

Poets Mentioned in the Gitagovinda

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While introducing his immortal work of Gitagovinda, the great poet Jayadeva invokes the attention of the lovers of poetry in the following verse:

*“Yadi Harismarane sarasam mano,
Yadi vilasakalasu kutuhalam
Madhura komalakantapadavalim,
Srunu tada Jayadeva Sarasvatim.”*

(Gitagovinda — 1st Canto-3)

“If your heart fills with sublime joy at the utterance of Lord Hari’s name, if you take delight in poetry and artistic creations, endowed with soft, sweet, delicate and musical expressions of high poetical excellence, you are cordially invited to go through the verses of Jayadeva, which may be considered to have come out from the lips of Sarasvati, the Goddess of music and learning.”

In the following verses the poet appears to comment upon Umapatidhara, Sarana, Govardhana Acharya and Kaviraja Dhoyi, the king among the poets and on the poetic value of their works.

*“Vachah pallavayatyumapatidharah
Sandarvasuddhim giram,
Janite Jayadeva eva Saranah
slaghyo duruhadruteh
Srngarottarasat prameya
rachanaircharya Govardhan,*

*Shardhi kopi na bisrutah srutidharo,
Dhoyi kabiksmapatih.”*

(Gitagovinda- 1st Canto-4)

“The poet Umapatidhara composes very soft lyrics and has free flowing speech. But he does not know the use of appropriate words with depth of meaning, to influence the mood. Poet Saran renowned for subtle flowing sounds composes complicated lyrics with difficult words, which is very painful to listener. Poet Gobardhan Acharya is unrivalled master in presenting erotic art and themes. Dhoyi famed as king of poets for his musical ear has the capacity to grasp others’ lyrics quickly and to present it with additions of his own words. Jayadeva has the divine gift of pure design of words and has the felicity of diction. As such, no poet can surpass Jayadeva.”

The entire stanza appears to be an interpolation. It does not fit in the total text of the poem.

In the Gitagovinda there is no mention of these poets being under any common royal patronage. Given below are brief descriptions of the lives and achievements of these poets:-

UMAPATIDHARA

Umapatidhara was a minister of the Sena dynasty. Umapatidhara, who had composed the

Deopara Eulogy of Vijaya Sena and Umapatidhara referred to in the Gita Govinda may be one and the same person. This eulogy records the war between Vijaya Sena and Raghav Deva (AD. 1156-1170), the Ganga emperor of Kalinga and contains at the end the name of Umapatidhara. It is quite probable that this eulogy might have been composed between (A.D. 1156-1158). The 7th, 23rd, 24th and 30th slokas of this eulogy have been mentioned in the 'Sadukti Karnamrtam'. Another sloka of Umapatidhara resembling the 4th sloka of the copper plate inscription of Madhainagar has been quoted here. So it can be said that Umapatidhara was in the court of Laksmana Sena. It has been described in the 5th chapter of the 'Prabandha Chintamani' composed in A.D. 1304 that Umapatidhara, the minister of the Gauda king Laksmana Sena was very wise and intelligent. While going to explain the sloka, "Vachah pallavayati....." in his Rasa Manjari, a commentary on the Gita Govinda, Maha Mahopadhyaya Sankar Misra writes: "Umapatidhara namna Laksmanasenamatyo vachah pallavayati vistarayati" etc. So it can be accepted beyond any questioning that Umapatidhara was a minister in the court of Laksmana Sena and he was closely associated with the Sena royal family from the reign of Vijaya Sena to that of Laksmana Sena, about his literary talents in compositions there can be disputes though.

SARANA

There is only one sloka found in the Sadukti Karnamrta in praise of Sarana. No other writing on this poet has yet been discovered. There is also no authentic record on the native place of the poet and his date of birth. There is no evidence that he was a court poet of Laksmana Sena. Inclusion of only one sloka in Sadukti Karnamrta cannot be an evidence of Sarana being a court poet of Laksmana Sena.

