



THE EMINENT POETS OF ODISHA AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS ODISHI MUSIC: A STUDY

Writer: Dr. Niladri Kalyan Das

ABSTRACT

Around the first century B.C., Odissi music was possibly known as Gandharb Veda, which was popularised in the Kharavela Yuga (a great king of Odisha). Charya Geetika (poems of Buddhist literature) written between 7th and 12th century, Bharat Muni's Natya Shastra written in 2nd to 4th century AD. (referred to the Odra Magadhi style of music and dance), Sangeet Ratnakar (Odra Magadhi style of Music), Odia Charyagitika by different Odia Sidhacharyas in 7th to 11th century, Gita Govinda by Sri Jayadeva in 12th century, Sangita Sara by Hari Nayak in 14th century to 15th century, Rasavaridhi by Brundavan Das in 15th century, Odia Mahabharata by Sarala Das in 15th century, Rasakallola by Dinakrushna Das in 16th century, etc. were authentic manuscripts of Odissi music.

Keywords: Mathura Mangala, Manasiksa, Chautisa, Chhanda, Odishi, Odia

Bhakta Charana Das

Bhakta Charana Das was a major poet of medieval Odisha and the name is a celebrated name in Odia literature, born around the year 1729 and lived up to 1813. One cannot be very exact about the years because there is no evidence about them. Bhakta Charana Das was born roughly during the decades of the 18th century, lived quite long a very old age and passed away sometime in the first decades of 19th. He was also a contemporary of both

Dinakrishna Das, the writer of ‘Rasakallola’ and of Upendra Bhanja, the king of kings in the real of Odia ornate poetry.

His family name was Bairagi Charana Pattanaik, which suggests that he came from a Kayastha lineage, Bairagi Charana is the name, which Bhakta Charana has used in the colophons of cantons in “Mathura Mangala”, his magnum opus, though he seems to have given it up his other works. He never, in his works, told us anything about his parents, as is the way with those who renounce the world and take to a monastic order.

Bhakta Charana had his early education in the most traditional way. After the elementary level, those who aspired for higher learning had to sit with teachers of Sanskrit and go in for further education. Those few again who aspired for the king's court and his patronage had to take learning more seriously and delve into wider areas of philosophical and poetic studies.

The works of Bhakta Charana das : Bhakta Charana Das did not write very much, but whatever discovered till now has earned him a distinguished place in Odia literature. ‘Mathura Mangala’ is the best known and most appreciated among his works. Besides that we have ‘Manasiksha, Manabodha’ Chautisa and Kalakalebara Kanhai in Chautisa style. “Gopamangala’ is another of his works.

His written works reveal that Bhakta Charana Das had not only studied the Bhagavata and the Bhagabata Gita but also have access to the sacred ‘Puranas’ and the ‘Samhitas’. Bhakta Charana as a writer appeared when ornate poetry was very popular. The literary firmament in Odisha during his time bore a galaxy of birth out talents to the magnitude of Dinakrishna Das , and Upendra Bhanja who is now exalted as Kavi Samrat the greatest and the most celebrated among the Kavya writers of the ‘riti’ age.

‘Manasiksha’ is a treatise with the essential tenets of the Chaitanya cult and faith. It is written in a lucid style in two line stanzas of nine letters each.

‘Mathura Mangala’ is the magnum opus of Bhakta Charana. It is also the most voluminous. One cannot claim for that matter that his other works, though much smaller bulk, are in any way inferior to Mathura Mangala. Mathura Mangala consists of thirty chapters of Chandas as they called by the poet.

Manabodha Chautisa is a song written in a tone to bring consolation and seem to show a way to those who think that the world is too much with them and wish to assure themselves that there is an escape. Kalakalebara Kanhai was written in a letter phase, when Bhakta Charana had already made a choice and has belonged to the Krishna cult and the Chaitanya fold.

Bhakta Charana once arrived at Puri and went to stay in one of these Monasteries sanctified by those old associations. There he breathed his last in 1813 on the 11th day of second fortnight in the month of Kartika.

Bhima Bhoi :

Bhima Bhoi was one of the popular saint-poets in Odisha. Historical records do not tell us much about the exact date of birth, not the full of detailed outlines of his life and whether he was blind from childhoods or not. According to some scholars he was born in Sambalpur district in a village called Kanakadapara near the sub divisional headquarter Raikhol in a poor Kandha family sometimes in the middle of the 19th century. There is a legend that a Kondha couple named Daura and Gurubari picked up an orphan boy from the forest and named him. Bhima Bhoi was born in a village called Joranda in the Dhenkanal ex-state and that his name was Bhima Sen Bhoi. Arakhita Das and he was blind from birth.

