

## Selected Tanavarnam-s in Apoorva Raga-s

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### ABSTRACT

*Varnams are generally composed in popular raga-s which helps the learner to understand the nuances of that particular raga. There are number of varna-s are composed in raga-s like Todi, Kalyani, Sankarabharanam, Bhairavi, Dhanyasi, Begada, Abhogi, Purvikalyani, Sahana, Nattakuranji, etc. Post Trinity period was emerged with several new composers. Musicians shown their enthusiasm in doing experiments such as creating new raga-s, trying to sing rare raga-s mentioned in the various ancient Musical Treatises. Some of them composed music to varnam-s by tuning old poetry or literature and render it as varnam-s. Some musicians, who are get trained in both Carnatic and Hindusthani music systems, introduced Hindusthani raga-s to Carnatic music and composed varnam-s in it. This paper is intended to highlight some Apoorva raga 'Tana Varnam-s', which is composed in rare or apoorva raga-s.*

**Keywords:** Apoorva ragas, Tana Varnam, Thirukural Tana Varnam, Carnatic music.

### Introduction

Tanavarṇam is one among the musical forms belong to modern period of carnatic music. It is the first item figured in traditional Carnatic music concerts. In general, Carnatic music compositions are divided into two major sections i.e 'Abhyasagana' and 'Sabhagana'. Abhyasa gana is for learners and Sabhagana is for performers after mastered in Abhyasagana. Varṇams are like a bridge between abhyasa gana and sabha gana. All of the nuances and essential features like sancharas, ranchaka prayogas, apoorva prayogas of the raga is glimpsed in a Varṇa. This is considered as most intricate and crucial item for vocal exercises. Varnams played a very important role in providing rhythm control to the music learner and practitioner. Practicing and performing Varṇa in second and third speed is helpful to gain control on rhythm, tempo and voice control over various sthaya-s. Hence it is melodic oriented, Swara phrases of various lengths and range is the main aspect of Tanavarṇam. Varnam, being a 'dhatu pradhana' composition, Sahityam (text) is simple, less in Varṇa and it has plenty of vowel extensions. These vowel extensions help to express the ragabhava by the performer through vocal cord. Tanavarṇam has two major segments i.e Purvangam and Uttarangam. Purvangam comprises of pallavi, anupallavi and mukthayiswaram, and uttarangam comprises with charaṇam and charaṇa

swara-s. Varnam is a unique composition only available in Carnatic music system and cannot be seen in any other music system in the world.

Varnams are generally composed in popular raga-s which helps the learner to understand the nuances of that particular raga. There are number of varna-s are composed in raga-s like Todi, Kalyani, Sankarabharanam, Bhairavi, Dhanyasi, Begada, Abhogi, Purvikalyani, Sahana, Nattakuranji, etc. Post Trinity period was emerged with several new composers. Musicians shown their enthusiasm in doing experiments such as creating new raga-s, trying to sing rare raga-s mentioned in the various ancient Musical Treatises. Some of them composed varnam-s are tuned old poetry or literature into varnam-s. Some musicians, who are well trained in both Hindusthani and Carnatic music systems introduced Hindusthani raga-s to Carnatic music and composed varnam-s in it. This paper is intended to highlight some of the Varnam-s which composed in rare or apoorva raga-s.

The idea of rendering Thirukural as the first item of a carnatic concert aroused in the mind of Sri V.S. Gomathisankara Iyer who was working as a professor in veena in the Department of music and also involved in the assignment of collecting rare Tamil compositions for the Annamalai University music series publications. This idea of using Thirukural as a carnatic music composition was inculcated into Iyer by the great Tamil Scholar Dr.Mu.Varadharajanar. Some of the Thirukural Varnam-s are tuned in rare ragas by V.S. Gomathisankara Iyer.

