

Narayana Tirtha and Venkatesvara

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*Vasudeve Bhagavati bhaktipravanaya dhiya
Vyajyate bhakti saradhya Krsnalila Tarangini*

(My perception, the wealth of my devotion and the gravitational force of my reverence for Lord Krishna are blown into the shape of "Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini". Its true meaning can be understood only by those charged with true dedication to the Lord).

The effacement of self is inherent in the Hindu ethos. The mystic etymology which connects the word *namah* with the elimination of *ahamkara*, as indicated by the negative particle *na* with the pronominal root *ma* is significant. While in the case of our greatest Vaggeyakaras like Purandaradasa, Thyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar, Syama Sastri, the broad outlines of their lives and work are known, details of the personal lives and the work of many of our eminent composers, particularly of the pre-trinity period (A.D. 1750) are lost in obscurity either because such details were not recorded by the masters themselves, their disciples and contemporaries or because they carried our philosophy of self-effacement to its logical conclusion, leaving us with no trace of their lives and their work. By such silence posterity is the loser. Communications in those times were admittedly difficult and poor; records of contemporaries were meagre, vague and conflicting. Scholars and students of a later day had no choice but to build up their own conclusions from such scattered sources. The scarcity of acceptable source material was a major handicap in assessing the life and work of these great Vaggeyakaras. The

remedy lay in our ability to draw the line between recorded data and supportive material on the one hand and legend and tradition on the other. In respect of our Vaggeyakaras, we have to depend a great deal on the family tradition to throw light on the less known aspects of their life and work. It is against this background that we have to recapture the various aspects of the life and work of Narayana Tirtha, the author of the Sanskrit dance-drama, Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini.

Annamacharya, Purandaradasa and Narayana Tirtha have been rightly regarded as the pioneers of the Karnataka Sangita Sampradaya. Quite a few ascetics of the 17th and 18th centuries were given the same appellation 'Narayana Tirtha' (or Tirtha Narayana) in South India with the result that there is no unanimity of opinion, among scholars, on the authorship of the works in Sanskrit and Telugu attributed to Narayana Tirtha.

Until recently Narayana Tirtha had not been given as much attention as he should have been, judging by his background, the level of excellence he attained as a *paramahansa parivrajaka*, the depth and beauty of his immortal creation, Sri Krishna Leela

Tarangini. While in Tamil Nadu, the singing of the Gitams from the twelve Tarangams in concerts has been a living tradition and finds an honoured place in the *paddhati* of the Bhajana Sampradaya - the pattern of group singing and dancing - evolved by the end of the 18th century by Sadgurusvamigal of Marudanallur, along with the compositions of Jayadeva, Ramadasa, Purandaradasa, Sadasiva Brahmdra, Kabirdas, Tulsidas and Tyagaraja at the various centres wherever the namasiddhanta doctrine has struck root, the tradition in Andhra Pradesh is even deeper. Apart from the rendering of the Tarangam gitams in Addanki, Ongole, Vijayawada, Kuchimanchi (East Godavari), annual festivals to honour the memory of Narayana Tirtha are being organised in recent years in Ongole, Vijayawada and Hyderabad; it is gathered that till the early part of the century the entire text of Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini was presented on the stage as a full-fledged dance-drama. The stage presentation as a dance-drama has now gone out of vogue. What is even more significant is the Kuchipudi dance tradition, which always accorded high priority to the Tarangams of Narayana Tirtha in dance repertoire. It has all along included Jayadeva's Asthapadis and Kshetrajna's padams. That, in name of innovation and in the itch for change and variety, some of the exponents of the Kuchipudi tradition appear to have moved away in recent years from the traditional pattern, is an entirely different matter. The sanctity of the time honoured tradition has to be preserved.

Happily, the oral tradition and the power of memory - the bed rock of the

Hindu ethos - has been strong over the centuries. Between 1868 A.D. and now, various editions of Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini in Grantha script, Devanagari script and Tamil script have appeared from time to time. But copies have run out of stock. In my two Volumes published in 1988 and 1990, we have published the Sanskrit text of all the Twelve Tarangams of the Tarangini, with transliteration, translation and a commentary in English.

