

**History Of Upper Assam,
Upper Burmah, And North
Eastern Frontier**

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HISTORY OF UPPER
ASSAM, UPPER BURMAH
AND NORTH-EASTERN
FRONTIER



BY

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TO THE ASSAM MILITARY POLICE FORCE

With which I had the honour of serving several happy interesting years—the Wardens of our long stretch of North-Eastern Marches; who, since we were brought into touch with this far-off corner of our Indian possessions have borne the heat, burden, and stress of every expedition (officially recognised or otherwise) with a cheerful willingness and zeal which has won the approbation of all who have worked with ~~them~~, but whose labours too frequently pass unnoticed—I dedicate this humble work.

. I S . H
“Floreat custodes terminorum Imperii nostri.”

L. W. SHAKESPEAR
(Colonel, 2nd Goorkhas).

DEHRA DOON, 1912-13.

PREFACE

As I have found no book dealing completely and succinctly with Assam, its border land now so much in the public eye, and the many wild and interesting peoples dwelling along that border, which obliges the student to search through many books before arriving at the points of interest desired (if even then they are obtained), I have endeavoured to collect materials from all—to me—possible sources, and weaving them into narrative form, to produce something useful and readable at least for those who care about that little-known but very interesting corner of India. The success of my article which the *Army Review* printed in October, 1912, on this subject, has led me to attempt something more complete in detail; and with all its shortcomings I trust it may be appreciated by those interested in the past and future of this fertile and lovely land. If any criticisms may seem too trenchant, I trust the hope that there are those who will in the future benefit by statements of facts may be recognised as a sufficient excuse for having ventured into such, possibly to some, undesirable spheres. In this connection a remark of Commander Bellairs, R.N., in his interesting article on "Secrecy and Discussion," which ran to the effect that, if there is no criticism, which naturally goes with discussion, the teachings of history are apt to be perverted—may still further strengthen my excuse. Without certain of the books

mentioned in the Bibliography this could not have been attempted, and I desire to record my high appreciation of, and indebtedness to, the particular labours of their authors; and my gratitude to the Librarian of the Imperial Library, Calcutta, for his personal assistance so courteously given. My thanks are also due to certain friends who have helped with photographs, namely, those of the Ābors, Mishmis, and some of the photos dealing with Marām monoliths and Nagas where I was unable to go personally; the rest of the photos and sketches are my own.

I may add that this book has been *viséd* by Army Headquarters, whose suggested alterations, omissions, have been duly attended to.

L. W. SHAKESPEAR
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HISTORY OF
UPPER ASSAM, UPPER BURMAH
AND
NORTH-EASTERN FRONTIER

CHAPTER I

IN spite of the interest Assam has furnished to ethnologists in the past, due to the numerous and curious peoples living in and round it, as well as from the more recent military expeditions and the awakening of China with her ambition to monopolise the country lying to the north and east of its practically unknown borders; there is hardly any part of India which is less known to the general public. It has indeed probably only been heard of by the public as a tea-producing district, and one which has, since Lord Curzon's famous "Partition," become connected with the sedition of Eastern Bengal which lies immediately south of Assam proper. It is not thought of as ever having possessed a stirring history or an old civilisation; though this latter is attested by the numerous ancient forts, temples, and certain old high roads such as the Kāmāli Alli running 350 miles

from Cooch Behar to Narainpur, still in use in parts, which are to be found scattered up and down the length and breadth of the land. These probably only reveal a small portion of what may still remain for the archæologist when the jungle and forest which still cover so great a portion of Assam may be removed, as settlers and their cultivation gradually extend. That it was a densely populated country in the far-off past is shown by the extensive ruins of Kamātāpur near Cooch Behar in the west, stated by Buchanan Hamilton to be upwards of nineteen miles round and flourishing up to the end of the fifteenth century, when it fell a prey to the Moghuls—by the extensive ruins of old fortifications in the neighbourhood of Baliapāra not far from the foot of the Aka Hills—by the famous temples of Kāmakhya near Gauhati, and those at Charaideo, near which latter are also the remains of the old capital of Garhgaon. In the extreme eastern corner of Assam, viz., in the angle formed by the rivers Dibong and Dikrang within fifteen miles of our present frontier post of Sadiya and no great distance from the point whence General Bower's recent Abor expedition made its start, lie the extensive ruins of Bishmaknagar (Kundina) and a large fort of hewn stone together with four or five excavated tanks.

This showing that what is now almost a "terra incognita" to us, covered with more or less impenetrable jungle, was once the centre of a thriving community.

Mr. Kinney, who knew the Dibrugarh district well, alludes to the former high state of cultivation and energy of a people now sunk in apathy and opium eating, as evinced by ruins of magnificent buildings

and raised roadways found all over the country. The fine old Tengrai Raj Alli connecting Rangpur with Nāmrup for instance, is frequently met with in the heart of the forest, and parts of it in the more open spaces are in use still. Mr. T. T. Cooper also writing in 1873 of eastern Assam again testifies to the energy and civilisation formerly characteristic of this people and forming a striking contrast to the lethargic existence of the present-day scanty population. He says : “ The contemplation of these ruins surrounded by almost impenetrable jungle which has overgrown the once fertile and well cultivated fields of a people that has almost passed away, is calculated to strike one with an intense desire to learn more of the history of those terrible events which robbed a fertile land of a vast and industrious population, converting it into a wilderness of swamps and forests.”

Again the extensive region of the dense Nambhor Forest lying between Lumding Junction (on the Assam and Bengal Railway) and Golaghat and bordered by the Mikir and Naga Hills is known to cover ground at one time owned by the strong Kachāri clans in a high state of civilisation with their capital at Dimāpur on the Dhansiri river almost in the centre of the forest. When the engineers, Messrs. Thornhill, Buckle, and Venters in 1896-97 were arranging the earthwork of the Assam and Bengal Railway north from Lumding, they came on causeways, canals, and sites of buildings, notably in the vicinity of Rangapahar and Dimāpur now covered with jungle ; which jungle, however, forest experts speak of as being of no greater age than 200 years. As we shall see later on, history shows us the Kachāris were overwhelmed by the Ahoms and

had their capital sacked in the middle of the sixteenth century, which was then deserted together with the entire region, and this was never re-occupied by either nation.

Just these few facts go to prove that Assam, spoken of in old Moghul writings as "a land of mystery and witchcraft," does possess an interest which will repay those who care to peruse the illuminating works on this country by Messrs. Blochmann, Gait, Prinsep, and others. When these are read and one realises to what an extent civilisation had reached, the large armies that operated up and down the Brahmaputra valley, the depth of its religions, the engineering and architectural work left behind, one is inclined to wonder what has become of it all and of the peoples; and what caused the decay of power which permitted its once thriving valleys to be now choked and buried in densest forests? For the people now met with in Assam are a peaceful, almost effeminate race, in no great numbers, addicted in a large measure to opium eating, and not disposed to diligent labour; whence the necessity for importing the great numbers of coolies from India required to work on the tea gardens.

