



Literary Heritage of Subarnapur During the reign of Biramitrodaya Sing Deo

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ABSTRACT

Subarnapur is one of the western most districts of the state of Odisha. It is bounded on the north by Bargarh on the east by Sambalpur district, on the south by Boudh and Balangir districts and on the west. Total area of this district is 2337 sq. k.ms and the administrative headquarter is located at Subarnapur. The Paleolithic implements, Chalcolithic remains and Megalithic monuments discovered in the Tel-Mahanadi valley show how old the place is. A number of Royal dynasties were ruling here from ancient to modern times. Among them the Telguchoda, Kalachuri, Ganga, Somavansis, Bhanja and Chouhan are most important. Biromitradaya Sing Deo (1902-37) was one of a most important king of Chouhan dynasty of Subarnapur. The reign of Biramitrodaya Sing Deo witnessed the flowering of all branches of literature viz. Poetry, Novel, Drama, Biography, Traveller, Translation etc. Subarnapur Durbar was pre-eminently constitutes by pundits who had their minds nurtured and testes formed by ancient Indian literary traditions. Subarnapur state also one of the hill bounded garjats of Odisha which stood detached from the mainstream of Odishan Literature. However the poetry of Radhanath Roy and Gangadhar Meher, impact the poet of Subarnapur like Gopinath Panigrahi, Loknath Mishra, Harihar Panigrahi, Kaivalya Charan Nayak etc.

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old the place is. A number of royal dynasties were ruling here from ancient to modern times. Among them, the Telguchoda, Kalachuri, Ganga, Somavansis, Bhanja, and Chouhan are most important. Biromitradaya Sing Deo (1902–37) was one of the most important kings of the Chouhan dynasty of Subarnapur. The reign of Biramitrodaya Sing Deo witnessed the flowering of all branches of literature, viz., poetry, novel, drama, biography, traveler, translation, etc. Subarnapur Durbar was preeminently composed by pundits who had their minds nurtured and testes formed by ancient Indian literary traditions. Subarnapur state was also one of the hill-bounded garjats of Odisha, which stood detached from the mainstream of Odishan literature. However, the poetry of Radhanath Roy and Gangadhar Meher impacts the poets of Subarnapur like Gopinath Panigrahi, Loknath Mishra, Harihar Panigrahi, Kaivalya Charan Nayak, etc.

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Introduction

Subarnapur is one of the westernmost districts of the state of Odisha. It is bounded on the north by Bargarh; on the east by Sambalpur district; on the south by Boudh and Balangir districts; and on the west. The total area of this district is 2337 sq. km., and the administrative headquarter is located at Subarnapur. The Paleolithic implements, Chalcolithic remains, and Megalithic monuments discovered in the Tel-Mahanadi valley show how old the place is. A number of royal dynasties were ruling here from ancient to modern times. Among them, the Telguchoda, Kalachuri, Ganga, Somavansis, Bhanja, and Chouhan are most important. The Chouhan dynasty was one of a prominent dynasty of Subarnapur. Raja Madan Gopal Sing Deo was the founder of this dynasty. He established the dynasty in 1635 A.D. From 1635 to 1947, long 312 years of rule by 13 Chouhan kings. The Chouhan were working as the tributaries of Maratha and Britiser. Sudhanshu Sekhar Sing Deo was the last ruler of the Chouhan dynasty. Biromitradaya Sing Deo (1902–37) was one of the most important kings of the Chouhan dynasty of Subarnapur. The reign of Biramitrodaya Sing Deo witnessed the flowering of all branches of literature, viz., poetry, novel, drama, biography, traveler, translation, etc.

Biramitrodaya Sing Deo

Biramitrodaya Sing Deo was 12th king of the Chouhan family of Subarnapur. He was born on July 8, 1874 A.D., at the royal palace of Subarnapur. His father name was Prataprudra Sing Deo, and his mother was Rani Amulyamani Devi. He was ascended to the throne in 1902 A.D., 35 years from 1902 to 1937, ruled by him. For the help during World War I, the British Government awarded him “Knight Commander of the Indian Empire (K.C.I.E.)”. Rani Parvati Devi, his queen, was also awarded by the British Government as “Kaisar-I-Hind” and "Lady.”.

