

Tai-Ahom State Formation : Role of Conquest and Irrigation in the Origin of the Tai-Ahom State

R. Buragohain

The Concept

The conquest theory and the irrigation hypothesis have aroused lively discussions amongst European scholars as factors in the process of state formation. Some have forcefully argued for it, while some have expressed doubts and reservations that it fails to satisfy us convincingly. The reason for this, as I find, is the complexity and variety of the factors involving a long period of time in the formation of the states. Each emergent state has produced different situations in different times in different places of the globe and it is simply impossible to universalise a single theory or hypothesis for general acceptance. But somewhere and sometimes, these theories and hypotheses on state formation processes, certainly throw some light in the understanding and study of the problems raised by these complexities, at least, partially in some cases, if not wholly.

The state is the unique institution that emerged in course of time with the progress of human civilisation from the primitive to the modern times. It is the most powerful social organisation that alone creates and destroys.

“It literally moves mountains and redirects rivers, and it has on occasion sent untold thousands, even millions to their deaths”. (Cohen and Service 1978 : 1)

How did such an organisation come to exist and shall continue to exist in future too, amidst increasing human conflicts, is the question which has been drawing the attention of the social scientists today. More interesting is the process through which states have emerged and developed to full-fledged statehood from pristine conditions. Indeed, it is so complex that it is not possible to say conclusively as to when and precisely at what point of time, the state began.

“It is no longer possible to think of the state as a conscious invention, suddenly introduced as an antidote to

confusion and chaos. The state must have evolved from rudimentary and inchoate beginnings, by a process of growth that was so slow as to have been all but imperceptible . . . Even if the full record of that development were available, we would not be able to say precisely when the state began." (Sait 1938 : 105)

Thus the concept of state formation is assuming new dimensions involving as it is, the social scientists, economists, anthropologists, philosophers and historians. Therefore, the whole subject is not only multi-dimensional, multidisciplinary and multicausal, rather as it stands, is kaleidoscopic in its entirety. Taking data from the African and some other European states, western scholars have formulated enough theories and hypotheses.

"We have enough theories and propositions including contradictory ones, to keep us busy for the next decade. The job ahead is to confront our theories with facts. Clear-cut hypothesis testing should now be the rule". (Cohen and Service 1978 : 14)

It is in this context, that I have made some attempts in this paper to see if the conquest theory and the irrigation hypothesis had any role to play in the emergence of the Tai-Ahom state in Upper Assam during its first three hundred years. It so, to what extent and how far? As usual I have followed the comparative method as and when necessary and unless otherwise stated, the terms, 'conquest' 'war' 'warfare'; 'Tai' 'Tai-Ahoms" and 'hydraulic culture' 'irrigation culture' 'managerial theory' are being used here interchangeably conveying the same meaning. The term 'origins' is used here in a wider context to mean the factors and processes of state formation including its appearance, emergence, rise and development in the analysis presented in this paper while the approach is bound to be holistic as the concept of state formation demands.

The Problem and its Setting

There are states which have emerged without conquests. There are also states which have emerged due to conquests. The German (Engels 1977 : 143-54), the Scythian (Khazanov 1978 : 425), the Aukole (Krader 1968 : 43), the Mauryan (Seneviratne 1978 : 382), the Gōnja (Goody 1970 : 116-17) state formations are the few examples of studies to mention here.

The adherents to conquest theory are Ratzel, L. Gumpłowicz and F. Oppenheimer. Ratzel conceived of state formations being the result of the external processes of migration and conquest. Gumpłowicz held that warlike hordes migrated into the neighbourhood of peaceful cultivators and husbandmen and forced them to give up part of their product. Out of the meeting of the two heterogeneous peoples, the relation of the ruler and the ruled is established. (Krader 1968 : 44). To Oppenheimer (1932 : 6ff), the state was an instrument of oppression, designed to confirm social inequality which is however originated in the conquest and subjugation of one people by another. This subjugation had no other purpose than the economic exploitation of the defeated. Carneiro (1970) adds population pressure to the conquest theory and gives more emphasis on environmental and social circumscriptions as the cause of warfares which appear after the initial conquests are settled. Thurnwald (1955) and Westermann (1952) are others who have used the conquest theory to explain the state formation processes in the states of Africa.

