

Dr. Shuddhananda  
Bharati

Chariot of Life  
Kaala Ther

Play



ASSA  
Editions

## Editor's Notes

There are several flowers and fruits in the literary grove of Shuddhananda Bharati that attract attention.

The chariot of life, this steady stream, this carousel continues to turn, like a ride... with the sound of music boxes in the street... joys, suffering without names...

In this play, all roles in the evolution coexist to achieve Jyoti, the clarity, the light of freedom, peace and serenity radiating within Self.

Rotating carousel... forward for a carousel ride.

It is a real pleasure for me to present *Chariot of Life* to you. We have much to learn from this wonderful text! Thank you to Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati for having transmitted *Chariot of Life* to us. With the blessing of *Aum Shuddha Shakti Aum*.

Christian Piaget

## Courage!

*The night is through,  
The chain of slavery  
It is already broken -  
I am full of courage!*

*Peace in the morning,  
A golden sun rises  
Like a lion superhuman  
To accomplish my dream.*

*A hopeful smile,  
Docile as a child  
Who plays in the infinite  
With a fiery star.*

*My journey is over;  
I enjoy time;  
The universe is my nest;  
Of eternal spring.*

## Song of Unity

*Unite. Unite, Unite, Oh Souls  
Unite and play your roles  
Unite in mind, unite in heart  
Unite in whole, unite in part  
Like words and tunes and sense in song  
Let East and West unite and live long  
Trees are many; the grove is one  
Branches are many; tree is one  
Shores are many; sea is one  
Limbs are many; body is one  
Bodies are many; self is one  
Stars are many; sky is one  
Flowers are many; honey is one  
Pages are many; book is one  
Thoughts are many; thinker is one  
Tastes are many; taster is one  
Actors are many; the drama is one  
Nations are many; the world is one  
Religions are many; Truth is one  
The wise are many; Wisdom is one  
Beings are many; breath is one  
Classes are many; college is one  
Find out this One behind the many  
Then life shall enjoy peaceful harmony.*

## Peace Anthem

*Peace for all, peace for all  
For all the countries peace  
Joy for all, joy for all  
For all the nations joy  
A rosy morning peace  
A smiling summer joy (Peace for all)*

*All for each and each for all  
This is the golden rule  
Life and Light and Love for all  
For all that live our love (Peace for all)*

*Work and food and clothes for all  
Equal status for all  
Health and home and school for all  
A happy world for all (Peace for all)*

*No idle rich, no more beggars  
All are equal workers  
No more tears, no more fears  
The heart is full of cheers (Peace for all)*

*No atom scare, no fat mammon  
No room for war demon  
Like leaves in trees, like rays in the sun  
We are one communion,  
One Divine communion (Peace for all)*

*The good in you is good for all  
Your life is life for all  
The God in you is God for all  
Your love is love for all (Peace for all)*

*For he or she or it or rest  
This collective life is best  
This Universal Life is best  
North or South, or East or West (Peace for all)*

*Peace for plants and birds and beasts  
For hills and streams and woods  
Peace in Home - land and air and sea  
Dynamic peace we see*

*Peace for all, peace for all*

*Immortal Peace for All*

# Presentation of Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati

11<sup>th</sup> May 1897 – 7<sup>th</sup> March 1990

## The wise one to the cosmic age

Although more than 90 years old, in his school in the south of India, *Kavi Yogi Maharishi* (great divine visionary, wise poet), Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati worked like a young man of twenty. When he was asked his age, he answered: "My age is Courage!" The Yogi wrote several hundred works in English, French, Tamil, Hindi, Telugu and Sanskrit; five thousand songs, and fifteen hundred poems in French. The magnum opus of the man conscious of the presence of God in him, *Bharata Shakti*, (in 50,000 verses) described his ideal: only One Humanity living in communion with only One God in a transformed world! *Bharata Shakti* is a monumental and unique work. The Yogi depicts the essence of all the religions, of all the prophets and saints, all the approaches of yoga and all the cultures on an allegorical fabric. It is a book for any age which all spiritual researchers and all nations should read and meditate on. His commitment is summarized in his book celebrating his life, *Pilgrim Soul*. The three poems mentioned in the opening express perfectly his ideal. His mantra, *Aum Shuddha Shakti Aum*, nourishes our souls and guides our steps toward the inner joy *Ananda*. It means: The light of Grace and power of the pure supreme Almighty bless us of peace, happiness and prosperity! Let the beauty and greatness of soul of Dr. Bharati Shuddhananda bloom and scent the entire Earth of its divine message and his spiritual and unifying benefactor!

