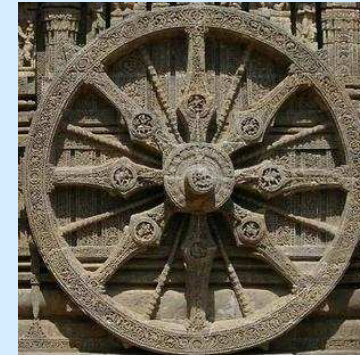


# ORIYA LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE



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# 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](mailto:bmisra@fas.harvard.edu).

# Orissa State



Area 155,820 sq. km. (60,162 sq. miles)  
Centered about  $21^{\circ}\text{N}$ ,  $85^{\circ}\text{E}$   
480 km coastline, Chilika Lake (3560 sq. km)  
Population 36,706,920 (census 2001)

# People



# Sights



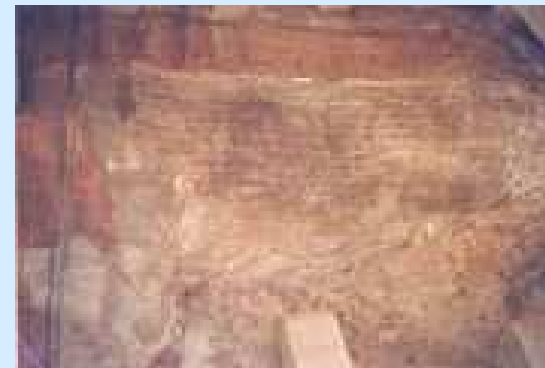
# Early Cave-Art and Writing



**Bikramkhol - prehistoric**



**Dhauli (Asoka)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Century BC**



**Hatigumpha (Kharavela)  
1<sup>st</sup> Century BC**

# Modern Oriya (oDiA) script

51 Letters

12 Vowels

39 Consonants

|    |     |    |     |    |   |
|----|-----|----|-----|----|---|
| ଅ  | ଆ   | ଇ  | ଈ   | ଉ  | ଊ |
| a  | ā   | i  | ī   | u  | ū |
| ଋ  | ୠ   | ଏ  | ଓ   | ଔ  | ଓ |
| r̄ | e   | ai | o   | au |   |
| କ  | ଖ   | ଗ  | ଘ   | ଙ  |   |
| ka | kha | ga | gha | ṅa |   |
| ଚ  | ଛ   | ଜ  | ଝ   | ଞ  |   |
| ca | cha | ja | jha | ña |   |
| ଟ  | ଠ   | ଡ  | ଢ   | ଣ  |   |
| ṭa | ṭha | ḍa | ḍha | ṇa |   |
| ତ  | ଥ   | ଦ  | ଧ   | ନ  |   |
| ta | tha | da | dha | na |   |
| ପ  | ଫ   | ବ  | ଭ   | ମ  |   |
| pa | pha | ba | bha | ma |   |
| ୟ  | ର   | ଲ  | ୱ   | ୲  | ୳ |
| ya | ra  | la | va  |    |   |
| ଶ  | ଷ   | ସ  | ହ   | ୱ  | ୲ |
| śa | ṣa  | sa | ha  |    |   |

# 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 in Orissa

- Sanskrit has been the court language at least from 6<sup>th</sup> Century to 15<sup>th</sup> Century (historical observations).
- Sankara appears to have traveled to Puri around 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> century in search of tantric scholarship.
- Jayadeva possibly wrote Gitagovinda in SriJagannatha temple around 12<sup>th</sup> century.
- Viswanath Kaviraja wrote sAhityadarpaNa, the reference book on alankAra about 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century.
- Origin of Hitopadesa by Narayana is speculated to Oriya kings and legends possibly to 4<sup>th</sup> Century.
- Sriharsa's Naishadhacharita possibly is speculated to be written in Orissa about 11<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> century. Social songs, instructions, prayers.

Example (1):

u'ncA u'ncA pAbata tahi'n basai sabarI bALI |

moran.gI piccha parihaNa sabarI gIbata guNjarI mALI ||

Example (2):

kALa kamaLa niraNjana tinihe.n yekai Thabare bAsa |

Jeu'n guru yehA prati prati kari bujhAbai'n

se guru muhi'n tAhA dAsara dAsa ||

Example (3):

bandai.n sabarInAtha mULa sarIra bandai |

bandai.n kanthaDinAtha gahIra gambhIra ||

# Sarala Dasa (15<sup>th</sup> 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 jlilA nAhi'n ||

xxx

bho daiba eDebaDa sa.mpada mu'n arjili pUrba pUNyabaLe |

aLape buDaili mu'n karmara abaLe ||

# Jagannatha Dasa (16<sup>th</sup> 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 kamaLalochana | uddhaba s'uNa mo' bacana ||  
Je prANI beda tattva jANe | mora mahimA' parimANe ||  
bitarke bhramai sa.nsAre | AtmAku ApaNe uddhare ||  
sumati AtmA guru paNe | AtmAku bujhAi ApaNe ||

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) (16<sup>th</sup> century)

- Balarama Das – eldest, prolific poet, devotee, translated SrimadbhagavadgItA, wrote dAnDirAmAyaNa 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'rlhari | kareNa s'an.kha cakradhArI ||

khagaAsane khagapati | khaTanti lakshmi sarasvatI ||

# Upendra Bhanja (17<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> 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 (17<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> century)

- Prolific poet on Krishna stories, life, teachings
- Wrote about popular imagery through Krishna stories

Example:

kRshikAraprAye kLasha 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 (18<sup>th</sup>- 19<sup>th</sup> 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 jlibA, 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 ( 19<sup>th</sup> 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 (19<sup>th</sup> century)

- Orissa was occupied by British 1803
- First Oriya book – translation of New Testament – 1807
- Gaurisankara Ray – Cuttack Printing Co. 1867
- First Oriya literary magazine – Utkala Dipika – 1874
- Prose writers: Biswanatha Kar, Nandakishore Bala, Chintamani Mohanty, Shashibhushan 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 (20<sup>th</sup> 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