It is generally assumed that climatic conditions tended very largely to bring about this state of decay, at all events where the people were concerned; for the climate is a distinctly enervating one, and each race that has settled there has, in course of time, lost its vigour and been supplanted by hardier folk, who in their turn have, in spite of material progress as to civilisation, succumbed to the love of ease and luxury born of an enervating climate in a highly fertile land.

As to vanished cities, forts and other landmarks of

the past, their disappearance is attributable to the soft alluvial soils of the valleys, which permit the easy task for rivers of cutting for themselves fresh channels, and so frequently destroying and carrying away the towns and buildings which history tells us did exist along their banks. Examples of this are to be found in comparing a map of 1790 with one of about 1860 when the Brahmaputra's course below Gauhati will be seen to have shifted close on fifty miles within this



BRAHMAPUTRA AND RIVER STEAMER AT GAUHATI.

period ; while some twenty miles from the right bank of the same river between Nalbāri and Hājo are to be seen the arches of an ancient bridge once spanning an old course of the river, and known as the " Sil Sako." It stands now in the centre of a lake surrounded by miles of forest, and had several of its arches destroyed by the great earthquake of 1897. In the far eastern corner of the province beyond and not far from Sadiya are signs that the Brahmaputra and Lohit rivers flowed

in the far-off past much closer to the foot of the Ābor and Mishmi hills, and Hannay states his opinion that it was the gradual changing of the river's course further and further south which led to the abandonment of the cities of Kundina (Bishmaknagar) and Prithiminagar. Added to this force of Nature come those of earthquakes by which Assam has suffered seriously, and the marvellously rapid growth of vegetation; which when unchecked in a few years spreads, chokes up valleys, and obliterates, as in the case of the Dhansiri and Kopili valleys, all traces of former towns and buildings. Although this volume is intended to deal chiefly with tribes dwelling along the whole of our north-eastern borderland it will not be without interest to trace the history of the country from the most ancient times as revealed by rock-cut inscriptions and legends, the first contact of the Moghuls with the Ahoms then the ruling race here, and finally the appearance of the English on the scene.

The particular part of Assam this history deals with, viz., upper Assam from Goalpāra to Sadiya, comprises the whole valley of the Brahmaputra with a length of nearly 450 miles and a varying breadth of sixty to eighty miles, covering an area of over 30,000 square miles. To the north and east high mountains shut it off from Thibet and Bhutān, on the west it joins Bengal, while south and east another mountainous region—that of the Patkoi and Barail ranges—separates it from Burma and south-western China. It is thus almost completely surrounded by mountains which are inhabited by more or less savage tribes. The early history of Assam being purely legendary it is practically impossible to lift the veil lying over it, though here

and there a little light comes in from ancient inscriptions in India, such, for instance, as that on the famous Allahabad pillar erected in Chandragupta's time, 316-292 B.C., whereon we learn that Kāmarupa (as Assam was called in early days) was known of then as a State lying away east of Nepal to which King Chandragupta's fame had penetrated; and it had then, probably under its Hindoo Khettri Kings (the very earliest rulers in Assam), attained to a degree of civilisation almost equal to that of the Hindu dynasties in India of those days.

A copper-plate inscription records an invasion by Vikramaditya, King of Ujjain, about 57 B.C., and as he was a Buddhist it is probable he fostered that religion in the land where, as we shall see, it never took a serious hold. Major Hannay of the old Assam Light Infantry, who made considerable research into the ancient history of Assam, is of opinion that Kāmarupa was one of the earliest conquests of the Hindu Khettri Kings about 400 B.C., and was the seat of that primitive form of Hinduism which existed previous to Buddhism, and which again was followed in the middle of the fifteenth century by Brahminical Hinduism introduced by certain Brahmins from the city of Gaur, in Bengal.

Another inscription shows a Gupta King, by name Samūdra, at the end of the fourth century A.D. exacting tribute from Kāmarupa, and from the following century this country came under the Gupta dynasty, lasting up to the first half of the ninth century. A Rajput, called Itari, rising to power, started the Pal dynasty, taking the name of Dharm Pal. Twelve kings of this dynasty are said to have reigned between

830 and 1140 A.D., and these in their turn gave way to that of the Senas, who however, being of Bengal, ruled only the western part of Kāmarupa.

That Assam and the Hukong Valley to the Irrawadi river and beyond, formed as it were a natural highway for old-time Indian kings with a desire for conquests far afield is known, and Forlong, in his researches, states an Indian King named Samudra (not the one previously mentioned) was ruling in upper Burma about 105 A.D., and that they were Hindus from that locality who led the Shans far down the Mekhong river into Siam ; while earlier still Chinese chronicles state an Indian prince from Cambōd in north-west India was reigning in Cambōdia, giving the name of his original homeland to his new territory. These chronicles also say adventurers from India founded kingdoms in Java and Malaya as far back as 166 A.D., and also that merchants from Alexandria or some other Roman port visited China a little later, travelling viâ Chiampa, the old name for Siam. All these Indians with their armies must have got there via Assam and the low passes of the Patkoi Range into the Hukong Valley and so further east. The difficult mountainous regions stretching from the Patkoi away down south to Arrakan precluded the possibility of passing masses of men through them, while long sea voyages were unknown to the Indian peoples of those days. Though certain historians are of opinion that Hindus from the ancient sea coast kingdom of Kalinga (Madras side) did make voyages to Java and that the Hindu ruined cities and temples found there are their handiwork.

Other copper plate inscriptions found in Assam show various lands having been made over to Brahmin

priests by certain rulers of the Pal dynasty between 990 and 1142 A.D., whose names are thus arrived at ; otherwise the first authentic information we have of Kāmarupa, viz., the country lying between the Karatoya river (flowing past Julpigori into the Brahmaputra near Goalundo) and Sadiya, is by the hand of the great Chinese traveller, Huien Tsiang, who came



ANCIENT TEMPLES IN UPPER ASSAM.

to this country in 630 A.D., visiting Gauhati and other places of sanctity.

Of the three strong tribes who long held dominion in different parts of upper Assam, the earliest to arrive in the country is surmised to have been the Kachāris, whose original habitat is believed to have been along the foot of the Darjiling hills and the Morang tract, which was known to the Nepalese as the "Kaccha country." These then travelled east and crossed the Brahmaputra, settling in what is now the Nowgong district between Jorhat and Gauhati.

Spreading from there, they populated the Dhansiri and Kopili valleys and all eastern Assam, eventually crossing the southern hills and occupying the present district of Cachar, to which they gave the name of their ancient home, after they had ousted the Tippera people.

The Chutiyas, an offshoot of the Kachāri tribe, alone used a written character, but made no use of it in recording events.

