

Muttuswami Dikshitar

(1775-1835)

V. Raghavan

Most concerts of Karnatic music open with the song *Vatapi-Ganapatim*, a Sanskrit composition on Ganesha. This would form a suitable introduction to an account of the great Karnatic composer, Muttuswami Dikshitar, the bi-centenary (March 18, 1975) of whose birth is being celebrated all over the country. The language of the song reflects the classical heritage, and its theme the religious background, the esoteric erudition and their special features which marked out its composer, Muttuswami Dikshitar. The *raga* of the song, Hamsadhvani, is the creation of his father Ramaswami Dikshitar and shows that our composer did not burst into glory in a vacuum but was a natural high-point in the tide of musical creativity that was gradually rising in the 17th and 18th centuries in the Cauvery Delta, under the Nayak and Mahratta Rulers of Tanjore. It would take a separate article to dwell on the personality of Ramaswami Dikshitar (1735-1817). He was a leading, versatile, masterly and venturesome composer, among many such who strode the stage of the pre-Trinity* period of Karnatic music.

On the side of *lakshya* (singing and composing), the father, Ramaswami Dikshitar, was apprenticed under Merattur Virabhadrayya. At that time one could not think of a greater guru than him. On the side of *lakshana*, Ramaswami Dikshitar sought at Tiruvidaimarudur (Madhyarjuna) Venkatavaidyanatha Dikshita, a descendant of the Panini of Karnatic music, Venkatamakhin. Thus on the side of theory and its evolution Ramaswami Dikshitar strengthened the Melakarta scheme formulated by Venkatamakhin, a task which his son Muttuswami Dikshitar carried out more fully and systematically through his compositions. Ramaswami Dikshitar composed *tana varna-s*, many *pada varna-s* for dance, using in one of them (*Sarigani* in Todi), for the words of the *sahitya*, just the seven letters of the *svara-s*; some *kirtana-s* and, above all, the long *ragamalika-s* in which he revelled. One such was on Lord Venkatesha at Tirupati in 48 *raga-s* (*Manasa veretarula*), one was on Goddess Minakshi at Madurai in 40 or 44 *raga-s* and there was the *magnum opus* not only of his creations but of the whole world of Karnatic music, the one in 108 *raga-s* and *tala-s* (*Ashtottara-sata-raga-tala-malika*). This composition is not only remarkable for its sheer length but also technically rich and significant for the employment of rare *raga-s* and closely related *raga-s* and the seven *Suladi* and the *Marga tala-s*. What is more, the names of the *raga-s* and *tala-s* are skillfully worked into the Telugu text of the composition through double meaning (*shlesha*); unfortunately this has come down to us only upto the 61st *raga*. In a song in Gangatarangini, he has a text which, when read normally and in the reverse order, yields the same text. There is a Tamil saying that the offspring of a tiger cannot be a cat. Such was the eminent father of whom Muttuswami Dikshitar was born.

*Tyagaraja (1767-1847), Muttuswami Dikshitar (1775-1835), and Shyama Shastri (1762-1827).

Ramaswami Dikshitar belonged to the *Kashyapa Gotra* and to the class of *Smarta* Brahmans of Tamilnadu called *Vadamas*, and his ancestors used to live at a sacred place called *Virinchipuram* in North Arcot District. His father was Venkateshvara Dikshitar and his mother Bhagirathi. The political conditions in the northern districts of Tamilnadu at that time were in a disturbed state and Ramaswami Dikshitar left for the more secure *Choladesa*. It was a time when, for scholars, poets and artists, all roads led to Tanjavur. From the time of the Nayak Rulers, the Cauvery Delta had drawn stalwarts in music and dance from Andhra; and the Mahratta rule that followed continued the patronage to the arts and led to the inflow of musicians from Maharashtra and the mingling of North Indian *raga*-s and the enrichment of the art. Ramaswami Dikshitar first went to Govindapuram, the well-known centre of the *Bhajana-sampradaya*; after paying visits to a few other places and staying for some time at Mayuram, he settled finally at Tiruvarur, a historical site hallowed from the Chola times; it was redolent with the traditions of music and dance centring round the large temple of Tyagaraja. It was the famous annual festival at the temple of Tyagaraja which drew Dikshitar to Tiruvarur. Tiruvarur was the devotional capital of the Mahratta rulers of Tanjavur and the reigning king of the time heard Ramaswami Dikshitar's music and extended his patronage to him. The *tana* and *pada varna*-s of Ramaswami Dikshitar on God Tyagaraja bear out that the composer had chosen Tiruvarur for his stay. The tradition at the Tiruvarur temple is that the order and details of the music and music instruments during the different services of the day and during festivals and processions—followed to this day—were arranged by Ramaswami Dikshitar.

Ramaswami Dikshitar, with his Sanskrit and Vaidik background, led an austere life, enriched with practice of devotion and music. It has been recorded that on every Ekadashi and Ramanavami Dikshitar had the practice of singing the whole of the *Gitagovinda* of Jayadeva, a habit which he must have adopted from his days at Govindapuram, the centre of *Bhajana*. However, he was not blessed with any children till his fortieth year. Among the numerous shrines in the Tanjavur district, Vaidyeshvarankoil is renowned for the fulfilment of yearnings of devotees and Ramaswami Dikshitar, with his wife Subbamamba (Subbulakshmi), went to that holy place and observed austerities before God Muddukumaraswami in the shrine there. Lord Shiva Vaidyanatha and Lord Kumara blessed the devoted couple and soon after their return to Tiruvarur, Subbamamba conceived and a male child was born. It was the day of the Vasanta festival for God Tyagaraja and under the constellation *Krittika*, associated with Kumara (in the cyclic year *Manmatha*, and the month of *Phalgun*), our composer was born. As he was born by the grace of Muddukumara at Vaidyeshvarankoil, he was named after the deity as Muttuswami. Sometime later, two more sons were also born to Ramaswami Dikshitar: Chinnaswami, also called after his guru, Venkata Vaidyanatha, and Baluswami. In the interval, between the two, a daughter named Balamba was also born.

Manali near Madras is famed from the times of the Pallavas and Cholas. A zamindar of Manali, Muddukrishna Mudaliar, was at that time a leading citizen of Madras. He used to function as the Dubhash (Agent) of the East India Co. and Governor Pigot (1755-63 and 1775-77). Muddu-

krishna's son Chinnayya (alias Venkatakrishna) succeeded to his father's office. Madras, by that time, had begun to play an important part in the patronage of music. Each of the leading temples in the city had a Dharmakarta (Head of Affairs) and this office was held by affluent landlords belonging to places in the neighbourhood of Madras. They attracted some of the famous musicians and dancers of the time.*

Manali Muddukrishna Mudaliar and his son had estates in the Cauvery Delta and had occasion to visit now and then Tiruvarur and its celebrated Temple. On one such occasion, the Manali Mudaliars were struck by the musical attainments of the Dikshitar and took them to Manali.

Life at Manali, under the affectionate and liberal patronage of Venkatakrishna Mudaliar, son of Muttukrishna Mudaliar, was musically a period of exhilarating activity for the Dikshitar. Many of the compositions, including the *108 Raga-tala-malika* of the elder Dikshitar, were inspired by this patron, whose name they bear as the *mudra*. A shower of gold coins (*Kanakabhisheka*) is said to have been given by the patron to Ramaswami Dikshitar for his *108 Raga-tala-malika*. With Manali as centre, they visited neighbouring shrines like Kalahasti and Tirupati. At the former shrine, Ramaswami Dikshitar sang the *kirtana Vasivasi* in Sahana-Adi. Later Muttuswami Dikshitar was to sing here his Useni song on *Kalahastisa* and a song in Kalyani on the Goddess here, *Jnanaprasunambika*. At Tirupati, Ramaswami Dikshitar sang *Inka daya* in the rare Vegavahini. This piece, as also the *ragamalika* in 48 *raga*-s, has a biographical reference; they were prayers to Lord Venkateshvara to restore to the second son Chinnaswami Dikshitar the eye-sight that he had lost for a time. Once, a scion of Venkatamakhin's line visited the Manali Mudaliar and tested the Dikshitar on the identity of a rare *raga*, but the Dikshitar could easily name it. The visitor recognised the Dikshitar as belonging to the same school. Ramaswami Dikshitar composed at once a *pada* (*Nanu parikshinchanela*) referring to the uncalled for test and set in the same *raga*.

In the company of the Dubhash of the English Company and the Governor, the Dikshitar had occasion to listen to European music from members of the English military band. It was at the instance of the Mudaliar that the third son of Ramaswami Dikshitar, Baluswami, learnt the European violin and, after him, its use as an accompaniment for Karnatic music gained vogue. Muttuswami Dikshitar was likewise persuaded to compose Sanskrit *sahitya*-s for the Band Airs, including the English National Anthem; and in Shankarabharana, Muttuswami Dikshitar wrote on various Hindu deities thirty-seven of these simple and pleasing pieces which came to be called *Nottu-svara-sahitya*-s.†

It was during their stay at Manali that a Yogin named Chidambaranatha visited the Dikshitar. The Yogin took Muttuswami Dikshitar with him on a

* See my article *Some musicians and their patrons about 1800 in Madras City* in the *Journal of the Music Academy*, Madras, Vol. XVI (1945) pages 127-136 and my edition of *Sarvadevavilasa* in the Adyar Library series (1957-58).

† The replica for 'God Save the King' is on the Goddess of Music (*Shantatam pahi mam Sangitashyamale*). 33 of these are printed by Subbarama Dikshitar in his *Balashiksha*; 6 of them are given by A. M. Chinnaswami Mudaliar in his *Oriental Music in Staff Notation* (1896).

pilgrimage to Kashi (Varanasi). According to Subbarama Dikshitar, Muttuswami Dikshitar stayed in the north for five years. This was an event of far-reaching importance for Muttuswami Dikshitar and his life. An opportunity came to him to listen to Hindustani music; his background was broadened, knowledge deepened and imagination fired with fresh ideas. The impact of Hindustani *raga*-s and the movement of the *dhrupad* style could be seen in his compositions.

