GEOGRAPHY AS MELODY IN MUTTUSVAMI DIKSHITA'S INDIAN MUSICAL WORKS*

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ABSTRACT. The life and works of Muttusvami Dikshita (1775–1834), a luminary of South Indian Karnatak classical music, abound in spatiocultural symbolisms of integration and harmony. Dikshita's peregrinations symbolize a cultural circuit of Hindu pilgrimage. His studies of North Indian Hindustani music at Varanasi (formerly Benares), and his transplantation of them throughout South India, make him an active agent of cultural diffusion, harmonizing cultural traditions through spatiosymbolic anchors. The religious expression of his musical genius, his songs, and his melodies contributed to linking linguistically and politically disparate regions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century India. The works of Dikshita affirm India's cultural continuity and underscore its enduring cultural empathies and similarities. *Keywords: cultural diffusion, Muttusvami Dikshita, India, music.*

> *Lord of the Universe, You who are situated in Kashi [Varanasi], come, bless me. . . . Like the region of Kashi, You bestow many boons. . . . O Deity, by the grace of the itinerant teacher, You are seen.*
>
> —Muttusvami Dikshita, quoted Shrinivasan 1996 [our translation]

Scant attention has been accorded the intersection of geography and music. The pioneering effort was by Peter Nash, who explored the geography of music across a global canvas (1968). Later, Martin Monkman offered a detailed look at geography and music pertaining to classical and popular Western musical styles (1992), and American country and popular music remain grist for the mill of George Carney (2002). Rolf Sternberg discussed the links of music and geography in the case of the "footloose" composer-conductor Wilhelm Richard Wagner, whose travels saw vivid expression as place experience in his librettos, orchestrations, and opera staging (1998).

The paucity of studies that explore the ties between geography and music is even more signal when the music being considered belongs to non-Western cultures. Cultural geographers and anthropologists have long agreed that the spatiocultural symbolisms of integration and harmony, especially in the context of large, complex non-Western societies, are inherently meaningful, but these cases tend to be little known beyond tight cultural bounds. Such exemplars should instead be part of the collective heritage of global cultural geography, if the discipline is to escape being mired in its currently dominant Western tradition. In this article we examine geographical themes in the musical works of Muttusvami Dikshita (1775–1834), a famous itinerant composer of classical South Indian Karnatak music.

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Classical Indian music is broadly categorized into the Hindustani (northern) and the Karnatak (southern) tradition or style. Hindustani music is heavily influenced by the musical systems of the Persian and the Central Asian Islamic cultures that ruled India in earlier centuries. The Karnatak musical tradition largely comprises devotional and spiritual themes and has more lyrical content than does Hindustani music. The two systems, though distinct, share technical aspects, such as notes and pitches, and claim a common ancestry in the ancient Hindu texts, the Vedas. To a person, the chief composers in the history of Karnatak music were considered religious figures, and their spiritual experience is intricately joined to their music. Some of these composers, including Muttusvami Dikshita, were itinerant and composed songs in honor of individual deities at temples they visited on their pilgrimages.

India's cultural diversity is prodigious. For all that, there is also a conscious "Indianness" that undergirds that diversity and provides a unifying theme for the myriad variations (Mookerji 1960). That a single theme of identity has endured over the long history of Indian culture is due in large measure to the personalities who acted to integrate cultural traditions without impairing the diversity itself. These unifiers made patent—and promoted—an island of unity in a sea of differences. The integrative work was done not on a political or poetical footing but through the propagation of values, beliefs, ideas, and motifs that transcended the narrower identities of caste, creed, and even region. India's integrators were sages, poet-saints, wandering minstrels, and, in some cases, rulers. Examples of past cultural integrators include Sankara (ca. eighth century C.E.), Purandaradasa (1484–1564), Maharaja Svati Tirunal (1813–1846), and many itinerant poet-saints. Themes of cultural integration abound in the life traces and musical works of Muttusvami Dikshita, making him a powerful exemplar of the syncretic Indian cultural paradigm.

