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Thirupathiripuliyur Kshetra Compositions Of Cuddalore M Subramaniam

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Abstract: Varnams and Kritis are types of musical composition in Carnatic music literature. Derived from the Sanskrit word meaning "creation" or "work," Kriti is a major genre of Carnatic music, playing a central role in every South Indian concert. Literally meaning "colour", varnams portray various shades of the ragam, within a short span, without any variations or sangatis. These form a very common, commencing piece, in a Carnatic music concert. The themes of compositional texts can be heroic, romantic, or narrative, but most are devotional in nature, regardless of whether they are jocular or serious. Composed in a variety of talas, many thousands of compositions have been created by numerous composers, forming the backbone of Carnatic music. Learning many such compositions, also makes sure that a student, will realize and imbibe the salient features of the ragam and talam, along with understanding the context of the lyrics used in them. The term "Samucchaya" refers to such a collection, or group of compositions. When these group kritis are specifically related to temples (kshetras), they are termed Kshetra UruppadigaL, or Kshetra Kritis. This article deals with the kshetra kritis, as well as, varnams, composed by Cuddalore M Subramaniam, in reference to the kshetra, Thirupathiripuliyur.

Index Terms - Kriti, Kshetra, Cuddalore M Subramaniam, Thirupathiripuliyur, group kritis, collection of kritis, Carnatic music lists of compositions, Padaleeshwarar, Brihannayaki, Varnam, Kriti

I. INTRODUCTION

Kshetra Kritis are indeed a unique and significant category within Carnatic music, reflecting a deep connection to Hindu temples and their deities. These compositions, often composed by revered composers like Muthuswami Dikshitar, Tyagaraja, and Syama Sastri, serve not only as musical offerings but also as devotional expressions that capture the essence of the deities and the sacredness of the temples they are dedicated to.

Here are a few key points about Kshetra Kritis:

1. **Devotional Focus:** Each Kshetra Kriti is dedicated to a specific deity and temple, often describing the deity's attributes, the temple's significance, and the legends associated with them.
2. **Historical and Cultural Importance:** These compositions often provide historical insights into the temples and their patronage, as well as the cultural and religious practices of the time.
3. **Musical Structure:** Like other Carnatic compositions, Kshetra Kritis follow the traditional structure of Pallavi (refrain), Anupallavi (second section), and Charanam (concluding section), but they often incorporate unique elements that reflect the mood and setting of the temple they celebrate.
4. **Language and Style:** They are usually composed in classical languages like Sanskrit and Telugu, and sometimes in Tamil and Kannada. The style and language often reflect the regional characteristics of the temples.

5. Composers: Some of the most renowned composers of Kshetra Kritis include:
 - Muthuswami Dikshitar: Known for his extensive travels and compositions dedicated to various temples across India.
 - Tyagaraja: Famous for his compositions dedicated to Lord Rama, particularly those associated with the temples in and around Thiruvaiyaru.
 - Syama Sastri: Known for his devotion to Goddess Kamakshi of Kanchipuram and his compositions dedicated to her.
6. Spiritual and Aesthetic Experience: Singing or listening to Kshetra Kritis is considered a spiritual experience, enhancing the devotee's connection with the divine and providing an aesthetic delight through their melodic and lyrical beauty.

Composers of the 19th and 20th centuries have significantly contributed to the tradition of composing kritis dedicated to the deities presiding in various kshetras. These compositions often reflect the spiritual essence of the temple, the legends associated with the deity, and the composers' deep devotion. By immortalizing the sanctity and grandeur of these kshetras in their music, they have enriched the cultural and spiritual heritage of Carnatic music.

Kshetra Kritis continue to be an integral part of Carnatic music concerts and are cherished for their devotional depth and musical richness.

In this article, the research scholar will be highlighting the compositions of Cuddalore M Subramaniam, which are composed on the deities of the kshetra, Thirupathiripuliyur. Apart from the compositional form of kritis, there are a few varnams, also composed on this kshetra. They have been mentioned in this article as well.

II. THIRUPATHIRIPULIYUR - STHALA PURANAM

Thirupathiripuliyur, a sacred site in Tamil Nadu, is known by many names, each reflecting its historical and spiritual significance. Names like Kadaiyanchalur, Kannivanam, Patalipuram, Adimanagar, Uttara Puri, Pathiripadi, and Pulisai highlight its rich heritage. The name Pathiripuliyur is particularly significant, deriving from the pathiri tree, a symbol of the site's natural sanctity, and the worship of Vyaghrapada, a sage with tiger legs. According to legend, Vyaghrapada performed penance under the shade of the pathiri tree, and the place became sanctified by his devotion. Additionally, Mangana Munivar worshipped here and was relieved of a curse that had turned him into a hare. The name also reflects the intertwining of mythology and nature that defines the spiritual essence of this holy place.