Strangely enough, there have been far too many areas of disagreement among scholars on the different aspects of Narayana Tirtha's life - the year and place of his birth, his early life, his *apat sanyasa* episode, his formal initiation into *sanyasa*, his itinerary in the North and South of India, the circumstances in which he came over to Tamil Nadu, the duration of his stay in Tamil Nadu, the composition and the dedication of his work 'Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini' to Lord Venkatesa at Varahur (in Tamil Nadu), the last phase of his life and the attainment of *samadhi* at Tirupoonturutti (in Tamil Nadu).

In my studies, I have given due weight to the view of the various scholars who have applied their minds to the subject, and I have been guided mostly by the dating of the works attributed to Narayana Tirtha and the family tradition, as enunciated in detail by Swami Sivasankara Sastri, a scion of eighth generation of the Tallavajihala family to which Narayana Tirtha belonged in his *purvasrama*. Swami Sivasankara Sastri, who passed away only fifteen years ago, was himself a *sanyasi* with his camp at Vetapalem (near Ongole) and was a distinguished

scholar in his own right. It would be only wise to accord due weight to the family tradition.

My studies indicate that Narayana Tirtha's year of birth would be somewhere between 1660 A.D. and 1675 A.D. and that he attained *samadhi* at Tirupoonthurutti (in Tamil Nadu) in 1745 A.D.

Narayana Tirtha Yatindra is last remembered for his work 'Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini'. To Saint Tyagaraja, the prince among renunciators, Narayana Tirtha was the *parameshthi guru*. Sonti Venkatasubbayya, the father of Sonti Venkataramanayya, the guru of Tyagaraja, was disciple of Narayana Tirtha. I shall indicate later the benign influence of Narayana Tirtha on Tyagaraja's life and compositions.

Tyagaraja had spent a fairly long spell of his life as a *grhastha*, in total dedication to his *Ishta Devata* Sri Rama and took to *apat-sanyasa* only in the final phase of his life. But, the circumstances, which forced young Govinda Sastri to become a *sanyasi* at a very young age - perhaps in his twelfth year, when he had just been married - were unusual. Govinda Sastri was a boy of great promise, had acquired considerable proficiency in music, was deeply devoted to Krishna. He mastered the six systems of philosophy in twelve years, with the guidance of his guru, Vasudeva Pandita. One day, soon after his early marriage to Achamma, young Govinda swam across the Krishna to Vedadri, the famous Narasimha kshetra (on the other bank of the river to reach his wife's residence) from Ginjupalli. A flash-flood which over powered him

mid-stream posed a threat to Govinda's life. He was perhaps conscious that he had yet a sacred mission to accomplish on this earth, and realised that *apat-sanyasa* (adoption as asceticism in the face of crisis) alone could save him. Immediately he pulled out a bunch of hair off his head and cast away the sacred thread, recited the prescribed *mantras* for *apat-sanyasa*. The floods in the Krishna abated. Young Govinda reached the opposite bank and when he greeted his wife, she saw in him the glow of a *sanyasi* and said that his worldly relationship as her husband was over. Young Govinda was formally initiated into *sanyasa* by his guru, Swami Sivaramananda Tirtha, at Kanchipuram.

The Guru took him along to Kasi, taught him the scriptures and inspired him to great endeavour. The young *sanyasi* became Narayana Tirtha. He visited Prayag and spent some years at Kasi, where he was engaged in many disputations and wrote many original works of rare merit on Hindu philosophy. According to the research works and documents I studied, it is clear that Narayana Tirtha did not move away from Kasi till 1701 A.D. On his way back home, he visited Puri Jagannath where he was profoundly drawn to the Namasiddhanta doctrine - the singing of the Lord's name and the praise of the Supreme Being as part of the devotional exercise.