On his return from Varanasi, it is said that Muttuswami Dikshitar first visited Tiruttani, a famous shrine dedicated to God Kumara, not far away from Madras and Manali. According to tradition, it was here that the blessing of Kumara, through which he was born, manifested itself for the second time and made Muttuswami Dikshitar the fluent and prolific composer that he became. When young Dikshitar was in meditation in the shrine at Tiruttani, God Kumara is said to have come to him as an elderly person, put sugarcandy into his mouth and vanished into the *sanctum sanctorum*. There is a series of eight compositions of Muttuswami Dikshitar in the eight declensions of Sanskrit, beginning with the Nominative, on Kumara. These are considered as his first *kriti*-s; as these were sung as a result of this miracle, Dikshitar took Kumara or Guha as his teacher (Guru) and used the name "Guru-Guha" as the *mudra* in all his songs. The first of this series (*Srinathadi Guruguho jayati jayati*) is in Mayamalavagaula and the *raga* lends some weight to the tradition that this was his first *kriti*. The second in Anandabhairavi (*Manasa guru guha*) is a very well-known *kriti* and sung often. Others in the group are in rare *raga*-s like Padi, Sama, Balahamsa, Purvi, Bhanumati, (a *vivadi-mela raga*) and Udayaravichandrika. Whatever the story, on the side of the *sahitya* and thought, these songs already display a mind steeped in Vedanta and esoteric lore and on the side of music, they show already a theoretical flair, technical maturity and artistic perfection.

Soon after this, the Dikshitars left Manali for Tiruvarur. On the way they visited many famous shrines, such as Kanchi, Tiruvannamalai and Chidambaram and Muttuswami Dikshitar sang of the deities in these sacred places. At Kanchi, where they stayed for four years, they met a musician-devotee of Rama and advocate of the practice of singing the Lord's Names, the Advaitic Sannyasin Upanishad Brahmendra Yogin.* Muttuswami Dikshitar set to music the *Ramashtapadi* composed by Upanishad Brahmendra. Of *kriti*-s sung by Dikshitar in Kanchi, *Chintaya makanda* in Bhairavi on Ekambaranatha, *Kanjadalayatakshi* in Manohari and *Nirajakshi Kamakshi* in Hindolam on Kamakshi and *Varadarajam upasmahe* in Saranga on Varadaraja are most popular. Equally well-known are his Tiruvannamalai song *Arunachalanatham* (Saranga) and *Ananda-natana-prakasam* (Kedara) on Nataraja at Chidambaram.† On

*On him and his works, and place in the musico-devotional culture centering round Rama and the singing of the Lord's Name, see my long paper on him in the *Journal of the Music Academy*, Madras, XXVII, pp. 113-50; Introduction, *Spiritual Heritage of Tyagaraja*, 2nd edn. 1966, pp. 62 fn., 120; and my edition of his *Upeyanamaviveka*, Adyar Library, 1965.

† Along with the Huseni piece at Kalahasti, the Saranga piece at Tiruvannamalai, and the Bhairavi piece at Kanchi, this forms one of the five pieces on the Shiva Lingas representing the five elements, earth, etc. The fifth one, to be mentioned later, is *Jambupate* in Iman at Jambukeshvaram, Tiruchi.

Govindaraja (Vishnu) in the same shrine, by the side of Nataraja, he sang in Mukhari *Govindarajam upasmahe* and another in the rare Mecha Bauli *Govindarajena*. At Vaidyesvarankoil, with which his birth was specially connected, he sang the well-known song on Goddess Balambika in Kalyani, *Bhaja re re chitta Balambikam*. Some time after reaching Tiruvarur, the father Ramaswami Dikshitar passed away (in 1817).

Muttuswami Dikshitar decided to stay on at Tiruvarur as he was deeply devoted to God Tyagaraja and Goddess Kamalamba. The single largest group among the songs of Dikshitar is on Tyagaraja, Kamalamba and other deities within Tyagaraja's big temple or in different parts of the town of Tiruvarur. The most notable of Dikshitar's Tiruvarur *kriti*-s are the series of eight songs in eight *Vibhakti*-s on Tyagaraja; the five on the five *Linga*-s within the temple representing the five elements (*pancha bhuta*-s): earth, water, light, air and ether; the series in eight *Gaulas* on the Goddess Nilotpalambika; the pieces on the different forms of Ganesha and the celebrated Navavarana *kriti*-s ($9 + 2 = 11$) on Kamalamba and the equally celebrated *kriti*-s on the planets. There is hardly a shrine, big or small, at Tiruvarur, inside or outside the temple, of which Dikshitar did not sing. Of the eight pieces on Tyagaraja, the fourth (*Tyagarajaya namaste*) in Begada is widely sung and three other pieces are in rare *raga*-s: Salaga Bhairavi, Rudrapriya and Viravasanta. In the Navavarana series on Kamalamba which have preliminary and concluding pieces in addition, the two in Ananda Bhairavi (*Kamalamba samrakshatu mam*) and Kalyani (*Kamalambam bhaja re*) are best known; two songs in this series are in Ghanta, a rare *raga*, and Ahiri. The *Gaula* series on Nilotpalamba employs Narayana-, Riti-, Kannada-, Kedara-, Mayamalava-, Purva-, Chaya-, *Gaulas*; besides the simple *Gaula*. *Mahaganapatir avatu mam* in *Gaula*, *Sri muladhara chakra vinayaka* in *Sri*, *Panchamatangamukha* in Malahari, *Vallabha-nayakasya* in Begada and a few others are on the different forms of Ganapati in the temple here. Among the 63 Tamil Shaiva Saints known as Nayanmars, Sundaramurti stands in a special relation to Tyagaraja and on his icon in front of Tyagaraja, Dikshitar sang a piece in the rare Takka *raga*. The oft-sung *Dakshinamurte* in Shankarabharana is on Dakshinamurti in the outer courtyard of the temple. Outside the South *Gopura* is the shrine of Durga on whom he sang *Dum Durge* in Sriranjani.

Within the inner courtyard of Tyagaraja's temple, there are the Nine Planets (*Nava Graha*-s). Among Dikshitar's dear pupils at the temple was Tambiappan, the artist who played *Suddhamaddalam*, which is the only kind of drum that could be used before Tyagaraja. Tambiappan was afflicted with an acute pain in the stomach and the guru, who was proficient in astrology, found that the affliction was due to a bad period in his disciple's horoscope. Desiring to cure him of the pain, Dikshitar composed *kriti*-s on the seven planets, Sun to Saturn, and asked him to sing them regularly. Tambiappan followed his guru's advice and was cured. Like the Navavarana series on Kamalamba, the series on the Planets* is also greatly cherished by devotees of Dikshitar. The series, which starts with the song on the Sun in Saurashtra and ends with the one on Saturn in Yerukala Kambhoji, includes one in the

*The two of the nodal planets Rahu and Ketu are later additions to this group. This whole series is given elsewhere in this volume with notation.

rare Paraz, the piece on Venus. The seven pieces are set in the seven Suladi *tala*-s. The *sahitya* of the *kriti*-s epitomises the *Jyotisha* and *Mantra Shastra*-s.

Dikshitar inherited from his father his music but unlike his father, he never courted patrons or sang their praise. In Tiruvarur, an anecdote is narrated about a *Devadasi* pupil of his, Kamalam by name, who was connected with the Tyagaraja Temple. One day, seeing that her guru was in need of household provisions, she proposed to sell some of her own jewels and purchase the provisions. When Dikshitar got an inkling of her intention, he prevented her and said in a song that God Tyagaraja would come to his help. In his *kirtana* in Lalita on the Goddess of Wealth, Dikshitar says in the *pallavi* "I resort to the golden Lakshmi and shun the support of inferior man" (*Hiranmayim Lakshimim bhajami; Hinamanavashrayam tyajami*). It is said that a miracle soon occurred; a state official from Tanjavur who had proposed to visit Tiruvarur cancelled his visit; the provisions that had been collected for his reception were turned by the local officer to the most deserving person at Tiruvarur, Muttuswami Dikshitar. Outside of his *kriti*-s in Sanskrit on the Deities, Dikshitar did not, like his father, compose in other forms or in the customary Telugu. But, perhaps for the sake of this pupil of his, the Temple Dancer Kamalam, Dikshitar composed a Telugu *varna* in Todi (*Rupe mu juchi*) and a Telugu *daru*, *Ni sati* in Sriranjani which Kamalam must have danced. Both these pieces, printed in the *Sangita Sampradaya Pradarshini*, are couched in the accepted love-theme and style of expression of dance compositions. While the former is on God Tyagaraja, the latter is on Valmikeshvara at the adjacent shrine, forming the *Kshetra Linga* of Tiruvarur, and embodies, in true Dikshitar style, the elements of *Kshetramahatmya*.

In Tiruvarur, there was the Mirasdar Vaidyalinga Mudaliar, who had his estate in the neighbouring village of Kulikkarai. He became attached to Dikshitar and took him, during the annual festival, to the temple of Vishvanatha and Annapurna at his village. Here was sung the well-known song *Ehi Annapurne* in Punnagavarali. Rarely sung but more important is the *ragamalika* in 14 *raga*-s on Lord Vishvanatha that Dikshitar composed here; instead of praising Vaidyalinga, Dikshitar praised the Deity in the temple and referred in passing to Vaidyalinga maintaining the Temple. Muttuswami was not attracted to composing *ragamalika*-s, the *forte* of his father, but the one that he gave us on Vishvanatha deserves special notice. It employs 14 *raga*-s beginning with Sri; the *pallavi* has two *raga*-s, Sri and Arabhi, each in two lines of one *avarta*, the second being in Madhyamakala. The same plan is followed in the *anupallavi* in four *raga*-s: Gauri, Nata, Gaula and Mohana; but at the end, after Mohana, a *viloma* passage takes us through the same four *raga*-s of the *anupallavi* and the two of the *pallavi* in reverse order, back to Sri. The *charana* is in 8 *raga*-s: Sama, Lalita, Bhairava, Saranga, Shankarabharana, Kambhoji, Devakriya and Bhupala, and these are again taken in reverse order in a Madhyamakala *sahitya*, back to the *pallavi* in Sri. There are three other, less known, *ragamalika*-s of Muttuswami Dikshitar: one in ten *raga*-s (Nata, Gaula, Sri, Arabhi, Varali, Kedara, Vasanta, Surati, Saurashtra and Madhyamavati), on the ten *avatara*-s of Vishnu (*Madhavo mam patu*), another on Devi in four *raga*-s (Saurashtra, Vasanta, Surati and Madhya-

mavati) and the third, the shortest, with the *raga*-s not known, *Purna-chandra-bimbavadane* on Kamalamba of Tiruvarur.

Like his father, Muttuswami Dikshitar also helped to organise the music of the Tyagaraja Temple. In a song in Sri, Dikshitar provides an index of the festivals of the temple, beginning with the hoisting of the flag. It is the practice of the Nagasvaram artists of the temple to play particular *raga*-s and compositions of Dikshitar at specific places in the temple and at specific times of service and processions. The practice started from this period under the guidance of Dikshitar himself. Among the numerous music compositions produced in imitation of the *Gitagovinda* of Jayadeva is one on Shiva called *Shiva-gitimalika* by Paramashivendra Sarasvati, the Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Pitha at that time.* There is a tradition in the temple of playing on the flute the songs of this composition and both the Dikshitar, Ramaswami and Muttuswami, seem to have been responsible for the musical settings of this composition and its rendering in the temple.