GOVARDHANA

In his Aryasaptasati, (Published in Chawkhamba Sanskrit Series) Govardhana Acharya speaks very high of the poetic talent of Sena king Pravara Sena of Vakataka clan, the famous writer of Setubandha or Ravanabaho, Acharya Dandi, in his famous treatise on poetics known as 'Kavyadarsa' and his fiction 'Avanti Sundari Katha' speaks very high of the poetic beauty of the Setubandha of Pravara Sena. The famous scholar of Maharashtra and the commentator of Ananta Arya Saptasati 'Byangartha Deepika' supports this view when he writes:-

"Kumuda vana vadhoschandrasyaacha sodasa kalah kalayitum vaktum kartum va pakshe darsayitum senakula tilaka bhupatih setukarta pravarasena nama, Raja, Purnamasi pradosa ekah prabhuh samartha. nanyaitarthah." (18)

(Arya Saptasati of Chawkhamba Publication)

This Pravara Sena was not a king of the Sena dynasty of the Vang.

The Malava king Arjunavarma Deva (A.D. 1211-1215) has quoted only one sloka from the Arya Saptasati in his Amarusatakam commentary. But Sridhara Dasa, the court poet of Laksmana Sena, has not quoted even a single *sloka* from Arya Saptasati in his Sadukti Karnamrtam composed in A.D. 1205. There might be a simple mention of the name of Govardhana. It is indeed strange that Sridhara Dasa was ignorant of such a renowned scholar and had simply heard of his name from the people.

In his Arya Saptasati Govardhana has expressed his gratitude to his two younger brothers Udayana and Balabhadra. Udayana Acharya was a great scholar of the then Utkala (Kalinga). He had composed the eulogy inscribed on the Sobhanesvara temple, located at Brahmin colony (Sasana) of Niali and Meghasvara temple

of Bhubaneswar. He was the court poet of Brahmin feudatory Chief Vaidyanatha and latter graced the court of Svapnesvara Deva, the feudatory Chief of Bhubaneswar and brother-in-law of the Ganga emperor Raja Raja Deva (A.D. 1170-1190). In the stone inscription of Meghasvara temple at Bhubaneswar he has described in 11 slokas the glorious achievements of Chodaganga Deva, Raja Raja Deva and Aniyanka Bhima Deva. In the History of Bengal, published by the Dacca University it has been accepted that Govardhana, the writer of Arya Saptasati and Udayana are two brothers. Udayana was the first commentator of the Gitagovinda. This commentary 'Bhaba Bivavini' by name is rare to find. F. Keilhorn came across this commentary in a peasants' home in Madhya Pradesh in A.D. 1874 and carried research on it. Kaviraja Udayana had made a commentary on Naisadhiya Charita of Sriharsa and named it Udayakari. Govardhana Acharya stayed at Puri and had composed the Govardhana Sataka in praise of Lord Jagannath. In the book Alankara Sekhara written in A.D. 1563 by Kesava Misra, the court poet of Manikya Chandra, the king of Kotkangra, it is mentioned that Govardhana regarded Jayadeva as a poet of the royal court. It is not mentioned which royal court it was and also the basis of such conclusion.

KAVIRAJA DHOYI

Kaviraja Dhoyi had composed Pavanadutam in Sanskrit in imitation of the famous Meghadutam by Kalidas. It is said that by dint of his poetic skill he could secure a place in the court of Laksmna Sena.

Had Jayadeva been one of the court poets of Laksmna Sena he would never have looked down upon the poetic ability of the above mentioned poets nor would he have condemned the writings of his colleagues. Criticism of the court

poets would mean insubordination to the king and was to be considered as a challenge to the king's authority as a result of which one could not expect to remain in his kingdom. So it is far from truth that Jayadeva was a poet in the court of Laksmna Sena. A poetic genius never goes unnoticed. Jayadeva was not unaware of the poetic talent of the poets mentioned in the Geeta Govinda. Had he been in the employment of Laksmna Sena, he would never dare to demean the position of other court poets.