Obviously 'Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini' was composed by Narayana Tirtha over a period of time when the saint composer visited the various holy centres - Prayag, Puri Jagannath, Sobhanadri, Vedadri, Simhachalam,

Srikakulam, Vijayawada, Mangalagiri, Tirupathi and Varahur. The stamp of Prayag, Varahur and the many shrines in Andhra Pradesh which Narayana Tirtha visited may be seen in the gitams themselves. At the Narasimha hill in Singarakonda near Addanki, Narayana Tirtha is said to have spent twelve years in penance in a cave. Later, he taught Tarangams to about sixty families in the Addanki area where his pattern of rendering is still being preserved by some of those families who have survived to this day.

A strange incident in Tirupati - doubtless a divine dispensation! - changed the entire course of Narayana Tirtha's life. Tradition has it that Lord Venkateswara assumed the form of a boy who was helping himself liberally with the sweets of the temple prasada. Narayana Tirtha is said to be indiscreet in his consumption of sweets. A stomach pain hit Narayana Tirtha immediately. When he prayed to the Lord of the Seven Hills for immediate relief from his colic, the unembodied voice of the Lord told him "Go down to the South country where my *amsa* (an element of Lord Venkateswara) is already established and pray. You will be relieved of the affliction.

Narayana visited many Sacred centres in (Tamil Nadu - among them, Govindapuram, Tiruvisanallur, Gunasekharam and when he crossed the Kaveri and spent a restless night in a Ganesa temple at Nadukkaveri village, and he saw no relief to his colic. An unembodied voice said to him "follow the first animal you sight when you wake up in the morning". It proved to

be a pair of varahas (boars). As they moved westward, Narayana Tirtha followed them and ultimately they disappeared in a mound in the nearby village Bhupatirajapuram. When Narayana Tirtha reached there, he was thrilled to see the shrine of Lord Venkatesa. He was relieved of his stomach pain at once. He stayed on at the holy spot for years, dedicated the complete version of Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini at the sacred shrine, renovated the temple and organised the annual festivals - Janmashtami and the Sikyotsave (uriyadi) and the *Bhajana Sampradaya*, which are today an integral part of the Varahur tradition. Bhupatirajapuram came to be known as Varahapuri or Varahur. He visited Melattur, the home of the Bhagavata Mela tradition, and it is believed that in his declining years, Narayana Tirtha composed at Melattur his Telugu work 'Parijatapaharana' -which reflects Narayana Tirtha's link with Kuchipudi tradition.

The records maintained by a leading family of the twin villages, Varahur-Kandamangalam, confirm that Narayana Tirtha lived in Varahur round about 1720 A.D. It appears to me to be therefore reasonably correct to infer that Narayana Tirtha's period is 1660/75 - to 1745 A.D. - a conclusion which I have justified at length in my two volumes.

In the final phase of his life, Narayana Tirtha sought peace in total meditation under a huge mango tree in the nearby village, Tirupoonturutti (not far from Tiruvaivaryu) and he attained *Jiva Samadhi* there in 1745 A.D.

The saint composer from Andhra desa found his final resting place in the Kaveri delta in Tamil Nadu at Tiruppoonturutti.

Composed in chaste and melodious Sanskrit, Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini, which is divided into twelve Tarangams (Cantos) - waves - and is therefore the 'River of Krishna's Sport' is cast in the form of a *yaksha-gana* (dance-drama), a felicitous combination of narration, dramatic poetry with dialogue, action, dance and music. It deals with the gripping theme of Krishna from His birth to the wedding of Rukmini as related in the Dasamaskandham of Srimad Bhagavatam; it consists of 155 songs of varying length (including short *daruvus*) composed in 39 ragas (of which 34 are highly evocative *rakti* ragas), 348 slokas and *vacanas* (linking prose passages). Nandanamakriya, Saurashtram, Madhyamavati, Kambodi, Mukhari, Kedaragaula, Sankara-bharanam, Bhairavi, Ananda Bhairavi, Regupti (Mohanam) - have been the composer's most favoured ragas - perhaps the favourites of the age too in which he lived. Musicians of a later age have, of course, taken liberties with the ragas and some of the Tarangam compositions are now being rendered in ragas different from what was intended by the Saint composer.

