

The Five Jewels of Laxmana Sena

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Jayadeva was one of the greatest poets of India and an unrivalled master of erotic religious lyrical poetry. The poet himself abstained from mentioning anything about his birth place except that he was born at place called Kenduvilwa. As Dr. N.S.R. Ayengar has said “The ancient Indian Poets never recorded anything about their age, place of birth and time. This, one feels, was partly because of their modesty and partly because they perhaps never thought it worthwhile, since they never had such narrow, parochial attitude to life. Perhaps they considered themselves as sons of India writing in the best of Indian languages - Sanskrit”. We are proud of them as they are to the exclusion of their provincial identities. But distortions of history need critical scrutiny.

One of the hypothesis on which the whole superstructure of the arguments in favour of the birth place of poet Jayadeva’s being in Bengal is that a stone or wooden slab bearing the names of Govardhana, Sarana, Jayadeva, Umapati and Dhoyi was said to have been fixed on the wall of Laxmana Sena’s assembly hall. This was discovered by two Vaishnava Saints - Rupa and Sanatana in the first part of sixteenth century.

This discovered verse is quoted below
“Govardhanasca Sarano Jayadeva Umapatih.
Kavirajasca ratnani Samitau Laksmanasyaca.



Shri Harekrishna Mukhopadhyaya in his book *Birbhum Vivarana* has mentioned that Shri Rupa and Sri Sanatana had seen this sloka inscribed in the assembly hall of Laxmana Sena at Shridhama Navadwipa. Laxmana Sena’s rule in a part of Bengal had come to an end in the year 1205 when Mohammad-i-Bhaktiyar had occupied his capital and he had fled to Puri, taken refuge in Orissa, where a powerful Hindu Gajapati King of the Ganga dynasty ruled at that time. The report of this discovery by the two Goswamis comes to us after four more centuries. According to Prof. Dr. Banamali Ratha, this verse lacked authenticity of any kind and it has been accepted by the scholars as a spurious one or a hearsay.

According to Thomas E Donaldson there is no contemporary epigraphic or literacy evidence to prove that Nadiya was ever the capital

of Laxmana Sena or his forefather and successors. The grants of land and villages by the Sena Kings were always issued from Vikramapura or in the case of the later ones from Dharyagrama and Phalgugrama. No Sanskrit work written during the Sena period mentions Nadiya as the capital of Laxmana Sena.

In Pavanadutam, Dhoyi has called the capital of Sena Kings as Vijayapura. Only Tabaquet-i-Nasiri written in 1260 AD fifty five years after the collapse of the Sena rule is Nadiya, mentions Nadiya as the seat of Sena's Government. This book Tabaquet is not a historical creation as it has given Laxmana Sena a rule of eighty years and narrates fanciful stories about his birth and about the destruction of Nadiya.

Mahammad-i-Bhaktiyan destroyed thoroughly the city of Nadiya (or whichever was the capital of Laxmana Sena) and left it in total ruins. There was no trace of the palace standing. The verse was supposedly discovered in on the gates some three hundred years later by the two Goswami's Rupa and Sanatana.

According to Kedarnath Mohapatra a noted historian, "The story of the connection of the five poets with Sidhama Navadwipa originated and perhaps was circulated in the post Chaitanya period when Nadiya came to prominence due to the birth of the great reformer Sri Chaitanya in that holy place. There is little evidence literary or archaeological that the Gita Govinda was popular in Bengal period prior to the advent of Sri Chaitanya. In fact Sri Chaitanya first discovered the jewel of Gita Govinda when he visited Puri in 1509 AD and came to realise the religious significance of the work from Raya Ramananda Gajapati's administrator of Rajamohendri on the banks of the Godavari when he went on pilgrimage to the south.

According to Dr. Bhagaban Panda the verse is written in very poor Sanskrit and is a spurious one like the famous traditional verse cited describing the nine jewels of the court of Vikramaditya, also called Chandragupta-II.

The entrance of the Assembly hall of Laxmana Sena could not have existed upto the time of Rupa and Sanatan Goswami. Dense vegetation must have covered the ruins of this palace in these three hundred years. The two great Goswamis nowhere in their numerous works have mentioned anything about this so called discovery of the inscription. Their biographies never mentions this discovery. Neither the contemporaries of Sri Chaitanya who came from Nadiya nor Srichaitanya himself ever mentioned anything about Laxmana Sena once ruling over Navadwipa or about any historical ruins of his palace. No Vaisnav literature written after Sri Chaitanya has ever mentioned about this grand discovery by the two Goswamis.

This verse was most probably composed by some Pandit of poor competence in Sanskrit in the first part of 20th Century on the basis of the verse Vacha Pallavayati" which itself was a "Prakhipta' (Interpolated) sloka of Gita Govinda mentioned the four poets Dhoyi, Umapati, Dhara, Sarana and Govardhana Acharya.

To quote Dr. Bhagaban Panda, the names of these two learned Goswamis were cleverly associated with the discovery of this so called verse in Nabadwipa in order to give an air of antiquity and gain the confidence of the people. So the story of seeing this inscription on the entrance of Laxman Sena's assembly hall at Nadiya is simply imaginary and as such unacceptable.

Nowhere in the history of India or anywhere else in the world the names of Court

poets are inscribed on stone or wooden slabs fixed at the entrance of a Durbar (assembly) hall.

Pandit Ramakanta Tripathy in the year 1935 edited and published in Calcutta the famous book of Govardhan Acharya called “Arya Saptasati”. In the introduction to this book Sri Tripathy has written that this sloka “Laxmanasya Pancharatna” was found quoted in the book Raja Tarangini written by the famous Kashmiri Poet Kallahana. Kallahana had written Raja Tarangini in 1148 AD. Laxmana Sena ruled a part of Bengal from 1170 to 1205. How could Kallahana know either about the five poets or about Laxmana Sena in 1148 ? This question has been asked by M. Winternits. Therefore Pandit Tripathy has told a white lie when he said that this sloka was quoted in Raja Tarangini by Kallahana.

Thus it is established that Pandit Ramakanta Tripathy like Harekrishna Mukhopadhyaya was creating false evidence in

support of the theory that Jayadeva belonged to the court of Laxmana Sena of Bengal.

References:

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Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik in a meeting on peripheral development of Konark by Indian Oil Foundation at Secretariat on 20.4.2011.