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## Punarvasu

A goddess of fortune. One of the naksatras. Daughter of Daksha. Wife of Candra.

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## بُونَارْفَاسُو

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Sanskrit name	Malayalam name	Tamil name	Western star name
संस्कृतम्	മലയാളം	தமிழ்	
Punarvasu पुनर्वसु	Punartam പുനർഭരതം	Punarpoosam പുനർപൃശമ്	Castor and Pollux

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## पुनर्वसु Punarvasu

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# Purandara Dasa

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Purandara Dāsa** (**Kannada**: ಪುರಂದರ ದಾಸ)<sup>[2]</sup> (1484–1564)

is a prominent composer of Carnatic music. He is widely referred to as the *Pitamaha* (the father or the grandfather) of Carnatic Music in honour of his significant contribution to Carnatic music.<sup>[3][4][5][6][7]</sup> He formulated the basic lessons of teaching Carnatic music by structuring graded exercises known as *Swaravalis* and *Alankaras*, and at the same time, he introduced the *Raga* Mayamalavagowla as the first scale to be learnt by beginners in the field. He also composed *Gitas* (simple songs) for novice students.

Purandara Dasa addressed social issues in addition to worship in his compositions, a practice emulated by his younger contemporary, Kanakadasa. Purandara Dasa's Carnatic music compositions are mostly in Kannada; some are in Sanskrit. He signed his compositions with the *mudra* (pen name), "Purandara Vittala" (Vittala is one of the incarnations of the Hindu god, Vishnu).

## Purandara Dasa

<b>Native name</b>	ಪುರಂದರ ದಾಸ
<b>Birth name</b>	Srinivasa Nayaka ಶ್ರೀನಿವಾಸ ನಾಯಕ
<b>Born</b>	1484 Kshemapura, near Tirthahalli, Shivamogga district, Karnataka
<b>Origin</b>	Kshemapura, Shivamogga, Karnataka state, India
<b>Died</b>	1564 Hampi, Karnataka state, India
<b>Genres</b>	Carnatic music
<b>Occupation(s)</b>	Carnatic vocalist

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## Biography

Inscriptional evidence suggests Purandara Dasa was born in 1484 CE in Kshemapura, near Tirthahalli, Shivamogga district, Karnataka state.<sup>[8]</sup> According to other opinions, his native town was Purandaraghatta in Karnataka,<sup>[9]</sup> or Purandaragad near Pune, but the latter is considered a historical mistake - connecting his "pen name" (his *ankita*) with a location that mainly served as a military encampment in the 15th and 16th century.<sup>[10]</sup> The only son of Varadappa Nayaka, a wealthy merchant, and Leelavati, he was named Srinivasa Nayaka, after the Lord of the Seven Hills. He received a good education in accordance with family traditions and acquired proficiency in Kannada, Sanskrit, and sacred music. At age 16 he married Saraswatibai, said by tradition to

have been a pious young girl. He lost his parents at age 20, thereby inheriting his father's business of gemstones and pawning. He prospered and became known as "navakoti narayana" (abundantly rich man; owner of nine crores).

According to popular belief, he was led to devote himself to musical composition by a miraculous incident which made the heretofore greedy and miserly merchant realize the worthlessness of his attachment to worldly possessions.<sup>[11]</sup> A poor man (Lord in disguise) wanted to perform the sacred thread ceremony (*upanayana*) for his son and came to Srinivasa's wife for money. She gave him her nose ring to sell, and the man sold the nose ring to Srinivasa himself. The miserly Srinavasa lent the man his money. Meanwhile, his wife was worried about what to say to her husband, so she prayed to her favorite deity, who gave her a nose ring just like the one she had just given away. When Srinivasa hurried home, anxious to know if the nose ring was hers, he was bewildered seeing her wear the same one. She confessed what had happened, and he was converted to belief in the virtue of a charitable life. At 30 years of age, he gave away all his wealth to charity and together with his family left his house to lead the life of a wandering minstrel to proselytise religion. In his very first song composition, he laments his wasted life of indulgence. It begins with the words 'Ana lae kara' in the Shuddha Saveri raga, set to Triputa tala.

