government. During the reign of Gadadhar Singha, the relations with the Jayantiyas was maintained by the Barphukan at Gauhati and there was no direct contact between the two kings. During this period most of the letters and presents from the Ahom side had been conveyed not by the Ahom envoys but through the visiting Jayantiya envoys, three Dalais of Gobha, Neli and Khala employed as envoys by the Jayantiya ruler.

Relations with the Kachari Rulers

Siu-seng-phā, who succeeded in 1603, was looking for an opportunity to punish Yasanarayan, the Kachari ruler, who did not attend his coronation as was usual custom for a tributary ruler, and also failed to pay regular tributes to him. As mentioned in the previous chapter Yasanarayan had already invaded the Jayantiya kingdom and reduced its ruler Dhanamanik to a tributary status, and took away Yasamanik, the Jayantiya heir apparent, as hostage to the Kachari capital. On Dhanamanika's death, which came too

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69 Ibid., pp.54-64.
70 Ibid.
71 JB, p.13; KB, p.21; AB(SM), pp.40-41; ATR, p.85.
early, Yasamanik was released from the captivity and sent back to the Jayantiya kingdom as a tributary ruler. Being greatly dissatisfied with his position Yasamanik turned towards the powerful Ahom ruler to free himself from the Kachari bondage. With that end in view, he offered a Jayantiya princess to Siu-seng-phā with the request that she should be escorted to the Ahom capital by the Satgaon route which passed through the Kachari kingdom.

The Jayantiya offer presented a two-fold opportunity to Siu-seng-phā for undertaking a punitive measure against the Kachari ruler for his defying conduct, and also for drawing the Jayantiya kingdom within the tributary orbit of the Ahom Government. Knowing well that Yasanarayan would not easily allow a passage to the Jayantiya princess through his territory, Siu-seng-phā sent two envoys, Sitaliya and Srikanta, to the Kachari capital. As expected, the request was turned down by Yasanarayan on the plea that this would encourage the Jayantiya king to attack his country.

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72 Ibid., p.14; ibid.; ibid.; ibid., p.86; A-B, p.95.
73 Ibid.; ibid., p.22; ibid.; ibid.; DAB, p.57
74 KB, p.22; AB(SM), pp.41-42.
75 Ibid.; ibid.
Yasanarayan's refusal provided Siu-seng-phā a strong cause to take a punitive measure against him. Two armies, one under the command of Chāo-pet Buragohain and the Saring Raja proceeded by the Dhansiri route and reached Singha-Duar; the other led by Kan-seng Bargohain and Sundar Gohain proceeded up the Kalang to Raha, and from there by the Kapili, and reached Satgaon. From there they sent two envoys, Srikanta and Sitaliya to Yasanarayan requesting him again to give passage to the Jayantiya princess through his territory. Yasanarayan told the Ahom envoys thus, "You say that you have come on friendly terms but the Gohains (refering to the Bargohain and Sundar Gohain) have already invaded the outskirts of my country. This is certainly not the sign of amity." The envoys pleaded their ignorance of the invasion saying, "When one turns his back even the elephants and mountains (which are high enough) cannot be seen. You are established and preserved by Svargadeo. It is not the custom to uproot a planted tree, but if this planted tree does not give fruits or shade it is not to be kept by its owner."

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76 According to L. Devi it was the principal entrance to the city. ATR, p. 86.
77 KB, pp. 22-23; AB(SM), pp. 42-43; A-B, pp. 95-96; DAB, p. 57; ATR, pp. 86-87.
78 Ibid.
79 Ibid.
The envoys thus indicated that the Kachari Raja was established and protected by the Ahom king but as he was not obeying the order of his overlord, it had been decided to punish him. Being offended at their reply the two envoys were detained at the Kachari capital.

The Ahom army resumed its offensive, and after occupying several places advanced as far as Demera, and by staying there, it successfully escorted the Jayantiya princess to the Ahom capital. Siu-seng-phā asked the army to teach a good lesson to the Kachari ruler by drawing an analogy of a mad dog. "If a dog kept by a household goes mad and bites people it should be killed, similarly the Kachari ruler, who was established and preserved by us when did not obey according to my wish should be punished," he said. Accordingly, the Ahom army made preparations for a bigger attack on the Kachari capital. Learning this, Yasanarayan expressed his willingness to submit to the Ahoms, but his brother, Bhimbal Konwar strongly opposed this move. Instead, a Kachari army led by Bhimbal Konwar suddenly attacked the Ahom fort and killed a great number of persons including

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81 Ibid.; ibid.; A-B, p.95; DAB, p.57; ATR, p.86.
82 Ibid.; ibid.; ATR, p.87.
the Bargohain and Sundar Gohain. After his disaster Siusseng-phā recalled the other army commanded by the Buragohain and Saring Raja from Singha Duar.

Greatly assured of his strength, Yasanarayan adopted the title "Pratapanarayana" and changed the name of his capital from Maibong to "Kirtipur". The Ahom envoys, Sitaliya and Srikanta, who had been detained by him, were released and sent back on a raft by the Dhansiri river. They were also told by the Kachari ruler thus, "(I) have heard that no funerary rites are performed without the heads of the (deceased) persons. The heads of the Gohains (which were taken by the Kacharis after the war) would be returned if a request is made by the Ahom king." Thus the first attempt of Siusseng-phā to reassert his suzereignty over the Kachari ruler proved abortive leading to a break off in the Ahom Kachari relations.

By this time, a Muslim army under Syed Babakar was advancing upstream the Brahmaputra for an attack of the Ahom kingdom. Faced by this danger from a powerful enemy from

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83 Ibid., pp.24-25; ibid.; A-B, p.96.
84 Ibid., p.25; ibid., p.44; ATR, p.88.
85 Ibid.; ibid.
86 Ibid.; ibid.; ibid.
87 Ibid., p.26; ibid., pp.44-45; PAB, p.73.
the west, Siu-seng-phā thought it wise not to continue the struggle against the Kacharis, but to neutralise the Kachari Raja by renewing an offer of friendly alliance. The death of Yasanarayan followed by a short reign of Naranarayan and the succession of Bhibalnarayan provided an opportunity for such a rapport. At the same time sufficient care was taken not to expose the weakness of the Ahom king. Considering the despatch of envoys directly by Siu-seng-phā as tantamount to lowering the status of the Ahom monarch, five persons were sent representing the three ministers, the Saring Raja and the Barchetiya to the Kachari capital for the apparent purpose of making an enquiry of the health of Bhimbalnarayan, the new ruler. The five envoys, e.g. Kamala, Nitai, Rupai, Bihua and Langi-chang were received, but were charged for the unfriendly act of the Gohains, who had earlier invaded the outskirts of the Kachari kingdom. To this, the envoys cleverly answered that the Ahom Svargadeo had sent Sundar Gohain and others only to fetch the Jayantiya princess. "We do not know the Gohains advanced so far to fight (against

89Ibid., pp.25-26.
90Ibid.; ibid.
91KB,p.27; AB(SM),p.47.
the Kacharis). That you have killed the Gohains was just a punishment (to them)."\textsuperscript{92}

Being convinced of the genuineness of this explanation and sincerity of the purpose of the Ahom mission, Bhimbalnarayan decided to send his envoy in company with the Ahom envoys, and asked thus, "I shall send a person with you, do in such a manner so that friendly relation is establish between the two kings."\textsuperscript{93} To this they replied, "If you send we can take him with us to the Gohains (the three Gohain), who are the real author of creating friendly relations between kings."\textsuperscript{94} Accordingly, Bhimbalnarayan sent his envoy named Ramananda to the courts of the Gohains. Thus efforts of the Ahom court to revive friendly relations with the Kachari king succeeded.

The Kachari envoy was duly received by the Gohains in their respective courts who advised him to come again, by observing the customary procedures.\textsuperscript{95} He was sent back with three Ahom envoys to the Kachari court who were duly received by Bhimbalnarayan. They were sent back in company with his

\textsuperscript{92}Ibid.; ibid.
\textsuperscript{93}Ibid.; ibid.
\textsuperscript{94}Ibid.; ibid.
\textsuperscript{95}Ibid.; ibid., pp. 87-88.
own envoy, Ramananda with five letters - one to the Ahom king, one each to the three Gohains and one to the Bar-chetiya of Marangi. In this way, the usual diplomatic relations with the Kachari ruler were restored. By sending five letters as usual, Bhimbalnarayan put himself into the former position of a subordinate ruler. Correspondences and exchange of envoys between the two courts continued. Siu-seng-phā in his letter to Bhimbalnarayan started using the usual term "established and preserved" (thāpita-sāncita). Finding himself in the position of a subordinate ruler of the Ahoms, Bhimbalnarayan admitted the right of the Ahom king to address him as "established and preserved" and requested for an Ahom girl so that his position as a subordinate ruler was confirmed. The Ahom king, on the advice of his ministers, agreed to offer a girl on condition that Bhimbalnarayan himself should "come forward upto Singha Duar to fetch the girl." On agreeing to the proposal, Siu-seng-phā sent the daughter of Saringiya Handique under the escort

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96 Ibid., pp.27-28; ibid.
97 Ibid.; ibid.
98 Ibid.
100 Ibid.; ibid.; ibid.
of Chão-pet Buragohain and Sitaliya to Singha Duar, where they waited for Bhimbalnarayan to come and receive her. 101 As the latter did not appear, on the advice of Siu-seng-phã, the girl was sent to the capital with the Ahom envoy Sitaliya. 102 Bhimbalnarayan expressed his extreme pleasure on receiving the girl at his place, and offered presents to Sitaliya. 103 He was later sent back in company with Kachari envoys.

Though Bhimbalnarayan accepted the Ahom overlordship, he was looking for an opportunity to assert his authority. This is borne out by the fact that soon after the Mughal invasion of the Ahom kingdom under Syed Babakar, Bhimbalnarayan, too, attacked the Ahom frontier village, Baghargaon. 104 This again led to the dislocation of the Ahom-Kachari relations, which was not restored till the death of Bhimbalnarayan in 1637.