Again this sloka of Jayadeva is a clear deviation from the established poetic tradition of that age. The great poets of India followed the principle enumerated in Kalidas's "Athava Krutavagdva Bansemin Purvasurvish". That is they sing the praise of the creations of their predecessors while going to highlight the poetic values of their own writings. But condemning the contemporary poets was unknown to Indian literature of that age. Having said, "Srunu tada Jayadeva Sarasvatim" in praise of his own poetic skill in this sloka, it is unbelievable that he goes to decry in the next sloka the five poets said to be belonging to Laksmna Sena's court. If at all they adorned the court of Laksmna Sena how is it that Jayadeva did not even mention the name of Laksmna Sena in the Gitagovind ? The above five poets referred to in this sloka specialized in five different themes. As the Gitagovind of Jayadeva deals with love episode of Sri Radha and Sri Krisna, did he admit his own inferiority in composing poetry on love, if he meant that Govardhana Acharya was unrivalled in writing on love play ?

In the second sloka that is 'Vachapallayati Umapatidhar' Jayadeva claims to have expertise of Sandharvasuddhi which means clarity and purity composition. In Sanskrit, scholars have explained the word Sandharva as Sandorta

Grantha. This word has been derived from Sanskrit root *drub* which means sewing. So Vak Sandarva means two aspects — one is the word contained and the other is the depth of feelings expressed. So if Sandarva is taken to be a literary piece of musical verses, the sweetness and appropriateness of words used, the feelings they stood for, the intensity of thought, the style of expression, the manner and sequence of the ideas dealt with accompanied with rhyme, then rhythm and poetic diction come under its purview. Considering from this viewpoint let us now see how far this sloka itself maintains Sandarva Suddhi.

As discussed earlier, this sloka does not maintain the poetic tradition of paying regards to the earlier poets. On the other hand this sloka condemns the contemporary poets. Let us take into consideration the expression, “Sarana Slaghya Durubadrute” in this sloka. The commentators have almost explained this as Sarana Nama Kalsih Duruhasya Duruha Kabyasya Drutidrute Rachane. In a *sasthi tatpurusa* compound it was not the practice to use adjectives which are not as extraordinary as the first and second word of *tatpurusa* compound. It was not in use in languages like Odia, Bengali and Hindi derived from Sanskrit, not to speak of Sanskrit grammar? So Sandarva Suddhi has not been maintained in these verses either in proper use of words or their underlying meaning. So it is difficult to say how this *sloka* found place in the original Gitagovinda. The commentators of latter times have of course explained these verses. But these appear to be interpolation.

The Saduktikarnamrtam is only a collection of extracts from the works of poets very familiar among the then people. The court poet Sridhara Das of Laksmna Sena was the publisher of this literary collection. It is learnt from *Dana*

Sagara composed by Balala Sena, father of Laksmna Sena, that in the Saka era A.D. 1091 or A.D. 1109 the editing of Saduktikarnamrtam was started and completed in the 17th national year of Laksmna Sena. Balala Sena had taken up composing a scripture entitled Adbhuta Sagara by name in the Saka Era 1090 or A. D. 1168 which was completed after Laksmna Sena has ascended the throne. But there is historical controversy in regard to the date of his coronation to the throne. In the opinion of the compiler of Visvakosa he had ascended the throne in A.D. 1199 and having been vanquished by the Muslim invaders, fled away. Some other say that he had ascended the throne in the Saka Era 1090 or A.D. 1169. This is more probable. Again some others are of opinion that having ascended the throne during A.D. 1178- 84 he ruled till A.D. 1204-05. Whatever it might be, the compilation of the Saduktikarnamrtam had begun in the reign of the king of Balala Sena. This collection has been divided into 5 *pravahas* (streams). From among them in the 59th Bichi (wave) of the Deva Pravaha the 4th sloka reproduces the 78th sloka of the Gitagovinda reading Jayasri Vinyastairma Hita iva Mandarakusumaih’ etc. which is the concluding stanza of the 11th canto. In the Srungar Pravaha the 80th sloka of the 12th canto of the Gitagovinda constitutes the 4th stanza of the 132nd Bichi (wave) which begins with, ‘Pratyulah Pulankurena Nibidasleshe Nimesena cha’. The 43rd concluding *sloka* of the canto of the Gitagovinda. “Angesvabharanam, kareti Bahusah Patrepi / Sancharini”, etc. constitutes the 4th stanza of 37th Bichi. Again the 81st *sloka* of the Gitagovinda beginning with “mananke rati keli saukularana rambhe taya sahasa” etc. forms the stanza of the 134th Bichi. The 83rd *sloka* of the Gitagovinda “tasya patala paujankitambare nidrakasaye drusau” is reproduced as the 5th stanza of 137th Bichi.

