

Meta data of E- Content

S.N.	AREA OF META DATA	
1.	Theme	Ahoms
2.	Subject	History
3.	Linkage of theme with chapter	Tribe, nomads And Settled Communities
4.	Class/ Level	Seventh
5.	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create awareness about Ahoms among the students • To develop understanding about culture, religion and society of Ahoms
6.	Description	<p>The Ahoms were a tribal community who established a kingdom in the region of present day Assam. The name 'Assam' is probably derived from the word 'Ahom'. The original homeland of the Ahoms may have been China. From there they migrated to Burma (now Myanmar). In the thirteenth century they came to Assam, which was earlier known as Kamarupa. There they clashed with the local tribals such as Kacharis, Khasis and Nagas. They finally settled in north-eastern Assam and set up a stable government. The first Ahom king was probably Sukapha. He ruled for 40 years, from 1228 to 1268. The Ahoms expanded their territories by defeating the local rulers. They also fought against the Mughals. Aurangzeb managed to conquer Garhgaon, the Ahom capital, but was unable to keep it under his control for long.</p> <p>In theory, however, the Ahoms ruled as vassals of the Mughals. The Ahoms had a tribal set-up. The village community was very powerful. It allotted land to peasants based on their needs. The peasant cultivated food crops, particularly rice, on their land. Peasants and others also had to serve in the army during war. People lived in houses made of bamboo, which was available locally. Tribal gods were worshipped. In the eighteenth century, some Ahoms adopted Hinduism as their religion. However, worship of tribal gods continued. Rudra Singh was the most powerful Ahom ruler. He ruled from 1696 to 1714. He and the later rulers compiled the 'buranjis' or</p>

		<p>Ahom historical works. In the nineteenth century, Assam became a part of British India. The Ahoms still live as a small tribal group in Assam.</p> <p>The Ahoms kept complete records of their rule, their genealogy, the path they followed to enter Assam, their culture and administration. These chronicles called Buranjis are written in Ahom and Assamese languages and exist in several translated and edited versions. According to the Buranjis, the nearby Naga hills afforded them security and they followed the animal tracks in the Hills to enter Assam. The Naga hills remained of strategic importance to them. Their relationship with the Nagas is also chronicled in the Buranjis. The style of administration they followed is known as Paik system. The Ahom state depended on forced labour. Those who were forced to work for the state were called Paiks. The Paik officials were ranked according to the Paiks they controlled.</p>
7.	Key Words	Bhuiyans, Assimilation, Embankment, Clan, khels, Mandapa, Sikhara, Ancestor
8.	Content Developer	Ms Jyotika Bajaj PRT English / Social Studies, BVM School)
9.	Subject Coordinator	Ms Milli Roy
10.	CIET Coordinator	Ms Indu Kumar

AHOMS

INTRODUCTION

The Ahoms migrated to the Brahmaputra valley and created a new state by suppressing the older political system of the *bhuiyans* (landlords) and for this they used firearms as early as the 1530s. By the 1660s they could even make high-quality gunpowder and cannons. During the latter part of the 16th century, the Ahoms faced a succession of Mughal invasions. In spite of their courageous defence, the Ahoms were defeated. But the Mughals could not have a direct control over the region for a long time. During their 600 year rule in the Brahmaputra valley, the Ahoms underwent a continuous process of cross-cultural adjustments and modifications. Many of their original aspect of culture and lifestyle were preserved, while many others underwent obvious Hinduization, due to factors political, economic and social. These layers of assimilation and changes were visible in the social levels such as in language, religion, and customs, and also in cultural levels such as art, architecture and literature.