The reign of Biramitrodaya Sing Deo witnessed the flowering of all branches of literature: poetry, novel, drama, biography, traveler, etc. Biramitradoya each set to have written *Chandraprabha Kvyā* 1902, *Astapadi* 1926, and *Anangarangini* 1935.

- *Astapadi* resembles Prataprudra Chaturdasapadi in content and form.
- *Anangarangini* deals with the imaginary story of love between Narabahana, Raja of Kousambi, and Chandraprabha. *Anangarangini* deals with the imaginary story of love between Rasananda, Yuvraj of Kanchanapura, and Anangarangini, princess of Kamanagara. Chandraprabha Kvyā declines the life and marriage, separation, and union between Narabahana, Raja of Kousambi, and Chandraprabha, daughter of the king Chitraketu.
- *Chandraprabha Kavya* elaborates depictions of the spring forest, the sunset, and the sunrise to justify them as jewels of Odia poetry. While there is an unmistakable shadow of the ornamental poetry of the Riti Yuga of Ananga Ranagini, Chandraprabha kavya is a splendid specimen of simplicity in modern poetry. Its theme is ancient, but its treatment brings it close to the poetry of Radhanath Ray and Nandakishor Bala.

Court Poet and his work

The Royal Court of Biramitrodaya Sing Deo was full of the most intellectual poets, among them B.C. Majumdar, Gopinath Panigrahi, Damodar Mishra, Swapneswar Das, etc., who are most important. The literature of Subarnapur is again divided into a number of parts like historical, biographical, play, fiction, travel, and translation.

Historical Literature

Bijay Chandra Mazumdar (1861–1942) was the historian of Subarnapur state. In his book “*Sonepur in the Sambalpur tract*,” which is the product of original research in popular form. Mazumdar attempts an authentic study of the history of Sonepur based on epigraphic records and philological evidence. He starts their writing with the aspect of physical geography. In the second of B.C. Majumdar's “*Odisha in the Making*,” published by Biramitradaya Sing Deo, is the source book of Odisha.

Gopinath Panigrahi, like B.C. Majumdar, was associated with Sonepur Durbar for three generations, from Prataprudra to Sudhanshusekhar, as a peskar, taqhasildar, and magistate, and his account is largely based on authentic history. He was a poet and also a historian; in his works like *Upahara Puspanjali* (1910), *Kumara Janmotsava* (1927), *Ekadasi Udhyanapa* (1928), and *Swarnapuraraja Vansanucharitam*, he described the history of states. He wrote for the raja he serves, in praise of the raja who was his patron.

Sastri Damodara Mishra was another pandit of Sonepur Darbar. His “*Swarnapura Chouhan Kirtidarpana*” was composed while he was head pandit. It is a historical kavya on the Chouhan ruler of Sonepur. Another kavya

known as “*Bhaktiratnamala*” first appeared in the Sambalpur Patriot on April 1, 1905. Damodar Mishra was appointed as the assistant teacher at Maharaja High School, Sonapur. The title of Sastri was conferred on him on the occasion of the Somabhusana thread ceremony in 1910. Damodara Mishra “*Swarnapura Gunadarsha*” (1921) is the historical geography of Sonapur.

Kabibhusan Swapaneswara Das composed “*Krutajnata Puspanjali*” in 1904 and “*Sambalamanasa*” in 1923. His translation includes *Kamayani*, *Gandhivoli*, *Ansu*, *Ramacharitamansa*, and *Shankaracharya Granthabali*. While Sambala Manasa, published by Parbati Devi, is a geographical and historical account of the Sambalpur tract in the manasa form. “*Kruthajnata Puspanjali*,” composed on the occasion of the gift of the Sadhana press, Sambalpur, by the author Biramitradaya Sing Deo on May 5, 1921, contains a historical record of the Chouhan ruler of Sonapur.

Narendra Sahu, a poet from Anugul, has attempted a poetic history of Sonapur Darbar on the basis of the information gathered from the old guards of Sonapur. His “*Sonapur Varna*” (1924) is dedicated to Maharaja Biramitrodaya Singh Deo for his patronage as a poet.

