CHAPTER - IV

PURANIC REFERENCES, LEGENDS AND ANECDOTES FEATURED IN THE ŚIVA KRITIS OF MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR
The history of Hindu temples is intrinsically linked to myth and legends. There are innumerable variations of tales based among other things on region, language and cultural background. It should be kept in mind that the point is to use these legends to illustrate aspects of Hinduism or narrate anecdotes about specific temples.

Purāṇas, the popular texts on the legendary Hindu themes written in Sanskrit, date from the time of the great epics, the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyana (about 500 B.C) with which they share considerable material.

“Traditionally, a purāṇa treats five subjects, the creation of the world, the periodic destruction and renewal of the world, the genealogy of Gods and Saints, the epochs into which the history of creation is divided and dynastic histories. They deal principally with folk religious beliefs, especially as they relate to cult worship of Lord Śiva and Lord Viṣṇu.”\(^1\)

The purānic references in the kritis of Muthuswami Dikshitar is a noteworthy quality of his compositions. His encyclopaedic knowledge of Vēdās, Śāstrās, Āgamās, Tantrās and Philosophy are profoundly reflected in most of his kritis. Muthuswami Dikshitar travelled widely, visiting temples spread all over South India and sang in praise of their respective deities. When he composed the songs, he not
only included the sthalapurāṇa, temple architecture and deity praise, but also purāṇic characters related to the particular God or Goddess. Some legends and purāṇic stories have not grown popular amidst the common people. A detail study of Dikshitar kṛitis can give enough information in that field. “Many musicologists have treated Muthuswami Dikshitar as the 64th Nāyanmārs and the 13th Ālārs”. *

In his Śiva kṛitis Muthuswami Dikshitar has included purānic references where the Lord has taken the form of Anugrahamūrti, Ugrasamhāramūrti, Bhikshātananāmūrti, Ardhanareśwaramūrti and so on. He has also referred to the physical appearance of the Lord, musical instruments used by him and the different festivals celebrated on the Lord’s name. Some legendary characters are also included in the Śiva kṛitis of Muthuswami Dikshitar.

LORD SIVA AS ANUGRAHAMURTI

1. Kirātarjuna Mūrti

Once, Dēvēndra advised Arjuna to worship Lord Śiva to obtain the divine ‘Pāsupatāstra’. Arjuna observed severe penance in the Himalayas to please the Lord. The rishīs were surprised at the severity of Arjuna’s austerity and they informed the matter to Lord Śiva. Śiva wanted to test the Bhakti and Śakti of Arjuna. He took the form of a Kirāta (hunter) and came to Arjuna. At the same time, an Asura in the form of a boar was about to attack Arjuna, when he aimed an arrow at it. But the kirāta disputed the right of Arjuna to shoot the boar, which he was first to aim at. Arjuna disagreed. Later they both simultaneously shot the boar and killed it. Arjuna and Kirāta claimed the dead boar and a fight arose
between them. The former felt exhausted. When Arjuna regained his senses he recognised in the Kirāta Lord himself. Lord Śiva admitted the strength of Arjuna and blessed him with the most powerful weapon - the ‘Pāṣupatāstra’. *

The kriti ‘Nīlāchalanātham’ in the rāga Sumadyuti rāga mentions Lord Śiva presenting the divine weapon to Arjuna, pleased with the latter’s penance. The charanam takes the words,

‘Arjuna Tapōmahita Pāṣupatāstra’.

2. Dakshināmūrti

After the death of Sati, Once when Śiva was alone, the sons of Brahma (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatkumara) came to have a darsana of Lord Śiva and prostrated before him. They requested the Lord to teach them the way to get rid of ‘Avidya’ and attain salvation. They told him that in spite of the vast study of scriptures, they had no internal peace and that they were in need of learning the inner secrets by knowing which, they could attain salvation. Hearing this, Lord Śiva assumed the form of ‘Dakshināmūrti’ and remaining as the Guru Supreme, began to teach them the inner secrets by keeping ‘Mauna’ and showing the ‘Chinmudra’ by his hand. The sages began to meditate on the lines shown by the Lord and attained the state of inexpressible and illimitable joy. *

Thus Lord Śiva came to be known as ‘Dakshināmūrti’ Dakshina literally means jnāna or knowledge. Lord Śiva as Dakshināmūrti is depicted in the following kritis of Muthuswami Dikshitar.

1. ‘Dakshināmūrte’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam
The pallavi starts as ‘Dakshināmūrtē’ and depicts the Lord as always steeped in silent meditation.

‘Dakshināmūrtē Vidalita Dāṣārathe chi-
dānandapūrte Sadā maunakirte.’

The anupallavi mentions the sages Sanaka and others and says that the Lord is devoted to different forms of knowledge and obliterates ignorance.

‘Rakshamām Sanakādi Rājayōgīstutē
Aksharānuraktē Avidyāviraktē’

2. ‘Srī Dakshināmūrtimīṣam’ in the rāga Phenadyuti

This kriti depicts the Lord as the awareness of the Supreme spirit in the pallavi.

‘Srī Dakshināmūrtimīṣam
Chitprakāśam Pranaumi’

The charaṇa depicts Him as the one who destroys all the doubts of the sages and others through the silent exposition of Mudra. He is the sun who removes the primordial darkness of Avidyā or ignorance.

‘Munijānādi Nikhila Samāṣayaharam
Anādyavidyā Tamō Bhāskaram’

3. ‘Srī Dakshināmūrtim’ in the rāga Atana

Lord Śiva is depicted as the bestower of knowledge in the pallavi of this kriti.

‘Srī Dakshināmūrtim Sadā Chintayēham
Sadānanda Vidyaprada Guruguhakīrtim’
The charana include the terms ‘Chinmudrakaram’ and ‘Nadanta Vēditam Nija Sanakādinutam’.

**Arddhanārīśwara Mūrti**

Initially, Brahma the creator, could create only Prajāpatīs. He therefore felt concerned with the slow progress of creation. Unless there were females, how could the creation progress. He therefore meditated on Mahēśwara who appeared before him in the form of ‘Arddhanārīśwara’, a composite form of Lord Śiva and Goddess Parvati. Brahma then realised his error and prayed to the left of Mahēśwara to give him a female to proceed with the duty of creation. Lord Śiva then created from his body a Goddess named ‘Parāśakti’. From then the creation of the world went on smoothly.*

The Arddhanārīśwara form of Lord Śiva is depicted in many of the Śiva kritīs of Mūthuswami Dikshitar.

1. ‘Arddhanārīśwaram’ in the rāga Kumudakriya

   In this kriti, the pallavi itself starts in the name of the Mūrti as
   ‘Arddhanārīśwaram Aradhayāmi Satatam’

   In the anupallavi the Lord is depicted as one who loves
   ‘Arddhanārīśwari’
   ‘Arddhanārīśwarīpriyakaram’

2. ‘Nāgalingam’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam
In this kriti the anupallavi mentions the Arddhanārāśwara form of Lord Śiva as,

‘Nāgavallīprasangam
Nagajārddhāṅgam’

**LORD ŚIVA AS UGRASAMHĀRA MŪRTI**

1. **Antakāntaka Mūrti**

Antakāsura was the son of Hiranyakṣha, one of the two sons of Kasyapa and Diti, the other being Hiranyakāṣipu. Antakāsura was the chief of Asuras. He practised severe penance and obtained several boons from Lord Brahma. He became so very powerful that he started creating annoyance to the Devas. Devas approached Lord Śiva.