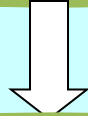
THE PROCESS OF ASSIMILATION

The Ahoms, unlike their contemporaries in the rest of India, possessed a sense of history and recorded everything in records called the *Buranjis*. The earliest *Buranjis* were written in the Tai-Ahom language, but with increasing homogenization, the later works came to be recorded in Assamese, which the kings had adopted as their official language. It is from these chronicles that the greatest knowledge about Ahom history has been derived. Along with the language, the kings adopted many other aspects of the conquered race, religion being the foremost. The Ahom religion consisted of ancestor worship, a politico-religious priesthood, frequent sacrifices and a monotheistic idea of a creator god called "*Pha*". They observed elaborate fertility rituals, marriages and burial customs. While crossing the Patkai range, the Ahoms followed an early form of Buddhism. Following King Asoka's tradition of community welfare, the Ahom kings too constructed thousands of kilometres of road, dug out ponds and planted trees across the region they ruled. However, with gradual Hinduisation, the rulers began to increasingly convert to *Vaishnavism* or *Śaktism*. The rulers gradually Hinduized their names as well, using both Tai and Hindu names.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION

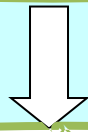
AHOM SOCIETY

The Ahom society was divided into clans called *khels*.



CLANS (KHELs)

A *khel* controlled several villages. People from heavily populated areas were shifted to less populated areas so as to save resources. Peasants were assigned land by village community. The *Khels* were divided on the basis of these Ahom's occupation and hereditary status.



PAIKS

The smallest unit of *khel* contained twenty *paiks*. This smallest unit was controlled by an officer known as *bora*. The *paiks* rendered direct service to the king.

AHOM ECONOMY

The early Ahom state had a simple economy. The primary occupation of the Ahoms was agriculture. They introduced new methods of wet rice cultivation. During wars almost all men served in the army. In normal situations, they had to earn their living in the construction of embankments, irrigation systems and other public works.

CROSS-CULTURAL REFLECTIONS IN AHOM ART

The surviving monuments, primarily in the modern town of Sivasagar in Upper Assam come from the later Ahom period, when the people were thoroughly Hinduized. Just like their early historical accounts written in the Tai language, nothing survives from the Early Ahom period.

RANG GHAR



The Rang-Ghar (Literally meaning “House of Entertainment”) was constructed during the reign of PramattaSingha in the early 18th century CE. The purpose of this building was to serve as a royal-pavilion from which the kings could watch traditional games like buffalo-fights and enjoy dance performances during festivals such as Bihu. The activities were performed at the field surrounding the building on all sides, called the “Rupohi-Pothār”. As such, it played a similar role as the amphitheatres of Ancient Rome, and is probably the only surviving example of its kind in India. Architecturally, it is a double-storied building with an apsidal plan (where entry is from the lateral sides) and a curved long boat-type roof. The ground floor is octagonal in plan with trapezoid sides, and pilasters framing three main and two minor arched entrance ways. The pilasters are fluted, being topped by a fluted semi-circular capital. The arches are topped by a double band of floral vines, which is continued all around the top of the ground floor, ending with a parapet (*chajja*). Empty spaces were filled with more low-reliefs of creepers and flower vases. Some of them even depict faunal life in the form of elephants, cattle and monkeys on branches. Clearly, these motifs show similarities with Arabesque patterns, and could be the result of Islamic contact from the north of India.

KARENG GHAR



The Kareng Ghar (literally meaning “The Palace”) was one of the grandest of Ahom building ventures. It is presumed to be the royal household of the Ahom Kings, and is located in a region today known as the Gargaon (meaning the “city of ramparts”; “Gar”: Rampart, “Gaon”: village). The city was established as capital of the Ahom Kingdom by Suklengmung in the 15th century, who built a palace here with wood and mud masonry. The present structure was built by King RājeswarSingha in 1750 CE. It survives in almost complete form today, with two major stories over ground and a third and fourth levels to maintain symmetry and also probably act as observation points, as there have found traces of watch towers. There were three more underground levels no longer in existence, which were used for evacuation during emergencies. The over ground structure is pyramidal, a form not usually chosen for building activity in the Indian subcontinent. What is interesting to the present discussion is the various stylistic influences that can be found in many corners of the palace that speak of borrowings from the mainland, and heavily from Islamic stylistics. The use of Islamic pointed arches, fluted pilasters with capital decoration, use of squinches and pendentives at the corners and the continuous vine motif – all point to borrowed stylistic traditions from the Indian mainland.