At the time of Mughal invasion of the Ahom kingdom in 1638, Indrabalnarayan, or Indraballabh, 105 the successor of

101 Ibid., p. 29; ibid.; ibid.
102 Ibid.; ibid.; ibid.
103 Ibid.; ibid.; ibid.
104 Ibid.; ibid., p. 53.
105 As Gait has referred to. op. cit., p. 121.
Bimbalnarayan, sent two envoys named Ujan Dalai and Kasinath to the Buragohain\textsuperscript{106} at Kajali to make friendly enquiries. But the main purpose was to collect information about the condition of the Ahoms during their difficult time. The Buragohain sent them back advising them to come again after observing all the norms existing between the two governments.\textsuperscript{107}

In the battle that ensued, the Ahoms defeated the Mughal army, and after negotiations a treaty was concluded fixing the Barnadi on the north and Asurar Ali on the south bank of the Brahmaputra as boundary between the two kingdoms.\textsuperscript{108}

King Indrabalnarayan, who was waiting to see the outcome of the struggle between his two powerful neighbours, decided to resume his relations with the Ahoms and sent an envoy to the Barbarua.\textsuperscript{109} Ujan Dalai, the envoy, who arrived at the court of the Barbarua, brought the following verbal message from Indrabalnarayan, "Svargamaharaja has appointed you as Barua at the frontier for the welfare of cows and Brahmins. I have also appointed you as Barua at the frontier...

\textsuperscript{106}It was not the Barphukan as L.Devi thinks. \textit{op.cit.}, p.90.
\textsuperscript{107}KB,pp,29-30.
\textsuperscript{108}PAB,p.113.
\textsuperscript{109}KB,pp.30-31.
for the welfare of cows and Brahmins." As it implied that the Barbarua was also an employee of the Kachari Raja, the former got offended and threatened the envoy that if necessary the Kachari country would be invaded. However, he advised the Kachari envoy to come again by observing due formalities.  

The threat worked. Fearing that there might be an attack from the Ahoms, who were now free from the Mughal incursion, in order to avenge the attack of Baghargaon by his predecessor Bhimbalnarayan, he sent his envoy Ujan Dalai with five letters to the Ahom king by observing the necessary formalities. In his letter, the Barbarua was addressed as the "Namjani Raja" meaning (Namjani=down country, Raja=king) "the king of down country". The Kachari ruler, thus retraced his position from asserting his independence to that of a subordinate ruler. The Kachari envoy was duly received by Siu-seng-phā, his three ministers and the Barbarua in their respective courts. On his return journey, he was accompanied by Sitaliya and Madhava Kandali deputed to the court

110 Ibid.; AB(SM), p.63; ATR, p.91.  
111 Ibid.; ibid.; ibid.  
112 Ibid.; ibid.; p.65; ibid.  
113 Ibid.; ibid.; ibid.
of Indrabalnarayan.\textsuperscript{114} The Ahom envoys were received by the 
Kachari ruler, who deputed Ujan Dalai and Kasinath with let-
ters and presents with the Ahom envoys to the Ahom kingdom.\textsuperscript{115}
In his reply sent through Sitaliya and Madhava Kandali, the 
Ahom monarch addressed the Kachari ruler as "established 
and preserved."\textsuperscript{116}

On hearing the death of Siu-seng-pha, and the accession 
of Siu-rām-pha nicknamed Bhaga Raja in 1641, Indrabalnarayan 
deputed his two envoys\textsuperscript{117} named Samardhula and Madhakandali 
with one letter addressed to the Ahom king by putting the 
seal of an independent king (lion-seal) and not that of a 
subordinate ruler.\textsuperscript{118} Finding Indrabalnarayan's letter sealed 
with the "lion-seal", the envoys were driven out of the court 
after tearing the letter.\textsuperscript{119} But the Gohains who were not 
in the favour of snapping the ties with the Kacharis at this 
stage, retained one envoy, Madhakandali, and sent the other 
to their kingdom asking him to come again with letters from

\textsuperscript{114}\textit{Ibid.}; \textit{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{115}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{116}\textit{Ibid.}; \textit{ibid.}; \textit{ibid.},p.92.
\textsuperscript{117}\textit{KB},p.33. According to \textit{AB(SM)},p.65 the name of the envoys 
were Majumdar and Cetiya Dalai.
\textsuperscript{118}From the references in the chronicles, it appears that a 
subordinate ruler addressing to his overlord, the Ahom 
king should use the "Phukan-seal" (Phukan-chap), not the 
\textsuperscript{119}\textit{KB},p.33.
his ruler by observing the formalities of a subordinate king. As he did not turn up for a long time, the other envoy was, too, sent back to his country. As a result the Ahoms relations with the Kacharis remained suspended.

During the reign of Siu-ting-phā, Birdarpanarayan, who had succeeded Indrabalnarayan to the Kachari throne, with a view to resuming his relations with the Ahoms deputed two embassies, one comprising of Majumdar and Demera Dalai by the Raha route, the other comprising of Phura Dalai by the Marangi route. The first was sent in his own name, the other in the name of his ministers. On instruction from the Ahom king, the Barchetiya, who was in charge of Marangi, detained Phura Dalai. But the two envoys, Majumdar and Demera Dalai who came by the Raha route were received by the Barbarua and were sent back in company with Ahom envoy named Sukatihunga. The Kachari envoys were instructed to come again after fulfilling all the formalities of diplomatic exchanges hitherto existing. They were also told that only then the other envoy, Phura Dalai, who came by the Marangi

120 Ibid.
121 Ibid.
122 Ibid., p.34. The number of envoys and their names differ from chronicles to chronicles. According to AB(SM), pp.67-68, Majumdar came through Marangi and Phura Dalai through Raha while DAB, p.86 puts Jeng and Phura Dalai through Marangi and Kaliyabar respectively.
route, would be released. This had led Birdarpanarayan to send Majumdar and Demera Dalai by observing the prevailing practices. In consultation with his minister the Ahom king sent his own envoys, Sitaliya and Ram, to the Kachari court in company with Majumdar and Demera Dalai. This had again, normalized the Ahom-Kachari relations. The Kachari envoy Phura Dalai, who was kept as hostage by the Barchetiya, was also released and sent back with the Ahom envoys. Sitaliya and Ram were received with due formality by Birdarpanarayan and were sent back with the Kachari envoys, who were received at the Ahom court. In his letter Siu-ting-phā addressed Kachari Raja as "established and preserved". Greatly enraged at this, Birdarpanarayan asked the Ahom envoys, "when did (he) establish and preserve me?" To this Sitaliya and Ram politely submitted, "If the king (Birdarpanarayan) does not know this, he may kindly make enquiry with the old ministers." After learning from his ministers that the

123 Ibid.
125 Ibid.
126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
128 Ibid.; ibid.
129 Ibid.; ibid.; ATR, pp. 92-93.
130 Ibid.; ibid.; ibid.
Kachari ruler was originally "established and preserved" by the Ahom king, he asked for a girl from the latter saying, "As Svargamaharaja had previously established and preserved (the Kachari ruler) by offering girl, hence he is justified in saying so. Well, like before, establish and preserve me by offering a girl". On hearing this Siu-ting-phā after consulting the ministers decided to offer a girl, and this was accordingly conveyed to the Kachari ruler, who again sent his envoys to the Ahom court.

By the time the Kachari envoys reached the Ahom capital, Siu-ting-phā passed away in 1648. His successor Siu-tām-lā alias Jaydhvaj Singha declined to accept the letter of Birdarpanarayan addressed to his predecessor, who was already dead, but advised the ministers to receive them outside the capital enclosure. The ministers, accordingly, received the Kachari envoys at the Elephant Stable (Hatisal). One of the envoys was sent back advising him to come back with letters properly addressed to the new king. This time two Ahom envoys were also sent with him to the Kachari capital.

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131 Ibid.; ibid.; ibid.  
132 Ibid., pp. 35-36; ibid., p. 69.  
133 Ibid.; ibid.  
134 SAB, p. 89; AB(SM), p. 70; KB, p. 37.
In compliance with the directive Raja Birdarpanarayan sent letter in proper order addressed to Jayadhvaj Singha with a request for a girl saying that he was the "son" of the Ahom king; and as "son" he was ready to obey his father. Siu-tâm-lâ, in his reply indicated his willingness and expressed his desire that if a girl were sent she should be received by Birdarpanarayan himself, if "he cannot, he should send either his brother or son, otherwise it won't be materialized." Birdarpanarayan expressed his inability to come to receive the girl personally as he was too busy, and his brother and son were minor, and he suggested that his officers would escort her. When this message of Birdarpanarayan was delivered by the Kachari envoys, Majumdar and Chetiya Dalai, they were charged at the court thus "Why did you say earlier that either the brother or the son of the king would come?" They were expelled from the court. This led to a break in relations of the Ahoms with the Kacharis.

A few years later, in view of the impending Mughal invasion, the Barphukan named Pikcai Chetiya made an all out
effort to restore the relations with Kacharis. He requested Garhgaonya Handique, who was posted at the Kachari frontier, to take such measures as would lead to the restoration of relations with the Kacharis. The Garhgaonya Handique, by a subtle means, spread rumours to the effect that the Ahoms would invade the Kachari kingdom, and at the same time sent word of temptation that an Ahom girl would be offered to the Kachari king on condition he resumed friendly relations.

On getting the news, Birdarpanarayan, being tempted by the offer rather than by the threat, sent two envoys named Camatakata and Satgaonya Patar to the Chaukiyal, the officer-in-charge of the Ahom frontier, with a request to restore friendly relations between the two kings. The Chaukiyal at the direction of his superior, sent back the Kachari envoys by advising them to come again after observing all the procedures, and an Ahom envoy named Nidhi was sent with him. This time the Kachari envoys were sent to the court of the Ahom king along with the Ahom envoy with letters and presents by observing all the procedures. Thus usual correspondences followed by further exchanges of envoys. On the second mission

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139 Ibid., pp. 73-74; ATR, p. 93.
141 Ibid.; ibid.
142 Ibid.; ibid., p. 40.
143 Ibid.; ibid.
of the Ahom envoys to the Kachari court. Nidhi, who was one of the envoys of the Barphukan, was replaced by the Ahom king's envoys named Ram and Laluk. During this period, the Kachari ruler sent six instead of five letters sent previously. Towards the later part of Jayadhvaja Singha's reign, Birdarpanarayan tried to reassert his position for he did not relish his position when he was addressed as the thapitasancitan (established and preserved) by the Ahom king. But the envoys of the kingdoms continued to be exchanged. During Mir Jumla's invasion of Assam, the Kachari envoys, who had been sent to the Ahom kingdom by the Kapili route were sent back by the Marangi route, as the former route was occupied by the Mughals. The Kachari envoys were told by the Ahom envoys to come some other time as the Mughal had invaded their country.

