Uttukadu Venkatasubbaier's

KAMAKSHI

NAVÁVARANA KRÍTIS

A STUDY OF THE SAHITYA

S. Sankaranarayanan
KAMAKSHI
NAVĀVARANA KRITIS

A STUDY
OF THE SAHITYA

With introductory notes, explanation of the terms, text of kritis in Devanāgari script, transliteration in Roman script and meaning.

S. Sankaranarayanan
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SRI SANKARA BHAGAVADPADACHARYA PARAMPARAGATHA
His Holiness Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetadhipathi

Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya Swamigal
Srimatam Samasthanam

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His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetha is greatly delighted to know that the Kamakshi Navavarana Kritis of Uttukkadu Venkatasubbaier is to be published by Shri S. Sankaranarayanan, with explanatory notes.

The absence of the composer's mudra in the kritis denotes the utter selflessness of Venkatasubbaier and his deep devotion to Sri Kamakshi. He seems to have been soaked in devotional ecstasy and ananda-anubhava.

Shri Sankaranarayanan has taken great pains in bringing out the importance of each kriti, as can be seen from his introductory note and translation in English, fortified with well-drawn yantras pertaining to the nine Avaranas. The meaning rendered by him for the kritis is crystal clear and the foot-notes given are elucidative.

Devotees of Devi Kamakshi, music sabhas and musicians will do well to take early steps to popularise these Navavarana keertanas. It will be good if boys and girls decide to get by heart these kritis and make it a point to sing them in the Devi shrine of the Siva temple of the locality in which they are residing, since according to Sri Jnanasambandar in his Tevaram about Alangudi Siva Temple indicates that Kamakoti, i.e., Sri Kamakshi, has been the Sakti Devi in all Siva shrines of the land and this idea has been confirmed by Puranic texts and by inscriptions in many temples of the Tamil region.

His Holiness the Acharya Swamigal invokes the grace of Sri Chandramouleswara for the success of the project and conveys His profound blessings on the publisher and on those engaged in this good and noble cause.

Narayana Narayana
PREFACE

'Navāvarana' (Nava aavarana, literally nine veils or enclosures) is a word known to all Sakti upasakas and lovers of Carnatic music; the latter associate it with the celebrated Kamalamba Navavarana Kritis of Muttusvami Dikshitar.

Decades before the Dikshitar's Kamalamba Navavarana, Uttukkadu Venkatasubbaier had composed fourteen kritis in Sanskrit, known as Kamakshi Navavarana Kritis, as the songs are on Sri Kamakshi of Kanchipuram. This book deals with the sahitya of these kritis.

Authentic information about the life of Venkatasubbaier is scanty. What little we have is based on legends. He is believed to have lived in the latter part of the 17th century. He was a vaggeyyakara (composer),* poet, mystic and Srividya upasaka. He has composed hundreds of songs, mostly in Tamil, on various deities. However only a few of them have gained prominence. His compositions on Sri Krishna are known as 'Raasa gaanam'.

The Kamakshi Navavarana Kritis appeared in the form of a book in Tamil in 1989. Compiled by the late Brahmasri Needamangalam Krishnamurthy Bhagavathar and published by Smt Rajammal Krishnamurthy (at No. 5, Ellamman Kovil Street, West Mambalam, Chennai-33), under the title "Uttukkadu Venkatasubbaier Aruliya

* A 'vaggeyyakara' is one who creates a musical piece—both the musical structure and the appropriate sahitya. The word 'composer' is not an exact equivalent of 'vaggeyyakara'. It is however used in the absence of an alternative word.
Kamakshi Navavarana Kirttanaikal", it contains the text of the kritis in Sanskrit and Tamil, and with notation in Tamil.

In the same year, Gayathri Associates of Chennai brought out a cassette of these kritis rendered by Smt Akhila Shankar and her group. It commences with the Benediction of Jagadguru Sankaracharya Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham. The songs, rendered with perfect unisonal sruti alignment and with calm and composed deliberation, induce in the listener a soothing feeling. (Since then, The Master Recording Company, Chennai ('Sangeetha') has also brought out a cassette of these kritis, rendered by the well-known musicians, Smt C. Saroja and C. Lalitha.)

As the compositions are in Sanskrit, a lay listener may not be able to understand the import of the sahitya of the kritis; and his difficulty is compounded by the 'incorrect' syllabication of the sahitya necessitated sometimes by the requirements of tala. Moreover, while listening, the sweetness of the music submerges the poetic beauty of the compositions, and more often the listener is carried away by the charm of the melody. The delight of the listener would however be heightened if he could appreciate the meaning also; and these kritis contain a wealth of information on Srividya and Srichakra.

A kriti (musical composition) is valued primarily for its art music—its aesthetic content and the melody, its sahitya serving only as a medium to portray the raga bhava. Even so, great vaggeyakaras have created many exquisite pieces, harmoniously blending lilting
melody with sparkling lyricism. Their creations not only excel in musical artistry but, in equal measure, evoke devotion and piety in the minds of sensitive listeners. Kamakshi Navavarana Kritis belong to this genre.

In this book, each kriti is studied in a section, and each section consists of four parts. The first part is an introductory note to explain the salient features of the sahitya. This is followed by the text of the song in Sanskrit. The third part gives a transliteration of the sahitya in Roman script for the benefit of those who cannot follow the Devanagari script. The last part gives the meaning (not too literal) of the kriti.

The lines of the kritis given in this Study may not necessarily correspond to the tala cycle. Readers interested in the swaras and talas of the kritis may consult the book published by Smt Rajammal Krishnamurthy.

In the transliteration of the kritis, compound words have been hyphenated, and commas added, to facilitate easy reading and understanding of the meaning.

For clarifying technical terms, I have relied upon learned works on Tantra Sastra, Srichakra, Lalitopakhyana and Lalita Sahasranama Stotra, and have liberally drawn material from them.

I feel blessed by the Benediction given by His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetha, Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal.

I am very grateful to the late Smt Akhila Shankar, the leader of the group that has superbly rendered the
kritis for the Gayathri Associates, for enlightening me on the intricacies of the raga structure and the tala pattern adopted by the composer; to Dr Sulochana Pattabhi Raman, musician, musicologist and critic, for sharing for this Study her learned observations on Venkatasubbaier's compositions in general, and the Kamakshi Navavarana Kritis in particular; and to Smt Rajammal Krishnamurthy for granting permission to reproduce the text of the songs from the book published by her.

It was my great good fortune that Brahmasri S.V. Radhakrishna Sastri of Srirangam, a physician and scholar of Ayurveda, and also a traditional Sanskrit scholar of eminence, and a commentator on Lalita Sahasranama Stotra and Vishnu Sahasranama Stotra, went through the manuscript of the book. He suggested changes at a few places in order to bring out the import of the sahitya. His insightful comments and explanations, which I have incorporated in the book, have added value to the Study.

I also benefited from the valuable comments offered by Mahamahopadhyaya Dr R Sathyanarayana of Mysore, an eminent Sanskrit scholar and musicologist. He has also honoured me with a Critical Appreciation of my work. I am deeply grateful to him.

Sangeeta Kalanidhi Dr Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, the nonagenarian Mahavidwan of Carnatic music, has very graciously contributed a Note of Commendation, highlighting the usefulness of the book to musicians, students and listeners in appreciating the music of the compositions. I am very thankful to him for this kind gesture.
I am also indebted to Shri T.S. Parthasarathy, scholar, commentator and author of several works on music and dance, and Fellow of Sangeet Natak Akademi, for favouring me with a learned Foreword. The discourse contained therein on the singular status given to the Srichakra/Navavarana in Srividya Upasana, should help readers in getting into the proper frame of mind to derive knowledge and pleasure from the Study.

I also thank Vidwan S. Rajam, musician and artist, for gifting the sketch of the composer that appears in the Introduction of the book.

My thanks are due further to Dr B.S. Ramakrishna Rao, Sanskrit scholar, and Hon. Professor, Chinmaya International Foundation, Kochi, for his help in the translation of the kritis, and to Shri V. Sivaramakrishnan, Edior, Bhavan's Journal, for editing the work.

I am most grateful to Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati, and Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi, for their financial assistance. Without their help this book could not have been published.

I should also express my thanks to Shri Narayanan of V.K.N. Enterprises, Chennai, for the diligence and care showed by him in the production of the book.

In the kriti Natajana Kalpavalli the composer has said that rendering of his Navavarana Kritis on Sri Kamakshi with deep contemplation of their significance and import would lead one to liberation. I would have gained enough reward for the modest work I have done in a spirit of devotion to music if the reader feels elevated while listening to a rendering of these kritis with an understanding of the meaning and significance of the sahitya.

Chennai
1 September 2000
S. Sankaranarayanan
பார்வை

பதிமதி முதலாளிகளால் அடங்கி வரும் பிற்பக்கானம் வாக்கியல்கள் காட்சிகள் இல்லாத பதிப்புப்பாட்டில். இவ்வினங்கு பித்திகள் காட்சிகள் தம் விளக்கங்கள் காண்பர்கள் இருந்தனர். குடியுரிமையாளர் அவர்கள் விளக்கம் அதிக நேரான புகழ்பெறுகின்றன. 

இம்மத்தியும் வந்த வருடம் 17-ஆம் நூற்றாண்டு முற்பக்கின் வரலாறு கருதப்படுகின்றது. குறித்து காட்சிகள் வருமதிகளில் என்பது தமதுக் குறிப்பிட்டு “காட்சியின்” என்று வெவ்வேறு பார்வைகள் பதிப்பற்றிய குறித்துக் கூறுவதாக இருந்தனர். அதிக புகழ்பெற்ற நேரத்தில் விளக்கம் இல்லாதது. இப்பக்கானத்தில் குறிப்பிட்டுச் செலுத்தும் வைக்குப் பார்வை வருகிறது. அவர்கள் அல்லது வெளிப்படையிலான விளக்கம் வாழ்கிறார்கள்.

இல்லாத பித்திகள் காட்சிகள் காட்சியை குறிப்பிட்டு குறித்துக் பதிப்பிட்டு 14 ஆம் வருடத்தில். இவ்வருடா பல்லூரில் பிப்பர்கள் அறிந்தது. நான்கு நாட்டிலிருந்து பார்வைகள், புகழ்பெற்ற பிப்பர்கள் காண்பர்கள், காண்பர்கள், அறிந்தவர்களின் புகழ்பெற்று காட்சிகளின்றி அல்லது மூலம் பார்வைகள் காண்பர்கள் காண்பர்கள். இல்லாத பிப்பர்கள் விளக்கம் பார்வைகளை காண்பர்கள் காண்பர்கள். நாதகத்திலிருந்து காண்பர்கள் காண்பர்கள், காண்பர்கள், அறிந்தவர்களின் புகழ்பெற்று காண்பர்கள் காண்பர்கள் இவ்வருடா புகழ்பெற்று பார்வைகள்.
காந்தர் ஆசிரியர் 'ஆஞ்சுதிமலா' தாயிர் கூறும் கிருத்தகாலகத்தில் இன்றும் காட்சியும், இப்போது பதிலிருந்து பெரியவாகும். அலங்காரமல்லா பாதிக்காரரின் கதிரில் ஆவியின் நோய், ஆனார் விளக்கம் துரத்தக்கதனாக, பாலாகையும் அல்ல பால்சறையும் பகிர்ச்சிக்கும் பெருமையும், பால் பயங்கார்கள் பதிலிருந்து பெரியவாகும். இந்த கிருத்தகாலத்தில் ஆன்டு பொழுதுபலி, ரசியா பாலார் விளையாட்டுகளில் பால்சறையும் பகிர்ச்சிக்கும் பெருமையும், பால் புதிய கிருத்தகாலில் படிகைக்கும் நையக்கும் வகட்டு வகட்டு காலமாகல் விளையாட்டு.
விளையாட்டுப்பாடுகளை காண்பவேண்டும். இதற்கு குறிப்பிட்டல் போன்ற அதிகாரப்பூர்வ பாட்டை பொறுத்து; பின்னர் அவ்வூரைச் சிக்கலாட்டும் தொகுதிகளின் சீட்டு விளக்கம்போன, இது சிறிய புகழ்முன் அமர்த்தப்பெறுகின்றது. இவ்வகை விளக்கப்படும் போது காரணமாக செய்யப் பயர்பெறுகிறது; இவ்வகைப் பயன்பாடுகள் சிக்கலாக பயன்படும் செய்திகளும் பயன்படுகின்றன.

சான்றல நன்றிக்கையும் உடன் பெறும் இளவுற்றைகள் ஓரும் போன்று போன்றுகள் விளக்கத்துக்கு புலம் விளக்குவரலாம். இங்கு சான்றல நன்றிக்கைகளை இந்தியா நன்றிக்கையாக நிறுவும் கருவிகளுடன், பானை கருவிகளுடன், வழக்கங்களுடன், விளக்கம் வழங்கியுள்ளதற்காக உடன் பானை அரித்து பார்க்கவும்.

சிக்கலாக விளக்கத்துக்கு பயன் பெறுவது, போட்டை மறைக் காட்டல் பிள்ளையாருடன், காண்பக நன்றிக்கைகள் ஓரங்கள் விளக்கம் வழங்க வேண்டும். காண்பக நன்றிக்கைகள் அதிகமானால் செய்யப்படும் விளக்கம் வழங்குவது உண்டு வருவது வேண்டும்.

முதல் குற்றங்களின் பட்டியலில் பதிவு பெற்று பொருள் வழிகாட்டிவும்.

சித்திரை
16.3.2000

சிற்றூர்க் பா. புரேக்கணேஸ்வரம்

(viii)
COMMENDATION

I was delighted to go through Shri S Sankaranarayanan’s scholarly work on the sahitya of Uttukkadu Venkatasubba Iyer’s Kamakshi Navavarana Kritis.

Venkatasubba Iyer, who is believed to have lived in the latter part of the 17th century, was a great vaggeyaíkara of the order of the Musical Trinity. A versatile poet and nadopasaka, he composed hundreds of compositions in Tamil on Sri Balakrishna, which are collectively known as "Raasa Gaanam". That he has also composed a group of Navavarana Kritis came to be known only recently.

The Kamakshi Navavarana group consists of 14 kritis. They are in ancient ragas like Nadasamakriya and Punnagavarali, classical rakti ragas like Kalyani and Shanmukhapriya, and mangala ragas like Surati and Madhyamavati. One kriti is in the not so well-known raga Balahamsa. Besides the familiar Adi and Misra Chapu talas, the composer has also employed difficult talas like Kanda Dhruva, Kanda Mathya and Sankeerna Mathya. All but one kriti have madhyama-kala passages in pallavi, anupallavi and charana, and one kriti has chitta-swaras, and the last kriti has three samarshis charanas. Thus, Venkatasubba Iyer was perhaps one of the earliest composers in Sanskrit who adopted a style combining these characteristics. Needless to say, all the kritis in the group, like his Tamil compositions, are musical pieces of outstanding quality, and are worthy of inclusion in the repertoire of Carnatic musicians.

In Carnatic music great importance is attached to the sahitya of the kritis from the musical point of view. This is because the sahitya of the compositions of great vaggeyaíkaras indicate the mood in which the raga is to be
presented. A good understanding of the meaning, import and significance of the sahitya is absolutely essential on the part of the exponent to invest the music with the appropriate bhava, and to transmit the emotion of the song to the listeners. Such an understanding also helps in the correct pronunciation and articulation of the lyrics while rendering the songs.

It is in this musical context I especially admire Shri Sankaranarayanan’s Study of Kamakshi Navavarana Kritis. The sahitya is in classical Sanskrit, a language with which not many musicians and listeners are familiar. Besides, the subject-matter of the kritis is Mother Goddess as embodied in the Srichakra, and the composer has included many particulars of the Avaranas in the respective kritis that have much esoteric significance. Thus, even a knowledge of Sanskrit would be of limited help in understanding the kritis. Sankaranarayanan has given crystal clear meaning of the sahitya with illuminating foot-notes and explanations wherever required. In addition to an informative General Introduction, he has provided an introductory note to each of the songs giving its salient features, followed by a transcreation of the sahitya.

I firmly believe that the Study would immensely benefit musicians, music teachers and students as well as listeners.

In my opinion, the author of the Study has made a notable contribution to the cause of Carnatic music. His is a pioneering work; to my knowledge, no one else has so far undertaken a study of the kritis under reference.

Any Trust, Academy, Board or organisation that comes forward to help its publication and propagation would be doing a singular service to Carnatic music.

I wish all success to Sankaranarayanan in this endeavour.

Chennai
16 March 2000

SEMANGUDI R. SRINIVASA IYER
Critical
APPRECIATION

Shri S. Sankaranarayanan, in his 'Uttukkadu Venkatasubbaier's Kamakshi Navavarana Kritis: A Study of the Sahitya', has compiled fourteen Sanskrit kritis of the composer relating to an esoteric form of worship of Goddess Kamakshi of Kancheepuram according to Sreevidya Tantra. He takes up an explication of the technical terminology, esoteric details of worship and the composer's expertise in the theory and practice of the Sreevidya Tantra. He draws upon immediately relevant authorities such as Lalitopakhyana and Lalita Sahasranaman for documentation, wherever appropriate. In addition to an informative Introduction and a Note on Sreeshakra, the author has provided an introductory note to each song, followed by the text in Devanagari and Roman Diacritical scripts and a free translation in English.

The author has displayed both erudition and skill in the organization of the text and its import. He is well equipped for the task he has undertaken. The book is useful to the devotees of Sreevidya, musicians and musicologists.

I heartily congratulate Shri Sankaranarayanan on the painstaking and systematic work he has carried out on the Kamakshi Navavarana Kritis.

DR. R. SATHYANARAYANA
Mahamahopadhyaya Rashtrakhooshana
Director, 'Kalasarasvati'
President, Indian Music Congress

Mysore
5 August 1999

(xi)
FOREWORD

The discovery of the musical compositions of Tallappakkam Annamacharya, Uttukkadu Venkatasubbaiah and Maharaja Swati Tirunal during the 20th century made a major impact on South Indian music as thousands of musical forms of an amazing variety and range saw the light of the day for the first time. In fact, Carnatic music started flowing along new channels and there was a welcome expansion of its scope.