From the above it is learnt that in the very first stream of Saduktikarnamrtam the last sloka of the 11th canto of the Gitagovinda containing 12 cantos has been quoted. So it is sure that this has been reproduced in the compilation of Saduktikarnamrtam which was started in the reign of Balala Sena. It is therefore clear that the Gitagovinda had already gained popularity and admiration before the reign of Balala Sena and its composition had also been completed by that time. That Jayadeva had composed the Gitagovinda during the reign of Laksmana Sena is therefore, not based on truth.

There are 72 slokas in all in the Gitagovinda. The verses “jayasri vinyastairmahite iva mandara kusumait” etc. quoted in the Saduktikarnamrtam as *slokas* from the Gitagovinda are considered to be interpolations. Many commentators have not accepted the sloka as it is none of the 72 *slokas* in the original text of the Gitagovinda. It has been discussed elsewhere how the interpolated verses mingled with the royal edition of the Gitagovinda have found a place in the original text. It has to be ascertained first when these interpolated *slokas* were composed and how these found a place in the Gitagovinda. The interpolated *slokas* with the four original *slokas* of the Gitagovinda were included in the Saduktikarnamrtam much later. Had Jayadeva been the court poet of Laksmana Sena and a contemporary of Sridhar Das, the compiler of the Saduktikarnamrtam, the above *slokas* would never been condemned by the commentators of latter times.

Again the question that comes up next for consideration is that in the same Saduktikarnamrtam some slokas later said to be composed by Jayadeva in praise of Laksmana Sena have been included. Among them the oft-quoted *sloka* is:

“Laksmi keli Bhuyangajangamahare
sankalpa kalpadruma
sreyah sadhka sanga sangarakala
Gangeya Vangapriya,
Gaudendra Pratiraja rajaka savalankara,
karnarpita
pratyathah ksitipa!a palaka satam drustoshi
tustabayam”

(Odishar Kavi Jayadev-Odia P.45)

The book does not mention this to be composed by Jayadeva, but later scholars have said so.

This means: ‘Oh ! that movable deity of Hari, Laksmi’s Consort, Oh ! thou wish- fulfilling tree of the supplicants, Oh ! symbol of bliss and happiness, Oh ! invincible warrior like Bhisma, Oh ! mighty one, Oh! beloved of the people of Vanga, Oh ! king of the kingdom Gauda, Oh ! jewel of the crowned feudatory princes, Oh ! benevolent Lord, we are blessed indeed at the sight of your ‘Majesty’.

A. Jayadeva instead of singing in praise of any royal power, devoted his life to sing the glory of Lord Jagannath, the Lord of the universe. It is not that easy to speak contemptuously of poets like Umapatidhara and Dhoyi enlisted as Court poets under royal patronage. It is quite impossible that such a dauntless poet and a staunch devotee of Lord Jagannatha like Jayadeva stooped so low as to compose the above *sloka* glorifying an earthly king. Sridhara Das could not dare to have quoted from Jayadeva’s Gitagovinda in his Saduktikarnamrtam, when his book contained such a derogatory verse on the four other poets, if at all either these four or Jayadeva belonged, to the court of Lashmana Sena. So Jayadeva was both in geographic and periodic sense not at all a contemporary of the poets he did not appreciate and in any case he was at least not a court poet of Laksmana Sena where Sridhara Das was writing ‘Sadukti Karnamrutam’.

