

TWO POEMS ON BALIAPAL

By
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Sri Samarendra Nayak

Ganamukti Lekhak O Shilpi Sammukhya
Orissa

Baliapal is not a mere name. As a small stretch of land at the mouth of Subarnarekha on the east coast of India, this stands for protest against monstrous war that is fought for the interest of the ruling classes. In the name of regional balance, they enter into crazy arms-race and to defend the country, start building up missile base with foreign aid, unconcerned for the possible destruction of a whole people with its rich culture. On the other hand these rulers fail to provide even the basic needs of life to the millions,

Baliapal, a dove dozing smugly in a corner of this country at Orissa-Bengal boarder of Balasore district has started flapping its wings. The people there do no more resign to their fate. They resent and resist. The resistance grows day by day.

Thus 'Baliapal' has been a connotative term acquiring new meaning, new significance every day, every hour.

GMLSS presents here two poems on Baliapal.

Ganamukti Lekhak
O Shilpi Sammukhya,
Orissa

O' Baliapal !

II 1 II

In geographical maps
and government records

O Baliapal !

You are not

just a name

or a hamlet,

you are the

emboldened fiery challenge,

an eternal protest.

You are a nest-of-peace

of countless life-birds.

You are the culmination

of a sweet, and cheerful life.

|| 2 ||

You are a bright
beautiful picture
in the sparkling eyes
of hundreds of peace-loving labour.

In this grey dusty earth
you are a placid oasis
for countless blooming lives.

You, a soul-stirring raga "Purabi"
heralding many a
bright, fragrant mornings.

|| 3 ||

You are the secret art
of living a decent, clean life,
you are a great epic
of labour & construction,
tools at work silently, incessantly.

You are not alone
earth, sand, and mud,
nor water and air,
tree, plant, and shrub
you are the sweet music,
of a swift-flowing river
you are the flow
of a lively bubbling stream.

II 4 II

In your shadowy zone
hundreds of humming bees
move about incessantly
filling countless pitchers of honey.

In your azure sky
white-kites spreading their wings
fly far away,
herons flap off
marble-white snowy feathers.

In your blue ocean
numberless boats
go forth fishing
dancing on the waves
cutting their ways,
sea-voyage over
a few of them
their black bare bodies
sprinkled with salt
return home in the afternoon
tired out.

II 5 II

Miles of cocoa
and cashew plantation,
countless, luxuriant
betel-vines
draw green artistic designs
on the carpet of brown sand.

Sweet-potato, ground-nut
musk-melon vines
have adorned your dusty soil
ever-green.

They have given the people
a high hope for
a long, prosperous life,
infused into hearts
of working class
an unquellén, eternal
hope to live.

II 6 II

But, today, at whose
ominous, damned manoeuvre
suddenly, covetuous eyes of a
power-mad hunter
like the evil-eyes of 'Sani'
has fallen on your green body ??

To cut to pieces
your delicate body,
to drink to heart's content
fresh red blood,
a damned hunter
has indiscreetly taken aim
at your heart
to launch a fiery missile.

Defying human conscience
with a demonic laugh
born anew in life after
today, that hunter
of prehistoric age
has silenced your
heart-rending notes.

II 7 II

But you are not
that innocent, helpless "Krauncha"
of by-gone days
in the moth-eaten pages of mythology
to kiss the dust
silently and noiselessly,
and resigning to your fate
accept death so easily.

The earth and water
sky and wind
sways
at your shrill cry.

You
a mighty, fighting "Jatayu".

You, too, have a
zest for life,
a free bird, a Dove of peace,
have taken shelter
without fear
under the sky
of myriad caring eyes.

have raised a stormy
song of protest
resounding all over.

Therefore, today, for you
innumerable "Valmiki"
give voice to slokas;
you are a symbol
of powerful and irrepressible spirit.

II 8 II

So in today's map of the country
you are not an ordinary village,
In government records
yours is not
a mere, ordinary name :
It's a name to conjure with.

You are a bold
vociferous challenge
of humanity's conscience,
you are a swift, spirited
horse-of-life.

You are on your own
a conscientious objector,
a synonym of protest,
hope of hundreds of
war-stricken peace-loving citizens.