A few years after Cakradhvaj Singha's succession in 1663 and the defeat of the Mughals by the Ahom army, the Ahom Government deputed Ram and Laluk to the Kachari capital to make an enquiry about the Barchetiya, who had fled away during

144 Ibid.; ibid., p.41.
145 KB, p.41.
146 Ibid., p.48.
147 KB, p.49.
148 Ibid.
Mir Jumla's invasion. In the verbal message, the Ahom envoys enquired thus, "We have come to know that the Barchetiya fled to your country due to the Mughal invasion and are staying with you. If it is true, my friend (the Kachari Raja) will send him back." As this was not contained in the letter, the envoys were charged that which was not mentioned in the letter why should they say so? The Ahom envoys explained, "It was not mentioned because our government was not certain whether he was a prisoner of the Bangals (Mughals) or has been staying with my friend (you). If he were staying with you, we have been directed to make enquiry verbally."  

Birdarpanarayan refused to hand over Barchetiya to the Ahom envoys saying, "He was my refugee, how can I surrender him, I can not." He also said "And (I) have heard that the Bangals (Mughals) have been advancing and reached Kaliyabar". Such a reply indicated that the Kachari Raja was waiting for an opportunity, and expected that the Ahom army might be defeated. As such he dared to violate the existing diplomatic procedures and sent his letters to the Ahom king through the visiting Ahom envoys without sending his envoys.  

149 Ibid., p.51; AB(SM), p.89.  
150 Ibid., pp.51-52; ibid., pp.89-90.  
151 Ibid.; ibid.  
152 Ibid.; ibid.  
153 Ibid.; ibid.
On receiving the information from Laluk, one of the Ahom envoys, who, after leaving the other envoy Ram with the letter of the Kachari king at the outpost of the Ahom frontier, proceeded to the capital to report the matter. Cakradhvaj Singha became furious at this defying attitude of his subordinate ruler. He charged his own envoys for bringing letters from a foreign ruler, an act which they were not supposed to do, and ordered them to return the letter at the outpost of the Kachari kingdom.\footnote{154}

This bold step produced the desired result. Soon Birdarpanarayan sent his envoys Biha Dalai and Satgaonya Dalai to the Barphukan to renew the relations with the Ahoms.\footnote{155} The Barphukan received them at his court at Jakhalabandha, and sent them back with the advice to come again after observing the diplomatic procedures. "Only then", they were told, "the good relations would be reestablished".\footnote{156} The Kachari ruler then sent envoys by observing all the existing procedures.\footnote{157} They were, however, had to return from Satgaon due to the trouble there.\footnote{158}
In 1670, just after the accession of Udayaditya Singha, the Kachari ruler sent his envoys named Camatakata and Car-kari to renew the relations which remained suspended for several years. After receiving them by the Barphukan, they were sent to the Ahom capital. But the letter they were carrying was found to have been addressed to the late king. Hence they were sent back, but they did not return. As a result correspondence between the two kingdoms against stopped for the next eight years. The Kachari king was, perhaps, happy at this, for his had got opportunity to assert his independence.

After Gadadhar Singha's success, in 1681, in driving out the Mughals from the lower Assam as far as the Manaha river, which became the Ahom-Mughal boundary in subsequent period, the Kachari king, Birdarpanarayan, perhaps feeling insecure, tried again to revive his relations with the Ahoms by sending his envoy to the Barphukan. After the reception, the Kachari envoy was sent back with one envoy named Abhoiypuria Damodar with presents. He was instructed to come again with the

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159 Ibid., p.55.
160 Ibid., p.56.
161 Ibid., p.57.
162 Ibid.
formal letters. But the Kachari envoy did not turn up, and the Ahom envoy was sent back without any escort.\textsuperscript{163} Thus the old relations with the Kachari king was not resumed.

On the accession of Gagurdhvaj, the son of Birdarpanarayan, attempt was made to restore the old relations with the Ahoms by sending a Dalai to the Barphukan,\textsuperscript{164} requesting him to send an Ahom envoy. The Barphukan, and the command of the Ahom king, charged the Kachari Dalai for the sending back the Ahom envoy earlier without escort, and also advised him to come with letters after observing the usual formalities.\textsuperscript{165} There was, however, no further communication during the remaining years of the reign of Gadadhar Singha.

Relations with the Koch Rulers

In 1603, Mansingh, a step brother of Parikshitnarayan, the ruler of Koch Hajo portion of the Koch kingdom fled away, for fear of his life, to the Ahom capital. Siu-seng-phā gave him shelter and established him at Namrup with the title "Namrupiya Raja" like other frontier princes.\textsuperscript{166} When requested by Parikshitnarayan for his surrender it was declined

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{163}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{164}Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{165}Ibid., pp. 57-58.
\item \textsuperscript{166}PAB, p. 72.
\end{itemize}
on the ground that he was protected prince of the Ahoms. This small episode indicated that the relations between Ahoms and the Koch rulers of Koch Hajo were strained at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Ahom Government was bent on taking advantage of the internal feuds among the Koch princes. But soon a new development occurred. The hostility between Raghudev and Lakshminarayan was revived by Raghudev's son Parikshitnarayan against Lakshminarayan. The opportunity was seized by Siu-seng-phā to demand submission of Parikshit, as his father did as a subordinate ally by offering his daughter. Realising the situation of being placed between two enemies, Parikshit agreed to meet the demand of the Ahom king. He, however, requested for thirty elephants as a token of his submission. Thus the relations between the Ahom king and that of the Koch Hajo were restored.

In the battle that took place between the armies of Parikshit and Lakshminarayan, the latter was defeated. Finding his position critical, Lakshminarayan turned to the Mughals for support and readily agreed to acknowledge the

169 Ibid.; ibid.
Mughal suzereignty, and to pay annual tribute. It was also agreed that the combined armies would attack Koch Hajo, and after its occupation by them, Lakshminarayan would be allowed to take possession of it. This agreement opened a new avenue to the Mughals and paved the way for their territorial expansion towards the eastern part of the Brahmaputra valley. Accordingly the Mughal army under Makaram Khan advanced against Koch Hajo towards the end of 1612. As was natural, Parikshit approached to the Ahom monarch through his envoy to support him against the Mughals. But the Ahom king failed to realize the gravity of situation and insisted that before any Ahom army was sent to assist him, he should come personally to the Ahom king. As Parikshit declined, he was left with no other alternative but to submit to Makaram Khan. He wrote to the Ahom king through the Ahom envoy, Dharadhar thus, "we have been acting as a fence against Bangal (the Mughals), as such you are not getting the thrust (of the Mughals). We, the fence against the Bengal, if broken, your (capital) Gargaon will be like a washing platform (on which the washermen wash their cloths)."

171 Ibid.
172 AB(SM), p.45.
173 Ibid.
On Parikshit's surrender in July 1613, he was first taken to Dacca, then called Jahangir Nagar, and after some time he was taken to Delhi. Consequently the Koch Hajo or the eastern Koch kingdom came directly under the Mughals, and brought them into direct contact with the Ahoms. But Parikshit's brother, Balinarayan fled away and submitted himself to the Ahom king saying, "The whole family has fallen to the sea of Gariya (the Mughals). May Svargadeva save us."\textsuperscript{175} This has happened in 1614. After remonstrating Balinarayan for the conduct of his elder brother, Parikshit, Siu-seng-phā assured him protection and assistance to fight the Bangals.\textsuperscript{176} Some more Koch princes, including the sons of Parikshit headed by Rupnarayan, Chandranarayan also sought protection of the Ahom king, who received them kindly and established some of them at Janji.\textsuperscript{177} The Ahom army supported Balinarayan against the Mughals and succeeded to capture the eastern portion of Koch Hajo.

The Mughal attempt to push their eastern frontier further east led them to serious conflict with the Ahoms. The defeat

\textsuperscript{175}PAB, pp. 80-81; DAB, p. 59.
\textsuperscript{176}Ibid.; A-B, p. 98.
\textsuperscript{177}DAB, p. 62; AB(SM), p. 50.
of the Mughals resulted in the Ahom occupation of the eastern Koch territory lying between the Bharari (Bharali) and Barnadi on the north bank. In 1616, the Ahom king installed Balinarayan as a tributary ruler by giving the title 'Dharmnayyan'.

Greatly encouraged by his victory over the Mughals, Siu-seng-pha endeavoured to befriend Lakshminarayan, the kind of Koch Behar, to make a common cause against the Mughals. Lakshminarayan, however, refused to join with the Ahoms; at the same time he expressed his willingness to act as a negotiator between the Ahoms and the Mughals for the concluding a peace. When Birukarji came to the Ahom court for this purpose, he was detained by the Ahom Government as hostage. This led to the renewal of war between the Ahoms and the Mughals. As a result the Mughal authority in Kamrup was consolidated. At this stage Chandranarayan, who was staying at Janji escaped from the Ahom kingdom and took shelter under the Mughals, who placed him at Karaibari.

180 AB(SM), p. 52.
181 Ibid.
182 Ibid.
183 Ibid.
In the next phrase of struggle between the Ahoms and the Mughals which started sometimes in early 1636, Dharma-narayan joined the Ahom army in defeating the Mughals and pushed them from Kamrup as far as Goalpara. As a result, many Bhuyan chiefs of north bank made their submission to the Ahoms. As a reward, Siu-seng-phā granted Koch Hajo to Dharmanarayana. At the victory of the Ahoms, Chandranarayan, again, transferred his allegiance to the Ahoms. Inspite of his betrayal, Sin-seng-phā offered him asylum and installed him as a vassal chief on the south bank. The Mughal general, Allah Yar Khan, wrote letters to the Barbarua requesting him not to give Chandranarayan shelter for he was turned a haramkhor (betrayer). Being an ambitious prince Chandranarayan was able to establish his position on the southern bank and to free the area from the Mughals.

