

## Raha Chaki and the Rohiyal Baruah: A Historical study

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**Abstract:** Presently Raha is a small town in Nagaon district of Assam, India. It is situated near the National Highway 37. And the river Kolong and Kopili flows near Raha. During the rule of Ahoms, Raha became a politically important place. As the river Kolong was marked as border between the Ahom and Kachari kingdom. Keeping all these in mind, Ahom King Pratap Singha set up a border outpost at Raha and gave its name as Raha Chaki and an officer was appointed there to monitor all the activities. The designation of the officer was known as Rohiyal Baruah. Apart from these Pratap Singha created some more posts like Jagiyal Gohain, Kajalimukhiya Gohain in the neighbouring area.

This paper is mostly depended on primary and secondary sources and like Ahom history, local journal, news papers etc.

**Key words:** Ahom, Border, Kolong, Kopili, Raha

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Raha has been a strategic point between the Ahoms and the Kachari, Ahom and the Jayantia, and Ahom and Manipur during 16<sup>th</sup> century. Especially during the reign of Pratap Singha, Raha became an important station throughout the period of Pratap Singha, Suhungmung of Dihingia raja and Rudra Singha. The post of Rahiyal Baruah and Raha *chaki* (outpost) has been created to collect taxes and to monitor the movement of Kachari king. Apart from these the Five or Seven Puali Rajas, namely- Barapujia, Saragaon, Salmara, Tupakuchi, Mikir and Khaigarh were actively participated, under the super vision of Rahiyal Barua of Raha Chaki, on the side of Ahom King during the Moamaria Rebellion. This is only because of the initiative taken by the Rahiyal Barua, these Tribal Kings extended their helping hand to the Ahom Kings in each and every adverse situations. During the time of Rudra Singha, war broke out between Ahoms and the Jayantia and Rahiyal Barua along with other Ahom officials convinced the Puali Raja or the Tribal Chiefs to fight against the Jayantia King.

The selection of the post of Barua for the Raha *Chaki* was confined to a particular Barua family. Rahiyal Barua or the border out post Officer was nominated from the Barua family of the Capital city only.

**Area of Study:** Raha is a small town in Nagaon district of Assam, situated near the National Highway 37. The river Kolong and Kapili flows near Raha. There are legends regarding the origin of the name 'Raha'. According to one such legend, it is believed that Sri Krishna took rested (*Raisil* in Assamese) for a while, on the way back to Dwaraka while he eloped with Rukmini. Another legend says that Jongal Bolohu, the Kamata King, was defeated and seriously injured in the hand of the Kacharis and he was struggled for life in the river Kolong near Raha. According to Lt. Dharmasingha Deka of Raha, this word might have originated from Dimasa word 'Raubi' means 'good' or 'beautiful' and 'Ha' means 'land'. It means 'beautiful land.' It seems the opinion of Lt. Dharmasingha Deka is more justified.

According to *Datiyaliya Buranji*, during the reign of Jadhvaj Singha the frontier Ahom Officer of Raha appointed 12 (twelve) Mikir Chiefs who were agreed to pay the stipulated annual tribute to the Ahom king. Accordingly, some of the Mikirs were allowed to settle in the plains.

'During the reign of Rajeswar Singha, Kirtichandra Barbarua established a bazaar at Raha, fixed the Prices of articles, transacted in the saibazaar... Kirtichandra Barbarua also recognized five local tribal Chiefs of the region, viz, Sara Khaigariya, Tupakuchiya, Barapujia and Mikir in addition to 7 (seven) local tribal Chiefs of Jagi.

It appears from the above narration that the western part of the present Nagaon district was largely ruled by local tribals chiefs owning allegiance to Ahom monarch. The political and trade relations with these feudal tribal chiefs were managed by the 3 (three) Frontier officer known as Kajalimukhiya Gohain of Kajolimukh, Jagiyal Gohain of Jagi and Rahiyal Barua of Raha,

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

Studies on Raha and Rahiyal Barua are available. Gait in his *A History of Assam*, L Devi's *Ahom Tribal Relations*, and Mr. J. O. Wade's *An Account of Assam* are some of the historical studies where numbers of references given about the Raha and Rahiyal Barua. Apart from these English histories, we can cite few Ahom histories where reference of Raha is available. There are histories about Raha, written by Ahom historians. *Asom Buronji* by Harakanta Barua Sadaramin, *Asom Buronji* by Kashinath Tamuly Phukan, *Asom Buranji* by Ghunabhiram Barua. Even then exclusive study on Raha and Rahiyal Barua is limited. The work of Ganesh Senapati in *Rahar Rahiyal Barua aru Panch Raja Puwali*, is the only comprehensive study, so far has been done. So there is still need to be studied on the topic, in more comprehensive and objective way.