Among the three giants, Venkatasubbaiah stands in a class by himself. It is a pity that the biographical details of this master composer are scanty. He may have lived in the middle of the eighteenth century, since his elder brother Kattu Krishnayya was a musician in the court of the Tanjore ruler Pratapa Simha who ruled from 1739 to 1763. One book shows his period as 1700-1765.

Venkatasubbaiah devoted his whole life to singing about the dancing Krishna, Nartana Gopala, at Uttukkadu. He lived a lonely, ascetic life, did not marry, and had no students. But for the late Nidamangalam Krishnamurti Bhagavatar, his compositions would have remained a sealed book.

The poet composed various types of kirtanas in Sanskrit and Tamil but he did not restrict himself to this musical form. His oeuvre also comprises other types of compositions such as Tillana and Ragamalika. And he was the first to compose a set of 14 Navavarana Kirtanas on Goddess Kamakshi. This fact was not known till Krishnamurti Bhagavatar published the kirtanas with notation in 1989. He did not, however, furnish their meaning.

Srividya mysticism believes that there are several supernatural powers which could be obtained by contemplating on the minor goddesses in the outer enclosures of the citadel, in the centre of which is seated the Supreme Goddess who is the embodiment of
all powers. Genuine devotees are warned against being sidetracked by the acquisition of supernatural powers and missing the contemplation of the all-powerful and blissful divine Mother who alone can give deliverance from all evil and sorrow that afflict mankind, and give eternal beatitude.

Prasthana-traya of Srividya

The Lalita Sahasranama Stotra forms the latter part of Sri Lalitopakhyana contained in the Brahma Purana and was related by Hayagriva to Agastya. While Upasana of the Srichakra, japa of the Panchadasakshari Mantra and the practice of Kundalini Yoga constitute the Tantric side of the Srividya tradition, the Sahasranama represents the devotional or bhakti side of the Sampradaya.

The 'Prasthana-traya' of Srividya includes the celebrated commentary on Lalita Sahasranama—'Saubhgya Bhaskara', the 'Varivasya Rahasya' and the 'Setu Bandha'—of Bhaskara Raya Makhin (Bhasurananda Natha).

The Srichakra

The Srichakra is a unique Yantra, a mystical diagram believed to possess magical or occult power. Yantras are intended as a chart or machine to stimulate inner visualization or meditation. The spiritual ascent of the worshipper is from the circumference inwards, the highest states being those closest to the centre. A typical yantra is the Sriyantra consisting of an outer frame composed of straight lines indented on the four sides to form a regular pattern. The frame encloses an arrangement of concentric circles and stylized lotus petals surrounding a series of nine intersecting triangles—four pointing upwards symbolizing the Siva principle, and the remaining five pointing downwards symbolizing the Sakti principle—the whole culminating in a central point (Bindu) which is the eternal, undifferentiated principle, Brahma, or the polar axis seen from above. In Tantricism, the Bindu represents the point of concentration of all creative forces, while the nine triangles signify primitive revelations of the Absolute. We have different
Yantras for Ganapati, Sudarsana, Sarabha, Subrahmanya, Hanuman and Chamundi.

The Navavarana Kritis

Those who wish to worship Goddess Ambika in the form of Srichakra must worship the nine chakras contained in it. The Bindu, the trikona, the ashta kona, the inner ten konas, the outer ten konas and the fourteen konas of each chakra are called ‘Avarana’ or enclosure. The esoteric meaning contained in the Kamakshi Navavarana Kritis of Venkatasubbayar has been explained by Shri Sankaranarayanan in his Preface.

Sankaranarayanan has rendered a unique service not only to Carnatic music but also to Srividya by writing this Study of the Sahitya of Venkatasubbayar’s Kamakshi Navavarana Kritis. I have read some of his articles published in the Bhavan’s Journal and other publications and find that he is an earnest and knowledgeable person in Carnatic music. He has a sound knowledge of Sanskrit too, without which one cannot even dream of giving the meaning of the Navavarana Kritis. Venkatasubbayar’s command over Sanskrit is breathtaking, but the language used by him in many places is abstruse, as it ought to be, as the subject is esoteric. Sankaranarayanan is fully conversant with Srividya lore, particularly the Navavarana part of it. He has given crystal clear meaning of the sahitya of the kirtanas with illuminating foot-notes. The original text has been furnished in the Devanagari script (accompanied by transliteration in Roman script). The Notes that he has provided at the beginning of the discussion of each kriti are lucid and cover the whole gamut of the Avarana under reference. The Study would help musicians as well as rasikas appreciate the greatness of the sahitya and the music of the Kamakshi Navavarana Kritis.

I warmly congratulate him on his sincere and fine effort.

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Chennai
January 26, 1998

(xiv)
CONTENTS

Preface .............................................. (i)

Commendation ....................................... (vi)

Critical Appreciation ............................... (xi)

Foreword .............................................. (xii)

1. Introduction .................................... 1

2. Invocation
   Kriti 1 : Sri Ganesvarah .......................... 11

3. Dhyana
   Kriti 2 : Vanchhasi yadi ......................... 18

4. 1st Avarana
   Kriti 3 : Santatam aham seve .................... 23

5. 2nd Avarana
   Kriti 4 : Bhajasva Sri ............................ 29

6. 3rd Avarana
   Kriti 5 : Sarvajiva dayapare ..................... 34

7. 4th Avarana
   Kriti 6 : Yoga yogesvari ......................... 40

8. 5th Avarana
   Kriti 7 : Nila lohita ramani ..................... 48
9. 6th Avarana
   Kriti 8 : Sadanandamayi .... 58
   Kriti 9 : Sadanandamayi .... 68
      (Alternative Kriti)

10. 7th Avarana
    Kriti 10 : Sakalaloka nayike .... 74

11. 8th Avarana
    Kriti 11 : Sankari Sri .... 83

12. 9th Avarana
    Kriti 12 : Natajana kalpavalli .... 93
    Kriti 13 : Srichakramatangini .... 100
         (Alternative Kriti)

13. Concluding Song
    Kriti 14 : Haladharanujam .... 113
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roman</th>
<th>Devanagari</th>
<th>Roman</th>
<th>Devanagari</th>
</tr>
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INTRODUCTION

Navarātri is celebrated as a festival for nine days from the 1st of the light half of Āsvina (September-October).

In the South it is celebrated to mark the triumph of Goddess Lalitā over Mahiṣāsura and other demons. In that region, music concerts are held in the evenings on the nine days as a form of worship of the Mother, in addition to the usual pūjā, etc. Traditionally, kṛti-s (musical compositions) on the Mother in Her many manifestations are rendered on those days, particularly the Kamalāmbā Navāvarāṇa Kṛti-s composed for this purpose by Muttusvāmī Dīksita (1775-1835). There is another set of Navāvarāṇa Kṛti-s, which is not widely known. This is the group of Kāmākṣī Navāvarāṇa Kṛti-s composed by Uttukkadu Venkatasubbaier, long before Dīksita composed Kamalāmbā Navāvarāṇa Kṛti-s. Both the sets of Navāvarāṇa Kṛti-s are on the Mother Goddess as embodied in Śrīcakra.

Unlike Navāvarāṇa Pūjā rendering of Navāvarāṇa Kṛti-s does not call for any imuanon; anyone who has learned the kṛti-s can render them. And if that person has an understanding of the meaning of the kṛti-s, particularly the significance of the terms and expressions used therein, he/she will have an elevating experience.
Uttukkadu Venkatasubbaier

Not much authentic information is available on the life of Venkatasubbaier. What we do know is sketchy and is based on legends. He is believed to have lived in the latter part of the 17th century. It is said that he was born in Uttukkadu*, a village 12 km south of Kumbhakonam in Tanjavur District of Tamilnadu, in the Tamil month of Āavani (August-September) in the asterism of Maghā, that when he was 21 he was blessed with the darśana of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, his iṣṭa devatā (deity of choice) and that he attained jala-samādhi in the Narmada River when he was 32, in the Tamil month of Aippasi (October-November), again when the asterism was Maghā.**

He was a mystic, poet, vāggeyakāra and practitioner of yoga. He remained a celibate all his life. He is believed to have spent most of his time in meditation on the Divine Mother as residing in the Śrīcakra, and in singing and dancing in ecstasy before his favourite deity, the Kāliya-nartana Kṛṣṇa, at the Uttukkadu temple. He was an adept in Nātya Śāstra too, as may be seen from his exquisite Padams (compositions for dance) which almost bring before

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* According to the sthala purāṇa the name of the place in Sanskrit was Dhenu-śvāsa-puram, or 'Mūccukkādu' in Tamil. In course of time, it became Uttukkadu.

** Some scholars believe that Venkatasubbaier lived for 65 years and attained samādhi in 1765.
our eyes Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the lad, in all His playful pranks at Brindavan.

It is also said that he was powerfully drawn to Śrīvidyā Rājagopāla, the deity at the Mannargudi temple, who is worshipped both as Viṣṇu and Śrīvidyā. A Śrīcakra is consecrated there as in the Kāmākṣī temple in Kāncīpuram.

Dr Sulochana Pattabi Raman, noted musician and musicologist of Chennai, has the following to say about Venkatasubbaier:

"Uttukkadu Venkatasubbaier's īṣṭa devatā was Kāliya nartana Kṛṣṇa on whom he has composed a large number of psongs, mostly in Tamil. He has also composed songs on Gaṇeṣa, Muruga, Śiva and Rāma.

"Many will be pleasantly surprised to know that the popular wedding song ‘Gaurī kalyānam Vaibhogame’ is Uttukkadu’s creation.

"The compositions of Venkatasubbaier are an epitome of musical, rhythmic, lyrical and devotional excellence. The immeasurable variety in his songs, composed in mellifluous Tamil and majestic Sanskrit, is truly remarkable. A dancing deity being his inspiration, his compositions reflect the lilt, rhythm and joy associated with dance. The songs also have a number of colkattu-s interspersed with solfa syllables and very endearing lyrics.”
Kāmākṣī Navāvaraṇa Kṛti-s

The Navāvaraṇa Kṛti-s, as the title suggests, are on Śrī Kāmākṣī, the presiding deity at the Kāṇcīpuram temple. In these kṛti-s She is pictured as residing in the Śrīcakra, particularly in the Bindu, the central point of the Śrīcakra*. 

The kṛti-s are in Sanskrit. Venkatasubbaier's style is distinct and unique. He has used only simple words but they are suggestive and significant. The prāsa and other prosodic refinements that we find in the kṛti-s testify to his command over the language and gift of poesy. Though the kṛti-s deal with abstract matters of symbolic significance, they brim with devotion. “I take refuge under you” and “protect me” are the refrains in all kṛti-s.

The musical structure is pleasing and vividly portrays the rāga bhāva. Most of the kṛti-s are in the slow tempo with short passages in the medium tempo. He has dextrously embellished the songs with jati-s and citrasvaram-s; the concluding kṛti has three samaśti caraṇa-s. He was thus one of the early composers, particularly in Sanskrit, to adopt a style of this kind.

To quote Dr Sulochana Pattabi Raman again: “His Navāvaraṇa Kṛti-s are singular. Couched in lyrical

* See the short note on Śrīcakra given at the end of this section. It is not a full-scale description of the Śrīcakra. Rather, it is intended to help the interested understand the concepts and terms that occur in the Navāvaraṇa Kṛti-s. It also gives an overview of the Śrīcakra.
verses, they give a graphic description of the Śrīcakra. The essence of the theme of the kṛti group is his total surrender to the Mother and earnest pleas for Her grace. The music of the kṛti-s sparkle with embellishments—rhythm and rhythm outshine each other.

"Altogether, the Navāvaraṇa Kṛti-s, like his other compositions, create an ambience of happiness, devotion and spirituality, which is the crying need of the hour".

The group of kṛti-s contains an Invocation, a Dhyāna (meditation) Kṛti, followed by 12 kṛti-s — a kṛti each on each of the nine Āvaraṇa-s (with two kṛti-s each on the sixth and the ninth Āvaraṇā-s). It concludes with a piece addressed to Śrī Akhilāṇḍeśvarī but the song is on Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the composer’s īsta devatā.

The particulars of the kṛti-s are:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Kṛti No.</th>
<th>Beginning words of the Kṛti</th>
<th>Rāga</th>
<th>Tāla</th>
<th>Avaraṇa and the day of Navarātri.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Śrī Ganeśvaraḥ</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Invocation</td>
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<td>Dhyāna</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Śuddhasāveri</td>
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<td>Ānandabhairavi</td>
<td>Khaṇḍa Tripūṭa</td>
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<td>Balahaṃsa</td>
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<td>Hindola</td>
<td>Saṅkirta Maṭhya</td>
<td>6th</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sadānandamayi</td>
<td>(Alternative Kṛti)</td>
<td>Hindola</td>
<td>Khaṇḍa Maṭhya</td>
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<td>Punnāgavarāli</td>
<td>Ādi</td>
<td>9th</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Śrīcakramāṅtāṅgini</td>
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<td>Suraṭi</td>
<td>Ādi</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Haladharaṇu jam</td>
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<td>Maṇīrāṅgu</td>
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<td>Concluding song</td>
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NOTE ON ŚRĪCAKRA

_Tantra_ is a _śāstra_ founded to guide a _sādhaka_ (seeker) to meditate upon the Transcendental Absolute _Brahman_ and eventually to identify himself with it. Since, in the initial stages, it is not possible for a _sādhaka_ to meditate on a formless and nameless Being, the _Tantra Śāstra_ has prescribed methods of worshipping a figure with a form and name. _Yantra_ is conceived as the form-pattern of the figure, and _mantra_, its sound body. _Cakra_ is another name for _yantra_. A _yantra_ has all the powers of the deity it represents.

A specific _yantra_ and a _mantra_ are prescribed for worshipping each deity. Of all the _yantra_-s the _Śrīcakra_, which is the abode of _Śrī Lalitā_ or _Mahātripurasundarī_, is the most celebrated one for, according to the _Tantra Śāstra_, any deity can be worshipped through the _Śrīcakra_.

Worshipping a deity through a _yantra_ is abstract and hence difficult, as compared to worshipping through an image or an idol. However, it is said, with the guidance of a _guru_ and backed by one’s sincere practice, one can advance in one’s _sādhana_, and can gradually switch over from external worship to ‘mental’ worship and eventually to ‘inner’ worship.

_Śrīcakra_ symbolises the process of descent of the Supreme Being into multitudinous forms. More aptly
put, it is the process of the 'objectification' of the Transcendental Brahman into beings with forms and names. Tantra Šāstra, like the doctrine of Advaita, holds that the Self, divested of its veiling body and mind, is itself the Absolute. Accordingly, by delineating the process of descent of the Brahman, the Tantra Šāstra guides the upāsaka to mentally traverse in the reverse direction by removing the layers of veils one after another, and eventually achieve the goal, namely, unfoldment of the Self.

The core of Śrīcakra is the Bindu and it is enclosed by nine Āvarana-s or veils that stand for successive lower levels of consciousness. The Śrīcakra (see the diagram given at the end of this section) consists of a series of nine triangles—five triangles with the apex downwards and four triangles with the apex upwards—superimposed around the Bindu. These nine triangles are surrounded by two circles of petals, one with eight petals and the other with sixteen petals. Outside these circles of petals, there are three circles beyond which, at the outermost, is a rectangular enclosure of three lines with four gates or entrances, one each on the four sides.

The following are the nine cakra-s of the Śrīcakra, from the outermost to the Bindu:

1st : There is a square (Caturaśra) of three lines opening out in the middle of each side as gates. This is called Bhūpura. The space between the
श्री चक्षुम्
Bhūpura and the three circles (Trivalaya) is the first cakra, the Trailokyamohana Cakra.

2nd: The Sarvāśāparipūraka Cakra, consisting of 16 petals (Ṣoḍaśadala).

3rd: The Sarvasamkṣobhaṇa Cakra, which consists of 8 petals (Aṣṭadala).

4th: The Sarvasaubhāgyadāyaka Cakra, which is made up of 14 triangles (Caturdaśāra).

5th: The Sarvārthasādха Cakra, having 10 (outer) triangles (Bahirdaśāra).

6th: The Sarvarakṣākara Cakra consisting of 10 (inner) triangles (Antaradaśāra).

7th: The Sarvarogahara Cakra which has 8 triangles (Aṣṭakoṇa).

8th: The Sarvasiddhiprada Cakra, also known as the Primary Triangle or Yoni Mudrā (Trikoṇa) and,

9th: The Sarvāṇandamaya Cakra, the Bindu.

Each Āvarana has its specific group of Yogini-s, Manovṛtti (mental activity/attitude), Cakreśvāri, group of Śakti-s and Mudrā Devatā-s and they have specific names. (These particulars are given below the diagram of the respective Āvarana-s). The composer has incorporated many of these names in the relevant kṛti-s.

The Śricakra as a whole is the abode of the Mother; the Yogini-s and Śakti-s and Mudrā Devatā-s
stationed in the Āvarāṇa-s are Her own emanations and their functions and powers are limited or conditioned by the stage or descent (level) of consciousness at which they are located. It follows that when the upāsaka worships these parivāra devatā-s (goddesses at the peripheries) he in fact worships the Supreme Goddess only.
Invocation

ŚRĪ GAṆEŚVARAḤ

Venkatasubbaier, before he begins the Navāvaraṇa Kṛti group, invokes the blessings of Śrī Gaṇeṣa for the success of his venture.

Since Navāvaraṇa is a component of Śrīvidyā Upāsanā, the composer very meaningfully declares in the pallavi (opening stanza) itself that Śrī Gaṇeṣa is pleased by Śrīvidyā Upāsanā—Śrīvidyopāsana modaka'.

Having referred to Navāvaraṇa (Śrīcakra), he touches upon a detail of the Gaṇeṣa Yantra. In the inner Śaṭkoṇa (hexagon) ĀVARANA of this yantra are stationed six vighnanaẏaka-s (senāṇāyaka-s) or commanders of Gaṇeṣa’s army), namely Āmoda, Pramoda, Sumukha, Durmukha, Arighna (Avighna) and Vighnakartā. Gaṇeṣa is the over-all captain or Supreme Commander of these senāṇāyaka-s. He is also the leader of the celestials (vrndāraka). Venkatasubbaier therefore addresses Śrī Gaṇeṣa (in the caraṇa of the kṛtī) as ‘Āmoda-pramoda-senānāyaka-nāyakavara vrndāraka’ (Cf. ‘Āmodaśca pramodaśca sumukho durmukhastathā, vighnāśca vighnakartā ca śadete vighnanāyakāḥ’, Lalitopākhyāna XXIII. 81).