Dikshitar's movements were on the plan of those of the Tamil Saints, the Nayanmars, Alwars, Arunagiri and others; his life was a continuous series of pilgrimages. Even when staying at Tiruvarur, he regularly visited the nearby shrines. Among his compositions the more important *kriti*-s and those that are more often sung relate to neighbouring shrines. On the northern boundary of the town is a commercial centre called Vijayapuram and on the Renuka Devi here, Dikshitar sang a piece in the rare Kannadabangala. A little farther, on the outskirts of the town is a local Tirupati called *Pulivalam* and on Venkatachala-pati here, he composed a song in Kapi, using Sanskrit and Tamil in the mixed diction known as Mani-pravala; two more pieces were also sung at this shrine. On another side of Tiruvarur, towards the west, is the sacred place known as Tirukkannamangai; the Vishnu-Deity here, Bhaktavatsala, evoked an elaborate composition, packed with details of the temple including its architecture, in the *Mela raga* Vamsavati.

Going east from Tiruvarur, at the village of Kivalur, Dikshitar sang his well-known Shankarabharana song *Akshaya-linga vibho*, which is associated with a miracle of the closed door of the sanctum opening for Dikshitar. Sikkil, his next stop, is famous for the beautiful image of Kumara referred to as *Sringara Vadivelan* and Dikshitar sang on this Deity his rare Ramamanohari *kriti*, *Sringara saktyayudha*. Nagappattana on the sea-coast is a historic centre, famous also for its religious associations, *Shaiva*, *Shakta* and *Vaishnava*; some well-known songs of Dikshitar relate to the Deities here: *Amba Nilayatakshi* in Nilambari, *Saundara-rajam asraye* in Brindavana Saranga and *Kayarohanesam* in the rare Devagandharam (different from Devagandhari).

Mannargudi, reputed as the Southern Dvaraka with its beautiful icon of Rajagopala, was the place where many musicians of the Tanjore Court lived. The Deity Rajagopala is the subject of *kriti*-s and *pada*-s of several composers. The well-known *Sri Rajagopala* in Saveri, *Balagopala* in Bhairavi and the little known but beautiful *Srividya Rajagopalam* in the rare *raga* Jaganmohanam

*I have recently re-edited this work, comparing fresh manuscripts of it.

(38th *Mela raga* and different from the popular Jaganmohini under the 15th) are Dikshitar's Mannargudi *kirtana*-s. En route is Nidamangalam and the Rama in the temple here brought forth the fine creation in Hindola-vasanta, *Santana-ramasvaminam*. The Bauli *kriti* in dawn-like serenity and sublimity, *Parvati-Parameshvarau vande*, is evidently on the Primordial Parents of the Universe at Vedaranyam, another historic shrine on the sea-coast near Tiruvarur in the south-east, the scene of a second celebration of the marriage of Shiva and Parvati for sage Agastya.

Mayuram, to the north of Tiruvarur, is one of the major *kshetra*-s of the Cauvery Delta and Ramaswami Dikshitar had stayed there for some time. Dikshitar, too, must have stayed there and he composed on Goddess Abhayamba of this place a series of *Navavarana kriti*-s, comparable to the ones on Kamalamba at Tiruvarur. In two of these, the well-known piece in Kalyani, (*Abhayamba*) and an Ananda-bhairavi *kriti* on Shiva here (*Abhayamba-nayaka*), Dikshitar mentions one Nagalinga, a local magnate who, like Vaidyalinga (Mudaliar) of Tiruvarur, was a Trustee of the temple and became evidently devoted to Dikshitar. A separate piece in Sri on Abhayamba is in mixed Sanskrit-Telugu-Tamil *Mani-pravala. Vadanyesvaram* in Devagandhari relates to Vallalar-koil in Mayuram. *Marakoti* in Arabhi is on the magnificent Kritivasa-icon at Vazhuvur near Mayuram; similarly on the outskirts on another side of Mayuram is Terazhandur, on the Ranganatha at which place he sang the well-known Hamir Kalyani song *Parimala-ranganatham*.

Dikshitar must have sojourned in Kumbhakonam for some time not only because it was a city of temples but also because of the Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kama Koti Math, who had migrated there from Kanchi for the same reasons that led to Ramaswami Dikshitar's migration. Numerous songs of Dikshitar relate Kumbhakonam and the numerous shrines that stud its neighbourhood. Lord Kumbheshvara was sung in a *kriti* in Kalyani and the majestic Goddess Mangalambika in a *kriti* in Ghanta (*Mangalambikam*).

Swamimalai near Kumbhakonam is one of the six traditionally hallowed shrines of Kumara and, therefore, had an additional attraction for Dikshitar who stood in a special relation to 'Guru Guha'. On the imposing Brahmachari-icon of Kumara here, Dikshitar sang his well-known Bilahari song *Sri Bala Subrahmanya* and *Sri Svaminathaya* in Kamas. On another side of Kumbhakonam is the equally sacred Madhyarjuna (Tiruvidaimarudur) of Lord Mahalinga and Goddess Brihatkuchamba. In the rare Pharaz, Dikshitar sang here *Chintaye Mahalinga murtim* and again a shorter piece, without *anupallavi*, in Athana. The better known Dhanyasi song *Paradevata* was sung on the Goddess here. At the *Kshetra* called Srivanchyam, Dikshitar seems to have stayed for some time. *Srivanchinatham* in Surati on the Shiva here and *Mangalambikayai* in Malavasri, and *Sri Mangalambike* in Kalyani on the Goddess here are known.

We have yet to mention Tanjavur, the capital of the Mahratta rulers and the centre to which all artists were being drawn. Dikshitar's stay in the capital was of special significance for the musical activity which took on an accelerated tempo and a technical turn. It was not the court that was primarily responsible for his visit to Tanjavur. It is said that the ruler invited him and the material advantages were tempting to other members of the family. But

Dikshitar, with his vow not to resort to courts or *Nara-stuti*, expressed his feelings in three songs. In the one in Lalita (which has already been mentioned) he said he would appeal to the Goddess of Wealth and not seek mere man; in another in Dhanyasi, sung at Mayura, he had made the same affirmation, "I always seek God (Mayuranatha) and shun rulers of earth who are embodiments of Maya"; in yet another song, in Dhanyasi, associated with Tanjavur, he now declares that the Goddess of all auspiciousness Mangaladevata (Lakshmi) has honoured him and he needs no other honours. Without praising King Serfoji directly, as other composers vied to do, Dikshitar just referred to him in a song (in the *Mela raga* 40th Nabhomani) on Brihadishvara, as a devotee of the Lord.

The sojourn in Tanjore must have been considerably long. It brought Dikshitar into contact with the other two members of the Karnatic music Trinity, Shyama Shastri who was living at the other end of the same West Main Street (where Dikshitar stayed) and Tyagaraja who was just seven miles away at Tiruvayyaru. Concrete evidence of the friendship of Shyama Shastri is to be had in a *pada varna* in Sriranjani by Ramaswami Dikshitar (*Sami ninne*) which had long been with only one *svara* passage in the *charana*; as given and especially noted in the *Sampradaya-Pradarshini*. Shyama Shastri himself composed the second *svara*-passage for this, Dikshitar composed another, and his brother Chinnaswami, the third, thus investing this composition with a unique halo. It also shows that the biographical detail that both his brothers Chinnaswami and Baluswami had already left from Tiruvarur for Madurai has to be corrected.

The next important development is the meeting and close contact of Dikshitar and the four dance-masters of the Tanjore Court, namely Ponnayya, Chinnayya, Sivanandam and Vadivelu. They adopted Dikshitar as their guru. In 8 or 9 of his *kriti*-s, Ponnayya mentions with pride his being the disciple of 'Guruguhamurti'. This shows that the brothers held Dikshitar as an incarnation of God Kumara Himself. Also, Vadivelu, one of the brothers, who made a name for himself under Maharaja Svati Tirunal of Travancore, practised the violin which the Dikshitar brother Baluswami had first taken up.

Thirdly, Tanjavur, right from an early period and even in later times, was full of temples; it is a complex of townships and villages extending from the Big Temple upto the Vennar river. The Big Temple of Brihadishvara and Brihannayaki is of central importance. It was to this temple that the Ponnayya brothers were also attached; a *Kuravanchi* dance-drama by *Deva-dasi*-s was a regular feature here. In his compositions on the Deities in this temple Dikshitar mentions its connection with the Chola monarchs of the past (in the piece on Brihadishvara in Gundakriya) and with the contemporary ruler Serfoji.

Fourthly, Dikshitar resolved to compose a complete corpus of songs to illustrate the 72 *Mela-Janya* scheme according to Venkatamakhin, using the *raga*-names with the *Katapayadi*-prefixes of this school. Dikshitar's pupil Ponnayya, too, used the *Mela raga* names with the *Katapayadi*-prefixes of this scheme; for example, Dhuni-Bhinna-shadja and Saila-Desakshi. These

are on the various Deities in Tanjavur City, Brihadishvara, Brihannayaki and Tyagaraja in the Big Temple, and Konkandeshvara, Kamakshi, Venkatesha, Rama and others in the rest of the temples in the town, the temples in Karutattangudi (Alaka) on the Vadavar river and those on the Vennar bank; Tiruvayyaru and its Pranatartihara and Dharmasamvardhani are also included in this series.

This series is not completely available and I shall give here a list insofar as I have been able to compile it. This is not only of much theoretical interest, but includes several well-known *kriti-s*; some are less known but beautiful ones; some are elaborate and others are short ones which dispense with the *anupallavi* (*Samashti-carana kriti-s* as they are popularly referred to).