Lakshminarayan, the ruler of Koch Behar, who refused an offer of alliance from the Ahom king, instead wanted to act as a peace mediator between the Ahoms and the Mughals, now changed his stand. On seeing the success of the Ahoms he

185 DAB, pp.72-80.
186 Ibid.
187 AAR, p.264.
189 PAB, pp.174-176.
sought to make alliance by offering his daughter. While negotiations were in progress Lakshminarayan died and succeeded by Birnarayan, who now refused to honour the pledge given by his predecessor. At this stage his minister Birukarji offered his daughter to Siu-seng-phâ and his grand daughter to his son. After 1639, Mahendranarayan, son of Dharmanarayan, who died earlier during the Ahom-Mughal war, was installed as the tributary Raja of Darrang and was instructed to consult the Barphukan on all important matters. Mahendranarayan made Mangaldai as his capital. From this time onward the position of the Darrang Raja remained as tributary till the end of the Ahom rule.

Regarding the Ahom relations with Koch Behar, Prananarayan, the king of Koch Behar, who had refused the proposal of Siu-seng-phâ to side with him, made a proposal of friendship by sending an envoy named Gokulchandra to Jaydhvaj Singha, who ascended the Ahom throne in 1648. Recalling the previous reaction of the Koch king to an Ahom proposal, Jaydhvaj Singha gave a reply on an ordinary piece of paper without covering it, through Bhavananda and Abhay, the two envoys. Finding the

190 DAB, p.71.
191 Ibid.
192 Ibid.
193 Ms. No.57; AB(SM), p.72.
letter without envelope (kulapatra), Prananarayan became furious and asked, "Why did you bring a letter without a kulapatra?" The two Ahom envoys had been expelled from his court and letter was torn to pieces. Subsequently, however, Prananarayan tried to effect a reconciliation with the Ahom king through Banamali Gossain, who, at that time, was staying at Madhupur close to Koch Behar. But Prananarayan's attempt did not prove a success for, the two messengers, who brought Prananarayan's letter to the Ahom court had been charged for bringing letter without accompanying Ahom envoys. The Ahom king, too, retaliated by tearing the letter and the driving away the Koch messenger from the Ahom court.

Sometime later, taking the opportunity of great confusion prevailing in the Mughal empire due to the civil strife that took place among the sons of Mughal Emperor, Shahjahan, Prananarayan made great effort to regain the lost territories by resorting to plundering raids at Ghoraghat region, and also by declining to pay the stipulated tribute to the Mughal

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194 ATR, p.237.
195 AB(SM), p.72.
196 Ibid.
197 Ibid., p.73.
Emperor. Thus he assumed the status of an independent king.
He also made attempts to take possession of Kamrup, first
by making peace overtures to Durllabhnarayan, the zamindar of
Barnagar, and the vassal of the Mughals.  

198 On the refusal of the latter to do so, Prananarayan despatched his general,
Bhavanathkārjī, to capture Dullabhnarayan and to occupy his estate.  

199 Realizing his weak position Durllabhnarayan fled to Beltola close to Gauhati, and took shelter under
Mahidharnarayan, the Koch chief of Beltola.  

200 On learning this, Jayadhvaj Singha sent presents to Durllabhnarayan thus supporting the action of Mahidharnarayan.  

201 Nawab Mir Lutfullah, the Mughal Fauzdar at Gauhati, on learning Bhavanathkārjī's advance, sent his envoy to Prananarayan asking the cause of sending an army to capture Dullabhnarayan, for the latter was a tributary to the Mughals. In the meantime, the army sent to stop the advance of Bhavanath, was defeated. Mir Lutfullah became greatly apprehensive of having enemies on two sides - the Ahoms on the east and the Koch on the west. He, therefore, fled away from Gauhati leaving a great

198 Ka.B, p.52; AB(SM), pp.74-75.
199 Ibid.; Ibid.
200 According to Ka.B, p.52, Durllabhanarayan came to Darrang and submitted himself to Jaydhvaj Singha.
number of articles and weapons. The Ahom took possession of Gauhati, Pandu, Saraighat, and the Koch army under Bhavanathkarji took Hajo. At this stage king Prananarayan with a view to uniting the territory of Darrang with that of Koch Behar, again, proposed to Jayadhvaj Singha an alliance as well as a division of the Mughal territory between him and the Ahoms. Jayadhvaj Singha, however, rejected it. Soon after, the Ahom troops marched against Prananarayan's army at Hajo. The Koch army was defeated and fled to Koch Behar. This happened sometimes in 1659.

Soon after a Koch Behar force under Bhavanandakarji advanced towards the Mana river, and Prananarayan with an army advanced to an occupied Dhubri after defeating the brother of Mughal Fauzadar. The Ahoms, too, after defeating Bhavanathkarji, advanced to Dhubri and in the battle that ensued the Koch Behar army was badly defeated. Thereafter, Prananarayan retired to his own dominion to the west of the Sonkosh. The Ahom army made further advance and occupied Haticala and Baritala beyond Dhuburi.

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202 AB(SKD), p.15.
205 Ka.B, p.54.
206 Ibid.
Relations between the Ahoms and the Koches were revived after the defeat of the Ahoms as well as Prananarayan of Koch Behar by the Mughals under Mir Jumla in 1662. The rulers of both the kingdoms had learnt "the folly of despiring of co-operation" between them.207 Had the armies of Ahoms and the Koches combined together against the Mughals, the results of the war might have been different.208 It appears that the powers realised their mistakes when their kings sought mutual friendship. In this respect, the initiative was taken by Jayadhvaj Singha, who sent his envoy Gopalcaran from to his camp at Namrup.209 The Ahom envoy went to meet Prananarayan at Baska hill in the Bhutan border. L.Devi, however says that it was Prananarayan, who took initiative to revive the friendly relations.210 After returning to his capital, Prananarayan reciprocated by sending his envoy to Jayadhvaj Singha. The Ahom king was pleased to receive the Koch envoys at his camp at Raisa,211 a few miles from his capital. In his reply of 10 Phalquna, Šaka 1584 (Feb.1663) to Prananarayan's letter, Jayadhvaj Singha expressed his happiness for making enquiry

207 ATR,p.241.
208 Ibid.
210 ATR,p.241.
of him at the most difficult time faced by him (this refers to the Mughals occupation of the Ahom capital). In his letter, he recalled that it was due to the betrayal of some subjects who joined the Mughals that he lost his own kingdom, and Prananarayan lost his. Among those who did so, the letter observes, were, the son of Harideka and Baduli Phukan. He then sought Prananarayan's friendship against the Mughals.

In reply Pranarayan wrote a long letter, in which, he recalled the history of the old friendship existing between the two kingdoms. Comparing himself to 'Arjuna' and the Ahom king to 'Krisna', he expressed his willingness to accept his advice. The friendship between the two was not of recent origin but was very old which originated in an oath of friendship between his great grandfather and the Ahom king. For sometime past, this friendship past, this friendship stopped resulting in the loss of kingdom by both the rulers. They now got back their country. Prananarayan consoled the Ahom king by saying that he should not feel sorry for his temporary disposal from his throne for similar fate befell on Ramachandra, Surath, and Yudhisthir, as all of them got their kingdoms back, so

212 Ibid., p.70-71.
213 Ibid.
214 The letter has two dates. In one portion of the letter it is written that the date of writing is 5 Asada San 1584 (June, 1662) and reached on 6 Bhadra, Saka 1585 (August, 1663) while in another portion the date of writing is put as 5 Bhadra, Saka 1585 (August, 1663). Ka.B, pp.71-79.
also the Ahom king. Prananarayan also recounted the whole history of the Koch kingdom and its relations with the Ahom kings. In conclusion he advised Jayadhvaj Singha to make necessary preparations to fight the Mughals, which might continue for several years and requested to keep him informed of the developments. This letter clearly shows that the invasion of Mir Jumla had put to an end to the hostilities between the Ahom and the Koch kings, and started a new era of friendship, mutual co-operation and good will. Prananarayan wrote another letter to the Ahom Prime Minister praising his political wisdom and requesting him to consolidate friendly relations between the two kingdoms. In his reply of 26 Bhadra, Šaka 1585 (September, 1663) Jayadhvaj Singha, addressing Prananarayan as "Kamateswar", recalled the long existing friendship between the two kingdoms since the time of Visva Singha. "The temporary enmity between the two ruling powers due to advance of Bhavanath to Hajo has now been forgotten by us. The Koch king, too, should forget it". He also referred to the cases of Jaynarayan and Makardhvaj who had been promised by the Ahom king to set up at Bijaypur. But

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215 Ibid.


217 Ka.B,p.79.
because of their betrayal they were turned into enemy, "as such your enemy is our enemy and our enemy is your enemy. He is the cause of enmity. Knowing it do not give him any shelter." In conclusion he hoped that both the powers would attack the Mughals from two sides. In his reply Prananarayan expressed his delight at the continuing friendship with the Ahom king, and hoped that regular envoys with letters would shuttle between the two courts, so that the existing friendship was strengthened. He also agreed to the proposal of the Ahom king that "your enemy is our enemy and our enemy is your enemy". If the two powers were united it would be a union of fire and wind which would burn all kinds of trees. He also proposed that the regular communication of envoys between the two kingdoms was difficult due to the Mughal occupation of Lower Assam. Therefore, an easier communication by the hilly route north of Darrang was suggested. This letter was carried by three envoys Paramananda Sarma, Gopalcaran and Ramcaran. This letter was received by Cakradhvaj Singha.