The second tribe to rise into prominence were the Kocches, allies to the Kachāris, whose home lay just east of the Karatoya river where the little State of Cooch Behar is now. Their kingdom when consolidated comprised the whole of Kāmarupa, which then lay chiefly on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, with Gauhati and the country towards Goalpāra on the south bank.

As these two tribes had kept no records, our information regarding them up to the arrival on the scene of the Ahoms, comes from Mahomedan historians who recorded the different Moghul invasions, and from local legends, here and there substantiated by rock-cut and copper plate inscriptions which have come to light at Tezpur, Gauhati and elsewhere.

The third and the most important tribe are the Ahoms, because they possessed a literature of a sort and certainly kept written historical records—"buranjis" as they are called, meaning "stores of instruction for the ignorant," whereby we have a definite history of events in upper Assam since their arrival there about 1220 A.D. They were non-Buddhist Shans of the great Tai race who inhabited the old kingdom of Pông (the Mogoung of the present day) which stretched from the upper Chindwyn to the upper

Irrawadi rivers ; and these people held sway in the Brahmaputra valley until the troubles with the Burmese in 1825 led to the appearance on the scene of the last dominant Power—the English. Besides these three large tribes, other smaller ones ruled in outlying portions of the country, as, for instance, the Chutiyas, owning the country between the Subansiri and Disang rivers, and the Morans who dwelt opposite the Chutiyas on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, east of the present Sibsagor. Both are of the same stock as the Kachāris, but the former is of very ancient origin, the Deori Chutiyas claiming proudly to belong to the descendants of the Hindu Khettri line, which Hannay says seems to be corroborated by the fact that the Chutiya language, now only known to the Deoris or temple priests, contains a large proportion of Sanscrit and Hindu words plus a certain amount of Burmese from the Shan conquerors, whose “buranjis” state the Chutiyas were the only possessors of a written language they met with at the time of their advent into Assam. Whether the Chutiyas were the original builders of the cities of Bishmaknagar (Kundina) and Prithiminagar beyond Sadiya, and now covered by forests, is not known; but Hannay is of opinion that they were occupied in the time of the Khettri Kings over 2,000 years ago.

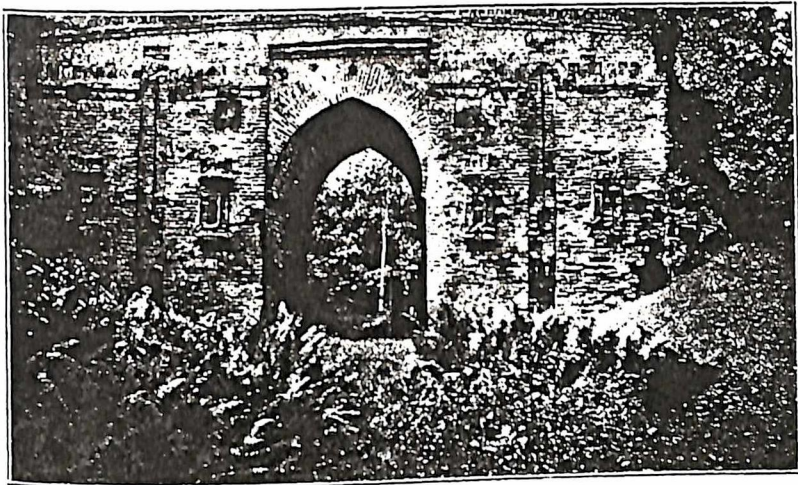
CHAPTER II

WE will now turn to a historical review of the three great tribes, beginning with the Kachāris, who, as we have seen before, trekked in past ages from the "Khaccha country," which lay roughly between the Brahmaputra and the Kusi rivers along the foot of the Himalayas into the country beyond the Brahmaputra, settling first in what is now the Nowgong district, and after long ages extending their dominions up the great valley to about where Sadiya now stands, and southwards up the Kopili valley and later still up the Dhansiri and Doyang valleys to where they emerge from the hills. Bryan Hodgson (1847) is one of the authorities for this statement as to the original home of the Kachāris and Kocches, both being at least linguistically allied; though Endle, in an excellent work on the Kachāris, places their ancestral home in Thibet and China, and concludes that they migrated in two streams into the rich Brahmaputra valley—one stream entering western Assam through the valleys of the Tista, Dharla, and Sankōsh rivers, and founding the kingdom of Kāmarupa; while the other stream found its way down the Subansiri, Dihong, and Dibang valleys into eastern Assam. He classes the Chutiyas, who long held sway round about

Sadiya, as being a clan of the great Kachāri nation left behind as the tide of migration rolled west and south. Both he and Hodgson hold that in very early days they were the dominant races in Assam; but the latter goes further and states they are the aborigines of Assam; in fact he classes them with the Tamulian aboriginal inhabitants of India such as Gonds, Bhils, etc., and does so through their peculiar physical capability of being able to live healthily in forest and swampy localities where no other human beings can exist. He therefore concludes that this capability could only have been evolved after a lapse of a very great space of time, which he computes at thirty centuries, so we may as well assume that the Kachāris and Kocches are of the aboriginal races in India. They appear to have been a peaceful and flourishing race, given to agriculture, and seem to have lived in amity with the rising Kocch nation on the far side of the Brahmaputra, with the exception of trouble in 1562, when they were defeated by the Kocch king Nar Narain; while they also traded with Dacca and Bengal viâ Goalpāra. It was evidently from Bengal that they got their ideas of building with bricks, for in those far-off days neither of the other nations built permanent towns or forts, their defences being entirely of the nature of earthworks, and their buildings of wood and bamboo. A few ancient temples only in upper Assam were then built of masonry, whereas the remains at Dimāpur, for instance, which flourished centuries before the Ahoms arrived, show us the Kachāris knew all about the art of brick making and permanent buildings; while the style in which they worked points to having

been copied from Bengal, the nearest civilised country to them. To anyone nowadays travelling by rail from Haflong to near Golaghat, or from Golaghat by road to Nichuguard at the foot of the Naga hills, it is difficult to realise that this densely forested region covers the sites of many old cities and vast areas of cultivation, the names of which, such as Maihām, Jāmaguri, Dijoa, alone remain in old Ahom accounts. Of the three valleys mentioned before, the Kopili is the only one which has not lapsed into such complete desolation ; for the reason that the Kachāris were able to hold on to this tract much longer, almost up to the beginning of the nineteenth century ; whereas the other two, viz., the Dhansiri and Doyang valleys, ceased to belong to them some 300 years earlier. By the time the Ahoms were making themselves felt as a power in the region round Sadiya and Nāmrup, the Kachāri people held the country up to the Dikkoo river flowing past Sibsagor, and here they came into contact with the Ahoms about the beginning of the fourteenth century. Constant friction occurring, and the Ahoms being strengthened by a fresh influx of emigrants from the east, the Kachāris gradually withdrew until in the end of the fifteenth century they took up arms with intent to recover lost lands so successfully, that in 1490 they badly defeated the Ahoms at Dampuk on the Dikkoo river, which they once more made their boundary. Thirty years later commenced the long series of wars in which the Ahoms, having reduced their other enemies, the Chutiyas and Morans, and also to a certain extent the Kooches, had time to turn with all their strength against the Kachāri peoples ; for in the early part of

the sixteenth century they were pressed back until they lost all territory east of Golaghat, the Ahoms building a strong earthwork fort at Marangi, a little south of Jorhat, by which to hold what they had taken. Before a year was over a Kachāri effort against Marangi led to the Ahoms ascending the Dhansiri and Doyang valleys in two strong armies where, after successful actions at Bardua and Maihām, the Ahoms