No.	Name of <i>Mela Raga</i>	Deity
1	Kanakambari	Kamakshi, West Main Street
2	Phenadyuti	Dakshinamurti
3	Ganasamavarali	Brihadishvara
4	Bhanumati	Brihannayaki
7	Senagrani	Jnanambika in Konkandeshvara Temple in West Main Street
10	Natabharana	Vishvanatha in South Main Street
11	Kokilarava	Kodanda Rama on Vadavar bank
12	Rupavati	Krishna
14	Vati Vasanta Bhairavi	Prasanna Venkatesha
17	Chayavati	Anandavalli on Vennar bank
21	Kiranaivali	Brihadishvara
23	Gauri Velavali	Kamakshi
30	Nagabharana	Tyagaraja-Brihadishvara
32	Ragachudamani	Shveta Ganapati in the East Gate Market
33	Gangatarangini	Varadaraja, East Main Street
34	Bhogacchaya Nata	Brihannayaki
37	Saugandhini	Kamakshi
40	Nabhomani	Brihadishvara
41	Kumbhini	Brihannayaki
42	Ravikriya	Brihannayaki
46	Stavaraja	Brihadishvara
48	Jivantika	Brihadishvara
49	Dhavalanga	Brihadishvara
50	Namadesi	Dharmasamvardhani at Tiruvayyaru
52	Ramamanohari	Brihannayaki (in Sanskrit-Telugu <i>Mani-pravala</i>)
57	Sumadyuti	Brihannayaki
59	Dhamavati	Brihannayaki
62	Ratipriya	Govindaraja (in Tanjavur)
64	Bhushavati	Brihannayaki
67	Santanamanjari	Brihannayaki
72	Rasamanjari	Kamakshi

This concluding song mentions expressly the 72 *Mela-s* or *raganga-s*, which proves again that this was a series specially undertaken by Dikshitar for illustrating Venkatamakhin's 72 Melakarta scheme.

We may note also the *kriti-s* which Dikshitar composed in Tanjavur in the *Janya raga-s* under the different *Mela-s*.

Salanganata	Kamakshi
Gundakriya	Brihadishvara
Manji	Kamakshi
Andhali	Brihannayaki
Dhanyasi	Lakshmi (in Varadaraja temple)

The missing ones in the *Mela-series* could probably be found in the manuscripts of the family of Dikshitar's descendant Baluswami and pupils, the Ponnayya Brothers, and it is up to their descendants, Sri Kittappa and Sri Sivanandam, to search for them in their ancestral home and help us in our researches.

A further interesting fact revealed here is that during his stay in Tanjavur, Dikshitar combined with the task of illustrating the 72 *Mela-s*, an exposition through the *kriti-s* of the continuous story of the *Lalitopakhyana* relating to the cult of *Srividya* in which Dikshitar was an initiated worshipper and *Sadhaka*. The following *Mela raga* pieces probably belong to this *Lalitopakhyana* series: 19. Jhankarabhramari, 35. Saila Desakshi, 43. Girvani, 44. Bhavani, 54. Vamasavati, 58. Desisimharava (Lakshmi), 60. Nishadha (Shiva), 63. Gitapriya (Kumara), 66. Chaturangini, 68. Joti, 69. Dhauta panchama, 70. Nasamani, 71. Kusumakara (Shiva-Kameshvara).

The following in *Janya raga-s*, on Devi, in short form, perhaps belong to the same series: Devaranji and Maruva (15th) and Navaratnavilasa (20th).

Dikshitar probably visited Tyagaraja's Tiruvayyaru more than once as some more songs of his on Pranatartihara (Nayaki) and Dharmasamvardhani (Madhyamavati) reveal.

From Tanjavur Dikshitar returned briefly to Tiruvarur or went on directly to Tiruchirapalli. He had only one child, a daughter, who had been given in marriage in Tiruchirapalli. This place is another big citadel-complex of religion and devotion in the Tamil country. It has three great temples, of Matribhuta and Sugandhikuntalamba on the rock-fort; of Jambukeshvara and Akhilandeshvari in the centre and Ranganatha beyond, encircled by the Kaveri and Kollidam rivers. Dikshitar sang in Kannada *Sri Matribhutam*, referring to the episode of the God taking, in his infinite compassion, the form of the 'mother' of an unfortunate young woman in confinement when her real mother was delayed by the floods in the Kaveri, and helping her during the delivery of the child. In the rare *raga* Kuntala, he sang of the Goddess in Matribhuta's temple. At Jambukeshvaram (Tiruvanaikka), the celebrated *kriti* in the Hindustani *raga* Iman, (*Jambupate*), was sung; on the renowned Akhilandeshvari in this shrine, he sang in Begada, *Sri Matah Shiva-*

vamanke; the high sanctity and spiritual power of the icon here is due to the *Srichakra* having been inlaid by Adi Shankara himself in the ear-rings (*tatanka*) of the Goddess and the *sahitya* of Dikshitar is couched in appropriate dignity and evocative Vedantic phrases. Recently a Dvijavanti (Jaijaivanti, another Hindustani *raga* handled by him) piece on Akhilandesvari has also gained much popularity. The famous *kriti*-s on Ranganatha are *Ranganayakam* in Nayaki and *Srirangapuravihara* in Brindavana Saranga; and *Sri Bhargavi* in the rare Mangala Kaisiki on the Goddess here.

Ahead of Tiruchi, the Kaveri being very wide, the area is called *Akhanda Kaveri* and on either side of the river here, near Kulittalai, there are three holy shrines to be worshipped in order in the morning, noon and evening. They are Kadambeshvara, Ratnachaleshvara and Vinganatha, the latter two on the hills. Dikshitar has songs on the Deities in this triad of temples: *Nilakantham bhaje* in Kedaragaula, a well-known song, is on the first; on the Goddess here, *Balakuchamba*, there is a small piece in Surati; and on Ratnachaleshvara, one in Mukhari (*Pahi mam Ratnachalanayaka*), also sung often.

The Dikshitar Brothers constituted a musical Trinity within the family. Chinnaswami and Baluswami were also gifted musicians although their output of compositions was meagre. After a brief stay in Tanjore, the two younger brothers left for Madurai and there was little news of how they were doing. Sometime later Dikshitar heard some unconfirmed reports of Chinnaswami having passed away. Sadness set on Dikshitar and he resolved to proceed to Madurai and check if the news was correct. He learnt at Madurai that Chinnaswami was no more and Baluswami had, in sorrow, departed in the direction of Rameshvaram. Dikshitar could not bring himself to leave so soon the ancient and sacred city of Madurai or the presence of Goddess Minakshi. The Deity inspired numerous songs of the composer and Devi-worshipper; he offered at the Devi's feet a whole series of *kriti*-s in the eight cases of Sanskrit, which included the rare *raga*-s Devakriya, Stavaraja and Simharava. Eight others on the Goddess included the oft-sung Varali *kriti*, *Mam ava Minakshi* and *Minakshi me mundam* in Gamakakriya, three in the rare Pharaz, Gauri and Devagandhara and one in an absolutely rare *raga* Shyamala — *Shyamalangi Matangi*. Four pieces on God Sundareshvara included one in Shuddha Vasanta. Nearby is the hill shrine called Azhakarkoil and on Sundararaja here, he sang the well-known *kriti*, *Sri Sundararaja*, in Ramakriya; at the shrine in another neighbouring place, Pushpavana, he sang one in the rare Sauvira, *Sarasa Sauvira*.

The next destination for Dikshitar was Rameshvaram. A pilgrimage to the Setu, like a visit to the Ganga, is one of the objectives of life for the devout Hindu. In Dikshitar's case, there was the additional purpose of finding out the whereabouts of his surviving brother Baluswami Dikshitar. At Darbhasayanam, where Rama prostrated himself on the sacred grass expecting the sea-god to yield him a passage to Lanka, Dikshitar sang one of his fine pieces, *Sri Ramam Ravikulabhisomam* in the old but rarely sung Narayana Gaula. *Ramanatham bhajeham* in Ramakriya sung at Rameshvaram is often heard in concerts.

At the Rameshvaram temple, he heard from a very aged person of a musician from the Chola-desa who had visited the shrine. He was told that the Rajah of Ettayapuram, who was also at that time at the temple for worship, was greatly pleased with his music and had taken him to his court. Dikshitar concluded that this musician must be his brother Baluswami and he started for Ettayapuram. Ettayapuram, a small Zamindari in Tirunelveli District, is, however, an important name in the history of South Indian music. It is famous for its patronage of musicians, dancers, poets and composers. On the way Dikshitar halted at a place named Sattur where he found the countryside parched by the failure of rains and a miracle is recorded of Dikshitar singing a new song and inducing rainfall. The text of the song *Anandamritakarshini* supports the tradition, as Dikshitar prays here to Devi, *sadyah suvrishtihetave santatam chintaye Amriteshvari, salilam varshaya, varshaya, varshaya* — "I think of you for the sake of immediate rains, O Goddess of *Amrita* (immortal elixir), pour, pour, pour the rains". The *raga* Amritavarshini, bearing an appropriate name, seems to be a new creation of Dikshitar. A second piece in this *raga*, *Himagirikumari*, has recently been discovered and it must have been composed by Dikshitar after this episode.

At Sattur, Dikshitar heard even happier news from persons going to Ettayapuram to attend a festive celebration. They said that the Rajah had arranged for Baluswami's second marriage. Dikshitar reached Ettayapuram in time for the happy function. The Rajah received Dikshitar with the respect and honour due to him and persuaded him to stay on and be the Guru and the guiding light of the Court. Dikshitar felt really moved and seems for once to have stepped out of his vow; since he could not but sing a song saying that he was resorting to a king, he sang *Venkateshvara Eddappa Bhupatim ashrayeham* in the rare *raga* Megharanji. But the text of the song is couched in double meaning and can easily be taken to refer to Lord Venkateshvara in his incarnation as Krishna in the Yadava line; indeed some of the epithets would go well only with the Supreme God. Not only does the *raga's* name Megharanji echo the earlier episode of Amritavarshini but the name Venkateshvara also recalls Sattur where the temple-Deity is Lord Venkateshvara. Apart from this, the passage in the song giving the *raga-mudra* suggests that the Rajah honoured Dikshitar with a *Kanakabhisheka* (shower of gold coins) and gift of lands (*Kanchana-vrishti-prada-megharanjita-bahukshetram*).

The stay of the two Dikshitars with the Ettayapuram Rajah in their later life is comparable to the stay of their father and the whole family with Manali Mudaliars in the early part of their life. There was the glow of real affection and a marked rise in the tempo of musical activity and creativity in which both the brothers and sometimes the patron also participated. The tutelary Deity of the Ruling House of Ettayapuram was also Kumara (Muruga) at the nearby cave temple of Kazhukumalai (Kankasaila). Dikshitar's song in Suddha Dhanyasi on this Deity (*Suddha Dhanyasi*) has gained much popularity now (*Subrahmanyena rakshito'ham*).

