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## Founder of Ahom Kingdom: Chaolung Sukapha

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### Why in News

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Recently, there has been a controversy in **Assam** regarding **Chaolung Sukapha** who founded the **Ahom kingdom**.

Amidst the ongoing **India-China border tension**, he has been repeatedly referred to as a Chinese invader.

### Key Points

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- **Chaolung Sukapha:**



- He was a **13<sup>th</sup> century ruler** who **founded the Ahom kingdom** that ruled Assam for six centuries. The Ahoms ruled the land till the **province was annexed to British India in 1826** with the signing of the **Treaty of Yandaboo**.
- **Sir Edward Gait**, in his book '**A History of Assam**', wrote that Sukapha is said to have left a place called **Maulung** (Burma which is now known as Myanmar) in **1215 AD** with eight nobles and some people.
- He and his people reached Brahmaputra valley and in **1235 AD, finally settled in Charaideo in upper Assam**.
- Sukapha established his **first small principality in Charaideo**, sowing the seeds of further expansion of the Ahom kingdom.

- **Ahoms:**

- They **created a new state by suppressing the older political system of the bhuiyans** (landlords).
- The Ahom state **depended upon forced labour**. Those forced to work for the state were called **paiks**.
- Ahom society was divided into **clans or khels**. A khel often controlled several villages.
- Ahoms **worshipped their own tribal gods** but instead of **imposing their own language, religion and rituals** on communities living in Assam, they **accepted the Hindu religion and the Assamese language**.

However, the **Ahom kings did not completely give up their traditional beliefs** after adopting Hinduism.

- Ahom society was very sophisticated. Poets and scholars were given land grants and theatre was encouraged. Important works of Sanskrit were translated into the local language.

**Historical works**, known as **buranjis**, were also written, first in the Ahom language and then in Assamese.

- Most of the Sukapha's people were men who later **married women from communities living in Assam**. **Intermarriage also increased assimilation processes**.

- **Significance:**

- Sukapha successfully **assimilated different communities and tribes**. He developed very amiable relationships with the **tribal communities of Assam especially the Sutias, the Morans and the Kacharis**.
- He is widely referred to as the architect of '**Bor Asom**' or '**Greater Assam**' because he **consolidated power, culture and religion in the region and managed to group a diverse mix of people** in such a politically sensitive region crisscrossing South Asia and South-East Asia.
- **Assam celebrates 'Asom Divas'** on **2<sup>nd</sup> December every year** to commemorate Sukapha and his rule.

## Way Forward

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- Chaolung Sukapha was the architect of greater Assam and he laid the foundation for a robust and vibrant Assam through his policy of amity, unity and harmony.
- Offensive remarks on social media and misinterpretation of historical facts can lead to a rift between different communities in an ethnically diverse state like Assam and hurt the sentiments of people which should be avoided at any cost.

**Source: IE**