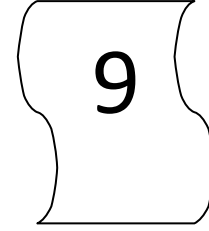


SRI RAGA AND DIKSHITHAR

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Abstract

The raganga raga system (Asampoorna mela padhhathi) consisted of 72 raganga ragas. The presence of 7 notes in the ascent and descent taken together was the necessary thing to be a raganga raga. The usage of vakra sancharas were also admissible. Muttuswami Dikshithar followed this raganga raga padhhathi and Sri raga was considered as one among these melas. Sri raga is considered as the janya raga of 22nd mela Kharaharapriya in the modern 72 melakartha scheme. According to Asampoorna mela padhhathi, the arohana and avarohana of Sri raga would be smpns; snpdnpmgrs. The introduction of 'dhaivatha' in the avarohana acts on the beauty of the raga and lends an emotional flavor. Unlike the compositions of Tyagaraja and Syama Sastri, in the compositions of Dikshithar one cannot notice any kind of lamenting on his own fate or any tone of seeking forgiveness for the sins committed. Or even any emotional flavor or of ultimate modesty and humbleness or soft feeling. He always approaches God in an elegant manner so that the compositions brim with the special attributes of God. But Dikshithar's compositions on Devi express this kind of soft feelings and emotional flavor through the phrases wherein dhaivatha is used. The article deals with the usage of dhaivatha in the compositions on Devi by Muttuswami Dikshithar and the emotional feeling thereby.

Introduction

By the word 'Mela', it is meant today a scale consisting of a krama sampoorna ascent and descent with homogenous character in its notes. Murchanas are the original sources for the concept of a mela. The ancient murchanas were sampoorna scales which took a definite pitch in relationship to the fundamental note. Jatis were also used, but it was not mandatory for them to take all the seven notes i.e., they were either sampoorna, shadava or audava. Hence for many centuries, ragas were described in terms of jatis and murchanas. The term raga was first introduced by Matanga in his Brihaddesi. With the advancement of musical knowledge, the necessity of classifying the ragas according to their affinity to certain fundamental scales arise. The pann-tiram system, raga-ragini-parivara system, janaka-janya system etc. came into existence later on. The number of melas then existed described by different lakshanakaras varied.

Govindacharya standardized the 72 melakartha system, by using the permutation-combination exercise and assigning 7 notes in the ascent and descent of the melas. The 72 melakartha system was followed by saint Tyagaraja. The prominent ragas of those times had the status of melas. Thus, the raganga raga system also prevailed simultaneously wherein this system also consisted of 72 ragas, each of which has all 7 notes and from which all other janya ragas were derived. The main difference to be noted was that it was not necessary for both ascent and descent to have all the 7 notes in the raganga raga system. The condition of having 7 notes when



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the ascent and descent were taken together was an essential thing. The use of vakra sancharas were also admissible. As the raganga raga system was developed by Venkitamakhi and as it was older than 72 melakartha system of Govindacharya, Muttuswami Dikshithar followed this system.

The asampoorna ragas of raganga raga system, did not always had all the 7 notes in the arohana and avarohana. Sri raga, a present prominent janya raga of 22nd melakartha Kharaharapriya, was grouped under the list of raganga ragas or asampoorna melas.

Sri raga in the raganga raga system

In the present 72 melakartha scheme, the arohana and avarohana of the raga is aro – srmpns; ava – snpmrgrs. The famous composition among the ghana raga pancharatna of Tyagaraja follows this arohana and avarohana. But in the raganga raga system, as this is a mela raga, all the notes should be present when the ascent and descent are taken together. Here, the arohana and avarohana will be srmpns; snpdnmpmrgs. Almost all the compositions of Dikshithar follows this pattern of arohana and avarohana and the phrase ‘pdnpm’ is an inevitable usage in all his kritis.

