

[“Aparṇṇā Pāṇigrāhī” by Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa Sāhu. In *Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa Granthābaḷī, Prathama Bhāga*, edited by Surendra Mahānti and Gopinātha Dāśa, p. 170. Cuttack: Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa Sāhu Smṛtirakṣā Samiti, 1971. Translated by David Dennen (2014; version 1.0).]

Aparṇṇā Pāṇigrāhī

Last year Aparṇṇā Pāṇigrāhī, having recorded a song on gramophone record in Kolkata, was returning to Paralakhemundi.¹ On the train he had a fever, and arriving at home he died.

Aparṇṇā Pāṇigrāhī was a celebrated *bīṇā*-player, not only of Paralakhemundi but also of the whole of Utkala. It is said that he was the finest *bīṇā*-player in Utkala.

Nine or ten years ago Aparṇṇā’s eyesight began to deteriorate. Because of the spring illness, his eyes were lost. He became blind. Aparṇṇā was Utkala’s *Surdās*.² His sweet, tender, beautiful, delicate voice and, along with that, his *bīṇā*-playing, the precise skillfulness of the finger movements, certainly had elevated Aparṇṇā very high.

He had learned from Vijayanagara’s Sūryanārāyaṇa Ostād (he had stayed for six or seven year at the royal court in Paralakhemundi) over a period of six or seven years with his mind engrossed in *bīṇā*-playing.

Aparṇṇā’s virtues like this were real; but in Odisha, people who appreciated Aparṇṇā’s virtues were few. He was a music-expert [*saṅgītajña*], singer, and musician of Paralakhemundi’s royal court [*rājadarbāra*].

Three years ago Aparṇṇā had been sent on behalf of the Utkala Saṅgīta Samāja (this has been in Cuttack by the effort of Śrīyukta Lakṣmīkānta Caudhurī) to the Nikhila Bhārata Saṅgīta Sammilānī [All-India Music Conference], and when everyone there noticed Aparṇṇā’s singing with a sweet, tender voice, and the very sweet finger movements and the sweet trembling, the fine gentle vibrations [*kampana*] he had displayed on the *bīṇā*, they had come near and with a thousand mouths praised Aparṇṇā.

¹ A city in southern Odisha.

² Blind North Indian poet and singer of the 15th century.

Aparṇṇā today is no more; he has gone to a distant region.

Aparṇṇā has not done any land cultivation at home. His house is in Parala's *karaṇa* neighborhood. He was a *karaṇa* Vaiṣṇava and a very devout person. He had two daughters. One of them has been married. Whether Aparṇṇā has a male descendent or not, I do not rightly know. [His] elderly mother and wife are at the house. They have an ordinary collection of ornaments. Aside from that there is nothing else.

Aparṇṇā has passed on. For keeping his name alive today, if a *bīṇā*-playing school could be founded in Utkala it would sufficiently honor him.