LAST REMAINING GATEWAY TO THE OLD KACHĀRI FORT AT DIMĀPUR.

retired. The sites of these places are no longer known. Five years later, the Kachāris, still smarting under these defeats, attacked the Ahoms in the neighbourhood of Golaghat, and this time the latter took a large force victoriously up the Dhansiri as far as the Kachāri capital of Dimāpur, where, after a stiff action, in which the Kachāri king was killed and his head sent to Charaideo, the Ahoms dictated terms and, setting up one Detsing as king, they retired out of the country. Five years later, however, Detsing quarrelled with the Ahom king Sūkmūngūng, who, with a large

army, advanced first up both sides of the Doyang, where the Kachāris made but slight resistance, and then moved into and up the Dhansiri to the capital.

Here the Kachāris after a desperate defence were completely defeated and the city sacked. The Ahoms now took over this entire tract of country, but as they never occupied it and the former Kachāri occupants had either been killed or had retired to found the new capital at Maibong in what is now the North Cachar hills, the Dhansiri and Doyang valleys soon relapsed into jungle, which in later times became known as the Nambhor forest. Ahom "buranjis" record that in 1637 the route for communication between Ahoms and Kachāris was viâ Koliabar, Nowgong, and the Kopili valley; as the Dhansiri valley route was impossible and the country depopulated, Maibong, now a small station on the Assam-Bengal Railway, lies a few miles north of the civil station of Haflong, and by the end of the sixteenth century had become a town of considerable size and strength according to old accounts, and from what remains for us to judge by, namely traces of what were strong walls, gateways, temples, etc. One curious rock-cut temple has a record cut into the stone showing the sacred edifice to have been made about 1721 in the reign of Chandra Narain. In the beginning of the seventeenth century the Kachāris were still in possession of the north of Nowgong district, where it borders the Brahmaputra valley, and to the south of the same along the Jamūna and Kopili valleys where stood the once flourishing towns of Rāhā, Doboka, Demera; and they had also long since been the dominant power in the Cachar plains (Surma valley), where they had driven back

the original occupants, the Tippera people. They now tried their strength against the adjoining strong hill tribe, the Jaintias, whose Raja was defeated and his capital, Khāspur, taken. A few years later, namely in 1606, trouble again occurred with the Ahoms and the two forces met at Dharmtika, where the Ahom king, Pratap Sing, was successful, but later received a signal defeat at Rāhā near Nowgong; after which he withdrew his forces owing to fears of an approaching Mahomedan invasion. A more or less peaceful period then set in for the Kachāris lasting some ninety years, when in 1696 Rudra Sing, one of the greatest of the Ahom monarchs, made war upon the Kachāri king, Tamradhoj, who had proclaimed his independence, and sent an army of 37,000 up the Dhansiri to Dijoa, and another of 34,000 viâ Rāhā and the Kopili valley. The objective of each was Maibong, the capital, and both forces had to make their own roads through the forest as they advanced. The former force having defeated the Kachāris at Dijoa (now Mohan Dijoa on the north-eastern edge of the Mikir hills), reached Maibong first, and in a pitched battle crushed Tamradhoj's forces and captured the city, demolishing its walls and defences. The Rāhā army having had enormous difficulties to contend with in cutting its way through dense forests arrived late, but was used to continue the war into Cachar, having Khāspur city as its objective. Much sickness in his army, and finding great difficulty in the matter of food supplies, caused Rudra Sing to give up the attempt and withdraw his troops. The Jaintias never having got over their defeat by the Kachāris, began trouble in 1705, and after a series of small actions their Raja

managed by treachery to seize the person of Tamradhoj, who appealed for aid to his old enemy the Ahom Rudra Sing. This was replied to by the sending of two Ahom columns through the Jaintia country in 1707, one of which got through the hills, defeated the Jaintia forces, and occupied the city of Jaintiapur on the south side of those hills. Both the Raja of Jaintia and his prisoner Tamradhoj were taken, sent to Bishnath, near Tespur, on the Brahmaputra, and both Kachāri and Jaintia countries came under Ahom rule. The Jaintia people, girding under the Ahom yoke, rose two years later, and at first had some successes against the small Ahom forces left in the hills, until the garrison at Demera, in the upper Kopili valley, managing to co-operate with the troops left to hold Jaintiapur, the Ahoms overcame all resistance and finally ended the campaign in a drastic manner with a great massacre at, and the destruction of the city of Jaintiapur. A little later Rudra Sing released his two royal captives at a big durbar held at Sālāgarh, opposite to Bishnath, and allowed them to return to their own States, which, however, remained feudatory to the Ahoms. Exhausted by this last war, the Kachāris enjoyed a period of peace for nearly a hundred years, until, in 1803, the great Moamaria rebellion in upper Assam having started against Ahom rule, the Kachāris were induced to side with the rebels, hoping thus to regain their old independence. A desultory war dragged on for two years, until the Kachāris were severely beaten in a pitched battle at Doboka, on the Jamūna river, and retired to Maibong and Cachar till 1817, when irruptions of the Manipuris under their Raja Manjit practically placed the following year the

whole of Cachar and its hill district under Manipuri domination. But only for a short time, for these in their turn were in 1819-20 ousted by the Burmese, who, conquering the State of Manipur, soon had Cachar in their hands, which they held till their aggressions generally at Rangoon, as well as in Assam, caused the English to declare war upon them, and their ejection from Assam speedily followed. The first visit to Khāspur, in Cachar, of any Englishman at all events any one of note, is that recorded in 1763 by Mr. Verelst from Bengal, who later became Governor-General; while the first recorded hostility between the British and the people of this locality, namely the vicinity of Cachar, was that which took place between a detachment of the Honourable East India Company's troops from Dacca and the Jaintia Raja's forces at a place twenty-one miles north-north-east of Sylhet. The Kachāris, as a nation, have now dwindled into the agricultural communities dwelling in Cachar and scattered about upper Assam; while Maibong and the North Cachar hills, so long their home and capital, have relapsed into ruins and jungle, except in the lower reaches of the Jetinga valley, which are now covered with flourishing tea gardens.