Dr. Mayadhar Mansingh in his History of Odia literature mentions that Bhima lost his eye-sight in his early childhood and this was perhaps due to a virulent attack of small pox.

He was exceptionally intelligent and singularly receptive to new ideas. He heard Jagannatha Das's Bhagabata and other Puranas recited in many villages, he retained in his wonderfully powerful memory. It would be proper to assume that Bhima Bhoi had a talent for poetry and a command over the local tradition and the idiom and language of the local tribal and non-tribal people even before his conversion to mahima cult. He had elements of a fast oral poet in him and was thoroughly conversant with the life-styles, hopes and aspirations of the local people.

Bhima Bhoi the saint poet does sometimes speak in the voice of a revolutionary. It is however, the voice of a revolutionary, who intensely concerned with the redemption of society and the welfare of all. In 1862, he seems to have met Mahima Gosain in the neighboring village, Gramadiha and converted into the Mahima faith. Mahima Gosain is said to have attained his siddhi or final realization in 1982 near the Kapilasa hills of Denkanal and thereafter started out on his missionary purpose of spreading the message of Mahima Dharma among the people. Stuti Chintamani is perhaps the most important poetical work of Bhima Bhoi. It is a collection of hundred Bolis. Boli is a technical term in Odia. Such Boli consists of 20 stanzas of two lines each. This stuti chintamani is a collection of 2000 stanzas and 4000 lines. It contains some autobiographical, personal and confessional verses as also a description of the degeneration of social values. It ends with a panegyric to the Alekha cult an exhortation to suffering humanity to seek the grace of the Alekha and his Mahima. A reading of Stuti Chintamani and Bhajanamala leaves one no doubt of the stature of Bhima Bhoi as a great poet. These are signs of a mature poet and Bhima Bhoi certainly was one.

One of other work's is 'Brahma Nirupana Gita' of Bhima Bhoi. He attempts to define the nature and qualities of Brahma. In Astaka Bihari Gita, Bhima Bhoi has given a call to all humanity and particularly the bhaktas to lead a pure, austere life and to put their mind and heart completely under divine dispensation.

'Chautisa Madhu Chakra' is another major work of Bhima Bhoi. Chautisa is a celebrated poetic form of Odia literature. In this form, Bhima Bhoi has experimented with the capacity of Odia language to a very fine degree. In the normal Chautisa form, the stanzas are arranged in such a way that the first word of each line begins with a letter as per the order of letters in the Odia alphabet. These Chautisas are generally composed in plain and simple language and are often couched in Navakhyari Chhanda.

"Adi-Anta-Gita" is almost a technical treatise where the secrets of the body have been sought to be explained in metaphysical terms. The essential features of a devoted wife also been described and the coming together of man and woman in sex-union sought to be explained in metaphysical terms. The essence of sexual activity and the relationship

between man and woman presented as parallel to what happens to the soul, the individual being in its quest for supreme deliverance by surrendering itself to the Lord.

It said that Bhima used to compose four prayer songs or bhajans in one Raga at a times. His collected Bhajanas set in different Ragas and Chants number three hundred ten (310)

Bhajans occupy a very important place in Bhima Bhoi's writings. These bhajanas were meant to be sung either individual or in a group, sometimes to the accompaniment of musical instruments. Mostly they are based upon the delineation of spiritual experience in simple and on adored style. Sometimes they are long and are largely lyrical. In the evolution of Odia literature, bhajanas occupy a very important place. They have generally classified into two groups, Saguna and Nirguna. Bhima Bhoi died in 1894 ahead he was nearly 45 or 46.

Jagannatha Das :

Jagannatha Das was born in a village named Kapileswarpura about six miles from the present Puri town. His father was Bhagabana Das and mother Padmavati. Bhagabana Das was Brahmin and socially respected scholar in Sanskrit and used to recite and explain the Sanskrit Ramayan, Mahabharata and eighteen Puranas for the benefit of the public of the village and its neighborhood. Purusottama Deva had conferred on him the title of 'PURANA Panda' for this.