Service (1975 : 270-72) has outrightly rejected the conquest theory though he accepts the agricultural routes to statehood. Modern historians have refused to accept the conquest theory on the ground that the conquering and the conquered states had already possessed some sort of developed statehood. M. H. Fried (1967) also argues that the type of society leading to a state formation by conquest is a super stratified society, given that the victors, or both the conquerors or vanquished have been internally stratified already. To him rank differences in local headmen, lineage elders, ward heads, factions or bigmen are universal features of such societies with unequal access to resources particularly in agricultural land. Claessen and Skalnik also hold the view that state formation by conquest in case of secondary states only (1978 : 627).

These set some limitations¹ in our case study. Because it is the historical fact that the conquered tribes of the Ahom state were already in developed stage. According to Maretina (1978), the Kacharis were already reaching some advanced class society stage while the Ahoms were already a highly developed society, in a lower form of state, not state per se according to Guha (1983 : 22) and the Chutiyas, Morans, Barahis too possessed the full characteristics of the social formations as described by Fried above. To relate the conquest theory

to the Tai-Ahom state formation, in such a context, will be superfluous. The complexities thus are enormous. The missing point here is that the nature of conquests, the mode and conditions of conquests have not been taken into account. However, there are scholars who do not altogether deny the role of conquests in state formations, though they would not accept it totally. They maintain that the state is not ordinarily founded by conquest of one ethnic group, tribe or nation by another. It may be, but more significantly, the forces of development are internal to the society (Krader 1968 : 44) According to Cohen (1974), conquests stimulate, to Khazanov (1978 :83) conquests not only stimulate but determine the local specific variations. That the emergence of the state is deeply affected by conquests, no one objects. But it does not take into account the internal factors and introduces only the external factors, as such it fails to satisfy convincingly as a general theory of explanation. (Lewis 1966 ; Cohen 1974)

Like the conquest theory, the irrigation hypothesis in the state formation process has also produced mixed reactions amongst scholars. Steward (1955), followed by Wittfogel (1957), Barabara Price (1971), E. Hunt (1972 a b) and Hunt and Hunt (1976) are the ones to formulate this hypothesis in state formation process. According to Steward, irrigation needed organisation, power and co-ordination of people which contribute to the growth of the state. To Wittfogel (1957 : 22), effective management of large volumes of water made an efficient organisation indispensable. Once this organisation existed hydraulic economy, characterised by division of labour, intensive cultivation and co-operation on a large scale and in which the state assumed managerial role inevitably developed. Hunt and Hunt (1976) made extensive studies on the managerial theory by Wright (1975) and on hydraulic culture of Wittfogel (1957). The Hunts have convincingly showed that irrigation involves an irrigation dependent ecology strongly emphasising the fact that whether it is a cause of statehood or not, irrigation where it is present or not is a major focus of political action. Their theory is that all water managers are also political leaders which is the natural outcome of the vital role played by irrigation in the birth of elite power,² (Cohen and Service 1978 :9) and we can accept here that irrigation culture conditions the resultant social transformations—an important aspect of state formation process. In Tai-Ahom's

case, such traits are clearly discernible. In a similar vein Barbara Price (1971) says that the most common determinant factor of infrastructure stability is irrigation agriculture. The greater the capacity to harness energy, the greater the tendency for states to develop. The Ahom structural growth and their intensive wet rice cultivations, is a case in point, which cannot be overlooked in such perspectives.

However, scholars are not convinced that irrigation alone leads to state formation as it does not carry any momothetic value. Though examples will not be lacking where states have born out of irrigation, but as a factor in the process of state formation, this is not adequate enough. (Claessen & Skalnik 1978 : 11 ; Claessen 1973)

Set on this frame, we may now proceed to take up our case study.