B. Again hundreds of poets and scholars used to visit the royal court with eulogical *slokas* in honour of the king with a view to obtaining gifts and rewards. A new corner appearing suddenly in the royal court with a eulogical *sloka* for the pleasure of the king can never expect to be enlisted as a poet or a scholar in the court of that king. In the above *sloka* it has not been mentioned as to which of the kings of Bengal (Vangapriya Gaudendra) has been honoured and glorified. So it is not understood as to how Jayadeva was identified as the court poet of Laksmana Sena.

C. If at all this *sloka* was composed in the 12th century A.D. it might very well have been a eulogy glorifying a Ganga king. If (ra) is substituted in place of the word (va) in the word 'Vangapriya' of the *sloka* it will be 'Rangapriya'. If 'ga' is substituted it becomes Gangapriya meaning thereby that the King of Bengal was dear to the kings of Ganga dynasty. Gangeya cannot be Gangapriya because nobody states the obvious. It is most probably Rangapriya, lover of performing arts. Rangapriya standing for lover of Drama. Probably the word 'Gangeya' might have been derived from the Ganga dynasty and refers to Ganga emperors. It is not unknown to anybody that the Ganga emperors of Kalinga bore the title 'Gaudesvara' before their names. Even now the Gajapati Kings of Odisha bear that dignifying title. This title along with others are 'Vira Sri Gajapati Gaudesvara Navakoti Karnatotkala Kalavargesvara Viradhi Viravara' etc. These titles along with the name of particular Gajapati king and his regnal year are incorporated in the horoscope of every Odia child.

In hundreds of eulogies singing the praise of kings nowhere else has it been found that any king has accepted such titles as 'Kalingapriya', 'Karnatapriya', 'Vangapriya' etc. coined after the name of his own country. It was either Rangapriya

or Gangapriya. By substituting 'va' in place of 'ra' or 'ga'.

D. Chand Baradai (Chandrakabi) in his work Pruthviraj Raso written in old Rajasthani language has followed the footprints of eight poets of whom Jayadeva has been accepted as one of the same.

*"kabi kirtti bhakatis Sudikkhi
ninaiki uchasthi kabichandra bhakkhi
Jayadeva athatham kabi kabirayam
jinaem kebalam kirtti govinda gayam"*

Chand Baradai was the contemporary of the last Hindu King of Delhi, Pruthviraj (AD. 1169-1192) of Chauhan dynasty. Many important and interesting events of the reign of Pruthviraj have been recorded in his Raso. Here salutations have been paid to the ten incarnations of the Lord in imitation of the Gitagovinda. Chand Baradai was the contemporary of Laksmana Sena, the king of Gauda and Sridhara Das, compiler of the Saduktikarnamrtam. So it goes without saying that in the distant Rajasthan region the Gitagovinda had already earned popularity and admiration before Chand Baradai who offered his salutations to Jayadeva. Much before the composition of Pruthviraj Raso, Gitagovinda was familiar among the people and it is sure that it must have been completed long before the Raso. Therefore it is not at all possible to treat Jayadeva as a contemporary either of Laksmana Sena, Sridhara Das or Pruthviraj Chauhan.

The main reason of the popularity of the Gitagovinda in the distant Rajasthan regions centers around Puri, the abode of Lord Jagannath. It may be that the pilgrims coming to Puri for a visit of Lord Jagannath must have been fascinated by the charming melody of the Gitagovinda, sung before the Lord in the temple as an indispensable item of daily worship and might have carried in memory as well as in manuscripts its enchanting

eloquence to the distant corners of Rajasthan. This is certain that after the introduction of the singing of the Gitagovinda in the ritualistic services of Lord Jagannath, it spread like wild fire to every nook and corner of India.

