



Jayadev - The Celebrated Saint Poet of Orissa

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Jayadev, the celebrated saint poet of Orissa, wrote his *magnum opus*, Gitagovinda, a lyrical ballad unparalleled in Sanskrit literature. Written during 12th century A.D. this piece of art depicts the immortal love of Radha-Krishna.

These love-songs of Gitagovinda created sensational impact in the minds of the then people of eastern India and could change the cultural ethos in all walks of life.

As narrated by poets and Orientalists of Eastern India, Jayadev was born at the village Kendu Vilva, a Brahmin village situated in Adaspur Panchayat of Balipatna Block, a place 37 kilometers away from Bhubaneswar, the Capital City of Orissa.

Some of the eastern Commentators and scholars have written volumes on the creativity of Jayadev which was nurtured and nourished at the Prachi Valley at the famous village Kendu Vilva where Jayadev used to worship his Lord, Madhab.

Kabiraja Narayan Das wrote "Sarbang Sundari" (in the 1307 A.D.), the Sanskrit script in which he has narrated that Jayadev the celebrated saint poet belongs to the village-Kendu Vilva. One Chandra Dutta of Mithila wrote a book on Jayadev Charita named as Bhakta Mala (in

1705 A.D.) in which he has mentioned Kendu vilva, a Brahmana-Sasan village near Jagannath Puri to be the birth place of Jayadeva. Nava Das a saint poet wrote Bhakti Mela in which Jayadev was shown to have been born in the said village in the district of Puri.

The epigraphic inscription - Prataparudra Abhilekha also indicates "Gitagovinda Seva" meaning that Jayadev's Gitagovinda was read and loved by the people of Orissa.

In the "History of Bengali Literature" written in Bengali language by Prof. Sukumar Sen the noted critic and writer of Bengal, Prof. Sen has opined that Jayadev belongs to Orissa. In the Oriental Dictionary there is mention of Jayadev belonging to Orissa. If any researcher reads the History of Sanskrit Literature written by Barada Chari, he would come across the views that Jayadev was born in Orissa and there he composed his famous devotional song Gitagovinda. Some of the devotees of Bhakti Cult expressed opinion in the book named Uttar Bharat Santha Parampara written in Hindi that Jayadev of Orissa wrote Gitagovinda.

Scholars like Prof. Barbara Miller and Prof. Thomas Donaldson have also opined that Jayadev belongs to Orissa.

If we analyse the pictorial description of nature as depicted in Gitagovinda we can well visualise that natural scenes of Gitagovinda resemble the geographical milieu of Orissa.

The erroneous opinion that Jayadev belonged to Bengal was created by one Banamali Das (1803) in his book *Jayadev Charita* and pointed out that he was the court poet of Laxman Sen. He just guessed and merely expressed opinion that Jaydev was born on the bank of Ajay river in the village Kenduli without giving any reason. In the Bengali etymological dictionary, the word Kenduli means festival. There is no such village named Kenduli and there is no epigraphical proof to substantiate this logic. This version of Banamali Das was supported emotionally by Prof. Suniti Chatterjee, the notable linguist of Bengal contrary to the opinion of literary historian Prof. Sukumar Sen. Thus this controversy started and rolled over. Thus, some section of people of Bengal fondly believed and propagated that Jayadev was born in the village Kenduli on the Bank of Ajay river in the district Birbhum. This is simply erroneous and historically and epigraphically holds no ground.

The regional propaganda in Bengali media and lately in Television serial "Saatwaa Rang" have created deep resentment among the art-loving people of Orissa who are great admirers of Jayadev - the illustrious saint poet of Orissa. Oriya people love Jayadev as they love their Lord Jagannath.

The Orissan folk art, drama, dance, sculpture and the Odissi music are greatly nurtured and flourished by lyricism and musicality of Gitagovinda.

There is also greater impact of these devotional songs of Gitagovinda on life and literature of Orissa. The lyrical poets of Orissa imbibed the spirit of devotional songs from the Gitagovinda.

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