

## Freedom Fighter Shree Abhiram Paramahansa Dev

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Thakur Shree Abhiram Paramahansa Dev was not only a well known religious teacher and famous social reformer but also a great freedom fighter. He was the only Oriya saint who struggled for independence of motherland. His heroic role during the period of great National movement recognized him a patriot and true lover of mother India. Achievements of Sri Abhiram Paramahansa Dev in freedom movement is remarkable. His contribution in the field of literature, religion, peace, love and brotherhood was incomparable. He was a great spiritual leader who created numbers of disciples and followers. He had started a religious and cultural movement in Orissa to create renaissance among the people.



He was a great lover of truth and peace. The life history of this notable saint is very interesting. He took birth on 18th January 1904 in a small village of Puri district. After completing his primary education he became a school teacher. After some days he left the teachership and started meditation in "Khandaba bana" near Brahmagiri at the age of eleven. There he also worshipped goddess

Vanadurga (Purnamasi). By the grace of Vanadurga he became a great Sadhu. He became very popular and with many disciples, sanyasis and devotees everywhere he started spiritual renaissance. His followers with love called him Shree Thakur. Shree Thakur moved

from village to village in Cuttack district for peaching his ideology, divine thought and spiritual values among the people. Shree Thakur had written a famous book named "Kali Bhagabata". Some patriotic elements are available in this great book. When Shree Thakur was at Ichhapur village of Cuttack district he wrote the first six chapters of the historic book Kali Bhagabata. This book admired the greatness of Shree Thakur in the freedom

struggle of India. The book Kali Bhagabata composed by Shree Thakur, criticised the harmful activities of the mighty Britishers. First six chapters of this book were published from Berhampur. Publisher Sashibhusan Rath had printed it in his Assha Press. In the critical period of the national movement this book had much impact on the people. Abhiram Paramahansa Dev had written in such way that

many chapter has two different meanings. The surface meaning differs from its inner meaning. Especially the chapters 4 and 22 have two different meanings. In Kali Bhagabata Shree Thakur described about the future political situation of India. The words Mahatma, British Emperor of that time George-V, Congress, Satyagrahis are found in the book Kali Bhagabata. Thakur Abhiram greatly appreciated the non-violent method adopted by Mahatma Gandhi against British imperialism. In Kali Bhagabata Abhiram Paramahansa Dev clearly praised Gandhiji as "Mahamanab" with a great soul. Shree Thakur was a great supporter of non-violence and Satyagraha which was adopted by Gandhiji in the freedom struggle. Shree Thakur also condemned the arbitrary ruling of the Britishers and advised the people to join as freedom fighters under the leadership of M.K. Gandhi to achieve freedom. Shree Thakur spoke about the Quit India movement of 1942 much before the historic incident happened. He also advised people not to co-operate with British administration. Shree Abhiram raised his voice against oppressive ruling of Emperor George-V. He also encouraged the Satyagrahis for their selfless struggle for Mother India. The book Kali Bhagabata earned popularity and widely circulated all over Orissa. Due to anti British feeling the book provided fuel to young mass of Orissa to oppose foreigners in any case. Shree Thakur is the only one saint of Orissa who actively and bravely participated in the Indian National Movement. A group of anti social people who were the great supporter of Britisher complained against Shree Thakur in Mahanga Police Station for his anti-British tone in Kali Bhagabata.

Sub-Inspector of Mahanga Police Station Durgananda Mishra managed to get a copy of

Kali Bhagabata but being unable to understand the real meaning of sentences, sent a confidential report to Orissa Police Head quarter at Cuttack on 2.2.1934. The report forwarded by the S.P. C.I.D (Special Branch) to A.P. Buckley, the S.P. (II) (Special Branch) of Madras for detailed examination and necessary action. The Chief Secretary of Madras Govt. Mr. G.T.H. Bracken ordered to file a case against the author, publisher and printer of the book Kali Bhagabata. The case was filed on 20.9.1934 under CRP Rules - 195 Section 124/A. The offence of Thakur according to the British Government has been quoted in the book "So Say Abhiram" page bearing No.18 - 4th paragraph "The said publication contained several passages and seditious matters intended to bring into hatred and contempt of His Majesty, the King - Emperor and the Government established by law in British vide India". Government order was issued No.437 public (general) dt. 30.4.1934 of Indian Press Act (Emergency Power) under Section 19, published in Madras Govt. Gazette, to seize all copies of the book Kali Bhagabata and orders were passed that the State Govts. should notify in their Gazettes that "any person who will be found reading Kali Bhagabata will be liable for imprisonment for one month or a five rupees fine." Shree Thakur was arrested on 26.9.1934 at Karamala Ashram and was confined in Chhatrapur Jail. Sri Thakur was presented to the District Magistrate Mr. A.F.W. Dixon's Court at Chhatrapur on 28.9.1934. The trial started from 29.9.1934 and ended on 13.12.1934.

At that period Shree Thakur was thirty years of age. At last the Judgement came in on 31.12.34 that Abhiram Paramahansa being founded guilty, was given punishment of rigorous imprisonment for one year. Shree

Thakur was taken to Berhampur District Jail on 13.12.1934 and there after to Rajamahendri Jail on 10.1.1935 to avoid public agitation. Sashi Bhusan Rath the publisher of that book was also awarded same punishment. Many prominent persons were presented during the trial. Among them Nilakantha Das viewed his feeling about Shree Thakur in his book "Geeta Prabesh". Sri Raman Murty well known advocate was arguing this case on behalf of Shree Thakur and Lingaraj Panigrahi was the lawyer of Sashibhusan Rath. The sentence to Thakur was relaxed for 41 days and he was released on 1.11.1935.

Shree Abhiram Paramahansa Dev a prominent religious teacher of Orissa sacrificed his life for the sake of Mother India.

His life long performance is remarkable. He is highly respected by the people of Orissa due to his outstanding contribution in the freedom struggle, social reform and religious teaching. His thought is implanted in the minds and hearts of the people of Orissa. Abhiram Paramahansa Dev occupied a high position in the religious world. His outstanding contribution towards secularism, mankind, social reform would be remembered for ever. Shree Thakur occupied a great place in the heart of the common people.

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*A delegation of the tribals of Kalahandi District handing over a memorandum to Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Naveen Patnaik in his Assembly Chamber for rapid execution of Aluminium Project at Lanjigarh on 28.12.2004. Shri Balabhadra Majhi, Minister, Scheduled Tribes & Scheduled Castes Development (Scheduled Tribes Development) is also present.*