ORIYA LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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Outreach Lecture
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Harvard University
April 11, 2009
Preface

This lecture was prepared and presented in a series “Languages and Literature of India” hosted by the Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies at Harvard University in a set of seventeen lectures during the period 2006-2009. The author is thankful to the Department and Harvard University for the support and assistance. The slides 7, 8, 9 and 10 were prepared by Mr. Sushant Dash of Norfolk, Connecticut and were presented by him. The material for the lecture has been collected from multiple sources though the ideas and opinions rest entirely with the author. The author acknowledges the discussion and research of many of his friends and colleagues in his journey to the topic. Comments and feedback are welcome. The author can be reached by email at bmisra@fas.harvard.edu.
Orissa State

Area 155,820 sq. km. (60,162 sq. miles)
Centered about 21°N, 85°E
480 km coastline, Chilika Lake (3560 sq. km)
Population 36,706,920 (census 2001)
People
Sights
Early Cave-Art and Writing

- **Bikramkhol** - prehistoric

- **Dhauli (Asoka)**
  3rd Century BC

- **Hatigumpha (Kharavela)**
  1st Century BC
Modern Oriya (oDiA) script

51 Letters
12 Vowels
39 Consonants
Sounds and Grammar

Sounds

• Words end in vowels and vowels are pronounced
• Accents exist, indistinctive “s”

Grammar

• Three genders – masculine, feminine, neuter
• Two numbers – singular, plural (no dual)
• Eight cases – Like in Sanskrit, except no suffix for nominative and vocative, same suffix for accusative and dative.
• Three tenses – present, past, future (other tense conjugations done with a “state” verb, like Sanskrit “sthA” )
Literature Style

- Oral poetry, speech oriented rhythm, literature for the masses
- Metaphorical narration, mysticism
- Writers evolved from all sections of the society
- Originality in imagery and thoughts
- Medieval poetry heavily ornamental with extreme word acrobatics
- Prolific romantic literature, bordering to erotic
- Mostly value-based writings with social and moral teachings
Modes of Thought

- Buddhist thoughts of void and mind
- Jaina thoughts on Karma and rebirth
- Sakta thoughts on power and surrender
- Vaishnava thoughts on humility and knowledge
- Vedic thoughts on internal divinity and spirituality
- Jagannatha as an all-encompassing deity representing all
Metres

• Oriya is a metric language, thoughts are expressed by stressed syllables.
• Metres can be of phrases of any length.
• Lines of nine, twelve and fourteen letters are common.
• Lines need not have the same number of letters.
• A stanza may consist of many lines of uneven length.
• Like Sanskrit, prose literature may also be composed and recited in metres for continuous lyrical rendering.
• Oral recitations are culturally appreciated.
Oriya Language Evolution

- Many noun words appear indigenous - objects made with earth, wood; names of bows and arrows; names of paddy varieties; description of soil conditions; naming of winds and environment.
- Verb endings possibly from Prakrit, later influenced by Sanskrit
- Human conditions, relations, conduct, ritual object names seem to be acquired from Pali.
- Modern Oriya has lack of use of the old words and is heavily Sanskritized.
- New noun words have been imported from the occupying rulers like Moghuls, Marathi and English.
- Strange hybrid words are lately created by Oriya speakers without reference to Oriya literature.
Sanskrit has been the court language at least from 6th Century to 15th Century (historical observations).

Sankara appears to have traveled to Puri around 6th to 8th century in search of tantric scholarship.

Jayadeva possibly wrote Gitagovinda in SriJagannatha temple around 12th century.

Viswanath Kaviraja wrote sAhityadarpaNa, the reference book on alankAra about 14th to 15th century.

Origin of Hitopadesa by Narayana is speculated to Oriya kings and legends possibly to 4th Century.

Sriharsa’s Naishadhacharita possibly is speculated to be written in Orissa about 11th century.

Atharva veda schools for vedic ritual and tantra training from olden days. Rituals used from agriculture, trade, wars and settle dispute.

