

["Kabisūrīya Rāyaguru" by Tāriṇīcaraṇa Ratha. *Utkāḷa Sāhitya* 18.9 (1322 [1915 or 1916]): 398–401. Translated by David Dennen (2014; version 1.0).]

Kabisūrīya Rāyaguru

Kabisūrīya Rayaguru is a very famous poet of Utkāḷa. He was born in a high *brāhmaṇa* family. His name was Baḷabhadra or Baḷadeba Ratha. He had attained the title Kabisūrīya Rāyaguru.¹ It is known that Purī's Rājā Mukundadeba had given him this title. The poet's birthplace [was] Gañjām, and he had passed almost his whole lifetime in Gañjām's capitals [*rājadhānīs*]. Particularly in Gañjām's Āṭhagaṛa capital he, having resided [for] a long time, was present as the chief *paṇḍita* of the *rājā* of that place. By Aṣṭadurga's chief Bālukeśa Haricandana Jagaddeba he was much honored; but being displeased in service to him, he had accepted the support of Gañjām's other *rājās*. Having passed some time in Mahuri, Pāraḷā, and Cikiṭi states in service, he had accepted the support of Jaḷantara *rājā* Rāmacandra Choṭarāya. There, after some time passed, it is known that he incurred the displeasure of some. It is known that at the time of abandoning service [in] that place on the road he lost his life at [his] adversaries' hands. In Dibyasimhadēba Rājā's twelfth year, that is, 1869 CE, he had died.² The poet's lifetime is not fully known. Possibly he had been born at the end of the eighteenth century. The poet's descendants reside nowadays within the Gañjām district in Dharakoṭa estate's Lālāsāsana. Baḷabhadra Kabisūrīya was the son of Ujjwaḷa Brahmā. Their ancestors had resided in Purī district's Maṇipura *śāsana* [= Brahman village].

Although Kabisūrīya Rāyaguru was a very famous poet of a short time ago, very few people of Utkāḷa were were acquainted with him and his books. This is a matter of great sorrow. In Oṛiśā's historian Mahātmā Hunter Sāheb's³ inventory of Oṛiśā's poets, the name of this poet of ours is not mentioned. But he has written a poet's name of "Jaḷantara Kabisūrīya Rāyaguru." It seems the poet with this name is none other than Baḷabhadra Ratha. Because the poet's final years were spent at Jaḷantara estate, it is entirely possible that some people gave him the mentioned name.

Kabisūrīya was a learned *paṇḍita* knowledgeable of Saṁskṛta literature and versed in the *saṅgīta-śāstras* [= music theory texts]. Even though he had not written any

¹ [Kabisūrīya = the sun among poets; Rāyaguru = king of *gurus/guru* to the king.]

² [It is now commonly believed that he died in 1845 of smallpox.]

³ [William Wilson Hunter (1840–1900), whose book *Orissa* was published in 1872.]

particular books [on those topics], the place of those he has written is very high in the world of Oṛiṣā's literature. The language used by the poet is simple, pure, and sweet. In his compositions the use of many genuine Oṛiā words is seen. The poet's poems [are] very graceful, expressive [*sarasa*], and enchanting. Although he had appeared immediately after the Bhañjīya poets,⁴ in his compositions he had been able to keep the purity, simplicity, and sweetness of the Oṛiā language completely intact, this is universal art [*kauśāla*] and not the introduction/practice of individuality. Among Utkāḷa's poets, Kabisūrīya's writings must be said to be very excellent. Likewise, similarity to compositions old or new from other writers is not found, it would not be too much to say. What Rādhānātha [Rāya], the chief poet of Utkāḷa's modern age, being charmed by Kabisūrīya's compositions, has said is displayed below:

*dhanya rathe! tumbha janma śubhakaṣaṇe,
mṛtyuñjaya tumbhe utkaḷa bhubane /
tumbha māṭideha grāsichi śmaśāna,
mātra yaśodehe tumbhe āyuṣmāna /*

[Blessed Ratha! Your birth [was] an auspicious moment,
You [are] ever-remembered in the land of Utkāḷa.
The creation ground has swallowed up your material body,
But in the body of fame you [are] long-lived.]

