

Editor's Notes

Of the five great epic poems, *Kundalakesi* is a wonderful poetical work but unfortunately it has been lost. The story it narrated has been presented in verse form by Yogi Sri Shuddhananda Bharati in a simple and sweet style. Owing to this effort, not only has the name 'Kundalakesi' been preserved for posterity but the significance of Buddhism it expounded, and its pleasing story will endure as long as the Tamil language exists.

In the same way *Valayaapati*, another great epic poem that was lost has also been presented by Swami Shuddhananda Bharati; it will be published in second part of this book.

A warm thank you to Savitri for the beautiful translation and to Maha Shakti. They have, by their meticulous work, been able to help me to express fully the thoughts of Kavi Yogi Maharishi Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati about *Kundalakesi and Valayaapati in Verse*.

The word 'Agaval' in Tamil means 'in Verse' in English.

It is a real pleasure for me to present *Kundalakesi and Valayaapati in Verse* to you. Thank you, Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati for having transmitted *Kundalakesi and Valayaapati in Verse*.

With the blessing of *Aum Shuddha Shakti Aum*.

God is Love!

Christian Piaget

Author's Preface

Tamil is one of the most ancient languages in the world; it is replete with rare and great artistic wealth! But the wealth it has lost owing to the vicissitudes of time and the evil intrusion across the sea is immeasurable. Tamil Nadu was subjected to innumerable wars and invasions by armed forces that resulted in the loss of an enormous amount of artistic wealth due to plunder and fires. The two epic poems 'Kundalakesi' and 'Valayapati' were also lost. After presenting Kundalakesi in verse, I am also presenting Valayapati. May the readers accept this fruit of love wholeheartedly and relish its flavour!

We have obtained only a hundred songs of Valayapati. I have fully incorporated their grace and notions in this book. This is a rare and great epic poem. Dante was energised by Virgil's words. The author of '*Thakkayagabharani*' was greatly inspired by Valayapati. As it finds mention in great works such as *Sivapadikaraurai*, *Tholkappiam*, *Ilampooranam*, *Yaparungala Vridhhi* and *Purathirattu*, it is evident that it is an epic poem lauded by poets. But we are unable to even name its author exactly.

Keeping in mind the objectives to be achieved in the Tamil world in the course of time and in order to preserve that which is available and to bring to light the greatness of Tamil scholars in the world, I started and completed this book with the help of Divine Grace. The Tamil people cannot now forget the name of Valayapati.

After prolonged research to delineate the story, I have penned the events making suitable modifications according

to the times. Valaya + pati means 'unbending (not easily moved to compassion) + husband. Who was that husband? Listen to a summary of the story:

There was a very wealthy man called Vayira Vaanigan in Kaveripoompattinam; he had two wives: the first wife's name was Anthari: she was a jealous and deceitful woman. The second wife's name was Pathini: she was from the Madurai Vellalar family, a highly virtuous woman and an ardent devotee of Siva Shakti. The second wife became pregnant. The first wife was consumed with jealousy; together with her brother Sathan, she raised a hue and cry and said: "It was not proper to raise a family with a woman from a different caste; she must be ostracized." Sathan was also a conniving man. Losing his senses due to their persistent agitation, Vayira Vaanigan threw his second wife out of the house and embarked on a ship to travel abroad. Sathan proclaimed the child he had with his mistress to be Anthari's child and deceived everyone.

Pathini left the town and went to Kalikudi where there was a temple dedicated to Kali who represents Shiva Shakti. She stood in front of the shrine and wept, narrating her woes to the Goddess. The Goddess appeared in her dreams and offered refuge. Due to divine grace, a yogini called Avvai appeared on the scene. She was a pure and true woman. Showing compassion for Pathini in her plight, she said: "Why do you worry? Come and stay with me," and took care of her. She also imparted spiritual knowledge, taught her yoga and the Saiva Jain moral values every day. Pathini understood the nature of the world and undertook spiritual penance. In due course of time

she gave birth to a son. Avvai named him Uthaman. He grew up to be a virtuous boy, endowed with intelligence and a thirst for knowledge.

One day Uthaman learnt the identity of his father from his mother. He went to Poompuhar, met Vayira Vaanigan and told him, "I am your son." Vaanigan refuted his statement, saying: "Who knows who your father is." Uthaman organised a court of arbitration, called his mother and Avvai to the hearing and presented his claim. Overcome by Mahashakti's energy, Avvai lauded the chastity and virtues of Pathini and explained that Uthaman was indeed Vayira Vaanigan's son. Everyone accepted her words. Vaanigan accepted Pathini as his wife; even the first wife who was childless was ready to admit Uthaman into the family. Vaanigan expressed his desire to give Uthaman his entire wealth and invited Pathini to live with him again. Happy with the good position accorded to her son, Pathini renounced the world and together with Avvai founded a monastery where she trained women to follow the spiritual path, spent her life in penance and reached the divine feet of the Lord. The unbending husband bent finally, lauded his wife Pathini greatly and he also embraced the spiritual path. This is the story.