III

The Advent of the Ahoms

(a) The waves of the Tai-Ahom migrants

There were at least two waves of Tai-Ahom migrants in Upper Assam in the twenties of the 13th century. One at the time of the conquest of the Chutiya kingdom by Sam-Long-Hpa and the other when Hso-Ka-Hpa finally came. The conquest of the Chutiya kingdom was the result of the aggressive and expansionist policy of the Mao-Shan Chief Hso-Hkan-Hpa (1220-1250). He sent his brother Sam-Long-Hpa, the redoutable Mao-Shan general whose first expedition was to Manipur through Lushai Hills-Tripura and the second expedition was the conquest of the Chutiya kingdom in the easternmost Assam (Gogoi 1968 : 158 ; N. Elias 1876 :18). The Chutiya kingdom became a tributary of the Mao-Shan Empire and Sam-Long-Hpa set up principalities at the Tipam-Namrup area (Gogoi 1968 :262). The second wave was the final migration of the Tai-Ahoms under Hso-Ka-Hpa's leadership when they left their original homeland of Mong-Mao in Upper Burma.

The political developments in the Mao-Shan empire necessiated this wave of migration of a considerable section of the Tais. The aggressive designs of the Mong-Mao monarch Hso-Hkan-Hpa to do away with the internal independence of the various Tai chiefs aiming at absolute centralisation of autho-

ity in himself to materialise his expansionist policy resulted in the discontentment of many of the Tai-Chiefs and Hso-Ka-Hpa was one of them. His political frustrations were one of the reasons to leave his original paternal kingdom of Mong-Mit Kupkingdao where he ruled for nineteen years efficiently and successfully for finding out a new homeland elsewhere. To this we may add that if the second conquest of the Chutiya kingdom by Hso-Ka-Hpa after Sam-Long-Hpa is to be taken as authentic,³ then he might have possessed the knowledge of Eastern Assam (Gogoi 1968 : 255), particularly about its ecological viability and the ethnic compatability which might have entered into his imaginative mind of the possibility of founding a new kingdom in this part of the land. Hso-Ka-Hpa was shrewd, tactful and a keen observer of situations. With the Shan-Tai heritage behind him and his faithful valiant followers, he could foresee that his dreamland of Mong-Dun-Hsun-Kham (land full of golden gardens) might be a reality. That is the reason, we find, that he made elaborate arrangements and plans before leaving his homeland for good. In such a case, the foundation and growth of the Tai-Ahom state was destined to be through conquests.

(b) The Tai-Ahoms in Upper Assam (1228-1539)

Hso-Ka-Hpa, the founding father of the Tai-Ahom kingdom was a man of outstanding personality, indefatigable in his pursuits, an excellent organiser in war and peace alike, and was singularly persuasive and charismatic in his dealings and dispositions. It is proved by the fact that he could organise a large number of followers including nobles and chiefs who decided to cast their lot in his new and unknown armed adventurism. And so he could bring with him.

“a large force composed of cavalry and infantry armed with cannon, guns and gun-powder so as to be able to fight his enemies and also there were other followers and servants”.
(Naoboicha Phukan : 176)

The Tai-Ahom chronicles also confirm that the various nobles and chieftains who accompanied Hso-Ka-Hpa, joined him from time to time and from place to place with their own contingent of forces, had also chosen him as their only leader and were confident of his ability and leadership. The conquest and occupation of Eastern Assam by Hso-Ka-Hpa and

his followers was thus coupled with the great westward movement of the Tai race of the time.

The Tai-Ahoms had to cross through a difficult terrain, had to undertake a series of conquests from the Doi-Kham hill to Mong-La-Khen-Ten-Sha, brought under control enough territory to constitute a kingdom of those days (Gogoi 1968:261). These conquests were once for all decisive confirming the armed might of the Ahoms. A chain of tributary states sprang up along the passage route which remained free to meet any eventuality in course of their settlement in Upper Assam. It is only in A. D. 1401, that the boundary between the Ahom and Nara kingdoms was finally settled. By this time, the Ahom kingdom in Assam already had stricken its roots.