Both early major works in Oriya are based on Sanskrit Mahabharata and Srimadbhagavatam
Early Oriya Poetry 1000-1400 AD

Compositions generally termed CharyApada from its discovery in Nepal in 19th century. Social songs, instructions, prayers.

Example (1):
\text{u’ncA u’ncA pAbata tahi’n basai sabarI bALI |}
\text{moran.gI piccha parihaNa sabarI gIbata guNjarI mALI ||}

Example (2):
\text{kALa kamaLa niraNjana tinihe.n yekai Thabare bAsa |}
\text{Jeu’n guru yehA prati prati kari bujhAbai’n}
\text{se guru muhi’n tAhA dAsara dAsa ||}

Example (3):
\text{bandai.n sabarInAtha mULa sarIra bandai |}
\text{bandai.n kanthaDinAtha gahIra gambhIra ||}
Sarala Dasa (15th century)

- Earliest poet of record of major work. Considered father of Oriya literature because of establishing written structural syntax.
- Followed Mahabharata story line, but mapped into Orissa geography and Oriya culture.
- Had strong social reform in mind against the caste hierarchy.
- Wrote in dAnDI metre for everyday singing.
- Did further work on Ramayana and ChandI purANa.

Example of dAnDI (from Sarala Mahabharata)

Jahu’n nis’abada hoilA raNaran.gabhui’n |
beDhiNa loDanti chaukati jaNe he’n kehi jIlA nAhi’n ||
xxx
bho daiba eDebaDa sa.mpada mu’n arjili pUrba pUNyabaLe |
aLape buDaili mu’n karmara abaLe ||
Jagannatha Dasa (16th century)

- Lyrical translation of Srimadbhagavatam for instructional everyday reading.
- Prolific writer of many other compositions
- Wrote and systematized many popular metres
  Example of nabAksharI:
  bolanti kamaLalochna | uddhaba s’uNa mo’ bacana ||
  Je prANI beda tattva jANe | mora mahimA’ parimANe ||
  bitarke bhramai sa.nsAre | AtmAku ApaNee uddhare ||
  sumati AtmA guru paNe | AtmAku bujhAi ApaNee ||
  Example of new dAnDI:
  candramA badanI raI, phula toLibAku s’aradhA hoi go’,
  kRshNa.nku maNDibA pAi’n, sajanI go’ ||
  hAta dharAdhari hoi, hamsagamanI ekameLa hoi go’,
  hele phulabane Jai, sajanI go’ ||
PancasakhA – (Five Associates) (16th century)

- Balarama Das – eldest, prolific poet, devotee, translated SrimadbhagavadgItA, wrote dAnDIRAMAyAaNa and many other compositions.
- Jagannatha Das – translator of SrImadbhagavatam
- Acyutananda Das – created the puzzle poetry, sUtra form, philosophical writings.
- Ananta Das – Vaishnavic and vedic expositions
- Jas’obanta Das – Lyrical poems of devotion
- Five considered to be the makers of Oriya literary thinking.

ChautisA composition example: (Balarama Das)
kamaLalocana s’rIhari | kareNa s’an.kha cakradhArI ||
khagaAsane khagapati | khaTanti lakshmI sarasvatI ||
Upendra Bhanja (17th-18th century)

- Born a prince, prolific poet of 52 books.
- Superb word play, metric, acrobatics in letters to play through arbitrary patterns.
- rIti poetry – poetry of s’rn.gAra, erotic symbolism with ornamental narratives.

Example (lines begin and end in “ka”):
kahibi candrAbaLI kRshNakaLA keLi kautuka |
kaLA kautuka e gIta nAma heba khyAtaka ||
karuthiba pratipAdare bAsa Adya prAnta “ka” ||

Example:
BibhIshaNapushpe JA’ kAnti jA’Na |
Bibhushanakari kanyAku Ana ||
Dinakrishna Das (17th-18th century)

• Prolific poet on Krishna stories, life, teachings
• Wrote about popular imagery through Krishna stories
  Example:
  kRshikAraprAye kLesha kari kAye s’rama lAbhaku pAilu |
  bALantara lobhe galAmULa, kalu hRdaya mAtra bikaLa ||
• ChhAnda poetry
  Example:
  krame madhu s’esha huante prabes’a hoilA grIshamasamaya 
  karamALikara mahAkharatara kamaLakumAra paraya |
  sujane ki kahibA mahI tapata |
  karAilA nRtya pathika pAdaku san.grAma bhUmi asvabata ||
Prominent Poets (18th- 19th century)