Although some compositions of the poet consist of *ādirasa* [= *sṛṅgāra rasa*, the erotic mood], like the other old poets of Utkāḷa, in those no defect of vulgarity/obscenity is observed. Every line by the poet is full of profound thoughts [*bhābas*]. Among the books composed by the poet, *Kiśoracandrānanda Campū* is foremost. This describes the play of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa [with] *catuṣpadīs* and Saṃskṛta verse [and] prose mixed [in] one book and has been composed in the name of the king of Aṣṭadurga, Bālukeśa Deba. Here from *ka* to *kṣa* in the order of each syllable, songs are seen combined with various sweet-to-hear *rāgas*. In the whole region of Utkāḷa, by people of all classes, these songs have been sung with much veneration. The poet's other well-known book [is] *Candrakaḷā (kābya)*. This book has been composed in the name of

⁴ [Poets such as Upendra Bhañja, sometimes noted for their complex and Sanskrit language.]

Jaḷantara *rājā* Rāmacandra Choṭarāya. Sadly, the *kābya* [= long poem] has remained in an incomplete condition. The poet had been able to compose only 21 *chāndas* [= cantos] of that. *Candrakaḷā* [was] written in the manner of *kābyas* composed by previous poets. Besides this the poet has also composed *Ratnākara Campū*, a book of songs in the *ka-to-kṣa* format⁵ regarding the play of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Kabisūrīya Rāyaguru was a hero-of-words [*bāgbīra/vāgvīra*] and a born poet [*āsūkabi*] and was well known for his humor. It is known that he had also written a book named *Hāsyārṇṇaba* or *Hāsyakalloḷa* [Waves of Laughter]. Kabisūrīya has written innumerable (nearly a thousand) short *catuṣpadī* poems. Those also are everywhere heard from the mouths of Oṛiśā's people. The songs are simple, sweet, and full of emotion [*bhāba*]. The collecting and publishing of all those in one place [we] think is greatly desirable.

Some proverbs issuing from the poet's mouth have been in use in the region up to today. For example:

1. *kuhā yāuthāe sinā*
tuhāi tuhāi puṭa deuthile
luhā ki hoiba sunā /

[Certainly it is said,
(By) repeatedly putting (it) into the crucible,
Will iron become gold?]

2. *bhuā nei guhā kandare rakhile*
simha parākrama ki kariba /
kuā nei śuā pākhare rakhile
rāma nāma ki se bhāṣiba /

[if a cat is placed in the den,
Will it show the strength of the lion?
If the crow is placed near the parrot,

⁵ [That is, arranged alphabetically.]

Will it speak Rāma's name?⁶]

3. *yāra mana yahīki rase,*
tāra binu tāku āna na diśe /

[To one whose mind is deeply engaged on something,
Without it it does not seem different.⁷]

4. *yāhāra yemanta swabhāba,*
prāṇa gale hele chāra ki yiba /

[The manner of one's nature—
Even if one dies will it be abandoned?]

Below, some lines were lifted from the poet's composed books. Readers will be able to understand from this the poet's simple and charming language, expressive [*sarasa*] and sweet thoughts [*bhābas*], composition-art, word-arrangement, etc.

(1)

galāṇi ta galā kathā re saṅgāta,
gupate sinā mū *tote pacāruchi*
baḷi paṛibāru byathā re /
gaṅgāru biśada *gabhīra to hṛda*
gaṅṭhidhana tora sneha,
goṛa khasi kheda *debāra darada*
yibāra upāya kaha re /
gaṅjāiki jiṇi *lāgi jhāṅke puṇi*
raṅjāilā mana jhaḷi,
golā garaḷaru *kaṭu pīyūṣaru*
swādu guṇa galā baḷi re /
giḷidelā pura- *ndara-nīḷa-kara-*

⁶ [Crows and parrots are often contrasted in Indian culture; in folklore parrots sometimes learn to speak the name of Rāma, which a crow presumably could not do.]

