INTRODUCTION: Historical Background of Medieval Assam.

(1) Political Conditions of Assam in the first half of the thirteenth Century:

During the early part of the thirteenth century, Kamrup was a big and flourishing kingdom with Kamrupnagar in the North Guwahati as the Capital. This kingdom fell due to repeated Muslim invasions and consequently forces of political destabilization set in. In the first decade of the thirteenth century Muslim intrusions began. "The expedition of 1205-06 A.D. under Muhammad Bin-Bukhtiyar proved a disastrous failure. Kamrupa rose to the occasion and dealt a heavy blow to the Muslim expeditionary force. In 1227 A.D. Ghiyasuddin Iwaz entered the Brahmaputra valley to meet with similar reverse and had to hurry back to Gaur. Nasiruddin is said to have overthrown the Kamrupa King, placed a successor to the throne on promise of an annual tribute and retired from Kamrupa."  

During the middle of the thirteenth century, the prosperous Kamrup kingdom broke up into Kamata Kingdom, Kachari

2. Ibid. p. 135.  
The Ahom, Kachari and Jayantiya kingdoms continued to exist till the British annexation; but the kingdoms of Kamata and Chutiya came to decay by the turn of the sixteenth century.

Baro Bhuyans: The Baro Bhuyan were petty chiefs who became independent rulers of the territories under their control during the middle of the thirteenth century. These petty rulers held their own in absence of powerful kings in Assam during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Ahoms established their supremacy in the sixteenth century. During the period the Koch kings also became very powerful. Thus pressed by the Ahoms in the east and the Koches in the west the Baro Bhuyans lost their political independence. 1

The Chutiya Kingdom:—

It is mentioned that one Birpal was the founder of Chutiya kingdom. His son Gourinarayan established supremacy over the then Chutiya clans, defeated the king Bhadrasena ruler in the plains, and another king Nayapala was also defeated by him. He established his capital at Ratnapur and assumed the name of 'Ratnadhvaj'. The rise of Ahom kingdom stood in the way of the expansionist policy of the Chutiyas and conflict with the Ahoms became

1. (a) Barua, K.L., Early History of Kamarupa, Guwahati, 1966, pp. 184-87
(b) Dutta, P.N., Glimpses into the History of Assam, Guwahati, 1979, pp. 93-98.
inevitable. Soon clash between the two powers began and after a series of wars between the Ahoms and Chutiyas, the Chutiya kingdom was finally annexed by the Ahoms in 1523.1

The Kamata Kingdom:

After the invasion of Mughisuddin in 1257 history is silent about the Kamrup kingdom but we learn about Kamata kingdom with Kamatapur as the capital; and it appears that the kingdom of Kamata is an extension and a continuation of the earlier kingdom of Kamrup. The kingdom comprised of the territories from Karotoya in the west to the river Bara Nadi in the east; and its first ruler was Sandhya. In course of time one of the ministers, Pratapdhvaj usurped power and became the king, and after his death his nephew ascended the throne and established his capital near Rangpur (Dimla). His name was Durlavana Sevan. He crippled the Bhuyans and measured strength with the Ahom King. He was a patron of learning. It is said that books in kamrupi were written during his reign; and poets like Hema Sarasvati, Kabiratna Sarasvati and Haribara Bipra belonged to this period? After the reign of Arimatta and Sutaranka, Niladdhvaj ascended the throne and established the rule of Khan dynasty. During the rule of his son Chakradhvaj (c.1460-80 A.D.) Barbak sultan of Bengal (1458-74) invaded Kamata, but the invasion was successfully repulsed.

The next ruler was Nilambar. During his rule Hussain shah invaded Kamata being instigated by Sachipatra, the disgruntled minister of Nilambar, Hussain shah established Muslim rule in Kamata and appointed Denial as administrator, who made Hajo his headquarters. Thus did the history of Kamata come to an end.1

The Kachari Kingdom :-

In the thirteenth century the Kachari kingdom was along the south bank of the Brahmaputra extending from Dikhu to the Kallang and including the valley of Dhansiri and what was later known as the North Cachar Sub-Division.2

The Jayantia kingdom :-

This kingdom was formed with the Jayantia hills and the adjacent plain lands. The Syntengs were its original inhabitants. Both the Khasis and Syntengs represent the remnants of the first Mongolian migration into India and speakers of Mon-khmer family of languages.3

(II) Foundation of Ahom rule :-

The Ahoms were an offshoot of the great Tai or Shan race which lived in Upper Burma. Sukapha, one of the descendants of the Shan royal family, left his country following a dispute with his brothers in 1215 A.D. and entered Assam in search of

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fortune and reached Khamjang in 1228 A.D. He overcame Naga resistance. He moved from place to place and finally made Charaideo his resting place in 1254 A.D. Then he fought against the surrounding tribes, the Morans and Borahis and consolidated his own position. He brought them under one unified rule through his shrewd statesmanship. He also maintained good relationship with his brother rulers in the upper Burma. He died in 1268 A.D.¹

After his death, his son Suteupha became the ruler. He ruled from 1268 A.D. to 1281 A.D. He annexed the Kaohari territory east of the Dikhu. But his expedition against the Naras, a branch of shans was a failure for the Burhagohain who led the expedition was disgraced. The reign of his successor Subinpha (1281 - 1293) was uneventful.²

Sukhangpha ruled over the Ahom kingdom from 1293 A.D. to 1332 A.D. He waged war against the Kamata kingdom and forced the king to surrender and gave his daughter in marriage to him.