### **Raga-s : The epicenter of Indian Music**

Music is the finest among the Fine arts. Music is a language of emotions. Music is the soul of Indian art and culture. It can influence all kinds of human emotions and feelings. Art music is bound by a System 'raga ' and 'tala'. Raga -s are vital to Indian music, especially to the Carnatic music, a music system of south India. Raga -s which originated centuries ago still have its refreshing beauty. The very heart of Indian music is 'raga'. It is a melodic form upon which the musician improvises. A raga, is much more than a technical rule. Each raga in Indian music system depicts a mood. Some raga -s are suitable to be played during sun rise, some during sunset, some produce a devotional feeling, some raga produces a romantic feeling, and so on... The outstanding feature of Indian music system, then any other music system in the world, is raga system. Carnatic music system has 72 Mela Kartha raga -s. Raga -s have endless scope for variations and creations. Musical compositions are concrete form of raga -s. The beauty lying in raga is very subtle and delicate to elucidate and comprehend. A Musical composition can present only certain beauty aspects of a raga but a detailed alapana can expose the beauty of a raga to some extent.

After the emergence of 72 Melakartha systems into Carnatic Music many raga-s which were previously in vogue before the 72 Melakartha scheme assigned according to their

swarasthana-s or Characteristic features, under a Melakartha i.e Janaka ragas as Janya raga. These Janya ragas, classified mainly into two ie ‘Upanga and Bhashanga’.

Upanga raga-s has the following classifications

1. Shadava – Sampurna
2. Audava – Sampurna
3. Sampurna – Shadava
4. Sampurna- Audava
5. Shadava - Shadava
6. Shadava - Audava
7. Audava - Shadava
8. Audava – Audava

Apart from the above classifications, classifications like the following Vakra ragas, Bhashanga Ragas, Nishadantya, Dhaivadantya Panchamantya, Madyamantya raga-s, Ghana, Naya, Desya Ragas, Karnataka – Desya ragas, Suddha, Chayalaga, Sankeerna Ragas, Common ragas and parallel ragas etc...are seen in the modern music. Among the above-mentioned classifications Prasiddha and apoorva raga-s is one classification. Prasiddha means Popular and Apoorva means rare.

### Some Apoorva Raga Varna-s

A raga, in which only one or a very few compositions composed, which is performed rarely in concerts is called apoorva raga or rare raga. Some Apoorva raga Varna-s is listed below

Sl.No.	Varnam	Raga	Tala	Composer
1.	Egan Aagi Anegan Agi	Nagavarali	Adi	Varagur. K. Muthukumaraswamy
2.	Naduvintri ( Thirukural Tana Varnam)	Nagavarali	Adi	Thiruvalluvar Music Composed by V.S.Gomathi Sankara Iyer
3.	Sri Durga Lakshmi Saraswathi	Nagavarali	Adi	Pathamadai Krishna Iyer
4.	Thondanukku Kuraiyethum	Veenadhari	Adi	V.S.Gomathi Sankara Iyer
5.	Adi nathane Azhagiya Velane	Veenadhari	Adi	Varagur. K. Muthukumaraswamy
6.	Veenadhanda Kamandala	Veenadhari	Adi	V.A.Dandayutha Dikshitar
7.	Varuvanodi vanna malar	Veenadhari	Adi	S.Srinivasa Iyengar
8.	Sondamum bandamum	Megaranjani	Adi	V.S.Gomathi Sankara Iyer
9.	Maa Karunai pozhi	Megaranjani	Adi	Varagur. K. Muthukumaraswamy
10.	Sevikunavillatha pozthu ( Thirukural Tana Varnam)	Megharanjani	Adi	Thiruvalluvar & Music Composed by V.S.Gomathi

				Sankara Iyer
11.	Megharanjani Ganamrutha	Megharanjani		Pattamadai Krishna Iyer
12.	Sevadi Tharuvai	Vahini	Adi	Varahur. K. Muthukumaraswamy
13.	Parinil nee kameswari	Vahini	Adi	Kshirapthisastri Thiruvananthai
14.	Aimkara Hrimkara	Omkaraswarupini	Adi	Adi Sankarar Music composed by TK Govindarao

## Nagavarali

**Aro : NSRGMPMD,,**

**Ava : NDPMGRSNDNS**

Upanga janya of Todi, 8<sup>th</sup> Melakartha. Swarasthanas are Suddha Rishabam, Sadharana Gandharam, Suddha madhyamam, Suddha dhaivatham and Kaisiki Nishadam.