‘Anala-sāla-antargata-vighna-yantra-haraṇa’ and ‘Viṣaṅga bhūtihara’. These refer to an episode in Śrī
Lalitā’s battle with Bhaṇḍāsura. At Her command, Her two ministers, Daṇḍinī and Mantrinī, engaged in battle Viṣaṅga and Viṣukra (brothers of Bhaṇḍāsura) who had set up a great yantra called Jayavighna.

Lending support to Śrī Lalitā’s ministers, Śrī Ganeśa located the Jayavighna Yantra, secretly placed somewhere in the enclosure, and destroyed it. (‘Anala-sāla-antargata-vighna-yantra-haraṇa’.) By this act, He also removed the fear caused (to Śrī Lalitā’s army) by Viṣaṅga—‘Viṣaṅga bhīti hara’ (Cf. Lalitopākhyaṇa XXIII. 74-75,* and ‘Mahāgaṇeśa-nirbhinna-vighna-yantra-praharṣitā’—Lalitā Sahasraṇama 78.)

(The contextual meaning of ‘janamukha’ in pallavi is not clear. Is it ‘janasukha’?)

* Antare vahni sālasya bhramandantāvalānanah
Nibhram kutracillagnum jayavighnāṃ vyakrayat || ||
Sa devo ghora nirghāta niṣavairdanta pānaiḥ ||
Kṣanācchūrṇkaroti sma jayavighnā mahāśilām. || 55 ||

(The elephant-faced lord, moving about within the fire-chamber, saw the Jayavighna yantra secretly kept somewhere there. Hitting it with his tusk He pulverized it instantly.)
श्री गणेश्वरः

षणमुखप्रिय रागः

आदि तालः

पल्लवि

श्रीगणेश्वर जय जगदीश्वर, सेवित जन मुख वरदाभयकर,
श्रीविवेकोपासनमोदक सदानन्द चिन्मयाकर (श्री)

अनुपल्लवि

याग योग फलकारक, पश्वायतन प्रपूजा नायक,
रागरहित, मानसिक वाचिक कायिक धर्मांदि फल दायक,
एकदन्त, गिरिराजसुतासुत, हिरण्य मणिकुंडल, श्रोभकर,
श्रीकर, यामिनीकरशेखर, हितकर दानवकुलभीकर, जय (श्री)

चरणः

अनलसाल अन्तर्गतविभ्रमन्त्वकरणदत्तसुन्दर,
मनसिज कोटि पराभव, बकुलमालिकाभरकपन्नवर,
धन कनक वाहनाचैश्रयदायक, द्वासागर,
विनत सुसुनिगण, जय जय घोष वेद पारावार विहार,
धनसमान सेनालहरीयुत गजमुख, विशेष भीतिहर, जय
कान्तिसुन्दर, तुप्पलिकरताण्डव, कोटिदिवाकर स-मानसनिम कोटिकोटिहरम्बनायक, द्वाकर, आ-
मोद प्रमोद सेनानायक नायकवर वृंदारक, जय जय (श्री)

13
ŚRI GANEŚVARAH

Ṣaṃmukhapriya Rāgaḥ Ādi Tālah
Pallavi

Śrī Gāṇeśvara jaya jagadīśvara,
Sevita-janamukha, varadābhayakara,
Śrīvidyopāsana-modaka, sadānanda, cinmayākāra
(Śrī)

Anupallavi

Yāga-yoga-phala-kāraka, pañ -
Cāyatana-prapūjā-nāyaka,
Rāga-rahita, mānasika-vācika-
Kāyika-dharmādi-phala-dāyaka,
Eka-danta, giri-rāja-sutā-suta,
Hiranya-maṇi-kundala, śobhakara,
Śrīkara, yāminikara-śekhara,
Hitakara, dānava-kula-bhikara, jaya
(Śrī)

Caranaḥ

Anala-sāla antargata-vighna-
Yantra-harana-danta-sundara,
Manasija-koti-parābhava, bakula-
Mālikābharaṇa-kandhara,
Dhana-kanaka-vāhanādi-aivaryā-
Dāyaka, dayā sāgara,
Vinata-sura-muni-gaṇa-jaya jaya ghoṣa,
Veda-pārāvāra-vihāra,
Ghana-samāna-senā-laharīyuta,
Gajamukha, viśaṅga-bhūtikara, jaya
Kānti-sundara, tuṇḍa-lola, kara
Tāṇḍava, koṭi-divākara sa-
Māna-sannibha, koṭi-koṭi-
heramba-nāyaka, dayākara, ā-
Moda-pramoda-senānāyaka,
nāyaka-vara vṛndāraka, jaya jaya (Śrī)
ŚRĪ GAṆESVARĀḤ

Oh Lord Gaṇeśa, you bestow boons on those who serve you, and free them from fear. Victory unto you, Oh Lord of the universe!

Ever in the blissful state of Pure Consciousness, you are pleased by Śrīvidyā Upāsanā.

Worshipped foremost in the Pañcāyatana Pūjā*, you make yāga and yoga fruitful, and grant rewards to those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in consonance with dharma. You are devoid of attachment.

Oh single-tusked Lord, son of Pārvatī, you are shining with golden ear-rings studded with gems, and the crescent on your crest.

While you bless your devotees with prosperity and well-being, you are a terror to the demons.

Beauteous with the fine tusk and adorned with the garland of ‘vakula’ (‘bakula’) ** flowers, you are more handsome than myriad Manmatha-s.

Oh ocean of compassion ! you are saluted by sages who loudly proclaim ‘Victory unto you’

With your beautiful tusk you destroyed the vighna-yantra placed in the fire enclosure (fire-place) and thereby removed the fear caused by Viṣṇuṇga.

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* The pūjā in which five deities are worshipped—Gaṇeśa, Sūrya, Devī, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

** Mimusops Elangi (‘Maulasari’)

16
You bestow on your devotees prosperity in the form of wealth, gold, vehicles, etc.

You abide in delight in the vast ocean of Veda-s.

Oh Gajamukha, Lord of many divisions of army, you are brilliant as myriad Suns. You are merciful, and you ever remain in Bliss. Your handsome trunk swings as you dance.

Oh Auspicious Lord, you are the supreme commander of your army, of which Āmoda, Pramoda Sumukha, Durmukha, Arighna (Avighna) and Vighnakaritā are the senānāyaka-s. You are the leader of the celestials too. Victory unto you.
Kṛti 2

Dhyāna Kṛti

VĀṆCHASI YADI KUŚALAM

This is a dhyāna kṛti on Śrī Kāmākṣī. The noteworthy features of the sāhitya are:

As this kṛti is a prelude to the Navāvaraṇa (Śrīcakra) proper, the composer says that though Śrī Kāmākṣī is the presiding deity in the Kāñcipuram temple, the upāsaka is to meditate on Her as residing in the Bindu, the central point in the nine-fold Śrīcakra. He adds that the Bindu is the very essence of the Supreme Bliss.

As the Navāvaraṇa Kṛti-s are rendered as musical worship of the Mother during Navarātri, Venkatasubbaier most appropriately describes Her as an adept in teaching the art of music (‘gānakalā-avabodhana-kuśalām’).

The last two lines of the kṛti pictures Śrī Kāmākṣī as holding a gem-studded vīnā (‘māṇikya manohara vīnā dharanām’). Devotees who had darśana of Śrī Kāmākṣī in Kāñcipuram during the Navarātri festival would have observed that She is decorated, on the
Vijayadaśamī Day, with a viṇā placed on Her laps. Hence the significance of the expression ‘viṇā dharaṇām’. The composer adds that the viṇā is propitiated by celestial musicians (gandharva-s) for its melody.

‘Karunā puspita kalpa latām.’ Kalpa vrksa or kalpa taru is the wish-yielding celestial tree. Since vrksa and taru are in the masculine gender, they are applied only to Gods. In regard to Goddesses, it is denoted as kalpa vallī or kalpa latā which are in the feminine gender, literally meaning a creeper.
वाज्ञ्चसि यदि कुश्चलम्

कल्याणि रागः
पढ़वि

वाज्ञ्चसि यदि कुशले, मानसे, पर-
मानन्दरस सिन्धुमध्यमणीबिन्दु चक्र-
निलयां, निरन्तरः
ध्याये: श्री कामाक्षीम्

अनुपढ़वि

काशीनगरविहारां, शिव-
कल्याणगुणगणसारां
कमलीकल्पित निजमायया
कारणकार्यविधायकवीराम्

चरणः

निजमोदसदारमणीय शिवा-
मृत्युमाज्या, सुभागं
गजमुख गुस्सुह विनुतां, सुमुखां
करणापूणित कल्यलताम्
गानकलावशोधनकुशालां
गन्धर्वसरालम्बित सुस्वर-
माणिक्य मनोहर वीणाधरां
सुरुसुत सरसीश्चरणाम्

(वाज्ञ्चसि)
VĀÑCHASI YADI KUŚALAM

Kalyāṇī Rāgah    Ādi Tālah

Pallavi

Vāñchasi yadi kuśalam, mānasa, para-
Mānanda-rasa-sindhu-madhya-maṇi-
Bindu-cakra-nilayāṁ, nirantaram
Dhyāyeḥ Śrī Kāmākṣīṁ  (Vāñchasi)

Anupallavi

Kāṅcīnagara-vihārāṁ, Śiva-
Kalyāṇa-ghanagaṇa-sārāṁ,

Kamanīya-kalpita nija-māyayā
Kāraṇa-kārya-vidhāyaka dhīrāṁ  (Vāñchasi)

Caranāḥ

Nijamoda-sadāramāṇīya Śivā-
Mrta-nāma-japāṁ, subhaγāṁ,
Gajamukha-guruguha-vinutāṁ, sumukhāṁ,
Karunā-puspita kalpa-latāṁ,

Gānakalā-avabodhana-kuśalam,
Gandharva-samārādhita-susvāra
Māṇikya-manohara viṇā-dharaṇāṁ
Suranuta-sarasīruha-caranāṁ  (Vāñchasi)
VĀŇCHASI YADI KUŚALAM

Incessantly meditate on Śrī Kāmākṣī if you want your well-being.

She abides in the Bindu Cakra, the core of Śrīcakra, and the essence of the Supreme Bliss.

She abides in Bliss in Kāncipuram, and is an embodiment of all that are good, virtuous and auspicious. She is the cause of all the events, as also their effects. Though they are illusory, they appear charming, being the result of the play of Her own māyā. Meditate on Śrī Kāmākṣī.

Ever remaining in Her own state of Bliss, She enjoys reciting the holy name of Śiva. Her face radiates happiness. She is the embodiment of compassion, and is worshipped by Gaṇeśa and the Great Subrahmanya.

She is a past master in teaching the art of music. She holds a vīnā studded with beautiful gems. The vīnā is propitiated by celestial musicians (gandharva-s) for its melody.

Her lotus-like feet are worshipped by the gods.

Incessantly meditate on Śrī Kāmākṣī.
Particulars of the Āvarana

Avaraṇa .. Bhūpura
Cakra .. Trailokyamohana
Group of Yoginī-ś.. Prakaṭa
Manovṛtti .. Jāgrat
Cakreśvarī .. Tripurā
Group of Śakti-ś .. 10 Siddhi-ś*
8 Śakti-ś**

Mudrā Devatā .. Sarvasamkṣobhinī

*Siddhi-ś Aṇimā, Laghimā, Mahimā, Īśīta, Vaiṣṭava, Prākāmya, Bhukti, Icchā, Prāpti, Sarvakāma.

**Śakti-ś Brāhmaṇī, Māheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, Vārāhi, Māhendrī, Cāmuṇḍā, Mahālakṣmī.
Kṛti 3

1st Āvaraṇa

SANTATAM AHAṀ SEVE

This kṛti is on the 1st Āvaraṇa, which is the space between Bhūpura (the square of three lines opening out in the middle of each side as gate) and the three circles (Trivalaya).

The names of the Cakra (Trailokyamohana), the group of eight Śakti-s (Brāhmī, Māheśvari, etc.), the group of ten Mudrā Devatā-s (Sarvasamāksobhīnī, Sarvavidrāvinī, etc.), the group of Yogini-s (Prakaṭa), and Cakreśvarī (Tripurā) are mentioned in the kṛti. The composer has reiterated that Goddess Mother abides in Bindu Cakra, the core of the Śrīcakra.

Expressions such as Cintāmaṇi (gṛha), Śrīpura, Sudhā-sindhu, etc., that one would come across in the Navāvaraṇa Kṛti-s are taken from Tantric texts dealing with Samayācāra, the method and procedure prescribed for ‘inner’ worship of Śrīcakra. The votaries of Samayācāra install, so to say, the Śrīcakra in the basic centres in their subtle bodies (Mūlādhāra, etc.) and worship the Goddess there. The terms are symbolic, the significance of which is given in detail in the works
on *Tantra Šāstra*. They are not therefore to be taken literally.* A full understanding of these terms is not essential for following the *Navāvarana Kṛti*-s as no *pūjā*, internal or external, is performed while rendering the *kṛti*-s.

(Cf. ‘Cintāmaṇi grhāntasthā’ and ‘Śrīmannagara nāyikā’, LS 57 & 56).

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* See also notes on *Kṛti* 9.

LS: *Lalitā Sahasranāma.*

25
सन्ततमो अहं सेवे

विलहरि रागः

पद्धति

सन्ततमो अहं सेवे, श्री
चैलोषमोहनचक्रनिल्ये,

सर्वसिद्धिसमूहसेविते
सकलागमनुत लोक भाविते

(सन्ततमो)

अनुपद्धति

चिन्तामणिश्रीपुरमध्ये,
उत्ज्ञशोभित वेदिके,
विन्दुचक्रनिल्ये करुणालये,

ब्रह्मादिप्रमुख संमानित-
महनीय मरकतमालिके,

(सन्ततमो)

चरणः

ब्राह्मी माहेश्वरायपदेशीसमूह-
कीलित प्रथमप्राकारे, वेदसारे,
संख्यामणीविद्राविण्यादि-
दशसमुद्रागणसज्जुते,
रम्यनियुपादि चर्केर्मरि,
राजराजेश्वरि, शिवकामेश्वरि

लङ्कमान शतयष्टिका रत्-
मालिनि, प्रकटयोगिनि

(सन्ततमो)
SANTATAM AHAṀ SEVE

Bilahari Rāgaḥ Ādi Tālāḥ

Pallavi

Santatam ahaṃ seve, Śrī
Trailokya-mohana-cakra-nilaye,
Sarvasiddhi-samūha-sevite,
Sakalāgama-nuta-loka-bhāvite, (Santatam)

Anupallavi

Cintāmaṇi-śrīpura-madhye, uttuṅga-
Śobhita-vedike,
Bindu-cakra-nilaye, karuṇālaye,
Brahmādi-pramukha-saṁmāṇita-
Mahanīya marakata mālike, (Santatam)

Caraṇāḥ

Brāhma-māheśvarī-ādi-aśṭa-devī-samūha-
Kīlita-prathama-prākāre, veda-sāre,
Saṁkṣobhini-vidrāvini-ādi-daśa-
Mudrā-gaṇa-sannute,
Ramya-tripurādi-cakreśvari,
Rājarājeśvari, śivakāmeśvari,
Lambamāna-śatayaśṭikā-ratna-
Mālini, prakaṭa-yogini (Santatam)
SANTATAM AHĀM SEVE

Oh Mother, I incessantly worship you.

Residing in the Trailokyamohana Cakra, you command the group of ten Siddhi-s (Aṇimā, etc.) and are praised by the Veda-s and revered by all the worlds.

Oh highly compassionate Mother, you abide in Bindu Cakra, seated on a lustrous high pedestal in the Cintāmaṇi mansion in Śrīpura, adorning a garland of emeralds presented by Brahmā and other gods.

You are guarded by the eight Devī-s (Brāhmaṇī, Māheśvarī, etc.) who are positioned in the first compound of the Āvaraṇa*. You are held in reverence by the ten Mudrā Devatā-s** (Sarvasaṁkṣobhīṇī, Sarvavidrāvīṇī, etc.)

In this Āvaraṇa you are Tripurā as Cakreśvarī (presiding deity of the Cakra), and Prakaṭa and other Yogiṇī-s.

Oh Rājarajaśvari, divine consort of Kāmeśvara (Śiva), you are the essence of Veda-s.

You are adorned by a long garland of hundred strings with pearls and precious stones.

Oh Mother, I incessantly worship you.

* According to treatises on Śrīcakra, the ten Siddhi-s (Aṇimā, etc) are posited on the outer line of the Āvaraṇa (Bhūpura); the eight Śakti-s (Brāhmaṇī, etc) on the middle line and the ten Mudrā Devatā-s (Sarvasaṁkṣobhīṇī, etc) on the inner-most line. However, as the composer says ‘kīliya prathama prākāre’, it is translated as: “...positioned in the first compound of the Āvaraṇa”.

** Daśa Mudrā-s: Each of the nine Āvaraṇa-s has a Mudrā Devatā; their names are given in the diagram of the respective Āvaraṇa. There is a tenth Mudrā, Sarvatrikhandā, which permeates the Śrīcakra as a whole. Hence daśa mudrā-s.
Particulars of the Āvaraṇa

Āvaraṇa .......... Sodaśadala
Cakra .......... Sarvāśāparipūraka
Group of Yoganī-s .. Gupta
Manovṛtti .......... Svapna
Cakreśvarī .......... Tripureśvarī
Group of Śakti-s .. Kāmākarṣini (16)
Mudrā Devatā .......... Sarvavidrāviṇī

* Śakti-s/Nityakalā Devī-s

Kāmākarṣini, Buddhākarṣini, Ahankārākarṣini, Śabdākarṣini,
Sparśākarṣini, Rūpākarṣini, Rasākarṣini, Gandhākarṣini,
Cittākarṣini, Dhairyaśakṣini, Smṛtyākarṣini, Nāmākarṣini,
Bijākarṣini, Ātmākarṣini, Amṛtākarṣini, Śarīrākarṣini.
Kṛti 4

2nd Āvaraṇa

BHAJASVA ŚRĪ TRIPURASUNDARĪM

This kṛti is on the 2nd Āvaraṇa. The sāhitya contains only the names of the Āvaraṇa (Ṣoḍaṣadala) and the Cakra (Sarvāśāparipūraka).