I mentioned above the Tamil tradition of the six hill shrines of Kumara. One of these is Tiruchendur on the sea-coast in this part of the country. Dikshitar visited this famous shrine and sang there a Todi *kriti* (*Subrahmany*

mam rakshatu). The headquarters of this region is Tirunelveli on the Tamraparni river. In the *raga*-s Simharava and Shankarabharana, Dikshitar offered *kriti*-s to Goddess Kantimati here. In the same temple he sang a Devagandhari song on God Salivatishvara. The Kambhoji piece on Kailasanatha and the one in Sriranjani on Devi Parvatarajakumari relate to a small shrine in another part of this town. The latter *kriti*, now better known, embodies several names of the Devi from the sacred *Lalitasahasranama-Stotra*. Another famous Agrahara here is Kallidaikkurichi and Dikshitar sang a piece in Abhogi on the Deity Lakshmi-varaha here. Among the *kriti*-s of Dikshitar, belonging to shrines in the Tirunelveli region, is the one in the very rare Narayana Desakshi *raga* on Shankara-Narayana at Shankara-Narayanarkoil.

Kerala, known for its traditions of *Bhakti* and sacred centres, was included in Dikshitar's pilgrimage. The famous Sasta (Ayyappan) at Sabarimala received homage from Dikshitar in a *kriti* in *raga Vasanta (Hariharaputram)*; Padmanabha at Anantasayanam, where one of his pupils, the dance-master Vadivelu flourished, received a *kriti* in *Madhyamavati*; similarly Guruvayur Appan (Narayana) was worshipped with a song in Todi. There is a Dikshitar *kriti* in Mohana on a form of Ganapati called Rakta-Ganapati and the song refers to Kerala as the region where the shrine of this rare Ganapati exists; but yet the actual site has not been identified.

On the completion of his pilgrimage and after his return to Ettayapuram, Dikshitar expressed a desire to go back to Tiruvarur for some time. The Rajah reluctantly yielded to his request and Dikshitar went back for a brief spell for a *darshan* of Tyagaraja and Kamalamba at Tiruvarur and soon returned to Ettayapuram. The Rajah was blessed with a son and out of devotion to Dikshitar, he named him Muttuswami. The marriage of the eldest son of the Rajah was to take place. It was celebrated with the blessings of Dikshitar and a great festival of music and dance was arranged with the marriage. The annual Navaratri festivals and the festivals at the Kazhukumalai shrine were also celebrated on the same style as occasions for the gatherings of musicians and dancers and the presentation of new music and dance compositions.

In 1834 on the day of the *Dipavali* festival, the end of Dikshitar came when he was in the midst of the worship of Devi. A miraculous portent is told of how the state elephant broke its chains, ran through the town to the crematorium at the outskirts of the town and stopped there. This greatly disturbed the Rajah, Baluswami and others as all of them felt that the state elephant that ran to the crematorium symbolised their Guru the great Dikshitar. While Baluswami and other pupils were singing Devi *kirtana*-s at the Puja, Dikshitar's end came. Dikshitar's song on Minakshi — *Minakshi me mudam Dehi* was being sung. When the passage in it *Minalochani Pashamochani*, describing the Goddess as the liberator of the Spirit from the mundane shackles, was reached, Dikshitar's spirit left the mortal vesture and reached the feet of the Goddess.

The best way to give an account of the output of the *kriti*-s by Dikshitar is, as I have done above, to deal with them around the *kshetra*-s visited

by him. We have also some more of such *kriti*-s of identifiable *kshetra*-association although, in the cases of some, we have no indication as to what took Dikshitar to the shrines concerned. Some of the *kshetra*-s are so important that someone like Dikshitar would not have left them out. While some of these songs are well-known, several of these have come to light only recently and are not in the *Sampradaya Pradarshini*. During the stay of the Dikshitar family at Manali, Dikshitar must have composed his three Madras songs, one in Suddha Dhanyasi on Parthasarathi Swami in Triplicane and the two on Kapalishvara and Kalpakamba in Mylapore in Mohana and Todi. At Tiruvorriyur, near Manali, connected with Tyagaraja of Tiruvurur, he sang on Shiva and Tripurasundari in Arabhi, Sama and Devamanohari. There is the well-known *Seshachala-nayakam* in Varali on the Lord of the Seven Hills. On Margasahaya, at their old ancestral home Virinchipura, he composed a Ramakriya piece (*Margasahayeshvaram*) and the piece on the Goddess Marakata Valli here, the one in Kambhoji (*Marakata Vallim*) has become popular. *Vedapurisvaram* in Dhanyasi relates to the shrine at the well-known Vulture Hill (Tirukazhukunram) between Mahabalipuram and Chinglepet. On Narasimha at Ghatakachalam on the river Gatilam, there is his piece *Narasimhagaccha* in Mohana. At Tirukkadayur in Chola *desa*, his song in Manohari (*Shankaram Abhirami-manoharam*) celebrates Shiva who subdued Kala (Death); and to the powerful Goddess Abhirami here, he offered a song in a rare *raga*, Bhushavati (*Abhiramim*). Another place of ancient glory, the Chola port at the estuary of Kaveri (Pumpukar), is Shvetaranya (Tiruvenkadu) with a big awe-inspiring image of Virabhadra. This shrine is celebrated in Arabhi (*Shvetaranyeshvaram*), Kalyani (on the Goddess who is called Spiritual Knowledge—*Brahma-vidyamba*) and Rudrapriya (on Virabhadra, *Rudrakopa*).

New and additional pieces have now been brought to light; particularly shorter pieces (with just *pallavi* and *charana*) on the same Deities covered in the itinerary mentioned earlier on.

The following additional pieces are in rare *raga*-s, including *Melakarta*-s; some are indeed very rare. The list has also some well-known songs. These are listed without any order or scheme of classification.

Name of <i>Mela Raga</i>		Deity
Vegavahini	1. <i>Vinapustakadharinim</i>	Sarasvati
	2. <i>Gajananayutam</i>	Ganesha
Suddhamalavi	<i>Naraharim ashraye</i>	
Gujari	<i>Gunijanadinuta</i>	Devi
Malavapanchama	<i>Vasudevam upasmahe</i>	
Margadesi	<i>Mangaladevate</i>	Lakshmi
Manji	1. <i>Ramachandrena</i>	
	2. <i>Sri Sarasvati</i>	
Gopikavasanta	<i>Balakrishnam bhavayami</i>	
Abheri	<i>Vinabheri</i>	Devi
Saurasena	<i>Saurasenesam vallisam</i>	Kumara
Tarangini	<i>Maye tvam</i>	
Saravati	<i>Saravati-tata-vasini</i>	Sarasvati
Madhavamanohari	<i>Mahalakshmi Karunarasalahari</i>	

Name of <i>Mela Raga</i>		<i>Deity</i>
Manirangu	1. <i>Mam ava Pattabhirama</i> 2. <i>Mam ava Minakshi</i>	
Chaya gaula	<i>Sarasvatya Bhagavatya</i>	
Gaulipantu	<i>Krishnananda Mukunda</i>	
Maruva	<i>Maruvakadimalini</i>	Devi
Lalitapanchama	<i>Brihadishvarim</i>	Tanjavur
Samanta	<i>Vishvanathena</i>	Kulikkarai near Tiruvarur
Nagagandhari	1. <i>Nagagandhari-raga-nute</i> 2. <i>Sarasi janabhasodari</i>	Devi Devi
Marga Hindola	1. <i>Chandrashekharam</i> 2. <i>Marga-Hindolaragapriye</i>	Tiruvarur Devi
Suddha Desi	<i>Kamakshi</i>	Tanjavur
Saindhavi	<i>Brihadishvari</i>	Tanjavur
Hejjujji	<i>Ramachandra-bhaktam</i>	Hanuman
Tanukirti	<i>Chidambara Natarajam</i>	
Sarasvati Manohari	<i>Sarasvati Manohari</i>	Kamakshi (Kanchi)
Purnapanchama	<i>Sadhu-jana-chitta</i>	Advaitic Impersonal Supreme Being
Ardra Desi	<i>Sri Ganeshat param</i>	
Manoranjani	<i>Balambike</i>	Vaidyeshvaran- koil
Rupavati	<i>Sri Krishnam</i>	
Navaroz	<i>Hastivadanaya</i>	Ganesha
Kalavati	<i>Kalavati</i>	Sarasvati
Revagupti	1. <i>Sada-vinata</i> 2. <i>Saravanabhava</i>	Devi Kumara
Mahuri	<i>Raghuvira</i>	
Jujavanti	1. <i>Chetas Sri</i> 2. <i>Akilandeshvari</i>	Krishna Devi at Jambukesh- varam
Devakriya	1. <i>Srivatukanatha</i> 2. <i>Sandhyadevi</i> 3. <i>Sriguruguha</i> 4. <i>Lalitambikam</i>	Bhairava Sandhya (Savitri- Gayatri) Tiruvarur May belong to the Lalitopakhyana series
Chayatarangini	<i>Sarasvati Chayatarangini</i>	
Narayani	<i>Mahishasuramardinim</i>	
Isamanohari	1. <i>Ananta Balakrishnam</i> 2. <i>Sri Gananatham</i>	
Janjhuti	<i>Ganeshakumara</i>	
Suddhamukhari	<i>Muraharena</i>	

Name of <i>Mela Raga</i>		<i>Deity</i>
Suddha Saveri (Different from the commonly heard Suddha Saveri which is Dikshitar's <i>Devakriya</i>)	<i>Ekamresanayike</i>	Kamakshi, Kanchi
Lalita	<i>Agastisvaram</i>	
Sumadyati	<i>Nilachalanatham</i>	
Devaranji	<i>Namaste Paradevate</i>	
Kumudakriya	<i>Ardhanarishvaram</i>	
Dhamavati	<i>Ramachandrasya</i>	
Joti	<i>Rame Bharata</i>	
Ramakali	<i>Rama Rama</i>	
Nagavarali	<i>Gana Iole</i>	Devi
Mohana Nata	<i>Mohana-nata-raga-priye</i>	
Hemavati	<i>Hariyuvati</i>	Lakshmi
Sindhu Ramakriya	<i>Sadashivena</i>	
Devamanohari	<i>Bharati maddhishana</i>	Sarasvati, Tiruvapur
Devagandhara	<i>Panchasatpitharupini</i>	Minakshi, Madurai

There still remain the many *kriti*-s that we have often heard in concerts, but of the background of these compositions little is known. Most of them are in popular *raga*-s. For example:

Nata	<i>Svaminatha</i>
Shankarabharana	<i>Sadashivam upasmahe</i>
Todi	<i>Mahaganapatim</i>
Kambhoji	<i>Sri Subranmanyaya</i>
Saveri	<i>Karikalabhamukham</i>
Kurunji	<i>Sri Venugopala</i>
Kamas	<i>Sarasadala-nayana</i>
Vasanta	<i>Ramachandram bhavayami</i>
Pantuvrali	<i>Sri Satyanarayanam</i>
Devagandhari	<i>Kshitijaramanam</i>

Dikshitar provided pilgrims with *kriti*-s to sing at all shrines and before all forms of the personal God; he placed at the disposal of those initiated into the esoteric worship of Devi, *kriti*-s that could be used in Her worship; he gave those who felt the impact of the Stars, songs to pray to the Planets. Dikshitar also produced *kirtana*-s for popular use on festive occasions, at special annual *Vrata*-s and *Puja*-s of Ganesha, Varalakshmi, Sarasvati and so on. Among those that are popularly sung, the Chamara (*Shanmukhapriya*) piece *Siddhivinayakam* has reference to Ganesha Chaturthis; *Sri Varalakshmi* in Sri is for Varalakshmi Vrata observed by women. *Sri Venugopala* in Kurunji refers to Jayanti, i.e. *Gokhulashtami* when Krishna just born is worshipped. *Sri Satyanarayanam* in Shiva Pantuvrali similarly describes the Satyanarayana Vrata.

