

Appayya, Bhaṭṭoji, Jagannātha: Anecdotes of Encounters and Their Lessons

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Appayya Dīkṣita, Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita, and Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja were three of India's leading intellectuals in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and each in his own way has transformed at least one of Sanskrit's major knowledge systems. In addition to the massive corpus of scholarly and artistic writings that these three authors have left behind, there also exists a rich body of anecdotes surrounding their lives. This paper deals with a subset of this narrative pool -- stories that have the three great men meet in a variety of locales and under diverse and peculiar circumstances. While some of these stories clearly have no historical basis, they have a lot to tell us about the themes and tensions that informed the last great period of Sanskrit learning and the various agendas of some of its most important agents. The paper will discuss stories dealing with three different encounters – Appayya meets Bhaṭṭoji, Bhaṭṭoji meets Jagannātha, and Jagannātha meets Appayya – and will tease out the lessons these have to teach us about questions of innovation versus traditionalism, the tension between local and translocal identities, and the negotiation of Sanskrit culture with radically new cultural formations.