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Thyagaraja Aradhana

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Thyagaraja Sisyaparampara

Saint Thyagaraja (1767-1847) composed over 1600 kriti-s. He had many disciples who were mainly responsible for the preservation and propagation of his compositions, both during his time and later. The world of Carnatic music owes much to these disciples. Some of Thyagaraja's known disciples were Thiruvetriyur Veena Kuppaiyer, Thiruvaiyaru Iya Bhagavatar, Walajapet Venkatarama Bhagavatar, Manapuchavadi Venkatasubbiah, Thillaisthanam Ramaiyengar, Lalgudi Ramaiyar, Umayalapuram Krishan Bhagavatar, Subbaraya Sastri (son of Syamasastri), Sundariyer, Amrithalingam pillai, Nemam Subbaramaiah, Nangavaram Neela kantiah, Sojjiri Seetharamaiah, Kannaiah Bhagavatar, Venkatachala pathi Bhagavatar, Ganesappagaru, Kumbakonam Aravamutha Iyer and Walajapet Potti Joshiyar. The excellent works of the great composer have been handed down to us through these direct disciples and their disciples belonging to four main *paramparas*: Walajapet, Umayalapuram and Lalgudi and Thillaisthanam.

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Thyagaraja's Kshetra kriti-s

P. P. Narayanaswami & Mohan Krishnamoorthy

Every now and then, the very presence of one or more individuals affects a major change in the fabric of a society. The influence and contributions of such individuals, could be in the field of politics, arts, science, manners, morals, religion or in any other sphere of societal life. Sri Thyagaraja was one such saint, singer, composer who left an indelible impression that will last for many centuries to come. In the introduction to his book, "*Compositions of Thyagaraja*" (Ganamandir Publications, Madras, May 1995), Sri T.K. Govinda Rao writes, "Sri Thyagaraja was one such musician whose music and spirituality provided an endearing alternative at a time when the country, after centuries of chaotic political and social strife, enforcing a long period of subjugation and decline of faith, needed a vital link that would ensure continuity of culture, tradition and revival of faith". Sri Thyagaraja, a prolific 18th century saint-composer, conveyed his feelings and ideas through the use of simple music and language that was familiar to the common man. "No other composer has influenced Carnatic music both in depth and extent as Thyagaraja has done. His *kriti-s*, couched in simplest language, homely metaphors and delicate rhythms, have a gripping intensity that lingers long in memory.", says R. Venkatraman, former President of India, in his Foreword to the book, "*Compositions of Thyagaraja*" (Ganamandir Publications, Madras, May 1995) by Sri T.K. Govinda Rao.

Thyagaraja is said to have composed over 1600 *kriti-s*. Of these, only around 700 or so are currently available. A vast majority of these *kriti-s* are devoted to singing the glory of Lord *Sri Rama* through the medium of *nama japa* and *Bhakti*. These include his major *kriti-s*, the *divyanama sankirtana-s*, the *utsava sampradaya kirtana-s* and so on. His compositions are steeped with an intense devotion for Lord Rama, thus making it straightforward for even *Harikatha* exponents to conduct *Ramayana Katha Prasanga-s* employing, solely, compositions of Thyagaraja! Indeed, since there is a wealth of compositions by Thyagaraja on the glorious virtues of Lord Rama (*Rama Nama Mahima*), these are also often used to illustrate the essence of *Ramayana*, the epic story. In his *kriti, rama bhakthi samrajya* (in *raga suddha bangala*), Thyagaraja writes, "The mere sight of those sublime souls who have been blessed with the kingdom of devotion to Rama, is capable of conferring supreme bliss, here and hereafter". [Source for all translations: T.K. Govinda Rao, *Compositions of Thyagaraja*, Ganamandir Publications, May 1995].

Though he was an strict devotee of Lord *Rama*, Thyagaraja has taken time out to deviate from this theme, to compose several beautiful *kriti-s* in

praise of other Gods and Goddesses of the South Indian Hindu pantheon. Unlike his great contemporary, Muthuswami Dikshitar, Thyagaraja was not a zealous pilgrim. However, he did travel to some nearby shrines in places like Srirangam, Lalgudi (near Trichy), Tirupati, Kovur, Tiruvottoyur, Nagapattanam and Madras, to mention a few places. Also, besides Lord Rama, he has composed and sang in praise of Lord Ganesha, Lord Siva, Lord Vishnu, Goddess Parvati (in several forms), and the sacred river Kaveri, in addition to a large number of songs glorifying *Nadabrahmam*, the medium of the *sapta swara-s*, through which he expressed his feelings towards God.

In this small note, we try to point out the various Thyagaraja *kriti-s* that are *not* related to the theme of Lord Rama. We illustrate some of Thyagaraja's compositions that are related to specific *kshetra-s*, or places (generally) of worship. Besides, we also highlight some of the compositions that are not related specifically to the theme of Lord Rama.