You are a well-defined
image of bold life,
you represent a collective warning
of millions of forefingers
for the next century.

You symbolize a clear
unmistakable utterance of "Om Shanti"
in chorus by thousands of men.

You also symbolize
holy utterance of 'Omkar'
of divine and happy life.

You embody
a red-hot,
sparkling, sharpened
sword of steel.



- Original Oriya by Brajanath Rath
- Translated by Ashok Kumar Das

Flowers bloom here throughout the Year

Here blossom flowers
throughout the year,
spring smiles,
bees humming
move about
in maddened breeze
branches laden with
alluring luocious fruits.

While early sun leaps out
to the bosom of the sky
from the dancing lap
of the rippled sea,
the fish of life
swims in the river 'subarnarekha',
throughout the year
reddened-leaves turn green
and drop down.

This land, my motherland
has underneath
its sand-dunes
trickling stream of water
like a juicy cashew fruit
that overflows with
riches of crop ;

Look at the sky
and then down to earth
crops everywhere
around and beneath ;
dare drive me homeless
from such a rich place !!

Satiating love of cool-
green-cocoanut
drowsy with dream
of betel vines
life infatuated with honey ;
don't you see
I use no glasses
no cataract blurs
my centenarian eyes,

I can count stars
in the night sky.

To tell you the truth—
daily I take
rice and fish
caught from the Bay of Bengal
and the Subarnarekha

wash my hands in
the spring-water-of-peace.

Dare you make
me a destitute ?
drive me out ?
throw me out in the street ?
make me homeless ?
Whither, whither, whither ?

They came from the region
where I will be resettled
with a message :

There grass does not grow
during the rains,
flowers wither in the bud,
love loses its ardour
on the honeymoon night,
that barren land
decaying hillock
awaits me ?

Then in the din & bustle
of millions of people,
creative culture
of two million arm,
my hearth & home
'hat and bazar'
daily round of life
fun and frolic
ecstasy of life
will vanish into thin air
like a wave of sound !

Shall I stand by the roadside
 with a beggar's bowl,
 my children to be sold in
 the market ?
 shall I make a
 prostitute of my wife
 in 'sonagachhi' ?
 sell my pubescent daughter
 to the Amirs ?
 clean plates in
 some Madras hotel ?

Tell me what to do ?
 I shall do
 as you like—

Shall I shine shoes
 in the footpath of Bombay !
 be a 'dadan' labour in Nepal
 to cut rocks !
 shall go as a slave
 to Arab & Africa !
 shall go
 wherever you like !

So much so that
 donned in the glamorous
 dress of democracy
 with a patriotic wig
 on my head
 make me stand before
 the foreigners at the Red Fort,
 imprisoned in a
 'glass-house of 'Vodka'

you can export
my skeleton
to Washington market,
as you like !

None has given
me a penny,
assistance on co-operation

Still with powerful arm
I built up an
independent culture
self generating economy,
turned this sandy
earth into gold,
a paradise on earth,
tamed an unruly river
brought under control
a stormy sea
and stretchad my
tired body on
Sandy hills,

Opening my eyes, today
I find, I will be
displaced from my native-land,
a suckling child
wrenched from her mother's lap
in his native-land.

But yet, remember
I am a labouring man
a peace-loving man
I don't disturb
even a fly,
if my dream is shattered !
none would be spared

May it be the
launching-pad for missiles
atomic, nuclear, or star-war
or anything !

Keep in mind ?
Keep in mind ?
flowers bloom here,
throughout the year
and the spring smiles.



- *Original Oriya by Samarendra Nayak*
- *English translation by Ashok Kumar Das
and Bijay Upadhyay*

Brajanath Rath : (b. 1936)

Eminent progressive poet of Orissa. Joined peoples literary movement since last couple of decades and has been active in "Ganamukti Lekhak O' Silpi Sammukhya" as its acting President. Won Orissa Sahitya Academy Award - 1984 and Visuva Milan Award—1974. Former President "Yuva Lekhak Sammelan", Orissa. President, Phakirmohan Sahitya Parisad, Balasore and Vice-President, Ganatantrik Adhikar Surakhya Sangathan, Orissa.

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