Sukhrangpha ruled from 1332 A.D. to 1364 A.D. and he was succeeded by his brother Sutupa who ascended the throne in 1364 and ruled upto 1376 when he was assassinated by the Chutiya

². Ibid, p.33.
The Ahom throne became vacant and there was no worthy successor. Two ministers ruled for four years (1376-80) and then to save the situation they made Tyaokhamti (1380-89), the third son of Sukhangpha, the king of Ahom kingdom. He tried to take revenge on the Chutiya king for the assassination of Sutupha, but he failed to secure confidence of the people because of the atrocities and oppression let loose by the elder Queen. Soon the king was assassinated. This led to the return of the Ministerial Rule (1380 A.D. to 1397 A.D.). After nine years of the ministerial rule the son of Tyaokhamti by the younger Queen was placed on the throne. He was then a lad of 15. He assumed the name of Sudangpha and set up his capital at Charquya. ¹

(III) Consolidation of Ahom rule:

Sudangpha (1397-1407) successfully dealt with the Tipam chiefs (Tipam is the name of the place between Buri Dihing and Disang)² who hatched a conspiracy against him. He got the conspirators treacherously murdered by inviting them to a feast, and he won over the others by conciliatory means and he actually married the daughter of a Tipam chief. Tao sulai a disgruntled Tipam youth fled to the upper Burma and instigated the Nara king

to send an expedition against the Ahoms. The expedition was checked, a formal treaty was signed to settle the boundary between the two kingdoms, and henceforth Patkai was regarded as the boundary between the two kingdoms. When Tao Sulai sought refuge in Kamata court, the Ahom king sent an expedition against the Kamata king who soon made peace in fear and gave his daughter in marriage to him.1

The most significant event during the reign of Sudangpha was that the Ahom king was profoundly influenced by the Brahminical culture. Himself brought up in disguise in the house of a Brahmin, he adopted the Hindu culture, and appointed Brahmins to high posts and introduced many Hindu rites and ceremonies to the royal palace. This marked the beginning of the Hinduisation of the Ahoms.2

Sudangpha won over all the hostile forces and peace prevailed in the kingdom for a long period for which his two successors Sujangpha (1407 A.D. to 1422 A.D.) and Suphakpha (1422 A.D. to 1439 A.D.) could reign without entering into war or conflict with any neighbouring kingdom.3

The next ruler Susenpha who ruled for long 49 years suppressed the rebellion of the Tangsu Nanas. Susenpha attacked the territory of the Kacharis for expansion of Ahom rule but the Ahoms were defeated by the Kacharis. He made peace and gave a princess in marriage to the Kachari king.¹ After the assassination of Suhenpha, Supimpha (1493 A.D. to 1497) ascended the Ahom throne. After his uneventful rule Suhungmung became the ruler of Assam. He shifted his capital to Bakata on the Dihing. Because of this he became known as Dihingia Raja. He is also the first Ahom king to assume the Hindu name of Swarga Narayan.² His long rule of 42 years has become memorable in the History of Assam for three important events - (1) The conquest of Chutiya kingdom, (2) The conquest of Cachar and (3) Repulsion of the Muslim invasion.³

(1) Conquest of the Chutiya kingdom

The Chutiya king Dhirnarayan attacked the Ahom kingdom both by land and river.⁴ The Ahoms retaliated in 1513 and the Ahom-Chutiya war began. The Ahom king repulsed the Chutiya aggression and occupied the Chutiya territory of Mungkhrang and the country around Namdang. In 1520 the Chutiyas attacked the Ahom

2. Ibid, p. 86.
fort at Mungkhrang and held it in possession. Soon however they suffered defeat near the mouth of Sessa river, and the Ahoms advanced and erected a fort at the mouth of Tiphao river. When the Chutiyas laid siege to this fort, the Ahom king himself rushed in with reinforcements and routed the invaders. Finding themselves at a disadvantage the Chutiyas sued for peace; but the peace overtures fell through owing to the Ahom king's demand for having the three heirlooms of the Chutiya king, the gold cat, gold elephant, the gold umbrella. When the negotiation for peace broke-down, the Chutiyas made their stronghold in a fortified place near Sadiya. Driven out from there by the Ahoms, they took possession of the Chandangiri hill, and from the top of the hill they resisted for a time the advance of the Ahom army by rolling down heavy stones. But the Ahom soldiers evolved a new strategy and climbing on the hill holding the creepers, they reached the top and took the Chutiyas by surprise. A severe fighting ensued and the invaders fled to Madhadang. In the fearful encounter both the Chutiya king and his son were slain. As a result the Chutiya kingdom was annexed by the Ahoms. After annexing the Chutiya kingdom, Suhungmung reorganised the Chutiya territory under the