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## Author's notes about the play

The Tamil language should prosper, and should spread all over the world like English. Original works should be written in Tamil and these should be translated into other languages and catch the foreigners by surprise. For a language to grow, poetry and drama are the two essential literary tools which should be developed. English language was immortalised by the works of poets like Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley and Byron. The literary fame of French spread the world over due to dramatists like Victor Hugo. German language was enriched by the poets of the ilk of Goethe. Goethe came to know of Sanskrit mainly due to Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*. From the charming *Shakuntala*, Goethe described a flower of spring. All the above poets dramatised their works in verse form. The English plays consist of free style verses, but the French and German plays are written in rhyming meters. Even a boy of fifteen years of age learns those plays well. The western world is very appreciative of poetic dramas; for, of all the literary forms, the versified drama is easily the best (A popular Sanskrit adage about Kalidasa's play says: Kavyeshu Natakam Ramyam Tatra Ramya Shakuntala; among the literary forms drama is most charming and among the dramas *Shakuntala*).

Plays of such nature should be written in Tamil also. Such plays should be staged by us the world over and the audiences should go rhapsodically over the literary products of the Tamils. With this great desire in mind, I wrote the play entitled *Kaala Ther*. I enacted it, even as I was writing it. I carefully selected the words for the play which would be easily comprehended by the common man. I have written a few other dramas on these lines.



The whole world is a car of existence. All the living beings are its passengers. It passes through many hurdles. When man attains the spiritual stage of equanimity, this chariot comes back to its shed in a tranquil ambience.

Every character in this play stands for a philosophical tenet in life. Life is a jungle of joys and sorrows. The eternal battle of the good and the evil takes place there. Few are the effulgent heroes among the entrants of this battle who return back victorious. Many are lost in the battlefield wrought by worries and anguishes. The wise men witness the mutually exclusive duel forces and remain equipoised. There are various attributes of men, namely the animal instinct, the human instinct and the divine instinct. This play depicts characters representing the above three stages. The foursome, namely Ponnu, Sundari, Annavi and Mullai, are conquered by the dragons of lust, anger, parsimony and confusion and play havoc with their evil deeds. Their own actions prove to be their nemesis. Kannan, Valli, Abdullah and Miller give up selfishness and lead an elevated life by their compassionate attitude. Vedantappatti, Sivam and Muruganar have matured after going through the grinding mill of life. The cynosure of all their attentions, Jyoti and Mangalam, carry on their daily routine with the divine force in their minds. They undergo several ordeals and gain spiritual enlightenment and wisdom, with the help of the saintly yogi. The evils perish... divine attributes surface. Now hear the story of *Kaala Ther* in brief.

Shuddhananda Bharati

## This is the story

Sivam is a prosperous advocate in Madurai. A pious man, he is soft by disposition. His mother is an evolved, spiritual woman. With many a varied experience behind her, she leads an ascetic life in the house. Sivam's first wife gives birth to a baby girl and passes away. This girl is our heroine Mangalam. She possesses all the noble virtues like erudition, discipline, musical talent, domestic skills, chastity and piety. While Sivam is fondling her amidst all luxuries, a seductress by name Sundari, entices Sivam's mind towards her and he eventually marries her. From that day onwards his life becomes a jungle of turmoils. To overcome their worries, Sivam, Mangalam and her grandmother worship Lord Murugan.

This play commences at Lord Murugan's shrine at Tirupparankunram. In that shrine Muruganar, his son Jyoti, daughter Valli and friend Kannan sing melodious songs. Jyoti and Mangalam fall in love at first sight. That later becomes a deep-rooted passion. Similarly Kannan and Valli love each other.

Sundari is an absolutely cunning, educated and arrogant character. She showers love upon her husband when she needs money. She however hates her aged husband and is in love with her relative by the name of Ponnu. Ponnu is a rogue camouflaging his lust under the cover of fine arts. A villain by name Annavi becomes his friend. He traps Ponnu in the amorous nets of a vivacious prostitute by name Mullai. Losing his wealth, education and everything else, Ponnu is hopelessly lost in Mullai's tentacles.

He satisfies the lust of Sundari and takes away her wealth which he surrenders at the harlot's feet. Towards the end, Sundari performs a series of evils to achieve her ends, namely to kill her aged husband by poisoning him, annexing his wealth, and conducting a forced marriage between Ponnu and Mangalam. While she enjoys being with Ponnu herself and eventually murders Mangalam. Annavi, Ponnu and Dr. Vaikuntum standby her evil designs. She scolds the aged mother-in-law and drives her away. She tries to drug Sivam, due to which he loses his sanity and roams like a mad man.