⁷ [The presence or absence of an object does not affect one's meditation on it.]

	<i>kaḷikāmaya timira,</i>	
<i>gahana ki gṛha</i>		<i>hoilā sandeha</i>
	<i>niścaya hoilā dūra re /</i>	
<i>gatāḷasanāṭa-</i>		<i>paṭu khañjarīta</i>
	<i>parāye āsilā uṛi,</i>	
<i>gaṇḍi garbhe guḷi</i>		<i>galā parā gaḷi</i>
	<i>bibeka delā ghauṛi re /</i>	
<i>ganana⁸ kusuma</i>		<i>pāi eṛe śrama</i>
	<i>phaḷa hoiba ki kāḷe,</i>	
<i>goḷiā na rakhi</i>		<i>kaha candramukhi</i>
	<i>gahaḷi na thibā beḷe re /</i>	
<i>goḷi delā mora</i>		<i>bāhāra bhitara</i>
	<i>swara se abā sarase,</i>	
<i>gātra goṭiyāka</i>		<i>pūrīlā pulaka</i>
	<i>śrabaṇa sīmā sparaśe re /</i>	
<i>gariṣṭha aruci</i>		<i>kāhī ki karuci</i>
	<i>aśana basana dehe /</i>	
<i>gurujanatati</i>		<i>jāṇile ki gati</i>
	<i>aṣṭadurgapati kahe /</i>	

[Of the matter that just occurred, O friend,
Only secretly I have asked you
Because I have fallen victim to distress.

Your heart is more pure and deep than the Gaṅgā (= the Ganges),
Your affection a treasured object;
The pain of losing my footing on slippery ground,
Tell me how to remove it.

More than intoxication from hemp,
Suddenly entering the mind he enchanted (me);
More potent than venom, sweeter than nectar.

⁸ ["Ganana" should likely be "gagana," which I have used for the purpose of translation.]

The darkness, filled by the tender shoot of the sapphire ray of light,
 overwhelmed (me);
 As to whether I was at home or in the forest,
 I became uncertain.
 Like the *khañjarīta* (bird), tireless and playful, (it) came flying,
 Entering my being like a bullet,
 Driving away my conscience.

Such labor for an unreal thing (*gagana kusuma*)—
 What will be the result?
 Giving up deception, tell me moon-faced one,
 When will the turmoil cease?

Perhaps that sweet sound agitated my outside and inside;
 A tingle spread throughout my body
 When it reached my hearing.

Why am I most apathetic
 About food, dress, and body?
 The elders knew which condition (this was),
 Says the Lord of Aṣṭadurga.]

(2)⁹

<i>atha bicakṣaṇe</i>		<i>ghena ta ikṣaṇe</i>
	<i>piibā pari yemā śirī,</i>	
<i>se mṛdu jaḷapa</i>		<i>mohanā aḷapa</i>
	<i>hoi āsibāru kiśorī /</i>	
	<i>pratimā, prati muhūrte āna āna /</i>	
<i>yeūrūpe tapa-</i>		<i>nīya bhaje rūpa</i>
	<i>dāha dāha ke bānabāna //</i>	
<i>birañci bindhāṇi</i>		<i>delā ki rasāṇi</i>
	<i>hāṭaka haṭha¹⁰ pitulāku,</i>	

⁹ [The first four verses of the seventh canto of *Candrakaḷā*.]

¹⁰ [For translation I have used “*haṭa*,” given in some editions.]