***Kriti-s* on Lord Ganesha:**

On Lord Ganesha, Thyagaraja sang the *kriti giriraja suta tanaya sadaya* in the *raga bangala*. The common misconception is that Thyagaraja used only Telugu in all of his compositions. This *kriti* on Lord Ganesha is an example of Thyagaraja's compositions in simple Sanskrit. The Sanskrit *kriti sri gananatham bhajamyaham* in the *raga kanakangi* (the first *melakarta raga*) is also attributed to Thyagaraja. Strangely, this *kriti* includes the *mudra* (signature) of Thyagaraja, as well as Dikshitar! However, the style of this *kriti* is similar to that of other Dikshitar *kriti-s*. The more famous Thyagaraja *kriti* on Lord Ganesha is, of course, *sri ganapathini* in the *saurashtra raga*. This is rendered as a prelude to the singing of Thyagaraja's *pancharatna-s*, the set of five gems of this great composer. This *kriti* also belongs to the set of Thyagaraja *kriti-s* called the *prahalada bhakti vijaya kirtana-s*.

***Kriti-s* on the Kaveri river:**

In the *kriti sari vedalina* in *raga asaveri*, Thyagaraja describes the flow of the sacred river Kaveri -- the river, that is said to flow gloriously towards her husband's house, fulfilling the desires of all devotees along the way. In the *kriti muripemu galigegada* in the *mukhari raga*, Thyagaraja further echoes: "Oh Rama! are you not happy that you have secured the abode of *Panchanada Kshetra* in Chola Desham, situated on the banks of the holy river Kaveri; a place so beautiful, and worthy of being coveted by Lord Siva himself..."

***Kriti-s* on Panchanadisha and Dharmasamvardhani:**

Since Thyagaraja spent a major portion of his time in the temple city of Tiruvaiyaru (Panchanadi, the bank of five rivers), we find a number of

compositions dedicated to the presiding deity of the temple at Tiruvaiyaru, Lord Pranatharthihara (Siva), and the Divine consort Goddess Dharmasamvardhani. The following are some of the *kriti-s* that Thyagaraja composed to glorify this sacred *kshetra* (place): *illalo pranatharthihara* (*raga: attana*), *evarunnaru* (*raga: malavasri*), *ehi trijagadisha* (*raga: saranga*), *muchata brahmadula* (*raga: madhyamavati*), *darshanamu seya* (*raga: narayanagaula*), *siva siva siva* (*raga: pantuvarali*), *devadi deva sadasiva* (*raga: sinduramakriya*).

In *siva siva siva*, the famous *kriti* in *pantuvarali*, Thyagaraja says, "Chanting the *Veda-s*, extol the Lord. Avoid all fruitless talk and in the company of noble devotees, indulge in chanting the name of the Lord and singing His glory. Knowing that Siva is the Lord whom Thyagaraja bows down to, chant the name of Siva eternally."

Thyagaraja's *kriri-s* on Dharmasamvardhani include: *karunajutavamma* (*raga: todi*), *parashakti manuparada* (*raga: saveri*), *nivu brovavale* (*raga: saveri*), *bale balendu* (*raga: ritigaula*), *amma dharmasamvardhani* (*raga: attana*), *vidhi chakradulaku* (*raga: yamuna kalyani*), *sive pahimam* (*raga: kalyani*), *innallavale* (*raga: deshya todi*), *nannu kanna talli* (*raga: kesari*), *amba ninnu nammiti* (*raga: arabhi*).

In the above list, *nannu kanna talli* is listed as a *kriti* in the *raga kesari*. There is some confusion regarding this beautiful *kriti*. Some references on Thyagaraja *kriti-s* list *nannu kanna talli* in the *raga kesari* (*Janya* of the 28th *Melakarta*, *harikambhoji*) and in *desadi tala*. This *kriti* is rendered in an old LP recording by Balamuralikrishna, the sleeve notes of which record the *raga* as *sindu kannada*. We use the *raga kesari* in our listing since that is the choice endorsed by (amongst others) T. S. Parthasarathy and V. Raghavan (in his book '*Spiritual Heritage of Thyagaraja*'). It is possible that *kesari* and *sindu kannada* are isomorphic *raga-s*. The book '*Ragas in Carnatic Music*' by Dr. Bhagyalakshmi lists *sindu kannada* as a *vakra shadava sampurna raga* (*sa ma ga ma ri ga ma pa da pa sa; sa ni da pa ma ga ri sa*) and as a *janya* of *harikambhoji*. The *kriti nannu kanna talli* is listed as an example of this *raga*. In the same book, the *kesari raga* also appears as a *ubhaya vakra shadava sampurna raga*, derived from the 25th *Melakarta*, *mararanjani*, (*sa ri ga ma pa da pa da sa; sa ni da pa ma ga ri sa*), with the *panchamam* and *daivatam* being used twice in the ascent as *vakra swara-s*. Here too, Dr Bhagyalakshmi quotes *nannu kanna talli* as an example of a *kriti* in *kesari*!

Specific compositions at some *kshetra-s*:

In the town of Shirkazhi, Thyagaraja composed *kriti-s* on Lord Subrahmanya including *nee vanti daivamu* in *todi* and *vara sikhivahana* in the not so often heard *raga supradipam*.

There is supposed to be a Thyagaraja *kriti* dedicated to the Sri Parthasarathy temple of Tiruvallikeni (Triplicane, Madras). The *pallavi* of this *kriti* commences with the words *sari vetalina*. In fact, this composition is not listed in many collections of Thyagaraja's works. Only the *pallavi* and *anupallavi* of this *kriti* are currently available!

Besides these, there are also a few other compositions, whose correct context and location cannot be determined, for want of exact geographical details or pointers in the lyrics.