An unusual feature of the sāhitya of the pallavi is that it is in two cases or vibhakti-s. The first part is an exhortation ‘Sing the praise of Śrī Tripurasundari’ in the accusative case or dvītiyā vibhakti; the second part is an entreaty to the Goddess seeking protection, which is in the vocative case or sambodhana-prathamā vibhakti. The sāhitya-s of the anupallavi and the caraṇa are also in the vocative case, making the entreaty the burden of the song. Generally, the burden of the song is repeated after the anupallavi and the caraṇa. However, in this kṛti, what is repeated is ‘Bhajasva Śrī Tripurasundarīm’ because it happens to be the beginning of the kṛti.

The sāhitya of the latter part of the anupallavi consists of four words and only the first and the fourth words—‘Gaṇamukha-janani’ and ‘Śivamanoramani’—are in the vocative case. It is probable that, originally, the second and third words were also in the vocative case, namely, ‘Ṣaṇḍhara vadane’ and ‘Śīrītī bhuvane’ but in course of time the musicians while singing unwittingly changed them to the present words of ‘Ṣaṇḍhara vadani’ and ‘Śīrītī bhuvani’ to keep rhyme. Or, the composer himself might have used the present words to keep rhyme, for poets do enjoy such licence.
भजस्व श्री त्रिपुरसुन्दरीमू

नादनामक्रिय रागः

आदि तालः

पद्विः

भजस्व श्री त्रिपुरसुन्दरी,
पाहि, पोड़ंशदल सर्वाङ्गा-
परिपूरक चक्रेश्वरि, मामि

(भजस्व)

अनुपद्विः

निजसुधालहरि प्रवाहिनि,
नित्याकामेश्वरि
गजमुखजननि, शाश्वरवदनि,
शिशिरितभुवनि, शिवमनोरसमणि

(भजस्व)

चरणः

अतिसुन्दर स्वदंशकर-
पाणाकुशाघरणे, शशिकिरणे,
विधिहरिसुतचरणे, हार-
केयुर विरीट कनकाभरणे,
श्रुतिनिगमागमरणे, वेद-
वेदान्त वितरणे

अत्यन्तुत कमनीय फलविनम-
कुचमण्डलमण्डित हुरि

(भजस्व)
BHajasva Śrī Tripurasundarīm

Nādanāmakriya Rāgāḥ
Ādi Tālāḥ

Pallavi

Bhajasva Śrī Tripurasundarīm,
Pāhi,  śroṭāsa-dala sarvāśā-
Paripūraka-cakreśvari, māmapi (Bhajasva)

Anupallavi

Nija-sudhā-laharī-pravāhini,
Nītyā-kāmeśvari,

Gajamukha-janani, śaśadhara-vadani,
Śiśirita-bhuvani, Śīva-mano-ramaṇi (Bhajasva)

Caranaḥ

Ati-sundara savya-dakṣa-kara-
Pāśāṅkuśa-dharane, śaśikirane,
Vidhi-hari-hara-nuta-caraṇe, ṇāra-
Keyūra-kirīṭa-kanakābharaṇe,
Śruti-nigamāgama-ramaṇe, veda-
Vedānta-vitaraṇe

Atyadbhuta-kamaniya-phala-nibha
Kucamaṇḍala-maṇḍita-hāre, (Bhajasva)

32
BHAJASVA ŠRĪ TRIPURASUNDARĪM

Sing the glory of Šrī Tripurāsundari. Oh Mother, protect me too.

Oh Mother, you are the presiding deity of the sixteen-petalled Sarvāśāparipūraka Cakra.

Oh Kāmeśvari, the Eternal, you are the embodiment of Bliss, the waves of which you spread all around.

Oh Mother of Gaṇeśa, your face is pleasant as moon, and you keep the world cool and calm. You are dear to the heart of Śiva.

You hold the noose in your left hand and the goad in the right hand. Your feet are worshipped by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. You are adorned by garlands, armlets, a crown and gold ornaments.

You are delighted by the Veda-s; you bestow the knowledge of Veda-s, and Vedānta. Your bosom is adorned by a beautiful garland.

Oh Mother, protect me too.
3rd Āvaraṇa

Particulars of the Āvaraṇa

Āvaraṇa  ..  Aṣṭadala
Cakra  ..  Sarvasamkṣobhaṇa
Group of Yogiṇī-s..  Guptatara
Manovṛtti  ..  Suṣupti
Cakreśvarī  ..  Tripurasundarī
group of Śakti-s ..  Anāṅgakusumā, (8) *
Mudrā Devatā ..  Sarvākarṣini

* Śakti Devī-s:

Anāṅgakusumā, Anāṅgamekhalā, Anāṅgamadanā, Anāṅgamadanātūrā,
Anāṅgarekhā, Anāṅgavegini, Anāṅgāṅkuśā, Anāṅgamālinī.
3rd Āvaraṇa

SARVAJĪVA DAYĀPARE

This kṛti, which is on the 3rd Āvaraṇa, contains the names of the Āvaraṇa (Aśṭadala), the Cakra (Sarva-sarṅkṣobhana), the group of Yogini-s (Guptatara), the group of (eight) Śakti-s (Ananāgakusumā, etc.), and the Mudrā Devatā (Sarvākarṣini).

In the dhyāna kṛti (‘Vāńchasi yadi kuśalam’), the composer described Śrī Kāmākṣi as holding a vīnā; he has repeated it in the caraṇa (Vīnā dhārini).*

Kāmakalā in ‘Kāmakalā-pradarśini’ (in the caraṇa is a technical term of Tantra Śāstra to denote the subject-object state of the Infinite. It stands for Prakāśa and Vimarśa, i.e., Śiva and Śakti, whose union is the cause of the creation of the universe. This single harmony of Śiva-Śakti is termed Kāmakalā in Tantra Śāstra. Kāmakalā also means a portion or digit of the Primordial Desire, which caused the creation.

* See also notes on Kṛti 6.
सर्वजीव द्यापरे
शुद्धसावेरे रागः
पद्विः
सर्वजीव द्यापरे, श्रंकर-
हृदयेश्वरि, सदानन्दशिव-
वीजमन्नेश्वरि,
सर्वदा सदा त्वामेव नमामि (सर्वजीव)
अनुपद्विः
सर्वसंशोभणापदल-
पद्मचंदके श्वरि, गुप्त-
तरयोगिनि, अनंकुकुमाका-
धर्मदीपीमुखः मोहिनि, परमतन्तनेश्वरि, व्यापक भण्डासुर मदभाजि (सर्वजीव)
चरणः
आनन्दकर्षित स्थूलसूक्ष्ममय- वाक्यान्तरप्रभणपालिनि,
ध्वनय स्वप्रकाशरूपिणि,
कामकलाप्रदर्शिनि,
दीनजनरक्षिणि, सर्वकर्षिणिः महिमादिसिदिनतप्रदायिनि नानाविध चन्त्रृपिणि,
नानाविध चन्त्रविमर्शिनि गानरूपतन्त्रीसमचित- वीणायारिणि, नारायणि (सर्वजीव)
SARVAJĪVA DAYĀPARE

Śuddhasāveri Rāgah

Ādi Tālaḥ

Pallavi

Sarva-jīva-dayā-pare, Śaṅkara-Hṛdayesvari, sadānanda-Śiva-Būja-mantresvari,

Sarvadā sadā tvām eva namāmi (Sarvajīva)

Anupallavi

Sarva-saṁkṣobhaṇa-aṣṭa-dala-
Padma-cakreśvari, gupta-
Tara-yogini, anaṅga-kusumā-
Dyaṣṭa-devī-svarūpa-mohini,
Para-mantra-tantresvari, vyāpaka-
Bhaṇḍāsura-mada-bhaṇjani, (Sarvajīva)

Caraṇaḥ

Ānandākarṣita-sthūla-sūkṣma-maya-
Bāhyāntara-prapaṇca-pālini,
Jñānamaya-svaprakāśa rūpiṇi
Kāmakalā pradarśini,
Dīnajana-rakṣiṇi, sarvākarṣiṇi,
Mahimā-ādi-siddhi-nata-pradāyini,
Nānā-vidha-yantra-rūpiṇi
Nānā-vidha-yantra-vimarśiṇi,
Gānarūpa-tantrī-samanvita-
Viṇā-dhāriṇi, Nārāyaṇi (Sarvajīva)

37
SARVAJĪVA DAYĀPARE

Oh ruler of Śiva's heart, presiding deity of the Blissful Śivabīja-mantra (Pañcākṣara), you are compassionate to all living beings. I salute you only, ever and always.

You are the presiding deity of the eight-petalled Sarvasaṁkṣobhaṇa Cakra. The group of Yogiṇī-s (of the Cakra), known as Guptatara Yogiṇī-s, are your own emanations.

Oh Goddess of the mantra and tantra (word-form and pattern-form) of the highest order, and destroyer of the arrogance of the all-powerful Bhaṇḍāsura, you are enchanting in the form of the eight Devī-s (Anāṅgakusumā, etc.).

You are the protector of the entire world—internal and external, gross and subtle—which are drawn by the Bliss Supreme, the Brahman.

You reveal the dynamic aspect of the Brahman, as a portion or digit of the Desire, to objectify yourself as beings in the world. You are the self-emanating light of the Supreme Knowledge.
Oh saviour of the forlorn, you hold all the world gravitated to you. You bestow the eight siddhi-s such as Aṇimā, Mahimā, etc. to your devotees.

You assume the form of various yantra-s and enliven them too. You hold a vīnā which is endowed with strings in the form of music.

Oh Goddess Kāmākṣi, I salute you only, ever and always.
7

4th Āvaraṇa

Particulars of the Āvaraṇa

Āvaraṇa .. Caturdaśāra
Cakra .. Sarvāsaubhagyadāyaka
Group of Yoginī-ś.. Sampradāya
Manovṛtti .. Īśvaravicāra
Cakreśvarī .. Tripuravāsinī
group of Śakti-s .. Sarvasamkṣobhiniḥ, (14)*
Mudrā Devatā .. Sarvavaśaṅkarī

* Śakti Devī-s:

Sarvasamkṣobhiniḥ, Sarvavidrāviniḥ, Sarvākaraṇī, Sarvāhlādinī,
Sarvasammohiniḥ, Sarvastambhiniḥ, Sarvajrbindiḥ, Sarvavaśaṅkarī,
Sarvaraṇjiniḥ, Sarvonmādinī, Sarvārthasādhiniḥ, Sarvasamppattipūraṇī,
Sarvamantramayiḥ, Saradvandvakṣayaṅkarī.
Kṛti 6

4th Āvaraṇa

YOGA YOGESVARI

This kṛti is on the 4th Āvaraṇa.

Except the name of the group of Śakti-s, all the other particulars of the Āvaraṇa are mentioned in the kṛti. These are: the Āvaraṇa (Caturdaśakoṇa), the Cakra (Sarvasaubhāgyadāyaka), the group of Yogini-s (Sampradāya), the Manovṛtti (Īsvara (Tattva) Vicāra), and the Cakresvarī (Tripuravāsini.)

Besides denoting the Goddess as Durgā, the daughter of Matarīga muni, and as consort of Tyāgarāja (of Tiruvarur fame) residing in Kāncipuram as Ekāṃra-nātha, Venkatasubbaier characterises Her as one who is delighted by nādopāsanā (nādayoga) soaked in bhakti and jñāna.

While reverting to the pāllavi, after rendering the caraṇa, musicians join ‘yoga’ with each of the four words of ‘jñāna’, ‘bhakti’, ‘nāda’ and ‘gāna’, to make it ‘jñānayoga’, ‘bhaktiyoga’, ‘nādayoga’, and ‘gānayoga’ and finally, as ‘Śrīvidyā-jñāna-bhakti-nāda-gāna-yogesvari’. By giving scope for these compound expressions, the composer emphasizes the point, as several ācārya-s of yore have done, that jñāna without bhakti would not lead one to self-realisation. It may be noted that the composer himself was a Śrīvidyā upāsaka as also a great devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
The composer has also referred to two mantra forms of the Goddess.

He says that the Goddess is the essence of the Principle of Mahāmāyā Mantra—Mahāmāyā mantrārtha säre'. The Goddess is in the form of Mahāmāya, the powerful bijāksara (the sacred seed sound) 'Hrīṁ'. As Mahāmāya, She is the creator of Avidyā, the powerful and irresistible Ignorance which deludes even the Creator Brahmā and the learned people. (Cf. Mahāmāyā, LS 215).

The second mantra referred to in the kṛti is the Kāmakalā Mantra. In the Mantra Śāstra concerning Śakti Upāsanā, the syllable 'īṁ' (in the 'Hrīṁ' of Paṅcadasāksarī Mantra) is the root of the Mantra, and is called 'Kāmakalā'. Here 'ī' symbolises Śakti and the Bindu (·) (m) symbolises Śiva. Hence 'īṁ' represents the united form of Śiva and Śakti. Venkatasubbaier therefore pictures the Goddess as abiding in Bliss in the 'īkāra' of Kāmakalā Mantra—'Īkāra Kāmakalā mantra vihāre'. (Cf. 'Kāmakalā rūpā', LS 322).

In Her battle with Bhaṇḍāsura, Śrī Lalitā had the support of Daṇḍinī (Vārāhī) and Mantriṇī (Śyāmalā). In importance they are next only to Śrī Lalitā; indeed they are Her own most prominent emanations.

Lalitopākhyaṇa describes in great detail the attributes of Mantriṇī and Her chariot; and these are
closely related to music. Her chariot is called *geyacakra/gīti-cakra* (geya and gīti mean ‘fit to be sung’ and ‘song’ respectively); the chariot has seven steps (even as music has seven notes); and She is known by sixteen names which include *Saṅgīta-yoginī (Gīta-yoginī), Viṅavati and Vaiṅikī.*

One learned commentator on *Śrī Lalitā Sahasranāma Stotra* describes *Mantriṇī* as wearing *tātanaka-s* (ear-ornaments) made of *tālapatra* (golden palm-leaf), and holding a *viṅā*.

We have therefore reasons to infer that the composer has *Śrī Lalitā,* in Her emanation as *Mantriṇī,* in mind when he calls Her and ‘*tālapattra-kanakābhe*’. ‘*Viṅādharaṇām*’ in *Kṛti 2* and ‘*viṅādhārini*’ in *Kṛti 5* also connote *Mantriṇī.*

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LS - *Śrī Lalitā Sahasranāma.*

43
योग योगेश्वरि
आनन्दमैरवि रागः
खण्ड त्रिपुत तालः
पद्धति
योगयोगेश्वरि, त्रिपुरासिनि,
योजय भामि तव पादपदृमूले,
मुनिजनानुकूले, श्रीविधा-
(योग)
अनुपद्धति
त्यागेऽहुद्येश्वरि, प्रसिद्ध चुरुदेष्टा-
कोणेश्वरि, भोगमोक्षवर्दायकि,
सर्वसौभाग्यदायक चोकेश्वरि,
आगमादि सकल तास्वार्थरूपे,
असिद्ध मुक्तपरित्व वेदितारूपे,
नागरत्र तालपत्र कनकामे,
नतजनमनःपर कल्पायुः, शोभे,
(योग)
चरणः
संप्रदायायोगिनी परिवारे, सदाशिव-
हृदयविहारि, अम्ब्र, हंसतुलिका तत्प-
सारे, महामायामन्त्रार्थ भोगे,
एकान्त तहुः, श्री काद्रीपुरश्रेष्ठे,
पवित्रे, ताम्रवर्णाङ्ग मतज्ञमुनि पुत्रे, सुचरिते,
ईंकार कामकलामन्त्र विहारे,
ईंकार तत्तज्ञविचारे, आनन्दारधिकरण-
भावभुवनात्मकानन्द रूपे, चुरुदेष्टप्रायकारे,
योग, ज्ञानयोग, भक्तियोग,
नादयोग, गान योग, श्रीविधा-
(योग)
YOGA YOGESVARI

Ānandabhairavi Rāgaḥ            Khaṇḍa Tripuṭa Tālāḥ

Pallavi

Yoga-yogeśvari, tripura-
Vāsini, yojava māmapi tava pāda-
Padma mūle, muni-janānukūle, Śrīvidyā- (Yoga)

Anupallavi

Tyāgeśa-hrdayeśvari, prasiddha-
Caturdaśa-koneśvari,
Bhoga-moksā-vara-dāyaki, sarva-
Saubhāgya-dāyaka-cakreśvari,
Āgarnādi-sakala-sāstrārtha-rūpe,
Akhila-bhuvana-pālita-vara-pratāpe,
Nāga-ratna-tāla-patra-kanakābhe,
Nata-jana-manaḥpara-karuṇāyute, śobhe (Yoga)

Caranaḥ

Sarinpradāya-yoginī-parivāre,
Sadāśiva-hṛdaya-vihāre, Amba,
Harṁsa-tūlikā-talpa-sāre, mahā-
Māyā-mantrārtha-sāre, ekāmra-
Taru-mūle, Śrī Kāṇcipurā-kṣetre,
Pavitre, tāmra-varnāṅga-mataṅga-muni-
Putre, sucarītre,
Īkāra-kāmakalā-mantra-vihāre,
Īśvara-tattva-viśāre, ānandādyā-
Dhikaraṇa-bhāva-bhuvanātmakānanda-
Rūpe, caturdaśa-prākāre,
Yoga, jñānayoga, bhaktiyoga,
Nādayoga, gānayoga, Śrīvidyā- (Yoga)
YOGA YOGEŚVARI

Oh Goddess of yoga, particularly of nāda yoga (worship in the form of music), practised with bhakti and jñāna (devotion, and knowledge of Śrīvidyā), you are highly compassionate to the sages. Be pleased to keep (join) me also at your lotus-like feet.

Oh consort of Tyāgarāja (of Tiruvarur fame), you grant the boons of enjoyment (in this world) as well as of ultimate emancipation. As Tripuravāsinī, you are the presiding deity of the well-known Caturdaśakona Āvaraṇa and Sarvasaubhāgyadāyaka Cakra.

Embodiment of the essence of all Veda-s and Śāstra-s, you are highly compassionate to the devotees, and have the prowess to protect all the worlds. You are shining like a nāgaratna and like pure gold. You are wearing ear-ornaments made of palm leaf. Oh Mother, keep me also at your lotus-like feet.