In Jagannatha Das's own works, one finds virtually nothing about his life except his name. nor does he write much about his times his contemporaries or contemporaneous society. The precise year of Jagannatha Das's birth according to the Christian era is somewhat uncertain. Dibara Das the author of 'Jagannatha Caritamata', only mentions that he was born in the month of Bhadrav, in the bright fortnight of the moon and under Anuradha Naksatra around noon on a Wednesday. He also mentions that Jagannath was eighteen at the time of Chaitanya's first visit to Sri Khetra for which now the generally accepted date is 1509 A.D.. Hence, Jagannatha must have been born in 1490 or 1491 A.D. The eminent historian of Odia literature, Pandit Surya Narayan Das, however, puts it is the year 1487 basing his arguments on materials relating to the birth of the Pannchasakhas as enshrined in

Achyutananda's Udaya-Kahani. Thus, Jagannatha was born sometimes between 1487 and 1491 A.D. It is certain that he was a very bright child and had acquired high proficiency in the readings of the Vedas Sanskrit Ramayana and Mahabharata, Nyaya and Vadanta texts etc.

Dibakara Das also refers to Jagannatha's growing interest in spiritual sadhana, his readings in philosophical texts and the time spent with Sri Chaitanya. The Odia Bhagavata is remarkable not nearly for enshrining high spiritual of philosophical values; it is also in excelled for the sheer energy of its lyricism and its deep emotive patterns that stir human heart. Like all great poetic creations.

Sisu Ananta Das mentions that Jagannatha had around 3600 sisyas of whom 12 were quite prominent. Jagannatha breathed his last in the 60th year of life. The day said to be the 7th day in the bright fortnight of the month of Magha in 1550A.D. Thus ended a life of dedication. He had ushered in significant religious, literary and linguistic transformations on Odisha.

Jagannatha Das's Bhagabata is not merely a poetical work. It is to the Odias perhaps more than what the bible is to the Christian world. There scarcely on Odia village where at least one complete set to the Bhagabata, worshipped or a home where it is not been known listened to read and recited.

Works of Jagannatha Das: among all the writings of Jagannatha Das, the Bhagabata enjoys without doubt the most important position. In fact, if this were the only work, which the poet had composed in his entire poetic career, this would have ensured immortality for him. That despite the fact technically this supposed to only the only the Odia version of the celebrated Sanskrit classic. In translating the Sanskrit Bhagabata into Odia, Jagannatha Das retained the basic thematic development of the original. He did not omit or modify very much. The odia Bhagabata an unsurpassed document in the quest for spirituality as can essential dimension of the Hindu view of life. The Odia Bhagabata is the finest expression of this quest and its tradition has regulated and influenced Odisha's culture, social ethics and value systems ever since. Summing up one may say that Odia culture is indeed Bhagabata culture.

Reference

1. Panigrahi, KC, 1976, Odia Sahityare Gita Govindara Prabandha in sarala sahityare Aitihāsika chitra in odia language.
2. [Walter R. Borg](#) , Applying Educational Research: How to Read, Do, and Use Research to Solve Problems of Practice ,Pearson, 2013
3. Rajguru Dr. Satyanarayan (1986) Odishara Sanskrutiya Itihas, odisha Sahitya Academy, Bhubaneswar.
4. Rajguru Dr. Satyanarayan (1985-2012), Odishara Itihas vol-I & II Granthamandira, Binodbehari, Cuttack-2
5. Brajabandhu M 2017: Chief Editor, History of Odisha, a comprehensive compendium on the history and culture of Odisha, <http://www.historyofodisha.in/>
6. Das, B. (1985). Orissa: Social Cultural and Religious Aspects. Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan.
7. Das, H, 1981: "*Culture Department*". Orissaculture.gov.in. Retrieved 2012-05-26.
8. Dash KC, May be unpublished, Internet uploaded work, retrieved, Gita Govinda of Jayadeva and the temple of Purushottama- Jagannatha, Former Reader in History, C- 3/2, Bhubaneswar- 14, Odisha.
9. Das, M.N. (1977.): Sidelights on History and Culture of Orissa, Cuttack.
10. Das R, (1989, 1996, 2002, 2015 Eds.): Sangita Sangya, Publisher, Ramahari Das Odissi Gurukul Trust, Badahata, Bira Govindapur, Sakhigopal, Puri, City Print, Infocity Area, Bhubaneswar-751024.