

REFERENCES OF TEMPLES IN CARNĀTIC MUSIC COMPOSITIONS

Sneha.V.P
Research Scholar
Department of Music
Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit
Kalady, Kerala
E mail: sneha.hum@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Music is an inseparable art in temples. Most of the daily worships or pūjas are accompanied by music, either on musical instruments or on voice. There are so many musical instruments like *kombu*, *kuzhal*, *pulluva veena*, *thimila*, *chenda*, *śankhu* or conch etc. and devotional musical forms like *sōpāna sangita*, *mallāri* tunes, *tēvāram*, *divya prabandham*, *lali*, *unjāl*, *kavuttuvam* etc. being used in south Indian temples during specific hours of worship. So many iconographical remaining and inscriptions also are found out from various temples that include references on music and musical instruments of ancient ages.

Conversely, we can find references on temples from carnātic music compositions also. Most of the illustrious composers of south Indian music have composed *kritīs* on Temples and Temple related themes and they are collectively known as *Kshētra Kritīs*. Most of them like Trinities - Tyāgarāja, Muthuswāmi Dīkshitar and Śyāma Śāstri and others like Subbarāya Śāstri, Veena Kuppaiyyar have brilliantly composed *Kshētra kritīs* during their visits to concerned temples. This article gives a brief description of some of the Indian temples that are mentioned in south Indian music compositions.

CARNĀTIC MUSIC COMPOSITIONS ON TEMPLE RELATED THEMES

Majority of the carnātic music composers possess *Kshētra kritīs* in their account. Along with the *rāga mudra* (*rāga* name) and *vāggēyakāra mudra* (*Nama Mudra*) (signature of the composer) which are usually found in almost all *kritīs*, *Kshētra kritīs* possess details like the *Kshētra mudra*, name of the deity, mentioning on the holy tree, place of the Temple, and sometimes offerings given to the deities also. Other descriptions like origin of the Temple, mythological and sculptural aspects, forms of the deities and festivals connected with the Temple etc.

Royal composer Shāhji Maharāj of Maratha Kingdom has been considered as the originator of *Kshētra kritīs*. There are so many other composers who also composed *kritīs* relating to Temple related themes. Muthuswāmi Dīkshitar has composed about 200 *Kshētra kritīs* on various temples whereas Śyāma Śāstri have 29 in his account. The latter has focused mainly on Goddesses like *Bangāru Kamākshi* of Tānjore and *Mīnākshi* of Madurai. Tyāgarāja has composed 44 *kshētra kritīs* in all, of which 21 are on female deities. Some of the Temples referred in the compositions are discussed below:

- *TIRUVĀRUR*

Tiruvārur is one of the ‘seven sacred places of Lord Tyāgarāja’ of which the other six being Tirumarikkādu (Vēdāranyam), Tirunagal (Nāgapattinam), Tirukkoil, Tirunellur, Tirukkaramayil and Tiruvānmiyur. The temple has been built in between 7th and 10th century AD. King Raja Raja Chōla – I was the royal patron of this temple.

In kritīs like ‘*Tyāgarājāya Namaste*’ in the *rāga Bēgada* and ‘*Chandraśēkharam*’ in the *rāga Mārga hindōlam*, Muthuswāmi Dīkshitar has referred the deity in the form of Sōmaskanda mūr̥ti with Uma on one side and Skantar in the middle. *Charana* portion of the *kriti* ‘*Tyāgarājāya Namaste*’ (*Bēgada rāga*) is as ‘*Makutādi pūjitha sōmaskanta mūr̥thaye*’ and that of the *kriti* ‘*Chandraśēkharam*’ (*rāga Mārga hindōlam*) is as ‘*Ānandaskandam Sōmaskandam*’.

The sacred tree (*sthala vriksha*) of the temple is ‘*Pādri*’ (mango tree or *pātali*) and is included in the *anupallavi* portion of the *kriti* ‘*Hātakeswaram*’ in *Bilahari raga* as: ‘*Pātali pādapa mūla prakaśam*’.