The legendary history of Kāmarupa, as Assam was called by the ancients, perpetuated in the name Kāmrup a district on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, would show the Hindu Khettri conquerors having dominated it and having in their turn given way to the Pal dynasty, and we are brought to the first authentic information to hand of this country by the Chinese traveller, Huien Tsiang, in 603 A.D. This has been

touched on before, so we begin the history of the great Kocch tribe at the rise of one Shankaldip, a Kocch chief, as we have the statements of a Hindu historian and the poet Firdusi, which give a better semblance of facts than do the legendary ideas of Bisoo, whom local tradition asserts to be the founder of this dynasty. Shankaldip rose to power in the middle of the fifth century, and when Huien Tsiang visited Assam the kingdom of Kāmarupa apparently extended from the Karatoya river, near Julpigori, as far as Sadiya along the north bank of the Brahmaputra, where, it seems, the Kocch people lived amicably with the Chutiyas, who even then may have been deteriorating from having been once a powerful community. Bryan Hodgson, in his work on the Kocch and Bodo people, states that these were the most numerous and powerful aborigines in north and north-western Bengal, and the only ones who, after the Aryan ascendancy had been established, were able to retain political power or possession in the plains. A translation of the Yogini Tantra shows these people to be spoken of as Mleccha or aborigines. One Hajo, he states, founded the great Kocch kingdom in the latter part of the fifteenth century, and his successors reigned for almost 200 years. Hajo, having no sons, married his daughter to a Mecch (Bodo) chief, thus uniting the aborigines and forming the Kocch dynasty, which was eventually able to withstand invasion by the Moslems, Bhootanese, and the Ahoms ; the latter holding sway then in upper Assam, while the Kocch held lower and middle Assam. Later Kocch rulers, however, cast off the Bodo alliance and began to look with greater favour on the creeds and customs of the Aryans than on their older religion of

nature, namely, the worship of stars and terrene elements. They eventually took to Hinduism, calling their country Behar, and declaring themselves to be Rājbanis. This change only affected the higher and wealthier grades of society, the masses, strange to say, mostly adopting Mahomedanism. What may have been the condition of the Kocch in the palmy days of Hinduism cannot now be ascertained, but it is certain that after the Moslem had succeeded the Hindu suzerainty, this people became so important that a Mahomedan historian, Abdul Fazul, could allude to Bengal as being "bounded on the north by the Kocch kingdom," which, he adds, "includes Kāmarupa." In 1773 this Kocch Raj was absorbed by the Great Company. Bryan Hodgson says, in speaking of their character, that they display no military or adventurous genius, but are better suited to the homely, tranquil affairs of agriculture. It is chiefly from old Moghul records of bygone invasions that any knowledge is arrived at of the Kocch people, plus lists of names of kings recorded on copper plates up to the beginning of the thirteenth century; and the earliest of these invasions was that of Mahmoud Bakhtiyar, who, desiring to conquer Thibet and deeming an easier route there to lie through the Bhootan hills, led an army in 1198 through the western end of Kāmarupa unopposed. When he had penetrated into the hills some sixteen marches, difficulties of supplies set in; he met the Thibetans in force, was beaten back, and had to conduct a disastrous retreat with the Kocch people now in arms harassing his flanks and cutting off supplies. Mahmoud eventually, with a small following, reached Dinajpore, the rest of his army

having perished. In 1253 Gyasuddin, a Moghul governor of Bengal, is said to have entered and traversed Kāmarupa almost to Sadiya, but was eventually beaten back and had to retreat to Gaur. Twenty-five years later a Moghul noble, Tugril Khan, entered the Kocch country, but was almost immediately killed in battle, and his force dispersed; while in 1337, another Moghul invasion took place in the reign of Mahomed Shah Tughlak, which did not advance far into the country before it too suffered a series of defeats, and was almost entirely annihilated. The Moghul historian Ferishta's account of this invasion of China which, passing through Cooch Behar, attempted the passage of the Bhootan hills, runs as follows: "Having heard of the great wealth of China, Mahomed Tughlak conceived the idea of subduing that empire; but in order to accomplish his design it was necessary to first conquer the country of Hemachal (Nepal) and Thibet lying between the borders of China and India. Accordingly in 1337 he ordered a force of 100,000 men to subdue this mountain region under his sister's son, Khoosroo Mulk, and to establish garrisons as far as the border of China. When this was effected he proposed to advance in person with his whole army to invade that empire. Nobles and state councillors in vain assured him that the troops of India never yet could, and never would, advance a step within the limits of China, and that the whole scheme was visionary. The king insisted on making the experiment, and the army was put in motion. Having entered the mountains, small forts were built on the road to secure communications, and proceeding in this manner the troops reached the

Chinese border, where a numerous army appeared to oppose them. The numbers of the Indians were at this time greatly diminished, and being much inferior to the enemy they were struck with dismay, which was only increased when they realised their distance from home, the rugged nature of the country they had passed, the approach of the rainy season, and the scarcity of provisions which was now badly felt. With these feelings they commenced their retreat to the foot of the range of hills, where the mountaineers, rushing down upon them, plundered their baggage, and the Chinese army also followed them closely. In this distressing situation the Indian troops remained seven days, suffering greatly from famine. At length the rain began to fall in torrents and the cavalry were up to the bellies of their horses in water. The rains obliged the Chinese to move their camp to a greater distance, and gave Khoosroo Mulk some hopes of effecting his retreat; but he found the low country completely inundated, and the mountains covered with impervious woods. The misfortunes of the army seemed to be at a crisis; no passage remained to them for retreat but that by which they had entered the hills, and which was now occupied by the mountaineers. So that in the short space of fifteen days the Indian army fell a prey to famine, and became the victims of the king's ambition. Scarcely a man returned to relate the particulars excepting some of those left behind in the garrisons below, and the few of those troops who evaded the enemy did not escape the more fatal vengeance of the king, who ordered them to be put to death on their return to Delhi." Mahomed later sent another army to avenge the loss of the first;

but its officers on arrival at the Kocch confines flatly refused to cross the border into a "land of witchcraft and magic." This all goes to prove that the Kocch people were a powerful nation and well versed in the arts of war of those times; but beyond these bare military records of the Moghuls we can get at no detailed information of these people till the reign of Nar Narain, who flourished from 1515 on. This king, who reigned fifty years, an exceptionally long time for an Asiatic ruler, built what is now Cooch Behar in substitution for the old city of Kamātāpur, which had been destroyed by the later Moghul invasions; and in 1546 began the long series of wars against the rising power of the Ahoms in the extreme east of upper Assam. Minor struggles had occurred between the two peoples from 1332, but with Ahom power now established, matters took a far more serious turn. With the aid of his famous general, Silarai, the Ahoms were worsted on the Dikrai river and at Koliabar (in Nowgong district); and the following year Silarai captured Narainpur on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, and Nar Narain completed the great raised roadway of 350 miles, called the Kamali Alli, connecting this town, where a fort was being built, with Cooch Behar, many parts of which are still in existence and use. Major Hannay is of opinion, however, that a road had existed ages before Nar Narain's reign, which connected the old cities east of Sadiya with the more flourishing western districts of upper Assam, and by which pilgrims were able to visit the sacred shrines of "Tāmasāri Mai" and "Bora Bhoori" near Sadiya. In 1562 Nar Narain again attacked the Ahoms with such success that he captured their capital