Narayana Tirtha's Tarangini is acclaimed universally as the only work of comparable status among the several of the genre of Jaya Deva's Gita Govindam. While the Gita Govindam is *Srngara Mahakavya* set to the Natya Sastra, the Advaita Sanyasi in Narayana Tirtha elevates the Bhagavata theme -

Rasa krida, Gopivastrapaharana, Radha Madhava Samvada and Rukmini's love for Krishna - to the lofty heights of Advaita Philosophy and the devotion of the Gopis to the level of Brahmananda as propounded in the Upanishads - without the least suggestion of frank, undisguised eroticism to which the Krishna theme has been carried by other eminent composers. The mastery of Narayana Tirtha's technique as a composer is best reflected in the Third Tarangam where the Gitams have built-in *Solkattus* for a dance number. The other Gitam "Balagopala mam uddhara Krsna" is remarkable for the use of *Mahavakyas* like "Tat tvam asi". In the Seventh Tarangam where Narayana Tirtha portrays the Rasa play of Krishna with the Gopis, jatis are also set as part of the songs in the *Suladi* compositions in seven ragas and seven talas - a rare type of composition, which Purandaradasa and Narayana Tirtha had evolved independently in the Karnataka and Andhra Traditions. Of the 39 ragas Narayana Tirtha has used, only five were not so well known in his time - Dvijavanti, Navroz, Mangalakapi, Desakshi and Gauri. It is noteworthy that Narayana Tirtha (and Tyagaraja who belongs to his *sishya-parampara*) have made intensive use of *rakti-ragas* in the cause of Bhakti.

The assonance and the lilting music, the highly evolved philosophical truths embodied in the Gitams, the uninhibited praise of the Supreme which Narayana Tirtha sings through his soulful music bring out the poetic genius of the composer.

In Narayana Tirtha's approach to the theme, the story element is much less important; it only serves a minimal role as a linking factor; the various episodes in Krishna's life are dismissed in brief phrases in a *gadyam* or a verse and in the main gitams, Narayana Tirtha only portrays the outpourings of the devotees to the Supreme Being in total surrender, a confession of their mistakes, their self-conceit and their ignorance (Maya). The entire atmosphere of the compositions is pure Advaita; un-flagging praise of the Lord (*Saccidanandasvarup*). The Bhagavan-nama Sankirtana tradition suggests prayer for the removal of the darkness of sin, release from the cycle of birth and death. It is one continuous story where the Lord makes it clear that He is the Imperishable Supreme-Being. While devotee's pride is decimated, the Lord confers grace on the transgressor - whether it be the Gopis, Radha, Brahma, Kaliya, Indra. The Lord allows Himself to be tied by the bonds of His devotees - even by His mother Yasoda herself.

Purandaradasa, Thyagaraja, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri reflected in their compositions the stirring of their souls, the rapture of their experiences, the environment in which they sang. There is a strong sense of dedication to their chosen gods and goddesses and the *mudra* of the composer slides gently into the mood and the texture of the composition. Narayana Tirtha took on a different role. He couched his emotional fervour and the prayers to Lord Krishna of the various characters of the story in the lilt of his gitams with Narayana Tirtha's *mudra* fitted into the composition in a delicate musical phrase.

A random sample of 111 *mudras* (each of the 155 gitams carries a *mudra*) indicates that in the case of 43, he has used the simple *mudra* 'Narayana Tirtha' in 32 gitams he has employed many colourful variants like Gurubhakta Sivanarayana Tirtha, Sivanarayanananda Tirtha, Dhira Sivanarayananda Thirtha, and among the rest *mudras* like Narayanananda Tirtha, Bhava Narayana Tirtha, Vara Narayana Tirtha are common. They point to his profound sense of variety and the choice of the *mudra* appropriate to the theme, the mood and the phrasing of the gitam.