Usually we can find the Nandi *vāhana* in a sitting posture in most of the temples. But as a contradiction, Nandi in Tiruvārur is in standing pose. Muthuswāmi Dīkshitar has referred this Nava Nandi in his composition ‘*Srī Tyāgarājasya*’ composed in *Rudrapriya rāga* as ‘*Nava Nandyādi pālasya*’. Also the composer has given mentioning on the evening ‘*sāyaraksha pūja*’ which is a very important *pūja* in the temple, as ‘*Amarēsādi pūjitha sāyamkālasya*’. Although the *panchamukha vādyā* is the main musical instrument kept in this temple, Dīkshitar has mentioned the instruments *śuddha maddalam* and *nāgaswaram* in his compositions ‘*Srī Tyāgarājasya*’ (*Rudrapriya rāga*) and ‘*Chandraśēkharam*’ (*Mārga hindōlam*) as ‘*Ati śuddhamaddalādi vādyalōlasya*’ and ‘*Ati śuddhamaddala vādyādipriyam*’ respectively. The temple festival ‘*Radhōtsava*’ has been mentioned as ‘*Āshvēśa mahārādha sthitham*’ in the *Sri rāga kriti* ‘*Tyāgarāja mahādhwajārōha*’. In short, the Śiva *kritis* by Muthuswāmi Dīkshitar themselves are encyclopedic references on the temple at Tiruvārur. Also he has composed *kritis* on the sixteen manifestations of Ganēśa in Tiruvārūr temple and is known as *Shōdaśa Ganapathi kritis*.

Ūttukkādu Venkatasubbaier has composed a composition ‘*Śrīchakra mātangini*’ in *Suruti rāga* and he has praised the Goddedd Kamākshi as ‘*Kamalāpura sadane kamanīya vadane*’. Kamalāpuram is another name for Tiruvarūr.

- *TIRUVOTTRIYUR*

Tyāgarāja, one among the Trinities has composed ‘*Tiruvotriyur Pancharatnam*’ - a group of *kritis* praising the deity *Tripura sundari* of Tiruvotriyur temple. *Kannathalli* (*Sāveri rāga*), *Sundari ni divyarūpamu* (*Kalyāni rāga*), *Sundari ninu varnimpa* (*Ārabhi rāga*), *Sundari nannindarilo* (*Bēgada rāga*) and *Dārini telusukonti* (*Śuddha sāvēri*) are the *kritis* of this group. The Goddess *mudra* is depicted as *Tripura sundari*. Muthuswāmi Dīkshitar also has composed *kriti* on this deity and it is ‘*Ādipurīśwaram sadā bhajēham Tripura sundari samēta*’ in *Ārabhi rāga*.

- *VĀRANĀSI*

It is one of the most sacred places of Hindu religion and is situated in Uttar Pradesh. It is also called as Kāśi or Banaras. Dikshitar has composed many *kritis* on the deity Lord Śiva of Viśwanātha temple of this place and some of them are ‘Viśwēśwarō’ in *Kānada rāga* and ‘Kāśi viśālākshi’ in *Pūrvikalyāni rāga* and *Sri Viśwanātham bhajēham (Chaturdaśa rāgamālika)*. Both the compositions give reference to the Goddess *Viśālākshi* also. Swāti Tirunāl also has composed a bhajan praising the deity there as ‘Viśwēśwar darśan kar chal man tum Kāśi’ in *Sindhu bhairavi rāga*.

- *SRĪRANGAM*

It is a temple on the Vaishnavite deity Ranganādha. Tyāgarāja has composed a group *kriti* on this deity and is popularly known as *Srīrangam Pancharatnam*. The compositions included in this group are ‘Jūtha murāre’ (*Ārabhi rāga*), ‘Vinarādana manavi’ (*Dēvagāndhāri rāga*), ‘Rājuvedala’ (*rāga Tōdi*), ‘Karunajūdavayya’ (*rāga Sāranga*) and ‘Ō Rangasāyi’ (*Kāmbōji rāga*). Also he has composed *kriti* in *Yamuna Kalyāni rāga* - ‘Rangapura vihāra’ and ‘Srī Ranganāthāya’ in *rāga Dhanyāsi*. Mārgadarśi Śēshayyāngar has composed 48 *kshētra kritis* of which most are in praise of Sri Ranganādha of Srīrangam temple.

