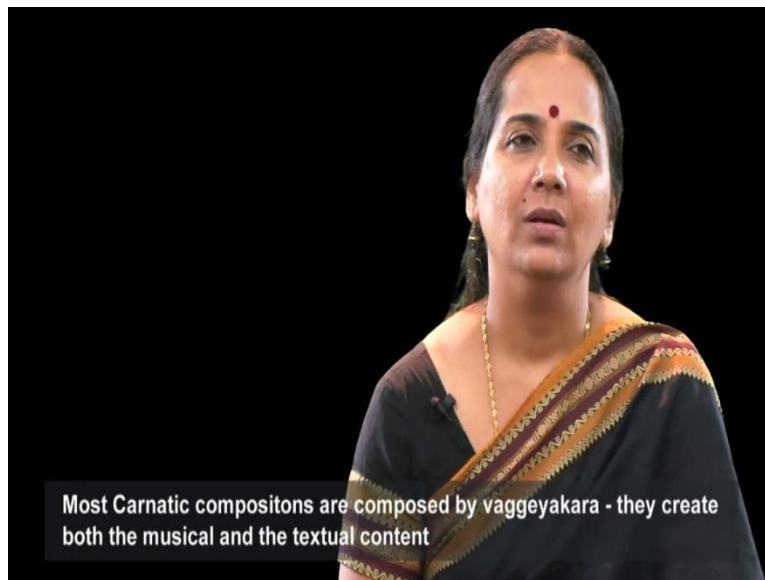


Appreciating Carnatic Music
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Lecture – 42
Kriti- Some Basic Features

Now, I mention that, there two aspects to all compositions in carnatic music, that is the dhathu and mathu. Dhathu being the musical aspects and the mathu being the lyrical, the textural aspect. Most compositions, that are rendered in carnatic music are composed by Vaggeyakaras.

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Vaggeyakara is ancient concept, is an ancient phenomenon. And the word means, vag geya kara, that is a person who creates both the text and the music. Vag is the text of the words, geya is musical aspects, kara is the person who does it.

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So, composers in carnatic music are Vaggeyakaras. They create both the musical and the textual content. And the great Vaggeyakaras, we believe, lyrics and music port forth spontaneously together, it is not as if they are, they wrote out, the poem and set out the music, that is not how we believe, that these compositions are created.

Oral tradition tells us that, these musicians, these, many of them are saints. The songs poured out of them spontaneously. We do also have, some compositions, which where, we have lyricist, person who has written the song and some musician setting it to music. There are compositions like that, but the bulk of the core carnatic compositions are creations of Vaggeyakaras. So, the lyric and the music were conceived and they came out together created simultaneously.

Kriti simply means that, which is done. So, it is interesting that, such a generic term should apply to the musical composition. In the north also Bandish is a similar term. Bandish is anything that is tied in tal. Compositions in Hindustani music, that also is a generic one Bandish another word is for instance Khayal. Khayal means thought, ideas and it refers to, kind of composition in Hindustani music.

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It is interesting, that a fairly, completely non-musical word, should refer to musical composition. Now, the general structure of kriti is three tiered, three sections to a kriti. The first which is, which usually runs one or two avarthanas, that is called a pallavi. The second sections which is called the anupallavai, may run to two to four lines. The charanam, the last section it may run to four to eight lines more.

Now, within this three tier structures, there are some kritis, which are in more than one charanams, so there will be more sections than three. And there are kritis, which have only two sections, so there is a lot of leeway there is a lot of variation. But broadly kriti, it can be safely said, most kritis are three tiered. That is the pallavi, anupallavi and the charanam and how these three sections are structured, how the musical setting happens, that there is great divergence, there amongst the Vaggeyakaras.

So, Thyagaraja, would have, one way of structuring a kriti and one way of giving it a musical setting. Dikshitar another great Vaggeyakara, has a completely, quite different way of structuring the composition, as well as giving it a musical setting.

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viDajAladurA nA manasu vinarA
anupallavi
aDiyAsalacE dagili nE nArtipaDinA padambulanu
caraNam
tanu vEpamulaku canina mari kana rAnidi kanugoninA
ninuga bhAvinci santasilliti shrI tyAgarAjanuta

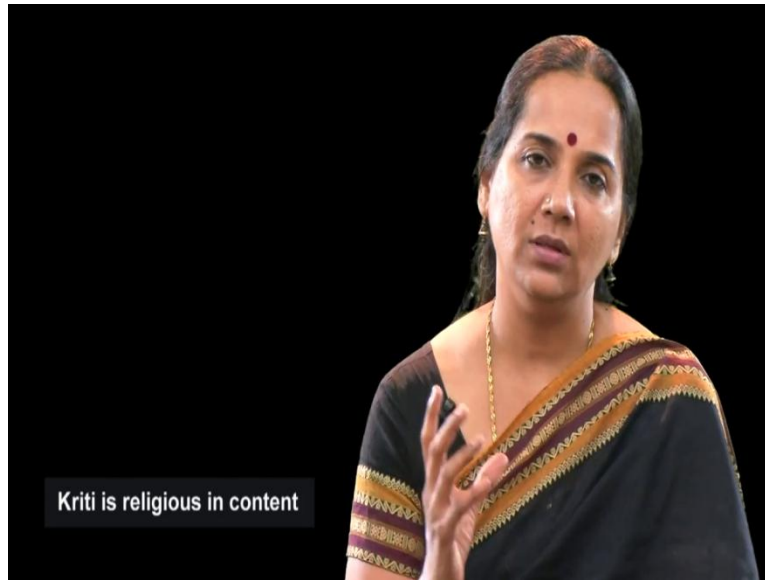
Meaning:

Listen my Lord, this is my resolve. My mind may be tossed about violently by despicable desires causing emancipation of my body, but it will never let go its hold of your sacred feet. Whatever the tasks I engage in, whatever the sights that confront me, however disagreeable, I regard them all without repugnance as your dispensation, O God worshipped by Thyagaraja

Kriti in the raga Janaranjani, Adi talam, Sanjay Subramaniam, you will see the lyrics playing also and you can clearly see how the three sections of the kriti are rendered “Vidajaladura na manasu vinara” and for the sake of music, we say “na manasu” again. This composition is in Telugu, it is a Thyagaraja composition as I said

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Now kriti, as I said is always religious in theme and there are shades of the religious attitudes, can be found in kriti, ranging from a simple straight forward prayer to a deity, to just protect and show benevolence, to show grace and write upto abstract ideas of Atheism or in Advaita Vedanta. So, all shades of religious ideas are found in kritis and this kriti in this kriti thyagaraja says that, even though my mind is tossed about because of desires. I will not let go your sacred feet “Virajaladura”

So, this is a typical kriti of Thyagaraja and we will see later on that, there are other kinds of, structured kritis in other ways too. And he has also composed other forms of compositions, he has given, his other compositional forms too. Now, let us listen to another kriti this is a composition of Muthusamy Dikshitar, this is just to show how, though both of them have the three-tier structure, still internally, there is a great deal of difference. (Music Starts: 11:36) (Music Ends: 16:15)

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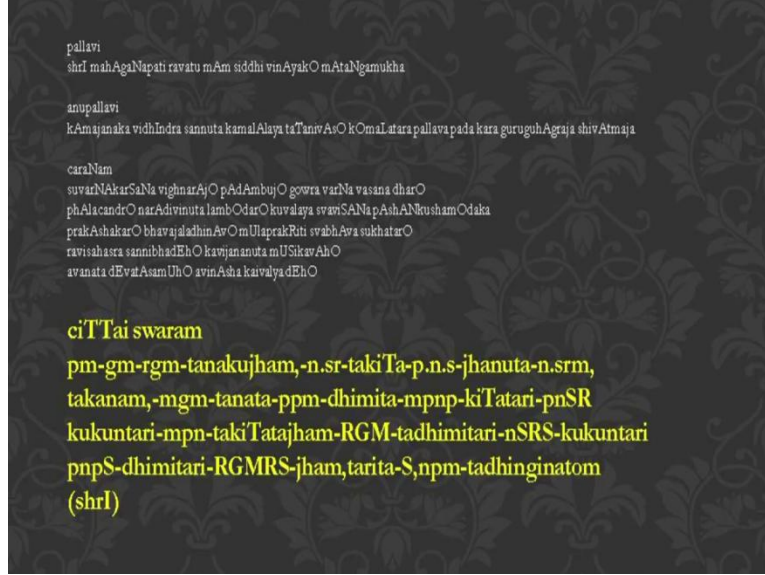
pallavi
shri mahAgaNapati ravatu mAma siddhi vinAyako mAthaNgamukha

anupallavi
kAmajanaka vidhIndra sannuta kamalAlaya taTanivAsO kOmaLatara pallava pada kara
guruguhAgraja shivAtmaja

caraNam
suvarNAkarSaNa vighnarAjo pAdAmbujO gowra varNa vasana dharO
phAlacandRO narAdivinuta lambOdarO kusalaya svaviSANA pAshANKushamOdaka
prakAshakarO bhavajaladhinaVO mUlaprakRiti svabhAva sukhatarO
ravisahasra sannibhadEhO kavijananuta mUSikavAhO
avanata dEvatAsamUHO avinAsha kaivalya dEhO

ciTTai swaram
pm-gm-rgm-tanakujham,-n.sr-takiTa-p.n.s-jhanuta-n.srm,
takanam,-mgm-tanata-ppm-dhimita-mpnp-kiTatani-pnSR
kukuntani-mpn-takiTatajham-RGM-tadhimitani-nSRS-kukuntani
pnpS-dhimitani-RGMRS-jham,tanita-S,npm-tadhinginatam
(shri)

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So, as you could see the lyrics, the text, there is what is called a Cittaiswaram in this kriti. Where there are swaras, swaras are set (Singing Starts: 16:34) (Singing Ends: 16:37) Tana Kujam, this is from dance, this is called Jati (Singing Starts: 16:47) (Singing Ends: 17:02) and so on. So, there is a swaras and jatis are woven together. And this is part of the kriti and even the kriti structure itself, is quite different when compared to Thyagaraja kriti.

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There is also, what is called the Madhyama Kala Sahityam, where there is a textual passage which is rendered at a faster, as twice the speed of the rest of the composition. (Singing Starts: 17:43) (Singing Ends: 17:50). So, this passage called the Madhyama Kala Sahityam, is a twice the speed, compared to the rest of the composition. Now, this is typically a stylistic feature of Dikshitar compositions and there are many others, which we will see, when we talk in detail about these vageyakaras.

The immediate purpose here, is just to say, though we speak of kriti as one compositional form. There are many stylistic divergences within these. Broadly, yes there are three sections to the kriti Pallavi Anupallavi and Charanam. But as we will see later on also, there are considerable variation variety here.