The Cultural Context of Dikshita's Time

Dikshita's time was marked by consolidation of the British East India Company's political and economic control of India, after other competing European powers (the Dutch, the French) had been effectively vanquished. The Battle of Plassey (1757) had already resulted in "Company Bahadur" (literally, "the mighty East India Company") becoming the de facto ruler of Bengal and thereby controlling the trade of the rich Ganga Plain. The company also effectively controlled the entire coast of the Indian peninsula and its hinterland. Militarily emasculated Indian rulers of the princely states were permitted to exert their own exploitative control over their economically marginalized and fragmented territories. Movement of goods and people became more orderly, compared with the preceding period, when conflicts between the British and the French, and their ever-shifting alliances with the indigenous rulers, had created chaotic conditions. Because the British East India Company certainly profited from the pilgrim tax at important Hindu sacred centers, it was probably in the company's interest to maintain order, encourage pilgrimages, and countenance the movement of people in general (Mukherjee 1977, 156–159). Devel-

opment of European trading factories on the Coromandel coast from the seventeenth century onward resulted in much intercultural exchange. Probably it was in this commercial and colonial context that Western music began to filter into Indian musical families.

Although the larger Indian space was still territorially contested due to different warring factions, significant movement of people, products, and ideas was taking place at the local, regional, and national scales. As a musician, Dikshita was part of the cultural undercurrents that sustained and nurtured a fundamental Indian syncretic.

Dikshita's Life and Pilgrimages

Born into a Brahman family who worshiped Siva, Muttusvami Dikshita inherited a long and illustrious tradition of learning and scholarship that was, in keeping with his time, shaped around the Sanskrit language and drew on Hindu scripture, philosophy, and mythology. The standard biographical accounts are those of T. L. Venkatarama Aiyar (1968) and R. Raghavan (1975), who also provide toponymic information. Muttusvami Dikshita's parents, Ramasvamy Dikshita and Subbulakshmi, from Tiruvarur (in modern Tamil Nadu), observed many austerities—prolonged fasting, deep meditation, prayer, and supplication—at the temple of their family deity, Kumara, and at Vaidyesvarankoil, a nearby pilgrimage spot (Figure 1). Locally, the deity is called "Muttukumarasvami." Soon after their return to Tiruvarur, they bore a son whom they named "Muttusvami," after the deity whose blessing he was believed to be and whose auspicious birth star he shared (Omanakutty 1990). The couple later had two additional sons and one daughter.

In his early life, Muttusvami received musical and scriptural training from his parents. Education within the home was the preferred mode by which the family passed on the traditions of learning and the arts to the next generation. After several years in Tiruvarur, the family moved to Manali, near Chennai (formerly Madras). At Manali they encountered European musical traditions through the family's official contacts with the East India Company and learned a more vernacular music through informal interactions with people, including Irish fiddlers, who were associated with the company. One of the younger brothers, Balusvami, learned to play the violin and pioneered its use in Karnatak music. He later introduced Muttusvami Dikshita to the French and English band music he had learned to play on the violin. Muttusvami Dikshita would later compose Sanskrit lyrics set to the tunes of thirty-nine different airs, such as "God Save the Queen," "Voulez-vous danser?" and "O Whistle and I Will Come to You, My Lad" (Marr 1990; Shankara Murthy 1990).

After a few years' stay at Manali, Muttusvami Dikshita became the disciple of Chidambaranatha Yogin and joined his teacher on a pilgrimage to the holy city of Varanasi. There he lived for five years, learning Hindustani music and receiving metaphysical training from his guru. This schooling would be evident in the lyrics of his songs. Legend has it that when the time came for the teacher and Dikshita to