You are seated in a pouch made of fine and soft barbs of feather of swan, the divine bird.

You are surrounded by the group of Saṃpradāya Yoginī-ś.

Oh Mother, you abide in delight in Sadāśiva’s heart.

Oh virtuous one, Mother Durgā, and daughter of sage Mataṅga of red-brown hue, you reside at the foot of ekāmra (mango) tree in the Kāṅcīpuram temple.
Surrounded by fourteen ‘prākāra-s’ (ramparts/compounds), you are in Bliss in the adhikaraṇa-s such as ānanda, etc., and in all living beings. You are the essence of Mahāmāyā Mantra; you dwell in delight in the ‘īkāra’ of Kāmakalā Mantra, meditating on ‘Īsvara-Tattva’, the Supreme Brahman.

Oh Mother, keep me also at your lotus-like feet.
Particulars of the Āvaraṇa

Āvaraṇa .. Bahirdaśāra
Cakra .. Sarvārthasādhaka
Group of Yoginī-s .. Kulottīrṇa
Manovṛtti .. Gurūpaṇsthāna
Cakreśvarī .. Tripuraśrī
group of Śakti-s .. Sarvasiddhipradā, (10)*
Mudrā Devatā .. Sarvonmādinī

* Śakti Devī-s:
Sarvasiddhipradā, Sarvasaṃpatpradā, Sarvapriyaṅkarī,
Sarvamaṅgalakārīṇī, Sarvakāmapradā, Sarvaduḥkhavimocani,
Sarvamṛtyupraśāmanī, Sarvavighnānavarani, Sarvāṅgasundarī,
Sarvasaubhāgyadāyinī.
5th Āvaraṇa

NīlaloHita Ramāṇi

This kṛti is on the 5th Āvaraṇa. The composer has incorporated the names of the Āvaraṇa (Bahirdaśāra), Cakra (Sarvārthasādhaka), the group of Yoginī-ś (Kulottirṇa), and the Mudrā Devatā (Sarvonmādini).

The fifth Āvaraṇa is exactly in the middle of the nine Āvaraṇa-ś, and the composer has perhaps intended that it should be distinct in more than one respect.

The kṛti is composed in Balahariṇsa, a rāga not often heard, and set to Khandaṇāti Dhruva Tāla (which consists of 17 akṣarakāla-ś or counts per āvarta), a variety seldom found employed in kṛti-ś. This combination makes the song a rare piece. It is also one of the long kṛti-ś in the group.

In the opening stanza itself the composer declares that the entire world is but a manifestation, an ‘objectification’, of the Absolute Brahman, which the Devī is. Says he: “The entire world comes of you, exists in you, and eventually gets dissolved in you” (‘Tvatto jagadbhavati, tvayyeva tiṣṭhati, layam gacchati’), echoing the teaching of Taittirīya Upaniṣad, III.1: “Yato
vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yatprayanti abhisarānviśanīti, tat vijñāsasva, tatbrahmēti”.

‘Kulottīrṇā’ is one of the names of Śrī Lalitā (LS 714). She is beyond the sense and sense objects; beyond the knower, the known, and the knowledge. As the embodiment of guru-śishya-parampara, She is the saviour of Her devotees.

‘Duḥkhavimocani’ (in anupallavi). She relieves Her devotees from sorrow and grief. ‘Sarvaduḥkhavimocani’ is one of the Śakti Devī-s of the Āvaraṇa.

According to Yoga Śāstra, savikalpa and nirvikalpa are the two last stages of experiences in samādhi, the deep contemplation of the Brahman, with and without attributes. Nirvikalpa samādhi is the exclusive concentration upon the Supreme Brahman, without distinct and separate consciousness of the knower, the known and the knowing, and without even self-consciousness.

In the savikalpa stage, the upāsaka is cognizant of the distinction that he is the knower, the subject, and the known (the Brahman), is the object.

The composer alludes to both the savikalpa and the nirvikalpa stages of samādhi, in the caraṇa of the kṛti.

In the ‘internal’ worship of Śricakra, the upāsaka is to visualize the Devī as seated on a throne above the Bindu, the core of Śricakra. There are five steps
(in all the four directions) that lead to the throne. These steps symbolise the five sthiti-s or stages of savikalpa samādhi, known as sāmya, laya, vināśa, adhyantarabhāva and aikya. The composer pictures this scene in the caraṇa: ‘Sāmyādi pañca sthiti saṁhāsanasthitē, mahāniya savikalpa samādhi sukha-vara bindu-pīṭha nilaye’.

In the latter part of the caraṇa Venkatasubbaier images the Goddess as abiding in the Cintāmaṇi Mansion (the Bindu), radiating the Truth of the Mahāvākyā ‘I am Brahman’ which Truth one experiences while in nirvikalpa samādhi: ‘Aham brahma tattvātmaka vitaraṇa nirvikalpa-tara cintāmaṇi madhye’.
नीललोहित रमणि

बलहसं रागः
खण्ड ध्रुव तालः

पल्लवि

नीललोहित रमणि, जय जय,
त्वस्तो जगद्भवति, त्वप्येव तिष्ठति,
लयं गच्छति, सार्वर्थसाधकचक्रेश्वरी, जय (नील)

अनुपल्लवि

श्री ललिते, कुलोत्तरीण योगिनीसमूहं
स्तुति निरते, परदेवते, वशित्व-
सिद्धिवर्धने, विधीन्द्र विनुते,
कोलाहल नवयोजन निर्भर कुञ्जम-
कलभार्तित कुच मण्डले,
सेवितमुनिजनमण्डले, अन्य-
तमस इव भवतारकवरमित्रसम-
रत्नकुण्डले, महंस्समपतु कामितार्थ-
फलदायिनि, दुःखविद्विधि
सथोन्मादिनि, शूरिनि, सरसिजमालिनि (नील)

चरणः

बहिद्रैशाराचक्रस्थितवरे, निविंदेषः-
परतत्त्वदीपिके, साम्यादि पवस्थिति-
सिद्धासनस्थिते, महनः सबिकल्य-
समाधिसुखस्वर बिनुपीठनिन्द्रे
सदावरदसंहल्य करवलये
करुणालये, काश्यपुरालये
मिहिरसमकोटि शोभुये
मूदमन्दहसितमुखे, विश्वात्मक-
हैं की सौः* बीजवर-
मन्त्रार्थ बोधके, चन्द्रमुखे
अहंकार तत्वात्मक वितरण
निर्विकल्पतर चिन्तामणिमध्ये,
सचिदानन्दपरविवे, अत्यतिशय-
गुम्फलवर तरुसमूह-
कदम्बवनमध्ये, आनन्दनृत्ये,
दृष्टिपल्लवकर कोमलधृत-
पाराकृताचित्रे, भण्डासुर-
संहार चरित्रे

(नील)

* हसं हस्स्की हस्सोः
Nīlalohita Ramānī

Balahamsa Rāgaḥ

Pallavi

Nīla-lohita-ramāṇī, jaya jaya, tvatto
Jagad-bhavati, tvayyeva tiṣṭhati,
Layarī gacchati, sarvārtha-sādhaka-
Cakreśvari, jaya

(Nīla)

Anupallavi

Śrī Lalite, kulottuṛṇa-yoginī-
Samūha-stuti-nirate, paradevate,
Vaṣitva-siddhi-varade, vidhīndra-vinute,

Kolāhala-nava-yauvana-nirbharā-kūṅkuma-
Kalabhāṅkita-kuca-maṇḍale,
Sevita-muni-jana-maṇḍale, andha-
Tamasa iva bhava-tāraka-vara-mitra-
Sama-ratna-kuṇḍale, maṅgala-sampat-
Kāmitārtha-phala-dāyini, duḥkha-vimocani
Sarvonmādini, śūlīni, sarasija-mālini

(Nīla)

Caraṇāḥ

Bahirdāśāra-cakrasthita-vare,
Nirviśeṣa-paratattva-dīpike,
Sāmyādi-paṅca-sthiti-
Simhāsanasthithe, mahāṇiya-savikalpa-
Samādhi-sukhavara-bhūd-pūrṇa-nilaye,
Sadā varada-saṅkalpa-karavālaye,
Karuṇālaye, Kāṇcīpurālaye,
Mihira-sama-koṭi-śobhayute,
Mṛdu-manda-hasita-mukhe,
Viśvātmaka haim klīṁ sauh*
Bīja-vara-mantrārtha-bodhake, candramukhe,

Aham brahma tattvātmaka-vitaraṇa
Nirvikalpa-tara-cintāmaṇi-madhye,
Saccidānanda-para-vidye, atyatiśaya-
Śubha-phala-vara-taru-samūha-
Kadamba-vana-madhye, ānanda-ñṛtye,
Dyuti-pallava-kara-komala-dhṛta-
Pāśāṅkuśa-citre, Bhaṇḍāsura-
Sarīnhāra-caritre

(Nila)

* Hsairīṁ hsklīṁ hssauḥ
Nīlalohita Ramāṇi

Oh consort of Śiva, glory to you.

The whole world comes of you, exists in you and eventually gets dissolved into you.

Oh Lalita, Supreme Goddess, you dwell in the Bahirdaśāra Āvaraṇa; you are the presiding deity of Sarvārthasādhaka Cakra. You are praised by the Kulottīrna* group of Yogini-s (stationed in the Āvaraṇa). You grant to your devotees Siddhi-s such as Vaśitva.

You are full of youthful bloom. Your bosom is anointed by vermilion and adorned by a garland of lotuses. You are served by sages.

You are seated on a throne above the Bindu Pūha, the point of Bliss of savikalpa samādhi, to attain which an upāsaka has to successively pass through the five stages of experiences of sāmya, etc. You are the lamp that sheds the light of the Supreme Truth.

You are highly compassionate and ever pleased to grant boons. You reside in Kāncīpuram. Though resplendent like a million Suns, your sweet smiling face is pleasant as moon to look at.

You are adept in imparting the essence of the Bīja Mantra “Haim Klim Sauh”* which encompasses and pervades all the mantra-s.

* Hsaim Hsklim Hssauh
The gems in your ear-ornaments resemble the Sun who saves the devotees from the misery of repeated births.

As the Mudrā Devatā, you are ‘Sarvonmādini’, the intocator of all.

Served by sages, Oh Durga, you remove your devotees’ sorrows and bestow on them auspiciousness and all the things that they desire, and make them happy.

Oh Mother Goddess and consort of Śiva, may you be victorious.

You abide in the divine Cintāmaṇi (mansion) which radiates the knowledge of the great Vedantic Truth ‘I am Brahman’. You are the Supreme Consciousness which is to be realised and experienced while in nirvikalpa samādhi.

You reside in the groves of kadamba trees that yield fruits in the form of auspiciousness.

You hold the noose and the goad in your lustrous tender hands.

You revel in the ecstasy of joyous Bliss.

Oh Mother, slayer of Bhaṅda, the demon, victory to you.
Particulars of the Āvaraṇa

Āvaraṇa .......... Antardāśāra
Cakra .......... Sarvaraksākara
Group of Yoginī-s .. Nigarbha
Manovṛtti .......... Upadeśa
Cakreśvarī .......... Tripuramālinī
Group of Śakti-s .. Sarvajñā (10)*
Mudrā Devatā .......... Sarvamahāṅkuśā

* Śakti Devī-s

Sarvajñā, Sarvaśakti, Sarvaiśvaryapradā, Sarvajñānamayī,
Sarvavyādhinivārīṇī, Sarvādhārasvarūpā, Sarvapāpaharā,
Sarvānandamāyī, Sarvaraksāsvarūpīṇī, Sarvepsitaphalapradā.
Kṛti 8

6th Āvaraṇa

SADĀNANDAMAYI

This kṛti is on the 6th Āvaraṇa.

We find in this kṛti the names of all but the Manovṛtti and the group of Śakti-s. These are: Āvaraṇa (Antardaśāra), Cakra (Sarvarakṣākara), Yogini group (Nīgarbha), Cakresvarī (Tripuramālinī), Mudrā Devatā (Sarvamahāṅkuśā) and Siddhi Devatā (Prākāmya).

The rāga chosen by the composer for this kṛti is Hindola which is well-known and popular, but the tāla and its jāti, namely, Maṭhya and Saṅkīrṇa respectively, are rare. A composition in this tāla and jāti is a test for the skill of the vāggeyakāra and of the mastery over laya of the musician. The tāla consists of 20 aksarakāla-s or counts per āvarta (cycle) in the slow tempo. The composition is also long.

In the latter part of the anupallavi, the composer has woven into the sāhitya the names of the aṣṭa-dik-pālaka-s (regents of the quarters) exactly in the order in which they are given in the Amarakośa—Indra to Iśāna.

The caraṇa begins with a reference to the coming into being of Bhaṅgāsura (‘manabhava-bhūti-sambhava’), a story not generally known.
'Bhamālinī' (in the caraṇa): 'Bhaga' means the six excellences: rulership, righteousness, glory, beauty, knowledge and detachment. It also means effort, energy, and will-power. Thus 'Bhamālinī' suggests that the Supreme Being is the abode of infinite auspicious qualities.

'Bhamālinī' is the name of one of the three Devatā-s situated on the 8th Āvaraṇa (see notes on the 8th Āvaraṇa). She is worshipped as Nityā on sukla-pakṣa-dvitiyā (second day of the waxing moon) and on krṣṇa-pakṣa-caturdaśī (14th day of the waning moon).

Vaśinī and Jayinī are two of the eight Vāg-devī-s stationed in the 7th Āvaraṇa (see notes on 7th Āvaraṇa).

The composer says in the caraṇa that the Goddess lustrously permeates in the songs on Her sung during the Navarātri festival ('geyarata nava-parvāntara bhāsini').

One peculiarity of this kṛti is that the prayer 'Protect me' ('māṁ ava') which is the burden of the song, does not occur in its usual place, the pallavi; it comes as the very last word of the kṛti.

(The story of the coming into being of Bhaṇḍāsura is given in Chapter VI of Lalitopākhyāna. After Parameśvara had reduced Kāmadeva to ashes, Citrasena, the chief of Śiva's gana-s drew a picture of}
a strange figure out of the ashes (of Kāmadeva). Śiva's sight fell on that figure and, lo and behold, it got life, and it resembled Kāmadeva in form. Prompted by Citrasena, the new-born propitiated Śiva with 'Ṣatārudrīyam'. Pleased, Śiva gave him a kingdom and sixty-thousand years of life and a boon that any enemy of his would lose half of his (enemy's) valour and strength. Looking at this scenario, Brahmā exclaimed 'bhanḍ', 'bhanḍ', meaning that the whole thing is ludicrous or absurd. Hence he came to be called Bhanḍa. Since he was born of the fire of anger of Rudra, Bhanḍa became a dānava (asura).
सदानन्दमयि

हिन्दौल रागः संज्ञीर्ण मठच तालः

पश्चिमि

सदानन्दमयि, चिन्मयि,
सदाशिवमयि, सर्वरुक्ताकरान्तरदेवशीरः
चक्रमयि, सर्वज्ञानमयि, देवि, (सदानन्दमयि)

अनुपश्चिमि

सदासेवित निगर्म्योगिनीसमूहे,
सर्वमहाधुरा प्रायकय वरदे,
सदासिनुत मुरवासव पावक
शमन नैनेन्त यादसांपति
पवन धनद ईश्वान दिशांपतये,
नारद मुनीन्द्र गन्धर्वर्गान-
रसिक मुहूदये, मधि, सदये (सदानन्दमयि)

चरणः

मनोभवभूतिसम्भव भण्डासुरच्छेदिनि,
महाप्रभादि नवनिधि फलदारिचिनि,
सनातनादि मुनिकुलपाळिनि,
त्रिपुरालिनि, निरुपमगुणशालिनि,
धनाधिप दरियय समर्पित मरकत-
मणिमयमालिनि, शिवहदयसमोदिनि,
अनाचन्तशरणागतपालिनी,
अविलागमकृतवैभवमालिनी,
वशिष्यादि पर वाङ्जय परसुति
धारिणि, भगमालिनी, मनोरम्य-चिन्तिलासिनि, जयिनि, गेयरत-
नवपवान्तर भासिनि, निकिल-लोकहितकर चिन्तामणिगृह-
वासिनि, शापमातुरजननि,
जय जय चन्द्रसूर्यनयनि, मामवा (सदानन्दमयि)
SADĀNANDAMAYI

Hindola Rāgah Saṅkīrṇa Maṭhya Tālaḥ

Pallavi

Sadānandamayi, cinmayi,
Sadāśivamayi, sarva-rakṣākara antardāśāra-
Cakramayi, sarva-jñānamayi, Devi, (Sadā)

Anupallavi

Sadā sevita-nigarbha-yoginī-samūhe,
Sarva-mahaṅkuśa-prākāmya-varade,
Sadā vinuta-sūra-vāsava-pāvaka-
Śamana-nairṛta-yādasāmpati-
Pavana-dhanada-iśāna-diśām-pataye,
Nārada-munīndra-gandharva-gāna-
Rasika-suhṛdaye, mayi, sadaye (Sadā)

Caranaḥ

Manobhava-bhūti-sambhava-Bhāṇḍāsura-cchedini,
Mahāpadmādi-nava-nidhi-phala-dāyini,
Sanātanādi-muni-kula-pālini,
Tripuramālini, nirupama-guna-śālini,
Dhanādhipa-harihaya-samarpita-marakata-
Maṇimaya-mālini, Śiva-hṛdaya-sammodini,

Anādyanta-śaraṇāgata-pālini,
Akhilāgama-kṛta-vaibhava-mālini
Vaśinyādi-para vāṁmaya-para-dyuti-
Dhārīṇī, bhagamālinī, manoramya-
Cidvilāsini, jayini, geyarata-
Nava-parvāntara-bhāsini, nikhila-
Loka-hitakara-cintāmaṇi-grha-
Vāsini, śaṃmātāra-janani,
Jaya jaya candra-sūrya-nayani, mānava (Sadā)
SADĀNANDAMAYI

Oh Devi, protect me.

You are Auspiciousness and Superior Knowledge. Existence, Consciousness and Bliss are your attributes. You are the presiding deity of the Āvarana (Antarādaśāra) and Cakra (Sarvarakṣākara).

You are attended by the group of Nigarbha Yoginī-ś (stationed in the Āvarana). You grant Prākāmya and other Siddhi-ś.