Pandit Aditya Prasad Guru was primarily a Sanskrit scholar who attempted three kavya in Odia: “*Kutiravasini*” (1931), “*Kookila Sandhesa*,” and “*Tarapur Garh*.” While *Kokila Sandhesa* was written in the tradition of Duta kavya like Kalidasa meghadutam and Dhoyi Kaviraja Pavanduta.

Biographical Literature

B.B. Dasgupta composed the books “*The Chouhan Rulers of Sonapur*” and “*The Life of Rani Amulyamani Devi*,” which were written in 1909 and published in the year 1915. The topography and the history of Sonapur with this biography began with a kind of prelude to Rani Amulyamani's early life, her married life, her children and grandchildren, her role as a wife, as a mother, and her last days. The life of a rani is bound to be uneventful; as such, lives are in all royal families. Mr. Dasgupta discovers in Amulyamani more than a rani; she is an idol mother, a devoted wife, and a fine specimen of womanhood.

Kavya

The Kavya of Parvati Devi, “*Syamantakamani*,” written in 1928. This work based on Vishnupurana is dedicated to Lord Krishna, whose boyhood was spent in Barundabana on Yamuna, loud with the call peacocks and the music of the running stream, and lit with the beauty of the leaf-fringed flower.

Somabhusana's kavya, “*Gajendra Mokhsna*” (the elephant salvation), written in 1907 when he was eleven years of age, depicts the epic struggle between the elephant and the crocodile. Their previous life in heaven, their

crocodile attempt on the elephant prayer, the dispatch of the discussion, and the death of the crocodile are depicted in simple, passionate poetry.

A.P. Guru's works, namely "Syenagireh" (1920), "*Purascharanavarnana Champu*" (1921), and "*Anutapa Tarangin*" (1922) in Sanskrit and *Kutiravasini* (1931), *Kokila Sandesa*, and *Tarapurgarh* in Odia, are models of Sanskrit classics and the Riti yuga tradition of Odia poetry. In this poem, *Syenagirih*, the poet celebrates the beauty of Syenagrih and its surrounding landscape. Syenagrieh is a hill three kilometers from the Sonapur town.

"*Kutiravasini*" is dedicated to and published by Parbati Devi, whose conformance of the title of Kaiser-I-Hind it commemorates. *Kokil Sandesha* 1932 is dedicated to Sri Chandrabhanu Singh Bariha, Zamindsar of Rampur.

Another kavya of Loknath Mishra is *Haripriya* 1923. Composed in 1921, it is dedicated in blank verse to Yuvraj Sudhanshu Sekhar. This kavya is a story in verse full of the elements of mystery and suspense. The village of *Haripriya* is located on the confluence of Suktel and Tel, and the town that reunites them is Sonapur. Which they reach through the tangled woods of Arjunpur on the Bolangir-Sonapur road.

Harihara Panigrahi had written the kavya "*Agamani*" and "Niranjana" in 1937. His poetry transcends the boundary of Sonapur state and appeals to the power that be to restore Odessa to its pristine glory. While he extends a warm welcome to goddess Durga in the season of mellow truthfulness in *Agamani*, he is said to think of Odisha, which had lost its power of poetry, splendors of sculpture, and wealth of marine trade. Hence the poet's prayer: may the hill and forest of Odessa fill fruits and flowers; may the rivers flow forever; and may the sailors voyage across the sea and return to reach with treasures.

Maharudrayajnakavyam 1920 is a product of Sonapur Durbar. It consists of 261 verses punctuated with passages of powerful Sanskrit prose. It celebrates the Maharudrayajna performed by B.M.Singh Deo in the famous Viswanath temple of Banaras in the month of Jyestha. The poet takes the opportunity to paint the landscape of the Sonapur state. He describes the journey of the Maharaja through Sonapur and Sambalpur and the return trip.