Lord Śiva got ready to fight against the Asura. He made the three well known snakes, Vāsuki, Takshaka and Dhananjaya to serve as his belt and bracelets. An Asura named Nila, who had secretly planned to kill Śiva, came out in the form of an elephant. Nandi, Śiva’s bull came to know of this and informed Virabhadra and he took the shape of a lion and attacked and killed Nila. The skin of the elephant was presented by Virabhadra to Śiva who wore it as His upper garments. Clad with His curious garments and ornamented with the serpants and using His powerful Trisūla, Śiva started fighting against Antaka. Atlast Śiva had to aim His arrow and shoot the Asura. Blood began to flow in profusion and each drop of it when touched the ground assumed the shape of another Antaka. Thus there arose thousands of Antakās to fight against Śiva. The Lord was atlast forced to thrust His Sūla through the body of the original
Antakāsura and began to dance. Lord Vishnu destroyed all the secondary 
Antakāsurās with His Chakrāyudha. To stop the blood from falling on the 
earth Śiva created out of the flame that was issuing from His mouth, a 
Śakti called ‘Yōgēśwari’. Ultimately, the Asura met his end at the hands 
of Lord Śiva. *6

The destroyal of Antakāsura is refered to, in the kriti,

1.‘Chintayamākandamūla’ in Bhairavi rāga (Charanam) 
   ‘Antakasūdanam Kundaradanam’

2.‘Chintaye Mahālingamūrtim’ in the rāga Paras (Anupallavi) 
   ‘Antakāntakam Āditārakam’

Tripurāntaka Mūrti

The three sons of Tarakāsura performed great penance and pleased 
Lord Brahma. The brothers attained the boon that the three forts were to 
be united into one after a thousand years and that on the particular day 
they were to be destroyed by a single arrow only. But of these three forts 
one was made of gold, another of silver and the third of iron. The Asurās 
gradually started harassing the Dēvās. The Gods including Indra could 
not safe guard themselves and they approached Lord Brahma to find a 
way out of this situation. Brahma told them that only a single arrow of 
Lord Śiva could destroy the three cities.

Śiva took upon the task and requested the Gods to yield half their 
energies to him. All the Gods were ready. Lord Śiva became very 
powerful. Moreover, Lord Vishnu turned out to become His arrow, Agni
its barb and Yama its feather. He made the Vēdās His bow with Savitri as the bow string. At last, Śiva destroyed the cities and their inhabitants.

The Tripurāntaka Mūrti form of Lord Śiva is mentioned in a number of Dikshitar kritis. They are,

1. ‘Mahālingēśwaram’ in the rāga Paras (Charāṇam)
   ‘Kālaharam Puraharam Śankaram’

2. ‘Nīlakanṭam Bhajēham’ in the rāga Kedārgaula (Charāṇam)
   ‘Dakshiṇa Kāśipuram Danḍita Kāma Tripuraharam’

3. ‘Nīlāchalanātham’ in the rāga Sumadyuti (Charāṇam)
   ‘Pāṣupatāstrapradam Tripurādiharam’

4. ‘Paramēśwara’ in Nata rāga (Anupallavi)
   ‘Purahara Mrugadhara’

5. ‘Pārvatīpatim’ in the rāga Hamsadhwni
   ‘Garvita Tripurādiharana Chaturam’

6. ‘Sankaranārāyanam’ in the rāga Narayana Desakshi (Charāṇam)
   ‘Kālaharam Tripuraharam’

7. ‘Śringārādi Navarasāngi’ in the rāga Dhavalangam (Charāṇam)
   ‘Angārakādi Vinutāṅgaja Tripurāre’

8. ‘Sṝti Māthrubbūtam’ in the rāga Kannada (Charanam)
   ‘Dharahāsa Tripurādi Haraṇam’

9. ‘Sṝti Tyāgarājasya’ in the rāga Rudrapriya (Charanam)
   ‘Śankarasya Puraharasya’
10. ‘Sadāśivamūpāsmahē’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Charaṇam)

‘Purāṇapurusham Purāntakam’

11. ‘Sakalāsura-vinutam’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Charaṇam)

‘Vikāṭa Guruguha Vijaya Tripurahara’

12. ‘Tyāgara-jēna’ in the rāga Salakabhairavi (Charaṇam)

‘Māra Kāla Tripurādi Haraṇēna’

Kālāri Mūrti

Sage Mrukandu was a great devotee of Lord Śiva. He was issueless. He prayed to God for a son. Pleased with his devotion, Lord Śiva appeared before him and offered him either to have a brilliant son having a short span of life (16 years) or a number of useless sons, each with a long life. The sage opted for the former and was blessed with a son who was named Mārkandēya. The child grew up to be an exceptionally intelligent boy. He also learnt about his short span of life. He therefore devoted much of his time to the worship of Gods and ultimately reached Tirukkadaiyur and started worshipping the Linga enshrined in a temple. Just then the attendants of Yama arrived to take away the life of Mārkandēya. Because of the intense devotion of the boy to the Lord, they were unable to take him with them. Later, Yama himself came to the spot to take away Mārkandēya. Yama tried to drag the boy from the Śiva temple when the Lord burst out of the Linga in great anger and kicked Yama on his chest which unnerved him completely. Yama was very sorry for his deed. Śiva then blessed Mārkandēya that he would for ever remain sixteen year old and become ‘Chiranjeevi’. Śiva in the act of chastising
Yama is known as the ‘Kālāri Mūrti’ Dikshitar kritis in which there is reference to the destruction of Yama or Kāla are,

1. ‘Kailāsanātham’ in the rāga Vegavahini (Charanam)
   ‘Kāla Kāma Harana Charaṇa Nētram’

2. ‘Mahālingēśwaram’ in the rāga Paras (Charanam)
   ‘Kālaharam Puraharam Śankaram’

3. ‘Nāgalingam Bhajēham’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Charanam)
   ‘Kālaharam Sirōvidhruta Gangam’

4. ‘Sankaranārāyaṇam’ in the rāga Narayana Desakshi (Charanam)
   ‘Kālaharam Tripuraharam’

5. ‘Tyāgarājēṇa’ in the rāga Salakabhairavi (Charanam)
   ‘Māra Kāla Tripurādi Haraṇēna’

6. ‘Sankaramabhirāmim’ in the rāga Kamalamanohari (Charanam)
   ‘Yamanigrāhānugraham and
   Bhakta Mārkandēyāyushpadam’

7. ‘Samba Sadāsivāya’ in the rāga Kamboji (Charanam)
   ‘Mārkandēyāyushprada nippuṇatarāya’

Kāmāntaka Mūrti

Dākshāyani, the consort of Lord Śiva, also known as Sati, immolated herself by jumping into the sacrificial fire of Daksha Prajāpati, her father, as he had shown utter disrespect to Śiva, by not offering him the oblation. She was reborn as Parvati to Himavān and she
began to love Śiva, the great YIGIN. In the meantime Tārakāśura started subjugating the Gods who were unable to safe guard themselves. The Gods knew that only a son born to Lord Śiva could destroy Tārakāśura. Since Śiva was engaged in meditation. The Dēvās deputed Kāma or Manmatha, the God of love to divert His attention. Kāma approached Lord Śiva and disturbed Him discharging his flowery arrows. Incensed at this interference of Kāma, in His mind, Śiva opened His third eye which emitted fire and on the spot reduced Kāma to ashes. But at the same time He fell in love with Parvathi. Later, a son was born to them, who later killed Tārakāśura, much to the relief of the Gods. In answer to the prayers of Rati, the consort of Kāma, Śiva granted her a boon that she would be reunited with Kāma after he was reborn as Pradyumna. It is a general belief in the South that Kāma was destroyed by Śiva at Tirukkurai, in Tanjore District.

There are a number of Dikshitar kritis with the reference of the Lord as Kāmāntaka Murti.

1. ‘Kailāsanātham’ in the rāga Vegavahini(Charaṇam)
   ‘Kālakāmaharaṇa Charaṇa Nētram’

2. ‘Nāgalingam’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Charaṇam)
   ‘Karuṇāpāngam Vijitānangam’

3. ‘Nīlakaṇṭam Bhaje’ In the rāga Kedarāgaula (Charaṇam )
   ‘Danḍita Kāma Tripuram’

4. ‘Pāhimam Ratnāchala’ in the rāga Mukhari (Charaṇam)
Brahmaṣiracchēdana Mūrti

Once, Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu had a dispute on the matter, who the greater among them was. Lord Śiva appeared before them in the form of an infinite jyōthi. They were asked to find the beginning and end of the jyōthi. Brahma took the form of a swan and Vishnu that of a boar and set out for the task. Finally both of them failed in their attempt. Vishnu accepted defeat and asked Śiva to forgive him. On the other hand Brahma with the help of a Kētaki flower told the Lord that he saw the upper end of the jyōthi. Understanding that Brahma was lying, Lord Śiva became angry and from His third eye was born a huge figure named Bhairava. Śiva ordered Bhairava to cut off the head of Brahma that told
the lie. Brahma was also cursed that he would not have pūja on his name on earth.

