

The Great revolutionary leader Jayee Rajguru

Jaykrushana Mohapatra popularly known as Jayee Rajguru a great freedom fighter and martyr of Odisha was born on, 29th October, 1739 the auspicious day of the Anla Navami in Biraharekrushnapur in Puri District to Chand Rajguru and Haramani Devi. Jaykrushna was born in a family in which his ancestors served in the court of the King of Khurda as Rajguru. His forefathers were the political, military advisors and spiritual teachers to the King of Khurda and were traditionally called 'Rajguru'. Jayee Rajguru was an excellent scholar in Sanskrit and a great tantra Sadhaka. He had mastered Vedas, Puranas and Scriptures in the early years of his life. He had mastery in writing thousands of shlokas with ease. He was an acclaimed scholar among the pundits. He was the royal priest, commander-in-chief and the real administrative representative of the kind of Khurdha, Gajapati Mukundadev-II. He was the head of the administration and chief of the army of Khurdha after his fathers's death. Jayee was a lifelong bachelor. At the age of 41 years he became the Chief Minister-cum-Rajguru of King Dibyasingha Deva-II. Unfortunately Dibyasingha Deva-II died in 1798 leaving the throne and administration into turmoil. Owing to the sincere efforts of Jayee Rajguru Mukunda Deva-II, the minor son of the deceased king ascended the throne of Khurdha in 1798. As the new king was a minor, Jayee Rajguru acted as regent to look after the affairs of entire administration of the kingdom. As regent of the kind Mukunda Deva-II, Jayee Rajguru was assigned important portfolios of the Khurda kingdom such as civil, military and Revenue administration religious affairs and the management of the Jagannath Temple etc. Jayee Rajguru was designated as Dewan, Bebartha (Minister) and Rajguru etc.

When the Britishers attacked Odisha and captured several lands and exuded notice to all the kings to accept their dominance and pay taxes. The king of Khurda never accepted their subjugation as per the advice of Jayee Rajguru. He then started writing to the neighbouring kingdoms and planning strategies. He succeeded in mobilizing and instigating the Odia solders, the paikas. He organized village youths

and trained them military practices, arms and ammunition as he had paramount warfare skills and knowledge of weaponry.

In 1760 the kingdom of Khurda faced the most unfortunate and unwanted situation during the rule of Birakishore Dev, the grandfather of Mukunda Dev-II. In that year Narayan Deva the king of Paralakhemundi invaded Khurda to capture the throne claiming that he was the successor of Ganga Dynasty. Unable to face the enemy Birakishore Deva begged for military assistance from Maratha ruler Shivram Sathe, the Bhonsle king of Nagpur to defeat Narayan Deva of Parala. Shivram sathe demanded & obtained important parganas of Khurda kingdom and rupees one lakh in cash for his assistance. Loss of prosperous parganas like Rahang, Chhabiskud, Sarai, Lumbai along with possession of Purushottam Kshetra of Puri was a great economic loss of Khurda kingdom for which the king suffered and became mad. The loss in the state economy continued till Jayee Rajguru's time Hence he took effort to revive state economy by adopting several economic policies. He also strengthened the Khurda army by recruiting Paikas. His reforms changed the situation of Khurda. The Khurda kingdom became economically sound and militarily strong to face enemy.

The Britishers intended to obtain a trade route on land from Ganjam to Balasore via Khurda for transportation of goods in connection with trade and commerce. Besides they needed a land passage for the British army to March from Kolkata to Madras which would go through the Khurda Kingdom. Hence, occupation of Khurda Kingdom was essential for the British administration. To fulfill their need the British utilized Shyam Sundar Deva, a brother of late Dibyasingha Deva-II for negotiation with the king of Khurda for land route but failed due to stiff resistance of Jayee Rajguru in 1798. This was the first confrontation Rajguru against the British. His intention was to safeguard the interest of the Kingdom of Khurda. In 1803 Col. Harcott the District Magistrate of Ganjam signed the treaty of Deogaon with the Marathas. According to the provisions of the treaty, the Pargansa of Rahang,

Chhabiskud, Sarai and Lumbai were transferred from the possession of the Marathas to the British. The British refused to transfer 4 Paraganas to the king Mukunda Deva-II. The British felt that Jayee Rajguru was the key person of Khurda administration behind the rejection of the agreement. The Britishers planned to remove Rajguru from the post of the king's advisor. Jayee Rajguru also took steps to take over the management of Sri Jagannath Temple of Puri. He mustered his army and occupied the 4 Paraganas on his own with contemplation to drive out the Britishers from his State and Country. On October 1804, a group of Paikas drew sword against Britishers at Pipli. This event alarmed the British force. In the meantime Jayee Rajguru approached all the rulers of the State to unite and invade the British.

The ultimate historical fight, the battle of Barunei took place in December 1804 on the foothills of Barunei between the Britishers and the Paikas led by Jayee Rajguru. The handful of Paikas fought against 7000 strong British army by their intrepidity, battle skills and holocaust. The British tempted few locals by offering large taxes in return for information of Jayee Rajguru and as a result he was arrested and taken to the Barabati fort. All his efforts to anchor the king was futile and king Mukunda Deva -II was captured on 3rd January 1805 and was imprisoned in the Barabari fort at Cuttack where Jayee Rajguru was also undergoing his imprisonment. Later both were sent to the Midnapur Jail from Cuttack fearing further violence in the State. The British counsels considered the petition submitted by the king from the prison and released Mukunda Deva-II and sent him to Puri for settlement and as caretaker of Puri Sri Mandir. The trial of Jayee Rajguru took place at Baghitota in Midnapur. Jayee Rajguru boldly confessed to the question of Col. Harcourt that the king was a child. What had been done was by myself. Hence, capital punishment or death sentence was awarded to the Valiant leader Jayee Rajguru after his trial.

He was brutally killed by the British soldiers on 6th December 1806. He sacrificed his life for the motherland and became a martyr. The great patriot Jayee Rajguru preferred death to surrender as to beg mercy. The credit of the first war of India's Independence goes to the "Sepoy Mutiny of 1857". Much earlier to this great event, India had witnessed in the soil of Odisha, the freedom struggle of the great freedom fighter Jayee Rajguru (Paika Bedroha) the kingdom of Khurda vowing to wipe out the rule of the mighty British from 1803 to 1805.