"*Kavyatirtha*" written by Biswanath Ratha, was a scholar of Sanskrita Vidyalaya, Puri, in 1918. *Kavyatirtha* was a Champu kavya. It is written in Vaidarbhi style in the form of a dialog between Bidyadhara and Vidyadhari. The occasion of the Kavya is the marriage of Yuvaraja Somabhusana of Sonapur with Sitadevi, the daughter of Krupamaya Deva, Ganga raja of Kimidi.

Pandit Jagannath Mishra *Tarka Tirtha* composes a champu kavya, namely *Utsava Tarangini* champu 1910, based on the Yuvaraja Somabhusana thread ceremony held on 16 June 1910. This *Utsava Tarangini* consists of seven waves. The first wave is a short introduction where Basupala from Pataliputra meets one Puri brahmana, Shyamsundar Mahapatrain, at the Samleswari temple of Sambalpur, where they decide to proceed to Sonapur to

witness the thread ceremony of Somabhusana. The second wave sends them down Chitrotpala, white with swans and sends. The third wave sends them round the temple town of Sonepur, where there is the jail judge court, post office, girl school, Rajbhavan, and Rajbhandar. The fourth wave covers the Chouhan Raja of Sonepur; the fifth wave describes the thread ceremony; the sixth about Raja Sabha; and the seventh wave gives a hearty send-off to the visitor.

Sonepur Darbar was a veritable hive. It created a variety of poetry. Some of this is fanciful, some mythological, and some occasional. Some of them were conceived as a tree or a stream. But an important feature of this kavya is their projection of the river and temple of Western Odisha, which has not been shown so far in other literary works.

Play

Sonepur had a tradition of dance, music, and drama. The kalaparisd and kalamandal of the town gave musical and theatrical performances from time to time. The Maharaja high school organized drama on the occasion of Saraswati puja, Ganesh puja. Rani Amulyamani Devi introduces the Magha festival into the Jagannatha temple, where on the tenth day of the bright fortnight of Magha, the Gajakumbhira drama was performed.

Gopinath Panigrahi speaks up *Sitavanabasa* drama in 1910. Free from egocentric discrimination, they mixed with the people and even acted with them on the stage.

Somabhusana wrote the play and acted in it. With his initiative, mythological plays like *Subhadraparinaya*, *Sachalaharana*, and *Rukmaniharana* were written by Gopinath Panigrahi and performed on the Gopalji mandapa. He directed and acted the plays.

Sridama Daridra Bhanjana 1920, a dance drama by Somabhusana, was humbly published by B.M.Sing Deo. It is divided into two acts. Sridama grading poverty, srikrishna extraordinary friendship, and hospitality are depicted against the rollicking humor generated by Bhagia Panda, a newly acquired friend of Sudama, and a newly created character in this mythological play. Some dialogues are written in Hindi, Hindi mixed with Odia and Odia mixed with Sambalpuri, which are its special features.

Fiction

In the field of fiction, Biromitradaya Singh Deo works on *Bhagna Kankana* and *Nilakuntala*. *Bhagnakankana* (the broken bracelet) is a short novel published by the Baptist mission press in Calcutta in 1920. It deals with a fragment of the lost history of some ruined kingdom of the Aryan located on the intractable forest that extended from the Godavari to Mahanadi before the light of civilization entered this part of the country.

Nilakuntala 1927 is a sociological novel that reflects the value of rural society. Manmohan Das of Binodpur on the Mahanadi is an orthodox Hindu who brought of an orphan boy, Haricharan. While Haricharan graduates himself through hard work, Kaminiranjan, his own son, turns a debauch and a dacoit. Manmohan gets his son married to Nilakuntala, daughter of Viswambara Das. But Kaminiranjan takes no other hue. His still money and gold and leaves home, while Manmohan is shamed and shocked, hence over the charge of his state to Haricharan and leaves for Brundaban. Nilakuntala goes and lives with her father. Nilakuntala projects a picture of society. The misguided youth, the village touts the simple Savara society, the gossips in the river ghat, the evils of poverty, and the benefit of education—all these are realistically reflected in the novel. The merit of the author lies in the way the main plot and the subsidiary plot are interwoven in the end. The novel, along with his learned introduction to *Naisyadhiyacharita*, *Sisupalavadha*, *Rutusambhavam*, *Uttararamacharitakavya*, *Kalikapurana*, *Sangitamitrodaya*, *Stutichintamani*, etc.