Garhgaon, in the neighbourhood of the present Sib-sagor, and retired to his own province with an immense amount of loot. Six years later the western part of the Kocch kingdom was invaded by the Moghuls under Suleiman Kararāni, and Nar Narain's forces sustained several crushing defeats. Gauhati, then a large, flourishing city on both banks of the Brahma-



“UMANAND” OR PEACOCK ISLAND OPPOSITE GAUHATI.

putra, was taken and looted, while a notorious Brahmin renegade, one of Suleiman's suite, namely Kala Pahar, was allowed to work his iconoclastic tendencies on the ancient Kāmakhya and other famous temples, which he more or less demolished. Some years later these were rebuilt by Nar Narain. In 1578 this king, deeming it well to be on good terms with the Moghul power, sent an embassy with presents as far as Agra, where it was well received by the

Emperor Akhbar. Nar Narain's reign saw the rise of a new form of Hindu religion preached by a reformer, Sankar Deb, whose tenets were based on a purified Vishnuism, which it was hoped might supplant the Tantric form of Hinduism, for ages the prevailing religion among the Kocch people. The subject of religion will be dealt with later. In the next reign, which brings us up to the end of the sixteenth century, we see the Kocch dominions comprise the country from the Karatoya to the Sankosh rivers and the districts now known as Kāmrup and Mangaldai on the north bank, together with Goalpāra and Mymensing on the south bank of the Brahmaputra ; and that their ruler must have been powerful is shown in the " Akhbarnamah " of that time, when King Lakshmi Narain declares himself to be a vassal of the Moghul Emperor, and wherein it is stated the Kocch king's forces numbered 40,000 horse, 200,000 foot soldiers, 700 elephants, and 1,000 ships. In the legends connecting one Bisoo as the originator of the Kocch kings it is said that he, at the height of his prosperity, caused a census to be taken and found that he had over 5,000,000 men fit to bear arms. This, though, of course, unreliable, together with the authentic information of the " Akhbarnamah," gives a good idea of the populous state of this country—only a part of Assam ; more especially when one compares it with the census of 1901, which showed that the entire population of the Assam valley was only a little over two and a half millions. In 1612, as the result of a quarrel between the Kocch king and the Nawab of Dacca, the latter crossed the Karatoya with a force of 6,000 horse, 11,000 foot, and a fleet of 500 ships on the

Brahmaputra filled with soldiers, and laid siege to Dhubri, which would seem to have been an important and well-defended place in those days, for it held out against this force for a month. Shortly after this, the Kocch king dying, opposition in his country ceased, and the Mahomedans annexed in the name of the emperor Jehangir the country up to the Bār Naddi, which flows through the present Mangaldai district, with the exception of the country between the Karatoya and Sankōsh rivers, to which the Kocch kings were now restricted, until by the middle of the eighteenth century this too had come under Mahomedan rule. It eventually passed into British possession in 1765 on Bengal falling into English hands, and the present small State of Cooch Behar represents all that is left of the once powerful Kocch kingdom.

CHAPTER III

WE now come to the last of the three great powers in upper Assam, who being a more or less literate people, have given us through their well connected historical records, or "buranjis" written in the Pali character, the clearest knowledge of doings in that country, whether touching on the Kocches, Kachāris or Moghuls, during their 600 years of power. As mentioned before, the Ahoms, whose "h" softened to "s," has given us the name "Assam," were non-Buddhist Shans, by religion pagans and demon worshippers, who, trekking west from their own country, of which Mogoung, in upper Burma, was the capital, in the early part of the thirteenth century reached the eastern extremity of the Brahmaputra valley and formed settlements in the Nāmrup locality on the Dihing river. Their immediate neighbours were then the Chutiya tribe, who ruled the country east of the Subansiri river, and the Moran tribe, between the Dikkoo and Dihing rivers. With the latter they soon came into conflict, and by 1236 the Ahoms had established themselves at and around Abhaypur, while twenty years later saw them in occupation of the country near Charaideo, which they made their capital; and which, in spite of its removal later on to

Garhgaon, for several hundred years was a place of importance and sanctity to the Ahom kings, many of whom were buried there, while the heads of conquered chiefs and notables were invariably interred on Charaideo hill. A similar custom obtained amongst the Manipuris and the Tangkul Nagas who both, up to modern times, buried their enemies' heads in special localities. By the end of the thirteenth century they had been much strengthened by a fresh



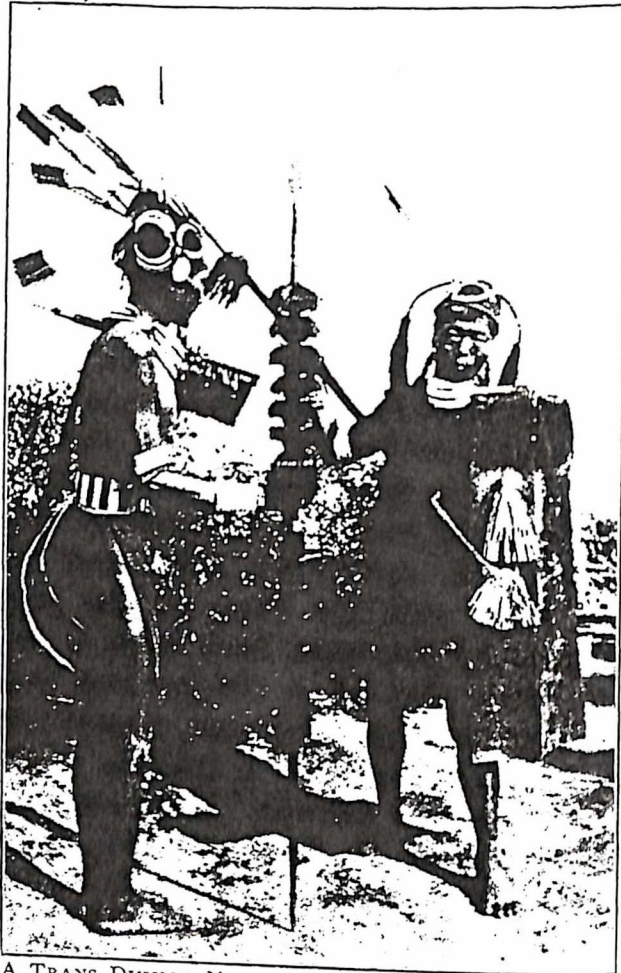
THE DIBONG WHERE IT LEAVES THE HILLS.