## III. OBJECTIVES:

1. To study historical background of Raha
2. To know the power and functions of the Rahiyal Barua of Raha Chaki, and
3. To study its importance as border out post between Ahoms and the Kacharies, and
4. To study its relation with tribal chiefs or the *Puwali* rajas of the area.

## IV. METHODOLOGY:

This is an empirical study. The Project is based on Secondary sources. Data are collected from various books, journals, magazines from our college library, Phulaguri library and internet sources.

## V. ANALYSIS:

Perhaps Raha was a part of the ancient Pragjyotish. It is mentioned in Pillar Inscription of Samudr Gupta that Kamrupa and Davaka was neighbouring state of the Guptas. It was the temporary capital of the Kamata king Ratnapal alias Jongal Balohu. Testimonies of this fact can still be seen in the Raha area. The Kapila River was the boundary between the Ahoms in North and Kacharies in the South. During the reign of Susenpha or Pratap Singha, tradition of appointing a border out post officer, in the area begun. And the name of the border out post was 'Raha' and the assigned its first officer was known as 'Rahiyal Barua', belonged to the family of Momai Tamuly Barbarua, the village organizer. Pratap Singha simultaneously opened two borders out post along with the Raha *Chaki* namely at the mouth of Jagi and Kajulikukh respectively in order to get latest information the about movement of Jayantia Raja and Demoria Raja, and the names of these two outpost officers were called as Jagiyal Gohain and Kajolimukhiya Gohain, respectively.

During the time of Suhungmung or Dihingia Raja, war between Ahom and the Kachari started and Kachari were defeated and their king Datchung escaped but he was killed in later. Perhaps during the time of Suhungmung border out post was set up at Raha and Kajolimukh for time being. On the basis of this fact Mr. J. P. Wade assumed Raha Chaki and Kajomukh chaki established in the year 1527. But this fact might not true as the Raha Chaki was established in 1536, that is, after the Kacharies were defeated and the entire tract between Dhansiri and Kolong River of Nagaon were annexed to the Ahom territory.

Perhaps the cause of establishment of Raha chaki for, Pratap Singha, was to check the growing strength of the Kacharies. Pratap Singha had created two new posts- Barbarua and the Barphukan and the area laying in Raha, Jagi, and Kajolimukh was kept under the charge of Barphukan.

We do not have much information about the Raha Chaki for the time of Surampha (1641-1644) and Sutimpha (1644-1648). But we have available information about the time Jayadhaj Singha (1648-1663). He had reestablished Raha Chaki. Jayadhaj Singha had appointed his father in law, Teleka Monikai, as Rahiyal Barua. At that point of time Raha chaki became a strategic border post not only for the Kacharies but also for the Jayantiyas.

The Rahiyal Barua of Raha Chaki had played a significant role from the time of its creation by Pratap Singha (1603 – 1641) to till the time of Phulaguri Dhewa (1861). It is not clear who was the First Rahiyal Barua, selected by Pratap Singha or history silent about this. Teleka Handique was appointed by Jayadhaj Singha (1648-1663) and in relation the former was his father in law. And during this period the importance of Raha Chaki increased.

According to the Report of Moft Mills, the name the revenue officer of the Raha area in the 1851-1852 was Sabhodhar Barua. It is no doubt that this officer was belonged to the family of Rahiyal Barua.

In the Phulaguri Dhewa (1861), one Sambhodhar Barua of Raha was actively involved and perhaps he was belonged to the family of the Rahiyal Barua. There was matrimonial alliance between the two families of Rahiyal Barua and royal family of Tupakuchi. There was a famous *thaan* named as *Burhagohain than* near the residence of Rahiyal Barua. Purnananda Burha Gohain had granted *devottar* land to this *than*. The idol of this *thaan* used to bring out during *Gohain Uliua Mela*. According to Ilawati Barua, the last family of Rahiyal Barua of Raha had royal lineage of Rudra Singha (Senapati, 1997).

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