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218 Ibid., pp.79-80.
219 Ibid.
220 Letter of Phalguna, Śaka 1585 (March, 1664).
221 Ibid.
In a subsequent letter, Prananarayan informed Cakradhvaj Singha about the activities of the Mughals who had captured elephants in his forest. Cakradhvaj Singha expressed his regret at the troubles given to him by the Mughals. In their letters to Prananarayan, the Buraqohain, the Bargohain, and the Barpatragohain stressed their old friendship between the two kingdoms and desired that it would be strengthened. There had been further communications between the two kingdoms. In a letter which was carried by Bhima and Nandana written on 24 Magha, Saka 1587 (10 Feb., 1666) by Cakradhvaj Singha, he expressed his satisfaction at the information given to him about the internal troubles in the Mughals empire and also about his preparations against the Mughals. After the death of Prananarayan his son Madnarayan (1668-1680) continued the policy of his father towards the Ahoms and sent envoys with letters to the Ahom king. In a letter of 28 Sravana, Saka 1589 (14 August, 1667) king Cakradhvaj Singha, reaffirming friendship, requested the Koch ruler to attack the Mughals in his frontier while he would attack the Mughals at

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223 Though this letter, according to the chronicles, is of Jaydhvaj Singha, it should be from his successor, Cakradhvaj Singha.
225 Letter to Prananarayan.
Soon after the recovery of Gauhati by the Ahom army, the Koch king deputed messengers to the Ahom court. The letter, which was sent without observing the customary diplomatic procedures by the Koch ruler, was not opened and was sent back. The Barphukan, on directive of the king, sent a letter to the Koch king asking him the reason for sending letter by not observing the usual diplomatic procedures. From this fact it appears that the Koch ruler was in doubt about the outcome of the struggle of the Ahoms against the Mughals. This indicates the change of the attitude of the Koch ruler towards the Ahoms. It was because the Koch ruler of Koch Behar, as the subordinate ruler of Mughals, had to support the Mughal army fighting against the Ahoms. After this, the diplomatic correspondence between the two courts discontinued for some years.

After the defeat of the Mughals at Itakhuli in 1681 and their expulsion from Lower Assam up to the Manaha during the reign of Gadadhar Singha, Raja Mahendranarayan (1682-1693) of Koch Behar sent envoys and letters to the Barphukan intimating him with the news that the Nawab of Dacca requested

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226 Letter to Madnarayan.
228 Ibid.; Ibid.
him to mediate between the Ahoms and the Mughals. He also informed the Ahom king about his not agreeing to the proposal on the ground that the Mughals wanted to have ten lakhs rupees from the Ahoms as indemnity, and also not making the Koch king free from Mughal liabilities. In his letter, Mahendranarayan desired the continuation of the old friendship and stated that the Mughals were the common enemy of both the powers. He also requested the Barphukan to attack the Mughal garrison at Rangamati. He said, if they made a simultaneous attack on the Mughals, Dacca would fall into their hands. This letter indicated that the attitude of the Koch Raja towards the Ahoms had changed as the later had been successful in driving out the Mughals. In his reply of October, 1685 to Mahendranarayan, the Barphukan expressed his unhappiness at the discomfort of the Koch ruler at the hands of the Mughals. But this letter did not reach Koch Behar due to dislocation of communication. After this, correspondences between the two courts had discontinued till the end of the period.

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230 ATR, p.248.
231 Ibid.
Relations with the Mughals

The speedy end of the Koch power in Koch Behar and the annexation of Koch Hajo to the Mughal dominions during the first quarter of the seventeenth century brought the Mughals into direct contact with the Ahoms. The eastern boundary of the former became conterminous with that of the latter. As stated in the previous chapter, due to the occupation of Koch Hajo and the capture of its ruler Parikshit by the Mughals, his younger brother, Balinarayan fled away to the Ahom kingdom and was granted asylum by Siu-seng-phā, the reigning Ahom monarch. J.N.Sarkar, R.C.Majumdar, S.K.Bhuyan hold the view that this action of Siu-seng-phā served as an occasion for an invasion by the Mughals.232 The Ahom chronicles, however, give no indication that the Mughal invasion of the Ahom territory had anything do with the protection granted by the Ahom king to Balinarayan. No doubt it might have caused irritation to the Mughals, but the actual hostilities began only after the Ahom soldiers seized the articles, such as aloe wood, black pepper, ivory purchased by a Mughal trader named Ratan Shah at Singari. Two men belonging

to the trader were also captured and killed on the charge of doing illegal trade and also collecting information within the Ahom territory. Ratan Shah, escaped by boat to Hajo, where he reported the matter to Sayyid Babakar (Sayyid Aba Bakr), the Mughal general in charge of Koch Hajo. On learning that it was the river Bharali that formed the eastern boundary of Parikshit's dominion, and that Singari lay to the west of that river, the Mughal general became furious at the audacity of the Ahoms to commit murder of Mughal subjects within their own territory and to plunder articles purchased for the Emperor. He, therefore, despatched Satrajit, his subordinate, to retaliate and, if possible, to punish Ahom officers for their atrocious misdeeds. Satrajit quickly sailed up the Brahmaputra with a strong navy and plundered the royal stores at Sala and carried away two female dancers from a temple there. The four Ahom officers, Sengdhara, Habung Piksai, Madnokhowa and Rankap stationed at Sala being unable to hold their position against Satrajit fled away to Atalbari east of Bisvanath. After his successful campaign Satrajit returned to Hajo.

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234 According to Baharistan-i-Ghaybi, Vol.1, tr. by Dr. M.I. Bora, Gauhati, p.107, he was the Zaminder of Bhusha.
235 PAB, p.82. According to AB(SM), p.46 three female dancers (natini).
Satrajit's advance to Sala was the beginning of a long series of wars between the Ahoms and the Mughals for the next quarter of a century. A well-organized Ahom force, which included army and navy, was despatched against the Mughals, and the king, himself followed the army. Learning the advance of the Ahom army, the Mughals, too, made their encampments at Bharali. This led to a serious battle at Bharali. After an initial setback, the Ahom army defeated the Mughals and several generals including the Sayyid Babakar, the commander, were killed and several chiefs (Rajas) accompanying him surrendered themselves to the Ahoms. A large amount of booty which included ammunition, cannons, boats, elephants, horses, swords fell to the hands of the Ahoms.

Following this war several developments occurred that had bearing on the Mughals' relations with the Ahoms. First, the western boundary of the Ahom kingdom was pushed further west to Kajali on the south bank and Barnadi on the north bank. Secondly, the pretty chieftains on the south bank including the chief of Dimarua submitted to the Ahom king.

\[\text{Ka.B, p.20.}\]
\[\text{A-B, p.98; DAB, pp.61-62.}\]
\[\text{Ibid.; ibid.; AB(SM), pp.49-50; PAB, pp.86-87.}\]
\[\text{Ka.B, pp.23-24; AB(SM), p.46; PAB, p.88.}\]
Thirdly, several Koch princes headed by Chandranarayan and Rupnarayan placed themselves under the protection of the Ahom king. Fourthly, the Koch prince, Balinarayan was placed as the subordinate Raja of the newly acquired territory from Bharali to Barnadi on the north bank, and named him "Dharmnarayan".  

The Ahom Mughal war continued intermittently till 1639. During this period attempts for peace between the two sides by Lakhinarayan, the ruler of Koch Behar, through Birukarji came to naught. Satrajit, too, pretending submission to the Ahom king and addressing the latter as my "father", tried to obtain trade benefits for the Mughals. He deputed two traders Uma and Kanai as envoys to the Ahom king with letters. King Siu-seng-phã too, through his envoy, Kamalloca, sent his approval and asked Satrajit to eat a quantity of salt and rice sent by him to prove that he was loyal as a son to him. The king sent too, in the name of the queen, a set of female dress to Satrajit's wife. Satrajit ate a morsel of rice and salt symbolising the acceptance of his

240 Ibid.; ibid., p. 50.


242 Ibid.; ibid.
allegiance to the Ahom king. In this way communications con­tinued between the Ahom king and Mughal general, Satrajit. As a result the Mughal traders obtain certain benefits in the frontier marts.

On receiving the information of Satrajit's allegiance to the Ahom king, Islam Khan, the Nawab of Bengal, removed Satrajit, on the approval of the Emperor, from his post as Thanadar and stationed him at an advanced outpost. On the other hand, the Nawab of Dacca sent his envoys Bajit Khan and Gopal with three Assamese traders, but the Ahom Government declined to receive them at the frontier outpost on the ground that the envoys should not have come with traders, who were not authorized to bring foreign missions.

In the meantime, Parikshit's uncle Mamu Govinda, a ruling chief of Beltala, whose son Manunarayan was killed by Dharmanarayan for acting as an independent chief, betrayed the Ahoms and joined with the Mughals. Satrajit, too, betrayed the Ahoms by not surrendering Mamu Govinda as promised earlier, whom he captured, instead he was sent to Dacca.

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243 SAB, p.83.
244 According to AB(SM), p.55 his name was Bajio Khan.
245 Baharistan-i-Ghaybi, p.49, Note No.6.
246 PAB, p.94.
amount to Abdul Islam, fled away and took shelter in Darrang.\textsuperscript{247} Abdul Islam demanded the surrender of Harikesh, stating that "I am to receive Rs.500/- from Harikesh Svargadeo should send him." Harikesh was not surrendered on the plea that he was refugee, who sought shelter in the Ahom kingdom. "It was against their custom to surrender a refuge."\textsuperscript{248}

The reply of the Ahom king stated that the Mughals, too, had earlier given protection to Mamu Govinda in their territory and was not surrendered to the Ahoms when asked for.\textsuperscript{249} Besides, there were fresh incidence in the border leading to retaliation and counter-retaliation by both sides. All these led to a fresh conflict. A Mughal force despatched in 1635 to capture Harikesh was successfully opposed by the Ahoms near the Bharali river. Ahom king, Siu-seng-phā in consultation with the ministers decided to fight the enemy. The Ahom army took the initiative and after defeating the enemy at several places it advanced as far as Nagarbera and Samariya, on the south bank and made encampment on the bank of the Kulsi river. Abdul Islam was killed and a large booty

\textsuperscript{247}Ibid., p.98; Ka.B, p.30.
\textsuperscript{248}Ibid., p.98; ibid., p.34.
\textsuperscript{249}Ibid.
and ammunition fell to the Ahom's hand. Having received the news of this disaster Islam Khan, the new Nawab of Bengal despatched in 1637 a large army under Mirja Jahina\textsuperscript{250} and Allah Yar Khan\textsuperscript{251} to assist the Mughal force in Assam.\textsuperscript{252} After defeating the Ahom army at several engagements, the Mughal army came up to Kajali.\textsuperscript{253} At the battle of Kajali, the Ahoms experienced the same fate, and the Mughals pushed them further east to Mari Baralimukh. In order to gain time for the completion of a strong fort at Samdhara, the Ahom generals sent an envoy named Sanatan to enquire about the reason of their advance. The Mughal general asked for aloe wood, ivory, gold and black pepper. "If the Nawab wants elephants we will catch them for him, aloe wood, black pepper; whatever is required we will deliver. Why should he fight?"\textsuperscript{254}

On receiving this demand the Ahom generals having had

\textsuperscript{250} Almost all the Assamese chronicles put his name as Mirja Jahina; Maathir-ul-Ummara, p.211, records that Islam Khan Mushhad sent army to Kuch Hajo under the command of his brother, Mir Zainuddin Ali; Gait puts his name as Zainul Abidan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.115.