The story associated with the *kriti tera teeyagarada* in the *gaulipantu raga* is well known. Apocryphal and anecdotal evidence leads us to believe that the entrance to the sanctum sanctorum of the hill temple at Tirupati was closed when Thyagaraja visited it. On seeing this, Thyagaraja is said to have sung this *kriti* spontaneously. At once, it is believed that the curtain rose magically, and Thyagaraja is reported to have had a holy *darshan* of the Lord Venkateshwara. The meaning of the song however indicates that, while Thyagaraja may indeed have composed and sung this *kriti* at Tirupati, he instead asks the Lord Venkateshwara to aid him in lifting the veil of jealousy *within himself*! He adds, "this veil prevents me from attaining the four-fold blessings of right conduct, taintless wealth, genuine love for humanity and unalloyed devotion to God, which leads to salvation". Another song associated with Tirupati temple is *venkatesha ninu* in the *madhyamavati raga*.

It is common conjecture that, due to some unknown incident, Thyagaraja was extremely despondent and dejected when he visited the coastal town of Nagapattinam. This mood is reflected in the composition *karmame balavanta maya* in the *saveri raga*. In this composition, Thyagaraja cries out in anguish, "The adverse effects of my despicable acts of my previous births have gained the upper hand". He goes on to seek the assistance of the Goddess of Nagapattinam to cleanse him of all his collected "impurities". At this place, he also composed *evuru teliya in toti*.

Kriti-s composed in Kanchipuram:

At the request of Saint Upanishad Brahman, a head of the Kanchi Matt, and also a close friend of his father, Thyagaraja visited the ancient city of Kanchipuram, renowned for its numerous Siva and Vishnu temples. There, he composed two *kriti-s* on Lord Varadaraja, in the rare *raga-s ragapanchamam* and *swarabhushani*. These are *varada navanitasha* and *varadaraja ninnukori* respectively. He also composed the *kriti vinayakuni valenu* in the *raga madhyamavati* on Goddess Kanchi Kamakshi.

Tiruvottiyur Pancharatnam-s:

At the request of his prominent disciple, Vina Kuppayyer, Thyagaraja visited the town of Tiruvottiyur (also known as Nasipuram). Here he composed five beautiful *kriti-s* on Goddess Tripurasundari. This set of *kriti-s* is

known as the *Tiruvottiyur Pancharatnam-s*. These *kriti-s* are: *kanna talli* (*raga: saveri*), *sundari ninnu* (*raga: arabhi*), *sundari nannindarilo* (*raga: begada*), *sundari ni divya* (*raga: kalyani*) and *dharini telusu konti* (*raga: suddhasaveri*). The last of this set of five *kriti-s*, in the *raga suddhasaveri*, is very popular and is included in many a modern-day concert repertoire.

Kovur Pancharatnam-s:

Sundara Mudaliar, a rich Landlord from Kovur, and a sincere devotee of Thyagaraja, invited Thyagaraja to visit his home town and the shrine of Lord Sundareshwara of Kovur. Here, Thyagaraja composed five songs, which are known as *Kovur Pancharatnam-s*. These are: *ee vasudha* (*raga: sahana*), *kori sevimpave* (*raga: kharaharapriya*), *shambo mahadeva* (*raga: pantuvarali*), *nammi vachina* (*raga: kalyani*) and *sundareshwaruni* (*raga: shankarabharanam*).

Srirangam Pancharatnam-s:

In the soul-stirring and weighty composition, *o rangashayi* (in *raga kambhoji*), Thyagaraja refers to the shrine at Srirangam as "*bhuloka vaikunta midhiyani nilona nive yuppongi*". Thyagaraja says "You seem to regard Srirangam as Vaikunta, your Supreme Abode itself and lose yourself here in the enjoyment of your company with your consort, Sri Devi". This *kriti*, which is often rendered in concerts these days, belongs to a set of five gems, known as *Srirangam Pancharatnam*. It is a masterful collection of five *kriti-s* on Lord Ranganatha at Srirangam. These are: *joota murare* (*raga: arabhi*), *o rangashayi* (*raga: kambhoji*), *karuna jootumayya* (*raga: saranga*), *rajuvedala* (*raga: toti*), and *vinarada* (*raga: devagandhari*). All of these *kriti-s* are extremely popular and are often presented in modern-day concerts.

Lalgudi Pancharatnam-s:

Thyagaraja had several disciples from the town of Tiruttavatturai, also known as Lalgudi, the home and birth place of the violin maestro, Lalgudi Jayaraman. One of these disciples was Lalgudi Jayaraman's great grandfather. At his request (and at the request of other disciples of Thyagaraja in Lalgudi), the great bard spent some time in the small town of Lalgudi, worshipping the presiding deities, Lord Saptarishiswara (also known as Sri Tapastheertha Deva), and Goddess Pravridha Srimati. (Srimati, which is also the name of Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman's sister, is a household name for women hailing from this village). While at Lalgudi, Saint Thyagaraja is believed to have stayed at house of Sri Lalgudi G. Jayaraman's great grand parents. The five songs he composed here are known as *Lalgudi Pancharatnam-s*. Recently, Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman (with assistance from young performers: G.J.R. Krishnan, J. Vijayalakshmi, Bombay Jayashri, Jayanthi R. Kiran, Sanjay Subrahmanyam and S. P. Ramh) rendered all of these five *kriti-s* in a commercially available cas-

sette recording. The *kriti-s* in this set are: *gati nive* (raga: *todi*), *lalite sri pravreddha srimathi* (raga: *bhairavi*), *deva sri* (raga: *madhyamavati*), *ma-hita pravreddha* (raga: *kambhoji*) and *eesha pahimam* (raga: *kalyani*).