- Development of Odissi style of rAga, music and style
- JaNANa style poetry: BanamaLi dInabandhu! Ehi aLi s’rIChAmure s’rIran.gAcharaNa sebAre mo’ mana rahithAu nirantare ||
- Battle poetry: brajanAtha baDajenA husiAra bAndhithibA lokara, maribAku Jeba hoiba Dara, hathiara chADI kheta kamAu, tebe tAhAku ki kahibA Au, nillaja jIibA, kshatrIn.ka s’obhA raNe prANa debA ||
- BhaktacharaNa Das – popular chautisA, kalAkalebara..
- Abhimanyu SamanatasinghAra – OdissI
- Arakshita Das – reflective poetry
- Gopalakrishna Pattanayaka – devotional Odissi
- Baladeva Ratha – champU poetry
- JadumaNi Mahapatra – criticism and sarcasm
Beginning of Modernism
(19th century)

• Trio of Modernism:
  Radhanatha Ray: prolific poet, also wrote in Bengali
  Fakirmohan Senapati: perceived of reforming society from
  social injustice, superstitions, colonial and princely rules,
  the founder of modern Oriya prose literature.
  Madhusudan Rao: born in a Marathi Brahma family, wrote
  extensively for children, created the first Oriya alphabet book,
  devotional poems and popular prayers.

• Madhusudan Das – considered father of modern Orissa,
  wrote extensively to arouse people for a separate state, beginning
  of Oriya nationalism.

• Bhima Bhoi – the blind kandha poet from the hills, massive corpus
  of devotional and philosophical songs for popular singing.
Printing Press and Publications (19th century)

- Orissa was occupied by British 1803
- Gaurisankara Ray – Cuttack Printing Co. 1867
- First Oriya literary magazine – UtkaLa Dipika – 1874
- Prose writers: Biswanatha Kar, Nandakishore Bala, Chintamani Mohanty, Shashibhusan Ray
- Dramatist: Ramashankar Ray
- Oriya dictionary: Gopala Chandra Praharaj
- Women writers: Reba Ray, Aparnna Panda, Aparnna Gantayat
- Ramayana in Women’s view: Tapaswini by Gangadhar Meher
Poets and writings (20th Century)

• Freedom struggle and call for nationalism
• Journalism – writing of current events
• First daily newspaper 1919, Samaja founded by Gopabandhu Dash, named as the role model for the modern Orissa.
• Critical writings: Balakrishna Kar, Godabarisha Misra, Lakshmikanta Mahapatra, Nilakantha Dash, Godabarisha Mahapatra, Kuntalakumari Sabat
• Dramatic presentations: Aswini Kumar Ghosh, Baishnab Pani, Kalicharan Pattanayak, Balakrishna Mohanty
• Progressive writers: Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, Gopinath Mohanty, Sachidananda Routray, Baikunthanath Pattanayak, Radhamohan Gadanayak, Manmohan Misra
• Romanticism: Mayadhar Mansingh
Present Age

- Sitakanta Mohapatra (poet) and Manoj Das (short story writer) are prominent among living writers for their use of colloquial imagery in writing.
- New breed of young poets experiment with the free rendering of poetry began by Radhanath Ray.
- Good translation material have been produced from other languages and Oriya materials are also translated into other languages.
- More women writers have written about the women’s issues, feminism, social inequality and injustice.
- Drama and newspaper materials have become prolific.
- Education system is divorcing the language slowly, massive revival would be required to withstand the competition of survival against expressive literature.
- The awareness is helping the cause of revival.
Looking Forward

• Economy of the people needs massive reinforcement
• More educational materials on the wealth of creative writings need be absorbed into the curriculum
• Odissi music needs scientific research to learn the production of syllable oriented expressive music
• Hill and tribal languages need research as regards the development of words in use in world literature