APPENDIX - III

The Memorial of Raja Bhairabendra Narayan Bhup of Bijni.

Bijni Raj and Cooch Behar
are remnants of Eastern and
Western Koch Kingdom respectively,
both having a common ancestor
Biswa Sing who founded the Koch
Kingdom.

The Bijni Raj family is very ancient, dating from
early part of 16th Century. The Bijni is really what remains
of what was once the Eastern Koch Kingdom which extended
over a large territory comprising of the Parganas Bijni,
Habraghat, Khuntaghat as well as what is now the Mangaldoi
Sub-Division, the Dist. of Kamrup and also country between
the old course of the Brahmaputra and Garo Hills. The
Western Koch Kingdom has survived in the shape of the
Native State of Cooch Behar.

The Koch Kingdom was founded by one Biswa Sing,
the common ancestor of the holders of Cooch Behar and
Bijni early in the 16th Century.

Upto the time of Maharaja Parikhit Narayan (1603-
1614) the Rajas of Bijni were rulers of the independent
Eastern Koch Kingdom. But the Maharaja Parikhit Narayan was beaten by the Moghuls with the result that his territory as far as Barnadi to the east was annexed to the Moghul Emperor and ultimately he submitted to the authority of the Moghul Emperor. This was followed by series of misfortunes to the Bijni Raj which was unable to repel the attack of the Ahoms from the East and that of the Bhutias from North. During the minority of Maharaja Chandra Narayan the Ahoms occupied a part of his territory. But subsequently the Bijni Raj having sought the help of Moghul Emperor, Raja Man Singha was sent to recover the territories lost to the Ahoms, who entered into a treaty in 1638 with the Ahoms delimiting the boundaries between the Moghul Empire and Ahoms, leaving Kamrup to the Ahoms, while Bijni Raj remained within the Moghul territory and the Raja thereof became a tributary Chief under the Moghul Emperor. Then after during the absence of Raja Sib Narayan in Dehi the Bhutias invaded Nij Bijni, within which the capital of the Bijni State lay and set up one Chatur Sing the king there. Raja Sib Narayan however ultimately succeeded in driving away Chatur Sing and in concluding peace with Bhutan promising to pay an annual tribute in kind to Bhutan in respect of Nij Bijni only. He also succeeded in securing a Sanad from the Moghul Emperor on payment of a tribute to the Emperor as the Rajas of Bijni proved
to be useful allies to the Moghuls. During his reign he was treacherously deprived of Pargana Mechpara with the result that Bijni Raj remained in possession of the Parganas Nij Bijni, Habraghat and Khuntaghat covering an area of more or less 1350 Sq. miles.

Practically speaking although entirely the whole of the tributary State of Bijni lay within the limits of Moghuls territory, the Rajas thereof being border Chieftains were forced to pay tribute to Bhutan as well as to the Moghul Emperor failed to protect their distant allies. The descendants of Raja Sib Narayan have held the Bijni Raj on no other title than that evidenced by the two agreements with the Bhutias and the Moghul Emperor but the effect of the duel agreements was no other than to make the Rajas of Bijni tributaries of the Moghuls in respect of the entire territory.

British Government used to receive tribute since acquisition of Dewany in 1765 and Dooars was annexed as a result of Bhutan War in 1865.

The early records under the British Rule viz., from the time of acquisition of Dewany in 1765 down to the time of the permanent Settlement in 1793 clearly show that Bijni was recognised as Tributary State and not as a Zamindary.
Early records under British Rule from 1765-1793:

1) There has been no permanent settlement with the Raj of Bijni in 1793 and no revenue was settled in accordance with the Decennial settlement regulations.

2) The Sayer Regulation of 1790 did not apply to Bijni as it was not a Zamindary; the Sayer Income was left in fact to the Rajas of Bijni upto the Permanent Settlement.

3) No Zamindar has Fishery Rights on navigable rivers except by grant from the Government. But on account of the Tributary character, the Bijni Raj has always been recognised as entitled to the Fishery Rights to Brahmaputra, Manas and other navigable rivers lying within the ambit of the Raj without any express grant of the fishery at any time.

4) Instead of revenue the Bijni Raj pays tribute.

5) Succession to the Raj does not follow the simple rule of inheritance as was the case in permanently settled Zamindary, every case of succession had to be reported to and recognised by the permanent authority as in the case of tributary States.
The Bijni Rajas long after 1793 exercised Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction.

The Revenue Survey operations in 1849 were not carried out with the Bijni Raj on the express ground that the Raja of Bijni as a Tributary Chief has a right to alter the boundaries of his territories. Up to the end of the 18th century no question was ever raised about the Tributary State of the Bijni Raj and no question of treating the Parganas Habraghat and Khuntaghat as separate from Nij Bijni was ever hinted.

But in later records one finds a different note—

(a) Single entity of the Bijni Raj is questioned and an attempt is made to treat the parganas Habraghat and Khuntaghat as permanently settled Zamindaries within British Territory.