You are worshipped by the aṣṭa dik-pālaka-ś (regents of quarters), namely, Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirīti, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera andĪsāna.

You are delighted by the music of sage Nārada and gandharva-ś (celestial musicians); you are kind to me.

You destroyed the arrogance of Bhaṇḍa, the demon, who was born of (created from) the ashes of Manmatha, the Lord of Love and Desire. You give the essence of Navanidhi-ś such as Mahāpadma*.

You protect the sages such as (Sanaka, Sanandana,) Sanātana and their lineage. As Tripuramālini, you are the Cakreśvarī. Embodiment of unparalleled virtues, you are adorned by an emerald

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* One of the nine treasures of Kubera; the other eight are: Padma, Śāṅkha, Makara, Kacchapa, Mukunda, Kunda, Nīla and Kharva.
necklace presented by Kubera and Indra. You gladden the heart of Śiva.

You give protection to those who seek refuge under you. All the Veda-s proclaim your grandeur.

You revel in the delightfully pleasant state of consciousness.

You are worshipped as Nityā; you are the abode of infinite auspicious qualities.

Vaśinī, Jayinī and other Vāgdevī-s eulogise your superlative attributes.

You lustrously permeate through the songs sung during the nine-day (Navarātri) festival.

You dwell in the Cintāmaṇi mansion which bestows all that is good for the entire world. Oh Mother of Subrahmaṇya, the Sun and the Moon shine deriving your power.

Oh Devi, protect me.
Kṛti 9

6th Āvaranā

(Alternative Kṛti)

SADĀNANDAMAYI

This is an alternative kṛti on the 6th Āvarana. Like the other kṛti on the Āvarana, this also commences with the words ‘Sadānandamayi, cinmayi, sadāśivamayi’, but the rest of the sāhitya is different. The rāga is the same, namely, Hindola, but the song is set to Khandajāti Mathya Tāla (12 aksarakāla-s or counts), another rare variety of tāla.

In the other kṛti the prayer ‘mām ava’ comes at the end of the kṛti, instead of in the pallavi. In this kṛti the composer makes no prayer at all! He seems to be pleased with describing the various attributes of the Goddess!

The composer has incorporated the names of the Cakra (Svararakṣākara), group of Yoginī-s (Nigarbha), Cakreśvarī (Tripuramālīni) and Mudrā Devatā (Sarvamahāṅkuśā). The Āvarana consists of ten triangles and this is also mentioned—‘daśa-trikoṇa-yuta’.

Where does Mother Goddess reside? Lalitā Sahasranāma and Lalitopākhyāna mention several of Her abodes. The composer too has mentioned the names of many abodes in this Kṛti Group. In this kṛti he has given five, namely, Sudhāsāgara, Bindu, Kāṅcīpura, the heart of Parameśvara and Tripura.
As stated in the notes on Kṛti 3, Sudhāśāgara, Tripura, etc. are not external objects; a practitioner of Samayācāra (inner worship) identifies them, symbolically, within himself.

‘Nikhila-kalālaye’ (in anupallavi) : The term ‘kalā’ refers to the 64 branches of knowledge, as also the 10 kalā-s of Agni, 12 of Śūrya, 16 of Candra, 10 each of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra, and 16 of Sadāśiva. All these kalā-s abide in the Goddess.

‘Tripuravāsini’ (anupallavi) : Tripura or Triad comprises all things that are three-fold, such as Trimūrti-s, Triguṇa-s, the three worlds, as also the Sun, Moon and Fire. All these are the abodes of the Goddess.

The composer has also stated that the Goddess removes all doubts about the non-duality of the Brahman and that She grants the knowledge that reveals the true nature of the Brahman.

She also illumines the ‘jīva’ which is encompassed by the five ‘kośa-s’ or sheaths—‘Pañca kośa antargata prāṇa nilaya prakāśini’*. These sheaths are: anna-maya (nourishment), prāṇa-maya (physical energy), mano-maya (mind), vijñāna-maya (cognition), and ānanda-maya (bliss). The first mentioned kośa is called ‘sthūla śarīra’ (gross body), the second, the third and the fourth constitute the ‘sūkṣma śarīra’ (subtle body), and the fifth is known as ‘kāraṇa-śarīra’ (causal body).

सदानन्दमयि

हिन्दील रागः

खण्ड मठच तालः

पद्धति

सदानन्दमयि, चिन्मयि, सदाशिवमयि,
दशस्त्रिकोणयुत सर्वरश्माकरचक्रेत्थारि,

(सदा)

अनुपद्धति

सुभासागरविन्दुमध्यनिलये, निषिलकलालये,
दैत्यनिवारण अंदैतालये, काश्मीपुरालये,
सनातनज्ञानशास्त्रिप्रदाचिनि, सुखदाचिनि,
सरमेशाहदसनिवाचिनि, त्रिपुरवाचिनि,
सुवाचिनि

(सदा)

चरणः

पंचकोशान्तगत प्राणनिलयप्रकाशिनि,
निगर्भयोगिनि, त्रिपुरमालिनि, गुणशालिनि
प्रपन्थशुभद सर्वभासुभुशमुद्रासूर्यिणि,
कुञ्जरमवर्गजननि, नवनीरजननि, रज-नीकरोंखरस्चिनि, मधुलवचननिरस्चिनि

(सदा)
SADĀNANDAMAYI

Hindola Rāgah  
Khandā Mathya Tālaḥ

Pallavi

Sadānandamayi, cinmayi, sadāśivamayi,
Daśa-trikoṇa-yuta sarva-rakṣākara-cakrēṣvari

(Sadā)

Anupallavi

Sudhāsāgara-bindu-madhya nilaye,
Nikhila-kalālaye,
Dvaita-nivāraṇādvaita-ālaye,
Kāṇcīpurālaye,
Sanātana-jñāna-śakti-pradāyini,
Sukhadāyini,
Parameśa-hṛdaya-nivāsini, tripura-
Vāsini, suvāsini

(Sadā)

Caranah

Pañca-kośāntargata prāṇa-nilaya-prakāśini,
Nīgarbha-yogini, tripuramālini, guṇaśālini,
Prapañca-subhada sarva-mahāṅkuṣa-mudrā-rūpiṇi,
Kuṇjara-mukha guha janani, nava-nīraja-nayani,
Rajanikara-šekhara-raṅjani, maṇjula-vacana niraṅjani

(Sadā)

71

7
SADĀNANDAMAYI

Oh Goddess, you are Auspiciousness and Superior Knowledge. Existence, Consciousness and Bliss are your attributes.

As Tripuramālinī you are the presiding deity of Sarvarakṣākara Cakra, comprising ten triangles. The Nīgarbha and other Yoginī-s stationed in the Cakra are your own emanations.

You yourselves are the Sarvamahāṅkuśā and other Mudrā Devatā-s.

You abide in Sudhāsāgara, in the Bindu, in Tripura, and in Kāncīpuram.

You are endowed with superior virtues. You make people joyous and happy by your pleasing words.

You bestow all auspicious things to the entire universe.

The sixty-four kalā-s abide in you.

Your eyes resemble (the petals of) a newly-blossomed lotus.

You are the Mother of Gaṇeśa and Subrahmanya. You are dear to Paramēśvara who wears a crescent (on His head); and you reside in His heart.
You illumine the jīva which is encompassed by five kośa-s (sheaths).

You give the power of the Eternal and Immutable Sacred Knowledge that illumines the true nature of the Supreme Spirit.

You are the Highest Truth, the non-dual Brahman, a realisation of which dispels the false belief that the individual soul and the Supreme Reality are different.
7th Āvarana

Particulars of the Āvarana

Āvarana .. Aṣṭakoṇa
Cakra .. Sarvarogahara
Group of Yoginī-ś .. Rahasya
Manovṛtti .. Manana
Cakreśvari .. Tripurasiddhā
Group of Śakti-ś .. Vaśinī (8)*
Mudrā Devatā .. Sarvakhecarī

* Śakti Devī-s

Vaśinī, Kāmeśī, Modinī, Vimalā, Arunā, Jayinī, Sarveśvarī, Kaulinī
Kṛti 10

7th Āvaraṇa

SAKALALOKA NĀYIKE

"I seek protection from you alone" says the composer, addressing the Goddess in this kṛti on the 7th Āvaraṇa.

The kṛti contains the names of the Cakra (Sarvarogahara), the group of Yogiṇī-s (Rahasya), the Cakreśvarī (Tripurasiddhā), and Siddhi Devī (Bhukti).

It is entirely apposite that the composer should describe Mother Goddess as Vāṅgamayī in this kṛti as the 7th Āvaraṇa is presided over by the Deities of Speech (Vāgdevī-s), Vaśinī to Kaulini.*

Lalitā Sahasranāma describes Goddess Mother as Māṭṛkā-varṇa-rūpiṇī (577), meaning She is in the form of varṇa (phonemes) of the Sanskrit language. Tantra Śāstra specifies the 51 varṇa-s in Sanskrit as māṭṛkā or varṇa-māṭṛkā. All the letters together are called akṣa-mālā or garland of the varṇa, from ‘a’ to ‘kṣa’. Hence Her names ‘Māṭṛkā-varṇa-rūpiṇī, and

* There are eight Vāgdevī-s: Vaśinī, Kāmeśvari, Modinī, Vimalā, Arunā, Jayinī, Sarveśvarī and Kaulinī. They are worshipped as Rahasya-yogiṇī-s. They are also the rṣi-s for Lalitā Sahasranāma Stotramālā Mantra, for it is they who, at the command of Śrī Lalitā, selected the 1000 names of the Goddess, from among the countless ones, and recited them in the assembly presided over by Śrī Lalitā Herself.
‘Aksa-mala’, meaning Sabda Brahman. The composer has picturesquely stated this concept in the anupallavi as ‘A ka ca ta ta pa ya ra la va sa adi ksa anta aksara mayi’.

Continuing, the composer says that all great literary works extol Her greatness (Nava-rasa-alaṅkāra-kavya-nātaka-varṇite).

The third line in the caraṇa ‘Kuvalayadala nava nila śarīra…..’ could be profitably read as ‘Nava kuvalayadala nīla śarīra’.

The last line in the caraṇa ‘Hṛṁkāra Kāmeśvara bija mantra lole’: ‘Hṛṁ’ is the bijaksara mantra form of Lalitā as Bhuvanesvarī (LS 294 and 301, and Lalitā Trisati 99). It is also the bijaksara of Lalitā as Mahāmāyā (LS 215).

The Kāmarāja bijaksara is ‘klīṁ’. It denotes the icchā sakti (the Divine Force of Will) of Parabrahman.

Was the original sāhitya, therefore, ‘klūṅkāra kāmeśvara bijamantra lole’? And unwittingly transmuted to ‘hrūṁkāra…….’ later?
सकललोक नायिकेके
आरभि रागः
आदि तालः
पद्धत्विः
सकललोक नायिकेके, त्वामेव
शरणं प्रपढः
सर्वशेषगहर्चक्रमेऽऽ
सर्वानन्दमेऽऽ, मक्खलमेऽऽ
(सकल)
अनुपद्धत्विः
अ क च ट त प य र ल व शादि श्नान्त
अख्षरमयि, वाङ्ग्रयि, चिन्मयि
शुक नारद कुम्भज मुनिवर
स्तुतिदायक जनसन्तुते
नागनायक सददुद्वाग फण-
लोकवहितिधर करवल्ले,
लोकलोक संमोहितवहितकर
भुत्कसिद्विन्त पुरावल्ले,
(सकल)
चरणः
भवरोगहर्वेभवे, परमकल्याण-
गुणानिकरे,
नवरसालझार काव्यनाटक
वर्णिते, शुभकरे,
कुवल्ल्यदल नव नीलशारीर
गोविन्दसोदरे, श्रीकरे,
शिवहदयकमलनिलये,
त्रिपुरासिश्वर, नत श्रीनगरे
अवनत रहस्ययोगिनीकुले,
शतदिनकरसमदुति मुखजाले,
भुवनप्रसिद्ध हृंकार
कामेश्वर बीजमन्त्रलोले,(संकल)
SAKALALOKA NĀYIKE

Ārabhi Rāgaḥ

Ādi Tālah

Pallavi

Sakala-loka-nāyike, tvāmeva
Śaṇanam prapadye,

Sarva-rogā-hara-cakramaye,
Sarvānandamaye, maṅgala-maye  (Sakala-loka)

Anupallavi

A-ka-ca-ta-ta-pa-ya-ra-la-va-śadi-kṣānta-
Aksaramayi, vānimayi, cinmayi,
Śuka-Nārada-kumbhaja-muni-vara-
Stuti-dāyaka-jana-sannute,

Nāganāyaka-sadaddaśāra-phāna-
Loka-vahita-dhara-kara-valaye,
Loka-loka-sammohipa-hitakara-
Bhukti-siddhi-nata-pura-nilaye,  (Sakala-loka)

Caraṇāḥ

Bhava-rogā-hara-vaibhave, parama-
Kalyāṇa-guṇa-nikare,
Nava-rasa-alankāra-kāvyā-nāṭaka-
Varṇite, śubhakare,
Kuvalaya-dala-nava-nilā-śarīra-
Govinda-sodare, śrīkare,
Śiva-hṛdaya-kamala-nilaye, tripura-
Siddheśvari, nata-śrīnagare,

Avanata-rahasya-yoginīkule,
Śata-dinakara-samadyuti-mukhajāle,
Bhuvana-prasiddha-hrūmkāra-
Kāmeśvara-bījamantra-lole, (Sakala-loka)
SAKALALOKA NÄYIKE

Oh Goddess of the universe, I seek protection from you alone.

Embodiment of Bliss and Auspiciousness, you pervade the Sarvarogahara Cakra.

You are Śabda Brahman; the letters of the alphabet are your form. You are the essence of literature.

You are Supreme Consciousness, and you are saluted by sages Śuka, Nārada and Agastya who sing your glory.

The great serpent kings (like Ādiśeṣa) form your bangles. (They have many heads (hoods) on which they carry the world. Their (mouths with venom-) teeth are omni-directional.)

You abide in the Cakra, served by Bhukti, the Siddhi Devatā of the Āvaraṇa. Though you delude the people of the world with the power of your māyā you also give what is good for them.

Abode of Superior Virtues, you are adept in saving people from re-birth.

You are praised in literary works such as poetry, drama, etc., in different figures of speech and in the nine poetic sentiments.
Bestower of virtues, excellences and wealth, and sister of Viṣṇu, whose colour is blue like the petals of a newly-blossomed kuvalaya flower, the blue water-lily which opens in the night. You abide in Śiva’s heart.

As Tripurasiddhā, you are the Cakresvari of the Āvaraṇa and are worshipped in Śrīcakra.

Served with devotion by the group of Rahasya Yoginīs (stationed in the Cakra), your face radiates the brilliance of a hundred Suns.

You are delightfully thrilled by the famous ‘Hṛūṅkāra Kāmeśvara Bīja Mantra’.

Oh Mother, I seek protection from you alone.
Particulars of the Ávaraṇa

Ávaraṇa .. Trikona
Cakra .. Sarvasiddhiprada
Group of Yoginī-s.. Atirahasya
Manovṛtti .. Nididhyāsana
Cakreśvarī .. Tripurāmbā
group of Šakti-s .. Kāmeśvarī (3)*
Mudrā Devatā .. Sarvabījā

* Šakti Devī-s
Kāmeśī, Vajreśī, Bhagamālinī, (Kāmeśvarī, Vajreśvarī, Bhagamālinī).

83
8th Āvaraṇa

ŚAÑKARI ŚRĪ RĀJARĀJEŚVARI

This kṛti is on the 8th Āvaraṇa. It is one of the long kṛti-s in the group.

The composer has given the names of the Cakra (Sarvasiddhiprada), the group of Yoginī-s (Atirahasya), the Mudrā Devatā (Sarvabījā), and Manovṛtti (Nididhyāsana).

He has stressed the importance of deep meditation (on the Goddess)—‘Antaḥ cintayāmi’.

According to works on Śrīcakra, the weapons of the Goddess are presided over by Āyudha Devatā-s located around the 8th Āvaraṇa. The composer therefore, quite appropriately in this Āvaraṇa, describes the Mother as ‘Aṅkuśa dhanuḥ pāsa daṇḍa bhāsakara cakra nivāsini’. In Lalitopākyāna and Lalitā Sahasranāma Stotra, Goddess Lalitā is described as holding in Her four hands a noose, a goad, a bow and five arrows. But in Kāṅcipuram, Śrī Kāmākṣī is holding a bunch of flowers. Hence the composer pictures Her as aṅkuśa (goad), dhanuḥ (bow), pāsa (noose), and daṇḍa. Daṇḍa is normally understood as a stick, but it also means stalk/stem of flowers. (As the five arrows are in the form of five (kinds of) flowers, there is no difference, in essence, in the two expressions, (Cf. ‘Dhṛta-pāśa-aṅkuśa-puṣpa-bāṇa-cāpām’ in the dhyāna śloka of Lalitā Sahasranāma Stotra).
‘Bhagamālinī’ in the pallavi: Bhagamālinī is one of the three deities situated in this Cakra, the other two being Kāmeśvarī and Vajreśvarī. (For more details, see notes on Kṛti 8.) (Cf. ‘Bhagamālinī’, LS 277).

‘Vahnivāsini’ (in the anupallavi): Vahni (Fire) represents all forms of physical energy. It also includes Sun and Moon, besides Fire. She therefore resides in Sūrya-soma-agni maṇḍala. (Cf. ‘Bhānu-maṇḍala-madhyasthā, Candra-maṇḍala-madhyagā, Vahni-maṇḍala vāsinī’, LS 275, 240 and 352 respectively.)

According to Vedānta, Parabrahman is the cause and explanation of the origination, sustentation and dissolution of the universe. These functions are performed by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra, who are evolved out of the Parabrahman itself.

The Tantra Śāstra posits that there really are five functions, the additions being obscuration (concealment of the dissolved universe till a new cycle begins) and grace (final release or emancipation of the individual soul). These five activities or pañca-kāraṇa-kṛtyāḥ are known as srṣṭi, sthiti, laya, tirodhāna and anugraha respectively. It is the Śakti aspect of the Parabrahman that performs these five-fold activities through the agency of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Īśāna and Sadāśiva who are the Lords of the five Causal Activities.
These are described in Lalitopākhyāna, XXXV, 30 and 31,* and the composer has taken the word pañca-kāraṇa-kṛtyendrā from Lalitopākhyāna and incorporated it in this kṛti. Lalitā Sahasranāma, śloka-s 63 and 64, nāma-s 264 to 274, also give these five-fold functions.**

Lastly, this is the only kṛti in the group wherein the composer has mentioned his name: Venkata kavi.