In a well known gitam in Eighth Tharangam beginning with "Deva Devam Kveti tam" Narayana Tirtha makes a pointed reference to his guru in the phrase 'Sivarama Tirtha padambuja bhramarena (the bee at the lotus feet of Sivarama Tirtha). At the end of the First Tharangam of Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini Narayana Tirtha refers to himself as 'Sivaramananda Tirtha pada sevaka (who sat at the feet of Sivaramananda Tirtha).

There is yet another noteworthy characteristic of Narayana Tirtha's compositions. Like Muthuswami Dikshitar, who followed him nearly a century later, Narayana Tirtha cast many of his gitams in different *Vibhaktis* (cases) : Accusative, Dative and Vocative cases - to cite only a few. They have been composed with rare felicity of diction and musical phrasing.

*Narayana namo Madeavaya
Avadharaya mam isvaram
Madhava mamava dehi
Ehi mudham mama dehi*

*Krsnam Kalaya sakhi
Pahi pahi jagan mohana Krsna
Alokaye Rukmini
Kathaya Kathaya Madhavam
Pahi mam Pahi mam Paramakrpaalo
Svaminam Vanamalinam*

Various Pilgrim Centres

The structure and texture of Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini have strong internal proof to justify the conclusion that the various songs in the twelve Tarangams had been composed by Narayana Tirtha at the various holy centres he visited in North and South India where he drew inspiration from the sacred spots.

Narayana Tirtha's Mangala Caranam 'Himagiri Tanayapatyam' is considered so sacred that many Harikatha exponents of the Tanjore tradition use it in the invocation for their performances. In his stuti to his *Ishtadevatas*, the saint refers to Jaganaath of Puri (Nilacala).

Narayana Tirtha's visit to Prayag is immortalised by the Gitam in the First Tarangam 'Rama Krishna Govindeti' which is symbolic of the Bhagavannama mahatmyam of which Narayana Tirtha was a distinguished exponent. The saint emphasises that the reverential utterance of the three holy names Rama, Krishna and Govinda constitutes the most holy confluence of Prayag. A dip in this Prayag of triple prayer has no reference to direction, location or time. While the dip in the Prayag of sangam of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the Sarasvati cleanses only the body; the dip in the Nama-sankirtana of Rama, Krishna and Govinda, cleanses the mind of its

impurities, uproots Maya, the cycle of birth and death, dispels sin and leads to liberation.

The Saint's visit to Mathura, which drove him into ecstasy, finds an echo in the song "Rama Madhura Nagari Ramya."

In his stuti to his *Ishtadevatas*, the song 'Subhadra Balabhadra Sudarsana sahita' in the First Tarangam -incorporated almost at the beginning of the work after the traditional invocation to Ganesa and Garuda - Tirthulu refers in rapture to Puri Jagannath - indication of the influence of Jagannatha and Jayadeva on Narayana Tirtha.

Gitams 4 and 20 in the First Tarangam are of special value in as much as they relate to Tirupati.

In the song

*Jaya Jaya Ramanatha
Jaya Jaya Dharanatha
Jaya Jaya Varahapuri Sri Venkatesa.*

Narayana Tirtha pays homage to Lord Venkateswara; the Lord of the Seven Hills. Since Tirupati is also described as the Adi Varaha kshetra, the references to Varahapuri and Sri Venkatesa make it clear that the Saint offers his homage in the Gitam to the Puri Jagannatha on the one side and the ten incarnations of Vishnu on the other. Narayana Tirtha may not have implied any difference between Sri Venkateswara of Tirupati and Sri Venkatesa of Varahur. It is usual to see in this song double reference and to ascribe it to Varahur and Sri Venkatesa Perumal of Varahur, where Narayana Tirtha was relieved of his

colic and dedicated the entire text of Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini to Lord Venkatesa of Varahur.

