

Shuddhananda Bharati, Kavi Yogi (Tamil; b.1897, d. 1990) was a man of many parts. He was a playwright, poet, essayist, lyricist, translator and yogi. When he wrote, it was with immense passion, and he communicated that passion to his readers. That passion never for once lost its high charge in spite of the prolificacy of his writings. It was for this reason that for over two decades from the late thirties to the early fifties, flooding the Tamil literary scene with his immense output, he was read as widely and with as much passion as he wrote. His beginnings, as a writer with nationalist fervour and as a yogi, were in the company of Sri Aurobindo, V. V. S. Ayyar, Subramania Bharati, etc. – all exiles in Pondicherry in the second decade of this century, and this lent him the unique distinction of being the only link between them and the contemporary times.

Dominating the Tamil literary scene in the forties, his output was prolific. Among his over 250 published works, 173 are in Tamil, fifty in English, six in French, four in Hindi and three in Telugu. Apart from these languages, he was also conversant with Sanskrit, Kannada, Malayalam and Urdu. Many of his works are out of print. Shuddhananda Bharati translated from French the novels of Victor Hugo, adapted the plays of Moliere and Racine, and Dante's *Divine Comedy* into Tamil. He wrote his magnum opus, *Bharata Shakti* (Epic of God-men), during a twenty-five-year long silent meditation, and this work won the highest Tamil literary award, Raja Rajan, from the Tamil University, Thanjavur (Tanjore). He founded the Yoga Samaj. He wrote *Vira Velunachchiar*, a verse play, for the Fifth International Conference-Seminar of Tamil Studies, Madurai, 1982. A selection of his important works are: *Tamil ichaip patalkal* (Tamil songs, with musical letter notation, 1959); *Silampuc selvam* (Criticism of *Silappadhikaram*); *Atma nadam* (Poems on spirituality, 1962); *Amarakavi Thakur* (Rabindranath Tagore, 1963); *Kirttananjali: 1015 Pamalarkal* (Lyrics, 1963); *Experiences of a Pilgrim Soul* (1964); *Yoga Siddhi* (1965); *Apparin arputam* (Play on the 7th c. Tamil Shaivite poet, 1966); *Joti Ramalingam: Arutperuncoti Ramalingap Peruman tirukkataiyum upatechamum atankiya arul natakam* (Play on Swami Ramalinga, 1966); *Sri Krishna and His Gospel* (1967); *Alvar Saints and Acharyas* (2nd ed. 1968); *Veda sadhanam* (1969); *The grand epic of Shaivism* (1970); *Kavikkuyil Bharatiyar* (Life and works of Bharatiyar, 1970); *Secrets of Sama Yoga* (1970); *Saktiparavasam: avesamana shakti isaip patalkal, Devi Bhagavatam, Tantira nulkal, Tirumantiram ivarrin karuttukkalaiyum kundalini yogap panbukaalaiyum vilakkum iniya isaippatalkal* (Lyrics on Devi, 1978).

Shuddhanandan Bharati's lyrics, some of which have for long been favourites of musicians in concert, are likely to be his enduring contributions.

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