Dikshitar usually mentions several details of the temples and the sacred places and the Deities' images he describes in the songs he sang.

Still, even after much effort and search, there are some *kshetra*-s or Deities whose identities I have not yet been able to discover. This is so even with regard to the shrines in the Chola region. There is a piece on the sacred river Ganga in a North Indian *raga* Jhanjhuti (*Gange mam pahi*) which Dikshitar might have composed when he visited Banaras. A song on Pashu-patinatha in Shiva Pantuvarali suggests that he might have visited Kathmandu along with Chidambaratha Yogin but as the geographical details mentioned here are not correct, Dikshitar might perhaps have, like the Nayanmars, sung of a *kshetra* like Kedara which he could not visit.

This brings us to the dominant character of Dikshitar's life and song, namely a mission such as the great pioneers and leaders of *Bhakti* in Tamilnad, the Nayanmars and Alwars and Arunagirinatha, carried out. It meant pilgrimages to the numerous shrines and singing of the Deities there. This task Dikshitar carried out far more thoroughly than even his predecessors. In most of his *kriti*-s related to the *kshetra*-s, Dikshitar incorporated a variety of details: the name of the *kshetra*, the Deity, the Goddess, the sacred Tank and Tree, the special features, if any, of the Image, the myths, legends and the *mantra*-s with the mystic significance investing them with a halo, folk beliefs, local customs, the special features of the *Vimana* over the *sanctum sanctorum* (according to *Agama* and ancient architecture) and the special food offering to the Deity which is unique to certain temples. All these factors make his *Kshetra kirtana*-s extremely interesting and full of material worthy of investigation and discovery; all this is hidden in the melodic setting of the songs which carries away the listener without his ever suspecting anything of the lore lurking in the words of the song. It is difficult to choose and illustrate this but I would like to refer serious students of the subject to my article in Tamil on *Dikshitar and the Temples*.*

Related to the above is the personality of the Deity as Dikshitar presents it in his *kriti*-s. In Hindu meditation, in *Japa* and *Dhyana*, the form of the personal God is evoked in the mind with a preliminary verse describing that form. This is called the *Dhyana-shloka*. The *Mantra-Shastra*-s prescribe the forms of the Deities to be contemplated, the posture (*Asana*), the expression on the face and *chinmudra*, the gesture of assurance (*Abhaya*) and the various kinds of weapons (*Astra*) held in the hands, the accompanying Goddess(es), attendants etc. Dikshitar was an adept in the *Mantra Shastra*, and his *Sahitya* embodies correctly all the details of the particular Deity in the song; when the melodic setting conditions the devotee's mind to the requisite mood of serenity and inwardness, the phrases and epithets that unfold in the flowing lines conjure in the mind the personality of the Deity. I have checked Dikshitar's descriptions of the Deity-forms in the songs on different forms of Ganesha: Mahaganapati in Todi; Panchamatangamukha in Malahari; Hastivadanaya in Navaroz. The iconography set forth is remarkable for its accuracy and conformity to *Mantra Shastra* and *Shilpa Shastra*. This can be seen in a conspicuous manner in the *kriti*-s on the Planets. *Mam ava Pattabhirama* is not just the whole beauty and incarnation of the *raga* Manirangu; the portrait of Rama in *State (Pattabhirama)* that is drawn here and that is instilled in the listener's mind is authentic, and in

* *Kalki Dipavali Number*, 1966, pp. 65-68.

conformity with the texts on Rama-worship. The Deity Rajagopala at Man-nargudi, the subject of Dikshitar's songs in Saveri (*Sri Rajagopala*) and the rare Jaganmohana (*Sri Vidya Rajagopalam*), is one of the most beautiful of our icons; appearing with a smile, like a very living presence. It owes its execution to a master craftsman acquainted with the esoteric *Mantra.Shas-tra* behind it. The image is a masculine and feminine figure in one, representing Krishna and Devi as a composite Deity — but differently from the way Ardhanarishwara-Shiva is represented. It is, therefore, called *Sri Vidya-Rajagopala*. Dikshitar describes the image as having feminine features and ornaments (*Nariveshadhara-vamabhaga*). This composite form of Sri Vidya-Rajagopala is to be worshipped by those who desire the effortless and mellifluous flow of the muse of poesy and music. For a more detailed treatment of this aspect, the student's attention is invited to my paper 'Sri Muttuswami Dikshitar', *Journal of the Music Academy*, Madras, XXVI, (pp. 131-47).

The nature and the style of presentation of the contents of Dikshitar songs, therefore, differ fundamentally from those of the most prominent composer with whom we are most familiar, namely Tyagaraja. Obviously, Dikshitar who was wedded to voluntary poverty as an ideal of life, had to pass harder times than his contemporary. But Dikshitar believed that all the resultant internal conflict and emotional ferment ought to be digested in the fire of *vairagya* or in the transcending of the passions resulting from *rajoguna*, and in firm devotion to and faith in the Almighty. The songs were not a medium for giving vent to emotions. Consequently, instead of being colourful with varied *bhava*-s and *rasa*-s, Dikshitar's *kriti*-s, are a product of a *sattvika* frame of mind and embody the highest *rasa* of *Shanta*, of serenity.

This is not to deny that the *Sahitya*-s of Dikshitar reflect Dikshitar's lofty ideals. Reference was already made to his *vairagya* and his vow not to seek man or indulge in *Narastuti*. His two songs which expressly speak of this have already been cited. In his *Vegavahini*-song, he says that the Goddess of poetry and art removes for one the humiliation of having to wait on the pleasure of degraded men (*Naradhamanana-viloka-sokapaham*).

Dikshitar's long stay at Tiruvarur, where he was born, was due again to his fascination of the esoteric meaning of the concept of the Deity Tyagaraja. Tyagaraja's image and more so His dance are conceived as a symbolic representation of the highest mystic monistic *mantra* affirming the oneness of the individual and Supreme Soul expressed in the formula (*A*) *hamsah*, (*I am He*), also called the *Hamsa* and *Ajapa mantra*. This has to be understood if one wants to follow the many references in the numerous Tyagaraja *kriti*-s of Dikshitar. The *Ajapa*, meaning 'with no repetition of word', is the silent contemplation of the unity of the individual spirit with the Supreme One; the inner soul lies like a child in the net-hammock of the life-breath of the mundane body in which it nestles in involuntary and ceaseless rhythm, the blissful swing of rise and fall. This is the *Ajapa-natana* or *Hamsa-natana* whose truth the Yogins know, *Yogi-vidita-ajapa-natana-rangam* as Dikshitar says in his *Tyagaraja palayasu mam* (Gaula), *Atilalita-hamsa-natana* (Athana, *Tyagarajo virajate*), *Ajapanatanananda-vaibhavam* (Marga Hindola

— *Chandrashekharam*) and *Ucchvasa — Ajapa — natabharanam* (Natabharana). The Nataraja of Chidambaram is celebrated as the Lord of Dance; but if one desires to enjoy the Dance of Shiva, one has to see Tyagaraja in Tiruvarur. It is the music of the *Kahala-s* (long trumpets) and the *Suddhamaddala* and the *tala* (with no other instrument) of this *Hamsa-natana* that is signified by the name Hamsadhvani that Ramaswami Dikshitar gave to his new *raga*; it is this Hamsadhvani that held Dikshitar in Tiruvarur and formed the spiritual tether which drew him back to Tiruvarur in the midst of his pilgrimages abroad; it is to this Hamsadhvani to which the present writer's epic-poem on Dikshitar's life is tuned.

The word *Tyaga* in the name Tyagaraja recalls the Upanishadic statement that it is by *Tyaga* (giving up) that one attains immortality (*Tyaganaika amrutatvam anasuh*). In Indian thought, the heart is a lotus, *Kamala*; hence is Tiruvarur called Kamalai or Kamalanagara. In the oft-heard opening Navavarana song in Anandabhairavi, Dikshitar invokes Goddess Kamalamba as sporting in the city of the lotus of the heart (*Hrit-kamala-nagara-nivasini*).

All the three great composers of the Karnatic Trinity — incidentally they were all born at Tiruvarur — were of the *Smarta*-tradition which, while believing in the fundamental truth of *Advaita* and *Nirguna-Brahman*, accepted also the *Saguna-Brahman* as manifested in a number of Deity-forms. These were intended to afford suitable means or supports for worship for men with a diversity of equipment and disposition. This ideology also allows the seeking of one form as more favoured than another, *Ishta-devata*, e.g. Rama for Tyagaraja, Kamakshi for Shyama Shastri and Padmanabha for Svati Tirunal. Dikshitar was a true Advaitin and adored in his songs all forms of the Deity with the same degree of devotion. If we have to think of any *Ishta-devata* for Dikshitar, it will be difficult to decide which one it is. Kumara is his Guru; on Ganesha, he had specialistic compositions, nearly twenty-five in number; and then there is Tyagaraja. But at an early age Dikshitar had also received *Diksha* or initiation in the esoteric worship of the Mother Goddess, *Srividya*. An attentive listener may recollect the expression *Chidanandanatha* appearing in some of the *kriti-s* of Dikshitar, beginning with the first that he sang at Tiruttani. This *Chidanandanatha* is the name of Dikshitar as an initiate in *Srividya* (*Diksha-nama*). His *Devi-kirtana-s* are very large in number; there are two series: one on Kamalamba of Tiruvarur and another on Abhayamba of Mayuram for the special *Navavarana*-worship of Devi. These, as well as most of the *Devi-kirtana-s*, addressed to the Goddesses worshipped at the different shrines visited by him, are replete with the entire lore and technical ideas of the *Srividya* form of *Shakti* worship. As I have already indicated, he has a whole corpus of compositions on the *Lalitopakhyana* — a text of this school. As more and more *kriti-s* of Dikshitar come to light, more pieces of this corpus are being revealed. Even in the pieces that have come down from the *Sampradaya Pradarshini*, we have many *Devi*-songs in which are embodied, *en bloc*, the Names of Devi as found in the two canonical hymns of the school, *Lalita Trisati* and *Lalita Sahasra Nama*. So that, as in the case of the *Navagraha-kriti-s*, here we have something which gives in a popular song-medium, for the benefit of the whole world of believing men and women, what is kept as a secret among the initiated.