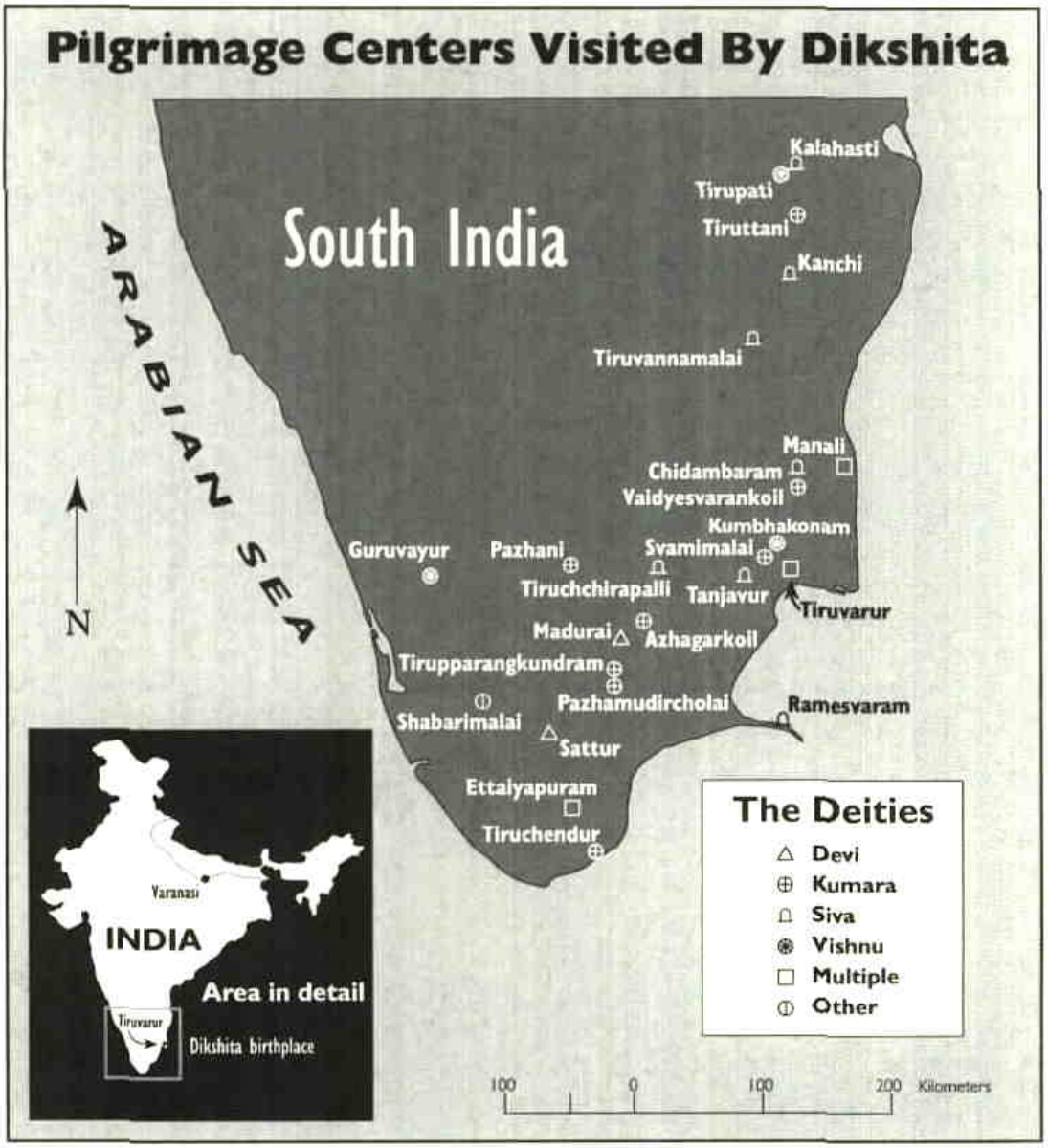

FIG. 1—Pilgrimage centers visited by Muttusvami Dikshita. *Sources:* Venkatarama Aiyar 1968; Raghavan 1975. (Cartography by the University of Nevada Mapping Facility)

part, the teacher asked him to reach into the sacred waters of the Ganga and accept as a blessing whatever object he found. When Dikshita did so, he found a *vina*, a lutelike stringed instrument (Venkatarama Aiyar 1968; Raghavan 1975). The vina also has a deep musicoreligious significance in the Hindu tradition as a symbol of learning and worship through music. Sarasvati, the Hindu goddess of learning, is always depicted with a vina in her hands.

Dikshita returned to the south after his sojourn in Varanasi and visited the shrine of his patron deity, Kumara, in Tiruttani. While he was sitting in deep and solitary contemplation, an old man appeared before him, put some sugar candy in Dikshita's

mouth, and disappeared into the sanctum sanctorum. Dikshita interpreted this as a vision of Kumara. One of the scriptural epithets for Kumara is "Guha" (embodiment of deep mystical knowledge). With this spiritual inspiration, he composed his first song, saluting Guha as his guru. Thenceforth all his songs bore "guru guha" as the stamp of authorship. Dikshita went on to compose a series of eight songs about the deity, using one of the eight Sanskritic declensions of the noun "guha" in each song.