When Hso-Ka-Hpa landed in Mong Tipam-Namrup, the area was already an Ahom stronghold, an important outpost of the early Tai-Ahom settlers. It is because of this that the first Ahom headquarter was set up here at Tipam. The easy submission of the Maran-Barahi chiefs, who were probably tributaries to the Chutiya kingdom, was the natural outcome of the earlier Ahom conquest of the Chutiya kingdom followed by Hso-Ka-Hpa's friendly but strong arm policies. These initial settlements were absolutely through conquests, the first foothold of the emerging Ahom kingdom after the arrival of Hso-Ka-Hpa and say, even before that.

The Tai-Ahoms had to remain in constant threat of attacks and invasions externally from the aggressive Mao-Shan king Hso-Hkan-Hpa⁴ and other tributary chiefs and internally from the Powerful Kacharis and the Chutiyas during the initial period of their settlement in their new homeland. War and warfare became the legacy of the Ahoms for survival and rise thus confirming the biological principle and Darwinian dictum. Defence, putting down rebellions and subduing rival states animated the early Ahom settlers. However, they avoided armed conflicts as far as possible and resorted to it only when the exigencies of the situations demanded. During Hso-Ka-Hpa's regime, only the Mahang area, an outskirt of the Kachari kingdom in the east of modern Barhat was wrested. Needless to mention, it was politically important to do so. Upto A. D. 1536 the Ahom nature of conquest or the Kachari territory was more on the battle of wits than on the battle of arms fully exploiting the superstitious beliefs of the Kacharis (Gogoi 1968 :292-93). The Ahom pressure was slow and silent

as it would have been impolitic to seriously antagonise the Kachari power at the infancy of the emerging Ahom state.

The initial expansion of the Ahoms remained confined up to the Dikhow valley. For almost three hundred years, the Ahoms had to remain cautious and careful. The Chutiyas in the east, the Kacharis in the west and the petty Bhuyan chiefs in the north still had political weight to jeopardise any Ahom aggressiveness. That is why the initial Policy set up by Hso-Ka-Hpa was continued by his successors. The foremost task was to avoid major conflicts with neighbours, to pay more attention towards solid consolidation. It is only from the reign of Hso-Hum Mong Dihingia Raja (1497-1539) that the Tai-Ahoms resorted to real conquest and annexation followed by complete absorptions of the conquered tribes.

During the latter half of the 14th century, there were three interregnums. There were internal and external conflicts too. In one instance, the Ahom king Hso-To-Hpa (1369-1376) was treacherously killed by the Chutiya king while the other two victims of regicides were Tao-Kham-Thi (1380-89) and Hso-Han-Hpa (1488-1493). The revolt of the Tai-Tipam community and of Chao-Pu-Lai, the youngest son of Hso-Khang-Hpa (1293-1332) were some others to mention here. How these interregnums and the growing internal conflicts were withstood by the infant Ahom kingdom will be a quite another issue to discuss here.

However, with the beginning of the 15th century, the growing Ahom state must have drawn the attention of the local Kachari and Chutiya powers. The Ahoms also realised that a change of policy was necessary in relation to the Kacharis and the Chutiyas. It became evident to them that without wiping out the Chutiya power, the Ahom state cannot have fuller development. So it took Hso-Hum-Mong Dihingia Raja to complete the task. The Chutiya power was completely crushed, was annexed, the population was fully absorbed. In case of the Kachari power the expansion went from Marangi to the Dhansiri river. The population increased considerably, three new offices that of the Barpatra Gohain, the third Minister in the council of ministers, the Sadiyakhowa Gohain (after the annexation of the Chutiya kingdom) and the Marangikhowa Gohain (after conquering Marangi from the Kacharis) came into existence. The royal princes were settled by creating several estates at Dihing, Tipam, Namrup, Sharing

and Tingkhong. By the end of Hso-Hum-Mong's reign, the Ahom state became a reality and both overtly and covertly, the conquests manifested in the formation of the Tai-Ahom state.

Further, the Ahoms resisted the Muslim invasions effectively and successfully, saved the Kamarupa Kamata kingdom and by A. D. 1534, the Ahom hegemony was unquestionably established throughout Assam from Sadiya to the Korotoy river.