Astrology

The Sonapur Darbar pays patronage to astrologers like Krupasindhu Mishra, Jyotisalankara, Ramachandra Padhi, Siddhanta Tilaka, Gobinda Ratha, Jyotisa Chandra, Bhagwan Mahaparta, Pandit Dwarikanath Mishra, Pandit Nilamani Ratha, etc.

Pandit Nilamani Ratha (1884–1961), son of Jagannath Ratha and grandson of Bhagirathi Ratha, who settled at Masinapali 27 kilometers from Sonapur town, was brought up under the patronage of Sonapur Darbar. He studied astrology in Banaras for six years and obtained the title *Jyotisa Tirtha* from Banaras and joined the newly started school of astrology in the town in 1818. He was an astrologer, a palmist, and a physiognom. In his introduction to *Chakrasaran*, it can answer instantly questions relating to the past, present, and future. The author had collected from *Narapati Jayacharya* a few useful chakras, which he has translated into Odia in this book.

Saptachasika is a translation of Prthuyasa's work into Odia for use by an Odishan astrologer. The original work, stiff and short *Gahanarthapurnam samkhiptm*, which the author has simplified in the form of question and answer, *Satpanchatika*, consists of seven chapters wherein the author discusses questions on birth and death, arrival and departure, health and diseases, success and failure, good and evil, loss and recovery, rainfall and crop failure, etc.

Songs and hymns

Yuvraj Somabhusana took part in dance and drama. Rani Parbati Devi and her daughter-in-law, Khirodra Kumara, composed secular and devotional songs. In the introduction to *Sangita Mitrodays*, he refers to Tansen and Kavisurya, who compose songs for all ages, and to Jayadeva, who belongs to religion and nature in the fine

harmony of his lyric. Music cleanses the soul, and while those disinclined to music are beastly, the musician is a higher soul who merges with the Brahmana through his son.

Pandit Swapaneswar Das, *Sahityakunjakalakantha*, has composed about 250 songs, including *Sangitaratnahara* 1925, *Sangitaballhari* 1931, *Sangitasudhasagara* 1933, *Sangitamitrodaya* 1934, and *Sangitakusumanjali*. He divides songs into three types: religious, amorous, and patriotic. These songs are based on the love of Radha and Krishna.

In "Sangitaratnahara," the poet has beautifully depicted the lovelorn state of Radha, who was a paragon of excellence. The picture of Radha writing blood-red lac-dye a love letter on a yellow pad, *Purnakari pita kagaje lalita laksharase lipi lekhilani*, is so moving. Lady Parvati Devi published a song called *Humvagita* in 1929.

"*Swarnapurabedha parikrama*," written by Biramitrada Sing Deo in 1899 with the assistance of Dayanidhi Pattnaik, is a cluster of 30 hymns composed to a variety of meters and addressed to the deity of the town from Ramnath to Somnath, Budharaja to Budhisamlai, Samleswari to Manekeswari, and Gopinath to Nrusinghnath.

Conclusion

Yet to say that the literature of Sonapur Darbar remains uninfluenced by new retreads of Odia literature started by the Satyabadi group and the Sabuja group of poets of this period. It remains insular; it stops to the conventional, conservative modes of ancient Sanskrit literature. It is indeed strength that a life so culturally rich, emotionally vibrant, and aesthetically opulent is not mirrored forth in the literature of Sonapur Durbar, which was preeminently constituted by Pandit who had their minds nurtured and tested by ancient Indian literary tradition. Sonapur state was also one of a hillbound Gadjat of Odisha that stood detached from the mainstream of Odishan literature. The poetry of Radhanath and Gangadhar, however, left their impact on poets like Gopinath Panigrahi, Harihar Panigrahi, Loknath Mishra, and Kaivalya Charan Naik. It is in this poet of the Durbar that we see a marked departure from the ornamental classical tradition of the past and a favorable response to the changing winds of Odia poetry.

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