The kriti ‘Kālabhairavam’ in the rāga Bhairavam has reference to Bhairava and the Lord who plucked away one of the head of Brahma. The kriti begins as ‘Kālabhairavam Bhajēham’ and in the Charanām it goes as,

‘Vārijāśanasya Krndanam’

The kriti also takes the phrase ‘Viddhikapāladharanam’ which means one, who holds the Brahma kapāla.

Once Brahma called Śiva Kāpāli and asked him to protect the world. Śiva felt insulted at this and in anger cut off the fifth head of Brahma with his left thump-nail. But unfortunately the Head of Brahma stuck on to the hands of Śiva. Later Brahma himself suggested him the way to get rid of the head. Lord Śiva was asked to observe the life of a Kāpālika for twelve years at the end of which the head would fall off. At the end of the twelfth year, Siva came to the sacred city of Vāranāsi and visited various sacred places. But the kapāla stuck to His hand was removed only after taking a bath in the sacred pond, ‘Kapālamōchana Tīrtha’. Even today the place is famous for ancient sanctity.

Dakshasamhāra Mūrti or Vīrabhadra Mūrti

The Gods and Rishīs once assembled at a sacrifice. When Daksha entered the hall, all there present except Śiva, rose up in reverence to Daksha Prajāpati. Daksha however took offensive to Śiva remaining seated at the time of his entry and very strongly declared that Śiva
henceforth be deprived of His share of offerings in the sacrifice. Siva then left the gathering. Sometime later, Daksha himself arranged a great sacrifice at ‘Kanakhala’ to which all the Gods with their consorts except Śiva and Sati were invited. Although Sati wished to attend the yāga, Śiva disagreed. But when Sati insisted, He permitted her to go alone. As expected, Sati was insulted and she ended her life in the sacrificial fire.

When Lord Śiva heard the news of Sati’s death, He in anger, tore a lock of His matted hair from which was created ‘Vīrabhadra’ and many other terrific gaṇās who proceeded to Kanakhala with Rudra himself at their command. They destroyed the sacrifice and killed Daksha. But on the prayer from the Rishis present there, Śiva agreed to revive Daksha, carrying a goat’s head instead of usual human ones.

Dikshitar kṛitis which refer to the events of Daksha yāga and Vīrabhadra Mūrti are,

1. ‘Akshayalinga Vibhō’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Anupallavi)
   ‘Dakshaśikshana Dakshatara’

2. ‘Rudrakōpajāta’ in the rāga Rudrapriya (Pallavi and Charanānam)
   ‘Rudrakōpajāta Vīrabhadramāśrayē’ (Pallavi)
   ‘Gajamukha Ganēsaraksham
   Ajavadana Daksha Śiksham’ (Charanānam)

Bhikṣhātana Mūrti

The Rishīs of Dārukavanam thought that there was absolutely
no use in loving and adorning Lord Śiva and that they could attain Mōksha through the performance of sacrifices. They left off worship of the Lord and did sacrifices vigorously.

Lord Śiva wanted to teach them a lesson. He asked Vishnu to assume the form of Mōhini and enter the abode of all Rishīs in Dāruka forest. He also wanted Vishnu to excite their passion, delude them and destroy their vratās. Lord Śiva then put himself in the form of a mendicant beggar.

There upon Lord Hari assumed the form of Mōhini and entered the dwelling point of the Rishīs in Dāruka Vanam. All the Rishīs lost their power of understanding and discrimination and followed Mōhini under strong excitement of passion.

Lord Śiva entered the Parnakuteers of the wives of the Rishīs, sang the stutīs and hymns beautifully and roamed about as a mendicant beggar (Bhikshātaka). The wives of Rishīs became excited and followed Lord Śiva. They entreated Him in various ways to satisfy them. Lord Śiva multiplied Himself and appeared in the mind of each woman. All the women enjoyed heartily.

Seeing their wives moving away with a mendicant the Rishīs tried different cruel methods to destroy Him. Atlast, they realised that it was none other than Lord Śiva Himself. They fell at His feet and asked forgiveness.

Muthuswami Dikshitar has mentioned the Bhikshātana Mūrti in some of his kritīs.
1. ‘Mārakōṭilāvanya’ in the rāga Arabhi (Anupallavi)
   ‘Dārukavana Tapōdhana Taruṇīmōha-kara Bhikshāṭana Vēshadhara Śankara’

2. ‘Śwētāranyēśwaram’ in the rāga Arabhi (Charanam)
   ‘Bhikshatāna Vēshadharam’

3. ‘Hāṭakēśwara’ in the rāga Bilahari (Charanam)
   ‘Dārukavanastha Tapōdhanaḍhyugra Tapah Prabhāva Sambhava Mūrte’

**Bhairava**

“Bhairava is the Pūrṇarūpa of Lord Śiva. He is so called because he protects the Universe (Bharna) and is also terrible (Bhishana). He is also called Kālabhairava for even the Kāla, God of death is afraid of Him. He is called ‘Amarāntaka’ because He kills the evil persons and ‘Pāpabhakshaka’ because he swallows the sins of His devotees. Bhairava is the Lord of the sacred city of Kāśi.”

Bhairava was born out of the fierceful anger of Lord Śiva. As soon as He was born, without the permission of Lord Śiva, he defeated the Dēvās. On this account Siva cursed him and made him a tree called ‘Tātiri’. Later, Siva blessed him saying that people praying to the Dēvās would pray to him also to attain full result. The cursed Bhairava, because he defeated the Dēvās, was called the ‘Damantaka’ tree.(Damanam means defeat) This tree is still being offered pūja by devotees. It was Bhairava who plucked of Brahma’s head and so he is in the form which
holds the Brahma Kapāla. ‘Kālabhairava’ finds mention in Dikshitar’s Śiva stuti in the rāga Bhairavam. The pallavi starts as,

‘Kālabhairavam Bhajēham Aniṣam
Kaśipuravāsam Bhūteṣa’

The Brahma Kapālam is mentioned in the Charaṇam as

‘Dhīrataram Viddhikapāladharam’

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE OF LORD ŚIVA

Lord Śiva with five faces and in the form of Ōmkāra

“Inorder to perform the five karmās, Srishti, Sthiti, Samhāra etc. smoothly, Śiva has five faces. Four of them are in the four directions and one in the centre. The five karmās are treated as the ‘Panchabhūtās’. It is also said that the primordial sound, ‘Ōmkāra’ evolved from these five faces. The ‘a’kāra evolved from the face that turns towards the North, ‘u’kāra from the face towards the west, ‘m’kāra from the face towards the south and the anuswara from the face towards the east and nada from the central face.”

Lord Śiva has three eyes which are the Sun, Moon, and the Fire. The third eye has the power of burning objects into ashes. So they are opened only when He wishes to destroy somebody. The five faces, three eyes and the primordial sound is depicted in many of the Siva kritis of Muthuswami Dikshitar.