Raga Nagavarali also called as ‘Nagadvani’ in ancient Tamil music. In Tamil Pann System this pann comes under Marutha Yazh under thiram ‘Nivir’ evolved from Perugiyal. It ranges from Mandra stayi nishadam to Madhyasthayi nishada. But according to old tradition it has been performed Mandra stayi Dhivatham to Tara sthayi Gandharam. This raga, the swaras have to be sung without gamakas. Vakra swara prayogas like ‘nrsgrmgsrns’, ‘gmdpg,rs’, ‘nsmm’, ‘gmdnrs’ are raga ranjaka prayogas of Nagavarali raga.

‘Eagan Agi Anegan Agi’ is a Tamil Tana Varnam composed in Nagavarali raga set to Adi tala composed by Varagur. K. Muthukumaraswamy is a beautiful example for the ragalakshana of Nagavarali discussed above. Prayogas like the following exhibits the nature and raga ranchaka prayogas of this raga.

In pallavi prayogas like- ‘ndmp, gmdp’, ‘rsrg mgmp- dpd- mpgrs’

In Anupallavi Prayogas like –‘g,d, pmgr mndp, mpm’, ‘mpdmgr srgm’

In Muktayiswaram prayogas like- ‘gmgrsrg,m’, ‘pndp ndpm’, gmrg srgm n,d n, smg , nddpm grn

The above ‘thaatu’ prayogas are frequently occurs in this raga and these are also the raga ranchaka prayogas of raga Nagavarali. Apart from the above ‘Thaatu prayogas’ janta prayogas nddppmgr, nddpm, without gamakas also a special feature of this raga which is perceptible in this varna.

## Veenadha

**Aro : S G P D N Ś**

**Ava : Ś NDPMGRS**

This raga is Janyam of 16<sup>th</sup> Mela Chakravaham. The swarsthanas are Suddha – Rishabam, Antara- Gandaram, Suddha- Madhyamam-, Chathusruthi- Dhaivatham, Kakali-Nishadam

Name of this raga mentioned in the book Sangitaswara prastara sagaram (p.425). Apart from the book Sangita Swaraprastara Sagaram, Sangita Chandirikai, Ragakosa, Palaiyali, Sangitakaumudi, and Pudiya Ragangal are a few grandhas mentioned this raga with same arohana and avarohana. A kriti ‘Girija Deviya Bhajiselo’ is composed by Sri Muthiah Bhagavathar in this raga, which is one among the Chamundamba Ashtotharasata Kirtana-s.

Tamil Varna-s ‘ Adi nathane – set to Adi tala composed by Varahur K. Muthukumaraswamy , Thondanukku Kuraiyethum –Adi composed by V.S. Gomathisankara Iyer, Veenadandakamandala – Adi composed by V.A. Dandayutha Dikshithar, Varuvanodi Vannamalar – Adi composed by S. Srinivasa Iyengar, Idikkuth thunai yarai –A’ Thirukural’ Tana varnam composed by Thiruvalluvar and music composed by V.S. Gomathisankar Iyer and A Tana Varnam in Telugu, Sari Evvarunnarura- Adi Composed by Pathamadai Krishna Iyer are perceptible in this raga.

In the Varnam ‘Sari Evvarunnarura-Adi – Pathamadai Krishna Iyer , in pallavi the following phrases are ragachaya and raga ranjaka prayogas can be seen.

‘grs, gpd ndpm’,- ‘m,grsgp,’- ‘grsgpgp,’- ‘dn,dpmgr’

In Anupallavi, the melody move up to tarastayi panchama ‘dnś,ḡ,ṗmḡr’, through this prayoga . In charanaswaras ,Janta swara prayoga like ‘śśnndppmmgg’is used. Through the melodic structure of this varna the Swarasanchara-s , Ragaranchaka prayogas, Tarasthayi Sancharas, and Thatuprayogas has been observed.

### **Megharanjani**

**Aro: S R G M N Ś**

**Ava: Ś N M G R S**

This is upanga Janya raga of 15<sup>th</sup> Mela Mayamalava Gowla. Swarasthanas figuring in this raga are Suddha rishabam, Antara Gandharam, Suddha Madhyamam, Kakali Nishadam. Panchama and Dhaivatha are varja. This raga is mentioned in many lakshanagrantha-s with note of its capability in stimulating rain when it was properly sung. A very few compositions are perceptible in this raga. Venkateswara Yadava – Rupaka – Muthuswamy Dikshitar and Karunato Nannu- Adi – Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar is noteworthy. This raga also mentioned with the name ‘Megharanji’ in some texts.