2. Tamuliphukan, K.N., AB, p.19
governorship of Sadiya khowa Gohain. Ahom colonies were establi­shed in the Chutiya kingdom, and the powerful nobles of the Chutiyas were driven out. Returning to capital Suhungmung per­formed the Rikkhvan ceremony to celebrate the victory. He also suppressed the chutiya rebellion of 1527.¹

(2) Conquest of the Kachari kingdom:—

Suhungmung attacked the Kachari kingdom with a view to expanding the Ahom territory in the west. Near the river Jhan­si­ri two battles were fought in which the Ahoms were defeated in the first but gained victory in the second. In another encounter in 1531 the Kacharis were completely crushed and a king's brother was slain. The Ahoms marched on and reached the Kachari capital Dimapur. As a result of the sack of Dimapur the Kachari king Khunkhara fled away. The Ahoms found the throne empty and placed Detsung, a king's relative to the throne as a puppet king.²

(3) Repulsion of Muslim invasions:—

Muslim invasions took place thrice during Suhungmung's reign. In 1527 a great Vizir attacked the Ahom territory. Although he was forced to go back in 1531, the hostilities renewed.

1. (a) Gait, E., HA, pp96.
   (b) Dutta, P., GHA, p. 124.
and the Ahom territory was again attacked. This time also the Muslim invasion was held in check by the Ahoms. In 1532, Turbak launched a massive attack on the Ahom territory. He was defeated at Koliabar, but Hussain Khan rushed in with reinforcements. The Muslims advanced up to Bharali where they suffered the crushing defeat at the hands of the Ahoms who chased the invaders up to the Karatcya river. Suhungmung repulsed Naga attacks in 1535 and 1536. He maintained friendly relations with the Raja of Manipur. The Koch king Bishva Singha paid a visit to the Ahom king and showed respects to him, Suhungmung's rule is memorable in the history of Assam for during his reign the use of fire-arms was first introduced and the Saka-era was adopted for the first time in Assam.

(IV) Rise of Koch kingdom:

The Muslim Rule established in Kamata proved to be short lived. There were revolts against Daniel in Kamrup and Goalpara and finally Daniel was assassinated. The Bhuyans began to exert their independence. Anarchy prevailed in Kamata following the killing of Daniel and the chaotic conditions produced a man like Bishva Singha who with a band of army occupied the territory

2. Acharyya, N.N., HMA, pp. 98-99
between the Karatoya and the Bara Nadi and established the Koch kingdom. He assumed the name of Bishva Singha and ruled from 1515 to 1540 A.D.¹ Bishva Singha was a man of great organising ability. He created an efficient army with a hierarchy of officers like Nawaba over 60,000 men, Umras over 3,000 men, Hazaris over 1000 men, Saikias over 100 men and Thakurlas over 20 men. It is only natural that the Ahoms might have been alarmed at the growth of the Koch power.²

After Bishva Singh's death his eldest son Malladev ascended the throne assuming the name of Naranarayana. Naranarayana was a peace loving man and he handed over the military affairs to his brother Sukladvaj who became popularly known as Chilarai. Chilarai was great general and a man of great military ambition, and as soon as Chilarai assumed military powers the Ahom-koch relation took a different form.³

(V) Ahom-koch Relation:

The period from 1539 A.D. to 1603 saw new development in medieval Assam, and this new aspect was Ahom-koch wars.

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¹ Acharyya, N.N., HMA, p. 189
² Gait, E., HA, p. 49.
³ Acharyya, N.N., BHA, p. 99.
In 1539 Suklenmung shifted his capital to Garhgaon and for this he is known as Garhgaya Raja. During his reign Chilarai, brother of the Koch king Naranarayana invaded the Ahom territory in 1546, inflicted defeat on the Ahom army near the Bharali and occupied a substantial portion of the Ahom Territory. But the Koch army had moved to Narayanpur by hurreidly constructing a road from Koch Bihar to Narayanpur. The Ahom king seized this opportunity and took position at the Pichala river. But the Koches began to retreat and the Ahoms inflicted a crushing defeat on the Koches and regained the whole of the territory. After the victory the Ahoms performed the Rikkhvan ceremony.

The Ahom-koch war renewed during the reign of Sukhampha, son of Suklenmung. Sukhampha was called Khora Raja for his physical deformity. The khora Raja accused the Koches for pillaging Ahom villages during their raid against the Kacharis. This led to war and the Koches advanced up to Dikhu river. Chilarai led the second expedition and entered into the Ahom capital. The Ahom king was compelled to enter into a treaty, the terms of which were the Ahoms to acknowledge the supremacy of the Koch, Koches to get a substantial portion of Ahom territory on the north

1. Gohain Barooah, P.N., Asamar Buranji, p. 44.
2. Dutta, P.N., GHA, p. 177
bank of Brahmaputra and the Ahoms to pay war indemnity to the Koches. The terms of the treaty were humiliating, but the Ahom king had to agree to them.¹