Mangalam loves Jyoti intensely, they meet secretly and confirm their love to each other. They decide to stand united even if their lives are threatened. Jyoti passes his B. A. degree course and goes to Madras to collect his degree.

During that period Sundari carries on her nefarious activities. She cleverly links the photo of Mangalam and Ponnu and advertises in the press that the marriage has been performed and celebrated over a feast. Jyoti, who goes to Madras, sees the photo in the newspapers and begins to suspect Mangalam's fidelity. He could not bear the treachery of Mangalam's entanglement with Ponnu after promising to marry him. He does not yield to the counsels of Kannan, who is with him. Jyoti gives his sister Valli in marriage to Kannan. He ordains them to perform their services to the fine arts in his garden in Madurai, and he joins Mahatma Gandhi's bandwagon. He has seen a movie on Gandhi the previous day. His devotion for him goes up. That evening there is a public meeting on the beach. There, Jyoti delivers a fiery speech. But his desire is to do

creative service to the nation. He becomes the editor of a newspaper entitled *Public Welfare*, serving the public at an intellectual plane. He is saddened by the plight of the poor in Madras. He is eager to remove the poverty, ignorance and the insanitary conditions of the poor. Acquiescing Mahatma's commands, he spreads literary and technical skills amidst the villages. At this stage the news of Mangalam's chastity and her sacrifices for him reach his ears. He repents over his mistake. His mind gets into a turmoil. Even the taste for public service becomes tepid. He goes in search of a guru of high spiritual attainments.

Mangalam suffers in the hands of Sundari, like a deer trapped by a tiger. Sundari confines her to a cattle shed and serves her stale food; makes her toil like a donkey. She enjoys being with Ponnu in absolute freedom. Ponnu sucks away her wealth to surrender it at Mullai's feet. The house is devastated by this plunder. Mangalam prays for divine succour.

Sivam roams all over, with his mind totally out of control. If he comes home, Sundari drives him away as a madcap. His clerk Cheenu and Appu join together to tame the arrogance of Sundari. They feed Sivam in secrecy and save Mangalam. On a rainy day Sivam knocks at the door for food. Sundari drives him away. He knocks at the rear door. Cheenu opens it. He enters with a legal document. This house and the property are all acquired by me; they are passed on to Mangalam. He gets Sivam's signature and preserves it. Mangalam is deeply touched by the condition of her father. Sivam prattles under the impression that she is already married. A grateful Appu feeds his

master. Hearing noises Sundari and Ponnu come running. They scold Appu; abuse Mangalam. The intrepid Mangalam publicly articulates the evils wrought by Sundari and Ponnu and their stinking lifestyles. They become enraged. Sivam runs into the house. Sundari and Ponnu go inside to drive him away under the pretence that he is mad. Skirmishes take place in the living room. Sivam throws away the radio, liquor bottles and perfumes helter-skelter. He also pushes Ponnu away. Annavi enters at that time and he quietly removes Sivam and sends him to some unknown place. Ponnu and Sundari go to shoot Mangalam. They see in the cowshed a saree laid over some object, They presume that it is Mangalam and kick it hard. Fierce thorns prick their legs. Mangalam is not there, but the thorns are packed inside a pillow cover upon which the saree is carefully laid. Mangalam has made good her escape.

In the meantime the whole city starts abusing Sundari. Ponnu's attributes also invite abusive criticism. Mullai has been under the patronage of a film producer all these days. He has fallen into the lusty webs of another harlot and ignores her. She could not pursue her luxurious lifestyle any further. Hence she provokes Ponnu to take Sundari's money and go to Madras to shoot films. Annavi supports it. Sundari, unable to bear the wagging tongues of the neighbourhood, gives her consent. Mullai conducts dancing courses for Sundari. Ponnu is eager to marry Mullai, but it is not possible so long as Mangalam is alive. Hence he wants to locate her and force her to join his theatre where he can easily spoil her; or else he wants to murder her. He learns her hideout from Annavi and goes there with four mercenaries armed with pistols.