The conquests produced a society in the Tai-Ahom state which consisted of divergent and heterogeneous peoples like the Chutiyas, Kacharis, Koches, Bhuyans, Marans and Barahis. All these groups of people had dominant political entities. The transculturation of these heterogeneous groups as encouraged and promoted by the conquering Ahoms themselves and with the intrusion of Brahmanical and Hindu influences, the picture of the Ahom conquest society underwent radical changes with the advance of time. The conquest of these developed type class added new dimensions to the on-growing social transformation in the birth of the Assamese nationality. Even then, it is important to note that the inborn ethnic sense of these different groups did not die out during the long period of Ahom rule and at present raising their heads of ethnic identity and respectability. It just remained merged, submerged whether it was under the Ahom rule or that of the British.

IV

The relevancy of the two variables

'Marching armed peasant commune'— an apt description of the Tai-Ahom migrants into Upper Assam is the significant terminology used by Guha (1983 :15-16) in content and meaning which adequately expresses the relevancy of the two variables in the process of Tai-Ahom state formation. The fact is that the Tai-Ahoms had to be remained 'armed' all for offence, defence and governance and at the same time had to be 'Peasants' in keeping with their irrigation culture and had to be on 'march' all the time. Irrigation like war, requires effective striking power through planning and organisation. The Ahoms were past masters in collective land reclamation and dyke building activities. They fully displayed this capacity upto the end of their rule and even after.

"Such activities organised on a war footing constituted an

essential function of the Ahom state. Even during the early British period, more than a lakh of people in one district once engaged themselves voluntarily to repair as many as 34 such embankments. Local initiative in offering unpaid labour on such a big scale was possible only because of the past tradition". (Guha : 1966:223 ; cf. Gait 1967 :249).

In the Ahom state, we may note, the militia and irrigation services were but state services, inseparable and indivisible.

In this context, the Ahom nature of conquests had to be different.

"...assuming that the necessary historical evidence is available - must take into account not only the mode of conquest and the condition of conquest and the conditions of contact but also the similarities or divergencies in culture and mode of livelihood of conquerors and conquered and the political institution they bring with them into the new combination." (Fortes and Evans Pritchard 1962 : 10).

The necessary historical evidence is not lacking in the Tai-Ahom chronicles. In the Tai-Ahom's case, the new combination produced a bond of understanding between the victors and the vanquished of mutual benefits to each other. The Ahoms made their conquered land permanent home and therefore, neither they liquidated nor expelled the native population yet established themselves as a cohesive ruling class apart from and above their new subjects (Wittfogel 1957 : 325). On the other hand, the native population willingly consented to the new authority as the conquests provided them peace and security and the Ahom hydraulic culture guaranteed them economic security which proved beneficial to them. We have in records that the Barahis went on saying amongst people

"Though this prince (Sukapha) and his followers have made us so many servitors, yet we do not feel any resentment in our hearts ; on the other hand, we long for serving and attending on them as frequently as possible." (Bhuyan 1943:3)

We may note here that the Ahom conquests of the local tribes did not produce any slavery in the true sense of the term as was the case with the Kacharis. Their services as servitors and like those of serfs were rather services to the emerging state. This is testified by the fact that at each stage of conquests, the subjugated people fully co-operated with the sovereign power in the wars that followed and particularly the

brave Kacharis fought hand in hand with the Ahom army against the Muslim invasions (Gogoi 1968:300 ; AB 1930-69). Such significant co-operation from a people, had it been reduced to object slavery, could not have been expected.

Hso-Ka-Hpa's attitude towards the conquered tribes was one of respect where the personal qualities, abilities, merits and calibre of these people were concerned. He had no hesitation to take them into confidence and place them in responsible posts. (DAB 1932 : 91 ; cf. Bhuyan 1949 : 3 ; Gogoi 1968 : 271). From the ethno-cultural point of view too, there was not much difference between the two, to stand on the way of reciprocal identification, having the same food habits and the means of subsistence. This efficacious identification with the sons of the soil, largely determined the formative phase of the Ahom state in an on-growing process. (cf. Wittfogel 1957 : 127).