Kriti-s composed in Sholingapuram:

Thyagaraja is said to have composed three *kriti-s* in the temple town of Sholingapuram. The first of these three *kriti-s*, *narasimha nannu* in *raga bilahari* is on Lord Yoga Lakshmi Narasimha. The remaining two *kriti-s*, *pahi ramaduta* (raga: *vasantavarali*) and *kaluguna padaniraja* (raga: *purnalalita*) are on Lord Yoga Anjaneya.

Kriti-s on Nadabrahmam:

No description of Thyagaraja's compositions will ever be complete without a mention of his numerous wonderful compositions on the theme of glory of divine music, *Nadabrahmam*. Thyagaraja echoes the Vedic dictum that Lord Siva is *Nada tanu*, and praises Lord Shankara in the exquisite (and popular) *nada tanum anisam* in *raga chittaranjani*. In this *kriti*, he describes Lord Siva as the essence of the *Sama Veda*, who delights in the art of the seven *swara-s* which are born from his five faces. In the *kriti*, *nama kusuma* in *sri raga*, Thyagaraja asks us to place the supreme Lord on the bejewelled pedestal of *nada* and *swara*, and worship His feet. Mere knowledge of music without *bhakti* (devotion) does not lead us to the right path, says Thyagaraja in the *dhanyasi kriti*, *sangita gnanamu*. In the *kriti*, *raga suda rasa* in the *andolika raga*, Thyagaraja suggests in the *charanam* that *nada*, *swara* and *pranava* are the very forms of Lord Sadasiva. In the *kriti*, *nada loludai* in *kalyanavasantam*, Thyagaraja ascertains that one can attain bliss by merely contemplating on *nada*. And so, the list goes on... The following is a partial list of Thyagaraja *kriti-s* devoted to the glorification of music: *anada sagara* (*garudadhvani*), *mokshamu galada* (*saramati*), *nadaloludai* (*kalyanavasantam*), *nada suda rasam* (*arabhi*), *nada suda rasa* (*begada*) *swara raga suda* (*shankarabharanam*) *sripapriya* (*attana*) *sangita shastra* (*mukhari*) *soga-suga mrdanga* (*sri ranjani*) *sobillu saptaswara* (*jaganmohini*), *sangita gnanamu* (*dhanyasi*) *vidulaka* (*mayamalavagaulai*), *vara raga laya* (*chenjukambhoji*), *nada tanum anisam* (*chittaranjani*), *raga ratna malikache* (*ritigowlai*), *nama kusuma* (*sri ragam*), *sangita shastra* (*salaga bhairavi*), *sitavara* (*devagandhari*).

In conclusion, we offer our humble homage to Saint Thyagaraja through the following majestic *Sloka* (verse), composed by Walajapet Krishnaswamy (the eldest son of Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavathar; one of the foremost disciples of Saint Thyagaraja), which beautifully crystallises the sacredness and depth of this divine composer:

*Vyaso Naigama Charchaya Mrdugira Valmiki Janmo Munih;
Vairagye Shuka Eva Bhakti Visayye Prahlada Eva Svayam;
Brahma Narada Eva Chapartimayoh Sangita Sahityayoh;
Yo Namamrta Pana Nirjita Sivah Tam Thyagarajam Bhaje.*

Saint Vyasa accomplished it (the supreme bliss) through Vedic discussions, Saint Valmiki through soft words of poetry;

Saint Shuka through renunciation, Prahlada through intense devotion;

Brahma and Narada through music and literature;

I salute Saint Thyagaraja, who achieved the supreme by merely drinking the immortal ambrosia of Lord's sacred *Nama*.

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Answers for Music Crossword on Page 17

ACROSS

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 4. GA | 9. AVAROHANA | 10. VAKRA RAGAS |
| 12. HANUMATODI | 16. VARNAM | 17. ALARIPPU |
| 18. MUDRA | 19. SAMAM | 22. ANUSVARA |
| 23: FLUTE | 28. NARAYANATIRTHA | |
| 29. GOWLA | 30. MALAHARI | 31. STHAYI |
| 33. NIROSHTA | 34. TAVIL | 35. RAMA |

DOWN

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. SVARA | 2. LAYA | 3. THODI |
| 4. GHATAM | 5. KOVUR | 6. MANODHARMA |
| 7. MALLARI | 8. SARNGADEVA | 11. SYAMASASTRI |
| 13. ANUPALLAVI | 14. TARASTHAYI | 15. LAGHU |
| 20. HARIDASA | 21. KAMAKSHI | 24. KAVERI |
| 25. SANGATI | 26. MANGALAM | 27. TANJAVUR |
| 32. ADI | | |

Ghana Raga Pancharatna Kriti-s

The Thyagaraja Aradhana, conducted annually in Tiruvaiyaru, attracts thousands of people from different regions of India and abroad. Started in 1925 by Bangalore Nagarathnamma (a brilliant singer of Thyagaraja Sisyaparampara), who built the shrine for Saint Thyagaraja at his samadhi, the *Aradhana* has been a time-honored tradition in which musicians of high repute participate. An important component of the proceedings is the re-enactment of *unchavritti*, the daily rounds that Thyagaraja as a *Bhagavatha* made, to gather alms. Leading vidwans take part in this event, starting from the *Tirumanjana Veedhi* residence of Tyagaraja and ending at the site of his samadhi. At the samadhi, musicians pay tribute to the memory of the great vaggeyakara through choral-singing of the Pancharathna Kritis. *Chetulara*, a composition in Bhairavi, is customarily rendered by flutists preceding the chorus. Due eminence is given to the great musicians present on the occasion. For example, in the fifties, the flute playing of *chetulara* was always led by Palladam Sanjeeva Rao while each of the Pancharathna kritis was led by a highly respected musician such as Musiri Subramania Iyer, Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer and Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar.

