**History**

**6th Semester (General)**

**Stream-Arts**

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**Topic-The Burmese invasion and establishment of British rule in Assam**

The Ahom kingdom (1228-1826) was a late medieval kingdom in the Brahmaputra valley in Assam. It is well known for maintaining its sovereignty for merely 600 years and successfully resisting Mughal expansion in north east India. Established by Sukafa from Shan Branch of Great Tai or Thai family of south East Asia, he founded the great Ahom dynasty in 1228 by establishing the first capital at Saraideo, which changed the very trend in the political history in North East India. It marks the beginning of a process leading to the establishment of non Aryan hagemony and the end of the long drawn out period of struggle against Aryan domination. After Sukafa it was Suhungmung under whose reign Assam became multi ethnic in character, casting a profound effect on the political and social life of the entire Brahmaputra valley. The kingdom became weaker with the rise of the Moamoria rebellion and subsequently fell to repeated Burmese invasion of Assam. The circumstances leading to the Burmese invasion of Assam are as follows:

After the death of Kamaleswar Singha in 1810, his brother Chandrakanta Singha succeeded the throne at the age of 14, just a minor who had no administrative knowledge. So Burha Gohain Purnananda became the de-facto ruler and Chandrakanta was only in name. As Chandrakanta grew up Purnananda became intolerable for him and so he made a conspiracy with Satram his childhood friend son of a Soothsayer whom he appointed as Charingya Phukan, which was against Ahom law. But the plot was discovered by Purnananda and the conspirators except Sathram was arrested and banished to Namrup. Later on he was killed on the order of Borgohain.

At Gauhati, on the death of Kalia Bhumura, Badan Chandra was appointed as Bar Phukan at Gauhati whose period is known as “Great Deluge”, the Burmese invasion of Assam.

Badan was very arrogant and greedy for power. He made oppressions on the people of Kamrup as his wish and also became jealous on Purnananda. So he made a conspiracy against Purnananda to kill him. But this plot was discovered and Purnananda sent a force to apprehend the Borphukan but before reaching the force Badan fled away to Bengal, sought help from the governor general against Purnananda but was refused. In Bengal he came into close contact with an agent of Burmese ruler and sought help from Badawpaya the Burmese ruler through this agent. This King who followed imperialistic design easily accepted Badans proposal and first Burmese attack was made on 1817.

The first battle between the Ahoms and the Burmese were fought at Ghiladhari where Ahoms were defeated. This battle was the last political act in the life of Purnananda because after this battle he breathes his last.

After his death his son Ruchinath became Burha Gohain. His army was also defeated by the Burmese at Kothalbari and Ruchinath fled to Gauhati. The Burmese occupied Jorhat installed Chandrakanta as Raja. The Ahom king offered a Ahom princess named Hemo Aidew to Burmese Harem.

Now Badan became the supreme executive power, started to misuse his power to such an extent that it became intolerable by the royal family and was killed in the advice of the Kings mother on one night. In the meantime Ruchinath backed to Jorhat and installed a prince named Purnanda as ruler in 1818. After hearing this news the Burmese king immediately dispatched a fresh army under Alamingi and in an encounter Ahoms were badly defeated, Purandar and his supporters fled away to Gauhati. The Burmese triumphantly entered into Jorhat and installed Chandrakanta as Ruler. This was the second Burmese invasion of 1819.

After this victory the Burmese started their untold atrocities on Assamese people which is marked as Manar din in the history of Assam. To save his life, Purandar fled to Rangpur. The Burmese left Assam in 1819 leaving Mingimagha Tilwa as incharge.

After their departure Chandrakanta tried to shake off the yolk of the Burmese king, started to construct his fort near Jaipur. Getting this news the new Burmese ruler Bagyidaw under his general Mingimaha sent a huge force and the battle was fought at Jaipur in which the Ahoms were defeated and the Ahom ruler took shelter in British territory from September 1821. This was the third Burmese invasion. Tilwa became the master of the Brahmaputra valley. The fugitive Princes Purandar and Chandrakanta successfully reoccupied Gauhati from Burmese by their new troops.

The forth Burmese attack was made on 1822 under Mingimaha Bandula with an army of 20,000. He attacked the Ahom forces at Mahagarh and defeated them. The Ahom ruler fled away to Bengal. Now the political scenario of Assam turned into another direction. The Burmese ruler requested the British now to give shelter to the Fugitive ruler but the British ignored. So the Burmese commander became ready to fight against British. They occupied Manipur and then Shahpuri and then attacked Kachar and then came very close to Sylhet but they were resisted by British. Thus the war became inevitable.

**Event of the war**

The main centre of the war was the western front, where the Burmese assembled their army and threatened Goalpara. On 13th March the British moved forward and expelled the Burmese from Brahmaputra valley. On 28th March 1824, they reached Gauhati. The Burmese retired to Maramukh in upper Assam.

Due to rainy season, the British halted at Gauhati for a long period. Only David Scott, who with his troops from Kachar, occupied Nogoan, Roha and Koliabar and then marched to Gauhati.

Then when the rain stopped the British Troops proceeded by river during early January 1825, Maramukh was occupied. In January 1825, they reached Jorhat. In the meantime internal disputes had started between the Burmese. Taking this advantage British attacked Rangpur in which the Burmese were badly defeated and the fall of Rangpur practically completed the conquest of Assam.

In January 1825, the British started operation against Burma. After capturing Arakan they were very close to Rangoon, the capital of Burma. Without any opposition British easily occupied Rangoon. In the war that took place in Burma, Mingimaha was captured. In 1825 Mahabandula was killed by the British and atlast with no other way the Burmese offered terms for the termination of hostilities on 26th December 1825 and thus the treaty of Yandabo was signed on February 24, 1826.

**The terms of the treaty were:**

1. The Burmese were to pay Rs 1 crore as indemnity.

2. The king of Burma renounced all claims upon and agreed to abstain from all interference with, the principality of Assam and dependencies.

3. He was not to interfere with the affairs of Kachars and Jayantia which he did earlier.

4. Gambhir Singh was recognised as raja of Manipur by the British.

5. The Burmese king ceded to the British the conquered provinces of Arakan, Yah, Mergni and Tenassirim.

**Effects**

The most important effect of the Burmese war was the annexation of Assam to the British Dominion. An attempt was made to restore upper Assam to an Ahom ruler but was not successful. From this time Assam politically became an integral part of India and he period of our political isolation came to an end. After this war Assam came directly under the control of British East India Company. David Scott who was appointed as the agent to the governor general of North East Frontier had introduced different administrative measures in Assam and the rule of British was continued in Assam till Independence.