In the course of his wandering he met the holy sage Vyasatirtha, guru of Krishnadevaraya, the emperor of Vijayanagara kingdom. According to Prof. Sambamoorthy,<sup>[12]</sup> Srinivasa had his formal initiation at the hands of Vyasatirtha in 1525 when he was about 40 years old, with the name Purandara Dasa bestowed on him. Purandara Dasa traveled extensively through the length and breadth of the Vijayanagara empire in Karnataka, Tirupati, Pandharapura composing and rendering soul stirring songs in praise of god. He spent his last years in Hampi and also sang in Krishnadevaraya's durbar. The mantapa (mandap) in which he stayed is known as Purandara Dasa Mantapa (mandap) in Hampi. He died in 1564 at the age of 80. There are around 4.75 lakh kirtanas attributed to him. According to legend, he desired to make 5 lakh keerthanas (songs). Being unable to do it, he requested his younger son to complete them. His son Madhwapathi told his father that he could do this in his next janma(birth). It is believed that he was reborn as the famous Vijayadaasa—birthplace is Cheekalparvi village near Maanvi town, Raichur district in Karnataka State—and completed the remaining 25 thousand keerthanas as promised. Most his songs are in praise of Lord Narayana and other Devatas. Due to this, he is believed to be an avatar of Narada.

## Purandara Dasa and Carnatic music

Purandara Dasa systematized the method of teaching Carnatic music which is followed to the present day.<sup>[3]</sup> He introduced the raga *Mayamalavagowla* as the basic scale for music instruction and fashioned series of graded lessons such as *swaravalis*, *janti swaras*, *alankaras*, *lakshana geetas*, *prabandhas*, *ugabhogas*, *daatu varase*, *geeta*, *sooladis* and *kritis*.<sup>[13]</sup> Another of his important contributions was the fusion of *bhava*, *raga*, and *laya* in his compositions. Purandara Dasa was the first composer to include comments on ordinary daily life in song compositions. He used elements of colloquial language for his lyrics. He introduced folk ragas into the mainstream, setting his lyrics to tunes/ragas of his day so that even a common man could learn and sing them.<sup>[14]</sup> He also composed a large number of *lakshya* and *lakshana geetas*, many of which are sung to this day. His *sooladis* are musical masterpieces and are the standard for *raga lakshana*. Scholars attribute the standardization of *varna mettus* entirely to Purandara Dasa.

The itinerant dasas who succeeded him are believed to have followed the systems he devised, as well as orally passing down his compositions. According to traditional sources his compositions number as many as four lac and seventy five thousand.<sup>[15]</sup> But not more than 700 compositions are accessible now.

Purandara Dasa was a *vaggeyakara* (performer), a *lakshanakara* (musicologist), and the founder of musical

pedagogy. For all these reasons and the enormous influence that he had on Carnatic music, musicologists call him the "Sangeeta Pitamaha" (grandfather) of Carnatic music.<sup>[16]</sup>

Purandara Dasa had great influence on Hindustani music. The foremost Hindustani musician Tansen's teacher, Swami Haridas also a Saraswat Brahmin was Purandara Dasa's disciple.<sup>[17]</sup> Purandara Dasa's compositions are equally popular in Hindustani music. Hindustani music legends such as Bhimsen Joshi, Madhav Gudi and Basavaraj Rajguru have made them more popular in recent years. In the pure Carnatic tradition, Madras Lalithangi and her illustrious daughter M.L.Vasantha Kumari have rendered yeoman service in propagating the compositions of Purandara Dasa; both were considered as authorities on Purandara Dasa. M.L.Vasantha Kumari was awarded an honorary doctorate by Mysore University for her contributions to Purandara Dasa's music. Young and well known artists such as Puttur Narasimha Nayak, Pandit Venkatesh Kumar, Nagaraja Rao Havaladar, Ganapathi Bhatt, Vidyabhushana, flautists Prapanchand performing Purandara Dasa's compositions and other dasa sahitya songs in Carnatic as well as Hindustani music concerts. Of latest, Mysore Ramachandracharya is highly propagating dasa sahitya through his programs. Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanams is also propagating the dasa krithis through the Dasa Sahitya Project. He also composed the first 'Lullaby' songs in Carnatic music such as 'Thoogire Rangana'<sup>[18]</sup> 'Gummana Kareyadere'<sup>[19]</sup> etc., which led to creation of many other similar songs later by others.