The Aradhana is conducted in many places all around the world and the group singing of the Pancharatna kritis is a focal item of the event. The aradhana program format seems to have evolved over a period of time, while the singing of the Pancharatna kritis preceded by *chetulara* in flute, seems to have come into vogue in 1940, when the *Thyagabrahma Mahotsava Sabha* was formed, with Musiri Subramania Iyer as the first secretary of the Sabha.

It is not known when and by whom these five kritis of Thyagaraja came to be named as the *Pancharatna kritis*. According to scholar T.S. Parthasarathy, in the 1908 volume of Thyagaraja's kriti-s, Narasimha Bhagavata refers to them as the compositions known together as the Pancharatna. So the grouping and christening of the five kriti-s must have occurred even earlier. A textual reference to the kritis as Pancharatna can be found in a 1933 book containing seven Thyagaraja kritis edited by S.A. Ramaswamy Iyer.

There are also several explanations as to how and why these kritis were selected and grouped. Select kritis of a composer are usually grouped according to some common or linking factors such as theme, deity or kshetra. Since none of these criteria can be applied to the set of five Pancharathna kritis, it is suggested that the unique name might have been given because of their distinctive merits and the creative excellence

binding them.

Some distinctive characteristics merit attention:

1. The number of charana-s in most Tyagaraja kriti-s is less than five, but there are eight to 10 charana-s in the Pancharatna-s.
2. The *swara-sahitya* type of structure of the charana-s adds to their evocative quality when sung. Furthermore, the charana-s have different dhatu-s (varnamettu).

It is said that, while the *pathantara* that is followed is of the Umalyapuram school (as taught by Swaminatha Iyer, according to Semman-gudi Srinivasa Iyer), there is not much difference between the versions of the three main sishya parampara-s. While all are set to Adi tala, the speed in which they are to be rendered is 1-kalai chaukam, except in the case of the Varali piece which is set in 2-kalai. Incidentally, the latter, as also the fact that this kriti is not usually taught by many because of an extra-musical consideration, may be the reason why many falter when singing it as part of a chorus.

As regards theme and import, it may be mentioned that, while most of the known kriti-s of Tyagaraja are contextual and in the nature of responses to specific situations, pleas, etc., the subjects of these five kriti-s are rather more general even while each of them conveys different moods.

Another point that needs to be explained is the reason why the prefix 'ghana raga' is attached to the Pancharatna-s. The characteristics commonly associated with the ghana raga-s are majesty and fulsomeness, with the sound emanating from the navel (nabhi) and commencing with 'hoomkara'. These raga-s provide considerable scope for sangati-s both in *arohana* and *avarohana* passages. For fulsome singing, they require rigorous 'akara' sadhakam. 'Ghanam' in musical parlance is interpreted to denote a weighty, substantial style; a branch of *manodharma sangeeta* or creative music wherein a raga is expounded in the style of *tanam* but the speed of singing is very fast (Ref. *Dictionary of South Indian Music and Musicians* by Prof. P. Sambamoorthy, Vol II). However, the grouping of the kritis does not seem to be only because they are all in Ghana ragas. Except for Gaula in which Thyagaraja composed only one kriti, there are more than one in the other four ragas.

Though the five raga-s traditionally referred to as ghana raga-s are the same in which Tyagaraja composed his Pancharatna-s, these are not the only raga-s termed as 'ghana'. Another set of raga-s so described consists of Kedaram, Narayanagaula, Reetigaula, Saranganata and Bauli. Punnagavarali also has been cited as a ghana raga.

Thus, the grouping of the kritis as the Ghana Raga Pancharathna

seems to be the result of a consensus of opinions that these compositions in the 5 ragas Nattai, Gaulai, Arabhi, Sri, and Varali, are the most scholarly contribution of Thyagaraja to South Indian Music. The composer has condensed in these five immortal gems, all his musical genius, his boundless devotion to God and the profound wisdom of the Vedanta teaching.

[Compiled by Library Committee. Excerpts have been taken from an article in the Sruti (India) magazine: *Thyagaraja's Ghanaraga Panchartna* by Manna Srinivasan]

GHANA RĀGA PANCHARATHNA KRITIS

1. Jagadānanda Kāraka

Rāgam—Nāta 36th Mela Janyam Thālam—Ādi

Pallavi:

Jagadānanda kāraka Jaya Jānaki prānanāyaka

Anupallavi:

Gaganādhīpa sathkulaja Rāja Rājeswarā
sugunākara surasēvyā bhavyadāyaka sadā sakala

Charanās:

1. Amara thāraka nichaya kumudahitha paripūrnanagha
sura surapūja dadhi payōdhi vāsa harana
sundarathara vadana sudhāmaya vachō brinda Gōvinda
sānanda māvarājarāpta subhakarānēka
2. Nigama nīrajāmrutaja pōshakānimisha vairi
vārīda samīrana khaga thuranga satkavi hrudālaya aganitha
vānarādhīpa nathāmghri yuga
3. Indra nīla mani sannibhāpaghana Chandra Sūryanayanāpramēya
vāgīndra janaka sakalēsa subhra Nāgēndra sayana samana vairi
sannuta
4. Pāda vijitha mouni sāpa sava paripāla vara mantra grahana lōla
parama sāntha chittha janaka jādhipa sarōja bhava varadākhila
5. Srushti sthityanta kāraka amita kāmīta phalada asāmāna gāthra Sachee
pathi suthāpdhi madahara anurāga rājitha katha sarahitha
6. Sajjana māna sāpdhi sudhākara kusuma vimāna surasā ripu karāpja
lālitcharana avaguna suragana mada harana sanātānā janutha

7. Omkāra panjarakīra purahara sarōjabhava Kēsavādi rūpa vāsava-ripu
Janakānthaka kalādhārāpta ghrunākara saranāgatha janapālana
sumanō-ramana nirvikāra nigamasārathara
8. Karadhrutha sara jālāsura madāpaharanā vanīsura surāvana kavīna
bilaja mouni kruta charitra sannuta Sri Thyāgarājanutha
9. Purāna purusha nru varāthmajāsriṭha parādhīna
kara virādha rāvana virāvana anagha parāsara manōhara vikruta
Thyāgarāja sannutha
10. Aganitha guna kanaka chēla sāla vidalana arunābha samāna charana
apāra mahimādhbutha sukavi jana hrithsadana sura munigana vihitha
kalasa nīra nidhijā ramana pāpagaja Nrusimha vara Thyāgarājādi
nutha

2. Duduku Gala

Rāgam—Goulai 15th Mela Janyam Thālam—Ādi

Pallavi:

Dudukū gala nannē dora-koduku brōchurā enthō

Anupallavi:

Kadu durvishaya krushtudai gadiya gadiyaku nindāru

Charanas:

1. Sri vanitha hruthkumudabja avāng mānasa gōchara
2. Sakala bhūthamula-yandu nīvai yundagā Madi lēka pōyina
3. Chiruta prāyamula nādē bhajanāmruta rasavihīna kutarkudaina
4. Paradhanamula koraku norula madi karaga balki kadupunimpa thirigi
natti
5. Thana-madini bhuvini saukhyapu jīvanamē yanuchu sadā dinamulu
gadipē
6. Thēliyani natavita kshudrulu vanitalu svavasamauta kupadisinchī
santasilli swara-layambu lerungakanu silāthmulai subhakthulaku
samānamanu
7. Dhrushtiki sārambagu lalanā sadanārbhaka sēnāmītha dhanādulanu,
dēvādīdēva nera nammithini gākanu padābja bhajanambu marachina

8. Chakkani mukha kamalambunu sadā nā madilō smarana lēkanē durmadandha janula kōri parithāpamulachē dagili nogili durvishaya durāsalanu rōyalēka sathathama parādhinaī chapalachitthudanaina
9. Mānavathanu durlabha manuchu nENCHI paramānanda monda-lēka; mada matsara kāma lōbha mōhulaku dāsudai mōsabōthi gāka; modati-kulajudaguchu bhuvini sudrula panulu salpuchu nuntini gāka; narādhmulanu kōri sārāhina madamulanu sādhipa thārumāru
10. Sathulaku konnallasthikai suthulaku konnāllu dhana thathulakai thirigithi nanyā Thyāgarājāptha ituvanti

3. Sadinchane

Rāgam—Ārabhi 29th Mela Janyam Thālam—Ādi

Pallavi:

Sādhinchane O Manasā

Anupallavi:

Bōdhinchina sanmārga-vachanamula bōnku-chēsi thā-pattinapattu

Charanas

Samayāniki thagu mātālādenē

1. Dēvaki Vasudēvula nēginchinatu
2. Rangēsudu sadgangā janakudu sangītha sampradāyakudu
3. Gōpī-jana-Manōratha Mosanga-lēkanē gēliyu chēsē-vādu
4. Vanithala sadā sokka jēyuchunu mrokka vhēsē Paramātmu-dadhiyu-gāka Yasōdha thanayudanchu mudhambunanu muddhu-betta navvuchundu hari
5. Parama bhaktha vatsaludu suguna pārāvārundu ājanma managhudī kali bādhala thīrchu vādanuchunē hrudayambujamuna jūchuchundaga
6. Harē Rāmachandra Raghukulēsa mrudubhāsha sēshasayana paranārī sōdharāja virāja thuraga rājarājanutha nirāmayāpaghana sarasīruha dhalāksha yanuchu vēdukonnanu thā brōvakanu
7. Sri Venkatēsa svaprakāsa sarvōnnatha sajjanamānasa nikēthana kankāmaradhara lasanmakuta kundala virājītha harē! yanuchu nē pogadagā Thyāgarāja-gēyudu mānavēndrudaina Rāmachandrudu

8. Sadhbhaktula nadatha litlanenē amarikagā nā; pūja-konenē alugavaddhanenē; Vimukhulathō jērabōku-manenē; Vetha galgina thālukommanenē; Damasamādi sukhadāyakudagu Sri Thyāgarājanuthudu chentha rākanē