But the Ahoms would never accept any defeat for long. The king enquired for the causes of defeat and planned to prepare Ahom militia and soon mustered a strong army to recover Narayanpur from the hands of the Koch army and finally the Koches were driven out from the Ahom territory.²

Chilarai defeated the Kacharis, made the Rajas of Manipur and Sylhet as his vassals and fought with Suleiman Karaman, Sultan of Bengal (1563-72 A.D.). According to Koch chronicle Chilarai assisted Akbar against Daud Khan Sultan of Bengal and in the expedition against Daud, he died.³

Naranarayana was a great king. His reign has become remarkable for the Vaisnava reformation initiated by Sankaradeva. Although Sankaradeva began to preach in the Ahom kingdom first, the hostility of Brahmins compelled him to go to the Koch kingdom, where he was cordially received by the Koch king. Sankaradeva

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began to preach and won a huge following which ultimately changed
the socio-cultural history of Assam.¹

Before his death Naranarayana divided his kingdom,
and gave east of the Sankosh to Raghu, son of Chilarai and the rest of
his kingdom to his son Lakshmi Narayana. The successors of the
divided kingdoms fought for supremacy. Lakshmi Narayana invited
Islam khan, the Governor of Bengal, to invade territory of Pariksh-
it, Raghu's successor. The Koches of the east sought Ahom help.
Finally the eastern Koch kingdom was divided between the Mughals
and the Ahoms. The Mughals occupied the west of Bara Nadi and the
Ahoms east of Bara Nadi.²

(VI) The Muhammedan wars:-

Susenpha who ascended the throne in 1603 A.D. after
the death of his father Sukhampha, was called the Burha Raja for
his age; but this Burha Raja, ruled for thirty eight years with a
great vigour and earned the name of Pratap Singha for his glorious
deeds. His rule came to an end in 1641.³

In the beginning of his reign he attacked the Kacha-
ri kingdom and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Kacharis at the

² Ibid, pp. 200-201.
³ (a)Tamuliphukan, K.N., AB. p.27
    (b)Gait, 'E., HA, p.106.
battle of Raha (1606). When the Kacharis retaliated, the Ahoms suffered reverses and were compelled to enter into a treaty with the victors.  

Mughal Invasion :-

The Mughal invasion began in 1616 and ended in 1620. Pratap Singha incurred the displeasure of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir by giving shelter to Balinarayan, the brother of the Kachari king Parikshit. The eastern koch kingdom was conquered by Jahangir, when Balinarayan took shelter in the Ahom court. Jahangir being enraged sent a contingent of Mughal army against the Ahom king. The Mughals launched a massive offensive both by land and river; but the battles fought at Hajo remained inconclusive and the hostilities were again renewed in 1635 A.D., when Shah Jahan was the Emperor of India. The Mughals made desperate attempt to crush the Ahom out-posts; but the bravery and heroism of the Ahom militia held in check all the attempts of the Mughals to gain a foothold on the Ahom soil. According to the treaty of Koliabar (1639) the Bar Nadi in the north and Asurar Ali in the south were demarcated as boundaries between the Ahoms and the Mughals.

1. a) Bhuyan, S.K., AB, p. 50.  
   b) Dutta, P.N., GHA, pp. 186-87.

2. a) M.S. Assam Buranji (D.H.A.S. No. 58)  
    f 24 and f 25A.  
   b) Dutta, D., HA, pp. 75-76.
Mir Jumla's Invasion:

The treaty of Koliabar left the Ahoms dissatisfied and the ambitious king Jayadhvaj Singha was on the look-out for an opportunity to recover the lost territories of Kamrup and Guwahati. Taking advantage of the internal feud between inheritors of Mughal throne following sickness of the Emperor Shahjahan, the Ahom king sent his army to Guwahati in 1659 A.D. violating the terms of treaty,¹ and captured the whole of the Brahmaputra valley upto the river Sankosh.

When Aurangzeb ascended the throne of the Mughal empire, he entrusted Mir Jumla, the governor of Bengal, to punish the lawlessness of Zamindars of Assam and Magh (Arakan) who had caused injury and molestation to the Muslims. Accordingly Mir Jumla advanced against the Ahoms in 1662 A.D. with a vast army with a view to conquering Assam.²

Mir Jumla launched a two-pronged attack on the Ahoms, one in the south and the other in the north and both by land and river. Before his vast advancing army the Ahom militia was shattered; and many fled in fear. Mir Jumla occupied Guwahati and won the victories of Samdhara and Bharalimukh.³

¹ Acharyya, N.N., BHA., pp. 139-40.
² Gait, E., HA., pp. 128-29
³ Gait, E., HA., pp. 129-130.
Koliabar, a great naval fight was fought in which the Ahom navy was completely crushed. After the Ahom reverses at Lakhau, Jayadhvaj Singha fled to Namrup. Mir Jumla entered the Ahom capital Garhgaon in a victorious march. But his celebration of victory proved futile because the monsoon set in.