Film director and playwright Girish Karnad made a documentary film titled, *Kanaka-Purandara* (English, 1988) on the two medieval Bhakti poets of Karnataka.<sup>[20][21]</sup>

## Philosophy

Purandara Dasa has explained the essence of Upanishads, Vedas, in simple Kannada. His Keerthanas have simple lessons on leading a noble life.<sup>[22]</sup> He is an exemplary person among the devotees of Sri Hari: *Dasarendare Purandara Dasarayya*.<sup>[23]</sup> This tribute was paid by no less than Vyasathirtha who was his guru as well as the mentor for the Vijayanagara Emperors.<sup>[23]</sup> The same guru acclaimed the literature produced by Purandara Dasa in Kannada as *Purandaropanishat*.<sup>[15][23]</sup> They are given the status of the Upanishads by his guru.<sup>[23]</sup> Shri Bannanje Govindacharya a scholar well-versed in Madhva tradition has dedicated discourses on the Upanishadic teachings in the compositions of Shri Purandara Dasa in Kannada, titled *Purandaropanishad*. Purandara Dasa was aware of the social evils of the period: decline of moral standards and deterioration of the culture of the people and the havoc played by casteism.<sup>[23]</sup> People were going after several gods one after other for selfish reasons, valued woman, gold and land more than the human life, immersed in blind beliefs.<sup>[23]</sup> Purandara Dasa traveled extensively for fighting these evils by awakening spirituality, moulding the culture and bringing about social reformation through his literature and compositions.<sup>[23]</sup>

### Casteism

Purandara Dasa fought the evils of casteism through his songs.<sup>[24]</sup> In his song *aavakulavaadarenu aavanadarenu aatma bhavavariyada mele* he wonders what is the use if one does not understand the spirit of humanism whatever caste or status one might be accredited to.<sup>[24]</sup> In the same song when relating to cows of different colours and sugarcane of different shapes he emphasizes that ones birth cannot merely decide the highness or lowness of any individual.<sup>[24]</sup> He asks will the sweetness of a crooked sugarcane be also crooked or will the milk of cows of many a colour be also of many colours.<sup>[24]</sup>

### Untouchability

Purandara Dasa has made some forceful expressions on untouchability which was dogging the society.<sup>[24]</sup> His strength comes perhaps from the support of his guru Vyasathirtha with the backing of powerful king Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara himself.<sup>[24]</sup> In one such song *Holaya horagihane oorolagillave* he opines that an individual should not be branded untouchable on the basis of his/her birth in any specific caste, however it is

rather his conduct which should make him untouchable if at all he can be called so. The usage of the word untouchable is not used in the limited context of physical contact with the person, it is the worthlessness of the association with that person which is highlighted here. This is evident by the subsequent expressions in the song which says that one who does not practice self-discipline is untouchable, one who plots against his own government is untouchable, similarly one who shirks charity while having wealth is untouchable, one who poisons to eliminate his opponents is untouchable, one who does not use soft language is untouchable, one who prides over his purity of caste is untouchable and finally one who does not meditate on Purandara Vittala is untouchable.<sup>[24]</sup> Dasa's message is loud and clear rejecting untouchability in our society.<sup>[24]</sup> He uses the name of Purandara Vittala to imply any God.<sup>[24]</sup> This is evident from his other songs on various Gods and Goddesses.<sup>[24]</sup> Similar ideas were expressed by many other poets also.<sup>[24]</sup>

