INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the second quarter of the thirteenth century A.D., there appeared a new political force in the eastern extremity of the Brahmaputra valley which was destined to produce far-reaching consequences in the history of the north-eastern region of India for the next six centuries. This new political force was represented by the Ahoms, who quickly laid the foundation of a new and vigorous kingdom. Subsequently, this kingdom was expanded in all directions to embrace the whole of the valley extending from the foothills of the Pat-kai range on the east to the river Manasha and the Nagarbera hills on the west and from the foot of the northern hill ranges on the north to the foot of the Naga hills on the south. The entire kingdom covered lengthwise from east to west a distance of more than 880 kms. and breadthwise from north to south, from 90 to 128 kms. Over this kingdom the Ahoms not only established their complete political authority, but also planted their own system of government. The Ahom rule continued uninterruptedly till the coming of the British during 1824-1826.

The Ahoms formed a branch of the widespread Tai race; its other branches are found in China's southern provinces.
of Yunnan, Kwang-si and Kwang-tung including the Hainan Island, northern Vietnam, particularly along the Vietnam-China border and the upper courses of the Red River, in Laos, Thailand, Burma and North-East India’s states of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The entire area, covering several thousand square kilometers through which flow several mighty rivers like the Yang-tse-kiang, the Sang-koi (Red River), the Menam, the Mekong, the Irrawady, and the Brahmaputra and many more small rivers, lies between lat. 7°-26° N. and long. 94°-110°E.

The widely scattered Tai people are known by many local and regional appellations such as Puyi, Chuang, Tai, Tai Deng (Red Tai), Tai Dam (Black Tai), Tai Khao (White Tai), Nang, Nung, Tho', Lao, Thai, Shan, Lüe, Khün, Khamti, Ahom, to name a few dominant and major groups. It is, however, important and interesting to note that almost all the groups, both major and minor, call themselves Tai in their own language.¹ No recent official statistics of the Tai population in different countries is available. Some scholars, on the basis of partial and earlier enumeration of the Tai groups, compute their figure at about 80 million.²

¹ In Thailand, however, the Tai call themselves Thai.
About the origin of the Tai and their march through centuries there is no unanimity of opinions among scholars. On the basis of ancient tradition and the fragmentary references found in some of the ancient books, mostly written in Chinese, scholars attempt to reconstruct their history.

A century ago M. Terrien de Lacouperie created an impression that the Tai belonged to the Ugro-Altai-Bak family, and the cradle of the Tai race was in the Kulung mountains, north of Szechuan and south of Shensi in China proper.\(^3\)

Apparently on the basis of this theory, a story was built up in the school text books in Thailand by some imaginative Thai writers which resulted in a popular belief that the Tai lived at the foot of the Altai mountain in central Mongolia some 7000 years ago.\(^4\). From there they moved through the Gobi desert then south-westward, and settled down in western Yunnan where they founded, much later, the famous Nan-Chao kingdom. In the light of latest research this theory does not hold water now. Some scholars maintain that the homeland of Tai must be sought in the coastal lowlands of southern

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\(^3\)"The Cradle of the Shan-Race" (p.IV) as inserted in A.R. Colquhoun's *Among the Shans*, London, 1885.

\(^4\)Khun Vichitramittra, *Thai Background*, Bangkok, 1934.
China and the Red River Delta of Vietnam. Proponents of this theory include Wilhelm Credner, who bases himself upon the type of habitat the present day Tai invariably prefer. It leads to the fact that theirs is a wet-rice growing culture and that they are found in the relatively warm humid lowlands and river valleys, never on the mountain's top or slopes. Recently, J.R. Chamberlain, on linguistic evidence and local Tai legends current among some Tai groups, comes to the conclusion that the many branches of the Tai language stem from Tongking or the Red River valley, thus lending support to the Red River Delta origin of the Tai. Very recently on the basis of human skeletons and other finds discovered at Ban Chiang in north-east Thailand a new theory is sought to be presented according to which the Tai people had their homeland in present day Thailand. On the other hand, the bioserological examination conducted by scientists shows that the Tais are quite dissimilar to the Chinese but closely resemble the Indonesians, especially the


6 "A New Look at the History and Classification of the Tai Languages", Studies in Tai Linguistic in Honour of William J. Gedney, ed. by J. Harris and J.R. Chamberlain, Central Institute of English Languages, Bangkok, 1975, pp.49-66.