The Mughals unused to deal with floods found supply line vitally cut off. Due to short of ration and inclement weather, the Mughal army feel a victim to various diseases. Abandoning all hopes for conquering Assam Mir Jumla made a peace treaty with the Ahoms and started his return journey, but along with his many soldiers he died on the way and could not reach Dacca. Meanwhile being shocked and unnerved by the reverses, King Jayadhvaj also died of anxiety and hardship.

The Third Mughal Invasion:

Mughals invaded Assam for the third time during the reign of Chakradhvaj Singha (1663-1670). Both the Mughals and the Ahoms accused each other. The Ahoms complained that the Mughals violated the terms of treaty of 1663 without vacating the territory they had to vacate and not releasing the prisoners of war.

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2. Barua, G.R., Assam Buranji, Calcutta, 1875, pp. 82-83.
3. Dutta, D., HA, p. 84.
The Mughals on the other hand accused the Ahoms for withholding payment of indemnity as per the terms of the treaty. Firu′ Khan, the Thanadar of Guwahati sent a reminder to the Ahom king for immediate payment of indemnity in 1667.¹ Retaliating, Chakradhvaj Singha appointed Lachit, the son of Homai Tamuli Bar-Barua, the great general of Pratap Singh as the Bar-phukan and the task of recovering Guwahati was entrusted to him.² By extraordinary dint of arms Lachit recovered Guwahati from the hands of Mughal in 1667. Receiving the news of defeat, Aurangzeb sent his imperial forces under the command of Raja Ram Singha, Raja of Ambar to teach a good lesson to the Ahom king. Ram Singha reached Rangamati in 1669 ³ and measured strength with Lachit, the great Ahom general. He occupied Hajo and made a desperate bid to receive Guwahati which was hardly held by Lachit. Lachit frustrated the Mughal attempt to build up fortification by guerilla raids. Finding that it was impossible to defeat the huge Mughal imperial forces, Lachit decided to test the fate of the Ahoms in a naval battle. However, Lachit fought a pitched battle near Alaboi Hill,⁴ and lost his ten thousand men in the said campaign. Even then Chakradhvaj Singha did not submit to the repeated pressure of Ram Singha to accept the boundary upto

² Bhuyan, S.K., AB, p.109
³ Gait, E., HA, p.155.
⁴ Acharyya, N.N., BHA, pp. 147-48.
Bar Nadi and Asur Ali as per the conditions of the treaty of 1639.¹

Chakradhvaj's stand was reiterated by Udayaditya who succeeded him. At this Ram Singha decided to have a decisive fight to be fought over the Brahmaputra. Lachit was also waiting for the opportunity. As it would have to be Barphukan fell ill when the naval battle began, and the Ahom navy which was considered invincible suffered reverses; and the navy began to retreat.² But such was Lachit's faith in the excellence of the Ahom navy that with ailing health he rushed to the battle, and inspired the soldiers with patriotic zeal to defend the motherland. His message worked wonders, and in the Battle of Saraighat, the Ahom Navy inflicted the crushing defeat on the Mughal navy. As a result of the victory, the Ahoms recovered the whole of Kamrup. The river Manas became the western boundary of the Ahom kingdom.³

(VII) Climacteric of Ahom Rule :-

Atan Burhagohain who exercised tremendous influence during the rule of Chakradhvaj and Udayaditya continued to hold ministerial power under seven more kings in succession; and he virtually exercised all political power from 1673 to 1677 and the

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1. (a) Dutta, D., HA, pp. 84-85.
   (b) Bhuyan, S.K., (ed), AB (SM), pp. 113 ff.
2. Ibid, pp. 121-124.
3. (a) Barua, G.R., AB, pp. 57-58
   (b) Dutta, D., HA, pp. 86-87.
rulers became just puppets in his hands.¹ But in the later part of his career he was corrupted by power and began to terrorise the powerful nobles. The elder brother of Lachit Barphukan named Laluk Barphukan fled from the country in order to escape the wrath of the Burhagohain. He then entered into secret negotiations with the Nawab of Bengal and surrendered Guwahati to the Muhammedans in March 1679.² Now organizing an army he marched towards the capital. The disgruntled nobles sided with him. The Barphukan with the help of the nobles put the Ahom king Sudaipha to death, seized power and placed Sulikpha to the throne.³ Laluk became the real ruler of the Ahom Kingdom. Sulikpha became known as Lara-Raja for his tender age. Soon the nobles became dissatisfied with the proud and overbearing nature of Laluk who cherished the design to assume the rank of the king, and it was Laluk who had surrendered Guwahati to the Muhal.⁴ The nobles could not forget and as such forgive him. When dissatisfaction reached extreme point, the nobles, assassinated Laluk, his sons and brothers.⁵ Lara-Raja brutally killed, murdered and maimed hundreds of descendants of royal family in order to make his position safe and secure.⁶