## Purandara Dasa and Thyagaraja

It is said that saint Thyagaraja(May 4, 1767 – January 6, 1847) was greatly inspired by Purandara Dasa. Thyagaraja has paid tribute to Purandara Dasa in his *Prahlada bhakti vijayam* as దురితవ్రాతములెల్లను పరిమార్చెడి హరిగుణముల్ బాడుచు నెప్పుడున్ పరవశుడైతెలయు పురందరదాసుని మహిమలను దలచడ మదిలోన్ <sup>[25][26]</sup> Which means that *I ponder, in my mind, on the greatness of Purandara Dāsa who shines in a state of ecstasy, always singing the virtues of Lord hari which transforms all bad fates.* While these musical geniuses Purandara Dasa and Thyagaraja lived almost three centuries apart, it is interesting to compare their lives, their contributions to music and philosophical thoughts.<sup>[26]</sup> There are several parallels in their lives.<sup>[26]</sup> Both Purandara Dasa and Thyagaraja were pious, saintly and great devotees of Krishna and Rama respectively. The lyrics of their krithis were simple, but with high philosophical and spiritual contents.<sup>[26]</sup> Both were musical prodigies who disliked royal patronages and gifts. They abhorred 'narastuthi' or praising of mortals. Purandara Dasa was not enamoured of the royal bounty and wealth of King of Vijaya nagar.<sup>[26]</sup>

Similarly, Thyagaraja too refused invitations from the Tanjavur Maharaja and other Kings of Travancore and Mysore. Both have commented on their feelings in musical forms and idioms.<sup>[26]</sup> In Purandara Dasa's krithi 'Namma bhagya doddado, Nimma bhagya doddado', he feels more blessed because of the Lord's protection compared to the King, who has just material possessions.<sup>[26]</sup> In another krithi, 'Antarangadalli Hariya kaanadava', Purandara Dasa reiterates the same concept 'Narara sevisa bedavo endendigu', while Thyagaraja says in his 'Nidhi chala sukhama, Ramuni sannidhi seva sukhama', that he does not need anybody's blessings but Rama's.<sup>[26]</sup>

Purandara Dasa and Thyagaraja have expressed their thoughts and feelings on other aspects of life as well.<sup>[26]</sup> A general concept of the meaning of their songs is given within brackets. Regarding music, what Purandara Dasa has said in 'Talabeku takka mela beku' Thyagaraja has echoed similar ideas in his 'Sogasuga mrudanga talamu' (basic details of an ideal krithi).<sup>[26]</sup> The words 'Sakala tirtha yaatreya maadidante nikhila punyada phalavu' in Purandara Dasa's 'Smarane onde saalade' have parallel expressions in Thyagaraja's 'Dhyaaname varamaina Ganga snaanamu' (Plunging in holy waters will not purify from the sins of deceit).<sup>[26]</sup> To focus one's mind to the devotion of the Lord, the words used by both Purandara Dasa and Thyagaraja in their krithis are almost identical. Purandara Dasa says 'Manava nilisuvudu balu kashta' and Thyagaraja's lyrics are 'Manasu nilpa shakti leka pothe' (Controlling one's mind for worship is hard).<sup>[26]</sup> Purandara Dasa's 'Sakala graha bala neene' and Thyagaraja's 'Graha bala memi' are close in their contents (Strength from the Divine protection is better than those from all planets).<sup>[26]</sup> Similarly, Dasa's 'Dwaitavu sukhava' and Thyagaraja's 'Dwaitamu sukhama' are alike in their philosophical content (the decision to follow Dvaita or Advaita for bliss).<sup>[26]</sup>

There are several examples where the thoughts of these two men run very similar. A few relevant lines are

