

Ahom King Sukapha

December 5, 2022

In news— On the occasion of Assam Day, celebrated every year on December 2, tributes poured in for Swargadeo Chaolung Sukapha, the first Ahom king.

Who is Swargadeo Chaolung Sukapha?

- Sukaphaa, also Siu-Ka-Pha, **the first Ahom king in medieval Assam**, was the founder of the Ahom kingdom and the architect of Assam.
- In reverence to his position in **Assam's history the honorific Chaolung is generally associated with his name.**
- The king played an important role in uniting Assam's various ethnic groups by treating them as equals and encouraging intertribal marriage.
- According to Ahom tradition, **Sukaphaa was a descendant of the god *Khunlung***, who had come down from the heavens and had ruled Mong-Ri-Mong-Ram.
- The details of Sukaphaa's life and origins before his entry into Assam, available from different chronicles, both Ahom and non-Ahom, are full of contradictions.
- According to Phukan (1992) who has tried to hold up a consistent account, Sukaphaa was born to Chao Chang-Nyeu (*alias* Phu-Chang-Khang) and Nang-Mong Blak-Kham-Sen in the Tai state of Mong Mao (also called Mao-Lung, with the capital at Kieng Sen), close to present-day Ruili in Yunnan, China.
- After his 19 years as crown prince came to an end, Sukaphaa decided to leave Mong Mao in 1215.
- Sukapha came into Assam not as a raiding conqueror but as a head of an agriculture folk in search of land.
- It appears he didn't encroach upon the land of peasants, rather he opened up new areas for settlement, procuring with shrewd diplomacy what he direly needed for the

purpose- the service of the local inhabitants.

- Over the next few years, he moved from place to place searching for the right capital, leaving behind his representative at each stage to rule the colonized land. Then he went up the Burhidihing river and established a province at Lakhen Telsa. Then he came back down the river and established his rule at Tipam.
- In 1236 he moved to Mungklang (Abhoipur), and in 1240 down the Brahmaputra to Habung (Dhemaji).
- In 1244 he went further down to Ligorigaon (Song-Tak), a few miles from present-day Nazira, and in 1246 to Simaluguri (Tun Nyeu), a place downstream from the present-day Simaluguri.
- Finally in 1253 he **built himself his capital city at Charaideo near present-day Sibsagar town.** The capital of the Ahom kingdom changed many times after this, but Charaideo remained the symbolic center of Ahom rule.
- With the help of local recruits, **he established three large farms for sali rice cultivation, called Barakhowakhat, Engerakhat and Gachikalakhat.**
- **In 1268 Sukaphaa died.**
- At the time of his death, his kingdom was bounded by the Brahmaputra River in the west, the Disang River in the north, the Dikhow River in the south and the Naga Hills in the east.
- The Ahom rule is hailed as a golden rule in the history of Assam, they are also credited for keeping the Mughal rulers away.

Note:

- **The Assam Day is also known as "Sukapha Diwas"** in honour of the founder of the Ahom kingdom.
- Since 1996 December 2 has been celebrated in Assam as the Sukaphaa Divox, or Axom Divox (Assam Day), to commemorate the advent of the first king of the Ahom kingdom in Assam after his journey over the Patkai

Hills.