Pallavi of the Tana Varnam ‘ Sondamum Bandamum’ –Adi , composed by V.S. Gomathisankara Iyer, begins with Madhyashayi Madhyama with the prayoga ‘mgm, n,; śnśrś, ;’ melody ranges up to tarastayi madhyama in the prayoga ‘śnś, rḡm-mḡrś’ .

In the anupallavi of this varnam melody ranges up to tarastayi madhyama ‘ rḡm,ḡ, n, m, ḡ rśnś,’

Vakra prayogas like ‘ś, nś-nḡrś’,and in mukthayiswara, Thatu prayogas like ‘gmrgsrns’and Srotovaha yati pattern with vakram like ‘ rñr - mñr- gmñr’ are perceptible. The varjam of Panchama and dhavatha gives a western tint and swift swing effect to this raga.

### **Vahini**

Aro : S G M P D N Ś

Ava: Ś D P M G R S

This raga is a upanga janyam of 16<sup>th</sup> Mela Chakravaham. This raga is mentioned with the name ‘Nabomargini’ with same arohana and avarohana in the book ‘ Ganavidya Prakasini’ authored by Perungulam Srinivasa Iyengar. ‘Sangeetha Swara prastara Sagaram’ Authored by Nadamuni Pandithar and ‘Sangeetha Raga kadal’ written by Mahadevan in Tamil also mentioned this raga as Nabomargini. In this raga Thirukural Tana Varnam ‘ Kadanarinthu’ – Adi – Composed by Thiruvalluvar and music composed by V.S. Gomathisankara Iyer, and a Tamil Tana Varnam ‘Sevadi Tharuvai- Adi , composed by Varagur K. Muthukumaraswamy is perceptible in this raga.

In the Varnam ‘Sevadi Tharuvai’ by Varagur Muthukumaraswamy, the pallavi has following sancharas ‘dnśd p,mg,’ ‘pmdpmgrs,’ ‘sdñs,’ ‘mgr, sgmg, mpm,’. In anupallavi melody ranges upto tarasthayi panchama ‘ś, ḡmḡmḡrś,,,,’ ‘śḡ, mḡrś’ the phrases are showing the tarasthayi sanchara-s of this raga. Janta swara prayogas like ‘ggrrss, pm gg rr ss’, are perceptible in the Charana swaras of the Tana Varna ‘Parinil nee Kameswari’ – Adi Composed by Thiruvananthai Ksheerabdi Sastri.

### **Omkaraswarupini**

Aro : S R G M P N S

Ava : S N P M G R S

This is Janya raga of 62<sup>nd</sup> Mela Rishabapriya. The Swarasthana-s are Chathusruthi Rishabam, Antara Gandharam, Prati Madhyamam, and Kaisiki Nishadam . Tana Varnam ‘Aimkara Hrimkara’ is a Sloka composed by Adi Sankaracharya and music composed by Sri T.K. Govindarao. This raga is mentioned in ‘Palai Yazhi’ written by Dr. B.M. Sundaram. No other composition is seen in this raga except this varna.

In pallavi the melody ranges up to mandrastayi madhyama in the prayoga ‘snpmps, ṅ’ Prayogas like ‘srg –grs , rgm –mgr, are perceptible in the pallavi. In Anupallavi the melody glides up to Tarasthayi Gandhara in the prayoga ‘ špnsī, rīg ī śn’ In the Muktayiswaram Prathyagatha prayogas like ‘rs-gr-mg-pm-np-mg’,and Thatu prayogas like ‘sr-sg-rm-gp-mn-pś’ are interesting to observe.

### **Conclusion**

In general Varna-s, taught to students to understand the framework, structure, and melodic movement of a raga. The sanchara-s and prayoga-s helps the learner to understand the melodic nature of that particular raga. Varna-s in apoorva ragas certainly helps the learner’s to understand melody and nature of that raga. In general Tana Varna-s are having less text and plenty of vowel extensions to emphasis the melody. But closely observing to the above Varnas , the Thirukural Tana varnam and the Varnam tuned for the sloka of Sri Adisankaracharya is surprisingly match exactly to the music and set in Varna format without disturbing it’s text. This shows the mastery of those composers who all are set music to that literature piece and change it into beautiful music composition ‘Tana Varna’.

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