Jaya Jaya Srinivasa (Gitam 20 in the First Tarangam) which marks the birth of Krishna is yet another prayer to Srinivasa of Saptagiri.

The hold of Mangalagiri, close to Kaza, where Narayana Tirtha was born, is reflected in Gitam 21 of the First Tarangam.

"Mangalalaya mamava Deva" and "Madhava Madhava Krishna Mangalalaya Sri Krishna" in Gitam 8 of the Second Tarangam.

The song 'Jaya Jaya Durga' in the First Tarangam is obviously, inspired by Kanaka Durga of Vijayawada.

Narayana Tirtha's visit to Srikakulam on the north bank of the Krishna (not far from Muvva and Kuchipudi) is immortalised in the song 'Avalokaya Sri Govindam' in the Tenth Tarangam.

The third caranam runs: -

*Ekantabhaktadaivatam Yadavabdi
Samuditam
Srikakula nagari Sri Bhumi sahitam*

Narayana Tirtha's adoration of Nrsimha, who has many shrines in Andhra desa, is best brought out by the two *gitams* the first on the Nrsimha shrine in Sobhanadri (Sixth Tarangam).

Pallavi: *Karunayavalokaya mom
Sri Narasimha
Surasura samhara sobhanadri
Sri Narasimha*

The other Gitam in the Eleventh Tarangam 'Vedadri Simham tvam namami' is in praise of Sri Narasimha at Vedadri.

Narayana Tirtha has composed duets in two situations in Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini.

Fifth Tarangam

The duet depicts the scene of Gopi-vastrapaharana in which Krishna taught monism (non-duality or Advaita) to the Gopis. They had given up the clothes which could be called Maya or *ahamkara*. Narayana Tirtha's handling of this delicate episode is masterly. In this dialogue, the Gopis ask for their *avaranam* (cover, protection) to be given back to them. Krishna's answer was that he has no *avaranam* to give them and that, in fact, *avaranam* does not exist at all.

Narayana Tirtha's poetic genius finds a different type of expression in the Radha-Madhava samvada.

The manifestation of Radha's Srngara rasa in this composition is symbolic of the yearning of the human soul for God. Narayana Tirtha's highly specialised sense of Srngara portrays the Madhurya *Bhava* of the Krishna cult. Since Radha is infatuated with the thought that she is the most beloved of Krishna, the lord tames her pride. Radha's answer to the Gopis is pure Advaita Vedanta. She recognises Krishna only as the Paramatma.

Rasa Krida

A devout Advaita Vedantin, Narayana Tirtha interpret the message of Rasa lila as merging in the non-dual *sat-cit-ananda* Brahman. In the first Gitam in the Seventh Tarangam "Advayam akhandi-tam". Krishna expounds this Vedanta truth to the

Gopis. Krishna communicates to the Gopis in twenty verses of the *Rasa lila* what the sixth chapter of the Chandogya Upanishad brings out in sixteen khandas. In the Seventh and Eighth Tarangams, Tirthulu draws liberally from the Upanishadic truths embodied in Chandogya, Brahadaran-yaka, Taittiriya, Isavasya and Mundaka Upanishads. "As the flowing rivers giving up their names and forms (nama, rupa) merge into the ocean, so the wise, freed from name and form, attain the effulgent Supreme *Purusha*; higher than the high!"

The bliss that the Gopis experienced in the *Rasa lila* is nothing else than the total undifferentiated identification of the *Jiva* with the non-dual Brahman. The Gopis had become *Jivan muktas* merged in Brahman that is Krishna, though still in human form. The tenets of Advaita Vedanta have been brought out most effectively in the *Rasa lila* Tarangams - Sixth, Seventh and Eighth.

Rukmini Kalyanam

The annual celebration of Rukmini Kalyanam on the concluding day of the Janmashtami / Uriyadi (Sikyotasava) festival at the Varahur Venkatesa Perumal temple is an integral part of the tradition which Narayana Tirtha himself had setup at Varahur three centuries ago. The Twelfth and concluding Tarangam which portrays the wedding of Rukmini with Krishna indicates Narayana Tirtha's close knowledge of the marriage customs and rituals followed by Andhra Brahmana families. The song 'Kalyanam', the sloka 'Bhaishmyah' and the song

'Brahmagranthim kuru' the references to Naga Bali and Sesha Homam do ample justice to the pattern of Andhra Brahmana weddings.