Javanese. \(^8\) This finding strengthens the theory that the origin of the Tais need be sought in the south rather than the north. None of these theories and hypotheses, however, have received general acceptance of scholars, and the search for a common theory acceptable to all still continues.

Wherever may have been the original homeland of the Tais, most scholars agree that during the historical period they lived for a long time southern China and the Red River valley. \(^9\) The strong pressure of the Han (Chinese) and the Yueh (Vietnamese) had caused them to move southwards and to enter northern Thailand, northern Burma and Laos. This process began long ago, \(^10\) and continued throughout the historical period. \(^11\)

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\(^10\) John F.Cady, *loc.cit.*

The Chinese power initiated to break the strength of the Tais and as a result the latter looked upon the Chinese as their hereditary enemy. As this struggle persisted for centuries, the migration too never ceased to stop. By the third century A.D. there came into existence a powerful group in western Yunnan under the name of Ngai-Lao, or Ai-Lao, or simply Lao. In the middle of the seventh century A.D., the Ngai-Laos defeated the Chinese and extended their power over lower Sze-Chuan and neighbouring territories. In the eighth century, a new kingdom known as Nan-Chao to the Chinese was established by a Tai prince by uniting six small principalities which grew in strength and size. This kingdom was brought to an end in 1253 by Kublai Khan's invasion of Yunnan. It had resulted in a further movement of the Tai people to the southern countries like Burma, Laos, Thailand. Although very early evidence of settlement of the Tai people in South-East Asia is lacking, their presence was definitely felt in the region long ago, and according to some scholars from the eighth century. In the great bas-relief of the Angkor Wat, Tais appear in the Khmer army of King Suryavarman II (A.D.1113-1150) and the word "Syam" appears in a Cham inscription.

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12 Brian Harrison, South-East Asia, New York, 1954, p.38.
13 ITK, pp.68,251.
14 Hugh Toye, Laos, London,1968, p.5. A photograph of Angkor Wat in which "Syam" soldiers are shown in the army of King Suryavarman II appears in the facing page 14.
According to some scholars the Tai principalities in the mainland South-East Asia were established by a process "infiltration" or a slow process of filling up the region with migrants and whenever and wherever conditions favoured they organized their mōng or state under chiefs. On the basis of his study of the Tai incursions, Broman comes to the conclusion that their movements were probably much more forceful than what they appear to be. A Tai ruler accompanied by a band of warriors and their families would establish himself in a fertile valley and asked the local population to recognize him and his followers as overlords or else give battle. He also says that the long established written tradition such as that of the Mons of Haripunjaya, near present Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, does not bear any sign of the gradual infiltration of the Tais. There is also no evidence of a compromise between the Mon rulers and the Tais, and that the Mon inscriptions ceased abruptly at the same time the Tai cultural traits appear suddenly. All these


suggest that the Tais had established their states by conquest and not infiltration.18

The major 'effervescence' of the Tai people took place between the eleventh and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries.19 During this period they not only held their sway over the river valleys of upper Laos and upper Burma and also poised at the valleys of the Brahmaputra and the Menam. The vigorous consequent of the Tai people across many mountainous stretches resulted in their effective dispersal. The diffusion during this period was so widespread in terms of geographical area that soon the contacts between groups faded out. Though no regular contact was possible between the Tais in Kwang-si and those in the upper river valleys of Tong-king; the Tais in the Laotian principalities could not easily communicate with their relatives in the valleys of the upper Chindwin; the Tai in Thailand had little or nothing to do with those of the Brahmaputra valley.