The singing of such songs is a double blessing. Dikshitar's songs can be sung during auspicious celebrations and in concerts; *Neraval* can be done by the musician at any passage in his song. There are no passages where the sentiment expresses suffering or things painful or inauspicious. There is nothing of specific or mundane significance which would make their singing, playing or *Neraval* either inauspicious or pointless. Wherever you touch or dwell, the glory of God or Goddess is there, and the uplifting Names and Epithets, with the swaying melody, transport you.

Dikshitar's firm faith in God is affirmed by him in a different and straightforward way. In a *Saranga-kriti* on Tyagaraja, he says, "My acts — well-done or ill-done — I dedicate to Tyagaraja, who looks after welfare here and in the hereafter, prosperity here and final salvation". This dedication of everything to the Lord forms also the *pallavi* of another piece, one in Khamas on God Kumara. In a Rudrapriya song on the same Tyagaraja, he says: "I am a devotee of Tyagaraja; therefore even if I am a man of little knowledge, I have known everything (Sarvajna); I have known what really deserves to be known". In the Purvisong in the Tiruttani-series, he affirms, "I am servant of Guru-Guha, no, I am Guru-Guha himself". There is a whole song in the rare *raga* Purna-Panchama on the One Nameless Absolute, the Brahman of the Upanishads.

In some places Dikshitar mentions the moral and spiritual virtues that qualify one to be a devotee or a person fit to be the abode of God. The *Asaveri-kirtana* on the Moon (in the Planet series) describes the Moon as pure and pleasing like the heart of a good man (*sadhu-hridaya-sadrisham*). God Tyagaraja is described as the royal swan sporting in the heart of the pure (*Athana*). Krishna (*Cetas sri*) sports in hearts which are cool and pleasing. It is to such people that God or Goddess is easy of access (*Sadhujananam atisarale*—Begada on Devi). In a fine short piece in Isamanohari on Ganesha, he says that God is realized in hearts which are free from defects like likes and dislikes and hence are beautiful (*raga-dveshadi-rahita-ramaniya-hridaya-viditam*). Shiva shines in hearts that melt like butter. (*Navanita-hridaya-vibhatam* in *Akshaya-Linga vibho*).

God shines in the heart of the wise like a lamp on the tower, (*Mati-matam-hridaya-gopura-dipah*), which suggests that this is for the help and guidance of the people. This God is not only the witness of all your acts but he is the enjoyer of the good and fine things that you do. To Dikshitar who did not sing to please any Prince, the God within him was the foremost *Rasika*, connoisseur of things beautiful; (*Rasikapungavaguruguhajananim*—Rasamanjari song, and *Guruguham sangita-priyam bhajeham* in *raga* Gitapriya). The Lord sits in the thousand petalled lotus within, and drinks the nectar of Dikshitar's music (*mamaka-sahasra-kamala-sino-madhurya-ganamritapanah*—Srinathadi in *Maya Malava Gaula*).

Although like Tyagaraja, Dikshitar did not write several exclusive pieces on the art of music as *Sadhana* or constituting the ineffable and Supreme Bliss itself, Dikshitar's conception of this high role of music is seen in his *kriti*-s. If Tyagaraja says that Shiva or Rama is the embodiment of music (*Nadatanum; Nada-sudharasambitanu*), Dikshitar embodies this idea in a number of

kriti-s. In the song in Ratipriya, (*Mararatipriyam*), he describes God as the embodiment of *Bhava*, *Raga* and *Tala*; and the Goddess is also described in the same way (*Bhaja re re chitta* and *Abhayamba* in Kalyani and *Panchasatpitha* in Devagandhara). The *kriti* in Vamsavati describes Devi as of the form of the 22 *shruti*-s. The two breasts of the Mother which sustain the universe are sweet music and poetry (*Sarasa-sangita-sahitya-stana-dvayaya*). The Devi-pieces, again and again, speak of Devi as herself playing on or enjoying the music of the vina in particular and of other instruments as well. Devi is pleased with those who know the essence of music and poetry (*Sangita-sahitya-sarajna-sannute*). That is, according to Dikshitar, a composer should be an adept in both fields, the literary and the musical. Similarly, on dance, Dikshitar refers to the many forms of dance promulgated by Nataraja in the last line of his well-known song in Kedara on that Deity at Chidambaram (*Sangita-vadyavinoda-Tandava-jatabahutara-bheda-chodyam*). In a Bilahari song on Hatakesvara at Tiruvarur, he speaks of the God there as displaying the art of dance described by authoritative writers on it like Hanuman, Nandin, Adi Bharata etc. (*Maruti-Nandi-Adi-Bharatacharyairavedita-nartana-sphurte*). In another Tiruvarur song in Rudrapriya, God Tyagaraja is described as being propitiated by various kinds of dance performed by the Devadasis of the temple. (*Vimala-rudraganika-nartana-vinodabheda-modakarasya*).

Dikshitar adopted the Sanskrit language as the medium of his works as this was the prevailing practice among the great composers; in the immediate past, he had his own father (to some extent) and the complete Sanskrit composers Narayana Tirtha, Sadashiva Brahmendra, Upanishad Brahmendra and last but not least Margadarshi Shesha Ayyanar who served as a model for Shri Svati Tirunal. Among his two contemporaries, Shyama Shastri wrote in Sanskrit before changing over to Telugu and Tyagaraja had several songs in pure Sanskrit. The Sanskrit medium established the continuity with the classical past, and, what is more, provided the most suitable vehicle for the kind of thought and ideas that Dikshitar had to convey. Sanskrit established here the necessary link with sacred literature, *Veda*, *Mantra*, *Tantra*, *Kshetramahatmya*. It also lent dignity to the diction and proved an aid to the elevating effect of his compositions.

The earlier age of *Gita*, *Prabandha* etc. was about to disappear, although these forms still lingered in the *Lakshana* and *Lakshya-gita*-s of the different *raga*-s. Ramaswami Dikshitar still composed a *Lakshya-prabandha* for his creation Hamsadhvani. Appearing during this transitional phase, Dikshitar's compositions gave a new direction to *kirtana*-s, along with those of his contemporaries. But a very important point of difference in Dikshitar's *kriti*-s, which distinguishes them from those of others (like Tyagaraja's) is that the *charana*-part was one integral whole and no part of it could be skipped; the musician can sing one *charana* of Tyagaraja's pieces and leave out the rest. That is possible because the *charana*-s are in the same setting and can be dispensed with. This is not possible in Dikshitar's *kriti*-s. *Madhyamakala* passages of varying lengths are a regular feature of Dikshitar's *kriti*-s, and give a needed variation, as the prevailing tempo of his compositions is the slow one (*vilambita*); often they alternate with the *vilambita* passages in all parts of the compositions. Several songs have *svara* passages and also a few have *jati*-s. They have

the embellishment of *prasa*-s, initial, medial and final, but they do not fall into metrical patterns as songs of composers in the Telugu medium do. They employ the *yati*-s of *Gopucchā* and *Srotovahā*, decrease and increase, syllable by syllable, a feature seen also in old Devarāma music. Examples are: Anandabhairavi, — *Tyagarāja-yoga-vaibhavam*, *Rāja-yoga-vaibhavam*, *Yoga-vaibhavam*, *Vaibhavam*, *Bhavam*, *Vam*; and in the same piece, taking the reverse order, we have the increase, *Sham*, *Prakasham*, *Svarupa-prakasham*, *Tattvasvarupaprakasham*, *Sakala-tattvasvarupa-prakasham*, *Shiva-Shaktyadi-sakala-tattvasvarupa-prakasham*. Concert listeners may recall similar passages in *Maye tvam yahi* and *Sri Varalakshmi*.

The importance of the compositions of Dikshitar for the theory and evolution of Karnatic music was dealt with above. The *raga*-s are the crux of this matter. Dikshitar's systematic work put Venkatamakhin's scheme of 72 *Mela-janya* scheme on a strong foundation. In the last piece of his series of illustrative compositions of this scheme, Dikshitar mentions expressly the 72 *Raganga raga*-s. Aware of the importance of the subject, Dikshitar took special care to work into the text of the songs and most dextrously, the names of the *raga*-s so that doubts or disputes regarding the *raga*-s of the pieces do not arise in his case as they do in the case of many *kriti*-s of Tyagarāja.

Of the three aspects of music and composition, *bhava*, *raga* and *tala*, the beauty of the last, of rhythm, pace and lilt can be enjoyed in Shyam Shastri. *Bhava* is most patent in the lyrical outpourings of Tyagarāja. *Raga* may be said to be Dikshitar's forte. This *raga* importance in Dikshitar may be viewed in more than one aspect. Firstly as a classicist, Dikshitar had a full awareness of the great heritage of the art. It may be seen from the several lists of songs given above under different heads, he brought to life numerous ancient *raga*-s by composing *kriti*-s in them. His *kriti*-s are, therefore, our sole guide now in the rendering of those *raga*-s. In some of the rare *raga*-s, Dikshitar has more than one *kirtana*. Cultivation of his *kriti*-s is, therefore, an enlarging of one's musical equipment and knowledge. The full and correct forms of *raga*-s were formerly determined by different kinds of definitive compositions *gita*, *prabandha*, *thaya* and *alapa*, referred to, together, as *chaturdandi*. Then came the *tana varna*-s and *daru*-s. In course of time, the *pada* or *kirtana* (*kriti*) on one side and *alapa* on the other became, according to the law of survival of the fittest, the two chief media by which *raga*-s were not only expounded and enjoyed, but also technically defined and recognised. Between the *kriti* and *alapa*, the former is the ready and tangible one. For all the ten characteristics of a *raga*, the *sanchara*-s and *prayoga*-s of master-composers in their *pada*-s or *kirtana*-s became the chief guide. The *kriti*-s of Dikshitar form, in this respect, our most precious possession. If as *sahitya*-s on different deities, his *kriti*-s are like *dhyana-shloka*-s of the *murti*-s of different forms of Divinity, on the music side they are so many *Lakshana-gita*-s investing the *raga murti*-s with all the subtleties and graces of the *raga*-s.

