

LACHIT BORPHUKAN

Lachit Borphukan was born to Momai Tamuli who later rose to become the first Borbarua (Governor of Upper Assam and Commander-in-chief of the Ahom Army). This enabled Lachit Borphukan to enjoy a comfortable upbringing. His father arranged for his education in Humanities, Scriptures and Military Science and as he grew up, he was given positions of great responsibilities.

Lachit Borphukan is best remembered for his extraordinary victory against the Mughal Army headed by Ram Singh in the battle of Saraighat. Like Shivaji, Lachit Borphukan also fought relentlessly to curb the expansion of the Mughal Empire in Assam. Lachit Borphukan was the commander in the battle of Saraighat which was fought in the year 1671 AD. between the Mughals and the Ahom Kingdom on the Brahmaputra river at Saraighat, now in Guwahati.

Lachit's patriotism and devotion to his land is best described by the battle of Saraighat where he even went to the extent of beheading his own uncle saying "Mur momai deshot koi dangor nohoi" for the sake of his land. During the preparation for the battle, he ordered an earthen wall for fortification to be constructed within one night and employed his maternal uncle as the supervisor.

Late in the night when Lachit came for inspection, he found that the work was not progressing satisfactorily. When asked for an explanation, his uncle tried to cite tiredness at which negligence of duty. Lachit Borphukan became so furious that he beheaded his uncle on the spot saying "My uncle is not greater than my country". The barrier was completed within that night and the remains of the fortification are still known as "Momai Kota Garh" or "The Fortification where the uncle was beheaded".

In spite of his illness, Lachit had himself carried on a boat and with seven boats accompanying him advanced headlong against the Mughal fleet. "If you (the soldiers) want to flee then flee". The king has given me a task here and I will do it well. Let the Mughals take me away. You report to the King that his general fought well following his orders. This had an electrifying effect on his soldiers. They rallied behind him and a desperate battle ensued on the Brahmaputra. The Ahoms in their small boats encircled the bigger but less maneuverable Mughal boats. The river got littered with clashing boats and drowning soldiers.

But this great general of the Ahom was finally defeated by illness that killed him very soon after the victory at the battle of Saraighat.

Lachit Borphukan's last remains lies in rest at the Lachit Maidam built in 1672 by Swargadeo Udayaditya Singha at Hulungapara 16 KM from Jorhat. On 24th November every year Lachit Divas is celebrated in Assam as a state holiday to commemorate the heroism of the great general Lachit Borphukan and the Assamese Army at the battle of Saraighat.

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