The advent of the Ahoms

The coming of the Ahoms, who belonged to the Māo branch of the Tai people, to the Brahmaputra valley in the early

18 B.M. Broman, op. cit.
The thirteenth century represents yet another small wave of the great dispersal of the Tai. They were led by Siu-kā-phā, a prince of the Māo royal family and the third son of Phu-chāng-khāng alias Chāo-sāng-ngeu, the ruler of Mōng-mit-kup-kling-dāo. He inherited his father's throne and ruled it for nineteen years. Several versions are came across about the reason for Siu-kā-phā's march to the Brahmaputra valley. According to A-B, Siu-kā-phā, who was earlier brought up his maternal grand-parents, was also nominated to succeed Pā-meo-pung, the ruler of Mōng-Māo who was without a son for a long time. Some years later, his queen gave birth to a male child. He was named Siu-khrām-phā and after the death of his father he succeeded to the Māo throne. This development had brought great disappointment to Siu-kā-phā's life and he decided to leave his country on a new venture. The same fact is also mentioned in several Assamese chronicles, which say that Siu-kā-phā's maternal grandmother greatly encouraged him to move to a new state when she found his prospect of becoming the ruler of Mōng-Māo bleak. She advised him thus, "No two

20 In A-B, it is mentioned as 'Kin-seng Māo-lung', p.43. In the English translation, G.C.Barua has ommitted 'Kin-seng' from Māo-lung.

21 AB (KTP), p.9; AB(HK), p.10; SAB, p.47.

22 Pp.43-44; DAB, p.6.

23 TTK, p.252; DAB, p.6.

24 Ibid.; ibid.

25 Ibid.; ibid.
tigers live in the same jungle and no two kings sit on the same throne."  

According to the Hsen-Wi Chronicle of the Hsen-Wi Shan State of Burma which formed a part of the Māo dominion, Sam-lung-phā, Siu-kā-Phā's cousin-brother, who had undertaken some years previously, an expedition to the Brahmaputra valley, had subjugated the Barahis, the Morans, the Chutias, the Kacharis, and Kamata and left them as tributary states.  

The A-B, without giving details of this Tai expedition, clearly says that the Chutiyas, the Borahis, the Morans, the Kacharis and Kamata were conquered by the Tai at the time when Siu-kā-phā was staying at Mao-lung. Due to some trouble arising among the princes of the Māo royal family Sam-lung-phā hastily returned home. This provided an opportunity to the newly conquered states to stop their tributes to the Māo ruler, who now despatched his cousin brother, Siu-kā-phā, 

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26 Ibid.; ibid.  
27 According to Hsen-Wi Chronicle, as reproduced in the Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, compiled by J. George Scott, Rangoon, 1900, p.221, he was the Sawbwa of Mong-king or Mogaung.  
29 A-B, p.38.  
30 Hsen-Wi Chronicle, pp.222,241; Shans at Home, p.22.
to reassert his authority over the ruling chiefs in the Brahmaputra valley. According to another account Siu-kā-phā, when commanded by Siu-khrān-phā, the Māo ruler, to fight against his own brother, who was the ruler of another state (mōng), became greatly disappointed at the prospect of a fight amongst brothers and decided to leave his mōng and to undertake a new conquest to the west. From the accounts given in the Hsen-Wi Chronicle and the chronicles of the Ahoms it is almost certain that some years previously to the advent of Siu-kā-phā, the Brahmaputra valley more particularly its upper region was conquered by the Tai. It also appears certain that Siu-kā-phā left his country with full knowledge and consent of Siu-khrān-phā, the ruler of Mōng-Māo, who, himself bade farewell to former saying, "Go you brother; but do not forget to pay annual tribute."  

Siu-kā-phā left his country in lāk-nī Kāt-rāo corresponding to A.D.1215. In his journey, he was accompanied by nine thousand warriors and their families. Some Assamese chronicles give different figures, but the original text in

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31Ibid.; ibid.
32AB(KTP), p.9.
33DAB, p.7; SAB, pp.2,45.
Ahom language expresses the figure in terms of matang, or cooking pot, which was three thousand and each pot was sufficient to cook meal for three persons. He was accompanied by a distinguished body of faithful and valiant nobles and chiefs from a number of ṁōngs (provinces) who joined him with their own contingents of army and other officers. He also took with him Phā-rung-sheng-ṁōng (the tutelary deity of his family), two elephants - one male and one female, and three hundred horses.

