

Vidyapati-The Poet(Part-3)

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Life and works

Devotional songs

Though he wrote hundreds of love songs about the romance of Radha and Krishna, he was not a special devotee of Krishna or Vishnu. Instead, he lavished attention on Shiva and Durga but also wrote songs about Vishnu and Ganga. He is particularly known for his songs of the love of Shiva and Parvati and prayers for Shiva as the supreme Brahman.

Life and works

A song titled *All My Inhibition:*

All my inhibition left me in a flash,
When he robbed me off my clothes,
But his body became my new dress.
Like a bee hovering on a lotus leaf
He was there in my night, on me!

Life and works

Influence

▶ Odia literature

Vidyapati's influence reached Odisha through Bengal. The earliest composition in Brajabuli, an artificial literary language popularized by Vidyapati, is ascribed to Ramananda Raya, the governor of Godavari province of the King of Odisha, Gajapati Prataprudra Dev. He was a disciple of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

Life and works

He recited his Brajabuli poems to Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, when he first met him on the bank of river Godavari at Rajahmundry, southern provincial capital of Kingdom of Odisha in 1511–12. Other notable Odia poets influenced by Vidyapati's poems were Champati Ray and king Pratap Malla Dev (1504–32).

Life and works

Bengali Literature

Bengali Vaishnavas like Chitanya and Chandidas adopted Vidyapati's love songs about Radha and Krishna as Vaishnava hymns. All major Bengali poets of the medieval period were influenced by Vidyapati. As a result, an artificial literary language, known as Brajabuli was developed in the sixteenth century.

Life and works

- ▶ Brajabuli is basically Maithili (as prevalent during the medieval period) but its forms are modified to look like Bengali. The medieval Bengali poets, Gobindadas Kabiraj, Jnandas, Balaramdas and Narottamdas composed their *padas* (poems) in this language. Rabindranath Tagore composed his *Bhanusingha Thakurer Padabali* (1884) in a mix of Western Hindi (Braj Bhasha) and archaic Bengali and named the language Brajabuli as an imitation of

Life and works

Vidyapati (he initially promoted these lyrics as those of a newly discovered poet, *Bhanusingha*). Other 19th-century figures in the Bengal Renaissance like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee have also written in Brajabuli. Tagore was much influenced by Vidyapati. He set the poet's *Bhara Badara* to his own tune. A bridge in Kolkata near Sealdah Station is named after him (Vidyapati Setu).

Life and works

▶ Legacy

Vidyapati has been kept alive in popular memory over the past six centuries; he is a household name in Mithila. His love songs are sung at weddings in the region. Many myths have arisen about him and people continue to sing his songs.

Life and works

- ▶ *Bidāpat Nāch*
- ▶ A form of folk dance-drama street theater, *Bidāpat Nāch*, where "bidāpat" is derived from "Vidyapati", is performed in Purnia district in north Bihar. While several groups performed in multiple villages in that area in the 20th century, there was just one group left in one village by 2012.

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