

Sankeerthana Lakshanamu of Chinna Tirumalacharya

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Abstract

Music tradition which evolves to function as the society's carrier of tradition and culture. It's mode of transmission allows in regular changes, modification and creative mood of various styles from one period time to another period of generation. The music tradition implies all the technical, user-friendly applications in the performance, discovery of new music, back soundings, compositions, playback singers for effective music development. Music is the powerful media to unite the people from all over the world. Indian music has been divided into two varieties such as Carnatic music and Hindustani Music. Traditional music carries an extent of every aspect of its culture fabrics be it political, philosophical, economical or social related which proves working guide to the development needs of the people. The combination of classical music and multimedia is another notable practice in the 21st century. The paper discusses the Carnatic music evolution and tradition of 21st century during this period of technological improvisation.

Introduction

Thalapakka Chinna Tirumalacharya, the Grandson of Thalapakka Annamacharya has written three works: (1) Ashtabasha Dandakamu (2) Sankeerthana Lakshanamu and; (3) Adyatma and Sringara Sankeerthanalu. Among these, Ashtabasha Dandakamu, a composition in dandaka metre in praise of Lord Venkateswara, composed in eight languages namely, (1) Sanskrit, (2) Prakriti, (3) Sauraseeni, (4) Maagadhi, (5) Paisaaci

or Apabhramasabhaasha , (6) Praaci , (7) Avanti , And (8) Saarvadesibhasha , was got inscribed on copper plates by the author himself on 07.11.1537 (Hevilambi samvatsara margasirsa “Sudha pancami Budhavaaramu). It was first published by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam authorities in their publication titled“ The Minor works of Annamacharya and his sons” issued in vol.1, Tirupati Devasthanam Thallapakkam works, in 1935. This publication was supervised by pandit. Vijayaraghavacharya. This dandakamu seems to have brought the title “astabhashakavichakravarti” to Chinna Tirumalacharya.

Chinna Tirumalacharya’s sankeerthanamulu also has been inscribed on copper plates during the lifetime of the author. Sixty adhyatmasankeertanas and one hundred and nineteen srungaarasankeertanas have been printed in 1962 in Thaallapaaka works, volume XVI under the editorship of Archakamudayagirisrinivaasaacharya.

Sankeertana Laksanam is a small work of seventy one verses (and twenty five sandhivacanams or prose linkages) dealing with hymnody.

History And Sources Of Sankeerthana Lakshanamu

From verse 15 of Sankeertana Lakshanamu in Telugu it is known that Thallapaaka Annamacharya had composed a work called Sankeertana Lakshanamu in Sanskrit. Verse 17 reiterates this fact and adds that it was commented upon by Thallapaka Peda Tirumalacharya, presumably in Sanskrit. Verse 16 states that China Tirumalacharya had permission from his father Peda Tirumalacharya to compose the work in Telugu. verse 17 states that china Tirumalacharya composed the work in Telugu following the Sankeertana Lakshana in Sanskrit and embarked the same(tadvakyanusarambugan).

It is learnt that Annamacharya’sSankeerthanas have been very popular even by 17.5.1535. some copper plates withsankeertanas areknown to have reachedAhobalam, Srirangam, Chidambaram, Simhachalam, Kadiri etc., some palm – leaf manuscripts are also known to exist at Srirangam and Tanjore. This happened as the Thallapakka family took it upon themselves to propagate Vaishnavism, of Ramanuja school.

Being a witness to the popularity of Annamacharya's Sankeertanas, ChinnaTirumalacharya is said to have got his Sankeertana Lakshanamu in Telugu inscribed on big stone-slabs of four feet width and seven feet length in the temple of Sri Venkateswara following the campakapradaksina order. Not only that he engraved the keerthanas in similar stone-slabs, some examples of how the sankeetanas were sung with swaras, sahithyas etc. It was Sri Udayagiri Srinivasacharya who discovered these stone-slabs in 1949. The exact number of stone-slabs thus engraved is not known, but only two such slabs have been discovered and preserved.

A sankeertana in Sanskrit is said to have been illustrated for singing with swaras, gamakas and sahityas. Terms like udgraha, melapa, Dhruva, antara, abhoga, uga, aytaniyama, jhampa, ata, rupaka, tivada, adi, eka, jyavala, adijyavala are found on the slabs as also pallavam and padam. Sri Srinivasacharya opines that Chinna Tirumalacharya could have got them inscribed on the stone slab prior to 7.11.1537. He has given details of this discovery in his introduction to volume XV of Thallapakka Geya Tacanalu, containing Annamacharya's Srungarasankeertanalu (1961) as also in the introduction to volume XVI containing Sankeertana of Chinna Tirumalacharya (1962). Two things are velar. Firstly Sankeertana Laksanamamu seems to have been inscribed on the stone slabs though they are not available now. Secondly writing music with notation, i.e. with swaras, gamakas and sahityas was prevalent in Telugu as far back as the beginning of the sixteenth century. The four photographic plates published in vol XVI of the sankeertana series are incontrovertible evidence to this fact.