On his march towards the Pat-kai, he reduced all those local chief or tribes, who tried to block his advance, to submission, and often made camps at places, where he stayed for periods ranging from a few months to three to four years. After leaving Mōng-kang (Mogaung), Siu-kā-phā's first halt was at Kat-rung-ṁōng-ban where he stayed for two years. The next halt was at Mōng-na Mōng-ti where he stayed for another two years and the third halt was at Khok-chang-bing-men. Thereafter, he crossed the river Nām-keu (Irrawaddy) at

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34 A-B, p.44.
36 Ibid.; ibid
37 Ibid.; ibid.; TTK, p.252.
Ta-bin-men and came upon to Ban-chak-chang-khao and stayed there for one year.\(^39\) Next year he came to Chao-ke at which place he conquered some villages.\(^40\) Leaving that place he came to Lang-mi-che-kao and then to Ma-la-khrang from where he marched to Mön-g-kao Mön-g-pan and then to Pha-ka-che-rin.\(^41\) From there he crossed the hill range called Doi-kham by a pass, and came upon big stones marking the boundary of the Naga country.\(^42\) On entering the Naga country he came upon the river Nam-ti-lik Kang-tai.\(^43\) After staying one year he crossed the river Nam-jang and came to Mön Kham-jang.\(^44\) At Mön Kham-jang he conquered the surrounding Naga villages and organized it into an Ahom mön(province) under a thäo-mön(governor).\(^45\) Leaving Kang-khru-mong, the Phu-kin-mön of Mön-phu, who accompanied him, as Thäo-mön Kham-jang, Siu-kä-pha left the place.\(^46\) After crossing the Nam-po, a

\(^{39}\text{Ibid.}; \text{ibid.}\)
\(^{40}\text{Ibid.,pp.44-45.}\)
\(^{41}\text{Ibid.,p.45; \text{ibid.}}\)
\(^{42}\text{Ibid.; \text{ibid.}}\)
\(^{43}\text{Ibid.; \text{ibid.}}\)
\(^{44}\text{Ibid.; \text{ibid.}}\)
\(^{45}\text{Ibid.; \text{ibid.}}\)
\(^{46}\text{Ibid.; \text{ibid.}}\)
small stream, he came to the Nam-ruk, and followed its course till he reached the Nam-jin (Buri-Dihing). \(^{47}\) Thereafter he went upstream of that river for some distance till he reached the meeting point with the Na-Dihing where he halted and founded another möng called Möng La-khe-ten-sa. \(^{48}\) After staying there for one year he followed the river Buri-Dihing down stream and came to Ti-pam, where he stayed for three years. \(^{49}\) By placing Kanngan, another phu-kin-möng accompanying him, as Thao-möng of Möng Ti-pam, he followed the river down stream and came to Möng Che-khru (Abhoipur), where he stayed for five years. \(^{50}\) Leaving that country in charge of a thao-möng, he came upon Habung on the Ti-lao (the Brahmaputra) where he stayed for three years. \(^{51}\) Leaving Habung in charge of a thao-möng, he sailed down the river Brahmaputra and came to the mouth of Dikhow. After surveying the area between the Dikhow and the Disang rivers, he proceeded to Simaluguri. \(^{52}\) From that place he made further advance and ultimately reached Cha-rai-deo on the low spur of the Naga hills where he made

\(^{47}\) Ibid.

\(^{48}\) Ibid., p.46; ibid., p.8.

\(^{49}\) Ibid.; ibid.

\(^{50}\) Ibid.

\(^{51}\) Ibid.; ibid.