Ecologically, the Tai-Ahom state had to be a hydraulic state. Their appended name of Mong-Dun-Hsun-Kham testifies to this characteristic feature. The 'Sali' paddy cultivation requiring control of large volumes of water by constructing small bunds (*Ali*) must be indebted to the Ahom hydraulic culture. Further, the perennial floods caused by the Brahmaputra river and its tributaries called for collective organisational works on a large scale in the construction of the dykes (Guha 1966 : 221). This in turn gave rise to agro-managerial despotism.

"Agro-managerial despotism is essential to hydraulic society, and as far as we know it is specific to it. It is specific in that inagro-hydraulic civilisations, different from feudalism, corvée labour is imposed on the mass of the population by the state." (Wittfogel 1957 : 414-15).

What is corvée labour in the west, is just the Paik system in the Tai-Ahom's case in substance. The Paik system with its 'Khels', 'gots' and the resultant division of labour 'Chamua paiks', 'Kanri paiks' and others, was ossified into the on growing Ahom polity leading to the growth of a hierarchical structure, pyramydic in form. With the increase in subjugated people and increase in more cultivable lands, the Paik system became the backbone of the whole Ahom structural growth, which in turn gave birth to the highly stratified Ahom society. Whether this agro-managerial despotism in the Ahom's case, gave rise to the characteristic features of feudalism, as viewed by Wade (1800 : xv), Guha (1966 : 234 ; 1983 : 39) and by Bhuyan

(1974 :250-51) cannot conclusively be probed here for want of time and space.

The Ahoms needed man-power badly in order to intensify their wet-rice cultivation and thereby to secure surplus production to sustain the state structure and the regime (Guha 1984 : 6). The exploitations, at first, were confined to secure productive work.

"The moment when the first conqueror spared his victim in order permanently to exploit him in productive work, was one of incomparable historical importance. It gave birth to nation and state to right, and the higher economics which have grown and will hereafter grow out of them". (Oppenheimer 1926 : 68)

The Ahoms never resorted to wanton aggressions and conquests. They aimed more at political subjugations. Perhaps for this, all lands remained communal property vested only in the sovereign. They stressed on political socialisation which served them the dual purpose of exploitation and consolidation at the cost of the aboriginal peoples. Another aspect of Ahom conquests was that with each conquests, the subdued king had to give a princess to the Ahom monarch. Its impact was far reaching. The marching armed Tai-Ahom community did not bring their wives while coming to Assam. They had to take their women mostly from the conquered tribes.

So the Tai Ahom state was a conquest state. A group of Tais from Upper Burma came and settled at Tipam. Gradually, they were successful in establishing their own state first in Upper Assam and then over the whole of the Brahmaputra valley. Separated by great distances, obstructed by inhospitable mountains from their homeland, and coming as a warrior band rather than as family migrants, they doubtless took their women from the newly conquered land. The children of their unions adopted their mother's tongue and this helped linguistic assimilation in the absence of women from their own kind. The political incorporation, by conquest leading to partial conquest, was followed by a cultural assimilation (Goody 1970 : 116-17).

In conclusion, we may now say that conquest played a major role in the process of state formation in Tai-Ahom's case. The Tai-Ahoms were literate, had a gentile constitution and other ingredients to form a state. What they had not was a territory and a sufficient number of population. Their conquests provided these both.

Parallely, their irrigation culture provided the needed infrastructure for social stability and onward development. The two factors produced the flow of the feedback systems which helped the Tai-Ahom state in taking shape. Egregiously, the two variables were the nucleus of the emerging Tai-Ahom state.