1. ‘Agastīswaram’ in the rāga Lalita (Charaṇam)

‘Jalaruhāpta Chandrāgni Drṣam’
2. ‘Chidambarēśwaram’ in the rāga Bhinnashadjam (Charaṇam)
   ‘Bhāskara Śaṣiśēkharam Trinētram’

3. ‘Kanakasabhāpatim’ in the rāga Malavasri (Charaṇam)
   ‘Dinakara Chandrāgni Ļōchanam’

4. ‘Kāṣi Viśwēśwara’ in the rāga Kamboji (Charaṇam)
   ‘Ravi Śaṣi Vahnētram’

5. ‘Kāyārohanēsam’ in the rāga Devagandharam (Charaṇam)
   ‘Bhavapāṣamōchanam Trinayanam’

6. ‘Nābhōmaṇi’ in the rāga Nabhomani (Pallavi)
   ‘Nābhōmaṇi Chandrāgni Nayanam’

7. ‘Pranatārthiḥharāya’ in the rāga Samantam (Charaṇam)
   ‘Ghrni Śaṣi Vahni Nayanāya’

8. ‘Nīlakanṭāya’ in the rāga Nadanamakriya (Charaṇam)
   ‘Bālārkka Śaṣi Vahninētra Dharāya’

9. ‘Pāhimāṃ Ratnāchala’ in the rāga Mukhari (Anupallavi)
   ‘Rohinīṣa Ravi Vahni Nayanāya’

10. ‘Pālayamāṃ’ in the rāga Nayaki (Charaṇam)
    ‘Divakarāgni Śaṣi Nētra’

11. ‘Pārvatīśwarēṇa’ in the rāga Bhushavali and ‘Śankaranarayananam’ in
the rāga Narayana Desakshi (Charaṇam)

‘Sūrya Chandrāgni Nayanam’

12. ‘Srī Dakshināmūrtim’ in the rāga Atana (Charaṇam)

‘Vahni Ravi Śaṣi Lōchana’

13. ‘Viṣwēswarō Rakshatu’ in the rāga Kanada (Charaṇam)

‘Śaṣi Ravi Vahni Lōchana’

Lord Śiva with five faces is depicted in the following kritīs.

1. ‘Sadāśivēna’ in the rāga Sindhuramakriya (Charaṇam)

‘Sadyōjātādi PanchaMukhēṇa’

2. ‘Pāhimām Ratnāchala’ in the rāga Mukhari (Charaṇam)

‘Sadyōjātādi Panchamukha’

3. ‘Kāṣi Viṣwēswaram’ in the rāga Kamboji (Charaṇam)

‘Kuvalayōdi Panchavadana Swayambhō’

4. ‘Vadanyēswaram’ in the rāga Devagandhar (Charaṇam)

‘Panchānanam Praṇata Gajānanam’

5. ‘Ekamranōtha in the rāga Gamakakriya (Charaṇam)

‘Panchāṭīta Sadyōjātādi

Panchamukham Sumukham’
Lord Śiva who adorns Ganga

The Ganga entered the matted locks of Lord Śiva at the request of Bhageeratha, who observed severe penance for the descent of Ganga to Pātāla for the redemption of his ancestors, the thousand sons of Sāgara, who had been burnt to ashes by Sage Kapila. There upon she followed down from the locks of Lord Śiva. Once she was drunk up by the Sage Jāhnu as her water inundated the Yajnaśāla of the Sage. She came out out of the ear of the Sage and acquired the name ‘Jāhnavi’. She is also known by the name ‘Bhägeerathi’, daughter of Bhageeratha. The Ganga flowed into Pātāla as Bhägeerathi. The ancestors of the King were raised to heaven by the touch of the sacred waters of Ganga.

In the Satya yuga all places were sacred. In the Trēta Yuga, Pushkara was considered most holy by the people. In the Dvāpara Yuga, Kurukshētra was considered as the most sacred place. In Kali Yuga, the Ganga has that glory. ‘He who utters the name of Ganga even from 100 miles afar, is freed from sins and attains the abode of Lord Hari’

Ganga comes off the Supreme Being. She enters the feet of Lord Hari and reaches Vaikuṇṭha. She issues from the Gōlōka and passes through the regions of Vishṇu, Brahma, Śiva, Dhruva, Chandra, Surya, Tapati, Janah, Manah and reaching Indralōka flows as Mandākini.

The Lord adorning the Ganga in His matted Locks is thus called ‘Gangādhara’. This form is depicted in many of the Śiva kritis of Muthuswami Dikshitar.
1. ‘Agastēśwaram’ in the rāga Lalita (Charaṇam)
   ‘Jāhnāvīdharam Satatam’

2. ‘Chidambarēśwaram’ in the rāga Bhinnashadjam (Charaṇam)
   ‘Sṛī Sivānanda Gangādharam Mrugadharam’

3. ‘Nīlāchalanātham’ in the rāga Sumadyuti (Charaṇam)
   ‘Gangādharam Śūlādidharam’

4. ‘Pāhimām Ratnāchala’ in the rāga Mukhari (Charaṇam)
   ‘Gangādhara Āgamasāra’

5. ‘Śringārādi’ in the rāga Dhavalangam (Charaṇam)
   ‘Gangādhara Vrushabha Turanga’

6. ‘Ānandanaṭana’ in the rāga Kedaram (Charaṇam)
   ‘Śeetāṃṣu Gangādharam’

7. ‘Aruṇāchalanātham’ in the rāga Saranga (Charaṇam)
   ‘Svapradeepa Mauni Vidhrutha Gangam’

8. ‘Nāgalingam’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Charaṇam)
   ‘Kālaharam Śirōvidhrutha Gangam’

9. ‘Paramēśwara’ in the rāga Nata (Charaṇam)
   ‘Panchanadēśwara Gangādhēśwara’
**Lord Śiva as Nilakantha**

In order to be immortal, the Dēvās once decided to churn the ocean using Mandhara Parvatha as the churning rod and Śēsha as the churning rope. The great mountain was then encircled by Śēsha and the Dēvās and Asurās took hold of the rope on either side. The Dēvās took the tail end of Śēsha and the Demons took the head end. Śēsha firmly coiled around the Mandhara Parvatha, after which the Dēvāsurās started churning the Pālāzhi ocean. Soon after the emergence of Lakshmi, Uchaisrava(Horse), Kaustubha(Gem) and so on, there arose a terrible form of blue color shining like golden clouds. It was the most deadly poisonous ‘Kālakuṭa’. All present there were terrified when Kālakuṭa declared that he would destroy all of them unless they went to Lord Śiva. All of them approached Śiva praying for their rescue. Śiva came to the spot and swallowed the poison. But Parvati scared by the consequence, pressed the Lord’s throat with her hands and prevented the poison from going down to Śiva’s stomach and killing Him. The poison remained in the Lord’s throat and gave it a blue color, thus earning Śiva the title of ‘Nīlakanṭa’.

Muthuswami Dikshitar has mentioned Lord Śiva as ‘Nīlakanṭa’ in many of his Śiva kritis.

1. ‘Kailāsanāham’ in the rāga Vegavahini (Charaṇam)
   ‘Nīlakanṭa Guruguha Putram’

2. ‘Tyāgarājam Bhajare’ in the rāga Yadukulakamboji (Charaṇam)
   ‘Nīlakanṭamanēka Phaladam’
3. ‘Ānandanaṭana’ in the rāga Kedaram (Charaṇam)
   ‘Ṣitāṃṣu Gangādharam Nilakandharam’

4. ‘Vadanyēśwaram’ in the rāga Devagandhari (Charaṇam)
   ‘Paraśu Mrugadharam Nilakandharam’

Lord Śiva wearing Tiger skin, Elephant skin, Trident, Deer, Damaru, Fire, Serpents etc.

The Rishīs in the Dārukavana performed a yajna to destroy Lord Śiva. A cruel tiger came out of the fire. They commanded the tiger to kill Lord Śiva. But the Lord killed the tiger and wore the skin around His waist. Then they created a Trident for the destruction of the Lord which He accepted as His weapon in his hands. A deer with sharp horns was also created for the same and the Lord kept it in His Left hand. The cobras they created were worn as the Lord’s ornaments. The Bhūtagaṇās formed an army to the Lord. Śiva made the Damaru also His instrument. The Sages also created an Asura named Muyalaka to kill the Lord. Muyalaka marched with the Yajna-fire to destroy the Lord. The Lord held the fire as Malu in His hand and kept the Asura under His feet. *18

In days of yore, Gajasura did severe penance. Brahma appeared before him and asked him what boon he wanted. Gajasura asked Brahma for powers and inexhaustible wealth. Brahma agreed. But he also said that if he fought against Lord Śiva, he would lose his boon. There upon Gajasura defeated Dēvās and Indra. He caused annoyance to the Rishīs. They approached Lord Śiva for help. Finally Gajasura came to attack Lord Śiva Himself. The Lord killed the Asura, tore the skin and wore it as
His garments. This is why in some forms He is wearing the elephant skin and in some, tiger skin. *19

Lord Śiva clad in elephant and tiger skin is depicted in many kṛtīs of Muthuswami Dikshitar. In some there are special mention of elephant or tiger and in some, there is a common mention as skin. The depiction of the Lord with trident, deer, damaru etc. finds mention in many Dikshitar kṛtīs.