Once, in Kailash, Lord Shiva and Parvati were dancing. Despite multiple performances, Lord Shiva could not win, although he declared himself the victor. Parvati, out of mischief, closed Shiva's eyes with her hands, causing the world to plunge into darkness, halting all activities. Realizing her mistake, Parvati sought forgiveness. Shiva instructed her to go to the earthly realm and worship him in various Shiva temples. He assured her that in the place where her left eye and shoulder twitched, she would find him and receive his blessings. As instructed, Parvati visited several temples and finally reached this place (Thirupathiripuliyur), where her left eye and shoulder twitched. She stayed here and worshipped Shiva, ultimately receiving his grace.

It is one of the revered shrines among the 275 Paadal Petra Sthalams, the temples glorified in the hymns of the Tamil Saivite saints in the Tevaram. Appar (Thirunavukkarasar), a revered Saivaite saint, was once thrown into the sea bound to a stone. He sang the "Sotrunai VEDIYAN" hymn, upon which the stone floated like a raft and he was safely brought ashore near Thirupathiripuliyur by the sea god Varuna. In gratitude, Appar sang the hymn "Eenraalumai" and worshipped the Lord here. The Lord is thus also known as Thonrath Thunai Nathar.

The temple is celebrated in hymns by saints Sambandar and Appar in the Tevaram, and by Sekkizhar in the Periya Puranam. It is noted for its ancient and rich traditions, and the associated legends highlight its significance in Saiva literature and devotion.

III. THE COMPOSER'S ASSOCIATION WITH THIRUPATHIRIPULIYUR

Cuddalore M. Subramaniam was born on 3rd May 1920 at Thirupathiripuliyur, in present-day Cuddalore. From a young age, he was deeply devoted to the deities Padaleeshwarar and Brihannayaki, who preside over the sacred temple of Thirupathiripuliyur. As a mark of his devotion, he used the mudra or signature “Padaleesa” or “Patali” in his compositions to honor these deities. In addition to this, he composed several kritis and varnams in praise of Padaleeshwara and Brihannayaki of Thirupathiripuliyur. These kritis are composed in multiple languages, including Telugu, Tamil, and Sanskrit.

In his book Isai Thendral, he mentions his creative journey and provides insights into his compositions, emphasizing the devotional and philosophical themes embedded in his works. Through these compositions, he has celebrated the presiding deities of various kshetras. He has composed numerous kritis dedicated to deities residing in sacred places such as Madurai, Tiruchendur, Pazhani, Chidambaram, Kanchipuram, Mysore, Sirkazhi, and many others.

IV. COMPOSITIONS AT THIRUPATHIRIPULIYUR

A. COMPOSITIONS ON PADALEESHWARAR

Cuddalore M Subramaniam has composed 5 kritis and 3 Varnams in praise of Padaleeshwarar of Thirupathiripuliyur. It is interesting to note that out of the 5 kritis, 3 kritis are composed in Melakartha ragas. The other 2 kritis are composed in the ragas Saveri and Dheera ranjani. Apart from the kritis, he has composed 3 varnams which is set to Gowlai, Andolika and Kamas ragam.

He has referred to Padaleeshwarar in different contexts in his kritis. A few examples are in his Mayamalavagowlai kriti Shambo Mahadevam he refers to shiva as “Nadha vidhya karakam namami shri padaleesham” referring to Padaleesa as the embodiment of sound and knowledge. Also in the Gowlai varnam, he has beautifully brought out the line “Jagadeesha padaleepura nivasa naapai daya ledhayya”, in which he describes the lord of the universe who resides in Padaleepuram and why he is not being merciful on him.

Here is the list of kritis composed on Padaleeshwarar in table 1 below:

TABLE 1

Sl. No.	Name of the kriti	Ragam	Thalam
1.	Shambo mahadevam	Mayamalavagowlai (15th mela)	Rupakam
2.	Chandrasekaram	Rishabapriya (62th mela)	Adi
3.	Pataleeshwaram	Jothiswaroopini (68th mela)	Adi
4.	Chandrasekaram	Saveri (15th mela janyam)	Adi
5.	Neelakandam upasmahe	Dheera ranjani (45th mela janyam)	Rupakam

The following are the varnams composed on Padaleeshwarar given in table 2 below:

TABLE 2

Sl. No.	Name of the Varnam	Ragam	Thalam
1.	Jagadeesha	Gowlai	Adi
2.	Ela needaya radhu	Andolika	Adi
3.	Ela needaya radhu pataleesa	Kamas	Adi

B.COMPOSITIONS ON BRIHANNAYAKI

There are 33 kritis and 8 varnams composed in praise of Brihannayaki of Thirupathiripuliyur. Out of these 34 kritis, 12 kritis are melakartha raga kritis, and remaining 21 kritis are composed in janya ragas.