<i>na dekhile jane</i>	<i>jagate nayane</i>
<i>tā nakhāgra kānti tuḷāku</i>	
<i>madimā,¹¹ gheni se bhurubarttuḷāku¹² /</i>	
<i>yogya nohe gheni</i>	<i>na kale sajanī</i>
<i>pāhārā hamsulī tuḷāku //</i>	
<i>amānī gahana</i>	<i>gaja abhimāna</i>
<i>chui āsilā gamanaku,</i>	
<i>śīsusakhīmālā</i>	<i>ācaribā kheḷā</i>
<i>yogāilā nāhī manaku /</i>	
<i>ānaku, nipaṭa nohilā najara /</i>	
<i>anārata rasa-</i>	<i>prasaṅge mānasa</i>
<i>hoi āsilā jarajara //</i>	
<i>darasphuṭa mallī</i>	<i>hasi bhūruballī</i>
<i>kheḷibā khuraḷī śikhilā,</i>	
<i>amita bhubhaṅgī¹³</i>	<i>sṛṣṭhi kheḷā bhaṅgi</i>
<i>ahaṅkāra sāra śukhilā /</i>	
<i>ālāpa, madhya madhyare nāsāpuṭa /</i>	
<i>phuliuṭhibāru</i>	<i>baṛhāilā¹⁴ guru</i>
<i>hoi swamaṅḍanaku nāṭa //</i>	

[Thus ably consider with (your) eyes
As if drinking the body of the princess;
She is charmingly soft-spoken, from just becoming a young woman;
The image, different at every moment—
I praise the appearance which, like gold,
Has a different luster with each burning.

As if the finest of artists burnished
The playful golden doll—
No one can see (anything) in the world

¹¹ [For translation I have used “*mrādimā*,” given in some editions.]

¹² [Other editions give “*ūrubarttuḷā*,” which I have used for translation.]

¹³ [For translation I have used “*bhujaṅgī*,” which appears in some editions.]

¹⁴ [For translation I have used “*batāilā*,” which appears in some editions.]

Equal to the brilliance of the tips of her nails;
Tenderness, considering those spherical buttocks:
Because it is not suitable her friend did not make the *pāhārā* from the down of
the swan.¹⁵

Her gait is a humble jungle elephant's, touched with arrogance;
The playful behavior of her young friends
Does not befit her mind;
To others, it is certainly not seen
That her mind always became overwhelmed with emotion (*rasa*).

The smiling eyebrow-creepers played and learned gymnastics—
The vanity of the boundless serpent (= Śeṣa?), who had created a playful manner
(of moving), withered completely;
Conversation, between the nostrils,
Because they were very proud, becoming the *guru* (they) taught dancing to their
ornaments.]

From a fear of excess [we] have desisted from quoting more.
Some pure Oṛiā words used by the poet are given below.

<i>kalabala</i>	<i>ḍuī</i>	<i>toṭi</i>	<i>bāuḷā</i>
<i>chaṭapaṭa</i>	<i>ḍhoka</i>	<i>bāsi</i>	<i>āuḷipāuḷi</i>
<i>khiāla</i>	<i>phaṭuā</i>	<i>nipaṭa</i>	<i>saṭābaṭā</i>
<i>jhāūḷi</i>	<i>phandāi</i>	<i>kāuḷi</i>	<i>lākhilā</i>
<i>ohaḷa</i>	<i>tiāri</i>	<i>khila</i>	<i>chapāi</i>
<i>laya</i>	<i>ciṛhi</i>	<i>khali</i> (verb)	<i>ṭikie</i>
<i>luḷe</i>	<i>saṅkhoḷā</i>	<i>khūṇa</i>	<i>ṭākara</i>
<i>jhula</i>	<i>gumāna</i>	<i>haṭi</i>	<i>ṭipi</i>
<i>dabi</i>	<i>chuṭilā</i>	<i>labe</i>	<i>ṭāparā</i>
<i>jāka</i>	<i>laṭa</i>	<i>gārimā</i>	<i>ṭāhi</i>

¹⁵ [A *pāhārā* is a cloth spread over the road where someone (such as a deity) travels to soften any falls. In this case the down of a swan is not soft enough to protect the heroine's buttocks.]

chari *barāi* *chāuli* *pasarā*

With much skill the poet has used [these] among the difficult Samskr̥ta words in the above-mentioned verses.

In the books composed by him, the poet, like other old poets, has not excessively introduced himself [or: made himself known].¹⁶

-Śrī Tāriṇīcaraṇa Ratha

¹⁶ [Here and in a similar passage above T. Ratha seems to be contrasting older poetry, such as that of Kabisūr̥ya, with a more “introspective” modern style.]