trek of emigrants from across the Patkoi range and had come into conflict with the Kachāri people, whose north-eastern border was the Dikkoo river. Fifty years later saw the commencement of the long continued series of struggles between the Ahoms and Kocches. In 1380 they crushed the Chutiya power across the Brahmaputra, and a few years later changed the capital from Charaideo to Chargūja, near the Dihing river, which brought about hostilities with the Tipam tribe, whose lands they now occupied. The first

Ahom record of Mahomedan efforts in the direction of upper Assam is in 1401, which shows how far west the Ahoms were then dwelling, when the Moghul forces, coming up by river, reached Koliabar nearly opposite Tezpur, where they met the Ahom forces, and being defeated there on land and water, were pursued to far below Goalpāra. The end of this century saw the defeat of the Kachāris on the Dikkoo at Dampuk, and the early part of the sixteenth century the subjugation of the Chutiya tribe and the annexation of their country, after severe fighting near Sadiya and at Kaitāra hill, said to be in the vicinity of the mouth of the Dibong river. By now the Ahoms had consolidated their power in what is now Lakhimpur on the north, and as far west as Golaghat on the south bank of the Brahmaputra. In 1526 the Ahoms drove back the Kachāris who objected to the building of the strong fort at Marangi (Moriani ?) almost on their borderland, and ascending the Dhansiri river they fought two successful engagements at Bardua and Maiham (unidentified) when the Kachāris gave in. The following year saw the Ahoms defeating another Mahomedan invasion near Duimunisila, where a fort was built and garrisoned. In this fight is the first record of weapons other than what were then generally used, namely, bows and arrows, spears, axes, etc., when forty Moghul cannon were captured. Five years later found the Ahoms not only successfully beating the Kachāris in the Dhansiri valley and dictating terms at their capital of Dimāpur, but also repelling another Moghul invasion below Koliabar, which led to their placing a large garrison as low down as Singiri, a little north of Gauhati on the north

bank and close to the Kocch border. This period appears to have been one of little peace and rest for the Ahoms who next year, 1532, had again to withstand an invasion by Turbak Khan, a Moghul noble, who with a large fleet sailed up the Brahmaputra to Singiri, where he defeated the Ahom army which retired to Sālāgarh on the south bank. Turbak again successfully attacked Sālāgarh and moved further east; when luck turning, favoured his enemy. The Ahom king sending large reinforcements by land and river was at last successful; and in a heavy battle again at Duimunisila Turbak's forces were defeated, he himself killed, and his head, as was customary, sent for burial on Charaideo hill. The beaten and disorganised forces were pursued by the victorious Ahoms through Kocch territory to the Karatoya river. At the Duimunisila fight the recorded Mahomedan losses were over 2,500 men, twenty-two ships, and many big guns; so that with the losses in the pursuit the Moghul casualty list must have been a long one; while the booty that fell to the pursuers is stated to have been twenty-eight elephants, a great number of guns and matchlocks, with a quantity of gold and silver ornaments and utensils. It is now that we find the Ahoms taking to fire-arms and utilising the numbers captured from the Moghuls in preference to bows and spears. It is supposed that they were taught their use and the rough manufacture of powder by their Mahomedan prisoners, and certainly by the time of Mir Jumla's famous invasion of a century later, or about 1662, they were proficient in the art of forging iron for cannon, of making excellent powder, and of intelligently using the same; which

is vouched for by the old time French traveller, Tavernier. It is in 1536 that the Ahom "buranjis" first mention trouble with any of the wild hill tribes



A TRANS DIKKOO NAGA IN WAR PAINT AND ONE FROM
TABHLUNG.

who inhabit the mountains which hem in upper Assam, and we now find the Khāmjang, Nāmsang, and Tabhlung Nagas raiding into the plains and standing up to the trained Ahoms in fights, in one of

which the two latter tribes not only inflicted severe loss but captured several guns before they finally submitted. This argues a higher form of bravery and fighting to what we are accustomed to find in these wild tribes, and also that their village communities must have been far more powerful than those of the present day ; for these three tribes are well known, the head villages of Nāmsang and Tabhlung lying only a few miles east and south of our present military police outpost of Tamlu in the Naga hills, where the Dikkoo river makes its exit from the mountains. A year later the Ahoms are found defeating the Kachāris in the Doyang and Dhansiri valleys, and sacking their ancient capital of Dimāpur. The destruction of this and their heavy losses took all heart out of the Kachāri people, who, as we have seen before, evacuated the Dhansiri valley and formed a new capital at Maibong in what is now called the North Cachar hills. For what reason the Ahoms never occupied this part of Kachāri territory is not known, but as it was quite depopulated by war it soon relapsed into a jungle too heavy perhaps for the conquerors to cope with ; and so it developed into the dense Nambhor forest, gradually covering and blotting out all evidences of Kachāri towns, roads, etc., which had been their pride and home for hundreds of years. This reign, namely that of Sūkmūngnūng lasting forty-two years, was long and eventful. It was notable for successful military operations which ended in the subjugation of the Chutiyas and Kachāris, while three Moghul invasions were repulsed. The social condition of the people was also considerably attended to, and artisans from Bengal imported to teach arts and crafts, while fire-

arms were also introduced. This latter fact is all the more remarkable and interesting seeing that, 120 years before, artillery and hand guns had not emerged from their very elementary condition in Europe, and indeed were only beginning to be generally used in war about the middle of the fifteenth century. The official capital was in this reign moved to Garhgaon not far from Sibsagor, and about 1552 the big tank there was excavated by the Ahom king, Sukhlemning, who also was the first to strike coins, and who also built the raised roadway called the Naga Alli, running from the Baralli to the Naga hills. The year 1546, as we have seen before, found the Ahoms at war with Nar Narain, the most powerful monarch in this part of India, and the Kocch arms at first very successful; but later, the Ahoms getting the upper hand, the war subsided owing to the exhaustion of both forces. Before the sixteenth century was out the Ahoms had to deal with an invasion by the Kocch king, Nar Narain, who successfully captured the strong Ahom positions at Boka, Sālāgarh, and Handia, chiefly by means of a strong fleet on the river. The occupation of their capital Garhgaon by Nar Narain, caused the Ahoms to cede Narainpur on the north bank to the Kocches, who closed the war and hurried back to repel a Moghul invasion in which, being unsuccessful, Nar Narain released all the Ahom hostages, hoping thereby to gain their friendship and alliance. This, however, did not come off, as the Ahoms were too busy in dealing not only with the Chutiya people, who were once more in revolt, but also with the Nārā Raja of Mayankwan, beyond the Patkoi range. The seventeenth century opened for this nation in further trouble with the Kachāris,