- *TEMPLES IN KERALA*

Maharaja Sri Swāti Tirunāl has composed group *kritis* on Goddess for the nine day Navarāthri festival and they are collectively known as *Navarāthri kritis*. The nine compositions are:

1. <i>Dēvi jagadjanani</i>	–	<i>Sankarābharanam</i>
2. <i>Pāhi janani</i>	–	<i>Kalyāni</i>
3. <i>Dēvi pāvane</i>	–	<i>Sāveri</i>
4. <i>Bhārathi māmava</i>	–	<i>Tōdi</i>
5. <i>Janani māmava</i>	–	<i>Bhairavi</i>
6. <i>Sarōruhāsana jāye</i>	–	<i>Pantuvārāli</i>
7. <i>Janani pāhisadā</i>	–	<i>Śuddha sāveri</i>
8. <i>Pāhi janani</i>	–	<i>Nāttakurinji</i>
9. <i>Pāhi parvatanandini</i>	–	<i>Ārabhi</i>

Each composition is being sung during each day of *Navarāthri* festival at *Kuthiramālikai* at Trivandrum district of Kerala as the main item of the concert. Another group *kriti* by the same composer – *Utsava prabandha*, is on the temple festival held at Sri Padmanābha Swāmi temple at Trivandrum. Of the 12 *keertanas*, each composition of this group gives account on the *pūjas*, details regarding the procession during the festival, the chariot on which the idol is being carried and so on. The composition ‘*Dēva māmāyi pāhi*’ in *Kēdāragoula rāga* composed by Maharaja is in praise of Lord Subrahmanya of Haripād temple. Pāpanāśam Śivan, a Tamil composer has composed a *kriti* on the deity of Guruvāyūr Sri Krishna temple as ‘*Guruvāyūrappā śaranam*’ in the *rāga Chakravākam*. There is a famous *Padam* in *Srī rāga* - ‘*Karuna cheyvānenthū thāmasam Krishna*’ composed by Irayimmam Thampi in praise of Lord Sri Krishna of Guruvāyūr temple. There are so many other compositions praising the shrines of various temples in Kerala like Śabarimala, Attakkulangara Bhagavathi Temple etc.

- *KĀNCHIPURAM*

It is a small temple town situated on the banks of river Vēgavathi. *Ēkāmrēśwara* temple is the most famous one of this place where the Lord Śiva is being worshiped in the form of *Pritvi linga*, one of the *Panchalingās*. The *kriti* - '*Chinthayamākanda*' in *Bhairavi rāga* is on this *linga* and is composed by Muthuswāmi Dīkshitar. Its charana includes the *linga mudra* as '*guruguhāntarangam pritvi lingam*'. There is another composition on this temple in the *rāga Śuddhasāvēri* - '*Ēkāmrēśa nāyike Śive śrī Kāmākshi pāhi pāhimām*' which give extra reference on the super Goddess *Kāmākshi* of this temple. Ūttukkadu Venkatasubbaier's *Kāmākshi Navāvarana kritīs* include compositions on the temple at Kānchipuram. One of them is '*Sadānandamayi chinmayi*' in *Hindōla rāga*. *Kshētra mudra* occurs as '*Dvaita nivāranādvaitālaye Kānchipurālaye*' in the *anupallavi* portion.

- *PAŚUPATINĀTHA KSHĒTRAM OF NEPAL*

This temple is called as *Nēpālam*. Dīkshitar has composed a *kriti* '*Paśupatiśwaram*' in *Śubhapantuvarāli rāga*. In the *anupallavi* part, he has addressed Lord Śiva as the one who has been extolled by King of western Kashmir; '*Paśchima Kāshmira rājavinutam*'. The deity here is *panchamukha linga* and hence a synonym '*Panchānanam*' has been included in the charana portion.

CONCLUSION

It can be found innumerable *kritīs* on temple related themes by almost all composers of carnatic music. But it is a notable fact that maximum numbers of *Kshētra kritīs* have been contributed by Muthuswāmi Dīkshitar. He has tried to include almost all the details regarding the temples in the *sāhitya*. Most of the compositions are in Sānskrit and Telugu languages. Apart from the examples cited, there are so many compositions on various other temples like Sri Kālahasti in Andhra Pradesh, Tanjavore, Tiruvannamalai, Tirunelveli, Māyāvaram (which is popularly known as the 'Banaras of the poor of the south'), Gōvur, Rāmēśwaram, Suchindram, Kumbhakōnam, and so on. It can be noted that majority of the *kritīs* by the Trinities are on temples in Tamil Nadu and hence we can assume that their pilgrimages were mainly inside the state. In short, from *Kshētra kritīs* one can get a clear picture about the temples, mode of worship and other special features there.

NOTES:

- (1) *Muthuswami Dikshitarude Keraliya Kshetrakritikal*, Ajith Namboothiri, Samakalika Sangitham (Journal), Issue 4, April 2008, p. 27

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