But where is Mangalam? She has escaped from the vigilant eyes of Sundari with Cheenu's help. Here is the garden of Muruganar. Valli and Kannan are the lonely inhabitants, as Muruganar has left for the holy pilgrimage to Benares. In the middle of the night a woman's voice is heard wailing. "Embittered in life due to the atrocities of Ponnu and Jyoti, I come here – Jyoti is not to be seen. The journal *Public Welfare*, says that Jyoti has gone away to some unknown destination. It seems that he has taken a deep-rooted dislike for me and has virtually forgotten me. Why should I carry on the burden of living? I will fall into this Vaigai River and end my life." So saying, she gets up. Valli, affected by ominous dreams, gets up and comes running to her. "Mangalam, do not attempt that. Live in peace with me." Kannan also consoles her, saying that Jyoti would come back. At that time noises are heard in the garden. Ponnu and Annavi, along with the gun-wielding marauders arrive. Although they wear masks, Kannan fathoms their identity and argues with them. He also fights with valour. Ponnu asks for Mangalam and the quarrels intensify. Ponnu shows the gun. As Valli comes in between, the bullet pierces her and she falls down. The thieves enter into the house to carry away Mangalam. Kannan obstructs them. Ponnu tries to shoot him down, but the shot hits Annavi, who falls down. Appu and Cheenu come running at this stage. Ponnu shoots Appu. The frightened Mangalam then runs away and jumps into the flooding Vaigai. The thieves set fire to the house and disappear. Cheenu brings the police force, who extinguish the fire and retrieve the household goods. They also locate a piece of paper whereon Mangalam has written that all

their wealth is transferred to Jyoti. Then they transfer Kannan, Valli and Appu, who have been hit in the gun-battle, to the hospital. In a few months' time their wounds are healed. The police get the full details from Cheenu and search for Ponnu, Mullai and Sundari. But they are not at Madurai. The police seal Sivam's house but cannot locate the thieves.

During this period, the world war is raging in full force in Europe. Abdullah Khan goes from India to the warfront in France. He is Jyoti's friend and is one of the many such soldiers who escaped from Dunkirk. Churchill honours him with a medal for bravery and sends him to the armed forces training college in Madras. Captain Abdullah flies to Madras and trains the Indian defence forces. A telegram bids him to come to Madurai. Abdullah has already established a name as an expert in espionage. In Madurai, communal clashes, murders and robberies are becoming rampant. Besides that, there is the case of Ponnu and Mullai. Abdullah is made responsible for arresting the culprits and ensuring that proper punishments are given to them. He conducts a detailed examination in the police station and enquires about the happenings at Muruganar's garden and about Mangalam. He encourages Cheenu and makes a detailed enquiry. He himself tries to capture Ponnu's gang. He then receives a call from Miller over the phone and he goes there.

Miller, the principal of Tallakulam College is the epitome of love. A true Christian, he is helpful to one and all. Well-endowed with money, he is a refuge for the deprived. His wife runs a hospital for women. She herself provides

medical assistance. They had a girl-child who died at an early age. After that they did not have any issue. He is now an elderly person. Jyoti, Kannan and Abdullah are all his students and treat him with affection as verily as their own father. Miller has a special corner for Jyoti. He learns about the brave deeds of Abdullah in Europe and, enthralled, he entertains them. They stroll over the college park. Then an exquisite woman comes, playing with the girl children in the garden. All the children showers affection on her. Mrs. Miller treats the woman virtually as her own daughter. She also is now Miller's favourite. Abdullah asks who this angel in human form is. He learns a part of the confidential details. Miller takes him to a private place and confides in him that the angel is Mangalam.

Mangalam falls into the River Vaigai. But the mother Vaigai dare not kill a sparking Tamil creeper. She carries her upon her roving waves and deposits her on the opposite shore. The college scouts who came there rescue her by rotating her on the wheels of a bullock-cart and then they take her to Miller. Under Mrs. Miller's treatment, Mangalam gets back her life. The Miller couple christen Mangalam as 'Anbumalar' and fondle her as their own child. There are obstacles to overcome. Mangalam is the princess charming. However, she reveals that her tragedy is due to Jyoti's disappearance. Miller makes enquires about Jyoti. Eventually he comes to know, through a priest, the noble deeds of Jyoti in Jnanapuri, where he has established a Yoga Samaj. He narrates them to Abdullah also.

Abdullah completes the actions related to his vigilance duties and comes to Yoga Samaj. He is taken aback by the



calibre of service rendered by Jyoti with his spiritual disciples. There was a spiritual guru in Jnanapuri. He was a big landlord. The entire Jnanapuri was his. His family members succumbed to a vicious disease. He gave up his earthly life and attained spiritual processes. Jyoti went to him at that time. The guru passed on his spiritual attainments to Jyoti along with Jnanapuri, and ordained him to educate the masses on the spiritual path and also to provide them with abundant means of livelihood. He then went away to the Himalayas. Jyoti converts Jnanapuri into a temple of spiritual practices and becomes a matured guru himself. He commences a Yoga Samaj in the name of his spiritual master, where he trains his disciples. Mangalam however has not left his innermost mind. Earlier she was a human being, now she has entered his mind's temples as Shakti, the Goddess Superior. He starts 'Mangala Vilasam' after her, to provide education, technical skills and the study of theology for women. He looks forward to a proper woman to run it. He builds small hutments for the poor, as well as small industrial openings. Food and clothing is given in abundance. He teaches them philosophy. They praise him as God personified. But Jyoti ever takes a low profile. He prevents them from calling him as god or saint and diverts their attentions to praying to the Lord only.

