

# Short History Of Arunachal Pradesh And Their Relationship With Ahom Dynasty Of Assam

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*Abstract: When the Ahom dynasty was formed in Assam, the independent tribal people of hilly areas encountered new hill policies made by Ahoms. Many hill tribes like that of Arunachal Pradesh continued to raid on the plains of Assam which made Ahoms to take certain military actions against them. As a result, number of wars took place between Ahoms and different tribes of Arunachal Pradesh like Tangsas, Tutsis, Wanchos, Nyishis, Mishmi, Khamptis and Singphos. The history between these two states was remarkable and very important to construct the history of Northeast India.*

*Keyword: Tribal, Rebellion, Race, Migration, Tradition*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Arunachal Pradesh is situated in Northeast India, it is one of the largest states of India forming India's international frontier with China and Tibet. Arunachal Pradesh means "The Land of the Rising Sun" but in ancient times it was known as 'Sereca' or 'Seres' which is Upper Assam. Various tools are also discovered relating to the prehistoric period like Parsi Parlo (Kurung Kumey) excavated site. Some historians also believe that tribal of Arunachal Pradesh were mentioned in Brahmanical literature as "Kirata" who lives in hills of Northeast. The History of Arunachal Pradesh is largely based on oral tradition, as only a few tribes have their scripts available with them. With the help of both oral and secondary sources, we can analyze the history of Arunachal Pradesh but there is no doubt that these sources fail to help in reconstructing the history of Arunachal Pradesh. According to some historians and scholars, there were certain wars and conflicts between tribal of hills and plains which took place after the formation of the Ahom dynasty in Assam.

## THE AHOMS OF ASSAM

Ahoms were the members of the Tai race who established their dynasty in 1228 AD in Assam which also led to the

beginning of the medieval age in northeast India. The Ahom dynasty was founded by King Sukapha, who migrated to Assam from Myanmar with nine thousand people in 1215 AD. For thirteen years, Ahoms were visiting Naga villages (Myanmar village) making occasional raids while killing people of Naga village for creating terror. And after forming their dynasty in Assam, they annexed the kingdoms like Chatigar and Koch Hajo. According to historians, the great Mughals failed to defeat Ahoms more than sixteenth times and the Ahom dynasty was one of the independent dynasties during Mughal India. They also subjugated other tribes and by the 16<sup>th</sup> century, they built a large empire based on an old political system call Bhuiyans (landlords). Ahoms policy towards hill men was to control by force using weapons and to conquer the land by fighting battles, as they knew some tribes were ferocious in nature like tribes from Arunachal Pradesh. At the very beginning, Ahom king introduced the system of Posa, which was a kind of payment paid by the inhabitants of Dour to the tribal of hills to buy off their raids, whereas he deals with other tribes by giving land for cultivation at the foothills which was called Khats. Ahoms also employed Kotokis (a person who will deal with tribal and who is familiar with tribal areas). During the later medieval age, different tribes from Arunachal Pradesh started to raid plains and some challenged Ahom kings as they were not satisfied. The history

of Ahom also gives some reference to Arunachal Pradesh, and according to some historical sources many wars took place between Ahoms and different tribes of Arunachal Pradesh from the 15<sup>th</sup> century AD onwards.

#### AHOMS AND TANGSAS OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Tangsas, while some historians believe that they are native Naga tribe of Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh and some can be found in Tinsukia district of Assam. They are one of the warrior clans who raided Ahom locality in 1487 AD. According to the chronology of Ahom dynasty, King Susenpha defeated Tangsas but more than a hundred Ahom soldiers lost their lives during the battle while according to Tangsas, they defeated Ahoms and the king fled from the battlefield. No doubt that Tangsas were strong and brave but their army was not well organized compared to Ahoms, due to which Ahom defeated Tangsas in the battle of second Tangsas-Ahom war of 1478 AD. In the second battle, Ahoms captured a large booty from Tangsas but Tangsas refused to sign any peace treaty with Ahoms.

#### AHOMS AND TUTSA OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Tutsa tribe is another Naga tribe from Southern Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh. The Tutsas of Khamjang were vassals to the ahoms during the King Sukapha. During the reign of Shungmung, Tutsas rebelled against the Ahoms due to which in 1504 AD, King Shungmung sent his army under Bar Gohain to Changlang. The rebellions were defeated and they were forced to sign a peace treaty with Ahoms while agreeing to pay tributes to the King Shungmung but soon Tutsas of Khamjang with Noctes (tribe belongs to Tirap district of Arunachal Pradesh) called Tablungia and Namsangia challenged the King of Ahom dynasty in 1535 AD. The King sent his son to the battlefield against the rebellions and soon Tutsas submitted a fine of hundred Bison (Mithun) but Noctes kept on battling with Ahoms. In 1536 AD, Noctes finally defeated Ahoms and made a peace treaty. According to Noctes oral history, they defeated the Ahoms while capturing four guns at the end because of which Ahoms asked for a peace treaty where they demanded their guns and promised not to interfere in domestic affairs in Nocte territories. In 1555 AD, Ahom King sent another expedition against Aitonia, Khamteng, and Papuk (Tutsas territories) but they fled away as a result large booty was collected by Ahoms but Tutsas didn't give up. As soon in 1573 AD, they again challenged Ahoms but again they were defeated. According to modern writers and research scholars, Tutsas were brave and their fighting skills were excellent but Ahoms army were in large numbers with modern weapons and techniques which made Ahoms stronger on the battlefield but, indeed, Tutsa never made their full submission and even they lost so many battles, they kept on challenging the Ahoms.