NOTES

1. The limitations arise because of the conflicting views and interpretations on 'conquest' by the different scholars. It is not only unclear but also confusing. It poses a question like 'What came first? Chicken or the Egg? Whether states are formed after conquests, or only after the formation of states conquests start. So, the problem is epistemological. Hence, following Robert Johann Gustov Droysen (cited by William Fogel & G. R. Elton in: 'Which Road to the Past? Two views of History' 1983, Yale University Press, New Haven & London) we shall have to confine ourselves to 'ideengeschichte' or 'imaginative understanding and in doing so, I have followed the dictionary meaning: 'the act of conquering: that which is conquered or acquired by physical or moral force: (Scots law) acquisition otherwise than by inheritance.
2. We can little elaborate the concept of elite power in connection with the Tai-Ahom case. It is strictly a monopoly bureaucracy in a kinship based closed class. The functional bureaucracy or for that matter the differentiated leadership which we find in most of the hydraulic societies, remained confined within the '*Satgharia* (seven clans) Ahom family' so far as our case study is concerned.
3. The whereabouts of Sam-Long-Hpa after the conquest of the Chutiya kingdom is shrouded in obscurity. It is not clear whether Hso-Ka-Hpa was the Mao-Shan general after Sam-Long-Hpa who suppressed the Chutiya attempts to break off the Mao-Shan yoke. But it is not also unlikely that after Sam-Long-Hpa, Hso-Ka-Hpa was the only Mao-Shan general to have been sent for suppressing the Chutiya uprisings from the Mao-Shan capital. But the Garo accounts (Gogoi 1968 -162-63) say that Sam-Long-Hpa was very much alive when Hso-Ka-Hpa landed at Mong Tipam and the area was handed over to Hso-Ka-Hpa by him as his successor and retired or died. In any case,

it appears probable that Hso-Ka-Hpa had had some knowledge of eastern Assam either from his personal experience or from the narratives of his fellowmen before leaving his motherland for good.

4. Hso-Ka-Hpa's conflict with Hso-Hkan-Hpa is the reason for this. The arrogant, aggressive Mao-Shan chief would brook no opposition. Earlier, he executed Sao Tai-Hkon (Hso-Zot-Hpa), the eldest brother of Hso-Ka-Hpa, who refused to surrender. When Hso-Ka-Hpa could not be forced by Hso-Hkan-Hpa to submit to his will, he decided to capture him. Hso-Ka-Hpa got wind of this and left his paternal kingdom before Hso-Hkan-Hpa could strike. Viewed from this point, Hso-Ka-Hpa had always the fear that the powerful Mao-Shan chief might attack at any time to ruin his chances of founding a new kingdom in Assam.

References

1. AB, 1930, *Ahom Buranji*, Tr. by G. C. Barua, Calcutta.
2. S. K. Bhuyan, 1949, *Anglo Assamese Relations, (1771-1826)*, DHAS, Gauhati, 2nd, Edition, Gauhati, 1974, Cited by Guha (1983 : 9).
3. Henri J. M. Claessen and Peter Skalnik, ed., 1978, *The Early State*, Mouton Publishers, The Hague, The Netherlands.
4. Robert L. Carneiro, 1970, *A Theory of the Origin of the State*, *Science* : 169 : 733-738, cited by Claessen and Skalnik (1978 : 13).
5. Henri J. M. Claessen, 1973, "Despotism and Irrigation", *Bijdragen tot de Taal, Land-en, Volkenkunde* : 129 : 70-85, cited by Claessen and Skalnik (1978 : 11).
6. R. Cohen, and Elman R., Service, ed., 1978, *Origins of the State : The Anthropology of Political evolution*, A publication of the Institute for the study of Human issues (I. S. H. I), Philadelphia.
7. R. Cohen, 1974, 'The evolution of hierarchical Institutions : a case study from Biu, Nigeria', *Savanna* : 3:153-154 ; 173, cited by : Claessen and Skalnik (1978 : 10, 14)
8. DAB, 1932, *Deodhai Assam Buranji*, S. K. Bhuyan, ed., DHAS, Gauhati.
9. N. Elias, 1876, *Introductory sketch of the History of the Shans in Upper Burma, Western Yunnan*, Calcutta.