**Lord Śiva clad in skin**

1. ‘Chintayēham sadā’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Nottuswara)
   ‘Danti Charmāmbaram’

2. Sankaranārāyanam’ in the rāga Narayana Desakshi (Charaṇam)
   ‘Śārddūla Charmāmbarāḍidharam’

3. Brihadīśwarāya’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Anupallavi)
   ‘Bhāsamāna Charmāmbarāḍhārāya’

4. ‘Ānandanaṭana’ in the rāga Kedaram (Charaṇam)
   ‘Bhūteśam Śārddūla Charmāmbaram’

5. ‘Sidheśwarāya’ in the rāga Nilambari (Charaṇam)
   ‘Charmāmbarāḍhārāya’

**Lord Śiva holding deer**

1. ‘Chidambarēśwaram’ in the rāga Bhinnashadjam (Pallavi)
   ‘SṛīŚivānanda Gangādharam Mrugadharam’
2. ‘Paramēśwara’ in the rāga Nata (Anupallavi)
   ‘Purahara Mrugadhara Sundarēśwara’

3. ‘Paṣupatīśwaram’ in the rāga Sivapantuvarali (Charanām)
   ‘Paraśumrugadharam Šūlādidharam’

4. ‘Ēkāmranaṭhāya’ in the rāga Vira Vasantam (Charanām)
   ‘Karavidhrutha Kurangam’

5. ‘Nāgalingam Bhajēham’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Charanām)
   ‘Nitya Sudhākara Vidhruta Kurangam’

6. ‘Srī Mātrubhūtam’ in the rāga Kannada (Anupallavi)
   ‘Kamalatara Dhruta kuranagam’

7. ‘Chintayēham Sada’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (NoṭṭuswaraSahitya)
   ‘Kanta Harinutam Karadhruta Mrugam’

**Lord Śiva as Sūlapāni**

1. ‘Kailāsanātham’ in the rāga Vegavahini (Charanām)
   ‘Ṣūlapānim Atyādbhuta Chitram’

2. ‘Kālabhairavam’ in the rāga Bhairavam (Anupallavi)
   ‘Ṣūla Chakra Pāsa Danda Hastam’

3. ‘Marakatalingam’ in the rāga Vasanta (Charanām)
   ‘Mālakapāla Šūlādidharam’

4. ‘Paṣupatīśwaram’ in the rāga Sivapantuvarali (Charanām)
   ‘Paraśu Mrugadharam Šūlādidharam’
5. ‘Ṣankaranārāyanam’ in the rāga Narayana Desakshi (Charaṇam)
   ‘Kapāla Śūla Mālādīdharam’

6. ‘Srī Viṣwanātham’ (Rāgamalika – 9th Charaṇam)
   ‘Vidhi Kapāla Triśūladhara’

**Lord Śiva with serpents as ornaments**

1. ‘Ādipurīśwaram’ in the rāga Arabhi (Charaṇam)
   ‘Nāgakavachadharam Saikatalingam’

2. ‘Brihadīśwaram’ in the rāga Nagadhwanī (Charanam)
   ‘Nāgarāja Vinutam’

3. ‘Kālabhairavam’ in the rāga Bhairavam (Charanam)
   ‘Nāgayajna sūtram Vichitram’

4. ‘Kusumākara’ in the rāga Kusumakaram (Charanam)
   ‘Pannagavalayābharanam’

5. ‘Nagābharanam’ in the rāga Nagabharaṇam (Pallavi)
   ‘Nāgabharaṇam Nagajābharanam’

6. ‘Nāgalingam’ in the rāga Mohanam (Charanam)
   ‘Nāgēndravinuta Sankaralingam’

7. ‘Nilakantāya’ in the rāga Nadanamakriya (Anupallavi)
   ‘Pannagābharana Bhūshanāya’

8. ‘Panchabhūta’ in the rāga Kiranavali (Charaṇam)
   ‘Phanirājābharanam’
9. 'Paṇupatiśwaram' in the rāga Śivapantuvarali (Anupallavi)
   'Pannagābharanadharam Suśōbhitam'

10. 'Pranatārthiharam' in the rāga Nayaki (Charanam)
    'Vāsuki Karkōṭakādidharam'

11. 'Srī Mātrubhūtam' in the rāga Kannada (Charanam)
    'Vāsukipramukhābharaṇam'

12. 'Tyāgarājapālaya' in the rāga Gaula (Charanam)
    'Bhōgiyuta Charanam'

Lord Śiva as Chandrasēkhara

Lord Śiva is also known as Chandrasēkhara. Daksha Prajāpati had many daughters. One of them was Sati, Śiva’s wife. Another 27 of them were given in marriage to the Moon God. They are the 27 constellations of stars. Of them, the Moon loved Rōhini the most. The rest of them thus felt deeply wronged by this unfair treatment and complained to their father.

Daksha was deeply vexed with the God cursed the Moon,, that his body would wane and decline. The moon was most dejected. He set off to a lonely place to pray to Śiva, to be restored to health.

Lord Śiva was also in a distressed state of mind. He had lost His wife, Sati. With His matted hair falling over His shoulders and ashes smeared all over His body, He wandered about like a mendicant, truly
looking mad. The heat of His grief was such that it suffocated even the Dēvās. The Dēvās not knowing what made their world so unbearable approached Lord Brahma to know the reason. Brahma told them that only the rays of the Moon could cool Him. They all together went to Siva and prayed to wear the Moon as a jewel.

Śiva wishing to save the Dēvās, stretched out His hands for the Moon. The Moon was beside himself with joy. His prayers had not been in vain. Śiva wore him as a jewel on His head and granted that if the Moon has to wane it shall be for the first half of the month and in the second half he shall regain his full stature once more. From then Śiva was also known as the one who wore the Moon- ‘Chandraśekhara’.

Dikshitar kritis which depict Lord Śiva as Chandraśekhara are,

1. ‘Brihadiswarāya’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Charanam)  
   ‘Chāru Chandraśekharāya’
2. ‘Chidambara Natarājam’ in the rāga Kedaram (Charanam)  
   ‘Kamalāpatinutapadam Sasidharam’
3. ‘Chidambarēswaram’ in the rāga Bhinnashadjam (Charanam)  
   ‘Bhāskara Śasīṣekharam’
4. ‘Chintayēham Sadā’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Nottuswara)  
   ‘Sundaram Sudhāmsu Maulim Sivam’
5. ‘Kailāsanāthēna’ in the rāga Kamboji (Charanam)  
   ‘Chārusarat Chandrakalādharānena’
6. ‘Kumbhēswarāya’ in the rāga Kalyani (Charanam)  
   ‘Charmāmbarāya Śasīṣekharaśya’
7. ‘Nīlāchalanātham’ in the rāga Sumadyuti (Charanām)  
   ‘Chandraśēkharam Krupākāram’
8. ‘Panchabhūta Kiraṇāvalim’ in the rāga Kiraṇāvali (Pallavi)  
   ‘Panchabhūta Kiraṇāvalim Chandramaulim’
9. ‘Pārvatīpate’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Nottuswara)  
   ‘Bhangīthara Varna Rupākāra’
10. ‘Pārvatī Patim’ in the rāga Hamsadhwani (Pallavi)  
    ‘Āṣritajānamandaram Śaṣidharam’
11. ‘Tārakēswara’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Anupallavi)  
    ‘Tārānāyakāśēkhara’
12. ‘Tyāgarāja Mahadhwajārōha’ in the rāga Sri (Anupallavi)  
    ‘Ananda Chandraśēkhara Vēdyam’
13. ‘Vēdapurīśwaram ‘ in the rāga Dhanyasi (Charanām)  
    ‘Chandraśēkharam Sadānandakaram’
14. ‘Ānandaṇaṭana’ in the rāga Kedaram (Charanām)  
    ‘Sītāmsu Gangādharam’