This set the stage for the undertaking of pilgrimages in earnest. Dikshita traveled equipped with schooling in metaphysical enlightenment and trained in the art of playing the vina and singing devotional songs. He had already taken the voluntary vow of an impecunious life. En route back to Tiruvarur he visited shrines at Kanchi, Tiruvannamalai, Chidambaram, and Vaidyesvarankoil. He stayed at Tiruvarur for many years, composing devotional songs in salutation to the several deities in the temples of the town and at nearby shrines. For a time he lived in Kumbhakonam, because it was—and still is—a city with untold numbers of temples, which he visited. Then he moved to Tanjavur, where he continued his pilgrimage to many local and nearby shrines for several years. Tanjavur was the capital of the Maratha rulers, who were great patrons of the various arts, including music. Here lived his contemporaries Shyama Shastri (1762–1827) and Tyagaraja (1767–1847), the others who would be recognized as the pillars of the "musical trinity" of Karnatak music.

The next pilgrimage site for Dikshita was Tiruchchirapalli, where he is known to have visited several temples. Not distant was the famous Ramesvaram temple, situated on an island that is part of the chain of islands between Sri Lanka and India. Here Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu, is said to have worshiped Siva before his campaign against the demon king Ravana. This episode, part of the classic "victory of good over evil," is embodied in the great Hindu epic, the Ramayana. Equivalent to Varanasi in the north, Ramesvaram is the premier place of Siva pilgrimage in the south. Devout pilgrims bring holy water from Varanasi and other sacred places on the banks of the river Ganga and pour it ritually on the granite icon of Siva at Ramesvaram. This ritual act evokes a momentous Hindu myth, the descent of the holy river Ganga from heaven, in which Siva holds the mighty river in his matted locks before letting it gush forth to earth. This reenactment ritual is also a powerful symbol of the spiritual union of North and South India.

Dikshita, hearing that one of his brothers had gone to Ettaiyapuram at the invitation of the local king, traveled there, composing songs at each of the several shrines he visited. The brothers lived in Ettaiyapuram for several years, under the patronage of the local ruler. Muttusvami Dikshita visited numerous other pilgrimage centers, including some in the modern state of Kerala, and eventually returned to Ettaiyapuram. There, during the Festival of Lights in 1834, he passed away. His death, too, is said to have been surrounded by mystery. The precise dates of his visits to specific places are unclear, even unknown, making the kind of chronology presented by Sternberg (1998) impossible at present.

Dikshita's Music

Raaga (melodic structure), *taala* (rhythm), and *bhaava* (emotion) are the three main components of Indian classical music. In Karnatak music, lyrics are an additional, important vehicle for building and elaborating these components. Dikshita's music, rich in all four dimensions, shows raaga as his particular forte (Raghavan 1975). Indian classical music, like jazz, is open to ingenious interpretations through creative improvisations. The performer's virtuosity is judged by the authenticity and correctness of rendering a composition and by improvisation within the basic framework of the composition's structure.

Dikshita's compositions offer particularly authentic and important reference tools for understanding the character of different raagas from a time when sound recordings did not exist. The compositions have been handed down through a lineage of disciples under various kinds of patronages in different parts of princely South India (Raghavan 1975). There are variations on minor points, the details of whose musicology is beyond the scope of this essay.

In general, Dikshita's compositions encompass a wide variety of both rare and popular raagas. Each composition provides a concise delineation of the most important and characteristic nuances of its raaga. Where there are multiple compositions in different raagas, "it is as if photographs of a person are taken from different postures" (Venkatarama Aiyar 1968, 71–72).

The rhythmic structure of Dikshita's compositions is complex but generally in slow tempo with medium-tempo passages. Only a few are in medium tempo with fast-tempo passages. The tempos are ideally suited to being playing on the vina and sung in accompaniment. The leisurely pace of the compositions is evocative of the stillness of being that the Hindu system of yoga advocates as the perfect means to reflection and self-realization. "Apart from his mastery of raaga, Dikshitar also excelled in his profound exploration of [the slow tempo], which was the most appropriate tempo in his musical evocation of [the mood of serenity,] . . . in which the state of absorption in [his compositions] is so complete that there is 'no extraneous movement or desire to break that state of consciousness' " (Chandralekha, noted classical danseuse, quoted in Bharucha 1995, 222–223). "[It is] almost impossible to dance to the sheer 'weight' of [Dikshita's compositions]. The only movement that was appropriate had to be as still and concentrated as possible, closely related to yogic principles" (Bharucha 1995, 225).

