

Essay on  
'Lachit Borphukan'  
(The Great Warrior of Assam)

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Introduction :- ~~As~~ There are times of crisis in the history of all nations. Assam also faced a similar situation in the sixth decade of the seventeenth century. It is at such a time of national shame and secrecy that three great personalities appeared on the scene, viz. Chakradhwaj Singha, the great King; Lachit Borphukan, the great General, and Aton Borphukan, the great Prime Minister. The inspiring determination of Chakradhwaj Singha, the incomparable bravery of Lachit Borphukan and the unique wisdom of Aton Borphukan were the forces that soon restored the glory of Assam as an Independent Kingdom.

Like Father, Like Son :- Not much is known about the early life of Lachit Borphukan. He hailed from the Lakhurakher clan, which was one of the oldest of the Ahom clans. He was born to Keenti Moran and Momai Jamuli Borbaruah on 24<sup>th</sup> November 1622 at Charai-deo in Assam. His father, Momai Jamuli Borbaruah was the first Borbaruah of Upper Assam and Commander-in-Chief of the Ahom Army under Pratap Singha. His father rose from

the very humble position of a household servant to the position of an army general and became the most trusted and one of the most important members of the royal cabinet. As the son of such an important noble, Lachit had the advantage of a good upbringing and was duly trained in the martial arts.

As a young man, he is said to have fought against Mir Jemla's forces in and around Gargaon. Lachit had worked in various capacities as Officer-in-Charge of the royal stables and the royal palanquins before being finally appointed as the Chief of Army.

There is an interesting story about Lachit's appointment as Army Chief. Chakradhwaj Singha, the King, had already known the merits of Lachit and had decided to make him the Commander-in-Chief. But to test his sense of honour, Chakradhwaj employed a servant to remove Lachit's turban in royal court. Lachit nearly killed the servant out of anger and by showing the right kind of indignation at the loss of honour, he duly passed the test. From his early career, Lachit had proved his unflinching sense of duty, which he inherited from

his father.

The Retrieving of Guwahati:- Lachit was appointed as Borphukan by King Chakradhwaj Singha. He was entrusted to lead the Ahom Army to liberate Guwahati from Mughals. As the new commander-in-chief, he devoted himself fully to the task of raising and training up a strong army. The task was accomplished with great speed. The new general lost no time in driving out the alien forces under Syed Feroz Khan from Lower Assam. Feroz Khan and many others were taken captive and Guwahati was free once again in 1667.

The Battle of Saraighat:- Lachit Borphukan is widely believed to be one of the best warriors in Assam history for his exemplary leadership in the 1671 Battle of Saraighat that thwarted a powerful aggression by the Mughal forces under the command of Ramsingh I to take over Ahom Kingdom.

Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor of Delhi, upon being informed of the 1667 defeat at Guwahati, sent a massive army of 30,000 infantry and 18,000 cavalry under Raja Ramsingh to conquer Guwahati once again. Lachit

Bosphukan, on the other hand, worked very hard day and night, and personally supervised all the preparations for meeting the challenge. He was an uncompromising taskmaster and is said to have chopped off his uncle's head for the negligence of duty with the famous words, "My uncle is not greater than my country."

Guwahati was chosen as the chief point for opposing the enemy and ramparts were erected at strategic places. Intermittent fighting on land and water continued for nearly two years during 1669 and 1670, but Ramsingh failed to break through the strong Ahom defense. The Ahoms, however, suffered a serious setback at Alaboi where Ramsingh's forces ambushed an Ahom regiment and killed ten thousand of them on a single day.

The decisive battle was, however, fought at Saraighat on the water of the Brahmaputra in the early part of 1671. Lachit Bosphukan was ailing at that time and Ramsingh wanted to take advantage of the situation. Ramsingh had nearly succeeded in breaking through the naval defense of the Ahoms. But, even with high fever in his body,

Lachit got himself carried to his battle-boat and inspired such courage among his soldiers that Ramsingh's forces were routed in no time. Ramsingh had to accept defeat and left Assam on 5 April 1671.

Lachit Borphukan, unfortunately, died on 25 April 1672, a year after leading the Ahoms to the famous victory at the Battle of Saraighat due to illness.

Legend and Legacy :- On February 25, 2022, our President Ram Nath Kovind kickstarted the 400<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary celebrations of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Ahom General Lachit Borphukan. He laid the foundation stone of a 150 foot bronze statue of Bir Lachit Borphukan, a war museum and other facilities at his memorial (Samadhi) at Hollongapar in Jorhat, and the war memorial of the Battle of Alaboi at Dadara in Kamrup. The war memorial "Alaboi Ranakshetra" will be built to honour the valor of Bir Lachit Borphukan and his 10,000 troops martyred at Alaboi, Kamrup. The memorial campus of 25 acres will also feature a 100 foot long "Hengdang" (Ahom sword) along with the statue.

Lachit Borphukan's bravery and

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tales of patriotism remained confined to the state of Assam for almost three centuries until the nation was introduced to the great general on November 14, 2000, when his statue was unveiled at the National Defense Academy in Khadakvasla, near Pune in Maharashtra by Lt. Gen. S.K. Sinha (Retd) PVSM, the then governor of Assam. Sinha ji is responsible for initiating the process of getting Lachit Borphukan his due from the nation.

Lachit Divas:- On November 24, each year Lachit Divas is celebrated in Assam as a state holiday to commemorate the heroism of the great general Lachit Borphukan and the victory of the Assamese Army (Ahom Army) at the Battle of Saraighat.

Lachit Borphukan Gold Medal:- Ever since 1999, the National Defense Academy (NDA) has been conferring the best passing cadet with the Lachit Borphukan Gold Medal.

Mahabir Lachit Award:- An Award is presented to the notable personalities of Assam by the Jai Ahom Juba Parishad.

Lachit Borphukan's Maidam:- His maidam was constructed in his memory at Jorhat, Assam, by Swargadeo Udayaditya Singha in 1672.

Conclusion :- For deep patriotism, bravery, dutifulness and determined leadership, Lachit remains an unrivalled hero in the history of Assam like Shivaji, his Maharashtraian contemporary. Lachit succeeded in restoring and upholding the freedom of his country and his people in the teeth of opposition from the mighty Mughal Army. No wonder, Lachit Borphukan has become a symbol of Assamese patriotism.

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Thank  
You!

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