Valayaapati's author has researched the *Thirukkural* extensively. The following Kural is an example:

"For those who seek to sever future births, their body itself is a burden; so why shall they seek the addition of other bonds?"

Valluvar said: "A harlot's false embrace for money is like one clasping an unknown corpse in a dark room".

The author of Valayaapati also demonstrates clearly the uselessness of wanton women thus:

The harlot with eyes resembling lotus flowers
Leaving the one who has lost his wealth
And desiring to switch to a great extent
to another admirer with abundant wealth
Is equivalent to the animal that leaves the place
it was grazing
When it loses its grass and enters another place
with plenty of grass
The infatuation with money in the world
is also highlighted in the following song:

If he has wealth, even a base person will be surrounded by others like birds circling around a fruit-bearing tree but a virtuous person with empty pockets may be likened to a bird fallen from the fruit tree.

It is indispensable to have wealth for a domestic life, patience to undertake penance, grace to practise ethics and ministers for governance. He says that in the absence of these qualities the task cannot be accomplished, and it will be like applying collyrium in the eye in the dark.

The following lines taken from Valayaapati that find mention in *Yaparungala Vriddhi* are pleasurable to read: "In the flames of time, the beauty and forms of human life are destroyed. One should not be agitated on seeing that. One should stand firm in one's virtuous path and act accordingly," says the poet.

Oh! Heart! May you prosper!
Hair that is blue coloured, oiled,

adorned with blossomed flowers
That beautiful, large coil of hair adorned with flowers
Will be burnt in the fire of time
Oh! Heart! May you prosper!
But seeing it getting burnt in the fire of time
Why be deluded so much?
Oh! Heart! May you prosper!

*

*

*

The greatness of heads covered by hair created by skilled
persons will also be destroyed, as you may see
Oh! Heart! May you prosper!
Do not be bewildered by the greatness of heads getting
destroyed
Stand on the virtuous paths
Oh! Heart! May you prosper!
Standing on the virtuous paths if you make efforts
The dawning of realization will be clear
Oh! Heart! May you prosper!

Song

Valayaapati's author imparts invaluable lessons
to the world. They form the heart of the epic poem too!
"Do not utter falsehoods; do not indulge in backbiting
Do not abuse anyone; speak the truth
and make progress in life
Do not take a life to live your life
Do not seek the company of mean people!

Do not rob anyone; do not accept pilfered goods;
Do not demean a person just because he is poor
Do not make overtures to other women!"

Kambar pays homage to the Lord who is the creator, conservator and destroyer of the universe. Sekkiyar worships the flowery feet of God who has created the world and manifests His divine play in innumerable ways. *Chinthamani* and *Kundalakesi* bow to the supreme God who is worshipped by the three worlds. Valayaapati's author also worships the supreme God in his heart. The aim and fruit of the worship is to rid oneself of the effects of past karma and attain supreme bliss.

"By worshipping at the feet of the luminous God
He who is lauded by all the three worlds
And by truly repenting for one's sins in one's heart
The worshipper shall be absolved of his past karma".

Let us also bow our heads in worship of the supreme God and begin¹ Valayaapati Agaval (Valayaapati in Verse).

Kavi Yogi Maharishi
Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati

¹ As the doctrine "The One who wipes the sorrow, the One with the perfect appearance, that is God Arhat" is accepted at one point in the epic poem, one group claims that this is indeed a Jain epic. The character Avvai who appears in the book is well-versed in Jain philosophy and she is also a devotee of Siva with an impartial outlook on all religions. So, this book may be considered to be a common one for Saivism and Jainism.

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 the 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
11th May 1897 – 7th 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. This work was completed and appreciated by Sri Aurobindo, the Mother, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Romain Rolland, Annie Besant, Bertrand Russell, George Bernard Shaw, Dr. Suzuki and so many others. It installs the author among the great, men such as Dante, Homer, Racine, Shakespeare, Vyasa, and Valmiki.

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati is one of the greatest Tamil poet, having translated into this language: *Gita, Upanishads, Veda,*

the *Bible*, the *Koran*, *Avesta*, the *Buddha-Dhamma-Sangha* and *Tattvartha Sutra*, the life and teachings of Lao-Tseu and Confucius. From their original languages, he also translated into Tamil *The Divine Comedy* of Dante, the tragedies of Racine, the comedies of Molière, the dramas of Corneille, Shakespeare, Goethe and the novels of Anatole France, Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas and others.

Shuddhananda's works are innumerable. Malcolm Macdonald, who chaired the Congress on the Unity of the Conscience in Singapore, said in his short speech about him: "He is such a remarkable man, having such a diversity of raised gifts, that it is difficult to know where to start and where to finish when one speaks about Kavi Yogi Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati. Few men have achieved as many things in only one human life." His name appears moreover in the Encyclopaedia of the World's Great Men, which says: "Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati is the author of literary works of varied styles: works epic and lyric, melodramas, operas, comedies, pastoral, romance, novels, biographies, commentaries on famous works and texts. *Bharata Shakti* is his magnum opus." He had a presentiment that he would receive the Nobel Prize for Peace or for Literature but did not live to see it. His commitment is summarized in his book celebrating his life, "*Experiences of a Pilgrim Soul (Expériences d'une Âme de Pèlerin)*."