Lord Śiva as Natarāja

Siva is also the Lord of dance. This is one of the greatest names of Siva and Śaivism, especially in Saiva Śiddhānta, developed a sophisticated philosophy symbolised in its five fold activities, Srishti, Sthiti, Samhāra, Tīrōbhāva and Anugraha. They reflect the cosmic activity which is the central motif of the dance. According to Bharata’s Nātyasāstra one hundred and eight variations of dance were performed by Śiva at different places on various occasions and the emblems, decorations and the number of arms differentiates them from each other. Lord Śiva depicted as Naṭarāja is found in many kritis of Muthuswami Dikshitar.
1. ‘Chidambara Naṭarāja Mūrtim’ in the rāga Tanukirti
2. ‘Chidambara Naṭarājam Āśrayēham’ in the rāga Kedaram
3. ‘Chidambarēśwaram’ in the rāga Bhinnashadjam (Anupallavi)
   ‘Chidānanda Naṭana Prakāṣam’

There are many other Śiva kritīs of Muthuswami Dikshitar in which the cosmic dance of the Lord is mentioned. In the kritī ‘Śivakāmipatim’ in Natakurinj rāga Dikshitar has described Siva as the one who defeated Goddess Kāli. Purāṇās says that,

‘Śiva ganās often heard Goddess Kāli say that she could dance better than Śiva. Śiva decided to come down to Chidambaram and teach her a lesson. Once in a hall at Chidambaram, there occurred a dance competition between Śiva and Kāli. Śiva with His left leg raised, did the dance of life. Sound of His drum was the first note heralding creation and the fire in His hand was the stir of life As He lifted up His foot, the promise of salvation was seen. Untiringly both of them danced until Lord Śiva did a most difficult pose to throw Kāli off balance. Unable to follow suit Kāli faltered and the sequence was broken. The ring of flame around showed that the Universe revolves around Him. Kāli bowed and retired’.

The kritī shows the sequence as,

‘NavaKālījīta Narttana Dhīram’ (Charaṇam)
Naṭarāja who dances in the sheer playful joy of creation and the forms which the Indian artists give to this aspect of the God are some of the most beautiful and sublime creations in the world of art.
Lord Śiva’s sacred bull – Nandi

Nandi is one of the most important of the ganās of Lord Śiva. He is present in all the important Śiva temples. Nandi was the son of Sage Salankayana, who longed for a son. To get a son he observed severe penance under a Sala tree at a place called Salagrama. Pleased with his austerities, Viṣṇu appeared before him and offered him a boon. The Sage prayed for a virtuous son. Soon after, a man appeared from the right side of Viṣṇu, resembling Śiva in every way. He was given the name ‘Nandīkēśwara’.

A blind sage named Silad once practised penance to get an immortal son, not born to human beings. Indra appeared on the scene to inform him that his desire could be fulfilled by Śiva alone. The Sage there after addressed his penance to Lord Śiva as advised by Indra. Siva was pleased and appeared before the Sage, promising him that He Himself would be born as a son to him. After sometime, when Silad was engaged in sacrifice, a lad came from the room in which the Sage was performing the sacrifice. He resembled Lord Śiva. He had a jatamukha on his head, three eyes and four arms. He carried in his hands a Trident, a Tanka, a gada and a Vajra. Śiva gave the lad the name ‘Nandi’ and disappeared. Then Silad and his son together repaired the Sages asrama. There the boy lost his super human form and became an ordinary mortal. Nandi was given good education and by the age of 17, he became well versed in the Vēdās. Sometimes later, two Sages, Mitra and Varuṇa came to the aśrama of Silad and after observing the boy, realised that his life was to end in a year’s time. The sage was perplexed. But Nandi hearing this started
meditating on Śiva. Śiva then appeared before him and bestowed long life on him freeing him from old age.  

Rāmāyaṇa says that it was Nandi who cursed Rāvaṇa that he and his race would be destroyed by monkeys. It was because Rāvaṇa once insulted Nandi by making remarks regarding the monkey-face of Nandi.

Nandikēśwara has been mentioned in a number of Śiva kritis of Mūthuswami Dikshitar.

1. ‘Agastīśwaram’ in the rāga Lalita (Pallavi)  
   ‘Nandīśam Śankaram’

2. ‘Arddhanārīśwaram’ in the rāga Kumudakriya (Charaṇam)  
   ‘Nandituragārōhitam’

3. ‘Ādipurīśwaram’ in the rāga Arabhi (Charaṇam)  
   ‘Nandipūjitā Svayambhūlingam’

4. ‘Kumbhēśwarāya’ in the rāga Kalyani (Anupallavi)  
   ‘Kamanīya Vrishabhārōhitāya’

5. ‘Śivakāmēśwaram’ in the rāga Arabhi (Charaṇam)  
   ‘Nandi Turāgārōhita’

6. ‘Mayūranātham’ in the rāga Dhanyasi (Charaṇam)  
   ‘Nandikēśamapramēyam’

7. ‘Muchukundavaraḍa’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Noṭṭuswara)  
   ‘Sundaratara Nandīṣa’
8. 'Nāgalingam' in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Anupallavi)
   'Nandi Turangam'

9. 'Praṇatārthiharāya' in the rāga Samantam (Charaṇam)
   'Nandi Turāgāya'

10. 'Śrī Tyāgarājasya in the rāga Rudrapriya (Charaṇam)
    'Nava Nandyādi Bhaktajana Pālasya'

11. 'Tyāgarāja Pālayāsu' in the rāga Gaula (Charaṇam)
    'Vṛisha Turanga'

12. 'Viśwanātham' in the rāga Natabharanam (Charaṇam)
    'Nandi Turānga Yāṇam Iśānam'

13. 'Aruṇāchalanātham' in the rāga Saranga (Charaṇam)
    'Aruḍhōthunga Vrishaturangam'

14. 'Hāṭakēśwaram' in the rāga Bilahari (Charaṇam)
    'Māruti Nandyārjunādi'

15. 'Sadāchalēśwaram' in the rāga Bhupalam (Charaṇam)
    'Kamalēśa Vinuta Vrishabhaturangam'

Other Purāṇic Characters Mentioned in the Śiva Kritīs of Muthuswami Dikshitar

Agastya Muni

Vratāsura, who, with the help of Kālakēyās constantly tortured the Dēvās was killed by Indra. The frightened Kālakēyās hid beneath the
ocean. They planned to destroy the three worlds living there. They came to the earth and ate up many Brāhmans at night. The Brāhmans of the whole world lived in fear of these Kālakēyās. The Dēvās approached Lord Vishnu to put an end to the deeds of the Kālakēyās. Vishnu told them that it was difficult to the Kālakēyās without drying the ocean. He said that it was possible only by Sage Agastya. Agastya happily shouldered the responsibility. When all the Dēvās were watching, Agastya drank up the whole ocean. The Kālakēyās were then killed. Dēvās were now bothered about the lost ocean and they again approached Lord Vishnu. Vishnu told them that on account of Bhareeratha’s penance, Ākāśa Ganga would come back to the earth. This was how the lost ocean was regained by the world.*

Muthuswami Dikshitar has mentioned the above incident of Agastya drinking the ocean in his kriti ‘Agastīswaram’ in the rāga Lalita. In the charaṇa he says, “Jalanidhipānārtham Kalasajēnārchitham” which means one who was worshipped by Agastya before he drank up the ocean.