\textsuperscript{251} Maathir-ul-Ummara by Nawab Samsam-ud-Daula Nawab Khan and his son Abdul Hayy, tr. by H.Beveridge, Rev., Annotated and completed by Bani Prasad, Vol.I, Calcutta 1911-41, p.211; \textit{PAB}, p.106.

\textsuperscript{252} \textit{PAB}, p.106.

\textsuperscript{253} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.107-109.

\textsuperscript{254} \textit{Ibid.}, p.110. The language of the message is slightly different in \textit{AB(SM)}, p.61.
consultation among themselves deputed Sanatan to Mirja Jahina with the message that "It will take six months' time to reach Garhgaon. If the General give us time we can inform our king and deliver the articles demanded by you."\(^{255}\) When the fort at Samdhara was complete, the Ahom generals sent information to the Mughals refusing to comply with the demand of Mirja Jahina, and the war renewed. In the battle at Samdhara, the Mughals were severely defeated and had to fall back to Hajo. Mirja Jahina, keeping Allah Yar Khan at Hajo as Thanadar, returned to Dacca.\(^{256}\) The latter, being defeated at several engagements sought for peace and a treaty was concluded in 1639 by which Barnadi on the north and Asurar Ali on the south became the boundary between the two territories.\(^{257}\) This treaty was followed by peace for the next twenty years. In reality, however, it was a period of diplomatic war of charges and counter charges between the two powers.\(^{258}\)

Soon after the conclusion of the treaty, Allah Yar Khan sent his envoy, Kamaljan, with letters addressed to both the Barbarua and the Chetiya Gohain, requesting them to allow

\(^{256}\) Ibid., p.42; AB(SM), p.61.
\(^{257}\) Ibid.; ibid.; PAB, p.113.
\(^{258}\) S.N. Bhattacharyya, op.cit., p.286.
the Mughal traders to come to the frontier marts for exchange of articles. In this letter the writer stated that since he was inferior to the Ahom king, the latter should save him. The Ahom monarch granted his request and trade and commercial intercourse between the two sides resumed.

Sometime earlier, Koch prince, Chandranarayan, who had taken refuge in the Ahom kingdom, fled away and joined Allah Yar Khan, who placed him at Karaibari. Soon, however, he came again to the Ahom kingdom. In 1640 Allah Yar Khan, the Mughal Thanadar, deputed Lenga and Polonga to the Barbarua with a request not to give shelter or any help to Chandranarayan, and to surrender him. He wrote, "If you hand over that haramkhor (betrayer) to us the good relations will continue." In his reply to Allah Yar Khan, sent through his envoys, Sanatan and Kanu, the Barbarua declined the request to handover Chandranarayan, who took shelter with them for the Mughals did not handover, earlier, such persons, and pointed out similar reaction on the part of the Mughals shown previously in cases of Ahom subjects taking shelter in the Mughals dominions. The Thanadar did not make any further

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259 This letter has two different dates at two different chronicles. According to PAB, p.171, it is 10 Phalguna Saka 1551 (1630) while Ka.B, pp.42-43 puts it as 10 Phalguna, Saka 1560 (1639).

260 PAB, p.113.

261 Ibid., pp.174-175.

262 Ibid., pp.175-176.

263 Ibid., pp.176-178.
demand for the surrender of Chandranarayan.

In 1641, some of the Mughal soldiers had forcibly taken away the articles offered by Bhutiyas (Bhutanese) to the temple of Gopeswar, which was situated near Singari within the Ahom dominion.264 This had provided the Ahoms a good opportunity to take punitive measure against the Mughals. Ahom soldiers disguised as Bhutanese seized and killed, at least twenty three Mughal subjects near Singari on the pretext that the Mughals had earlier plundered and took away their valuable articles offered to the temple of Gopeswar.265 Having learnt this Allah Yar Khan pretending to have no knowledge of the fate of these twenty-three persons, wrote several letters in the next two years, to the Barbarua.266 In his replies, the Barbarua repeatedly denied of having any knowledge of the fate of those persons. He wrote back that the Bhutanese, though they received their cereals from the plains, often killed the Ahom subjects as they killed the people of Darrang and other neighbouring territories. They might have also killed these twenty-three Mughal subjects. He further wrote that

264 Ka.B, p.44.
265 Ibid., pp.44,49.
266 PAB, pp.181-184,187-189.
they should take such measures which would increase their friendly relations not those that would lead to enmity.\textsuperscript{267}

The period from 1643 to 1658 was peaceful without any major clash. The Ahoms were aware of the Mughal penetration towards the east and were waiting for an occasion to oust them from the Brahmaputra valley.

In 1658 Emperor Shah Jahan fell ill and this led to a war of succession among his sons; prince Shuja, who was the Nawab of Dacca had proceeded to Delhi. Taking advantage of the confusion caused by the war of succession, Prananarayan tried to throw off the Mughal yoke and asked help from Durllabhnarayan,\textsuperscript{268} another Koch prince, who refused to do so.\textsuperscript{269} In a fit of rage, he despatched an army under Bhavanathkarji, one of his officers, against Durllabhnarayan, who fled away and took shelter in the Ahom kingdom\textsuperscript{270} and was later made the ruler of Beltala.\textsuperscript{271} Bhavanathkarji then proceeded to Hajo against Mirja Nathula,\textsuperscript{272} who sent an army under his

\textsuperscript{267}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 184-186, 191-197.

\textsuperscript{268}Son of Uttamnarayan of the same Koch family, and a chieftain under the Mughals at Barnagar.

\textsuperscript{269}A-B, p. 158.

\textsuperscript{270}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{271}\textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{272}His full name was Nathulla Siraji as quoted in \textit{JB}, p. 92. Letter of the Thanadar of Sylhet to the Ahoms. Gait puts his name as Mir Lutfullah Shirazi, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 124.
son, Jarula, but were defeated and retreated to Gauhati.\textsuperscript{273}

King Jaydhvaj Singha was quick to take advantage of the dissension among the Mughals. A strong Ahom army was assembled and by throwing a bridge over the Kallang\textsuperscript{274} it advanced towards Gauhati.\textsuperscript{275} On receiving the information of the advance of the Ahoms from the east and that of Bhavanathkarji from the west, Mirja Nathula fled away to Dacca.\textsuperscript{276}

The Ahom army took the possession of Gauhati, Pandu and Saraiughat in 1659,\textsuperscript{277} and made the Koch prince, Jaynarayan, the son of Chandranarayan, the ruler of Kamrup.\textsuperscript{278} At this stage, Prananarayana sent his envoy, Chakrapani Khandadhara,\textsuperscript{279} to Jaydhvaj Singha with the proposal of an offensive and defensive alliance against the Mughals. It runs thus "Maharaja is taking the tract lying on the south bank of the Brahmaputra (dakshinkul), and I am taking that on the north (uttarkul). The Mughals can do nothing if we combine ourself."\textsuperscript{280} On the disapproval

\textsuperscript{273}Ka.B,p.52.
\textsuperscript{274}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{275}Ibid.,p.53.
\textsuperscript{276}Ibid.,p.52; PAB,p.115; AB(SM),p.75.
\textsuperscript{277}Ibid., AB(SM),p.75.
\textsuperscript{278}Ibid.,p.53; PAB,p.117.
\textsuperscript{279}According to AB(SM),p.75, Prananarayan sent two envoys namely Chakrapani Khandadhara and Pakhadhara to the Ahom king.
\textsuperscript{280}Ibid.; Ka.B,p.53.
of this proposal, war between the Ahoms and the Koches broke out. The Ahom army defeated the Koches, and drove them across the Sankosh and became the master of the whole of the Brahmaputra valley.281 Soon they advanced as far west as Haticala.282

After the war of succession, Aurangzeb, the third son, became the Mughal emperor, who appointed Mir Jumla as the Nawab of Bengal. On learning Mir Jumla's appointment, the Ahom king, in consultation with his councillors, sent two envoys named Sanatan and Madhavcaran to Shayesta Khan, who was then in charge of Bengal Subah, to make an enquiry of this matter.283 The two envoys submitted to Shayesta Khan that their king had taken possession of the territory solely in order to protect it from the Koches.284 They also informed him that it was the Koches, who drove the Mughal Thanadar out of Gauhati. The Ahom envoys came back after collecting information about Mir Jumla.

Mir Jumla after taking the charge of Bengal in 1660, made preparations for an invasion of Koch and the Ahom kingdoms.

