

## The Prakshipta Krithis of Saint Thyagaraja

Ashok Madhav (madhav\_pgh@yahoo.com)

Thyagaraja is considered to be the most popular vaggeyakara in Carnatic music. In music concerts one can hear his kritis being rendered more often than other composers. He continues to have a large following of admirers. True to the quote "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery", some later composers plagiarized his style, and in an attempt to get their compositions accepted and popularized, even tagged Thyagaraja's name (mudra) onto their compositions. Prof. P. Sambhamurthy - a noted scholar and musicologist has termed these imitation kritis "prakshipta" meaning not authentic or spurious. Some aspects of this situation will be discussed in this article.

K.V. Srinivasa Iyengar's three kritis-*Needu charanamule* and *Natajana paripala*-both in Simmendramadhyamam and third kriti-*Vinatasuta vahanudai*-in Harikambodi have Thyagaraja's mudra. The following compositions too bear Thyagaraja's mudra though they have been composed by others, *Paramukha melara*-Surati and *Abhimana mennadu* in Vivardhani raga was the work of Mannargudi Rajagopala Iyer and *Diname Sudinamu* in Latangi - was composed by Visalur Girisha Iyer. Tanjavur Krishna Bhagavatar composed a kriti in the raga Todi, *Vedalenu Kodandapani*. The original composition did not have Thyagaraja's name in it, however, the mudra was inserted by an anonymous person later in order to give it wider popularity.

Many music scholars believe that the following popular kritis are not Thyagaraja's compositions. They have come to this conclusion because these kritis do not conform to Thyagaraja's style of composing. They also differ from the type of grammar used by Thyagaraja in his compositions :

*Sri Gananatham bhajamyaham*-Kanakangi

*Kalasavardhijam*-Ratnangi

*Ganamurthe*-Ganamurthi

*Kamalaptakula*-Brindavana Saranga

*Neelakanta niranjana*-Abhogi

*Kshetra palaka*-Bilahari

*Vanaja nayanudani*-Kedaragoula

*Sri Raghukula mandu*-Hamsadhvani

*Abhishta varada*-Hamsadhvani  
*Rama namanu*-Athana  
*Sadamatim daladu gadara*-Gambhiravani  
*Sarasiruha nayane*-Amrutavarshini  
*Diname sudinamu*-Latangi  
*Tarama Nee mahima*-Kalyani  
*Sandehamu yelara*-Kalyani  
*Parulanna vedanu*-Balahamsa  
*Paripurna kama*-Hamsabhramari  
*Maravairi Ramani*-Nasikabhushani  
*Narayana hari*-Yamuna kalyani  
*Sarasa netra*-Shankarabharanam  
*Ranganayaka Sri*-Shankarabharanam  
*Abhimanamu ledemi*-Andhali  
*Endu bayara daya*-Dhanyasi  
*Evarunnaru*-Malavashri  
*Garuda gamana*-Gauri manohari  
*Ni balama nama*-Anandabhairavi

Thyagaraja's musical compositions exerted considerable dominance in Carnatic music thereby influencing some skillful composers to use the ragas of Thyagaraja's kritis for their own lyrics. The kriti-*Srivallipate* in raga Nagaswaravali of Subbarama Dikshitar has similar melodic structure as that of Thyagaraja's kriti-*Sripate Neepada* in the same raga. Tanjavur Krishna Bhagavata's kriti - *Vedalenu Kodandapani* in Todi sounds very similar to Thyagaraja's Todi kriti-*Brindavana lola*. Patnam Subramanya Iyer's lyrics-*Etula vrasu yunnado* were made to fit Thyagaraja's kriti-*Etula brotuvo teliya* in Chakravakam.

Some of Papanasam Sivan kritis are similarly tuned along the model of Thyagaraja's kritis.

*Karunai seivai* (Sivan) - *Raghunayaka* (Tya) - Hamsadhvani  
*Tunai purindarul* (Sivan) - *Manasuloni* (Tya) - Varamu  
*Sharavana bhava* (Sivan) - *Rama katha sudha* (Tya) - Madhyamavati

According to Prof. Sambhamurthy - some of the ragas of kritis composed by Thyagaraja have been rendered in ragas different from the ones that he originally

set the kritis to. The kritis *Jnanamusagarada* was originally composed in Shadvidha margini (Mela 46) but is now being rendered in Purvikalyani (a janya of Gamanashramana - Mela 53). The kritis *Intha soukhyamani* and *Mivalla gunadosha* were originally set in Karnataka kapi raga by Thyagaraja but now they are frequently rendered in Hindustani Kapi. The kritis in Kalyani-Sundari *ni divya rupamunu* and *Vasudevayani* are not being rendered the way Thyagaraja had originally envisaged. This is the case with Thyagaraja's Dhanyasi kriti-*Sangita jnanamu* too.

Kritis are also being rendered in two different ragas as documented in books of Thyagaraja's kritis. This could be due to variation in pathantharams practiced by disciples belonging to different schools. Following are some examples:

- Ne morabettide* - Rupavati (also rendered in Todi)
- Nada tanu manisham* - Chittaranjani (ragas derived from Melas 19 & 22)
- Chetulara sringaramu* - Bhairavi (Kharaharapriya)
- Rama neeyada* - Kharaharapriya (Dilipakam)
- Ne pogadakunte* - Varali (Desikatodi)
- Sri Narasimha* - Phalaranjani (Phalamanjari)
- Pahi Rama duta* - Vasanthavarali (Shadvidha margini)
- Vallagadanaka* - Shankarabharanam (Harikambodi)
- Ennalurake* - Shubhapantuvarali (Pantuvarali)
- Paraloka bhaya* - Mandhari (Namanarayani)
- Sita Kalyana vaibhogame* - Shankarabharanam (Kuranji)
- Na pali SriRama* - Shankarabharanam (Navaraj)
- Kantha judumi* - Vachaspathi (Latangi)

Though changes in rendering of some Thyagaraja's kritis have occurred over the years, we have been fortunate that the bulk of his compositions have remained untainted. We have to laud the efforts of a few disciples like Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavata and some others who had the foresight to preserve Thyagaraja's rich legacy for posterity.