(For meaning of kalpa taru, see explanation in the notes on Kṛti 2. The terms ‘savikalpa samādhi’ and ‘nirvikalpa samādhi’ have been explained in Kṛti 7.)

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* ब्रह्माविष्णुच्छ ब्रह्म इत्यत्स्तदाविष्णुसदा नमः || 30 || पञ्चक्षेत्रेन्द्राय यदाजायेव विश्रवति ||

It is worth noting here that Ch.XXXV in Lalitopākhyāna, which contains the above śloka-s, is titled ‘Kāṅcīmāhātya vāraṇam’, and the śloka-s eulogize Lalitā as Kāmākṣī.

** सृष्टिकृत्री ब्रह्मरूपा गोविन्दरूपि || 63 || संहारिणी ब्रह्मरूपा तिरोधानकरीथरी || सदासिद्धानुग्रहद पञ्चकृत्यपरायण || 64 ||
श्री राजराजेश्वरि

मध्यमावति रागः

श्री राजराजेश्वरि,
जय शिव- सर्वसिद्धिप्रदायकचक्रेश्वरि,
कामेश्वरवामेश्वरि भगमालिनि
सन्ततं तव रूपमु अन्तः चिन्तयामि,
अहं चिन्तयामि,

(श्री)

अनुप्रकाशि

मध्यकर कुष्ठभर मन्ददसित- मुख विलासिनि,
अक्षुन्न धनुः पाश दण्ड- भासकर चक्रनिवासिनि,

भृज्ञि सनक मुनिगणवर
पूजित परमोल्लासिनि,
भूतजन हितकारिणि,
परपोषण वहिवासिनि,
वेदकवि हुदि सरसिज- विवरण पुदुतर भासिनि,
विधिहरिः सुरसमंत
नित्यान्तर प्रकाशिनि

(श्री)

87
चरण:

परिभाषीकृत नादान्तर नित्यान्त-
रक्षरक्षकर त्रयप्राकारे,
अतिरिहस्ययोगिनी परिवारे,
गिरिराजवरतनये, सृष्टि-
स्थित्यादि पञ्चकारणकृत्येन्द्र-
गण संमानिते,
यतीन्द्रगणसंमोदिते,
शारणागत निजजन वरदस्मृत्तप-
कल्पतरु निकरे,
सहजस्थिति सविकल्प निर्विकल्प-
समाधि मुखवर्ते,

परत्त्व निदिष्यासन-
वितरण सर्वभीम मुद्राधिपते,
भण्डसुरमदवण्डन वैभवे,
चिन्तामणिगराधिपते,
तरुणारूप मुखकमले, सकले,
सारसहित विद्याधिपते,
सदा चिदम्बरनर्तन पदयुग
समकर नटनाधिपते, जय शिव

(श्रीकृष्ण)
ŚAṆKARI ŚRĪ RĀJARĀJEŚVARI

Madhyamāvati Rāguḥ

Ādi Tālaḥ

Pallavi

Śaṅkari Śrī Rājarājeśvari, (jaya Śiva-)

Sarvasiddhi-pradāyaka-cakreśvari,
Kāmeśvara-vāneśvari, bhagamālini,
Santatam tava rūpam antaḥ cintayāmi,
Aharāṁ cintayāmi, (Śaṅkari)

Anupallavi

Maṅgalakara-kuṅkumadharā-manda-hasita-
Mukha-vilāsini,
Aṅkuśa-dhanuḥ-pāśa-dāṇḍa-bhāsakara-
Cakra-nivāsini,

Bhrīṅgi-sanaka-muni-gañā-vara-pūjita-
Paramollāsini,
Bhūtajana-hitakāriṇī, paraṇoṣaṇa-
Vahnivāsini,
Veṅkaṭa-kavi-hṛdi-sarasija-vivaraṇa-
Paṭutara-bhāsini
Vidhi-hari-hara-sura-saṁmata-nityāntara-
Prakāśini, (Śaṅkari)

Caranāḥ

Parikhī-krta-nādāntara-nityānta-
Raṅgarakṣākara-traya-prākāre,
Atirahasya-yogini-parivāre,
Girirāja-vara-tanaye, sṛṣṭi-

89
Sthityādi pañcakāraṇa-krtyendra-
Gaṇa-saṁmānite,
Yatindra-gaṇa-saṁmodite,
Śaraṇāgata-nija-jana-varada-saṅkalpa-
Kalpa-taru-nikare,
Sahaja-sthiti-savikalpa-nirvikalpa-
Samādhi-sukha-varade,

Para-tattva-nididhyāsana-vitaraṇa-
Sarva-bīja-mudrādhipate,
Bhaṇḍāsura-mada-khaṇḍana-vaibhave,
Cintāmaṇi-nagarādhipate,
Taruṇāruṇa-mukha-kamale, sakale,
Sāra-sahita-vidyādhipate,
Sadā cidambara-nartana-pada-yuga-
Samakara-naṭanādhipate, (jaya Siva-) (Śaṅkari)
ŚAṆKARI ŚRĪ RĀJARĀJEŚVARI

Oh Goddess Śaṅkari, Śivaśaṅkari, Rājarājeśvari, glory to you; I incessantly meditate on you.

You are the presiding deity of the Sarvasiddhi-prada Cakra. You are inseparable from Kāmeśvara, being the left side of His being. As Bhagamālinī, you are one of the Devatā Trinity in this Cakra.

With the auspicious kurikuma on the forehead, there is a radiating smile on your face. You shine (in Kāncipuram) holding in your hands a noose, a goad, a bow and a bunch of five flowers (five arrows in the form of five flowers).

You are delighted by the worship of great sages like Bhṛṣigī and Sanaka. You bestow on the living beings all that are beneficial to them.

You are the highest form of nourishing energy represented by Fire. You resplendently abide in the fully-blossomed lotus-like heart of Venkatakavi (the composer). You shine as the core of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, and other Gods.

You abide in the Bindu, in the centre of the Trikoṇa (8th Āvaraṇa) on the three lines of which are stationed the fifteen Nityā-s and subordinate deities as your body-guards. You are at the pinnacle of the nine-stage Bindu, at Mahābindu, as Nirguṇa Brahman.

You are subserved by the group of Atirahasya-Yoginī-s.
Oh Pārvati, daughter of Himavān, you are meditated upon by the deities of the five Causal Activities of Origination, Sustentation, Dissolution, Obscuration and Grace.

You are delighted by the worship of sages. You are like the wish-yielding kalpa (creeper) to those who seek your refuge. You grant to your devotees the Bliss of sahaja-sthiti, savikalpa and nirvikalpa samādhi-s.

You are the Mudrā Devatā of Sarvabīja Mantra which bestows on the sādhaka the power of highly concentrated meditation for gaining the knowledge of the Reality of the Supreme Being.

You demonstrated your prowess by subduing the arrogance of Bhaṅḍāsura. You are the sovereign of the city of Cintāmaṇi. Your face is crimson (like the Sun at dawn). You are the repository of all arts, and Knowledge Supreme.

In Cidambaram, you dance with the steps and hands of Śiva.

Glory to you, oh Goddess, Śivaśaṅkari, I incessantly meditate on you.
12
9th Āvaraṇa

Particulars of the Āvaraṇa

Āvaraṇa ... Bindu
Cakra ... Sarvānandamaya
Group of Yoginī-s ... Parāparātirahasya
Manovṛtti ... Savikalpasamādhi
Cakreśvarī ... Mahātripurasundarī
Śakti ... Parabrahmasvarūpā
Mudrā Devatā ... Yoni
Kṛti 12

9th Āvaraṇa

NATAJANA KALPAVALLI

This kṛti is on the 9th and the innermost Āvaraṇa, the Bindu, also called the Sarvānandamaya Cakra. The pre-eminent status of the Bindu lies in the fact that the Śrīcakra itself has evolved out of the Bindu. And Bindu is where Lalitā resides: ‘Sudha sindhu sama sobhita śṛṣṭura bindu madhye’, says the composer in the caraṇa.

Bindu, Sarvānandamaya Cakra, Parāparātirasasya Yoginī and Mahātripurasundarī—the terms that pertain to the ninth Āvaraṇa—are mentioned in the kṛti.

A Śrīcakra is consecrated in front of the pedestal of Śrī Kamākṣī in the Kāṇcīpuram temple. The composer has drawn attention to this fact in the pallavi—‘avanata sarvānandamaya mahā pīṭha nilaye’.

According to the treatises on Śrīvidyā, the colour of the face (and the body) of Śrī Lalitā is that of the red hibiscus, the rising Sun, and the pomegranate flower. In the previous kṛti (on the 8th Āvaraṇa) the composer himself has described Devī’s face as ‘crimson like the Sun at the dawn’ (‘tarunāruṇa mukha kamale’). In the present kṛti (anupallavi), he however addresses Her as ‘Smita cāru nava mallī manda dhavala mukha kamala vallī—‘your endearingly smiling face resembles a lotus and a newly blossomed light white jasmine’. The reference is to the row of (white) teeth visible when She smiles’.

94
‘Guruṇaḍale’ (caraṇa): Tantra Śāstra posits that the Transcendental Brahman is the Primordial Preceptor, the Ādiguru. Stationed in the Bindu, He has in Him the united form of Śiva and Śakti.

There is a hierarchy of guru-s who transmits the Knowledge Supreme in an incessant flow or current. This current is termed ‘oghā’. According to Tantra Śāstra there are three ogha-s: the divya (divine), the siddha (semi-divine) and the mānava (human), in that order. The Ādiguru himself assumes the forms of the guru-s in the three ogha-s, and the four together constitute the guruṇaḍala. The composer explicitly states this concept when he describes the Goddess as ‘Divya-mānava-yogi-gaṇa-guruṇaḍale’.*

This kṛti being on the last Āvaraṇa of the Śrīcakra, the composer affirms his conviction (in the closing lines of the caraṇa) that Goddess Kāmakṣi is delighted with his Navāvarana songs (‘navāvarana gāna rasike’). He also imagines that these kṛti-s will be sung by Brahmans of good conduct (sadācāra bhūsura), gods (sura), people of virtue (sajjana), and celestial musicians like Nārada (Nāradādi gandharva). He adds that rendering the kṛti-s with deep contemplation of their significance and import would lead one to liberation (‘sārasāra navāvarana gāna japa tapa dhyāna yoga’).

* Gurumandala rūpinī (LS 713), Bindumandala vāsinī (LS 380), and Divyaugha-siddhaugha-naraugha rūpe, Lalitopākhyaṇa, XXVII.16.

95
नतजन कल्पवश्नि

पुवागवरालि रागः

आदि तालः

पञ्चवियः

नतजन कल्पवश्नि, अवनत
सर्वनन्दमयचक्र महापीठनिल्ये,
सदा वितर वितर, तव सुधाकर
दृष्टि, मयि मरकमथि,

(नतजन)

अनुपञ्चवियः

समितचारु नवमझी मन्द-
धवल मुखमलवश्नि,

शतमवादि सुरपूजित समस्त-
च्रेंश्रीरि, परमशशनोहरि,
परा-पारिस्क्योगिनि,
महानिपुरसुन्दरि, महेंद्रि,

(नतजन)

चरणः

विद्याकार तरङ्ग आनन्द-
रत्नाकरे, श्रीकरे,
सदा दिव्यमानवयोगिणण-
गुरुमण्डले, सुमझि,
शिवगणनत पादपशयुगले,
विकरे, सुधासिन्धुसमशोभित
श्रीपुरविन्दुमध्ये, शरदिन्दुमुखे
सदाचारभूमुरसूरसज्जन-
नारदिसिन्धुवेऄोपर सार-
सारनवारणगान-
ध्यायोगपत्पिंके

(नतजन)

96
NATAJANA KALPAVALLI

Punnāgavarāli Rāgaḥ  Ādi Tālaḥ

Pallavi

Nata-jana-kalpa-valli, avanata-
Sarvānandamaya-cakramahā-pūrha-nilaye,
Sadā vitara vitara, tava sudhākara-
Drṣṭirn, mayi marakatamayi,

(Natajana)

Anupallavi

Smita-cāru-nava-mallī-manda-
Dhavala-mukha-kamala-valli,

Śatamakhādi-sura-pūjita-samasta-
Cakreśvari, parameśa-manohari,
Parāparāti-rahasya-yogini,
Mahātripurasundari, maheśvari,

(Natajana)

Caranaḥ

Cidākāra-taraṅga-ānanda-
Ratnākare, śrikare,
Sadā divya-mānava-yogi-gaṇa-
Gurumāṇḍale, sumanīgale,
Śiva-gaṇa-nata-pāda-padma-yugale,
Vikale, sudhā-sindhu-sama-śobhita-
Śrīpura-bindu-madhye, śaradindu-mukhe

Sadācāra-bhūsura-sura-sajjana-
Nāradādi-gandharva-ghoṣapara-sāra-
Sāra-navāvaraṇa-gāna-
Dhyāna-yoga-japa-tapa-rasike,

(Natajana)

97
NATAJANA KALPAVALLI

Oh Mother, you fulfil all the wishes of your devotees; cast your cool and pleasant glance at me, at all times.

Resplendent like the emerald gem, you are seated on a divine altar, below which lies the Bindu—the Sarvānandamaya Cakra, the core of Śrīcakra.

Your endearingly smiling face resembles a lotus and a newly blossomed light white jasmine.

Oh sovereign of all the nine cakra-s (of Śrīcakra), you are worshipped by Indra and other deva-s. Divine consort of Parameśvara, the group of Parāparāti-rahasya-yoginī-s (positioned in this Āvaraṇa) are your own emanations.

As the Cakreśvarī of Bindu, you are Mahātripura-sundarī.

You are the serene ocean of Supreme Bliss, of which the Consciousness are the ever-changing waves.

Bestower of wealth, you assume the form of preceptors—divine, semi-divine and human—who constitute the gurumāndala, the hierarchy of preceptors of ātma-vidyā (Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit).
You are auspiciousness incarnate. Your lotus-like feet are worshipped by the gaṇa-s of Śiva.

You abide lustrously in Bindu which is the ocean of ambrosia, being Sarvānandamaya. Your face is charming like the autumnal moon.

You are immensely pleased with the Navāvaraṇa Kṛti-s (of pregnant construction), sung by Nārada and other celestial musicians, by people of virtue and by Brahmins of good conduct, and gods. You are extremely delighted when they do japa and penance, and meditate on the significance and import of the kṛti-s which will make them attain yoga (union with the Cosmic Spirit).

Cast your benevolent glance on me, at all times.
Kṛti 13

9th Āvaraṇa
(Alternative Kṛti)

SRĪCAKRAMĀTAṆGINI

This alternative kṛti on the 9th Āvaraṇa is quite unlike the other kṛti-s in the group.

First, the carana of the kṛti is in four sections. After singing each of the first three sections, the musician has to revert, not to the pallavi, but to the beginning line of the first section. Only after singing the fourth (and last) section that one goes back to the pallavi.

Second, the pallavi alone has a short passage in the medium tempo. The anupallavi and the carana has no such passage.

Third, not a single particular of the Āvaraṇa is mentioned in the kṛti, whereas all the other kṛti-s in the group are replete with such information. And, but for two expressions—‘Śricakramātaṅgini’ and ‘bhūcakrameru niketane’—one may not deem this kṛti to belong to the Navāvaraṇa group!

The prayer ‘mām ava’ (protect me) comes in the anupallavi.

Section 2 of the carana gives details of various methods of worship: ‘pañcāyatana pūjā’, recitation of the holy syllabic mantra (‘bhāvanākṣari’), the sitting

100
posture ('padmāsana'), deep meditation ('dhyāna'), pondering over the seed word/syllable and its significance ('manana'), consciously holding the mind on the syllabic mantra under contemplation ('dhāraṇa'), and the various services ('upacāra') to be mentally rendered. Significantly, the composer has stressed the importance and necessity of contemplation of the principles symbolically expressed by the syllabic mantra; the mere recital of a mantra without understanding the significance seems to be of little avail.

'Kara kāñcanekṣu dhanurākṛta gambhīra madhubhai kaiṭabhā sadane' (section 3 of the caraṇa):

The story of the killing of the demons, Madhu and Kaiṭabha, is given in adhyāya IX of skandha I of Devī Bhāgavatam. Goddess Śakti had given them a boon that they would die only of their free will. Secured by this boon they challenged even Viṣṇu for a fight. Viṣṇu sought the help of Mother Goddess. Wielding Her power of māyā, She deluded their minds by passing a side glance at them. Bloated with arrogance and pride (caused by māyā), they taunted Viṣṇu to seek a boon for Himself. Viṣṇu promptly asked them the boon of their own death. They realised they were deceived, but it was too late, and they had to grant the boon. Viṣṇu killed them by breaking their heads on His thighs. This, in short, is the story.

The composer has hinted at this story in a manner of riddle in the expression 'Kara kāñcanekṣu dhanurākṛta madhu kaiṭabha sadane'.
The sugar-cane bow in the front left hand of Mother Goddess symbolises Mind (‘manorūpeksu kodanḍā’, LS 10). ‘Sadana’ is a residence or dwelling place, but it also means Death (itself).

Venkatasubbier seems to say that Mother Goddess used Her power of māyā, symbolised by the sugar-cane bow, to make the demons oblivious to their imminent death, and made them grant a boon of their own death. The way She carried out Her will was indeed ‘gambhira’, i.e., inscrutable!

Viṣṇu’s name is not mentioned, perhaps because He had only an incidental role in the killing of the demons!

‘Lakāra lālana tattva nirāmayi’ (section 4 of the caraṇa) and ‘Kalā vikalā kampita lola cāmare’ (section 1):

_Tantra Śāstra_ declares that the _Parabrahman_, together with its manifestations as 36 _tattva_-s (fundamental or cosmic principles) constitutes this world of phenomena. These 36 _tattva_-s consist of 24 ‘ātma tattva’/‘jada tattva_-s’, 7 ‘māyā tattva’/‘vidyā tattva_-s’ and 5 ‘Siva tattva_-s’. The composer has made references to two _tattva_-s in this _kṛti_. These are ‘lakāra’ (or ‘prthivī tattva’, the Principle of Earth) and ‘kalā vikalā’ (‘kāla tattva’, the Principle of Time). ‘Prthivī tattva’ comes under ‘ātma tattva’ group and ‘kāla tattva’, under ‘māyā tattva’ group.