#### AHOMS AND WANCHO OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Wanchos lives in the Longding area of Arunachal Pradesh, presently they are spread over 36 villages with 11 confederacies known as Jan. They are fierce head hunters but

during early medieval age Wanchos of Banapara were close to Ahom King, due to which they were helped by Ahom military to defeat Wanchos of Banchangias (presently Wannu village) in 1549 AD. The Wanchos fought bravely while using different hand made weapons, but the Ahoms military marched towards the centre of the village where the Chief of Banchangias was made a prisoner. After the battle was over, Wanchos of Banchangias paid several buffaloes and mithun (bison) to Ahom King as booty.

#### AHOMS AND NYISHI OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Nyishi (Dafla according to ahom as well as british documents) were settled in north of nao duar (nine passes) in Darrang and che duar (six passes) in Lakhimpur. They occupied the territories between Bhorali River and Subansiri River. Around 1562 -63 AD Nyishis invaded plains due to which King Pratap Singh constructed forts as defense called Daflagarh in Darrang district. Later in 1614 AD, Ahoms military marched towards Nyishis territories but were defeated. The Nyishis raided plains again and again during the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Later, they compromised and joined Ahoms army to stop the invasion of Bengal but later in 1714 relationship between Ahoms and Nyishis became hostile again. Ahom King and Nyishis came to a peace agreement in which the king granted posa to conciliate them. Nyishis were also entitled to receive one double cloth, one dao (local sword), and four seer of salts, etc from plains, and Nyishis were asked not to raid any other villages which come under Ahom rule.

#### AHOMS AND MISHMI OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

The Mishmi of Tibet and Arunachal Pradesh comprises three tribes (Idu, Digaro, and Miju). Presently, they are settled in the North-Eastern tip of the Central Arunachal Pradesh especially in Upper and Lower Dibang Valley, Lohit, and Anjaw districts. The Abors (presently known as Adi) from Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh and Mishings (Miris) had close relationships as Miris were intermediaries during the 16<sup>th</sup> century between Abors and traders of plains, but Abors had good terms with Ahoms whereas mishmis raided plains during early 17<sup>th</sup> century. They burnt down the houses in the plains and killed more than 200 people. Ahom King Sutyinpha constructed Mishmigarth (Rampart) to resist Mishmi raids. In 1675 AD, Ahom priest was murdered by Mishmis due to which Ahom King sent an army to capture the guilty but Ahom military was defeated by Mishmis and Deoris combined force. A fresh reinforcement reached Tishing. Mishmis were asked to hand over the guilty and to pay tributes without any more conflicts. Since Mishmis agreed with the terms of the treaty, there were no further conflicts between Ahoms and Mishmis.

#### AHOMS AND KHAMPTIS AND SINGPHOS OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Khamptis and singphos migrated to India during the 18<sup>th</sup> century from Burma. After a few years later Singphos ousted them from the bank of river Tengapani, Khamtis who were

cultivators, good artisans, and warriors settled down in Sandiya region for trading. Their relationship with Ahoms was very comfortable at the beginning but later khamptis expanded their territories while crossing the river Brahmaputra and ousted Governor of Ahom in Sadiya but Ahom King did nothing because of domestic political condition. In 1799 AD, Khamptis came furthermore to the plains with the help of other tribes like Mishmis, Adis, Muluk, Pan, Phakials, and Naras but were defeated by Ahoms. King of Khamptis was captured but Ahom King released him. Khamptis became strong again in Sadiya region during the Ahom-Burmese war of 1816 -1824.

After singphos ousted Khamptis from the bank of Tengapani River, they started to capture more territories in Assam and later they joined Moarmaria rebellions that were defeated by Ahoms. Together they attacked villages of Assam and imported Burmese troops for help. Ahom army under Deka Phukan marched towards Singphos. Singphos defeated Ahoms for a while but later Ahoms captured the forts of Singphos which made them sign a peace treaty. Ahoms offered Ahom girl named Rangili to the Chief of Singphos but the agreement didn't last for long as, during Burmese invasions like Khamptis, Singphos also attacked several villages in the plains which also caused the downfall of Ahoms in Assam, and later Khamptis settled around Arunachal Pradesh.

## II. DISCUSSION

As observed traditionally, the tribals of Arunachal Pradesh were fearless and brave, and were independent in nature. The history of tribal of Arunachal Pradesh have only few resources to reconstruct their history, this journal is based on oral history and secondary sources which is not totally based on facts and proper data. There is a need for more research, survey, or investigation on the history of Arunachal

Pradesh and if it happens then we may come up with some more useful information and new historical approaches.

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