



Carnatic Music

Sri Kamalamba Jayati in Ahiri, a Dikshitar's masterpiece

By Vidya Subramanian - www.vidyasubramanian.com

Each of the Kamalamba Navavarana kritis of Shri Muthuswami Dikshitar is a masterpiece in its own right. This article attempts to highlight some unique attributes of the 9th avarana kriti, Sri Kamalamba Jayati, in Raagam Ahiri and set to Rupaka talam. Shri Dikshitar begins the pallavi with the words ``Sri Kamalamba Jayati'' (``Hail Goddess Kamalamba!").

Shri Dikshitar, being a follower of the Srividya mode of worship, describes different aspects of the Mother Goddess in the Navavarana kritis. The Srichakra consists of geometrical diagrams and is believed to have great esoteric significance. This kriti is dedicated to the aspect of the Goddess that is seated in the Sarvananda maya chakra i.e. the wheel that symbolizes complete bliss. In the Anupallavi, he describes the Goddess as ``Sarvananda maya chakra vaasini''. Sanskrit language employs eight cases of declension of a noun and the first 8 kritis in the group are in each of these 8 cases. So, what did the veritable Shri Dikshitar do with the 9th kriti? He employed all the 8 cases in the 9th kriti, thereby making it a truly remarkable piece!

Another interesting aspect of this piece is the lyrical variations to the pallavi, all ending with the refrain, ``Sri Kamalamba Jayati''. This is akin to the concept of sangatis or melodic progressions that are common in many kritis. But here, Shri Dikshitar uses adjectives such as ``Jagadamba'' (Mother of the World) and ``Sringara rasa kadamba'' (embodiment of love as an emotion). He salutes Goddess Tripurasundari, the presiding deity of this chakra, as the Supreme deity who is worshipped by the other Gods.

The raga Ahiri is often associated with sorrowful emotions. Although Shri Dikshitar does not directly incorporate the raga name, he uses the term ``Ramaahari'' to refer to Lakshmi and Vishnu, thereby alluding to the raga name in an indirect reference. This relatively long piece is an excellent treatise on this raga's scope and key phrases. Some of these phrases are I D nsN,d dnsn nDp and gmpMp mgr (Pallavi); Srn N,d dnD P; P D N S and Nrs Ns with the N held flat (Anupallavi) and M,gM with the g lowered; dnnDp; the jaaru or slow curve linking higher octave S to P (Charanam).

copyright © 2008 - 2009 Carnatic Darbar