In the composition “sree Varalakshmi namasthubhayam”, in the madhyamakala sahithya of the anupallavi, in the line “kesavahrid khelinye” the notation comes like “p,dnmpm,grs”. The phrase evokes a tender, soothing feeling and a beautiful conclusion to the madhyamakala sahithya. Meaning of the line is “Goddess Lakshmi residing in the heart of Lord Kesava”. This prayoga with a tender and soothing effect implies the soft feeling of love between these two celestial beings. Unlike Tyagaraja and Syama Sastri, the kritis of Dikshithar do not emphasize on the personal emotions, lamenting on the author’s fate and the sins committed by him. Most of the lyrics consist of the attributes of God. In this composition the phrase “kesavahrid khelinye” only denotes a human like emotion or tenderness. So, it is obvious that Dikshithar deliberately used the “pdnpm” phrase to the particular lyrics, to make perfect matching combination of music and sahithya.

The composition “tyagaraja mahadhwajaroaha” was composed on the Tyagaraja shrine in Tiruvarur. The glory and majesty of the deity during the annual ‘Radholsava’, is mainly described in the composition. Here the sahithya is also descriptive of the attributes of Siva and the philosophical and mythological references. In the line ‘anugarahatmaka padadarsanam padadarsanam’, there is a hint of interaction with his devotees which typically signifies the one and only way or path to nirvana or salvation for the devotee. Here also the phrase ‘pdn’ is used to evoke the personal feeling of the devotee who sincerely worshipped the God.



‘Sri Abhayamba’ a composition among the Abhayamba Navavaranam of Muttuswami Dikshithar is set in manipravala language. It is a mixture of Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit. In the anupallavi of the composition “rakshikka ithu nalla samayamma” which means “this is the right time to be compassionate and protect me”, the phrase “pdnpm” is incorporated beautifully. Here the awesome manipravala language and the use of “pdnpm” make the line sound more emotional and touching.

In “Sree Kamalambike” in khanda triputa tala, at the samashti charana, the word “sreekari sugakari” is sung to the notation “p,dnpnpm”. The word “sreekari” means one who is auspicious. The auspiciousness of Goddess Kamalambika which is showered on the devotees can well be brought out only through this beautiful prayoga.

“Sree mooladhara chakra Vinayaka” is another composition of Dikshithar in the same raga where the prayoga “pdnpm” is not at all used. This composition is about Lord Ganapathi who dwells in the mooladhara chakraas the presiding deity. “Moola kantha mukthi pradayaaka” which comes in the anupallavi brings the feeling of mukthi (salvation). This might be the reason for not using dhaivatha prayoga in the compositions. Another composition in the same raga beginning as “Kameswarena” does not take any “pdnpm” prayoga in its notation.

When these 6 compositions of Dikshithar are taken for an in-depth observation three of them are composed of Goddess, two on Lord Kameshwara and one on Lord Ganapathi. Lord Siva and Goddess Parvati are considered as the creators of the whole world and the approach of a bhaktha in a special manner is observed in the compositions on Lord Siva and Goddess.

Although Dikshithar is a versatile composer who composed on different deities, his compositions on Devi are worth mentioning always. He has to his credit a number of samudaya kritis such as Kamalamba navavaranam , Abhayamba navavaranam, Neelopalamba navavaranam, etc. besides his individual compositions on Devi. Muttuswami Dikshithar occupies a unique place in the area of worship of Goddess and Srividya cult. Through the Kamalamba navavarana keertanas he travelled a spiritual journey of Sreevidya upasana and enjoyed the different areas of self realisation. The outpour of his creativity and spiritual thoughts, is well expressed in his compositions on Goddess.

As all are known the style of Dikshithar is compared to nalikera rasa, wherein the coconut is useful in many ways; but to enjoy the taste and its use, one has to take some effort. As mentioned earlier the approach of Dikshithar towards his deities is in an elegant and decent manner in his compositions and the personal emotions and lamenting on composer’s fate have no place there. Through an analysis it is observed that unlike the other deities, Dikshithar has a special modesty and devotion towards Goddess which can be well noticed in the compositions on Goddess. In the compositions in Sri raga on Goddess also the same fact can be noticed.

Conclusion



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The usage of dhaivatha in Sri raga acts on the beauty and depth of his modesty towards Devi. Sri raga becomes a raganga raga in Dikshithar sampradaya by the usage of dhaivatha. When one observes all these Devi kritis the dhaivatha prayogas sound very attractive and Dikshithar's modesty and humbleness towards Goddess is wellportrayed through this. Even without dhavivatha the ragas sound good and attractive but the usage of dhaivatha seems to be very appropriate to express the intimacy and humbleness of Dikshithar towards the Goddess.

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