Of Karnatak music composers, Dikshita is considered the most intellectual. Rather than offer social commentaries or messages, or seek specific favors, in his lyrics, he weaves together profound mystical and philosophical references from Hindu scriptures and lore, setting them to sophisticated patterns of melody and rhythm. They contain a verb that may pray ("Bestow Divine Love"; "Guide me"), offer praise ("Victory [to]"; "Salutations [to]"), or supplicate ("I seek refuge [in]"). His choice of Sanskrit as a medium of artistic expression is most appropriate for the linkages he provides to India's sacred lore and cultural traditions. He also com-

posed songs in the regional languages—Tamil and Telugu—and even some with lyrics in all three languages (Venkatarama Aiyar 1968; Raghavan 1975).

In one of his songs Dikshita himself says that he sang while playing a vina. The compositions were sung at the temples he visited, especially during religious festivals. Because the lyrics contain compact information about lore, scripture, metaphysics, and also ritual, the songs are particularly suited for rendition on specific calendar occasions of worship. Rather than emotional outbursts, they show serene contemplation. Therefore, no Dikshita song is inauspicious or inappropriate for any spiritual or religious occasion (Raghavan 1975; Shankar 1991).

Modern technology is making it possible to preserve renditions and interpretations of Dikshita's compositions in a variety of vocal and instrumental recordings. Every major Indian concert features at least a handful of his compositions. Except in concerts devoted to the compositions of a specific composer, a musician who does not include Dikshita compositions is considered immature and seriously lacking in scholarliness. Likewise, the ability to render them well is considered the mark of mature and profound musical learning.

The Geography of Dikshita's Pilgrimages

Dikshita's move to Manali was the start of his musical quest. Its significance as an initiative toward cultural integration is reflected in later compositions with Sanskrit lyrics and Indian raagas that he set to the tunes of English airs, testifying to his assimilative abilities.[1] He would travel widely, either gaining inspiration or paying homage, in his visits to South India's shrines. Deities at these holy places include Devi the mother goddess, Kumara, Siva, and Vishnu. Even though Dikshita was primarily a worshiper of Siva, he visited and sang devotional songs at the holy places of the other deities. This speaks to his inclusive, integrative, and eclectic approach, much in keeping with the larger and nonexclusive Indian ethos.

His first long-distance spiritual pilgrimage with his guru to Varanasi, the primordial city of Siva, is especially significant. Hindus consider Varanasi the holiest place on earth (Eck 1999). Siva is said to have declared that the name of Rama, uttered at Varanasi at the moment of a person's passing, will lead to liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. Varanasi has long been the center of Hindu learning, supporting a rich tradition of classical music. Study of Hindustani music at the sacred complex of Varanasi would have been a profound experience for Dikshita. There he could experience the differences and similarities between India's regional cultural traditions firsthand, propagating and blending them within the context of a culturally diverse India. The musical grounding and principles that he brought with him from the South Indian cultural region helped him learn and adapt to the northern musical systems. And there, quite close to Nepal, Dikshita took training in tantra and nondualist philosophy.[2] His legendary plucking of a vina from the sacred river Ganga has deep significance, in part because this emphasizes the profound sanctity of the event itself and in part because identification of the vina with the goddess of learning and with worship through music symbolizes the transfer-

ence of a sacred tradition through Dikshita's pilgrimage to Varanasi. Dikshita became the blessed and sanctified agent who literally carried a major regional musical tradition, delivered through the vina, to the other parts of India.

His return pilgrimage to the south marked a new beginning. Back in his familiar regional cultural milieu, he underwent a divine initiation into worship through music at Tiruttani, the first place featured in his compositions. The ethos of place brought about the musical outpouring of a deep spiritual experience, and this musical exposition tied the inner, spiritual place to the outer, physical place. For Dikshita, and other itinerant composers of Karnatak music, geopiety itself, their reverence for a place, evoked a musical and lyrical expression (Monkman 1992).

Dikshita's lyrics pertained to the specific deity at each holy place he visited. But his compositions also drew in subtle allusions to the local environment in which these deities were—and still are—situated. He fused divine space with physical space. Thus we see the elicitation of person-place relationships in his compositions. Because Dikshita saw the universal spirit in the local deities, his songs transcend the north–south dichotomy and, instead evoke integration. They also enhance the importance of each place through intertwining the local deity with the universal spirit. Universalizing the local deity through devotional songs has the effect of elevating the local sacred places.