SHIVA DOUL TEMPLE COMPLEX



The strongest testimony to the process of Hinduisation of the Ahom rulers comes from a temple complex built during 1734 CE, by the queen of King SivaSingha. The complex comprises of three major temples (or “dols”, which probably is a derivative of the Orissan term to categorise temples as “deuls”), and a lake called the “*Borpukhuri*”. The tallest in the complex, the one dedicated to *Siva*, stands at 104 feet and was originally capped by an 8 feet high golden *kalasa*. The present structure comprises of a roofed *mandapa*, an *antarāla*, and a *garbha-griha* topped by the *sikhara*. The sculptural and relief contents of both the inner and outer walls depict various icons from the Hindu pantheon – *Vaishnava*, *Saiva* and *Sakta*. There are well-preserved reliefs of *MahisasuraMardini*, *Ganesa* and *Kartikeya* on the inner and outer walls. All constructions of King RudraSingha (father of PramattaSingha) including the Biadyanath Sivadol , Phakuadol, RangNath Sivadol, Keshabarai Vishnudol etc. were of made of brick and he hired an architect called Ghanashyam from the Indian mainland for this purpose. Traditional natural colours were used to colour the patterns borrowed from the Islamic stylistic canon.



THINK ABOUT IT:

1. Describe the emergence of Ahoms as a tribe.
2. How did Kareng ghar reflect the culture of Ahom tribe?
3. What is the significance of Rang Ghar?
4. Explain the administrative division of Ahoms.

1. Write a diary entry about a day in the life of a Banjara.
2. Ask students to research news reports about tribes.
3. On a map of India ask students to locate major tribes found in India today.

PROJECT for STUDENTS

1. Divide the class into groups (each group to have 6 students)
2. Each group may be assigned work on one tribe- location, history, population, literacy levels, educational development, economic activity, religious beliefs, status of women, fairs and festivals, dances and food.
3. Each group will perform a folk dance of the tribal group they have been assigned.
4. Each group will be graded.

URLs

1. https://www.google.co.in/search?hl=en&site=img&tbm=isch&source=hp&biw=1360&bih=667&q=ahom+society&oq=ahom+society&gs_l=img.3..0i24.1188.3559.0.4322.12.7.0.5.5.0.229.838.0j2j2.4.0....0...1ac.1.64.img..3.9.838...0j0i5i30.CEZPFbNzu_M#hl=en&tbs=sur:fc&tbm=isch&q=rang+ghar&imgrc=ZxeYLFA2ihokFM%3A
2. https://www.google.co.in/search?hl=en&site=img&tbm=isch&source=hp&biw=1360&bih=667&q=ahom+society&oq=ahom+society&gs_l=img.3..0i24.1188.3559.0.4322.12.7.0.5.5.0.229.838.0j2j2.4.0....0...1ac.1.64.img..3.9.838...0j0i5i30.CEZPFbNzu_M#hl=en&tbs=sur:fc&tbm=isch&q=KARENG+ghar&imgrc=CVDKJ4z8uc33RM%3A
3. https://www.google.co.in/search?hl=en&site=img&tbm=isch&source=hp&biw=1360&bih=667&q=ahom+society&oq=ahom+society&gs_l=img.3..0i24.1188.3559.0.4322.12.7.0.5.5.0.229.838.0j2j2.4.0....0...1ac.1.64.img..3.9.838...0j0i5i30.CEZPFbNzu_M#hl=en&tbs=sur:fc&tbm=isch&q=shiva+dol+temple+complex&imgrc=1mjmiu1GLcPxZM%3A