Abdullah informs the purpose of his visit to Jyoti and also appraises him of the happenings at Madurai. Jyoti is saddened over Mangalam's plight. He mentions that a woman is needed to run Mangala Vilasam. "A girl par excellence is with Miller. She is educated, faultless and virtuous. If you write to him it will work. I will also inform

him in person.” So saying, Abdullah takes his leave and goes to Madurai. Jyoti immediately writes to Miller.

Abdullah investigates into the cine world with two spies and locates the three villains. Ponnu and Mullai have exchanged rings. It is just a marriage of convenience for Mullai has no love for him. His pocket is empty. Both of them treat Sundari like a slave and ridicule her. Sundari puts on weight. She is not cut out for dancing. She takes to prostitution to make a living. One day she is overcome by hunger. Abdullah’s spy takes her food and wins her friendship. He learns through her the atrocities committed by Ponnu and Mullai. One day in the Madras beach, Ponnu and Mullai are taking a walk, exchanging sweet-nothings. Sundari, from a distance, scolds them, just when the spy comes. He asks Sundari that, with her help, Ponnu and Mullai shall be taken into custody that night. Sundari goes for a coffee with the spy. For after all, hunger has to be appeased.

Ponnu and Mullai rehearse for a movie called ‘World of Love’. Ponnu is the hero and Mullai the heroine. Caught in her webs Ponnu ill-treats his wife (Sundari) while enjoying the harlot. While rehearsing at night, Abdullah and the spy enter as film producers. The peacock-dance is in progress. Ponnu and Mullai sing and dance with a lot of fanfare. They also make fun of his wife Sundari, abuse her and ridicule her. Sundari can’t bear it and jealousy overpowers her. She goes into the bedroom and mixes poison with the liquor. Her plan is that Mullai drinks it and dies, after which she will be able to see Ponnu. With this strategy, she runs away from the house. But her conscience

pricks her. She weeps bitterly over the atrocities committed by her against her husband and Mangalam. She decides to locate her husband and die after getting his pardon. She roams around as a destitute, living on alms of food.

Here, after the rehearsals, Ponnu and Mangalam return to their bedroom. Tired after the dance, Ponnu slips into his bed to relax. Mullai snatches away the entire money given by the producer for that day's shooting. She also gives a sword to Ponnu urging him to kill Sundari, who is creating scenes that night herself. Ponnu pleads that he is tired. She gives him some liquor, which was the one in which Sundari has mixed poison. Ponnu collapses due to the poison. He draws out his knife, accusing Mullai of poisoning him. he kills her and he also dies. Mullai screams. Abdullah and the police force come and arrest them. They give their final testimony and die, after conceding all the offences. Abdullah places the entire property in government custody and sends his staff to locate Sundari. He also learns that Sivam, Vedantappatti and Muruganar are all in Kalathi. The spiritual master, after completing his journey to the Himalayas, also returns to Kalathi. The above three approach him and attain spiritual salvation. They learn about Jyoti from him. They all come to Jnanapuri.

Mangalam dreams of Jyoti on the moonlit balcony. She sings Jyoti's praise to a parrot when Miller comes with a letter bearing good news. It is from Jyoti to Miller, regarding Mangala Vilasam. Mangalam is overtaken with joy on reading it. "When is it going to be that day of union with Jyoti?" she cries. Abdullah Khan brings a motor car and says that they can start immediately after giving them an

update. Kannan and Valli join them. They all go to the Yoga Samaj and see Jyoti. Jyoti and Mangalam meet in privacy and take the pledge to forget their worries and to live like the divine couple Shiva and Shakti. All of them praise Jyoti and Mangalam. Then the spiritual master, Vedantapatti, Sivam and Muruganar arrive from Kalathi. Abdullah, the Millers, Kannan, Valli and Cheenu become Jyoti's disciples and get involved in the services of Yoga Samaj. Miller donates all his wealth from the running of an electrical industry, in Yoga Nilayam.

While they rejoice, a beggar-maid (Sundari) enters with her empty vessel. Grandmother is stunned to see Sundari reduced to this stage. Sundari, in penitence, wails over her sins. The police firmly arrest her and she gets rigorous imprisonment.

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