Most of Dikshita's songs illustrate the theme of depicting the Universal Spirit in the local deities. In Hinduism the divine feminine, for example, is often referred to by generic or universal names, such as "Devi" (mother goddess) or "Sakti" (primordial energy). Her manifestations at specific sacred places, however, are given locally or regionally evocative names, such as "Minakshi" (one with fish-shaped eyes), "Kali" (black one), or "Vindhya-Vasani" (one residing in the Vindhya Mountains). We have selected two examples to elucidate the process. Minakshi's temple, situated in the heart of Madurai, is the largest and the most famous goddess pilgrimage center in India. In a song of prayer to this deity, Dikshita sings: "O, Minakshi, bless me, Thou who dwellest in the city of [Madurai]" (Shrinivasan 1996, 161; our translation). In the same song he extols Minakshi as the acme of nondual existence: "Thou who art the measurer, the measured, and the measurement"—which is to say, "You are the actor, the acted upon, and the action"—all three manifest as one embodied principle. Therefore, she is one who "breaks the shackles of [worldly] bondage." Although the goddess Minakshi is in the world, she is not of it, which enables her devotees to shed their mortal shackles. The worship of her at Madurai through Dikshita's work releases a devotee from the spatiotemporal conditioning of mundane existence. In that song, Dikshita also relates her to the regional ruling family as "the daughter of the Pandya king," bringing out the mythological tradition of the place and its ruling dynasty, and as "the creator of the ten notes on the vina," worshiping the primordial energy through the sounds of his favorite musical instrument, the vina. He infuses spiritual and political meaning together in Madurai, glorifies the deity, and then sanctifies the place permeated by the deity. This intertwined evocation of the spiritual, the political, and the physical carries an impor-

tant public message. Through Dikshita's songs, Madurai city does not remain a mere physical place; it is invested with the spirit of the powerful goddess. By associating her with the Pandya, the poet glorifies the rulers, a manner of paying tribute. The mother goddess of the locality is culturally universalized through such songs. The local and the universal become fluid symbols that interact freely and transform effortlessly into the other through the medium of melody. This process of universalizing the local in the Indian cultural tradition has been examined by McKim Marriott (1955).

The second example is a song that Dikshita sang at Sattur, in the drought-prone semiarid Ramnad region of Tamil Nadu (Shrinivasan 1996, 18). In an effort to capture water from low and erratic rainfall, generations of local rulers in southeastern Tamil Nadu have had many low, almost imperceptible earthen dams constructed. With the late-autumn rains, water accumulates behind the dams and forms shallow, elongated lakes that look like emeralds from above. This precious water supply has been the lifeblood of agriculture in the region. Drought used to mean distress, if not famine.

When Dikshita visited Sattur, it was in the grip of a severe drought. The local people, hearing about the "holy minstrel" who was visiting the local temple, entreated him to pray for rain on their behalf. Thereupon, he is said to have composed and sung this song in the raaga called *amritavarshini* (she who causes a rain of ambrosia), addressing Bhavani (the goddess there) as "One who bestows the rain of ambrosia of joy divine." The song concludes with a prayer to her: "I meditate upon Thee always, Goddess of Immortality, pour forth the rains, pour forth, pour forth." Legend has it that heavy rains soon came. In fact, after a while local residents feared a deluge. Responding to their subsequent concern, Dikshita is supposed to have recited the same song, changing only one word in the last line: "I meditate upon Thee always, Goddess of Immortality, stop the rains, stop, stop." Then, according to the legend, the rains stopped! Irrespective of its meteorological efficacy, this song is symbolic of the interplay between the spiritual and the earthly, through the medium of music. In his song Dikshita integrates physical environment and benevolence of the divine spirit, not to mention his compassion for the people who were suffering. He brings out both the pathos of the famine-ravaged people and the necessity of human endeavor to influence the suprahuman forces.

Dikshita's training in music was evident in the new genre of lyrical compositions launched when he returned to the south and made his first important pilgrimage to Tiruttani. He is credited with the introduction of several raagas to Karnatak music, which he set to words. Because raagas are not preserved as easily in their abstract form as in lyrical compositions set to them, Dikshita elevated raagas from musical exercises to living works, preserving the ones he brought with him from the Hindustani tradition by providing them with words commemorating South Indian deities.