¹ Gait, E., HA, pp. 165-166.
² Bhuyan, S.K., AB (SM), p. 139.
³ Tamuliphukan, K.N., AB, p. 43.
⁴ Gait, E., HA, pp. 164-166.
⁵ Tamuliphukan, K.N., AB, p. 43.
⁶ Ibid, p. 44.
However, Gadapani, one of the claimants who was noted for his vigour and energy, managed to escape the clutches of the cruel king. With the active help of the dissatisfied nobles he removed Lara Raja from the throne and himself ascended the throne in 1681. At first Lara-Raja was banished to Namrup, then subsequently put to death.\(^1\) The first act of Gadapani was to oust the Mughals from Guwahati and push them back finally to the other side of the river Manash and thus virtually put an end to Ahom-Mughal conflict.\(^2\)

(VIII) Ahom-Kachari-Jayantiya Relations :–

During the rule of Audra Singha (1696-1714), Kachari king Tamradhvaj declared independence. When the Ahom invaded the territory and captured Maitong the capital of Kachari kingdom, Tamradhvaj fled to Khaspur, and sought the help of Ram Singha the Jayantiya king.\(^3\) When the Kachari king reached the Jayantiya capital, he was kept under confinement. Receiving the call of help from Tamradhvaj, Rudra Singha attacked Jayantiya and defeated the Jayantiya king; and both the kings, Ram Singha and Tamradhvaj were brought to his court.\(^4\) The Kachari king acknowledged the suzerainty of the Ahom king over Kachari territory and

3. a) Bhuyan, S.K., Tungkhungia Buranji, pp. 34-35.
   b) Dutta, P.N., GHA, p. 231.
was released. But the Jayantiya king refused and he and his son were kept in confinement till death.¹

With a view to driving out the Mughals from Bengal Rudra Singha built up a confederacy of rulers, i.e. Ahom, Jayantiya and Cachar by raising a combined army to which 600 Daflas joined. But his mission was not successful because his life was snatched away by death in 1714.²

(IX) Moamaria Rebellion :-

Moamaria rebellion took place during the rule of Lakshmi Singha (1769-80); and this rebellion embarassed the Ahom king so much so that henceforth the prosperity of the kingdom began to fade and forces of decay set in. The main cause of the Moamaria rebellion was the persecution of the Moamaria mahantas and their disciples since the days of Surampha (1641-44). The immediate cause of the rebellion was the flogging of a Moran trader of Moamaria clan on the ground that he supplied bad elephants to the king. This humiliation of the trader enraged the Moamarias to a rebellion.³ The rebels captured Rangpur, made Ramakanta, a Moran chief as the king,⁴ while his younger brothers were made judges.

¹ Bhuyan, S.K., TB, pp. 35-36.
² Dutta, P.N., GHA, p. 236.
³ Dutta, D., HA, pp. 99-100
⁴ Barua, G.R., AB, p. 301.
Tipam and Saring. The Moran leader Ragha became the Barbarus. Finding the new regime unbearable the Ahom nobles and loyal officers joined hands together and by a surprise attack in 1770, captured the king and put him to death. Ragha was killed at the time of attack, and soon Lakshmi Singha was made the Ahom king.

The policy of persecution of Moamarias was continued in the reign of Gaurinath Singha (1780-94) who succeeded Lakshmi Singha. The Moamarias again revolted but rebellion was suppressed by Purnananda Burhagohain. The Moamarias revolted again in 1786 and this time they defeated the Burhagohain. Gaurinath fled to Guwahati and appealed to the Raja of Manipur for help. Meanwhile Burhagohain Purnananda held his own against the rebels. To make the matters worse, Krishna Narayan, son of Hangsha Narayan, a tributary Raja of Darrang revolted. Finding himself in a desperate situation Gaurinath appealed to the British for help; and Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-general

sent six companies of sixty sepoys each, in 1792 under Captain Welsh as the Commander and Dr. J.P. Wade as the attending physician. Soon Captain Welsh reached Goalpara which was under the British possession since 1765. Welsh acceded to the request of the Ahom king who had surrendered himself to the British Government. But Cornwallis was in favour of conciliatory settlement. Before the arrival of the messenger of Cornwallis, Welsh defeated Krishna Narayan. Soon Krishna Narayan surrendered. Now Cornwallis allowed Welsh to suppress the Moamarias. Welsh began his expedition in 1794 and defeated the rebels of Jorhat and occupied Rangpur. Meanwhile, Sir John Shore became the Governor-general of India. He reversed the policy of Cornwallis and stopped all intervention to neutral states. Soon Welsh was called back. But before return Walsh crushed the Moamaria rebellion.

(X) Circumstance leading to British Annexation:–

The Moamaria rebellion produced far-reaching effects on the future political history of Assam. The rebellion occasioned the entry of the British army as invited by Gaurinath and the Burmese army as invited by the rebels to Assam. Both the armies

1. (a) Bhuyan, S.K., Anglo-Assamese Relations, p. 290.
   (b) Dutta, D., HA, p.106.
gathered first hand knowledge of the geographical and political conditions of Assam and as such the background was created by the internal weaknesses of the Ahom rule for further invasion or intervention from both the sides since both the powers became interested to extend suzerainty in Assam.