References to the lines from the kriti pahi parvatha rajakumari “padaleesa priya shri brihannayaki”, in the Hanumathodi the pallavi begins with the line “paradevathe pahimam amba padaleesa priya shri brihannayaki”. In his kriti set to Gangeyabhushani “Gangeyabhushani subhashini”, he says, “mamava sadha devi shri brihannayaki”, “pankajasama mukha vilasini padaleesa priya shri brihannayaki” is mentioned in the anupallavi.

Apart from these the composer has used uncommon ragas like Vasantha Chandrika, Hamsavinodhini, Maddhima raval, Lavanya, and Manoharam in the compositions in praise of Brihannayaki.

The following are the compositions in Melakartha ragas given in table 3 below:

TABLE 3

Sl. No.	Name of the kriti	Ragam	Thalam
1.	Pahi parvatharajakumari	Senavathi (7th mela)	Adi
2.	Para devathe pahimam	Hanumathodi (8th mela)	Adi
3.	Pahimam shiva kameshwari	Suryakantham (17th mela)	Adi
4.	Kadaikan paramma	Gowrimanohari (23rd mela)	Adi
5.	Gangeya booshani	Gangeyabooshani (33rd mela)	Adi
6.	Mamava sada devi sri	Salagam (37th mela)	Rupakam
7.	Nityakalyani pahimam	Kalyani (65th mela)	Misra chapu
8.	Sangeetha rasike	Namanarayani (50th mela)	Adi
9.	Umayandri ulagedamma	Chitrambari (26th mela)	Adi
10.	Himagiri thanaye hemavathi	Hemavathi (58th mela)	Adi
11.	Tharunathil paramma	Dharmavathi (59th mela)	Adi
12.	Arulayo nee Adiparasakthi	Shubapantuvarali (45th mela)	Adi

The following are the compositions in janya ragas given in table 4 below:

TABLE 4

Sl. No.	Name of the kriti	Ragam	Thalam
1.	Devi tripura bhairavi	Bhairavi (20th mela janya)	Adi
2.	Vandhe sada lalithambikam	Mechagandhari (34th mela janyam)	Adi
3.	Sadha sath sangeetha rasike	Arabhi (29th mela janyam)	Adi
4.	Paripalayamam devamanohari	Devamanohari (22nd mela janyam)	Adi
5.	Irangadha jagadhamba	Saraswathi (64th mela janyam)	Adi
6.	Lalithe mam pahi	Vijayanagari (59th mela janyam)	Rupakam
7.	Nee yallal veru yarenakkamma	Sahana (28th mela janyam)	Adi
8.	Neeye gathi neelayadakshi	Manoharam (28th mela janyam)	Adi
9.	Nayakiye brihannayakiye	Nayaki (22nd mela janyam)	Adi
10.	Shri raja rajeshwari	Shri (22mela janyam)	Adi
11.	Shankari jagadeeshwari	Gowlai (15th mela janyam)	Misra chapu
12.	Nalmaraiyal pottrum	Begada (29th mela janyam)	Misra chapu
13.	Thamadamenno thaye	Sriranjani (22nd mela janyam)	Adi
14.	Deivam nee dhanamma	Hindolam (20th mela janyam)	Adi
15.	Irangadha jagadeeshwariye	Mukhari (20th mela janyam)	Adi
16.	Paramugham yenamma	Bhairavi (20th mela janyam)	Adi
17.	Bale paripalayamam	Vasanth chandrika (65th mela janyam)	Rupakam
18.	Sarasakshi	Hamsavinodhini (29th mela janyam)	Rupakam
19.	Maha tripura sundari	Maddhima ravali(22nd mela janyam)	Rupakam
20.	Pankajanabha sahodhari	Lavanya (62nd mela janyam)	Adi
21.	Mamava shri brihannayaki	Manoharam (28th mela janyam)	Adi

The following are the varnams composed on Brihannayaki given in table 5 below:

TABLE 5

Sl. No.	Name of the Varnam	Ragam	Thalam
1.	Neeraja lochani	Hindolam (20th mela janyam)	Adi
2.	Ninne namminanu	Karaharapriya (22nd mela)	Adi
3.	Paradevathe	Suddha dhanyasi (22nd mela janyam)	Adi
4.	Ninne nammi	Keeravani (21st mela)	Adi
5.	Sarasirahasana priye	Lathangi (63rd mela)	Adi
6.	Devi dayapari	Suddha saveri (29th mela janyam)	Adi
7.	Devi gowri manohari	Gowrimanohari (23rd mela)	Adi
8.	Needhu charanamu	Vijayanagari (59th mela janyam)	Adi

V. CONCLUSION

The compositions of Cuddalore. M. Subramaniam composed at Thirupathiripuliyur showcases the fact that, 20th century composers have carried forward the legacy of composing Kshetra kritis following in the footsteps of the Trinity of Carnatic music. It is interesting to note that the compositions are not restricted to one language but composed in Tamil, Telugu, and Sanskrit. Such compositions, highlighting the various salient features of a particular kshetra, gives a wide scope for the researchers to know more about the importance of Kshetra Kritis and dwell into the roots of it.

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