Through his compositions Dikshita expresses worship of Siva, Vishnu, and the goddess Sakti or Devi, along, of course, with his own patron deity, Kumara. Always,

compositions were connected with important pilgrimage centers for each deity: Varanasi for Siva; Tirupati for Vishnu; Madurai for Devi/Sakti. This symbolizes the syncretic motif in his pilgrimages. By the nonsectarian, transcendental endeavor expressed through his music, Dikshita has become the embodiment of nonexclusive, syncretic, typically Indian personality.

Dikshita is indicative of integration in yet another way. In the Hindu religion, Vishnu and Siva represent, respectively, the sustenance and dissolution aspects of existence. The mother goddess (Devi, Sakti) represents the primordial energy that subsumes the Siva and Vishnu principles. The composition of songs about these three principal Hindu deities harmonizes the otherwise different principles embedded in them. In his ecclesiastical, lyrical worship of all three aspects, he freely enjoys the union of these principles within himself as a result of his nondualistic training and practice. Therefore, his songs do not glorify one deity at the expense of others. Instead, they elevate each one in turn to the same level and express each fully through the other. His compositions reflect nondualist philosophy at the highest level. Two examples illustrate this. In a song to the mother goddess he says of her: "One whom Vishnu and Siva have realized" (Shrinivasan 1996, 88; our translation). In a song about Krishna, he uses the description *gowripantaranga*, "beloved of the Consort (Siva) of Gowri" (Omanakutty 1990, 23; our translation).

Dikshita's pilgrimage, from the south to the north and back, symbolized a space of continuous flow—a circulation of ideas between what otherwise were distinct cultural regions. In his compositions, he provides clues to the locations of his songs. Some even provide significant geographical detail: "She who dwells on the banks of the pure Tamraparni" (Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu); "He who influences the Pandya and Kerala regions" (Ayyappan, at Shabarimalai, Kerala); and "Lord of the city of Guru and Vayu, the God of Wind" (Krishna, at Guruvayur, Kerala) (Shrinivasan 1996, 206, 207, 275; our translation). Other songs name the king or dynasty associated with the region: "Daughter of the Pandya king" (Minakshi, at Madurai); "established by King Rajendra Chozha" (Siva, at Tanjavur) (Omanakutty 1990, 21; Shrinivasan 1996, 161; our translation). Also presented are rituals performed at the shrine ("He who is pleased by the sounds of the flute and . . . other instruments" [Ayyappan, at Sabarimalai, Kerala]), mythological traditions ("He who is pleased by offerings of sesame seeds" [Saturn]), and metaphysical symbols and symbolisms associated with the deity ("dweller in the Source Chakra" [Ganesha, the elephant-headed god]) (Shrinivasan 1996, 275, 84, 162; our translation).

In a group of nine songs about the goddess Kamalamba (Tiruvarur), each song uses one of the eight declensions of the noun "Kamalamba," corresponding with each of the eight concentric corridors of that temple. The ninth song includes all eight declensions and focuses on the sanctum sanctorum, the center (Durga 1991, 59; Rao 1991, 54; Shrinivasan 1996, 201–202).

In short, Dikshita's place-specific musical compositions reaffirm the sanctity of India's holy places and invest them with additional linkages in space, time, and folk memory. Indian music, from either the northern or the southern tradition, is not

necessarily readily known to westerners. Nonetheless, with an Indian population of more than one billion, and subcontinental expatriates scattered across the globe (Eck 2001), it stands to reason that the geography that is explicit in the works of one of the country's best-beloved composers, a nearly sacred figure, might be better known abroad. Indeed, with the rising popularity of "world music," and such now-universal media as the World Wide Web, the influence of Muttusvami Dikshita can spread far.

Notes

1. A raaga is "a melody formed of certain well-defined sound phrases which distinguish it from other melodies formed of different [sound phrases, giving] every raga a persona different from every other raga" (Venkatarama Aiyar 1968, 67).

2. Nondualism, a Hindu philosophical subsystem, holds that the primordial principle (*brahman*) pervades the entire cosmos, that everything is a manifestation of it, that the individual consciousness in each being of the cosmos is identical with brahman, and that awakening to this reality results in liberation.

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