

Topic: Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita's Rudrapriyā - One name, multiple identities

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Abstract:

Often, rāga-s differentiate themselves with the slightest variation. One distinct phrase or a minor rearrangement of svara-s gives life to a new rāga with an independent identity. With the addition of more compositions to its name and repeated renditions new melodic patterns develop around these distinguishing markers, further establishing the rāga's uniqueness. There is another phenomenon that goes unnoticed. One rāga manifests as different versions of itself. Despite obvious variances, these different expressions of the rāga remain within one identity. The collapsing of a cluster of rāga identities into one form is not recognised and leads to some unforeseen consequences, such as the erasure of phrases that do not conform to the dominant version of the rāga. This raises another question. When do we cognitively recognise a rāga form as autonomous ?

The case of Rudrapriyā is even more curious. Here, Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita offers us different perspectives of the rāga in a series of compositions. Are they all one rudrapriyā or do they suggest something else? An investigation.