\(^{52}\) Ibid.; ibid., p.9.
his final settlement and established his capital. In this way he founded a new kingdom in the tract bounded by the Pat-kai, the Buri-Dihing, the Brahmaputra, the Dikhow, and the Naga hills. The Ahoms called their kingdom Mông-dun-sun-kham. The môngs which were founded on his way now became provinces (mông) of the kingdom. In course of time this group of Tai people came to be known as the Ahoms and their kingdom as the Ahom kingdom.

The tract of country over which the Ahoms founded their kingdom was inhabited chiefly by the Barahis and the Marans, the two small Mongoloid tribes whose origin has not been fully ascertained. To their north and north-east lay the Chutiya kingdom with its capital at Sadiya and to their south were the Kacharis ruled by their kings. The hills which lay to the east of their kingdom were inhabited by the Naga tribes. Within this area the external relations of the Ahom government during the early days were concerned with the immediate neighbours, and also with the Shan states in Burma from where the Ahoms themselves came.

53 Ibid., pp.46-47; Ibid.
54 DAB, p.100; AB(KTP), p.11; AB(HB), p.12.
55 TTK, pp.266-267.
56 Ibid.
Sāu-kā-phā, who died in A.D. 1268, and his two immediate successors were engaged more in consolidating their authority over their new kingdom and its protection from any onslaught by its neighbours. During the reign of Siu-khāng-phā (1293-1332), the fourth king of the dynasty, there ensued the first war with Kamata and continued for a number of years. Unable to continue the fight due to great loss of men and material, and probably due to the threat from the Muslims in Bengal at the same time, the Kamata king, Pratapdāj, ultimately sought for peace by offering Rajani, his daughter, to the Ahom king and thus implying the acceptance of the vassalage of the latter. This had enhanced considerably the prestige of the Ahom power on the western side of the Valley. The sixth king of the dynasty, Siu-tu-phā (1369-1376), was treacherously murdered by the Chutiyas. His successor, Tāo-khām-thi (1380-1389) undertook an expedition and personally led his army against the Chutiyas to avenge the murder of his brother, but the Chutiyas king fled into the nearby hills for shelter.

60 Ibid., p. 49; ibid., p. 11; ibid., p. 51.
After the kingdom was administered by the councillors for nine years due to the lack of a suitable prince for the throne, Siu-dāng-phā (1397-1407), who was born and brought up in a Brahmin family at Habung, was crowned as king. It was during his reign, that the Brahmanical religious influence on the Ahom court was felt, for the first time, as the king brought the members of the Brahmin family to the capital. During his reign, the relation with Kamata was further strengthened when its ruler offered a princess, Bhaṇjani by name, to the Ahom king. But there was a serious break of his relations with Mong-kang, culminating in a war, which was, however, brought to an end by a treaty that fixed the Pat-kai as the boundary between them.

Towards the end of the fifteenth century a war with the Kacharis broke out. The Ahom army was defeated and was compelled to retreat to the side of the Dikhow river with heavy loss. Finally they sued for peace and sent a girl named Jekhring and two elephants to the Kachari Raja as a token of their submission.

The spectacular expansion of the Ahom kingdom was witnessed during the long reign of Siu-hum-mög (1497-1539), commonly known as Dihingiya Raja in the Assamese chronicles. By that time, the Ahom power had not only its firm foothold but also attained its considerable strength to deal with its troublesome neighbours. The Chutiya kingdom in the north-east which gave occasional troubles and the Kachari kingdom on the south bank of the Dikhow extending as far as the Dhansiri valley were now considered only impediments for any further growth of the kingdom. Siu-hum-mög seized some pretexts to invade these principalities. In the wars that ensued, the Chutiyas were routed; their king was seized and killed and the remaining members of the Chutiya royal family were transferred to a distance place. The Chutiya kingdom was transformed into an Ahom province under the name of Mông Tio-ra, and was placed under a thao-mög with his headquarters at Sadiya. In the same way Siu-hum-mög successfully initiated a determined and bold action to wrest the territory to the south-west of the river Dikhow from the hands of the Kacharis. The acquired territory was made a möng and was