(XI) The Burmese Invasion:

During Noamaria rebellion Purmananda Burhagohain came to power and was appointed in the post in 1784. He continued to wield power till 1817 when he died.\(^1\) By virtue of his extraordinary magnetic personality he made the rulers playthings in his hands, and he became the defacte ruler during the period of his prime ministership. During the reign of Kamaeswar Singha (1795 - 1810) and his son Chandra Kanta Singha (1810-1818), he became the virtual ruler.\(^2\) When Badan Chandra became Par-Thukan after the death of Kolia-Bhomora, the situation was reversed.\(^3\) Badan Chandra placed his personal interest above the interests of the kingdom. The Burhagohain was determined to take action against him, but Badan Chandra fled to Calcutta and sought help of the British to restore his nominee to the Ahom throne. But the Governor-general refused to comply with such a request. Disappointed thus Badan Chandra went to Burma to instigate the Burmese

\(^1\) Acharyya, N.N., BHA, pp. 198-201.
\(^3\) Dutta, D., Assam upto Company's Ruhe, pp. 123-124.
king to invade Assam. The ambitious king Bodawapaya at once accepted the offer with the hope of annexing Assam and he sent an army of 7,000 soldiers to attack Assam. The Burmese army occupied Jorhat, retained Chandra Kanta as the king and restored Badan Chandra to the post of Bar-Phukan. In a palace intrigue Badan Chandra was killed. In the meantime Burhagohain Purnananda died and was succeeded by his son Ruchinath as Burhagohain. Now Burhagohain Ruchinath who had earlier fled to Guwahati during the Burmese attack returned to Jorhat, and with the help of mercenaries, he placed Brajanath on the throne. Later, Chandra Kanta, who had fled away was seized and his right ear, was mutilated. This news of unjust removal of Chandra Kanta from the Ahom throne enraged the Burmese king, and he despatched a fresh army and General Alamingi to attack the Ahom kingdom. In 1819, the Burmese Army defeated the Ahom troops and in a victorious march installed Chandra Kanta to the throne.

But Chandra Kanta tried to shake off the Burmese Yoke, and when the news reached Burma, the Burmese king again sent another invasion against the Ahoms. Although virtually victorious, the Burmese pursued a policy of oppressions which alienated

2. (a) Tamuliphukaia, K.N., AB, p.65.
   (b) Bhuyan, S.K., AB, p.139.
the nation. Soon Chandra Kanta and Purandar Singha the fugitive princes reorganised troops and after repeated attempts occupied Guwahati. Receiving the news the Burmese king attacked Assam for the fourth time in 1822 and the Burmese became the masters of the soil.

(XII) Anglo-Burmese War:

The policy of aggression of the Burmese roused strong suspicion in the minds of British, and soon they got determined to oust the Burmese from Assam and Manipur which territory they had already occupied. Meanwhile the fugitive princes and nobles were pressing them hard to make Assam free from the hands of the oppressive Burmese soldiers.

(XIII) The Annexation:

The British army attacked Assam on March 24, 1824 and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Burmese on all fronts. Ultimately the British became masters by the Treaty of Yandabo signed on February 24, 1826; and consequently Assam was annexed by the British on that date.

2. (a) Ibid, p. 229.
   (b) Bhuyan, S.K., TB, p. 206.
3. Dutta, D., HA, p. 129
(XIV) Accounts of Foreign travellers:

Some foreign travellers visited Assam during the middle age and left interesting accounts regarding the administrative system and socio-cultural conditions of Assam. Ralph Fitch visited the Koch kingdom during the closing years of Naranarayana's reign. According to Ralph, the kingdom was averse to the killing of animals. People developed the art of inundating the country to check foreign invasion. Shihabuddin, who accompanied Mir Jumla in his expedition to Assam left a detailed account of the socio-economic conditions of the medieval Assam. Captain Welsh while conducting expedition (1792) used to sent reports which reflect the condition of Assam in the closing years of the eighteenth century. Dr. Wade who accompanied Welsh to Assam wrote books and papers on Assam. His first book contains the history of the reign of Gaurinath Singha was lost. His second book "An Account of Assam" is a valuable source book on the closing years of the Ahom Rule. His geographical sketch of Assam throws a flood of light on the geographical conditions of Assam.

1. Dutta, D., HA, p. 60.
2. (a)Ibid, p. 81
   (b)Gait, E., HA, pp. 41-150.
3. Dutta, D., HA, pp. 106-107
The Ahom administrative system was a form of 'monarchical oligarchy'. The king was selected from a few members of royal families. The king was regarded as a holy person and was referred to as Swargadeo (Heavenly lord). A slight scar or blemish on the body was considered a disqualification for kingship. The royal families were Dihingia, Charingia, Tungkhungia, Namrupia, Chamuguria and Parvatia.\(^1\)

The king ruled over his kingdom with the help of his ministers. The council of ministers consisted of three Gohains who represented the aristocracy. Nyayasodha-phukan was the officer of justice.\(^2\) However, the principal judicial authorities were the three Gohains. The original legal code of the Ahoms was thorough and elaborate, and punishments varied according to the nature of the crime.