Though the stone slabs are not available for checking up the text of Sankeertana Lakshanamu in Telugu the copper plates are available. Chinna Tirumalacharya got this work inscribed on copper plates also during his own lifetime. But the date inscribed is not mentioned.

The text on some of the copper plates were copied by one Saadhu Subrahmanya saasthy as far back 1922-23. When the paper mss.were found in bad condition, some issued in print as “The Minor works of Thallapakka Annamacharya and his sons – Vol.I during 1935 under the editorship of Pandit Vijayaraghavacharya.

Two slightly different texts are available for Sankeerthana Lakshanamu in Telugu. The first is the printed version ,and the second is the version on the copper plates. Though the printed text is merely the copied version from the copper plates, they are not identical. Some mistakes seem to have crept in either at the time of copying from the unclean copper plates or at the time of printing taking the text from paper ,in bad condition. Now that the chemically cleaned copper plates are available for verification of the text and (at S.V. Museum on Temple Art, 223, Govindharaja Swamy North Mada Street, Tirupati) the printed text available is corrected, adopting the text on copper plates as the standard original text. The following are the details in this connection.

1. The text of SankeertanaLakshanamu in Telugu is inscribed on four copper plates each measuring 40 cm. * 18 cm. The writing is on both sides of the copper plates. The date of inscription is not given.
2. The writing is in the old style with purnanusvaras for ardhanusvaras and duplicated consonants etc.
3. The printed text shows 71 verses. The last verse in the copper plates is numbered as 70 only. On a check up it was found that the verse beginning with nalugupadambulunokacaluna,..’ has not been given its serial number 32; but is given after the next verse beginning with ‘ visamapaadambulokariti ‘. It must have been a scribal error.
4. The copper plates have the verse beginning with ‘sankirnavividhapaapa’ as the 9th verse and the verse beginning with ‘madidallapakayannaya’ as the tenth verse. The

printed text has them as 10th and 9th. The order of the copper plates has been restored in this edition.

5. The copper plates begin with the following caption: 'SrirastuSrimateramanu-jayanamah. ThallapakaAnnamacharulyaKumarunduPedaTirumalacharyuluvarikumarunduchina Tirumalacharyulu anaticcinasankirtanalakshanamainapadacchandamu' the printed text has omitted 'ainapadacchandamu'. It is a very important detail. The author has given 'padacchandamu' as the alternative title of the work. It is the 'pada sampradaya' that the author is mainly concerned with.
6. In verse 40 the printed text gives the last word as 'munulu'. The copper plate gives it as 'ghanulu'. The context pertains to 'sikhaapadam' which is found in the works of historical times, like Sangita Choodamani, Sangita Ratnakara. Any reference to 'munis' is inappropriate. Hence the copper plate reading 'lakshanajnulainaghanulu' is accepted and incorporated.
7. In verse 64 both the copper plate and the printed text are given at the beginning of the third line 'vistarapaadavaadamula'. Though the poet might have chosen 'vadesa' for 'pa' even in an amredita it is shown as 'paadapaadamulu' for the readers' convenience.
8. The printed text in the prose link after verse 64 and in verse 65, gives 'yelapaata' as beginning with 'ya' sound. The copper plate also reads 'yelapadam', 'yaalapaatapadambu'. This is morphological form with initial consonantal 'ya' is retained only to enable the reader to distinguish between 'eela' of 'eelaaprabhandha' and this 'yela' which are two different things.

Conclusion

Sankeerthana Lakshanani in Sanskrit was the original work of saint and the composer Thallapaaka Annamacharya. Although the original is no longer available, we are fortunate to have its line-to-line translation into Telugu poetry by his grandson, Thallapaaka Chinna Tirumalaacharya, thanks to TTD authorities who could locate it and preserve it for us. The

present publication is the English version of the said poetic work in Telugu. The traditional padam was in vogue even prior to the fifteenth century A.D. when

Annamaacharya hallowed Bharath with his physical presence. However, it existed in a variety of forms as household songs and prayer songs, festival songs and entertainment songs, temple songs and temple plays, and soon. Annamaachaarya wrote his Sankeerthana Lakshanani in order to impart clarity to their physical structure, define with precision their importance for different applications and assist evolution are the Kruti forms of traditional padam innovated by subsequent Vaggeyakaras such as Bhadraachala Ramadas, Thyagaraja, Muthuswami Deekshitar and so on.

The recent trends in musical compositions betray complete ignorance of traditional parameters. The present booklet makes available the brief Lakshana Grantha of the great Achaarya. It should prove to be an invaluable tool to modern composers to develop new and novel musical forms that derive added lustre in traditional glory.

Bibliography

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