The *raga*-s, as named and as sung in the *kriti*-s, give rise to some confusion and controversy. The *raga-lakshana* discussions of the Experts' Committee of the Music Academy, Madras, continued for many years during its Annual Conferences and form the Academy's solid achievement. The detailed

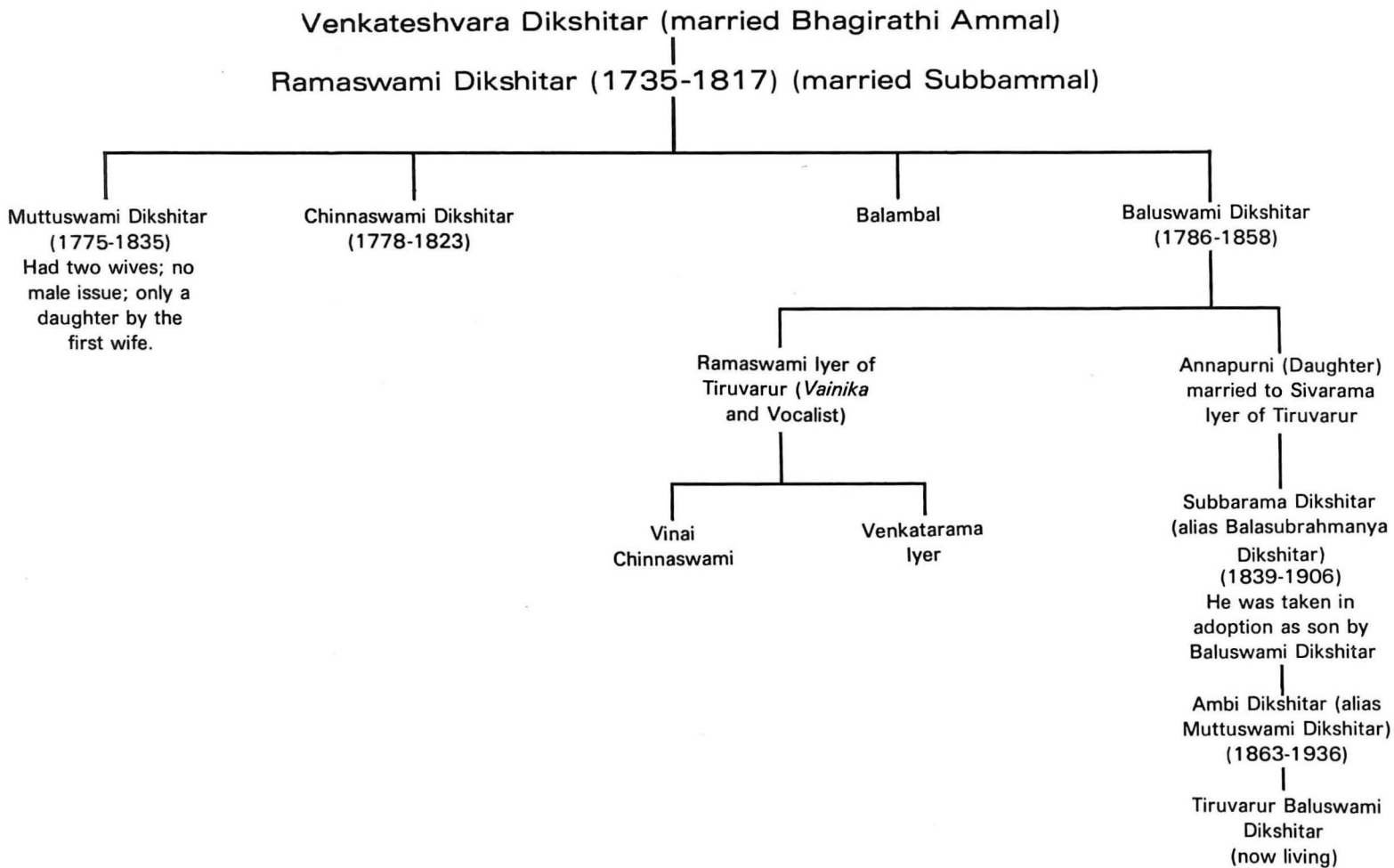
reports in the Academy's Journal show that the usages in the *kriti*-s in the same *raga*-s by the two main composers, Tyagaraja and Dikshitar, figured continuously, producing the idea of two schools, as it were, the Tyagaraja school and the Dikshitar school. From this point of view again, the *kriti*-s of Dikshitar are valuable. We may leave aside *raga*-s like Shankarabharana and Bhairavi, Kambhoji and Todi; even in the case of *raga*-s sung less often, although the same notes are used by the two composers, Tyagaraja and Dikshitar, the setting of the Dikshitar *kriti* is such that a different ethos and effect are created. There is then this distinct aesthetic value which we should not deprive ourselves of.

The distinct quality of Dikshitar's music, from the aesthetic point of view, is its style which is derived from the technique of the vina. In his major Bhairavi *kriti Balagopala*, Dikshitar calls himself a *vainika-gayaka* and this gives the key to an understanding and appreciation of the excellence of Dikshitar's style. In the well-known Gamakakriya song on Minakshi, Dikshitar speaks of the ten *gamaka*-s in the playing of the vina. The richness of *gamaka* in Dikshitar's music, the grace of the *kampa*, the *odukkal-sadukkal*, as they call it in our musical parlance, all this finer quality of his music derives from the vina. Another distinction is the tempo. The full evocation of *raga*-form could come only in the *vilamba-kala*. Because of this *vishranti*, the *gamaka*-s and the stately diction of Dikshitar's *kriti*-s produce the impression of a big python, of a state elephant, of a ship on the waters, and of the big temple car of Tyagaraja at Tiruvarur.

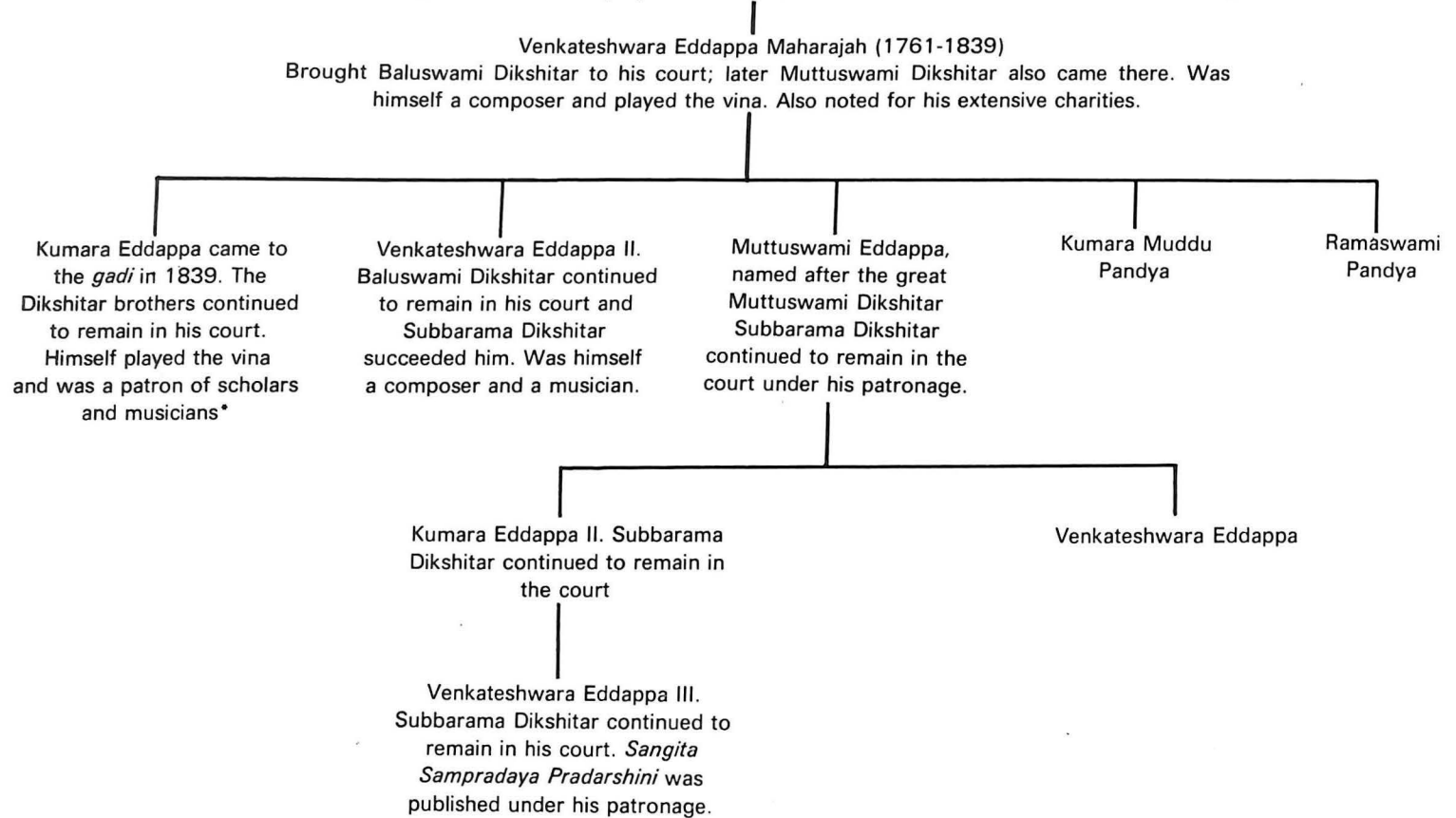
Such is the work, such is the high quality of the art of Dikshitar, a scholar and master, a versatile genius. Like the title *vainika-gayaka* that he gave himself, another is in his Bauli song, *Pandita-tara*, meaning 'more scholarly than others'. This offers us the key to an understanding of another dimension of Dikshitar's work and art. I have observed that when a musician grows in knowledge and maturity, steadiness and reflectiveness, he begins to develop a greater interest in Dikshitar's *kirtana*-s.

I may conclude with a reference to Sri Aurobindo's exposition of true or great poetry as *mantra*. When you sit and listen to Manirangu and *Mam ava* or Navaroz and *Hasti-vadanaya* or Bauli and *Parvati-Parameshvarau*, you are under the spell of something transcending a mere song.

THE DIKSHITAR FAMILY TREE
(KASHYAPA GOTRA)



The Maharajahs of Ettayapuram: Patrons of the Dikshitar Family



*These included Vina Subbukutti Aiyar, Baluswami Dikshitar's pupil Vina Minakshisundaram Iyer, Vina Subbia Annavi, vocalists Tirunelveli Vengu Bhagavatar and Madurai Ramayya Bhagavatar, Muttuswami Dikshitar's pupil Tevur Subrahmanya Iyer.