The composer describes the Goddess as ‘lakāra lālana tattva nirāmayi’—‘you heartily rejoice (in abiding)
in ‘prthivī tattva’. (‘La’ denotes the Principle of Earth) In the worship of Śakti (as also other godheads) various upacāra-s or services are offered to Her, one of which is the applying of candana, an article of pleasant smell. Candana represents ‘gandha’ (smell), which in turn symbolises ‘prthivī tattva’. While (mentally) offering candana, the sādhaka needs to identify it with prthivī and the prthivī as manifestation of Śakti. Hence the mantra: “Lam prthivyātmikāyai devyai gandham samarpayāmi.” This is a component of ‘Lamityādi pañca pūjāḥ’.

Now about the ‘kāla tattva’ or the Principle of Time.

In section 1 of the caraṇa, the composer has drawn different descriptive pictures of the Goddess, including the following, namely, ‘nuta ramā vāṇi’ and ‘kalā vikalā kara kampita lola cāmare’.

‘Nuta ramā vāṇi—She is served by Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī. Worshippers of Lalitā are familiar with the picture of Lalitā, showing Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī as standing on the left side and right side respectively and fanning Her with cāmara (chowrie).@ This is to

*Dharā LS 955: “She is supporter of everything in the form of Earth, denoted by the mystic sound “Lam”

Cf. Lalitā Trīśatī nāmāvalī: ‘Lakāra rūpā’ (61), ‘Lakārākhyā’ (181) and ‘Lakārīnyā’ (261)

** See notes on ‘Lamityādi pañca pūjāḥ’ on page 105.

@ Sa cāmara ramā vāṇi savya daksīna sevitā (LS 614).
demonstrate that worship of Lalitā is sufficient for being blessed with wealth and prosperity (Lakṣmī), and knowledge and wisdom (Sarasvatī).

The poet in the composer has made a similar portrayal, personifying (the Principle of) Time as two female attendants; ‘kalā vikalā kara kampita lola cāmare’—the Goddess enjoys being fanned with chowrie by kalā and vikalā.

Kāla is Time, also Death. Kalā is division of Time, and vikalā, its subdivision. By illustrating that the Principle of Time too is subserviant to the Goddess, Venkatasubbaier seems to convey his conviction that the worshipper of Lalitā will be delivered from the fear of Kāla, i.e., Death, because Kāla himself is only a servant of the Goddess!

In the concluding section of the caraṇa the composer seems to urge the devotees not to stop with longing for heaven (svarga), for it gives enjoyment only for a limited period, i.e., only so long as the result of one’s good deeds lasts, and after that one has to take re-birth. Instead he seems to ask the devotees to seek the grace of Mother Goddess to attain ‘apavarga’, or mokṣa, the final salvation, whereupon one can remain in a state of Bliss for ever, without fear of re-birth. He terms ‘svarga’ as ‘laghutara’, less worthy, as compared to ‘apavarga’.

(Lalitā Sahasranāma Stotra proclaims that the Goddess confers on Her devotees both heaven and salvation (‘svarga-apavarga-dā’, 764), the self-
established nature of Pure Consciousness (‘kaivalya-pada-dāyini’, 625), and the invaluable state of liberation or mukti/mokṣa (‘anarghya-kaivalya-pada-dāyini, 926).

Lamityādi pañca pūjāḥ

Godheads are offered 64 upacāra-s or 16, or a minimum of five. These five upacāra-s are: ‘gandha’ (candana), ‘puṣpa’ (flower), ‘dhūpa’ (incense), ‘dīpa’ (lamp) and ‘naivedya’ (food). These five articles symbolise the five Great Elements, or tattva-s, namely, ‘prthivi’, ‘ākāśa’, ‘vāyu’, ‘agni’ and ‘jala’ (‘amṛta’, food) respectively. These offerings are to be made mentally, by uttering the respective ‘bīja akṣara’—‘laṁ’, ‘haṁ’, ‘yaṁ’, ‘rāṁ’, and ‘vaṁ’. Hence this worship is called ‘laṁ ityādi pañca pūjāḥ’.

The mantra in full is as follows:

‘Laṁ’  Prthivyātmikāyai devyai gandham samarpayāmi
‘Haṁ’  Ākāśātmikāyai devyai puṣpam samarpayāmi
‘Yaṁ’  Vāyvātmikāyai devyai dhūpam āghrāpayāmi
‘Raṁ’  Agnyātmikāyai devyai dīpam darṣayāmi
‘Vaṁ’  Amṛtātmikāyai devyai amṛtopahāram (amṛtam mahā naivedyam) nivedayāmi

‘Saṁ’  Sarvātmikāyai devyai sarvopacāra pūjāḥ samarpayāmi.

Venkatasubbaier has hinted the ‘pañca pūjāḥ’ by mentioning the bīja akṣara of just one—‘prthivi tattva’.

105
श्रीचक्रमातातिनि

सुरटि रागः
आदि तालः
पद्धति

श्रीचक्रमातातिनि
देवदेववन्दिनि, शैलेन्द्रनन्दिनि,
शिवभागनन्दिनि, कान्त-
निरंतरकद्व्यवनर्धनि, कामकोटि-
कलापीठविराजिनि
(श्रीचक्र)

अनुपद्धति

भूचक्रमेछलिनिकेतने, भुवनेष्वरि, हंसगमने,
पुष्पहूँजायापूज्यितत्चरणे, पुज्याविन्दनयने, मामव
(श्रीचक्र)

चरणः

भवानि, मधुरवाणि, शुकपाणि, नुतरमाणि

1. जय जय जय
जयनतवाणि नमो नमस्ते,
जयशुकपाणि नमो नमस्ते,
जयमधुरवाणि नमो नमस्ते,
पाशाशुकश्चरणे, कलाबिकलाकमितलोत्नामे,
(भवानि)
2. पञ्चायतन सनातन पूजन पावन भावनाक्षरीलोकन
पद्मासन ध्यान मनन धारण सेवन धीर निर्तरविनुते,
(भवानि)

3. कमलापुरसदने, कमनीयवदने, करुणायतनयने, कर-
काशनेशुअनुरागुत गम्भीर मधुकेतभसदने
गजाभुजक्षफलवैरिघर जटामकुट-
कल्लोलाविलोक्य करादुरुकमलोहे,
निधुवनशीले, सनिगमलोहे, जय जय
(भवानि)

4. ललिते, लालणसारसज्ञलविग्रहे,
कल्पसितके, लकारलालनत्त्व
निरामयि, चिन्मयि, लम्बोदरगुञ्जननि,
ललामकरत ललायतललाट सिन्दुर तिलके, लघुतर-
स्वगीपर्यमुखदायिनि, सुमते, महादेवि, सरसिजाशि
(श्रीचक्र)
ŚRĪCAKRAMĀṬAṆGINI

Suraṭi Rāgaḥ  Ādi Tālaḥ

Pallavi

Śrīcakramāṭaṅgini,
Devadeva vandani, śailendra nandini,
Śiva-bhāga nandini, kānta-
Nirantara kadamba-vana-raṇjani, kāmakoṭi-
Kalāpīṭha virājini, (Śrīcakra)

Anupallavi

Bhūcakra-meru-niketane, bhuvaneśvari,
Hamśa-gamane,
Puruhūtajāyā-pūjita-carane, phullāravinda-
Nayane, mām ava (Śrīcakra)

Caranaḥ

1. Bhavāni, madhura-vāṇi, śuka-pāṇī,
Nuta-ramā-vāṇi, jaya jaya jaya
Jaya nata vāṇi, namo namaste,
Jaya śuka-pāṇi, namo namaste,
Jaya madhura-vāṇi, namo namaste,
Pāśāṅkuśa dharaṇe, kalā vikalā kara-
Kampita lola cāmare (Bhavāni)

2. Paṅcāyatana sanātana pūjana pāvana-
Bhāvanākṣari lolana-
Padmāsana dhyāna manana dhāraṇa sevana-
Dhīra nirāntara vinute (Bhavāni)
3. Kamalāpura sadane, kamanīya vadane,
   Karuṇāyata nayane, kara-
   Kāñcanekṣu dhanurākṛta gambhīra-
   Madhu-kaiṭabha sadane,
   Gaṅgā bhujaṅga kamalavairi-dhara-
   Jaṭāmakuṭa kallola vilokya-
   Karādurukrama lole, nidhuvana śīle,
   Sanigama lole, jaya jaya (Bhavāni)

4. Lalite, lāvanya sāramaṅgala vigrahe,
   Kalpalatike, lakāra-
   Lālana tattva nirāmayi, cinmayi,
   Lambodara guruguha janani,
   Lalāma marakata lalāyata lalāṭa-
   Sindūra-tilake, laghutara-
   Svarga-apavarga sukhadāyini, sumate,
   Sarasijākṣi (Śrīcakra)
ŚRĪCAKRAMĀTAṆGINI

Oh Goddess, daughter of sage Mataṅga! Protect me. You reside in Śrīcakra, also known as Bhūcakra-meru.

Oh daughter of Himavān, you happily share the person of Śīva. You are worshipped by all deva-s and Śacīdevī, consort of Indra.

You are one with Śīva, being a portion of His being. You are the sovereign of the 64 kalā-s or arts.

Oh supreme sovereign of universe, you enjoy residing in the enchanting dense forest of kadamba trees.

Your eyes are like the (petals of the) fully-blossomed lotus. Your gait is as graceful as that of the swan, the divine bird.

You radiate as the Primordial Desire imminent to manifest the innate potency as universe.

Oh consort of Bhava, the creator-aspect of Kāmeśvara, you hold a parrot, a noose and a goad in your hands. You are saluted by Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī, and worshipped by scholars. Your voice is sweet and melodious. I salute you. May you be victorious.
Kalā and vikalā, (the two female attendants) fan you with cāmara (chowrie) in a rhythmic movement.

Your virtuous and dutiful devotees worship you in pañcāyatana-pūjā, installing you in the centre, and Gaṇeśa, Sūrya, Viṣṇu and Śiva in the four sub-directions. Sitting in the padmāsana posture, they are ever absorbed in meditation, in reciting your holy syllabic mantra, in contemplating on its meaning with intense and unwavering concentration. They also internally/mentally perform the various upacāra-s or services.

Oh Goddess of Kamalāpura (Tiruvarur), you have an attractive and pleasant face; your eyes long to cover all living beings by compassion.

It is with your power of māyā, symbolized by the sugar-cane bow held in your hand, that you caused the death of the demons, Madhu and Kaiṭabha.

Your līlā-s (divine plays) encompass the entire universe. Śiva, your divine consort, who holds Gaṅgā, the serpent and the crescent on his diadem of matted hair, joyfully views those līlā-s, His eyes moving constantly hither and thither like waves of sea.

Oh Lalita, your person is charming and beautiful and it personifies all auspiciousness. You are always rejoiceful.
You are delighted by scriptures like Veda-s. You are the wish-yielding celestial creeper, kalpa.

You are Consciousness Supreme and the ‘prthivī tattva’.

Your forehead is adorned by an emerald pendent, and you sport a sindūra tilaka.

You grant the ultimate salvation (that gives Joy-Bliss unlimited), in comparison to which heaven (where the Joy-Bliss is limited) is less worthy.

Oh Mother of Gaṇeśa and Subrahmaṇya, you are the large-hearted Supreme Goddess.

Oh Goddess, protect me.
Kṛti 14

Concluding Song

HALADHARĀNUJAṂ PRĀPTUM

This kṛti, the last in the group, is on Śrī Krṣṇa (the composer's deity of choice), but is addressed to Śrī Akhilāṇḍeśvarī.

It is composed in Maṇiraṅgu, one of the auspicious (maṅgala) rāga-s of Carnatic music, with which a kṛti group or rāgamālikā is traditionally concluded.

The kṛti has four samaṣṭi caranā-s. (A samaṣṭi caranā is the section in a kṛti which stands for both the anupallavi and the caranā.) The pallavi has a madhyama-kāla passage ('Akhilāṇḍeśvari guruguha janani'). This passage is to be sung at the end of each samaṣṭi caranā, followed by the beginning line of the pallavi 'Haladharānujaṁ prāptum'. Employment of samaṣṭi caranā was rare in Venkatasubbaier's time. (Even in the later period, Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita seems to be the only vāggeyakāra who has composed kṛti-s with samaṣṭi caranā.)

We see the composer's poetic imagination at its best in the concluding samaṣṭi caranā. He says: 'Kamalā kuca maṇḍala kuṃkuma dhara bhāsam'— (His face) shines with the brilliance caused by the mark of the kuṃkuma from the breast of His divine consort, Laksīni'!
Several well-known attributes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are mentioned in the kṛti. One particular expression is, however, worthy of attention, and this is ‘Kāliya phaṇa padanyāsām’—keeping the foot on the hood of Kāliya, the serpent. Kāliya-nartana Kṛṣṇa is the deity of choice of Venkatasubbaier. He extols the deep affection that Śrī Kṛṣṇa has towards His devotees; the composer says that the Lord is willing to be a servant’s servant of the devotees (‘kīrtigāyaka dāsānudāsām’).

The kṛti starts with an appeal to Goddess Akhilāṇḍesvarī: “Give Kṛṣṇa to us, we have come to attain Him”. Evidently, the ‘we’ stands for the gopī-s of Brindavan, who had taken the ‘Kātyāyanī vrata’. (The non-mention of who the ‘we’ is, appears purposeful.)

Adhyāya 22, skandha 10 of Śrīmad Bhāgavatam describes the Kātyāyanī vrata undertaken by the gopī-s to attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa as their husband. It is however significant that in this song the composer makes the gopī-s address the Mother as Akhilāṇḍesvarī instead of Kātyāyanī or Gaurī or Durgā. One may wonder why?

It is well-known that a Śricakra is consecrated in front of the pedestal of Śrī Kāmākṣī in Kāṅcipuram, in order to subdue her ‘ugratā’ (ferocity or fierceness) and make Her benign. For the same reason, two Śricakra-s are consecrated on the ear-rings of Śrī Akhilāṇḍesvarī in Tiruvanaikka (also known as
Triuvanaikkovil and Jambukesvaram) near Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu. It appears that this fact has influenced Venkatasubbaier to make the gopi-s address Śrī Akhilāṇḍesvari as the kṛti group is on Navāvaraṇa (Śrīcakra).

Venkatasubbaier seems to have deliberately brought in Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Akhilāṇḍesvari in the concluding song in the Navāvaraṇa kṛti group.

As observed in the Introduction, musical compositions on Devī in Her many manifestations are sung, particularly by young girls and women, during the Navarātri festival in Tamil Nadu as a musical worship of the Mother. The composer has perhaps taken this fact also into consideration when he composed the piece under discussion as the concluding song in the Navāvaraṇa group so that, while singing they (the girls and women) can mentally align themselves with the spirit of the kṛti and transform it into a prayer of their own to Śrī Akhilāṇḍesvari, to bless them with a happy marital life. In the case of maiden girls, it assumes additional significance; it would turn out to be an earnest entreaty, a la the gopi-s, to Śrī Akhilāṇḍesvari to bless them to attain a husband as loving, as caring, as understanding and as compassionate as Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Was it not in His incarnation as Śrī Kṛṣṇa that the Great Lord took upon Himself the role of a great protector of women and their honour?
हल्घरानुजं प्रात्मुषम्
मणिरङ्कु रागः
पद्भवि
हल्घरानुजं प्रात्मु वयम्
आगता, देहि देवि (श्री)
अखिलाण्डेश्वरी, गुरुगुहजननि,
आनन्दसुखविश्रवप्रदायिनि,
HALADHARĀNUJAM PRĀPTUM

Mañiraṅgu Rāgaḥ  Ādi Tālāḥ

Pallavi

Haladharānujaṁ prāptum vayam
Āgatā, dehi Devi (Śrī)
Akhilāṇḍeśvari, guruguha-janani,
Ānanda-sukha-vara-pradāyini,  (Haladharānujaṁ)

Samaṣṭi Caranāḥ

1. Jalada-patala-dyuti-gātraṁ, nija-
   Šaranaṅgata-uttāra-gotraṁ, dala-
   Kamala-vipula-netram,
   Sanakādi-muni-stuti pātraṁ,
   Akhilāṇḍeśvari............  (Haladharānujaṁ)

2. Kṛta-haiyaṅava-coram, api
   Keśavam pūrvam Ṛmāvatāraṁ,
   Mrīdu-madhurādhara-śobhamudāraṁ,
   Mohana-madhupu-yamunā vihāram,
   Akhilāṇḍeśvari............  (Haladharānujaṁ)

3. Kāliya-phaṇa-padanyāsam, api
   Kamalā-kuca-kuṅkuma-dhara-bhāsāṁ,
   Khelita-Gokula-vāsam, api
   Kīrti-gāyaka-dāsāṁdāsam,
   Akhilāṇḍeśvari............  (Haladharānujaṁ)
HALADHARĀNUJAM PRĀPTUM

Oh Devī, supreme ruler and protector of the universe, Mother of the Great Subhrahmanya, bestower of the boon of happiness and Supreme Bliss, we have come to attain Kṛṣṇa, the younger brother of Balarāma who has the plough as his weapon. Give that Kṛṣṇa to us.

His complexion resembles that of the rain-clouds. He comes of a lineage of protecting those who seek refuge. His eyes are like the lotus petals. Sages like Sanaka extol His attributes. Give that Kṛṣṇa to us.

He was Śrī Rāma in his previous incarnation. He has beautiful sweet soft lips, and He is enchanting. He wandered on the banks of Yamunā. As a child he was a butter-thief; He slayed the demon Madhu. He is munificent in granting benefits. Give that Kṛṣṇa to us.

He lived and played in Gokulam and danced on the hood of Kāliya, the serpent. His face is lustrous with the mark of the kurūkuma from the breasts of Kamalā (Lakṣmī, His divine consort). And He is the servant's servant of the devotee who sings the renown of his illustrious deeds.

Oh Devi Akhilāṇḍeśvari, give that Kṛṣṇa to us.