64 Ibid., pp.54-57; ibid.,pp.13-14,60; ibid.,pp.16-19,200.
65 Ibid.,p.57; ibid.,p.15,60; ibid.p.19.
placed under a thāo-mōng. The Kachari king retreated further south, and he became a vassal of the Ahom king. The beginning of the sixteenth century also saw new conflict with the Sultans of Bengal who were trying to push their advance to the Brahmaputra valley due to the downfall of the Kamata power. The Ahom army not only successfully repulsed the Muslim invaders but also pursued them as far as the Karatoya river. This made the Koch Raja, Visva Singha, who was just rising to power in northern Bengal, submitted to the Ahom king and was allowed to remain as tributary. During the reign of Siu-klen-mōng (1539-1552), the country was invaded by a large Koch naval force in 1546 and, at first, the Ahoms were defeated, but eventually they managed to regain all that they had lost before. Siu-klen-mōng successfully intervened in a dispute between chāo-phā of Mōng-kang and the Burmese monarch, who wanted to absorb the former's state. For this the chāo-phā of Mōng-kang gave his daughter to him. During the reign of his successor, Siu-khām-phā (1552-1603), the Koch army led by Cilarai, the brother of king Naranarayan, again

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67 Ibid., pp.66-73; ibid., pp.16-17, 53; ibid., pp.29-37.
68 Ibid., p.77; DAB, pp.37-38; AB(SM), p.23.
69 Ibid., pp.79-81; ibid., p.81; ibid., p.25.
invaded Ahom territory, and this time the Ahom army was badly defeated. Early in 1563, the Ahom capital, Garhgaon, was captured by the Koches. Negotiations followed and the Ahoms acknowledged the Koch supremacy. But the Koch victory was temporary. Soon the Ahoms reasserted themselves and in 1570 they defeated the Koch army.

The history of the Ahoms during the seventeenth century was dominated by the conflicts with the Mughals. At first under the inspired rule of Siu-seng-phā (1603-1641), commonly known as Pratap Singha the Ahoms greatly extended their influence, for the first time, occupying the whole now known as Nowgong district. Pratap Singha was an able administrator who caused the less populated border districts to be developed by settlement of families on whom he could repose trust. Huge earthen ramparts were raised, fortresses were built and

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70 Ibid., pp. 85-87; ibid., pp. 45-46; ibid., pp. 32-33.
72 Ibid., pp. 109-110; A-B, pp. 87-88; DAB, pp. 47-48; AB(SM), p. 33; SAB, p. 73.
73 A-B, p. 91; DAB, pp. 50-51.
the army was strengthened. As result, the Mughals faced stiff resistance and could not succeed in subjugating the Ahoms. In the next eight years following the death of Pratap Singha during which nothing important event occurred. Siu-tăm-lā alias Jayadhvaj Singha(1648-1663), who was quick to seize the period of dissension amongst the contenders to the Mughal throne, to wrest lower Assam from the Mughals and to extend his western boundary beyond Dhubri. In 1658 a Koch army was defeated. But it was not long before Mir Jumla demanded the Ahoms to vacate the newly acquired tracts. Jaydhvaj Singha appeared to have underestimated the Mughal armies' strength for he did not avoid the threatened conflict. In 1662, the Mughal army under Mir Jumla advanced along both banks of the Brahmaputra and a fleet kept pace with the land army. By defeating the Ahom defenders, he took Gauhati and rapidly advanced further east, never letting the retreating Ahom troops to regain their confidence. In spite of considerable odds, the Mughal army finally occupied Garhagao, the capital city.