281Ibid.; ibid.
282Ibid., p.76.
283Ka.B, pp.54-55.
284Ibid., p.56; PAB, p.119. According to AB(SKD), pp.18-19, when Mir Jumla sent an envoy to the Ahom king demanding Gauhati, the latter replied that Gauhati was taken possession by the Koches and not by the Ahoms; Koch-Behar had to be conquered before Gauhati could be taken.
By the end of 1661 he occupied Koch Behar, its ruler Pranana-rayan escaped to Bhutan. From Koch Behar, Mir Jumla decided to march to Assam. Earlier he had despatched from Dacca two envoys named Lalu and Hariram to the Assamese officers at Pancaratan near Goalpara protecting against their usurpation of the Mughal dominion from Gauhati to Haticala and asking them to withdraw from this area. "The Patshahi dominion of Haticala, Baritala and Guwahata (Gauhati), why did (you) occupy? For the welfare of cows and Brahmins, (you) should surrender (these areas) and live peacefully." \(^{285}\) The Ahom officers \(^{286}\) stationed at Pancaratan referred the matter to their Svargadeo, who asked the Phukans to send reply to Mir Jumla to the affect that the territory in question was not usurped by the Ahoms, it was seized from the Bardeuliya (or Bardeuniya) i.e. the Koches. An Ahom envoy named Sanatan was sent with the Mughal envoys to convey the reply to Mir Jumla. Not satisfied with the answer Mir Jumla said, "If you have not destroyed Kamrup but by the Bardeuliyas, you will see what we will do to Bardeuliya." \(^{287}\) Soon he sent a second embassy demanding the surrender of the said territory, and threatened the invasion of Garhgaon in the event of its non-compliance. On learning from

\(^{285}\)AB(SM), p. 76-77.

\(^{286}\) They were Baduli Phukan, Lapet Phukan, Lahan Phukan, Phulbarua Phukan.

\(^{287}\) AB(SM), p. 77.
Sanatan that Mir Jumla was serious of his invasion of Assam, the Ahom officers leaving Haticala and Baritala retreated to the month of the Mahanadi river where Baduli Phukan made his encampment.\textsuperscript{288} Mir Jumla, according to his claim, marched towards Assam. In the meantime, due to an appointment of Bejdalai Bhandari Barua as the Supreme Commander of the Ahom army which was greatly resented by the Ahom Phukans, they became indifferent\textsuperscript{289} and also due to the outbreak of cholera among the Ahom army they withdrew to Pandu and Saraighat.\textsuperscript{290} Mir Jumla followed the retreating Ahom army, leaving Ataullah as commander at Jogighopa. On receiving the news of fall of Jogighopa, Jayadhvaj Singha sent a large reinforcement to repulse the enemy from Saraighat. But Mir Jumla marched at such speed that he captured Hajo and Saraighat before the Ahom reinforcement reached there. The Ahom force then withdrew to Kajali, and the main force fell back further east at the two impregnable forts at Samadhara on the north and Simalugarh opposite to it on the south bank of the Brahmaputra.\textsuperscript{291}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[289] AB(SM), p.78.
\item[290] A-B, p.162.
\item[291] Ibid.; Ka.B, p.62; AB(SM), pp.78-79; PAB, p.121.
\end{footnotes}
and Dimarua joined the Mughals. At this stage some of the persons including Rajasasur, who was earlier dismissed from his office, betrayed the king and showed the Mughals the path through Diju and led them to the Simalugarh fort. In the fighting that ensued the Ahom army was badly defeated who retreated further east. In the furious naval battle on the Brahmaputra, the Mughal navy supported by the Portuguese gunners defeated the Ahom navy. This was the great disaster of the Ahom navy that they had ever suffered and it decided the fate of Assam. After this victory Mir Jumla slowly marched towards upper Assam. On his way to the Ahom capital he was approached by the Ahom noble for peace, but he rejected the peace offer suspecting it to be a dilatory tactics to gain time. Arriving at Lakhow on 9 March, the Mughal army attacked and defeated the Ahoms here.

Realising the futility of further resistance to the enemy, Jaydhvaj Singha left for Namrup. A five-men peace mission was sent to Mir Jumla by the Ahom ministers with the proposal that the Ahom Government was ready to pay tribute if the Mughals

\[292\text{AB(SM), p.79. Rajasasur means king's father-in-law.}\]
\[293\text{A-B, p.164.}\]
\[294\text{Ibid., pp.167-168.}\]
\[295\text{AB(SM), p.79; PAB, p.123; Ka.B, pp.62-63.}\]
made no further advance. The envoy included Banhbariya Kataki, Lakhai, Bhoyariya Bamun, Sawal Mudai, son of Tamuli Dalai's brother. To their pleadings, Mir Jumla replied, "You are ordinary persons, what discussion should I have with you. They should send one of the Gohains or Phukans." On their return, the ministers, after consultation, sent Phulbarua Phukan with Kaupatiya and Sanatan Kataki with letter and presents. They met Mir Jumla at Gajpur and conveyed the proposal of the ministers. Rejecting the proposal Mir Jumla said, "If they were agreeable to pay tributes they should have informed us while we were at Kaliyabar, now we have come nearer to your capital why should we return? The Padshah would be displeased when he learns this." Sometime later the Mughal army occupied the capital Garhgaon, and remained there for some months. The Ahom ministers made peace overtures for the return of the Mughals. During the rainy seasons, the Mughals suffered extreme hardship accompanied by guerilla attacks of the Ahoms. At last Mir Jumla agreed to leave the Ahom kingdom, and concluded a treaty in January, 1663.

296 Ibid.; ibid.; ibid.
297 Ibid., pp. 79-80; ibid.; ibid.
298 Ibid.
299 Ibid.
In the treaty the following terms were agreed by both sides:

1. Jaydhvaj Singha agreed to send his daughter, Nang-seng, to the Emperor's son accompanied by the daughter of Tipam Raja;

2. 20,000 (twenty thousand) tolas of gold, 1,20,000 (one lakh twenty thousand) of silver, and twenty elephants, of which fourteen were tusked and six were female elephants;

3. The territories of Assam upto the Bharali river of the province of Darrang on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, and upto the river Kalang including Dimarua and Beltala on the south to cede to the Emperor of Delhi;

4. Rupees three lakhs and ninety elephants to deliver during the course of a year from Śaka 1023 (1663) in the installment of one lakh in every four months and thirty elephants of which ten big tuskers, ten small tuskers and ten female elephants in every three months;

5. Four sons, one each of the Bargohain, the Buragohain, the Barpatragohain, and the Barphukan to be made over as hostages pending compliance with the last mentioned condition;

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AB(SM), p.83, records the quantity as twelve thousand of silver.

Since the son of Buragohain died, Ramrai Gohain, the son of his brother, was to be sent under this clause.
6. All the prisoners were to be released;
7. Thereafter the Ahom kings to pay annual tribute of twenty elephants, ten tusked and ten female, to the Emperor; and
8. One Gomosta of the Ahom king with his assistance would be present at the office of the Faujdar of Gauhati.  

On January 10, 1663, Mir Jumla began his return march, after reaching Pandu on Feb., he halted there for eleven days to settle the administration of Kamrup. Rashid Khan was appointed Faujdar at Gauhati and Muhammad Beg the Thanadar of Kajali under the Faujdar.  

Meanwhile, the Rajmantri returned all the people belonging to the Padshah including those, who had been transferred earlier from Kamrup to Assam by Pikcai Barphukan. But Mir Jumla, contrary to his promise, compelled 12,000 subjects of the Assam king to leave Assam and accompany him to Bengal. Among them were Luthuri Chetiya, Nam Dayangiya Rajkhowa, Laluk Gohain, Dighala Hazarika, Jakaisukia Rajkhowa and their families. In addition, a few Assamese and some Muslim families voluntarily accompanied the Mughal army. There were also some other leading figures like Baduli Phukan his brother Maupiya, Jagat, Raghunath Mazumdar, Manohar Kakati and a few other with their wives.

303 This clause of the treaty is not mentioned by other including HA and TTK.
and children. Taking the hostages and others, Mir Jumla sailed down the Brahmaputra towards the end of February, and died on 31 March, 1663, on way to Dacca.

After receiving the news of the submission of the Ahom king, Emperor Aurangzeb sent his envoys, Dor Beg and Rustam Beg with presents consisting of one full dress including the headgear and shoe to the Ahom king. On their arrival at Gauhati, Rasid Khan, the Mughal Faujdar sent his two envoys named Sheikh Kamal and Taj Khan with the imperial envoys. By the time they reached Lakhow, Jaydhvaj Singha passed away, his cousin brother Siu-ping-moŋ alias Cakradhvaj Singha succeeded him to the Ahom throne. Hearing the news of Jaydhvaj Singha's death one of the imperial envoys Rustam Beg returned to Gauhati and sought the advice of Rasid Khan as to the disposal of the presents. On the latter's advice Rustam Beg returned to Lakhow to hand over the presents to the new king. In the meantime, Bhavananda and Gadai informed Cakradhvaj Singha of the coming of the imperial envoys with presents.

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305 Cirpao. According to AB(SM), p. 86; SAB, p. 166; AB(SKD), pp. 23-24; AB(HB), p. 48 says that cirpao is a turban bearing the footprint of the Emperor in red colour where it was written that they (the Ahoms) were tributary to the Mughals, it seems wrong.


Having got the report the king exclaimed. "My father, grandfather and forefathers did never put on the dress of Mughal emperors. Now that I have to put it on. It is worse than death." The envoys were, however, received at the capital and led to the royal presents. According to one account, the imperial envoys desired to see the king wear the cirpao with due respect. As the king was opposed to it, he pretended illness. In the meantime, the imperial envoys were bribed not to press their point and they agreed. Leaving Rasid Khan's men outside, the imperial messengers were led to the presence of the king. The Mughal envoys were sent back accompanied with two Ahom envoys, named Chandra Kandali and Sanatan with a letter to the Emperor. In Delhi, the Assamese envoys were duly received by the Emperor, and sent them back, without any written message, but with a verbal message promising to give up any portion of the newly acquired territory that had not previously been included in the dominions of Koch kings and to release the prisoners taken during the war. On their way back the envoys visited the court of the Governor at Dacca.