mentioned:<sup>[26]</sup>

- Mosahodenallo naanu (Purandara Dasa) and Mosabegu vinave satsahasamu (Thyagaraja) (Do not get deceived by not thinking of God)
- Manuja sharira enu sukha (Purandara Dasa) and Pranamuleni vaaniki bangaru baaga jutti in Bhakti beecha meeyave (Thyagaraja) (Praise the Lord to get eternal bliss)
- Saamanyavalla Sri Hariye seve (Purandara Dasa) and Adi gadu bhajana manasa (Thyagaraja) (false pretence is no bhajana at all)
- Daasana madiko enna (Purandara Dasa) and Meluko Dayaanidhi (Thyagaraja) (Accept me as your own)
- Idu bhaagya, Padumanabha paada bhajana sukhavayya (Purandara Dasa) and Ide bhaagya gaka, yemi yunnadira, Rama (Thyagaraja) (blessed is the one who worships God sincerely)
- Kaliyuga dalli Hari naama (Purandara Dasa) and Padavini sadbhakti galkude (Thyagaraja) (only true devotion to God can bring a status of value)
- Raama naama paayasakke Krishna naama sakkare (Purandara Dasa) and Raama kathaa sudha rasa paanamu (Thyagaraja) (Drink the divine nectar)
- Dharma shravana yetake (Purandara Dasa) and Chevitiki-yupadeshinchi natu gaado (Thyagaraja) (Worship of God is more important than other trivial pursuits)

## Salutations

Tirupati Tirumala Devasthanam is propagating and popularising the literature of Purandara Dasa under the Dasa Sahitya Project.<sup>[27]</sup> A statue of Purandaradasa was dedicated at the foot of Tirumala in Alipiri.<sup>[27]</sup>

## Compilations of Purandara Dasa's lyrics

- Gaja Vadana Beduve Gowri Thanaya (<http://www.osuri.com/songs/GajaVadanaBeduve.html>) A popular Purandara Dasa composition in Carnatic Raagam Hamsadhvani
- Jackson, William J. 2002. *Songs of Three Great South Indian Saints*. Oxford India. **ISBN 0-19-566051-X**
- KavyaPremi. 1996. *Purandara Daasa Haadugalu*. Dharwad: Samaja Publishers. Contains ca. 225 songs; in Kannada language.
- [www.dasavani.blogspot.in](http://www.dasavani.blogspot.in) (<http://www.dasavani.blogspot.in>)

## See also

- Haridasa
- Shri Madhvacharya
- Vyasathirtha
- Kanakadasa
- Annamacharya
- Puttur Narasimha Nayak
- Dvaita Philosophy
- List of Carnatic composers
- List of Carnatic musicians
- List of Carnatic instrumentalists

## Notes



1. *The Vedanta kesari, Volume 49* (<http://books.google.com/books?id=jynkAAAAMAAJ&q=purandaradasa+sannyasa>), Sri Ramakrishna Math., 1964, p. 419
2. Kamath 1980
3. Iyer (2006), p93 (Quote: "He is considered to be the *Pitamaha* of Carnatic music because he codified the teaching of Carnatic music by evolving several graded steps like *Sarali*, *Jantai* and *Tattu Varisai*; alankaras and geethams")
4. Thielemann (2002), p. 22 (Quote:"The most well known among the haridasas is Purandara Dasa (1480 or 84-1564), whose significant contribution to South Indian music is honored by referring to him as the 'father of Carnatic music'")
5. Kassebaum (2000), p211
6. Parthasarathy, T. S. (1991). "Margadarsi Whom Swati Tirunal followed". *The Journal of the Music Academy, Madras* (Music Academy) **62**: 72. (Quote: "The great Purandara Dasa was a 'Margadarsi' in many ways although he is generally referred to as the 'Pitamaha' (grandfather) of Carnatic music")
7. R Zydembos in Cushman S, Cavanagh C, Ramazani J, Rouzer P, *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics: Fourth Edition*, p.767, Princeton University Press, 2012, ISBN 978-0-691-15491-6
8. Sharma 2000:598
9. Chaitanya Deva (1995), p. 83
10. Desai, Krishnarao and Sharma in Sharma 2000:Appendix VII
11. Iyengar 1964
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## External links

- The life history of Sri Purandara Dasa in Kannada language (<http://www.vyasapeetham.com/products.asp?cid=1/>)
- Annual Purandara Dasa and Thyagaraja Aradhana in D.C., Maryland and Virginia (<http://www.nadatarangini.org/>)
- Bhagyada Lakshmi Baaramma (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOPCIjKRmcQ>) A popular Purandara Dasa composition in Sri Raagam
- Lyrics and translation of Purandaradasa compositions (<http://sahityam.net/wiki/Category:Purandaradasa>)
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