10. F. Engels, 1977, *The Origin of the Family, Private property and the State*, Progress Publishers, Moscow.
11. M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, 1962, *African Political Systems*, Oxford University Press, Amen House London.
12. Morton H. Fried, 1967, *The Evolution of Political Society*, New York, Random House, in Claessen & Skalnik (1978 : 52-53).
13. P. Gogoi, 1968, *The Tai and the Tai Kingdoms*, Gauhati University, Gauhati.
14. E. Gait, 1967, *A History of Assam*, 3rd Rev. Edition, Gauhati.
15. A. Guha. 1966, "Land Rights and Social Claeses in Medieval Assam", Gokhale Institute, Poona, Vol. III, No. 3, Sept., 1983,
 "The Ahom Political System : an into the state formation Process in Medieval Assam, 1228-1714', *Social Scientist* Vol. 11, Dec., 1984.
 'Neo-Vaishnavism to Insurgency : Peasant Uprisings and the Crisis of feudalism in late 18th century Assam', Occasional Paper No. 67, CSSS, Calcutta, May.
16. Jack Goody, 1970, 'Marriage Policy and incorporation in Northern Chana' in Ronald Cohen and John Middleton. ed., *From Tribe to Nation*, Chandler Publishing Co.
17. E. Hunt, 1972, "Irrigation and Centralisation : A Critique of Million's Argument", Paper read at the Annual Meeting of the SWA A. Cited by Cohen and Service (1978 : 70) ; 1972, 'Irrigation and Socio-Political Organisation of the Cuicatec Cacicazgos' in F. Johnson and R. Macneish (ed), *The Pre-history of the Tehuacan Valley*, Vol. 4. Austin Univesity, Texas Press, in Cohen and Service (1918 : 70).
18. R. C. Hunt, and E. Hunt, 1976, 'Canal Irrigation and local social Organisation," *Current Anthropology*, 17, 389-411, Cited by Claessen & Skalnik (1978 : 9).
19. Anatolli M. Khazanov, 1978, 'The Early State among the Scythians' & 'Some theoretical problems of the study of the early state', in Classen and Skalnik (1978 : 425, 83).
20. Lawrence Krader, 1968, *Formation of the state, ANKOLE : Formation by conquest*, Prentice Hall, INC, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
21. Herbert S. Lewis, 1966, *The Origins of African Kingdoms*, Cahiers d'etudes Africaines, 23:402-407, Cited by Claessen & Skalnik (1978 : 10).

22. Sofia A. Maretina, 1979, "The Kachari State : The character of Early State like formations in the Hill Districts of Northeast India" ; in Claessen & Skalnik (1978:339-358).
23. Franz Oppenheimer, 1926, *The State : Its history and development viewed sociologically*, New York, Vanguard Press.
24. Naoboicha Phukan, Naoboicha Phukan's Buranji, DHAS, Transcript Vol. IX : 175-176. A brief reference in Tamuli Phukan's Buranjis : 9 Cited by Gogoi 1968:255.
25. B. Price, 1971, "Prehispanic Irrigation Agriculture in Nuclear America," *Latin American Research Review*, 6 :3-60, Cited by Cohen & Service (1978 : 11).
26. Julian H. Steward, 1955, *Theory of Culture Change*, Urbana University of Illinois Press 199. Cited by Claessen Skalnik (1978 :11).
27. E. Mcc. Sait, 1938, *Political Institutions : A preface*, New York, Appleton century, Cited by Cohen & Service (1978 : 37).
28. Sudharsan Seniviratne, 1978, "Mauryan State" in Claessen & Skalnik (1978 :382).
29. R. Service Elman, 1975, *Origins of the State and Civilisations : The process of cultural evolution*, New York, Norton.
30. Richard Thurnwald, 1935, *Die menschliche Gesellschaft*, Vol. 4. (The State) Berlin, Leipzig De Gruyler, Cited by Claessen & Skalnik (1978 :10).
31. Karl A. Wittfogel, 1957, *Oriental Despotism*, New Haven, Yale University Press, London, OUP.
32. H. T. Wright and G. Johnson, 1975, "Population Exchange and early state formation in South Western Iran" *American Anthropologist*, 77 :267-289. Cited by Cohen & Service (1978 : 3&9).
33. D. Westermann, 1952, *Grschichte Africas Statenbildung Sudlich der Sahara*, Koln, Greven Verlag. Cited by Claessen & Skalnik (1978 : 1).
34. J. P. Wade, 1800, *An Account of Assam*, p. XV, Ed., B. Sharma, 1st Impression.