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75 Ibid.; ibid.; ibid.; ibid.; ibid.; ibid.
77 Ibid., pp.76-77; ibid., pp.59-60; ibid., pp.119-120.
78 Ibid., p.78; ibid., p.63.
During the rainy season, Mir Jumla and his army had to face unbearable hardship due to dislocation of communication and the night attacks of the Ahoms, whose moral had risen considerably. Protected negotiations resulted in a treaty, by which the Ahoms paid a considerable indemnity, handed over the sons of the Gohains as hostages, ceded the western part of the Brahmaputra valley to the Delhi Emperor and agreed to pay yearly tribute of elephants, besides sending of Jaydhvaj Singha's daughter to Delhi.\textsuperscript{79} His successor Siu-pung-mông alias Cakradhvaj Singha (1663-1669), the payment of indemnity was stopped, thus provoking new hostilities with the Mughals.\textsuperscript{80} A huge Mughal army was despatched during the dry season of 1668 and a protected war followed which ended with an Ahom victory at the battle of Saraighat.\textsuperscript{81} The decade after Cakradhvaj Singha's death is marked by a series of intrigues and seven rulers rapidly succeeded one after another.

A more balanced period begun with Siu-pāt-phā alias Gadadhar Singha (1681-1696), during whose reign the Mughals were finally defeated at the battle of Itakhuli (1681),

\textsuperscript{79}Ibid., pp. 82-83; Ibid., pp. 65-66; Ibid., pp. 127-128.  
\textsuperscript{80}Ibid., pp. 88-91; Ibid., pp. 85, 91; Ibid., p. 133.  
\textsuperscript{81}Ibid., pp. 93-94; Ibid., pp. 93-94; Ibid., p. 137.
and the Ahoms pushed the western frontier to the Manaha river, between present-day Barpeta and Goalpara districts, as the boundary between the Mughal sphere of influence and that of the Ahoms. The reign of Siu-khrung-phā alias Rudra Singha (1696-1714), was mainly noted for establishing wider contacts with other powers far and near, sent envoys to neighbouring states and chiefs for political and cultural integrity of this region. He even planned an invasion of Bengal. Under his son Siu-tān-phā alias Siva Singha (1714-1744), the original Tai religion was greatly supplanted by Hinduism. With no more foreign trouble, the kingdom enjoyed peace and prosperity. Siu-rem-phā alias Rajesvar Singha assisted Raja Jay Singh of Manipur against the Burmese.

But during the second half of the eighteenth century there arose serious internal disturbances caused by the Moamariya, a religious sect of Vaishnava persuasion; at the same time, there was the revolt of Kriahnanarayan, a prince of Darrang, who had obtained the assistance of the Burkendazes from Bengal and caused devastation in lower Assam. The Moamariyas even succeeded in expelling the Ahom king from his

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82 Ibid., p.123; ibid., p.103; ibid., p.159; Tu.B., p.17.
83 TB, pp.1, 24, 95.
84 Tu.B., pp.35-36.
capital and installing their own nominee on the Ahom throne. All these compelled Siu-hit-pong-phā alias Gaurinath Singha (1780-1794) to seek foreign assistance including that of the East India Company, who had sent troops to restore order in the kingdom. One of the major effects of the internal disturbances was the loss of unity among the councillors one of whom, Badanchandra Barphukan, had fled away first to Bengal, and thereafter to Burma and appealed to the Burmese monarch for assistance of arms and men. Seizing the opportunity, Bodawpaya despatched a Burmese army to Assam. In this way the Burmese appeared in the political scene of the Ahom kingdom. Although they returned soon, they appeared twice subsequently. On the last occasion, they stayed on and converted the Ahom kingdom a province of Burma, although they kept Jogesvar Singha as the nominal king. The Burmese occupation devastated and depopulated the kingdom, and the people suffered terribly under their rule. The Burmese occupation of Assam and Manipur together with border conflicts caused

85 Ibid., pp.64-68.
86 Ibid., pp.101,119,126.
87 HA,p.231; Nirode K.Barooah, David Scott in North-East India 1802-1831, New Delhi, 1970,p.66.
88 Ibid.
serious concern of the East India Company. The situation in the frontier in Assam and elsewhere became so serious that the Company government declared war on Burma in March 1824. The Anglo-Burmese War fought during 1824-1826 was settled by the Treaty of Yandabo, and Assam which was already occupied by the British, in 1825, was retained by them. This brought to an end of the Ahom rule.

89 Ibid., p. 223.