It has been described in the Pruthviraj Raso that Sri Vijaya Pala during his campaign to the Deccan had arrived in Orissa and received the hospitality of Mukunda Deva, the Gajapati King of Soma dynasty and devotee of Lord Jagannath. There is also mention of the marriage of the eldest son of Vijaya Pala's daughter with the daughter of Mukunda Deva. It is probable that Chand Baradai (Chandrakabi) visited Lord Jagannath and might have been inspired on hearing the sweet verses of the Gitagovinda sung before the Lord in the temple. The date of Chand Baradai is also differed among the scholars.

E. In the middle of the 12th century A.D. an anthology compiled by Vidyadhara Pandit named Subhasita Ratnakosa includes in it two slokas written by one Jayadeva by name. The 1567th *sloka* of this anthology has been repeated in the Saduktikarnamrtam as its 1538th *sloka*. Jayadeva the poet of the Gitagovinda and Jayadeva of Subhasita Ratnakosa are not one and the same person.

F. In the preface of the text Saktimuktavali composed by Jahrana in A.D. 1275, it has been mentioned that the dramatist of Prasanna Raghav had composed the sloka Laksmikali Bhujanga etc. in praise of the king Laksmmana Sena of Bengal.

SHEIKH SUBHODAYA:

According to the scripture Sheikh Subhodaya, the Seikh belonged to the kingdom of Attavi. While proceeding to the east on his mission to preach Islam he entered the kingdom of Vang. The Seikh possessed many supernatural

powers. He could go wherever he liked putting on the enchanted sandals. He built his *asrama* close to the palace of Laksmmana Sena. Knowing the motive of the Seikh and apprehending danger Umapatidhara, the minister of Laksmmana Sena tried to poison him to death. But Seikh could save himself by reading Namaj in a thundering voice. It was reported that the Seikh had saved the life of a washerman from the attack of three tigers. He could also save through his magic powers three ships of a merchant named Prabhakar on the point of sinking in the sea. One Kumardutta, the brother-in-law of Laksmmana Sena, having entered into a rich merchant's house molested his young wife Madhavi. So the merchant and his wife complained before the king. But the queen advocated her brother's cause and beat Madhavi clutching her lock of hair. But Jagatguru Govardhanacharya who happened to be present there scolded the king and threatened to curse him. Out of anger he was about to leave the place with his staff and kamandalu (water pot of an ascetic), but the king lay prostrate at his feet and pacified him. The Seikh had brought in this compromise. At the machinations of Umapatidhara four persons went in disguise to the Seikh for causing him an injury. But they had to lose their eyesight. After a lot of entreats the Seikh had withdrawn the curse and they got back their eyesight. These obviously cannot be believed to be historically correct incidents.

Once a musician named Budhan Misra had come to the royal court of Laksmmana Sena. As he was an adept in the art of music, Kapilesvara Deva, the Gajapati emperor of Utkal had granted him the title of Sadachandra Gaja Jayapatra. When he sang in the Patta Manjari Raga all the leaves of the Pipal tree close to the Durbar fell down. All praised Budhan Misra very highly. Padmavati, Jayadeva's wife, while going to the Ganges for a bath heard the musical sound

and appearing at the royal court demanded of the king that no letter of commendation should be given to anybody unless he excels her and her husband in music. The Seikh who was present there requested Padmavati to sing. On his request Padmavati sang in Gandhara tune so sweetly that all the boats sailing in the Ganges came ashore. All were amazed to see the boats behaving like animate creatures. The Seikh asked Budhan Misra to face a competition with Padmavati. But as Budhan did not agree for a competition with a woman and Seikh proposed to summon Jayadeva to the royal court. On his arrival Jayadeva asked Budhan Misra to make new leaves sprout up on the Pipal tree by his musical talent. But as Budhan Misra declined Jayadeva sang in Vasanta Raga and new leaves shot forth on the Pipal tree making it as green as before. Jayadeva won the contest. At the advice of the Seikh, Budhan Misra was given only some minor presentation. The story reveals the extraordinary tricks of the Seikh, his mission to construct mosques and preach Islam and his achievements in settling up differences in royal courts. One need not examine such theological magic stories to make or refuse a point.