**Muchukunda**

A monkey once perched on a tree and dropped Bilva leaves on the ground not realizing that there was a Śiva linga below. Lord Śiva was pleased with the innocent act and blessed him. The monkey was reborn as Muchukunda, the Chōla ruler, retaining his monkey face and the memory of his earlier life. (More details are given in the sthala purāṇa of Tiruvarur in Chapter III). Muchukunda finds mention in two of the Śiva kritis of Muthuswami Dikshitar.
1. ‘Tyāgarājāya Namaste’ in the rāga Begada (Charaṇam)

   ‘Muchukundādi Bhaktajana Manoratha sphūrtayē’

2. ‘Muchukunda Varada’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Nottuswara)

Kāmbōja Rāja

The Kāmbōja Rājya is situated to the North-West of India. This is modern Kabul. King Sudakshinan of this place is called Kāmbōjan. It is said that he was present at the ‘Svayamvara’ of Draupadi. Mahābhārata says that his younger brother was killed by Arjuna. All the Kings of this place were called Kāmbōjās. The place was initially ruled by a King called Kāmbōja. It must have got the name ‘Kāmbōjam’ from this king.

Muthuswami Dikshitar in his Kāmboji kritīs has mentioned this king and has cleverly woven the rāga mudra into these kritīs

1. ‘Kailāsanāthēna ‘in the rāga Kamboji (Charaṇam)

   ‘Sadgatidāyakambōja Charanēna’

2. ‘Kāṣi Viśwēswara’ in the rāga Kamboji (Charaṇam)

   ‘Bhadradāyakambojakara Vibhō’

3. ‘Srī Valmīkalingam’ in the rāga Kamboji (Charaṇam)

   ‘Sōmakulāmbikambōja Madhukaram’

4. ‘SāmbaSaḍāśivāya’ in the rāga Kamboji (Anupallavi)

   ‘Sadgatiprādāyakambōja Padāya’
Malayadhvaja Pândyan

Malayadhvaja was the son of the founder of Madura city, Kulašēkhara Pândya. Malayadhvaja was a true devotee of Lord Śiva. He married Kāñchanamāla, the daughter of the Sūrya Vamsa King, Śūrāsenan. They were issueless. For an issue Malayadhvaja conducted Putrakāmēshi Yāga. The yāgavēdi gave him a three year old daughter who had three breasts. Soon there was an ‘aśīṁri’, ‘Oh King, You are lucky to have the incarnation of Goddess Mīnakshi as your daughter. When she finds the person to be her husband, she will lose her extra breast’. Malayadhvaja was happy and named the girl ‘Mīnakshi’. Mīnakshi was brought up with affection. After few years, Thadātaka (another name of Mīnakshi) was over-thrown and Malayadhvaja passed away. Knowing the story of her third breast she set out to look for her husband. She defeated Dēvēndra and the Ashtadikpālakās and tried to enter Kailāsa. Nandikesa informed Lord Śiva that a young girl was fighting with the dwarapālakās. Lord Śiva appeared in front of her as a sixteen year old youth. Just then her third breast vanished. Sundarēśwar (Lord Śiva) married her in front of Kāñchanamāla.

Once, Kāñchanamāla wished to take a dip in the Samudra. She told her wish to her daughter. Tradition was that, a lady could take a dip, only along with her husband or son. Tadāthaka prayed to her husband to fulfil her mother’s wish, who neither had her husband nor a son. Lord Sundarēśwar brought Malayadhvaja all the way to earth and Kāñchanamāla’s wish was fulfilled. Later both of them, Malayadhvaja
and Kāñchanamāla, went to the heaven. (This story is mentioned in the Halasya Māhātmyam. Halasyam means Madurai)

In the Kannada rāga kriti ‘Pālayamam Pārvatīsa’, Dikshitar has mentioned this ardent Śiva devotee.

Anupallavi - ‘Malayadhvaja Pāṇḍya Rāja
   Pūjita Pankaja Charaṇa’

Vālākhilya

Vālākhilyās are a group of Sages. Kratu, one of the Sapta Rishīs, had 60,000 sons in his wife Santati. These 60,000 sages are called ‘Vālākhilyās’. All these Sages were only half the size of the thump and they were all jitēndriyās. They shone like the sun.

Once, Kaśyapa Prajāpati conducted a Yāga. The fuel for the Yāga was asked to be brought by the Dēvās and Vālākhilyās. When Indra took big pieces of wood, the Vālākhilyās naturally took small pieces. Seeing this, Indra mocked at them. The angry Vālākhilyās stopped their work and decided to make another Indra and started penance. Indra was afraid. He approached Kaśyapa for help. Kaśyapa sanctified them. But he said that their penance would not be priceless. During that time Kaśyapa’s wife Vinatha was longing for a son. Vālākhilyā’s penance gave her a son, who was more efficient than Indra that was Garuḍa.

Vālākhilya finds mention in the Vegavahini rāga kriti, ‘Kailāsanātham’ of Muthuswami Dikshitar.

Charaṇam - ‘Vālākhilyādi Pūjita Gātram’
Kubēra

Kubēra was the son of Viṣravas, son of Pulastya Prajāpati. His mother was Ijibila. For long time Viṣravas was issueless and he conducted severe penance and Lord Brahma blessed him with four sons- Rāvana, Kumbhakarna, Vibheeshana and Kubēra. The first three were born to other wives of Viṣravas. Kubēra again did severe penance and at last Lord Brahma appeared before him and according to his wish gave him the vehicles Sankhanidhi, Patmanidhi and Pushpakavimāna. He was made one of the Ashṭadikpālakās, the others being Indra, Agni, Yama, Niryati, Varuna, Vāyu and Śiva. According to his father’s wish Kubēra lived in Lankapuri built by Viṣwakarma, the divine architect.

Kubēra was a devotee of Lord Śiva and was blessed by him many a times. Once, Kubēra conducted penance of 100 years on the bank of the river Kaveri. Lord Śiva appeared before him and asked what he wished for. Kubēra replied that he wanted to be the king of Yakshās. Lord Śiva thus blessed him.

*Muthuswami Dikshitar has mentioned Kubēra in some of his Kṛitis.*

1. 'Chintayēham Sada’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam (Noṭṭuswara)
   ‘Danti Charmāmbaram Dhanāda Hitam’

2. ‘Marakatalingam’ in the rāga Vasanta (Charaṇam)
   ‘Mānita Vaiṣravanādi Varadam’
Vāmadēva

Vāmadēva is one of the seven sons born to Manu in his wife Satarūpi. Vāmadēva is an incarnation of Lord Śiva. Tradition says that Brāhmaṇās were born from his face, Kshatriyās from his hand, Vaiṣyās from his Jankha and Śudrās from his feet. Vāmadēva wears the Trident and has five faces. When Chandra kidnapped Tāra, The wife of Brihaspati, he fought against Chandra.

Vāmadēva finds mention in the Todi rāga kriti ‘Vēdāranyēśwara’ of Muthuswami Dikshitar.

Charanam - ‘Sūrya Chandrāgni Lōchanāya
Para Vāmadēvādi Vanditapadāya’

Kārkōṭakan and Vāsuki

Lord Śiva as mentioned earlier has serpents as ornaments. But Kārkōṭaka and Vāsuki finds special mention in His kritis.

Kārkōṭaka is the fierceful serpent born to Kaśyapa in Kadru. He was once cursed by sage Nārada for cheating him. He was unable to move. The Sage said that when he meets Nala, he would be free of the curse. As said, once when Nala came there, discarding Damayanti, he saw Kārkōṭaka in the forest and the latter was freed from the curse. As a reward, Kārkōṭaka bit Nala and destroyed the Kali in Nala. Nala became blue in color and this helped him to hide himself during his exile in the ‘Ritupamarājadhāni’. Nala was awarded two divine weapons. When he
wore the weapons he would attain his original form. Kārkōṭaka happily left the forest.

Vāsuki was also born to Kaśyapa in Kadru. He was their eldest son and he spent his entire childhood with his parents. Once Vinata and Kadru had a dispute concerning the color of Uchaisravas, the Horse. Kadru for the surety of her winning, asked her children to be on the tail of Uchaisravas as black hair. But Vāsuki denied his mother, to do such unfair deeds. Kadru thus cursed Vāsuki and other serpants who were with him. Thus Vāsuki and the serpants had to separate from their mother. During the churning of Palazhi with Mandhara Parvata, it was Vāsuki who was used as the churning rope.