God I loved and lived in him,
Making His commandment
Leave to Man his entire talents
This is my will!

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati
Editions ASSA

Author's Note

We take great pride in the existence of five epic poems in Tamil. Of these, only three – *Chinthamani*, *Silapadikaram* and *Manimekalai* – have survived the ravages of time. *Valayaapati* and *Kundalakesi* have been lost. We have been able to find only a few verses from them here and there. A hundred verses have been found from *Valayaapati* and only nineteen have been retrieved from *Kundalakesi*.

Kundalakesi is an epic sweet poem on the lines of *Soolamani*; Veerasozhiyam calls it a “Long poetical work.” It presents the tenets of the Buddhist religion. Ethics, wealth, happiness and home – it explains the meaning of these four things. Neelakesi mentions some aspects of this epic work. As a result, we have been able to guess the story to a great extent. For a long time, only its invocation song was available to us. In recent times, eighteen more verses have been found as a result of the research undertaken by learned men. I am giving below two of these. The poem's distinctive quality comes to the fore.

The verse highlights the greatness and attributes of God who is worthy of worship: to always do good, to think good, to speak only of good qualities beneficial to all, to have nothing for oneself, internal and external detachment, to strive for the well-being of others – these are the divine qualities that define God's greatness. Human beings who surrender to such a great entity that is God shall be blessed with high moral values, divine grace and a good life. This is the meaning of the invocation song. Now let's look at the second verse:

At every stage of life, man dies, grows old and dies every day. Since the physical body is impermanent, one should avoid grieving for another's death and instead look at how one is nearing death every day, grieve for it and find a way to attain final salvation.

This story narrated by this poem that explains the significance of these facts will be retold by me in verse form. The objective of this effort is to preserve the name *Kundalakesi* in a story in Tamil Nadu so that it is not lost in the wheels of time. In the same way, I have also written the story of *Valayaapati* in verse after extensive research. With the Grace of God, may the Tamil language and the Tamil people attain success and flourish!

Kavi Yogi Maharishi

Dr. Shuddhananda Bharati



Buddha

Kundalakesi in verse

1. Invocation

Benevolent face, compassionate eyes,
Heart filled with grace, affectionate speech
A noble life dedicated to the well-being of all
Righteous work – these are the qualities of the supreme God
Let's meditate on the lotus feet of the Lord, He who
embodies perfection.

2. Long poetical work

An ancient Tamil poet who spoke of His glory wrote the great story of *Kundalakesi* that's deemed to be one of the five great epic poems. But it exists only in name. A poem with a distinguished writing style like *Soolamani*, it is a long poetical work but only nineteen verses are available to us. Although the original poem is lost, I shall endeavour to acquaint the Tamil people with the story!

3. Kundalakesi

In a flourishing city, there lived a rich merchant who was endowed with both knowledge and great wealth. The daughter born to him was a slender lass, with the grace of a swan, a radiant face and flower-like eyes; nectar flowed from her lips as she spoke; famed for her beautiful hair in dark curls, she was named Pathirai (this was her original name) and she was also called Kundalakesi. She was like a beautiful painting, a blessed person indeed!

4. She danced, she stood

She came of age; like a prattling parrot, a singing nightingale and a peacock dancing with its feathers spread out in all their glory, she danced one day with her friends on the upper storey of her house and looked down.

5. Love for Kaalan

On the street, the king's sentries were walking along with a thief they had captured. Pathirai saw them and was horrified: "Oh, what a handsome young man! He is the man my heart yearns for! Can he be a thief? He is the man I love!" Kaalan was in fact the son of a minister dear to the king. Though he had studied the tenets of Buddhism, his wayward mind led him to commit unrighteous acts; the king ordered the execution of the captured prisoner, and the sentries led him away.

6. He alone is my husband

Devastated by love, the young maiden refused to partake of food; heartbroken, she fell prey to an unknown malady and lay supine. Only the thoughts of her lover mattered, to think of anything else was a waste of time for her. She prayed to Lord Buddha for her lover's release. When her parents brought up the topic of her marriage, she said her beloved was the only companion she desired, she would not look at anyone else!

7. They enjoyed life

The minister pleaded; her father too appealed to the king. Due to God's grace, Kaalan was set free. The maiden rejoiced; they got married. Her wealthy father blessed the newlyweds and gifted them a house and money. The young couple lived a carefree life and everyday passed in a blur of enjoyment and pleasure. The world was forgotten; they thought only of their desires; like music and its keynotes, they became one in their love. They bathed in a sea of love and remained inseparable.

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