If we examine the truth in the above Durbar story, it will appear to be a fabricated one for the following reasons

A. Kapilesvara Deva, the Gajapati king of Utkal, ruled from A.D. 1435-1467 that is more than 200 years of the reign of Lakshmana Sena. So the question arises as to how Gajapati Kapilesvara Deva granted the testimonial 'Sada Chandra Gaja Jayapatra' to a scholar of 12th century A.D.? The story is obviously written well after 16th century and the author did not have the slightest sense of history, putting Lakshmana Sena of 12th century A.D. and Kapilendra Deva of 15th century together.

B. Lakshmana Sena was an orthodox Hindu king who was always opposed to Muslim rule

and had to flee away in A.D. 1205 having been defeated in a surprise raid by an Afghan Commander. It is not understood how he was believed to be a patron to the spread of Islam.

C. Nowhere it has been mentioned that the couple Jayadeva and his wife Padmavati had adorned the court of Lakshmana Sena. Had the superiority of Padmavati and her husband in music known to the king or the Seikh, there was hardly any necessity for Padmavati to claim and prove her proficiency in the royal court. Again it is absurd to believe that Padmavati, a conservative Brahmin lady of high culture and musical proficiency intruded upon the royal court in a challenging manner when on her way to the river Ganges for bath. One cannot imagine that a lady could be so advanced in the 13th century A.D. of medieval India.

D. Then another character Govardhana Acharya appears in the story as a travelling mendicant and not as a court poet as claimed later.

It can be emphatically said that the scripture Sheikh Subhodaya is not based on any historical truth. The eminent scholar Dr. Sukumar Sena, while commenting on this story has said:

"It indicates that Jayadeva did not originally belong to the court of Lakshmana Sena and that he first came there as an outsider."

(Sheikh Subhodaya of Halayudh Misra — Edited by Sukumar Sen and published by Asiatic Society, Calcutta — 1963). Sheikh Subhodaya cannot have any claim to historic authenticity. It was written, if at all by Halayudha Mishra, only to describe the superiority of a Muslim saint over Hindu Pundits and Kings. Such a Seikh most probably did not exist and if at all he existed his achievements were either imaginary or highly exaggerated.

The court poet of Lakshmana Sena:

In the 'Birbhum Record' by Harekrushna Mukhopadhaya reference has been made to a stone inscription supporting the so called fact that Jayadeva was the court poet of Lakshmana Sena, which is reported to have been seen by Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatana Gosvami of Sri Dham Brundabana in the council chamber of Lakshmana Sena. The sloka reads as follows:

“Govardhanascha Sarano Jayadeva Umapatih
Kavirajascha rtmani panchaite Lakshmanasyascha”

This means — Govardhana, Sarana, Jayadeva, Umapati and Kaviraja were the five gems in the court of Lakshmana Sena.

Nowhere in their writings Sri Rupa and Sri Sanatan had mentioned about this stone inscription. It is strange how the compiler of the Birabhum Records could trace out the existence of such a stone inscription. Again the two Goswamis lived after 400 years of the reign of Lakshmana Sena. After the conquest of the kingdom of Lakshmana Sena and the destruction of the Capital town by the Muslim Commander Muhammed-e-Bakhtyar, the city of Nadia was completely desolated. In the book Tabakat-i-Nasiri there is mention of this in A.D. 1260.

“After Muhammed-e-Bakhtyar possessed himself of that territory (Rai Lakshmania's) he left the city of Nadiah in desolation”. On the footnotes of that page this has been mentioned: “Muhammed-e-Bakhtyar destroyed Nadiah and leaving it in desolation passed onwards.” (Tabakat-e-Nasiri- translated by Raverty, p. 550 & Sri Jayadeva Gitagovind P.233)”

In such circumstances it is beyond one's conception as to how Rupa and Sanatana could come across the above stone inscription at the entrance of the royal palace of Lakshmana Sena.