Vāsuki and Kārkōṭaka finds mention in some kritis of Muthuswami Dikshitar.

1. ‘Pranatārthiharam’ in the rāga Nayaki (Charaṇam)
   ‘Vāsuki Kārkōṭakādidharam’

2. ‘Sṛī Mātrubhūtam’ in the rāga Kannada (Charaṇam)
   ‘Vāsuki pramukhābharaṇam’

Rājēndra Chōzha

Between the 19th and 13th centuries, South India was dominated by the Chōla dynasty, whose extensive empire covered much of the Penninsular India. Their two great Kings were Rājarāja (985 – 1014) and
Rājarājēndra-I (1014 – 1044) under whose period literature, architecture and sculpture reached new heights. They built magnificent temples endowed with land and enormous wealth and these became the focal point of their economy as well as their social and cultural life. In 1216, the Chōlas were defeated by the Pāndyās, who then became the dominant power in South India.

The Musical Trinity never used the divine art of music to praise ordinary man, but they always respected the patrons who were devotees of the Lord. Dikshitar has mentioned many such patrons in his kritīs. Rājarājēndra Chōzha finds mention in his Gundakriyi kriti, ‘Rājarājēndra Chōzha’.

Pallavi

‘Rājarājēndra Chōzha Pratishṭitam
Brihadīśwaram Bhajarē Śrī’

Charaṇam

‘Rājarājēndra Chōzhadharam
Rājadharam Brihadīśwaram Bhaja’

ANECDOTAL ŚIVA KRITĪS OF MUTHUSWAMI DIKSHITAR

The Musical Trinity were saint composers. They always raised their voice against injustice and for this, they used music as their vehicle. They had divine power which was proved in various situations. It is said that Tyāgarāja gave life to a dead person by singing the kriti ‘Nājivādhāra’ in the rāga Bilahari. Dikshitar once sang the kriti ‘Ānandāmrutākarshini’ in the rāga Amrutavarshini and blessed the
villagers of Ettayapuram with a heavy pour of rain. There are many other
instances where these saintly composers have given out outpours of
music on the spot. There are also few anecdotal kritis of Muthuswami
Dikshitar in praise of Lord Śiva.

‘Akshayalinga Vibhō’ in the rāga Sankarabharanam and Miṣra
Chāpu Tālam

As a part of his pilgrimage, Muthuswami Dikshitar once came to
the Śiva temple at Kivalur. When he reached the place, unfortunately, the
doors of sanctum-sanctorum were closed for worship. Muthuswami
Dikshitar humbly requested the temple priest to keep the sanctum-
sanctorum open for sometime more since he was coming from a long
distance. But the priest refused to do so and also mockingly said that the
sanctum-sanctorum will be open the next day also. In great emotion
Dikshitar composed and sang the Sankarabharanam Kriti ‘Akshayalinga
Vibhō’. At the end of the song, to the surprise of all present there
including the priest, the doors opened on their own accord. Saint
Tyāgarāja also had such an experience at Tirupati when he sang the kriti
‘Teratīyagarāda’ in Gaulipantu rāga’.*

‘Tyāgarājam Bhajarē’ in the rāga Yadukulakamboji and Miṣra
Chāpu Tālam

Muthuswami Dikshitar was not in an affluent circumstance and had
often to struggle against poverty. Once during a miserable stage,
Dikshitar’s wife called one of his favourite disciple, Tiruvarur
Kamalam, who was fairly well off and told her that there was nothing in
the house to be cooked and asked her if she could help them. Kamalam
whole heartedly said that she would debt her golden bangle and help the family. Muthuswami Dikshitar happened to know this and felt ashamed of himself. He could not imagine himself to earn his family by using the divine art as the source. He told Kamalam not to do so and said that if he was a true devotee of Lord Tyāgarāja, the Lord would find a way. That day he went to the temple and composed the kriti ‘Tyāgarājam Bhajēham’ in the rāga Yadukulakamboji. In the kriti, Dikshitar tells the mind to sing the glory of Lord Tyāgarāja and cut asunder the three types of afflictions (Tāpatraya) man has to suffer in this world.

‘Tyāgarājēna Samrakshitōham’ in the rāga Salakabhairavi and Ādi Tālam

On the day Muthuswami Dikshitar sang the kriti ‘Tyāgarājam Bhajārē’ in the temple, an officer of the King of Tanjore was to visit Tiruvarur and the subordinates had arranged huge amount of provision for him. Unexpectedly, the visit was postponed and the whole amount of provision was sent to the sage composer. Dikshitar realised that it was Lord Tyāgarāja Himself who had helped him and on the very moment composed the kriti ‘Tyāgarājēna Samrakshitōham’ in the rāga Salakabhairavi.

‘Sri Viśwanātham’ - Chaturḍasa Rāgamālika - Ādi Tālam

Once the Mirasdar of Kulikkarai, Vaidyalinga Mudaliar invited Muthuswami Dikshitar to his place. During his stay at Kulikkarai, he composed kritīs in praise of Kāsi Viśvēswar, Viśālakshi and Annapūrṇā. The Mirasdar was happy and conferred upon him ‘Kanakābhishēkam’.
The Mirasdar then, very much hesistantly requested Dikshitar to compose a kriti in praise of him. Though the Mirasdar was not a stubborn character, Dikshitar had to disobey him for the great saints never composed in praise of man. But instead, Dikshitar composed a Rāgamalika of 14 rāgās in praise of the deities at Kulikkarai beginning with ‘Sṛī Viṣwanātham’. In the last Charaṇa he has praised Lord Śiva as the one who takes care of Vaidyalinga Prabhu. The Mirasdar was happy.

‘Vaidyalinga Bhūpāla Pālanam’

There are number of legends included in the Śivakritīs of Muthuswami Dikshitar, of which some are dealt with in the Chapter III which deals with the temples.
Foot Note

1. Encyclopedia Americana- Vol. 23 , Pg. 17
2. Gowrie Kuppuswami and M.Hariharan, Pg. 212
3. Mahabharata- Vanaparvam
4. Swami Sivananda – ‘Lord Siva and His Worship’- Pg. 103
5. Sivapuramam – Satarudra Samhita – Chapter-III
6. S.L Nagar- Siva in Indian Art ,Literature and Thought - Pg. 112 &113
7. Mahabharata – Karnaparvam
8. Markandeya Puranam
9. Linga Puranam
10. Varaha Puranam
11. Kurma Puranam
12. Swami Sivananda – Lord Siva and His Worship – Pg. 114
13. S.L.Nagar – Siva in Art, literature and Thought- Pg.166
14. Vettam Mani – Puranic Encyclopedia – Pg. 902
15. Siva Puranam
16. Vettam Mani – Puranaic Encyclopedia – Pg. 362
17. Matsya Purana
18. Swami Sivananda – Lord Siva and His Worship – Pg. 114
19. Kurma Purana
20. Siva Mahapurana
21. Siva Mahapurana
22. Linga Purana
23. Mahabharatam- Vanaparvam- Chapters 101-105
24. Vettam Mani – Puranic Encyclopedia – Pg. 264
25. Vettam Mani – Puranic Encyclopedia – Pg. 934
26. Vishnu Puranam – 1st Amsam – 10th Chapter
27. Vettam Mani – Puranic Encyclopedia – Pg. 818
28. Vettam Mani – Puranic Encyclopedia – Pg. 298
29. Vettam Mani– Puranic Encyclopedia – Pg. 1093
30. Vettam Mani – Laghu Purana Nikhandu – Pg. 173
31. Vettam Mani – Laghu Purana Nikhandu – Pg. 545
32. Reader’s Digest – Illustrated guide to India – Pg. 46
33 K.T.Ravindranath – Karnataka Sangeeta Charitram- Pg. 203
34 K.T.Ravindranath – Karnataka Sangeeta Charitram – Pg. 205
35 K.T.Ravindranath – Karnataka Sangeeta Charitram – Pg. 205
36 K.T.Ravindranath – Karnataka Sangeeta Charitram – Pg. 204