Rukmini's *patrika lekhanam* is a remarkable piece "please make sure that you take my hand in marriage. In my thoughts and words, I care only for your grace. Gopala alone is my Lord." Let us look at the language in which Rukmini couches her message to Krishna.

"Srimate Satya Kama, Satya Sankalpa" - She calls him "the Indweller and the controller of all." The message is packed with Upanishadic phrases; and to Rukmini, Krishna is no ordinary lover, but the effulgent Supreme Being.

Influence of Tyagaraja

By blending exquisite melody, Advaita and Bhakti with Moksha (liberation) as the Supreme goal, Narayana Tirtha set up a pattern which Tyagaraja followed a hundred years later. Narayana Tirtha was, of course, the *parameshti* guru of Tyagaraja. A study of the format, the pattern of gadyams, vacanas and gitams and the rakti ragas used by Tyagaraja in Tyagaraja's opera 'Nauka Caritram' will establish that Tyagaraja modelled this great work entirely on the mould of Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini. Tyagaraja's handling of the 'leaky boat' episode has close resemblance to Narayana Tirtha's portrayal of Gopivastrapaharana in Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini. In his prelude to Prahlada Bhakti Vijayam, Tyagaraja renders homage to Narayana Tirtha.

"Sri Narayana Tirthadi
Bhagavaddasula nellam branamalli."

Narayana Tirtha's influence on Tyagaraja, even in the phrasings of some of his kritis is profound. Let us look at the following examples.

1. The expression 'Giriraja suta tanaya' in Tyagaraja's song on Ganesa in Bangala raga is inspired by the Mangala sloka on Ganesa in Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini.
2. The phrase 'yaga-yoga-raga-bhoga-tyaga' in Narayana Tirtha's famous gitam 'Ramakrishna Govindeti' finds an echo in Tyagaraja's 'Raga Sudharasa'.
3. 'Nikhila lokanidana' in Tyagaraja's Saranga piece is an echo from a gitam in the eleventh Tarangm of Narayana Tirtha.
4. Tyagaraja's 'Vinasuta vihara' is very similar to Narayana Tirtha's phrase 'Vinatasuta ghana vahana.'

There are many more parallels.

Conclusion

My studies have led me to the following conclusions :

1. The period of Narayana Tirtha, the author of Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini, should be accepted as: AD 1675 to AD 1745.
2. Born in Kaza in Andhra Pradesh, he attained samadhi at Tirupointurutti, in Tamil Nadu.
3. He stayed at Varahur and the neighbouring areas like Melattur,

Tirupointurutti in the final phase of his life for quite a few years round about AD 1720 till his *Jivan mukti* in AD 1745 at Tirupointurutti.

4. He could not have moved out of Varanasi (Kasi) before AD 1701, judging from the literary evidence. From 1701 AD onwards, he should have moved on to Puri, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu and spent his last days at Tirupointurutti.
5. Dr. Iravatham Mahadevan (formerly of the Indian Administrative Service, also a distinguished scholar and a warm friend of our family), who hails from the twin villages - Varahur / Kanda-mangalam mentioned to me that according to his family records, one of his forefathers had borne testimony to Narayana Tirtha being a contemporary of his at Varahur; Tirtha is known to have lived at Varahur round about 1720 AD. This information establishes conclusively the validity of the view that I have expressed in these two volumes that the period of Narayana Tirtha, the author of Sri Krishna Leela Tarangini, is 1660/75 -1745 A.D.

*Kamada kaminamesa
mumuksunam ca moksada*

*Srnvafam gayatam bhaktya
Krsna/i/afarangini.*

Mangalam

Navanita Coraya