



## The Geeta Govinda in the Shreemandira

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Poet Jayadeva's Geetagovinda has exercised deep influence on the daily rituals of the Shreemandira i.e. Shree Jagannath Temple at Puri.

There are broadly 119 classes of *sevas* (ritual services) in Shreemandira, as provided in the Record of Rights of the temple, inclusive of the Geetagovinda Seva. A brief account of the Seva is given below.

The Geetagovinda Sevak (servitor) reads out the Geetagovinda at the Jaya-Vijaya door, at the time of Chandanlagi ritual. Chandanlagi means applying of sandal paste on the Deities. This Sevak gets his remuneration for the Seva from the Jagannath Ballava and Raghaba Das Mathas (a monasteries). Since sometime past, this Seva has been discontinued for some reasons but may be revived in future.

Another seva associated with the Geetagovinda is the Bhitara Gayani Devadasi Seva. The Devadasi, a female Servitor, sings songs from the Geetagovinda, standing at the Kalahata door of the sanctum-sanctorum, just prior to the Ratripahada i.e. closing of the temple doors for

the night. Consequent upon the death of the lone Bhitara-gayani Devadasi in the year 1993, this Seva has been discontinued for the time being.



There are certain inscriptions on the western side wall of the Jaya-Vijaya door, pertaining to the period of King Prataprudra Deva (1497-1533 AD) of the Surya Dynasty. There is a royal proclamation in the inscriptions that the Devadasis and the Vaishnavas must sing songs from the Geetagovinda only before Lord Jagannath.

After Chandanlagi ritual is over, Lord Jagannath, Lord Balahhadra and Devi Subhadra are dressed up again for the Badasinghar Besha.

The Deities wear baralagi pata (silken clothes). Some lines from the Geetagovinda are woven into the texture of the clothes. Also the Deities are adorned with flower garlands, floral ornaments like floral headgear etc. This is the last Besha of the day and is very attractive to look at.

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