4. Kanakana Ruchira

Rāgam—Varāli

39th Mela

Thālam—Ādi

Pallavi:

Kana Kana Ruchirā Kanakavasana Ninnu

Anupallavi:

Dina Dinamunu Manasuna Chanavuna Ninnu

Charanams:

1. Pālugaru mōmuna Sriyapāra mahima danaru ninnu
2. Thala Thala-manu mukha-kala galigina Sītha kulukuchu nōra-kannulanu jūchē ninnu
3. Bālārākābha suchēla manimaya mālālankrutha kandhara Sarasijāksha vara kapōla suruchira kiritadhara sathathambu manasārāga
4. Sāpathnīmāthayow Suruchichē-karna sūlamaina-māta vīnula churukkana thālaka Sri Harini dhyāninchi sukhimpaga lēda yatu
5. Mrugamadalalāma subhanitala varajātāyu mōkshaphalada pavanamānasutudu nīdhu mahima delpa Sīta thelisi valachi sokkalēdharīthi ninnu
6. Sukhāspada vimukhambudhara pavana vidēhamānasa vihārāptha surabhūja mānitha gunāmka Chidānanda khaga thuranga dhrutaradhānga parama dayākara karunārāsa varunālaya bhayāpahārā Sri Raghupathē
7. Kāminchi prēmamīra karamula nīdu pādakamalamula battukonuvādu sākshi Rāmanāma rasikudu Kailāsa sadhanudu sākshi mariyu Nārada Parāsara Suka Saunaka Purandara nagajā dharaja mukhyulu sākshigāda Sundarēsa sukha salāmbudhi vāsāsrithulakē
8. Sathathamu prēma pūrithudagu Thyāgarāja nuta mukhajitha kumudahitha varada ninnu

5. Endarō Mahānubhāvulu

Rāgam—Sri

22nd Mela Janyam

Thālam—Ādi

Pallavi:

Endarō mahānubhāvulu andariki vandanamulu

Anupallavi:

Chanduru varnuni anda chandamunu hrudayā Aravindamuna
jūchi brahmānanda manubhavinchuvār+endarō

Charanas:

1. Sāma-gāna-lōla manasija lāvanya dhanya mūrdhanyul+endarō
2. Mānasa vana-chara vara sanchāramu nilipi mūrthi bāguga podaganē
vār+endarō
3. Saraguna pādamulaku svāntamanu sarōjamunu samarpanamu
sēyuvār+endarō
4. Pathitha pāvanudanē parāthparuni gurinchi paramārthamagu
nijamārgamu thonu pāduchunu sallāpamuthō swara layādi rāgamula
eliyuvār+endarō
5. Hari-guna manimaya saramulu galamuna sōbillu bhaktha-kotulilalō
thelivitho chelimithō karunagalgi jagamellanu sudhā drushtichē
brōchuvār+endarō
6. Hoyalumīra nadalu kalgu sarasuni sadā kanula jūchuchunu
pulaka-sarīrulai ananda payōdhi nimagnulai mudambunanu
yasamu galavār+endarō
7. Parama bhāgavatha mouni vara sasi vibhakara Sanaksanandana
digīsa sura kimpurusha kanakasipu suta Nārada Thumburu- pavana
sūnu Bālachandra dhara suka sarōjabhava bhūsuravarulu- parama
pāvanulu ghanulu sāsavathulu kamala bhava sukhamu sadānubhavulu
gāka endarō
8. Nī mēnu nāma vaibhavammulanu nī parākrama dhairyamula sāntha
mānasamu nīvulanu vachana satyamunu Raghuvāra! Nī yeda
sadbhakthiyu janinchakanu durmathamulanu kalla chēsinatti nī madi
neringi santhathambunanu guna-bhajanānanda kīrtanamu sēyuvār
endarō
9. Bhāgavatha Rāmāyana Gītādi Sruthi Sāsthra Purānapu marmamulan
Sivādi Shanmathamula gūḍhamula muppadi mukkōti
surāntharangamula bhāvamula neringi bhāva rāga layādi
saukhyamulache chirāyuvul galigi niravadhi sukhātmulai
Thyāgarājātmulaina vār+endarō

10. Prema muppiri gonu vēla nāmamunu dalachē-vāru Rāma-
bhakthudaina Thyāgarāja-nuthuniki nija-dāsulainavar+endarō

The Musical Plays of Thyagaraja

Thyagaraja composed two musical plays, bringing out the greatness of devotion to God. The *Prahlada Bhakthi Vijaya* and the *Nauka Charitra* are modeled on the *natakas* of the Bhagavatha tradition.

Naukā Charitra, a one act play, is more dramatic and is considered to be the more noteworthy as an artistic achievement. The play is full of delightful music and beautiful poetry written in simple language. With the *Humbling of the Gopi's Pride* as the theme, the opera stresses the importance of absolute surrender to God. The story is told in the context of a boat excursion on the river Jumna- the party consisting of Krishna and Gopis. The Gopis are exhilarated with Krishna's love and become intoxicated with pride. Lord Krishna, in order to render them humble and purify them, conjures up a gale which tosses the boat in the turbulent waters. The women are filled with panic. The craft suddenly springs leak and Krishna grimly asks them to remove their garments, symbolic of all material trappings, and plug the holes with them. When the desperate Gopis surrender their pure spirit to the Lord in meek prayer that He was the sole saviour, the Lord calls off the storm and blesses his devotees.

