

PATHA KAVITHA PITHAMAHA - ANNAMACHARYA**R. Seethalakshmi***Research Scholar, Dept. of Music, Queen Mary's College, Chennai - 4***Abstract**

Tallapaka Annamacharya (1408-1503) was a Hindu Saint of the 15th Century and the earliest known Indian Musician to compose songs called Sankirtanas in praise of Lord Venkateswara, the deity of seven hills in Tirumala, India where unbroken worship has been offered for over 12 centuries. The musical form of the Keerthana songs that he composed, which are still popular among the Carnatic music conculartists, have strongly. Influenced the structure of Carnatic music compositions. Sri Annamacharya is remembered for his saintly life and is honoured as a great bhakta or devotee of Bagawan govinda by devotees and saintly singers. He is believed to have been the reincarnation of the precious sword of Vishnu (Nandakam). He is widely regarded as the Andra Pada Kivita Pitamaha (Grand old man of Telegu Song Writing)

Keywords: Tallapaka Annamacharya, Tirumala, Sankirtanas, Venkateswara, Annamacharya, Bagawan govinda, Nandakam, Andra Pada Kivita Pitamaha

Personal life

A rhyming couplet of poems called Dwipada written by Tallapakka Chinnanna, grandson of Annamacharya, enabled us to learn about the Saint Annamacharya, his life and works. Annamacharya was born on Vaishka Suddha Pournami in the year Sarwadari (May-9-1408) in Tallapaka, a village in current day kadapa district in Andrapradesh, India. He was born into a Nandavarika Smartha Brahavin family. He caller became a Sri Vaishnavaita Saint, Initiated by Venkatesha. His wife Timmakka, had written Subadrakalyanam, and is considered the first female poet in Telugu literature. Their son, Pedda Tirumalacharya and grandson, Tallapakka Chinnaiah were also composers are considered to have dominated the Influenced the structure of carnatic music compositions. Annamacharya lived for 94 years until Palguna Bagula Dwadashi (12th day after fullmoon) in the year Dundubi (1503).

Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanams have consecrated Annamacharya in two places, on is the Annamacharya mandiram located in the Annamacharya project office premesis at Tirupati and the other one in Annamacharya temple at tallapakka the birth place of Annamacharya. The evidences supporting the fact that Annamacharya in the Incarnation of the lord are found in chinnanna's dwipada.

History of Annamacharya:

It is believed that in the 10th century a big famine broke out in Varanasi and Scores of scholars migrated to southern part of India for earning their linelihoods. Some the them concentrated in the town called "Nandavanam" in Andra Pradesh which was ruled by

the king Nanda. These Immigrants were called 'Nandavarikas' and Annamacharya's fore fathers were then so called Nandavarikas and hence Annamacharya.

In the Duipada, the story of Annamacharya goes back three generations to his grandfather Narayana Ayya. It is told that Narayanaayya was blessed with the village goddess appeared before him and advised that a boy with an element of Hari or Vishnu would be born in the third generation of Narayanaayya.

Birth of Annamayya:

Narayana Suri, the Son of Narayanaayya, did not have children for a long time. Narayana Suri and his wife Lakkamamba visited Tirumala temple and while they were prostrating in front of the Holy Mast (Dwaja Sthamba) a dazzling brilliance from the Sword of lord Venkateswara struck them like a lightning. Eventually a boy was born to them and they named him Annamayya. Annamayya became Annamacharya when the sage Ghana Vishnu at Tirumala converted him into a vaishnavite at the age of eight.

Literary Career:

During his long and prolific career, Annamacharya composed and Sang 32,000 Sankirtanas, 12 Satakas (sets of hundred versers), (Some of the people says that Annamaya has composed 36,000 songs) Ramayana in the form of Dwipadas, Sankirtana Lakshmanan (Characterizes of Sankirtanas) Sringeri Manjari, and Venkatachala Mahathmyam. His works were in Telugu, Sanskrit and a few other languages of India.

Chinnanna called the 32,000 Sankirtanas as 32,000 Manthas or Sacred Hymns. It was also recorded in Chinnanna's duripada that purandara dasa, who was 70 years younger to Annamacharya, heard about the miracles of Annamacharya and visited him. Purandara Dasa paid his respects to Annamacharya by calling him the incarnation of lord venkateswara and him Sankirtanas as Sacred Hymns.

Annamacharya Considered his compositions as floral offerings to Bagavan Govinda. In the poems, he praises venkateswara, describes his love for him, argues and Quarrels with the lord, confesses the devotees failures and apprehensions and surrenders himself to venkateswara. His songs are classified into the Adhyaatma (spiritual) and Sringeri (romantic) Sankeertomes genres. His songs in the 'Sringeri' genre worship Bagwan Venkateswara by describing the amorous and romantic adventures of Venkateswara and Alamelmanga, while others describe the bakthi of his devotees.

In this later keertanes, he espouses subjects such as morality, Dharma and righteousness. He was one of the first few who opposed the social stigma towards the untouchable castes in his era, with his Sankeertanas explaining that the relationship between god and human is the same irrespective of the latter's colour, caste and financial

status, in beautiful yet powerful usage of words is his songs “Brahmam Okkate Para Brahmam Okkate” and “E Kulajudainanemi evvadiananemi”.

Annamacharya wrote the Sankirtanes on palm leaves and later his son Tirumalacharya got them engraved on copper plates. But for reasons not known, most of these Copper Plates lay hidden in a rock built cell opposite to Hundi in the Tirumala temple unnoticed for over 400 years.

Next comes the some of the very famous songs of Annamayya

		Raga		Talam
1. Aadhivo Alladhivo	-	Madhyamarathi	-	Adi
2. Evvari Bakiyam	-	Bairai	-	Adi
3. Enthaga Nidhra	-	Kamboji	-	Kandachapu
4. Okapari Kokapari	-	Karaharapriya	-	Adi
5. Oh Baranathmaja	-	Sriragam	-	Adi
6. Kondalelo	-	Hindolam	-	Adi
7. Kshirabdhi Kanyakugu	-	Kuranji	-	Adi
8. Brahmam Okate	-	Revathi	-	Adi

In 1922, twenty five hundred copper plates comprising of about 14,000 Sankirtanas and a few other works, were found in a rock built cell, later named as Sankirtoma Bhandaragam, opposite to the Hundi.

Conclusion:

Ever since the discovery of this lost treasure Tirumala Devasthanas and other organizations in India are working hard to promote the music and literature of Annamacharya. His choice of words gives a mellifluous tone to his songs, charming the listener. His prodigious literary cauer earned him a place among the all time greats of Telugu literature.

References

1. Murty, UA Narasimha. "Padam-Padyam: The Story of Telugu Poetry." *Indian Literature* 46.1 (207 (2002): 150-154.
2. Rao, B. Rajanikanta. "Andhra's Musical Heritage." *Journal of the Indian Musicological Society* 8.4 (1977): 35.
3. N_r_ya_ar_vu, V_lc_ru, Velcheru Narayana Rao, and David Shulman. *Classical Telugu poetry: an anthology*. Vol. 13. Univ of California Press, 2002.
4. Dalal, Roshen. *Hinduism: An Alphabetical Guide*. Penguin Books India, 2010.