None of the old Vaishnava scriptures mentioned about it. It could be that Harekrushna Mukhopadhaya himself was the composer of this *sloka* and the architect of this stone inscription, if it ever existed.

Sir William Jones, a Judge in the then Supreme Court in Calcutta, the founder of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta and a great Sanskrit scholar had stayed in India in the last two decades of the 18th Century. He had published an essay named 'On the Musical Modes of the Hindus' in the magazine named "The Asiatic Researches" in 1799. In order to ascertain the modes and rhythm of the songs of the Gita Govinda, he had discussed with the scholars and musicians of Kashmir, Nepal and other regions of the then India. They told him that such old modes and rhythms were not prevalent in their regions. Further they advised him to contact persons in South India as Jayadeva was born in the southern regions meaning south of Calcutta. He had observed that many people believed that Jayadeva was born in Kalinga. Again some others are of opinion that Jayadeva belonged to Burdhaman area of the then Bengal.

In "On the Musical Modes of the Hindus" written in 1784 and since then much enlarged, revised and published in 1799 by the Asiatic Researches Vol. III (p.83- 84), Sir William Jones writes:-

“Although the Sanskrit books have preserved the theory of such musical compositions the practice of it seems almost wholly left (as all the Pandits and Rajas confess) in Gour and Magdha or the province of Bengal and Bihar. When I first read the songs of Jayadeva who has prefixed to each of them the name of the mode, in which it was anciently sung, I had hope of procuring the original music, but the Pandits of south referred me to those of the west and the Brahmins of the west would have sent me to those

of the south, while they, I mean those of Nepal and Kashmir declared that the notes to the Gitagovinda must exist in one of the southern provinces, where the poet was born.”

In the Asiatic Researches Vol-III published in 1799 there is an essay on Gitagovinda or songs of Jayadeva (pp. 180-207) which contains the following as its preface:

“The loves of Krishna and Radha x x x is the subject of little pastoral drama entitled Gitagovinda, it was the work of Jayadeva who flourished, it is said before Kalidasa, and was born at Kenduli, which many believe to be in Kalinga, but there is a town of similar name in Burdman, the natives of it insist that the finest lyrical poet of India was their countryman and celebrate in honour of him an annual jubilee, passing a whole night in representing his drama and singing his beautiful songs.”

(Preface to the Gitagovinda translated by Sir William Jones and published by Upendralal Das, Calcutta in 1894).

The Court of king of Utkal and Jayadeva:

In A.D. 1563 Kesav Misra, the court poet of king Manik Chandra of kingdom of Kotkangra, has quoted a *sloka* of Govardhana in his ‘Sloka Alankara Sekhara’. From this it is learnt that Jayadeva was the crown of all other poets and scholars adorning the court of the king of Utkala. The sloka reads as follows :

“*Prak pratyak pruthivibhruto parishadi prakhyata
sankhyabata
mahnayavatark karkasataya bichhidya vidyamadam
ye ke-pyutkala bhupato! tabasabha sambhabitah
Panditah
patram Sri Jayadeva Pandit Kavi stanmuddhi
binyasyati*”

(Odishar Kavi Jayadev-Odia — P38)

It means — “Oh king of Utkala, of all the scholars of your court who command great respect and admiration by crushing the pride of all other scholars in the courts of the kings of the east and the west who indulge in putting forth dry and argumentative discourses, Jayadeva puts on the terminal of victory over them as the greatest poet.”

Besides the above *sloka*, Kesava Misra in his Alankar Sekhara has quoted from Govardhana one sloka from each of the Sabdalankara (word-ornament) and Arthalankara (meaning ornament) sections and eight *slokas* describing the beauty of women. Govardhana, the writer of Alankara Sekhara and Govardhana, the writer of Arya Saptasati are one and the same person.

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