Naukā Charitra consists of 21 songs, 24 *Kanda padyas*, 5 *Sisa Padyas*, 3 *Utpalamālas*, 5 *Champakamālas*, 7 *Sardulas*, 2 *Dvipādas*, 1 *Utsāha padya* and many interesting prose passages serving as connecting links in the story. The play starts with a composition in Surati and ends with a mangalam in the same raga. Of the 21 songs in the play, 7 are in the kriti style and the rest are simpler melodies. Excepting for the Ghana raga Vārāli, the other ragas used in the play are rakthi ragas. In all, 13 ragas are used in the *Naukā Charitra*. The ragas and the number of songs (in parentheses) in each raga are Surati(2), Pantuvarāli(1), Yadukulakāmbhoji(1), Saurāshtra(4), Sāranga(1), Bhairavi(1), Punnāgavarāli(4), Sāvērī(1), Karnāṭaka Kāpi(1), Devagāndhārī(1), Ghanta(2), Vārāli(1) and Mōhana(1). Excepting for the *phala sruti* (benediction *sloka*) in the end, the entire opera is in Telugu.

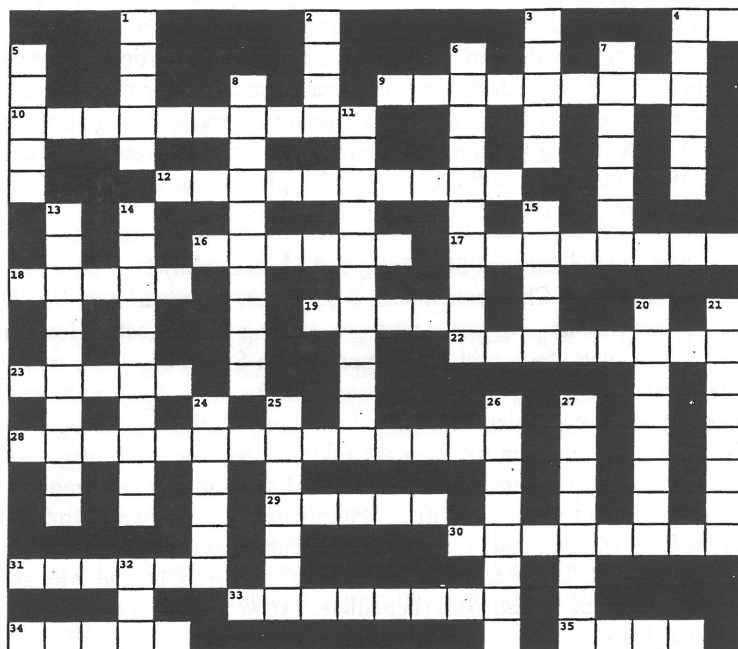
In *Prahlada Bhakti Vijaya* which is a play of five acts, Thyagaraja brings out the triumph of Prahlada's devotion to Hari over the many trials to which he was subjected to by his demon father Hiranyakashipu. The play is composed of both heavy and light musical pieces, some of which

have become popular in concerts. There are 45 kritis in 28 ragas and 135 verses. A well-known composition belonging to this set of kritis is *Sri ganapathini* in Saurashtram, which is sung as a prelude to the rendering of Pancharathna kritis. Again, Thyagaraja has employed many rakthi ragas: Husēni, Sahana, Punnāgavarali, Ghanta, Nilāmbari, Gaulipantu, Asāveri, Āhiri and Paras.

[Compiled by Library Committee: Sources: *The Spiritual Heritage of Thyagaraja* by C. Ramanujachari; *A Dictionary of South Indian Music and Musicians*, Vol 3 by Prof. P. Sambamurthy]

Music Crossword

Sumanth Swaminathan



Clues on facing Page
Answers on Page 7

Clues for Music Crossword

ACROSS

4. Gandhara
9. Descending notes characterizing a raga
10. Ragas with zig-zag arohana or avarohana (2 words)
12. 8th mela
16. Concerts usually begin with this
17. Opening item of a bharathanatyam performance
18. Signature woven into a composition
19. starting point of a tala cycle
22. Auxiliary note attached to a principal note
23. Wind instrument made from bamboo
28. He wrote Krishna Leela Tarangini
29. Thyagaraja composed only one song in this ghana raga.
30. Raga of the first composition usually taught to a beginner.
31. Octave
33. Don't use your lips to sing this raga's svaras
34. Percussion instrument played with a short stick in one hand
35. Thyagaraja's Ishtadevatha

DOWN

1. A musical note
2. Sruthi Maatha — Pitha
3. Thyagaraja composed quite a few songs in this raga.
4. Claypot instrument
5. EE Vasudha in Sahana is one of — Pancharathana kritis
6. —sangita, creative part of music.
7. Piece in gambhiranata played by nagasvaram and tavil
8. Author of Sangita Ratnakara
11. This famous composer was a desciple of Pachimiriyam Adiappayya
13. Middle section of a kriti
14. The upper octave (2 words)
15. Variable section of some talas
20. 15th century movement of 'God's Servents'
21. Deity revered by Syamasastri
24. Thiruvaiyaru is located on this river
25. A variation of the same musical line in a composition.
26. Concluding piece of a performance
27. Brothers Cinnayya, Ponnayya, Sivanandam & Vadivelu form the — Quartette.
32. Eight beat tala

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