308 Ibid.; ibid.; ibid.
311 Ibid., p.86.
Shayesta Khan, too, despatched his envoy, Panditrai with a letter with the Assamese envoys.\footnote{Ibid., p.87.}

A few months later, Rasid Khan sent Sheikh Kamal to Cakradhvaj Singha with a reminder that the balance of the indemnity was overdue.\footnote{Ibid., p.90; AB(SM), pp.87-88.} Initially the Ahom king declined to receive the Mughal envoy as the latter would not agree to make the customary obeissance on entering the royal court, but afterwards gave way and was received by the king.\footnote{Ibid.; ibid.} The Mughal Thanadar, for the next three years, repeatedly sent reminders of the war indemnity which the Ahom king intentionally delayed showing one pretext after another in this respect.\footnote{Ibid., pp.88-90.}

On the other hand, with a view to overthrowing the Mughal suzerainty, the Ahoms renewed their friendly relations with Koch Behar Raja Prananarayan who, too, was willing to make an alliance against their common enemy, the Mughals. In one of the letters of 6aka 1589 (1667) Cakradhvaj Singha wrote thus, "I shall attack the Mughals who are at Gauhati and let our ally attack those at his border."\footnote{Ibid., p.84.}
Early in 1667, Sayad Firoz Khan, who succeeded Rasid Khan as Faujdar of Gauhati, sent a strongly worded letter to Cakradhvaj Singha demanding payment of the indemnity still outstanding. By this time the Ahom king had almost completed the preparations for a war against the Mughals, and a well-equipped army under Laci Barphukan set out to wrest Gauhati from the Mughals. Although the Ahom army suffered a minor reverse on the bank of the Barnadi, it won several other engagements. In 1669, Gauhati, Pandu and Saraighat were re-occupied by the victorious Ahom army. Realizing the strategic importance of Gauhati it was chosen as the headquarters of the Barphukan, and Pandu and Saraighat were strongly fortified.

On receiving the news of the Mughal disaster in the eastern frontier and the reoccupation of Gauhati by the Ahom army, Aurangzeb decided to send a huge army under Raja Ram Singha, son of Mirza Raja Jay Singha of Amber, to put down the enemy. He was to be accompanied by Rasid Khan, the late Faujdar of Gauhati, other chiefs and nobles. The Bengal armies were directed to join his army. He was also joined

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317 Ibid., pp. 90-91; AB(SM), p. 91.
318 AB(SM), pp. 91-92; Ka.B has given different Šaka.
319 Ibid.; ibid., p. 92.
320 Ibid., p. 93; ibid.; A-B, p. 203.
by Koch army.

The Ahoms had not completed their preparations for resisting the advance of Ram Singha. They, therefore, resorted, once more, to their old device of opening negotiations in order to gain time. Lacit Barphukan, in consultation with other ministers, who were stationed at Gauhati sent his two envoys, named Komora and Sundar, to Ram Singha enquiring the purpose of his advance towards the frontier. This visit was followed by several visits of envoys between the two sides which continued for a few months. In this way, the Ahoms gained some time for their full preparations. As soon as the preparations were complete, the war started.

After an initial reverse near Agiyathuri, the Ahoms defeated the Mughals in several other engagements. While the war was in progress Cakradhvaj Singha passed away and was succeeded by his brother Siu-nyāt-phā alias Udayaditya Singha. Unable to recapture Gauhati by means of expedition, Ram Singha started negotiations with the Barphukan with a view to obtaining it by other means. In one of his letters he even promised

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321 Ibid., p.94.
322 A-B, p.212.
to offer three lakhs of rupees to the Barphukan and heavy presents to other officers. In another letter to the Barphukan sent through Sonabar Nadial, Ram Singha wrote, "I wish that we Rajas (Ram Singha was the son of Man Singh, the Raja of Ambar) should have a duel. A large number of men, on both sides, have been killed. If the king of Assam wishes, we, the kings may fight a duel in presence of our armies. I am the son of Jay Singha and a descendant of Mandhata. I am Raja Ram Singha. If I cannot get a victory over the king of Assam, I shall return to the Musalman Padsah with my army. I have kept everything ready for the purpose." In reply to this letter, the Barphukan sent his message, thus, "Ram Singha wishes to fight a duel with our king but we are ready to meet him in the field." King Cakradhvaj Singha on learning about the Ram Singha's letter expressed his resentment as follows, "The Musalman commandar has sent a letter asking me, a king, to fight a duel with him. He is a mere servant and has no umbrella over his head. I do not like to fight a duel with him." As a reply to such audacity, the king directed his officers to attack the enemy.

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324 Ibid., p.98.
325 A-B, pp.208-209.
326 Ibid.
327 Ibid.
In a series of encounters, the enemy was worsted and many of them captured. In the face of this reverse Ram Singha himself came up with his Rajput cavalry and defeated the Ahoms land force at the battle of Alaboi. As many as 10,000 soldiers on the Ahom side fell. Even after this Ram Singha failed to get Gauhati. He now waited for another opportunity but continued his efforts to persuade the Barphukan to evacuate. Ram Singha in his letter of 1669 proposed that the old boundary that was settled between Allah Yar Khan and the Barbarua in 1639, should be restored. In his reply, the Barphukan ignored the proposal and asked Ram Singha to maintain good relations between them. When all the attempts failed, Ram Singha determined to wrest Gauhati by all his means, and this led to battles at Pandu and Saraighat in March 1671 but the attackers were repulsed both at land and water. The defeated Mughal army, pursued by the Ahom soldiers, retreated to Rangamati, and the territory upto the river Mamonaha was occupied by the Ahoms. Hadira opposite Goalpara, now became the Ahom frontier outpost on the north bank. After this the Mughals showed no desire to renew the contest and for some years there was peace between the two sides.

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328 A place between Amingaon and Hajo on the north bank.
329 AB(SM), p. 98.
From 1673 to 1681, the Ahom kingdom greatly suffered from internal disturbances. During this period ministers usurped the king's power and they themselves conducted foreign relations by keeping the monarchs in the dark. During this time soon after his dismissal, Laluksula Barphukan, one of the brothers of Lacit Barphukan, contacted Mughal Thanadar, Mansur Khan, with a view to usurping the power of the king.\textsuperscript{331} Mohammad Azam, the son of Emperor, who was at Dacca, agreed to pay four lakhs of rupees as a price for Gauhati. The Barphukan abandoned Gauhati to the Mughals in March 1679.\textsuperscript{332}

The accession of Siu-pat-pha alias Gadadhar Singha in 1681 ended the usurpation of the sovereign power by the ministers. Within a short time, he despatched a well-equipped army to recover Gauhati by ousting the Mughals.\textsuperscript{333} The Ahom army defeated the Mughal occupational army at several engagements. Mansur Khan, the Thanadar of Gauhati fled away, and the territory as far as the river Manaha came under the Ahoms. This was the last Ahom-Mughal war. Henceforth river Manaha became the boundary between the two dominions.

\textsuperscript{331} Ka.B, p.100.
\textsuperscript{332} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{333} Ibid. pp.102-103; AB(SM), pp.122-123.
Relations with the Shan States

During this period there is only one reference of the Ahoms relations with the Shan States of Burma. It was during the reign of Jaydhvaj Singha sometimes in 1652. An embassy from the Sam king, identified as the king of Siam in the English translation of the Ahom-Buranji, visited the Ahom court. It is not been clearly stated whether this embassy which entered the kingdom through the Patkai pass, actually came from Siam or some other Shan State of Burma. In the original text in the Ahom language, the kingdom is mentioned as Mong-Sam i.e. Sam country. In any case this was an embassy came from a Tai king in the east. The purpose of embassy is not recorded. But from the answer of Jaydhvaj Singha gave to the messengers, who brought the news of the coming the Sam envoys that "if the Sam envoys have come to make friendship he migh come, otherwise not". From this answer it may be presumed that the Sam embassy came to seek friendship which was, perhaps, disturbed earlier. It is for this reason the Sam envoys pledged fidelity by drinking. The embassy presented the king with a number of articles, which included among other a drum.

334 P.147.
335 Ibid.
336 Ibid.
337 Ibid.
On his return journey of the envoys, two Ahom priests with letters and presents have been sent with them.

**Relations with the Local Chiefs and the Hill Tribes**

During this period several petty chiefs on both the banks of the Brahmaputra accepted their allegiance to the Ahom king. They included Hengarabariya Raja, Sajai Raja, Mogor Raja, Haldhibariya Raja, Brahman Raja, Barduariya Raja, Kantam Raja, who along with some other Koch chiefs fought, on the side of the Ahoms, against the Mughals. \(^{338}\)

The territorial expansion on the north bank brought the Ahoms into contact with the tribes living in the hills nearby. In dealing with them, who depended for the supply of certain essential articles including rice on the plains people, Siuseng-phā introduced a new system called posā.

During the reign of Siu-ching-phā, when the Chungis, \(^{339}\) one of the hill tribes of the north bank, created troubles in the border, the king despatched a force to subjugate them. \(^{340}\) The Ahom force destroyed the Chungi villages and granaries

\(^{338}\) *DAB*, p.72; *A-B*, p.106.
\(^{339}\) Gait gives the name of the tribe as Dafla. *op.cit.*, p.126.
\(^{340}\) *SAB*, p.88.
and took away their cattles, which made the Chungis to come down and to submit themselves to the Ahom monarch. During his reign there was a fighting between two Naga tribes. The Nagas of Kham-jang came to the Ahom capital to pay homage to Siu-ching-phā, and at the same time prayed for help against the Nagas of Kham-teng, Sikidu, Titu, Kham and Luma.\textsuperscript{341} Since the Nagas of Kham-jang owed allegiance to the Ahom king, he despatched an army against the Nagas of the aforesaid places. They were defeated and brought to submission, and they offered tributes to the Ahom king.\textsuperscript{342} In 1651, when the Lakma Nagas made an inroad into a village of the Ahom frontier, an army was sent against them to take punitive action.\textsuperscript{343} The latter was defeated and when they submitted and offered tributes to the Ahom king they were allowed to remain in possession of the Shang-doi-mlan-doi hill.\textsuperscript{344} During the reign of Gada-dhar Singha, the Nagas of Dayang valley and the Miris of Sadiya caused disturbances, but soon they were suppressed.\textsuperscript{345}

\textsuperscript{341}A-B,p.134.
\textsuperscript{342}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{343}Ibid.,pp.145-153.
\textsuperscript{344}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{345}Ibid.,pp.267-268.