and severe actions took place at Dharmtika and Rāhā, involving heavy losses on both sides ; at the latter place the Ahoms being severely beaten. A few years later, namely in 1615, the Moghul governor of Bengal despatched Aba Bakr with a force of 10,000 troops and 400 ships against the Ahom king. These arrived in due time at Hajo, a few miles from the river on its north bank and opposite Gauhati without opposition ; and making Hajo their base they advanced to meet their enemies on the Bharali river. After a stiff encounter Aba Bakr was victorious ; but failing to reap the full advantage of his success by pursuing vigorously, the Ahom king was able to send up large reinforcements. The battle was renewed, Aba Bakr killed, and his force driven back on Hajo. Here the Ahoms were joined by various petty Rajas and their following, all anxious to be rid of the Mahomedan invaders. These managed to capture the Moghul position at Pandoo, near Gauhati, while the main Ahom army was hemming in the Moghuls at Hajo. After six weeks a battle was brought on by the Ahoms, ending in the complete discomfiture of the invaders and their dispersal with heavy loss ; the latter including many horses, cannon, and cattle, which fell into the victors hands. Twenty years later the Mahomedans were again at Hajo with the friendly connivance of the Kocches, and as their presence caused continual friction in this part of the country, the Ahom king, Pratap Sing, was induced to declare war on them ; when, after defeating them at Niubihan, he invested Hajo. In other parts of the district, namely, at Pandoo and Srighat, Ahom troops were not so successful ; but more men and ships arriving,

the Moghuls were driven from Pandoo and almost annihilated at Sualkuchi, on the north bank, a little below Pandoo, 300 ships and many cannon and matchlocks being captured. Curiously enough, the Ahom records of this fight make the first mention of any European being in Assam, when amongst their prisoners they found a Feringhi, but of what nationality is not known. Ralph Fitch, a merchant in Queen Elizabeth's time, had visited Kamātāpur, the Kocch capital, but no European had gone further east. Having cleared the Moghuls off the river, the Ahoms concentrated for the assault of Hajo, which fell after a desperate defence, when an immense amount of loot, munitions of war, etc., were secured. Pratap Sing, pursuing his advantage, continued his advance down river, seizing all Mahomedan posts as far as Goalpāra. This continuance of success for the Ahoms was not of long duration, for almost immediately the Nawab of Dacca despatched a force of 12,000 men to recover the territory thus lost to Bengal, and it was not long before he captured a strong fort at Jogighopa, near the mouth of the Manās river, from which he secured the submission of the Goalpāra country opposite. The Ahoms, beaten at Jogighopa, drew off to the foot of the Bhootan hills and awaited reinforcements. These arrived duly, and with 40,000 men they attacked the Moghuls in their camp at Bishenpur. In the heavy battle that ensued Pratap Sing's troops were beaten with the loss of over 4,000 men and several generals. A later defeat in a naval action on the Brahmaputra at Srighat, followed by the capture of Pandoo and Gauhati, placed the whole of Kāmārūpa for the time being at the Moghul disposal, whose

commander made his headquarters at Gauhati and began to consolidate his rule. The Kocches having joined the Moghuls in this war, it was not long before the Ahoms retaliated by attacking their troops on the Bharāli river, whom they pursued almost to Gauhati. Here, as the resources of both belligerents were almost down to nil after a war extending to almost three years, peace was made; and the Bar Naddi, running into the Brahmaputra opposite Gauhati, became the eastern boundary of Mahomedan possessions. This brings one to the end of King Pratap Sing's reign, as he died in 1641, after thirty-eight eventful years, during which two great wars had been conducted against the Kachāris and the Moghuls, although not always with uniform success to the Ahoms. Great attention had been paid to internal organisation, markets were established and trade fostered. Buildings of masonry and of a permanent nature were erected, notably at Abhaypur, Mathurapur, and Garhgaon, the latter being fortified and having a palace built in its centre, the ruins of which are still visible. The Ahom capital Garhgaon is described in the "buranjis" of that time as being "of great size with the palace in the centre, the city was surrounded by a well-raised solid embankment serving instead of customary fortifications, and on the top of which ran a roadway. In this embankment were four masonry gates each three kōs (a kōs is one and a quarter miles) from the palace, which again was defended by a deep ditch and stockade work of great strength. The palace was of masonry, and the audience hall therein is said to be 120 cubits by 36 cubits." Of the state of the country in this part of

Assam at this period it is described as being "on the north bank (*i.e.*, what is now north Lakhimpur) more under cultivation than about Garhgaon, but generally on the south bank as far down as Koliabar were extensive fields and fine rice crops." Wild elephants are said to have been exceedingly numerous, 160 being caught in one drive in 1654. King Pratap Sing also constructed many roads and tanks, threw up the great Dopgarh embankment as a protection against Naga inroads, and developed backward tracts. He built the forts at Samdhāra, Safrai, and Sila, while several stone bridges are believed to date from his reign. This king, having been the first to be converted to Hinduism, which occurred about 1613, later many nobles following his example, Brahmin influence soon became powerful and many Hindus from India were given high official posts. The Ahom language was, however, still predominant. Although no longer the official capital, Charaideo maintained its sacred interest. Ahom kings worshipped, buried the heads of the eminent persons killed in battle on the hill overlooking Charaideo, and were mostly buried there themselves. These tombs were covered with large mounds, and the royal funeral customs prescribed that the queen, certain guards, slaves, and an elephant or a horse, should be buried with deceased royalty. Some of these mounds have been opened and from the spaces inside, bones and ornaments found, it is conjectured the above customs were really observed. The next fifteen years saw the Ahoms worried by incursions of the Daphlas and Mirris on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, which were put down drastically and many of the

villages burnt ; while on the south bank the Lakma Nagas in the hills south-east of Sibsagor, between the Dilli and Dikkoo rivers, appeared to have been sufficiently strong to carry on a series of raids into the plains and to seriously harass the Ahom troops sent into the hills against them.

These particular Nagas were visited in February, 1900, by the Deputy Commissioner with a punitive party, and were found to be anything but a war-like people. In 1658, owing to confusion arising in Bengal consequent on the Emperor Shah Jehan's illness, the Kocch people rose and made a supreme effort to throw off the Moghul yoke under which for years they had lain. The Ahoms were induced to join in this, and while the Kocches overpowered the Moghuls in Goalpāra and southern Kāmarupa, their allies proceeded against and captured Hajo and Gauhati. Dissensions, however, arising between the two allies, the Ahoms attacked and drove the Kocches across the Sankosh river, which joins the Brahmaputra at Dubhri, after which they became masters of entire Assam. A mastery which they only enjoyed four years, for 1662 saw the Moghul armies again in motion under Mir Jumla, then Governor of Bengal, to recover the lost territory. As this is the most famous of all Moghul invasions it is deserving of more attention and in greater detail.

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