(b) Nij Bijni is treated as a semi independent State outside British territory in the Sanad granted to Raja Amrit Narayan. In pursuance of this he is called the Raja of Bijni and the Zamindar of Habraghat and Khuntaghat. The Sanads granted to the Rajas of Bijni were untraceable at that time and important records were in a confused state and the Govt. Officials at that time dealing with the Rajas of Bijni, who were border Chieftains, were quite in ignorance of the real history and status of the House of Bijni.
The death of Raja Amrit Narayan Bhup in his independent territory—Nij Bijni outside British territory in 1853 living no son and subsequent forcible assumption of the management of the part of his State; that is Habraghat and Khuntaghát by the then Court of Wards inspite of the protests of the Rans of Bijni are turning points in the history of the Bijni House. The evils of duel authority were there and manifested themselves in more virulence during such administration. The Court of Wards began to apply laws and regulations to the Raj, in utter ignorance the officials of the Court of Wards, which held the position of the State did incalculable wrong to the Raj by submitting reports which influenced the Supreme Government against the Raj.

Bijní is described as the "Protected State of Bijní" in the Report of Sir Ashle Eden and Hamilton's Gazeteer.

While the Court of Wards was incharge of Parganas Habraghat and Khuntaghát on behalf of Raja Kumud Narayan the most momentous event in the history of the Bijní Raj took place. In 1864 the Government for the purpose of protection of Chiefs dependent allies and its subjects, resolved to annex the Dooars permanently into the British territory and promulgated Proclamation and an expedition was led into Bhutias. In the following year a treaty was
concluded by which Bhutan War was terminated and Bhutan ceded the Dooars to the British Govt. By the Proclamation of 1864 the British Govt. promised to respect all rights of Chiefs and others if they kept peace and help the British. At this critical moment Raja Kumud Narayan was a ward of Court in respect of Habraghat and Khuntaghat and Rani Opeshwari was exercising the full sovereign right as his guardian at Nij Bijni and in spite of her protest the Government of the time brushed aside the tributary rights of the Bijni Raj and purported to make a temporary settlement of a portion of the Nij Bijni only and on behalf of Raja Kumud Narayan, settlement was taken by the Court of Wards for seven years from 1869-70 on the pretext that Nij Bijni was a revenue paying Sāmindary under Bhutan. British Government disregarded the single entity of the Bijni State comprising at that time of parganas Habraghat, Khuntaghat and Nij Bijni covering an area of more or less 1350 Sq. miles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Pargana Habraghat</td>
<td>212126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) &quot;A&quot; Mahal within the above Pargana</td>
<td>12409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Pargana Khuntaghat</td>
<td>395684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Pargana Bijni</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Under temporary settlement</td>
<td>130000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Forest area declared Govt. Forests</td>
<td>8037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Uncultivated area excluded from settlement</td>
<td>10145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>859701 Acres</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since the death of Amrit Narayan Bhup in 1853, there had been serious disputes over succession to the Raj one after another and they were aggravated by the simultaneous intervention of both British and Bhutan Government.

Raja Bhairabendra Narayan Bhup obtained possession of the Raj only on 1st October 1944 from the Court of Wards after a series of harassing litigation. The matter was raised when it could have been raised for the first time by Rani Opeswari but she failed to make herself heard from the distant Nij Bijni outside the British territory and further she did not live long to press her cause. Raja Kumud Narayan lived for a short time and after his death the affairs of Bijni were in turmoil. The state has been seized and possessed by the RANIS, who under the family custom had not a shadow of title to hold the property. They successfully kept Bhairabendra Narayan's father who was the rightful owner out of possession by sheer force. Thereafter the RANIS were fighting amongst themselves until 1891 when Rani Abhayeswaree obtained possession of the territory which she claimed to hold only as a widow's State during her life time. After the death of Rani Abhayeswaree in 1918 there was a fresh crop of litigations while the Court of Wards possessed the State.
by settling up the lunatic Raja Jogendra Narayan as the successor of Rani Abhayaswaree by virtue of nomination made by her. The litigation terminated ultimately in Oct. 1830 in a compromise under which Raja Bhairabendra Narayan's right as successor to Raja Jogendra Narayan was declared and established and this was further confirmed by an Act of the Assam Legislature in 1931 being the Bijni Succession Act. Thereafter and even after the death of Raja Jogendra Narayan in 1937 the Court of Wards continued in possession of the Raj, first on behalf of Raja Jogendra Narayan and after his death on behalf of Raja Bhairabendra Narayan until Sept. 1944 when the later obtained possession.

But the vast territories of Maharaja Narnarayan, the Western Koch Kingdom still survive in the State of Cooch Behar while the Eastern Koch Kingdom comprising Bijni State has, by a series of wrongs and errors been reduced to the present unfortunate position. The nature of the tenure by which Cooch Behar Rajas held the territories and their history in the early stages was very similar to those of Bijni. Both were independent kingdoms and both became tributaries of the Moghuls after the grant of the Dewani; both Bijni and Cooch Behar have been paying tributes. It is only by a Chapter of accident and
misfortunes that the Bijni Raj family has been allowed to slide down into the present position while the other branch of the same family equally descended from Maharaja Narnarayan still remains there States as a Tributary Chief, though even to this day Rajas of Bijni like their cousins of Cooch Behar retained their title of "Bhup" and pay "Tribute".

The Bijni Raj—a remanant of the Koch Kingdom—even today reflects the distinct and unit culture of the Koch tribe.

The past history of the Raj discloses that their ancestors were always loyal to the Crown and rendered all possible help to the Government. Within their power and resources. Besides, they were treated always as allies and friends to the Crown.

The above Memorial was submitted by Raj Bhairabendra Narayan to His Excellency Lord Louis Mountbattain, Governor General of India, Through His Excellency Sir Md. Saleh Akbar Hydari, Governor of Assam.