The other administrative officers were Katakis, Kakatis and Dolois. The Katakis were ambassadors whose duty was

\(^1\)(a) Gait., E., HA, pp. 233-35

to conduct diplomatic relations; the Kakatis were scribes who were attached to royal courts; and the Dololi were professional astrologers to advise the king.  

"The gift of Ahoms to Assam was primarily in their military organisations and their administration. Nothing so practical and elaborate is said to have existed not only in Assam but also in the whole of Eastern India. The Ahoms were so powerful that the kingdom they carved out for themselves came to be associated with their name as a nation." Indeed, the whole political organisation was knit into a rigid discipline as that of an army. There were graded military officers, each of which was in charge of distinct platoon - Boras commanded 20 paiks, Saikias, 100, Hazarikas 1000, Rajkhowas 3000, and Phukans 6000 paiks. In fact, the entire mass of common people were either Karis (craftsmen) or Faiks (foot soldiers). The Ahom kings maintained a strong navy. The chief of the naval staff was known as Pani Phukan or Nausaliya Phukan.

2. According to Dr. Grierson - 'The Ahoms have left at least two important legacies to Assam. The sense of the importance of history, and the system of administration.' Linguistic Survey of India, Vol.II, p.62.  
3. (a) Bhuyan, S.K., AAR, pp. 10 ff.  
   (b) Gait, E., HA, pp. 239 ff.  
All spiritual and religious matters were assigned to the priests. Under Ahom rule it was compulsory on the part of all able bodied persons to render service to the state whenever needed. There was not only decentralisation of powers but also departmentalisation and there were departments for gun-powder factories, and royal wardrobes, the Queen's business etc.¹

Because of the vast well-organised administrative system, the Ahoms could rule for long six hundred years, consolidating power and bringing stability to the land.²

1. (a) Gait, E., HA, pp. 333 ff.
   (b) Ibid, Report on the progress of Historical Research in Assam, Shillong, 1897. p. 2.
APPENDIX - 'A'

TWELVE BHUYAN CHIEFS OF MEDIEVAL ASSAM

1. Atai Bhuyan.
2. Uzir Bhuyan.
3. Somdar Bhuyan.
5. Bhakat Bhuyan.
6. Rai Bhuyan.
7. Shakai Bhuyan.
8. Laskar Bhuyan.
10. Ramabhatta Bhuyan.
11. Tamai Bhuyan.
**APPENDIX - 'B'**

**Chronology of Ahom Kings**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>List of rulers</th>
<th>Commenced</th>
<th>Reign Ended</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Sukapha</td>
<td>1228</td>
<td>1266</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Suteupha</td>
<td>1268</td>
<td>1281</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Subinpha</td>
<td>1281</td>
<td>1293</td>
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<td>4. Sukhangpha</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Sukhrangpha</td>
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<td>1364</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Sutupha</td>
<td>1364</td>
<td>1376</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interregnum</td>
<td></td>
<td>1376</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Tyaokhantti</td>
<td>1360</td>
<td>1389</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interregnum</td>
<td></td>
<td>1389</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Sudanphya</td>
<td>1397</td>
<td>1407</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Sujangpha</td>
<td>1407</td>
<td>1422</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Suphakpha</td>
<td>1422</td>
<td>1439</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Susenpha</td>
<td>1439</td>
<td>1489</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Suhenpha</td>
<td>1489</td>
<td>1493</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Supimpha</td>
<td>1493</td>
<td>1497</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Suhungmung or the Dihingia Raja</td>
<td>1497</td>
<td>1539</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Suklenmung or Garh gaye Raja (Deka)</td>
<td>1539</td>
<td>1552</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Sukhampha or Khora Raja</td>
<td>1552</td>
<td>1603</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Susengpha or Burha Raja or Pratap Singha</td>
<td>1603</td>
<td>1641</td>
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<td>18. Surampha or Bhaga Raja</td>
<td>1641</td>
<td>1644</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Sutyinpha or Nariya Raja</td>
<td>1644</td>
<td>1648</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Sutamla or Jayadhvaj Singha</td>
<td>1648</td>
<td>1663</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Ruler Name</td>
<td>Start Year</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Supungmung or Chakradhvaj Singha</td>
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<td>Suklampha or Ramadhvaj</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>Gobar</td>
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<td>26.</td>
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<td>Sulikpke or Lara Raja</td>
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<td>Supatpha or Gadadhar Singh</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>Sukhrungpha or Rudra Singh</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>Sutanpha or Sib Singh</td>
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<td>32.</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>Surampha or Rajesvar Singh</td>
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<td>Sunyeopha or Lakshmi Singh</td>
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<td>Suhltpangpha or Gaurinath Singh</td>
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<td>36.</td>
<td>Suklingpha or Kamaleswar Singh</td>
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<td>37.</td>
<td>Sudingpha or Chandra Kanta Singh</td>
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<td>38.</td>
<td>Purandar Singh</td>
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<td>39.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Burmese rule</td>
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<td>British conquest</td>
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<td>40.</td>
<td>Purandar Singh rules in upper Assam</td>
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<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Purandar Singh rules in upper Assam</td>
<td>1832</td>
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